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| | |
|---|---|
| **Reference** | Mss Eur F111/33 |
| **Title** | Annotated Copy of |
| **Date(s)** | 1892-1924 (CE, Gregorian) |
| **Written in** | English, Urdu and German in Latin and Arabic script |
| **Extent and Format** | 2 volumes with inserts (898 folios) |
| **Holding Institution** | British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers |
| **Copyright for document** | Public Domain |

**About this record**

These two volumes are George Curzon's own personal annotated copies of both volumes of his book *Persia and the Persian Question* , which was published in 1892. Alongside the volumes are various loose papers relating to Persia [Iran], consisting of the following: received correspondence; newspaper cuttings; publishers' press releases; cuttings from various booksellers' catalogues; various journal and magazine articles; two items of printed official British correspondence; several prints of photographs and sketches; and a few handwritten notes by Curzon.

In most cases these papers, which range in date from 1892 to 1924, relate to the chapters in the book where they were originally inserted, suggesting that they were kept by Curzon with the intention of using them to inform a revised edition of the book.

Of particular note among the small amount of correspondence are two letters received by Curzon in 1914 and 1915 from retired schoolmaster and Islamic scholar Sayyid Mazhar Hasan Musawi of Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India (ff 5-9 and ff 44-53). These letters, which are written in Urdu and are accompanied by English translations, discuss in detail several inaccuracies found in the Urdu version of *Persia and the Persian Question* .

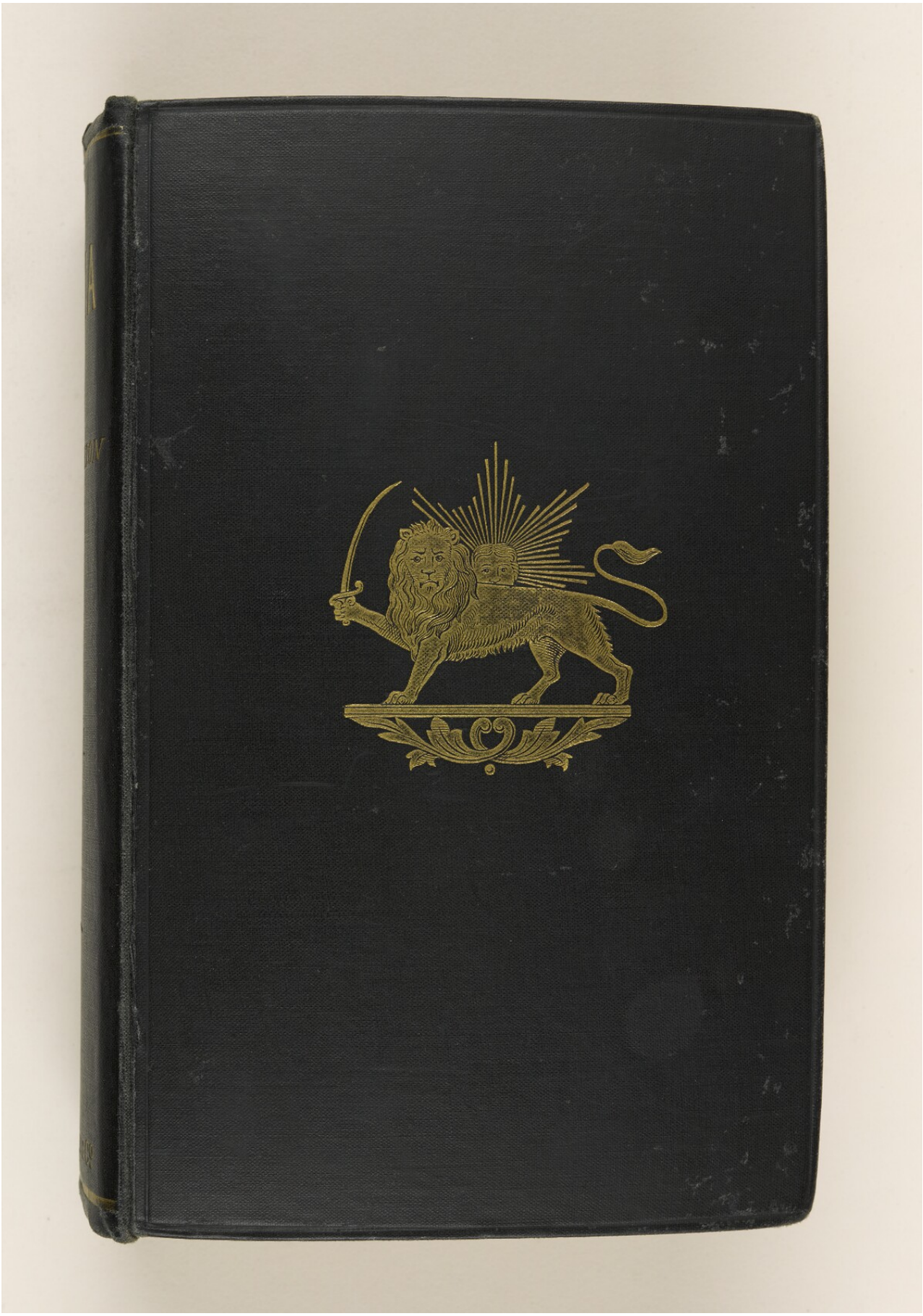
The various prints of photographs and sketches, which were originally inserted into volume two, are of different locations in the Gulf region. Several of these appear to have been produced in preparation for the publication of the second volume of John Gordon Lorimer's *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia* (i.e. the 'Geographical and Statistical' section) in 1908, as they are identical to the versions found in that volume.

Also of note among the loose papers are an illustrated article from *Country Life* dated 5 June 1920, entitled 'The People of Persia' (ff 36-37), and a printed family tree of the Shah of Persia [Aḥmad Shah

Qājār], produced in preparation of his visit to Britain in 1919 (f 233).

Volume one of *Persia and the Persian Question* contains a map of Persia, Afghanistan and Beluchistan [Balochistan], which is folded inside the front cover (f 1).

The German language material consists of a publisher's press release for two books authored by German archaeologist Ernst Emil Herzfeld (ff 29-30).



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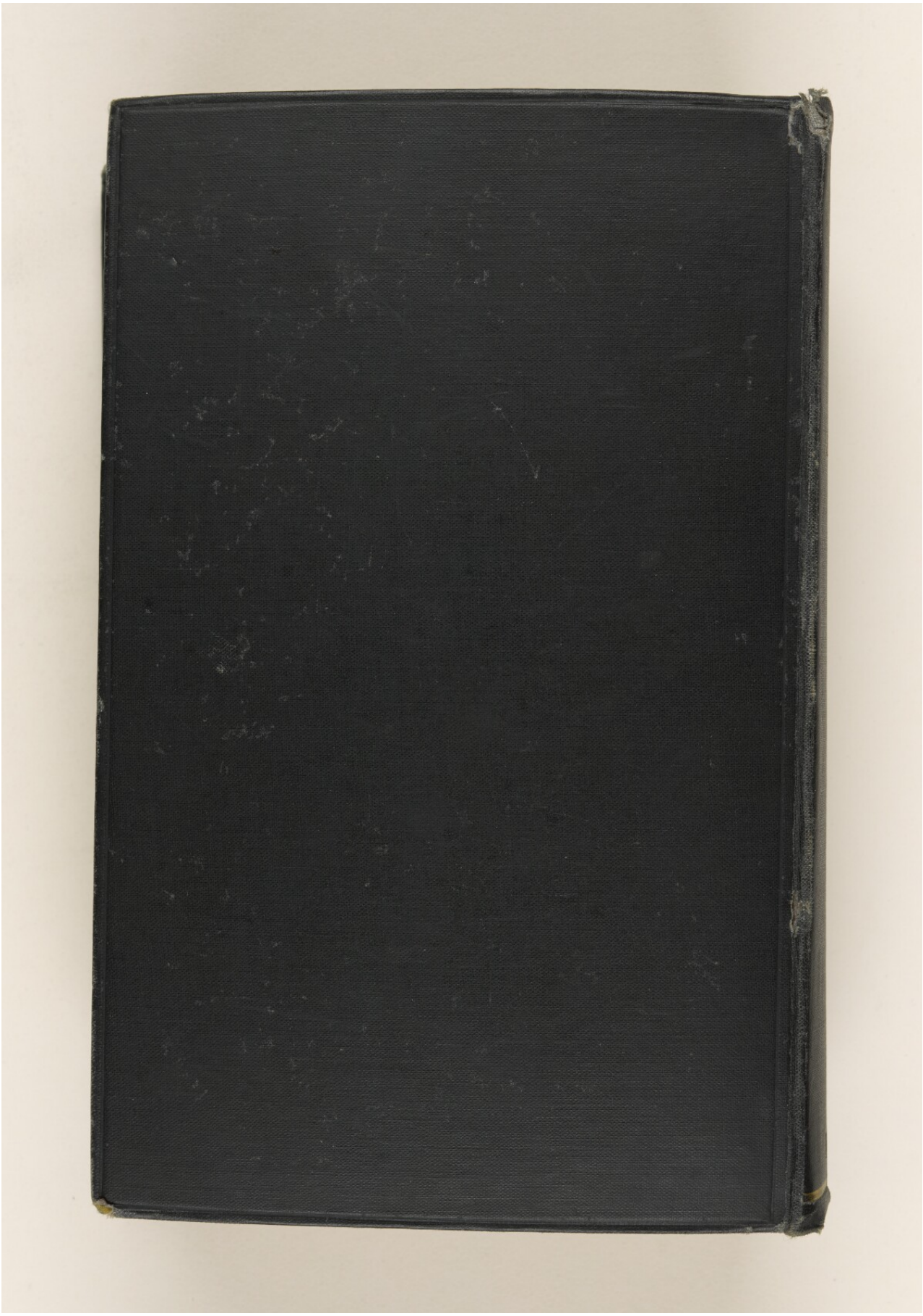

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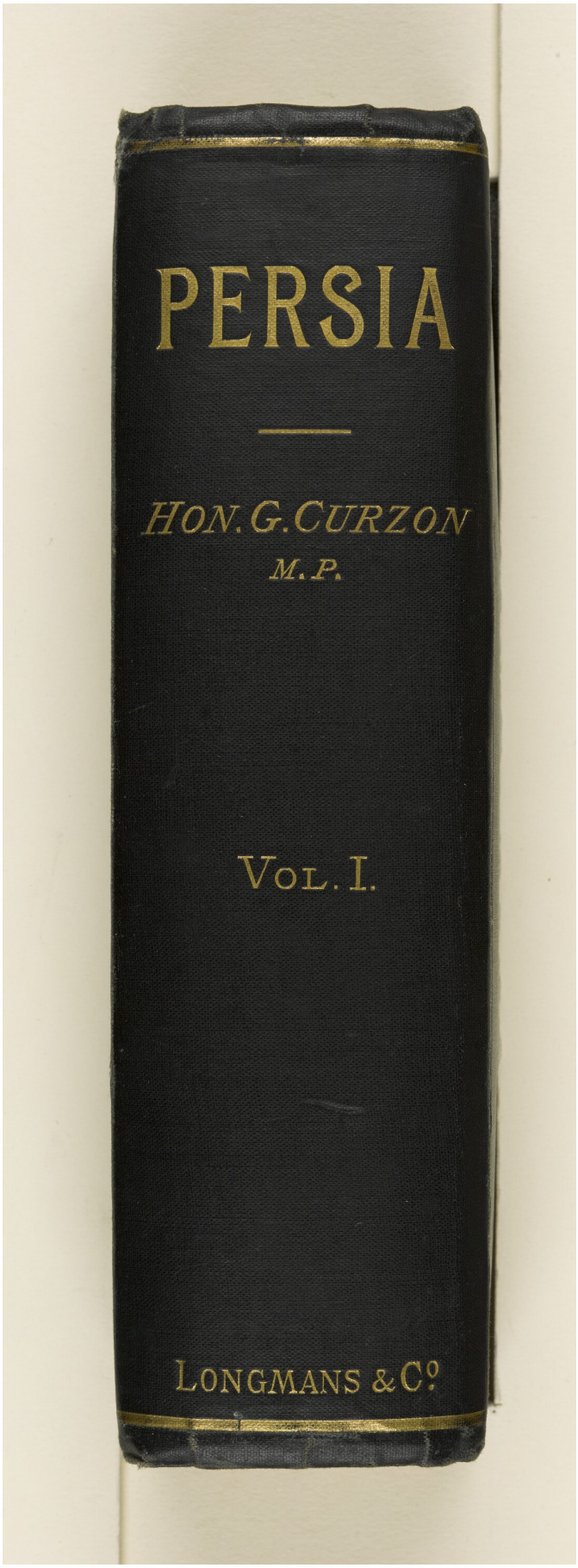
PERSIA
HON. G. CURZON
M. P.
VOL. I.
LONGMANS & Co.



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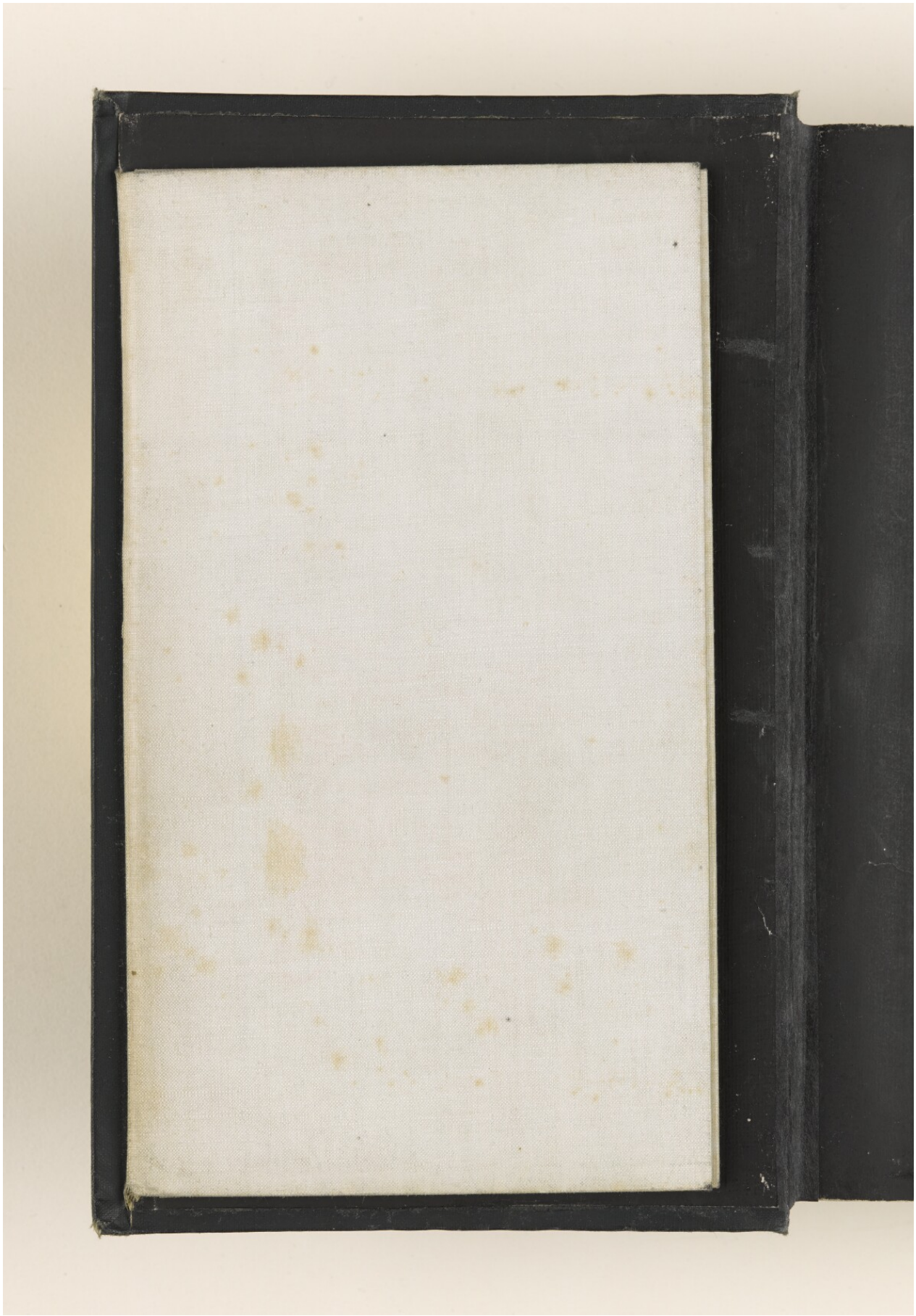




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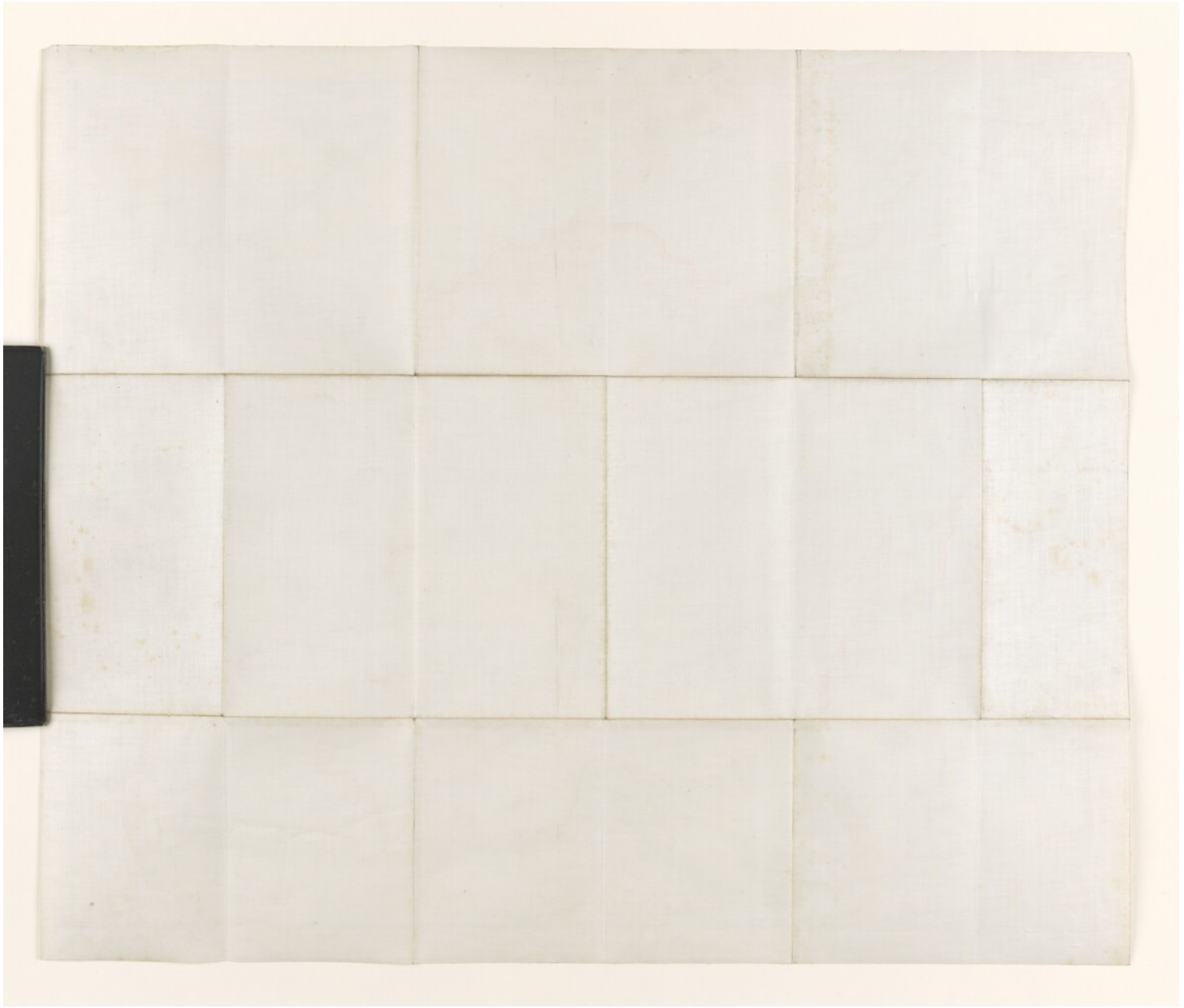

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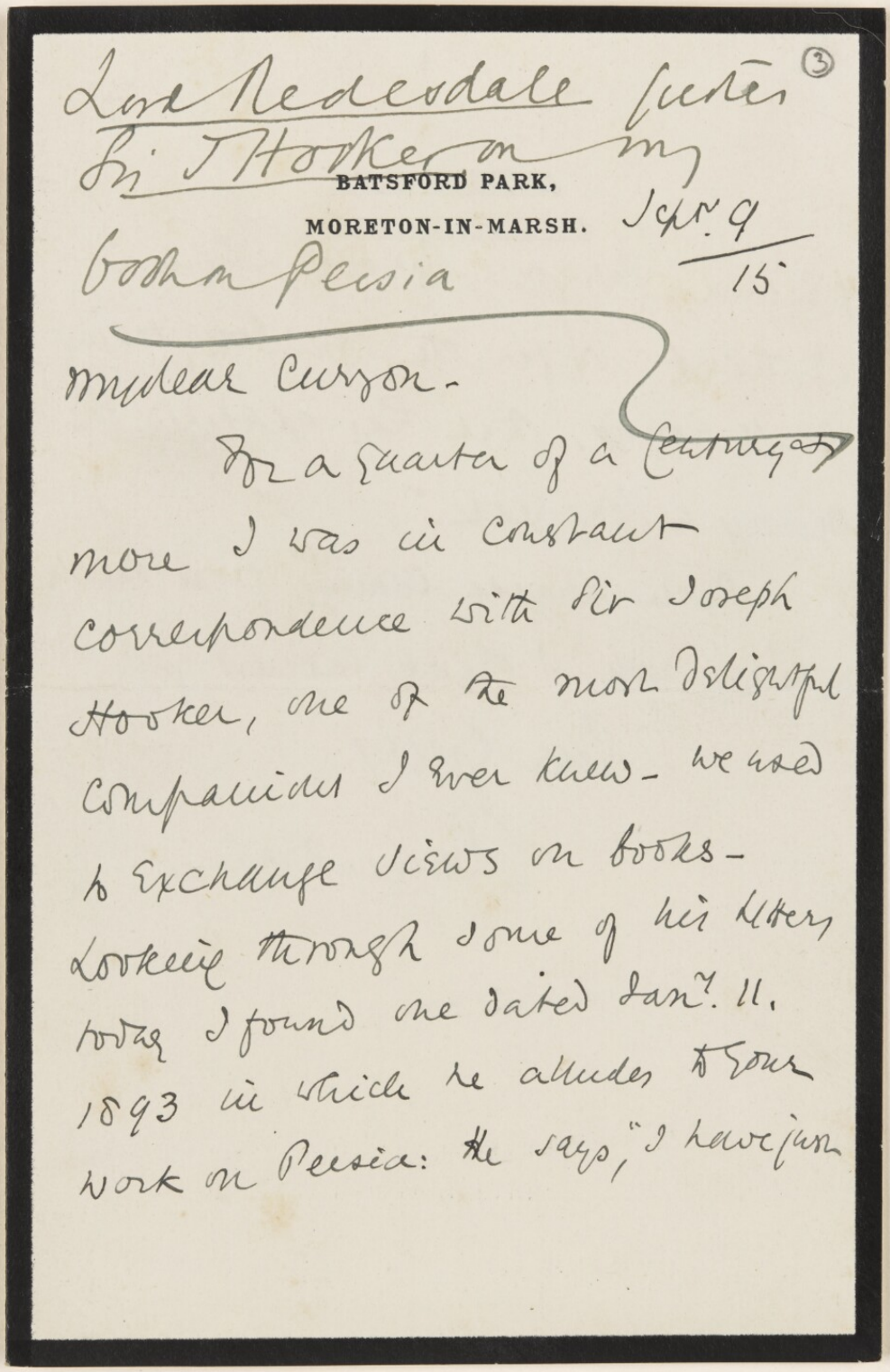


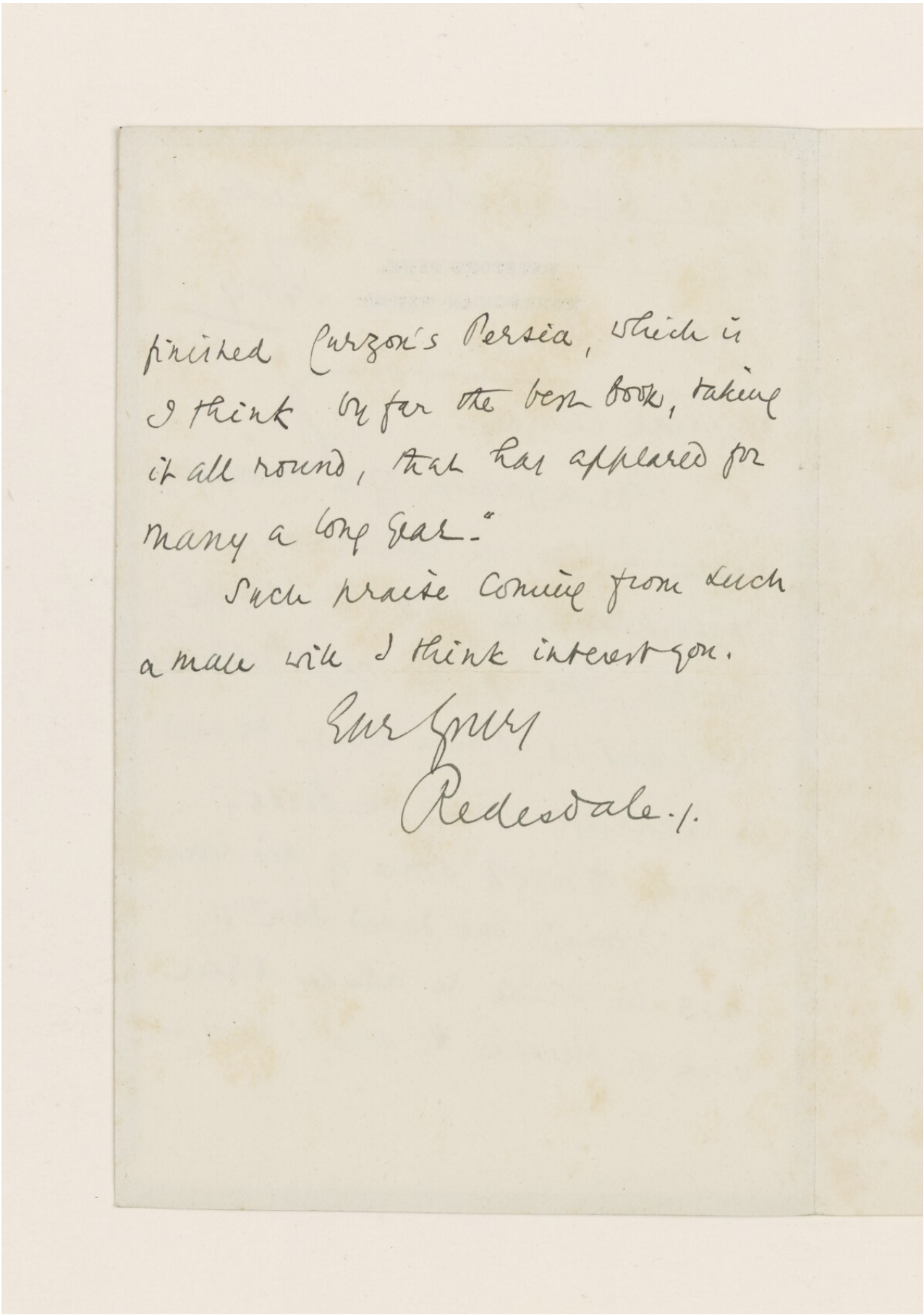
Lord Redesdale quotes Sir J Hooker on my book on Persia

BATSFORD PARK,
MORETON-IN-MARSH.

Sept. 9/15

My dear Curzon -

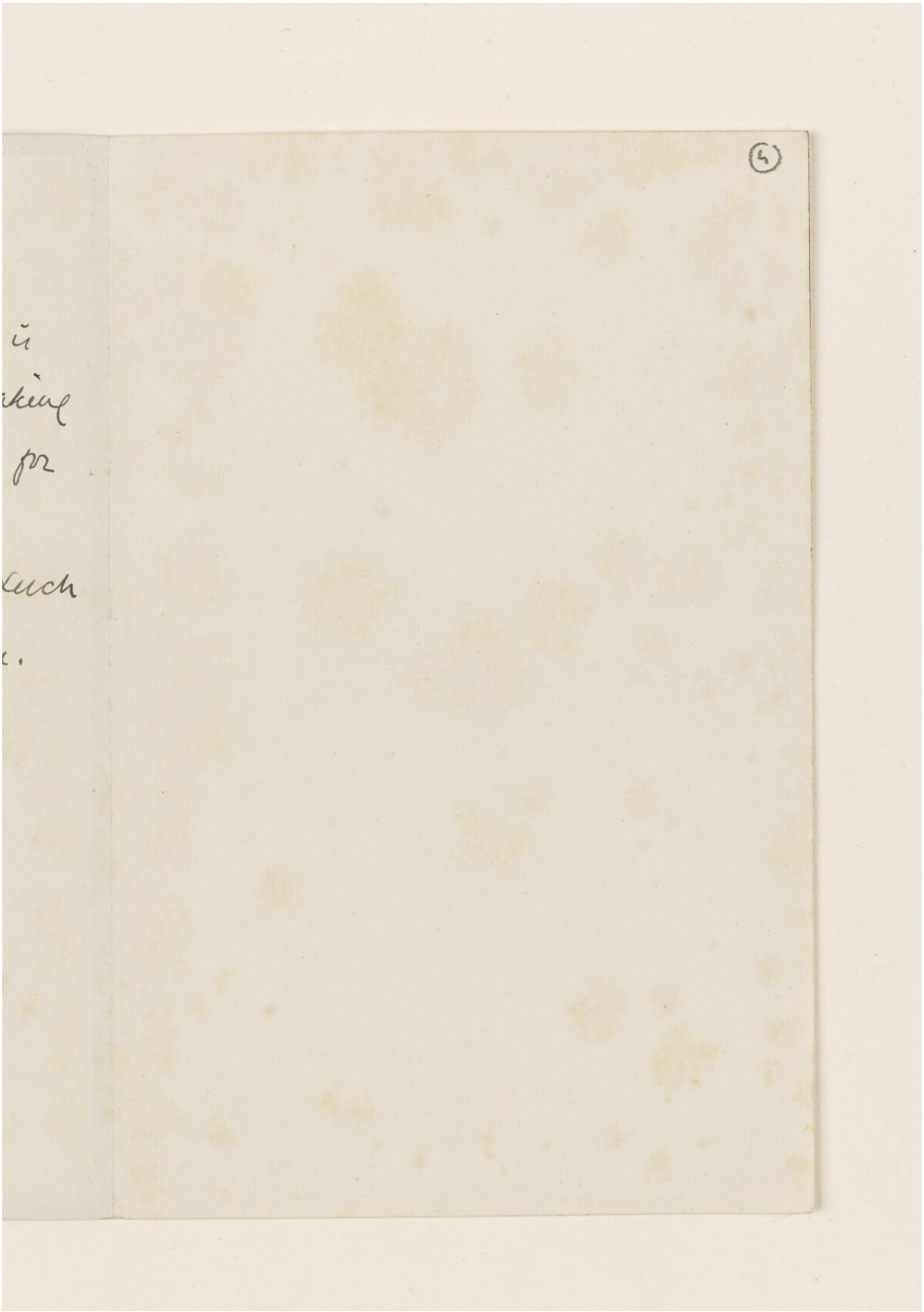
For a quarter of a Century at more I was in constant correspondence with Sir Joseph Hooker, one of the most delightful companions I ever knew - we used to exchange views on books - Looking through some of his letters today I found one dated Jan^y. 11. 1893 in which he alludes to your work on Persia: He says, "I have just



finished Curzon's Persia, which is
I think by far the best book, taking
it all round, that has appeared for
many a long year."

Such praise coming from such
a man as I think interest you.

Ever yours
Redesdale.





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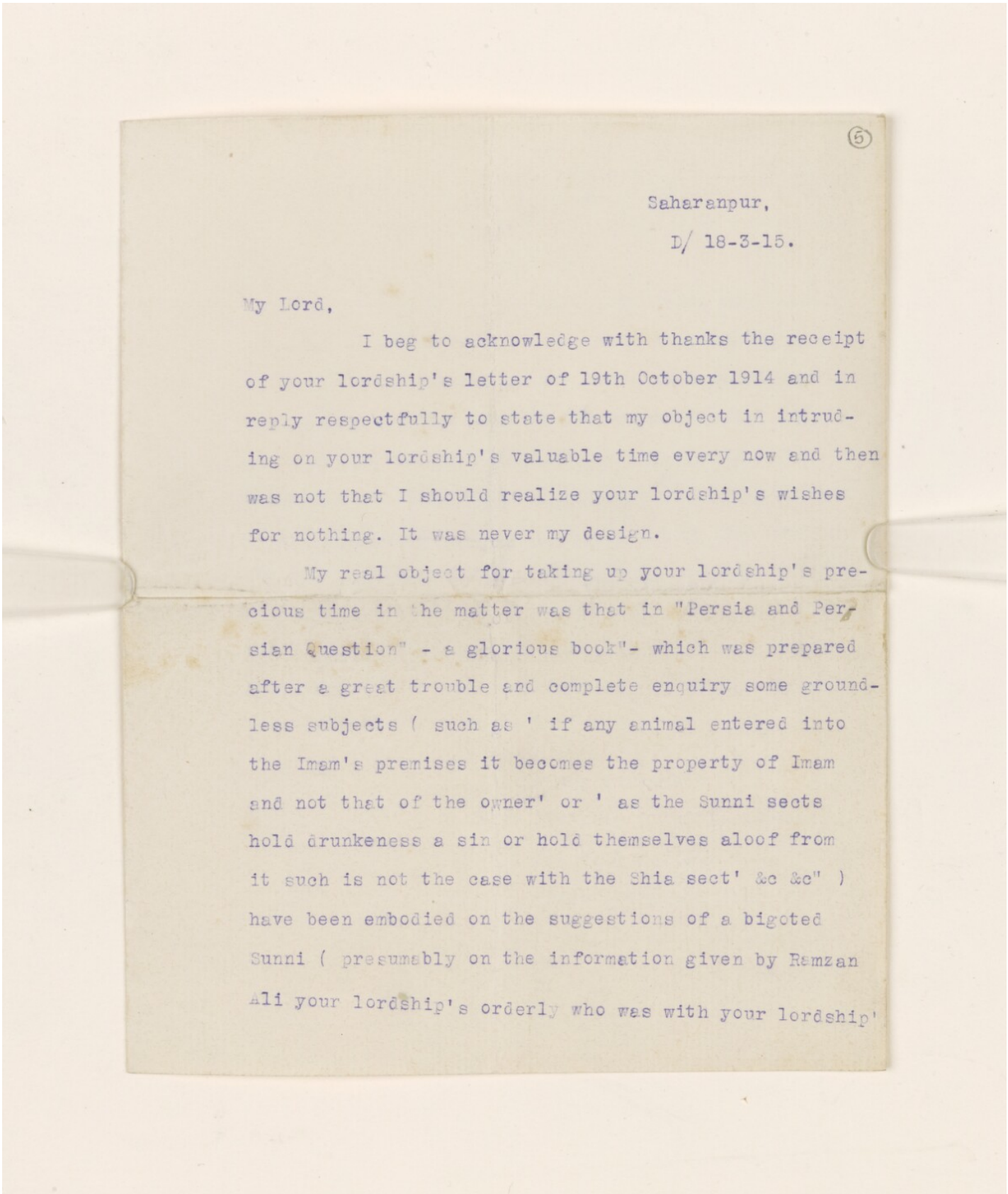


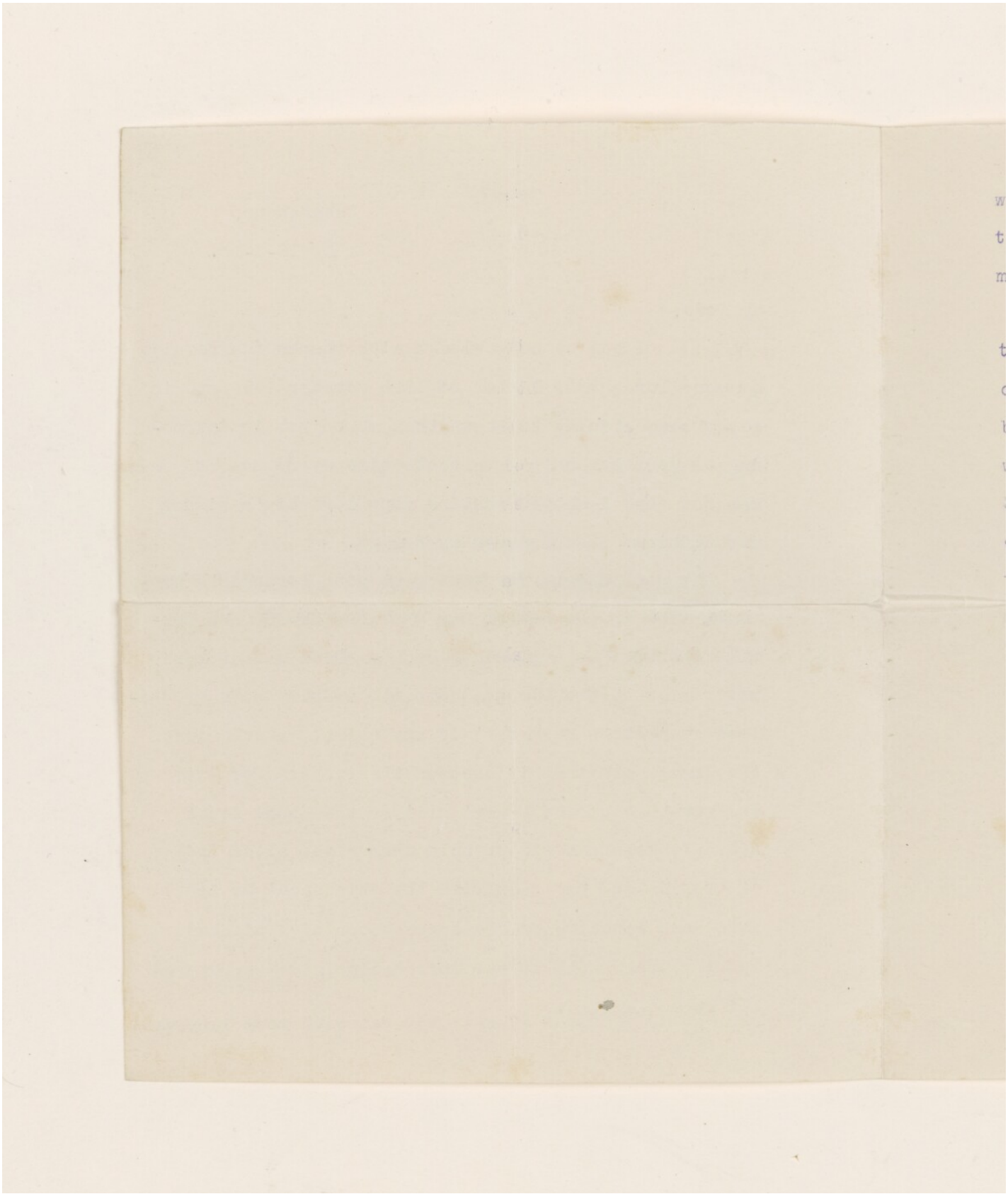
(5)

Saharanpur,
D/ 18-3-15.

My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your lordship's letter of 19th October 1914 and in reply respectfully to state that my object in intruding on your lordship's valuable time every now and then was not that I should realize your lordship's wishes for nothing. It was never my design.

My real object for taking up your lordship's precious time in the matter was that in "Persia and Persian Question" - a glorious book"- which was prepared after a great trouble and complete enquiry some groundless subjects ( such as ' if any animal entered into the Imam's premises it becomes the property of Imam and not that of the owner' or ' as the Sunni sects hold drunkeness a sin or hold themselves aloof from it such is not the case with the Shia sect' &c &c" ) have been embodied on the suggestions of a bigoted Sunni ( presumably on the information given by Ramzan Ali your lordship's orderly who was with your lordship'



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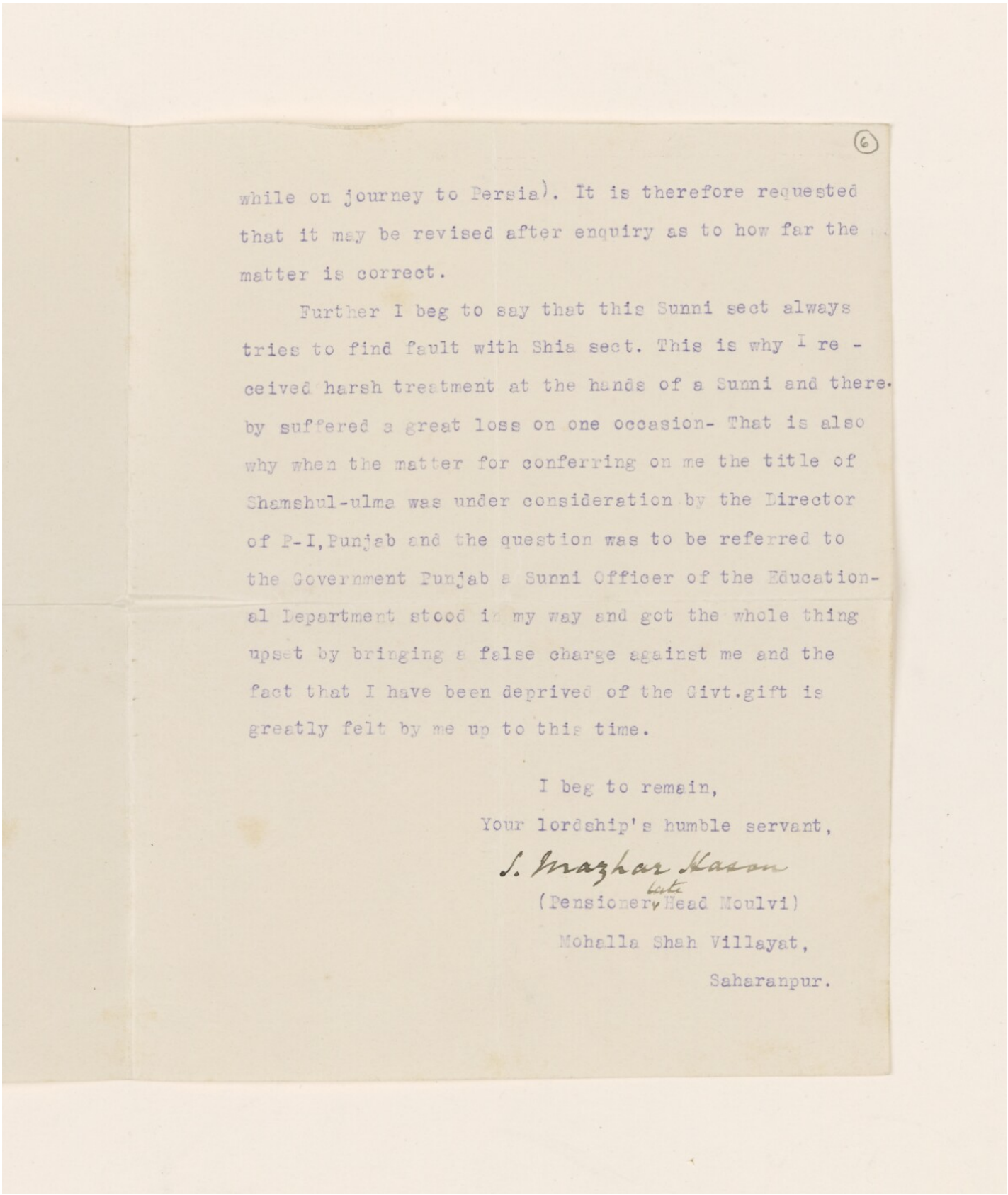


(6)

while on journey to Persia). It is therefore requested that it may be revised after enquiry as to how far the matter is correct.

Further I beg to say that this Sunni sect always tries to find fault with Shia sect. This is why I received harsh treatment at the hands of a Sunni and thereby suffered a great loss on one occasion- That is also why when the matter for conferring on me the title of Shamshul-ulma was under consideration by the Director of P-I, Punjab and the question was to be referred to the Government Punjab a Sunni Officer of the Educational Department stood in my way and got the whole thing upset by bringing a false charge against me and the fact that I have been deprived of the Givt.gift is greatly felt by me up to this time.

I beg to remain,

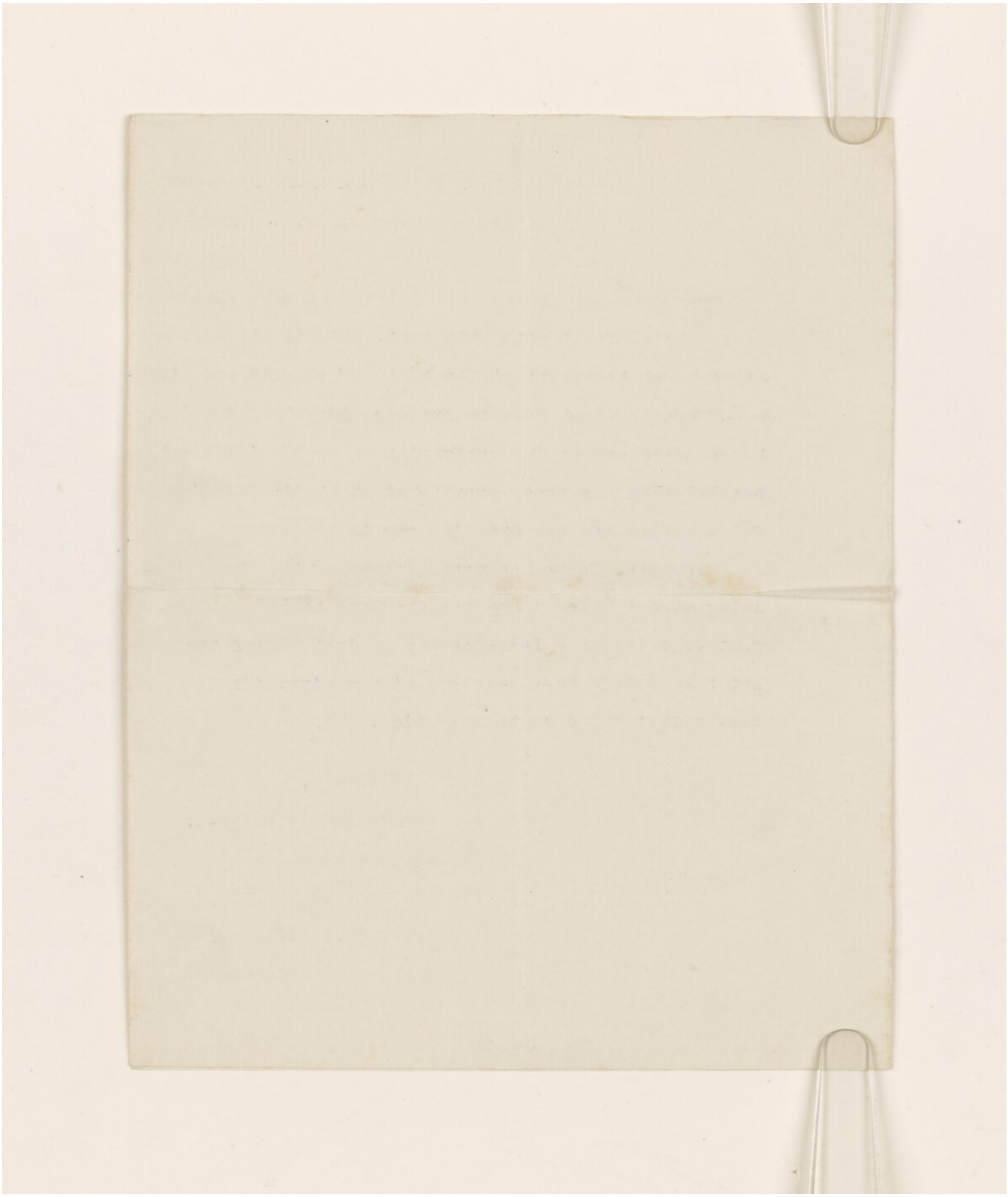
Your lordship's humble servant,

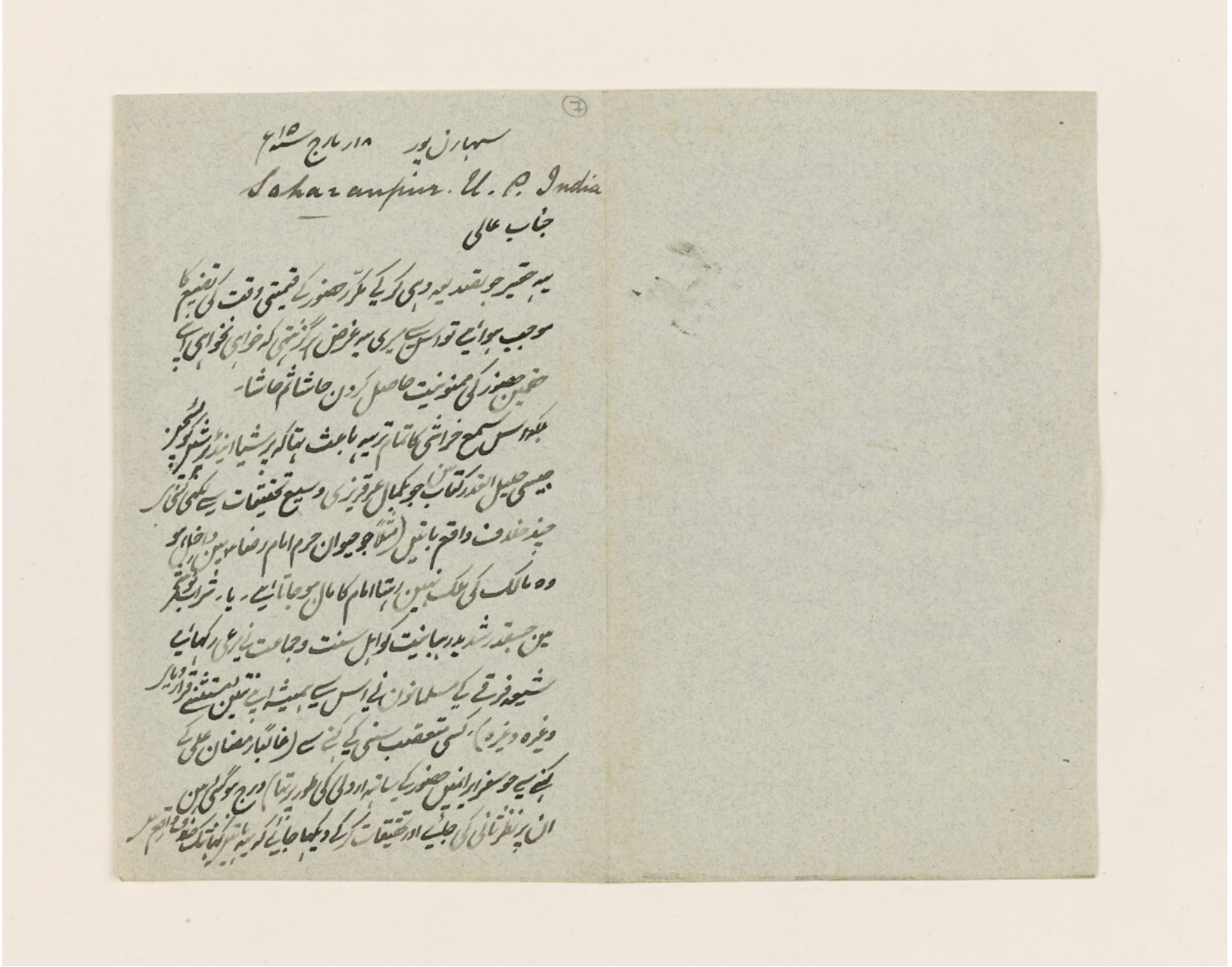
S. Mazhar Hasan

(Pensioner late Head Moulvi)

Mohalla Shah Villayat,

Saharanpur.





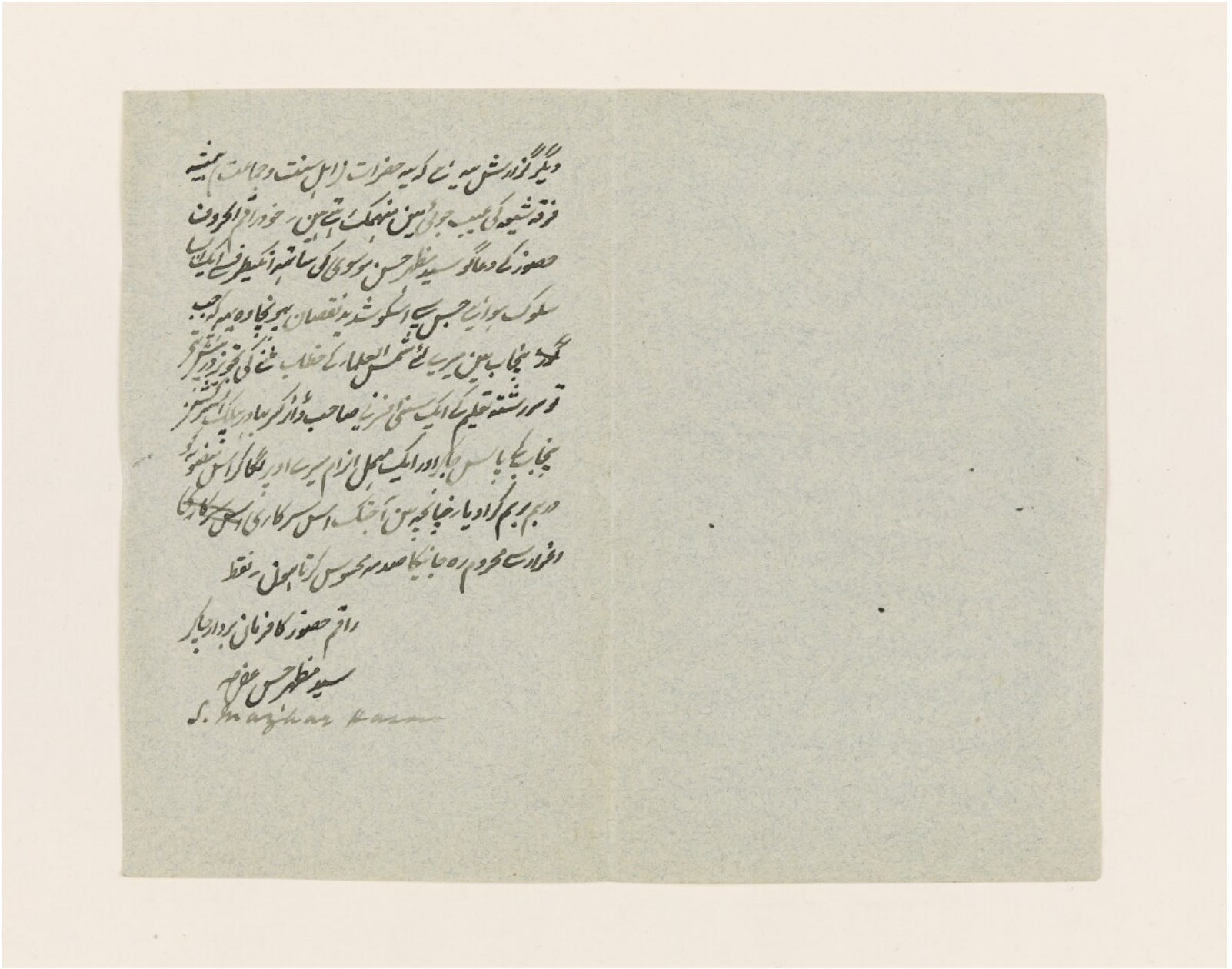
(7)

سہارن پور ۱۸ مارچ سنہ ۱۵ء

Saharanpur. U. P. India

جناب عالی

یہ حقیر جو تصدیعہ دہی کر کے مکرر حضور کے قیمتی وقت کی تضیع کا
موجب ہوا ہے تو اس سے میری یہ غرض ہرگز نہ تھی کہ خواہی نخواہی اپنے
حق میں حضور کی ممنونیت حاصل کروں حاشا ثم حاشا۔
بلکہ اس سمع خراشی کا تمام تر یہ باعث تھا کہ پرشیا اینڈ پرشین کو لیکچرز
جیسی جلیل القدر کتاب میں جو بکمال عرقریزی وسیع تحقیقات سے لکھی گئی ہے
چند خلاف واقع باتیں (مثلاً جو حیوان حرم امام رضا میں داخل ہو
وہ مالک کی ملک نہیں رہتا امام کا مال ہو جاتا ہے۔ یا۔ شراب نوشی
میں جسقدر شدید رہبانیت کو اہل سنت وجماعت نے مرعی رکھا ہے
شیعہ فرقے کے مسلمانوں نے اس سے ہمیشہ اپنے تئیں مستثنے قرار دیا ہے
وغیرہ وغیرہ) کسی متعصب سنی کے کہنے سے (غالباً رمضان علی کے
کہنے سے جو سفر ایران میں حضور کے ساتھ اردلی کی طور پر تھا) درج ہو گئی ہیں
ان پر نظر ثانی کی جائے اور تحقیقات کر کے دیکھا جائے کہ یہ باتیں کہاں تک خلاف واقع ہیں



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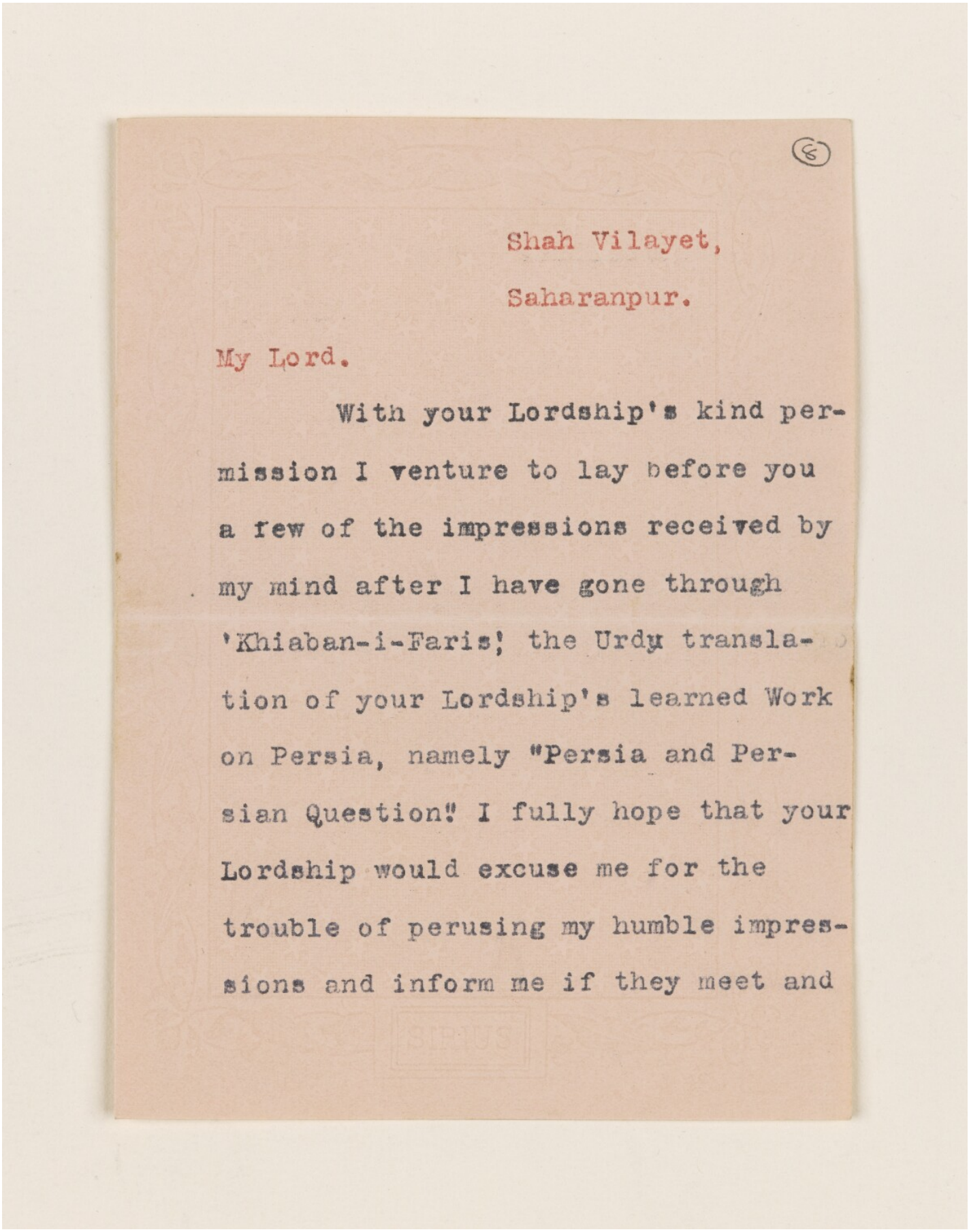


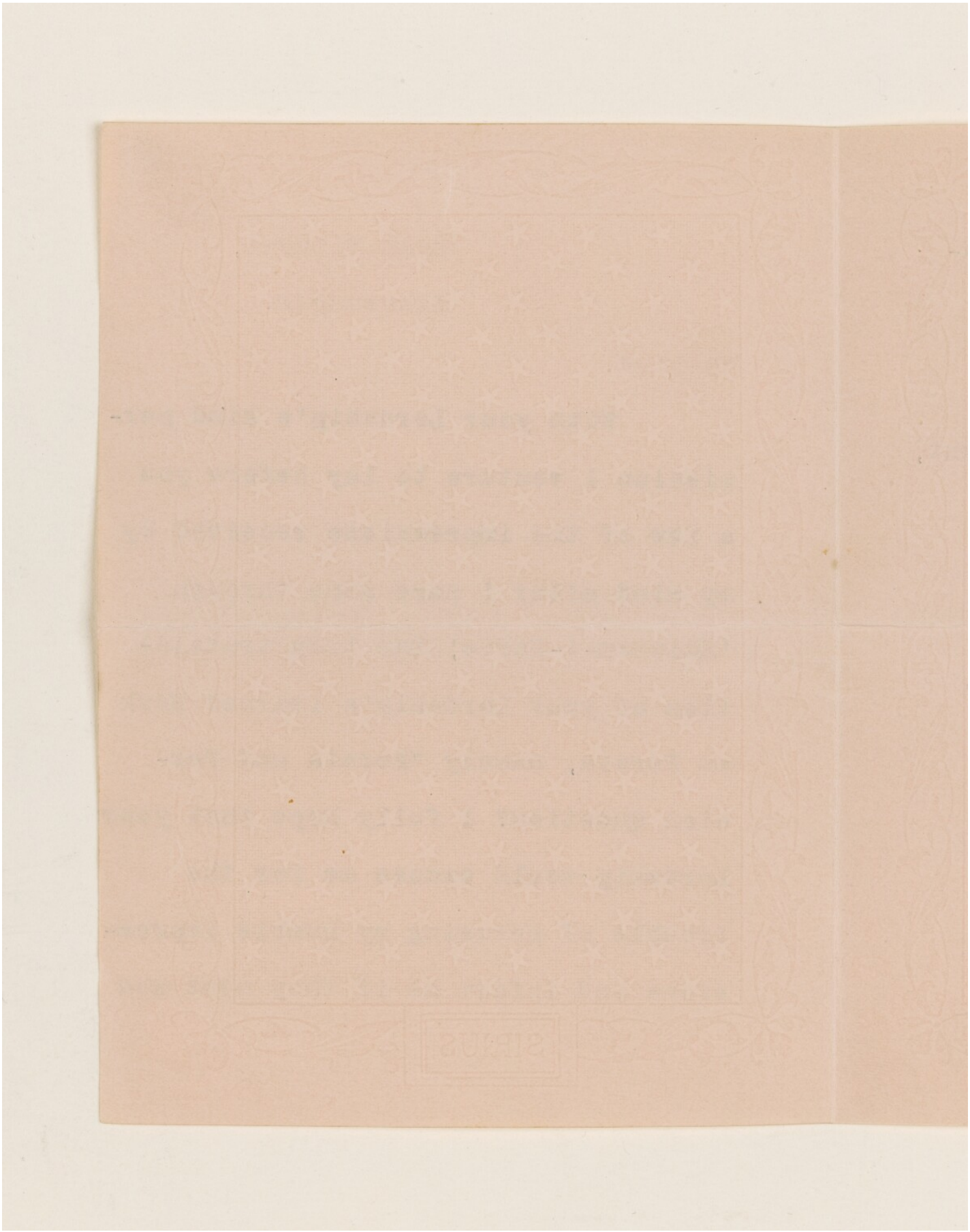
(8)

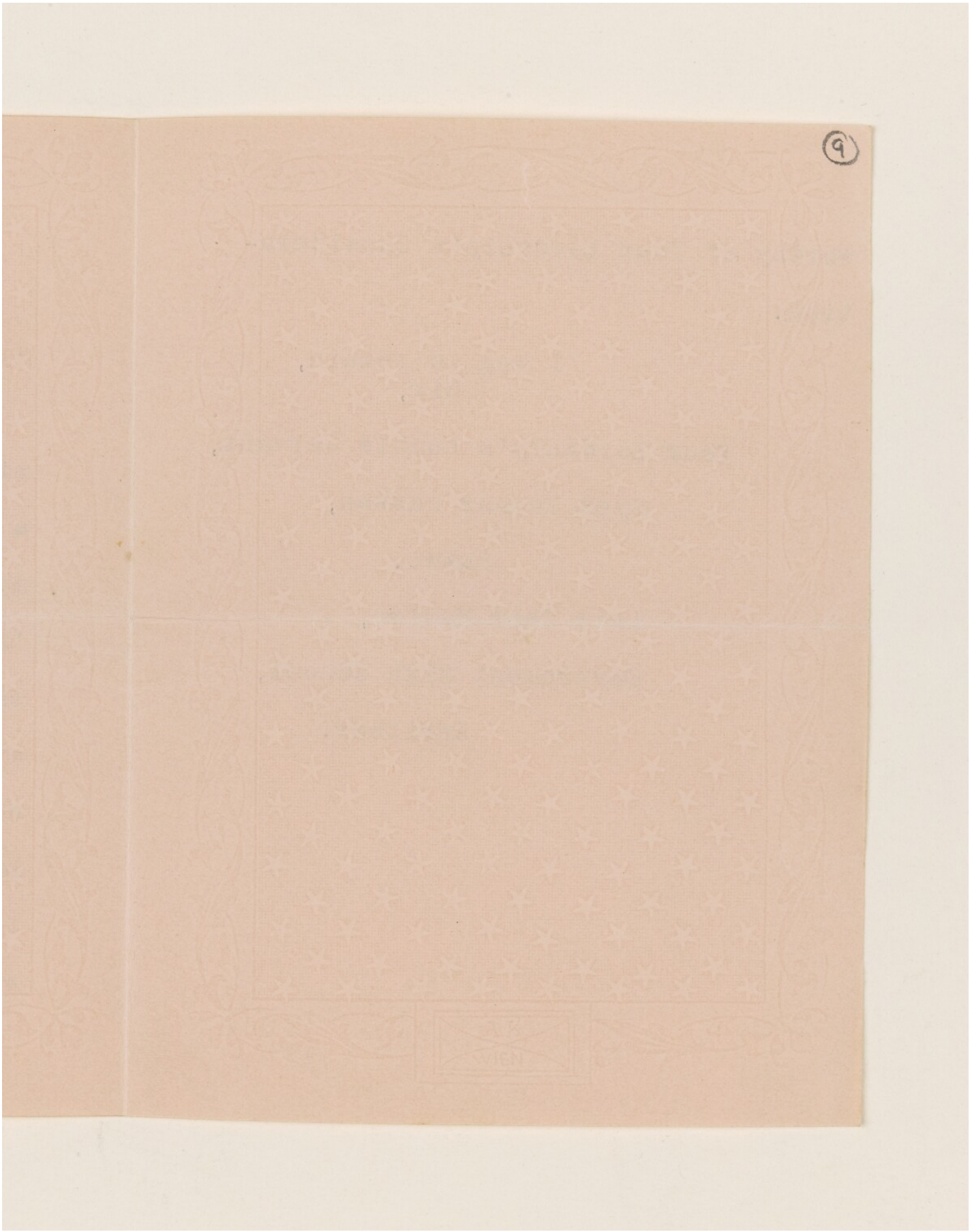
Shah Vilayet,

Saharanpur.

My Lord.

With your Lordship's kind permission I venture to lay before you a few of the impressions received by my mind after I have gone through 'Khiaban-i-Faris' the Urdu translation of your Lordship's learned Work on Persia, namely "Persia and Persian Question" I fully hope that your Lordship would excuse me for the trouble of perusing my humble impressions and inform me if they meet and



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worthy of Your Lordship's Considera-
tion.

I beg to remain,
Sir,

Your Lordship's humble Servant,

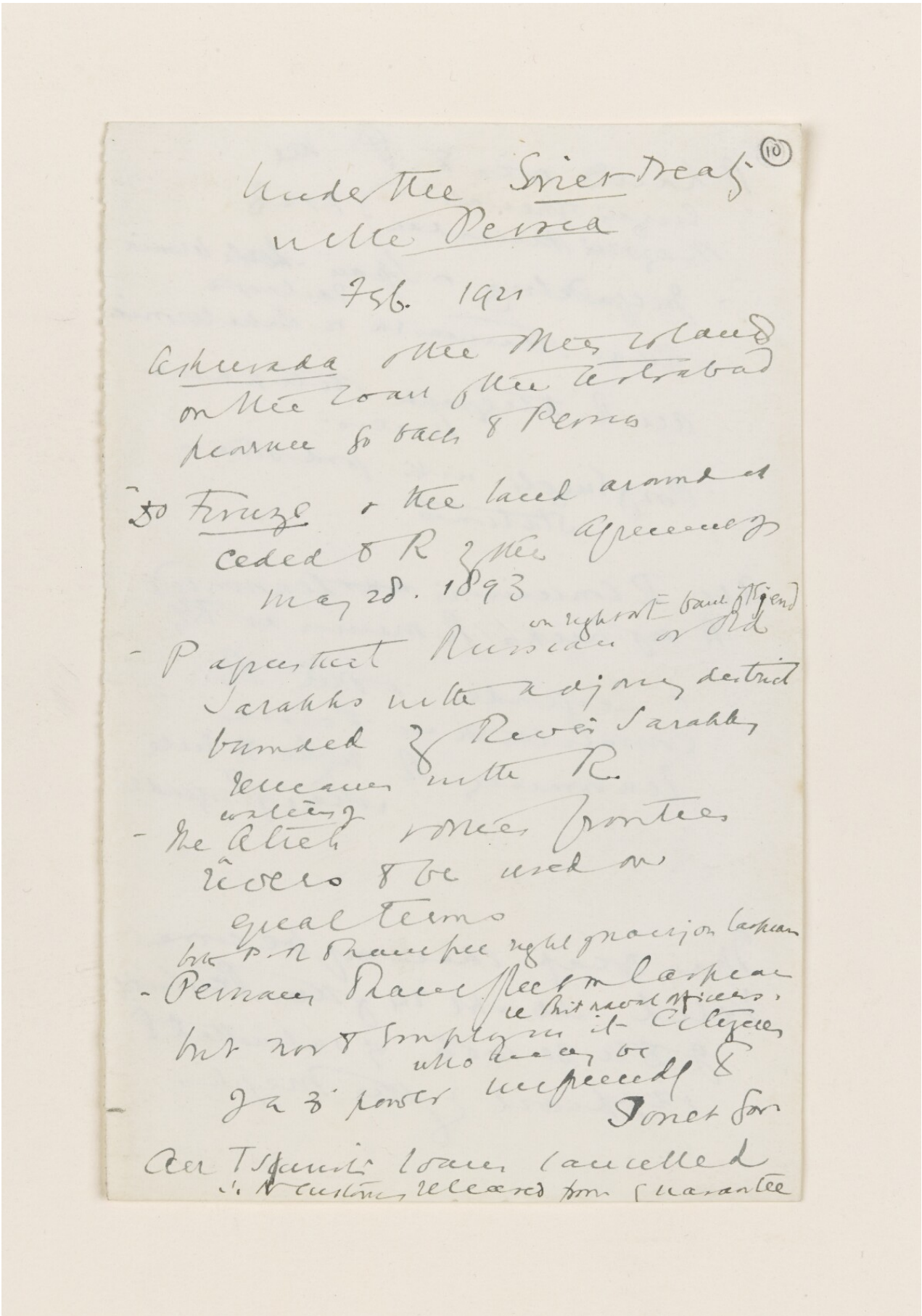
Syed Mazhar Hassan,

Muswi.

Late Head Maulvi,

Government High School,

Amritsar.



(10)

Under the Soviet Treaty with Persia

Feb. 1921

Ashurada & the other islands on the coast of the Astrabad province go back to Persia

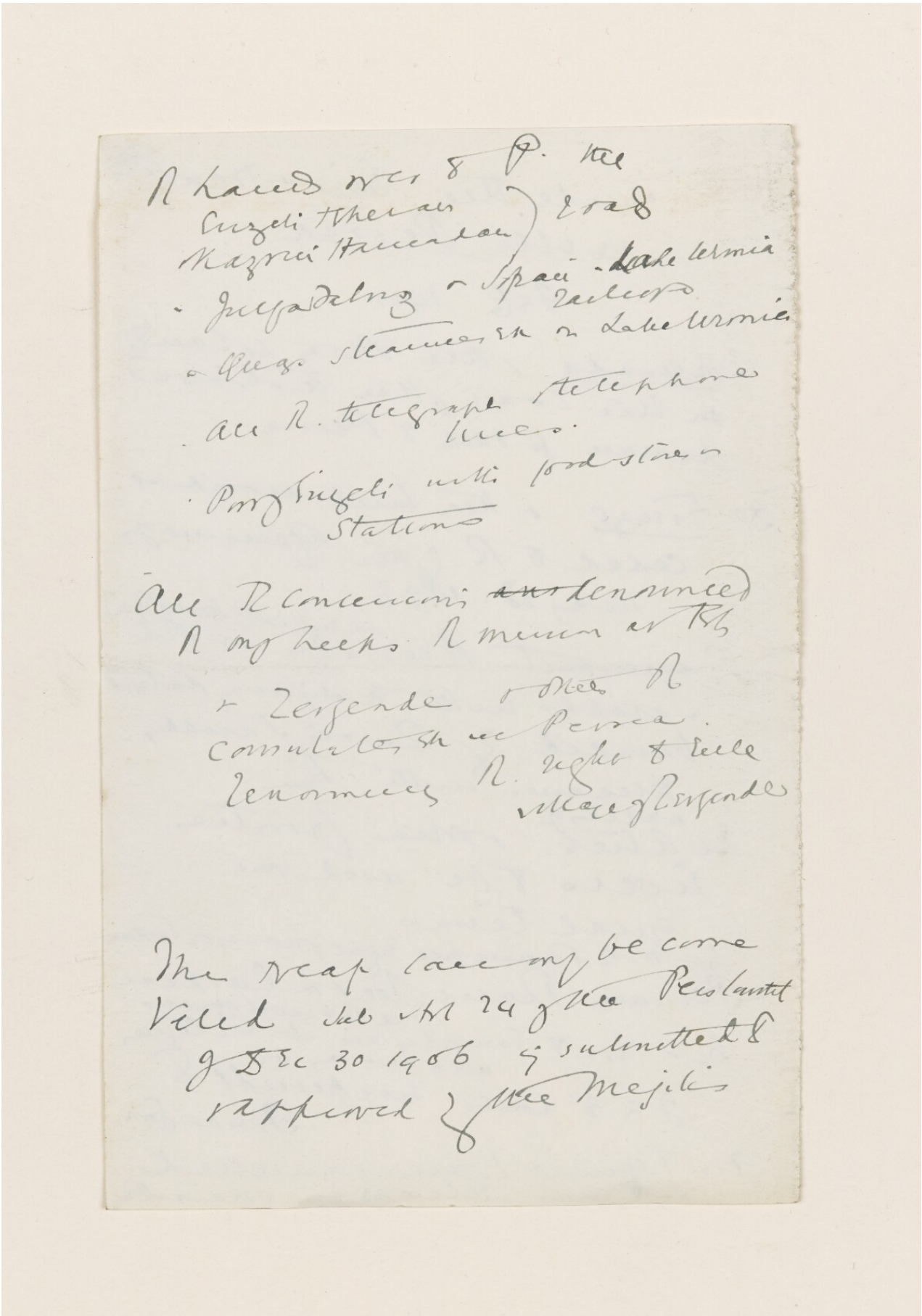
- So Firuze & the land around it ceded to R. by the Agreement of May 28. 1893

- Paragraph that Russian or Old Sarakhs with adjoining district bounded by River Sarakhs remains with R. (on right of E. bank of Tejend)

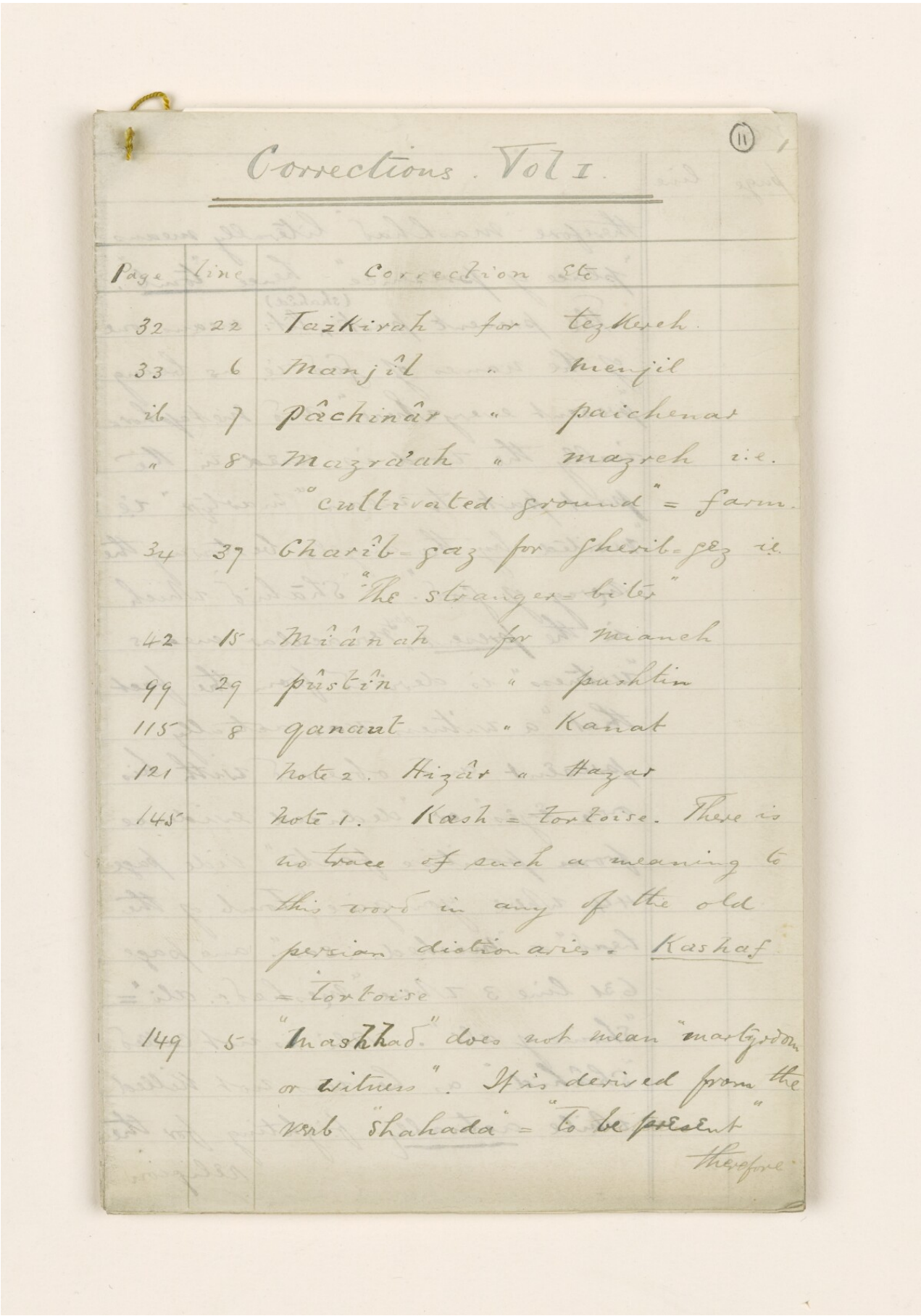
- The waters of Atrek & other frontier rivers to be used on equal terms

- Persians to have free right of navigation Caspian but not to employ in it Citizens who may be of a 3rd power unfriendly to Soviet Govt

Our Tsarist loans cancelled
∴ Customs released from guarantee



R Lands nr 8 P. Rd
Enzeli Kheiras
Kazvin Hamadan
Julfa Jolfa
Julfa Tabriz
Julfa Tabriz
Julfa Tabriz



(11)

# Corrections. Vol I.

| Page | Line | Correction Etc |
|---|---|---|
| 32 | 22 | Tazkirah for tezkereh. |
| 33 | 6 | Manjîl " menjil |
| ib | 7 | pâchinâr " paichenar |
| " | 8 | Mazra'ah " mazreh i.e. "cultivated ground" = farm. |
| 34 | 37 | Gharîb-gaz for gherib-gez i.e. "The stranger-biter" |
| 42 | 15 | Mîânah for mianeh |
| 99 | 29 | pûstîn " pushtin |
| 115 | 8 | qanaut " Kanat |
| 121 | | note 2. Hizâr " Hazar |
| 145 | | note 1. Kash = tortoise. There is no trace of such a meaning to this word in any of the old persian dictionaries. Kashaf = tortoise |
| 149 | 5 | "Mashhad" does not mean "martyrdom or witness". It is derived from the verb "shahada" = "to be present" therefore |

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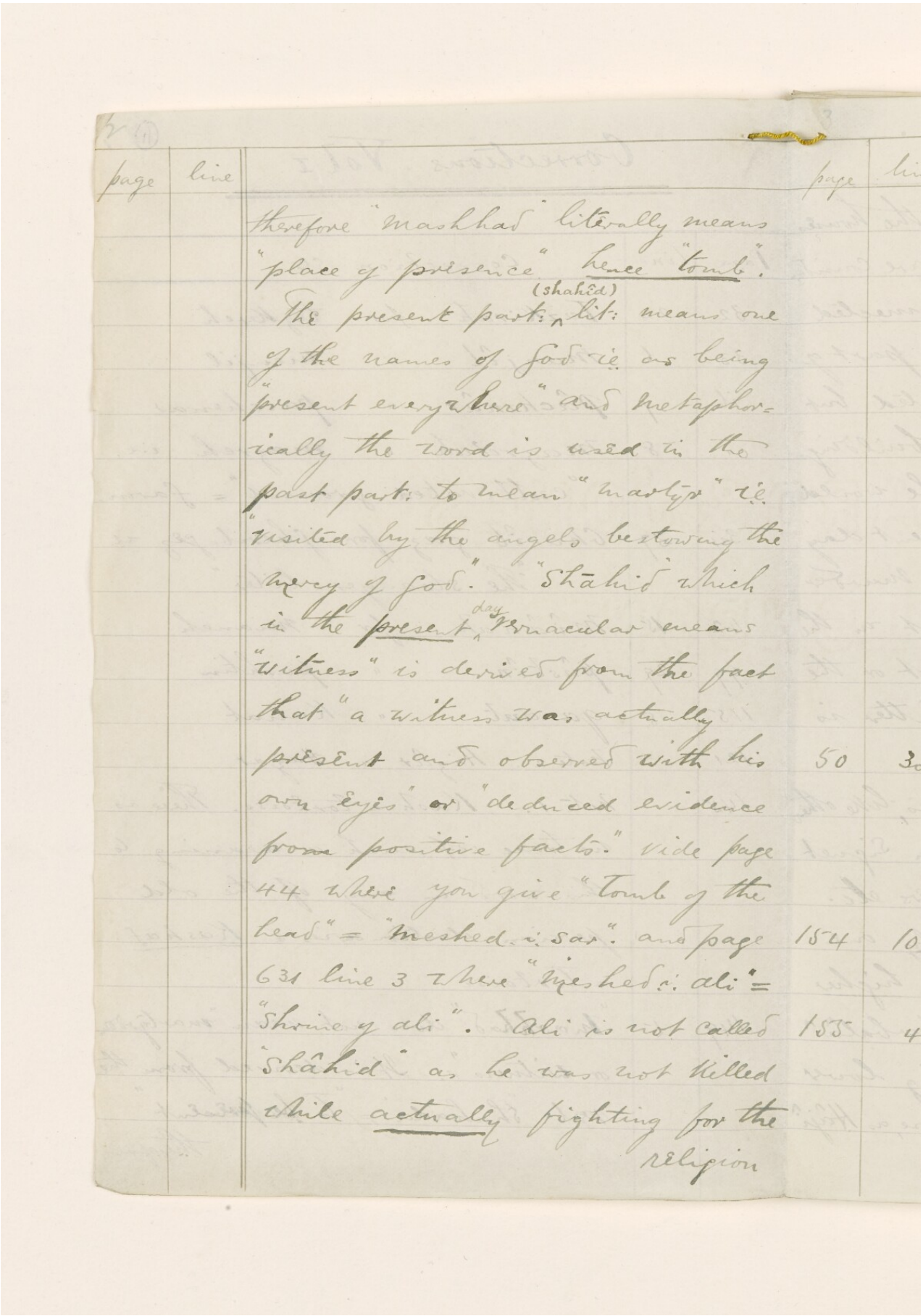
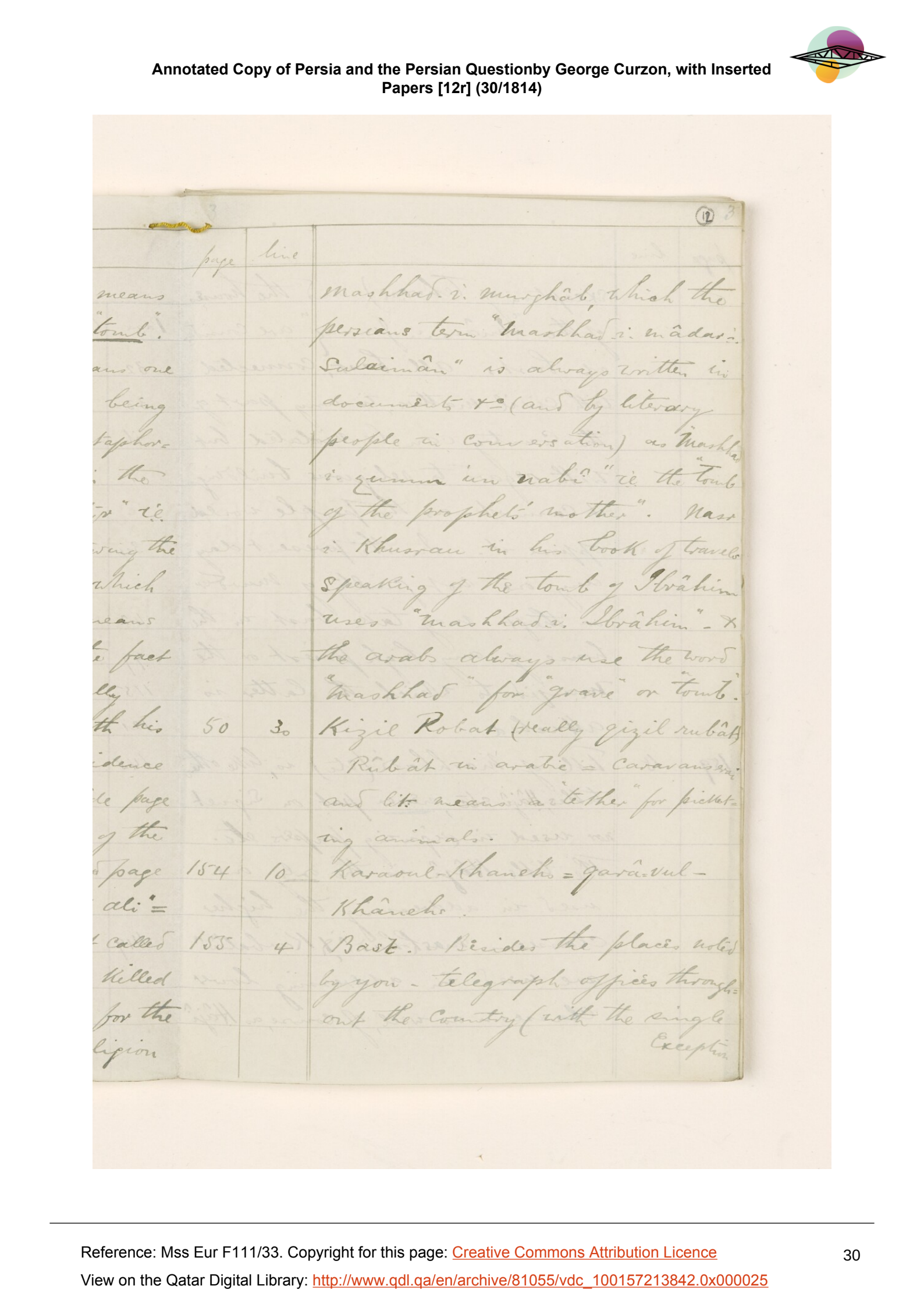


page | line

therefore "mashhad" literally means "place of presence" hence "tomb".
The present part: (shahēd) lit: means one of the names of God i.e. as being "present everywhere" and metaphorically the word is used in the past part: to mean "martyr" i.e. "visited by the angels bestowing the mercy of God". "Shāhid" which in the present day vernacular means "witness" is derived from the fact that "a witness was actually present and observed with his own eyes" or "deduced evidence from positive facts." vide page 44 where you give "Tomb of the head" = "meshed i: sar". and page 631 line 3 where "meshed i: ali" = "shrine of ali". Ali is not called "Shāhid" as he was not killed while actually fighting for the religion

page | li
50 | 3
154 | 10
155 | 4



(12) 3

| | page | line | |
|---|---|---|---|
| means "tomb". ans one being taphor- the r" i.e. wing the which means e fact lly th his idence le page of the page ali" = called killed for the ligion | | | mashhad-i-murghâb, which the persians term "mashhad-i-mâdar-i-Sulaimân" is always written in documents &c (and by literary people in conversation) as "mashhad-i-qumm un nabî" i.e. the "tomb of the prophet's mother". Nasr-i-Khusrau in his book of travels speaking of the tomb of Ibrâhim uses "mashhad-i-Ibrâhim" - & the arabs always use the word "mashhad" for "grave" or "tomb". |
| | 50 | 30 | Kizil Robat (really qizil rubât) Rubât in arabic = Caravanserai and lit. means a "tether" for picketing animals. |
| | 154 | 10 | Karaoul-Khaneh = qarâ-vul-Khâneh. |
| | 155 | 4 | Bast. Besides the places noted by you - telegraph offices throughout the Country (with the single Exception |

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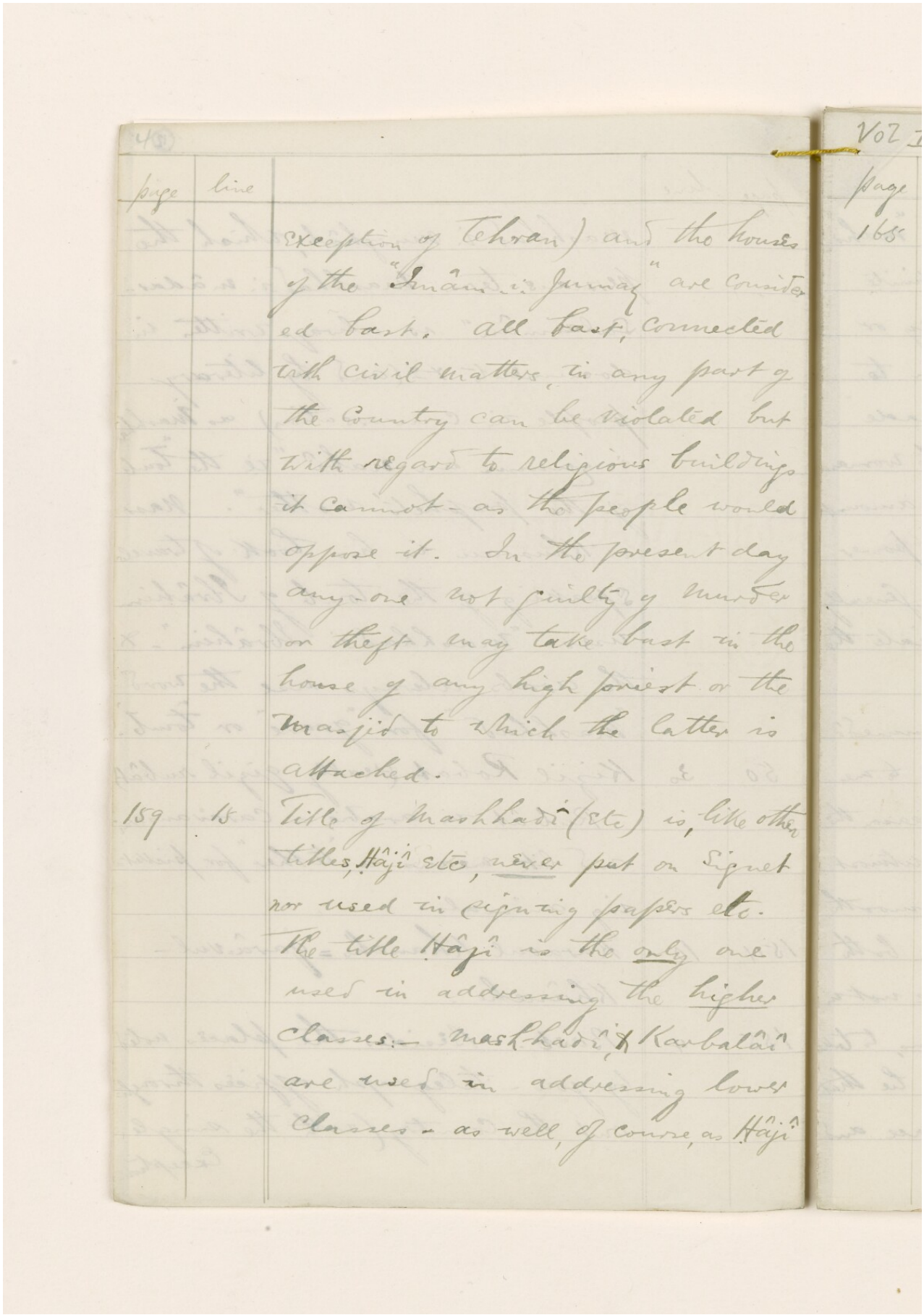
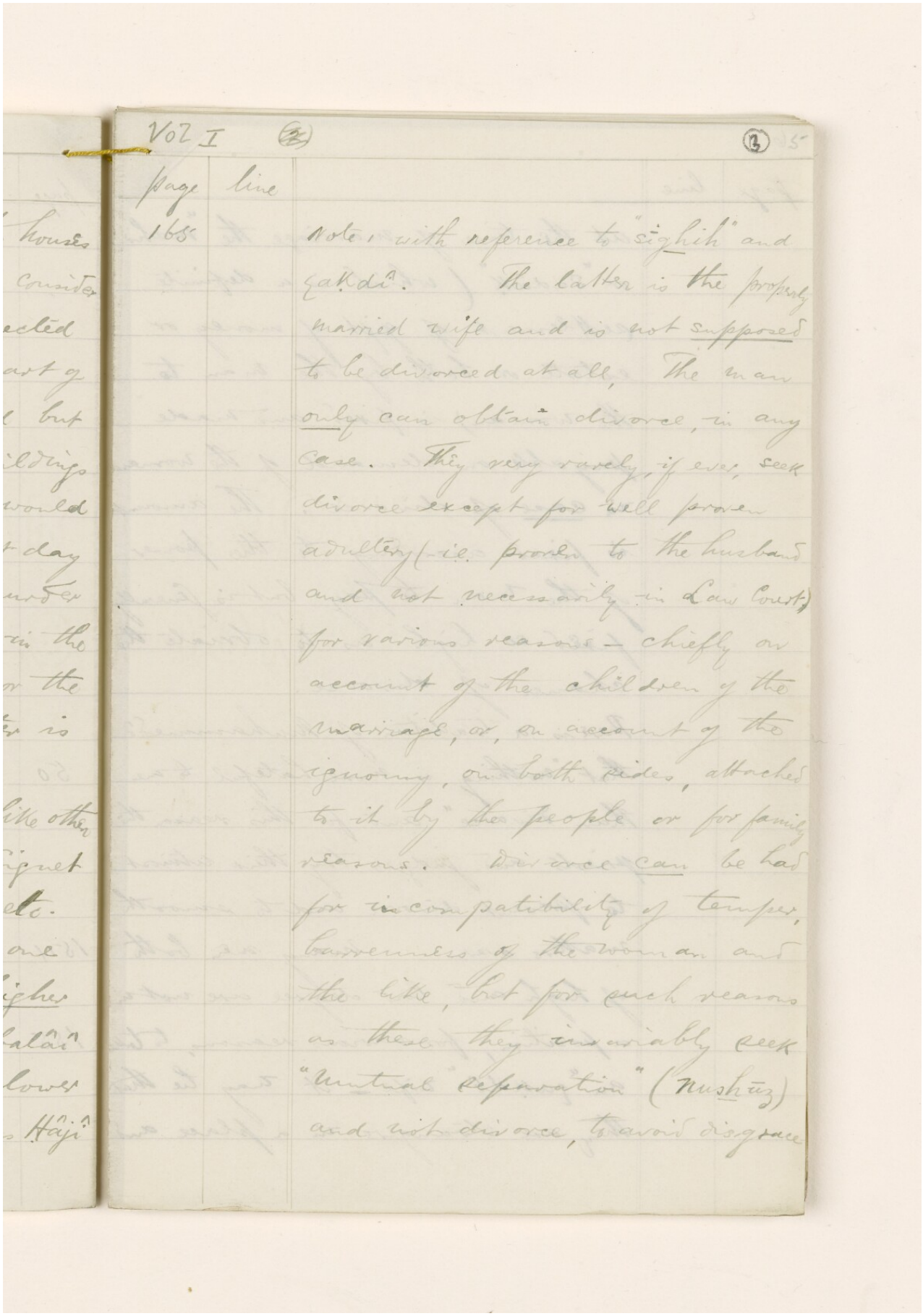


| page | line | |
|---|---|---|
| | | exception of Tehran) and the houses of the "Imâm i Jumaq" are considered bast. all bast, connected with civil matters, in any part of the Country can be violated but with regard to religious buildings it cannot - as the people would oppose it. In the present day any one not guilty of murder or theft may take bast in the house of any high priest or the masjid to which the latter is attached. |
| 159 | 15 | Title of Mashhadi (etc) is, like other titles, Hâji etc, never put on Signet nor used in signing papers etc. The title Hâji is the only one used in addressing the higher classes - Mashhadi & Karbalâi are used in addressing lower classes - as well, of course, as Hâji |

Vol I
page
165



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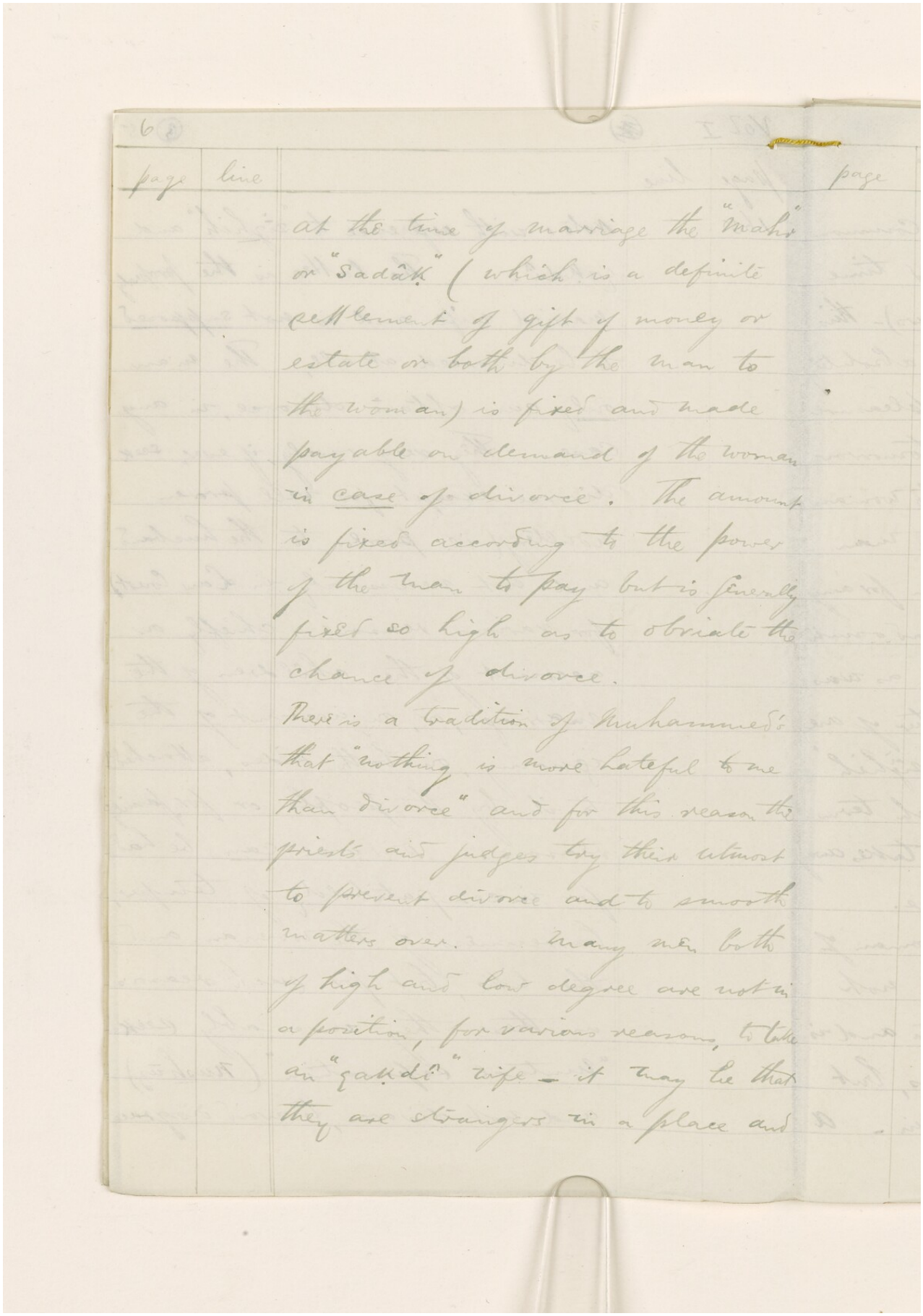
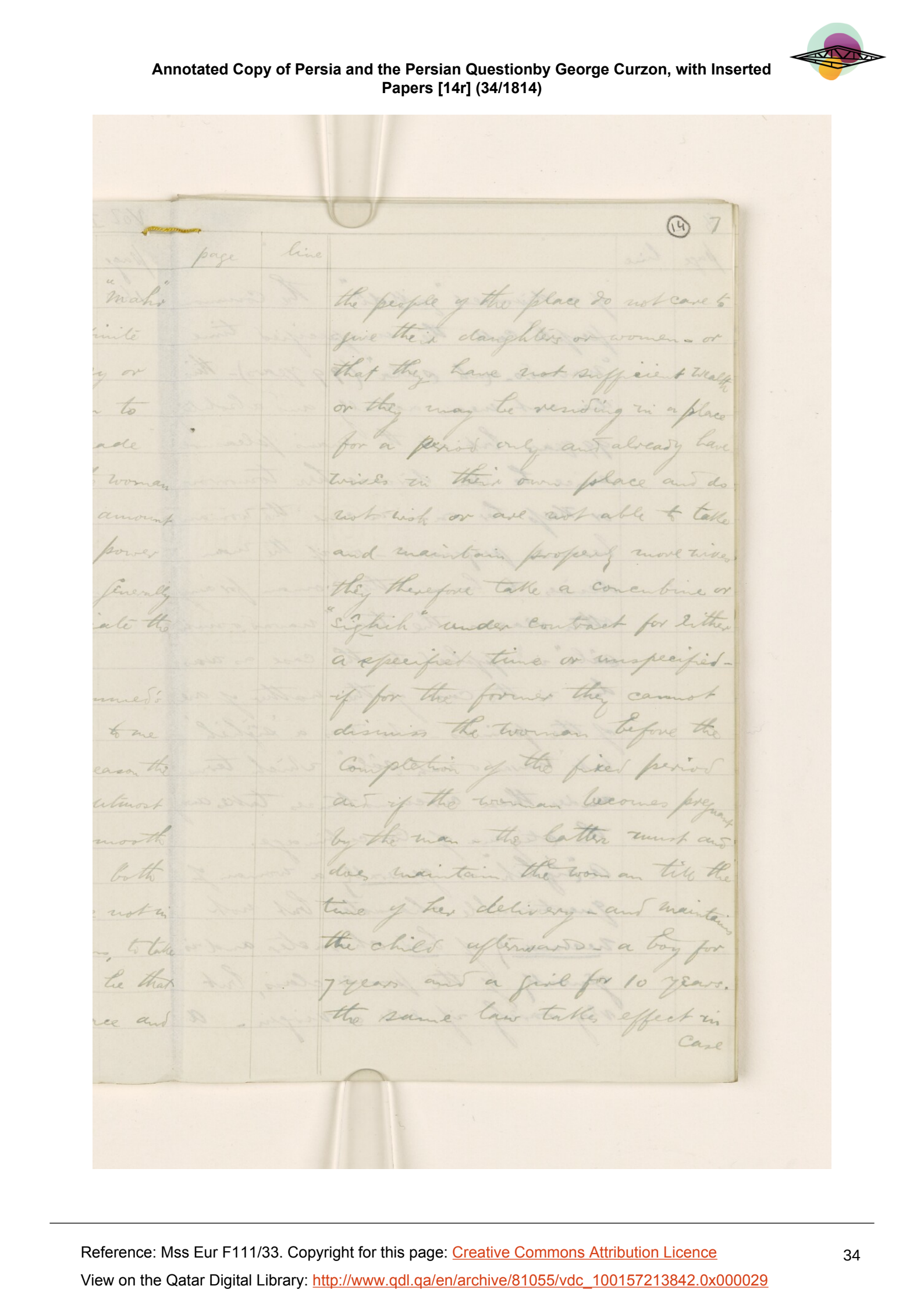
| page | line | |
|---|---|---|
| 165 | | Note, with reference to "sighih" and |
| | | zakdi. The latter is the properly |
| | | married wife and is not supposed |
| | | to be divorced at all. The man |
| | | only can obtain divorce, in any |
| | | case. They very rarely, if ever, seek |
| | | divorce except for well proven |
| | | adultery (i.e. proven to the husband |
| | | and not necessarily in Law Court) |
| | | for various reasons – chiefly on |
| | | account of the children of the |
| | | marriage, or, on account of the |
| | | ignominy, on both sides, attached |
| | | to it by the people or for family |
| | | reasons. Divorce can be had |
| | | for incompatibility of temper, |
| | | barrenness of the woman and |
| | | the like, but for such reasons |
| | | as these they invariably seek |
| | | "Mutual Reparation" (Mushūz) |
| | | and not divorce, to avoid disgrace |



page | line | page

at the time of marriage the "Mahr" or "Sadâk" (which is a definite settlement of gift of money or estate or both by the man to the woman) is fixed and made payable on demand of the woman in case of divorce. The amount is fixed according to the power of the man to pay but is generally fixed so high as to obviate the chance of divorce.

There is a tradition of Muhammed's that "nothing is more hateful to me than divorce" and for this reason the priests and judges try their utmost to prevent divorce and to smooth matters over. Many men both of high and low degree are not in a position, for various reasons, to take an "Sakdi" wife – it may be that they are strangers in a place and



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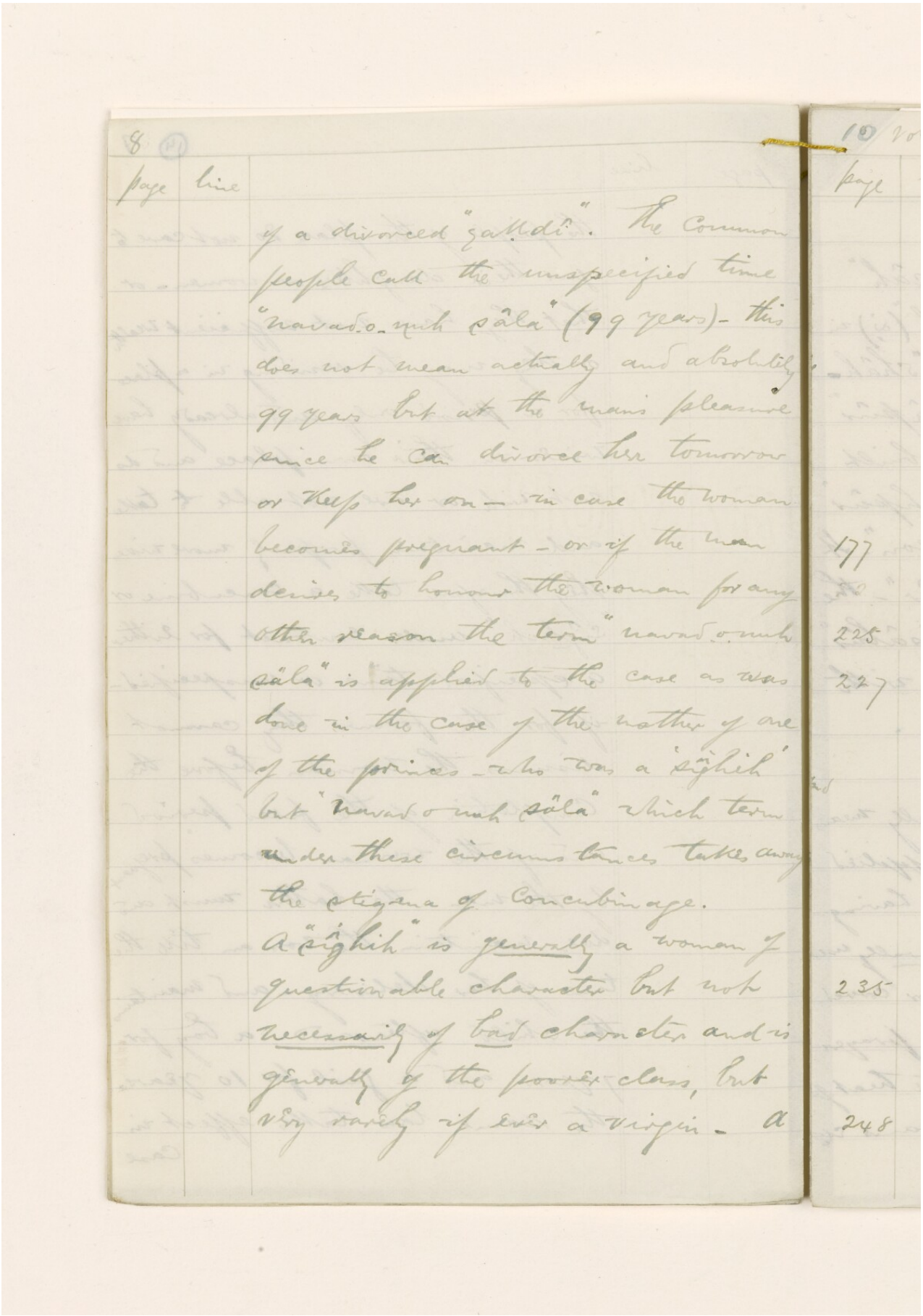
the people of the place do not care to give their daughters or women - or that they have not sufficient wealth or they may be residing in a place for a period only and already have wives in their own place and do not wish or are not able to take and maintain properly more wives they therefore take a concubine or "Sîghih" under contract for either a specified time or unspecified - if for the former they cannot dismiss the woman before the completion of the fixed period and if the woman becomes pregnant by the man - the latter must and does maintain the woman till the time of her delivery - and maintains the child afterwards - a boy for 7 years and a girl for 10 years. the same law takes effect in case



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of a divorced "zaḳḳdî". The common people call the unspecified time "navad-o-nuh sâla" (99 years) - this does not mean actually and absolutely 99 years but at the man's pleasure since he can divorce her tomorrow or keep her on - in case the woman becomes pregnant - or if the man desires to honour the woman for any other reason the term "navad-o-nuh sâla" is applied to the case as was done in the case of the mother of one of the princes - who was a 'sîghih' but "navad-o-nuh sâla" which term under these circumstances takes away the stigma of concubinage.

A "sîghih" is generally a woman of questionable character but not necessarily of bad character and is generally of the poorer class, but very rarely if ever a virgin - A

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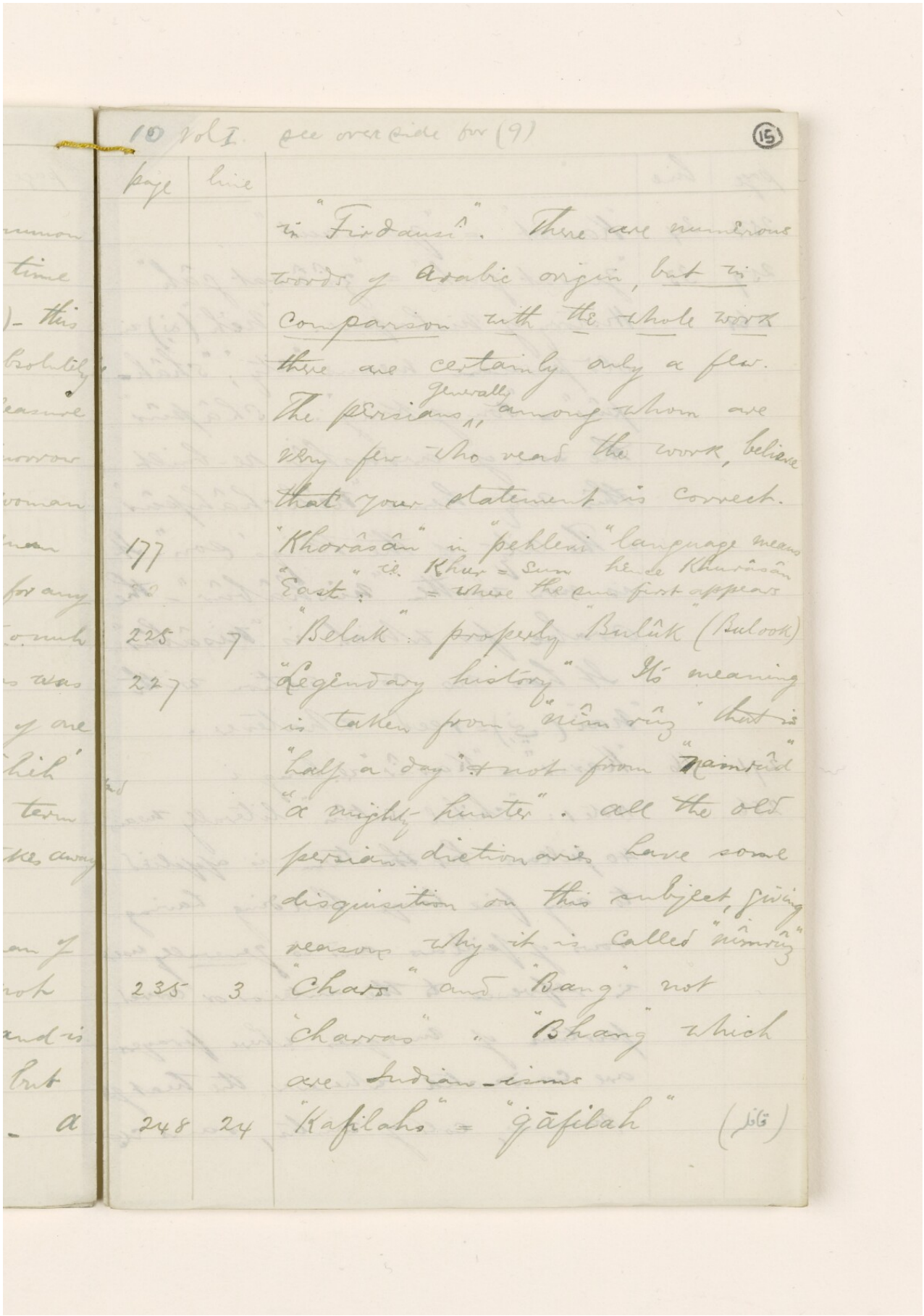

(10) Vol I. see overside for (9) (15)

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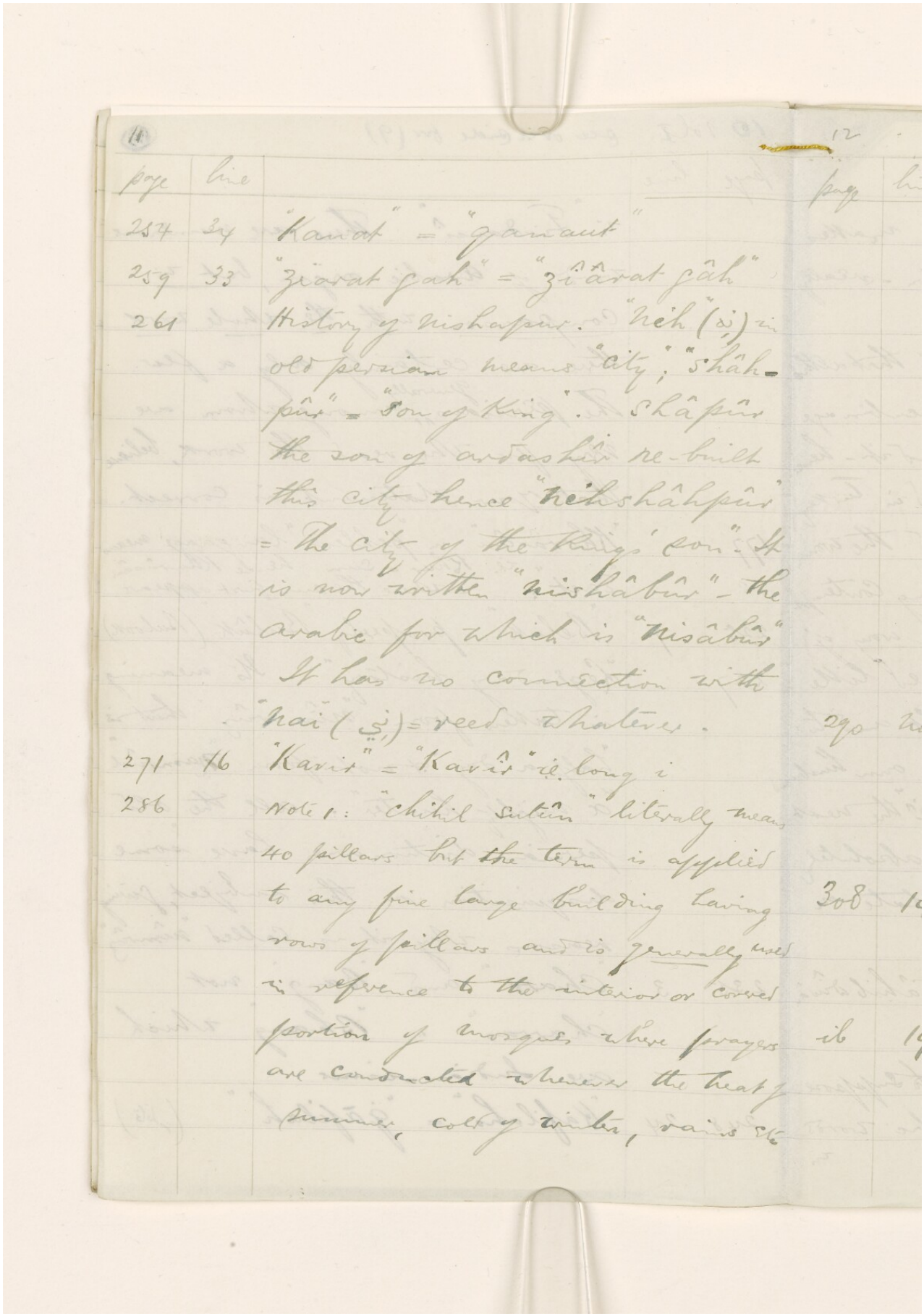
| | | in "Firdausi". There are numerous words of Arabic origin, but in comparison with the whole work there are certainly only a few. The Persians, generally among whom are very few who read the work, believe that your statement is correct. |
| 177 | | "Khorâsân" in "pehlevi" language means "East": i.e. Khur = Sun hence Khurâsân = where the sun first appears |
| 225 | 7 | "Belak": properly Balûk (Baloch) |
| 227 | | "Legendary history" Its meaning is taken from "nîm rûz" that is "half a day" not from "Naimrûd" "a night-hunter". all the old persian dictionaries have some disquisition on this subject giving reasons why it is called "nîmrûz" |
| 235 | 3 | "Chars" and "Bang" not "charras" "Bhang" which are Indian-isms |
| 248 | 24 | "Kafilahs" = "qâfilah" (16) |



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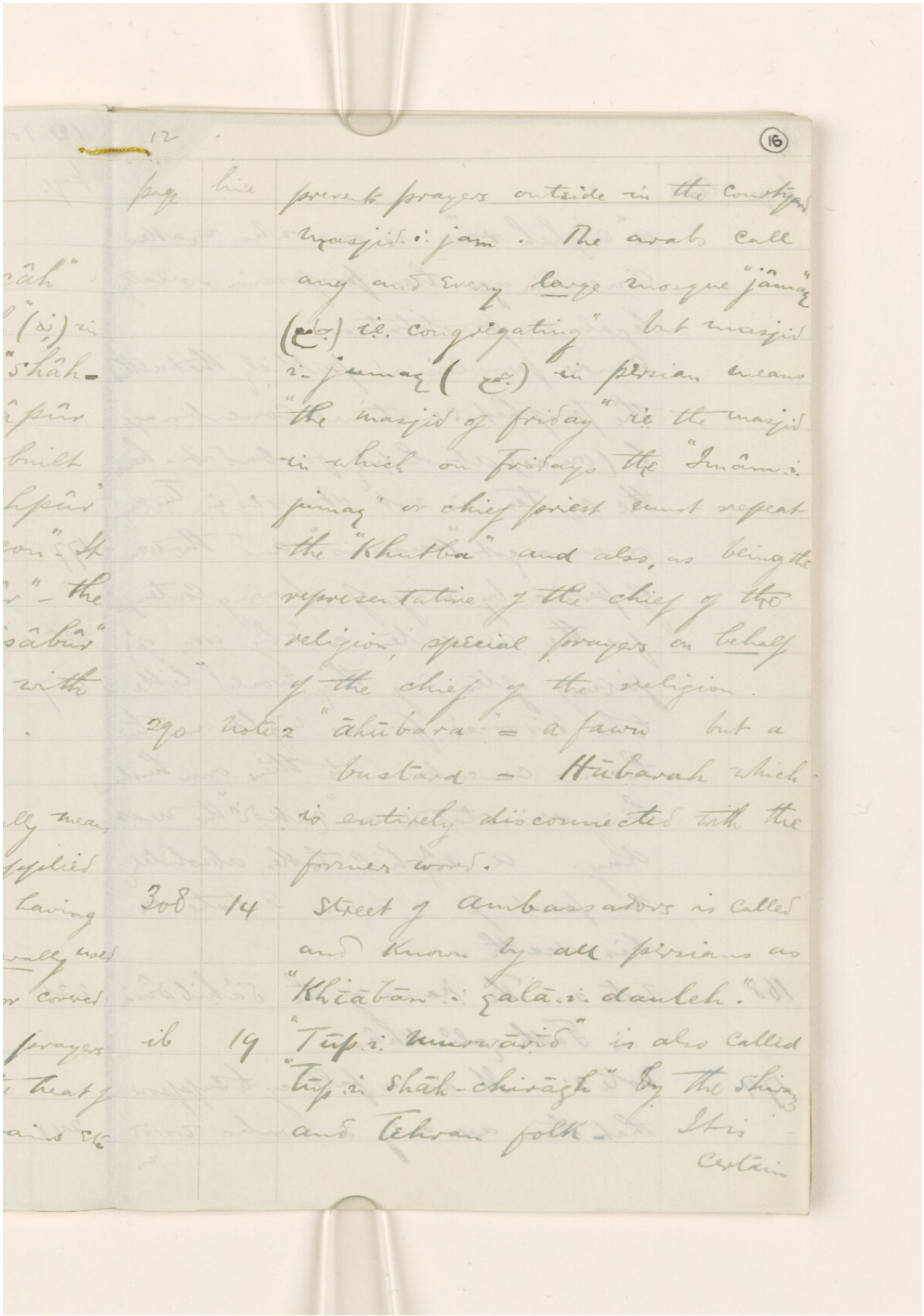
| 257 | 24 | "Kanat" = "ganaut" |
| 259 | 33 | "ziarat gah" = "zîârat gâh" |
| 261 | | History of Nishapur. "Neh (ش) in old persian means "city"; "shah-pûr" = "son of king". Shâpûr the son of ardashîr re-built this city hence "nêshshâhpûr" = The city of the kings' son". It is now written "nishâbûr" - the arabic for which is "nisâbûr" It has no connection with "nai (نی) = reed whatever. |
| 271 | 16 | "Kavir" = "Kavîr" i. long i |
| 286 | | Note 1: "chihil sutûn" literally means 40 pillars but the term is applied to any fine large building having rows of pillars and is generally used in reference to the interior or covered portion of mosques where prayers are conducted whether the heat of summer, cold of winter, rains &c |



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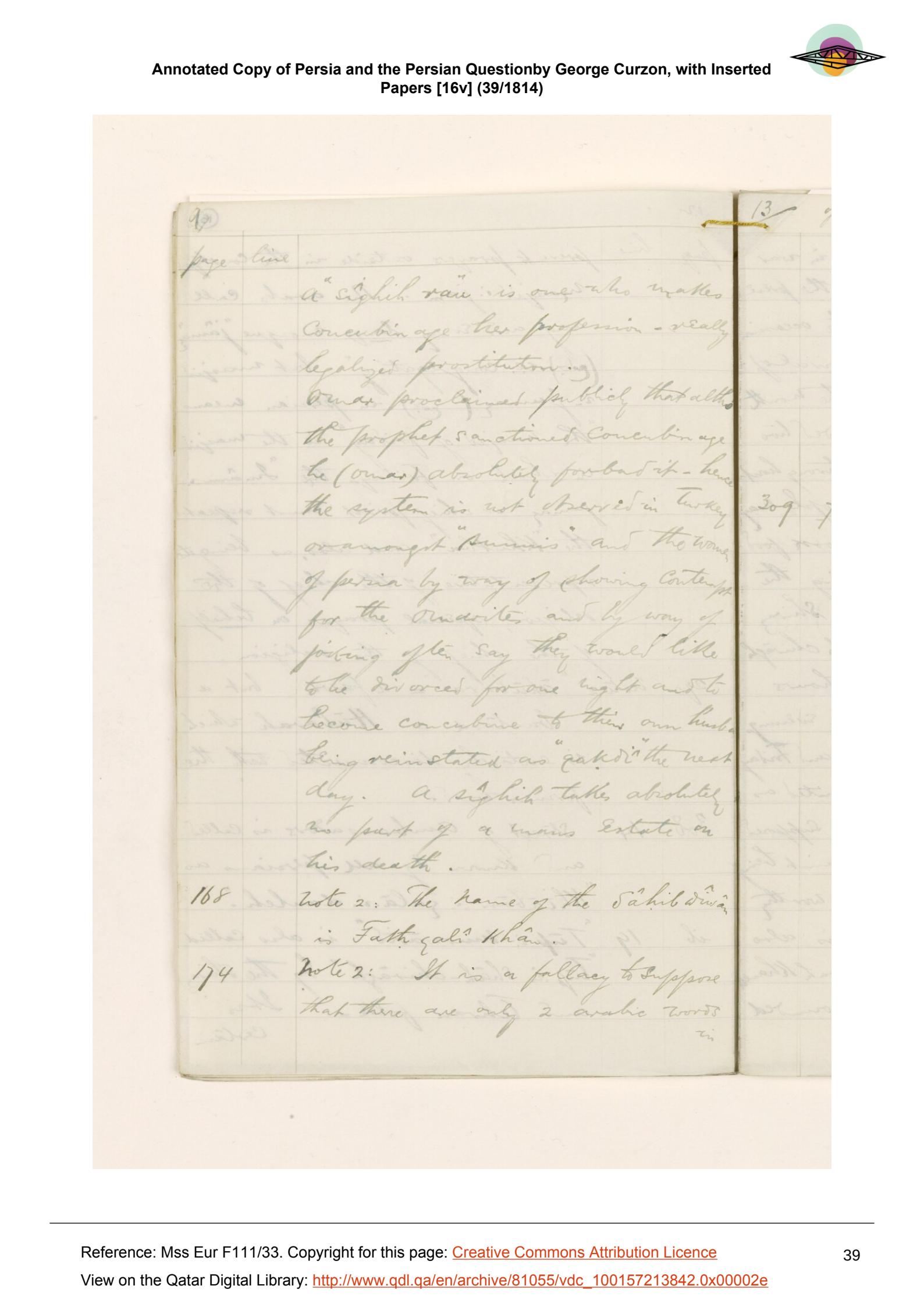
| | | prevents prayers outside in the courtyard masjid i. jam. The arabs call any and every large mosque "jâmaʿ" (جمع) i.e. congregating" but masjid i. jumaʿ (جمع) in persian means "the masjid of friday" i.e. the masjid in which on fridays the "Imâm i. jumaʿ" or chief priest must repeat the "Khutba" and also, as being the representative of the chief of the religion, special prayers on behalf of the chief of the religion. |
| 290 | note 2 | "āhūbara" = a fawn but a bustard = Hūbarah which is entirely disconnected with the former word. |
| 308 | 14 | Street of Ambassadors is called and known by all persians as "Khīābān i. ʿalā i. dauleh." |
| ib | 19 | "Tūp i. murwārid" is also called "Tūp i. shāh-chirāgh" by the Shiraz and Tehran folk. It is certain |



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A "sîghih râu" is one who makes concubinage her profession - really legalized prostitution.

Omar proclaimed publicly that altho the prophet sanctioned concubinage he (Omar) absolutely forbad it - hence the system is not observed in Turkey or amongst "sunnis" and the women of persia by way of showing contempt for the Omarites and by way of joking often say they would like to be divorced for one night and to become concubine to their own husband being reinstated as "qaḳdî" the next day. A sîghih takes absolutely no part of a mans estate on his death.

168 Note 2: The name of the Sâḥib dîwân is Fatḥ qalî Khân.

174 Note 2: It is a fallacy to suppose that there are only 2 arabic words in

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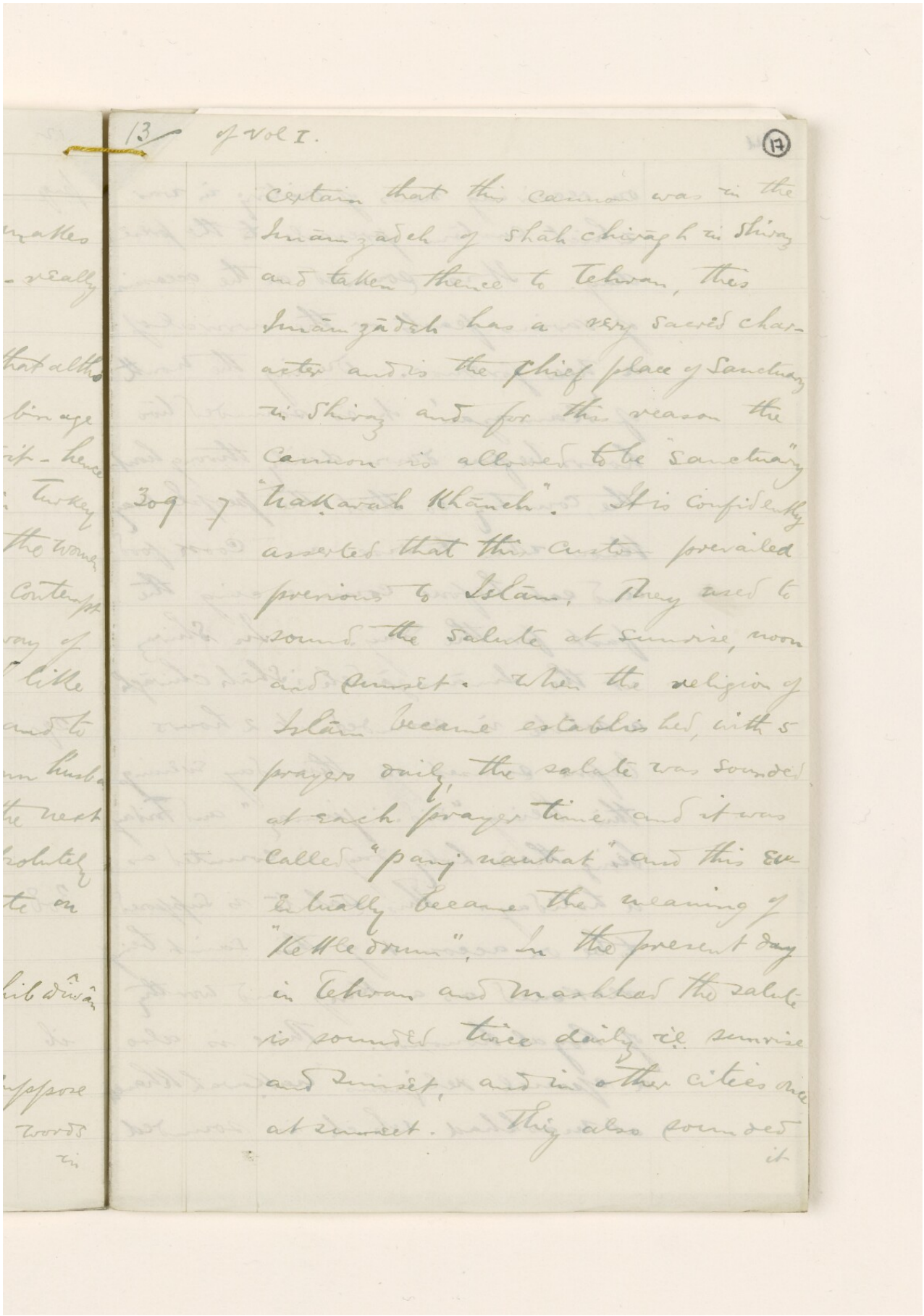

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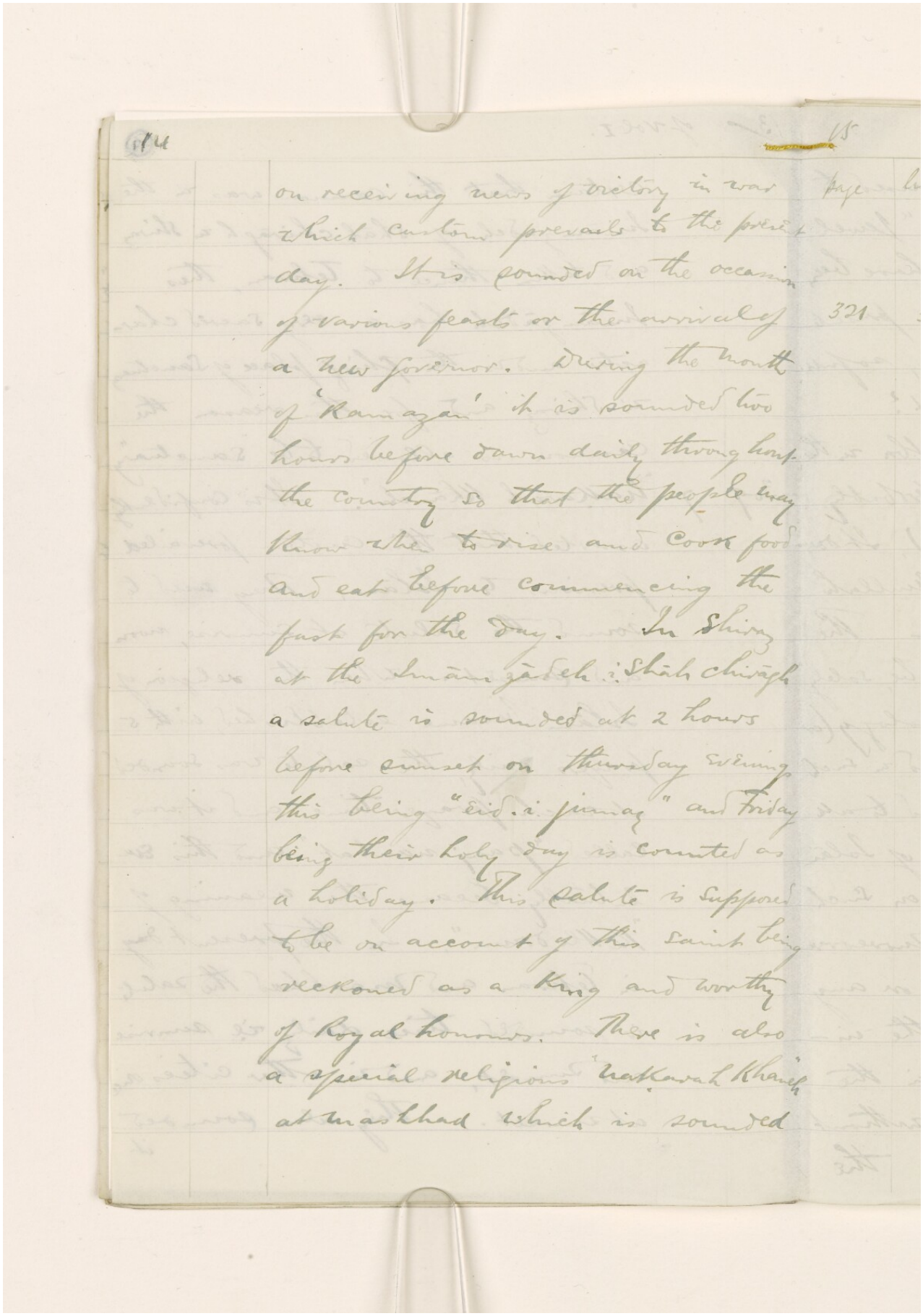
certain that this cannon was in the Imāmzādeh of Shāh Chirāgh in Shiraz and taken thence to Tehran, this Imāmzādeh has a very sacred character and is the chief place of Sanctuary in Shiraz and for this reason the cannon is allowed to be "sanctuary"

309 7 "Naḳarah Khānch". It is confidently asserted that this custom prevailed previous to Islām. They used to sound the salute at sunrise, noon and sunset. When the religion of Islām became established, with 5 prayers daily, the salute was sounded at each prayer time and it was called "panj naubat" and this eventually became the meaning of "Kettle drum". In the present day in Tehran and Mashhad the salute is sounded twice daily i.e. sunrise and sunset, and in other cities once at sunset. They also sounded it



on receiving news of victory in war page
which custom prevails to the present
day. It is founded on the occasion
of various feasts or the arrival of 321
a new governor. During the month
of 'Ramazan' it is sounded two
hours before dawn daily throughout
the country so that the people may
know when to rise and cook food
and eat before commencing the
fast for the day. In Shiraz
at the Imāmzādeh Shāh Chirāgh
a salute is sounded at 2 hours
before sunset on Thursday evening
this being "eid.i. jimaz" and Friday
being their holy day is counted as
a holiday. This salute is supposed
to be on account of this saint being
reckoned as a King and worthy
of Royal honours. There is also
a special religious "nakarah khaneh"
at Mashhad which is sounded



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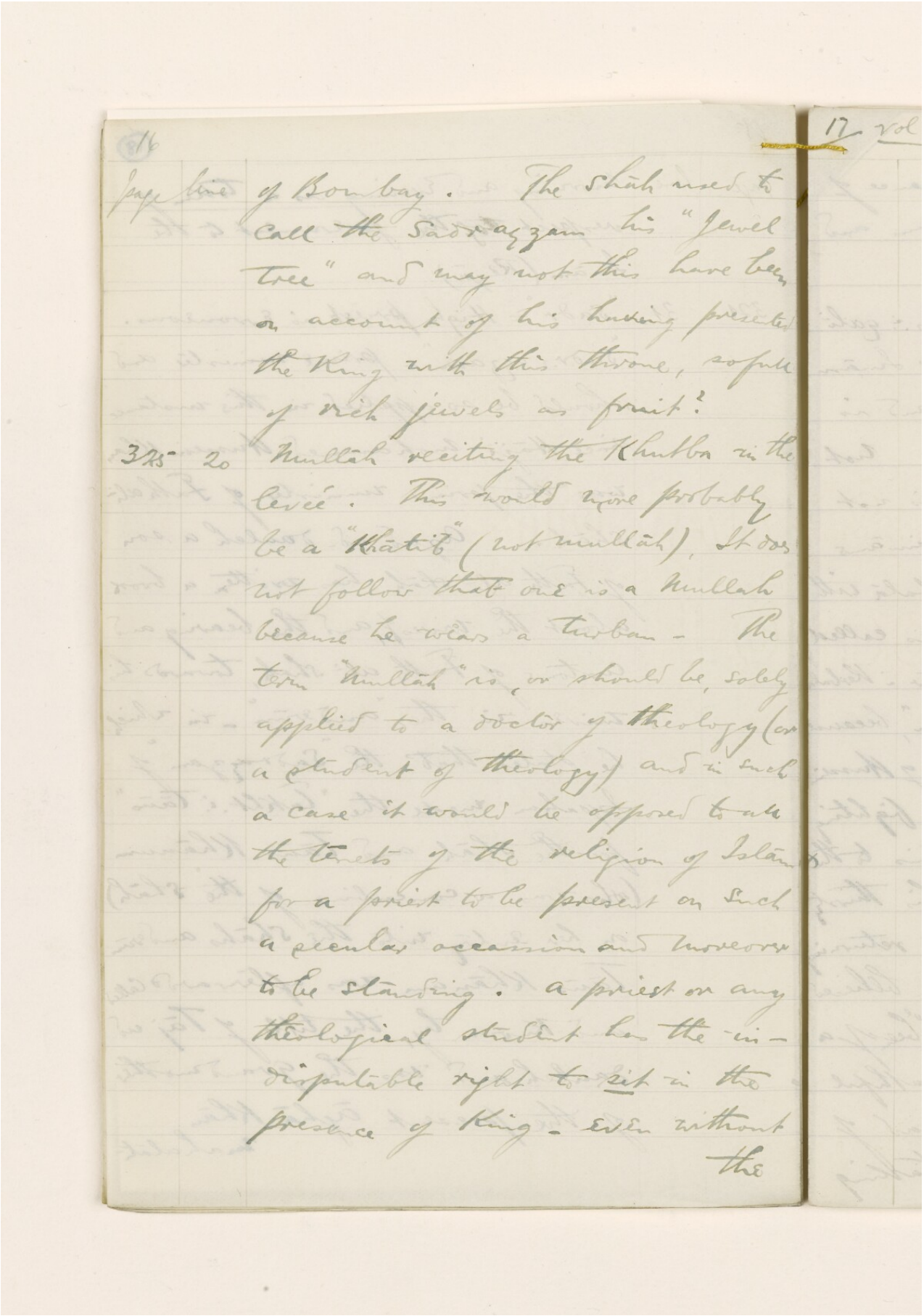
| | | morning and evening as a token of respect of the government to the Imām (Rezā) |
| 321 | 31 | "Sadr" = High priest is erroneous. "Sadr-i-aẓẓam" = prime minister and should be so applied in this instance since Hājī Mohammed Hussein Khan was the prime minister of Fath ali shāh. Azud-ud-dauleh a son of Fath ali shāh has written a book about the wives of, and the bearing and customs of Fath ali shah, towards his wives in the "anderūn" - in which he states that the "Sadraẓẓam" of Ispahan made the "Takht-i-Tāūs" for the shāh and Tāūs Khānum (who was a concubine of the shāh) on her entry into the shāhs anderūn Tāūs Khānum was afterwards called and known by the title of Tāj ud dauleh and was the grandmother of the present Āghā Khān mahalāti- |



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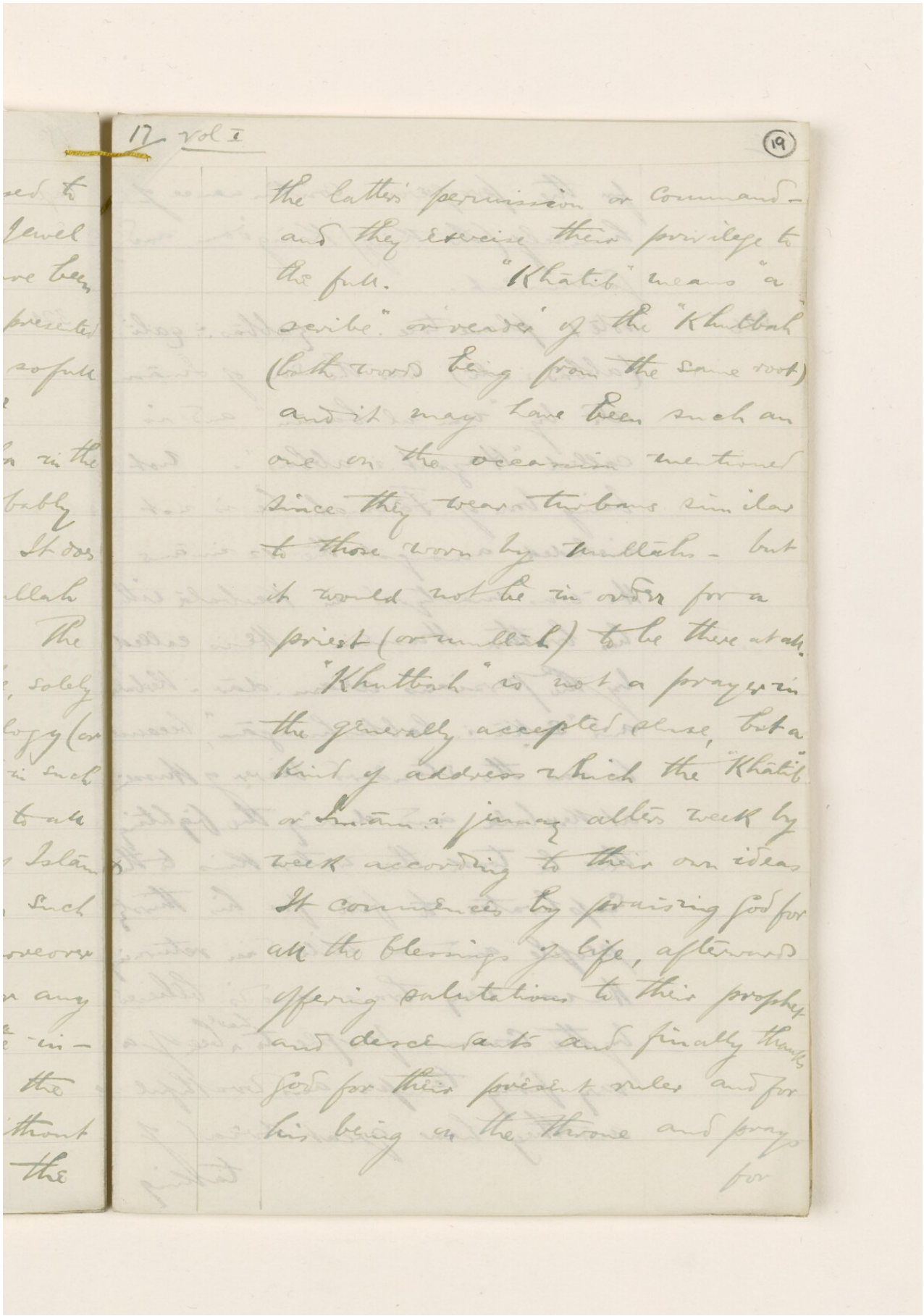
of Bombay. The Shah used to call the Sadr-azzam his "Jewel tree" and may not this have been on account of his having presented the King with this throne, covered with rich jewels as fruit?

328 20 Mullah reciting the Khutba in the levée. This would more probably be a "Khatib" (not mullah). It does not follow that one is a Mullah because he wears a turban. The term "Mullah" is, or should be, solely applied to a doctor of theology (or a student of theology) and in such a case it would be opposed to all the tenets of the religion of Islam for a priest to be present on such a secular occasion and moreover to be standing. A priest or any theological student has the indisputable right to sit in the presence of King. Even without the



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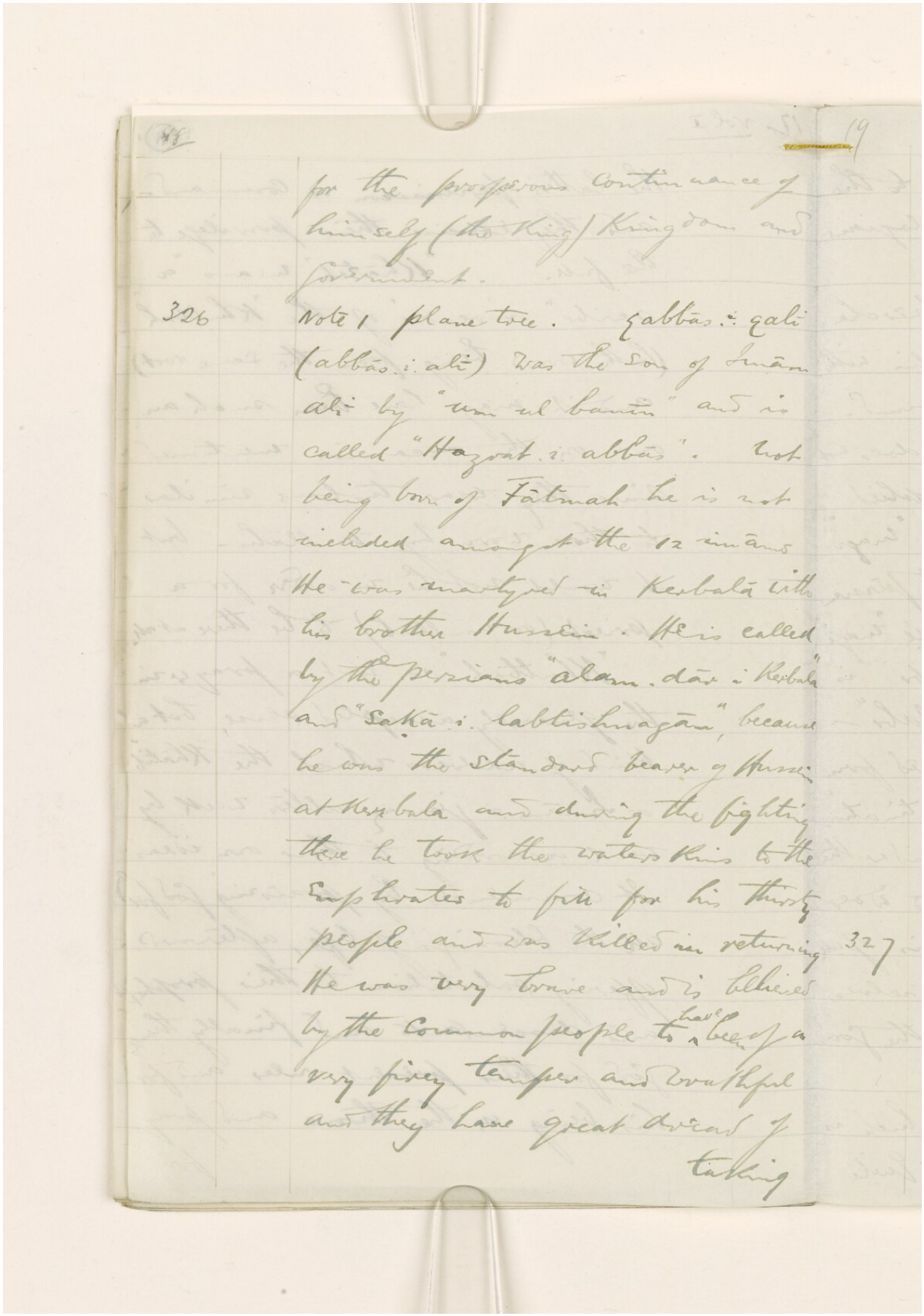
the latter's permission or command — and they exercise their privilege to the full. "Khatib" means a "scribe" or reader of the "Khutbah" (both words being from the same root) and it may have been such an one on the occasion mentioned since they wear turbans similar to those worn by mullahs — but it would not be in order for a priest (or mullah) to be there at all. "Khutbah" is not a prayer in the generally accepted sense, but a kind of address which the "Khatib" or Imam may alter week by week according to their own ideas. It commences by praising God for all the blessings of life, afterwards offering salutations to this prophet and descendants and finally thanks God for this present rule and for his being on the throne and prays for



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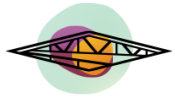
for the prosperous continuance of
himself (the King) Kingdom and
government.

326 Note 1 plane tree. ʿAbbās i ʿAlī
(abbās i alī) was the son of Imām
alī by "um ul banīn" and is
called "Hazrat i abbās". Not
being born of Fātimah he is not
included amongst the 12 imāms
He was martyred in Kerbalā with
his brother Hussein. He is called
by the persians "alam dār i Kerbala"
and "Saka i labtishnagān" because
he was the standard bearer of Hussein
at Kerbala and during the fighting
there he took the waters Kiss to the
Euphrates to fill for his thirsty
people and was killed in returning 327
He was very brave and is admired
by the common people to have been a
very fiery temper and revengeful
and they have great dread of
taking



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oath by Hazrat i. abbas (or abbās i. ali) and will only do so in very extreme cases. His tomb or any place connected with him is considered to be very sacred sanctuary. The tree in question is supposed to be "nazar Karda" by him it is said that Fath ali shāh made this tree sanctuary for his anderūn on this account – and it is for this reason too that the branches are not lopped off. A person, thing or place is said to be "nazar Karda" which is supposed to have been "covered" by the vision of any imām – in a similar condition to the "Lourdes vision".

327 17 Takieh. The "mullāh" here mentioned is called a "Rūza-Khwān" i.e. "a preacher of the passion play in prose". They do not stand but sit during the delivery of their address.

They

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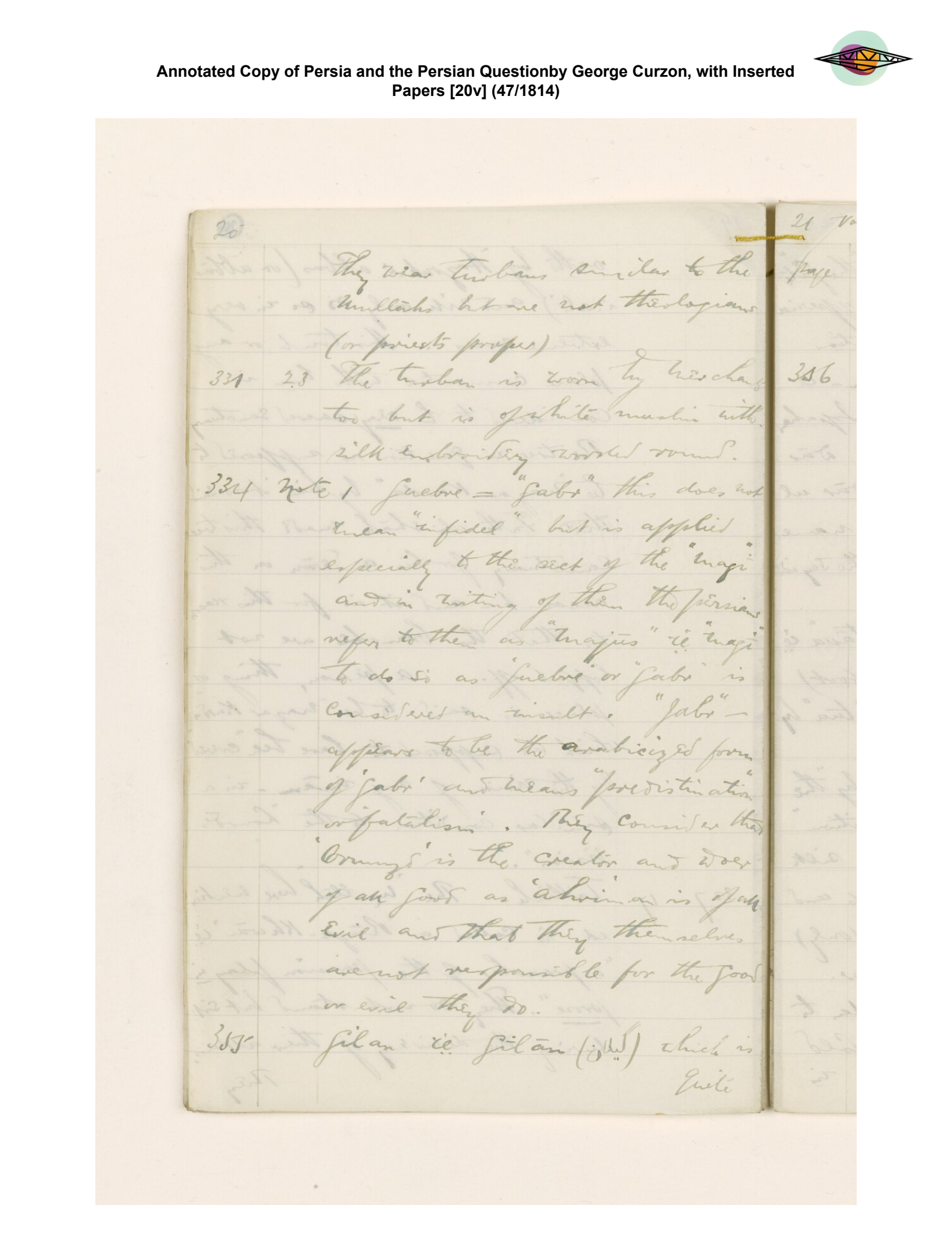

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They wear turbans similar to the Mullahs but are not theologians (or priests proper)

331 23 The turban is worn by merchants too but is of white muslin with silk embroidery worsted round.

334 Note 1 Guebre = "Gabr" this does not mean "infidel" but is applied especially to the sect of the "magi" and in writing of them the persians refer to them as "majūs" i.e. "magi" to do so as 'guebre' or 'gabr' is considered an insult. "Jabr" — appears to be the arabicized form of 'gabr' and means "predistination" or 'fatalism'. They consider that 'Ormuzd' is the creator and doer of all good as 'ahriman is of all evil and that they themselves are not responsible for the good or evil they do.

335 Gilan i.e. Gīlān (گیلان) which is quite

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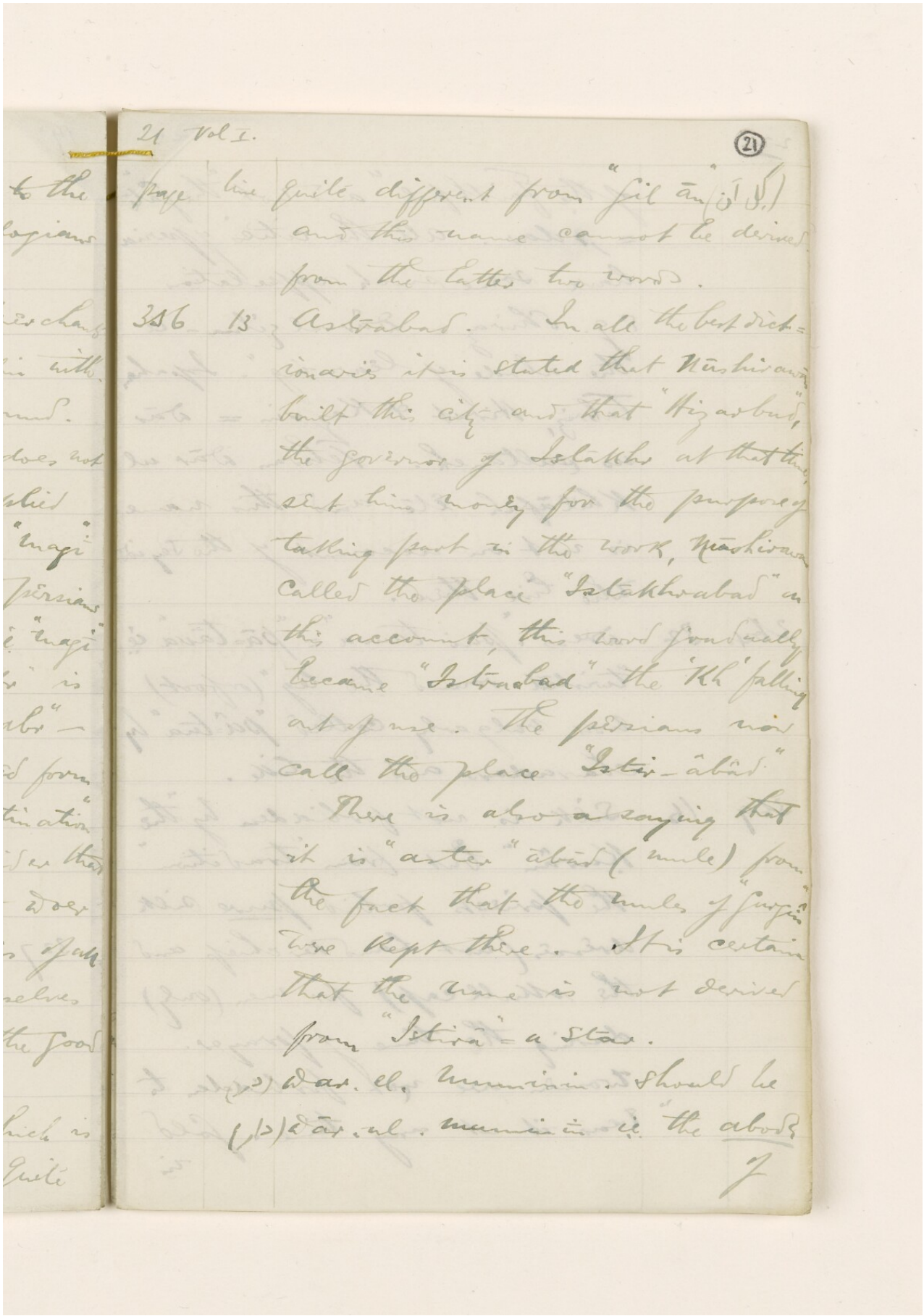

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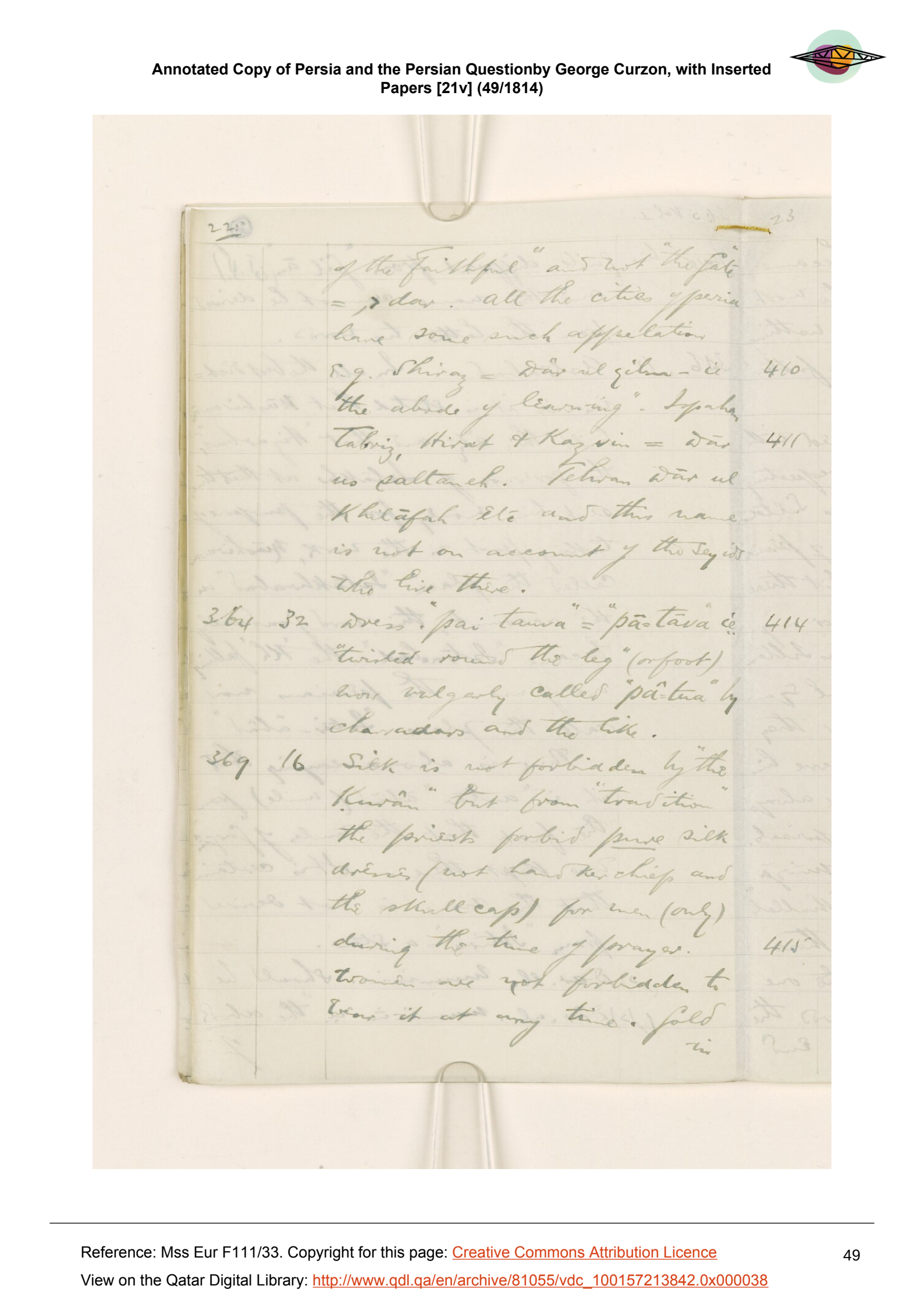
| | | quite different from "Gil ān" (گل آن) and this name cannot be derived from the latter two words. |
| 316 | 13 | Astrabad. In all the best dictionaries it is stated that Nūshirawān built this city and that "Hizarbud", the governor of Istakhr at that time, sent him money for the purpose of taking part in the work, Nūshirawān called the place "Istakhrabad" on this account, this word gradually became "Istrabad" the 'Kh' falling out of use. The persians now call the place "Istir-âbâd" There is also a saying that it is "aster" ābād (mule) from the fact that the mules of "Gurgān" were kept there. It is certain that the name is not derived from "Istirā" = a star. |
| | | (دار) Dar. el. Muminin. should be |
| | | (دار) Dār. ul. muminin i.e. the abode of |



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of the faithful" and not "the gate" = ,> dar. all the cities of persia have some such appelation e.g. Shiraz = dār ul ʿilm - i.e. 410
the abode of learning". Ispahan Tabriz, Hirat & Kazvin = dār 411
us saltaneh. Tehran dār ul Khilāfah etc and this name is not on account of the Seyids who live there.

364 32 dress "pai tauva" = "pā=tāva" i.e. 414
"twisted round the leg" (or foot) now vulgarly called "pâ=tua" by charadars and the like.

369 16 Silk is not forbidden by "the Ḳurân" but from "tradition" the priests forbid pure silk dresses (not handkerchiefs and the skull cap) for men (only) during the time of prayer. 415
women are not forbidden to wear it at any time. Gold

in

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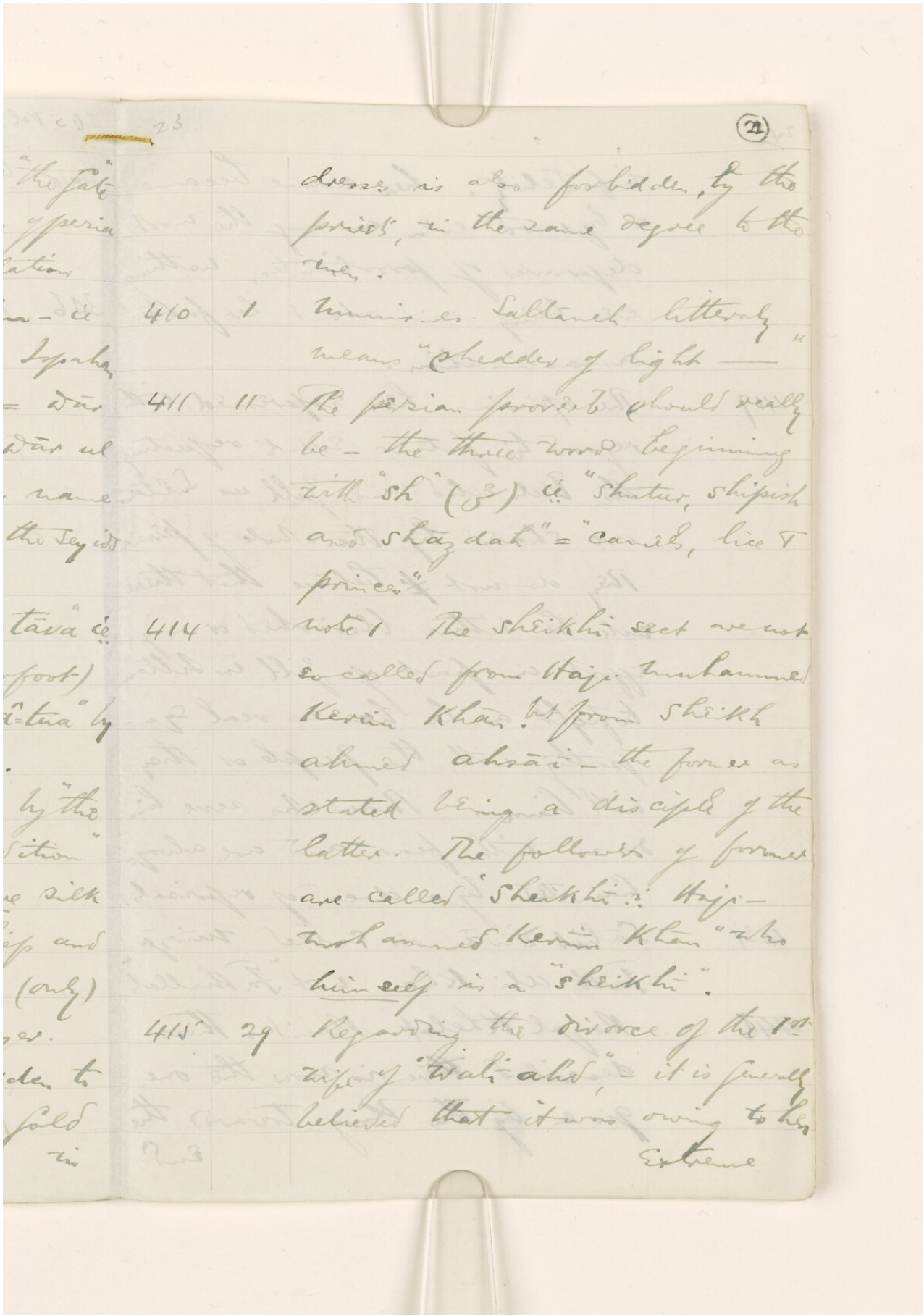

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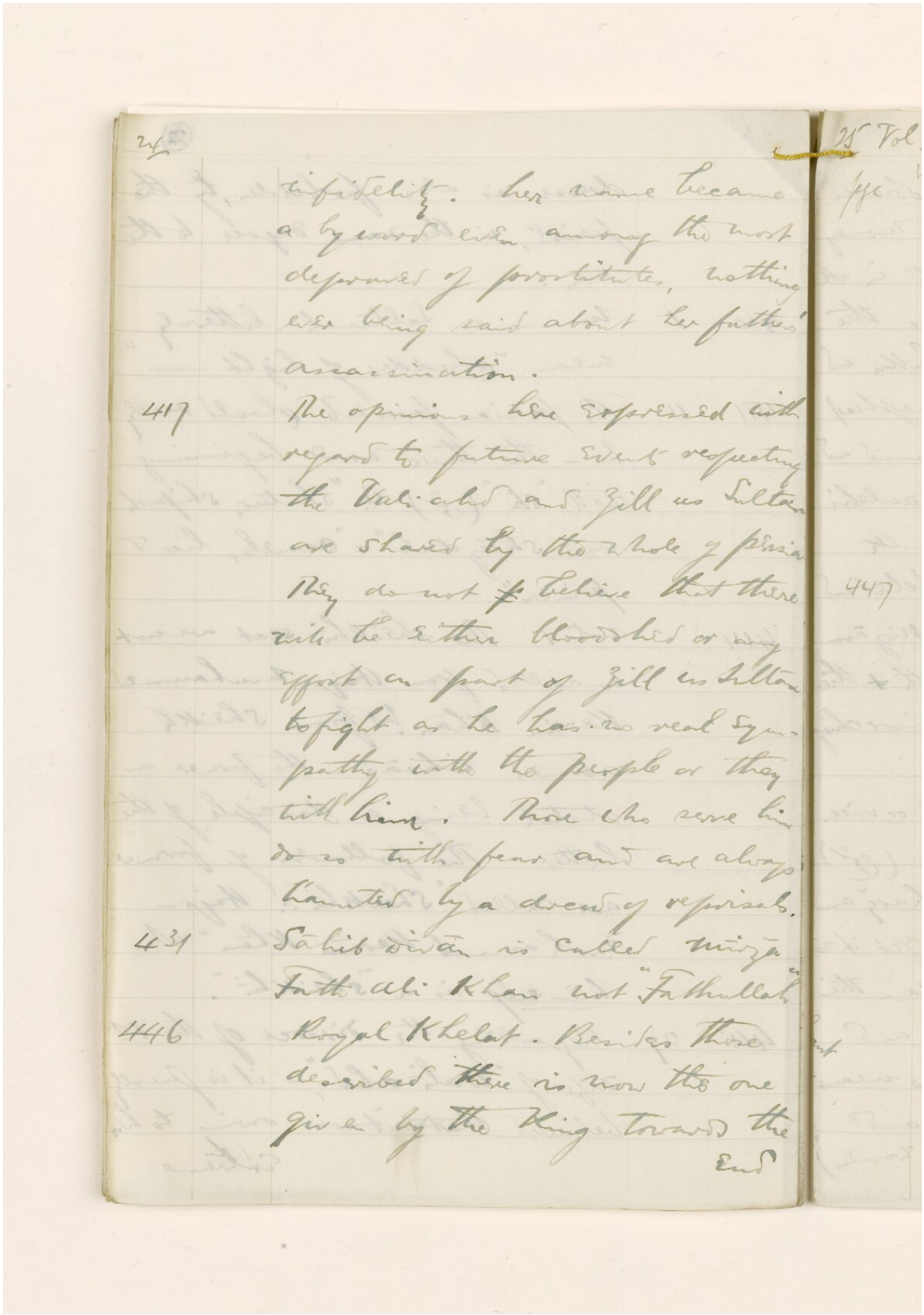
dress is also forbidden, by the priests, in the same degree to the rich.

410 1 Munir es Sultaneh literally means "Shedder of light —"

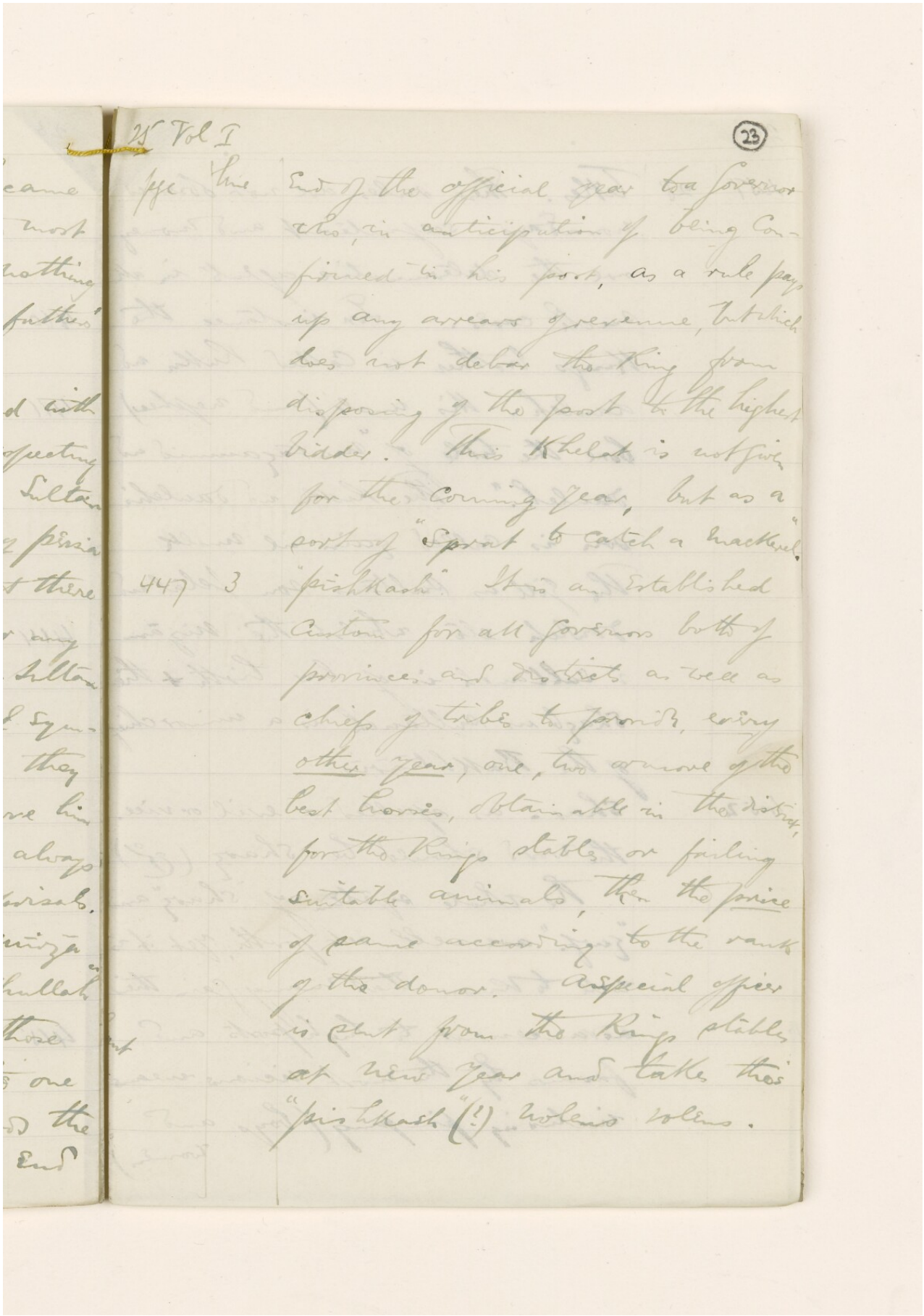
411 11 The persian proverb should really be — the three word beginning with "Sh" (ش) ie. "Shutur, shipish and shazdah" = "camels, lice & princes"

414 note 1 The Sheikhi sect are not so called from Haji Muhammed Kerim Khan but from Sheikh ahmed ahsai — the former as stated being a disciple of the latter. The followers of former are called "Sheikhis" Haji Muhammed Kerim Khan "who himself is a "Sheikhi".

415 29 Regarding the divorce of the 1st wife of "Wali-ahd" — it is generally believed that it was owing to her Extreme



infidelity. Her name became
a by word even among the most
depraved of prostitutes, nothing
ever being said about her father's
assassination.
417 The opinions here expressed with
regard to future event respecting
the Valiahd and Zill us Sultan
are shared by the whole of Persia
They do not believe that there 447
will be either bloodshed or any
effort on part of Zill us Sultan
to fight as he has no real sym-
pathy with the people or they
with him. Those who serve him
do so with fear and are always
haunted by a dread of reprisals.
431 Sahib diwan is called Mirza
Fath ali Khan not "Fathullah"
446 Royal Khelat. Besides those
described there is now the one
given by the King towards the
End



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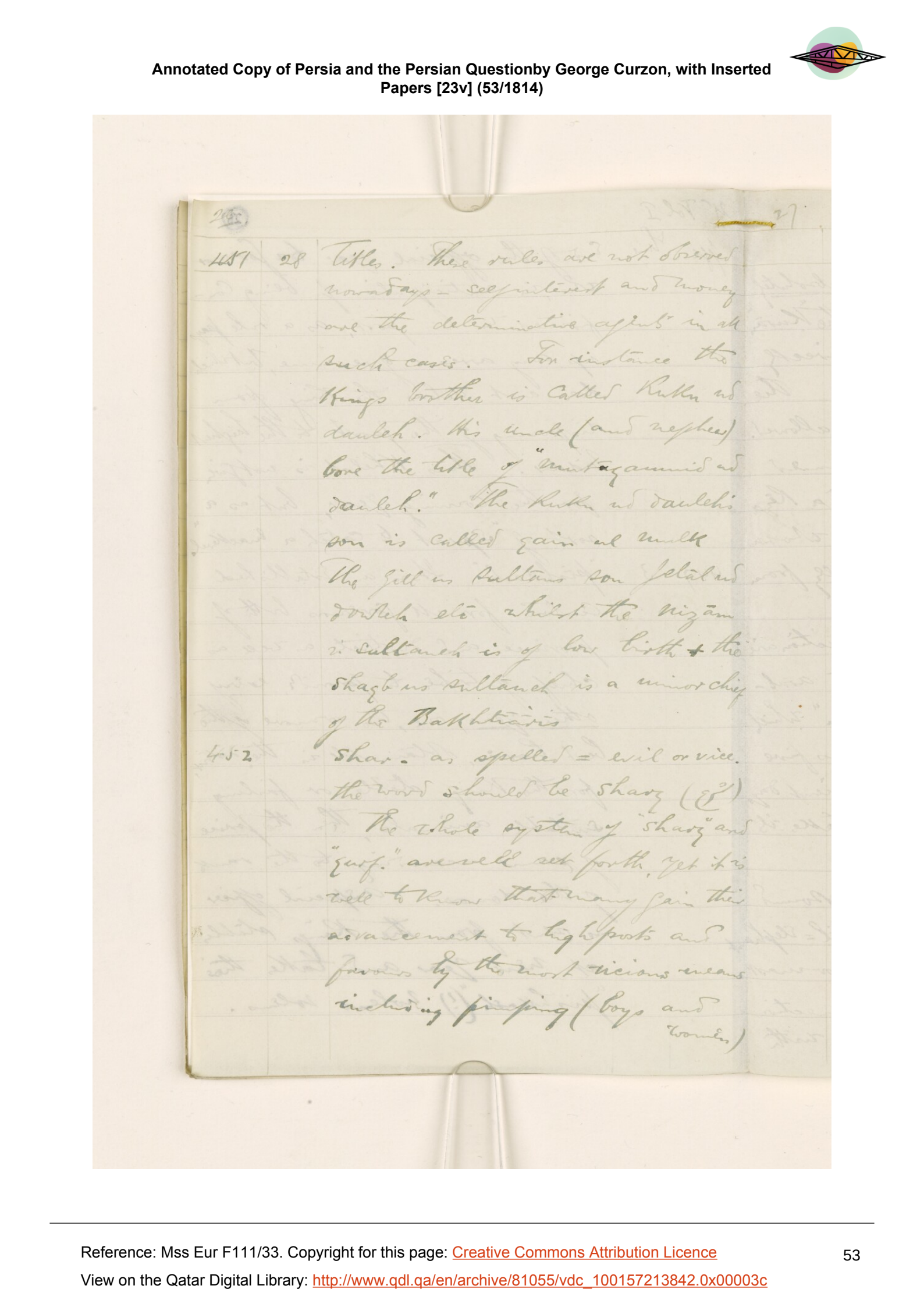
| | | End of the official year to a Governor who, in anticipation of being confirmed in his post, as a rule pays up any arrears of revenue, but which does not debar the King from disposing of the post to the highest bidder. This Khelat is not given for the coming year, but as a sort of "Sprat to catch a mackerel" |
| 447 | 3 | "pishkash". It is an established custom for all Governors both of provinces and districts as well as chiefs of tribes to provide, every other year, one, two or more of the best horses, obtainable in the district, for the Kings stables or failing suitable animals, then the price of same according to the rank of the donor. A special officer is sent from the Kings stables at new year and takes this "pishkash" (?) nolens volens. |



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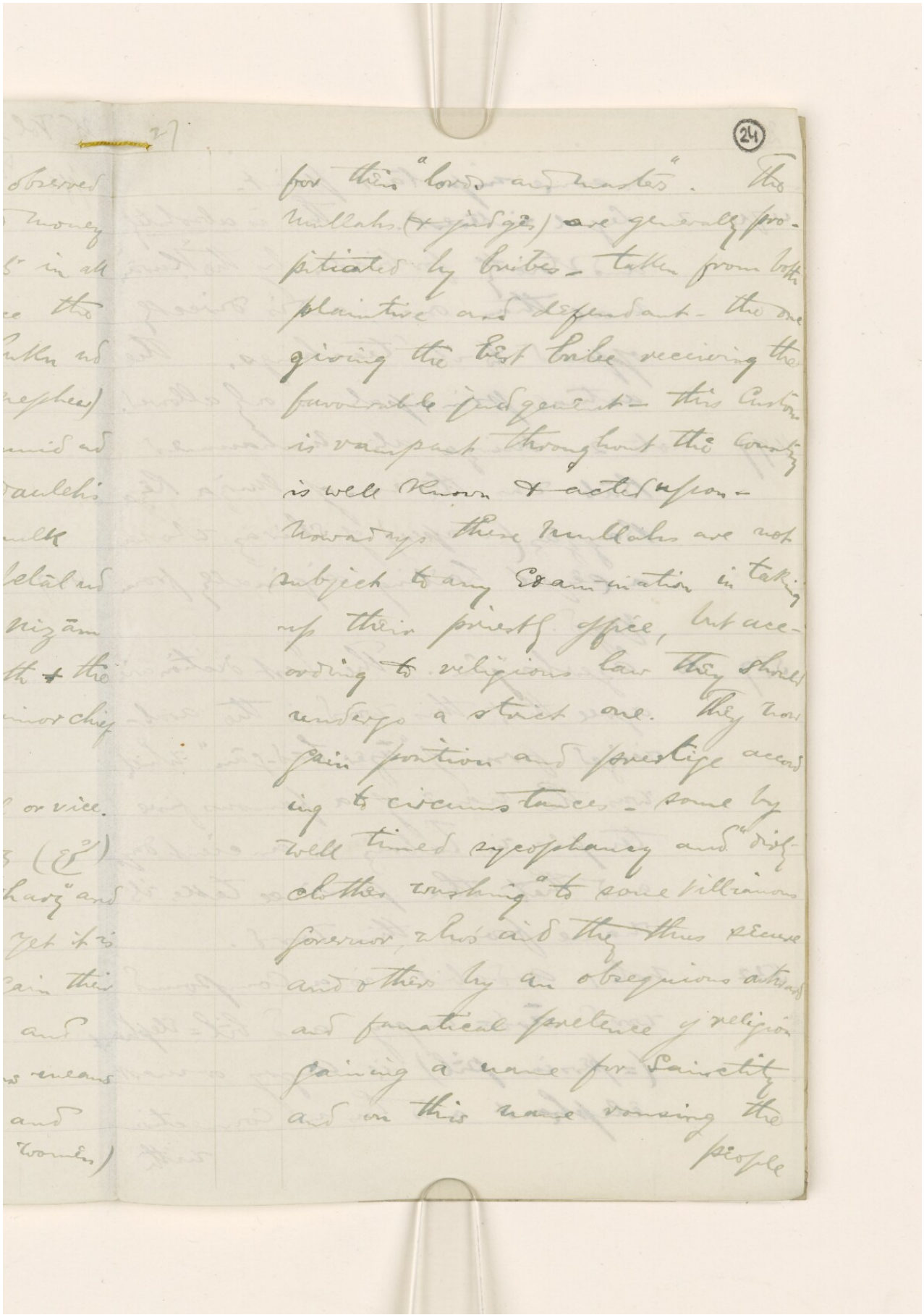
451 28 Titles. These rules are not observed nowadays – self interest and money are the determinative agents in all such cases. For instance the Kings brother is called Rukn ud dauleh. His uncle (and nephew) bore the title of "mutaqaumid ud dauleh." The Rukn ud dauleh's son is called qain ul mulk The Zill us sultans son Jetal ud dowleh etc whilst the Nizām i sultaneh is of low birth + the Shaqb us sultaneh is a minor chief of the Bakhtiāris

452 Shar. as spelled = evil or vice. the word should be sharq (ﻗﺮ)

The whole system of "sharq" and "qurf." are well set forth, yet it is well to know that many gain their advancement to high posts and favours by the most vicious means including pimping (boys and women)







for their "lords and masters". The mullahs (& judges) are generally propitiated by bribes - taken from both plaintive and defendant - the one giving the best bribe receiving the favourable judgement - this Custom is rampant throughout the country is well known & acted upon - Nowadays these mullahs are not subject to any Examination in taking up their priestly office, but according to religious law they should undergo a strict one. They now gain position and prestige according to circumstances - some by well timed sycophancy and "dirty clothes washing" to some villainous governor, who's aid they thus secure and others by an obsequious outward and fanatical pretence of religion gaining a name for Sainctity and on this name rousing the people

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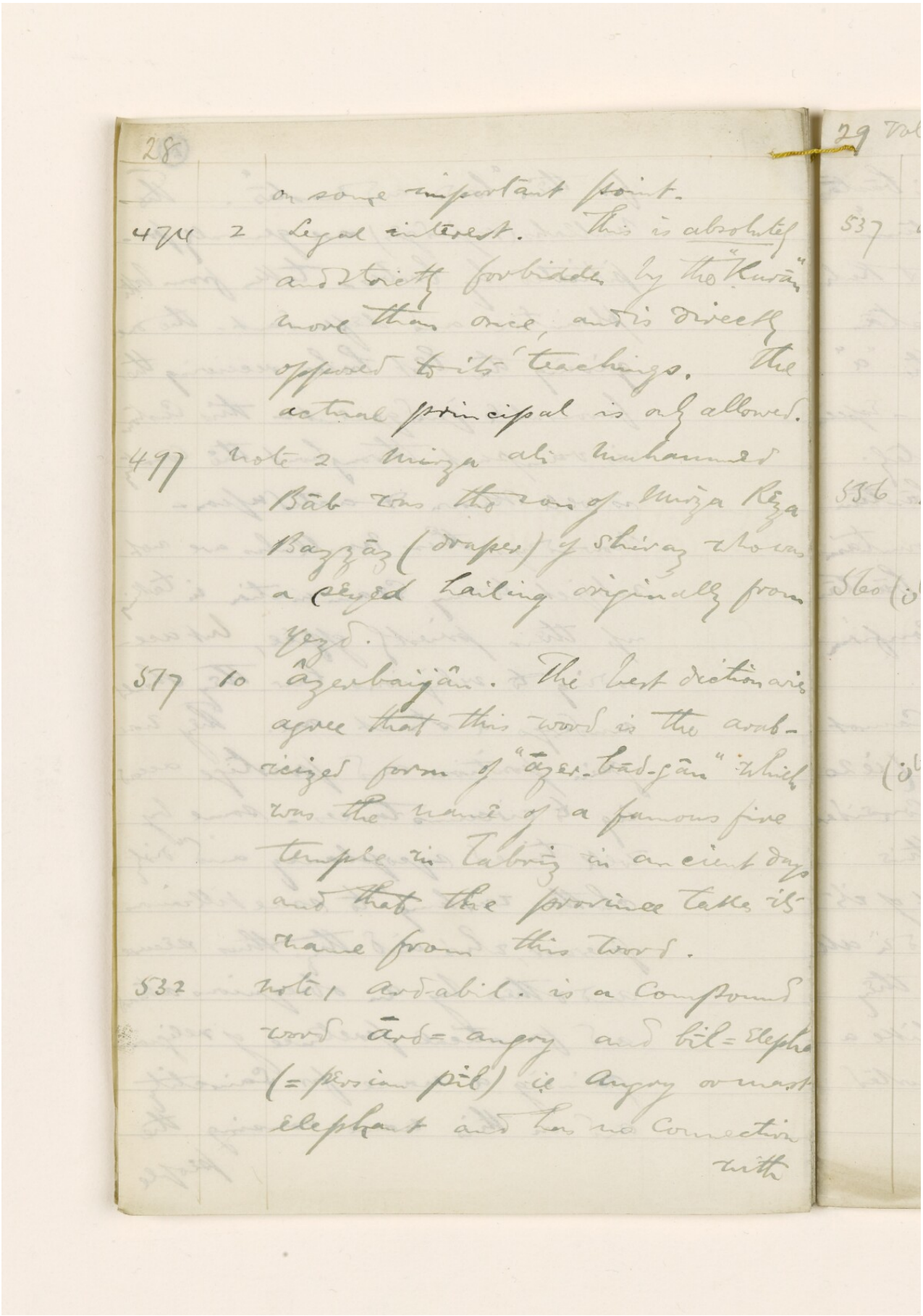

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on some important point.

474 2 Legal interest. This is absolutely and strictly forbidden by the "Kurān" more than once, and is directly opposed to its teachings. The actual principal is only allowed.

497 note 2 Mirza ali Muhammed Bāb was the son of Mirza Rēza Bazzāz (draper) of Shiraz who was a seyed hailing originally from Yezd.

517 10 âzerbaijân. The best dictionaries agree that this word is the arabicized form of "āzer-bād-gān" which was the name of a famous fire temple in Tabriz in ancient days and that the province takes its name from this word.

532 note 1 ard-abil. is a compound word ārd = angry and bīl = elephant (= persian pīl) i.e. angry or mast elephant and has no connection with

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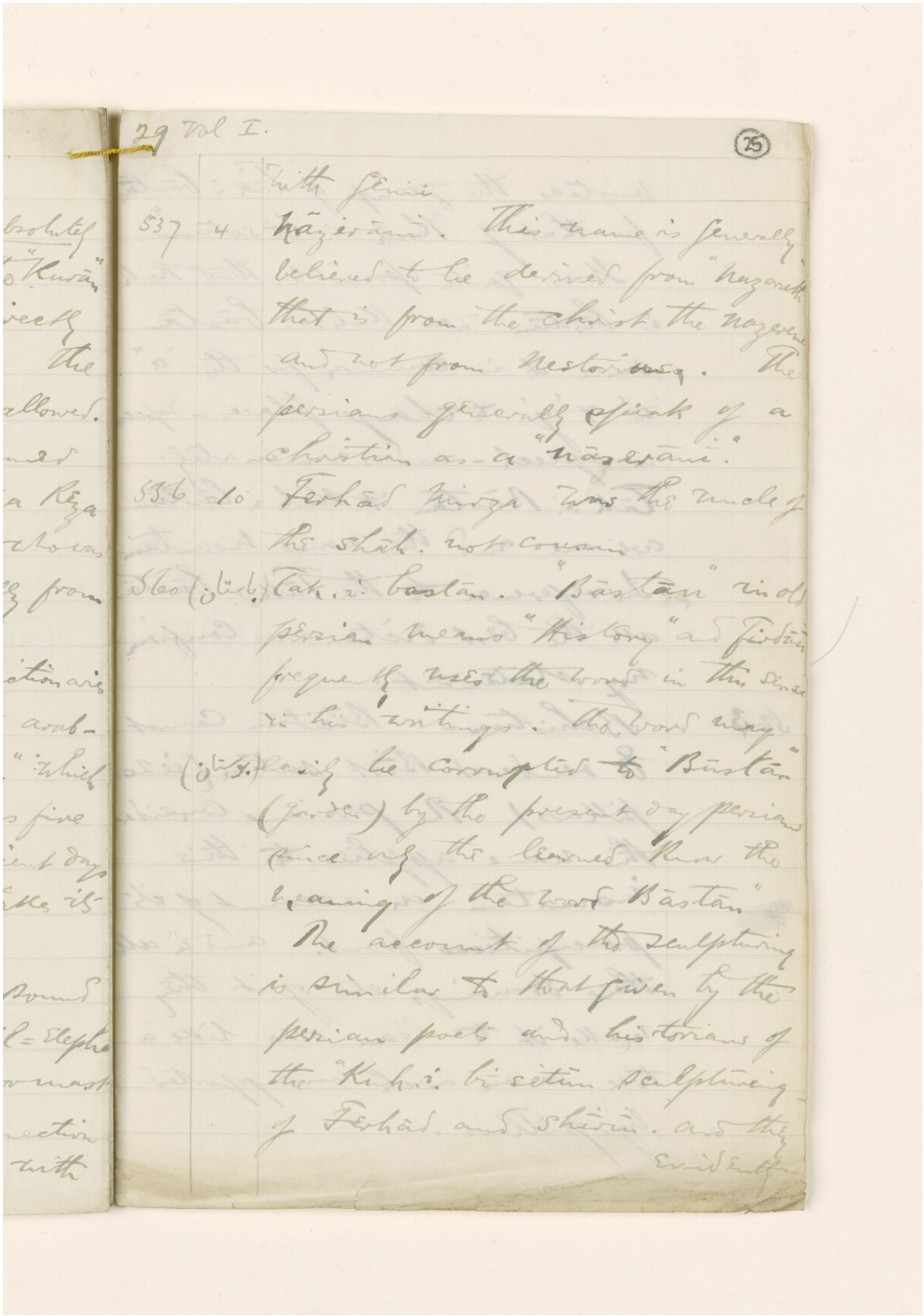

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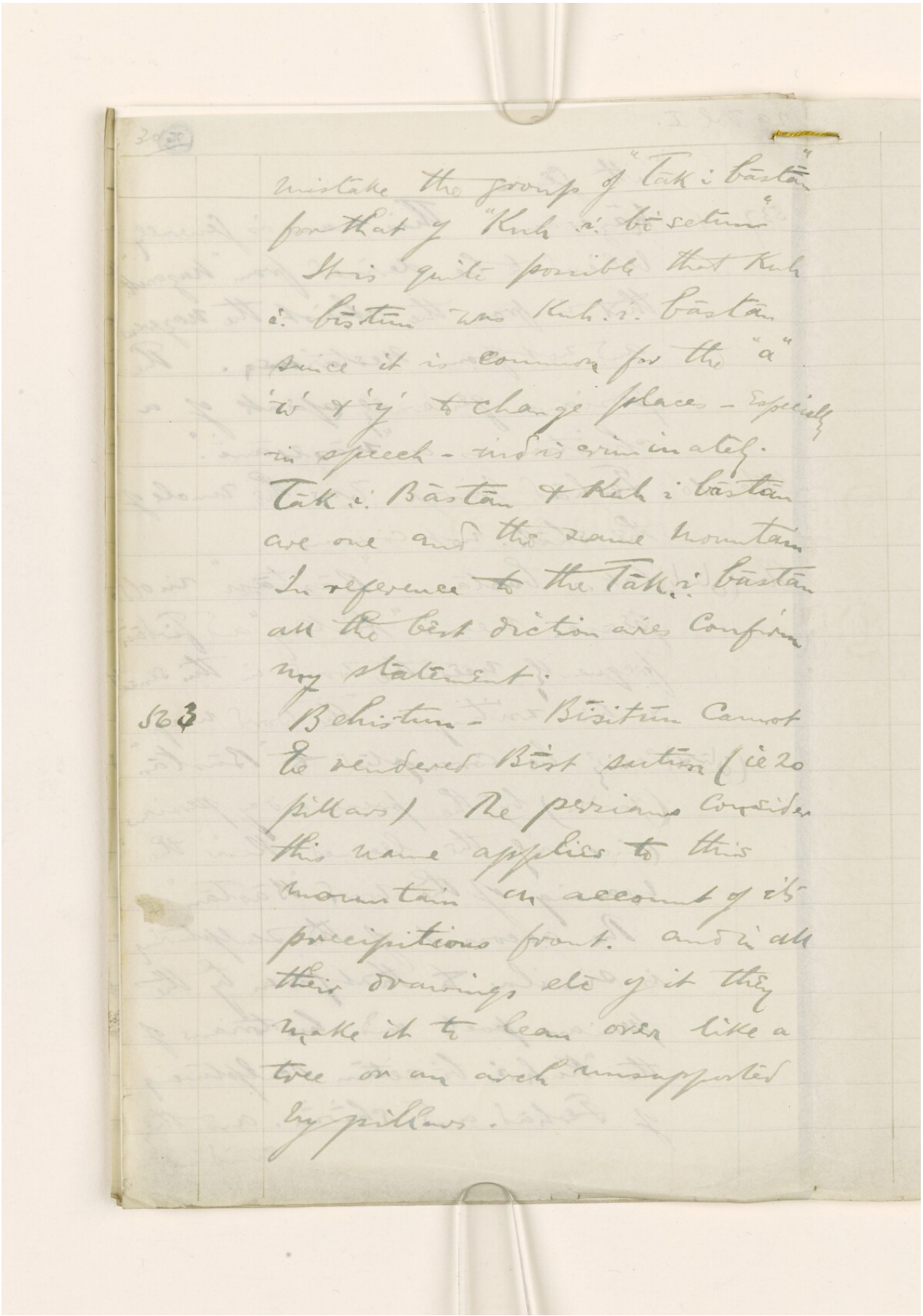
537 4 Nāzerāni. This name is generally believed to be derived from "Nazareth" that is from the christ the nazerene and not from Nestorius. The persians generally speak of a christian as a "nāserāni".

556 10 Ferhād Mirza was the uncle of the shāh. not cousin

560 (باستان) Tak.i. bastān. "Bāstān" in old persian means "History" and Firdūsi frequently uses the word in this sense in his writings. The word may

(بوستان) easily be corrupted to "Būstān" (garden) by the present day persians since only the learned know the meaning of the word "Bāstān"

The account of the sculpturing is similar to that given by the persian poets and historians of the "Kuh.i. bisetūn sculpturing of Ferhād and shīrīn. and they evidently



mistake the group of "Tāk i bāstān" for that of "Kuh i bīsetūn"

It is quite possible that Kuh i bīstūn was Kuh i bāstān since it is common for the "a" 'w' & 'y' to change places - especially in speech - indiscriminately. Tāk i Bāstān & Kuh i bāstān are one and the same mountain. In reference to the Tāk i bāstān all the best dictionaries confirm my statement.

563 Behistun - Bīsitūn cannot be rendered Bīst sutūn (ie 20 pillars) The persians consider this name applies to this mountain on account of its precipitious front. and in all their drawings etc of it they make it to lean over like a tree or an arch unsupported by pillars.

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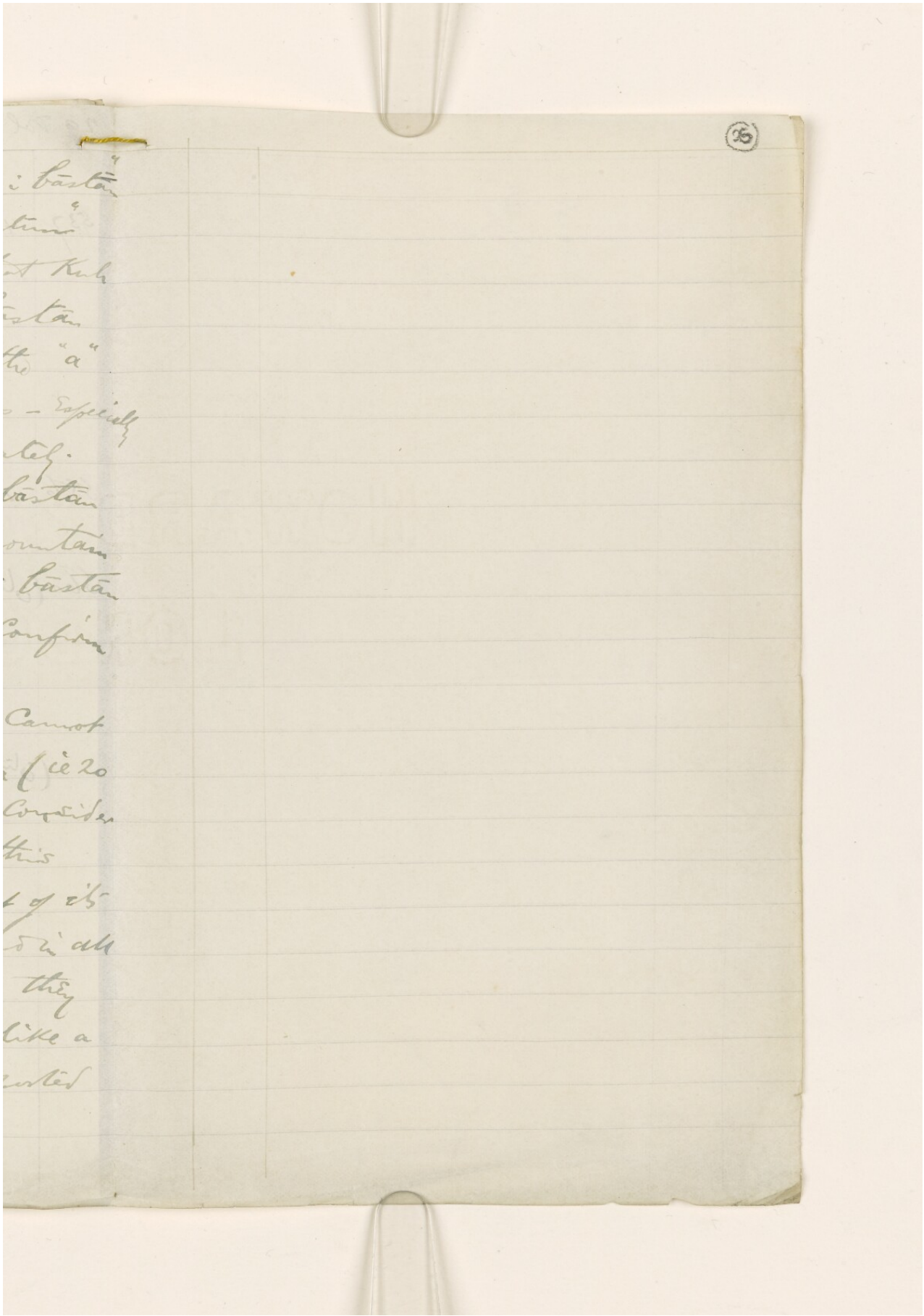

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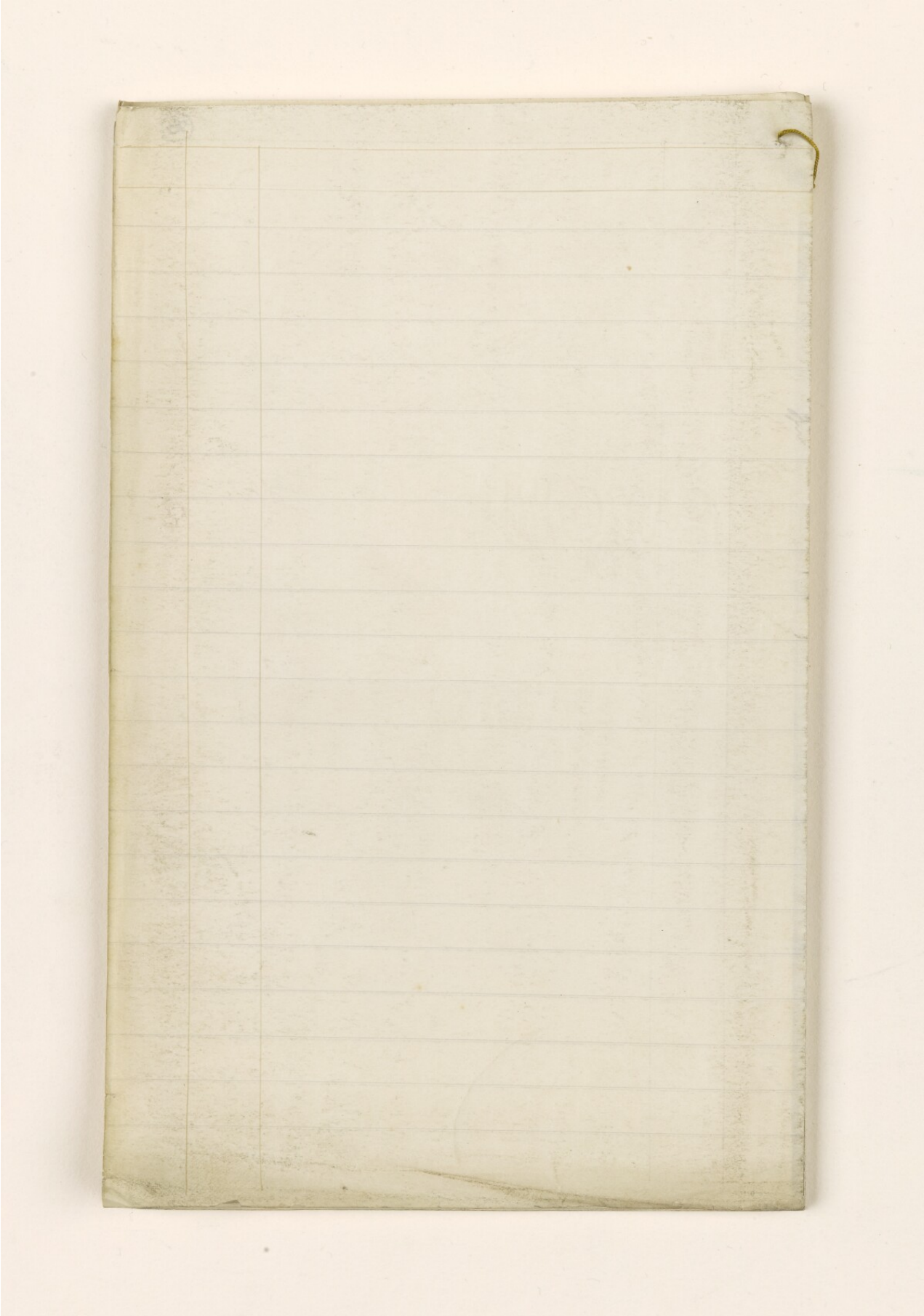

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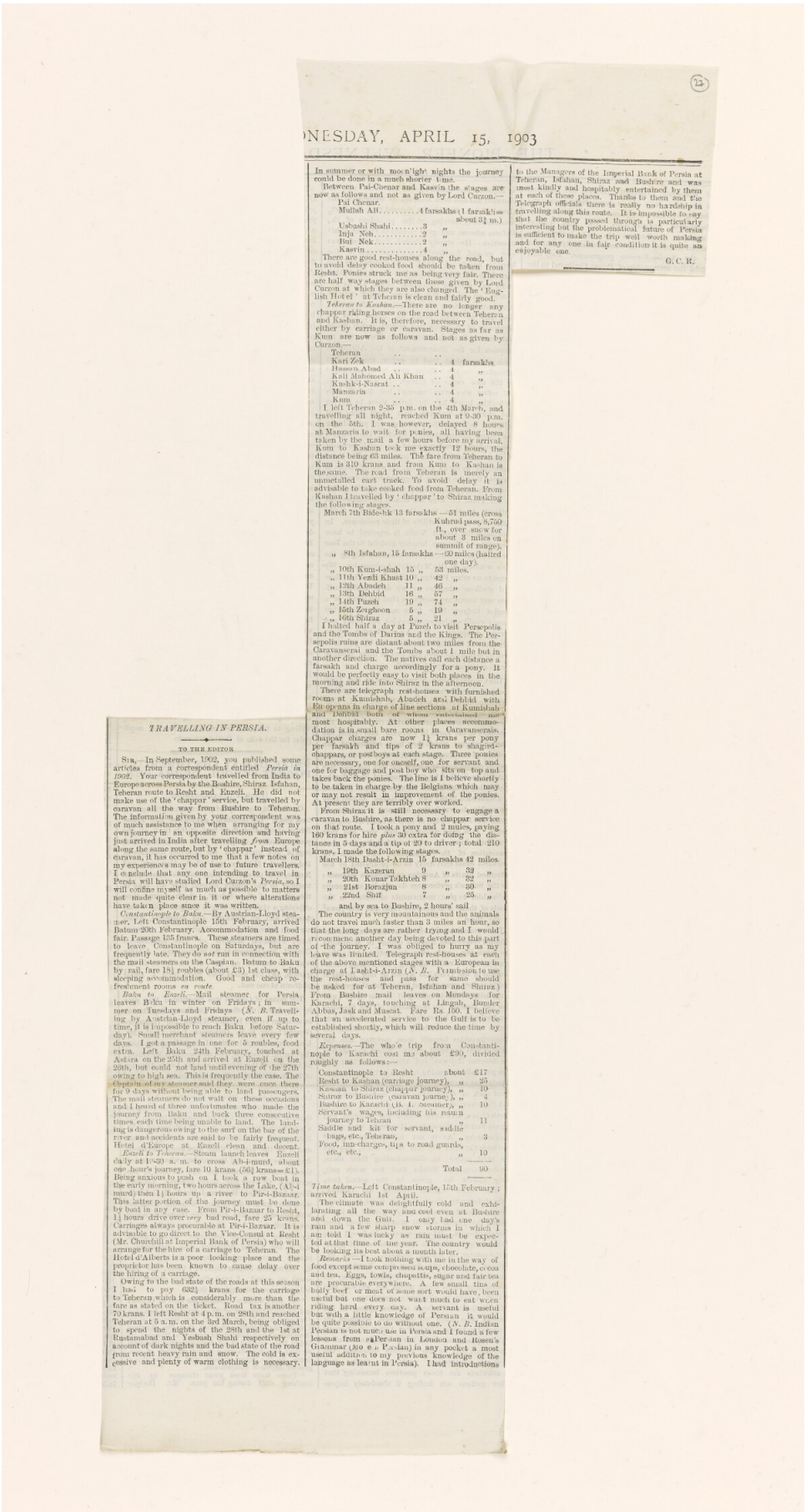

NESDAY, APRIL 15, 1903

In summer or with moonlight nights the journey could be done in a much shorter time.

Between Pal-Chenar and Kasvin the stages are now as follows and not as given by Lord Curzon.—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pal Chenar. | | |
| Mullah Ali | 4 farsakhs | (1 farsakh is about 3¼ m.) |
| Usbashi Shahi | 3 | " |
| Inja Neh | 2 | " |
| Bat Nek | 2 | " |
| Kasvin | 4 | " |

There are good rest-houses along the road, but to avoid delay cooked food should be taken from Resht. Ponies struck me as being very fair. There are half way stages between those given by Lord Curzon at which they are also changed. The 'English Hotel' at Teheran is clean and fairly good.

*Teheran to Kashan.*—There are no longer any chappar riding horses on the road between Teheran and Kashan. It is, therefore, necessary to travel either by carriage or caravan. Stages as far as Kum are now as follows and not as given by Curzon.—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Teheran | | |
| Kari Zek | 4 | farsakhs |
| Hasan Abad | 4 | " |
| Kali Mahomed Ali Khan | 4 | " |
| Kushk-i-Nasrat | 4 | " |
| Manzaria | 4 | " |
| Kum | 4 | " |

I left Teheran 2-35 p.m. on the 4th March, and travelling all night, reached Kum at 9-30 p.m. on the 5th. I was however, delayed 8 hours at Manzaria to wait for ponies, all having been taken by the mail a few hours before my arrival. Kum to Kashan took me exactly 12 hours, the distance being 63 miles. The fare from Teheran to Kum is 310 krans and from Kum to Kashan is the same. The road from Teheran is merely an unmetalled cart track. To avoid delay it is advisable to take cooked food from Teheran. From Kashan I travelled by 'chappar' to Shiraz making the following stages.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| March 7th | Bidehk | 13 farsakhs | —51 miles (cross Kuhrud pass, 8,750 ft., over snow for about 3 miles on summit of range). |
| " 8th | Isfahan, | 15 farsakhs | —60 miles (halted one day). |
| " 10th | Kum-i-shah | 15 " | 53 miles. |
| " 11th | Yezdi Khast | 10 " | 42 " |
| " 12th | Abadeh | 11 " | 46 " |
| " 13th | Dehbid | 16 " | 57 " |
| " 14th | Puzeh | 19 " | 74 " |
| " 15th | Zerghoon | 5 " | 19 " |
| " 16th | Shiraz | 5 " | 21 " |

I halted half a day at Puzeh to visit Persepolis and the Tombs of Darius and the Kings. The Persepolis ruins are distant about two miles from the Caravanserai and the Tombs about 1 mile but in another direction. The natives call each distance a farsakh and charge accordingly for a pony. It would be perfectly easy to visit both places in the morning and ride into Shiraz in the afternoon.

There are telegraph rest-houses with furnished rooms at Kumlehah, Abadeh and Dehbid with Employés in charge of line sections at Kumishah and Dehbid both of whom entertained me most hospitably. At other places accommodation is in small bare rooms in Caravanserais. Chappar charges are now 1½ krans per pony per farsakh and tips of 2 krans to shagird-chappars, or postboys at each stage. Three ponies are necessary, one for oneself, one for servant and one for baggage and post boy who sits on top and takes back the ponies. The line is I believe shortly to be taken in charge by the Belgians which may or may not result in improvement of the ponies. At present they are terribly over worked.

From Shiraz it is still necessary to engage a caravan to Bushire, as there is no chappar service on that route. I took a pony and 2 mules, paying 160 krans for hire *plus* 30 extra for doing the distance in 9 days and a tip of 20 to driver; total 210 krans. I made the following stages.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| March 18th | Dasht-i-Arzin | 15 farsakhs | 42 miles. |
| " 19th | Kazerun | 9 " | 32 " |
| " 20th | Konar Takhteh | 8 " | 32 " |
| " 21st | Borazjun | 8 " | 30 " |
| " 22nd | Shif | 7 " | 25 " |

and by sea to Bushire, 2 hours' sail.

The country is very mountainous and the animals do not travel much faster than 3 miles an hour, so that the long days are rather trying and I would recommend another day being devoted to this part of the journey. I was obliged to hurry as my leave was limited. Telegraph rest-houses at each of the above mentioned stages with a European in charge at Lashi-i-Arzin (*N. B.* Permission to use the rest-houses and pass for same should be asked for at Teheran, Isfahan and Shiraz.) From Bushire mail leaves on Mondays for Karachi, 7 days, touching at Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Jask and Muscat. Fare Rs 150. I believe that an accelerated service to the Gulf is to be established shortly, which will reduce the time by several days.

*Expenses.*—The whole trip from Constantinople to Karachi cost me about £90, divided roughly as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Constantinople to Resht | about | £17 |
| Resht to Kashan (carriage journey), | " | 25 |
| Kashan to Shiraz (chappar journey), | " | 10 |
| Shiraz to Bushire (caravan journey), | " | 4 |
| Bushire to Karachi (B. I. Steamer), | " | 10 |
| Servant's wages, including his return journey to Tehran | " | 11 |
| Saddle and kit for servant, saddle bags, etc., Teheran, | " | 3 |
| Food, inn-charges, tips to road guards, etc., etc., | " | 10 |
| Total | | 90 |

*Time taken.*—Left Constantinople, 15th February; arrived Karachi 1st April.

The climate was delightfully cold and exhilarating all the way and cool even at Bushire and down the Gulf. I only had one day's rain and a few sharp snow storms in which I am told I was lucky as rain must be expected at that time of the year. The country would be looking its best about a month later.

*Remarks.*—I took nothing with me in the way of food except some compressed soups, chocolate, cocoa and tea. Eggs, fowls, chupattis, sugar and fair tea are procurable everywhere. A few small tins of bully beef or meat of some sort would have been useful but one does not want much to eat when riding hard every day. A servant is useful but with a little knowledge of Persian it would be quite possible to do without one. (*N. B.* Indian Persian is not much use in Persia and I found a few lessons from a Persian in London and Rosen's Grammar (30 c. c. Persian) in my pocket a most useful addition to my previous knowledge of the language as learnt in Persia). I had introductions to the Managers of the Imperial Bank of Persia at Teheran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Bushire and was most kindly and hospitably entertained by them at each of these places. Thanks to them and the Telegraph officials there is really no hardship in travelling along this route. It is impossible to say that the country passed through is particularly interesting but the problematical future of Persia is sufficient to make the trip well worth making and for any one in fair condition it is quite an enjoyable one.

G. C. R.

## TRAVELLING IN PERSIA.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In September, 1902, you published some articles from a correspondent entitled *Persia in 1902*. Your correspondent travelled from India to Europe across Persia by the Bushire, Shiraz Isfahan, Teheran route to Resht and Enzeli. He did not make use of the 'chappar' service, but travelled by caravan all the way from Bushire to Teheran. The information given by your correspondent was of much assistance to me when arranging for my own journey in an opposite direction and having just arrived in India after travelling *from* Europe along the same route, but by 'chappar' instead of caravan, it has occurred to me that a few notes on my experience may be of use to future travellers. I would remind that any one intending to travel in Persia will have studied Lord Curzon's *Persia*, so I will confine myself as much as possible to matters not made quite clear in it or where alterations have taken place since it was written.

*Constantinople to Baku.*—By Austrian-Lloyd steamer, left Constantinople 15th February, arrived Batum 20th February. Accommodation and food fair. Passage 135 francs. These steamers are timed to leave Constantinople on Saturdays, but are frequently late. They do *not* run in connection with the mail steamers on the Caspian. Batum to Baku by rail, fare 18½ roubles (about £3) 1st class, with sleeping accommodation. Good and cheap refreshment rooms *en route*.

*Baku to Enzeli.*—Mail steamer for Persia leaves Baku in winter on Fridays; in summer on Tuesdays and Fridays (*N. B.* Travelling by Austrian-Lloyd steamer, even if up to time, it is impossible to reach Baku before Saturday). Small merchant steamers leave every few days. I got a passage in one for 5 roubles, food extra. Left Baku 24th February, touched at Astara on the 25th and arrived at Enzeli on the 26th, but could not land until evening of the 27th owing to high sea. This is frequently the case. The Captain of my steamer said they were once there for 9 days without being able to land passengers. The mail steamers do not wait on these occasions and I heard of three unfortunates who made the journey from Baku and back three consecutive times, each time being unable to land. The landing is dangerous owing to the surf on the bar of the river and accidents are said to be fairly frequent. Hotel d'Europe at Enzeli clean and decent.

*Enzeli to Teheran.*—Steam launch leaves Enzeli daily at 1-30 a. m. to cross Ab-i-mund, about one hour's journey, fare 10 krans (56½ krans = £1). Being anxious to push on I took a row boat in the early morning, two hours across the Lake, (Ab-i mund) then 1½ hours up a river to Pir-i-Bazaar. This latter portion of the journey must be done by boat in any case. From Pir-i-Bazaar to Resht, 1½ hours drive over *very* bad road, fare 25 krans. Carriages always procurable at Pir-i-Bazaar. It is advisable to go direct to the Vice-Consul at Resht (Mr. Churchill at Imperial Bank of Persia) who will arrange for the hire of a carriage to Teheran. The Hotel d'Alberts is a poor looking place and the proprietor has been known to cause delay over the hiring of a carriage.

Owing to the bad state of the roads at this season I had to pay 632½ krans for the carriage to Teheran which is considerably more than the fare as stated on the ticket. Road tax is another 70 krans. I left Resht at 4 p.m. on 28th and reached Teheran at 5 a.m. on the 3rd March, being obliged to spend the nights of the 28th and the 1st at Rustamabad and Yesbash Shahi respectively on account of dark nights and the bad state of the road from recent heavy rain and snow. The cold is excessive and plenty of warm clothing is necessary.



THE PIONEER, WEDNESD

f Macedonia, principally because the outcome f the crisis may throw some light upon the earing of Prince Ferdinand towards the Bulgaro- lacedonian organisations. The best Austro- ungarian authorities do not believe the alkan situation to have been essentially changed / the Austro-Russian programme. They still gard the relationship of Prince Ferdinand to the

of Russia. The same interviewer who saw M. Zinovieff has also been accorded an audience of the Grand Vizier. Ferid Pacha claimed that the Port was faithfully carrying out the provisions of the Reform scheme, and gave details in support of his assertion. He stoutly denied that there was any ground for fearing a re-enactment of the terrible events of 1876. All violence on the art of the Turkish troops had been forbidden nder the severest penalties. Hilmi Pacha was man on whom the Powers might rely to onscientiously carry out his mission of conciliation, and no fault could be found with the Governors of Salonica and Scutari, one of whom ad been trained in Germany. There was no ccasion for the disarmament of the Albanians. uch a step might lead to serious trouble. The Albanians in the valleys were being reconciled o the new order of things. It was only the ill tribes who were unruly; but the Turkish uthorities knew how to bring them to reason nd order. It was true that there were still ollisions between the Ottoman troops and the Bulgarian insurrectionary bands. The Turkish ommandants were doing what they could, pursuant o instructions from the Porte, to avoid those ncounters as far as possible. It was ridiculous to magine that the roving Bulgarian bands could not e quickly suppressed, but it was the pacific policy f the Porte to show the utmost forbearance and atience, trusting that the malcontents would ltimately see the futility of their resistance. In onclusion the Grand Vizier is reported to have bserved :—"We are heartily grateful to the Tsar or his excellent advice, and value most highly the ise counsels of His Majesty's Ambassador. We sten to no other Foreign Minister with such close nd studious attention as we do to M. Zinovieff. ou may accept my assurance that the same or a milar Reform Note from any other Power but ussia would not have commanded our ready and rnest compliance. The Austro-Russian reform heme will be fulfilled to the letter, but you must ive us reasonable time, say, two or three months, r its entire accomplishment."

The Constantinople correspondent of the *Times* oes not endorse the alleged roseate anticipations ttributed to Ferid Pacha and M. Zinovieff. Con- derable dissatisfaction, he says, is expressed by e two Embassies immediately concerned at the rdiness of the Turks in carrying into effect the lan of reforms which they have adopted at the stance of the Russian and Austrian Governments pecial emphasis is laid upon the fact that the code gulations drafted by the Council of State for the plication of the above reforms has not yet been mmunicated to the two Embassies, so that they re unable to watch the measure or manner in hich the Porte fulfils, or fails to fulfil, its engage- ents. It is, most probably, this very end that e Turks have in view in delaying the com- unication of the regulations, and which will oubtless cause that delay to be protracted to the xtremest limits of Austrian and Russian patience ; r the Sultan's preferences do not by any means eline him to place instruments of control in the ands of those who have the right and the powe to use them.

The revelations which from time to time are fforded concerning Russia's doings in Manchuria re amusing, and even instructive, but they an scarcely be called edifying. The Peking corres- ondent of the *Times* has shown us how Russia is aking every arrangement to evacuate the province i the letter while annexing it in the spirit ; and ow the Tientsin correspondent of the *Standard* oudhsafes some interesting light upon the true ature of those civilising influences which the uscovite prides himself upon carrying into the idst of less favoured races. When she started e Siberian Railway, and afterwards, whilst she as gradually increasing her sway in Manchuria ussia was at some pains to lay stress upon the eat work of civilisation she had undertaken ; nd there have not been wanting those, even in orth China, who have caught the infection, and gued that the Russians in Manchuria were better an anarchy. As it not infrequently happens hat such theorists do the most harm, and are e most active in disseminating their ideas, e correspondent thinks that too much pub- city cannot be given to the actual facts f the case. Home readers are familia, ith statements about Chinese corruption, and hinese morality is universally regarded as repre- enting the lowest ethical standard among even astern Powers. It is, however, to be feared that hina can give Russia in Manchuria several points n the matter of official honesty. Where the hinese squeeze one dollar the Russians are queezing thousands. The wholesale robbery of overnment funds going along the railway and Port Arthur is absolutely appalling. Long sts of officials with large salaries appear in the eturns who have no existence, steamers are hartered to bring coal to Port Arthur which never ailed any sea but in the lively imagination of a w officials into whose pockets disappear the ayments ostensibly made for them : and notorious are these practices becoming that her nations are finding it absolutely impos- willing to take the risk of making himself unpopular for the sake of British interests

## PRIZE DAY AT THE IMPERIAL FOREST SCHOOL, DEHRA DUN.

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

On the last day of March, the annual prize-giving took place. The beautiful gardens of the Forest School always look their best at this time of the year, and offer a delightful place for social gatherings of any kind. All the principal residents of Dehra, both Military and Civil, European and Native, were present as usual on this occasion, and testified to the kindly interest they all take in the affairs of the School, at the same time enjoying a visit to the school gardens bright with flowers, and its buildings and museums, which are both interesting and attractive. Sir Edward Law, Financial Member of His Excellency's Council, was present at the prize-giving. A large tent was erected on one of the lawns in the garden, and the prizes were given from a small platform at one end.

The Board of Control was constituted this year by the following officers of the Forest Department in addition to Mr. Bradley-Wilmot, the Inspector-General :—Mr. F. B. Dickenson from Oudh, Mr. Lace, from Bengal. Mr. Hobart-Hampden, from the Central Provinces, who now succeeds Mr. Oliver, as Director of the School ; and Mr. Lewis, Director of Public Instruction, United Provinces.

The Director of the School, Mr. J. W. Oliver, in his opening speech, spoke as follows :—

"It is a great pleasure to me to be able to report that the result of the final examination has, on the whole, been very satisfactory. The classes of 1901-1902 opened with 37 students in the Upper class and 8 in the Lower ; there were some alterations during the course, and the numbers who presented themselves for examination were 35 and 7, respectively. Of these four, Rama Iyengar, Venkata Rama Iyer, Kalshi Ram and Mr. A. M. C. Littlewood have gained the Higher Standard certificate with honours ; 27 have gained the Higher Standard pass certificate ; two, Siddiqui and Sidhu Ram, the Lower Standard certificate with honours, and 5 the Lower Standard pass certificate,—in all 6 honours and 31 passes out of a total of 42. As regards honours this is, I think, the best result on record. I trust the junior classes will follow the good example set them.

"At the Entrance examination held in October last 43 candidates out of 96 qualified for admission compared with 51 out of 84 in the previous year. I should here perhaps mention that the Bombay Government has decided to train its Rangers at Dehra Dun, instead of at Poona, so that in future we may expect an increase in the number of students in the Upper classes, and I hope also a greater degree of competition.

"There have been some changes in the teaching staff during the year. Mr. Hooper

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556 **Kaempfer** (Engelbert) Amoenitatum Exoticarum politico-physico-medicarum fascituli V., quibus continentur variæ relat. et descript. Rerum Persicarum et Ulterioris Asiæ, *with plates*, 4to, pp. 912 and Index, vellum. 1712 15s

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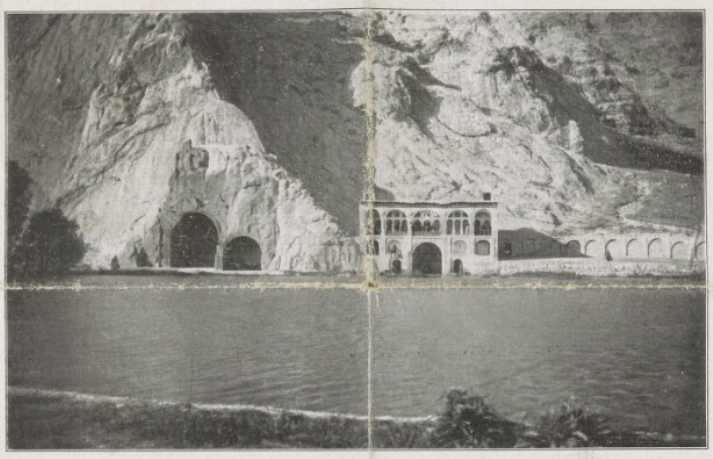
IN UNSERM VERLAGE IST ERSCHIENEN

# AM TOR VON ASIEN

## FELSDENKMALE AUS IRANS HELDENZEIT

VON

## ERNST HERZFELD



*Der Ṭāq i bustān, verkleinerte Abbildung nach dem Kupferdruck Tafel XXVIII*

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Das Werk legt in seinen Tafeln der Öffentlichkeit neue, in den Jahren 1913 und 1916/17 gemachte Aufnahmen des Verfassers von iranischen Denkmalen vor, die fast alle überhaupt noch nicht, oder doch nicht photographisch aufgenommen waren. So bietet das Werk der Forschung lauter neuen Wissensstoff dar und wird daher immer die eigentliche Veröffentlichung der enthaltenen Denkmale bleiben.
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*Felsdenkmal des Dareios von Bīstūn, verkleinerte Abbildung nach dem Lichtdruck Tafel X*

begehrenswert machen. Die Bildbeigaben sind in 3 verschiedenen Techniken vervielfältigt, die größte Zahl als Lichtdrucke in einem hierfür besonders geeigneten Karton, einzelne als Dreifarbendrucke und 5 der schönsten als Kupferdrucke. Die in dieser Ankündigung abgedruckten Schwarzbilder sind stark verkleinert und geben kaum eine Vorstellung von den Wiedergaben, wie sie im Werk selbst enthalten sind. Der Text ist in großer lateinischer Schrift gesetzt und das Werk in Halbleder gebunden.

Die ältesten der behandelten Denkmale entstammen der Wende des dritten zum zweiten Jahrtausend v. Chr. und sind die drei Bilder der Lullu-Könige bei Sarpul. Es folgen zeitlich und örtlich die gewaltigen Felsgräber einiger medischer Fürsten aus dem 9. bis 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Von dem berühmten Denkmal des großen Dareios (518 v. Chr.) dem Altertum als Stele der Semiramis bekannt, wird eine neue Aufnahme und eine eingehende kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung vorgelegt.



*Treibende Elefanten von der Schwarzwildjagd, Ṭāq i bustān, verkleinerte Abbildung nach dem Kupferdruck Tafel XLVIII*

Aus der Zeit Alexanders d. Gr., aus der bisher kein einziges Denkmal in Iran bekannt war, wird die Ruine eines ionischen Tempels bei Khurha, die Statue einer Knöchelspielerin aus Seleukeia und der Kopf eines alten Mannes aus Dīnawar zum ersten Male bekannt gemacht.

Zwei Felsdenkmale, unterhalb des Dareiosbildes am gleichen heiligen Berge von Bīstūn gelegen, waren zwar oberflächlich bekannt, aber unbeachtet und unbestimmt geblieben. Ihre griechischen Inschriften werden ergänzt, entziffert und so das eine Denkmal als Huldigung der vier Himmelsgegenden des iranischen Reichs vor dem Arsakiden Mithradates II. dem Gr. (um 80 v. Chr.), das andre als Sieg Gotarzes' II. Geopothros über seinen aus Tacitus' Annalen bekannten Gegenkönig Meherdates, 50 n. Chr. bestimmt. Diese Untersuchung erschließt der Kunstforschung ein Neuland, die Kunst der arsakidischen Zeit Irans.

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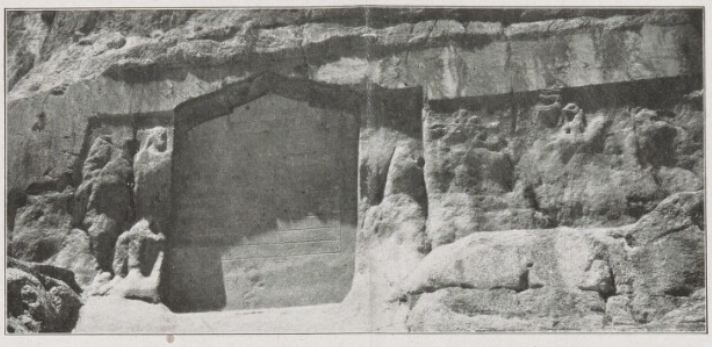

*Felsdenkmale Mithradates' II. und Gotarzes' II., Bīstūn, verkleinerte Abbildung nach dem Lichtdruck Tafel XXII u.*

Endlich enthält das Buch außer vielen kleineren Denkmalen die erschöpfende Aufnahme und Untersuchung des schönsten aller Denkmale Irans, des dem Morgenlande als Weltwunder geltenden Ṭāq i bustān. Diese unweit von Bīstūn gelegene Gruppe sasanidischer Denkmale besteht aus dem Bild der Belehnung Ardashīr's II. mit dem Königtum durch die Götter Ohormizd und Mithra (um 380 n. Chr.), aus der kleinen Grotte mit den Bildnissen Shāpūr's II. und III. (um 385 n. Chr.) und aus der großen Grotte Khosrō's II. Parwēz (um 620 n. Chr.). Diese Denkmale sind die einzigen Zeugen der großen Kunst der mittleren und letzten Spanne der Sasanidenzeit. Mit ihnen endet die sasanidische Kunst und das Reich, und zugleich die zweite große weltgeschichtliche Epoche des alten Morgenlandes die mit dem ersten Auftreten von Völkern indogermanischer Sprache in den alten Kulturländern beginnt und im Weltreich der alten Perser in Erscheinung tritt.

So begleiten diese Denkmale eine Welt von ihrer Geburtstunde bis zu ihrem Tode. Auf dem großen Hintergrunde der geschichtlichen Entwicklung Asiens hebt sich ihr Bild ab. Sie liegen alle in einer eng umgrenzten Landschaft durch die seit der Morgendämmerung der Geschichte die einzige große, natürliche Straße vom Mittelmeer durch die babylonischen Ebenen zum Hochland von Iran und weiter durch das große Asien bis zu den Gestaden des Stillen Ozeans führte. Diese Landschaft bedeutet das Tor des großen Asien. Fünf Jahrtausende sind Karawanen, Heere, wandernde Völker diese Straße gezogen. Mit ihnen ergoß sich ein Strom von Gedanken und geistigen Gütern durch dieses Tor von Asien, fernste Länder verbindend und fernste Länder befruchtend. Von diesen Wanderungen der Gedanken zeugen die Denkmale, und diese ihre Zeugnisse versucht der Text des Buches zu deuten: nicht nur was diese Denkmäler sind, sondern was sie bedeuten. Daher wird das Tor von Asien zu einem tiefen Symbol.



*Seitenansicht eines Kapitells am Ṭāq i bustān, verkleinerte Abbildung nach dem Kupferdruck Tafel LVII*

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VOR KURZEM WURDE MIT BAND II UND IV VOLLSTÄNDIG

FORSCHUNGEN ZUR ISLAMISCHEN KUNST I
HERAUSGEGEBEN VON FRIEDRICH SARRE

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Die Archäologische Reise im „Euphrat- und Tigrisgebiet" enthält die wissenschaftlichen Ergebnisse einer Forschungsreise, die Sarre in Begleitung von Herzfeld im Jahre 1907/08 unternommen hat, und deren Zweck war, die Denkmäler der islamischen Epoche der in dieser Hinsicht noch wenig erforschten Landschaft aufzunehmen und zugleich einen geeigneten Platz zur Vornahme von Grabungen auf islamischem Kulturboden ausfindig zu machen.
Der erste Band des Textes und der dritte Tafelband wurden schon im Mai 1911 vollendet. Die damals angefangenen Ausgrabungen von Samarra und nach ihrem Abschluß der Krieg unterbrachen das Fortführen der Veröffentlichung. Nach dem Kriege war es die erste Sorge der Verfasser, das ein Torso gebliebene Werk zu Ende zu führen. Der langen Verzögerung wegen fühlten sie sich verpflichtet, keine schnell improvisierte, sondern eine durchgearbeitete, abschließende Veröffentlichung zu geben. Daher wurden auch eine Reihe von Aufnahmen, die auf früheren und späteren Reisen in Mesopotamien gemacht sind, und die das in diesem Werke behandelte Gebiet auf das gesamte eigentliche Mesopotamien abrunden, nachträglich aufgenommen. Aus diesen Gründen reichte der ursprünglich geplante Umfang von drei Bänden nicht aus; der Stoff füllte vier starke Bände. Trotz der aus den Folgen des Krieges sich ergebenden Schwierigkeiten konnte dieses Unternehmen nicht nur überhaupt durchgeführt, sondern es konnte auch in der gleichen Form wie begonnen, mit gleichwertigem Papier, Druck und Tafeln vollendet werden.

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(31)

No. 173, dated Bushire, the 12th December 1902.

From—Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. Kemball, Officiating Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

To—The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

I have the honour to submit a report on the subject of the Chiefs, commonly known as the Trucial Chiefs, who occupy the coast line of the Persian Gulf on the Arabian side, from the limits of the El Katr peninsula eastward to Ras-al-Khaima.

2. A full account of the various tribes living under the rule of these Chiefs will be found in Volume XXIV of the Bombay Government Records, and I propose to confine my present report mainly to a consideration of the question of the relations of this Residency to the Trucial Chiefs.

3. In order to explain the position satisfactorily, it may be advisable to make a passing reference to the causes which led to the interference of the British Government in the affairs of these Arab tribes. In the early part of the last century, what may perhaps be described as a reign of terror existed in the Persian Gulf owing to the acts of piracy committed by the Arab tribes living on the shores of the Gulf. Previous to the expedition of 1819 under Sir William Grant Keir, which had for its object the complete destruction of the forts and boats of the piratical tribes, no vessel whether carrying a British pass or British colours, or those of any other nation, was safe. The General Treaty of 1820 with the Arab tribes of the Persian Gulf, the due observance of which on the part of these tribes was insisted upon by the constant surveillance and unremitting vigilance of the British authorities in the Gulf, ensured the attainment of the main object which the British Government then had in view, namely, the entire suppression of piracy and consequent security to the trade and traders of all nations. The enterprise and resources of the piratical tribes were thus directed into a legitimate channel, and it being desired to prevent the occurrence of any accidents among the tribes themselves which, from affording an opening and pretext to the evil disposed, might degenerate into piracy, the Chiefs were in 1835 induced to bind themselves by a maritime truce not under any circumstances to engage in hostilities by sea for a period of six months, on the understanding that the British Government would not interfere with their wars by land. The advantages of this truce were apparent to all concerned, and it was again and again renewed, until, in 1853, the treaty of perpetual peace at sea was concluded. The due observance of this treaty has always been strictly insisted upon, and it is to this fact that the entire cessation of piracies in the southern and eastern waters of the Gulf is mainly to be attributed.

4. The conclusion of this treaty and the opportunities which have been taken to enforce obedience to it have given the Resident a position of paramount influence over the Trucial Chiefs. Any infractions of the maritime peace have always been promptly punished, and the consequence is that of recent years the peace at sea has been very rarely disturbed, the last occasion which I have been able to trace having occurred in 1892 when a fine was levied from the Chief of Debaye for sending an armed boat to assist the Chief of Ajman.

5. In the internal disputes of the Trucial Chiefs it has never been the custom of the Resident to interfere, neither has the Resident interfered in the matter of successions to the Chiefships. In 1883, the present Chief of Shargah usurped the Chiefship, and the Resident, although appealed to for "advice and instructions" by the Chief who had been deposed from power, declined to interfere, and instructed the Residency Agent not to interfere in party matters. More recently, in 1900, the Chief of Ajman was killed by his uncle, Abdul Aziz, who proclaimed himself Chief. The succession of Abdul Aziz was generally accepted and he subsequently wrote to me asking for the recognition

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of the British Government, which, however, it was not considered necessary to give formally, though tacit recognition has been given.

In this, the most recent case which has occurred, it will be observed that the Chief of his own accord asked for the recognition of the British Government, and probably in future cases the same course will be followed. It will, however, in my opinion, rarely be necessary or advisable for the Resident to exercise any voice in the matter of these successions. Under present conditions, a Chief who can obtain and hold power may generally be held to be a ruler acceptable to his subjects, otherwise he will not be able to hold his position for long, and if we begin to interfere in such matters and accept any degree of responsibility for the actions of the Chiefs, we may frequently find ourselves in embarrassing positions. I am inclined, therefore, to think that our policy of non-interference in the internal disputes of the Trucial Chiefs and in the matter of successions to Chiefships, is wise. No good reason for departing from it has, I think, been shown, and no good object would be gained by doing so.

6. Our position at present, with regard to these Trucial Chiefs, is without doubt at least one of tacit predominance. This result is due to our policy in the past, to the various engagements which we have entered into with the Chiefs, and to the more intimate relations which we have had with them in consequence. Our position of "overlordship", so far as it refers to the maintenance of the maritime peace, to the protection of our traders, and to the observance by the Chiefs of their various engagements with us, is clear and is undoubtedly accepted by the Chiefs without demur. As I have stated above no infringement of the maritime truce has occurred for years, notwithstanding the fact that land disputes, for the successful prosecution of which operations by sea would be of great importance, have been by no means unfrequent.

This clearly shows that the Chiefs are well aware of the serious consequences which would result to themselves from any infringement of this truce. As a matter of fact our position of tacit predominance does enable us to interfere in the interests of peace even in the internal disputes of the Arab tribes. The fact of a Chief knowing that any infringement of the peace at sea will at once render him liable to be called to account by the Resident makes him think twice before he embarks on hostilities by land against another Chief, and it frequently happens that the Resident is enabled to use his good offices and thereby to bring about a peaceful settlement of disputes which formerly would have been settled by force of arms. More than one instance of this has occurred of late years. I will give a recent case as an example. During the visit which I paid last month to the Arab Coast, I learnt from the Chief of Ajman, that the neighbouring Chief of Umm-al-Gawain was on the point of starting on an expedition against the Chief of Ras-el-Khaima. When I visited Umm-al-Gawain, I ascertained that the report was true and that the expedition had been already organised and intended to start in a day or two. The cause of the dispute did not appear to be very serious, though, from what I was told, the Umm-al-Gawain people had a just cause of complaint against Ras-el-Khaima. After some discussion and a due warning that no breach of the maritime peace was to occur, I managed to prevail upon the Umm-al-Gawain Chief to postpone the expedition until the result of the endeavours which I promised to make for a satisfactory settlement of the dispute could be seen. I have not yet heard whether the Residency Agent has been able to bring about such a settlement, but it is probable that he has. I mention this case (and others of a similar nature could also be quoted) merely for the purpose of showing that the Chiefs are nearly always willing to accept the Resident's advice, even in matters where Treaty engagements are not concerned. The fact of the Chief of Ajman mentioning the matter to me seems to show that the Chiefs themselves have no particular wish to see the peace disturbed, and certainly of recent years fighting by land seems to have been of less frequent occurrence.

7. If I were asked to say whether our influence among the Chiefs is as great now as it ever was, I should certainly reply in the affirmative. Time has been on our side, the tribes themselves, it may be presumed, have lost to some extent their old turbulent instincts and have seen the advantages of peace, while experience has taught the Chiefs that the engagements which they have entered into must be observed.

The general tranquility, both maritime and internal, of this part of the Coast during recent years seems to me to show that our traditional policy, which may aptly be described as a judicious policy of overlordship, has been fully maintained. In my opinion it cannot be improved upon. For all practical and necessary purposes the Trucial Chiefs may be considered to be under our protectorate and there is no necessity to make this protectorate more formal unless and until further developments in the Gulf make such a course advisable. There may, of course, be at any time a recrudescence of fighting by land which was in former years, as may be seen by a reference to the Residency Administration Reports of 1873 and onwards, of frequent occurrence, but this is never likely to affect our interests to any serious extent. It will be necessary to see that our traditional policy is maintained. So long as this is done and so long as the Resident acts promptly and authoritatively when any of the Chiefs shows signs of not abiding by his engagements, it may be taken for granted that his intervention will always be implicitly accepted and that our influence, so far from declining, will continue to increase.

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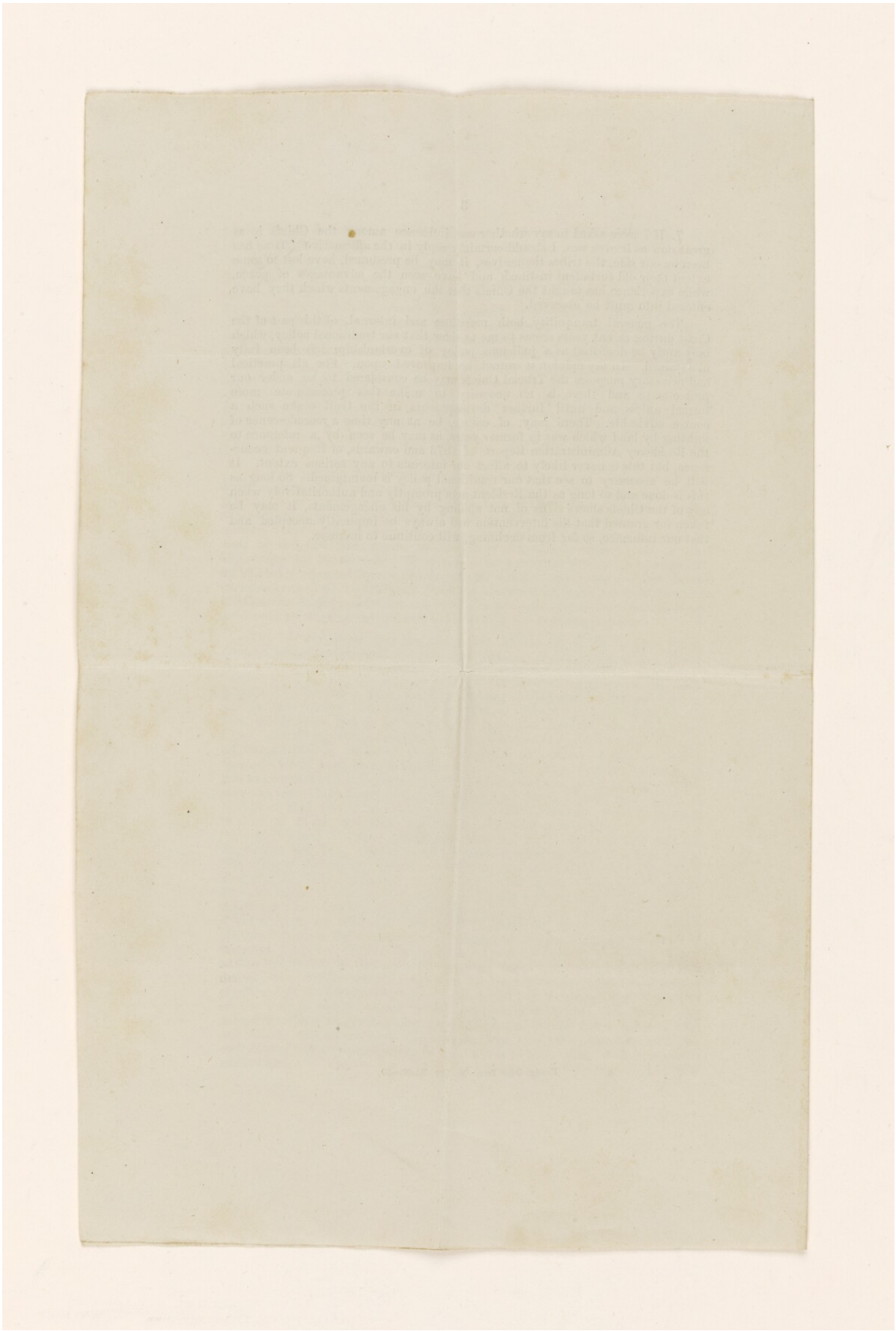

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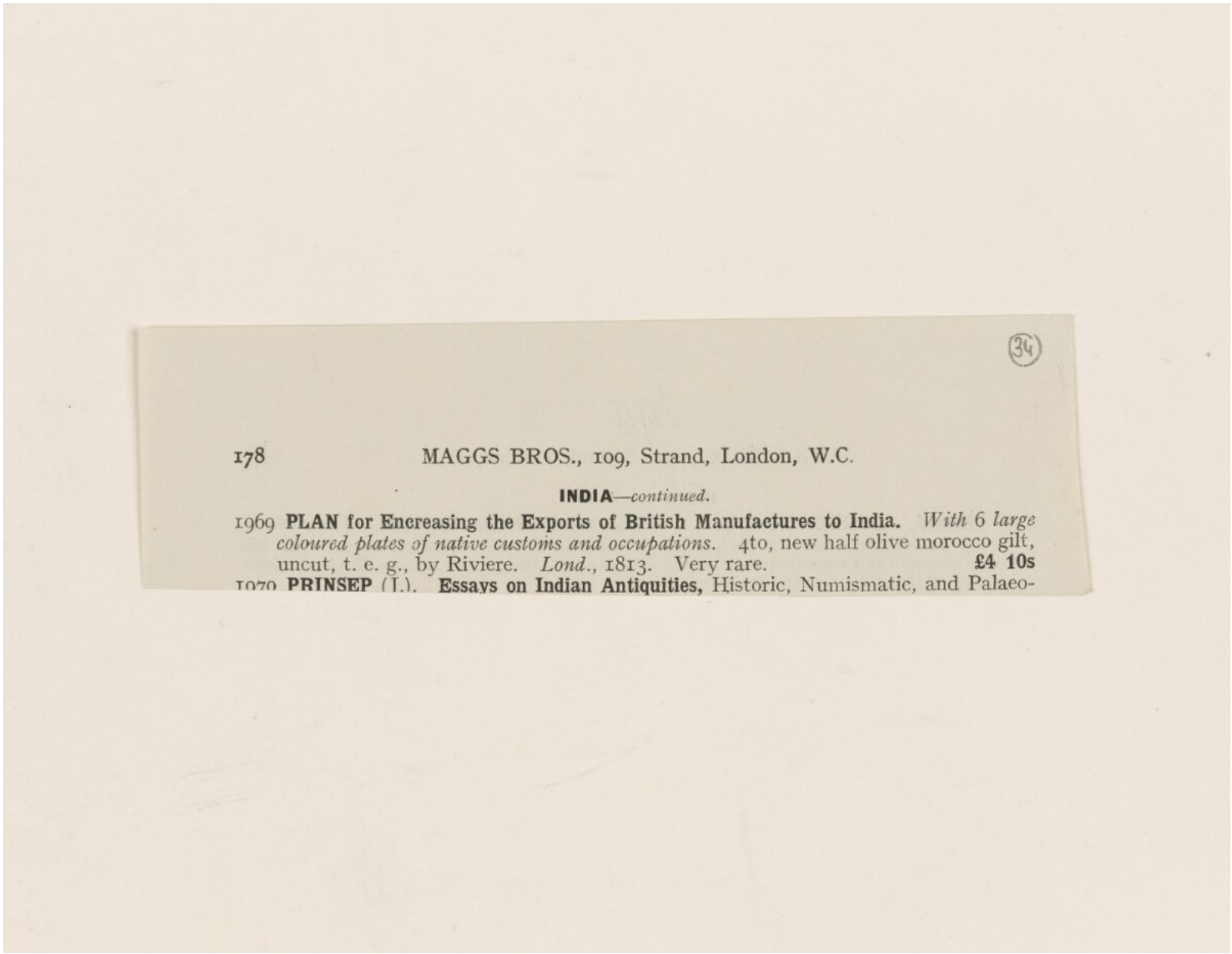

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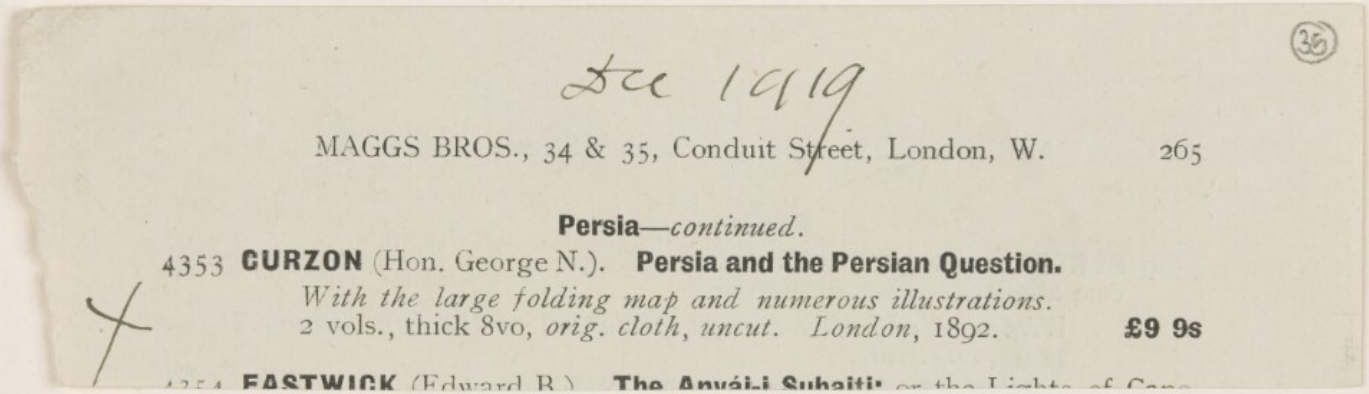

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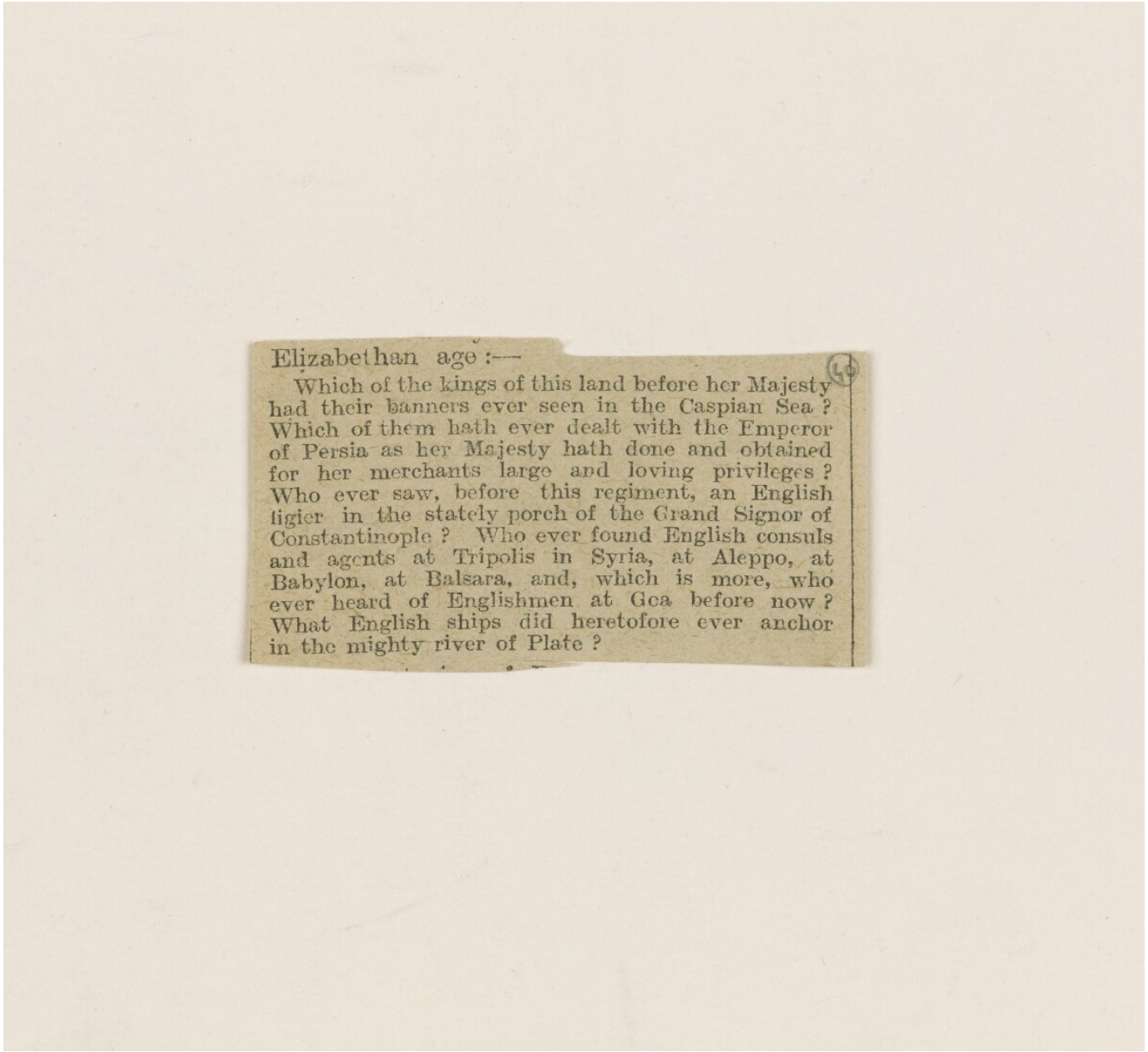

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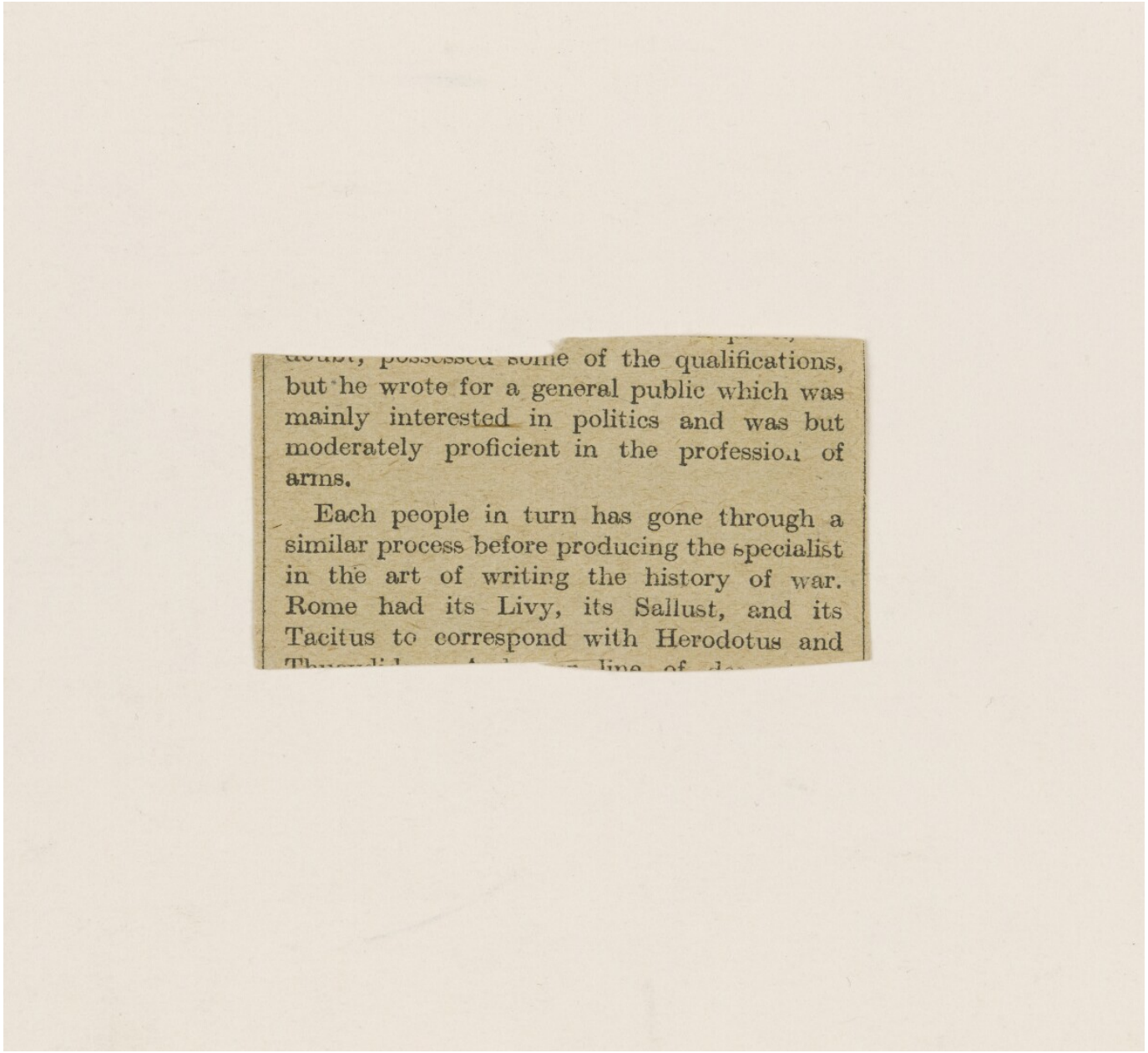

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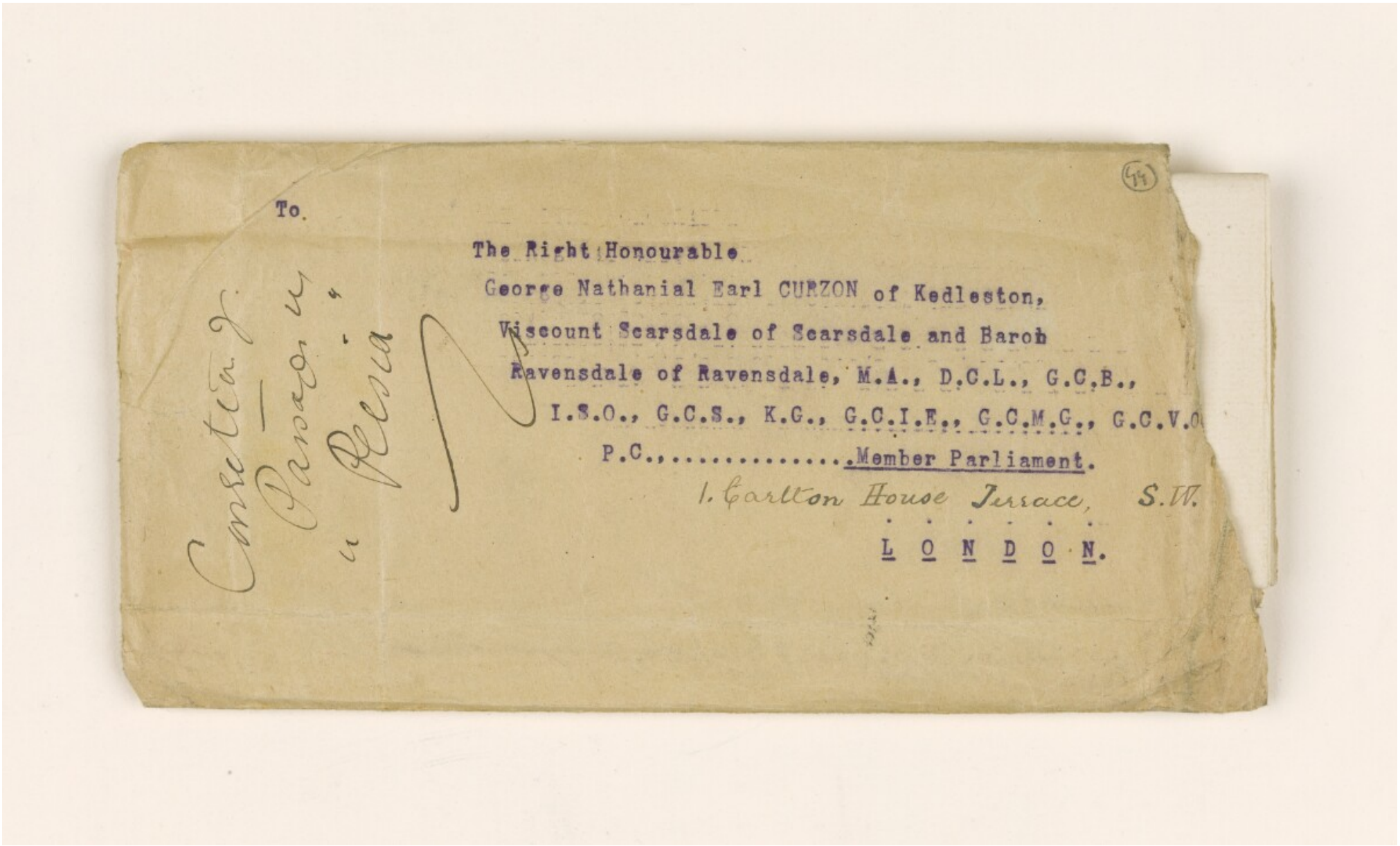
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Viscount Scarsdale of Scarsdale and Baron
Ravensdale of Ravensdale, M.A., D.C.L., G.C.B.,
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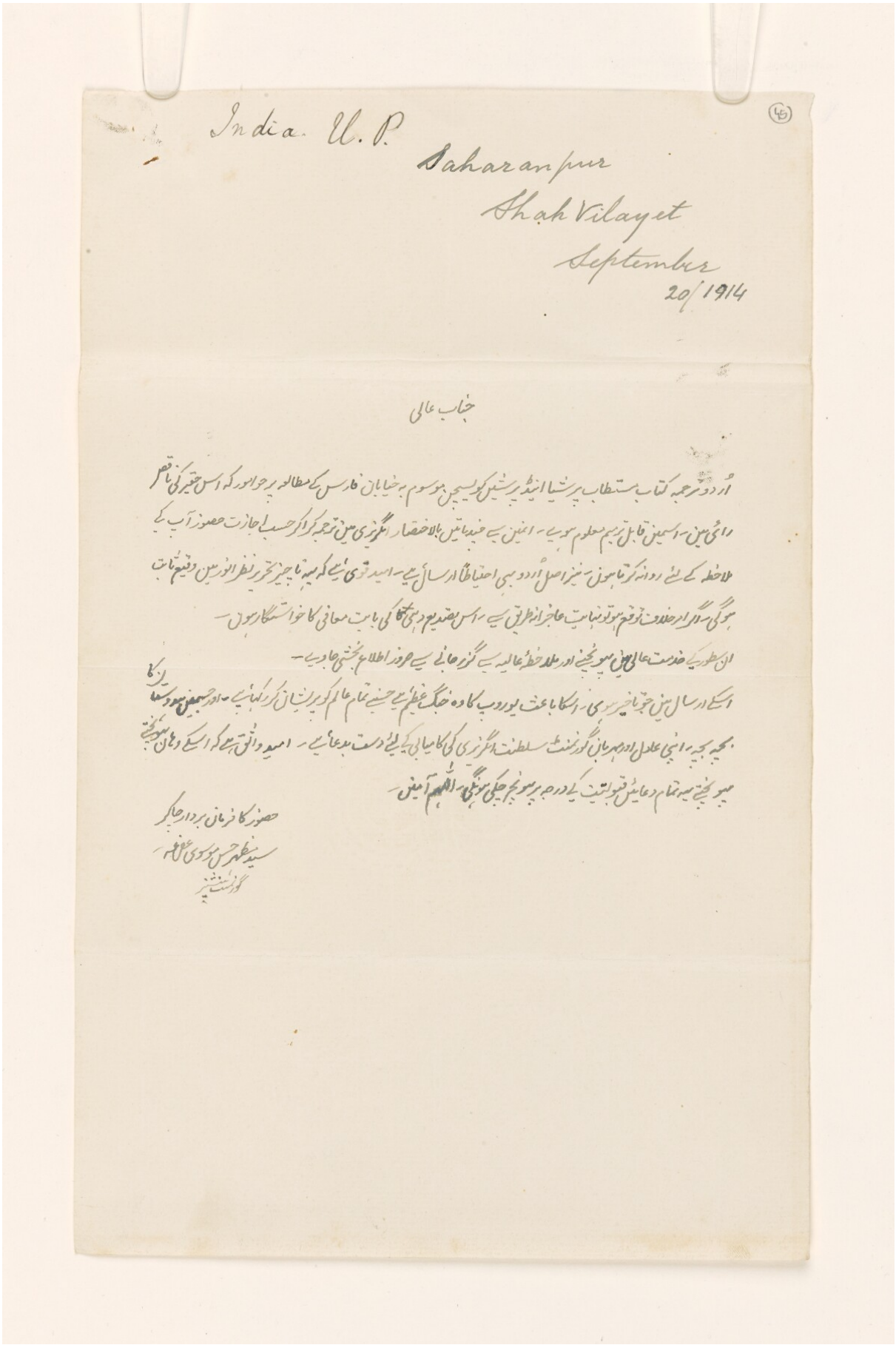

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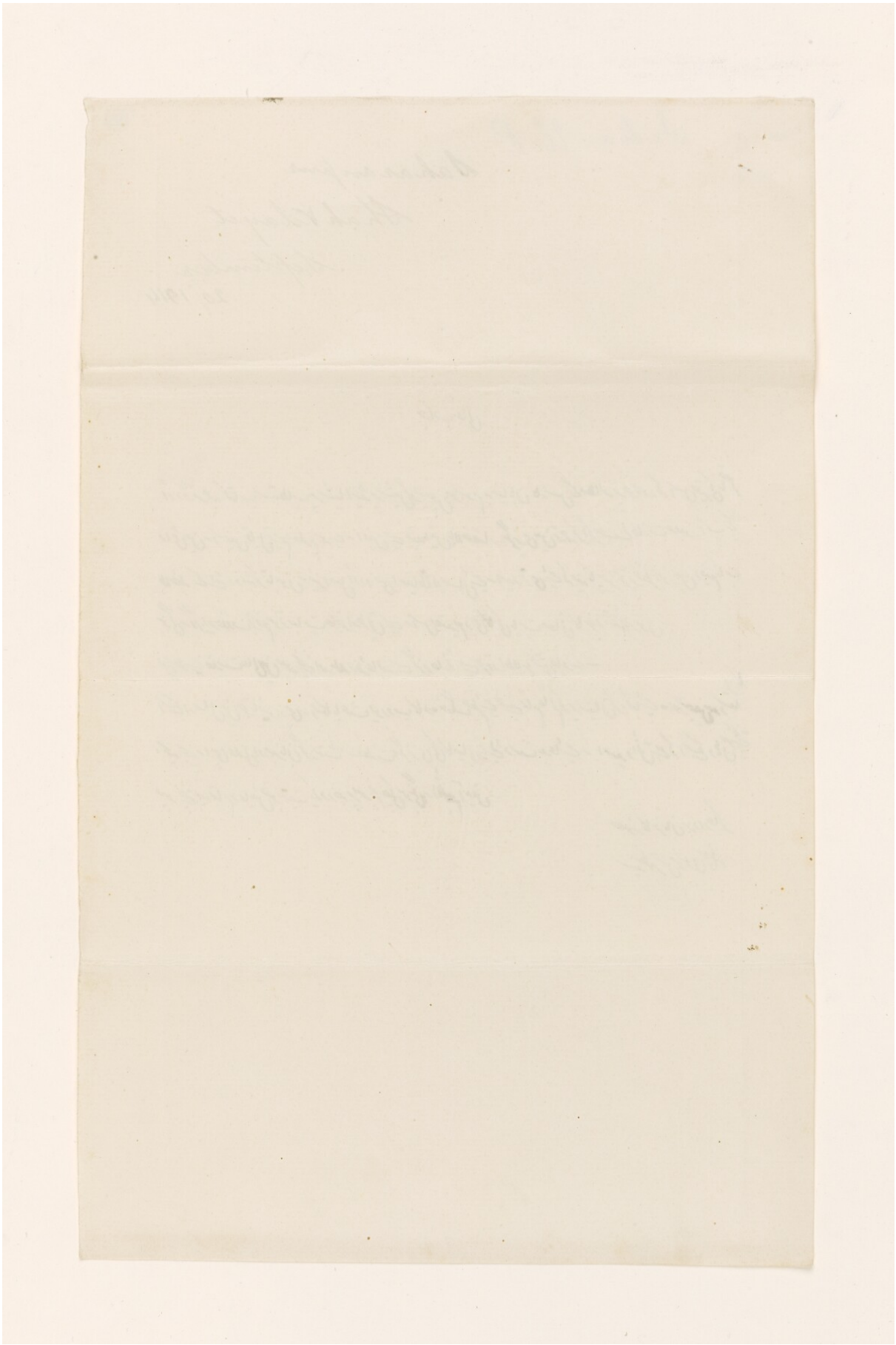

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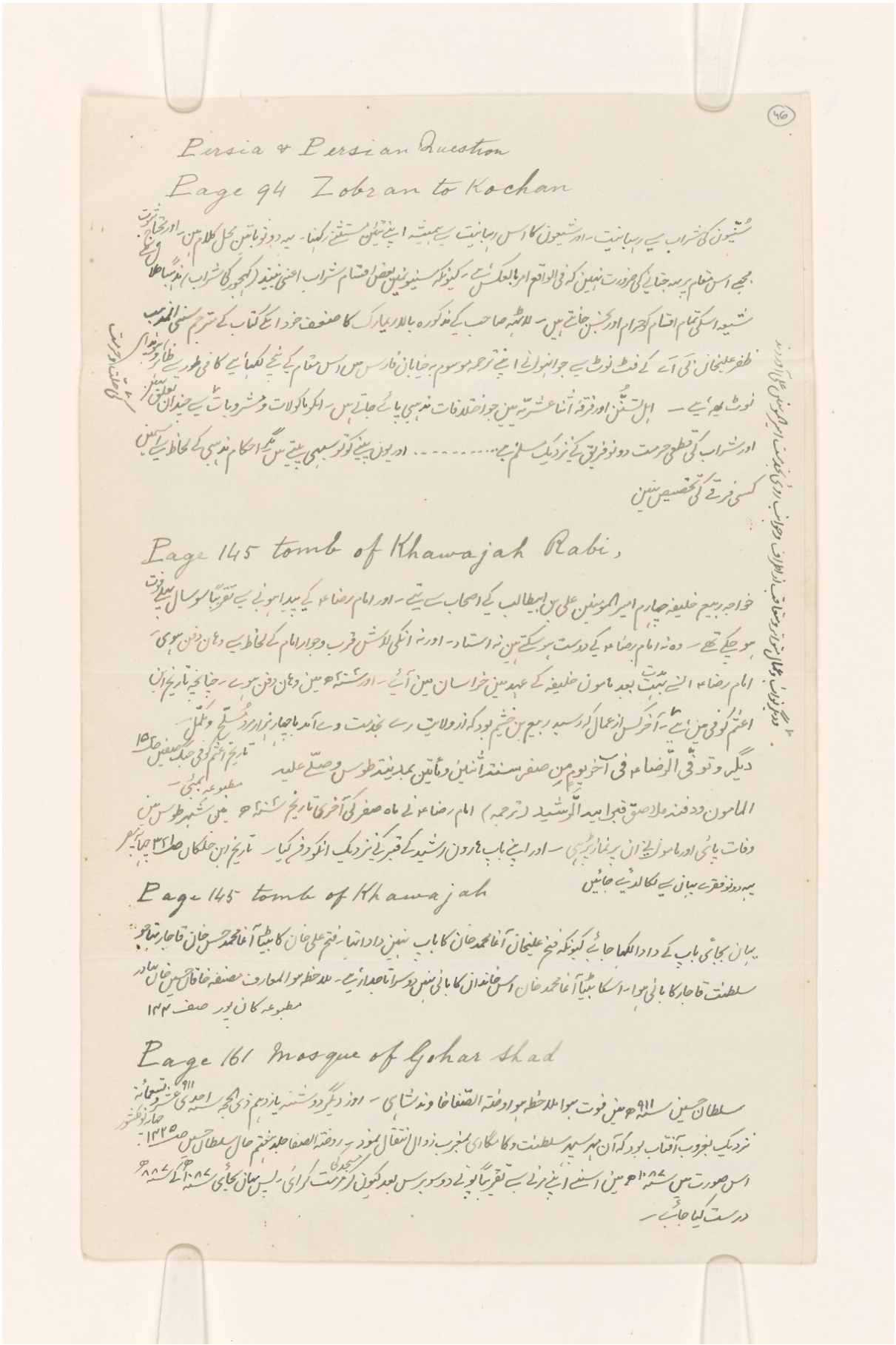

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Persia & Persian Question

Page 94 Zobran to Kochan

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Page 145 tomb of Khawajah Rabi,

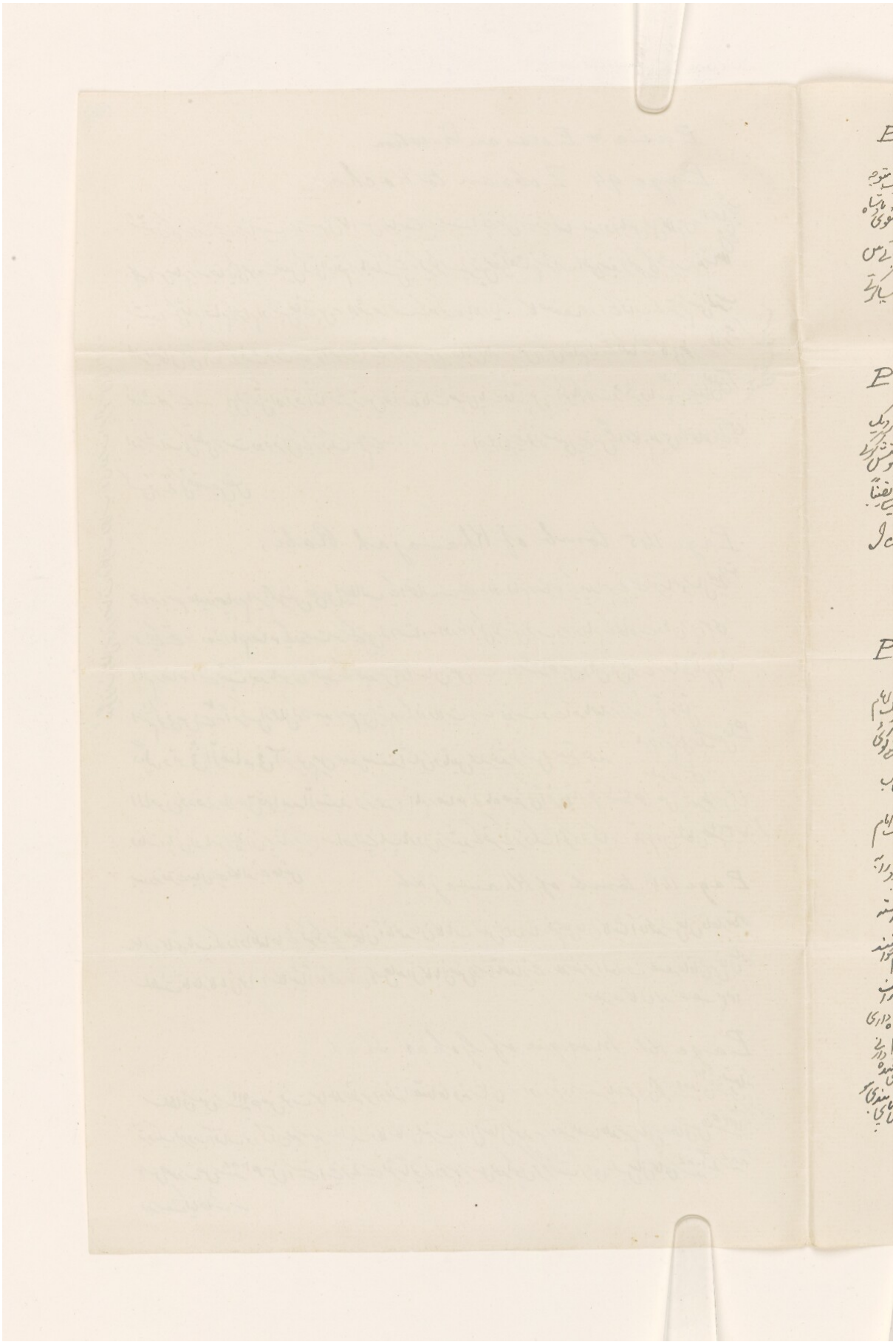
خواجہ ربیع خلیفہ چہارم امیر المومنین علی بن ابیطالب کے اصحاب سے تھے - اور امام رضاء کے پیدا ہونے سے تقریباً سو سال پہلے فوت ہو چکے تھے - وہ نہ امام رضاء کے دوست ہو سکتے ہیں نہ استاد - اور نہ انکی لاش قرب و جوار امام کے لحاظ سے وہاں دفن ہوئی امام رضاء الی بیت بعد مامون خلیفہ کے عہد میں خراسان میں آئے - اور ۲۰۳ھ میں وہاں دفن ہوئے - چنانچہ تاریخ ابن اعثم کوفی میں ہے - آخر کس از عمال کہ رسید ربیع بن خثیم بود کہ از ولایت رے بخدمت وے آمد با چہار ہزار مرد مسلح و قتل دیلم و توفی الرضاء فی آخر یوم من صفر سنۃ اثنین و مائتین بمدینۃ طوس و صلّی علیہ المامون و دفنہ ولاصق قبر ابید الرشید (ترجمہ) امام رضاء نے ماہ صفر کی آخری تاریخ ۲۰۳ھ میں شہر طوس میں وفات پائی اور مامون نے ان پر نماز پڑھی - اور اپنے باپ ہارون الرشید کے قبر کے نزدیک انکو دفن کیا - تاریخ ابن اعثم کوفی جلد ۸ صفحہ ۱۵۶ مطبوعہ بمبئی - تاریخ ابن خلکان صفحہ ۳۲۱ چاپ مصر یہہ دونو فقرے بیان سے نکالدیے جائیں

Page 145 tomb of Khawajah

یہاں بجائی باپ کے دادا لکھا جائے کیونکہ فتح علیخان آغا محمد خان کا باپ نہیں دادا تھا - فتح علی خان کا بیٹا آغا محمد حسن خان قاجار تھا جو سلطنت قاجار کا بانی ہوا - اسکا بیٹا آغا محمد خان اس خاندان کا بانی نہیں دوسرا تاجدار ہے - للہ حظ ہو المعارف مصنفہ خافاں حسن خان مشیر سلطنت مطبوعہ کان پور صفحہ ۱۴۲

Page 161 Mosque of Gohar Shad

سلطان حسین سنہ ۹۱۱ھ میں فوت ہوا للہ حظ ہو روضۃ الصفا خاوند شاہی - اور دیگر دوشنبہ یازدہم ذی الحجہ سنہ ۹۱۱ھ اجل موعود سے عنان تسخیر ملک نوشتہ نزدیک بغروب آفتاب بود کہ آن مہر سپہر سلطنت و کامگاری بمغرب زوال انتقال نمود - روضۃ الصفا جلد ہفتم حال سلطان حسین صفحہ ۱۴۲۵ اس صورت میں سنہ ۱۰۸۷ھ میں اسنے اپنے نرنے سے تقریباً تو نے دو سو برس بعد کیوں از سر نو مرمت کرائی - پس یہاں کی سنہ ۱۰۸۷ھ درست کیا جائے -



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Page 149 History of meshhad

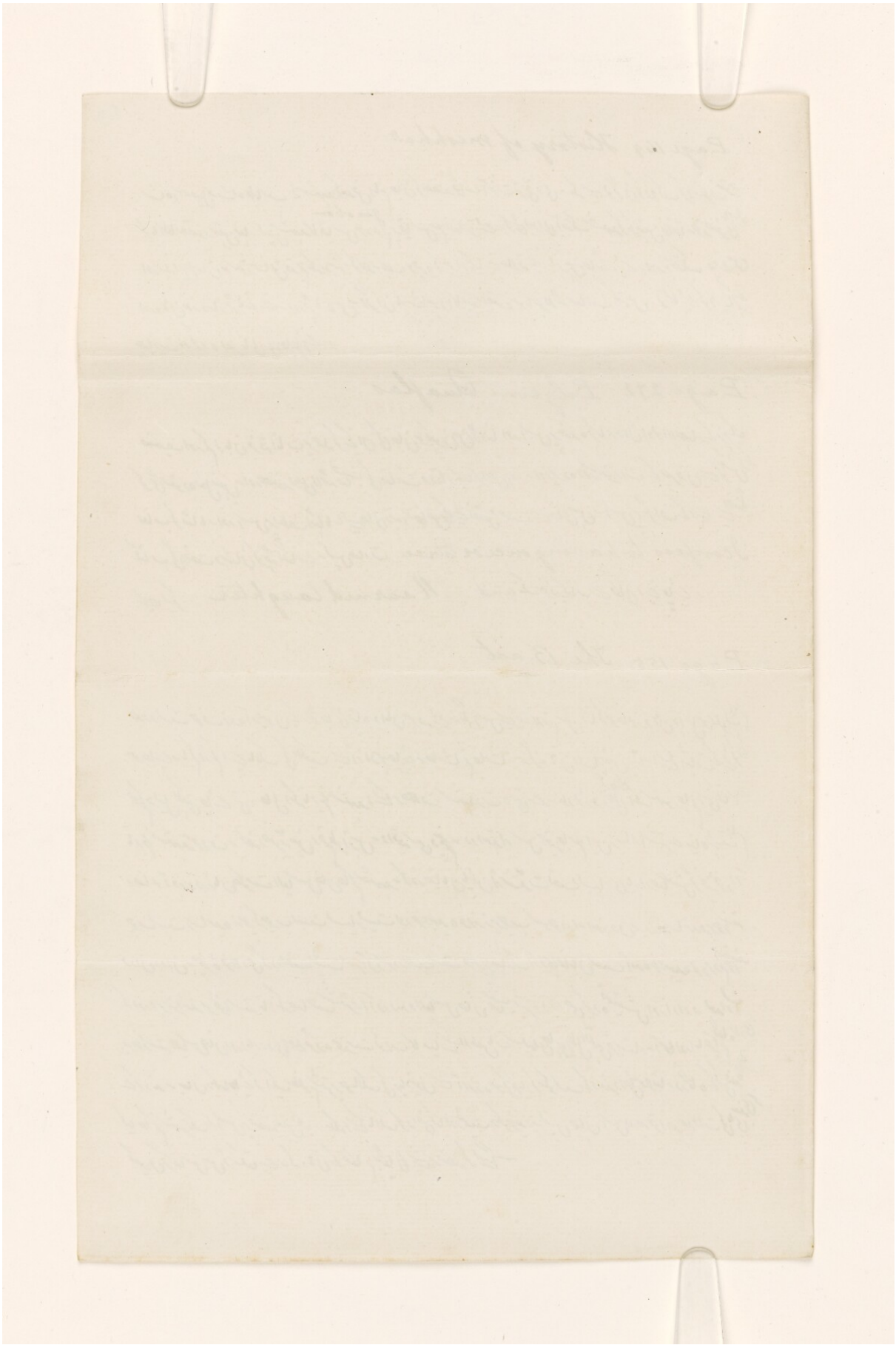
شاہ اسمعیل و شاہ طہماسپ نے مشہد کو مدفن امام جان کر بقصد ثواب آخرت ترقی دی۔ مکہ سے لوگوں کو روک کر اسطرف متوجہ کرنا انکا مقصود نہیں تھا۔ پس مشہد کا قیاس جرد نوم Jerobam پر قیاس مع الفارق ہے۔ کوئی ایرانی آجتک مشہد کو مکہ نہیں جانتا۔ خود صفوی بادشاہ اور جملہ اہل ایران بدستور سابق قدیم مکہ مدینہ۔ کربلا۔ نجف وغیرہ کو جو انکے اپنے علاقہ سے باہر ہیں جاتے رہے۔ اور آجتک جاتے ہیں اور وہاں نذر و نیاز چڑھاتے تھے۔ اور چڑھاتے ہیں۔ اگر ان بادشاہوں کا یہ مقصود ہوتا جو لاٹھ صاحب کہتے ہیں تو کاہے کو ایسا کرتے عبارت مذکورہ نظر ثانی کی قابل ہے۔

Page 272 Pilgrim Quaflas

ضعیف اور کم زبان فرقہ اناث پر حملہ کرکے ان کی جان جوکھوں میں ڈالنا اور اس پر خندہ کرنا مردان اولوالابصار کے نزدیک کوئی ستودہ فعل نہیں۔ اور حضور اعلی لاٹھ صاحب کی متانت و وقار سے بمراحل دور۔ اور پردہ دار مستورات کے چہروں سے کوشش کرکے نقاب کو ہٹانا۔ اور اس پر لطف اٹھانا ایسے عالی رتبہ اشخاص کے لیئے نقص و عیب سے خالی نہیں۔ اس پر گراف کے رہنے سے یقیناً کتاب کی رفعت و شان کو بٹہ لگتا ہے۔ پس عبارت I confess to having once or twice سے لیکر and well earned laughter تک ضرور کتاب سے نکال دینے چاہیئے۔

Page 155 The Bast

حدود بست خوف زدہ آدمیوں کے لیئے جائی پناہ و امان ضرور ہے۔ مگر اس سے یہ لازم نہیں آتا کہ جو جانور وہاں داخل ہو مملوک امام ہو جائے۔ یا کم از کم اپنے مالک کی ملکیت سے آزاد ہو جائے۔ حاشا ثم حاشا۔ ہرگز وہاں ایسا نہیں ہوتا۔ اسکے اثبات کے لیئے کوئی محکم دلیل لکھنی چاہیئے تھی۔ حال انکہ تاریخ مشہد اسکے برخلاف شہادت دیتی ہے۔ ملا نور و زعلی بسطامی ایک مشہور عالم اپنی کتاب تاریخ مشہد معروف بہ تحفہ رضویہ میں رقم طراز ہیں۔ واقعہ سی و پنجم۔ در ابتداء سن حقیر جامع این رسالہ اشتری پناہ بہ بست امام رضا آورد در زمان حکومت الیاس خان حاکم مشہد۔ کہ در خیابان پائین از شدت تعب و بسیاری بار از صاحبش گریختہ خود را بہ چوب بست رسانیدہ۔ چونکہ چوب بست بسیار پست بود خوابیدہ و از زیر چوب سر خود را بہ اندرون بست رسانید و برخواستہ دوان دوان بہ پنجرہ فولادی کہ در عقب پشت سر آن سرور نصب است و ضریح مبارک از آنجا نمایان است آمدہ خوابیدہ بود مردم خواستند کہ او را برخیزانند برنخواستہ تا آنکہ صاحب شتر را آوردند و الیاس خان صاحب شتر را راضی کردہ قیمتش او را دادہ بعد از آن برخواستہ الیاس خان او را باردوی معلی بردہ بخدمت نواب کامیاب سلاطین مآب سلیمان جاہی ظل اللہی فرستاد۔ آنجا او را باحترام نگاہداری می کردند۔ یہاں دیکھا جائے کہ ایک مظلوم شتر پر جو مالک کی زیادتیوں سے آزردہ ہو کر فریاد کرنیکو بست کے اندر داخل ہوا تھا۔ درگاہ کے کسی عہدہ دار نے کیا حاکم شہر تک لے اس پر قبضہ نہیں کیا۔ بلکہ اسکے مالک کو راضی کیا اور قیمت دیکر خریدا۔ پس جہاں اس درجہ قواعد عدالت کی پابندی ہو کیونکر قیاس میں آسکتا ہے۔ کہ وہاں کے حکام بیگانی شے پر قبضہ کر لینگے۔



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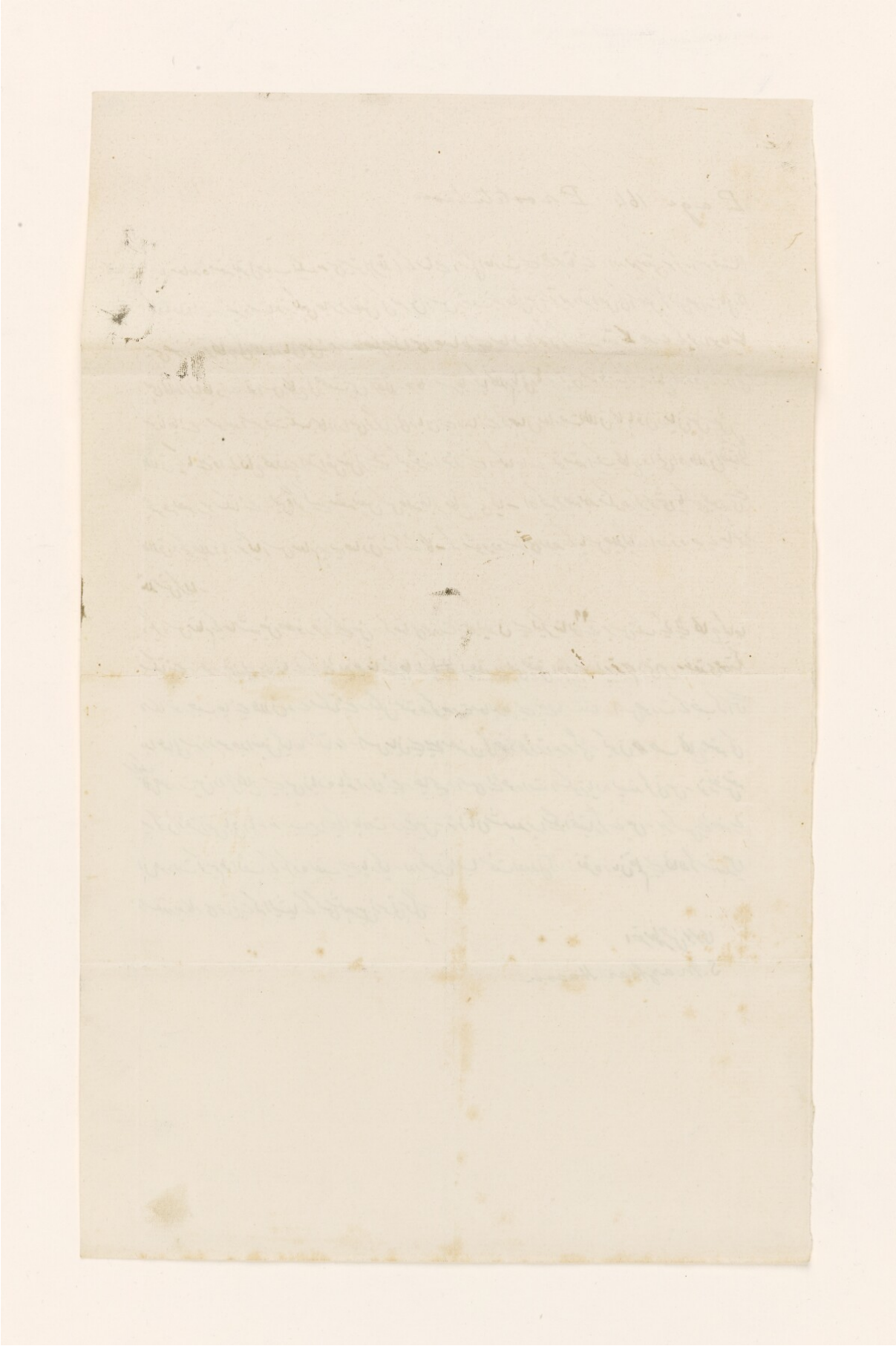
Page 164 Prostitution

جبکہ معاہدۂ متعہ بقول جناب ایک مذہبی پیشوا (ملا) کے سامنے اسکی اجازت سے طے ہوتا ہے۔ اور مہر معین ہوکر۔ اسیوقت ادا کردیا جاتا ہے۔ نیز دستاویز لکھی جاکر فریقین کی مہریں اس پر ثبت ہوجاتی ہیں۔ تو پھر اعتراض کی اسمیں کونسی صورت باقی رہی یہی صورت تو نکاح کی جملہ ادیان میں ہے۔ خاصکر جبکہ آمنی احتیاط سے معاملہ طے ہوکر گزشتہ عقد کے عدے کے پورا ہوجانیکا بھی لحاظ کرلیا جاوے۔ تو اس نکاح کی صحت میں عقلاً۔ عرفاً۔ شرعاً۔ کیا کلام باقی رہا۔ رہی یہ بات کہ یہ نکاح محدود ہے۔ دائمی ہونا چاہیے۔ سو یہ اسیوقت تک بجا اور اپنی لوگوں کی زبان سے زیبا ہے کہ جہاں مفارقت طلاق کا باؤن درمیان میں نہیں۔ طلاق کے ماننے والے نکاح محدود پر اعتراض نہیں کرسکتے۔ کیونکہ ذرا غور سے دیکھا جائے۔ تو متعہ ایک نکاح دائمی اور طلاق اختیاری کا مجموعہ تصور ہوسکتا ہے۔ یعنی اگر کسینے متعہ نہیں کسی جگہ جاکر نکاح ہی کیا۔ اور کچھ عرصہ بعد شکوہ کو خوشی یا کسی مجبوری سے طلاق دیکر چلا آیا۔ تو کیا اس مقام پر یہ صادق نہ آئے گا۔ کہ شوہر دوسری زوجہ کے پاس چلا گیا۔ اور زوجہ نے بیتابی سے تلاش کرلیا۔

دیگر اس مقام کے حاشیہ میں حضور خود لکھتے ہیں۔ کہ متاعی عورت سے ایکدن سے لیکر ننانوے ۹۹ برس تک کے لیئے نکاح کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ عورتیں یورپ زمانے کے لیئے زوجہ بنائے جانے کیلئے کو عقدی یعنی حقیقی زوجہ ہونے پر ترجیح دیتی ہیں۔ عقدی عورت کو اسکا شوہر جب چاہے طلاق دے سکتا ہے۔ لیکن متعہ کو مدت معاہدہ سے پہلے باستثنار اسی صورت کے جب کہ اس سے بداعمالی سرزد ہو جدا نہیں کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس بیان سے پہلے مضمون کی خود بخود تردید ہوگئی۔ کیونکہ جب نکاح متعہ کی ایک ایسی صورت میں دائمی نکاح سے بھی زیادہ پائداری ہے۔ چنانچہ اسی لئے عورات اسکو زیادہ پسند کرتی ہیں۔ تو نفس متعہ پر کوئی اعتراض باقی رہا نہ مذہب پر اسکا اجازت دینے میں۔ نہ زمان شہد پر اسکے اختیار کرنے میں۔ پھر کس لیئے حضور نے ان عورات کو نیم طوائف کے مکروہ لقب سے یاد کیا۔ اور کیوں ایسا سخت اور دل آزار فقرہ زبان قلم سے نکالا کہ شہد میں اسقدر بدکاری ہوتی ہے کہ ایشیا کے کسی شہر میں نہ ہوتی ہوگی۔

اظہر حسن موسوی
S. Mazhar Hasan



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"Persia and Persian Question"

Page 94.Zobran to Kochan.

Regarding your Lordship's remarks on the Stern and strict abstinence from all sorts of intoxicating liquors on the part of the Sunnis and on the indulgence of the Shias in habits of drinking to excess, I have my own humble observations to submit to your Lordship.

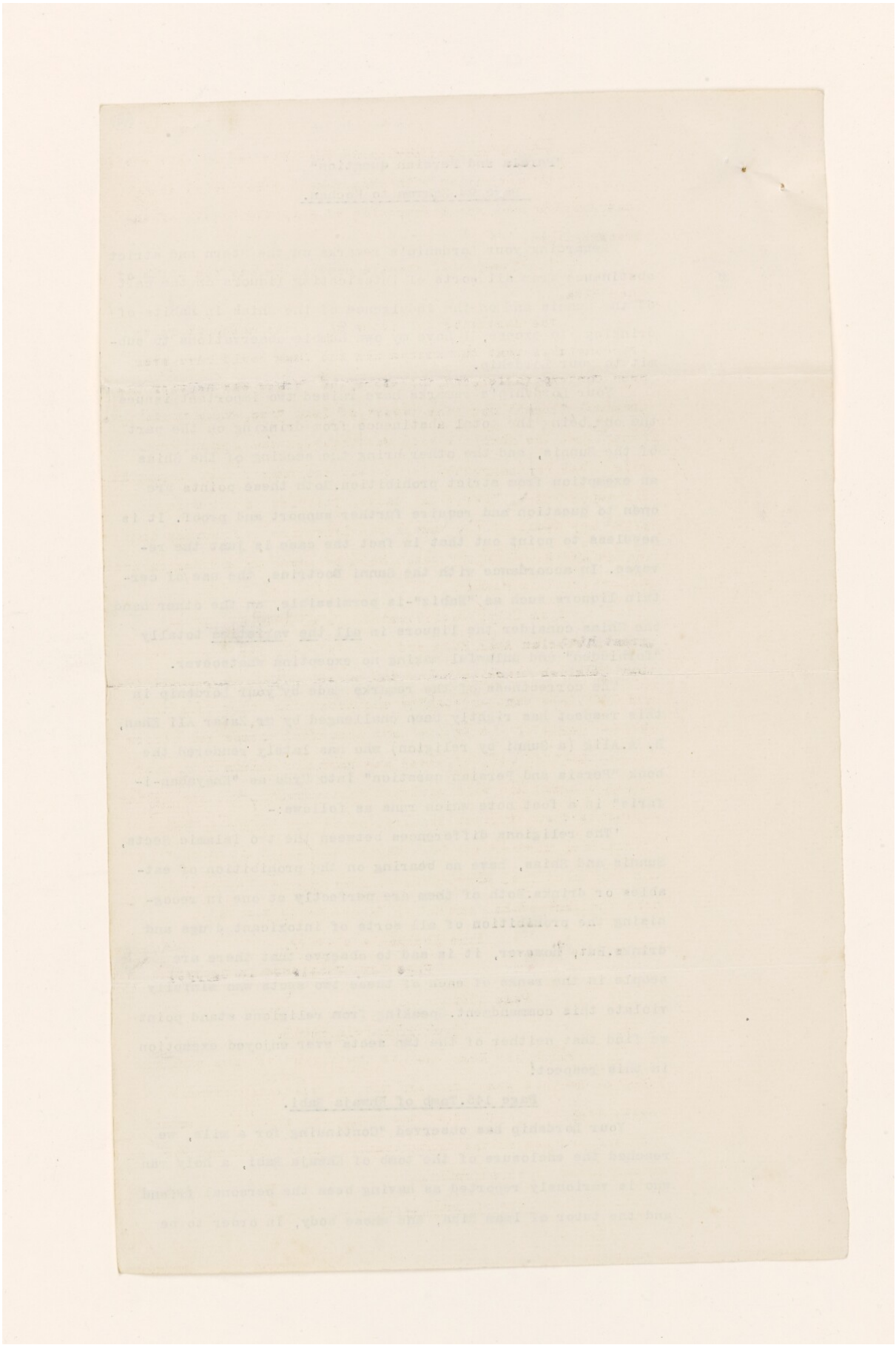
Your Lordship's remarks have raised two important issues the one being the total abstinence from drinking on the part of the Sunnis, and the other bring the seeking of the Shias an exemption from strict prohibition.Both these points are open to question and require further support and proof. It is needless to point out that in fact the case is just the reverse. In accordance with the Sunni Doctrine, the use of certain liquors such as "Nabiz"-is permissible, on the other hand the Shias consider the liquors in all the varieties totally "forbidden" and unlawful making no exception whatsoever.

The correctness of the remarks made by your Lordship in this respect has rightly been challenged by Mr.Zafar Ali Khan, B. A.Alig (a Sunni by religion) who has lately rendered the book "Persia and Persian question" into Urdu as "Khayaban-i-faris" in a foot note which runs as follows:-

'The religions differences between the two Islamic Sects, Sunnis and Shias, have no bearing on the prohibition of eatables or drinks.Both of them are perfectly at one in recognising the prohibition of all sorts of intoxicant drugs and drinks.But, however, it is sad to observe that there are people in the ranks of each of these two sects who sinfully violate this commandment.Speaking from religions stand point we find that neither of the two sects ever enjoyed exemption in this respect!

Page 145.Tomb of Khwaja Rabi.

Your Lordship has observed "Continuing for a mile, we reached the enclosure of the tomb of Khwaja Rabi, a holy man who is variously reported as having been the personal friend and the tutor of Imam Riza, and whose body, in order to be



near that of his Sainted Companion, was interred in this spot?

In connection with this remark I may point out that Khawaja Rabi was a Companion of Ali, the fourth of the Great Caliphs.

The Khwaja died about a century before the birth of Imam Riza.

The Chronological order of events makes it quite irreconciable that the Khwaja and the Imam could have ever been Contemporaries. And, therefore, the former was neither the personal friend' nor 'the tutor' of Imam Riza. Your Lordship's remark that the Khwaja's body was interred there simply because that spot happened to be near the Imam's tomb is not at all supported by historical facts. The fact is that long after the death of the Khwaja the Imam came to Khorasan in the reign of the Caliph Mamun. He died there in 202 Hegira and was interred in Meshed.

I am fully corroborated in my view by the two great historian Asam Kufi and Ibni Khulkan. The former says that [(English translation of the ~~above~~ original) ("Other representatives and Officials came constantly one after the other from the various parts of the Empire and presented themselves before Amir-ul-mominin Ali, of these was Rabi bin Khasim with four thousand armed and well equipped followers.")]; and the latter describes that [(English translation of the original Arabic) ("Imam Riza died on the last day of the month of "Safar" in 202 Hegira at Tus. Mamun offered prayers and interred him near the tomb of his (mamun's) father Harun Rashid.

Ibne Khulkan's history,

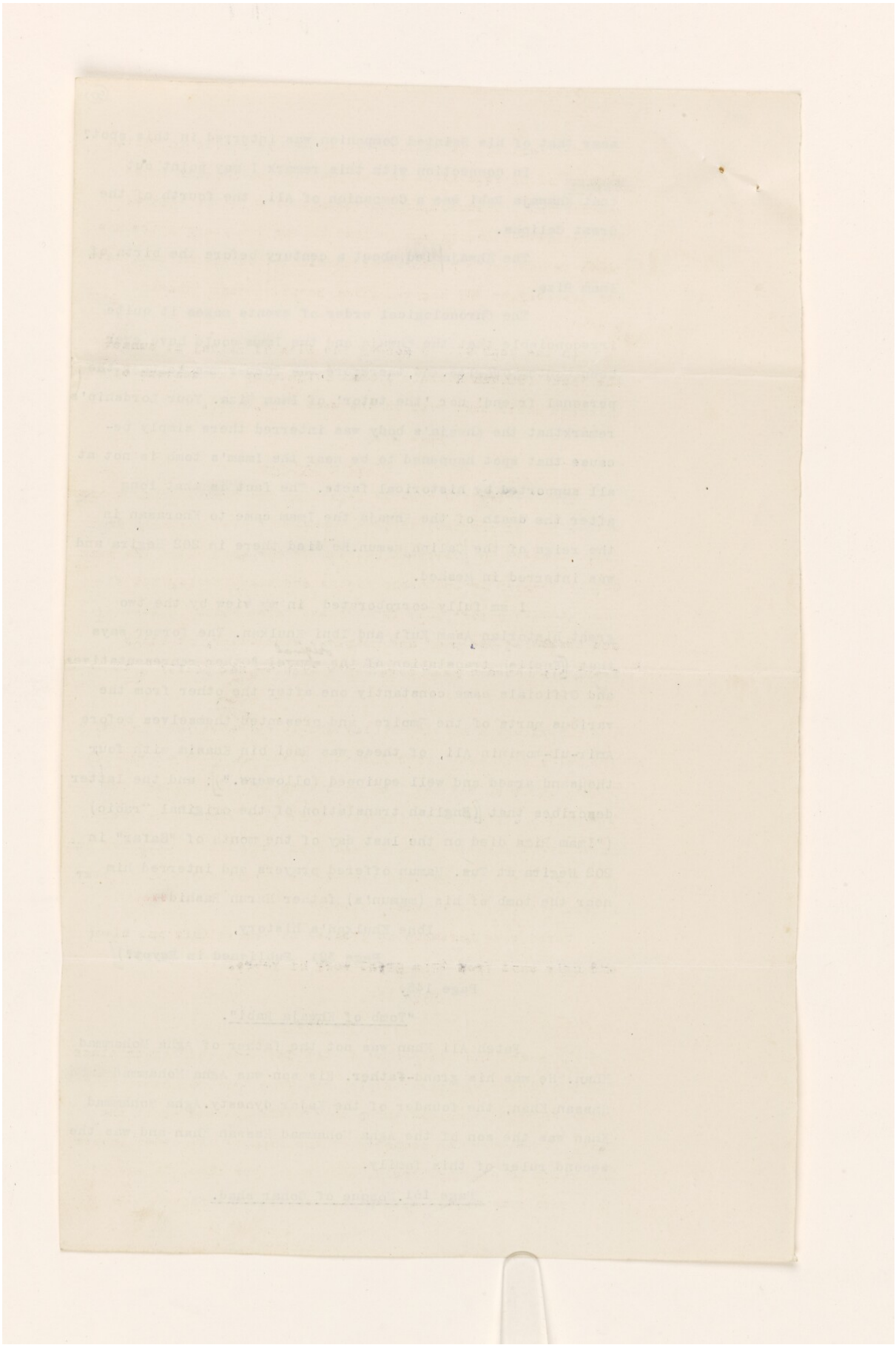
Page 321, Published in Egypt!)]

Page 145.

"Tomb of Khwaja Rabi".

Fateh Ali Khan was not the father of Agha Mohammad Khan. He was his grand-father. His son was Agha Mohammad Hassan Khan, the founder of the Kajar dynesty. Agha Mohammad Khan was the son of the Agha Mohammad Hassan Khan and was the second ruler of this family.

Page 161. Mosque of Gohar shad.



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The date of the reconstruction of the mosque by Sultan Hussain as alleged to be in the inscription appears to be rediculously incorrect.Sultan Hussain died in 911 Higera. The reconstruction by him in 1087 ~~H~~ viz 171 years after his death is obviously a grave misrepresentation.The correct date may possibly be 887 Higera. (Vide Rozat-ul-Safa "Khawand Shahi").

In the year 911 on Monday the 11th of Zilhaj at sunset the 'Sun' (Sultan Hussain ) that brightened the heavens of rule and power went down in the west (i.e.died).

Page 272.

Pilgrim Kaflas.

Your Lordship's remarks regarding the female Pilgrim open with a biting sarcasm. It is no wonder if your Lordship deplores therein the wretched customs of the East where the weak Sex is wrapped up in Shabby cloths and heavy veils. But when your Lordship goes your further and takes pride in teasing and troubling the poor and helpless women-folk, it looks fearfully beneath your Lordship's dignity and position to do so.

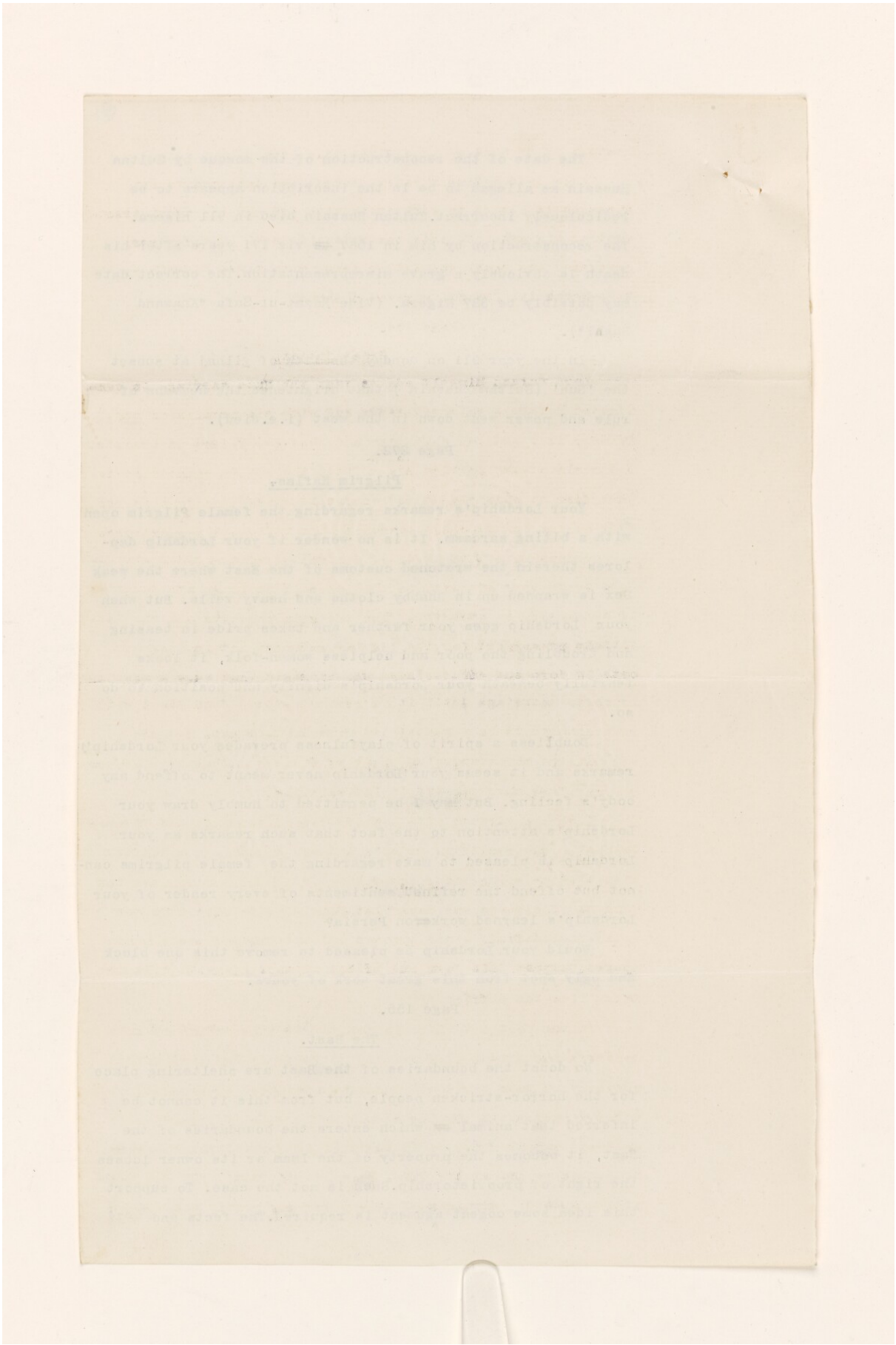
Doubtless a spirit of playfulness prevades your Lordship's remarks and it seems your Lordship never meant to offend any body's feeling. But may I be permitted to humbly draw your Lordship's attention to the fact that such remarks as your Lordship is pleased to make regarding the female pilgrims cannot but offend the refined sentiments of every reader of your Lordship's learned work~~s~~on Persia?

Would your Lordship be pleased to remove this one block and ugly spot from this great work of yours?

Page 155.

The East.

No doubt the boundaries of the East are sheltering place for the horror-stricken people, but from this it cannot be inferred that animal ~~an~~ which enters the boundaries of the East, it becomes the property of the Imam or its owner looses the right of proprietorship.Such is not the case. To support this idea some cogent argument is required.The facts and



history of Mashhad go ~~so~~ against this idea.

Once upon a time a camel entered the Sast and to all appearances seemed to seek protection against the cruel treatment of his owner.On this the Mutawali Sashi (i.e.Manager) purchased the camel and set it free, vide Tohfe Ri-zwaih by Mula ~~Nawaz~~ Firoz Ali Sustami Miyawar Mushhad.

Page 164.

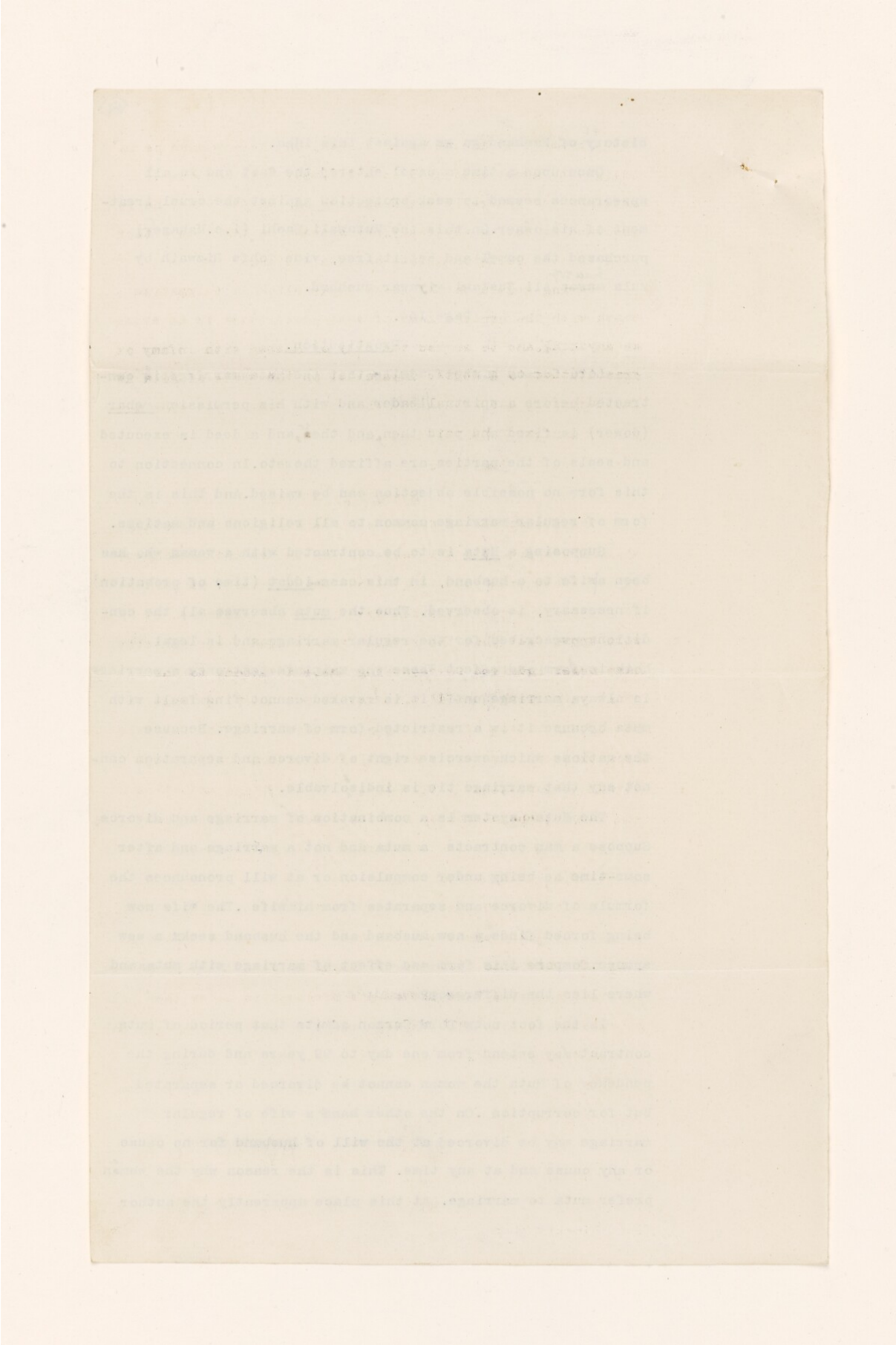
Prostitution.

Lord Curzon himself admits that the Muta marriage is contracted before a spirtual leader and with his permission Mehar (dower) is fixed and paid then, and then, and a deed is executed and seals of the parties are affixed thereto.In connection to this form no possible objection can be raised.And this is the form of regular marriage common to all religions and nations.

Supposing a Muta is to be contracted with a woman who has been a wife to a husband, in this case iddat (time of probation) if necessary, is observed. Thus the muta observes all the conditions prescribed for the regular marriage and is legal both in form and effect.Those who maintain that once a marriage is always marriage until it is revoked cannot find fault with muta because it is a restricted form of marriage. Because the nations which exercise right of divorce and separation cannot say that marriage tie is indisolvable.

The Muta system is a combination of marriage and divorce. Suppose a man contracts a muta and not a marriage and after some-time he being under compulsion or at will pronounces the formula of divorce and separates from his wife .The wife now being forced finds a new husband and the husband seeks a new spouse.Compare this form and effect of marriage with muta and where lies the difference?

In the foot note Lord Curzon admits that period of Muta contract may extend from one day to 99 years and during the pendency of Muta the woman cannot be divorced or separated but for corruption .On the other hand a wife of regular marriage may be divorced at the will of husband for no cause or any cause and at any time. This is the reason why the woman prefer muta to marriage. At this place apparently the author



(53)

finds himself on the horns of dilema. On the one hand he is obliged to admit that Muta is a stronger tie than the marriage and generally women approve it, on the other hand he is inclined to criticise adversely. Any attempt to denounce ~~either~~ muta and the religion allows it becomes futile.

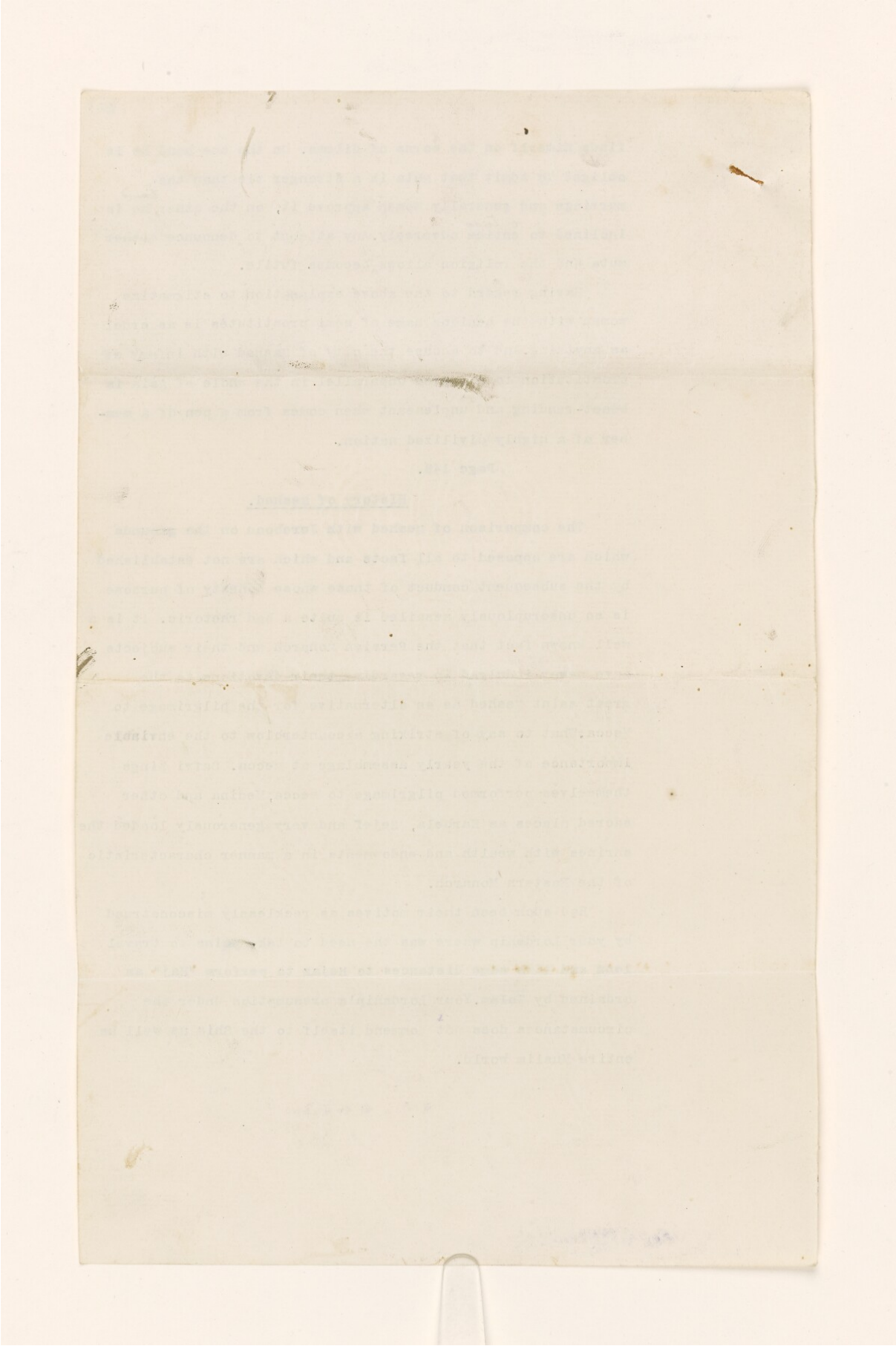
Having regard to the above explanation to stigmatize women with the henions name of semi prostitutes is as cruel as anything. And to accuse the city of Mashad with infamy of prostitution to a degree unparallel in the whole of Asia is heart-rending and unpleasant when comes from a pen of a member of a highly civilized nation.

Page 149.

History of Meshed.

The comparison of Meshed with Jereboon on the grounds which are opposed to all facts and which are not established by the subsequent conduct of those whose honesty of purpose is so unscruplously assailed is quite a bad rhetoric. It is a well known fact that the Persian Monarch and their subjects have never indulged in regarding their devotions to the great saint Meshed as an alternative for the pilgrimage to Mecca. What to say of striking a counterblow to the enviable importance of the yearly assemblage at mecca. Safvi Kings themselves performed pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina and other sacred places as Karbela, Nejef and very generously loaded the shrines with wealth and endowments in a manner characteristic of the Eastern Monarch.

Had such been their motives as recklessly misconstrued by your Lordship where was the need to take pains to travel long and tire some distances to Hejaz to perform "Haj" as ordained by ~~Tolam~~ Islam. Your Lordship's presumption under the circumstances does not commend itself to the Shia as well as entire Muslim world.



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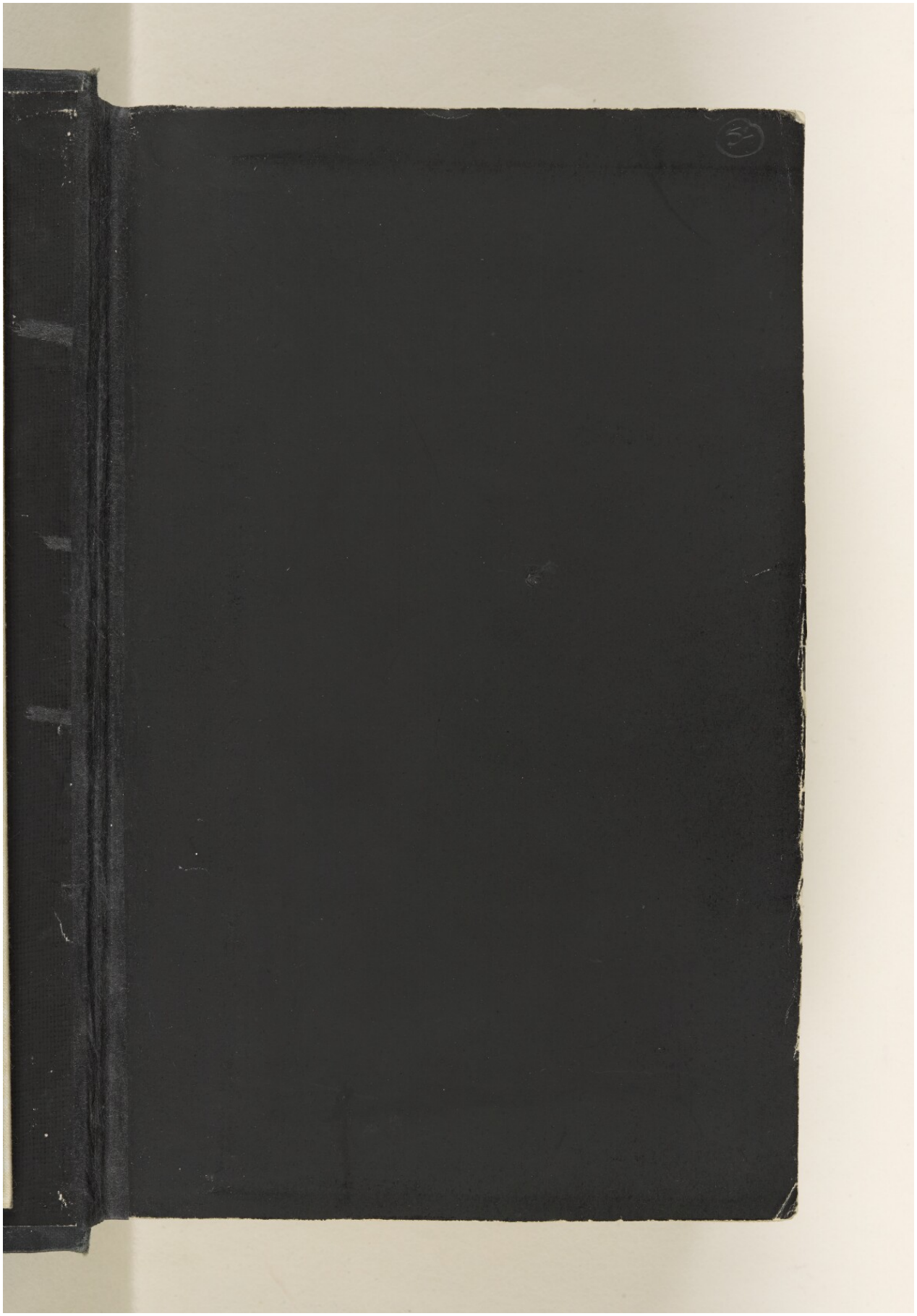

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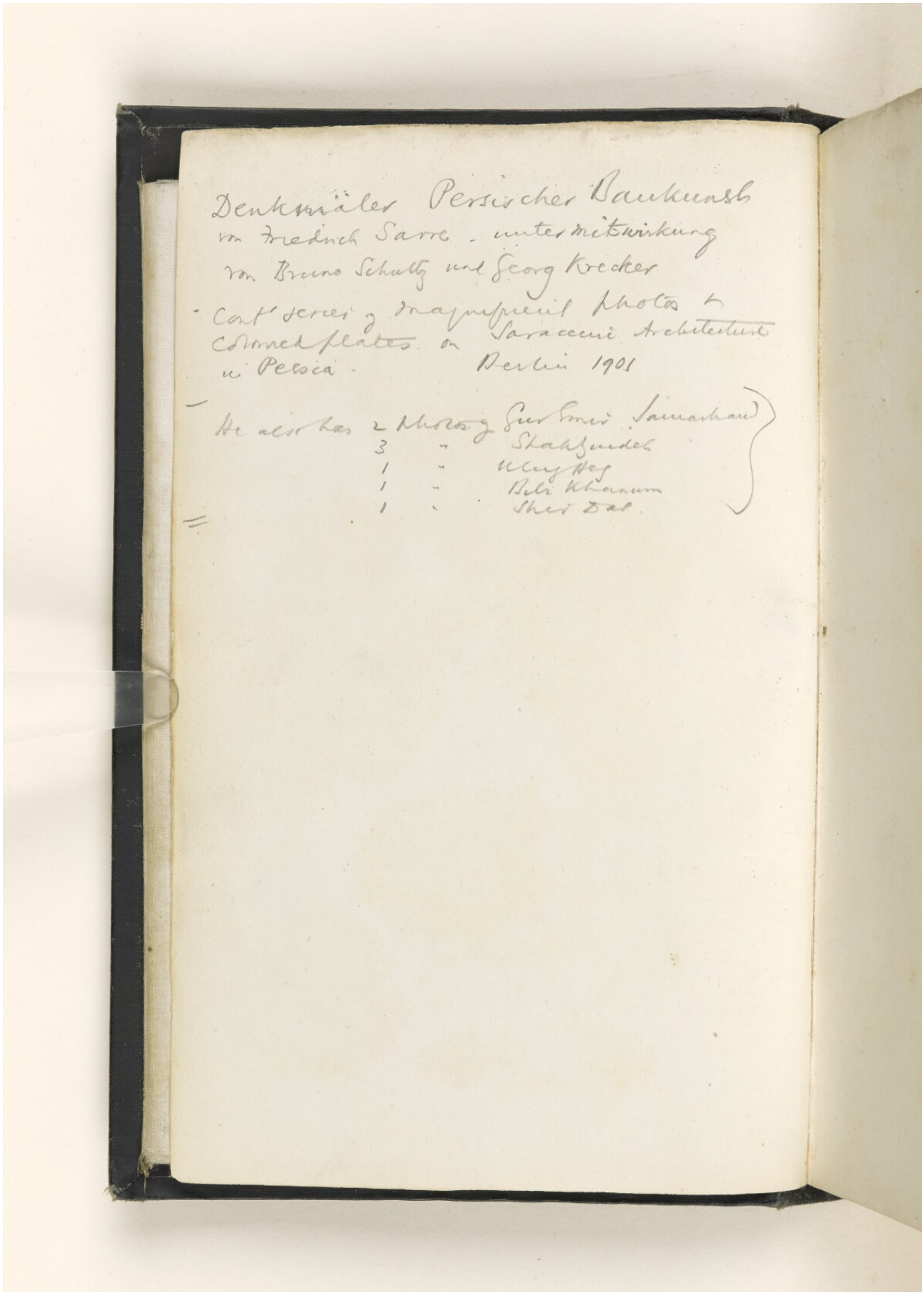
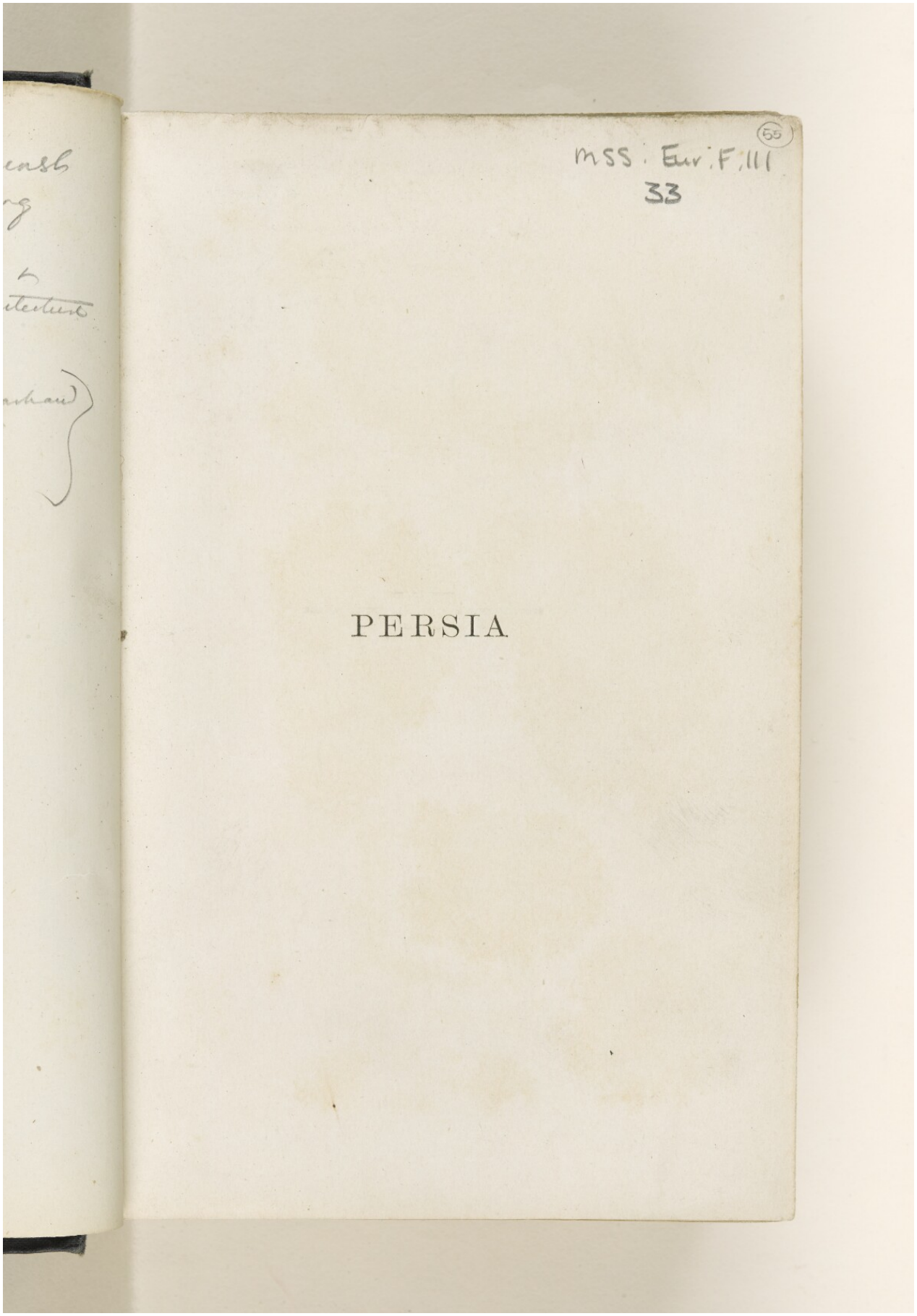

Denkmäler Persischer Baukunst
von Friedrich Sarre - unter mitwirkung
von Bruno Schultz und Georg Krecker
Cart' series of magnificent photos &
coloured plates on Saracenic Architecture
in Persia. Berlin 1901
He also has 2 photos of Gur Emir Samarkand
3 " Shahzunder
1 " Ulug Beg
1 " Bibi Khanum
1 " Sher Dar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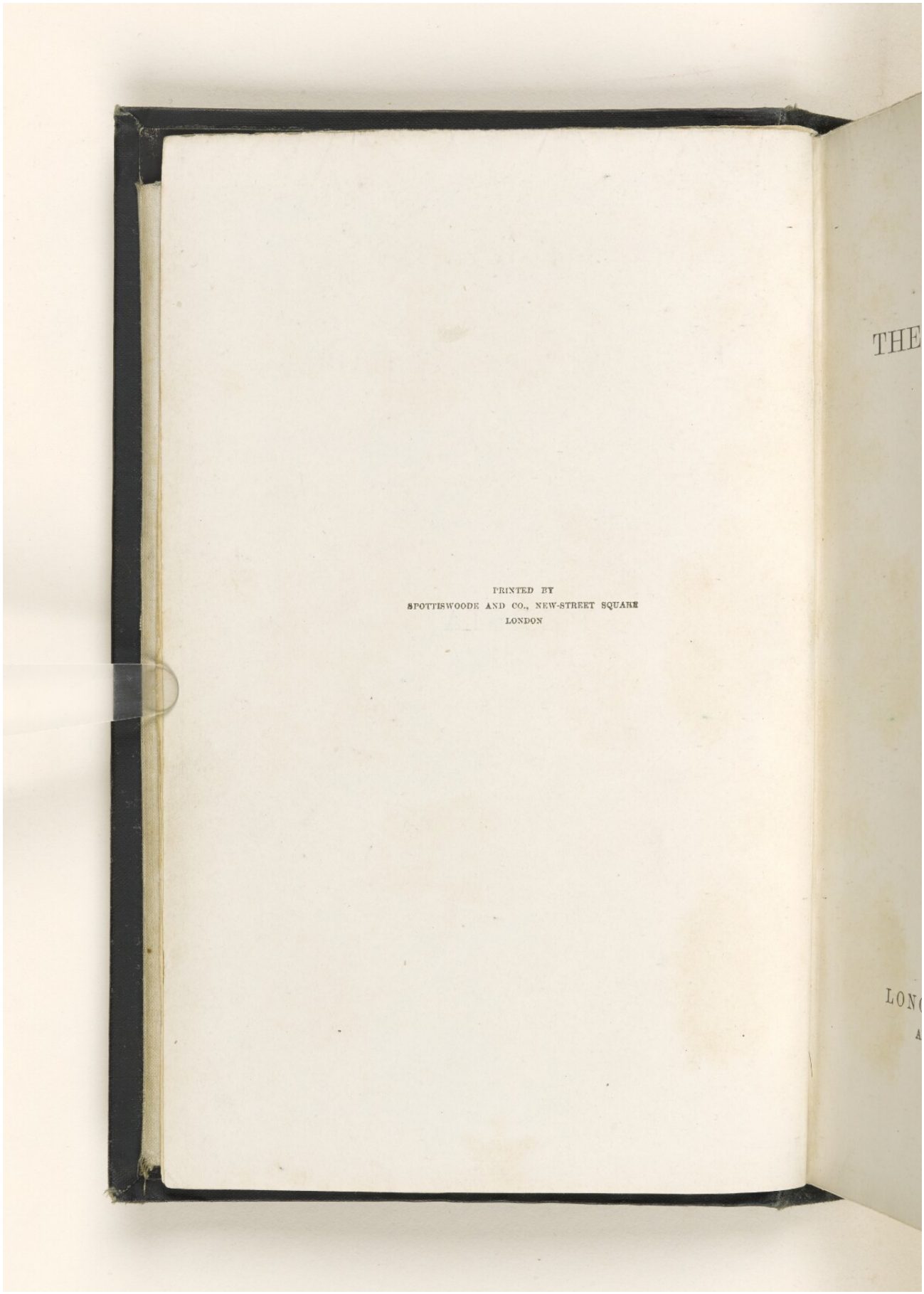


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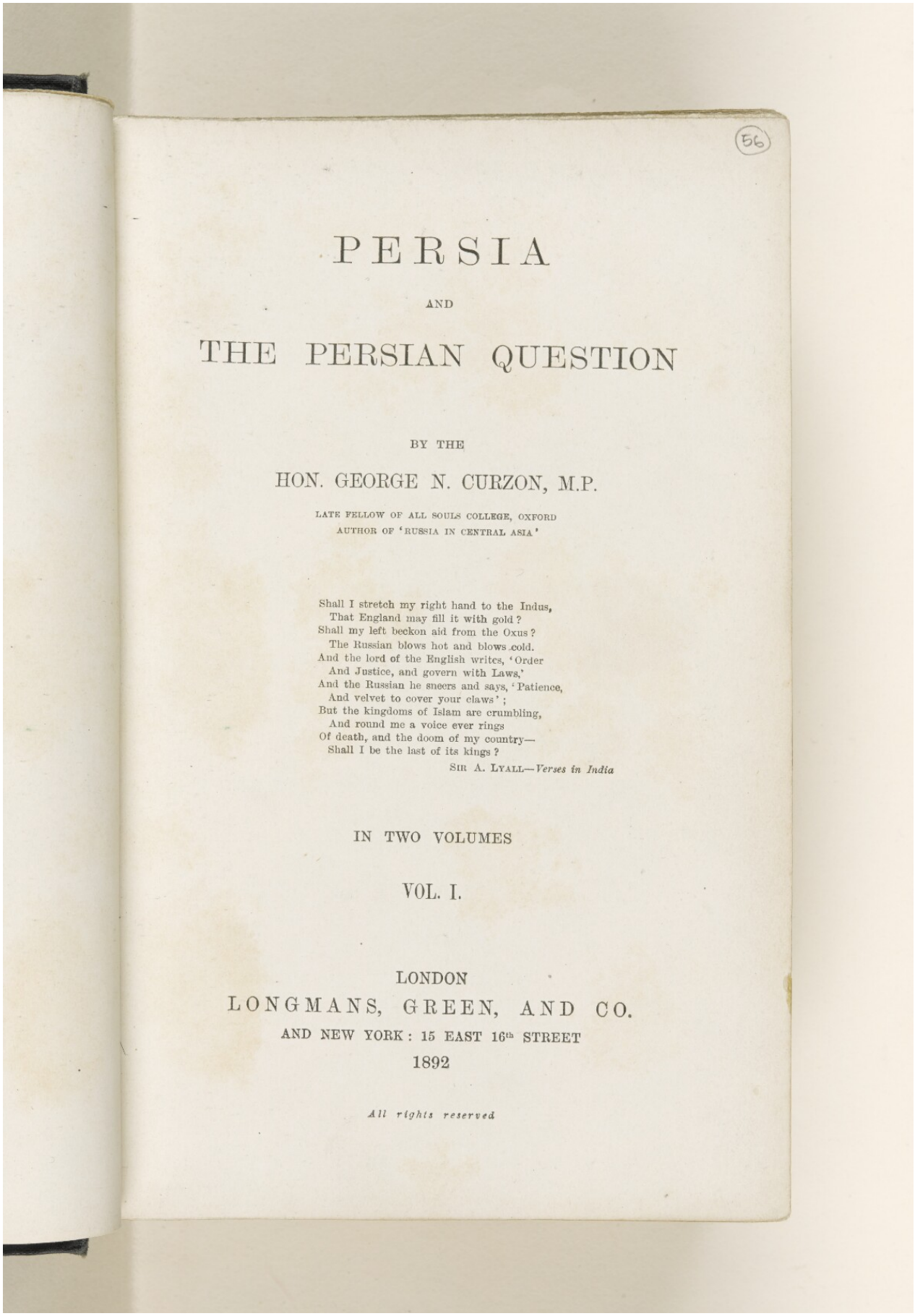

56

# PERSIA

AND

# THE PERSIAN QUESTION

BY THE

HON. GEORGE N. CURZON, M.P.

LATE FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD
AUTHOR OF 'RUSSIA IN CENTRAL ASIA'

Shall I stretch my right hand to the Indus,
That England may fill it with gold?
Shall my left beckon aid from the Oxus?
The Russian blows hot and blows cold.
And the lord of the English writes, 'Order
And Justice, and govern with Laws,'
And the Russian he sneers and says, 'Patience,
And velvet to cover your claws';
But the kingdoms of Islam are crumbling,
And round me a voice ever rings
Of death, and the doom of my country—
Shall I be the last of its kings?

SIR A. LYALL—*Verses in India*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16th STREET
1892

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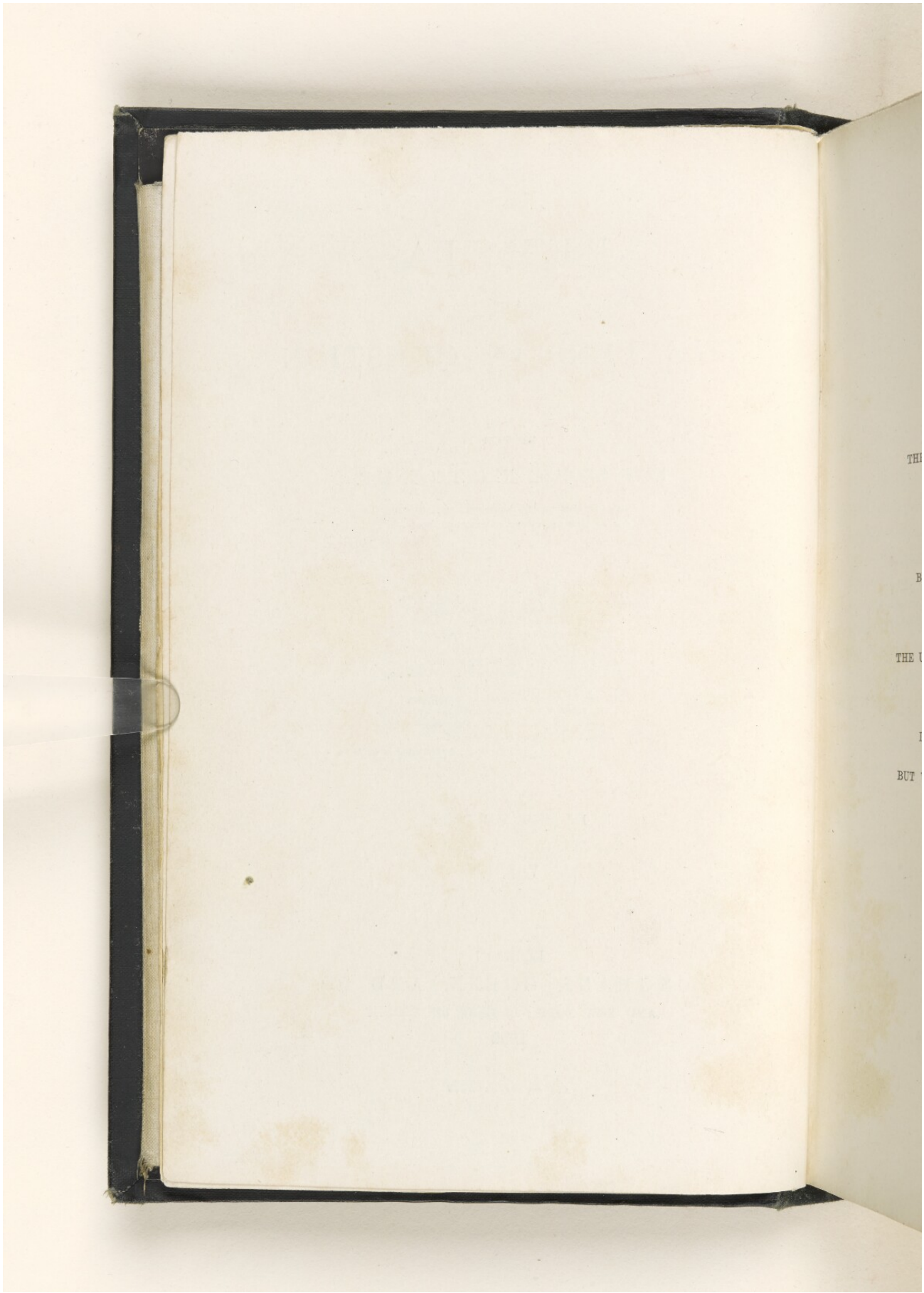

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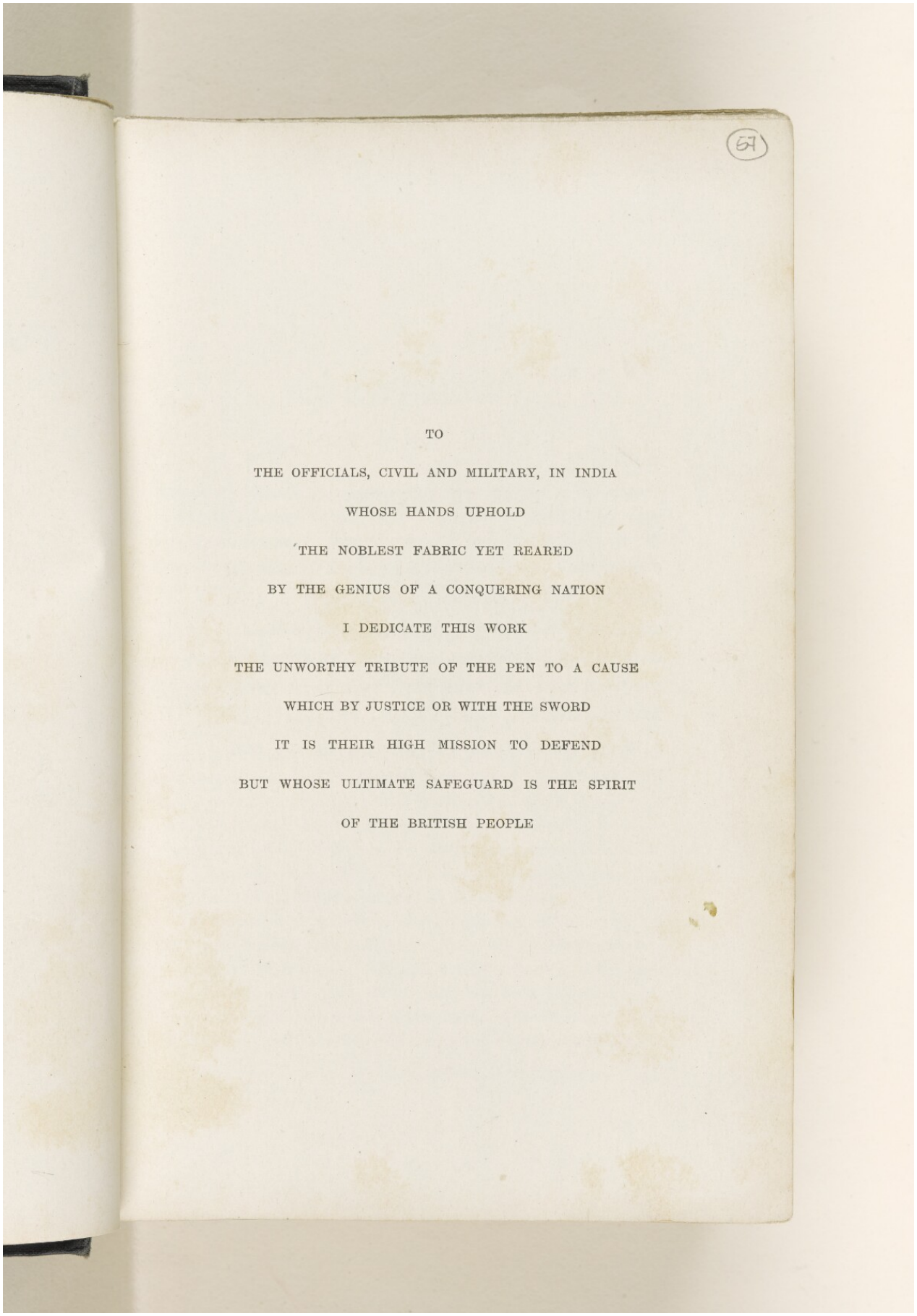

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TO

THE OFFICIALS, CIVIL AND MILITARY, IN INDIA

WHOSE HANDS UPHOLD

THE NOBLEST FABRIC YET REARED

BY THE GENIUS OF A CONQUERING NATION

I DEDICATE THIS WORK

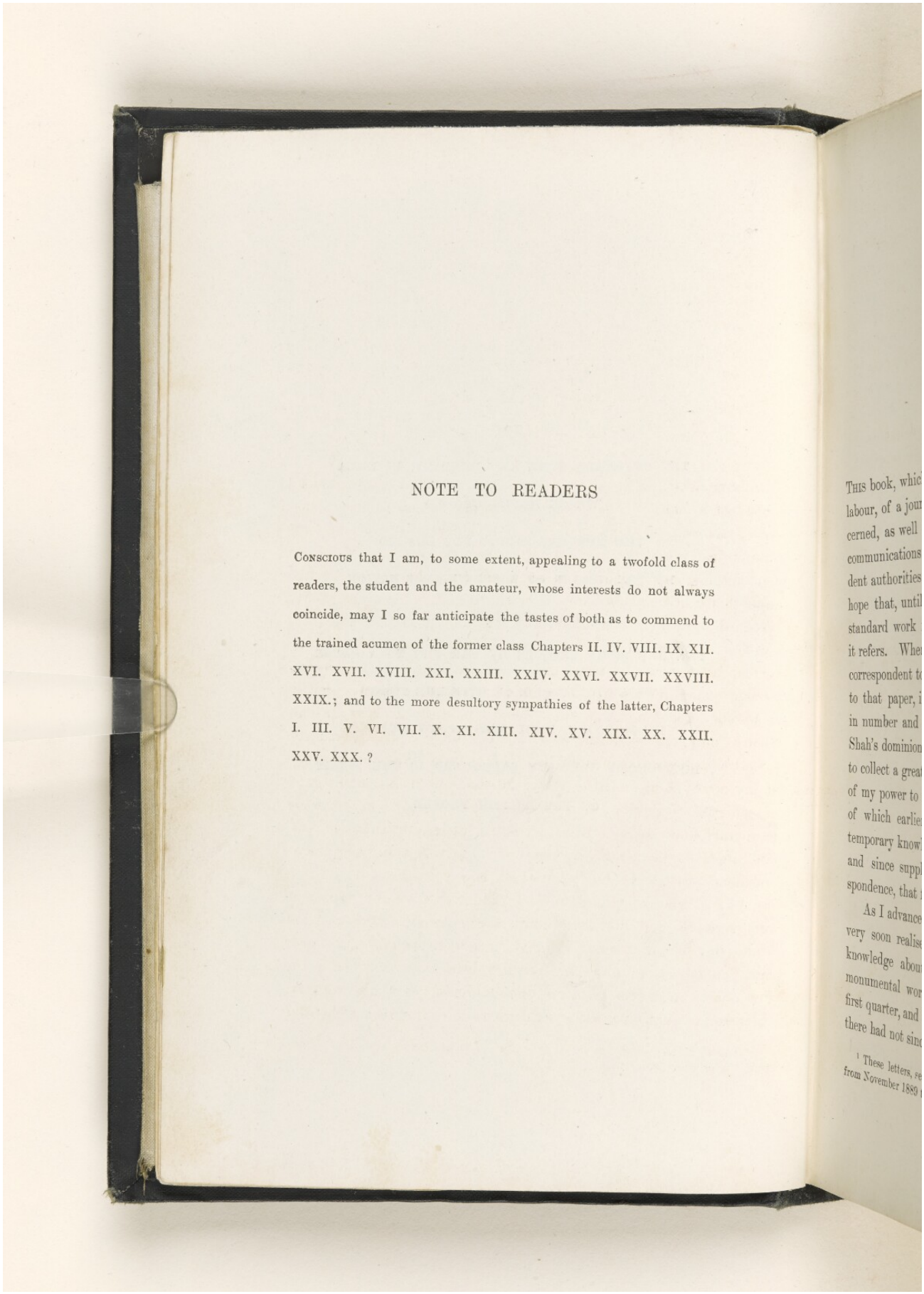
THE UNWORTHY TRIBUTE OF THE PEN TO A CAUSE

WHICH BY JUSTICE OR WITH THE SWORD

IT IS THEIR HIGH MISSION TO DEFEND

BUT WHOSE ULTIMATE SAFEGUARD IS THE SPIRIT

OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE



## NOTE TO READERS

Conscious that I am, to some extent, appealing to a twofold class of readers, the student and the amateur, whose interests do not always coincide, may I so far anticipate the tastes of both as to commend to the trained acumen of the former class Chapters II. IV. VIII. IX. XII. XVI. XVII. XVIII. XXI. XXIII. XXIV. XXVI. XXVII. XXVIII. XXIX.; and to the more desultory sympathies of the latter, Chapters I. III. V. VI. VII. X. XI. XIII. XIV. XV. XIX. XX. XXII. XXV. XXX.?

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[1] These letters, se
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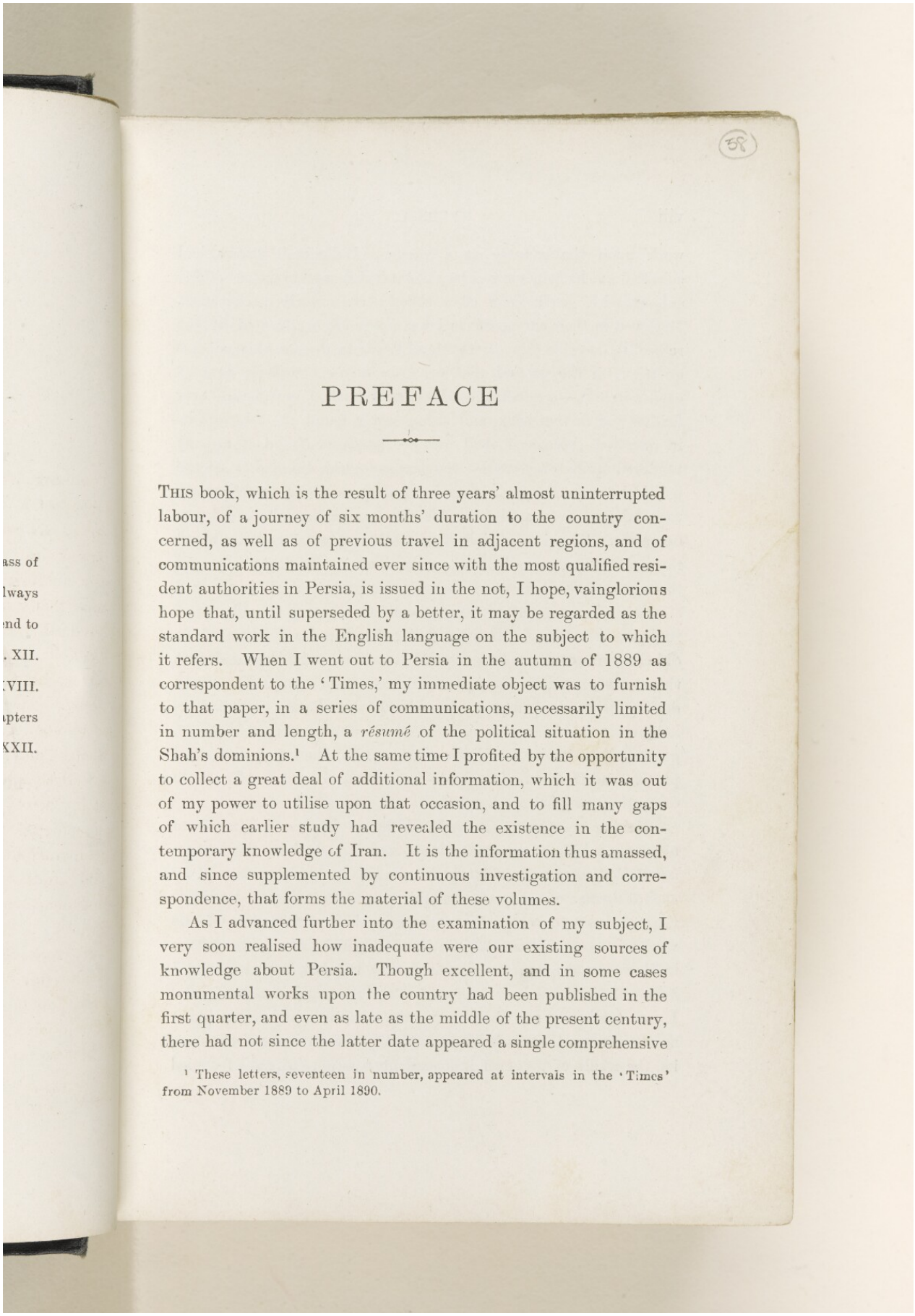
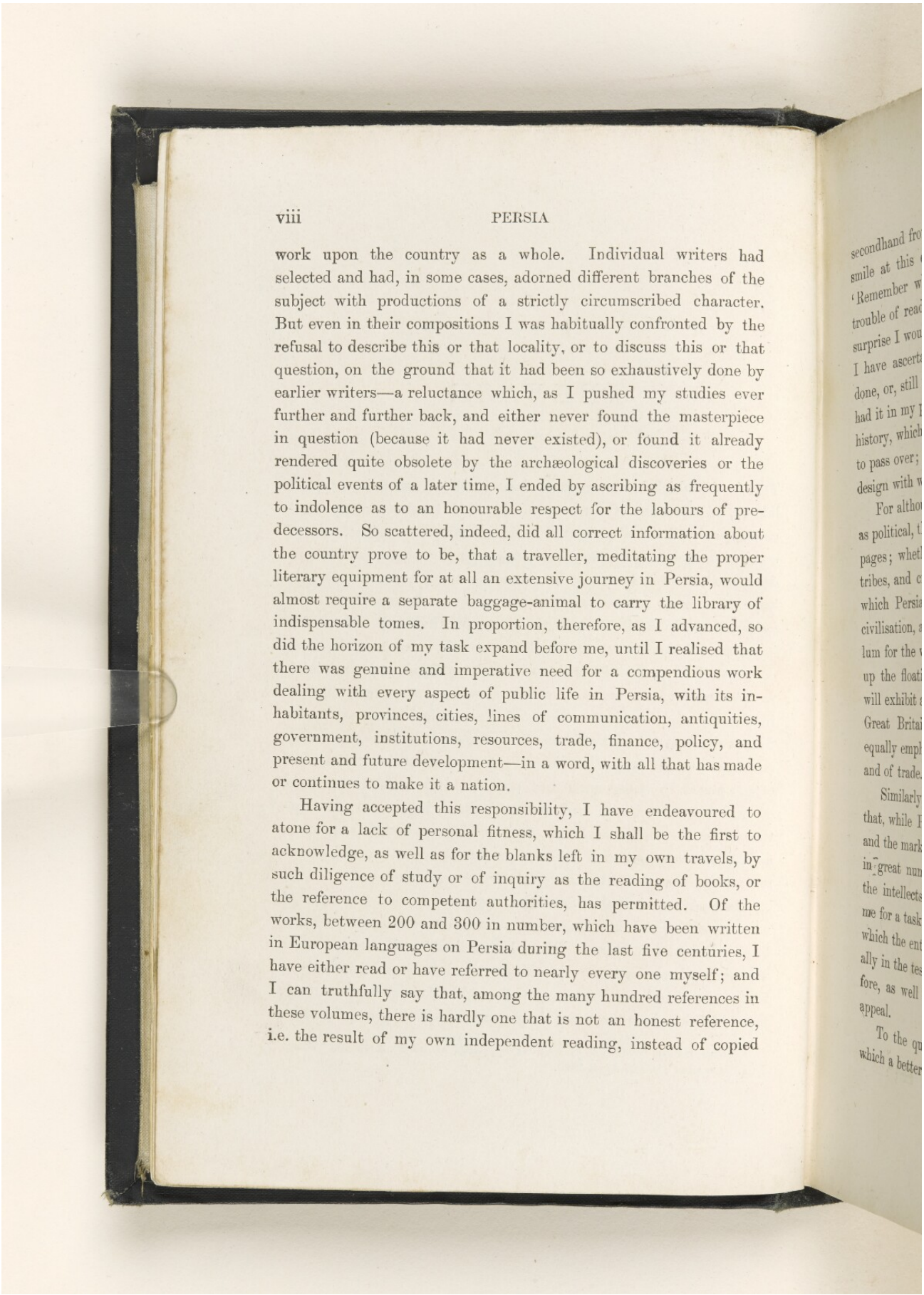


# PREFACE

THIS book, which is the result of three years' almost uninterrupted labour, of a journey of six months' duration to the country concerned, as well as of previous travel in adjacent regions, and of communications maintained ever since with the most qualified resident authorities in Persia, is issued in the not, I hope, vainglorious hope that, until superseded by a better, it may be regarded as the standard work in the English language on the subject to which it refers. When I went out to Persia in the autumn of 1889 as correspondent to the 'Times,' my immediate object was to furnish to that paper, in a series of communications, necessarily limited in number and length, a *résumé* of the political situation in the Shah's dominions.[1] At the same time I profited by the opportunity to collect a great deal of additional information, which it was out of my power to utilise upon that occasion, and to fill many gaps of which earlier study had revealed the existence in the contemporary knowledge of Iran. It is the information thus amassed, and since supplemented by continuous investigation and correspondence, that forms the material of these volumes.

As I advanced further into the examination of my subject, I very soon realised how inadequate were our existing sources of knowledge about Persia. Though excellent, and in some cases monumental works upon the country had been published in the first quarter, and even as late as the middle of the present century, there had not since the latter date appeared a single comprehensive

[1] These letters, seventeen in number, appeared at intervals in the 'Times' from November 1889 to April 1890.





work upon the country as a whole. Individual writers had selected and had, in some cases, adorned different branches of the subject with productions of a strictly circumscribed character. But even in their compositions I was habitually confronted by the refusal to describe this or that locality, or to discuss this or that question, on the ground that it had been so exhaustively done by earlier writers—a reluctance which, as I pushed my studies ever further and further back, and either never found the masterpiece in question (because it had never existed), or found it already rendered quite obsolete by the archæological discoveries or the political events of a later time, I ended by ascribing as frequently to indolence as to an honourable respect for the labours of predecessors. So scattered, indeed, did all correct information about the country prove to be, that a traveller, meditating the proper literary equipment for at all an extensive journey in Persia, would almost require a separate baggage-animal to carry the library of indispensable tomes. In proportion, therefore, as I advanced, so did the horizon of my task expand before me, until I realised that there was genuine and imperative need for a compendious work dealing with every aspect of public life in Persia, with its inhabitants, provinces, cities, lines of communication, antiquities, government, institutions, resources, trade, finance, policy, and present and future development—in a word, with all that has made or continues to make it a nation.

Having accepted this responsibility, I have endeavoured to atone for a lack of personal fitness, which I shall be the first to acknowledge, as well as for the blanks left in my own travels, by such diligence of study or of inquiry as the reading of books, or the reference to competent authorities, has permitted. Of the works, between 200 and 300 in number, which have been written in European languages on Persia during the last five centuries, I have either read or have referred to nearly every one myself; and I can truthfully say that, among the many hundred references in these volumes, there is hardly one that is not an honest reference, i.e. the result of my own independent reading, instead of copied

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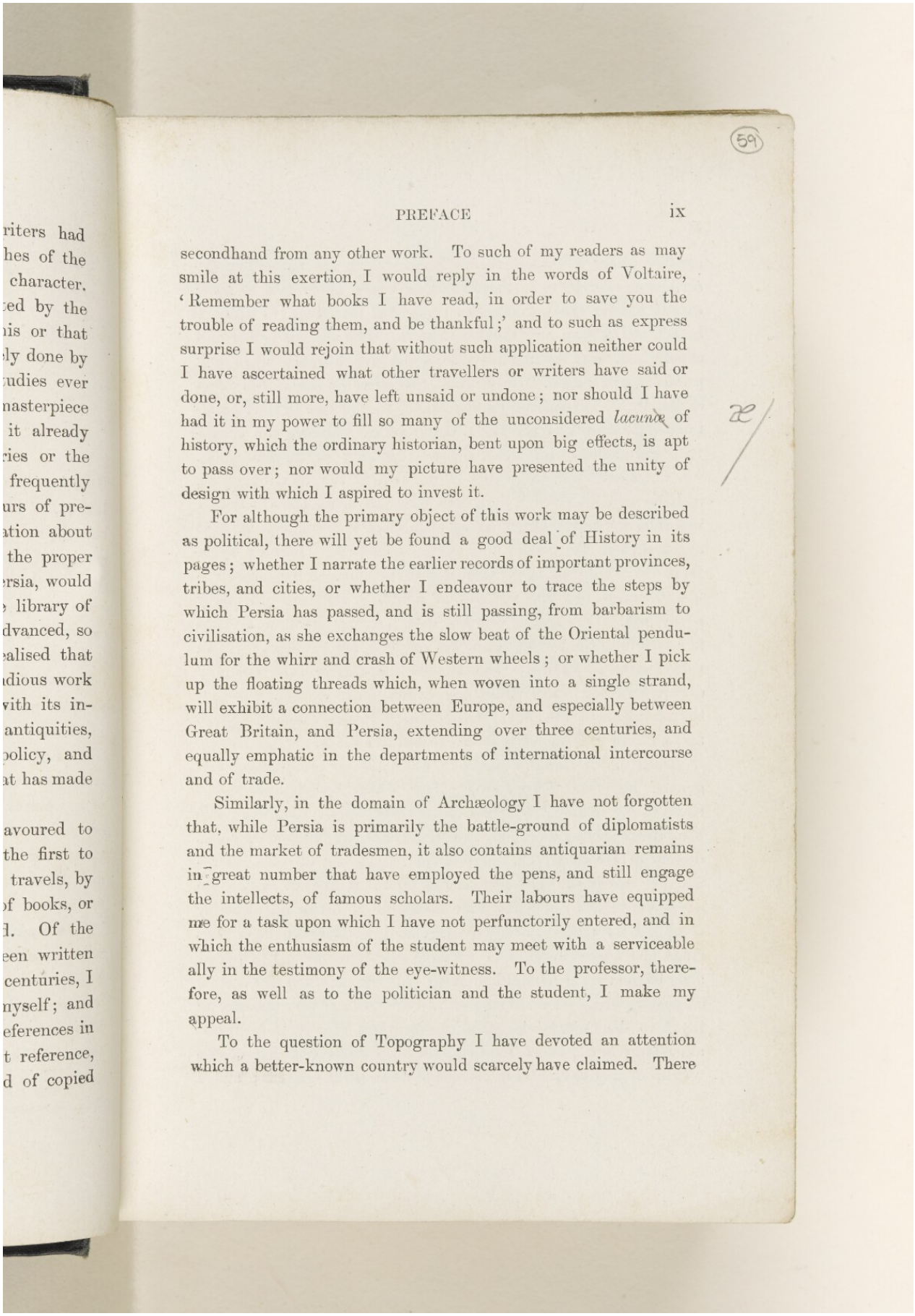



secondhand from any other work. To such of my readers as may smile at this exertion, I would reply in the words of Voltaire, 'Remember what books I have read, in order to save you the trouble of reading them, and be thankful;' and to such as express surprise I would rejoin that without such application neither could I have ascertained what other travellers or writers have said or done, or, still more, have left unsaid or undone; nor should I have had it in my power to fill so many of the unconsidered *lacunæ* of history, which the ordinary historian, bent upon big effects, is apt to pass over; nor would my picture have presented the unity of design with which I aspired to invest it.

For although the primary object of this work may be described as political, there will yet be found a good deal of History in its pages; whether I narrate the earlier records of important provinces, tribes, and cities, or whether I endeavour to trace the steps by which Persia has passed, and is still passing, from barbarism to civilisation, as she exchanges the slow beat of the Oriental pendulum for the whirr and crash of Western wheels; or whether I pick up the floating threads which, when woven into a single strand, will exhibit a connection between Europe, and especially between Great Britain, and Persia, extending over three centuries, and equally emphatic in the departments of international intercourse and of trade.

Similarly, in the domain of Archæology I have not forgotten that, while Persia is primarily the battle-ground of diplomatists and the market of tradesmen, it also contains antiquarian remains in great number that have employed the pens, and still engage the intellects, of famous scholars. Their labours have equipped me for a task upon which I have not perfunctorily entered, and in which the enthusiasm of the student may meet with a serviceable ally in the testimony of the eye-witness. To the professor, therefore, as well as to the politician and the student, I make my appeal.

To the question of Topography I have devoted an attention which a better-known country would scarcely have claimed. There

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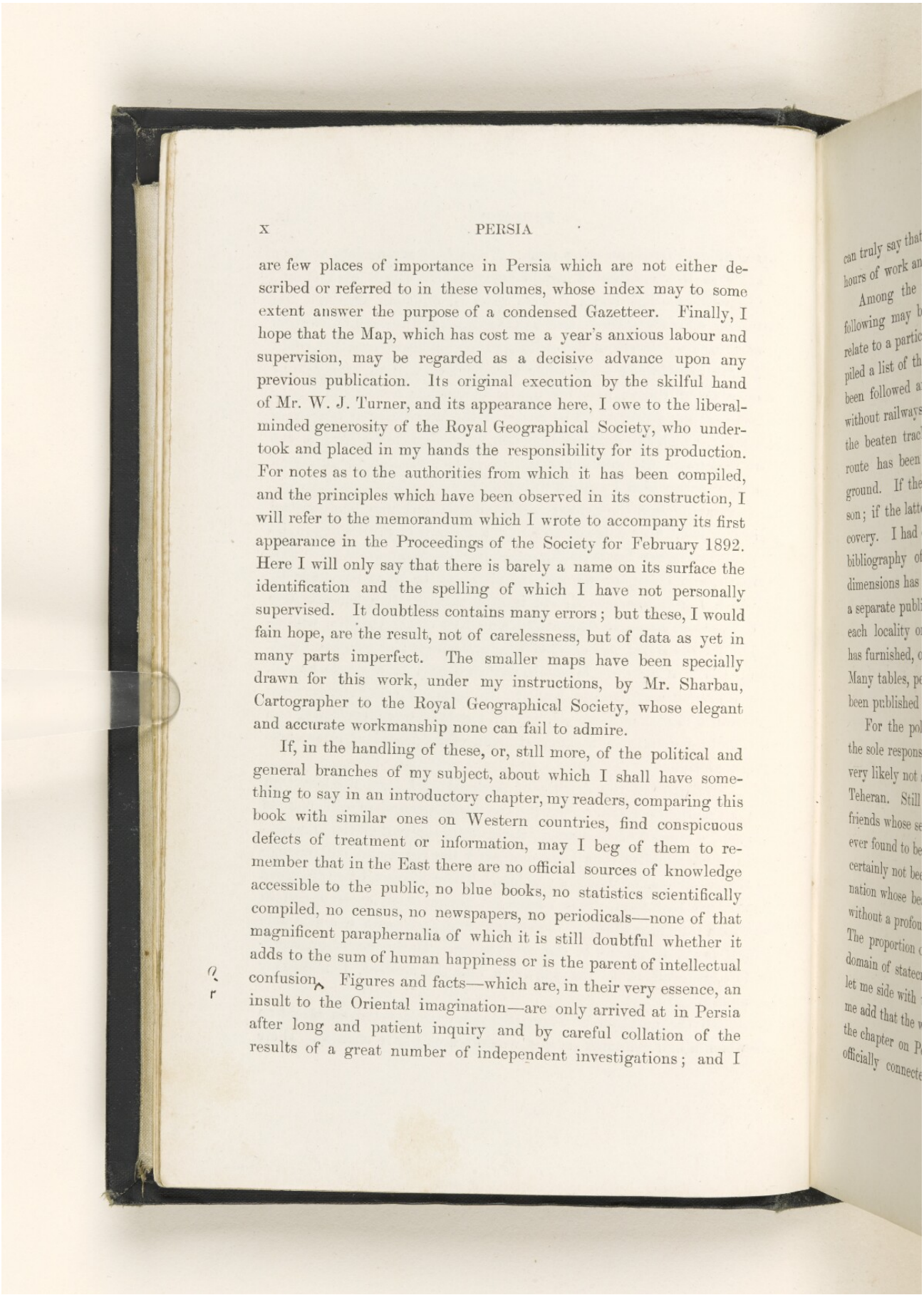



are few places of importance in Persia which are not either described or referred to in these volumes, whose index may to some extent answer the purpose of a condensed Gazetteer. Finally, I hope that the Map, which has cost me a year's anxious labour and supervision, may be regarded as a decisive advance upon any previous publication. Its original execution by the skilful hand of Mr. W. J. Turner, and its appearance here, I owe to the liberal-minded generosity of the Royal Geographical Society, who undertook and placed in my hands the responsibility for its production. For notes as to the authorities from which it has been compiled, and the principles which have been observed in its construction, I will refer to the memorandum which I wrote to accompany its first appearance in the Proceedings of the Society for February 1892. Here I will only say that there is barely a name on its surface the identification and the spelling of which I have not personally supervised. It doubtless contains many errors; but these, I would fain hope, are the result, not of carelessness, but of data as yet in many parts imperfect. The smaller maps have been specially drawn for this work, under my instructions, by Mr. Sharbau, Cartographer to the Royal Geographical Society, whose elegant and accurate workmanship none can fail to admire.

If, in the handling of these, or, still more, of the political and general branches of my subject, about which I shall have something to say in an introductory chapter, my readers, comparing this book with similar ones on Western countries, find conspicuous defects of treatment or information, may I beg of them to remember that in the East there are no official sources of knowledge accessible to the public, no blue books, no statistics scientifically compiled, no census, no newspapers, no periodicals—none of that magnificent paraphernalia of which it is still doubtful whether it adds to the sum of human happiness or is the parent of intellectual confusion. Figures and facts—which are, in their very essence, an insult to the Oriental imagination—are only arrived at in Persia after long and patient inquiry and by careful collation of the results of a great number of independent investigations; and I

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can truly say that single lines in this book have sometimes cost me hours of work and pages of correspondence.

Among the special features which I have incorporated, the following may be mentioned. At the end of such chapters as relate to a particular province or part of the country, I have compiled a list of the principal routes in the neighbourhood that have been followed and described by previous writers. In a country without railways or a Bradshaw, a new comer, if he diverge from the beaten track, is likely to be quite unconscious whether his route has been traversed before, or whether he is upon virgin ground. If the former, I present him with the means of comparison; if the latter, I acquaint him with the responsibilities of discovery. I had originally hoped to append to my second volume a bibliography of Persian Geography and Travel; but to such dimensions has my list of titles swollen that I must reserve it for a separate publication. Instead I have affixed to the discussion of each locality or subject as complete a catalogue as my reading has furnished, of the works relating thereto in European tongues. Many tables, pedigrees, and catalogues that have never previously been published are also included in the text.

For the political opinions expressed therein I desire to claim the sole responsibility. They have not been derived from, and are very likely not shared in their entirety by, the British Legation at Teheran. Still less have they been borrowed from any of the friends whose services I shall presently acknowledge. If they are ever found to be unpalatable to the admirers of Persia, they have certainly not been arrived at in any spirit of unfriendliness to that nation whose best interests I desire to serve, nor are they uttered without a profound conviction in every instance that they are true. The proportion of the whole truth that ought to be told in the domain of statecraft is a question open to dispute. But at least let me side with those who abhor the diplomatic lie. Finally, let me add that the whole of these two volumes, with the exception of the chapter on Persepolis, was already in print when I became officially connected with the India Office; and that the views

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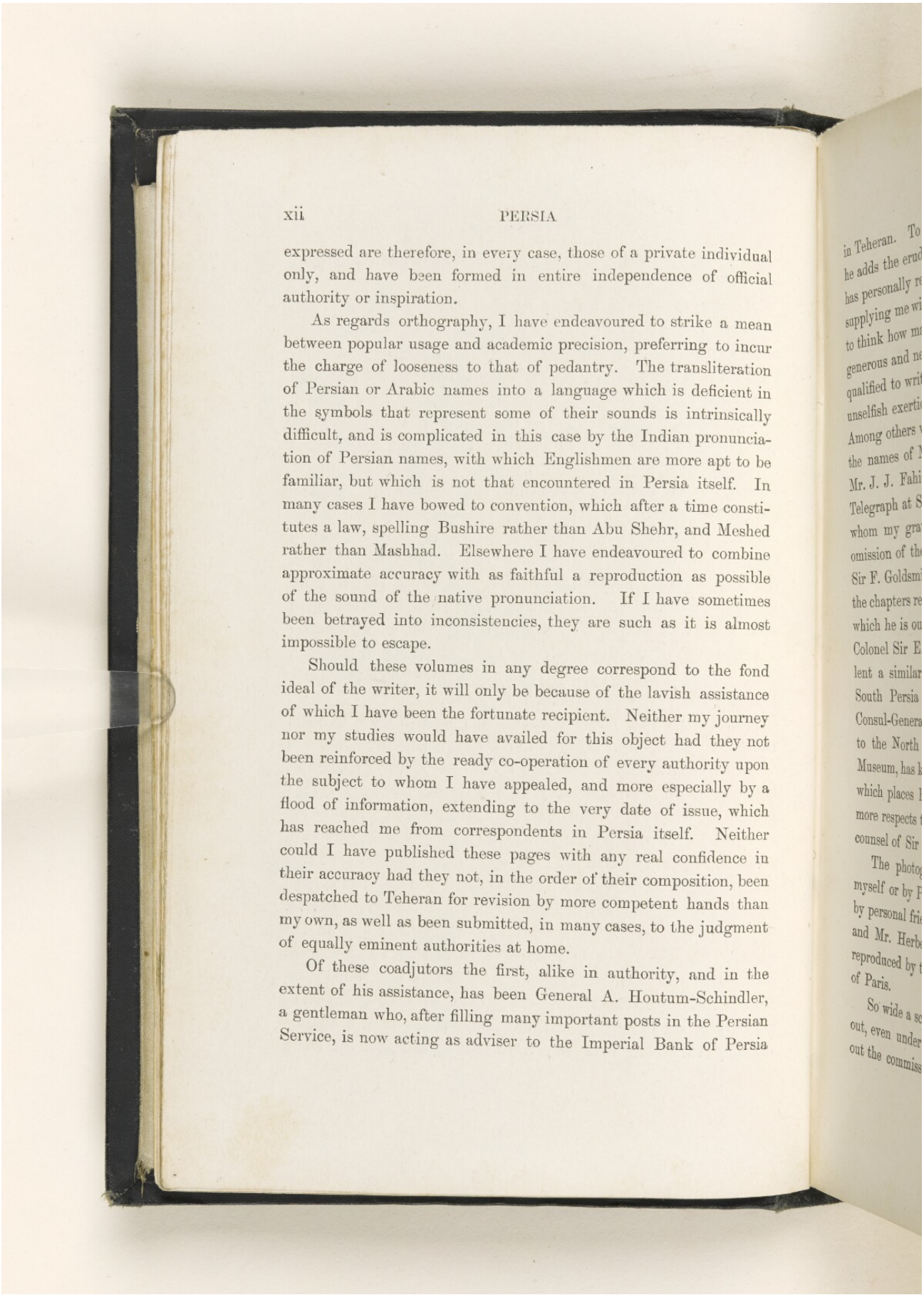



expressed are therefore, in every case, those of a private individual only, and have been formed in entire independence of official authority or inspiration.

As regards orthography, I have endeavoured to strike a mean between popular usage and academic precision, preferring to incur the charge of looseness to that of pedantry. The transliteration of Persian or Arabic names into a language which is deficient in the symbols that represent some of their sounds is intrinsically difficult, and is complicated in this case by the Indian pronunciation of Persian names, with which Englishmen are more apt to be familiar, but which is not that encountered in Persia itself. In many cases I have bowed to convention, which after a time constitutes a law, spelling Bushire rather than Abu Shehr, and Meshed rather than Mashhad. Elsewhere I have endeavoured to combine approximate accuracy with as faithful a reproduction as possible of the sound of the native pronunciation. If I have sometimes been betrayed into inconsistencies, they are such as it is almost impossible to escape.

Should these volumes in any degree correspond to the fond ideal of the writer, it will only be because of the lavish assistance of which I have been the fortunate recipient. Neither my journey nor my studies would have availed for this object had they not been reinforced by the ready co-operation of every authority upon the subject to whom I have appealed, and more especially by a flood of information, extending to the very date of issue, which has reached me from correspondents in Persia itself. Neither could I have published these pages with any real confidence in their accuracy had they not, in the order of their composition, been despatched to Teheran for revision by more competent hands than my own, as well as been submitted, in many cases, to the judgment of equally eminent authorities at home.

Of these coadjutors the first, alike in authority, and in the extent of his assistance, has been General A. Houtum-Schindler, a gentleman who, after filling many important posts in the Persian Service, is now acting as adviser to the Imperial Bank of Persia

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in Teheran. To the advantage of long residence in the country he adds the erudition of a scholar and the zeal of a pioneer. He has personally revised nearly every page of these volumes, besides supplying me with much of my original information; and I tremble to think how many errors they might have contained but for his generous and never-failing co-operation. Few men so excellently qualified to write a first-rate book themselves would have lent such unselfish exertion to improve the quality of another man's work. Among others who have helped me in Persia itself I must mention the names of Mr. J. R. Preece, now British Consul at Isfahan; Mr. J. J. Fahie, Assistant Superintendent of the Indo-European Telegraph at Shiraz; my various hosts of 1889–90, and others to whom my gratitude is not the less profound that they prefer the omission of their names from this acknowledgment. In England, Sir F. Goldsmid has graciously given the benefit of his revision to the chapters relating to Seistan and the South-East Provinces, upon which he is our chief authority, besides helping me in other matters. Colonel Sir E. C. Ross, recently British Resident at Bushire, has lent a similarly generous testamur to the chapters dealing with South Persia and the Gulf; and Colonel Stewart, our capable Consul-General at Tabriz, to the majority of the chapters relating to the North of the country. Mr. Cecil Smith, of the British Museum, has kindly read the accounts of Pasargadæ and Persepolis, which places he has himself visited. Finally, I have profited, in more respects than I can name, by the scholarly and experienced counsel of Sir Alfred Lyall.

The photographs that adorn the text were either taken by myself or by Persian students of the Royal College at Teheran, or by personal friends, among whom I may mention Major Sawyer and Mr. Herbert Weld-Blundell. A few engravings have been reproduced by the courteous permission of the Librairie Hachette of Paris.

So wide a scheme, I am well aware, cannot have been carried out, even under the favourable conditions above described, without the commission of some blunders or mistakes. The sincerest

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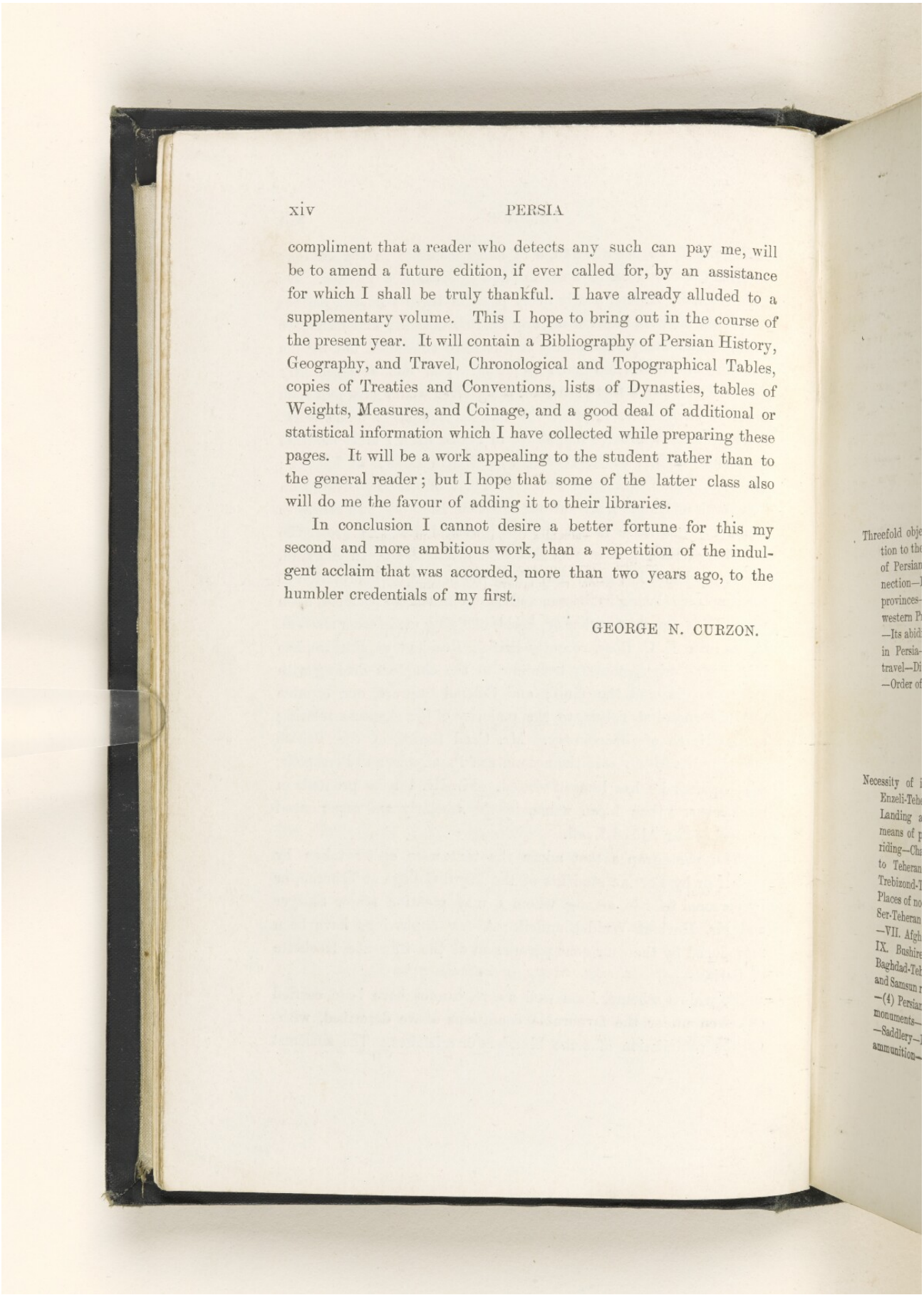



compliment that a reader who detects any such can pay me, will be to amend a future edition, if ever called for, by an assistance for which I shall be truly thankful. I have already alluded to a supplementary volume. This I hope to bring out in the course of the present year. It will contain a Bibliography of Persian History, Geography, and Travel, Chronological and Topographical Tables, copies of Treaties and Conventions, lists of Dynasties, tables of Weights, Measures, and Coinage, and a good deal of additional or statistical information which I have collected while preparing these pages. It will be a work appealing to the student rather than to the general reader; but I hope that some of the latter class also will do me the favour of adding it to their libraries.

In conclusion I cannot desire a better fortune for this my second and more ambitious work, than a repetition of the indulgent acclaim that was accorded, more than two years ago, to the humbler credentials of my first.

GEORGE N. CURZON.

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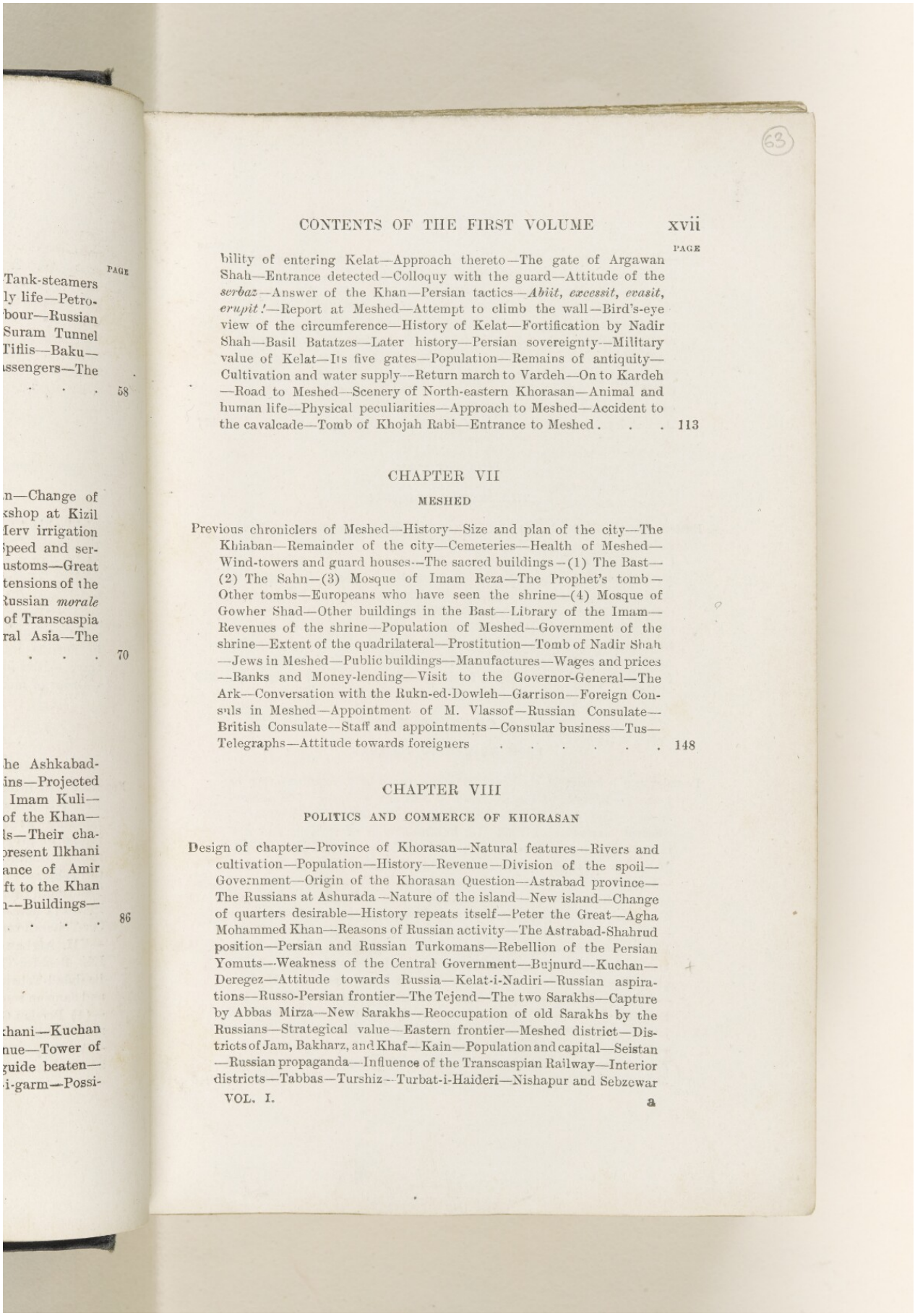



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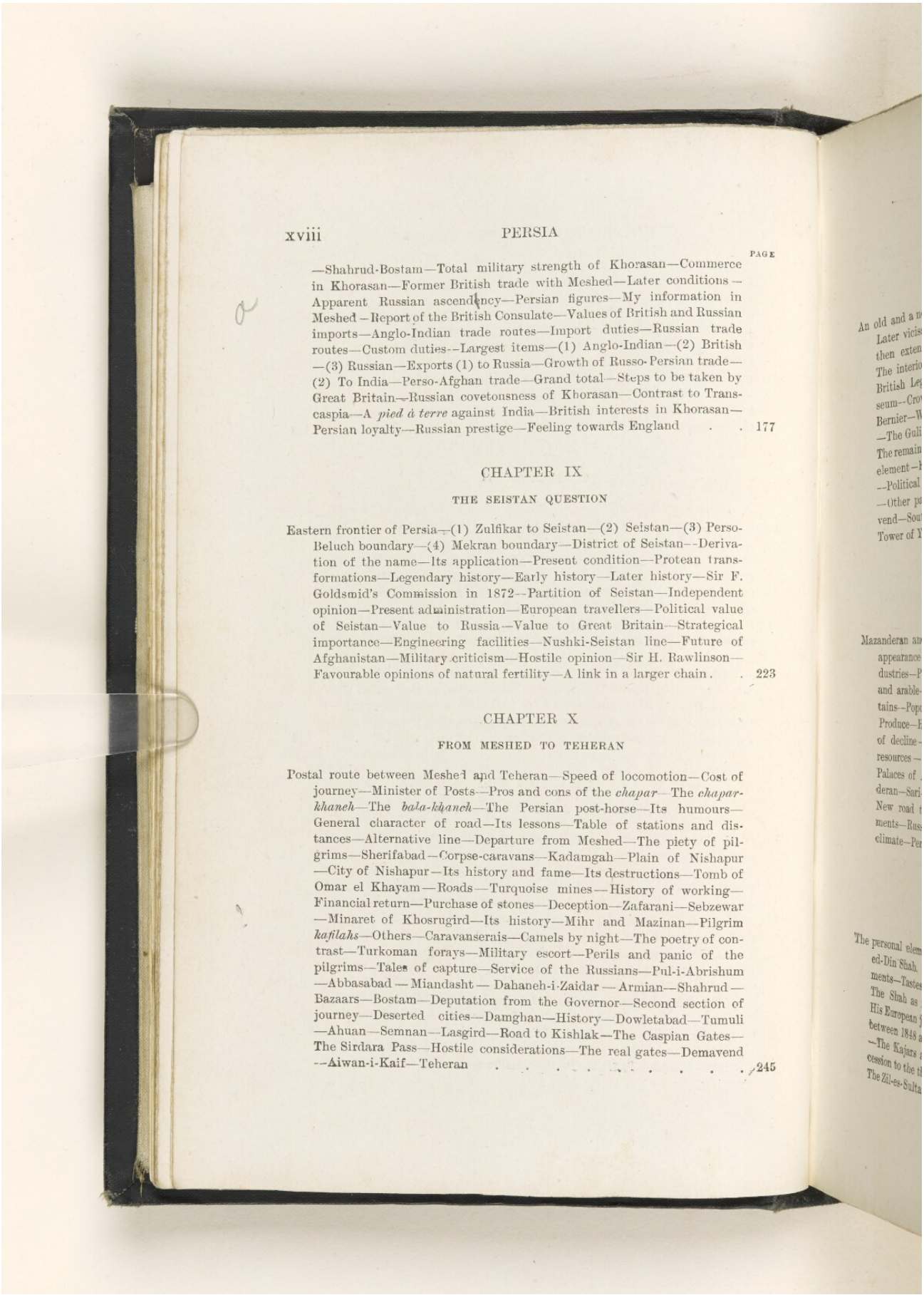



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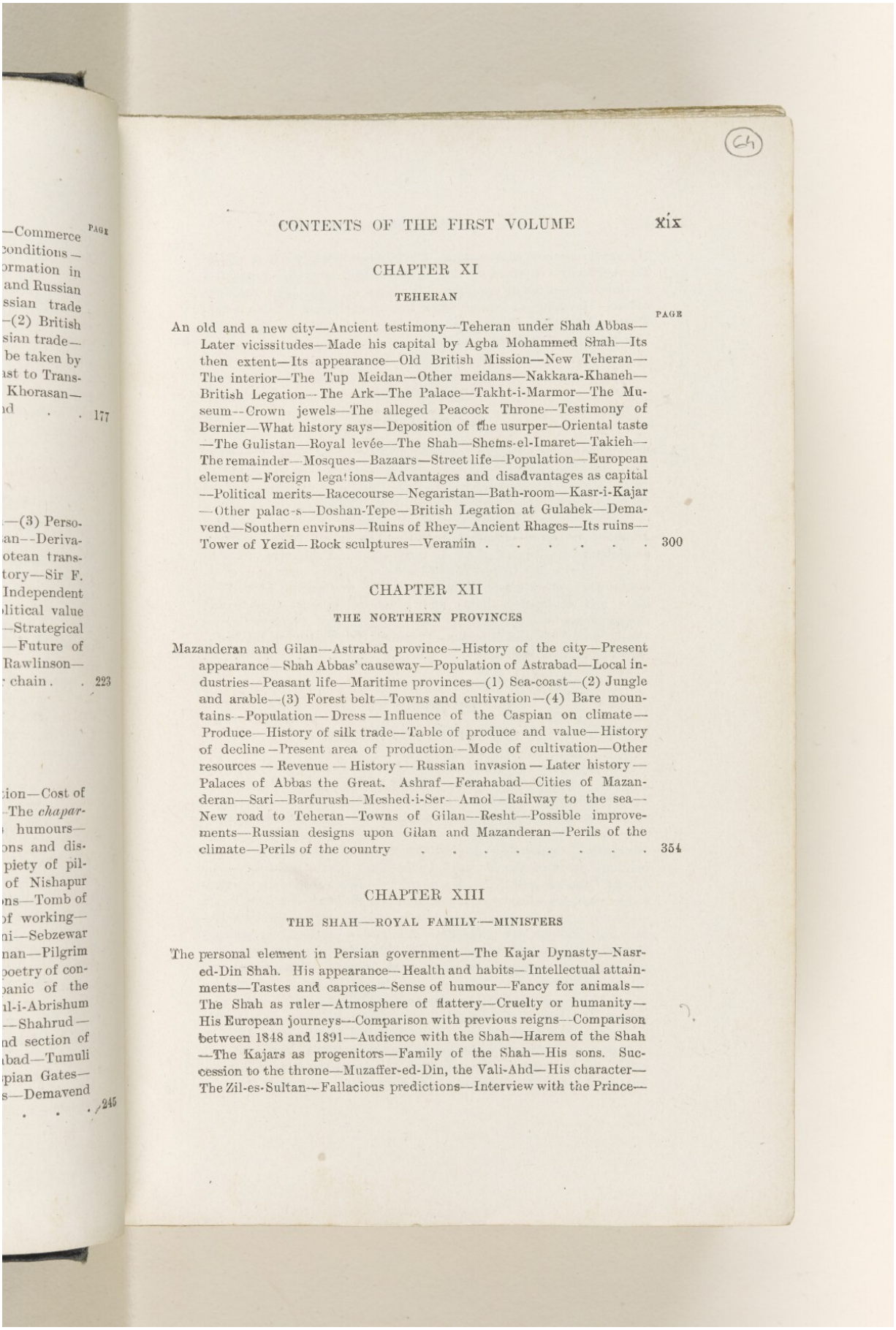

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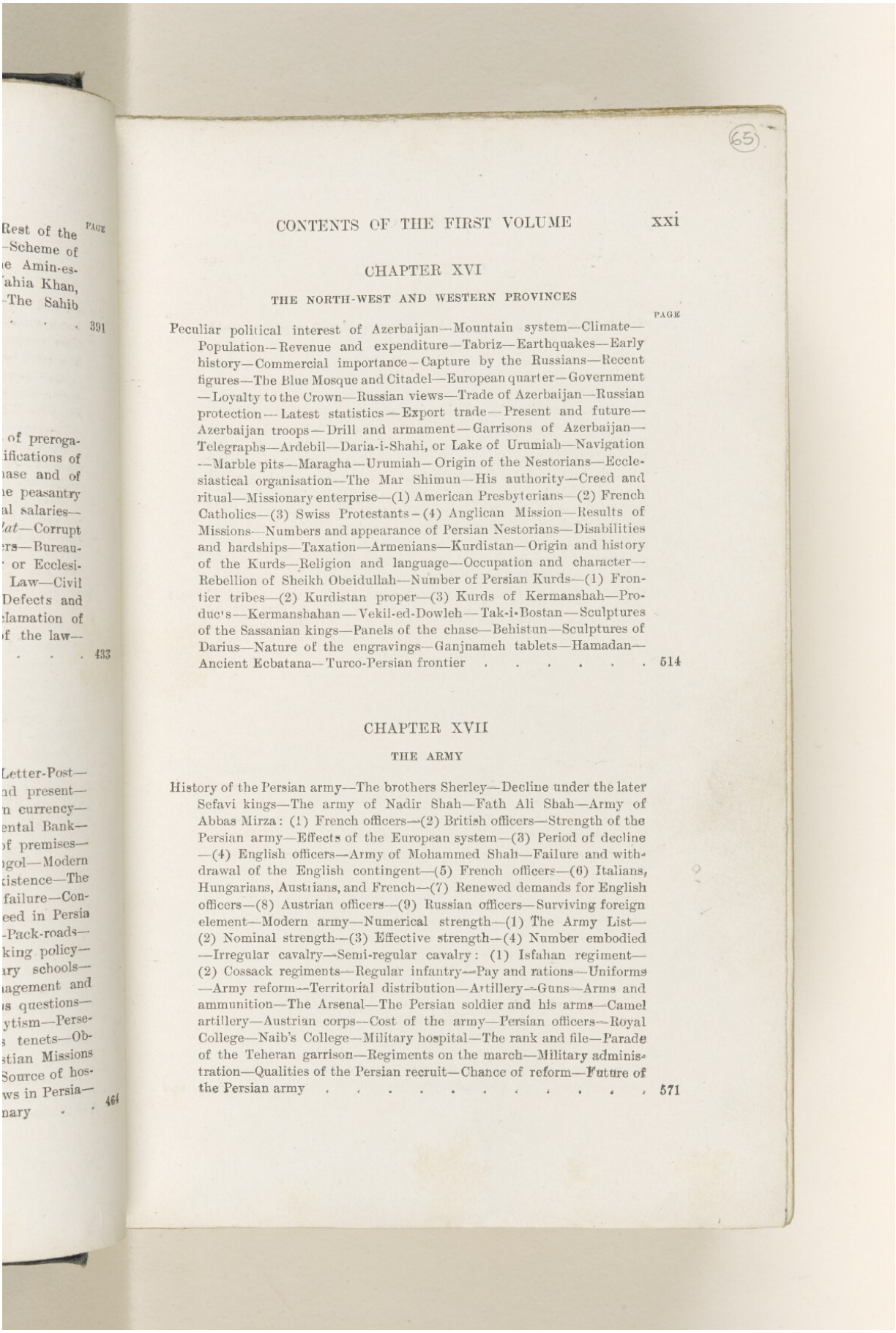

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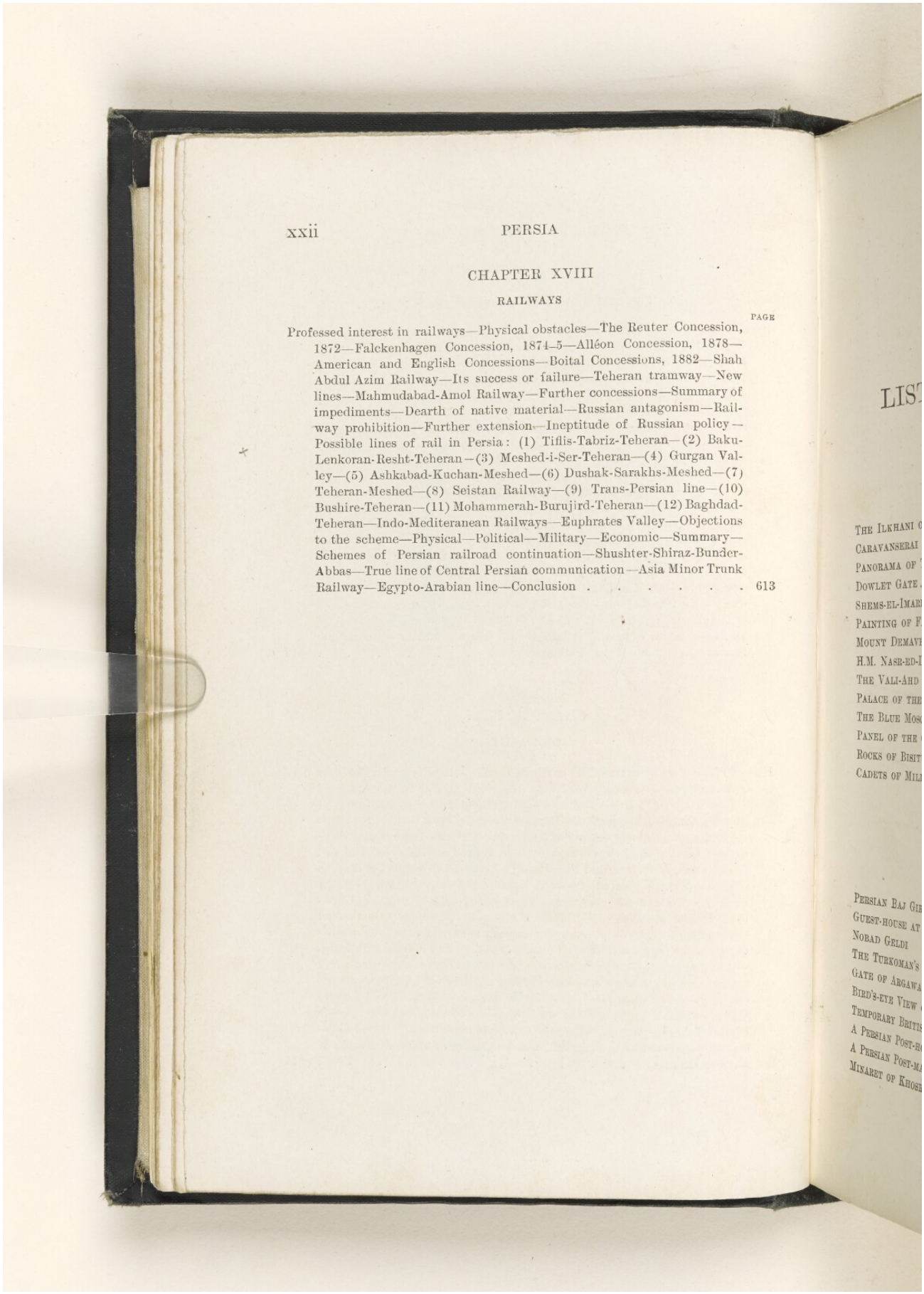



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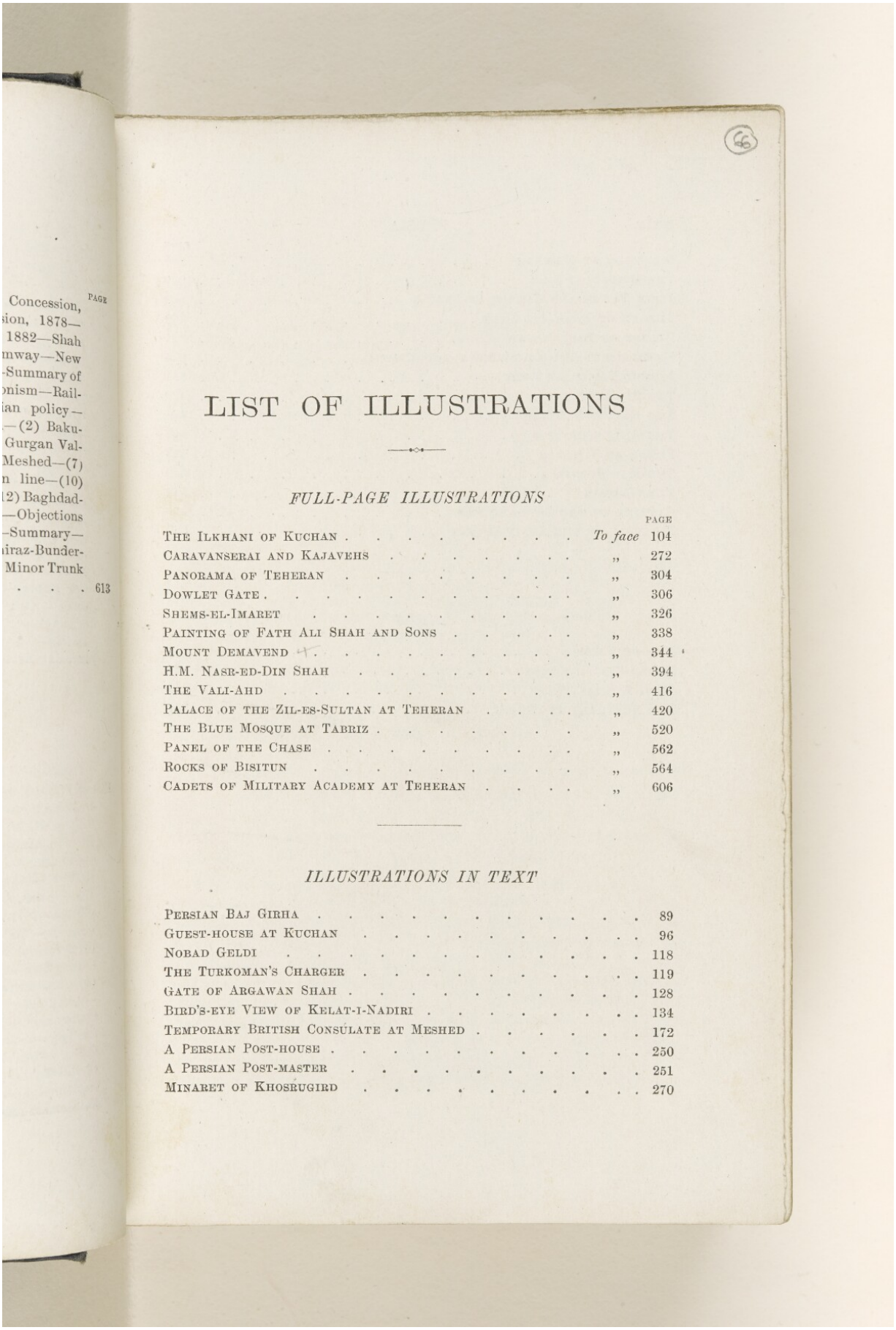

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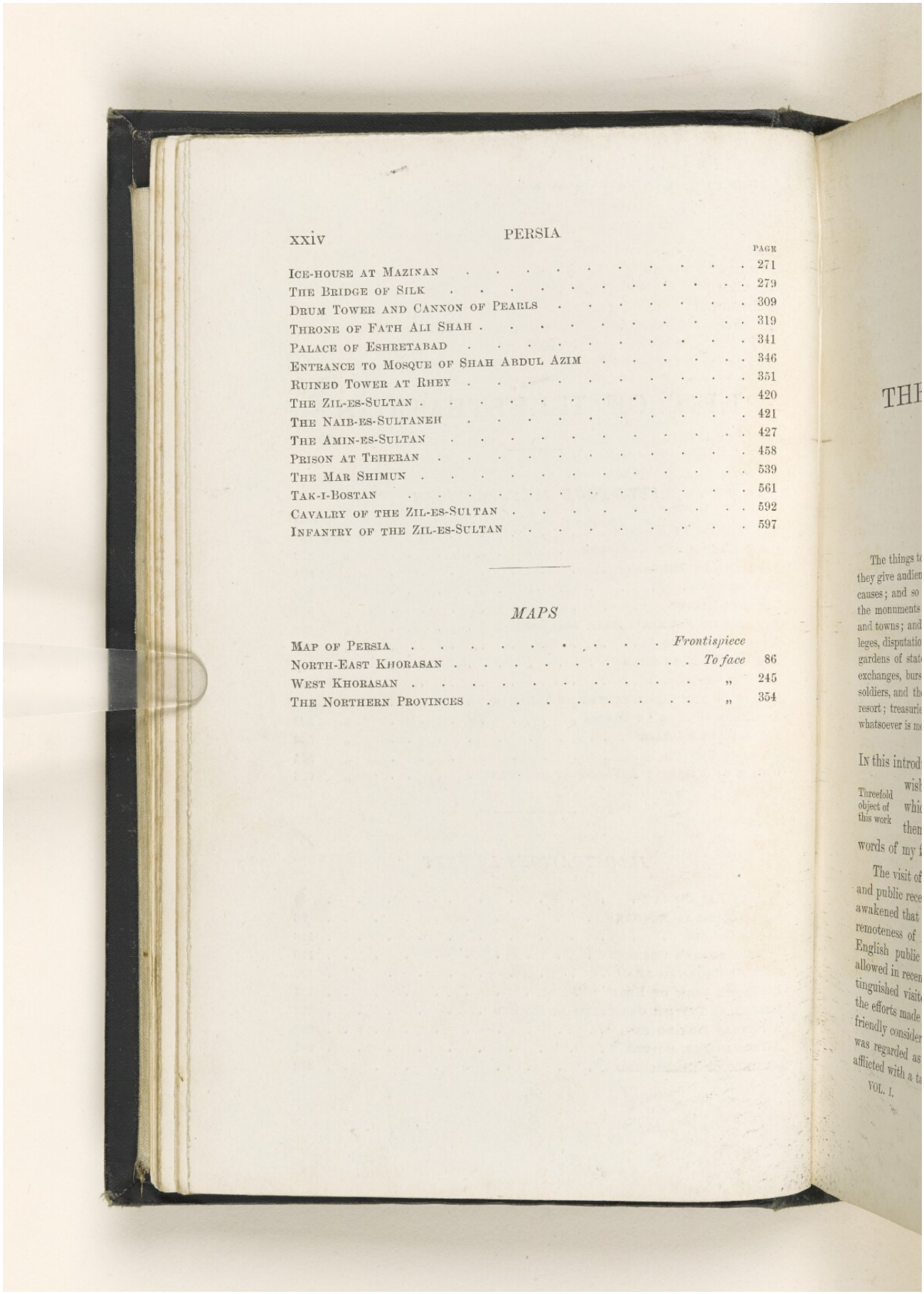



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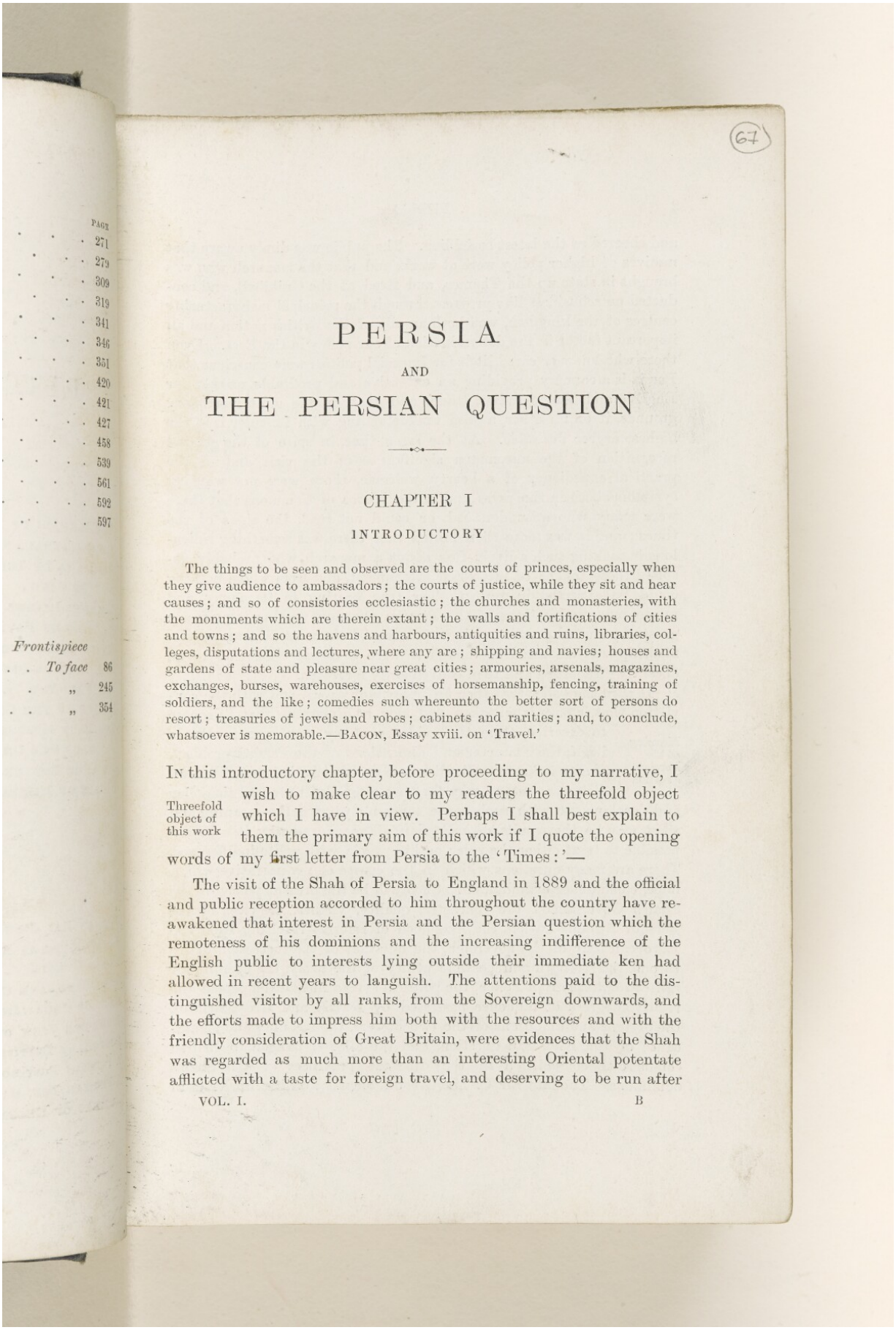

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# PERSIA
AND
# THE PERSIAN QUESTION

## CHAPTER I
### INTRODUCTORY

The things to be seen and observed are the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns; and so the havens and harbours, antiquities and ruins, libraries, colleges, disputations and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure near great cities; armouries, arsenals, magazines, exchanges, burses, warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable.—BACON, Essay xviii. on 'Travel.'

Threefold object of this work

IN this introductory chapter, before proceeding to my narrative, I wish to make clear to my readers the threefold object which I have in view. Perhaps I shall best explain to them the primary aim of this work if I quote the opening words of my first letter from Persia to the 'Times:'—

The visit of the Shah of Persia to England in 1889 and the official and public reception accorded to him throughout the country have reawakened that interest in Persia and the Persian question which the remoteness of his dominions and the increasing indifference of the English public to interests lying outside their immediate ken had allowed in recent years to languish. The attentions paid to the distinguished visitor by all ranks, from the Sovereign downwards, and the efforts made to impress him both with the resources and with the friendly consideration of Great Britain, were evidences that the Shah was regarded as much more than an interesting Oriental potentate afflicted with a taste for foreign travel, and deserving to be run after



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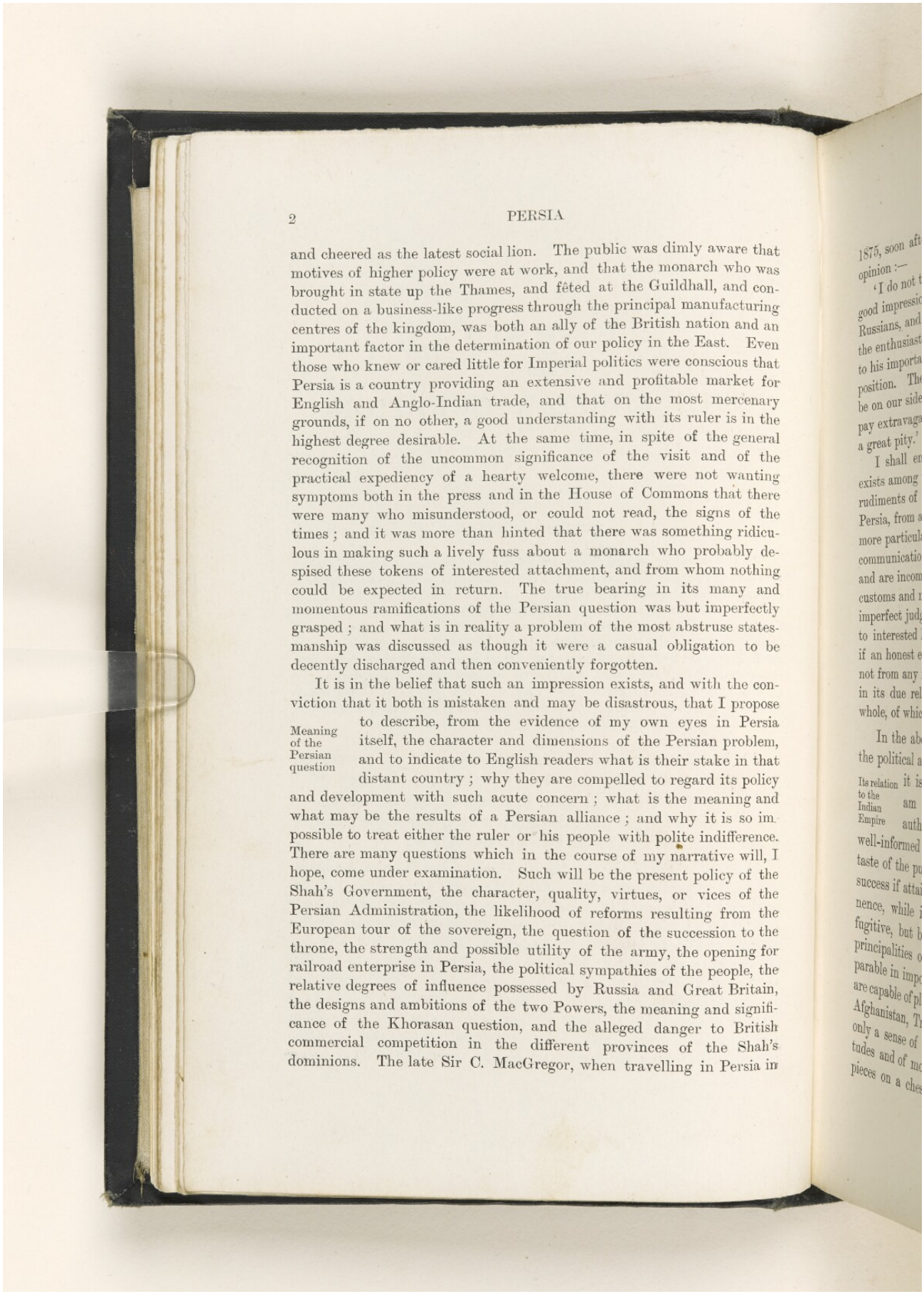



and cheered as the latest social lion. The public was dimly aware that motives of higher policy were at work, and that the monarch who was brought in state up the Thames, and fêted at the Guildhall, and conducted on a business-like progress through the principal manufacturing centres of the kingdom, was both an ally of the British nation and an important factor in the determination of our policy in the East. Even those who knew or cared little for Imperial politics were conscious that Persia is a country providing an extensive and profitable market for English and Anglo-Indian trade, and that on the most mercenary grounds, if on no other, a good understanding with its ruler is in the highest degree desirable. At the same time, in spite of the general recognition of the uncommon significance of the visit and of the practical expediency of a hearty welcome, there were not wanting symptoms both in the press and in the House of Commons that there were many who misunderstood, or could not read, the signs of the times; and it was more than hinted that there was something ridiculous in making such a lively fuss about a monarch who probably despised these tokens of interested attachment, and from whom nothing could be expected in return. The true bearing in its many and momentous ramifications of the Persian question was but imperfectly grasped; and what is in reality a problem of the most abstruse statesmanship was discussed as though it were a casual obligation to be decently discharged and then conveniently forgotten.

It is in the belief that such an impression exists, and with the conviction that it both is mistaken and may be disastrous, that I propose to describe, from the evidence of my own eyes in Persia itself, the character and dimensions of the Persian problem, and to indicate to English readers what is their stake in that distant country; why they are compelled to regard its policy and development with such acute concern; what is the meaning and what may be the results of a Persian alliance; and why it is so impossible to treat either the ruler or his people with polite indifference. There are many questions which in the course of my narrative will, I hope, come under examination. Such will be the present policy of the Shah's Government, the character, quality, virtues, or vices of the Persian Administration, the likelihood of reforms resulting from the European tour of the sovereign, the question of the succession to the throne, the strength and possible utility of the army, the opening for railroad enterprise in Persia, the political sympathies of the people, the relative degrees of influence possessed by Russia and Great Britain, the designs and ambitions of the two Powers, the meaning and significance of the Khorasan question, and the alleged danger to British commercial competition in the different provinces of the Shah's dominions. The late Sir C. MacGregor, when travelling in Persia in

Meaning of the Persian question

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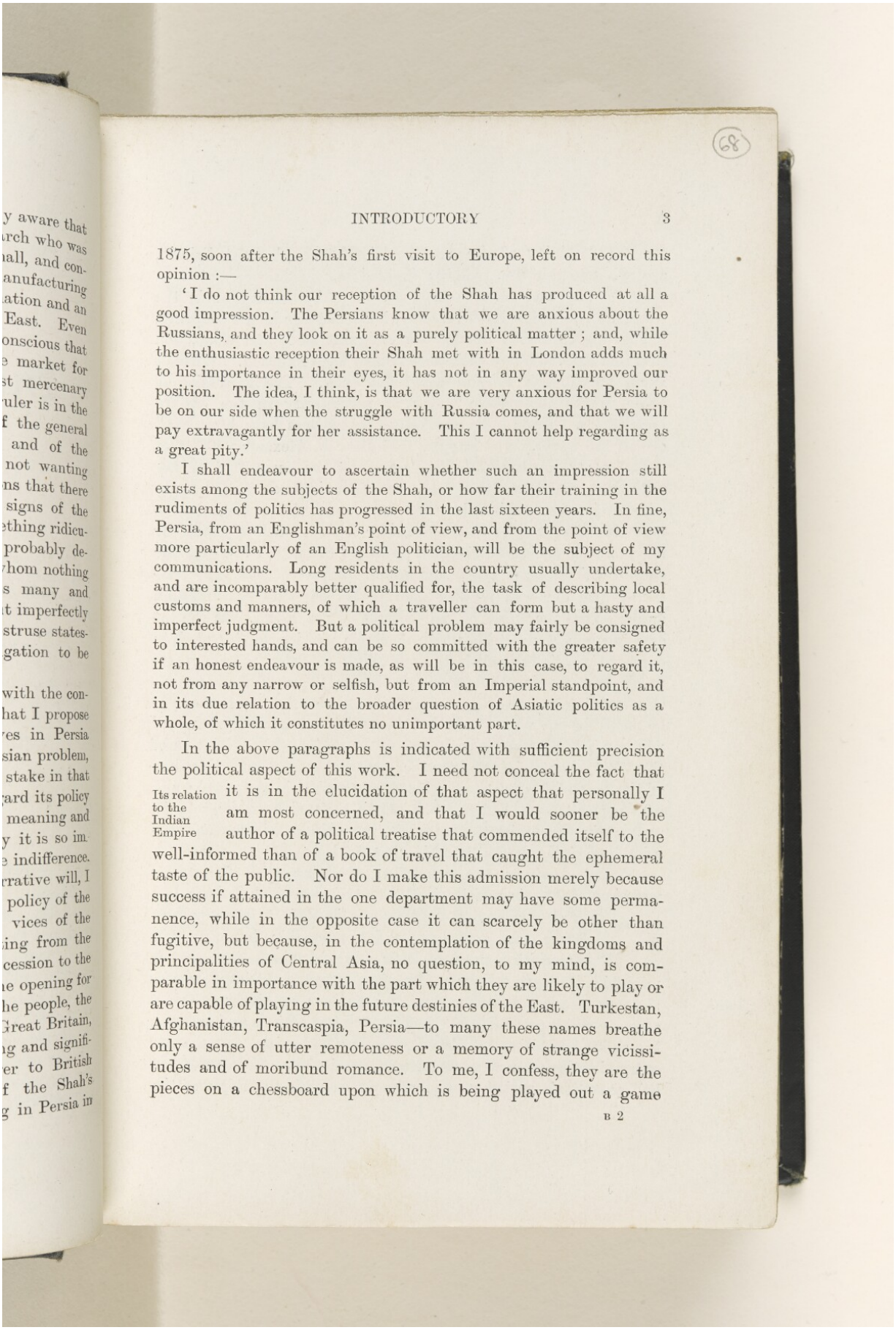



1875, soon after the Shah's first visit to Europe, left on record this opinion :—

'I do not think our reception of the Shah has produced at all a good impression. The Persians know that we are anxious about the Russians, and they look on it as a purely political matter ; and, while the enthusiastic reception their Shah met with in London adds much to his importance in their eyes, it has not in any way improved our position. The idea, I think, is that we are very anxious for Persia to be on our side when the struggle with Russia comes, and that we will pay extravagantly for her assistance. This I cannot help regarding as a great pity.'

I shall endeavour to ascertain whether such an impression still exists among the subjects of the Shah, or how far their training in the rudiments of politics has progressed in the last sixteen years. In fine, Persia, from an Englishman's point of view, and from the point of view more particularly of an English politician, will be the subject of my communications. Long residents in the country usually undertake, and are incomparably better qualified for, the task of describing local customs and manners, of which a traveller can form but a hasty and imperfect judgment. But a political problem may fairly be consigned to interested hands, and can be so committed with the greater safety if an honest endeavour is made, as will be in this case, to regard it, not from any narrow or selfish, but from an Imperial standpoint, and in its due relation to the broader question of Asiatic politics as a whole, of which it constitutes no unimportant part.

Its relation to the Indian Empire

In the above paragraphs is indicated with sufficient precision the political aspect of this work. I need not conceal the fact that it is in the elucidation of that aspect that personally I am most concerned, and that I would sooner be the author of a political treatise that commended itself to the well-informed than of a book of travel that caught the ephemeral taste of the public. Nor do I make this admission merely because success if attained in the one department may have some permanence, while in the opposite case it can scarcely be other than fugitive, but because, in the contemplation of the kingdoms and principalities of Central Asia, no question, to my mind, is comparable in importance with the part which they are likely to play or are capable of playing in the future destinies of the East. Turkestan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia—to many these names breathe only a sense of utter remoteness or a memory of strange vicissitudes and of moribund romance. To me, I confess, they are the pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a game



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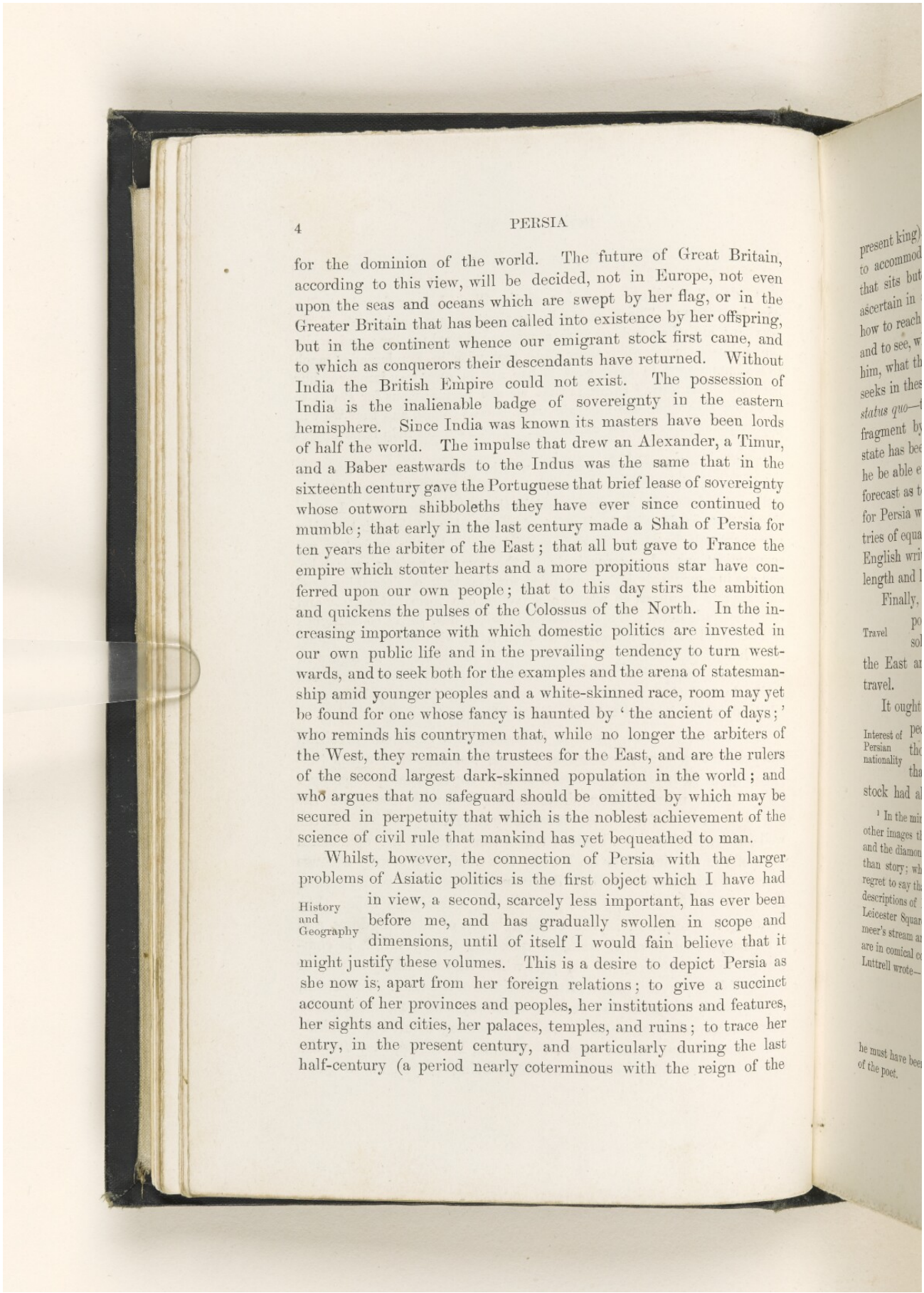
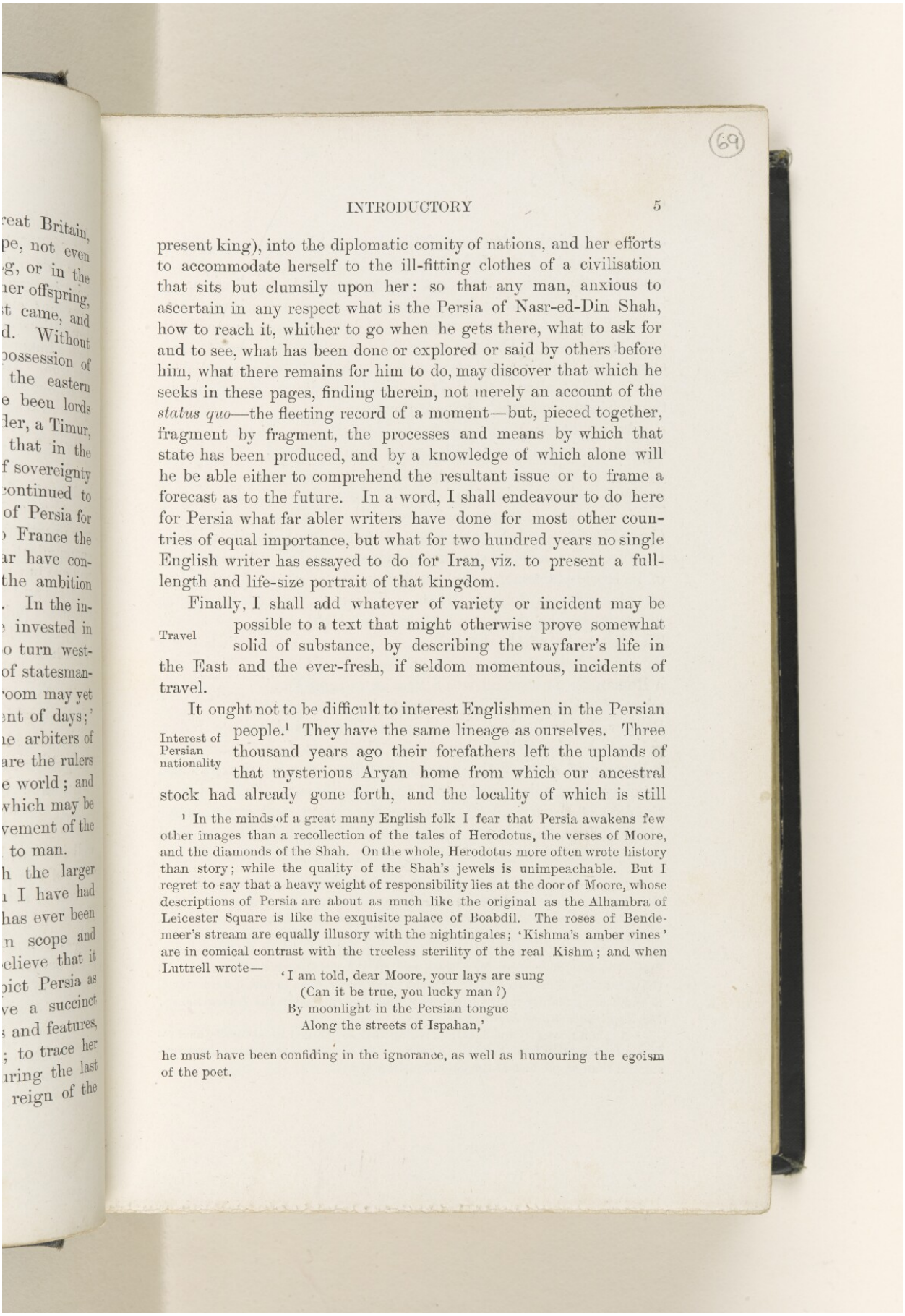




for the dominion of the world. The future of Great Britain, according to this view, will be decided, not in Europe, not even upon the seas and oceans which are swept by her flag, or in the Greater Britain that has been called into existence by her offspring, but in the continent whence our emigrant stock first came, and to which as conquerors their descendants have returned. Without India the British Empire could not exist. The possession of India is the inalienable badge of sovereignty in the eastern hemisphere. Since India was known its masters have been lords of half the world. The impulse that drew an Alexander, a Timur, and a Baber eastwards to the Indus was the same that in the sixteenth century gave the Portuguese that brief lease of sovereignty whose outworn shibboleths they have ever since continued to mumble; that early in the last century made a Shah of Persia for ten years the arbiter of the East; that all but gave to France the empire which stouter hearts and a more propitious star have conferred upon our own people; that to this day stirs the ambition and quickens the pulses of the Colossus of the North. In the increasing importance with which domestic politics are invested in our own public life and in the prevailing tendency to turn westwards, and to seek both for the examples and the arena of statesmanship amid younger peoples and a white-skinned race, room may yet be found for one whose fancy is haunted by 'the ancient of days;' who reminds his countrymen that, while no longer the arbiters of the West, they remain the trustees for the East, and are the rulers of the second largest dark-skinned population in the world; and who argues that no safeguard should be omitted by which may be secured in perpetuity that which is the noblest achievement of the science of civil rule that mankind has yet bequeathed to man.

History and Geography

Whilst, however, the connection of Persia with the larger problems of Asiatic politics is the first object which I have had in view, a second, scarcely less important, has ever been before me, and has gradually swollen in scope and dimensions, until of itself I would fain believe that it might justify these volumes. This is a desire to depict Persia as she now is, apart from her foreign relations; to give a succinct account of her provinces and peoples, her institutions and features, her sights and cities, her palaces, temples, and ruins; to trace her entry, in the present century, and particularly during the last half-century (a period nearly coterminous with the reign of the





present king), into the diplomatic comity of nations, and her efforts to accommodate herself to the ill-fitting clothes of a civilisation that sits but clumsily upon her: so that any man, anxious to ascertain in any respect what is the Persia of Nasr-ed-Din Shah, how to reach it, whither to go when he gets there, what to ask for and to see, what has been done or explored or said by others before him, what there remains for him to do, may discover that which he seeks in these pages, finding therein, not merely an account of the *status quo*—the fleeting record of a moment—but, pieced together, fragment by fragment, the processes and means by which that state has been produced, and by a knowledge of which alone will he be able either to comprehend the resultant issue or to frame a forecast as to the future. In a word, I shall endeavour to do here for Persia what far abler writers have done for most other countries of equal importance, but what for two hundred years no single English writer has essayed to do for Iran, viz. to present a full-length and life-size portrait of that kingdom.

Travel

Finally, I shall add whatever of variety or incident may be possible to a text that might otherwise prove somewhat solid of substance, by describing the wayfarer's life in the East and the ever-fresh, if seldom momentous, incidents of travel.

Interest of Persian nationality

It ought not to be difficult to interest Englishmen in the Persian people.[1] They have the same lineage as ourselves. Three thousand years ago their forefathers left the uplands of that mysterious Aryan home from which our ancestral stock had already gone forth, and the locality of which is still

[1] In the minds of a great many English folk I fear that Persia awakens few other images than a recollection of the tales of Herodotus, the verses of Moore, and the diamonds of the Shah. On the whole, Herodotus more often wrote history than story; while the quality of the Shah's jewels is unimpeachable. But I regret to say that a heavy weight of responsibility lies at the door of Moore, whose descriptions of Persia are about as much like the original as the Alhambra of Leicester Square is like the exquisite palace of Boabdil. The roses of Bendemeer's stream are equally illusory with the nightingales; 'Kishma's amber vines' are in comical contrast with the treeless sterility of the real Kishm; and when Luttrell wrote—

'I am told, dear Moore, your lays are sung
(Can it be true, you lucky man?)
By moonlight in the Persian tongue
Along the streets of Ispahan,'

he must have been confiding in the ignorance, as well as humouring the egoism of the poet.

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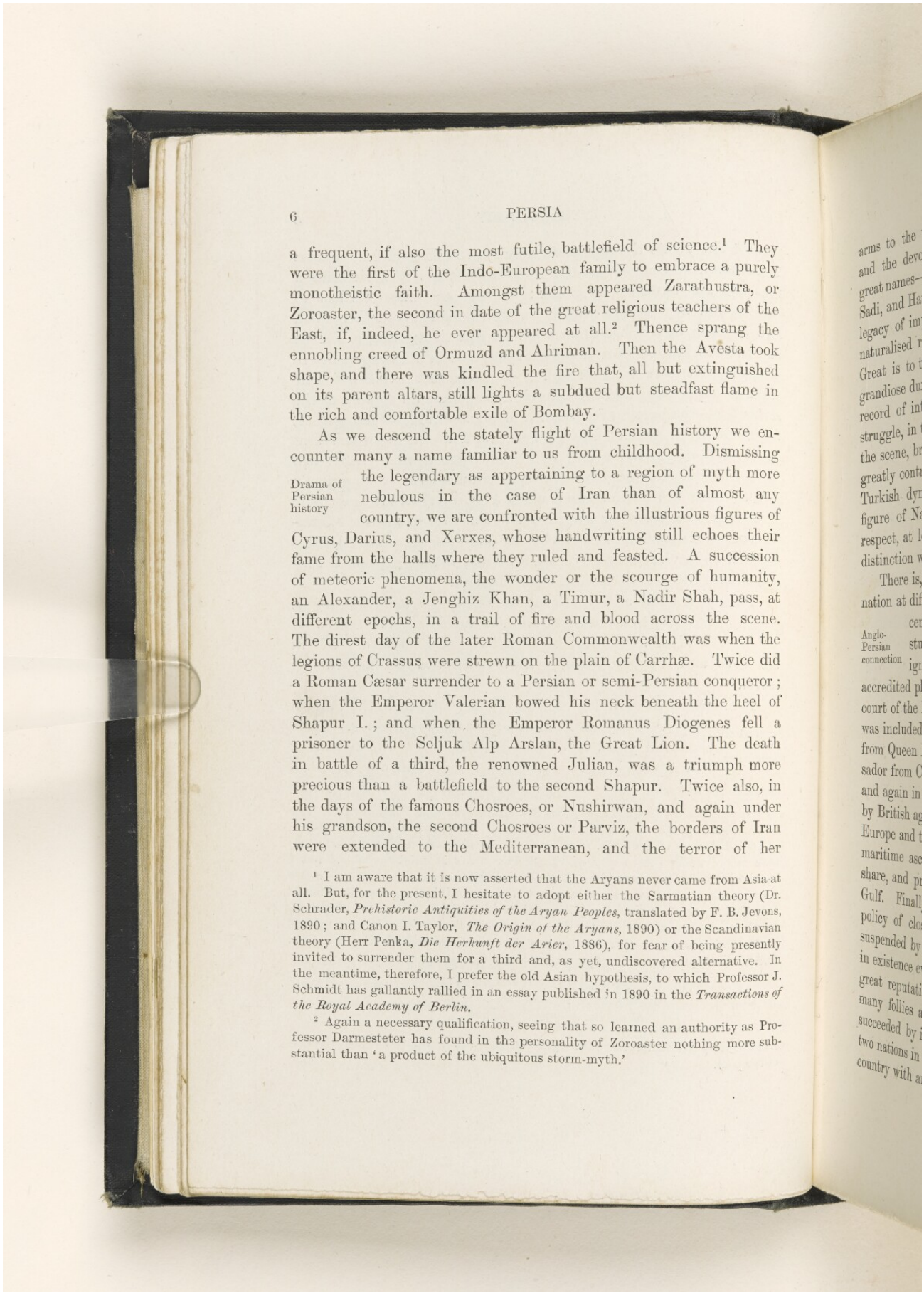




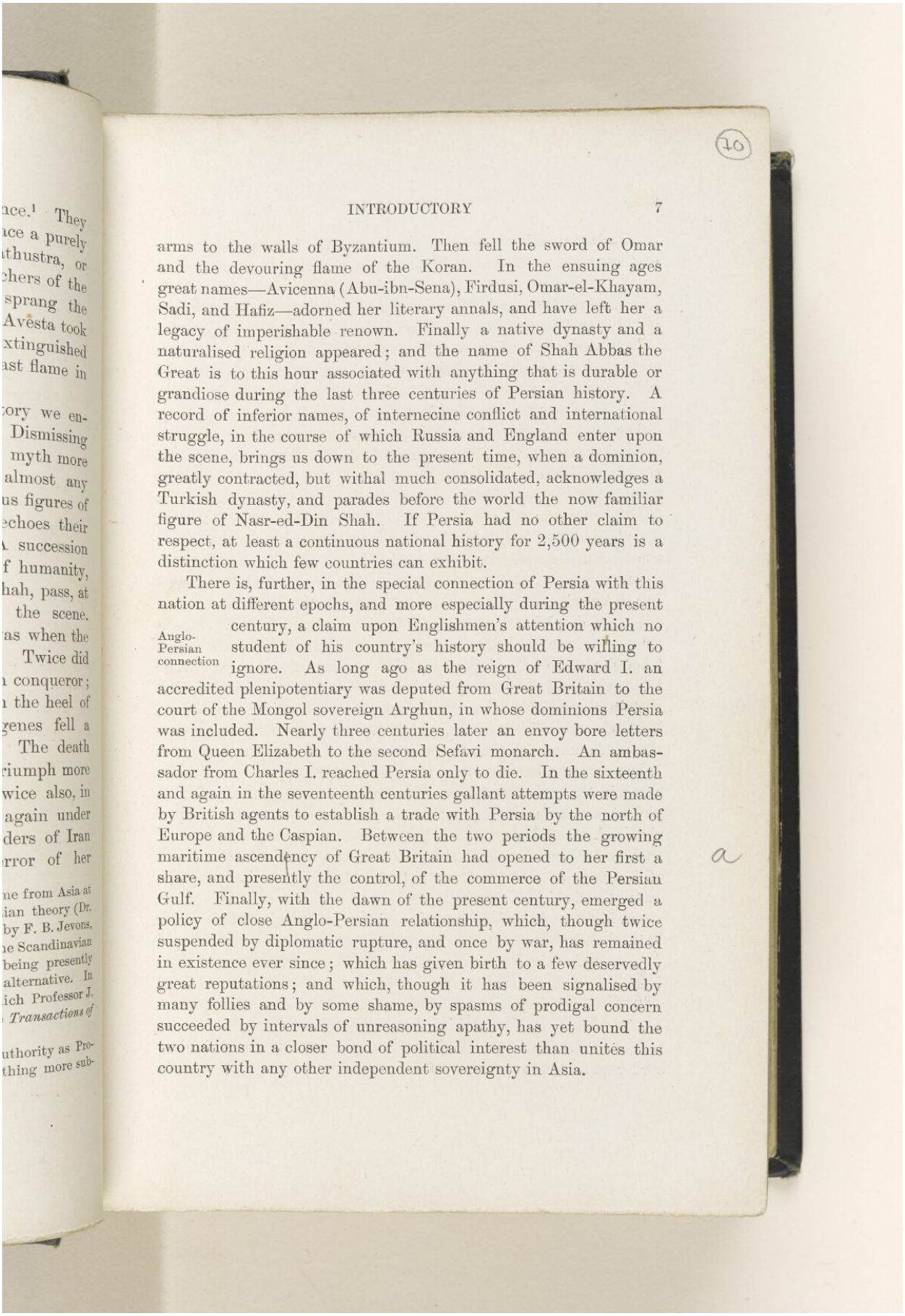
a frequent, if also the most futile, battlefield of science.[1] They were the first of the Indo-European family to embrace a purely monotheistic faith. Amongst them appeared Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, the second in date of the great religious teachers of the East, if, indeed, he ever appeared at all.[2] Thence sprang the ennobling creed of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Then the Avesta took shape, and there was kindled the fire that, all but extinguished on its parent altars, still lights a subdued but steadfast flame in the rich and comfortable exile of Bombay.

Drama of Persian history

As we descend the stately flight of Persian history we encounter many a name familiar to us from childhood. Dismissing the legendary as appertaining to a region of myth more nebulous in the case of Iran than of almost any country, we are confronted with the illustrious figures of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, whose handwriting still echoes their fame from the halls where they ruled and feasted. A succession of meteoric phenomena, the wonder or the scourge of humanity, an Alexander, a Jenghiz Khan, a Timur, a Nadir Shah, pass, at different epochs, in a trail of fire and blood across the scene. The direst day of the later Roman Commonwealth was when the legions of Crassus were strewn on the plain of Carrhæ. Twice did a Roman Cæsar surrender to a Persian or semi-Persian conqueror; when the Emperor Valerian bowed his neck beneath the heel of Shapur I.; and when the Emperor Romanus Diogenes fell a prisoner to the Seljuk Alp Arslan, the Great Lion. The death in battle of a third, the renowned Julian, was a triumph more precious than a battlefield to the second Shapur. Twice also, in the days of the famous Chosroes, or Nushirwan, and again under his grandson, the second Chosroes or Parviz, the borders of Iran were extended to the Mediterranean, and the terror of her

[1] I am aware that it is now asserted that the Aryans never came from Asia at all. But, for the present, I hesitate to adopt either the Sarmatian theory (Dr. Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, translated by F. B. Jevons, 1890; and Canon I. Taylor, *The Origin of the Aryans*, 1890) or the Scandinavian theory (Herr Penka, *Die Herkunft der Arier*, 1886), for fear of being presently invited to surrender them for a third and, as yet, undiscovered alternative. In the meantime, therefore, I prefer the old Asian hypothesis, to which Professor J. Schmidt has gallantly rallied in an essay published in 1890 in the *Transactions of the Royal Academy of Berlin*.

[2] Again a necessary qualification, seeing that so learned an authority as Professor Darmesteter has found in the personality of Zoroaster nothing more substantial than 'a product of the ubiquitous storm-myth.'





arms to the walls of Byzantium. Then fell the sword of Omar and the devouring flame of the Koran. In the ensuing ages great names—Avicenna (Abu-ibn-Sena), Firdusi, Omar-el-Khayam, Sadi, and Hafiz—adorned her literary annals, and have left her a legacy of imperishable renown. Finally a native dynasty and a naturalised religion appeared; and the name of Shah Abbas the Great is to this hour associated with anything that is durable or grandiose during the last three centuries of Persian history. A record of inferior names, of internecine conflict and international struggle, in the course of which Russia and England enter upon the scene, brings us down to the present time, when a dominion, greatly contracted, but withal much consolidated, acknowledges a Turkish dynasty, and parades before the world the now familiar figure of Nasr-ed-Din Shah. If Persia had no other claim to respect, at least a continuous national history for 2,500 years is a distinction which few countries can exhibit.

Anglo-Persian connection

There is, further, in the special connection of Persia with this nation at different epochs, and more especially during the present century, a claim upon Englishmen's attention which no student of his country's history should be willing to ignore. As long ago as the reign of Edward I. an accredited plenipotentiary was deputed from Great Britain to the court of the Mongol sovereign Arghun, in whose dominions Persia was included. Nearly three centuries later an envoy bore letters from Queen Elizabeth to the second Sefavi monarch. An ambassador from Charles I. reached Persia only to die. In the sixteenth and again in the seventeenth centuries gallant attempts were made by British agents to establish a trade with Persia by the north of Europe and the Caspian. Between the two periods the growing maritime ascendency of Great Britain had opened to her first a share, and presently the control, of the commerce of the Persian Gulf. Finally, with the dawn of the present century, emerged a policy of close Anglo-Persian relationship, which, though twice suspended by diplomatic rupture, and once by war, has remained in existence ever since; which has given birth to a few deservedly great reputations; and which, though it has been signalised by many follies and by some shame, by spasms of prodigal concern succeeded by intervals of unreasoning apathy, has yet bound the two nations in a closer bond of political interest than unites this country with any other independent sovereignty in Asia.

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The memorials of many of these ages, the handiwork of some of these men, will come under notice in the narrative to which I shall presently turn. My journey was divided into four portions, each of which will be found to possess a historical interest or a political importance, as well as physical idiosyncrasies, of its own. They will deal respectively with the north-east, the central, and the south-west provinces of Persia, and with the maritime highway on the south, the thread upon which will be strung whatever of information I have been able to collect, either with regard to the regions actually traversed or to those bordering thereupon, being supplied by the description of my own travels, which consisted of (1) a ride of 850 miles through the frontier province of Khorasan and thence to the capital, Teheran; (2) the more familiar journey of 800 miles, also on horseback, from Teheran to Bushire; (3) the ascent of the Shat-el-Arab and the Karun River; and (4) the navigation of the Persian Gulf.

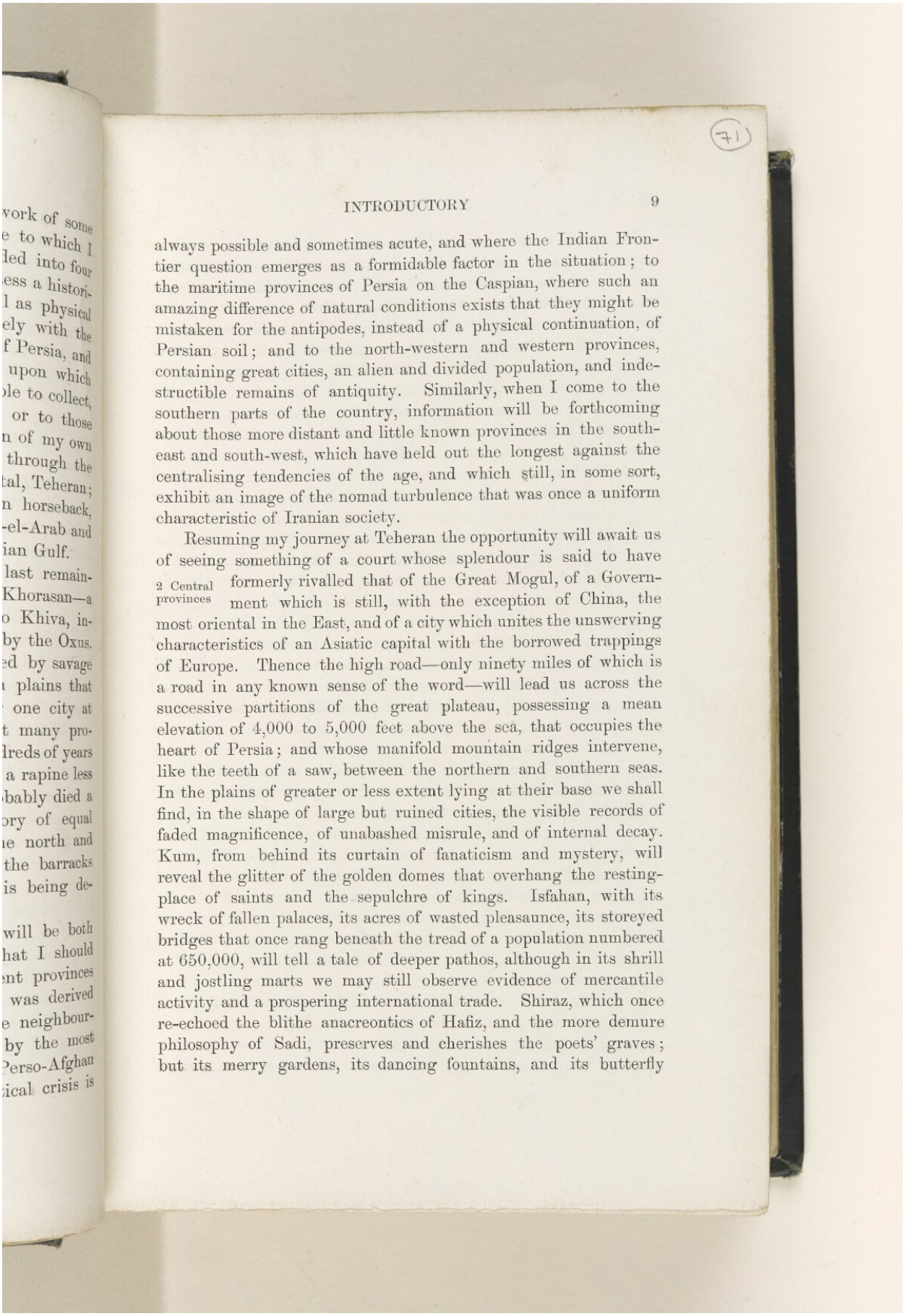
Fourfold division of journey

In the first case I shall conduct my readers to the last remaining possession of the once mighty principality of Khorasan—a dominion that embraced Merv, extended to Khiva, included Herat and Kandahar, and was laved by the Oxus. Though shorn of its high estate, this province, fortified by savage mountains and inaccessible ravines, interspersed with plains that sustain the relics of famous capitals, and possessing one city at least of world-wide renown, will be found to present many problems of undiminished and imperial interest. For hundreds of years it has been the battle-ground of races and the prey of a rapine less merciful than sustained war. More persons have probably died a violent death in Khorasan than in any other territory of equal size in Asia. There, moreover, at this moment, on the north and east, the eagles are again gathered together, and in the barracks of Transcaspia and the council-tents of Turkestan is being debated the destiny of Meshed.

1. Khorasan

While treating of this portion of my journey it will be both natural and necessary to the scope of these volumes that I should give the latest information about the adjacent provinces or districts; information the bulk of which was derived from inquiries made by myself while in the neighbourhood, and the whole of which has been supervised by the most competent authorities. This will apply to the Perso-Afghan border and Seistan question on the east, where a political crisis is

Contiguous provinces

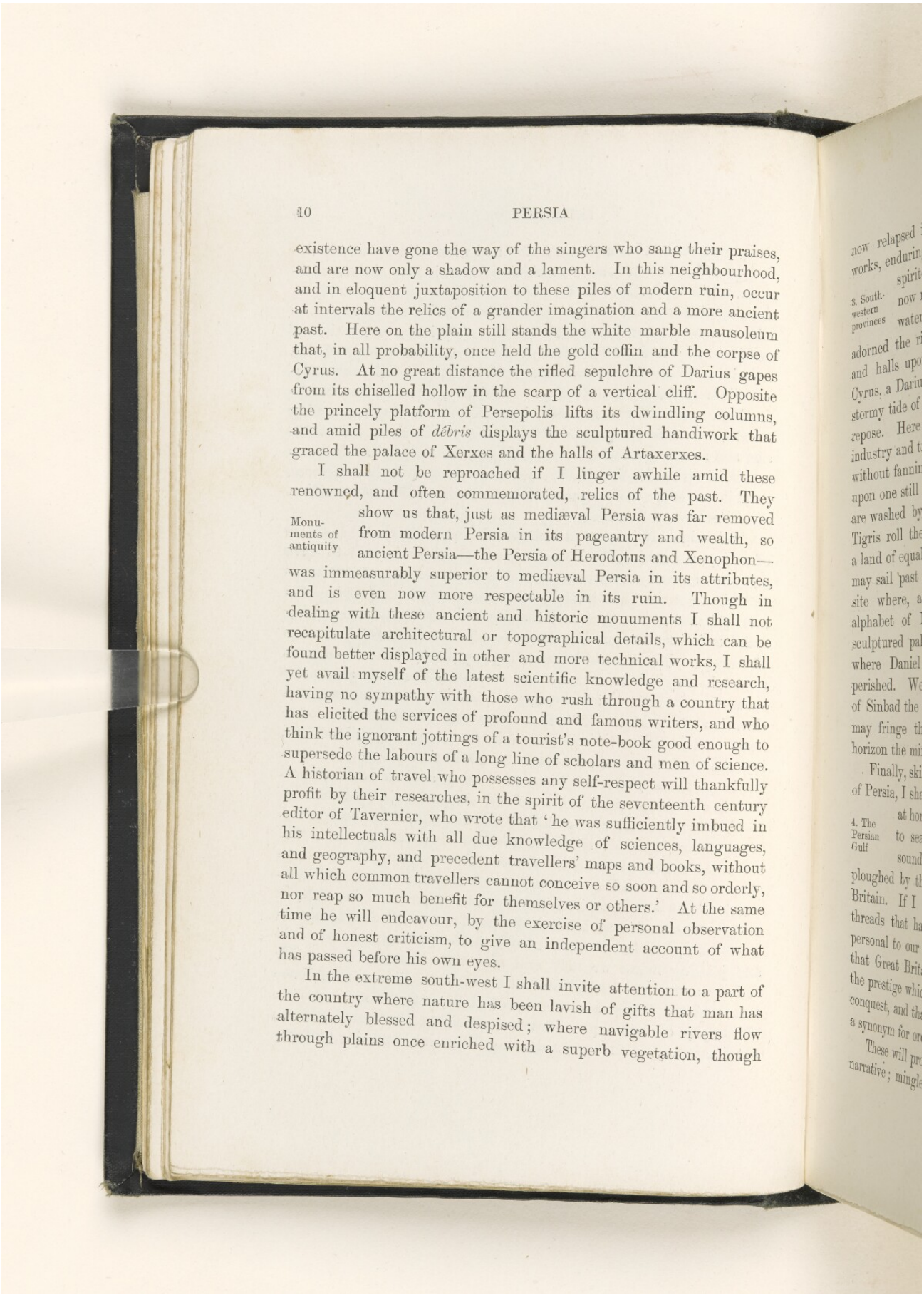




always possible and sometimes acute, and where the Indian Frontier question emerges as a formidable factor in the situation; to the maritime provinces of Persia on the Caspian, where such an amazing difference of natural conditions exists that they might be mistaken for the antipodes, instead of a physical continuation, of Persian soil; and to the north-western and western provinces, containing great cities, an alien and divided population, and indestructible remains of antiquity. Similarly, when I come to the southern parts of the country, information will be forthcoming about those more distant and little known provinces in the south-east and south-west, which have held out the longest against the centralising tendencies of the age, and which still, in some sort, exhibit an image of the nomad turbulence that was once a uniform characteristic of Iranian society.

Resuming my journey at Teheran the opportunity will await us of seeing something of a court whose splendour is said to have formerly rivalled that of the Great Mogul, of a Government which is still, with the exception of China, the most oriental in the East, and of a city which unites the unswerving characteristics of an Asiatic capital with the borrowed trappings of Europe. Thence the high road—only ninety miles of which is a road in any known sense of the word—will lead us across the successive partitions of the great plateau, possessing a mean elevation of 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea, that occupies the heart of Persia; and whose manifold mountain ridges intervene, like the teeth of a saw, between the northern and southern seas. In the plains of greater or less extent lying at their base we shall find, in the shape of large but ruined cities, the visible records of faded magnificence, of unabashed misrule, and of internal decay. Kum, from behind its curtain of fanaticism and mystery, will reveal the glitter of the golden domes that overhang the resting-place of saints and the sepulchre of kings. Isfahan, with its wreck of fallen palaces, its acres of wasted pleasaunce, its storeyed bridges that once rang beneath the tread of a population numbered at 650,000, will tell a tale of deeper pathos, although in its shrill and jostling marts we may still observe evidence of mercantile activity and a prospering international trade. Shiraz, which once re-echoed the blithe anacreontics of Hafiz, and the more demure philosophy of Sadi, preserves and cherishes the poets' graves; but its merry gardens, its dancing fountains, and its butterfly

2 Central provinces





existence have gone the way of the singers who sang their praises, and are now only a shadow and a lament. In this neighbourhood, and in eloquent juxtaposition to these piles of modern ruin, occur at intervals the relics of a grander imagination and a more ancient past. Here on the plain still stands the white marble mausoleum that, in all probability, once held the gold coffin and the corpse of Cyrus. At no great distance the rifled sepulchre of Darius gapes from its chiselled hollow in the scarp of a vertical cliff. Opposite the princely platform of Persepolis lifts its dwindling columns, and amid piles of *débris* displays the sculptured handiwork that graced the palace of Xerxes and the halls of Artaxerxes.

I shall not be reproached if I linger awhile amid these renowned, and often commemorated, relics of the past. They show us that, just as mediæval Persia was far removed from modern Persia in its pageantry and wealth, so ancient Persia—the Persia of Herodotus and Xenophon—was immeasurably superior to mediæval Persia in its attributes, and is even now more respectable in its ruin. Though in dealing with these ancient and historic monuments I shall not recapitulate architectural or topographical details, which can be found better displayed in other and more technical works, I shall yet avail myself of the latest scientific knowledge and research, having no sympathy with those who rush through a country that has elicited the services of profound and famous writers, and who think the ignorant jottings of a tourist's note-book good enough to supersede the labours of a long line of scholars and men of science. A historian of travel who possesses any self-respect will thankfully profit by their researches, in the spirit of the seventeenth century editor of Tavernier, who wrote that 'he was sufficiently imbued in his intellectuals with all due knowledge of sciences, languages, and geography, and precedent travellers' maps and books, without all which common travellers cannot conceive so soon and so orderly, nor reap so much benefit for themselves or others.' At the same time he will endeavour, by the exercise of personal observation and of honest criticism, to give an independent account of what has passed before his own eyes.

Monuments of antiquity

In the extreme south-west I shall invite attention to a part of the country where nature has been lavish of gifts that man has alternately blessed and despised; where navigable rivers flow through plains once enriched with a superb vegetation, though

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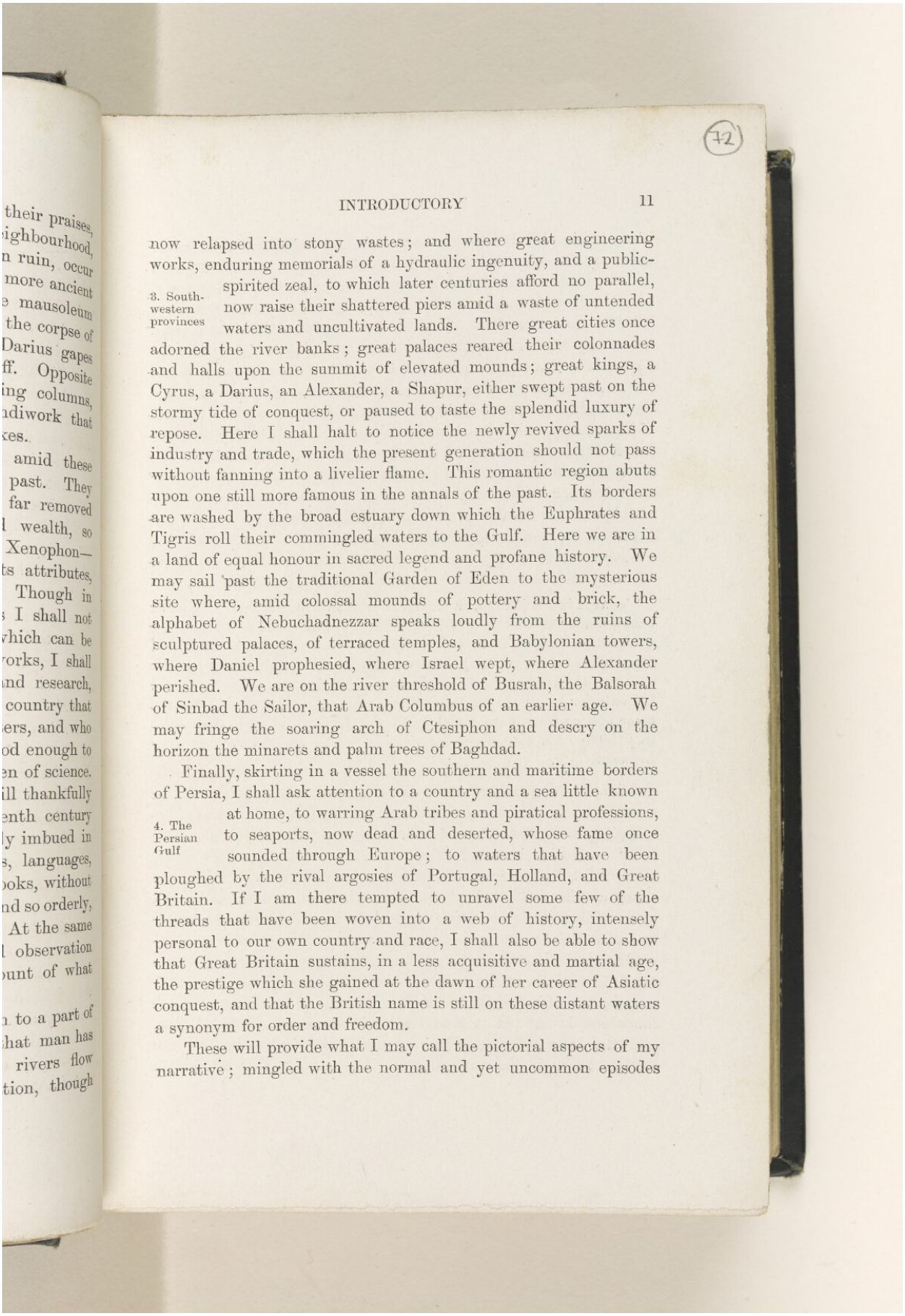



now relapsed into stony wastes; and where great engineering works, enduring memorials of a hydraulic ingenuity, and a public-spirited zeal, to which later centuries afford no parallel, now raise their shattered piers amid a waste of untended waters and uncultivated lands. There great cities once adorned the river banks; great palaces reared their colonnades and halls upon the summit of elevated mounds; great kings, a Cyrus, a Darius, an Alexander, a Shapur, either swept past on the stormy tide of conquest, or paused to taste the splendid luxury of repose. Here I shall halt to notice the newly revived sparks of industry and trade, which the present generation should not pass without fanning into a livelier flame. This romantic region abuts upon one still more famous in the annals of the past. Its borders are washed by the broad estuary down which the Euphrates and Tigris roll their commingled waters to the Gulf. Here we are in a land of equal honour in sacred legend and profane history. We may sail past the traditional Garden of Eden to the mysterious site where, amid colossal mounds of pottery and brick, the alphabet of Nebuchadnezzar speaks loudly from the ruins of sculptured palaces, of terraced temples, and Babylonian towers, where Daniel prophesied, where Israel wept, where Alexander perished. We are on the river threshold of Busrah, the Balsorah of Sinbad the Sailor, that Arab Columbus of an earlier age. We may fringe the soaring arch of Ctesiphon and descry on the horizon the minarets and palm trees of Baghdad.

3. South-western provinces

Finally, skirting in a vessel the southern and maritime borders of Persia, I shall ask attention to a country and a sea little known at home, to warring Arab tribes and piratical professions, to seaports, now dead and deserted, whose fame once sounded through Europe; to waters that have been ploughed by the rival argosies of Portugal, Holland, and Great Britain. If I am there tempted to unravel some few of the threads that have been woven into a web of history, intensely personal to our own country and race, I shall also be able to show that Great Britain sustains, in a less acquisitive and martial age, the prestige which she gained at the dawn of her career of Asiatic conquest, and that the British name is still on these distant waters a synonym for order and freedom.

4. The Persian Gulf

These will provide what I may call the pictorial aspects of my narrative; mingled with the normal and yet uncommon episodes

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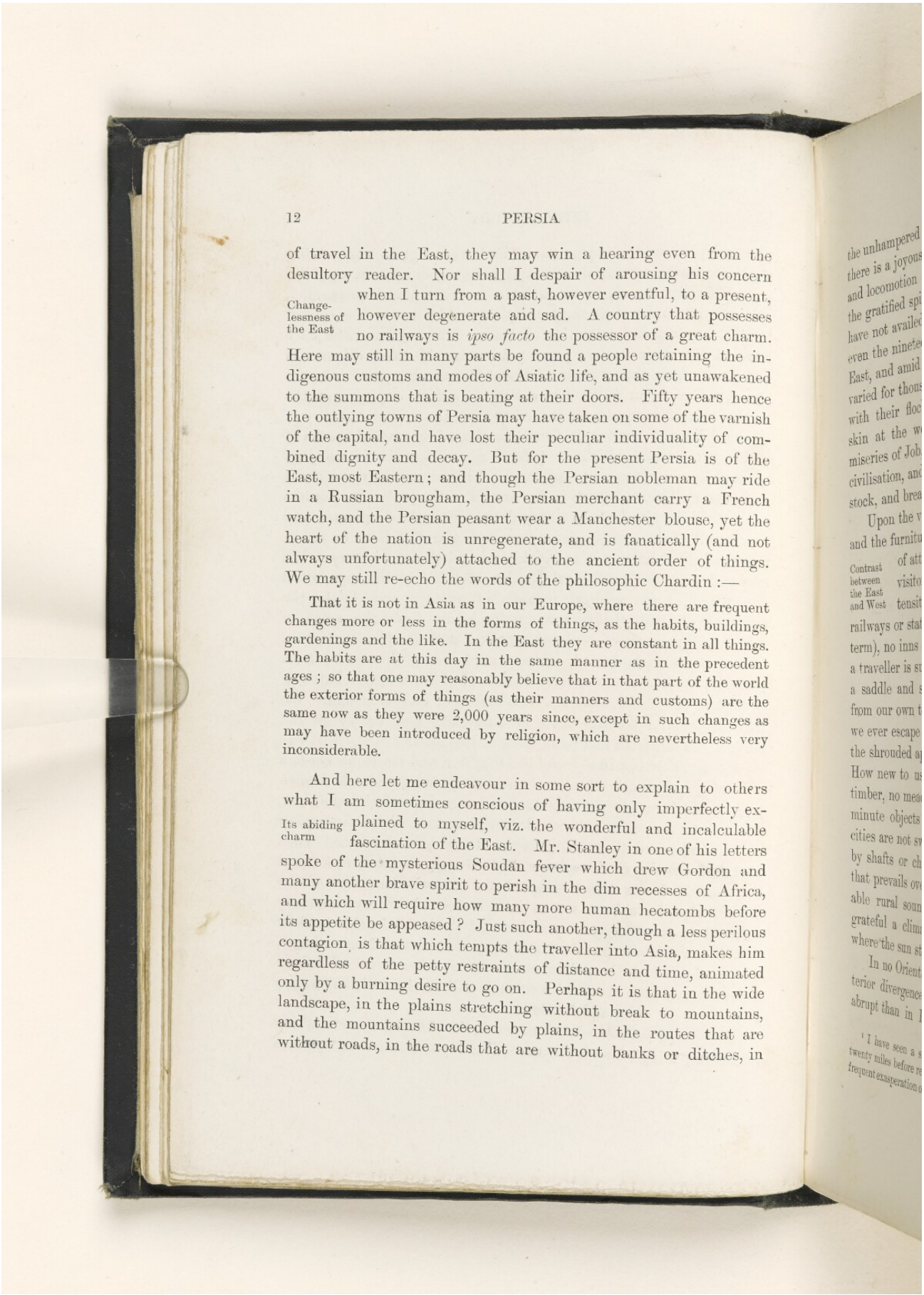




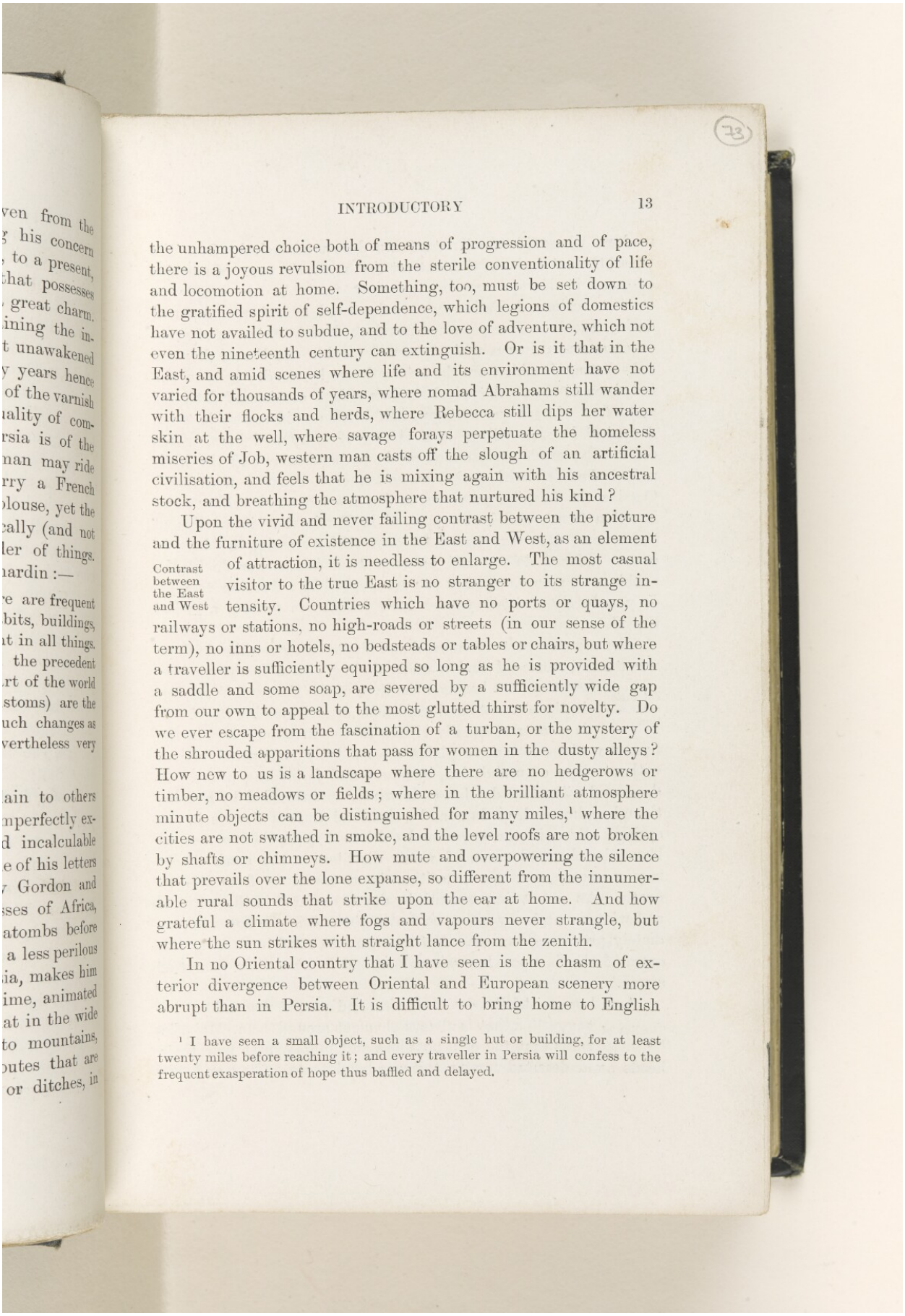
of travel in the East, they may win a hearing even from the desultory reader. Nor shall I despair of arousing his concern when I turn from a past, however eventful, to a present, however degenerate and sad. A country that possesses no railways is *ipso facto* the possessor of a great charm. Here may still in many parts be found a people retaining the indigenous customs and modes of Asiatic life, and as yet unawakened to the summons that is beating at their doors. Fifty years hence the outlying towns of Persia may have taken on some of the varnish of the capital, and have lost their peculiar individuality of combined dignity and decay. But for the present Persia is of the East, most Eastern; and though the Persian nobleman may ride in a Russian brougham, the Persian merchant carry a French watch, and the Persian peasant wear a Manchester blouse, yet the heart of the nation is unregenerate, and is fanatically (and not always unfortunately) attached to the ancient order of things. We may still re-echo the words of the philosophic Chardin :—

Changelessness of the East

That it is not in Asia as in our Europe, where there are frequent changes more or less in the forms of things, as the habits, buildings, gardenings and the like. In the East they are constant in all things. The habits are at this day in the same manner as in the precedent ages; so that one may reasonably believe that in that part of the world the exterior forms of things (as their manners and customs) are the same now as they were 2,000 years since, except in such changes as may have been introduced by religion, which are nevertheless very inconsiderable.

And here let me endeavour in some sort to explain to others what I am sometimes conscious of having only imperfectly explained to myself, viz. the wonderful and incalculable fascination of the East. Mr. Stanley in one of his letters spoke of the mysterious Soudan fever which drew Gordon and many another brave spirit to perish in the dim recesses of Africa, and which will require how many more human hecatombs before its appetite be appeased? Just such another, though a less perilous contagion, is that which tempts the traveller into Asia, makes him regardless of the petty restraints of distance and time, animated only by a burning desire to go on. Perhaps it is that in the wide landscape, in the plains stretching without break to mountains, and the mountains succeeded by plains, in the routes that are without roads, in the roads that are without banks or ditches, in

Its abiding charm





the unhampered choice both of means of progression and of pace, there is a joyous revulsion from the sterile conventionality of life and locomotion at home. Something, too, must be set down to the gratified spirit of self-dependence, which legions of domestics have not availed to subdue, and to the love of adventure, which not even the nineteenth century can extinguish. Or is it that in the East, and amid scenes where life and its environment have not varied for thousands of years, where nomad Abrahams still wander with their flocks and herds, where Rebecca still dips her water skin at the well, where savage forays perpetuate the homeless miseries of Job, western man casts off the slough of an artificial civilisation, and feels that he is mixing again with his ancestral stock, and breathing the atmosphere that nurtured his kind?

Contrast between the East and West

Upon the vivid and never failing contrast between the picture and the furniture of existence in the East and West, as an element of attraction, it is needless to enlarge. The most casual visitor to the true East is no stranger to its strange intensity. Countries which have no ports or quays, no railways or stations, no high-roads or streets (in our sense of the term), no inns or hotels, no bedsteads or tables or chairs, but where a traveller is sufficiently equipped so long as he is provided with a saddle and some soap, are severed by a sufficiently wide gap from our own to appeal to the most glutted thirst for novelty. Do we ever escape from the fascination of a turban, or the mystery of the shrouded apparitions that pass for women in the dusty alleys? How new to us is a landscape where there are no hedgerows or timber, no meadows or fields; where in the brilliant atmosphere minute objects can be distinguished for many miles,[1] where the cities are not swathed in smoke, and the level roofs are not broken by shafts or chimneys. How mute and overpowering the silence that prevails over the lone expanse, so different from the innumerable rural sounds that strike upon the ear at home. And how grateful a climate where fogs and vapours never strangle, but where the sun strikes with straight lance from the zenith.

In no Oriental country that I have seen is the chasm of exterior divergence between Oriental and European scenery more abrupt than in Persia. It is difficult to bring home to English

[1] I have seen a small object, such as a single hut or building, for at least twenty miles before reaching it; and every traveller in Persia will confess to the frequent exasperation of hope thus baffled and delayed.

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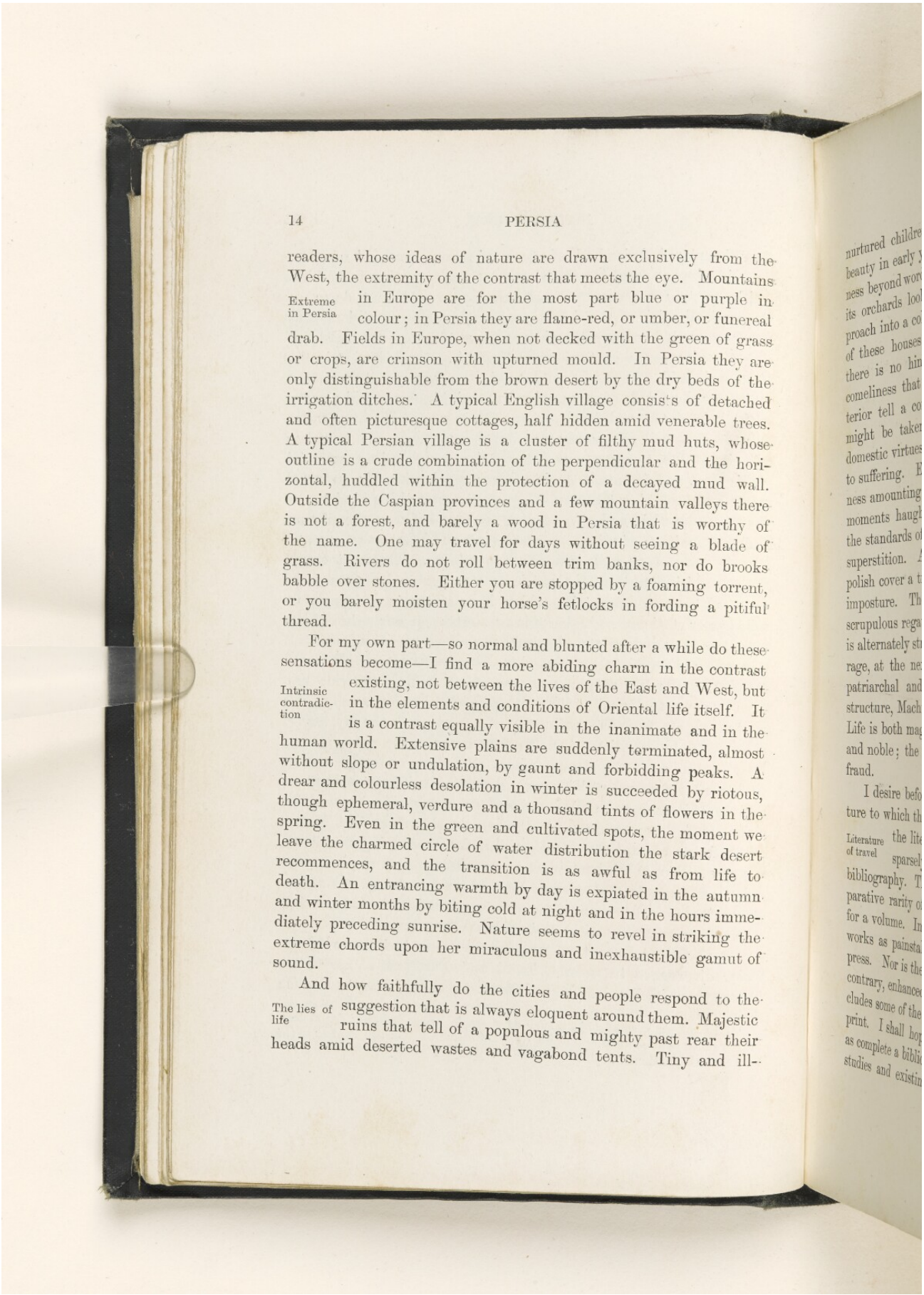




readers, whose ideas of nature are drawn exclusively from the West, the extremity of the contrast that meets the eye. Mountains in Europe are for the most part blue or purple in colour; in Persia they are flame-red, or umber, or funereal drab. Fields in Europe, when not decked with the green of grass or crops, are crimson with upturned mould. In Persia they are only distinguishable from the brown desert by the dry beds of the irrigation ditches. A typical English village consists of detached and often picturesque cottages, half hidden amid venerable trees. A typical Persian village is a cluster of filthy mud huts, whose outline is a crude combination of the perpendicular and the horizontal, huddled within the protection of a decayed mud wall. Outside the Caspian provinces and a few mountain valleys there is not a forest, and barely a wood in Persia that is worthy of the name. One may travel for days without seeing a blade of grass. Rivers do not roll between trim banks, nor do brooks babble over stones. Either you are stopped by a foaming torrent, or you barely moisten your horse's fetlocks in fording a pitiful thread.

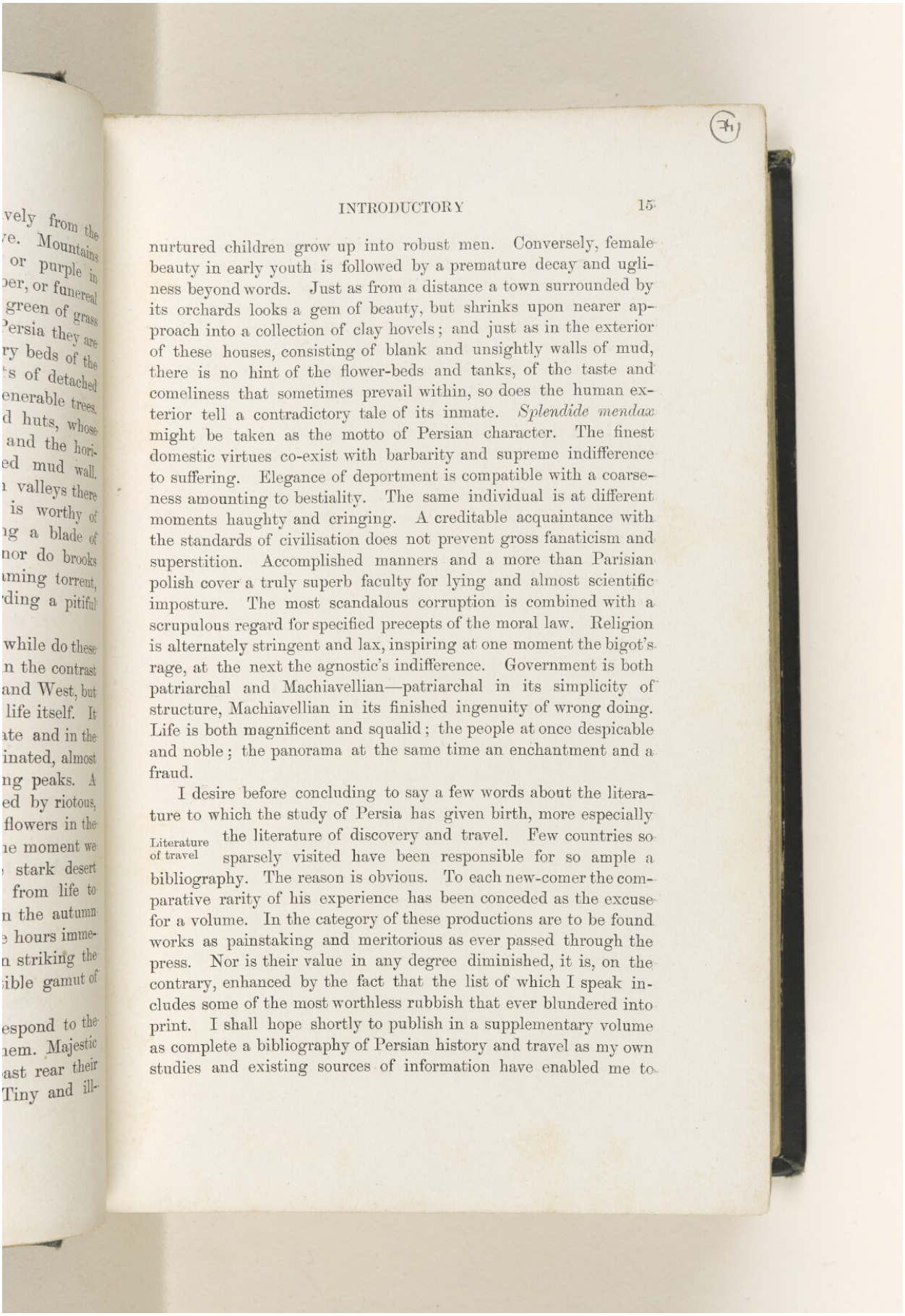
Extreme in Persia

For my own part—so normal and blunted after a while do these sensations become—I find a more abiding charm in the contrast existing, not between the lives of the East and West, but in the elements and conditions of Oriental life itself. It is a contrast equally visible in the inanimate and in the human world. Extensive plains are suddenly terminated, almost without slope or undulation, by gaunt and forbidding peaks. A drear and colourless desolation in winter is succeeded by riotous, though ephemeral, verdure and a thousand tints of flowers in the spring. Even in the green and cultivated spots, the moment we leave the charmed circle of water distribution the stark desert recommences, and the transition is as awful as from life to death. An entrancing warmth by day is expiated in the autumn and winter months by biting cold at night and in the hours immediately preceding sunrise. Nature seems to revel in striking the extreme chords upon her miraculous and inexhaustible gamut of sound.

Intrinsic contradiction

And how faithfully do the cities and people respond to the suggestion that is always eloquent around them. Majestic ruins that tell of a populous and mighty past rear their heads amid deserted wastes and vagabond tents. Tiny and ill-

The lies of life





nurtured children grow up into robust men. Conversely, female beauty in early youth is followed by a premature decay and ugliness beyond words. Just as from a distance a town surrounded by its orchards looks a gem of beauty, but shrinks upon nearer approach into a collection of clay hovels; and just as in the exterior of these houses, consisting of blank and unsightly walls of mud, there is no hint of the flower-beds and tanks, of the taste and comeliness that sometimes prevail within, so does the human exterior tell a contradictory tale of its inmate. *Splendide mendax* might be taken as the motto of Persian character. The finest domestic virtues co-exist with barbarity and supreme indifference to suffering. Elegance of deportment is compatible with a coarseness amounting to bestiality. The same individual is at different moments haughty and cringing. A creditable acquaintance with the standards of civilisation does not prevent gross fanaticism and superstition. Accomplished manners and a more than Parisian polish cover a truly superb faculty for lying and almost scientific imposture. The most scandalous corruption is combined with a scrupulous regard for specified precepts of the moral law. Religion is alternately stringent and lax, inspiring at one moment the bigot's rage, at the next the agnostic's indifference. Government is both patriarchal and Machiavellian—patriarchal in its simplicity of structure, Machiavellian in its finished ingenuity of wrong doing. Life is both magnificent and squalid; the people at once despicable and noble; the panorama at the same time an enchantment and a fraud.

Literature of travel

I desire before concluding to say a few words about the literature to which the study of Persia has given birth, more especially the literature of discovery and travel. Few countries so sparsely visited have been responsible for so ample a bibliography. The reason is obvious. To each new-comer the comparative rarity of his experience has been conceded as the excuse for a volume. In the category of these productions are to be found works as painstaking and meritorious as ever passed through the press. Nor is their value in any degree diminished, it is, on the contrary, enhanced by the fact that the list of which I speak includes some of the most worthless rubbish that ever blundered into print. I shall hope shortly to publish in a supplementary volume as complete a bibliography of Persian history and travel as my own studies and existing sources of information have enabled me to

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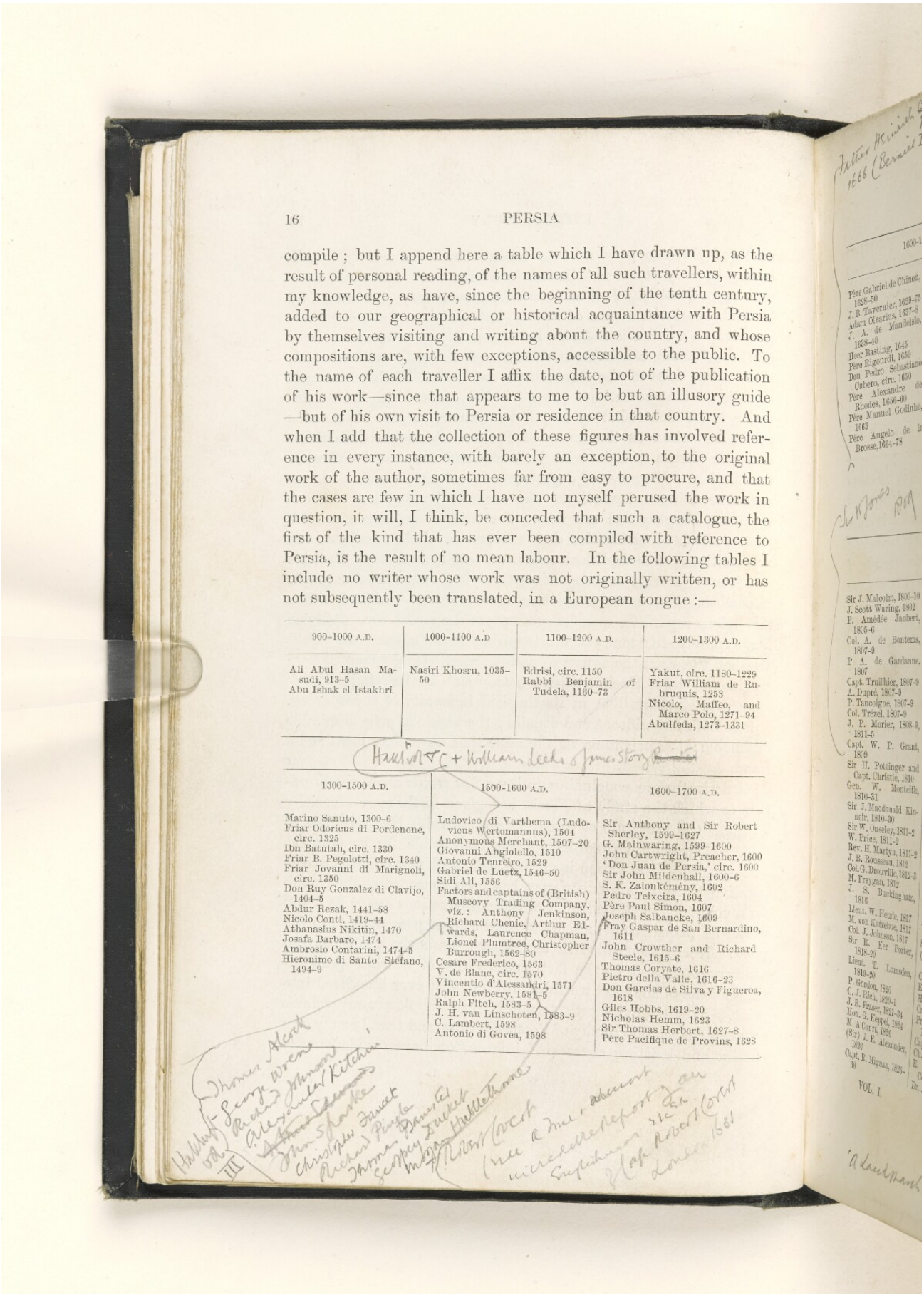



compile ; but I append here a table which I have drawn up, as the result of personal reading, of the names of all such travellers, within my knowledge, as have, since the beginning of the tenth century, added to our geographical or historical acquaintance with Persia by themselves visiting and writing about the country, and whose compositions are, with few exceptions, accessible to the public. To the name of each traveller I affix the date, not of the publication of his work—since that appears to me to be but an illusory guide—but of his own visit to Persia or residence in that country. And when I add that the collection of these figures has involved reference in every instance, with barely an exception, to the original work of the author, sometimes far from easy to procure, and that the cases are few in which I have not myself perused the work in question, it will, I think, be conceded that such a catalogue, the first of the kind that has ever been compiled with reference to Persia, is the result of no mean labour. In the following tables I include no writer whose work was not originally written, or has not subsequently been translated, in a European tongue :—

| 900–1000 A.D. | 1000–1100 A.D. | 1100–1200 A.D. | 1200–1300 A.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ali Abul Hasan Masudi, 913–5<br>Abu Ishak el Istakhri | Nasiri Khosru, 1035–50 | Edrisi, circ. 1150<br>Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, 1160–73 | Yakut, circ. 1180–1229<br>Friar William de Rubruquis, 1253<br>Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco Polo, 1271–94<br>Abulfeda, 1273–1331 |

| 1300–1500 A.D. | 1500–1600 A.D. | 1600–1700 A.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Marino Sanuto, 1300–6<br>Friar Odoricus di Pordenone, circ. 1325<br>Ibn Batutah, circ. 1330<br>Friar B. Pegolotti, circ. 1340<br>Friar Jovanni di Marignoli, circ. 1350<br>Don Ruy Gonzalez di Clavijo, 1404–5<br>Abdur Rezak, 1441–58<br>Nicolo Conti, 1419–44<br>Athanasius Nikitin, 1470<br>Josafa Barbaro, 1474<br>Ambrosio Contarini, 1474–5<br>Hieronimo di Santo Stefano, 1494–9 | Ludovico di Varthema (Ludovicus Wertomannus), 1504<br>Anonymous Merchant, 1507–20<br>Giovanni Angiolello, 1510<br>Antonio Tenreiro, 1529<br>Gabriel de Luetz, 1546–50<br>Sidi Ali, 1556<br>Factors and captains of (British) Muscovy Trading Company, viz.: Anthony Jenkinson, Richard Chenie, Arthur Edwards, Laurence Chapman, Lionel Plumtree, Christopher Burrough, 1562–80<br>Cesare Frederico, 1563<br>V. de Blanc, circ. 1570<br>Vincentio d'Alessandri, 1571<br>John Newberry, 1581–5<br>Ralph Fitch, 1583–5<br>J. H. van Linschoten, 1583–9<br>C. Lambert, 1598<br>Antonio di Govea, 1598 | Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley, 1599–1627<br>G. Mainwaring, 1599–1600<br>John Cartwright, Preacher, 1600<br>'Don Juan de Persia,' circ. 1600<br>Sir John Mildenhall, 1600–6<br>S. K. Zalonkémény, 1602<br>Pedro Teixeira, 1604<br>Père Paul Simon, 1607<br>Joseph Salbancke, 1609<br>Fray Gaspar de San Bernardino, 1611<br>John Crowther and Richard Steele, 1615–6<br>Thomas Coryate, 1616<br>Pietro della Valle, 1616–23<br>Don Garcias de Silva y Figueroa, 1618<br>Giles Hobbs, 1619–20<br>Nicholas Hemm, 1623<br>Sir Thomas Herbert, 1627–8<br>Père Pacifique de Provins, 1628 |



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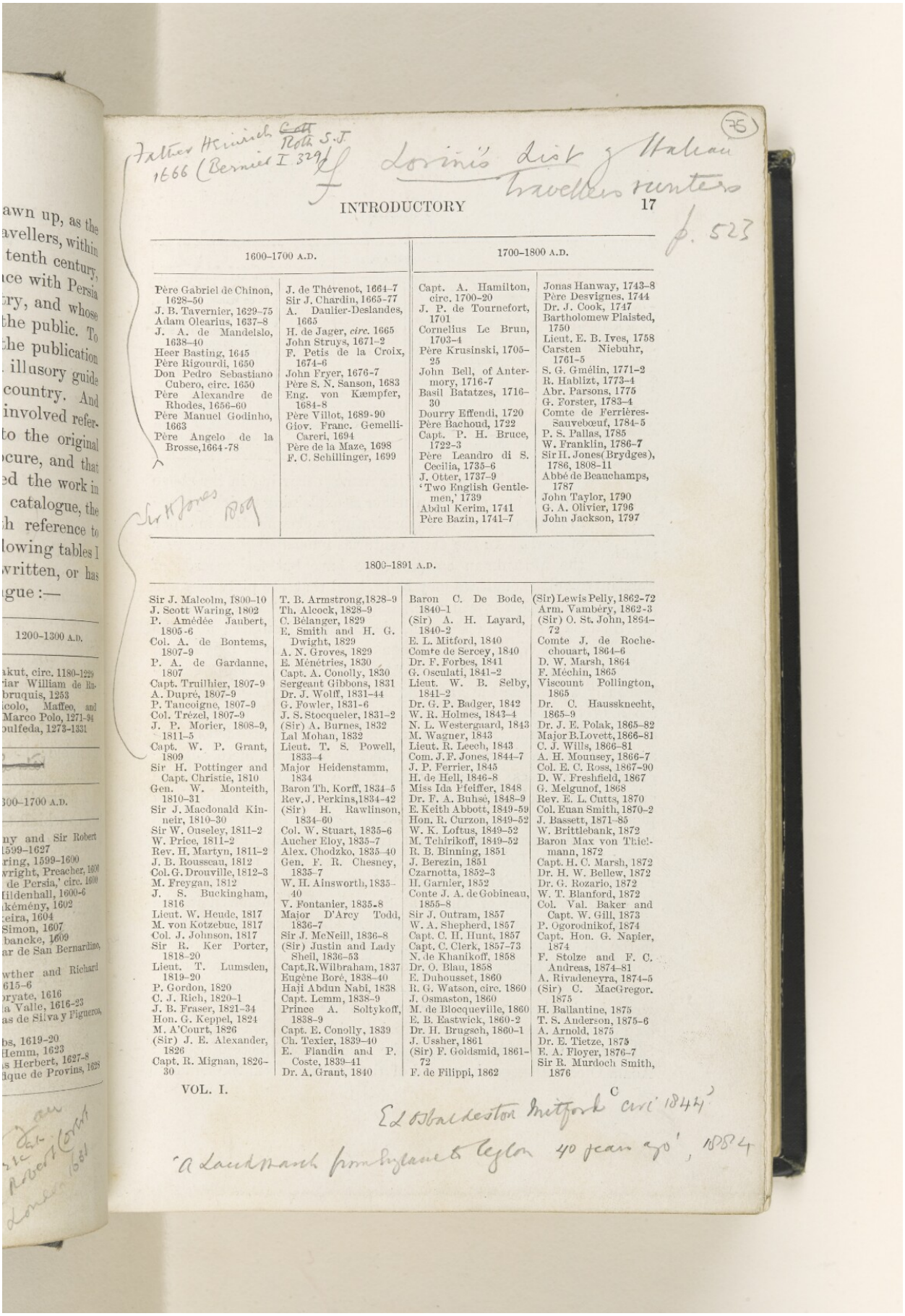

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1200–1300 A.D.

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iar William de Ru-
bruquis, 1253
icolo, Maffeo, and
Marco Polo, 1271–94
oulfeda, 1273–1331

300–1700 A.D.

ny and Sir Robert
1599–1627
ring, 1599–1600
wright, Preacher, 1600
de Persia,' circ. 1600
Hildenhall, 1600–6
kémény, 1602
eira, 1604
Simon, 1607
bancke, 1609
ar de San Bernardino,
wther and Richard
615–6
oryate, 1616
a Valle, 1616–23
as de Silva y Figueroa,
bs, 1619–20
Hemm, 1623
s Herbert, 1627–8
ique de Provins, 1628

Father Heinrich Roth S.J. 1666 (Bernier I 329) f

Lorini's list of Italian travellers writers

75

p. 523



1600–1700 A.D.

Père Gabriel de Chinon, 1628–50
J. B. Tavernier, 1629–75
Adam Olearius, 1637–8
J. A. de Mandelslo, 1638–40
Heer Basting, 1645
Père Rigourdi, 1650
Don Pedro Sebastiano Cubero, circ. 1650
Père Alexandre de Rhodes, 1656–60
Père Manuel Godinho, 1663
Père Angelo de la Brosse, 1664–78
J. de Thévenot, 1664–7
Sir J. Chardin, 1665–77
A. Daulier-Deslandes, 1665
H. de Jager, *circ.* 1665
John Struys, 1671–2
F. Petis de la Croix, 1674–6
John Fryer, 1676–7
Père S. N. Sanson, 1683
Eng. von Kæmpfer, 1684–8
Père Villot, 1689–90
Giov. Franc. Gemelli-Careri, 1694
Père de la Maze, 1698
F. C. Schillinger, 1699

Sir W Jones Bog

1700–1800 A.D.

Capt. A. Hamilton, circ. 1700–20
J. P. de Tournefort, 1701
Cornelius Le Brun, 1703–4
Père Krusinski, 1705–25
John Bell, of Antermory, 1716–7
Basil Batatzes, 1716–30
Dourry Effendi, 1720
Père Bachoud, 1722
Capt. P. H. Bruce, 1722–3
Père Leandro di S. Cecilia, 1735–6
J. Otter, 1737–9
'Two English Gentlemen,' 1739
Abdul Kerim, 1741
Père Bazin, 1741–7
Jonas Hanway, 1743–8
Père Desvignes, 1744
Dr. J. Cook, 1747
Bartholomew Plaisted, 1750
Lieut. E. B. Ives, 1758
Carsten Niebuhr, 1761–5
S. G. Gmélin, 1771–2
R. Hablizt, 1773–4
Abr. Parsons, 1775
G. Forster, 1783–4
Comte de Ferrières-Sauvebœuf, 1784–5
P. S. Pallas, 1785
W. Franklin, 1786–7
Sir H. Jones (Brydges), 1786, 1808–11
Abbé de Beauchamps, 1787
John Taylor, 1790
G. A. Olivier, 1796
John Jackson, 1797

1800–1891 A.D.

Sir J. Malcolm, 1800–10
J. Scott Waring, 1802
P. Amédée Jaubert, 1805–6
Col. A. de Bontems, 1807–9
P. A. de Gardanne, 1807
Capt. Truilhier, 1807–9
A. Dupré, 1807–9
P. Tancoigne, 1807–9
Col. Trézel, 1807–9
J. P. Morier, 1808–9, 1811–5
Capt. W. P. Grant, 1809
Sir H. Pottinger and Capt. Christie, 1810
Gen. W. Monteith, 1810–31
Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir, 1810–30
Sir W. Ouseley, 1811–2
W. Price, 1811–2
Rev. H. Martyn, 1811–2
J. B. Rousseau, 1812
Col. G. Drouville, 1812–3
M. Freygan, 1812
J. S. Buckingham, 1816
Lieut. W. Heude, 1817
M. von Kotzebue, 1817
Col. J. Johnson, 1817
Sir R. Ker Porter, 1818–20
Lieut. T. Lumsden, 1819–20
P. Gordon, 1820
C. J. Rich, 1820–1
J. B. Fraser, 1821–34
Hon. G. Keppel, 1824
M. A'Court, 1826
(Sir) J. E. Alexander, 1826
Capt. R. Mignan, 1826–30
T. B. Armstrong, 1828–9
Th. Alcock, 1828–9
C. Bélanger, 1829
E. Smith and H. G. Dwight, 1829
A. N. Groves, 1829
E. Ménétries, 1830
Capt. A. Conolly, 1830
Sergeant Gibbons, 1831
Dr. J. Wolff, 1831–44
G. Fowler, 1831–6
J. S. Stocqueler, 1831–2
(Sir) A. Burnes, 1832
Lal Mohan, 1832
Lieut. T. S. Powell, 1833–4
Major Heidenstamm, 1834
Baron Th. Korff, 1834–5
Rev. J. Perkins, 1834–42
(Sir) H. Rawlinson, 1834–60
Col. W. Stuart, 1835–6
Aucher Eloy, 1835–7
Alex. Chodzko, 1835–40
Gen. F. R. Chesney, 1835–7
W. H. Ainsworth, 1835–40
V. Fontanier, 1835–8
Major D'Arcy Todd, 1836–7
Sir J. McNeill, 1836–8
(Sir) Justin and Lady Sheil, 1836–53
Capt. R. Wilbraham, 1837
Eugène Boré, 1838–40
Haji Abdun Nabi, 1838
Capt. Lemm, 1838–9
Prince A. Soltykoff, 1838–9
Capt. E. Conolly, 1839
Ch. Texier, 1839–40
E. Flandin and P. Coste, 1839–41
Dr. A. Grant, 1840
Baron C. De Bode, 1840–1
(Sir) A. H. Layard, 1840–2
E. L. Mitford, 1840
Comte de Sercey, 1840
Dr. F. Forbes, 1841
G. Osculati, 1841–2
Lieut. W. B. Selby, 1841–2
Dr. G. P. Badger, 1842
W. R. Holmes, 1843–4
N. L. Westergaard, 1843
M. Wagner, 1843
Lieut. R. Leech, 1843
Com. J. F. Jones, 1844–7
J. P. Ferrier, 1845
H. de Hell, 1846–8
Miss Ida Pfeiffer, 1848
Dr. F. A. Buhsé, 1848–9
E. Keith Abbott, 1849–59
Hon. R. Curzon, 1849–52
W. K. Loftus, 1849–52
M. Tchihikoff, 1849–52
R. B. Binning, 1851
J. Berezin, 1851
Czarnotta, 1852–3
H. Garnier, 1852
Conte J. A. de Gobineau, 1855–8
Sir J. Outram, 1857
W. A. Shepherd, 1857
Capt. C. H. Hunt, 1857
Capt. C. Clerk, 1857–73
N. de Khanikoff, 1858
Dr. O. Blau, 1858
E. Duhousset, 1860
R. G. Watson, circ. 1860
J. Osmaston, 1860
M. de Blocqueville, 1860
E. B. Eastwick, 1860–2
Dr. H. Brugsch, 1860–1
J. Ussher, 1861
(Sir) F. Goldsmid, 1861–72
F. de Filippi, 1862
(Sir) Lewis Pelly, 1862–72
Arm. Vambéry, 1862–3
(Sir) O. St. John, 1864–72
Comte J. de Rochechouart, 1864–6
D. W. Marsh, 1864
F. Méchin, 1865
Viscount Pollington, 1865
Dr. C. Haussknecht, 1865–9
Dr. J. E. Polak, 1865–82
Major B. Lovett, 1866–81
C. J. Wills, 1866–81
A. H. Mounsey, 1866–7
Col. E. C. Ross, 1867–90
D. W. Freshfield, 1867
G. Melgunof, 1868
Rev. E. L. Cutts, 1870
Col. Euan Smith, 1870–2
J. Bassett, 1871–85
W. Brittlebank, 1872
Baron Max von Thielmann, 1872
Capt. H. C. Marsh, 1872
Dr. H. W. Bellew, 1872
Dr. G. Rozario, 1872
W. T. Blanford, 1872
Col. Val. Baker and Capt. W. Gill, 1873
P. Ogorodnikof, 1874
Capt. Hon. G. Napier, 1874
F. Stolze and F. C. Andreas, 1874–81
A. Rivadeneyra, 1874–5
(Sir) C. MacGregor, 1875
H. Ballantine, 1875
T. S. Anderson, 1875–6
A. Arnold, 1875
Dr. E. Tietze, 1875
E. A. Floyer, 1876–7
Sir R. Murdoch Smith, 1876



Ed Obadeston Mitford circ 1844?

'A Landmark from England to Ceylon 40 years ago', 1884

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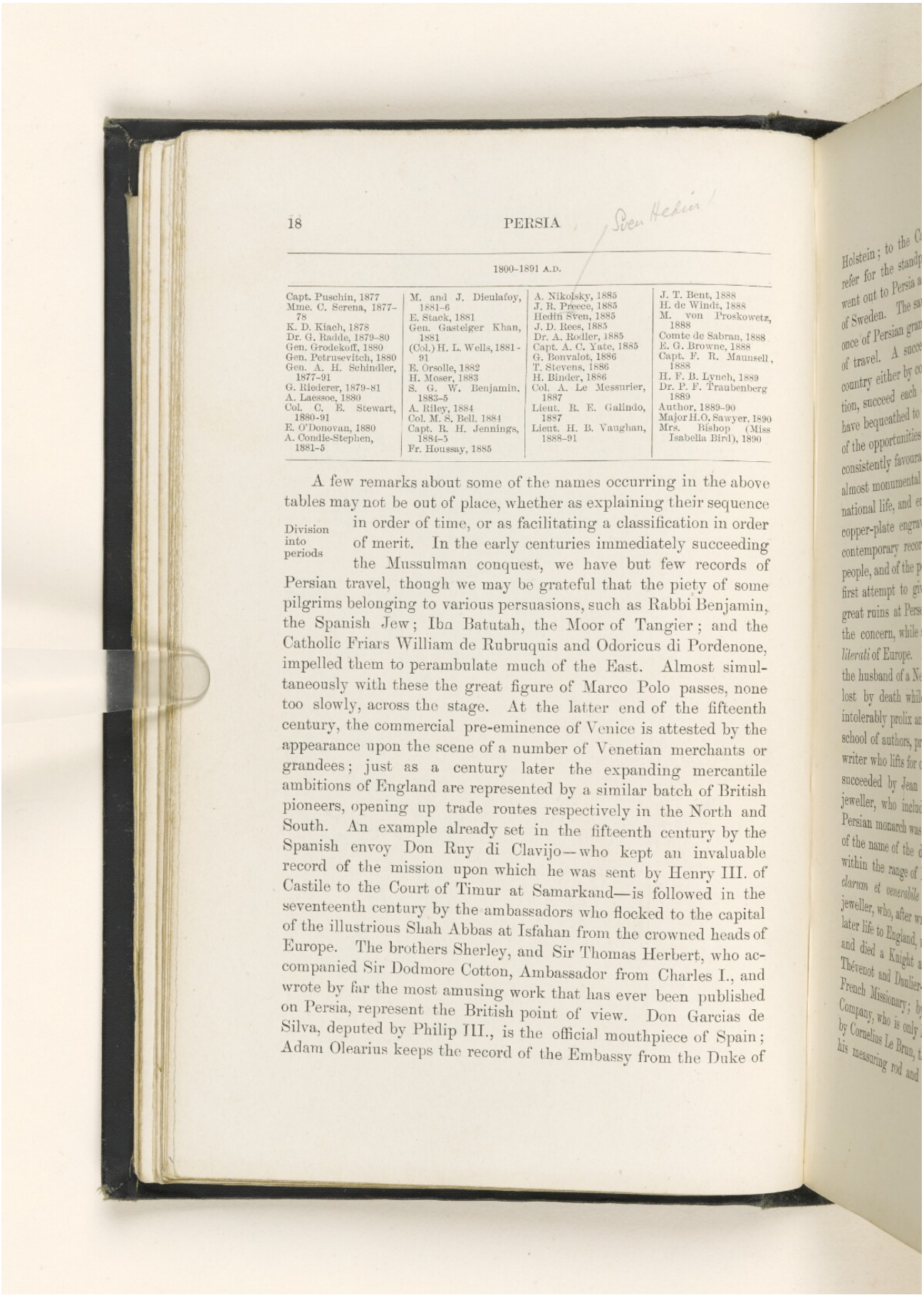


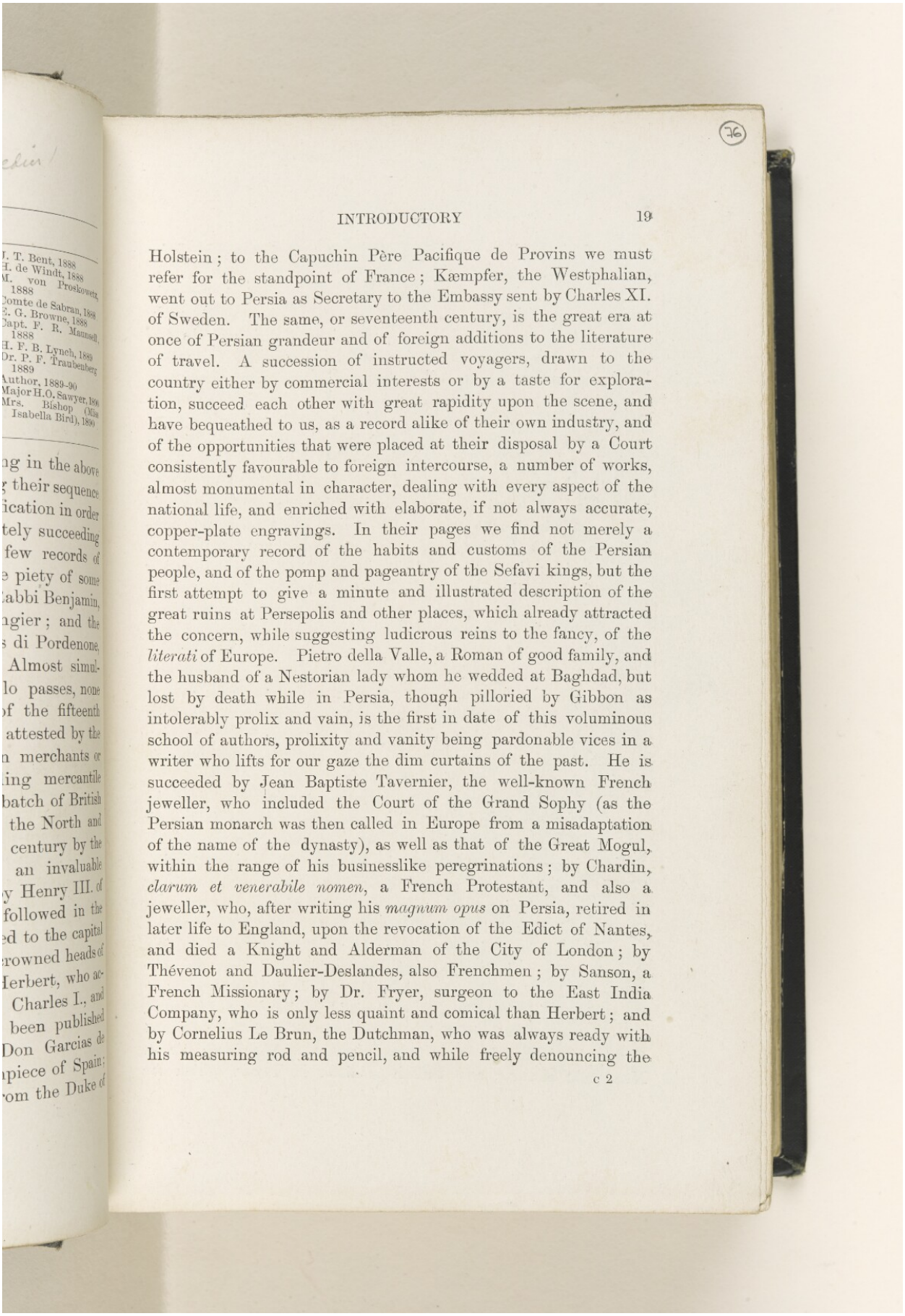


1800–1891 A.D.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capt. Puschin, 1877 | M. and J. Dieulafoy, 1881–6 | A. Nikolsky, 1885 | J. T. Bent, 1888 |
| Mme. C. Serena, 1877–78 | E. Stack, 1881 | J. R. Preece, 1885 | H. de Windt, 1888 |
| K. D. Kiach, 1878 | Gen. Gasteiger Khan, 1881 | Hedin Sven, 1885 | M. von Proskowetz, 1888 |
| Dr. G. Radde, 1879–80 | (Col.) H. L. Wells, 1881–91 | J. D. Rees, 1885 | Comte de Sabran, 1888 |
| Gen. Grodekoff, 1880 | E. Orsolle, 1882 | Dr. A. Rodler, 1885 | E. G. Browne, 1888 |
| Gen. Petrusevitch, 1880 | H. Moser, 1883 | Capt. A. C. Yate, 1885 | Capt. F. R. Maunsell, 1888 |
| Gen. A. H. Schindler, 1877–91 | S. G. W. Benjamin, 1883–5 | G. Bonvalot, 1886 | H. F. B. Lynch, 1889 |
| G. Riederer, 1879–81 | A. Riley, 1884 | T. Stevens, 1886 | Dr. P. F. Traubenberg 1889 |
| A. Laessoe, 1880 | Col. M. S. Bell, 1884 | H. Binder, 1886 | Author, 1889–90 |
| Col. C. E. Stewart, 1880–91 | Capt. R. H. Jennings, 1884–5 | Col. A. Le Messurier, 1887 | Major H.O. Sawyer, 1890 |
| E. O'Donovan, 1880 | Fr. Houssay, 1885 | Lieut. R. E. Galindo, 1887 | Mrs. Bishop (Miss Isabella Bird), 1890 |
| A. Condie-Stephen, 1881–5 | | Lieut. H. B. Vaughan, 1888–91 | |

Division into periods

A few remarks about some of the names occurring in the above tables may not be out of place, whether as explaining their sequence in order of time, or as facilitating a classification in order of merit. In the early centuries immediately succeeding the Mussulman conquest, we have but few records of Persian travel, though we may be grateful that the piety of some pilgrims belonging to various persuasions, such as Rabbi Benjamin, the Spanish Jew; Ibn Batutah, the Moor of Tangier; and the Catholic Friars William de Rubruquis and Odoricus di Pordenone, impelled them to perambulate much of the East. Almost simultaneously with these the great figure of Marco Polo passes, none too slowly, across the stage. At the latter end of the fifteenth century, the commercial pre-eminence of Venice is attested by the appearance upon the scene of a number of Venetian merchants or grandees; just as a century later the expanding mercantile ambitions of England are represented by a similar batch of British pioneers, opening up trade routes respectively in the North and South. An example already set in the fifteenth century by the Spanish envoy Don Ruy di Clavijo—who kept an invaluable record of the mission upon which he was sent by Henry III. of Castile to the Court of Timur at Samarkand—is followed in the seventeenth century by the ambassadors who flocked to the capital of the illustrious Shah Abbas at Isfahan from the crowned heads of Europe. The brothers Sherley, and Sir Thomas Herbert, who accompanied Sir Dodmore Cotton, Ambassador from Charles I., and wrote by far the most amusing work that has ever been published on Persia, represent the British point of view. Don Garcias de Silva, deputed by Philip III., is the official mouthpiece of Spain; Adam Olearius keeps the record of the Embassy from the Duke of





Holstein; to the Capuchin Père Pacifique de Provins we must refer for the standpoint of France; Kæmpfer, the Westphalian, went out to Persia as Secretary to the Embassy sent by Charles XI. of Sweden. The same, or seventeenth century, is the great era at once of Persian grandeur and of foreign additions to the literature of travel. A succession of instructed voyagers, drawn to the country either by commercial interests or by a taste for exploration, succeed each other with great rapidity upon the scene, and have bequeathed to us, as a record alike of their own industry, and of the opportunities that were placed at their disposal by a Court consistently favourable to foreign intercourse, a number of works, almost monumental in character, dealing with every aspect of the national life, and enriched with elaborate, if not always accurate, copper-plate engravings. In their pages we find not merely a contemporary record of the habits and customs of the Persian people, and of the pomp and pageantry of the Sefavi kings, but the first attempt to give a minute and illustrated description of the great ruins at Persepolis and other places, which already attracted the concern, while suggesting ludicrous reins to the fancy, of the *literati* of Europe. Pietro della Valle, a Roman of good family, and the husband of a Nestorian lady whom he wedded at Baghdad, but lost by death while in Persia, though pilloried by Gibbon as intolerably prolix and vain, is the first in date of this voluminous school of authors, prolixity and vanity being pardonable vices in a writer who lifts for our gaze the dim curtains of the past. He is succeeded by Jean Baptiste Tavernier, the well-known French jeweller, who included the Court of the Grand Sophy (as the Persian monarch was then called in Europe from a misadaptation of the name of the dynasty), as well as that of the Great Mogul, within the range of his businesslike peregrinations; by Chardin, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, a French Protestant, and also a jeweller, who, after writing his *magnum opus* on Persia, retired in later life to England, upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and died a Knight and Alderman of the City of London; by Thévenot and Daulier-Deslandes, also Frenchmen; by Sanson, a French Missionary; by Dr. Fryer, surgeon to the East India Company, who is only less quaint and comical than Herbert; and by Cornelius Le Brun, the Dutchman, who was always ready with his measuring rod and pencil, and while freely denouncing the



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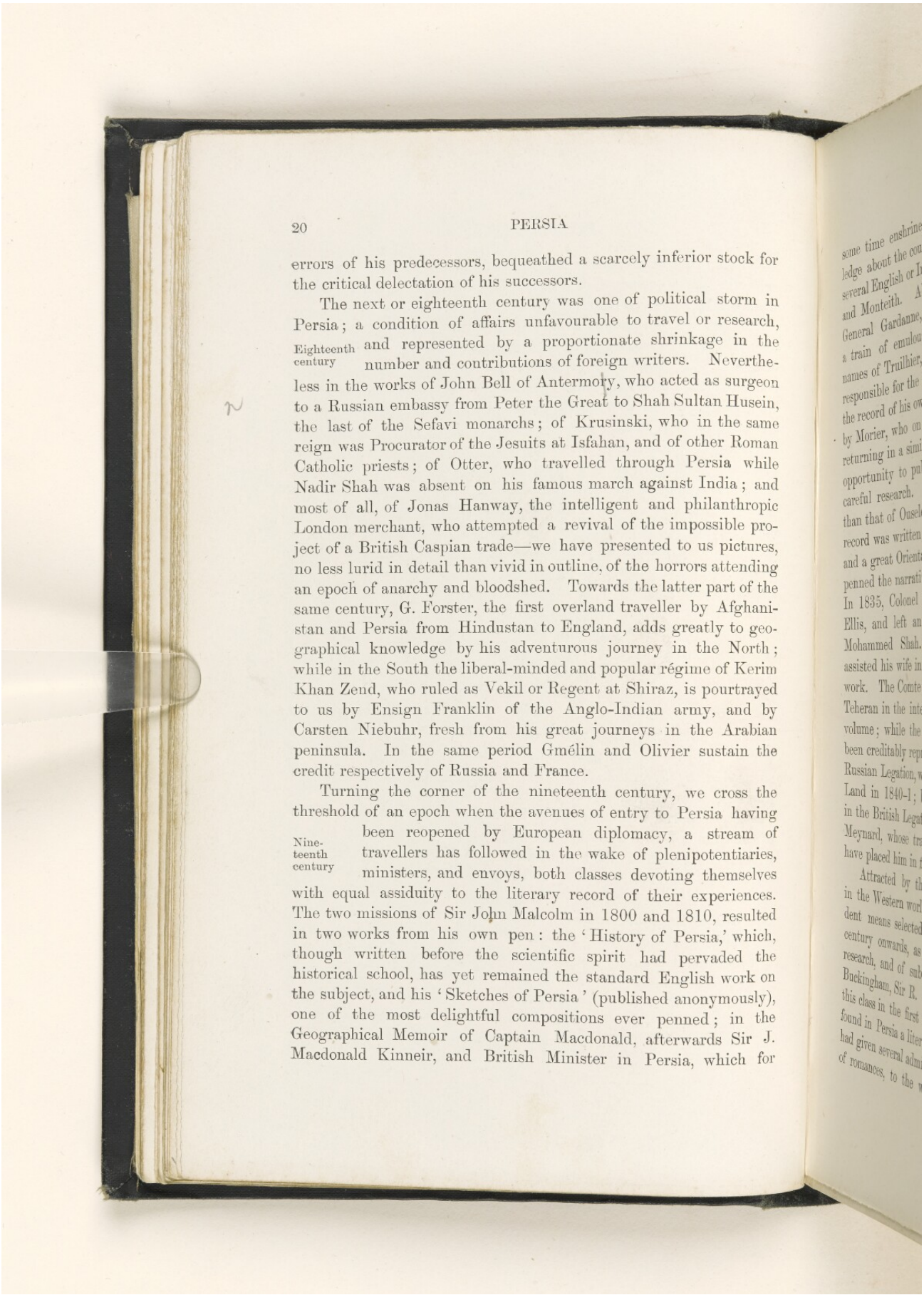




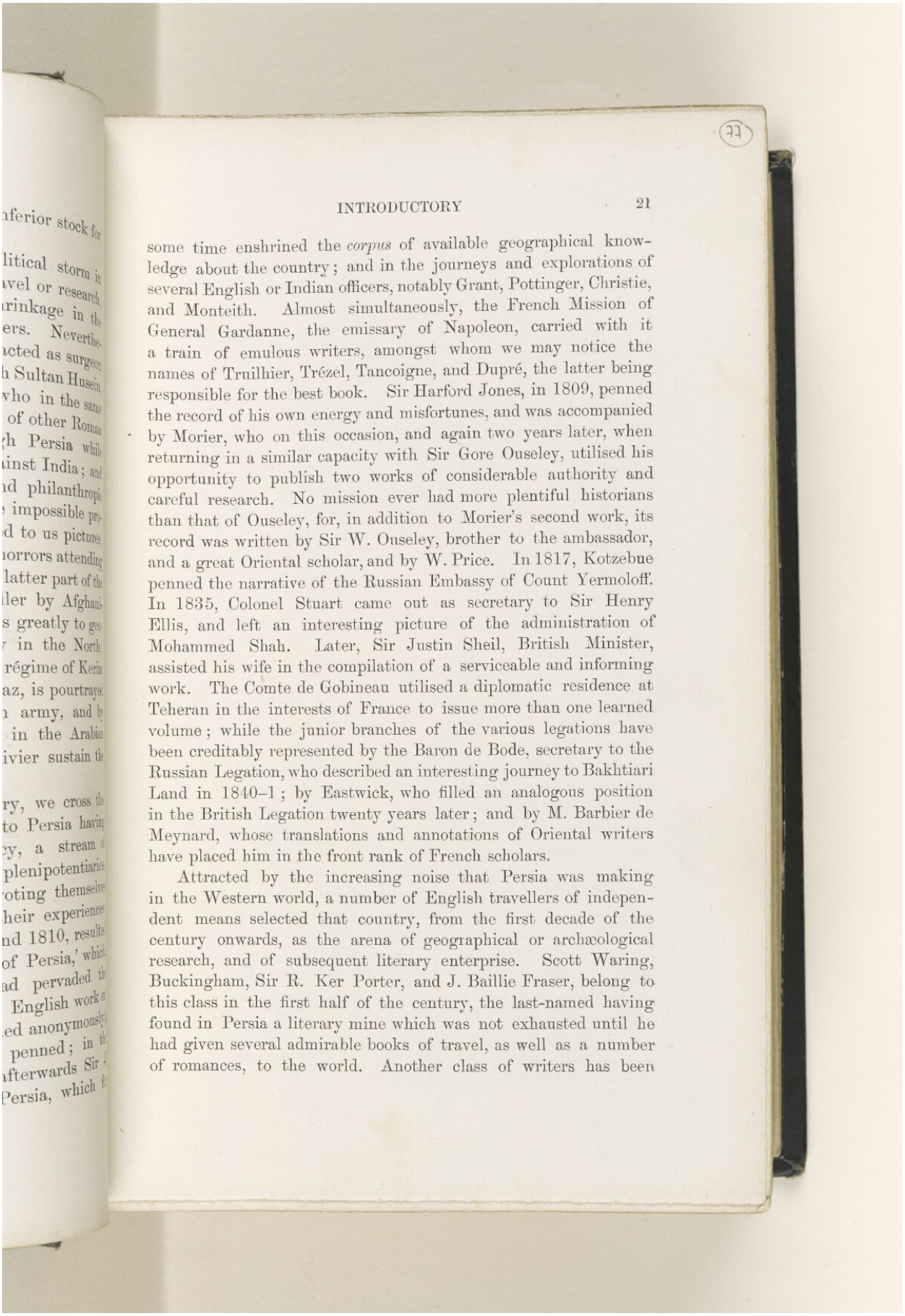
errors of his predecessors, bequeathed a scarcely inferior stock for the critical delectation of his successors.

The next or eighteenth century was one of political storm in Persia; a condition of affairs unfavourable to travel or research, and represented by a proportionate shrinkage in the number and contributions of foreign writers. Nevertheless in the works of John Bell of Antermony, who acted as surgeon to a Russian embassy from Peter the Great to Shah Sultan Husein, the last of the Sefavi monarchs; of Krusinski, who in the same reign was Procurator of the Jesuits at Isfahan, and of other Roman Catholic priests; of Otter, who travelled through Persia while Nadir Shah was absent on his famous march against India; and most of all, of Jonas Hanway, the intelligent and philanthropic London merchant, who attempted a revival of the impossible project of a British Caspian trade—we have presented to us pictures, no less lurid in detail than vivid in outline, of the horrors attending an epoch of anarchy and bloodshed. Towards the latter part of the same century, G. Forster, the first overland traveller by Afghanistan and Persia from Hindustan to England, adds greatly to geographical knowledge by his adventurous journey in the North; while in the South the liberal-minded and popular régime of Kerim Khan Zend, who ruled as Vekil or Regent at Shiraz, is pourtrayed to us by Ensign Franklin of the Anglo-Indian army, and by Carsten Niebuhr, fresh from his great journeys in the Arabian peninsula. In the same period Gmélin and Olivier sustain the credit respectively of Russia and France.

Eighteenth century

Turning the corner of the nineteenth century, we cross the threshold of an epoch when the avenues of entry to Persia having been reopened by European diplomacy, a stream of travellers has followed in the wake of plenipotentiaries, ministers, and envoys, both classes devoting themselves with equal assiduity to the literary record of their experiences. The two missions of Sir John Malcolm in 1800 and 1810, resulted in two works from his own pen: the 'History of Persia,' which, though written before the scientific spirit had pervaded the historical school, has yet remained the standard English work on the subject, and his 'Sketches of Persia' (published anonymously), one of the most delightful compositions ever penned; in the Geographical Memoir of Captain Macdonald, afterwards Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir, and British Minister in Persia, which for

Nineteenth century





some time enshrined the *corpus* of available geographical knowledge about the country; and in the journeys and explorations of several English or Indian officers, notably Grant, Pottinger, Christie, and Monteith. Almost simultaneously, the French Mission of General Gardanne, the emissary of Napoleon, carried with it a train of emulous writers, amongst whom we may notice the names of Truilhier, Trézel, Tancoigne, and Dupré, the latter being responsible for the best book. Sir Harford Jones, in 1809, penned the record of his own energy and misfortunes, and was accompanied by Morier, who on this occasion, and again two years later, when returning in a similar capacity with Sir Gore Ouseley, utilised his opportunity to publish two works of considerable authority and careful research. No mission ever had more plentiful historians than that of Ouseley, for, in addition to Morier's second work, its record was written by Sir W. Ouseley, brother to the ambassador, and a great Oriental scholar, and by W. Price. In 1817, Kotzebue penned the narrative of the Russian Embassy of Count Yermoloff. In 1835, Colonel Stuart came out as secretary to Sir Henry Ellis, and left an interesting picture of the administration of Mohammed Shah. Later, Sir Justin Sheil, British Minister, assisted his wife in the compilation of a serviceable and informing work. The Comte de Gobineau utilised a diplomatic residence at Teheran in the interests of France to issue more than one learned volume; while the junior branches of the various legations have been creditably represented by the Baron de Bode, secretary to the Russian Legation, who described an interesting journey to Bakhtiari Land in 1840–1; by Eastwick, who filled an analogous position in the British Legation twenty years later; and by M. Barbier de Meynard, whose translations and annotations of Oriental writers have placed him in the front rank of French scholars.

Attracted by the increasing noise that Persia was making in the Western world, a number of English travellers of independent means selected that country, from the first decade of the century onwards, as the arena of geographical or archæological research, and of subsequent literary enterprise. Scott Waring, Buckingham, Sir R. Ker Porter, and J. Baillie Fraser, belong to this class in the first half of the century, the last-named having found in Persia a literary mine which was not exhausted until he had given several admirable books of travel, as well as a number of romances, to the world. Another class of writers has been

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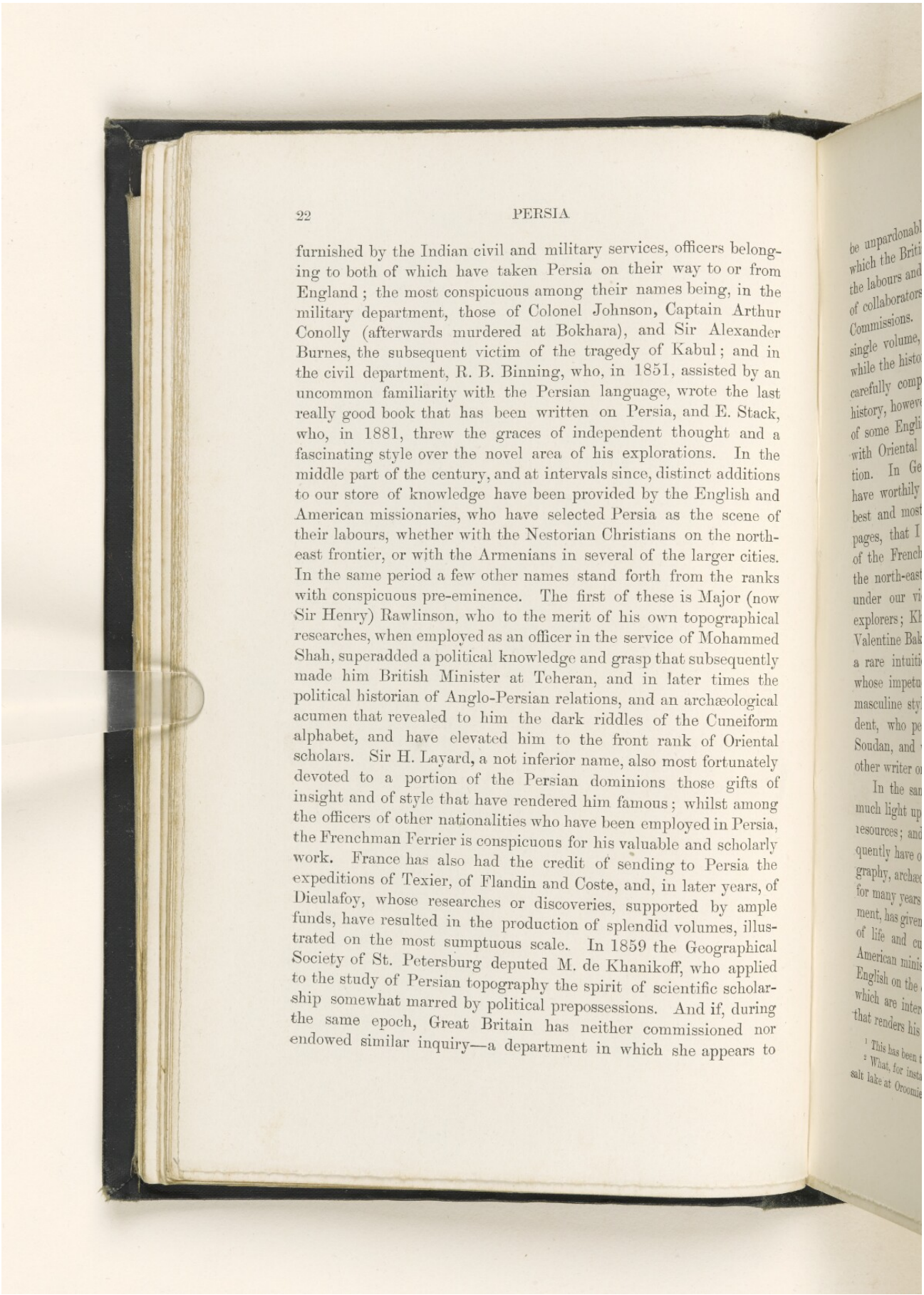



furnished by the Indian civil and military services, officers belonging to both of which have taken Persia on their way to or from England; the most conspicuous among their names being, in the military department, those of Colonel Johnson, Captain Arthur Conolly (afterwards murdered at Bokhara), and Sir Alexander Burnes, the subsequent victim of the tragedy of Kabul; and in the civil department, R. B. Binning, who, in 1851, assisted by an uncommon familiarity with the Persian language, wrote the last really good book that has been written on Persia, and E. Stack, who, in 1881, threw the graces of independent thought and a fascinating style over the novel area of his explorations. In the middle part of the century, and at intervals since, distinct additions to our store of knowledge have been provided by the English and American missionaries, who have selected Persia as the scene of their labours, whether with the Nestorian Christians on the north-east frontier, or with the Armenians in several of the larger cities. In the same period a few other names stand forth from the ranks with conspicuous pre-eminence. The first of these is Major (now Sir Henry) Rawlinson, who to the merit of his own topographical researches, when employed as an officer in the service of Mohammed Shah, superadded a political knowledge and grasp that subsequently made him British Minister at Teheran, and in later times the political historian of Anglo-Persian relations, and an archæological acumen that revealed to him the dark riddles of the Cuneiform alphabet, and have elevated him to the front rank of Oriental scholars. Sir H. Layard, a not inferior name, also most fortunately devoted to a portion of the Persian dominions those gifts of insight and of style that have rendered him famous; whilst among the officers of other nationalities who have been employed in Persia, the Frenchman Ferrier is conspicuous for his valuable and scholarly work. France has also had the credit of sending to Persia the expeditions of Texier, of Flandin and Coste, and, in later years, of Dieulafoy, whose researches or discoveries, supported by ample funds, have resulted in the production of splendid volumes, illustrated on the most sumptuous scale. In 1859 the Geographical Society of St. Petersburg deputed M. de Khanikoff, who applied to the study of Persian topography the spirit of scientific scholarship somewhat marred by political prepossessions. And if, during the same epoch, Great Britain has neither commissioned nor endowed similar inquiry—a department in which she appears to

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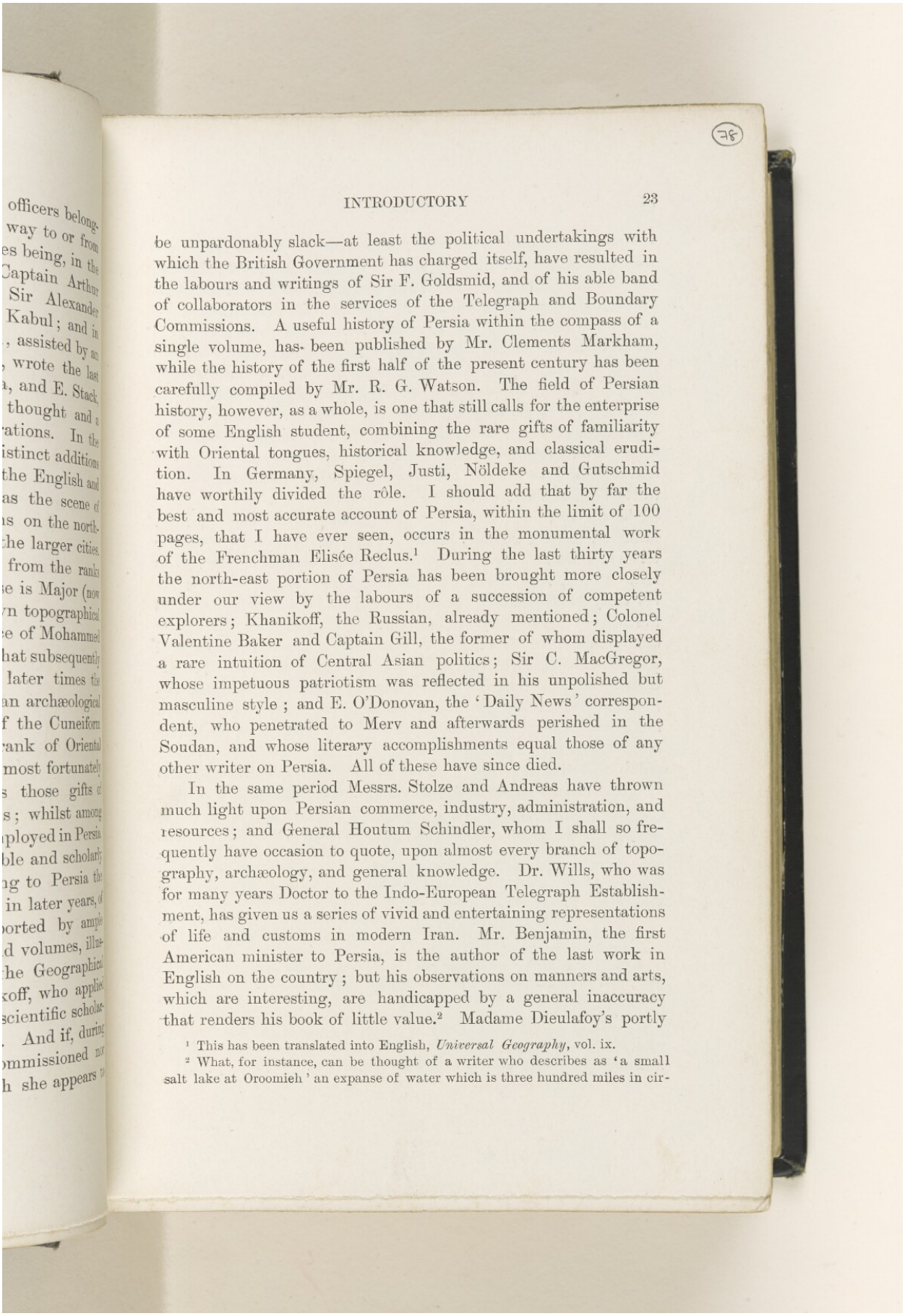


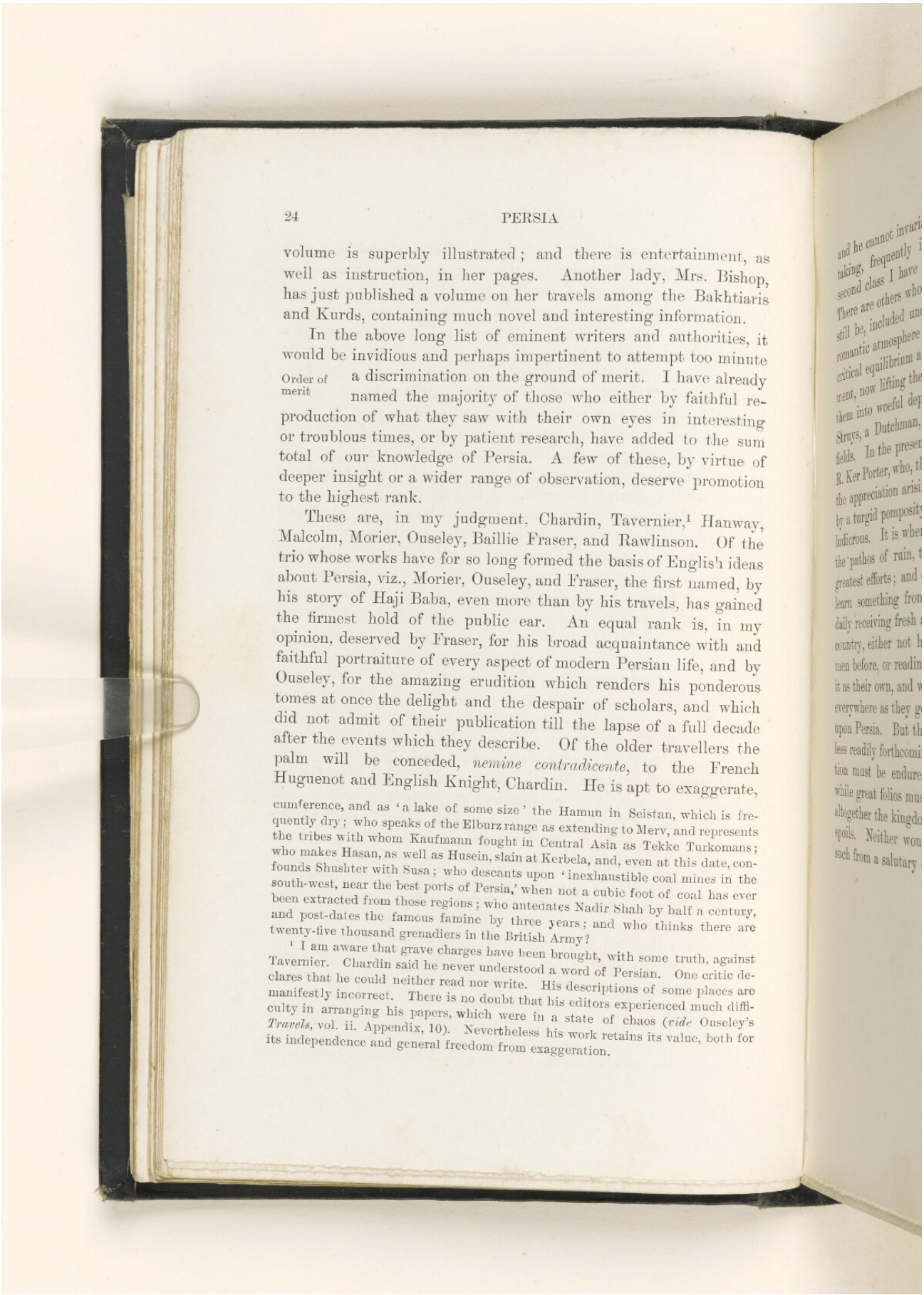


be unpardonably slack—at least the political undertakings with which the British Government has charged itself, have resulted in the labours and writings of Sir F. Goldsmid, and of his able band of collaborators in the services of the Telegraph and Boundary Commissions. A useful history of Persia within the compass of a single volume, has been published by Mr. Clements Markham, while the history of the first half of the present century has been carefully compiled by Mr. R. G. Watson. The field of Persian history, however, as a whole, is one that still calls for the enterprise of some English student, combining the rare gifts of familiarity with Oriental tongues, historical knowledge, and classical erudition. In Germany, Spiegel, Justi, Nöldeke and Gutschmid have worthily divided the rôle. I should add that by far the best and most accurate account of Persia, within the limit of 100 pages, that I have ever seen, occurs in the monumental work of the Frenchman Elisée Reclus.[1] During the last thirty years the north-east portion of Persia has been brought more closely under our view by the labours of a succession of competent explorers; Khanikoff, the Russian, already mentioned; Colonel Valentine Baker and Captain Gill, the former of whom displayed a rare intuition of Central Asian politics; Sir C. MacGregor, whose impetuous patriotism was reflected in his unpolished but masculine style; and E. O'Donovan, the 'Daily News' correspondent, who penetrated to Merv and afterwards perished in the Soudan, and whose literary accomplishments equal those of any other writer on Persia. All of these have since died.

In the same period Messrs. Stolze and Andreas have thrown much light upon Persian commerce, industry, administration, and resources; and General Houtum Schindler, whom I shall so frequently have occasion to quote, upon almost every branch of topography, archæology, and general knowledge. Dr. Wills, who was for many years Doctor to the Indo-European Telegraph Establishment, has given us a series of vivid and entertaining representations of life and customs in modern Iran. Mr. Benjamin, the first American minister to Persia, is the author of the last work in English on the country; but his observations on manners and arts, which are interesting, are handicapped by a general inaccuracy that renders his book of little value.[2] Madame Dieulafoy's portly

[1] This has been translated into English, *Universal Geography*, vol. ix.

[2] What, for instance, can be thought of a writer who describes as 'a small salt lake at Oroomieh' an expanse of water which is three hundred miles in cir-





volume is superbly illustrated; and there is entertainment, as well as instruction, in her pages. Another lady, Mrs. Bishop, has just published a volume on her travels among the Bakhtiaris and Kurds, containing much novel and interesting information.

In the above long list of eminent writers and authorities, it would be invidious and perhaps impertinent to attempt too minute a discrimination on the ground of merit. I have already named the majority of those who either by faithful reproduction of what they saw with their own eyes in interesting or troublous times, or by patient research, have added to the sum total of our knowledge of Persia. A few of these, by virtue of deeper insight or a wider range of observation, deserve promotion to the highest rank.

Order of merit

These are, in my judgment, Chardin, Tavernier,[1] Hanway, Malcolm, Morier, Ouseley, Baillie Fraser, and Rawlinson. Of the trio whose works have for so long formed the basis of English ideas about Persia, viz., Morier, Ouseley, and Fraser, the first named, by his story of Haji Baba, even more than by his travels, has gained the firmest hold of the public ear. An equal rank is, in my opinion, deserved by Fraser, for his broad acquaintance with and faithful portraiture of every aspect of modern Persian life, and by Ouseley, for the amazing erudition which renders his ponderous tomes at once the delight and the despair of scholars, and which did not admit of their publication till the lapse of a full decade after the events which they describe. Of the older travellers the palm will be conceded, *nemine contradicente*, to the French Huguenot and English Knight, Chardin. He is apt to exaggerate,

cumference, and as 'a lake of some size' the Hamun in Seistan, which is frequently dry; who speaks of the Elburz range as extending to Merv, and represents the tribes with whom Kaufmann fought in Central Asia as Tekke Turkomans; who makes Hasan, as well as Husein, slain at Kerbela, and, even at this date, confounds Shushter with Susa; who descants upon 'inexhaustible coal mines in the south-west, near the best ports of Persia,' when not a cubic foot of coal has ever been extracted from those regions; who antedates Nadir Shah by half a century, and post-dates the famous famine by three years; and who thinks there are twenty-five thousand grenadiers in the British Army?

[1] I am aware that grave charges have been brought, with some truth, against Tavernier. Chardin said he never understood a word of Persian. One critic declares that he could neither read nor write. His descriptions of some places are manifestly incorrect. There is no doubt that his editors experienced much difficulty in arranging his papers, which were in a state of chaos (*vide* Ouseley's *Travels*, vol. ii. Appendix, 10). Nevertheless his work retains its value, both for its independence and general freedom from exaggeration.

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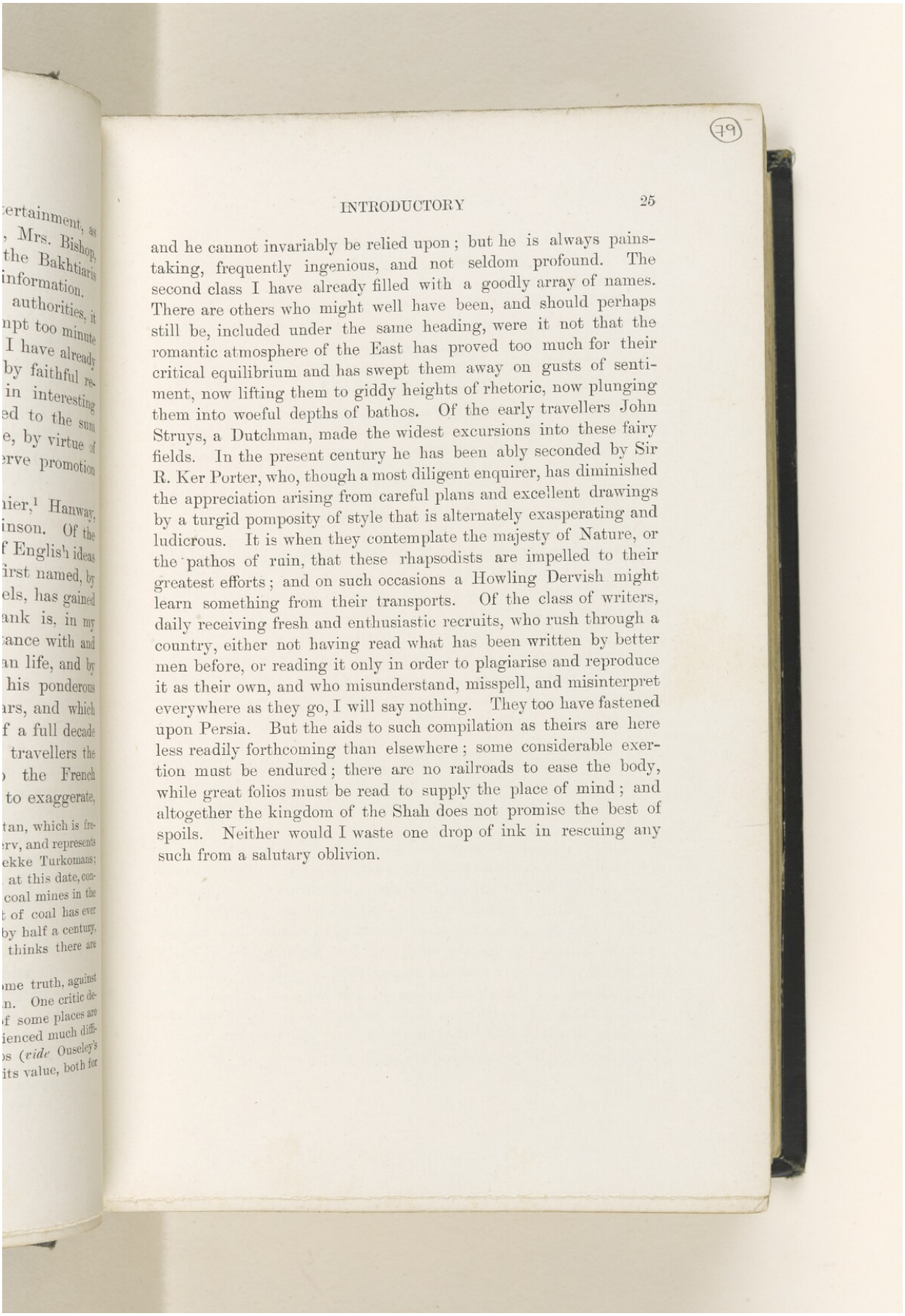
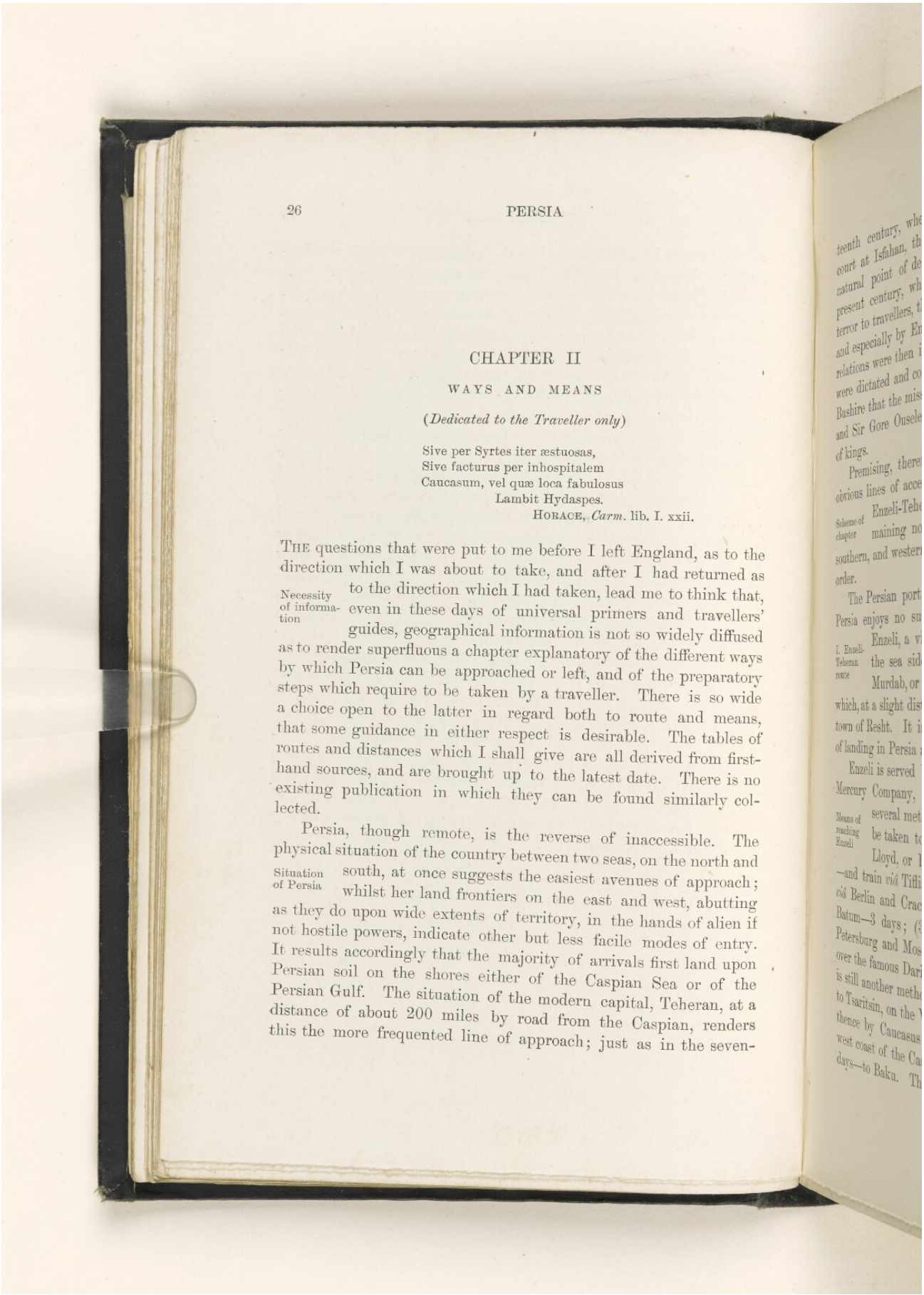




and he cannot invariably be relied upon; but he is always painstaking, frequently ingenious, and not seldom profound. The second class I have already filled with a goodly array of names. There are others who might well have been, and should perhaps still be, included under the same heading, were it not that the romantic atmosphere of the East has proved too much for their critical equilibrium and has swept them away on gusts of sentiment, now lifting them to giddy heights of rhetoric, now plunging them into woeful depths of bathos. Of the early travellers John Struys, a Dutchman, made the widest excursions into these fairy fields. In the present century he has been ably seconded by Sir R. Ker Porter, who, though a most diligent enquirer, has diminished the appreciation arising from careful plans and excellent drawings by a turgid pomposity of style that is alternately exasperating and ludicrous. It is when they contemplate the majesty of Nature, or the pathos of ruin, that these rhapsodists are impelled to their greatest efforts; and on such occasions a Howling Dervish might learn something from their transports. Of the class of writers, daily receiving fresh and enthusiastic recruits, who rush through a country, either not having read what has been written by better men before, or reading it only in order to plagiarise and reproduce it as their own, and who misunderstand, misspell, and misinterpret everywhere as they go, I will say nothing. They too have fastened upon Persia. But the aids to such compilation as theirs are here less readily forthcoming than elsewhere; some considerable exertion must be endured; there are no railroads to ease the body, while great folios must be read to supply the place of mind; and altogether the kingdom of the Shah does not promise the best of spoils. Neither would I waste one drop of ink in rescuing any such from a salutary oblivion.





## CHAPTER II

### WAYS AND MEANS

(*Dedicated to the Traveller only*)

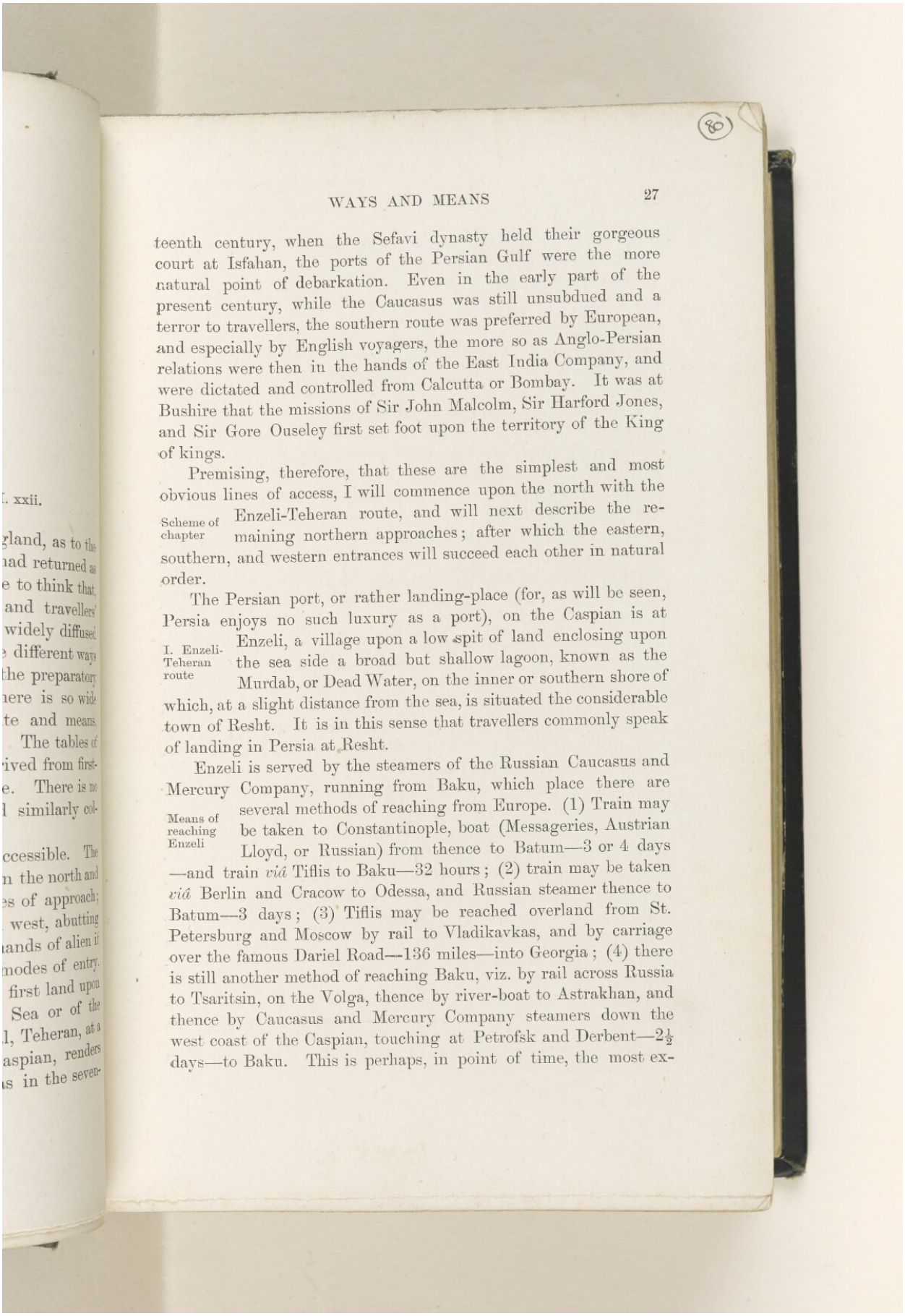
Sive per Syrtes iter æstuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quæ loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes.
HORACE, *Carm.* lib. I. xxii.

THE questions that were put to me before I left England, as to the direction which I was about to take, and after I had returned as to the direction which I had taken, lead me to think that, even in these days of universal primers and travellers' guides, geographical information is not so widely diffused as to render superfluous a chapter explanatory of the different ways by which Persia can be approached or left, and of the preparatory steps which require to be taken by a traveller. There is so wide a choice open to the latter in regard both to route and means, that some guidance in either respect is desirable. The tables of routes and distances which I shall give are all derived from first-hand sources, and are brought up to the latest date. There is no existing publication in which they can be found similarly collected.

Necessity of information

Persia, though remote, is the reverse of inaccessible. The physical situation of the country between two seas, on the north and south, at once suggests the easiest avenues of approach; whilst her land frontiers on the east and west, abutting as they do upon wide extents of territory, in the hands of alien if not hostile powers, indicate other but less facile modes of entry. It results accordingly that the majority of arrivals first land upon Persian soil on the shores either of the Caspian Sea or of the Persian Gulf. The situation of the modern capital, Teheran, at a distance of about 200 miles by road from the Caspian, renders this the more frequented line of approach; just as in the seven-

Situation of Persia





teenth century, when the Sefavi dynasty held their gorgeous court at Isfahan, the ports of the Persian Gulf were the more natural point of debarkation. Even in the early part of the present century, while the Caucasus was still unsubdued and a terror to travellers, the southern route was preferred by European, and especially by English voyagers, the more so as Anglo-Persian relations were then in the hands of the East India Company, and were dictated and controlled from Calcutta or Bombay. It was at Bushire that the missions of Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, and Sir Gore Ouseley first set foot upon the territory of the King of kings.

Premising, therefore, that these are the simplest and most obvious lines of access, I will commence upon the north with the Enzeli-Teheran route, and will next describe the remaining northern approaches; after which the eastern, southern, and western entrances will succeed each other in natural order.

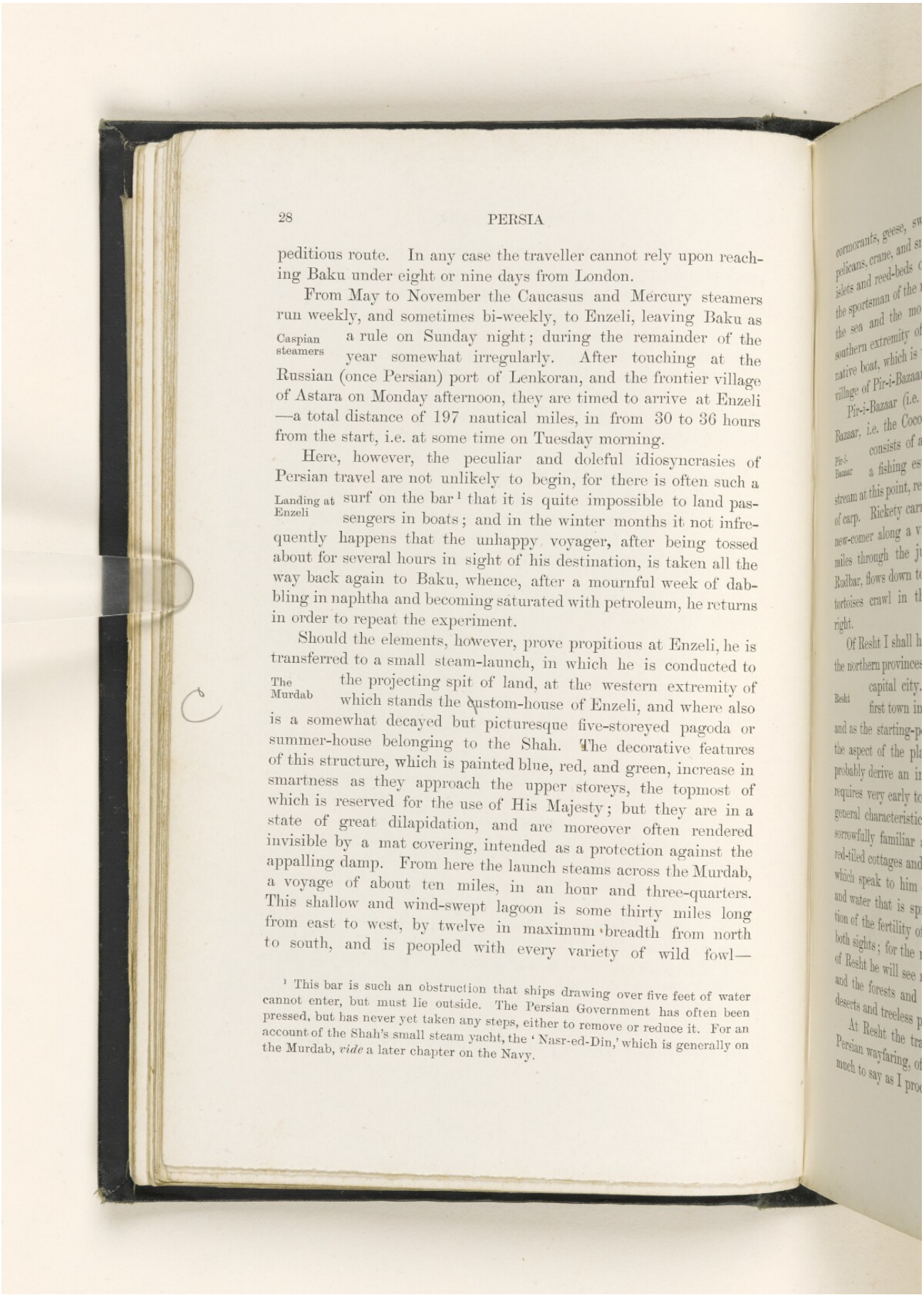
Scheme of chapter

The Persian port, or rather landing-place (for, as will be seen, Persia enjoys no such luxury as a port), on the Caspian is at Enzeli, a village upon a low spit of land enclosing upon the sea side a broad but shallow lagoon, known as the Murdab, or Dead Water, on the inner or southern shore of which, at a slight distance from the sea, is situated the considerable town of Resht. It is in this sense that travellers commonly speak of landing in Persia at Resht.

I. Enzeli-Teheran route

Enzeli is served by the steamers of the Russian Caucasus and Mercury Company, running from Baku, which place there are several methods of reaching from Europe. (1) Train may be taken to Constantinople, boat (Messageries, Austrian Lloyd, or Russian) from thence to Batum—3 or 4 days—and train *viâ* Tiflis to Baku—32 hours; (2) train may be taken *viâ* Berlin and Cracow to Odessa, and Russian steamer thence to Batum—3 days; (3) Tiflis may be reached overland from St. Petersburg and Moscow by rail to Vladikavkas, and by carriage over the famous Dariel Road—136 miles—into Georgia; (4) there is still another method of reaching Baku, viz. by rail across Russia to Tsaritsin, on the Volga, thence by river-boat to Astrakhan, and thence by Caucasus and Mercury Company steamers down the west coast of the Caspian, touching at Petrofsk and Derbent—2½ days—to Baku. This is perhaps, in point of time, the most ex-

Means of reaching Enzeli





peditious route. In any case the traveller cannot rely upon reaching Baku under eight or nine days from London.

From May to November the Caucasus and Mercury steamers run weekly, and sometimes bi-weekly, to Enzeli, leaving Baku as a rule on Sunday night; during the remainder of the year somewhat irregularly. After touching at the Russian (once Persian) port of Lenkoran, and the frontier village of Astara on Monday afternoon, they are timed to arrive at Enzeli —a total distance of 197 nautical miles, in from 30 to 36 hours from the start, i.e. at some time on Tuesday morning.

Caspian steamers

Here, however, the peculiar and doleful idiosyncrasies of Persian travel are not unlikely to begin, for there is often such a surf on the bar[1] that it is quite impossible to land passengers in boats; and in the winter months it not infrequently happens that the unhappy voyager, after being tossed about for several hours in sight of his destination, is taken all the way back again to Baku, whence, after a mournful week of dabbling in naphtha and becoming saturated with petroleum, he returns in order to repeat the experiment.

Landing at Enzeli

Should the elements, however, prove propitious at Enzeli, he is transferred to a small steam-launch, in which he is conducted to the projecting spit of land, at the western extremity of which stands the custom-house of Enzeli, and where also is a somewhat decayed but picturesque five-storeyed pagoda or summer-house belonging to the Shah. The decorative features of this structure, which is painted blue, red, and green, increase in smartness as they approach the upper storeys, the topmost of which is reserved for the use of His Majesty; but they are in a state of great dilapidation, and are moreover often rendered invisible by a mat covering, intended as a protection against the appalling damp. From here the launch steams across the Murdab, a voyage of about ten miles, in an hour and three-quarters. This shallow and wind-swept lagoon is some thirty miles long from east to west, by twelve in maximum breadth from north to south, and is peopled with every variety of wild fowl—

The Murdab

[1] This bar is such an obstruction that ships drawing over five feet of water cannot enter, but must lie outside. The Persian Government has often been pressed, but has never yet taken any steps, either to remove or reduce it. For an account of the Shah's small steam yacht, the 'Nasr-ed-Din,' which is generally on the Murdab, *vide* a later chapter on the Navy.

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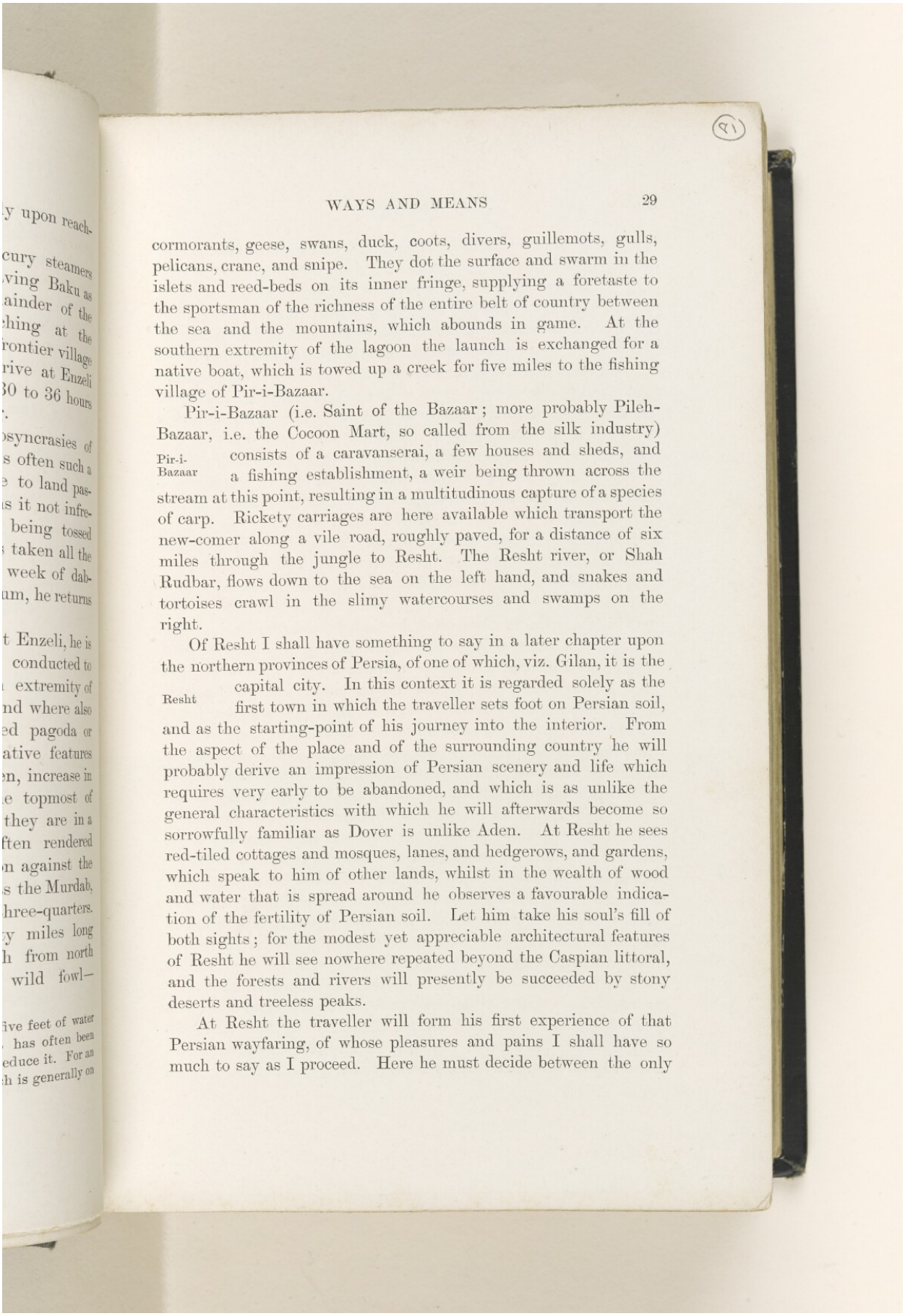



cormorants, geese, swans, duck, coots, divers, guillemots, gulls, pelicans, crane, and snipe. They dot the surface and swarm in the islets and reed-beds on its inner fringe, supplying a foretaste to the sportsman of the richness of the entire belt of country between the sea and the mountains, which abounds in game. At the southern extremity of the lagoon the launch is exchanged for a native boat, which is towed up a creek for five miles to the fishing village of Pir-i-Bazaar.

Pir-i-Bazaar

Pir-i-Bazaar (i.e. Saint of the Bazaar; more probably Pileh-Bazaar, i.e. the Cocoon Mart, so called from the silk industry) consists of a caravanserai, a few houses and sheds, and a fishing establishment, a weir being thrown across the stream at this point, resulting in a multitudinous capture of a species of carp. Rickety carriages are here available which transport the new-comer along a vile road, roughly paved, for a distance of six miles through the jungle to Resht. The Resht river, or Shah Rudbar, flows down to the sea on the left hand, and snakes and tortoises crawl in the slimy watercourses and swamps on the right.

Resht

Of Resht I shall have something to say in a later chapter upon the northern provinces of Persia, of one of which, viz. Gilan, it is the capital city. In this context it is regarded solely as the first town in which the traveller sets foot on Persian soil, and as the starting-point of his journey into the interior. From the aspect of the place and of the surrounding country he will probably derive an impression of Persian scenery and life which requires very early to be abandoned, and which is as unlike the general characteristics with which he will afterwards become so sorrowfully familiar as Dover is unlike Aden. At Resht he sees red-tiled cottages and mosques, lanes, and hedgerows, and gardens, which speak to him of other lands, whilst in the wealth of wood and water that is spread around he observes a favourable indication of the fertility of Persian soil. Let him take his soul's fill of both sights; for the modest yet appreciable architectural features of Resht he will see nowhere repeated beyond the Caspian littoral, and the forests and rivers will presently be succeeded by stony deserts and treeless peaks.

At Resht the traveller will form his first experience of that Persian wayfaring, of whose pleasures and pains I shall have so much to say as I proceed. Here he must decide between the only

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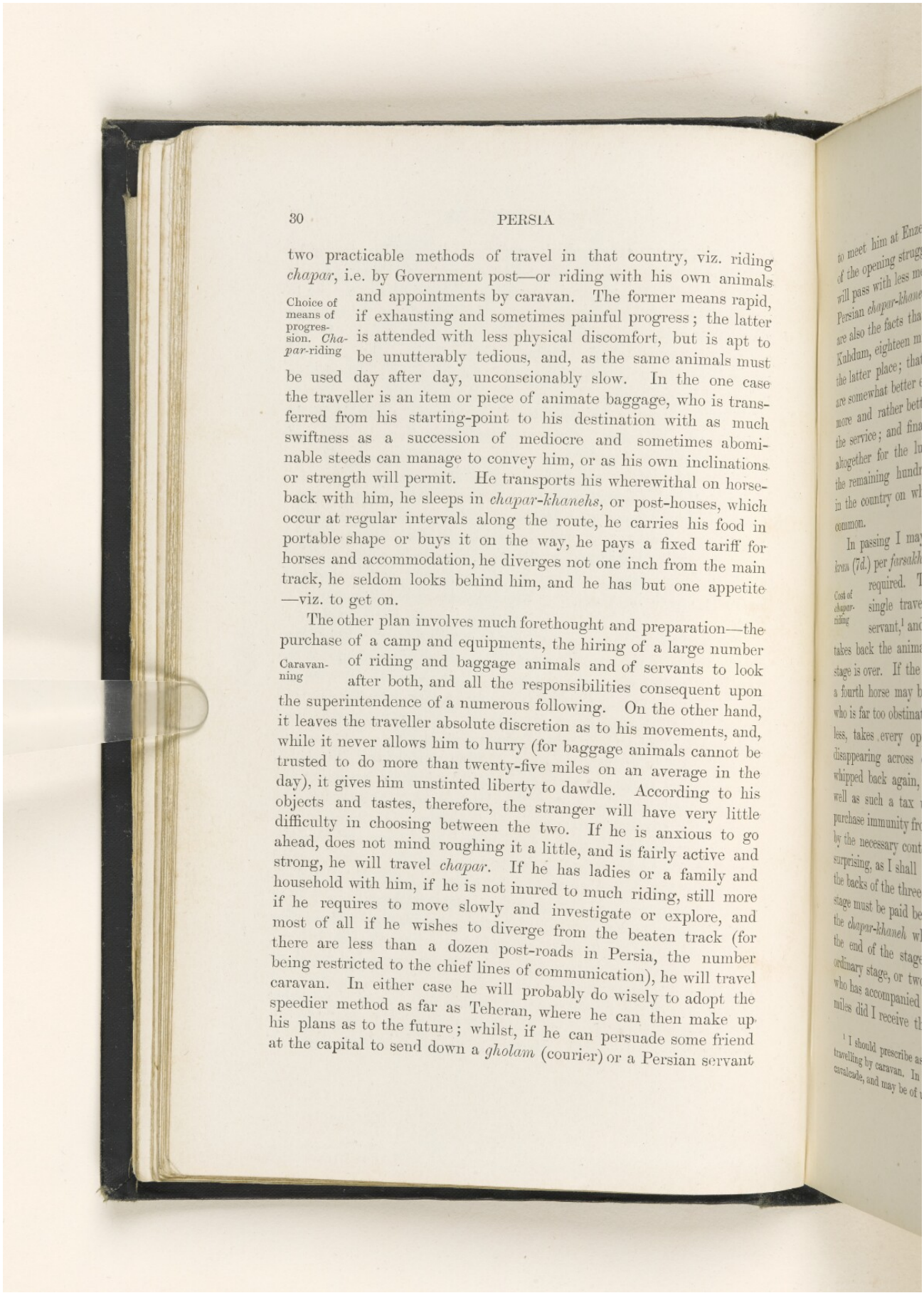


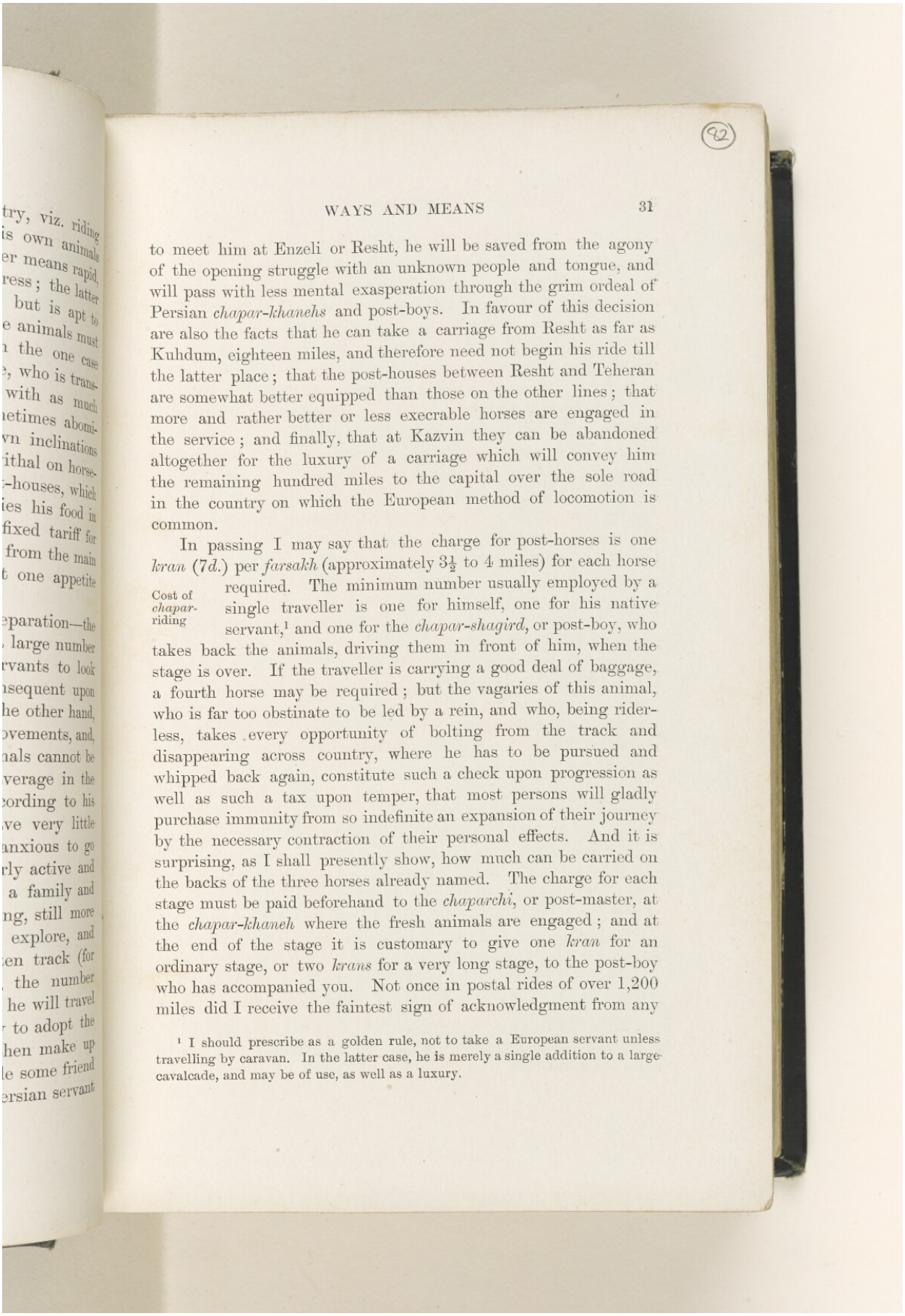


two practicable methods of travel in that country, viz. riding *chapar*, i.e. by Government post—or riding with his own animals and appointments by caravan. The former means rapid, if exhausting and sometimes painful progress; the latter is attended with less physical discomfort, but is apt to be unutterably tedious, and, as the same animals must be used day after day, unconscionably slow. In the one case the traveller is an item or piece of animate baggage, who is transferred from his starting-point to his destination with as much swiftness as a succession of mediocre and sometimes abominable steeds can manage to convey him, or as his own inclinations or strength will permit. He transports his wherewithal on horseback with him, he sleeps in *chapar-khanehs*, or post-houses, which occur at regular intervals along the route, he carries his food in portable shape or buys it on the way, he pays a fixed tariff for horses and accommodation, he diverges not one inch from the main track, he seldom looks behind him, and he has but one appetite—viz. to get on.

Choice of means of progression. *Chapar*-riding

The other plan involves much forethought and preparation—the purchase of a camp and equipments, the hiring of a large number of riding and baggage animals and of servants to look after both, and all the responsibilities consequent upon the superintendence of a numerous following. On the other hand, it leaves the traveller absolute discretion as to his movements, and, while it never allows him to hurry (for baggage animals cannot be trusted to do more than twenty-five miles on an average in the day), it gives him unstinted liberty to dawdle. According to his objects and tastes, therefore, the stranger will have very little difficulty in choosing between the two. If he is anxious to go ahead, does not mind roughing it a little, and is fairly active and strong, he will travel *chapar*. If he has ladies or a family and household with him, if he is not inured to much riding, still more if he requires to move slowly and investigate or explore, and most of all if he wishes to diverge from the beaten track (for there are less than a dozen post-roads in Persia, the number being restricted to the chief lines of communication), he will travel caravan. In either case he will probably do wisely to adopt the speedier method as far as Teheran, where he can then make up his plans as to the future; whilst, if he can persuade some friend at the capital to send down a *gholam* (courier) or a Persian servant

Caravanning





to meet him at Enzeli or Resht, he will be saved from the agony of the opening struggle with an unknown people and tongue, and will pass with less mental exasperation through the grim ordeal of Persian *chapar-khanehs* and post-boys. In favour of this decision are also the facts that he can take a carriage from Resht as far as Kuhdum, eighteen miles, and therefore need not begin his ride till the latter place; that the post-houses between Resht and Teheran are somewhat better equipped than those on the other lines; that more and rather better or less execrable horses are engaged in the service; and finally, that at Kazvin they can be abandoned altogether for the luxury of a carriage which will convey him the remaining hundred miles to the capital over the sole road in the country on which the European method of locomotion is common.

Cost of *chapar*-riding

In passing I may say that the charge for post-horses is one *kran* (7*d.*) per *farsakh* (approximately 3½ to 4 miles) for each horse required. The minimum number usually employed by a single traveller is one for himself, one for his native servant,[1] and one for the *chapar-shagird*, or post-boy, who takes back the animals, driving them in front of him, when the stage is over. If the traveller is carrying a good deal of baggage, a fourth horse may be required; but the vagaries of this animal, who is far too obstinate to be led by a rein, and who, being riderless, takes every opportunity of bolting from the track and disappearing across country, where he has to be pursued and whipped back again, constitute such a check upon progression as well as such a tax upon temper, that most persons will gladly purchase immunity from so indefinite an expansion of their journey by the necessary contraction of their personal effects. And it is surprising, as I shall presently show, how much can be carried on the backs of the three horses already named. The charge for each stage must be paid beforehand to the *chaparchi*, or post-master, at the *chapar-khaneh* where the fresh animals are engaged; and at the end of the stage it is customary to give one *kran* for an ordinary stage, or two *krans* for a very long stage, to the post-boy who has accompanied you. Not once in postal rides of over 1,200 miles did I receive the faintest sign of acknowledgment from any

[1] I should prescribe as a golden rule, not to take a European servant unless travelling by caravan. In the latter case, he is merely a single addition to a large cavalcade, and may be of use, as well as a luxury.

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one of these individuals, whose stolidity is proof even against the agreeable emotion of receiving a tip, and who never deviate, even by accident, into an expression of gratitude. As a Persian traveller seldom gives them anything, I suppose they look with contempt upon a European who is foolish enough to squander a gratuitous shilling. At the *chapar-khaneh*, where the traveller puts up for the night, and where he is supplied with a few conveniences, such as water and firewood, possibly with milk and eggs, it is usual to give the postmaster, upon leaving in the morning, a gratuity varying, according to the nature of the service, from two to four *krans*. These are the only disbursements required, except for provisions bought in the villages *en route*; and to meet this outlay a supply of a few hundred *krans*, which can either be procured in one-*kran* or two-*kran* pieces at Baku, or can be sent down from Teheran, is necessary. These are usually carried in bags in the rider's holsters, and are a great encumbrance on a long journey. But no other currency is in existence, and no other method of payment is therefore possible.[1] With these preliminary instructions for his guidance, from which he will already have learnt that the journey lying before him, if not luxurious, is at any rate cheap, the traveller will upon arriving at Resht (or Kuhdum) make his way to the post-house, and after procuring his *tezkereh* or postal order, will arrange for starting upon his ride as soon as possible. He will not, as did a friend of mine, ask for a porter to take up his luggage to the hotel! There is an English as well as a Russian Consulate at Resht; and the former building, after being for some time unoccupied, has lately received another official inmate, so that in the last resort the help of a countryman and the majesty of officialdom can both be appealed to for assistance.

Character of route

The stretch of country between Resht and Teheran may be roughly divided into three sections—(1) the forest belt extending from Resht to the mountains, which is a portion of the immense wooded zone that covers the flat coast-line from Talish in the west to Astrabad in the east, a total distance of 400 miles; (2) the spurs and the main range of the Elburz Mountains, which at the highest point of the pass attain an altitude of over 7,000 feet above the sea; (3) the elevated plateau or plain upon

[1] The Imperial Bank has since issued bank-notes, but as they can only be cashed, at present, in the towns where issued, I doubt whether they are accepted at the post-houses.



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their southern side, descending from Kazvin to Teheran. Between Resht and Kazvin the stages are as follows:[1]

| Name of station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in Miles |
|---|---|---|
| Resht to Kuhdum . . . . | 6 | 16 |
| Kuhdum to Rustamabad . . . | 5 | 18½ |
| Rustamabad to Menjil . . . | 5 | 17½ |
| Menjil to Paichenar . . . | 5 | 13 |
| Paichenar to Mazreh . . . | 5 | 20 |
| Mazreh to Kazvin . . . . | 5 | 21 |
| Total . . | 31[2] | 106 |

Resht to Kazvin

After leaving Resht the road strikes inland through the first or woodland belt, traversing a forest, which, while it reeks with miasma, also abounds in game. Here are to be found not only the humble *fauna* with which we are familiar in England, such as hares, foxes, pheasants, and the like, but wolves, hyenas, jackals, leopards, tigers, lynxes, and wild boar. Generally

[1] The following modern writers have given descriptions of the journey from Enzeli to Teheran: E. B. Eastwick (1860–61), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. i. pp. 293–end; vol. ii. pp. 1–14. Col. Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 312–317. A. Arnold (1875) *Through Persia by Caravan*, vol. i. caps. viii.–x. A. H. Schindler, (1877), *Zeit. d. Gesell. für Erd. z. Berlin*, vol. xiv. Sir C. MacGregor (1878), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 176–180. E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. pp. 307–337. E. Orsolle (1882), *Le Caucase et la Perse*, caps. xi.–xv.

[2] The total of *farsakhs* if multiplied by four seldom corresponds to the actual number of miles, for the reason that, the *farsakh* being the unit of measurement, no fraction of a *farsakh* is taken into account. Thus 12½ miles will count as 4 *farsakhs* equally with 16 miles, and be paid for accordingly. Moreover, the length of the *farsakh* differs in different parts of the country according to the nature of the ground, the local interpretation of the term being the distance which a laden mule will walk in the hour. Thus in mountainous country the *farsakh* will be apt not greatly to exceed three miles; whilst on level ground four miles may sometimes be an inadequate measurement. The name *farsakh* is, as well known, the Arabicised form of the old Persian *parasang* (transcribed by the Greeks as παρασάγγης), and is supposed to be derived from pieces of stone (*sang*) placed on the roadside as marks at fixed distances apart. In one of the books of the Zend Avesta there is the following not too precise definition of the term: 'A *farsakh* is the distance at which a long-sighted man can see a camel and discern whether it be white or black.' In Luristan, on the other hand, the standard is sound, not sight, a *farsakh* being the distance at which a drum beat can be heard. As a matter of fact, the original *parasang* was an old Babylonian measure, based on the Babylonian cubit, and was equal to 3·523 miles. But the modern *parasang* varies in proportion as the modern cubit varies; its mean value being 3·915 miles, which corresponds with the Royal Babylonian cubit. *Vide* 'Notes on the Length of the *Farsakh*,' by Gen. A. H. Schindler, in *Proceedings of the R. G. S.* (new series), vol. x. pp. 584–588 (1888).



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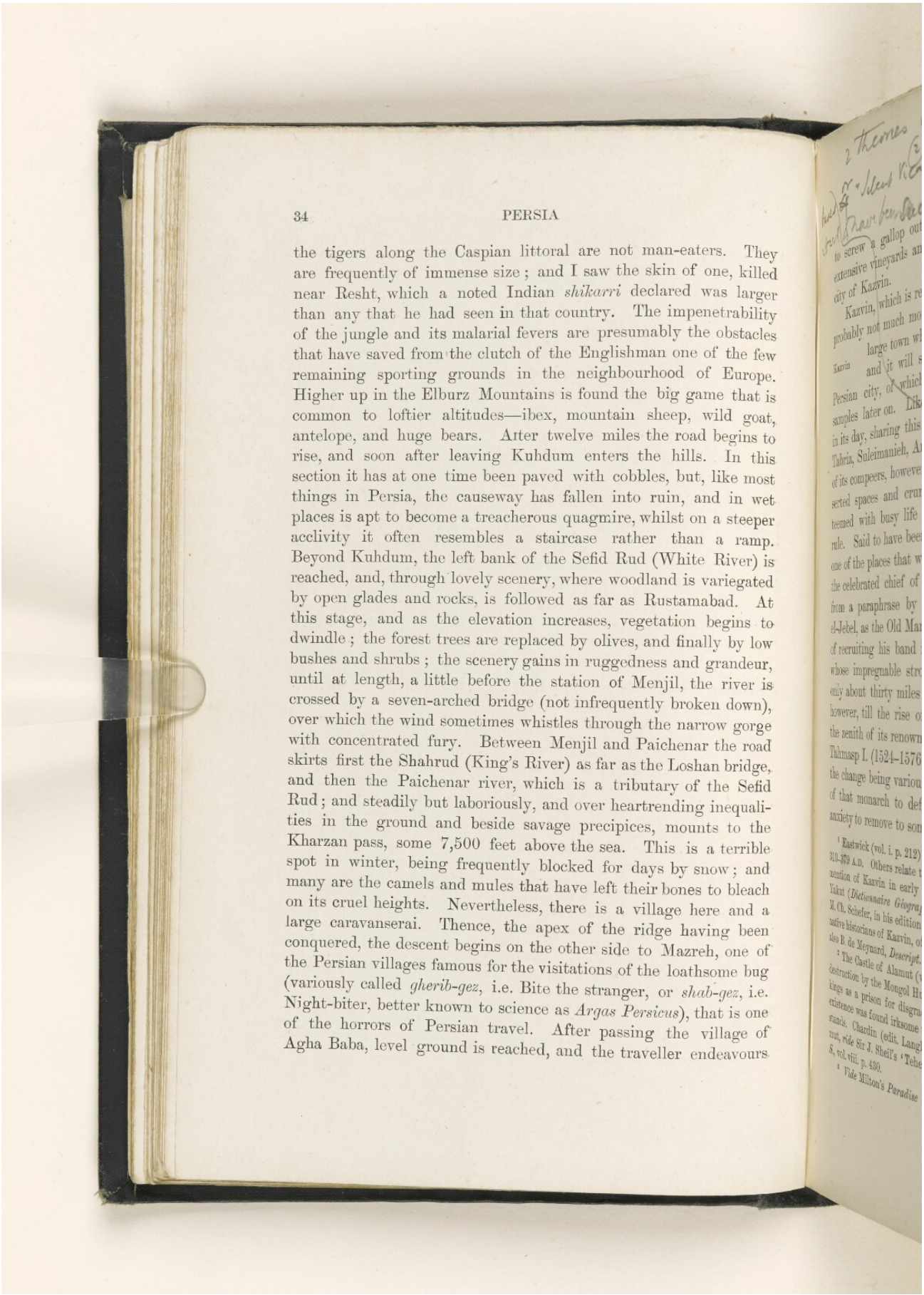



the tigers along the Caspian littoral are not man-eaters. They are frequently of immense size; and I saw the skin of one, killed near Resht, which a noted Indian *shikarri* declared was larger than any that he had seen in that country. The impenetrability of the jungle and its malarial fevers are presumably the obstacles that have saved from the clutch of the Englishman one of the few remaining sporting grounds in the neighbourhood of Europe. Higher up in the Elburz Mountains is found the big game that is common to loftier altitudes—ibex, mountain sheep, wild goat, antelope, and huge bears. After twelve miles the road begins to rise, and soon after leaving Kuhdum enters the hills. In this section it has at one time been paved with cobbles, but, like most things in Persia, the causeway has fallen into ruin, and in wet places is apt to become a treacherous quagmire, whilst on a steeper acclivity it often resembles a staircase rather than a ramp. Beyond Kuhdum, the left bank of the Sefid Rud (White River) is reached, and, through lovely scenery, where woodland is variegated by open glades and rocks, is followed as far as Rustamabad. At this stage, and as the elevation increases, vegetation begins to dwindle; the forest trees are replaced by olives, and finally by low bushes and shrubs; the scenery gains in ruggedness and grandeur, until at length, a little before the station of Menjil, the river is crossed by a seven-arched bridge (not infrequently broken down), over which the wind sometimes whistles through the narrow gorge with concentrated fury. Between Menjil and Paichenar the road skirts first the Shahrud (King's River) as far as the Loshan bridge, and then the Paichenar river, which is a tributary of the Sefid Rud; and steadily but laboriously, and over heartrending inequalities in the ground and beside savage precipices, mounts to the Kharzan pass, some 7,500 feet above the sea. This is a terrible spot in winter, being frequently blocked for days by snow; and many are the camels and mules that have left their bones to bleach on its cruel heights. Nevertheless, there is a village here and a large caravanserai. Thence, the apex of the ridge having been conquered, the descent begins on the other side to Mazreh, one of the Persian villages famous for the visitations of the loathsome bug (variously called *gherib-gez*, i.e. Bite the stranger, or *shab-gez*, i.e. Night-biter, better known to science as *Argas Persicus*), that is one of the horrors of Persian travel. After passing the village of Agha Baba, level ground is reached, and the traveller endeavours

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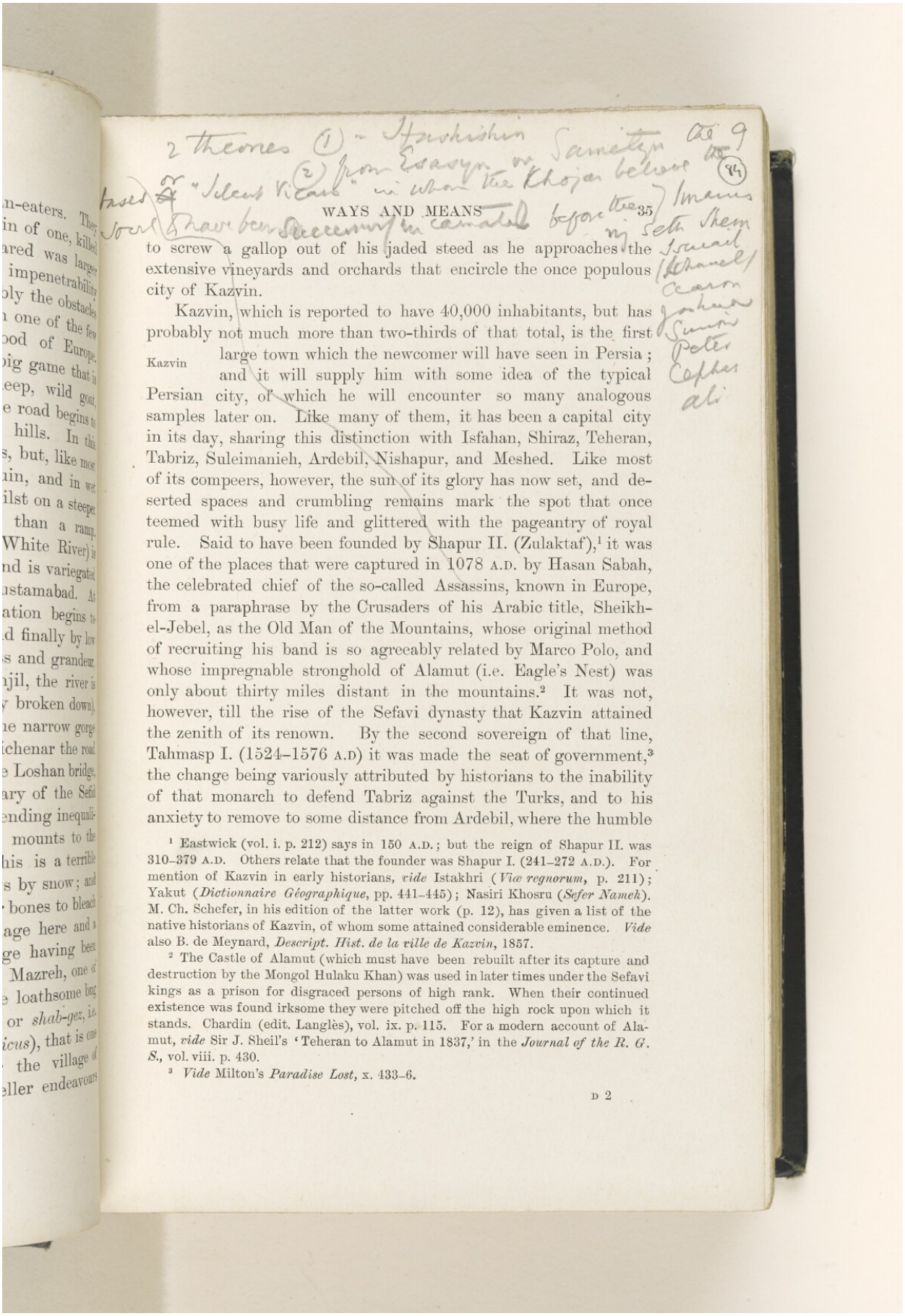



to screw a gallop out of his jaded steed as he approaches the extensive vineyards and orchards that encircle the once populous city of Kazvin.

Kazvin, which is reported to have 40,000 inhabitants, but has probably not much more than two-thirds of that total, is the first large town which the newcomer will have seen in Persia; and it will supply him with some idea of the typical Persian city, of which he will encounter so many analogous samples later on. Like many of them, it has been a capital city in its day, sharing this distinction with Isfahan, Shiraz, Teheran, Tabriz, Suleimanieh, Ardebil, Nishapur, and Meshed. Like most of its compeers, however, the sun of its glory has now set, and deserted spaces and crumbling remains mark the spot that once teemed with busy life and glittered with the pageantry of royal rule. Said to have been founded by Shapur II. (Zulaktaf),[1] it was one of the places that were captured in 1078 A.D. by Hasan Sabah, the celebrated chief of the so-called Assassins, known in Europe, from a paraphrase by the Crusaders of his Arabic title, Sheikh-el-Jebel, as the Old Man of the Mountains, whose original method of recruiting his band is so agreeably related by Marco Polo, and whose impregnable stronghold of Alamut (i.e. Eagle's Nest) was only about thirty miles distant in the mountains.[2] It was not, however, till the rise of the Sefavi dynasty that Kazvin attained the zenith of its renown. By the second sovereign of that line, Tahmasp I. (1524–1576 A.D) it was made the seat of government,[3] the change being variously attributed by historians to the inability of that monarch to defend Tabriz against the Turks, and to his anxiety to remove to some distance from Ardebil, where the humble

Kazvin

[1] Eastwick (vol. i. p. 212) says in 150 A.D.; but the reign of Shapur II. was 310–379 A.D. Others relate that the founder was Shapur I. (241–272 A.D.). For mention of Kazvin in early historians, *vide* Istakhri (*Viæ regnorum*, p. 211); Yakut (*Dictionnaire Géographique*, pp. 441–445); Nasiri Khosru (*Sefer Nameh*). M. Ch. Schefer, in his edition of the latter work (p. 12), has given a list of the native historians of Kazvin, of whom some attained considerable eminence. *Vide* also B. de Meynard, *Descript. Hist. de la ville de Kazvin*, 1857.

[2] The Castle of Alamut (which must have been rebuilt after its capture and destruction by the Mongol Hulaku Khan) was used in later times under the Sefavi kings as a prison for disgraced persons of high rank. When their continued existence was found irksome they were pitched off the high rock upon which it stands. Chardin (edit. Langlès), vol. ix. p. 115. For a modern account of Alamut, *vide* Sir J. Sheil's 'Teheran to Alamut in 1837,' in the *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. viii. p. 430.

[3] *Vide* Milton's *Paradise Lost*, x. 433–6.



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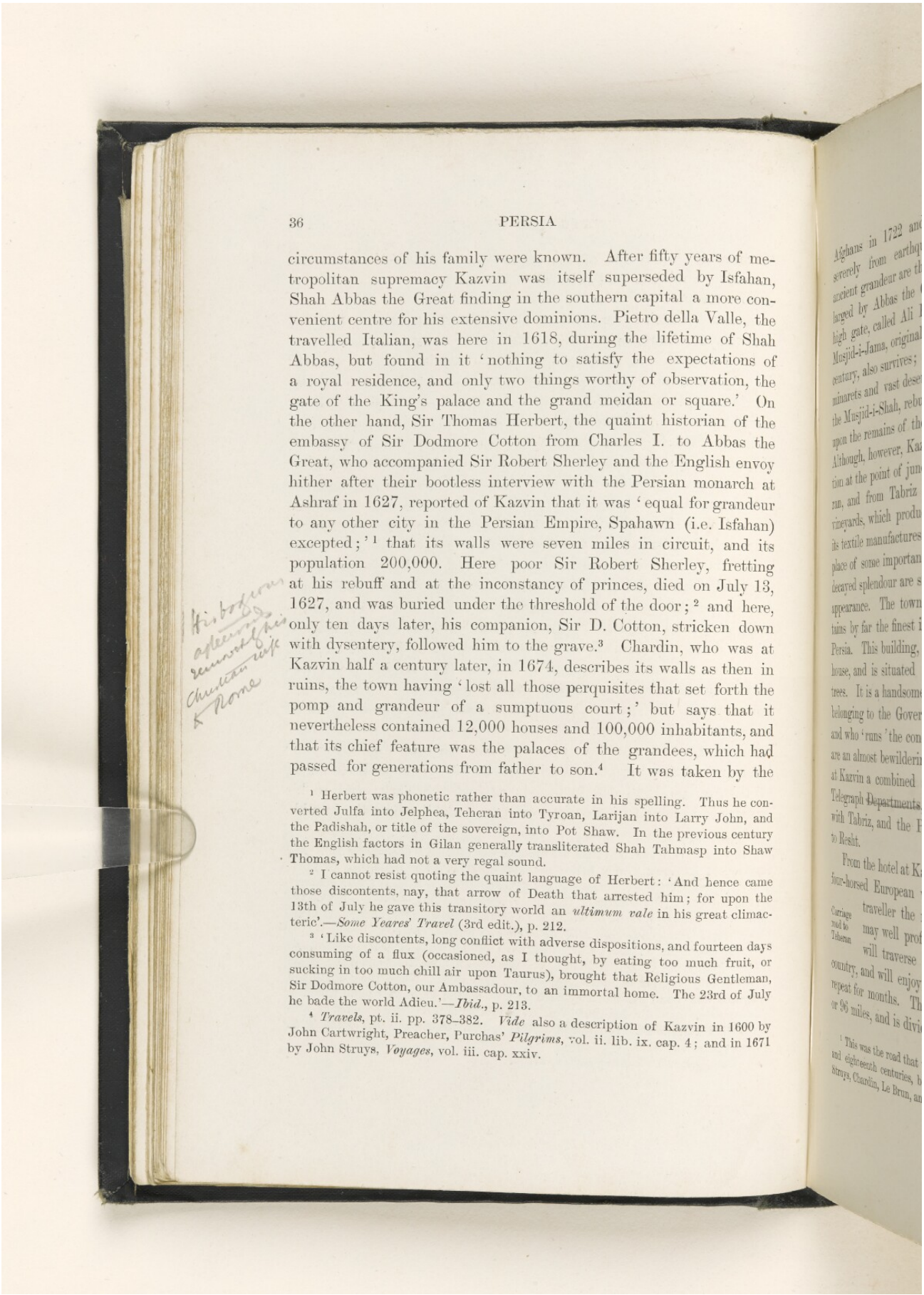



circumstances of his family were known. After fifty years of metropolitan supremacy Kazvin was itself superseded by Isfahan, Shah Abbas the Great finding in the southern capital a more convenient centre for his extensive dominions. Pietro della Valle, the travelled Italian, was here in 1618, during the lifetime of Shah Abbas, but found in it 'nothing to satisfy the expectations of a royal residence, and only two things worthy of observation, the gate of the King's palace and the grand meidan or square.' On the other hand, Sir Thomas Herbert, the quaint historian of the embassy of Sir Dodmore Cotton from Charles I. to Abbas the Great, who accompanied Sir Robert Sherley and the English envoy hither after their bootless interview with the Persian monarch at Ashraf in 1627, reported of Kazvin that it was 'equal for grandeur to any other city in the Persian Empire, Spahawn (i.e. Isfahan) excepted;'[1] that its walls were seven miles in circuit, and its population 200,000. Here poor Sir Robert Sherley, fretting at his rebuff and at the inconstancy of princes, died on July 13, 1627, and was buried under the threshold of the door;[2] and here, only ten days later, his companion, Sir D. Cotton, stricken down with dysentery, followed him to the grave.[3] Chardin, who was at Kazvin half a century later, in 1674, describes its walls as then in ruins, the town having 'lost all those perquisites that set forth the pomp and grandeur of a sumptuous court;' but says that it nevertheless contained 12,000 houses and 100,000 inhabitants, and that its chief feature was the palaces of the grandees, which had passed for generations from father to son.[4] It was taken by the

[1] Herbert was phonetic rather than accurate in his spelling. Thus he converted Julfa into Jelphea, Teheran into Tyroan, Larijan into Larry John, and the Padishah, or title of the sovereign, into Pot Shaw. In the previous century the English factors in Gilan generally transliterated Shah Tahmasp into Shaw Thomas, which had not a very regal sound.

[2] I cannot resist quoting the quaint language of Herbert: 'And hence came those discontents, nay, that arrow of Death that arrested him; for upon the 13th of July he gave this transitory world an *ultimum vale* in his great climacteric'.—*Some Yeares' Travel* (3rd edit.), p. 212.

[3] 'Like discontents, long conflict with adverse dispositions, and fourteen days consuming of a flux (occasioned, as I thought, by eating too much fruit, or sucking in too much chill air upon Taurus), brought that Religious Gentleman, Sir Dodmore Cotton, our Ambassadour, to an immortal home. The 23rd of July he bade the world Adieu.'—*Ibid.*, p. 213.

[4] *Travels*, pt. ii. pp. 378–382. *Vide* also a description of Kazvin in 1600 by John Cartwright, Preacher, Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. ix. cap. 4; and in 1671 by John Struys, *Voyages*, vol. iii. cap. xxiv.

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Afghans in 1722 and by the Turks in 1725, and has suffered severely from earthquakes since. Among the remains of its ancient grandeur are the Royal Palace, built by Tahmasp and enlarged by Abbas the Great, which is now in ruins, but whose high gate, called Ali Kapi, like that at Isfahan, remains. The Musjid-i-Jama, originally built by Harun-er-Rashid in the eighth century, also survives; a huge structure with two broken blue-tiled minarets and vast deserted courts. But the principal mosque is the Musjid-i-Shah, rebuilt by Agha Mohammed and Fath Ali Shah upon the remains of the original edifice of Tahmasp and Abbas. Although, however, Kazvin has fallen from its high estate, its position at the point of junction of the two roads from Resht to Teheran, and from Tabriz to Teheran, and of a third to Kum;[1] its vineyards, which produce a grape of good repute in Persia; and its textile manufactures, which are not inconsiderable, render it a place of some importance; and side by side with the evidences of decayed splendour are signs of reviving prosperity and pretentious appearance. The town has very showy modern gates, and it contains by far the finest inn (there is only one other competitor) in Persia. This building, or *mehman-khaneh*, is attached to the post-house, and is situated in a large garden with a wide avenue of trees. It is a handsome two-storeyed structure with large portico, belonging to the Governor of Kazvin, whose residence is hard by, and who 'runs' the concern. Furnished apartments and good food are an almost bewildering luxury to the traveller. There is also at Kazvin a combined station of the Persian and Indo-European Telegraph ~~Departments~~, the wires of the latter connecting Teheran with Tabriz, and the Persians having the management of a line to Resht.

Carriage road to Teheran

From the hotel at Kazvin, springless *tarantasses* and lumbering four-horsed European vehicles can be procured to transport the traveller the remaining 100 miles to Teheran; and he may well profit by the convenience while he can, for he will traverse one of the only two made roads in the country, and will enjoy a method of locomotion which he cannot repeat for months. The distance is reckoned as 24 full *farsakhs*, or 96 miles, and is divided into six stages of about 16 miles each,

[1] This was the road that was traversed by most voyagers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before Teheran had been made the capital—e.g. by Struys, Chardin, Le Brun, and others.

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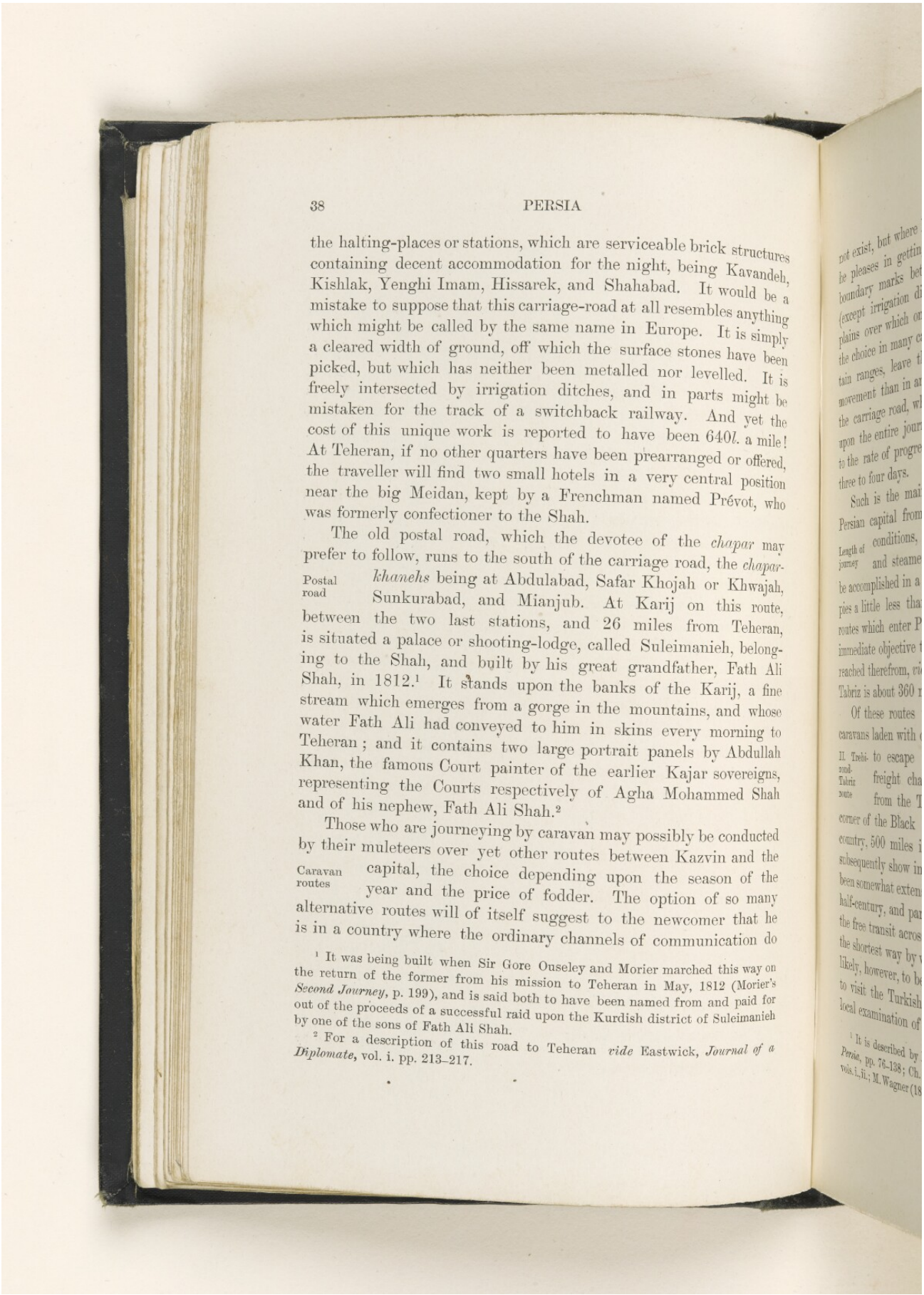



the halting-places or stations, which are serviceable brick structures containing decent accommodation for the night, being Kavandeh, Kishlak, Yenghi Imam, Hissarek, and Shahabad. It would be a mistake to suppose that this carriage-road at all resembles anything which might be called by the same name in Europe. It is simply a cleared width of ground, off which the surface stones have been picked, but which has neither been metalled nor levelled. It is freely intersected by irrigation ditches, and in parts might be mistaken for the track of a switchback railway. And yet the cost of this unique work is reported to have been 640*l.* a mile! At Teheran, if no other quarters have been prearranged or offered, the traveller will find two small hotels in a very central position near the big Meidan, kept by a Frenchman named Prévot, who was formerly confectioner to the Shah.

Postal road

The old postal road, which the devotee of the *chapar* may prefer to follow, runs to the south of the carriage road, the *chapar-khanehs* being at Abdulabad, Safar Khojah or Khwajah, Sunkurabad, and Mianjub. At Karij on this route, between the two last stations, and 26 miles from Teheran, is situated a palace or shooting-lodge, called Suleimanieh, belonging to the Shah, and built by his great grandfather, Fath Ali Shah, in 1812.[1] It stands upon the banks of the Karij, a fine stream which emerges from a gorge in the mountains, and whose water Fath Ali had conveyed to him in skins every morning to Teheran; and it contains two large portrait panels by Abdullah Khan, the famous Court painter of the earlier Kajar sovereigns, representing the Courts respectively of Agha Mohammed Shah and of his nephew, Fath Ali Shah.[2]

Caravan routes

Those who are journeying by caravan may possibly be conducted by their muleteers over yet other routes between Kazvin and the capital, the choice depending upon the season of the year and the price of fodder. The option of so many alternative routes will of itself suggest to the newcomer that he is in a country where the ordinary channels of communication do

[1] It was being built when Sir Gore Ouseley and Morier marched this way on the return of the former from his mission to Teheran in May, 1812 (Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 199), and is said both to have been named from and paid for out of the proceeds of a successful raid upon the Kurdish district of Suleimanieh by one of the sons of Fath Ali Shah.

[2] For a description of this road to Teheran *vide* Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. i. pp. 213–217.

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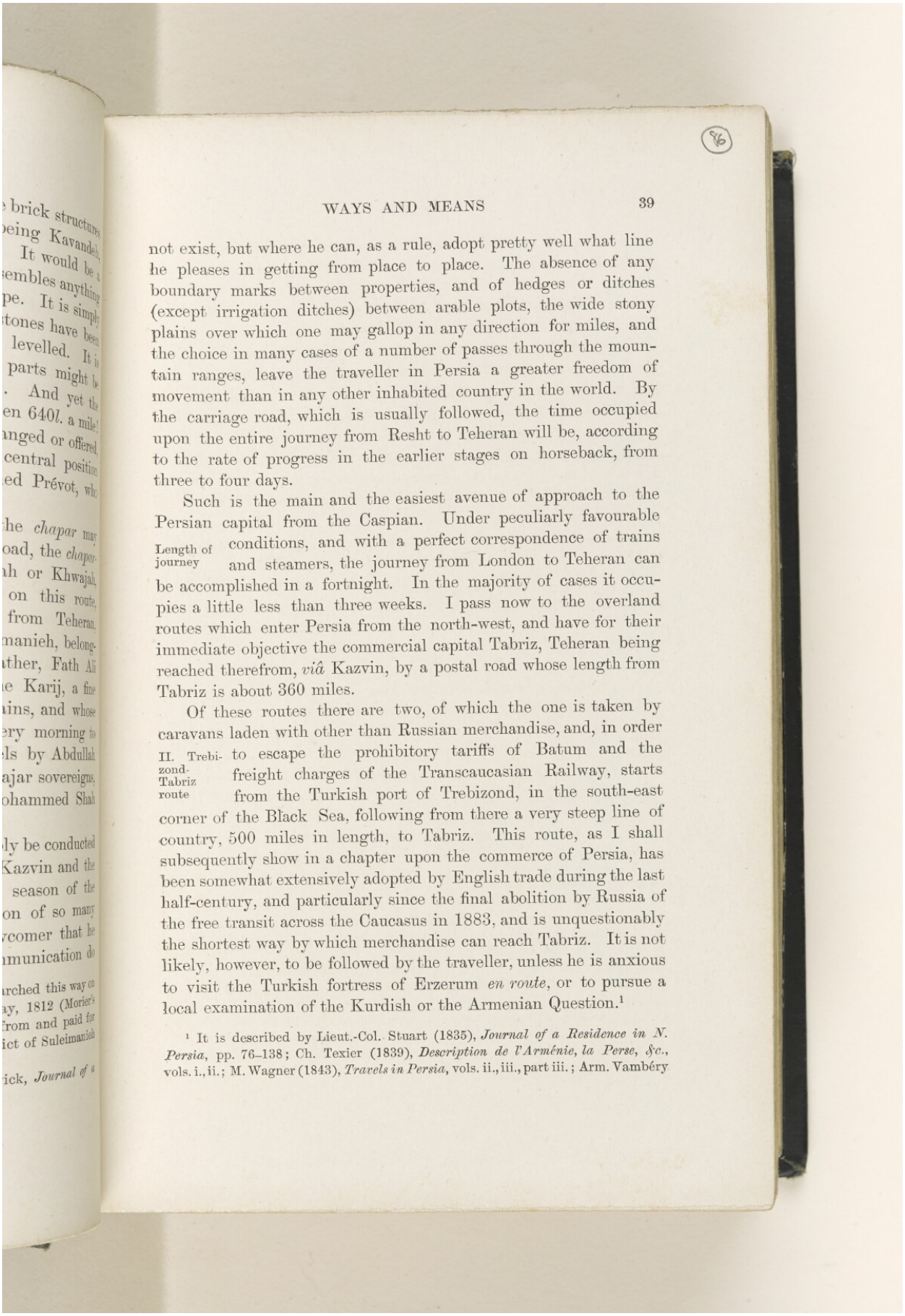



not exist, but where he can, as a rule, adopt pretty well what line he pleases in getting from place to place. The absence of any boundary marks between properties, and of hedges or ditches (except irrigation ditches) between arable plots, the wide stony plains over which one may gallop in any direction for miles, and the choice in many cases of a number of passes through the mountain ranges, leave the traveller in Persia a greater freedom of movement than in any other inhabited country in the world. By the carriage road, which is usually followed, the time occupied upon the entire journey from Resht to Teheran will be, according to the rate of progress in the earlier stages on horseback, from three to four days.

Such is the main and the easiest avenue of approach to the Persian capital from the Caspian. Under peculiarly favourable conditions, and with a perfect correspondence of trains and steamers, the journey from London to Teheran can be accomplished in a fortnight. In the majority of cases it occupies a little less than three weeks. I pass now to the overland routes which enter Persia from the north-west, and have for their immediate objective the commercial capital Tabriz, Teheran being reached therefrom, *viâ* Kazvin, by a postal road whose length from Tabriz is about 360 miles.

Length of journey

Of these routes there are two, of which the one is taken by caravans laden with other than Russian merchandise, and, in order to escape the prohibitory tariffs of Batum and the freight charges of the Transcaucasian Railway, starts from the Turkish port of Trebizond, in the south-east corner of the Black Sea, following from there a very steep line of country, 500 miles in length, to Tabriz. This route, as I shall subsequently show in a chapter upon the commerce of Persia, has been somewhat extensively adopted by English trade during the last half-century, and particularly since the final abolition by Russia of the free transit across the Caucasus in 1883, and is unquestionably the shortest way by which merchandise can reach Tabriz. It is not likely, however, to be followed by the traveller, unless he is anxious to visit the Turkish fortress of Erzerum *en route*, or to pursue a local examination of the Kurdish or the Armenian Question.[1]

II. Trebizond-Tabriz route

[1] It is described by Lieut.-Col. Stuart (1835), *Journal of a Residence in N. Persia*, pp. 76–138; Ch. Texier (1839), *Description de l'Arménie, la Perse, &c.*, vols. i., ii.; M. Wagner (1843), *Travels in Persia*, vols. ii., iii., part iii.; Arm. Vambéry

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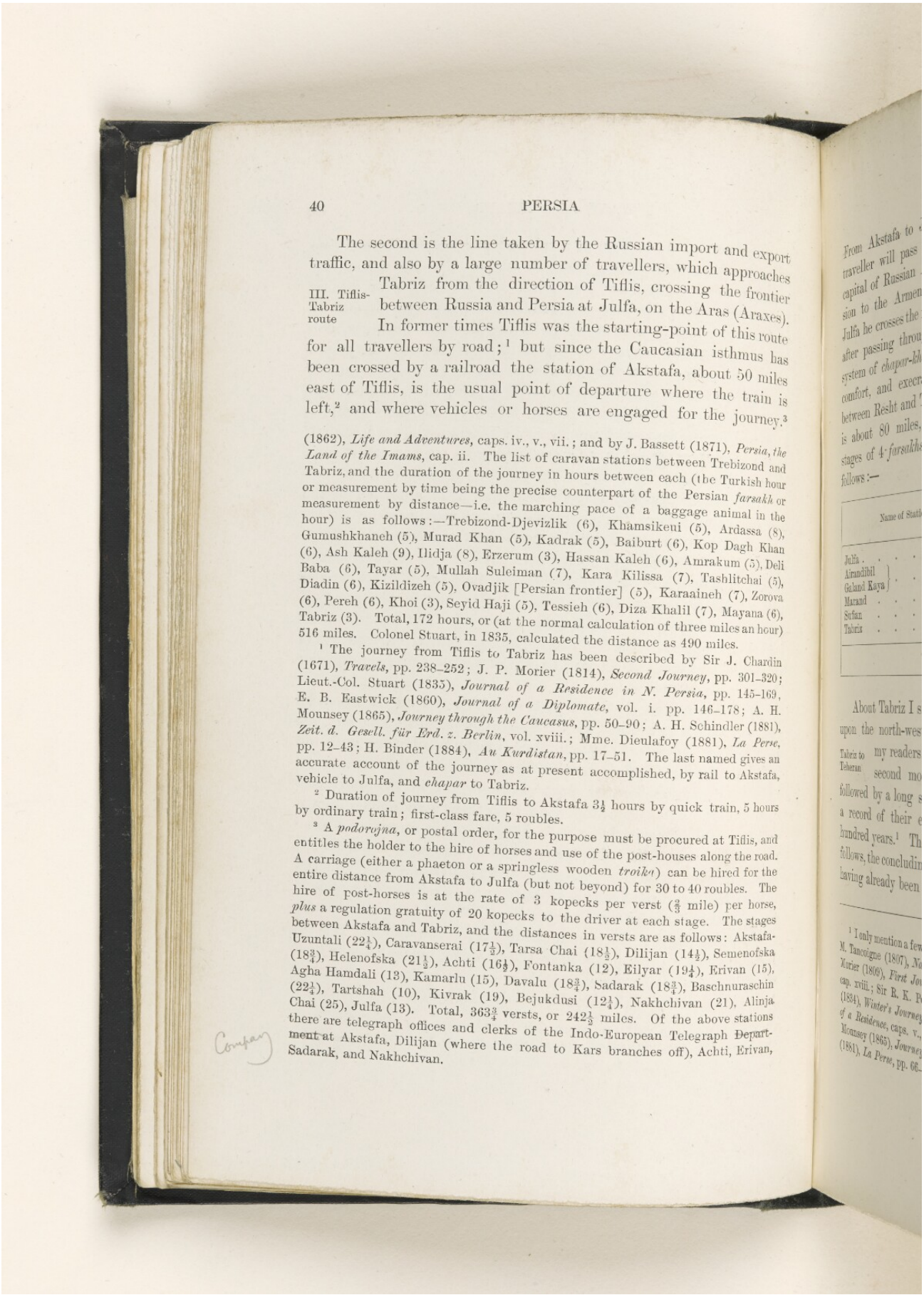



The second is the line taken by the Russian import and export traffic, and also by a large number of travellers, which approaches Tabriz from the direction of Tiflis, crossing the frontier between Russia and Persia at Julfa, on the Aras (Araxes).

III. Tiflis-Tabriz route

In former times Tiflis was the starting-point of this route for all travellers by road;[1] but since the Caucasian isthmus has been crossed by a railroad the station of Akstafa, about 50 miles east of Tiflis, is the usual point of departure where the train is left,[2] and where vehicles or horses are engaged for the journey.[3]

(1862), *Life and Adventures*, caps. iv., v., vii.; and by J. Bassett (1871), *Persia, the Land of the Imams*, cap. ii. The list of caravan stations between Trebizond and Tabriz, and the duration of the journey in hours between each (the Turkish hour or measurement by time being the precise counterpart of the Persian *farsakh* or measurement by distance—i.e. the marching pace of a baggage animal in the hour) is as follows:—Trebizond-Djevizlik (6), Khamsikeui (5), Ardassa (8), Gumushkhaneh (5), Murad Khan (5), Kadrak (5), Baiburt (6), Kop Dagh Khan (6), Ash Kaleh (9), Ilidja (8), Erzerum (3), Hassan Kaleh (6), Amrakum (5), Deli Baba (6), Tayar (5), Mullah Suleiman (7), Kara Kilissa (7), Tashlitchai (5), Diadin (6), Kizildizeh (5), Ovadjik [Persian frontier] (5), Karaaineh (7), Zorova (6), Pereh (6), Khoi (3), Seyid Haji (5), Tessieh (6), Diza Khalil (7), Mayana (6), Tabriz (3). Total, 172 hours, or (at the normal calculation of three miles an hour) 516 miles. Colonel Stuart, in 1835, calculated the distance as 490 miles.

[1] The journey from Tiflis to Tabriz has been described by Sir J. Chardin (1671), *Travels*, pp. 238–252; J. P. Morier (1814), *Second Journey*, pp. 301–320; Lieut.-Col. Stuart (1835), *Journal of a Residence in N. Persia*, pp. 145–169, E. B. Eastwick (1860), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. i. pp. 146–178; A. H. Mounsey (1865), *Journey through the Caucasus*, pp. 50–90; A. H. Schindler (1881), *Zeit. d. Gesell. für Erd. z. Berlin*, vol. xviii.; Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, pp. 12–43; H. Binder (1884), *Au Kurdistan*, pp. 17–51. The last named gives an accurate account of the journey as at present accomplished, by rail to Akstafa, vehicle to Julfa, and *chapar* to Tabriz.

[2] Duration of journey from Tiflis to Akstafa 3¼ hours by quick train, 5 hours by ordinary train; first-class fare, 5 roubles.

[3] A *podorojna*, or postal order, for the purpose must be procured at Tiflis, and entitles the holder to the hire of horses and use of the post-houses along the road. A carriage (either a phaeton or a springless wooden *troika*) can be hired for the entire distance from Akstafa to Julfa (but not beyond) for 30 to 40 roubles. The hire of post-horses is at the rate of 3 kopecks per verst (⅔ mile) per horse, *plus* a regulation gratuity of 20 kopecks to the driver at each stage. The stages between Akstafa and Tabriz, and the distances in versts are as follows: Akstafa-Uzuntali (22¼), Caravanserai (17½), Tarsa Chai (18½), Dilijan (14½), Semenofska (18¾), Helenofska (21½), Achti (16¾), Fontanka (12), Eilyar (19¼), Erivan (15), Agha Hamdali (13), Kamarlu (15), Davalu (18¾), Sadarak (18¾), Baschnuraschin (22¼), Tartshah (10), Kivrak (19), Bejukdusi (12¼), Nakhchivan (21), Alinja Chai (25), Julfa (13). Total, 363¾ versts, or 242½ miles. Of the above stations there are telegraph offices and clerks of the Indo-European Telegraph Department at Akstafa, Dilijan (where the road to Kars branches off), Achti, Erivan, Sadarak, and Nakhchivan.

Company

From Akstafa to Julfa is a distance of about 250 miles. The traveller will pass through the interesting town of Erivan, the capital of Russian Armenia, and will be able to make the excursion to the Armenian ecclesiastical centre of Echmiadzin. At Julfa he crosses the river in a ferry-boat to Persian territory, where, after passing through the custom-house, he emerges upon the system of *chapar-khanehs*, postboys, decayed horses, physical discomfort, and execrable track, which I have already described between Resht and Teheran. The distance from Julfa to Tabriz is about 80 miles, or, according to Persian computation, five stages of 4 *farsakhs* each, the post-houses and distances being as follows :—

| Name of Station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in Miles |
|---|---|---|
| Julfa . . . . . | — | — |
| Airandibil } . . . . . | 5 | 20 |
| Galand Kaya } | | |
| Marand . . . . . | 5 | 24 |
| Sufian . . . . . | 5 | 17 |
| Tabriz . . . . . | 5 | 23 |
| Total . . | 20 | 84 |

About Tabriz I shall have a good deal to say in a later chapter upon the north-west provinces of Persia, to which I will refer my readers. The route from Tabriz to Teheran is the second most travelled route in Persia, and has been followed by a long succession of eminent voyagers, who have left a record of their experiences extending over a period of two hundred years.[1] The post stations and distances to Kazvin are as follows, the concluding section of the road from Kazvin to the capital having already been described :—

Tabriz to Teheran

[1] I only mention a few : Sir J. Chardin (1671), *Travels into Persia*, pp. 370–382; M. Tancoigne (1807), *Narrative of Journey into Persia*, Letters xii.–xiv.; J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, cap. xiv.; Sir W. Ouseley (1812), *Travels*, vol. iii. cap. xviii.; Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 251–306; J. B. Fraser (1834), *Winter's Journey*, vol. i. Letter viii.; Col. W. K. Stuart (1835), *Journal of a Residence*, caps. v., vi.; Lady Sheil, *Glimpses of Life, &c.*, cap. vii.; A. H. Mounsey (1865), *Journey through the Caucasus, &c.*, cap. viii.; Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, pp. 66–119.

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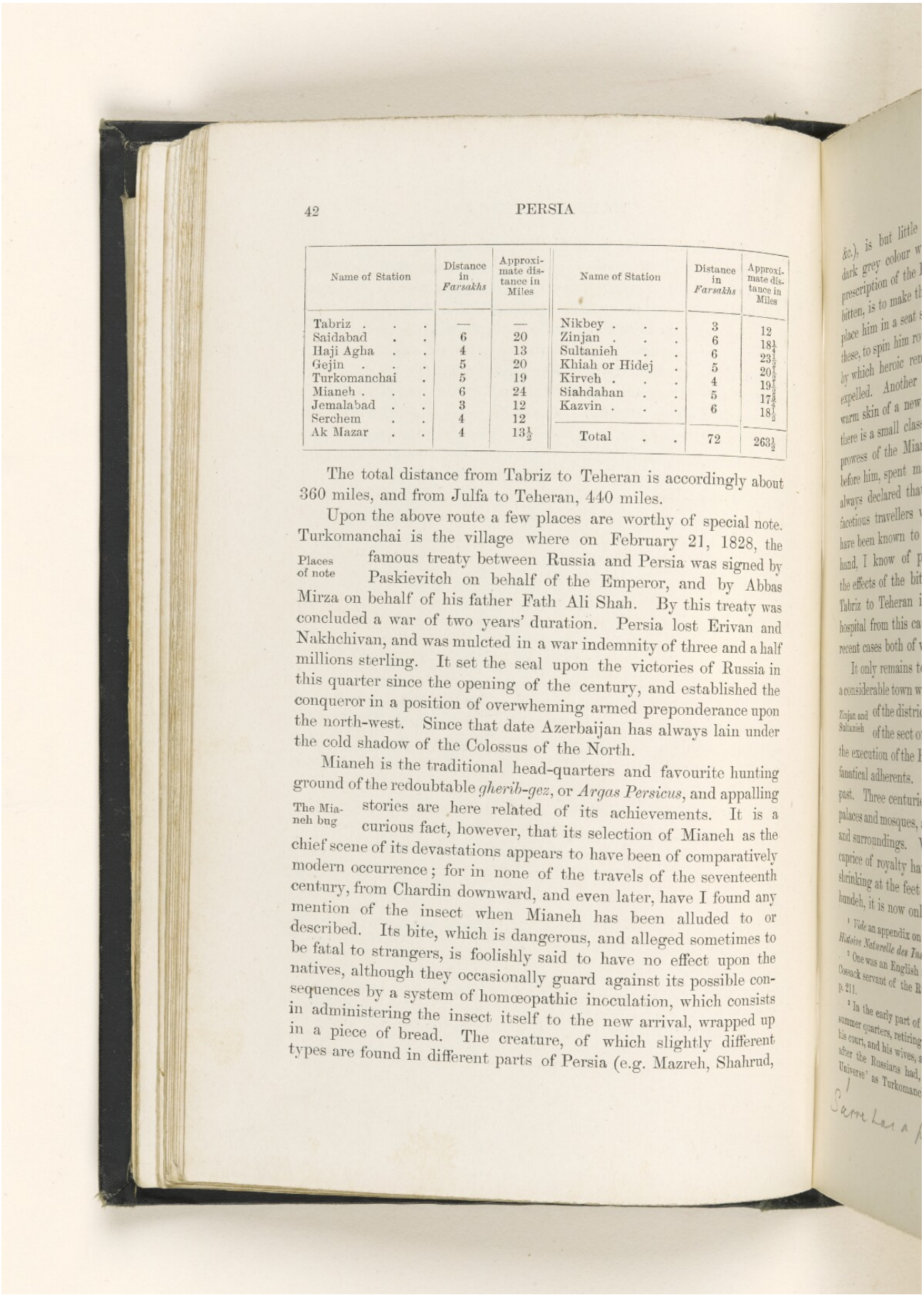




| Name of Station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in Miles | Name of Station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in Miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tabriz | — | — | Nikbey | 3 | 12 |
| Saidabad | 6 | 20 | Zinjan | 6 | 18¼ |
| Haji Agha | 4 | 13 | Sultanieh | 6 | 23⅓ |
| Gejin | 5 | 20 | Khiah or Hidej | 5 | 20⅔ |
| Turkomanchai | 5 | 19 | Kirveh | 4 | 19⅔ |
| Mianeh | 6 | 24 | Siahdaban | 5 | 17⅔ |
| Jemalabad | 3 | 12 | Kazvin | 6 | 18½ |
| Serchem | 4 | 12 | | | |
| Ak Mazar | 4 | 13½ | Total | 72 | 263½ |

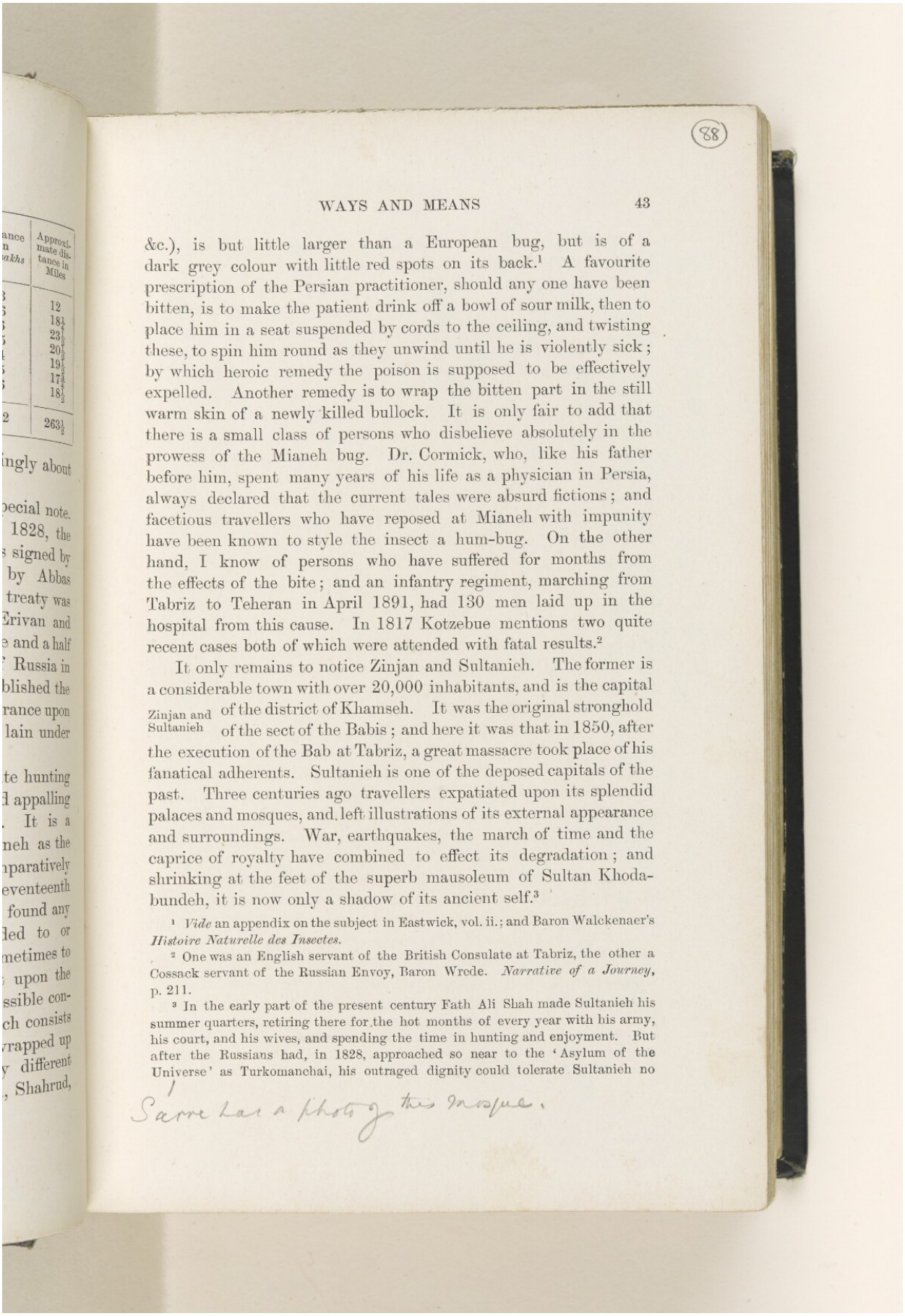
The total distance from Tabriz to Teheran is accordingly about 360 miles, and from Julfa to Teheran, 440 miles.

Places of note

Upon the above route a few places are worthy of special note. Turkomanchai is the village where on February 21, 1828, the famous treaty between Russia and Persia was signed by Paskievitch on behalf of the Emperor, and by Abbas Mirza on behalf of his father Fath Ali Shah. By this treaty was concluded a war of two years' duration. Persia lost Erivan and Nakhchivan, and was mulcted in a war indemnity of three and a half millions sterling. It set the seal upon the victories of Russia in this quarter since the opening of the century, and established the conqueror in a position of overwheming armed preponderance upon the north-west. Since that date Azerbaijan has always lain under the cold shadow of the Colossus of the North.

The Mianeh bug

Mianeh is the traditional head-quarters and favourite hunting ground of the redoubtable *gherib-gez*, or *Argas Persicus*, and appalling stories are here related of its achievements. It is a curious fact, however, that its selection of Mianeh as the chief scene of its devastations appears to have been of comparatively modern occurrence; for in none of the travels of the seventeenth century, from Chardin downward, and even later, have I found any mention of the insect when Mianeh has been alluded to or described. Its bite, which is dangerous, and alleged sometimes to be fatal to strangers, is foolishly said to have no effect upon the natives, although they occasionally guard against its possible consequences by a system of homœopathic inoculation, which consists in administering the insect itself to the new arrival, wrapped up in a piece of bread. The creature, of which slightly different types are found in different parts of Persia (e.g. Mazreh, Shahrud,



(88)



&c.), is but little larger than a European bug, but is of a dark grey colour with little red spots on its back.[1] A favourite prescription of the Persian practitioner, should any one have been bitten, is to make the patient drink off a bowl of sour milk, then to place him in a seat suspended by cords to the ceiling, and twisting these, to spin him round as they unwind until he is violently sick; by which heroic remedy the poison is supposed to be effectively expelled. Another remedy is to wrap the bitten part in the still warm skin of a newly killed bullock. It is only fair to add that there is a small class of persons who disbelieve absolutely in the prowess of the Mianeh bug. Dr. Cormick, who, like his father before him, spent many years of his life as a physician in Persia, always declared that the current tales were absurd fictions; and facetious travellers who have reposed at Mianeh with impunity have been known to style the insect a hum-bug. On the other hand, I know of persons who have suffered for months from the effects of the bite; and an infantry regiment, marching from Tabriz to Teheran in April 1891, had 130 men laid up in the hospital from this cause. In 1817 Kotzebue mentions two quite recent cases both of which were attended with fatal results.[2]

Zinjan and Sultanieh

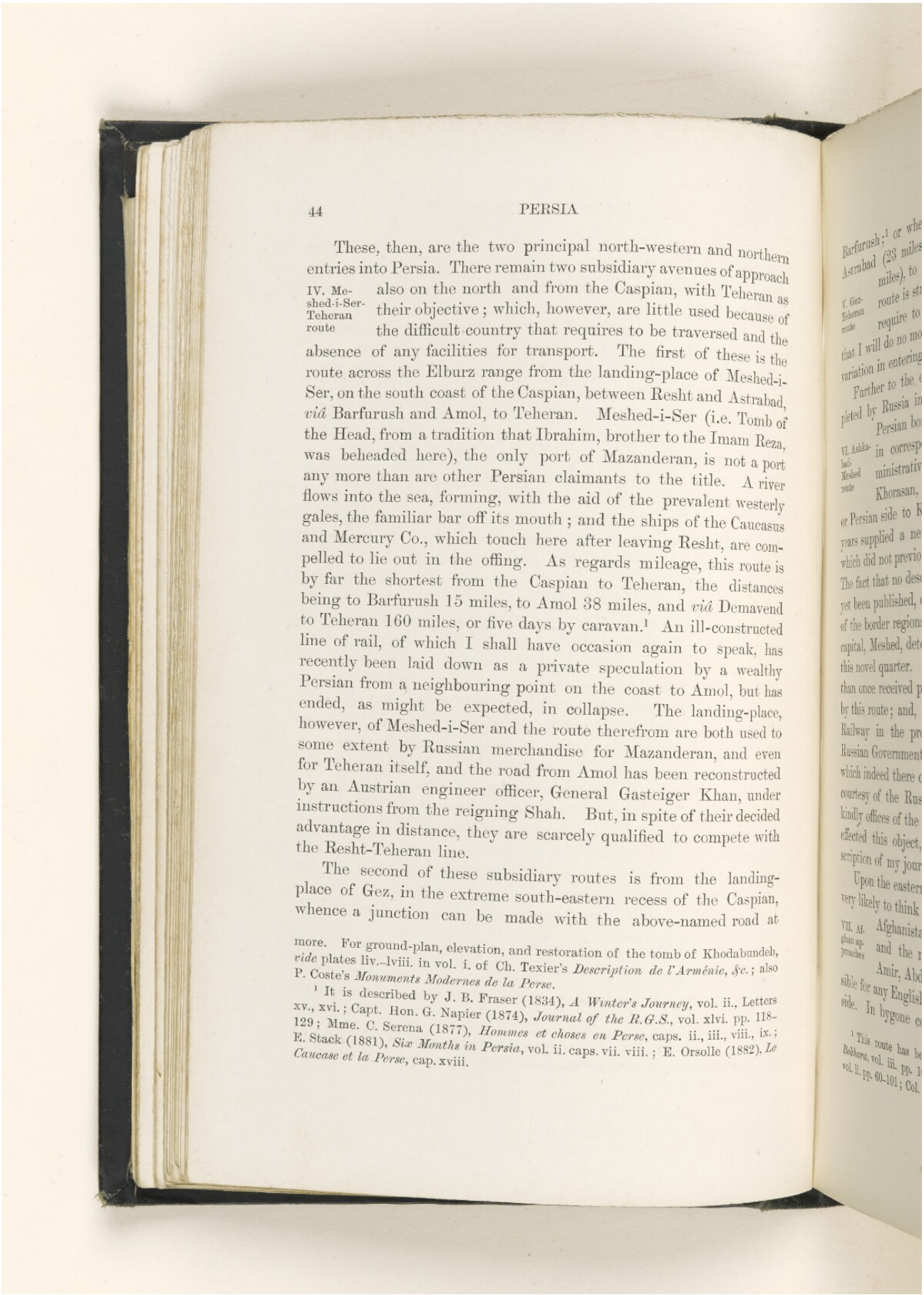
It only remains to notice Zinjan and Sultanieh. The former is a considerable town with over 20,000 inhabitants, and is the capital of the district of Khamseh. It was the original stronghold of the sect of the Babis; and here it was that in 1850, after the execution of the Bab at Tabriz, a great massacre took place of his fanatical adherents. Sultanieh is one of the deposed capitals of the past. Three centuries ago travellers expatiated upon its splendid palaces and mosques, and left illustrations of its external appearance and surroundings. War, earthquakes, the march of time and the caprice of royalty have combined to effect its degradation; and shrinking at the feet of the superb mausoleum of Sultan Khodabundeh, it is now only a shadow of its ancient self.[3]

[1] *Vide* an appendix on the subject in Eastwick, vol. ii.; and Baron Walckenaer's *Histoire Naturelle des Insectes.*

[2] One was an English servant of the British Consulate at Tabriz, the other a Cossack servant of the Russian Envoy, Baron Wrede. *Narrative of a Journey*, p. 211.

[3] In the early part of the present century Fath Ali Shah made Sultanieh his summer quarters, retiring there for the hot months of every year with his army, his court, and his wives, and spending the time in hunting and enjoyment. But after the Russians had, in 1828, approached so near to the 'Asylum of the Universe' as Turkomanchai, his outraged dignity could tolerate Sultanieh no

Save Lar a photog this Mosque.





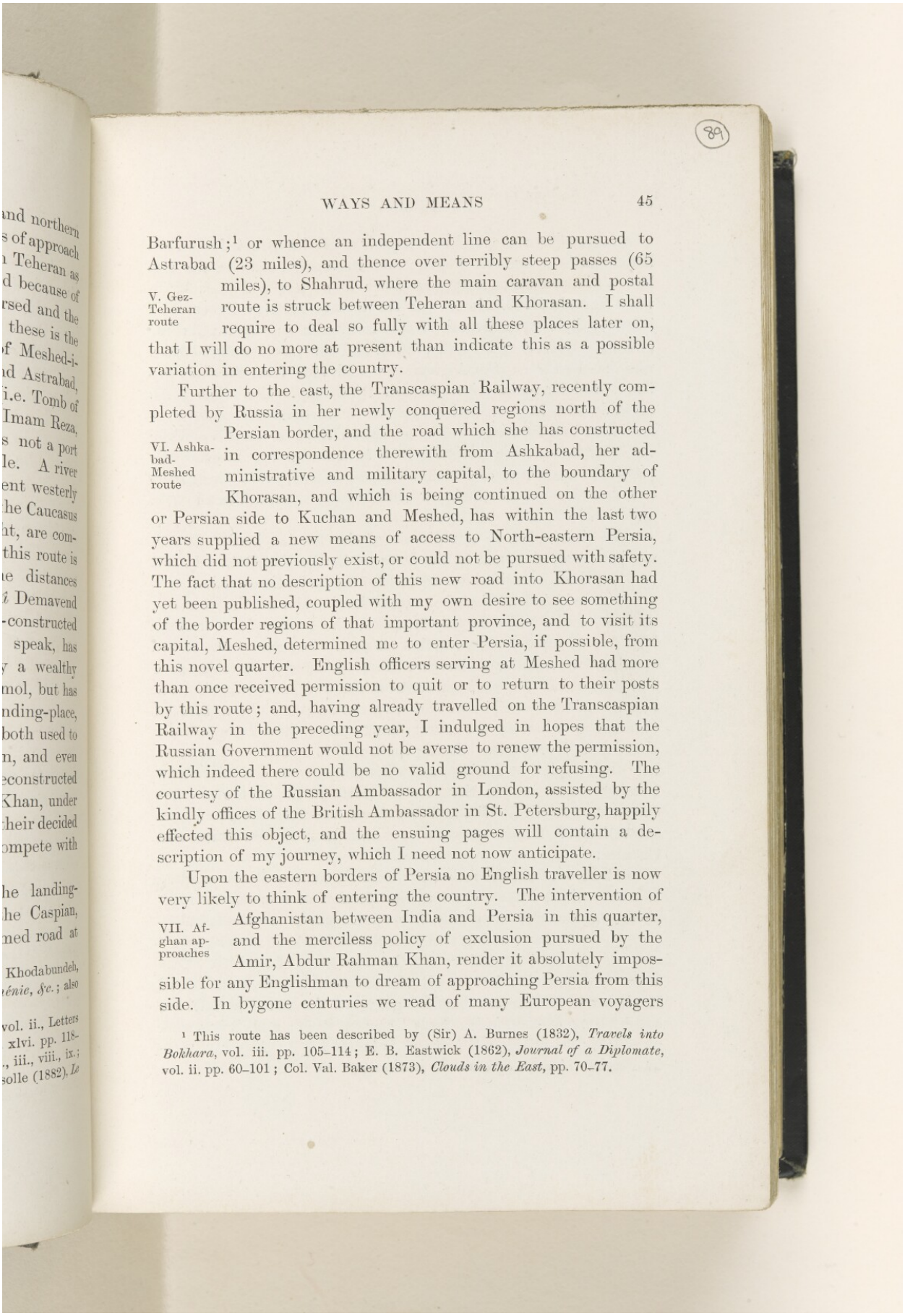
IV. Meshed-i-Ser-Teheran route

These, then, are the two principal north-western and northern entries into Persia. There remain two subsidiary avenues of approach also on the north and from the Caspian, with Teheran as their objective; which, however, are little used because of the difficult country that requires to be traversed and the absence of any facilities for transport. The first of these is the route across the Elburz range from the landing-place of Meshed-i-Ser, on the south coast of the Caspian, between Resht and Astrabad, *viâ* Barfurush and Amol, to Teheran. Meshed-i-Ser (i.e. Tomb of the Head, from a tradition that Ibrahim, brother to the Imam Reza, was beheaded here), the only port of Mazanderan, is not a port any more than are other Persian claimants to the title. A river flows into the sea, forming, with the aid of the prevalent westerly gales, the familiar bar off its mouth; and the ships of the Caucasus and Mercury Co., which touch here after leaving Resht, are compelled to lie out in the offing. As regards mileage, this route is by far the shortest from the Caspian to Teheran, the distances being to Barfurush 15 miles, to Amol 38 miles, and *viâ* Demavend to Teheran 160 miles, or five days by caravan.[1] An ill-constructed line of rail, of which I shall have occasion again to speak, has recently been laid down as a private speculation by a wealthy Persian from a neighbouring point on the coast to Amol, but has ended, as might be expected, in collapse. The landing-place, however, of Meshed-i-Ser and the route therefrom are both used to some extent by Russian merchandise for Mazanderan, and even for Teheran itself, and the road from Amol has been reconstructed by an Austrian engineer officer, General Gasteiger Khan, under instructions from the reigning Shah. But, in spite of their decided advantage in distance, they are scarcely qualified to compete with the Resht-Teheran line.

The second of these subsidiary routes is from the landing-place of Gez, in the extreme south-eastern recess of the Caspian, whence a junction can be made with the above-named road at

more. For ground-plan, elevation, and restoration of the tomb of Khodabundeh, *vide* plates liv.–lviii. in vol. i. of Ch. Texier's *Description de l'Arménie, &c.*; also P. Coste's *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*.

[1] It is described by J. B. Fraser (1834), *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii., Letters xv., xvi.; Capt. Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 118–129; Mme. C. Serena (1877), *Hommes et choses en Perse*, caps. ii., iii., viii., ix.; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. caps. vii. viii.; E. Orsolle (1882), *Le Caucase et la Perse*, cap. xviii.





Barfurush;[1] or whence an independent line can be pursued to Astrabad (23 miles), and thence over terribly steep passes (65 miles), to Shahrud, where the main caravan and postal route is struck between Teheran and Khorasan. I shall require to deal so fully with all these places later on, that I will do no more at present than indicate this as a possible variation in entering the country.

V. Gez-Teheran route

Further to the east, the Transcaspian Railway, recently completed by Russia in her newly conquered regions north of the Persian border, and the road which she has constructed in correspondence therewith from Ashkabad, her administrative and military capital, to the boundary of Khorasan, and which is being continued on the other or Persian side to Kuchan and Meshed, has within the last two years supplied a new means of access to North-eastern Persia, which did not previously exist, or could not be pursued with safety. The fact that no description of this new road into Khorasan had yet been published, coupled with my own desire to see something of the border regions of that important province, and to visit its capital, Meshed, determined me to enter Persia, if possible, from this novel quarter. English officers serving at Meshed had more than once received permission to quit or to return to their posts by this route; and, having already travelled on the Transcaspian Railway in the preceding year, I indulged in hopes that the Russian Government would not be averse to renew the permission, which indeed there could be no valid ground for refusing. The courtesy of the Russian Ambassador in London, assisted by the kindly offices of the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, happily effected this object, and the ensuing pages will contain a description of my journey, which I need not now anticipate.

VI. Ashkabad-Meshed route

Upon the eastern borders of Persia no English traveller is now very likely to think of entering the country. The intervention of Afghanistan between India and Persia in this quarter, and the merciless policy of exclusion pursued by the Amir, Abdur Rahman Khan, render it absolutely impossible for any Englishman to dream of approaching Persia from this side. In bygone centuries we read of many European voyagers

VII. Afghan approaches

[1] This route has been described by (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 105–114; E. B. Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 60–101; Col. Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 70–77.

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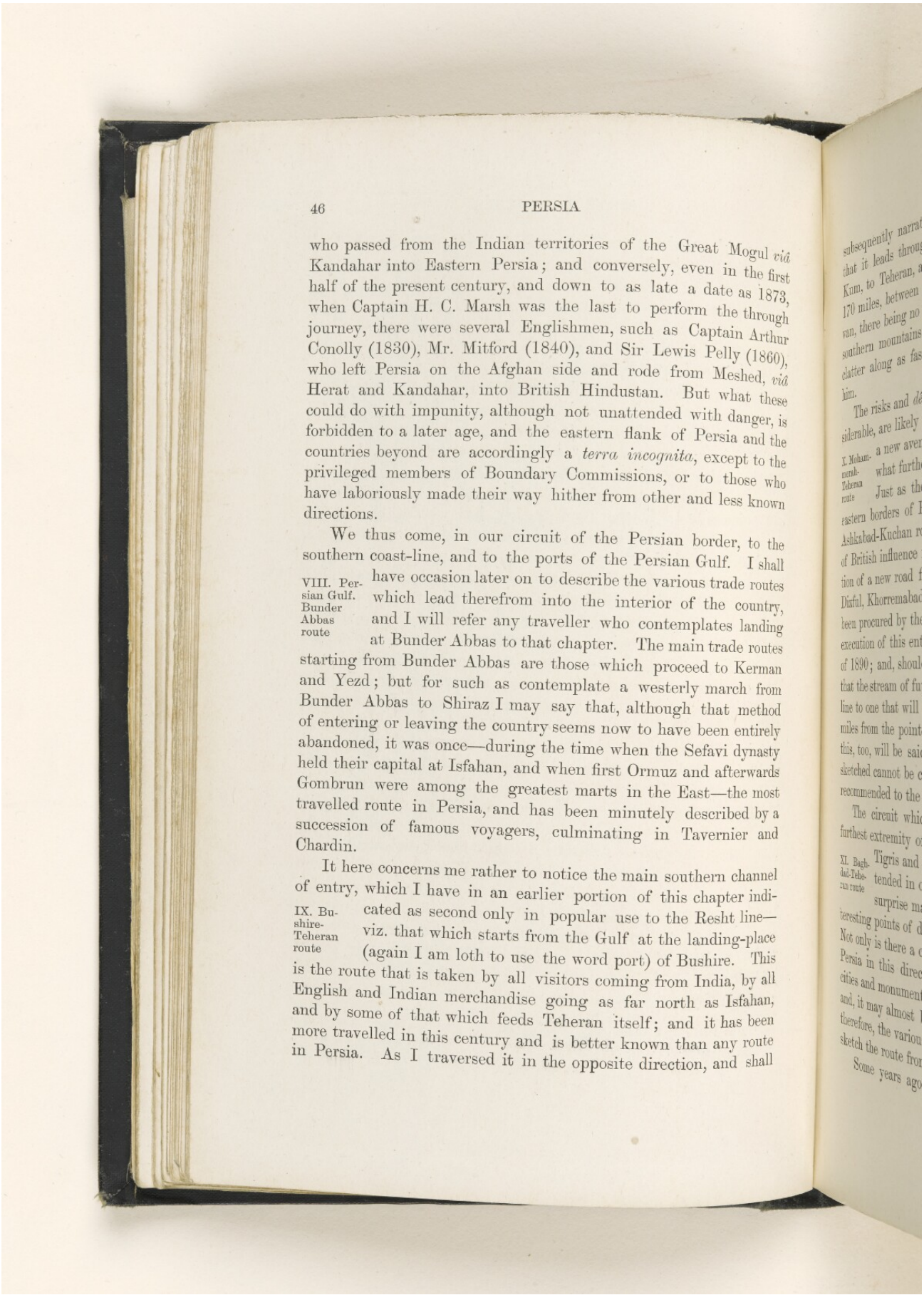



who passed from the Indian territories of the Great Mogul *viâ* Kandahar into Eastern Persia; and conversely, even in the first half of the present century, and down to as late a date as 1873, when Captain H. C. Marsh was the last to perform the through journey, there were several Englishmen, such as Captain Arthur Conolly (1830), Mr. Mitford (1840), and Sir Lewis Pelly (1860), who left Persia on the Afghan side and rode from Meshed, *viâ* Herat and Kandahar, into British Hindustan. But what these could do with impunity, although not unattended with danger, is forbidden to a later age, and the eastern flank of Persia and the countries beyond are accordingly a *terra incognita*, except to the privileged members of Boundary Commissions, or to those who have laboriously made their way hither from other and less known directions.

VIII. Persian Gulf. Bunder Abbas route

We thus come, in our circuit of the Persian border, to the southern coast-line, and to the ports of the Persian Gulf. I shall have occasion later on to describe the various trade routes which lead therefrom into the interior of the country, and I will refer any traveller who contemplates landing at Bunder Abbas to that chapter. The main trade routes starting from Bunder Abbas are those which proceed to Kerman and Yezd; but for such as contemplate a westerly march from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz I may say that, although that method of entering or leaving the country seems now to have been entirely abandoned, it was once—during the time when the Sefavi dynasty held their capital at Isfahan, and when first Ormuz and afterwards Gombrun were among the greatest marts in the East—the most travelled route in Persia, and has been minutely described by a succession of famous voyagers, culminating in Tavernier and Chardin.

IX. Bushire-Teheran route

It here concerns me rather to notice the main southern channel of entry, which I have in an earlier portion of this chapter indicated as second only in popular use to the Resht line—viz. that which starts from the Gulf at the landing-place (again I am loth to use the word port) of Bushire. This is the route that is taken by all visitors coming from India, by all English and Indian merchandise going as far north as Isfahan, and by some of that which feeds Teheran itself; and it has been more travelled in this century and is better known than any route in Persia. As I traversed it in the opposite direction, and shall

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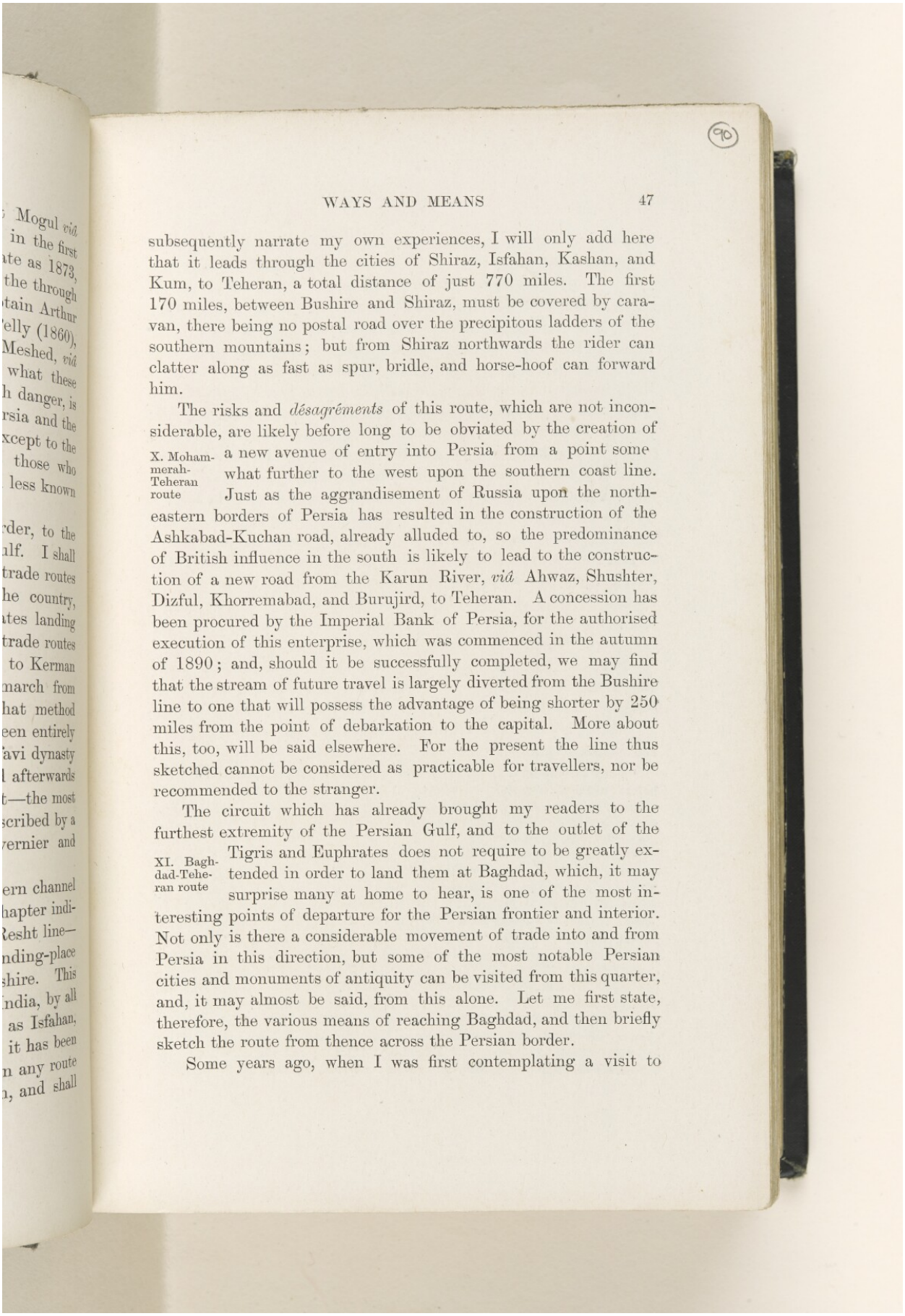




subsequently narrate my own experiences, I will only add here that it leads through the cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, Kashan, and Kum, to Teheran, a total distance of just 770 miles. The first 170 miles, between Bushire and Shiraz, must be covered by caravan, there being no postal road over the precipitous ladders of the southern mountains; but from Shiraz northwards the rider can clatter along as fast as spur, bridle, and horse-hoof can forward him.

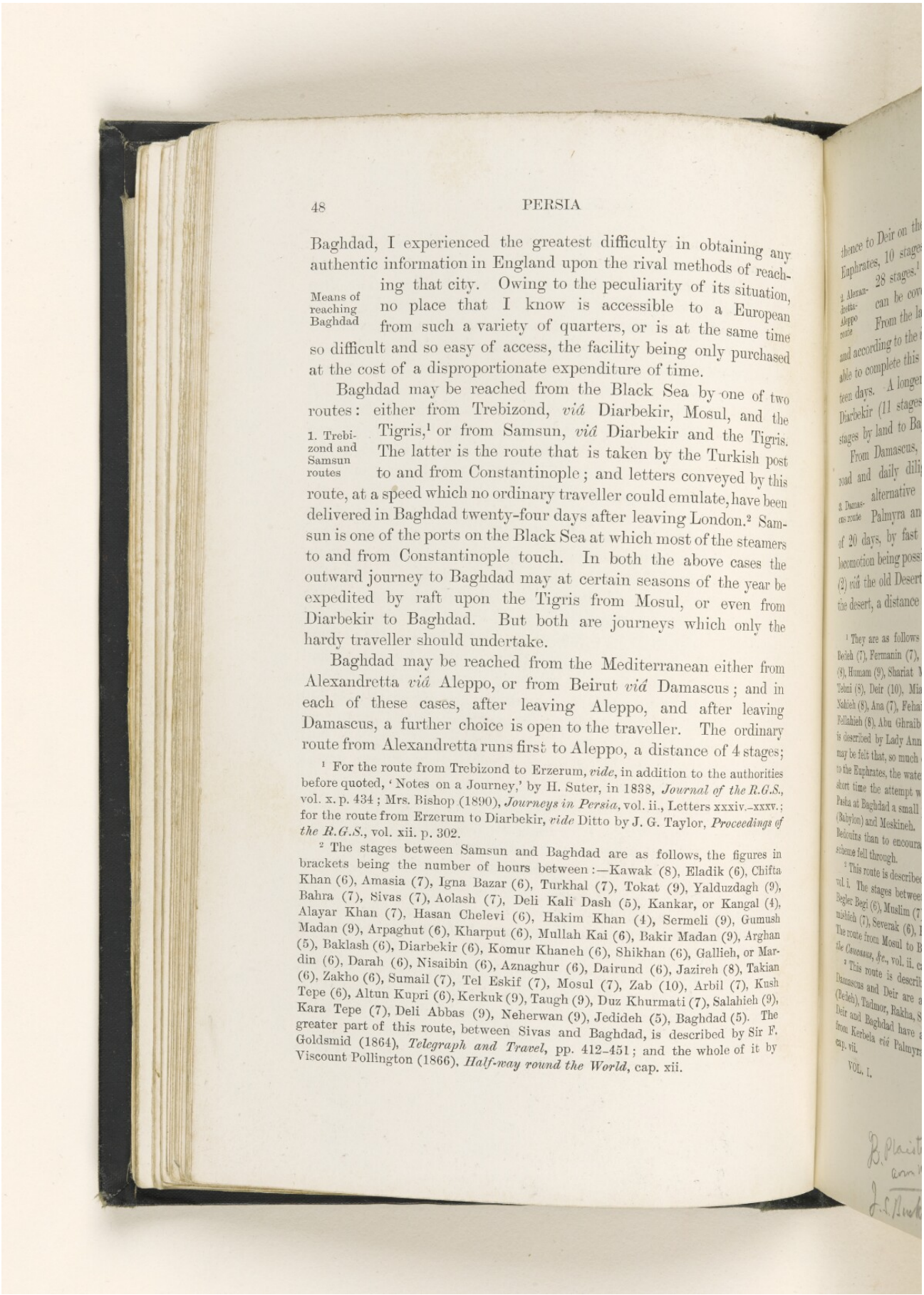
X. Mohammerah-Teheran route

The risks and *désagréments* of this route, which are not inconsiderable, are likely before long to be obviated by the creation of a new avenue of entry into Persia from a point somewhat further to the west upon the southern coast line. Just as the aggrandisement of Russia upon the north-eastern borders of Persia has resulted in the construction of the Ashkabad-Kuchan road, already alluded to, so the predominance of British influence in the south is likely to lead to the construction of a new road from the Karun River, *viâ* Ahwaz, Shushter, Dizful, Khorremabad, and Burujird, to Teheran. A concession has been procured by the Imperial Bank of Persia, for the authorised execution of this enterprise, which was commenced in the autumn of 1890; and, should it be successfully completed, we may find that the stream of future travel is largely diverted from the Bushire line to one that will possess the advantage of being shorter by 250 miles from the point of debarkation to the capital. More about this, too, will be said elsewhere. For the present the line thus sketched cannot be considered as practicable for travellers, nor be recommended to the stranger.

XI. Baghdad-Teheran route

The circuit which has already brought my readers to the furthest extremity of the Persian Gulf, and to the outlet of the Tigris and Euphrates does not require to be greatly extended in order to land them at Baghdad, which, it may surprise many at home to hear, is one of the most interesting points of departure for the Persian frontier and interior. Not only is there a considerable movement of trade into and from Persia in this direction, but some of the most notable Persian cities and monuments of antiquity can be visited from this quarter, and, it may almost be said, from this alone. Let me first state, therefore, the various means of reaching Baghdad, and then briefly sketch the route from thence across the Persian border.

Some years ago, when I was first contemplating a visit to





Means of reaching Baghdad

Baghdad, I experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining any authentic information in England upon the rival methods of reaching that city. Owing to the peculiarity of its situation, no place that I know is accessible to a European from such a variety of quarters, or is at the same time so difficult and so easy of access, the facility being only purchased at the cost of a disproportionate expenditure of time.

1. Trebizond and Samsun routes

Baghdad may be reached from the Black Sea by one of two routes: either from Trebizond, *viâ* Diarbekir, Mosul, and the Tigris,[1] or from Samsun, *viâ* Diarbekir and the Tigris. The latter is the route that is taken by the Turkish post to and from Constantinople; and letters conveyed by this route, at a speed which no ordinary traveller could emulate, have been delivered in Baghdad twenty-four days after leaving London.[2] Samsun is one of the ports on the Black Sea at which most of the steamers to and from Constantinople touch. In both the above cases the outward journey to Baghdad may at certain seasons of the year be expedited by raft upon the Tigris from Mosul, or even from Diarbekir to Baghdad. But both are journeys which only the hardy traveller should undertake.

Baghdad may be reached from the Mediterranean either from Alexandretta *viâ* Aleppo, or from Beirut *viâ* Damascus; and in each of these cases, after leaving Aleppo, and after leaving Damascus, a further choice is open to the traveller. The ordinary route from Alexandretta runs first to Aleppo, a distance of 4 stages;

[1] For the route from Trebizond to Erzerum, *vide*, in addition to the authorities before quoted, 'Notes on a Journey,' by H. Suter, in 1838, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. x. p. 434; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii., Letters xxxiv.–xxxv.; for the route from Erzerum to Diarbekir, *vide* Ditto by J. G. Taylor, *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xii. p. 302.

[2] The stages between Samsun and Baghdad are as follows, the figures in brackets being the number of hours between:—Kawak (8), Eladik (6), Chifta Khan (6), Amasia (7), Igna Bazar (6), Turkhal (7), Tokat (9), Yalduzdagh (9), Bahra (7), Sivas (7), Aolash (7), Deli Kali Dash (5), Kankar, or Kangal (4), Alayar Khan (7), Hasan Chelevi (6), Hakim Khan (4), Sermeli (9), Gumush Madan (9), Arpaghut (6), Kharput (6), Mullah Kai (6), Bakir Madan (9), Arghan (5), Baklash (6), Diarbekir (6), Komur Khaneh (6), Shikhan (6), Gallieh, or Mardin (6), Darah (6), Nisaibin (6), Aznaghur (6), Dairund (6), Jazireh (8), Takian (6), Zakho (6), Sumail (7), Tel Eskif (7), Mosul (7), Zab (10), Arbil (7), Kush Tepe (6), Altun Kupri (6), Kerkuk (9), Taugh (9), Duz Khurmati (7), Salahieh (9), Kara Tepe (7), Deli Abbas (9), Neherwan (9), Jedideh (5), Baghdad (5). The greater part of this route, between Sivas and Baghdad, is described by Sir F. Goldsmid (1864), *Telegraph and Travel*, pp. 412–451; and the whole of it by Viscount Pollington (1866), *Half-way round the World*, cap. xii.



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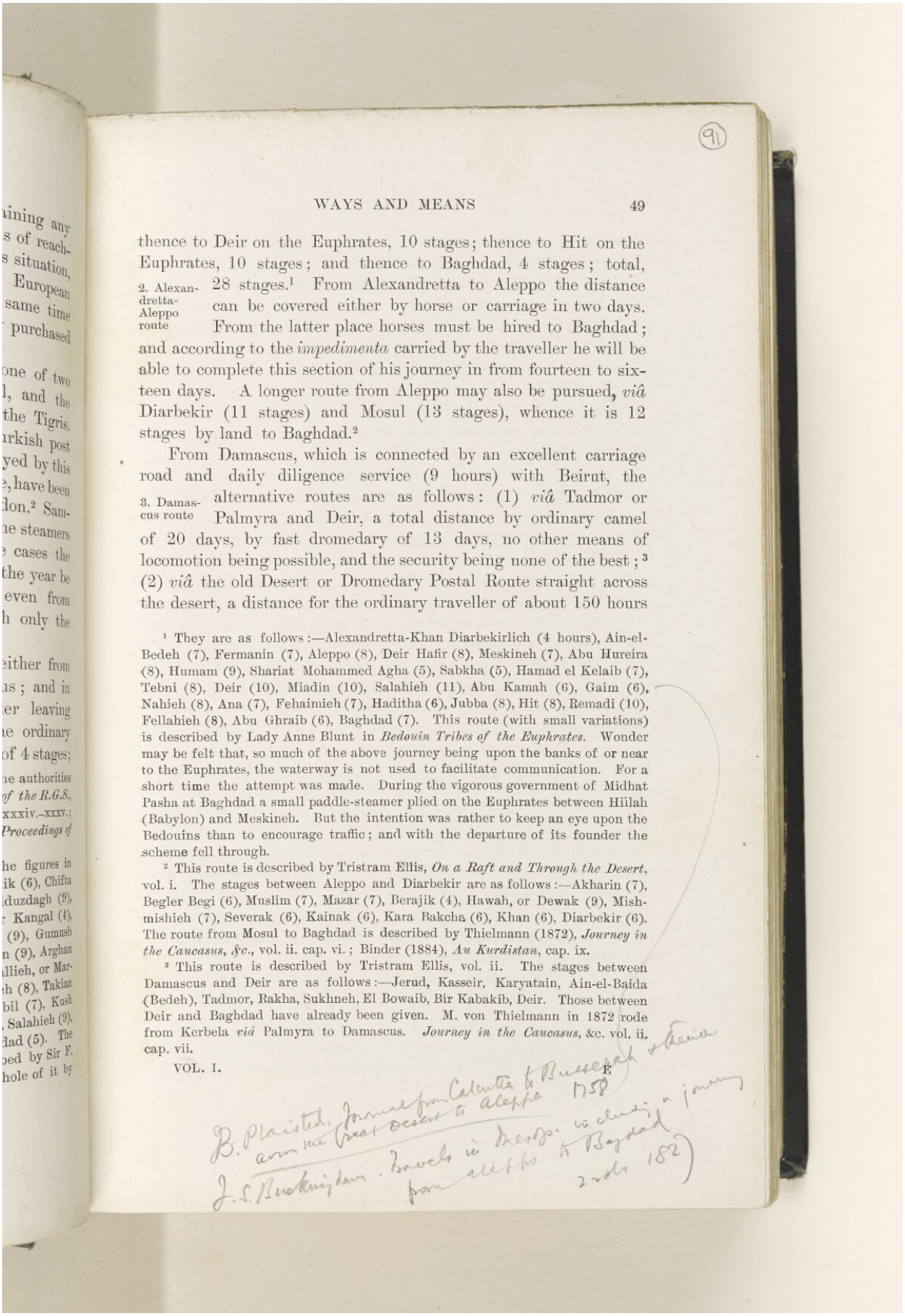



thence to Deir on the Euphrates, 10 stages; thence to Hit on the Euphrates, 10 stages; and thence to Baghdad, 4 stages; total, 28 stages.[1] From Alexandretta to Aleppo the distance can be covered either by horse or carriage in two days. From the latter place horses must be hired to Baghdad; and according to the *impedimenta* carried by the traveller he will be able to complete this section of his journey in from fourteen to sixteen days. A longer route from Aleppo may also be pursued, *viâ* Diarbekir (11 stages) and Mosul (13 stages), whence it is 12 stages by land to Baghdad.[2]

2. Alexandretta-Aleppo route

From Damascus, which is connected by an excellent carriage road and daily diligence service (9 hours) with Beirut, the alternative routes are as follows: (1) *viâ* Tadmor or Palmyra and Deir, a total distance by ordinary camel of 20 days, by fast dromedary of 13 days, no other means of locomotion being possible, and the security being none of the best;[3] (2) *viâ* the old Desert or Dromedary Postal Route straight across the desert, a distance for the ordinary traveller of about 150 hours

3. Damascus route

[1] They are as follows:—Alexandretta-Khan Diarbekirlich (4 hours), Ain-el-Bedeh (7), Fermanin (7), Aleppo (8), Deir Hafir (8), Meskineh (7), Abu Hureira (8), Humam (9), Shariat Mohammed Agha (5), Sabkha (5), Hamad el Kelaib (7), Tebni (8), Deir (10), Miadin (10), Salahieh (11), Abu Kamah (6), Gaim (6), Nahieh (8), Ana (7), Fehaimieh (7), Haditha (6), Jubba (8), Hit (8), Remadi (10), Fellahieh (8), Abu Ghraib (6), Baghdad (7). This route (with small variations) is described by Lady Anne Blunt in *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates*. Wonder may be felt that, so much of the above journey being upon the banks of or near to the Euphrates, the waterway is not used to facilitate communication. For a short time the attempt was made. During the vigorous government of Midhat Pasha at Baghdad a small paddle-steamer plied on the Euphrates between Hillah (Babylon) and Meskineh. But the intention was rather to keep an eye upon the Bedouins than to encourage traffic; and with the departure of its founder the scheme fell through.

[2] This route is described by Tristram Ellis, *On a Raft and Through the Desert*, vol. i. The stages between Aleppo and Diarbekir are as follows:—Akharin (7), Begler Begi (6), Muslim (7), Mazar (7), Berajik (4), Hawah, or Dewak (9), Mishmishieh (7), Severak (6), Kainak (6), Kara Bakcha (6), Khan (6), Diarbekir (6). The route from Mosul to Baghdad is described by Thielmann (1872), *Journey in the Caucasus, &c.*, vol. ii. cap. vi.; Binder (1884), *Au Kurdistan*, cap. ix.

[3] This route is described by Tristram Ellis, vol. ii. The stages between Damascus and Deir are as follows:—Jerud, Kasseir, Karyatain, Ain-el-Baida (Bedeh), Tadmor, Rakha, Sukhneh, El Bowaib, Bir Kabakib, Deir. Those between Deir and Baghdad have already been given. M. von Thielmann in 1872 rode from Kerbela *viâ* Palmyra to Damascus. *Journey in the Caucasus*, &c. vol. ii. cap. vii.



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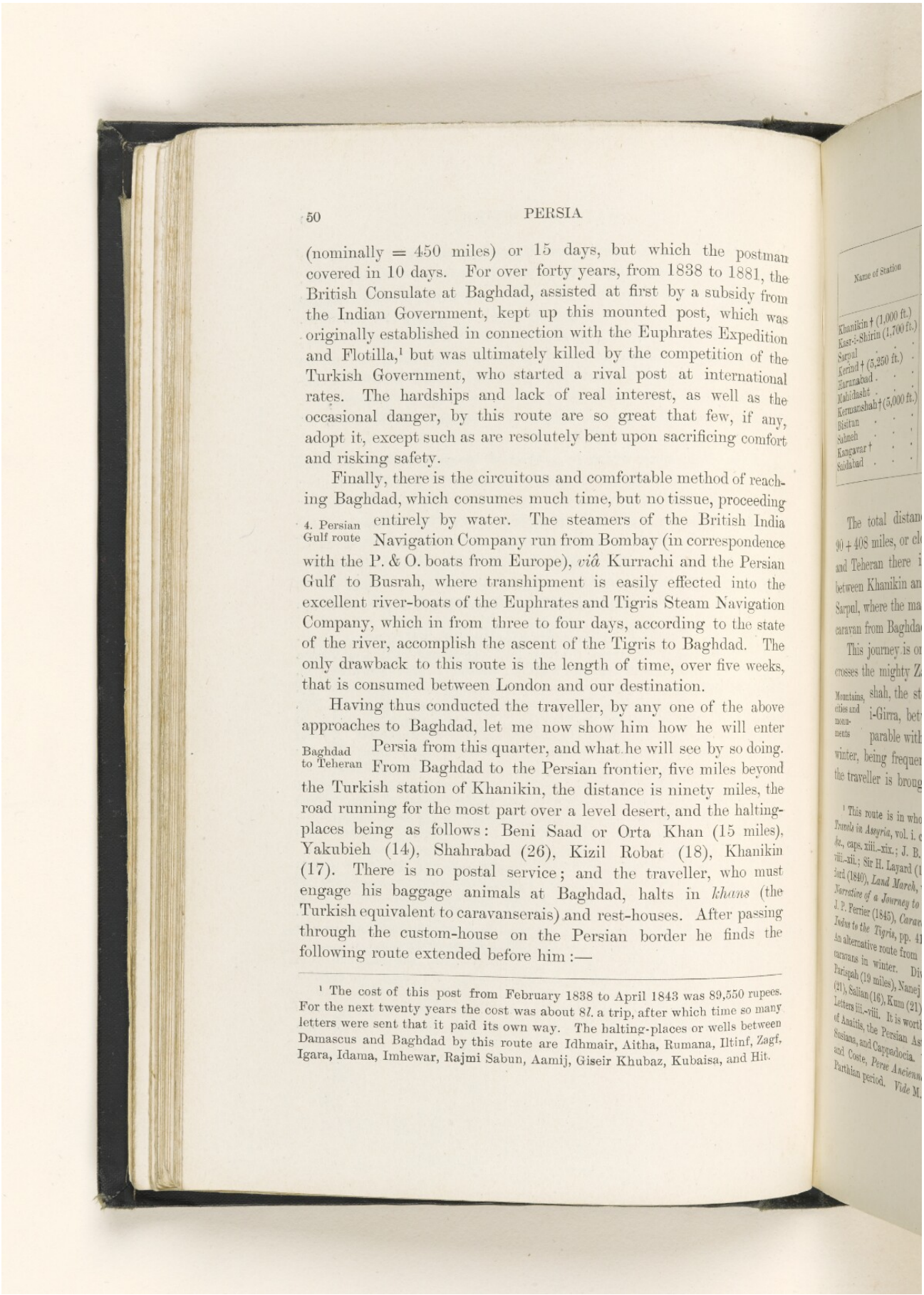



(nominally = 450 miles) or 15 days, but which the postman covered in 10 days. For over forty years, from 1838 to 1881, the British Consulate at Baghdad, assisted at first by a subsidy from the Indian Government, kept up this mounted post, which was originally established in connection with the Euphrates Expedition and Flotilla,[1] but was ultimately killed by the competition of the Turkish Government, who started a rival post at international rates. The hardships and lack of real interest, as well as the occasional danger, by this route are so great that few, if any, adopt it, except such as are resolutely bent upon sacrificing comfort and risking safety.

Finally, there is the circuitous and comfortable method of reaching Baghdad, which consumes much time, but no tissue, proceeding entirely by water. The steamers of the British India Navigation Company run from Bombay (in correspondence with the P. & O. boats from Europe), *viâ* Kurrachi and the Persian Gulf to Busrah, where transhipment is easily effected into the excellent river-boats of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which in from three to four days, according to the state of the river, accomplish the ascent of the Tigris to Baghdad. The only drawback to this route is the length of time, over five weeks, that is consumed between London and our destination.

4. Persian Gulf route

Having thus conducted the traveller, by any one of the above approaches to Baghdad, let me now show him how he will enter Persia from this quarter, and what he will see by so doing. From Baghdad to the Persian frontier, five miles beyond the Turkish station of Khanikin, the distance is ninety miles, the road running for the most part over a level desert, and the halting-places being as follows: Beni Saad or Orta Khan (15 miles), Yakubieh (14), Shahrabad (26), Kizil Robat (18), Khanikin (17). There is no postal service; and the traveller, who must engage his baggage animals at Baghdad, halts in *khans* (the Turkish equivalent to caravanserais) and rest-houses. After passing through the custom-house on the Persian border he finds the following route extended before him:—

Baghdad to Teheran

[1] The cost of this post from February 1838 to April 1843 was 89,550 rupees. For the next twenty years the cost was about 8*l.* a trip, after which time so many letters were sent that it paid its own way. The halting-places or wells between Damascus and Baghdad by this route are Idhmair, Aitha, Rumana, Iltinf, Zagf, Igara, Idama, Imhewar, Rajmi Sabun, Aamij, Giseir Khubaz, Kubaisa, and Hit.

| Name of Station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles | Name of Station | Distance in *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khanikin † (1,000 ft.) | | | Hamadan † . | 6 | 25 |
| Kasr-i-Shirin (1,700 ft.) | 6 | 18 | Mila Gird . | 7 | 25 |
| Sarpul . . . | 5 | 18 | Zerreh . . | 4 | 16 |
| Kerind † (5,250 ft.) . | 8 | 29 | Nuvaran † . | 9 | 32 |
| Harunabad . . . | 6 | 20 | Shamiran . | 4 | 14 |
| Mahidasht . . . | 6 | 22 | Khushkek . | 5 | 19 |
| Kermanshah † (5,000 ft.) | 4 | 14 | Khanabad † . | 6 | 22 |
| Bisitun . . . | 6 | 21 | Robat Kerim | 8 | 32 |
| Sahneh . . . | 4 | 16 | Teheran (3,800 ft.) | 7 | 28 |
| Kangavar † . . | 5 | 18 | | | |
| Saidabad . . . | 6 | 23 | Total . . | 112 | 412 |

† = Telegraph Stations.

The total distance between Baghdad and Teheran is thus 90 + 408 miles, or close upon 500 miles.[1] Between Kermanshah and Teheran there is a *chapar* service and *chapar-khanehs*; but between Khanikin and Kermanshah there is only one post station, Sarpul, where the mail changes horses. It is accordingly usual to caravan from Baghdad to Kermanshah.

This journey is one of threefold and exceptional interest. It crosses the mighty Zagros range between Khanikin and Kermanshah, the steepest part of the pass, known as the Teng-i-Girra, between Sarpul and Kerind, being fully comparable with the *kotals* of the Bushire-Shiraz line, and, in winter, being frequently impassable from snow. By this ascent the traveller is brought up from the level plains of Assyria and

Mountains, cities and monuments

[1] This route is in whole or in part described by J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels in Assyria*, vol. i. caps. i.–ix.; Hon. G. Keppel (1824), *Personal Narrative, &c.*, caps. xiii.–xix.; J. B. Fraser (1835), *Travels in Koordistan*, vol. ii. Letters viii.–xii.; Sir H. Layard (1840), *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 201–252; E. L. Mitford (1840), *Land March*, vol. i. cap. x., vol. ii. cap. i.; Com. Felix Jones (1844), *Narrative of a Journey to the Frontier of Turkey and Persia*, Bombay Records; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 1–50; H. W. Bellew (1872), *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 413–469; H. Binder (1884), *Au Kurdistan*, caps. xi. xii. An alternative route from Baghdad to Teheran *viâ* Kum is usually followed by caravans in winter. Diverging at Kangavar, it pursues the following line: Parispah (19 miles), Nanej (30), Dizabad (25), Saruk (19), Siahwashan (27), Jairud (21), Salian (16), Kum (21). *Vide* Mrs. Bishop's *Journeys in Persia* (1890), vol. i. Letters iii.–viii. It is worthy of mention that at Kangavar are the ruins of a temple of Anaitis, the Persian Astarte, the worship of whom was wide-spread in Media, Susiana, and Cappadocia. *Vide* C. Texier, *L'Arménie, &c.*, plates 62–8, and Flandin and Coste, *Perse Ancienne*, vol. i. plates 20–3. The temple is attributed to the Parthian period. *Vide* M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, part v. pp. 7–11.



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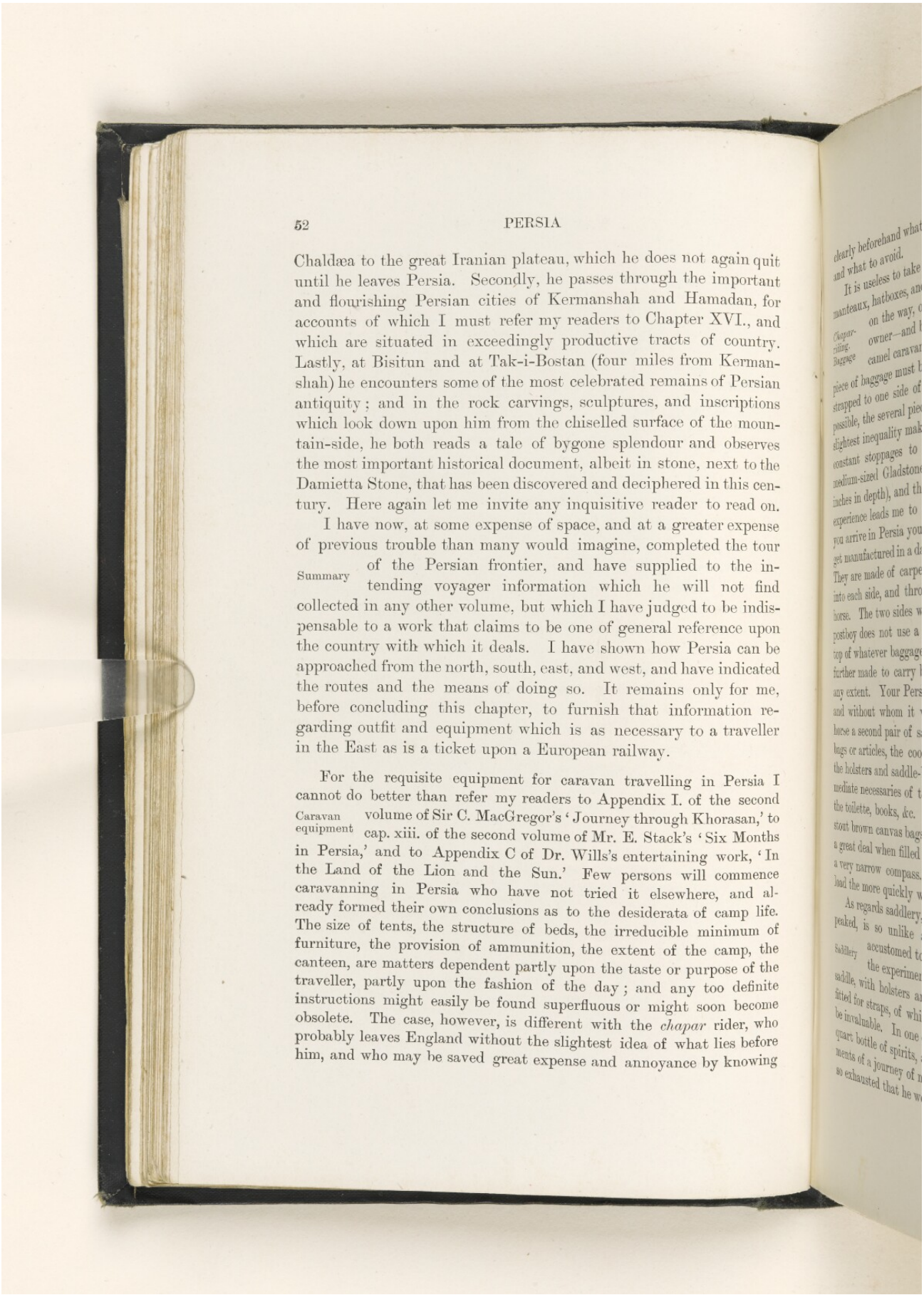




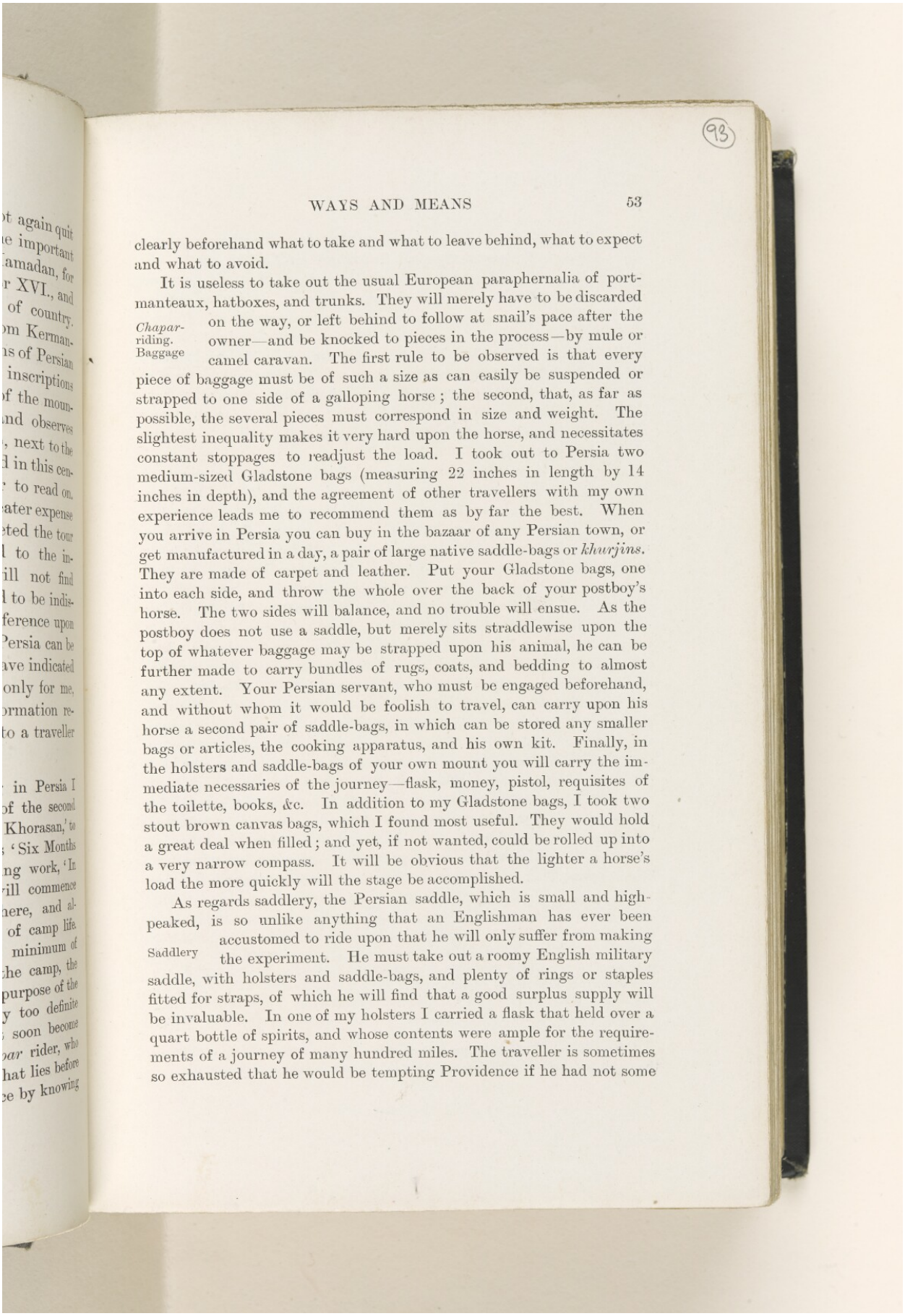
Chaldæa to the great Iranian plateau, which he does not again quit until he leaves Persia. Secondly, he passes through the important and flourishing Persian cities of Kermanshah and Hamadan, for accounts of which I must refer my readers to Chapter XVI., and which are situated in exceedingly productive tracts of country. Lastly, at Bisitun and at Tak-i-Bostan (four miles from Kermanshah) he encounters some of the most celebrated remains of Persian antiquity; and in the rock carvings, sculptures, and inscriptions which look down upon him from the chiselled surface of the mountain-side, he both reads a tale of bygone splendour and observes the most important historical document, albeit in stone, next to the Damietta Stone, that has been discovered and deciphered in this century. Here again let me invite any inquisitive reader to read on.

I have now, at some expense of space, and at a greater expense of previous trouble than many would imagine, completed the tour of the Persian frontier, and have supplied to the intending voyager information which he will not find collected in any other volume, but which I have judged to be indispensable to a work that claims to be one of general reference upon the country with which it deals. I have shown how Persia can be approached from the north, south, east, and west, and have indicated the routes and the means of doing so. It remains only for me, before concluding this chapter, to furnish that information regarding outfit and equipment which is as necessary to a traveller in the East as is a ticket upon a European railway.

Summary

For the requisite equipment for caravan travelling in Persia I cannot do better than refer my readers to Appendix I. of the second volume of Sir C. MacGregor's 'Journey through Khorasan,' to cap. xiii. of the second volume of Mr. E. Stack's 'Six Months in Persia,' and to Appendix C of Dr. Wills's entertaining work, 'In the Land of the Lion and the Sun.' Few persons will commence caravanning in Persia who have not tried it elsewhere, and already formed their own conclusions as to the desiderata of camp life. The size of tents, the structure of beds, the irreducible minimum of furniture, the provision of ammunition, the extent of the camp, the canteen, are matters dependent partly upon the taste or purpose of the traveller, partly upon the fashion of the day; and any too definite instructions might easily be found superfluous or might soon become obsolete. The case, however, is different with the *chapar* rider, who probably leaves England without the slightest idea of what lies before him, and who may be saved great expense and annoyance by knowing

Caravan equipment





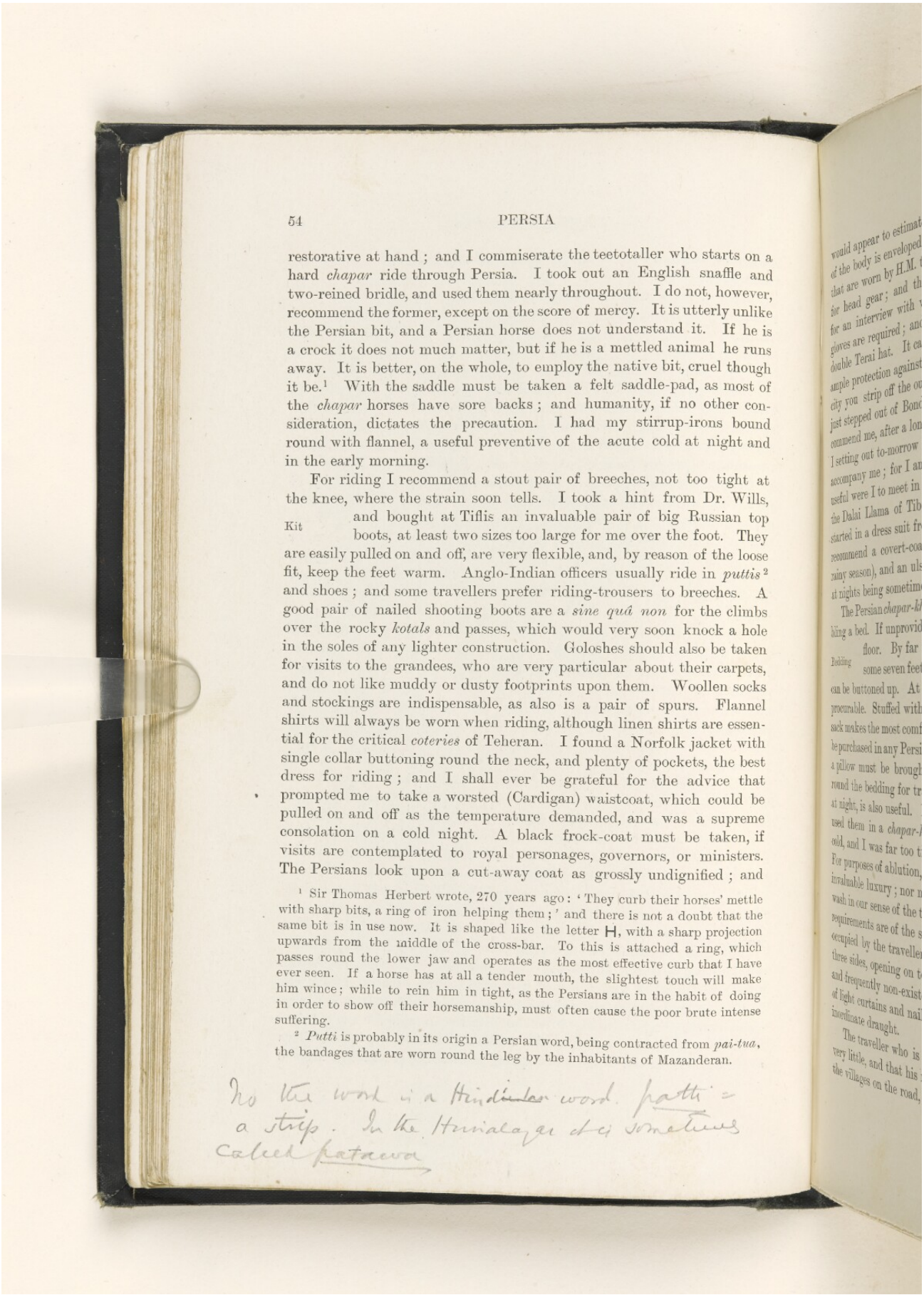
clearly beforehand what to take and what to leave behind, what to expect and what to avoid.

It is useless to take out the usual European paraphernalia of portmanteaux, hatboxes, and trunks. They will merely have to be discarded on the way, or left behind to follow at snail's pace after the owner—and be knocked to pieces in the process—by mule or camel caravan. The first rule to be observed is that every piece of baggage must be of such a size as can easily be suspended or strapped to one side of a galloping horse; the second, that, as far as possible, the several pieces must correspond in size and weight. The slightest inequality makes it very hard upon the horse, and necessitates constant stoppages to readjust the load. I took out to Persia two medium-sized Gladstone bags (measuring 22 inches in length by 14 inches in depth), and the agreement of other travellers with my own experience leads me to recommend them as by far the best. When you arrive in Persia you can buy in the bazaar of any Persian town, or get manufactured in a day, a pair of large native saddle-bags or *khurjins*. They are made of carpet and leather. Put your Gladstone bags, one into each side, and throw the whole over the back of your postboy's horse. The two sides will balance, and no trouble will ensue. As the postboy does not use a saddle, but merely sits straddlewise upon the top of whatever baggage may be strapped upon his animal, he can be further made to carry bundles of rugs, coats, and bedding to almost any extent. Your Persian servant, who must be engaged beforehand, and without whom it would be foolish to travel, can carry upon his horse a second pair of saddle-bags, in which can be stored any smaller bags or articles, the cooking apparatus, and his own kit. Finally, in the holsters and saddle-bags of your own mount you will carry the immediate necessaries of the journey—flask, money, pistol, requisites of the toilette, books, &c. In addition to my Gladstone bags, I took two stout brown canvas bags, which I found most useful. They would hold a great deal when filled; and yet, if not wanted, could be rolled up into a very narrow compass. It will be obvious that the lighter a horse's load the more quickly will the stage be accomplished.

*Chaparriding.* Baggage

As regards saddlery, the Persian saddle, which is small and high-peaked, is so unlike anything that an Englishman has ever been accustomed to ride upon that he will only suffer from making the experiment. He must take out a roomy English military saddle, with holsters and saddle-bags, and plenty of rings or staples fitted for straps, of which he will find that a good surplus supply will be invaluable. In one of my holsters I carried a flask that held over a quart bottle of spirits, and whose contents were ample for the requirements of a journey of many hundred miles. The traveller is sometimes so exhausted that he would be tempting Providence if he had not some

Saddlery





restorative at hand; and I commiserate the teetotaller who starts on a hard *chapar* ride through Persia. I took out an English snaffle and two-reined bridle, and used them nearly throughout. I do not, however, recommend the former, except on the score of mercy. It is utterly unlike the Persian bit, and a Persian horse does not understand it. If he is a crock it does not much matter, but if he is a mettled animal he runs away. It is better, on the whole, to employ the native bit, cruel though it be.[1] With the saddle must be taken a felt saddle-pad, as most of the *chapar* horses have sore backs; and humanity, if no other consideration, dictates the precaution. I had my stirrup-irons bound round with flannel, a useful preventive of the acute cold at night and in the early morning.

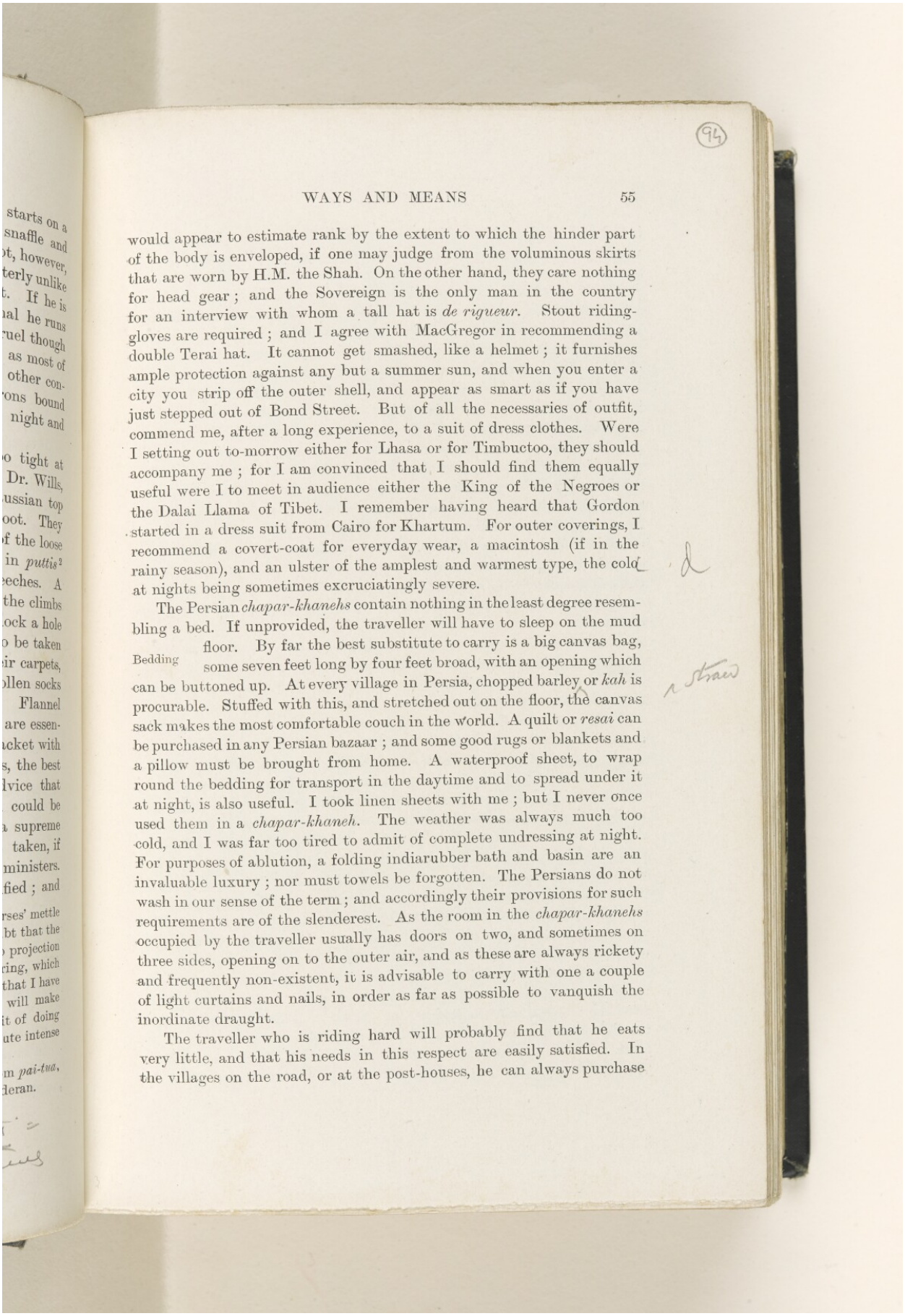
For riding I recommend a stout pair of breeches, not too tight at the knee, where the strain soon tells. I took a hint from Dr. Wills, and bought at Tiflis an invaluable pair of big Russian top boots, at least two sizes too large for me over the foot. They are easily pulled on and off, are very flexible, and, by reason of the loose fit, keep the feet warm. Anglo-Indian officers usually ride in *puttis*[2] and shoes; and some travellers prefer riding-trousers to breeches. A good pair of nailed shooting boots are a *sine quâ non* for the climbs over the rocky *kotals* and passes, which would very soon knock a hole in the soles of any lighter construction. Goloshes should also be taken for visits to the grandees, who are very particular about their carpets, and do not like muddy or dusty footprints upon them. Woollen socks and stockings are indispensable, as also is a pair of spurs. Flannel shirts will always be worn when riding, although linen shirts are essential for the critical *coteries* of Teheran. I found a Norfolk jacket with single collar buttoning round the neck, and plenty of pockets, the best dress for riding; and I shall ever be grateful for the advice that prompted me to take a worsted (Cardigan) waistcoat, which could be pulled on and off as the temperature demanded, and was a supreme consolation on a cold night. A black frock-coat must be taken, if visits are contemplated to royal personages, governors, or ministers. The Persians look upon a cut-away coat as grossly undignified; and

Kit

[1] Sir Thomas Herbert wrote, 270 years ago: 'They curb their horses' mettle with sharp bits, a ring of iron helping them;' and there is not a doubt that the same bit is in use now. It is shaped like the letter H, with a sharp projection upwards from the middle of the cross-bar. To this is attached a ring, which passes round the lower jaw and operates as the most effective curb that I have ever seen. If a horse has at all a tender mouth, the slightest touch will make him wince; while to rein him in tight, as the Persians are in the habit of doing in order to show off their horsemanship, must often cause the poor brute intense suffering.

[2] *Putti* is probably in its origin a Persian word, being contracted from *pai-tua*, the bandages that are worn round the leg by the inhabitants of Mazanderan.

No the word is a Hindustan word. patti = a strip. In the Himalayas it is sometimes called patawa



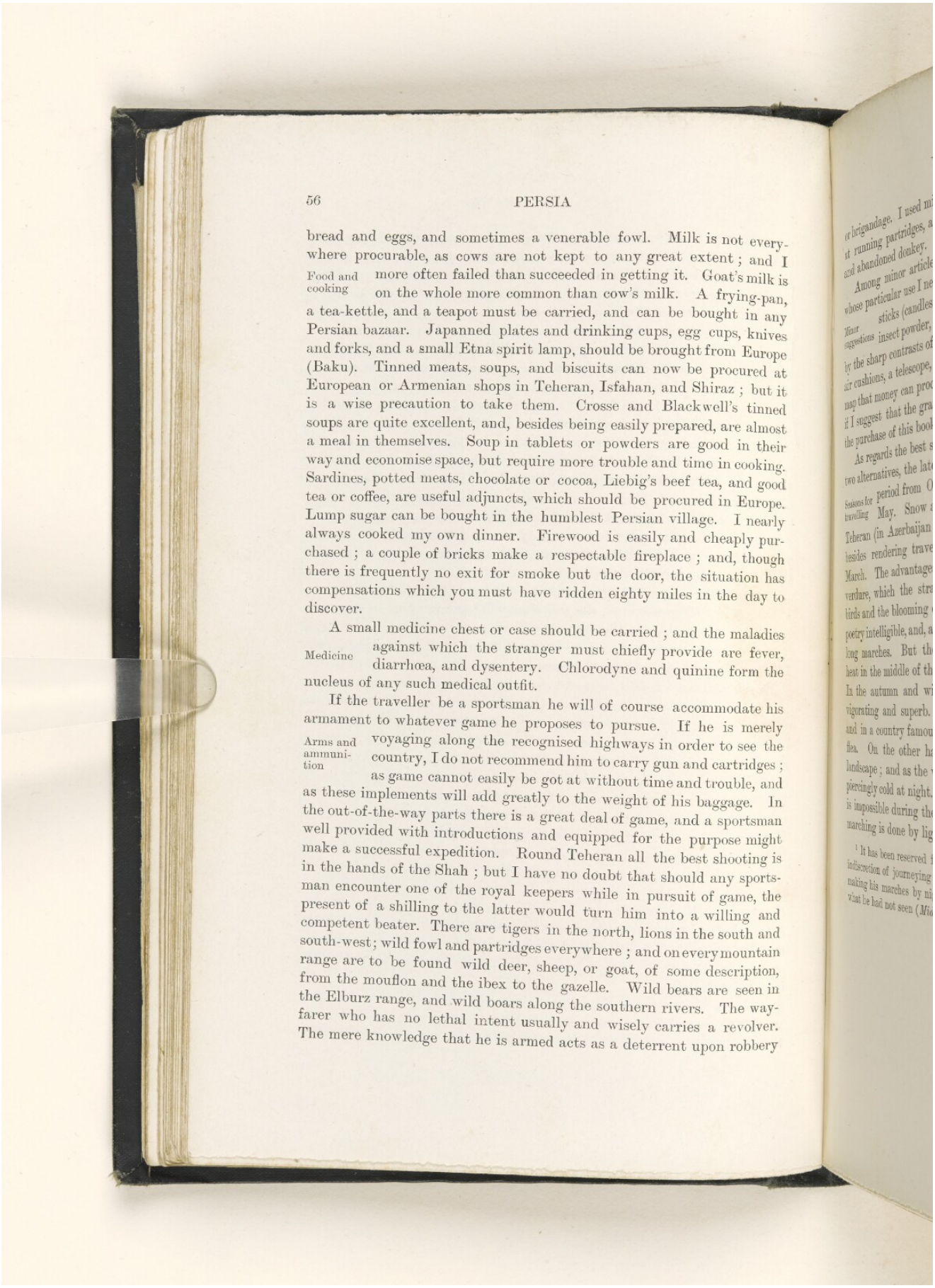


would appear to estimate rank by the extent to which the hinder part of the body is enveloped, if one may judge from the voluminous skirts that are worn by H.M. the Shah. On the other hand, they care nothing for head gear; and the Sovereign is the only man in the country for an interview with whom a tall hat is *de rigueur*. Stout riding-gloves are required; and I agree with MacGregor in recommending a double Terai hat. It cannot get smashed, like a helmet; it furnishes ample protection against any but a summer sun, and when you enter a city you strip off the outer shell, and appear as smart as if you have just stepped out of Bond Street. But of all the necessaries of outfit, commend me, after a long experience, to a suit of dress clothes. Were I setting out to-morrow either for Lhasa or for Timbuctoo, they should accompany me; for I am convinced that I should find them equally useful were I to meet in audience either the King of the Negroes or the Dalai Llama of Tibet. I remember having heard that Gordon started in a dress suit from Cairo for Khartum. For outer coverings, I recommend a covert-coat for everyday wear, a macintosh (if in the rainy season), and an ulster of the amplest and warmest type, the cold at nights being sometimes excruciatingly severe.

The Persian *chapar-khanehs* contain nothing in the least degree resembling a bed. If unprovided, the traveller will have to sleep on the mud floor. By far the best substitute to carry is a big canvas bag, some seven feet long by four feet broad, with an opening which can be buttoned up. At every village in Persia, chopped barley or *kah* is procurable. Stuffed with this, and stretched out on the floor, the canvas sack makes the most comfortable couch in the world. A quilt or *resai* can be purchased in any Persian bazaar; and some good rugs or blankets and a pillow must be brought from home. A waterproof sheet, to wrap round the bedding for transport in the daytime and to spread under it at night, is also useful. I took linen sheets with me; but I never once used them in a *chapar-khaneh*. The weather was always much too cold, and I was far too tired to admit of complete undressing at night. For purposes of ablution, a folding indiarubber bath and basin are an invaluable luxury; nor must towels be forgotten. The Persians do not wash in our sense of the term; and accordingly their provisions for such requirements are of the slenderest. As the room in the *chapar-khanehs* occupied by the traveller usually has doors on two, and sometimes on three sides, opening on to the outer air, and as these are always rickety and frequently non-existent, it is advisable to carry with one a couple of light curtains and nails, in order as far as possible to vanquish the inordinate draught.

Bedding

The traveller who is riding hard will probably find that he eats very little, and that his needs in this respect are easily satisfied. In the villages on the road, or at the post-houses, he can always purchase





bread and eggs, and sometimes a venerable fowl. Milk is not everywhere procurable, as cows are not kept to any great extent; and I more often failed than succeeded in getting it. Goat's milk is on the whole more common than cow's milk. A frying-pan, a tea-kettle, and a teapot must be carried, and can be bought in any Persian bazaar. Japanned plates and drinking cups, egg cups, knives and forks, and a small Etna spirit lamp, should be brought from Europe (Baku). Tinned meats, soups, and biscuits can now be procured at European or Armenian shops in Teheran, Isfahan, and Shiraz; but it is a wise precaution to take them. Crosse and Blackwell's tinned soups are quite excellent, and, besides being easily prepared, are almost a meal in themselves. Soup in tablets or powders are good in their way and economise space, but require more trouble and time in cooking. Sardines, potted meats, chocolate or cocoa, Liebig's beef tea, and good tea or coffee, are useful adjuncts, which should be procured in Europe. Lump sugar can be bought in the humblest Persian village. I nearly always cooked my own dinner. Firewood is easily and cheaply purchased; a couple of bricks make a respectable fireplace; and, though there is frequently no exit for smoke but the door, the situation has compensations which you must have ridden eighty miles in the day to discover.

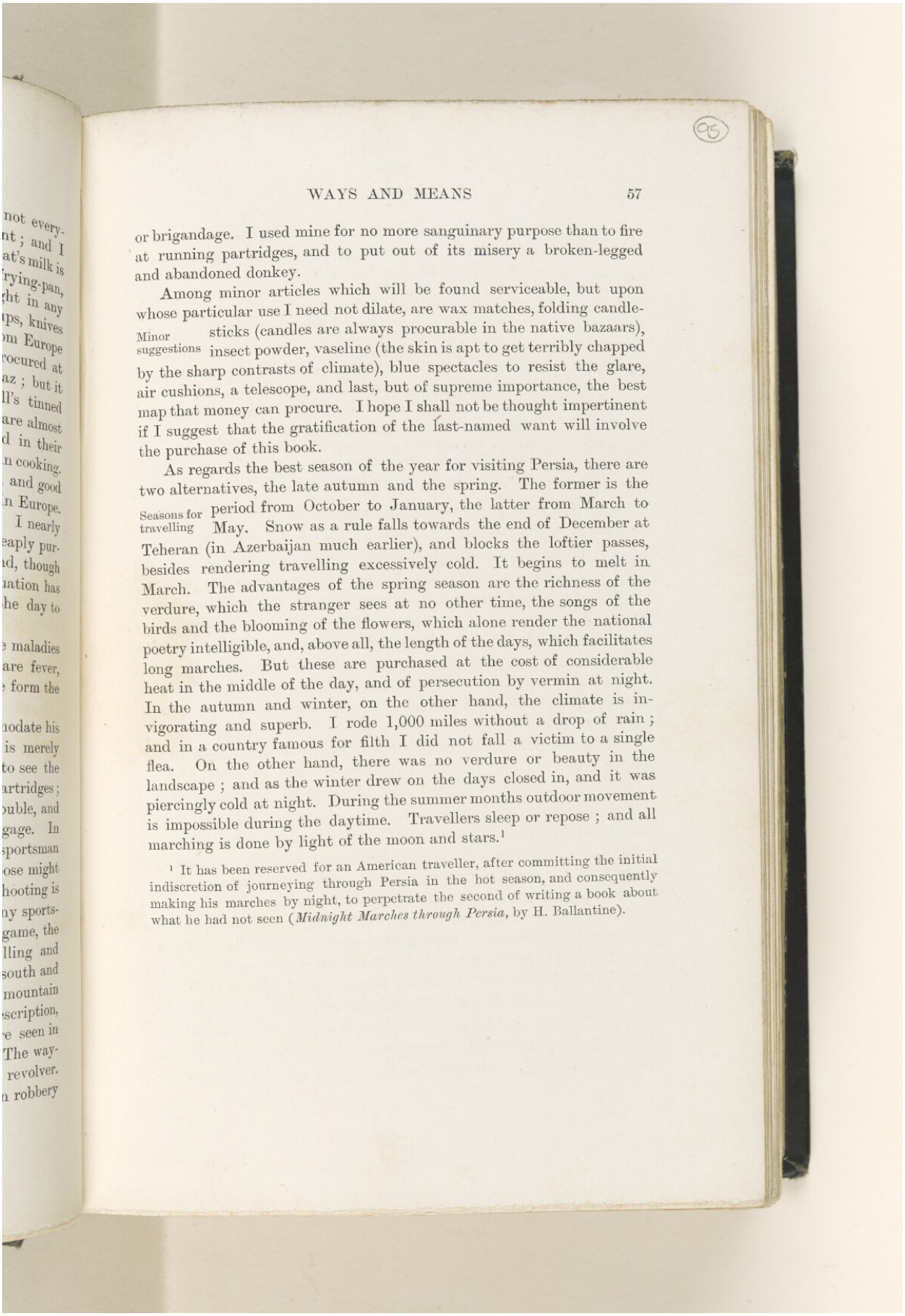
Food and cooking

A small medicine chest or case should be carried; and the maladies against which the stranger must chiefly provide are fever, diarrhœa, and dysentery. Chlorodyne and quinine form the nucleus of any such medical outfit.

Medicine

If the traveller be a sportsman he will of course accommodate his armament to whatever game he proposes to pursue. If he is merely voyaging along the recognised highways in order to see the country, I do not recommend him to carry gun and cartridges; as game cannot easily be got at without time and trouble, and as these implements will add greatly to the weight of his baggage. In the out-of-the-way parts there is a great deal of game, and a sportsman well provided with introductions and equipped for the purpose might make a successful expedition. Round Teheran all the best shooting is in the hands of the Shah; but I have no doubt that should any sportsman encounter one of the royal keepers while in pursuit of game, the present of a shilling to the latter would turn him into a willing and competent beater. There are tigers in the north, lions in the south and south-west; wild fowl and partridges everywhere; and on every mountain range are to be found wild deer, sheep, or goat, of some description, from the mouflon and the ibex to the gazelle. Wild bears are seen in the Elburz range, and wild boars along the southern rivers. The wayfarer who has no lethal intent usually and wisely carries a revolver. The mere knowledge that he is armed acts as a deterrent upon robbery

Arms and ammunition





or brigandage. I used mine for no more sanguinary purpose than to fire at running partridges, and to put out of its misery a broken-legged and abandoned donkey.

Minor suggestions

Among minor articles which will be found serviceable, but upon whose particular use I need not dilate, are wax matches, folding candle-sticks (candles are always procurable in the native bazaars), insect powder, vaseline (the skin is apt to get terribly chapped by the sharp contrasts of climate), blue spectacles to resist the glare, air cushions, a telescope, and last, but of supreme importance, the best map that money can procure. I hope I shall not be thought impertinent if I suggest that the gratification of the last-named want will involve the purchase of this book.

Seasons for travelling

As regards the best season of the year for visiting Persia, there are two alternatives, the late autumn and the spring. The former is the period from October to January, the latter from March to May. Snow as a rule falls towards the end of December at Teheran (in Azerbaijan much earlier), and blocks the loftier passes, besides rendering travelling excessively cold. It begins to melt in March. The advantages of the spring season are the richness of the verdure, which the stranger sees at no other time, the songs of the birds and the blooming of the flowers, which alone render the national poetry intelligible, and, above all, the length of the days, which facilitates long marches. But these are purchased at the cost of considerable heat in the middle of the day, and of persecution by vermin at night. In the autumn and winter, on the other hand, the climate is invigorating and superb. I rode 1,000 miles without a drop of rain; and in a country famous for filth I did not fall a victim to a single flea. On the other hand, there was no verdure or beauty in the landscape; and as the winter drew on the days closed in, and it was piercingly cold at night. During the summer months outdoor movement is impossible during the daytime. Travellers sleep or repose; and all marching is done by light of the moon and stars.[1]

[1] It has been reserved for an American traveller, after committing the initial indiscretion of journeying through Persia in the hot season, and consequently making his marches by night, to perpetrate the second of writing a book about what he had not seen (*Midnight Marches through Persia*, by H. Ballantine).

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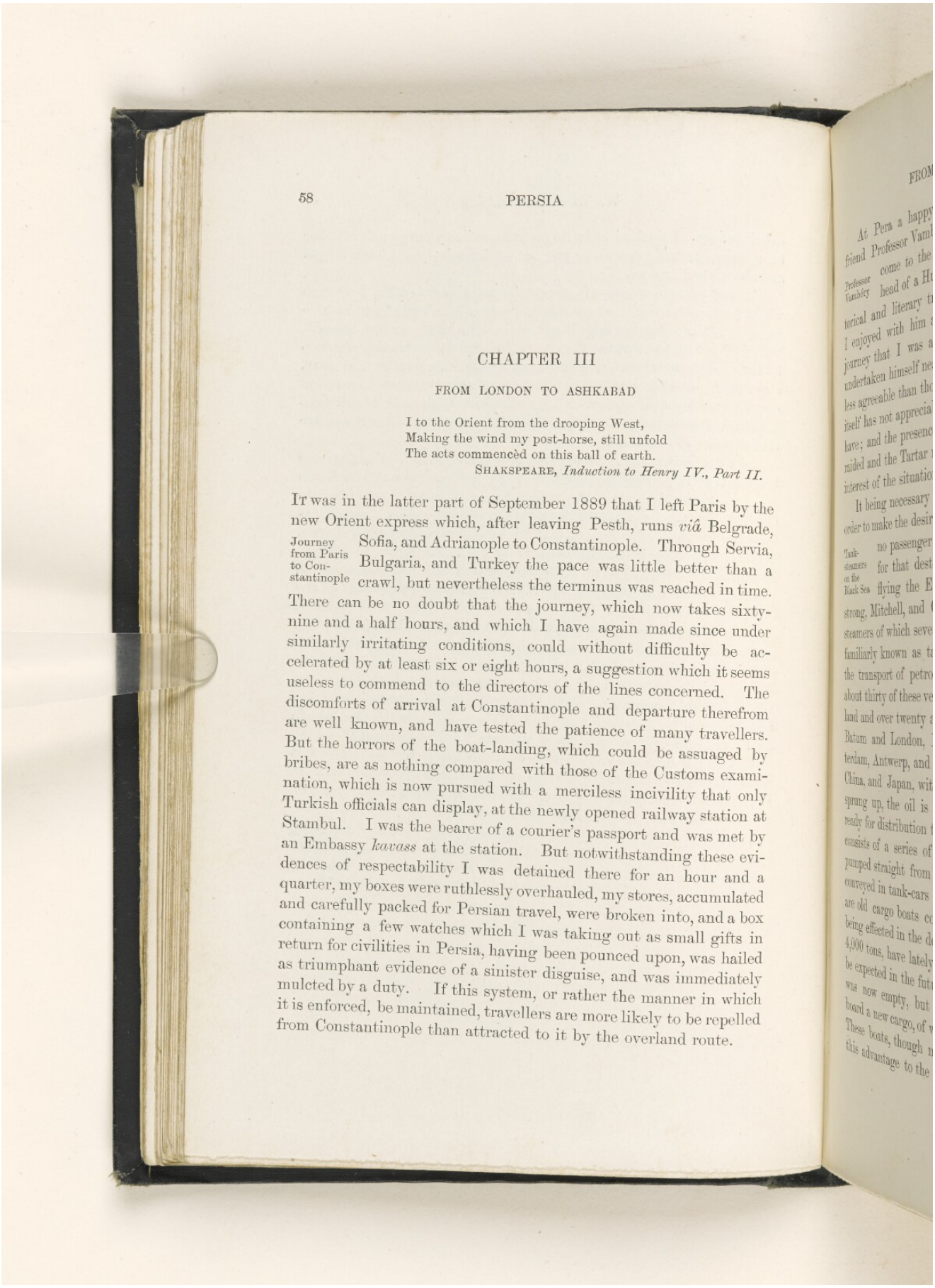




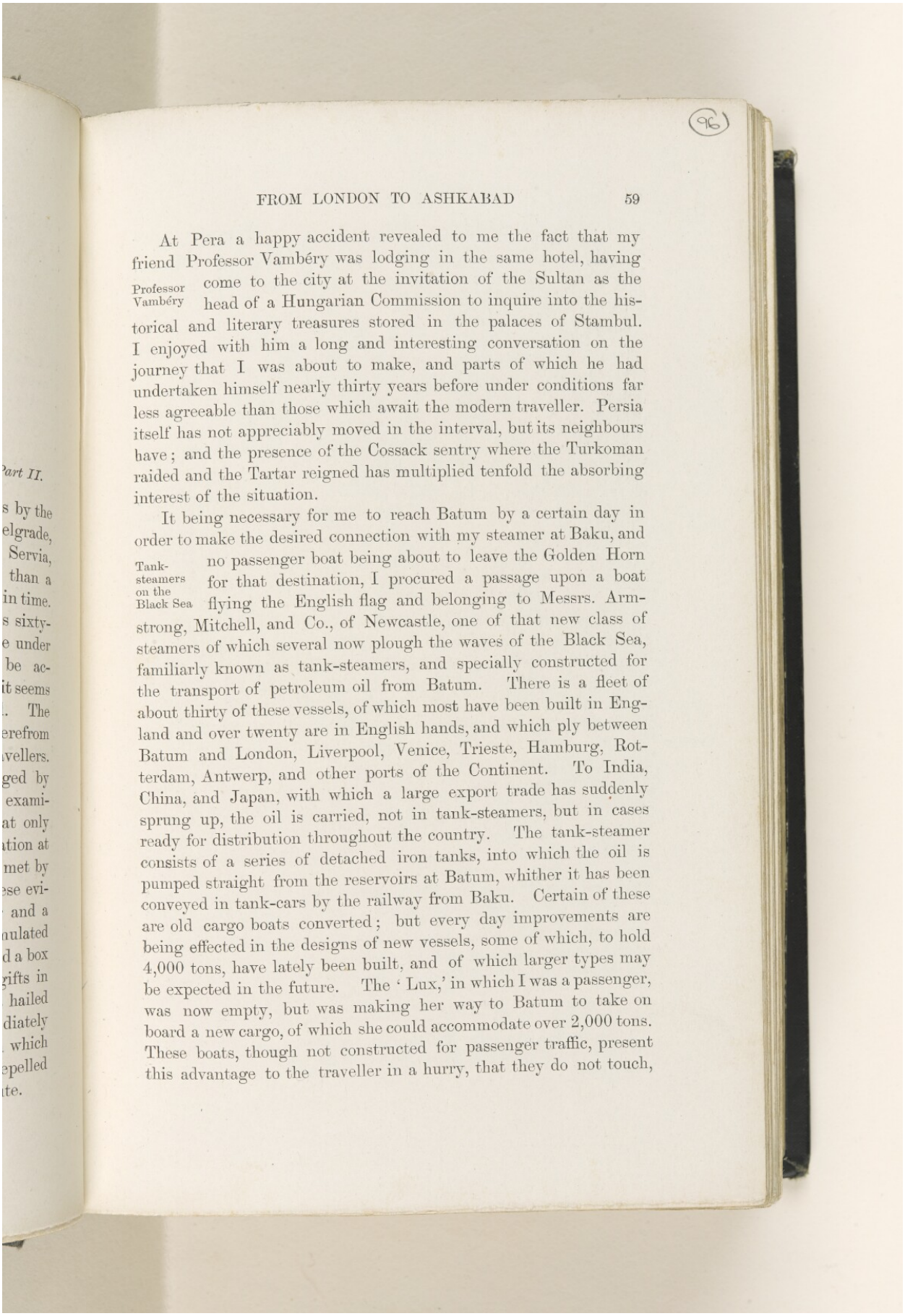
## CHAPTER III

### FROM LONDON TO ASHKABAD

I to the Orient from the drooping West,
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold
The acts commenced on this ball of earth.
SHAKSPEARE, *Induction to Henry IV., Part II.*

Journey from Paris to Constantinople

It was in the latter part of September 1889 that I left Paris by the new Orient express which, after leaving Pesth, runs *viâ* Belgrade, Sofia, and Adrianople to Constantinople. Through Servia, Bulgaria, and Turkey the pace was little better than a crawl, but nevertheless the terminus was reached in time. There can be no doubt that the journey, which now takes sixty-nine and a half hours, and which I have again made since under similarly irritating conditions, could without difficulty be accelerated by at least six or eight hours, a suggestion which it seems useless to commend to the directors of the lines concerned. The discomforts of arrival at Constantinople and departure therefrom are well known, and have tested the patience of many travellers. But the horrors of the boat-landing, which could be assuaged by bribes, are as nothing compared with those of the Customs examination, which is now pursued with a merciless incivility that only Turkish officials can display, at the newly opened railway station at Stambul. I was the bearer of a courier's passport and was met by an Embassy *kavass* at the station. But notwithstanding these evidences of respectability I was detained there for an hour and a quarter, my boxes were ruthlessly overhauled, my stores, accumulated and carefully packed for Persian travel, were broken into, and a box containing a few watches which I was taking out as small gifts in return for civilities in Persia, having been pounced upon, was hailed as triumphant evidence of a sinister disguise, and was immediately mulcted by a duty. If this system, or rather the manner in which it is enforced, be maintained, travellers are more likely to be repelled from Constantinople than attracted to it by the overland route.



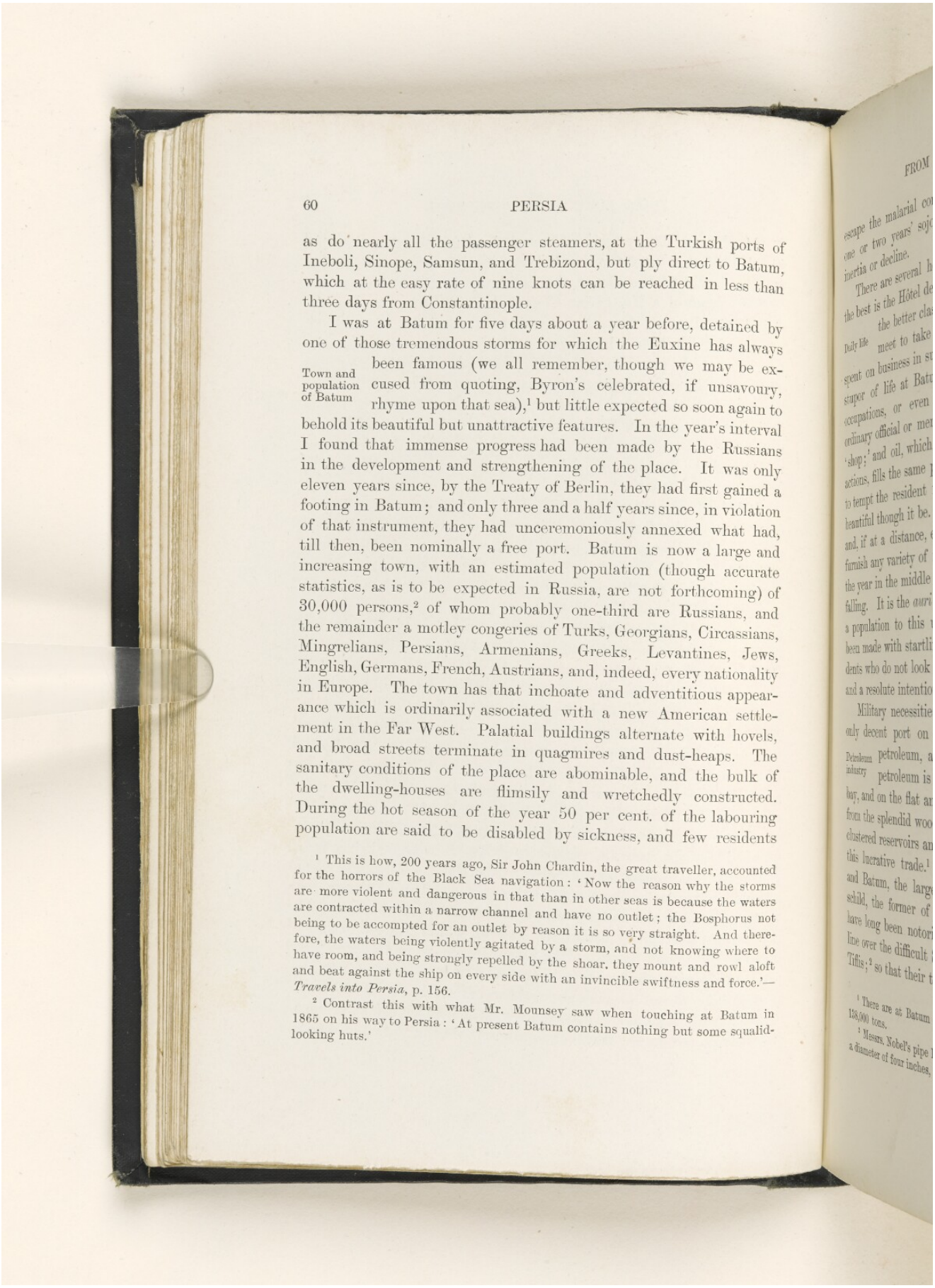


At Pera a happy accident revealed to me the fact that my friend Professor Vambéry was lodging in the same hotel, having come to the city at the invitation of the Sultan as the head of a Hungarian Commission to inquire into the historical and literary treasures stored in the palaces of Stambul. I enjoyed with him a long and interesting conversation on the journey that I was about to make, and parts of which he had undertaken himself nearly thirty years before under conditions far less agreeable than those which await the modern traveller. Persia itself has not appreciably moved in the interval, but its neighbours have; and the presence of the Cossack sentry where the Turkoman raided and the Tartar reigned has multiplied tenfold the absorbing interest of the situation.

Professor Vambéry

It being necessary for me to reach Batum by a certain day in order to make the desired connection with my steamer at Baku, and no passenger boat being about to leave the Golden Horn for that destination, I procured a passage upon a boat flying the English flag and belonging to Messrs. Armstrong, Mitchell, and Co., of Newcastle, one of that new class of steamers of which several now plough the waves of the Black Sea, familiarly known as tank-steamers, and specially constructed for the transport of petroleum oil from Batum. There is a fleet of about thirty of these vessels, of which most have been built in England and over twenty are in English hands, and which ply between Batum and London, Liverpool, Venice, Trieste, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and other ports of the Continent. To India, China, and Japan, with which a large export trade has suddenly sprung up, the oil is carried, not in tank-steamers, but in cases ready for distribution throughout the country. The tank-steamer consists of a series of detached iron tanks, into which the oil is pumped straight from the reservoirs at Batum, whither it has been conveyed in tank-cars by the railway from Baku. Certain of these are old cargo boats converted; but every day improvements are being effected in the designs of new vessels, some of which, to hold 4,000 tons, have lately been built, and of which larger types may be expected in the future. The 'Lux,' in which I was a passenger, was now empty, but was making her way to Batum to take on board a new cargo, of which she could accommodate over 2,000 tons. These boats, though not constructed for passenger traffic, present this advantage to the traveller in a hurry, that they do not touch,

Tank-steamers on the Black Sea





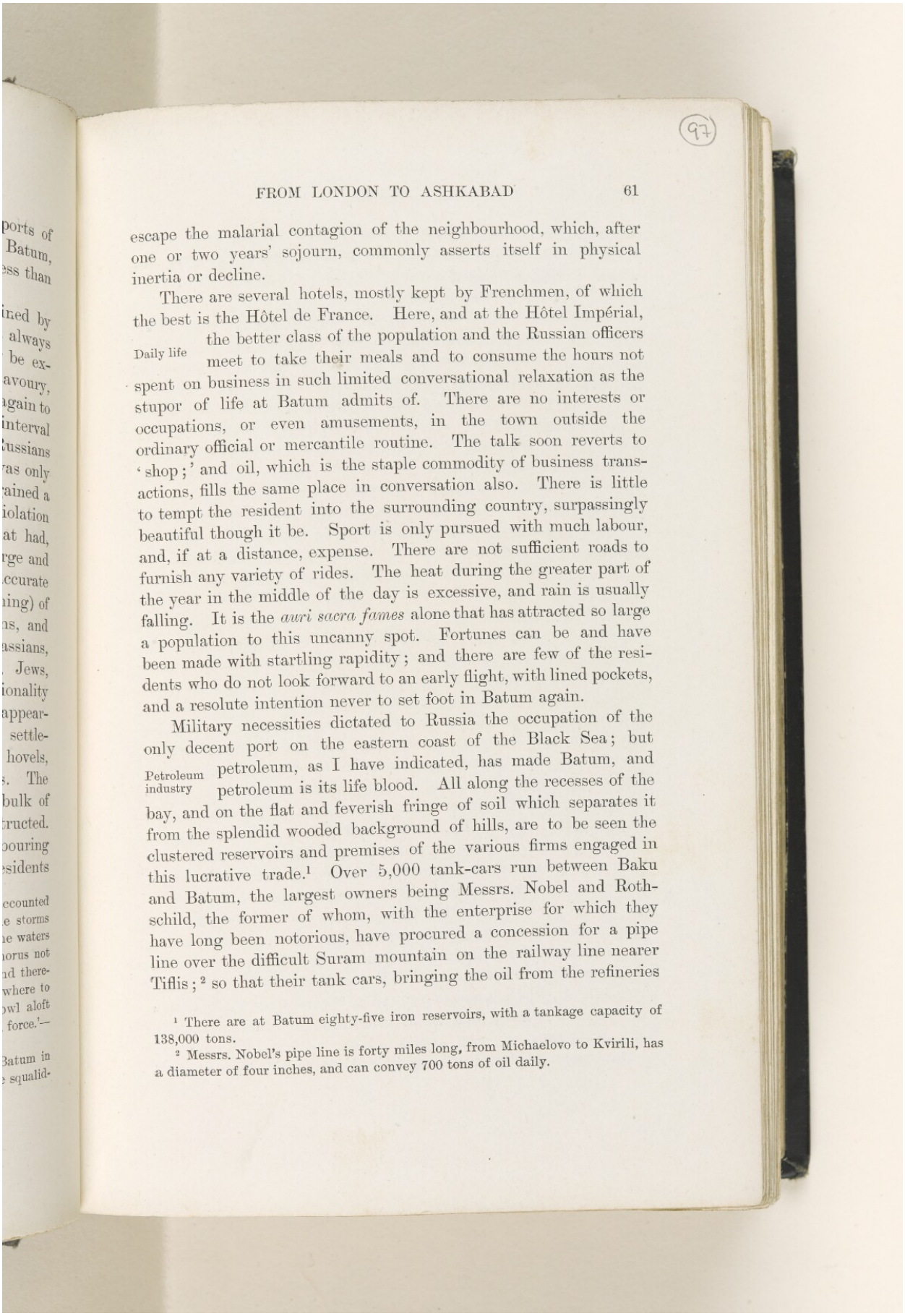
as do nearly all the passenger steamers, at the Turkish ports of Ineboli, Sinope, Samsun, and Trebizond, but ply direct to Batum, which at the easy rate of nine knots can be reached in less than three days from Constantinople.

Town and population of Batum

I was at Batum for five days about a year before, detained by one of those tremendous storms for which the Euxine has always been famous (we all remember, though we may be excused from quoting, Byron's celebrated, if unsavoury, rhyme upon that sea),[1] but little expected so soon again to behold its beautiful but unattractive features. In the year's interval I found that immense progress had been made by the Russians in the development and strengthening of the place. It was only eleven years since, by the Treaty of Berlin, they had first gained a footing in Batum; and only three and a half years since, in violation of that instrument, they had unceremoniously annexed what had, till then, been nominally a free port. Batum is now a large and increasing town, with an estimated population (though accurate statistics, as is to be expected in Russia, are not forthcoming) of 30,000 persons,[2] of whom probably one-third are Russians, and the remainder a motley congeries of Turks, Georgians, Circassians, Mingrelians, Persians, Armenians, Greeks, Levantines, Jews, English, Germans, French, Austrians, and, indeed, every nationality in Europe. The town has that inchoate and adventitious appearance which is ordinarily associated with a new American settlement in the Far West. Palatial buildings alternate with hovels, and broad streets terminate in quagmires and dust-heaps. The sanitary conditions of the place are abominable, and the bulk of the dwelling-houses are flimsily and wretchedly constructed. During the hot season of the year 50 per cent. of the labouring population are said to be disabled by sickness, and few residents

[1] This is how, 200 years ago, Sir John Chardin, the great traveller, accounted for the horrors of the Black Sea navigation: 'Now the reason why the storms are more violent and dangerous in that than in other seas is because the waters are contracted within a narrow channel and have no outlet; the Bosphorus not being to be accompted for an outlet by reason it is so very straight. And therefore, the waters being violently agitated by a storm, and not knowing where to have room, and being strongly repelled by the shoar, they mount and rowl aloft and beat against the ship on every side with an invincible swiftness and force.'—*Travels into Persia*, p. 156.

[2] Contrast this with what Mr. Mounsey saw when touching at Batum in 1865 on his way to Persia: 'At present Batum contains nothing but some squalid-looking huts.'





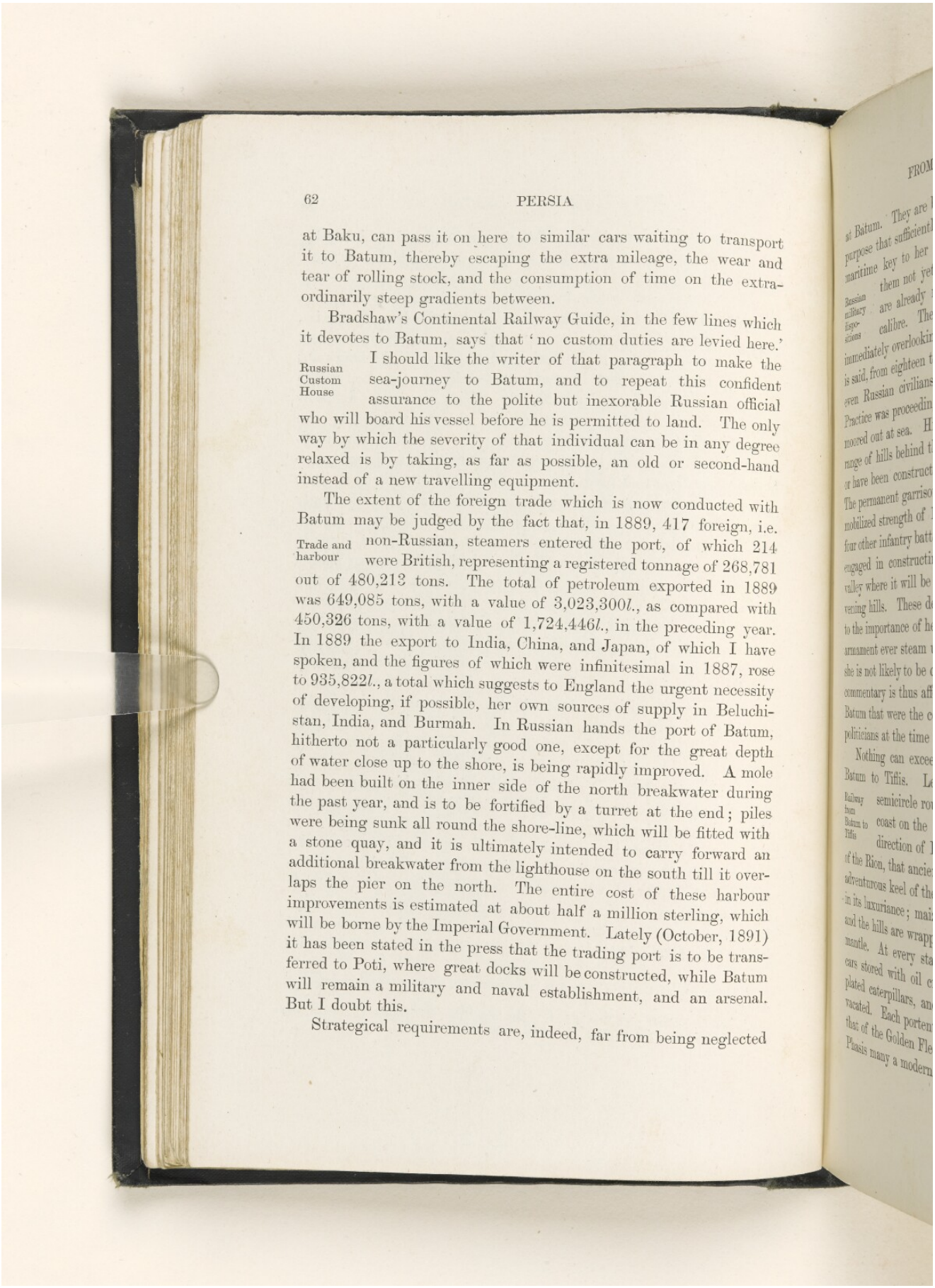
escape the malarial contagion of the neighbourhood, which, after one or two years' sojourn, commonly asserts itself in physical inertia or decline.

There are several hotels, mostly kept by Frenchmen, of which the best is the Hôtel de France. Here, and at the Hôtel Impérial, Daily life the better class of the population and the Russian officers meet to take their meals and to consume the hours not spent on business in such limited conversational relaxation as the stupor of life at Batum admits of. There are no interests or occupations, or even amusements, in the town outside the ordinary official or mercantile routine. The talk soon reverts to 'shop;' and oil, which is the staple commodity of business transactions, fills the same place in conversation also. There is little to tempt the resident into the surrounding country, surpassingly beautiful though it be. Sport is only pursued with much labour, and, if at a distance, expense. There are not sufficient roads to furnish any variety of rides. The heat during the greater part of the year in the middle of the day is excessive, and rain is usually falling. It is the *auri sacra fames* alone that has attracted so large a population to this uncanny spot. Fortunes can be and have been made with startling rapidity; and there are few of the residents who do not look forward to an early flight, with lined pockets, and a resolute intention never to set foot in Batum again.

Military necessities dictated to Russia the occupation of the only decent port on the eastern coast of the Black Sea; but Petroleum industry petroleum, as I have indicated, has made Batum, and petroleum is its life blood. All along the recesses of the bay, and on the flat and feverish fringe of soil which separates it from the splendid wooded background of hills, are to be seen the clustered reservoirs and premises of the various firms engaged in this lucrative trade.[1] Over 5,000 tank-cars run between Baku and Batum, the largest owners being Messrs. Nobel and Rothschild, the former of whom, with the enterprise for which they have long been notorious, have procured a concession for a pipe line over the difficult Suram mountain on the railway line nearer Tiflis;[2] so that their tank cars, bringing the oil from the refineries

[1] There are at Batum eighty-five iron reservoirs, with a tankage capacity of 138,000 tons.

[2] Messrs. Nobel's pipe line is forty miles long, from Michaelovo to Kvirili, has a diameter of four inches, and can convey 700 tons of oil daily.





at Baku, can pass it on here to similar cars waiting to transport it to Batum, thereby escaping the extra mileage, the wear and tear of rolling stock, and the consumption of time on the extraordinarily steep gradients between.

Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide, in the few lines which it devotes to Batum, says that 'no custom duties are levied here.'

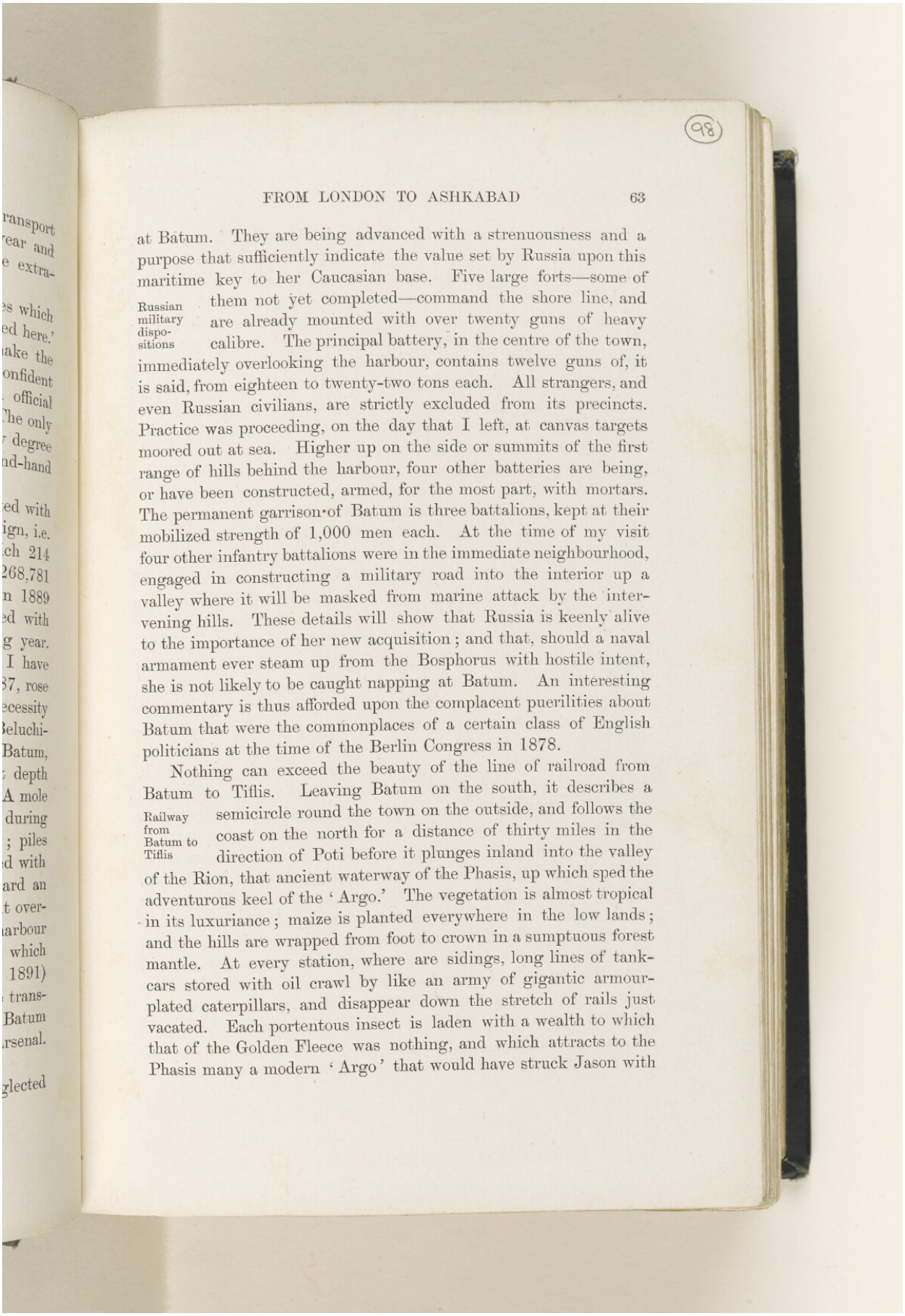
Russian Custom House

I should like the writer of that paragraph to make the sea-journey to Batum, and to repeat this confident assurance to the polite but inexorable Russian official who will board his vessel before he is permitted to land. The only way by which the severity of that individual can be in any degree relaxed is by taking, as far as possible, an old or second-hand instead of a new travelling equipment.

Trade and harbour

The extent of the foreign trade which is now conducted with Batum may be judged by the fact that, in 1889, 417 foreign, i.e. non-Russian, steamers entered the port, of which 214 were British, representing a registered tonnage of 268,781 out of 480,213 tons. The total of petroleum exported in 1889 was 649,085 tons, with a value of 3,023,300*l.*, as compared with 450,326 tons, with a value of 1,724,446*l.*, in the preceding year. In 1889 the export to India, China, and Japan, of which I have spoken, and the figures of which were infinitesimal in 1887, rose to 935,822*l.*, a total which suggests to England the urgent necessity of developing, if possible, her own sources of supply in Beluchistan, India, and Burmah. In Russian hands the port of Batum, hitherto not a particularly good one, except for the great depth of water close up to the shore, is being rapidly improved. A mole had been built on the inner side of the north breakwater during the past year, and is to be fortified by a turret at the end; piles were being sunk all round the shore-line, which will be fitted with a stone quay, and it is ultimately intended to carry forward an additional breakwater from the lighthouse on the south till it overlaps the pier on the north. The entire cost of these harbour improvements is estimated at about half a million sterling, which will be borne by the Imperial Government. Lately (October, 1891) it has been stated in the press that the trading port is to be transferred to Poti, where great docks will be constructed, while Batum will remain a military and naval establishment, and an arsenal. But I doubt this.

Strategical requirements are, indeed, far from being neglected





at Batum. They are being advanced with a strenuousness and a purpose that sufficiently indicate the value set by Russia upon this maritime key to her Caucasian base. Five large forts—some of them not yet completed—command the shore line, and are already mounted with over twenty guns of heavy calibre. The principal battery, in the centre of the town, immediately overlooking the harbour, contains twelve guns of, it is said, from eighteen to twenty-two tons each. All strangers, and even Russian civilians, are strictly excluded from its precincts. Practice was proceeding, on the day that I left, at canvas targets moored out at sea. Higher up on the side or summits of the first range of hills behind the harbour, four other batteries are being, or have been constructed, armed, for the most part, with mortars. The permanent garrison of Batum is three battalions, kept at their mobilized strength of 1,000 men each. At the time of my visit four other infantry battalions were in the immediate neighbourhood, engaged in constructing a military road into the interior up a valley where it will be masked from marine attack by the intervening hills. These details will show that Russia is keenly alive to the importance of her new acquisition; and that, should a naval armament ever steam up from the Bosphorus with hostile intent, she is not likely to be caught napping at Batum. An interesting commentary is thus afforded upon the complacent puerilities about Batum that were the commonplaces of a certain class of English politicians at the time of the Berlin Congress in 1878.

Russian military dispositions

Nothing can exceed the beauty of the line of railroad from Batum to Tiflis. Leaving Batum on the south, it describes a semicircle round the town on the outside, and follows the coast on the north for a distance of thirty miles in the direction of Poti before it plunges inland into the valley of the Rion, that ancient waterway of the Phasis, up which sped the adventurous keel of the 'Argo.' The vegetation is almost tropical in its luxuriance; maize is planted everywhere in the low lands; and the hills are wrapped from foot to crown in a sumptuous forest mantle. At every station, where are sidings, long lines of tank-cars stored with oil crawl by like an army of gigantic armour-plated caterpillars, and disappear down the stretch of rails just vacated. Each portentous insect is laden with a wealth to which that of the Golden Fleece was nothing, and which attracts to the Phasis many a modern 'Argo' that would have struck Jason with

Railway from Batum to Tiflis

even greater consternation than the magic of the Colchian princess. As the line ascends, clinging closely to the bed of the stream almost to its source in the watershed that separates the Caspian and Black Sea drainage, the scenery becomes more imposing. The mountains climb to an airier height, and the train creeps tortuously through solemn gorges and magnificent glens. The station platforms are crowded with wild Georgian urchins—true sons of the mountains—anxious to exchange for a few kopecks long strings of chestnuts or bunches of miniature grapes. Stately bearded figures, close pinched at the waist by the tightly fitting *tcherkess* or Circassian pelisse, and wearing a curled lambskin bonnet, tall leather boots, and a small armoury of damascened weapons, attend the arrival and departure of the trains with military regularity, and survey the scene with stalwart composure.

Suram Tunnel works

The railroad from Batum to Tiflis, a distance of about 220 miles, or at least from Poti to Tiflis, has now been open for many years; but the Russians have for some time been engaged upon extensive alterations upon a section of the line between the stations of Rion and Michaelovo, where the existing rails climb the steep and laborious gradients of the Suram mountain at a height of 3,000 feet above the sea. The alterations involve not only the piercing of a tunnel three miles long through the mountain, but the entire realignment, at a more practicable level, of the railroad for a distance of several miles, an undertaking which necessitates the construction of new bridges and viaducts, as well as an immense amount of cutting, stonework, and embankment. A large number of workmen were engaged upon this task when I passed a year before. In the interim a great advance had been made. The spring of 1890 was named as the period when the works would be finished, but it was not till October that the tunnel was opened, after the Russian fashion, with a religious service; nor did that mean the completion of the whole undertaking. The Russian Government is putting itself to an enormous outlay in this quarter, a fact which illustrates the importance attached by it not only to secure, but to easy and rapid rail communication in the Caucasus.[1] The works struck me as being conducted on a large and worthy scale, and as being marked by great strength and solidity. The Suram Tunnel is remarkable

[1] It has since been announced (November 1890) that a military railway has been authorised, connecting the fortress of Kars with the main line.



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as surpassing all European tunnels in the dimensions of its profile. The St. Gothard Tunnel has a section of only sixty square metres, but that of the Suram Tunnel is ninety metres. Perhaps it is the expense thus incurred that accounts for the heavy charge for passenger traffic from Batum to Baku. A first-class ticket costs 47½ roubles, for a distance of 560 miles—that is, at the rate of over 2*d*. a mile. The locomotives between Batum and Baku are entirely propelled by residual naphtha, or *astatki*, as it is called, driven in the form of a fine spray into the furnace. Over the Suram mountain a double Fairlie engine pulls in front, while a second pushes and puffs behind. I found that the time consumed in getting to Baku was three hours longer than formerly. Upon inquiring the reason, I was told that the railway used to belong to a company, but has since been purchased by the State. To those who know the ways of the Russian Government this was quite enough.

Tiflis

Tiflis is too well known to travellers to deserve mention. Those only who are unacquainted with the East are likely to go into ecstasies over its modest, though perhaps singular attractions, among which Orientalism plays every year a less and less distinguished part. The town was in some excitement over an agricultural and industrial exhibition, the first ever held in the Caucasus, which had just been opened in a series of wooden pavilions on an open space outside the town. Here were collected specimens of the agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, pisciculture, and arboriculture, as well as of the textile fabrics and manufacturing industries of the Caucasus, together with objects from Central Asia and Transcaspia. The local manufactures, whether in metals or textiles, were varied and interesting, but the general level of the exhibition did not rise above that of an agricultural show in an English county town; and the grounds appeared to be visited quite as much for the sake of the bands and refreshment booths as for more business-like objects.

Hôtel de Londres

The Hôtel de Londres at Tiflis is perhaps the most wonderful rendezvous of varied personalities that is to be found in the East. Situated on the dividing line between Europe and Asia, and on the high road to the remote Orient, almost every pilgrim to or from those fascinating regions halts for a while within its hospitable walls. Here the outgoing traveller takes his last taste of civilisation before he plunges into the unknown. Here, too, the returning wanderer enjoys, very likely for the first



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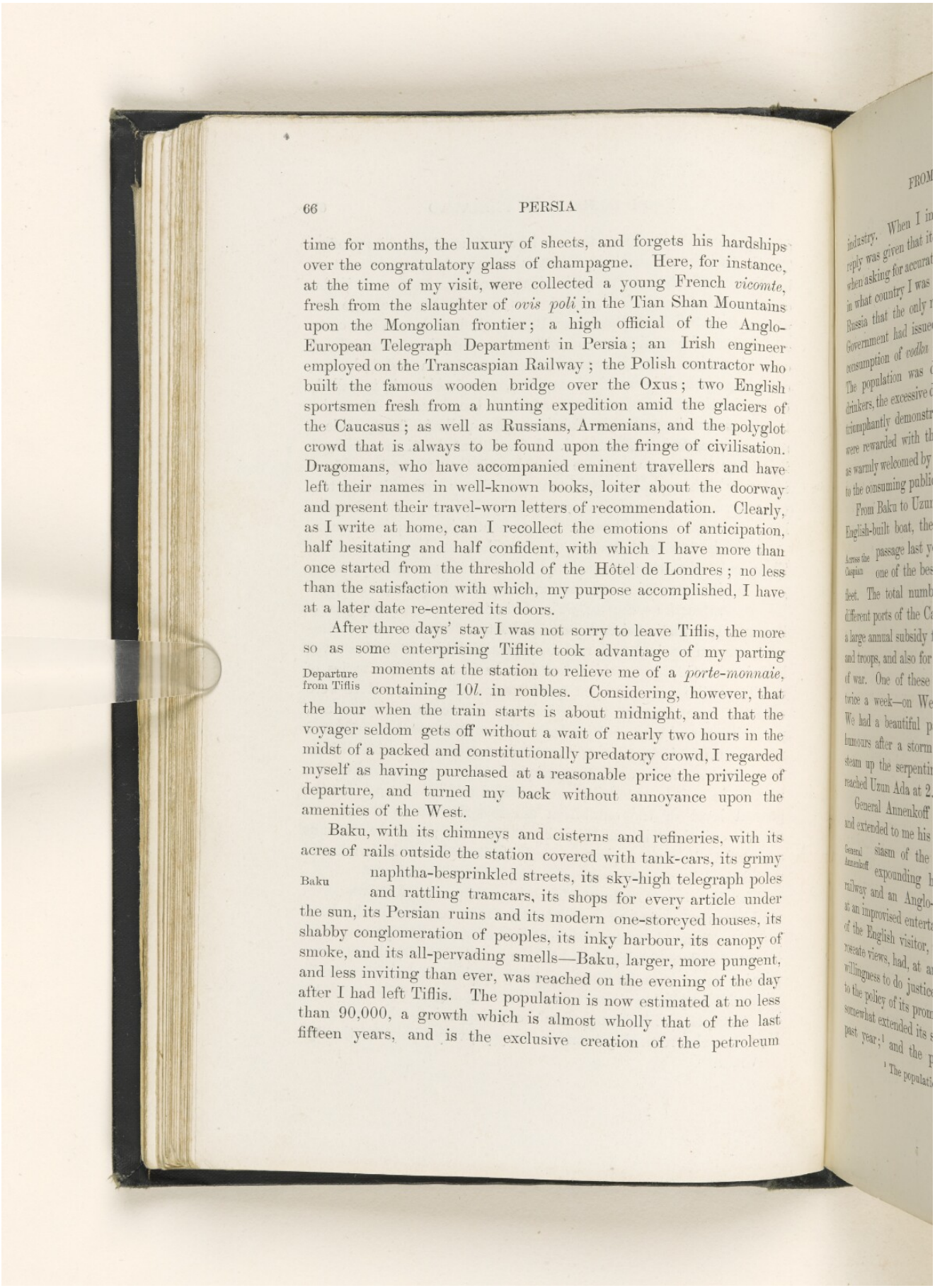




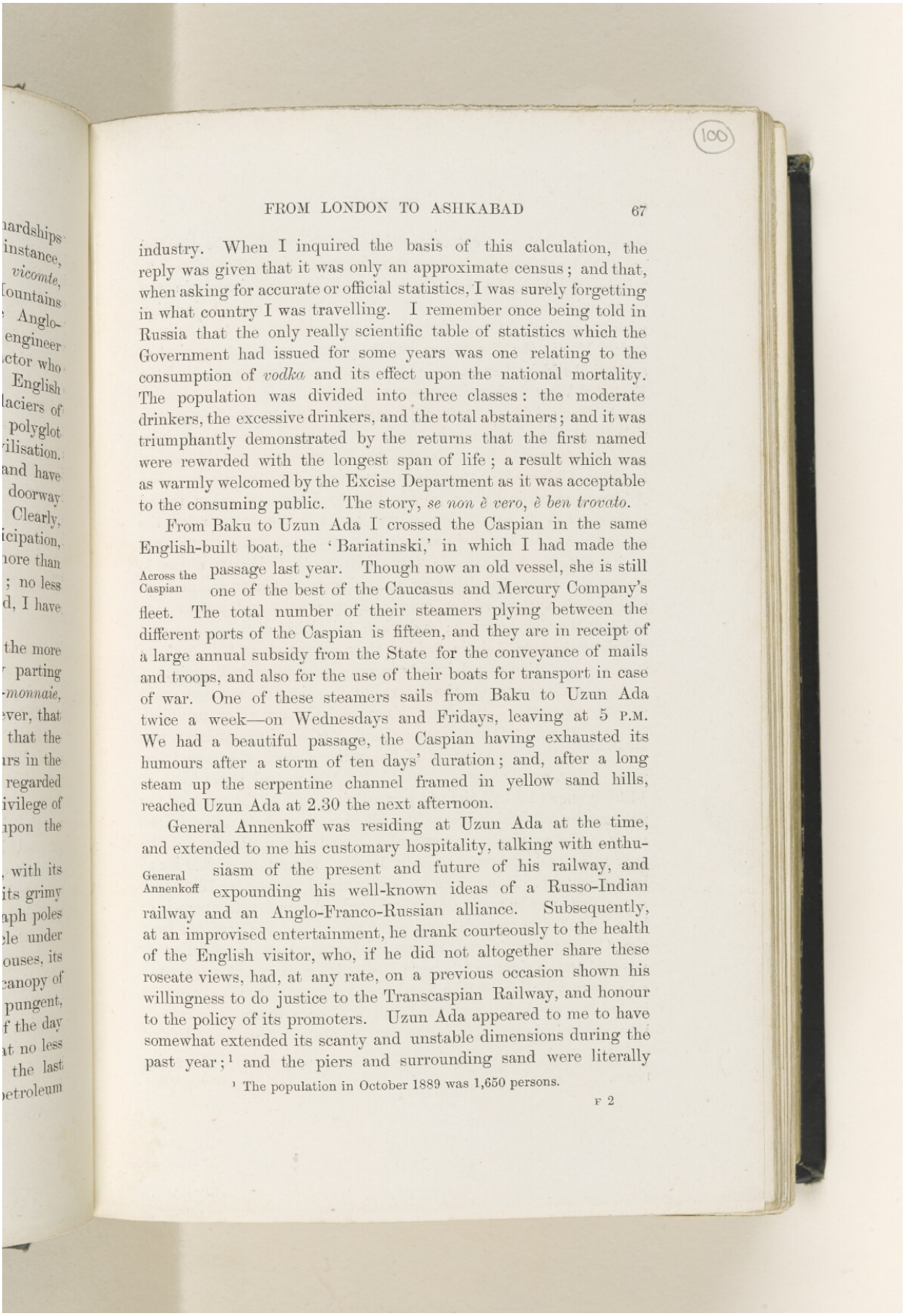
time for months, the luxury of sheets, and forgets his hardships over the congratulatory glass of champagne. Here, for instance, at the time of my visit, were collected a young French *vicomte*, fresh from the slaughter of *ovis poli* in the Tian Shan Mountains upon the Mongolian frontier; a high official of the Anglo-European Telegraph Department in Persia; an Irish engineer employed on the Transcaspian Railway; the Polish contractor who built the famous wooden bridge over the Oxus; two English sportsmen fresh from a hunting expedition amid the glaciers of the Caucasus; as well as Russians, Armenians, and the polyglot crowd that is always to be found upon the fringe of civilisation. Dragomans, who have accompanied eminent travellers and have left their names in well-known books, loiter about the doorway and present their travel-worn letters of recommendation. Clearly, as I write at home, can I recollect the emotions of anticipation, half hesitating and half confident, with which I have more than once started from the threshold of the Hôtel de Londres; no less than the satisfaction with which, my purpose accomplished, I have at a later date re-entered its doors.

After three days' stay I was not sorry to leave Tiflis, the more so as some enterprising Tiflite took advantage of my parting moments at the station to relieve me of a *porte-monnaie*, containing 10*l.* in roubles. Considering, however, that the hour when the train starts is about midnight, and that the voyager seldom gets off without a wait of nearly two hours in the midst of a packed and constitutionally predatory crowd, I regarded myself as having purchased at a reasonable price the privilege of departure, and turned my back without annoyance upon the amenities of the West.

Departure from Tiflis

Baku, with its chimneys and cisterns and refineries, with its acres of rails outside the station covered with tank-cars, its grimy naphtha-besprinkled streets, its sky-high telegraph poles and rattling tramcars, its shops for every article under the sun, its Persian ruins and its modern one-storeyed houses, its shabby conglomeration of peoples, its inky harbour, its canopy of smoke, and its all-pervading smells—Baku, larger, more pungent, and less inviting than ever, was reached on the evening of the day after I had left Tiflis. The population is now estimated at no less than 90,000, a growth which is almost wholly that of the last fifteen years, and is the exclusive creation of the petroleum

Baku





industry. When I inquired the basis of this calculation, the reply was given that it was only an approximate census; and that, when asking for accurate or official statistics, I was surely forgetting in what country I was travelling. I remember once being told in Russia that the only really scientific table of statistics which the Government had issued for some years was one relating to the consumption of *vodka* and its effect upon the national mortality. The population was divided into three classes: the moderate drinkers, the excessive drinkers, and the total abstainers; and it was triumphantly demonstrated by the returns that the first named were rewarded with the longest span of life; a result which was as warmly welcomed by the Excise Department as it was acceptable to the consuming public. The story, *se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

Across the Caspian

From Baku to Uzun Ada I crossed the Caspian in the same English-built boat, the 'Bariatinski,' in which I had made the passage last year. Though now an old vessel, she is still one of the best of the Caucasus and Mercury Company's fleet. The total number of their steamers plying between the different ports of the Caspian is fifteen, and they are in receipt of a large annual subsidy from the State for the conveyance of mails and troops, and also for the use of their boats for transport in case of war. One of these steamers sails from Baku to Uzun Ada twice a week—on Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving at 5 P.M. We had a beautiful passage, the Caspian having exhausted its humours after a storm of ten days' duration; and, after a long steam up the serpentine channel framed in yellow sand hills, reached Uzun Ada at 2.30 the next afternoon.

General Annenkoff

General Annenkoff was residing at Uzun Ada at the time, and extended to me his customary hospitality, talking with enthusiasm of the present and future of his railway, and expounding his well-known ideas of a Russo-Indian railway and an Anglo-Franco-Russian alliance. Subsequently, at an improvised entertainment, he drank courteously to the health of the English visitor, who, if he did not altogether share these roseate views, had, at any rate, on a previous occasion shown his willingness to do justice to the Transcaspian Railway, and honour to the policy of its promoters. Uzun Ada appeared to me to have somewhat extended its scanty and unstable dimensions during the past year;[1] and the piers and surrounding sand were literally

[1] The population in October 1889 was 1,650 persons.



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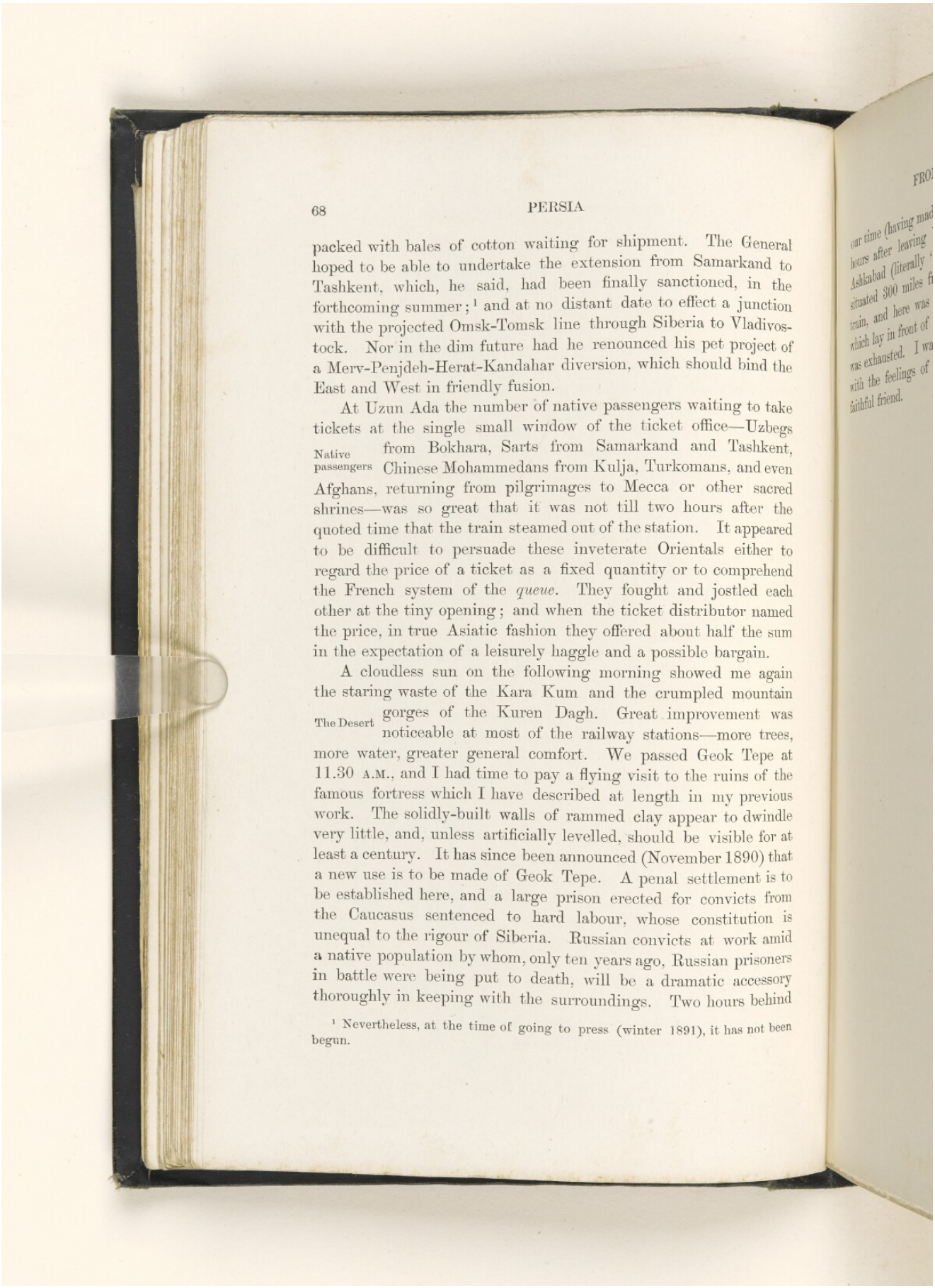



packed with bales of cotton waiting for shipment. The General hoped to be able to undertake the extension from Samarkand to Tashkent, which, he said, had been finally sanctioned, in the forthcoming summer;[1] and at no distant date to effect a junction with the projected Omsk-Tomsk line through Siberia to Vladivostock. Nor in the dim future had he renounced his pet project of a Merv-Penjdeh-Herat-Kandahar diversion, which should bind the East and West in friendly fusion.

Native passengers

At Uzun Ada the number of native passengers waiting to take tickets at the single small window of the ticket office—Uzbegs from Bokhara, Sarts from Samarkand and Tashkent, Chinese Mohammedans from Kulja, Turkomans, and even Afghans, returning from pilgrimages to Mecca or other sacred shrines—was so great that it was not till two hours after the quoted time that the train steamed out of the station. It appeared to be difficult to persuade these inveterate Orientals either to regard the price of a ticket as a fixed quantity or to comprehend the French system of the *queue*. They fought and jostled each other at the tiny opening; and when the ticket distributor named the price, in true Asiatic fashion they offered about half the sum in the expectation of a leisurely haggle and a possible bargain.

The Desert

A cloudless sun on the following morning showed me again the staring waste of the Kara Kum and the crumpled mountain gorges of the Kuren Dagh. Great improvement was noticeable at most of the railway stations—more trees, more water, greater general comfort. We passed Geok Tepe at 11.30 A.M., and I had time to pay a flying visit to the ruins of the famous fortress which I have described at length in my previous work. The solidly-built walls of rammed clay appear to dwindle very little, and, unless artificially levelled, should be visible for at least a century. It has since been announced (November 1890) that a new use is to be made of Geok Tepe. A penal settlement is to be established here, and a large prison erected for convicts from the Caucasus sentenced to hard labour, whose constitution is unequal to the rigour of Siberia. Russian convicts at work amid a native population by whom, only ten years ago, Russian prisoners in battle were being put to death, will be a dramatic accessory thoroughly in keeping with the surroundings. Two hours behind

[1] Nevertheless, at the time of going to press (winter 1891), it has not been begun.

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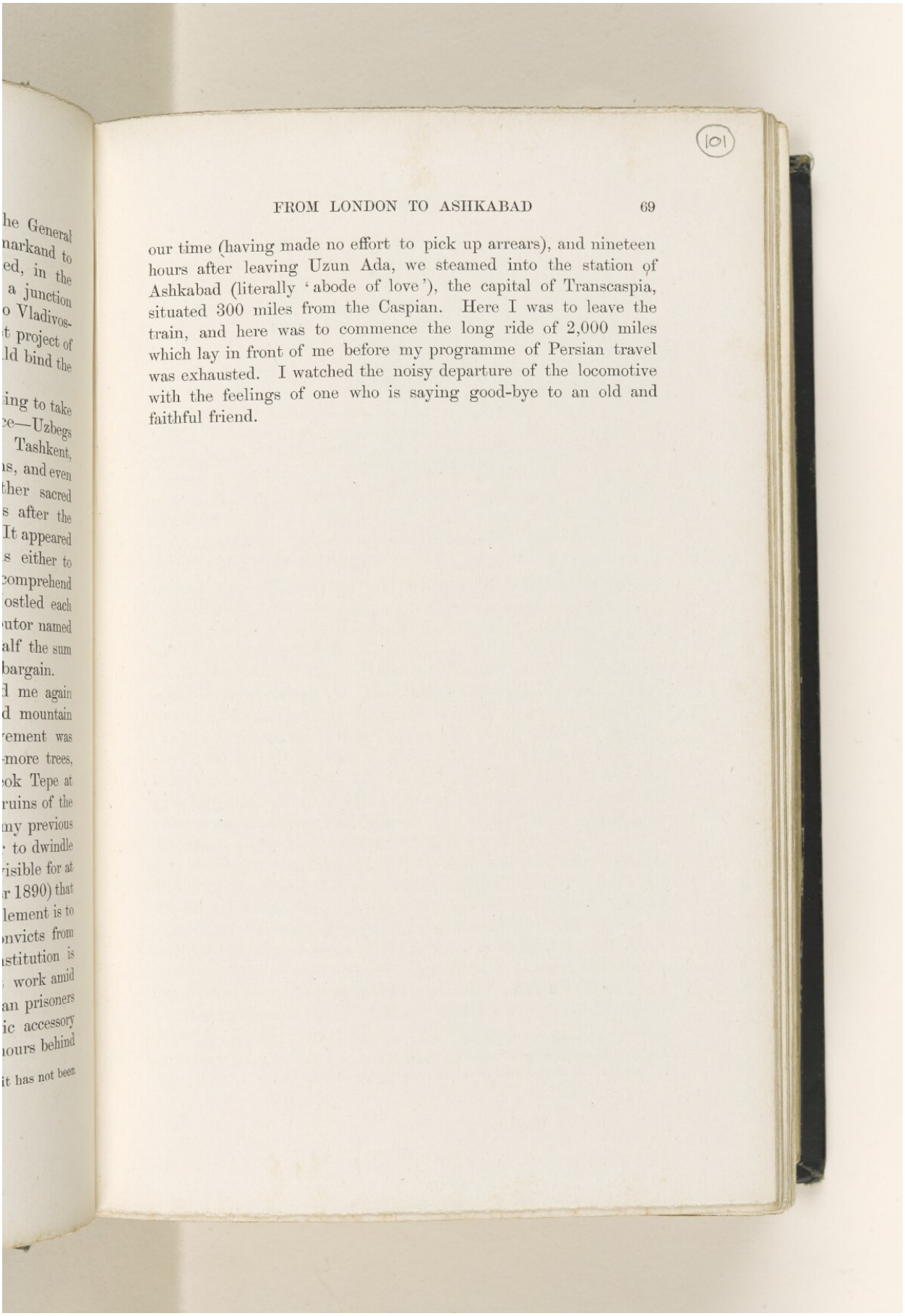



our time (having made no effort to pick up arrears), and nineteen hours after leaving Uzun Ada, we steamed into the station of Ashkabad (literally 'abode of love'), the capital of Transcaspia, situated 300 miles from the Caspian. Here I was to leave the train, and here was to commence the long ride of 2,000 miles which lay in front of me before my programme of Persian travel was exhausted. I watched the noisy departure of the locomotive with the feelings of one who is saying good-bye to an old and faithful friend.

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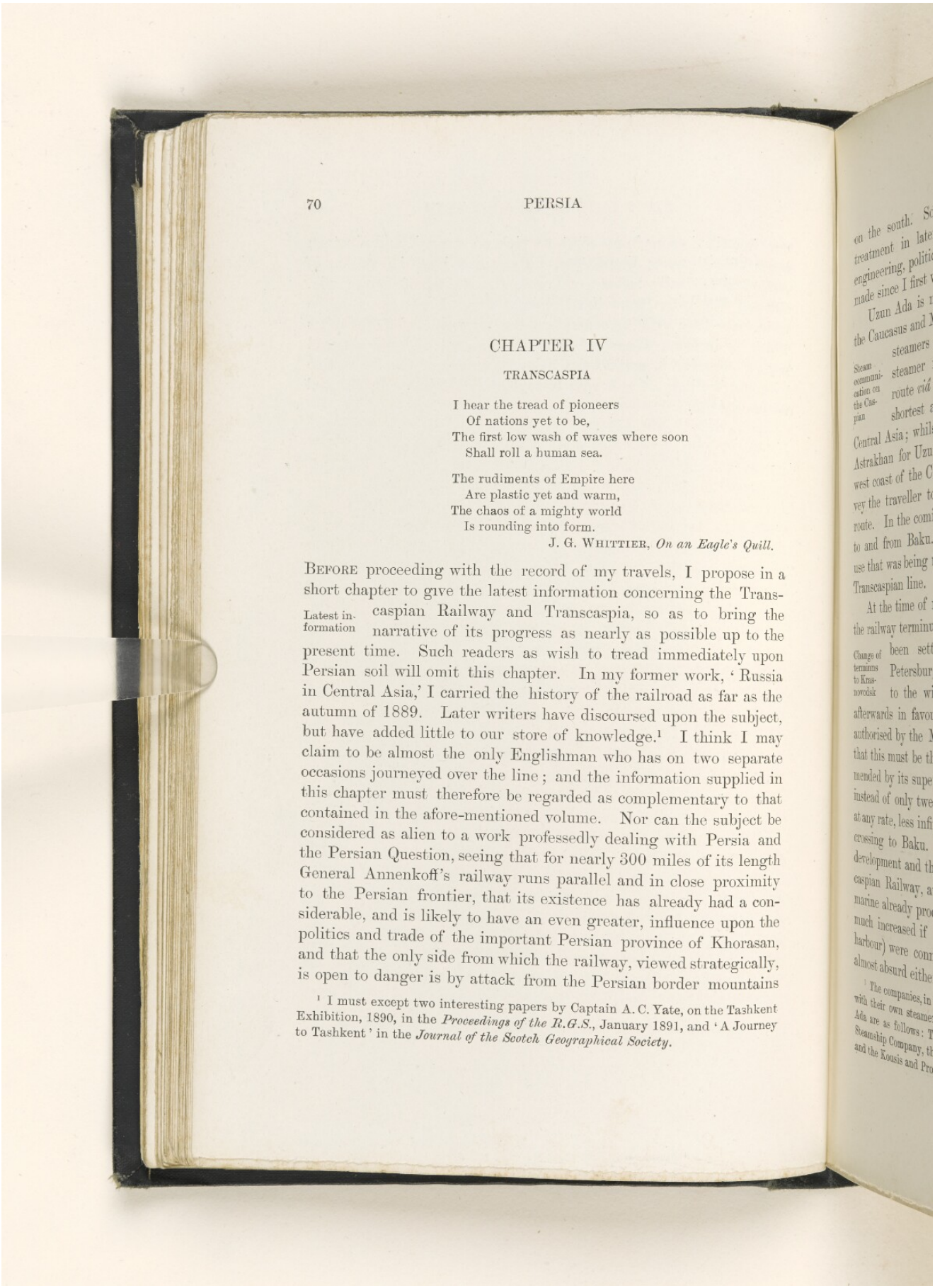




## CHAPTER IV

### TRANSCASPIA

I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be,
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea.

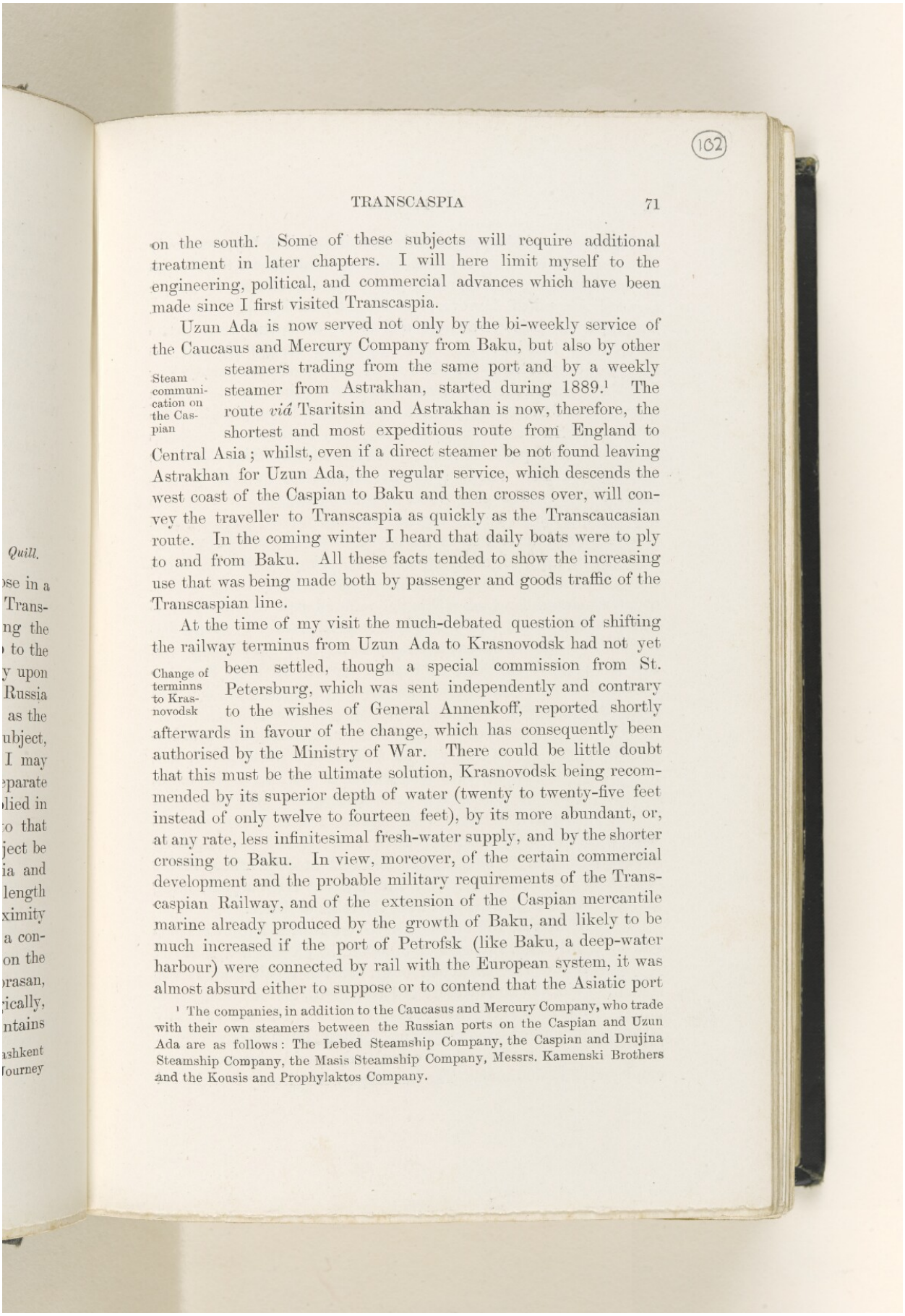
The rudiments of Empire here
Are plastic yet and warm,
The chaos of a mighty world
Is rounding into form.

J. G. WHITTIER, *On an Eagle's Quill.*

BEFORE proceeding with the record of my travels, I propose in a short chapter to give the latest information concerning the Trans-caspian Railway and Transcaspia, so as to bring the narrative of its progress as nearly as possible up to the present time. Such readers as wish to tread immediately upon Persian soil will omit this chapter. In my former work, 'Russia in Central Asia,' I carried the history of the railroad as far as the autumn of 1889. Later writers have discoursed upon the subject, but have added little to our store of knowledge.[1] I think I may claim to be almost the only Englishman who has on two separate occasions journeyed over the line; and the information supplied in this chapter must therefore be regarded as complementary to that contained in the afore-mentioned volume. Nor can the subject be considered as alien to a work professedly dealing with Persia and the Persian Question, seeing that for nearly 300 miles of its length General Annenkoff's railway runs parallel and in close proximity to the Persian frontier, that its existence has already had a considerable, and is likely to have an even greater, influence upon the politics and trade of the important Persian province of Khorasan, and that the only side from which the railway, viewed strategically, is open to danger is by attack from the Persian border mountains

Latest information

[1] I must except two interesting papers by Captain A. C. Yate, on the Tashkent Exhibition, 1890, in the *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, January 1891, and 'A Journey to Tashkent' in the *Journal of the Scotch Geographical Society.*





on the south. Some of these subjects will require additional treatment in later chapters. I will here limit myself to the engineering, political, and commercial advances which have been made since I first visited Transcaspia.

Uzun Ada is now served not only by the bi-weekly service of the Caucasus and Mercury Company from Baku, but also by other steamers trading from the same port and by a weekly steamer from Astrakhan, started during 1889.[1] The route *viâ* Tsaritsin and Astrakhan is now, therefore, the shortest and most expeditious route from England to Central Asia; whilst, even if a direct steamer be not found leaving Astrakhan for Uzun Ada, the regular service, which descends the west coast of the Caspian to Baku and then crosses over, will convey the traveller to Transcaspia as quickly as the Transcaucasian route. In the coming winter I heard that daily boats were to ply to and from Baku. All these facts tended to show the increasing use that was being made both by passenger and goods traffic of the Transcaspian line.

Steam communication on the Caspian

At the time of my visit the much-debated question of shifting the railway terminus from Uzun Ada to Krasnovodsk had not yet been settled, though a special commission from St. Petersburg, which was sent independently and contrary to the wishes of General Annenkoff, reported shortly afterwards in favour of the change, which has consequently been authorised by the Ministry of War. There could be little doubt that this must be the ultimate solution, Krasnovodsk being recommended by its superior depth of water (twenty to twenty-five feet instead of only twelve to fourteen feet), by its more abundant, or, at any rate, less infinitesimal fresh-water supply, and by the shorter crossing to Baku. In view, moreover, of the certain commercial development and the probable military requirements of the Transcaspian Railway, and of the extension of the Caspian mercantile marine already produced by the growth of Baku, and likely to be much increased if the port of Petrofsk (like Baku, a deep-water harbour) were connected by rail with the European system, it was almost absurd either to suppose or to contend that the Asiatic port

Change of terminus to Krasnovodsk

[1] The companies, in addition to the Caucasus and Mercury Company, who trade with their own steamers between the Russian ports on the Caspian and Uzun Ada are as follows: The Lebed Steamship Company, the Caspian and Drujina Steamship Company, the Masis Steamship Company, Messrs. Kamenski Brothers and the Kousis and Prophylaktos Company.

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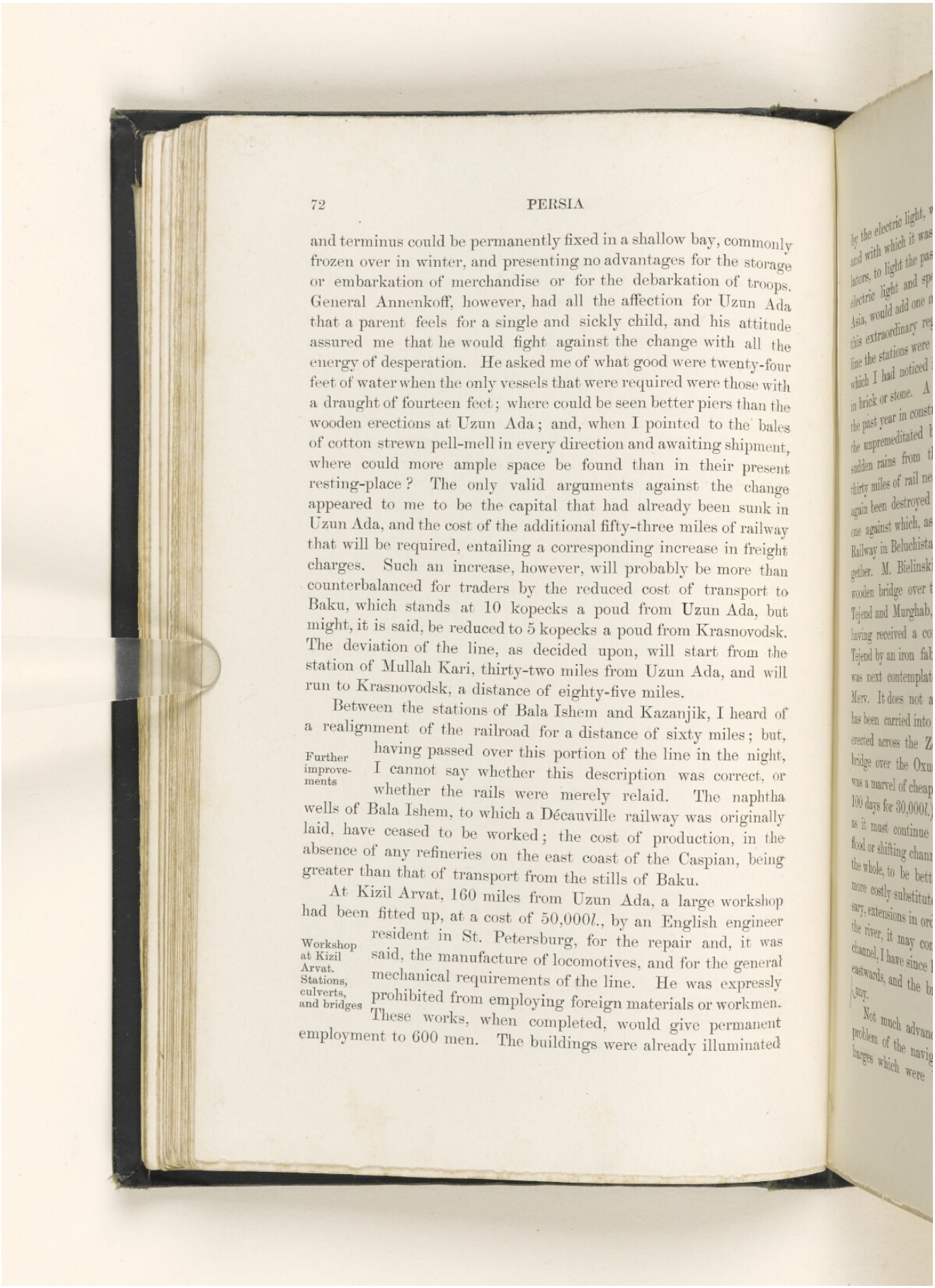




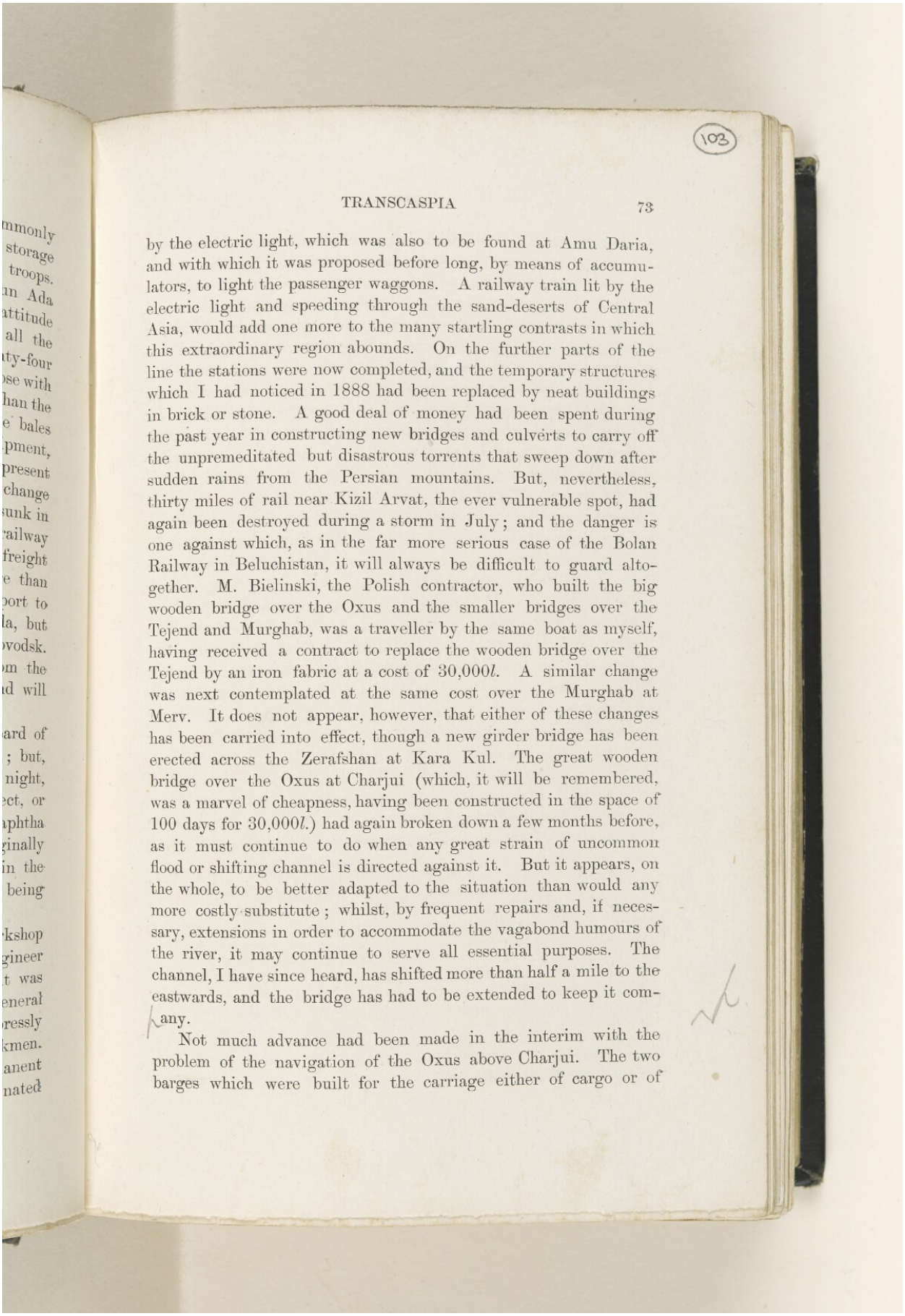
and terminus could be permanently fixed in a shallow bay, commonly frozen over in winter, and presenting no advantages for the storage or embarkation of merchandise or for the debarkation of troops. General Annenkoff, however, had all the affection for Uzun Ada that a parent feels for a single and sickly child, and his attitude assured me that he would fight against the change with all the energy of desperation. He asked me of what good were twenty-four feet of water when the only vessels that were required were those with a draught of fourteen feet; where could be seen better piers than the wooden erections at Uzun Ada; and, when I pointed to the bales of cotton strewn pell-mell in every direction and awaiting shipment, where could more ample space be found than in their present resting-place? The only valid arguments against the change appeared to me to be the capital that had already been sunk in Uzun Ada, and the cost of the additional fifty-three miles of railway that will be required, entailing a corresponding increase in freight charges. Such an increase, however, will probably be more than counterbalanced for traders by the reduced cost of transport to Baku, which stands at 10 kopecks a poud from Uzun Ada, but might, it is said, be reduced to 5 kopecks a poud from Krasnovodsk. The deviation of the line, as decided upon, will start from the station of Mullah Kari, thirty-two miles from Uzun Ada, and will run to Krasnovodsk, a distance of eighty-five miles.

Between the stations of Bala Ishem and Kazanjik, I heard of a realignment of the railroad for a distance of sixty miles; but, having passed over this portion of the line in the night, I cannot say whether this description was correct, or whether the rails were merely relaid. The naphtha wells of Bala Ishem, to which a Décauville railway was originally laid, have ceased to be worked; the cost of production, in the absence of any refineries on the east coast of the Caspian, being greater than that of transport from the stills of Baku.

Further improvements

At Kizil Arvat, 160 miles from Uzun Ada, a large workshop had been fitted up, at a cost of 50,000*l.*, by an English engineer resident in St. Petersburg, for the repair and, it was said, the manufacture of locomotives, and for the general mechanical requirements of the line. He was expressly prohibited from employing foreign materials or workmen. These works, when completed, would give permanent employment to 600 men. The buildings were already illuminated

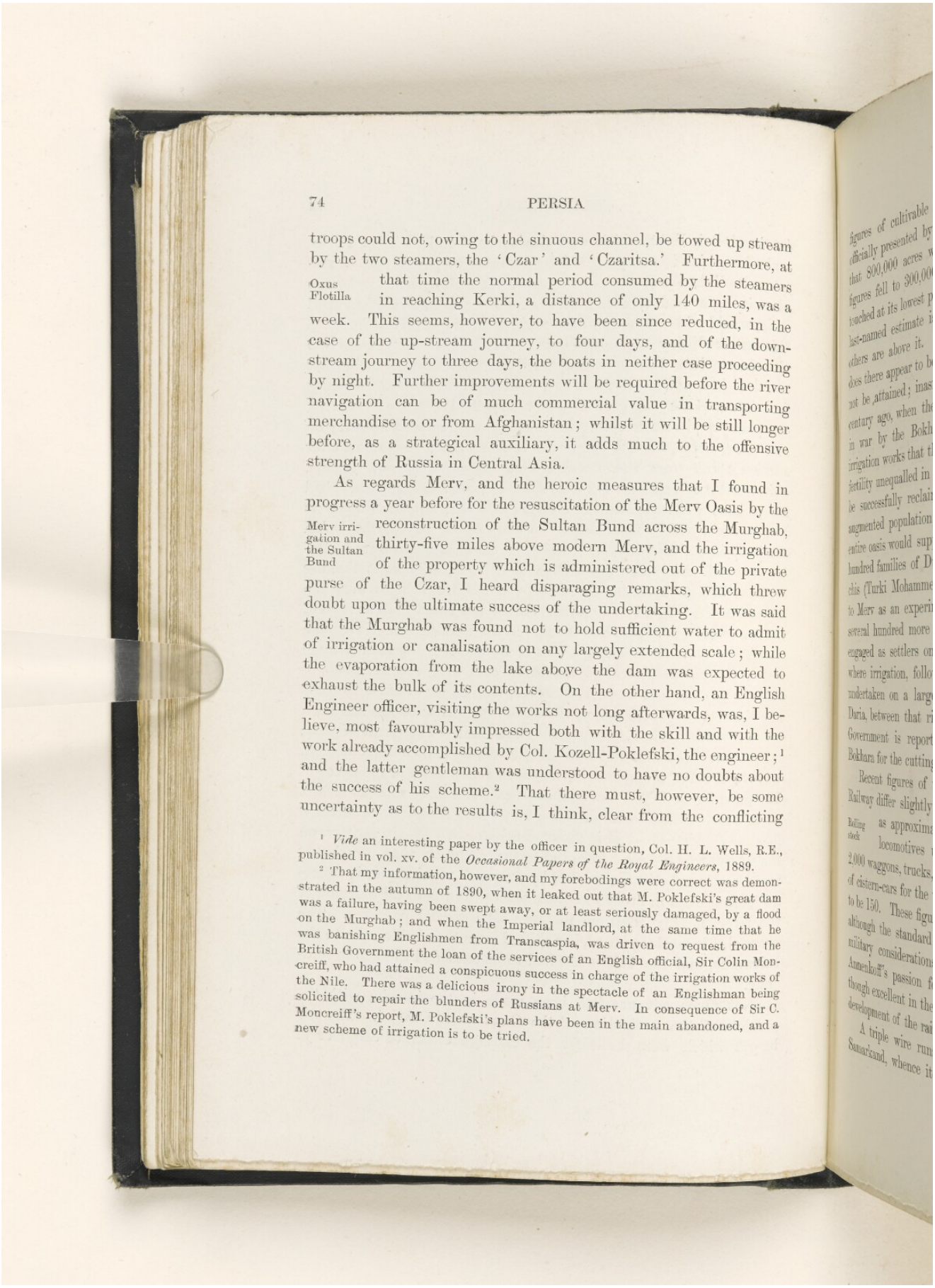
Workshop at Kizil Arvat. Stations, culverts, and bridges





by the electric light, which was also to be found at Amu Daria, and with which it was proposed before long, by means of accumulators, to light the passenger waggons. A railway train lit by the electric light and speeding through the sand-deserts of Central Asia, would add one more to the many startling contrasts in which this extraordinary region abounds. On the further parts of the line the stations were now completed, and the temporary structures which I had noticed in 1888 had been replaced by neat buildings in brick or stone. A good deal of money had been spent during the past year in constructing new bridges and culverts to carry off the unpremeditated but disastrous torrents that sweep down after sudden rains from the Persian mountains. But, nevertheless, thirty miles of rail near Kizil Arvat, the ever vulnerable spot, had again been destroyed during a storm in July; and the danger is one against which, as in the far more serious case of the Bolan Railway in Beluchistan, it will always be difficult to guard altogether. M. Bielinski, the Polish contractor, who built the big wooden bridge over the Oxus and the smaller bridges over the Tejend and Murghab, was a traveller by the same boat as myself, having received a contract to replace the wooden bridge over the Tejend by an iron fabric at a cost of 30,000*l*. A similar change was next contemplated at the same cost over the Murghab at Merv. It does not appear, however, that either of these changes has been carried into effect, though a new girder bridge has been erected across the Zerafshan at Kara Kul. The great wooden bridge over the Oxus at Charjui (which, it will be remembered, was a marvel of cheapness, having been constructed in the space of 100 days for 30,000*l*.) had again broken down a few months before, as it must continue to do when any great strain of uncommon flood or shifting channel is directed against it. But it appears, on the whole, to be better adapted to the situation than would any more costly substitute; whilst, by frequent repairs and, if necessary, extensions in order to accommodate the vagabond humours of the river, it may continue to serve all essential purposes. The channel, I have since heard, has shifted more than half a mile to the eastwards, and the bridge has had to be extended to keep it company.

Not much advance had been made in the interim with the problem of the navigation of the Oxus above Charjui. The two barges which were built for the carriage either of cargo or of





troops could not, owing to the sinuous channel, be towed up stream by the two steamers, the 'Czar' and 'Czaritsa.' Furthermore, at that time the normal period consumed by the steamers in reaching Kerki, a distance of only 140 miles, was a week. This seems, however, to have been since reduced, in the case of the up-stream journey, to four days, and of the down-stream journey to three days, the boats in neither case proceeding by night. Further improvements will be required before the river navigation can be of much commercial value in transporting merchandise to or from Afghanistan; whilst it will be still longer before, as a strategical auxiliary, it adds much to the offensive strength of Russia in Central Asia.

Oxus Flotilla

As regards Merv, and the heroic measures that I found in progress a year before for the resuscitation of the Merv Oasis by the reconstruction of the Sultan Bund across the Murghab, thirty-five miles above modern Merv, and the irrigation of the property which is administered out of the private purse of the Czar, I heard disparaging remarks, which threw doubt upon the ultimate success of the undertaking. It was said that the Murghab was found not to hold sufficient water to admit of irrigation or canalisation on any largely extended scale; while the evaporation from the lake above the dam was expected to exhaust the bulk of its contents. On the other hand, an English Engineer officer, visiting the works not long afterwards, was, I believe, most favourably impressed both with the skill and with the work already accomplished by Col. Kozell-Poklefski, the engineer;[1] and the latter gentleman was understood to have no doubts about the success of his scheme.[2] That there must, however, be some uncertainty as to the results is, I think, clear from the conflicting

Merv irrigation and the Sultan Bund

[1] *Vide* an interesting paper by the officer in question, Col. H. L. Wells, R.E., published in vol. xv. of the *Occasional Papers of the Royal Engineers*, 1889.

[2] That my information, however, and my forebodings were correct was demonstrated in the autumn of 1890, when it leaked out that M. Poklefski's great dam was a failure, having been swept away, or at least seriously damaged, by a flood on the Murghab; and when the Imperial landlord, at the same time that he was banishing Englishmen from Transcaspia, was driven to request from the British Government the loan of the services of an English official, Sir Colin Moncreiff, who had attained a conspicuous success in charge of the irrigation works of the Nile. There was a delicious irony in the spectacle of an Englishman being solicited to repair the blunders of Russians at Merv. In consequence of Sir C. Moncreiff's report, M. Poklefski's plans have been in the main abandoned, and a new scheme of irrigation is to be tried.

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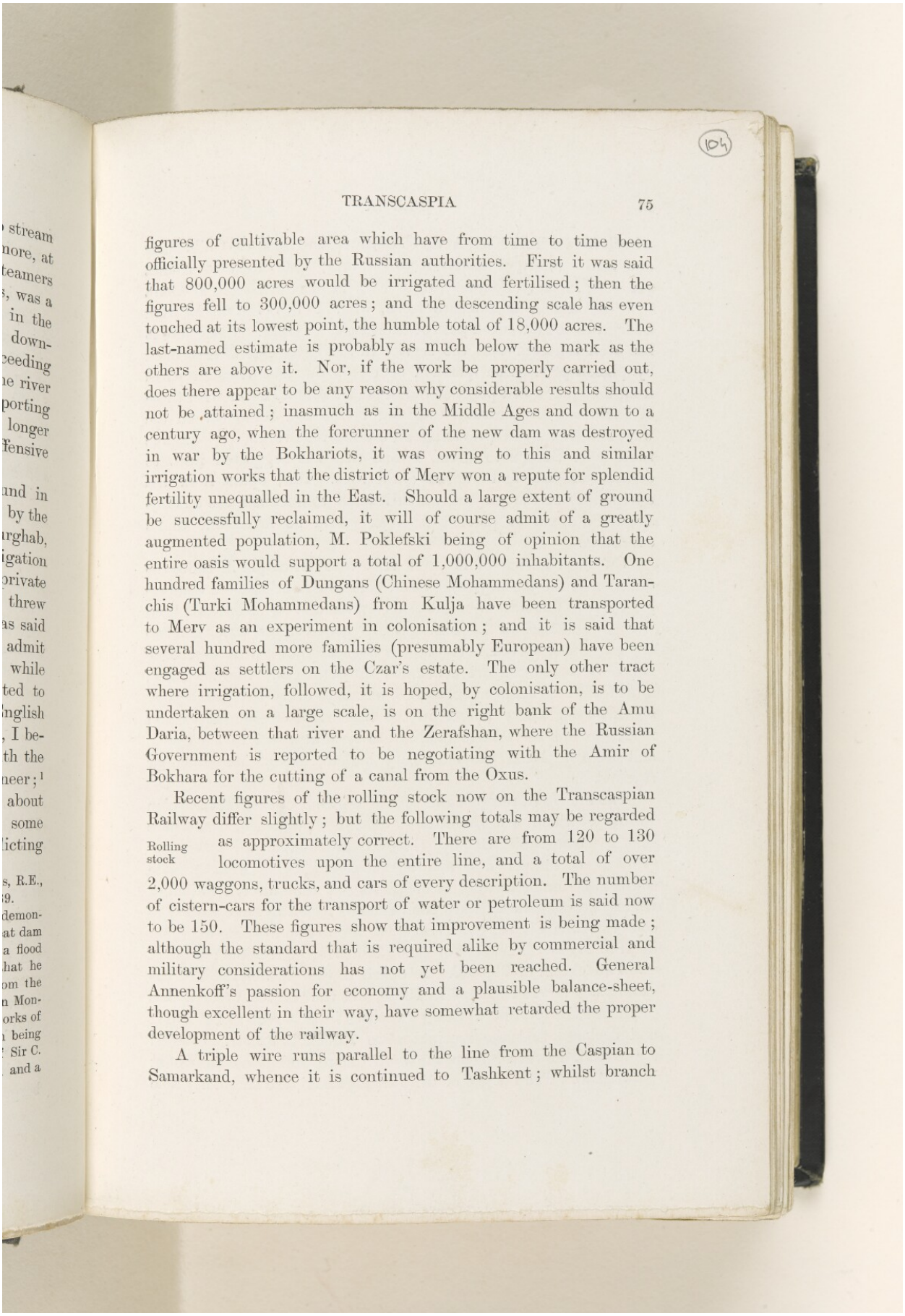



figures of cultivable area which have from time to time been officially presented by the Russian authorities. First it was said that 800,000 acres would be irrigated and fertilised; then the figures fell to 300,000 acres; and the descending scale has even touched at its lowest point, the humble total of 18,000 acres. The last-named estimate is probably as much below the mark as the others are above it. Nor, if the work be properly carried out, does there appear to be any reason why considerable results should not be attained; inasmuch as in the Middle Ages and down to a century ago, when the forerunner of the new dam was destroyed in war by the Bokhariots, it was owing to this and similar irrigation works that the district of Merv won a repute for splendid fertility unequalled in the East. Should a large extent of ground be successfully reclaimed, it will of course admit of a greatly augmented population, M. Poklefski being of opinion that the entire oasis would support a total of 1,000,000 inhabitants. One hundred families of Dungans (Chinese Mohammedans) and Taranchis (Turki Mohammedans) from Kulja have been transported to Merv as an experiment in colonisation; and it is said that several hundred more families (presumably European) have been engaged as settlers on the Czar's estate. The only other tract where irrigation, followed, it is hoped, by colonisation, is to be undertaken on a large scale, is on the right bank of the Amu Daria, between that river and the Zerafshan, where the Russian Government is reported to be negotiating with the Amir of Bokhara for the cutting of a canal from the Oxus.

Rolling stock

Recent figures of the rolling stock now on the Transcaspian Railway differ slightly; but the following totals may be regarded as approximately correct. There are from 120 to 130 locomotives upon the entire line, and a total of over 2,000 waggons, trucks, and cars of every description. The number of cistern-cars for the transport of water or petroleum is said now to be 150. These figures show that improvement is being made; although the standard that is required alike by commercial and military considerations has not yet been reached. General Annenkoff's passion for economy and a plausible balance-sheet, though excellent in their way, have somewhat retarded the proper development of the railway.

A triple wire runs parallel to the line from the Caspian to Samarkand, whence it is continued to Tashkent; whilst branch

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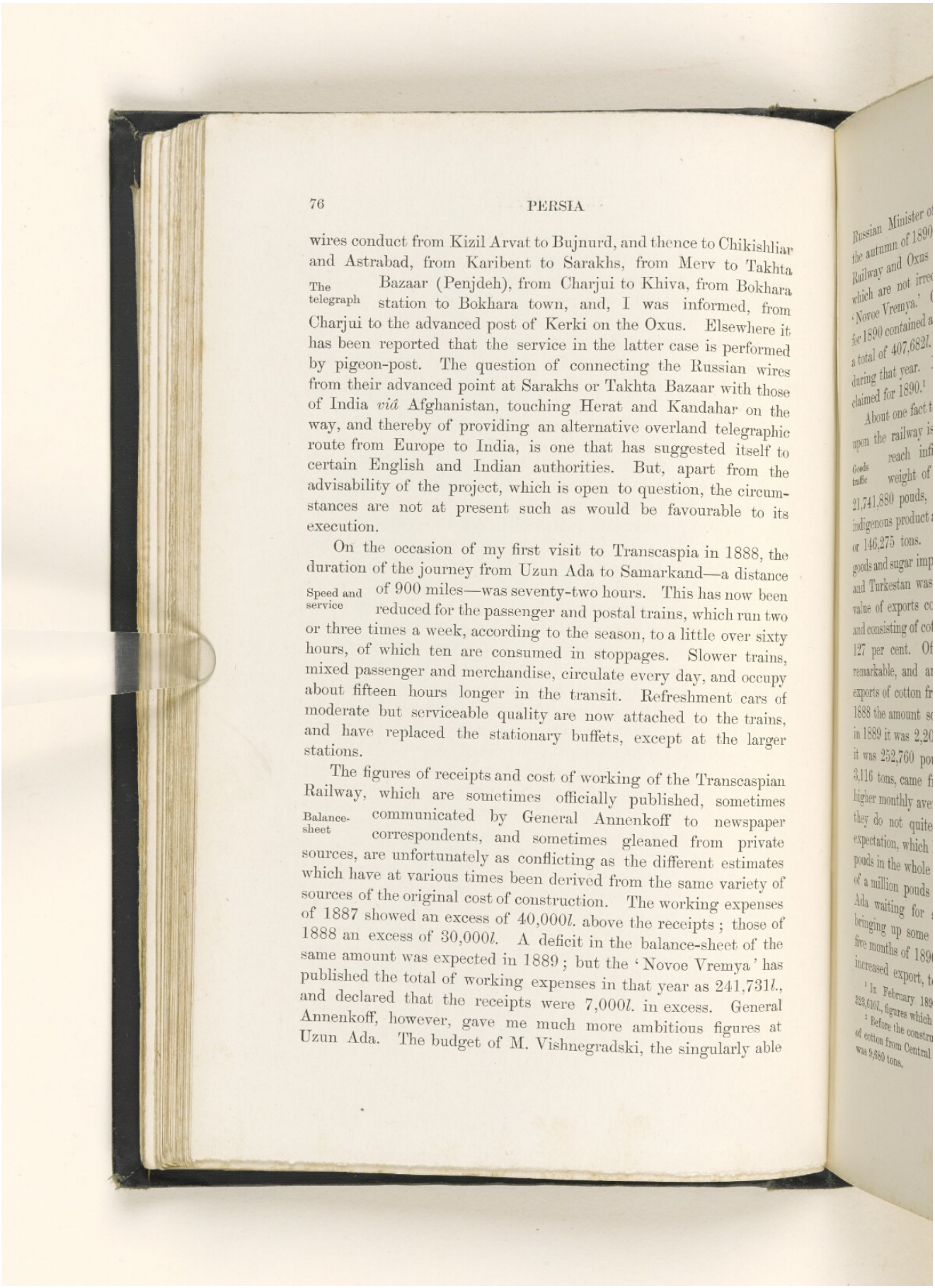




wires conduct from Kizil Arvat to Bujnurd, and thence to Chikishliar and Astrabad, from Karibent to Sarakhs, from Merv to Takhta Bazaar (Penjdeh), from Charjui to Khiva, from Bokhara station to Bokhara town, and, I was informed, from Charjui to the advanced post of Kerki on the Oxus. Elsewhere it has been reported that the service in the latter case is performed by pigeon-post. The question of connecting the Russian wires from their advanced point at Sarakhs or Takhta Bazaar with those of India *viâ* Afghanistan, touching Herat and Kandahar on the way, and thereby of providing an alternative overland telegraphic route from Europe to India, is one that has suggested itself to certain English and Indian authorities. But, apart from the advisability of the project, which is open to question, the circumstances are not at present such as would be favourable to its execution.

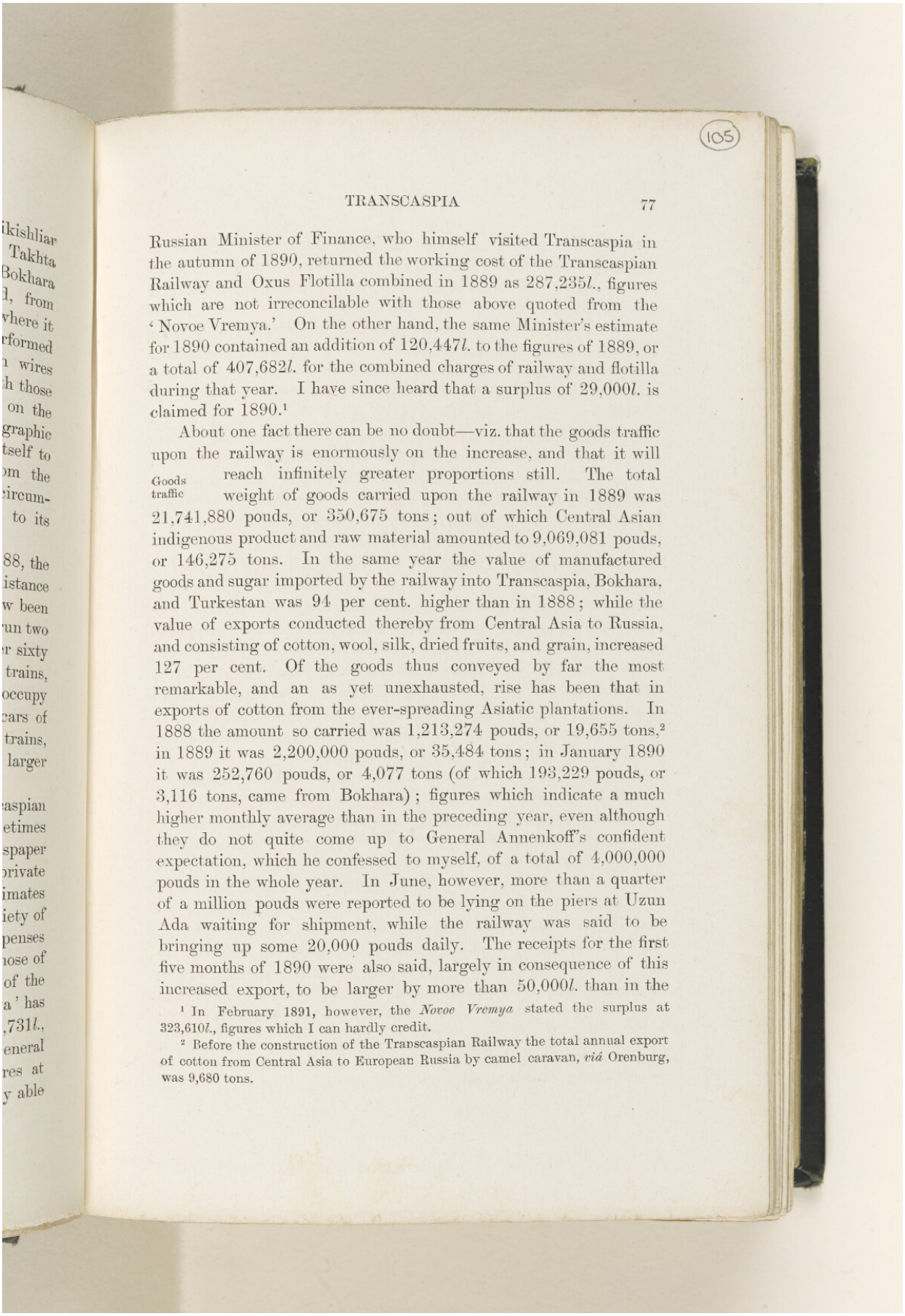
The telegraph

On the occasion of my first visit to Transcaspia in 1888, the duration of the journey from Uzun Ada to Samarkand—a distance of 900 miles—was seventy-two hours. This has now been reduced for the passenger and postal trains, which run two or three times a week, according to the season, to a little over sixty hours, of which ten are consumed in stoppages. Slower trains, mixed passenger and merchandise, circulate every day, and occupy about fifteen hours longer in the transit. Refreshment cars of moderate but serviceable quality are now attached to the trains, and have replaced the stationary buffets, except at the larger stations.

Speed and service

The figures of receipts and cost of working of the Transcaspian Railway, which are sometimes officially published, sometimes communicated by General Annenkoff to newspaper correspondents, and sometimes gleaned from private sources, are unfortunately as conflicting as the different estimates which have at various times been derived from the same variety of sources of the original cost of construction. The working expenses of 1887 showed an excess of 40,000*l.* above the receipts; those of 1888 an excess of 30,000*l.* A deficit in the balance-sheet of the same amount was expected in 1889; but the 'Novoe Vremya' has published the total of working expenses in that year as 241,731*l.*, and declared that the receipts were 7,000*l.* in excess. General Annenkoff, however, gave me much more ambitious figures at Uzun Ada. The budget of M. Vishnegradski, the singularly able

Balance-sheet





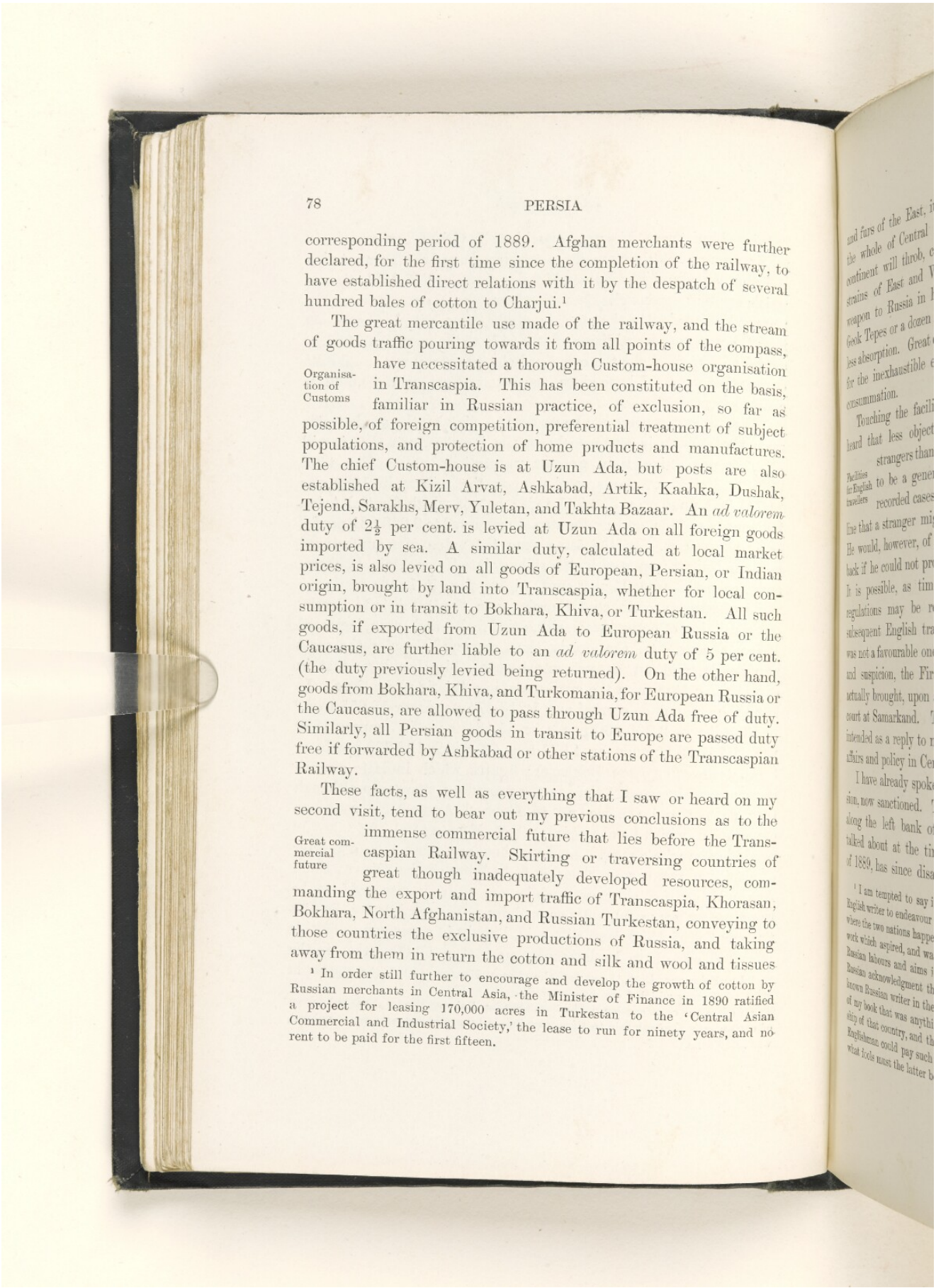
Russian Minister of Finance, who himself visited Transcaspia in the autumn of 1890, returned the working cost of the Transcaspian Railway and Oxus Flotilla combined in 1889 as 287,235*l.*, figures which are not irreconcilable with those above quoted from the 'Novoe Vremya.' On the other hand, the same Minister's estimate for 1890 contained an addition of 120,447*l.* to the figures of 1889, or a total of 407,682*l.* for the combined charges of railway and flotilla during that year. I have since heard that a surplus of 29,000*l.* is claimed for 1890.[1]

Goods traffic

About one fact there can be no doubt—viz. that the goods traffic upon the railway is enormously on the increase, and that it will reach infinitely greater proportions still. The total weight of goods carried upon the railway in 1889 was 21,741,880 pouds, or 350,675 tons; out of which Central Asian indigenous product and raw material amounted to 9,069,081 pouds, or 146,275 tons. In the same year the value of manufactured goods and sugar imported by the railway into Transcaspia, Bokhara, and Turkestan was 94 per cent. higher than in 1888; while the value of exports conducted thereby from Central Asia to Russia, and consisting of cotton, wool, silk, dried fruits, and grain, increased 127 per cent. Of the goods thus conveyed by far the most remarkable, and an as yet unexhausted, rise has been that in exports of cotton from the ever-spreading Asiatic plantations. In 1888 the amount so carried was 1,213,274 pouds, or 19,655 tons,[2] in 1889 it was 2,200,000 pouds, or 35,484 tons; in January 1890 it was 252,760 pouds, or 4,077 tons (of which 193,229 pouds, or 3,116 tons, came from Bokhara); figures which indicate a much higher monthly average than in the preceding year, even although they do not quite come up to General Annenkoff's confident expectation, which he confessed to myself, of a total of 4,000,000 pouds in the whole year. In June, however, more than a quarter of a million pouds were reported to be lying on the piers at Uzun Ada waiting for shipment, while the railway was said to be bringing up some 20,000 pouds daily. The receipts for the first five months of 1890 were also said, largely in consequence of this increased export, to be larger by more than 50,000*l.* than in the

[1] In February 1891, however, the *Novoe Vremya* stated the surplus at 323,610*l.*, figures which I can hardly credit.

[2] Before the construction of the Transcaspian Railway the total annual export of cotton from Central Asia to European Russia by camel caravan, *viâ* Orenburg, was 9,680 tons.





corresponding period of 1889. Afghan merchants were further declared, for the first time since the completion of the railway, to have established direct relations with it by the despatch of several hundred bales of cotton to Charjui.[1]

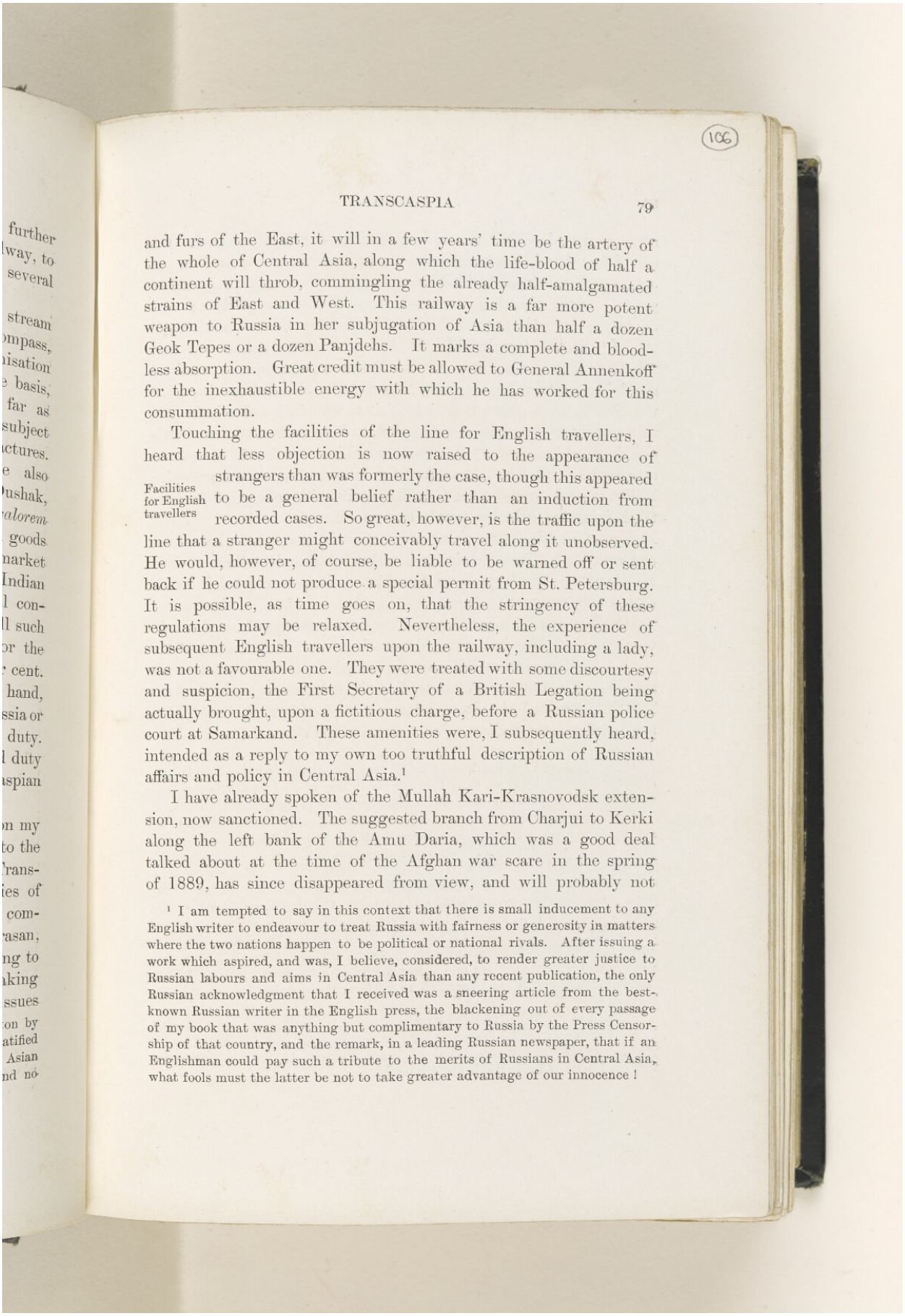
Organisation of Customs

The great mercantile use made of the railway, and the stream of goods traffic pouring towards it from all points of the compass, have necessitated a thorough Custom-house organisation in Transcaspia. This has been constituted on the basis, familiar in Russian practice, of exclusion, so far as possible, of foreign competition, preferential treatment of subject populations, and protection of home products and manufactures. The chief Custom-house is at Uzun Ada, but posts are also established at Kizil Arvat, Ashkabad, Artik, Kaahka, Dushak, Tejend, Sarakhs, Merv, Yuletan, and Takhta Bazaar. An *ad valorem* duty of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is levied at Uzun Ada on all foreign goods imported by sea. A similar duty, calculated at local market prices, is also levied on all goods of European, Persian, or Indian origin, brought by land into Transcaspia, whether for local consumption or in transit to Bokhara, Khiva, or Turkestan. All such goods, if exported from Uzun Ada to European Russia or the Caucasus, are further liable to an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. (the duty previously levied being returned). On the other hand, goods from Bokhara, Khiva, and Turkomania, for European Russia or the Caucasus, are allowed to pass through Uzun Ada free of duty. Similarly, all Persian goods in transit to Europe are passed duty free if forwarded by Ashkabad or other stations of the Transcaspian Railway.

Great commercial future

These facts, as well as everything that I saw or heard on my second visit, tend to bear out my previous conclusions as to the immense commercial future that lies before the Transcaspian Railway. Skirting or traversing countries of great though inadequately developed resources, commanding the export and import traffic of Transcaspia, Khorasan, Bokhara, North Afghanistan, and Russian Turkestan, conveying to those countries the exclusive productions of Russia, and taking away from them in return the cotton and silk and wool and tissues

[1] In order still further to encourage and develop the growth of cotton by Russian merchants in Central Asia, the Minister of Finance in 1890 ratified a project for leasing 170,000 acres in Turkestan to the 'Central Asian Commercial and Industrial Society,' the lease to run for ninety years, and no rent to be paid for the first fifteen.





and furs of the East, it will in a few years' time be the artery of the whole of Central Asia, along which the life-blood of half a continent will throb, commingling the already half-amalgamated strains of East and West. This railway is a far more potent weapon to Russia in her subjugation of Asia than half a dozen Geok Tepes or a dozen Panjdehs. It marks a complete and bloodless absorption. Great credit must be allowed to General Annenkoff for the inexhaustible energy with which he has worked for this consummation.

Facilities for English travellers

Touching the facilities of the line for English travellers, I heard that less objection is now raised to the appearance of strangers than was formerly the case, though this appeared to be a general belief rather than an induction from recorded cases. So great, however, is the traffic upon the line that a stranger might conceivably travel along it unobserved. He would, however, of course, be liable to be warned off or sent back if he could not produce a special permit from St. Petersburg. It is possible, as time goes on, that the stringency of these regulations may be relaxed. Nevertheless, the experience of subsequent English travellers upon the railway, including a lady, was not a favourable one. They were treated with some discourtesy and suspicion, the First Secretary of a British Legation being actually brought, upon a fictitious charge, before a Russian police court at Samarkand. These amenities were, I subsequently heard, intended as a reply to my own too truthful description of Russian affairs and policy in Central Asia.[1]

I have already spoken of the Mullah Kari-Krasnovodsk extension, now sanctioned. The suggested branch from Charjui to Kerki along the left bank of the Amu Daria, which was a good deal talked about at the time of the Afghan war scare in the spring of 1889, has since disappeared from view, and will probably not

[1] I am tempted to say in this context that there is small inducement to any English writer to endeavour to treat Russia with fairness or generosity in matters where the two nations happen to be political or national rivals. After issuing a work which aspired, and was, I believe, considered, to render greater justice to Russian labours and aims in Central Asia than any recent publication, the only Russian acknowledgment that I received was a sneering article from the best-known Russian writer in the English press, the blackening out of every passage of my book that was anything but complimentary to Russia by the Press Censorship of that country, and the remark, in a leading Russian newspaper, that if an Englishman could pay such a tribute to the merits of Russians in Central Asia, what fools must the latter be not to take greater advantage of our innocence!

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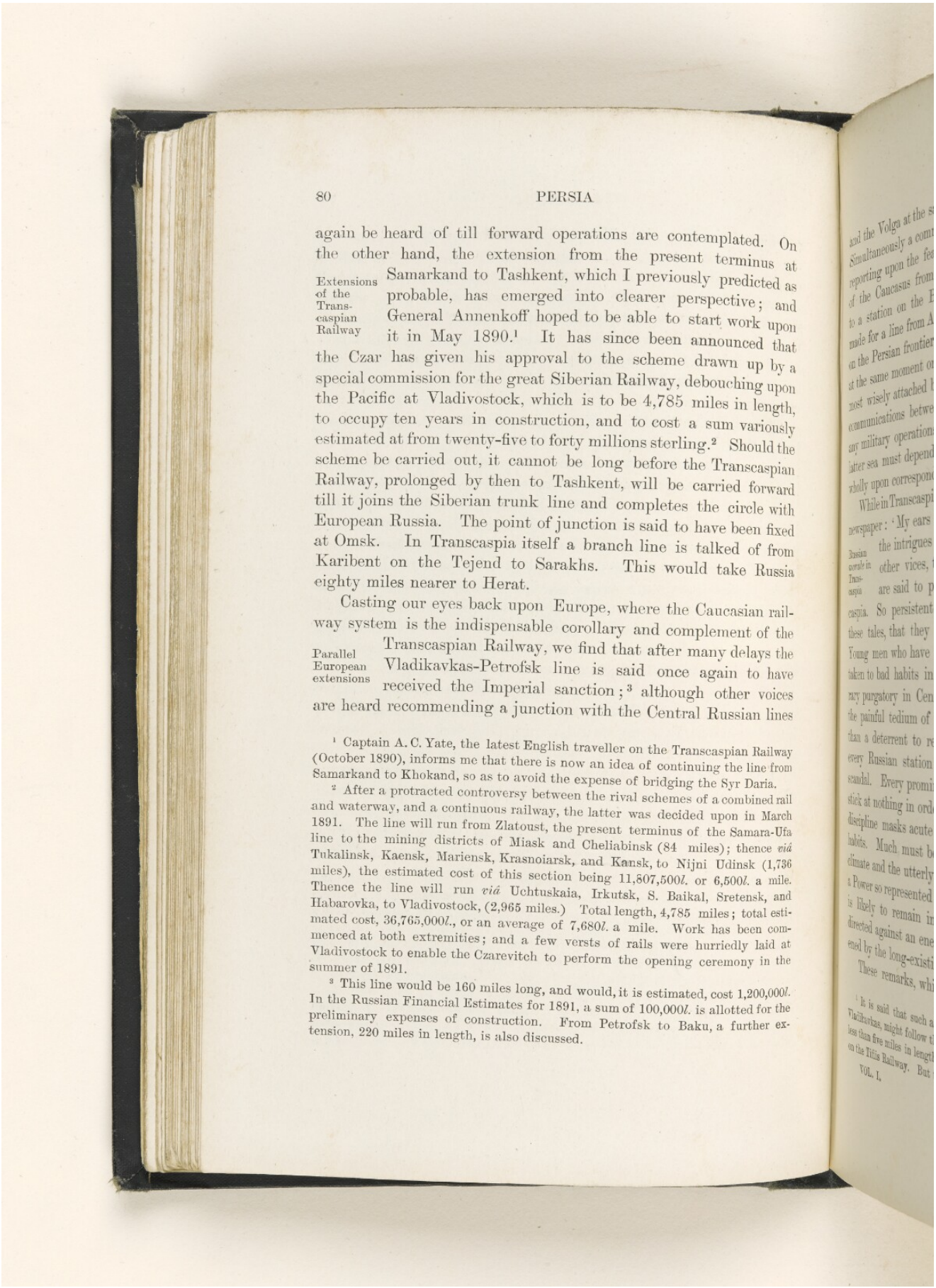




again be heard of till forward operations are contemplated. On the other hand, the extension from the present terminus at Samarkand to Tashkent, which I previously predicted as probable, has emerged into clearer perspective; and General Annenkoff hoped to be able to start work upon it in May 1890.[1] It has since been announced that the Czar has given his approval to the scheme drawn up by a special commission for the great Siberian Railway, debouching upon the Pacific at Vladivostock, which is to be 4,785 miles in length, to occupy ten years in construction, and to cost a sum variously estimated at from twenty-five to forty millions sterling.[2] Should the scheme be carried out, it cannot be long before the Transcaspian Railway, prolonged by then to Tashkent, will be carried forward till it joins the Siberian trunk line and completes the circle with European Russia. The point of junction is said to have been fixed at Omsk. In Transcaspia itself a branch line is talked of from Karibent on the Tejend to Sarakhs. This would take Russia eighty miles nearer to Herat.

Extensions of the Trans-caspian Railway

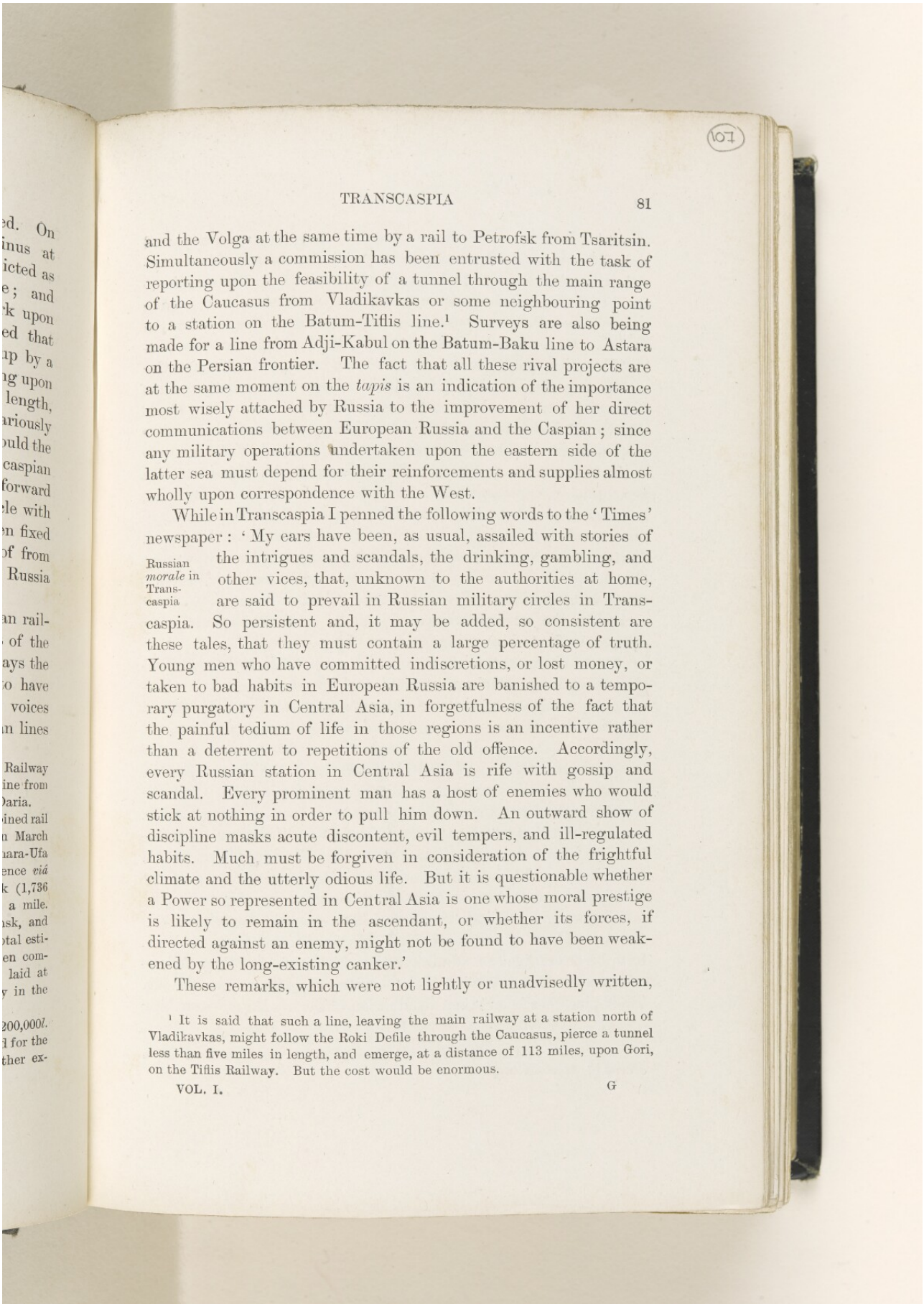
Casting our eyes back upon Europe, where the Caucasian railway system is the indispensable corollary and complement of the Transcaspian Railway, we find that after many delays the Vladikavkas-Petrofsk line is said once again to have received the Imperial sanction;[3] although other voices are heard recommending a junction with the Central Russian lines

Parallel European extensions

[1] Captain A. C. Yate, the latest English traveller on the Transcaspian Railway (October 1890), informs me that there is now an idea of continuing the line from Samarkand to Khokand, so as to avoid the expense of bridging the Syr Daria.

[2] After a protracted controversy between the rival schemes of a combined rail and waterway, and a continuous railway, the latter was decided upon in March 1891. The line will run from Zlatoust, the present terminus of the Samara-Ufa line to the mining districts of Miask and Cheliabinsk (84 miles); thence *viâ* Tukalinsk, Kaensk, Mariensk, Krasnoiarsk, and Kansk, to Nijni Udinsk (1,736 miles), the estimated cost of this section being 11,807,500*l.* or 6,500*l.* a mile. Thence the line will run *viâ* Uchtuskaia, Irkutsk, S. Baikal, Sretensk, and Habarovka, to Vladivostock, (2,965 miles.) Total length, 4,785 miles; total estimated cost, 36,765,000*l.*, or an average of 7,680*l.* a mile. Work has been commenced at both extremities; and a few versts of rails were hurriedly laid at Vladivostock to enable the Czarevitch to perform the opening ceremony in the summer of 1891.

[3] This line would be 160 miles long, and would, it is estimated, cost 1,200,000*l.* In the Russian Financial Estimates for 1891, a sum of 100,000*l.* is allotted for the preliminary expenses of construction. From Petrofsk to Baku, a further extension, 220 miles in length, is also discussed.





and the Volga at the same time by a rail to Petrofsk from Tsaritsin. Simultaneously a commission has been entrusted with the task of reporting upon the feasibility of a tunnel through the main range of the Caucasus from Vladikavkas or some neighbouring point to a station on the Batum-Tiflis line.[1] Surveys are also being made for a line from Adji-Kabul on the Batum-Baku line to Astara on the Persian frontier. The fact that all these rival projects are at the same moment on the *tapis* is an indication of the importance most wisely attached by Russia to the improvement of her direct communications between European Russia and the Caspian; since any military operations undertaken upon the eastern side of the latter sea must depend for their reinforcements and supplies almost wholly upon correspondence with the West.

Russian *morale* in Trans-caspia

While in Transcaspia I penned the following words to the 'Times' newspaper: 'My ears have been, as usual, assailed with stories of the intrigues and scandals, the drinking, gambling, and other vices, that, unknown to the authorities at home, are said to prevail in Russian military circles in Trans-caspia. So persistent and, it may be added, so consistent are these tales, that they must contain a large percentage of truth. Young men who have committed indiscretions, or lost money, or taken to bad habits in European Russia are banished to a temporary purgatory in Central Asia, in forgetfulness of the fact that the painful tedium of life in those regions is an incentive rather than a deterrent to repetitions of the old offence. Accordingly, every Russian station in Central Asia is rife with gossip and scandal. Every prominent man has a host of enemies who would stick at nothing in order to pull him down. An outward show of discipline masks acute discontent, evil tempers, and ill-regulated habits. Much must be forgiven in consideration of the frightful climate and the utterly odious life. But it is questionable whether a Power so represented in Central Asia is one whose moral prestige is likely to remain in the ascendant, or whether its forces, if directed against an enemy, might not be found to have been weakened by the long-existing canker.'

These remarks, which were not lightly or unadvisedly written,

[1] It is said that such a line, leaving the main railway at a station north of Vladikavkas, might follow the Roki Defile through the Caucasus, pierce a tunnel less than five miles in length, and emerge, at a distance of 113 miles, upon Gori, on the Tiflis Railway. But the cost would be enormous.



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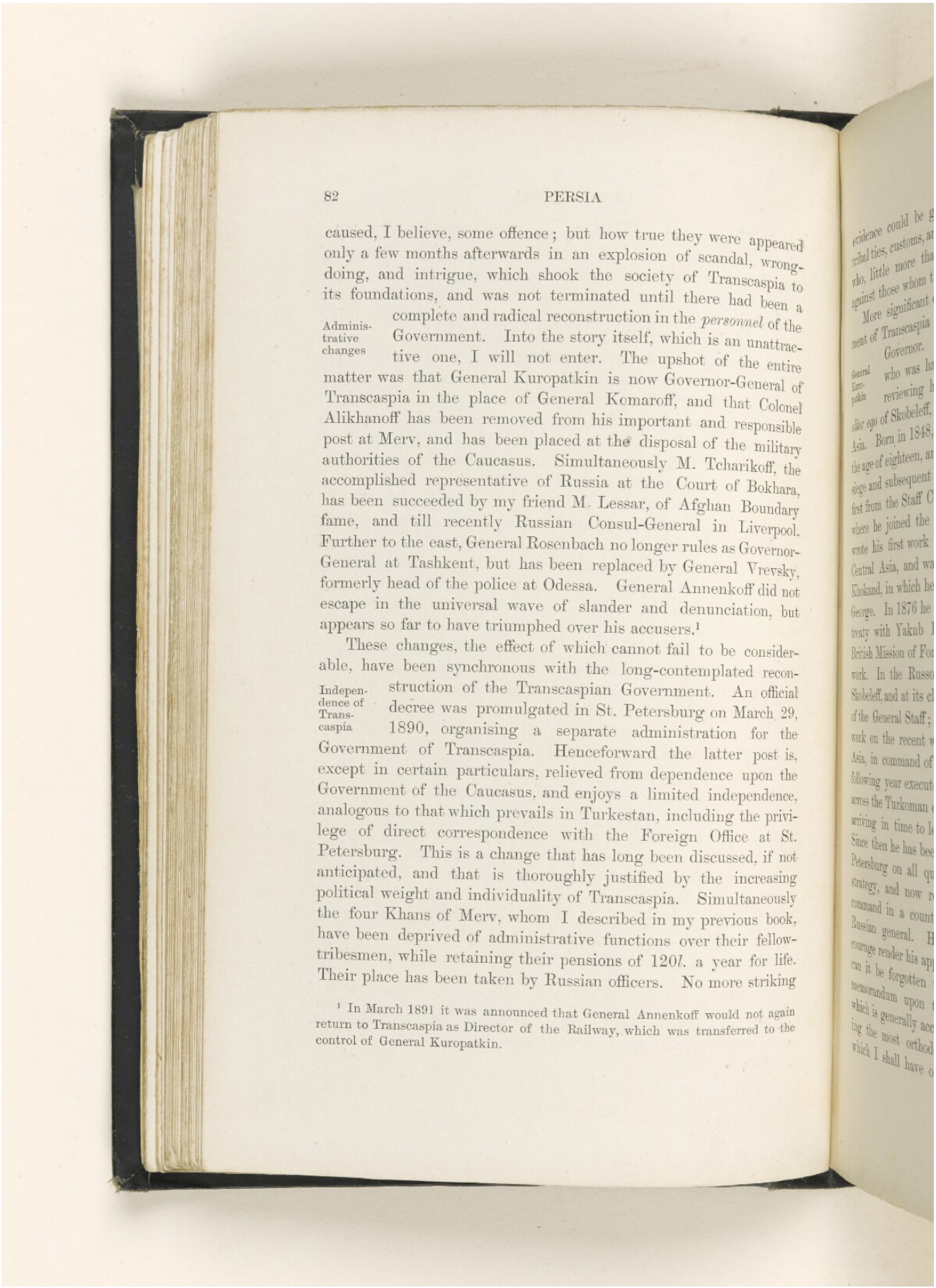




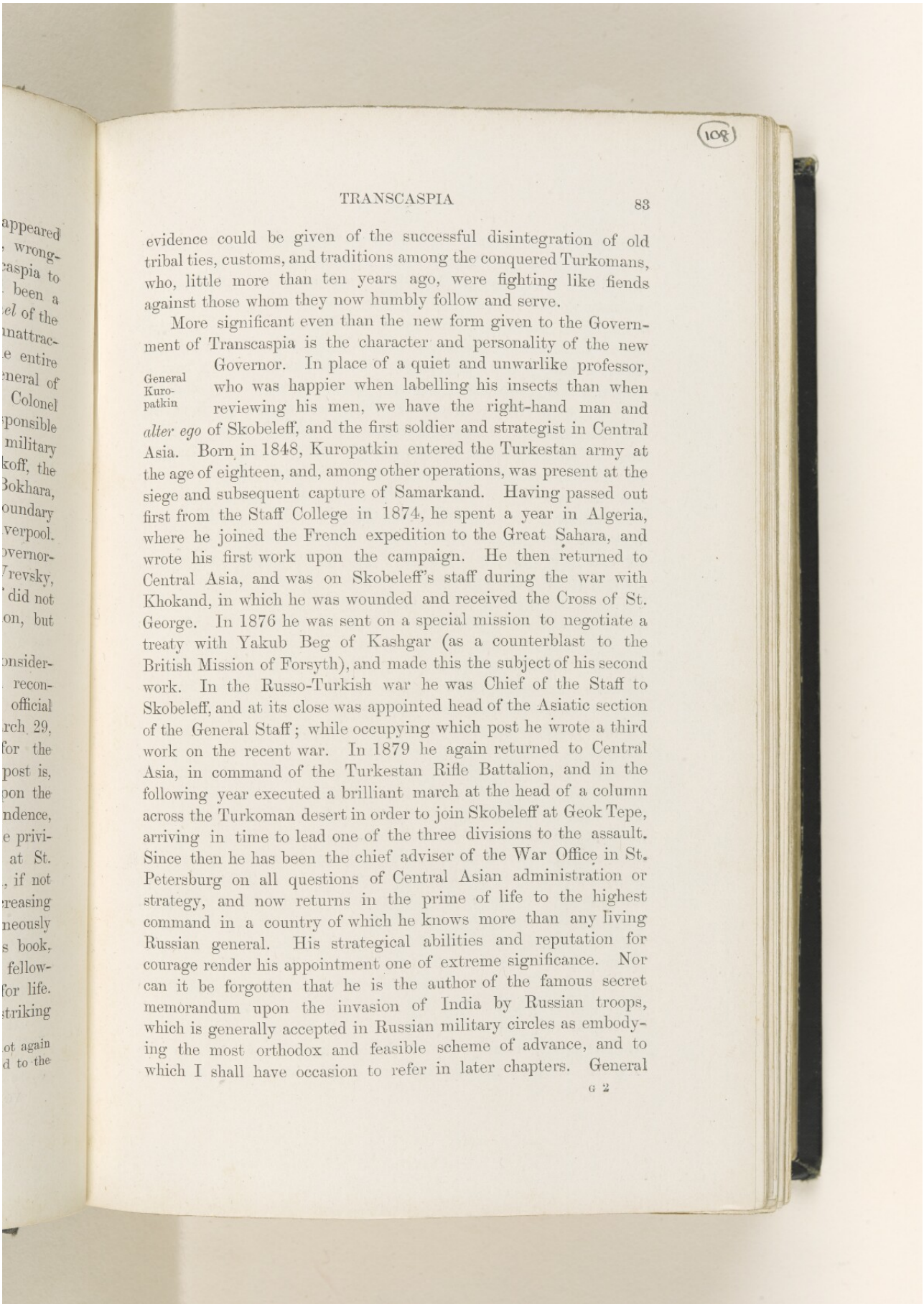
caused, I believe, some offence; but how true they were appeared only a few months afterwards in an explosion of scandal, wrong-doing, and intrigue, which shook the society of Transcaspia to its foundations, and was not terminated until there had been a complete and radical reconstruction in the *personnel* of the Government. Into the story itself, which is an unattractive one, I will not enter. The upshot of the entire matter was that General Kuropatkin is now Governor-General of Transcaspia in the place of General Komaroff, and that Colonel Alikhanoff has been removed from his important and responsible post at Merv, and has been placed at the disposal of the military authorities of the Caucasus. Simultaneously M. Tcharikoff, the accomplished representative of Russia at the Court of Bokhara, has been succeeded by my friend M. Lessar, of Afghan Boundary fame, and till recently Russian Consul-General in Liverpool. Further to the east, General Rosenbach no longer rules as Governor-General at Tashkent, but has been replaced by General Vrevsky, formerly head of the police at Odessa. General Annenkoff did not escape in the universal wave of slander and denunciation, but appears so far to have triumphed over his accusers.[1]

Administrative changes

These changes, the effect of which cannot fail to be considerable, have been synchronous with the long-contemplated reconstruction of the Transcaspian Government. An official decree was promulgated in St. Petersburg on March 29, 1890, organising a separate administration for the Government of Transcaspia. Henceforward the latter post is, except in certain particulars, relieved from dependence upon the Government of the Caucasus, and enjoys a limited independence, analogous to that which prevails in Turkestan, including the privilege of direct correspondence with the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg. This is a change that has long been discussed, if not anticipated, and that is thoroughly justified by the increasing political weight and individuality of Transcaspia. Simultaneously the four Khans of Merv, whom I described in my previous book, have been deprived of administrative functions over their fellow-tribesmen, while retaining their pensions of 120*l.* a year for life. Their place has been taken by Russian officers. No more striking

Independence of Transcaspia

[1] In March 1891 it was announced that General Annenkoff would not again return to Transcaspia as Director of the Railway, which was transferred to the control of General Kuropatkin.





evidence could be given of the successful disintegration of old tribal ties, customs, and traditions among the conquered Turkomans, who, little more than ten years ago, were fighting like fiends against those whom they now humbly follow and serve.

More significant even than the new form given to the Government of Transcaspia is the character and personality of the new Governor. In place of a quiet and unwarlike professor, who was happier when labelling his insects than when reviewing his men, we have the right-hand man and *alter ego* of Skobeleff, and the first soldier and strategist in Central Asia. Born in 1848, Kuropatkin entered the Turkestan army at the age of eighteen, and, among other operations, was present at the siege and subsequent capture of Samarkand. Having passed out first from the Staff College in 1874, he spent a year in Algeria, where he joined the French expedition to the Great Sahara, and wrote his first work upon the campaign. He then returned to Central Asia, and was on Skobeleff's staff during the war with Khokand, in which he was wounded and received the Cross of St. George. In 1876 he was sent on a special mission to negotiate a treaty with Yakub Beg of Kashgar (as a counterblast to the British Mission of Forsyth), and made this the subject of his second work. In the Russo-Turkish war he was Chief of the Staff to Skobeleff, and at its close was appointed head of the Asiatic section of the General Staff; while occupying which post he wrote a third work on the recent war. In 1879 he again returned to Central Asia, in command of the Turkestan Rifle Battalion, and in the following year executed a brilliant march at the head of a column across the Turkoman desert in order to join Skobeleff at Geok Tepe, arriving in time to lead one of the three divisions to the assault. Since then he has been the chief adviser of the War Office in St. Petersburg on all questions of Central Asian administration or strategy, and now returns in the prime of life to the highest command in a country of which he knows more than any living Russian general. His strategical abilities and reputation for courage render his appointment one of extreme significance. Nor can it be forgotten that he is the author of the famous secret memorandum upon the invasion of India by Russian troops, which is generally accepted in Russian military circles as embodying the most orthodox and feasible scheme of advance, and to which I shall have occasion to refer in later chapters. General

General Kuropatkin



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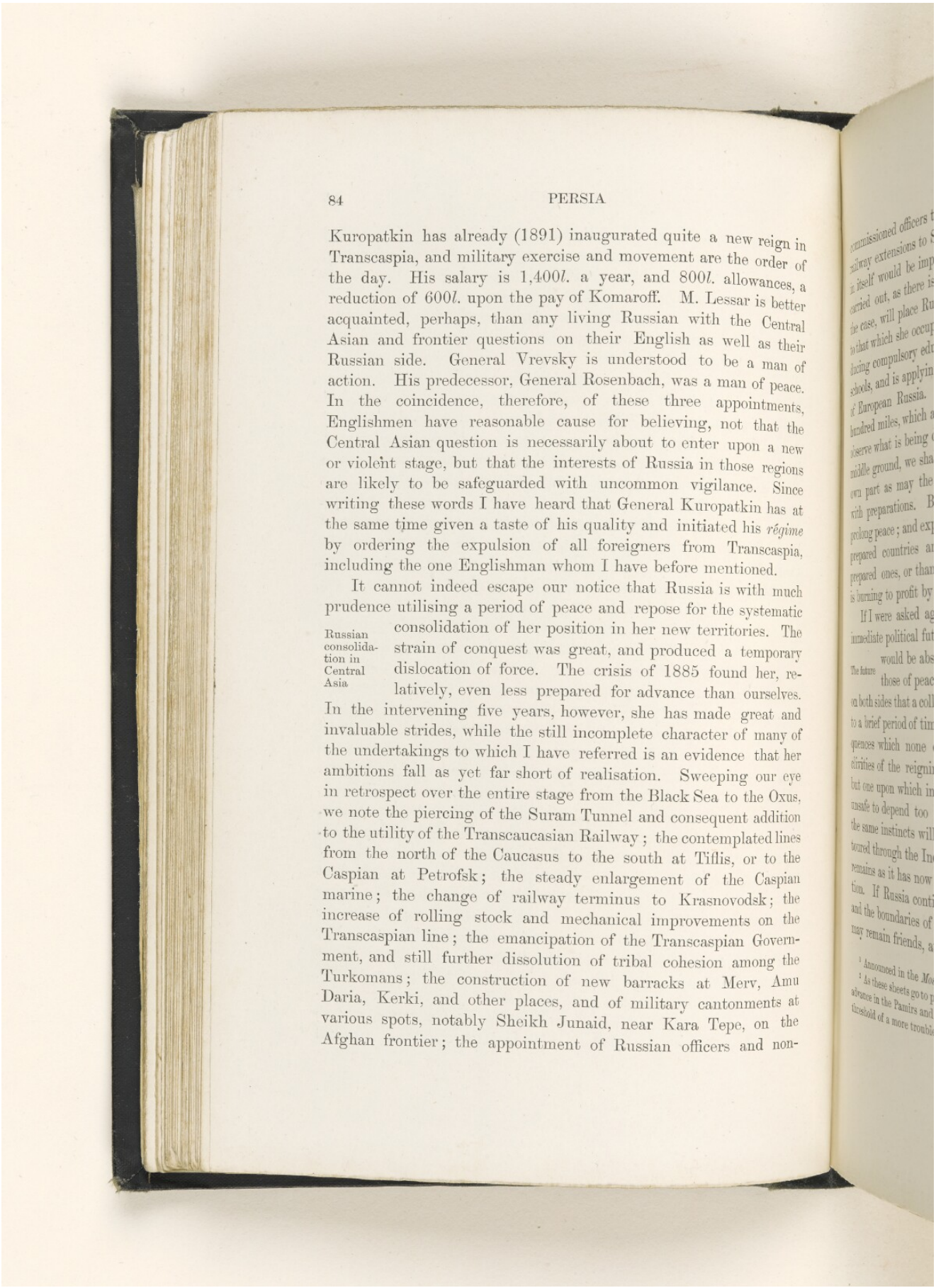
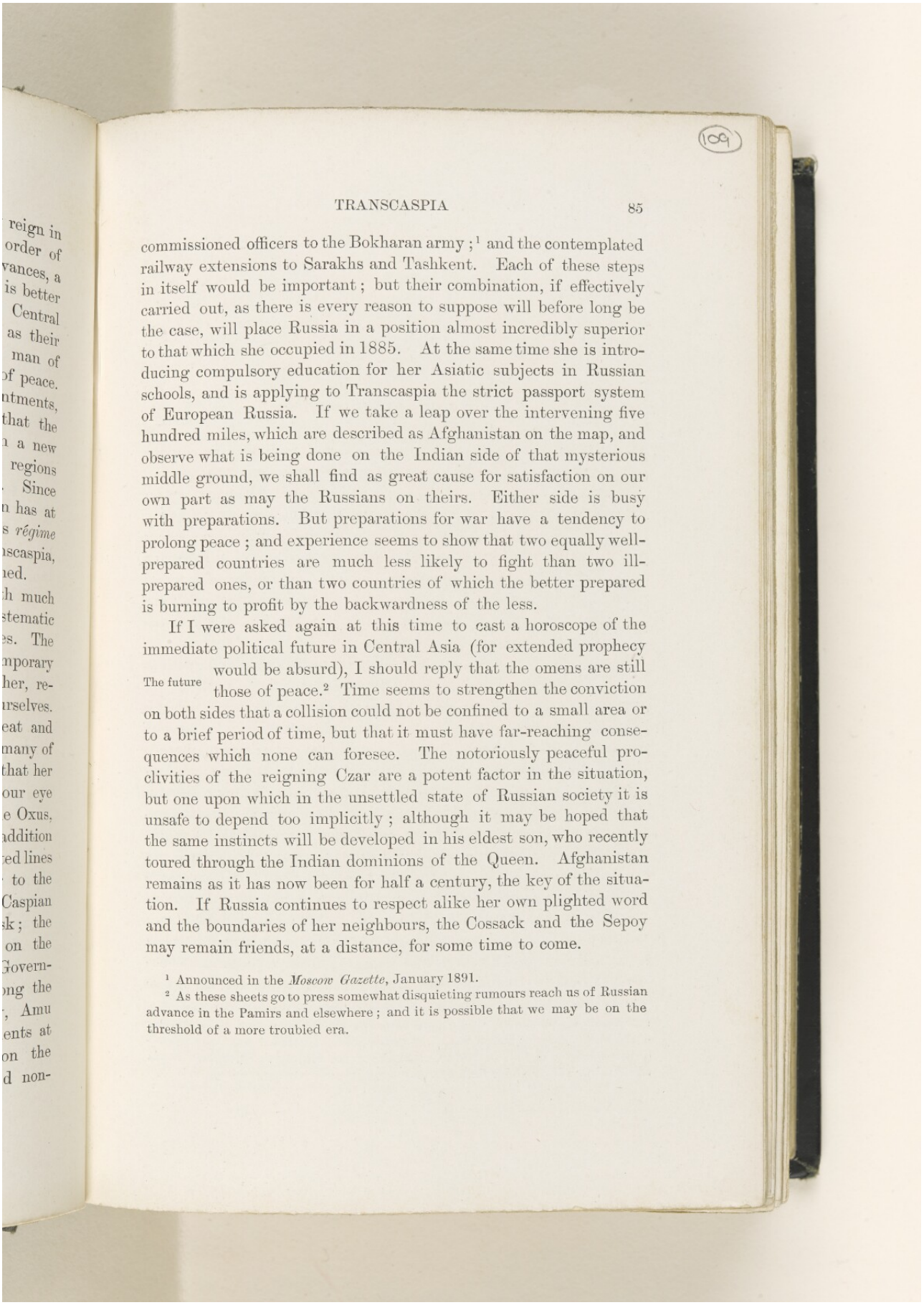




Kuropatkin has already (1891) inaugurated quite a new reign in Transcaspia, and military exercise and movement are the order of the day. His salary is 1,400*l.* a year, and 800*l.* allowances, a reduction of 600*l.* upon the pay of Komaroff. M. Lessar is better acquainted, perhaps, than any living Russian with the Central Asian and frontier questions on their English as well as their Russian side. General Vrevsky is understood to be a man of action. His predecessor, General Rosenbach, was a man of peace. In the coincidence, therefore, of these three appointments, Englishmen have reasonable cause for believing, not that the Central Asian question is necessarily about to enter upon a new or violent stage, but that the interests of Russia in those regions are likely to be safeguarded with uncommon vigilance. Since writing these words I have heard that General Kuropatkin has at the same time given a taste of his quality and initiated his *régime* by ordering the expulsion of all foreigners from Transcaspia, including the one Englishman whom I have before mentioned.

Russian consolidation in Central Asia

It cannot indeed escape our notice that Russia is with much prudence utilising a period of peace and repose for the systematic consolidation of her position in her new territories. The strain of conquest was great, and produced a temporary dislocation of force. The crisis of 1885 found her, relatively, even less prepared for advance than ourselves. In the intervening five years, however, she has made great and invaluable strides, while the still incomplete character of many of the undertakings to which I have referred is an evidence that her ambitions fall as yet far short of realisation. Sweeping our eye in retrospect over the entire stage from the Black Sea to the Oxus, we note the piercing of the Suram Tunnel and consequent addition to the utility of the Transcaucasian Railway; the contemplated lines from the north of the Caucasus to the south at Tiflis, or to the Caspian at Petrofsk; the steady enlargement of the Caspian marine; the change of railway terminus to Krasnovodsk; the increase of rolling stock and mechanical improvements on the Transcaspian line; the emancipation of the Transcaspian Government, and still further dissolution of tribal cohesion among the Turkomans; the construction of new barracks at Merv, Amu Daria, Kerki, and other places, and of military cantonments at various spots, notably Sheikh Junaid, near Kara Tepe, on the Afghan frontier; the appointment of Russian officers and non-





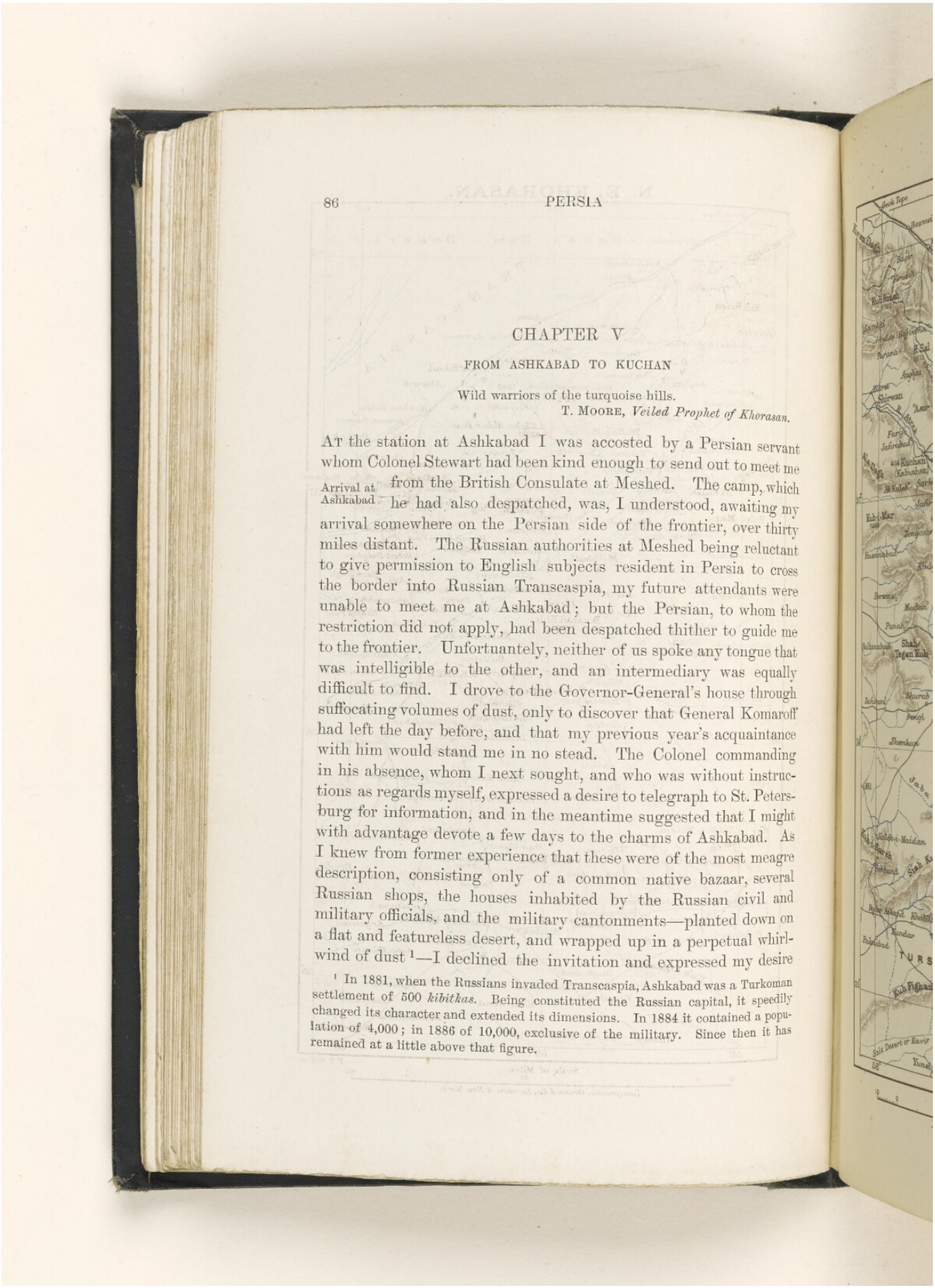
commissioned officers to the Bokharan army ;[1] and the contemplated railway extensions to Sarakhs and Tashkent. Each of these steps in itself would be important ; but their combination, if effectively carried out, as there is every reason to suppose will before long be the case, will place Russia in a position almost incredibly superior to that which she occupied in 1885. At the same time she is introducing compulsory education for her Asiatic subjects in Russian schools, and is applying to Transcaspia the strict passport system of European Russia. If we take a leap over the intervening five hundred miles, which are described as Afghanistan on the map, and observe what is being done on the Indian side of that mysterious middle ground, we shall find as great cause for satisfaction on our own part as may the Russians on theirs. Either side is busy with preparations. But preparations for war have a tendency to prolong peace ; and experience seems to show that two equally well-prepared countries are much less likely to fight than two ill-prepared ones, or than two countries of which the better prepared is burning to profit by the backwardness of the less.

If I were asked again at this time to cast a horoscope of the immediate political future in Central Asia (for extended prophecy would be absurd), I should reply that the omens are still those of peace.[2] Time seems to strengthen the conviction on both sides that a collision could not be confined to a small area or to a brief period of time, but that it must have far-reaching consequences which none can foresee. The notoriously peaceful proclivities of the reigning Czar are a potent factor in the situation, but one upon which in the unsettled state of Russian society it is unsafe to depend too implicitly ; although it may be hoped that the same instincts will be developed in his eldest son, who recently toured through the Indian dominions of the Queen. Afghanistan remains as it has now been for half a century, the key of the situation. If Russia continues to respect alike her own plighted word and the boundaries of her neighbours, the Cossack and the Sepoy may remain friends, at a distance, for some time to come.

The future

[1] Announced in the *Moscow Gazette*, January 1891.

[2] As these sheets go to press somewhat disquieting rumours reach us of Russian advance in the Pamirs and elsewhere ; and it is possible that we may be on the threshold of a more troubled era.





## CHAPTER V

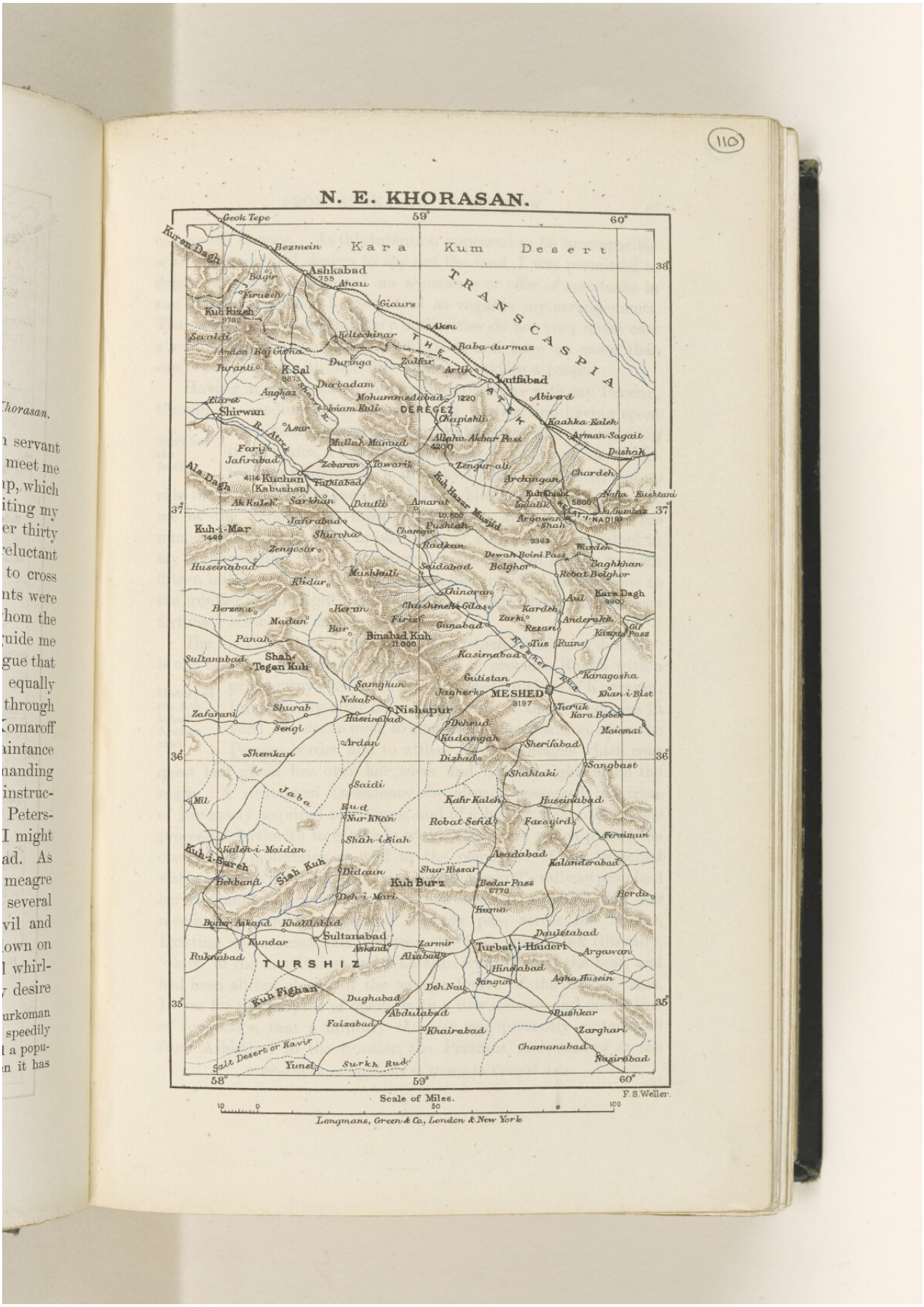
### FROM ASHKABAD TO KUCHAN

Wild warriors of the turquoise hills.
T. MOORE, *Veiled Prophet of Khorasan.*

AT the station at Ashkabad I was accosted by a Persian servant whom Colonel Stewart had been kind enough to send out to meet me from the British Consulate at Meshed. The camp, which he had also despatched, was, I understood, awaiting my arrival somewhere on the Persian side of the frontier, over thirty miles distant. The Russian authorities at Meshed being reluctant to give permission to English subjects resident in Persia to cross the border into Russian Transcaspia, my future attendants were unable to meet me at Ashkabad; but the Persian, to whom the restriction did not apply, had been despatched thither to guide me to the frontier. Unfortuantely, neither of us spoke any tongue that was intelligible to the other, and an intermediary was equally difficult to find. I drove to the Governor-General's house through suffocating volumes of dust, only to discover that General Komaroff had left the day before, and that my previous year's acquaintance with him would stand me in no stead. The Colonel commanding in his absence, whom I next sought, and who was without instructions as regards myself, expressed a desire to telegraph to St. Petersburg for information, and in the meantime suggested that I might with advantage devote a few days to the charms of Ashkabad. As I knew from former experience that these were of the most meagre description, consisting only of a common native bazaar, several Russian shops, the houses inhabited by the Russian civil and military officials, and the military cantonments—planted down on a flat and featureless desert, and wrapped up in a perpetual whirlwind of dust [1]—I declined the invitation and expressed my desire

Arrival at Ashkabad

[1] In 1881, when the Russians invaded Transcaspia, Ashkabad was a Turkoman settlement of 500 *kibitkas*. Being constituted the Russian capital, it speedily changed its character and extended its dimensions. In 1884 it contained a population of 4,000; in 1886 of 10,000, exclusive of the military. Since then it has remained at a little above that figure.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N. E. KHORASAN.
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Ashkabad
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Kuh Rizeh
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Kelteshinar
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Lutfabad
Abivard
Mohammedabad
DEREGEZ
Chapishli
Shirwan
Asar
Kaakha Kaleh
Arman Sagait
Dushak
Mullah Mamud
Allahu Akbar Pass
Zobaran
Tawarik
Zengur-ali
Archingan
Chardeh
Ala Dagh
Kuchan
(Kabushan)
Fathiabad
Ak Kaleh
Sankhan
Doulib
Amarat
Kuh Hazar Masjid
Jafirabad
Argawan
Shah
Kuh-i-Mar
Shuroha
Chamgir
Bushtalo
Radkan
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Wardeh
Baghkhan
Huseinabad
Khidar
Maskhali
Seidabad
Bolghor
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Chinaran
Aul
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Zarki
Anderakh
Madan
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Gunabad
Rezan
Kuzgar Pass
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Bar
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Tus (Ruins)
Sultanabad
Shah Tegan Kuh
Kasimabad
Gulistan
Karagosha
Samghun
Jagherk
MESHED
Khan-i-Bist
Nekab
Nishapur
Turuk
Kara Bobek
Zafarani
Shurab
Haseinabad
Serigi
Deh-rud
Maiomai
Kadamgah
Ardan
Sherifabad
Shemkan
Dizbad
Sangbast
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Huseinabad
Nur Khan
Robat Seid
Farayird
Feraimun
Kaleh-i-Maidan
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Asadabad
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Siah Kuh
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Shur Hissar
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Dauletabad
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TURSHIZ
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Hindabad
Agha Husein
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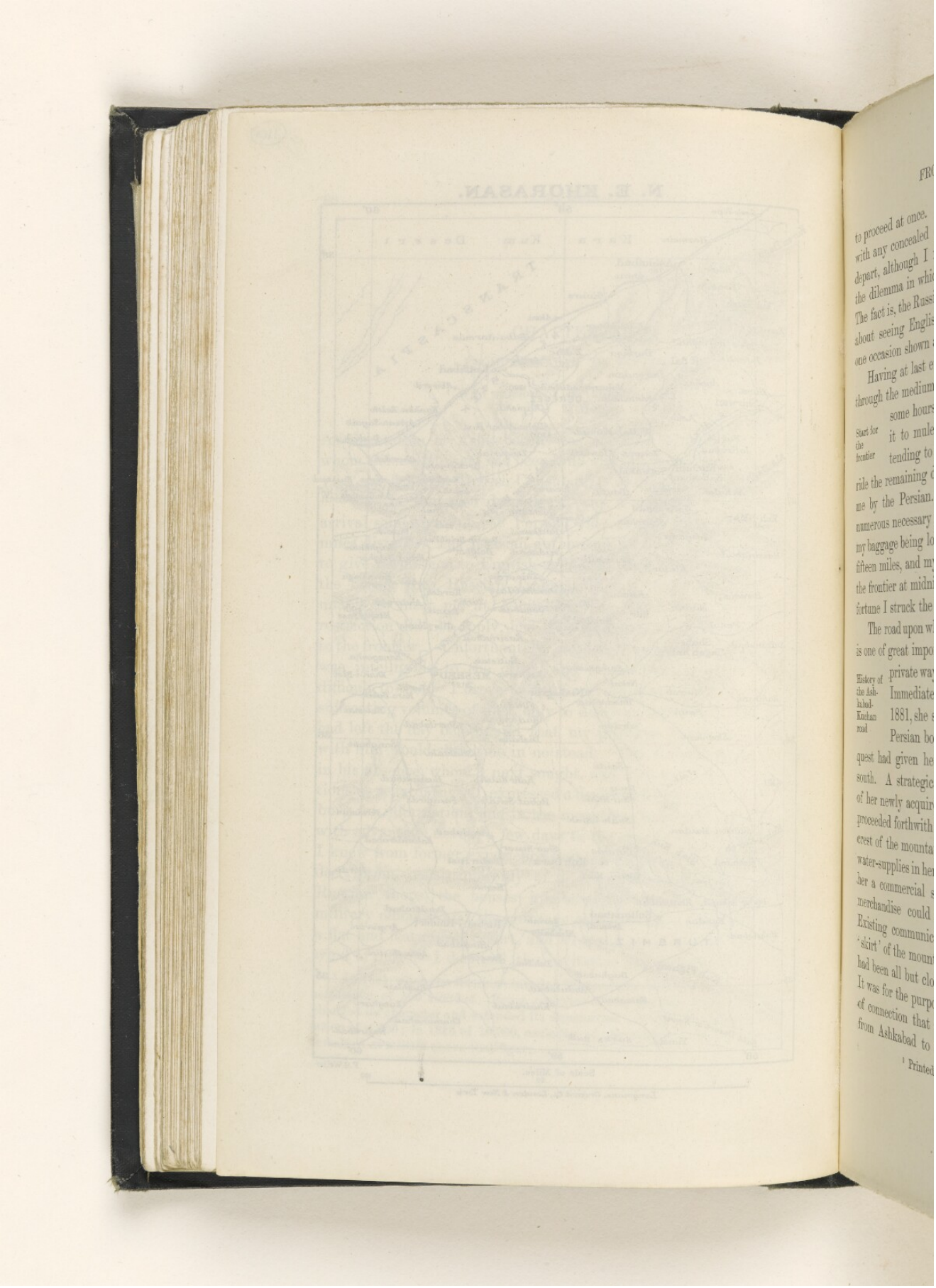

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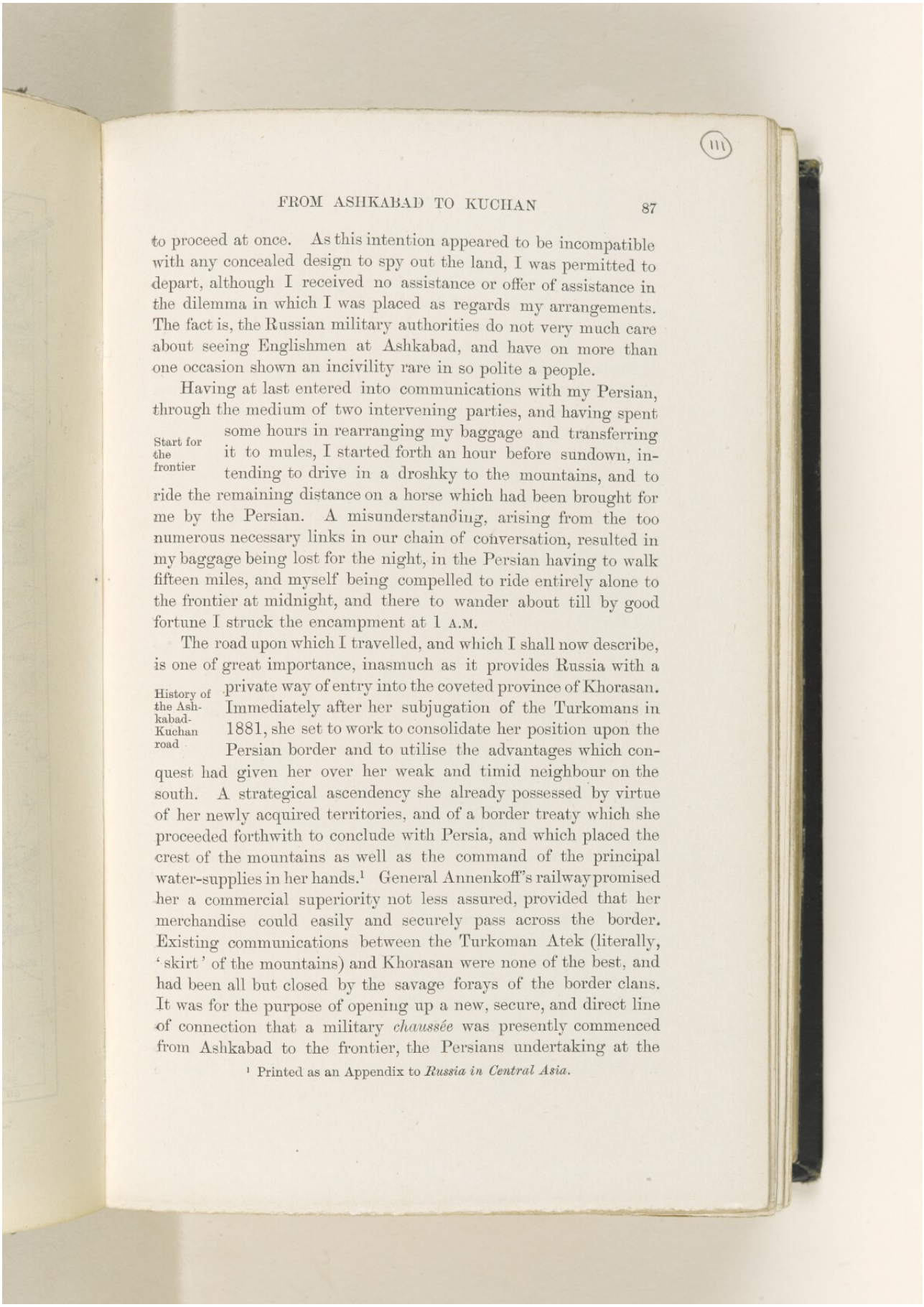



to proceed at once. As this intention appeared to be incompatible with any concealed design to spy out the land, I was permitted to depart, although I received no assistance or offer of assistance in the dilemma in which I was placed as regards my arrangements. The fact is, the Russian military authorities do not very much care about seeing Englishmen at Ashkabad, and have on more than one occasion shown an incivility rare in so polite a people.

Start for the frontier

Having at last entered into communications with my Persian, through the medium of two intervening parties, and having spent some hours in rearranging my baggage and transferring it to mules, I started forth an hour before sundown, intending to drive in a droshky to the mountains, and to ride the remaining distance on a horse which had been brought for me by the Persian. A misunderstanding, arising from the too numerous necessary links in our chain of conversation, resulted in my baggage being lost for the night, in the Persian having to walk fifteen miles, and myself being compelled to ride entirely alone to the frontier at midnight, and there to wander about till by good fortune I struck the encampment at 1 A.M.

History of the Ashkabad-Kuchan road

The road upon which I travelled, and which I shall now describe, is one of great importance, inasmuch as it provides Russia with a private way of entry into the coveted province of Khorasan. Immediately after her subjugation of the Turkomans in 1881, she set to work to consolidate her position upon the Persian border and to utilise the advantages which conquest had given her over her weak and timid neighbour on the south. A strategical ascendency she already possessed by virtue of her newly acquired territories, and of a border treaty which she proceeded forthwith to conclude with Persia, and which placed the crest of the mountains as well as the command of the principal water-supplies in her hands.[1] General Annenkoff's railway promised her a commercial superiority not less assured, provided that her merchandise could easily and securely pass across the border. Existing communications between the Turkoman Atek (literally, 'skirt' of the mountains) and Khorasan were none of the best, and had been all but closed by the savage forays of the border clans. It was for the purpose of opening up a new, secure, and direct line of connection that a military *chaussée* was presently commenced from Ashkabad to the frontier, the Persians undertaking at the

[1] Printed as an Appendix to *Russia in Central Asia*.

same time to co-operate in the amicable enterprise by constructing a similar road upon their side of the boundary which should meet the Russian road, and eventually link Ashkabad by a carriageable highway with Kuchan and Meshed. The Persian section of the road was entrusted to General Gasteiger Khan, an Austrian Engineer officer in the service of the Shah. Before the close of 1888 the Russian section, thirty miles in length, had reached the frontier; but the Persian, it is needless to add, had scarcely been commenced and showed no signs of progress. Irritated at this delay, and at the advantage presumed to have been gained by Great Britain in the Karun Concession of 1888, Russia now put on the screw at the Persian Court; and, among the stipulations of a secret agreement which has not been divulged, insisted upon the immediate completion of the Ashkabad-Kuchan road. The Shah did not relish the injunction, but was powerless to resist. General Gasteiger Khan was relieved of his office, it being variously alleged that he had quarrelled with the Governor-General of Khorasan, and that he had been found secretly corresponding with the Russians; and the contract was entrusted to the Malek-et-Tajar or Head of the Merchants' Guild at Meshed, who undertook to complete the work in a year at a cost of 13,000*l*., receiving in return a concession of the rest-houses, wells, and collection of tolls along the route. This was the situation when I travelled upon the road in the beginning of October 1889.

Leaving Ashkabad in a southerly direction, the road strikes across the plain towards the mountains. It is of uniform width, twenty-five feet, and, although near the town it was full of holes, yet the gradients, even in the steepest parts, are such as to render it easily available for the passage of artillery. At a distance of eight miles it reaches the foot of the hills and then winds up a lateral valley parallel to the axis of the main range of the Kopet Dagh. Later on an ascent in zigzags commences, leading, at a distance of fifteen miles, into a narrow mountain gorge, at whose bottom is a stony torrent bed, empty when I passed it, but evidently liable to a sudden rush of water in times of melting snow or flood. It must be economy rather than any practical object that has induced the Russians to cross and recross this torrent-bed, not by bridges, but by a rough stone causeway built through the channel itself, and already in many places broken up and swept away. A second series of zigzags leads, at about the

Russian section



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twenty-fifth mile, into a desolate upland valley, across which the road runs in a dreary line until, again passing into the hills, it reaches the Russian village of Baj Girha (literally, 'Takers of the Tolls'), previously known as Andan, at about one mile beyond which the crest is mounted that marks the boundary between Russian and Persian territory. Neither on the road nor at the frontier were there any Russian soldiers, though the Chief of the Staff at Ashkabad had presented me with an order for passing any



PERSIAN BAJ GIRHA

that I might encounter. The fact is, Russia can afford to leave this portion of her Asiatic frontier absolutely unguarded, aggression from Persia being out of the question, and none but Russians or natives going the other way. Near the end of the road, however, and at a short distance from the frontier, I found a large rectangular stone building in course of construction, which is, I believe, to serve the purposes of a guard- and rest-house combined. The Persian Baj Girha, where there is a Custom-house at which dues are levied on caravans from Ashkabad, is a small village of mud

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huts, clinging to the hill side, at about two miles from the frontier down a valley; and here it was that, stumbling along on foot with my bridle on my arm, I fortunately struck my camp. A glorious moon, idealising the gaunt and sombre landscape, had cheered my solitary ride and guided me to my destination. There was not an atom of verdure on the brown bleak hills; and not a sign or sound of life on the road except a rare caravan moving with music of camel-bells through the silence.

The mountain range through which I had been passing, in whose spurs and branches I spent another two days before reaching Kuchan, and in whose rugged eastern ramifications I was to wander for the ten days following, is the eastern prolongation of the great Elburz range that runs like a mighty rock wall along the entire northern border of Persia. Connected with the Caucasian system upon the west, it follows at distances varying from ten to thirty miles the south coast line of the Caspian, throwing up on its way the prodigious peak of Demavend (19,400 ft.), until, temporarily arrested in the valley of the Gurgan beyond Astrabad, it assumes a new lease of vigour in the knotted mountain ridges that stand one behind the other like infantry files, with an axis pointing from north-west to south-east, in the middle district between the Turkoman plains and the northern skirts of the Great Persian Desert. Further on the connection is as distinct with the misnamed Paropamisan range above Herat, itself a western continuation of the tremendous Hindu Kush. In the region under examination, the border ranges on the north are known by the names of the Kuren Dagh and Kopet Dagh, whilst the main and still higher inland ridge, enclosing the valley of the Atrek on the south, bears the successive names of Ala Dagh and Binalud Kuh. The upland valleys concealed between these parallel barriers have an average elevation of 4,000 feet, and are dominated by peaks that claim an altitude of from 8,000 to 11,000 feet. It is said that in Khorasan alone there are not less than sixteen summits which answer to this description. Nothing can exceed the bleak sterility of their outward form. Unredeemed by any verdure but a stunted and scanty growth of juniper, watered by few springs, and with little or no soil upon the slopes, the grey limestone tells with frank and forbidding effrontery its remote geological tale. It was not out of keeping with the chill and savage character of these hills that until the last decade they were

The Border Mountains

the chosen haunt of rapine and murder, the Turkoman man-hunters sweeping down like a flame through their sullen gorges, and falling with sword and musket upon the villages and flocks that presumed to survive their repeated devastations.

Projected railroad

It was said, when the Russians began to build the Ashkabad-Kuchan road, that they contemplated in the future laying upon it a line of rails—whether a railroad or a steam tramway—that should facilitate their connection with Meshed. As has been pointed out to me, however, by an English Engineer officer who has inspected the work, such cannot possibly be the case, the zigzags by which the ridges are surmounted being of a character with which, in their present condition, no railroad in the world could grapple; while the same may be said of many of the angles on the Persian section of the road between Baj Girha and Kuchan. It would be easy enough to lay a line of rails from Kuchan to Meshed, where the track would run upon a level plain. But no purpose would be served by such an outlay; and it is more probable, as will be pointed out later on, that, if Meshed is to be brought into correspondence with the Russian railway system, it will be from the opposite direction.

From Baj Girha there are two short marches, *viâ* Durbadam and Imam Kuli, to Kuchan. The distance is said to be 12 *farsakhs*, nominally 48 miles. I reckon the stages, however, from Ashkabad as follows:

| | Miles |
|---|---|
| Ashkabad to Baj Girha . . . . . | 30 |
| Baj Girha to Persian Do. . . . . | 2 |
| Persian Do. to Imam Kuli . . . . . | 21 |
| Imam Kuli to Kuchan . . . . . | 23 |
| Total . . | 76 |

Persian section of the road

Between the frontier and Kuchan, the present camel and mule track does not follow precisely the same line as will the *chaussée*. The latter, it is understood, will make a *détour* by Aughaz, and will avoid other steep or difficult places. Nevertheless, I kept continually striking upon the incomplete works, small segments of the road being finished, others only marked out, and others again in the hands of the workmen. I met some hundreds of these in batches,[1] blasting the rocks, or building unsubstantial bridges, which will probably be destroyed by the first flood. A German engineer had been engaged to infuse

[1] Their wages were about 6½*d.* a day.

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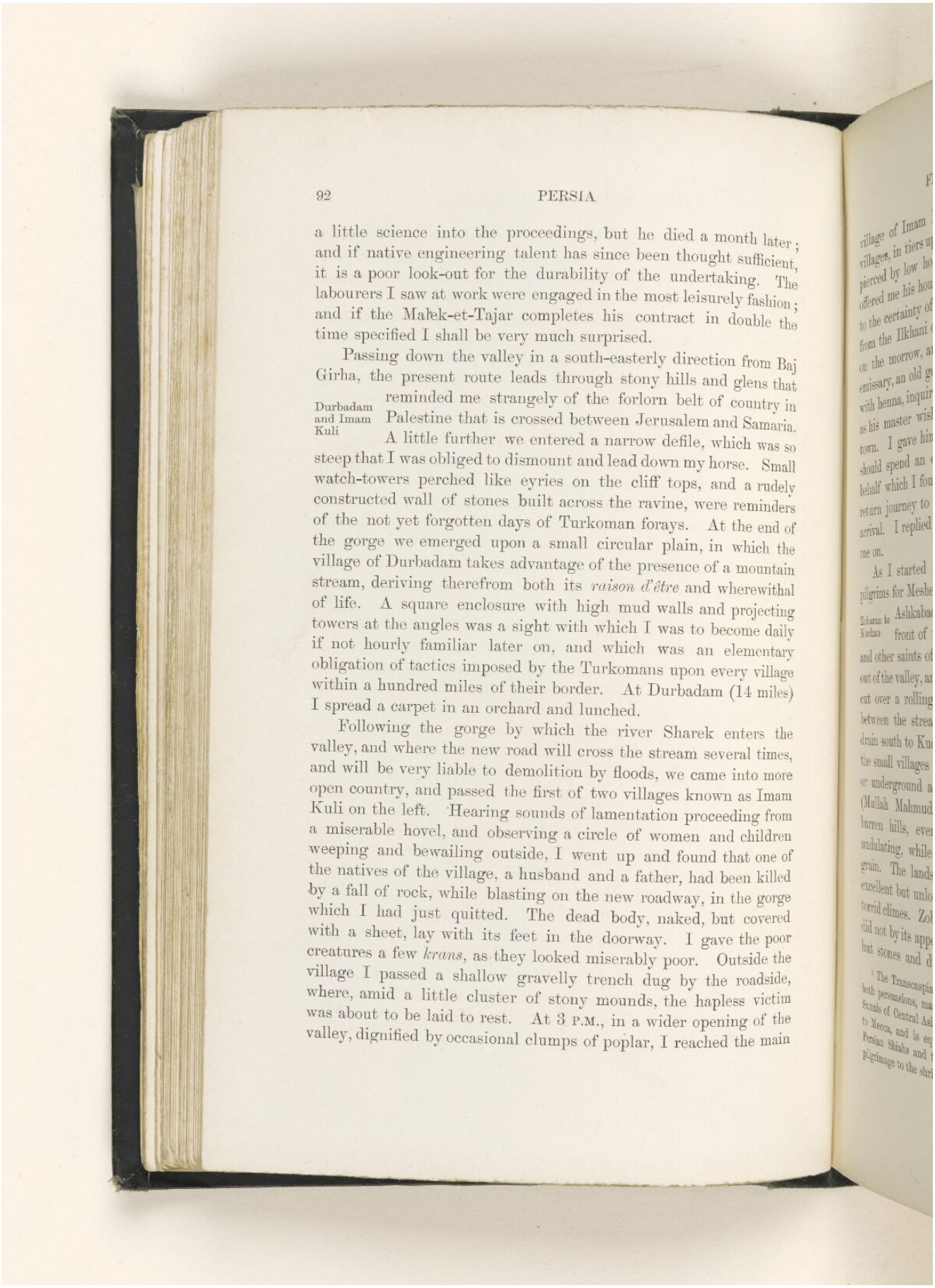


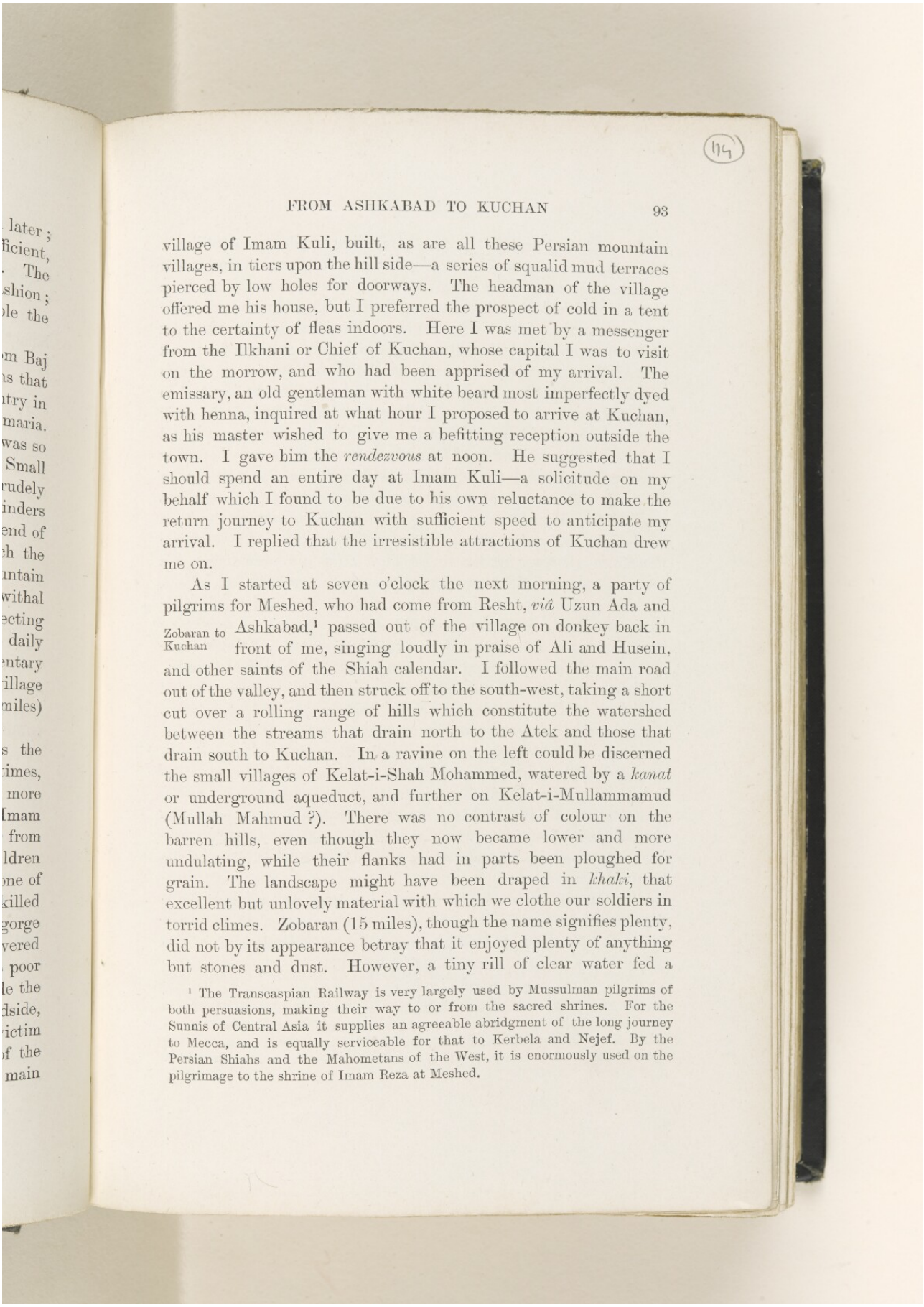


a little science into the proceedings, but he died a month later; and if native engineering talent has since been thought sufficient, it is a poor look-out for the durability of the undertaking. The labourers I saw at work were engaged in the most leisurely fashion; and if the Malek-et-Tajar completes his contract in double the time specified I shall be very much surprised.

Passing down the valley in a south-easterly direction from Baj Girha, the present route leads through stony hills and glens that reminded me strangely of the forlorn belt of country in Palestine that is crossed between Jerusalem and Samaria. A little further we entered a narrow defile, which was so steep that I was obliged to dismount and lead down my horse. Small watch-towers perched like eyries on the cliff tops, and a rudely constructed wall of stones built across the ravine, were reminders of the not yet forgotten days of Turkoman forays. At the end of the gorge we emerged upon a small circular plain, in which the village of Durbadam takes advantage of the presence of a mountain stream, deriving therefrom both its *raison d'être* and wherewithal of life. A square enclosure with high mud walls and projecting towers at the angles was a sight with which I was to become daily if not hourly familiar later on, and which was an elementary obligation of tactics imposed by the Turkomans upon every village within a hundred miles of their border. At Durbadam (14 miles) I spread a carpet in an orchard and lunched.

Durbadam and Imam Kuli

Following the gorge by which the river Sharek enters the valley, and where the new road will cross the stream several times, and will be very liable to demolition by floods, we came into more open country, and passed the first of two villages known as Imam Kuli on the left. Hearing sounds of lamentation proceeding from a miserable hovel, and observing a circle of women and children weeping and bewailing outside, I went up and found that one of the natives of the village, a husband and a father, had been killed by a fall of rock, while blasting on the new roadway, in the gorge which I had just quitted. The dead body, naked, but covered with a sheet, lay with its feet in the doorway. I gave the poor creatures a few *krans*, as they looked miserably poor. Outside the village I passed a shallow gravelly trench dug by the roadside, where, amid a little cluster of stony mounds, the hapless victim was about to be laid to rest. At 3 P.M., in a wider opening of the valley, dignified by occasional clumps of poplar, I reached the main



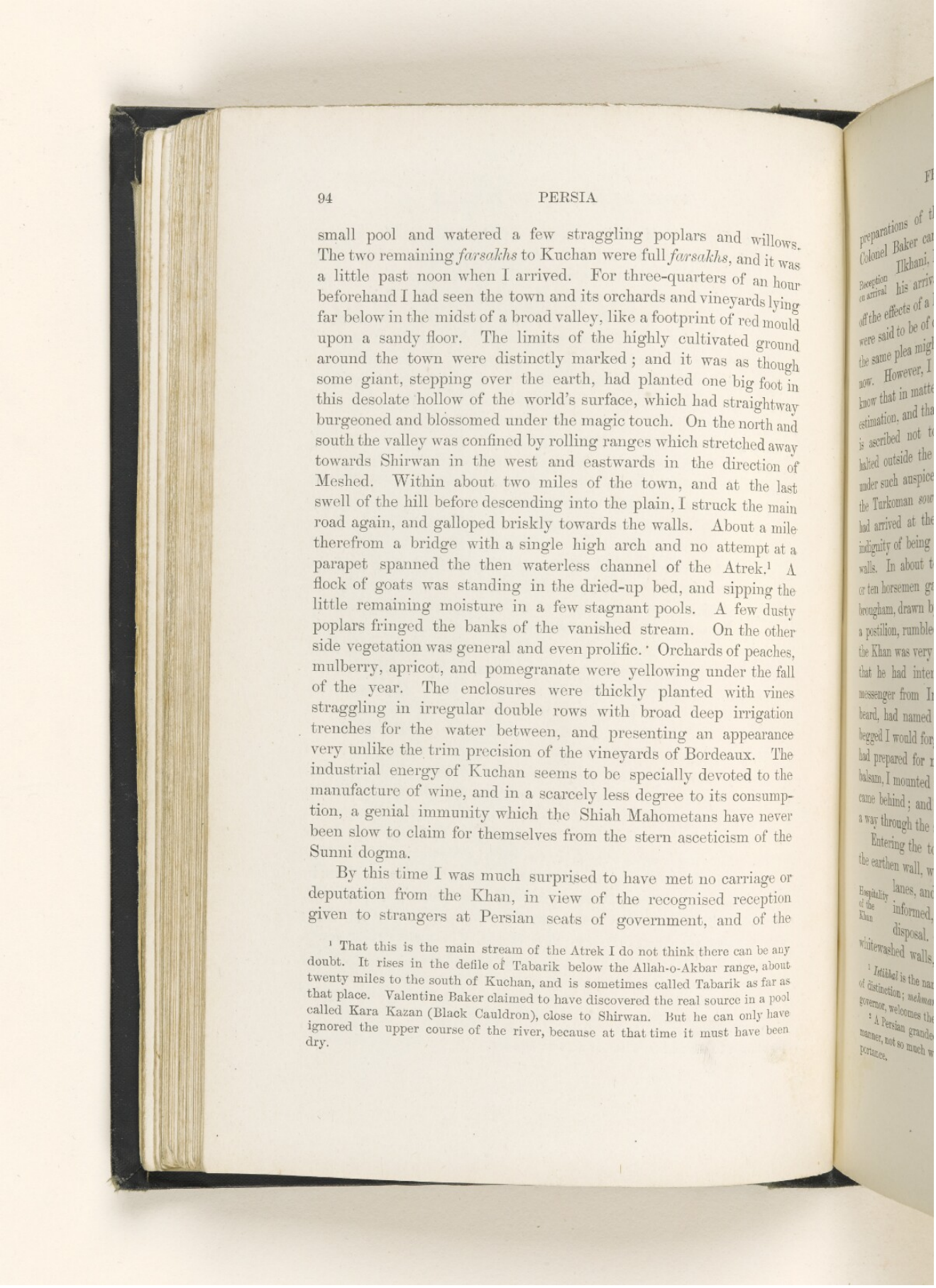


village of Imam Kuli, built, as are all these Persian mountain villages, in tiers upon the hill side—a series of squalid mud terraces pierced by low holes for doorways. The headman of the village offered me his house, but I preferred the prospect of cold in a tent to the certainty of fleas indoors. Here I was met by a messenger from the Ilkhani or Chief of Kuchan, whose capital I was to visit on the morrow, and who had been apprised of my arrival. The emissary, an old gentleman with white beard most imperfectly dyed with henna, inquired at what hour I proposed to arrive at Kuchan, as his master wished to give me a befitting reception outside the town. I gave him the *rendezvous* at noon. He suggested that I should spend an entire day at Imam Kuli—a solicitude on my behalf which I found to be due to his own reluctance to make the return journey to Kuchan with sufficient speed to anticipate my arrival. I replied that the irresistible attractions of Kuchan drew me on.

As I started at seven o'clock the next morning, a party of pilgrims for Meshed, who had come from Resht, *viâ* Uzun Ada and Ashkabad,[1] passed out of the village on donkey back in front of me, singing loudly in praise of Ali and Husein, and other saints of the Shiah calendar. I followed the main road out of the valley, and then struck off to the south-west, taking a short cut over a rolling range of hills which constitute the watershed between the streams that drain north to the Atek and those that drain south to Kuchan. In a ravine on the left could be discerned the small villages of Kelat-i-Shah Mohammed, watered by a *kanat* or underground aqueduct, and further on Kelat-i-Mullammamud (Mullah Mahmud ?). There was no contrast of colour on the barren hills, even though they now became lower and more undulating, while their flanks had in parts been ploughed for grain. The landscape might have been draped in *khaki*, that excellent but unlovely material with which we clothe our soldiers in torrid climes. Zobaran (15 miles), though the name signifies plenty, did not by its appearance betray that it enjoyed plenty of anything but stones and dust. However, a tiny rill of clear water fed a

Zobaran to Kuchan

[1] The Transcaspian Railway is very largely used by Mussulman pilgrims of both persuasions, making their way to or from the sacred shrines. For the Sunnis of Central Asia it supplies an agreeable abridgment of the long journey to Mecca, and is equally serviceable for that to Kerbela and Nejef. By the Persian Shiahs and the Mahometans of the West, it is enormously used on the pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed.





small pool and watered a few straggling poplars and willows. The two remaining *farsakhs* to Kuchan were full *farsakhs*, and it was a little past noon when I arrived. For three-quarters of an hour beforehand I had seen the town and its orchards and vineyards lying far below in the midst of a broad valley, like a footprint of red mould upon a sandy floor. The limits of the highly cultivated ground around the town were distinctly marked; and it was as though some giant, stepping over the earth, had planted one big foot in this desolate hollow of the world's surface, which had straightway burgeoned and blossomed under the magic touch. On the north and south the valley was confined by rolling ranges which stretched away towards Shirwan in the west and eastwards in the direction of Meshed. Within about two miles of the town, and at the last swell of the hill before descending into the plain, I struck the main road again, and galloped briskly towards the walls. About a mile therefrom a bridge with a single high arch and no attempt at a parapet spanned the then waterless channel of the Atrek.[1] A flock of goats was standing in the dried-up bed, and sipping the little remaining moisture in a few stagnant pools. A few dusty poplars fringed the banks of the vanished stream. On the other side vegetation was general and even prolific. Orchards of peaches, mulberry, apricot, and pomegranate were yellowing under the fall of the year. The enclosures were thickly planted with vines straggling in irregular double rows with broad deep irrigation trenches for the water between, and presenting an appearance very unlike the trim precision of the vineyards of Bordeaux. The industrial energy of Kuchan seems to be specially devoted to the manufacture of wine, and in a scarcely less degree to its consumption, a genial immunity which the Shiah Mahometans have never been slow to claim for themselves from the stern asceticism of the Sunni dogma.

By this time I was much surprised to have met no carriage or deputation from the Khan, in view of the recognised reception given to strangers at Persian seats of government, and of the

[1] That this is the main stream of the Atrek I do not think there can be any doubt. It rises in the defile of Tabarik below the Allah-o-Akbar range, about twenty miles to the south of Kuchan, and is sometimes called Tabarik as far as that place. Valentine Baker claimed to have discovered the real source in a pool called Kara Kazan (Black Cauldron), close to Shirwan. But he can only have ignored the upper course of the river, because at that time it must have been dry.

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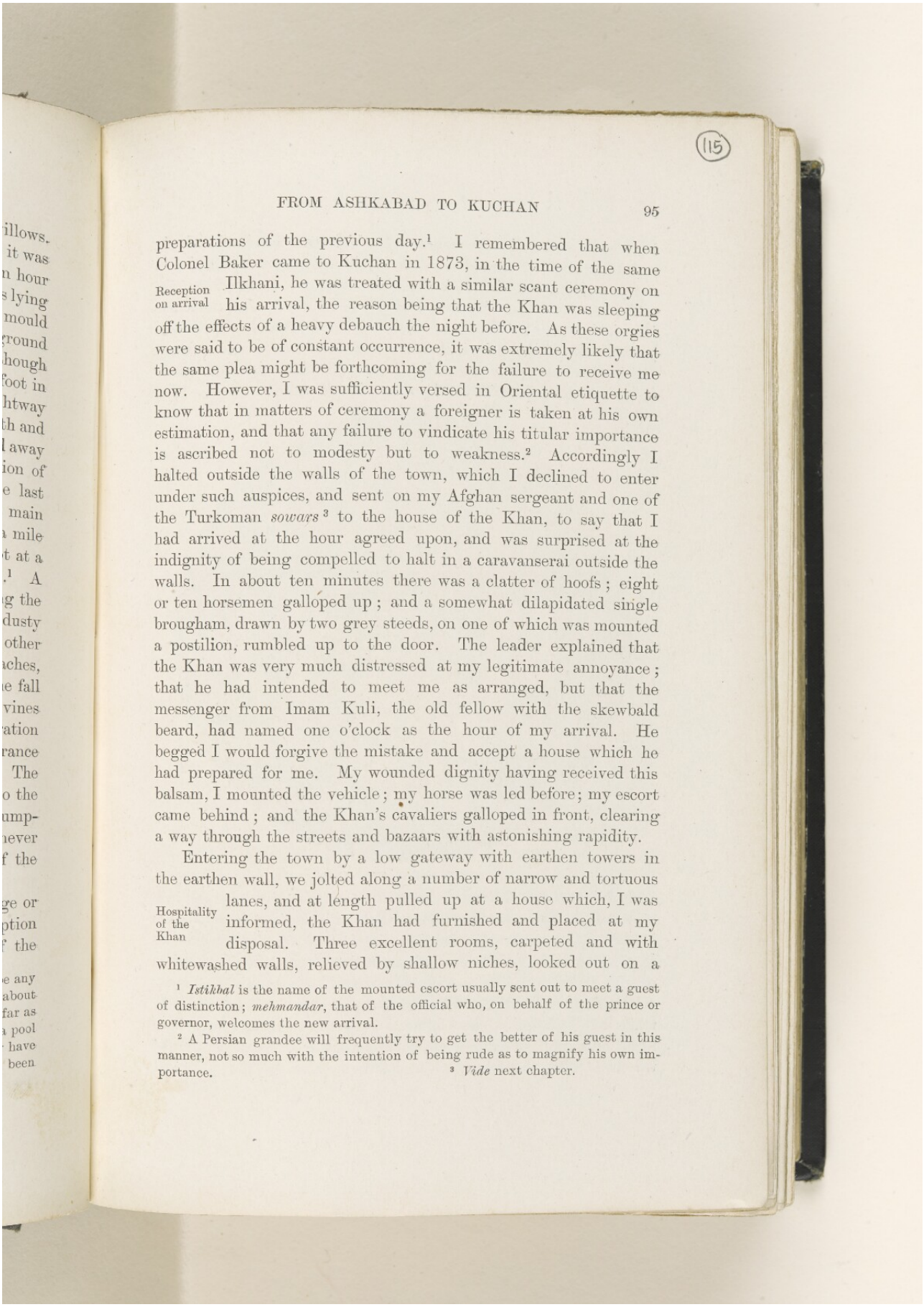




preparations of the previous day.[1] I remembered that when Colonel Baker came to Kuchan in 1873, in the time of the same Ilkhani, he was treated with a similar scant ceremony on his arrival, the reason being that the Khan was sleeping off the effects of a heavy debauch the night before. As these orgies were said to be of constant occurrence, it was extremely likely that the same plea might be forthcoming for the failure to receive me now. However, I was sufficiently versed in Oriental etiquette to know that in matters of ceremony a foreigner is taken at his own estimation, and that any failure to vindicate his titular importance is ascribed not to modesty but to weakness.[2] Accordingly I halted outside the walls of the town, which I declined to enter under such auspices, and sent on my Afghan sergeant and one of the Turkoman *sowars*[3] to the house of the Khan, to say that I had arrived at the hour agreed upon, and was surprised at the indignity of being compelled to halt in a caravanserai outside the walls. In about ten minutes there was a clatter of hoofs; eight or ten horsemen galloped up; and a somewhat dilapidated single brougham, drawn by two grey steeds, on one of which was mounted a postilion, rumbled up to the door. The leader explained that the Khan was very much distressed at my legitimate annoyance; that he had intended to meet me as arranged, but that the messenger from Imam Kuli, the old fellow with the skewbald beard, had named one o'clock as the hour of my arrival. He begged I would forgive the mistake and accept a house which he had prepared for me. My wounded dignity having received this balsam, I mounted the vehicle; my horse was led before; my escort came behind; and the Khan's cavaliers galloped in front, clearing a way through the streets and bazaars with astonishing rapidity.

Reception on arrival

Entering the town by a low gateway with earthen towers in the earthen wall, we jolted along a number of narrow and tortuous lanes, and at length pulled up at a house which, I was informed, the Khan had furnished and placed at my disposal. Three excellent rooms, carpeted and with whitewashed walls, relieved by shallow niches, looked out on a

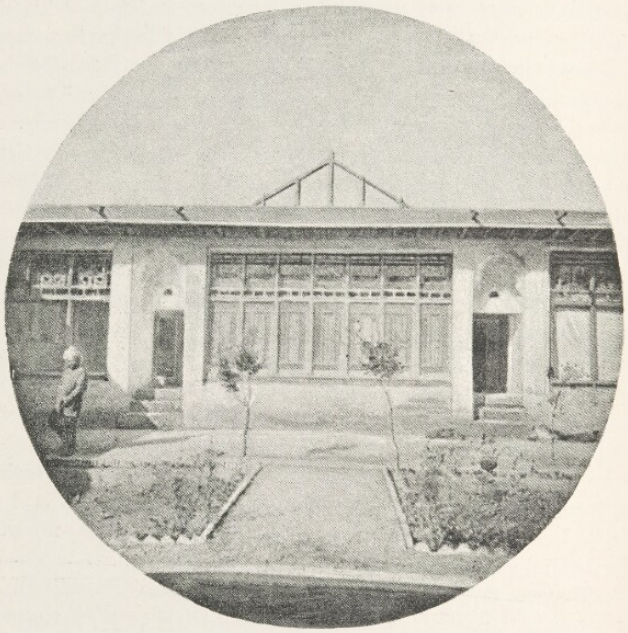
Hospitality of the Khan

[1] *Istikbal* is the name of the mounted escort usually sent out to meet a guest of distinction; *mehmandar*, that of the official who, on behalf of the prince or governor, welcomes the new arrival.

[2] A Persian grandee will frequently try to get the better of his guest in this manner, not so much with the intention of being rude as to magnify his own importance.

[3] *Vide* next chapter.

little open court, in the centre of which was a circular basin and fountain, surrounded by flower-beds—the normal interior of every Persian mansion. A Russian *samovar* simmered on the table, and some cane-bottomed chairs (which a Persian nobleman invariably keeps for European visitors) stood around. The entire garden wall of the principal room was one large window frame, filled, according to the prevailing Persian fashion, with little pieces of stained glass prettily set in a species of wooden lattice. The



GUEST HOUSE AT KUCHAN

second apartment, intended as a bedroom, contained a small iron stove of Persian manufacture; and the niches in the walls were completely covered with Russian pictures of a character that we associate either with tradesmen's advertisements at Christmas time or with the special issues of illustrated newspapers—viz. brilliantly coloured pictures of the Russian Royal Family, and fanciful portraits of black-haired houris with gorgeous necklaces and bare necks and arms. There were no less than four large pictures of the Czar and Czarina, and a coloured print of the principal



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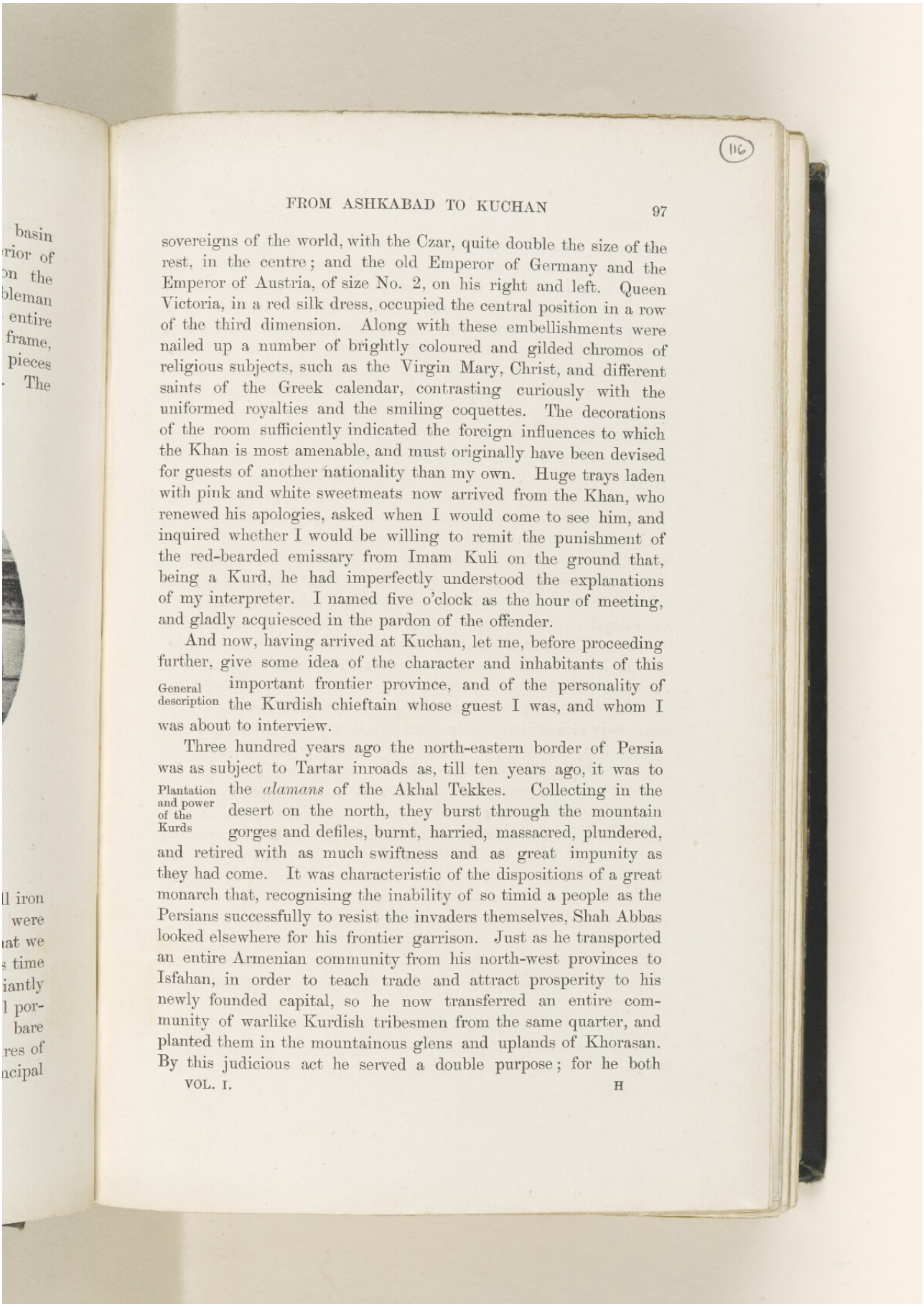



sovereigns of the world, with the Czar, quite double the size of the rest, in the centre; and the old Emperor of Germany and the Emperor of Austria, of size No. 2, on his right and left. Queen Victoria, in a red silk dress, occupied the central position in a row of the third dimension. Along with these embellishments were nailed up a number of brightly coloured and gilded chromos of religious subjects, such as the Virgin Mary, Christ, and different saints of the Greek calendar, contrasting curiously with the uniformed royalties and the smiling coquettes. The decorations of the room sufficiently indicated the foreign influences to which the Khan is most amenable, and must originally have been devised for guests of another nationality than my own. Huge trays laden with pink and white sweetmeats now arrived from the Khan, who renewed his apologies, asked when I would come to see him, and inquired whether I would be willing to remit the punishment of the red-bearded emissary from Imam Kuli on the ground that, being a Kurd, he had imperfectly understood the explanations of my interpreter. I named five o'clock as the hour of meeting, and gladly acquiesced in the pardon of the offender.

General description

And now, having arrived at Kuchan, let me, before proceeding further, give some idea of the character and inhabitants of this important frontier province, and of the personality of the Kurdish chieftain whose guest I was, and whom I was about to interview.

Plantation and power of the Kurds

Three hundred years ago the north-eastern border of Persia was as subject to Tartar inroads as, till ten years ago, it was to the *alamans* of the Akhal Tekkes. Collecting in the desert on the north, they burst through the mountain gorges and defiles, burnt, harried, massacred, plundered, and retired with as much swiftness and as great impunity as they had come. It was characteristic of the dispositions of a great monarch that, recognising the inability of so timid a people as the Persians successfully to resist the invaders themselves, Shah Abbas looked elsewhere for his frontier garrison. Just as he transported an entire Armenian community from his north-west provinces to Isfahan, in order to teach trade and attract prosperity to his newly founded capital, so he now transferred an entire community of warlike Kurdish tribesmen from the same quarter, and planted them in the mountainous glens and uplands of Khorasan. By this judicious act he served a double purpose; for he both



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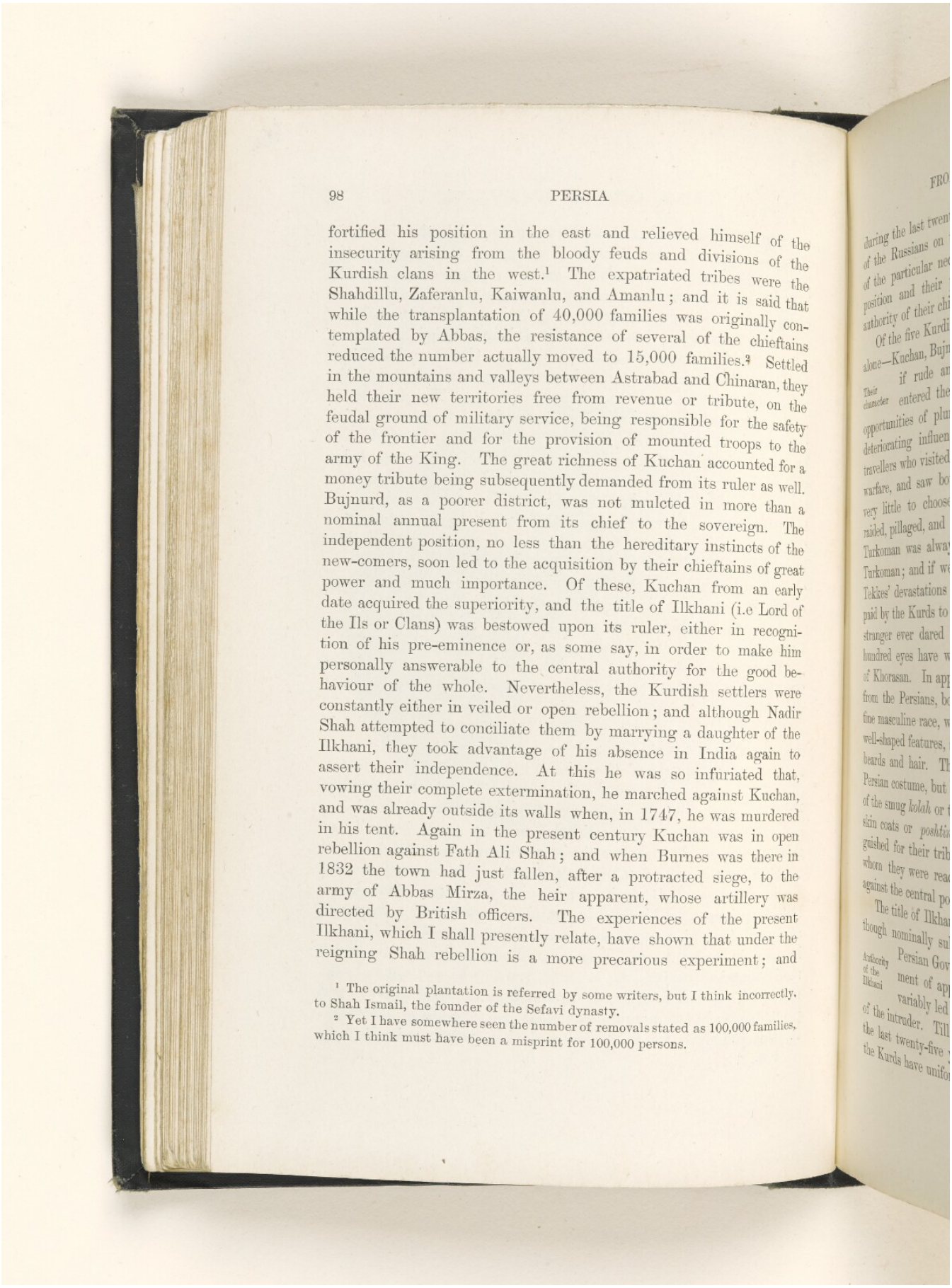
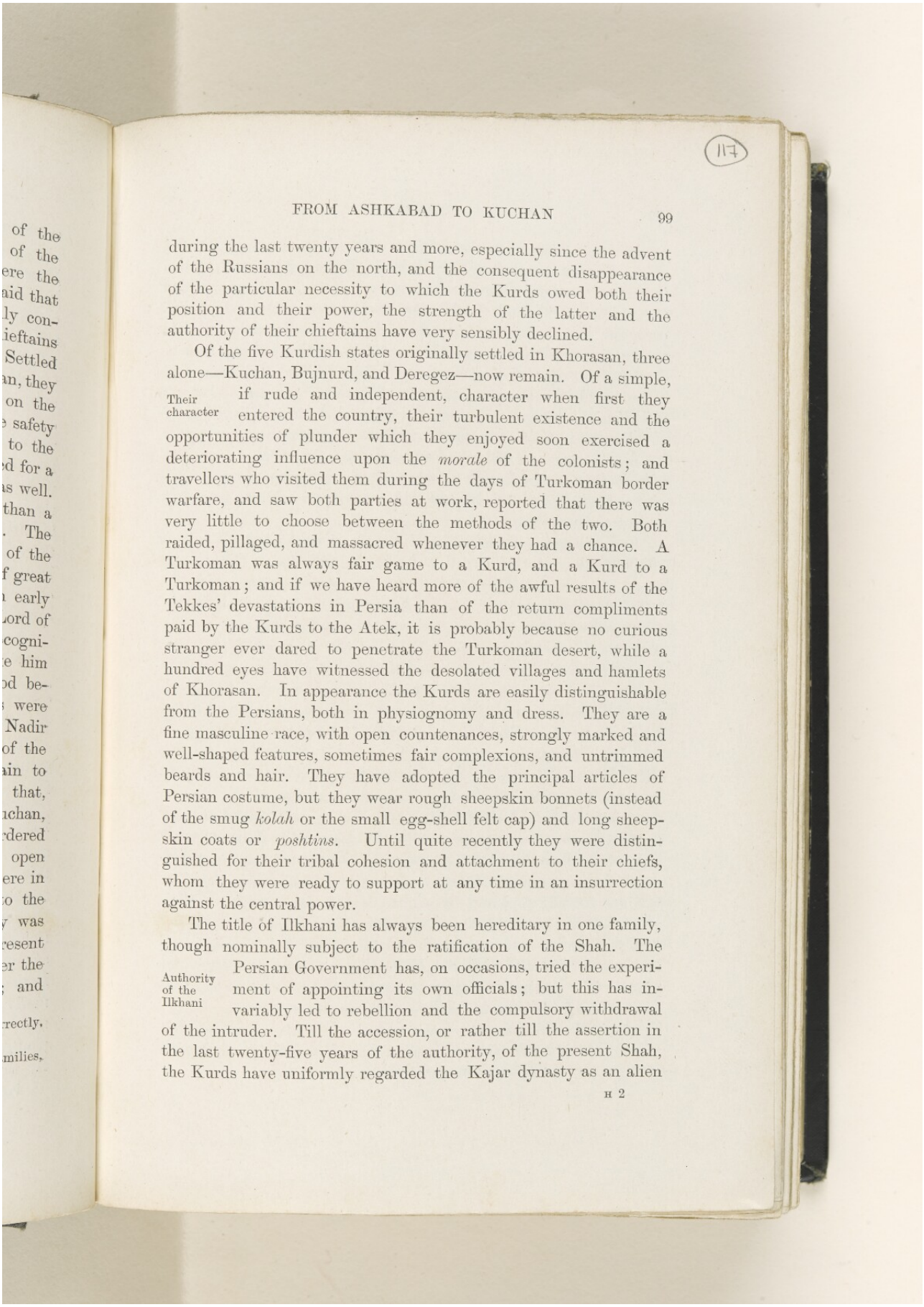




fortified his position in the east and relieved himself of the insecurity arising from the bloody feuds and divisions of the Kurdish clans in the west.[1] The expatriated tribes were the Shahdillu, Zaferanlu, Kaiwanlu, and Amanlu; and it is said that while the transplantation of 40,000 families was originally contemplated by Abbas, the resistance of several of the chieftains reduced the number actually moved to 15,000 families.[2] Settled in the mountains and valleys between Astrabad and Chinaran, they held their new territories free from revenue or tribute, on the feudal ground of military service, being responsible for the safety of the frontier and for the provision of mounted troops to the army of the King. The great richness of Kuchan accounted for a money tribute being subsequently demanded from its ruler as well. Bujnurd, as a poorer district, was not mulcted in more than a nominal annual present from its chief to the sovereign. The independent position, no less than the hereditary instincts of the new-comers, soon led to the acquisition by their chieftains of great power and much importance. Of these, Kuchan from an early date acquired the superiority, and the title of Ilkhani (i.e Lord of the Ils or Clans) was bestowed upon its ruler, either in recognition of his pre-eminence or, as some say, in order to make him personally answerable to the central authority for the good behaviour of the whole. Nevertheless, the Kurdish settlers were constantly either in veiled or open rebellion; and although Nadir Shah attempted to conciliate them by marrying a daughter of the Ilkhani, they took advantage of his absence in India again to assert their independence. At this he was so infuriated that, vowing their complete extermination, he marched against Kuchan, and was already outside its walls when, in 1747, he was murdered in his tent. Again in the present century Kuchan was in open rebellion against Fath Ali Shah; and when Burnes was there in 1832 the town had just fallen, after a protracted siege, to the army of Abbas Mirza, the heir apparent, whose artillery was directed by British officers. The experiences of the present Ilkhani, which I shall presently relate, have shown that under the reigning Shah rebellion is a more precarious experiment; and

[1] The original plantation is referred by some writers, but I think incorrectly, to Shah Ismail, the founder of the Sefavi dynasty.

[2] Yet I have somewhere seen the number of removals stated as 100,000 families, which I think must have been a misprint for 100,000 persons.





during the last twenty years and more, especially since the advent of the Russians on the north, and the consequent disappearance of the particular necessity to which the Kurds owed both their position and their power, the strength of the latter and the authority of their chieftains have very sensibly declined.

Of the five Kurdish states originally settled in Khorasan, three alone—Kuchan, Bujnurd, and Deregez—now remain. Of a simple, if rude and independent, character when first they entered the country, their turbulent existence and the opportunities of plunder which they enjoyed soon exercised a deteriorating influence upon the *morale* of the colonists; and travellers who visited them during the days of Turkoman border warfare, and saw both parties at work, reported that there was very little to choose between the methods of the two. Both raided, pillaged, and massacred whenever they had a chance. A Turkoman was always fair game to a Kurd, and a Kurd to a Turkoman; and if we have heard more of the awful results of the Tekkes' devastations in Persia than of the return compliments paid by the Kurds to the Atek, it is probably because no curious stranger ever dared to penetrate the Turkoman desert, while a hundred eyes have witnessed the desolated villages and hamlets of Khorasan. In appearance the Kurds are easily distinguishable from the Persians, both in physiognomy and dress. They are a fine masculine race, with open countenances, strongly marked and well-shaped features, sometimes fair complexions, and untrimmed beards and hair. They have adopted the principal articles of Persian costume, but they wear rough sheepskin bonnets (instead of the smug *kolah* or the small egg-shell felt cap) and long sheepskin coats or *poshtins*. Until quite recently they were distinguished for their tribal cohesion and attachment to their chiefs, whom they were ready to support at any time in an insurrection against the central power.

Their character

The title of Ilkhani has always been hereditary in one family, though nominally subject to the ratification of the Shah. The Persian Government has, on occasions, tried the experiment of appointing its own officials; but this has invariably led to rebellion and the compulsory withdrawal of the intruder. Till the accession, or rather till the assertion in the last twenty-five years of the authority, of the present Shah, the Kurds have uniformly regarded the Kajar dynasty as an alien

Authority of the Ilkhani



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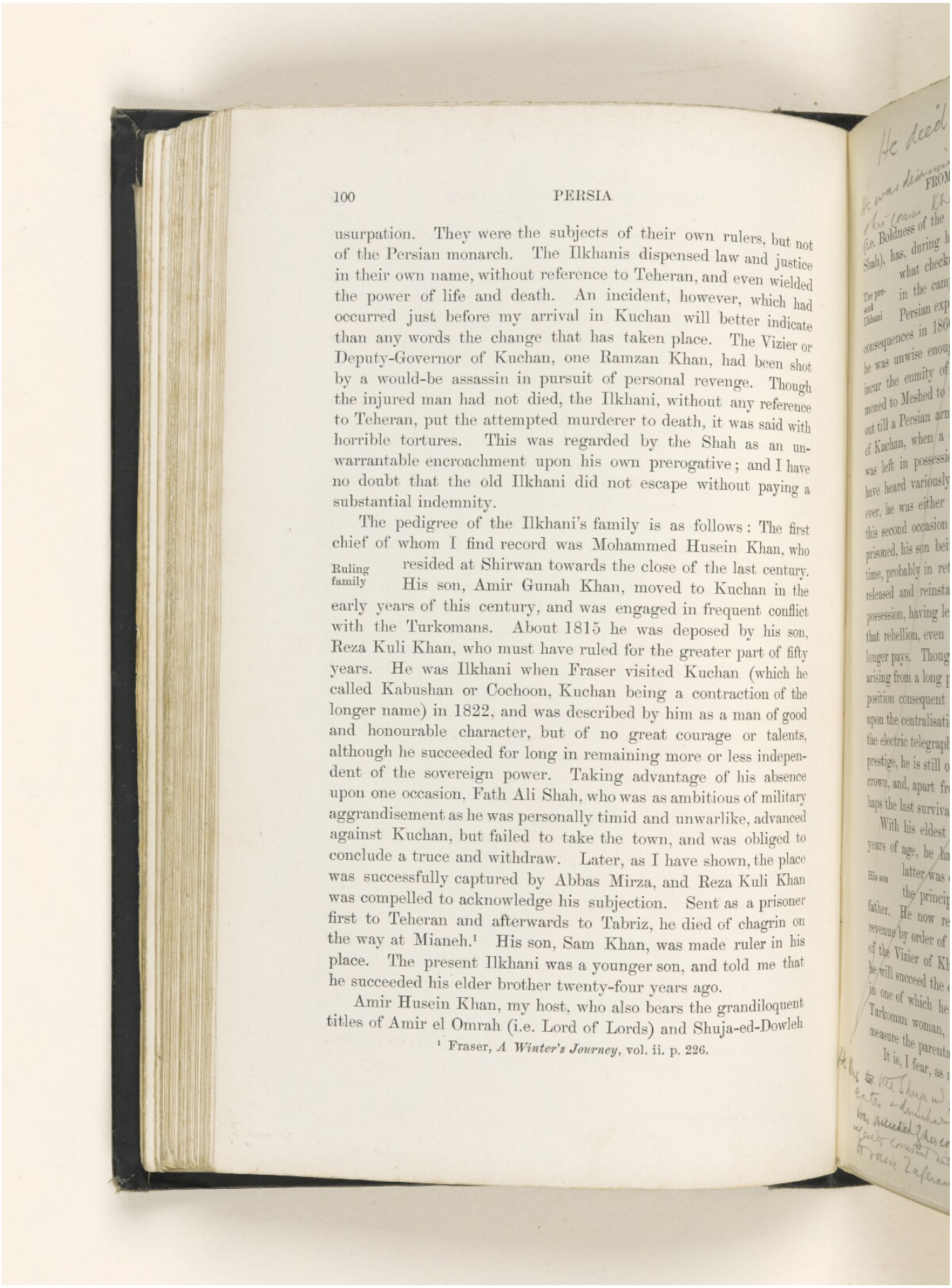




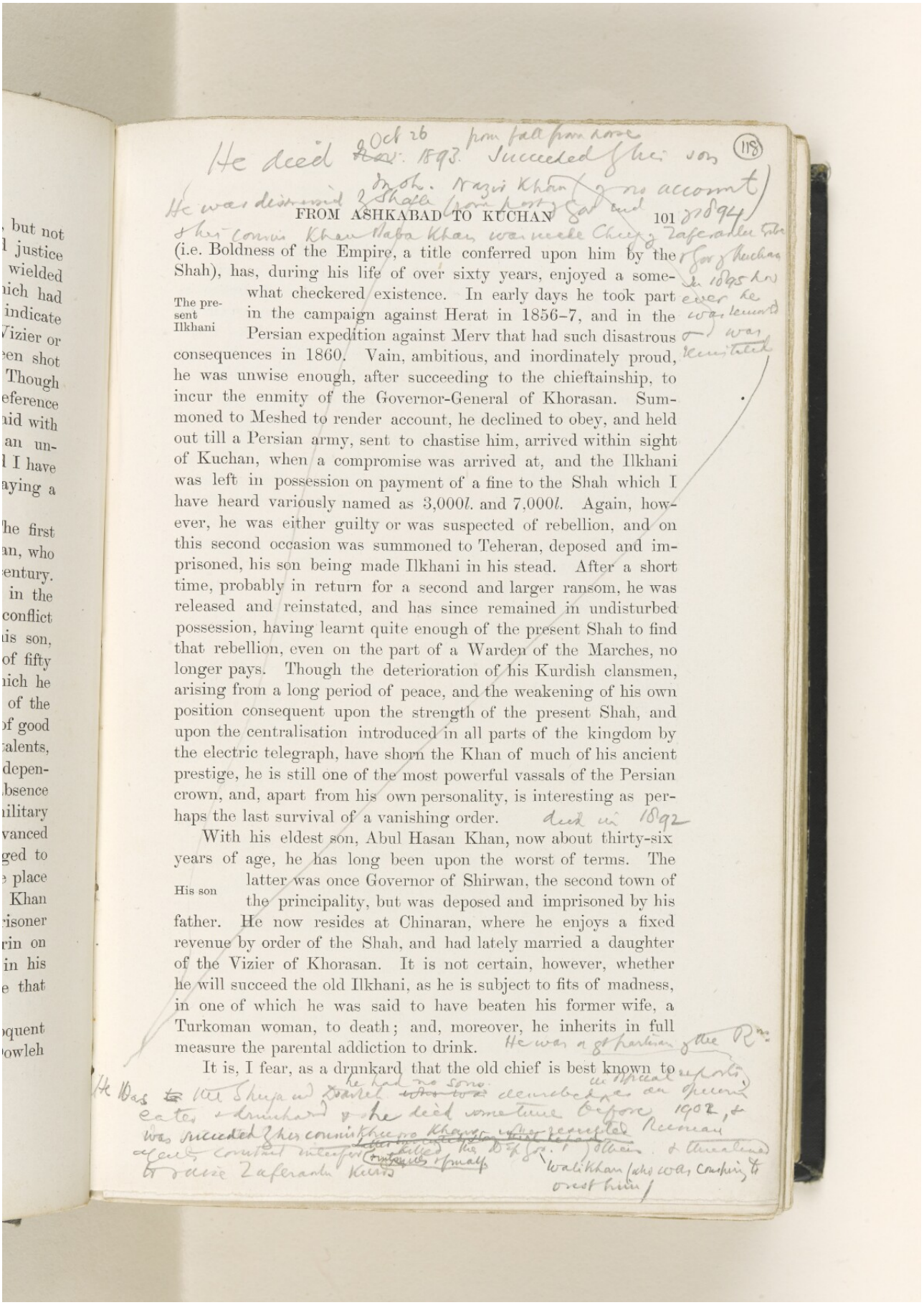
usurpation. They were the subjects of their own rulers, but not of the Persian monarch. The Ilkhanis dispensed law and justice in their own name, without reference to Teheran, and even wielded the power of life and death. An incident, however, which had occurred just before my arrival in Kuchan will better indicate than any words the change that has taken place. The Vizier or Deputy-Governor of Kuchan, one Ramzan Khan, had been shot by a would-be assassin in pursuit of personal revenge. Though the injured man had not died, the Ilkhani, without any reference to Teheran, put the attempted murderer to death, it was said with horrible tortures. This was regarded by the Shah as an unwarrantable encroachment upon his own prerogative; and I have no doubt that the old Ilkhani did not escape without paying a substantial indemnity.

The pedigree of the Ilkhani's family is as follows: The first chief of whom I find record was Mohammed Husein Khan, who resided at Shirwan towards the close of the last century. His son, Amir Gunah Khan, moved to Kuchan in the early years of this century, and was engaged in frequent conflict with the Turkomans. About 1815 he was deposed by his son, Reza Kuli Khan, who must have ruled for the greater part of fifty years. He was Ilkhani when Fraser visited Kuchan (which he called Kabushan or Cochoon, Kuchan being a contraction of the longer name) in 1822, and was described by him as a man of good and honourable character, but of no great courage or talents, although he succeeded for long in remaining more or less independent of the sovereign power. Taking advantage of his absence upon one occasion, Fath Ali Shah, who was as ambitious of military aggrandisement as he was personally timid and unwarlike, advanced against Kuchan, but failed to take the town, and was obliged to conclude a truce and withdraw. Later, as I have shown, the place was successfully captured by Abbas Mirza, and Reza Kuli Khan was compelled to acknowledge his subjection. Sent as a prisoner first to Teheran and afterwards to Tabriz, he died of chagrin on the way at Mianeh.[1] His son, Sam Khan, was made ruler in his place. The present Ilkhani was a younger son, and told me that he succeeded his elder brother twenty-four years ago.

Ruling family

Amir Husein Khan, my host, who also bears the grandiloquent titles of Amir el Omrah (i.e. Lord of Lords) and Shuja-ed-Dowleh

[1] Fraser, *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 226.





(i.e. Boldness of the Empire, a title conferred upon him by the Shah), has, during his life of over sixty years, enjoyed a somewhat checkered existence. In early days he took part in the campaign against Herat in 1856–7, and in the Persian expedition against Merv that had such disastrous consequences in 1860. Vain, ambitious, and inordinately proud, he was unwise enough, after succeeding to the chieftainship, to incur the enmity of the Governor-General of Khorasan. Summoned to Meshed to render account, he declined to obey, and held out till a Persian army, sent to chastise him, arrived within sight of Kuchan, when a compromise was arrived at, and the Ilkhani was left in possession on payment of a fine to the Shah which I have heard variously named as 3,000*l.* and 7,000*l.* Again, however, he was either guilty or was suspected of rebellion, and on this second occasion was summoned to Teheran, deposed and imprisoned, his son being made Ilkhani in his stead. After a short time, probably in return for a second and larger ransom, he was released and reinstated, and has since remained in undisturbed possession, having learnt quite enough of the present Shah to find that rebellion, even on the part of a Warden of the Marches, no longer pays. Though the deterioration of his Kurdish clansmen, arising from a long period of peace, and the weakening of his own position consequent upon the strength of the present Shah, and upon the centralisation introduced in all parts of the kingdom by the electric telegraph, have shorn the Khan of much of his ancient prestige, he is still one of the most powerful vassals of the Persian crown, and, apart from his own personality, is interesting as perhaps the last survival of a vanishing order.

The present Ilkhani

With his eldest son, Abul Hasan Khan, now about thirty-six years of age, he has long been upon the worst of terms. The latter was once Governor of Shirwan, the second town of the principality, but was deposed and imprisoned by his father. He now resides at Chinaran, where he enjoys a fixed revenue by order of the Shah, and had lately married a daughter of the Vizier of Khorasan. It is not certain, however, whether he will succeed the old Ilkhani, as he is subject to fits of madness, in one of which he was said to have beaten his former wife, a Turkoman woman, to death; and, moreover, he inherits in full measure the parental addiction to drink.

His son

It is, I fear, as a drunkard that the old chief is best known to

English readers and has been commemorated by English writers. During the past twenty years he has been visited and interviewed by several Englishmen: by Colonel Valentine Baker in 1873, Captain Napier in 1874, Sir C. MacGregor in 1875, and Edmund O'Donovan in 1880;[1] and by most of these authorities was found either drinking or drunk, or slowly recovering from the effects of drink, Kuchan being noted for its white wine, and the Khan having a partiality besides for brandy, arrack, and any spirit that is sufficiently potent. General Grodekoff, who was despatched to Khorasan in disguise in 1880 by General Skobeleff, with the knowledge of the Shah, in order to purchase supplies for the Russian army then operating against the Tekke Turkomans in Transcaspia, was well aware beforehand of the propensities of the Kurdish chieftain, and in his official account of the mission entrusted to him very candidly avows the steps by which he sought to ingratiate himself with his too convivial host:—

His reputation

> Knowing that he was fond of liquor, we placed several bottles of wine, liqueurs, and *vodka* before him; and in a very short time the Shuja had drunk several glasses of different wines, and then called in his singers and musicians. The men who came with him, his surgeon, and his favourites, Vali Khan and Ramzan Khan, drank themselves stupid, and a regular orgy began. Next day I went to see the Amir, and presented my documents to him. Bottles were already standing before him, and he explained that he was recovering from his intoxication. During our conversation he repeatedly partook of brandy, opium, *hashish*, and wine, and by noon was quite drunk. In the evening of the same day he invited us to a European supper, and again got intoxicated to the last degree.'

In the negotiations that followed, General Grodekoff was alternately impressed by the astuteness of the Ilkhani and disgusted by his habits. Once his editor writes:—

> A three days' sojourn in his society showed Colonel Grodekoff that the Amir was very much in possession of all his faculties; that he was not to be deceived by our giving ourselves out as commission agents; and that, although he was a drunkard, still he saw and remembered everything.

[1] The authorities on Kuchan are J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xxii. and Appendix B; (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 74–84; Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 277–278; Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), 'Diary of a Tour in Khorasan,' *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. p. 87; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 83–88; E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.; General Grodekoff (1880), *The War in Turkomania* (Russian), vol. iv. cap. xvii.

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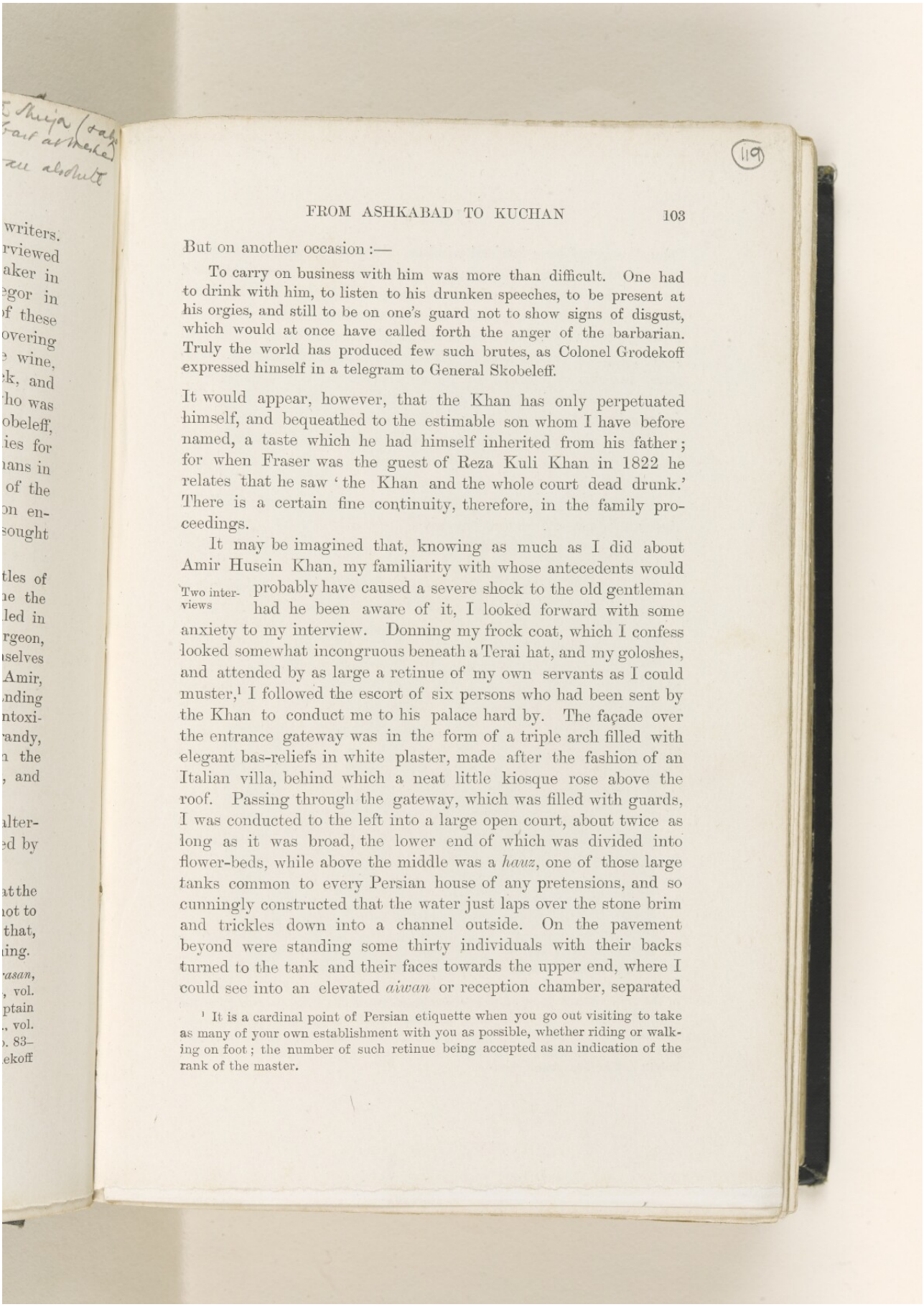




But on another occasion :—

To carry on business with him was more than difficult. One had to drink with him, to listen to his drunken speeches, to be present at his orgies, and still to be on one's guard not to show signs of disgust, which would at once have called forth the anger of the barbarian. Truly the world has produced few such brutes, as Colonel Grodekoff expressed himself in a telegram to General Skobeleff.

It would appear, however, that the Khan has only perpetuated himself, and bequeathed to the estimable son whom I have before named, a taste which he had himself inherited from his father; for when Fraser was the guest of Reza Kuli Khan in 1822 he relates that he saw 'the Khan and the whole court dead drunk.' There is a certain fine continuity, therefore, in the family proceedings.

Two interviews

It may be imagined that, knowing as much as I did about Amir Husein Khan, my familiarity with whose antecedents would probably have caused a severe shock to the old gentleman had he been aware of it, I looked forward with some anxiety to my interview. Donning my frock coat, which I confess looked somewhat incongruous beneath a Terai hat, and my goloshes, and attended by as large a retinue of my own servants as I could muster,[1] I followed the escort of six persons who had been sent by the Khan to conduct me to his palace hard by. The façade over the entrance gateway was in the form of a triple arch filled with elegant bas-reliefs in white plaster, made after the fashion of an Italian villa, behind which a neat little kiosque rose above the roof. Passing through the gateway, which was filled with guards, I was conducted to the left into a large open court, about twice as long as it was broad, the lower end of which was divided into flower-beds, while above the middle was a *hauz*, one of those large tanks common to every Persian house of any pretensions, and so cunningly constructed that the water just laps over the stone brim and trickles down into a channel outside. On the pavement beyond were standing some thirty individuals with their backs turned to the tank and their faces towards the upper end, where I could see into an elevated *aiwan* or reception chamber, separated

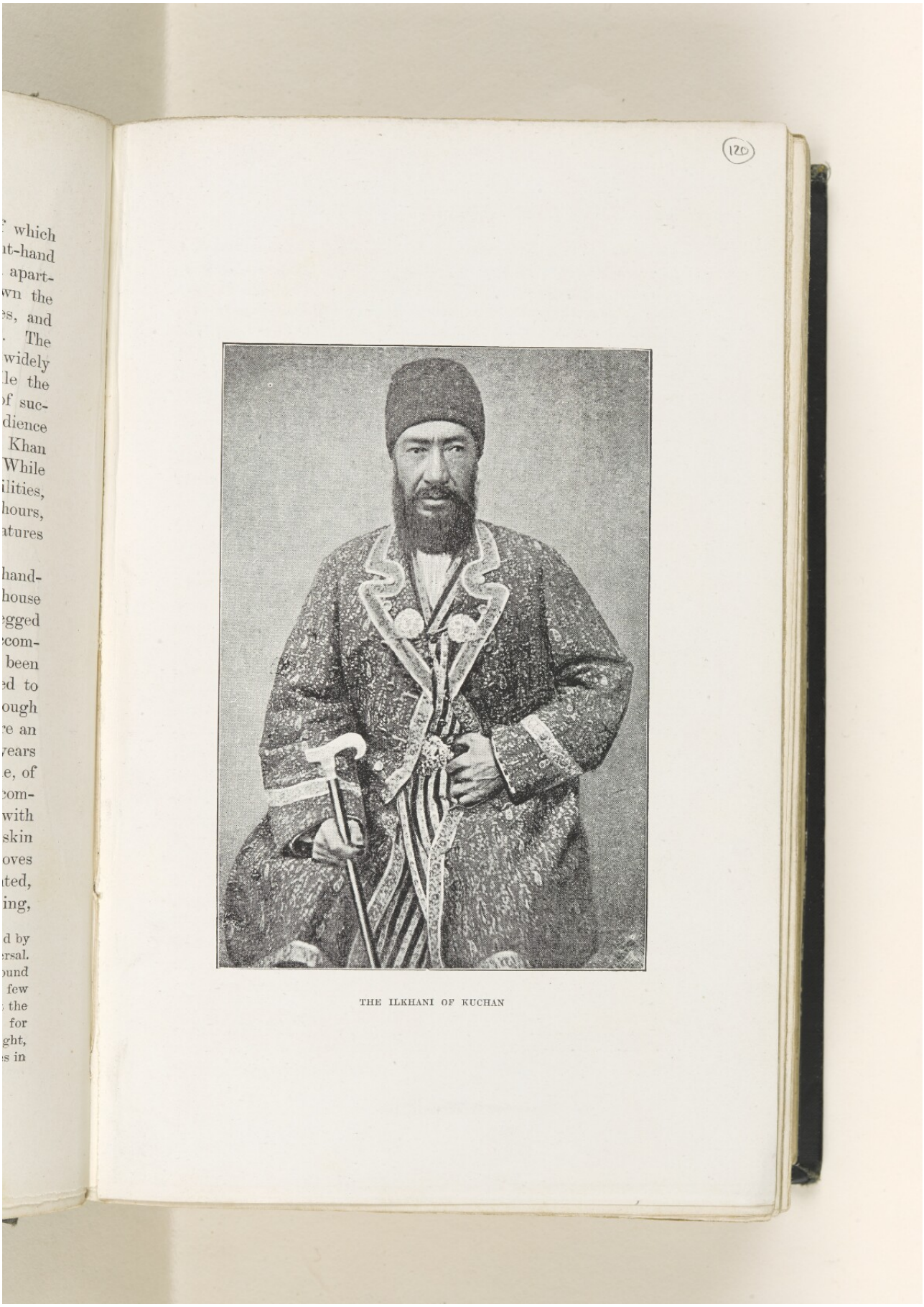
[1] It is a cardinal point of Persian etiquette when you go out visiting to take as many of your own establishment with you as possible, whether riding or walking on foot; the number of such retinue being accepted as an indication of the rank of the master.

from the court by a latticed window, the central panels of which were thrown open. Entering a small room in the right-hand corner, I left my goloshes, and was ushered into the central apartment of the daïs, which contained only two inlaid tables down the middle, positively laden with coloured glass candelabra, vases, and curios, and an iron bedstead with a mattress in the corner. The glass baubles represent an incomprehensible but very widely spread taste among the Persians of the upper classes, while the bedstead was doubtless introduced as a crowning evidence of successfully assimilated civilisation. In the centre of this audience chamber at the back was a recessed apartment, where the Khan was seated at a table, and whence he rose to welcome me. While he was dictating to the interpreter the customary opening civilities, and during our subsequent interviews, which lasted fully two hours, I had abundant opportunity to become acquainted with his features and deportment.

Appearance of Amir Husein Khan

In appearance the Shuja is striking, but the reverse of handsome. There was a photograph of him hanging in the house where he entertained me, which I subsequently begged of him, and a reproduction of which adorns the accompanying page. He was careful to explain that, having been taken by a Persian artist, the likeness entirely failed to do him justice, a criticism which I am bound to endorse, as, though an ugly, he was in no sense a forbidding-looking man, but wore an air both of authority and of intelligence. Though over sixty years of age, his beard and hair were jet black, the result, I imagine, of dye. He had strongly marked features and a very sallow complexion. He was dressed in a black cloth coat and trousers, with diamond buckles, and a diamond-hilted sword, a black sheepskin *kolah* or hat pressed low down on to his ears,[1] white cotton gloves and stockings, and patent leather shoes. Being very short-sighted, he wore colossal blue spectacles over his eyes. When speaking,

[1] The *kolah*, as the national headdress of the Persians, was only introduced by the Kajar family a century ago. Up till that time the turban was universal. Even after the introduction of the *kolah*, a shawl was sometimes wrapped round it; but this was a distinction limited to the King, the Royal Family, and a few of the great officers of State. It is now only seen in the Court dress worn at the Shah's levées. On the other hand, the *kolah* itself has changed in shape; for whereas at the beginning of the century it was about a foot and a half in height, and sloped up to a peak at the top, it is now ordinarily from six to ten inches in height and is level round the top.



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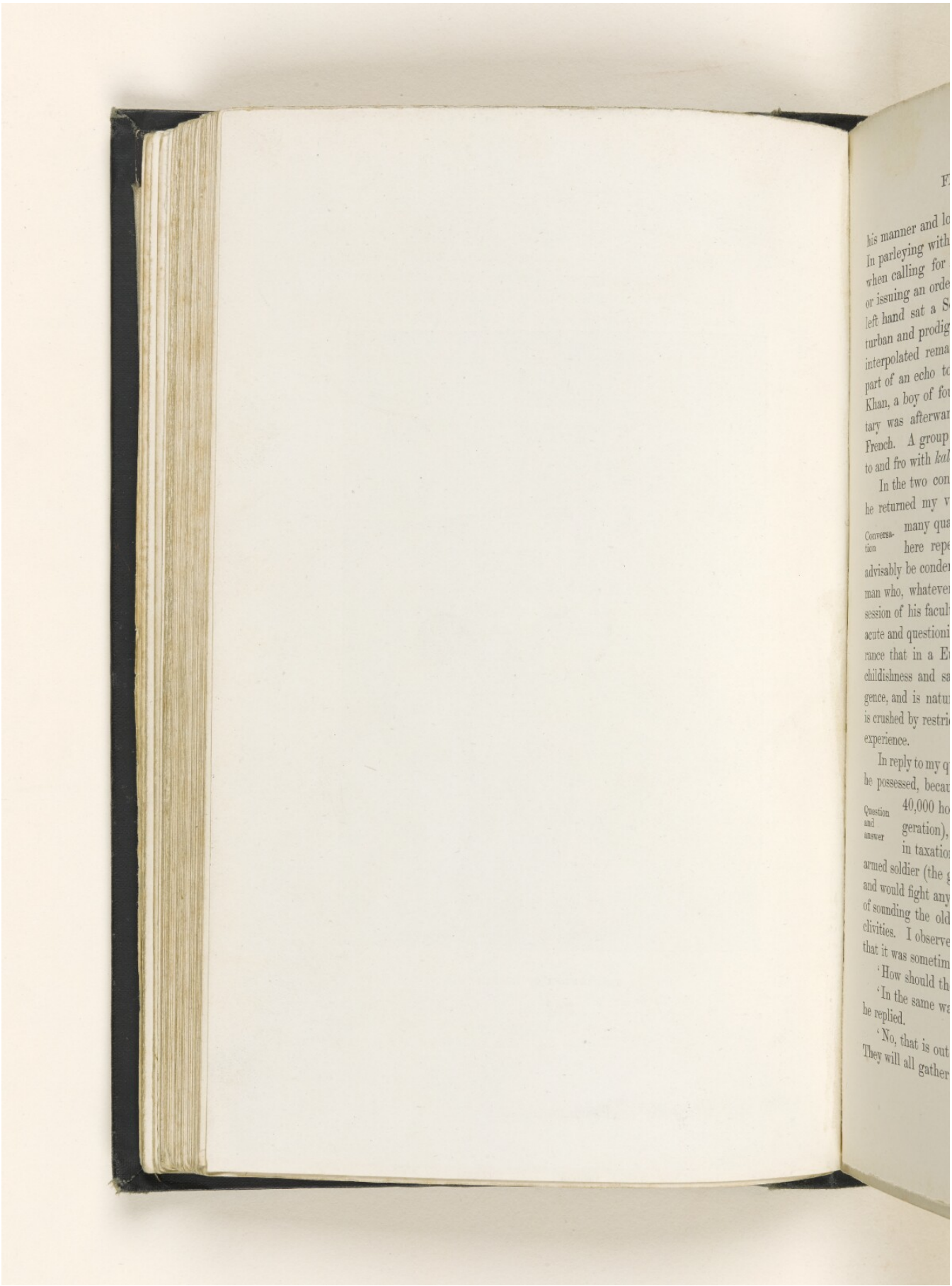

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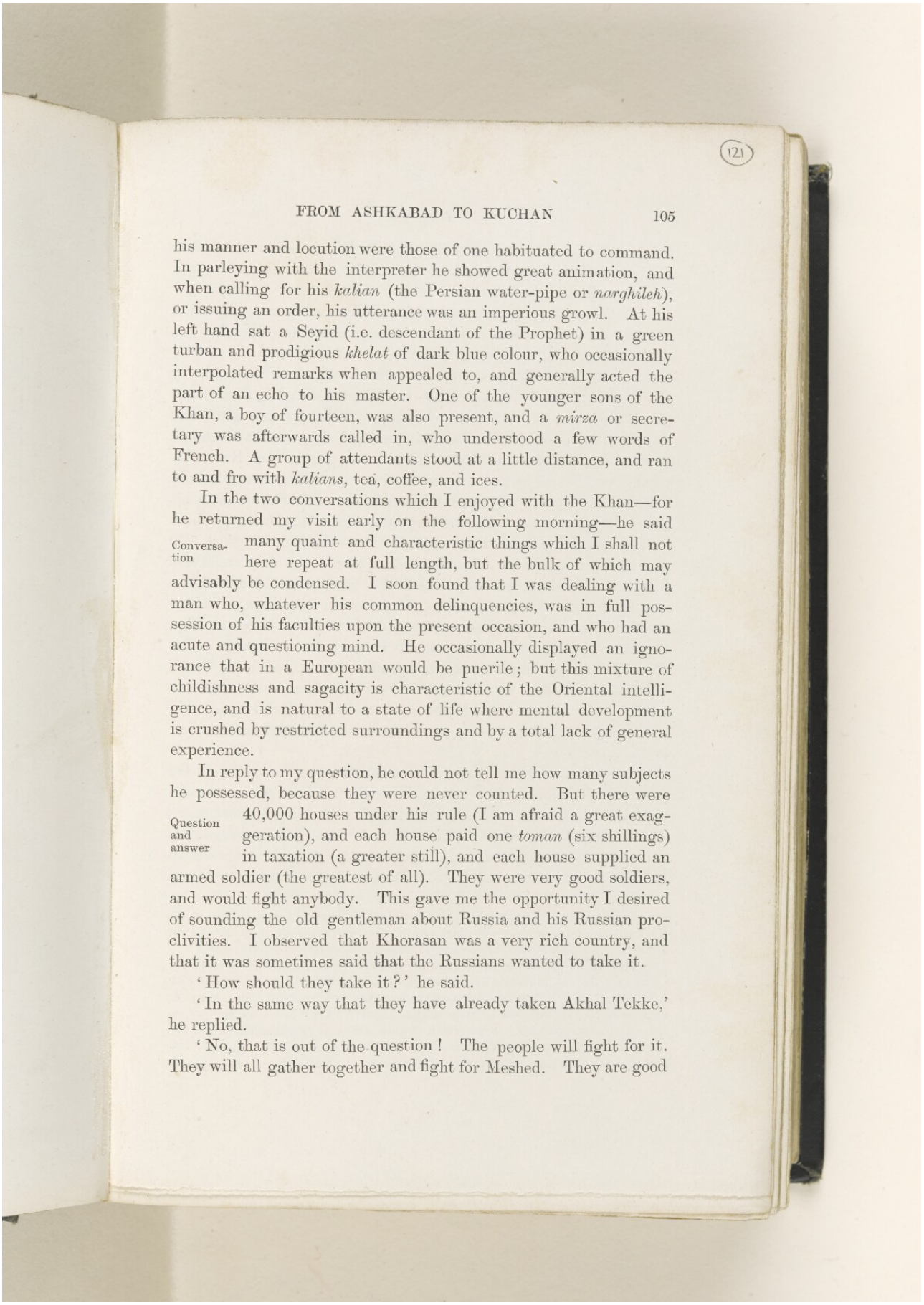




his manner and locution were those of one habituated to command. In parleying with the interpreter he showed great animation, and when calling for his *kalian* (the Persian water-pipe or *narghileh*), or issuing an order, his utterance was an imperious growl. At his left hand sat a Seyid (i.e. descendant of the Prophet) in a green turban and prodigious *khelat* of dark blue colour, who occasionally interpolated remarks when appealed to, and generally acted the part of an echo to his master. One of the younger sons of the Khan, a boy of fourteen, was also present, and a *mirza* or secretary was afterwards called in, who understood a few words of French. A group of attendants stood at a little distance, and ran to and fro with *kalians*, tea, coffee, and ices.

In the two conversations which I enjoyed with the Khan—for he returned my visit early on the following morning—he said many quaint and characteristic things which I shall not here repeat at full length, but the bulk of which may advisably be condensed. I soon found that I was dealing with a man who, whatever his common delinquencies, was in full possession of his faculties upon the present occasion, and who had an acute and questioning mind. He occasionally displayed an ignorance that in a European would be puerile; but this mixture of childishness and sagacity is characteristic of the Oriental intelligence, and is natural to a state of life where mental development is crushed by restricted surroundings and by a total lack of general experience.

Conversation

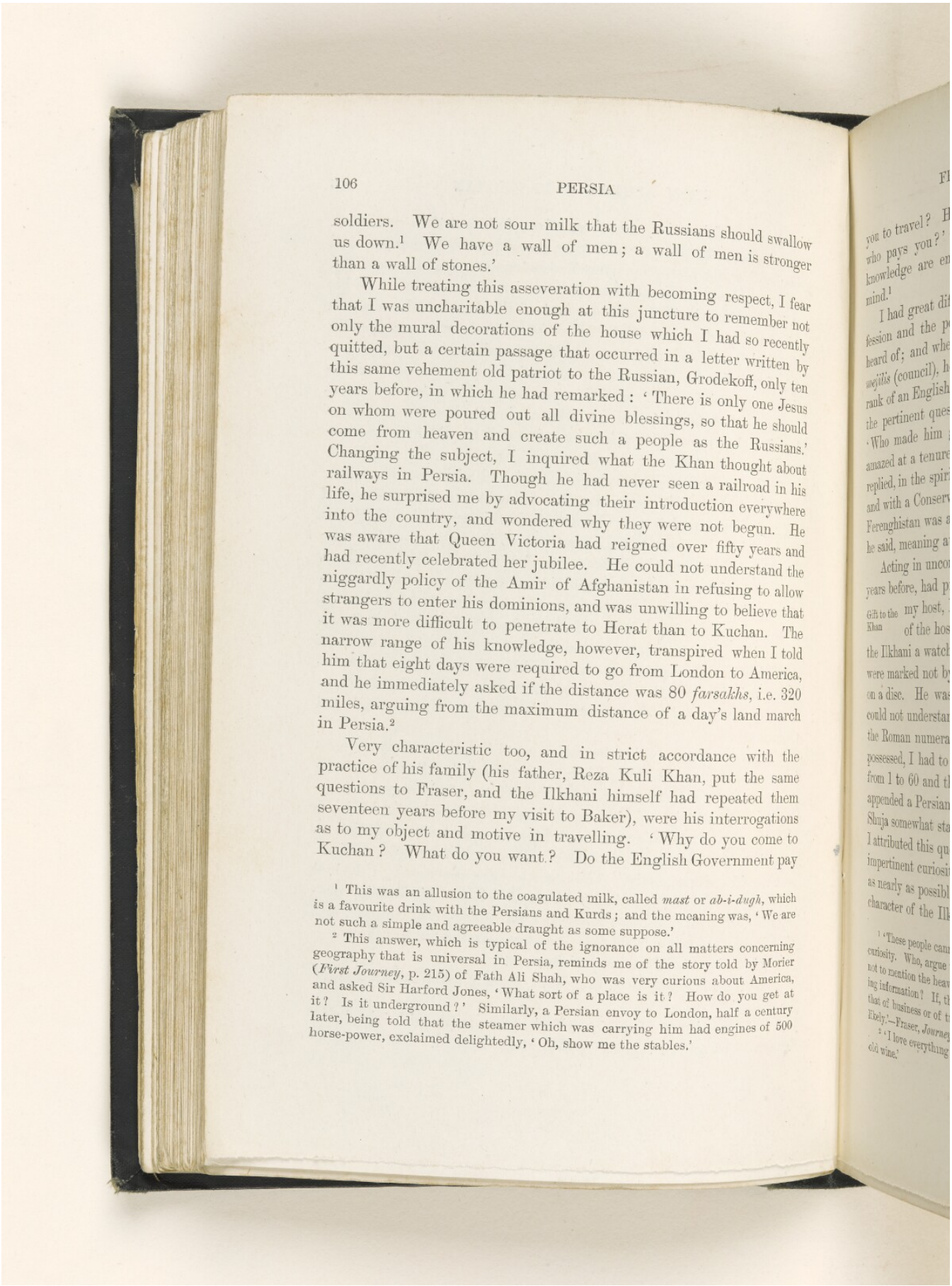
In reply to my question, he could not tell me how many subjects he possessed, because they were never counted. But there were 40,000 houses under his rule (I am afraid a great exaggeration), and each house paid one *toman* (six shillings) in taxation (a greater still), and each house supplied an armed soldier (the greatest of all). They were very good soldiers, and would fight anybody. This gave me the opportunity I desired of sounding the old gentleman about Russia and his Russian proclivities. I observed that Khorasan was a very rich country, and that it was sometimes said that the Russians wanted to take it.

Question and answer

'How should they take it?' he said.

'In the same way that they have already taken Akhal Tekke,' he replied.

'No, that is out of the question! The people will fight for it. They will all gather together and fight for Meshed. They are good





soldiers. We are not sour milk that the Russians should swallow us down.[1] We have a wall of men; a wall of men is stronger than a wall of stones.'

While treating this asseveration with becoming respect, I fear that I was uncharitable enough at this juncture to remember not only the mural decorations of the house which I had so recently quitted, but a certain passage that occurred in a letter written by this same vehement old patriot to the Russian, Grodekoff, only ten years before, in which he had remarked: 'There is only one Jesus on whom were poured out all divine blessings, so that he should come from heaven and create such a people as the Russians.' Changing the subject, I inquired what the Khan thought about railways in Persia. Though he had never seen a railroad in his life, he surprised me by advocating their introduction everywhere into the country, and wondered why they were not begun. He was aware that Queen Victoria had reigned over fifty years and had recently celebrated her jubilee. He could not understand the niggardly policy of the Amir of Afghanistan in refusing to allow strangers to enter his dominions, and was unwilling to believe that it was more difficult to penetrate to Herat than to Kuchan. The narrow range of his knowledge, however, transpired when I told him that eight days were required to go from London to America, and he immediately asked if the distance was 80 *farsakhs*, i.e. 320 miles, arguing from the maximum distance of a day's land march in Persia.[2]

Very characteristic too, and in strict accordance with the practice of his family (his father, Reza Kuli Khan, put the same questions to Fraser, and the Ilkhani himself had repeated them seventeen years before my visit to Baker), were his interrogations as to my object and motive in travelling. 'Why do you come to Kuchan? What do you want? Do the English Government pay

[1] This was an allusion to the coagulated milk, called *mast* or *ab-i-dugh*, which is a favourite drink with the Persians and Kurds; and the meaning was, 'We are not such a simple and agreeable draught as some suppose.'

[2] This answer, which is typical of the ignorance on all matters concerning geography that is universal in Persia, reminds me of the story told by Morier (*First Journey*, p. 215) of Fath Ali Shah, who was very curious about America, and asked Sir Harford Jones, 'What sort of a place is it? How do you get at it? Is it underground?' Similarly, a Persian envoy to London, half a century later, being told that the steamer which was carrying him had engines of 500 horse-power, exclaimed delightedly, 'Oh, show me the stables.'

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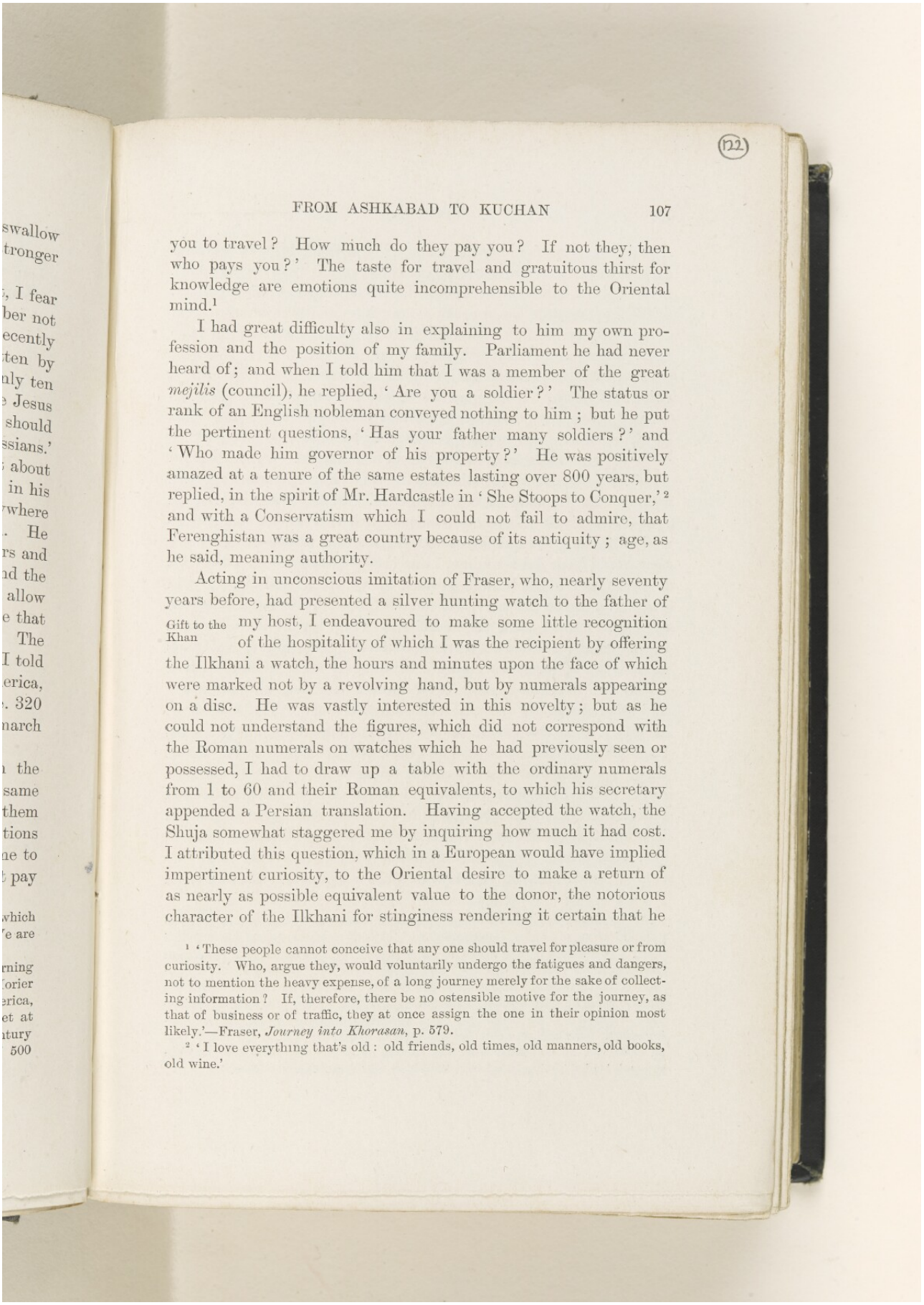



you to travel? How much do they pay you? If not they, then who pays you?' The taste for travel and gratuitous thirst for knowledge are emotions quite incomprehensible to the Oriental mind.[1]

I had great difficulty also in explaining to him my own profession and the position of my family. Parliament he had never heard of; and when I told him that I was a member of the great *mejilis* (council), he replied, 'Are you a soldier?' The status or rank of an English nobleman conveyed nothing to him; but he put the pertinent questions, 'Has your father many soldiers?' and 'Who made him governor of his property?' He was positively amazed at a tenure of the same estates lasting over 800 years, but replied, in the spirit of Mr. Hardcastle in 'She Stoops to Conquer,'[2] and with a Conservatism which I could not fail to admire, that Ferenghistan was a great country because of its antiquity; age, as he said, meaning authority.

Gift to the Khan

Acting in unconscious imitation of Fraser, who, nearly seventy years before, had presented a silver hunting watch to the father of my host, I endeavoured to make some little recognition of the hospitality of which I was the recipient by offering the Ilkhani a watch, the hours and minutes upon the face of which were marked not by a revolving hand, but by numerals appearing on a disc. He was vastly interested in this novelty; but as he could not understand the figures, which did not correspond with the Roman numerals on watches which he had previously seen or possessed, I had to draw up a table with the ordinary numerals from 1 to 60 and their Roman equivalents, to which his secretary appended a Persian translation. Having accepted the watch, the Shuja somewhat staggered me by inquiring how much it had cost. I attributed this question, which in a European would have implied impertinent curiosity, to the Oriental desire to make a return of as nearly as possible equivalent value to the donor, the notorious character of the Ilkhani for stinginess rendering it certain that he

[1] 'These people cannot conceive that any one should travel for pleasure or from curiosity. Who, argue they, would voluntarily undergo the fatigues and dangers, not to mention the heavy expense, of a long journey merely for the sake of collecting information? If, therefore, there be no ostensible motive for the journey, as that of business or of traffic, they at once assign the one in their opinion most likely.'—Fraser, *Journey into Khorasan*, p. 579.

[2] 'I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine.'

would not give a farthing in excess. What the quality or worth of his return gift may have been I never discovered; because, although he brought a bundle with him on his valedictory visit the next day, which I afterwards heard contained an intended present of carpets or embroidery, he failed to offer it to me, and it was said to have been purloined by some of his servants.

Such were the main incidents of my intercourse with the old chief of Kuchan. I am glad to be able, if not to contradict the versions of his character and accomplishments that have been given by my predecessors, at least to depict another and more favourable side of his nature. I note that on Sir C. MacGregor in 1875 he left the same impression of dignified manners and considerable intelligence. In the evening I had an opportunity both of becoming acquainted with the Persian *cuisine* and of testing the quality of the Khan's own kitchen. A dinner that would have fed a regiment was brought ready cooked from his house to that which he was pleased to call mine, and deposited in dishes upon the floor of the room. There were soup, chickens cooked in no less than three different ways, leg of lamb, mutton *ragoût*, excellent *kabobs*, a Persian omelette, three gigantic platters of rice, two of them containing the famous Persian *chilau* or plain boiled rice, the third a *pilau*, or rice mixed with meat and currants,[1] and other dishes for which I cannot find a name. The cooking of such as I tried was excellent, and the rice especially was prepared in a manner that no Parisian artist could emulate. For drink there was Kuchan wine, which I thought extremely nasty, sour milk, which is equally distasteful to the untrained palate, and native sherbet, which, though little else than iced sugar and water, is a most agreeable and refreshing beverage. Delicately carved and transparent pear-wood spoons from Abadeh floated in the sherbet-bowl. Lastly there were piles of grapes. I more than

Dinner from the Khan's kitchen

[1] The *chilau*, which is a triumph of cooking, comes up in the form of 'a white pyramid of steamed rice, every grain of which is dry outside, but inside is full of juice,' and is served with a large number of *entrées*. For its recipe, *vide* Thielmann (*Journey in the Caucasus*, vol. ii. p. 26), copied from Polak's *Persien*. As for the *pilau*, Chardin declared that there were above twenty sorts, for which he gave the recipes, made up with mutton, lamb, pullets, &c. The results of a long experience are condensed in these words: 'It has a wonderful, sobering, filling, and nourishing effect. One eats so much that one expects to expire; but at the end of half an hour you do not know what has become of it all; you no longer feel the stomach loaded' (edit. Lloyd, vol. ii. p. 226; edit. Langlès, vol. viii. p. 187).

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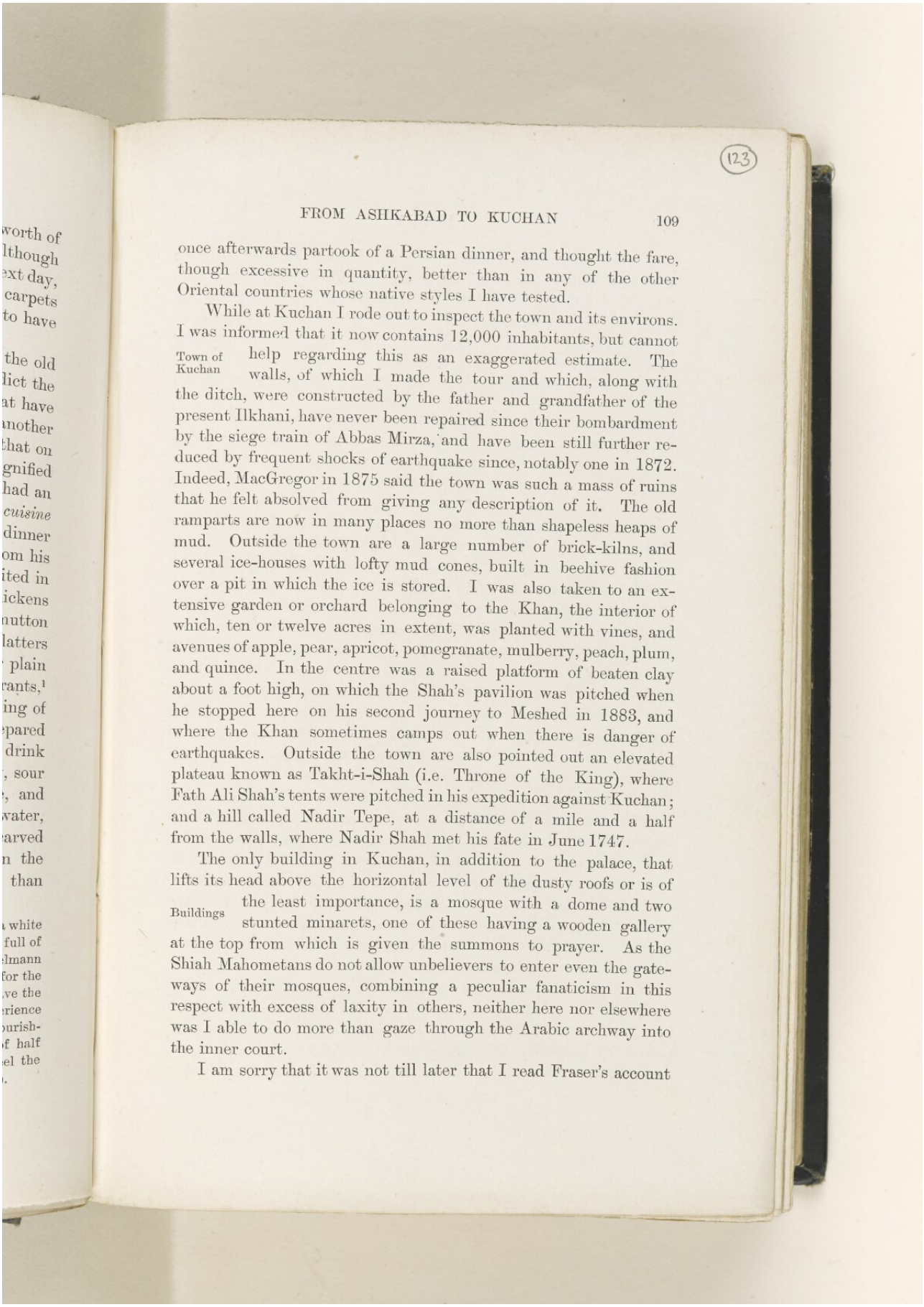




once afterwards partook of a Persian dinner, and thought the fare, though excessive in quantity, better than in any of the other Oriental countries whose native styles I have tested.

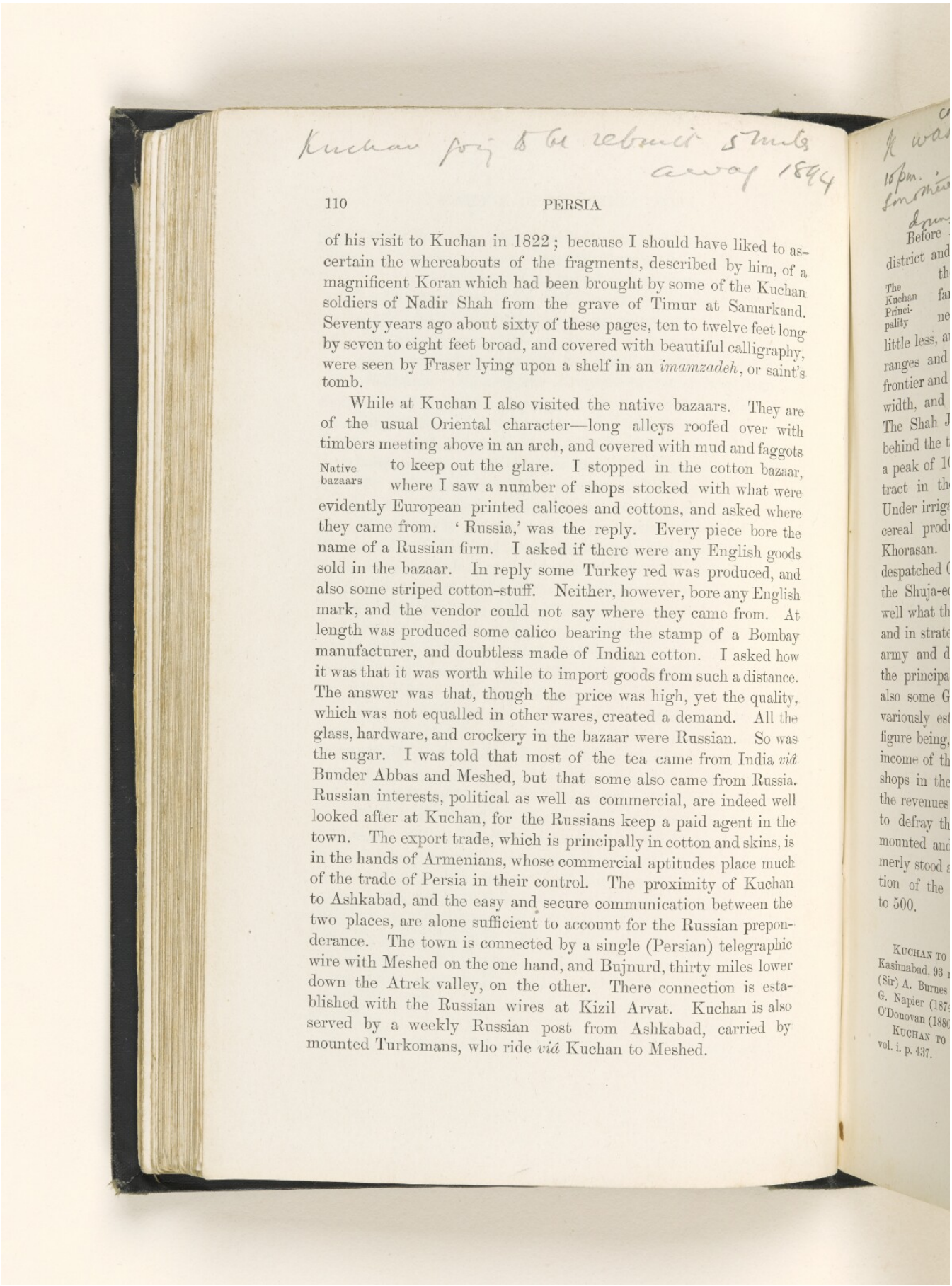
While at Kuchan I rode out to inspect the town and its environs. I was informed that it now contains 12,000 inhabitants, but cannot help regarding this as an exaggerated estimate. The walls, of which I made the tour and which, along with the ditch, were constructed by the father and grandfather of the present Ilkhani, have never been repaired since their bombardment by the siege train of Abbas Mirza, and have been still further reduced by frequent shocks of earthquake since, notably one in 1872. Indeed, MacGregor in 1875 said the town was such a mass of ruins that he felt absolved from giving any description of it. The old ramparts are now in many places no more than shapeless heaps of mud. Outside the town are a large number of brick-kilns, and several ice-houses with lofty mud cones, built in beehive fashion over a pit in which the ice is stored. I was also taken to an extensive garden or orchard belonging to the Khan, the interior of which, ten or twelve acres in extent, was planted with vines, and avenues of apple, pear, apricot, pomegranate, mulberry, peach, plum, and quince. In the centre was a raised platform of beaten clay about a foot high, on which the Shah's pavilion was pitched when he stopped here on his second journey to Meshed in 1883, and where the Khan sometimes camps out when there is danger of earthquakes. Outside the town are also pointed out an elevated plateau known as Takht-i-Shah (i.e. Throne of the King), where Fath Ali Shah's tents were pitched in his expedition against Kuchan; and a hill called Nadir Tepe, at a distance of a mile and a half from the walls, where Nadir Shah met his fate in June 1747.

Town of Kuchan

The only building in Kuchan, in addition to the palace, that lifts its head above the horizontal level of the dusty roofs or is of the least importance, is a mosque with a dome and two stunted minarets, one of these having a wooden gallery at the top from which is given the summons to prayer. As the Shiah Mahometans do not allow unbelievers to enter even the gateways of their mosques, combining a peculiar fanaticism in this respect with excess of laxity in others, neither here nor elsewhere was I able to do more than gaze through the Arabic archway into the inner court.

Buildings

I am sorry that it was not till later that I read Fraser's account



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of his visit to Kuchan in 1822; because I should have liked to ascertain the whereabouts of the fragments, described by him, of a magnificent Koran which had been brought by some of the Kuchan soldiers of Nadir Shah from the grave of Timur at Samarkand. Seventy years ago about sixty of these pages, ten to twelve feet long by seven to eight feet broad, and covered with beautiful calligraphy, were seen by Fraser lying upon a shelf in an *imamzadeh*, or saint's tomb.

While at Kuchan I also visited the native bazaars. They are of the usual Oriental character—long alleys roofed over with timbers meeting above in an arch, and covered with mud and faggots to keep out the glare. I stopped in the cotton bazaar, where I saw a number of shops stocked with what were evidently European printed calicoes and cottons, and asked where they came from. 'Russia,' was the reply. Every piece bore the name of a Russian firm. I asked if there were any English goods sold in the bazaar. In reply some Turkey red was produced, and also some striped cotton-stuff. Neither, however, bore any English mark, and the vendor could not say where they came from. At length was produced some calico bearing the stamp of a Bombay manufacturer, and doubtless made of Indian cotton. I asked how it was that it was worth while to import goods from such a distance. The answer was that, though the price was high, yet the quality, which was not equalled in other wares, created a demand. All the glass, hardware, and crockery in the bazaar were Russian. So was the sugar. I was told that most of the tea came from India *viâ* Bunder Abbas and Meshed, but that some also came from Russia. Russian interests, political as well as commercial, are indeed well looked after at Kuchan, for the Russians keep a paid agent in the town. The export trade, which is principally in cotton and skins, is in the hands of Armenians, whose commercial aptitudes place much of the trade of Persia in their control. The proximity of Kuchan to Ashkabad, and the easy and secure communication between the two places, are alone sufficient to account for the Russian preponderance. The town is connected by a single (Persian) telegraphic wire with Meshed on the one hand, and Bujnurd, thirty miles lower down the Atrek valley, on the other. There connection is established with the Russian wires at Kizil Arvat. Kuchan is also served by a weekly Russian post from Ashkabad, carried by mounted Turkomans, who ride *viâ* Kuchan to Meshed.

Native bazaars

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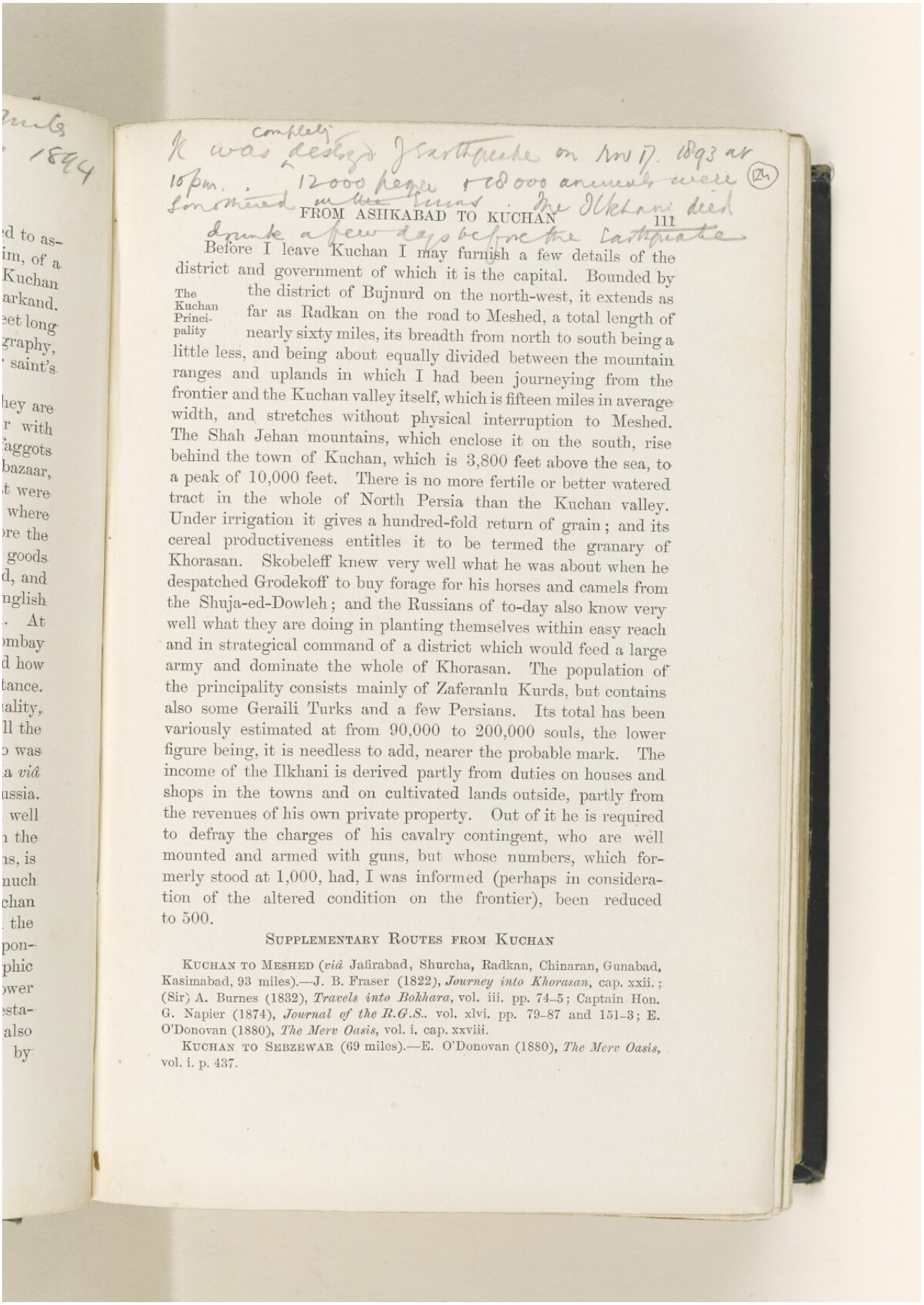

It was completely destroyed by earthquake on Nov 17. 1893 at 10 pm. 12000 people & 18000 animals were (124) consumed in the ruins. The Ilkhani died drunk a few days before the earthquake



Before I leave Kuchan I may furnish a few details of the district and government of which it is the capital. Bounded by the district of Bujnurd on the north-west, it extends as far as Radkan on the road to Meshed, a total length of nearly sixty miles, its breadth from north to south being a little less, and being about equally divided between the mountain ranges and uplands in which I had been journeying from the frontier and the Kuchan valley itself, which is fifteen miles in average width, and stretches without physical interruption to Meshed. The Shah Jehan mountains, which enclose it on the south, rise behind the town of Kuchan, which is 3,800 feet above the sea, to a peak of 10,000 feet. There is no more fertile or better watered tract in the whole of North Persia than the Kuchan valley. Under irrigation it gives a hundred-fold return of grain; and its cereal productiveness entitles it to be termed the granary of Khorasan. Skobeleff knew very well what he was about when he despatched Grodekoff to buy forage for his horses and camels from the Shuja-ed-Dowleh; and the Russians of to-day also know very well what they are doing in planting themselves within easy reach and in strategical command of a district which would feed a large army and dominate the whole of Khorasan. The population of the principality consists mainly of Zaferanlu Kurds, but contains also some Geraili Turks and a few Persians. Its total has been variously estimated at from 90,000 to 200,000 souls, the lower figure being, it is needless to add, nearer the probable mark. The income of the Ilkhani is derived partly from duties on houses and shops in the towns and on cultivated lands outside, partly from the revenues of his own private property. Out of it he is required to defray the charges of his cavalry contingent, who are well mounted and armed with guns, but whose numbers, which formerly stood at 1,000, had, I was informed (perhaps in consideration of the altered condition on the frontier), been reduced to 500.

The Kuchan Principality

### Supplementary Routes from Kuchan

Kuchan to Meshed (*viâ* Jafirabad, Shurcha, Radkan, Chinaran, Gunabad, Kasimabad, 93 miles).—J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xxii.; (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 74–5; Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 79–87 and 151–3; E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.

Kuchan to Sebzewar (69 miles).—E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. p. 437.

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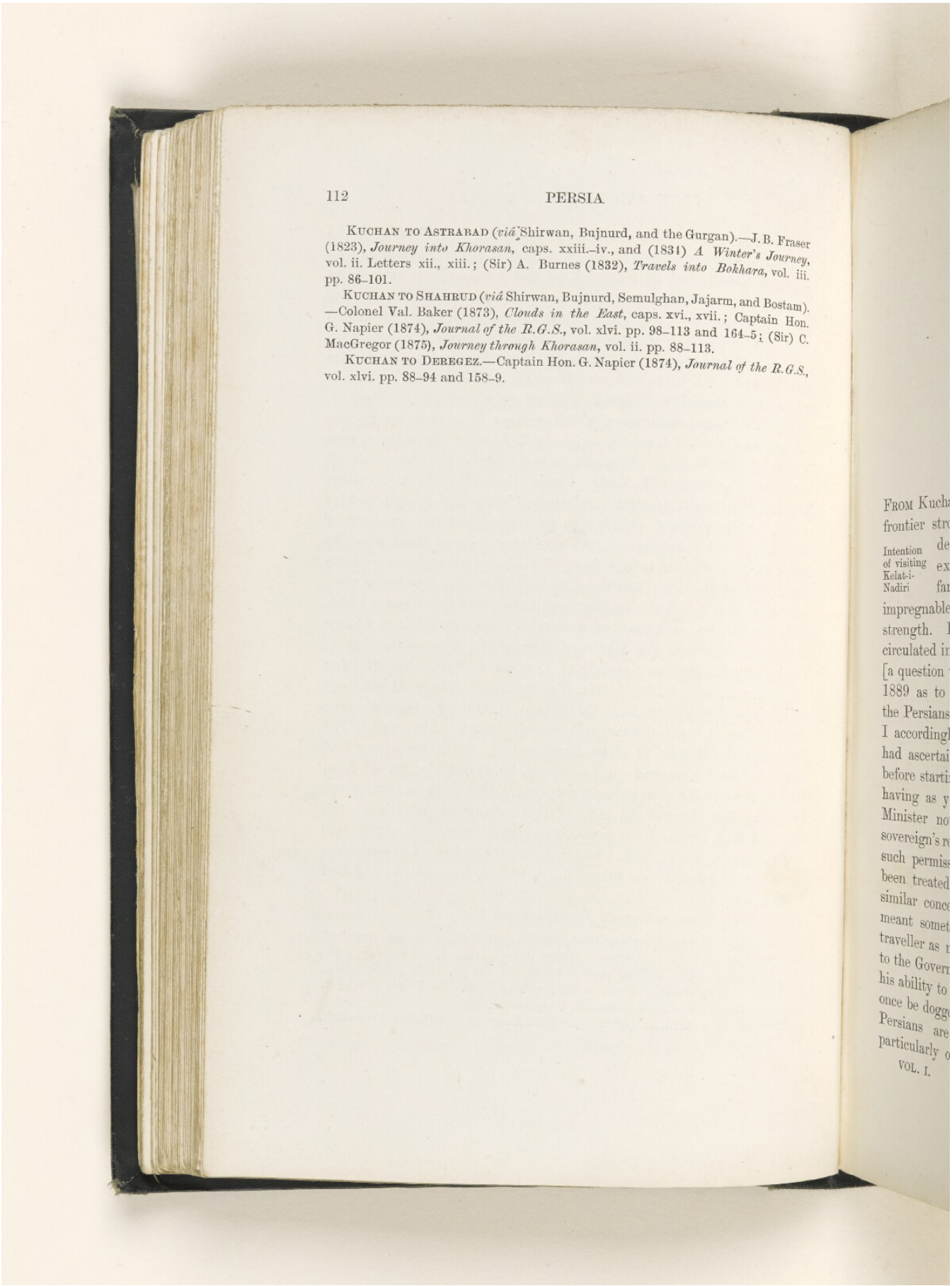



KUCHAN TO ASTRABAD (*viâ* Shirwan, Bujnurd, and the Gurgan).—J. B. Fraser (1823), *Journey into Khorasan*, caps. xxiii.–iv., and (1834) *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. Letters xii., xiii.; (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 86–101.

KUCHAN TO SHAHRUD (*viâ* Shirwan, Bujnurd, Semulghan, Jajarm, and Bostam).—Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, caps. xvi., xvii.; Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 98–113 and 164–5; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 88–113.

KUCHAN TO DEREGEZ.—Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 88–94 and 158–9.



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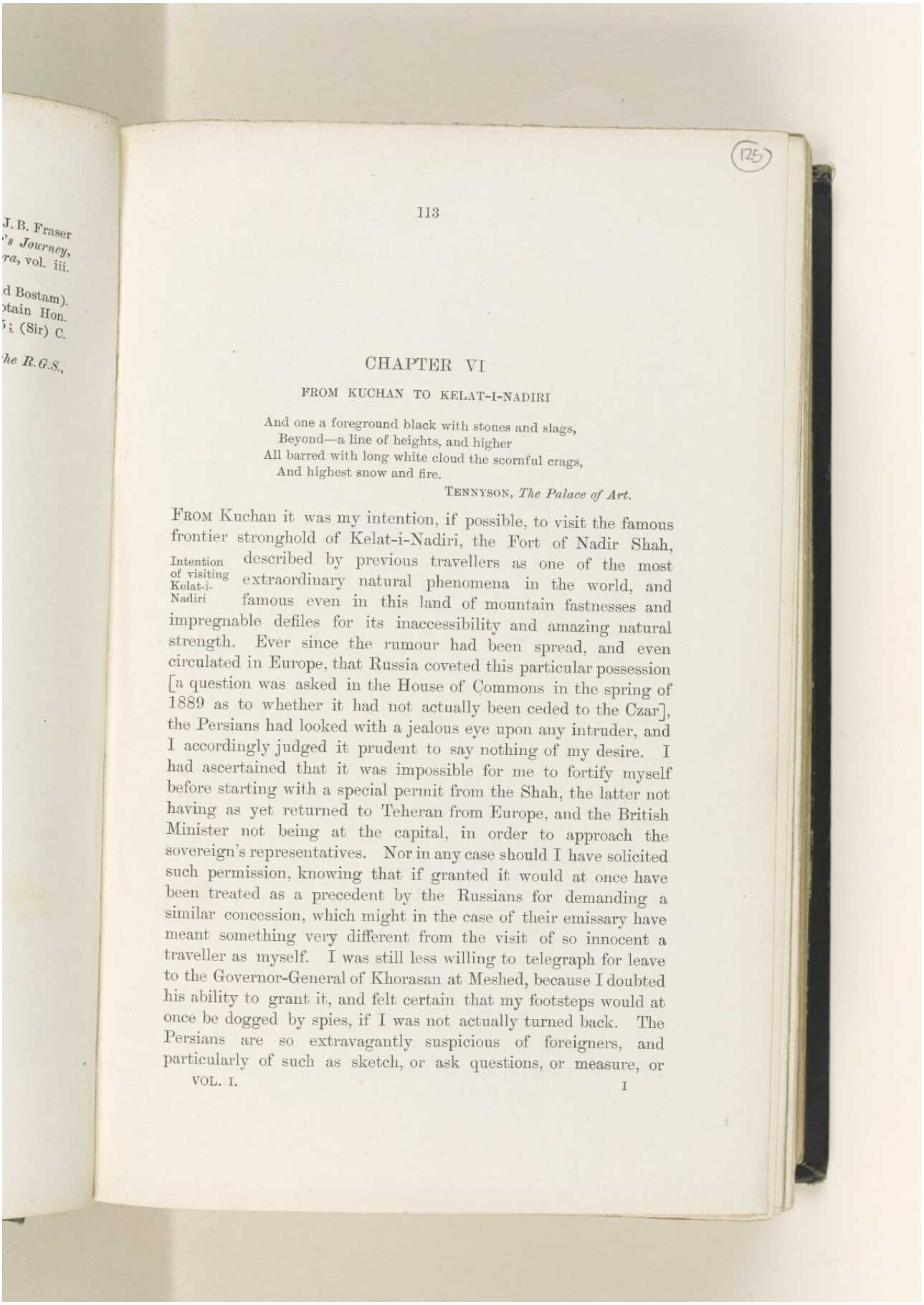

J. B. Fraser
's *Journey*,
*ra*, vol. iii.

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); (Sir) C.

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## CHAPTER VI

### FROM KUCHAN TO KELAT-I-NADIRI

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond—a line of heights, and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest snow and fire.

TENNYSON, *The Palace of Art*.

FROM Kuchan it was my intention, if possible, to visit the famous frontier stronghold of Kelat-i-Nadiri, the Fort of Nadir Shah, described by previous travellers as one of the most extraordinary natural phenomena in the world, and famous even in this land of mountain fastnesses and impregnable defiles for its inaccessibility and amazing natural strength. Ever since the rumour had been spread, and even circulated in Europe, that Russia coveted this particular possession [a question was asked in the House of Commons in the spring of 1889 as to whether it had not actually been ceded to the Czar], the Persians had looked with a jealous eye upon any intruder, and I accordingly judged it prudent to say nothing of my desire. I had ascertained that it was impossible for me to fortify myself before starting with a special permit from the Shah, the latter not having as yet returned to Teheran from Europe, and the British Minister not being at the capital, in order to approach the sovereign's representatives. Nor in any case should I have solicited such permission, knowing that if granted it would at once have been treated as a precedent by the Russians for demanding a similar concession, which might in the case of their emissary have meant something very different from the visit of so innocent a traveller as myself. I was still less willing to telegraph for leave to the Governor-General of Khorasan at Meshed, because I doubted his ability to grant it, and felt certain that my footsteps would at once be dogged by spies, if I was not actually turned back. The Persians are so extravagantly suspicious of foreigners, and particularly of such as sketch, or ask questions, or measure, or

Intention of visiting Kelat-i-Nadiri



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pull instruments out of their pockets, that no successful exploration would ever be undertaken if they were to be forewarned of the traveller's intention. I determined, therefore, to take no one into my counsels, but to announce that I was going to Meshed and might possibly diverge on the way to hunt in the mountains; my secret resolve being to strike across country by whatever route I could find,[1] and ascertain for myself whether it was possible for a single individual, unexpected and unannounced, to penetrate into Kelat.

The victoria of the Ilkhani

I had the greatest difficulty in eluding the vigilance of the Ilkhani, who was not only full of curiosity as to my movements, but also insisted upon my travelling in his brand-new Russian victoria as far as Meshed, threatening to return me the silver watch if I would not accept the loan of his vehicle. It was in vain that I said that I preferred to ride. 'You will have plenty of riding later on,' was the reply. Or that I wanted to stop at the villages *en route*. 'So can the carriage,' was the rejoinder. Finally I compromised by accepting the victoria, with the intention of sending it back at the end of the first stage; and concluded by a most ceremonious departure from Kuchan. The Khan walked with me through the streets, holding me by the hand, and deposited me in the vehicle, which was of Moscow build and of the newest and most elegant description (I fell to wondering from whom the present had come), and to which were harnessed four grey horses with postilions. With mounted *gholams* clearing a way in front and attendants walking by the side, the victoria, with myself inside it, rolled slowly out of the town.

Kuchan to Chamgir

The first part of my route lay along the highway to Meshed; as, in order to avoid suspicion, I had decided upon pursuing it as far as Radkan, on the outskirts of the Shuja's government, and forty miles from his city. The road runs across an almost dead level, although at about twenty miles from Kuchan it crosses the watershed between the Atrek and Keshef Rud drainage. It was unmetalled, in bad repair, and reflected no credit on the engineer who had constructed it. My postilions, as a rule, preferred to drive over the open plain, for the road was frequently intersected by irrigation trenches of a foot or more in depth, which

[1] I had no information as to the existence of any such route, the few English travellers who had previously been to Kelat having gone from Meshed.

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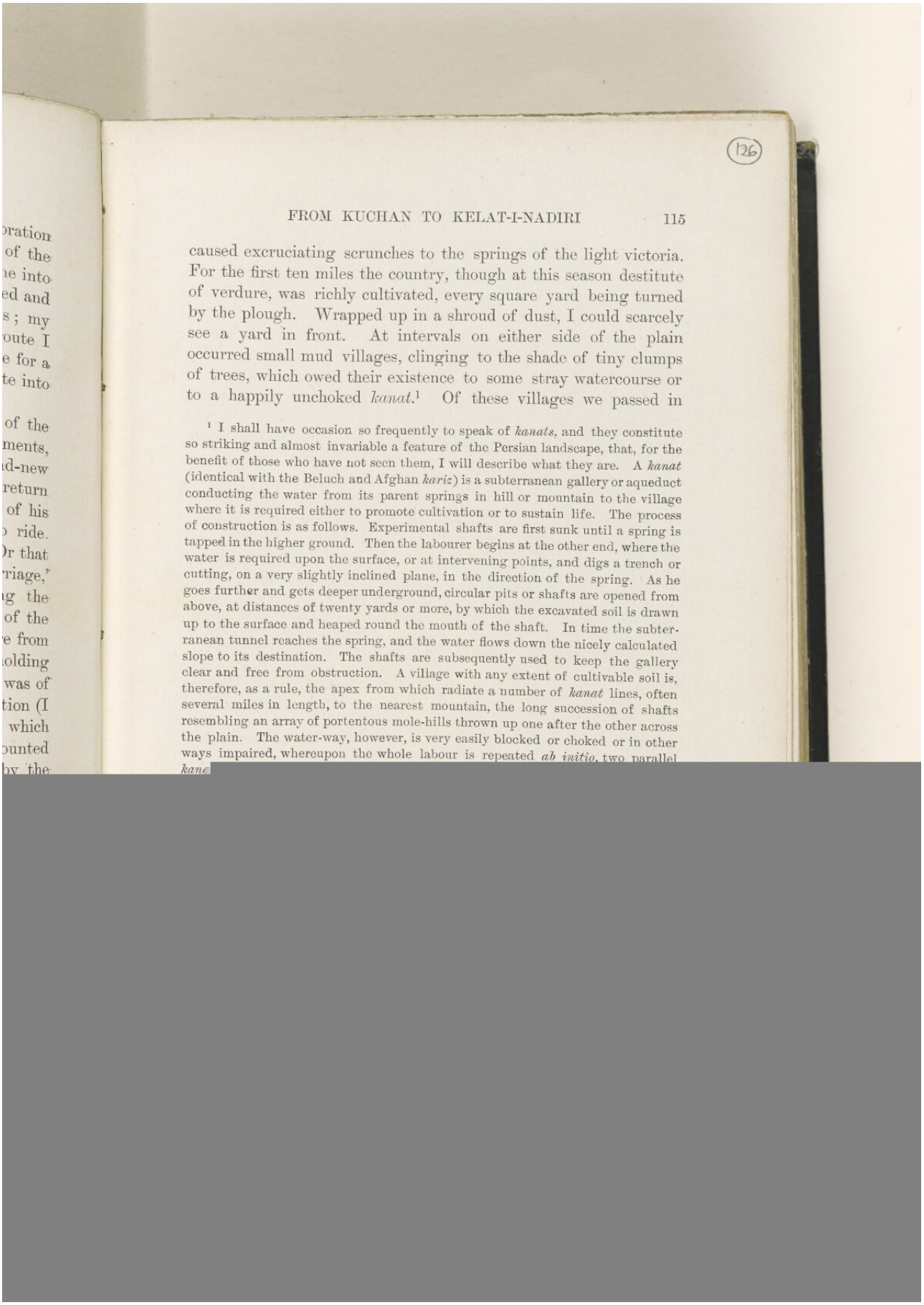

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caused excruciating scrunches to the springs of the light victoria. For the first ten miles the country, though at this season destitute of verdure, was richly cultivated, every square yard being turned by the plough. Wrapped up in a shroud of dust, I could scarcely see a yard in front. At intervals on either side of the plain occurred small mud villages, clinging to the shade of tiny clumps of trees, which owed their existence to some stray watercourse or to a happily unchoked *kanat*.[1] Of these villages we passed in

[1] I shall have occasion so frequently to speak of *kanats*, and they constitute so striking and almost invariable a feature of the Persian landscape, that, for the benefit of those who have not seen them, I will describe what they are. A *kanat* (identical with the Beluch and Afghan *kariz*) is a subterranean gallery or aqueduct conducting the water from its parent springs in hill or mountain to the village where it is required either to promote cultivation or to sustain life. The process of construction is as follows. Experimental shafts are first sunk until a spring is tapped in the higher ground. Then the labourer begins at the other end, where the water is required upon the surface, or at intervening points, and digs a trench or cutting, on a very slightly inclined plane, in the direction of the spring. As he goes further and gets deeper underground, circular pits or shafts are opened from above, at distances of twenty yards or more, by which the excavated soil is drawn up to the surface and heaped round the mouth of the shaft. In time the subterranean tunnel reaches the spring, and the water flows down the nicely calculated slope to its destination. The shafts are subsequently used to keep the gallery clear and free from obstruction. A village with any extent of cultivable soil is, therefore, as a rule, the apex from which radiate a number of *kanat* lines, often several miles in length, to the nearest mountain, the long succession of shafts resembling an array of portentous mole-hills thrown up one after the other across the plain. The water-way, however, is very easily blocked or choked or in other ways impaired, whereupon the whole labour is repeated *ab initio*, two parallel

*kanat*

succession Fathiabad, two miles from Kuchan; Sarkhan, seven miles; Jafirabad, a collection of low cubical domes, fifteen miles, and Dashtabad. Black goats'-hair tents scattered here and there showed that not all the Kurds had taken to sedentary life, but that some retained their nomad instincts; while an occasional deserted village marked the site of a destroyed *kanat* or exhausted spring. At Kelata,[1] about twenty-two miles from Kuchan, I dismissed the victoria, with instructions to go home on the morrow; and mounting my horse, and leaving the high road to Meshed and the telegraph poles on the right, continued for another eight miles on the level to Chamgir, a small village some way short of Radkan. As we rode along the plain, now quite destitute of vegetation, a lovely lake of water, the creature of the Eastern mirage, trembled and glittered on the horizon, and ever receded while we advanced. Towards evening the north-east hills, on which the declining sun shone with full orb, acquired a startling glory with tints of rose and coral; the opposite range, plunged in the shadow, was suffused with an opaline vapour that temporarily endowed it with almost ethereal beauty. Presently they both relapsed, the one into a russet brown, the other into a cold and ashen grey. I camped in an orchard outside the village.

Primitive threshing

At one of the hamlets which we had passed during the day I saw a decidedly primitive manner of threshing barley straw. A threshing-floor was prepared of trodden earth outside the walls, and upon this the straw was spread out; while a long wooden cylinder or roller, armed with big wooden spikes, like the barrel of a colossal musical box, and drawn by bullocks, was driven slowly round and round over the heaps. The result was that the straw was chopped up into small pieces, which constitute the *kah*, or fodder, that is the common food of horses and mules in Persia. This mode of threshing and the implement employed are as old and unalterable as are most of the habits and utensils of the East. It is described at length by Chardin over two hundred years ago,[2] and by even earlier travellers, and will doubtless be visible in remote hamlets two hundred years hence.

XX. paces of this chanell, than digge they an other pitt like to the first, and so from pitt to pitt they conveigh the water alongest these chanells whither they woll.' But the system is older yet, for it is described by Polybius (lib. x. 25).

[1] Kelata is the plural, and signifies a collection of villages or hamlets, each of which is usually distinguished by a separate title.

[2] *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. iv. pp. 105–106.

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It is impossible to tire of the interest and humours of camp life. The traveller arrives first on his superior mount, and selects a favourable spot, beneath the protection of trees, and if possible near to running water. Stretching himself at full length upon an outspread carpet, he enjoys the luxury of relaxation and repose. The villagers crowd round and stare. Some firewood and forage are bought for a few coppers. A flame is soon crackling and blazing; the *samovar* puffs out its grateful steam; and an excellent cup of tea proves to be the best beverage in the world. By this time the remainder of the camp has arrived. The horses are unsaddled by their grooms, currycombed, wrapped in thick felts from ears to tail, picketed, and fed from nosebags containing grass and chopped straw. The tents and beds and cooking utensils and baggage are pulled with a crash from the backs of the mules, who, relieved of their burdens, immediately seek the nearest tree to scratch their hinder parts, and then incontinently lie down, and kicking their heels in the air, do their ineffectual best to turn a somersault in the dust. Meanwhile the cook is hard at work on one side scooping a hole in the ground, into which he transfers the already lighted fuel, and over which he props an iron grid. On the other side the tent-pegs are driven in; the tent soon rises, and, extended on his couch, the traveller recalls the incidents of the day, tries to summon up resolution to write his diary, and awaits the crowning consolation of dinner. By 8.30 or 9 P.M. all is still save the tinkle of the mule bells and an occasional sneeze from the horses; for at five next morning the forward movement must again begin.

Camp life

And here, before I proceed further, let me introduce to my readers, for the purposes of this chapter only, the names and individuality of my attendants, who will appear several times within its pages. Their leader was Ramzan Ali Khan, an Afghan of Persian extraction (i.e. a descendant of a Persian ancestor who had accompanied either Nadir Shah or Ahmed Shah Durani into Afghanistan in the previous century, and had settled there), himself a *duffadar*, or sergeant, in the Indian Corps of Guides, who are recruited on the north-west border of India very largely from these sources, and whose members are commonly employed upon frontier expeditions or foreign service. Ramzan Ali had accompanied General Maclean, the British Consul-General at Meshed, from India, and was a fine

My retinue

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specimen of the Asiatic. Courageous and resourceful, a good horseman, with the manners of a perfect gentleman, he entertained a profound conviction that there was no people in the world like the English. Colonel Stewart, then acting as substitute for General Maclean at Meshed, had kindly given me the loan of his personal servant, Gregory, an Armenian of Julfa, who, knowing English fairly well, and Persian thoroughly, proved himself a most efficient interpreter,[1] and also of his cook. He



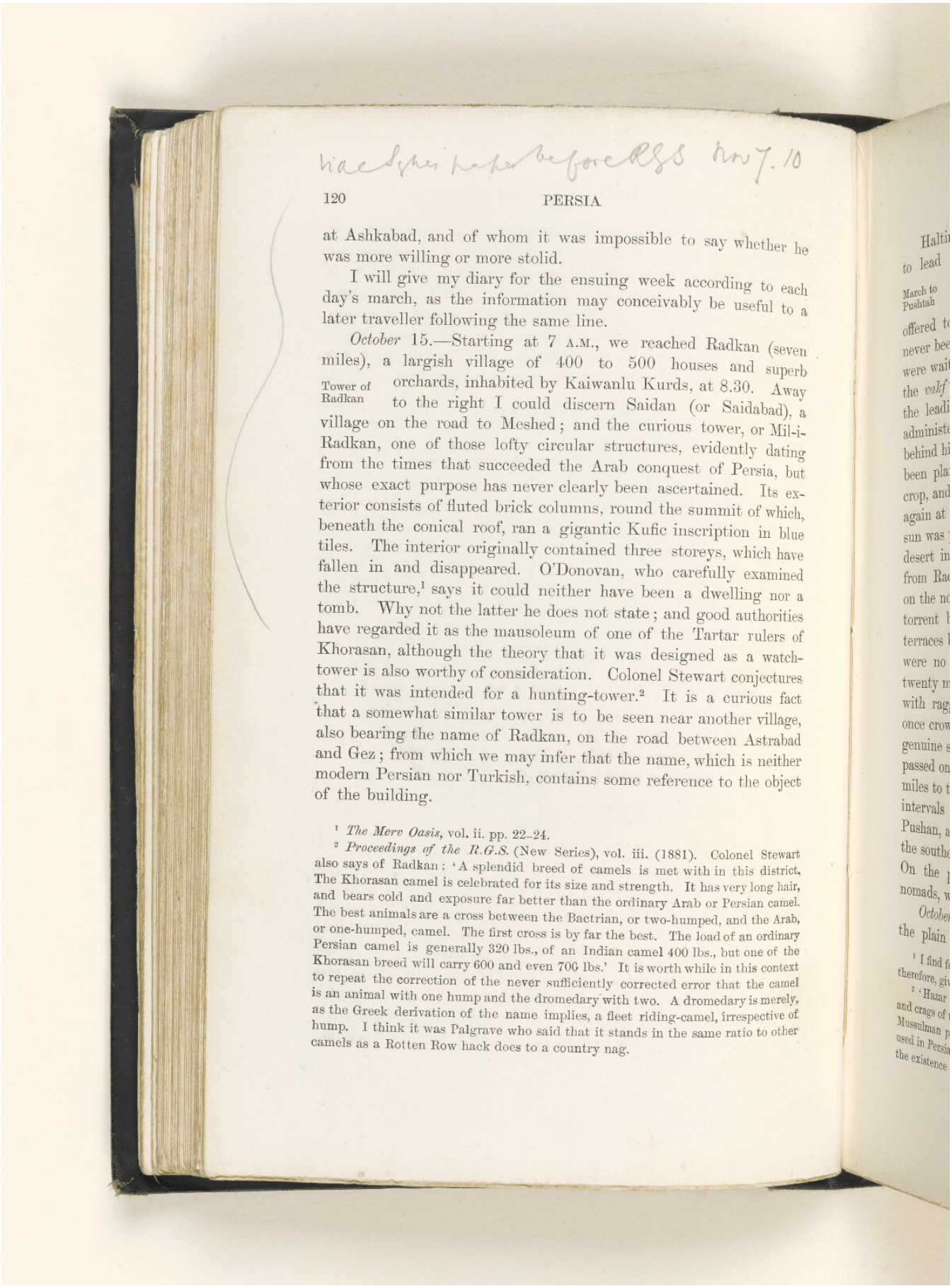
NOBAD GELDI

had, moreover, sent as a personal escort two of the Turkoman *sowars*, or horsemen, a small contingent of whom are kept by the Indian Government at Meshed, and are employed as a private mounted post between that city and Herat. They are chiefly Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh, who threw in their lot with Great Britain before the Russian advance of 1885, and have preferred to

[1] The poor fellow died a few weeks later on the march from Meshed to Teheran.

maintain this allegiance rather than join the conquerors, whom they cordially dislike. I present upon the accompanying page a portrait of Nobad Geldi, the senior of these Turkomans, which I took with my 'Kodak' at Imam Kuli. He rode a white Turkoman horse, whose tail was dyed with henna, and which, though of unprepossessing appearance, could always go both faster and longer than any other animal in the caravan. Its favourite pace was the peculiar amble or run which the Turkomans teach their horses,







at Ashkabad, and of whom it was impossible to say whether he was more willing or more stolid.

I will give my diary for the ensuing week according to each day's march, as the information may conceivably be useful to a later traveller following the same line.

Tower of Radkan

*October* 15.—Starting at 7 A.M., we reached Radkan (seven miles), a largish village of 400 to 500 houses and superb orchards, inhabited by Kaiwanlu Kurds, at 8.30. Away to the right I could discern Saidan (or Saidabad), a village on the road to Meshed; and the curious tower, or Mil-i-Radkan, one of those lofty circular structures, evidently dating from the times that succeeded the Arab conquest of Persia, but whose exact purpose has never clearly been ascertained. Its exterior consists of fluted brick columns, round the summit of which, beneath the conical roof, ran a gigantic Kufic inscription in blue tiles. The interior originally contained three storeys, which have fallen in and disappeared. O'Donovan, who carefully examined the structure,[1] says it could neither have been a dwelling nor a tomb. Why not the latter he does not state; and good authorities have regarded it as the mausoleum of one of the Tartar rulers of Khorasan, although the theory that it was designed as a watch-tower is also worthy of consideration. Colonel Stewart conjectures that it was intended for a hunting-tower.[2] It is a curious fact that a somewhat similar tower is to be seen near another village, also bearing the name of Radkan, on the road between Astrabad and Gez; from which we may infer that the name, which is neither modern Persian nor Turkish, contains some reference to the object of the building.

[1] *The Merv Oasis*, vol. ii. pp. 22–24.

[2] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. iii. (1881). Colonel Stewart also says of Radkan: 'A splendid breed of camels is met with in this district. The Khorasan camel is celebrated for its size and strength. It has very long hair, and bears cold and exposure far better than the ordinary Arab or Persian camel. The best animals are a cross between the Bactrian, or two-humped, and the Arab, or one-humped, camel. The first cross is by far the best. The load of an ordinary Persian camel is generally 320 lbs., of an Indian camel 400 lbs., but one of the Khorasan breed will carry 600 and even 700 lbs.' It is worth while in this context to repeat the correction of the never sufficiently corrected error that the camel is an animal with one hump and the dromedary with two. A dromedary is merely, as the Greek derivation of the name implies, a fleet riding-camel, irrespective of hump. I think it was Palgrave who said that it stands in the same ratio to other camels as a Rotten Row hack does to a country nag.

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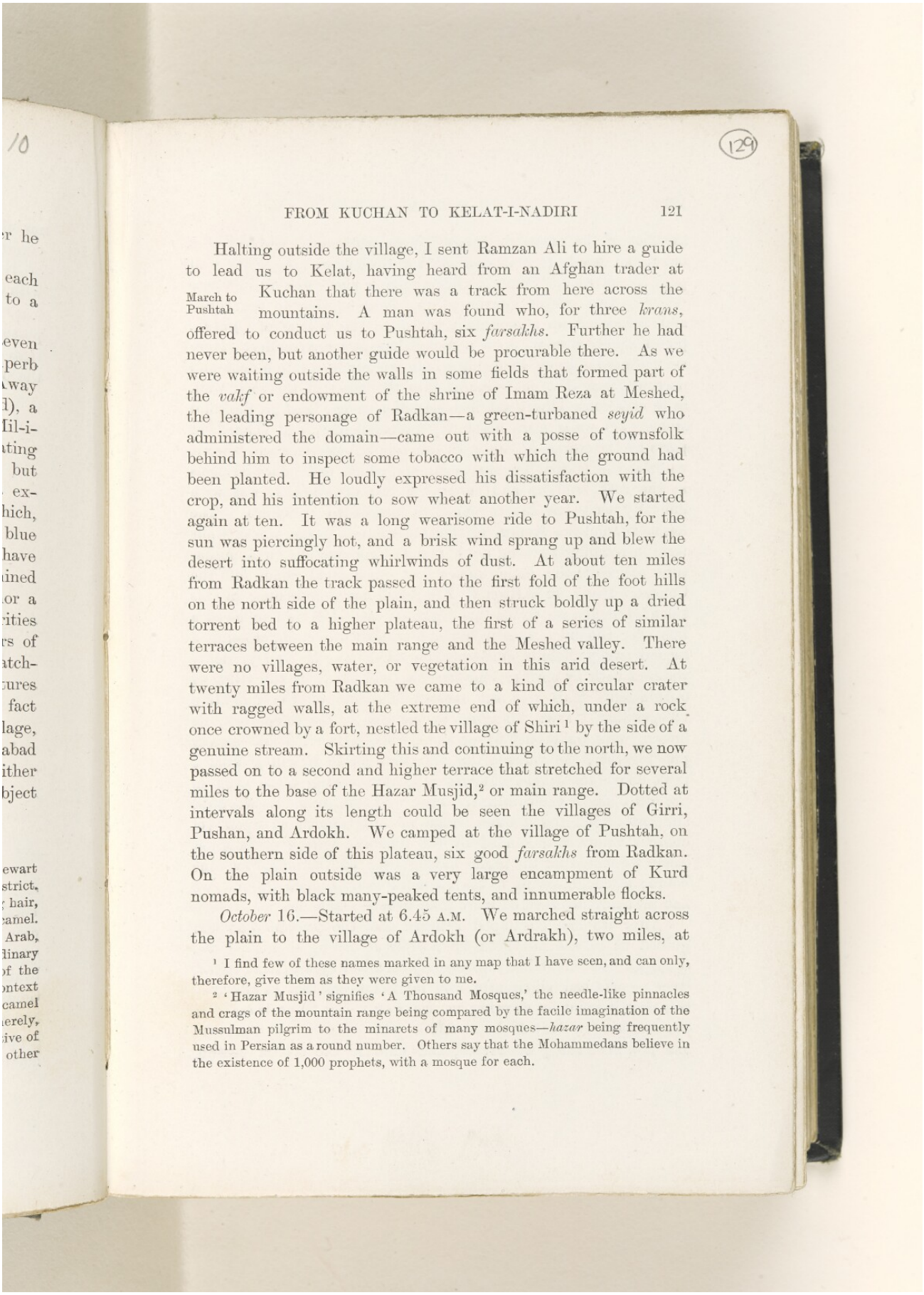




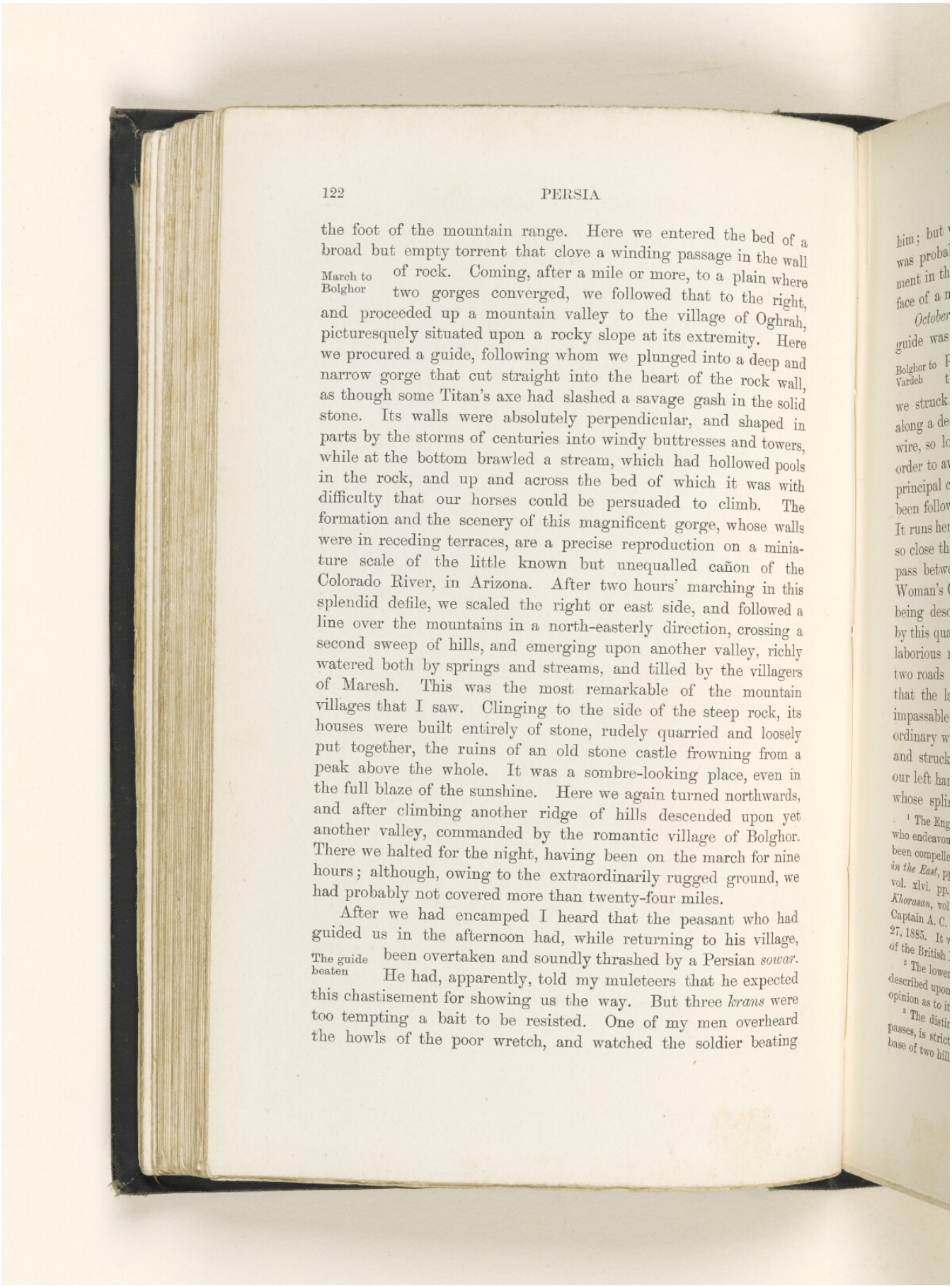
Halting outside the village, I sent Ramzan Ali to hire a guide to lead us to Kelat, having heard from an Afghan trader at Kuchan that there was a track from here across the mountains. A man was found who, for three *krans*, offered to conduct us to Pushtah, six *farsakhs*. Further he had never been, but another guide would be procurable there. As we were waiting outside the walls in some fields that formed part of the *vakf* or endowment of the shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed, the leading personage of Radkan—a green-turbaned *seyid* who administered the domain—came out with a posse of townsfolk behind him to inspect some tobacco with which the ground had been planted. He loudly expressed his dissatisfaction with the crop, and his intention to sow wheat another year. We started again at ten. It was a long wearisome ride to Pushtah, for the sun was piercingly hot, and a brisk wind sprang up and blew the desert into suffocating whirlwinds of dust. At about ten miles from Radkan the track passed into the first fold of the foot hills on the north side of the plain, and then struck boldly up a dried torrent bed to a higher plateau, the first of a series of similar terraces between the main range and the Meshed valley. There were no villages, water, or vegetation in this arid desert. At twenty miles from Radkan we came to a kind of circular crater with ragged walls, at the extreme end of which, under a rock once crowned by a fort, nestled the village of Shiri[1] by the side of a genuine stream. Skirting this and continuing to the north, we now passed on to a second and higher terrace that stretched for several miles to the base of the Hazar Musjid,[2] or main range. Dotted at intervals along its length could be seen the villages of Girri, Pushan, and Ardokh. We camped at the village of Pushtah, on the southern side of this plateau, six good *farsakhs* from Radkan. On the plain outside was a very large encampment of Kurd nomads, with black many-peaked tents, and innumerable flocks.

March to Pushtah

*October* 16.—Started at 6.45 A.M. We marched straight across the plain to the village of Ardokh (or Ardrakh), two miles, at

[1] I find few of these names marked in any map that I have seen, and can only, therefore, give them as they were given to me.

[2] 'Hazar Musjid' signifies 'A Thousand Mosques,' the needle-like pinnacles and crags of the mountain range being compared by the facile imagination of the Mussulman pilgrim to the minarets of many mosques—*hazar* being frequently used in Persian as a round number. Others say that the Mohammedans believe in the existence of 1,000 prophets, with a mosque for each.



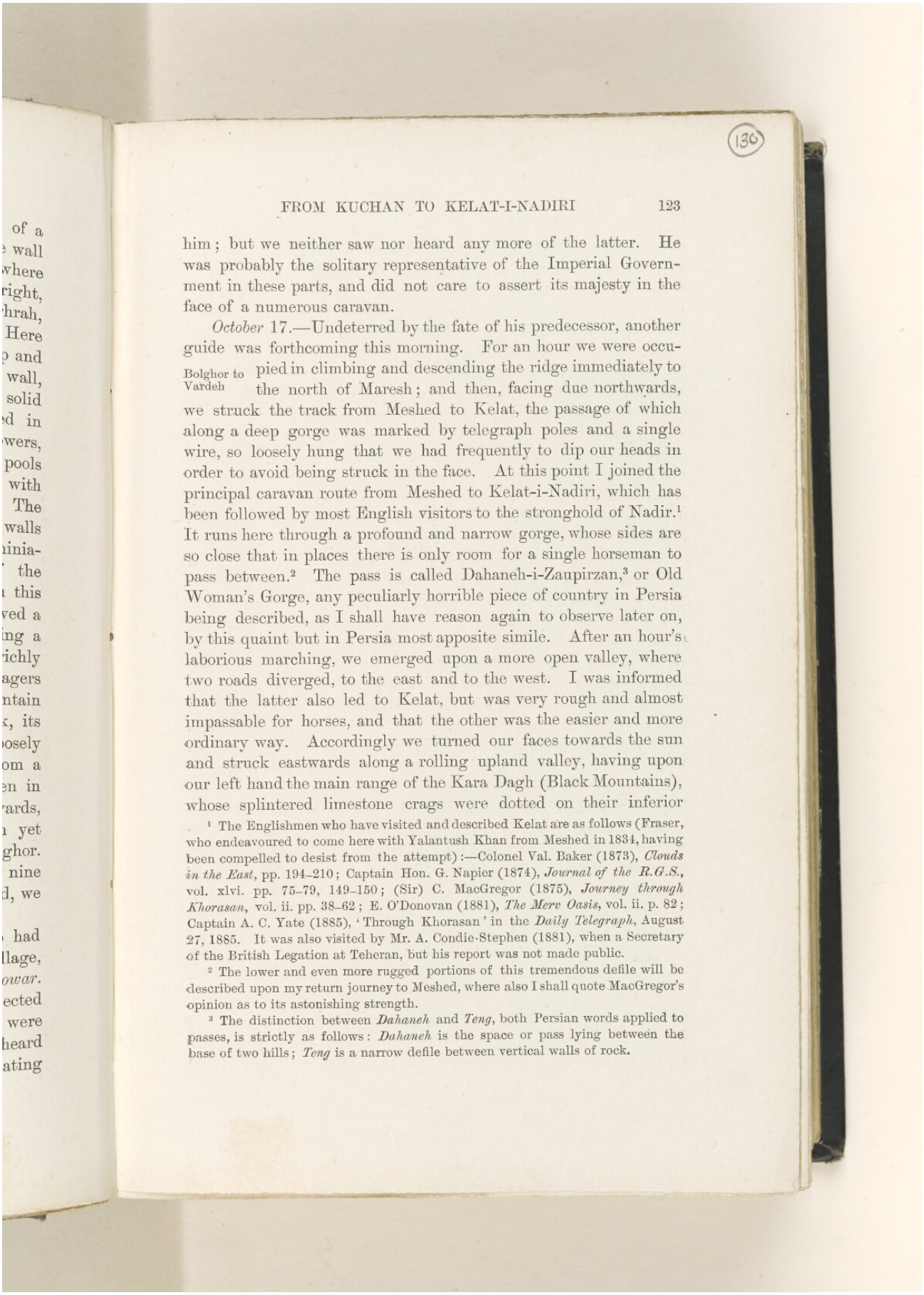


the foot of the mountain range. Here we entered the bed of a broad but empty torrent that clove a winding passage in the wall of rock. Coming, after a mile or more, to a plain where two gorges converged, we followed that to the right, and proceeded up a mountain valley to the village of Oghrah, picturesquely situated upon a rocky slope at its extremity. Here we procured a guide, following whom we plunged into a deep and narrow gorge that cut straight into the heart of the rock wall, as though some Titan's axe had slashed a savage gash in the solid stone. Its walls were absolutely perpendicular, and shaped in parts by the storms of centuries into windy buttresses and towers, while at the bottom brawled a stream, which had hollowed pools in the rock, and up and across the bed of which it was with difficulty that our horses could be persuaded to climb. The formation and the scenery of this magnificent gorge, whose walls were in receding terraces, are a precise reproduction on a miniature scale of the little known but unequalled cañon of the Colorado River, in Arizona. After two hours' marching in this splendid defile, we scaled the right or east side, and followed a line over the mountains in a north-easterly direction, crossing a second sweep of hills, and emerging upon another valley, richly watered both by springs and streams, and tilled by the villagers of Maresh. This was the most remarkable of the mountain villages that I saw. Clinging to the side of the steep rock, its houses were built entirely of stone, rudely quarried and loosely put together, the ruins of an old stone castle frowning from a peak above the whole. It was a sombre-looking place, even in the full blaze of the sunshine. Here we again turned northwards, and after climbing another ridge of hills descended upon yet another valley, commanded by the romantic village of Bolghor. There we halted for the night, having been on the march for nine hours; although, owing to the extraordinarily rugged ground, we had probably not covered more than twenty-four miles.

March to Bolghor

After we had encamped I heard that the peasant who had guided us in the afternoon had, while returning to his village, been overtaken and soundly thrashed by a Persian *sowar*. He had, apparently, told my muleteers that he expected this chastisement for showing us the way. But three *krans* were too tempting a bait to be resisted. One of my men overheard the howls of the poor wretch, and watched the soldier beating

The guide beaten





him; but we neither saw nor heard any more of the latter. He was probably the solitary representative of the Imperial Government in these parts, and did not care to assert its majesty in the face of a numerous caravan.

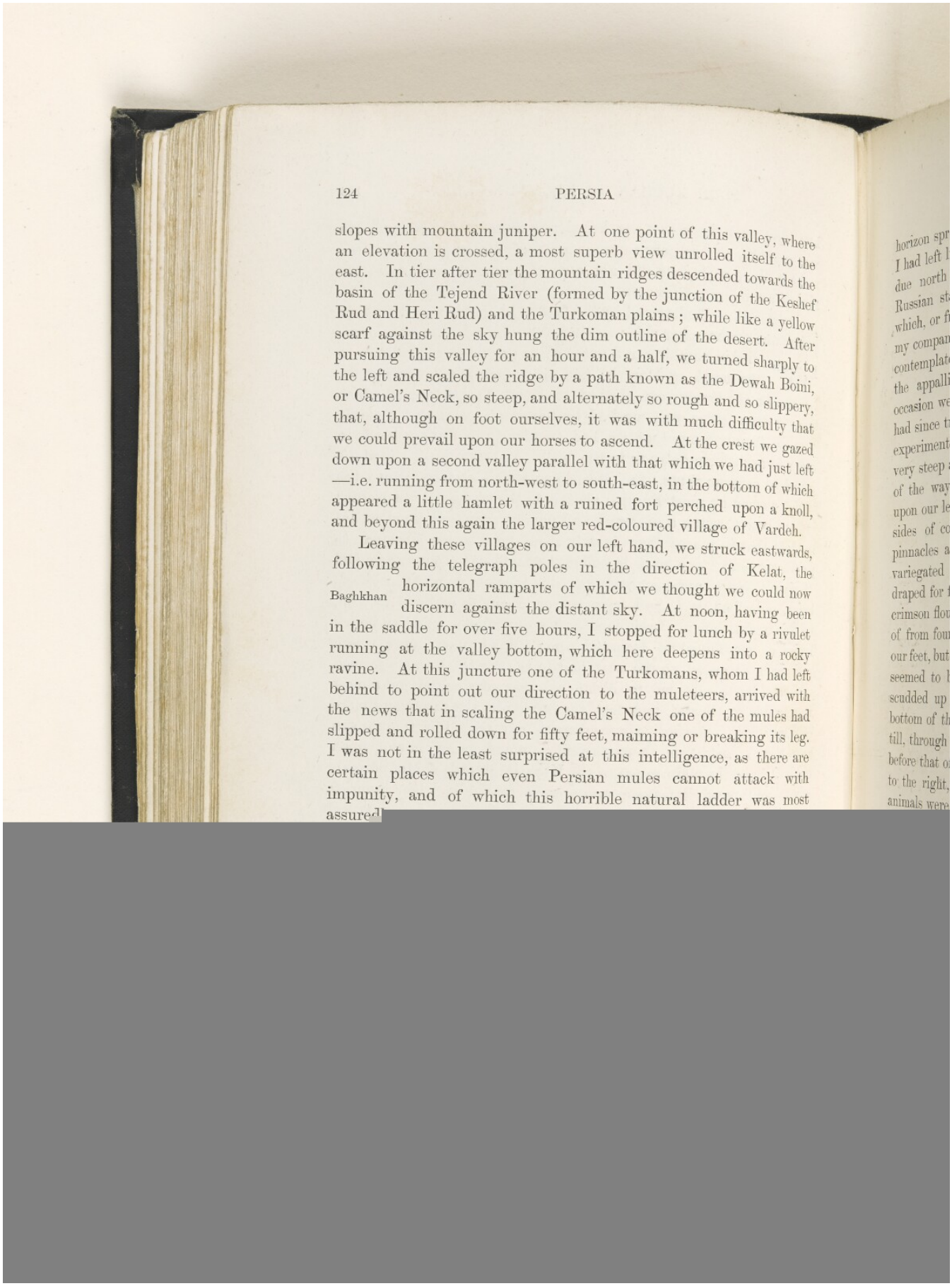
*October* 17.—Undeterred by the fate of his predecessor, another guide was forthcoming this morning. For an hour we were occupied in climbing and descending the ridge immediately to the north of Maresh; and then, facing due northwards, we struck the track from Meshed to Kelat, the passage of which along a deep gorge was marked by telegraph poles and a single wire, so loosely hung that we had frequently to dip our heads in order to avoid being struck in the face. At this point I joined the principal caravan route from Meshed to Kelat-i-Nadiri, which has been followed by most English visitors to the stronghold of Nadir.[1] It runs here through a profound and narrow gorge, whose sides are so close that in places there is only room for a single horseman to pass between.[2] The pass is called Dahaneh-i-Zaupirzan,[3] or Old Woman's Gorge, any peculiarly horrible piece of country in Persia being described, as I shall have reason again to observe later on, by this quaint but in Persia most apposite simile. After an hour's laborious marching, we emerged upon a more open valley, where two roads diverged, to the east and to the west. I was informed that the latter also led to Kelat, but was very rough and almost impassable for horses, and that the other was the easier and more ordinary way. Accordingly we turned our faces towards the sun and struck eastwards along a rolling upland valley, having upon our left hand the main range of the Kara Dagh (Black Mountains), whose splintered limestone crags were dotted on their inferior

Bolghor to Vardeh

[1] The Englishmen who have visited and described Kelat are as follows (Fraser, who endeavoured to come here with Yalantush Khan from Meshed in 1834, having been compelled to desist from the attempt):—Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 194–210; Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 75–79, 149–150; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 38–62; E. O'Donovan (1881), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. ii. p. 82; Captain A. C. Yate (1885), 'Through Khorasan' in the *Daily Telegraph*, August 27, 1885. It was also visited by Mr. A. Condie-Stephen (1881), when a Secretary of the British Legation at Teheran, but his report was not made public.

[2] The lower and even more rugged portions of this tremendous defile will be described upon my return journey to Meshed, where also I shall quote MacGregor's opinion as to its astonishing strength.

[3] The distinction between *Dahaneh* and *Teng*, both Persian words applied to passes, is strictly as follows: *Dahaneh* is the space or pass lying between the base of two hills; *Teng* is a narrow defile between vertical walls of rock.

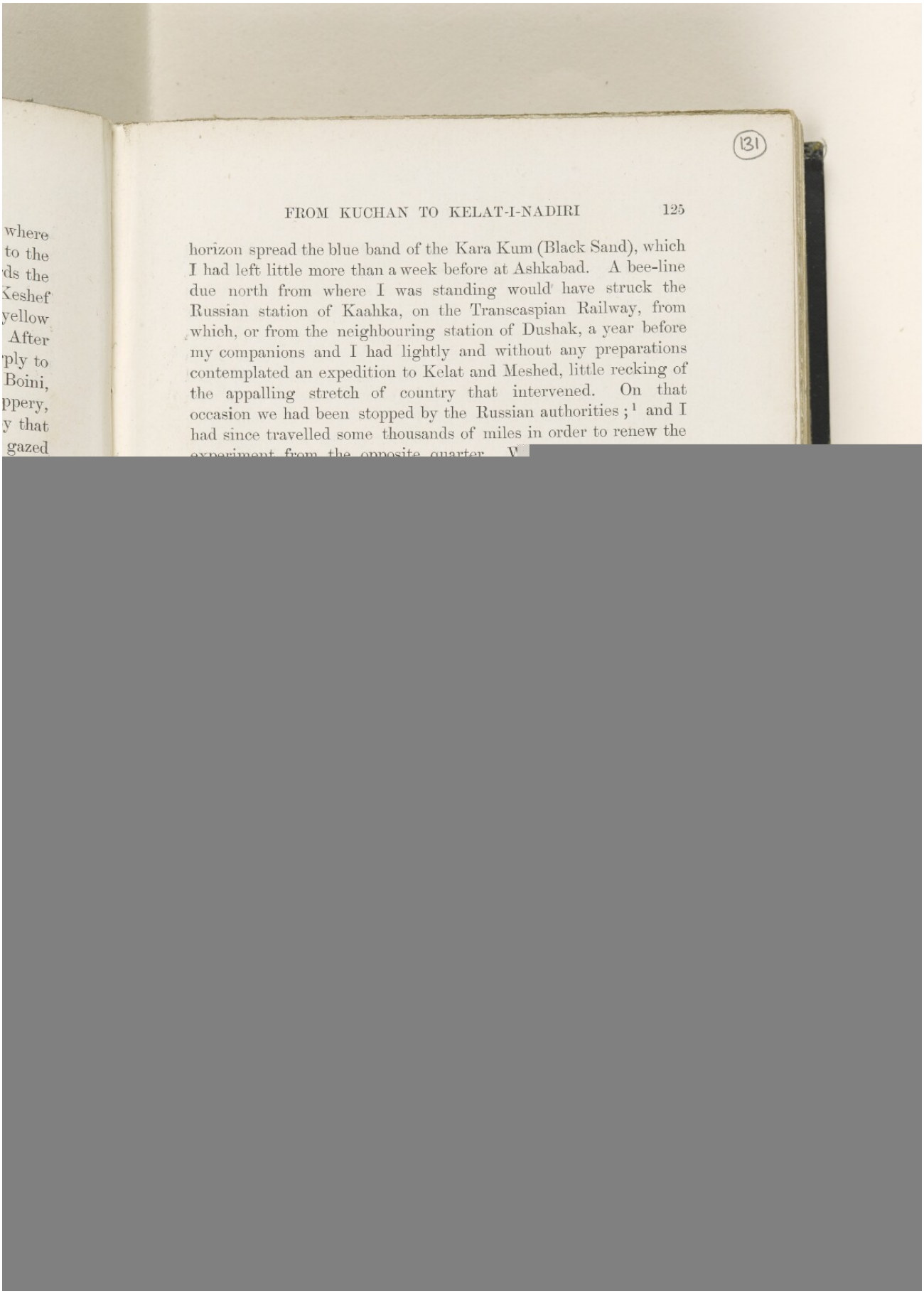




slopes with mountain juniper. At one point of this valley, where an elevation is crossed, a most superb view unrolled itself to the east. In tier after tier the mountain ridges descended towards the basin of the Tejend River (formed by the junction of the Keshef Rud and Heri Rud) and the Turkoman plains; while like a yellow scarf against the sky hung the dim outline of the desert. After pursuing this valley for an hour and a half, we turned sharply to the left and scaled the ridge by a path known as the Dewah Boini, or Camel's Neck, so steep, and alternately so rough and so slippery, that, although on foot ourselves, it was with much difficulty that we could prevail upon our horses to ascend. At the crest we gazed down upon a second valley parallel with that which we had just left —i.e. running from north-west to south-east, in the bottom of which appeared a little hamlet with a ruined fort perched upon a knoll, and beyond this again the larger red-coloured village of Vardeh.

Leaving these villages on our left hand, we struck eastwards, following the telegraph poles in the direction of Kelat, the horizontal ramparts of which we thought we could now discern against the distant sky. At noon, having been in the saddle for over five hours, I stopped for lunch by a rivulet running at the valley bottom, which here deepens into a rocky ravine. At this juncture one of the Turkomans, whom I had left behind to point out our direction to the muleteers, arrived with the news that in scaling the Camel's Neck one of the mules had slipped and rolled down for fifty feet, maiming or breaking its leg. I was not in the least surprised at this intelligence, as there are certain places which even Persian mules cannot attack with impunity, and of which this horrible natural ladder was most assured

Baghkhan



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FROM KUCHAN TO KELAT-I-NADIRI 125

horizon spread the blue band of the Kara Kum (Black Sand), which I had left little more than a week before at Ashkabad. A bee-line due north from where I was standing would have struck the Russian station of Kaahka, on the Transcaspian Railway, from which, or from the neighbouring station of Dushak, a year before my companions and I had lightly and without any preparations contemplated an expedition to Kelat and Meshed, little recking of the appalling stretch of country that intervened. On that occasion we had been stopped by the Russian authorities;[1] and I had since travelled some thousands of miles in order to renew the

Realising that my mules, which I had left far behind, would be unlikely to arrive for hours, if indeed they succeeded in coming at all before it was dark, I made up my mind for a night in a Persian hovel. The inhabitants of Issurcha, however, were by no means glad to see a stranger, and at first declared that they could provide me neither with forage nor with accommodation. After a little delay a villager was found who placed at my disposal an empty mud apartment, in which, with nothing but what I had on me, I made myself as comfortable as I could. Fortunately, about 10.30 P.M. the mules appeared, having found a guide who brought them safely down the mountain.

Ab-i-garm

During the last two days I had, from such natives as we met and interrogated, heard the most conflicting reports of the possibility of entering Kelat. Some declared that any one could go in or come out as he pleased;[1] others that a strict guard was kept at the entrance, and no strangers permitted to pass. The question accordingly presented itself how and in what guise I was to make the attempt. I did not want, after all this trouble, to be turned back. On the other hand, I was reluctant to do anything that, if discovered, might arouse suspicion, or bring discredit upon the English name. I imagine from what I saw later that it would have been possible to ride in at night, though I cannot be sure. I resolved, however, as I had no motive in concealing my intentions, and as they were of the most innocent description, to ride down to the gate, if gate there was, at daylight, and either enter uninterrupted or not at all. My presence, moreover, was likely so soon to become known in the neighbourhood, that disguise or concealment, even if temporarily successful, would be liable to detection in the end.

Possibility of entering Kelat

*October* 18.—I was called at 4.30 A.M., and started at five in the moonlight, having a rough ride of nearly ten miles before me. Descending the valley of Issurcha to the point where we had entered it on the previous day, we followed the course of the stream, which here turned northwards and plunged into a black and rocky gorge called Derbend-i-Jaur, where we threaded our way between sombre walls in and out of the river bed. The

Approach thereto

[1] General Annenkoff at Uzun Ada had asked me why, instead of going to Meshed *viâ* Kuchan, I did not take the more interesting route by Kaahka and Kelat-i-Nadiri. 'Russian officers,' he said, 'were forbidden by their own Government to enter; but no one would stop an Englishman.'

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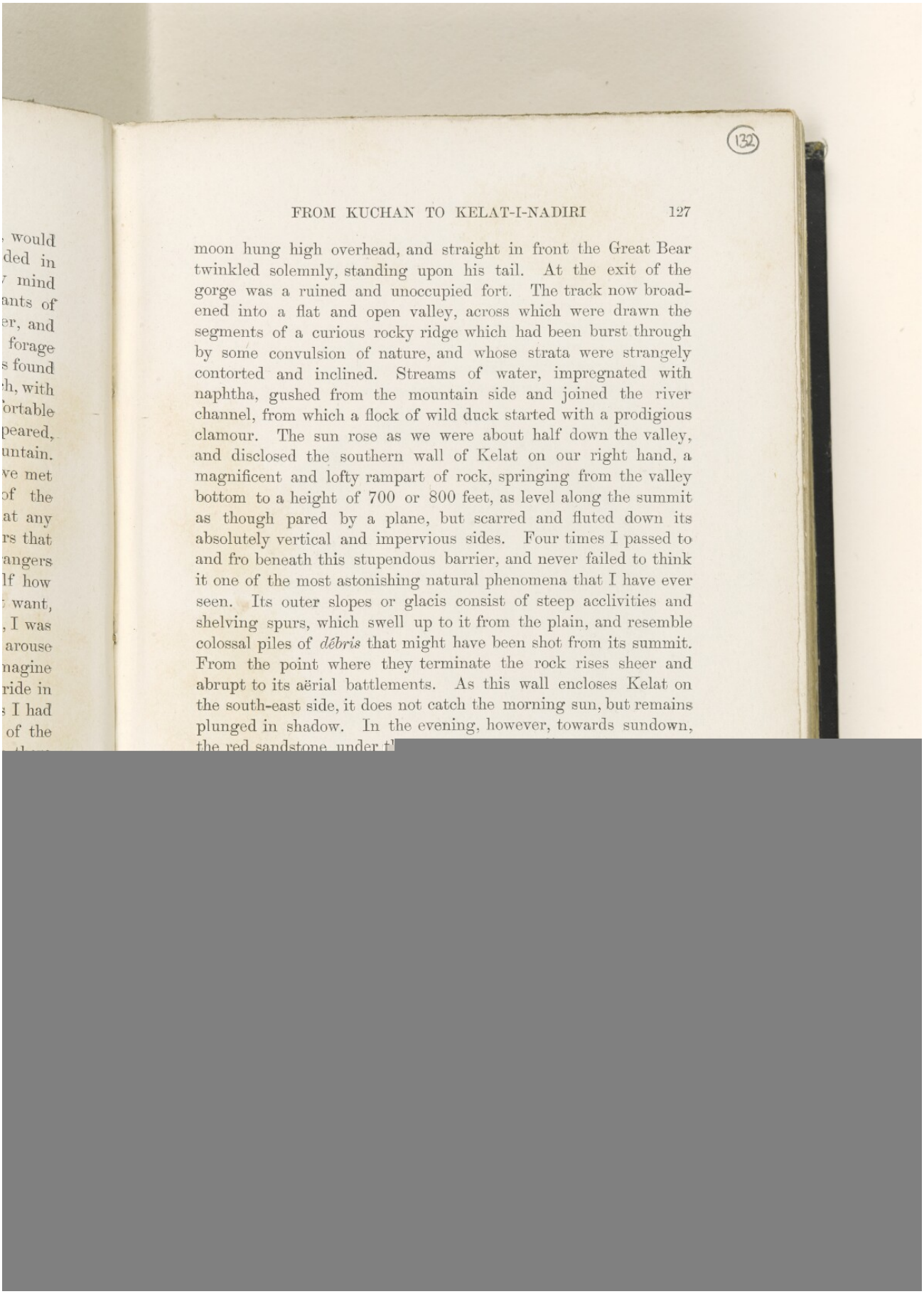



moon hung high overhead, and straight in front the Great Bear twinkled solemnly, standing upon his tail. At the exit of the gorge was a ruined and unoccupied fort. The track now broadened into a flat and open valley, across which were drawn the segments of a curious rocky ridge which had been burst through by some convulsion of nature, and whose strata were strangely contorted and inclined. Streams of water, impregnated with naphtha, gushed from the mountain side and joined the river channel, from which a flock of wild duck started with a prodigious clamour. The sun rose as we were about half down the valley, and disclosed the southern wall of Kelat on our right hand, a magnificent and lofty rampart of rock, springing from the valley bottom to a height of 700 or 800 feet, as level along the summit as though pared by a plane, but scarred and fluted down its absolutely vertical and impervious sides. Four times I passed to and fro beneath this stupendous barrier, and never failed to think it one of the most astonishing natural phenomena that I have ever seen. Its outer slopes or glacis consist of steep acclivities and shelving spurs, which swell up to it from the plain, and resemble colossal piles of *débris* that might have been shot from its summit. From the point where they terminate the rock rises sheer and abrupt to its aërial battlements. As this wall encloses Kelat on the south-east side, it does not catch the morning sun, but remains plunged in shadow. In the evening, however, towards sundown, the red sandstone under t[illegible]

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The upper part of the wall above the arches was loopholed and had a parapet, but there was no one upon it and no sign of life or movement. This is the famous Derbend-i-Argawan Shah, or Gate of Argawan, or Arghun Shah, the passage having originally been fortified by that monarch, who was the grandson of Hulaku Khan, and is said to have retired to Kelat after being defeated on one occasion in battle by his uncle, Ahmed Khan.[1] A fine inscription on a smoothed surface of rock upon the right-hand wall of the



GATE OF ARGAWAN SHAH

defile beyond the gate records this act of the sovereign. The present barricade is only a modern substitute for that which was built by Nadir Shah, and which, I do not doubt, was a far more substantial structure.

[1] This monarch, called by the Persians Argawan Shah, but more commonly spoken of as Arghun Khan (1284–1290 A.D.), was the remarkable man to whom Marco Polo was sent by Kubla Khan from China in charge of a Tartar bride, who opened diplomatic intercourse with the sovereigns of Europe, including King Edward I., and who, like his father, Abaka Khan, was almost a Christian, and degraded the Mussulmans from all public office.

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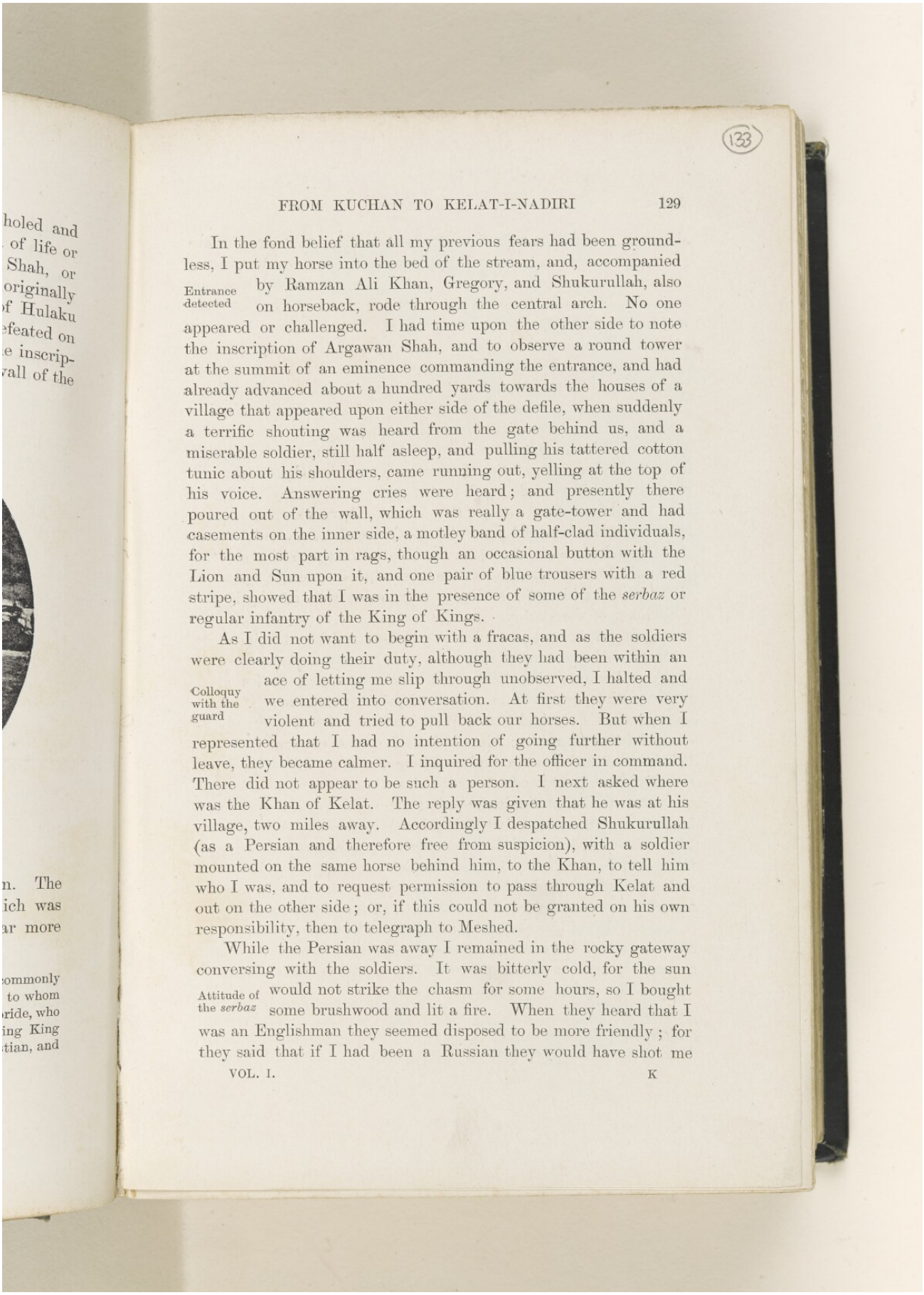



In the fond belief that all my previous fears had been groundless, I put my horse into the bed of the stream, and, accompanied by Ramzan Ali Khan, Gregory, and Shukurullah, also on horseback, rode through the central arch. No one appeared or challenged. I had time upon the other side to note the inscription of Argawan Shah, and to observe a round tower at the summit of an eminence commanding the entrance, and had already advanced about a hundred yards towards the houses of a village that appeared upon either side of the defile, when suddenly a terrific shouting was heard from the gate behind us, and a miserable soldier, still half asleep, and pulling his tattered cotton tunic about his shoulders, came running out, yelling at the top of his voice. Answering cries were heard; and presently there poured out of the wall, which was really a gate-tower and had casements on the inner side, a motley band of half-clad individuals, for the most part in rags, though an occasional button with the Lion and Sun upon it, and one pair of blue trousers with a red stripe, showed that I was in the presence of some of the *serbaz* or regular infantry of the King of Kings.

Entrance detected

As I did not want to begin with a fracas, and as the soldiers were clearly doing their duty, although they had been within an ace of letting me slip through unobserved, I halted and we entered into conversation. At first they were very violent and tried to pull back our horses. But when I represented that I had no intention of going further without leave, they became calmer. I inquired for the officer in command. There did not appear to be such a person. I next asked where was the Khan of Kelat. The reply was given that he was at his village, two miles away. Accordingly I despatched Shukurullah (as a Persian and therefore free from suspicion), with a soldier mounted on the same horse behind him, to the Khan, to tell him who I was, and to request permission to pass through Kelat and out on the other side; or, if this could not be granted on his own responsibility, then to telegraph to Meshed.

Colloquy with the guard

While the Persian was away I remained in the rocky gateway conversing with the soldiers. It was bitterly cold, for the sun would not strike the chasm for some hours, so I bought some brushwood and lit a fire. When they heard that I was an Englishman they seemed disposed to be more friendly; for they said that if I had been a Russian they would have shot me

Attitude of the *serbaz*



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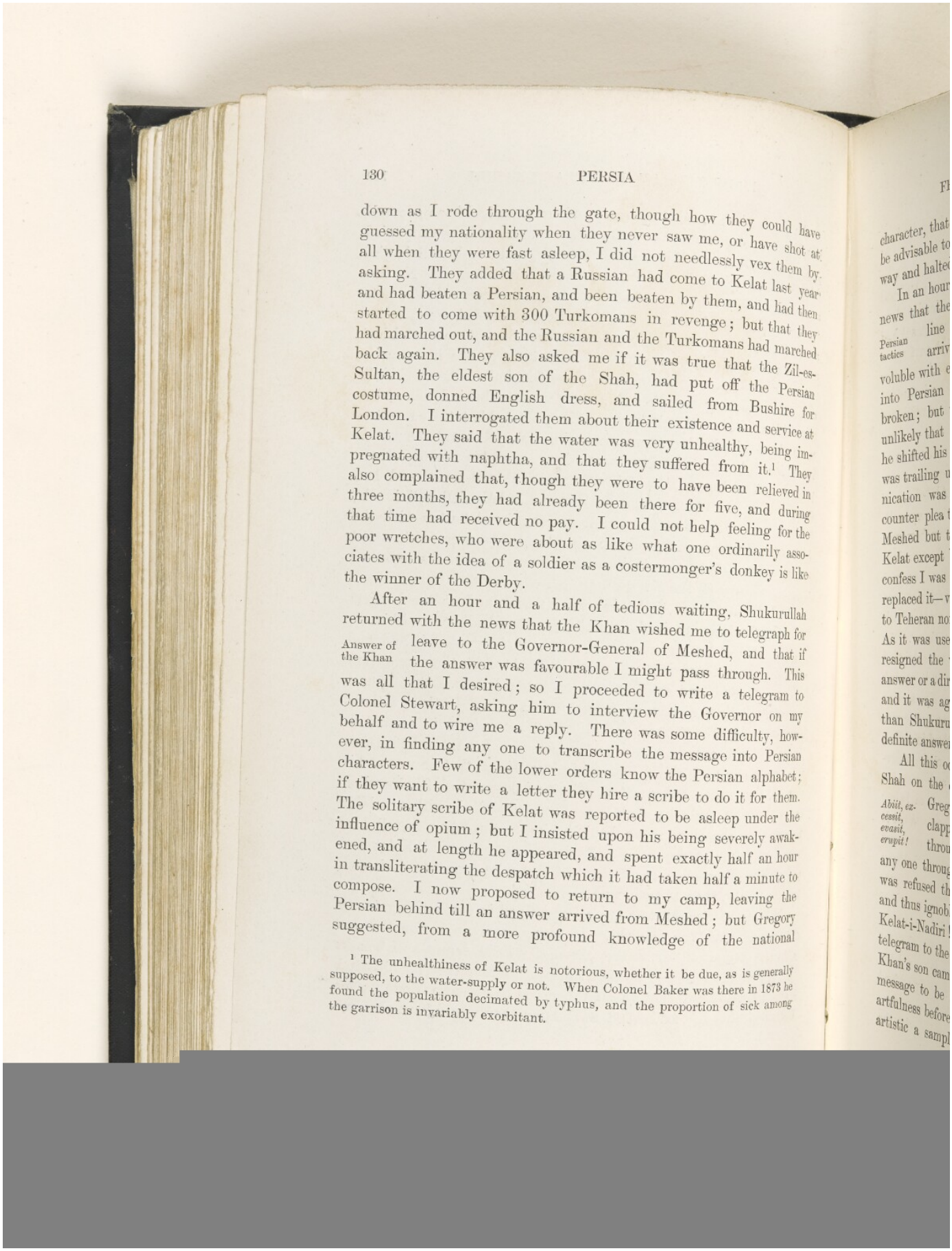


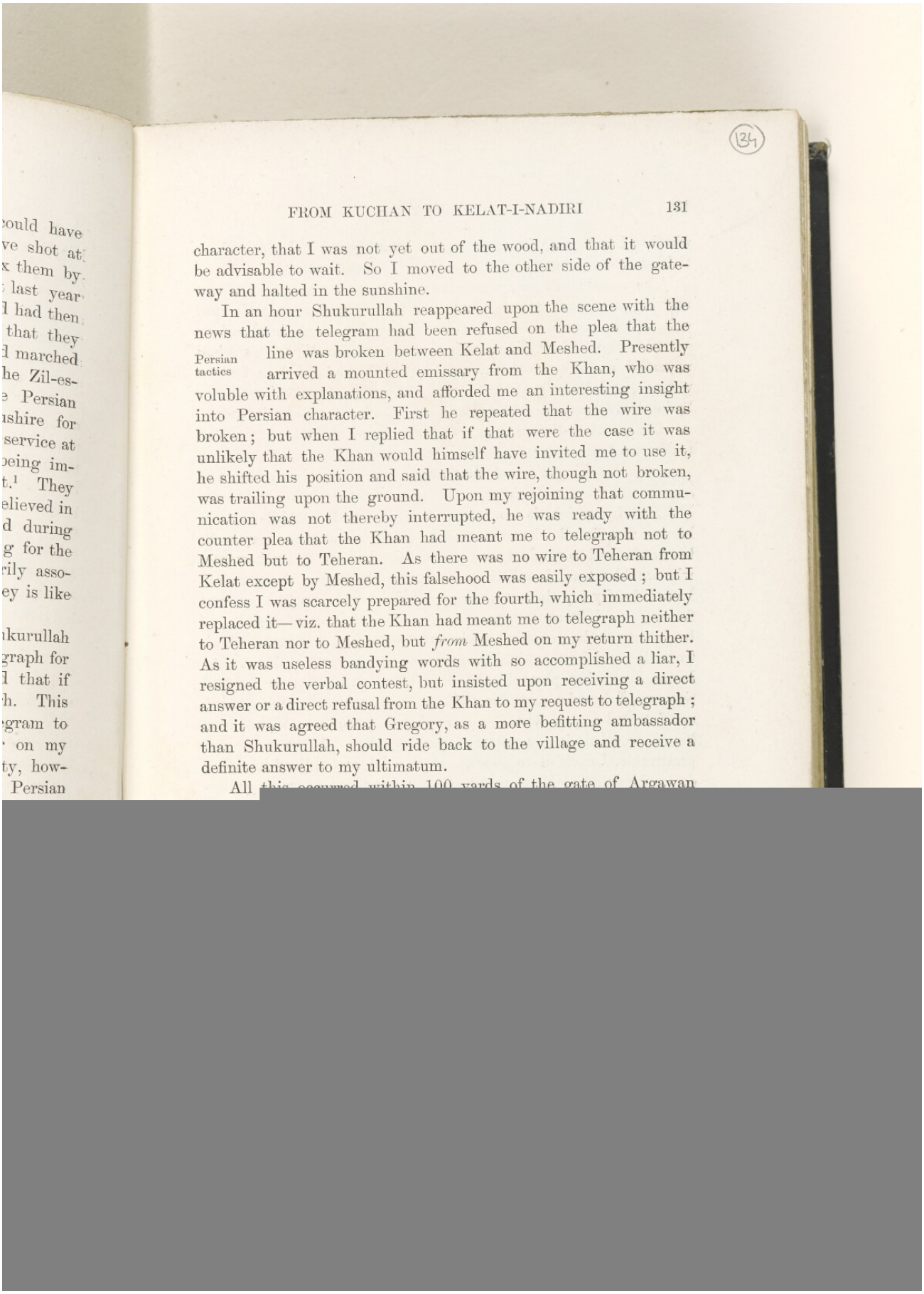


down as I rode through the gate, though how they could have guessed my nationality when they never saw me, or have shot at all when they were fast asleep, I did not needlessly vex them by asking. They added that a Russian had come to Kelat last year and had beaten a Persian, and been beaten by them, and had then started to come with 300 Turkomans in revenge; but that they had marched out, and the Russian and the Turkomans had marched back again. They also asked me if it was true that the Zil-es-Sultan, the eldest son of the Shah, had put off the Persian costume, donned English dress, and sailed from Bushire for London. I interrogated them about their existence and service at Kelat. They said that the water was very unhealthy, being impregnated with naphtha, and that they suffered from it.[1] They also complained that, though they were to have been relieved in three months, they had already been there for five, and during that time had received no pay. I could not help feeling for the poor wretches, who were about as like what one ordinarily associates with the idea of a soldier as a costermonger's donkey is like the winner of the Derby.

Answer of the Khan

After an hour and a half of tedious waiting, Shukurullah returned with the news that the Khan wished me to telegraph for leave to the Governor-General of Meshed, and that if the answer was favourable I might pass through. This was all that I desired; so I proceeded to write a telegram to Colonel Stewart, asking him to interview the Governor on my behalf and to wire me a reply. There was some difficulty, however, in finding any one to transcribe the message into Persian characters. Few of the lower orders know the Persian alphabet; if they want to write a letter they hire a scribe to do it for them. The solitary scribe of Kelat was reported to be asleep under the influence of opium; but I insisted upon his being severely awakened, and at length he appeared, and spent exactly half an hour in transliterating the despatch which it had taken half a minute to compose. I now proposed to return to my camp, leaving the Persian behind till an answer arrived from Meshed; but Gregory suggested, from a more profound knowledge of the national

[1] The unhealthiness of Kelat is notorious, whether it be due, as is generally supposed, to the water-supply or not. When Colonel Baker was there in 1873 he found the population decimated by typhus, and the proportion of sick among the garrison is invariably exorbitant.



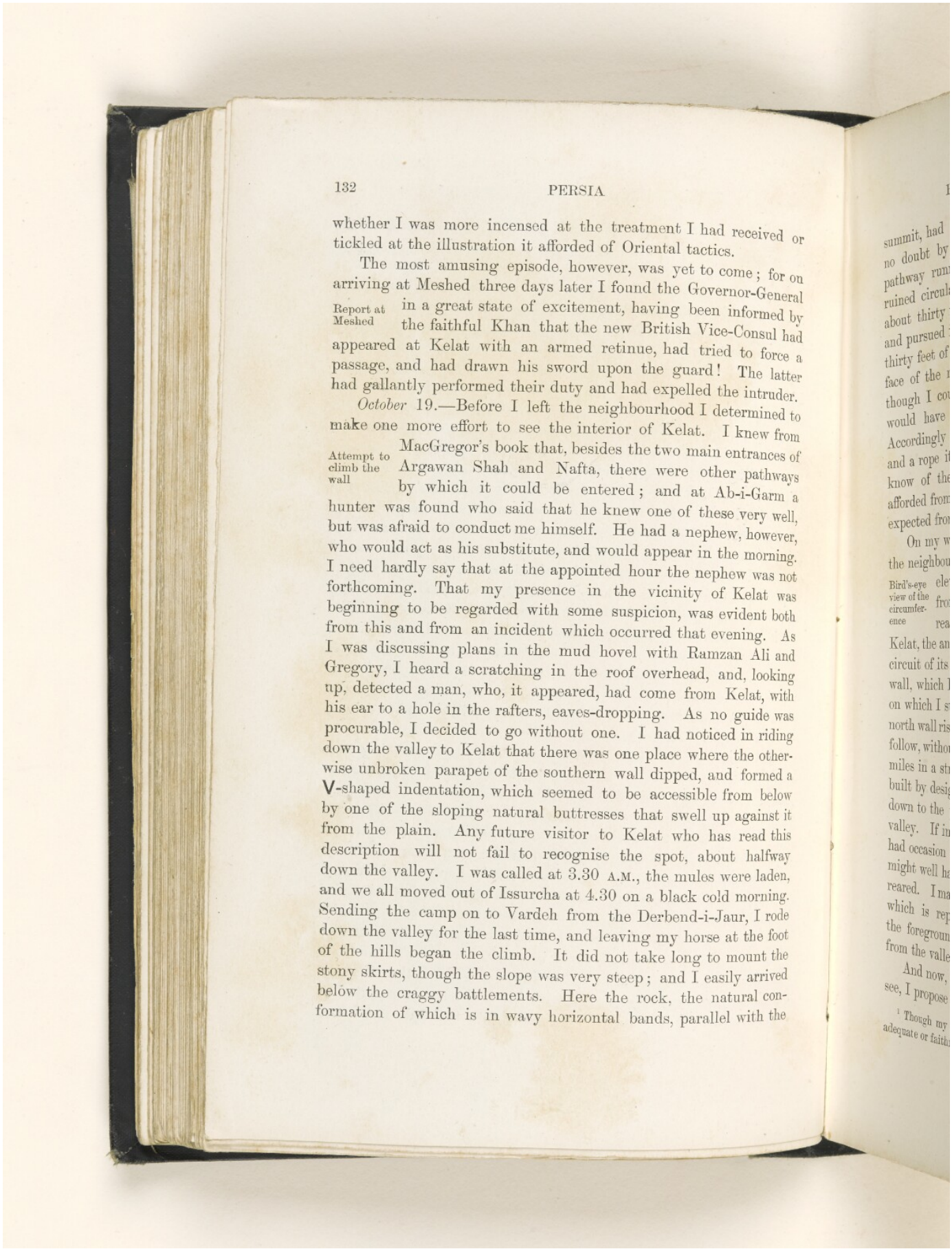


character, that I was not yet out of the wood, and that it would be advisable to wait. So I moved to the other side of the gateway and halted in the sunshine.

In an hour Shukurullah reappeared upon the scene with the news that the telegram had been refused on the plea that the line was broken between Kelat and Meshed. Presently arrived a mounted emissary from the Khan, who was voluble with explanations, and afforded me an interesting insight into Persian character. First he repeated that the wire was broken; but when I replied that if that were the case it was unlikely that the Khan would himself have invited me to use it, he shifted his position and said that the wire, though not broken, was trailing upon the ground. Upon my rejoining that communication was not thereby interrupted, he was ready with the counter plea that the Khan had meant me to telegraph not to Meshed but to Teheran. As there was no wire to Teheran from Kelat except by Meshed, this falsehood was easily exposed; but I confess I was scarcely prepared for the fourth, which immediately replaced it—viz. that the Khan had meant me to telegraph neither to Teheran nor to Meshed, but *from* Meshed on my return thither. As it was useless bandying words with so accomplished a liar, I resigned the verbal contest, but insisted upon receiving a direct answer or a direct refusal from the Khan to my request to telegraph; and it was agreed that Gregory, as a more befitting ambassador than Shukurullah, should ride back to the village and receive a definite answer to my ultimatum.

Persian tactics

All this occurred within 100 yards of the gate of Argawan





whether I was more incensed at the treatment I had received or tickled at the illustration it afforded of Oriental tactics.

The most amusing episode, however, was yet to come; for on arriving at Meshed three days later I found the Governor-General in a great state of excitement, having been informed by the faithful Khan that the new British Vice-Consul had appeared at Kelat with an armed retinue, had tried to force a passage, and had drawn his sword upon the guard! The latter had gallantly performed their duty and had expelled the intruder.

Report at Meshed

*October* 19.—Before I left the neighbourhood I determined to make one more effort to see the interior of Kelat. I knew from MacGregor's book that, besides the two main entrances of Argawan Shah and Nafta, there were other pathways by which it could be entered; and at Ab-i-Garm a hunter was found who said that he knew one of these very well, but was afraid to conduct me himself. He had a nephew, however, who would act as his substitute, and would appear in the morning. I need hardly say that at the appointed hour the nephew was not forthcoming. That my presence in the vicinity of Kelat was beginning to be regarded with some suspicion, was evident both from this and from an incident which occurred that evening. As I was discussing plans in the mud hovel with Ramzan Ali and Gregory, I heard a scratching in the roof overhead, and, looking up, detected a man, who, it appeared, had come from Kelat, with his ear to a hole in the rafters, eaves-dropping. As no guide was procurable, I decided to go without one. I had noticed in riding down the valley to Kelat that there was one place where the otherwise unbroken parapet of the southern wall dipped, and formed a V-shaped indentation, which seemed to be accessible from below by one of the sloping natural buttresses that swell up against it from the plain. Any future visitor to Kelat who has read this description will not fail to recognise the spot, about halfway down the valley. I was called at 3.30 A.M., the mules were laden, and we all moved out of Issurcha at 4.30 on a black cold morning. Sending the camp on to Vardeh from the Derbend-i-Jaur, I rode down the valley for the last time, and leaving my horse at the foot of the hills began the climb. It did not take long to mount the stony skirts, though the slope was very steep; and I easily arrived below the craggy battlements. Here the rock, the natural conformation of which is in wavy horizontal bands, parallel with the

Attempt to climb the wall

summit, had been artificially scarped by some previous occupant, no doubt by Nadir Shah, so as to form a sort of rocky ledge or pathway running along the face, and defended at intervals by ruined circular towers. There were two such rocky ledges, one about thirty feet above the other. I scrambled on to the lower and pursued it as far as the V-shaped gap. There were only about thirty feet of rock above me; and it was to be climbed. But the face of the rock was very steep and smooth; I was alone, and though I could have scrambled up it was the kind of place that would have been very awkward to come down from again. Accordingly I resigned the attempt. With the aid of a friend and a rope it could easily have been managed, but from what I know of the interior of Kelat I doubt whether the panorama afforded from the top of the wall would be as striking as might be expected from its external configuration.

Bird's-eye view of the circumference

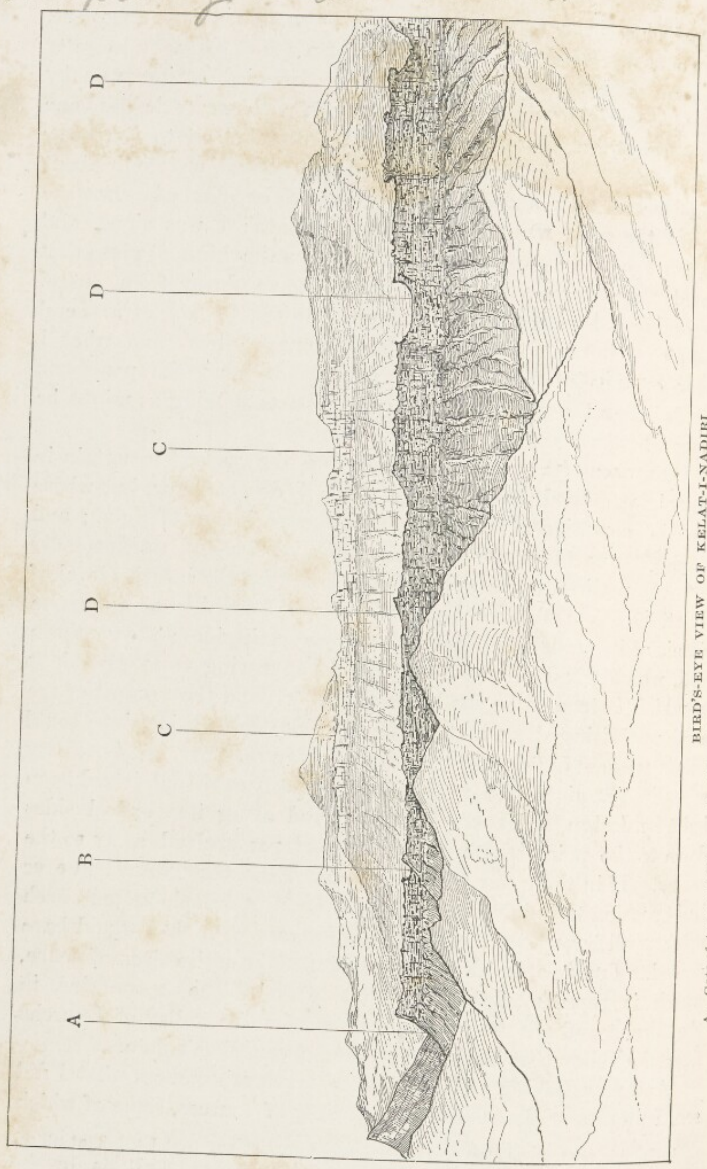
On my way back, however, I climbed the highest mountain in the neighbourhood, the name of which I do not know, but whose elevation is far higher than the perimeter of Kelat; and from there my ambitions were so far and unexpectedly realised that, though I could not see the interior level of Kelat, the angle of vision being too obtuse, I could trace the entire circuit of its walls from east to west on both sides; the southern wall, which I had attempted to climb, appearing from the height on which I stood to be the lower of the two, and the summit of the north wall rising above it on the further side. From this point I could follow, without difficulty, the whole southern rampart, nearly twenty miles in a straight line, running as regularly as though it had been built by design, and scarped and scarred along its vertical sides down to the point where the buttress-slopes shelved away to the valley. If in their war with Olympian Zeus the Titans had ever had occasion to build for themselves an unassailable retreat, such might well have been the mountain fortress that they would have reared. I made a sketch from this point of the entire circumference, which is reproduced on the next page.[1] The mountains in the foreground are the range that separate the valley of Issurcha from the valley that leads down to Argawan Shah's gate.

And now, having related with so much minuteness what I did see, I propose to describe from a variety of sources, some of which

[1] Though my own sketch is poor enough, I cannot say that I think at all an adequate or faithful idea of Kelat is given by the drawings of Sir C. MacGregor.

Photographs of Kelat shown me by Lieut. A. G. Medley 19th Bengal Lancers 1894 (Junior Army & Navy Club) vide Description by Surgeon F. S. Weir






BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF KELAT-I-NADIRI

A. Gate of Argawan Shah. B. Site of attempted ascent. C. Northern wall of Kelat. D. Southern wall of Kelat.

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Geographical Journal

 Nov 1923

## KALAT-I-NADIRI

Col. J. K. Tod, C.M.G., Indian Army

IN the *Journal* for December 1906 is an account by the Consul-General of Khorasan, then Major P. M. Sykes, of a visit which he paid in September 1905 to Kalat-i-Nadiri. As that account is now eighteen years old, it is perhaps not too soon for the *Journal* to find space for some recent impressions made by the same enchanting journey. Major Sykes congratulated himself on his good fortune in obtaining entrance to the "jealously guarded stronghold, in which no previous Consul-General had been permitted to set foot." It was my good fortune to be in Meshed during 1919 in circumstances that specially favoured visits to outlying points on the frontier, and I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity to view so romantic a spot as Kalat-i-Nadiri. The Governor-General not only granted ready permission, but personally interested himself, sending on word to the local governor, and detailing an officer of the Meshed garrison as my guide.

Early in the morning of May 3 three of us set out from Meshed—Captain Blacker of the Guides, Isa Khan, our Persian guide, and myself. We rapidly accomplished the 18 miles across the Meshed plain to the foot of the northern mountains by Ford car. Not without difficulties, where no real road exists, the car got us almost to Andarukh. There horses awaited us, and a small escort of "the Guides." From this point to Kalat-i-Nadiri is 44 miles by a rough mountain track. The Andarukh gorge, or "Darband," is a fitting portal to the wild region beyond. The route traverses a succession of defiles between rocky heights of great grandeur, but the scenery has the charm of contrast, for a clear rapid stream is followed, which brings verdant beauty to the valley, while the villages nestle among groves of poplar, willow, mulberry, and plane, with orchards adjoining. The first of these villages is Kardeh, where the road forks, one track going due north over the mountains to Kakhka on the Trans-Caspian railway, while our route branches north-east, and is marked by the telegraph line.

The next village is Al, a favourite summer resort of Meshed citizens, and a little further on the valley opens suddenly, from a narrow gorge, on a grand view of the peak of "Panj Man" ("Five Stun"). It is pyramidal, but topped by a stupendous crown of vertical rock. The name is a survival of an old-time jest about the weight of the huge cylindrical mass.

Here, too, a little above the left bank of the stream, a flat rock face bears a finely chiselled inscription which records a victory by a Bokharan invader, Fateh Muhammad Sheibani, in A.D. 915.

Continuing, the road passes below the grim heights which Macgregor named the "Kuh-i-na-Mumkin," ascends the Darband-i-Shikasta, or

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Islands; and the sixth provides that "the Governor is, and shall be deemed always to have been, authorized and empowered to make and execute, in Our name and on Our behalf, grants and dispositions of any Lands which may lawfully be granted or disposed of by Us within the Dependencies.

Some points of interest will be noted. The British Settlement Act is not invoked, though the islands and territory named were already part of the British Dominions: Captain Cook had taken possession of South Georgia in 1775; Captain William Smith had landed on King George Island and taken possession of the South Shetlands in 1819; Captain George Powell did the same for the South Orkneys in 1821; and Captain Biscoe for Graham Land in 1832. The Letters Patent of 1908 named these lands, with the Sandwich Islands; but did not cover anything else in the sector specified, which comprises indeed the southern extremity of South America.

The extension of British rule over the area shown in the figure dates from 1917. On March 28 in that year were issued Letters Patent, passed under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, providing for the further Definition and Administration of certain Islands and Territories, including "Graham Land, otherwise known as Graham's Land," as Dependencies of the Colony of the Falkland Islands.

The preamble recites that doubts have arisen as to the limits of the groups of islands . . . and "it is expedient that provision should be made for the Government, not only of these islands and territory, but also of certain other Our islands and territories adjacent thereto as Dependencies of Our Colony of the Falkland Islands."

Thereupon it is declared that these Dependencies "shall be deemed to include and to have included all islands and territories whatsoever" between 20° and 50° W. south of 50° S., and between 50° and 80° W. south of 58° S.

These Letters Patent of 1908 and 1917 were published in the *Government Gazette* of the Falkland Islands, but not in the *London Gazette*, so that the above details are not quite easily found. We are indebted to the courtesy of the Colonial Office for the loan of printed copies of the documents.

We understand that the technical difference between the procedure by Letters Patent under the Great Seal and by Order in Council is that the first is a direct exercise of the Royal Prerogative, whereas the second is an exercise of a power of the King authorized or controlled by Act of Parliament. To discover why in two cases so apparently similar it was desirable to follow different paths may attract some student of political geography in search of a subject for a degree-thesis; but the difference is perhaps more curious than important, and may even be accidental. The accomplished fact is likely to be of the first importance, and welcome as an augury of determination to leave nothing to chance in the enterprise that the Colonial Office Committee has taken in hand, of fitting out Scott's old ship the *Discovery* for scientific research in Antarctic waters,

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Shattered Ravine, where it is a mere rock staircase among the huge boulders that are scattered in wild confusion, then winds up other rugged defiles, and emerges at 17 miles into the comparatively open valley of Bulghur. The inhabitants of all these villages are of Turkish stock, and like highlanders in all lands, are a virile race compared with the Meshed city folk.

Next day's march began with the Zao-i-Pir Zan, or Gorge of the Old Woman, a name that Persians are wont to give to peculiarly rugged and forbidding features of their roads. The gorge pierces the southern of the two great spurs which form the eastern continuation of the Hazar Masjid range. The track led up the rocky bed of the stream between precipices so close together that there was hardly room to lead our horses over the bare slippery rock. We emerged at length upon green sward, bright with spring flowers, and the track led on over grassy spurs, skirting the northern range, the Kara Dagh, and gradually leading up to the Duiuk Boyun (Camel's Neck) Pass.

A grand view opens up eastwards, the distant frontier mountains above the valley of the Hari Rud framed between precipitous crags. The immediate ascent to the pass is a steep rocky zigzag: the summit, at 10½ miles from Bulghur, a sharply cut ridge; and the descent begins immediately into a bleak treeless valley, in which the village of Vardeh is seen far below.

The Turkman headman received us hospitably, and it was noon before we resumed the march. The first few miles were easy going over barren uplands, past the village of Bagh Kand, until we reached the edge of a deep re-entrant in the escarpment by which the frontier range falls to the northern lowlands.

Through the gap formed by the re-entrant we gained our first view of the great south-western rampart of Kalat-i-Nadiri. The path led steeply down the deep-cut valley, at first enclosed by sheets of bare rock at a high angle, then narrowing between sheer precipices. The slippery surface worn smooth by the stream made the going dangerous for shod horses. Strata tilted on end jutted vertically from the face of the precipice, as shown in Major Sykes' photograph; but the rugged framework enclosed pictures of soft beauty. Hawthorn in full flower scented the air, and honeysuckle grew in profusion.

At 9 miles from Vardeh the valley of the Issik Su (Warm Water) is reached, and the path follows the stream through a defile between fine crags. It is this passage which is called the Darband-i-Giaour, and not the upper part of the valley. At its exit is the pleasantly situated village of Hammam Kala. Here a reception party from Kalat-i-Nadiri awaited us, and escorted by them we rode fast down the broad green valley with the great rampart of Kalat-i-Nadiri on our right, lofty serrated mountains on our left. The marvel of this, the longest face of the natural fortress, is its straightness and regularity, 15 miles from north-west to south-east at

an almost even height of 1500 feet. The greater part of the height is detritus at a very steep slope, though not inaccessible, but except at the Arghawan Shah gap the whole length is crowned by vertical cliff with scarcely a fissure in which a goat could find foothold.

At 3 miles from Hammam Kala the Issik Su turns sharply to enter Kalat-i-Nadiri by the grim gateway of Arghawan Shah, a magnificent cleft in the rampart wall. The entrance is cultivated and wooded. Then path and stream together traverse a gorge between sheer cliffs sometimes only 20 or 30 yards apart. The triple-arched barrier fortification portrayed by Macgregor and by Curzon was demolished by a flood, said to have been in 1905, the year of Major Sykes' visit. Only one arch remains standing, and fallen masonry lies in the bed of the stream. Immediately inside is a village with well-wooded enclosures. Towers and battlemented walls in a dilapidated state are perched upon the steep slopes. In a rickety shed facing the " Darband " is an antiquated field gun on a broken-down carriage. The defences of the entrance are altogether decayed and useless.

We rode on for 2 miles by a rocky path along the hillside above the left—northern—bank of the stream before we reached Kabud Gumbaz, the Khan's residence, in a sheltered situation among the dense foliage of walled gardens and orchards. The Persian flag was flying over a mud wall enclosure. Across the road was drawn up a guard under the decrepit old commandant.

A cobbled ramp under an arched gateway led us into the main court-yard of the Mukbarra of Nadir Shah. Dismounting, we entered by a low doorway into an inner garden court, where we were welcomed by the Khan, Fateh ul Mulk, and shown into the room prepared for us.

The Mukbarra is an octagonal building with rooms built round a lofty central chamber which rises high above the rest, is surrounded by sandstone columns—*not* fluted, as some accounts state—and was evidently at one time roofed in with a dome. The dome has long since fallen in and the central chamber is open to the sky. The occasional thud of falling masonry detached by the heavy rain that fell during our stay intimated that the process of decay continues rapidly, and made our quarters feel none too safe. Some of the stone panels of the lower part of the building are decorated with patterns in relief of trees and flowers similar to those seen on the Mogul buildings of Delhi and Agra, but of very inferior workmanship. Below ground-level are the vaults which formerly contained the treasures amassed by Nadir Shah ; the entrance, on the east side, was choked with masses of rubble.

The area enclosed within the natural ramparts that shut off Kalat-i-Nadiri is about 25 square miles. Almost the

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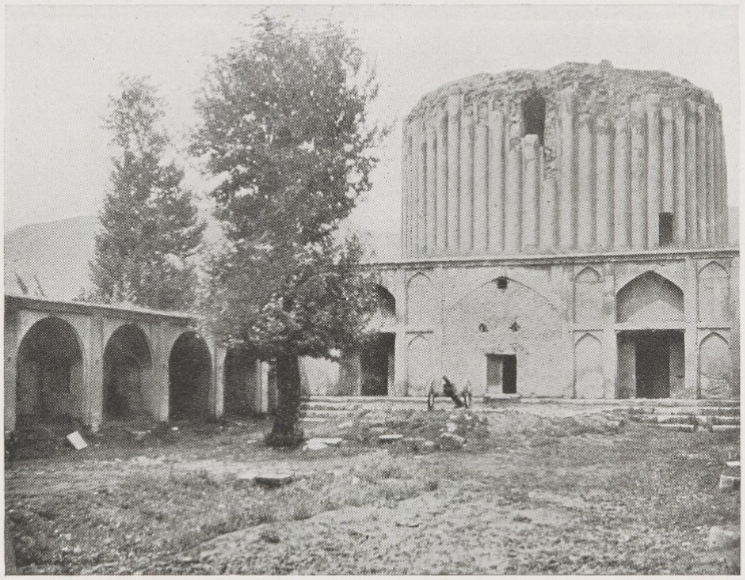
THE PANJ MAN



THE MUKBARRA OF NADIR SHAH

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THE DARBAND OF ARGHAWAN SHAH FROM WITHIN, LOOKING WEST *From a drawing by Col. Tod.*

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the two main gateways of Arghawan Shah and Nafta, there are three other regular entrances, all narrow and difficult. The Deh Chah pass near the north-west corner, leading to a village of that name one farsakh beyond the rampart; the Chaubast Darband on the east side, towards Haji Buland, and the Kushtani Darband in the south-eastern corner below the Baba Kamagli peak, leading in the direction of Sarakhs. There are also two or three steep footpaths, little better than goat tracks, that give precarious means of entry; otherwise the whole perimeter of some 50 miles is guarded by absolutely impregnable cliffs. The internal communications are rough hill paths, fit only for surefooted animals; even the main path from Arghawan Shah to Nafta is a mere stony pack track.

The morning after our arrival we paid a return visit to the Khan in an annexe to the Mukbarra.

The Khanship has been hereditary in the same family for many generations. Fateh ul Mulk, or Fateh Ali Khan, to give him his name instead of his title, is a man of about thirty-five, a pleasant and courteous host, with the rather listless manner of the better-class Persian. He is grandson of Behbud Khan, who entertained Macgregor at the time of his visit, and of whom the latter wrote as being very intelligent and well read. Kalat-i-Nadiri is now administered as a district under the Governor-General of Khorasan, and is garrisoned by only twenty or thirty soldiers from Meshed. The gardens within the Mukbarra enclosure were shady with plane trees, willows, and poplars, fragrant with roses, and melodious with the song of nightingales.

A little beyond the Mukbarra is the blue-domed mosque from which the place takes its name, Kabud Gumbaz. It is used as the mausoleum of the Khans. The glazed-tile ornamentation of the dome and of the adjoining "Aiwans," though much fallen into disrepair, is still beautiful.

In the forenoon we started to ride up to the Kamar-i-Khist as the best point from which to get a general view. A stiff climb up a rocky spur led us on to grassy uplands bright with spring flowers, sheets of white candytuft, yellow mustard, or blue forget-me-not, sprinkled with scarlet poppies, hyacinths, and irises; but before we reached the village of Khist, clouds had gathered over the hills to the west, and in front of us the "Kamar" itself became shrouded in mist. We turned back none too soon, and made a perilous descent in a terrific thunderstorm.

All through the night, and during the next two days, the rain came down with little intermission, affording additional proof of the isolation of Kalat-i-Nadiri. Secluded at all times, when the "Darbands" were closed by raging flood the place was completely cut off from the outer world. Even the main pathway through Kabud Gumbaz became almost impassable for man or beast.

The third morning broke clear and cloudless, so we started early to make another attempt upon the Kamar-i-Khist. Again we scrambled



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up the steep ascent, and by nine o'clock scaled the summit, following the fresh track of an *Ovis Argali*, which showed that our approach had been watched by sharper eyes than ours. Mist had gathered again, obscuring the view. Immediately below us was the northern rampart cliff, and it stretched away eastward, until in the distance its continuity was broken by the Darband-i-Nafta gap. From the foot of the cliff the ground slopes steeply to a maze of foothills and ridges which fall away to the Trans-Caspian plain. The grassy slopes afford pasture to the flocks of nomad tribesmen, some of whose black tents were visible far below. Over the west shoulder of the Kamar leads the difficult path to Deh Chah. Through the Darband-i-Nafta the road leads north-east to Dushakh on the Trans-Caspian railway 16 miles distant, and crosses the frontier at the Darband-i-Khoja half-way.

Temporary partings of the mist clouds revealed extensive views over the Trans-Caspian plain and the Kara Kum desert beyond, stretching like a sea to the horizon. Dark patches on the buff plain marked the wooded enclosures around the stations on the Trans-Caspian railway. To the north lay Kakhka, where in the preceding summer a little British force had joined the retreating Trans-Caspian army and enabled them to make head against the Bolshevist onslaught, and eventually to turn the tables and drive the Red invaders back to the Oxus. Further north-east, but obscured by cloud was Dushakh, the scene of the desperate fight on October 15, 1918, when the 19th Punjabis covered themselves with glory, and struck the enemy the final blow that compelled the abandonment of their enterprise.

Looking backwards over the interior of Kalat-i-Nadiri, the view was of rolling downlike hills with here and there a sharp peak, all draining to the deep valley of the Issik Su which lay below, and all bounded by the wonderful encircling cliffs.

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## NOTES ON THE OKOVANGO AND KUNENE RIVERS

Maudslay Baynes

I HAVE been interested in articles appearing in the *Geographical Journal*, "The Control of Climate by Lakes," by Prof. E. H. L. Schwarz, vol. 57, No. 3, of March 1921; and "Notes on the Kunene River, Southern Angola," by F. E. Kanthack, vol. 57, No. 5, of May. Being acquainted with the Okovango and Kunene rivers over that part of their courses most in question, that is the easterly course of the former and westerly of the latter, I offer the following remarks.

The first question that presents itself regarding the Okovango is: What proportion of its volume flowing past Libebe, say, may be supposed actually to reach the Zambesi *viâ* the Chobe? If I am right in supposing

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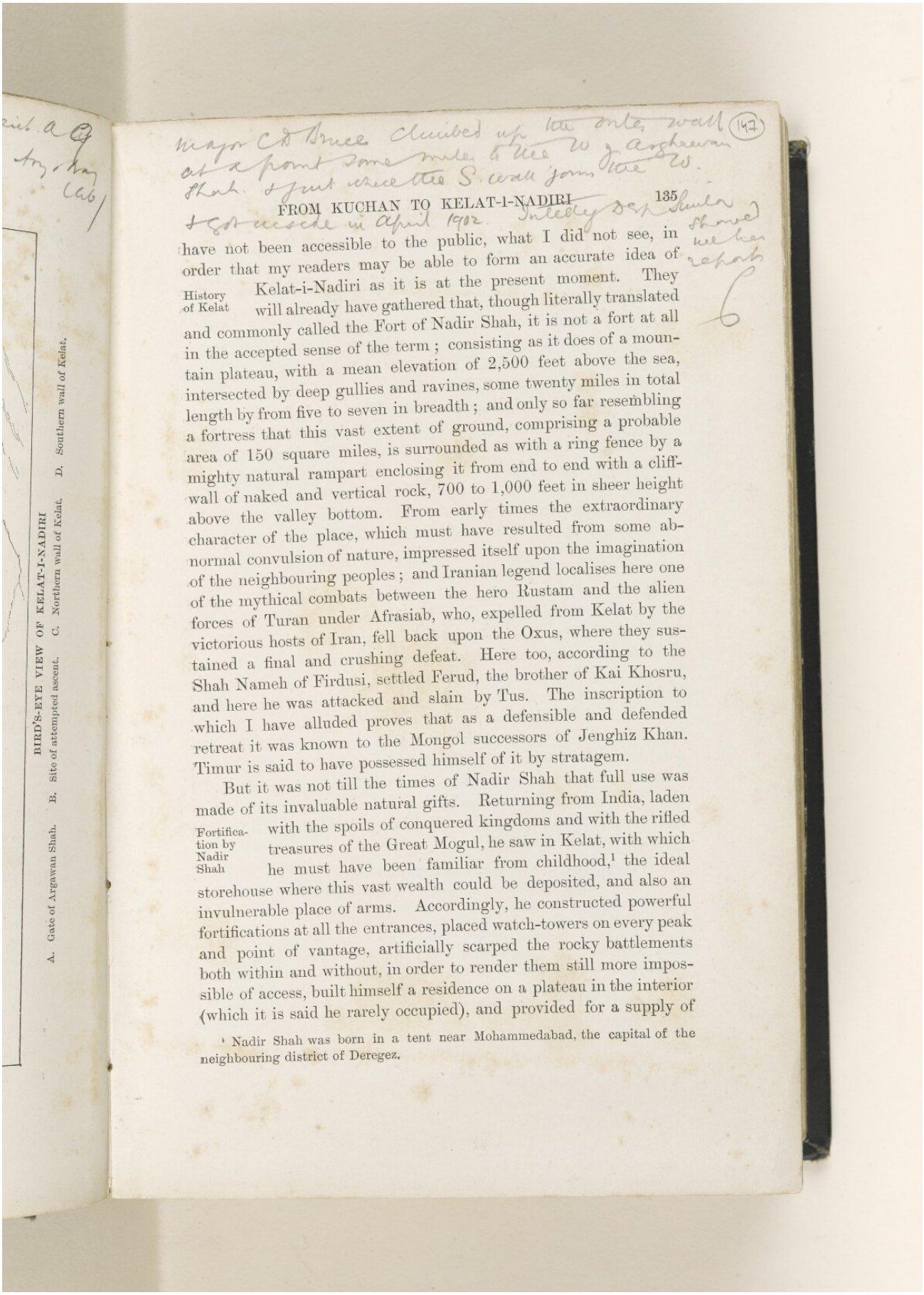




have not been accessible to the public, what I did not see, in order that my readers may be able to form an accurate idea of

History of Kelat

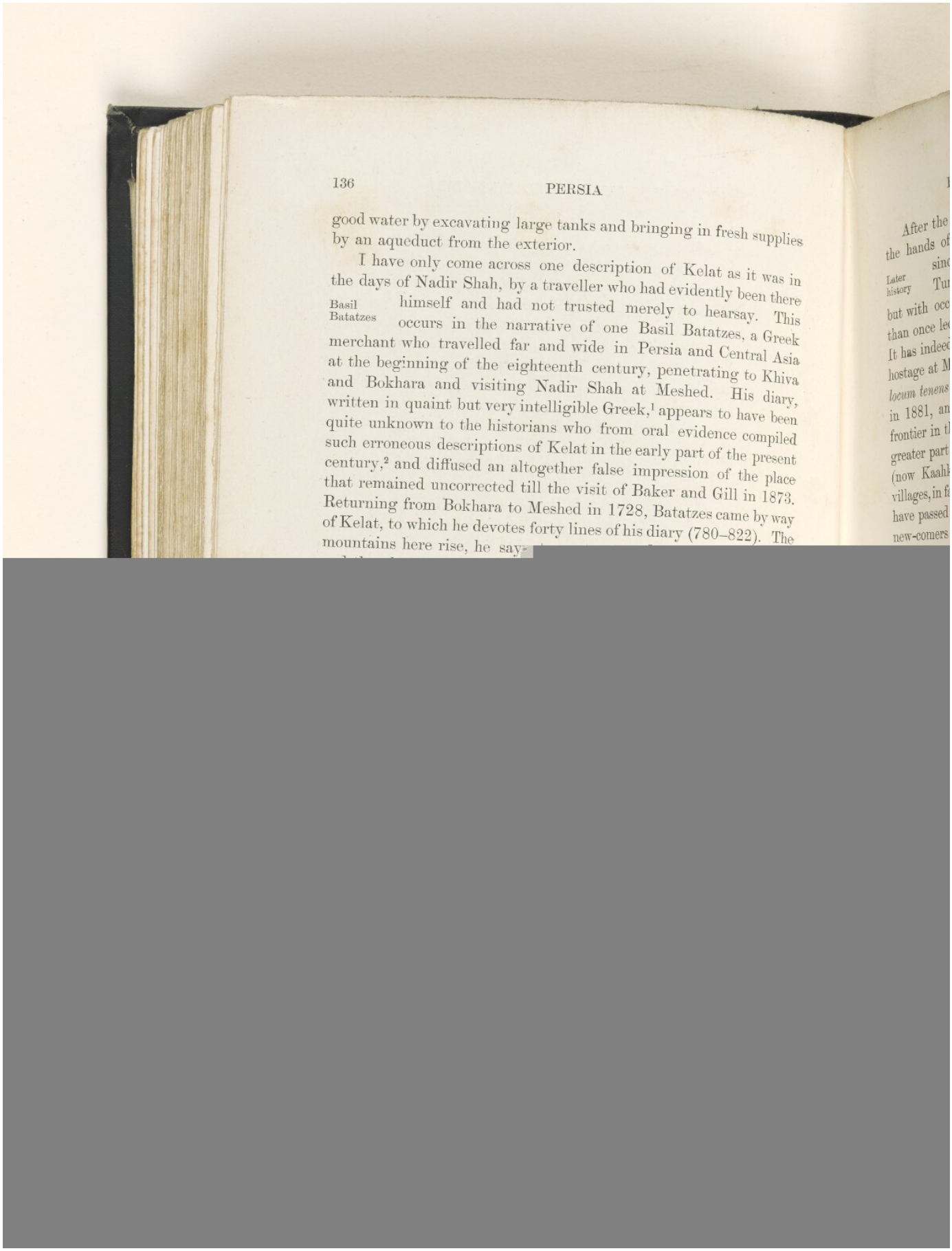
Kelat-i-Nadiri as it is at the present moment. They will already have gathered that, though literally translated and commonly called the Fort of Nadir Shah, it is not a fort at all in the accepted sense of the term; consisting as it does of a mountain plateau, with a mean elevation of 2,500 feet above the sea, intersected by deep gullies and ravines, some twenty miles in total length by from five to seven in breadth; and only so far resembling a fortress that this vast extent of ground, comprising a probable area of 150 square miles, is surrounded as with a ring fence by a mighty natural rampart enclosing it from end to end with a cliff-wall of naked and vertical rock, 700 to 1,000 feet in sheer height above the valley bottom. From early times the extraordinary character of the place, which must have resulted from some abnormal convulsion of nature, impressed itself upon the imagination of the neighbouring peoples; and Iranian legend localises here one of the mythical combats between the hero Rustam and the alien forces of Turan under Afrasiab, who, expelled from Kelat by the victorious hosts of Iran, fell back upon the Oxus, where they sustained a final and crushing defeat. Here too, according to the Shah Nameh of Firdusi, settled Ferud, the brother of Kai Khosru, and here he was attacked and slain by Tus. The inscription to which I have alluded proves that as a defensible and defended retreat it was known to the Mongol successors of Jenghiz Khan. Timur is said to have possessed himself of it by stratagem.

But it was not till the times of Nadir Shah that full use was made of its invaluable natural gifts. Returning from India, laden

Fortification by Nadir Shah

with the spoils of conquered kingdoms and with the rifled treasures of the Great Mogul, he saw in Kelat, with which he must have been familiar from childhood,[1] the ideal storehouse where this vast wealth could be deposited, and also an invulnerable place of arms. Accordingly, he constructed powerful fortifications at all the entrances, placed watch-towers on every peak and point of vantage, artificially scarped the rocky battlements both within and without, in order to render them still more impossible of access, built himself a residence on a plateau in the interior (which it is said he rarely occupied), and provided for a supply of

[1] Nadir Shah was born in a tent near Mohammedabad, the capital of the neighbouring district of Deregez.



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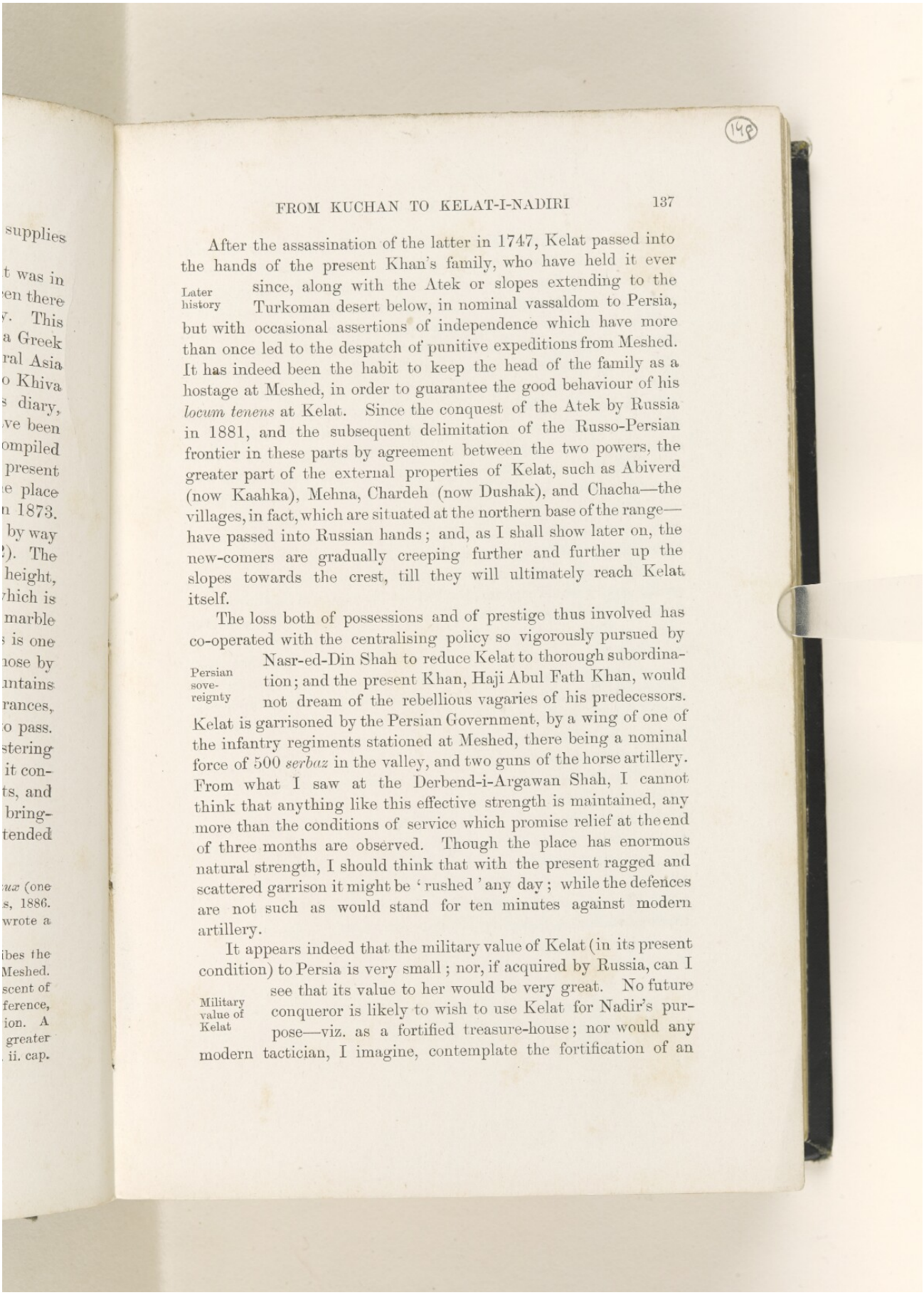
good water by excavating large tanks and bringing in fresh supplies by an aqueduct from the exterior.

Basil Batatzes

I have only come across one description of Kelat as it was in the days of Nadir Shah, by a traveller who had evidently been there himself and had not trusted merely to hearsay. This occurs in the narrative of one Basil Batatzes, a Greek merchant who travelled far and wide in Persia and Central Asia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, penetrating to Khiva and Bokhara and visiting Nadir Shah at Meshed. His diary, written in quaint but very intelligible Greek,[1] appears to have been quite unknown to the historians who from oral evidence compiled such erroneous descriptions of Kelat in the early part of the present century,[2] and diffused an altogether false impression of the place that remained uncorrected till the visit of Baker and Gill in 1873. Returning from Bokhara to Meshed in 1728, Batatzes came by way of Kelat, to which he devotes forty lines of his diary (780–822). The mountains here rise, he say-





After the assassination of the latter in 1747, Kelat passed into the hands of the present Khan's family, who have held it ever since, along with the Atek or slopes extending to the Turkoman desert below, in nominal vassaldom to Persia, but with occasional assertions of independence which have more than once led to the despatch of punitive expeditions from Meshed. It has indeed been the habit to keep the head of the family as a hostage at Meshed, in order to guarantee the good behaviour of his *locum tenens* at Kelat. Since the conquest of the Atek by Russia in 1881, and the subsequent delimitation of the Russo-Persian frontier in these parts by agreement between the two powers, the greater part of the external properties of Kelat, such as Abiverd (now Kaahka), Mehna, Chardeh (now Dushak), and Chacha—the villages, in fact, which are situated at the northern base of the range—have passed into Russian hands; and, as I shall show later on, the new-comers are gradually creeping further and further up the slopes towards the crest, till they will ultimately reach Kelat itself.

Later history

The loss both of possessions and of prestige thus involved has co-operated with the centralising policy so vigorously pursued by Nasr-ed-Din Shah to reduce Kelat to thorough subordination; and the present Khan, Haji Abul Fath Khan, would not dream of the rebellious vagaries of his predecessors. Kelat is garrisoned by the Persian Government, by a wing of one of the infantry regiments stationed at Meshed, there being a nominal force of 500 *serbaz* in the valley, and two guns of the horse artillery. From what I saw at the Derbend-i-Argawan Shah, I cannot think that anything like this effective strength is maintained, any more than the conditions of service which promise relief at the end of three months are observed. Though the place has enormous natural strength, I should think that with the present ragged and scattered garrison it might be 'rushed' any day; while the defences are not such as would stand for ten minutes against modern artillery.

Persian sovereignty

It appears indeed that the military value of Kelat (in its present condition) to Persia is very small; nor, if acquired by Russia, can I see that its value to her would be very great. No future conqueror is likely to wish to use Kelat for Nadir's purpose—viz. as a fortified treasure-house; nor would any modern tactician, I imagine, contemplate the fortification of an

Military value of Kelat

enclosure over sixty miles in circumference. The real value of Kelat is as a basis of operations and starting point for offensive movements against Transcaspia. Well guarded at the entrances and held by a strong garrison, it might have been made, and might still become, a veritable thorn in the side of an enemy stationed in the Atek below. A hostile force quartered here might, for instance, descend without warning and with overwhelming strength upon the Transcaspian Railway, and cut the Russian line of communication with the Caspian. But Persia is not the power to do anything one half so heroic; and Nadir's fortress is in the highest degree unlikely ever to be made a sally-port against General Annenkoff's railway. Should the Russians take Kelat, which they appear to be excessively anxious to do, the gain to them in prestige would be considerable; for ever since Nadir's days it has been looked upon as the principal military outpost of Khorasan. They would also acquire what might be made a suitable depôt for stores, and arsenal for a limited number of troops (neither the water nor the grain supply would sustain many), and there would be the decided negative advantage of preventing a position so formidable in the hands of an enemy from falling into an enemy's hands. But as an offensive measure against Khorasan I do not see that they would profit thereby, as other and far simpler ways are open to them of reaching Meshed, and as no modern army would trust itself to the awful defiles that extend for quite forty miles between the two places. In other words, the offensive eye of Kelat, so to speak, looks northward not southward; and, the march of power being in the latter direction, it is unlikely that we shall again see it utilised as a place of arms.

So much for the military value of Kelat-i-Nadiri. Let me now say something about its interior features. How little was known about it before the visits of Baker and MacGregor may be illustrated by the scanty description furnished from hearsay by Fraser, who doubled both its length and breadth.[1] Entrance to the interior is gained by one of five gates, of which the two principal are Argawan Shah on the south and Nafta on the north. The three others are Kushtani on the south-east, Chubast on the west, and Dehcha on the north-west. All of these gates are said to be fortified and defended by troops; of the two main entrances it is undoubtedly true. There are also several footpaths (it is said

Its five gates

[1] Vide *Journey into Khorasan*, Appendix B (1).

nine) by which it can be entered; and I doubt not that in that large circumference shepherds must have discovered goat-tracks by which approach, though difficult, is feasible. Nevertheless, the character, no less than the paucity of the acknowledged entrances, which are in each case through easily barred defiles, confirms the general opinion which I have expressed as to the phenomenal nature of this mountain stronghold.

The inhabitants are Turks chiefly of the Jallayer and Benjat tribes, with a few Arab and Kurdish families as well. Their total Population number does not exceed 1,000. They are to be found in two villages, situated in the valley by which the stream which I followed enters and traverses Kelat, and in six hamlets upon the uplands or higher elevations. Of the two main villages, I saw that of Argawan Shah, clustered upon either side of the gorge, at a short distance within the gate of the same name. The other, Giuk Gumbaz (i.e. 'Vault of Heaven' in Turkish) or Ja Gumbaz, locally contracted into Gugumaz, is a little over two miles down the valley from the same entrance, and is the spot to which I had twice despatched Shukurullah to interview the Khan and to send the telegram. Here is a curious circular tower of red sandstone, with fluted half-columns on the outer surface, rising from a big octagonal substructure. It is called Makber-i-Nadiri, having been built (for what purpose does not appear clear) by that king, and is now used as a residence by the Khan.[1] From Gugumaz the river continues to run for six miles at the bottom of the same valley, which intersects Kelat from south to north, and deepens into a rocky gorge, until upon reaching the northern wall it passes out through a cleft not unlike that of Argawan Shah, similarly fortified, garrisoned, and closed by a wall pierced with arches across the bed of the stream. The latter, emerging from the defile, makes its way down through the lower ranges, and ultimately irrigates the cornfields of Dushak.

In addition to Nadir's tower at Gugumaz, there are other but quite inconsiderable relics of that king's occupation. To the north-Remains of antiquity west of the village, upon an elevated open plateau, are the ruins of what purports to be his palace, and is called Imaret-i-Nadiri, the largest remains being those of an enclosure, called the Diwan-Khaneh, twenty yards square. Beyond this,

[1] There is an illustration of it in MacGregor's *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. p. 50.

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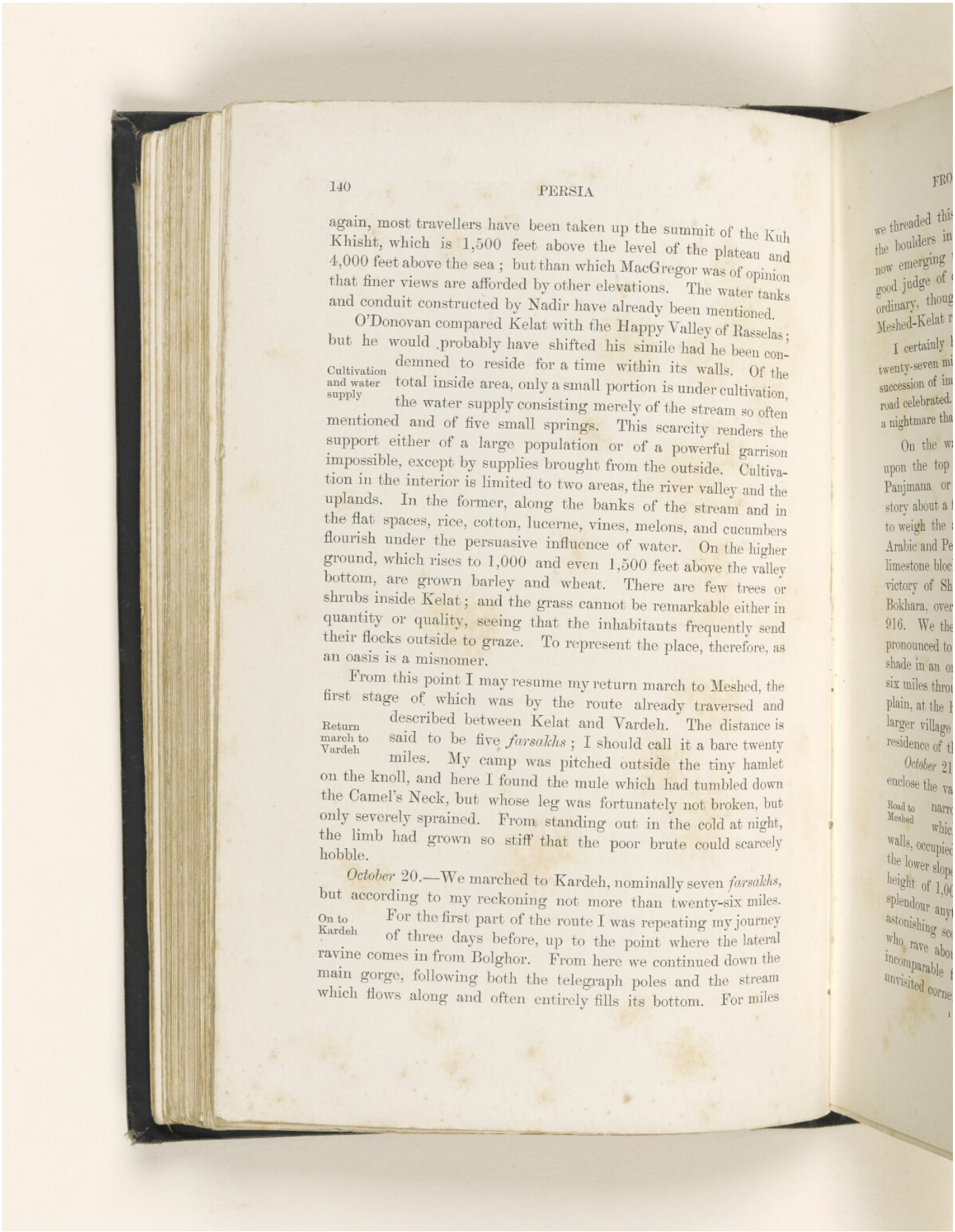




again, most travellers have been taken up the summit of the Kuh Khisht, which is 1,500 feet above the level of the plateau and 4,000 feet above the sea; but than which MacGregor was of opinion that finer views are afforded by other elevations. The water tanks and conduit constructed by Nadir have already been mentioned.

O'Donovan compared Kelat with the Happy Valley of Rasselas; but he would probably have shifted his simile had he been condemned to reside for a time within its walls. Of the total inside area, only a small portion is under cultivation, the water supply consisting merely of the stream so often mentioned and of five small springs. This scarcity renders the support either of a large population or of a powerful garrison impossible, except by supplies brought from the outside. Cultivation in the interior is limited to two areas, the river valley and the uplands. In the former, along the banks of the stream and in the flat spaces, rice, cotton, lucerne, vines, melons, and cucumbers flourish under the persuasive influence of water. On the higher ground, which rises to 1,000 and even 1,500 feet above the valley bottom, are grown barley and wheat. There are few trees or shrubs inside Kelat; and the grass cannot be remarkable either in quantity or quality, seeing that the inhabitants frequently send their flocks outside to graze. To represent the place, therefore, as an oasis is a misnomer.

Cultivation and water supply

From this point I may resume my return march to Meshed, the first stage of which was by the route already traversed and described between Kelat and Vardeh. The distance is said to be five *farsakhs*; I should call it a bare twenty miles. My camp was pitched outside the tiny hamlet on the knoll, and here I found the mule which had tumbled down the Camel's Neck, but whose leg was fortunately not broken, but only severely sprained. From standing out in the cold at night, the limb had grown so stiff that the poor brute could scarcely hobble.

Return march to Vardeh

*October* 20.—We marched to Kardeh, nominally seven *farsakhs*, but according to my reckoning not more than twenty-six miles. For the first part of the route I was repeating my journey of three days before, up to the point where the lateral ravine comes in from Bolghor. From here we continued down the main gorge, following both the telegraph poles and the stream which flows along and often entirely fills its bottom. For miles

On to Kardeh

**Tales from Turkistan.— Stor Løb.** Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons. 1924. 7½ × 5, pp. x. + 307. *Two Illustrations.* 6*s. net.* (150)

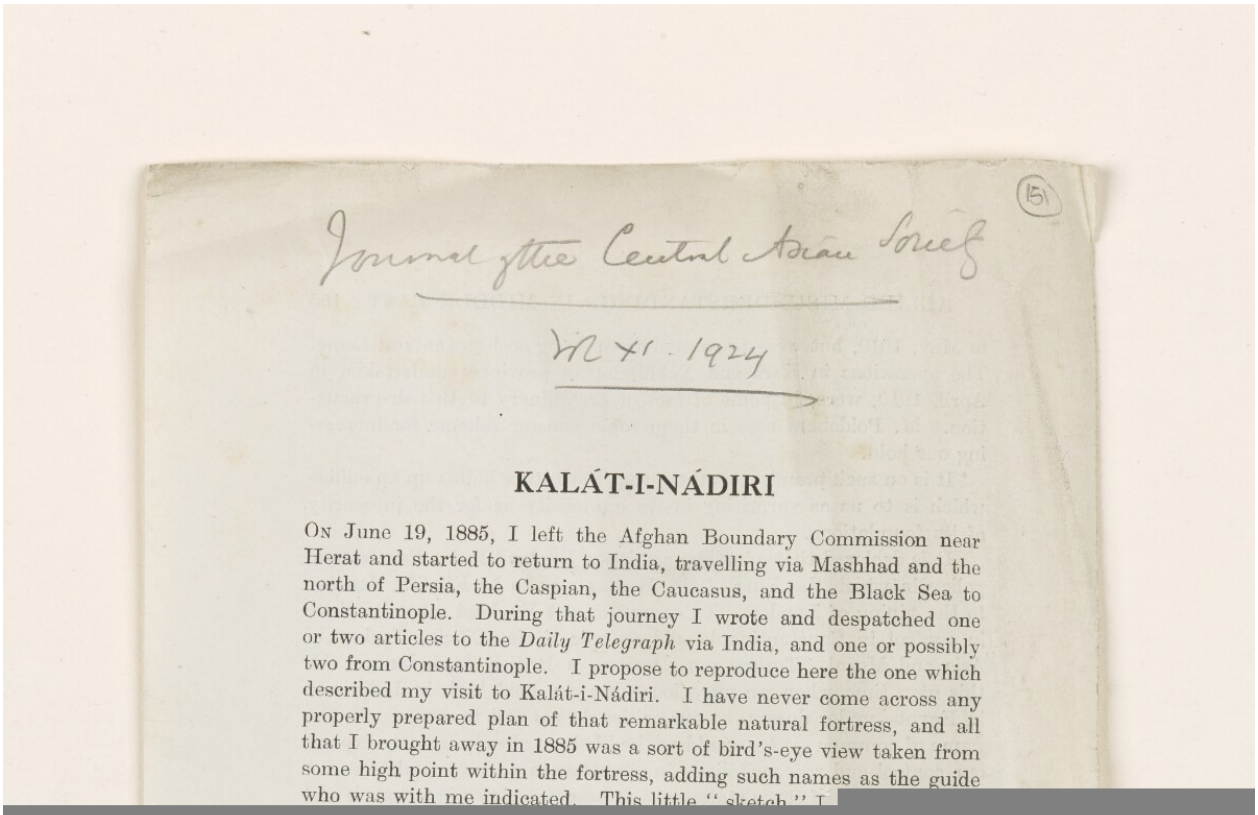
The author writes under a *nom de plume*, but it is not difficult to recognize in him Major L. V. S. Blacker, whose paper read before the Society in 1921 (*Journal*, Vol. 58, pp. 178 *et seq.*) covered in part the same ground. Few officers can have served in so many war areas so widely separated from one another as Major Blacker and his gallant contingent of the "Guides," and after a perusal of this work the armchair critic, who cursed the "side-show," would perhaps be ready to allow that the tiny force employed was able to carry out important military work that was out of all proportion to its size and cost.

To take the thrilling pursuit of the fifteen Afghans across unmapped mountains, where the cold was great and where rations were very short, until they were finally run to ground and seized in a caravanserai at Yarkand, not only are the finest qualities of British leadership displayed, but important results were secured with a tiny expenditure of force. Again, on the north-east frontier of Persia, what splendid work was done by the same gallant band, and how much loss of life and property was escaped by the Persians through the British operations! Moreover, every opportunity was taken to add to the geographical knowledge of the countries that were visited. Major Blacker has studied Persian history, but in his account of a visit to the forbidden fortress of Kalat-i-Nadiri, he makes a slip in stating that Nadir Shah, whose fastness and treasure-house it was, came of a Kurdish line. Actually he was of Afshar, and therefore of Turkish, descent, and so cannot be claimed as belonging to the Aryans, about whom the author waxes eloquent throughout his book. This does not a whit detract from a most graphic account of a natural fortress, which is probably unmatched in the world, and which struck the reviewer with awe when he visited it. Altogether we have a collection of thrilling stories of peril and adventure by land and sea, and it is to be hoped that they will be advertised as especially suitable for boys and girls, for such deeds must never be forgotten, as they enrich the annals of our race and also the records of our Nordic brethren in the Panjab.

One has often wondered how our descendants will compare the great deeds of the World War with those done by the heroes of the Elizabethan era. The leaders in those days were as brave as lions, permeated with pride of race, and did great things, but the men they led were, in some cases, cowardly, owing to the superstitions of the period and also lack of spirit. Will not the verdict be that the British officer of the World War was enabled to do deeds that can never be surpassed, partly owing to his own spirit, but also owing to the splendid quality of the men he led? In any case a great tribute for valour is surely due to those unconquerable Indian troops who fought with success in every war area, and who covered themselves and the "Guides" with undying fame in the expeditions here narrated.

P. M. S.

with an account of the writer's experiences with the American army in eastern Siberia in 1919–20. In this part the personal note is much in evidence, and there are, in addition to the portrait of the author, full-page plates of his military decorations. Of the rest of the book about 100 pages are devoted to pious platitudes on the evils of war, the hope of universal peace, and America's example to the world; and about 150 pages to an account of Siberia's resources, incomplete, far from accurate, and dealing mainly with the Amur region and Sakhalin. It is clear that in spite of his avowed attempt to gather "every possible source of information" the author was ill-equipped for his task. To begin with, he uses a Mercator map to illustrate the extent of Siberia, thus exaggerating its area. He eulogizes the climate of Siberia, "in all respects like that of the United States," citing merely the temperatures of July, saying nothing of the length of the Siberian winter, and disposing of the low winter temperatures as "grossly exaggerated." He writes as if latitude alone decided climate, and reminds us that "Vladivostok has the same latitude as New York, Spain, and the Mediterranean," the inference being that all have the same climate. "Blagoveshchensk and Omsk have considerably higher year-around temperatures" than London (p. 326). "The world knows little of such surprising facts." We agree. Evidently climate is not the author's special study. The Amur river is hardly 3000 miles long even if head streams are included, and so cannot be navigable for 8541 miles (p. 328). The "Ob–Yenisei" waterway may exist on the map, but facts are ignored when the author implies the possibility of through navigation from Irbit to Kyakhta. A little knowledge of Siberia would have saved him from that mistake. The natives of Siberia are mentioned only as "good workers, hospitable, and not knowing the value of money, their labour is cheap." The railway map is incomplete, and the town map includes Ust Yansk with thirty houses and omits Novo-Nikolaevsk with over 60,000 inhabitants, Tyumen, Barnaul, and Biisk. The author seems to think that Kamchatka is devoted to "prisons," and that the "exile mines" are or were in the Taimir peninsula. The chapters on timber are fairly full, but those on minerals are less satisfactory. Owing to the lack of system in the orthography it is impossible to locate on an atlas the various coal deposits enumerated: the map provided is merely an outline sketch. The chapter on Sakhalin coal (Pilevo river) reads like a company prospectus. In fact, Mr. Channing would seem to see in Siberia merely a land for exploitation: "Siberia stands to-day rich, unsettled, and unexploited—as did our United States, now vast and glorious, a century or more ago": but he has no constructive policy to offer. Many valuable books have been written on various parts of Siberia, but Mr. Channing appears to have discovered only "a scant dozen of writers and lecturers" on the country. These he condemns for giving a false picture of Siberia, eulogizing as the only writer who tells the truth Mr. Stefansson, who we believe claims no personal knowledge of



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Journal of the Central Asian Society

VII XI. 1924

## KALÁT-I-NÁDIRI

On June 19, 1885, I left the Afghan Boundary Commission near Herat and started to return to India, travelling via Mashhad and the north of Persia, the Caspian, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea to Constantinople. During that journey I wrote and despatched one or two articles to the *Daily Telegraph* via India, and one or possibly two from Constantinople. I propose to reproduce here the one which described my visit to Kalát-i-Nádiri. I have never come across any properly prepared plan of that remarkable natural fortress, and all that I brought away in 1885 was a sort of bird's-eye view taken from some high point within the fortress, adding such names as the guide who was with me indicated. This little "sketch" I

in May, 1919, but were prevented from doing so by events at home. The operations in Kars and Nakhitchevan provinces undertaken in April, 1919, were, in point of fact, a preliminary to British evacuation. M. Poidebard sees in them some sinister scheme for increasing our hold.

It is on such premises as these that the author builds up an edifice which is to us as surprising in its immensity as for the insecurity of its foundations.

It is declared that after the armistice England had a Pan-Islamic policy in which the King of the Hedjaz was to be Khalifa, dancing to the piping of London. To carry this out England must be alone in control in Constantinople and to rule Syria, Cilicia, Turkey in Asia and Mosul. Turkey must become a British dependency. All this at a time when we were loosening our hold both in India and in Egypt—under duress, so our critics do not fail to assert. In the name of common sense, would we be likely to simultaneously expand our control and responsibilities in countries in no way vital to us?

In the light of these statements it becomes clear that French and British policies in the past five years could not be otherwise than divergent. M. Poidebard concludes his book by forecasting that Russia and Turkey must resume their hostility in the Caucasus; that indeed seems most probable. Russia will never tolerate Turkey in possession of Kars, the great fortress of the southern approach; Turkey will never forget that Caucasia is predominantly Mussulman and the focus of Turki-speaking peoples. So far we agree. M. Poidebard says France and Turkey must in the future be friends. Again we agree. But when he asserts that the Pan-Islam movement, in alliance with the Bolshevists, is essentially directed against Great Britain, we cannot follow him. It takes two to make a quarrel, and what have we to fall out with Turkey or Persia or

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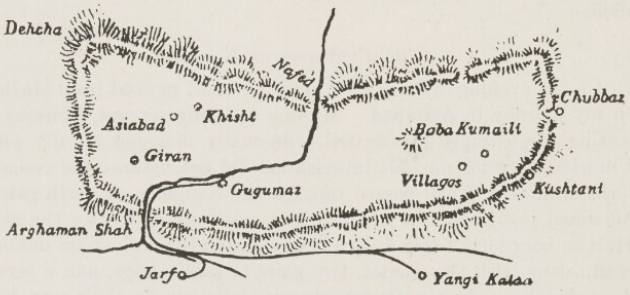
## ENLARGED SKETCH OF KALAT-I-NADARI.

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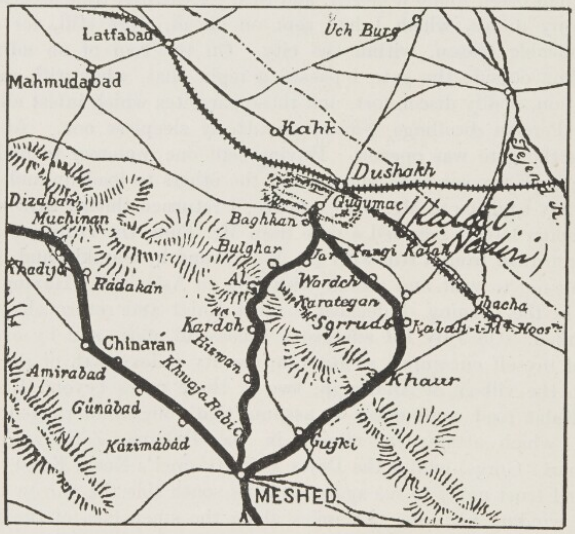

tively, and as MacGregor found it in 1875. Colonel Tod states that the defences which we severally saw were all swept away in a flood, probably in the year 1905. The illustrations in MacGregor's "Khorasan" are useful, the more so as he gives the only known sketch of the Nafta entrance on the north side of the perimeter.

With these preliminary remarks I will pass on to my account of Kalát-i-Nádiri, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 27, 1885.

### The Fortress of Kalát

On the evening of June 29, I made an effort to start from Mashhad on my journey to Astrabad. My one and only servant, however, by getting disgustingly intoxicated, effectually defeated all my plans. Unfortunately for me, his intoxication did not assume the comatose form until after I had passed through the Naughan, or north gate, of Mashhad just at sunset when all the gates are closed for the night. Half an hour later I found myself standing in the dark on an unknown road, alone with two ponies, two pairs of saddle-bags, and a servant dead drunk. Shortly afterwards two villagers on their way home came up. With some persuasion, verbal and pecuniary, I induced them to take the drunkard with his pony and saddle-bags to their village, and look after them for the night. I then returned to the Naughan Gate, found it closed, and then for the first time ascertained that my mules, which I had sent on ahead, were still, for some inexplicable reason, within the city. On the roof of an adjacent dwelling outside the gate I passed a night that, what with mental irritation, bodily discomfort, and those parasites which infest all low-class Persian dwellings, proved an utterly sleepless one. At day-break the gate was opened. Having sent one muleteer to find and bring back my servant, and ordered the others to load up and bring back my baggage to Mr. Gray's house, I returned thither myself. A few hours later I received a note from Mr. Finn, the British Consul, just returned from a trip with Dr. Weir round by Sarakhs and Kalát, asking me to wait and march with him to Astrabad. Having seen him in the evening, I decided to visit Kalát and return thence to Mashhad. On July 1 I effected a successful start, and by evening found myself encamped at Rizwan, twenty miles north of the city. From the village of Andurugh, two or three miles beyond Rizwan, the Kalát road commences to assume that rough and rugged character which attains its climax in the Dahana-i-Zaupirzan (Old Woman's Gorge) and at the Dewa Boini (Camel's Neck) Kotal. The latter I trust never to see again. On its south side the narrow track, after winding for some two miles along the steep face of the Dewa Boini Range, arrives at the foot of an almost perpendicular mass of rock about 100 feet or 150 feet high. Along its face a steep winding

path has been constructed. In ascending it half my mules fell down or dropped their loads, which had then to be carried to the top and there reloaded. However, all's well that ends well. It took my mules fully an hour to get to the top of that little 100-foot scarp. On the north side a long, very steep, and in places rocky track descends into the Wardeh Valley. The mules did not think much of it after their experiences on the south side. There is a certain grandeur in the wild scenery of this mountain region. The numerous passes with their cliffs towering overhead and the limpid waters of a rapid rivulet underfoot combine into a simple beauty. The vegetation—wild roses, honeysuckle, convolvulus, wild thyme, and, what is so rare in the East, luxuriant grass and clover—reminds the English traveller pleasingly of his own native country. At the higher elevations the steep slopes and scarps are overgrown with junipers of somewhat dwarf stature. Several striking views are obtained along this route; firstly, of the broad fertile plain of Mashhad from the hills overhanging Rizwan. Such a view, both over the valley of the Keshef Rud itself and over the neighbouring spurs and minor basins (which are all cultivated), gives one some conception of the fertility and productiveness of this district. Secondly, one gets a fine prospect from the Mirza Kashti range north of Baghkan down a wild precipitous gorge to the lofty natural walls of Kalát overhanging the Darwaza-i-Arghawan Shah.

The entire distance from Mashhad to Kalát is about eighty-three miles. Leaving the Naughan Gate, the road at the fourth mile passes the picturesque mosque, or tomb, of Khwaja Rabi, lying embosomed in magnificent chinar-trees. Thence to Rizwan (twenty miles) the only thing that attracts the attention is the great fertility of the country and the picturesque appearance of every village lying embedded in a large area of orchards and gardens. In the distance, to the north, loom the lofty mountains which have as yet proved a barrier to Russian acquisitiveness. Nearer to the east stands the striking rocky height of Izhdarkuh (Drachen-fels). From Rizwan the road passes through the Andurugh Pass to Kardeh (thirty-one miles), and thence through another defile to Al (thirty-six miles). Al is an uncommonly pretty village situated amid shady orchards and ripening cornfields, and overhung by stupendous cliffs. It boasts a couple of chinar-trees that might well vie with those that adorn the great avenue of Isfahan. On the summit of the cliffs overhead, I was informed, are the ruins of a town or fortress of the ancient Persians (*Gabr*, Anglicé *Guebres*), and in passing through the Dahana-i-Al (Al Pass) the remains of masonry are seen in several places on the sides of the cliff. These are said to be the relics of the road or roads by which the Gabr obtained access to their stronghold. I should doubt if such was the case, because I noticed there are other

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natural and easy means of access to the summit. A mile or two farther on may be seen on the right hand side of, and twenty or thirty feet above, the path a large boulder, the face of which, having been smoothed, bears an Arabic inscription. I was unable to ascertain the meaning of it. Opposite this boulder is a striking work of nature, called the Kuh-i-Panjmana, or the Five-Maund Mountain.* This little trifle consists of a great precipitous promontory of solid rock, a sheer drop of about 500 feet, more properly, perched on the top of, say, 1,000 feet of bare steep slope. Of course, it has a legend. Once upon a time there came hither a mighty monarch, attended by a numerous retinue. When the monarch saw this curious promontory of rock, he turned to one of his courtiers and directed him to go up and weigh it. "Certainly," said the courtier, "if your Majesty will be pleased to provide me with the scales." So it was called the "Five-Maund [about 35 pounds] Mountain," just as we talk of London as the "little village," or the 81-ton gun as the "Woolwich Infant." The next village beyond Al, on or near the direct road to Kalát (there are numbers of villages in the adjacent valleys) is Bulghar (forty-seven miles). Thence to Wardeh is the tug-of-war for the mules. First comes the Dahana-i-Zaupirzan (this too has its legend, but it is not quite suited to the pages of the Central Asian Society's *Journal*), four miles of rocky gorge. In some places the perpendicular walls of rock are only seven to eight feet apart; in others the channel of the stream, which often is the only possible road, is strewn with stones and boulders, or composed of water-worn slippery rock. The crowning task is the Dewa Boini Kotal, and that I have already described. Beyond it are passed the villages of Wardeh (sixty-one miles) and Baghkan (sixty-four miles). From Baghkan the road traverses two successive gorges—charming enough in their way, but not exactly as easy as a king's highroad should be—and at the seventy-ninth mile the entrance to Kalát, known as Darwaza-i-Arghawan Shah, is reached. From there to the village of Gugumaz, where the *Sartip*, or Commandant, resides within the fortress, is four miles. Total, eighty-three miles.

In passing through this country the traveller meets with every civility from the inhabitants, who are almost all of Turkish or Kurdish race, and speak those languages. Their manners are somewhat rough and familiar, but they are none the less obliging. In every village I obtained without any difficulty milk, eggs, mutton, chickens, etc., for self and servants, and barley and dry fodder for my horse and the mules. Now I have in India come across villages where the inhabitants, from sheer pig-headed ill-will, refused to sell any thing whatever. I was also pleased to find that these people were

* Colonel Tod in the Royal Geographical Society's *Journal* for November, 1923, gives a picture of it.

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not possessed of a large bump of curiosity. It is decidedly annoying, when you want to dress, bathe, dine, breakfast, read, write, or do anything else for which privacy is desirable, to find the door of your humble 80-pound tent besieged by a dirty crowd of all ages, but not sexes. Women hereabouts are supposed to wish neither to see nor to be seen. The Turk and Kurd peasantry of this mountain tract are by no means well to do, although they cultivate with most exemplary industry not only every square foot of their narrow valleys, but also the tops and slopes of every open hill blessed with soil fit for cultivation. The hill soil, being dependent on rain alone, is known as *daima*. Barley is generally grown on it. The yield naturally depends on the rainfall, but taken all round is poor. Land watered by natural streams is called in Persia *zamin-i-khálisa* or *Padshahi* (Crown lands). Land watered by *karez** (artificial subterraneous channel tapping a spring at the foot of a hill) is called *zamin-i-máliki* (private property). The former pays a higher tax than the latter. I believe that no tax at all is exacted on *daima*, the yield being poor, and rain being regarded as the gift of God, common to all. My guide, himself a small Kurd chief from Charam, near Kalát, said: "We are like sheep dogs who guard a flock, and who for their pains get naught but a few bare bones. It is the shepherd or owner who reaps all the profits. But for us the Turcomans would long ago have laid waste Mashhad and its fertile neighbourhood. It is we who have held the Turcomans in check, while others have sat in peace and amassed wealth." My guide himself had been a prisoner at Bokhara, having been captured by Tekes and sold for fifty tomans (about £17). After nine months he escaped on foot from Bokhara, having first killed his master's son, who seemingly stood in the way of his escape, and found his way in the garb of a darwish to Karki on the Oxus, and then through Maimena and Balamurghab to Persia. Two of his brothers, he tells me, are still there. They were released from slavery by the Russians, but having married in Bokhara, elected to remain there. What struck me most in my guide's allusions to the good old days of the Alamán, or Turcoman raids, was that he evidently regarded it as a perfectly fair give-and-take sort of business. He said, "We used to raid on them and they used to raid on us. Prisoners were taken on both sides, and were exchanged in due course. For a man of wealth or position, two or three men of the lower classes would be given." He spoke with no expressions of bitterness against the Turcomans. He evidently considered that he had given as good as he took. The fear of the Turcoman that pervades the baser grades of Persians—than whom none are, perhaps, lower than the inferior classes in Mashhad, Teheran, etc.—evidently finds no echo in the hearts of these highlanders. Such Turks and

* Persicé *Kanát*.

Kurds are the men in whom the Shah might find excellent material for an army, if he would but put down embezzlement with a strong hand and establish a competent system of supervision over all departments and grades of his army. He allows from 10,000 to 15,000 tomans per annum to the colonel of each regiment of infantry for its pay, uniform, etc. Half of that sum, perhaps, is embezzled. The paper strength of a regiment is 1,000 rank and file. The real strength is, perhaps, 500. If the colonel is threatened with an inspection of his regiment, he has previously arranged for temporarily placing the required number of men in the ranks. This is known and tolerated by the Shah and by his third son, Naib-us-Sultana, who is War Minister, with the title of Amir-i-Kabir; and so long as it lasts the Persian army will remain inefficient. The sons of men of rank in Persia are promoted while still in their infancy or boyhood to the grade of major or colonel. As is well known, the same thing went on in Great Britain in the eighteenth century. "The major crying for his parritch" is an echo from the Scotch nursery of that period. Later on, perhaps, they attend *L'École d'État Majeur* in Teheran, where they receive instruction in tactics, geometry, mathematics, military drawing, the use of artillery, etc., and are then given the command of a regiment. Such is the case of the Sartip Abdullah Khan here (Kalát-i-Nádiri). His father before him was a soldier, and, it appears, one of the most noted Persian generals during the reigns of the present Shah and his predecessor Mohammed Shah. He attained the rank of Amir-i-Toman (practically equivalent to a general of division, but relatively greater in Persia), and to the title of I'timád-ud-Daula. At the age of thirteen the son was granted the rank of sarhang, or colonel, and later on attended the Staff College at Teheran, where, he tells me, he highly distinguished himself. He then obtained the command of the Fauj-i-fadawi, or Hamadáni Regiment, which is composed mainly of peasantry from his own estates. He is a Turk of the tribe of Karaguzlu. He has now—and he is still a young man of thirty or so, I should say—attained the rank of Sartip-i-Awwal, or first-class brigadier. Such is the career of a man with interest. He now draws a salary of 4,000 tomans (£1,333), and an income of double that amount from his estates at Hamadan. He was apparently born with the proverbial silver spoon. But for a man without interest there is little hope of promotion. He may attain the rank of Naib, Sultan, or Yáwar (lieutenant, captain, or major), and remain in that rank until he is placed on the shelf.

It was last year (1884) about this time, I am informed, that the Persian Commissioner for the settlement of the Russo-Persian frontier, Sulaiman Khan, accompanied by his Russian confrère, arrived here. The commandant, pursuant to the instructions given him by the Shah, refused to let them enter the fortress. They were conse-

quently obliged to communicate by telegraph via Mashhad with Teheran; and it was only when the Shah's express order arrived that the Commissioners and their suites were allowed to enter. The Shah's order is that no one be allowed to enter or leave Kalát without the permission either of the Shah himself or of the commandant. After staying here some days, the Persian and Russian Commissioners, who had already settled the frontier from Sarakhs to Kalát, continued their work westward, and have now, I understand, completed it to the east shore of the Caspian. As one result of this new frontier settlement the whole of the Atak, up to the foot of the northern spurs of Kalát, and so as to place in Russian possession the road from Ashkabad, through a fertile, inhabited, and well-watered district to Sarakhs, has been ceded to Russia. Lutfabad, though still Persian territory, is cut off from Kalát by intervening Russian territory. The peasantry here are very bitter on the subject of this cession of the fertile Atak to Russia. But what could the poor Shah do? What the frontier is from Ashkabad to the Caspian I cannot yet say, but I believe it to be approximately represented by the Atrek River. Another outcome of this rectification of the frontier is the stoppage of rice cultivation among these mountains. The Russians, having obtained the whole of the Atak, found that its fertility depended solely on the water supply from the mountains. If the mountaineers cultivated rice the supply was sensibly diminished. So the Russian Government reapplied the screw to the Shah, and the latter ordered the mountaineers to stop cultivating rice. He impoverishes his own subjects to benefit aliens. T

Arghawan Shah Gate, they are simply pitiable, and I conclude that the defences of the other four gates, although I did not see them, are equally feeble. The garrison of 500 infantry, 200 cavalry, and some guns of sorts is utterly inadequate. At each gate two to four guns are placed behind walls of no great strength, in some position supposed to command the entrance. With regard to the position selected for the guns at the Arghawan Shah Gate, it appeared to me that their fire would only take effect on an enemy already within the entrance, instead of commanding and closing the entrance itself. As for the miserable little loopholed gateway drawn across the entrance, a baron of the mediæval ages would have been ashamed to see such a structure closing access to his feudal stronghold. Here you have a channel, say, 40 to 50 feet wide between lofty walls of rock. What should be done is to make loopholed galleries in the rocky walls themselves, besides a succession of adequate defensible barriers to assault. There must always be an arrangement admitting of the passage of the stream when in flood. But when the stream is in flood an enemy could scarcely make an assault; and when the flood abates the channel of water escape can be closed. Yesterday (July 4, 1885) evening the *Sartip's* Nazir, or house steward (I had sent in my letter of introduction given me by Mirza Abbas Khan, the British Agent in Mashhad, about midday), came out and brought me the *Sartip's* invitation to be his guest during my stay. As I rode with him through the winding rocky channel, about half a mile in length, known as the Darwaza-i-Arghawan Shah, he pointed out to me, in that braggadocio manner characteristic of too many Persians, the miserable defences meant to bid defiance to the invader. Now as a matter of fact, Kalát in the hands of an able and energetic Government might be made a terrible thorn in the side of Russia. Fortify impregnably its five entrances, put into it a garrison of, say, 5,000 infantry and at least five batteries with machine guns, place there a good well-filled arsenal, collect a reserve supply of provisions for one year, and some mule and pony transport, connect the five entrances by good broad level roads, or, better still, by a light tramway system, and then the place would be able not only to resist any assault, but also to effectively harass the Russian line of comunications between Ashkabad and Sarakhs, which is only distant some ten miles or so from the two northerly gates of Kalát, called Dehcha and Nafta. In order to prevent continued attacks from the Kalát garrison on every passing convoy or detachment it would be necessary to detach a considerable force to hold the garrison in check. Even then it would be impossible to watch each of the five issues. It would be a dangerous experiment to hazard even a strong force in the mountain defiles and fastnesses south of Kalát where every Kurd and Turk is an enemy. Consequently even if sorties from the Dehcha, or north-west, and Nafta,

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or north-east, Gates could be prevented, the Chubbaz and Kushtani Gates to the east and south-east, and the Arghawan Shah, to the south, will still be available. From these issues more distant points of the Ashkabad-Sarakhs road could be assailed before the forces opposite Dehcha and Nafta could afford any assistance. If all the entrances to Kalát, however, are like that of Arghawan Shah, it must be admitted that a sortie therefrom in the face of a fairly strong besieging force would be as impossible as a successful assault by the besiegers. But as I said above, I think the Kurds and Turks of these highlands would render the position of a besieging force in front of the Arghawan Shah Gate untenable. Whence would its supplies be drawn? Would they be brought in by these difficult mountain passes and gorges, in the face of swarms of mountaineers, rifles in hand? It would be an arduous task, liable to end in disaster. On the other hand, Kalát is more or less self-sustaining. Its principal water-supply is drawn from the copious stream that flows down from Jarf and Istakhsu, enters Kalát by the Arghawan Shah, and leaving it by the Nafta Gate runs away to fertilize the fields of Dushakh. To divert the course of this stream may be regarded as an impossibility, but supposing that the garrison of Kalát were to be deprived of it, they have still the internal resources of water-supply to fall back upon. These, however, to the best of my knowledge, are not as abundant as they might be. They consist of a large tank at Khisht constructed by Nadir, and of five small springs issuing from the soil, one each near Girau, Sirzar, Aghdash, Kulahzau, and the fifth some six miles east of Khisht. But this tank and the springs are only just enough for the wants of the villagers themselves, and could not possibly suffice for a large garrison as well. What, therefore, should be done now is to take immediate steps to provide an adequate internal reserve of water by artificial means. The actual existence of five natural springs proves that the interior of Kalát is not void of water-bearing strata. While on the subject of water, it may be mentioned that there are two medicinal springs in this neighbourhood, the one of which is looked upon by the natives as a valuable remedy for many diseases, and the other as a poison. The former is a hot sulphur spring near the Nafta Gate, called by the local peasantry Ab-i-Khwaja, or the holy man's water. Its products are taken medicinally, especially for skin diseases. In Mohammedan countries the priesthood appear to have early realized the capital, both pecuniary and religious, to be made out of a judicious use of these hot sulphur springs. Near them is invariably to be found a Ziarat, or the tomb of some saint of the Mohammedan Calendar, used as a resort for pilgrims. The gesture expressive of offence to the olfactory organ with which the *Sartip* spoke of the waters of Nafta carried my thoughts away forcibly to the pleasures of Harrogate. The second

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is at Istagshu, some eight miles up the Kalát stream from Arghawan Shah. This, as its waters are said to be red, I take to be an iron spring. The natives, however, aver that it is undeniably poisonous, and, mingling with the main stream, proves the cause of the fever, ague, and other diseases so prevalent at Kalát in the autumn. By others the unhealthiness of Kalát in the autumn is attributed to the moist vapours arising from the rice fields and to the consumption of water that has been used for irrigating the rice fields. Just outside the Darwaza-i-Arghawan Shah rises the Karazu spring, the excellent water of which was conveyed by Nadir in pipes to Gugumaz, four miles off. This useful work of sanitation has long been out of repair. It is one of the most interesting traces of Nadir's work here.

I had expected to find the interior of Kalát more fertile and more cultivated than it is. The narrow valley, extending from Arghawan Shah to below Gugumaz, is everywhere cultivated. The cultivation consists of rice, wheat, lucerne, vineyards, orchards, melon, and cucumber beds, etc. The level summits and gentler slopes of the spurs throughout the whole interior of the fortress are cultivated as *daima*, or rain land. Barley and wheat are produced in large quantities. Probably there are not less than twenty square miles of this cultivation inside Kalát. The people also cultivate and pasture their sheep in the valleys and mountain slopes immediately adjoining Kalát. I was surprised to see so few flocks grazing inside the fortress, and to find the grass as a rule so scant. Still the lucerne grown in the valley and the wheat and barley straw of the *daima* supplementing the natural grass growth of the hillsides should suffice for the support of a large number of animals. The local products of grain, rice, etc., would go a long way to support a garrison of 5,000 men.

CAMP OUTSIDE KALÁT, JULY 6, 1885

I cannot praise too highly the kindness and hospitality that I experienced at the hands of Sartip Abdullah Khan. I was lodged in a spacious tent, with every convenience, in the midst of his garden. I dined with him always, but owing to its being the Ramazan fast—during which Mohammedans of rank spend most of the day in sleep—I breakfasted alone. He could speak a little broken French, and as he evidently preferred talking that language, we generally conversed in it. The only thing I feel disposed to find fault with is that his cook would insist on trying to imitate European cooking. Some of his Persian dishes were excellent, but his *cuisine à l'Anglaise* was not palatable. I shall always look back with much pleasure to my short stay in Kalát-i-Nádiri.

As a matter of course, in Ka[redacted]

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the Karazu water in pipes for four miles to Gugumaz. Secondly, in Gugumaz itself is the Makbara-i-Nádir,* or Nádir's tomb, built under Nádir's orders. Not that Nádir was buried there, although it is possible he may have intended that he should be. No one, I believe, knows where the peasant boy, who rose to be one of the greatest Oriental conquerors, lies buried—if, indeed, he was buried at all. In his latter days he made himself generally hated by his subjects, and he was assassinated by one or more of his own soldiers near Kuchan. Naturally his camp broke up at once, and his corpse was not improbably left to the dogs and vultures. His so-called tomb is a simple but not inelegant edifice of red sandstone. The central chamber, which was once domed—this dome has fallen in—is exactly like most Mohammedan tombs. It is encircled, however, by a number of small chambers, and below it is a very extensive cellar, which is not the case in most Mohammedan tombs. It is a semi-ruin now, and will be a complete ruin ere long. Not far from it stands a small *masjid*, completely encased in Kashi, or painted tiles. This is known as the Bulūt-gumbaz. On the red-coloured eminence two or three miles east of Gugumaz was Nádir's Nakkāra-khana. The Nakkāra-khana is the building in a city, or the spot in a camp from which are sounded reveillé, retreat, last post, etc., on drums and trumpets. Nádir's own usual residence was near Khisht, and its site (named Asiabad) is now indicated by some uninteresting remains of walls, etc. The water-tanks below Khisht are also due to him, and at a place called Buikuli, on the outer face of the southern wall, between Arghawan Shah and Kushtani, are to be seen the remains of a wall and tower constructed under his orders. Such is the sum total of all that remains here to remind the world of the once widespread fame of the great Nádir Shah.

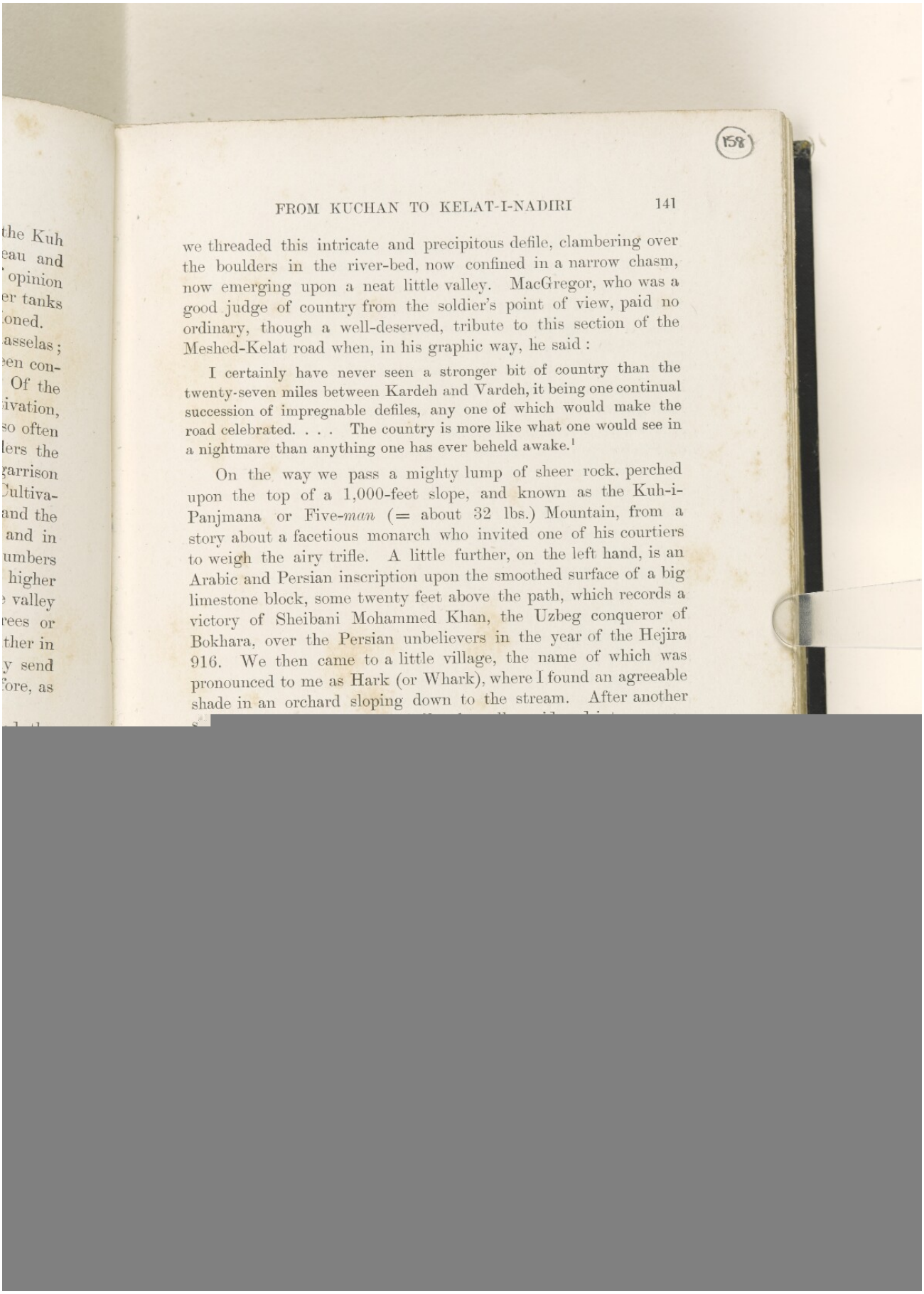
From the height north of Khisht a fine view of the Atak is obtainable on a fine day. Yesterday it was very misty, and I could with difficulty make out the following places when indicated by my guide: North lay Aliabad, with Ṇurik, Tirmachin, Kahka, and Baward to the west, and Dushakh to the east of it. The Kalát stream issuing from the Nafta or north-east gate, flows away to Dushakh. Just below the eminence from which I viewed the Atak a footpath winds down the steep cliff and goes away to Aliabad. A guard is always posted to watch this pass. Between the north wall of Kalát and the Atak stretches a series of confused rugged spurs for six or seven miles.

I returned from Kalát to Mashhad by a circuitous route, to avoid Dewa Boini and the Zaopirzan Gully, and probably arrived back there on the 10th. I marched thence with Mr. Finn and Dr. Weir as far as Kuchan, and there saw the Khan, a famous character, with whom

* MacGregor and Tod give pictures of it.

O'Donovan stayed on his way to Merv early in the eighties of the last century, and whose striking portrait Curzon's "Persia" gives. At Kuchan I decided to part from my fellow-countrymen. Their leisurely progress did not suit me. Only a weekly steamer left Bandar-i-Gaz for Baku, and I calculated that by forced marching I could catch the one due to start in about ten days. The same half-dozen of mules carried my kit from Mashhad to the Caspian, and I have calculated that those mules kept up an average of thirty-three miles a day for eleven days. The longest march was fifty, an all-night march. The heat was serious. I stopped a week at Tiflis and three weeks at Therapia, near Constantinople. I took the opportunity to swim the Bosphorus just opposite Therapia. I returned to Bombay by the Khedivial and P. and O. Lines.

A. C. Yate.

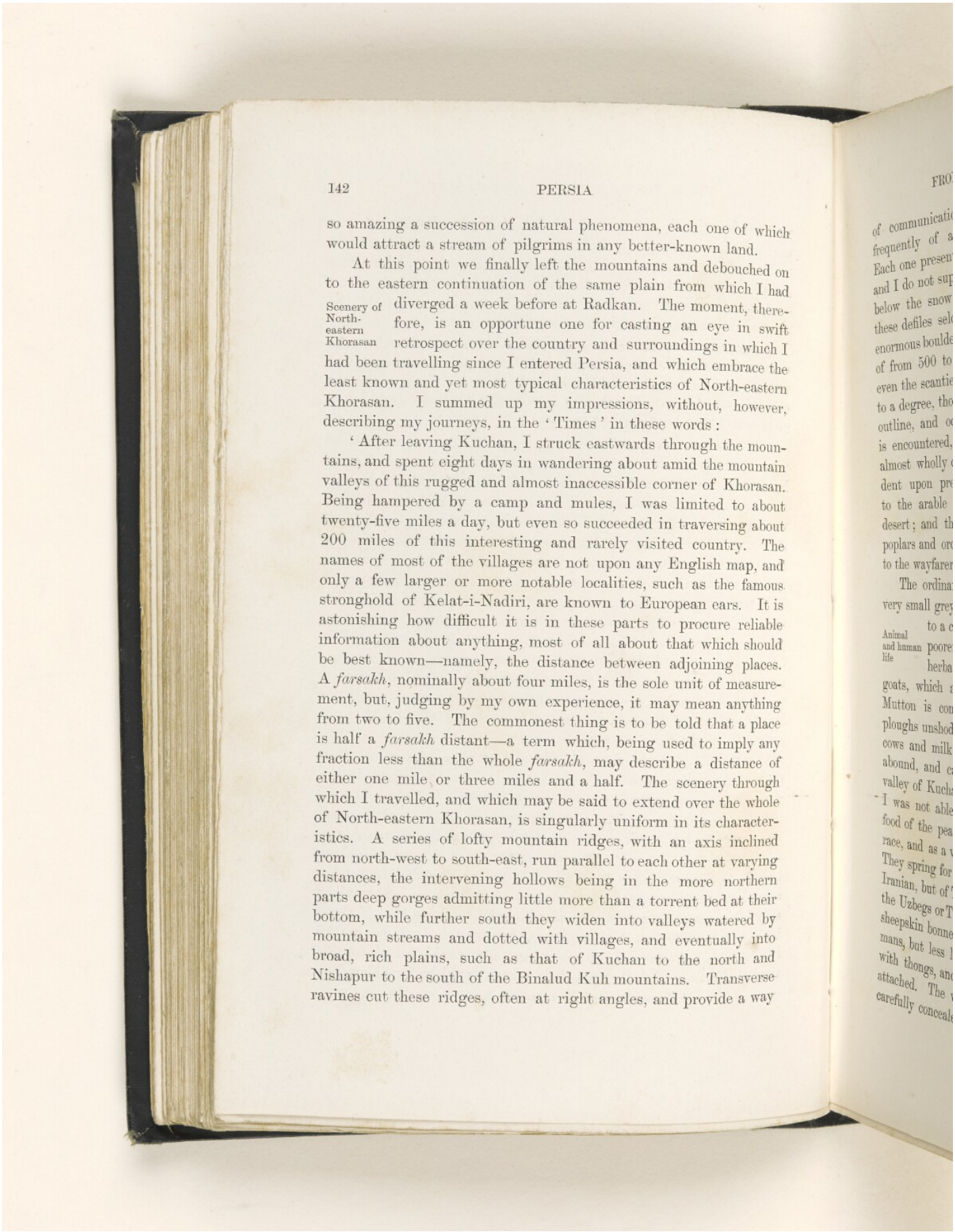




we threaded this intricate and precipitous defile, clambering over the boulders in the river-bed, now confined in a narrow chasm, now emerging upon a neat little valley. MacGregor, who was a good judge of country from the soldier's point of view, paid no ordinary, though a well-deserved, tribute to this section of the Meshed-Kelat road when, in his graphic way, he said :

I certainly have never seen a stronger bit of country than the twenty-seven miles between Kardeh and Vardeh, it being one continual succession of impregnable defiles, any one of which would make the road celebrated. . . . The country is more like what one would see in a nightmare than anything one has ever beheld awake.[1]

On the way we pass a mighty lump of sheer rock, perched upon the top of a 1,000-feet slope, and known as the Kuh-i-Panjmana or Five-*man* (= about 32 lbs.) Mountain, from a story about a facetious monarch who invited one of his courtiers to weigh the airy trifle. A little further, on the left hand, is an Arabic and Persian inscription upon the smoothed surface of a big limestone block, some twenty feet above the path, which records a victory of Sheibani Mohammed Khan, the Uzbeg conqueror of Bokhara, over the Persian unbelievers in the year of the Hejira 916. We then came to a little village, the name of which was pronounced to me as Hark (or Whark), where I found an agreeable shade in an orchard sloping down to the stream. After another





so amazing a succession of natural phenomena, each one of which would attract a stream of pilgrims in any better-known land.

At this point we finally left the mountains and debouched on to the eastern continuation of the same plain from which I had diverged a week before at Radkan. The moment, therefore, is an opportune one for casting an eye in swift retrospect over the country and surroundings in which I had been travelling since I entered Persia, and which embrace the least known and yet most typical characteristics of North-eastern Khorasan. I summed up my impressions, without, however, describing my journeys, in the 'Times' in these words:

Scenery of North-eastern Khorasan

'After leaving Kuchan, I struck eastwards through the mountains, and spent eight days in wandering about amid the mountain valleys of this rugged and almost inaccessible corner of Khorasan. Being hampered by a camp and mules, I was limited to about twenty-five miles a day, but even so succeeded in traversing about 200 miles of this interesting and rarely visited country. The names of most of the villages are not upon any English map, and only a few larger or more notable localities, such as the famous stronghold of Kelat-i-Nadiri, are known to European ears. It is astonishing how difficult it is in these parts to procure reliable information about anything, most of all about that which should be best known—namely, the distance between adjoining places. A *farsakh*, nominally about four miles, is the sole unit of measurement, but, judging by my own experience, it may mean anything from two to five. The commonest thing is to be told that a place is half a *farsakh* distant—a term which, being used to imply any fraction less than the whole *farsakh*, may describe a distance of either one mile or three miles and a half. The scenery through which I travelled, and which may be said to extend over the whole of North-eastern Khorasan, is singularly uniform in its characteristics. A series of lofty mountain ridges, with an axis inclined from north-west to south-east, run parallel to each other at varying distances, the intervening hollows being in the more northern parts deep gorges admitting little more than a torrent bed at their bottom, while further south they widen into valleys watered by mountain streams and dotted with villages, and eventually into broad, rich plains, such as that of Kuchan to the north and Nishapur to the south of the Binalud Kuh mountains. Transverse ravines cut these ridges, often at right angles, and provide a way

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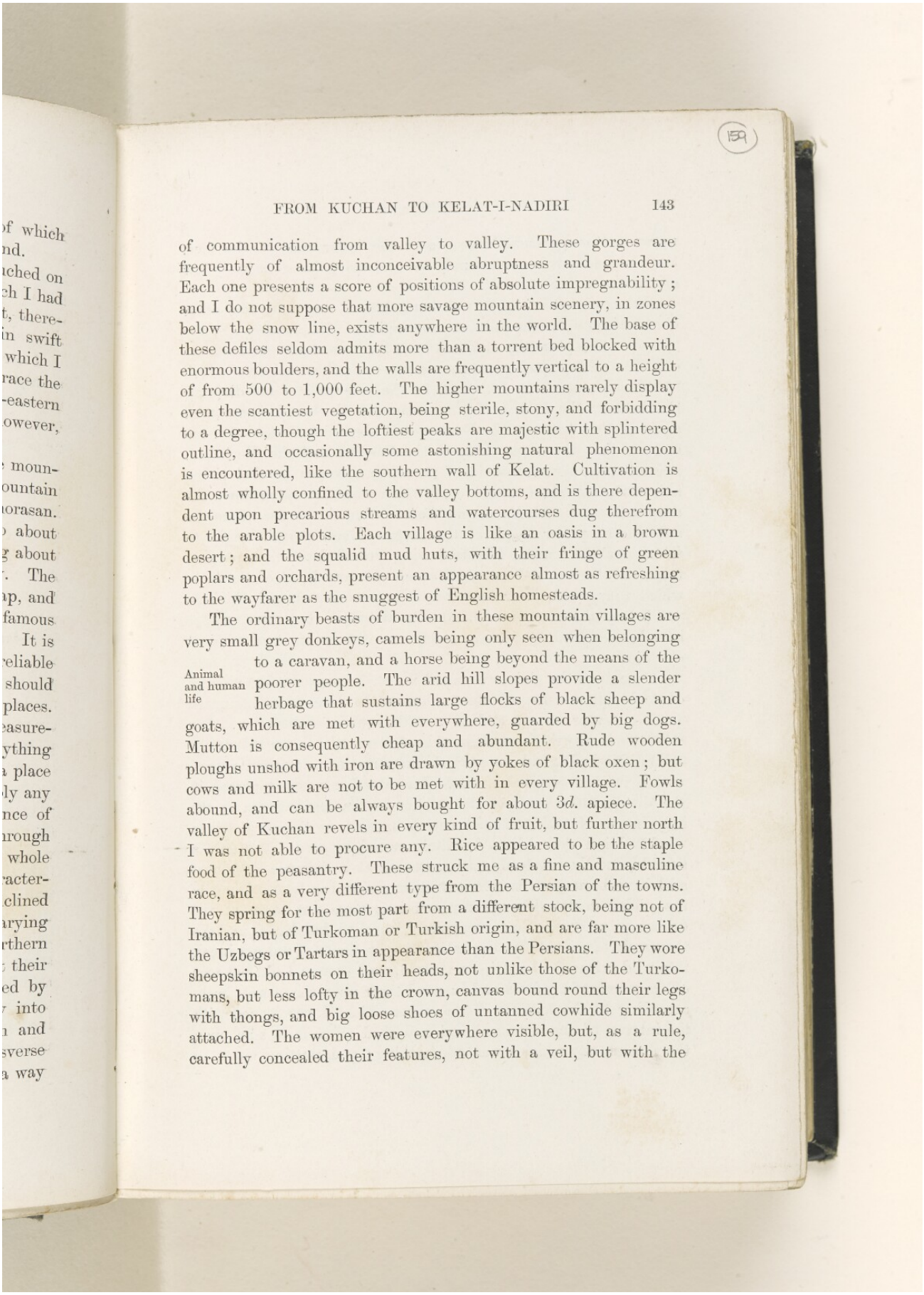



of communication from valley to valley. These gorges are frequently of almost inconceivable abruptness and grandeur. Each one presents a score of positions of absolute impregnability; and I do not suppose that more savage mountain scenery, in zones below the snow line, exists anywhere in the world. The base of these defiles seldom admits more than a torrent bed blocked with enormous boulders, and the walls are frequently vertical to a height of from 500 to 1,000 feet. The higher mountains rarely display even the scantiest vegetation, being sterile, stony, and forbidding to a degree, though the loftiest peaks are majestic with splintered outline, and occasionally some astonishing natural phenomenon is encountered, like the southern wall of Kelat. Cultivation is almost wholly confined to the valley bottoms, and is there dependent upon precarious streams and watercourses dug therefrom to the arable plots. Each village is like an oasis in a brown desert; and the squalid mud huts, with their fringe of green poplars and orchards, present an appearance almost as refreshing to the wayfarer as the snuggest of English homesteads.

Animal and human life

The ordinary beasts of burden in these mountain villages are very small grey donkeys, camels being only seen when belonging to a caravan, and a horse being beyond the means of the poorer people. The arid hill slopes provide a slender herbage that sustains large flocks of black sheep and goats, which are met with everywhere, guarded by big dogs. Mutton is consequently cheap and abundant. Rude wooden ploughs unshod with iron are drawn by yokes of black oxen; but cows and milk are not to be met with in every village. Fowls abound, and can be always bought for about 3*d*. apiece. The valley of Kuchan revels in every kind of fruit, but further north I was not able to procure any. Rice appeared to be the staple food of the peasantry. These struck me as a fine and masculine race, and as a very different type from the Persian of the towns. They spring for the most part from a different stock, being not of Iranian, but of Turkoman or Turkish origin, and are far more like the Uzbegs or Tartars in appearance than the Persians. They wore sheepskin bonnets on their heads, not unlike those of the Turkomans, but less lofty in the crown, canvas bound round their legs with thongs, and big loose shoes of untanned cowhide similarly attached. The women were everywhere visible, but, as a rule, carefully concealed their features, not with a veil, but with the

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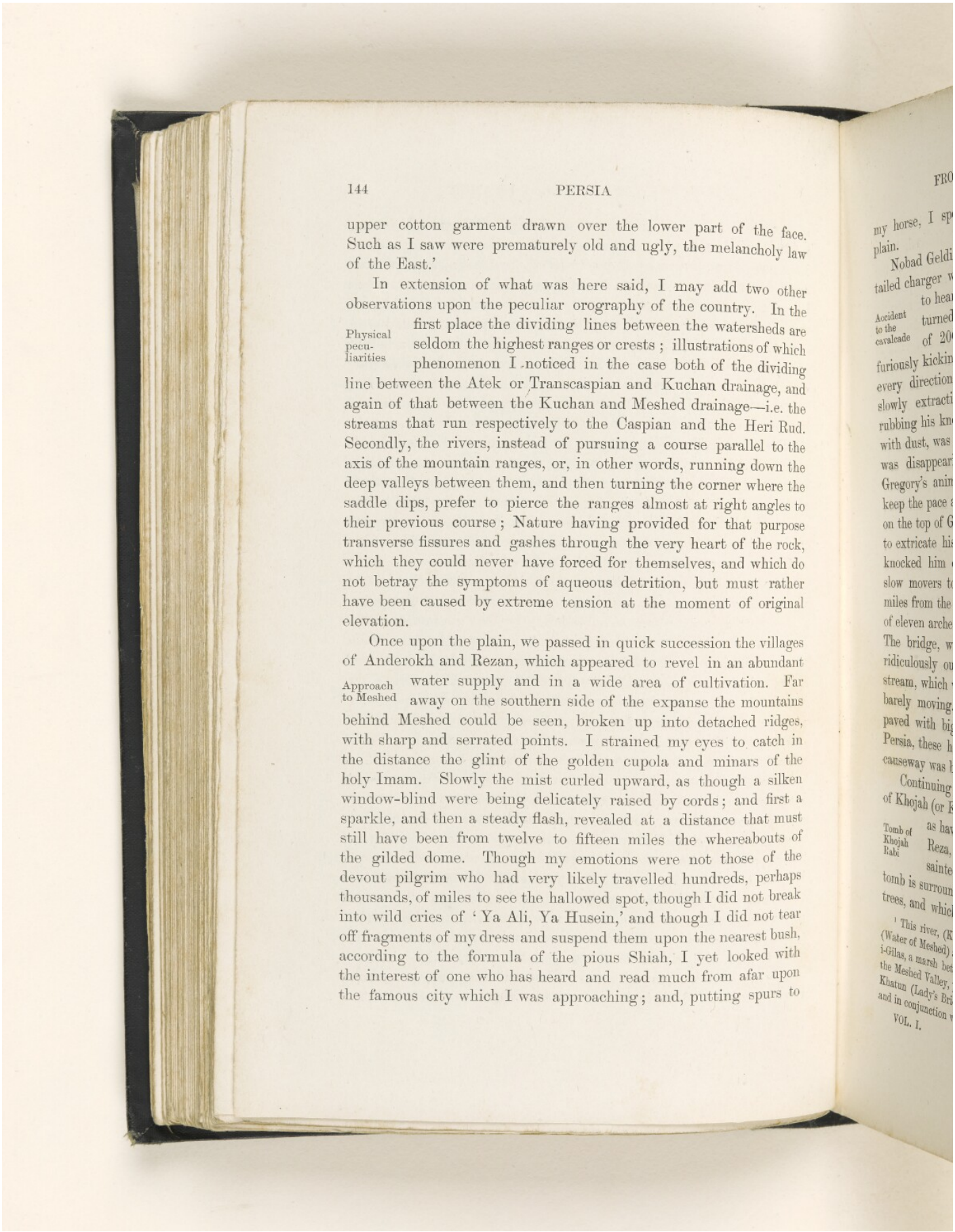



upper cotton garment drawn over the lower part of the face. Such as I saw were prematurely old and ugly, the melancholy law of the East.'

In extension of what was here said, I may add two other observations upon the peculiar orography of the country. In the first place the dividing lines between the watersheds are seldom the highest ranges or crests; illustrations of which phenomenon I noticed in the case both of the dividing line between the Atek or Transcaspian and Kuchan drainage, and again of that between the Kuchan and Meshed drainage—i.e. the streams that run respectively to the Caspian and the Heri Rud. Secondly, the rivers, instead of pursuing a course parallel to the axis of the mountain ranges, or, in other words, running down the deep valleys between them, and then turning the corner where the saddle dips, prefer to pierce the ranges almost at right angles to their previous course; Nature having provided for that purpose transverse fissures and gashes through the very heart of the rock, which they could never have forced for themselves, and which do not betray the symptoms of aqueous detrition, but must rather have been caused by extreme tension at the moment of original elevation.

Physical peculiarities

Once upon the plain, we passed in quick succession the villages of Anderokh and Rezan, which appeared to revel in an abundant water supply and in a wide area of cultivation. Far away on the southern side of the expanse the mountains behind Meshed could be seen, broken up into detached ridges, with sharp and serrated points. I strained my eyes to catch in the distance the glint of the golden cupola and minars of the holy Imam. Slowly the mist curled upward, as though a silken window-blind were being delicately raised by cords; and first a sparkle, and then a steady flash, revealed at a distance that must still have been from twelve to fifteen miles the whereabouts of the gilded dome. Though my emotions were not those of the devout pilgrim who had very likely travelled hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles to see the hallowed spot, though I did not break into wild cries of 'Ya Ali, Ya Husein,' and though I did not tear off fragments of my dress and suspend them upon the nearest bush, according to the formula of the pious Shiah, I yet looked with the interest of one who has heard and read much from afar upon the famous city which I was approaching; and, putting spurs to

Approach to Meshed

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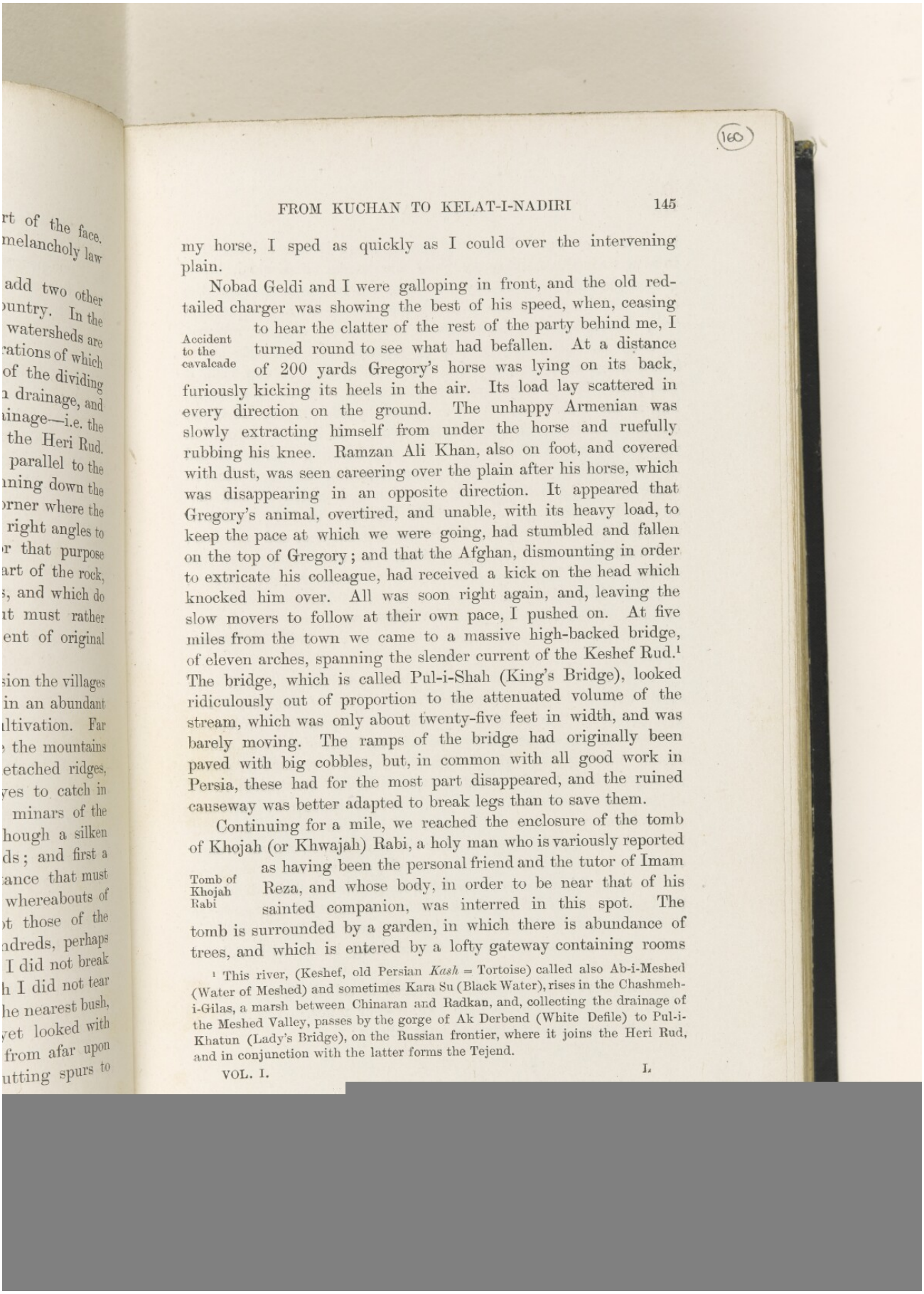



my horse, I sped as quickly as I could over the intervening plain.

Nobad Geldi and I were galloping in front, and the old red-tailed charger was showing the best of his speed, when, ceasing to hear the clatter of the rest of the party behind me, I turned round to see what had befallen. At a distance of 200 yards Gregory's horse was lying on its back, furiously kicking its heels in the air. Its load lay scattered in every direction on the ground. The unhappy Armenian was slowly extracting himself from under the horse and ruefully rubbing his knee. Ramzan Ali Khan, also on foot, and covered with dust, was seen careering over the plain after his horse, which was disappearing in an opposite direction. It appeared that Gregory's animal, overtired, and unable, with its heavy load, to keep the pace at which we were going, had stumbled and fallen on the top of Gregory; and that the Afghan, dismounting in order to extricate his colleague, had received a kick on the head which knocked him over. All was soon right again, and, leaving the slow movers to follow at their own pace, I pushed on. At five miles from the town we came to a massive high-backed bridge, of eleven arches, spanning the slender current of the Keshef Rud.[1] The bridge, which is called Pul-i-Shah (King's Bridge), looked ridiculously out of proportion to the attenuated volume of the stream, which was only about twenty-five feet in width, and was barely moving. The ramps of the bridge had originally been paved with big cobbles, but, in common with all good work in Persia, these had for the most part disappeared, and the ruined causeway was better adapted to break legs than to save them.

Accident to the cavalcade

Continuing for a mile, we reached the enclosure of the tomb of Khojah (or Khwajah) Rabi, a holy man who is variously reported as having been the personal friend and the tutor of Imam Reza, and whose body, in order to be near that of his sainted companion, was interred in this spot. The tomb is surrounded by a garden, in which there is abundance of trees, and which is entered by a lofty gateway containing rooms

Tomb of Khojah Rabi

[1] This river, (Keshef, old Persian *Kash* = Tortoise) called also Ab-i-Meshed (Water of Meshed) and sometimes Kara Su (Black Water), rises in the Chashmeh-i-Gilas, a marsh between Chinaran and Radkan, and, collecting the drainage of the Meshed Valley, passes by the gorge of Ak Derbend (White Defile) to Pul-i-Khatun (Lady's Bridge), on the Russian frontier, where it joins the Heri Rud, and in conjunction with the latter forms the Tejend.



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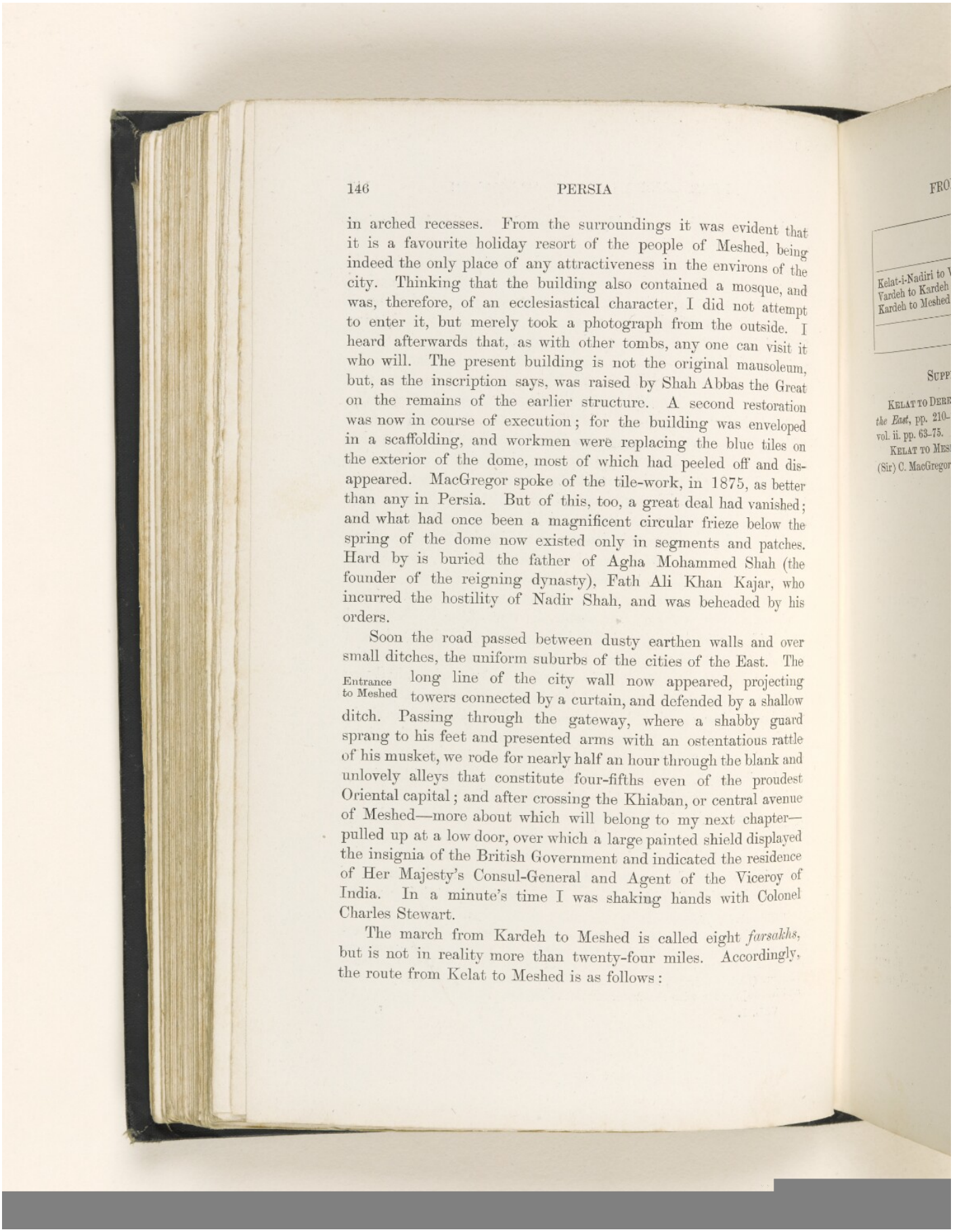



in arched recesses. From the surroundings it was evident that it is a favourite holiday resort of the people of Meshed, being indeed the only place of any attractiveness in the environs of the city. Thinking that the building also contained a mosque, and was, therefore, of an ecclesiastical character, I did not attempt to enter it, but merely took a photograph from the outside. I heard afterwards that, as with other tombs, any one can visit it who will. The present building is not the original mausoleum, but, as the inscription says, was raised by Shah Abbas the Great on the remains of the earlier structure. A second restoration was now in course of execution; for the building was enveloped in a scaffolding, and workmen were replacing the blue tiles on the exterior of the dome, most of which had peeled off and disappeared. MacGregor spoke of the tile-work, in 1875, as better than any in Persia. But of this, too, a great deal had vanished; and what had once been a magnificent circular frieze below the spring of the dome now existed only in segments and patches. Hard by is buried the father of Agha Mohammed Shah (the founder of the reigning dynasty), Fath Ali Khan Kajar, who incurred the hostility of Nadir Shah, and was beheaded by his orders.

Soon the road passed between dusty earthen walls and over small ditches, the uniform suburbs of the cities of the East. The long line of the city wall now appeared, projecting towers connected by a curtain, and defended by a shallow ditch. Passing through the gateway, where a shabby guard sprang to his feet and presented arms with an ostentatious rattle of his musket, we rode for nearly half an hour through the blank and unlovely alleys that constitute four-fifths even of the proudest Oriental capital; and after crossing the Khiaban, or central avenue of Meshed—more about which will belong to my next chapter—pulled up at a low door, over which a large painted shield displayed the insignia of the British Government and indicated the residence of Her Majesty's Consul-General and Agent of the Viceroy of India. In a minute's time I was shaking hands with Colonel Charles Stewart.

Entrance to Meshed

The march from Kardeh to Meshed is called eight *farsakhs*, but is not in reality more than twenty-four miles. Accordingly, the route from Kelat to Meshed is as follows:

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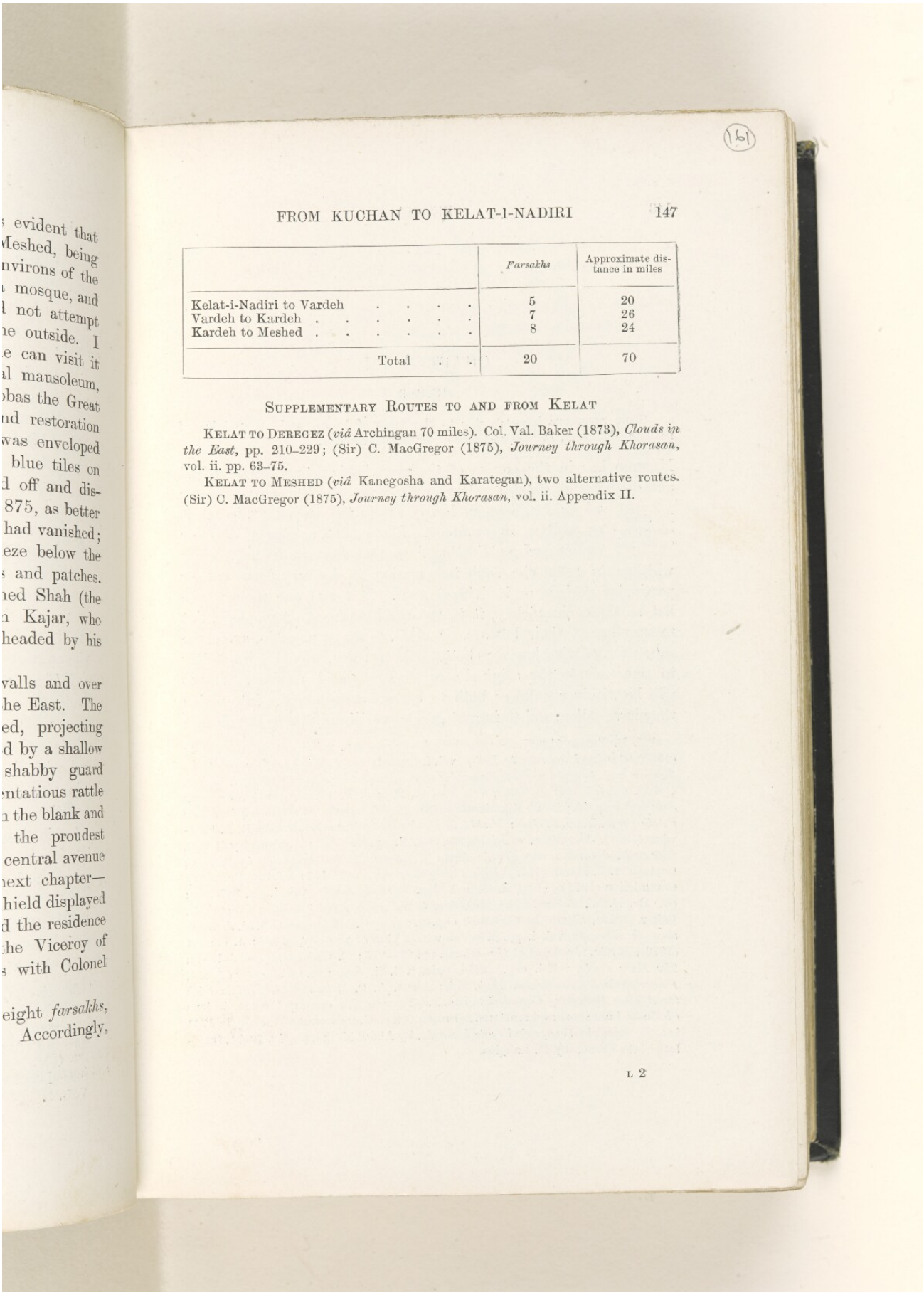

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Accordingly,

(161)



| | *Farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|
| Kelat-i-Nadiri to Vardeh . . . . . | 5 | 20 |
| Vardeh to Kardeh . . . . . | 7 | 26 |
| Kardeh to Meshed . . . . . | 8 | 24 |
| Total . . | 20 | 70 |

### Supplementary Routes to and from Kelat

Kelat to Deregez (*viâ* Archingan 70 miles). Col. Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 210–229; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 63–75.

Kelat to Meshed (*viâ* Kanegosha and Karategan), two alternative routes. (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. Appendix II.



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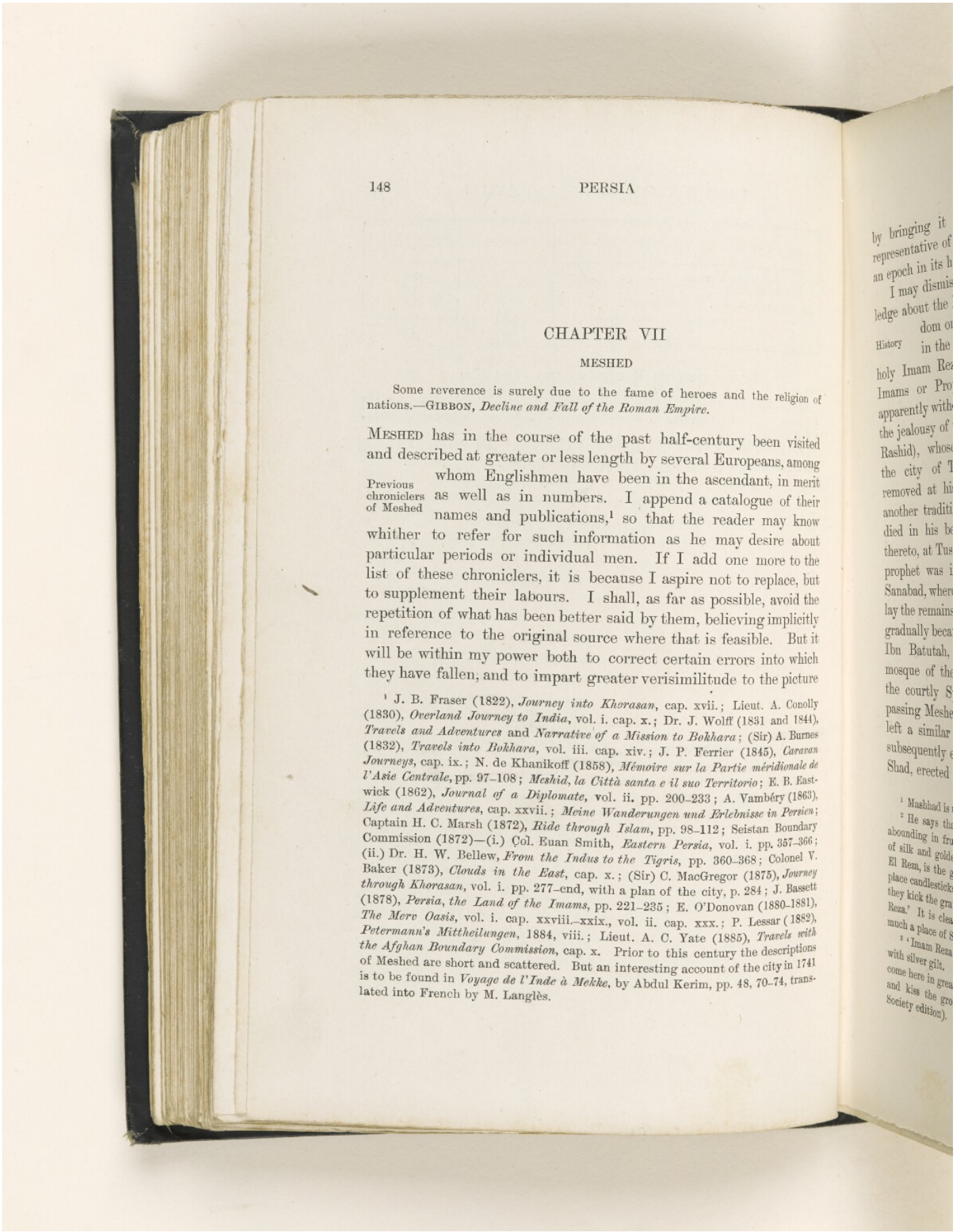



## CHAPTER VII

### MESHED

Some reverence is surely due to the fame of heroes and the religion of nations.—GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

MESHED has in the course of the past half-century been visited and described at greater or less length by several Europeans, among whom Englishmen have been in the ascendant, in merit as well as in numbers. I append a catalogue of their names and publications,[1] so that the reader may know whither to refer for such information as he may desire about particular periods or individual men. If I add one more to the list of these chroniclers, it is because I aspire not to replace, but to supplement their labours. I shall, as far as possible, avoid the repetition of what has been better said by them, believing implicitly in reference to the original source where that is feasible. But it will be within my power both to correct certain errors into which they have fallen, and to impart greater verisimilitude to the picture

Previous chroniclers of Meshed

[1] J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xvii.; Lieut. A. Conolly (1830), *Overland Journey to India*, vol. i. cap. x.; Dr. J. Wolff (1831 and 1844), *Travels and Adventures* and *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara*; (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. cap. xiv.; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, cap. ix.; N. de Khanikoff (1858), *Mémoire sur la Partie méridionale de l'Asie Centrale*, pp. 97–108; *Meshid, la Città santa e il suo Territorio*; E. B. Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 200–233; A. Vambéry (1863), *Life and Adventures*, cap. xxvii.; *Meine Wanderungen und Erlebnisse in Persien*; Captain H. C. Marsh (1872), *Ride through Islam*, pp. 98–112; Seistan Boundary Commission (1872)—(i.) Col. Euan Smith, *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 357–366; (ii.) Dr. H. W. Bellew, *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 360–368; Colonel V. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, cap. x.; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. pp. 277–end, with a plan of the city, p. 284; J. Bassett (1878), *Persia, the Land of the Imams*, pp. 221–235; E. O'Donovan (1880–1881), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.–xxix., vol. ii. cap. xxx.; P. Lessar (1882), *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1884, viii.; Lieut. A. C. Yate (1885), *Travels with the Afghan Boundary Commission*, cap. x. Prior to this century the descriptions of Meshed are short and scattered. But an interesting account of the city in 1741 is to be found in *Voyage de l'Inde à Mekke*, by Abdul Kerim, pp. 48, 70–74, translated into French by M. Langlès.

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by bringing it up to date. The fixed residence of an official representative of the Queen in Meshed is alone sufficient to mark an epoch in its history.

History

I may dismiss with the briefest notice the rudiments of knowledge about the holy city. Its name (Mashhad = 'Place of Martyrdom or Witness'[1]) and fame are alike due to the fact that in the ninth century A.D. the remains of the pre-eminently holy Imam Reza, son of Imam Musa, and eighth of the twelve Imams or Prophets, were here interred. Rumour relates, but apparently without any very certain foundation, that, having incurred the jealousy of the Khalif Mamun (son of the renowned Harun-er-Rashid), whose capital was Merv, the saint, then residing at the city of Tus, fifteen miles from the modern Meshed, was removed at his orders by a dish of poisoned grapes; although another tradition represents the holy father as having comfortably died in his bed, or whatever was the ninth century equivalent thereto, at Tus. Whichever be the truth, the body of the departed prophet was interred in a tower in the neighbouring village of Sanabad, where also (a curious corollary to the story of the murder) lay the remains of the Khalif's father, the illustrious Harun. Sanabad gradually became an object of religious attraction and worship, and Ibn Batutah, who travelled hither about 1330 A.D., found the mosque of the Imam in existence, and highly revered.[2] In 1404 the courtly Spanish Ambassador, Don Ruy Gonzalez di Clavijo, passing Meshed on his way to the Court of Timur at Samarkand, left a similar record.[3] Shah Rukh, the youngest son of Timur, subsequently embellished the mausoleum; while his wife, Gowher Shad, erected the magnificent mosque which still exists alongside.

[1] Mashhad is the locative noun of the root *shahad*, to witness.

[2] He says that 'the Meshed of El Reza is a large and well-peopled city, abounding in fruits. Over the Meshed is a large dome adorned with a covering of silk and golden candlesticks. Under the dome, and opposite to the tomb of El Reza, is the grave of the Calif Harun-el-Rashid. Over this they constantly place candlesticks with lights. But when the followers of Ali enter as pilgrims they kick the grave of El Rashid, but pour out their benedictions over that of El Reza.' It is clear from the above that in the fourteenth century Meshed was as much a place of Sunni as of Shiah pilgrimage.

[3] 'Imam Reza lies buried in a great mosque in a large tomb, which is covered with silver gilt. On account of this tomb the city is crowded with pilgrims, who come here in great numbers every year. When the pilgrims arrive, they dismount and kiss the ground, saying that they have reached a holy place' (Hakluyt Society edition).

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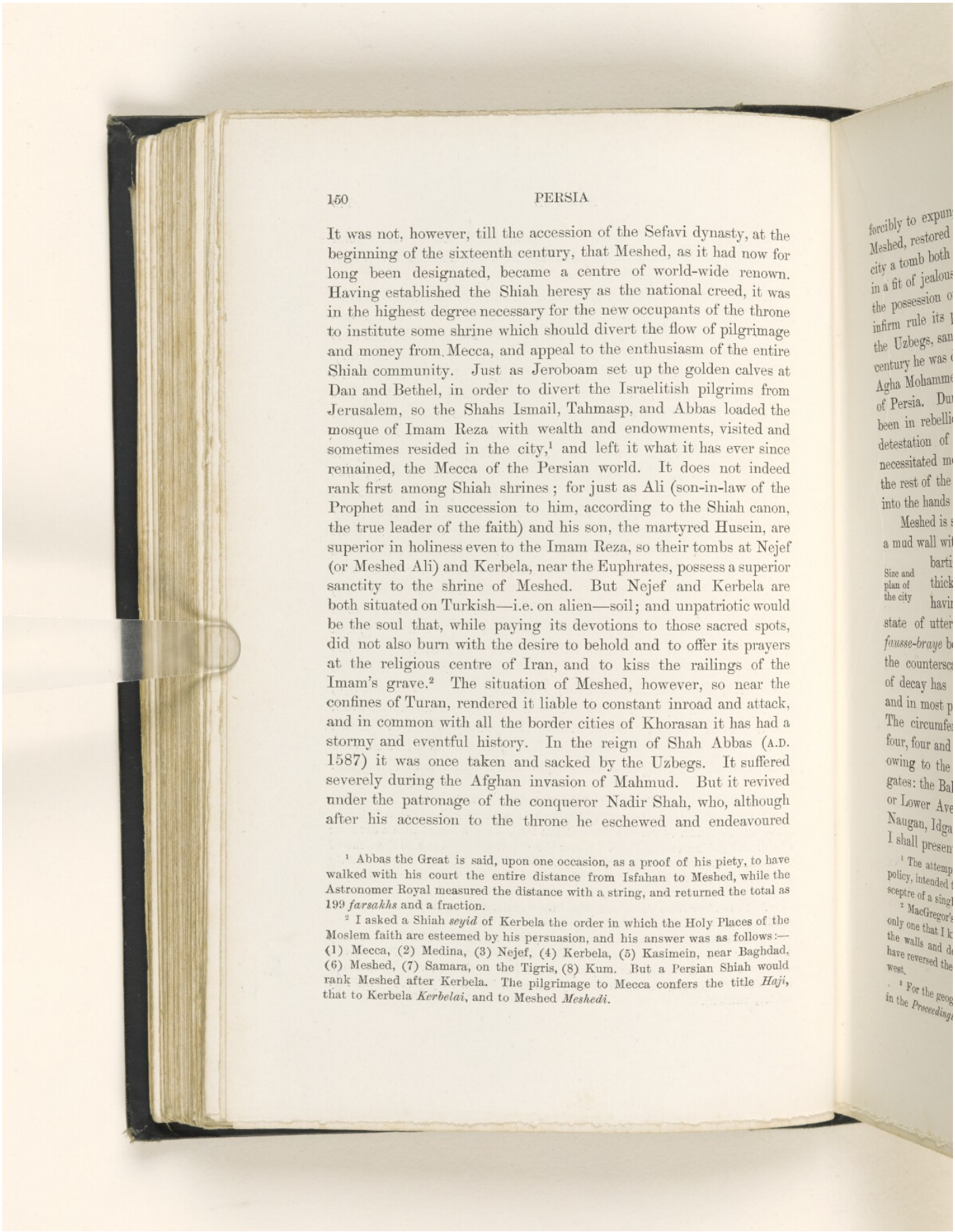



It was not, however, till the accession of the Sefavi dynasty, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that Meshed, as it had now for long been designated, became a centre of world-wide renown. Having established the Shiah heresy as the national creed, it was in the highest degree necessary for the new occupants of the throne to institute some shrine which should divert the flow of pilgrimage and money from Mecca, and appeal to the enthusiasm of the entire Shiah community. Just as Jeroboam set up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, in order to divert the Israelitish pilgrims from Jerusalem, so the Shahs Ismail, Tahmasp, and Abbas loaded the mosque of Imam Reza with wealth and endowments, visited and sometimes resided in the city,[1] and left it what it has ever since remained, the Mecca of the Persian world. It does not indeed rank first among Shiah shrines; for just as Ali (son-in-law of the Prophet and in succession to him, according to the Shiah canon, the true leader of the faith) and his son, the martyred Husein, are superior in holiness even to the Imam Reza, so their tombs at Nejef (or Meshed Ali) and Kerbela, near the Euphrates, possess a superior sanctity to the shrine of Meshed. But Nejef and Kerbela are both situated on Turkish—i.e. on alien—soil; and unpatriotic would be the soul that, while paying its devotions to those sacred spots, did not also burn with the desire to behold and to offer its prayers at the religious centre of Iran, and to kiss the railings of the Imam's grave.[2] The situation of Meshed, however, so near the confines of Turan, rendered it liable to constant inroad and attack, and in common with all the border cities of Khorasan it has had a stormy and eventful history. In the reign of Shah Abbas (A.D. 1587) it was once taken and sacked by the Uzbegs. It suffered severely during the Afghan invasion of Mahmud. But it revived under the patronage of the conqueror Nadir Shah, who, although after his accession to the throne he eschewed and endeavoured

[1] Abbas the Great is said, upon one occasion, as a proof of his piety, to have walked with his court the entire distance from Isfahan to Meshed, while the Astronomer Royal measured the distance with a string, and returned the total as 199 *farsakhs* and a fraction.

[2] I asked a Shiah *seyid* of Kerbela the order in which the Holy Places of the Moslem faith are esteemed by his persuasion, and his answer was as follows:—(1) Mecca, (2) Medina, (3) Nejef, (4) Kerbela, (5) Kasimein, near Baghdad, (6) Meshed, (7) Samara, on the Tigris, (8) Kum. But a Persian Shiah would rank Meshed after Kerbela. The pilgrimage to Mecca confers the title *Haji*, that to Kerbela *Kerbelai*, and to Meshed *Meshedi*.

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forcibly to expunge the Shiah faith,[1] yet often held his court at Meshed, restored and beautified the sacred shrine, and built in the city a tomb both for himself and for the son whom he had blinded in a fit of jealous passion. After his death, Meshed remained in the possession of his blind grandson, Shah Rukh, under whose infirm rule its population, harried by almost yearly invasions of the Uzbegs, sank from 60,000 to 20,000, until at the end of the century he was deposed and tortured to death by the brutal eunuch Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar, the founder of the reigning family of Persia. During the present century Meshed has several times been in rebellion against the sovereign power, having inherited a detestation of the Kajars, recurrent outbreaks of which have necessitated more than one punitive expedition; but along with the rest of the kingdom it has now passed in peaceful subjection into the hands of Nasr-ed-Din.

Meshed is surrounded, as are all Oriental towns of any size, by a mud wall with small towers at regular distances, and projecting bartizans at the angles. The wall was originally nine feet thick at the bottom and four feet thick at the top, besides having a parapet one foot in thickness, but is now in a state of utter disrepair. There was formerly a small ditch or *fausse-braye* below the rampart, with a low parapet on the crest of the counterscarp, and a broader ditch beyond. But the process of decay has merged these structural features in a common ruin, and in most parts they are not to be distinguished from each other. The circumference of the walls has been variously calculated at four, four and a half, and six miles; but any calculation is difficult, owing to the irregularity of the plan.[2] They are pierced by five gates: the Bala Khiaban, or Upper Avenue, and the Pain Khiaban, or Lower Avenue Gate, at the two ends of the main street; the Naugan, Idgah, and Sarab. The ark or citadel, my visit to which I shall presently relate, is situated on the south-west wall.[3]

Size and plan of the city

[1] The attempted restoration of the Sunni creed by Nadir Shah was an act of policy, intended to reunite the Mussulman world from Tabriz to Delhi under the sceptre of a single monarch.

[2] MacGregor's plan (vol. i. p. 284), which was made by Col. Dolmage, is the only one that I know, but is not thoroughly accurate. Eastwick, in riding round the walls and describing the plan of the city, seems, by some strange error, to have reversed the points of the compass, turning north into south and east into west.

[3] For the geographical position of Meshed, *vide* a paper by Major T. H. Holdich in the *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. vii. (1885) pp. 735–738.

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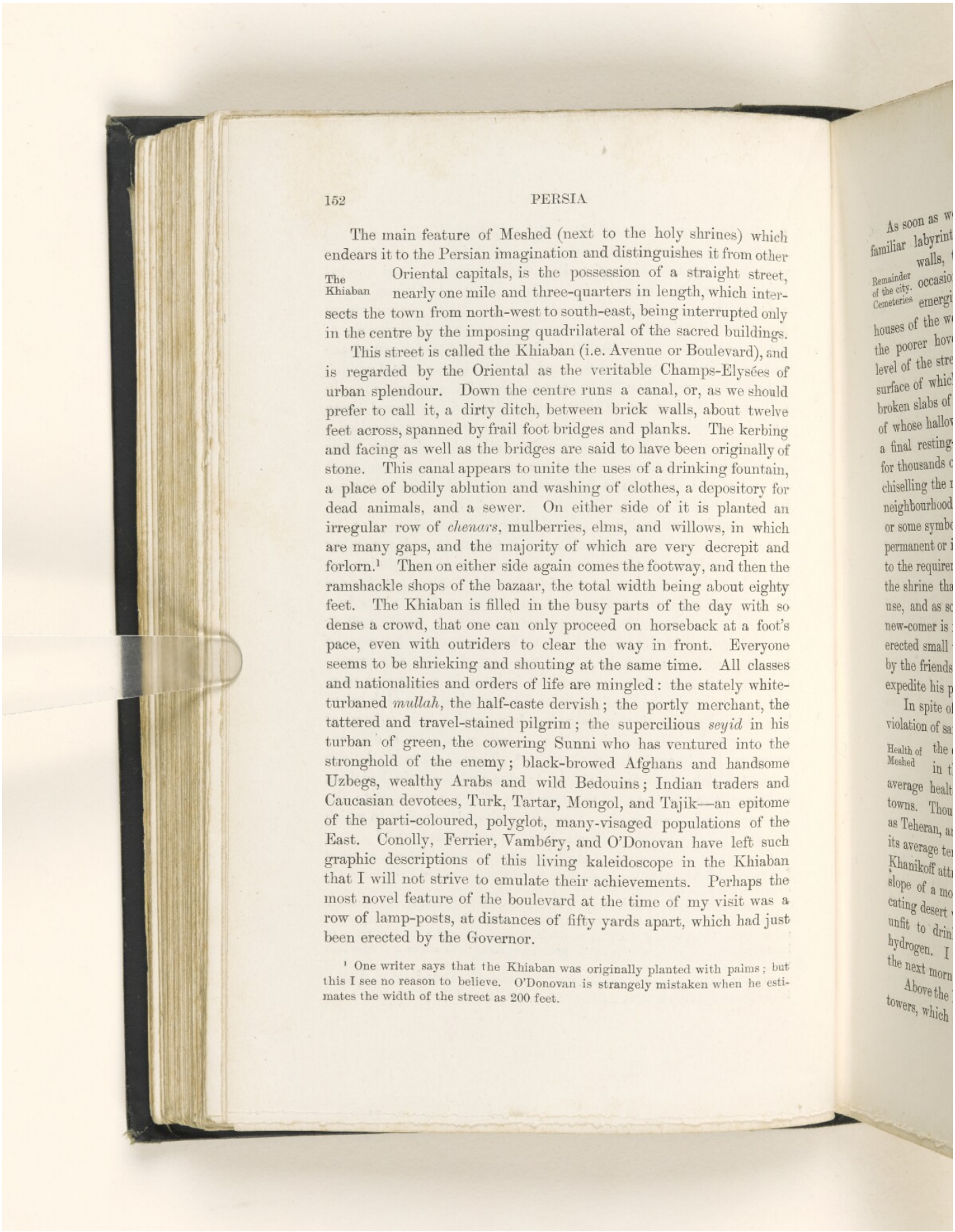


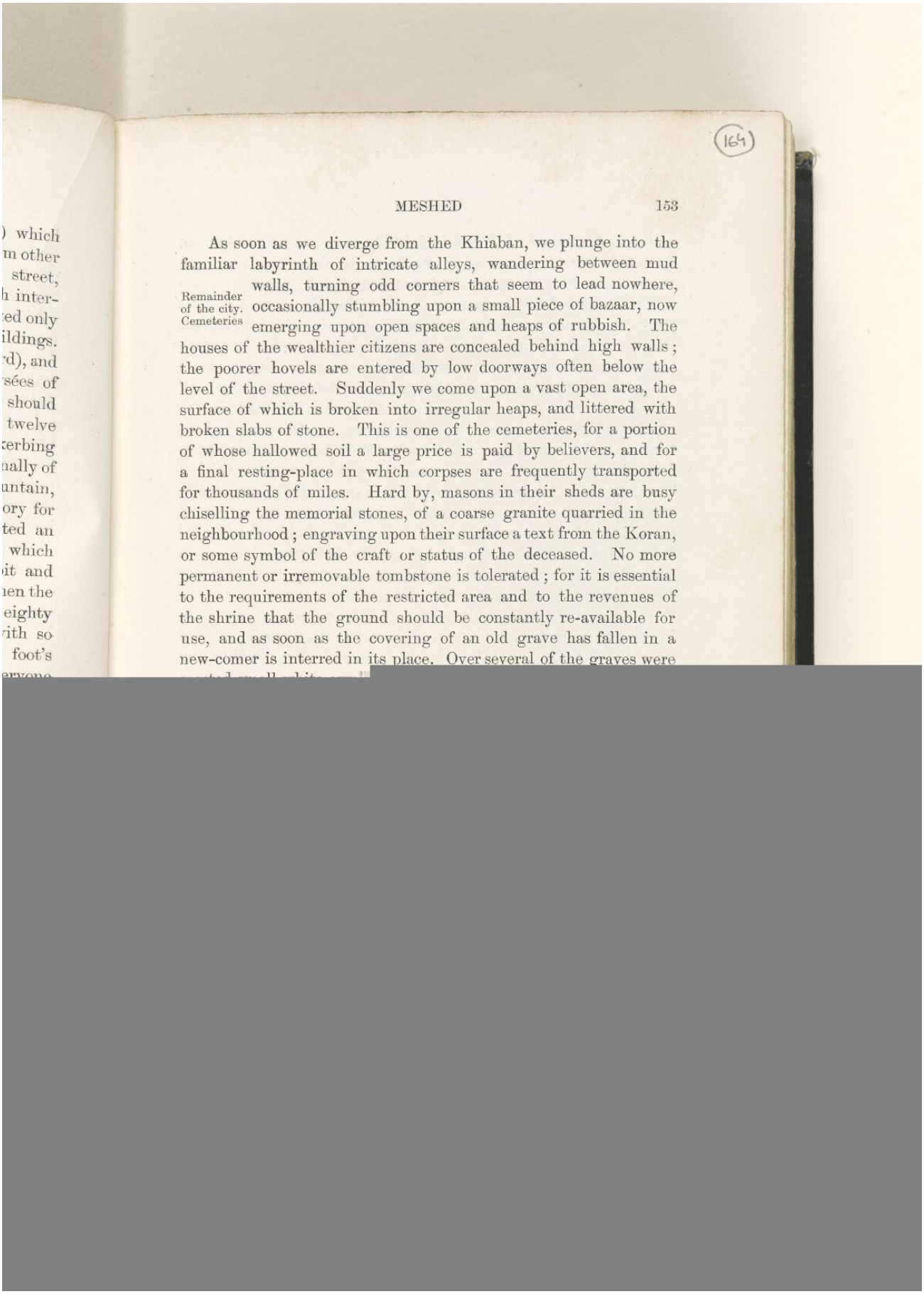


The main feature of Meshed (next to the holy shrines) which endears it to the Persian imagination and distinguishes it from other Oriental capitals, is the possession of a straight street, nearly one mile and three-quarters in length, which intersects the town from north-west to south-east, being interrupted only in the centre by the imposing quadrilateral of the sacred buildings.

The Khiaban

This street is called the Khiaban (i.e. Avenue or Boulevard), and is regarded by the Oriental as the veritable Champs-Elysées of urban splendour. Down the centre runs a canal, or, as we should prefer to call it, a dirty ditch, between brick walls, about twelve feet across, spanned by frail foot bridges and planks. The kerbing and facing as well as the bridges are said to have been originally of stone. This canal appears to unite the uses of a drinking fountain, a place of bodily ablution and washing of clothes, a depository for dead animals, and a sewer. On either side of it is planted an irregular row of *chenars*, mulberries, elms, and willows, in which are many gaps, and the majority of which are very decrepit and forlorn.[1] Then on either side again comes the footway, and then the ramshackle shops of the bazaar, the total width being about eighty feet. The Khiaban is filled in the busy parts of the day with so dense a crowd, that one can only proceed on horseback at a foot's pace, even with outriders to clear the way in front. Everyone seems to be shrieking and shouting at the same time. All classes and nationalities and orders of life are mingled: the stately white-turbaned *mullah*, the half-caste dervish; the portly merchant, the tattered and travel-stained pilgrim; the supercilious *seyid* in his turban of green, the cowering Sunni who has ventured into the stronghold of the enemy; black-browed Afghans and handsome Uzbegs, wealthy Arabs and wild Bedouins; Indian traders and Caucasian devotees, Turk, Tartar, Mongol, and Tajik—an epitome of the parti-coloured, polyglot, many-visaged populations of the East. Conolly, Ferrier, Vambéry, and O'Donovan have left such graphic descriptions of this living kaleidoscope in the Khiaban that I will not strive to emulate their achievements. Perhaps the most novel feature of the boulevard at the time of my visit was a row of lamp-posts, at distances of fifty yards apart, which had just been erected by the Governor.

[1] One writer says that the Khiaban was originally planted with palms; but this I see no reason to believe. O'Donovan is strangely mistaken when he estimates the width of the street as 200 feet.



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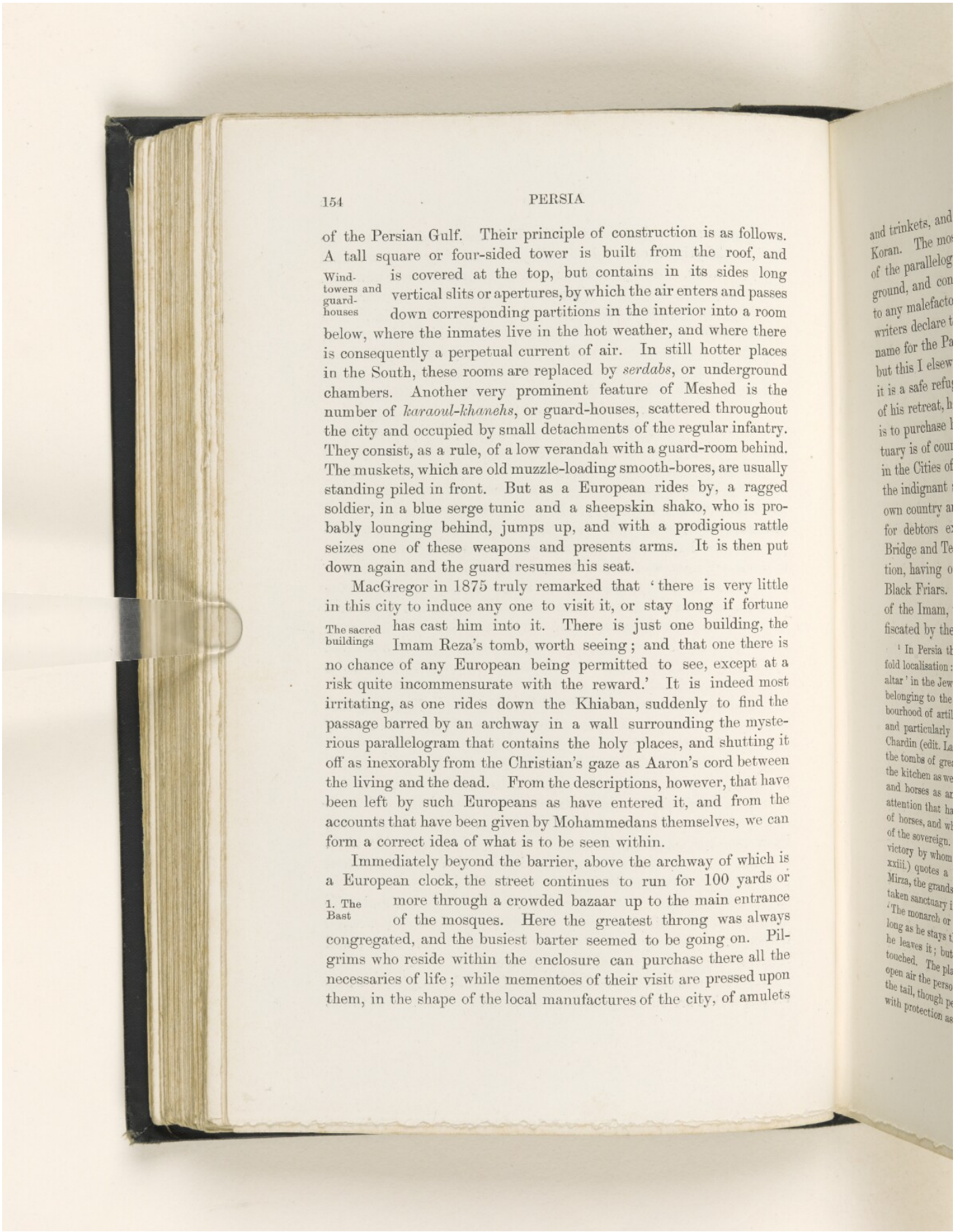
Remainder of the city. Cemeteries

As soon as we diverge from the Khiaban, we plunge into the familiar labyrinth of intricate alleys, wandering between mud walls, turning odd corners that seem to lead nowhere, occasionally stumbling upon a small piece of bazaar, now emerging upon open spaces and heaps of rubbish. The houses of the wealthier citizens are concealed behind high walls; the poorer hovels are entered by low doorways often below the level of the street. Suddenly we come upon a vast open area, the surface of which is broken into irregular heaps, and littered with broken slabs of stone. This is one of the cemeteries, for a portion of whose hallowed soil a large price is paid by believers, and for a final resting-place in which corpses are frequently transported for thousands of miles. Hard by, masons in their sheds are busy chiselling the memorial stones, of a coarse granite quarried in the neighbourhood; engraving upon their surface a text from the Koran, or some symbol of the craft or status of the deceased. No more permanent or irremovable tombstone is tolerated; for it is essential to the requirements of the restricted area and to the revenues of the shrine that the ground should be constantly re-available for use, and as soon as the covering of an old grave has fallen in a new-comer is interred in its place. Over several of the graves were





of the Persian Gulf. Their principle of construction is as follows. A tall square or four-sided tower is built from the roof, and is covered at the top, but contains in its sides long vertical slits or apertures, by which the air enters and passes down corresponding partitions in the interior into a room below, where the inmates live in the hot weather, and where there is consequently a perpetual current of air. In still hotter places in the South, these rooms are replaced by *serdabs*, or underground chambers. Another very prominent feature of Meshed is the number of *karaoul-khanehs*, or guard-houses, scattered throughout the city and occupied by small detachments of the regular infantry. They consist, as a rule, of a low verandah with a guard-room behind. The muskets, which are old muzzle-loading smooth-bores, are usually standing piled in front. But as a European rides by, a ragged soldier, in a blue serge tunic and a sheepskin shako, who is probably lounging behind, jumps up, and with a prodigious rattle seizes one of these weapons and presents arms. It is then put down again and the guard resumes his seat.

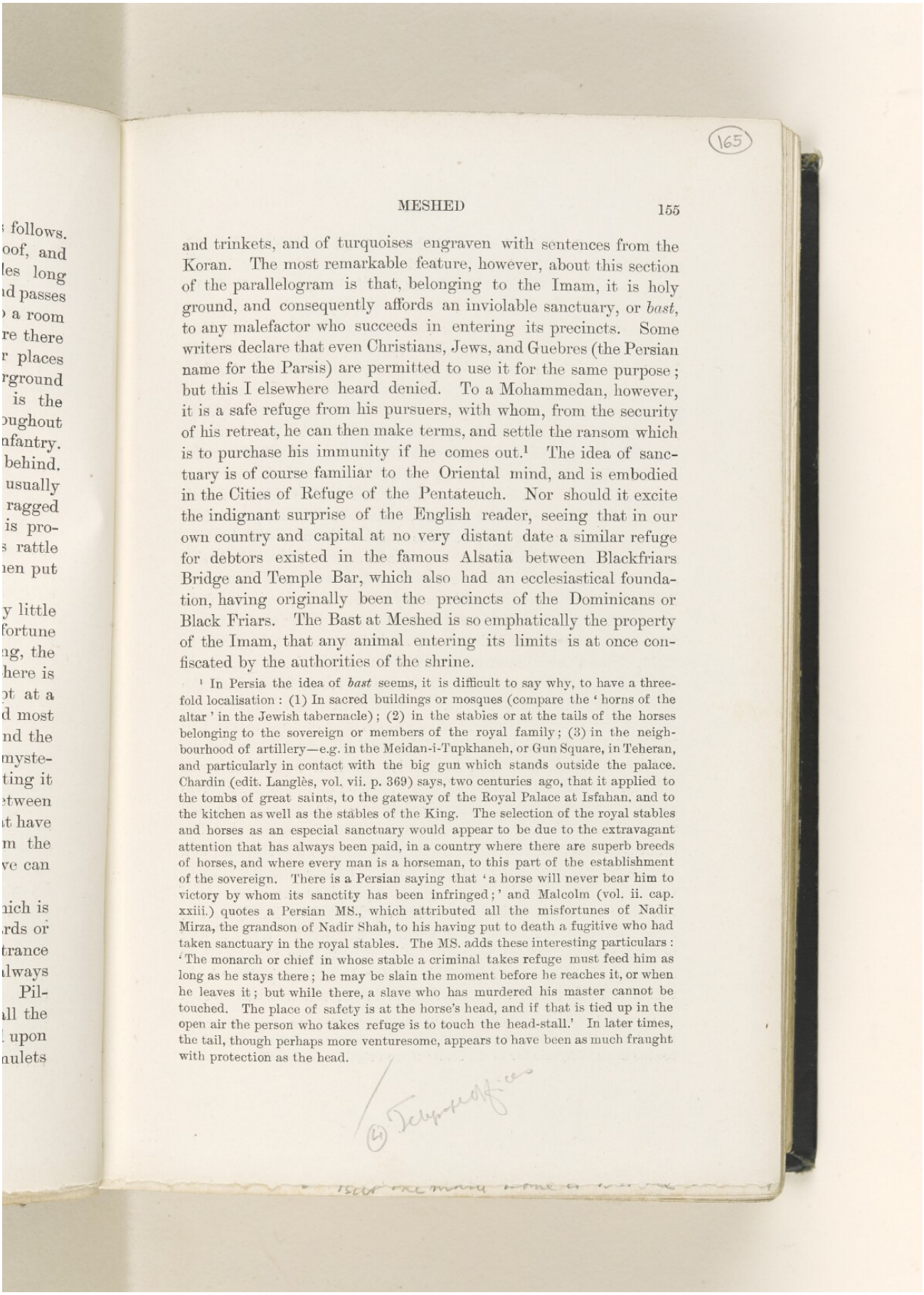
Wind-towers and guard-houses

MacGregor in 1875 truly remarked that 'there is very little in this city to induce any one to visit it, or stay long if fortune has cast him into it. There is just one building, the Imam Reza's tomb, worth seeing; and that one there is no chance of any European being permitted to see, except at a risk quite incommensurate with the reward.' It is indeed most irritating, as one rides down the Khiaban, suddenly to find the passage barred by an archway in a wall surrounding the mysterious parallelogram that contains the holy places, and shutting it off as inexorably from the Christian's gaze as Aaron's cord between the living and the dead. From the descriptions, however, that have been left by such Europeans as have entered it, and from the accounts that have been given by Mohammedans themselves, we can form a correct idea of what is to be seen within.

The sacred buildings

Immediately beyond the barrier, above the archway of which is a European clock, the street continues to run for 100 yards or more through a crowded bazaar up to the main entrance of the mosques. Here the greatest throng was always congregated, and the busiest barter seemed to be going on. Pilgrims who reside within the enclosure can purchase there all the necessaries of life; while mementoes of their visit are pressed upon them, in the shape of the local manufactures of the city, of amulets

1. The Bast





and trinkets, and of turquoises engraven with sentences from the Koran. The most remarkable feature, however, about this section of the parallelogram is that, belonging to the Imam, it is holy ground, and consequently affords an inviolable sanctuary, or *bast*, to any malefactor who succeeds in entering its precincts. Some writers declare that even Christians, Jews, and Guebres (the Persian name for the Parsis) are permitted to use it for the same purpose; but this I elsewhere heard denied. To a Mohammedan, however, it is a safe refuge from his pursuers, with whom, from the security of his retreat, he can then make terms, and settle the ransom which is to purchase his immunity if he comes out.[1] The idea of sanctuary is of course familiar to the Oriental mind, and is embodied in the Cities of Refuge of the Pentateuch. Nor should it excite the indignant surprise of the English reader, seeing that in our own country and capital at no very distant date a similar refuge for debtors existed in the famous Alsatia between Blackfriars Bridge and Temple Bar, which also had an ecclesiastical foundation, having originally been the precincts of the Dominicans or Black Friars. The Bast at Meshed is so emphatically the property of the Imam, that any animal entering its limits is at once confiscated by the authorities of the shrine.

[1] In Persia the idea of *bast* seems, it is difficult to say why, to have a threefold localisation: (1) In sacred buildings or mosques (compare the 'horns of the altar' in the Jewish tabernacle); (2) in the stables or at the tails of the horses belonging to the sovereign or members of the royal family; (3) in the neighbourhood of artillery—e.g. in the Meidan-i-Tupkhaneh, or Gun Square, in Teheran, and particularly in contact with the big gun which stands outside the palace. Chardin (edit. Langlès, vol. vii. p. 369) says, two centuries ago, that it applied to the tombs of great saints, to the gateway of the Royal Palace at Isfahan, and to the kitchen as well as the stables of the King. The selection of the royal stables and horses as an especial sanctuary would appear to be due to the extravagant attention that has always been paid, in a country where there are superb breeds of horses, and where every man is a horseman, to this part of the establishment of the sovereign. There is a Persian saying that 'a horse will never bear him to victory by whom its sanctity has been infringed;' and Malcolm (vol. ii. cap. xxiii.) quotes a Persian MS., which attributed all the misfortunes of Nadir Mirza, the grandson of Nadir Shah, to his having put to death a fugitive who had taken sanctuary in the royal stables. The MS. adds these interesting particulars: 'The monarch or chief in whose stable a criminal takes refuge must feed him as long as he stays there; he may be slain the moment before he reaches it, or when he leaves it; but while there, a slave who has murdered his master cannot be touched. The place of safety is at the horse's head, and if that is tied up in the open air the person who takes refuge is to touch the head-stall.' In later times, the tail, though perhaps more venturesome, appears to have been as much fraught with protection as the head.

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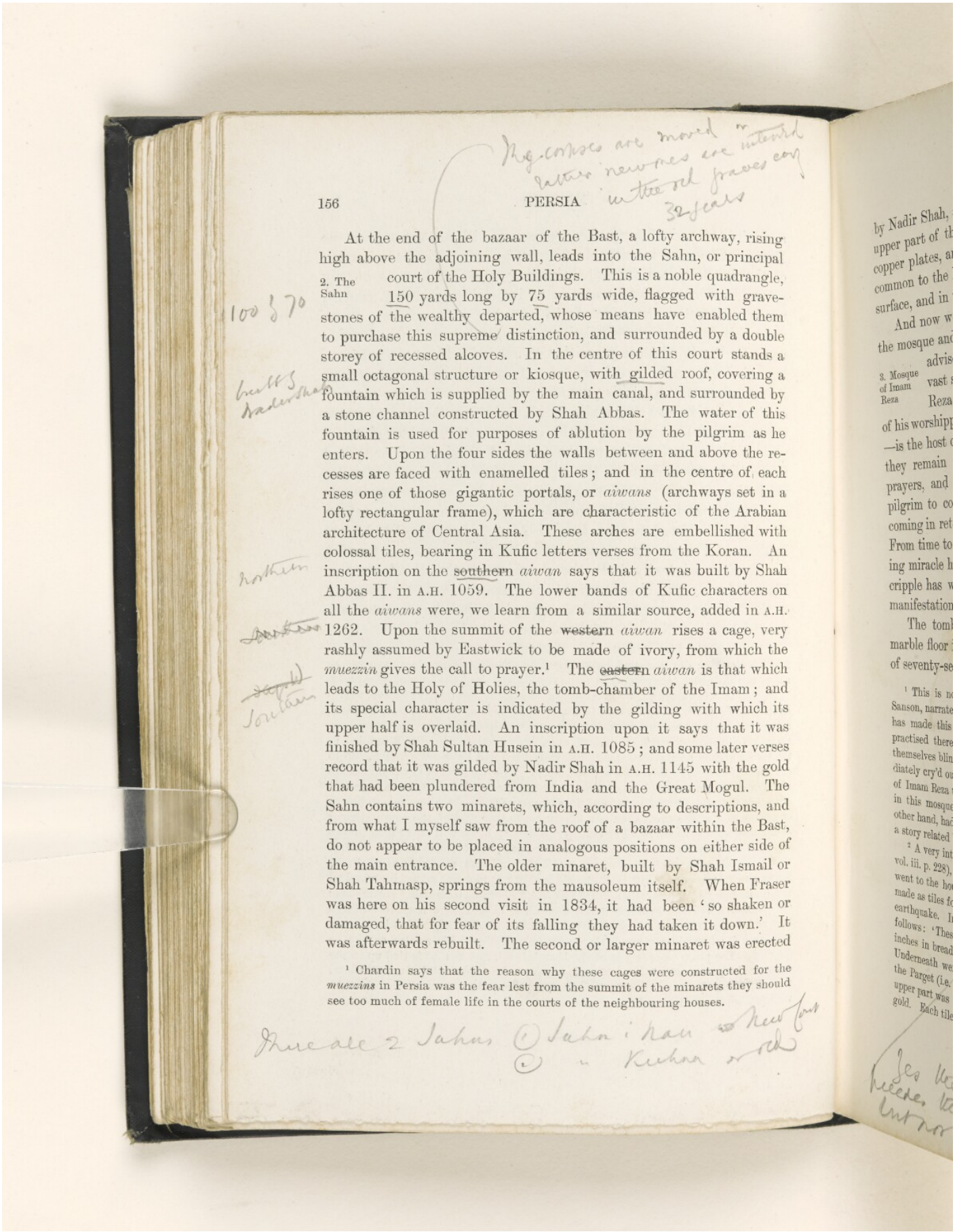




2. The Sahn

At the end of the bazaar of the Bast, a lofty archway, rising high above the adjoining wall, leads into the Sahn, or principal court of the Holy Buildings. This is a noble quadrangle, 150 yards long by 75 yards wide, flagged with grave-stones of the wealthy departed, whose means have enabled them to purchase this supreme distinction, and surrounded by a double storey of recessed alcoves. In the centre of this court stands a small octagonal structure or kiosque, with gilded roof, covering a fountain which is supplied by the main canal, and surrounded by a stone channel constructed by Shah Abbas. The water of this fountain is used for purposes of ablution by the pilgrim as he enters. Upon the four sides the walls between and above the recesses are faced with enamelled tiles; and in the centre of each rises one of those gigantic portals, or *aiwans* (archways set in a lofty rectangular frame), which are characteristic of the Arabian architecture of Central Asia. These arches are embellished with colossal tiles, bearing in Kufic letters verses from the Koran. An inscription on the southern *aiwan* says that it was built by Shah Abbas II. in A.H. 1059. The lower bands of Kufic characters on all the *aiwans* were, we learn from a similar source, added in A.H. 1262. Upon the summit of the western *aiwan* rises a cage, very rashly assumed by Eastwick to be made of ivory, from which the *muezzin* gives the call to prayer.[1] The eastern *aiwan* is that which leads to the Holy of Holies, the tomb-chamber of the Imam; and its special character is indicated by the gilding with which its upper half is overlaid. An inscription upon it says that it was finished by Shah Sultan Husein in A.H. 1085; and some later verses record that it was gilded by Nadir Shah in A.H. 1145 with the gold that had been plundered from India and the Great Mogul. The Sahn contains two minarets, which, according to descriptions, and from what I myself saw from the roof of a bazaar within the Bast, do not appear to be placed in analogous positions on either side of the main entrance. The older minaret, built by Shah Ismail or Shah Tahmasp, springs from the mausoleum itself. When Fraser was here on his second visit in 1834, it had been 'so shaken or damaged, that for fear of its falling they had taken it down.' It was afterwards rebuilt. The second or larger minaret was erected

[1] Chardin says that the reason why these cages were constructed for the *muezzins* in Persia was the fear lest from the summit of the minarets they should see too much of female life in the courts of the neighbouring houses.

by Nadir Shah, and rises from behind the opposite gateway. The upper part of these minarets is in each case overlaid with gilded copper plates, and is crowned with the cage-like gallery that is common to the Persian style. The sun flashes from their radiant surface, and in the distance they glitter like pillars of fire.

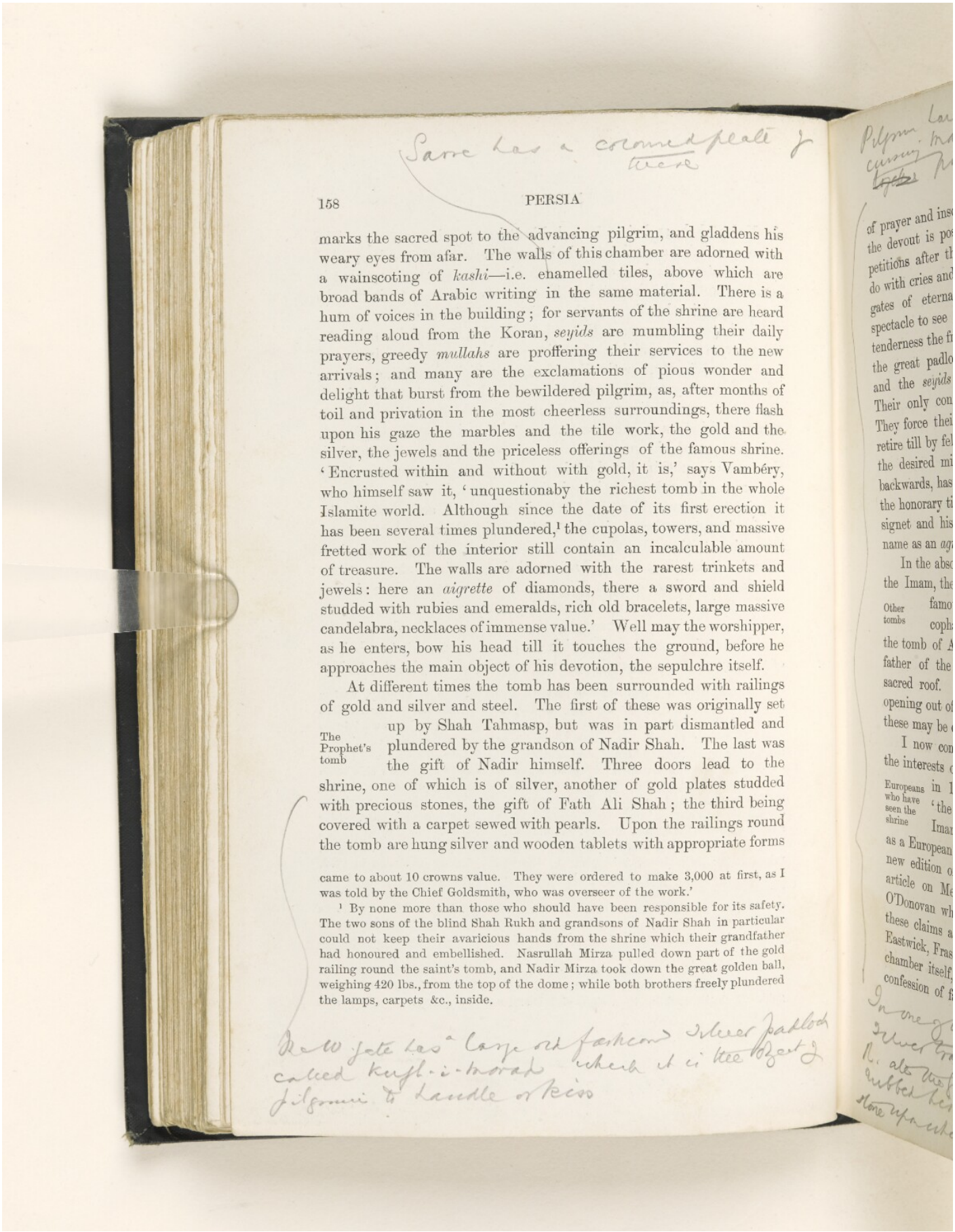
3. Mosque of Imam Reza

And now we approach the chief glory of the whole enclosure, the mosque and sepulchre of the immortal Imam. I say immortal advisedly, for the theory upon which the shrine and the vast system dependent upon it subsist is that the sainted Reza still lives, and responds miraculously to the petitions of his worshippers. The Hazret, as he is called—i.e. His Highness,—is the host of his guests. He supplies their bodily wants while they remain within his domain; and equally he answers their prayers, and furthers their spiritual needs. It is open to any pilgrim to consult him, and Delphic responses are easily forthcoming in return for a suitable fee to one of the attendant priests. From time to time also the rumour goes abroad that some astonishing miracle has been effected at the shrine of His Highness. The cripple has walked, or the blind man has seen, or some similar manifestation has occurred of god-like effluence.[1]

The tomb itself is preceded by a spacious chamber, whose marble floor is overlaid with rich carpets. Above it, to a height of seventy-seven feet, swells the main cupola, whose gilded exterior [2]

[1] This is no new thing, for, 200 years ago, the French missionary, Father Sanson, narrates and mercilessly analyses the same phenomena. 'Shah Abbas has made this tomb famous by a great many false miracles he caused to be practised there; for, placing people there on purpose who should counterfeit themselves blind, they suddenly received their sight at this sepulchre, and immediately cry'd out, "A miracle;" he procur'd so great a veneration for this tomb of Imam Reza that most of the greatest lords in Persia have desir'd to be bury'd in this mosque; and to which they give great legacies.' Nadir Shah, on the other hand, had a most intense contempt for these manufactured miracles. *Vide* a story related by Malcolm, *History*, vol. ii. p. 51.

[2] A very interesting passage occurs in the narrative of Chardin (edit. Langlès, vol. iii. p. 228), who, being in Isfahan in the reign of Shah Suleiman in 1672, went to the house of the King's goldsmith to see these very gilt plates being made as tiles for the dome of Imam Reza, which had just been destroyed by an earthquake. In the English translation of Lloyd (vol. i. p. 237) it appears as follows: 'These plates were of brass (no—*cuivre*, i.e. copper) and square, 10 inches in breadth and 16 in length, and of the thickness of two crown pieces. Underneath were two Barrs 3 inches broad, solder'd on crosswise, to sink into the Parget (i.e. plaster) and to serve as cramp irons to fasten the tiles. The upper part was gilt so thick that one would have taken the tile to b





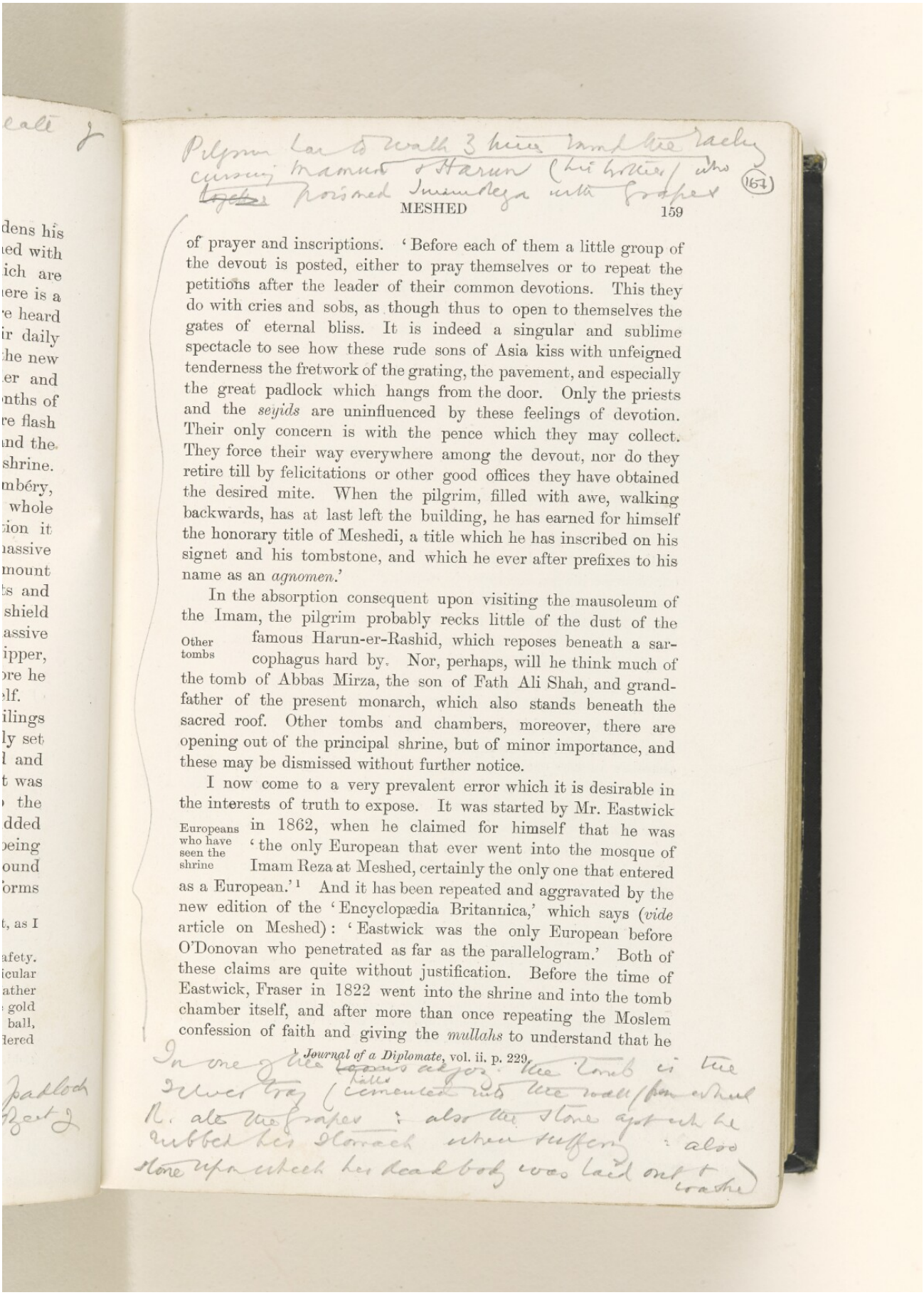
marks the sacred spot to the advancing pilgrim, and gladdens his weary eyes from afar. The walls of this chamber are adorned with a wainscoting of *kashi*—i.e. enamelled tiles, above which are broad bands of Arabic writing in the same material. There is a hum of voices in the building; for servants of the shrine are heard reading aloud from the Koran, *seyids* are mumbling their daily prayers, greedy *mullahs* are proffering their services to the new arrivals; and many are the exclamations of pious wonder and delight that burst from the bewildered pilgrim, as, after months of toil and privation in the most cheerless surroundings, there flash upon his gaze the marbles and the tile work, the gold and the silver, the jewels and the priceless offerings of the famous shrine. 'Encrusted within and without with gold, it is,' says Vambéry, who himself saw it, 'unquestionaby the richest tomb in the whole Islamite world. Although since the date of its first erection it has been several times plundered,[1] the cupolas, towers, and massive fretted work of the interior still contain an incalculable amount of treasure. The walls are adorned with the rarest trinkets and jewels: here an *aigrette* of diamonds, there a sword and shield studded with rubies and emeralds, rich old bracelets, large massive candelabra, necklaces of immense value.' Well may the worshipper, as he enters, bow his head till it touches the ground, before he approaches the main object of his devotion, the sepulchre itself.

The Prophet's tomb

At different times the tomb has been surrounded with railings of gold and silver and steel. The first of these was originally set up by Shah Tahmasp, but was in part dismantled and plundered by the grandson of Nadir Shah. The last was the gift of Nadir himself. Three doors lead to the shrine, one of which is of silver, another of gold plates studded with precious stones, the gift of Fath Ali Shah; the third being covered with a carpet sewed with pearls. Upon the railings round the tomb are hung silver and wooden tablets with appropriate forms

came to about 10 crowns value. They were ordered to make 3,000 at first, as I was told by the Chief Goldsmith, who was overseer of the work.'

[1] By none more than those who should have been responsible for its safety. The two sons of the blind Shah Rukh and grandsons of Nadir Shah in particular could not keep their avaricious hands from the shrine which their grandfather had honoured and embellished. Nasrullah Mirza pulled down part of the gold railing round the saint's tomb, and Nadir Mirza took down the great golden ball, weighing 420 lbs., from the top of the dome; while both brothers freely plundered the lamps, carpets &c., inside.



Pilgrim has to walk 3 times round the rocky cursing Mamun & Harun (his brother) who ~~together~~ poisoned Imam Reza with grapes

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of prayer and inscriptions. 'Before each of them a little group of the devout is posted, either to pray themselves or to repeat the petitions after the leader of their common devotions. This they do with cries and sobs, as though thus to open to themselves the gates of eternal bliss. It is indeed a singular and sublime spectacle to see how these rude sons of Asia kiss with unfeigned tenderness the fretwork of the grating, the pavement, and especially the great padlock which hangs from the door. Only the priests and the *seyids* are uninfluenced by these feelings of devotion. Their only concern is with the pence which they may collect. They force their way everywhere among the devout, nor do they retire till by felicitations or other good offices they have obtained the desired mite. When the pilgrim, filled with awe, walking backwards, has at last left the building, he has earned for himself the honorary title of Meshedi, a title which he has inscribed on his signet and his tombstone, and which he ever after prefixes to his name as an *agnomen*.'

Other tombs

In the absorption consequent upon visiting the mausoleum of the Imam, the pilgrim probably recks little of the dust of the famous Harun-er-Rashid, which reposes beneath a sarcophagus hard by. Nor, perhaps, will he think much of the tomb of Abbas Mirza, the son of Fath Ali Shah, and grandfather of the present monarch, which also stands beneath the sacred roof. Other tombs and chambers, moreover, there are opening out of the principal shrine, but of minor importance, and these may be dismissed without further notice.

Europeans who have seen the shrine

I now come to a very prevalent error which it is desirable in the interests of truth to expose. It was started by Mr. Eastwick in 1862, when he claimed for himself that he was 'the only European that ever went into the mosque of Imam Reza at Meshed, certainly the only one that entered as a European.'[1] And it has been repeated and aggravated by the new edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' which says (*vide* article on Meshed): 'Eastwick was the only European before O'Donovan who penetrated as far as the parallelogram.' Both of these claims are quite without justification. Before the time of Eastwick, Fraser in 1822 went into the shrine and into the tomb chamber itself, and after more than once repeating the Moslem confession of faith and giving the *mullahs* to understand that he

[1] *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. p. 229.

In one of the ~~rooms~~ halls adjoy. the tomb is the silver tray (cemented into the wall) from which R. ate the grapes & also the stone ajst wh he rubbed his stomach when suffering & also stone upon which his dead body was laid out & washed

was a convert to Islam (a most questionable proceeding on his part), was allowed to sit for two days in one of the alcoves of the Sahn, in order to make a drawing of its interior.[1] Conolly in 1830 visited all the chambers of the mosque but that containing the tomb itself, and walked daily in the Sahn, where, though recognised, he was free from insult.[2] Burnes in 1832, on his return journey from Bokhara, went into the Sahn, but did not think it prudent to go beyond, his 'judgment conquering his curiosity.'[3] Ferrier in 1845 did exactly the same.[4] Fraser, returning to Meshed in 1834, after the occupation of the city by the army of Abbas Mirza, with which were several English officers, found 'the Sahn open to all Europeans,' but in a state of grievous dilapidation that was afterwards repaired.[5] All these were before the date of Eastwick's visit. But when we come to Eastwick himself, we are surprised to find not only that he did not go into the mosque, in the true sense of the term, at all, but that he did not even go so far as the more cautious of his predecessors in crossing the Sahn. He was introduced by the Mutawali Bashi, or Chief Guardian of the shrine, by a door from the back into one of the recessed alcoves that surround the Sahn, where he sat and gazed at what was passing below. He went no further, and he even went there unawares.[6]

Continuing the narrative since his day and down to that of O'Donovan, we find that in the year following (1863) Vambéry, on the return from his heroic voyage as a mendicant dervish to Bokhara and Samarkand, entered the mosque and visited the tomb chamber in the character which he had so long and successfully worn. About the same time Colonel Dolmage, an English officer in the service of the Shah,[7] who superintended a powder factory near Meshed, penetrated into the interior under the auspices of the Hissam-es-Sultaneh, then Governor-General of Khorasan. Finally, when we come to O'Donovan in 1880, we find that he did not even enter the Sahn, but claims from a doorway outside to have

[1] *Journey into Khorasan*, pp. 472, 511.
[2] *Overland Journey to India*, vol. i. p. 288.
[3] *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. p. 70.
[4] *Caravan Journeys*, p. 126.
[5] *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 211.
[6] *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 224–229.
[7] Colonel, originally Doctor, Dolmage was an Englishman who, after serving as a veterinary surgeon in the Crimean War, came out to Persia and entered the service of the Shah. He subsequently died at Teheran. It was his plan of Meshed that appeared in MacGregor's book, having been purchased by the latter officer for a few *krans*.



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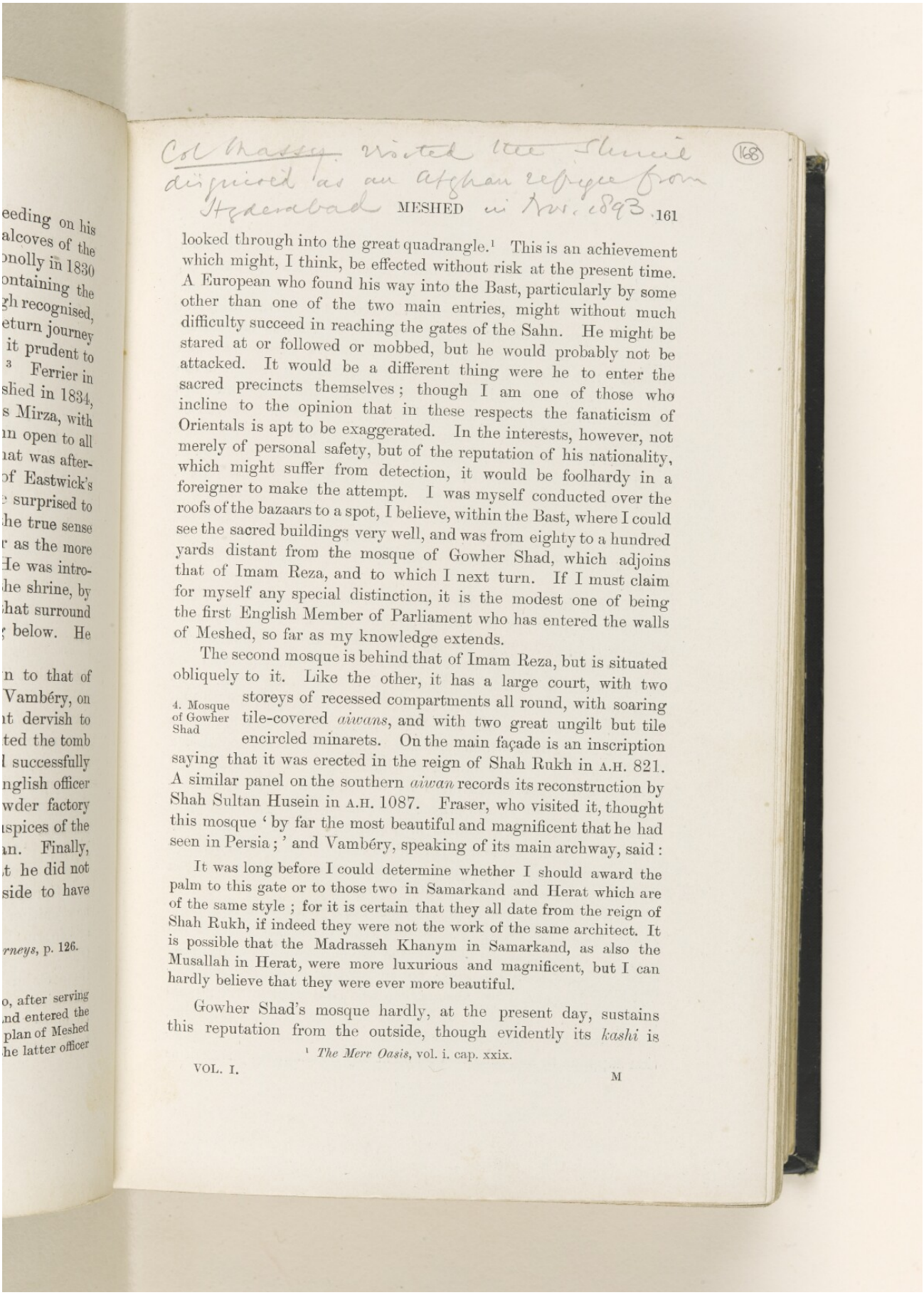

Col Massy visited the Shrine disguised as an Afghan refugee from Hyderabad in Nov. 1893 (168)



looked through into the great quadrangle.[1] This is an achievement which might, I think, be effected without risk at the present time. A European who found his way into the Bast, particularly by some other than one of the two main entries, might without much difficulty succeed in reaching the gates of the Sahn. He might be stared at or followed or mobbed, but he would probably not be attacked. It would be a different thing were he to enter the sacred precincts themselves; though I am one of those who incline to the opinion that in these respects the fanaticism of Orientals is apt to be exaggerated. In the interests, however, not merely of personal safety, but of the reputation of his nationality, which might suffer from detection, it would be foolhardy in a foreigner to make the attempt. I was myself conducted over the roofs of the bazaars to a spot, I believe, within the Bast, where I could see the sacred buildings very well, and was from eighty to a hundred yards distant from the mosque of Gowher Shad, which adjoins that of Imam Reza, and to which I next turn. If I must claim for myself any special distinction, it is the modest one of being the first English Member of Parliament who has entered the walls of Meshed, so far as my knowledge extends.

4. Mosque of Gowher Shad

The second mosque is behind that of Imam Reza, but is situated obliquely to it. Like the other, it has a large court, with two storeys of recessed compartments all round, with soaring tile-covered *aiwans*, and with two great ungilt but tile encircled minarets. On the main façade is an inscription saying that it was erected in the reign of Shah Rukh in A.H. 821. A similar panel on the southern *aiwan* records its reconstruction by Shah Sultan Husein in A.H. 1087. Fraser, who visited it, thought this mosque 'by far the most beautiful and magnificent that he had seen in Persia;' and Vambéry, speaking of its main archway, said:

> It was long before I could determine whether I should award the palm to this gate or to those two in Samarkand and Herat which are of the same style; for it is certain that they all date from the reign of Shah Rukh, if indeed they were not the work of the same architect. It is possible that the Madrasseh Khanym in Samarkand, as also the Musallah in Herat, were more luxurious and magnificent, but I can hardly believe that they were ever more beautiful.

Gowher Shad's mosque hardly, at the present day, sustains this reputation from the outside, though evidently its *kashi* is

[1] *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. xxix.



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superb. The dome, which is larger and loftier than that of Imam Reza, is covered with tiles of blue, green, and orange patterns, which have peeled off in places.

Other buildings in the East

Entrance is found by one of the archways in the principal Sahn to a *madresseh*, or religious college, which was erected by the munificence of one Mirza Jafir, a wealthy Persian merchant who had made a fortune in India; and it is the third finest building in Meshed, resembling the mosques in structural features and decoration. It was further endowed by its founder with large revenues, which supported fifty or sixty *mullahs*. Also included in the parallelogram are other *madressehs*, courts, lodging-houses, and baths, as well as a great refectory, where the pilgrims are fed at the expense of His Highness (each new-comer being entitled to three days' gratuitous board), at the rate of 30 *mans* or 195 lbs. of rice a day. Here it is said that 500 or 600 meals are served daily to the hungry guests of the Imam.

Library of the Imam

We are indebted to Khanikoff, who was a most scholarly and accurate inquirer, for the following information about the library of the Imam. He says that the date of its foundation cannot be placed earlier than the time of Shah Rukh, the oldest volume being a Koran that was deposited in his reign. The next donations occurred in the reigns of Shah Abbas and Shah Sultan Husein. A catalogue had been drawn up shortly before Khanikoff's visit in 1858, from which he learnt that the library contained 2,997 works in 3,654 volumes, of which 1,041 were Korans (189 printed, and 852 manuscripts, some of the latter of great dimensions and rare beauty), 299 prayer-books and guides to pilgrims, 246 works on general ecclesiastical law, and 221 on that of the Shiah persuasion alone. It is curious to learn that the greatest benefactor of the library was the unlettered Nadir Shah, who presented it with as many as 400 manuscripts.

Revenues of the Shrine

The revenues of the shrine in money and in kind are very large. Fraser says that under Shah Sultan Husein, the last of the Sefavi dynasty, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, they were 15,000 *tomans*; but in 1821 he gives the figures as 2,000 to 2,500 *tomans* (can this be a misprint for 20,000 to 25,000 ?). Bassett, in 1878, gave the total as 40,000 *tomans*, which were then equivalent to 16,000*l*. According to the information supplied to me, they now stand at 60,000 *tomans* (equivalent at

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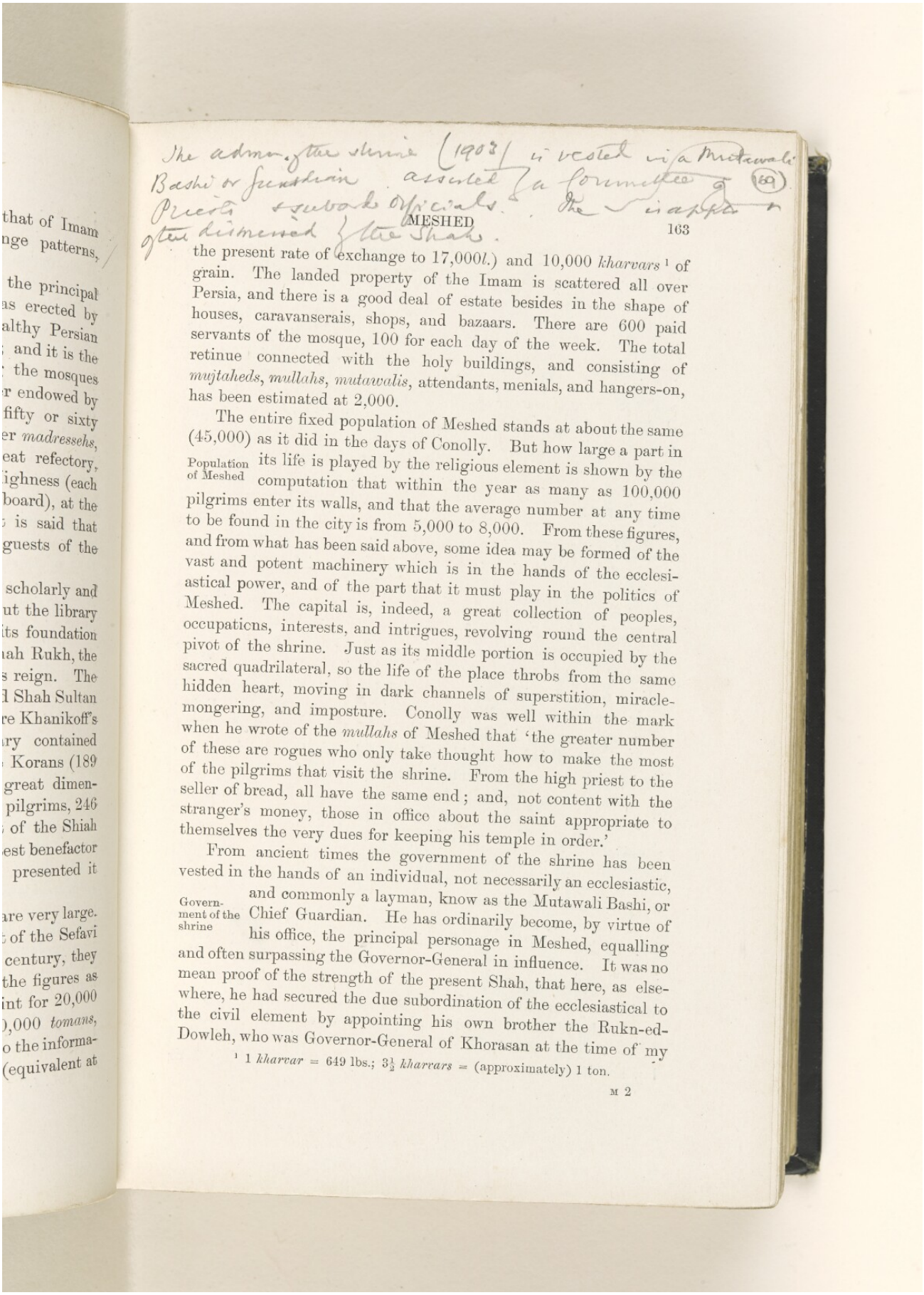

The admn. of the shrine (1903) is vested in a Mutawali Bashi or Guardian assisted by a Committee of Priests & subordinate officials. The [illegible] is appointed or often dismissed by the Shah.

(169)



the present rate of exchange to 17,000*l.*) and 10,000 *kharvars*[1] of grain. The landed property of the Imam is scattered all over Persia, and there is a good deal of estate besides in the shape of houses, caravanserais, shops, and bazaars. There are 600 paid servants of the mosque, 100 for each day of the week. The total retinue connected with the holy buildings, and consisting of *mujtaheds*, *mullahs*, *mutawalis*, attendants, menials, and hangers-on, has been estimated at 2,000.

Population of Meshed

The entire fixed population of Meshed stands at about the same (45,000) as it did in the days of Conolly. But how large a part in its life is played by the religious element is shown by the computation that within the year as many as 100,000 pilgrims enter its walls, and that the average number at any time to be found in the city is from 5,000 to 8,000. From these figures, and from what has been said above, some idea may be formed of the vast and potent machinery which is in the hands of the ecclesiastical power, and of the part that it must play in the politics of Meshed. The capital is, indeed, a great collection of peoples, occupations, interests, and intrigues, revolving round the central pivot of the shrine. Just as its middle portion is occupied by the sacred quadrilateral, so the life of the place throbs from the same hidden heart, moving in dark channels of superstition, miracle-mongering, and imposture. Conolly was well within the mark when he wrote of the *mullahs* of Meshed that 'the greater number of these are rogues who only take thought how to make the most of the pilgrims that visit the shrine. From the high priest to the seller of bread, all have the same end; and, not content with the stranger's money, those in office about the saint appropriate to themselves the very dues for keeping his temple in order.'

Government of the shrine

From ancient times the government of the shrine has been vested in the hands of an individual, not necessarily an ecclesiastic, and commonly a layman, know as the Mutawali Bashi, or Chief Guardian. He has ordinarily become, by virtue of his office, the principal personage in Meshed, equalling and often surpassing the Governor-General in influence. It was no mean proof of the strength of the present Shah, that here, as elsewhere, he had secured the due subordination of the ecclesiastical to the civil element by appointing his own brother the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, who was Governor-General of Khorasan at the time of my

[1] 1 *kharvar* = 649 lbs.; $3\frac{1}{2}$ *kharvars* = (approximately) 1 ton.



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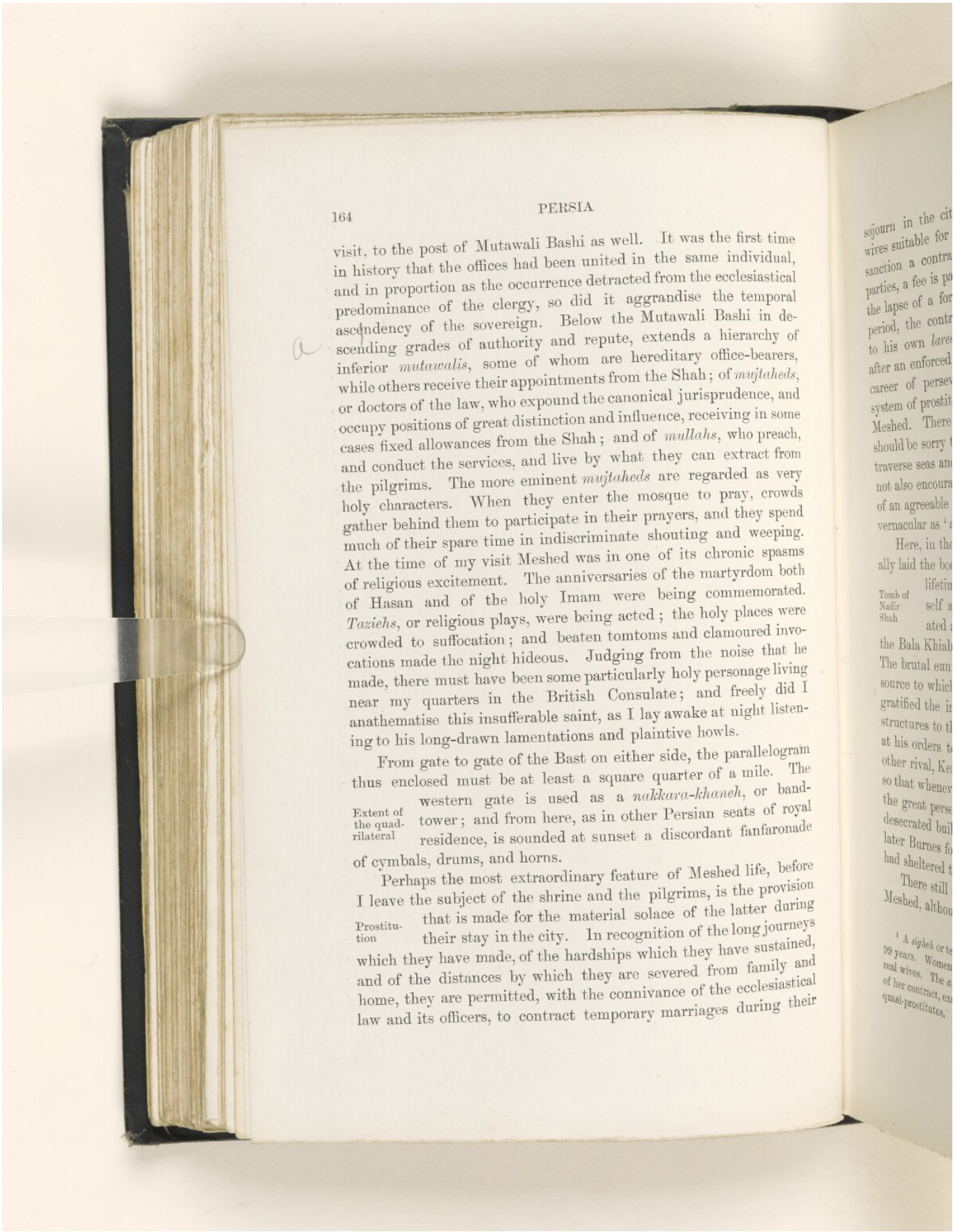




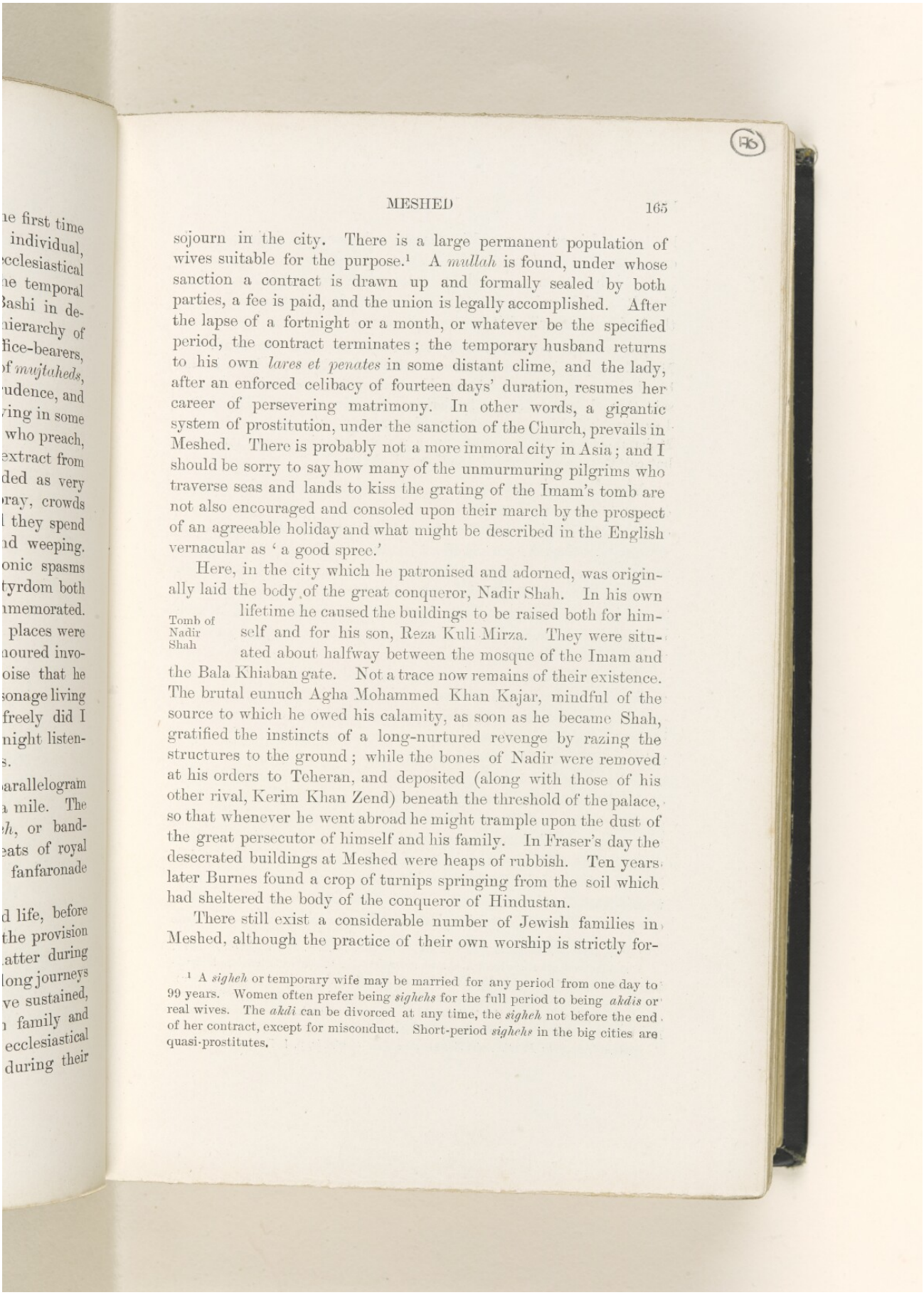
visit, to the post of Mutawali Bashi as well. It was the first time in history that the offices had been united in the same individual, and in proportion as the occurrence detracted from the ecclesiastical predominance of the clergy, so did it aggrandise the temporal ascendency of the sovereign. Below the Mutawali Bashi in descending grades of authority and repute, extends a hierarchy of inferior *mutawalis*, some of whom are hereditary office-bearers, while others receive their appointments from the Shah; of *mujtaheds*, or doctors of the law, who expound the canonical jurisprudence, and occupy positions of great distinction and influence, receiving in some cases fixed allowances from the Shah; and of *mullahs*, who preach, and conduct the services, and live by what they can extract from the pilgrims. The more eminent *mujtaheds* are regarded as very holy characters. When they enter the mosque to pray, crowds gather behind them to participate in their prayers, and they spend much of their spare time in indiscriminate shouting and weeping. At the time of my visit Meshed was in one of its chronic spasms of religious excitement. The anniversaries of the martyrdom both of Hasan and of the holy Imam were being commemorated. *Taziehs*, or religious plays, were being acted; the holy places were crowded to suffocation; and beaten tomtoms and clamoured invocations made the night hideous. Judging from the noise that he made, there must have been some particularly holy personage living near my quarters in the British Consulate; and freely did I anathematise this insufferable saint, as I lay awake at night listening to his long-drawn lamentations and plaintive howls.

From gate to gate of the Bast on either side, the parallelogram thus enclosed must be at least a square quarter of a mile. The western gate is used as a *nakkara-khaneh*, or band-tower; and from here, as in other Persian seats of royal residence, is sounded at sunset a discordant fanfaronade of cymbals, drums, and horns.

Extent of the quadrilateral

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of Meshed life, before I leave the subject of the shrine and the pilgrims, is the provision that is made for the material solace of the latter during their stay in the city. In recognition of the long journeys which they have made, of the hardships which they have sustained, and of the distances by which they are severed from family and home, they are permitted, with the connivance of the ecclesiastical law and its officers, to contract temporary marriages during their

Prostitution





sojourn in the city. There is a large permanent population of wives suitable for the purpose.[1] A *mullah* is found, under whose sanction a contract is drawn up and formally sealed by both parties, a fee is paid, and the union is legally accomplished. After the lapse of a fortnight or a month, or whatever be the specified period, the contract terminates; the temporary husband returns to his own *lares et penates* in some distant clime, and the lady, after an enforced celibacy of fourteen days' duration, resumes her career of persevering matrimony. In other words, a gigantic system of prostitution, under the sanction of the Church, prevails in Meshed. There is probably not a more immoral city in Asia; and I should be sorry to say how many of the unmurmuring pilgrims who traverse seas and lands to kiss the grating of the Imam's tomb are not also encouraged and consoled upon their march by the prospect of an agreeable holiday and what might be described in the English vernacular as 'a good spree.'

Tomb of Nadir Shah

Here, in the city which he patronised and adorned, was originally laid the body of the great conqueror, Nadir Shah. In his own lifetime he caused the buildings to be raised both for himself and for his son, Reza Kuli Mirza. They were situated about halfway between the mosque of the Imam and the Bala Khiaban gate. Not a trace now remains of their existence. The brutal eunuch Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar, mindful of the source to which he owed his calamity, as soon as he became Shah, gratified the instincts of a long-nurtured revenge by razing the structures to the ground; while the bones of Nadir were removed at his orders to Teheran, and deposited (along with those of his other rival, Kerim Khan Zend) beneath the threshold of the palace, so that whenever he went abroad he might trample upon the dust of the great persecutor of himself and his family. In Fraser's day the desecrated buildings at Meshed were heaps of rubbish. Ten years later Burnes found a crop of turnips springing from the soil which had sheltered the body of the conqueror of Hindustan.

There still exist a considerable number of Jewish families in Meshed, although the practice of their own worship is strictly for-

[1] A *sigheh* or temporary wife may be married for any period from one day to 99 years. Women often prefer being *sighehs* for the full period to being *akdis* or real wives. The *akdi* can be divorced at any time, the *sigheh* not before the end of her contract, except for misconduct. Short-period *sighehs* in the big cities are quasi-prostitutes.

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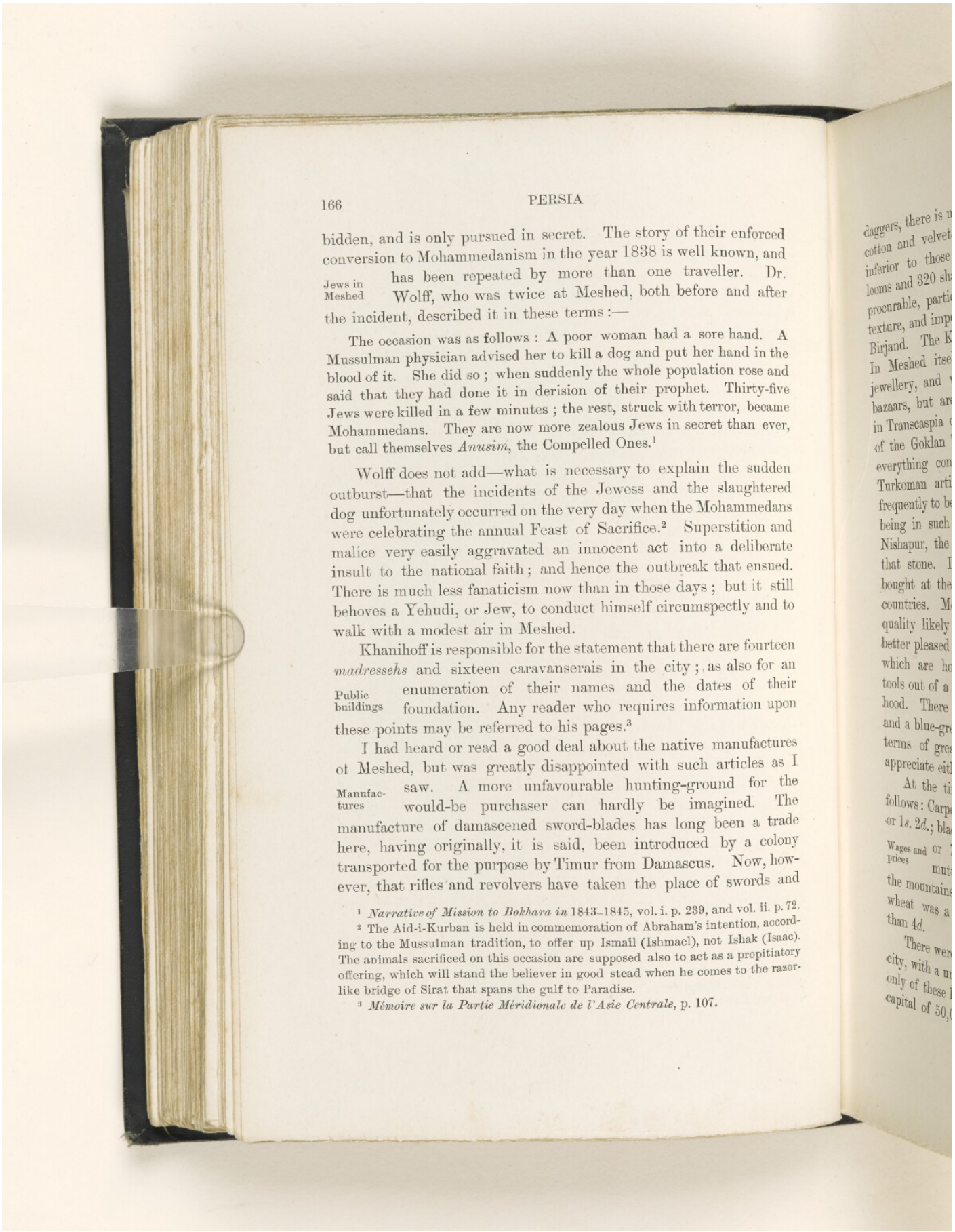



bidden, and is only pursued in secret. The story of their enforced conversion to Mohammedanism in the year 1838 is well known, and has been repeated by more than one traveller. Dr. Wolff, who was twice at Meshed, both before and after the incident, described it in these terms :—

Jews in Meshed

The occasion was as follows : A poor woman had a sore hand. A Mussulman physician advised her to kill a dog and put her hand in the blood of it. She did so ; when suddenly the whole population rose and said that they had done it in derision of their prophet. Thirty-five Jews were killed in a few minutes ; the rest, struck with terror, became Mohammedans. They are now more zealous Jews in secret than ever, but call themselves *Anusim*, the Compelled Ones.[1]

Wolff does not add—what is necessary to explain the sudden outburst—that the incidents of the Jewess and the slaughtered dog unfortunately occurred on the very day when the Mohammedans were celebrating the annual Feast of Sacrifice.[2] Superstition and malice very easily aggravated an innocent act into a deliberate insult to the national faith ; and hence the outbreak that ensued. There is much less fanaticism now than in those days ; but it still behoves a Yehudi, or Jew, to conduct himself circumspectly and to walk with a modest air in Meshed.

Khanihoff is responsible for the statement that there are fourteen *madressehs* and sixteen caravanserais in the city ; as also for an enumeration of their names and the dates of their foundation. Any reader who requires information upon these points may be referred to his pages.[3]

Public buildings

I had heard or read a good deal about the native manufactures of Meshed, but was greatly disappointed with such articles as I saw. A more unfavourable hunting-ground for the would-be purchaser can hardly be imagined. The manufacture of damascened sword-blades has long been a trade here, having originally, it is said, been introduced by a colony transported for the purpose by Timur from Damascus. Now, however, that rifles and revolvers have taken the place of swords and

Manufactures

[1] *Narrative of Mission to Bokhara in* 1843–1845, vol. i. p. 239, and vol. ii. p. 72.

[2] The Aid-i-Kurban is held in commemoration of Abraham's intention, according to the Mussulman tradition, to offer up Ismail (Ishmael), not Ishak (Isaac). The animals sacrificed on this occasion are supposed also to act as a propitiatory offering, which will stand the believer in good stead when he comes to the razor-like bridge of Sirat that spans the gulf to Paradise.

[3] *Mémoire sur la Partie Méridionale de l'Asie Centrale*, p. 107.

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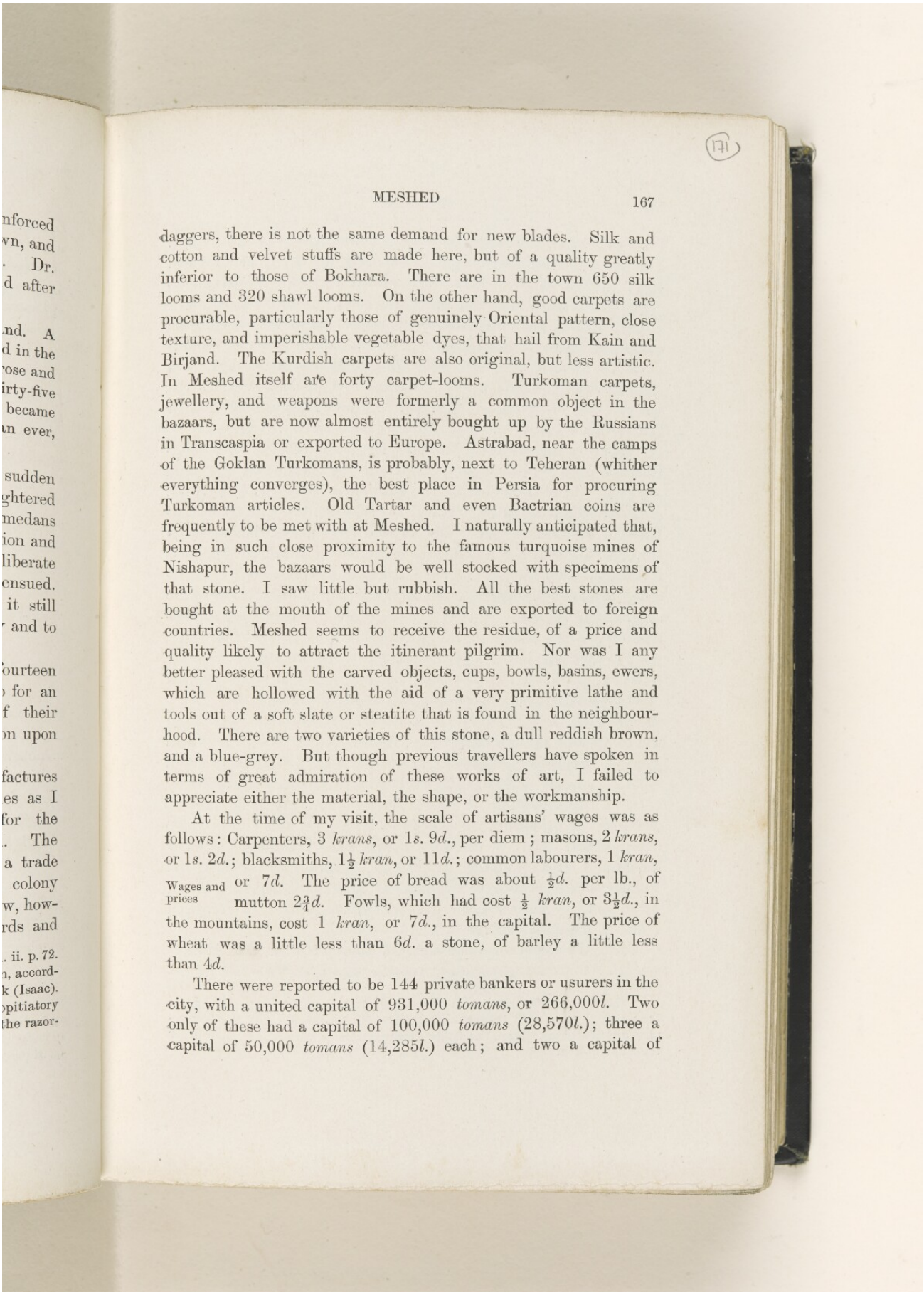




daggers, there is not the same demand for new blades. Silk and cotton and velvet stuffs are made here, but of a quality greatly inferior to those of Bokhara. There are in the town 650 silk looms and 320 shawl looms. On the other hand, good carpets are procurable, particularly those of genuinely Oriental pattern, close texture, and imperishable vegetable dyes, that hail from Kain and Birjand. The Kurdish carpets are also original, but less artistic. In Meshed itself are forty carpet-looms. Turkoman carpets, jewellery, and weapons were formerly a common object in the bazaars, but are now almost entirely bought up by the Russians in Transcaspia or exported to Europe. Astrabad, near the camps of the Goklan Turkomans, is probably, next to Teheran (whither everything converges), the best place in Persia for procuring Turkoman articles. Old Tartar and even Bactrian coins are frequently to be met with at Meshed. I naturally anticipated that, being in such close proximity to the famous turquoise mines of Nishapur, the bazaars would be well stocked with specimens of that stone. I saw little but rubbish. All the best stones are bought at the mouth of the mines and are exported to foreign countries. Meshed seems to receive the residue, of a price and quality likely to attract the itinerant pilgrim. Nor was I any better pleased with the carved objects, cups, bowls, basins, ewers, which are hollowed with the aid of a very primitive lathe and tools out of a soft slate or steatite that is found in the neighbourhood. There are two varieties of this stone, a dull reddish brown, and a blue-grey. But though previous travellers have spoken in terms of great admiration of these works of art, I failed to appreciate either the material, the shape, or the workmanship.

At the time of my visit, the scale of artisans' wages was as follows: Carpenters, 3 *krans*, or 1*s*. 9*d*., per diem; masons, 2 *krans*, or 1*s*. 2*d*.; blacksmiths, 1½ *kran*, or 11*d*.; common labourers, 1 *kran*, or 7*d*. The price of bread was about ½*d*. per lb., of mutton 2¾*d*. Fowls, which had cost ½ *kran*, or 3½*d*., in the mountains, cost 1 *kran*, or 7*d*., in the capital. The price of wheat was a little less than 6*d*. a stone, of barley a little less than 4*d*.

Wages and prices

There were reported to be 144 private bankers or usurers in the city, with a united capital of 931,000 *tomans*, or 266,000*l*. Two only of these had a capital of 100,000 *tomans* (28,570*l*.); three a capital of 50,000 *tomans* (14,285*l*.) each; and two a capital of

30,000 *tomans* (8,570*l.*) each. The rest were petty money dealers. The New Oriental Bank in Teheran kept an agent at Meshed; but, as they have since parted with their business to the new Imperial Bank of Persia, the latter have taken their place in Khorasan, where there is considerable scope for their transactions. A great many Russian rouble notes (it is said 200,000) were in circulation in Meshed. An English sovereign was worth 3 *tomans* and 3½ *krans*, or, at the normal rate of exchange, 19*s.* 6*d.* Indian rupees fetched their full Indian value of 1*s.* 5*d.*[1]

Banks and Money-lending

While at Meshed I enjoyed an interview with the Governor-General of Khorasan. As I have already indicated, this high official is one of the two surviving brothers of the Shah. His name is Mohammed Taki Mirza, his title the Rukn-ed-Dowleh (i.e. Pillar of the State), and he was then Governor-General for the third time, having filled the post at intervals during the past fifteen years, and occasionally been superseded or shelved, as some other aspirant had gained the ear of the sovereign or been able to offer a higher bribe.[2] He had the reputation of being a mild but timid individual, who shared the family taste for saving, but temporises in politics. His chief minister however, or Wuzir (Vizier), was reported to be a staunch partisan of Russia, with whom his sympathies were notorious.

Visit to the Governor-General

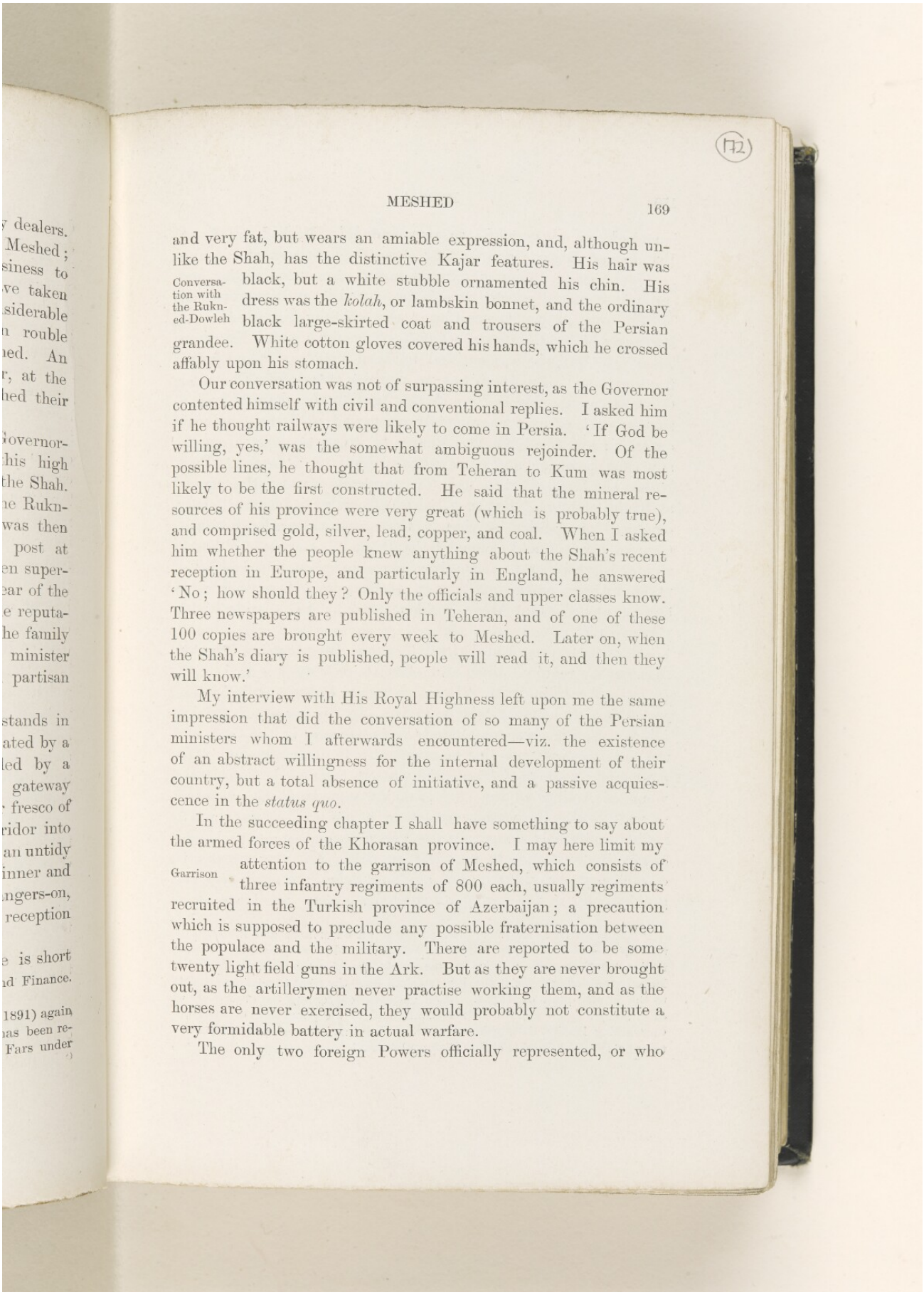
The Ark, or Citadel, in which the Governor resides, stands in the south-west portion of the city, from which it is separated by a large parade-ground or *meidan*. It is defended by a circuit of low walls and towers. Entering a gateway between two towers, above which was a ludicrous daub or fresco of the Lion and the Sun, we rode down a long vaulted corridor into a large court. Here we dismounted, and, passing through an untidy quadrangle with straggling flower-beds, crossed into an inner and smaller court, where were a number of attendants and hangers-on, by whom we were ushered into the *diwan-khaneh*, or reception room, at the upper end.

The Ark

Here the Governor came forward to receive us. He is short

[1] No. 753 of the Diplomatic and Consular Reports on Trade and Finance. 1890.

[2] The Rukn-ed-Dowleh has in the spring of the present year (1891) again been ejected, (it is said because of his Russophil tendencies), and has been replaced by Fathullah Khan, the Sahib Diwan, formerly Governor of Fars under the Zil-es-Sultan.





and very fat, but wears an amiable expression, and, although unlike the Shah, has the distinctive Kajar features. His hair was black, but a white stubble ornamented his chin. His dress was the *kolah*, or lambskin bonnet, and the ordinary black large-skirted coat and trousers of the Persian grandee. White cotton gloves covered his hands, which he crossed affably upon his stomach.

Conversation with the Rukn-ed-Dowleh

Our conversation was not of surpassing interest, as the Governor contented himself with civil and conventional replies. I asked him if he thought railways were likely to come in Persia. 'If God be willing, yes,' was the somewhat ambiguous rejoinder. Of the possible lines, he thought that from Teheran to Kum was most likely to be the first constructed. He said that the mineral resources of his province were very great (which is probably true), and comprised gold, silver, lead, copper, and coal. When I asked him whether the people knew anything about the Shah's recent reception in Europe, and particularly in England, he answered 'No; how should they? Only the officials and upper classes know. Three newspapers are published in Teheran, and of one of these 100 copies are brought every week to Meshed. Later on, when the Shah's diary is published, people will read it, and then they will know.'

My interview with His Royal Highness left upon me the same impression that did the conversation of so many of the Persian ministers whom I afterwards encountered—viz. the existence of an abstract willingness for the internal development of their country, but a total absence of initiative, and a passive acquiescence in the *status quo*.

In the succeeding chapter I shall have something to say about the armed forces of the Khorasan province. I may here limit my attention to the garrison of Meshed, which consists of three infantry regiments of 800 each, usually regiments recruited in the Turkish province of Azerbaijan; a precaution which is supposed to preclude any possible fraternisation between the populace and the military. There are reported to be some twenty light field guns in the Ark. But as they are never brought out, as the artillerymen never practise working them, and as the horses are never exercised, they would probably not constitute a very formidable battery in actual warfare.

Garrison

The only two foreign Powers officially represented, or who

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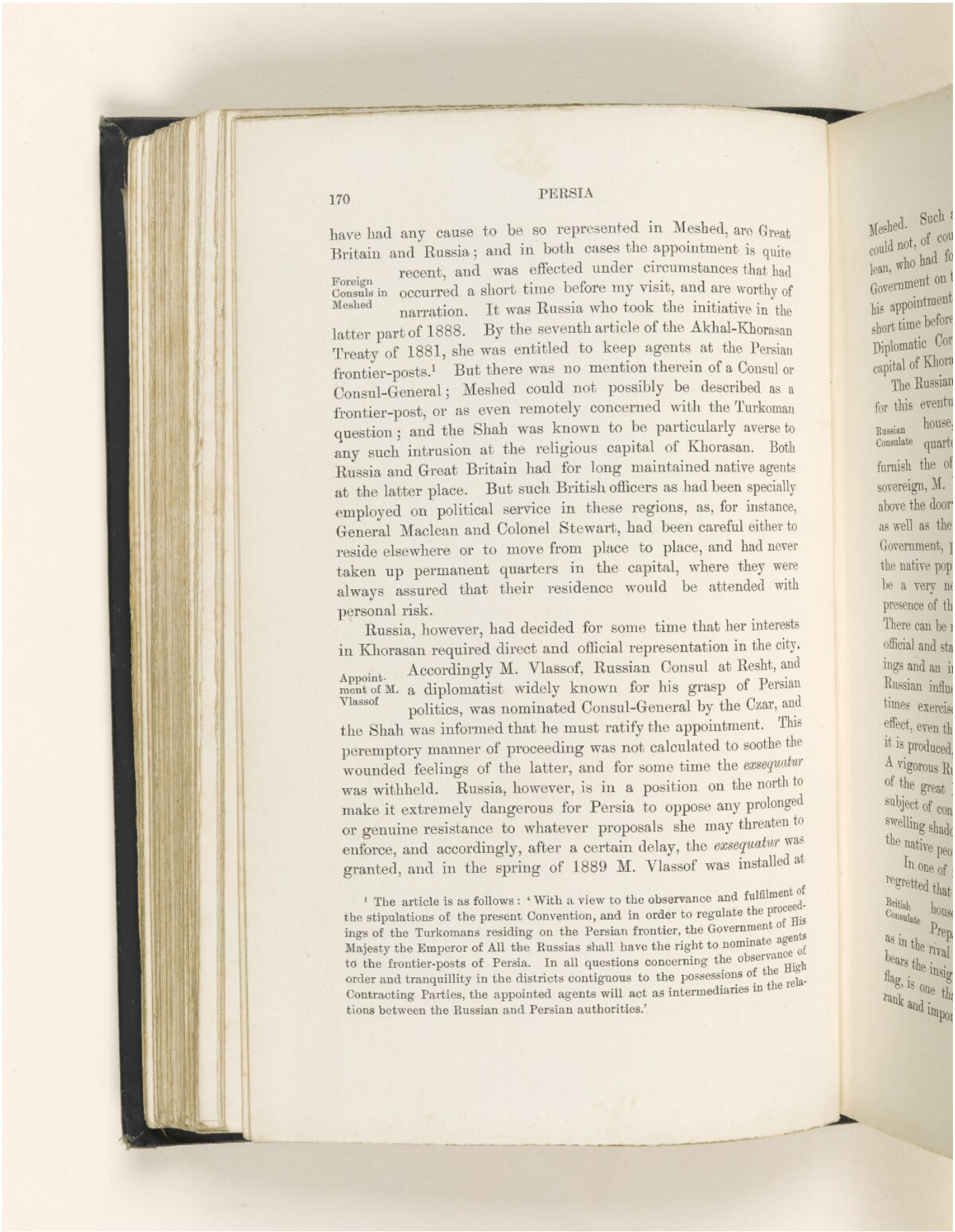




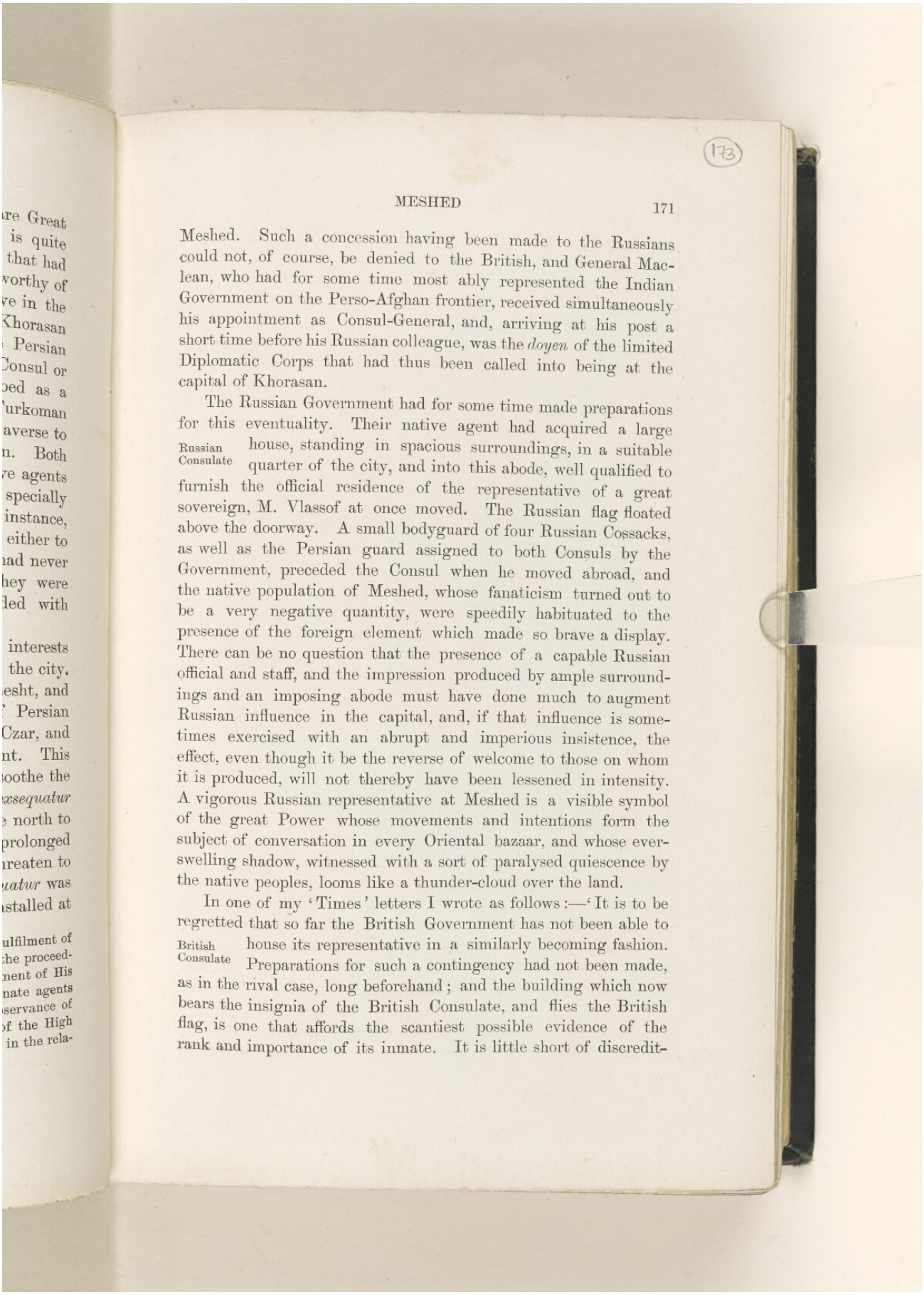
have had any cause to be so represented in Meshed, are Great Britain and Russia; and in both cases the appointment is quite recent, and was effected under circumstances that had occurred a short time before my visit, and are worthy of narration. It was Russia who took the initiative in the latter part of 1888. By the seventh article of the Akhal-Khorasan Treaty of 1881, she was entitled to keep agents at the Persian frontier-posts.[1] But there was no mention therein of a Consul or Consul-General; Meshed could not possibly be described as a frontier-post, or as even remotely concerned with the Turkoman question; and the Shah was known to be particularly averse to any such intrusion at the religious capital of Khorasan. Both Russia and Great Britain had for long maintained native agents at the latter place. But such British officers as had been specially employed on political service in these regions, as, for instance, General Maclean and Colonel Stewart, had been careful either to reside elsewhere or to move from place to place, and had never taken up permanent quarters in the capital, where they were always assured that their residence would be attended with personal risk.

Foreign Consuls in Meshed

Russia, however, had decided for some time that her interests in Khorasan required direct and official representation in the city. Accordingly M. Vlassof, Russian Consul at Resht, and a diplomatist widely known for his grasp of Persian politics, was nominated Consul-General by the Czar, and the Shah was informed that he must ratify the appointment. This peremptory manner of proceeding was not calculated to soothe the wounded feelings of the latter, and for some time the *exsequatur* was withheld. Russia, however, is in a position on the north to make it extremely dangerous for Persia to oppose any prolonged or genuine resistance to whatever proposals she may threaten to enforce, and accordingly, after a certain delay, the *exsequatur* was granted, and in the spring of 1889 M. Vlassof was installed at

Appointment of M. Vlassof

[1] The article is as follows: 'With a view to the observance and fulfilment of the stipulations of the present Convention, and in order to regulate the proceedings of the Turkomans residing on the Persian frontier, the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias shall have the right to nominate agents to the frontier-posts of Persia. In all questions concerning the observance of order and tranquillity in the districts contiguous to the possessions of the High Contracting Parties, the appointed agents will act as intermediaries in the relations between the Russian and Persian authorities.'



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Meshed. Such a concession having been made to the Russians could not, of course, be denied to the British, and General Maclean, who had for some time most ably represented the Indian Government on the Perso-Afghan frontier, received simultaneously his appointment as Consul-General, and, arriving at his post a short time before his Russian colleague, was the *doyen* of the limited Diplomatic Corps that had thus been called into being at the capital of Khorasan.

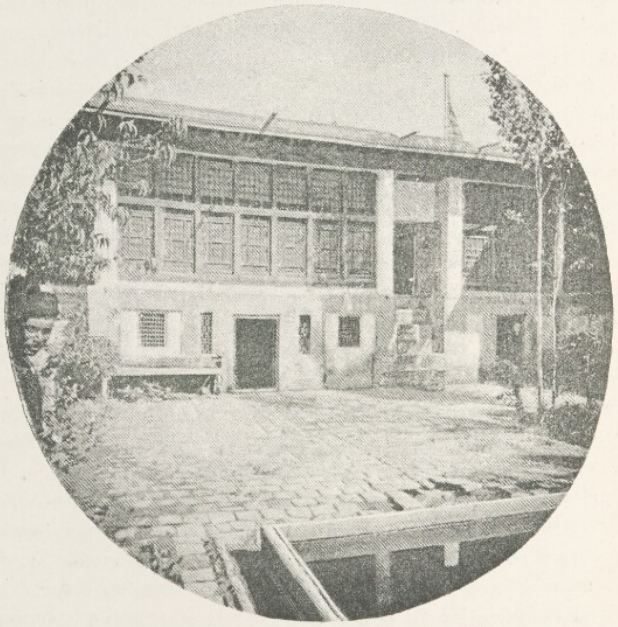
Russian Consulate

The Russian Government had for some time made preparations for this eventuality. Their native agent had acquired a large house, standing in spacious surroundings, in a suitable quarter of the city, and into this abode, well qualified to furnish the official residence of the representative of a great sovereign, M. Vlassof at once moved. The Russian flag floated above the doorway. A small bodyguard of four Russian Cossacks, as well as the Persian guard assigned to both Consuls by the Government, preceded the Consul when he moved abroad, and the native population of Meshed, whose fanaticism turned out to be a very negative quantity, were speedily habituated to the presence of the foreign element which made so brave a display. There can be no question that the presence of a capable Russian official and staff, and the impression produced by ample surroundings and an imposing abode must have done much to augment Russian influence in the capital, and, if that influence is sometimes exercised with an abrupt and imperious insistence, the effect, even though it be the reverse of welcome to those on whom it is produced, will not thereby have been lessened in intensity. A vigorous Russian representative at Meshed is a visible symbol of the great Power whose movements and intentions form the subject of conversation in every Oriental bazaar, and whose ever-swelling shadow, witnessed with a sort of paralysed quiescence by the native peoples, looms like a thunder-cloud over the land.

British Consulate

In one of my 'Times' letters I wrote as follows:—'It is to be regretted that so far the British Government has not been able to house its representative in a similarly becoming fashion. Preparations for such a contingency had not been made, as in the rival case, long beforehand; and the building which now bears the insignia of the British Consulate, and flies the British flag, is one that affords the scantiest possible evidence of the rank and importance of its inmate. It is little short of discredit-

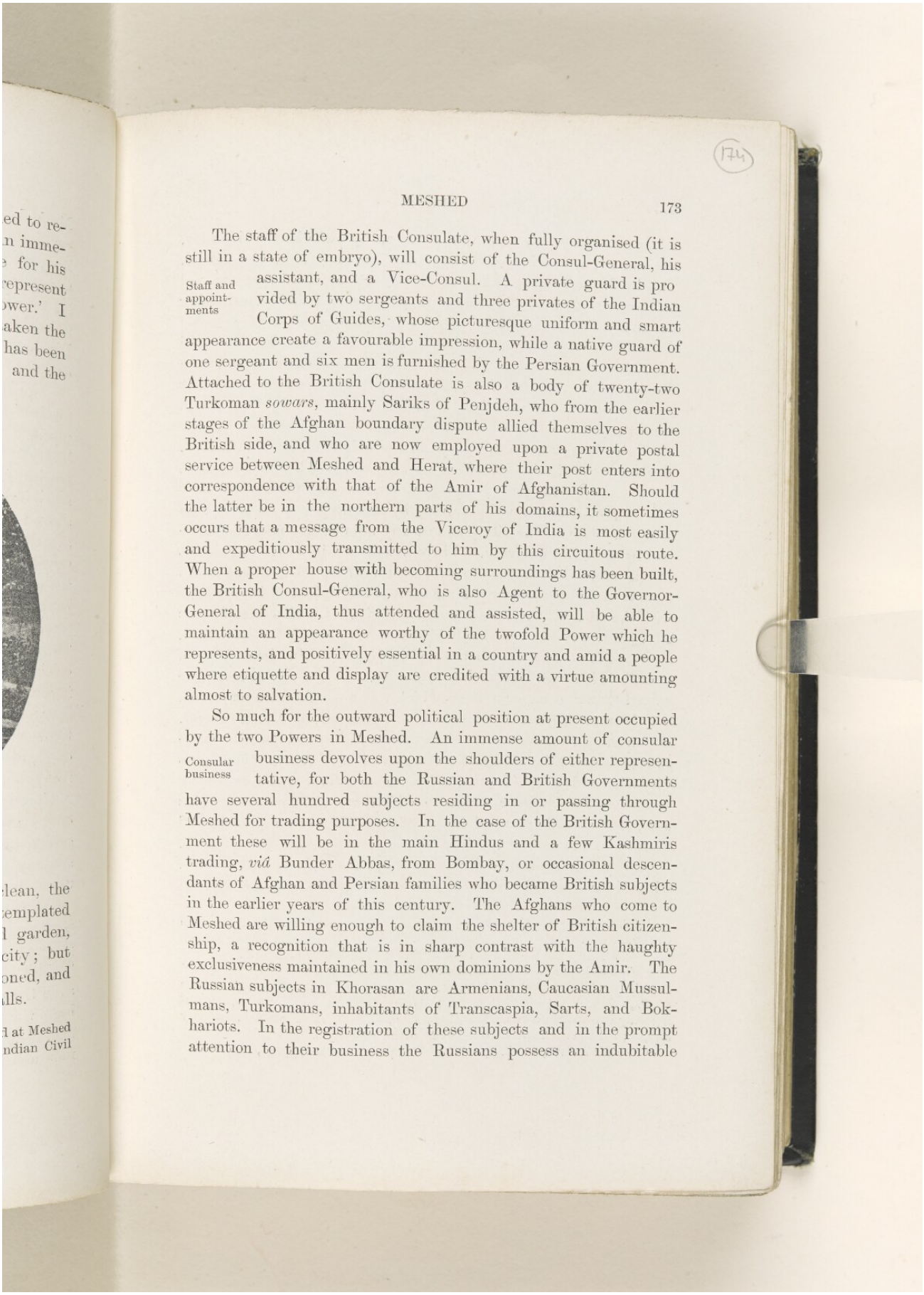
able that the British Consul-General should be compelled to reside in such attenuated and miserable surroundings. An immediate duty is imposed upon the Government to provide for his maintenance in a style and in quarters better fitted to represent to the native mind the prestige of a great and wealthy Power.' I rejoice to have heard since that the Government has taken the same view of the case as I did; and that a sum of money has been granted, sufficient for the purchase of a plot of ground and the



TEMPORARY BRITISH CONSULATE AT MESHED

erection of a becoming edifice thereon. General Maclean, the capable representative of Great Britain in Khorasan,[1] contemplated at first the purchase of a well-wooded and well-watered garden, nearly thirty acres in extent, outside the walls of the city; but my latest information is that this project has been abandoned, and that a property is more likely to be bought within the walls.

[1] General Maclean has since retired (1891), and has been succeeded at Meshed by Mr. Ney Elias, one of the most distinguished members of the Indian Civil Service.





The staff of the British Consulate, when fully organised (it is still in a state of embryo), will consist of the Consul-General, his assistant, and a Vice-Consul. A private guard is provided by two sergeants and three privates of the Indian Corps of Guides, whose picturesque uniform and smart appearance create a favourable impression, while a native guard of one sergeant and six men is furnished by the Persian Government. Attached to the British Consulate is also a body of twenty-two Turkoman *sowars*, mainly Sariks of Penjdeh, who from the earlier stages of the Afghan boundary dispute allied themselves to the British side, and who are now employed upon a private postal service between Meshed and Herat, where their post enters into correspondence with that of the Amir of Afghanistan. Should the latter be in the northern parts of his domains, it sometimes occurs that a message from the Viceroy of India is most easily and expeditiously transmitted to him by this circuitous route. When a proper house with becoming surroundings has been built, the British Consul-General, who is also Agent to the Governor-General of India, thus attended and assisted, will be able to maintain an appearance worthy of the twofold Power which he represents, and positively essential in a country and amid a people where etiquette and display are credited with a virtue amounting almost to salvation.

Staff and appointments

So much for the outward political position at present occupied by the two Powers in Meshed. An immense amount of consular business devolves upon the shoulders of either representative, for both the Russian and British Governments have several hundred subjects residing in or passing through Meshed for trading purposes. In the case of the British Government these will be in the main Hindus and a few Kashmiris trading, *viâ* Bunder Abbas, from Bombay, or occasional descendants of Afghan and Persian families who became British subjects in the earlier years of this century. The Afghans who come to Meshed are willing enough to claim the shelter of British citizenship, a recognition that is in sharp contrast with the haughty exclusiveness maintained in his own dominions by the Amir. The Russian subjects in Khorasan are Armenians, Caucasian Mussulmans, Turkomans, inhabitants of Transcaspia, Sarts, and Bokhariots. In the registration of these subjects and in the prompt attention to their business the Russians possess an indubitable

Consular business

advantage in their passport system, by which the identity, nationality, and claims of an applicant can at once be ascertained. The British have never adopted this most useful of systems, and an immense amount of labour and time is spent in investigating the titles of the claimant to British protection, which are frequently disputed by the Persian authorities, and can only be vindicated with trouble and delay. It is worth while considering whether in Persia, at any rate, the passport system might not advantageously be introduced.[1] It would, I believe, be welcomed by the Persian Government.

There is very little to be seen in the neighbourhood of Meshed. The mosque of Khojah Rabi I have already described. The Musallah, originally built in A.D. 1699 for the celebration of the feast of Kurban, and described by MacGregor as the only ruin of any note about the city, has lost any note that it may once have had by being a total ruin. Visitors will possibly care to ride out to the remains of Tus, the predecessor of Meshed, fifteen miles distant in a north-westerly direction. Persian legend is very busy with the antiquity and history and vicissitudes of this once famous city. The present remains, which are very clearly to be traced, are those of a walled Arab city, quite four miles in circumference, and of a citadel in its north-east corner. In the centre is a large ruined structure under a dome, which was no doubt once a mosque, but is now known as the Nakkara-Khaneh or Drum Tower. O'Donovan, who spent some time in examining and describing the ruins, mistook this building for the tomb of the great national poet Firdusi,[2] and even identified his coffin.[3] The poet's grave lay beneath a far humbler structure which was visible seventy years ago; but had disappeared long before O'Donovan visited it, and been replaced by no more distinctive memorial than a field of wheat.

Tus

Meshed is connected by telegraph, as I have already shown, with Kelat-i-Nadiri on the north, and with Kuchan and Bujnurd

[1] I have since heard that the Afghans have been allowed by the British Government to accept Russian passports through the medium of the Persian officials, a concession which I am unable either to justify or to explain.

[2] Firdusi, born about 940 A.D., died 1021, was employed by Mahmud of Ghuzni to write the history of Persia in verse. The result was the *Shah Nameh*, or *Book of Kings*, in which the poet discharged his duty in 60,000 Pehlevi verses, containing only two Arabic words, although two out of every three words in ordinary usage at the time were of Arabic—i.e. non-Iranian—origin.

[3] *The Merv Oasis*, vol. ii. pp. 14–16. Compare Khanikoff, pp. 31, 109–110.

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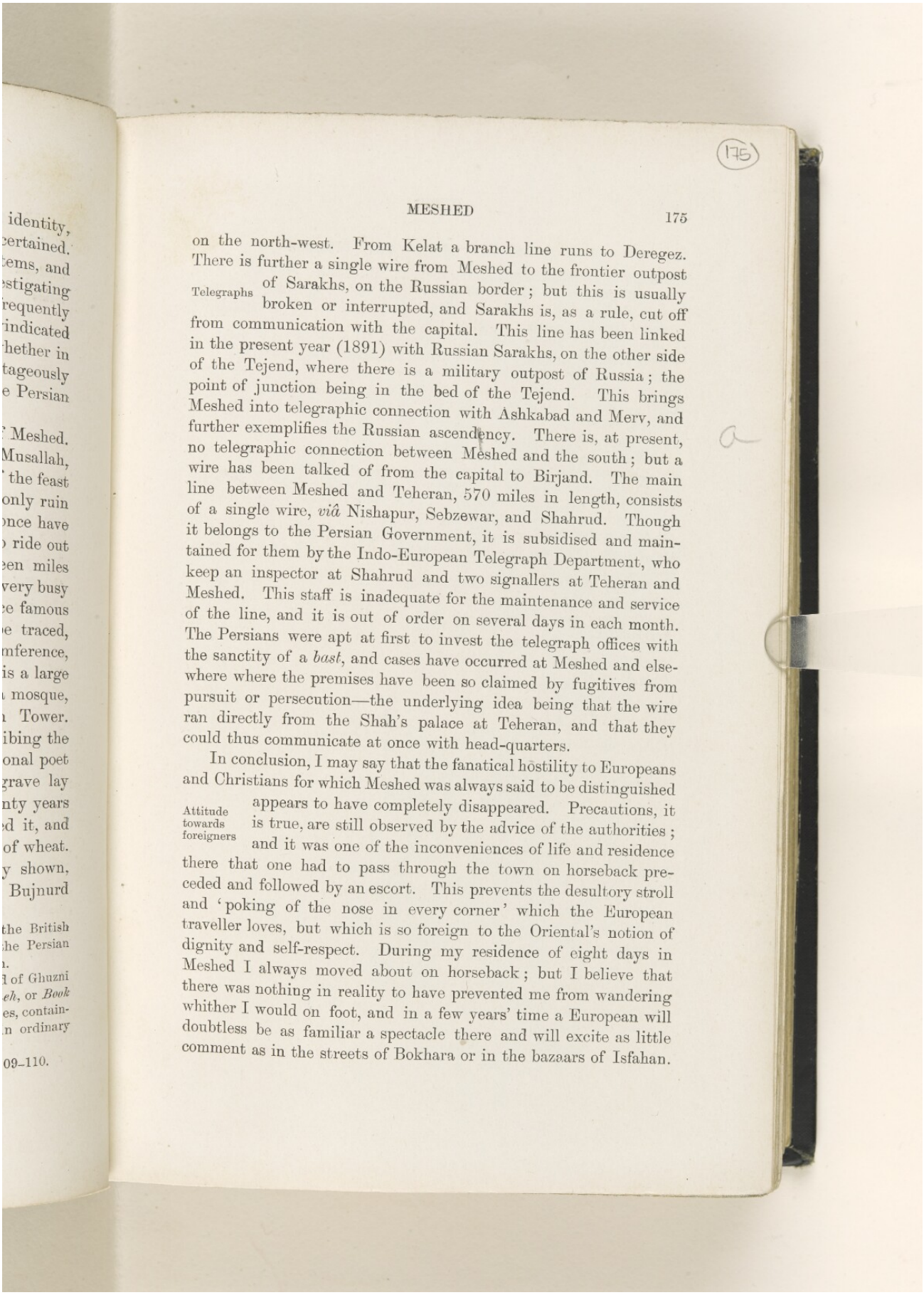



on the north-west. From Kelat a branch line runs to Deregez. There is further a single wire from Meshed to the frontier outpost of Sarakhs, on the Russian border; but this is usually broken or interrupted, and Sarakhs is, as a rule, cut off from communication with the capital. This line has been linked in the present year (1891) with Russian Sarakhs, on the other side of the Tejend, where there is a military outpost of Russia; the point of junction being in the bed of the Tejend. This brings Meshed into telegraphic connection with Ashkabad and Merv, and further exemplifies the Russian ascendency. There is, at present, no telegraphic connection between Meshed and the south; but a wire has been talked of from the capital to Birjand. The main line between Meshed and Teheran, 570 miles in length, consists of a single wire, *viâ* Nishapur, Sebzewar, and Shahrud. Though it belongs to the Persian Government, it is subsidised and maintained for them by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, who keep an inspector at Shahrud and two signallers at Teheran and Meshed. This staff is inadequate for the maintenance and service of the line, and it is out of order on several days in each month. The Persians were apt at first to invest the telegraph offices with the sanctity of a *bast*, and cases have occurred at Meshed and elsewhere where the premises have been so claimed by fugitives from pursuit or persecution—the underlying idea being that the wire ran directly from the Shah's palace at Teheran, and that they could thus communicate at once with head-quarters.

Telegraphs

In conclusion, I may say that the fanatical hostility to Europeans and Christians for which Meshed was always said to be distinguished appears to have completely disappeared. Precautions, it is true, are still observed by the advice of the authorities; and it was one of the inconveniences of life and residence there that one had to pass through the town on horseback preceded and followed by an escort. This prevents the desultory stroll and 'poking of the nose in every corner' which the European traveller loves, but which is so foreign to the Oriental's notion of dignity and self-respect. During my residence of eight days in Meshed I always moved about on horseback; but I believe that there was nothing in reality to have prevented me from wandering whither I would on foot, and in a few years' time a European will doubtless be as familiar a spectacle there and will excite as little comment as in the streets of Bokhara or in the bazaars of Isfahan.

Attitude towards foreigners

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## Supplementary Routes from Meshed.

Meshed to Sarakhs (*viâ* Ak Derbend and Pui-i-Khatun, 96 miles). (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 56–65; Capt. Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. p. 146 (1876); (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 1–30.

Meshed to Herat (two routes; the most familiar *viâ* Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam and Ghurian, 220 miles). J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, pp. 118–19; Lieut. A. Conolly (1830), *Overland Journey to India*, vol. i. cap. xii.; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, cap. x. and cap. xxxi.; Capt. Claude Clerk (1857), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxxi. pp. 45–47; H. C. Marsh (1872), *Ride through Islam*, pp. 113–131; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. caps. viii. ix.

Meshed to Seistan (*viâ* Turbat-i-Haideri, Bajistan, Birjand, Lash Juwain). Dr. F. Forbes (1841), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiv. (1844); Col. Euan Smith (1872), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 323–356 and Appendix D; Dr. H. W. Bellew (1872), *From the Indus to the Tigris*, caps. ix. x.; Sir F. Goldsmid (1872), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliii. p. 65 (1873).

Meshed to Kaahka (Transcaspian Railway), *viâ* Sengiban, Chaksari, Charköi, and Kardeh. Max von Proskowetz (1888), *Vom Newastrand nach Samarkand*, iii. 5.

Meshed to Dushak (Transcaspian Railway), *viâ* Kanegosha, Khanibist, Namisar, Huntalabad, Tamura Pass, Chacha, Karategan. (Private information.)

For other routes, outlined but not described, *vide* MacGregor, vol. ii. Appendix II.



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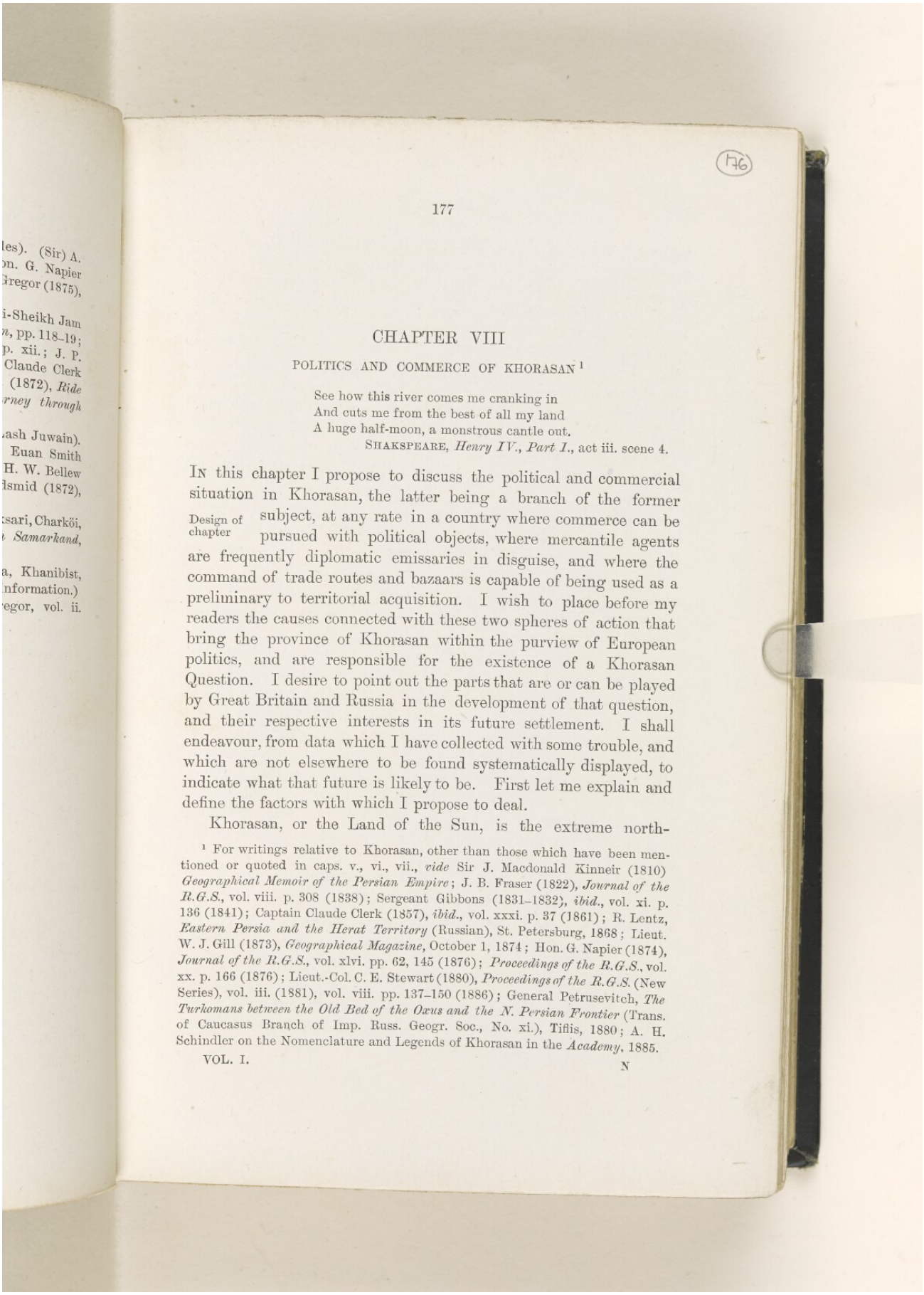



# CHAPTER VIII

## POLITICS AND COMMERCE OF KHORASAN[1]

> See how this river comes me cranking in
> And cuts me from the best of all my land
> A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out.
> SHAKSPEARE, *Henry IV., Part I.*, act iii. scene 4.

Design of chapter

In this chapter I propose to discuss the political and commercial situation in Khorasan, the latter being a branch of the former subject, at any rate in a country where commerce can be pursued with political objects, where mercantile agents are frequently diplomatic emissaries in disguise, and where the command of trade routes and bazaars is capable of being used as a preliminary to territorial acquisition. I wish to place before my readers the causes connected with these two spheres of action that bring the province of Khorasan within the purview of European politics, and are responsible for the existence of a Khorasan Question. I desire to point out the parts that are or can be played by Great Britain and Russia in the development of that question, and their respective interests in its future settlement. I shall endeavour, from data which I have collected with some trouble, and which are not elsewhere to be found systematically displayed, to indicate what that future is likely to be. First let me explain and define the factors with which I propose to deal.

Khorasan, or the Land of the Sun, is the extreme north-

[1] For writings relative to Khorasan, other than those which have been mentioned or quoted in caps. v., vi., vii., *vide* Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir (1810) *Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire*; J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. viii. p. 308 (1838); Sergeant Gibbons (1831–1832), *ibid.*, vol. xi. p. 136 (1841); Captain Claude Clerk (1857), *ibid.*, vol. xxxi. p. 37 (1861); R. Lentz, *Eastern Persia and the Herat Territory* (Russian), St. Petersburg, 1868; Lieut. W. J. Gill (1873), *Geographical Magazine*, October 1, 1874; Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 62, 145 (1876); *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xx. p. 166 (1876); Lieut.-Col. C. E. Stewart (1880), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. iii. (1881), vol. viii. pp. 137–150 (1886); General Petrusevitch, *The Turkomans between the Old Bed of the Oxus and the N. Persian Frontier* (Trans. of Caucasus Branch of Imp. Russ. Geogr. Soc., No. xi.), Tiflis, 1880; A. H. Schindler on the Nomenclature and Legends of Khorasan in the *Academy*, 1885.



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eastern province of Persia. Extending from about long. 56 degs. on the west, to long. 61 degs. on the east, or from the Kal Mura River [1] to the Heri Rud, it presents an average width of a little over 300 miles. Its extreme length would be, from its north-western to its south-eastern extremity, a distance of 600 miles; but its average length may be calculated at 100 miles less. Upon the north it is bounded by the great mountain range, the eastern continuation of the Elburz system, which I have already described at length, and by which it is severed from what was once Turkoman, but is now Russian Transcaspian territory. On the south it is bounded and all but cut off from the world by the appalling desert that stretches like a sea to the very outskirts of Kerman.

Province of Khorasan

In this wide extent of territory, which is estimated at between 150,000 and 200,000 square miles, are included the most extreme varieties of physical conformation, of scenery, and of climate. Upon the north appear mountains whose highest peaks are rarely left by the snow, and rise to an elevation of between 12,000 and 13,000 feet. Range succeeds range in this knotted mountain cluster; the intervening valleys, with a mean elevation of 3,000 to 4,000 feet, being the recipients of whatever moisture drains from their sides, the centres of cultivation, and the sites of villages and towns. In contrast to this almost Alpine scenery, the Dasht-i-Kavir, or Great Salt Desert of Persia, one of the most strange and funereal scenes upon which ever fell the eye of man, lays its palsied hand across the middle part. Then towards the south-east ensues a second mountainous plateau, with peaks of 6,000 feet, and lower cultivated valleys. Finally, to redress the balance, comes the Dasht-i-Lut, or Desert of Lut, whose features, though different, are not unfit to be compared with those of the Dasht-i-Kavir.[2]

Natural features

Cultivation here, as elsewhere in Persia, depends upon water supply; the detritus swept down by the streams or torrents depositing a layer of soil upon the sand, which is subsequently

[1] Rising on the south slopes of the Ala Dagh range, the Kal Mura receives the drainage of the Jagatai or Juwain plain, through which it flows in an easterly direction, is then joined by the Kara Su (Black Water), after which it turns south, cuts the main route from Meshed to Teheran at the Pul-i-Abrishum (Bridge of Silk), and after a further course of fifty miles is lost in the Salt Desert.

[2] Descriptions of both these deserts will more properly be given in a chapter upon the Eastern Provinces. *Vide* vol. ii. cap. xxiii.

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fertilised by the same agency that originally brought it. A petty torrent named the Kusf gives life to a limited area of cultivation near Birjand in the south; and there are a few scanty confluents of the upper course of the Heri Rud. With these exceptions the rivers of Khorasan are confined to the northern portion of the province, which has in consequence acquired its reputation as one of the granaries of Persia. Here the Keshef Rud, of which I have spoken, drains the Meshed valley into the Heri Rud. Conversely, the Atrek and Gurgan on the western side of the watershed drain towards the Caspian Sea. About midway between the two the Kara Su and Kal Mura, already mentioned, lose themselves in the Kavir. This is the sum total of the rivers of a province that is more than half as large again as the whole of Italy, and not far short of the entire area of Spain.

Rivers and cultivation

The population of Khorasan is as varied as are its physical characteristics. Successive waves of conquest have brought hither specimens of most of the great ethnic divisions of Asia, and, retiring, have left them rooted, in greater or less degree, to the soil. Here, in addition to the original Iranian stock, and to other members of the Aryan family, are descendants of the Mongols who came in the wake of Timur and Jenghiz Khan, Arabs who were borne on the flood tide of Mohammedan conquest, Tartars, Turkomans, and Turks—three really interchangeable names for different branches of the same great family that, in succession to the Mongols, startled the West first with the Seljuk and afterwards with the Ottoman invasion. The 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' in its latest edition, gives the relative proportions of these races in Khorasan as follows:—

Population

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. Iranians . . = | Tajiks . . . | 400,000 |
| | Kurds . . . | 250,000 |
| | Beluchis . . | 10,000 |
| II. Mongols . . = | Timuris . . . | 250,000 |
| | Hazaras . . | 50,000 |
| III. Tartars . . = | Afshars . . / Kajars . . | 100,000 |
| IV. Arabs . . . = | | 100,000 |
| | Total . . | 1,160,000 |

But from what I can gather this estimate exceeds at least twofold the verifiable total of the population, which may be set down as between 500,000 and 600,000; the terrible famine of 1872



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having inflicted damages from which the province has never recovered.

History

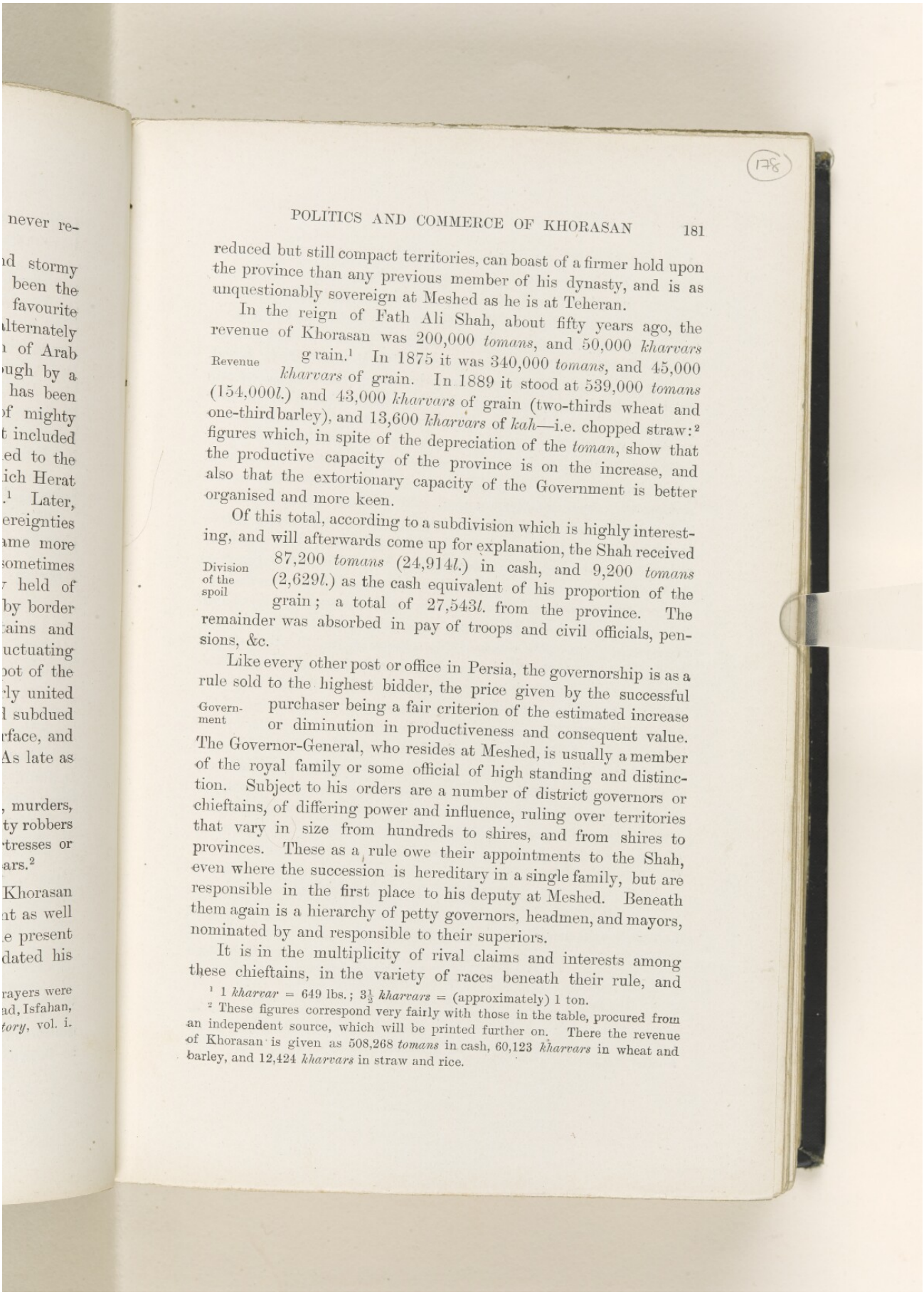
Khorasan has experienced a history of great and stormy vicissitudes. Situated on the borders of Iran, it has been the perpetual theatre of armed struggle, and a favourite battle-ground of races. Its capital cities have alternately excited by their dimensions the bewildered admiration of Arab chroniclers, and have been swept off the earth, as though by a tornado, by the passions of conquerors and kings. It has been the residence of great monarchs, and the nucleus of mighty empires. At one time its name implied a dominion that included Kharezm (Khiva) and Merv on the north, that stretched to the Oxus and embraced Balkh, the mother of cities, of which Herat was a central point, and that extended beyond Kandahar.[1] Later, as limb after limb was torn away, and independent sovereignties were created out of the fragments, its boundaries became more and more contracted, until the kings of Persia would sometimes have found it difficult to say how much they really held of Khorasan. In the early part of this century, desolated by border warfare on the north, inhabited by turbulent chieftains and conflicting tribes, and commonly dependent upon the fluctuating politics and fortunes of Herat, it was the vulnerable spot of the Kajars' dominions, a sort of Ireland to an otherwise fairly united kingdom. Long after it had been forcibly conquered and subdued to the Shah's authority, disorder trembled below the surface, and events might at any moment precipitate an explosion. As late as 1862 Mr. Eastwick wrote :—

> The normal state of Khorasan is war. Petty plunderings, murders, brigandage, small insurrections, executions of five, ten, or twenty robbers take place weekly ; and cavalry engagements, sieges of fortresses or towns, annually, with a considerable war every five or ten years.[2]

It is not indeed till the last ten or fifteen years that Khorasan may be said to have become thoroughly fused, in sentiment as well as in title, with the rest of the Shah's dominions. The present King, who, whatever his failings, has undeniably consolidated his

[1] Of Malek Shah, the son of Alp Arslan, it was even said that 'prayers were every day offered up for his health in Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Isfahan, Rhe, Bokhara, Samarcand, Ourgunje, and Kashgar.'—Malcolm, *History*, vol. i. p. 217.

[2] *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. p. 216.



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reduced but still compact territories, can boast of a firmer hold upon the province than any previous member of his dynasty, and is as unquestionably sovereign at Meshed as he is at Teheran.

Revenue

In the reign of Fath Ali Shah, about fifty years ago, the revenue of Khorasan was 200,000 *tomans*, and 50,000 *kharvars* grain.[1] In 1875 it was 340,000 *tomans*, and 45,000 *kharvars* of grain. In 1889 it stood at 539,000 *tomans* (154,000*l.*) and 43,000 *kharvars* of grain (two-thirds wheat and one-third barley), and 13,600 *kharvars* of *kah*—i.e. chopped straw:[2] figures which, in spite of the depreciation of the *toman*, show that the productive capacity of the province is on the increase, and also that the extortionary capacity of the Government is better organised and more keen.

Division of the spoil

Of this total, according to a subdivision which is highly interesting, and will afterwards come up for explanation, the Shah received 87,200 *tomans* (24,914*l.*) in cash, and 9,200 *tomans* (2,629*l.*) as the cash equivalent of his proportion of the grain; a total of 27,543*l.* from the province. The remainder was absorbed in pay of troops and civil officials, pensions, &c.

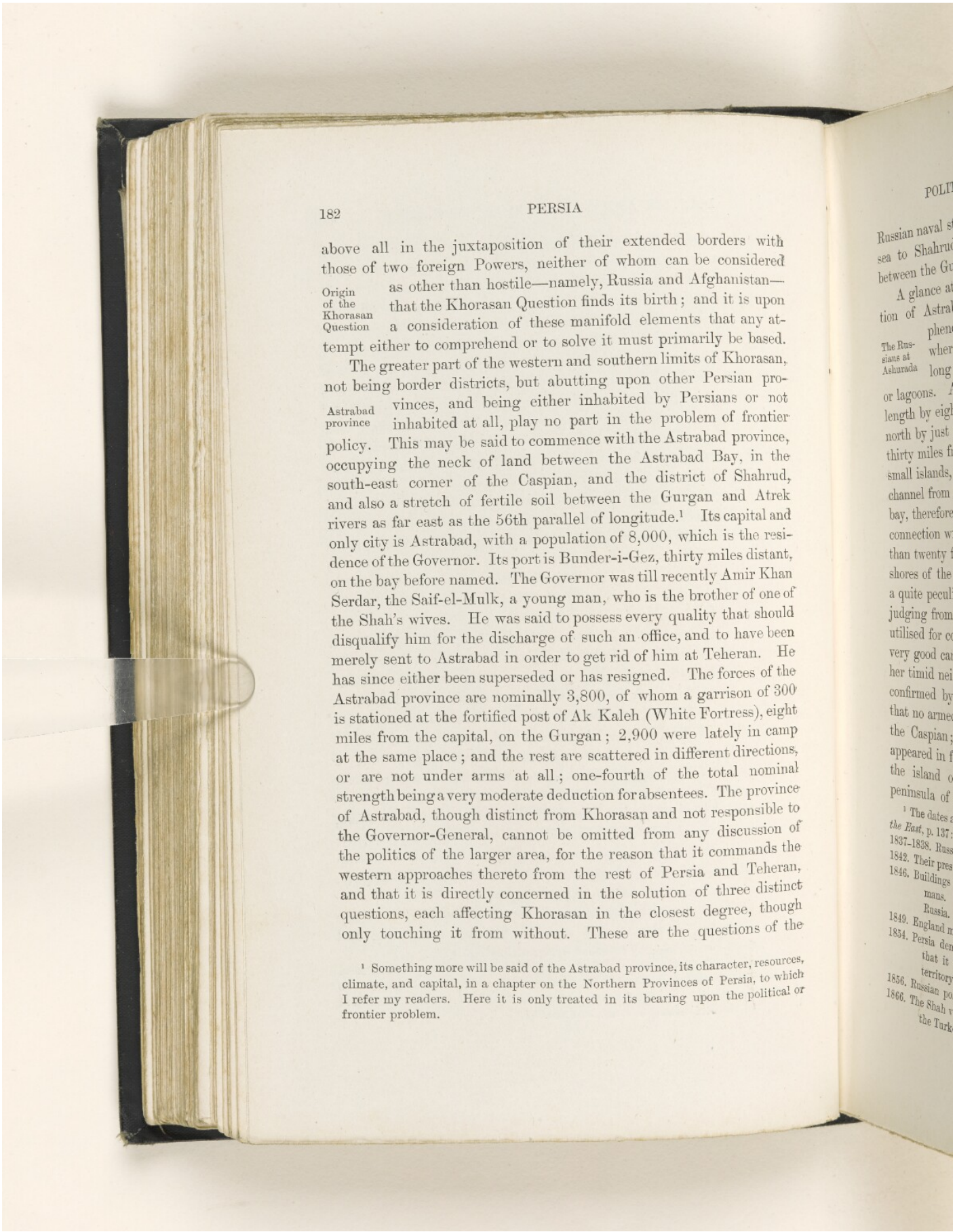
Govern-ment

Like every other post or office in Persia, the governorship is as a rule sold to the highest bidder, the price given by the successful purchaser being a fair criterion of the estimated increase or diminution in productiveness and consequent value. The Governor-General, who resides at Meshed, is usually a member of the royal family or some official of high standing and distinction. Subject to his orders are a number of district governors or chieftains, of differing power and influence, ruling over territories that vary in size from hundreds to shires, and from shires to provinces. These as a rule owe their appointments to the Shah, even where the succession is hereditary in a single family, but are responsible in the first place to his deputy at Meshed. Beneath them again is a hierarchy of petty governors, headmen, and mayors, nominated by and responsible to their superiors.

It is in the multiplicity of rival claims and interests among these chieftains, in the variety of races beneath their rule, and

[1] 1 *kharvar* = 649 lbs.; $3\frac{1}{2}$ *kharvars* = (approximately) 1 ton.

[2] These figures correspond very fairly with those in the table, procured from an independent source, which will be printed further on. There the revenue of Khorasan is given as 508,268 *tomans* in cash, 60,123 *kharvars* in wheat and barley, and 12,424 *kharvars* in straw and rice.





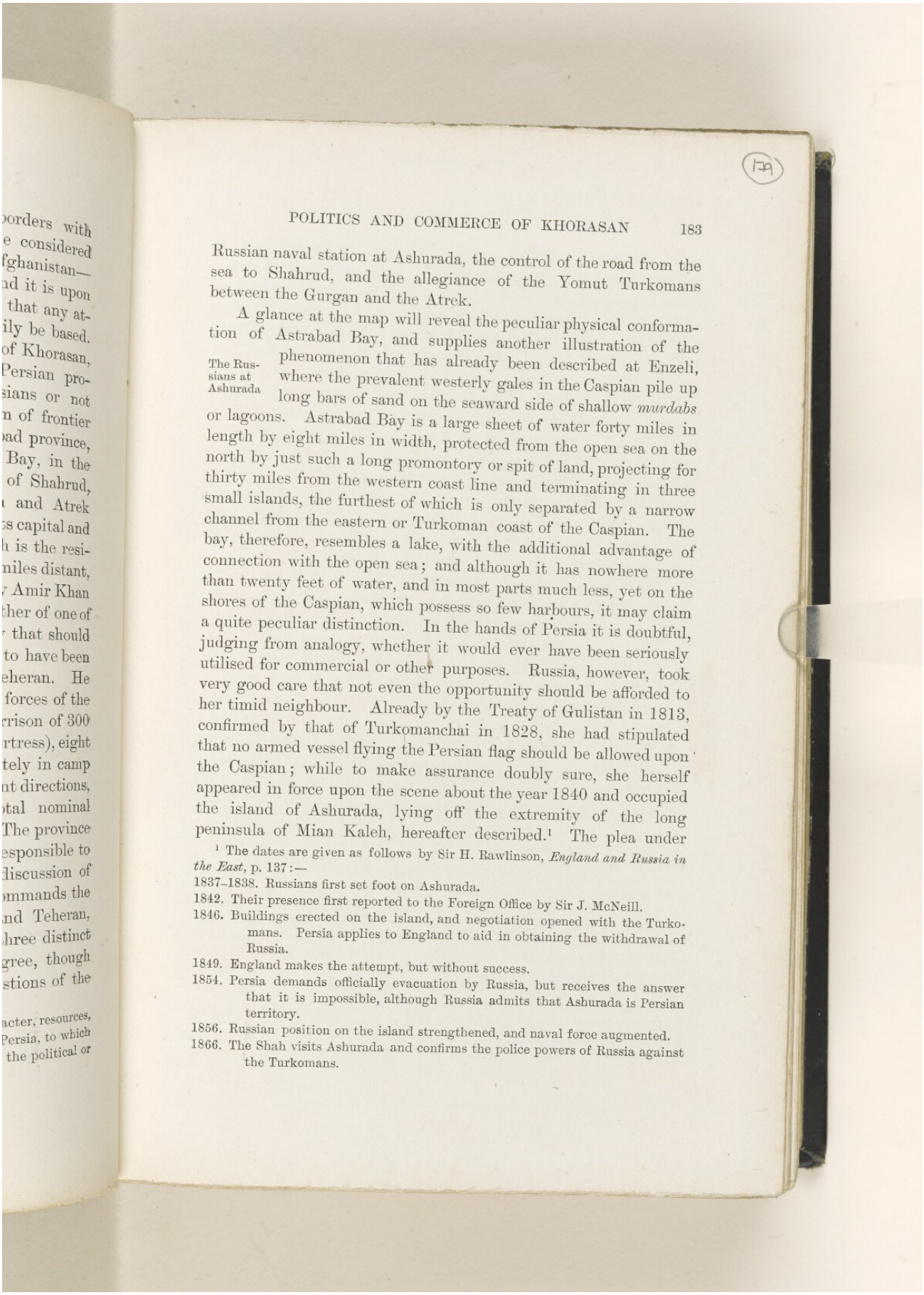
above all in the juxtaposition of their extended borders with those of two foreign Powers, neither of whom can be considered as other than hostile—namely, Russia and Afghanistan—that the Khorasan Question finds its birth; and it is upon a consideration of these manifold elements that any attempt either to comprehend or to solve it must primarily be based.

Origin of the Khorasan Question

The greater part of the western and southern limits of Khorasan, not being border districts, but abutting upon other Persian provinces, and being either inhabited by Persians or not inhabited at all, play no part in the problem of frontier policy. This may be said to commence with the Astrabad province, occupying the neck of land between the Astrabad Bay, in the south-east corner of the Caspian, and the district of Shahrud, and also a stretch of fertile soil between the Gurgan and Atrek rivers as far east as the 56th parallel of longitude.[1] Its capital and only city is Astrabad, with a population of 8,000, which is the residence of the Governor. Its port is Bunder-i-Gez, thirty miles distant, on the bay before named. The Governor was till recently Amir Khan Serdar, the Saif-el-Mulk, a young man, who is the brother of one of the Shah's wives. He was said to possess every quality that should disqualify him for the discharge of such an office, and to have been merely sent to Astrabad in order to get rid of him at Teheran. He has since either been superseded or has resigned. The forces of the Astrabad province are nominally 3,800, of whom a garrison of 300 is stationed at the fortified post of Ak Kaleh (White Fortress), eight miles from the capital, on the Gurgan; 2,900 were lately in camp at the same place; and the rest are scattered in different directions, or are not under arms at all; one-fourth of the total nominal strength being a very moderate deduction for absentees. The province of Astrabad, though distinct from Khorasan and not responsible to the Governor-General, cannot be omitted from any discussion of the politics of the larger area, for the reason that it commands the western approaches thereto from the rest of Persia and Teheran, and that it is directly concerned in the solution of three distinct questions, each affecting Khorasan in the closest degree, though only touching it from without. These are the questions of the

Astrabad province

[1] Something more will be said of the Astrabad province, its character, resources, climate, and capital, in a chapter on the Northern Provinces of Persia, to which I refer my readers. Here it is only treated in its bearing upon the political or frontier problem.





Russian naval station at Ashurada, the control of the road from the sea to Shahrud, and the allegiance of the Yomut Turkomans between the Gurgan and the Atrek.

A glance at the map will reveal the peculiar physical conformation of Astrabad Bay, and supplies another illustration of the phenomenon that has already been described at Enzeli, where the prevalent westerly gales in the Caspian pile up long bars of sand on the seaward side of shallow *murdabs* or lagoons. Astrabad Bay is a large sheet of water forty miles in length by eight miles in width, protected from the open sea on the north by just such a long promontory or spit of land, projecting for thirty miles from the western coast line and terminating in three small islands, the furthest of which is only separated by a narrow channel from the eastern or Turkoman coast of the Caspian. The bay, therefore, resembles a lake, with the additional advantage of connection with the open sea; and although it has nowhere more than twenty feet of water, and in most parts much less, yet on the shores of the Caspian, which possess so few harbours, it may claim a quite peculiar distinction. In the hands of Persia it is doubtful, judging from analogy, whether it would ever have been seriously utilised for commercial or other purposes. Russia, however, took very good care that not even the opportunity should be afforded to her timid neighbour. Already by the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, confirmed by that of Turkomanchai in 1828, she had stipulated that no armed vessel flying the Persian flag should be allowed upon the Caspian; while to make assurance doubly sure, she herself appeared in force upon the scene about the year 1840 and occupied the island of Ashurada, lying off the extremity of the long peninsula of Mian Kaleh, hereafter described.[1] The plea under

The Russians at Ashurada

[1] The dates are given as follows by Sir H. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, p. 137:—

1837–1838. Russians first set foot on Ashurada.
1842. Their presence first reported to the Foreign Office by Sir J. McNeill.
1846. Buildings erected on the island, and negotiation opened with the Turkomans. Persia applies to England to aid in obtaining the withdrawal of Russia.
1849. England makes the attempt, but without success.
1854. Persia demands officially evacuation by Russia, but receives the answer that it is impossible, although Russia admits that Ashurada is Persian territory.
1856. Russian position on the island strengthened, and naval force augmented.
1866. The Shah visits Ashurada and confirms the police powers of Russia against the Turkomans.

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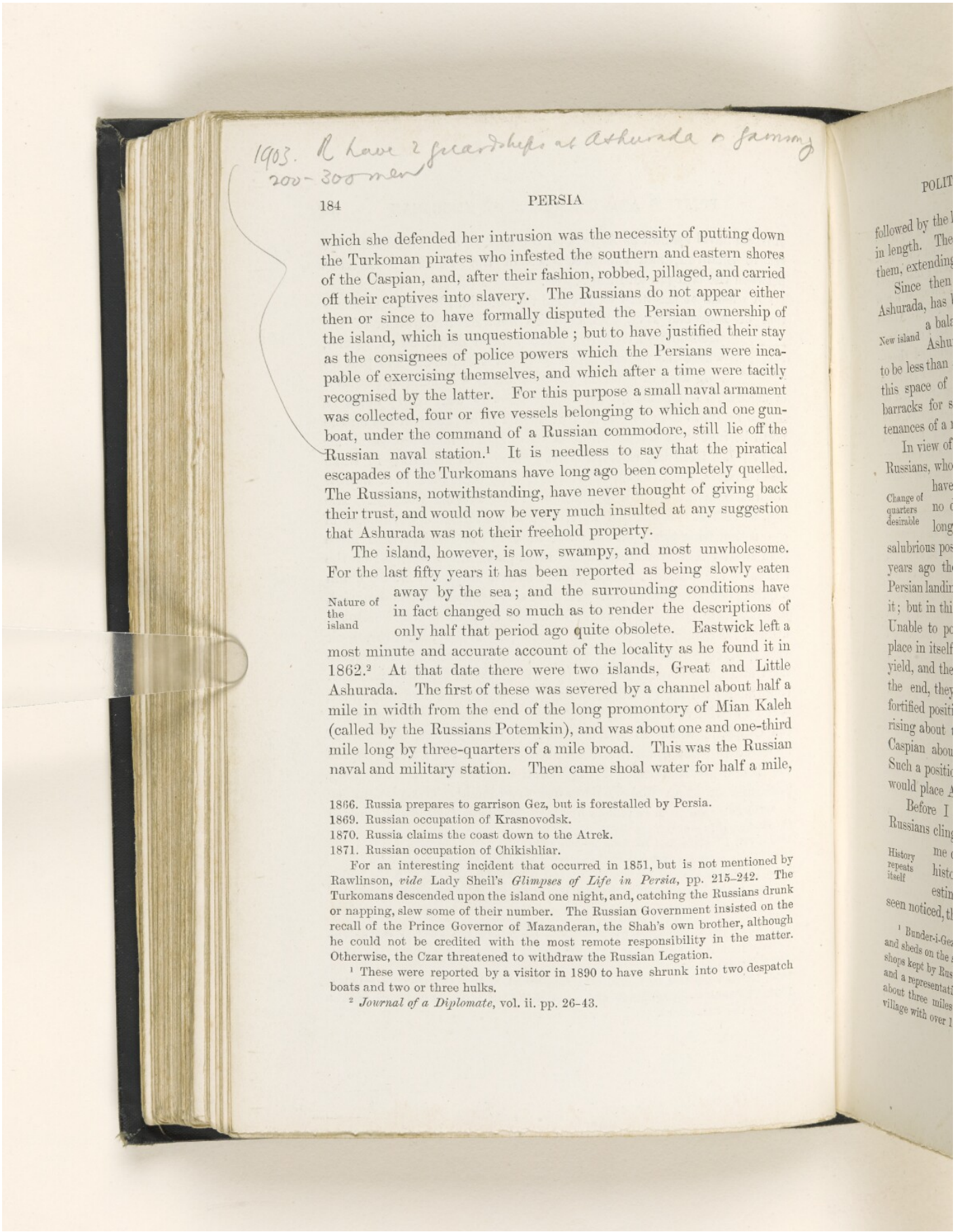

1903. R have 2 guardships at Ashurada & gaming 200-300 men



which she defended her intrusion was the necessity of putting down the Turkoman pirates who infested the southern and eastern shores of the Caspian, and, after their fashion, robbed, pillaged, and carried off their captives into slavery. The Russians do not appear either then or since to have formally disputed the Persian ownership of the island, which is unquestionable; but to have justified their stay as the consignees of police powers which the Persians were incapable of exercising themselves, and which after a time were tacitly recognised by the latter. For this purpose a small naval armament was collected, four or five vessels belonging to which and one gunboat, under the command of a Russian commodore, still lie off the Russian naval station.[1] It is needless to say that the piratical escapades of the Turkomans have long ago been completely quelled. The Russians, notwithstanding, have never thought of giving back their trust, and would now be very much insulted at any suggestion that Ashurada was not their freehold property.

Nature of the island

The island, however, is low, swampy, and most unwholesome. For the last fifty years it has been reported as being slowly eaten away by the sea; and the surrounding conditions have in fact changed so much as to render the descriptions of only half that period ago quite obsolete. Eastwick left a most minute and accurate account of the locality as he found it in 1862.[2] At that date there were two islands, Great and Little Ashurada. The first of these was severed by a channel about half a mile in width from the end of the long promontory of Mian Kaleh (called by the Russians Potemkin), and was about one and one-third mile long by three-quarters of a mile broad. This was the Russian naval and military station. Then came shoal water for half a mile,

1866. Russia prepares to garrison Gez, but is forestalled by Persia.
1869. Russian occupation of Krasnovodsk.
1870. Russia claims the coast down to the Atrek.
1871. Russian occupation of Chikishliar.

For an interesting incident that occurred in 1851, but is not mentioned by Rawlinson, *vide* Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life in Persia*, pp. 215–242. The Turkomans descended upon the island one night, and, catching the Russians drunk or napping, slew some of their number. The Russian Government insisted on the recall of the Prince Governor of Mazanderan, the Shah's own brother, although he could not be credited with the most remote responsibility in the matter. Otherwise, the Czar threatened to withdraw the Russian Legation.

[1] These were reported by a visitor in 1890 to have shrunk into two despatch boats and two or three hulks.

[2] *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 26–43.

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followed by the low sand spit known as Little Ashurada, two miles in length. Then came more shoals, with a narrow passage between them, extending to the Turkoman coast.

New island

Since then a third island, which the Russians call Middle Ashurada, has been formed between the other two, while to strike a balance the erosive process has been going on at Great Ashurada to such an extent that the island is now reported to be less than a mile long by only one-third of a mile wide. Upon this space of ground are built the quarters of the commodore, barracks for soldiers, a church, club-house, and the usual appurtenances of a military station.

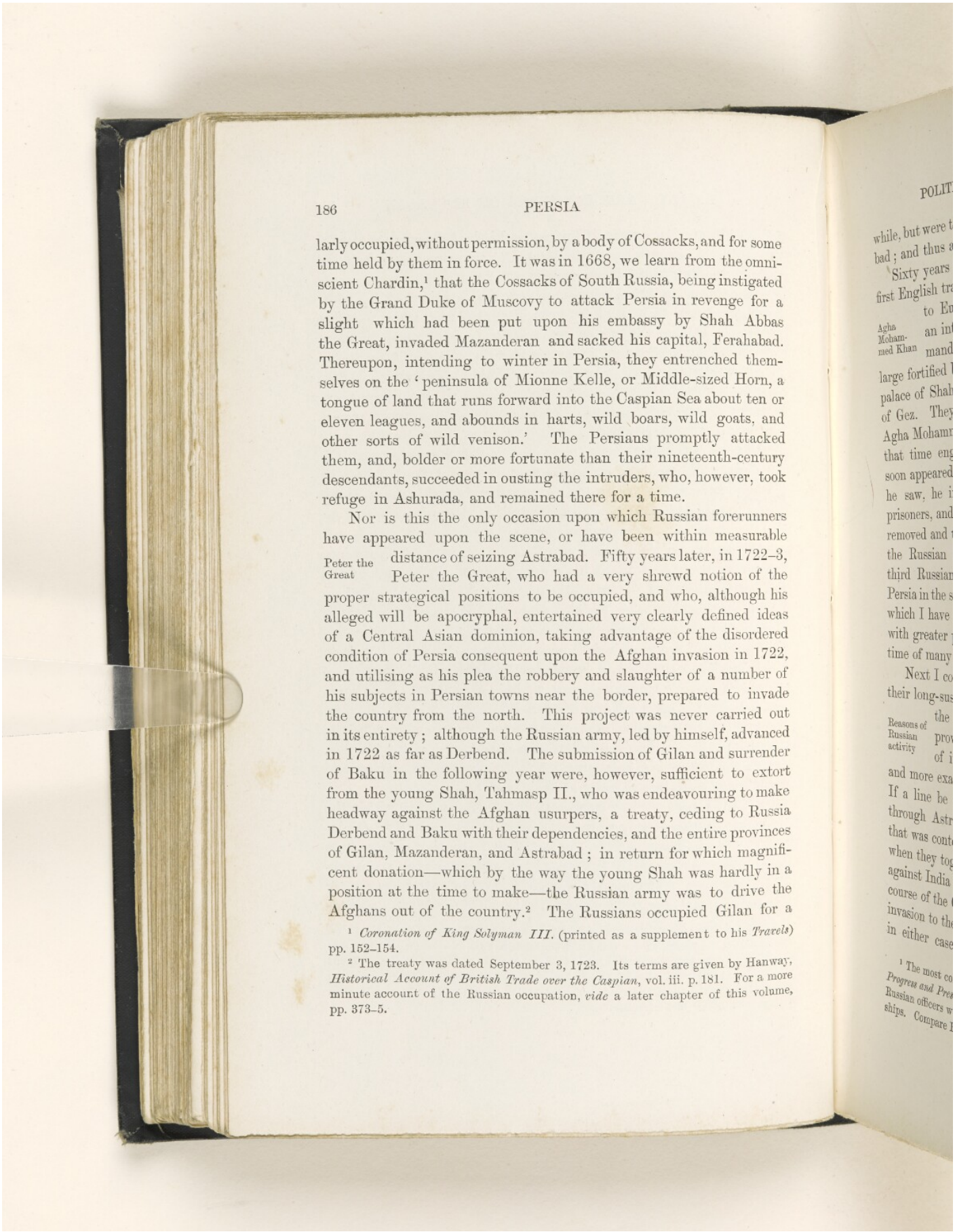
Change of quarters desirable

In view of the facts here narrated it is not surprising that the Russians, who since the complete subjugation of the Turkomans have next to nothing to do at Ashurada, and have really no defensible *raison d'être* in the place, should have for long turned covetous eyes upon some more secure and salubrious post on the inner line of the bay. More than twenty years ago they are said to have contemplated the seizure of the Persian landing-place of Gez, on the mainland, by offering to garrison it; but in this they were forestalled by the Persian Government. Unable to possess themselves of Gez, which, though a wretched place in itself,[1] the Shah would be in the last degree reluctant to yield, and the occupation of which would signify the beginning of the end, they are rumoured now to be desirous of obtaining a fortified position on the Kara Su (or Black Water), a small river rising about thirty miles east of Astrabad, and flowing into the Caspian about six miles south of the *embouchure* of the Gurgan. Such a position would be equivalent to the occupation of Gez, and would place Astrabad literally at their mercy.

History repeats itself

Before I pass to the question of the reasons for which the Russians cling so closely to their foothold in this unlovely spot, let me call attention to the fact that in their presence there history is merely repeating itself. It is a strange and interesting coincidence, although it is one which I have never seen noticed, that over 200 years ago the island of Ashurada was simi-

[1] Bunder-i-Gez, sometimes also called Kinara, is a miserable collection of huts and sheds on the shore, with a large caravanserai, a Persian Custom House, a few shops kept by Russian Armenians, and the residences of a Russian Consular Agent and a representative of the Caucasus and Mercury Steamship Company. It is about three miles from the village of Gez, which is an ordinary Persian forest-village with over 1,000 inhabitants.





larly occupied, without permission, by a body of Cossacks, and for some time held by them in force. It was in 1668, we learn from the omniscient Chardin,[1] that the Cossacks of South Russia, being instigated by the Grand Duke of Muscovy to attack Persia in revenge for a slight which had been put upon his embassy by Shah Abbas the Great, invaded Mazanderan and sacked his capital, Ferahabad. Thereupon, intending to winter in Persia, they entrenched themselves on the 'peninsula of Mionne Kelle, or Middle-sized Horn, a tongue of land that runs forward into the Caspian Sea about ten or eleven leagues, and abounds in harts, wild boars, wild goats, and other sorts of wild venison.' The Persians promptly attacked them, and, bolder or more fortunate than their nineteenth-century descendants, succeeded in ousting the intruders, who, however, took refuge in Ashurada, and remained there for a time.

Nor is this the only occasion upon which Russian forerunners have appeared upon the scene, or have been within measurable distance of seizing Astrabad. Fifty years later, in 1722–3, Peter the Great, who had a very shrewd notion of the proper strategical positions to be occupied, and who, although his alleged will be apocryphal, entertained very clearly defined ideas of a Central Asian dominion, taking advantage of the disordered condition of Persia consequent upon the Afghan invasion in 1722, and utilising as his plea the robbery and slaughter of a number of his subjects in Persian towns near the border, prepared to invade the country from the north. This project was never carried out in its entirety; although the Russian army, led by himself, advanced in 1722 as far as Derbend. The submission of Gilan and surrender of Baku in the following year were, however, sufficient to extort from the young Shah, Tahmasp II., who was endeavouring to make headway against the Afghan usurpers, a treaty, ceding to Russia Derbend and Baku with their dependencies, and the entire provinces of Gilan, Mazanderan, and Astrabad; in return for which magnificent donation—which by the way the young Shah was hardly in a position at the time to make—the Russian army was to drive the Afghans out of the country.[2] The Russians occupied Gilan for a

Peter the Great

[1] *Coronation of King Solyman III.* (printed as a supplement to his *Travels*) pp. 152–154.

[2] The treaty was dated September 3, 1723. Its terms are given by Hanway, *Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian*, vol. iii. p. 181. For a more minute account of the Russian occupation, *vide* a later chapter of this volume, pp. 373–5.

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B. of Trade Journal

For new edition (Jan-May 1892 inclus

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Cotton Cultivation in Central Asia

Board of Trade Journal

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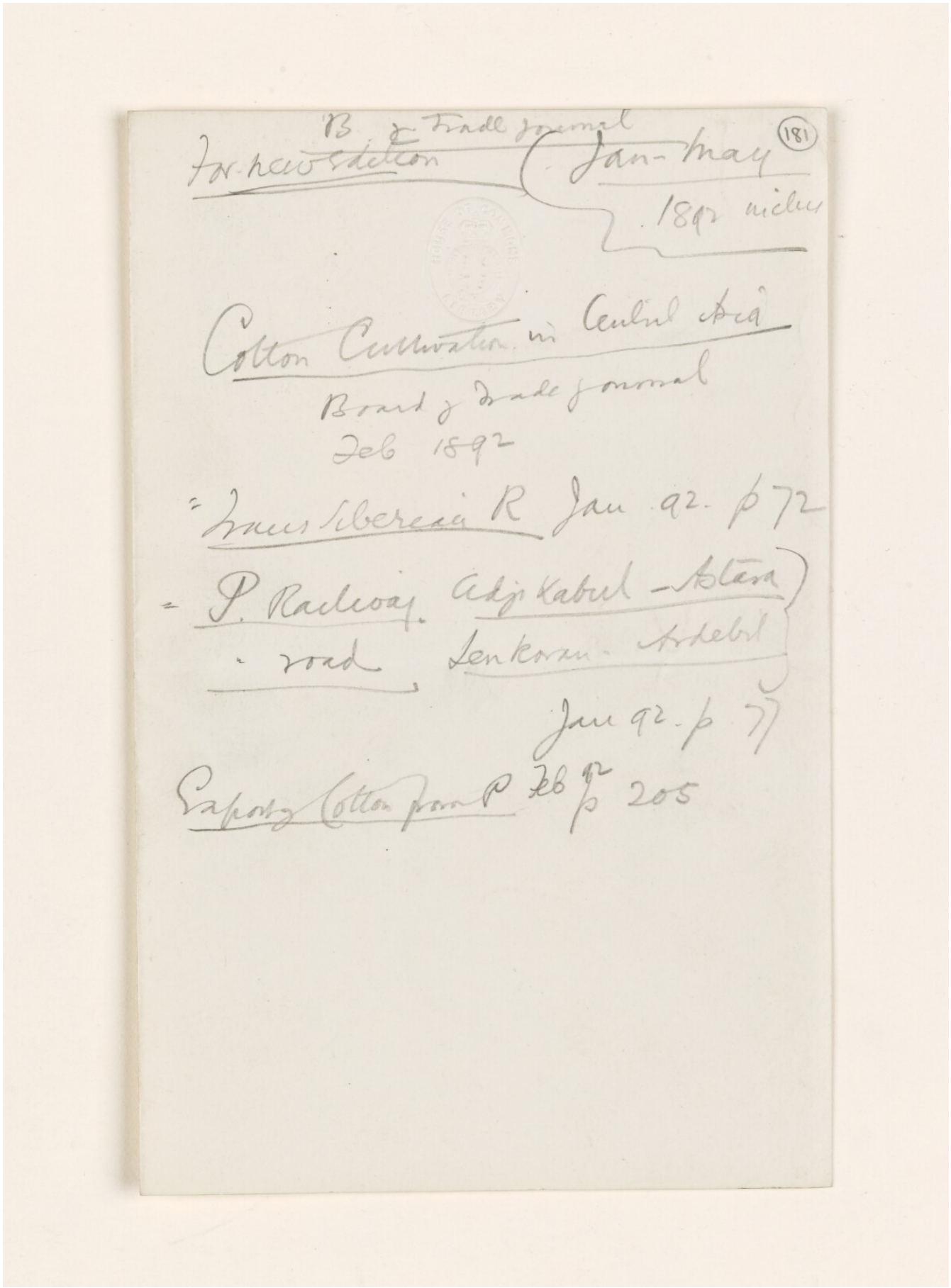
= Trans Siberian R Jan 92. p 72

= P. Railway Adj Kabul - Astara road Lenkoran - Ardebil

Jan 92. p 77

Exports of Cotton from P Feb 92 p 205



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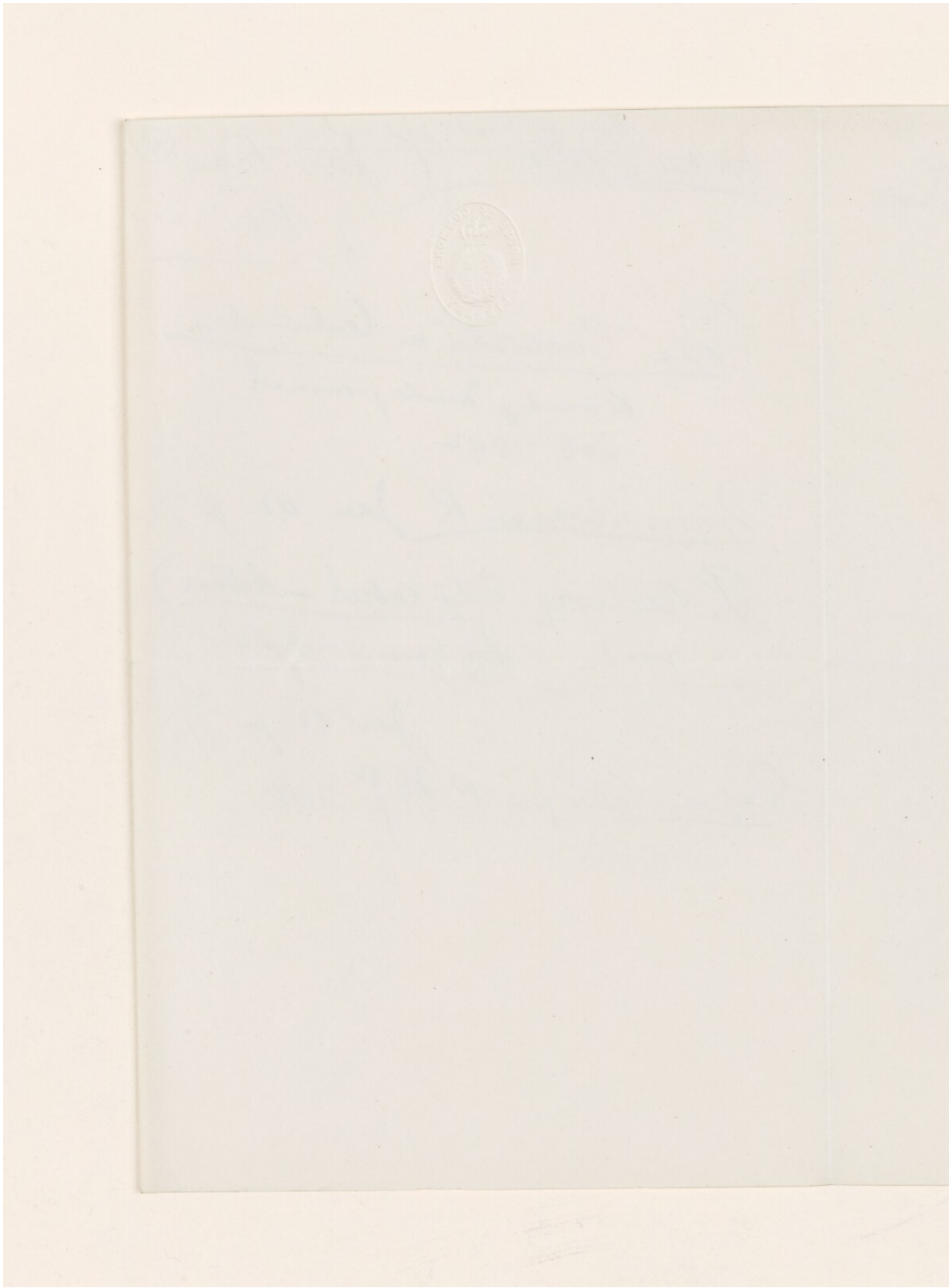

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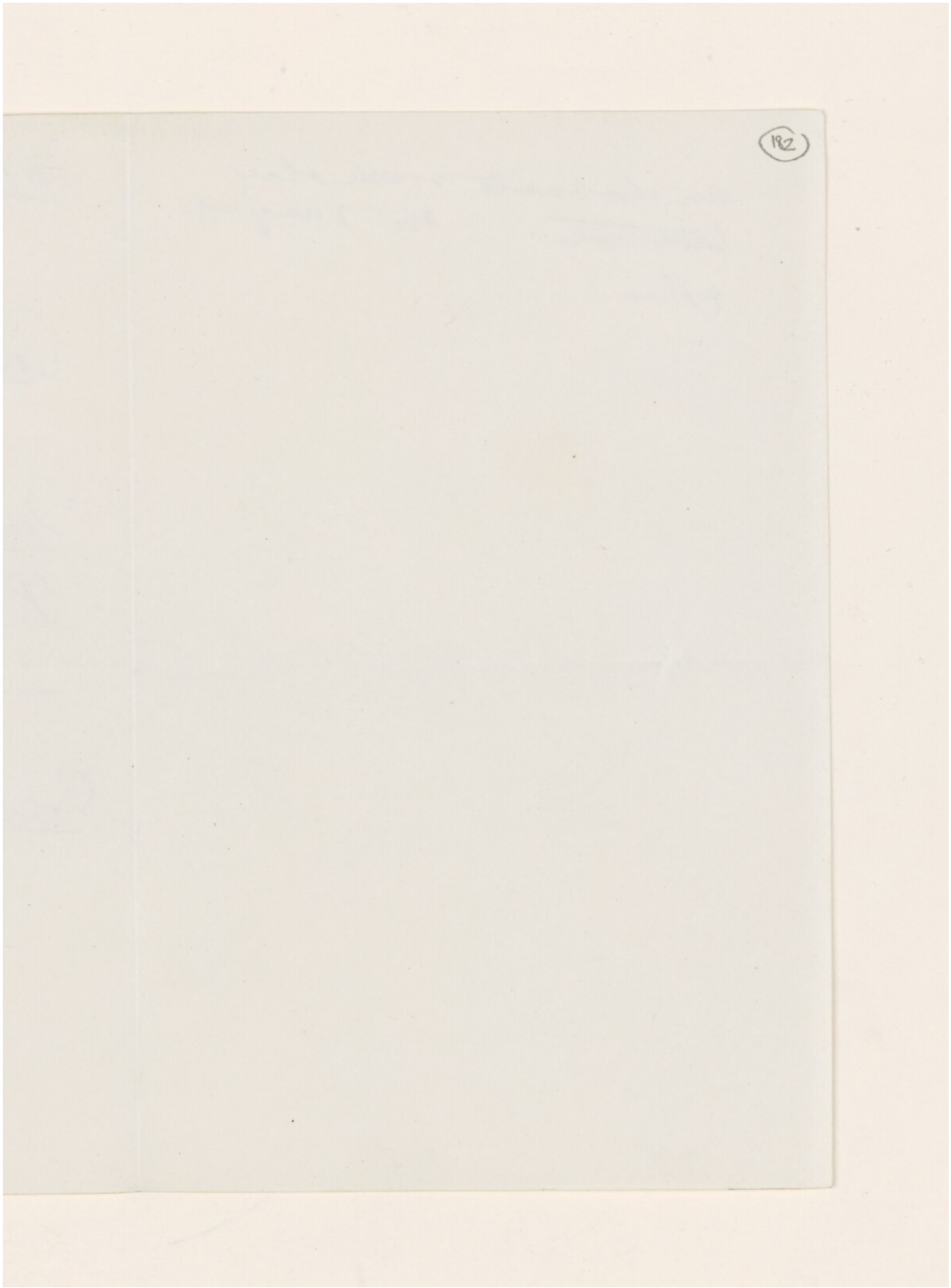


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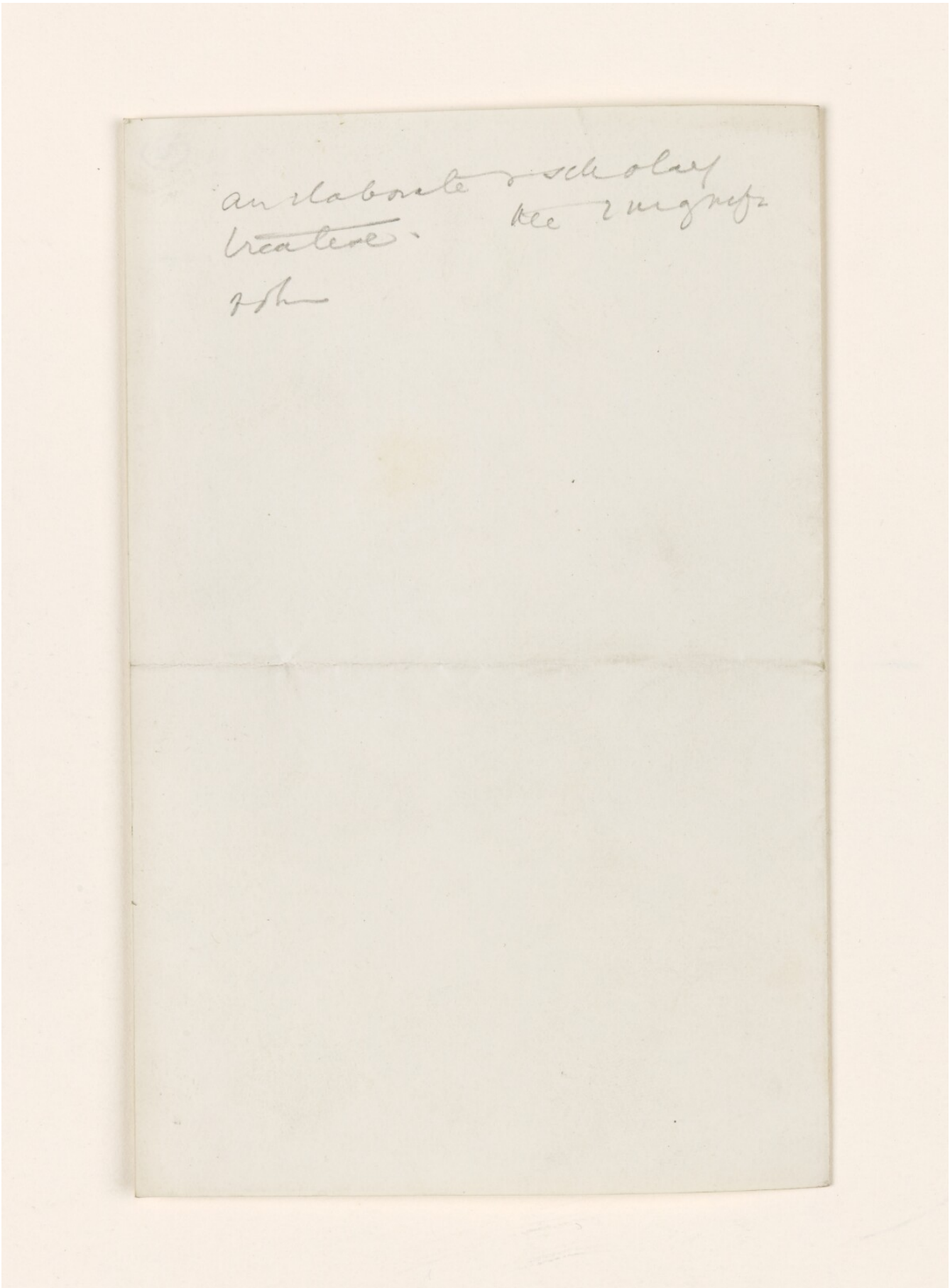

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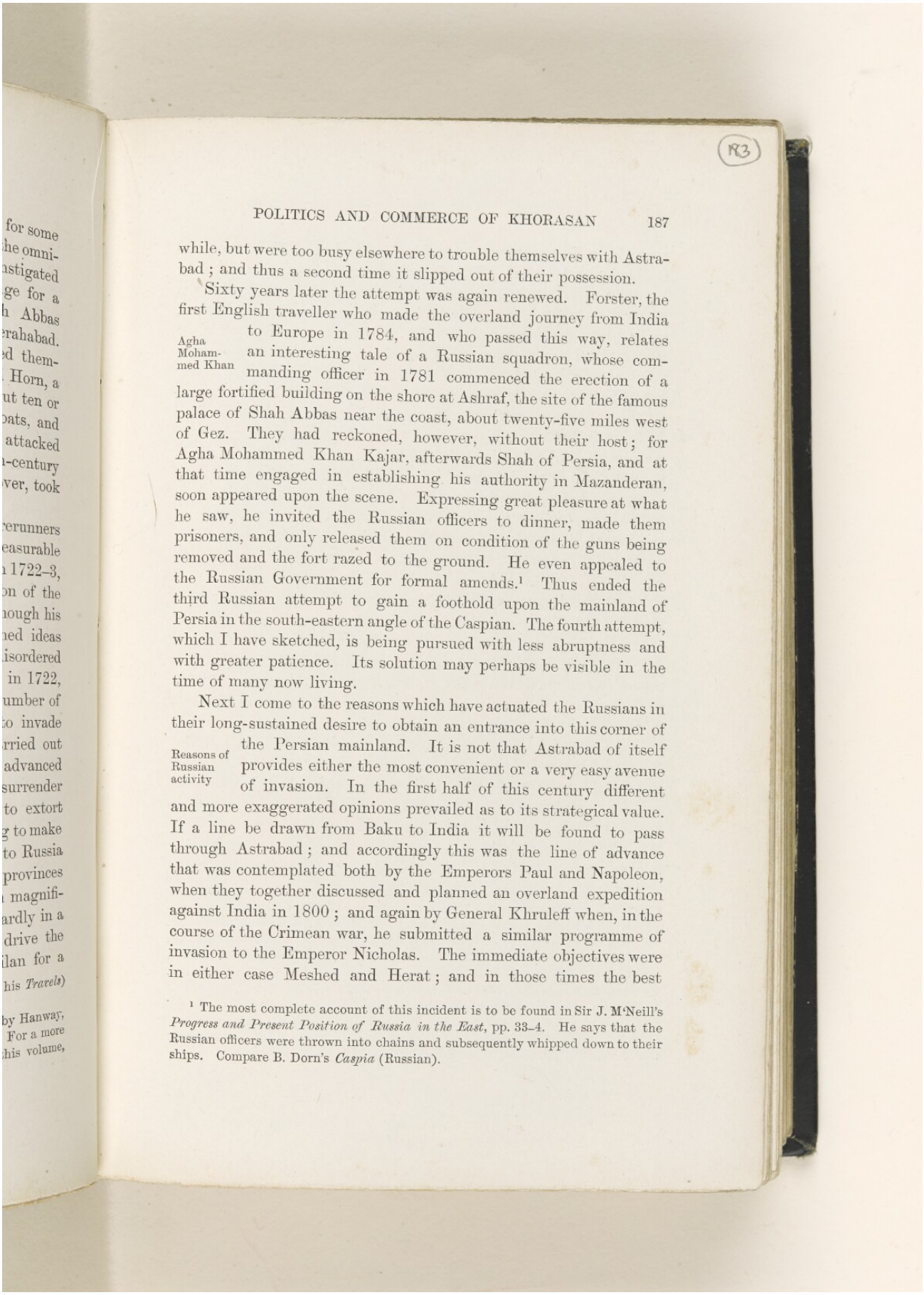



while, but were too busy elsewhere to trouble themselves with Astrabad; and thus a second time it slipped out of their possession.

Agha Mohammed Khan

Sixty years later the attempt was again renewed. Forster, the first English traveller who made the overland journey from India to Europe in 1784, and who passed this way, relates an interesting tale of a Russian squadron, whose commanding officer in 1781 commenced the erection of a large fortified building on the shore at Ashraf, the site of the famous palace of Shah Abbas near the coast, about twenty-five miles west of Gez. They had reckoned, however, without their host; for Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar, afterwards Shah of Persia, and at that time engaged in establishing his authority in Mazanderan, soon appeared upon the scene. Expressing great pleasure at what he saw, he invited the Russian officers to dinner, made them prisoners, and only released them on condition of the guns being removed and the fort razed to the ground. He even appealed to the Russian Government for formal amends.[1] Thus ended the third Russian attempt to gain a foothold upon the mainland of Persia in the south-eastern angle of the Caspian. The fourth attempt, which I have sketched, is being pursued with less abruptness and with greater patience. Its solution may perhaps be visible in the time of many now living.

Reasons of Russian activity

Next I come to the reasons which have actuated the Russians in their long-sustained desire to obtain an entrance into this corner of the Persian mainland. It is not that Astrabad of itself provides either the most convenient or a very easy avenue of invasion. In the first half of this century different and more exaggerated opinions prevailed as to its strategical value. If a line be drawn from Baku to India it will be found to pass through Astrabad; and accordingly this was the line of advance that was contemplated both by the Emperors Paul and Napoleon, when they together discussed and planned an overland expedition against India in 1800; and again by General Khruleff when, in the course of the Crimean war, he submitted a similar programme of invasion to the Emperor Nicholas. The immediate objectives were in either case Meshed and Herat; and in those times the best

[1] The most complete account of this incident is to be found in Sir J. M'Neill's *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*, pp. 33–4. He says that the Russian officers were thrown into chains and subsequently whipped down to their ships. Compare B. Dorn's *Caspia* (Russian).

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route for a European army marching to Meshed or Herat was undoubtedly by Astrabad. But since then the Transcaspian situation has been revolutionised. Russia sits securely where the Turkoman terror formerly reigned. Meshed can be smitten from Ashkabad, and Herat from Merv and Penjdeh, without any necessity for the lengthy land march from the Caspian. Astrabad, therefore, as a point of debarkation, has not the value for Russia that it formerly had. Nor are its own resources sufficient, so far as can be ascertained, to support a very large army in the field, although it is said that, in 1863, a Persian army of 30,000 men remained encamped for eight months in the neighbourhood. Its value is now not so much offensive as defensive. Its eye may be said to look not eastwards, but westwards; and its strategical importance is involved in the second of the questions which I named above, viz. the control of the Shahrud road and the position which it consequently enables its occupant to take up against the rest of Persia and the capital.

The Astrabad-Shahrud position

Astrabad is separated from Shahrud by the Shah Kuh, or main range of the Elburz mountains, which here retain a distinct physical individuality before they are broken up into the manifold ridges of northern Khorasan. The highest peak of this section, fifteen miles south of Astrabad, attains an altitude of 13,000 feet. Across the range there are two passes to Shahrud, a distance by the mule track of sixty-five miles, one of which at least, in spite of the elevation and of the nature of the country, might be converted into an excellent military road.[1] An army marching by either of these and seizing Shahrud, which is absolutely defenceless, would find itself in this position. It would, in the first place, be surrounded by a district of considerable fertility and abundant water supply, capable even in summer of sustaining a large army.[2] Secondly, it would hold the point of junction of the

[1] The two roads between Shahrud and Astrabad (one by the Kuzluk Pass, the other by Ziarat) are described by Lieut. A. Conolly (1830), *Overland Journey to India*, vol. i. pp. 182–184; Captain Claude Clerk (1872), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvii. pp. 193–194; Colonel B. Lovett (1881), Ditto (New Series), vol. v. pp. 75–84 (1883). The road from Astrabad to Gez (27 miles) is described by E. B. Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 45–49; Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 114, 115; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 163–166.

[2] Colonel Val. Baker (*Clouds in the East*, p. 142) said that the plain of Bostam (which is the district surrounding Shahrud, Bostam, three miles distant, being the residence of the Governor) could maintain an army of 60,000 men.

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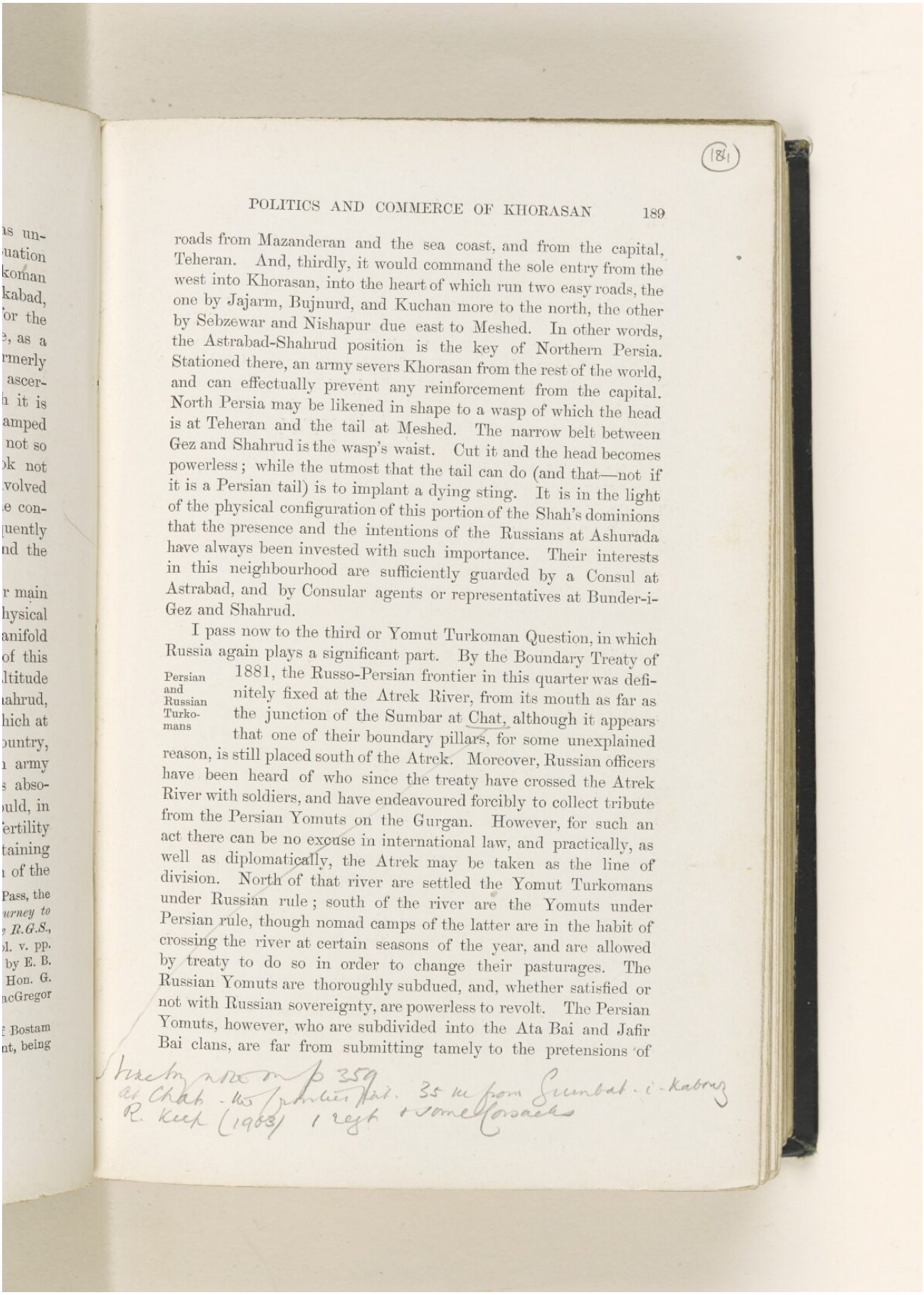



roads from Mazanderan and the sea coast, and from the capital, Teheran. And, thirdly, it would command the sole entry from the west into Khorasan, into the heart of which run two easy roads, the one by Jajarm, Bujnurd, and Kuchan more to the north, the other by Sebzewar and Nishapur due east to Meshed. In other words, the Astrabad-Shahrud position is the key of Northern Persia. Stationed there, an army severs Khorasan from the rest of the world, and can effectually prevent any reinforcement from the capital. North Persia may be likened in shape to a wasp of which the head is at Teheran and the tail at Meshed. The narrow belt between Gez and Shahrud is the wasp's waist. Cut it and the head becomes powerless; while the utmost that the tail can do (and that—not if it is a Persian tail) is to implant a dying sting. It is in the light of the physical configuration of this portion of the Shah's dominions that the presence and the intentions of the Russians at Ashurada have always been invested with such importance. Their interests in this neighbourhood are sufficiently guarded by a Consul at Astrabad, and by Consular agents or representatives at Bunder-i-Gez and Shahrud.

I pass now to the third or Yomut Turkoman Question, in which Russia again plays a significant part. By the Boundary Treaty of

Persian and Russian Turkomans

1881, the Russo-Persian frontier in this quarter was definitely fixed at the Atrek River, from its mouth as far as the junction of the Sumbar at Chat, although it appears that one of their boundary pillars, for some unexplained reason, is still placed south of the Atrek. Moreover, Russian officers have been heard of who since the treaty have crossed the Atrek River with soldiers, and have endeavoured forcibly to collect tribute from the Persian Yomuts on the Gurgan. However, for such an act there can be no excuse in international law, and practically, as well as diplomatically, the Atrek may be taken as the line of division. North of that river are settled the Yomut Turkomans under Russian rule; south of the river are the Yomuts under Persian rule, though nomad camps of the latter are in the habit of crossing the river at certain seasons of the year, and are allowed by treaty to do so in order to change their pasturages. The Russian Yomuts are thoroughly subdued, and, whether satisfied or not with Russian sovereignty, are powerless to revolt. The Persian Yomuts, however, who are subdivided into the Ata Bai and Jafir Bai clans, are far from submitting tamely to the pretensions of

Insert note on p 359
at Chat - No frontier Pat. 35 m from Sumbat-i-Kaboud
R. Atrek (1903) 1 regt + some Cossacks

Persian authority, and were during the year 1888–9 in active rebellion. Further to the east are the Goklan Turkomans, a more submissive people, who, in order to escape the hereditary enmity of the Yomuts, have tranquilly accepted the Persian yoke, pay revenue to the Shah's exchequer, and provide him with a body of 300 irregular cavalry.[1]

Rebellion of the Persian Yomuts

The rebellion of the Yomuts began in February 1888, and was not finally extinguished till March 1889. It appears to have been fomented by, if not to have entirely arisen from, the scandalous misgovernment of the Persian authorities. So serious, however, did the movement become that at one time 13,000 Persian troops, under the command of the Governor-General of Khorasan, the Khans of Bujnurd and Kuchan, and the Prince Governor of Astrabad, were in the field against them. Almost incredible stories are related of the cowardice of the Persian troops, large bodies of 1,000 and 2,000 men being checked and routed in open daylight by a few scores, or at most hundreds, of Turkoman horsemen. It is only fair to add that the Persian soldiers were perhaps as much actuated by discontent as by cowardice in these discreditable proceedings. At least one-half of their pay, when it came from Teheran, was pocketed by the Saif-el-Mulk; and to expect these ill-fed, ill-clothed, and unpaid wretches to fight was perhaps more than human. Savage acts of violence occurred on both sides, particularly on that of the Persians, who spared neither the lives of the men nor the honour of the women who fell into their hands. At length the revolt was brought to an end by the familiar Persian methods of treachery and intrigue. The clans were induced to turn against each other; and, finally, the leading Ata Bai chieftain, Haji Nazar Khan, who had been the life and soul of the rising, was enticed into Persian territory and killed. The revolt then collapsed.[2]

Episodes such as this not merely display the lamentable incapacity of the Central Government, but they can have but one ulterior consequence—the encouragement of Russian pretensions on the north. It is well known that that Power claims, and

[1] The weakness of the Astrabad Government is shown by the fact that, although the Goklan Turkomans reside within the nominal borders of the Astrabad province, their tribute is collected and their levies are commanded by the Ilkhani of Bujnurd.

[2] For information about the Yomut Turkomans, *vide* Aucher Eloy (1836), *Relations de Voyages*, pp. 331–36, and notes by Kazi Syud Ahmed, printed in the *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. p. 142 (1876).

The Saif ul Mulk afterwards repress[2] Persia at the Jubilee of 1897 as Amir Khan Sardar & finally became Sipah Salar. He died about 1904

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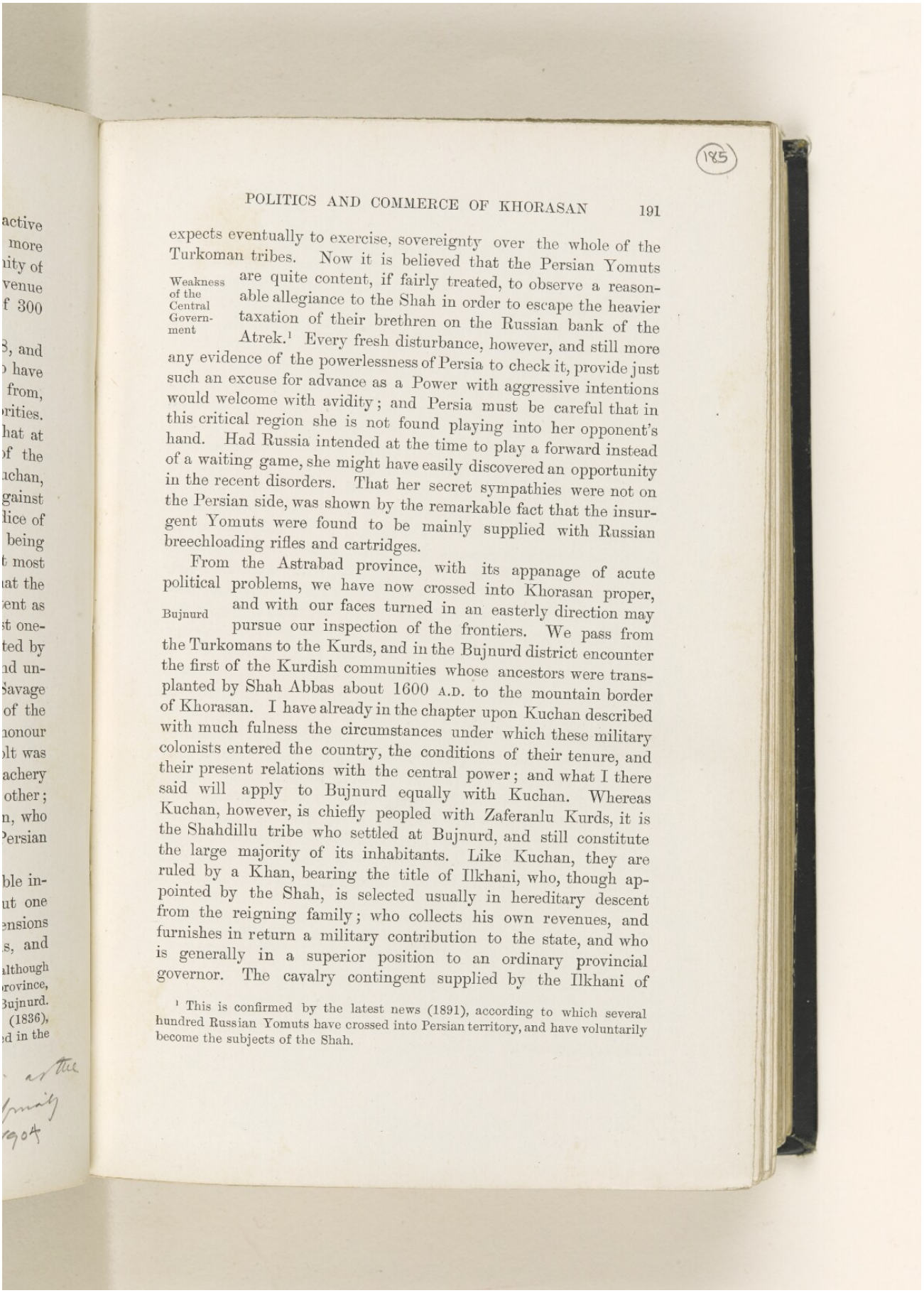



expects eventually to exercise, sovereignty over the whole of the Turkoman tribes. Now it is believed that the Persian Yomuts are quite content, if fairly treated, to observe a reasonable allegiance to the Shah in order to escape the heavier taxation of their brethren on the Russian bank of the Atrek.[1] Every fresh disturbance, however, and still more any evidence of the powerlessness of Persia to check it, provide just such an excuse for advance as a Power with aggressive intentions would welcome with avidity; and Persia must be careful that in this critical region she is not found playing into her opponent's hand. Had Russia intended at the time to play a forward instead of a waiting game, she might have easily discovered an opportunity in the recent disorders. That her secret sympathies were not on the Persian side, was shown by the remarkable fact that the insurgent Yomuts were found to be mainly supplied with Russian breechloading rifles and cartridges.

Weakness of the Central Government

From the Astrabad province, with its appanage of acute political problems, we have now crossed into Khorasan proper, and with our faces turned in an easterly direction may pursue our inspection of the frontiers. We pass from the Turkomans to the Kurds, and in the Bujnurd district encounter the first of the Kurdish communities whose ancestors were transplanted by Shah Abbas about 1600 A.D. to the mountain border of Khorasan. I have already in the chapter upon Kuchan described with much fulness the circumstances under which these military colonists entered the country, the conditions of their tenure, and their present relations with the central power; and what I there said will apply to Bujnurd equally with Kuchan. Whereas Kuchan, however, is chiefly peopled with Zaferanlu Kurds, it is the Shahdillu tribe who settled at Bujnurd, and still constitute the large majority of its inhabitants. Like Kuchan, they are ruled by a Khan, bearing the title of Ilkhani, who, though appointed by the Shah, is selected usually in hereditary descent from the reigning family; who collects his own revenues, and furnishes in return a military contribution to the state, and who is generally in a superior position to an ordinary provincial governor. The cavalry contingent supplied by the Ilkhani of

Bujnurd

[1] This is confirmed by the latest news (1891), according to which several hundred Russian Yomuts have crossed into Persian territory, and have voluntarily become the subjects of the Shah.

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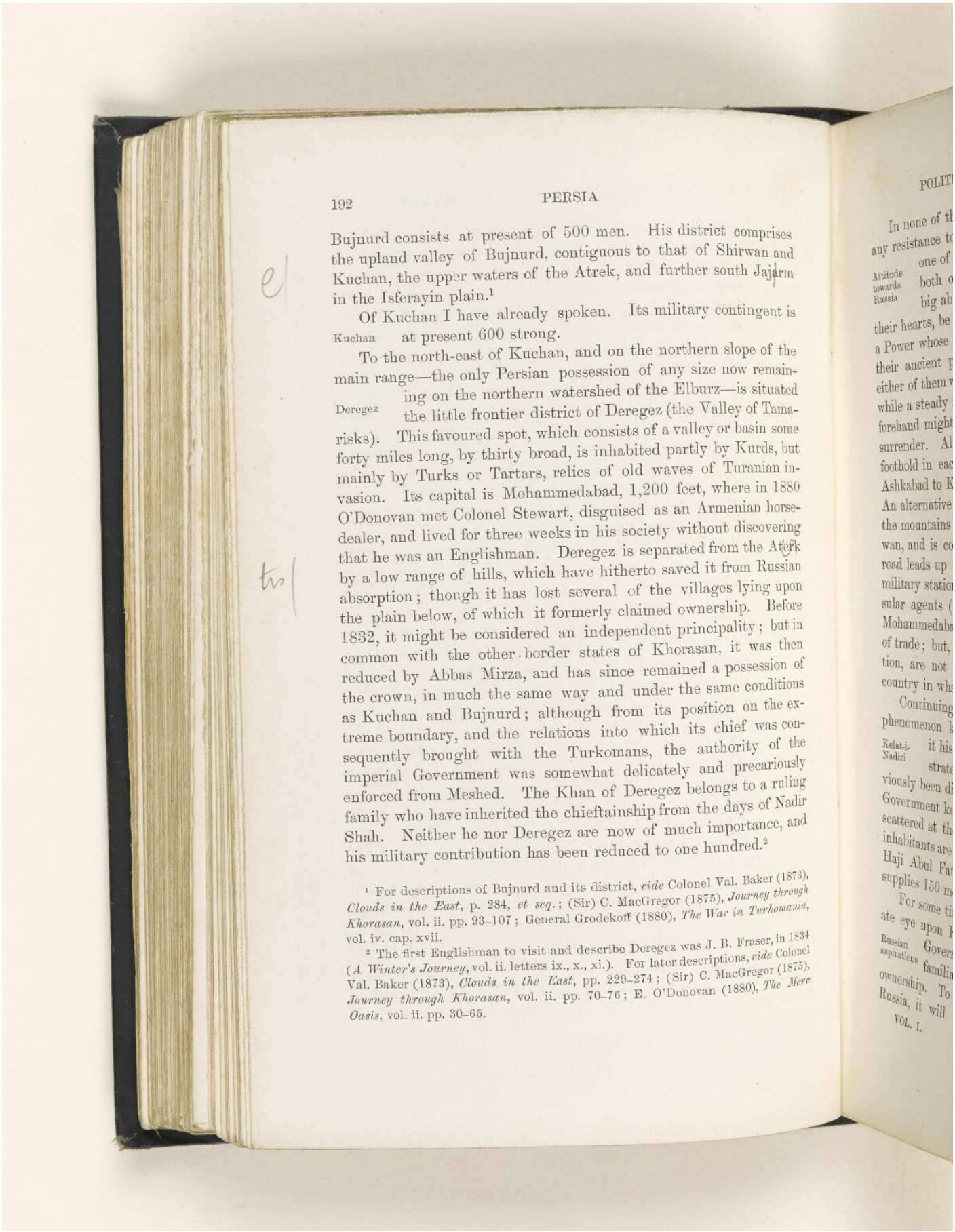



Bujnurd consists at present of 500 men. His district comprises the upland valley of Bujnurd, contiguous to that of Shirwan and Kuchan, the upper waters of the Atrek, and further south Jajarm in the Isferayin plain.[1]

Kuchan

Of Kuchan I have already spoken. Its military contingent is at present 600 strong.

Deregez

To the north-east of Kuchan, and on the northern slope of the main range—the only Persian possession of any size now remaining on the northern watershed of the Elburz—is situated the little frontier district of Deregez (the Valley of Tamarisks). This favoured spot, which consists of a valley or basin some forty miles long, by thirty broad, is inhabited partly by Kurds, but mainly by Turks or Tartars, relics of old waves of Turanian invasion. Its capital is Mohammedabad, 1,200 feet, where in 1880 O'Donovan met Colonel Stewart, disguised as an Armenian horse-dealer, and lived for three weeks in his society without discovering that he was an Englishman. Deregez is separated from the Atrek by a low range of hills, which have hitherto saved it from Russian absorption; though it has lost several of the villages lying upon the plain below, of which it formerly claimed ownership. Before 1832, it might be considered an independent principality; but in common with the other border states of Khorasan, it was then reduced by Abbas Mirza, and has since remained a possession of the crown, in much the same way and under the same conditions as Kuchan and Bujnurd; although from its position on the extreme boundary, and the relations into which its chief was consequently brought with the Turkomans, the authority of the imperial Government was somewhat delicately and precariously enforced from Meshed. The Khan of Deregez belongs to a ruling family who have inherited the chieftainship from the days of Nadir Shah. Neither he nor Deregez are now of much importance, and his military contribution has been reduced to one hundred.[2]

[1] For descriptions of Bujnurd and its district, *vide* Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, p. 284, *et seq.*; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 93–107; General Grodekoff (1880), *The War in Turkomania*, vol. iv. cap. xvii.

[2] The first Englishman to visit and describe Deregez was J. B. Fraser, in 1834 (*A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. letters ix., x., xi.). For later descriptions, *vide* Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 229–274; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 70–76; E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. ii. pp. 30–65.



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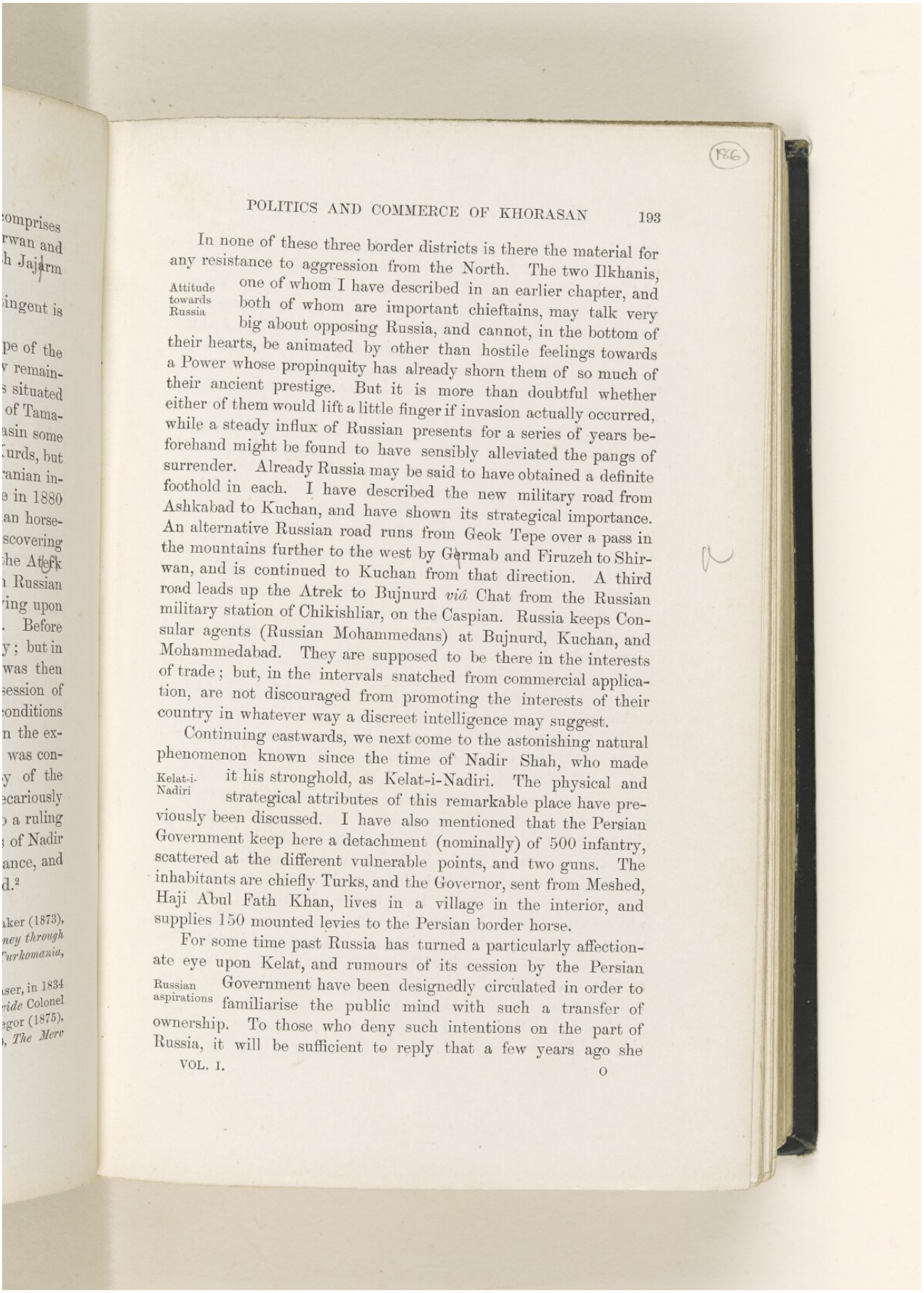



In none of these three border districts is there the material for any resistance to aggression from the North. The two Ilkhanis, one of whom I have described in an earlier chapter, and both of whom are important chieftains, may talk very big about opposing Russia, and cannot, in the bottom of their hearts, be animated by other than hostile feelings towards a Power whose propinquity has already shorn them of so much of their ancient prestige. But it is more than doubtful whether either of them would lift a little finger if invasion actually occurred, while a steady influx of Russian presents for a series of years beforehand might be found to have sensibly alleviated the pangs of surrender. Already Russia may be said to have obtained a definite foothold in each. I have described the new military road from Ashkabad to Kuchan, and have shown its strategical importance. An alternative Russian road runs from Geok Tepe over a pass in the mountains further to the west by Germab and Firuzeh to Shirwan, and is continued to Kuchan from that direction. A third road leads up the Atrek to Bujnurd *viâ* Chat from the Russian military station of Chikishliar, on the Caspian. Russia keeps Consular agents (Russian Mohammedans) at Bujnurd, Kuchan, and Mohammedabad. They are supposed to be there in the interests of trade; but, in the intervals snatched from commercial application, are not discouraged from promoting the interests of their country in whatever way a discreet intelligence may suggest.

Attitude towards Russia

Continuing eastwards, we next come to the astonishing natural phenomenon known since the time of Nadir Shah, who made it his stronghold, as Kelat-i-Nadiri. The physical and strategical attributes of this remarkable place have previously been discussed. I have also mentioned that the Persian Government keep here a detachment (nominally) of 500 infantry, scattered at the different vulnerable points, and two guns. The inhabitants are chiefly Turks, and the Governor, sent from Meshed, Haji Abul Fath Khan, lives in a village in the interior, and supplies 150 mounted levies to the Persian border horse.

Kelat-i-Nadiri

For some time past Russia has turned a particularly affectionate eye upon Kelat, and rumours of its cession by the Persian Government have been designedly circulated in order to familiarise the public mind with such a transfer of ownership. To those who deny such intentions on the part of Russia, it will be sufficient to reply that a few years ago she

Russian aspirations



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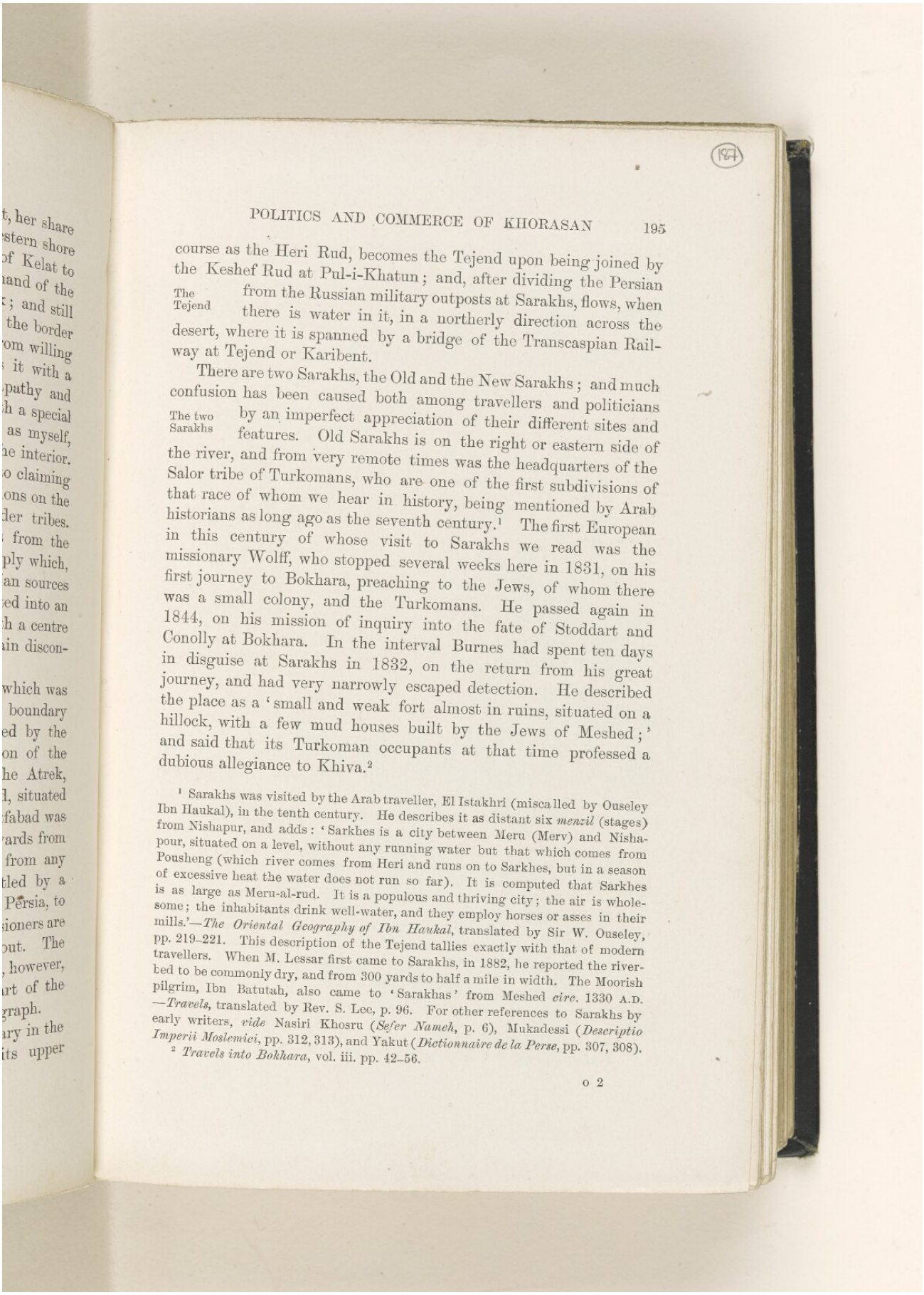
formally offered to give to Persia, in exchange for Kelat, her share of the famous and fertile plain of Moghan on the western shore of the Caspian. The offer was declined. The value of Kelat to Russia consists, as I have before argued, in its command of the head waters of the streams that run down to the Atek; and still more in its position as a central point for controlling the border tribes, and in its prodigious prestige. Persia is far from willing to cede this remarkable point of vantage, and guards it with a jealousy that is in curious contrast to her general apathy and weakness. No stranger is permitted to enter except with a special permit from the Shah, and several Russians, as well as myself, have been baffled in the attempt to penetrate into the interior. Russian policy in these parts is at present directed to claiming more and more of the streams that irrigate her possessions on the plain, and to extending her influence over the border tribes. Little by little she has crept up the mountain skirts from the Atek at the bottom, while disputes about the water supply which, though it fertilises Russian villages, yet flows from Persian sources and through Persian territory, can always be aggravated into an excuse for encroachment. Kelat would provide her with a centre of particular value for either object, and she will remain discontented until she possesses it.

In the published treaty between Russia and Persia, which was concluded in December 1881, and which defined the new boundary between Transcaspia and Khorasan, necessitated by the Russian conquests of that year, the delineation of the border which commenced at the mouth of the Atrek, stops abruptly before it reaches the village of Lutfabad, situated in the Atek below the Persian district of Deregez. Lutfabad was left to the Persians; but what is the exact frontier eastwards from this point to Sarakhs on the Tejend is not ascertainable from any published document. It is believed to have been settled by a secret treaty in 1881 or in 1883 between Russia and Persia, to which I shall later on have occasion to refer; and commissioners are reported to have passed over the ground and traced it out. The popular uncertainty, or rather ignorance, upon the point is, however, an excuse for just such acts of encroachment on the part of the stronger power as I have sketched in the preceding paragraph.

Russo-Persian frontier

At Sarakhs we once again touch a definite boundary in the shape of the Tejend River, which, though known in its upper

Yes 1881. vide vol II. p 596.





course as the Heri Rud, becomes the Tejend upon being joined by the Keshef Rud at Pul-i-Khatun; and, after dividing the Persian from the Russian military outposts at Sarakhs, flows, when there is water in it, in a northerly direction across the desert, where it is spanned by a bridge of the Transcaspian Railway at Tejend or Karibent.

The Tejend

There are two Sarakhs, the Old and the New Sarakhs; and much confusion has been caused both among travellers and politicians by an imperfect appreciation of their different sites and features. Old Sarakhs is on the right or eastern side of the river, and from very remote times was the headquarters of the Salor tribe of Turkomans, who are one of the first subdivisions of that race of whom we hear in history, being mentioned by Arab historians as long ago as the seventh century.[1] The first European in this century of whose visit to Sarakhs we read was the missionary Wolff, who stopped several weeks here in 1831, on his first journey to Bokhara, preaching to the Jews, of whom there was a small colony, and the Turkomans. He passed again in 1844, on his mission of inquiry into the fate of Stoddart and Conolly at Bokhara. In the interval Burnes had spent ten days in disguise at Sarakhs in 1832, on the return from his great journey, and had very narrowly escaped detection. He described the place as a 'small and weak fort almost in ruins, situated on a hillock, with a few mud houses built by the Jews of Meshed;' and said that its Turkoman occupants at that time professed a dubious allegiance to Khiva.[2]

The two Sarakhs

[1] Sarakhs was visited by the Arab traveller, El Istakhri (miscalled by Ouseley Ibn Haukal), in the tenth century. He describes it as distant six *menzil* (stages) from Nishapur, and adds: 'Sarkhes is a city between Meru (Merv) and Nishapour, situated on a level, without any running water but that which comes from Pousheng (which river comes from Heri and runs on to Sarkhes, but in a season of excessive heat the water does not run so far). It is computed that Sarkhes is as large as Meru-al-rud. It is a populous and thriving city; the air is wholesome; the inhabitants drink well-water, and they employ horses or asses in their mills.'—*The Oriental Geography of Ibn Haukal*, translated by Sir W. Ouseley, pp. 219–221. This description of the Tejend tallies exactly with that of modern travellers. When M. Lessar first came to Sarakhs, in 1882, he reported the river-bed to be commonly dry, and from 300 yards to half a mile in width. The Moorish pilgrim, Ibn Batutah, also came to 'Sarakhas' from Meshed *circ.* 1330 A.D. —*Travels*, translated by Rev. S. Lee, p. 96. For other references to Sarakhs by early writers, *vide* Nasiri Khosru (*Sefer Nameh*, p. 6), Mukadessi (*Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*, pp. 312, 313), and Yakut (*Dictionnaire de la Perse*, pp. 307, 308).

[2] *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. pp. 42–56.



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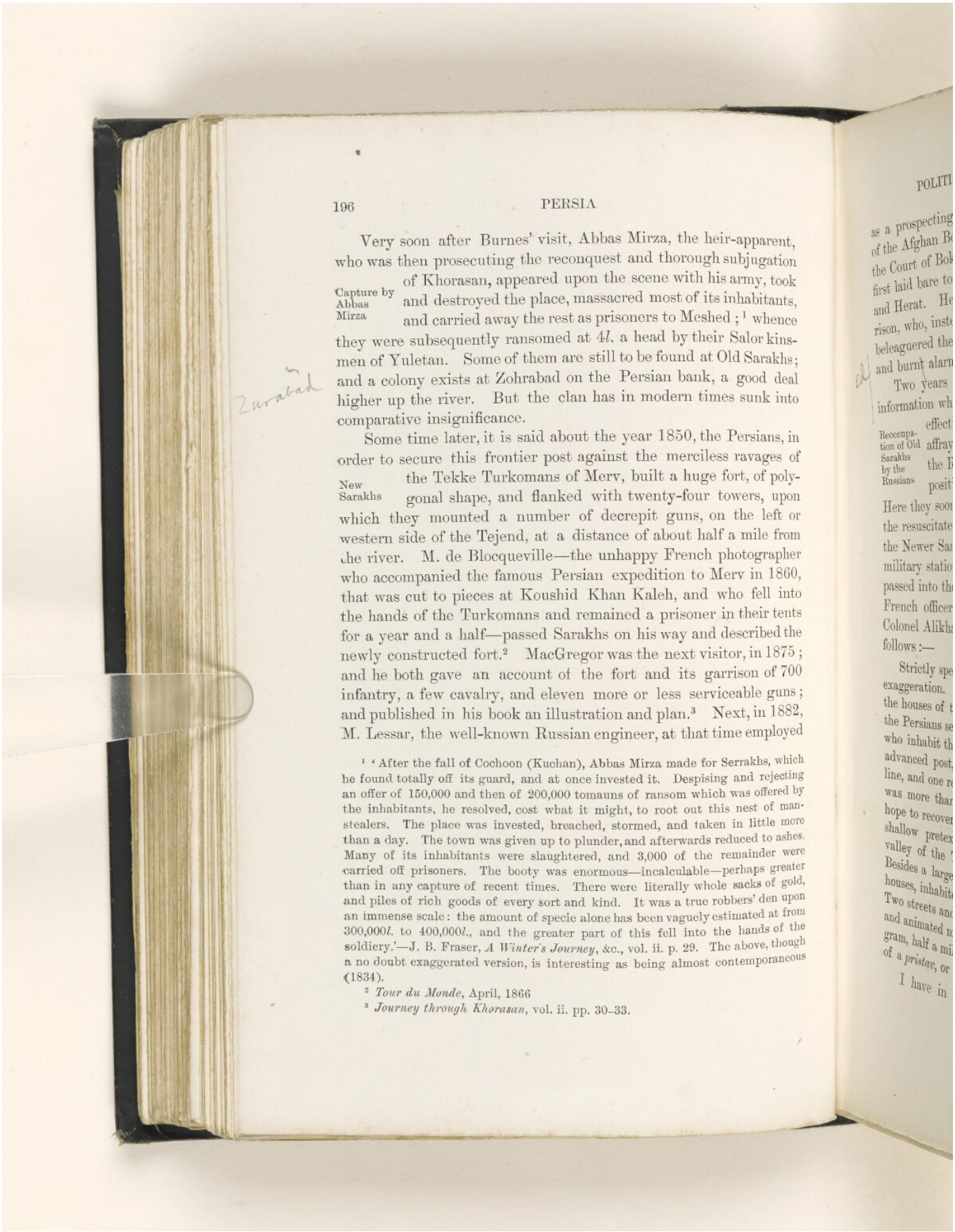



Very soon after Burnes' visit, Abbas Mirza, the heir-apparent, who was then prosecuting the reconquest and thorough subjugation of Khorasan, appeared upon the scene with his army, took and destroyed the place, massacred most of its inhabitants, and carried away the rest as prisoners to Meshed ;[1] whence they were subsequently ransomed at 4*l.* a head by their Salor kinsmen of Yuletan. Some of them are still to be found at Old Sarakhs; and a colony exists at Zohrabad on the Persian bank, a good deal higher up the river. But the clan has in modern times sunk into comparative insignificance.

Capture by Abbas Mirza

Some time later, it is said about the year 1850, the Persians, in order to secure this frontier post against the merciless ravages of the Tekke Turkomans of Merv, built a huge fort, of polygonal shape, and flanked with twenty-four towers, upon which they mounted a number of decrepit guns, on the left or western side of the Tejend, at a distance of about half a mile from the river. M. de Blocqueville—the unhappy French photographer who accompanied the famous Persian expedition to Merv in 1860, that was cut to pieces at Koushid Khan Kaleh, and who fell into the hands of the Turkomans and remained a prisoner in their tents for a year and a half—passed Sarakhs on his way and described the newly constructed fort.[2] MacGregor was the next visitor, in 1875 ; and he both gave an account of the fort and its garrison of 700 infantry, a few cavalry, and eleven more or less serviceable guns ; and published in his book an illustration and plan.[3] Next, in 1882, M. Lessar, the well-known Russian engineer, at that time employed

New Sarakhs

[1] 'After the fall of Cochoon (Kuchan), Abbas Mirza made for Serrakhs, which he found totally off its guard, and at once invested it. Despising and rejecting an offer of 150,000 and then of 200,000 tomauns of ransom which was offered by the inhabitants, he resolved, cost what it might, to root out this nest of man-stealers. The place was invested, breached, stormed, and taken in little more than a day. The town was given up to plunder, and afterwards reduced to ashes. Many of its inhabitants were slaughtered, and 3,000 of the remainder were carried off prisoners. The booty was enormous—incalculable—perhaps greater than in any capture of recent times. There were literally whole sacks of gold, and piles of rich goods of every sort and kind. It was a true robbers' den upon an immense scale: the amount of specie alone has been vaguely estimated at from 300,000*l.* to 400,000*l.*, and the greater part of this fell into the hands of the soldiery.'—J. B. Fraser, *A Winter's Journey*, &c., vol. ii. p. 29. The above, though a no doubt exaggerated version, is interesting as being almost contemporaneous (1834).

[2] *Tour du Monde*, April, 1866

[3] *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 30–33.

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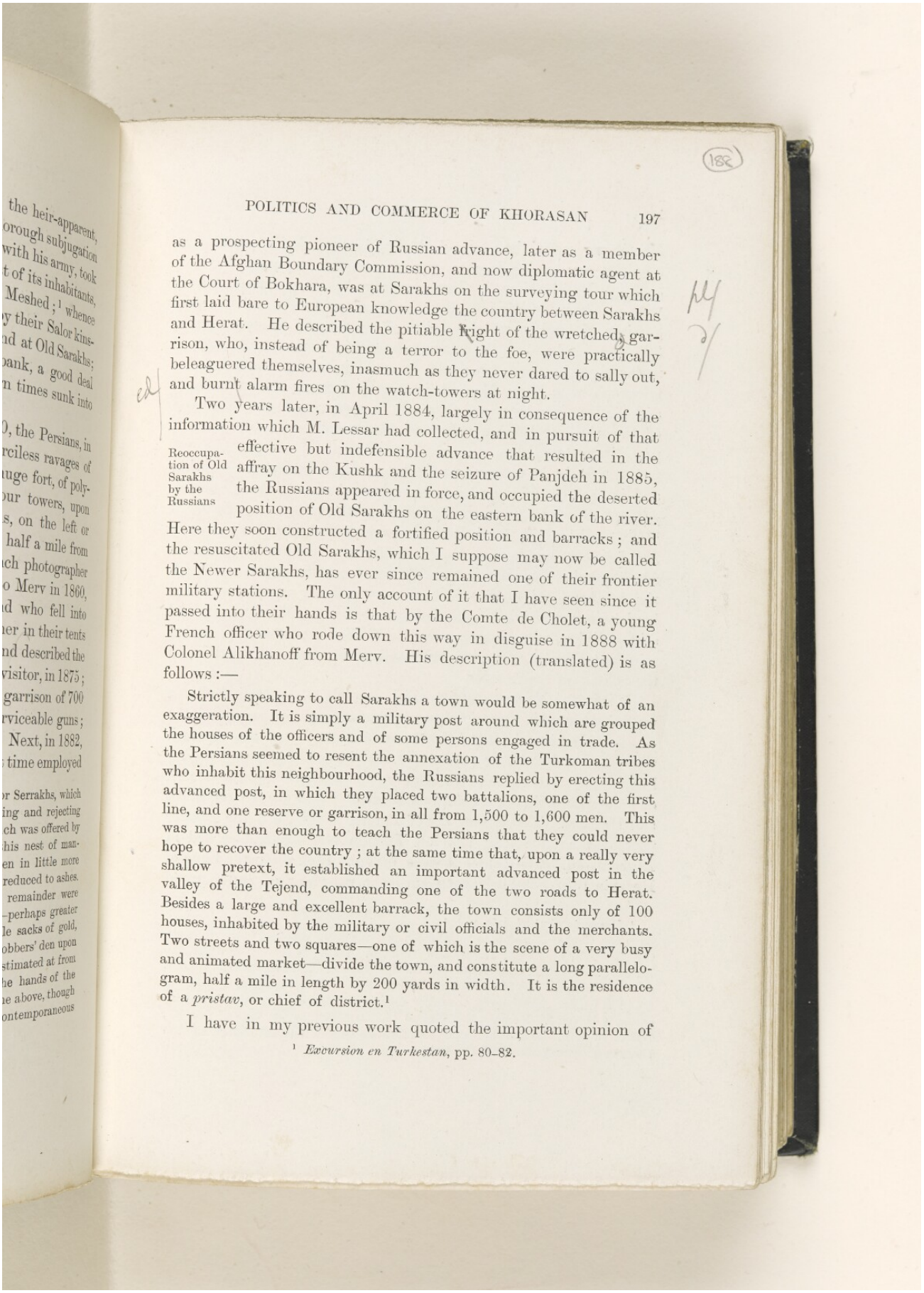



as a prospecting pioneer of Russian advance, later as a member of the Afghan Boundary Commission, and now diplomatic agent at the Court of Bokhara, was at Sarakhs on the surveying tour which first laid bare to European knowledge the country between Sarakhs and Herat. He described the pitiable plight of the wretched garrison, who, instead of being a terror to the foe, were practically beleaguered themselves, inasmuch as they never dared to sally out, and burnt alarm fires on the watch-towers at night.

Two years later, in April 1884, largely in consequence of the information which M. Lessar had collected, and in pursuit of that effective but indefensible advance that resulted in the affray on the Kushk and the seizure of Panjdeh in 1885, the Russians appeared in force, and occupied the deserted position of Old Sarakhs on the eastern bank of the river. Here they soon constructed a fortified position and barracks; and the resuscitated Old Sarakhs, which I suppose may now be called the Newer Sarakhs, has ever since remained one of their frontier military stations. The only account of it that I have seen since it passed into their hands is that by the Comte de Cholet, a young French officer who rode down this way in disguise in 1888 with Colonel Alikhanoff from Merv. His description (translated) is as follows:—

Reoccupation of Old Sarakhs by the Russians

> Strictly speaking to call Sarakhs a town would be somewhat of an exaggeration. It is simply a military post around which are grouped the houses of the officers and of some persons engaged in trade. As the Persians seemed to resent the annexation of the Turkoman tribes who inhabit this neighbourhood, the Russians replied by erecting this advanced post, in which they placed two battalions, one of the first line, and one reserve or garrison, in all from 1,500 to 1,600 men. This was more than enough to teach the Persians that they could never hope to recover the country; at the same time that, upon a really very shallow pretext, it established an important advanced post in the valley of the Tejend, commanding one of the two roads to Herat. Besides a large and excellent barrack, the town consists only of 100 houses, inhabited by the military or civil officials and the merchants. Two streets and two squares—one of which is the scene of a very busy and animated market—divide the town, and constitute a long parallelogram, half a mile in length by 200 yards in width. It is the residence of a *pristav*, or chief of district.[1]

I have in my previous work quoted the important opinion of

[1] *Excursion en Turkestan*, pp. 80–82.

MacGregor upon the strategical significance of the position at Sarakhs, as commanding the approach up the valley of the Heri Rud to Herat.[1] This advantage has now passed entirely from the Persians' into the Russians' hands. The Persian garrison of Sarakhs, which consists of one wing of infantry—about 300 men—and a small detachment of artillery, is practically isolated in the big overgrown fort which it could in no case defend. The telegraph wire from Meshed is usually interrupted or broken; and the Russians have probably only to appear upon the other side of the river and fire a volley of blank cartridge, to ensure a precipitate stampede.

Strategical value

Sarakhs is the extreme north-east point of the Persian frontier, and in fact occupies an angle sharply pushed out into the desert. Here we turn south, following the valley through which flows the Heri Rud, the river supplying the boundary first between Persia and Russia as far as the Zulfikar Pass, and afterwards between Persia and Afghanistan. Here also we touch the northern skirts of a belt of country lying upon or near the border lines, and inhabited by various tribes of mixed origin and alien religion, who, though subjects of Persia, profess a somewhat reluctant allegiance to her rule, and constitute a critical item in the politics of the frontier.

Eastern frontier

It is in the Meshed district which extends to the Heri Rud that we first encounter these foreign elements. Round the capital the Iranian element is in the ascendant; but as we approach the frontier we come across colonies or detachments who belong in race and religion to the Chehar Aimak (lit. Four Settlements), or wandering tribes of the Afghan border.[2] These are the Jamshidis and Hazaras. The former are of Persian origin, but the greater part of the tribe long ago left Persian territory and settled in Afghanistan. The remnant were brought back after the siege of Herat in 1857, established at Kanegosha, near Meshed, and required

Meshed district

[1] *Russia in Central Asia*, p. 121.

[2] The Chehar Aimak were originally, as their name implies, four tribes, viz. the Jamshidi, Firuzkuhi, Timuri, and Taimuni. Later on two other tribes, the Hazara and Kipchak, were included in the designation. The Firuzkuhis, Taimunis and Kipchaks, the two first of whom are said to be of Persian origin, are now not found in Persia. Members of the other four branches are. Dr Bellew's classification is different. He gives the original Chehar Aimak as the Timuri, Taimun, Dahi, and Suri; the Jamshidi and Firuzkuhi as subdivisions of Timuri, and the Hazaras as synonymous with the Dahi.

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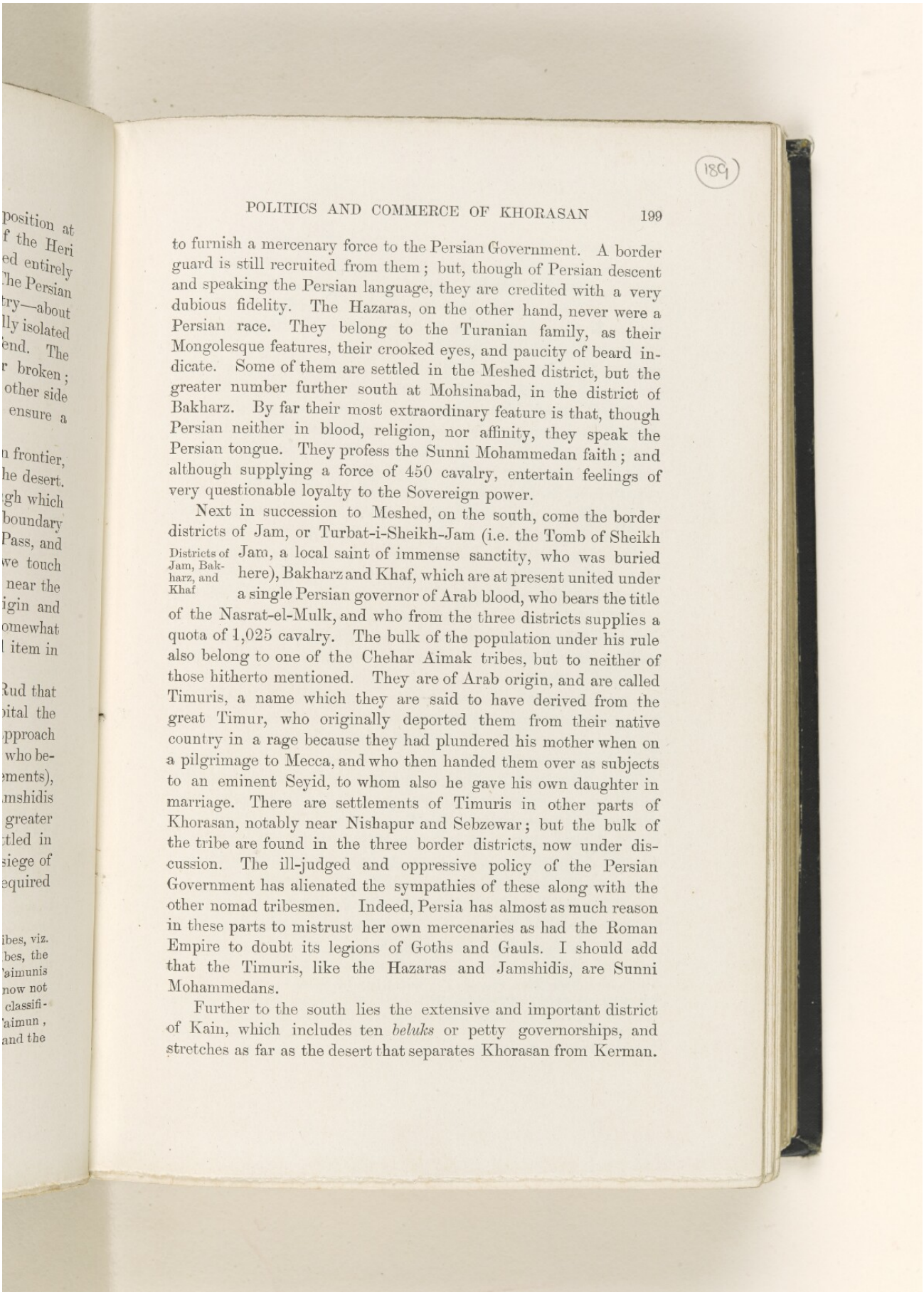



to furnish a mercenary force to the Persian Government. A border guard is still recruited from them; but, though of Persian descent and speaking the Persian language, they are credited with a very dubious fidelity. The Hazaras, on the other hand, never were a Persian race. They belong to the Turanian family, as their Mongolesque features, their crooked eyes, and paucity of beard indicate. Some of them are settled in the Meshed district, but the greater number further south at Mohsinabad, in the district of Bakharz. By far their most extraordinary feature is that, though Persian neither in blood, religion, nor affinity, they speak the Persian tongue. They profess the Sunni Mohammedan faith; and although supplying a force of 450 cavalry, entertain feelings of very questionable loyalty to the Sovereign power.

Districts of Jam, Bakharz, and Khaf

Next in succession to Meshed, on the south, come the border districts of Jam, or Turbat-i-Sheikh-Jam (i.e. the Tomb of Sheikh Jam, a local saint of immense sanctity, who was buried here), Bakharz and Khaf, which are at present united under a single Persian governor of Arab blood, who bears the title of the Nasrat-el-Mulk, and who from the three districts supplies a quota of 1,025 cavalry. The bulk of the population under his rule also belong to one of the Chehar Aimak tribes, but to neither of those hitherto mentioned. They are of Arab origin, and are called Timuris, a name which they are said to have derived from the great Timur, who originally deported them from their native country in a rage because they had plundered his mother when on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and who then handed them over as subjects to an eminent Seyid, to whom also he gave his own daughter in marriage. There are settlements of Timuris in other parts of Khorasan, notably near Nishapur and Sebzewar; but the bulk of the tribe are found in the three border districts, now under discussion. The ill-judged and oppressive policy of the Persian Government has alienated the sympathies of these along with the other nomad tribesmen. Indeed, Persia has almost as much reason in these parts to mistrust her own mercenaries as had the Roman Empire to doubt its legions of Goths and Gauls. I should add that the Timuris, like the Hazaras and Jamshidis, are Sunni Mohammedans.

Further to the south lies the extensive and important district of Kain, which includes ten *beluks* or petty governorships, and stretches as far as the desert that separates Khorasan from Kerman.

Kain

Kain is ruled by an Arab Amir, in whose family is vested a hereditary chieftainship, and who among the border chieftains of the south occupies a position analogous and even superior to that enjoyed by the Ilkhanis of Bujnurd and Kuchan on the north. Mir Alam Khan, the present Governor, is probably the most powerful subject of the Persian Crown. Now more than sixty years of age, of strong character, and with a formidable reputation for severity, he has cleared his province of the roving bands of marauders, principally Afghans and Beluchis, who used to lay it waste with impunity; and is so big a personage that he requires to be very cautiously interfered with by the Central Power. The Amir was already Governor at the time of the Seistan Boundary Commission in 1872, and did not behave with any excess of civility to Sir F. Goldsmid. However, as the area of his own dominions was at stake, Seistan being a subdivision of his province, there was perhaps some excuse for offence; and he has since been extremely attentive to such Englishmen as have gone his way. He bears a ceremonious title, conferred upon him by the Shah, and holds the rank of an Amir-i-Toman, or Major-General in the Persian army. The sovereignty of the Crown is typified by a detachment of Persian artillery in the fort at Birjand. (The Amir has since died, November 1891.)

Population and capital

The inhabitants of the khanate are of Persian and Arab descent, and are estimated at not less than 80,000. Formerly the seat of government was the town of Kain; but it has now been transferred to Birjand, a larger unwalled city, with 14,000 inhabitants. Colonel Stewart reports that opium is enormously grown and consumed here, and that hundreds are said to die yearly from excessive indulgence.[1] The military contribu- of the Amir is 700 horsemen, from Kain and Seistan combined; and two regiments of infantry, which are called out in turn, one doing duty in Seistan, while the other is disbanded in Birjand.

Seistan, as I have indicated, is one of the *beluks* or subdivisions of the province of Kain, and is administered by a deputy of the

[1] *Vide* a most interesting paper by Colonel C. E. Stewart, entitled 'The Herat Valley and the Persian Border from the Heri Rud to Sistan,' *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. viii. pp. 137–156 (1886). Kain has been described by the Seistan Boundary Commission, 1872 (i. Col. Euan Smith, *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 336–343; ii. H. W. Bellew, *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 320–322), and by (Sir) C. MacGregor, *Journey through Khorasan*, pp. 161, 162. For Birjand, *vide* the same writers on adjoining pages.

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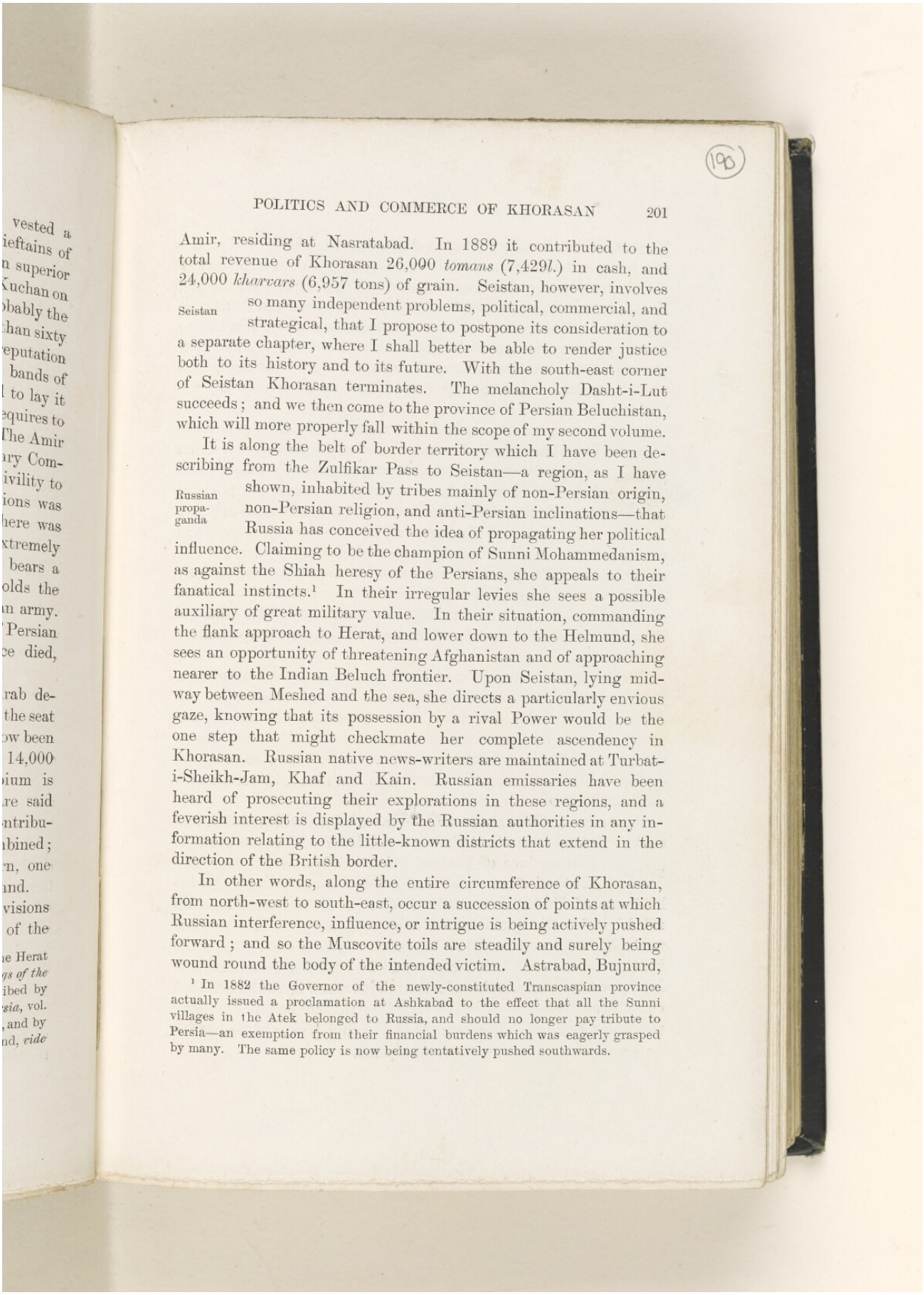



Amir, residing at Nasratabad. In 1889 it contributed to the total revenue of Khorasan 26,000 *tomans* (7,429*l.*) in cash, and 24,000 *kharvars* (6,957 tons) of grain. Seistan, however, involves so many independent problems, political, commercial, and strategical, that I propose to postpone its consideration to a separate chapter, where I shall better be able to render justice both to its history and to its future. With the south-east corner of Seistan Khorasan terminates. The melancholy Dasht-i-Lut succeeds; and we then come to the province of Persian Beluchistan, which will more properly fall within the scope of my second volume.

Seistan

It is along the belt of border territory which I have been describing from the Zulfikar Pass to Seistan—a region, as I have shown, inhabited by tribes mainly of non-Persian origin, non-Persian religion, and anti-Persian inclinations—that Russia has conceived the idea of propagating her political influence. Claiming to be the champion of Sunni Mohammedanism, as against the Shiah heresy of the Persians, she appeals to their fanatical instincts.[1] In their irregular levies she sees a possible auxiliary of great military value. In their situation, commanding the flank approach to Herat, and lower down to the Helmund, she sees an opportunity of threatening Afghanistan and of approaching nearer to the Indian Beluch frontier. Upon Seistan, lying midway between Meshed and the sea, she directs a particularly envious gaze, knowing that its possession by a rival Power would be the one step that might checkmate her complete ascendency in Khorasan. Russian native news-writers are maintained at Turbat-i-Sheikh-Jam, Khaf and Kain. Russian emissaries have been heard of prosecuting their explorations in these regions, and a feverish interest is displayed by the Russian authorities in any information relating to the little-known districts that extend in the direction of the British border.

Russian propaganda

In other words, along the entire circumference of Khorasan, from north-west to south-east, occur a succession of points at which Russian interference, influence, or intrigue is being actively pushed forward; and so the Muscovite toils are steadily and surely being wound round the body of the intended victim. Astrabad, Bujnurd,

[1] In 1882 the Governor of the newly-constituted Transcaspian province actually issued a proclamation at Ashkabad to the effect that all the Sunni villages in the Atek belonged to Russia, and should no longer pay tribute to Persia—an exemption from their financial burdens which was eagerly grasped by many. The same policy is now being tentatively pushed southwards.

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Kuchan, Kelat, Sarakhs, Khaf, and Seistan are the several scenes of operation, and may eventually supply the requisite doorways of entry. A glance at the map and at the Transcaspian position of Russia, coterminous for 300 miles with the northern border of Khorasan, will show how a situation which the vicinity of a strong Power in possession of the mountains might have rendered extremely critical has, in the face of a neighbour as weak and pliant as Persia, been converted by Russia into an overwhelming advantage.

Influence of the Transcaspian railway

It is scarcely possible indeed to exaggerate the effect which the Transcaspian conquests of Russia, and her subsequent construction of a railway across the desert immediately outside and below the Persian frontier, have had upon the political condition, and will have upon the political destinies of her neighbours. This, however, is a wider question than should fall within the scope of a chapter dealing solely with one province of the Persian dominion; and I therefore propose to defer it till a chapter is reached which shall handle the whole question of Russian influence and policy in Persia, of which General Annenkoff's railway may be described as one of the propelling instruments.[1]

Interior districts

Before I leave the politics of Khorasan, let me revert once again to its administrative subdivisions, and supplement the information which I have given about the border provinces by a brief sketch of its interior districts. I may divide these into two classes: an inner row, or second line, so to speak, of border districts; and districts which have no connection with the frontier at all.

Tabbas

Commencing from the south, where we left off with Seistan, and striking inland from about the same parallel as Kain, we come to the province of Tabbas, which touches on the south that of Yezd, from which it is 200 miles distant. The inhabitants of Tabbas are partly Arabs, partly Persians, and are ruled by a hereditary chieftain of analogous though inferior position to the Khans, Ilkhanis, and Amirs previously described. His name is Mirza Mohammed Bakar Khan, and his official title the Imad-el-Mulk, or 'Pillar of the State'; though it cannot be contended that either in contributions or in individual importance he lends to it any particular support. The country is big and poor, the people in-

[1] *Vide* vol. ii. cap. xxx.

offensive and quiet; and no trace remains of the condition of affairs described by Malcolm at the end of the last century, when the chiefs maintained themselves in practical independence, and their subjects were noted for valour.[1] The Khan provides a contingent of 150 cavalry.

North of Tabbas is the small district of Turshiz, also with a mainly Arab population, and under a Governor responsible to the Governor-General at Meshed. Turshiz is famous for its fruit, which is incomparable, and for its silk, which the disease, that wrought such havoc in Gilan, fortunately failed to touch. It is also reported to have turquoise mines, greatly inferior to those of Nishapur.

Turshiz

Turshiz is really in the third, not the second, line of support; for between it and Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam occurs the district of Turbat-i-Haideri (Tomb of Haider), which is of some strategical importance, as being situated upon the line of advance of any army advancing from Herat by Khaf upon Meshed with a view of cutting off communication between the capital and Seistan. It is peopled principally by Karai Turks, but also by Beluchis, and a century ago was brought to a pitch of extraordinary power and prosperity by a very remarkable ruler named Ishak Khan, who was said to be as good a merchant as he was a soldier, and as accomplished a student as he was an administrator, and who drew from his semi-independent province a revenue of 100,000*l.*[2] Like most of their neighbours the people of Turbat-i-Haideri have said good-bye to the days of fighting and freedom, and are now completely subdued by the Persians. Their country, like Turshiz, is rich in mulberries and orchards; but was terribly decimated both by Turkoman ravages and by the great famine. Turshiz and Turbat-i-Haideri combined contribute two infantry regiments to the armed strength of Khorasan, which will be noticed presently.

Turbat-i-Haideri

The two interior *beluks* of Persia which are not concerned, even in a secondary degree, with frontier problems, are those of Nishapur and Sebzewar. Their governorships are comfortable berths, which are usually bestowed upon some Persian prince—Nishapur, for

[1] *History of Persia*, vol. ii. pp. 143, 144. Mir Husein Khan was then the chief of the powerful ruling Arab family, and, with a population of only 30,000, sustained an army of 2,000 horse and 6,000 foot.

[2] Malcolm (*History*, vol. ii. p. 148) says 100,000 *tomans*, or 200,000*l.* But as he frequently speaks of a *toman* elsewhere as equivalent to 1*l.*, I think that the latter total must be halved. Even this estimate is probably exaggerated.

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instance, being at present under a cousin of the Rukn-ed-dowleh, and Sebzewar under his eldest son. I shall subsequently have something to say about both when I come to their capitals on my journey from Meshed to Teheran. Neither district contributes any infantry troops to the Persian army, having seemingly been granted a special exemption after the visit of the Shah in 1868.

Nishapur and Sebzewar

Finally we come back to the large and wealthy district of Shahrud-Bostam, to which I have already alluded in a footnote when speaking of Astrabad, and which is administered by the sole surviving son of Fath Ali Shah. This is only separated by the Elburz from Astrabad; and thus my task is over, for I have now completed the circuit of Khorasan, and supplied a sketch of each of the administrative subdivisions of this most important province.

Shahrud-Bostam

In quitting this branch of my subject, let me sum up the total of the armed strength of Khorasan, of which I have already in passing noticed the majority of the items. The calculation does not of course include the local levies, *Shamkhalchis* (matchlock men, &c.), who might be raised in time of war, but the effective troops who, within a few days' time, could be called out and placed in the field.

Total military strength of Khorasan

INFANTRY (*Serbaz* or Regulars).

i. *Territorial Regiments.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Regiments of Karai Turks levied at Turshiz and Turbat-i-Haideri, 800 each | = | 1,600 |
| 2 Regiments levied at Birjand, 800 each | = | 1,600 |

(Of these 4 regiments only one wing of each is mobilised at a time, or half of the whole, the other half being disbanded.)

ii. *Extra-territorial Regiments.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Regiments usually recruited in Azerbaijan, 3 of which are always in garrison at Meshed, 800 each | = | 3,200 |
| Total | | 6,400 |

CAVALRY (chiefly mercenary).

*Irregular* (i.e. effective, but not mobilised).

| | |
|---|---|
| Timuris and Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam | 1,025 |
| Jamshidis | 300 |
| Hazaras | 450 |
| Zaferanlu Kurds (under the Ilkhani of Kuchan) | 600 |
| Shahdillu Kurds, Goklan Turkomans } under the Ilkhani of Bujnurd | 500 |
| | 300 |

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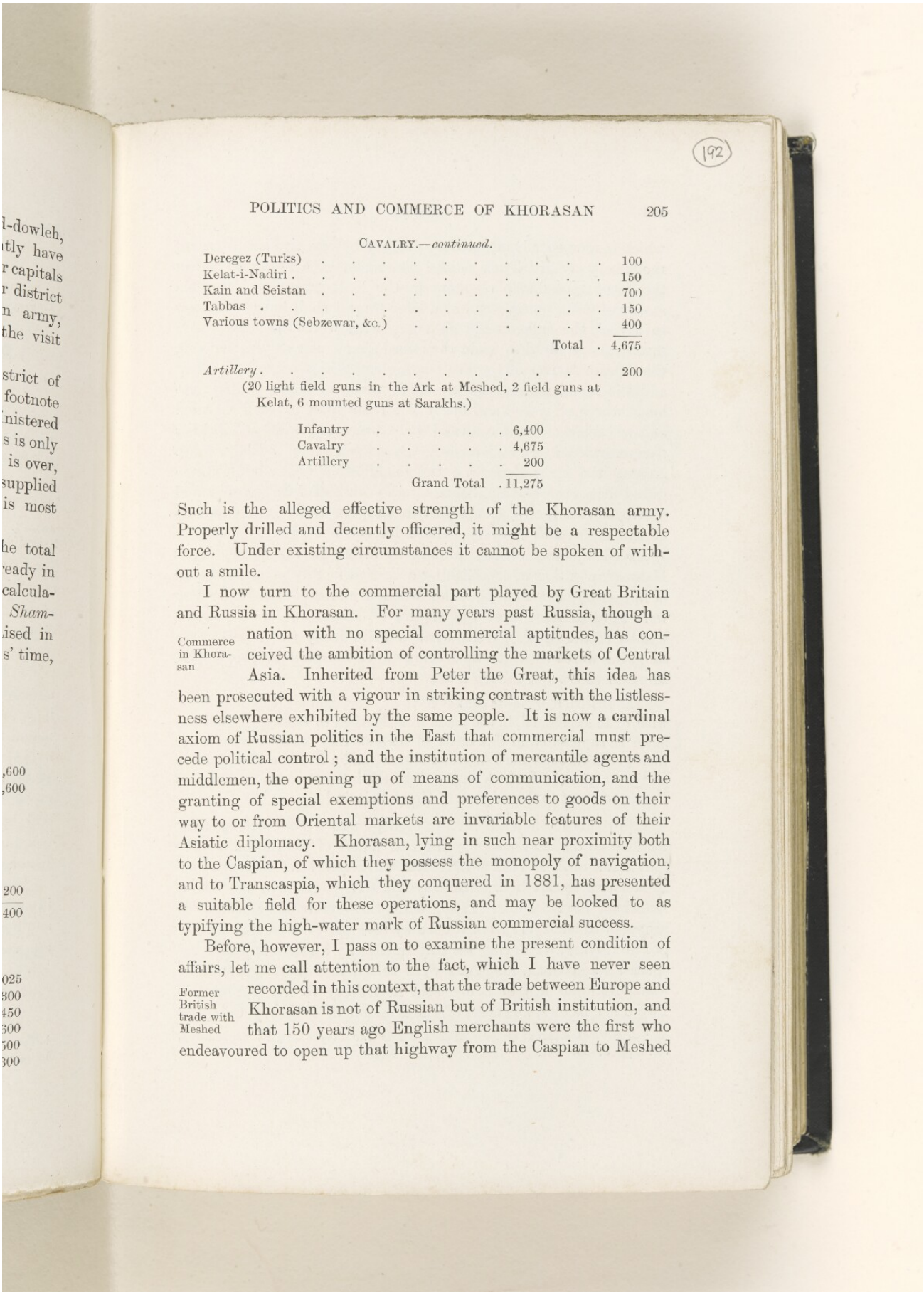

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CAVALRY.—*continued.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Deregez (Turks) | 100 |
| Kelat-i-Nadiri | 150 |
| Kain and Seistan | 700 |
| Tabbas | 150 |
| Various towns (Sebzewar, &c.) | 400 |
| Total | 4,675 |
| *Artillery* | 200 |

(20 light field guns in the Ark at Meshed, 2 field guns at Kelat, 6 mounted guns at Sarakhs.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Infantry | 6,400 |
| Cavalry | 4,675 |
| Artillery | 200 |
| Grand Total | 11,275 |

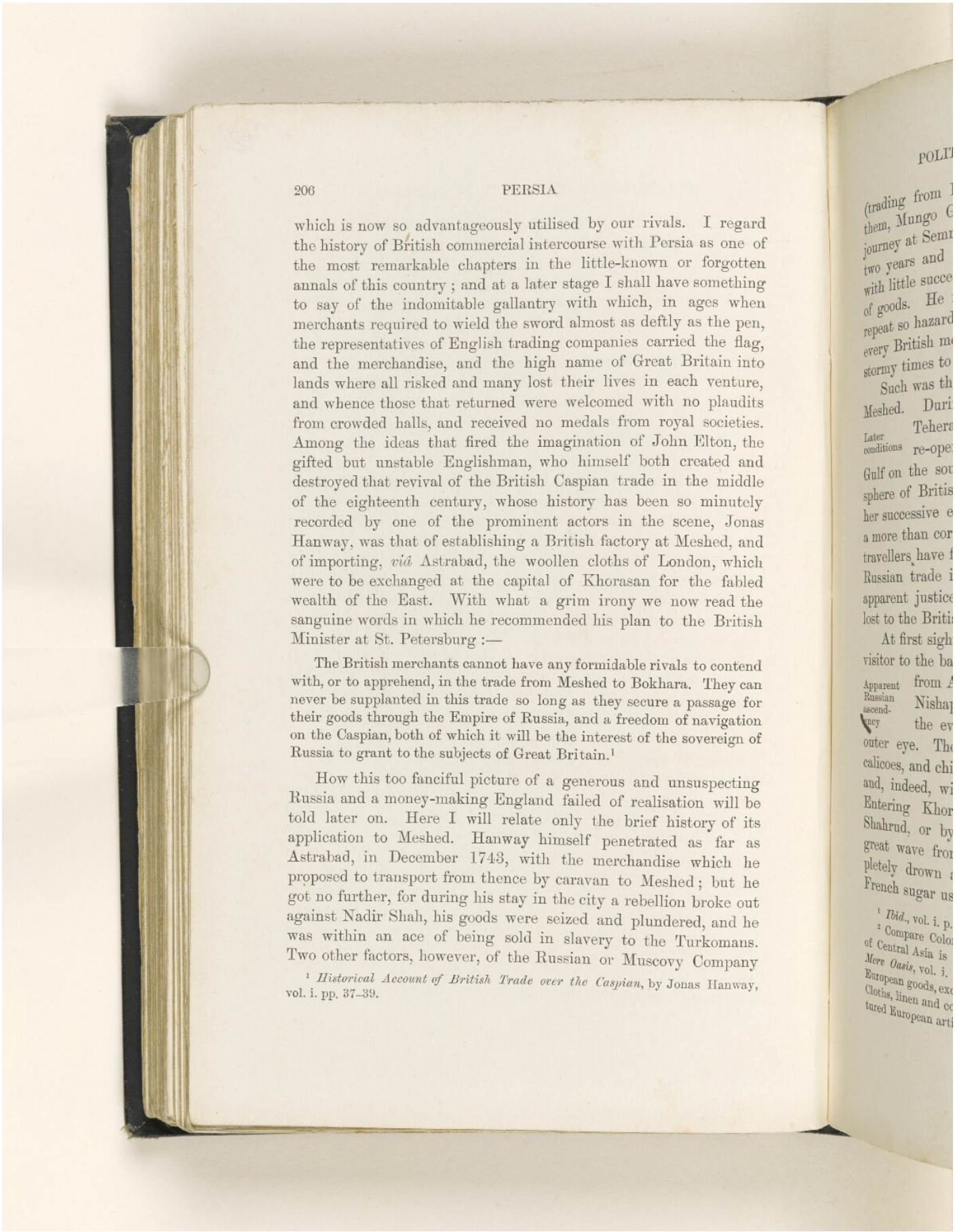
Such is the alleged effective strength of the Khorasan army. Properly drilled and decently officered, it might be a respectable force. Under existing circumstances it cannot be spoken of without a smile.

Commerce in Khorasan

I now turn to the commercial part played by Great Britain and Russia in Khorasan. For many years past Russia, though a nation with no special commercial aptitudes, has conceived the ambition of controlling the markets of Central Asia. Inherited from Peter the Great, this idea has been prosecuted with a vigour in striking contrast with the listlessness elsewhere exhibited by the same people. It is now a cardinal axiom of Russian politics in the East that commercial must precede political control; and the institution of mercantile agents and middlemen, the opening up of means of communication, and the granting of special exemptions and preferences to goods on their way to or from Oriental markets are invariable features of their Asiatic diplomacy. Khorasan, lying in such near proximity both to the Caspian, of which they possess the monopoly of navigation, and to Transcaspia, which they conquered in 1881, has presented a suitable field for these operations, and may be looked to as typifying the high-water mark of Russian commercial success.

Former British trade with Meshed

Before, however, I pass on to examine the present condition of affairs, let me call attention to the fact, which I have never seen recorded in this context, that the trade between Europe and Khorasan is not of Russian but of British institution, and that 150 years ago English merchants were the first who endeavoured to open up that highway from the Caspian to Meshed





which is now so advantageously utilised by our rivals. I regard the history of British commercial intercourse with Persia as one of the most remarkable chapters in the little-known or forgotten annals of this country; and at a later stage I shall have something to say of the indomitable gallantry with which, in ages when merchants required to wield the sword almost as deftly as the pen, the representatives of English trading companies carried the flag, and the merchandise, and the high name of Great Britain into lands where all risked and many lost their lives in each venture, and whence those that returned were welcomed with no plaudits from crowded halls, and received no medals from royal societies. Among the ideas that fired the imagination of John Elton, the gifted but unstable Englishman, who himself both created and destroyed that revival of the British Caspian trade in the middle of the eighteenth century, whose history has been so minutely recorded by one of the prominent actors in the scene, Jonas Hanway, was that of establishing a British factory at Meshed, and of importing, *viâ* Astrabad, the woollen cloths of London, which were to be exchanged at the capital of Khorasan for the fabled wealth of the East. With what a grim irony we now read the sanguine words in which he recommended his plan to the British Minister at St. Petersburg :—

> The British merchants cannot have any formidable rivals to contend with, or to apprehend, in the trade from Meshed to Bokhara. They can never be supplanted in this trade so long as they secure a passage for their goods through the Empire of Russia, and a freedom of navigation on the Caspian, both of which it will be the interest of the sovereign of Russia to grant to the subjects of Great Britain.[1]

How this too fanciful picture of a generous and unsuspecting Russia and a money-making England failed of realisation will be told later on. Here I will relate only the brief history of its application to Meshed. Hanway himself penetrated as far as Astrabad, in December 1743, with the merchandise which he proposed to transport from thence by caravan to Meshed; but he got no further, for during his stay in the city a rebellion broke out against Nadir Shah, his goods were seized and plundered, and he was within an ace of being sold in slavery to the Turkomans. Two other factors, however, of the Russian or Muscovy Company

[1] *Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian*, by Jonas Hanway, vol. i. pp. 37–39.

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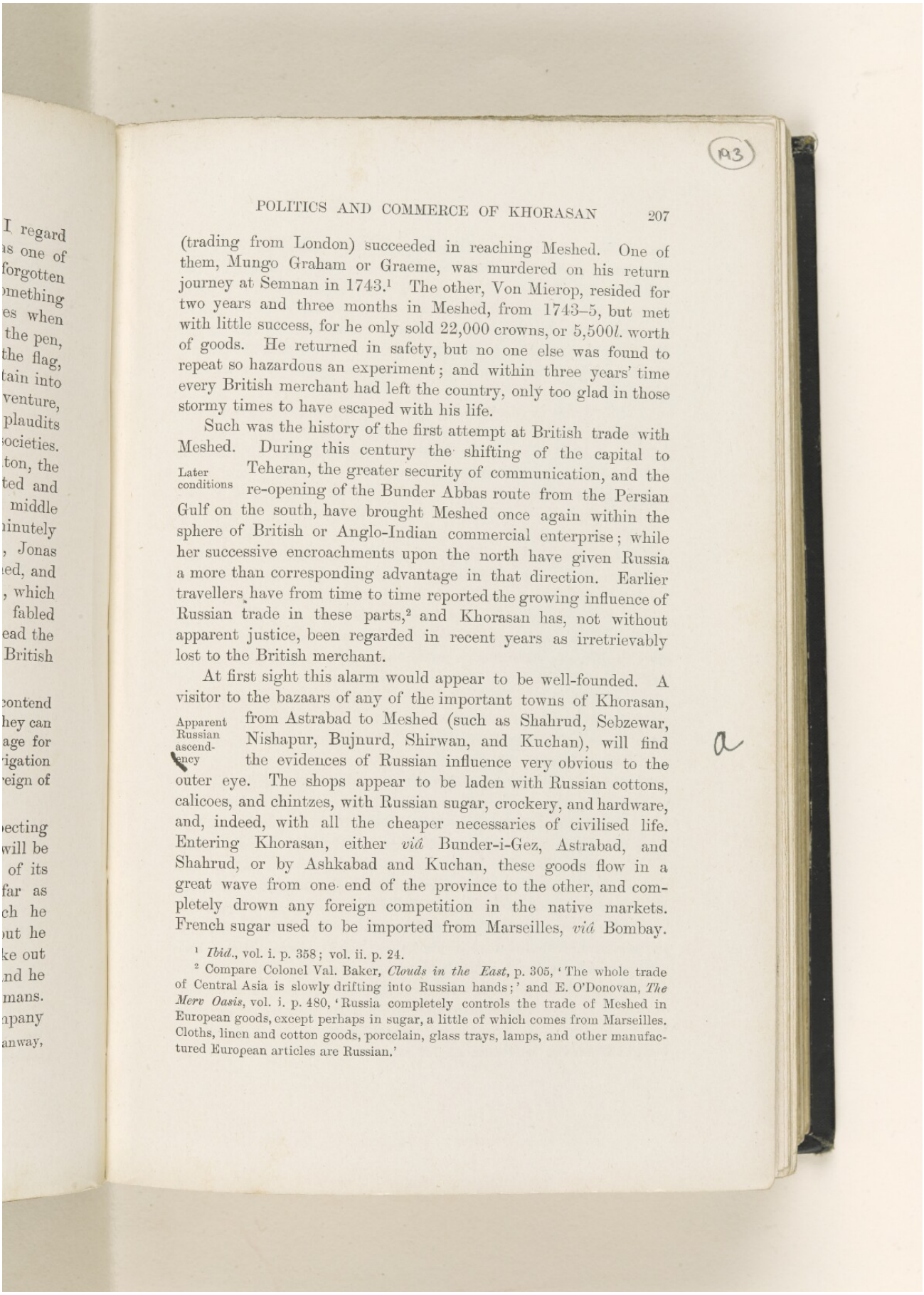

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(trading from London) succeeded in reaching Meshed. One of them, Mungo Graham or Graeme, was murdered on his return journey at Semnan in 1743.[1] The other, Von Mierop, resided for two years and three months in Meshed, from 1743–5, but met with little success, for he only sold 22,000 crowns, or 5,500*l.* worth of goods. He returned in safety, but no one else was found to repeat so hazardous an experiment; and within three years' time every British merchant had left the country, only too glad in those stormy times to have escaped with his life.

Later conditions

Such was the history of the first attempt at British trade with Meshed. During this century the shifting of the capital to Teheran, the greater security of communication, and the re-opening of the Bunder Abbas route from the Persian Gulf on the south, have brought Meshed once again within the sphere of British or Anglo-Indian commercial enterprise; while her successive encroachments upon the north have given Russia a more than corresponding advantage in that direction. Earlier travellers have from time to time reported the growing influence of Russian trade in these parts,[2] and Khorasan has, not without apparent justice, been regarded in recent years as irretrievably lost to the British merchant.

Apparent Russian ascendancy

At first sight this alarm would appear to be well-founded. A visitor to the bazaars of any of the important towns of Khorasan, from Astrabad to Meshed (such as Shahrud, Sebzewar, Nishapur, Bujnurd, Shirwan, and Kuchan), will find the evidences of Russian influence very obvious to the outer eye. The shops appear to be laden with Russian cottons, calicoes, and chintzes, with Russian sugar, crockery, and hardware, and, indeed, with all the cheaper necessaries of civilised life. Entering Khorasan, either *viâ* Bunder-i-Gez, Astrabad, and Shahrud, or by Ashkabad and Kuchan, these goods flow in a great wave from one end of the province to the other, and completely drown any foreign competition in the native markets. French sugar used to be imported from Marseilles, *viâ* Bombay.

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 358; vol. ii. p. 24.

[2] Compare Colonel Val. Baker, *Clouds in the East*, p. 305, 'The whole trade of Central Asia is slowly drifting into Russian hands;' and E. O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. p. 480, 'Russia completely controls the trade of Meshed in European goods, except perhaps in sugar, a little of which comes from Marseilles. Cloths, linen and cotton goods, porcelain, glass trays, lamps, and other manufactured European articles are Russian.'

The trade is now extinct, and no sugar, either loaf or crushed, but Russian is seen. Russian kerosine from Baku commands the market. In 1888–9, 36,000 pouds were imported into Meshed. Lamps, chandeliers, candle-shades, lustres, trays, glasses, tumblers, samovars, teapots, saucers, locks, and cheap cutlery are all of Russian origin, and suggest to the casual observer that the supply of the entire furniture of life has been monopolised by Russian enterprise.

Persian figures

While I was in Meshed, I took such steps as were open to me, by consulting the best authorities, including Messrs. Ziegler's agent, the sole European mercantile house represented there, to ascertain the true state of affairs, and more especially the respective volumes and values of Russian and Anglo-Indian trade. It is well known that in Persia it is almost impossible to obtain statistics, and that such as are with infinite difficulty procurable are too often imperfect or erroneous. Calculations as to the total amount of trade are frequently made from Custom-house returns, which do not necessarily supply a reliable basis of induction. Figures are readily given by European merchants or their agents; but native merchants either do not care to disclose them, or sometimes do not keep them at all. Therefore, of neither the figures which I am about to give, nor of those published by the officials of the British Government, can absolute accuracy be postulated in Khorasan any more than in other parts of Persia. They may be regarded, however, as approximately correct.

My information in Meshed

I was assured by my informants in Meshed that, while the volume of trade in Khorasan was indisputably Russian, the value was still on the side of the English. The cheaper objects which were everywhere visible and which flood the petty retail shops all hailed from Russia, and competition with them was impossible; but the more costly imports, entering Khorasan partly from the west, *viâ* Tabriz, Teheran, and Shahrud, but in far greater quantity from the south, *viâ* Bunder Abbas on the sea, and Kerman, were of British or Anglo-Indian origin, and estimated in £ *s. d.*, it could be demonstrated that Meshed at that moment did a larger trade with Bombay than it did with the whole of Russia. For instance, the customs dues for Meshed for the year 1888 (i.e., the *octroi* collected on imported merchandise) had been bought from the Government for the sum of 50,000 *tomans* (3½

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*tomans* equal to 1*l.*),[1] of which it was calculated that 30,000 *tomans* would be levied on goods from Bunder Abbas, and 20,000 on goods from the whole of the rest of Persia and from Russia, the latter not even amounting to one-half of the lesser fraction.

This assurance struck me as requiring elucidation at the time; and I have since been able to explain and in some respects to correct it by the much fuller details contained in an admirable commercial report compiled by Consul-General Maclean in the past year (1890), the first that has ever been issued from Meshed or Khorasan, and in itself an ample justification of the presence of a British consular staff in so important a trade centre as Meshed. This publication is contained in the series of Diplomatic and Consular Reports on trade and finance, issued by the English Foreign Office; and will no doubt be the first of an annual series.[2]

Report of the British Consulate

From this report I gather that the total value of Anglo-Indian goods imported into Khorasan in 1889–90 (the Persian year is counted from the vernal equinox, i.e. from March 21, 1889, to March 21, 1890) was 84,300*l.*, and the total value of Russian goods 110,400*l.* But to the former should certainly be added a considerable portion of the value of the Chinese black and green teas, shipped from Bombay, and no doubt for the most part purchased and brought from China by British merchants. The total value of this Chinese tea was 433,000 *tomans*, or 123,714*l.*; but very nearly the whole of it only passes through Meshed in transit to Bokhara, Khiva, &c., the taste of the Khorasanis being partial to Indian black tea, of which an import of 12,000*l.* is included in the total of Anglo-Indian imports already quoted. The addition thereto of a large fraction of the value of the Chinese tea will explain the otherwise ambiguous statement of my informants.

Values of British and Russian imports

Here let me pause to consider and balance the facilities at the disposal of the rival European Powers for trade with Khorasan. Nominally there are three trade routes available for British or Anglo-Indian imports, in practice only two. First is the lengthy overland journey *viâ* Teheran and Tabriz from the Turkish port of Trebizond, in the angle of the Black

Anglo-Indian trade routes

[1] Conolly mentions that in 1830 the customs dues of Meshed were farmed for 15,000 *tomans*.—*Overland Journey to India*, vol. i. p. 291.

[2] *Annual Series*, 1890, No. 753.



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Sea, a total distance by caravan march of 1,500 miles, and occupying a camel four months of time.[1] Second is the route from Bunder Abbas on the Persian Gulf to Meshed, of which there are two variations: the shorter journey *viâ* Kerman, Rahwar, Nahiband and Tun, a distance of 940 miles, or 40 days by mule and 75 days by camel; and the longer deviation *viâ* Yezd, which is occasionally taken by merchants, because of the greater abundance of transport and the additional chance of finding a sale in the busy mart of Yezd. The third, and by far the most direct and shortest, route for Indian merchandise, would be *viâ* the Bolan Pass by rail to the British frontier at Chaman in Beluchistan, and thence by Kandahar and Herat to Meshed, a distance from the Indian frontier of 30 stages only, or 670 miles. This route, however, which was once a crowded trade artery, has practically been killed by the exorbitant transit dues charged by the Amir of Afghanistan,[2] whose fiscal policy is conceived on the strictest protectionist principles, and is coldly indifferent to the convenience or the commerce of his neighbours. Of the two former or practicable routes, that from Trebizond was utilised by British merchandise in 1889 to the value of 23,400*l.*, that from Bunder Abbas by Anglo-Indian merchandise (excluding the China tea) to the value of 60,870*l.*

Import duties

By treaty between Great Britain and Persia, only five per cent. *ad valorem* can be charged upon British merchandise, at the port or town of entry. Thus British goods will be called upon for this impost at Tabriz (having passed through Trebizond, in transit, duty free), and Anglo-Indian goods at Bunder Abbas. But as in the case of Khorasan there are no British merchants at the destination or at the big towns *en route*, the Persian Custom-house officials take the opportunity of screwing a little more than is their due, and subjecting foreign merchandise to the same system as prevails for native goods, viz. the payment of a customs duty at each large city. Thus British goods from Trebizond after paying their five per cent. at Tabriz will, after passing into the hands of

[1] The freight-charge of each camel-load from Trebizond to Meshed is 27½ *tomans*, i.e. 7*l.* 17*s.*; from Bunder Abbas (*viâ* Kerman) to Meshed, 9 *tomans*, i.e. 2*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*

[2] The Amir levies 2*l.* 2*s.* upon every cwt., and the cost of each camel-load is further 2*l.* 7*s.* On the Kabul road he is reported to levy 80 rupees (5*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*) on every camel-load of Indian goods in transit to Bokhara. This is not Protection, but Prohibition.

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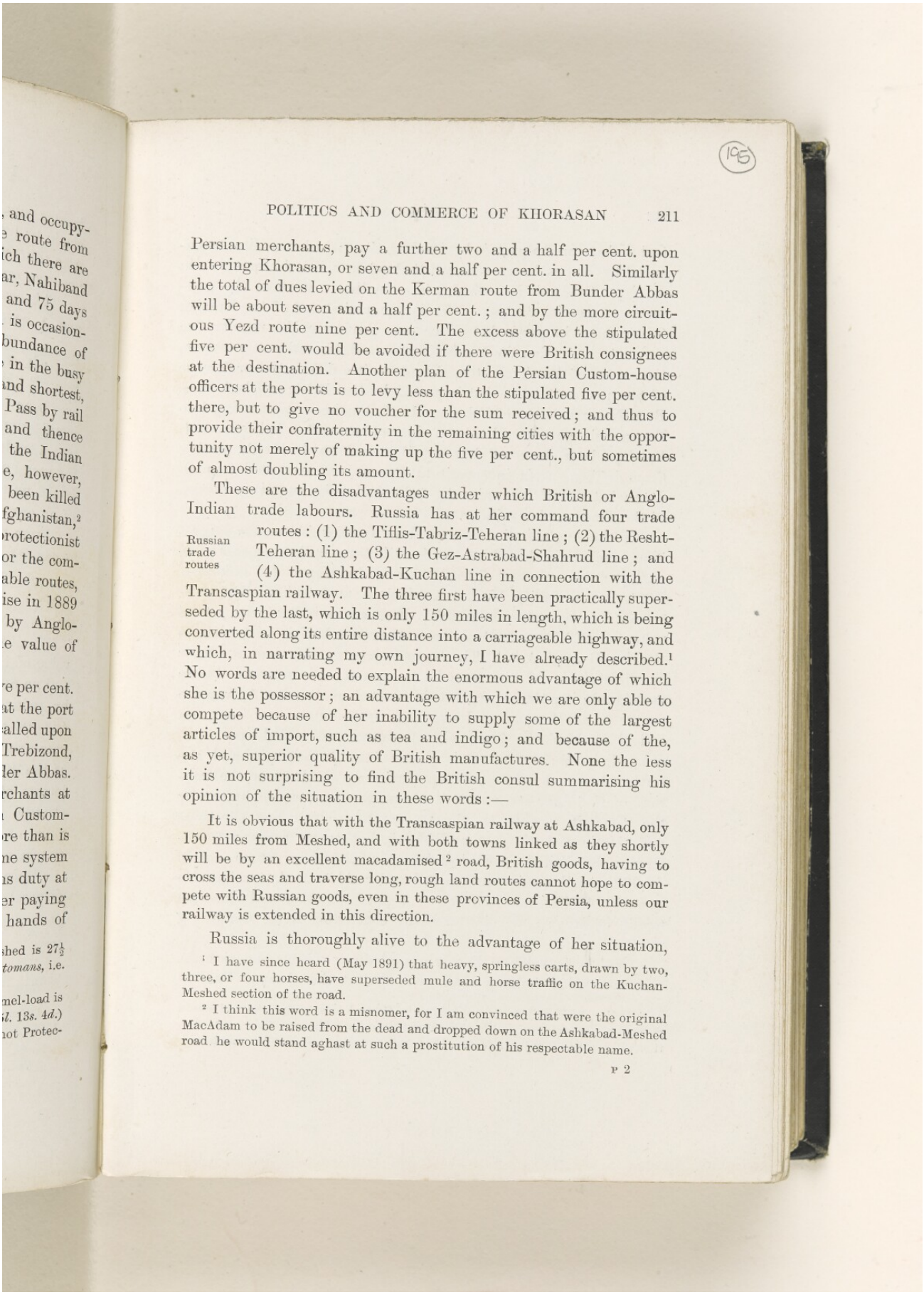



Persian merchants, pay a further two and a half per cent. upon entering Khorasan, or seven and a half per cent. in all. Similarly the total of dues levied on the Kerman route from Bunder Abbas will be about seven and a half per cent.; and by the more circuitous Yezd route nine per cent. The excess above the stipulated five per cent. would be avoided if there were British consignees at the destination. Another plan of the Persian Custom-house officers at the ports is to levy less than the stipulated five per cent. there, but to give no voucher for the sum received; and thus to provide their confraternity in the remaining cities with the opportunity not merely of making up the five per cent., but sometimes of almost doubling its amount.

These are the disadvantages under which British or Anglo-Indian trade labours. Russia has at her command four trade routes: (1) the Tiflis-Tabriz-Teheran line; (2) the Resht-Teheran line; (3) the Gez-Astrabad-Shahrud line; and (4) the Ashkabad-Kuchan line in connection with the Transcaspian railway. The three first have been practically superseded by the last, which is only 150 miles in length, which is being converted along its entire distance into a carriageable highway, and which, in narrating my own journey, I have already described.[1] No words are needed to explain the enormous advantage of which she is the possessor; an advantage with which we are only able to compete because of her inability to supply some of the largest articles of import, such as tea and indigo; and because of the, as yet, superior quality of British manufactures. None the less it is not surprising to find the British consul summarising his opinion of the situation in these words:—

Russian trade routes

It is obvious that with the Transcaspian railway at Ashkabad, only 150 miles from Meshed, and with both towns linked as they shortly will be by an excellent macadamised[2] road, British goods, having to cross the seas and traverse long, rough land routes cannot hope to compete with Russian goods, even in these provinces of Persia, unless our railway is extended in this direction.

Russia is thoroughly alive to the advantage of her situation,

[1] I have since heard (May 1891) that heavy, springless carts, drawn by two, three, or four horses, have superseded mule and horse traffic on the Kuchan-Meshed section of the road.

[2] I think this word is a misnomer, for I am convinced that were the original MacAdam to be raised from the dead and dropped down on the Ashkabad-Meshed road he would stand aghast at such a prostitution of his respectable name.



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and endeavours to push it by fiscal tactics, which are discountenanced by the gentlemen who call themselves political economists in England, but which are a familiar feature in the commercial strategy of foreign countries, and of the Russian Government in particular. Her own goods pay the regular five per cent. on crossing the Persian borders. But in order to encourage the export of Persian cotton, she allows it a differential preference of ten per cent. over that imported by the Baltic or Black Seas. By a Customs decree of February 1889, Persian goods passing into Transcaspia pay an *ad valorem* duty of two and a half per cent. But by a later decree of February 1890 such goods, if only passing through Transcaspia in transit to Europe, are exempted from all duty whatever, if forwarded by Ashkabad or by any other station of the Transcaspian railway.

Customs duties

Of the Anglo-Indian imports from Bunder Abbas, the largest item, excluding the China tea, is still tea; Indian green tea to the value of 7,140*l.* (mostly in transit to Bokhara), and Indian black tea, which is preferred in Khorasan, to the value of 12,000*l.* Next comes indigo, with a total value of 10,170*l.*, of which more than one-half is in transit to Russian Central Asia.[1] The import duty on this indigo affords an illustration of the cumulative system of taxation before mentioned; for three per cent. is exacted at Bunder Abbas, one per cent. at Kerman, and two and three-fourths per cent. on arrival at Meshed. This, with the two and a half per cent. exacted by Russia, when it passes into Transcaspia, and the further two and a half per cent. levied by Bokhara on the frontiers of that khanate, makes it a somewhat expensive luxury by the time it reaches the Tartar capital. In calico sheetings and shirtings, both grey and bleached, there is a marked preference for British over Russian goods, and of these nearly 12,000*l.* worth are imported *viâ* Bunder Abbas. A considerable quantity of Kashmir shawls, of copper sheeting and tin, and finally of drugs and spices, are the concluding items worthy of mention.

Largest items: 1. Anglo-Indian

The Tabriz-Teheran line brings whatever cottons and chintzes can succeed in holding their own against the cheaper Russian

[1] Indigo is largely used everywhere in Central Asia to dye silk and cotton garments, to stain glass, and to give the colour to those blue and white enamelled tiles which are so familiar a feature in secular as well as religious ornamentation.

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imports of the same article. English knives and scissors, crockery and porcelain, of which there seemed to be very little in the bazaars,

2. British

but which come by this route, are greedily snapped up when offered for sale, though at higher prices than the corresponding articles of Russian manufacture. Simultaneously I found a consensus of opinion that the Russian import of cheap cotton fabrics of which I have spoken had been very much overdone, that the bazaars were now overstocked with these goods, and that they could only be sold at prices which would result in serious losses to their owners. The main feature of the competition between the two countries was undoubtedly this: that all English articles are considered vastly superior in durability and quality; but that the enormous distances which they have to traverse and the high prices which must necessarily be charged, render it almost impossible for them to compete with their rivals. For my part I think it extraordinary, when we compare the two situations (putting aside altogether the articles in which Russia cannot compete, such as indigo, minerals and tea), that Great Britain should still claim so creditable a proportion of the trade. Whether it can be maintained is another question, to which I should hesitate to return an affirmative answer.

Of the Russian total of 110,400*l.* imported by the Transcaspian railway, cotton stuffs, plain and coloured, constitute nearly one-

3. Russian

third. The second largest item is sugar, which has driven every other sugar, French or Indian, out of the market, and is sold in the bazaars at 4½*d.* a pound—a price that is in the main due to the bounties granted by the Russian Government to Russian exporters of the article,[1] and with which it is next to impossible for Indian sugar, even though made from the sugar-cane, to compete. Russian crockery and porcelain, which are almost universal, amount to 11,500*l.*; and the value of Russian hardware is only 1,000*l.* less.

If we turn to the exports of Khorasan, physical considerations will explain the fact that the trade with Russia is vastly in excess of that with India. Exclusive of such Indian goods as pass

[1] One rouble (2*s.*) per poud (36 lbs.) excise duty is refunded on Russian sugar exported abroad. In the case, however, of Central Asia and Persia, the rebate, having served its purpose by completely driving out all other competitors from the market, was discontinued from May 1, 1891.

through Khorasan to Russian territory, the figures of export to Russia (some of course in transit to other European countries) amount to a total of 111,500*l.* Cotton, assisted by the differential preference before alluded to, is responsible for the large figure of nearly 43,000*l.* Wool is credited with about half that total. 5,700*l.* worth of Turkoman and Persian carpets are sent to Europe, not all, of course, to Russian destinations. Finally, out of the total output of turquoises from the celebrated mines near Nishapur, which is estimated at nearly 23,000*l.* annually, over 17,000*l.* were despatched in 1889 by the Transcaspian railway to Europe.

Exports: 1. to Russia

That some idea may be gained of the enormous increase in Russo-Persian trade, due to the prosperous working of the Transcaspian railway, let me compare the figures that I have just given with those of the first nine months of 1886, the railway having only reached Ashkabad in December 1885. From January to October 1886 the exports from Persia to Ashkabad equalled 61,000*l.*, the imports to Persia from Ashkabad 37,000*l.* The totals for 1889 were, as I have shown, respectively 111,500*l.*, and 110,400*l.* In other words the exports have very nearly doubled in the space of three years, while the imports have exactly trebled.

Growth of Russo-Persian trade

Against these imposing figures the export trade to British India can only oppose the modest total of 39,000*l.*, nearly the whole of which is represented by Khorasan opium, intended chiefly for the Chinese market. Ten years ago the total output of opium in Khorasan was only 160 hundredweight. The value of the export, over and above that which is consumed in the province, is now 37,100*l.* to India, as well as 14,300*l.* to Constantinople, or a total of 51,400*l.*

2. to India

In order to complete the survey of the commerce of Khorasan, the figures of Perso-Afghan trade must be added. There is very little difference in the respective values of imports and exports, either country contributing in about equal proportion to the needs of the other. Whereas Afghanistan, however, sends her indigenous sheepskin coats (*poshtins*), pistachios, &c., the bulk of Persian exports are Russian piece goods, sugar, and hardware. The value of the exports from Khorasan into Afghanistan is returned as 18,300*l.*, of imports into Khorasan from Afghanistan as 17,300*l.*

Perso-Afghan trade

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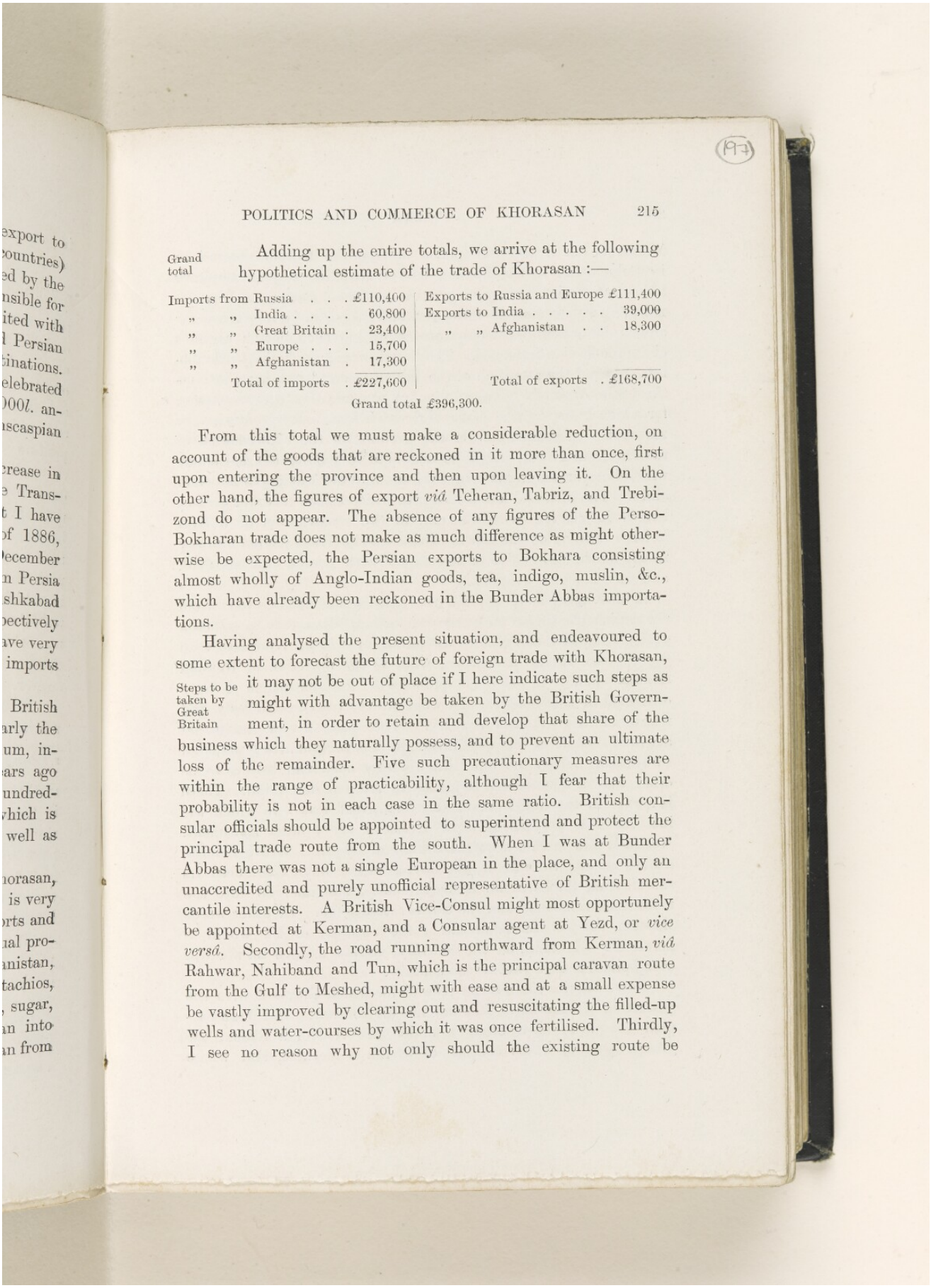


(197)



Grand total

Adding up the entire totals, we arrive at the following hypothetical estimate of the trade of Khorasan :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Imports from Russia . . . | £110,400 | Exports to Russia and Europe | £111,400 |
| „ „ India . . . . | 60,800 | Exports to India . . . . . | 39,000 |
| „ „ Great Britain . | 23,400 | „ „ Afghanistan . . | 18,300 |
| „ „ Europe . . . | 15,700 | | |
| „ „ Afghanistan . | 17,300 | | |
| Total of imports . | £227,600 | Total of exports . | £168,700 |

Grand total £396,300.

From this total we must make a considerable reduction, on account of the goods that are reckoned in it more than once, first upon entering the province and then upon leaving it. On the other hand, the figures of export *viâ* Teheran, Tabriz, and Trebizond do not appear. The absence of any figures of the Perso-Bokharan trade does not make as much difference as might otherwise be expected, the Persian exports to Bokhara consisting almost wholly of Anglo-Indian goods, tea, indigo, muslin, &c., which have already been reckoned in the Bunder Abbas importations.

Having analysed the present situation, and endeavoured to some extent to forecast the future of foreign trade with Khorasan, it may not be out of place if I here indicate such steps as might with advantage be taken by the British Government, in order to retain and develop that share of the business which they naturally possess, and to prevent an ultimate loss of the remainder. Five such precautionary measures are within the range of practicability, although I fear that their probability is not in each case in the same ratio. British consular officials should be appointed to superintend and protect the principal trade route from the south. When I was at Bunder Abbas there was not a single European in the place, and only an unaccredited and purely unofficial representative of British mercantile interests. A British Vice-Consul might most opportunely be appointed at Kerman, and a Consular agent at Yezd, or *vice versâ*. Secondly, the road running northward from Kerman, *viâ* Rahwar, Nahiband and Tun, which is the principal caravan route from the Gulf to Meshed, might with ease and at a small expense be vastly improved by clearing out and resuscitating the filled-up wells and water-courses by which it was once fertilised. Thirdly, I see no reason why not only should the existing route be

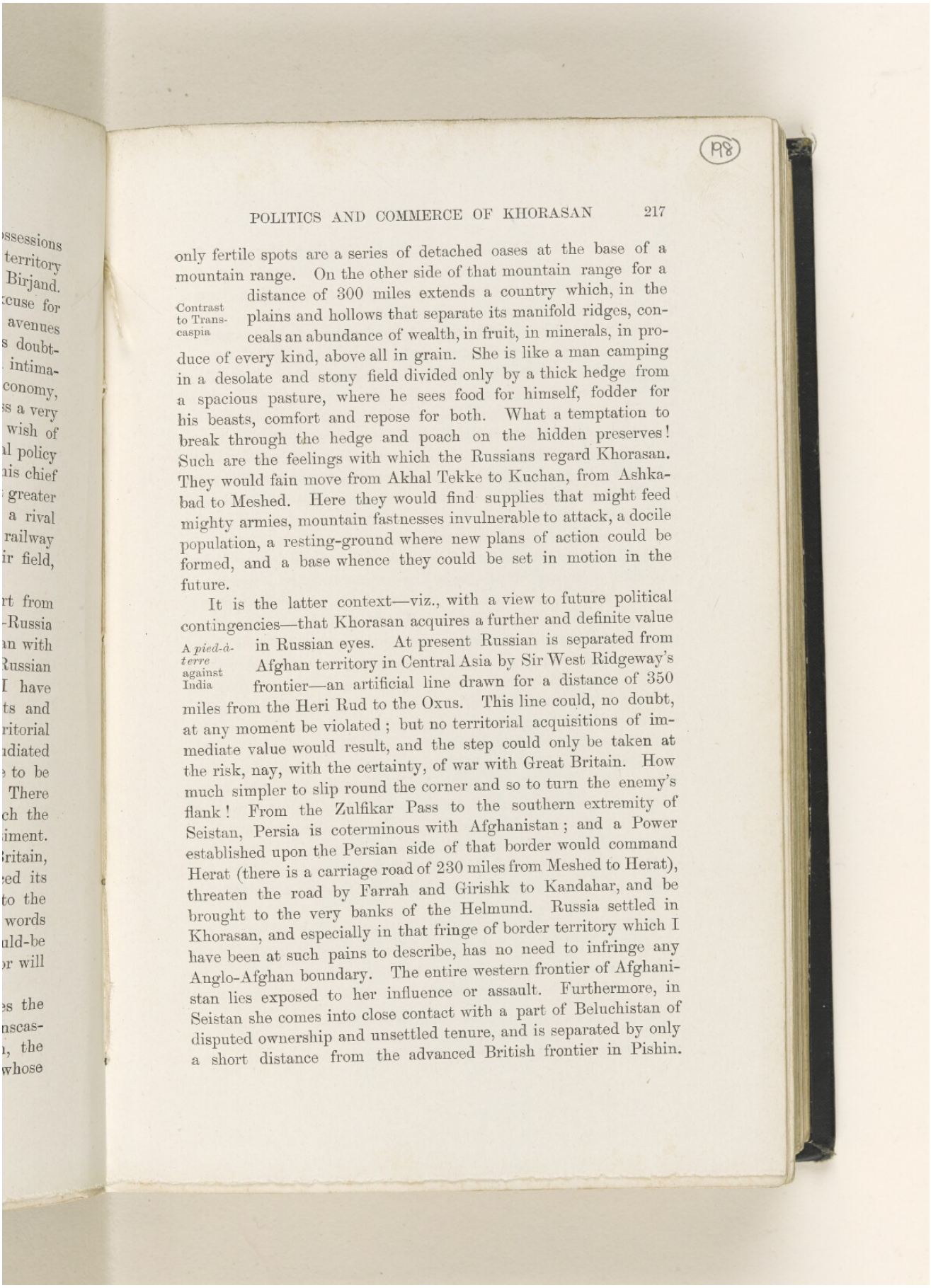
Steps to be taken by Great Britain

improved, but a new one opened up from the British possessions in Beluchistan to the Persian border, avoiding Afghan territory altogether, and proceeding e.g. from Quetta *viâ* Seistan to Birjand. All of these are feasible measures, and there can be no excuse for any supineness in developing or facilitating such pacific avenues of Anglo-Indian influence. The fourth remedy, which has doubtless engaged the attention of the Indian Government, is an intimation to the Amir of Afghanistan, not on grounds of political economy, for which I suspect that Abdur Rahman Khan would profess a very reasonable contempt, but on the grounds of the avowed wish of the Suzerain Power, that it is desirable to modify a fiscal policy which is injurious to his own subjects, and displeasing to his chief allies. The fifth and last remedy, to which I shall revert at greater length in dealing with Seistan, is the construction of a rival British railroad on the south, to balance the Transcaspian railway in the north, and enable us to compete with Russia in a fair field, and with her own weapons.

Russian covetousness of Khorasan

I now proceed to explain the reasons for which, apart from the legitimate desire for commercial profit, both Powers—Russia and Great Britain—are induced to regard Khorasan with so intense a concern, what is the objective of Russian policy in the comprehensive designs which I have described in this chapter, and what are the counter-interests and responsibilities of this country. The passion for territorial aggrandisement is one which, though it is indignantly repudiated by Russian writers, no one with his eyes open can believe to be other than a dominating influence in the Russian mind. There is a step in the development of every great Power in which the lust for new possessions is in excess of every other sentiment. Russia is now in this acquisitive stage of empire. Great Britain, having passed through it, and having in her day experienced its intoxicating fumes in all their intensity, has emerged into the more sober atmosphere of the conservative stage. In other words Russian interest in Khorasan is the cupidity of the would-be possessor. England, on the contrary, neither aspires to, nor will ever hold, a square yard of the country.

If we inquire the ulterior reasons for which Russia desires the possession of Khorasan, they are not far to seek. Her Transcaspian conquests have brought under her control a region, the greater part of which consists of barren wilderness, and whose





only fertile spots are a series of detached oases at the base of a mountain range. On the other side of that mountain range for a distance of 300 miles extends a country which, in the plains and hollows that separate its manifold ridges, conceals an abundance of wealth, in fruit, in minerals, in produce of every kind, above all in grain. She is like a man camping in a desolate and stony field divided only by a thick hedge from a spacious pasture, where he sees food for himself, fodder for his beasts, comfort and repose for both. What a temptation to break through the hedge and poach on the hidden preserves! Such are the feelings with which the Russians regard Khorasan. They would fain move from Akhal Tekke to Kuchan, from Ashkabad to Meshed. Here they would find supplies that might feed mighty armies, mountain fastnesses invulnerable to attack, a docile population, a resting-ground where new plans of action could be formed, and a base whence they could be set in motion in the future.

Contrast to Transcaspia

It is the latter context—viz., with a view to future political contingencies—that Khorasan acquires a further and definite value in Russian eyes. At present Russian is separated from Afghan territory in Central Asia by Sir West Ridgeway's frontier—an artificial line drawn for a distance of 350 miles from the Heri Rud to the Oxus. This line could, no doubt, at any moment be violated; but no territorial acquisitions of immediate value would result, and the step could only be taken at the risk, nay, with the certainty, of war with Great Britain. How much simpler to slip round the corner and so to turn the enemy's flank! From the Zulfikar Pass to the southern extremity of Seistan, Persia is coterminous with Afghanistan; and a Power established upon the Persian side of that border would command Herat (there is a carriage road of 230 miles from Meshed to Herat), threaten the road by Farrah and Girishk to Kandahar, and be brought to the very banks of the Helmund. Russia settled in Khorasan, and especially in that fringe of border territory which I have been at such pains to describe, has no need to infringe any Anglo-Afghan boundary. The entire western frontier of Afghanistan lies exposed to her influence or assault. Furthermore, in Seistan she comes into close contact with a part of Beluchistan of disputed ownership and unsettled tenure, and is separated by only a short distance from the advanced British frontier in Pishin.

A *pied-à-terre* against India

Finally, having reached that point, she is already half way to the sea; and, her railways once carried as far as Nasratabad, she would begin to felicitate herself upon a port on the Indian Ocean and the long sought outlet in the southern seas.[1]

British interests in Khorasan

The physical conditions which I have expounded, the designs of Russia, of which evidence can be produced incapable of refutation, and the importance of any movements so intimately affecting Afghanistan explain the interest which England is thereby compelled to take in this portion of the Shah's dominions. Those who argue that Khorasan is far from India, and can therefore safely be left alone, repeat the imbecile fallacy that has already been attended with such pitiable results in the past, and that has landed us in our recent position in both Persia and Afghanistan. Afghanistan has often been described as the north-western glacis of our Indian citadel; and to allow an enemy to effect a lodgment undisturbed upon even the outskirts of that glacis is to commit a strategical error of the first importance. British policy in Khorasan is directed to the safeguarding of British—i.e., of Afghan—interests in that quarter; to the maintenance of the political *status quo*—i.e., of the Persian dominion; and more particularly to the watching of those approaches from the south, the freedom of which is indispensable to British commerce, and the control of which by a hostile instead of an allied Power would be an appreciable peril to Hindustan. It is a consolatory fact that General Maclean, the recently appointed Consul-General at Meshed, is also Consul for Seistan. An independent British official should, however, be deputed to the latter place, whose near proximity to the Anglo-Beluch frontier renders it of great importance to British interests, and whose resources, if developed by scientific irrigation and a railway, might make it a nucleus of commercial influence radiating through central and southern Persia, and even counterbalancing Russian ascendency in northern Khorasan.

Finally, let me indicate what I believe to be the attitude of the population of Khorasan towards Russia and Great Britain, and the assistance or the reverse that either Power may expect to meet with in the prosecution of its schemes. Earlier travellers, such

[1] That these designs are not the offspring of imagination, but are seriously entertained by Russia, evidence will be forthcoming, in a later chapter upon Russian Policy in Persia as a whole, to prove.

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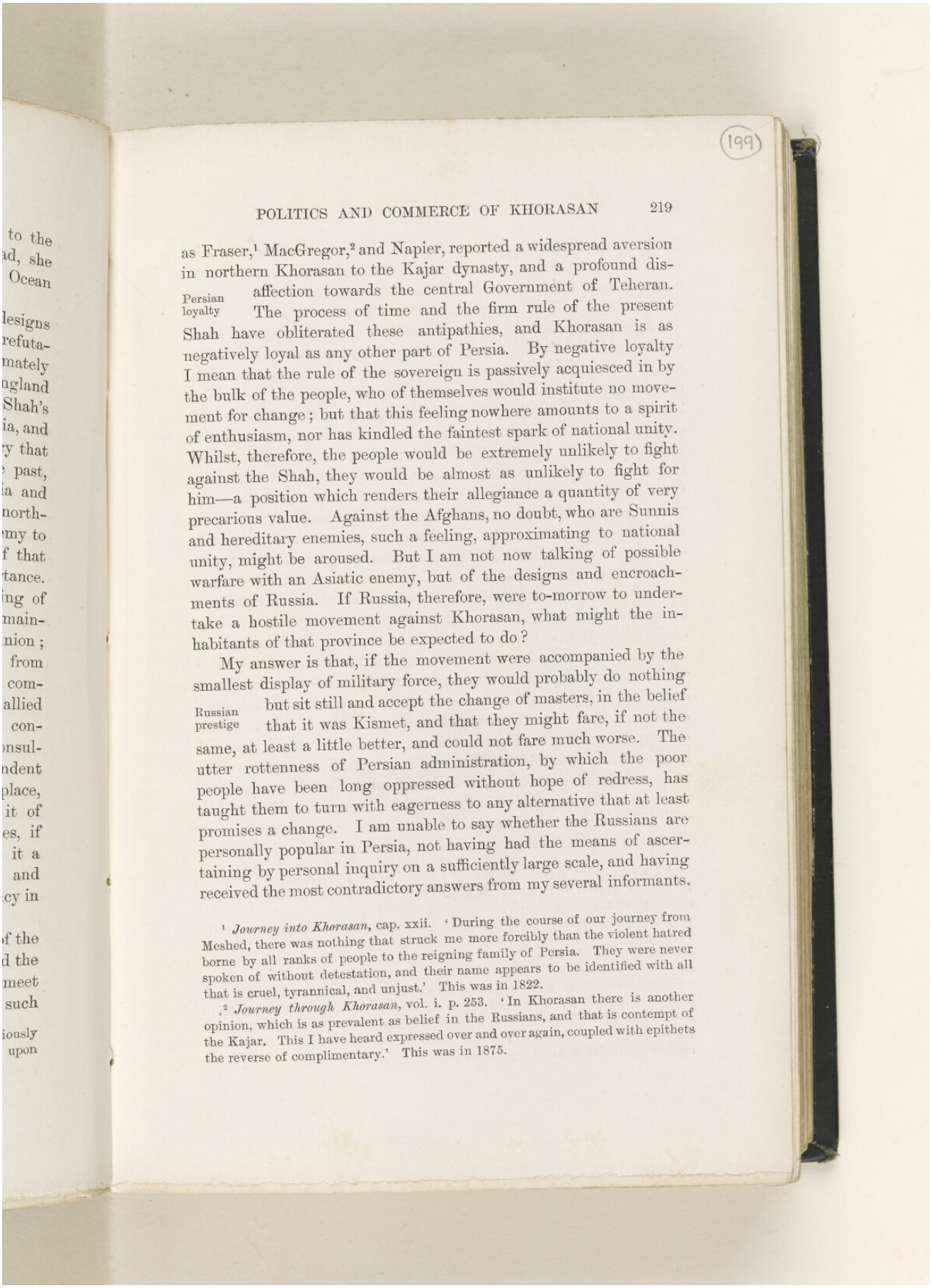



as Fraser,[1] MacGregor,[2] and Napier, reported a widespread aversion in northern Khorasan to the Kajar dynasty, and a profound disaffection towards the central Government of Teheran. The process of time and the firm rule of the present Shah have obliterated these antipathies, and Khorasan is as negatively loyal as any other part of Persia. By negative loyalty I mean that the rule of the sovereign is passively acquiesced in by the bulk of the people, who of themselves would institute no movement for change; but that this feeling nowhere amounts to a spirit of enthusiasm, nor has kindled the faintest spark of national unity. Whilst, therefore, the people would be extremely unlikely to fight against the Shah, they would be almost as unlikely to fight for him—a position which renders their allegiance a quantity of very precarious value. Against the Afghans, no doubt, who are Sunnis and hereditary enemies, such a feeling, approximating to national unity, might be aroused. But I am not now talking of possible warfare with an Asiatic enemy, but of the designs and encroachments of Russia. If Russia, therefore, were to-morrow to undertake a hostile movement against Khorasan, what might the inhabitants of that province be expected to do?

Persian loyalty

My answer is that, if the movement were accompanied by the smallest display of military force, they would probably do nothing but sit still and accept the change of masters, in the belief that it was Kismet, and that they might fare, if not the same, at least a little better, and could not fare much worse. The utter rottenness of Persian administration, by which the poor people have been long oppressed without hope of redress, has taught them to turn with eagerness to any alternative that at least promises a change. I am unable to say whether the Russians are personally popular in Persia, not having had the means of ascertaining by personal inquiry on a sufficiently large scale, and having received the most contradictory answers from my several informants.

Russian prestige

[1] *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xxii. 'During the course of our journey from Meshed, there was nothing that struck me more forcibly than the violent hatred borne by all ranks of people to the reigning family of Persia. They were never spoken of without detestation, and their name appears to be identified with all that is cruel, tyrannical, and unjust.' This was in 1822.

[2] *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. p. 253. 'In Khorasan there is another opinion, which is as prevalent as belief in the Russians, and that is contempt of the Kajar. This I have heard expressed over and over again, coupled with epithets the reverse of complimentary.' This was in 1875.

But the reputation acquired by them in Khorasan owing to their liberation of the slaves at Bokhara and Khiva, most of whom were Persians from this province,[1] and their deliverance of the borderlands from the devastating scourge of the Turkomans, combined with the prestige of their numbers and ever forward progress, have predisposed a naturally craven race to regard their advance with mingled resignation and respect. Some would be found to think the change a decided gain. The majority would vote it inevitable. The sympathy of the few, aided by the apathy of the many, would disarm opposition and pave the way for an easy conquest. If it be inquired whether the spirit of religious animosity might not be invoked, and a *jihad*, or religious war, preached against the infidels, the answer must be returned that Russia is not in the least likely to proceed until she has guarded against such a contingency. The religious element is in the ascendant at Meshed, and no doubt exercises a considerable control over the prepossessions of the people. Any fear of violation, either of the shrine or of the endowments by which it is supported, or of the privileges and abuses by which it is surrounded, would unquestionably awaken a feeling of the bitterest hostility. But Russia has never shown anything but a large patience towards the religious scruples and superstitions of her Mussulman subjects. Such suspicions would easily be disarmed; and it is to be feared that the holy *mullahs* and *mujtaheds* of Meshed are not more averse than the majority of their fellow-countrymen to the receipt of bribes. When, therefore, the old Khan of Kuchan told me that all the people of Khorasan would rally and fight for Meshed, I believe him to have been talking nonsense. My impression is that Meshed, if it is destined to fall, will fall without a blow; and that a change of ownership in Khorasan might be effected without the loss of a drop of blood.

[1] I never heard this doubted until I came across a Russian book, entitled *Sketches of Persia*, by P. Ogorodnikof, published in St. Petersburg in 1878. The author was a Russian who had been deputed by the Imperial Geographical Society to join a commercial caravan, conducted by General Glukhofski, to Meshed in 1874; and his utterances were mainly an epitome of the views of a Russian merchant, named Baumgarten, who resided for many years in Shahrud and was seen there by Baker, Napier, MacGregor, and other English travellers. Baumgarten, who presumably knew what he was saying and could not be regarded as a Russophobe, denied that the Khivan release of prisoners had brought any popularity to Russia, and declared that the Persians held the Russians in contempt while cringing to them, and seeking to propitiate them as possible informers to the Shah against their misdeeds and rapacities.

When I credit the Russians with an influence so remarkable, I am not for a moment conceding to them a monopoly of such an advantage. Were the British in a position to exercise the same pressure or ultimately to take the same steps, I believe that they would be received with an acclaim out of all proportion greater than that which might await their opponents. The Russians are in the habit of conducting matters in a somewhat high-handed and dictatorial manner in Persia; and, while such an attitude may inspire alarm and even create respect, it makes no appeal to affection. On the other hand, the franker and more honourable methods of the English have won for that Power a consideration which, in the absence of positive evidences of strength, such as numerous troops and adjacent dominions, is highly meritorious. The Timuri tribes, of whom I spoke, along the eastern border of Khorasan, are known to be extremely friendly to the English; and the nearer we approach to Beluchistan and the Indian frontier, the more does the popularity arising from just and tolerant administration prevail. The Persians are beginning to see perfectly well that the English do not desire a rood of their soil, and that the Russians are bent upon forcible appropriation. But the Russians are near and formidable, and the English are far away and make no visible display of strength. While, therefore, British influence is welcome and meets with encouragement, there is no spirit or party capable of engendering a successful resistance to Russian designs. The Khorasanis, like their fellow-men all the world over, are not above making friends with the mammon of unrighteousness.

Feeling towards England

### Supplementary Routes in E. Khorasan.

Meshed to Turbat-i-Haideri. H. W. Bellew (1872), *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 351–7; Col. Euan-Smith (1872), *Eastern Persia*, pp. 353–6.

Turbat-i-Haideri to Bajistan. H. W. Bellew (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 340–9; Col. Euan-Smith (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 349–53.

Bajistan to Kain. H. W. Bellew (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 325–39; Col. E. Smith (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 343–9.

Kain to Birjand. H. W. Bellew (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 309–25; Col. E. Smith (1872), *Ibid.* pp. 337–42.

Farrah (Afghanistan) to Nishapur (*viâ* Birjand, Tun, and Bajistan). J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 437–8

Farrah (Afghanistan) to Semnan (*viâ* Khur and Tabbas). J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Ibid.* pp. 439–40.

Tabbas to Birjand (*viâ* Tun and Kain). (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. pp. 137–66.

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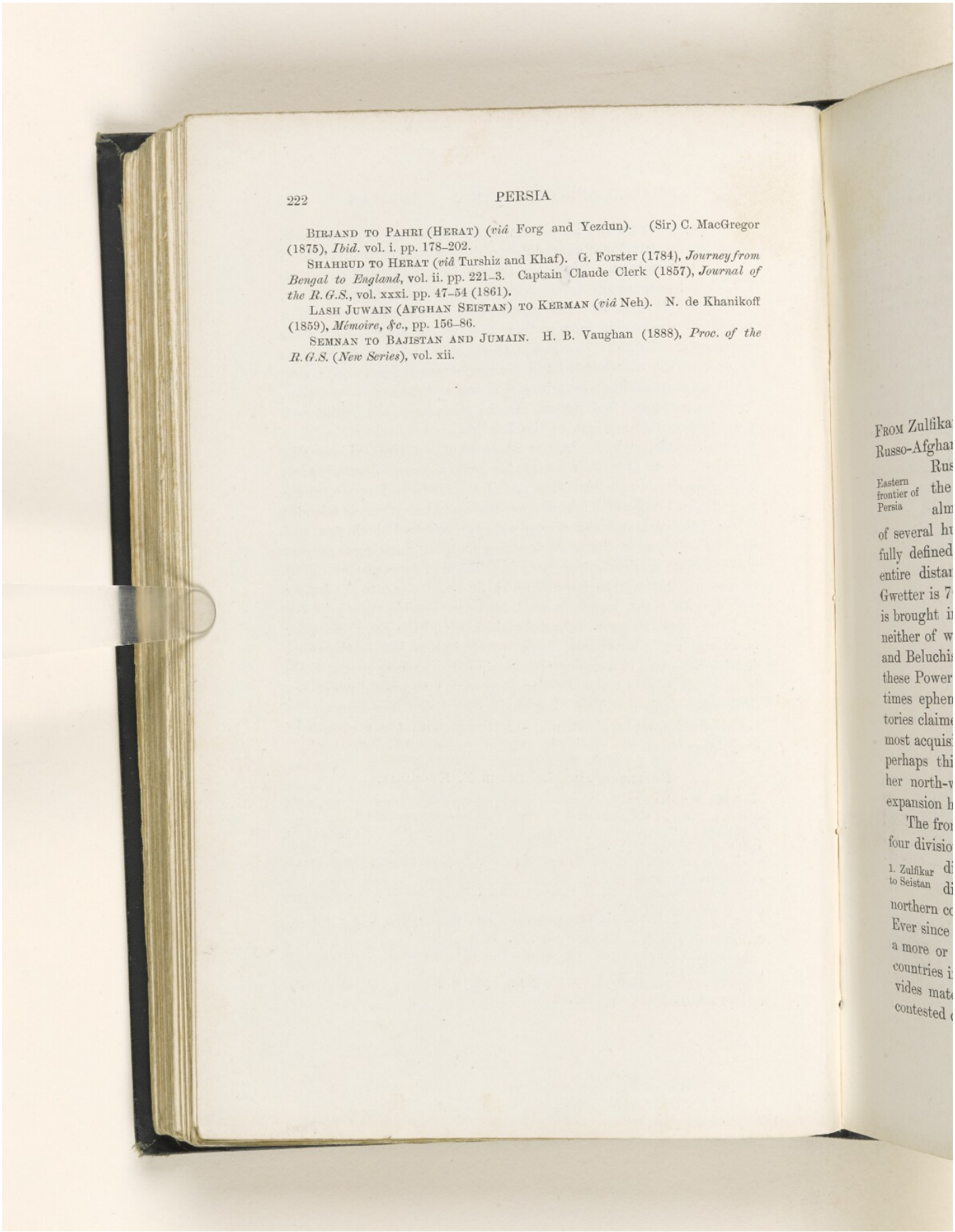



BIRJAND TO PAHRI (HERAT) (*viâ* Forg and Yezdun). (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 178–202.

SHAHRUD TO HERAT (*viâ* Turshiz and Khaf). G. Forster (1784), *Journey from Bengal to England*, vol. ii. pp. 221–3. Captain Claude Clerk (1857), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxxi. pp. 47–54 (1861).

LASH JUWAIN (AFGHAN SEISTAN) TO KERMAN (*viâ* Neh). N. de Khanikoff (1859), *Mémoire, &c.*, pp. 156–86.

SEMNAN TO BAJISTAN AND JUMAIN. H. B. Vaughan (1888), *Proc. of the R.G.S. (New Series)*, vol. xii.

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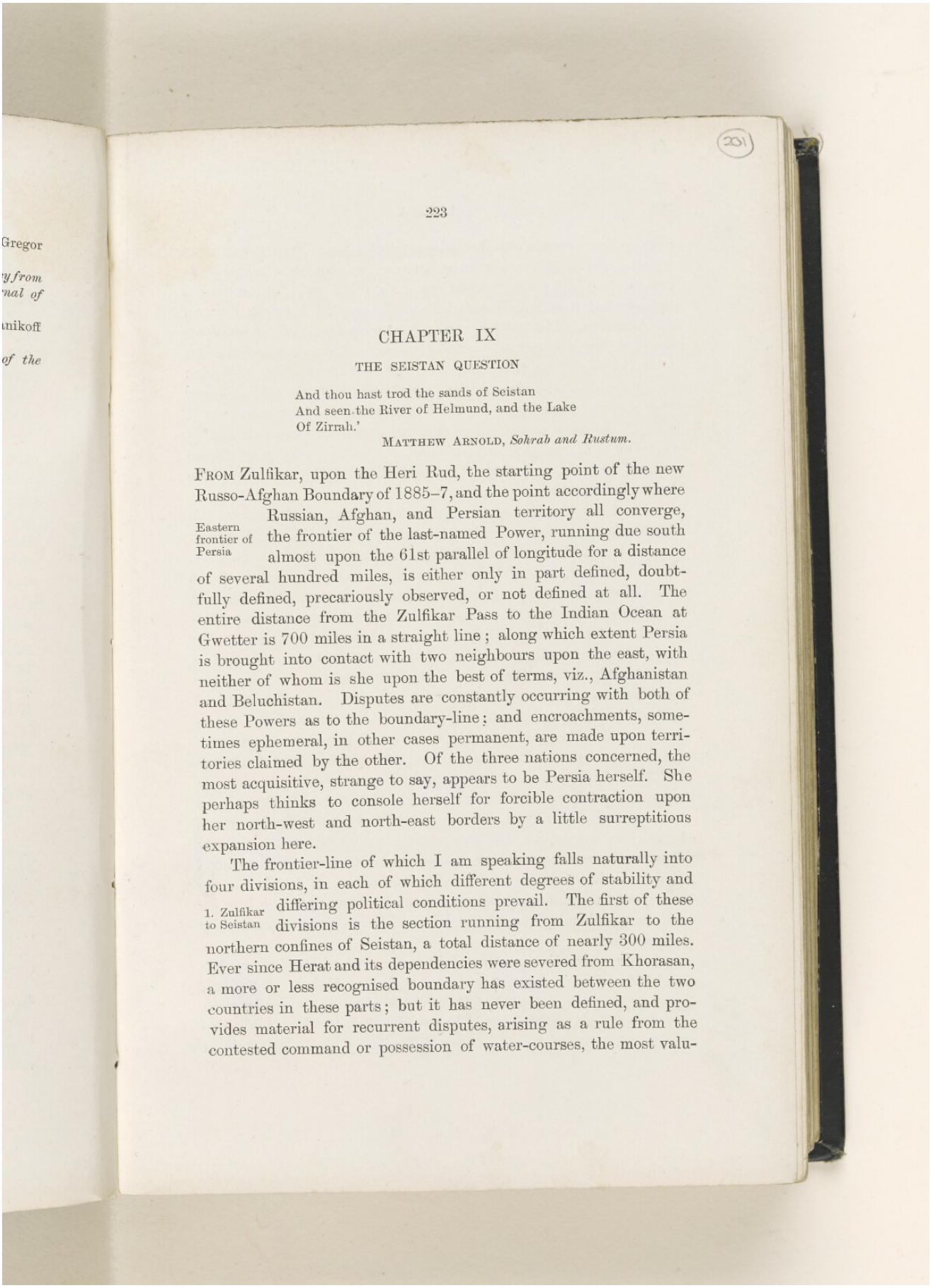




## CHAPTER IX

### THE SEISTAN QUESTION

And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah.'

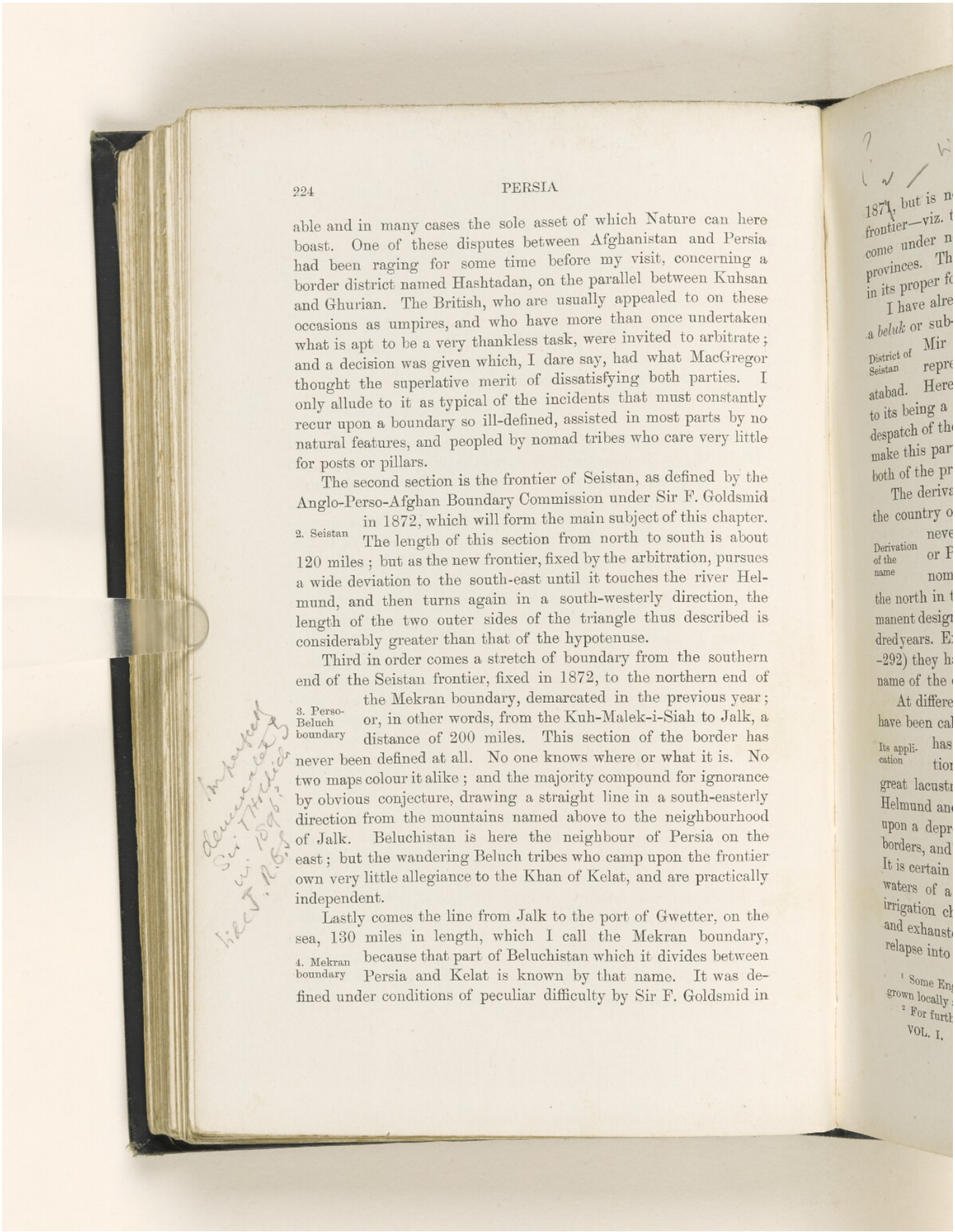
MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Sohrab and Rustum.*

FROM Zulfikar, upon the Heri Rud, the starting point of the new Russo-Afghan Boundary of 1885–7, and the point accordingly where Russian, Afghan, and Persian territory all converge, the frontier of the last-named Power, running due south almost upon the 61st parallel of longitude for a distance of several hundred miles, is either only in part defined, doubtfully defined, precariously observed, or not defined at all. The entire distance from the Zulfikar Pass to the Indian Ocean at Gwetter is 700 miles in a straight line; along which extent Persia is brought into contact with two neighbours upon the east, with neither of whom is she upon the best of terms, viz., Afghanistan and Beluchistan. Disputes are constantly occurring with both of these Powers as to the boundary-line; and encroachments, sometimes ephemeral, in other cases permanent, are made upon territories claimed by the other. Of the three nations concerned, the most acquisitive, strange to say, appears to be Persia herself. She perhaps thinks to console herself for forcible contraction upon her north-west and north-east borders by a little surreptitious expansion here.

Eastern frontier of Persia

The frontier-line of which I am speaking falls naturally into four divisions, in each of which different degrees of stability and differing political conditions prevail. The first of these divisions is the section running from Zulfikar to the northern confines of Seistan, a total distance of nearly 300 miles. Ever since Herat and its dependencies were severed from Khorasan, a more or less recognised boundary has existed between the two countries in these parts; but it has never been defined, and provides material for recurrent disputes, arising as a rule from the contested command or possession of water-courses, the most valu-

1. Zulfikar to Seistan





able and in many cases the sole asset of which Nature can here boast. One of these disputes between Afghanistan and Persia had been raging for some time before my visit, concerning a border district named Hashtadan, on the parallel between Kuhsan and Ghurian. The British, who are usually appealed to on these occasions as umpires, and who have more than once undertaken what is apt to be a very thankless task, were invited to arbitrate; and a decision was given which, I dare say, had what MacGregor thought the superlative merit of dissatisfying both parties. I only allude to it as typical of the incidents that must constantly recur upon a boundary so ill-defined, assisted in most parts by no natural features, and peopled by nomad tribes who care very little for posts or pillars.

The second section is the frontier of Seistan, as defined by the Anglo-Perso-Afghan Boundary Commission under Sir F. Goldsmid in 1872, which will form the main subject of this chapter.

2. Seistan

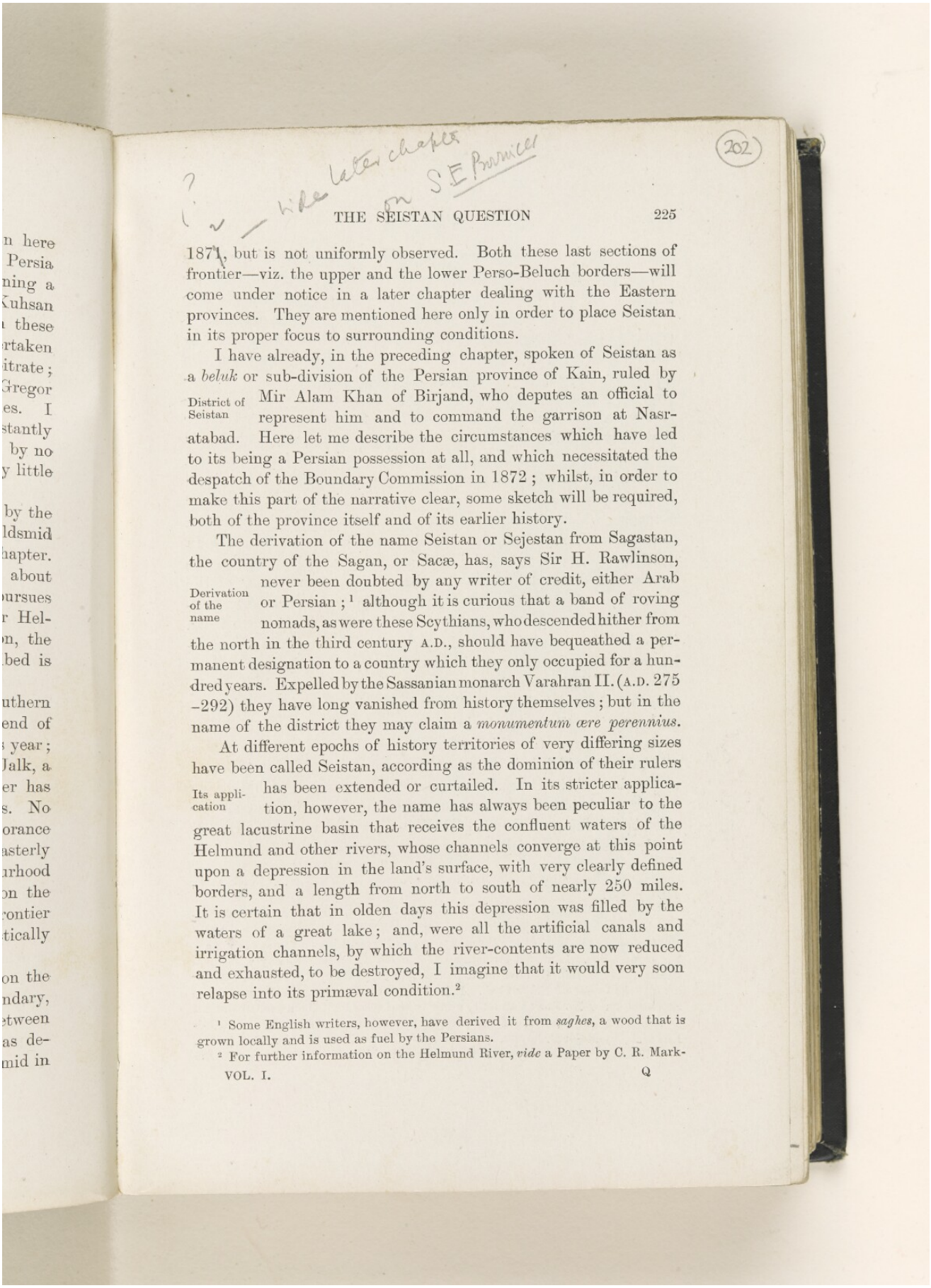
The length of this section from north to south is about 120 miles; but as the new frontier, fixed by the arbitration, pursues a wide deviation to the south-east until it touches the river Helmund, and then turns again in a south-westerly direction, the length of the two outer sides of the triangle thus described is considerably greater than that of the hypotenuse.

Third in order comes a stretch of boundary from the southern end of the Seistan frontier, fixed in 1872, to the northern end of the Mekran boundary, demarcated in the previous year; or, in other words, from the Kuh-Malek-i-Siah to Jalk, a distance of 200 miles. This section of the border has never been defined at all. No one knows where or what it is. No two maps colour it alike; and the majority compound for ignorance by obvious conjecture, drawing a straight line in a south-easterly direction from the mountains named above to the neighbourhood of Jalk. Beluchistan is here the neighbour of Persia on the east; but the wandering Beluch tribes who camp upon the frontier own very little allegiance to the Khan of Kelat, and are practically independent.

3. Perso-Beluch boundary

Lastly comes the line from Jalk to the port of Gwetter, on the sea, 130 miles in length, which I call the Mekran boundary, because that part of Beluchistan which it divides between Persia and Kelat is known by that name. It was defined under conditions of peculiar difficulty by Sir F. Goldsmid in

4. Mekran boundary





1871, but is not uniformly observed. Both these last sections of frontier—viz. the upper and the lower Perso-Beluch borders—will come under notice in a later chapter dealing with the Eastern provinces. They are mentioned here only in order to place Seistan in its proper focus to surrounding conditions.

I have already, in the preceding chapter, spoken of Seistan as a *beluk* or sub-division of the Persian province of Kain, ruled by Mir Alam Khan of Birjand, who deputes an official to represent him and to command the garrison at Nasr-atabad. Here let me describe the circumstances which have led to its being a Persian possession at all, and which necessitated the despatch of the Boundary Commission in 1872; whilst, in order to make this part of the narrative clear, some sketch will be required, both of the province itself and of its earlier history.

District of Seistan

The derivation of the name Seistan or Sejestan from Sagastan, the country of the Sagan, or Sacæ, has, says Sir H. Rawlinson, never been doubted by any writer of credit, either Arab or Persian;[1] although it is curious that a band of roving nomads, as were these Scythians, who descended hither from the north in the third century A.D., should have bequeathed a permanent designation to a country which they only occupied for a hundred years. Expelled by the Sassanian monarch Varahran II. (A.D. 275–292) they have long vanished from history themselves; but in the name of the district they may claim a *monumentum ære perennius*.

Derivation of the name

At different epochs of history territories of very differing sizes have been called Seistan, according as the dominion of their rulers has been extended or curtailed. In its stricter application, however, the name has always been peculiar to the great lacustrine basin that receives the confluent waters of the Helmund and other rivers, whose channels converge at this point upon a depression in the land's surface, with very clearly defined borders, and a length from north to south of nearly 250 miles. It is certain that in olden days this depression was filled by the waters of a great lake; and, were all the artificial canals and irrigation channels, by which the river-contents are now reduced and exhausted, to be destroyed, I imagine that it would very soon relapse into its primæval condition.[2]

Its application

[1] Some English writers, however, have derived it from *saghes*, a wood that is grown locally and is used as fuel by the Persians.

[2] For further information on the Helmund River, *vide* a Paper by C. R. Mark-



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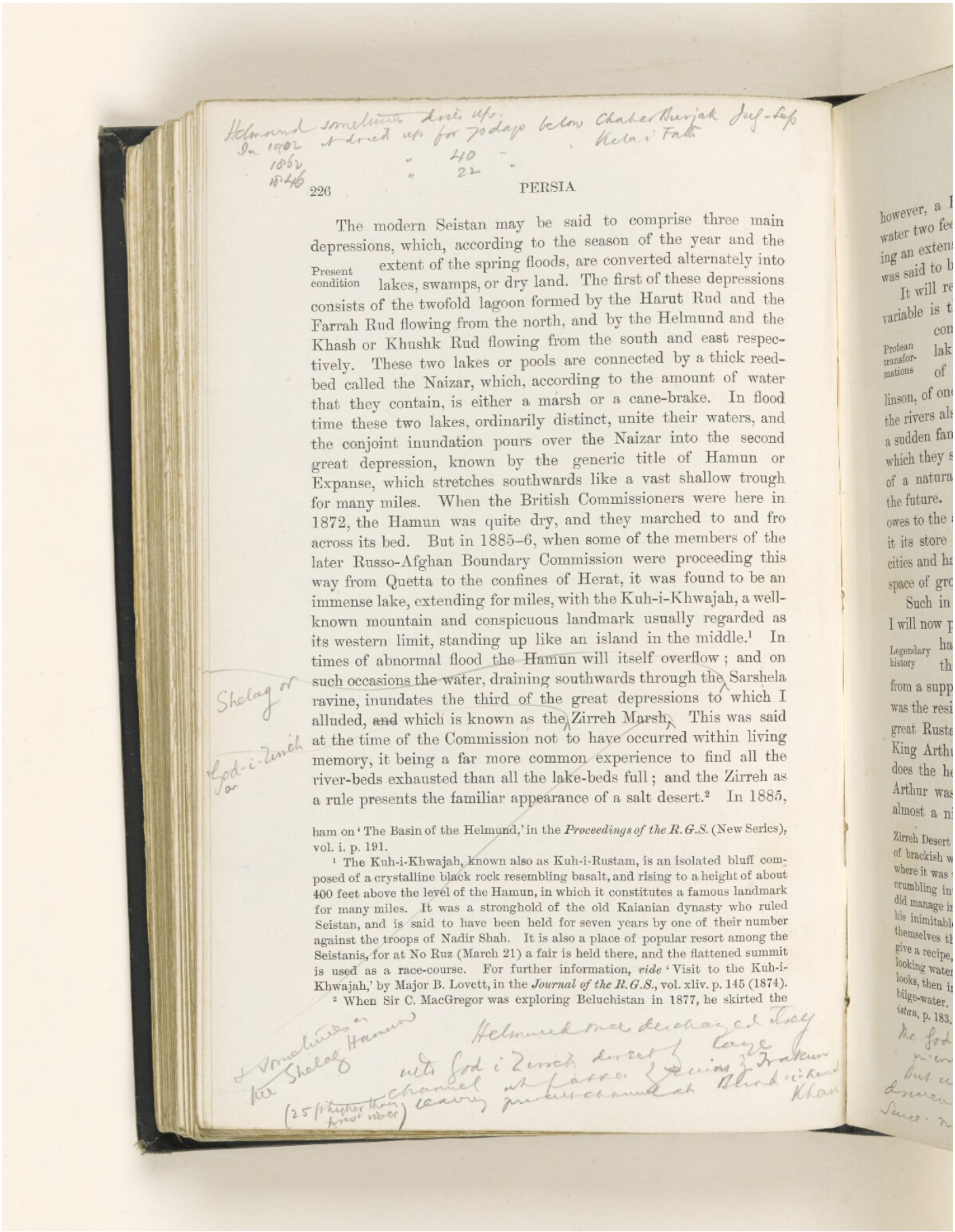




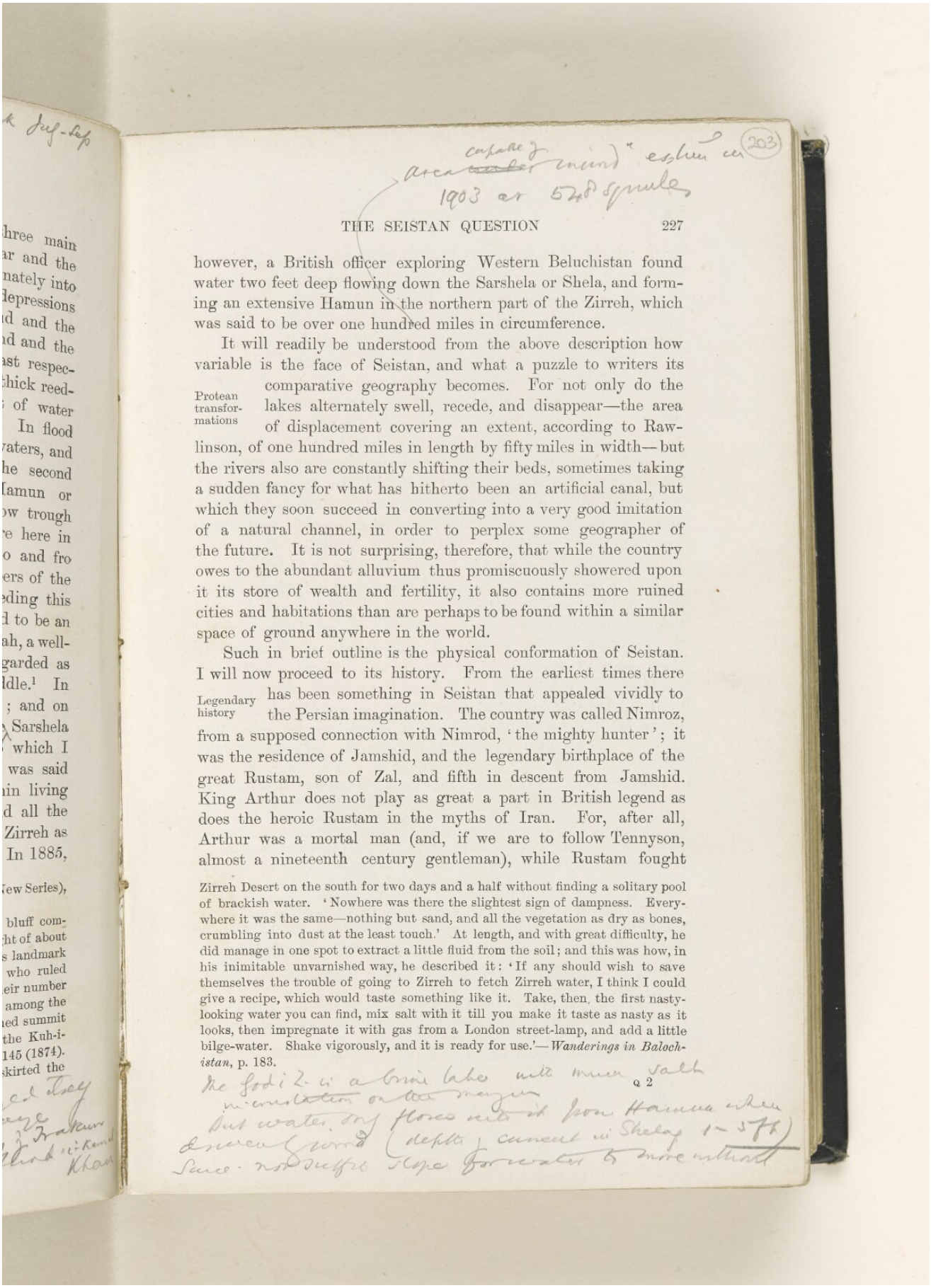
The modern Seistan may be said to comprise three main depressions, which, according to the season of the year and the extent of the spring floods, are converted alternately into lakes, swamps, or dry land. The first of these depressions consists of the twofold lagoon formed by the Harut Rud and the Farrah Rud flowing from the north, and by the Helmund and the Khash or Khushk Rud flowing from the south and east respectively. These two lakes or pools are connected by a thick reed-bed called the Naizar, which, according to the amount of water that they contain, is either a marsh or a cane-brake. In flood time these two lakes, ordinarily distinct, unite their waters, and the conjoint inundation pours over the Naizar into the second great depression, known by the generic title of Hamun or Expanse, which stretches southwards like a vast shallow trough for many miles. When the British Commissioners were here in 1872, the Hamun was quite dry, and they marched to and fro across its bed. But in 1885–6, when some of the members of the later Russo-Afghan Boundary Commission were proceeding this way from Quetta to the confines of Herat, it was found to be an immense lake, extending for miles, with the Kuh-i-Khwajah, a well-known mountain and conspicuous landmark usually regarded as its western limit, standing up like an island in the middle.[1] In times of abnormal flood the Hamun will itself overflow; and on such occasions the water, draining southwards through the Sarshela ravine, inundates the third of the great depressions to which I alluded, and which is known as the Zirreh Marsh. This was said at the time of the Commission not to have occurred within living memory, it being a far more common experience to find all the river-beds exhausted than all the lake-beds full; and the Zirreh as a rule presents the familiar appearance of a salt desert.[2] In 1885,

Present condition

ham on 'The Basin of the Helmund,' in the *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. i. p. 191.

[1] The Kuh-i-Khwajah, known also as Kuh-i-Rustam, is an isolated bluff composed of a crystalline black rock resembling basalt, and rising to a height of about 400 feet above the level of the Hamun, in which it constitutes a famous landmark for many miles. It was a stronghold of the old Kaianian dynasty who ruled Seistan, and is said to have been held for seven years by one of their number against the troops of Nadir Shah. It is also a place of popular resort among the Seistanis, for at No Ruz (March 21) a fair is held there, and the flattened summit is used as a race-course. For further information, *vide* 'Visit to the Kuh-i-Khwajah,' by Major B. Lovett, in the *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliv. p. 145 (1874).

[2] When Sir C. MacGregor was exploring Beluchistan in 1877, he skirted the



THE SEISTAN QUESTION 227

however, a British officer exploring Western Beluchistan found water two feet deep flowing down the Sarshela or Shela, and forming an extensive Hamun in the northern part of the Zirreh, which was said to be over one hundred miles in circumference.

It will readily be understood from the above description how variable is the face of Seistan, and what a puzzle to writers its comparative geography becomes. For not only do the lakes alternately swell, recede, and disappear—the area of displacement covering an extent, according to Rawlinson, of one hundred miles in length by fifty miles in width—but the rivers also are constantly shifting their beds, sometimes taking a sudden fancy for what has hitherto been an artificial canal, but which they soon succeed in converting into a very good imitation of a natural channel, in order to perplex some geographer of the future. It is not surprising, therefore, that while the country owes to the abundant alluvium thus promiscuously showered upon it its store of wealth and fertility, it also contains more ruined cities and habitations than are perhaps to be found within a similar space of ground anywhere in the world.

Protean transformations

Such in brief outline is the physical conformation of Seistan. I will now proceed to its history. From the earliest times there has been something in Seistan that appealed vividly to the Persian imagination. The country was called Nimroz, from a supposed connection with Nimrod, 'the mighty hunter'; it was the residence of Jamshid, and the legendary birthplace of the great Rustam, son of Zal, and fifth in descent from Jamshid. King Arthur does not play as great a part in British legend as does the heroic Rustam in the myths of Iran. For, after all, Arthur was a mortal man (and, if we are to follow Tennyson, almost a nineteenth century gentleman), while Rustam fought

Legendary history

Zirreh Desert on the south for two days and a half without finding a solitary pool of brackish water. 'Nowhere was there the slightest sign of dampness. Everywhere it was the same—nothing but sand, and all the vegetation as dry as bones, crumbling into dust at the least touch.' At length, and with great difficulty, he did manage in one spot to extract a little fluid from the soil; and this was how, in his inimitable unvarnished way, he described it: 'If any should wish to save themselves the trouble of going to Zirreh to fetch Zirreh water, I think I could give a recipe, which would taste something like it. Take, then, the first nasty-looking water you can find, mix salt with it till you make it taste as nasty as it looks, then impregnate it with gas from a London street-lamp, and add a little bilge-water. Shake vigorously, and it is ready for use.'—*Wanderings in Baluchistan*, p. 183.



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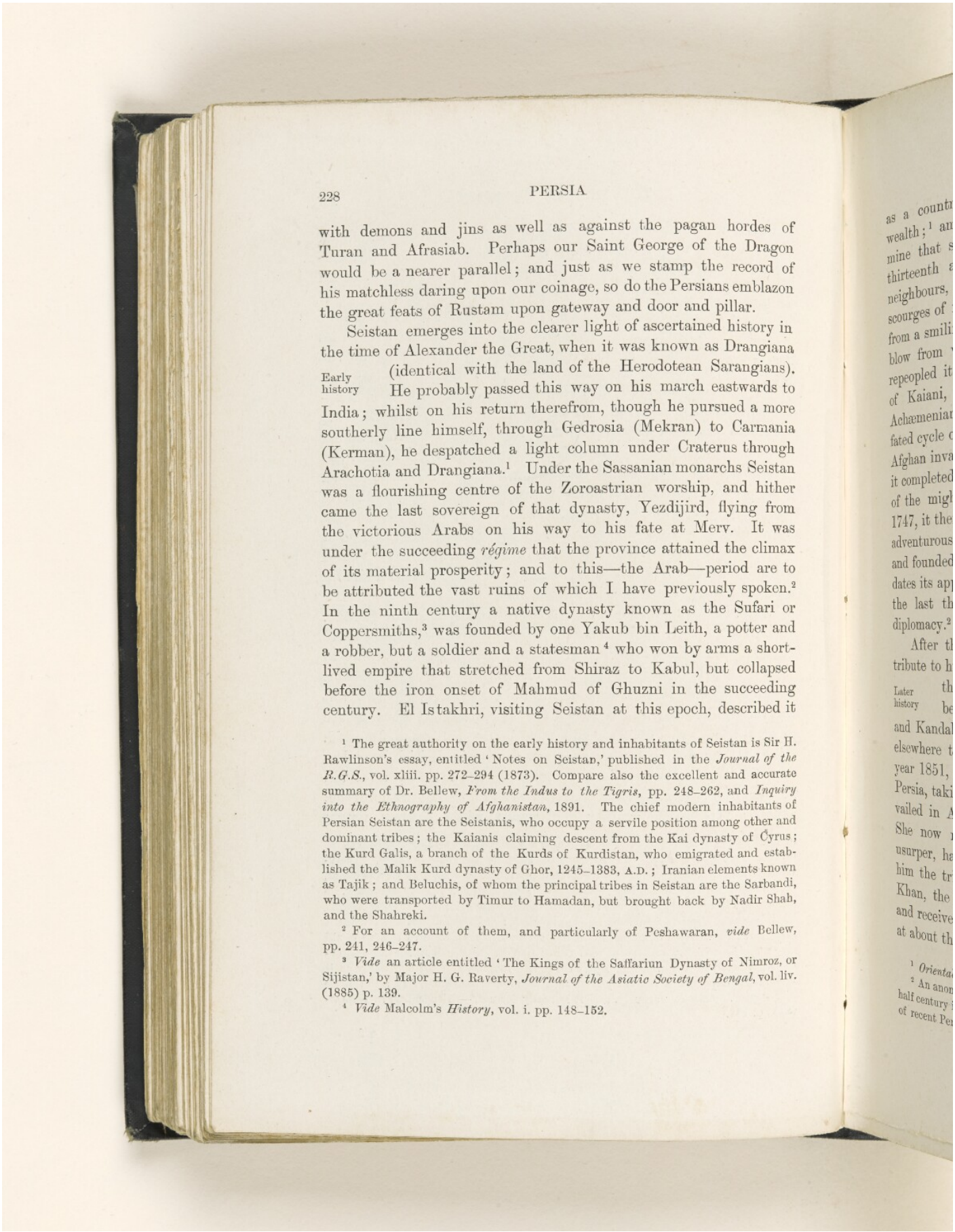



with demons and jins as well as against the pagan hordes of Turan and Afrasiab. Perhaps our Saint George of the Dragon would be a nearer parallel; and just as we stamp the record of his matchless daring upon our coinage, so do the Persians emblazon the great feats of Rustam upon gateway and door and pillar.

Seistan emerges into the clearer light of ascertained history in the time of Alexander the Great, when it was known as Drangiana (identical with the land of the Herodotean Sarangians). He probably passed this way on his march eastwards to India; whilst on his return therefrom, though he pursued a more southerly line himself, through Gedrosia (Mekran) to Carmania (Kerman), he despatched a light column under Craterus through Arachotia and Drangiana.[1] Under the Sassanian monarchs Seistan was a flourishing centre of the Zoroastrian worship, and hither came the last sovereign of that dynasty, Yezdijird, flying from the victorious Arabs on his way to his fate at Merv. It was under the succeeding *régime* that the province attained the climax of its material prosperity; and to this—the Arab—period are to be attributed the vast ruins of which I have previously spoken.[2] In the ninth century a native dynasty known as the Sufari or Coppersmiths,[3] was founded by one Yakub bin Leith, a potter and a robber, but a soldier and a statesman[4] who won by arms a short-lived empire that stretched from Shiraz to Kabul, but collapsed before the iron onset of Mahmud of Ghuzni in the succeeding century. El Istakhri, visiting Seistan at this epoch, described it

Early history

[1] The great authority on the early history and inhabitants of Seistan is Sir H. Rawlinson's essay, entitled 'Notes on Seistan,' published in the *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliii. pp. 272–294 (1873). Compare also the excellent and accurate summary of Dr. Bellew, *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 248–262, and *Inquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan*, 1891. The chief modern inhabitants of Persian Seistan are the Seistanis, who occupy a servile position among other and dominant tribes; the Kaianis claiming descent from the Kai dynasty of Cyrus; the Kurd Galis, a branch of the Kurds of Kurdistan, who emigrated and established the Malik Kurd dynasty of Ghor, 1245–1383, A.D.; Iranian elements known as Tajik; and Beluchis, of whom the principal tribes in Seistan are the Sarbandi, who were transported by Timur to Hamadan, but brought back by Nadir Shah, and the Shahreki.

[2] For an account of them, and particularly of Peshawaran, *vide* Bellew, pp. 241, 246–247.

[3] *Vide* an article entitled 'The Kings of the Saffariun Dynasty of Nimroz, or Sijistan,' by Major H. G. Raverty, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. liv. (1885) p. 139.

[4] *Vide* Malcolm's *History*, vol. i. pp. 148–152.

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as a country of populous cities, abundant canals, and great wealth;[1] among its natural resources being included a rich gold mine that subsequently disappeared in an earthquake. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Seistan, like most of its neighbours, experienced the two successive visitations of those scourges of mankind, Jenghiz Khan and Timur Beg, being turned from a smiling oasis into a ruinous waste, and suffering a murderous blow from which it has never recovered. The Sefavi dynasty repeopled it under the local rule of the ancient reigning family of Kaiani, who claimed descent from Kai Kobad, the first Achæmenian king. But the march of time brought round the fated cycle of injury and desolation; and at the hands both of the Afghan invaders of 1722, and of Nadir Shah who expelled them, it completed its chronic tale of suffering. Remaining a portion of the mighty empire of the Afshar usurper till his death in 1747, it then passed to the sceptre of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the adventurous captain who, imitating his master's exploits, rode off and founded the Durani empire in Afghanistan. From this epoch dates its appearance on the stage of modern politics, and during the last thirty years upon the chess-board of Anglo-Indian diplomacy.[2]

After the death of Ahmed Shah, Seistan continued to pay tribute to his successor, Timur Shah, till his death in 1793. In the break-up of the Durani dominion that followed, it became alternately attached to the fortunes of Herat and Kandahar, the Persian Government having its hands too full elsewhere to be able to attempt its recovery. From about the year 1851, however, after the death of Yar Mohammed of Herat, Persia, taking advantage of the disorder and disunion that prevailed in Afghanistan, began to revive and to press her claims. She now remembered that Nadir Shah, though a Turkoman usurper, had been king of Persia, and that Seistan had paid to him the tribute which it paid to Persian kings before him. Ali Khan, the local ruler, was persuaded to hoist the Persian flag, and received in return a Persian princess in marriage. This was at about the time of the Persian expedition against Herat in 1857

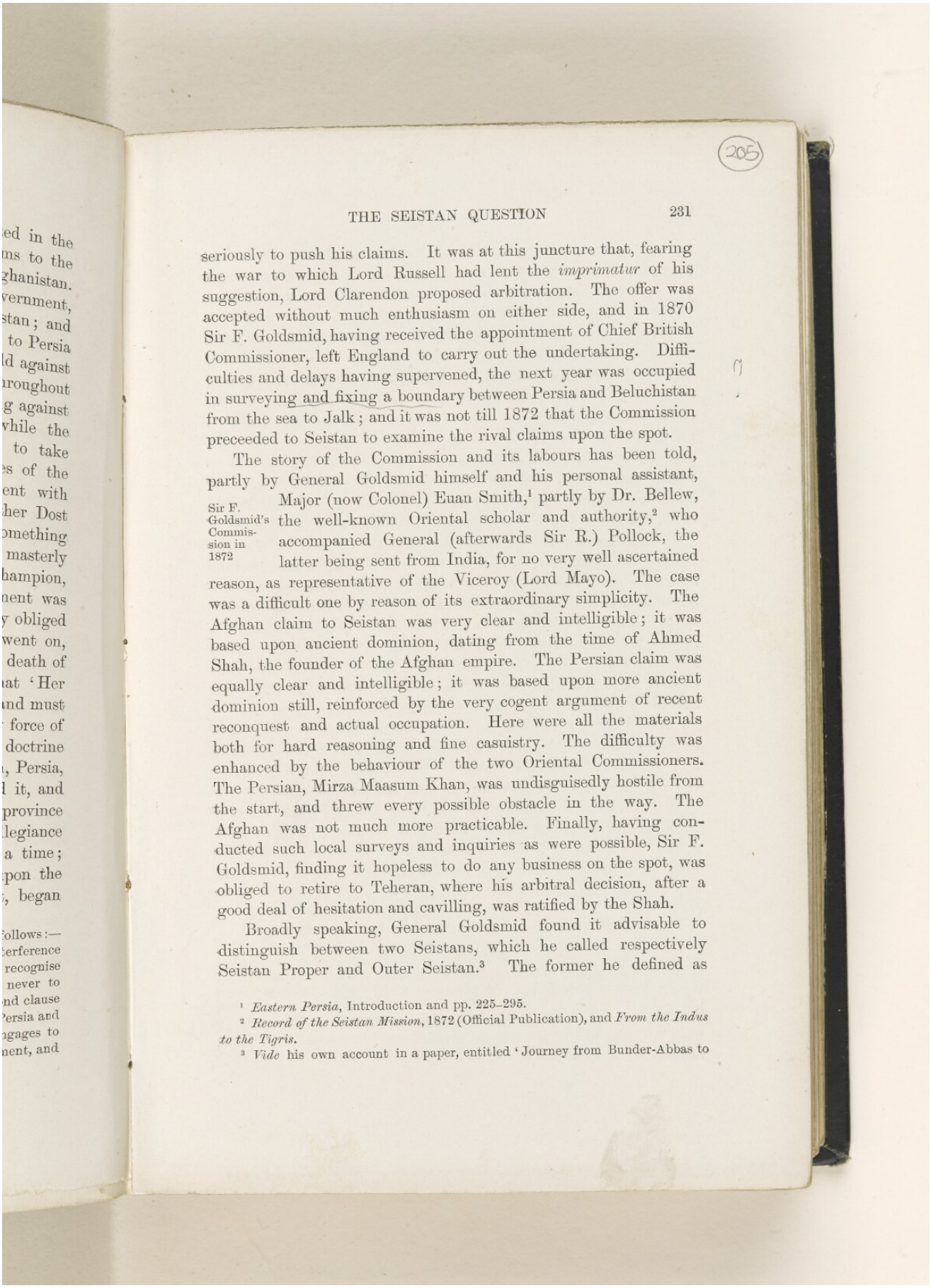
Later history

[1] *Oriental Geography*, pp. 203–209.

[2] An anonymous *History of Seistan* has been written in the course of the last half century in Persian by Reza Kuli Khan, the most accomplished and voluminous of recent Persian authors.

that brought about war with Great Britain, and resulted in the Treaty of Paris, by which Persia relinquished all claims to the sovereignty of Herat, and all right of interference in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, amid constant protests from the British Government, Ali Khan returned with a Persian military escort to Seistan; and both he and his successor, Taj Mohammed, who applied to Persia for protection when Dost Mohammed appeared in the field against Herat, acknowledged the sovereignty of the Shah. Throughout this period the British Minister was continually protesting against the violation of one clause of the Treaty of Paris, while the Persian Government as continually kept inviting him to take advantage of another, that promised the friendly offices of the British Government in the event of any disagreement with Afghanistan.[1] Shir Ali, too, who had succeeded his father Dost Mohammed as Amir in 1863, was equally anxious that something should be settled. But at that time the ignoble policy of 'masterly inactivity,' of which Lord Lawrence was the recognised champion, was in possession of the field; and the Indian Government was unwilling to recognise the ruler whom it was subsequently obliged to pay. Accordingly, protests and appeals and excuses went on, until at length, in November 1863, Lord Russell, sick to death of the squabble, penned a despatch in which he said that 'Her Majesty's Government decline to interfere in the matter, and must leave it to both parties to make good their pretensions by force of arms;' a frank if not a very courageous subscription to the doctrine that might is right. Taking advantage of this permission, Persia, in 1865–66, marched a force into the country, occupied it, and gradually brought all the Persian inhabitants of the province under her sway, besides tampering with the Afghan allegiance of the Beluchis. The Afghans behaved very quietly for a time; but Shir Ali, who had now established himself firmly upon the throne, and required to be treated with some respect, began

[1] Both clauses occur in Article VI. of the Treaty. The first was as follows:—'His Majesty the Shah of Persia engages to abstain hereafter from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan. His Majesty promises to recognise the independence of Herat and of the whole of Afghanistan, and never to attempt to interfere with the independence of those States.' The second clause ran thus: 'In case of differences arising between the Government of Persia and the countries of Herat and Afghanistan, the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government, and not to take up arms unless those friendly offices fail of effect.'





seriously to push his claims. It was at this juncture that, fearing the war to which Lord Russell had lent the *imprimatur* of his suggestion, Lord Clarendon proposed arbitration. The offer was accepted without much enthusiasm on either side, and in 1870 Sir F. Goldsmid, having received the appointment of Chief British Commissioner, left England to carry out the undertaking. Difficulties and delays having supervened, the next year was occupied in surveying and fixing a boundary between Persia and Beluchistan from the sea to Jalk; and it was not till 1872 that the Commission preceeded to Seistan to examine the rival claims upon the spot.

Sir F. Goldsmid's Commission in 1872

The story of the Commission and its labours has been told, partly by General Goldsmid himself and his personal assistant, Major (now Colonel) Euan Smith,[1] partly by Dr. Bellew, the well-known Oriental scholar and authority,[2] who accompanied General (afterwards Sir R.) Pollock, the latter being sent from India, for no very well ascertained reason, as representative of the Viceroy (Lord Mayo). The case was a difficult one by reason of its extraordinary simplicity. The Afghan claim to Seistan was very clear and intelligible; it was based upon ancient dominion, dating from the time of Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Afghan empire. The Persian claim was equally clear and intelligible; it was based upon more ancient dominion still, reinforced by the very cogent argument of recent reconquest and actual occupation. Here were all the materials both for hard reasoning and fine casuistry. The difficulty was enhanced by the behaviour of the two Oriental Commissioners. The Persian, Mirza Maasum Khan, was undisguisedly hostile from the start, and threw every possible obstacle in the way. The Afghan was not much more practicable. Finally, having conducted such local surveys and inquiries as were possible, Sir F. Goldsmid, finding it hopeless to do any business on the spot, was obliged to retire to Teheran, where his arbitral decision, after a good deal of hesitation and cavilling, was ratified by the Shah.

Broadly speaking, General Goldsmid found it advisable to distinguish between two Seistans, which he called respectively Seistan Proper and Outer Seistan.[3] The former he defined as

[1] *Eastern Persia*, Introduction and pp. 225–295.

[2] *Record of the Seistan Mission*, 1872 (Official Publication), and *From the Indus to the Tigris*.

[3] *Vide* his own account in a paper, entitled 'Journey from Bunder-Abbas to

the region between the Naizar on the north and the main lateral canal taken from the Helmund, in order to irrigate Sekuha and the neighbouring villages on the south, and extending from the old and true bed of the Helmund on the east, to the fringe of the Hamun and the Kuh-i-Khwajah on the west. This area he estimated at 950 square miles, and its population at 45,000, 20,000 of whom were Seistanis,[1] 15,000 Persian-speaking settlers, and 10,000 Beluchi nomads. Outer Seistan was the country on the right bank of the Helmund from its lake-mouth on the north to Rudbar on its upper waters on the south. His decision may be summarised thus. He gave Seistan Proper to Persia, and Outer Seistan to Afghanistan. The boundary between the two was drawn as follows: From the Siah Kuh (Black Mountain), which is the eastern boundary of the Persian district of Nehbandan, along the southern fringe of the Naizar to the left bank of the Helmund; thence up the river to a point about a mile above the great *bund* or dam at Kohak;[2] after which it consists of a line drawn from this point in a south-westerly direction to the range Kuh-Malek-i-Siah, which is the northerly continuation of a line of mountains that bound the Zirreh desert upon the west. Here the district of Seistan terminated, and the award was concluded. South of this point is the indeterminate and unobserved line to Jalk which I have previously mentioned.

Partition of Seistan

Hampered as he was by instructions almost incapable of execution, impeded by systematic obstruction, and owing a definite issue only to the foresight which induced him to complete his local surveys before the Indian members of the mission appeared upon the scene, General Goldsmid may be congratulated upon having been able to formulate a decision at all. To the independent observer it undoubtedly appears that the Persians were the gainers by his award; for they

Independent opinion

Meshed by Seistan,' published in the *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliii. pp. 65–83 (1873).

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson says: 'The true Seistanis are Persians of the purest Arian type. In fact, the only true representatives of the old Arian race to be found in Persia are the Seistanis and the Jamshidis of Herat; the language, physical appearance, and general characteristics of the Persians of the Achæmenian period being better preserved in this outlying corner of the Empire than in any other locality.'

[2] This dam, known indifferently as the Amir's, the Seistan, and the Kohak Bund, is a great dyke built across the river with tamarisk branches, stakes, and rammed clay, in order to divert its principal volume into the Sekuha Canal.

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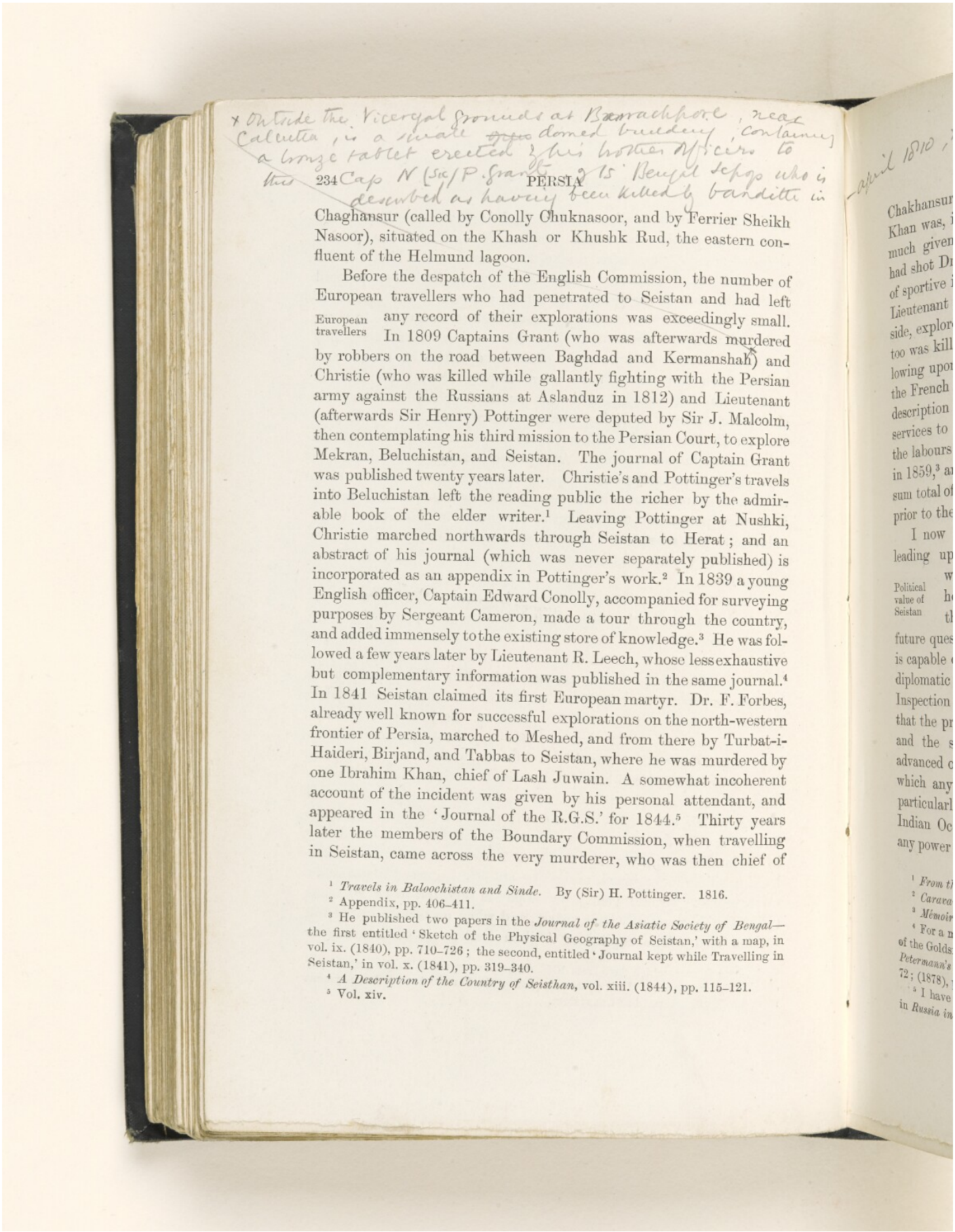
retained the only really valuable and lucrative portion of the country—a portion to which they could establish the double claim of ancient possession and actual occupation. Had the demarkation taken place ten years earlier, when first they pressed for it, there can be no doubt that in the absence of the second of these claims the award would not have been so favourable to them as it ultimately proved to be. Notwithstanding which facts, they professed themselves extremely dissatisfied with the result, and looked upon the partition as an attempt to enrich an English vassal state, Afghanistan, at their expense. The Afghans, on their side, were annoyed at losing the revenue-paying part of the province, and Shir Ali is said never to have forgiven the British Government in consequence. The award has not been adhered to with absolute precision on the spot; but, even if we concede to it a fair amount of success, it still remains somewhat doubtful whether it is wise policy for the Indian Government to undertake these chivalrous but thankless Commissions, which are apt to be misinterpreted by both parties, and usually leave a legacy of odium behind them.

Present administration

The chief town of Persian Seistan is Sekuha (the Three Hills), so called from three clay hills around and in part upon which the town is built. At the time of the Commission in 1872, it consisted of about 1,200 mud huts, not more than half of which were then or are now inhabited. The population is entirely engaged in agricultural pursuits, the town being situated in the most productive part of the province. As I have before said, however, the administrative and military head-quarters are at Nasratabad (called Nasirabad by Goldsmid), where lives the Deputy Governor of the Amir of Kain, and where is stationed one of the two infantry regiments, nominally 1,000, but actually less than 800 strong, which are raised in the entire province; as well as a small force of cavalry and a few guns. Service is for life, and is hereditary in the families supplying the soldiers. They are armed with muzzle-loading rifles of Persian manufacture, and are supposed to get a new uniform every second year. Their pay is reported to be 20 *krans* (12*s*.) and 7½ *mans* of wheat yearly, and when on service in Seistan rations also.[1] The capital of Afghan Seistan is Chakhansur or

[1] These figures, which date from 1886, do not correspond with the general pay of the Persian infantry. *Vide* a later chapter on the Persian Army. But payment is no doubt as haphazard as the system.



× Outside the Viceregal grounds at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, is a small ~~[illegible]~~ domed building, containing a bronze tablet erected by his brother officers to this Cap N (sic) P. Grant of 15 Bengal Sepoys who is described as having been killed by banditti in



Chaghansur (called by Conolly Chuknasoor, and by Ferrier Sheikh Nasoor), situated on the Khash or Khushk Rud, the eastern confluent of the Helmund lagoon.

European travellers

Before the despatch of the English Commission, the number of European travellers who had penetrated to Seistan and had left any record of their explorations was exceedingly small. In 1809 Captains Grant (who was afterwards murdered by robbers on the road between Baghdad and Kermanshah) and Christie (who was killed while gallantly fighting with the Persian army against the Russians at Aslanduz in 1812) and Lieutenant (afterwards Sir Henry) Pottinger were deputed by Sir J. Malcolm, then contemplating his third mission to the Persian Court, to explore Mekran, Beluchistan, and Seistan. The journal of Captain Grant was published twenty years later. Christie's and Pottinger's travels into Beluchistan left the reading public the richer by the admirable book of the elder writer.[1] Leaving Pottinger at Nushki, Christie marched northwards through Seistan to Herat; and an abstract of his journal (which was never separately published) is incorporated as an appendix in Pottinger's work.[2] In 1839 a young English officer, Captain Edward Conolly, accompanied for surveying purposes by Sergeant Cameron, made a tour through the country, and added immensely to the existing store of knowledge.[3] He was followed a few years later by Lieutenant R. Leech, whose less exhaustive but complementary information was published in the same journal.[4] In 1841 Seistan claimed its first European martyr. Dr. F. Forbes, already well known for successful explorations on the north-western frontier of Persia, marched to Meshed, and from there by Turbat-i-Haideri, Birjand, and Tabbas to Seistan, where he was murdered by one Ibrahim Khan, chief of Lash Juwain. A somewhat incoherent account of the incident was given by his personal attendant, and appeared in the 'Journal of the R.G.S.' for 1844.[5] Thirty years later the members of the Boundary Commission, when travelling in Seistan, came across the very murderer, who was then chief of

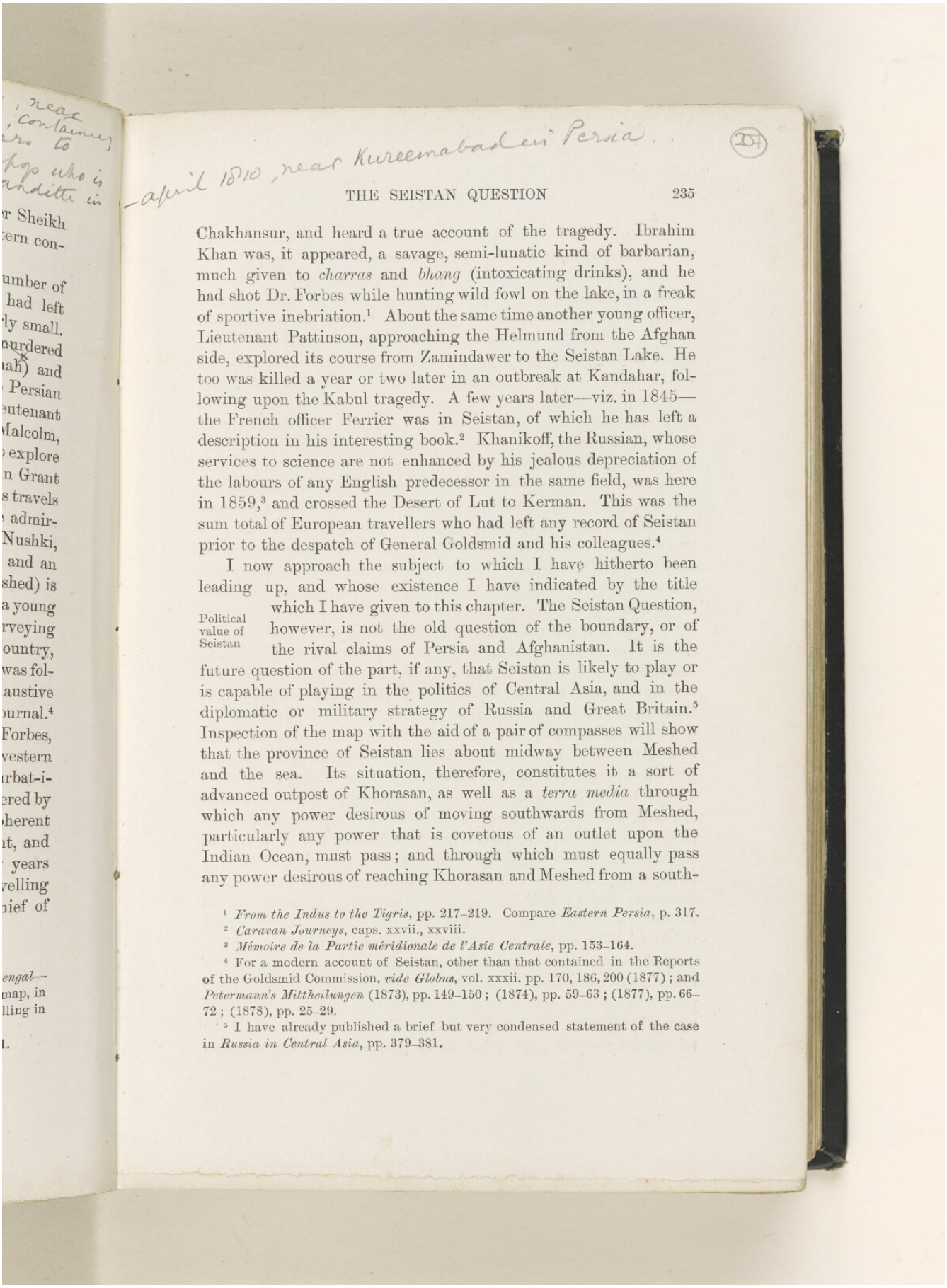
[1] *Travels in Baloochistan and Sinde.* By (Sir) H. Pottinger. 1816.

[2] Appendix, pp. 406–411.

[3] He published two papers in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*—the first entitled 'Sketch of the Physical Geography of Seistan,' with a map, in vol. ix. (1840), pp. 710–726; the second, entitled 'Journal kept while Travelling in Seistan,' in vol. x. (1841), pp. 319–340.

[4] *A Description of the Country of Seisthan*, vol. xiii. (1844), pp. 115–121.

[5] Vol. xiv.



april 1810, near Kureemabad in Persia.

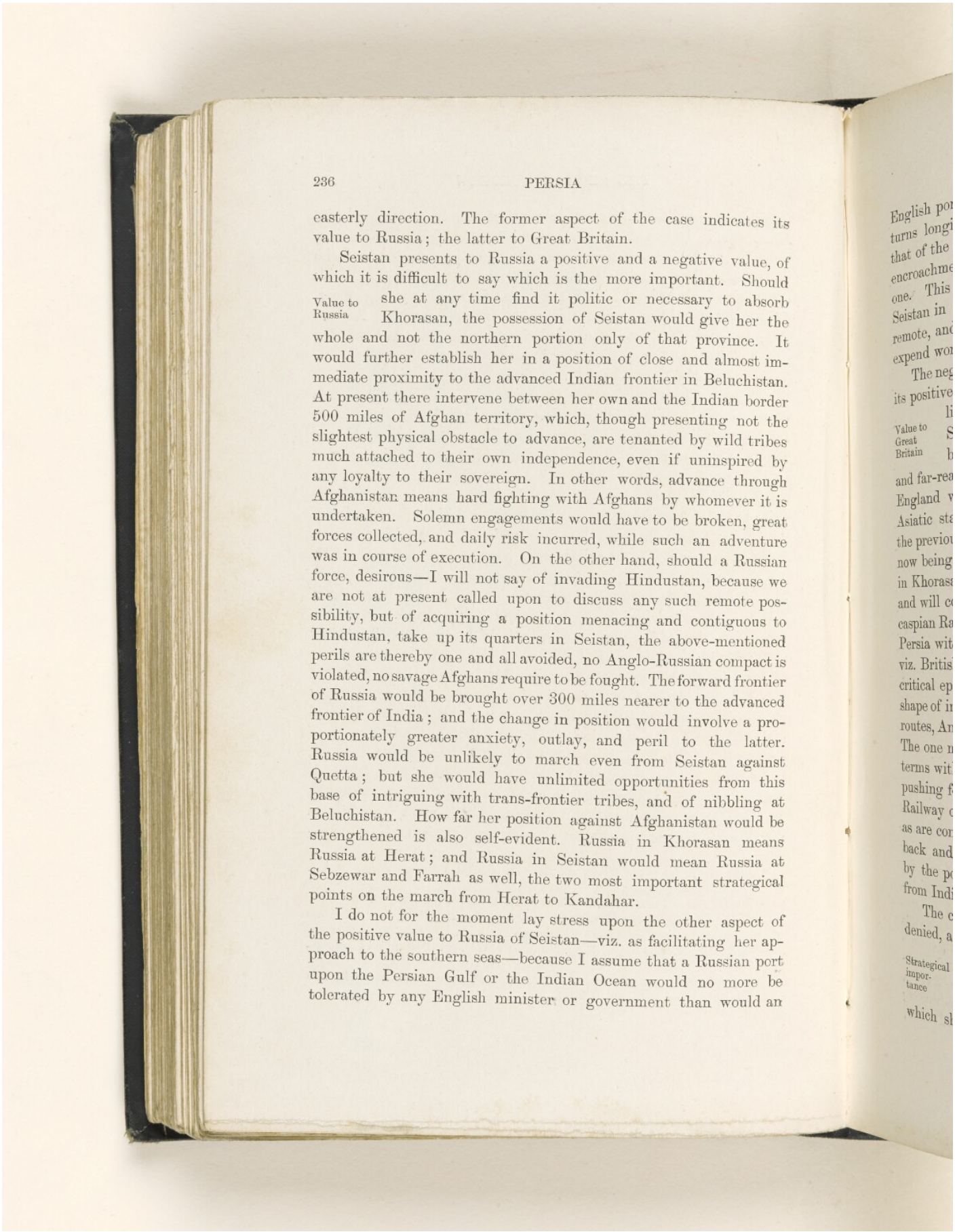


Chakhansur, and heard a true account of the tragedy. Ibrahim Khan was, it appeared, a savage, semi-lunatic kind of barbarian, much given to *charras* and *bhang* (intoxicating drinks), and he had shot Dr. Forbes while hunting wild fowl on the lake, in a freak of sportive inebriation.[1] About the same time another young officer, Lieutenant Pattinson, approaching the Helmund from the Afghan side, explored its course from Zamindawer to the Seistan Lake. He too was killed a year or two later in an outbreak at Kandahar, following upon the Kabul tragedy. A few years later—viz. in 1845—the French officer Ferrier was in Seistan, of which he has left a description in his interesting book.[2] Khanikoff, the Russian, whose services to science are not enhanced by his jealous depreciation of the labours of any English predecessor in the same field, was here in 1859,[3] and crossed the Desert of Lut to Kerman. This was the sum total of European travellers who had left any record of Seistan prior to the despatch of General Goldsmid and his colleagues.[4]

Political value of Seistan

I now approach the subject to which I have hitherto been leading up, and whose existence I have indicated by the title which I have given to this chapter. The Seistan Question, however, is not the old question of the boundary, or of the rival claims of Persia and Afghanistan. It is the future question of the part, if any, that Seistan is likely to play or is capable of playing in the politics of Central Asia, and in the diplomatic or military strategy of Russia and Great Britain.[5] Inspection of the map with the aid of a pair of compasses will show that the province of Seistan lies about midway between Meshed and the sea. Its situation, therefore, constitutes it a sort of advanced outpost of Khorasan, as well as a *terra media* through which any power desirous of moving southwards from Meshed, particularly any power that is covetous of an outlet upon the Indian Ocean, must pass; and through which must equally pass any power desirous of reaching Khorasan and Meshed from a south-

[1] *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 217–219. Compare *Eastern Persia*, p. 317.
[2] *Caravan Journeys*, caps. xxvii., xxviii.
[3] *Mémoire de la Partie méridionale de l'Asie Centrale*, pp. 153–164.
[4] For a modern account of Seistan, other than that contained in the Reports of the Goldsmid Commission, *vide Globus*, vol. xxxii. pp. 170, 186, 200 (1877); and *Petermann's Mittheilungen* (1873), pp. 149–150; (1874), pp. 59–63; (1877), pp. 66–72; (1878), pp. 25–29.
[5] I have already published a brief but very condensed statement of the case in *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 379–381.





easterly direction. The former aspect of the case indicates its value to Russia; the latter to Great Britain.

Seistan presents to Russia a positive and a negative value, of which it is difficult to say which is the more important. Should she at any time find it politic or necessary to absorb Khorasan, the possession of Seistan would give her the whole and not the northern portion only of that province. It would further establish her in a position of close and almost immediate proximity to the advanced Indian frontier in Beluchistan. At present there intervene between her own and the Indian border 500 miles of Afghan territory, which, though presenting not the slightest physical obstacle to advance, are tenanted by wild tribes much attached to their own independence, even if uninspired by any loyalty to their sovereign. In other words, advance through Afghanistan means hard fighting with Afghans by whomever it is undertaken. Solemn engagements would have to be broken, great forces collected, and daily risk incurred, while such an adventure was in course of execution. On the other hand, should a Russian force, desirous—I will not say of invading Hindustan, because we are not at present called upon to discuss any such remote possibility, but of acquiring a position menacing and contiguous to Hindustan, take up its quarters in Seistan, the above-mentioned perils are thereby one and all avoided, no Anglo-Russian compact is violated, no savage Afghans require to be fought. The forward frontier of Russia would be brought over 300 miles nearer to the advanced frontier of India; and the change in position would involve a proportionately greater anxiety, outlay, and peril to the latter. Russia would be unlikely to march even from Seistan against Quetta; but she would have unlimited opportunities from this base of intriguing with trans-frontier tribes, and of nibbling at Beluchistan. How far her position against Afghanistan would be strengthened is also self-evident. Russia in Khorasan means Russia at Herat; and Russia in Seistan would mean Russia at Sebzewar and Farrah as well, the two most important strategical points on the march from Herat to Kandahar.

Value to Russia

I do not for the moment lay stress upon the other aspect of the positive value to Russia of Seistan—viz. as facilitating her approach to the southern seas—because I assume that a Russian port upon the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean would no more be tolerated by any English minister or government than would an

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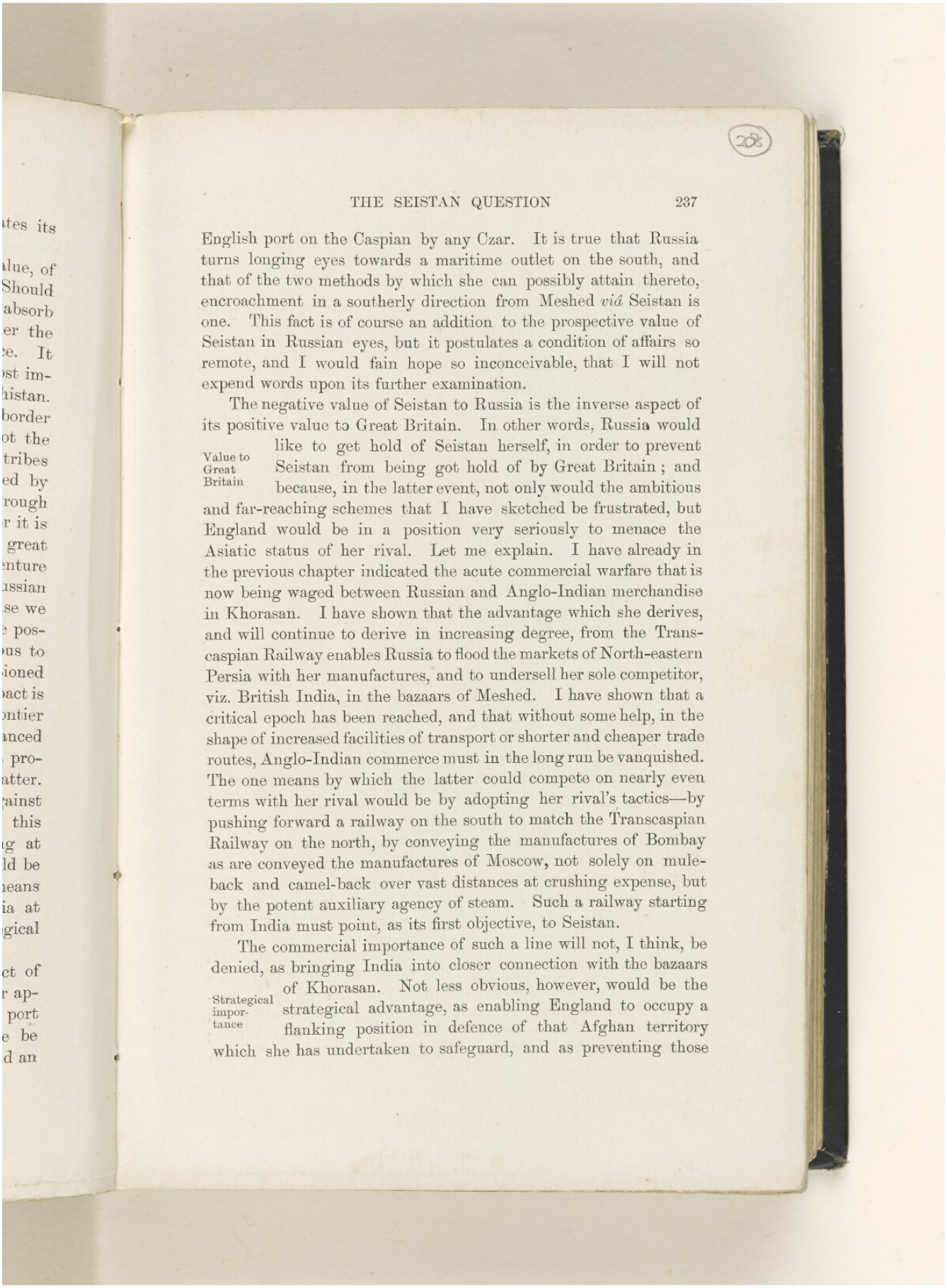



English port on the Caspian by any Czar. It is true that Russia turns longing eyes towards a maritime outlet on the south, and that of the two methods by which she can possibly attain thereto, encroachment in a southerly direction from Meshed *viâ* Seistan is one. This fact is of course an addition to the prospective value of Seistan in Russian eyes, but it postulates a condition of affairs so remote, and I would fain hope so inconceivable, that I will not expend words upon its further examination.

Value to Great Britain

The negative value of Seistan to Russia is the inverse aspect of its positive value to Great Britain. In other words, Russia would like to get hold of Seistan herself, in order to prevent Seistan from being got hold of by Great Britain; and because, in the latter event, not only would the ambitious and far-reaching schemes that I have sketched be frustrated, but England would be in a position very seriously to menace the Asiatic status of her rival. Let me explain. I have already in the previous chapter indicated the acute commercial warfare that is now being waged between Russian and Anglo-Indian merchandise in Khorasan. I have shown that the advantage which she derives, and will continue to derive in increasing degree, from the Transcaspian Railway enables Russia to flood the markets of North-eastern Persia with her manufactures, and to undersell her sole competitor, viz. British India, in the bazaars of Meshed. I have shown that a critical epoch has been reached, and that without some help, in the shape of increased facilities of transport or shorter and cheaper trade routes, Anglo-Indian commerce must in the long run be vanquished. The one means by which the latter could compete on nearly even terms with her rival would be by adopting her rival's tactics—by pushing forward a railway on the south to match the Transcaspian Railway on the north, by conveying the manufactures of Bombay as are conveyed the manufactures of Moscow, not solely on mule-back and camel-back over vast distances at crushing expense, but by the potent auxiliary agency of steam. Such a railway starting from India must point, as its first objective, to Seistan.

Strategical importance

The commercial importance of such a line will not, I think, be denied, as bringing India into closer connection with the bazaars of Khorasan. Not less obvious, however, would be the strategical advantage, as enabling England to occupy a flanking position in defence of that Afghan territory which she has undertaken to safeguard, and as preventing those

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developments of the Muscovite earth-hunger which I have sketched, and which might be fraught with peril to the harmonious relations between the two empires. Here I will pause; and will not go on to suggest that, if a commanding necessity ever arose, such a position might very effectively be utilised by an Indian army for offence, because I am loth to imagine a situation in which British or Indian soldiers will ever again be required to march in fighting order through Persia, or be forced into a policy of aggressive retaliation. The map, however, will assist the reader to form his own judgment.

There remain, however, two questions of practical importance —viz. the engineering possibility of constructing such a line, and the probable returns that might be expected from the country opened up. If the map be inspected, the physical contour of the region will suggest that the most natural, though by no means the shortest, method of reaching Seistan is by the valley of the Helmund from Girishk or Kandahar. The greater part of this distance—namely, that from Hazarjuft below the confluence of the Argandab to Rudbar, a distance of 160 miles—is locally known as the Garmsel, or Hot Region, identical with the Garmsir of Southern Persia. No part of this unhappy neighbourhood has suffered more from the passions of man than the Garmsel. In olden times it was the scene of active cultivation, and the site of busy and populous cities. Brigands, outlaws, and the stormy trail of armies have converted it into a sandy and untenanted desert. But the testimony of those who have explored it, notably of Dr. Bellew, who marched this way from India with General Pollock, is enthusiastic as to the possibilities of recuperation. This is what he says:—

Engineering facilities

> The valley everywhere bears the marks of former prosperity and population. Its soil is extremely fertile, and the command of water is unlimited. It only requires a strong and just Government to quickly recover its lost prosperity, and to render it a fruitful garden, crowded with towns and villages in unbroken succession all the way from Sistan to Kandahar. Under a civilised Government there is not a doubt that Garmsel would soon recover its pristine prosperity, and then this part of the Helmund valley would rival in the salubrity of its climate that of the Tigris at Baghdad. When the curse of anarchy and lawlessness is replaced in this region by the blessings of peace and order, then Garmsel will once more become the seat of plenty. The advancing civilisation of the West must some day penetrate to this neglected corner,

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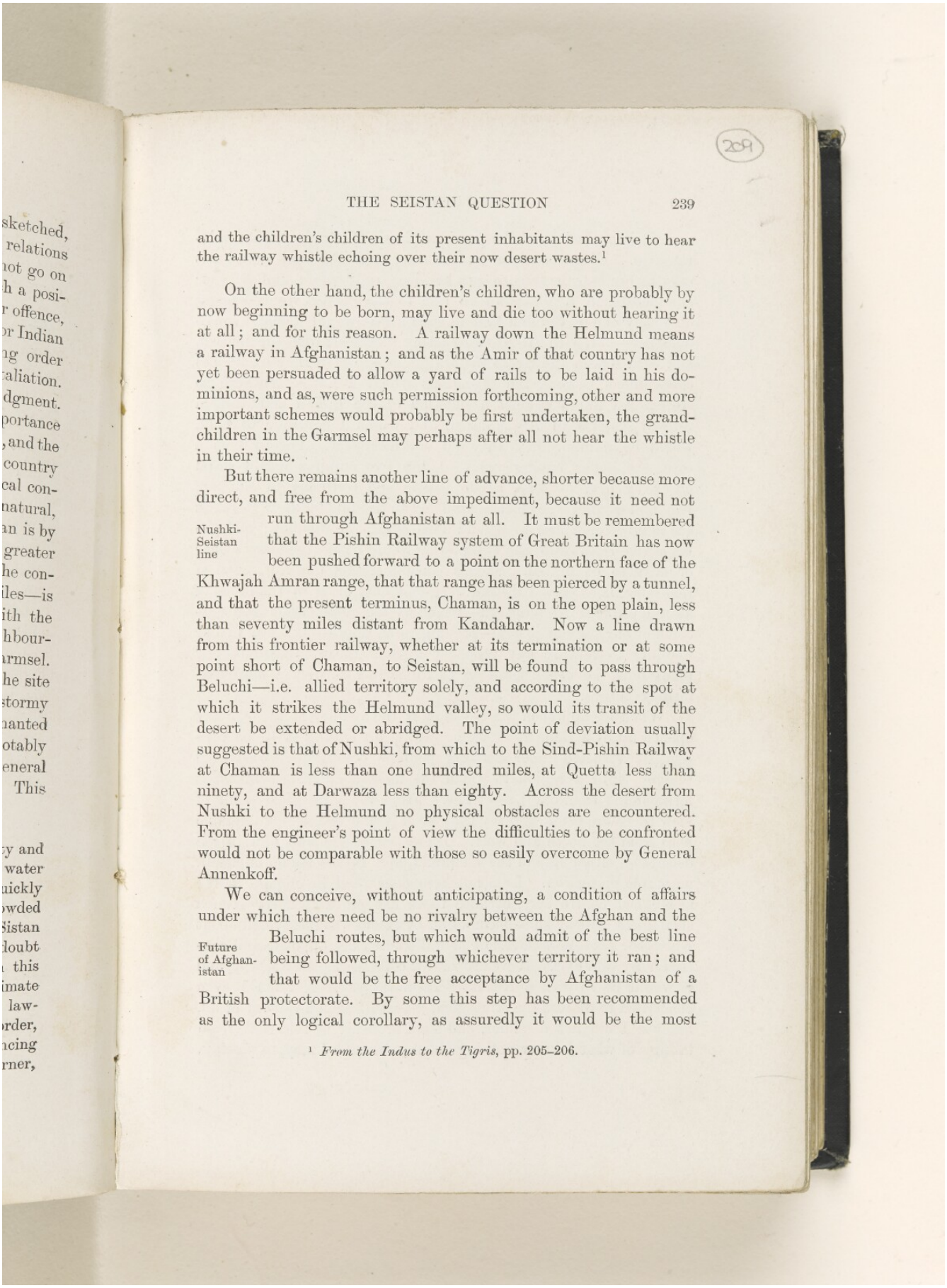



and the children's children of its present inhabitants may live to hear the railway whistle echoing over their now desert wastes.[1]

On the other hand, the children's children, who are probably by now beginning to be born, may live and die too without hearing it at all; and for this reason. A railway down the Helmund means a railway in Afghanistan; and as the Amir of that country has not yet been persuaded to allow a yard of rails to be laid in his dominions, and as, were such permission forthcoming, other and more important schemes would probably be first undertaken, the grandchildren in the Garmsel may perhaps after all not hear the whistle in their time.

Nushki-Seistan line

But there remains another line of advance, shorter because more direct, and free from the above impediment, because it need not run through Afghanistan at all. It must be remembered that the Pishin Railway system of Great Britain has now been pushed forward to a point on the northern face of the Khwajah Amran range, that that range has been pierced by a tunnel, and that the present terminus, Chaman, is on the open plain, less than seventy miles distant from Kandahar. Now a line drawn from this frontier railway, whether at its termination or at some point short of Chaman, to Seistan, will be found to pass through Beluchi—i.e. allied territory solely, and according to the spot at which it strikes the Helmund valley, so would its transit of the desert be extended or abridged. The point of deviation usually suggested is that of Nushki, from which to the Sind-Pishin Railway at Chaman is less than one hundred miles, at Quetta less than ninety, and at Darwaza less than eighty. Across the desert from Nushki to the Helmund no physical obstacles are encountered. From the engineer's point of view the difficulties to be confronted would not be comparable with those so easily overcome by General Annenkoff.

Future of Afghanistan

We can conceive, without anticipating, a condition of affairs under which there need be no rivalry between the Afghan and the Beluchi routes, but which would admit of the best line being followed, through whichever territory it ran; and that would be the free acceptance by Afghanistan of a British protectorate. By some this step has been recommended as the only logical corollary, as assuredly it would be the most

[1] *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 205–206.

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practical conclusion, of the previous phases of Anglo-Afghan relationship. Given such a protectorate, and England would not only before long be free to run her iron rails where and whither she pleased in Afghanistan—a line to the Persian frontier being obviously one of the first that in such a case would demand consideration—but, with the Afghans acting in concert with the British, and with Russia and Great Britain (as *ex hypothesi* they would be) coterminous powers, the objections which I have elsewhere so strenuously urged against a junction of the Indian and Russian railway systems in Afghanistan, and which I continue to hold, would be minimised, if they did not disappear. For in such a case, the buffer having vanished, the two empires would stand cheek by jowl in Asia, as do Russia and Germany in Europe; England would be as much committed to defend Balkh or Herat as she is now compelled to defend Portsmouth or Bombay; and the respective railways of the two powers would have a tendency sooner or later to be united. Such a consummation, however, even if realisable, is as yet far distant. It can only arise in the event of an independent Afghanistan—which is the justification and outcome of our present policy—proving to be impossible; and in our inability to venture any prophecy upon data so precarious, our plans must be constructed so as to harmonise with a more immediate future.

Military criticism

When we approach the question of the quality of the country opened up by a Beluchi-Persian railway, presuming it to be constructed under existing political conditions, we advance into a region in which the most conflicting evidence is forthcoming from our authorities. From the strategical point of view there are some who say that such a line would be vulnerable both from the north and west. There are others who find in the deserts on either side of the Helmund, and in the Helmund itself, an ample protection. I am not here concerned to engage in the strategical controversy, because there has probably never been a strategical railway since locomotion by steam was discovered about which the professors have not held diametrically opposite and contradictory opinions. It was so with the Transcaspian Railway, and it would be so with a Nushki-Seistan railway. Nor am I even concerned to discuss the strategical aspect of such a railway at all, because I am not a soldier, and shall probably be told that I am talking of what I know nothing about; although I may, in passing,

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confess that to my uninstructed vision the military advantages of such a line would appear to be considerable. I prefer, however, to treat it as a commercial scheme, and to assume that a subscribing public, as well as generals and colonels, wish to be able to form an opinion.

We will suppose, therefore, that our railway has reached Seistan. What will it find, and what will it do when it gets there?

Hostile opinion

There are some who protest that the features of the country are hopelessly unfavourable to commerce or colonisation. They paint lamentable pictures of the physical amenities of Seistan. There is a famous wind called the *Bad-i-sad-o-bist-ruz* (or wind of 120 days), which blows steadily there from a north-westerly direction in the months between March and August, beginning soon after sunrise, abating at midday, and attaining its maximum strength after sunset. There is also a particularly horrible kind of fly that bites and even kills horses by its bite. At times of the year the climate, owing to the extent of marsh water stagnating under the sun, breeds fevers and ague. The face of the country is apt to be flooded; and communication is only kept up by the precarious method of *tutins*, a kind of raft made of reeds lashed together and strengthened by tamarisk stakes.[1] These critics even go so far as to include the whole country in the scope of their truculent denunciation, and to ask wherein lies the beauty or the money value of reed-beds, and sand-hills, and swamps.

Less sweeping, because better informed, and worthy of careful examination (by reason of the unequalled position of its author), although unfavourable in character, is the opinion that has been expressed by Sir H. Rawlinson. He has written as follows:—

Sir H. Rawlinson

Though possessing great natural advantages, the province of Seistan is, in its present aspect, a wretchedly unhealthy country, only habitable for a few months in the year, and hardly worth the expense of government; while in regard to its strategical value, which is the point of view that has been chiefly regarded in India, great misapprehension prevails. So far from Seistan being, as has been so often stated, a convenient base for aggression upon India from the westward, it is in every respect inferior to Herat for that purpose.[2] To the south and

[1] For a description and illustration, *vide* Bellew's *From the Indus to the Tigris*, p. 227.

[2] This is true; but supposing it is thought desirable by an invader for political



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south-east it is bounded by an impassable desert; while to the east it possesses one single line of communication along the Helmund, contracted and ill-supplied, and exposed to a flank attack from the northward throughout its whole extent from Seistan to Kandahar. Supposing, indeed, the Afghans to be in strength at Herat, Farrah, or Zamin Dawer, it would be quite impossible for a Persian army to march along the Helmund from Seistan to Girishk. The only military value of Seistan consists in its abundant supply of camels for carriage; and these animals are for the most part in the hands of the Beluchis, who are Afghan, and not Persian dependents, and who might thus be available for our own purposes, though hardly for those of our enemies.[1]

It is permissible to point out that, although the author of the above paragraph is fortunately still living, it was written at a time (1875) long anterior to more recent developments, and with a view to conditions which no longer exist. The question discussed by Rawlinson in dealing with the strategical controversy is the chance afforded to Persia of invading Afghanistan from the base of Seistan; and this has no relation whatever to the new problem created by the appearance of Russia within striking distance of Herat. A Persian army is now about as likely to invade Afghanistan as it is to march against St. Petersburg. But what Persians or Afghans would not, or could not do, European armies operating from railway bases may, and since 1885 alone it may be said that any previous military criticism upon Seistan has already become obsolete.

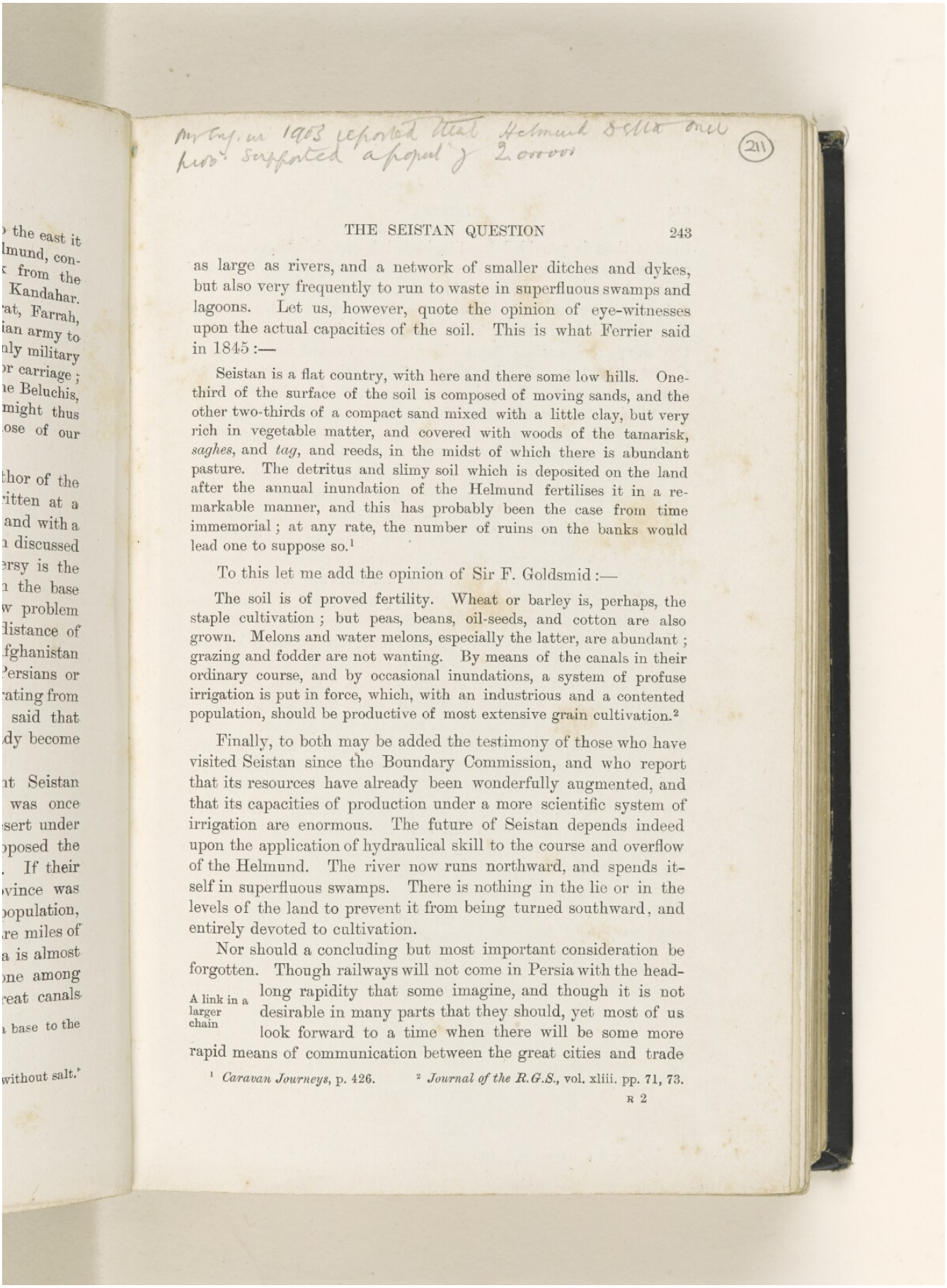
Favourable opinions of natural fertility

To the jeremiads of those critics who represent Seistan (parodying the phrase in which Persia as a whole was once described[2]) as consisting of two parts, a desert under water and a desert above water, must be opposed the evidence both of history and of existing facts. If their verdict be true, how comes it that this province was once so famous for its magnificent fertility, its dense population, and its splendid cities? What must be said of the square miles of ruins still encumbering the ground? Fertility in Persia is almost solely dependent upon water supply; and here, alone among Persian provinces, is enough water not merely to fill great canals

reasons to leave Herat alone, or supposing Seistan be added as a base to the already acquired base of Herat, what then?

[1] *England and Russia in the East*, p. 116.

[2] 'Persia consists of two parts: a desert with salt, and a desert without salt.'



Mr Eng. in 1903 reported that Helmund Delta once prob. supported a popul'y 2,000,000

(211)



as large as rivers, and a network of smaller ditches and dykes, but also very frequently to run to waste in superfluous swamps and lagoons. Let us, however, quote the opinion of eye-witnesses upon the actual capacities of the soil. This is what Ferrier said in 1845 :—

Seistan is a flat country, with here and there some low hills. One-third of the surface of the soil is composed of moving sands, and the other two-thirds of a compact sand mixed with a little clay, but very rich in vegetable matter, and covered with woods of the tamarisk, *saghes*, and *tag*, and reeds, in the midst of which there is abundant pasture. The detritus and slimy soil which is deposited on the land after the annual inundation of the Helmund fertilises it in a remarkable manner, and this has probably been the case from time immemorial ; at any rate, the number of ruins on the banks would lead one to suppose so.[1]

To this let me add the opinion of Sir F. Goldsmid :—

The soil is of proved fertility. Wheat or barley is, perhaps, the staple cultivation ; but peas, beans, oil-seeds, and cotton are also grown. Melons and water melons, especially the latter, are abundant ; grazing and fodder are not wanting. By means of the canals in their ordinary course, and by occasional inundations, a system of profuse irrigation is put in force, which, with an industrious and a contented population, should be productive of most extensive grain cultivation.[2]

Finally, to both may be added the testimony of those who have visited Seistan since the Boundary Commission, and who report that its resources have already been wonderfully augmented, and that its capacities of production under a more scientific system of irrigation are enormous. The future of Seistan depends indeed upon the application of hydraulical skill to the course and overflow of the Helmund. The river now runs northward, and spends itself in superfluous swamps. There is nothing in the lie or in the levels of the land to prevent it from being turned southward, and entirely devoted to cultivation.

A link in a larger chain

Nor should a concluding but most important consideration be forgotten. Though railways will not come in Persia with the headlong rapidity that some imagine, and though it is not desirable in many parts that they should, yet most of us look forward to a time when there will be some more rapid means of communication between the great cities and trade

[1] *Caravan Journeys*, p. 426. [2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliii. pp. 71, 73.



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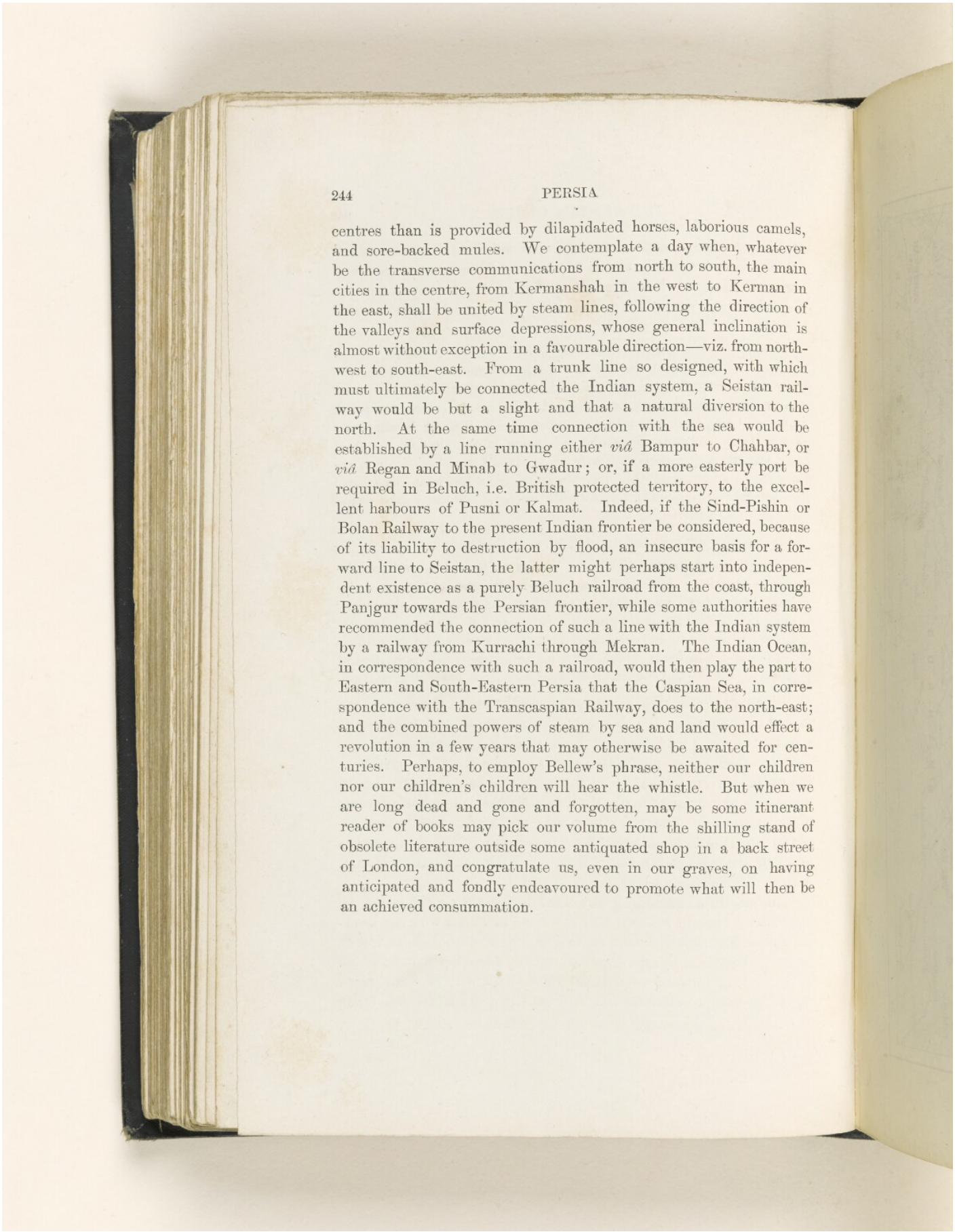



centres than is provided by dilapidated horses, laborious camels, and sore-backed mules. We contemplate a day when, whatever be the transverse communications from north to south, the main cities in the centre, from Kermanshah in the west to Kerman in the east, shall be united by steam lines, following the direction of the valleys and surface depressions, whose general inclination is almost without exception in a favourable direction—viz. from north-west to south-east. From a trunk line so designed, with which must ultimately be connected the Indian system, a Seistan railway would be but a slight and that a natural diversion to the north. At the same time connection with the sea would be established by a line running either *viâ* Bampur to Chahbar, or *viâ* Regan and Minab to Gwadur; or, if a more easterly port be required in Beluch, i.e. British protected territory, to the excellent harbours of Pusni or Kalmat. Indeed, if the Sind-Pishin or Bolan Railway to the present Indian frontier be considered, because of its liability to destruction by flood, an insecure basis for a forward line to Seistan, the latter might perhaps start into independent existence as a purely Beluch railroad from the coast, through Panjgur towards the Persian frontier, while some authorities have recommended the connection of such a line with the Indian system by a railway from Kurrachi through Mekran. The Indian Ocean, in correspondence with such a railroad, would then play the part to Eastern and South-Eastern Persia that the Caspian Sea, in correspondence with the Transcaspian Railway, does to the north-east; and the combined powers of steam by sea and land would effect a revolution in a few years that may otherwise be awaited for centuries. Perhaps, to employ Bellew's phrase, neither our children nor our children's children will hear the whistle. But when we are long dead and gone and forgotten, may be some itinerant reader of books may pick our volume from the shilling stand of obsolete literature outside some antiquated shop in a back street of London, and congratulate us, even in our graves, on having anticipated and fondly endeavoured to promote what will then be an achieved consummation.

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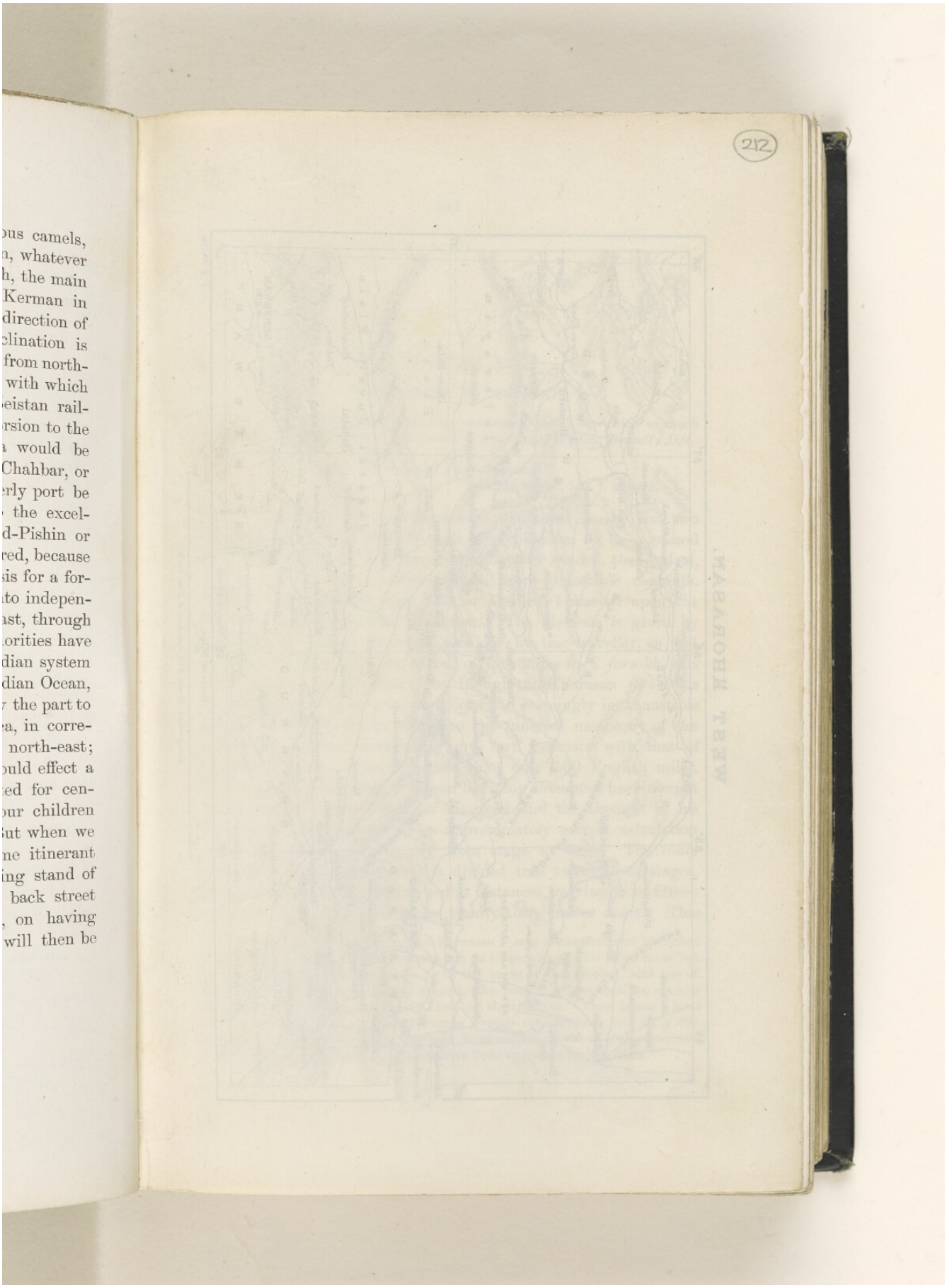


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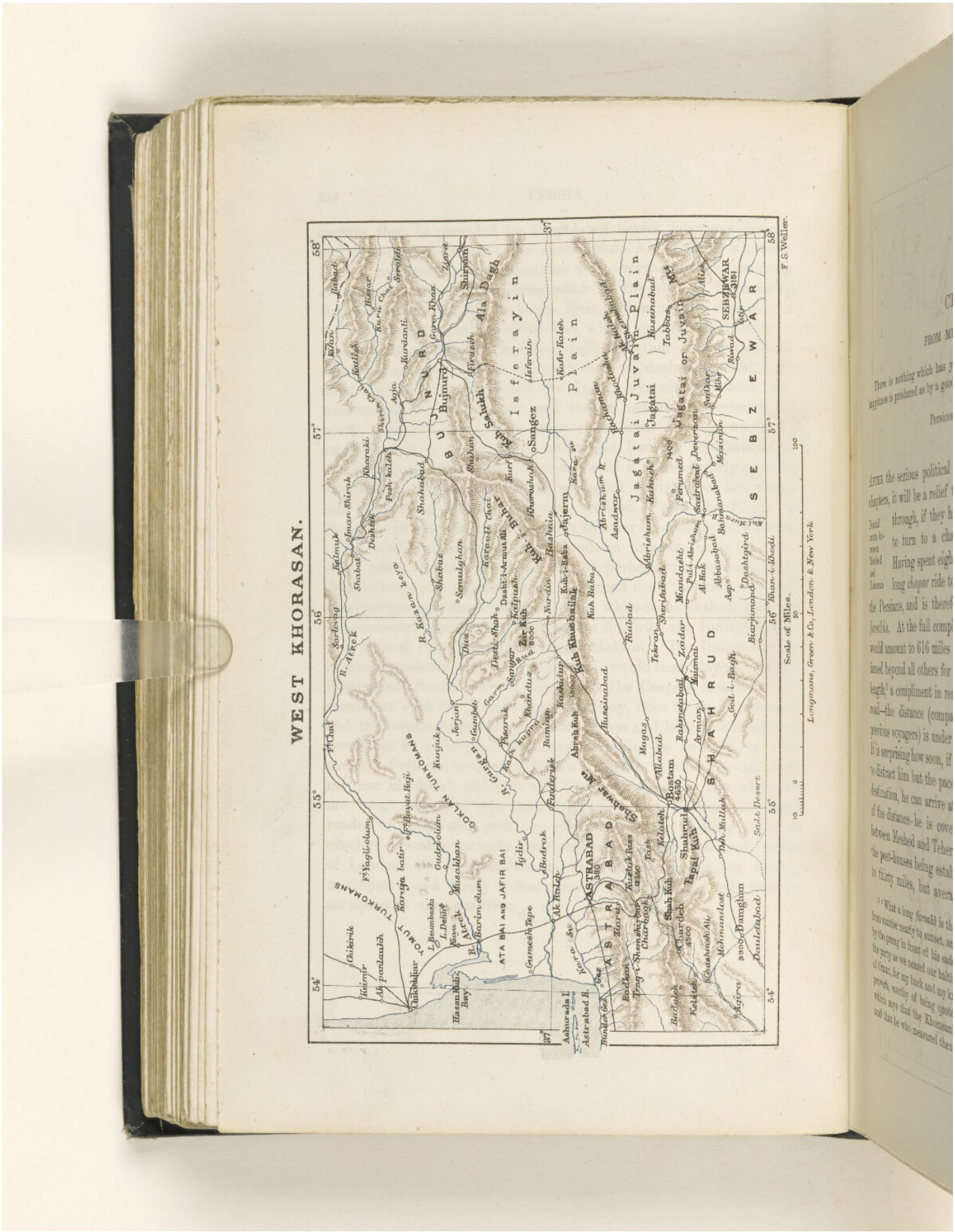
WEST KHORASAN.
Scale of Miles.
Longmans, Green & Co., London & New York.
F. S. Weller.
Sahib
Isferaiyin
Sangez
Jagatai Juvain Plain
Khan Koleh Plain
Jagatai or Juvain
Bujnurd
Ala Dagh
Kuh-i-Bum
Kuh-i-Bala
Kuh Khushallak
Kuh Raba
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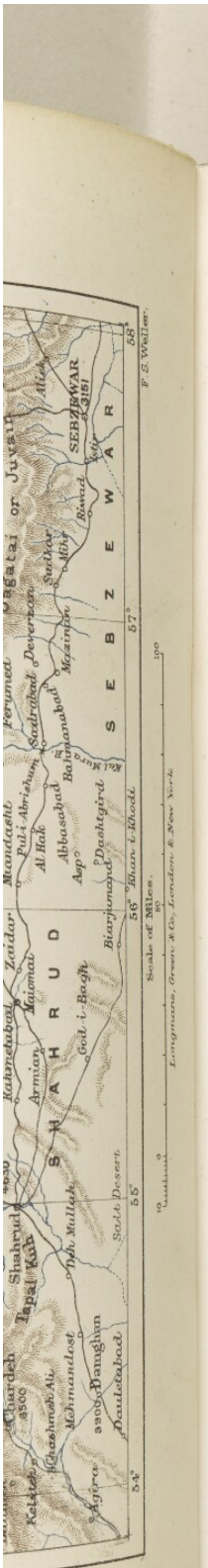






## CHAPTER X

### FROM MESHED TO TEHERAN

There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.—Dr. Johnson, *Boswell's Life.*

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.
Horace, *Carm.*, Lib. I. xxxviii.

After the serious political discussions contained in the last two chapters, it will be a relief to such of my readers as have passed through, if they have not altogether evaded, that ordeal, to turn to a chapter with more digestible contents. Having spent eight days at Meshed, I started upon the long *chapar* ride to Teheran. The distance is given by the Persians, and is therefore paid for by the traveller, as 154 *farsakhs*. At the full complement of four miles to a *farsakh*, this would amount to 616 miles; but, though the Khorasan *farsakh* is famed beyond all others for its odious and seemingly inexhaustible length,[1] a compliment in reality to the funereal monotony of the road—the distance (comparing my own estimate with that of previous voyagers) is under rather than over 560 English miles. It is surprising how soon, if a man be riding alone and have nought to distract him but the paces of his steed and the thought of his destination, he can arrive at an approximately correct calculation of the distance he is covering from stage to stage. The route between Meshed and Teheran is divided into twenty-four stages, the post-houses being established at distances varying from fifteen to thirty miles, but averaging twenty-three miles apart. This

Postal route between Meshed and Teheran

[1] 'What a long *farsakh* is that of Khorasan!' says a traveller who has toiled from sunrise nearly to sunset, and who can no longer cling to his jaded horse but by the prong in front of his saddle. 'By the beard of the Prophet,' said one of the party as we neared our halting-ground, 'the road is longer than the entrails of Omar, for my back and my knees have lost their feeling.' There is also a local proverb, worthy of being quoted (Burnes' *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. p. 89), which says that the Khorasani *farsakh* is as endless as the chatter of women, and that he who measured them must have done so with a broken chain.

distance I accomplished in the comfortable time of nine days, doing an average of sixty miles a day, but in reality combining days of seventy miles with shorter spans. This is slow rather than speedy travelling for Persia;[1] and I afterwards became easily habituated to journeys of seventy-five to eighty miles in the day. Telegraph officials and residents in the country seldom do less, and frequently more. The post which goes through from Meshed to Teheran without stopping, but with first claim upon the horses at each station, covers the distance in from five to six days. Dr. Wills reports having ridden from Isfahan to Teheran, about 280 miles, in thirty-nine and a half hours;[2] whilst officers travelling by day alone and resting at night have accomplished 120 miles between dawn and leaving the saddle.

Quick riding is indeed an accomplishment for which the Persians have always been famous, and notable records in which have been achieved even by their kings. Abbas the Great, 300 years ago, rode from Shiraz to Yezd in twenty-eight and a half hours, the Astronomer Royal being commanded to take the time. Malcolm gives the distance as eighty-nine *farsakhs*, or 303 miles;[3] but, though modern measurements have reduced it to 220 miles, it was still no mean performance. Agha Mohammed Khan, the founder of the reigning dynasty, fleeing to Mazanderan on the death of Kerim Khan Zend, rode from Shiraz to Isfahan—a distance, by whatever route, of not much under 300 miles—in less than three days. Fath Ali Shah, his nephew, upon succeeding to the throne, rode from Shiraz to Teheran, a distance of at least 550 miles, in six days. Fraser mentions the case of a Persian, Agha Bahram, who kept the best horses in the country, and who once on the same Arab horse rode from Shiraz to Teheran in six days, rested three days, rode back in five days, rested nine days, and performed the journey a third time in seven days.[4] But the most remarkable, because the most sustained performance of which I have ever read was that of the dragoman who, in 1804, rode from Constantinople

Speed of locomotion

[1] And yet I find a French officer (*Notes de Voyage d'un Hussard*, par le Comte de Sabran, p. 225) who, having accomplished the journey in the same leisurely time in 1888, writes a book to say that General Maclean expressed himself as stupefied with his astonishing performance, and told him that an English officer, who had done the journey in ten days, had fallen seriously ill in consequence! Sir H. Rawlinson once rode it in six.

[2] *Persia as It Is*, p. 296.

[3] *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 345.

[4] *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 319.

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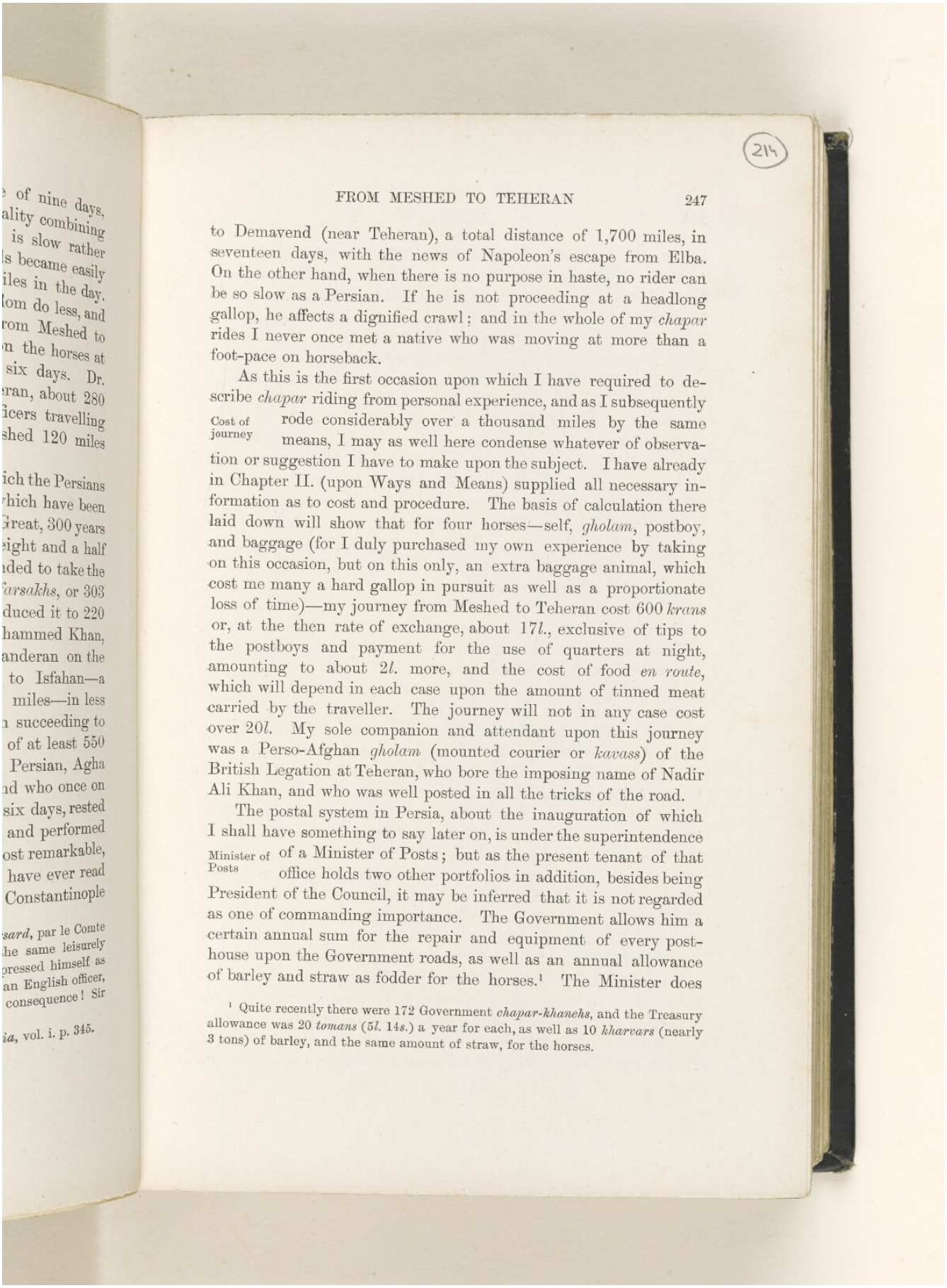



to Demavend (near Teheran), a total distance of 1,700 miles, in seventeen days, with the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba. On the other hand, when there is no purpose in haste, no rider can be so slow as a Persian. If he is not proceeding at a headlong gallop, he affects a dignified crawl; and in the whole of my *chapar* rides I never once met a native who was moving at more than a foot-pace on horseback.

Cost of journey

As this is the first occasion upon which I have required to describe *chapar* riding from personal experience, and as I subsequently rode considerably over a thousand miles by the same means, I may as well here condense whatever of observation or suggestion I have to make upon the subject. I have already in Chapter II. (upon Ways and Means) supplied all necessary information as to cost and procedure. The basis of calculation there laid down will show that for four horses—self, *gholam*, postboy, and baggage (for I duly purchased my own experience by taking on this occasion, but on this only, an extra baggage animal, which cost me many a hard gallop in pursuit as well as a proportionate loss of time)—my journey from Meshed to Teheran cost 600 *krans* or, at the then rate of exchange, about 17*l.*, exclusive of tips to the postboys and payment for the use of quarters at night, amounting to about 2*l.* more, and the cost of food *en route*, which will depend in each case upon the amount of tinned meat carried by the traveller. The journey will not in any case cost over 20*l.* My sole companion and attendant upon this journey was a Perso-Afghan *gholam* (mounted courier or *kavass*) of the British Legation at Teheran, who bore the imposing name of Nadir Ali Khan, and who was well posted in all the tricks of the road.

Minister of Posts

The postal system in Persia, about the inauguration of which I shall have something to say later on, is under the superintendence of a Minister of Posts; but as the present tenant of that office holds two other portfolios in addition, besides being President of the Council, it may be inferred that it is not regarded as one of commanding importance. The Government allows him a certain annual sum for the repair and equipment of every post-house upon the Government roads, as well as an annual allowance of barley and straw as fodder for the horses.[1] The Minister does

[1] Quite recently there were 172 Government *chapar-khanehs*, and the Treasury allowance was 20 *tomans* (5*l.* 14*s.*) a year for each, as well as 10 *kharvars* (nearly 3 tons) of barley, and the same amount of straw, for the horses.

not, however, work the system himself. That would be a shocking violation of all Persian usage. Each road is farmed to a publican, probably some merchant or wealthy person, who pays a certain sum per annum to the Minister for the privilege. He then provides the servants and animals at each station, and makes as much money out of the business as he can; the only check upon his parsimony being the fear of losing his contract in favour of a higher bidder at the end of the year. It is not surprising, therefore, that the post-houses are mostly in a state of extreme and disgraceful dilapidation, or that the horses are among the sorriest specimens of the equine race that were ever foaled. The system is a vicious one, and it is hard to say whether the traveller or the poor brutes whom he is compelled to flog along are the more to be pitied.

Pros and cons of the *chapar*

Let me, however, endeavour to balance the pains and the pleasures, if any there be, of *chapar* riding, so as to arrive at a fair verdict. The system has been variously described by travellers according to their tastes, endurance, and fortune, as an exhilaration, a tedium, or a torture; and there is perhaps something to be said for each opinion. Much depends upon the extent to which the road adopted is travelled upon, and, in consequence, supplied; something upon the season of the year or the weather encountered; a good deal upon the luck of the voyager. The route between Meshed and Teheran is but little traversed (except by pilgrims, who move in *kafilahs*, or caravans), and there are accordingly not above five or six horses, sometimes less, at each station. These I found to be for the most part underfed, broken-down, and emaciated brutes, with ill-regulated paces, and open sores on their backs that sometimes made it almost unbearable to bestride them. The best that were supplied to me would anywhere else be classified at a low level of equine mediocrity. To ride the worst was a penalty to which any future Dante might appropriately condemn his most inveterate foe in the lower circles of hell. Subsequently, however, upon the Teheran-Shiraz line, which is more travelled upon and better provided, I found a larger number and a superior quality of animals. They were generally tolerable and sometimes positively good; and when I succeeded in covering by their means an average of between eight and nine miles in the hour throughout the day, when they invariably cantered and sometimes galloped, it can be imagined that a day's ride of from seventy to eighty miles may become quite endurable,

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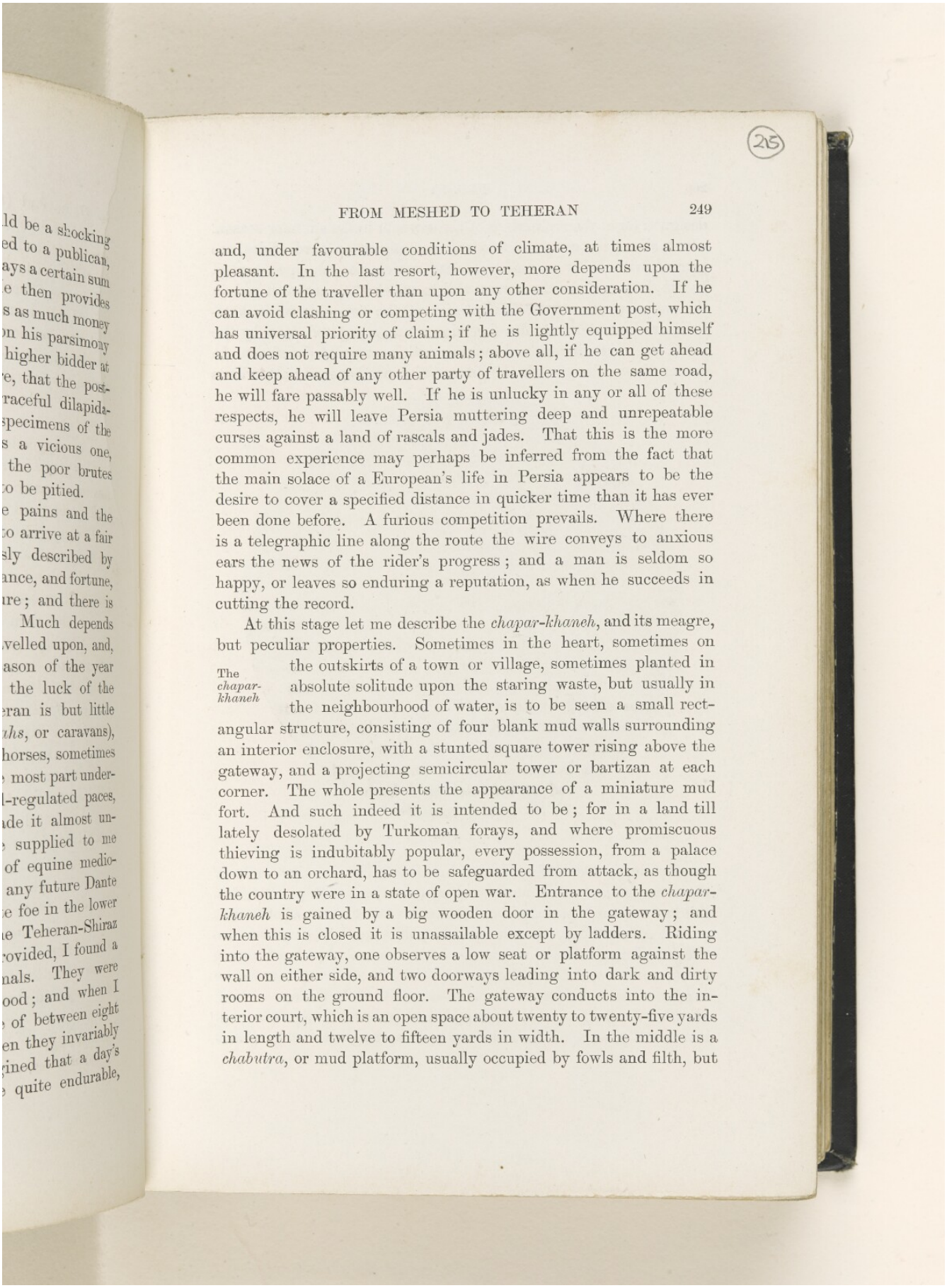



and, under favourable conditions of climate, at times almost pleasant. In the last resort, however, more depends upon the fortune of the traveller than upon any other consideration. If he can avoid clashing or competing with the Government post, which has universal priority of claim; if he is lightly equipped himself and does not require many animals; above all, if he can get ahead and keep ahead of any other party of travellers on the same road, he will fare passably well. If he is unlucky in any or all of these respects, he will leave Persia muttering deep and unrepeatable curses against a land of rascals and jades. That this is the more common experience may perhaps be inferred from the fact that the main solace of a European's life in Persia appears to be the desire to cover a specified distance in quicker time than it has ever been done before. A furious competition prevails. Where there is a telegraphic line along the route the wire conveys to anxious ears the news of the rider's progress; and a man is seldom so happy, or leaves so enduring a reputation, as when he succeeds in cutting the record.

The *chapar-khaneh*

At this stage let me describe the *chapar-khaneh*, and its meagre, but peculiar properties. Sometimes in the heart, sometimes on the outskirts of a town or village, sometimes planted in absolute solitude upon the staring waste, but usually in the neighbourhood of water, is to be seen a small rectangular structure, consisting of four blank mud walls surrounding an interior enclosure, with a stunted square tower rising above the gateway, and a projecting semicircular tower or bartizan at each corner. The whole presents the appearance of a miniature mud fort. And such indeed it is intended to be; for in a land till lately desolated by Turkoman forays, and where promiscuous thieving is indubitably popular, every possession, from a palace down to an orchard, has to be safeguarded from attack, as though the country were in a state of open war. Entrance to the *chapar-khaneh* is gained by a big wooden door in the gateway; and when this is closed it is unassailable except by ladders. Riding into the gateway, one observes a low seat or platform against the wall on either side, and two doorways leading into dark and dirty rooms on the ground floor. The gateway conducts into the interior court, which is an open space about twenty to twenty-five yards in length and twelve to fifteen yards in width. In the middle is a *chabutra*, or mud platform, usually occupied by fowls and filth, but

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designed for *al fresco* slumbers of the traveller in the summer season. The walls of the court, on two and sometimes on three sides, are pierced with holes or mangers, into which the chopped barley, or *kah*, is placed for the horses, and to which they are tethered in the warm weather. In the interior of the two side walls, however, are long dark stables for winter use, unlighted save by the low door, unventilated, and reeking with accumulated refuse. In one of these, along with the horses, the postboys and attendants



A PERSIAN POST-HOUSE

usually sleep, stretched around a low fire. The interior walls of the court have at one time or another been faced with plaster; but this has uniformly peeled off, and the entire fabric looks what it is—mud. As the weary traveller rides in, the *chaparchi*, or post-house keeper, who sometimes wears the semblance of an official dress, comes out to meet him. Eager inquiries are exchanged as to the supply of fresh horses in the stables; and while these are being gratified or disappointed, the baggage is pulled off the exhausted beasts and piled upon the *chabutra*, and the English rider stretches

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himself at full length or boils a cup of broth or tea. His Persian attendant takes a pull at the *kalian*, which is always ready, and the wearied animals, stripped except for their tattered horsecloths, are slowly walked up and down for ten minutes by the postboy, and finally marched off to water. In a quarter of an hour, if lucky, sometimes not for one hour or even two, a fresh batch of horses having been brought out, and the traveller having selected the best for himself, he will remount, and will once again pursue the



A PERSIAN POST-MASTER

uneven tenour of his way. If, however, no fresh animals are forthcoming, or if he has been anticipated by some other voyager, then ensues the most heartrending experience of all. For, after a tedious wait of perhaps two hours, the same miserable brutes that have borne the burden of his last twenty-five miles' stage are brought out again to be urged and flagellated through twenty-five more. I confess that my sympathies were always with the beast rather than with his rider; and considering the pitiless daily, nay, almost hourly, task that is imposed upon these wretched crocks, it was

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sometimes a surprise to me that persuasion, however extreme, could extract from them anything more than a hobble.

But supposing the traveller to have reached the end of his day's journey and to have arrived at the post-house where he proposes to pass the night, what then? The answer to the question is contained in the projecting square tower above the entrance gateway. Access thereto is gained by stairways of almost Alpine steepness, fashioned in the mud at the angles of the court inside. Clambering up these with difficulty, we reach the flat roof that runs right round the building, and find that the tower consists of a single chamber, which invariably has two, sometimes three, doors (that are never known to shut), and usually a couple of open window spaces in the walls, so that it may literally be said to stand

The *bala-khaneh*

Four-square to all the winds that blow.

This is the *bala-khaneh*, or upper chamber, specially reserved for the comfort of foreign guests, and within this forlorn and wintry abode, which is not much less draughty than the rigging of a ship, the wayfarer must spend the night. The interior has at one time been plastered and whitewashed. Its only decorative features are a number of shallow niches in the walls, in which Persian visitors have sometimes scrawled the most fearful illustrations, and occasionally, but not always, a fireplace. Of furniture it is absolutely destitute. To have the floor swept clean of vermin, to spread a felt or carpet in the corner and one's sack of straw upon it, to buy firewood and light a fire, to stuff up the open windows and nail curtains over the ramshackle doors—all these are necessary and preliminary operations, without which the dingy tenement would be simply uninhabitable, but which it is sometimes hard work to undertake in a state of extreme stiffness and exhaustion after a long day's ride upon a freezing winter's night. Even so, this aërial roost is sometimes too chill for endurance, and one is compelled to descend and seek refuge in the dank and cellar-like apartments below. In half an hour's time, however, when the work has been done, as the genial warmth begins to relax stiff joints and weary limbs, and as the *samovar* puffs out its cheery steam, a feeling of wonderful contentment ensues, and the outstretched traveller would probably not exchange his quarters for a sheeted bed in Windsor Castle. But it is upon the following morning,

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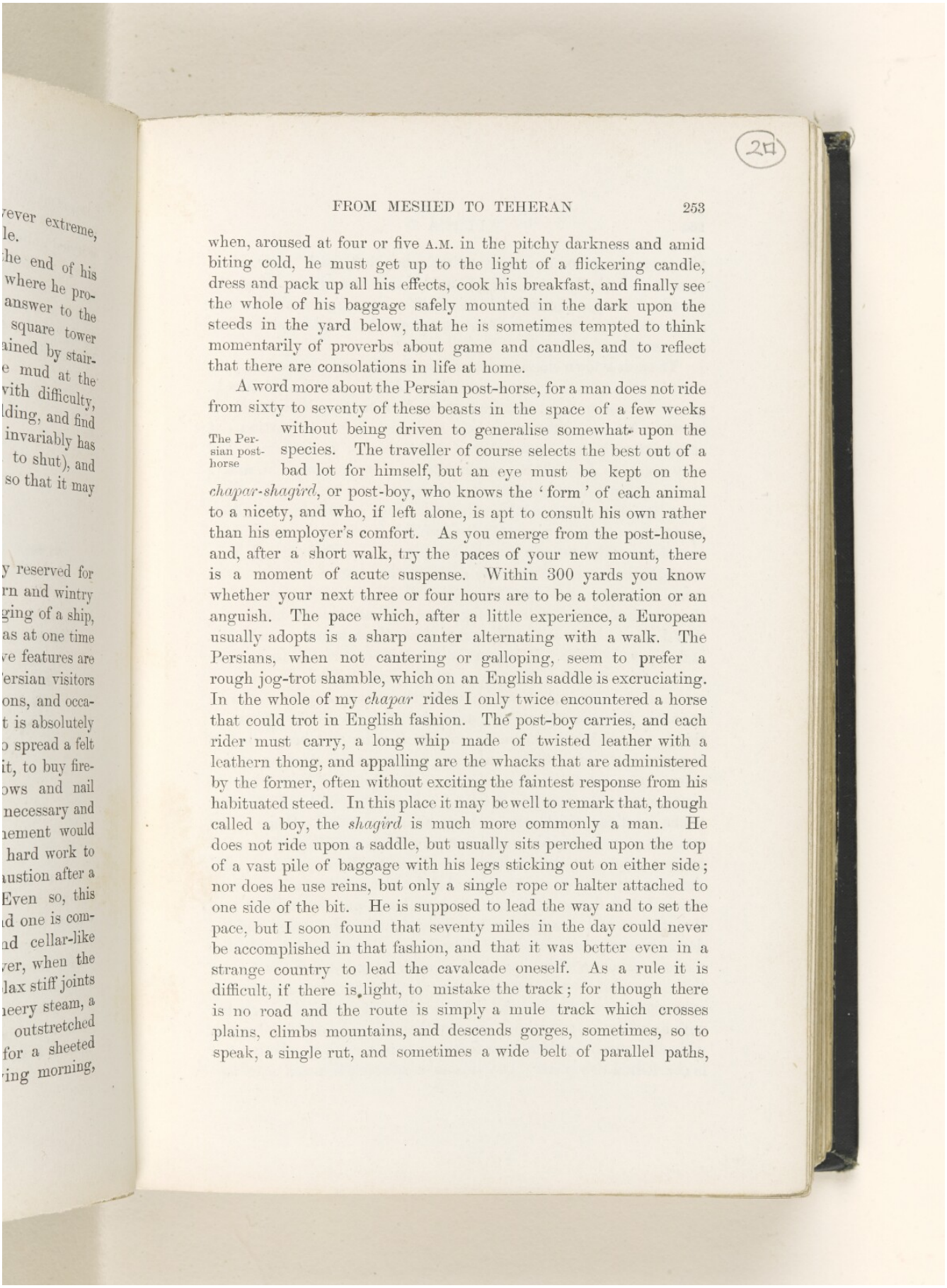



when, aroused at four or five A.M. in the pitchy darkness and amid biting cold, he must get up to the light of a flickering candle, dress and pack up all his effects, cook his breakfast, and finally see the whole of his baggage safely mounted in the dark upon the steeds in the yard below, that he is sometimes tempted to think momentarily of proverbs about game and candles, and to reflect that there are consolations in life at home.

The Persian post-horse

A word more about the Persian post-horse, for a man does not ride from sixty to seventy of these beasts in the space of a few weeks without being driven to generalise somewhat upon the species. The traveller of course selects the best out of a bad lot for himself, but an eye must be kept on the *chapar-shagird*, or post-boy, who knows the 'form' of each animal to a nicety, and who, if left alone, is apt to consult his own rather than his employer's comfort. As you emerge from the post-house, and, after a short walk, try the paces of your new mount, there is a moment of acute suspense. Within 300 yards you know whether your next three or four hours are to be a toleration or an anguish. The pace which, after a little experience, a European usually adopts is a sharp canter alternating with a walk. The Persians, when not cantering or galloping, seem to prefer a rough jog-trot shamble, which on an English saddle is excruciating. In the whole of my *chapar* rides I only twice encountered a horse that could trot in English fashion. The post-boy carries, and each rider must carry, a long whip made of twisted leather with a leathern thong, and appalling are the whacks that are administered by the former, often without exciting the faintest response from his habituated steed. In this place it may be well to remark that, though called a boy, the *shagird* is much more commonly a man. He does not ride upon a saddle, but usually sits perched upon the top of a vast pile of baggage with his legs sticking out on either side; nor does he use reins, but only a single rope or halter attached to one side of the bit. He is supposed to lead the way and to set the pace, but I soon found that seventy miles in the day could never be accomplished in that fashion, and that it was better even in a strange country to lead the cavalcade oneself. As a rule it is difficult, if there is light, to mistake the track; for though there is no road and the route is simply a mule track which crosses plains, climbs mountains, and descends gorges, sometimes, so to speak, a single rut, and sometimes a wide belt of parallel paths,

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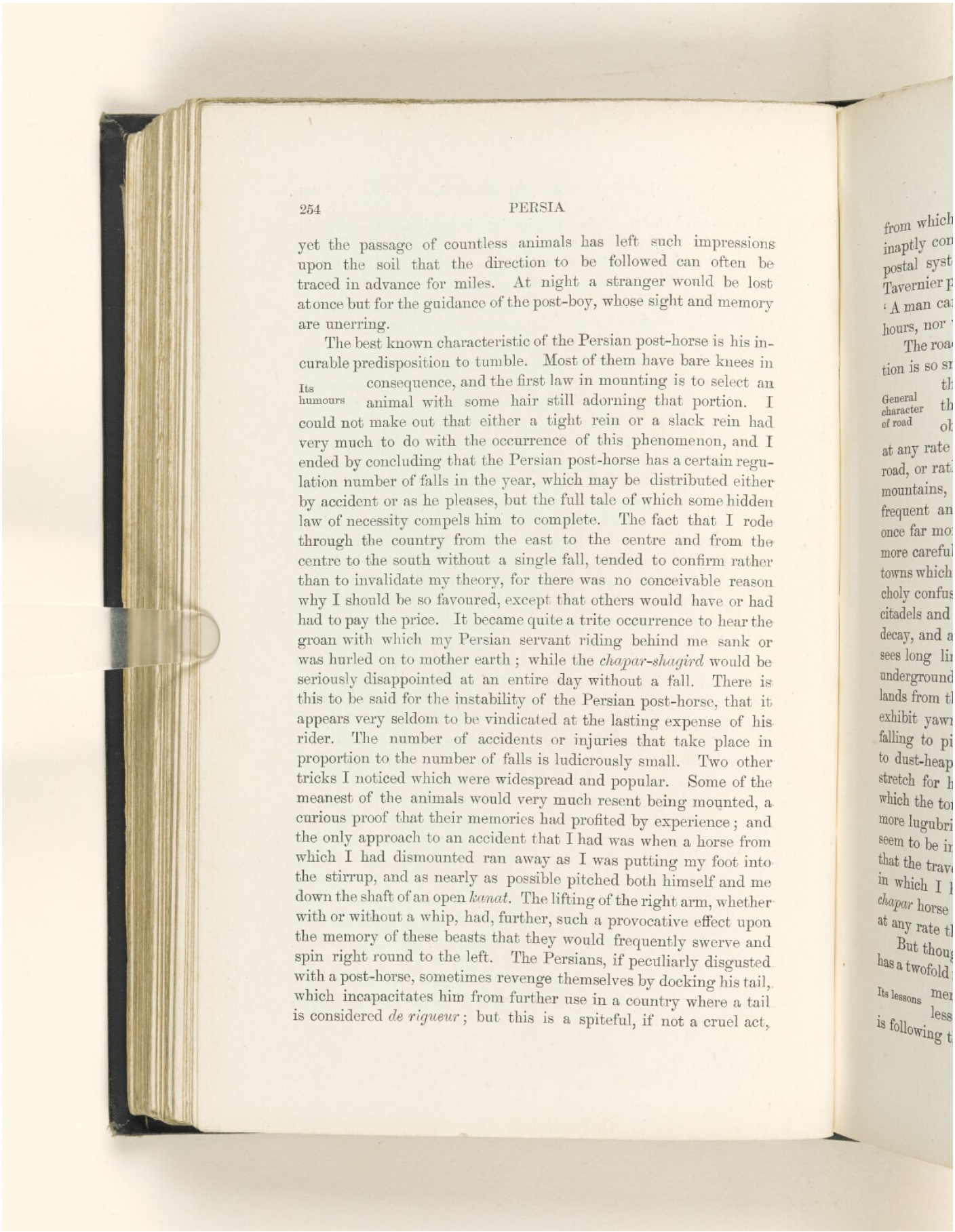
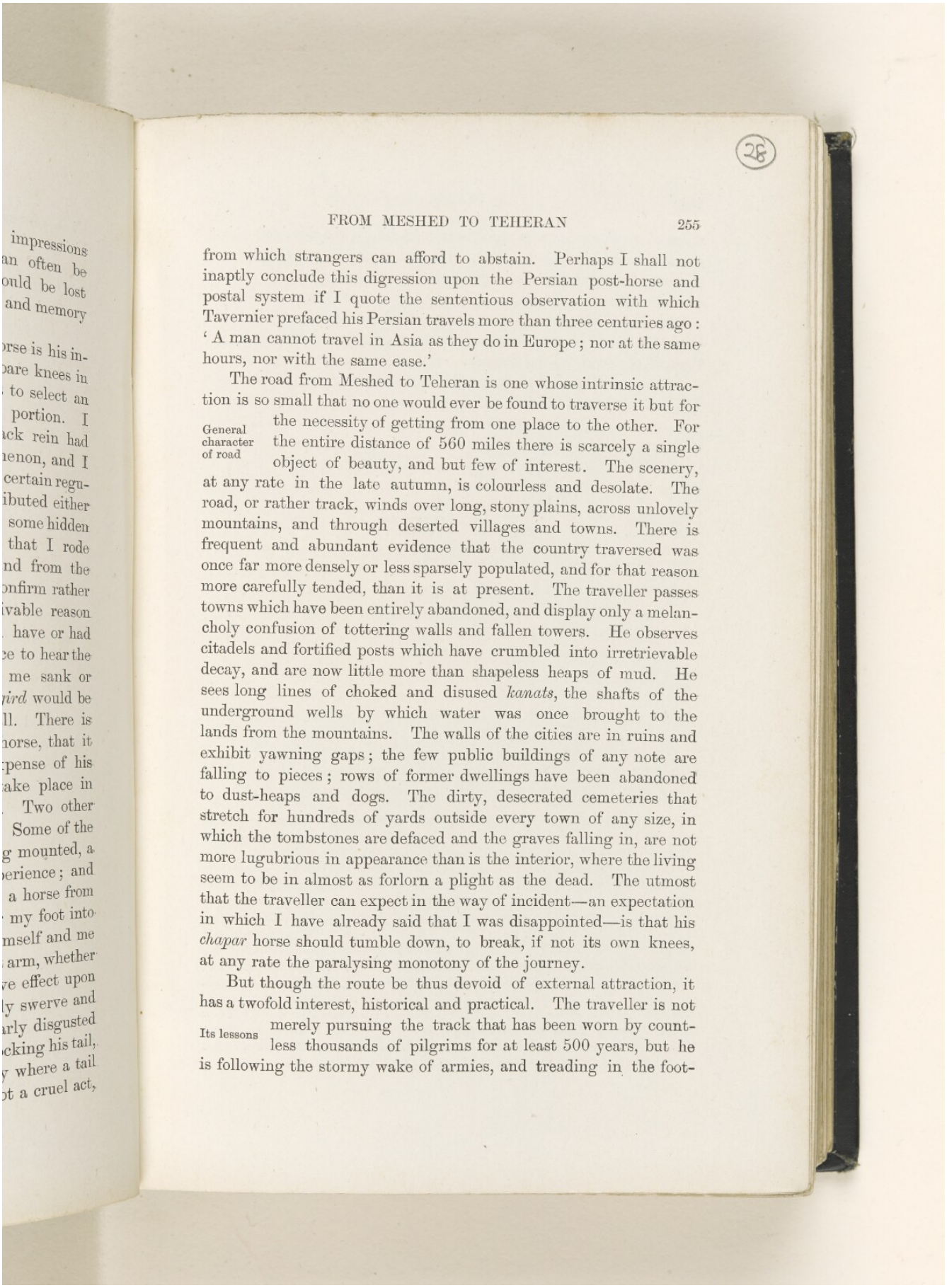




yet the passage of countless animals has left such impressions upon the soil that the direction to be followed can often be traced in advance for miles. At night a stranger would be lost at once but for the guidance of the post-boy, whose sight and memory are unerring.

The best known characteristic of the Persian post-horse is his incurable predisposition to tumble. Most of them have bare knees in consequence, and the first law in mounting is to select an animal with some hair still adorning that portion. I could not make out that either a tight rein or a slack rein had very much to do with the occurrence of this phenomenon, and I ended by concluding that the Persian post-horse has a certain regulation number of falls in the year, which may be distributed either by accident or as he pleases, but the full tale of which some hidden law of necessity compels him to complete. The fact that I rode through the country from the east to the centre and from the centre to the south without a single fall, tended to confirm rather than to invalidate my theory, for there was no conceivable reason why I should be so favoured, except that others would have or had had to pay the price. It became quite a trite occurrence to hear the groan with which my Persian servant riding behind me sank or was hurled on to mother earth; while the *chapar-shagird* would be seriously disappointed at an entire day without a fall. There is this to be said for the instability of the Persian post-horse, that it appears very seldom to be vindicated at the lasting expense of his rider. The number of accidents or injuries that take place in proportion to the number of falls is ludicrously small. Two other tricks I noticed which were widespread and popular. Some of the meanest of the animals would very much resent being mounted, a curious proof that their memories had profited by experience; and the only approach to an accident that I had was when a horse from which I had dismounted ran away as I was putting my foot into the stirrup, and as nearly as possible pitched both himself and me down the shaft of an open *kanat*. The lifting of the right arm, whether with or without a whip, had, further, such a provocative effect upon the memory of these beasts that they would frequently swerve and spin right round to the left. The Persians, if peculiarly disgusted with a post-horse, sometimes revenge themselves by docking his tail, which incapacitates him from further use in a country where a tail is considered *de rigueur*; but this is a spiteful, if not a cruel act,

Its humours





from which strangers can afford to abstain. Perhaps I shall not inaptly conclude this digression upon the Persian post-horse and postal system if I quote the sententious observation with which Tavernier prefaced his Persian travels more than three centuries ago: 'A man cannot travel in Asia as they do in Europe; nor at the same hours, nor with the same ease.'

General character of road

The road from Meshed to Teheran is one whose intrinsic attraction is so small that no one would ever be found to traverse it but for the necessity of getting from one place to the other. For the entire distance of 560 miles there is scarcely a single object of beauty, and but few of interest. The scenery, at any rate in the late autumn, is colourless and desolate. The road, or rather track, winds over long, stony plains, across unlovely mountains, and through deserted villages and towns. There is frequent and abundant evidence that the country traversed was once far more densely or less sparsely populated, and for that reason more carefully tended, than it is at present. The traveller passes towns which have been entirely abandoned, and display only a melancholy confusion of tottering walls and fallen towers. He observes citadels and fortified posts which have crumbled into irretrievable decay, and are now little more than shapeless heaps of mud. He sees long lines of choked and disused *kanats*, the shafts of the underground wells by which water was once brought to the lands from the mountains. The walls of the cities are in ruins and exhibit yawning gaps; the few public buildings of any note are falling to pieces; rows of former dwellings have been abandoned to dust-heaps and dogs. The dirty, desecrated cemeteries that stretch for hundreds of yards outside every town of any size, in which the tombstones are defaced and the graves falling in, are not more lugubrious in appearance than is the interior, where the living seem to be in almost as forlorn a plight as the dead. The utmost that the traveller can expect in the way of incident—an expectation in which I have already said that I was disappointed—is that his *chapar* horse should tumble down, to break, if not its own knees, at any rate the paralysing monotony of the journey.

Its lessons

But though the route be thus devoid of external attraction, it has a twofold interest, historical and practical. The traveller is not merely pursuing the track that has been worn by countless thousands of pilgrims for at least 500 years, but he is following the stormy wake of armies, and treading in the foot-

steps of great conquerors and kings. And if, in the desolation that gapes around him, he sees no hint or reminder of what these countries once were, at least he is able to form some judgment of what the combined horrors of war, pestilence, and chronic misgovernment —which is worse than either—have done for them, and in this blighted zone of crumbling cities and forsaken homes to read the tale of Persia's long decline.

Table of stations and distances

The following is a table of the stations and distances between Meshed and Teheran: [1]

| Name of station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles | Name of station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meshed | — | — | Deh Mullah | 4 | 16 |
| Sherifabad | 6 | 22 | Damghan | 6 | 26 |
| Kadamgah | 7 | 29 | Ghushah | 7 | 23 |
| Nishapur | 6 | 17 | Ahuan | 7 | 24 |
| Shurab | 7 | 25 | Semnan | 7 | 24 |
| Zafarani | 5 | 18 | Lasgird | 6 | 22 |
| Sebzewar | 7 | 24 | Deh Nemek | 8 | 25 |
| Mihr | 7 | 32 | Kishlak | 7 | 26 |
| Mazinan | 6 | 20 | Aiwan-i-Kaif | 6 | 21 |
| Abbasabad | 7 | 23 | Kabud Gumbaz | 7 | 26 |
| Miandasht | 6 | 23 | Teheran | 7 | 25 |
| Maiomai | 7 | 24 | | | |
| Armian | 4 | 17 | | | |
| Shahrud | 7 | 27 | | | |
| | | | Total | 154 | 559 |

Before proceeding further it may be well to state that there is an alternative route for the first three stages between Meshed and Nishapur. The postal service and stations being upon the other

[1] This road has been followed and, in part or wholly, described by a long series of travellers, of whom I select only the most eminent or learned:—El Istakhri (900–1000 A.D.), *Oriental Geography*, p. 181; Ruy di Clavijo (1404), *Narrative of Embassy*; Von Mierop (1744), J. Hanway's *Historical Account of British Trade*, vol. i. pp. 357–359; Captain Truilhier (1807), Daussy's *Mémoire Descriptif*; J. B. Fraser (1821–1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xiii.–xvii.; Captain A. Conolly (1830), *Overland Journey*, vol. i. pp. 194–220; E. L. Mitford (1840), *Land March*, vol. ii. pp. 13–34; Dr. J. Wolff (1831, 1844), *Travels*, and *Narrative of Mission*; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 54–115; Captain C. Clerk (1857), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxxi. pp. 37–45; N. de Khanikoff (1858), *Mémoire, &c.*, pp. 72–97; E. B. Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 134–191, 271–295; A. Vambéry (1863), *Life and Adventures*, cap. xxviii.; H.M. the Shah of Persia (1867 and 1883), *Diaries* (in Persian); H. W. Bellew (1872), *From the Indus to the Tigris*, pp. 368–411; Colonel Euan Smith (1872), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 366–388; Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East* pp. 142–176; E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. xxii.–xxviii.



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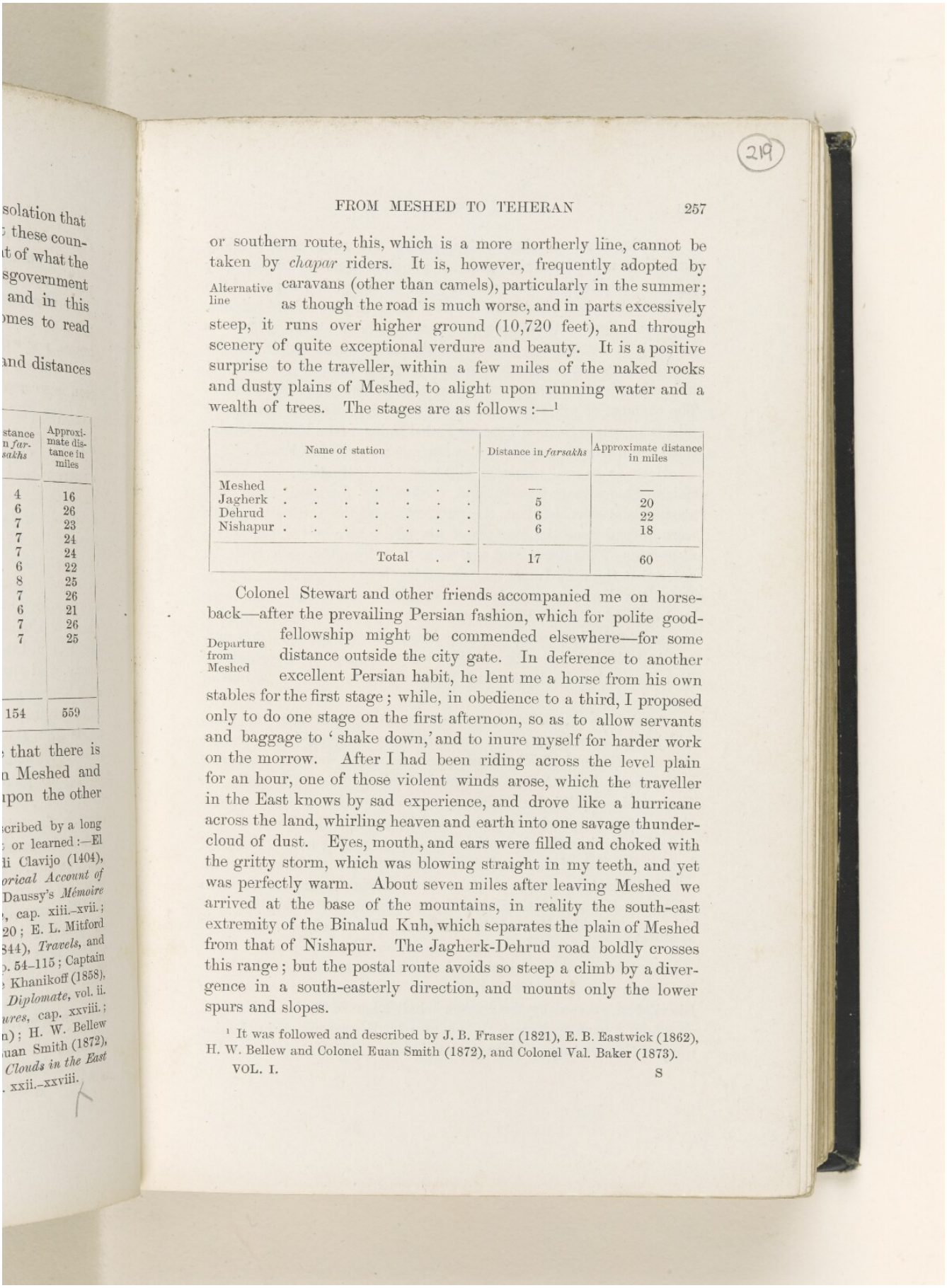

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| 6 | 22 |
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| 7 | 26 |
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| 7 | 26 |
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| 154 | 559 |

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cribed by a long
or learned:—El
li Clavijo (1404),
*orical Account of*
Daussy's *Mémoire*
, cap. xiii.–xvii.;
20; E. L. Mitford
344), *Travels*, and
. 54–115; Captain
Khanikoff (1858),
*Diplomate*, vol. ii.
*ures*, cap. xxviii.;
n); H. W. Bellew
uan Smith (1872),
*Clouds in the East*
xxii.–xxviii.

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or southern route, this, which is a more northerly line, cannot be taken by *chapar* riders. It is, however, frequently adopted by caravans (other than camels), particularly in the summer; as though the road is much worse, and in parts excessively steep, it runs over higher ground (10,720 feet), and through scenery of quite exceptional verdure and beauty. It is a positive surprise to the traveller, within a few miles of the naked rocks and dusty plains of Meshed, to alight upon running water and a wealth of trees. The stages are as follows:—[1]

Alternative line

| Name of station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|
| Meshed . . . . . | — | — |
| Jagherk . . . . . | 5 | 20 |
| Dehrud . . . . . | 6 | 22 |
| Nishapur . . . . . | 6 | 18 |
| Total . . | 17 | 60 |

Colonel Stewart and other friends accompanied me on horseback—after the prevailing Persian fashion, which for polite good-fellowship might be commended elsewhere—for some distance outside the city gate. In deference to another excellent Persian habit, he lent me a horse from his own stables for the first stage; while, in obedience to a third, I proposed only to do one stage on the first afternoon, so as to allow servants and baggage to 'shake down,' and to inure myself for harder work on the morrow. After I had been riding across the level plain for an hour, one of those violent winds arose, which the traveller in the East knows by sad experience, and drove like a hurricane across the land, whirling heaven and earth into one savage thunder-cloud of dust. Eyes, mouth, and ears were filled and choked with the gritty storm, which was blowing straight in my teeth, and yet was perfectly warm. About seven miles after leaving Meshed we arrived at the base of the mountains, in reality the south-east extremity of the Binalud Kuh, which separates the plain of Meshed from that of Nishapur. The Jagherk-Dehrud road boldly crosses this range; but the postal route avoids so steep a climb by a divergence in a south-easterly direction, and mounts only the lower spurs and slopes.

Departure from Meshed

[1] It was followed and described by J. B. Fraser (1821), E. B. Eastwick (1862), H. W. Bellew and Colonel Euan Smith (1872), and Colonel Val. Baker (1873).



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At the crest of each ridge, where the road, now rapidly ascending, topped the rise, grateful pilgrims wending to the holy city had, as they caught sight of the gilded cupola of the Prophet, piled little heaps of stone in pious thanksgiving. The symbolism of these erections is said to be that the pilgrim is building in anticipation a home for the next world, either for the dear departed, or for those who may survive him, or for himself. Every knoll was thickly covered with these emblems of devotion. The topmost of all, where the new-comer first discerns the sacred pile, is known as Salaam Tepe, or Kuh-i-Salaam (the Hill of Salutation); and there is an analogous site upon the Dehrud road.

The piety of pilgrims

Here, as he first comes in sight of his destination, the excited Shiah Mussulman kneels, and strikes his forehead upon the ground, and sobs aloud at the recollection of the indignities that were heaped upon the martyrs of his faith; here he tears off little fragments of his dress, and ties them to a bramble or a bush, in order that the holy Imam may recognise them and plead for him in Paradise; here he unfurls his coloured banner; and here with loud cries of 'Ya Ali,' 'Ya Husein,' and 'Ya Imam Reza,' he presses forward to the long-sought goal. Many times I turned back myself to look, but the entire valley was wrapped in a tornado of dust, the white clouds of which rolled upwards like the smoke of a prairie fire.

At the top of one of these hills is an upright slab of stone, which has been erected to commemorate the piety of a former Governor-General of Khorasan, who was exiled to this post after being both Sadr Azem, or Grand Vizier, and Sipah Salar, or Commander-in-Chief, at Teheran, and who earned a great reputation, particularly with pilgrims, for improving the Meshed road and adorning it with substantial caravanserais. His name still lives, both on the slab of slate and on the lips of many a grateful Meshedi.

Following the telegraph poles, and winding over a succession of bleak but undulating ridges, we passed the caravanserai of Turukh, situated by a stream. The road was thronged with pedestrians, with camels, and donkeys; and I even saw a wheeled vehicle which had stuck fast on one of the hills. At length in a hollow we came upon the domed caravanserai of Sherifabad, erected by the famous Ishak Khan of Turbat-i-Haideri, of whom I have spoken in the chapter on Khorasan, at the beginning of this century. Here it was that in 1831 the eccentric Dr.

Sherifabad

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Wolff, travelling for the first time to Meshed, so narrowly escaped being taken a prisoner by a band of wild Hazaras. There is a small village round the caravanserai, and the *chapar-khaneh* stands hard by.

There was no sun in the early morning, and a cold white mist ran shivering along the mountains. Two hours after starting we passed the village and caravanserai of Sultanabad, where my baggage horse, seeing his opportunity, bolted down the intricate alleys of the village, and we had quite a game of hide and seek before we could drive him out again. There were many hundreds of travellers upon the road, chiefly going Meshed-way, and all or nearly all on horseback, a sign of greater affluence than the employment of a donkey. I was on the look-out for coffins of defunct Shiahs on their way to the great necropolis of Meshed; and from the descriptions of previous travellers recognised the ghastly burden as soon as I saw it. Some that I passed were wrapped in black felt, and slung on either side of donkeys. One man, however, was carrying a very long coffin in front of him on his saddle-bow, and must have had moments of strange emotion. Sometimes a regular corpse-caravan is met, which has been chartered to convey so many score of departed Shiahs to their final resting-place. But as frequently an amateur carrier is encountered, who, to pay the expenses of his own journey and leave a little for amusement at the end, contracts to carry the corpse of some wealthier fellow-citizen or friend. It was a long and stony and fatiguing ride to the next post-house at Kadamgah.

Corpse-caravans

At Kadamgah the Dehrud route from Meshed descends from the mountains on to the plain and joins that upon which I travelled. The name means 'the place of the step,' the tradition being that the Imam Reza halted here on his way to Tus, and, in order to convince the local fire-worshippers of his superiority, left the imprint of his foot upon a black stone, which became a *ziarat gah*, or place of pilgrimage, ever afterwards.[1] Over the sacred spot a mosque was raised, not, as Eastwick says, by Shah Abbas, but by Shah Suleiman, and the sanctity of the site has led to its being peopled by a colony of *seyids*, who are as

Kadamgah

[1] There is another Kadamgah near Persepolis, in the province of Fars, so called from the alleged footprint of Ali's horse on a slab of rock. Captain Wells, *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (New Series), vol. v. (1883). Some Sassanian sculptures near Shiraz were also called Kadamgah by the seventeenth century writers.



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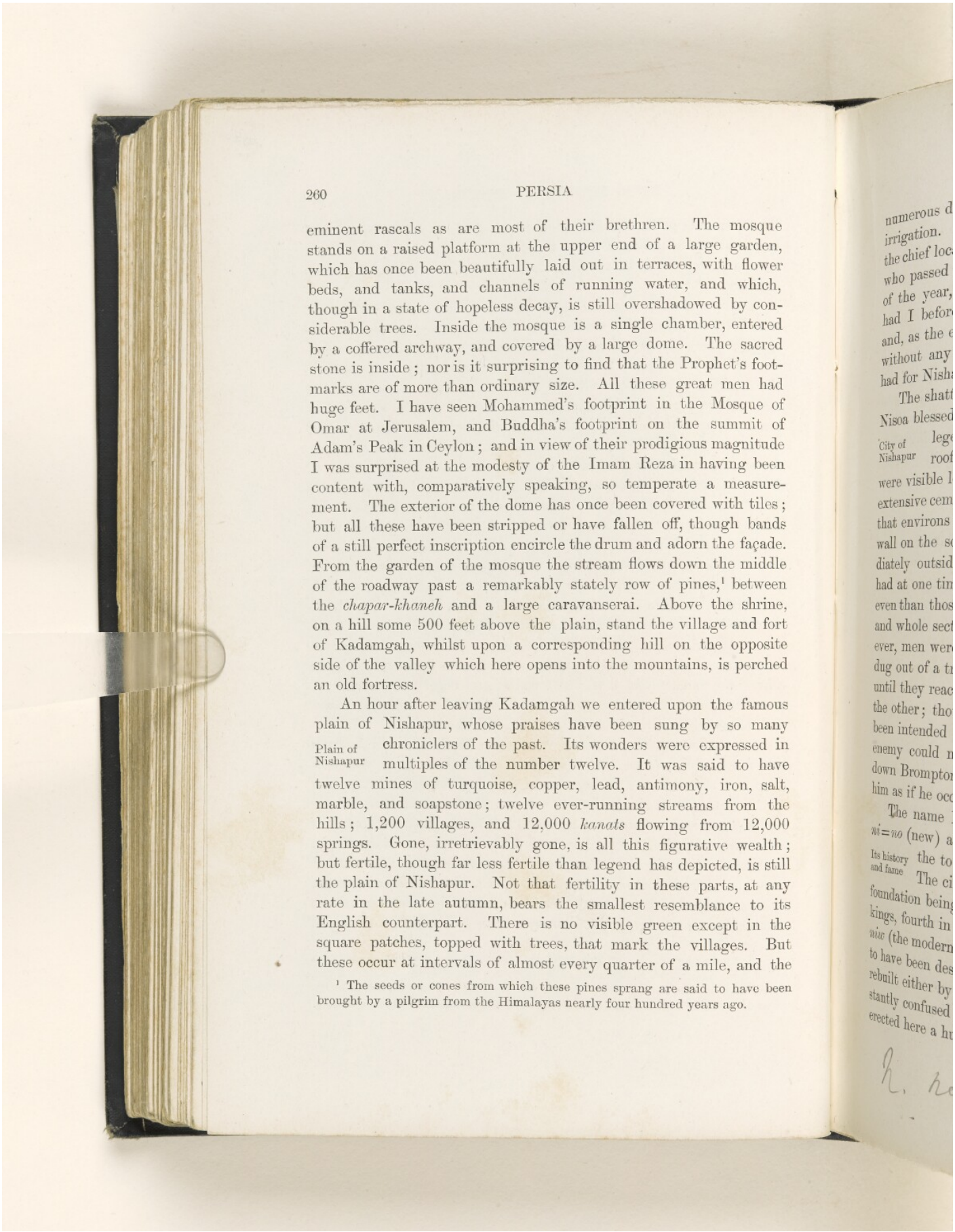



eminent rascals as are most of their brethren. The mosque stands on a raised platform at the upper end of a large garden, which has once been beautifully laid out in terraces, with flower beds, and tanks, and channels of running water, and which, though in a state of hopeless decay, is still overshadowed by considerable trees. Inside the mosque is a single chamber, entered by a coffered archway, and covered by a large dome. The sacred stone is inside; nor is it surprising to find that the Prophet's footmarks are of more than ordinary size. All these great men had huge feet. I have seen Mohammed's footprint in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, and Buddha's footprint on the summit of Adam's Peak in Ceylon; and in view of their prodigious magnitude I was surprised at the modesty of the Imam Reza in having been content with, comparatively speaking, so temperate a measurement. The exterior of the dome has once been covered with tiles; but all these have been stripped or have fallen off, though bands of a still perfect inscription encircle the drum and adorn the façade. From the garden of the mosque the stream flows down the middle of the roadway past a remarkably stately row of pines,[1] between the *chapar-khaneh* and a large caravanserai. Above the shrine, on a hill some 500 feet above the plain, stand the village and fort of Kadamgah, whilst upon a corresponding hill on the opposite side of the valley which here opens into the mountains, is perched an old fortress.

Plain of Nishapur

An hour after leaving Kadamgah we entered upon the famous plain of Nishapur, whose praises have been sung by so many chroniclers of the past. Its wonders were expressed in multiples of the number twelve. It was said to have twelve mines of turquoise, copper, lead, antimony, iron, salt, marble, and soapstone; twelve ever-running streams from the hills; 1,200 villages, and 12,000 *kanats* flowing from 12,000 springs. Gone, irretrievably gone, is all this figurative wealth; but fertile, though far less fertile than legend has depicted, is still the plain of Nishapur. Not that fertility in these parts, at any rate in the late autumn, bears the smallest resemblance to its English counterpart. There is no visible green except in the square patches, topped with trees, that mark the villages. But these occur at intervals of almost every quarter of a mile, and the

[1] The seeds or cones from which these pines sprang are said to have been brought by a pilgrim from the Himalayas nearly four hundred years ago.

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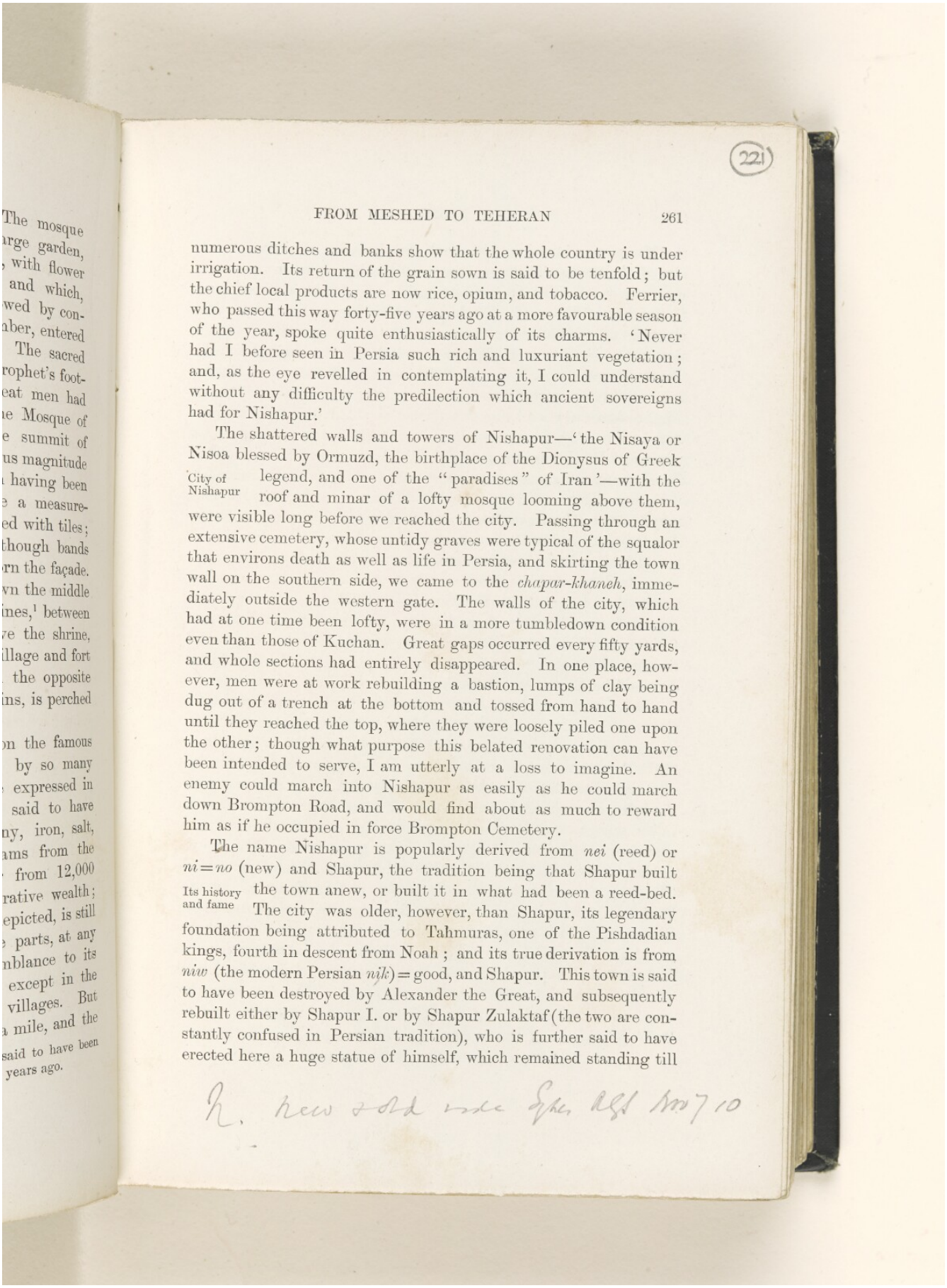



numerous ditches and banks show that the whole country is under irrigation. Its return of the grain sown is said to be tenfold; but the chief local products are now rice, opium, and tobacco. Ferrier, who passed this way forty-five years ago at a more favourable season of the year, spoke quite enthusiastically of its charms. 'Never had I before seen in Persia such rich and luxuriant vegetation; and, as the eye revelled in contemplating it, I could understand without any difficulty the predilection which ancient sovereigns had for Nishapur.'

City of Nishapur

The shattered walls and towers of Nishapur—'the Nisaya or Nisoa blessed by Ormuzd, the birthplace of the Dionysus of Greek legend, and one of the "paradises" of Iran'—with the roof and minar of a lofty mosque looming above them, were visible long before we reached the city. Passing through an extensive cemetery, whose untidy graves were typical of the squalor that environs death as well as life in Persia, and skirting the town wall on the southern side, we came to the *chapar-khaneh*, immediately outside the western gate. The walls of the city, which had at one time been lofty, were in a more tumbledown condition even than those of Kuchan. Great gaps occurred every fifty yards, and whole sections had entirely disappeared. In one place, however, men were at work rebuilding a bastion, lumps of clay being dug out of a trench at the bottom and tossed from hand to hand until they reached the top, where they were loosely piled one upon the other; though what purpose this belated renovation can have been intended to serve, I am utterly at a loss to imagine. An enemy could march into Nishapur as easily as he could march down Brompton Road, and would find about as much to reward him as if he occupied in force Brompton Cemetery.

Its history and fame

The name Nishapur is popularly derived from *nei* (reed) or *ni*=*no* (new) and Shapur, the tradition being that Shapur built the town anew, or built it in what had been a reed-bed. The city was older, however, than Shapur, its legendary foundation being attributed to Tahmuras, one of the Pishdadian kings, fourth in descent from Noah; and its true derivation is from *niw* (the modern Persian *nik*) = good, and Shapur. This town is said to have been destroyed by Alexander the Great, and subsequently rebuilt either by Shapur I. or by Shapur Zulaktaf (the two are constantly confused in Persian tradition), who is further said to have erected here a huge statue of himself, which remained standing till

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the Mussulman invasion. Shapur's city, however, was not upon the site of the modern Nishapur, but considerably more to the south-east, where its ruins are still traceable round a blue-domed tomb to the left of the road. Nishapur, which has certainly been destroyed and rebuilt more than any city in the world, rose again under the Arabs, and became successively the capital of the Taheride dynasty, of Mahmud of Ghuzni, when Governor of Khorasan, and of the powerful Seljuk family, whose first Sultan, Togrul Beg, resided here, and brought it to the zenith of its splendour. A long line of eminent travellers testified to its magnificence and renown. In the tenth century, the Arab pilgrim El Istakhri found the city a square, stretching one *farsakh* in every direction, with four gates and two extensive suburbs. In the eleventh century, Nasiri Khosru declared that it was the sole rival to Cairo. An Arab wit said of its *kanats* and its people, 'What a fine city it would be if only its watercourses were above ground and its population underground!' Another writer, Abu Ali el Alewi, recorded that it was larger than Fostat (old Cairo), more populous than Baghdad, more perfect than Busrah, and more magnificent than Kairwhan. It had forty-four quarters, fifty main streets, a splendid mosque, and a world-famed library. It was one of the four Royal cities of the Empire of Khorasan.[1]

Its destructions

But now the cycle of misfortune had come round; and from the twelfth century downwards it may be said that if Nishapur was only destroyed in order that it might be rebuilt, it was no sooner rebuilt than it was again destroyed. No city ever showed such unconquerable vitality. No city was ever the sport of such remorseless ruin. Nature herself assisted man in the savage tenacity of his vengeance, for what a conqueror had spared an earthquake laid low. Three great earthquakes are recorded in the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fifteenth centuries. The long career of human devastation was inaugurated by the Turkomans, who in 1153 A.D., in the reign of the great Sultan Sanjar, ravaged it so completely that the inhabitants on returning could not discover the sites of their homes. But if the Turkomans had chastised with whips, the Mongol hordes of Jenghiz Khan might be trusted to chastise with scorpions. They fell upon the city with flame and sword in 1220 A.D., under the command of Tului Khan, son of the conqueror; and the appalling measure of

[1] The others were Merv, Balkh, and Herat.

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Omar Khayyam's Tomb.

In a recent issue we drew attention to a passage in Colonel Yate's new book on Khorasan, describing the dilapidated condition of Omar Khayyam's tomb in the ancient city of Nishapur. His account of it as "a brick structure some three feet high, uncared for, and without any inscription or mark," ought to make the members of the Omar Khayyam Club blush. So far as we know, the Club has done nothing to justify its existence save eat and talk a great deal. It is accused of being the outcome of a literary fad. Its members are said to be not unmindful of the sweet uses of advertisement, which they agreeably unite with a devotion to the pleasures of the table. In order to clear itself of this charge, the Club might attempt to render to the shrine of its literary hero the reverent care denied it by Omar's own countrymen. Colonel Yate says that the people of Nishapur utterly neglect the tomb, and treat it with complete disdain. The reason they give is that Omar was a Sunni instead of an orthodox Shiah, and was despised accordingly. Many of the townspeople have never heard of his name, and even Colonel Yate's guide asked him whether Omar Khayyam was a Christian, as every European, especially every Englishman, who came to Nishapur, went on pilgrimage to his tomb. It is probable, therefore, that the people of Nishapur would not resent any attempt to restore and beautify the structure, and provide it with an inscription. If the Omar Khayyam Club is really in earnest—which we are inclined to doubt, save where dinners are concerned—it might easily do some-

whom the writer has conversed on the subject. The teams will probably turn out as follow :—

ENGLAND.

W. J. Sagar (Cambridge University) (back),
E. W. Elliott (Durham),
*J. T. Taylor (Durham),
E. J. Vivyan (Devon), and
C. Smith (Gloucestershire) (three-quarter backs),
E. J. Walton (Yorkshire) and
*R. O. Schwarz (Richmond) (half-backs),
*H. Alexander (Cheshire),
*J. Daniell (Cambridge University),
N. C. Fletcher (Old Merchant Taylors),
R. Graham (Cumberland),
C. O. P. Gibson (Northumberland),
*A. F. C. Luxmoor (Richmond),
E. W. Roberts (Devon), and
*C. T. Scott (Blackheath) (forwards).

WALES.

* W. J. Bancroft (Swansea) (back),
*W. Llewellyn (London Welsh),
*Gwyn Nicholls (Cardiff),
*Geo. Davies (Swansea), and
*W. Trew (Swansea) (three-quarter backs),
*G. Llewellyn Lloyd (Newport) and
*L. A. Phillips (Newport) (half-backs),
*R. Heelings (Llwynypia),
*A. Bryce (Aberavon),
*F. Millar (Mountain Ash),
*Geo. Boots (Newport),
*J Hodges (Newport),
*J. Blake (Cardiff),
*G. Dobson (Cardiff), and
*F. Scrines (Swansea) (forwards).

*An old International.

One has little hesitation in saying that Wales will win easily.

Oxford University opened their tour, on Saturday, with a win by one try to nothing over the Edinburgh Wanderers, who, just before the inter-'Varsity match, were overwhelmed by Cambridge. On Monday, the Dark Blues went down before Oxford University by two tries to *nil*. Welsh football, still the cleverest in the Kingdom, has proved much too good for Cambridge, who have lost to Cardiff by a goal and a try to *nil*, and to Newport by four goals and a try to *nil*.

The most surprising result last Saturday was the

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thing for this neglected sepulchre. A very small annual payment, for example, would secure a native custodian who would see that the environment of the tomb bore more resemblance to the "sweet garden-side" craved by the poet than it does now. Colonel Yate does not tell us quite as much about the spot as we should like to know. In the preface to Fitzgerald's translation, a story related by Khwajah Nizami of Samarcand, one of Omar Khayyam's pupils, is reprinted thus :—

I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyam, in a garden; and one day he said to me, "My tomb shall be in a spot, where the north wind may scatter roses over it." I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew his were no idle words. Years after, when I chanced to revisit Nishapur, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.

Is the tomb buried beneath stray blossoms nowadays? Perhaps the next traveller who wanders to Nishapur will tell us. If not, the Omar Khayyam Club, when it can tear itself away from its jimketings, might have some of the roses the poet loved so well twined once more about his grave. When Lord Curzon visited the spot a few years ago, he found more weeds than roses. He described it as standing "in a neglected garden, which once contained flower-beds and rivulets of water, but is now a waste of weeds." The Persians are not very careful of the tombs of their famous men. At Shiraz Lord Curzon thought even the tomb of Hafiz lacking in the distinction which ought to encompass "the last resting-place of a national hero and the object of adoration to millions." Poor Omar Khayyam is in far worse case, though no one would dub him a "national hero." Lord Curzon was unkind enough to call his works "useless baggage." Thousands of people, with the Omar Khayyam Club as their mouthpiece, profess to think differently; but they might appropriately allow their homage to take a more practical form than it has hitherto done. We have not much sympathy with the intense adulation lavished upon Omar Khayyam in England and America. It has savoured too much of insincere affectation. Omar's philosophy of life, propagated among persons who forget that in his other self he was a famous man of science, "winning knowledge of every kind," might have questionable effects in this too literal age. But beneath the fuss about Omar which is merely fashionable and casual, there undoubtedly exists a genuine interest in the old astronomer-poet. Among his less noisy admirers, the trifling sum necessary to adorn his resting-place might be readily raised; and the Consul-General at Meshed, when next he tours into the Nishapur hills, would doubtless be willing to see that the money was properly expended.

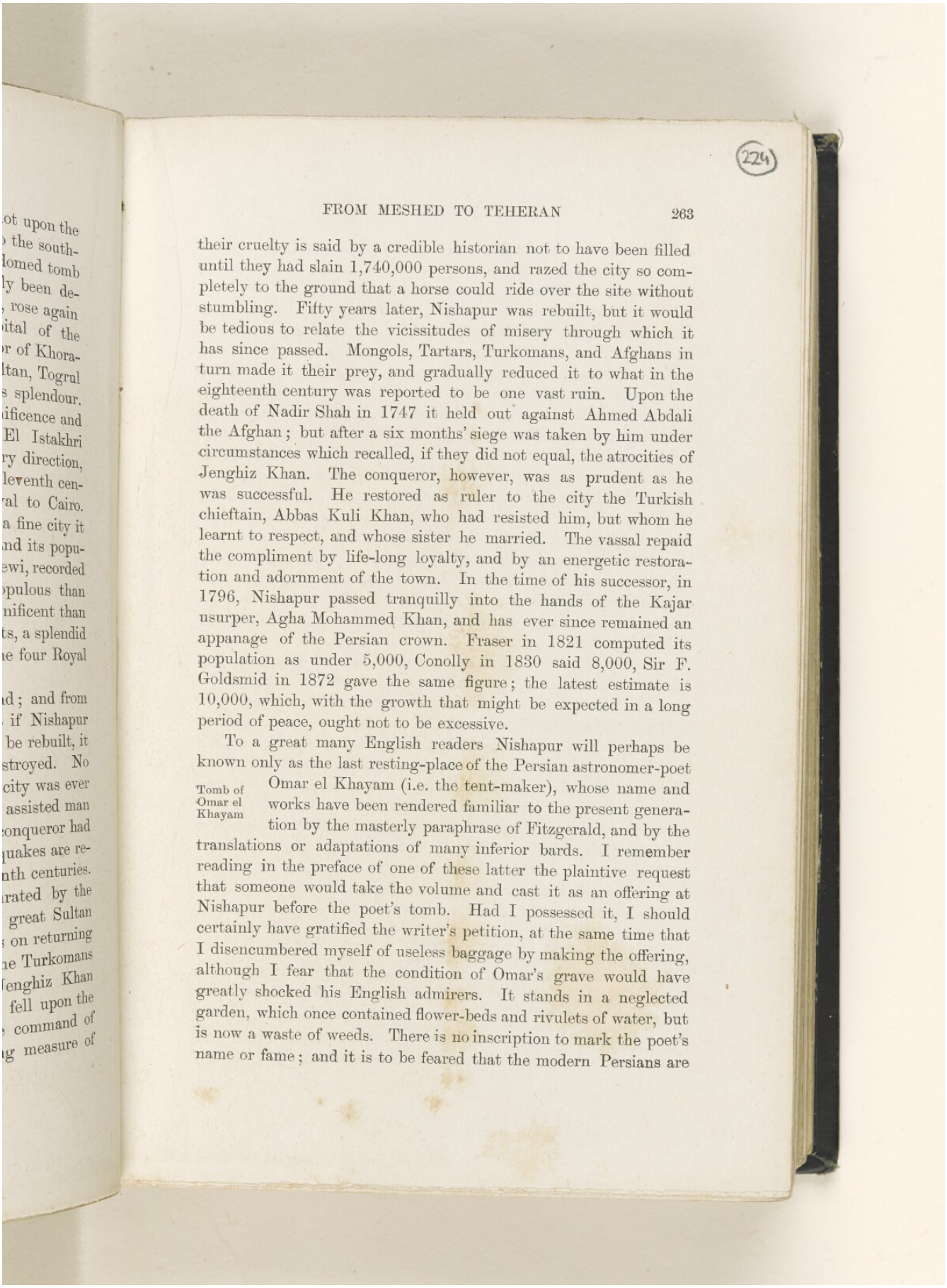


IA, WEDNESDAY, J

## THE STEAM FERRY SERVICE.

The sudden stoppage of Messrs. Shepherd and Com pany's ferry service on the Ulva and Dharamter lin has caused a dislocation of the traffic along the Bom bay coast, and it has been the cause of raising ar outcry among the poorer class of passengers who use to utilize the ferry to a considerable extent for going to and coming from their *gaums*. On learning tha the ferry was stopped, and the boats that used to b employed on the business were otherwise engaged about five hundred persons waited on Mr Haji Ismail a member of Messrs. Shepherd and Company's firm, a his house in the native town, and entreated him t reconsider the question in their own interest. Th reply given by him was that the whole thing reste with the *Sircar* and with the *Lat Sahib*, meaning wit the Bombay Government and with H. E the Gover nor of Bombay, and that communications in thi behalf were still in progress. This answer was no quite satisfactory to the applicants who left th place discontented

Messrs Shepherd and Company, however, aver tha they are in no way losers by the stopping of th ferry, but that the public were so. On the contrar their three boats, since they were run on other line have been a source of increased income and revenu to them. The binding they had given since th year 1865 to carry Government specie or treasur the mails, the prisoners or convicts, and the office in charge of all of them, free of cost, is now n longer in existence, and they are free from i enforcement. With these bindings in force la year, and with the reduced privilege of carryin passengers and their baggage granted under th amended agreement of the year 1894, they had bee short of their passenger-traffic by near upon thirt five thousand souls, which, coupled with the loss revenue arising out of making no charge for the co veyance of treasure, convicts, and the mails, had to on their legitimate and average income. Since th creation of the monopoly the first contracts used t begin in the first paragraph after this fashion :- "The contractors shall have the exclusive right working the ferry for the carriage of passengers an their baggage and such other description of freig specified in the schedule." This wording had throw the country craft out of all competition with t monopolists. But at the end of the year 1893, M Lamb, the Collector of Colaba, inserted the wo "steam" and made the clause to run:—"The contrac ors shall have the exclusive right of working the *stea* ferry, etc.," thus freeing the country craft from t obligation they were under hitherto, and whittli down the monopoly. Since that time the boats work by steam were only debarred from entering into co petition with the vessels of the monopolists, who we protected to that extent and no further. Moreov the comparative facilities enjoyed by the countr craft in respect of harbour medical examinati emboldened it to work on a passenger traffic on lin far easier than the stricter search in steam boats wou allow of working. Messrs. Shepherd and Company communication made to the Collector of Colaba May last embody some of the points on whi they think themselves aggrieved. They said th when they were appointed contractors in 186 Government intended to supersede native cra passenger-traffic, and establish a regular stea ferry service between Bombay and the por across the harbour. The contract gave the the exclusive right to work the ferries betwe Bombay and Mandwa, Rewas, Karanja, Dharamt Uran, Hog Island, and Ulva, and *vice versa*. U till the year 1894 they remained in exclusive enjo ment of this right. In that year the





their cruelty is said by a credible historian not to have been filled until they had slain 1,740,000 persons, and razed the city so completely to the ground that a horse could ride over the site without stumbling. Fifty years later, Nishapur was rebuilt, but it would be tedious to relate the vicissitudes of misery through which it has since passed. Mongols, Tartars, Turkomans, and Afghans in turn made it their prey, and gradually reduced it to what in the eighteenth century was reported to be one vast ruin. Upon the death of Nadir Shah in 1747 it held out against Ahmed Abdali the Afghan; but after a six months' siege was taken by him under circumstances which recalled, if they did not equal, the atrocities of Jenghiz Khan. The conqueror, however, was as prudent as he was successful. He restored as ruler to the city the Turkish chieftain, Abbas Kuli Khan, who had resisted him, but whom he learnt to respect, and whose sister he married. The vassal repaid the compliment by life-long loyalty, and by an energetic restoration and adornment of the town. In the time of his successor, in 1796, Nishapur passed tranquilly into the hands of the Kajar usurper, Agha Mohammed Khan, and has ever since remained an appanage of the Persian crown. Fraser in 1821 computed its population as under 5,000, Conolly in 1830 said 8,000, Sir F. Goldsmid in 1872 gave the same figure; the latest estimate is 10,000, which, with the growth that might be expected in a long period of peace, ought not to be excessive.

Tomb of Omar el Khayam

To a great many English readers Nishapur will perhaps be known only as the last resting-place of the Persian astronomer-poet Omar el Khayam (i.e. the tent-maker), whose name and works have been rendered familiar to the present generation by the masterly paraphrase of Fitzgerald, and by the translations or adaptations of many inferior bards. I remember reading in the preface of one of these latter the plaintive request that someone would take the volume and cast it as an offering at Nishapur before the poet's tomb. Had I possessed it, I should certainly have gratified the writer's petition, at the same time that I disencumbered myself of useless baggage by making the offering, although I fear that the condition of Omar's grave would have greatly shocked his English admirers. It stands in a neglected garden, which once contained flower-beds and rivulets of water, but is now a waste of weeds. There is no inscription to mark the poet's name or fame; and it is to be feared that the modern Persians are

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as little solicitous of the dust of Omar el Khayam as a nineteenth-century citizen of London might be of that of Matthew Paris or William of Malmesbury.

Nishapur possesses a Telegraph station of the Meshed-Teheran line worked by a Persian staff. It is also the meeting-point of several important roads in addition to the two from Meshed. On the south a road comes in from Turshiz, and on the north a track runs *viâ* Madan [1] (where are the turquoise mines) to Kuchan; while in a more westerly direction stretches the old long-forgotten trade route to the Caspian, which is believed to have been a link in the great chain of overland connection in the middle ages between China and India and the European continent. It ran from Nishapur to the Arab city of Isferayin in the plain of the same name, then struck westwards, and passing through the mountains by the defile known as the Dahaneh-i-Gurgan, through which the river Gurgan forces its way, descended the slope to the Caspian. The stages on this route are recorded in the itineraries of Isidore of Charax, and of El Istakhri, and the caravanserais built by Shah Abbas the Great are still standing, though in ruins.

Roads

About thirty-six miles in a north-westerly direction from Nishapur, on the first of the roads above mentioned, are situated the famous turquoise mines of Madan (i.e. mines), which from their proximity to the better known city have always been called the mines of Nishapur. Though turquoises are or have been found elsewhere in Persia,[2] and, it is sometimes said, in other countries, these may for all practical purposes be regarded as the only mines in the world that are worked or that repay working on a large scale, and as the source of 999 out of every 1,000 turquoises that come into the market. The mines, of which there are an immense number, actually worked, fallen in, or disused, are situated in a district some forty square miles in extent,

Turquoise mines

[1] Described by Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 166–171.

[2] The other turquoise mines of which I have heard or read in Persia are:—(1) Near Turshiz, leased by the Government (1889) for 500 *tomans* a year, but not worked; they are mentioned by Bellew. (2) Near Tabbas, mentioned by MacGregor and Herbert. (3) Near Kerman, mentioned by Marco Polo, Langlès, and Herbert. (4) At Taft, in the district of Yezd, mentioned by Khanikoff, Napier, and Herbert. (5) At Kaleh Zeri, near Basiran, between Birjand and Neh, mentioned by Khanikoff. The mines in the Kerman district are several in number: (α) Those of Pariz at God-i-Ahmer; (β) near Mashiz; (γ) near Shehr-i-Babek. But the stones of all these mines are very pale in colour and of no great value.

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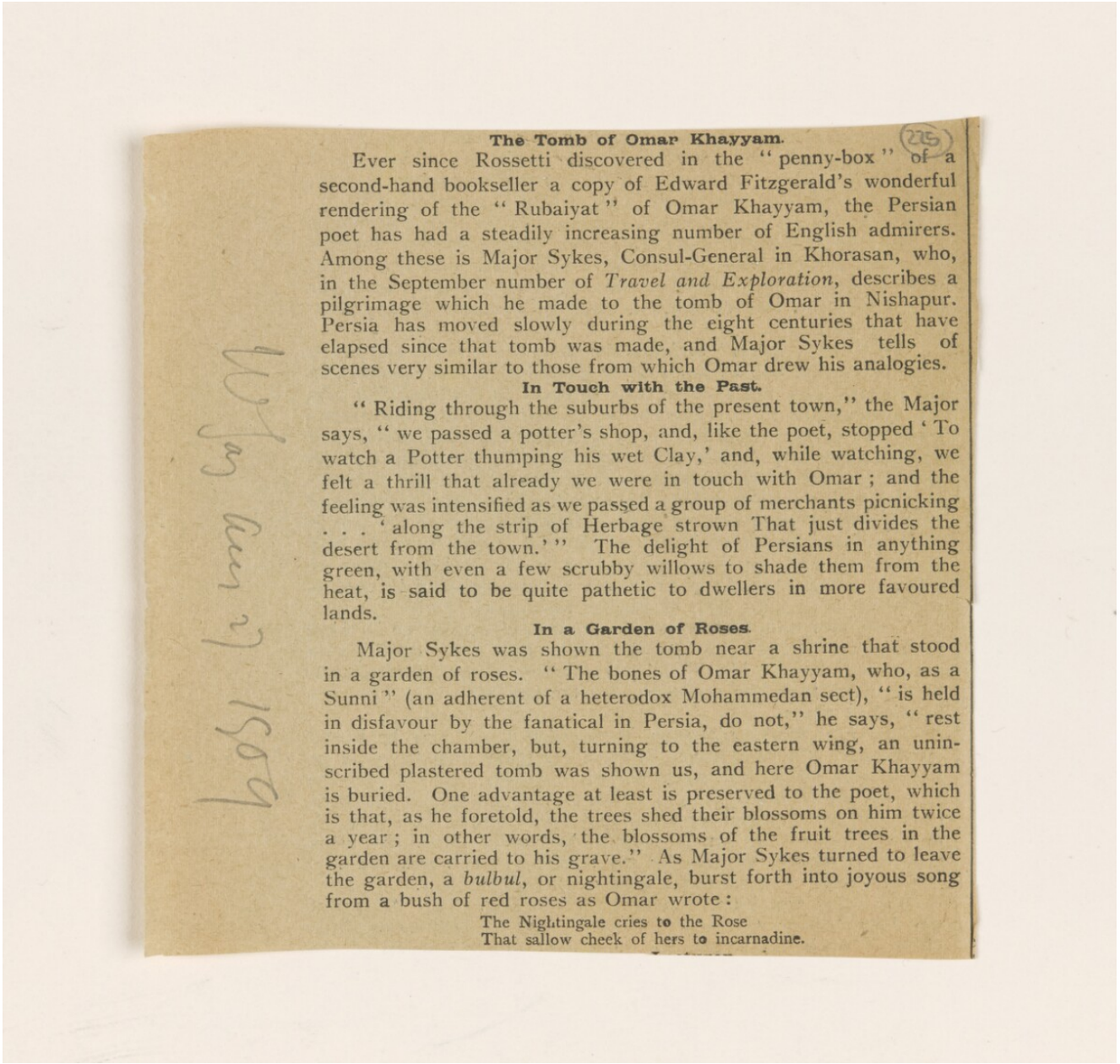

### The Tomb of Omar Khayyam.

Ever since Rossetti discovered in the "penny-box" of a second-hand bookseller a copy of Edward Fitzgerald's wonderful rendering of the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet has had a steadily increasing number of English admirers. Among these is Major Sykes, Consul-General in Khorasan, who, in the September number of *Travel and Exploration*, describes a pilgrimage which he made to the tomb of Omar in Nishapur. Persia has moved slowly during the eight centuries that have elapsed since that tomb was made, and Major Sykes tells of scenes very similar to those from which Omar drew his analogies.

### In Touch with the Past.

"Riding through the suburbs of the present town," the Major says, "we passed a potter's shop, and, like the poet, stopped 'To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay,' and, while watching, we felt a thrill that already we were in touch with Omar; and the feeling was intensified as we passed a group of merchants picnicking . . . 'along the strip of Herbage strown That just divides the desert from the town.'" The delight of Persians in anything green, with even a few scrubby willows to shade them from the heat, is said to be quite pathetic to dwellers in more favoured lands.

### In a Garden of Roses.

Major Sykes was shown the tomb near a shrine that stood in a garden of roses. "The bones of Omar Khayyam, who, as a Sunni" (an adherent of a heterodox Mohammedan sect), "is held in disfavour by the fanatical in Persia, do not," he says, "rest inside the chamber, but, turning to the eastern wing, an uninscribed plastered tomb was shown us, and here Omar Khayyam is buried. One advantage at least is preserved to the poet, which is that, as he foretold, the trees shed their blossoms on him twice a year; in other words, the blossoms of the fruit trees in the garden are carried to his grave." As Major Sykes turned to leave the garden, a *bulbul*, or nightingale, burst forth into joyous song from a bush of red roses as Omar wrote:

The Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers to incarnadine.

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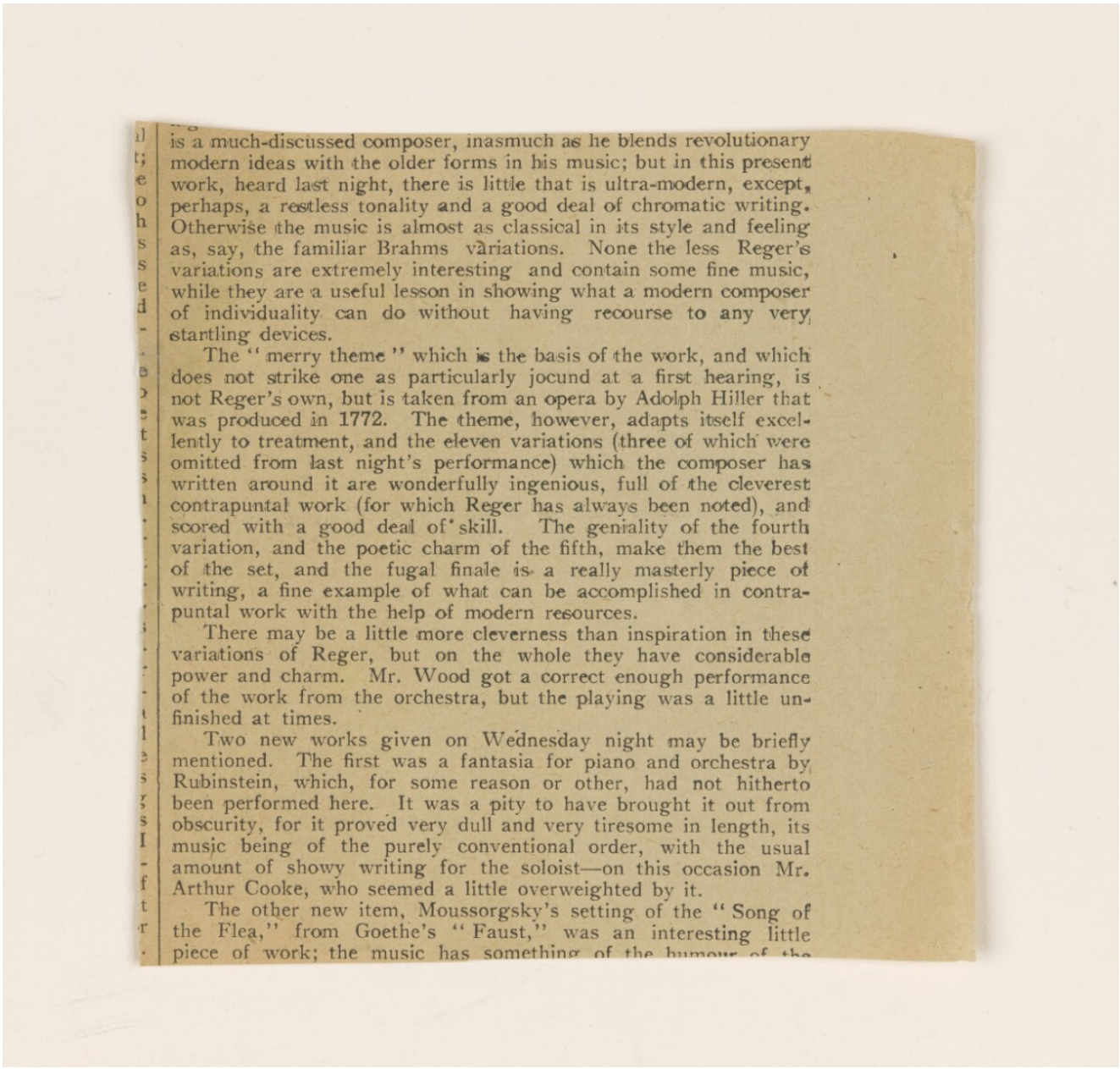


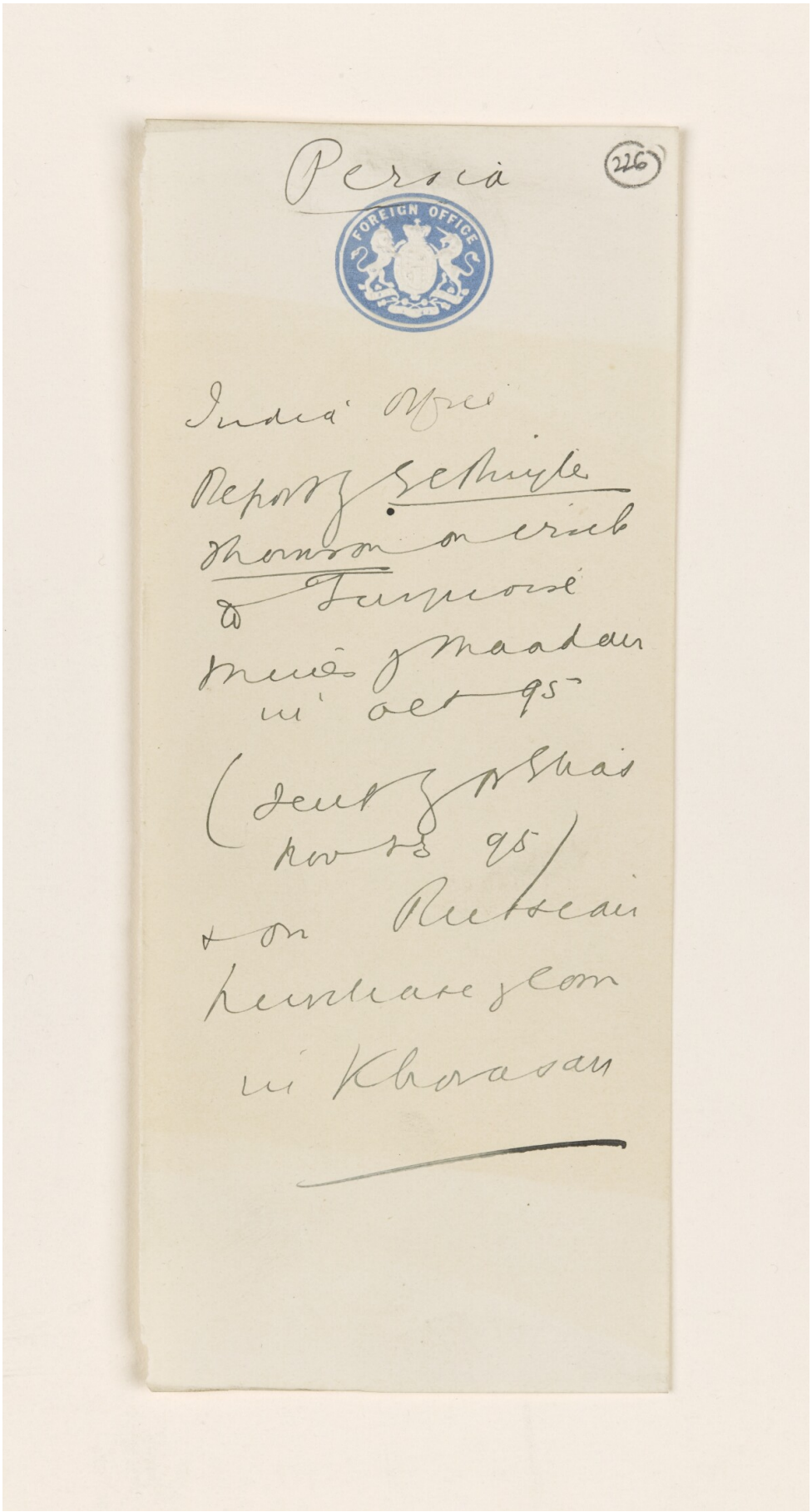
is a much-discussed composer, inasmuch as he blends revolutionary modern ideas with the older forms in his music; but in this present work, heard last night, there is little that is ultra-modern, except, perhaps, a restless tonality and a good deal of chromatic writing. Otherwise the music is almost as classical in its style and feeling as, say, the familiar Brahms variations. None the less Reger's variations are extremely interesting and contain some fine music, while they are a useful lesson in showing what a modern composer of individuality can do without having recourse to any very startling devices.

The "merry theme" which is the basis of the work, and which does not strike one as particularly jocund at a first hearing, is not Reger's own, but is taken from an opera by Adolph Hiller that was produced in 1772. The theme, however, adapts itself excellently to treatment, and the eleven variations (three of which were omitted from last night's performance) which the composer has written around it are wonderfully ingenious, full of the cleverest contrapuntal work (for which Reger has always been noted), and scored with a good deal of skill. The geniality of the fourth variation, and the poetic charm of the fifth, make them the best of the set, and the fugal finale is a really masterly piece of writing, a fine example of what can be accomplished in contrapuntal work with the help of modern resources.

There may be a little more cleverness than inspiration in these variations of Reger, but on the whole they have considerable power and charm. Mr. Wood got a correct enough performance of the work from the orchestra, but the playing was a little unfinished at times.

Two new works given on Wednesday night may be briefly mentioned. The first was a fantasia for piano and orchestra by Rubinstein, which, for some reason or other, had not hitherto been performed here. It was a pity to have brought it out from obscurity, for it proved very dull and very tiresome in length, its music being of the purely conventional order, with the usual amount of showy writing for the soloist—on this occasion Mr. Arthur Cooke, who seemed a little overweighted by it.

The other new item, Moussorgsky's setting of the "Song of the Flea," from Goethe's "Faust," was an interesting little piece of work; the music has something of the humour of the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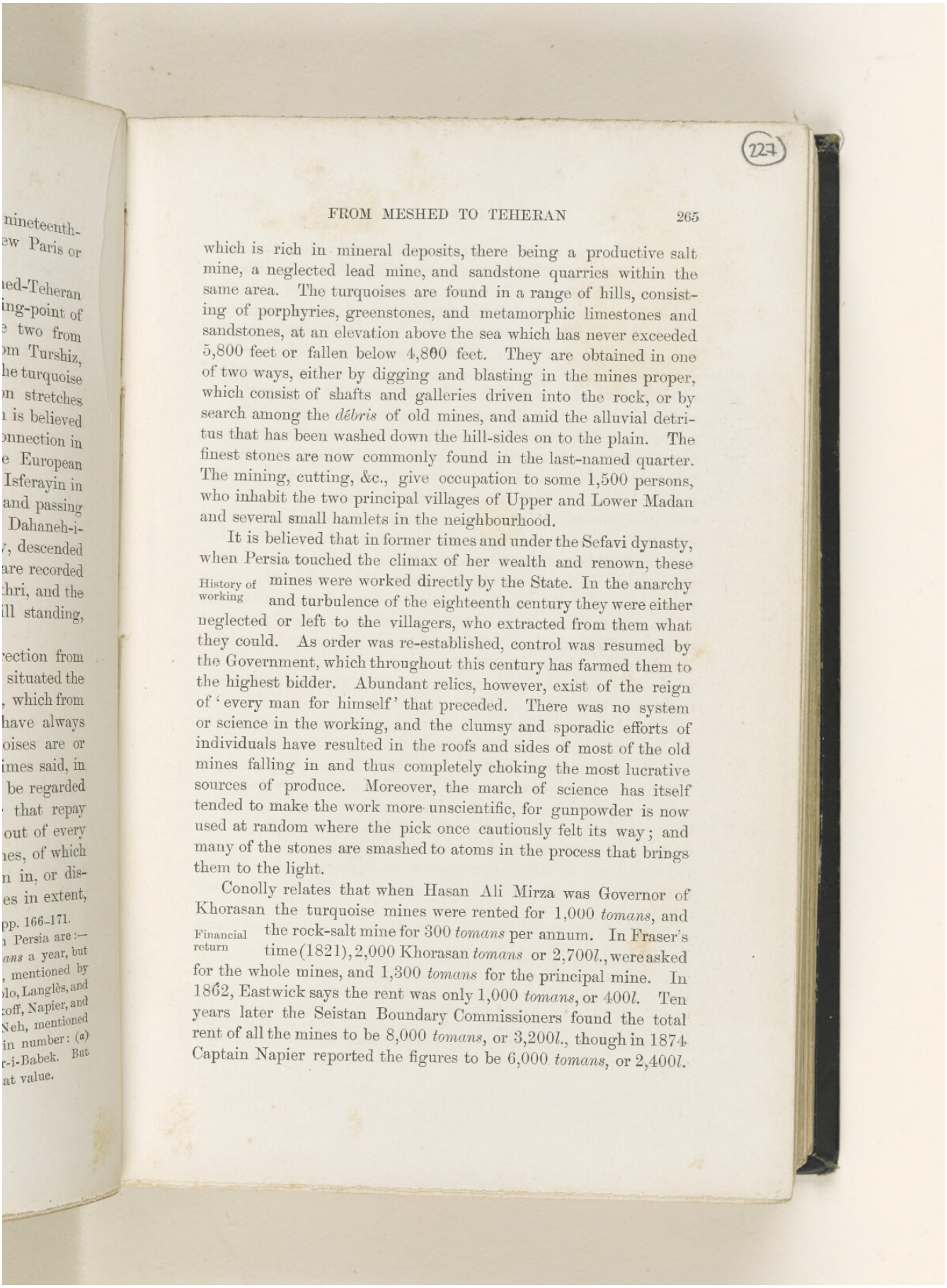



which is rich in mineral deposits, there being a productive salt mine, a neglected lead mine, and sandstone quarries within the same area. The turquoises are found in a range of hills, consisting of porphyries, greenstones, and metamorphic limestones and sandstones, at an elevation above the sea which has never exceeded 5,800 feet or fallen below 4,800 feet. They are obtained in one of two ways, either by digging and blasting in the mines proper, which consist of shafts and galleries driven into the rock, or by search among the *débris* of old mines, and amid the alluvial detritus that has been washed down the hill-sides on to the plain. The finest stones are now commonly found in the last-named quarter. The mining, cutting, &c., give occupation to some 1,500 persons, who inhabit the two principal villages of Upper and Lower Madan and several small hamlets in the neighbourhood.

It is believed that in former times and under the Sefavi dynasty, when Persia touched the climax of her wealth and renown, these mines were worked directly by the State. In the anarchy and turbulence of the eighteenth century they were either neglected or left to the villagers, who extracted from them what they could. As order was re-established, control was resumed by the Government, which throughout this century has farmed them to the highest bidder. Abundant relics, however, exist of the reign of 'every man for himself' that preceded. There was no system or science in the working, and the clumsy and sporadic efforts of individuals have resulted in the roofs and sides of most of the old mines falling in and thus completely choking the most lucrative sources of produce. Moreover, the march of science has itself tended to make the work more unscientific, for gunpowder is now used at random where the pick once cautiously felt its way; and many of the stones are smashed to atoms in the process that brings them to the light.

History of working

Conolly relates that when Hasan Ali Mirza was Governor of Khorasan the turquoise mines were rented for 1,000 *tomans*, and the rock-salt mine for 300 *tomans* per annum. In Fraser's time (1821), 2,000 Khorasan *tomans* or 2,700*l.*, were asked for the whole mines, and 1,300 *tomans* for the principal mine. In 1862, Eastwick says the rent was only 1,000 *tomans*, or 400*l.* Ten years later the Seistan Boundary Commissioners found the total rent of all the mines to be 8,000 *tomans*, or 3,200*l.*, though in 1874 Captain Napier reported the figures to be 6,000 *tomans*, or 2,400*l.*

Financial return

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The rent remained at 8,000 *tomans* up till 1882, when the Shah very wisely thought that he could make a better bargain. In that year he leased the mines for a term of fifteen years to the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Education, Telegraphs, and Mines, the rent to be 9,000 *tomans* in the first year, and 18,000 *tomans* in each succeeding year.[1] The Minister took a few rich men into partnership, and the versatile and accomplished General Schindler, whose services are enlisted for whatever work of regeneration is contemplated (I wish I could say executed) in Persia, held the post of managing director for one year.[2] This syndicate appears to have found the system of working the mines itself unremunerative; for at the time of my visit I found that they had been sublet to the Malek-et-Tajar, or head of the Merchants' Guild at Meshed—the enterprising speculator who had also undertaken the Kuchan road—and who was paying a rent of 10,000 *tomans*, or 2,850*l*., per annum as sublessee, himself subletting again to the villagers after the immemorial fashion to which every tenant in turn seems compelled to come back. He had just had a smart dispute with some of his own sublessees, who had discovered some larger and finer stones than he had bargained for, and whose tenancy he had accordingly terminated by the abrupt method of confiscation. In the past year (1890) the output of stones was estimated at not less than 80,000 *tomans*, or 22,850*l*.

Purchase of stones

It would be quite a mistake to suppose that by going either to Meshed or to Nishapur, or even to the pit mouth, the traveller can pick up valuable stones at a moderate price. Fraser tried seventy years ago, and was obliged to desist from the attempt by the ruthless efforts made to cheat him. Every succeeding traveller has tried and has reported his failure. All the best stones are bought up at once by commission agents on the spot and are despatched to Europe or sold to Persian grandees. I did not see a single good specimen either in Meshed or Teheran, though I

[1] Benjamin (*Persia and the Persians*, p. 408), with his usual inaccuracy, says 80,000 dollars, or 16,000*l*.

[2] By far the best account of the mines is to be found in a report written by him (and published in *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, part ii., 1884). The remaining travellers who have visited and described the turquoise mines of Madan are J. B. Fraser (1822), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. xvi., and Appendix to *Travels South of the Caspian*, pp. 344–346; Alex. Chodzko (circ. 1838), *Revue d'Orient*; N. de Khanikoff (1858), *Mémoire, &c.*, pp. 90–93; Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 166–71.

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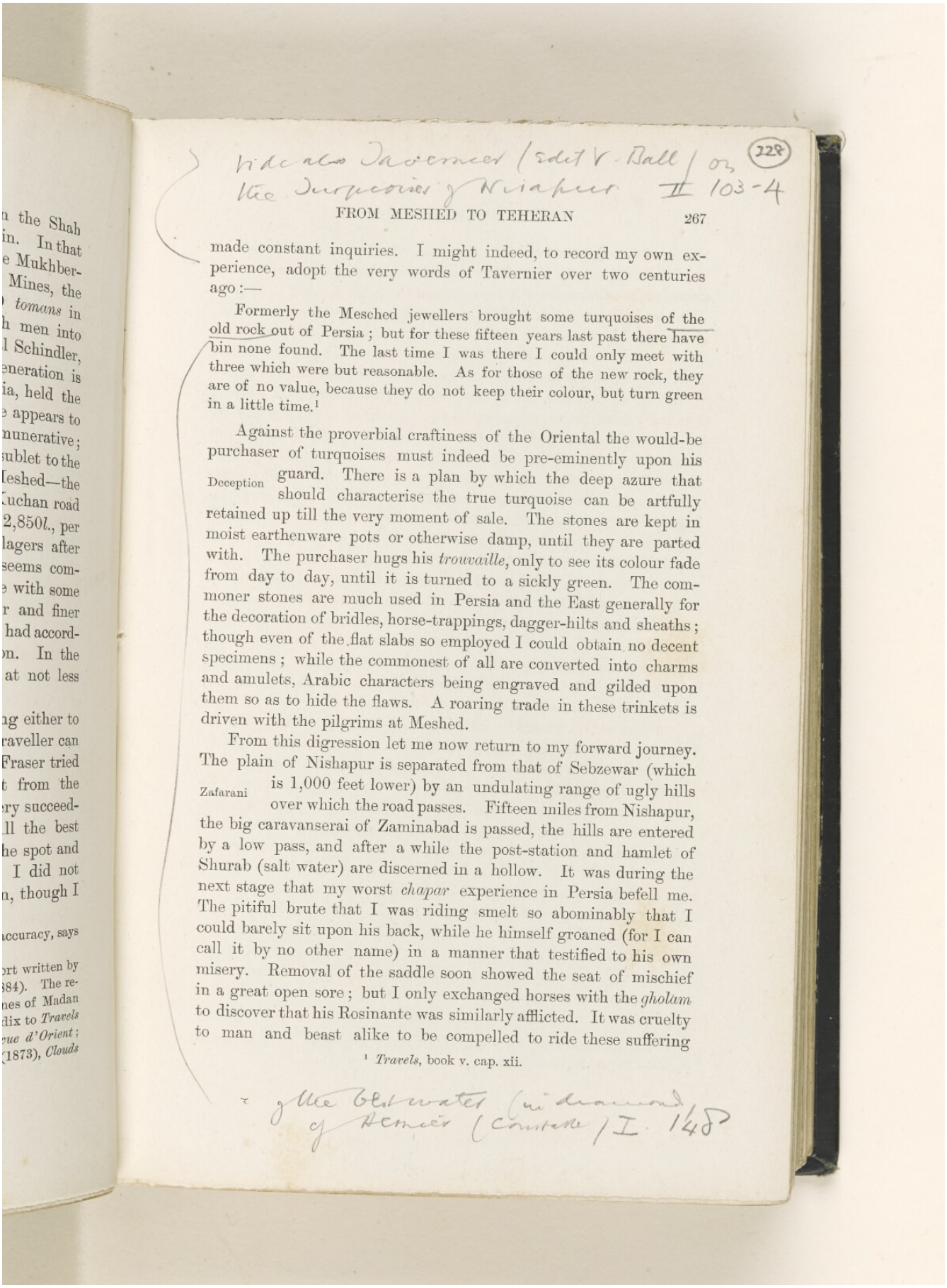

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made constant inquiries. I might indeed, to record my own experience, adopt the very words of Tavernier over two centuries ago:—

Formerly the Mesched jewellers brought some turquoises of the old rock out of Persia; but for these fifteen years last past there have bin none found. The last time I was there I could only meet with three which were but reasonable. As for those of the new rock, they are of no value, because they do not keep their colour, but turn green in a little time.[1]

Against the proverbial craftiness of the Oriental the would-be purchaser of turquoises must indeed be pre-eminently upon his guard. There is a plan by which the deep azure that should characterise the true turquoise can be artfully retained up till the very moment of sale. The stones are kept in moist earthenware pots or otherwise damp, until they are parted with. The purchaser hugs his *trouvaille*, only to see its colour fade from day to day, until it is turned to a sickly green. The commoner stones are much used in Persia and the East generally for the decoration of bridles, horse-trappings, dagger-hilts and sheaths; though even of the flat slabs so employed I could obtain no decent specimens; while the commonest of all are converted into charms and amulets, Arabic characters being engraved and gilded upon them so as to hide the flaws. A roaring trade in these trinkets is driven with the pilgrims at Meshed.

Deception

From this digression let me now return to my forward journey. The plain of Nishapur is separated from that of Sebzewar (which is 1,000 feet lower) by an undulating range of ugly hills over which the road passes. Fifteen miles from Nishapur, the big caravanserai of Zaminabad is passed, the hills are entered by a low pass, and after a while the post-station and hamlet of Shurab (salt water) are discerned in a hollow. It was during the next stage that my worst *chapar* experience in Persia befell me. The pitiful brute that I was riding smelt so abominably that I could barely sit upon his back, while he himself groaned (for I can call it by no other name) in a manner that testified to his own misery. Removal of the saddle soon showed the seat of mischief in a great open sore; but I only exchanged horses with the *gholam* to discover that his Rosinante was similarly afflicted. It was cruelty to man and beast alike to be compelled to ride these suffering

Zafarani

[1] *Travels*, book v. cap. xii.

v. also Ebn Hawkal (ed. Kramers) or Tavernier (Ball) I. 148?

skeletons for eighteen miles. A stretch of several miles across the level brought us to the station of Zafarani. There was once a magnificent caravanserai here, reported to be the largest in Persia. The Persians, eager for a fantastic interpretation wherever it can be suggested, explain the title (yellow or saffron) by a legend of a certain rich merchant who, when building the structure, mixed with the bricks some saffron which he had bought out of charity from a poor man, and which was forthwith converted by a miracle into gold dust, that is supposed to have glittered in the bricks ever afterwards.[1] The building, which is said once to have contained 1,700 rooms, besides baths, shops, and gardens (all of which have disappeared), has been attributed by some travellers to Shah Abbas. But Khanikoff very appositely pointed out that the style and the inscriptions in the Kufic character alike referred it to the Arab period, and he conjecturally placed its foundation in the reign of the Seljuk Malek Shah. Upon its ruins a fine modern caravanserai was built by the public-spirited Sadr Azem before mentioned. From Zafarani the road leads across the Sebzewar plain at no great distance from the mountains on the north, until the city of that name is reached. The entire town, whose central street is a very long covered bazaar (newly constructed when Conolly passed through in 1830), must be traversed before we arrive at the *chapar-khaneh*, close to the western gate.

Sebzewar

Sebzewar (i.e. green-having) is the capital of a district of some fertility, which suffered terribly in the famine of 1871, and is only now beginning to raise its head again. Before that year the population of the city was estimated at 30,000. It sank at once to less than 10,000, but is now said to have mounted to 18,000. The town is surrounded by the usual wall of mud bricks, and on the north is commanded by a ruined ark or citadel on a mound. The legendary foundation of Sebzewar, it is needless to say, goes far back into the past, but its historical birth is more justly attributed to the Seljuk dynasty, the style of whose architecture can be detected in certain of its remains. Like most of its neighbours, it has been several times destroyed; Timur completing in 1380 A.D. the operation which Mohammed Shah of Kharezm had left imperfectly done. Whatever of prosperity it subsequently regained was obliterated in true Afghan fashion by the Afghan

[1] Different versions of this legend are related by Fraser, pp. 385–386; Ferrier, pp. 102–103; and Eastwick, vol. ii. p. 180.

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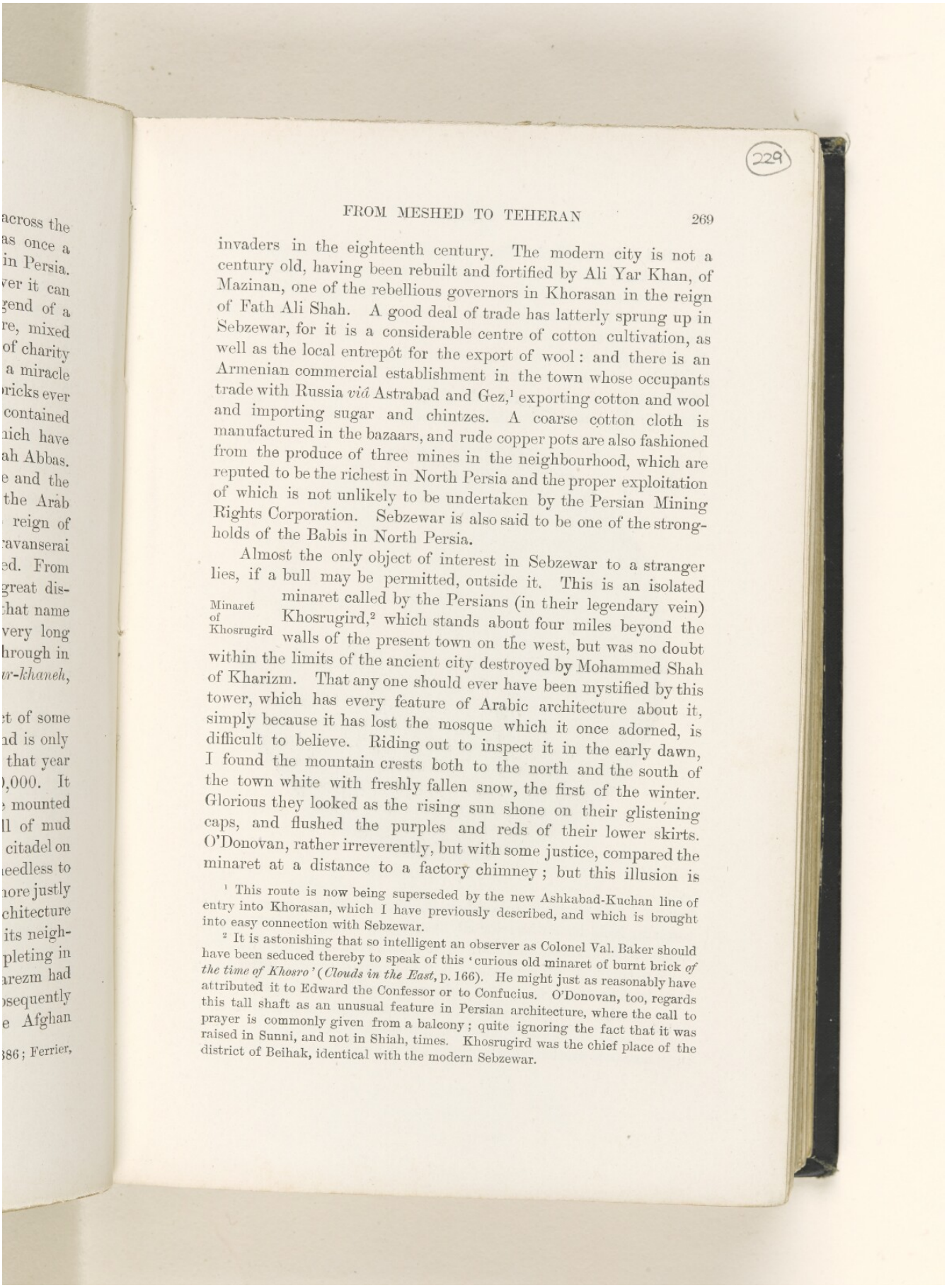



invaders in the eighteenth century. The modern city is not a century old, having been rebuilt and fortified by Ali Yar Khan, of Mazinan, one of the rebellious governors in Khorasan in the reign of Fath Ali Shah. A good deal of trade has latterly sprung up in Sebzewar, for it is a considerable centre of cotton cultivation, as well as the local entrepôt for the export of wool: and there is an Armenian commercial establishment in the town whose occupants trade with Russia *viâ* Astrabad and Gez,[1] exporting cotton and wool and importing sugar and chintzes. A coarse cotton cloth is manufactured in the bazaars, and rude copper pots are also fashioned from the produce of three mines in the neighbourhood, which are reputed to be the richest in North Persia and the proper exploitation of which is not unlikely to be undertaken by the Persian Mining Rights Corporation. Sebzewar is also said to be one of the strongholds of the Babis in North Persia.

Minaret of Khosrugird

Almost the only object of interest in Sebzewar to a stranger lies, if a bull may be permitted, outside it. This is an isolated minaret called by the Persians (in their legendary vein) Khosrugird,[2] which stands about four miles beyond the walls of the present town on the west, but was no doubt within the limits of the ancient city destroyed by Mohammed Shah of Kharizm. That any one should ever have been mystified by this tower, which has every feature of Arabic architecture about it, simply because it has lost the mosque which it once adorned, is difficult to believe. Riding out to inspect it in the early dawn, I found the mountain crests both to the north and the south of the town white with freshly fallen snow, the first of the winter. Glorious they looked as the rising sun shone on their glistening caps, and flushed the purples and reds of their lower skirts. O'Donovan, rather irreverently, but with some justice, compared the minaret at a distance to a factory chimney; but this illusion is

[1] This route is now being superseded by the new Ashkabad-Kuchan line of entry into Khorasan, which I have previously described, and which is brought into easy connection with Sebzewar.

[2] It is astonishing that so intelligent an observer as Colonel Val. Baker should have been seduced thereby to speak of this 'curious old minaret of burnt brick *of the time of Khosro*' (*Clouds in the East*, p. 166). He might just as reasonably have attributed it to Edward the Confessor or to Confucius. O'Donovan, too, regards this tall shaft as an unusual feature in Persian architecture, where the call to prayer is commonly given from a balcony; quite ignoring the fact that it was raised in Sunni, and not in Shiah, times. Khosrugird was the chief place of the district of Beihak, identical with the modern Sebzewar.

dispelled as we approach. Then we see it to be a single lofty tower, 100 feet high, of brickwork arranged so as to form an exterior pattern on the surface, converging towards the summit, and adorned with two bands of Kufic inscriptions also in brickwork. The capital at the top is broken, and the shaft has, therefore, an unfinished appearance. It springs from a square plinth of mixed concrete and gravel, the whole of which to a depth of about six feet is exposed, and which stands upon a further terrace about eight feet high, in the corners of which are doors, and which is surrounded by low pillars and a



MINARET OF KHOSRUGIRD

low mud wall encircling the whole enclosure. Fraser ascended the tower in 1822 by an interior flight of spiral steps, and O'Donovan followed his example in 1880. The stairway is now in ruins.

No traveller who could read the Kufic character need ever have been in doubt as to the history of this interesting relic; for the inscription states that it was raised in the year 505 of the Hejira—i.e. in 1110 A.D.—when Sultan Sanjar ruled in Khorasan, in the reign of Sultan Mohammed, the son of Malek

Its history

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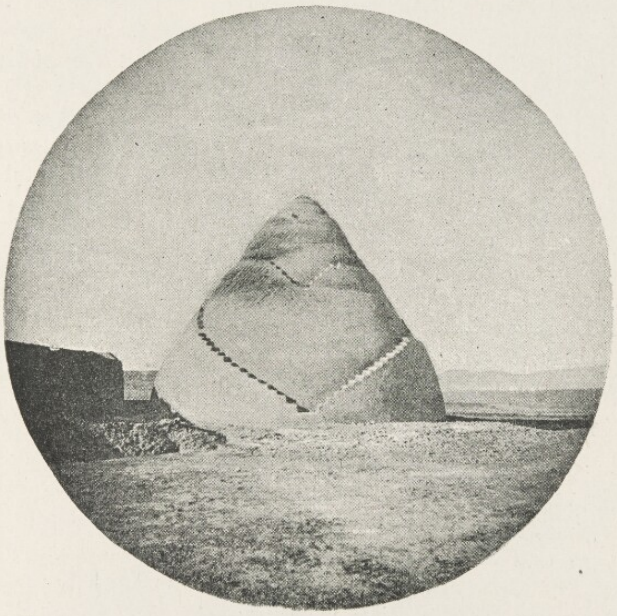
Shah the Seljuk. It suffered severe injury in the Afghan invasion in 1722, but was subsequently restored by Nadir Shah, and now stands the sole surviving reminder of a city and a splendour that have utterly perished.

Near Sebzewar the country was richly cultivated, especially with cotton. In less than an hour, however, the arable ceased, and Mihr and Mazinan in front and around stretched a desolate gravelly plain, in the middle of which in the distance a mountain with double cone stood up and expanded, as we drew near, into a small



ICE-HOUSE AT MAZINAN

isolated ridge. Leaving this on the left, we turned towards the base of the snowy range on the north, and after a five hours' ride reached the village of Mihr, the first inhabited place that we had seen for over thirty miles. The post-house is in the very centre of the village, down whose main street runs a rapid and brick-coloured stream. Between Mihr and Mazinan I caught my first glimpse of a *kavir*, or salt desert, one of those strange and weird expanses, sometimes hard plain, sometimes treacherous swamp,

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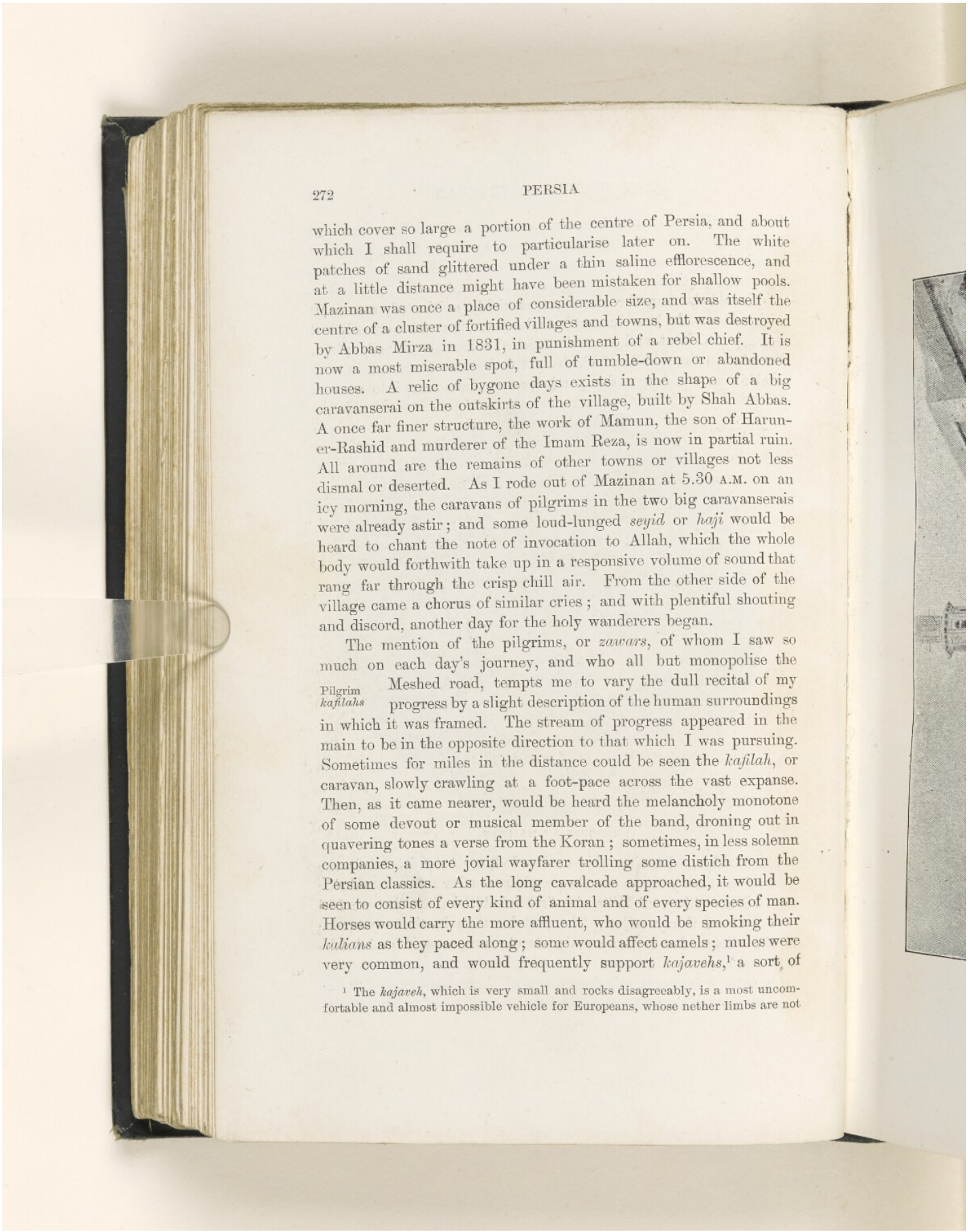



which cover so large a portion of the centre of Persia, and about which I shall require to particularise later on. The white patches of sand glittered under a thin saline efflorescence, and at a little distance might have been mistaken for shallow pools. Mazinan was once a place of considerable size, and was itself the centre of a cluster of fortified villages and towns, but was destroyed by Abbas Mirza in 1831, in punishment of a rebel chief. It is now a most miserable spot, full of tumble-down or abandoned houses. A relic of bygone days exists in the shape of a big caravanserai on the outskirts of the village, built by Shah Abbas. A once far finer structure, the work of Mamun, the son of Harun-er-Rashid and murderer of the Imam Reza, is now in partial ruin. All around are the remains of other towns or villages not less dismal or deserted. As I rode out of Mazinan at 5.30 A.M. on an icy morning, the caravans of pilgrims in the two big caravanserais were already astir; and some loud-lunged *seyid* or *haji* would be heard to chant the note of invocation to Allah, which the whole body would forthwith take up in a responsive volume of sound that rang far through the crisp chill air. From the other side of the village came a chorus of similar cries; and with plentiful shouting and discord, another day for the holy wanderers began.

Pilgrim *kafilahs*

The mention of the pilgrims, or *zawars*, of whom I saw so much on each day's journey, and who all but monopolise the Meshed road, tempts me to vary the dull recital of my progress by a slight description of the human surroundings in which it was framed. The stream of progress appeared in the main to be in the opposite direction to that which I was pursuing. Sometimes for miles in the distance could be seen the *kafilah*, or caravan, slowly crawling at a foot-pace across the vast expanse. Then, as it came nearer, would be heard the melancholy monotone of some devout or musical member of the band, droning out in quavering tones a verse from the Koran; sometimes, in less solemn companies, a more jovial wayfarer trolling some distich from the Persian classics. As the long cavalcade approached, it would be seen to consist of every kind of animal and of every species of man. Horses would carry the more affluent, who would be smoking their *kalians* as they paced along; some would affect camels; mules were very common, and would frequently support *kajavehs*,[1] a sort of

[1] The *kajaveh*, which is very small and rocks disagreeably, is a most uncomfortable and almost impossible vehicle for Europeans, whose nether limbs are not

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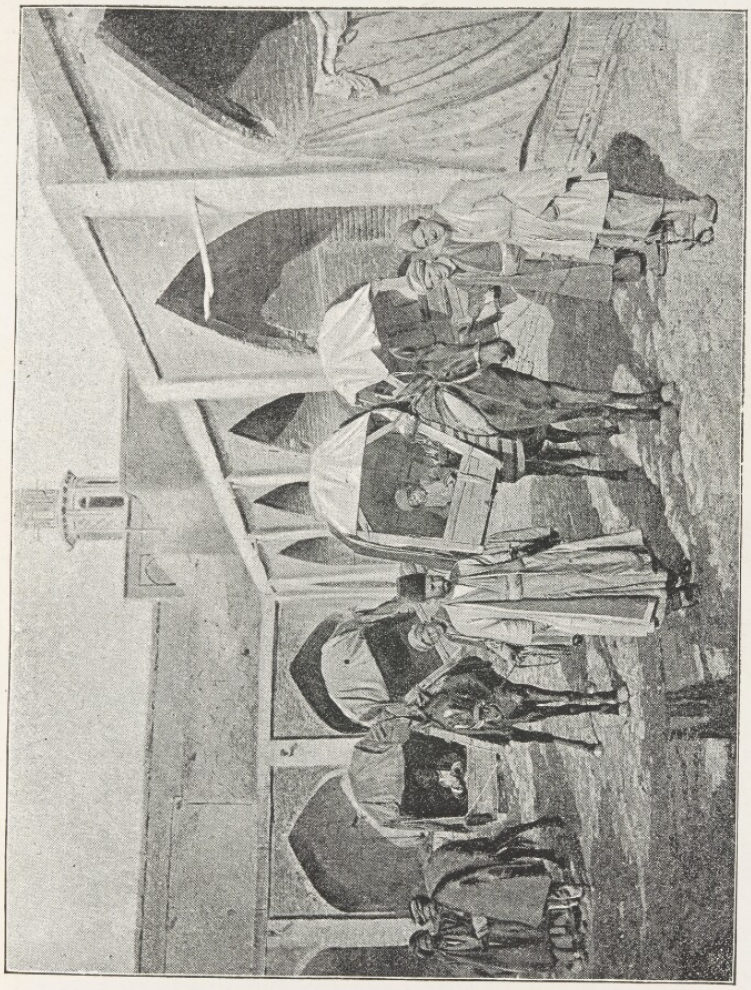
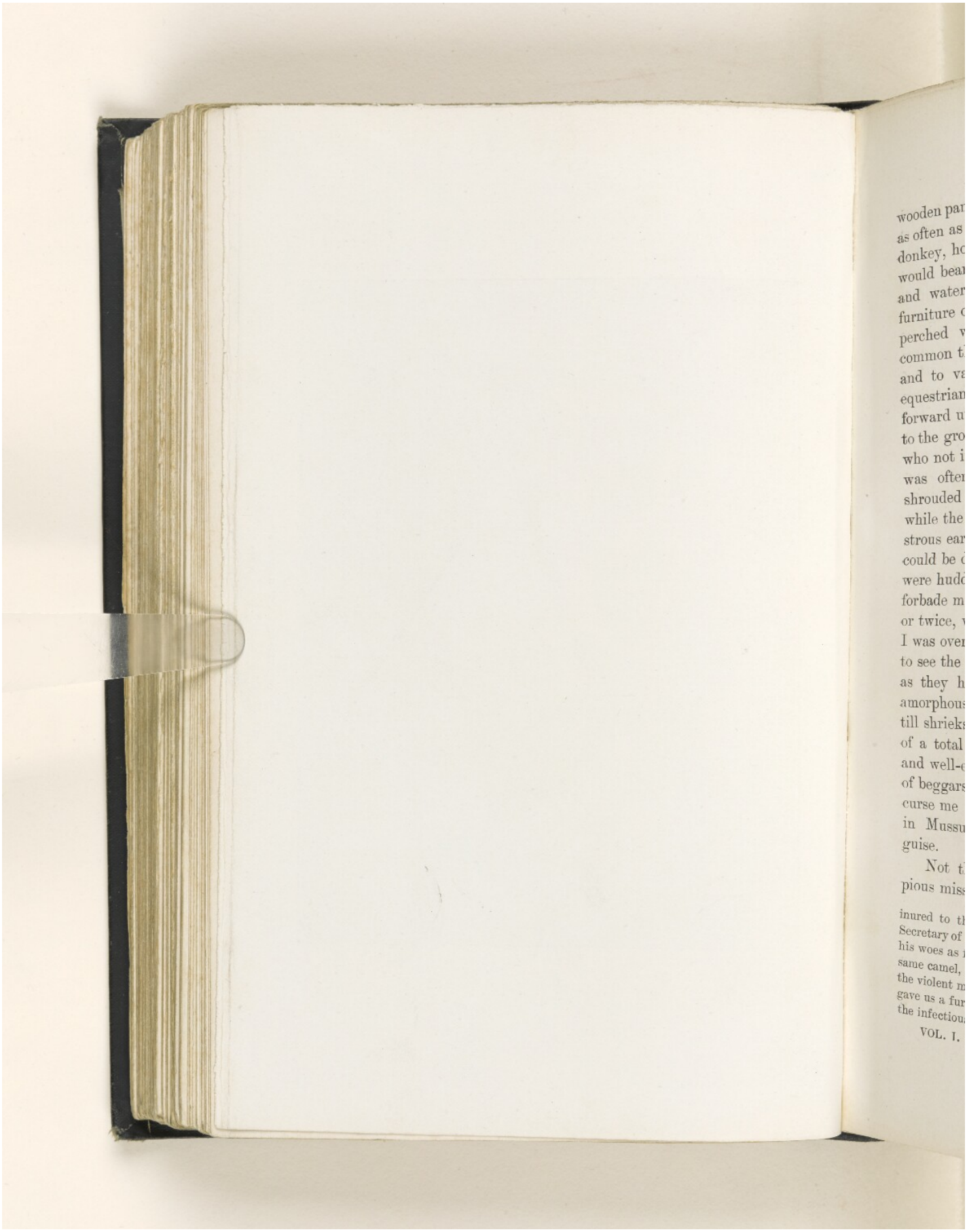


CARAVANSERAI AND KAJAVEHS



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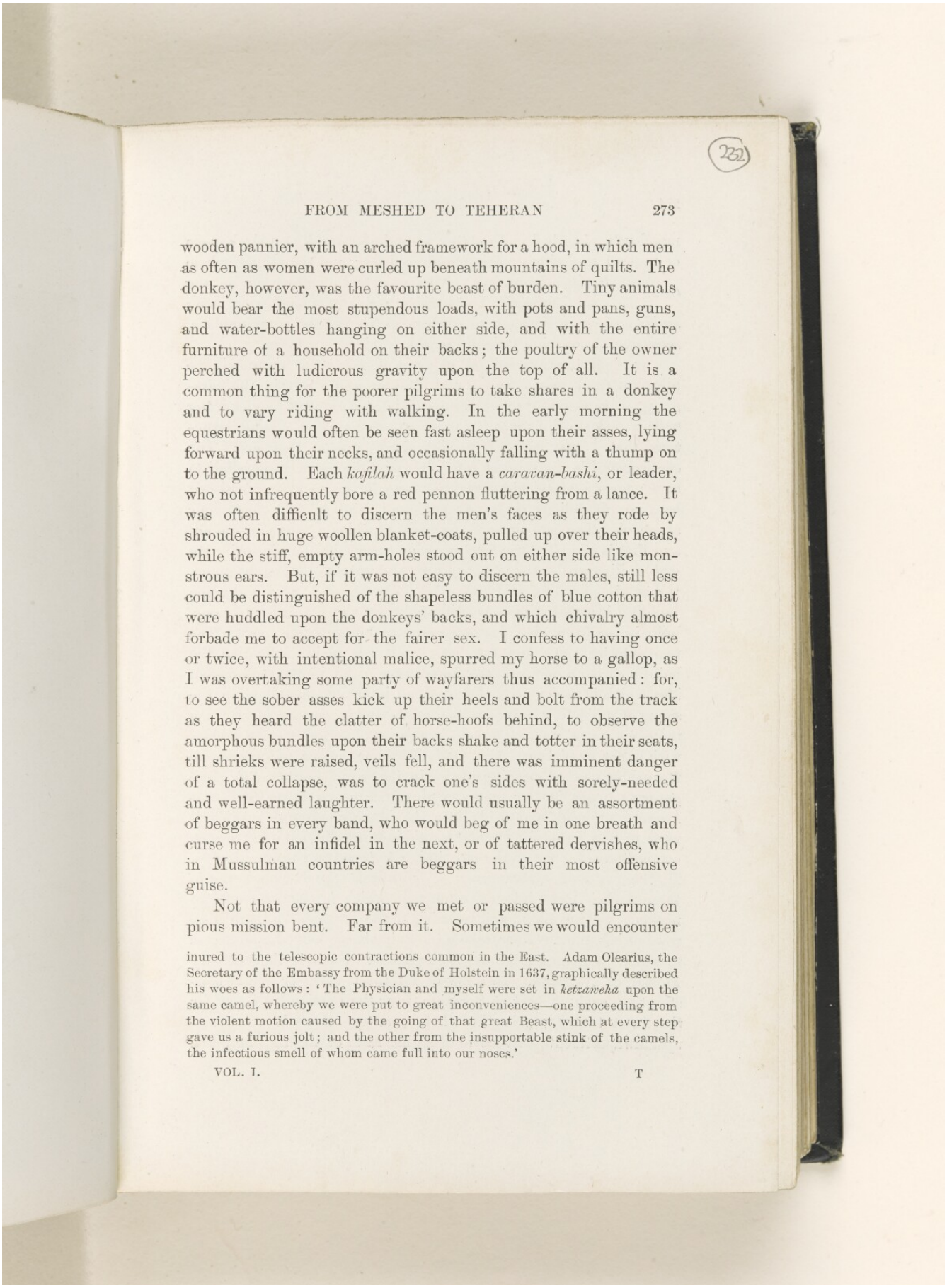



wooden pannier, with an arched framework for a hood, in which men as often as women were curled up beneath mountains of quilts. The donkey, however, was the favourite beast of burden. Tiny animals would bear the most stupendous loads, with pots and pans, guns, and water-bottles hanging on either side, and with the entire furniture of a household on their backs; the poultry of the owner perched with ludicrous gravity upon the top of all. It is a common thing for the poorer pilgrims to take shares in a donkey and to vary riding with walking. In the early morning the equestrians would often be seen fast asleep upon their asses, lying forward upon their necks, and occasionally falling with a thump on to the ground. Each *kafilah* would have a *caravan-bashi*, or leader, who not infrequently bore a red pennon fluttering from a lance. It was often difficult to discern the men's faces as they rode by shrouded in huge woollen blanket-coats, pulled up over their heads, while the stiff, empty arm-holes stood out on either side like monstrous ears. But, if it was not easy to discern the males, still less could be distinguished of the shapeless bundles of blue cotton that were huddled upon the donkeys' backs, and which chivalry almost forbade me to accept for the fairer sex. I confess to having once or twice, with intentional malice, spurred my horse to a gallop, as I was overtaking some party of wayfarers thus accompanied: for, to see the sober asses kick up their heels and bolt from the track as they heard the clatter of horse-hoofs behind, to observe the amorphous bundles upon their backs shake and totter in their seats, till shrieks were raised, veils fell, and there was imminent danger of a total collapse, was to crack one's sides with sorely-needed and well-earned laughter. There would usually be an assortment of beggars in every band, who would beg of me in one breath and curse me for an infidel in the next, or of tattered dervishes, who in Mussulman countries are beggars in their most offensive guise.

Not that every company we met or passed were pilgrims on pious mission bent. Far from it. Sometimes we would encounter

inured to the telescopic contractions common in the East. Adam Olearius, the Secretary of the Embassy from the Duke of Holstein in 1637, graphically described his woes as follows: 'The Physician and myself were set in *ketzaweha* upon the same camel, whereby we were put to great inconveniences—one proceeding from the violent motion caused by the going of that great Beast, which at every step gave us a furious jolt; and the other from the insupportable stink of the camels, the infectious smell of whom came full into our noses.'



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merchants, absorbed and sedate; sometimes *mullahs* on sleek asses or mules; sometimes officials and soldiers; and sometimes whole families migrating. All classes and all ages were on the road: horsemen and footmen; rich men and poor men; *seyids* and scoundrels—a microcosm of the stately, commonplace, repulsive, fascinating Oriental world.

Others

At night these varied and polyglot elements (for there will be pilgrims from many lands) seek shelter and sleep in the caravanserais erected at intervals of ten or fifteen miles along the entire route. I have so often spoken of these structures that I may here, in passing, describe what they are. The caravanserai is the Eastern inn. But with the name the parallelism ends: for no proud signboard, no cheerful parlour or burnished bar, no obsequious ostler or rubicund landlord welcomes your approach. The caravanserai, perhaps, contains a single custodian, and that is all. The wayfarer must do everything for himself. He stables his own beasts, piles together and watches his own baggage, lights his own fire, and cooks his own repast. As a rule, the building is a vast square or rectangular structure of brick or stone, built in the form of a parallelogram round an open court. The two exterior sides and the back walls are plain, and give the building from a distance the appearance of an immense fort—an idea which is frequently, and with full intention, sustained in the shape of projecting towers at the angles and a parapet above. In the front outer wall, or façade, is a series of large recessed arches, with a seat, or platform, about two feet from the ground. These are frequently used as sleeping-places in the warm weather. A huge gateway opens in the centre, with sometimes a tower and *bala-khaneh* overhead, and leads into the inner quadrangle, which is perhaps fifty yards square, and whose sides are divided into recessed compartments, open to the air, similar to those on the outside wall. In the superior caravanserais a doorway at the back of each of these arches leads into an inner cell, which is occupied on cold nights. Behind these, and reaching to the exterior wall, are long rows of hot, unlit stables, where the animals are lodged, and access to which is gained from the four corners. Such is the ordinary Persian caravanserai. In a few of improved style or recent construction, such as that at Borasjun, near the Persian Gulf—by far the finest that I saw in the whole country—there is a series of upstairs apartments for visitors of higher rank or means; but, as a

Caravanserais

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# SHAH'S VISIT.

**Aga Mohammed Shah.**
1795—1797.

**Fath Ali Shah.**
1798—1834.

**Mohammed Shah.**
1835—1848.

**Nasir-ud-Din Shah.**
1848—1896.
(Visited Europe in 1873, 1878, and 1889. Created K.G. in 1873.)

**Muzaffer-ud-Din Shah.**
1896—1907.
(Visited Europe 1900, 1902, and 1905. Was the guest of King Edward in 1902. Created K.G. in 1903.)

**Mohammed Ali Shah.**
1907—1909.
(Deposed July 16, 1909, and is now at Constantinople and is known as the ex-Shah.)

**Sultan Ahmad Shah.**
Born January 20, 1898.
Came to Throne, July 18, 1909.
Crowned July 21, 1914.

The Shah is therefore 21 years of age. He came to the throne at the age of 11, and was crowned at the age of 16.

The Shah was much impressed by Germany during the war, and was by no means sure that the Allies would win.

This is his first visit to Europe, and he is no doubt learning many things.

He is not at all interested as yet in the politics of his country, and is content to leave everything to his Prime Minister and Government.

His ruling passion is the acquisition of money.

He is fond of shooting, and obtains a certain amount of excellent sport in winter on his preserves near Tehran, which are stocked with ibex and moufflon, chiefly the latter. There are also a great many partridges on the preserves, and large bags can be obtained when snow is on the ground.

[1206]

The Shah did a record journey from Persia to Constantinople, leaving Tehran on the 12th August and reaching Constantinople on the 19th August on His Majesty's cruiser "Ceres." He proceeded, after a stay of a week at Prinkipo, where he saw his father, the ex-Shah, on board His Majesty's cruiser "Ceres" to Taranto, and went from there by train direct to Montreux, where he stayed about a month. He arrived in Paris early in October and stayed at the Hôtel Meurice *incognito* as Prince Abbas.

**Prince Nosret-es-Sultaneh Husain Kuli Mirza.**

Born 1894. He is the fifth son of the late Muzaffer-ud-Din Shah, and is therefore the Shah's uncle. He is 25 years of age, and has been Governor-General of the province of Kerman in South-Eastern Persia bordering on Indian Baluchistan. He held this post during the war, but he was not a success as a Governor. He has good manners, and speaks French tolerably well, but he is rather effeminate. The Shah is very fond of him.

**Prince Nosret-ed-Dowleh Firouz Mirza (Minister for Foreign Affairs).**

Born about 1887. Son of Prince Farman Farma, G.C.M.G., who is now Governor-General of Fars (Shiraz). His mother is Princess Ezzet-ed-Dowleh, a daughter of the late Muzaffer-ud-Din Shah.

He was Governor of the province of Kerman in 1907.

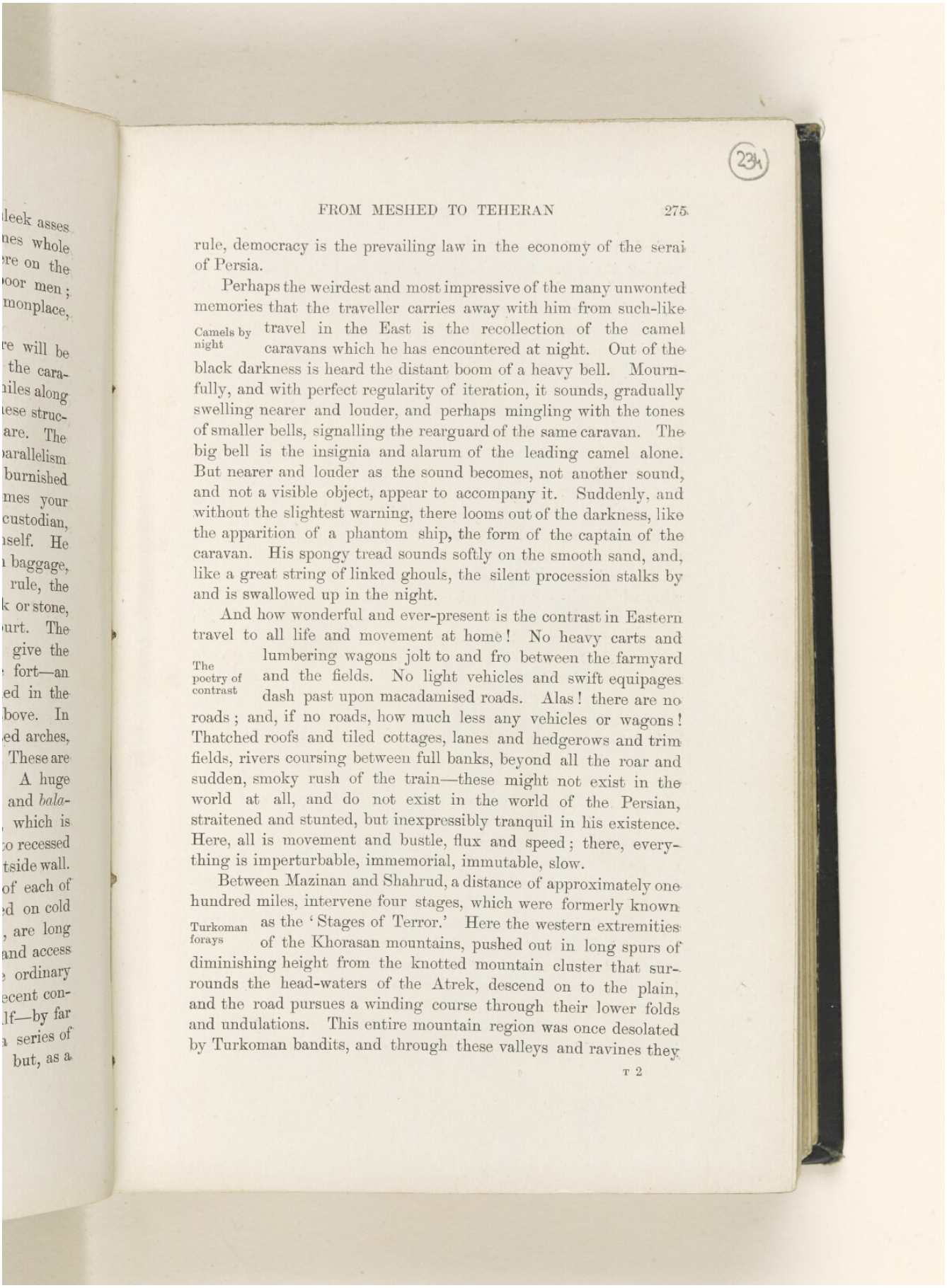
His first Cabinet post was in 1916 when he became Minister of Finance. He was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs a few days after the signature of the Anglo-Persian Agreement (August 9, 1919), and he took a principal part in the negotiations with Sir Percy Cox, His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, which led to the conclusion of the Agreement.

He speaks French fluently and understands English.

During his two visits to London in September and October he favourably impressed official opinion here with his intelligence and shrewdness.

He is fond of shooting and motoring, and when in London in September he went for a short flight by aeroplane at Hounslow Aerodrome, but would not face the journey from Paris to London by air.

He has been consistently pro-British throughout the war, and had things gone badly for us he would undoubtedly have suffered severely. He has before now given proof of considerable personal courage and disregard of his own safety.





rule, democracy is the prevailing law in the economy of the serai of Persia.

Perhaps the weirdest and most impressive of the many unwonted memories that the traveller carries away with him from such-like travel in the East is the recollection of the camel caravans which he has encountered at night. Out of the black darkness is heard the distant boom of a heavy bell. Mournfully, and with perfect regularity of iteration, it sounds, gradually swelling nearer and louder, and perhaps mingling with the tones of smaller bells, signalling the rearguard of the same caravan. The big bell is the insignia and alarum of the leading camel alone. But nearer and louder as the sound becomes, not another sound, and not a visible object, appear to accompany it. Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, there looms out of the darkness, like the apparition of a phantom ship, the form of the captain of the caravan. His spongy tread sounds softly on the smooth sand, and, like a great string of linked ghouls, the silent procession stalks by and is swallowed up in the night.

Camels by night

And how wonderful and ever-present is the contrast in Eastern travel to all life and movement at home! No heavy carts and lumbering wagons jolt to and fro between the farmyard and the fields. No light vehicles and swift equipages dash past upon macadamised roads. Alas! there are no roads; and, if no roads, how much less any vehicles or wagons! Thatched roofs and tiled cottages, lanes and hedgerows and trim fields, rivers coursing between full banks, beyond all the roar and sudden, smoky rush of the train—these might not exist in the world at all, and do not exist in the world of the Persian, straitened and stunted, but inexpressibly tranquil in his existence. Here, all is movement and bustle, flux and speed; there, everything is imperturbable, immemorial, immutable, slow.

The poetry of contrast

Between Mazinan and Shahrud, a distance of approximately one hundred miles, intervene four stages, which were formerly known as the 'Stages of Terror.' Here the western extremities of the Khorasan mountains, pushed out in long spurs of diminishing height from the knotted mountain cluster that surrounds the head-waters of the Atrek, descend on to the plain, and the road pursues a winding course through their lower folds and undulations. This entire mountain region was once desolated by Turkoman bandits, and through these valleys and ravines they

Turkoman forays



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dashed down in headlong foray upon the helpless bands of travellers making their way to or from Meshed. Sweeping up whatever they could get, driving off the animals, and chaining a few score of captives to their saddle-bows, they galloped off into their mountain-fastnesses with as much precipitation as that with which they had come. Already, along the route which I have described from Meshed to Mazinan, I had seen frequent proofs of their dreaded presence, in the shape of those small circular towers, dotted all over the plain like chessmen on a chessboard, which, from Ashkabad to Meshed, from Sarakhs to Farrah, and from Shahrud almost to Kum, marked the chosen hunting-grounds of these terrible moss-troopers of the border. In parts almost every field had one of these structures, into which, as soon as a rolling cloud of dust revealed the apparition of the enemy, the husbandman crept by a small hole at the bottom, and, rolling two big stones against the aperture, waited till the scourge had swept past. Similar evidence of the terror they inspired, and of the state of siege which self-preservation imposed upon their possible victims, is forthcoming along the entire belt of country above named, in the rude forts erected in every village as a refuge for the inhabitants. Once behind a mud wall the miserable peasants were safe; but woe betide them if caught in the open country—death or the slave-markets of Khiva and Bokhara were then the certain issue.

What the luckless peasant faced every day the timid pilgrim looked to encounter on this fateful stretch of road which I am about to describe. The most elaborate precautions were taken against the danger. An escort used to leave Shahrud and Mazinan twice a month, consisting of a number of so-called foot-soldiers armed with matchlocks, and a mounted detachment accompanying an old gun. At Miandasht the two escorts met and relieved each other. The support of the Mazinan detachment, consisting of 150 matchlock men and twelve artillerymen with their horses, was imposed, in lieu of the ordinary taxes, upon the villagers of that place; and even so late as 1872, when the Seistan Boundary Commissioners passed this way on their return to Teheran, they had to travel with an escort of eighty matchlocks, a 4½-pounder dragged by six horses, and 150 to 200 mounted *sowars*, between Mazinan and Shahrud.

Military escort

Conolly, Fraser, Eastwick, O'Donovan, and other writers who journeyed with the pilgrim caravans have left inimitable accounts

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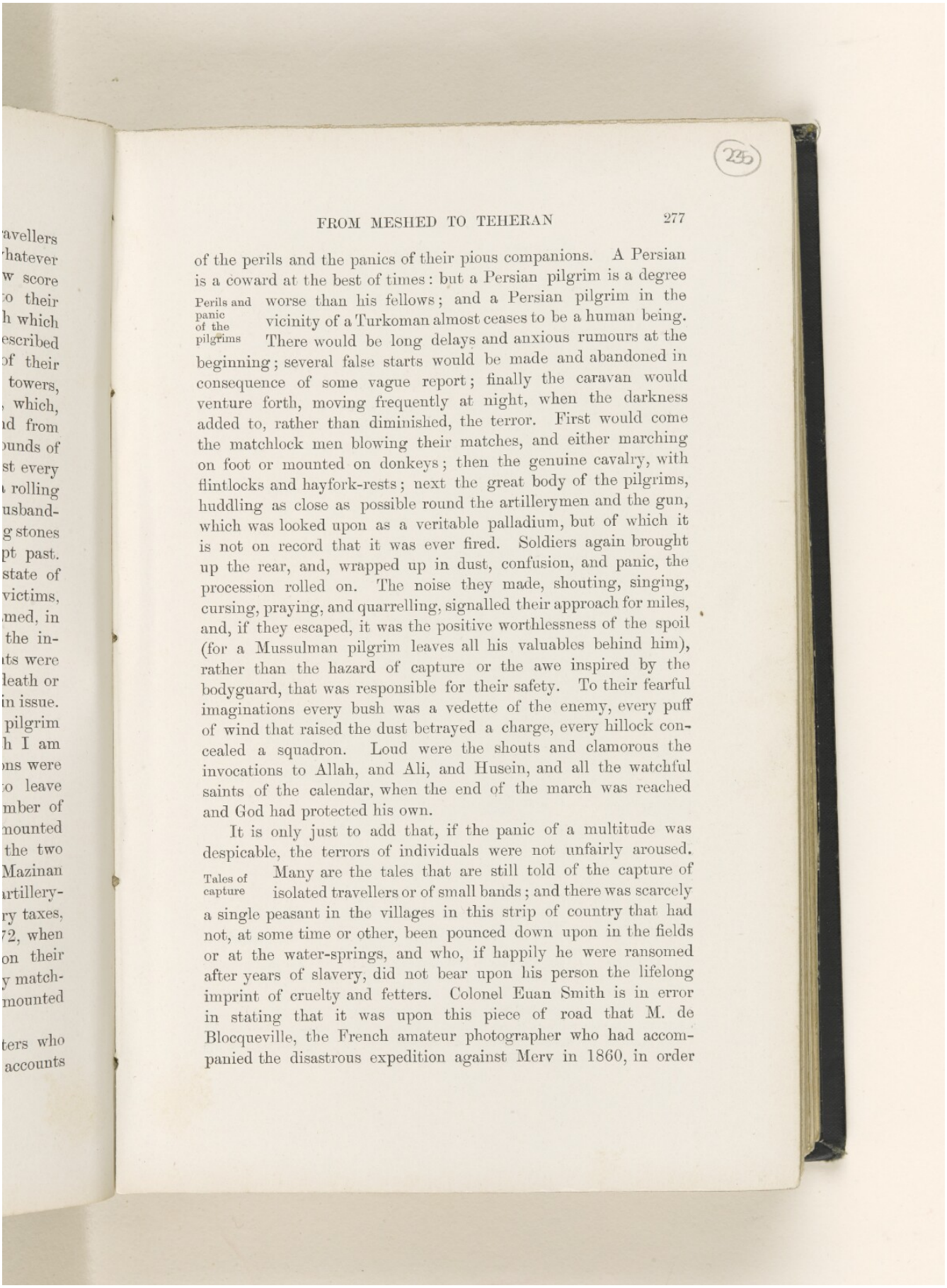



of the perils and the panics of their pious companions. A Persian is a coward at the best of times: but a Persian pilgrim is a degree worse than his fellows; and a Persian pilgrim in the vicinity of a Turkoman almost ceases to be a human being. There would be long delays and anxious rumours at the beginning; several false starts would be made and abandoned in consequence of some vague report; finally the caravan would venture forth, moving frequently at night, when the darkness added to, rather than diminished, the terror. First would come the matchlock men blowing their matches, and either marching on foot or mounted on donkeys; then the genuine cavalry, with flintlocks and hayfork-rests; next the great body of the pilgrims, huddling as close as possible round the artillerymen and the gun, which was looked upon as a veritable palladium, but of which it is not on record that it was ever fired. Soldiers again brought up the rear, and, wrapped up in dust, confusion, and panic, the procession rolled on. The noise they made, shouting, singing, cursing, praying, and quarrelling, signalled their approach for miles, and, if they escaped, it was the positive worthlessness of the spoil (for a Mussulman pilgrim leaves all his valuables behind him), rather than the hazard of capture or the awe inspired by the bodyguard, that was responsible for their safety. To their fearful imaginations every bush was a vedette of the enemy, every puff of wind that raised the dust betrayed a charge, every hillock concealed a squadron. Loud were the shouts and clamorous the invocations to Allah, and Ali, and Husein, and all the watchful saints of the calendar, when the end of the march was reached and God had protected his own.

Perils and panic of the pilgrims

It is only just to add that, if the panic of a multitude was despicable, the terrors of individuals were not unfairly aroused. Many are the tales that are still told of the capture of isolated travellers or of small bands; and there was scarcely a single peasant in the villages in this strip of country that had not, at some time or other, been pounced down upon in the fields or at the water-springs, and who, if happily he were ransomed after years of slavery, did not bear upon his person the lifelong imprint of cruelty and fetters. Colonel Euan Smith is in error in stating that it was upon this piece of road that M. de Blocqueville, the French amateur photographer who had accompanied the disastrous expedition against Merv in 1860, in order

Tales of capture

to take photographs and paint a battle-scene for the Shah, was seized and carried off, and not redeemed until he had been a captive for fifteen months and a ransom of 11,000 *tomans* (then equivalent to 5,000*l.*) was paid by his royal patron.[1] He was captured in the successful attack made by the Turkomans upon the Persian column while at Merv. It was here, however, that a Persian general in command of 6,000 men, halting behind his column for two or three moments to take a final pull at his *kalian*, was snatched up and swept away in full sight of his troops, and within a few weeks' time was sold for a few pounds in the bazaar of Khiva.

Service of the Russians

Whatever may be said of the designs of Russia on this province of Khorasan, not Persia only, but every traveller between Teheran and Meshed, owes her a lasting sense of gratitude for the service she has wrought in putting an end to this unmitigated curse. It was certainly not for unselfish reasons, nor in the interests of Persia, still less out of pure philanthropy, that Russia undertook her successful campaigns against the Tekke Turkomans of Transcaspia. But here we may afford to ignore motives, and may be content with congratulating both ourselves and her upon the fact. Since the victorious campaign of Skobeleff in 1881, and the subsequent annexation of Akhal Tekke, the Meshed-Teheran road has been absolutely secure. No guard is maintained or needed, the pilgrims have no special ground of appeal to Allah, and the traveller is startled by nothing more serious than the whirr of wings as a covey of red-legged partridges—which abound in these mountains—rises almost from between his horse's legs.

Pul-i-Abrishum

Leaving Mazinan, our road struck northwards towards the hills. In the grey morning light I discerned a numerous herd of wild deer, as large as red deer, at a distance of 300 yards from the track; but the bullets of my revolver had no other effect than to accelerate their disappearance. After fourteen miles we came to the deserted caravanserai and fort of Sadrabad.

[1] It was said that the Turkomans had at first priced the luckless photographer at 3*l.* 10*s.* But as soon as they found out that he was a European, and of some value, their demands rose in a steady crescendo. Meanwhile the Khan of Khiva, hearing that the captive had instruments, and thinking he must be a military engineer, was very anxious to get hold of him to fortify his capital. Colonel Val. Baker gratuitously doubles the ultimate ransom. M. de Blocqueville wrote the history of his adventures in the *Tour du Monde*, April 1866.

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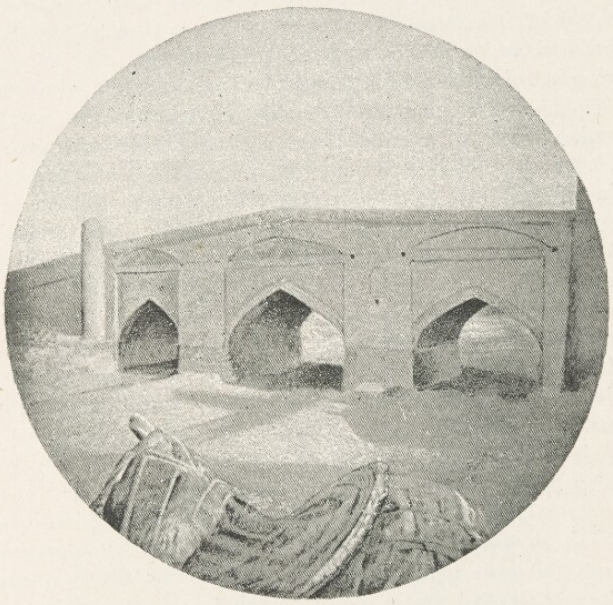
As the name implies, these edifices were raised by the great Minister, or Sadr Azem, before mentioned; but the fort and its garrison were practically useless: for the latter were only just strong enough to guard themselves, without turning a thought to the protection of others. A mile and a half beyond Sadrabad brought us to the Pul-i-Abrishum (or Bridge of Silk)—originally built by Nadir Shah, and recently restored—over the Abrishum River (a stream



THE BRIDGE OF SILK

strongly impregnated with salt from salt-springs near its source), which flows down here from the north, and, under the name of the Kal Mura, subsequently disappears into a *kavir* to the south. The Kal Mura is generally regarded as the eastern boundary of Khorasan, and it marked the extreme north-west limit of the Afghan empire of Ahmed Shah Durani in the last century. At the time that I passed, the river-bed, which was about twenty yards in width, was absolutely dry. The rising sun just enabled me to take a photograph, which reveals a very typical Persian bridge, and I then hurried on.

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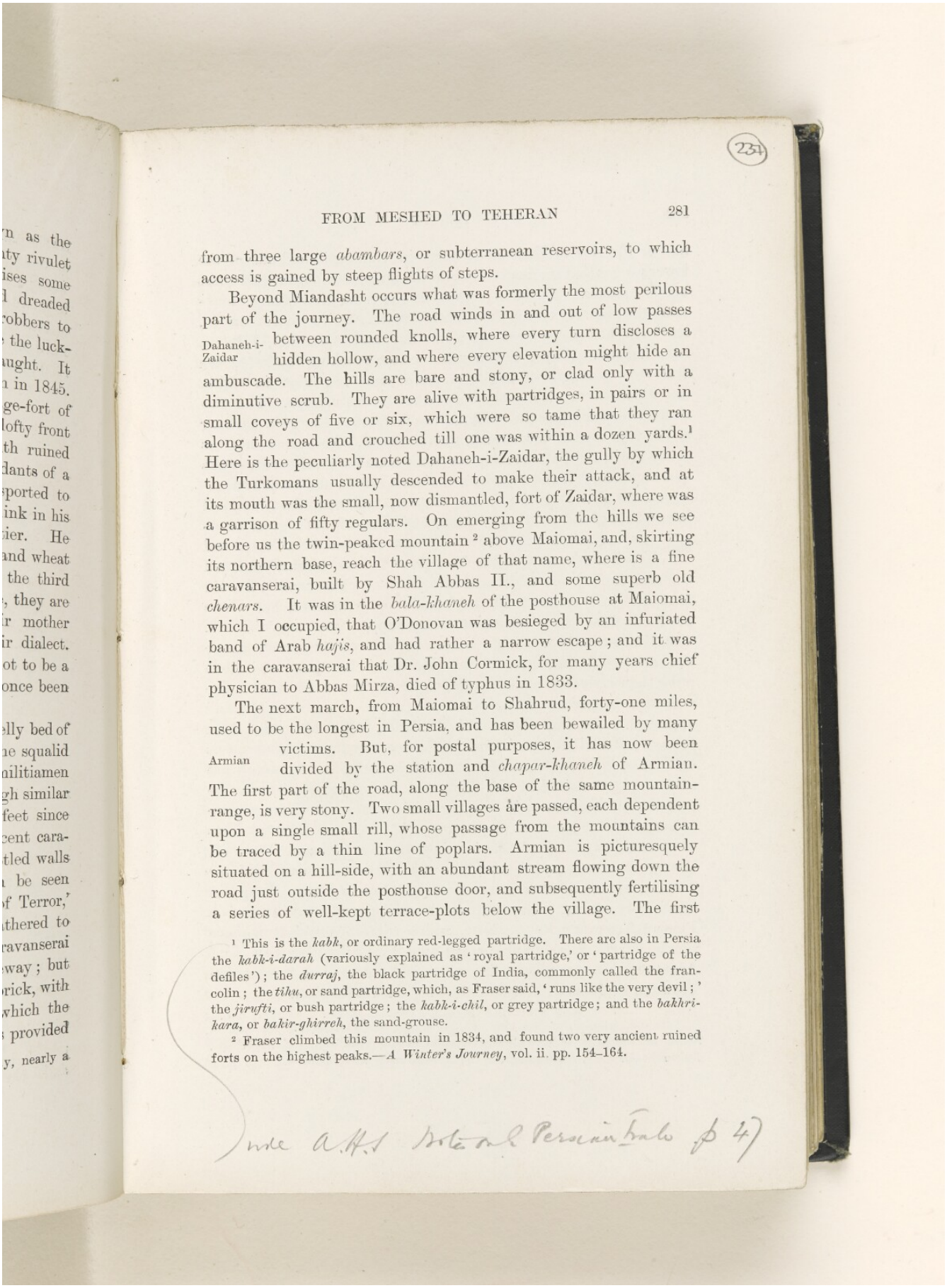
A few miles beyond we came to a spot known as the Chashmeh-i-Gez (or Spring of Tamarisks), where a scanty rivulet supplies a number of little pools and fertilises some patches of grass. This was a notorious and dreaded spot in the old days, for hither came the Turkoman robbers to water their horses after the long mountain ride, and here the luckless voyager was frequently swooped down upon and caught. It was close to this spot that Ferrier had a brush with them in 1845. The end of this stage is the remarkable-looking village-fort of Abbasabad, which rises in tiers upon an eminence, the lofty front being pierced with numerous windows and crowned with ruined battlements. Its inhabitants are the converted descendants of a Georgian colony of a hundred families, who were transported to this spot by Abbas the Great three centuries ago, as a link in his chain of military colonies along the northern frontier. He assigned them an annual allowance in coin (100 *tomans*) and wheat (100 *kharvars*), which after a while was not paid. In the third generation, being forbidden to use the Georgian tongue, they are said to have become Mussulmans; but traces of their mother language have been detected by some travellers in their dialect. During the Turkoman reign of terror there was said not to be a single adult man in Abbasabad who had not more than once been carried away captive.

Abbasabad

A hilly ride over low, barren ridges, and up the gravelly bed of a valley known as the Dahaneh Al Hak, brings us to the squalid village of that name, where a corps of fifty militiamen were once stationed to guard the road. Through similar scenery and over undulating ground we mount 1,000 feet since leaving Abbasabad, and come at length to the magnificent caravanserai of Miandasht[1] (lit. mid-plain), whose lofty embattled walls and projecting towers resemble a vast fortress, and can be seen for miles. This was the central point of the 'Stages of Terror,' and here, one half the peril over, the pilgrims foregathered to exchange felicitations or foment alarms. There is an old caravanserai built by Shah Abbas, whose name appears above the gateway; but the huge castellated structure is a new erection of burnt brick, with a parapet and walls twenty feet high. A courtyard, in which the *chapar-khaneh* is located, connects the two, and water is provided

Miandasht

[1] Conolly called it Meergundusht; Von Mierop, more correctly, nearly a hundred years before, Meondasht.





from three large *abambars*, or subterranean reservoirs, to which access is gained by steep flights of steps.

Beyond Miandasht occurs what was formerly the most perilous part of the journey. The road winds in and out of low passes between rounded knolls, where every turn discloses a hidden hollow, and where every elevation might hide an ambuscade. The hills are bare and stony, or clad only with a diminutive scrub. They are alive with partridges, in pairs or in small coveys of five or six, which were so tame that they ran along the road and crouched till one was within a dozen yards.[1] Here is the peculiarly noted Dahaneh-i-Zaidar, the gully by which the Turkomans usually descended to make their attack, and at its mouth was the small, now dismantled, fort of Zaidar, where was a garrison of fifty regulars. On emerging from the hills we see before us the twin-peaked mountain[2] above Maiomai, and, skirting its northern base, reach the village of that name, where is a fine caravanserai, built by Shah Abbas II., and some superb old *chenars*. It was in the *bala-khaneh* of the posthouse at Maiomai, which I occupied, that O'Donovan was besieged by an infuriated band of Arab *hajis*, and had rather a narrow escape; and it was in the caravanserai that Dr. John Cormick, for many years chief physician to Abbas Mirza, died of typhus in 1833.

Dahaneh-i-Zaidar

The next march, from Maiomai to Shahrud, forty-one miles, used to be the longest in Persia, and has been bewailed by many victims. But, for postal purposes, it has now been divided by the station and *chapar-khaneh* of Armian. The first part of the road, along the base of the same mountain-range, is very stony. Two small villages are passed, each dependent upon a single small rill, whose passage from the mountains can be traced by a thin line of poplars. Armian is picturesquely situated on a hill-side, with an abundant stream flowing down the road just outside the posthouse door, and subsequently fertilising a series of well-kept terrace-plots below the village. The first

Armian

[1] This is the *kabk*, or ordinary red-legged partridge. There are also in Persia the *kabk-i-darah* (variously explained as 'royal partridge,' or 'partridge of the defiles'); the *durraj*, the black partridge of India, commonly called the francolin; the *tihu*, or sand partridge, which, as Fraser said, 'runs like the very devil;' the *jirufti*, or bush partridge; the *kabk-i-chil*, or grey partridge; and the *bakhri-kara*, or *bakir-ghirreh*, the sand-grouse.

[2] Fraser climbed this mountain in 1834, and found two very ancient ruined forts on the highest peaks.—*A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. pp. 154–164.

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half of the ride to Shahrud is spent in winding in and out of the lower ranges that gradually dip into the plain of Shahrud, 1,000 feet below Armian. The snowy crown of the Shah Kuh (King Mountain), the highest point of the Elburz between Shahrud and Astrabad, had been before my eyes the whole day, and at its feet, I knew, lay Shahrud. About eleven miles before reaching the latter, the first view is caught of the level plain, some ten miles in width, on which were visible three detached green clumps. The two nearer were unimportant villages, the farthest and largest, nestling at the very foot of the Elburz, was Shahrud. So buried in trees is the town, that, after riding for some time between garden-walls and orchards, I found myself in the main street, almost unawares.

I have already, in a previous chapter, dwelt upon the strategical importance of the position of Shahrud. The town is a great meeting-point of roads, from Herat to Meshed, from Tabbas and Turshiz, from Yezd, from Astrabad and Mazanderan, and from the capital. It is situated in a plain, of whose fertility I could form no just estimate in the month of November, but whose productiveness and abundant water-supply are unquestioned. The Rud-i-Shah (or King's River) flows down the street outside the *chapar-khaneh*, but at this season of the year was little more than a rivulet, and reflected no honour upon its name. The defensive properties of the place struck me as contemptible, and appeared to be limited to a ruined citadel, and to two small mud towers, perched upon a conical hill above the town. Shahrud is celebrated for its local manufacture of boots and shoes, which are said to be patronised by the Shah and the Royal Family; for the redoubtable *shabgez*, or *gherib-gez*, which attacked O'Donovan here but spared me; and as an entrepôt both of the local products of Mazanderan and of Russian imports *viâ* Gez and Astrabad, through the agency of Russian and Russo-Armenian traders.[1] The Russian Caucasus and Mercury Company also keep an agent in the town. Its population is said to be 5,000. There is a Persian Telegraph-station here, and a wire to Astrabad, whence there is further telegraphic connection by Chikishliar with Kizil Arvat and Transcaspia—a line which is much used by the Russian Legation in Teheran in communicating with Ashkabad.

Shahrud

[1] The opening-up of the new trade-route from Ashkabad, *viâ* Kuchan, to Sebzewar is reported to have already caused a considerable falling-off, or, perhaps, I should rather say, transference, in the Russian trade with Shahrud.

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Having arrived at Shahrud early in the afternoon, I spent some time in inspecting the town. It contains a large covered Bazaars bazaar, not thatched, but properly roofed, and with spacious and well-appointed shops. My observations and inquiries tallied exactly with what I had heard at Meshed. All the sugar was Russian, all the tea was Indian, brought from Bunder Abbas *viâ* Yezd. The greater part of the coloured cottons and chintzes were Russian, but the white sheeting bore the name of a Bombay firm, and I saw, not merely a large pile of Manchester glazed calicoes with a Bombay label, but also a number of unbleached cottons direct from Manchester itself. This was a gratifying fact, considering that Shahrud lies within four marches of what is practically a Russian port on the Caspian. I bought some delicious white grapes for a few pence. A wine is made from them in Shahrud.

Though Shahrud is the capital of the district of Bostam-Shahrud, it is not the residence of the Governor or the seat of Bostam government. The latter is at the town of Bostam, three and a half miles in a north-easterly direction from Shahrud (from which it is concealed by a rocky hill), and higher up the course of the same river. Bostam, a Mazanderani proper name, is a place of superior fertility and luxury to Shahrud. It is, further, a site of great sanctity among Mohammedan pilgrims, for here was buried the famous Sheikh, or Sultan, Bayazid, the leader of a dervish sect, who died, and was interred in the court of a beautiful mosque, now much ruined, in the year A.D. 874. × Attached to the same mosque, whose cupola was erected by a Mongol prince in A.D. 1313, is a shaking minaret, similar to those which I shall afterwards describe at Isfahan, and which can be made to vibrate by rocking it at the summit. Colonel Lovett has attributed this phenomenon to the elasticity of the bricks and cement employed, the latter becoming more elastic with age, and has compared it with the kindred phenomenon of slabs of elastic sandstone.[1] There is, further, at Bostam a curious brick tower, whose outer circumference is, so to speak, dog-toothed by a number of salient angles, similar to the tower of which I shall speak later at Rhey.[2]

[1] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. p. 79 (1883). The best account of the buildings at Bostam is that of Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, &c. p. 79.

[2] Fraser (*Journey into Khorasan*, pp. 612–614) describes a very similar tower, with polygonal surface, near Jorjan, on the banks of the Gurgan River. This tower was 150 feet high, 10 yards interior diameter, 52 yards exterior circum-

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Already, upon arriving at the posthouse of Shahrud—which is unique in the possession of a threefold *bala-khaneh*—I had observed unfamiliar symptoms of refinement, in the shape of a druggeted floor and curtained doorways. On my return from the bazaars I was proceeding to make my toilet, and was already in a state of semi-*déshabille*, when, without the slightest warning, I became aware of a further act of official attention. Two Armenians first entered unannounced, both of whom could speak a little French. One was the agent of Messrs. Ziegler in Shahrud, the other of a firm named Tumanianz. I presumed that they had come out of curiosity, as they offered no explanation. But in the East such amenities cannot be resented, requiring rather to be interpreted as tokens of civility. Wherefore I continued my toilet while discussing the trade and commerce of Shahrud. Presently, however, the doorway of the *bala-khaneh* was again darkened, and a trio of Persian officials marched in, while a posse of attendants stood outside. They were succeeded by some menials carrying a tray, on which were two packets of tea and four sugar-loaves wrapped up in blue paper; following whom appeared two other individuals holding by the legs a kicking sheep, while a third balanced a couple of cane-bottomed chairs behind. I really think that I am justified in presenting this to my readers as a spectacle of no mean dramatic effect.

Deputation from the Governor

*Scene.*—A mud room in a Persian posthouse.

*Dramatis Personæ.*—Englishman in flannel shirt, breeches, and stockings only; Armenian traders; Persian chamberlains; struggling sheep.

*Dramatic Accessories.*—Sugar-loaves and cane-bottomed chairs.

I now realised that I was the recipient of a formal deputation from the Prince-Governor of Shahrud, who had sent to welcome and to invite me to become his guest at Bostam, and that the Armenians had been despatched as a sort of advanced guard to reconnoitre and interpret. By their aid I was enabled to acknowledge the hospitality of the Governor and to accept his gifts—a process which naturally involved the return of an equivalent present to the deputies. Having pocketed a few *tomans* with much satisfaction, these worthies forthwith realised that no more business was to be done.

ference, and terminated in a lofty pointed cone, in which was a single window. Two belts of Arabic inscriptions demonstrated a kindred origin to the tower of Bostam.

Accordingly, they announced that the hour for repose had arrived, and bowed themselves out. For my part, I slew the sheep and had a capital leg of mutton for dinner.

Shahrud is rather more than the halfway stage between Meshed and Teheran, but it serves to divide the journey into two portions, of which it is difficult to determine which is the less attractive. There is a curious identity between their respective features: for, just as the Meshed-Shahrud section presents two cities of ancient fame, Nishapur and Sebzewar, so the Shahrud-Teheran section displays Damghan and Semnan; and, just as the only structures worthy of observation in the first section are the minarets and towers of Sebzewar and Bostam, so, in the second, we must be content with the analogous monuments of Damghan and Semnan. Finally, to complete the parallelism, just as the first section terminates after threading the famous Turkoman passes, so does the second conduct us, on the penultimate day's journey, through the even more famous Caspian Gates that lead into the Plain of Veramin. Stones, sand, *kavir*, and execrable horses are the common prerogatives of both.

Second section of journey

It was on one of the worst of these brutes that, over a track scarcely less atrocious, I pursued my way to Deh Mullah ('the Village of the Priest'). The *chapar-khaneh* is on the outskirts of the village, which lies a little farther in the plain, and is remarkable only for a huge mound of clay, once crowned by a citadel, whose riven and crumbling walls stand up in melancholy ruin. The ride from Deh Mullah to Damghan is over rather better ground, but is unutterably tedious. On my right hand was the scarped red rampart of the Elburz, rising sheer from the plain, and, like a wall of brass, shutting off the defiles and gorges of that mighty range; and behind them, again, the steamy lowlands of Mazanderan, sloping to the Caspian. On the left, or south, whereas on most maps I see marked a salt desert, or *kavir*, my own notes record that, throughout the entire day's journey, the horizon was bounded on that side, at an average distance of about ten miles, by a range of hills of quite sufficient elevation to appear upon most maps, although I cannot find any trace of them upon the majority of those that I have studied. The road to Damghan passed several villages, one of which, Mehmandost, was evidently a favourite halting-place for travellers, as there were crowds of wayfarers and horsemen in the single street. About three miles from Damghan

Deserted cities

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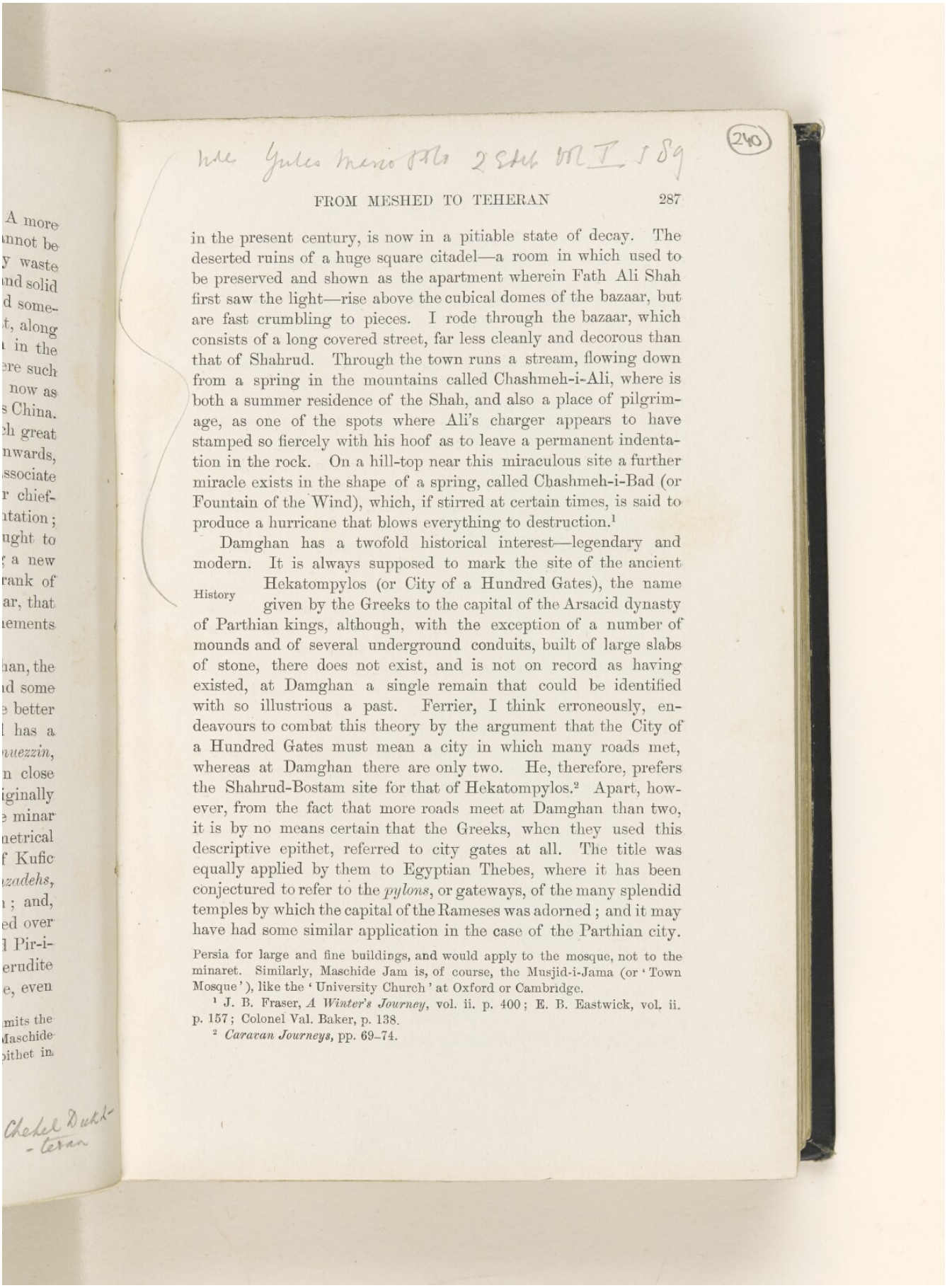
we rode through the ruins of a deserted city, Bostajan. A more sorrowful spectacle than an abandoned town of mud cannot be conceived. The buildings, and roofs, and walls gradually waste away into indistinguishable heaps of clay; but, so compact and solid do these become in the process, that they last for scores, and sometimes for hundreds, of years. Nor is it fair to assume that, along with each deserted city or site, its inhabitants, as an item in the population, have been wiped off the face of the earth. Were such the case, one might be led to infer that Persia, which is now as sparsely peopled as Palestine, was once as densely crowded as China. I believe that this would be a false inference. Just as each great Persian monarch or founder of a dynasty, from Cyrus downwards, has shifted the capital and seat of government, so as to associate a fresh glory with his name, so has each petty governor or chieftain striven to emulate his sovereign by a new urban plantation; and, in a yet lower grade, each father of a family has thought to better himself and to transcend his forerunners by erecting a new abode. It is to this universal instinct, permeating every rank of life, not less than to the ravages of famine, disease, and war, that must be attributed the countless wasting skeletons of tenements and cities that litter the soil of Persia.

Damghan

From a distance of some miles the two minarets of Damghan, the counterparts of that of Sebzewar, rise in view. They stand some way apart, in different quarters of the town. The better preserved of the two, which is mountable and has a small turret of later date at the top, with a door for the *muezzin*, is situated just off the main street of the town, and is in close proximity to a mosque—not, indeed, that to which it was originally attached, but a comparatively modern structure. Like the minar at Sebzewar, it is faced with bricks, so laid as to form geometrical patterns on the circumference, and has, further, a band of Kufic letters in high relief. The two minarets belong to the *imamzadehs*, or tombs of two saints, named respectively Jafir and Kasim; and, for an account of their shrines, as well of a third tomb raised over a saint named Mohammed, the son of Ibrahim, and called Pir-i-Alamdar, I cannot do better than refer my readers to the erudite pages of Khanikoff.[1] Damghan, though a considerable place, even

[1] *Mémoire, &c.*, pp. 74–75. Bassett (*Land of the Imams*, p. 197) commits the absurd mistake of saying that the minars are called Chehil Sutune and Maschide Jam. The former name—i.e. 'forty pillars'—is a common descriptive epithet in





in the present century, is now in a pitiable state of decay. The deserted ruins of a huge square citadel—a room in which used to be preserved and shown as the apartment wherein Fath Ali Shah first saw the light—rise above the cubical domes of the bazaar, but are fast crumbling to pieces. I rode through the bazaar, which consists of a long covered street, far less cleanly and decorous than that of Shahrud. Through the town runs a stream, flowing down from a spring in the mountains called Chashmeh-i-Ali, where is both a summer residence of the Shah, and also a place of pilgrimage, as one of the spots where Ali's charger appears to have stamped so fiercely with his hoof as to leave a permanent indentation in the rock. On a hill-top near this miraculous site a further miracle exists in the shape of a spring, called Chashmeh-i-Bad (or Fountain of the Wind), which, if stirred at certain times, is said to produce a hurricane that blows everything to destruction.[1]

History

Damghan has a twofold historical interest—legendary and modern. It is always supposed to mark the site of the ancient Hekatompylos (or City of a Hundred Gates), the name given by the Greeks to the capital of the Arsacid dynasty of Parthian kings, although, with the exception of a number of mounds and of several underground conduits, built of large slabs of stone, there does not exist, and is not on record as having existed, at Damghan a single remain that could be identified with so illustrious a past. Ferrier, I think erroneously, endeavours to combat this theory by the argument that the City of a Hundred Gates must mean a city in which many roads met, whereas at Damghan there are only two. He, therefore, prefers the Shahrud-Bostam site for that of Hekatompylos.[2] Apart, however, from the fact that more roads meet at Damghan than two, it is by no means certain that the Greeks, when they used this descriptive epithet, referred to city gates at all. The title was equally applied by them to Egyptian Thebes, where it has been conjectured to refer to the *pylons*, or gateways, of the many splendid temples by which the capital of the Rameses was adorned; and it may have had some similar application in the case of the Parthian city.

Persia for large and fine buildings, and would apply to the mosque, not to the minaret. Similarly, Maschide Jam is, of course, the Musjid-i-Jama (or 'Town Mosque'), like the 'University Church' at Oxford or Cambridge.

[1] J. B. Fraser, *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 400; E. B. Eastwick, vol. ii. p. 157; Colonel Val. Baker, p. 138.

[2] *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 69–74.

Dismissing, however, the identity of Damghan with Hekatompylos as a question of purely speculative interest, we may find enough of romance in the history of the town under its modern name.[1] It is needless to say that Jenghiz Khan destroyed it once, or to add that Timur destroyed it again. That was a compliment invariably paid by those rival scourges of humanity to urban magnificence. Don Ruy di Clavijo, passing through Northern Persia on his embassy from the Castilian King to the Court of the Great Tartar in 1404, found still standing at Damghan two towers of human heads set in mud, which, but a few years before, the latter had erected as a trophy. Shah Abbas rebuilt the town and constructed its citadel. Here, in October 1729, Nadir Shah gained his great victory over the Afghan Ashraf, which heralded the final expulsion of the aliens in the following year. Here, in 1763, Zeki Khan, the savage half-brother of Kerim Khan Zend, being despatched to quell a revolt of the Kajar tribe, planted a garden with his prisoners, head downwards, at even distances; and here, in 1796, perished the miserable grandson of Nadir, Shah Rukh, from the effects of the inhuman torture inflicted upon him at Meshed by Agha Mohammed Shah. In the present century Damghan is said to have been finally ruined by a friend, instead of a foe, having never recovered from the encampment here, for three months, in 1832, of the army of Abbas Mirza on its way to Herat. No flight of locusts could have inflicted a more wholesale devastation. The population is reported now to be 13,000. I cannot credit it.

After leaving Damghan the road strikes due west, and traverses first a gravelly, and afterwards a richly-cultivated, plain to Ghushah,

Dowletabad

a place consisting only of two buildings—a caravanserai and a posthouse, which the exigencies of travel have conjured up in an otherwise untenanted expanse. The only interesting spot passed on the way is the deserted fort of Dowletabad, with a triple wall of enclosure, surrounded by a deep fosse. Sixty years ago Sergeant Gibbons, an Englishman serving in the army of Abbas Mirza, said it was 'one of the best little forts he had seen in Persia.'[2] Its chief, who had held out for some time against the exactions of the provincial Governor, offered Abbas Mirza a bribe

[1] For early notices of Damghan, *vide* Istakhri, *Viæ Regnorum*, p. 211; Mukadessi, *Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*, p. 256; Yakut, *Dictionnaire Géographique*, p. 233.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xi. p. 136 (1841).

of 30,000 *tomans* if he would continue him in the government. The Prince pocketed the money and carried off the chief to Meshed, the local Governor taking advantage of his absence to capture the fort. Like most other places in the neighbourhood, it is now abandoned and is rapidly falling to pieces.

Throughout this day, and, indeed, in all parts of my journey, I passed several of those great tumuli, or barrows, which have so puzzled the traveller in North Persia. They consist of immense circular or oval mounds, from fifty to a hundred feet in height, supporting, as a rule, no traces of buildings, but composed of solid masses of clay, worn smooth by the long passage of time. Local tradition, of course, assigns them to Jamshid—which is tantamount to a confession of utter ignorance as to their origin. By some they have been regarded as the sites of fire-temples, raised in the old days of Zoroastrian worship. I entertain very little doubt that they were mostly, if not all, raised as citadels or forts of defence for villages, long since perished, below. They are invariably to be found upon the plains where Nature has provided no ready means of defence, and where artifice was consequently required to create them. Many still exhibit upon their summits the crumbling, shapeless walls of the mud citadels by which they were once crowned. Good illustrations of this stage of existence are visible at Bidesht, near Shahrud, and at Jajarm, between Bujnurd and Shahrud. Where the tumuli (or *kurgans*, as they are called) are smooth and bare, the superstructure has entirely perished. A long line of these mounds is still traceable along the valley of the Gurgan, starting from Gumesh Tepe (or Silver Hill)—an obviously artificial erection—on the shores of the Caspian, and forming part of a triple line of earth ramparts, attributed to Alexander the Great, which extends as far as Bujnurd. The regularity of their occurrence in some places, as, for instance, between Kazvin and Teheran, has led to the plausible conjecture that they may also have been used as signal-stations, or beacons, from one camp to another. But, in either case, their purpose was military. There seems to be no ground for regarding any of them as sepulchral barrows.

Tumuli

The road from Ghushah lay over a desolate and uncultivated plain, and then gradually mounted, until, having traversed an easy pass in the hills, it suddenly dropped down upon a gloomy hollow, where stood the caravanserai and posthouse of Ahuan. The existing



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brick serai was built by Shah Suleiman Sefavi; an older one of stone, attributed to the Sassanid Nushirwan, is in ruins. The

Ahuan

name Ahuan, which has apparently much perplexed previous travellers,[1] signifies antelope or gazelle,[2] tradition ascribing to this spot one of the astounding miracles by which the Imam Reza signalised the various stages of his eastward journey to Tus. Here he found a captive female antelope, which, detecting his sacred personality, found speech, and invoked the assistance of the saint on behalf of her motherless young. The Imam bade the hunter release the animal, and himself went bail for her reappearance. The antelope, however, found the joys of home too much for her plighted word, and failed to keep the tryst; whereupon the prophet, being appealed to, 'willed' her back again to her captor, with whom she remained a prisoner, or a pet, ever afterwards. Here the mountain range is entered that separates the plains of Damghan and Semnan. From the highest point of the dividing crest the latter city was visible, twelve miles away, lying like a green splash upon a floor of stones. The descent on the far side, though easy, is very stony, and cantering down was no pleasure. Meeting a closed carriage drawn by four horses, with two postillions, outriders, and a guard, I had a horrible momentary dread that I was in for an *istikbal*, or official entry; but was reassured by finding that the occupant was the *hakim*, or Governor, who presumably was making a tour through his not very extensive dominions.

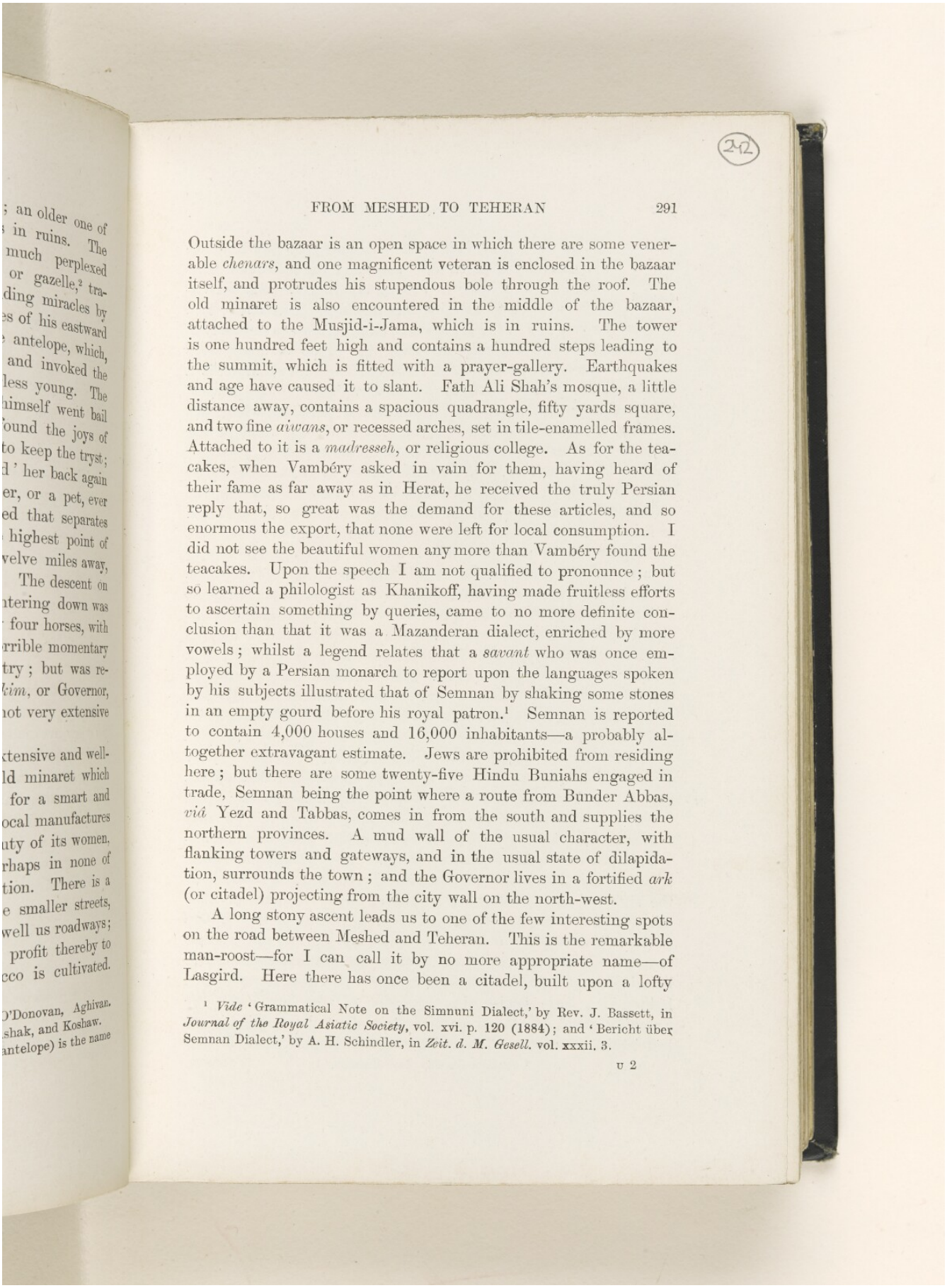
Semnan is held remarkable in Persia for its extensive and well-irrigated gardens, for its ancient trees, for an old minaret which

Semnan

enables it to compete with Damghan, for a smart and well-preserved modern mosque, for its local manufactures of teacakes and blue cotton pyjamas, for the beauty of its women, and for the unintelligibility of its speech. Perhaps in none of these respects does it quite answer to expectation. There is a great deal of water flowing in rivulets down the smaller streets, which usually serve as watercourses in Persia as well us roadways; but the environs of the town did not appear to profit thereby to the full extent, although a good deal of tobacco is cultivated.

[1] Fraser spelt it, Aheaiyoon; Ferrier, Aheeiyon; O'Donovan, Aghivan. Similarly, Ghushah has been rendered Gosbek, Goocheh, Kushak, and Koshaw.

[2] *Ahu* = an antelope or gazelle. Hence *ahubara* (little antelope) is the name for the elegant Persian bustard.



; an older one of
in ruins. The
much perplexed
or gazelle,[2] tra-
ding miracles by
es of his eastward
antelope, which,
and invoked the
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O'Donovan, Aghivan,
shak, and Koshaw.
antelope) is the name

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Outside the bazaar is an open space in which there are some venerable *chenars*, and one magnificent veteran is enclosed in the bazaar itself, and protrudes his stupendous bole through the roof. The old minaret is also encountered in the middle of the bazaar, attached to the Musjid-i-Jama, which is in ruins. The tower is one hundred feet high and contains a hundred steps leading to the summit, which is fitted with a prayer-gallery. Earthquakes and age have caused it to slant. Fath Ali Shah's mosque, a little distance away, contains a spacious quadrangle, fifty yards square, and two fine *aiwans*, or recessed arches, set in tile-enamelled frames. Attached to it is a *madresseh*, or religious college. As for the tea-cakes, when Vambéry asked in vain for them, having heard of their fame as far away as in Herat, he received the truly Persian reply that, so great was the demand for these articles, and so enormous the export, that none were left for local consumption. I did not see the beautiful women any more than Vambéry found the teacakes. Upon the speech I am not qualified to pronounce; but so learned a philologist as Khanikoff, having made fruitless efforts to ascertain something by queries, came to no more definite conclusion than that it was a Mazanderan dialect, enriched by more vowels; whilst a legend relates that a *savant* who was once employed by a Persian monarch to report upon the languages spoken by his subjects illustrated that of Semnan by shaking some stones in an empty gourd before his royal patron.[1] Semnan is reported to contain 4,000 houses and 16,000 inhabitants—a probably altogether extravagant estimate. Jews are prohibited from residing here; but there are some twenty-five Hindu Buniahs engaged in trade, Semnan being the point where a route from Bunder Abbas, *viâ* Yezd and Tabbas, comes in from the south and supplies the northern provinces. A mud wall of the usual character, with flanking towers and gateways, and in the usual state of dilapidation, surrounds the town; and the Governor lives in a fortified *ark* (or citadel) projecting from the city wall on the north-west.

A long stony ascent leads us to one of the few interesting spots on the road between Meshed and Teheran. This is the remarkable man-roost—for I can call it by no more appropriate name—of Lasgird. Here there has once been a citadel, built upon a lofty

[1] *Vide* 'Grammatical Note on the Simnuni Dialect,' by Rev. J. Bassett, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xvi. p. 120 (1884); and 'Bericht über Semnan Dialect,' by A. H. Schindler, in *Zeit. d. M. Gesell.* vol. xxxii. 3.



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circular mound to a total height of perhaps eighty feet from the plain. The citadel has fallen into ruin, and the buildings in its interior are a litter of rubbish and bricks. But the villagers have established themselves in the deserted *enceinte*, and, on the very top of the outer walls, have built a double storey of mud houses, which are only accessible by flights of crazy steps from the interior, and the most remarkable feature of which is a ledge or balcony built out from each storey with rude logs of wood plastered over with mud. Upon this rickety platform, which has nothing in the shape of a railing to prevent anyone from falling off, and which is full of holes, the inhabitants appear to live their outdoor life. The place, from a little distance, looks as if a gigantic colony of birds had settled there and built out their nests from the walls, the outer shape of the entire mound resembling a huge cask. It is entered by a steep stairway from the ground, mounting to a small postern, the door of which is a single block of stone swung on a pivot. I entered, and scrambled up the rude flights of steps in the interior, and poked my nose into some of the nests—I cannot call them cottages—in the upper storeys. The women were unveiled and steeped in squalor. The general condition of the tenements was very much like what the domestic economy of a rookery might be expected to be. Here the same dialect is spoken as at Semnan. The citadel is surrounded by a deep, broad fosse, converted into garden-plots, the revenues of which go to swell the endowment of the Imam Reza at Meshed.

Lasgird

After leaving Lasgird the route conducts through a hilly region which has been furrowed by winter torrents into deep gullies and ravines crossed by bridges. Upon descending again into the plain, the village of Deh Nemek (Salt Village) can be seen, at least twelve miles away, in the middle of an unutterably barren and repulsive desert. Few things are more treacherous in Persian travel than the false expectation induced by the sight of one's destination at the apparent distance of a few miles only, or more wearying than the disappointment that follows as the miles lengthen out into *farsakhs*, and the end never seems to come. What, in the distance, had appeared a settlement of two buildings only, turned out to be a village with a good many houses, hidden in a little semi-fertile depression of 'the level waste, the rounding grey.' In the succeeding strip of country—which is not less desolate—we pass, at the villages of Padeh and Aradan,[1] further

Road to Kishlak

[1] Fraser calls this place Heratoo.

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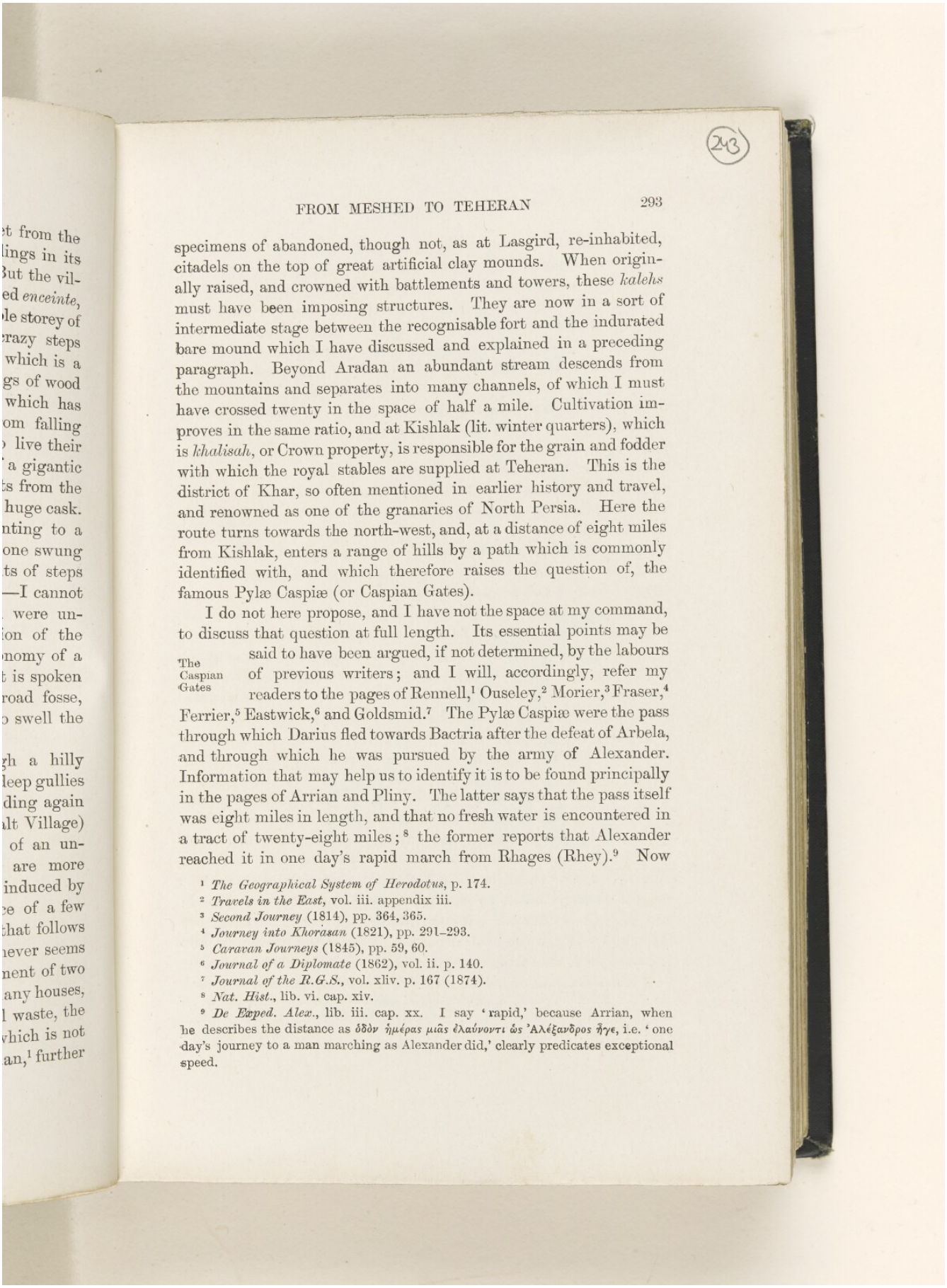



specimens of abandoned, though not, as at Lasgird, re-inhabited, citadels on the top of great artificial clay mounds. When originally raised, and crowned with battlements and towers, these *kalehs* must have been imposing structures. They are now in a sort of intermediate stage between the recognisable fort and the indurated bare mound which I have discussed and explained in a preceding paragraph. Beyond Aradan an abundant stream descends from the mountains and separates into many channels, of which I must have crossed twenty in the space of half a mile. Cultivation improves in the same ratio, and at Kishlak (lit. winter quarters), which is *khalisah*, or Crown property, is responsible for the grain and fodder with which the royal stables are supplied at Teheran. This is the district of Khar, so often mentioned in earlier history and travel, and renowned as one of the granaries of North Persia. Here the route turns towards the north-west, and, at a distance of eight miles from Kishlak, enters a range of hills by a path which is commonly identified with, and which therefore raises the question of, the famous Pylæ Caspiæ (or Caspian Gates).

I do not here propose, and I have not the space at my command, to discuss that question at full length. Its essential points may be said to have been argued, if not determined, by the labours of previous writers; and I will, accordingly, refer my readers to the pages of Rennell,[1] Ouseley,[2] Morier,[3] Fraser,[4] Ferrier,[5] Eastwick,[6] and Goldsmid.[7] The Pylæ Caspiæ were the pass through which Darius fled towards Bactria after the defeat of Arbela, and through which he was pursued by the army of Alexander. Information that may help us to identify it is to be found principally in the pages of Arrian and Pliny. The latter says that the pass itself was eight miles in length, and that no fresh water is encountered in a tract of twenty-eight miles;[8] the former reports that Alexander reached it in one day's rapid march from Rhages (Rhey).[9] Now

The Caspian Gates

[1] *The Geographical System of Herodotus*, p. 174.
[2] *Travels in the East*, vol. iii. appendix iii.
[3] *Second Journey* (1814), pp. 364, 365.
[4] *Journey into Khorasan* (1821), pp. 291–293.
[5] *Caravan Journeys* (1845), pp. 59, 60.
[6] *Journal of a Diplomate* (1862), vol. ii. p. 140.
[7] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xliv. p. 167 (1874).
[8] *Nat. Hist.*, lib. vi. cap. xiv.
[9] *De Exped. Alex.*, lib. iii. cap. xx. I say 'rapid,' because Arrian, when he describes the distance as ὁδὸν ἡμέρας μιᾶς ἐλαύνοντι ὡς Ἀλέξανδρος ἦγε, i.e. 'one day's journey to a man marching as Alexander did,' clearly predicates exceptional speed.

the claimants to the distinction of being the veritable Pylæ Caspiæ are four in number. There is a pass called Teng-i-Shemshirbur, (or the Pass of the Sword Cut—the tradition being that it was hewn in the rock by one slash of Ali's scimetar), on the upper road from the capital to Shahrud, and just under the shadow of the Shahkuh, the highest peak of the Elburz, between Astrabad and Shahrud. This pass is 150 yards long and only 18 feet wide, between two perpendicular walls of limestone. Napier says, 'there can be little doubt that this is the Caspian Gates.' On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Napier is wrong. For, not only do neither the features nor length correspond in any particular, but the Sword Cut Pass is about 200 miles too far to the east. Burnes[1] selected as his candidate the Gaduk Pass in the Elburz, north of Firuzkuh, through which runs the ordinary road to Mazanderan. Among the northern passes leading from Irak Ajemi into the Caspian provinces, those of Sawachi, near Firuzkuh, and the Teng-serenza, just beyond that place, have also been mentioned, both of them being precipitous rocky defiles of a character that might be supposed to justify the name of gates.[2] Morier, however, who visited them, and was at first impressed by the verisimilitude of their features, soon recognised that, in addition to other respects, they failed in the essential element of distance, being ninety miles east of Teheran, and, consequently, not within a day's march even for Alexander. Accordingly, he suggested, and Fraser, Ferrier, and Eastwick have supported with much wealth of argument, the choice of the pass to which my journey has now brought me, between the plains of Khar and Veramin.

The Sirdara Pass

This pass is known as the Sirdara, or Ser Dereh, or Sardari, probably Ser-i-dareh (i.e. Head of the Valley). It is entered by a narrow passage or gateway on the south-east, and winds tortuously through a projecting spur of the Elburz range, that here runs forward in a south-westerly direction into the great central desert. My notes represent it as being nearly six miles in length.[3] A salt stream flows down the valley bottom, and encrusts its banks with a white efflorescence. At times the pass opens into a little plain, and then again contracts. In the centre is an old

[1] *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. p. 111. [2] Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 365.

[3] The extent to which miscalculation of distance is possible when the writer has ridden on horseback, and has perhaps composed his description from memory afterwards, may be judged from the varying estimates of the length of this pass. Ferrier says $2\frac{4}{5}$ miles, Eastwick 4, and O'Donovan 12.

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deserted building with towers at the corner, and at the western exit are the remains of two old castles or towers. The place has evidently been strongly fortified and guarded, according to the standards of an age that knew no guns; and this very fact tends to sustain the likelihood of its having been the recognised mountain passage in a bygone day. Furthermore, the distance from Rhey—which is about forty miles—corresponds sufficiently with the reckoning of the classical writers.

Hostile considerations

On the other hand, there remain the considerations, which I feel it impossible to ignore, that the pass itself does not, in its material features, in the least justify the description of *pylæ*, or gates, or the statement of Pliny that it was artificially fashioned, and so narrow in parts as only to admit a cart; that, leading, as it does, through a quite subordinate spur of the main range, it would be surprising that it should have attained a celebrity so far in excess of other, and much more remarkable, defiles; and, above all, that, as it does not conduct directly to the Caspian, but leaves the main range of the Elburz still to be pierced, there appears to be no sufficient reason for its being known as the Caspian Gates.[1] The first, however, of these difficulties is to some extent met and obviated by the suggestion of Sir H. Rawlinson—whose acquaintance with the orography of Persia is unrivalled—that the real Caspiæ Pylæ are not the Sirdara Pass, but a defile in the same range a few miles to the north, known as the Teng-i-Suluk, which he saw and examined in 1835, and whose physical characteristics, although little known, correspond with the accounts of the classical authorities, besides containing a shorter route between Rhages and the Plain of Khar.

The real gates

I cannot help thinking, indeed, that some such solution must be accepted, or at least anticipated, by those who attach a becoming value to the statements of the Greek and Roman writers. Nor can the very important fact be left out of sight, that European travellers, passing northwards from Isfahan to Mazanderan, to the Court of Abbas the Great at Ferahabad or Ashraf, on the Caspian, less than 300 years ago, have left descriptions of the defile or defiles by which they penetrated the Elburz in this very

[1] This difficulty may, perhaps, be met by supposing that the pass, like the Caspian Sea itself, took its name from the tribe of the Caspii, of whom Strabo constantly speaks, and who resided in the neighbourhood. Their name is conceivably preserved in the district of Jasp, west of Kashan.

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part, that correspond with sufficient exactitude with the words of Pliny. Starting from Mahalleh Bagh, which a Persian geographer identifies with the Plain of Khar, both Pietro della Valle, in 1618, and Sir Thomas Herbert, accompanying Sir Robert Sherley and Sir Dodmore Cotton, in 1627, proceeded through a defile, which they describe in very similar terms, to Hablah Rud and Firuzkuh, whence they continued their march to the Caspian. Of this defile Pietro della Valle says that, after leaving Mahalleh Bagh, he entered a deep and very narrow valley (*una profonda e angustissima valle*), with lofty mountains on either side (*i monti son sempre altissimi delle bande*), and in some turnings so narrow that to conduct a litter through it was a critical undertaking (*che ci diede fastidio per far passar la lettiga*), and that through this valley flowed a rivulet of salt water. Herbert, in his inimitable phraseology, says: 'The greater part of this night's journey was through the bottoms of transected Taurus, whose stupendious forehead wets itself in the ayery middle region; the fretum, or lane, is about forty yards broad even below, and bestrewed with pibbles; either side is walled with an amazing hill, higher than to reach up at twice shooting; and for eight miles so continues, agreeing with the relation Pliny and Solinus make of it; a prodigious passage, whether by art or nature questionable; I allude it unto nature, God's handmaid.' The description of these writers does not essentially differ from that left by A. Chodzko, formerly Russian Consul at Resht, of the pass which he visited in company with Sir H. Rawlinson, in 1835. He calls it Gardan-i-Sialek, and describes it as a tremendous defile, 2,500 yards long, with bare precipitous rock walls, from 650 to 1,000 feet in height, the passage between them being only thirty feet wide in its broadest and five feet in its narrowest part.[1] On the other hand, it is quite credible that the passes of Pliny, Della Valle, Herbert, and Rawlinson, may not be the same Caspian Gates through which Darius fled and Alexander marched; and that there may be more than one claimant to the title. This is, on the whole, the most probable solution, the Sirdara pass, in the opinion of the most learned critics, corresponding more accurately to the account of Arrian (cf. also Quintus Curtius and Amm. Marcellinus), than does any other pass to the north or east.[2] It cannot, however, to my

[1] *Annales des Voyages*, 1850, Part III.

[2] This view is sustained by the German writers Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 532; Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, p. 257; Tomaschek, *Zur hist.*

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mind, conceivably be identified with that of Pliny, nor is it likely to have been the Caspiæ Pylæ to which so much geographical importance was attached by Strabo.

Demavend

It was soon after emerging upon the plateau beyond the pass that an isosceles cone of perfect shape and dazzling whiteness rose in view above the browns and greys of the nearer ranges, and disclosed to my enchanted vision the mighty Demavend. From that day, for over a month, I never, except in the mist of early morning, lost sight of the lordly spectacle, which always overhangs Teheran, and which attended me on my southward ride to a distance of 160 miles. What Fujiyama is to the Japanese, Demavend is to the Persian landscape. Both are ever-present, aerial, and superb. Both have left an enduring mark upon the legends of their country;[1] and if the peerless Fuji has played a far greater part in the art of Nippon than has Demavend in that of Iran, it is because the Japanese, while not inferior in ingenuity, are a vastly more imaginative people.

Aiwan-i-Kaif

Traversing a level, uncultivated plain, we reached the village and posthouse of Aiwan-i-Kaif,[2] fording a rapid but muddy stream which flows over a broad bed outside. The name indicates Portal, or Hall, of Delight, although other derivations have been suggested—viz. Aiwan-i-Kai (i.e. Hall of the Kaianians—tradition interpreting a ruin in the neighbourhood[3] as a palace of

*Topographie von Persien*, p. 79; and by Schindler, in the publication mentioned at the end of this chapter. The last-named authority has supplied me with the following conjectural identification of Alexander's march: first day, from Rhages to the present Aiwan-i-Kaif, 383 *stadia* or 44 miles; second day, through the Caspian Gates (Sirdara Pass) and Choara (Khar) to the present Aradan, 297 *stadia* or 34 miles; third day to Lasgird, 331 *stadia* or 38 miles; fourth day to Alah, or Germab, 370 *stadia* or 42 miles; fifth day to Frat, near Hekatompylos or Damghan, 417 *stadia* or 48 miles; sixth day, 400 *stadia* or 46 miles to Shahrud, where he found the corpse of Darius.

[1] 'According to the local legends, Demavend, or Divband, i.e. "Dwelling of the Divs or Genii," has been the scene of all the events veiled under the form of myths. Here, say the Persian Mohammedans, Noah's Ark was stranded; here dwelt Jemshid and Rustem, heroes of the national epics; here was kindled the bonfire of Feridun, vanquisher of the giant Zohak; here the monster himself is entombed, and the smoke of the mountain is the breath of his nostrils; here, also, is chained down the Persian Prometheus, Yasid ben Jigad, whose liver is eternally devoured by a gigantic bird. The caverns of the volcanoes are full of treasures guarded by snakes.'—Elisée Reclus, *Universal Geography* (English edition), vol. ix. p. 84.

[2] Ferrier calls it Haivanak or Eiwanee-Keij.

[3] Described by Eastwick, vol. ii. pp. 137, 138.

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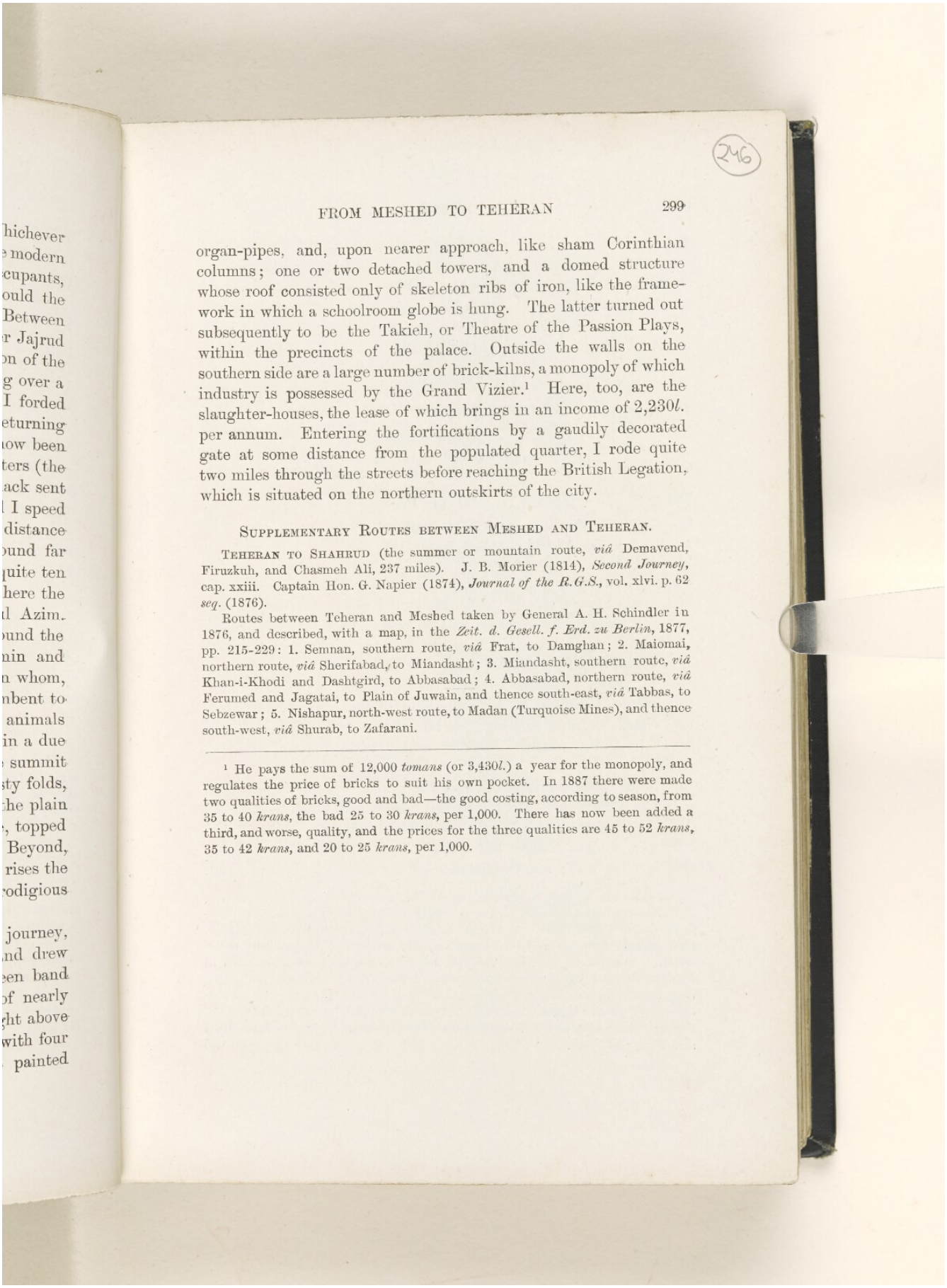
Cambyses), and Aiwan-i-Key (or Royal Drinking-hall). Whichever it be, the place appeared to me to have no attractions for the modern votaries of Epicurus. A great many of the houses had no occupants, and seemed to have been abandoned; and ill-advised would the monarch be who sought refuge in so squalid a retreat. Between Aiwan-i-Kaif and Kabud Gumbaz (Blue Dome) the River Jajrud descends from the mountains, and was divided at this season of the year into at least twenty-five different channels, straggling over a pebbly bed—in all, quite a quarter of a mile in width. I forded all these, and at Kabud Gumbaz encountered the first returning symptoms of proximity to that civilisation to which I had now been a stranger for nine days, in the shape of a vast pile of letters (the first I had received since leaving England) and a good hack sent out for my use by a friend in Teheran. Right gladly did I speed over the Plain of Veramin, whose ruins, presenting in the distance the appearance of four solitary columns, rose from a mound far away in the hollow of the plain. From a distance of quite ten miles the flash, as of a beacon fire, on the horizon showed where the sun's rays splintered on the golden dome of Shah Abdul Azim. Formerly the caravan route lay past this sanctuary and round the base of the range which separates the plains of Veramin and Teheran. Still is that line followed by the pilgrims, upon whom, whether starting for or returning from Meshed, it is incumbent to call and do reverence at the prophet's shrine; but pack animals and the postal road now both cut off an angle by striking in a due northerly direction over the ridge itself. Mounting to the summit of the pass, the new road winds up and down through dusty folds, until, the northern crest being reached, far down upon the plain that expands below is seen spread out the belt of verdure, topped only by a few edifices, that marks the capital of Persia. Beyond, again, at a distance of about seven miles from the city, rises the abrupt ferrugineous face of the Elburz range, like a prodigious rampart of rusty corrugated iron.

The first appearance of Teheran is agreeable after a long journey, but in no sense imposing. As I descended the slope and drew nearer, it was difficult to believe that that green band could shroud a great city with a population of nearly 200,000 souls. The only buildings that rose to any height above the level of the tree-tops appeared to be a large mosque, with four tile-covered minarets, that looked from a distance like painted

Teheran





organ-pipes, and, upon nearer approach, like sham Corinthian columns; one or two detached towers, and a domed structure whose roof consisted only of skeleton ribs of iron, like the framework in which a schoolroom globe is hung. The latter turned out subsequently to be the Takieh, or Theatre of the Passion Plays, within the precincts of the palace. Outside the walls on the southern side are a large number of brick-kilns, a monopoly of which industry is possessed by the Grand Vizier.[1] Here, too, are the slaughter-houses, the lease of which brings in an income of 2,230*l.* per annum. Entering the fortifications by a gaudily decorated gate at some distance from the populated quarter, I rode quite two miles through the streets before reaching the British Legation, which is situated on the northern outskirts of the city.

### Supplementary Routes between Meshed and Teheran.

Teheran to Shahrud (the summer or mountain route, *viâ* Demavend, Firuzkuh, and Chasmeh Ali, 237 miles). J. B. Morier (1814), *Second Journey*, cap. xxiii. Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. p. 62 *seq.* (1876).

Routes between Teheran and Meshed taken by General A. H. Schindler in 1876, and described, with a map, in the *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. zu Berlin*, 1877, pp. 215-229: 1. Semnan, southern route, *viâ* Frat, to Damghan; 2. Maiomai, northern route, *viâ* Sherifabad, to Miandasht; 3. Miandasht, southern route, *viâ* Khan-i-Khodi and Dashtgird, to Abbasabad; 4. Abbasabad, northern route, *viâ* Ferumed and Jagatai, to Plain of Juwain, and thence south-east, *viâ* Tabbas, to Sebzewar; 5. Nishapur, north-west route, to Madan (Turquoise Mines), and thence south-west, *viâ* Shurab, to Zafarani.

[1] He pays the sum of 12,000 *tomans* (or 3,430*l.*) a year for the monopoly, and regulates the price of bricks to suit his own pocket. In 1887 there were made two qualities of bricks, good and bad—the good costing, according to season, from 35 to 40 *krans*, the bad 25 to 30 *krans*, per 1,000. There has now been added a third, and worse, quality, and the prices for the three qualities are 45 to 52 *krans*, 35 to 42 *krans*, and 20 to 25 *krans*, per 1,000.

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# CHAPTER XI

## TEHERAN [1]

Over the utmost hill at length I sped,
A snowy steep—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountain—and outspread
The plain, the city, and the camp below.
SHELLEY, *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto V.

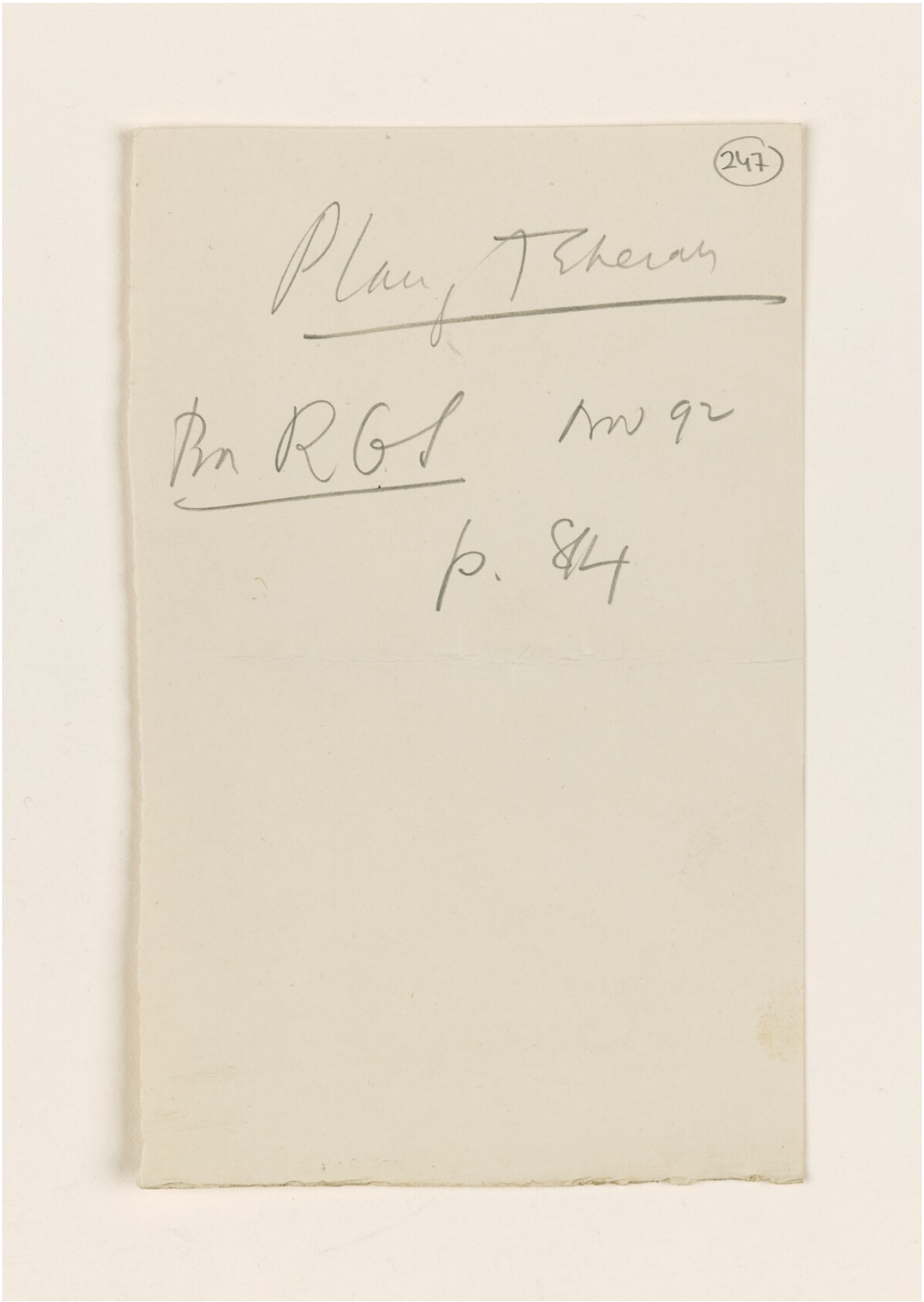
TEHERAN, the modern capital of Persia, has frequently been spoken of by travellers, with some suspicion of contempt, as a new city. In the sense in which they use the word—i.e. in the historical sense—it is by no means a new, but, on the contrary, an ancient city. In another sense—viz. structurally—it was made a new city by Agha Mohammed Shah, a century ago, and still more by his nephew and successor, Fath Ali Shah; and has become a yet newer city—so new that the visitors in the first half of this century would barely recognise it—during the last twenty years. Before I trace the incidents of this twofold renaissance, I propose to say something of the antique, forgotten, but withal not uninteresting Teheran of the past. Research can never be quite wasted upon the origin and youth of a great capital.

An old and a new city

It has been conjectured that the name Teheran is identical with the Tazora that appears in the Theodosian tables as near to Rhages (Rhey). In the tables, however, it is not the Median Rhages, but a place of the same name near Yezd, that is spoken of; and the identity cannot therefore be sustained.

Ancient testimony

[1] I shall not attempt to give, as I have done in the case of previous chapters, any bibliography of Teheran, for the reason that very nearly every foreign visitor to Persia has stayed in the capital and has described his stay. Any reader, therefore, desirous of more ample instruction may be referred to the large bibliography which I propose to publish. Teheran, however, has been much less rich in historians than any other Persian capital; and the information contained in this chapter will, in the main, not be found elsewhere. I may add that the popular etymology which explains Teheran or Tihran as 'the pure' is false. It is an old Persian word which was formerly written with the two-dotted t, and sometimes also Tirun and Tiran.

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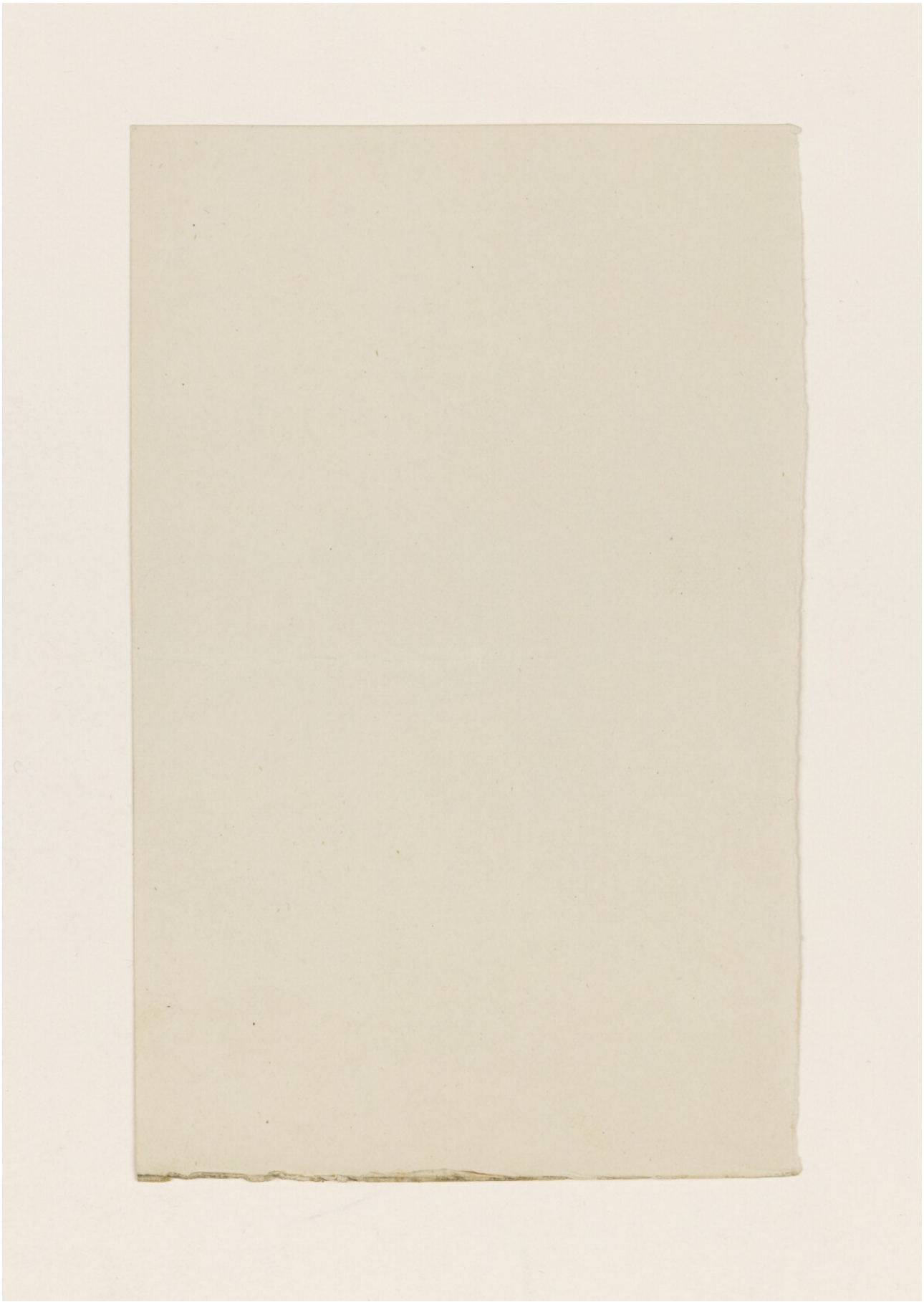

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Whatever its origin, Teheran must have been for long a small and insignificant place, for neither of those indefatigable geographers, El Istakhri and Masudi, whose travels illumine the tenth century, allude thereto, although they have much to say of the adjacent Rhey. The earliest irrefragable mention is in the pages of Abu Abdullah Yakut in A.D. 1179–80. His account, which is borne out by several native historians,[1] represents the primitive Teheranis as troglodytes, living underground in a semi-savage state, at war with their neighbours, and in revolt against the sovereign. However this may be, the locality soon became quite famous for its rivulets and gardens, and a more normal and respectable city sprang into existence. Hamdallah, in the fourteenth century, described it as a town of some magnitude and importance, and as preferable, both for climate and water-supply, to Rhey. Don Ruy di Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to Timur, halting here on July 6, 1404, delivered himself of a somewhat balancing opinion :—[2]

> The city of Teheran was very large, but it had no walls ; and it was a very delightful place, well supplied with everything ; but it was an unhealthy place, according to the natives, and fevers were very prevalent.

Shah Tahmasp, the second of the Sefavi dynasty, seems to have been the first to favour it with a royal patronage ; but Shah Abbas the Great, having fallen ill there from a surfeit of fruit, vowed he would never enter the place again. By him the province and city were placed under the government of a Khan.

At this time Teheran was visited by more than one European ; and the descriptions of the Italian, Pietro della Valle (1618), and of the Englishman, Sir Thomas Herbert (1627), are so curious as to be worthy of reproduction. I quote from a translation of the former that appears in ‘ Pinkerton’s Travels ’ :—

Teheran under Shah Abbas

> Teheran is a large city, more spacious than Cashan, but not well peopled, nor containing many houses, the gardens being extremely large, and producing abundance of fruit of various descriptions, of such excellent quality that it is sought for by all the circumjacent

[1] For a list of them, *vide* a note by M. Langlès, in vol. viii. p. 164 of his edition of Chardin.

[2] *Narrative of Embassy* (Hakluyt Society), p. 98. Watson (*History of Persia*, p. 62) must have been unaware of Clavijo when he wrote that Della Valle was the first European to visit Teheran.

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country. The Khan ordinarily resides here. All the streets are watered by a number of considerable streamlets, which, serpentining in the gardens, contribute not a little to their fertility. The streets, moreover, are shaded by beautiful, lofty plane-trees, called in Persia *chinar*; some of them are so extremely thick that it would take from two to three men to clasp them round. Excepting these, Teheran possesses nothing, not even a single building, worthy of notice.

More humorously the English traveller, whose tender susceptibilities appear to have been inflamed by the Teheran ladies:—

Seated is Tyroan in the midst of a large level or plain. The Houses are of white bricks hardened by the Sun. The City has about 3,000 Houses, of which the Duke's and the Buzzar are the fairest; yet neither to be admired. The Market is divided into two; some part thereof is open and other part arched. A Rivolet in two branches streams through the Town, serving withal both Grove and Gardens, who for such a favour, return a thankful tribute to the Gardiner. The inhabitants are pretty stately, the Women lovely, and both curious in novelties; but the jealousies of the men confine the temper of the weaker sex; yet by that little they adventured at, one might see *vetitis rebus gliscit voluntas*.[1]

Later vicissitudes

Under the later Sefavi kings Teheran sometimes became the temporary residence of the Court; a palace was built here by Shah Suleiman; and here Shah Sultan Husein received the Turkish Ambassador. Tavernier incidentally notices, but did not apparently see, the town; Chardin calls it a *petite ville du pays*. It was taken and pillaged in the Afghan invasion, but is mentioned by Hanway (as Tœhiran) in the catalogue of Von Mierop's stages to Meshed in 1744.[2] It was here that Nadir, on his return from India, convoked a meeting of all the priests of religion, with a view to promulgating a new national faith. Here he blinded his son, Reza Kuli Khan, and here that helpless individual was afterwards murdered.[3] Kerim Khan Zend added to and altered the existing Ark or citadel, but did not often occupy it. Ali Murad Khan stayed there while marching against Mazanderan. With the rise of the Kajar dynasty, at the close

[1] *Some Yeares' Travel, &c.* (3rd edit.), p. 206.

[2] *Historical Account, &c.*, vol. i. pp. 357–359. 'Tœhiran is a city enclosed with a wall of earth, which has many round turrets. But the whole is much decayed. Here we found provisions in plenty, and the bread exceedingly good.'

[3] G. A. Olivier, *Voyage, &c.*, vol. v. p. 418; vol. vi. p. 47.

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of the same century, the first epoch of the city's political ascendency began.

The seat and cradle of the Kajar family was at Astrabad; but this was too remote and too far situated to the East to suit the expanding ambitions of the eunuch candidate for the throne. For some time, while his fortunes were yet insecure, and while his sovereignty was practically limited to Mazanderan, Agha Mohammed fixed his residence at Sari; but, as he turned his eyes and aspirations southwards, and the dream of a Pan-Iranian kingdom became capable of realisation, a more accessible capital was required. Accordingly, he selected Teheran, and its elevation to metropolitan rank is commonly dated from 1788. It was not till seven years later that his rivals were all removed, and that he found himself firmly seated upon the throne; but what had been perhaps in the first place a choice of necessity remained the selection of prudence. Rebellion had been effectively stamped out of life in the south. The Afghans had ceased for awhile to be hostile or formidable. On the other hand, at Teheran, the successful usurper was within easy reach of his own patrimony and tribesmen; and he was in a better position to watch the only enemy of whom he had real apprehension—Russia. The same considerations, aggravated rather than diminished by the events of the present century, have compelled his successors to endorse his judgment; and, whatever may be said against the site, there is very small likelihood, as long as Persia escapes dismemberment, of Teheran being dethroned from its position.

Made his capital by Agha Mohammed Shah

Agha Mohammed, though he elevated Teheran to the rank of his capital, either had not the taste or did not reign long enough to confer upon it any of the external distinction with which his predecessors on the throne had always striven to adorn their seats of government. Olivier, who was there in 1797, the year of the king's death, reported the city as being little more than two miles in circuit, and as containing a population of only 15,000, 3,000 of whom belonged to the court or army of the Shah. Fath Ali Shah, however, had more regal ideas. Under his rule the city increased in size, importance, and display. In 1807 General Gardanne, the French Envoy, found it containing a population of over 50,000 in winter, though all but deserted in summer, when the Court was away, and the inhabitants had retired to their *yeilaks*, or summer quarters, on the mountains. A very

Its then extent

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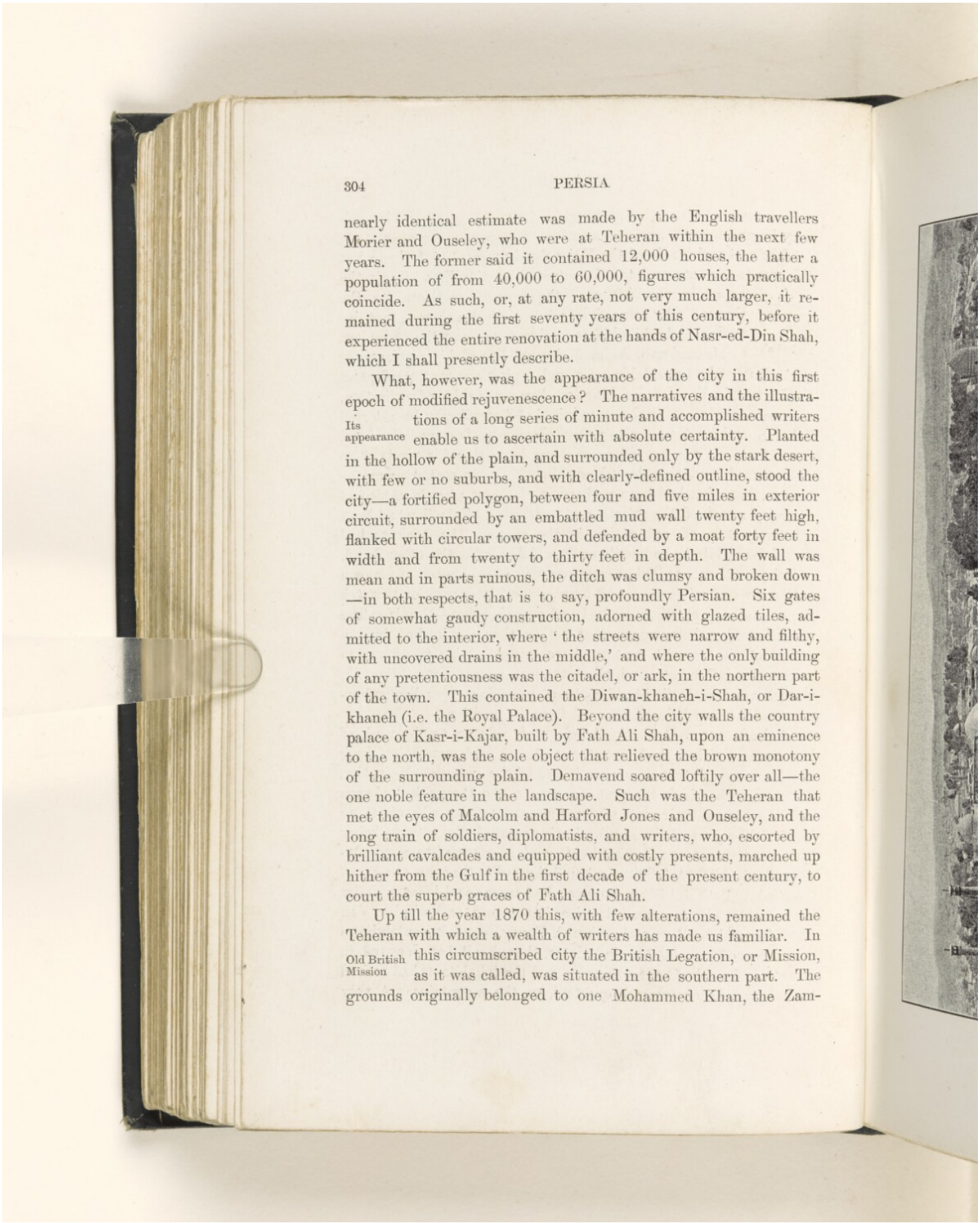



nearly identical estimate was made by the English travellers Morier and Ouseley, who were at Teheran within the next few years. The former said it contained 12,000 houses, the latter a population of from 40,000 to 60,000, figures which practically coincide. As such, or, at any rate, not very much larger, it remained during the first seventy years of this century, before it experienced the entire renovation at the hands of Nasr-ed-Din Shah, which I shall presently describe.

Its appearance

What, however, was the appearance of the city in this first epoch of modified rejuvenescence? The narratives and the illustrations of a long series of minute and accomplished writers enable us to ascertain with absolute certainty. Planted in the hollow of the plain, and surrounded only by the stark desert, with few or no suburbs, and with clearly-defined outline, stood the city—a fortified polygon, between four and five miles in exterior circuit, surrounded by an embattled mud wall twenty feet high, flanked with circular towers, and defended by a moat forty feet in width and from twenty to thirty feet in depth. The wall was mean and in parts ruinous, the ditch was clumsy and broken down —in both respects, that is to say, profoundly Persian. Six gates of somewhat gaudy construction, adorned with glazed tiles, admitted to the interior, where 'the streets were narrow and filthy, with uncovered drains in the middle,' and where the only building of any pretentiousness was the citadel, or ark, in the northern part of the town. This contained the Diwan-khaneh-i-Shah, or Dar-i-khaneh (i.e. the Royal Palace). Beyond the city walls the country palace of Kasr-i-Kajar, built by Fath Ali Shah, upon an eminence to the north, was the sole object that relieved the brown monotony of the surrounding plain. Demavend soared loftily over all—the one noble feature in the landscape. Such was the Teheran that met the eyes of Malcolm and Harford Jones and Ouseley, and the long train of soldiers, diplomatists, and writers, who, escorted by brilliant cavalcades and equipped with costly presents, marched up hither from the Gulf in the first decade of the present century, to court the superb graces of Fath Ali Shah.

Old British Mission

Up till the year 1870 this, with few alterations, remained the Teheran with which a wealth of writers has made us familiar. In this circumscribed city the British Legation, or Mission, as it was called, was situated in the southern part. The grounds originally belonged to one Mohammed Khan, the Zam-

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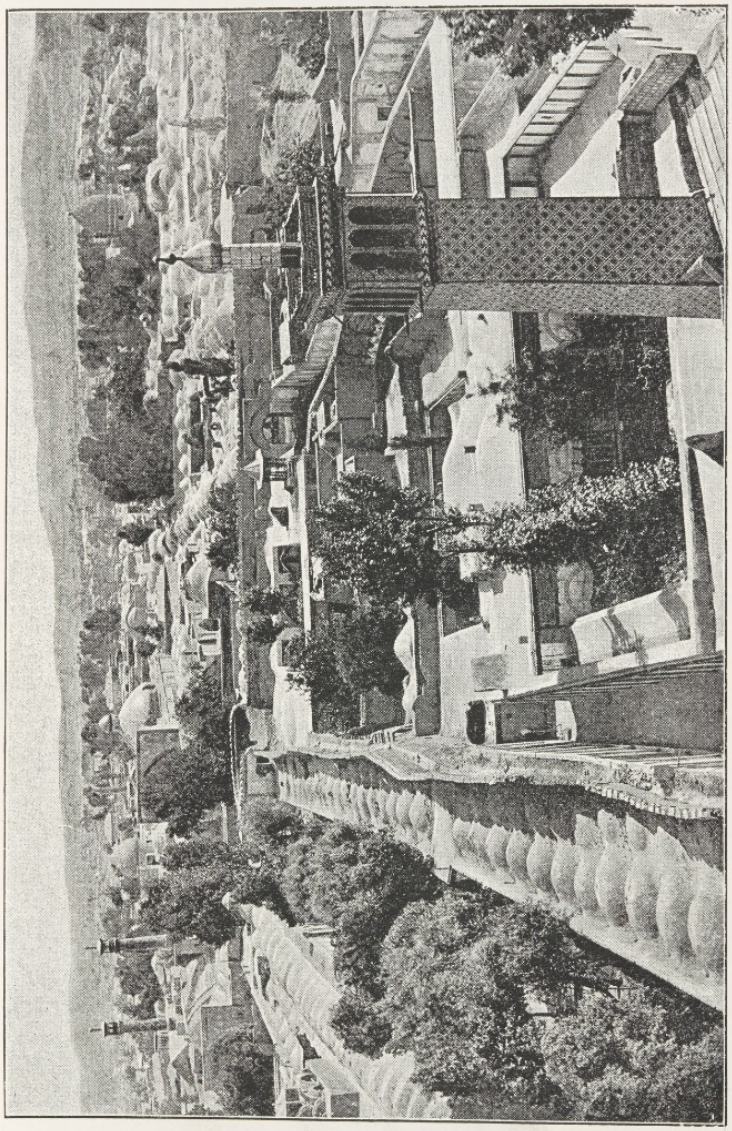
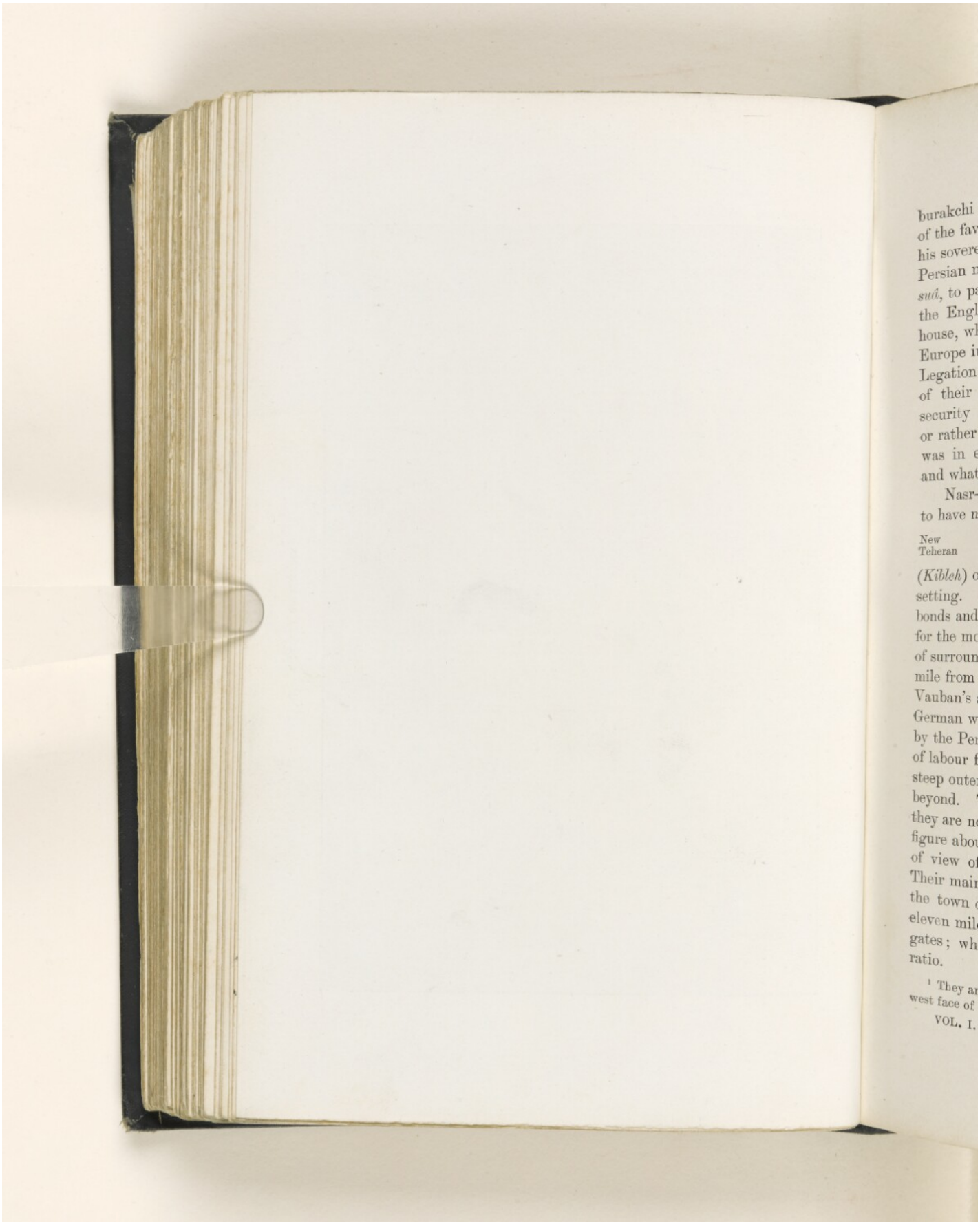


PANORAMA OF TEHERAN



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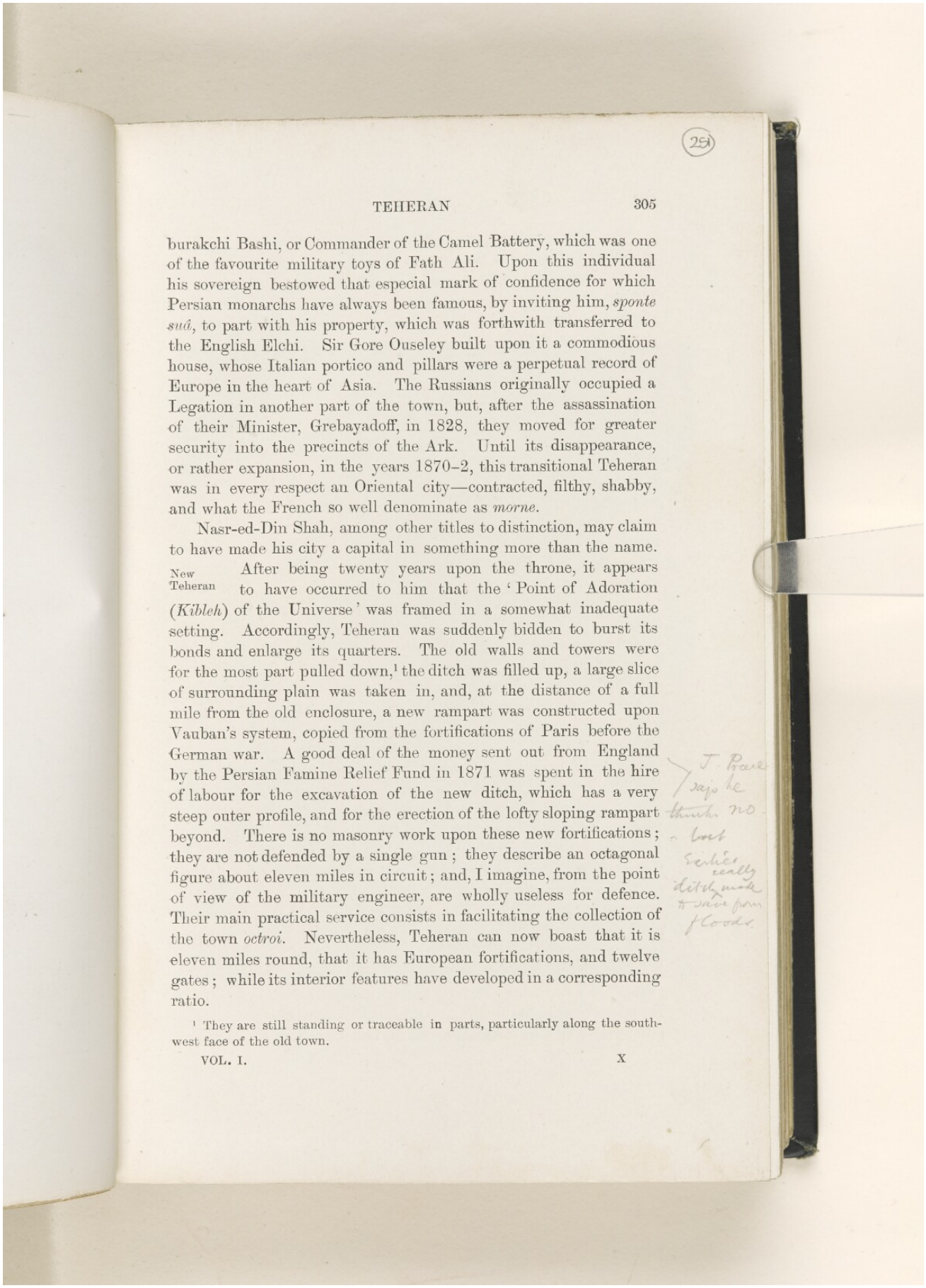



burakchi Bashi, or Commander of the Camel Battery, which was one of the favourite military toys of Fath Ali. Upon this individual his sovereign bestowed that especial mark of confidence for which Persian monarchs have always been famous, by inviting him, *sponte suâ*, to part with his property, which was forthwith transferred to the English Elchi. Sir Gore Ouseley built upon it a commodious house, whose Italian portico and pillars were a perpetual record of Europe in the heart of Asia. The Russians originally occupied a Legation in another part of the town, but, after the assassination of their Minister, Grebayadoff, in 1828, they moved for greater security into the precincts of the Ark. Until its disappearance, or rather expansion, in the years 1870–2, this transitional Teheran was in every respect an Oriental city—contracted, filthy, shabby, and what the French so well denominate as *morne*.

New Teheran

Nasr-ed-Din Shah, among other titles to distinction, may claim to have made his city a capital in something more than the name. After being twenty years upon the throne, it appears to have occurred to him that the 'Point of Adoration (*Kibleh*) of the Universe' was framed in a somewhat inadequate setting. Accordingly, Teheran was suddenly bidden to burst its bonds and enlarge its quarters. The old walls and towers were for the most part pulled down,[1] the ditch was filled up, a large slice of surrounding plain was taken in, and, at the distance of a full mile from the old enclosure, a new rampart was constructed upon Vauban's system, copied from the fortifications of Paris before the German war. A good deal of the money sent out from England by the Persian Famine Relief Fund in 1871 was spent in the hire of labour for the excavation of the new ditch, which has a very steep outer profile, and for the erection of the lofty sloping rampart beyond. There is no masonry work upon these new fortifications; they are not defended by a single gun; they describe an octagonal figure about eleven miles in circuit; and, I imagine, from the point of view of the military engineer, are wholly useless for defence. Their main practical service consists in facilitating the collection of the town *octroi*. Nevertheless, Teheran can now boast that it is eleven miles round, that it has European fortifications, and twelve gates; while its interior features have developed in a corresponding ratio.

[1] They are still standing or traceable in parts, particularly along the south-west face of the old town.



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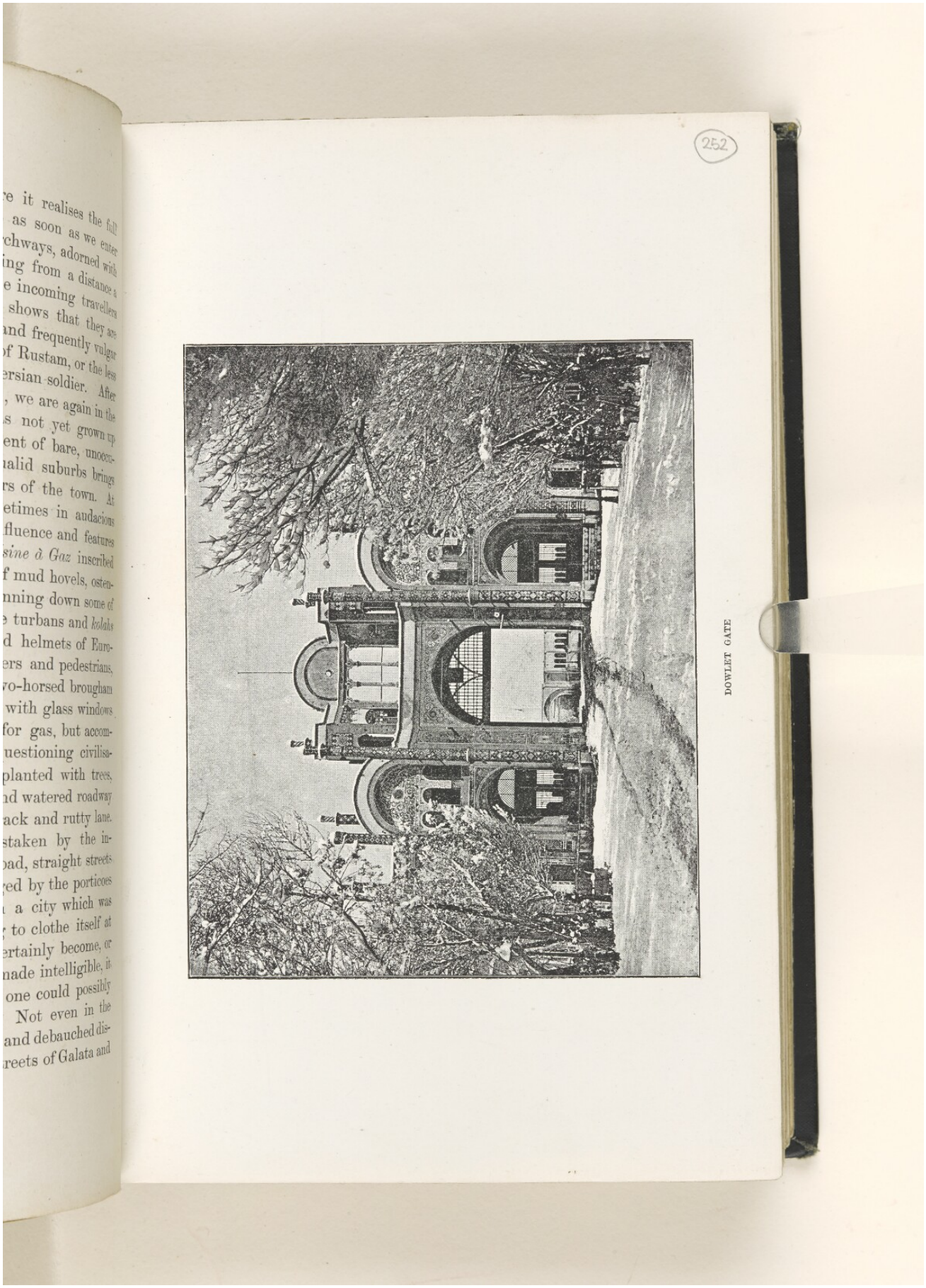
That the city has yet much to do before it realises the full aspirations of its royal Haussmann is evident as soon as we enter the gates. These consist of lofty archways, adorned with pinnacles and towers, and presenting from a distance a showy appearance, which has caused to some incoming travellers paroxysms of delight. A closer inspection shows that they are faced with modern glazed tiles, in glittering and frequently vulgar patterns, depicting the phenomenal combats of Rustam, or the less heroic features and uniform of the modern Persian soldier. After entering the gates, where a guard is stationed, we are again in the open country, for on most sides the city has not yet grown up to its new borders, which embrace a large extent of bare, unoccupied desert. This passed, a ride through squalid suburbs brings us to the more central and pretentious quarters of the town. At every turn we meet in juxtaposition, sometimes in audacious harmony, at others in comical contrast, the influence and features of the East and West. A sign-board with *Usine à Gaz* inscribed upon it will suddenly obtrude itself in a row of mud hovels, ostentatiously Asiatic. Tram-lines are observed running down some of the principal thoroughfares. Mingled with the turbans and *kolahs* of the Oriental crowd are the wide-awakes and helmets of Europeans. Through the jostling throng of cavaliers and pedestrians, camels, donkeys, and mules, comes rolling the two-horsed brougham of some Minister or grandee. Shops are seen with glass windows and European titles. Street lamp-posts built for gas, but accommodating dubious oil-lamps, reflect an air of questioning civilisation. Avenues, bordered with footpaths and planted with trees, recall faint memories of Europe. A metalled and watered roadway comes almost as a shock after weeks of mule track and rutty lane. Strange to say, it does not appear to be mistaken by the inhabitants for the town sewer. We ride along broad, straight streets that conduct into immense squares and are fringed by the porticoes of considerable mansions. In a word, we are in a city which was born and nurtured in the East, but is beginning to clothe itself at a West-End tailor's. European Teheran has certainly become, or is becoming; but yet, if the distinction can be made intelligible, it is being Europeanised upon Asiatic lines. No one could possibly mistake it for anything but an Eastern capital. Not even in the European quarter has it taken on the insufferable and debauched disguise with which we are familiar in the hideous streets of Galata and

The interior

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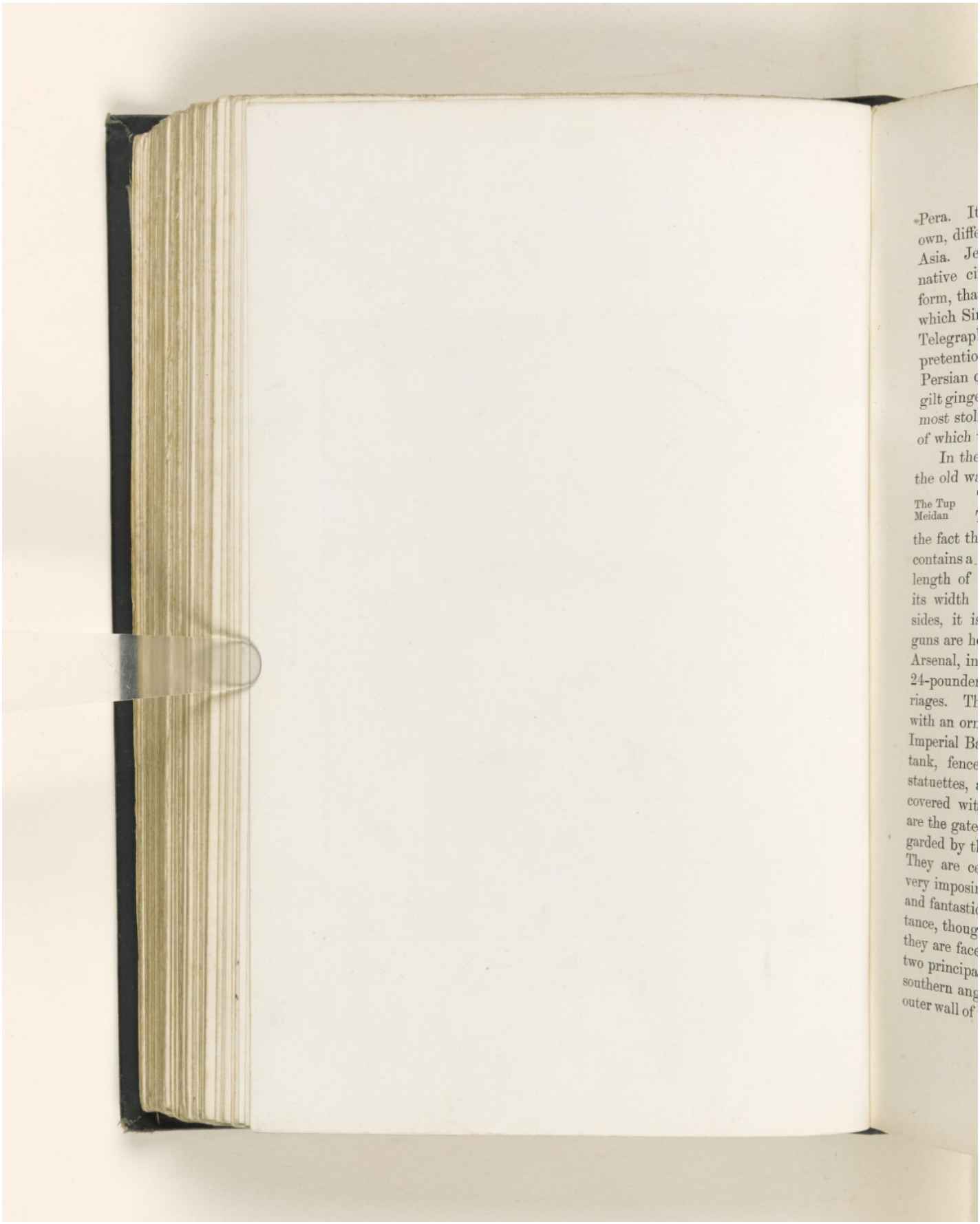

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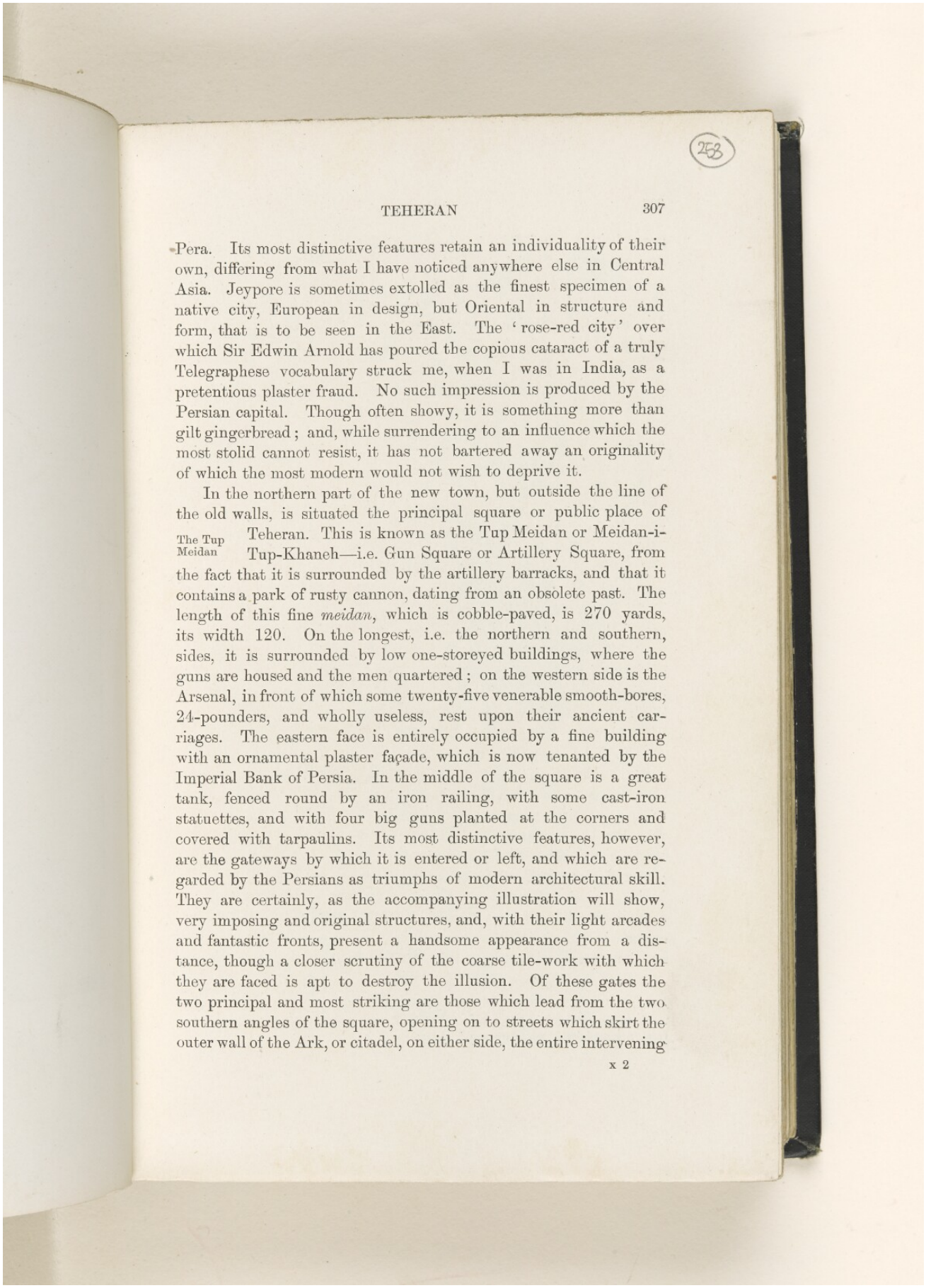



Pera. Its most distinctive features retain an individuality of their own, differing from what I have noticed anywhere else in Central Asia. Jeypore is sometimes extolled as the finest specimen of a native city, European in design, but Oriental in structure and form, that is to be seen in the East. The 'rose-red city' over which Sir Edwin Arnold has poured the copious cataract of a truly Telegraphese vocabulary struck me, when I was in India, as a pretentious plaster fraud. No such impression is produced by the Persian capital. Though often showy, it is something more than gilt gingerbread; and, while surrendering to an influence which the most stolid cannot resist, it has not bartered away an originality of which the most modern would not wish to deprive it.

In the northern part of the new town, but outside the line of the old walls, is situated the principal square or public place of Teheran. This is known as the Tup Meidan or Meidan-i-Tup-Khaneh—i.e. Gun Square or Artillery Square, from the fact that it is surrounded by the artillery barracks, and that it contains a park of rusty cannon, dating from an obsolete past. The length of this fine *meidan*, which is cobble-paved, is 270 yards, its width 120. On the longest, i.e. the northern and southern, sides, it is surrounded by low one-storeyed buildings, where the guns are housed and the men quartered; on the western side is the Arsenal, in front of which some twenty-five venerable smooth-bores, 24-pounders, and wholly useless, rest upon their ancient carriages. The eastern face is entirely occupied by a fine building with an ornamental plaster façade, which is now tenanted by the Imperial Bank of Persia. In the middle of the square is a great tank, fenced round by an iron railing, with some cast-iron statuettes, and with four big guns planted at the corners and covered with tarpaulins. Its most distinctive features, however, are the gateways by which it is entered or left, and which are regarded by the Persians as triumphs of modern architectural skill. They are certainly, as the accompanying illustration will show, very imposing and original structures, and, with their light arcades and fantastic fronts, present a handsome appearance from a distance, though a closer scrutiny of the coarse tile-work with which they are faced is apt to destroy the illusion. Of these gates the two principal and most striking are those which lead from the two southern angles of the square, opening on to streets which skirt the outer wall of the Ark, or citadel, on either side, the entire intervening

The Tup Meidan



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space being occupied by its courts and buildings. From the south-east corner the Nasirieh Gate leads down to the eastern entrance to the palace and to the bazaars. From the south-west corner the Dowlet Gate conducts to the Khiaban-i-Almasieh (or Avenue of Diamonds), from which the western or public entrance to the Ark and palace is gained. Upon this gate, when the Shah is in Teheran, floats the royal standard.

Two other *meidans* are worthy of notice. One is the Meidan-i-Mashk, a vast open space, over a quarter of a mile in length, which is used as a Champ de Mars, or parade-ground, for the garrison, and where I witnessed a military display which I shall afterwards describe. This *meidan* is a little to the north-west of the Tup Meidan, and is reached by a gateway opening out of the so-called Street of Ambassadors, which leads from the north-west angle of the Gun Square. The remaining square, called the Meidan-i-Shah, is outside the gardens of the Ministry of War, and the more southerly portion of the palace enclosure. It contains a large tank in the centre, and a colossal brass gun, known as the Tup-i-Murvarid, or Cannon of Pearls, which has always been an especially sacred *bast*, or sanctuary, for the fugitive criminal, a veritable 'horns of the altar,' in Teheran. Successive chroniclers of the capital have given different and inconsistent accounts of this monster cannon, some alleging that it was brought by Nadir Shah from Delhi, where it was originally decorated with a string of pearls near the muzzle, others that it was cast by him in Persia. Sir R. K. Porter says that it was the same gun that Chardin saw in the *meidan* at Isfahan; but, as I cannot find that Chardin saw or described any particularly big gun there, I am loth to accept this explanation. Elsewhere I have read that the gun was cast by Kerim Khan Zend at Shiraz, and that, having been

Other meidans



For note on Nakkara Khaneh (254)
vide Yule, Marco Polo
I 731



semi-sacred character is unimpeachable. An artillery guard is stationed hard by, and barren women make a pilgrimage hither, and pass beneath the gun, in order to promote the object of their desire.

The most distinctive feature, however, of this smaller *meidan* is the great arched gateway leading from it, and used as the Nakkara-Khaneh (or Drum Tower), whence, every evening, at sundown, is discoursed, from prodigious horns, kettle-drums, cornets, and fifes, the appalling music which is an inalienable

Nakkara-Khaneh



DRUM TOWER AND CANNON OF PEARLS

appurtenance of royalty in Persia, and is always sounded at sunset from some elevated gallery or tower in any city blessed with a royal or princely governor. Over two hundred years ago it used to disturb the slumbers of Tavernier and Chardin at Isfahan, where it was sounded at sunset and at midnight; the truth being, as the former writer sagaciously observed, that 'the musick would never charm a curious ear.' It is commonly supposed that this practice is a relic of the old fire or sun worship, that luminary being saluted both at its rising and setting by respectful strains. Whether this be so or not I cannot say. What is certain is that it has for long

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been an Oriental attribute of royalty; and, in a letter from the French traveller, Bernier, written in 1663 from the Court of the Great Mogul at Delhi, where there neither was, nor, so far as we know, ever had been, fire-worship, I have come across the following passage, describing the practice as it prevailed there and then, in terms which exactly fit the sonorous and portentous discord which is evoked every evening by the band of brazen-lunged youths to whom I used to listen with a sort of horrified fascination at Teheran:—

Over the great gate there is a large raised place which is called Nagar Kanay, because that is the place where the Trumpets are, or rather the Hoboys and Timbals that play together in consort at certain hours of the day and night. But this is a very odd consort in the ears of an European that is a new comer, not yet accustomed to it; for sometimes there are ten or twelve of these Hoboys, and as many Timbals that sound all at once together; and there is a Hoboy which is called Karna, a fathom and a half long, and of half a foot aperture below; as there are Timbals of brass or iron that have no less than a fathom in diameter, whence it is easie to judge what a noise they must needs make.

Bernier goes on to say that at first he found this royal music quite insufferable; but that afterwards it was very pleasing in the night time, when it seemed 'to carry with it something that is grave, majestical, and very melodious.' Verily *de gustibus non est disputandum*. The same practice is still kept up by some of the native princes in India.

From the Tup Meidan, as I have indicated, two streets run in a northerly direction towards the outer walls. These streets or avenues—for they are planted with poplars—are regarded as the crowning glory of modern, being, in fact, the nucleus of European, Teheran. The more westerly of the two, known to the Persians as Khiaban-i-Dowlet, has been sometimes described as the Boulevard des Ambassadeurs, from the fact that the representatives of several foreign Powers have acquired residences upon it. Of these, by far the most spacious and imposing is the Legation which shelters the representative of Her Britannic Majesty. At the distance of nearly half a mile from the great square, a fine gateway, upon which Her Majesty's initials are carved in stone, conducts on the left hand into a large wooded enclosure, where nothing at first is visible but a dense growth of trees, interspersed with winding pathways and

British Legation

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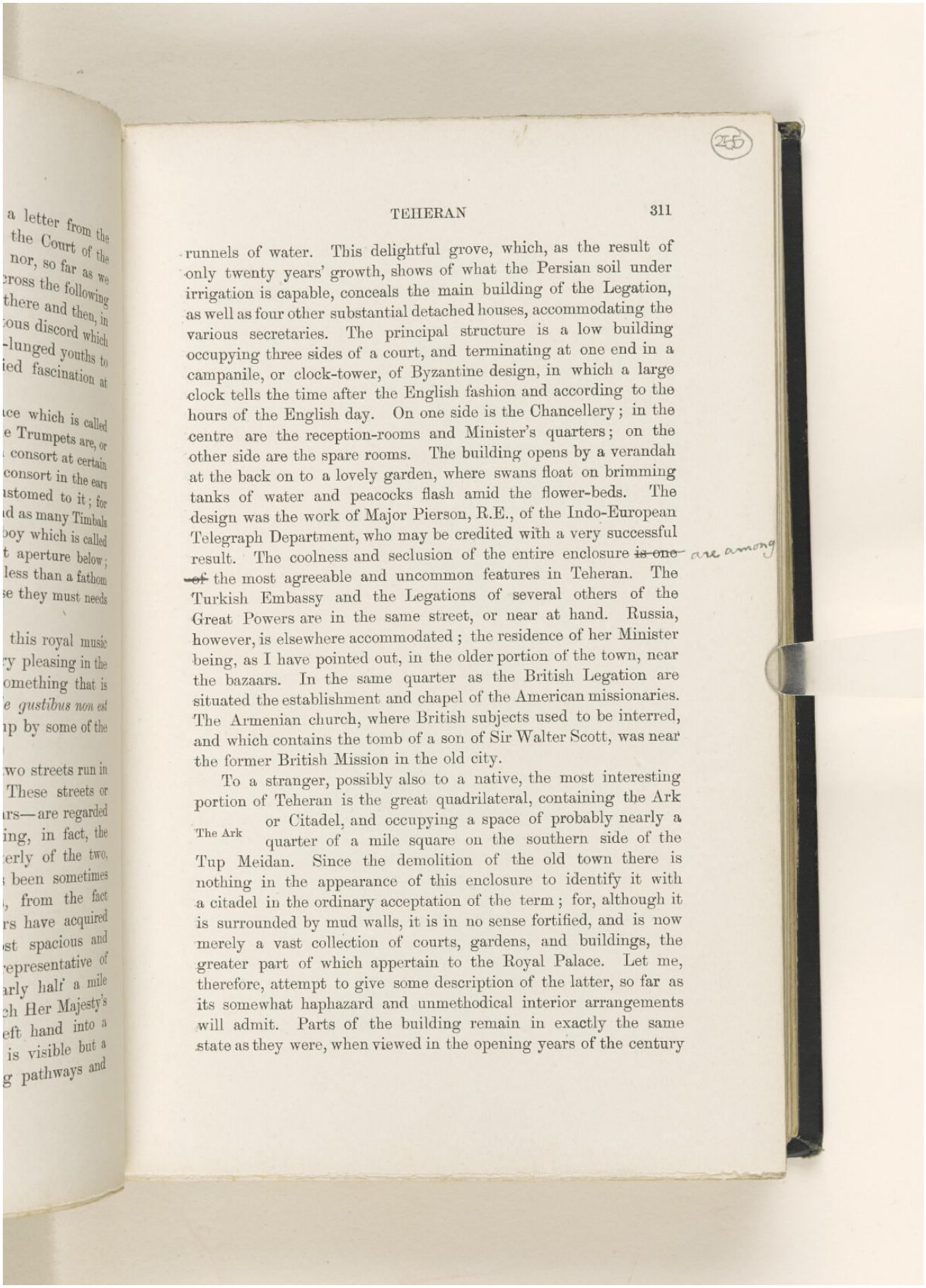



runnels of water. This delightful grove, which, as the result of only twenty years' growth, shows of what the Persian soil under irrigation is capable, conceals the main building of the Legation, as well as four other substantial detached houses, accommodating the various secretaries. The principal structure is a low building occupying three sides of a court, and terminating at one end in a campanile, or clock-tower, of Byzantine design, in which a large clock tells the time after the English fashion and according to the hours of the English day. On one side is the Chancellery; in the centre are the reception-rooms and Minister's quarters; on the other side are the spare rooms. The building opens by a verandah at the back on to a lovely garden, where swans float on brimming tanks of water and peacocks flash amid the flower-beds. The design was the work of Major Pierson, R.E., of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, who may be credited with a very successful result. The coolness and seclusion of the entire enclosure ~~is one of~~ are among the most agreeable and uncommon features in Teheran. The Turkish Embassy and the Legations of several others of the Great Powers are in the same street, or near at hand. Russia, however, is elsewhere accommodated; the residence of her Minister being, as I have pointed out, in the older portion of the town, near the bazaars. In the same quarter as the British Legation are situated the establishment and chapel of the American missionaries. The Armenian church, where British subjects used to be interred, and which contains the tomb of a son of Sir Walter Scott, was near the former British Mission in the old city.

The Ark

To a stranger, possibly also to a native, the most interesting portion of Teheran is the great quadrilateral, containing the Ark or Citadel, and occupying a space of probably nearly a quarter of a mile square on the southern side of the Tup Meidan. Since the demolition of the old town there is nothing in the appearance of this enclosure to identify it with a citadel in the ordinary acceptation of the term; for, although it is surrounded by mud walls, it is in no sense fortified, and is now merely a vast collection of courts, gardens, and buildings, the greater part of which appertain to the Royal Palace. Let me, therefore, attempt to give some description of the latter, so far as its somewhat haphazard and unmethodical interior arrangements will admit. Parts of the building remain in exactly the same state as they were, when viewed in the opening years of the century

by the successive envoys of the British and Indian Governments. But the major part of the enclosure does not now answer to their description and has been so much altered by the reigning Shah in the reconstruction of the past twenty years, as to need a fresh historian.

The Palace

Upon entering by a modest and wholly undistinguished gateway from the Khiaban-i-Almasieh, the visitor finds himself in a small irregular courtyard, planted with trees. From this he is conducted into another and larger paved court, in the centre of which is a long raised *hauz* or tank, the water lapping noiselessly, in the Persian style, over the level brim. On either side of this is a paved causeway, beyond which are flower-beds and rows of poplars, planes, and pines. The entire upper end of this court is occupied by a handsome building, the centre of which, when the heavy curtains that shield it are raised, is open to the public gaze, disclosing the Talar or throne room, and the famous white marble throne, standing upon a dais in the centre. Upon this throne on certain public occasions, and particularly at the festival of No Ruz or New Year (March 21), the Shah displays himself to the people in a fashion not essentially different from that in which Darius and Xerxes appeared in royal state before their subjects in the *talars* of Persepolis 2,300 years ago.[1]

Takht-i-Marmor

On either side of the throne room, and opening into it, are apartments sumptuously decorated in the Persian style with mural ornamentation and oil paintings. In these the ministers and honoured guests are entertained with coffee and *kalians* before and during the royal levées. The Talar itself is a spacious chamber, whose flat ceiling is set with mirror panels, and whose walls are embellished with the *aineh-kari* or mirror work, small facets ingeniously and artistically fixed in plaster, so as to produce a thousand angles and coruscations, in which the Persians are so undeniably clever; and with oil paintings of the various princes of the Kajar family. Round the lower part is a dado or wainscoting of alabaster carved in relief, and adorned with painted flowers and birds. In the centre of the room stands the Takht-i-

[1] These open throne-rooms are, however, far older than either Darius or Xerxes, and are one of the most ancient accompaniments of Eastern royalty. We read of Solomon in 1 Kings, vii. 6, 7, that 'He made a porch of pillars, and the porch was before them; and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them. Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment.'

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Marmor, or white marble throne of Kerim Khan Zend, wrought of marble of Yezd, and brought from Shiraz.[1] This great structure, which does not in the least degree resemble a throne according to Western ideas, but might rather be compared to an elevated platform surrounded by a pierced marble balustrade, rests upon low twisted pillars and upon the shoulders of grotesque figures representing *jins* or *divs*. Two steps supported by recumbent lions lead up to it, and the throne itself consists of a two-fold terrace, upon the back part of which, supported by a pearl-embroidered cushion, sits, or rather kneels (this being the Persian substitute for sitting), upon State occasions the King of Kings. In front of the throne is a place for a fountain, running water being another of the appurtenances of Eastern royalty.[2] The roof of the front part of the throne room, where it is open to the garden, is sustained by two immense columns with deep spiral flutings, also of Yezd marble, and constructed by order of Kerim Khan for his palace at Shiraz.

A passage from the court of the Talar leads into another and larger court, where is the main and State entrance into the palace. The Museum It was under a threshold, opening out of the arcade between the two, that were deposited by Agha Mohammed Shah the bones of Nadir Shah and Kerim Khan,[3] that he might have the exquisite luxury, as he passed in and out, of trampling upon the dust of his hereditary foes. Here are a large doorway, and a broad flight of carpeted steps, leading up between great bronzes and porcelain vases to the State apartments. As I mounted them three times during my stay at Teheran, and became familiar with the rooms to which they conduct, I may here describe the latter. At the top of the staircase is the Shah's library, a small room which has been neatly fitted, after the

[1] There is an illustration of it, from a photograph, in Benjamin's *Persia and the Persians*, p. 222, and a superb engraving of the whole Talar in P. Coste's *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*. Some writers have supposed this also to be an Indian throne, and to have belonged to Nadir's spoil. Others have declared that it was wrought of Maragha marble. In Kerim Khan's day it stood in the *talar* of the palace, that is now the office of the Indo-European Telegraph in Shiraz, from whence, along with the fluted columns, it was removed by Agha Mohammed Shah to Teheran.

[2] The symbolism of this custom is variously interpreted either as signifying light, and being, therefore, of good omen, or as typifying the main source of wealth in a thirsty land, and being consequently a mark of luxury.

[3] Those of Kerim Khan were said to have been afterwards restored to their original resting-place.

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European manner, with bookcases behind glass doors, and in which I saw several well-bound European books. It is reported to contain many Arabic MSS. of inestimable value. Upon the left hand at the top is the entrance to the new Museum, a great hall or gallery, constructed after the return of the Shah from his first visit to Europe in 1873, to contain not only the Royal Regalia, but also the vast collection of *objets d'art* and curiosities, which the generosity of foreign crowned heads, or his own whims, have enabled him to amass during a reign of over forty years. This extraordinary chamber, which with its contents alternately resembles an Aladdin's palace, an old curiosity shop, a prince's wardrobe, and a municipal museum, consists of a long parallelogram, crowned by a series of low domes, with plaster decorations in white, blue, and gold, there being a number of deep recesses, terminating in windows along one side; while the partition between these recesses, and the remaining walls of the room, are fitted with glass cases, in which are displayed, side by side, treasures of priceless value and the most unutterable rubbish. The central part of the chamber, which is, in part, tile-paved, contains a number of immense porcelain vases, mostly from Europe, candelabra, lustres, armchairs covered with a thin plating of real gold, etc., whilst upon tables or under glass cases are disposed with some slight effort at arrangement, but in ludicrous juxtaposition, Swiss musical boxes, Persian antiquities and specimens, meteorolites, European purchases or presents, and heads of game shot by His Majesty.

Perhaps the objects in this bizarre collection that most attract the stranger are the infinity of gems, cut, uncut, or set in every variety of fashion, that are seen behind the glass panels.

Crown jewels

Here are the enamelled and bejewelled arms of the great Sefavi kings, here the swords of Timur, Shah Ismail and Agha Mohammed Shah, here the magnificent Abbas' coat of mail. A square glass case contains a vast heap of pearls, four or five inches deep, into which one can plunge the hand and spill them in cascades and handfuls. Upon a separate stand appears the globe of jewels which was constructed out of his loose stones by the reigning Shah, at a cost (exclusive of the gems, provided by himself) of 320,000*l.*, and which is looked upon as the artistic *chef d'œuvre* of his reign. Its alleged value, with the stones (75 lbs of pure gold, and 51,366 gems, weighing 3656·4 grammes) is 947,000*l.*

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It is a little difficult to determine the respective countries amid the flash of the various stones; nor does the artist appear to have been as good a cartographer as he was a craftsman. However, as well as I could discern, the sea is composed of emeralds, England and France of diamonds, Africa of rubies, India of amethysts, and Persia herself of the national stone—turquoises.[1] I can imagine the day when some future and less economical sovereign, or possibly even some conqueror from the north, shall handle this glittering plaything in a more practical spirit, and shall perhaps desire to ascertain by personal experience the worth of the constituent elements into which his curiosity may suggest that it should be again resolved. At the upper end of the room, beneath glass cases, are a number of royal crowns, dating from the Sefavean days to modern times, prominent among them being the mighty head piece, pearl-bedecked, and with flashing *jika* or aigrette of diamonds in front, which is worn by the King at No Ruz, and was so familiar an object upon the head of Fath Ali Shah, as depicted in the illustrations, English and Persian, of the early part of the century. Here, too, is a superb tiara, manufactured by order of the present Shah, in Paris. The number of jewelled swords, scabbards, epaulettes, and cups, vases, boxes and *kalians*, is enormous, while in separate glasses repose huge, solitary, uncut gems. At the upper end of the chamber stands a throne of modern shape, if not of modern construction, viz., a lofty chair exquisitely enamelled and completely covered with rubies and emeralds. I shall have something to say presently about the history of this beautiful work of art. I was informed that the Shah, when he uses this hall, as he not infrequently does, as an audience chamber to the Ministers and Foreign Representatives at No Ruz, prefers to stand near the lower end of the hall to occupying the throne itself. Upon the walls on the right hand side of the room are displayed a heterogeneous collection of the treasures or trifles which the august traveller has brought back from Europe. Here are suspended the ribbons and stars of a multitude of orders, including the Garter, and an imposing array of Russian decorations. Elsewhere are arrayed gorgeous sets of silver-gilt plate, enamelled snuff-boxes, gold and silver

[1] Of the remaining gems, M. Orsolle (*Le Caucase et la Perse*) says that the ruby which marks Demavend was the last jewel torn from the miserable Shah Rukh by the myrmidons of Agha Mohammed Khan; and that the diamond which marks Teheran was found upon the body of Ashraf, the last Afghan king, by a Beluchi, who presented it to Shah Tahmasp II.

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vases, a case containing photographs of the English Royal Family, dating from the Shah's first visit in 1873, specimens of filagree work, and a number of objects in ivory and bone, ranging from the most delicate Chinese workmanship to a collection of six-penny toothbrushes (classification, with a vengeance!). From the walls depend a number of mediocre or execrable oil paintings, and large panels of glazed tile-work, representing different scenes in the life of the present sovereign. The three finest jewels possessed by the Shah are said to be a huge uncut ruby, once the property of Aurungzebe, which shimmers at the top of what is called the Kaianian crown; a large diamond, set in a ring, which was sent by George IV. as a present to Fath Ali Shah, and was said by the gossips to have opened at once the gates of the capital and the heart of the monarch; and beyond all the Daria-i-Nur, or Sea of Light, the sister diamond to the Kuh-i-Nur (Kohinoor), or Mountain of Light, which is the property of the British Crown. Both jewels are said to have descended from Timur to Mohammed Shah, the puppet whom Nadir spared at Delhi, but whom he considerately relieved of all his chief valuables, including these diamonds and the Peacock Throne. Upon Nadir's death, the Kuh-i-Nur went with Ahmed Shah Durani into Afghanistan, and descended to Shah Shuja, from whom it was taken by Runjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, whence it passed by conquest into the possession of the English Crown. The Daria-i-Nur remained in Persia, and has been worn by its successive sovereigns. Fath Ali Shah immortalised his own vanity at the same time that he considerably lowered the value of the stone, by causing to be scratched upon it his own name.[1] He was in the habit of wearing it in one of the *bazubands* or armlets which he bore upon State occasions, between the shoulder and elbow; but it is also sometimes worn in a belt, and in other settings. I asked to see this jewel, but it was shut up in an iron box that lay upon the seat of the elevated throne: and it appeared that in the absence either of the key or of the Grand Vizier, I think the latter, it could not be shown.

Such, as well as I can remember them with the assistance of

[1] I have read in different works that the stone was valued at 200,000*l.*, and also that its value was depreciated to the extent of 1,000,000*l.* by the act of Fath Ali Shah; statements from which it is difficult to strike out a mean of truth. It weighs 186 carats.

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Contrary to what has been said of late about the Crown jewels of Persia, their antiquity is not very great. The old crown paraphernalia of Persia was captured by the Ottomans in 1514 under Selim I. from Ismail, the then Shah of Persia, and the majority of them are still in the treasury of the Old Seraglio at Constantinople. Among them is the enormous emerald, said to be the largest in the world, the stupendous pearl necklace which adorns the wax effigy of Sultan Selim I., consisting of eight rows of enormous pearls, and the famous throne known as the "Persian throne." It is of beaten gold, into which a large number of rubies, pearls, and emeralds of great size and beauty have been wrought in mosaic. The Sultan has lent this splendid and costly work of Oriental art to the historical section of the exhibition at Budapest. The throne is raised on four solid gold legs, and there is a large seat, also of gold, on which the ancient Shahs used to sit, tailor-fashion, on embroidered cushions.

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through the fresh country in the spring-time, and I might speak of the pleasure of bicycling by moonlight. Then the bicycle is a social, a fraternal, a democratic institution; and its health-bringing properties are beyond words. I know of no exercise which confers more benefit alike on the physical and the mental man—in fine, cycling is an exhilarating thing, and that in one word goes far to explain a popularity which I believe is to endure."

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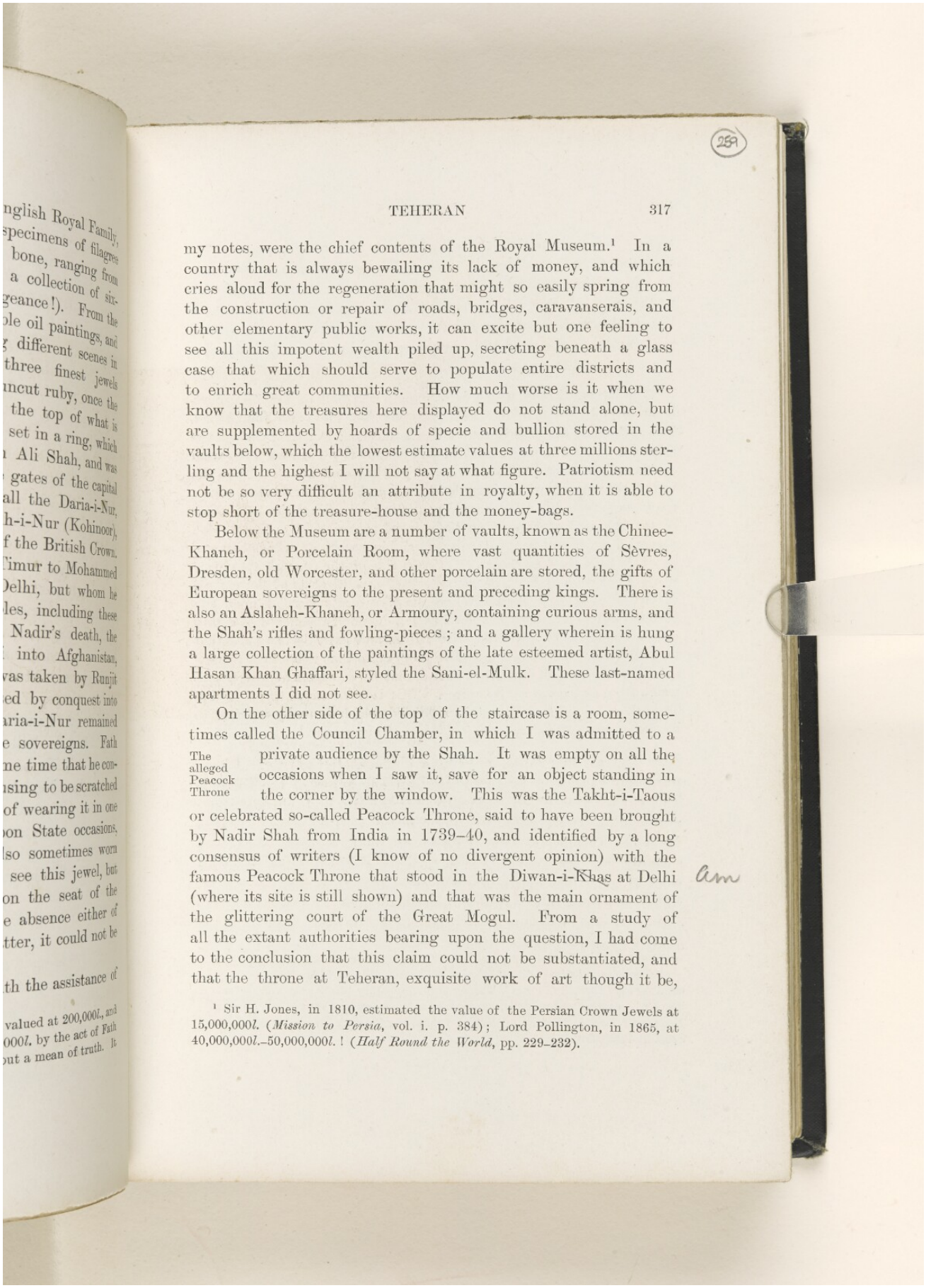
Prince Henry of Orléans has definitely arranged to deliver his lecture on his recent travels, before the Royal Geographical Society, on the 18th inst.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS.—A quarterly return of marriages, births and deaths has been issued by authority of the Registrar-General. The population of the United Kingdom in the middle of 1896 is estimated at 39,465,697 persons; that of England and Wales at 30,731,092; of Scotland at 4,186,849, and of Ireland at 4,547,756. In the United Kingdom 280,900 births, and 176,513 deaths were registered in the three months ending March 31, 1896, and the natural increase of population was therefore 104,387. The number of persons married in the quarter ending Dec. 31 1895, was 159,678;





my notes, were the chief contents of the Royal Museum.[1] In a country that is always bewailing its lack of money, and which cries aloud for the regeneration that might so easily spring from the construction or repair of roads, bridges, caravanserais, and other elementary public works, it can excite but one feeling to see all this impotent wealth piled up, secreting beneath a glass case that which should serve to populate entire districts and to enrich great communities. How much worse is it when we know that the treasures here displayed do not stand alone, but are supplemented by hoards of specie and bullion stored in the vaults below, which the lowest estimate values at three millions sterling and the highest I will not say at what figure. Patriotism need not be so very difficult an attribute in royalty, when it is able to stop short of the treasure-house and the money-bags.

Below the Museum are a number of vaults, known as the Chinee-Khaneh, or Porcelain Room, where vast quantities of Sèvres, Dresden, old Worcester, and other porcelain are stored, the gifts of European sovereigns to the present and preceding kings. There is also an Aslaheh-Khaneh, or Armoury, containing curious arms, and the Shah's rifles and fowling-pieces; and a gallery wherein is hung a large collection of the paintings of the late esteemed artist, Abul Hasan Khan Ghaffari, styled the Sani-el-Mulk. These last-named apartments I did not see.

On the other side of the top of the staircase is a room, sometimes called the Council Chamber, in which I was admitted to a private audience by the Shah. It was empty on all the occasions when I saw it, save for an object standing in the corner by the window. This was the Takht-i-Taous or celebrated so-called Peacock Throne, said to have been brought by Nadir Shah from India in 1739–40, and identified by a long consensus of writers (I know of no divergent opinion) with the famous Peacock Throne that stood in the Diwan-i-Khas at Delhi (where its site is still shown) and that was the main ornament of the glittering court of the Great Mogul. From a study of all the extant authorities bearing upon the question, I had come to the conclusion that this claim could not be substantiated, and that the throne at Teheran, exquisite work of art though it be,

The alleged Peacock Throne

[1] Sir H. Jones, in 1810, estimated the value of the Persian Crown Jewels at 15,000,000*l.* (*Mission to Persia*, vol. i. p. 384); Lord Pollington, in 1865, at 40,000,000*l.*–50,000,000*l.*! (*Half Round the World*, pp. 229–232).

was a fraudulent pretender to the honour of having supported the majesty of the Great Mogul. Let me deploy the chain of reasoning by which I had arrived at this conclusion. The standard reference to the original Peacock Throne at Delhi is contained in the well-known description of the French jeweller Tavernier, who visited that capital in the year 1665 in the splendid reign of Aurungzebe. He wrote as follows:—

The largest throne, which is set up in the hall of the first court, is in form like one of our field beds, six feet long and four broad. The cushion at the base is round like a bolster; the cushions on the sides are flat. The under part of the canopy is all embroidered with pearls and diamonds, with a fringe of pearls round about. Upon the top of the canopy, which is made like an arch with four panes, stands a peacock with his tail spread, consisting all of saphirs and other proper coloured stones. The body is of beaten gold enchas'd with several jewels, and a great ruby upon his breast, at which hangs a pearl that weighs fifty carats. On each side of the peacock stand two nosegays as high as the bird, consisting of several sorts of flowers, all of beaten gold enamelled. When the king seats himself upon the throne there is a transparent jewel with a diamond appendant of eighty or ninety carats, encompass'd with rubies and emeralds, so hung that it is always in his eye. The twelve pillars also that uphold the canopy are set with rows of fair pearl, round, and of an excellent water, that weigh from six to ten carats apiece. This is the famous throne which Tamerlane began and Cha Jehan finish'd, which is really reported to have cost 160 million and 500,000 livres of our money.[1]

Now contrast this with the Persian claimant to the title. I have purposely caused to be reproduced an engraving of the Takht-i-Taous at Teheran, in order to accompany and elucidate my argument. It is certainly a platform, or, as Tavernier calls it, a Field-bed Throne; as were the majority of those employed by the sovereigns of the East. It is further a sumptuous and a beautiful work of art. The entire fabric is overlaid with a plating of gold, which is exquisitely chiselled and enamelled, and is absolutely encrusted with precious stones, among which rubies and emeralds are the most prominent. Seven bejewelled legs sustain the plat-

[1] *Travels in India* (edit. 1678), book ii. cap. viii. p. 122. Hanway (vol. ii. cap. x.) says that the Peacock Throne and nine other thrones, as well as several jewelled weapons and utensils, were valued at nine crores of rupees, or 11,250,000*l*. The *Nadir-Nameh* (History of Nadir) valued the Peacock Throne at 2,000,000*l*.; Scott at 1,000,000*l*.

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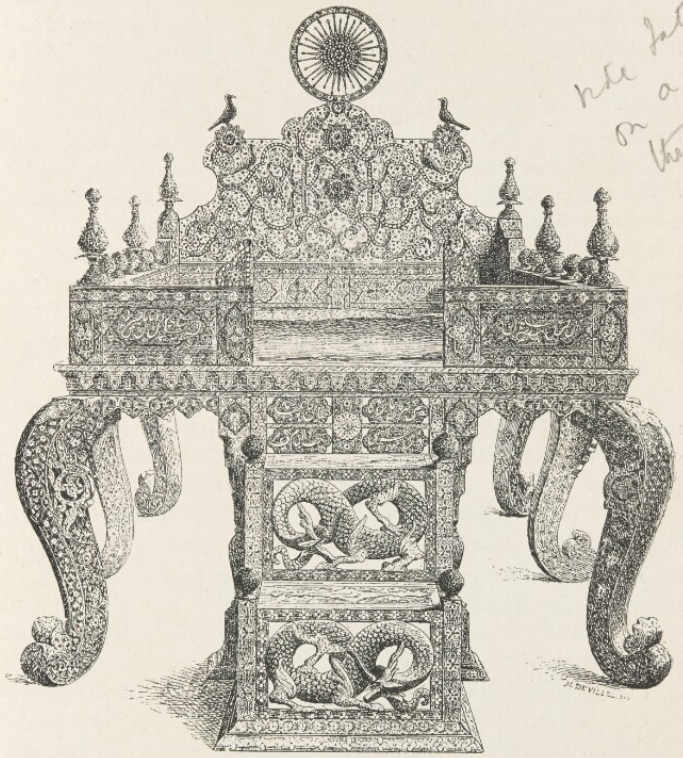
form, access to which is gained by two steps, decorated with salamanders. An elegant balustrade containing inscriptions in panels runs round, and the lofty back, which is one mass of gems, rises to a point in the centre whereupon is fixed a circular star of diamonds, with scintillating rays, made to revolve by a piece of



THRONE OF FATH ALI SHAH

mechanism at the back. On either side of the star are two bejewelled birds, perched on the edges of the back-frame, and facing each other. Now there is in the fabric thus delineated and reproduced above very little except general shape that tallies with Tavernier's detailed description. There is no trace or sign of a canopy, or of the means by which a vanished canopy could

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have been added to the existing throne. Above all there is no peacock.[1]

At this stage, however, I felt compelled to remember that Tavernier, while particularly describing the Peacock Throne, had also left on record that 'The Great Mogul has seven thrones, some set all over with diamonds, others with rubies, emeralds, and pearls;' and that Hanway had reported Nadir as carrying off nine other thrones in addition; and it might be therefore that the Teheran throne, though not *the* Peacock Throne, was one of the rifled thrones of the Emperors of Hindustan. Such a theory seemed to find a momentary corroboration in the description given by another Frenchman, Bernier, in the same century, of a throne (clearly not *the* Peacock Throne of Tavernier) at Delhi. The throne that he saw was supported by six high pillars or feet of massive gold, set with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. Its value was estimated at forty millions of rupees (a rupee at that time was equivalent to half a crown) or to sixty millions of French livres. And yet, to maintain the confusion, this too was a Peacock Throne, for he added:—

Testimony of Bernier

The art and workmanship of this throne is not answerable to the matter; that which I find upon it best devised are two peacocks covered with precious stones and pearls, which are the work of a Frenchman called —— that was an admirable workman.

Nevertheless, this could not be the Teheran throne; for the latter has seven legs; nor was an acute observer like Bernier likely to have committed the error that Morier did, and mistaken its winged supporters for peacocks.

In this dilemma, but with the growing conviction that the modern Takht-i-Taous had a very shadowy connection, if any at all, with the plundered treasures of Delhi, I turned to contemporaneous records. I found in Malcolm[2] that Nadir Shah was so fond of the real Peacock Throne of the Great Mogul that he had an exact duplicate of it made in other

What history says

[1] Morier, who saw Fath Ali Shah seated in audience upon this throne in 1809, described it with no great accuracy. He said, 'On each side of the back are two square pillars, on which are perched birds—probably intended for peacocks—studded with precious stones of every description, and holding each a ruby in their beaks' (*First Journey*, p. 191). Now, no one who really inspected them could possibly mistake the birds for peacocks; nor are there (now at any rate) rubies in their beaks.

[2] *History of Persia*, vol. ii. p. 37.

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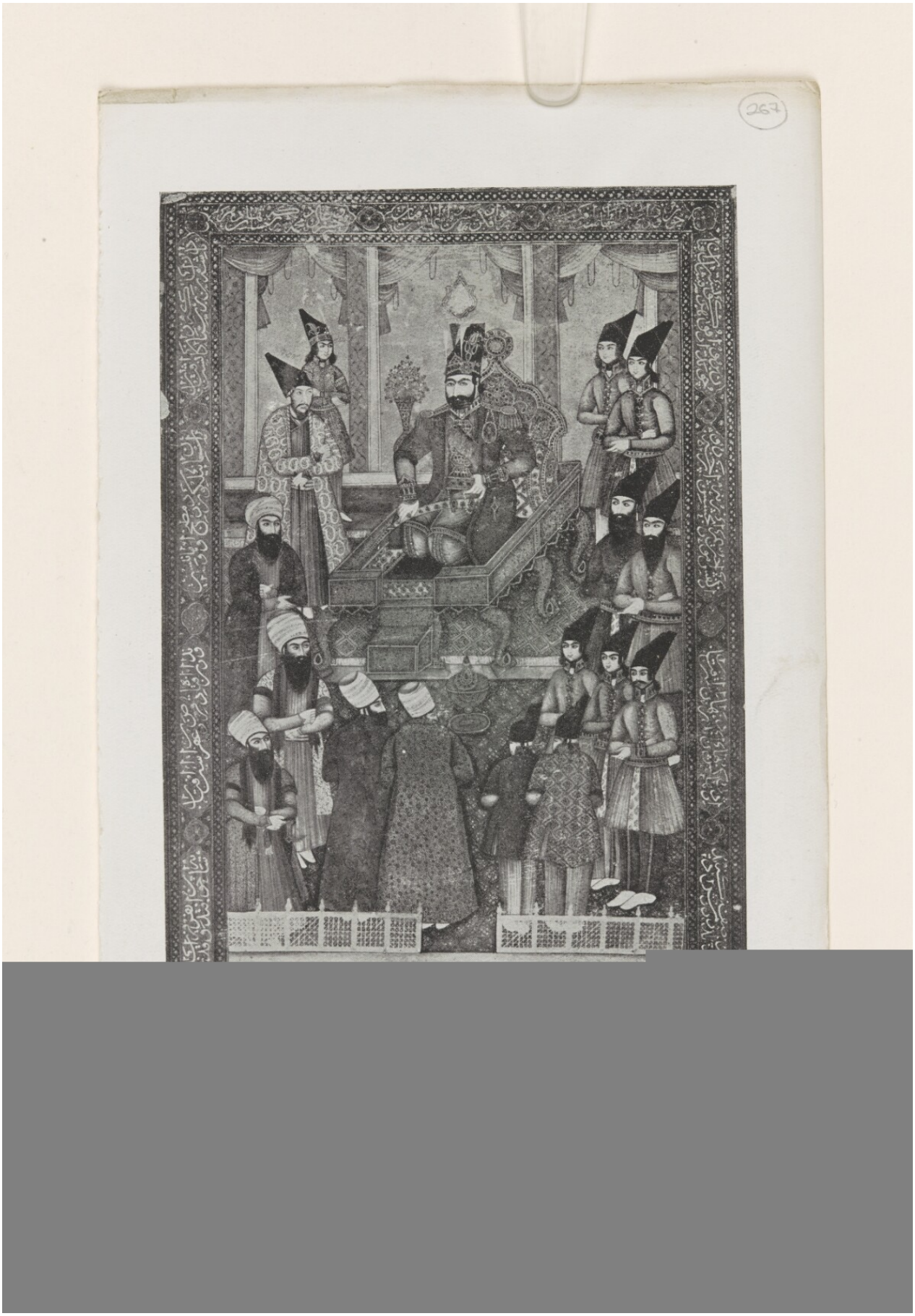


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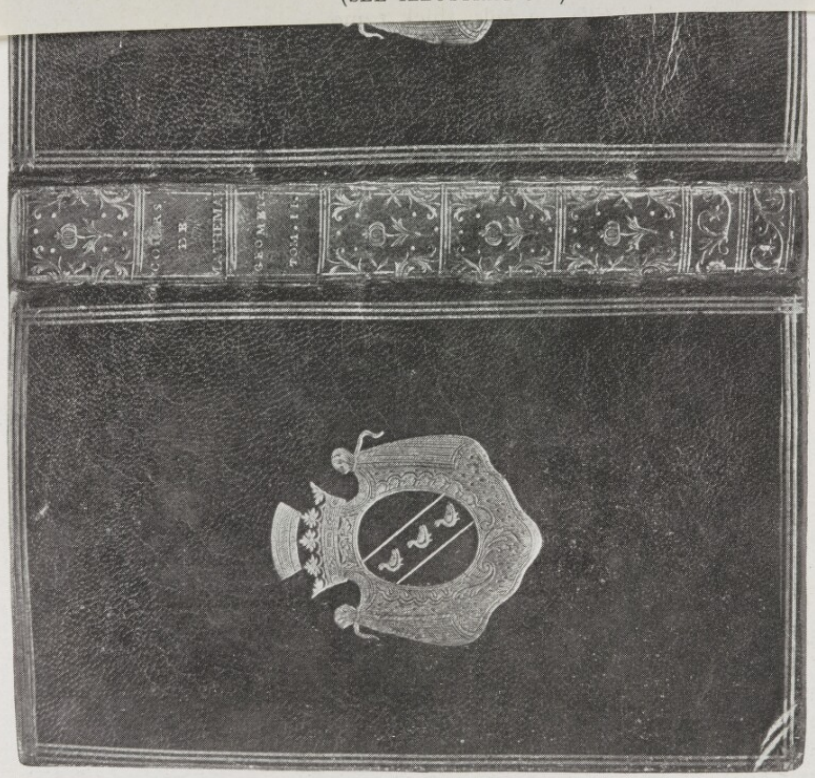
BINDING—FOREIGN ORNAMENTAL—*continued.*

410 PERSIAN. Collection of 6 large Antique Persian Book Covers, with paintings in gold and colours by a native artist.

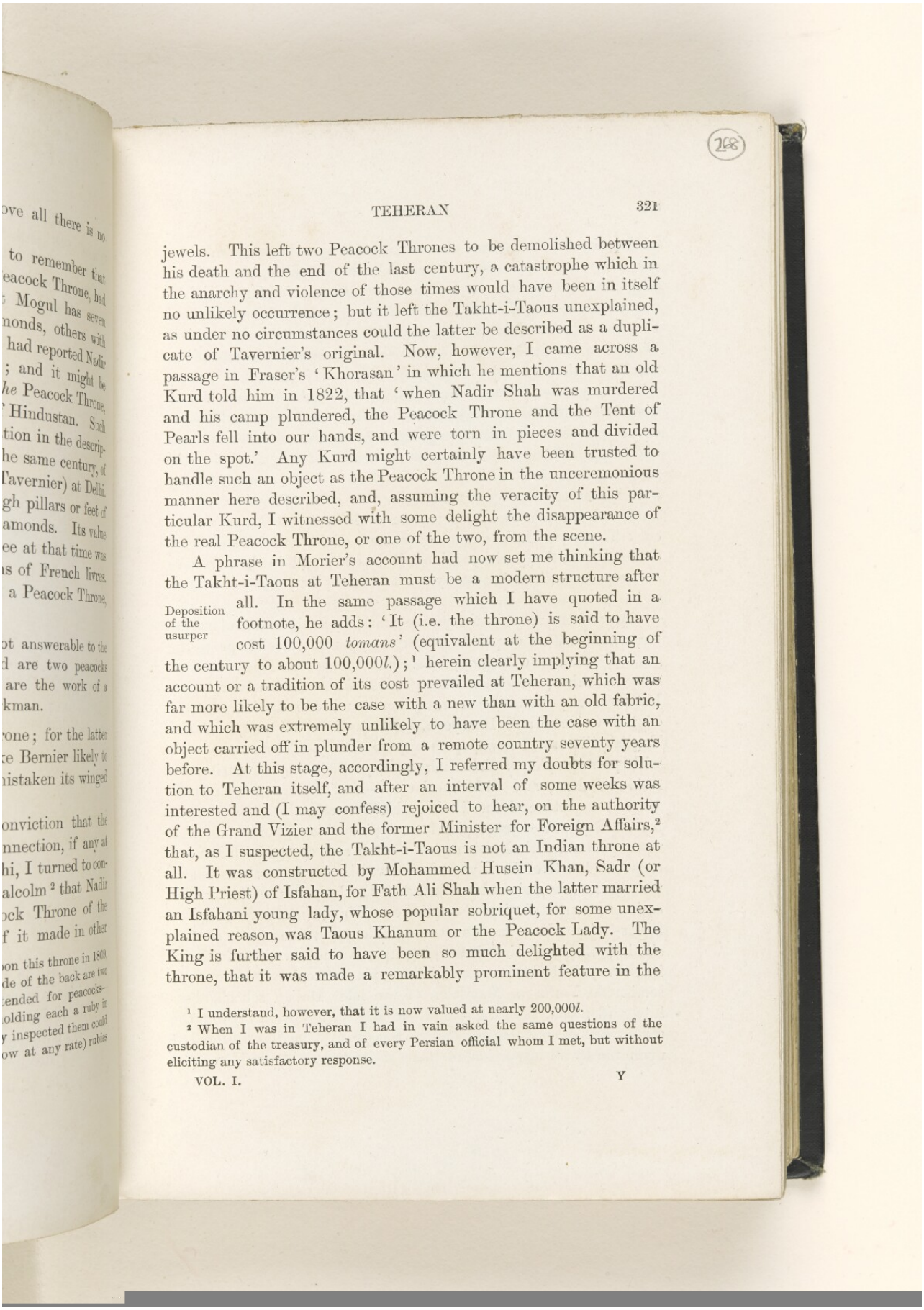
Representing the King seated surrounded by his Court in official dress, standing; lady and gentleman, seated, surrounded by decorations of flowers, fruit, birds' heads, etc.; a battle, with mounted warriors, banners, etc., dead and wounded in foreground; triumphal progress, numerous figures of warriors, mounted on horses and elephants, banners, etc., dead and wounded in foreground; each cover with border of inscriptions. Large folio (average size of each 11½ by 18½ in.).

The Six, £14 14s

(SEE ILLUSTRATION.)



BEZOUT. See No. 430.





jewels. This left two Peacock Thrones to be demolished between his death and the end of the last century, a catastrophe which in the anarchy and violence of those times would have been in itself no unlikely occurrence; but it left the Takht-i-Taous unexplained, as under no circumstances could the latter be described as a duplicate of Tavernier's original. Now, however, I came across a passage in Fraser's 'Khorasan' in which he mentions that an old Kurd told him in 1822, that 'when Nadir Shah was murdered and his camp plundered, the Peacock Throne and the Tent of Pearls fell into our hands, and were torn in pieces and divided on the spot.' Any Kurd might certainly have been trusted to handle such an object as the Peacock Throne in the unceremonious manner here described, and, assuming the veracity of this particular Kurd, I witnessed with some delight the disappearance of the real Peacock Throne, or one of the two, from the scene.

Deposition of the usurper

A phrase in Morier's account had now set me thinking that the Takht-i-Taous at Teheran must be a modern structure after all. In the same passage which I have quoted in a footnote, he adds: 'It (i.e. the throne) is said to have cost 100,000 *tomans*' (equivalent at the beginning of the century to about 100,000*l.*);[1] herein clearly implying that an account or a tradition of its cost prevailed at Teheran, which was far more likely to be the case with a new than with an old fabric, and which was extremely unlikely to have been the case with an object carried off in plunder from a remote country seventy years before. At this stage, accordingly, I referred my doubts for solution to Teheran itself, and after an interval of some weeks was interested and (I may confess) rejoiced to hear, on the authority of the Grand Vizier and the former Minister for Foreign Affairs,[2] that, as I suspected, the Takht-i-Taous is not an Indian throne at all. It was constructed by Mohammed Husein Khan, Sadr (or High Priest) of Isfahan, for Fath Ali Shah when the latter married an Isfahani young lady, whose popular sobriquet, for some unexplained reason, was Taous Khanum or the Peacock Lady. The King is further said to have been so much delighted with the throne, that it was made a remarkably prominent feature in the

[1] I understand, however, that it is now valued at nearly 200,000*l.*

[2] When I was in Teheran I had in vain asked the same questions of the custodian of the treasury, and of every Persian official whom I met, but without eliciting any satisfactory response.



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ceremonies that commonly ensue upon marriage. Here, therefore, at one fell swoop, toppled down the whole of the brilliant hypothesis, which has sustained scores of writers, and provided material for pages of glowing rhetoric. From the same authorities I learned that the original Peacock Throne of Nadir Shah (i.e. the survivor of the two facsimiles) was discovered in a broken-down and piecemeal condition by Agha Mohammed Shah, who extracted it along with many other of the conqueror's jewels by brutal torture from his blind grandson Shah Rukh at Meshed, and then had the recovered portions of it made up into the throne of modern shape and style, which now stands at the end of the new Museum in the palace at Teheran, and to which I have alluded in my description of that apartment. In this chair, therefore, are to be found the sole surviving remnants of the Great Mogul's Peacock Throne, and the wedding present of Fath Ali Shah must descend from the position which it has usurped in the narrative of every writer in this century, without exception, who has alluded to it.

Beyond the room in the palace containing this beautiful impostor, which, with a respectful iconoclasm, permissible, I hope, to the student of history, I have endeavoured to depose from its false pinnacle, extend a series of chambers of some size, but no merit, exhibiting an extravagant and often farcical contrast of the Oriental and European. Illustrations, snipped from the English illustrated newspapers appear side by side upon the walls with photographs of the Shah and his little boy favourite, the Aziz-es-Sultan, and with inferior copies of Italian oil-paintings. Here is a picture of the Paris Exhibition and the Eiffel Tower; there a deplorable oleograph of an Alpine village, both hung in a room adorned with Persian plaster-work and spread with Persian carpets. I noticed here, what I observed in the other palaces that I visited, that the Oriental intellect seems to derive a peculiar gratification from the display of duplicates. Thus, the King's son, the Zil-es-Sultan, has, in his town residence, a long row of facsimile portraits of himself hanging upon a single wall. Similarly, in the royal abode, I noticed in one place two large copies of a semi-nude Venus or Magdalen of the later Italian school, absolutely identical, hanging on either side of a doorway; and the same phenomenon was constantly repeated. The impression left upon me by an inspection of many modern Persian residences of

Oriental taste

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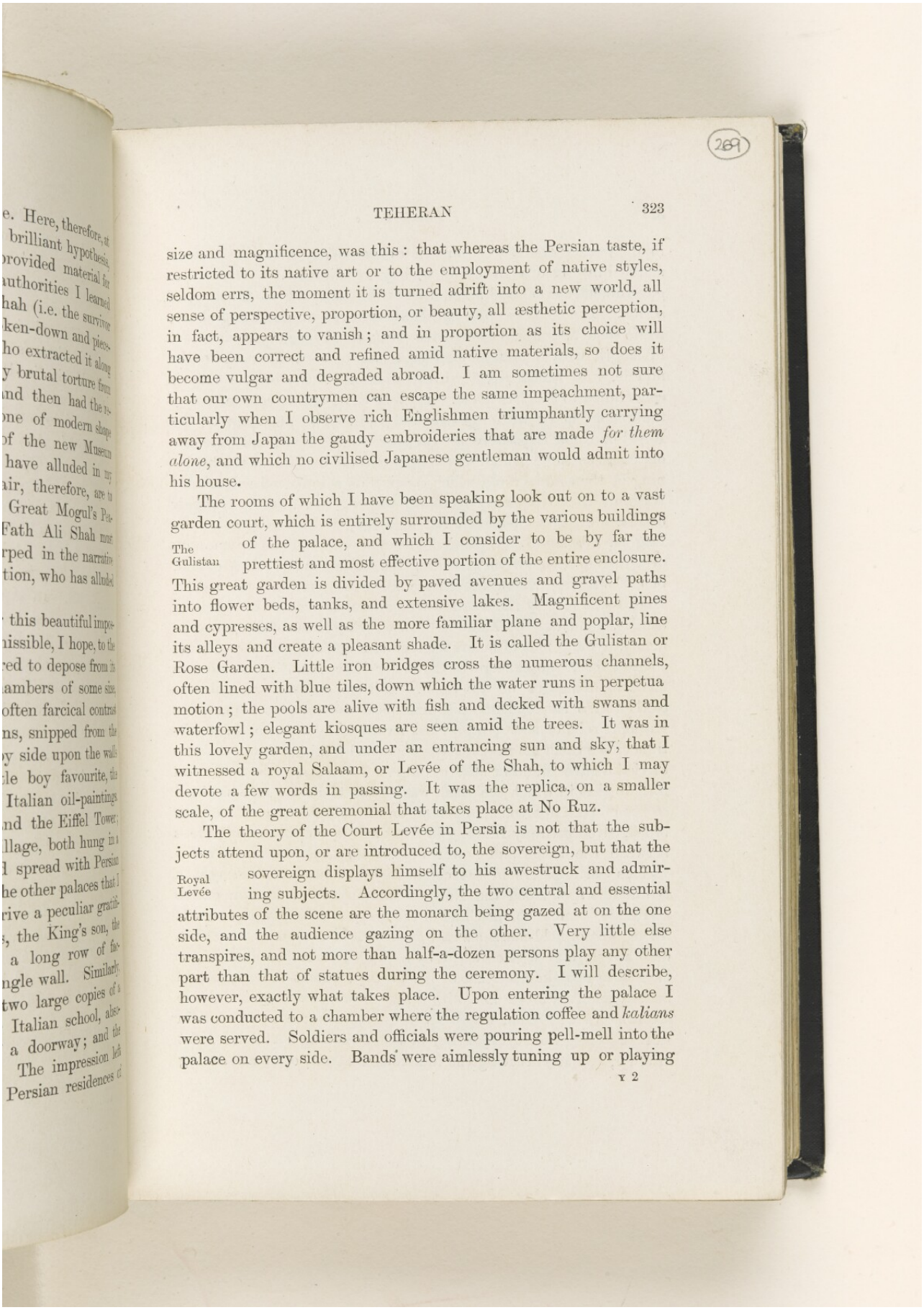



size and magnificence, was this: that whereas the Persian taste, if restricted to its native art or to the employment of native styles, seldom errs, the moment it is turned adrift into a new world, all sense of perspective, proportion, or beauty, all æsthetic perception, in fact, appears to vanish; and in proportion as its choice will have been correct and refined amid native materials, so does it become vulgar and degraded abroad. I am sometimes not sure that our own countrymen can escape the same impeachment, particularly when I observe rich Englishmen triumphantly carrying away from Japan the gaudy embroideries that are made *for them alone*, and which no civilised Japanese gentleman would admit into his house.

The rooms of which I have been speaking look out on to a vast garden court, which is entirely surrounded by the various buildings of the palace, and which I consider to be by far the prettiest and most effective portion of the entire enclosure. This great garden is divided by paved avenues and gravel paths into flower beds, tanks, and extensive lakes. Magnificent pines and cypresses, as well as the more familiar plane and poplar, line its alleys and create a pleasant shade. It is called the Gulistan or Rose Garden. Little iron bridges cross the numerous channels, often lined with blue tiles, down which the water runs in perpetua motion; the pools are alive with fish and decked with swans and waterfowl; elegant kiosques are seen amid the trees. It was in this lovely garden, and under an entrancing sun and sky, that I witnessed a royal Salaam, or Levée of the Shah, to which I may devote a few words in passing. It was the replica, on a smaller scale, of the great ceremonial that takes place at No Ruz.

The Gulistan

The theory of the Court Levée in Persia is not that the subjects attend upon, or are introduced to, the sovereign, but that the sovereign displays himself to his awestruck and admiring subjects. Accordingly, the two central and essential attributes of the scene are the monarch being gazed at on the one side, and the audience gazing on the other. Very little else transpires, and not more than half-a-dozen persons play any other part than that of statues during the ceremony. I will describe, however, exactly what takes place. Upon entering the palace I was conducted to a chamber where the regulation coffee and *kalians* were served. Soldiers and officials were pouring pell-mell into the palace on every side. Bands were aimlessly tuning up or playing

Royal Levée



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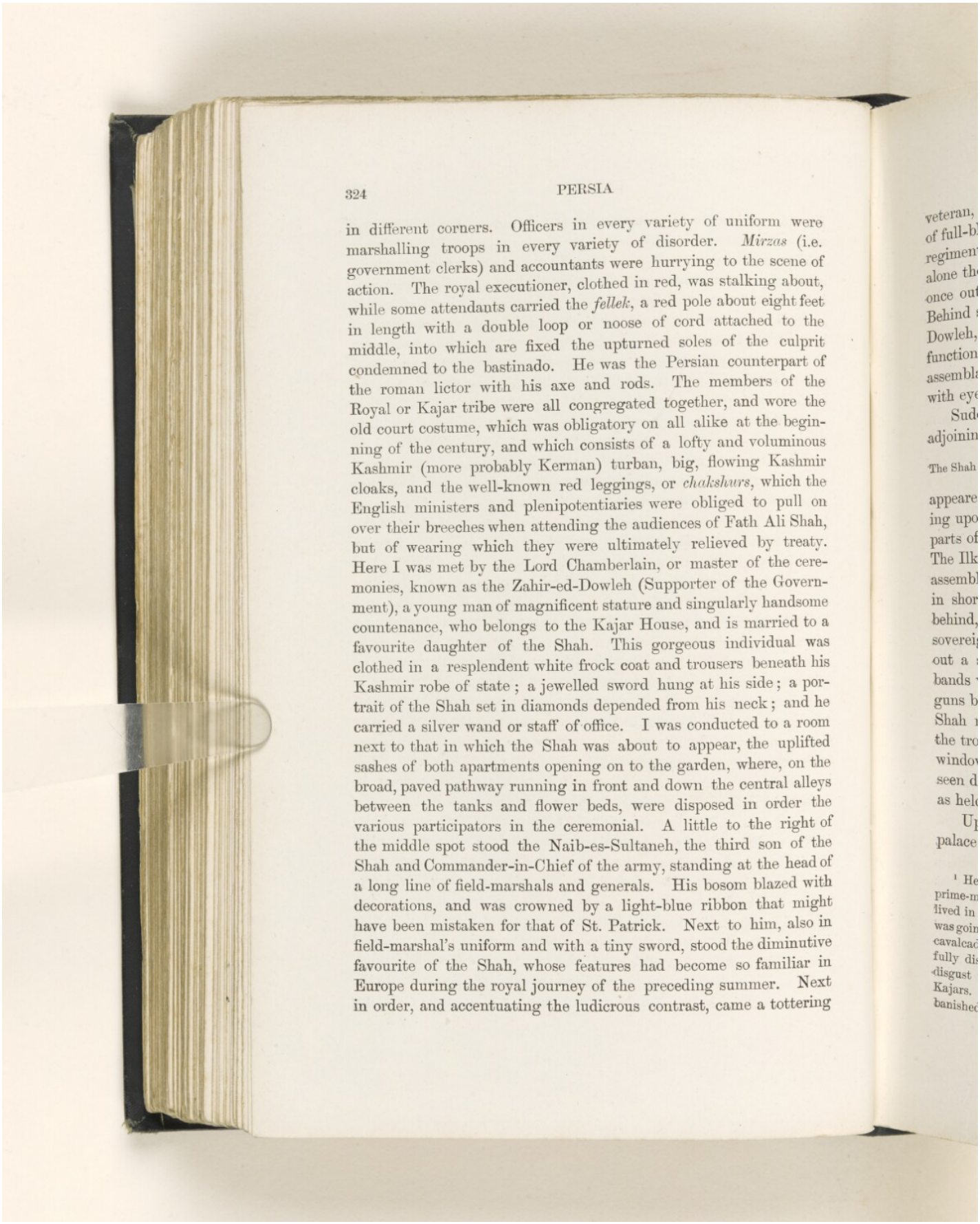



in different corners. Officers in every variety of uniform were marshalling troops in every variety of disorder. *Mirzas* (i.e. government clerks) and accountants were hurrying to the scene of action. The royal executioner, clothed in red, was stalking about, while some attendants carried the *fellek*, a red pole about eight feet in length with a double loop or noose of cord attached to the middle, into which are fixed the upturned soles of the culprit condemned to the bastinado. He was the Persian counterpart of the roman lictor with his axe and rods. The members of the Royal or Kajar tribe were all congregated together, and wore the old court costume, which was obligatory on all alike at the beginning of the century, and which consists of a lofty and voluminous Kashmir (more probably Kerman) turban, big, flowing Kashmir cloaks, and the well-known red leggings, or *chakshurs*, which the English ministers and plenipotentiaries were obliged to pull on over their breeches when attending the audiences of Fath Ali Shah, but of wearing which they were ultimately relieved by treaty. Here I was met by the Lord Chamberlain, or master of the ceremonies, known as the Zahir-ed-Dowleh (Supporter of the Government), a young man of magnificent stature and singularly handsome countenance, who belongs to the Kajar House, and is married to a favourite daughter of the Shah. This gorgeous individual was clothed in a resplendent white frock coat and trousers beneath his Kashmir robe of state; a jewelled sword hung at his side; a portrait of the Shah set in diamonds depended from his neck; and he carried a silver wand or staff of office. I was conducted to a room next to that in which the Shah was about to appear, the uplifted sashes of both apartments opening on to the garden, where, on the broad, paved pathway running in front and down the central alleys between the tanks and flower beds, were disposed in order the various participators in the ceremonial. A little to the right of the middle spot stood the Naib-es-Sultaneh, the third son of the Shah and Commander-in-Chief of the army, standing at the head of a long line of field-marshals and generals. His bosom blazed with decorations, and was crowned by a light-blue ribbon that might have been mistaken for that of St. Patrick. Next to him, also in field-marshal's uniform and with a tiny sword, stood the diminutive favourite of the Shah, whose features had become so familiar in Europe during the royal journey of the preceding summer. Next in order, and accentuating the ludicrous contrast, came a tottering

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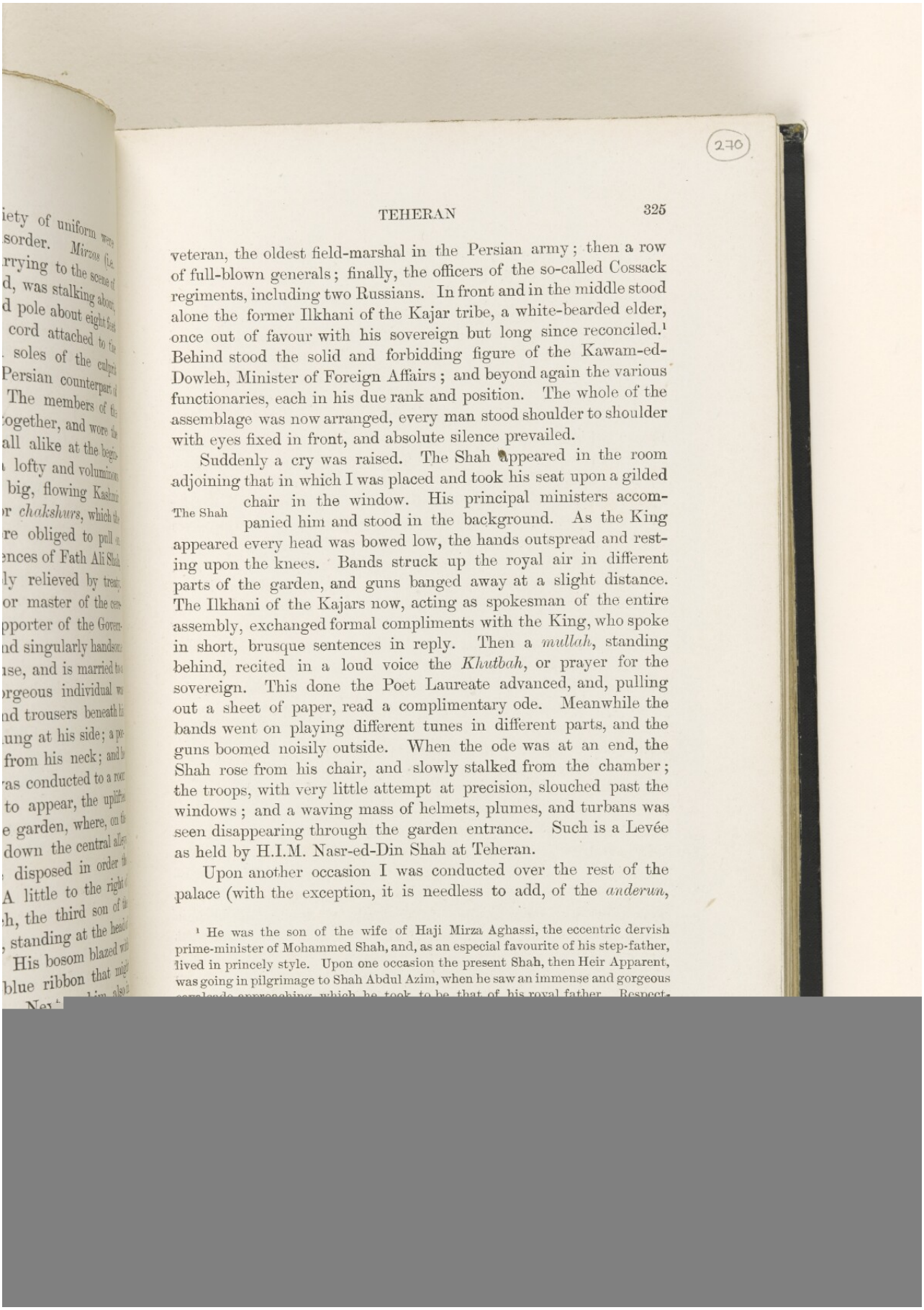




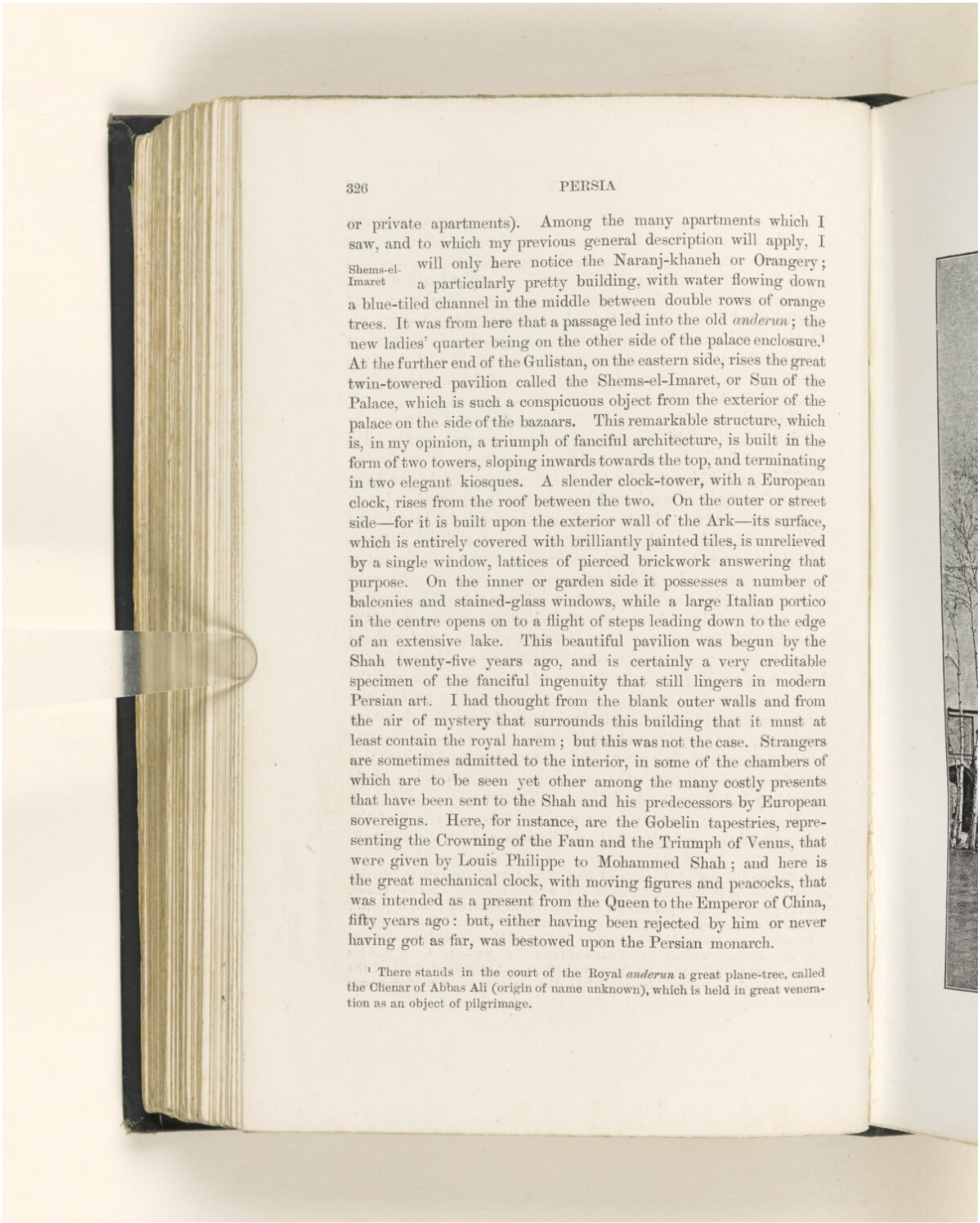
veteran, the oldest field-marshal in the Persian army; then a row of full-blown generals; finally, the officers of the so-called Cossack regiments, including two Russians. In front and in the middle stood alone the former Ilkhani of the Kajar tribe, a white-bearded elder, once out of favour with his sovereign but long since reconciled.[1] Behind stood the solid and forbidding figure of the Kawam-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and beyond again the various functionaries, each in his due rank and position. The whole of the assemblage was now arranged, every man stood shoulder to shoulder with eyes fixed in front, and absolute silence prevailed.

The Shah

Suddenly a cry was raised. The Shah appeared in the room adjoining that in which I was placed and took his seat upon a gilded chair in the window. His principal ministers accompanied him and stood in the background. As the King appeared every head was bowed low, the hands outspread and resting upon the knees. Bands struck up the royal air in different parts of the garden, and guns banged away at a slight distance. The Ilkhani of the Kajars now, acting as spokesman of the entire assembly, exchanged formal compliments with the King, who spoke in short, brusque sentences in reply. Then a *mullah*, standing behind, recited in a loud voice the *Khutbah*, or prayer for the sovereign. This done the Poet Laureate advanced, and, pulling out a sheet of paper, read a complimentary ode. Meanwhile the bands went on playing different tunes in different parts, and the guns boomed noisily outside. When the ode was at an end, the Shah rose from his chair, and slowly stalked from the chamber; the troops, with very little attempt at precision, slouched past the windows; and a waving mass of helmets, plumes, and turbans was seen disappearing through the garden entrance. Such is a Levée as held by H.I.M. Nasr-ed-Din Shah at Teheran.

Upon another occasion I was conducted over the rest of the palace (with the exception, it is needless to add, of the *anderun*,

[1] He was the son of the wife of Haji Mirza Aghassi, the eccentric dervish prime-minister of Mohammed Shah, and, as an especial favourite of his step-father, lived in princely style. Upon one occasion the present Shah, then Heir Apparent, was going in pilgrimage to Shah Abdul Azim, when he saw an immense and gorgeous cavalcade approaching, which he took to be that of his royal father. Respect-





or private apartments). Among the many apartments which I saw, and to which my previous general description will apply, I will only here notice the Naranj-khaneh or Orangery; a particularly pretty building, with water flowing down a blue-tiled channel in the middle between double rows of orange trees. It was from here that a passage led into the old *anderun*; the new ladies' quarter being on the other side of the palace enclosure.[1] At the further end of the Gulistan, on the eastern side, rises the great twin-towered pavilion called the Shems-el-Imaret, or Sun of the Palace, which is such a conspicuous object from the exterior of the palace on the side of the bazaars. This remarkable structure, which is, in my opinion, a triumph of fanciful architecture, is built in the form of two towers, sloping inwards towards the top, and terminating in two elegant kiosques. A slender clock-tower, with a European clock, rises from the roof between the two. On the outer or street side—for it is built upon the exterior wall of the Ark—its surface, which is entirely covered with brilliantly painted tiles, is unrelieved by a single window, lattices of pierced brickwork answering that purpose. On the inner or garden side it possesses a number of balconies and stained-glass windows, while a large Italian portico in the centre opens on to a flight of steps leading down to the edge of an extensive lake. This beautiful pavilion was begun by the Shah twenty-five years ago, and is certainly a very creditable specimen of the fanciful ingenuity that still lingers in modern Persian art. I had thought from the blank outer walls and from the air of mystery that surrounds this building that it must at least contain the royal harem; but this was not the case. Strangers are sometimes admitted to the interior, in some of the chambers of which are to be seen yet other among the many costly presents that have been sent to the Shah and his predecessors by European sovereigns. Here, for instance, are the Gobelin tapestries, representing the Crowning of the Faun and the Triumph of Venus, that were given by Louis Philippe to Mohammed Shah; and here is the great mechanical clock, with moving figures and peacocks, that was intended as a present from the Queen to the Emperor of China, fifty years ago: but, either having been rejected by him or never having got as far, was bestowed upon the Persian monarch.

Shems-el-Imaret

[1] There stands in the court of the Royal *anderun* a great plane-tree, called the Chenar of Abbas Ali (origin of name unknown), which is held in great veneration as an object of pilgrimage.

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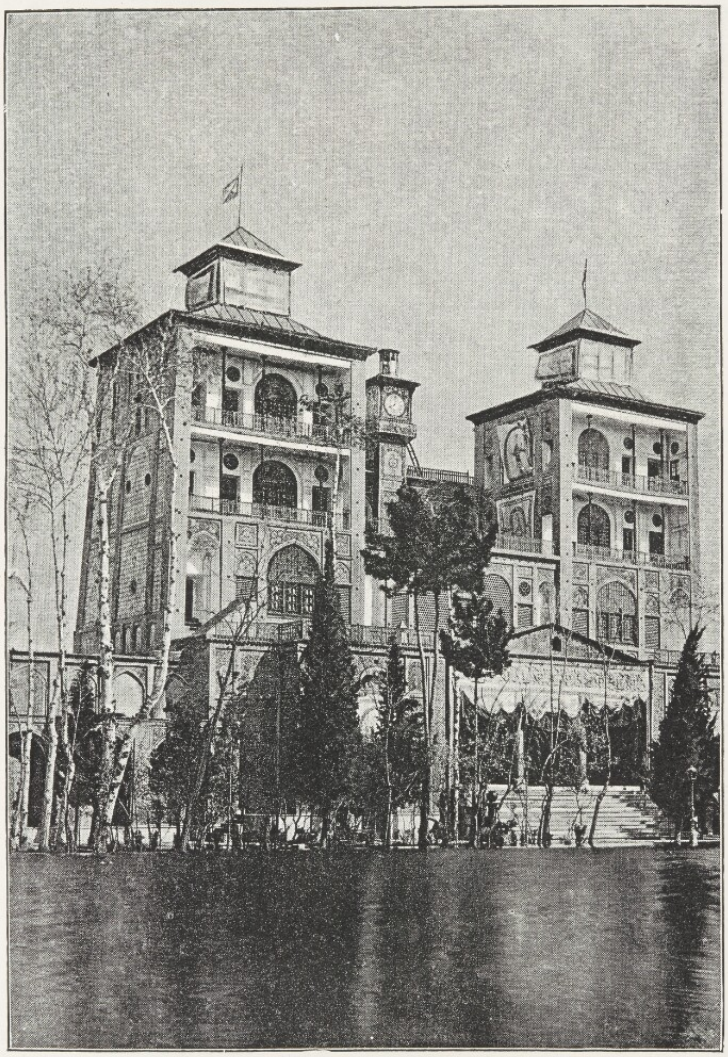
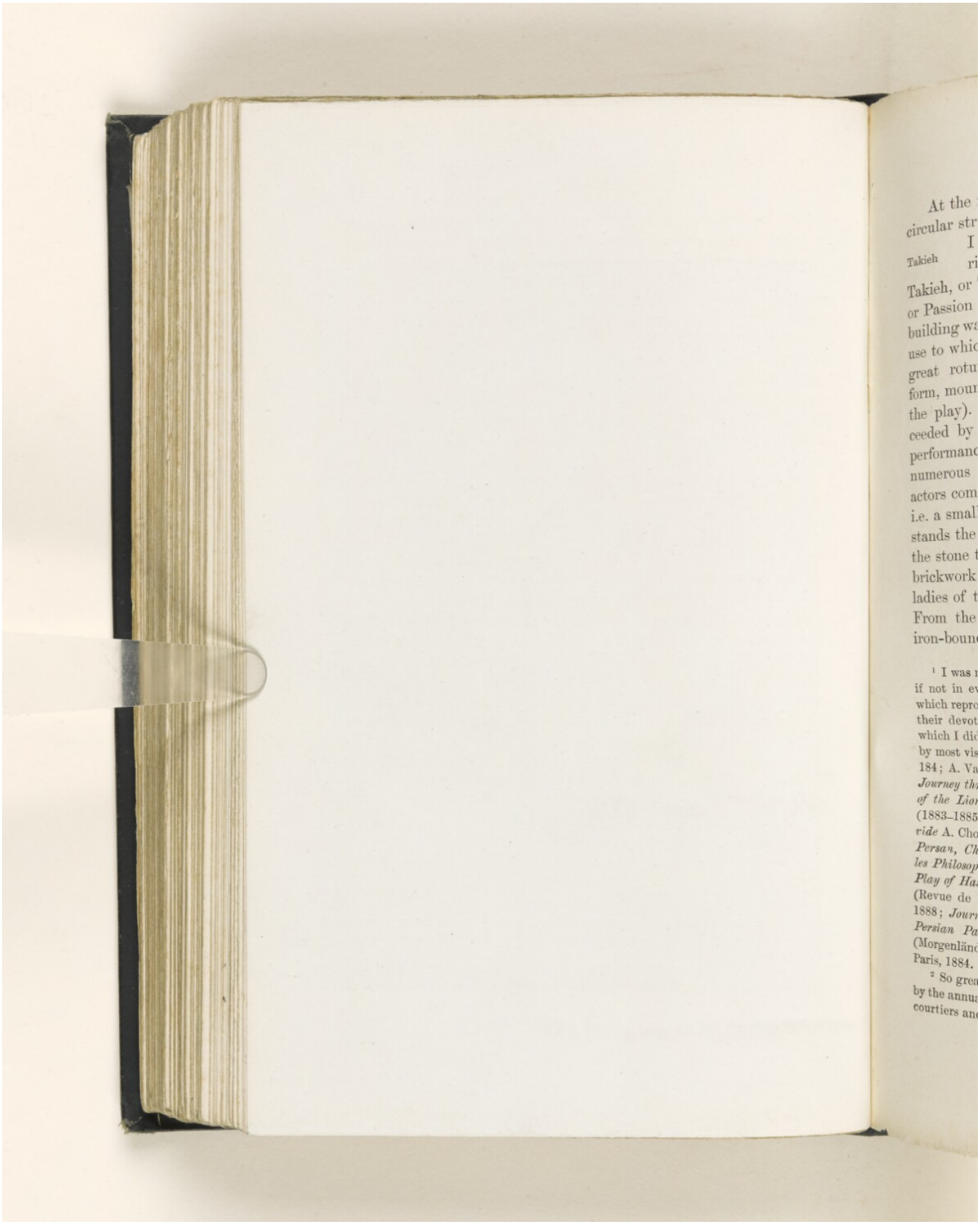


SHEMS-EL-IMARET



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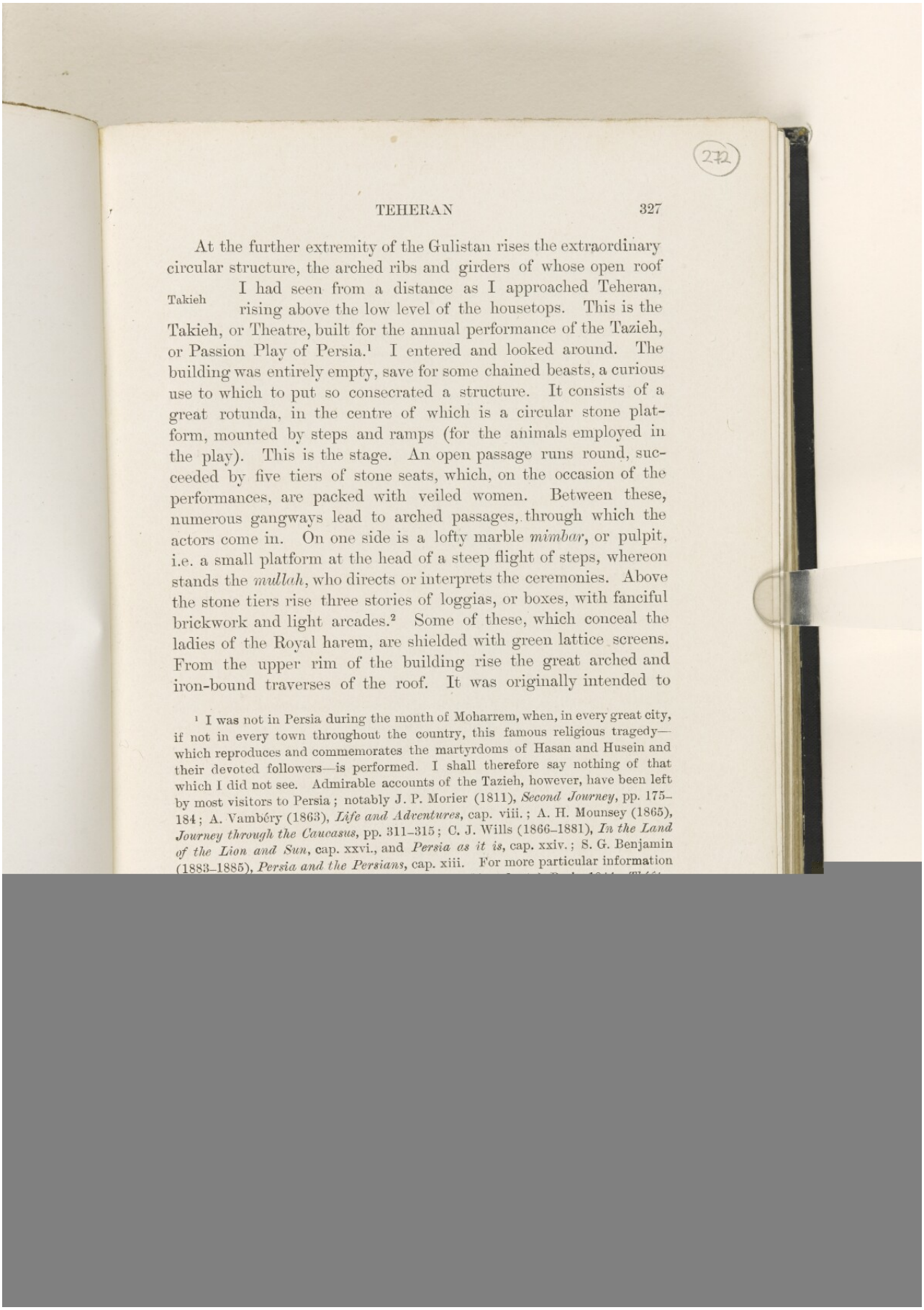




Takieh

At the further extremity of the Gulistan rises the extraordinary circular structure, the arched ribs and girders of whose open roof I had seen from a distance as I approached Teheran, rising above the low level of the housetops. This is the Takieh, or Theatre, built for the annual performance of the Tazieh, or Passion Play of Persia.[1] I entered and looked around. The building was entirely empty, save for some chained beasts, a curious use to which to put so consecrated a structure. It consists of a great rotunda, in the centre of which is a circular stone platform, mounted by steps and ramps (for the animals employed in the play). This is the stage. An open passage runs round, succeeded by five tiers of stone seats, which, on the occasion of the performances, are packed with veiled women. Between these, numerous gangways lead to arched passages, through which the actors come in. On one side is a lofty marble *mimbar*, or pulpit, i.e. a small platform at the head of a steep flight of steps, whereon stands the *mullah*, who directs or interprets the ceremonies. Above the stone tiers rise three stories of loggias, or boxes, with fanciful brickwork and light arcades.[2] Some of these, which conceal the ladies of the Royal harem, are shielded with green lattice screens. From the upper rim of the building rise the great arched and iron-bound traverses of the roof. It was originally intended to

[1] I was not in Persia during the month of Moharrem, when, in every great city, if not in every town throughout the country, this famous religious tragedy—which reproduces and commemorates the martyrdoms of Hasan and Husein and their devoted followers—is performed. I shall therefore say nothing of that which I did not see. Admirable accounts of the Tazieh, however, have been left by most visitors to Persia; notably J. P. Morier (1811), *Second Journey*, pp. 175–184; A. Vambéry (1863), *Life and Adventures*, cap. viii.; A. H. Mounsey (1865), *Journey through the Caucasus*, pp. 311–315; C. J. Wills (1866–1881), *In the Land of the Lion and Sun*, cap. xxvi., and *Persia as it is*, cap. xxiv.; S. G. Benjamin (1883–1885), *Persia and the Persians*, cap. xiii. For more particular information

cover the whole with a dome, the Shah, it is said, having been so much impressed with the Albert Hall in London, as to long for a reproduction in Teheran; but the substructure was found to be inadequate to the burden. Accordingly, these spans were thrown across and awnings are stretched over them when the play is acted in the heat of the day; the precise counterpart of the *velarium* of the Roman amphitheatre. As the drama is prolonged into the evening, light is gained from thousands of candles fixed in lustres against the walls. The electric light was introduced for a time, but is said to have been abandoned or to have proved a failure.

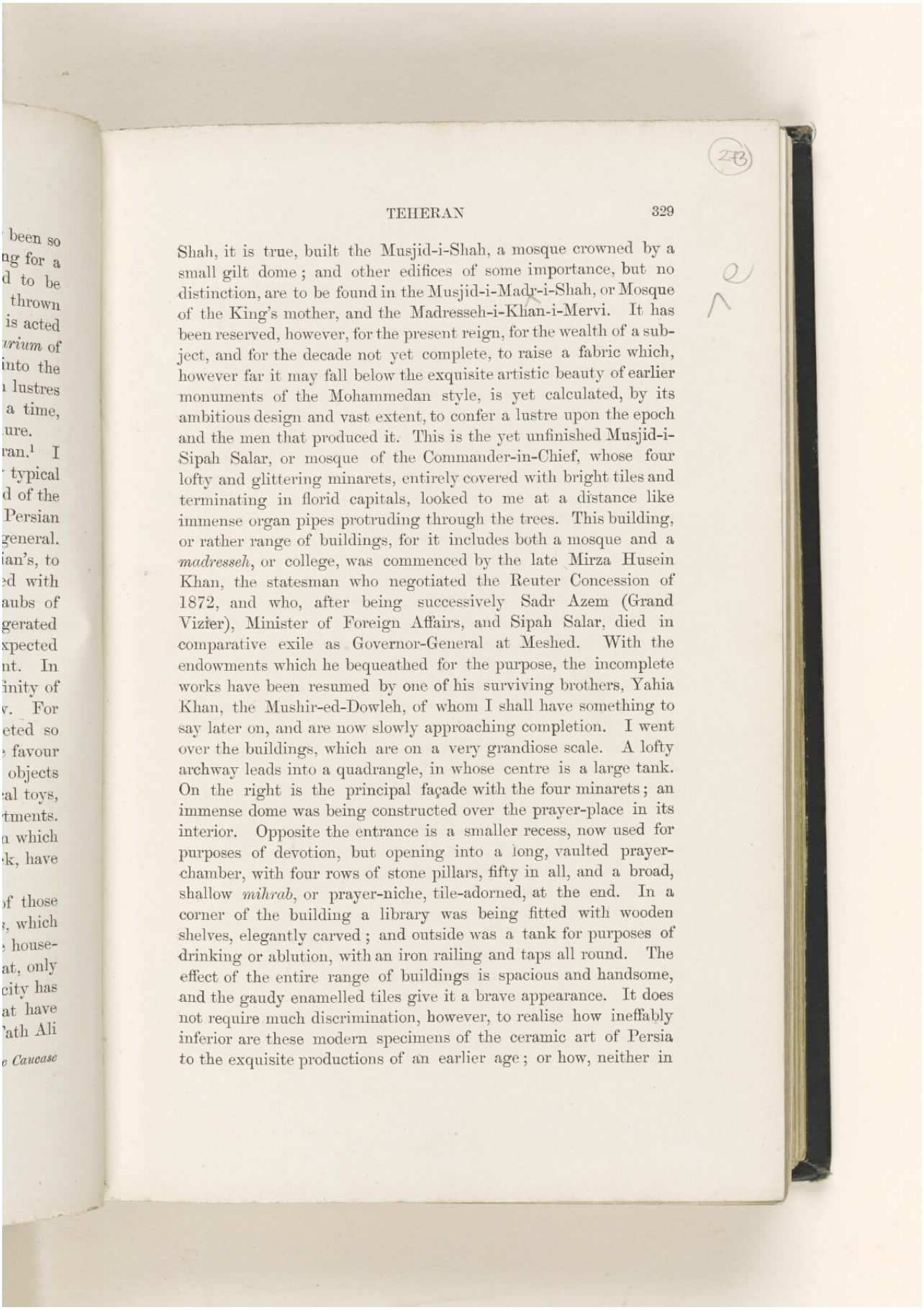
Such are the main features of the Royal Palace at Teheran.[1] I have described them at some length, as they are eloquently typical of the life of mingled splendour and frippery, and of the taste, half cultured and half debased, of the Persian monarch and, it may be said, of the Persian aristocracy in general. It is shocking, for instance, to our eye, but not to a Persian's, to see this beautiful garden, which Nature has co-operated with ingenious art to render pleasing, surrounded by hideous daubs of Persian soldiers painted upon the plaster walls, with the exaggerated disregard of all verisimilitude or proportion that might be expected of a street urchin who had stolen a brush and a pot of paint. In different parts of this building must be stored away an infinity of presents and works of art in addition to those which I saw. For in this century alone the various embassies who competed so gallantly, and it must also be said so extravagantly, for the favour of Fath Ali Shah, brought with them a mass of European objects and curiosities, from panelled coaches down to mechanical toys, not one tithe of which are exposed to view in the State apartments. Many, no doubt, have never been looked at since the day on which they were presented; or, having been playthings for a week, have been relegated to lumber rooms for a lifetime.

The remainder

For a great capital Teheran is singularly destitute of those immense religious edifices, whether mosques or *madressehs*, which tower, too often in a state of utter ruin, above the house-tops of most Oriental towns. The reason is that, only having become a capital, so to speak, in later life, the city has found no patron to endow it with the great structures that have immortalised the seats of government of earlier kings. Fath Ali

Mosques

[1] The best description of the Palace that I have seen is by Orsolle, *Le Caucase et la Perse*, cap. xvi.



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Shah, it is true, built the Musjid-i-Shah, a mosque crowned by a small gilt dome; and other edifices of some importance, but no distinction, are to be found in the Musjid-i-Madr-i-Shah, or Mosque of the King's mother, and the Madresseh-i-Khan-i-Mervi. It has been reserved, however, for the present reign, for the wealth of a subject, and for the decade not yet complete, to raise a fabric which, however far it may fall below the exquisite artistic beauty of earlier monuments of the Mohammedan style, is yet calculated, by its ambitious design and vast extent, to confer a lustre upon the epoch and the men that produced it. This is the yet unfinished Musjid-i-Sipah Salar, or mosque of the Commander-in-Chief, whose four lofty and glittering minarets, entirely covered with bright tiles and terminating in florid capitals, looked to me at a distance like immense organ pipes protruding through the trees. This building, or rather range of buildings, for it includes both a mosque and a *madresseh*, or college, was commenced by the late Mirza Husein Khan, the statesman who negotiated the Reuter Concession of 1872, and who, after being successively Sadr Azem (Grand Vizier), Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Sipah Salar, died in comparative exile as Governor-General at Meshed. With the endowments which he bequeathed for the purpose, the incomplete works have been resumed by one of his surviving brothers, Yahia Khan, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, of whom I shall have something to say later on, and are now slowly approaching completion. I went over the buildings, which are on a very grandiose scale. A lofty archway leads into a quadrangle, in whose centre is a large tank. On the right is the principal façade with the four minarets; an immense dome was being constructed over the prayer-place in its interior. Opposite the entrance is a smaller recess, now used for purposes of devotion, but opening into a long, vaulted prayer-chamber, with four rows of stone pillars, fifty in all, and a broad, shallow *mihrab*, or prayer-niche, tile-adorned, at the end. In a corner of the building a library was being fitted with wooden shelves, elegantly carved; and outside was a tank for purposes of drinking or ablution, with an iron railing and taps all round. The effect of the entire range of buildings is spacious and handsome, and the gaudy enamelled tiles give it a brave appearance. It does not require much discrimination, however, to realise how ineffably inferior are these modern specimens of the ceramic art of Persia to the exquisite productions of an earlier age; or how, neither in

design, execution, nor glaze, do they deserve to be considered works of art at all.

Bazaars

The bazaars of Teheran occupy a very considerable space in the old city; although, in common with the rest of the capital, they have experienced a much-needed renovation in the reign of the present king. The main entrance is from the street opposite the Shems-el-Imaret, and conducts, through an open courtyard containing a pool of water, and known as the Meidan-i-Sebz, into the dim, vaulted arcades which are so familiar to the wanderer in Eastern lands. The Teheran bazaars are vaulted throughout with a succession of low brick domes, and open frequently upon small courts or squares. They contain a number of spacious and well-built caravanserais; and there are few objects of Eastern use or consumption—from a saddle-horse to a tea-tray,—which cannot be there procured. European merchandise is exhibited on every other stall, and one of the first and most obvious discoveries is, that Persia clothes itself from Europe. Another of the most widely-spread but unintelligible of modern Persian tastes is abundantly illustrated, and can be inexpensively gratified, in the Teheran bazaars. This is the fondness, which seems to permeate all classes, from the Shah downwards, for lustres, candelabra, candle and lamp shades, and glass vases or ornaments of every conceivable description. I never entered a Persian prince's or nobleman's house without encountering a shop's window full of these articles, as a rule proudly stacked, as though they were rare treasures, upon a table; and I imagine that a Persian would have no hesitation in pronouncing the Crystal Palace to be the *maximum opus* of the world's architecture. I shall say nothing about the manner of shops or mode of selling, about the division of trades or scenes of barter, in the Teheran bazaars; for the reason that they are the same as in every other town in the East, and have been so frequently described as to be familiar even to those who have not seen them. I will merely say that, in arrangement, width of passage, size of shops, and general structural convenience, they are in advance of almost any Oriental bazaar that I have elsewhere seen, though inferior to those which I afterwards saw at Isfahan and Shiraz, and which may also be seen at Tabriz; but that, as a field of exploration for the curio-hunter or stranger, they are the most disappointing in the East. The vendors ask the most impossible

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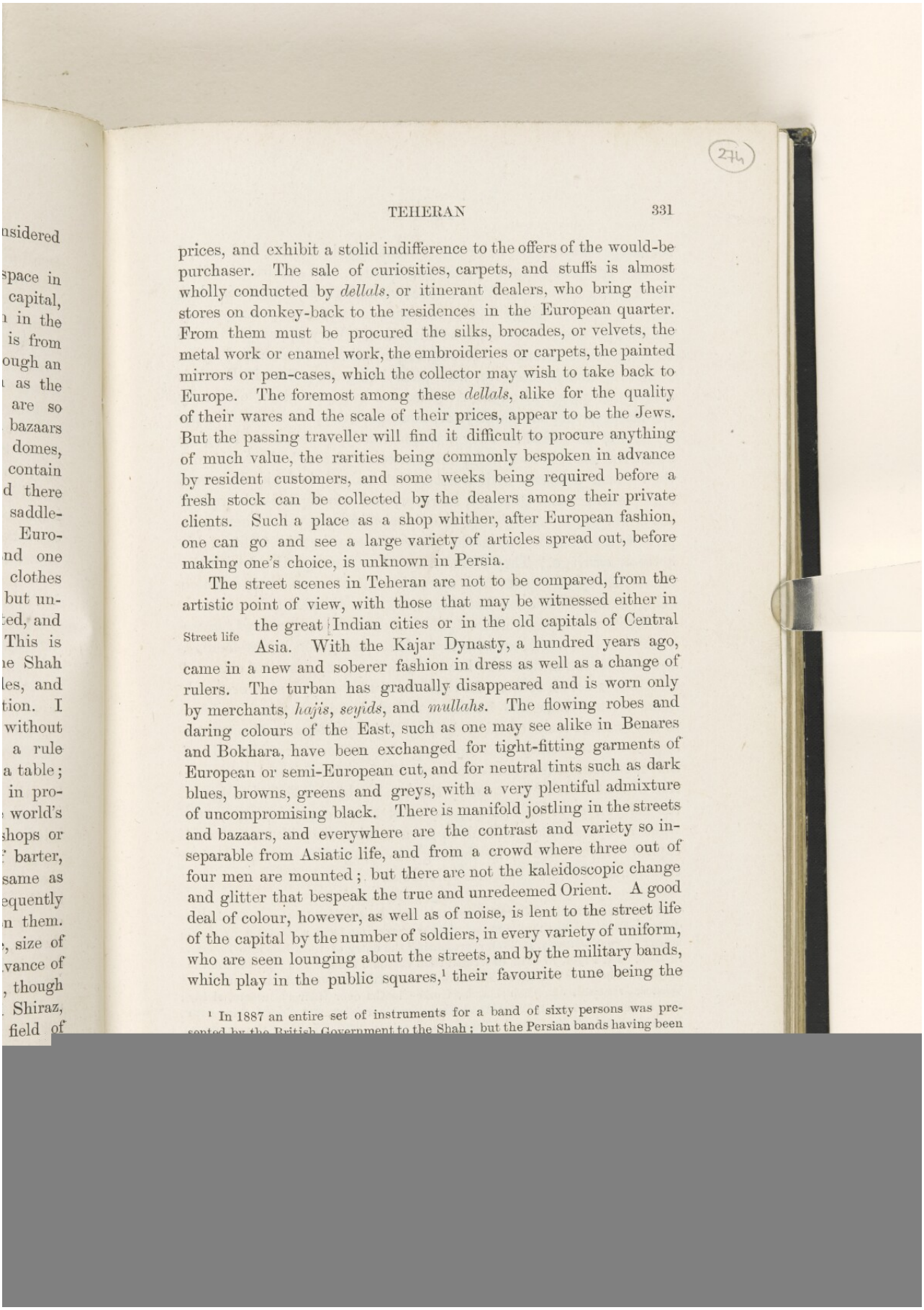


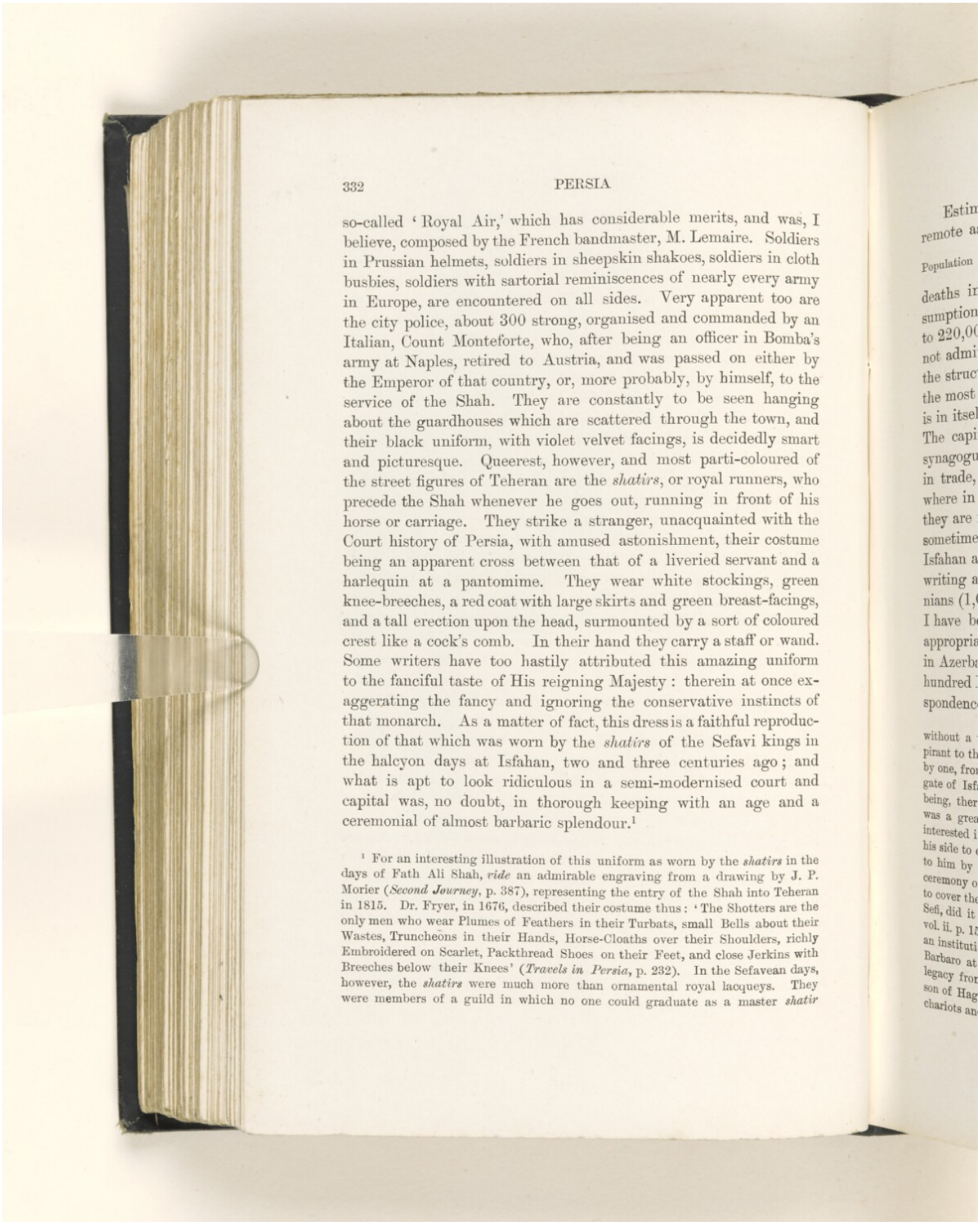


prices, and exhibit a stolid indifference to the offers of the would-be purchaser. The sale of curiosities, carpets, and stuffs is almost wholly conducted by *dellals*, or itinerant dealers, who bring their stores on donkey-back to the residences in the European quarter. From them must be procured the silks, brocades, or velvets, the metal work or enamel work, the embroideries or carpets, the painted mirrors or pen-cases, which the collector may wish to take back to Europe. The foremost among these *dellals*, alike for the quality of their wares and the scale of their prices, appear to be the Jews. But the passing traveller will find it difficult to procure anything of much value, the rarities being commonly bespoken in advance by resident customers, and some weeks being required before a fresh stock can be collected by the dealers among their private clients. Such a place as a shop whither, after European fashion, one can go and see a large variety of articles spread out, before making one's choice, is unknown in Persia.

Street life

The street scenes in Teheran are not to be compared, from the artistic point of view, with those that may be witnessed either in the great Indian cities or in the old capitals of Central Asia. With the Kajar Dynasty, a hundred years ago, came in a new and soberer fashion in dress as well as a change of rulers. The turban has gradually disappeared and is worn only by merchants, *hajis*, *seyids*, and *mullahs*. The flowing robes and daring colours of the East, such as one may see alike in Benares and Bokhara, have been exchanged for tight-fitting garments of European or semi-European cut, and for neutral tints such as dark blues, browns, greens and greys, with a very plentiful admixture of uncompromising black. There is manifold jostling in the streets and bazaars, and everywhere are the contrast and variety so inseparable from Asiatic life, and from a crowd where three out of four men are mounted; but there are not the kaleidoscopic change and glitter that bespeak the true and unredeemed Orient. A good deal of colour, however, as well as of noise, is lent to the street life of the capital by the number of soldiers, in every variety of uniform, who are seen lounging about the streets, and by the military bands, which play in the public squares,[1] their favourite tune being the

[1] In 1887 an entire set of instruments for a band of sixty persons was presented by the British Government to the Shah; but the Persian bands having been





so-called 'Royal Air,' which has considerable merits, and was, I believe, composed by the French bandmaster, M. Lemaire. Soldiers in Prussian helmets, soldiers in sheepskin shakoes, soldiers in cloth busbies, soldiers with sartorial reminiscences of nearly every army in Europe, are encountered on all sides. Very apparent too are the city police, about 300 strong, organised and commanded by an Italian, Count Monteforte, who, after being an officer in Bomba's army at Naples, retired to Austria, and was passed on either by the Emperor of that country, or, more probably, by himself, to the service of the Shah. They are constantly to be seen hanging about the guardhouses which are scattered through the town, and their black uniform, with violet velvet facings, is decidedly smart and picturesque. Queerest, however, and most parti-coloured of the street figures of Teheran are the *shatirs*, or royal runners, who precede the Shah whenever he goes out, running in front of his horse or carriage. They strike a stranger, unacquainted with the Court history of Persia, with amused astonishment, their costume being an apparent cross between that of a liveried servant and a harlequin at a pantomime. They wear white stockings, green knee-breeches, a red coat with large skirts and green breast-facings, and a tall erection upon the head, surmounted by a sort of coloured crest like a cock's comb. In their hand they carry a staff or wand. Some writers have too hastily attributed this amazing uniform to the fanciful taste of His reigning Majesty: therein at once exaggerating the fancy and ignoring the conservative instincts of that monarch. As a matter of fact, this dress is a faithful reproduction of that which was worn by the *shatirs* of the Sefavi kings in the halcyon days at Isfahan, two and three centuries ago; and what is apt to look ridiculous in a semi-modernised court and capital was, no doubt, in thorough keeping with an age and a ceremonial of almost barbaric splendour.[1]

[1] For an interesting illustration of this uniform as worn by the *shatirs* in the days of Fath Ali Shah, *vide* an admirable engraving from a drawing by J. P. Morier (*Second Journey*, p. 387), representing the entry of the Shah into Teheran in 1815. Dr. Fryer, in 1676, described their costume thus: 'The Shotters are the only men who wear Plumes of Feathers in their Turbats, small Bells about their Wastes, Truncheons in their Hands, Horse-Cloaths over their Shoulders, richly Embroidered on Scarlet, Packthread Shoes on their Feet, and close Jerkins with Breeches below their Knees' (*Travels in Persia*, p. 232). In the Sefavean days, however, the *shatirs* were much more than ornamental royal lacqueys. They were members of a guild in which no one could graduate as a master *shatir*

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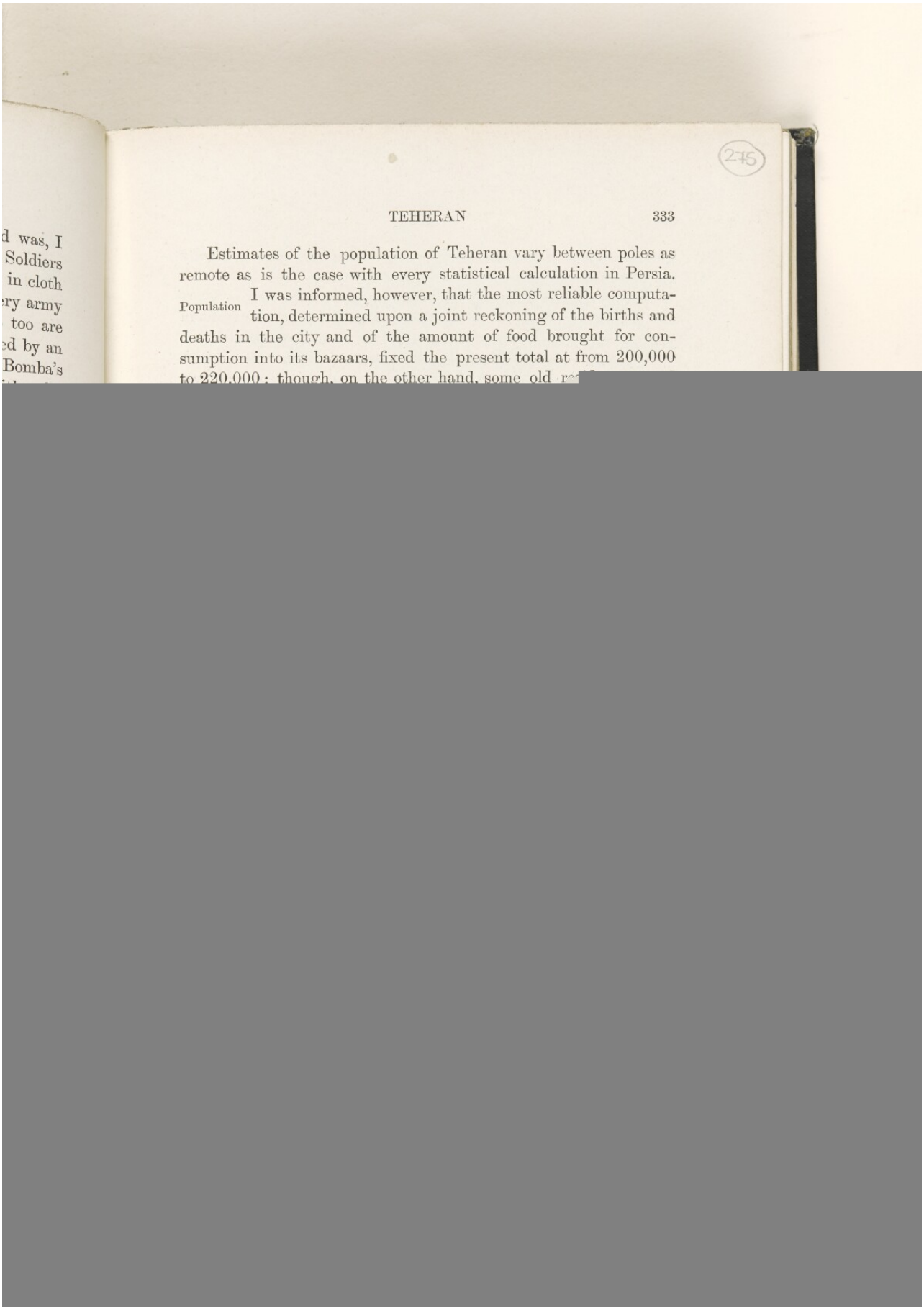
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TEHERAN 333
Estimates of the population of Teheran vary between poles as remote as is the case with every statistical calculation in Persia.
Population
I was informed, however, that the most reliable computation, determined upon a joint reckoning of the births and deaths in the city and of the amount of food brought for consumption into its bazaars, fixed the present total at from 200,000

The gardeners of the British Legation were once almost wholly recruited from this class.[1]

But by far the most startling consequence of the new order of things is the increase in the number of Europeans now resident in the capital. As late as 1851 Mr. Binning reported that the only European foreigners were the staffs of the various Legations, a few officers in the army (the majority having left because they could not get their pay), two or three French and Italian shopkeepers, and an Englishman employed by the Shah to translate the foreign journals to him and to edit his own pet newspaper. In 1865 Mr. Mounsey found this total swollen to fifty. But at the time of my visit, in the autumn and winter of 1889, it was estimated to have risen to nearly 500 persons. The increase is not in the official element. They—i.e. the diplomats, the officers of the Telegraph Department, a few Austrian and Russian officers in the army, and one or two other employés of the Persian Government—remain at about the same figure. So, it may be said, do the missionaries, the merchants, and the few globe-trotters who may be annually driven by a vagabond fancy to Teheran. It is in the large number of speculators, small traders, would-be concessionaries, wandering *chevaliers d'industrie*, *et hoc genus omne*—all the goodly crew, in fact, who live to illustrate the phrase that 'where the carcase is, there will the eagles [surely a mistranslation for vultures!] be gathered together'—it is in these that the main increase has taken place; and in time we may expect the streets of Teheran to present as many models of the sartorial degradation of Europe as do those of Cairo or Constantinople. The elements of this polyglot, but, unfortunately, monochrome, society are necessarily thrown somewhat together; and in their idiosyncrasies, foibles, combinations, rivalries, and projects is to be found an inexhaustible fund of local gossip, as well as almost the sole source of non-political interest.

European element

There is but one Embassy at Teheran—that which is occupied by the representative of the Sultan: a compliment which could hardly fail to be exchanged between the two great Mohammedan Powers. Europe is, however, represented by

Foreign Legations

[1] Guebre, which means 'infidel,' and is the same as Giaour, is, of course, not their own name, but only a term of opprobrium applied to them by the Mussulmans. Until 1882 they paid a special *jezieh* or poll-tax to the Persian Government; but, through the intervention of the British Legation, this invidious tax was repealed.

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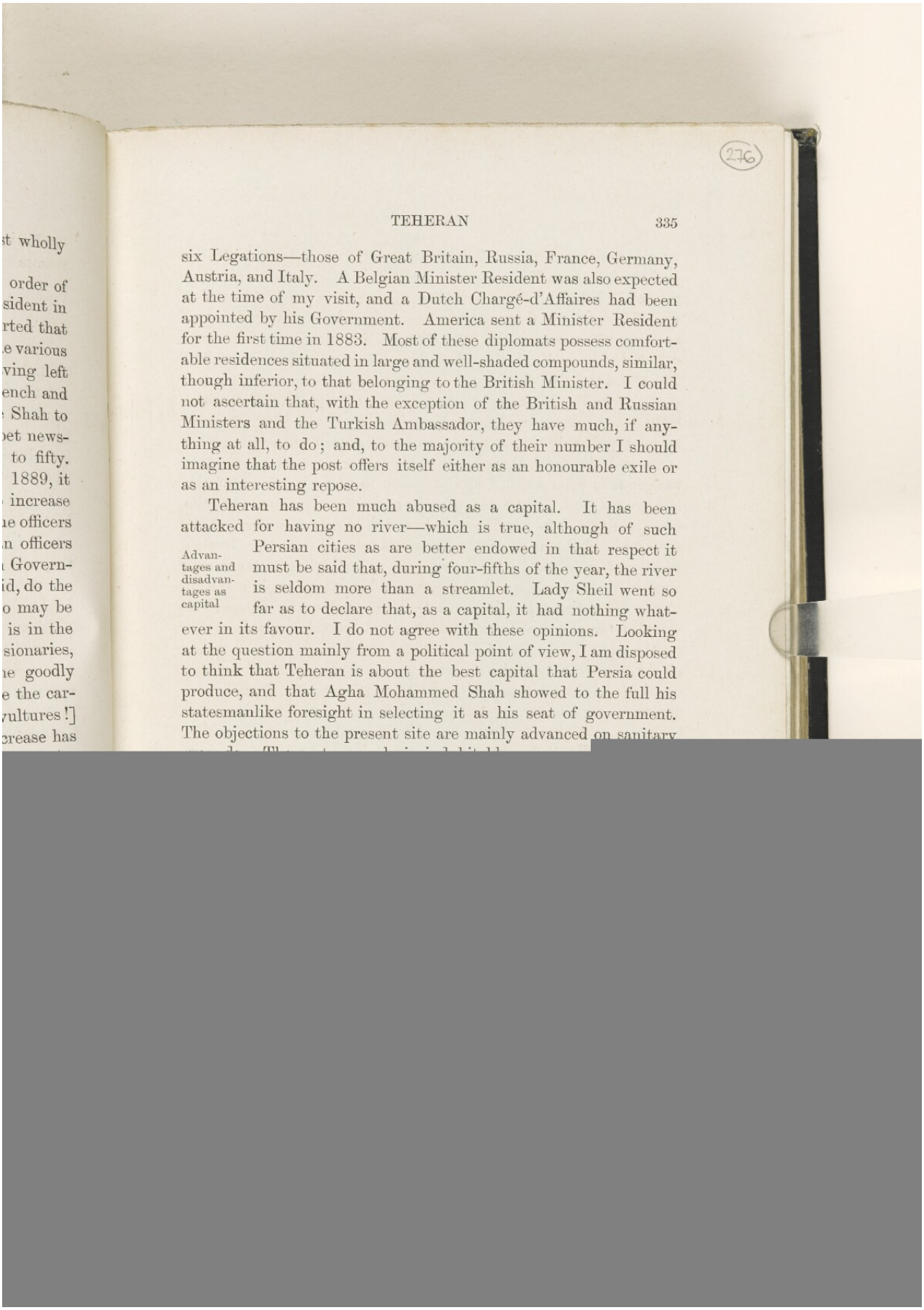




six Legations—those of Great Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. A Belgian Minister Resident was also expected at the time of my visit, and a Dutch Chargé-d'Affaires had been appointed by his Government. America sent a Minister Resident for the first time in 1883. Most of these diplomats possess comfortable residences situated in large and well-shaded compounds, similar, though inferior, to that belonging to the British Minister. I could not ascertain that, with the exception of the British and Russian Ministers and the Turkish Ambassador, they have much, if anything at all, to do; and, to the majority of their number I should imagine that the post offers itself either as an honourable exile or as an interesting repose.

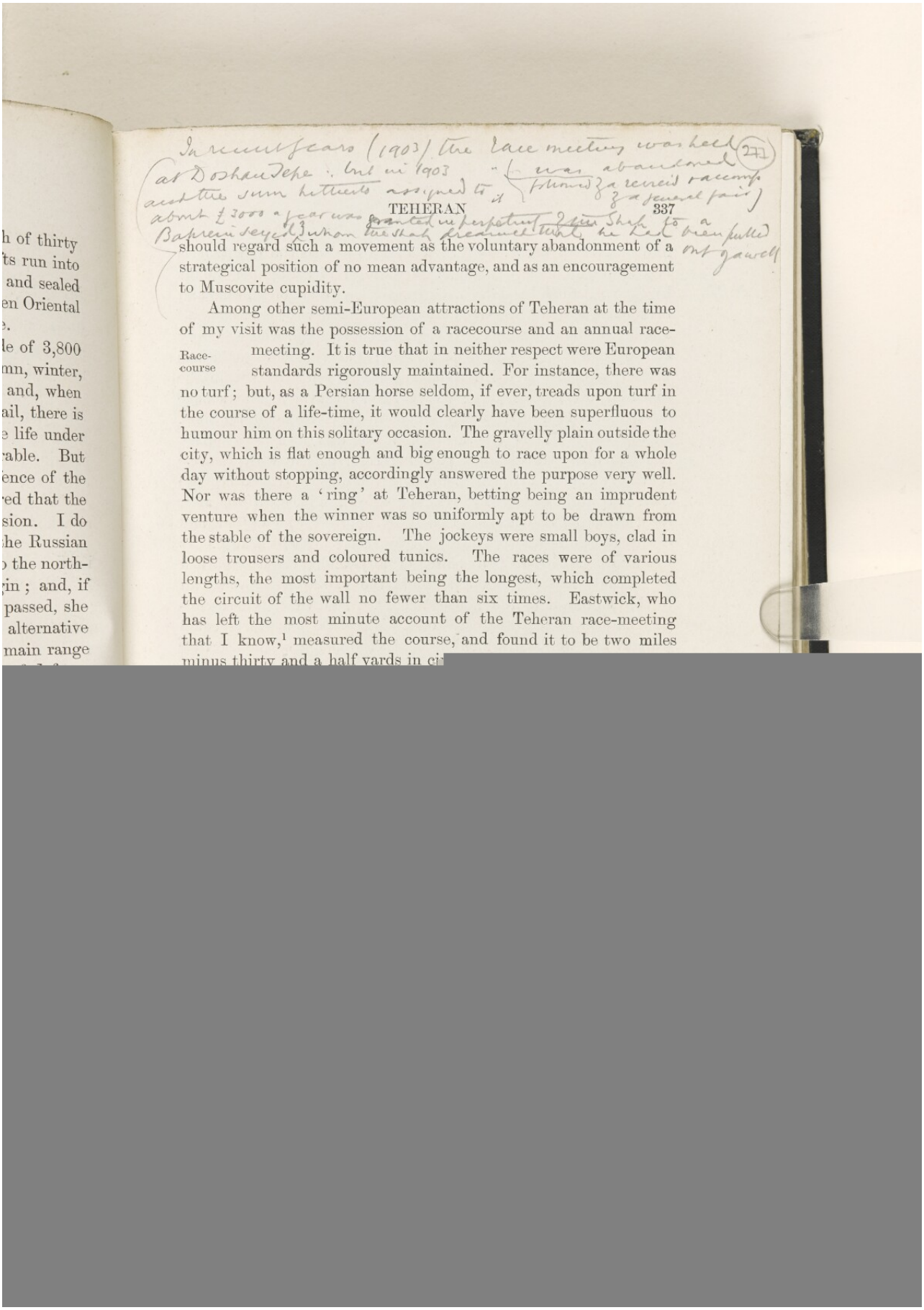
Advantages and disadvantages as capital

Teheran has been much abused as a capital. It has been attacked for having no river—which is true, although of such Persian cities as are better endowed in that respect it must be said that, during four-fifths of the year, the river is seldom more than a streamlet. Lady Sheil went so far as to declare that, as a capital, it had nothing whatever in its favour. I do not agree with these opinions. Looking at the question mainly from a political point of view, I am disposed to think that Teheran is about the best capital that Persia could produce, and that Agha Mohammed Shah showed to the full his statesmanlike foresight in selecting it as his seat of government. The objections to the present site are mainly advanced on sanitary

provided with a shaft, sunk into the ground to a depth of thirty or forty feet, from the bottom of which four lateral shafts run into the soil. When all these are filled, the whole is closed and sealed up. This certainly does not sound very nice: but between Oriental systems of sewerage it would be difficult to discriminate.

On the other hand, the city is situated at an altitude of 3,800 feet above the sea; during the greater part of the autumn, winter, and spring months the climate is delightful; and, when the scorching heats of summer begin to prevail, there is an easy and rapid retreat to the mountain-slopes, where life under tents and the trees, though not exhilarating, is endurable. But the grounds upon which I should prefer to rest my defence of the site are political. Here, too, adverse critics have declared that the city lies exposed to Russian attack and invites aggression. I do not agree. Teheran is nearly 500 miles by road from the Russian frontier at Julfa, on the Araxes, whence, as conducting to the north-west capital, Tabriz, an invasion would doubtless begin; and, if Persia did not stop Russia before those 500 miles were passed, she would never stop her anywhere. The sole remaining alternative on the north is the Resht-Kazvin route, crossing the main range of the Elburz, than which an army posted for purposes of defence could not solicit a better position. If, on the other hand, as I have argued in my chapter upon Khorasan, invasion were to come from the north-east quarter, how much better would the Shah be able to meet it from Teheran, than from Isfahan. The choice of a capital must, however, in the main, be determined, not by its exposure, or the reverse to a single possible enemy, but by its central or centralising position, and by its ready command of the routes leading to the most valuable provinces of the kingdom. It is in this respect that Teheran is so admirably placed. Situated but little more than midway between the eastern and western capitals, Meshed and Tabriz, it commands the important provinces of which they are the governing centres. At the same time, it is in close proximity to, and in easy yet defensible communication with, the northern maritime provinces, for which it may hereafter require to strike a blow. Lastly, it stands as a sort of advanced outpost to the elder capitals of Isfahan and Shiraz, upon which, in the event of disaster in the north, it would always be possible to fall back. So far, therefore, from thinking that Persia would be the better or the stronger for a change of capital to a more southerly site, I

Political merits



In recent years (1903) the race meeting was held at Doshan Tepe: but in 1903 was abandoned and the sum hitherto assigned to it (followed by a recreid & accomp. by a general fair) about £3000 a year was granted in perpetuity by the Shah to a Bahrein seyed, whom the Shah dreamed that he had been pulled out of a well



should regard such a movement as the voluntary abandonment of a strategical position of no mean advantage, and as an encouragement to Muscovite cupidity.

Race-course

Among other semi-European attractions of Teheran at the time of my visit was the possession of a racecourse and an annual race-meeting. It is true that in neither respect were European standards rigorously maintained. For instance, there was no turf; but, as a Persian horse seldom, if ever, treads upon turf in the course of a life-time, it would clearly have been superfluous to humour him on this solitary occasion. The gravelly plain outside the city, which is flat enough and big enough to race upon for a whole day without stopping, accordingly answered the purpose very well. Nor was there a 'ring' at Teheran, betting being an imprudent venture when the winner was so uniformly apt to be drawn from the stable of the sovereign. The jockeys were small boys, clad in loose trousers and coloured tunics. The races were of various lengths, the most important being the longest, which completed the circuit of the wall no fewer than six times. Eastwick, who has left the most minute account of the Teheran race-meeting that I know,[1] measured the course, and found it to be two miles minus thirty and a half yards in ci

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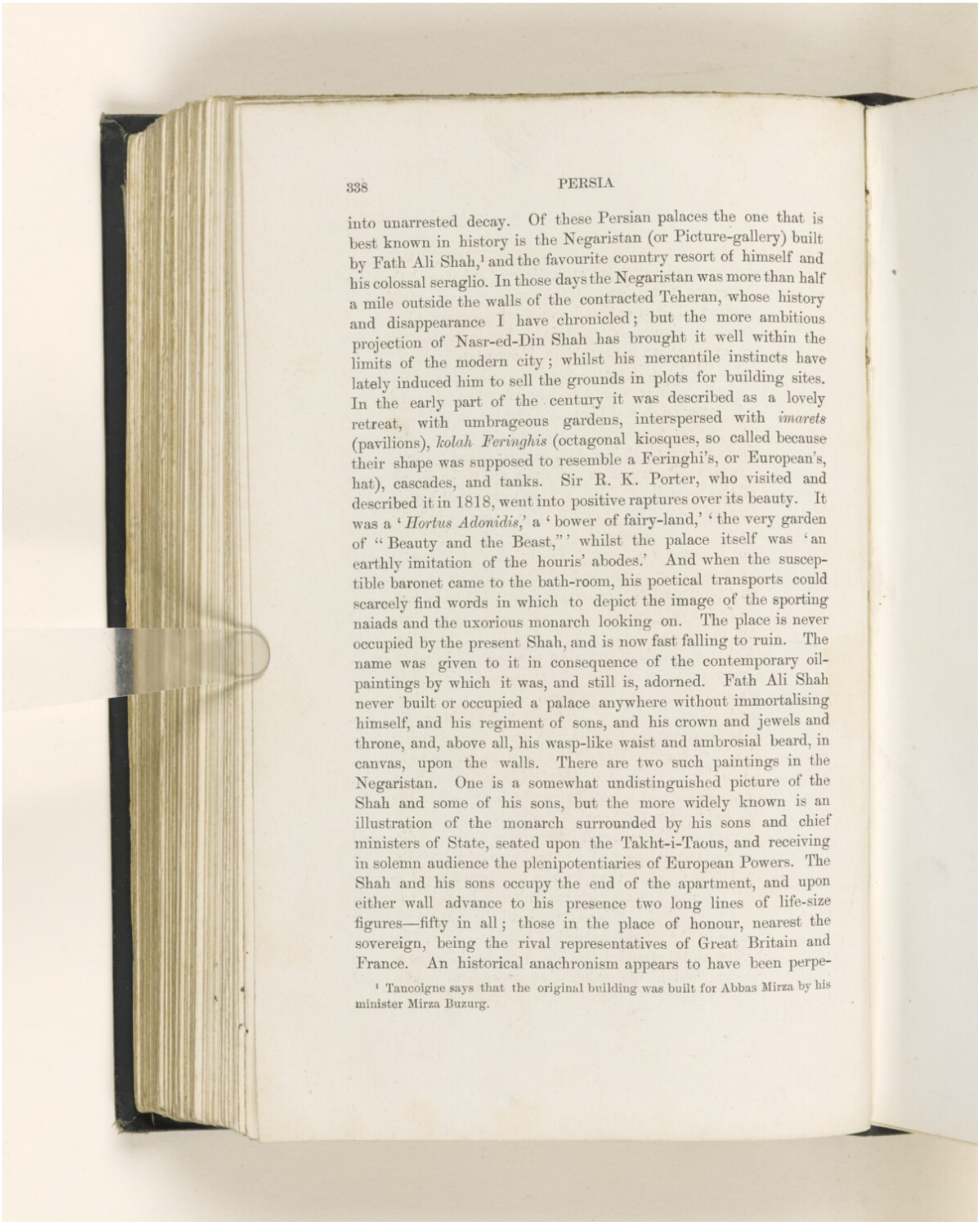



into unarrested decay. Of these Persian palaces the one that is best known in history is the Negaristan (or Picture-gallery) built by Fath Ali Shah,[1] and the favourite country resort of himself and his colossal seraglio. In those days the Negaristan was more than half a mile outside the walls of the contracted Teheran, whose history and disappearance I have chronicled; but the more ambitious projection of Nasr-ed-Din Shah has brought it well within the limits of the modern city; whilst his mercantile instincts have lately induced him to sell the grounds in plots for building sites. In the early part of the century it was described as a lovely retreat, with umbrageous gardens, interspersed with *imarets* (pavilions), *kolah Feringhis* (octagonal kiosques, so called because their shape was supposed to resemble a Feringhi's, or European's, hat), cascades, and tanks. Sir R. K. Porter, who visited and described it in 1818, went into positive raptures over its beauty. It was a '*Hortus Adonidis*,' a 'bower of fairy-land,' 'the very garden of "Beauty and the Beast,"' whilst the palace itself was 'an earthly imitation of the houris' abodes.' And when the susceptible baronet came to the bath-room, his poetical transports could scarcely find words in which to depict the image of the sporting naiads and the uxorious monarch looking on. The place is never occupied by the present Shah, and is now fast falling to ruin. The name was given to it in consequence of the contemporary oil-paintings by which it was, and still is, adorned. Fath Ali Shah never built or occupied a palace anywhere without immortalising himself, and his regiment of sons, and his crown and jewels and throne, and, above all, his wasp-like waist and ambrosial beard, in canvas, upon the walls. There are two such paintings in the Negaristan. One is a somewhat undistinguished picture of the Shah and some of his sons, but the more widely known is an illustration of the monarch surrounded by his sons and chief ministers of State, seated upon the Takht-i-Taous, and receiving in solemn audience the plenipotentiaries of European Powers. The Shah and his sons occupy the end of the apartment, and upon either wall advance to his presence two long lines of life-size figures—fifty in all; those in the place of honour, nearest the sovereign, being the rival representatives of Great Britain and France. An historical anachronism appears to have been perpe-

[1] Tancoigne says that the original building was built for Abbas Mirza by his minister Mirza Buzurg.

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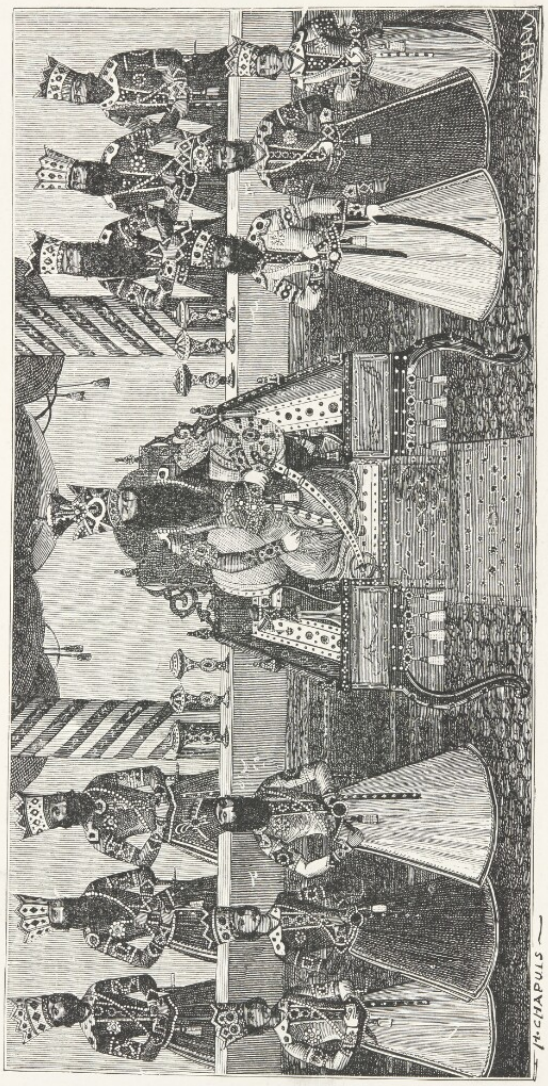
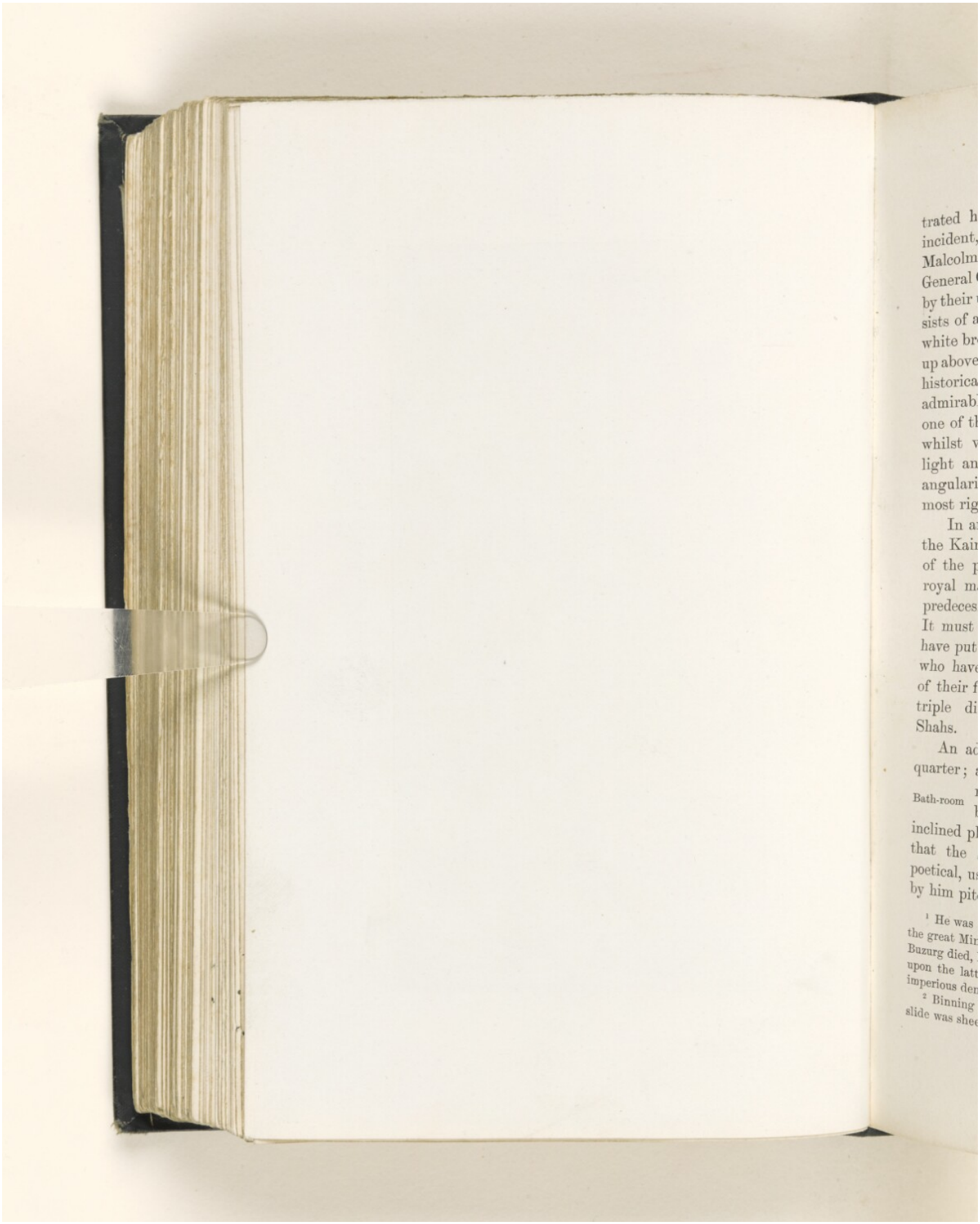


PAINTING OF FATH ALI SHAH AND SONS



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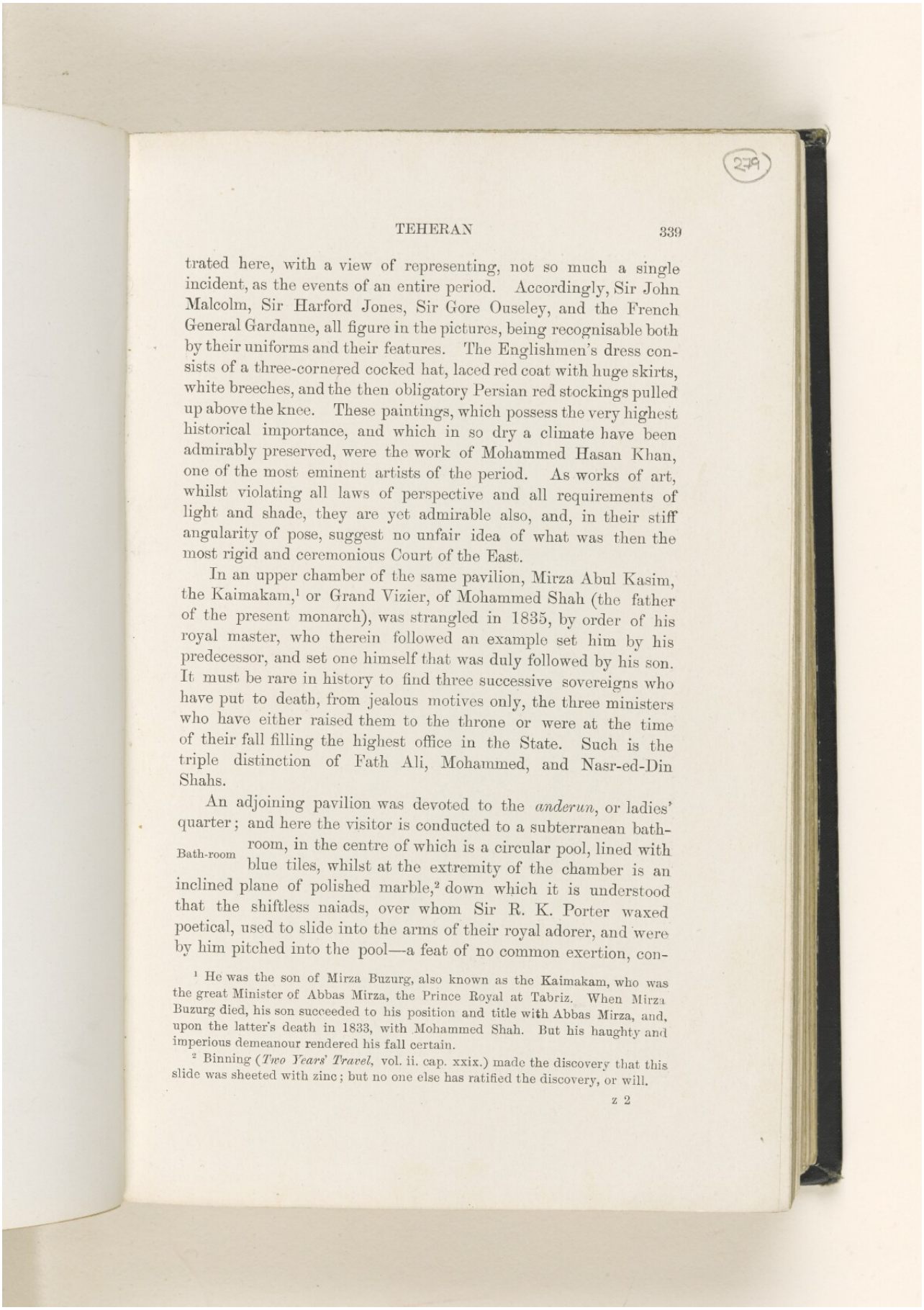



trated here, with a view of representing, not so much a single incident, as the events of an entire period. Accordingly, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, Sir Gore Ouseley, and the French General Gardanne, all figure in the pictures, being recognisable both by their uniforms and their features. The Englishmen's dress consists of a three-cornered cocked hat, laced red coat with huge skirts, white breeches, and the then obligatory Persian red stockings pulled up above the knee. These paintings, which possess the very highest historical importance, and which in so dry a climate have been admirably preserved, were the work of Mohammed Hasan Khan, one of the most eminent artists of the period. As works of art, whilst violating all laws of perspective and all requirements of light and shade, they are yet admirable also, and, in their stiff angularity of pose, suggest no unfair idea of what was then the most rigid and ceremonious Court of the East.

In an upper chamber of the same pavilion, Mirza Abul Kasim, the Kaimakam,[1] or Grand Vizier, of Mohammed Shah (the father of the present monarch), was strangled in 1835, by order of his royal master, who therein followed an example set him by his predecessor, and set one himself that was duly followed by his son. It must be rare in history to find three successive sovereigns who have put to death, from jealous motives only, the three ministers who have either raised them to the throne or were at the time of their fall filling the highest office in the State. Such is the triple distinction of Fath Ali, Mohammed, and Nasr-ed-Din Shahs.

An adjoining pavilion was devoted to the *anderun*, or ladies' quarter; and here the visitor is conducted to a subterranean bath-room, in the centre of which is a circular pool, lined with blue tiles, whilst at the extremity of the chamber is an inclined plane of polished marble,[2] down which it is understood that the shiftless naiads, over whom Sir R. K. Porter waxed poetical, used to slide into the arms of their royal adorer, and were by him pitched into the pool—a feat of no common exertion, con-

Bath-room

[1] He was the son of Mirza Buzurg, also known as the Kaimakam, who was the great Minister of Abbas Mirza, the Prince Royal at Tabriz. When Mirza Buzurg died, his son succeeded to his position and title with Abbas Mirza, and, upon the latter's death in 1833, with Mohammed Shah. But his haughty and imperious demeanour rendered his fall certain.

[2] Binning (*Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. cap. xxix.) made the discovery that this slide was sheeted with zinc; but no one else has ratified the discovery, or will.



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sidering that it is at some distance. I will refrain from reflections about the 'vanished peals of laughter and the songs once warbled by ruby lips,' leaving such flights of the fancy to the late American Minister in Persia, who was well qualified to bear the vacant mantle of Sir R. K. Porter.[1]

Outside the walls the most conspicuous eminences and the most advantageous sites have likewise been monopolised by the palace-building craze of the Kajar dynasty. Of these edifices the most prominent in any view of Teheran is that known as the Kasr-i-Kajar (Castle of the Kajars, irreverently transliterated by the English sergeants who came to Persia in the first quarter of the century to instruct the native army, as 'Castle Cadger'), or Takht-i-Kajar—i.e. Throne of the Kajars. It is situated upon an elevation about two miles to the north of the modern walls. From a distance this building has a most imposing appearance, for it rises from a base of foliage in a number of white tiers, one above the other, culminating in a sort of castle at the top.[2] The Persians entertain the most grotesque notions of its architectural importance, and have been known to assert its superiority to Windsor Castle or Versailles. A nearer approach dissipates the fond but foolish illusion. It is then seen to merit comparison with a European palace, whether of sovereign or of subject, about as appositely as might a harbour bumboat with a man-of-war; the successive tiers consisting only of earthen terraces faced with brick, and once adorned with lakes and fountains, which, like most such things in Persia, have gone to ruin. The palace at the top contains a variety of pictures of scenes and persons dating from the time of Fath Ali Shah, and in one of the pavilions in the grounds is, or was, a portrait of the English 'Beau Brummel' of Persia, Istarji, or Strachey, who accompanied Sir John Malcolm's Mission, and created such an impression as an Adonis that Fath Ali Shah composed an ode in his honour and had his picture painted for most of his palaces here and at Isfahan. In the Kasr-i-Kajar he was framed between the mythic heroes, Zal and Afrasiab—an apotheosis which I am not aware that any other Englishman has ever attained. When the King moved with the

Kasr-i-Kajar

[1] *Persia and the Persians*, p. 78.

[2] Illustrations of the Kasr-i-Kajar appear in the works of Malcolm, Morier, Ouseley, etc.; but by far the best are a number of plates in P. Coste's sumptuous work, *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*, Pl. lviii., lix., lx.

pick of his harem in the summer months to Sultanieh, the rest of the ladies were left behind in this castle. He is said to have contented himself with the modest total of one hundred upon these occasions, but Persian tradition fixes the number of the disconsolates as seven hundred.

Other palaces, or summer villas, or shooting-boxes of the Shah,



PALACE OF ESHRETABAD

on the northern side of the capital, are Sultanetabad, 600 feet above Gulahek on the hill-slope, a building constructed by the present Shah, and adorned with Persian frescoes of European, and particularly of English, scenes, among which may be noticed the Lobby of the House of Commons, the interior of a fine London restaurant, and the nave of a cathedral; showing that His Majesty has most accurately discerned the three leading influences

Other palaces

in the lives of Englishmen;[1] Eshretabad, a very pretty place, of which I give an illustration, where the main pavilion is occupied by the Shah, and seventeen smaller pavilions, situated round a lake, by the ladies who accompany him (a creditable reduction from the standards of his great grandfather), and where also is to be seen a painting of Fath Ali seated in durbar with the foreign ambassadors before him; Niaveran, or Nioberan; Agdasieh, near Niaveran; Nejefabad; and Suleimanieh, of which I have spoken in Chapter II. These are all in the immediate neighbourhood of Teheran, and the majority of them are situated on the hill-slope known as Shimran,[2] a cultivated belt extending for a length of about twenty miles along the base of the great scarp of the Elburz, that towers like a prodigious natural rampart above the plain of Teheran on the north. Fath Ali Shah set the example of retreat to this cooler, because more elevated, site; and the large number of trees and gardens which have been planted in consequence of its since universal adoption is said to have had a very appreciable effect in lowering the temperature and increasing the rainfall of the capital.

Doshan-Tepe

One result of the royal partiality for suburban residences has been the construction or the improvement of the roads that lead thereto from the city. A very passable road, planted for the most part with trees, leads to Gulahek on the north; and another such road, affording the solitary carriage-drive of Teheran, conducts between stiff rows of poplars in a straight line north-east, towards yet another villa, known, from the rocky eminence on which it is placed, as Doshan-Tepe (or the Rabbit Hill). The rock is an ugly excrescence from the plain at the distance of three miles from the city; and the palace is from the outside a yet uglier excrescence upon the rock. It is, however, a favourite hunting-lodge of the Shah's when he goes shooting in the neighbouring mountains, which are kept as a royal preserve. At the foot of the rock is a large and shady garden, where, in a long row of cages or dens, are kept the wild beasts of the Shah's menagerie. The animals themselves struck me as fine specimens, but they were badly housed, and their number was small. The popularity of the place, however, as

[1] Excellent descriptions of this palace are given by Stack (*Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. pp. 155–157), and Orsolle (*Le Caucase et la Perse*, pp. 283–5).

[2] The popular etymology—Shem-i-Iran, i.e. Light of Iran—is again absurd. Shimran is an old Persian word, the origin and meaning of which are unknown.

a sort of Iranian Jardin des Plantes, or Zoo, is evidenced by the rent of 500 *krans* per annum exacted by the crown from the lessee of a small coffee-house at the entrance of the garden. In the neighbourhood of Doshan-Tepe are two other royal shooting-boxes, Kasr Firuz to the south, and Surkheh Hissar to the north. Further to the east is a more considerable hunting-lodge on the banks of the Jajrud.

The Shah, as I have indicated, is not the sole patron of the slopes of Shimran. His sons and the nobility in general have followed the royal example, and there are many tasteful and beautiful residences perched on the hill-sides or hidden in the valleys. Of these, by no means the least agreeable is the summer residence of the British Legation in the village of Gulahek, about six miles from the northern gate of the capital, and said to be 700 feet higher in elevation. The seignorial rights of this village—the lordship of the manor, in fact—were presented by Mohammed Shah to Sir John Campbell in 1835; the grounds and garden, in which stand the Minister's residence, were the gift of the reigning sovereign. Under the terms of these concessions the villagers of Gulahek, which consists of about 100 houses, enjoy quite peculiar privileges, being exempt from the obligations both of conscription and of the billeting of troops. Their assessment is payable to the British Government, and is levied by the Legation. Petty jurisdiction is exercised among them by a village *kedkhoda* (or headman), who is nominated by the British Minister, and is responsible to the member of the Legation invested with Consular functions. As at Teheran, there are more than one edifice in the enclosure belonging to the Mission; but the main building alone is of any size. This is supplemented by a great Indian durbar-tent, which is pitched outside and serves as a dining and drawing room during the summer months. The surrounding garden is a dense thicket of trees, and, though not comparable with what we style a garden here, is yet far better adapted to the torrid climate, from which its shade in the summer affords an invaluable protection. The recent purchase of a neighbouring garden, with its water-supply (every gallon of the precious fluid having a well-ascertained and costly market value), has added to the attractions of a residence without which it would be impossible for the staff of a European Legation to remain at the capital during the hot months. Russia is similarly favoured in the possession of the

British Legation at Gulahek

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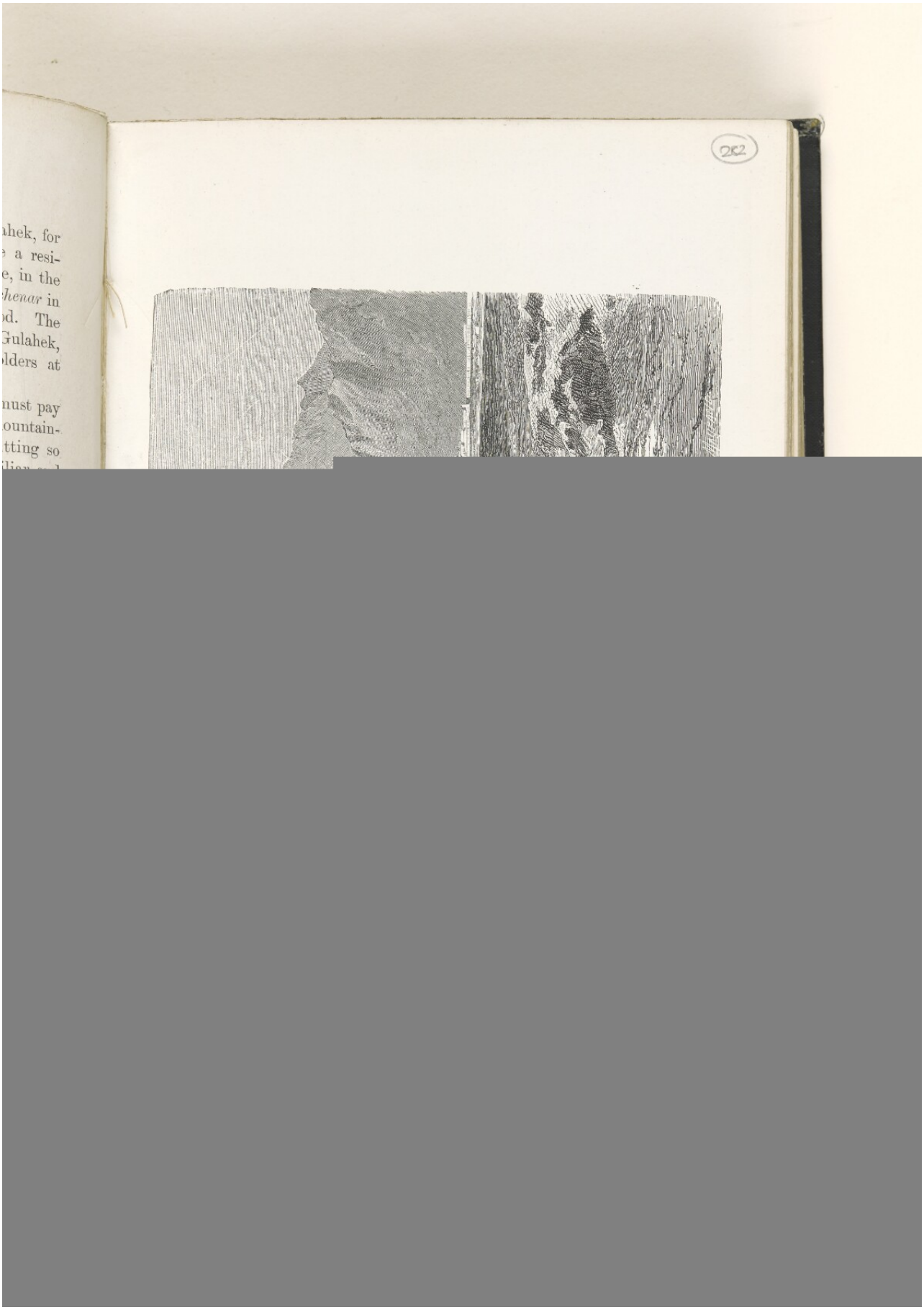
village of Zargandeh, a little to the north-west of Gulahek, for which they claim analogous privileges. The French lease a residence at Tejrish, a mile higher up the mountain, where, in the court of an *imamzadeh*, is what claims to be the largest *chenar* in Persia. The Turks own grounds in the same neighbourhood. The Germans were till recently tenants of the English in Gulahek, and now live at Dizashub. The Austrians are leaseholders at Rustamabad.

Demavend

Before I quit the northern outskirts of Teheran I must pay the tribute of one more parting paragraph to the mighty mountain-sentinel Demavend. The shapely white cone, cutting so keenly and so high into the air, becomes so familiar and cherished a figure in the daily landscape, that on leaving Teheran and losing sight thereof (which, if he be journeying in a southerly direction, he does not do for 160 miles), the traveller is conscious of a very perceptible void. Demavend is a volcano, not, as some have said, wholly extinct, but rather in a state of suspended animation. There is no record of eruption during the historic period, but columns of smoke are sometimes seen to ascend from the fissures, particularly from the Dud-i-Kuh (or Smoky Peak) on the southern side. It is very strange that no mention is made of the mountain by Chardin, whose keen vision overlooked but little; or by Pietro della Valle, who passed almost at its base. Hanway, in 1744, speaks of it as 'the great mountain Demoan on which the Persians say that the Ark rested.' The first to accomplish the ascent—the Persians having always believed and declared, like the Armenians in the case of Ararat, that it was not to be climbed by mortal man—was Mr., afterwards Sir, W. T. Thomson, in 1836. The French naturalist, Aucher Eloy, met Thomson coming down from the top, and himself ascended a few days later. Since that date Demavend has been frequently ascended by members of the various Legations in Teheran, the climb being neither difficult nor dangerous, but intensely fatiguing. For long an irreconcilable divergence between the trigonometrical and other calculations of its height, arrived at by different travellers or men of science, prevailed, the estimates ranging from 14,500 to 21,500 feet. General Schindler, as the result of a combined trigonometrical and barometrical measurement, gives the true altitude as 19,400 feet.[1] From the summit, which

[1] 'Notes on Demavend,' from *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. x. pp. 85–89 (1888); *vide* also 'Accounts of Ascent,' by W. T. Thomson, in 1836,

Vide notes of A.H.S. in his MS. on E. Persian trak. p. 8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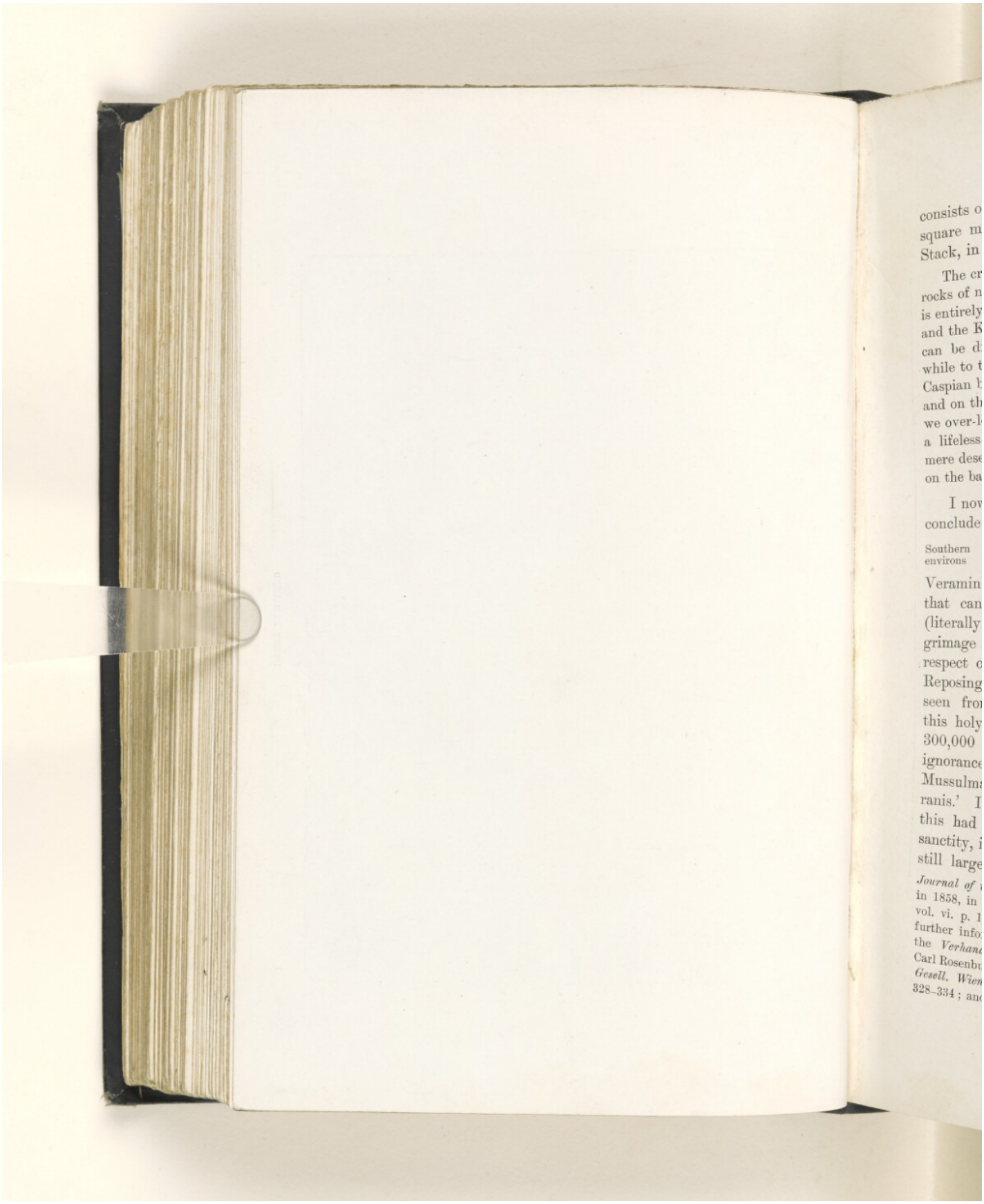

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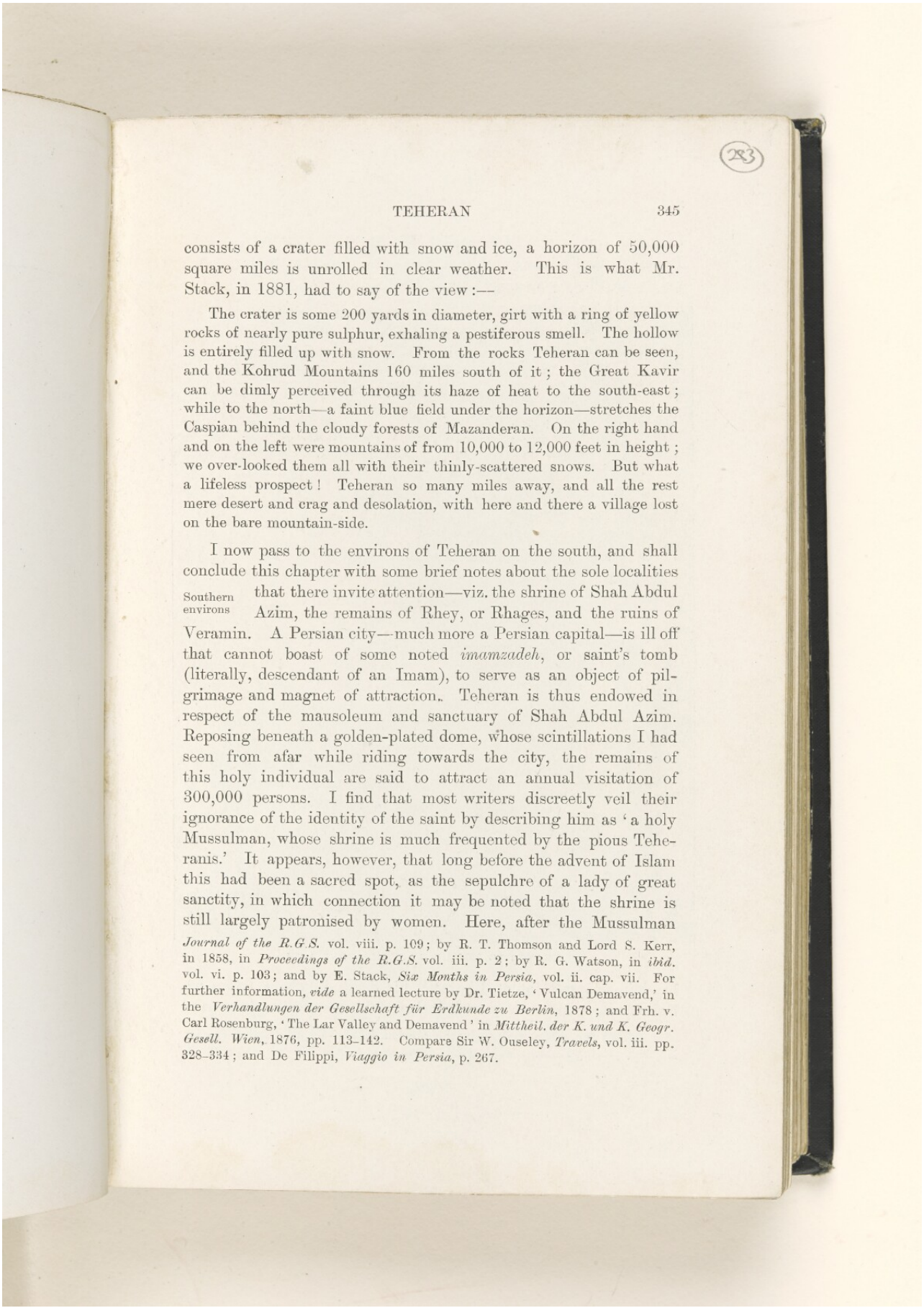




consists of a crater filled with snow and ice, a horizon of 50,000 square miles is unrolled in clear weather. This is what Mr. Stack, in 1881, had to say of the view:—

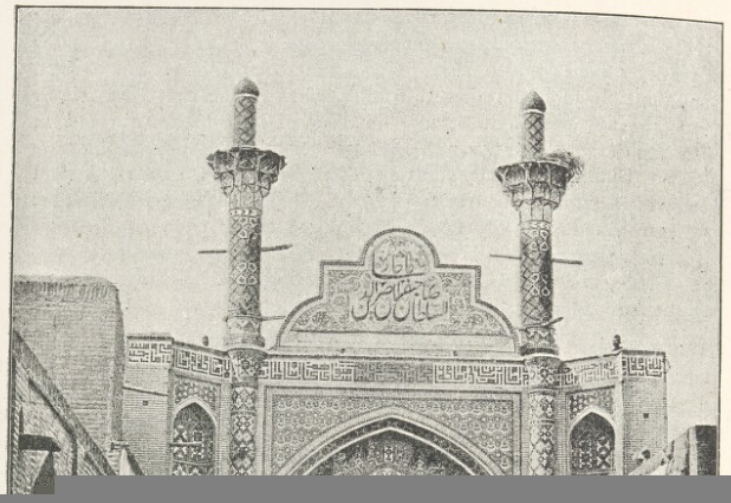
The crater is some 200 yards in diameter, girt with a ring of yellow rocks of nearly pure sulphur, exhaling a pestiferous smell. The hollow is entirely filled up with snow. From the rocks Teheran can be seen, and the Kohrud Mountains 160 miles south of it; the Great Kavir can be dimly perceived through its haze of heat to the south-east; while to the north—a faint blue field under the horizon—stretches the Caspian behind the cloudy forests of Mazanderan. On the right hand and on the left were mountains of from 10,000 to 12,000 feet in height; we over-looked them all with their thinly-scattered snows. But what a lifeless prospect! Teheran so many miles away, and all the rest mere desert and crag and desolation, with here and there a village lost on the bare mountain-side.

Southern environs

I now pass to the environs of Teheran on the south, and shall conclude this chapter with some brief notes about the sole localities that there invite attention—viz. the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim, the remains of Rhey, or Rhages, and the ruins of Veramin. A Persian city—much more a Persian capital—is ill off that cannot boast of some noted *imamzadeh*, or saint's tomb (literally, descendant of an Imam), to serve as an object of pilgrimage and magnet of attraction. Teheran is thus endowed in respect of the mausoleum and sanctuary of Shah Abdul Azim. Reposing beneath a golden-plated dome, whose scintillations I had seen from afar while riding towards the city, the remains of this holy individual are said to attract an annual visitation of 300,000 persons. I find that most writers discreetly veil their ignorance of the identity of the saint by describing him as 'a holy Mussulman, whose shrine is much frequented by the pious Teheranis.' It appears, however, that long before the advent of Islam this had been a sacred spot, as the sepulchre of a lady of great sanctity, in which connection it may be noted that the shrine is still largely patronised by women. Here, after the Mussulman

*Journal of the R.G.S.* vol. viii. p. 109; by R. T. Thomson and Lord S. Kerr, in 1858, in *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* vol. iii. p. 2; by R. G. Watson, in *ibid.* vol. vi. p. 103; and by E. Stack, *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. vii. For further information, *vide* a learned lecture by Dr. Tietze, 'Vulcan Demavend,' in the *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 1878; and Frh. v. Carl Rosenburg, 'The Lar Valley and Demavend' in *Mittheil. der K. und K. Geogr. Gesell. Wien*, 1876, pp. 113–142. Compare Sir W. Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. iii. pp. 328–334; and De Filippi, *Viaggio in Persia*, p. 267.

conquest, was interred Imamzadeh Hamza, the son of the seventh Imam, Musa el Kazim; and here, flying from the Khalif Mutawakkel, came a holy personage named Abul Kassem Abdul Azim, who



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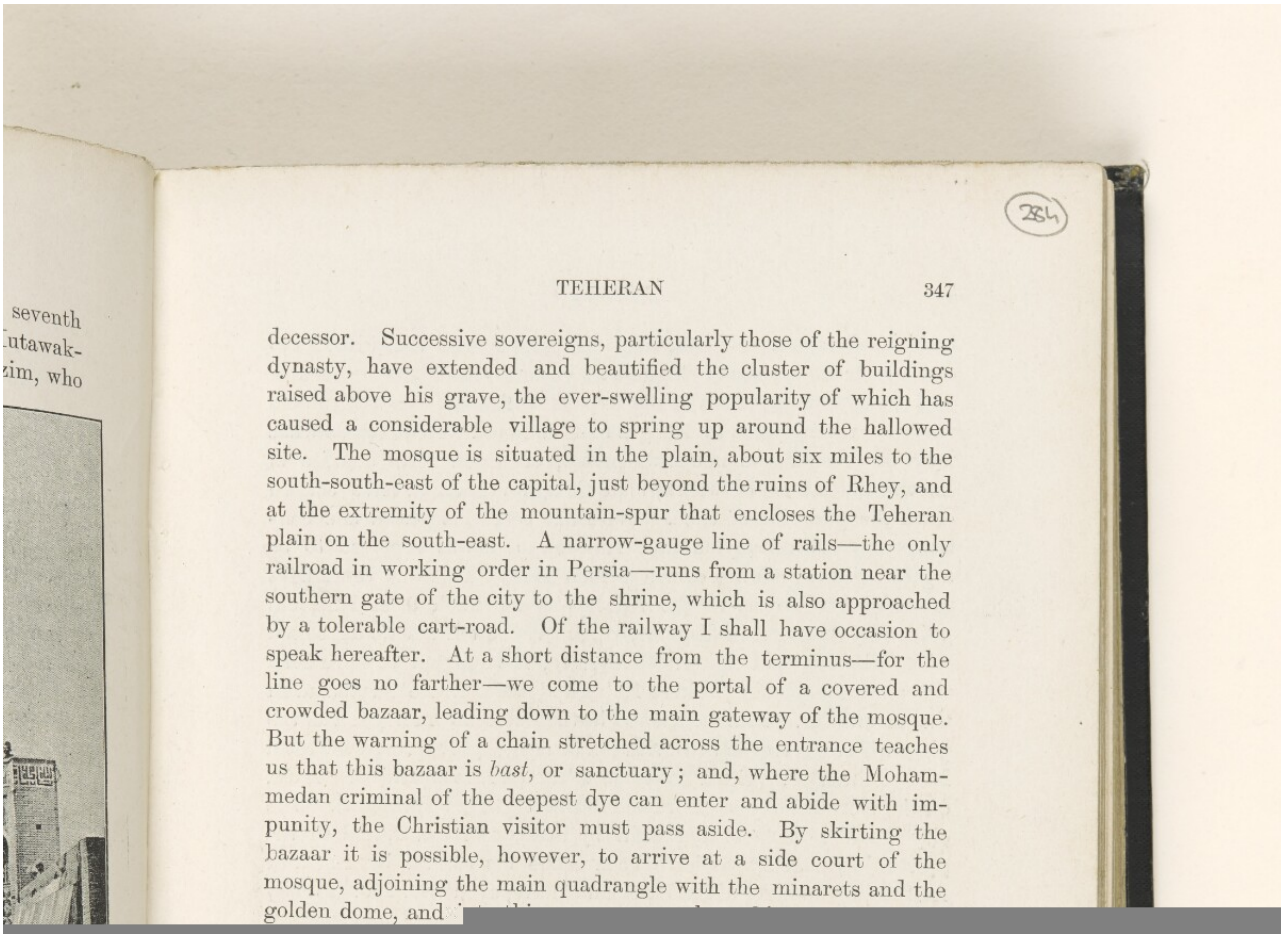

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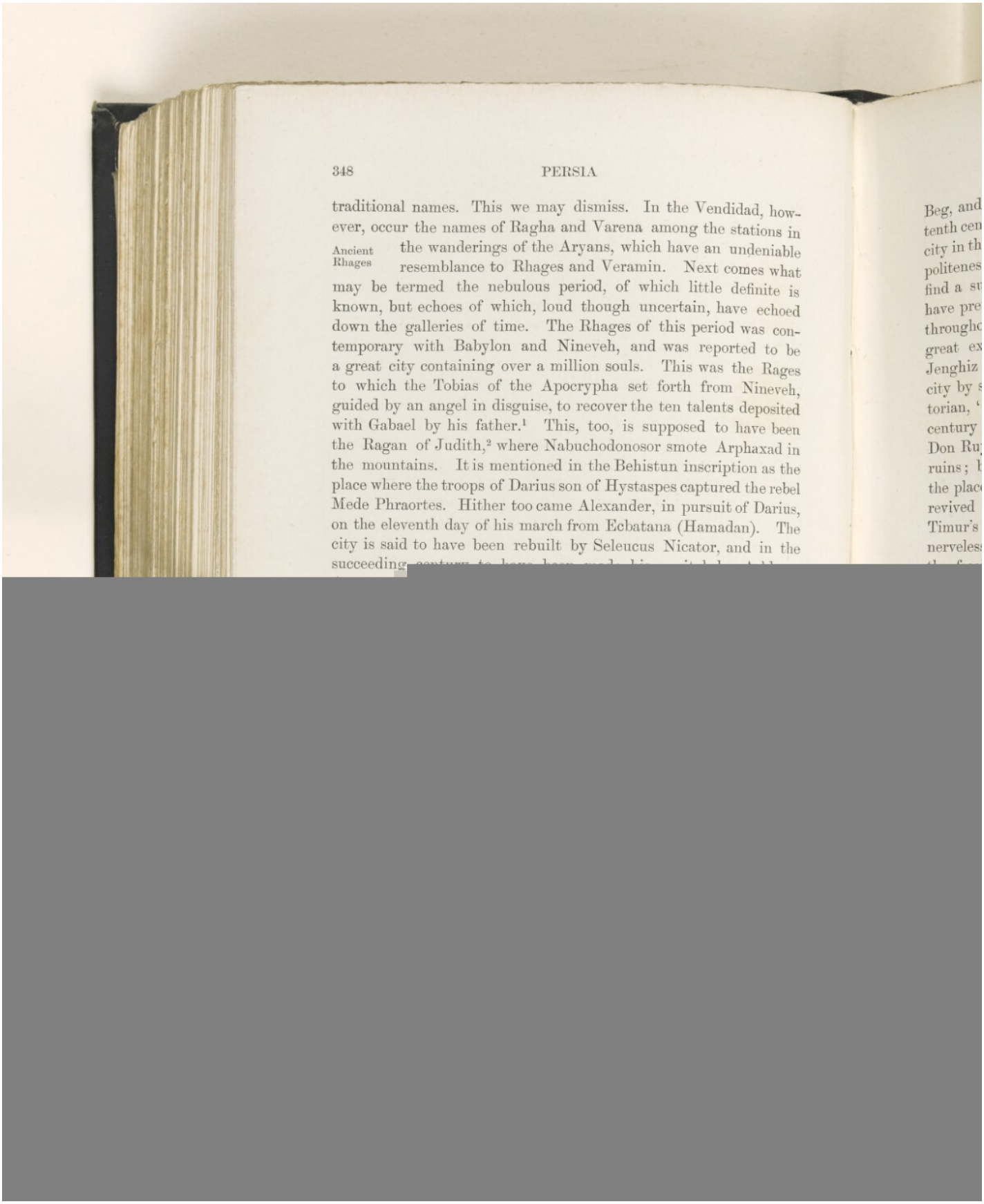
decessor. Successive sovereigns, particularly those of the reigning dynasty, have extended and beautified the cluster of buildings raised above his grave, the ever-swelling popularity of which has caused a considerable village to spring up around the hallowed site. The mosque is situated in the plain, about six miles to the south-south-east of the capital, just beyond the ruins of Rhey, and at the extremity of the mountain-spur that encloses the Teheran plain on the south-east. A narrow-gauge line of rails—the only railroad in working order in Persia—runs from a station near the southern gate of the city to the shrine, which is also approached by a tolerable cart-road. Of the railway I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. At a short distance from the terminus—for the line goes no farther—we come to the portal of a covered and crowded bazaar, leading down to the main gateway of the mosque. But the warning of a chain stretched across the entrance teaches us that this bazaar is *bast*, or sanctuary; and, where the Mohammedan criminal of the deepest dye can enter and abide with impunity, the Christian visitor must pass aside. By skirting the bazaar it is possible, however, to arrive at a side court of the mosque, adjoining the main quadrangle with the minarets and the golden dome, and



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traditional names. This we may dismiss. In the Vendidad, however, occur the names of Ragha and Varena among the stations in the wanderings of the Aryans, which have an undeniable resemblance to Rhages and Veramin. Next comes what may be termed the nebulous period, of which little definite is known, but echoes of which, loud though uncertain, have echoed down the galleries of time. The Rhages of this period was contemporary with Babylon and Nineveh, and was reported to be a great city containing over a million souls. This was the Rages to which the Tobias of the Apocrypha set forth from Nineveh, guided by an angel in disguise, to recover the ten talents deposited with Gabael by his father.[1] This, too, is supposed to have been the Ragan of Judith,[2] where Nabuchodonosor smote Arphaxad in the mountains. It is mentioned in the Behistun inscription as the place where the troops of Darius son of Hystaspes captured the rebel Mede Phraortes. Hither too came Alexander, in pursuit of Darius, on the eleventh day of his march from Ecbatana (Hamadan). The city is said to have been rebuilt by Seleucus Nicator, and in the succeeding

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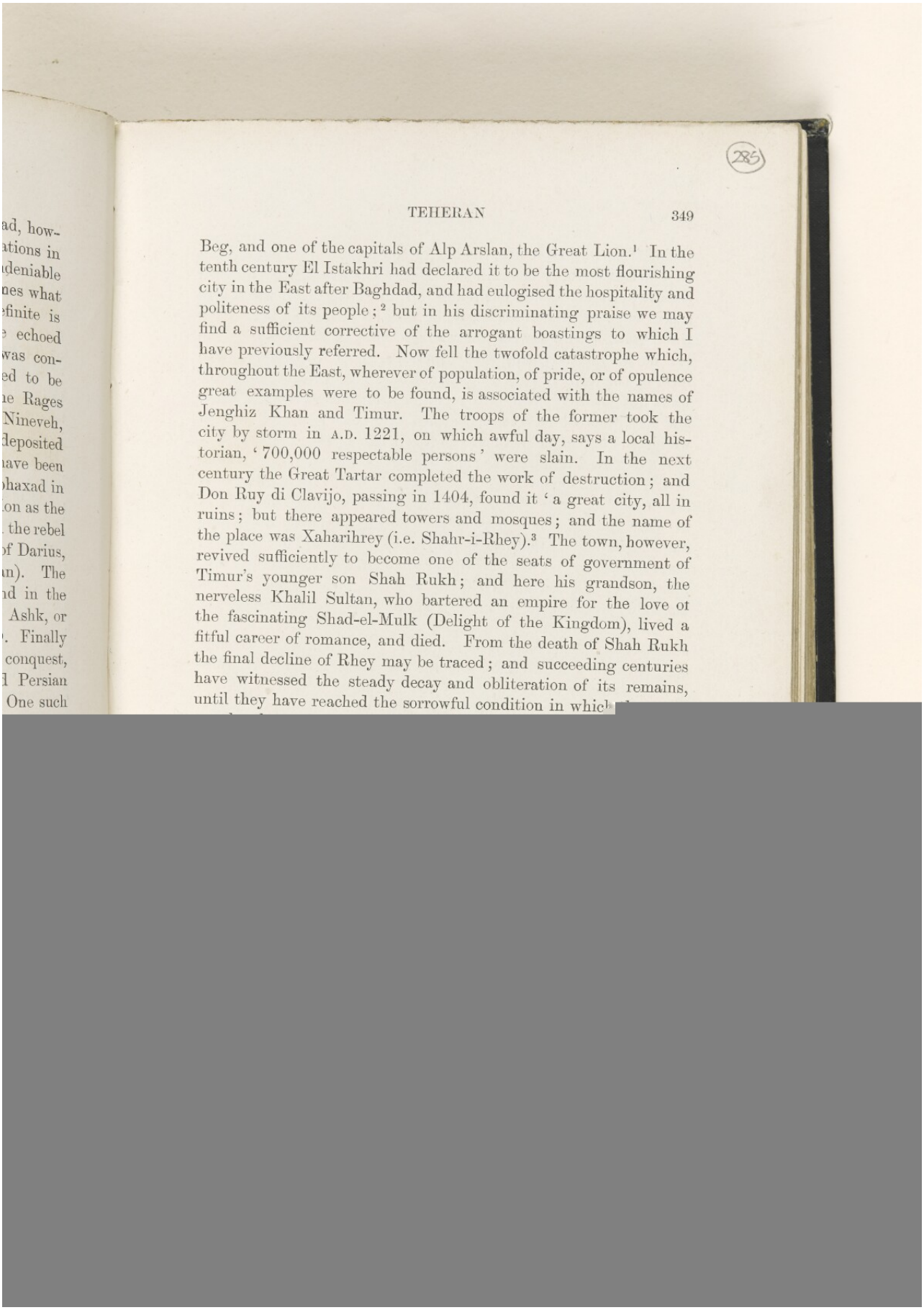

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TEHERAN 349

Beg, and one of the capitals of Alp Arslan, the Great Lion.[1] In the tenth century El Istakhri had declared it to be the most flourishing city in the East after Baghdad, and had eulogised the hospitality and politeness of its people;[2] but in his discriminating praise we may find a sufficient corrective of the arrogant boastings to which I have previously referred. Now fell the twofold catastrophe which, throughout the East, wherever of population, of pride, or of opulence great examples were to be found, is associated with the names of Jenghiz Khan and Timur. The troops of the former took the city by storm in A.D. 1221, on which awful day, says a local historian, '700,000 respectable persons' were slain. In the next century the Great Tartar completed the work of destruction; and Don Ruy di Clavijo, passing in 1404, found it 'a great city, all in ruins; but there appeared towers and mosques; and the name of the place was Xaharihrey (i.e. Shahr-i-Rhey).[3] The town, however, revived sufficiently to become one of the seats of government of Timur's younger son Shah Rukh; and here his grandson, the nerveless Khalil Sultan, who bartered an empire for the love of the fascinating Shad-el-Mulk (Delight of the Kingdom), lived a fitful career of romance, and died. From the death of Shah Rukh the final decline of Rhey may be traced; and succeeding centuries have witnessed the steady decay and obliteration of its remains, until they have reached the sorrowful condition in whic

plain. This was, no doubt, the arx, or acropolis, and its outline can still be satisfactorily determined. Below this was a lower fortified *enceinte*, or citadel; and encircling this, upon the plain, was a vast space surrounded by fortified walls, with its entrances masked by three great square towers, the whole forming a triangle with the arx as its apex. Such, briefly stated, appears to have been the form of the fortified part of ancient Rhey. At present the line of walls has resolved itself into prodigious mounds of broken brick and clay, from which coins have constantly been recovered, and to which visitors to Teheran are in the habit of going out with a spade or shovel for an afternoon's private excavation. They seldom return without some fragment of exquisite tile-work, still gleaming with that flame-like iridescence which is a perished secret of the past, but which is indescribably beautiful even upon the minute chips and splinters that are, as a rule, the sole reward of the spade. I am not aware that any scientific or systematic excavation has ever taken place in the mounds of Rhey, and it is one of the tasks which I should consequently recommend to the labours of archæologists.

There are, however, other and more substantial relics of the ancient city. The most conspicuous of these is a great circular tower, locally known as the Nakkara-Khaneh (or Drum-tower) of Yezid, which too ardent writers, with no apparent justification, have identified with the sepulchre of Togrul Beg, and with the mausoleum of the lovers Khalil Sultan and Shad-el-Mulk. It is a great fabric, built of brick, entirely hollow inside, and roofless, from sixty to seventy feet in height and one hundred and twenty feet in exterior circumference, the outer surface being broken into a series of projecting angles, similar to the towers which I have previously noticed at Jorjan and Bostam. Around the summit is, or, rather, was, a cornice decorated with a Kufic inscription. This structure has unfortunately been subjected in the last few years to a restoration so complete that it now presents the appearance of a brand-new fabric. The surrounding ground has been converted into a garden, with tanks and trees, and a stairway, constructed in the wall, leads to the summit. From this point some idea may be gained of the outline of the ancient city. At a little distance to the east, and at the foot of the mountain, stands a second ruined tower with Kufic cincture, of which, as it has not been restored, I present a photograph. Above this are the remains of a stone citadel, on the rock.

Tower of Yezid

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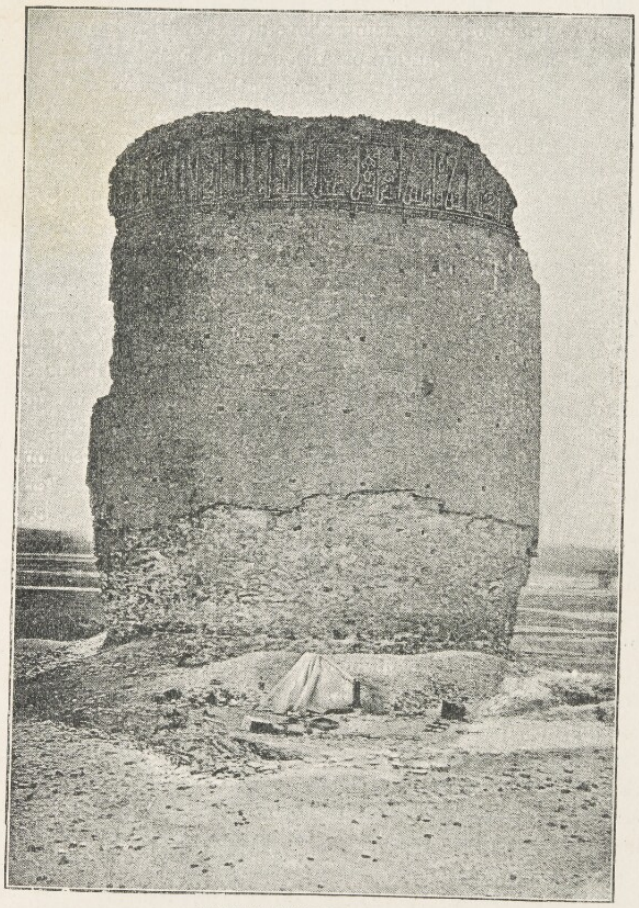
One relic there used to be at Rhey of the famous period of the Sassanian kings. This was a semi-obliterated bas-relief of a figure mounted on horseback and armed with a spear, which was sculped on a smoothed surface of rock, above what I have called the arx. The globe-crowned headdress and the style left no

Rock sculptures



RUINED TOWER AT RHEY

doubt as to the period of the sculpture, though insufficient to warrant an identification with any individual among the monarchs,

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whose likenesses at Naksh-i-Rustam and Shapur I shall describe later on. In the latter part of Fath Ali Shah's reign, however, this bas-relief, in the true spirit of Persian restoration, was effaced to make way for a sculpture representing the long-bearded monarch spearing a lion; and no one now seems to be aware of the history of this wanton palimpsest.[1] At some distance lower down, another smoothed surface of rock, rising above a pretty pool known as the Chashmeh-i-Ali (or Fountain of Ali), exhibits Fath Ali Shah seated in high relief, with his Court—a nineteenth-century imitation of the Sassanian model, which has also been copied by Nasr-ed-Din Shah on the road through the Elburz into Mazanderan, and of which it is difficult to say whether it is more pompous or absurd. An adjoining panel exhibits the same sovereign under a parasol, holding a falcon upon his wrist. This is the sum total of what is to be seen at Rhey. In a desolate valley of the mountain-range at whose feet it lies is situated, at a considerable elevation, the circular 'Tower of Silence,' or place of exposure of the Parsis of Teheran. Like its well-known namesakes at Bombay, it consists of a hollow tower, in which the bodies of the dead are exposed upon ledges, to be devoured by birds of prey; but, unlike the structures of Bombay, its interior can be seen by climbing to a higher point of the mountain.

Between thirty and forty miles in a south-easterly direction from Teheran are the remains of yet another dead capital, Veramin.

Veramin

The present town is dominated by the walls of a great mud fort, flanked with bastions and sloping inwards from the base. It was this great structure (of which there is an excellent likeness in Mme. Dieulafoy's book) which I had seen upon the summit of its mound while riding towards Teheran across the northern skirts of the plain of Veramin, and which the fickle light had transformed into huge detached pillars of mud. The village also contains the ruins of what was once a most noble mosque, attributed to Sultan Abu Said, the son of Sultan Mohammed Khodabundeh (i.e. Slave of God), whose tomb I have mentioned at Sultanieh. Scattered about the plain are other great *kalehs*, or similar earthen fortresses, with towering walls of unbaked bricks

[1] *Vide* E. Flandin, *Perse Moderne*, plate 30. Illustrations of the original are given by Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. iii. plate 65, and W. Price, *Journal of Embassy*, p. 37; and the fact of the mutilation is mentioned by Fraser in 1834, *Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 49. Nevertheless Stuart, who wrote in 1835, Lady Sheil *circ.* 1850, Binning in 1851, and Ussher in 1861, all mention and describe the Sassanian bas-relief, which it is therefore clear that not one of them had ever so much as seen.

Saxe has a photo of the Jumma Mesjid at Veramin



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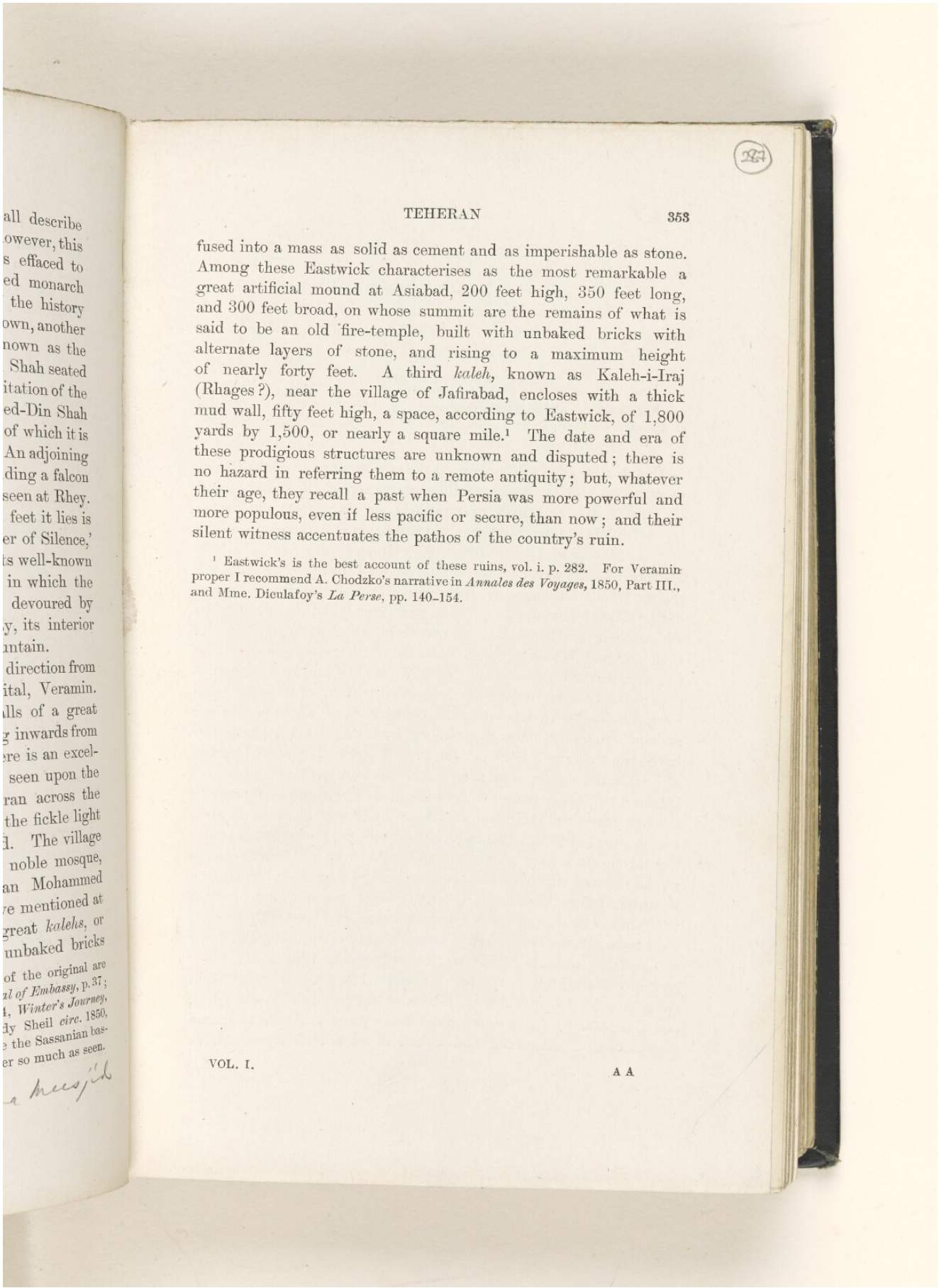

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TEHERAN 353

fused into a mass as solid as cement and as imperishable as stone. Among these Eastwick characterises as the most remarkable a great artificial mound at Asiabad, 200 feet high, 350 feet long, and 300 feet broad, on whose summit are the remains of what is said to be an old fire-temple, built with unbaked bricks with alternate layers of stone, and rising to a maximum height of nearly forty feet. A third *kaleh*, known as Kaleh-i-Iraj (Rhages?), near the village of Jafirabad, encloses with a thick mud wall, fifty feet high, a space, according to Eastwick, of 1,800 yards by 1,500, or nearly a square mile.[1] The date and era of these prodigious structures are unknown and disputed; there is no hazard in referring them to a remote antiquity; but, whatever their age, they recall a past when Persia was more powerful and more populous, even if less pacific or secure, than now; and their silent witness accentuates the pathos of the country's ruin.

[1] Eastwick's is the best account of these ruins, vol. i. p. 282. For Veramin proper I recommend A. Chodzko's narrative in *Annales des Voyages*, 1850, Part III., and Mme. Dieulafoy's *La Perse*, pp. 140–154.

VOL. I. A A

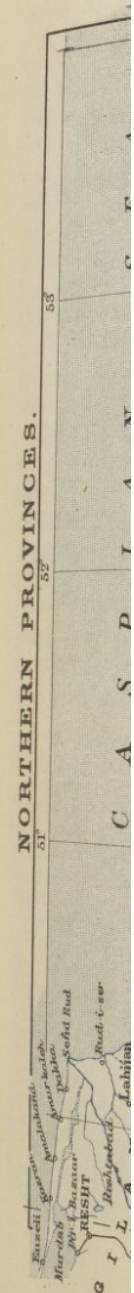
## CHAPTER XII

### THE NORTHERN PROVINCES

'For the King of the North shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.'—*Daniel* xi. 13.

Mazanderan and Gilan

In Chapter II. I have disembarked the newcomer to Persia at Resht, or rather at Enzeli, in the south-west corner of the Caspian, and have conducted him from thence to the capital; in Chapter VIII. I have begged his company as I ranged over the whole of Khorasan from the Herat border in the east, to Astrabad in the west; in the last chapter I have shown him the plain of Teheran, bounded on the north by the stupendous barrier of the Elburz Mountains. But on the far side of those mountains, where their northern skirts descend in wooded flounces to the Caspian, and between Resht and Astrabad, extends a range of country, marked by so strange an individuality, and so unlike anything else that is to be seen in any other part of Persia, that a work professing to treat of that country as a whole would err seriously in omitting any notice of it. Readers who have followed me so far will have pictured, and have justly pictured Persia, at least in the winter months, as for the most part a colourless, waterless, and treeless expanse, where wide deserts, with whose monotony the eye aches, roll their sandy levels to the base of bleak mountains, whose gaunt ribs protrude like the bones of some emaciated skeleton through a scanty covering of soil. And yet within a few miles at the most of this cheerless scene, severed by a single but mighty mountain range, lies another Persia, so rich in water that malarial vapours are bred from the stagnant swamps, so abundantly clothed with trees of the forest, that often a pathway can scarcely be forced through the intricate jungle, so riotous in colour that the traveller can almost awake with the belief that he has been transported in sleep to some tropical clime. These extraordinary characteristics, and this amazing change, are exhibited by the northern maritime provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan. Mazanderan signifies *Maz*



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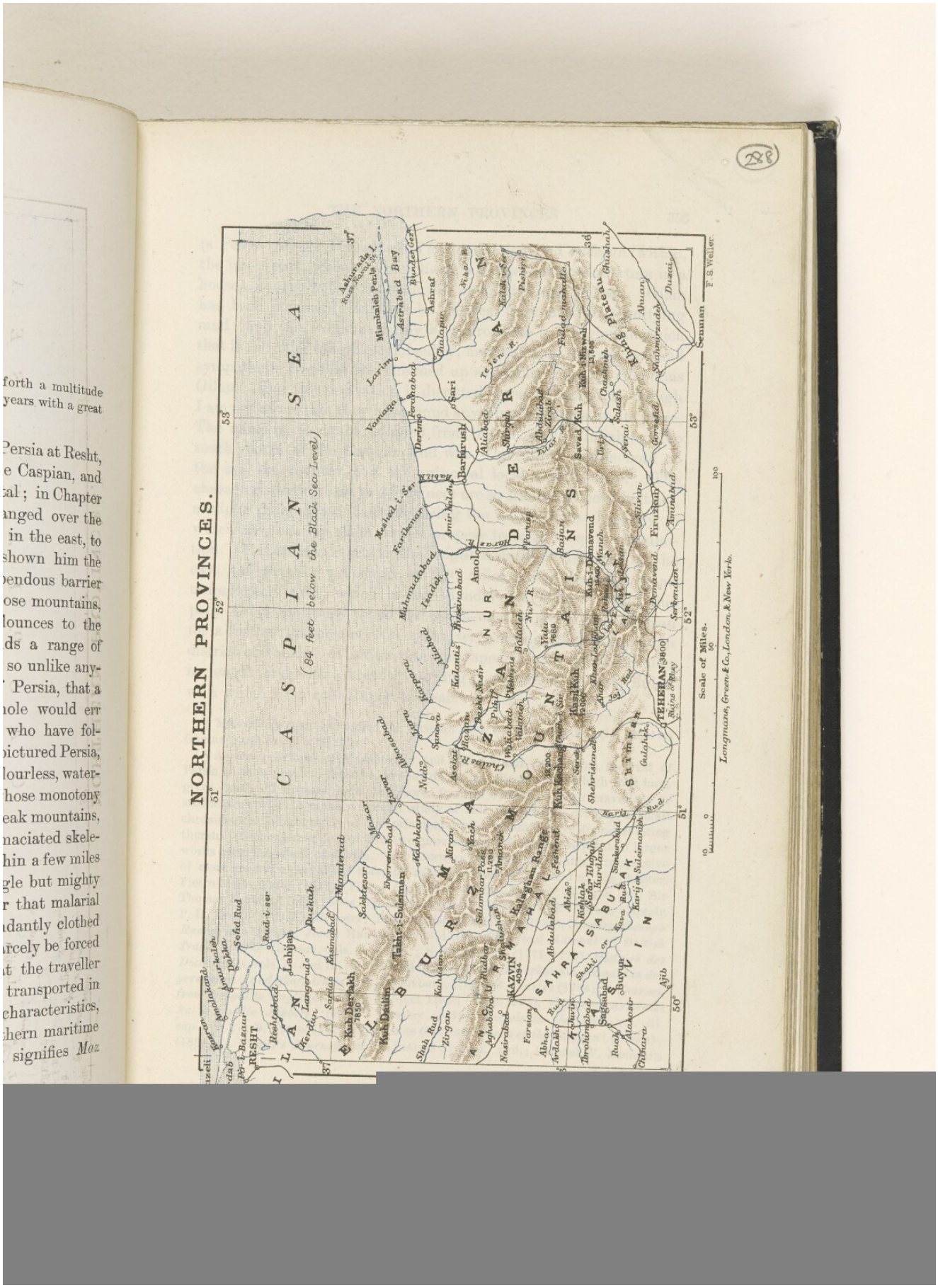
NORTHERN PROVINCES.
CASPIAN SEA
(84 feet below the Black Sea Level.)
Scale of Miles.
Longmans, Green & Co., London & New York.
TEHERAN
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RESHT
Elburz Mts.
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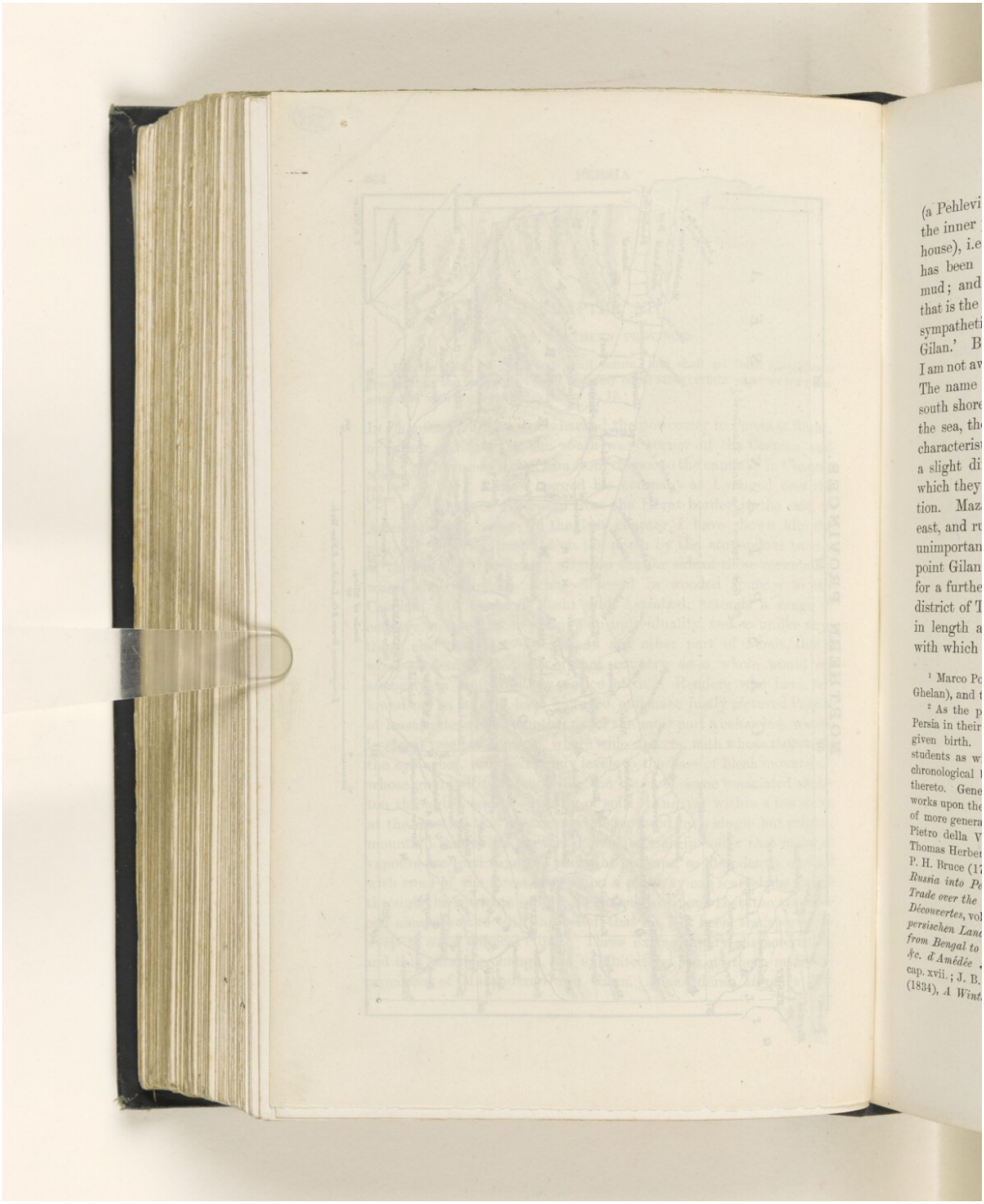

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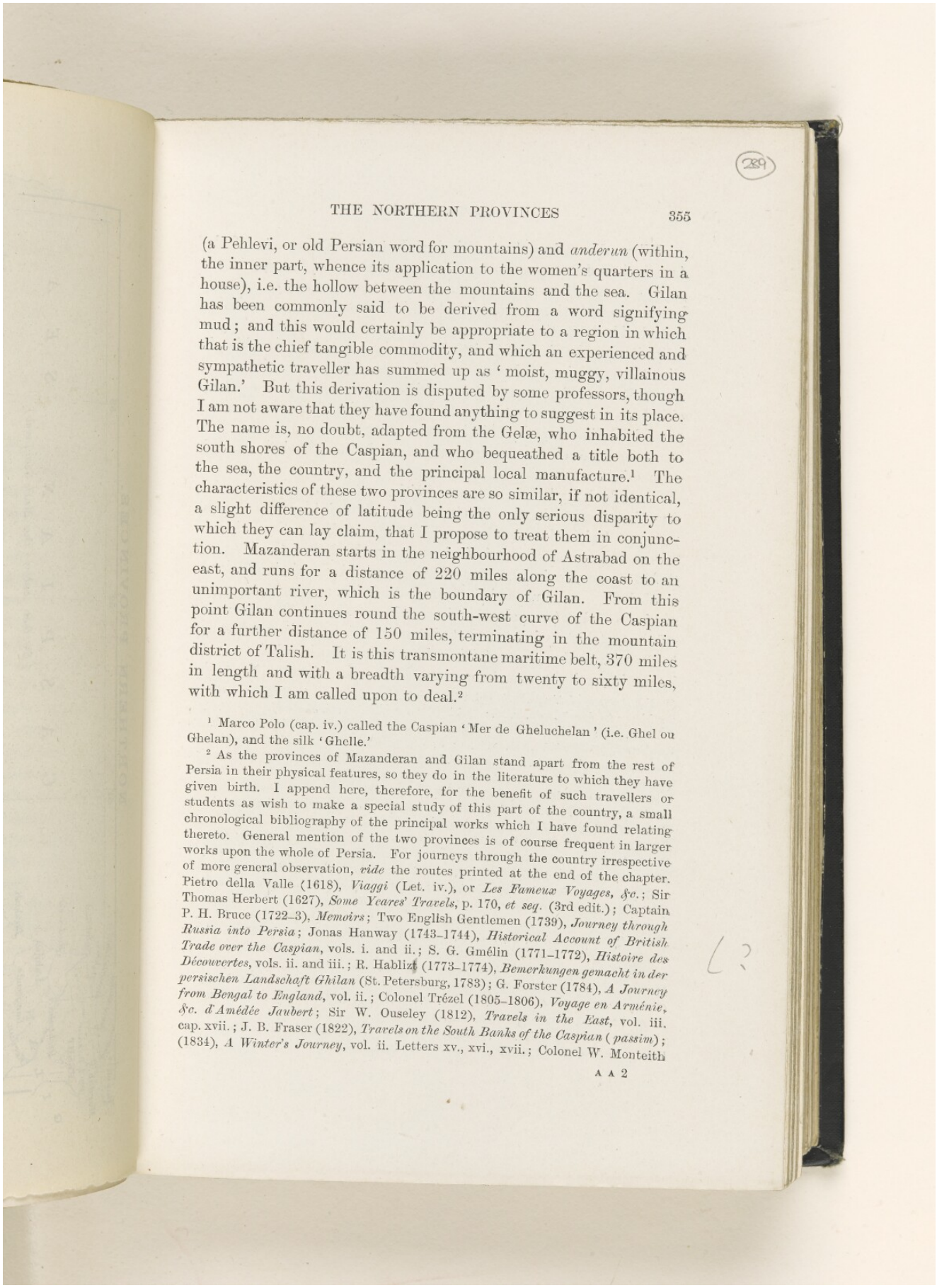



(a Pehlevi, or old Persian word for mountains) and *anderun* (within, the inner part, whence its application to the women's quarters in a house), i.e. the hollow between the mountains and the sea. Gilan has been commonly said to be derived from a word signifying mud; and this would certainly be appropriate to a region in which that is the chief tangible commodity, and which an experienced and sympathetic traveller has summed up as 'moist, muggy, villainous Gilan.' But this derivation is disputed by some professors, though I am not aware that they have found anything to suggest in its place. The name is, no doubt, adapted from the Gelæ, who inhabited the south shores of the Caspian, and who bequeathed a title both to the sea, the country, and the principal local manufacture.[1] The characteristics of these two provinces are so similar, if not identical, a slight difference of latitude being the only serious disparity to which they can lay claim, that I propose to treat them in conjunction. Mazanderan starts in the neighbourhood of Astrabad on the east, and runs for a distance of 220 miles along the coast to an unimportant river, which is the boundary of Gilan. From this point Gilan continues round the south-west curve of the Caspian for a further distance of 150 miles, terminating in the mountain district of Talish. It is this transmontane maritime belt, 370 miles in length and with a breadth varying from twenty to sixty miles, with which I am called upon to deal.[2]

[1] Marco Polo (cap. iv.) called the Caspian 'Mer de Gheluchelan' (i.e. Ghel ou Ghelan), and the silk 'Ghelle.'

[2] As the provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan stand apart from the rest of Persia in their physical features, so they do in the literature to which they have given birth. I append here, therefore, for the benefit of such travellers or students as wish to make a special study of this part of the country, a small chronological bibliography of the principal works which I have found relating thereto. General mention of the two provinces is of course frequent in larger works upon the whole of Persia. For journeys through the country irrespective of more general observation, *vide* the routes printed at the end of the chapter. Pietro della Valle (1618), *Viaggi* (Let. iv.), or *Les Fameux Voyages, &c.*; Sir Thomas Herbert (1627), *Some Yeares' Travels*, p. 170, *et seq.* (3rd edit.); Captain P. H. Bruce (1722–3), *Memoirs*; Two English Gentlemen (1739), *Journey through Russia into Persia*; Jonas Hanway (1743–1744), *Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian*, vols. i. and ii.; S. G. Gmélin (1771–1772), *Histoire des Découvertes*, vols. ii. and iii.; R. Hablizl (1773–1774), *Bemerkungen gemacht in der persischen Landschaft Ghilan* (St. Petersburg, 1783); G. Forster (1784), *A Journey from Bengal to England*, vol. ii.; Colonel Trézel (1805–1806), *Voyage en Arménie, &c. d'Amédée Jaubert*; Sir W. Ouseley (1812), *Travels in the East*, vol. iii. cap. xvii.; J. B. Fraser (1822), *Travels on the South Banks of the Caspian* (*passim*); (1834), *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. Letters xv., xvi., xvii.; Colonel W. Monteith



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When discussing the political and strategical aspects of the Astrabad-Shahrud position in Chapter VIII., I undertook to say something more upon a future occasion of the former city and of the province of which it is the capital. Politically, Astrabad looks in the main towards Khorasan and the East. Physically, it must be classified with the Caspian provinces, to which in climate, vegetation, and character of inhabitants, it bears the closest resemblance. Furthermore, any visitor to Mazanderan is so likely either to start from Astrabad, if he be coming from the East, or to end his journey there if he have started from Teheran, that some mention of its features seems to be appropriate in this connection.

Astrabad Province

Astrabad city[1] (i.e. the town of either *astra* star, or *aster* mule), sometimes called by the Persians Dar-el-Muminin or Gate of the Faithful, from the number of Seyids living there, is said by Fraser, who is incomparably the best authority upon the Northern provinces, to have been founded by Yezid ibn Meklub, or Muhallab, an Arab chief of great celebrity, and general of the armies of the Omeyah Khalif Suleiman about 720 A.D.[2] Its subsequent history is somewhat obscure. Of course it was levelled in the universal cyclone of Timuride destruction in 1384 A.D. In later history it became famous as the headquarters of the Kajar

History of the City

(1831), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. iii.; Colonel W. K. Stuart (1836), *Journal of a Residence in Persia*, cap. x. xi.; Major D'Arcy Todd (1836), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. viii. pp. 102–108; A. Eloy (1836), *Relations de Voyages*, pp. 416–451; Sir H. Rawlinson (1838), *ibid.*, vol. x. p. 1; A. Chodzko (1839), *Nouvelles Annales des Voyages*, 5me série, vols. xx., xxi.; W. R. Holmes (1843), *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*; F. A. Buhse (1848), *Annales des Voyages*, 1851, part iv.; N. de Khanikoff (1859), *Journal Asiatique* (1862); Keith Abbott (1859), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. iii. p. 390; E. B. Eastwick (1860), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii.; M. Guilliny (1866), *Essai sur le Ghilan* (*Bull. de la Soc. de Géogr.*); G. Melgunof (1868), *Das Südliche Ufer des Kaspischen Meeres, oder die Nordprovinzen Persiens*; Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*; Dr. Tietze (1875), *Zeitschrift der Ges. für Erdkunde*, Vienna, 1875; B. Dorn, *Caspia* (Russian), 1875; Captain Puschin (1877), *The Caspian Sea* (Russian); Colonel B. Lovett (1881–1882), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. (1883) and *Consular Report*, No. 36, 1882.

[1] For accounts of Astrabad city *vide* Jonas Hanway (1743–1744), *Historical Account*, vol. i. p. 165, &c.; J. B. Fraser (1822), *Travels on the South of the Caspian*, cap. i.; W. R. Holmes (1844), *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, caps. xiv., xv. E. B. Eastwick (1860), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 50–59; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. ii. pp. 161–163; E. O'Donovan (1880), *The Merv Oasis*, vol. i. cap. x.; Colonel B. Lovett (1881), *Consular Report*, No. 36, 1882.

[2] The *Encyclopædia Britannica* antedates the reign of Suleiman by one hundred years, and turns his general's name into Yezzen-ibn-Messlub.

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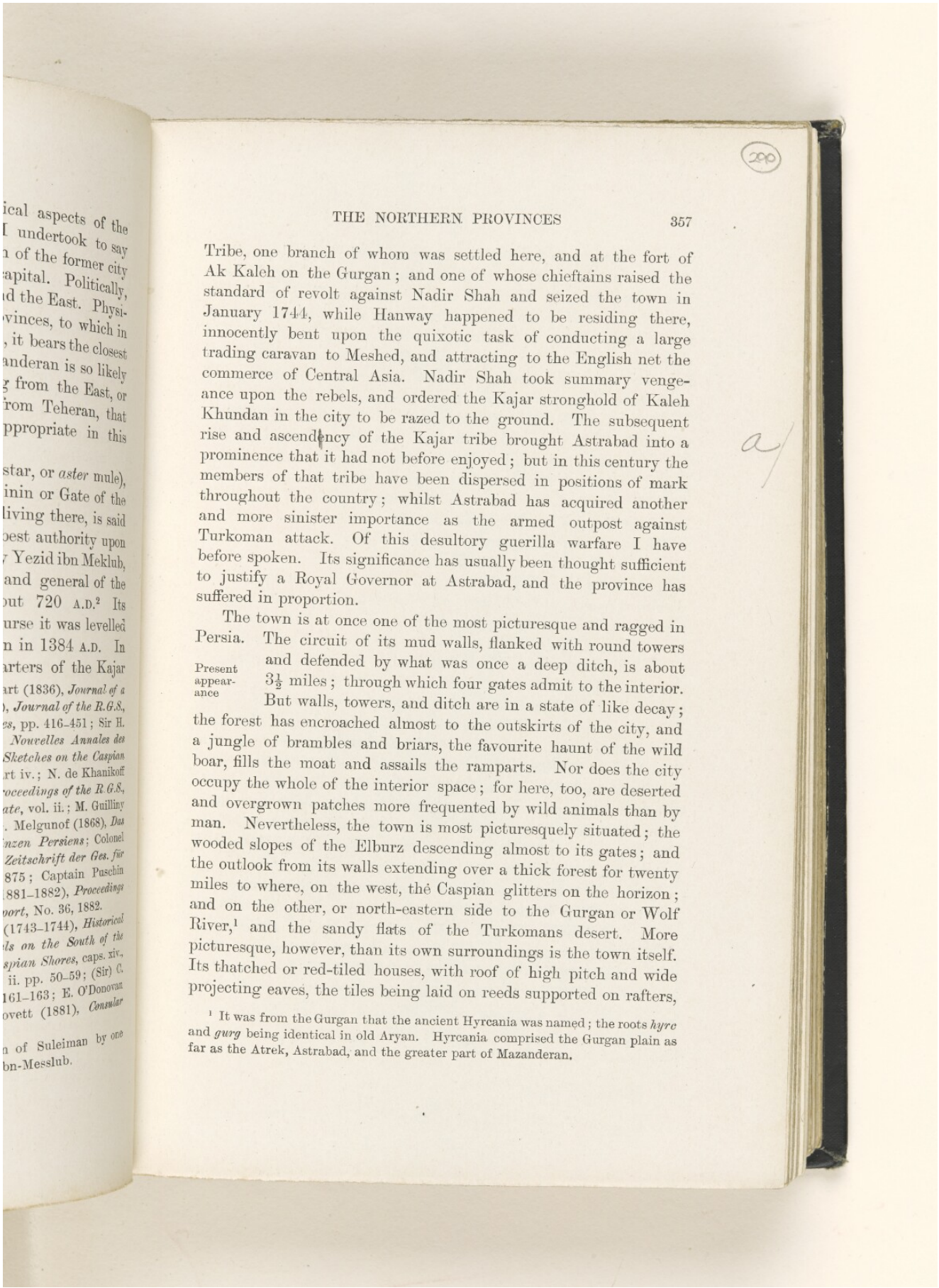

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Tribe, one branch of whom was settled here, and at the fort of Ak Kaleh on the Gurgan; and one of whose chieftains raised the standard of revolt against Nadir Shah and seized the town in January 1744, while Hanway happened to be residing there, innocently bent upon the quixotic task of conducting a large trading caravan to Meshed, and attracting to the English net the commerce of Central Asia. Nadir Shah took summary vengeance upon the rebels, and ordered the Kajar stronghold of Kaleh Khundan in the city to be razed to the ground. The subsequent rise and ascendency of the Kajar tribe brought Astrabad into a prominence that it had not before enjoyed; but in this century the members of that tribe have been dispersed in positions of mark throughout the country; whilst Astrabad has acquired another and more sinister importance as the armed outpost against Turkoman attack. Of this desultory guerilla warfare I have before spoken. Its significance has usually been thought sufficient to justify a Royal Governor at Astrabad, and the province has suffered in proportion.

a/

The town is at once one of the most picturesque and ragged in Persia. The circuit of its mud walls, flanked with round towers and defended by what was once a deep ditch, is about 3½ miles; through which four gates admit to the interior. But walls, towers, and ditch are in a state of like decay; the forest has encroached almost to the outskirts of the city, and a jungle of brambles and briars, the favourite haunt of the wild boar, fills the moat and assails the ramparts. Nor does the city occupy the whole of the interior space; for here, too, are deserted and overgrown patches more frequented by wild animals than by man. Nevertheless, the town is most picturesquely situated; the wooded slopes of the Elburz descending almost to its gates; and the outlook from its walls extending over a thick forest for twenty miles to where, on the west, the Caspian glitters on the horizon; and on the other, or north-eastern side to the Gurgan or Wolf River,[1] and the sandy flats of the Turkomans desert. More picturesque, however, than its own surroundings is the town itself. Its thatched or red-tiled houses, with roof of high pitch and wide projecting eaves, the tiles being laid on reeds supported on rafters,

Present appearance

[1] It was from the Gurgan that the ancient Hyrcania was named; the roots *hyrc* and *gurg* being identical in old Aryan. Hyrcania comprised the Gurgan plain as far as the Atrek, Astrabad, and the greater part of Mazanderan.

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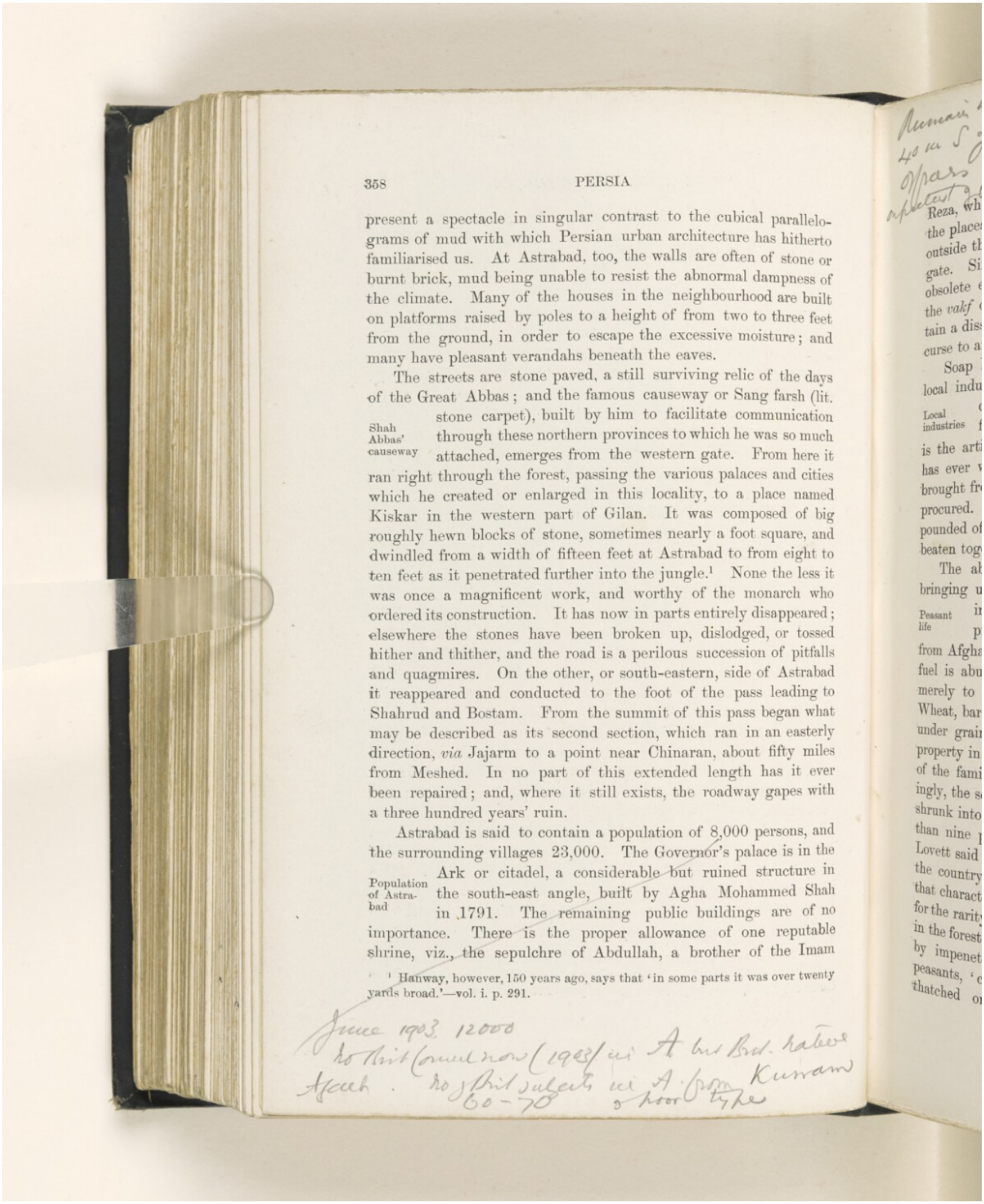




present a spectacle in singular contrast to the cubical parallelograms of mud with which Persian urban architecture has hitherto familiarised us. At Astrabad, too, the walls are often of stone or burnt brick, mud being unable to resist the abnormal dampness of the climate. Many of the houses in the neighbourhood are built on platforms raised by poles to a height of from two to three feet from the ground, in order to escape the excessive moisture; and many have pleasant verandahs beneath the eaves.

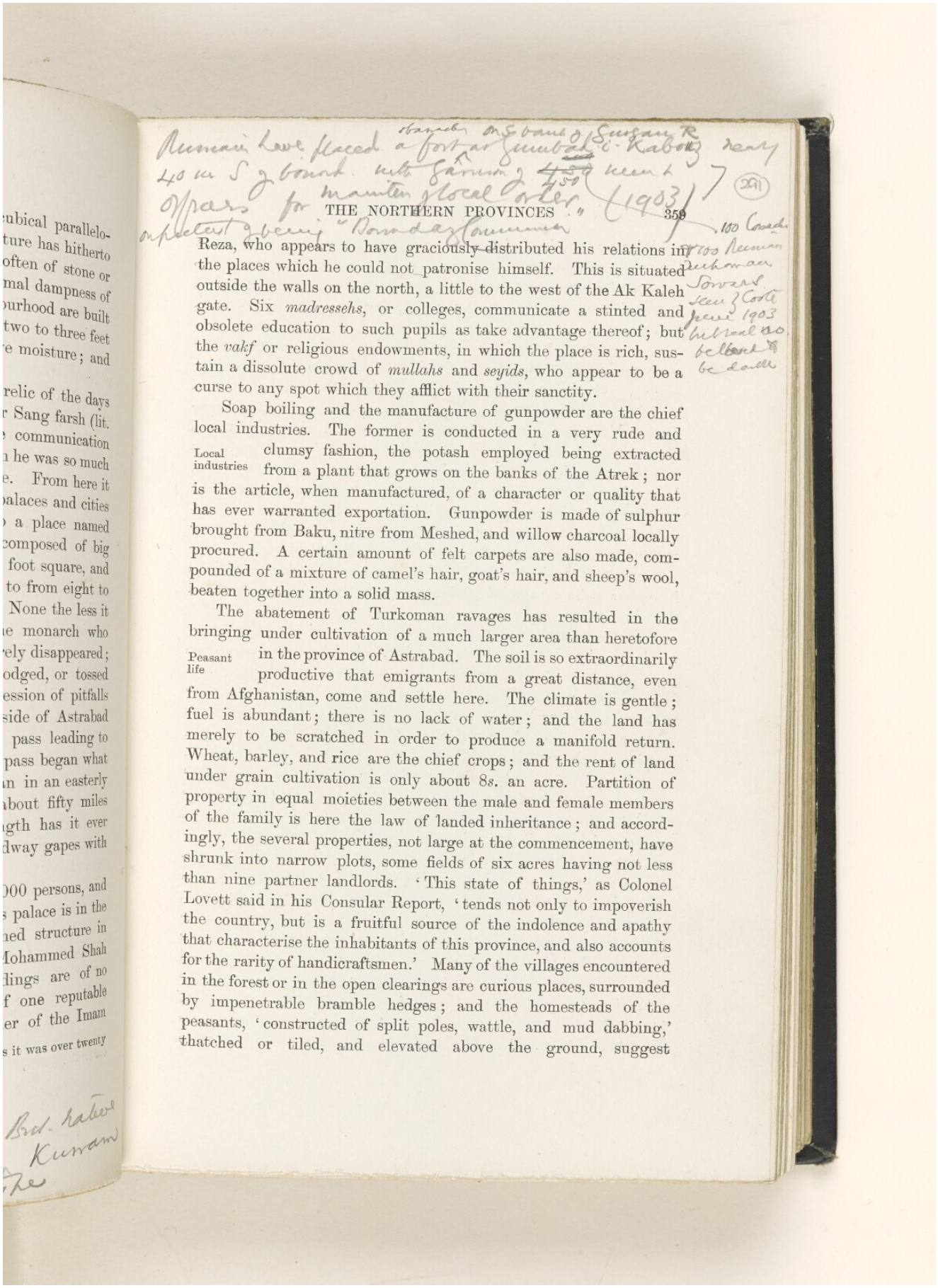
The streets are stone paved, a still surviving relic of the days of the Great Abbas; and the famous causeway or Sang farsh (lit. stone carpet), built by him to facilitate communication through these northern provinces to which he was so much attached, emerges from the western gate. From here it ran right through the forest, passing the various palaces and cities which he created or enlarged in this locality, to a place named Kiskar in the western part of Gilan. It was composed of big roughly hewn blocks of stone, sometimes nearly a foot square, and dwindled from a width of fifteen feet at Astrabad to from eight to ten feet as it penetrated further into the jungle.[1] None the less it was once a magnificent work, and worthy of the monarch who ordered its construction. It has now in parts entirely disappeared; elsewhere the stones have been broken up, dislodged, or tossed hither and thither, and the road is a perilous succession of pitfalls and quagmires. On the other, or south-eastern, side of Astrabad it reappeared and conducted to the foot of the pass leading to Shahrud and Bostam. From the summit of this pass began what may be described as its second section, which ran in an easterly direction, *via* Jajarm to a point near Chinaran, about fifty miles from Meshed. In no part of this extended length has it ever been repaired; and, where it still exists, the roadway gapes with a three hundred years' ruin.

Shah Abbas' causeway

Astrabad is said to contain a population of 8,000 persons, and the surrounding villages 23,000. The Governor's palace is in the Ark or citadel, a considerable but ruined structure in the south-east angle, built by Agha Mohammed Shah in 1791. The remaining public buildings are of no importance. There is the proper allowance of one reputable shrine, viz., the sepulchre of Abdullah, a brother of the Imam

Population of Astrabad

[1] Hanway, however, 150 years ago, says that 'in some parts it was over twenty yards broad.'—vol. i. p. 291.





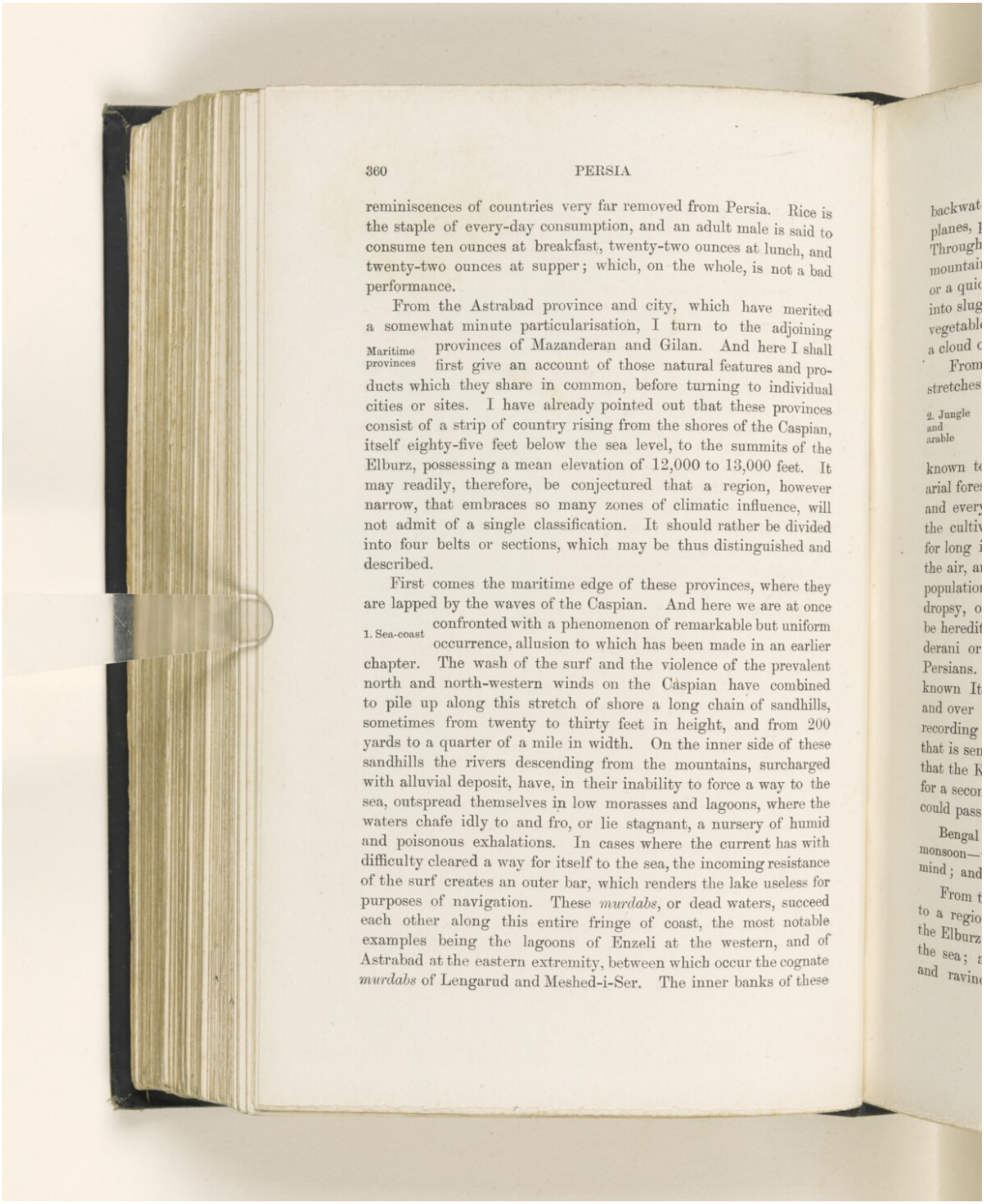
Reza, who appears to have graciously distributed his relations in the places which he could not patronise himself. This is situated outside the walls on the north, a little to the west of the Ak Kaleh gate. Six *madressehs*, or colleges, communicate a stinted and obsolete education to such pupils as take advantage thereof; but the *vakf* or religious endowments, in which the place is rich, sustain a dissolute crowd of *mullahs* and *seyids*, who appear to be a curse to any spot which they afflict with their sanctity.

Soap boiling and the manufacture of gunpowder are the chief local industries. The former is conducted in a very rude and clumsy fashion, the potash employed being extracted from a plant that grows on the banks of the Atrek; nor is the article, when manufactured, of a character or quality that has ever warranted exportation. Gunpowder is made of sulphur brought from Baku, nitre from Meshed, and willow charcoal locally procured. A certain amount of felt carpets are also made, compounded of a mixture of camel's hair, goat's hair, and sheep's wool, beaten together into a solid mass.

Local industries

The abatement of Turkoman ravages has resulted in the bringing under cultivation of a much larger area than heretofore in the province of Astrabad. The soil is so extraordinarily productive that emigrants from a great distance, even from Afghanistan, come and settle here. The climate is gentle; fuel is abundant; there is no lack of water; and the land has merely to be scratched in order to produce a manifold return. Wheat, barley, and rice are the chief crops; and the rent of land under grain cultivation is only about 8*s*. an acre. Partition of property in equal moieties between the male and female members of the family is here the law of landed inheritance; and accordingly, the several properties, not large at the commencement, have shrunk into narrow plots, some fields of six acres having not less than nine partner landlords. 'This state of things,' as Colonel Lovett said in his Consular Report, 'tends not only to impoverish the country, but is a fruitful source of the indolence and apathy that characterise the inhabitants of this province, and also accounts for the rarity of handicraftsmen.' Many of the villages encountered in the forest or in the open clearings are curious places, surrounded by impenetrable bramble hedges; and the homesteads of the peasants, 'constructed of split poles, wattle, and mud dabbing,' thatched or tiled, and elevated above the ground, suggest

Peasant life





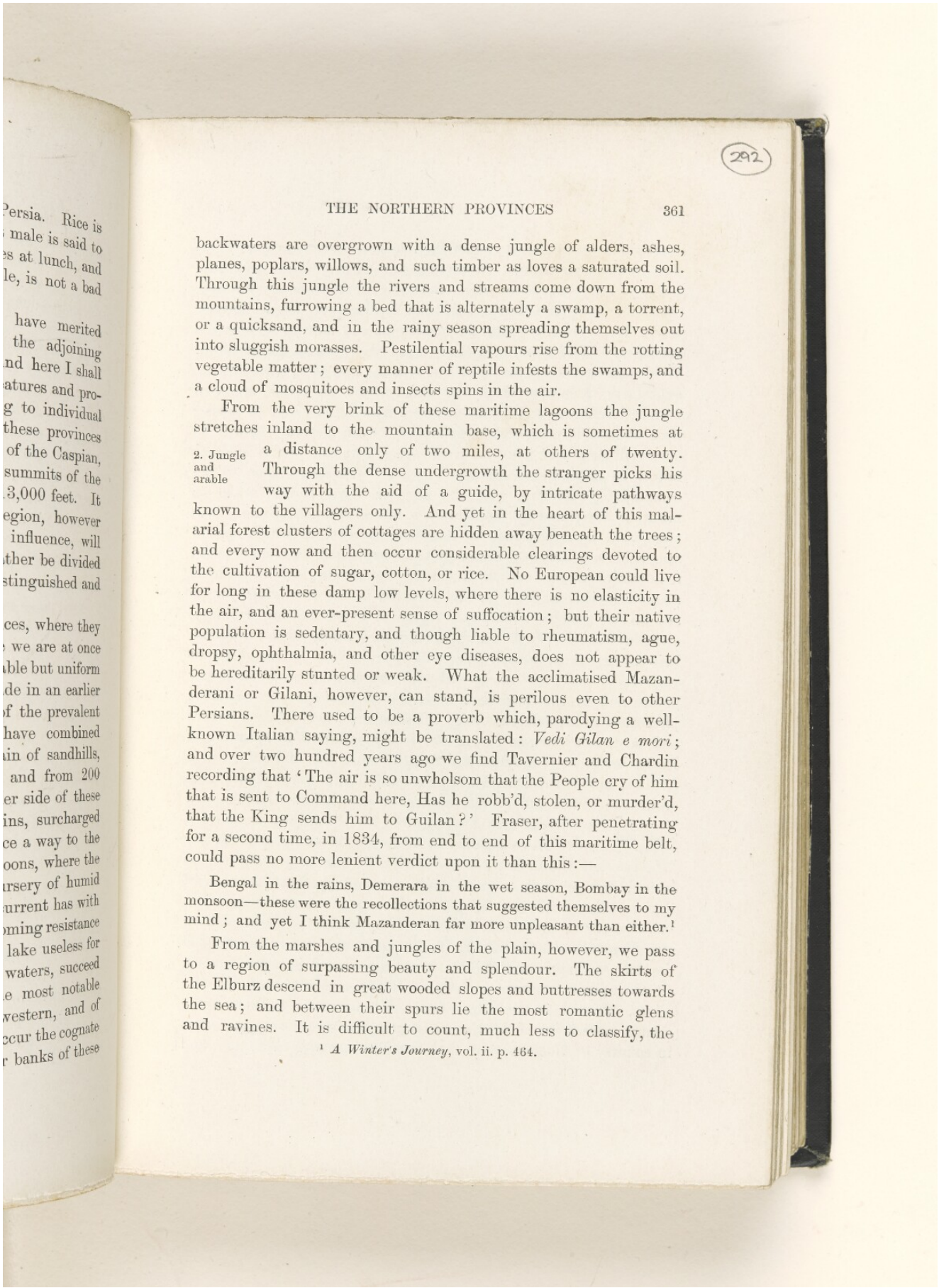
reminiscences of countries very far removed from Persia. Rice is the staple of every-day consumption, and an adult male is said to consume ten ounces at breakfast, twenty-two ounces at lunch, and twenty-two ounces at supper; which, on the whole, is not a bad performance.

From the Astrabad province and city, which have merited a somewhat minute particularisation, I turn to the adjoining provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan. And here I shall first give an account of those natural features and products which they share in common, before turning to individual cities or sites. I have already pointed out that these provinces consist of a strip of country rising from the shores of the Caspian, itself eighty-five feet below the sea level, to the summits of the Elburz, possessing a mean elevation of 12,000 to 13,000 feet. It may readily, therefore, be conjectured that a region, however narrow, that embraces so many zones of climatic influence, will not admit of a single classification. It should rather be divided into four belts or sections, which may be thus distinguished and described.

Maritime provinces

First comes the maritime edge of these provinces, where they are lapped by the waves of the Caspian. And here we are at once confronted with a phenomenon of remarkable but uniform occurrence, allusion to which has been made in an earlier chapter. The wash of the surf and the violence of the prevalent north and north-western winds on the Caspian have combined to pile up along this stretch of shore a long chain of sandhills, sometimes from twenty to thirty feet in height, and from 200 yards to a quarter of a mile in width. On the inner side of these sandhills the rivers descending from the mountains, surcharged with alluvial deposit, have, in their inability to force a way to the sea, outspread themselves in low morasses and lagoons, where the waters chafe idly to and fro, or lie stagnant, a nursery of humid and poisonous exhalations. In cases where the current has with difficulty cleared a way for itself to the sea, the incoming resistance of the surf creates an outer bar, which renders the lake useless for purposes of navigation. These *murdabs*, or dead waters, succeed each other along this entire fringe of coast, the most notable examples being the lagoons of Enzeli at the western, and of Astrabad at the eastern extremity, between which occur the cognate *murdabs* of Lengarud and Meshed-i-Ser. The inner banks of these

1. Sea-coast



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backwaters are overgrown with a dense jungle of alders, ashes, planes, poplars, willows, and such timber as loves a saturated soil. Through this jungle the rivers and streams come down from the mountains, furrowing a bed that is alternately a swamp, a torrent, or a quicksand, and in the rainy season spreading themselves out into sluggish morasses. Pestilential vapours rise from the rotting vegetable matter; every manner of reptile infests the swamps, and a cloud of mosquitoes and insects spins in the air.

From the very brink of these maritime lagoons the jungle stretches inland to the mountain base, which is sometimes at a distance only of two miles, at others of twenty. Through the dense undergrowth the stranger picks his way with the aid of a guide, by intricate pathways known to the villagers only. And yet in the heart of this malarial forest clusters of cottages are hidden away beneath the trees; and every now and then occur considerable clearings devoted to the cultivation of sugar, cotton, or rice. No European could live for long in these damp low levels, where there is no elasticity in the air, and an ever-present sense of suffocation; but their native population is sedentary, and though liable to rheumatism, ague, dropsy, ophthalmia, and other eye diseases, does not appear to be hereditarily stunted or weak. What the acclimatised Mazanderani or Gilani, however, can stand, is perilous even to other Persians. There used to be a proverb which, parodying a well-known Italian saying, might be translated: *Vedi Gilan e mori*; and over two hundred years ago we find Tavernier and Chardin recording that 'The air is so unwholsom that the People cry of him that is sent to Command here, Has he robb'd, stolen, or murder'd, that the King sends him to Guilan?' Fraser, after penetrating for a second time, in 1834, from end to end of this maritime belt, could pass no more lenient verdict upon it than this:—

2. Jungle and arable

Bengal in the rains, Demerara in the wet season, Bombay in the monsoon—these were the recollections that suggested themselves to my mind; and yet I think Mazanderan far more unpleasant than either.[1]

From the marshes and jungles of the plain, however, we pass to a region of surpassing beauty and splendour. The skirts of the Elburz descend in great wooded slopes and buttresses towards the sea; and between their spurs lie the most romantic glens and ravines. It is difficult to count, much less to classify, the

[1] *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 464.

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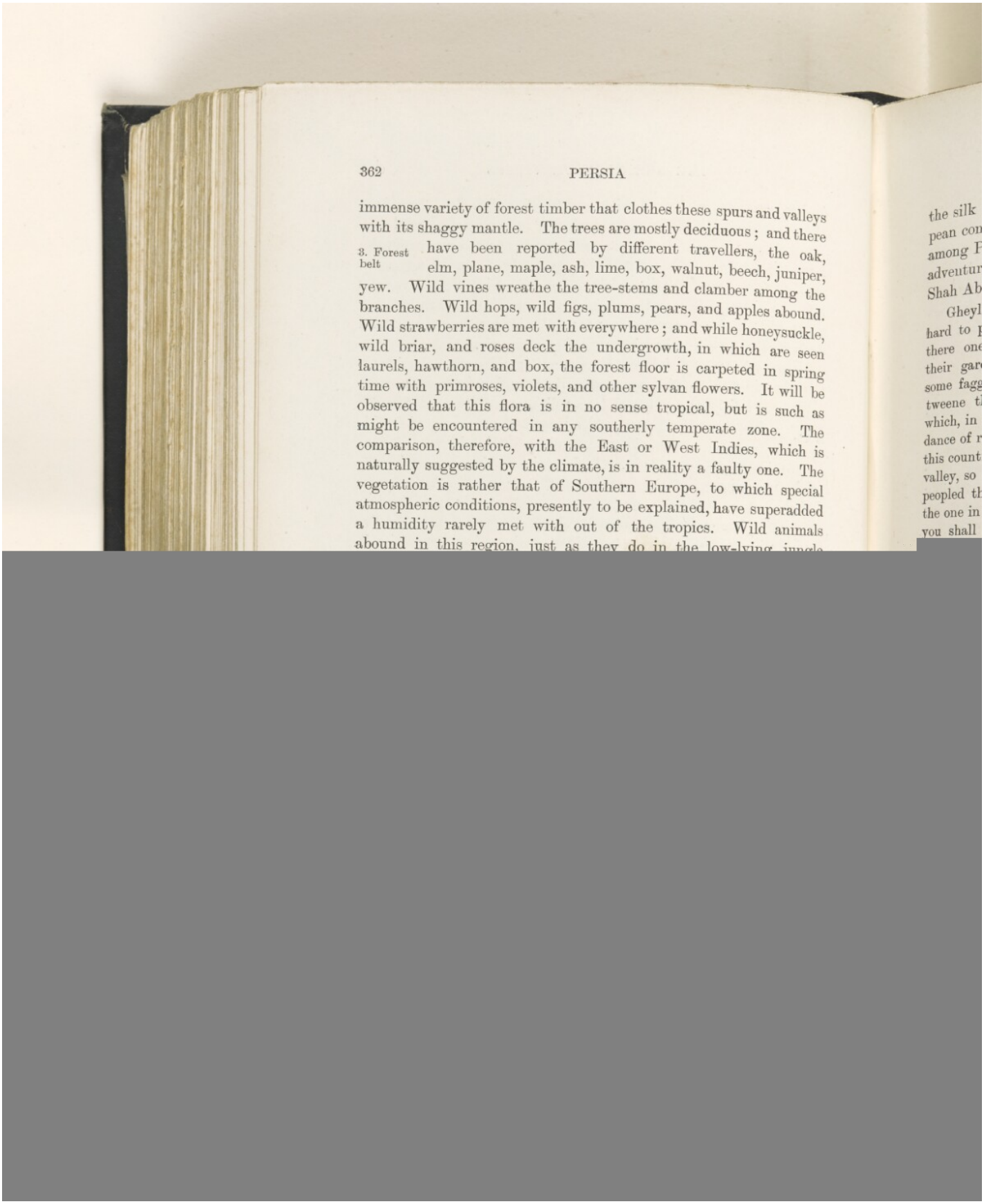

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immense variety of forest timber that clothes these spurs and valleys with its shaggy mantle. The trees are mostly deciduous; and there
3. Forest belt have been reported by different travellers, the oak, elm, plane, maple, ash, lime, box, walnut, beech, juniper, yew. Wild vines wreathe the tree-stems and clamber among the branches. Wild hops, wild figs, plums, pears, and apples abound. Wild strawberries are met with everywhere; and while honeysuckle, wild briar, and roses deck the undergrowth, in which are seen laurels, hawthorn, and box, the forest floor is carpeted in spring time with primroses, violets, and other sylvan flowers. It will be observed that this flora is in no sense tropical, but is such as might be encountered in any southerly temperate zone. The comparison, therefore, with the East or West Indies, which is naturally suggested by the climate, is in reality a faulty one. The vegetation is rather that of Southern Europe, to which special atmospheric conditions, presently to be explained, have superadded a humidity rarely met with out of the tropics. Wild animals abound in this region, just as they do in the low-lying jungle

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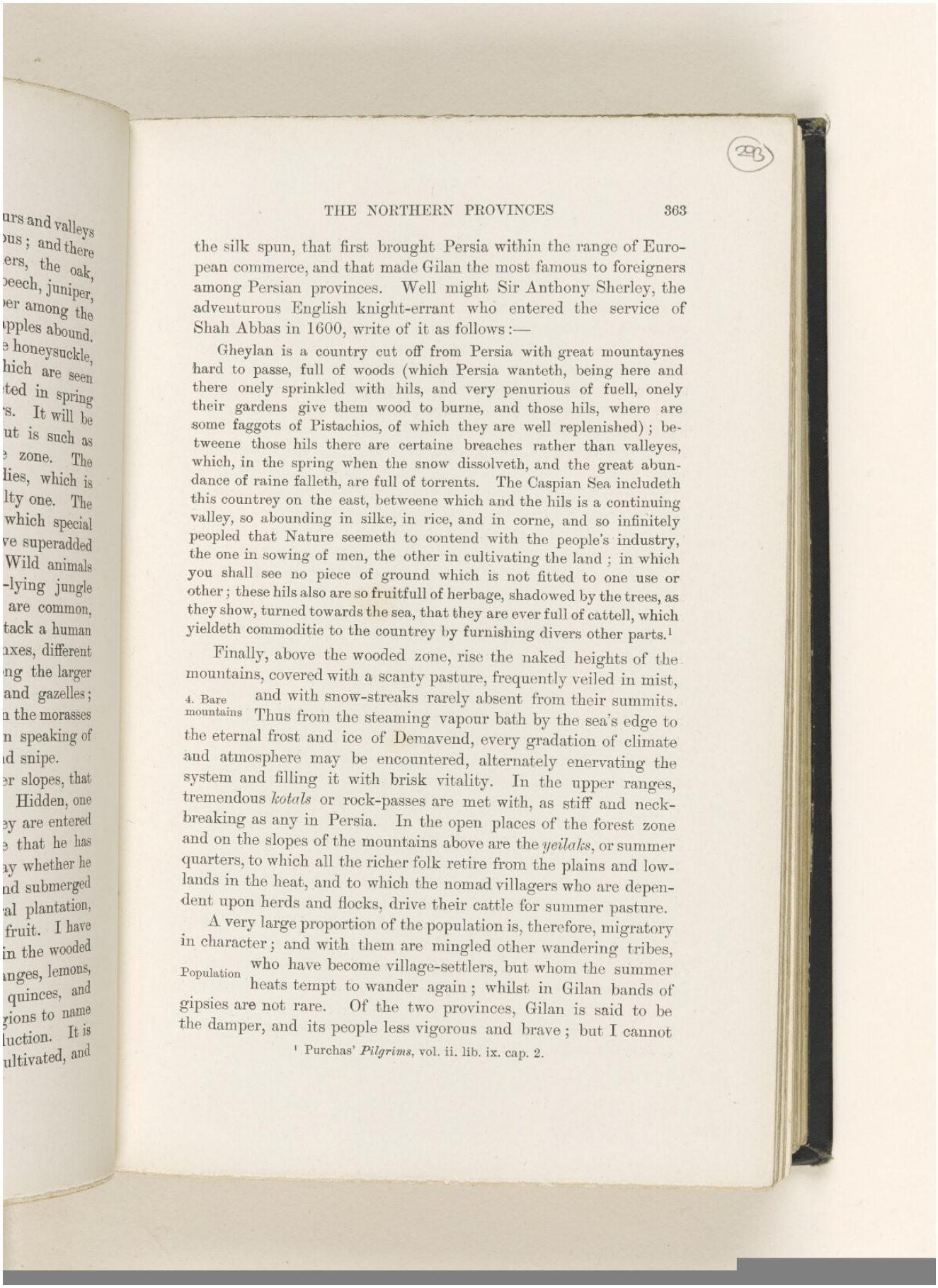



the silk spun, that first brought Persia within the range of European commerce, and that made Gilan the most famous to foreigners among Persian provinces. Well might Sir Anthony Sherley, the adventurous English knight-errant who entered the service of Shah Abbas in 1600, write of it as follows:—

Gheylan is a country cut off from Persia with great mountaynes hard to passe, full of woods (which Persia wanteth, being here and there onely sprinkled with hils, and very penurious of fuell, onely their gardens give them wood to burne, and those hils, where are some faggots of Pistachios, of which they are well replenished); betweene those hils there are certaine breaches rather than valleyes, which, in the spring when the snow dissolveth, and the great abundance of raine falleth, are full of torrents. The Caspian Sea includeth this countrey on the east, betweene which and the hils is a continuing valley, so abounding in silke, in rice, and in corne, and so infinitely peopled that Nature seemeth to contend with the people's industry, the one in sowing of men, the other in cultivating the land; in which you shall see no piece of ground which is not fitted to one use or other; these hils also are so fruitfull of herbage, shadowed by the trees, as they show, turned towards the sea, that they are ever full of cattell, which yieldeth commoditie to the countrey by furnishing divers other parts.[1]

Finally, above the wooded zone, rise the naked heights of the mountains, covered with a scanty pasture, frequently veiled in mist, and with snow-streaks rarely absent from their summits. Thus from the steaming vapour bath by the sea's edge to the eternal frost and ice of Demavend, every gradation of climate and atmosphere may be encountered, alternately enervating the system and filling it with brisk vitality. In the upper ranges, tremendous *kotals* or rock-passes are met with, as stiff and neck-breaking as any in Persia. In the open places of the forest zone and on the slopes of the mountains above are the *yeilaks*, or summer quarters, to which all the richer folk retire from the plains and lowlands in the heat, and to which the nomad villagers who are dependent upon herds and flocks, drive their cattle for summer pasture.

4. Bare mountains

A very large proportion of the population is, therefore, migratory in character; and with them are mingled other wandering tribes, who have become village-settlers, but whom the summer heats tempt to wander again; whilst in Gilan bands of gipsies are not rare. Of the two provinces, Gilan is said to be the damper, and its people less vigorous and brave; but I cannot

Population

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. ix. cap. 2.

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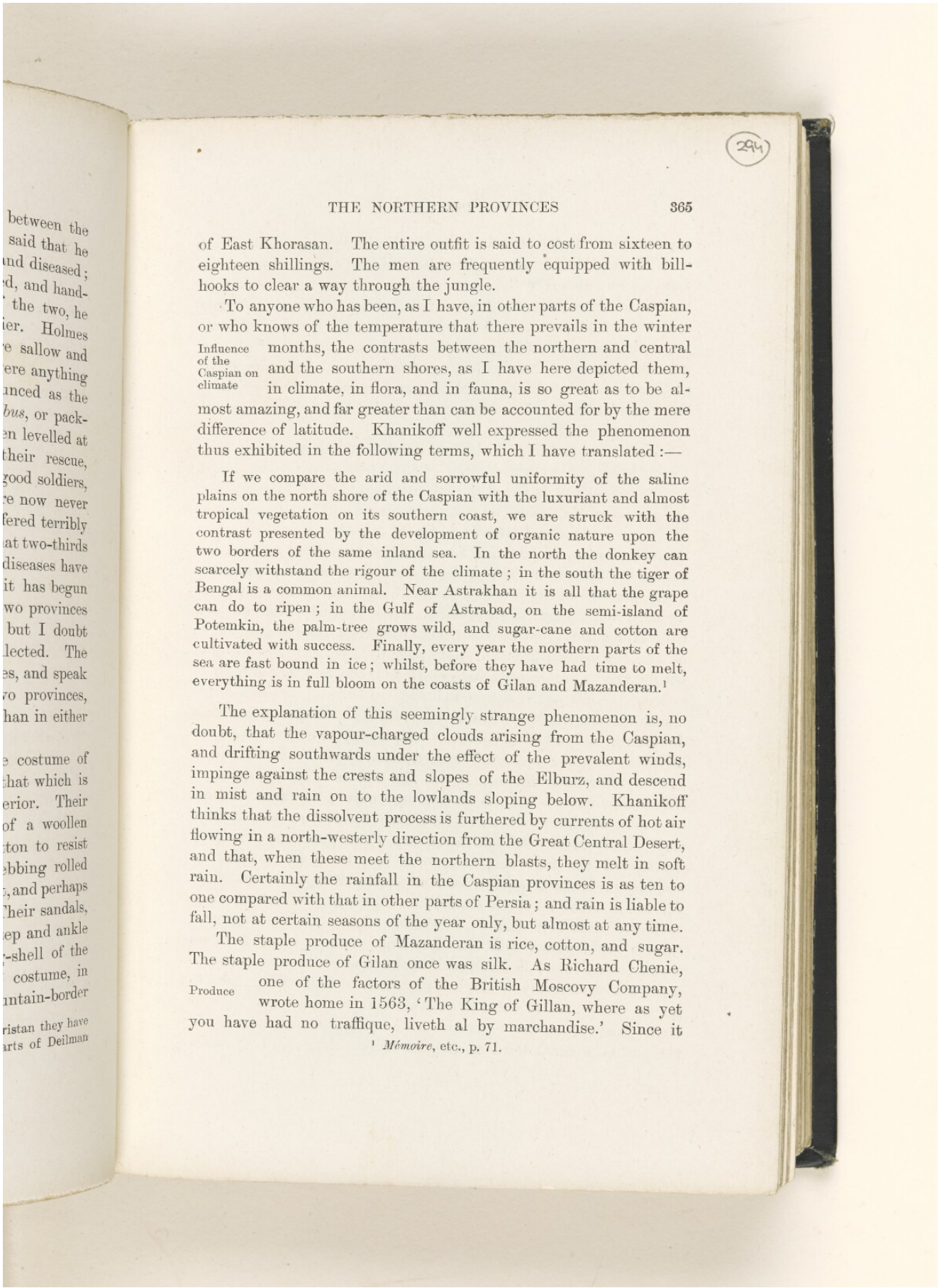
convince myself that there is any genuine distinction between the two. Fraser, the most competent authority to follow, said that he had expected to find the inhabitants wretched, puny, and diseased; but that, on the contrary, they were stout, well-formed, and handsome, the children being particularly beautiful. Of the two, he reported the Mazanderanis as the darker and swarthier. Holmes said that the sedentary population near the sea were sallow and sickly; and I am sure it would be surprising if they were anything else. The Mazanderanis have been commonly denounced as the Bœotians of Persia, and the taunt of Mazanderani *yabus*, or pack-horses (for which, too, the province is famous), has been levelled at their heads. Here too, however, Fraser comes to their rescue, reporting them as quiet and inoffensive, but brave and good soldiers, at least in their own climate, outside of which they are now never employed. The population of the two provinces suffered terribly from the plague of 1830–31, in which it was estimated that two-thirds were swept away. Epidemics of small-pox and other diseases have ravaged the district since, and it is only latterly that it has begun again to hold up its head. The totals for each of the two provinces are variously estimated at from 150,000 to 250,000; but I doubt if the data for correct enumeration have ever been collected. The natives are said to be descended from the ancient Medes, and speak a dialect of Persian, which differs slightly in the two provinces, and a third form of which, with more Pehlevi words than in either of the others, is spoken in the highlands of Talish.[1]

Like their surroundings, and like themselves, the costume of the peasantry in Gilan and Mazanderan differs from that which is worn in the cities and plains of the interior. Their *shulwars*, or pyjamas, are frequently made of a woollen stuff called *chakah*, which is better adapted than cotton to resist the thorns. On their legs they wear bands of webbing rolled round and round, called *pai tava*, or *tua*, the counterpart, and perhaps the eponymous forerunner of the Kashmir *putti*. Their sandals, or *charuks*, are made of raw hide fastened over the instep and ankle by a thong. On the head they wear, not the felt egg-shell of the Persian peasant, but a shako of sheepskin. Their costume, in fact, is not unlike that worn by the Kurds in the mountain-border

Dress

[1] As long ago as the tenth century El Istakhri said: 'In Taberistan they have a peculiar dialect, neither Arabick nor Persian; and in many parts of Deilman (Dilem) their language is not understood.'





of East Khorasan. The entire outfit is said to cost from sixteen to eighteen shillings. The men are frequently equipped with bill-hooks to clear a way through the jungle.

To anyone who has been, as I have, in other parts of the Caspian, or who knows of the temperature that there prevails in the winter months, the contrasts between the northern and central and the southern shores, as I have here depicted them, in climate, in flora, and in fauna, is so great as to be almost amazing, and far greater than can be accounted for by the mere difference of latitude. Khanikoff well expressed the phenomenon thus exhibited in the following terms, which I have translated :—

Influence of the Caspian on climate

> If we compare the arid and sorrowful uniformity of the saline plains on the north shore of the Caspian with the luxuriant and almost tropical vegetation on its southern coast, we are struck with the contrast presented by the development of organic nature upon the two borders of the same inland sea. In the north the donkey can scarcely withstand the rigour of the climate ; in the south the tiger of Bengal is a common animal. Near Astrakhan it is all that the grape can do to ripen ; in the Gulf of Astrabad, on the semi-island of Potemkin, the palm-tree grows wild, and sugar-cane and cotton are cultivated with success. Finally, every year the northern parts of the sea are fast bound in ice ; whilst, before they have had time to melt, everything is in full bloom on the coasts of Gilan and Mazanderan.[1]

The explanation of this seemingly strange phenomenon is, no doubt, that the vapour-charged clouds arising from the Caspian, and drifting southwards under the effect of the prevalent winds, impinge against the crests and slopes of the Elburz, and descend in mist and rain on to the lowlands sloping below. Khanikoff thinks that the dissolvent process is furthered by currents of hot air flowing in a north-westerly direction from the Great Central Desert, and that, when these meet the northern blasts, they melt in soft rain. Certainly the rainfall in the Caspian provinces is as ten to one compared with that in other parts of Persia ; and rain is liable to fall, not at certain seasons of the year only, but almost at any time.

The staple produce of Mazanderan is rice, cotton, and sugar. The staple produce of Gilan once was silk. As Richard Chenie, one of the factors of the British Moscovy Company, wrote home in 1563, 'The King of Gillan, where as yet you have had no traffique, liveth al by marchandise.' Since it

Produce

[1] *Mémoire*, etc., p. 71.

was this silk traffic that brought Persia into mercantile contact with Europe, that prompted the interchange of embassies and the framing of treaties in the sixteenth and later centuries, and that made Persia wealthy and famous; and since, moreover, it is only recently that it may be said to have permanently declined, I shall take advantage of this opportunity to give a short *résumé* of this interesting page of Persian history, only treating of the subject in so far as relates to Gilan and Mazanderan, and reserving for a later chapter on the Commerce of Persia, its international application in bygone ages.

History of Silk trade

The romantic story of the introduction of the silkworm from China into Europe in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, about 550 A.D., is one of the favourite anecdotes of history. The first mention of its cultivation in the northern provinces of Persia that I have come across, is in the pages of the tenth century pilgrim, El Istakhri, who travelled from Rhey to Sari, the capital of Mazanderan, and spoke of the silk which was produced in great quantity in the province called Taberistan, the ancient name for the Elburz region in these parts. Three centuries later we learn from Marco Polo that the merchants of Genoa, then at the height of its commercial renown, had recently brought the Caspian within the far-reaching sphere of their trade, and had begun to export 'the silk which is called Ghelle.' In the middle of the sixteenth century the Moscovy Company, through its agents, Anthony Jenkinson and others, made that courageous attempt to open up a British Caspian trade through Russia, whose dramatic annals I shall afterwards relate. It was the silk of Gilan in quest of which they came. In the succeeding century the main channel of export of this product was in Dutch hands from the Persian Gulf. Early in the eighteenth century, Peter the Great, who fully understood the part that commerce can be made to play in schemes of imperial aggrandisement in the East, endeavoured to divert the entire northern export into Russia, by an arrangement with the Armenian traders of Baku. After a while this conspiracy broke down and the Russians attempted the business themselves. In 1725 Peter was about to enter into an engagement with a company of English merchants, being willing even to invoke foreign aid in order to gain his end, when he sickened and died. Then ensued the second brief, but gallant, experiment on the part of a small band of English merchants, headed by Elton

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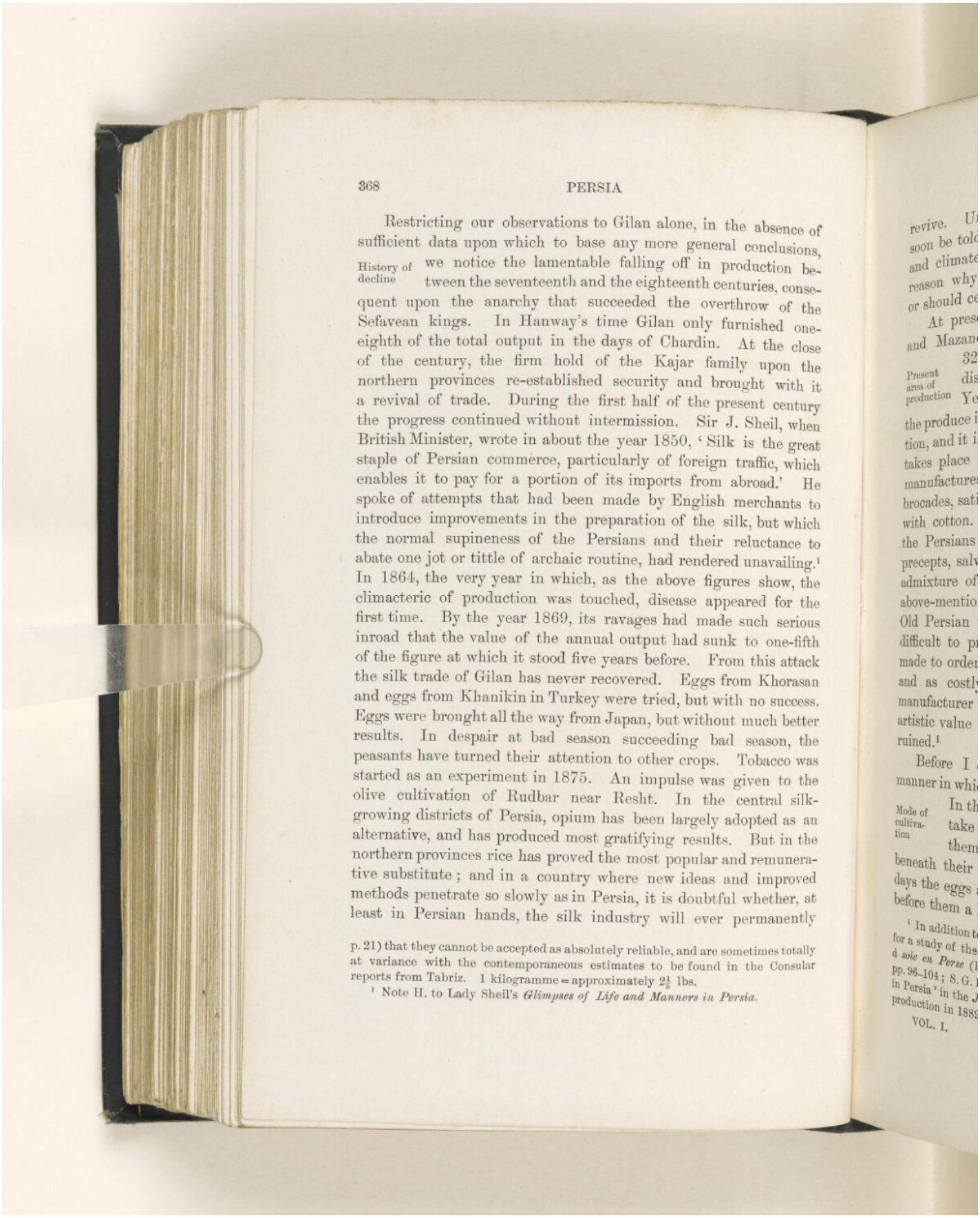
and Hanway, the history of which will also come under notice in my second volume. Since then, no direct endeavour has been made forcibly to divert the traffic into this or that channel, although the conquests of Russia in the early part of the present century have rendered it inevitable that the greater part of the exports of northern Persia should pass through her hands.

Sooner than weary my readers with a long-drawn and statistical narrative of the state of the Silk trade of Persia, and of northern Persia in particular, during the last 250 years, I have preferred to arrange in tabular fashion the principal information with which my reading has supplied me as to the produce and value of that trade at different dates within this period.

Table of produce and value

| Date | Authority | Produce of all Persia | Value | Produce of Gilan | Value | Produce of Mazanderan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1637 | Olearius | 20,000 bales of 216 lbs. each | 2*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* 8*d.* per lb. in Persia | 8,000 bales | — | 2,000 bales |
| 1670 | Chardin | 22,000 bales of 276 lbs. each | 10 to 12 million *livres* | 10,000 bales | — | 2,000 bales |
| 1744 | Hanway | — | — | 30,000 *batmans* of 12 lbs. each | 12–18 crowns, *i.e.* 3*l.*–4*l.* 10*s.* per *batman*; 30–40 crowns, *i.e.* 7*l.* 10*s.*–10*l. circ.* 1750 | — |
| 1771 | Gmélin | — | — | — | — | 1,500–1,600 *batmans* |
| 1822 | Fraser | — | — | 60,000 *shahmans* of 14 lbs. each | 6½–8 *tomans*, *i.e.* 3*l.* 12*s.*–4*l.* 8*s.* per *shahman* | — |
| 1836 | Fowler | — | — | 1,800,000 lbs. (Gilan and Mazanderan) | 2,000,000*l.* | — |
| 1839 | Chodzko | — | — | 90,000 *shahmans* of 13 lbs. each | — | — |
| 1840 | Chodzko | — | — | 110,000 *shahmans* | — | — |
| 1843 | Holmes | — | — | 1,300,000 lbs. | — | — |
| 1844 | Sheil | — | — | 1,000,000 lbs. | 450,000*l.* | — |
| 1864 | — | — | — | 2,190,000 lbs. | 1,000,000*l.* | — |
| 1865 | — | — | — | 1,230,000 lbs. | 667,000*l.* | — |
| 1866 | Stolze & Andreas' | — | — | 612,500 kilogr. | 743,000*l.* | — |
| 1867 | Do. | — | — | 503,400 kilogr. | 507,000*l.* | — |
| 1868 | Do. | — | — | 403,400 kilogr. | 451,000*l.* | — |
| 1869 | Do. | — | — | 323,800 kilogr. | 302,000*l.* | — |
| 1870 | Do. | — | — | 418,100 kilogr. | 399,000*l.* | — |
| 1871 | Do. | — | — | 350,400 kilogr. | 286,000*l.* | — |
| 1872 | Do. | — | — | 286,600 kilogr. | 221,000*l.* | — |
| 1873 | Do. | — | — | 347,400 kilogr. | 225,000*l.* | — |
| 1874 | Do. | — | — | 644,700 kilogr. | 330,000*l.* | — |
| 1875 | Do. | — | — | 245,400 kilogr. | 105,000*l.* | — |
| 1876 | Do. | — | — | 262,000 kilogr. | 215,000*l.* | — |
| 1877 | Churchill | — | — | 210,000 lbs. | 123,000*l.* | — |
| 1878 | Do. | — | — | 704,700 lbs. | 135,000*l.* | — |
| 1882 | Stolze & Andreas | — | — | 177,000 kilogr. | — | — |
| 1885 | Benjamin | 608,000 lbs. | — | 7,000 *shahmans* of 65 lbs. each | — | 35,000 lbs. |
| 1886 | Herbert | — | — | 6,000 bales as above | — | — |

[1] These figures are copied from the British Consular Reports of Mr. Churchill, but the authors append the just observation (*Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1885,





Restricting our observations to Gilan alone, in the absence of sufficient data upon which to base any more general conclusions, History of decline we notice the lamentable falling off in production between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, consequent upon the anarchy that succeeded the overthrow of the Sefavean kings. In Hanway's time Gilan only furnished one-eighth of the total output in the days of Chardin. At the close of the century, the firm hold of the Kajar family upon the northern provinces re-established security and brought with it a revival of trade. During the first half of the present century the progress continued without intermission. Sir J. Sheil, when British Minister, wrote in about the year 1850, 'Silk is the great staple of Persian commerce, particularly of foreign traffic, which enables it to pay for a portion of its imports from abroad.' He spoke of attempts that had been made by English merchants to introduce improvements in the preparation of the silk, but which the normal supineness of the Persians and their reluctance to abate one jot or tittle of archaic routine, had rendered unavailing.[1] In 1864, the very year in which, as the above figures show, the climacteric of production was touched, disease appeared for the first time. By the year 1869, its ravages had made such serious inroad that the value of the annual output had sunk to one-fifth of the figure at which it stood five years before. From this attack the silk trade of Gilan has never recovered. Eggs from Khorasan and eggs from Khanikin in Turkey were tried, but with no success. Eggs were brought all the way from Japan, but without much better results. In despair at bad season succeeding bad season, the peasants have turned their attention to other crops. Tobacco was started as an experiment in 1875. An impulse was given to the olive cultivation of Rudbar near Resht. In the central silk-growing districts of Persia, opium has been largely adopted as an alternative, and has produced most gratifying results. But in the northern provinces rice has proved the most popular and remunerative substitute; and in a country where new ideas and improved methods penetrate so slowly as in Persia, it is doubtful whether, at least in Persian hands, the silk industry will ever permanently

p. 21) that they cannot be accepted as absolutely reliable, and are sometimes totally at variance with the contemporaneous estimates to be found in the Consular reports from Tabriz. 1 kilogramme = approximately $2\frac{1}{5}$ lbs.

[1] Note H. to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia.*

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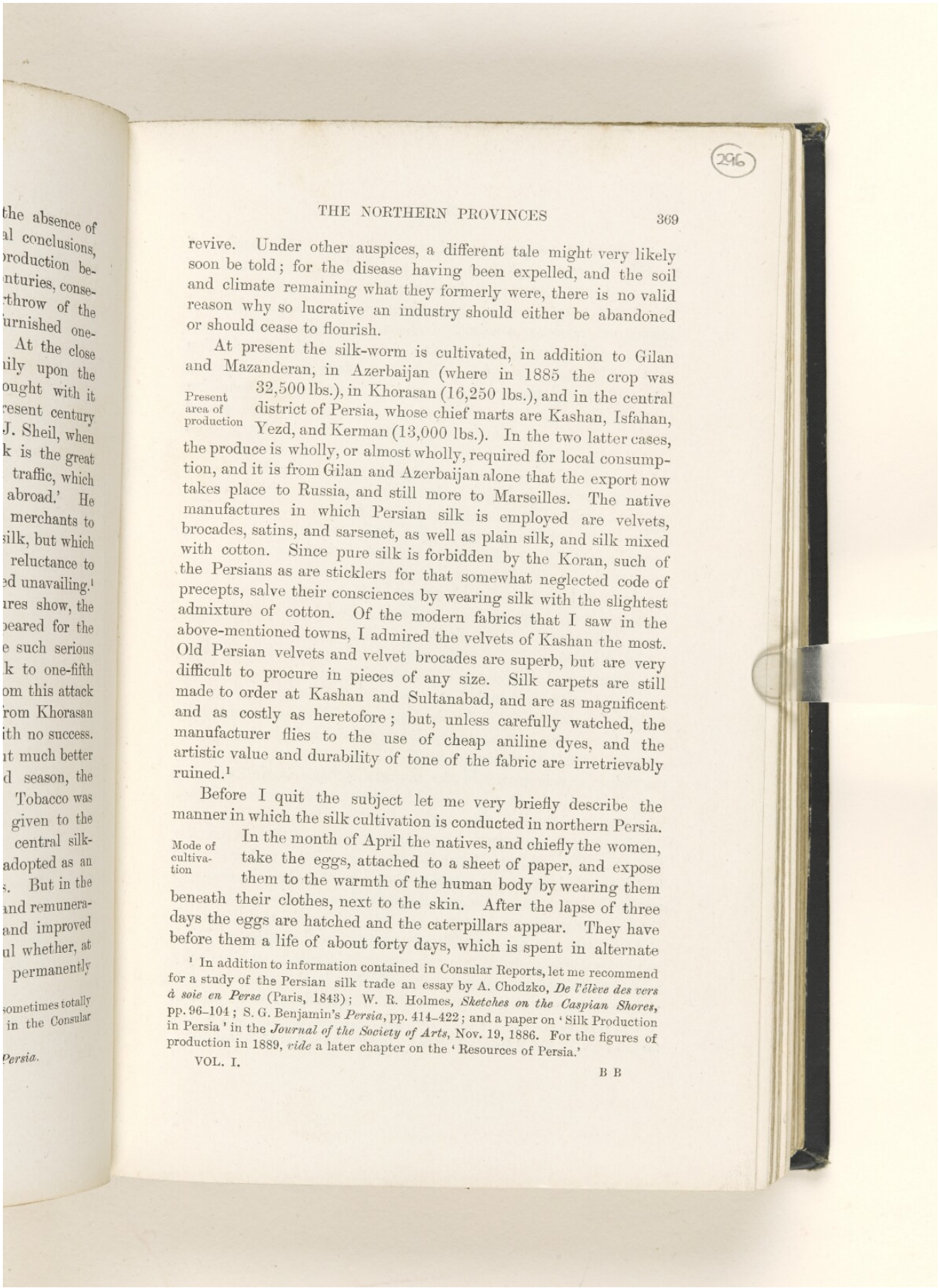



revive. Under other auspices, a different tale might very likely soon be told; for the disease having been expelled, and the soil and climate remaining what they formerly were, there is no valid reason why so lucrative an industry should either be abandoned or should cease to flourish.

Present area of production

At present the silk-worm is cultivated, in addition to Gilan and Mazanderan, in Azerbaijan (where in 1885 the crop was 32,500 lbs.), in Khorasan (16,250 lbs.), and in the central district of Persia, whose chief marts are Kashan, Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman (13,000 lbs.). In the two latter cases, the produce is wholly, or almost wholly, required for local consumption, and it is from Gilan and Azerbaijan alone that the export now takes place to Russia, and still more to Marseilles. The native manufactures in which Persian silk is employed are velvets, brocades, satins, and sarsenet, as well as plain silk, and silk mixed with cotton. Since pure silk is forbidden by the Koran, such of the Persians as are sticklers for that somewhat neglected code of precepts, salve their consciences by wearing silk with the slightest admixture of cotton. Of the modern fabrics that I saw in the above-mentioned towns, I admired the velvets of Kashan the most. Old Persian velvets and velvet brocades are superb, but are very difficult to procure in pieces of any size. Silk carpets are still made to order at Kashan and Sultanabad, and are as magnificent and as costly as heretofore; but, unless carefully watched, the manufacturer flies to the use of cheap aniline dyes, and the artistic value and durability of tone of the fabric are irretrievably ruined.[1]

Mode of cultivation

Before I quit the subject let me very briefly describe the manner in which the silk cultivation is conducted in northern Persia. In the month of April the natives, and chiefly the women, take the eggs, attached to a sheet of paper, and expose them to the warmth of the human body by wearing them beneath their clothes, next to the skin. After the lapse of three days the eggs are hatched and the caterpillars appear. They have before them a life of about forty days, which is spent in alternate

[1] In addition to information contained in Consular Reports, let me recommend for a study of the Persian silk trade an essay by A. Chodzko, *De l'élève des vers à soie en Perse* (Paris, 1843); W. R. Holmes, *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, pp. 96–104; S. G. Benjamin's *Persia*, pp. 414–422; and a paper on 'Silk Production in Persia' in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, Nov. 19, 1886. For the figures of production in 1889, *vide* a later chapter on the 'Resources of Persia.'



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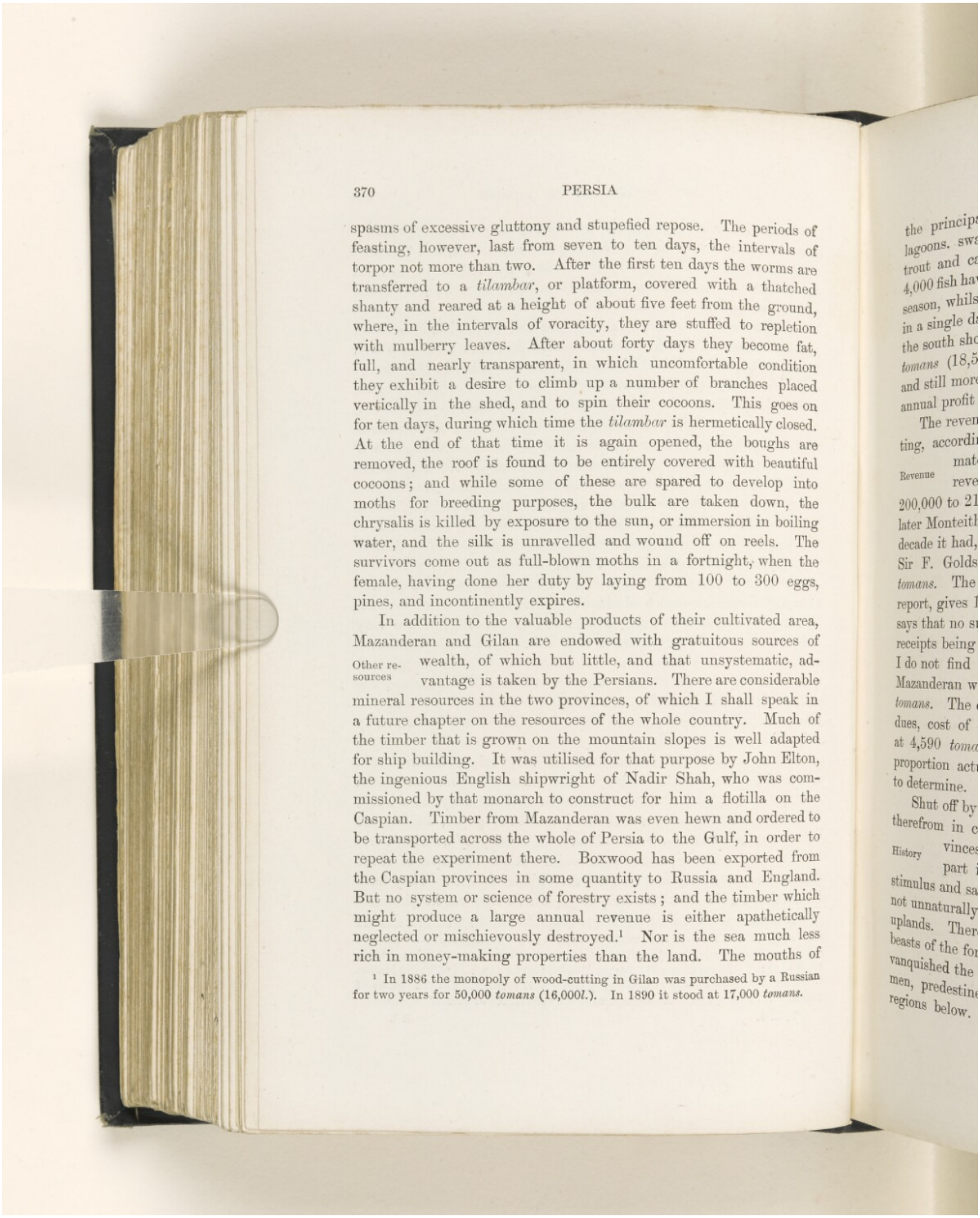



spasms of excessive gluttony and stupefied repose. The periods of feasting, however, last from seven to ten days, the intervals of torpor not more than two. After the first ten days the worms are transferred to a *tilambar*, or platform, covered with a thatched shanty and reared at a height of about five feet from the ground, where, in the intervals of voracity, they are stuffed to repletion with mulberry leaves. After about forty days they become fat, full, and nearly transparent, in which uncomfortable condition they exhibit a desire to climb up a number of branches placed vertically in the shed, and to spin their cocoons. This goes on for ten days, during which time the *tilambar* is hermetically closed. At the end of that time it is again opened, the boughs are removed, the roof is found to be entirely covered with beautiful cocoons; and while some of these are spared to develop into moths for breeding purposes, the bulk are taken down, the chrysalis is killed by exposure to the sun, or immersion in boiling water, and the silk is unravelled and wound off on reels. The survivors come out as full-blown moths in a fortnight, when the female, having done her duty by laying from 100 to 300 eggs, pines, and incontinently expires.

In addition to the valuable products of their cultivated area, Mazanderan and Gilan are endowed with gratuitous sources of wealth, of which but little, and that unsystematic, advantage is taken by the Persians. There are considerable mineral resources in the two provinces, of which I shall speak in a future chapter on the resources of the whole country. Much of the timber that is grown on the mountain slopes is well adapted for ship building. It was utilised for that purpose by John Elton, the ingenious English shipwright of Nadir Shah, who was commissioned by that monarch to construct for him a flotilla on the Caspian. Timber from Mazanderan was even hewn and ordered to be transported across the whole of Persia to the Gulf, in order to repeat the experiment there. Boxwood has been exported from the Caspian provinces in some quantity to Russia and England. But no system or science of forestry exists; and the timber which might produce a large annual revenue is either apathetically neglected or mischievously destroyed.[1] Nor is the sea much less rich in money-making properties than the land. The mouths of

Other resources

[1] In 1886 the monopoly of wood-cutting in Gilan was purchased by a Russian for two years for 50,000 *tomans* (16,000*l*.). In 1890 it stood at 17,000 *tomans*.

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the principal rivers, especially the Sefid Rud, and the marine lagoons. swarm with a variety of fish, sturgeon, salmon, mullet, trout and carp. At the mouth of the above-named river nearly 4,000 fish have sometimes been taken in the day at the height of the season, whilst in the Enzeli lagoon 300,000 carp have been netted in a single day. At the time of my visit the entire fisheries on the south shore of the Caspian were leased to a Russian for 65,000 *tomans* (18,500*l.*) a year; and from the export both of dried fish, and still more of caviar to Russia, he was said to make a large annual profit by the speculation.

Revenue

The revenue of these two provinces has been peculiarly fluctuating, according as it has followed the ups and downs of their material progress or decline. Fraser in 1822 found the revenue of Gilan, from customs and land-tax, to be 200,000 to 210,000 *tomans*, or 110,000*l.* to 115,000*l.* Ten years later Monteith returned it as 300,000 *tomans*, whilst, after a further decade it had, according to Holmes, reverted to the original figure. Sir F. Goldsmid has given the revenue (in 1874) as 440,000 *tomans*. The 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' quoting from an obsolete report, gives 105,000 *tomans* as the revenue of Mazanderan, and says that no surplus is left therefrom for the treasury, the entire receipts being consumed in military and administrative expenses. I do not find that this is the case. In 1888–89 the revenue of Mazanderan was 139,350 *tomans* in cash, that of Gilan 345,000 *tomans*. The expenditure in the former province on government dues, cost of collecting, public buildings, &c., was only returned at 4,590 *tomans*; in the latter it was 24,430 *tomans*. What proportion actually reached the Royal Exchequer it is impossible to determine.

History

Shut off by the mountains from the rest of Persia, and differing therefrom in climate, character, and interests, the Caspian provinces have necessarily played a somewhat independent part in history. The imagination that finds both its stimulus and satisfaction in the legendary period of a nation's life, not unnaturally located the heroes of Persian myth in the sublime uplands. There they fought their battles and triumphed, the very beasts of the forest taking their side in the conflict; there Rustam vanquished the Div Sefid, or White Demon; an inferior order of men, predestined to a just servitude, inhabited the maleficent regions below. The part played by these provinces in classical



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history, and in the campaigns of Alexander, may be traced by reference to the title Hyrcania in a Classical dictionary. In the Christian Era they appear only at fitful epochs upon the public stage. During the Sassanian period and the first centuries of Islam, Mazanderan formed part of Tapuristan, the modern Taberistan. About the year 900 A.D. Mazanderan was given by the Khalif Mutadhid (or Mutazzid) to Ismail Samani, the founder of the Samanid dynasty of North Persia and Bokhara, as a reward for his services in conquering the rebellious Amr bin Leith, the brother and successor of Yakub bin Leith, already mentioned in the chapter on Seistan. In the fourteenth century we find an independent Seyid dynasty ruling in Mazanderan. When Anthony Jenkinson and his fellow pioneers opened the British Caspian trade with Persia in the middle of the sixteenth century, they speak of a king of Gilan, who was only in nominal dependence upon the Sefavi Shahs. This state of halting subjection developed into actual rebellion in the reign of Shah Abbas, who, in 1593, ordered a general massacre in Gilan. Mazanderan, however, as his mother's birthplace, was a special favourite with Abbas. Here he built a series of magnificent palaces, whose wasting ruins I shall presently describe; here, in sight of the Caspian and in a retreat where no enemy could either follow or disturb him, he loved, when not at Isfahan, to reside. So anxious was he to raise the maritime border to a higher level of prosperity and cultivation, that here, as elsewhere, he pursued his favourite policy of colonisation on a gigantic scale; transplanting 30,000 families of Christians from the Turkish border in order at one and the same time to depopulate the regions which were yearly ravaged by the Ottomans, and to apply a fresh and vigorous industry to the most neglected part of his dominions. Chardin gives the following quaint description of the aptitudes of the country for the novel immigrants:—

> It is sayd to be a perfect right country for the Christians; it abounds with wine and hog's flesh, two things which they mightily like; they love to go to sea, and they will traffick with their brothers, the Muscovites, by the Caspian Sea.[1]

Abbas, however, had failed to reckon with the Mazanderani climate, which quarrelled as fatally with the new comers as it did with the worthy English ambassador, Sir Dodmore Cotton; for, as

[1] *Travels* (edit. Lloyd), vol. ii. pp. 8–11.

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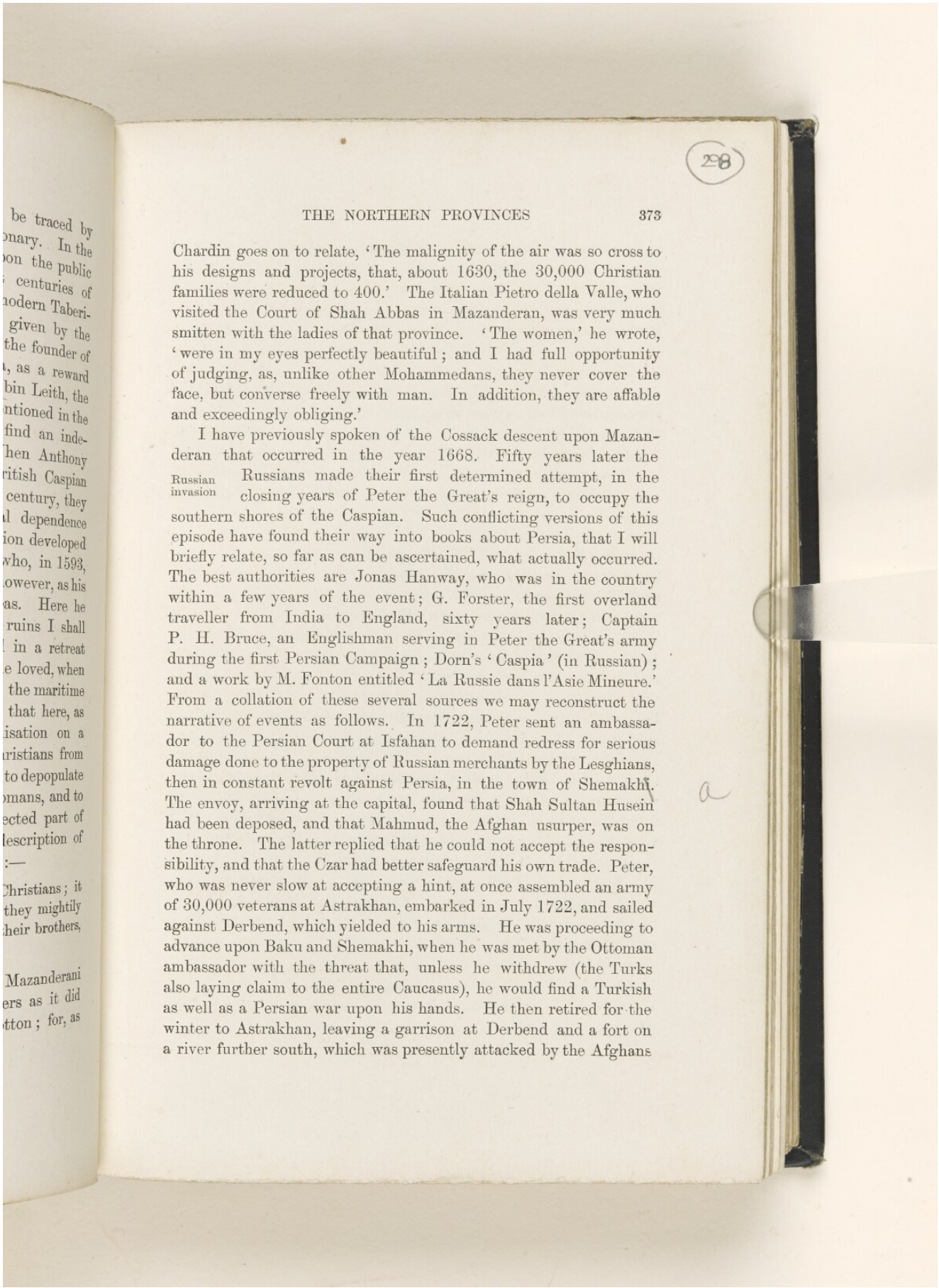
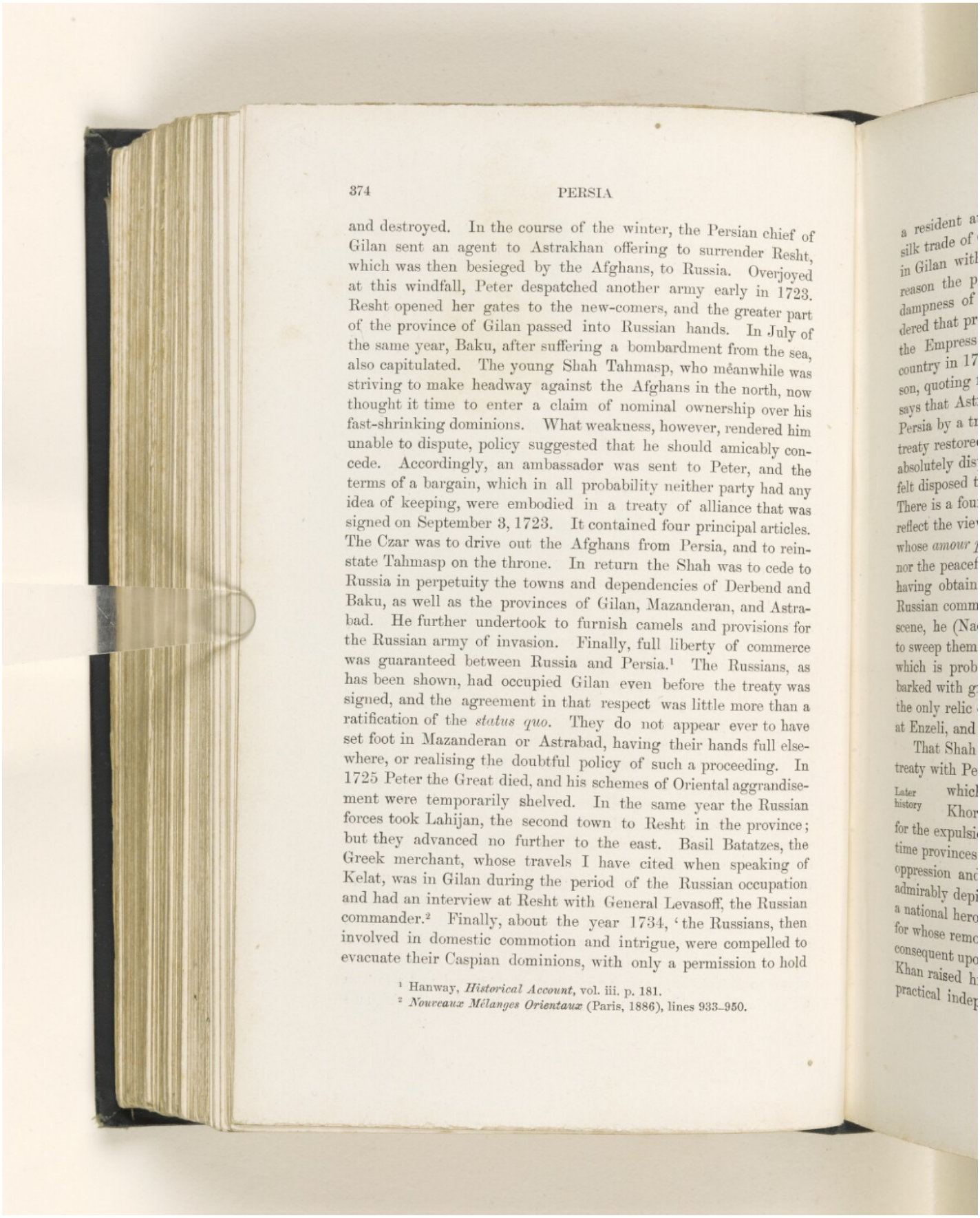




Chardin goes on to relate, 'The malignity of the air was so cross to his designs and projects, that, about 1630, the 30,000 Christian families were reduced to 400.' The Italian Pietro della Valle, who visited the Court of Shah Abbas in Mazanderan, was very much smitten with the ladies of that province. 'The women,' he wrote, 'were in my eyes perfectly beautiful; and I had full opportunity of judging, as, unlike other Mohammedans, they never cover the face, but converse freely with man. In addition, they are affable and exceedingly obliging.'

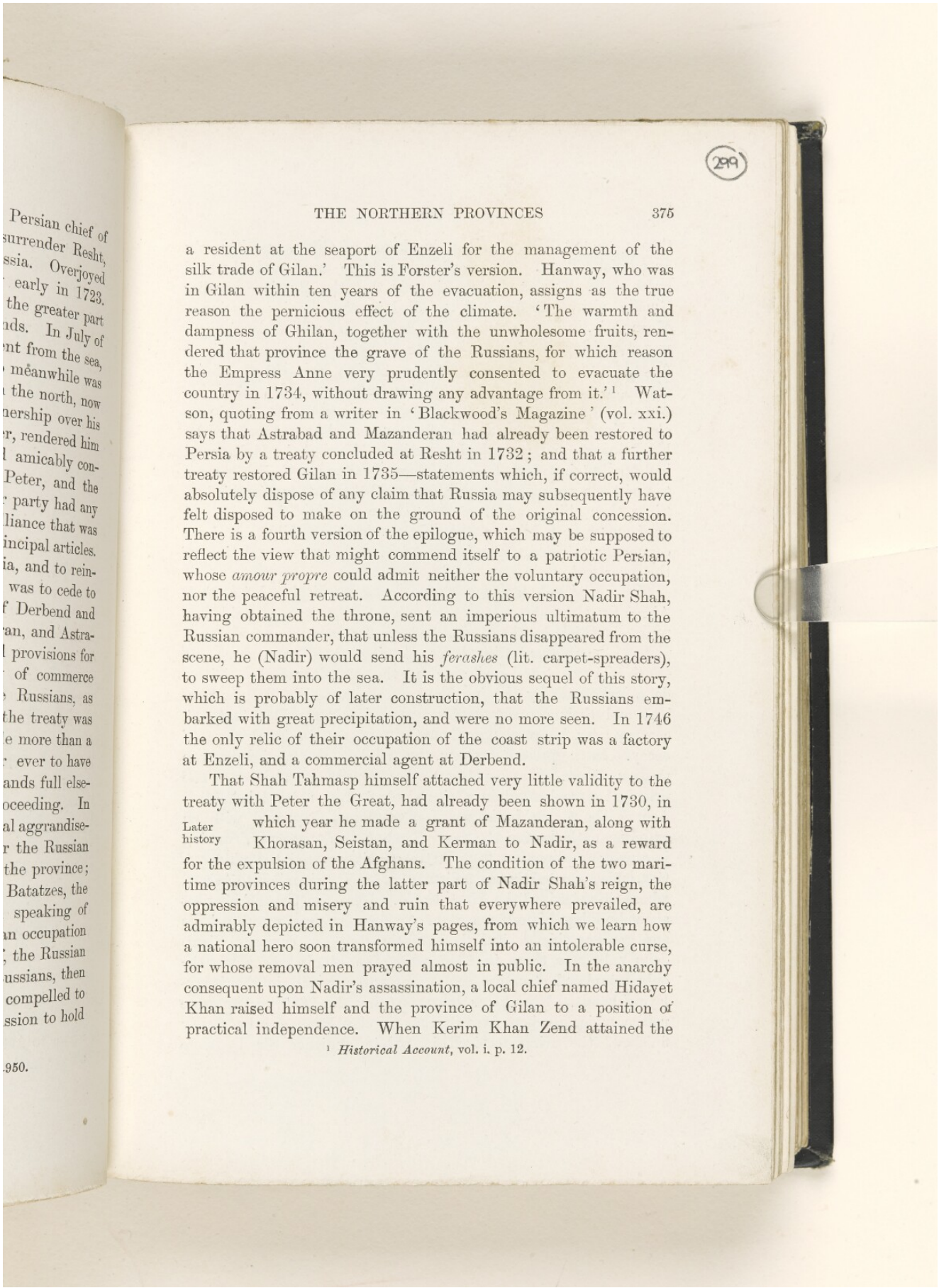
I have previously spoken of the Cossack descent upon Mazanderan that occurred in the year 1668. Fifty years later the Russian invasion Russians made their first determined attempt, in the closing years of Peter the Great's reign, to occupy the southern shores of the Caspian. Such conflicting versions of this episode have found their way into books about Persia, that I will briefly relate, so far as can be ascertained, what actually occurred. The best authorities are Jonas Hanway, who was in the country within a few years of the event; G. Forster, the first overland traveller from India to England, sixty years later; Captain P. H. Bruce, an Englishman serving in Peter the Great's army during the first Persian Campaign; Dorn's 'Caspia' (in Russian); and a work by M. Fonton entitled 'La Russie dans l'Asie Mineure.' From a collation of these several sources we may reconstruct the narrative of events as follows. In 1722, Peter sent an ambassador to the Persian Court at Isfahan to demand redress for serious damage done to the property of Russian merchants by the Lesghians, then in constant revolt against Persia, in the town of Shemakhi. The envoy, arriving at the capital, found that Shah Sultan Husein had been deposed, and that Mahmud, the Afghan usurper, was on the throne. The latter replied that he could not accept the responsibility, and that the Czar had better safeguard his own trade. Peter, who was never slow at accepting a hint, at once assembled an army of 30,000 veterans at Astrakhan, embarked in July 1722, and sailed against Derbend, which yielded to his arms. He was proceeding to advance upon Baku and Shemakhi, when he was met by the Ottoman ambassador with the threat that, unless he withdrew (the Turks also laying claim to the entire Caucasus), he would find a Turkish as well as a Persian war upon his hands. He then retired for the winter to Astrakhan, leaving a garrison at Derbend and a fort on a river further south, which was presently attacked by the Afghans





and destroyed. In the course of the winter, the Persian chief of Gilan sent an agent to Astrakhan offering to surrender Resht, which was then besieged by the Afghans, to Russia. Overjoyed at this windfall, Peter despatched another army early in 1723. Resht opened her gates to the new-comers, and the greater part of the province of Gilan passed into Russian hands. In July of the same year, Baku, after suffering a bombardment from the sea, also capitulated. The young Shah Tahmasp, who meanwhile was striving to make headway against the Afghans in the north, now thought it time to enter a claim of nominal ownership over his fast-shrinking dominions. What weakness, however, rendered him unable to dispute, policy suggested that he should amicably concede. Accordingly, an ambassador was sent to Peter, and the terms of a bargain, which in all probability neither party had any idea of keeping, were embodied in a treaty of alliance that was signed on September 3, 1723. It contained four principal articles. The Czar was to drive out the Afghans from Persia, and to reinstate Tahmasp on the throne. In return the Shah was to cede to Russia in perpetuity the towns and dependencies of Derbend and Baku, as well as the provinces of Gilan, Mazanderan, and Astrabad. He further undertook to furnish camels and provisions for the Russian army of invasion. Finally, full liberty of commerce was guaranteed between Russia and Persia.[1] The Russians, as has been shown, had occupied Gilan even before the treaty was signed, and the agreement in that respect was little more than a ratification of the *status quo*. They do not appear ever to have set foot in Mazanderan or Astrabad, having their hands full elsewhere, or realising the doubtful policy of such a proceeding. In 1725 Peter the Great died, and his schemes of Oriental aggrandisement were temporarily shelved. In the same year the Russian forces took Lahijan, the second town to Resht in the province; but they advanced no further to the east. Basil Batatzes, the Greek merchant, whose travels I have cited when speaking of Kelat, was in Gilan during the period of the Russian occupation and had an interview at Resht with General Levasoff, the Russian commander.[2] Finally, about the year 1734, 'the Russians, then involved in domestic commotion and intrigue, were compelled to evacuate their Caspian dominions, with only a permission to hold

[1] Hanway, *Historical Account*, vol. iii. p. 181.
[2] *Nouveaux Mélanges Orientaux* (Paris, 1886), lines 933–950.



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a resident at the seaport of Enzeli for the management of the silk trade of Gilan.' This is Forster's version. Hanway, who was in Gilan within ten years of the evacuation, assigns as the true reason the pernicious effect of the climate. 'The warmth and dampness of Ghilan, together with the unwholesome fruits, rendered that province the grave of the Russians, for which reason the Empress Anne very prudently consented to evacuate the country in 1734, without drawing any advantage from it.'[1] Watson, quoting from a writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine' (vol. xxi.) says that Astrabad and Mazanderan had already been restored to Persia by a treaty concluded at Resht in 1732; and that a further treaty restored Gilan in 1735—statements which, if correct, would absolutely dispose of any claim that Russia may subsequently have felt disposed to make on the ground of the original concession. There is a fourth version of the epilogue, which may be supposed to reflect the view that might commend itself to a patriotic Persian, whose *amour propre* could admit neither the voluntary occupation, nor the peaceful retreat. According to this version Nadir Shah, having obtained the throne, sent an imperious ultimatum to the Russian commander, that unless the Russians disappeared from the scene, he (Nadir) would send his *ferashes* (lit. carpet-spreaders), to sweep them into the sea. It is the obvious sequel of this story, which is probably of later construction, that the Russians embarked with great precipitation, and were no more seen. In 1746 the only relic of their occupation of the coast strip was a factory at Enzeli, and a commercial agent at Derbend.

That Shah Tahmasp himself attached very little validity to the treaty with Peter the Great, had already been shown in 1730, in which year he made a grant of Mazanderan, along with Khorasan, Seistan, and Kerman to Nadir, as a reward for the expulsion of the Afghans. The condition of the two maritime provinces during the latter part of Nadir Shah's reign, the oppression and misery and ruin that everywhere prevailed, are admirably depicted in Hanway's pages, from which we learn how a national hero soon transformed himself into an intolerable curse, for whose removal men prayed almost in public. In the anarchy consequent upon Nadir's assassination, a local chief named Hidayet Khan raised himself and the province of Gilan to a position of practical independence. When Kerim Khan Zend attained the

Later history

[1] *Historical Account*, vol. i. p. 12.

throne, he left Hidayet Khan in charge of Gilan, exacting only an annual tribute. The chief kept a large army, and observed great state. It was during his rule that the Russian traveller Gmélin visited Resht, and travelled in the Caspian provinces. Meanwhile, in Mazanderan and Astrabad, the wily Kajar eunuch was organising the strength and the following that were shortly to place him upon the Persian throne. Sheikh Vais, the son of Ali Murad Khan Zend, who held the throne for four years, from 1781–85, was despatched by his father to crush these pretensions, and to recover Mazanderan. Though at first successful he was deserted by his followers and compelled to retire. When Agha Mohammed had finally triumphed, Hidayet Khan of Gilan was foolish enough to resist the successful usurper, and paid the penalty with his life. Since then Gilan and Mazanderan have remained in secure and undisputed possession of the Kajar reigning family, and have commonly provided governing billets for the sons or relatives of the sovereign.

Palaces of Abbas the Great. Ashraf

I have already spoken of the partiality displayed by Shah Abbas for Mazanderan, and have alluded to the royal residences which he there constructed. Let me say a few words more about them before passing on. The monarch was here visited and seen by the garrulous Italian Pietro della Valle, and by the ingenious Englishman, Sir Thomas Herbert, and their contemporaneous narratives are still extant. A century later, Hanway described the ravages of a hundred years' decay. In the present century, the tale has been carried down to modern times. These palaces were several in number. The principal were located in a situation of great natural beauty at Ashraf, about five miles south of Astrabad Bay, and with an exquisite outlook over the sea. Shah Abbas' causeway, running in a westerly direction from Astrabad city, passed the village of Gez, and conducted thence, a distance of twenty-six miles, to Ashraf, whose title signified the Most Noble. Here the Great Abbas set about building himself a sort of northern Isfahan, whose palaces and gardens should rival those of the southern capital. Pietro della Valle was there in 1618, while the king's palace was the only completed structure, and the town was still in the bricklayers' hands. Nine years later, on May 25, 1627, in the same palace, which Herbert described as 'pretty large and but newly finished,' the King received in public audience Sir Dodmore

Cotton, ambassador from Charles I., and his own accredited envoy Sir Robert Sherley. This is how the ever-amusing Herbert describes the scene:—

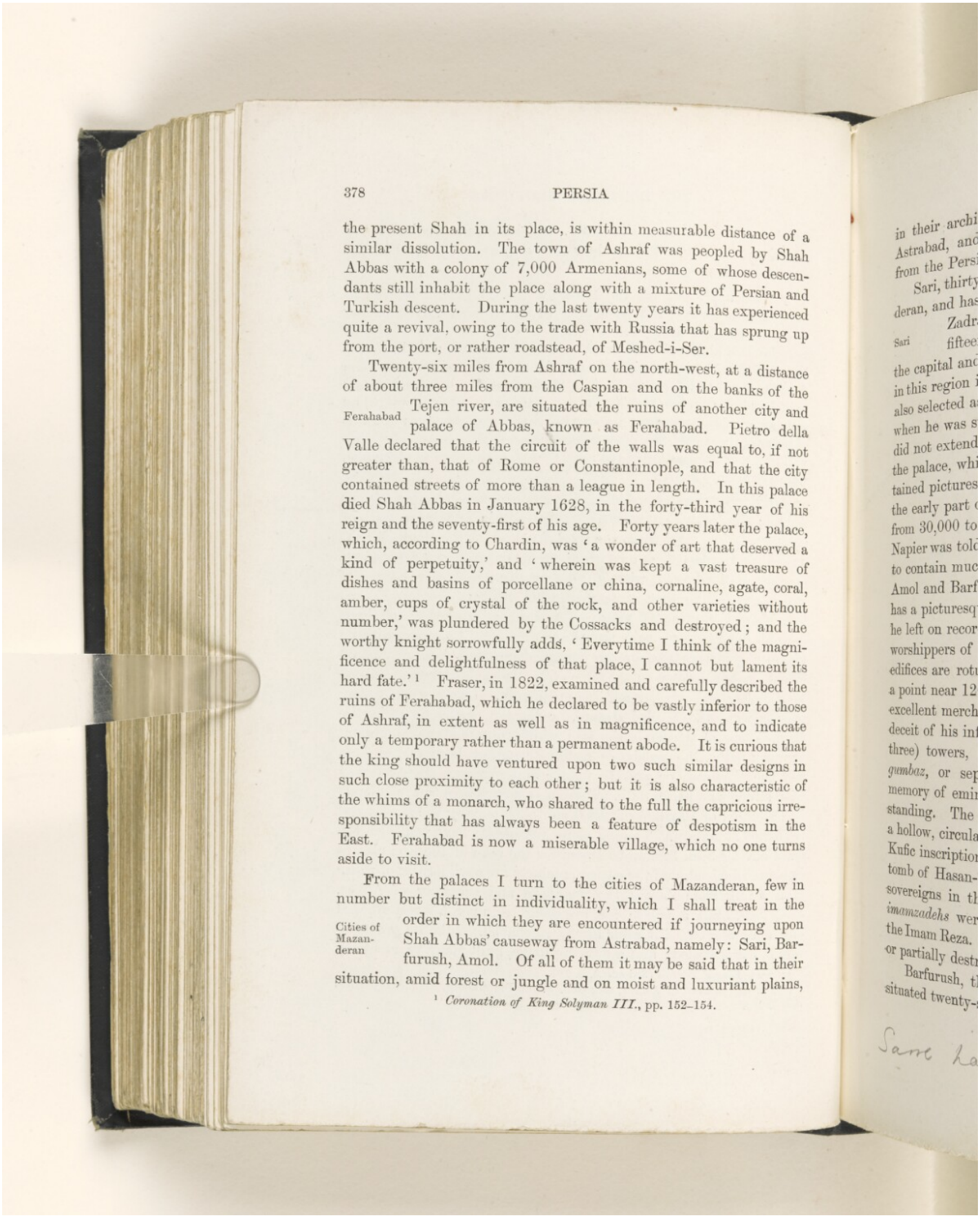
At the upper end sat the Pot-shaw [i.e. Padishah], beloved at home, famous abroad, and formidable to his enemies. His grandeur was this: Circled with such a world of wealth he clothed himself that day in a plain red callico coat quilted with cotten, as if he should have said His dignity consisted rather in his parts and prudence than *furtivis coloribus*, having no need to steal respect by borrowed colours or embroideries. Cross-legg'd the Pot-shaw sat; his sash was white and large; his waste was girded with a thong of leather; the hilt of his sword was gold, the blade formed like a semi-circle, and doubtless well tempered; the scabbard red; and the Courtiers, *regis ad exemplum*, were but meanly attired.[1]

Originally there were six different royal establishments at Ashraf; five of which were contained within one large wall of circumvallation. Of these the most famous was the Bagh-i-Shah, or King's Garden, laid out with stone terraces, and canals, and cascades, and adorned with *aiwans*, or open halls, the largest of which, called, like that at Isfahan, Chehel Situn, or Forty Pillars, terminated the principal vista. Terraces, and cascades, and halls have all gone to utter ruin, but the garden is still a glory, with its gigantic cypresses and orange trees. The Chehel Situn was accidentally burnt down in the time of Nadir Shah, and was replaced by a flimsy structure, itself in equal ruin. Other gardens and palaces were the Bagh-i-Harem, or Garden of the Seraglio, the Bagh-i-Tepe, or Garden of the Hill, which contained the Hummum, or warm baths, the palace of Sahib Zeman, or Lord of the Age, and the Khelwet, or private palace and garden. A paved way with streams and waterfalls led from this enclosure to the Imaret-i-Chashmeh, or Pavilion of the Fountains, making the sixth royal residence at Ashraf. The old stone pavements have vanished, the slabs having been broken or stolen for the sake of the iron clamps cemented by lead, and the entire precincts are a wilderness of ruin.[2] Half a mile from Ashraf the grandson and successor of Abbas, Shah Sefi, built a palace for his daughter, upon a lovely wooded eminence, and called it, after himself, Sefiabad. Like its predecessors it has perished; and a hunting lodge, built many years ago by

[1] *Some Yeares' Travels* (3rd edit.), p. 185.

[2] For the palaces of Ashraf, *vide* Gen. J. von Blaramberg, *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben*.

Sarre has one photo of Palace of Sahib Zeman
+ " " " Bagh-i-Chehmeh





the present Shah in its place, is within measurable distance of a similar dissolution. The town of Ashraf was peopled by Shah Abbas with a colony of 7,000 Armenians, some of whose descendants still inhabit the place along with a mixture of Persian and Turkish descent. During the last twenty years it has experienced quite a revival, owing to the trade with Russia that has sprung up from the port, or rather roadstead, of Meshed-i-Ser.

Twenty-six miles from Ashraf on the north-west, at a distance of about three miles from the Caspian and on the banks of the Tejen river, are situated the ruins of another city and palace of Abbas, known as Ferahabad. Pietro della Valle declared that the circuit of the walls was equal to, if not greater than, that of Rome or Constantinople, and that the city contained streets of more than a league in length. In this palace died Shah Abbas in January 1628, in the forty-third year of his reign and the seventy-first of his age. Forty years later the palace, which, according to Chardin, was 'a wonder of art that deserved a kind of perpetuity,' and 'wherein was kept a vast treasure of dishes and basins of porcellane or china, cornaline, agate, coral, amber, cups of crystal of the rock, and other varieties without number,' was plundered by the Cossacks and destroyed; and the worthy knight sorrowfully adds, 'Everytime I think of the magnificence and delightfulness of that place, I cannot but lament its hard fate.'[1] Fraser, in 1822, examined and carefully described the ruins of Ferahabad, which he declared to be vastly inferior to those of Ashraf, in extent as well as in magnificence, and to indicate only a temporary rather than a permanent abode. It is curious that the king should have ventured upon two such similar designs in such close proximity to each other; but it is also characteristic of the whims of a monarch, who shared to the full the capricious irresponsibility that has always been a feature of despotism in the East. Ferahabad is now a miserable village, which no one turns aside to visit.

Ferahabad

From the palaces I turn to the cities of Mazanderan, few in number but distinct in individuality, which I shall treat in the order in which they are encountered if journeying upon Shah Abbas' causeway from Astrabad, namely: Sari, Barfurush, Amol. Of all of them it may be said that in their situation, amid forest or jungle and on moist and luxuriant plains,

Cities of Mazanderan

[1] *Coronation of King Solyman III.*, pp. 152–154.

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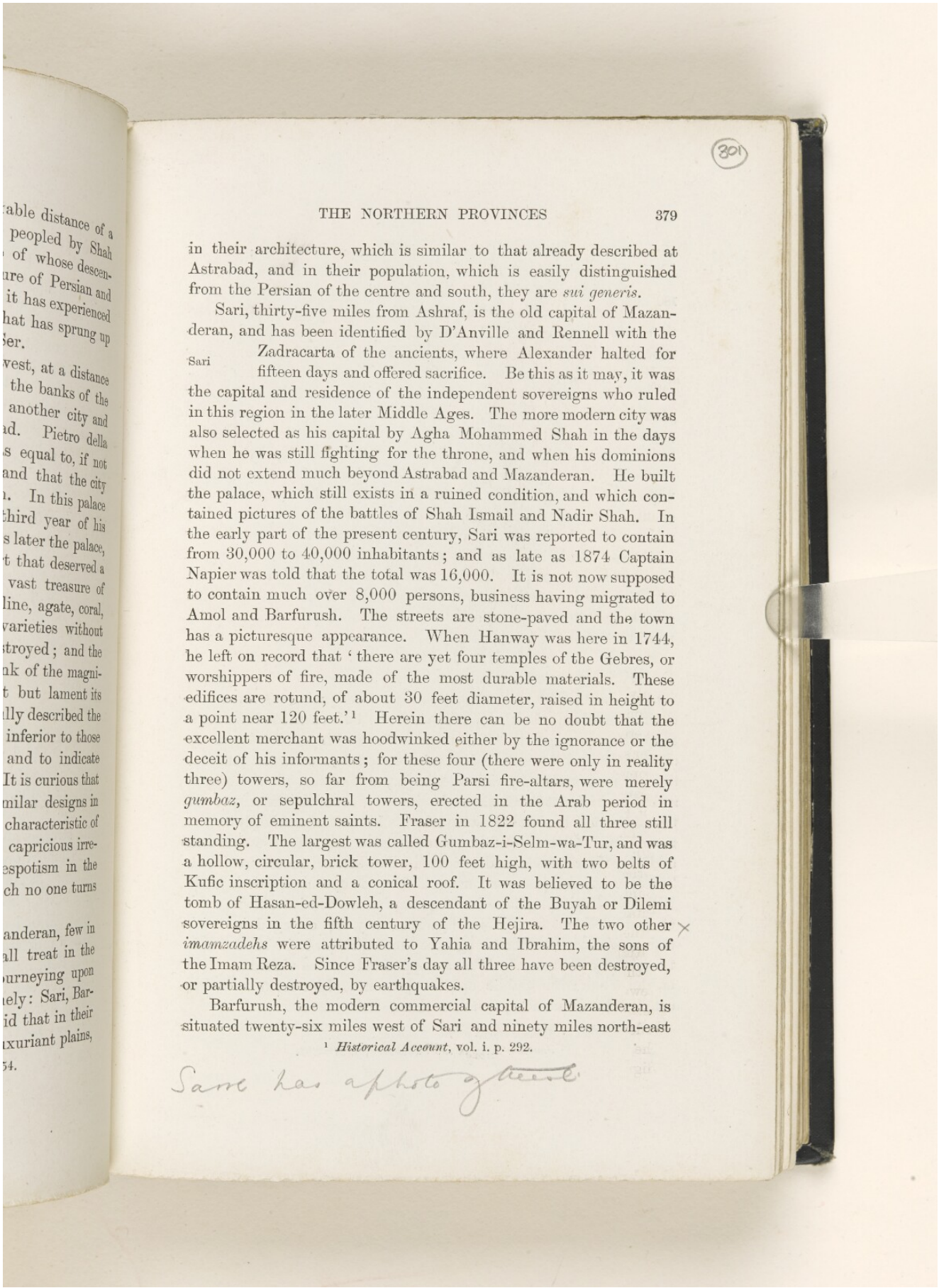




in their architecture, which is similar to that already described at Astrabad, and in their population, which is easily distinguished from the Persian of the centre and south, they are *sui generis*.

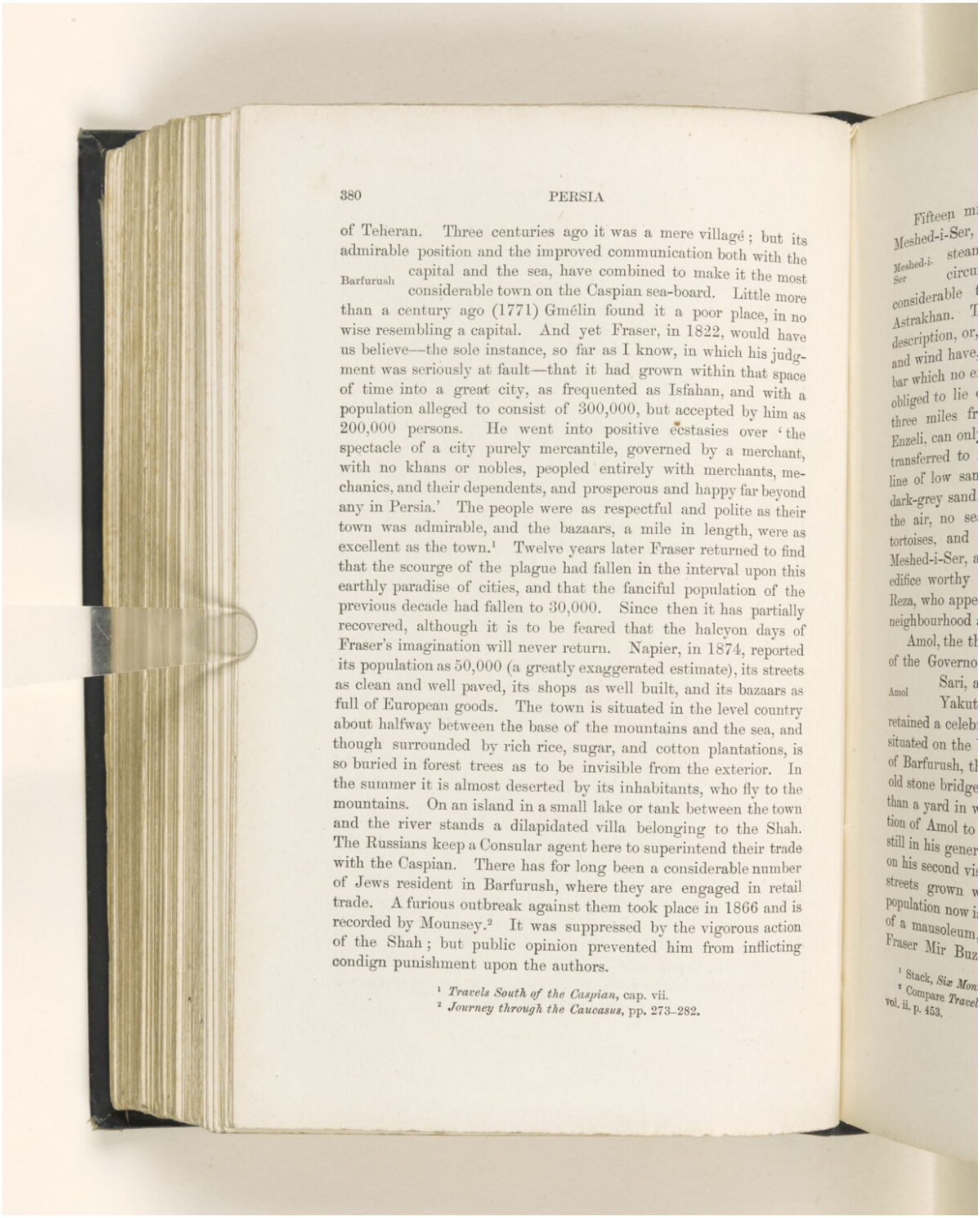
Sari, thirty-five miles from Ashraf, is the old capital of Mazanderan, and has been identified by D'Anville and Rennell with the Zadracarta of the ancients, where Alexander halted for fifteen days and offered sacrifice. Be this as it may, it was the capital and residence of the independent sovereigns who ruled in this region in the later Middle Ages. The more modern city was also selected as his capital by Agha Mohammed Shah in the days when he was still fighting for the throne, and when his dominions did not extend much beyond Astrabad and Mazanderan. He built the palace, which still exists in a ruined condition, and which contained pictures of the battles of Shah Ismail and Nadir Shah. In the early part of the present century, Sari was reported to contain from 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants; and as late as 1874 Captain Napier was told that the total was 16,000. It is not now supposed to contain much over 8,000 persons, business having migrated to Amol and Barfurush. The streets are stone-paved and the town has a picturesque appearance. When Hanway was here in 1744, he left on record that 'there are yet four temples of the Gebres, or worshippers of fire, made of the most durable materials. These edifices are rotund, of about 30 feet diameter, raised in height to a point near 120 feet.'[1] Herein there can be no doubt that the excellent merchant was hoodwinked either by the ignorance or the deceit of his informants; for these four (there were only in reality three) towers, so far from being Parsi fire-altars, were merely *gumbaz*, or sepulchral towers, erected in the Arab period in memory of eminent saints. Fraser in 1822 found all three still standing. The largest was called Gumbaz-i-Selm-wa-Tur, and was a hollow, circular, brick tower, 100 feet high, with two belts of Kufic inscription and a conical roof. It was believed to be the tomb of Hasan-ed-Dowleh, a descendant of the Buyah or Dilemi sovereigns in the fifth century of the Hejira. The two other *imamzadehs* were attributed to Yahia and Ibrahim, the sons of the Imam Reza. Since Fraser's day all three have been destroyed, or partially destroyed, by earthquakes.

Sari

Barfurush, the modern commercial capital of Mazanderan, is situated twenty-six miles west of Sari and ninety miles north-east

[1] *Historical Account*, vol. i. p. 292.

Sari has a photo given





of Teheran. Three centuries ago it was a mere village; but its admirable position and the improved communication both with the Barfurush capital and the sea, have combined to make it the most considerable town on the Caspian sea-board. Little more than a century ago (1771) Gmélin found it a poor place, in no wise resembling a capital. And yet Fraser, in 1822, would have us believe—the sole instance, so far as I know, in which his judgment was seriously at fault—that it had grown within that space of time into a great city, as frequented as Isfahan, and with a population alleged to consist of 300,000, but accepted by him as 200,000 persons. He went into positive ecstasies over 'the spectacle of a city purely mercantile, governed by a merchant, with no khans or nobles, peopled entirely with merchants, mechanics, and their dependents, and prosperous and happy far beyond any in Persia.' The people were as respectful and polite as their town was admirable, and the bazaars, a mile in length, were as excellent as the town.[1] Twelve years later Fraser returned to find that the scourge of the plague had fallen in the interval upon this earthly paradise of cities, and that the fanciful population of the previous decade had fallen to 30,000. Since then it has partially recovered, although it is to be feared that the halcyon days of Fraser's imagination will never return. Napier, in 1874, reported its population as 50,000 (a greatly exaggerated estimate), its streets as clean and well paved, its shops as well built, and its bazaars as full of European goods. The town is situated in the level country about halfway between the base of the mountains and the sea, and though surrounded by rich rice, sugar, and cotton plantations, is so buried in forest trees as to be invisible from the exterior. In the summer it is almost deserted by its inhabitants, who fly to the mountains. On an island in a small lake or tank between the town and the river stands a dilapidated villa belonging to the Shah. The Russians keep a Consular agent here to superintend their trade with the Caspian. There has for long been a considerable number of Jews resident in Barfurush, where they are engaged in retail trade. A furious outbreak against them took place in 1866 and is recorded by Mounsey.[2] It was suppressed by the vigorous action of the Shah; but public opinion prevented him from inflicting condign punishment upon the authors.

[1] *Travels South of the Caspian*, cap. vii.
[2] *Journey through the Caucasus*, pp. 273–282.

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Fifteen miles from Barfurush is the port or roadstead of Meshed-i-Ser, at the mouth of the river Babil. Here the Russian steamers of the Caucasus and Mercury touch in their circumnavigation of the Caspian, and there is a very considerable trade, both export and import, principally with Astrakhan. The harbour accommodation is of the most meagre description, or, rather, does not exist. The rival influences of river and wind have, in a manner before described, created a formidable bar which no effort is made to pierce or dredge. The steamers are obliged to lie out in the offing at a distance of between two and three miles from the shore; and passengers and cargo, as at Enzeli, can only be disembarked in calm weather, when they are transferred to native, flat-bottomed barges. 'The coast here is a line of low sandhills, overlooking a steep and narrow beach of dark-grey sand. There are no shells on the shore, no birds in the air, no seaweed, no fish, nothing but green water-snakes, tortoises, and frogs.'[1] There is a Persian Custom-house at Meshed-i-Ser, and a lighthouse, with no light. The only other edifice worthy of notice is an *imamzadeh* of a brother of Imam Reza, who appears to have strewn his dead relatives about this neighbourhood as thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa.

Meshed-i-Ser

Amol, the third town of Mazanderan, and the present residence of the Governor of the province, is, unlike Barfurush, but like Sari, a place that has figured in history. In the time of Yakut it was the first city in Taberistan; and it long retained a celebrity for its cotton and carpet manufactures. It is situated on the banks of the Haraz, about twenty-three miles west of Barfurush, the river being crossed outside the town by a very old stone bridge, between 80 and 100 yards long and not more than a yard in width. Gmélin, 120 years ago, found the population of Amol to be only 800 persons, but 50 years later Fraser, still in his generous mood, reported from 35,000 to 40,000, although on his second visit in 1834 the place was 'a ruin, a desert—the streets grown with jungle, and not a soul to be seen.'[2] The population now is said to be about 8,000. There are the ruins here of a mausoleum, erected by Shah Abbas, over a Seyid, called by Fraser Mir Buzurg, who was his mother's ancestor, and raised

Amol

[1] Stack, *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 202.

[2] Compare *Travels South of the Caspian*, cap. viii., with *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 453.

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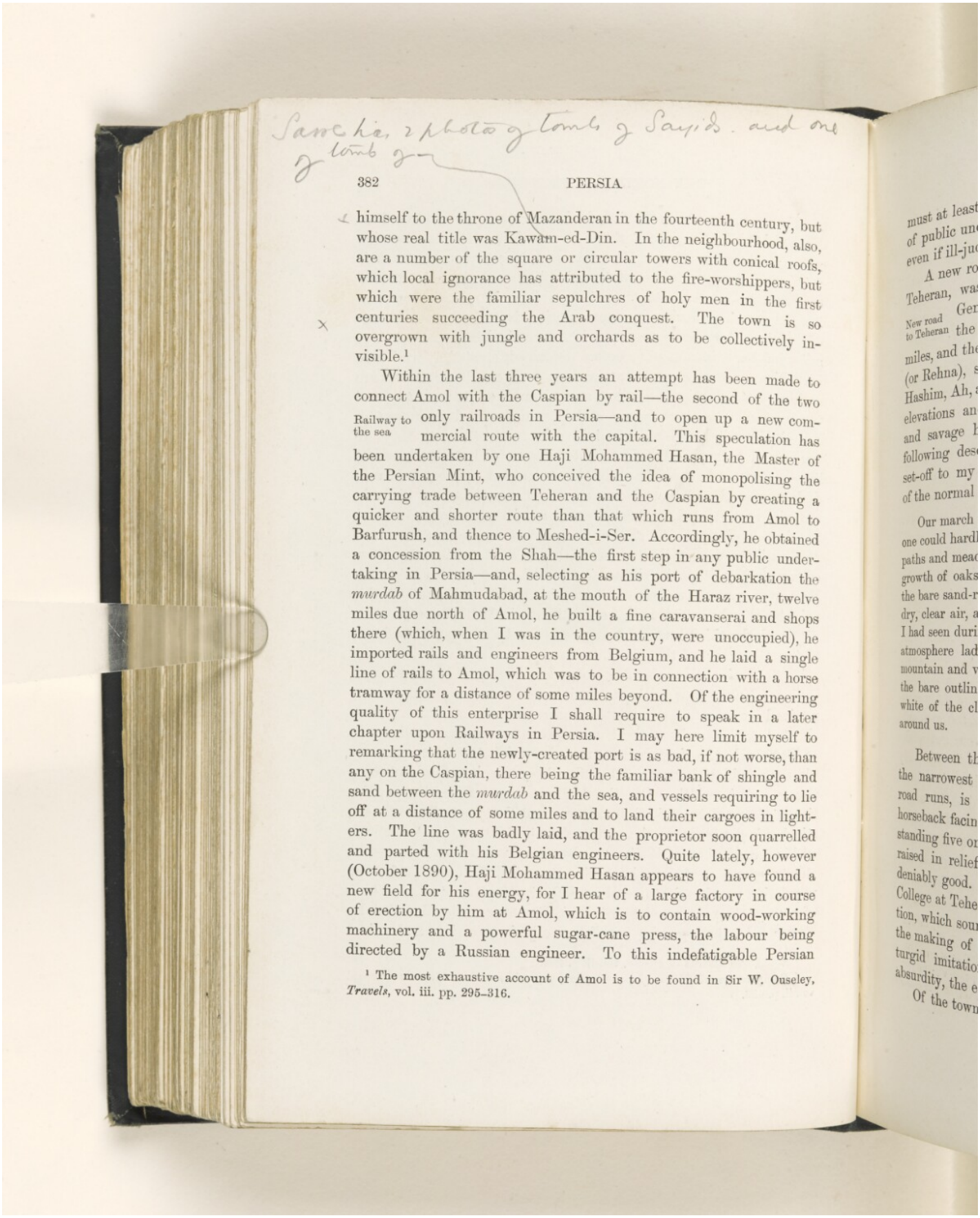

Sanchia, 2 photos of tomb of Sayids. and one of tomb of—



himself to the throne of Mazanderan in the fourteenth century, but whose real title was Kawam-ed-Din. In the neighbourhood, also, are a number of the square or circular towers with conical roofs, which local ignorance has attributed to the fire-worshippers, but which were the familiar sepulchres of holy men in the first centuries succeeding the Arab conquest. The town is so overgrown with jungle and orchards as to be collectively invisible.[1]

Railway to the sea

Within the last three years an attempt has been made to connect Amol with the Caspian by rail—the second of the two only railroads in Persia—and to open up a new commercial route with the capital. This speculation has been undertaken by one Haji Mohammed Hasan, the Master of the Persian Mint, who conceived the idea of monopolising the carrying trade between Teheran and the Caspian by creating a quicker and shorter route than that which runs from Amol to Barfurush, and thence to Meshed-i-Ser. Accordingly, he obtained a concession from the Shah—the first step in any public undertaking in Persia—and, selecting as his port of debarkation the *murdab* of Mahmudabad, at the mouth of the Haraz river, twelve miles due north of Amol, he built a fine caravanserai and shops there (which, when I was in the country, were unoccupied), he imported rails and engineers from Belgium, and he laid a single line of rails to Amol, which was to be in connection with a horse tramway for a distance of some miles beyond. Of the engineering quality of this enterprise I shall require to speak in a later chapter upon Railways in Persia. I may here limit myself to remarking that the newly-created port is as bad, if not worse, than any on the Caspian, there being the familiar bank of shingle and sand between the *murdab* and the sea, and vessels requiring to lie off at a distance of some miles and to land their cargoes in lighters. The line was badly laid, and the proprietor soon quarrelled and parted with his Belgian engineers. Quite lately, however (October 1890), Haji Mohammed Hasan appears to have found a new field for his energy, for I hear of a large factory in course of erection by him at Amol, which is to contain wood-working machinery and a powerful sugar-cane press, the labour being directed by a Russian engineer. To this indefatigable Persian

[1] The most exhaustive account of Amol is to be found in Sir W. Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. iii. pp. 295–316.

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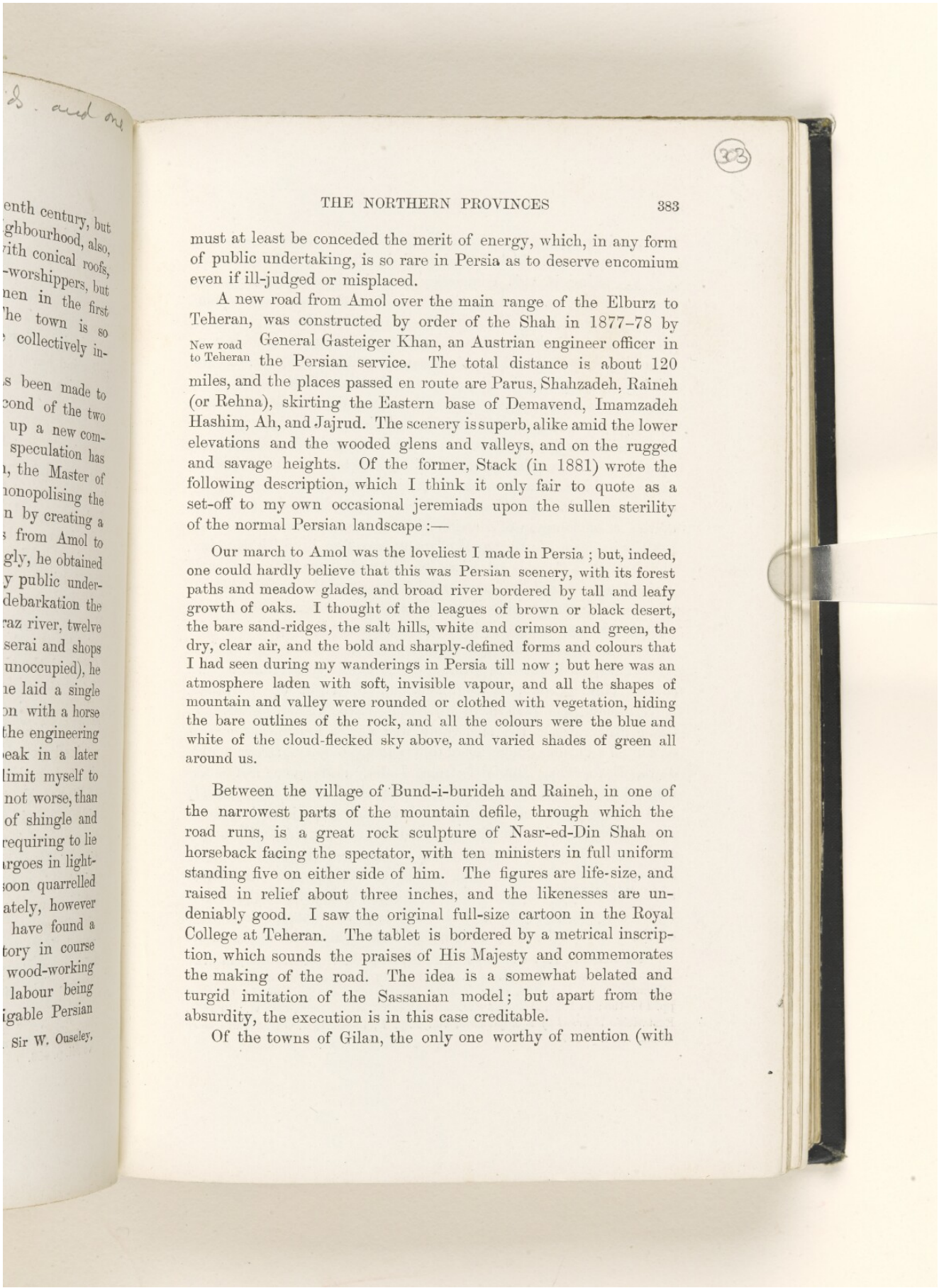

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must at least be conceded the merit of energy, which, in any form of public undertaking, is so rare in Persia as to deserve encomium even if ill-judged or misplaced.

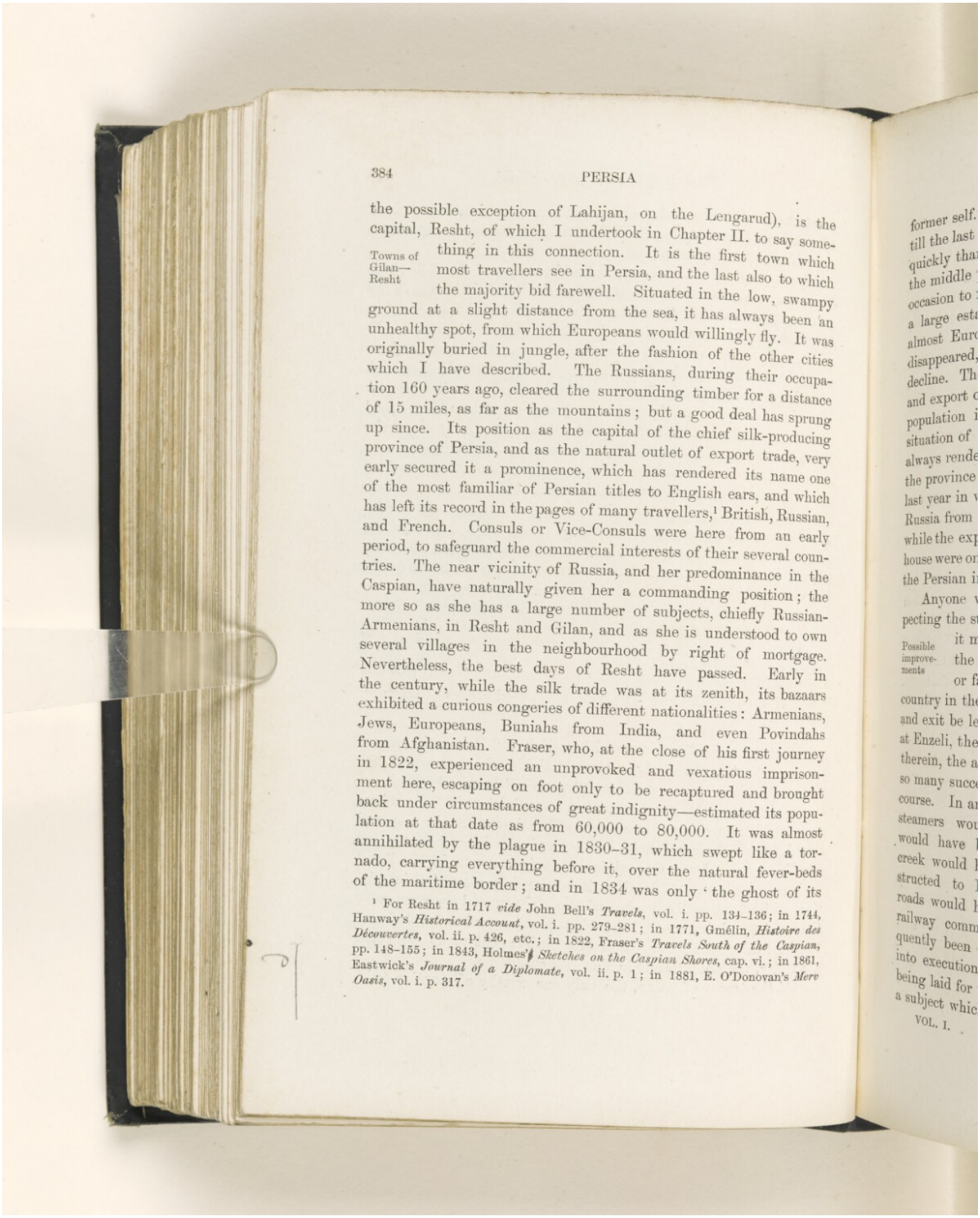
New road to Teheran

A new road from Amol over the main range of the Elburz to Teheran, was constructed by order of the Shah in 1877–78 by General Gasteiger Khan, an Austrian engineer officer in the Persian service. The total distance is about 120 miles, and the places passed en route are Parus, Shahzadeh, Raineh (or Rehna), skirting the Eastern base of Demavend, Imamzadeh Hashim, Ah, and Jajrud. The scenery is superb, alike amid the lower elevations and the wooded glens and valleys, and on the rugged and savage heights. Of the former, Stack (in 1881) wrote the following description, which I think it only fair to quote as a set-off to my own occasional jeremiads upon the sullen sterility of the normal Persian landscape :—

> Our march to Amol was the loveliest I made in Persia ; but, indeed, one could hardly believe that this was Persian scenery, with its forest paths and meadow glades, and broad river bordered by tall and leafy growth of oaks. I thought of the leagues of brown or black desert, the bare sand-ridges, the salt hills, white and crimson and green, the dry, clear air, and the bold and sharply-defined forms and colours that I had seen during my wanderings in Persia till now ; but here was an atmosphere laden with soft, invisible vapour, and all the shapes of mountain and valley were rounded or clothed with vegetation, hiding the bare outlines of the rock, and all the colours were the blue and white of the cloud-flecked sky above, and varied shades of green all around us.

Between the village of Bund-i-burideh and Raineh, in one of the narrowest parts of the mountain defile, through which the road runs, is a great rock sculpture of Nasr-ed-Din Shah on horseback facing the spectator, with ten ministers in full uniform standing five on either side of him. The figures are life-size, and raised in relief about three inches, and the likenesses are undeniably good. I saw the original full-size cartoon in the Royal College at Teheran. The tablet is bordered by a metrical inscription, which sounds the praises of His Majesty and commemorates the making of the road. The idea is a somewhat belated and turgid imitation of the Sassanian model; but apart from the absurdity, the execution is in this case creditable.

Of the towns of Gilan, the only one worthy of mention (with





the possible exception of Lahijan, on the Lengarud), is the capital, Resht, of which I undertook in Chapter II. to say something in this connection. It is the first town which most travellers see in Persia, and the last also to which the majority bid farewell. Situated in the low, swampy ground at a slight distance from the sea, it has always been an unhealthy spot, from which Europeans would willingly fly. It was originally buried in jungle, after the fashion of the other cities which I have described. The Russians, during their occupation 160 years ago, cleared the surrounding timber for a distance of 15 miles, as far as the mountains; but a good deal has sprung up since. Its position as the capital of the chief silk-producing province of Persia, and as the natural outlet of export trade, very early secured it a prominence, which has rendered its name one of the most familiar of Persian titles to English ears, and which has left its record in the pages of many travellers,[1] British, Russian, and French. Consuls or Vice-Consuls were here from an early period, to safeguard the commercial interests of their several countries. The near vicinity of Russia, and her predominance in the Caspian, have naturally given her a commanding position; the more so as she has a large number of subjects, chiefly Russian-Armenians, in Resht and Gilan, and as she is understood to own several villages in the neighbourhood by right of mortgage. Nevertheless, the best days of Resht have passed. Early in the century, while the silk trade was at its zenith, its bazaars exhibited a curious congeries of different nationalities: Armenians, Jews, Europeans, Buniahs from India, and even Povindahs from Afghanistan. Fraser, who, at the close of his first journey in 1822, experienced an unprovoked and vexatious imprisonment here, escaping on foot only to be recaptured and brought back under circumstances of great indignity—estimated its population at that date as from 60,000 to 80,000. It was almost annihilated by the plague in 1830–31, which swept like a tornado, carrying everything before it, over the natural fever-beds of the maritime border; and in 1834 was only 'the ghost of its

Towns of Gilan—Resht

[1] For Resht in 1717 *vide* John Bell's *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 134–136; in 1744, Hanway's *Historical Account*, vol. i. pp. 279–281; in 1771, Gmélin, *Histoire des Découvertes*, vol. ii. p. 426, etc.; in 1822, Fraser's *Travels South of the Caspian*, pp. 148–155; in 1843, Holmes's *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, cap. vi.; in 1861, Eastwick's *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. p. 1; in 1881, E. O'Donovan's *Merv Oasis*, vol. i. p. 317.



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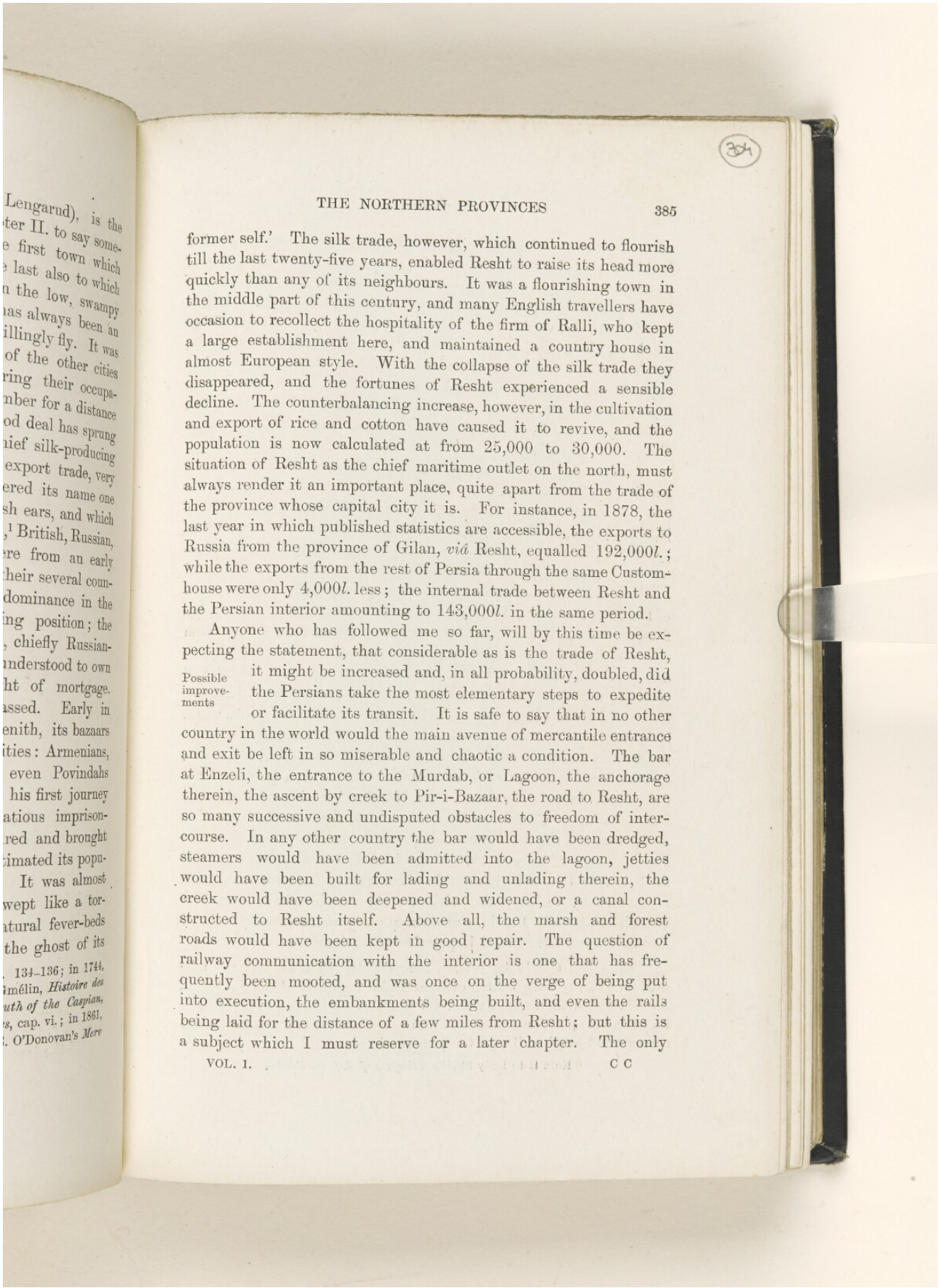

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former self.' The silk trade, however, which continued to flourish till the last twenty-five years, enabled Resht to raise its head more quickly than any of its neighbours. It was a flourishing town in the middle part of this century, and many English travellers have occasion to recollect the hospitality of the firm of Ralli, who kept a large establishment here, and maintained a country house in almost European style. With the collapse of the silk trade they disappeared, and the fortunes of Resht experienced a sensible decline. The counterbalancing increase, however, in the cultivation and export of rice and cotton have caused it to revive, and the population is now calculated at from 25,000 to 30,000. The situation of Resht as the chief maritime outlet on the north, must always render it an important place, quite apart from the trade of the province whose capital city it is. For instance, in 1878, the last year in which published statistics are accessible, the exports to Russia from the province of Gilan, *viâ* Resht, equalled 192,000*l.*; while the exports from the rest of Persia through the same Custom-house were only 4,000*l.* less; the internal trade between Resht and the Persian interior amounting to 143,000*l.* in the same period.

Possible improvements

Anyone who has followed me so far, will by this time be expecting the statement, that considerable as is the trade of Resht, it might be increased and, in all probability, doubled, did the Persians take the most elementary steps to expedite or facilitate its transit. It is safe to say that in no other country in the world would the main avenue of mercantile entrance and exit be left in so miserable and chaotic a condition. The bar at Enzeli, the entrance to the Murdab, or Lagoon, the anchorage therein, the ascent by creek to Pir-i-Bazaar, the road to Resht, are so many successive and undisputed obstacles to freedom of intercourse. In any other country the bar would have been dredged, steamers would have been admitted into the lagoon, jetties would have been built for lading and unlading therein, the creek would have been deepened and widened, or a canal constructed to Resht itself. Above all, the marsh and forest roads would have been kept in good repair. The question of railway communication with the interior is one that has frequently been mooted, and was once on the verge of being put into execution, the embankments being built, and even the rails being laid for the distance of a few miles from Resht; but this is a subject which I must reserve for a later chapter. The only



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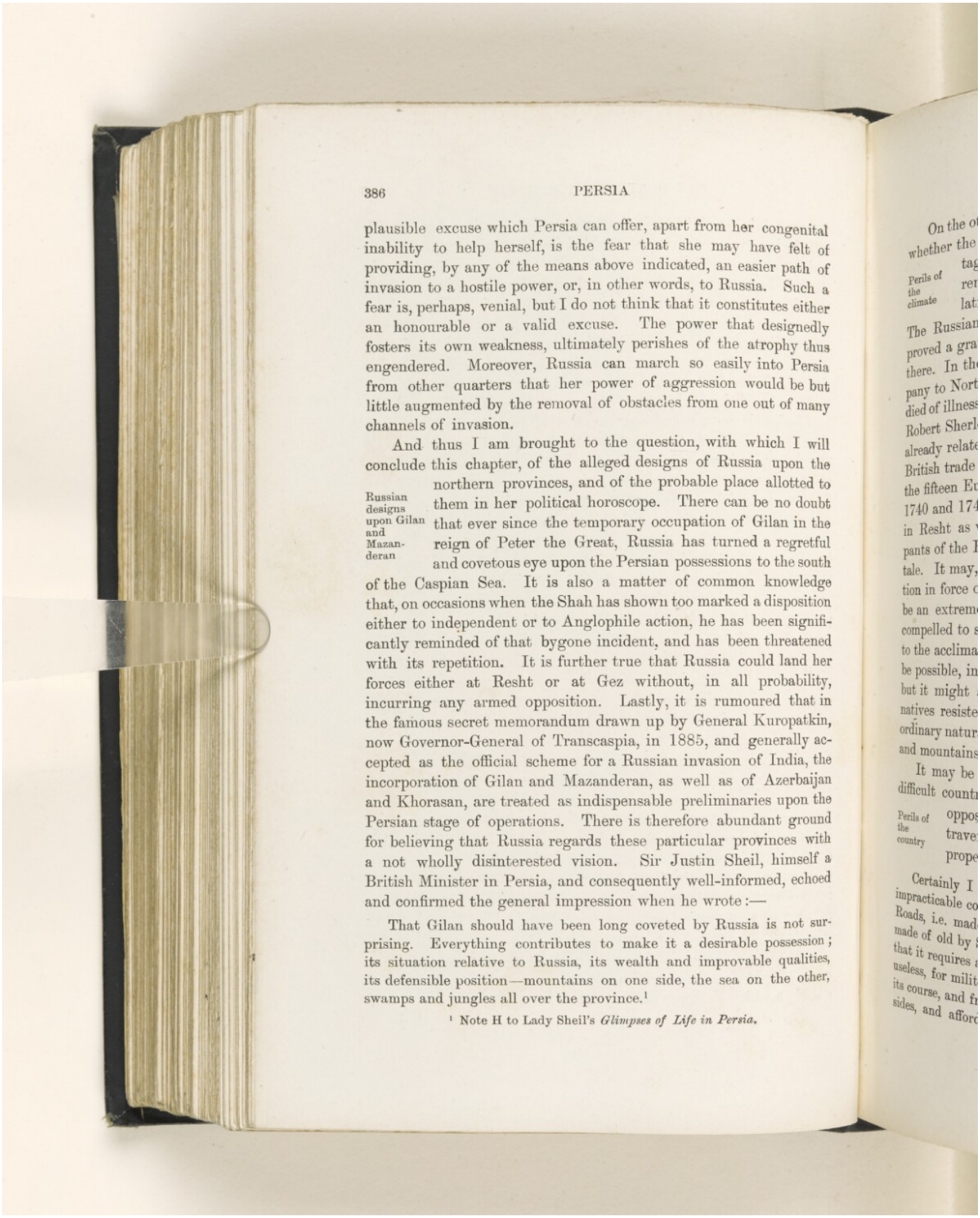



plausible excuse which Persia can offer, apart from her congenital inability to help herself, is the fear that she may have felt of providing, by any of the means above indicated, an easier path of invasion to a hostile power, or, in other words, to Russia. Such a fear is, perhaps, venial, but I do not think that it constitutes either an honourable or a valid excuse. The power that designedly fosters its own weakness, ultimately perishes of the atrophy thus engendered. Moreover, Russia can march so easily into Persia from other quarters that her power of aggression would be but little augmented by the removal of obstacles from one out of many channels of invasion.

And thus I am brought to the question, with which I will conclude this chapter, of the alleged designs of Russia upon the northern provinces, and of the probable place allotted to them in her political horoscope. There can be no doubt that ever since the temporary occupation of Gilan in the reign of Peter the Great, Russia has turned a regretful and covetous eye upon the Persian possessions to the south of the Caspian Sea. It is also a matter of common knowledge that, on occasions when the Shah has shown too marked a disposition either to independent or to Anglophile action, he has been significantly reminded of that bygone incident, and has been threatened with its repetition. It is further true that Russia could land her forces either at Resht or at Gez without, in all probability, incurring any armed opposition. Lastly, it is rumoured that in the famous secret memorandum drawn up by General Kuropatkin, now Governor-General of Transcaspia, in 1885, and generally accepted as the official scheme for a Russian invasion of India, the incorporation of Gilan and Mazanderan, as well as of Azerbaijan and Khorasan, are treated as indispensable preliminaries upon the Persian stage of operations. There is therefore abundant ground for believing that Russia regards these particular provinces with a not wholly disinterested vision. Sir Justin Sheil, himself a British Minister in Persia, and consequently well-informed, echoed and confirmed the general impression when he wrote:—

Russian designs upon Gilan and Mazanderan

> That Gilan should have been long coveted by Russia is not surprising. Everything contributes to make it a desirable possession; its situation relative to Russia, its wealth and improvable qualities, its defensible position—mountains on one side, the sea on the other, swamps and jungles all over the province.[1]

[1] Note H to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life in Persia.*

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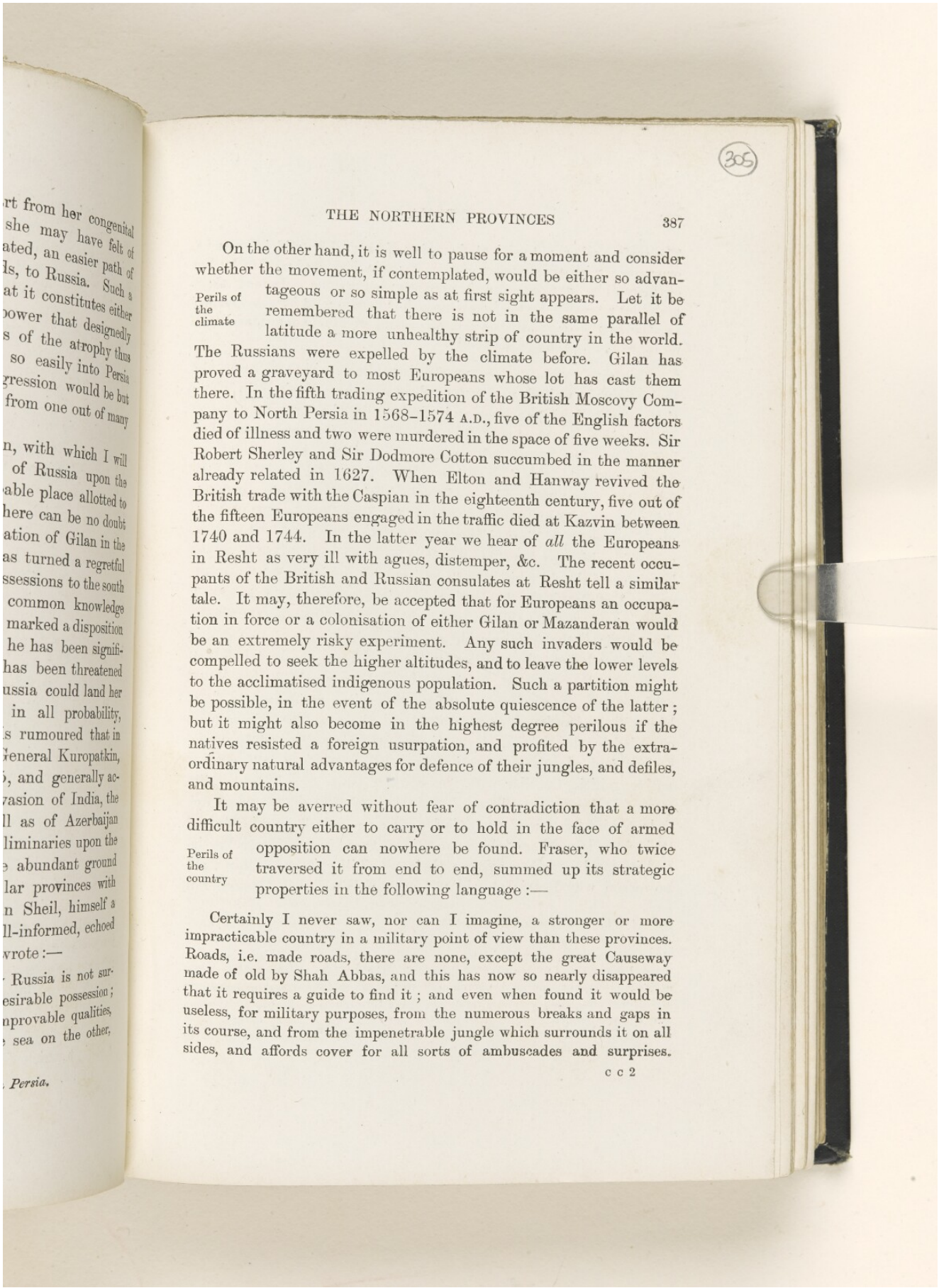

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On the other hand, it is well to pause for a moment and consider whether the movement, if contemplated, would be either so advantageous or so simple as at first sight appears. Let it be remembered that there is not in the same parallel of latitude a more unhealthy strip of country in the world. The Russians were expelled by the climate before. Gilan has proved a graveyard to most Europeans whose lot has cast them there. In the fifth trading expedition of the British Moscovy Company to North Persia in 1568–1574 A.D., five of the English factors died of illness and two were murdered in the space of five weeks. Sir Robert Sherley and Sir Dodmore Cotton succumbed in the manner already related in 1627. When Elton and Hanway revived the British trade with the Caspian in the eighteenth century, five out of the fifteen Europeans engaged in the traffic died at Kazvin between 1740 and 1744. In the latter year we hear of *all* the Europeans in Resht as very ill with agues, distemper, &c. The recent occupants of the British and Russian consulates at Resht tell a similar tale. It may, therefore, be accepted that for Europeans an occupation in force or a colonisation of either Gilan or Mazanderan would be an extremely risky experiment. Any such invaders would be compelled to seek the higher altitudes, and to leave the lower levels to the acclimatised indigenous population. Such a partition might be possible, in the event of the absolute quiescence of the latter; but it might also become in the highest degree perilous if the natives resisted a foreign usurpation, and profited by the extraordinary natural advantages for defence of their jungles, and defiles, and mountains.

Perils of the climate

It may be averred without fear of contradiction that a more difficult country either to carry or to hold in the face of armed opposition can nowhere be found. Fraser, who twice traversed it from end to end, summed up its strategic properties in the following language :—

Perils of the country

Certainly I never saw, nor can I imagine, a stronger or more impracticable country in a military point of view than these provinces. Roads, i.e. made roads, there are none, except the great Causeway made of old by Shah Abbas, and this has now so nearly disappeared that it requires a guide to find it; and even when found it would be useless, for military purposes, from the numerous breaks and gaps in its course, and from the impenetrable jungle which surrounds it on all sides, and affords cover for all sorts of ambuscades and surprises.



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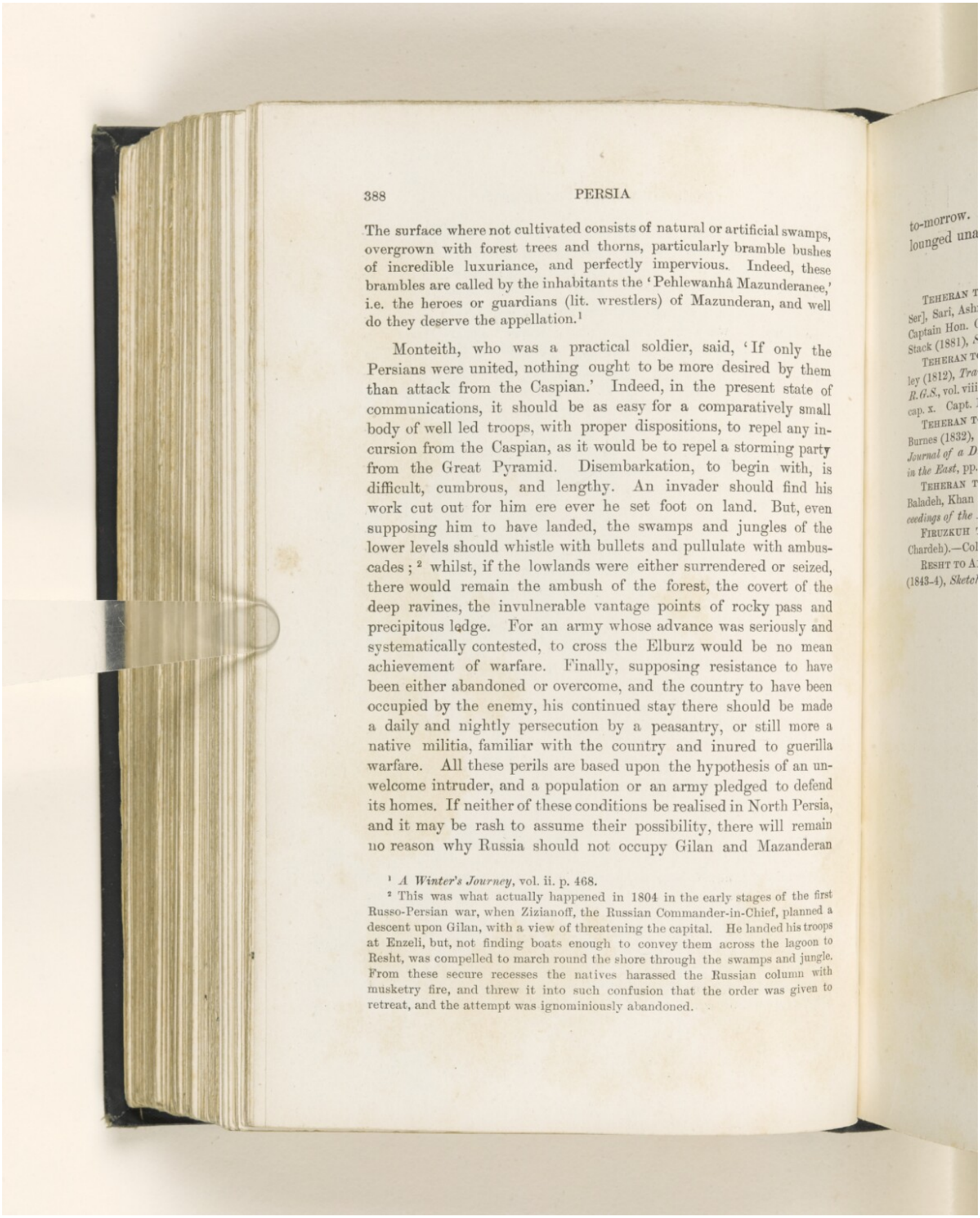



The surface where not cultivated consists of natural or artificial swamps, overgrown with forest trees and thorns, particularly bramble bushes of incredible luxuriance, and perfectly impervious. Indeed, these brambles are called by the inhabitants the 'Pehlewanhâ Mazunderanee,' i.e. the heroes or guardians (lit. wrestlers) of Mazunderan, and well do they deserve the appellation.[1]

Monteith, who was a practical soldier, said, 'If only the Persians were united, nothing ought to be more desired by them than attack from the Caspian.' Indeed, in the present state of communications, it should be as easy for a comparatively small body of well led troops, with proper dispositions, to repel any incursion from the Caspian, as it would be to repel a storming party from the Great Pyramid. Disembarkation, to begin with, is difficult, cumbrous, and lengthy. An invader should find his work cut out for him ere ever he set foot on land. But, even supposing him to have landed, the swamps and jungles of the lower levels should whistle with bullets and pullulate with ambuscades;[2] whilst, if the lowlands were either surrendered or seized, there would remain the ambush of the forest, the covert of the deep ravines, the invulnerable vantage points of rocky pass and precipitous ledge. For an army whose advance was seriously and systematically contested, to cross the Elburz would be no mean achievement of warfare. Finally, supposing resistance to have been either abandoned or overcome, and the country to have been occupied by the enemy, his continued stay there should be made a daily and nightly persecution by a peasantry, or still more a native militia, familiar with the country and inured to guerilla warfare. All these perils are based upon the hypothesis of an unwelcome intruder, and a population or an army pledged to defend its homes. If neither of these conditions be realised in North Persia, and it may be rash to assume their possibility, there will remain no reason why Russia should not occupy Gilan and Mazanderan

[1] *A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 468.

[2] This was what actually happened in 1804 in the early stages of the first Russo-Persian war, when Zizianoff, the Russian Commander-in-Chief, planned a descent upon Gilan, with a view of threatening the capital. He landed his troops at Enzeli, but, not finding boats enough to convey them across the lagoon to Resht, was compelled to march round the shore through the swamps and jungle. From these secure recesses the natives harassed the Russian column with musketry fire, and threw it into such confusion that the order was given to retreat, and the attempt was ignominiously abandoned.

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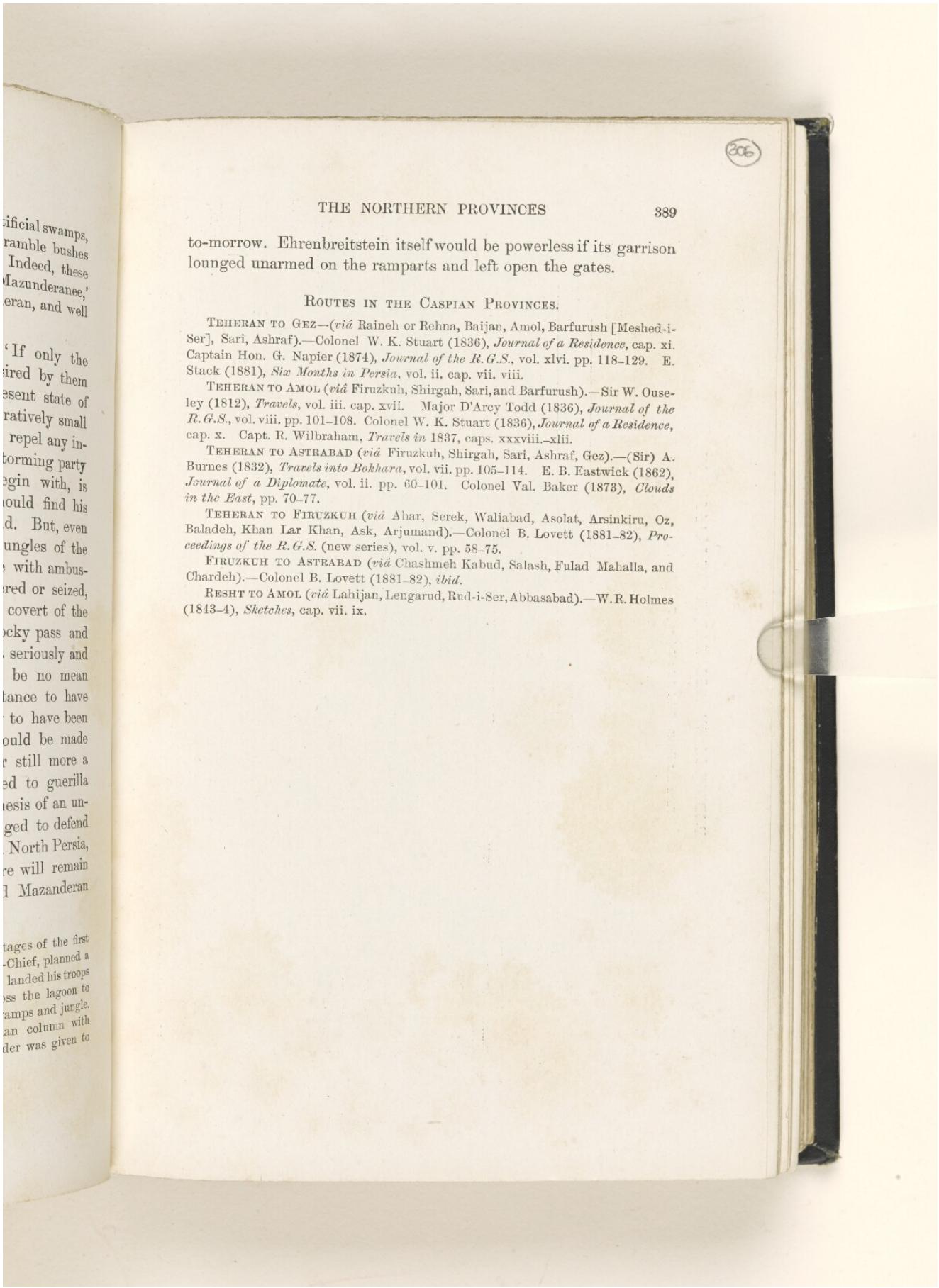




to-morrow. Ehrenbreitstein itself would be powerless if its garrison lounged unarmed on the ramparts and left open the gates.

### Routes in the Caspian Provinces.

Teheran to Gez—(*viâ* Raineh or Rehna, Baijan, Amol, Barfurush [Meshed-i-Ser], Sari, Ashraf).—Colonel W. K. Stuart (1836), *Journal of a Residence*, cap. xi. Captain Hon. G. Napier (1874), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvi. pp. 118–129. E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. vii. viii.

Teheran to Amol (*viâ* Firuzkuh, Shirgah, Sari, and Barfurush).—Sir W. Ouseley (1812), *Travels*, vol. iii. cap. xvii. Major D'Arcy Todd (1836), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. viii. pp. 101–108. Colonel W. K. Stuart (1836), *Journal of a Residence*, cap. x. Capt. R. Wilbraham, *Travels in* 1837, caps. xxxviii.–xlii.

Teheran to Astrabad (*viâ* Firuzkuh, Shirgah, Sari, Ashraf, Gez).—(Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. vii. pp. 105–114. E. B. Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomate*, vol. ii. pp. 60–101. Colonel Val. Baker (1873), *Clouds in the East*, pp. 70–77.

Teheran to Firuzkuh (*viâ* Ahar, Serek, Waliabad, Asolat, Arsinkiru, Oz, Baladeh, Khan Lar Khan, Ask, Arjumand).—Colonel B. Lovett (1881–82), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. pp. 58–75.

Firuzkuh to Astrabad (*viâ* Chashmeh Kabud, Salash, Fulad Mahalla, and Chardeh).—Colonel B. Lovett (1881–82), *ibid.*

Resht to Amol (*viâ* Lahijan, Lengarud, Rud-i-Ser, Abbasabad).—W. R. Holmes (1843–4), *Sketches*, cap. vii. ix.

# PEDIGREE OF THE KAJAR DYNASTY,[1] 1891

FATH ALI KHAN. Chief of the Kajars. Put to death by Nadir Shah 1729

MOHAMMED HUSEIN KHAN. Rival of Kerim Khan Zend. Killed in Mazanderan 1758

AGHA MOHAMMED SHAH. Reigned 1795–7. Assassinated 1797

HUSEIN KULI KHAN. Put to death by the Turkomans 1763

SADIK KHAN. Put to death by Fath Ali Shah 1798

FATH ALI SHAH. Reigned 1798–1834. Died Oct. 1834

HUSEIN KULI KHAN

MOHAMMED ALI MIRZA. Governor of Kermanshah. Died 1821

ABBAS MIRZA. Vali-Ahd. Died 1833

HUSEIN ALI MIRZA (Firman Firma). Governor of Shiraz. Rebelled against Mohammed Shah. Defeated and died 1835

ALI MIRZA (Zil-es-Sultan). Governor of Teheran. Reigned for one month in 1834 as Adil Shah. Died 1854

SULTAN MOHAMMED MIRZA (Saif-ed-Dowleh). Resided at Baghdad

MOHAMMED HUSEIN MIRZA. Governor of Kermanshah 1821–35

IMAM KULI MIRZA (Imad-ed-Dowleh). Governor of Kermanshah

REZA KULI MIRZA. TIMUR MIRZA. WALI MIRZA. Visited England 1837

MOHAMMED SHAH. Reigned 1835–48. Died Sept. 1848

BAHMAN MIRZA. Governor of Azerbaijan. Banished. A Russian pensionor

SULTAN MURAD MIRZA (Hissam-es-Sultaneh). Governor of Khorasan 1851–9, and of Fars

HAMZA MIRZA (Hishmet-ed-Dowleh). Governor of Khorasan 1859. Led disastrous expedition against Merv in 1860. Died in 1882

ABDESHIR MIRZA. Governor of Azerbaijan

FERHAD MIRZA (Motemed-Dowleh). Governor of Fars 1877–82, and Azerbaijan

Motemed-el-Dowleh, Governor of Fars 1889

KHANLAR MIRZA. Governor of Arabistan and Luristan. Commanded against the British at Mohammerah in 1857.

NASR-ED-DIN SHAH. Began to reign Sept. 1848. Born July 1831.

ABBAS MIRZA (Mulk Ara). Resided in exile at Baghdad. Now at Teheran.

Formerly Late Minister of Commerce

ABDES SAMED MIRZA (Izz-ed-Dowleh). Governor of Hamadan 1883. Minister of Justice 1885

MOHAMMED TAKI MIRZA (Rukn-ed-Dowleh). Governor of Khorasan

MUIN-ED-DIN MIRZA. Declared Vali-Ahd 1849. Died Nov. 1856

MOHAMMED KAZIM KHAN. Declared Vali-Ahd 1856. Died June 1858

MASUD MIRZA (Zil-es-Sultan). Born Jan. 1850. Governor of Isfahan and Yezd

MUZAFFER-ED-DIN MIRZA. Born March 1853. Declared Vali-Ahd 1858

JELAL-ED-DOWLEH. Governor of Yezd 1890

KAMRAN MIRZA (Naib-es-Sultaneh). Born July 1856. Governor of Teheran. Minister of War, and Commander-in-Chief

NASRET-ED-DIN MIRZA (Sahar-es-Sultaneh). Born May 1892

MOHAMMED REZA MIRZA (Rukn-es-Sultaneh). Born Feb. 1883

HUSEIN ALI MIRZA (Yamin-es-Sultaneh). Born 1890

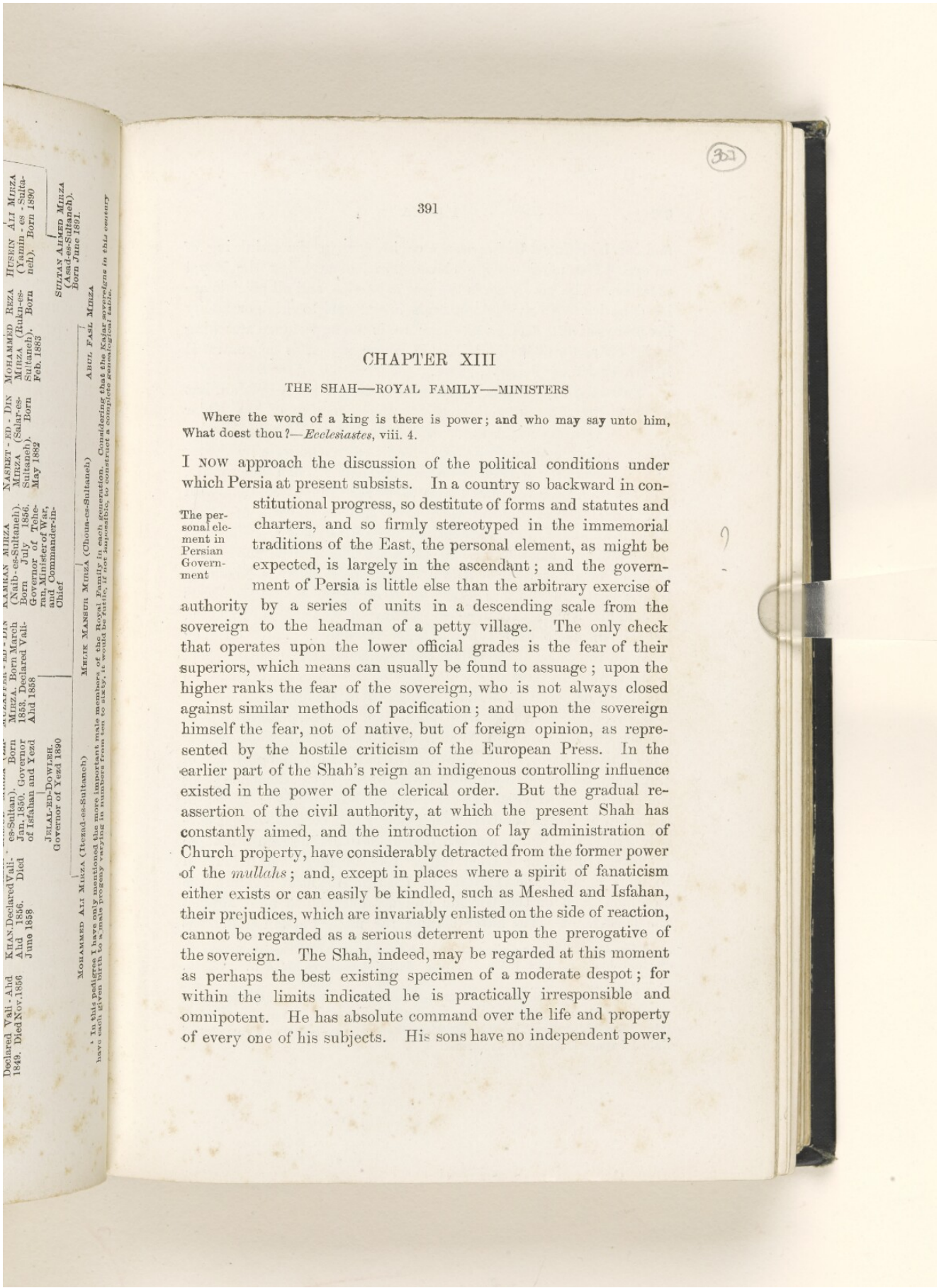
SULTAN AHMED MIRZA (Asad-es-Sultaneh). Born June 1891.

MOHAMMED ALI MIRZA (Itezad-es-Sultaneh)

MELIK MANSUR MIRZA (Choua-es-Sultaneh)

ABUL FASL MIRZA

[1] In this pedigree I have only mentioned the more important male members of the Royal Family in each generation. Considering that the Kajar sovereigns in this century have each given birth to a male progeny varying in numbers from ten to sixty, it would be futile, if not impossible, to construct a complete genealogical table.



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# CHAPTER XIII

## THE SHAH—ROYAL FAMILY—MINISTERS

Where the word of a king is there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou?—*Ecclesiastes*, viii. 4.

I NOW approach the discussion of the political conditions under which Persia at present subsists. In a country so backward in constitutional progress, so destitute of forms and statutes and charters, and so firmly stereotyped in the immemorial traditions of the East, the personal element, as might be expected, is largely in the ascendant; and the government of Persia is little else than the arbitrary exercise of authority by a series of units in a descending scale from the sovereign to the headman of a petty village. The only check that operates upon the lower official grades is the fear of their superiors, which means can usually be found to assuage; upon the higher ranks the fear of the sovereign, who is not always closed against similar methods of pacification; and upon the sovereign himself the fear, not of native, but of foreign opinion, as represented by the hostile criticism of the European Press. In the earlier part of the Shah's reign an indigenous controlling influence existed in the power of the clerical order. But the gradual reassertion of the civil authority, at which the present Shah has constantly aimed, and the introduction of lay administration of Church property, have considerably detracted from the former power of the *mullahs*; and, except in places where a spirit of fanaticism either exists or can easily be kindled, such as Meshed and Isfahan, their prejudices, which are invariably enlisted on the side of reaction, cannot be regarded as a serious deterrent upon the prerogative of the sovereign. The Shah, indeed, may be regarded at this moment as perhaps the best existing specimen of a moderate despot; for within the limits indicated he is practically irresponsible and omnipotent. He has absolute command over the life and property of every one of his subjects. His sons have no independent power,

The personal element in Persian Government

and can be reduced to impotence or beggary in the twinkling of an eye. The ministers are elevated and degraded at the Royal pleasure. The sovereign is the sole executive, and all officials are his deputies. No civil tribunals are in existence to check or modify his prerogative. Enormous, therefore, is the importance attaching to the character of the individual in whose person is concentrated such a wealth of plenary powers.

The Kajar Dynasty

Nasr-ed-Din Shah, as I have before said, is not a Persian, but a Turk, by descent, and is the fourth sovereign of the Kajar Dynasty which has occupied the throne of Persia for close upon one hundred years. The Kajars, whose family history has been written by more than one Persian biographer, and has even been translated into English,[1] are not content with any more modest descent than from Japhet, the son of Noah. Even if we question the authenticity of so illustrious a pedigree, it is yet indisputable that for 700 years the Kajar tribe have been heard of in history. A chieftain of that race ruled the country from Rhey to the Oxus, as deputy for one of the Mongol descendants of Jenghiz Khan. Timur is said to have banished them to Syria, but afterwards to have suffered them to return. Later on they espoused the cause of the Sefavi Shahs and assisted in raising them to the throne, in return for which service they were included in the Kizil-bash or seven Red-Head tribes, so called from the scarlet head-covering which they were permitted to wear. According to one account the mother of Shah Ismail himself was of Kajar blood.[2] Under his successor, Shah Tahmasp, we hear of a Kajar governor of Kandahar, and of a Kajar ambassador to the Porte, demonstrating the prominence to which the tribe had already attained; whilst in the reign of Abbas the Great their power had become so considerable that that monarch found it expedient to divide them into three branches, whom he settled respectively in Merv and Khorasan to fight against the Tartars, in Georgia to fight against the Lesghians, and on the Gurgan and at Astrabad to fight against the Turkomans. The latter became the main Persian settlement

[1] *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, translated from an Oriental Persian MS. by Sir Harford Jones Brydges, 1833. Compare Morier, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. vii. p. 231.

[2] So says Mr. Watson in his *History of Persia*; but I have always understood that the mother of Shah Ismail was Martha, the daughter of Uzun Hasan, chieftain of the White Sheep, and his Christian wife Despoina, who was a daughter of Kalo Johannes Emperor of Trebizond.

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of the tribe, whose chieftain, Fath Ali Khan, a little more than 150 years ago, having been made joint Commander-in-Chief with Nadir Kuli Khan, by Shah Tahmasp II., was speedily put out of the way by the ambitious soldier of fortune,[1] thereby bequeathing to his posterity a blood feud which was not satisfied until Nadir's descendants had all been removed by death or torture, and a Kajar sovereign was firmly seated upon the throne of Persia. Agha Mohammed Shah, the grandson of Fath Ali Khan, could not himself perpetuate the race, having at an early age been made a eunuch by order of Adil Shah, the nephew and successor of Nadir. But his nephew, Fath Ali Shah, to whom he transmitted the crown, and his successors after him, have proved so extraordinarily prolific of male offspring that the continuity of the dynasty has been assured; and there is probably not a reigning family in the world that in the space of one hundred years has swollen to such ample dimensions as the royal race of Persia. The Kajars have, indeed, been mainly distinguished for five characteristics, which have been uniformly noticeable in the princes of the blood: a genius for paternity, a fairly high level of intelligence, handsome features, sporting instincts, and a remorseless economy. How true a Kajar is the reigning monarch will be evident as I proceed.

Nasr-ed-Din Shah. His appearance

Since his two visits to England in 1873 and 1889 the personality and many of the idiosyncrasies of the Shah have become familiar to the British public. Nasr-ed-Din (Defender of the Faith) was the eldest son of Mohammed Shah, and was born on July 17, 1831. Consequently, he is now just sixty years of age. Upon his father succeeding Fath Ali Shah in 1834 (Abbas Mirza, Mohammed's father, and for so many years Vali-Ahd or Heir Apparent, having died in the previous year), Nasr-ed-Din became Vali-Ahd and, after the fashion of the Persian Royal Family, was, at the early age of twelve, made nominal Governor of Azerbaijan, residing at Tabriz. In that province, at Deran near Urumiah, he was seen in 1835, and described as follows by Colonel Stuart, who accompanied Sir H. Ellis as private secretary on his mission to Teheran:—

> The Walee Ahud was, like his uncle, seated at an open window. I never saw so beautiful a child. The expression of his countenance is mournful, and the poor thing was evidently shy. We were given

[1] He was buried in the Mausoleum of Khojah Rabi outside Meshed: *vide* Chapter VII.

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sherbet, sugar candy, and tea, presented by servants who knelt. The ablutions of the Walee Ahud were carefully performed after he had drunk his tea. He wiped his little chin, where, Inshallah, his beard will be, with most dignified gravity.[1]

And again in 1836 :—

The little prince is grown since we last saw him. He has a beautiful but mournful cast of countenance, and was terribly bored, most likely, poor child.

As a fact, the Vali-Ahd was very much neglected by his father, over whom the young prince's mother had ceased to exercise any charm. He lived in very difficult circumstances, often being compelled to borrow money in order to pay his daily expenses. Mohammed Shah favoured his younger son, Abbas Mirza, then styled Naib-es-Sultaneh, who retired from the country soon after his elder brother ascended the throne, and only returned to Persia in later years after a long exile at Baghdad.

So much for the Shah in his early years. Soon after reaching man's estate, his appearance was described by Mr. Binning in terms which hardly ratify the promise of his childhood :—

The Shah is now (1851) in his twenty-second year, but looks older. His complexion is very sallow, and his countenance, though not disagreeable, cannot be pronounced handsome. He wears moustaches, with but the rudiments of a beard.[2]

In middle life, the Shah's appearance is so familiar throughout Europe as to need no lengthened description, and may be judged of from the illustration which accompanies this text. The Kajars are a handsome race, and if Nasr-ed-Din cannot equal the majestic appearance of his great-grandfather, Fath Ali Shah, or even of his grandfather, Abbas Mirza, both of whom were famous for their long-bearded beauty, his mien and deportment are, at any rate, kingly and pleasing. He, and his sons after him, have abandoned the fashion of the beard that was set by his Kajar predecessors, and have reverted to the shaven cheeks and chin which we see in the portraits of most of the Sefavi sovereigns. Though sixty years of age, the Shah is erect, active, and robust, making the most of a middle stature, and walking with a slow step and a peculiar jaunty movement of the hips, which has a certain air of distinction.

[1] *Journal of a Residence in N. Persia*, p. 136.
[2] *Journal of Two Years' Travel in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 236.

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H.M. NASR-ED-DIN SHAH

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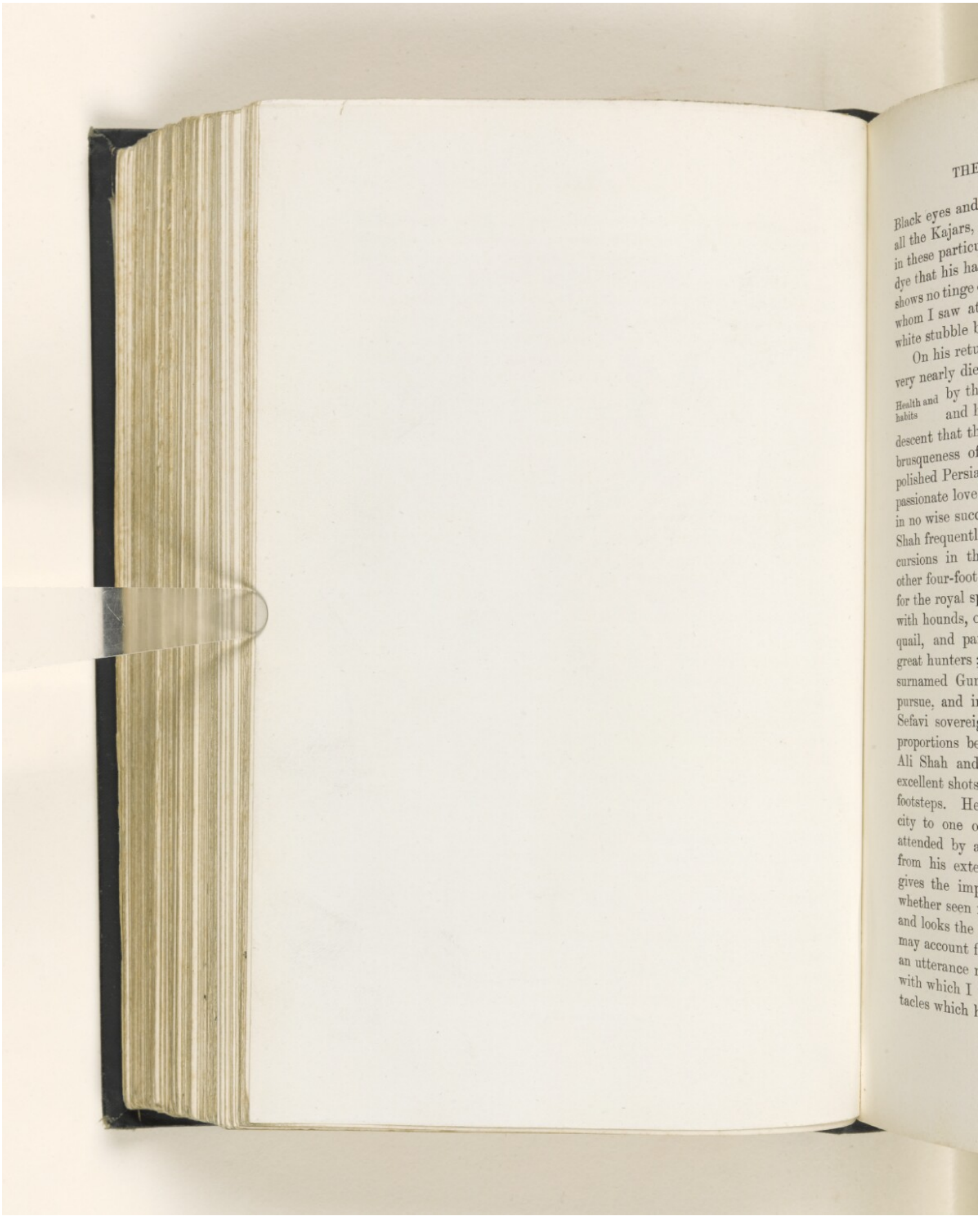

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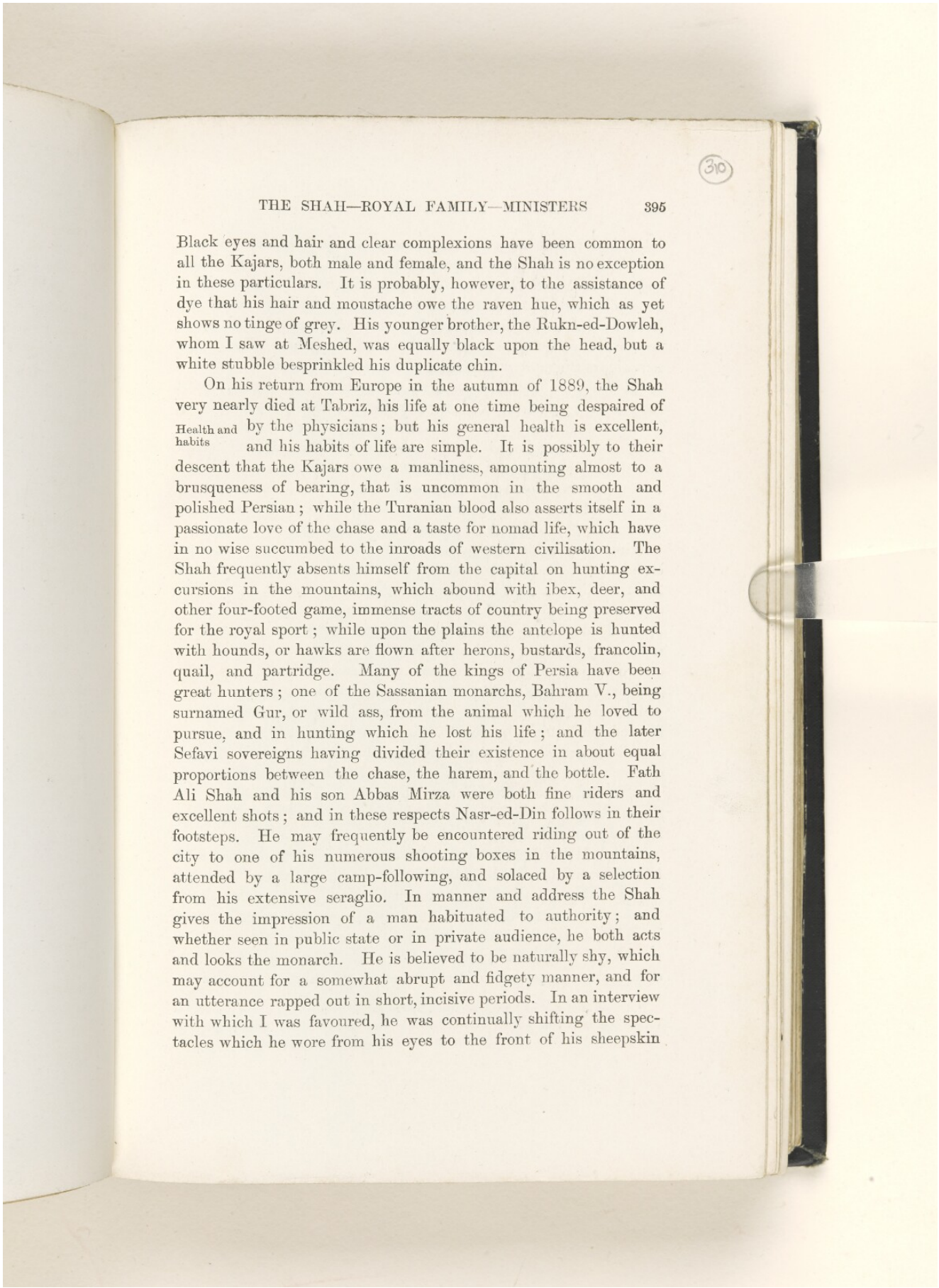



Black eyes and hair and clear complexions have been common to all the Kajars, both male and female, and the Shah is no exception in these particulars. It is probably, however, to the assistance of dye that his hair and moustache owe the raven hue, which as yet shows no tinge of grey. His younger brother, the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, whom I saw at Meshed, was equally black upon the head, but a white stubble besprinkled his duplicate chin.

Health and habits

On his return from Europe in the autumn of 1889, the Shah very nearly died at Tabriz, his life at one time being despaired of by the physicians; but his general health is excellent, and his habits of life are simple. It is possibly to their descent that the Kajars owe a manliness, amounting almost to a brusqueness of bearing, that is uncommon in the smooth and polished Persian; while the Turanian blood also asserts itself in a passionate love of the chase and a taste for nomad life, which have in no wise succumbed to the inroads of western civilisation. The Shah frequently absents himself from the capital on hunting excursions in the mountains, which abound with ibex, deer, and other four-footed game, immense tracts of country being preserved for the royal sport; while upon the plains the antelope is hunted with hounds, or hawks are flown after herons, bustards, francolin, quail, and partridge. Many of the kings of Persia have been great hunters; one of the Sassanian monarchs, Bahram V., being surnamed Gur, or wild ass, from the animal which he loved to pursue, and in hunting which he lost his life; and the later Sefavi sovereigns having divided their existence in about equal proportions between the chase, the harem, and the bottle. Fath Ali Shah and his son Abbas Mirza were both fine riders and excellent shots; and in these respects Nasr-ed-Din follows in their footsteps. He may frequently be encountered riding out of the city to one of his numerous shooting boxes in the mountains, attended by a large camp-following, and solaced by a selection from his extensive seraglio. In manner and address the Shah gives the impression of a man habituated to authority; and whether seen in public state or in private audience, he both acts and looks the monarch. He is believed to be naturally shy, which may account for a somewhat abrupt and fidgety manner, and for an utterance rapped out in short, incisive periods. In an interview with which I was favoured, he was continually shifting the spectacles which he wore from his eyes to the front of his sheepskin

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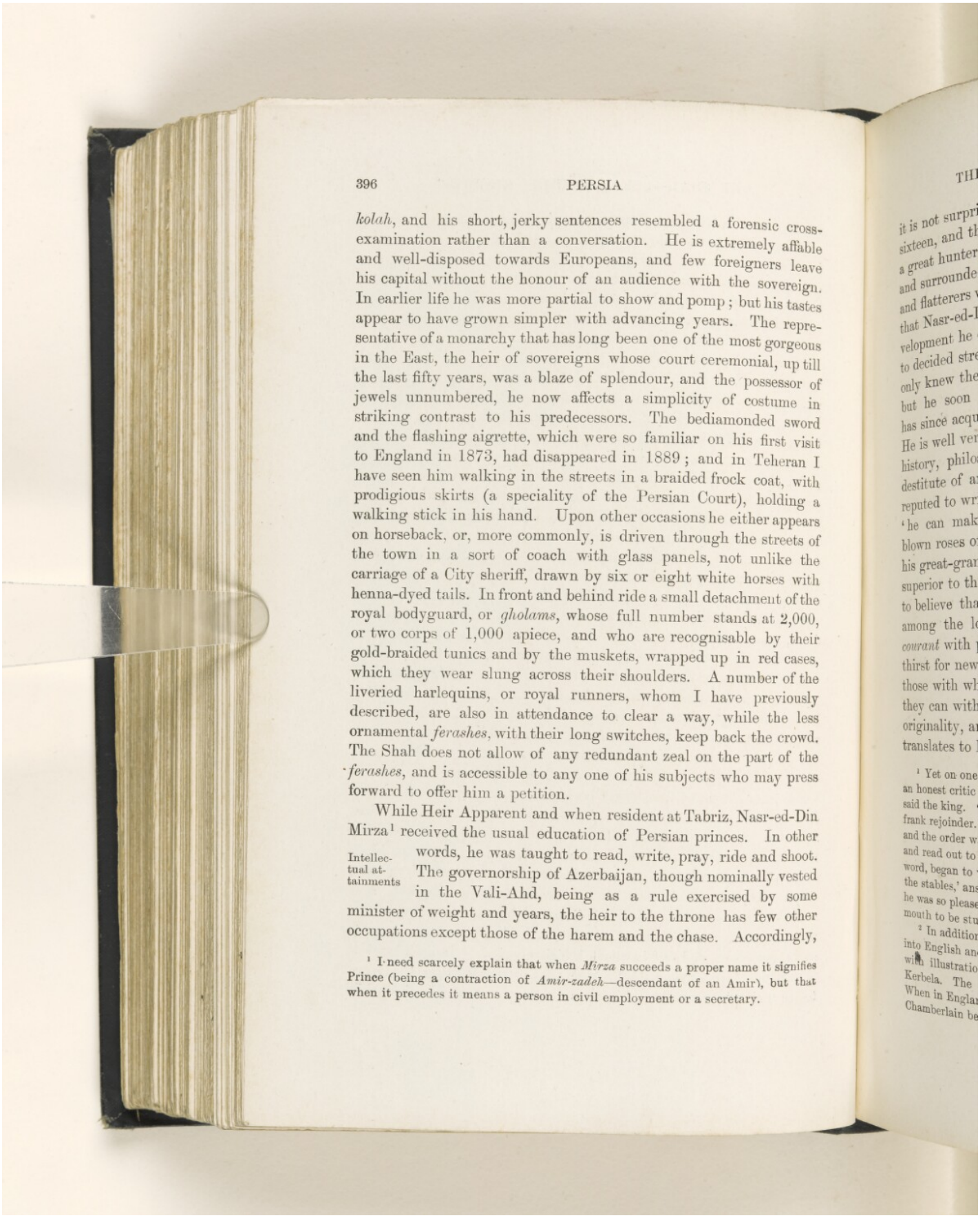


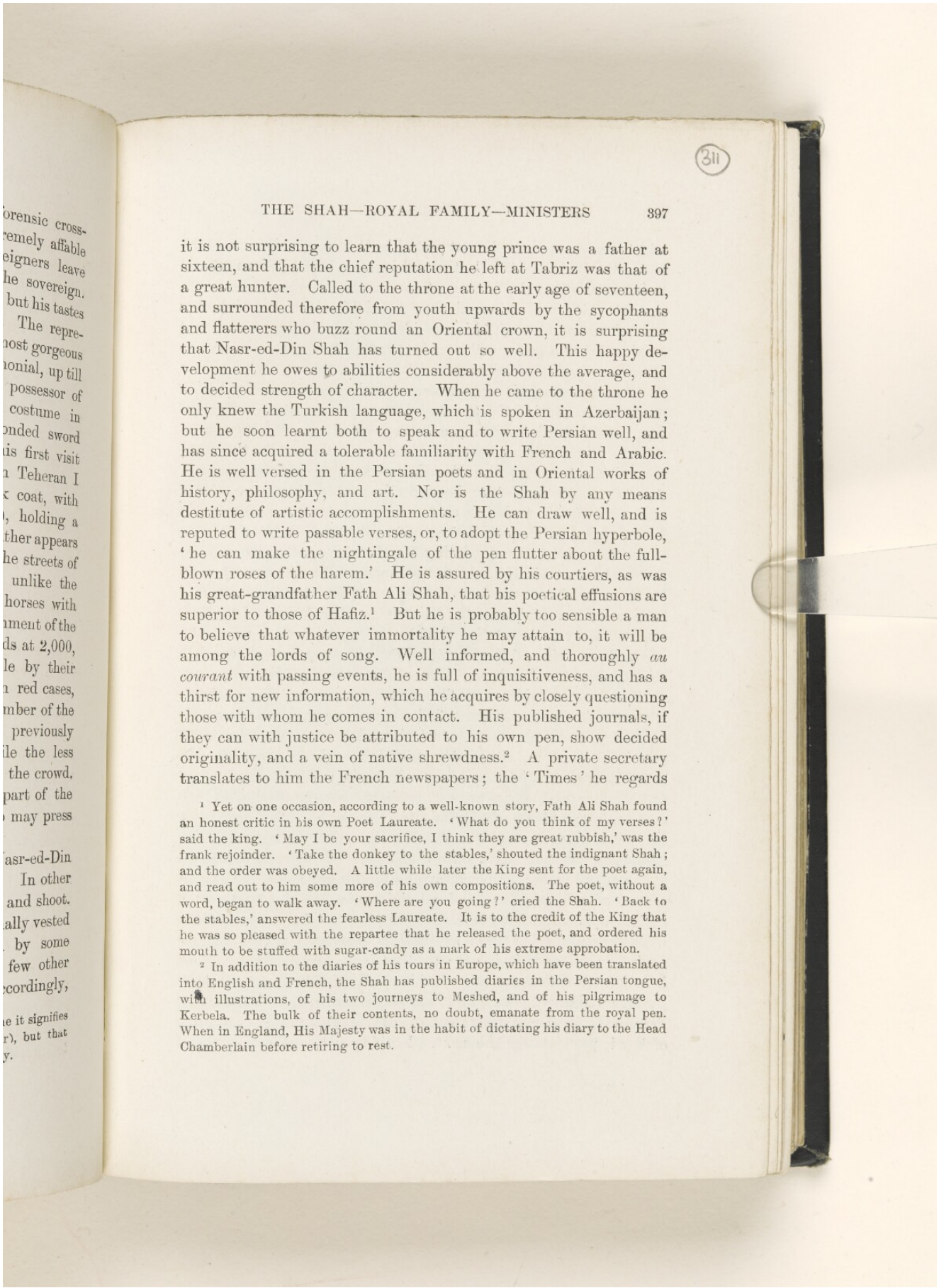


*kolah*, and his short, jerky sentences resembled a forensic cross-examination rather than a conversation. He is extremely affable and well-disposed towards Europeans, and few foreigners leave his capital without the honour of an audience with the sovereign. In earlier life he was more partial to show and pomp; but his tastes appear to have grown simpler with advancing years. The representative of a monarchy that has long been one of the most gorgeous in the East, the heir of sovereigns whose court ceremonial, up till the last fifty years, was a blaze of splendour, and the possessor of jewels unnumbered, he now affects a simplicity of costume in striking contrast to his predecessors. The bediamonded sword and the flashing aigrette, which were so familiar on his first visit to England in 1873, had disappeared in 1889; and in Teheran I have seen him walking in the streets in a braided frock coat, with prodigious skirts (a speciality of the Persian Court), holding a walking stick in his hand. Upon other occasions he either appears on horseback, or, more commonly, is driven through the streets of the town in a sort of coach with glass panels, not unlike the carriage of a City sheriff, drawn by six or eight white horses with henna-dyed tails. In front and behind ride a small detachment of the royal bodyguard, or *gholams*, whose full number stands at 2,000, or two corps of 1,000 apiece, and who are recognisable by their gold-braided tunics and by the muskets, wrapped up in red cases, which they wear slung across their shoulders. A number of the liveried harlequins, or royal runners, whom I have previously described, are also in attendance to clear a way, while the less ornamental *ferashes*, with their long switches, keep back the crowd. The Shah does not allow of any redundant zeal on the part of the *ferashes*, and is accessible to any one of his subjects who may press forward to offer him a petition.

While Heir Apparent and when resident at Tabriz, Nasr-ed-Din Mirza[1] received the usual education of Persian princes. In other words, he was taught to read, write, pray, ride and shoot. The governorship of Azerbaijan, though nominally vested in the Vali-Ahd, being as a rule exercised by some minister of weight and years, the heir to the throne has few other occupations except those of the harem and the chase. Accordingly,

Intellectual attainments

[1] I need scarcely explain that when *Mirza* succeeds a proper name it signifies Prince (being a contraction of *Amir-zadeh*—descendant of an Amir), but that when it precedes it means a person in civil employment or a secretary.





it is not surprising to learn that the young prince was a father at sixteen, and that the chief reputation he left at Tabriz was that of a great hunter. Called to the throne at the early age of seventeen, and surrounded therefore from youth upwards by the sycophants and flatterers who buzz round an Oriental crown, it is surprising that Nasr-ed-Din Shah has turned out so well. This happy development he owes to abilities considerably above the average, and to decided strength of character. When he came to the throne he only knew the Turkish language, which is spoken in Azerbaijan; but he soon learnt both to speak and to write Persian well, and has since acquired a tolerable familiarity with French and Arabic. He is well versed in the Persian poets and in Oriental works of history, philosophy, and art. Nor is the Shah by any means destitute of artistic accomplishments. He can draw well, and is reputed to write passable verses, or, to adopt the Persian hyperbole, 'he can make the nightingale of the pen flutter about the full-blown roses of the harem.' He is assured by his courtiers, as was his great-grandfather Fath Ali Shah, that his poetical effusions are superior to those of Hafiz.[1] But he is probably too sensible a man to believe that whatever immortality he may attain to, it will be among the lords of song. Well informed, and thoroughly *au courant* with passing events, he is full of inquisitiveness, and has a thirst for new information, which he acquires by closely questioning those with whom he comes in contact. His published journals, if they can with justice be attributed to his own pen, show decided originality, and a vein of native shrewdness.[2] A private secretary translates to him the French newspapers; the 'Times' he regards

[1] Yet on one occasion, according to a well-known story, Fath Ali Shah found an honest critic in his own Poet Laureate. 'What do you think of my verses?' said the king. 'May I be your sacrifice, I think they are great rubbish,' was the frank rejoinder. 'Take the donkey to the stables,' shouted the indignant Shah; and the order was obeyed. A little while later the King sent for the poet again, and read out to him some more of his own compositions. The poet, without a word, began to walk away. 'Where are you going?' cried the Shah. 'Back to the stables,' answered the fearless Laureate. It is to the credit of the King that he was so pleased with the repartee that he released the poet, and ordered his mouth to be stuffed with sugar-candy as a mark of his extreme approbation.

[2] In addition to the diaries of his tours in Europe, which have been translated into English and French, the Shah has published diaries in the Persian tongue, with illustrations, of his two journeys to Meshed, and of his pilgrimage to Kerbela. The bulk of their contents, no doubt, emanate from the royal pen. When in England, His Majesty was in the habit of dictating his diary to the Head Chamberlain before retiring to rest.

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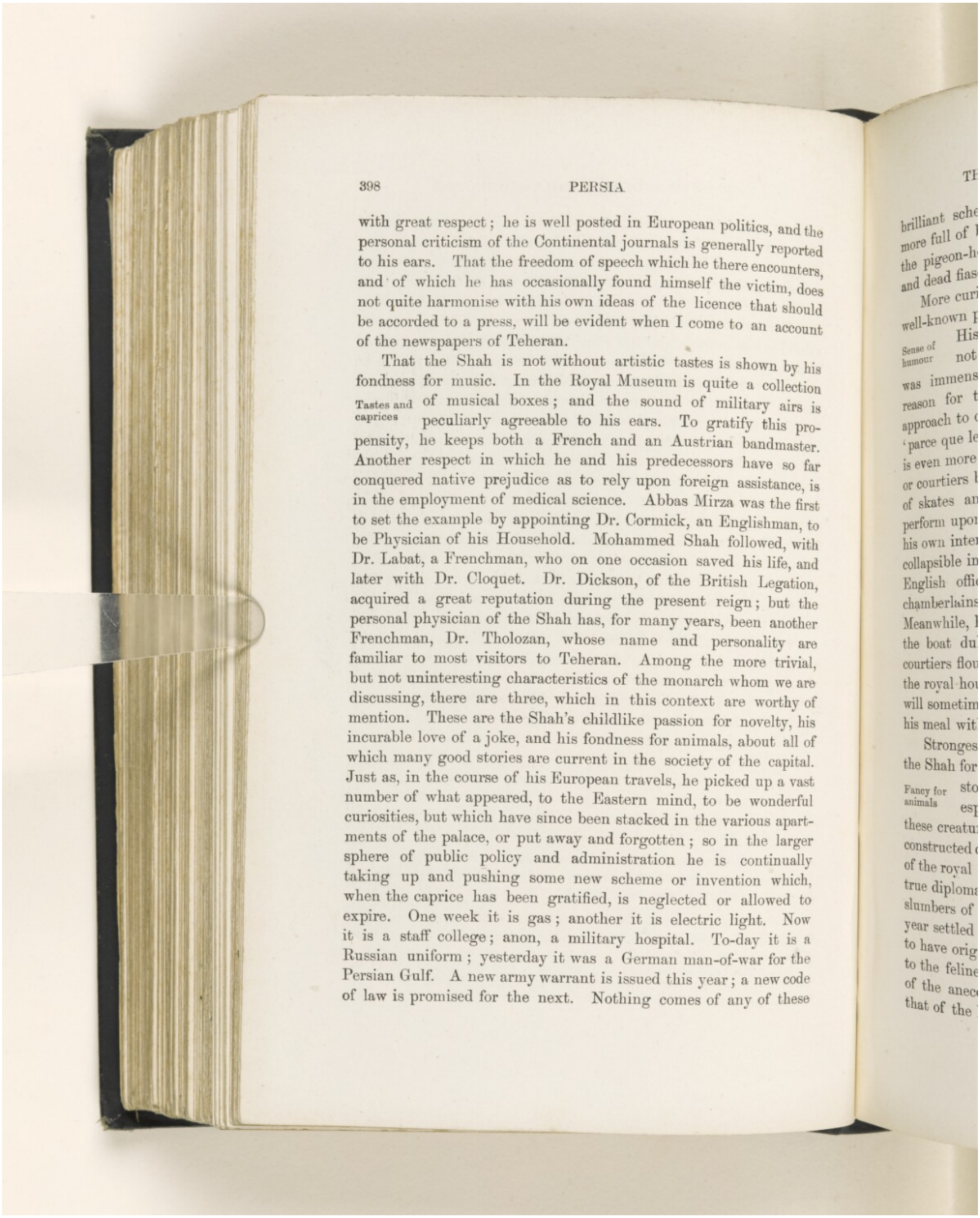



with great respect; he is well posted in European politics, and the personal criticism of the Continental journals is generally reported to his ears. That the freedom of speech which he there encounters, and of which he has occasionally found himself the victim, does not quite harmonise with his own ideas of the licence that should be accorded to a press, will be evident when I come to an account of the newspapers of Teheran.

Tastes and caprices

That the Shah is not without artistic tastes is shown by his fondness for music. In the Royal Museum is quite a collection of musical boxes; and the sound of military airs is peculiarly agreeable to his ears. To gratify this propensity, he keeps both a French and an Austrian bandmaster. Another respect in which he and his predecessors have so far conquered native prejudice as to rely upon foreign assistance, is in the employment of medical science. Abbas Mirza was the first to set the example by appointing Dr. Cormick, an Englishman, to be Physician of his Household. Mohammed Shah followed, with Dr. Labat, a Frenchman, who on one occasion saved his life, and later with Dr. Cloquet. Dr. Dickson, of the British Legation, acquired a great reputation during the present reign; but the personal physician of the Shah has, for many years, been another Frenchman, Dr. Tholozan, whose name and personality are familiar to most visitors to Teheran. Among the more trivial, but not uninteresting characteristics of the monarch whom we are discussing, there are three, which in this context are worthy of mention. These are the Shah's childlike passion for novelty, his incurable love of a joke, and his fondness for animals, about all of which many good stories are current in the society of the capital. Just as, in the course of his European travels, he picked up a vast number of what appeared, to the Eastern mind, to be wonderful curiosities, but which have since been stacked in the various apartments of the palace, or put away and forgotten; so in the larger sphere of public policy and administration he is continually taking up and pushing some new scheme or invention which, when the caprice has been gratified, is neglected or allowed to expire. One week it is gas; another it is electric light. Now it is a staff college; anon, a military hospital. To-day it is a Russian uniform; yesterday it was a German man-of-war for the Persian Gulf. A new army warrant is issued this year; a new code of law is promised for the next. Nothing comes of any of these

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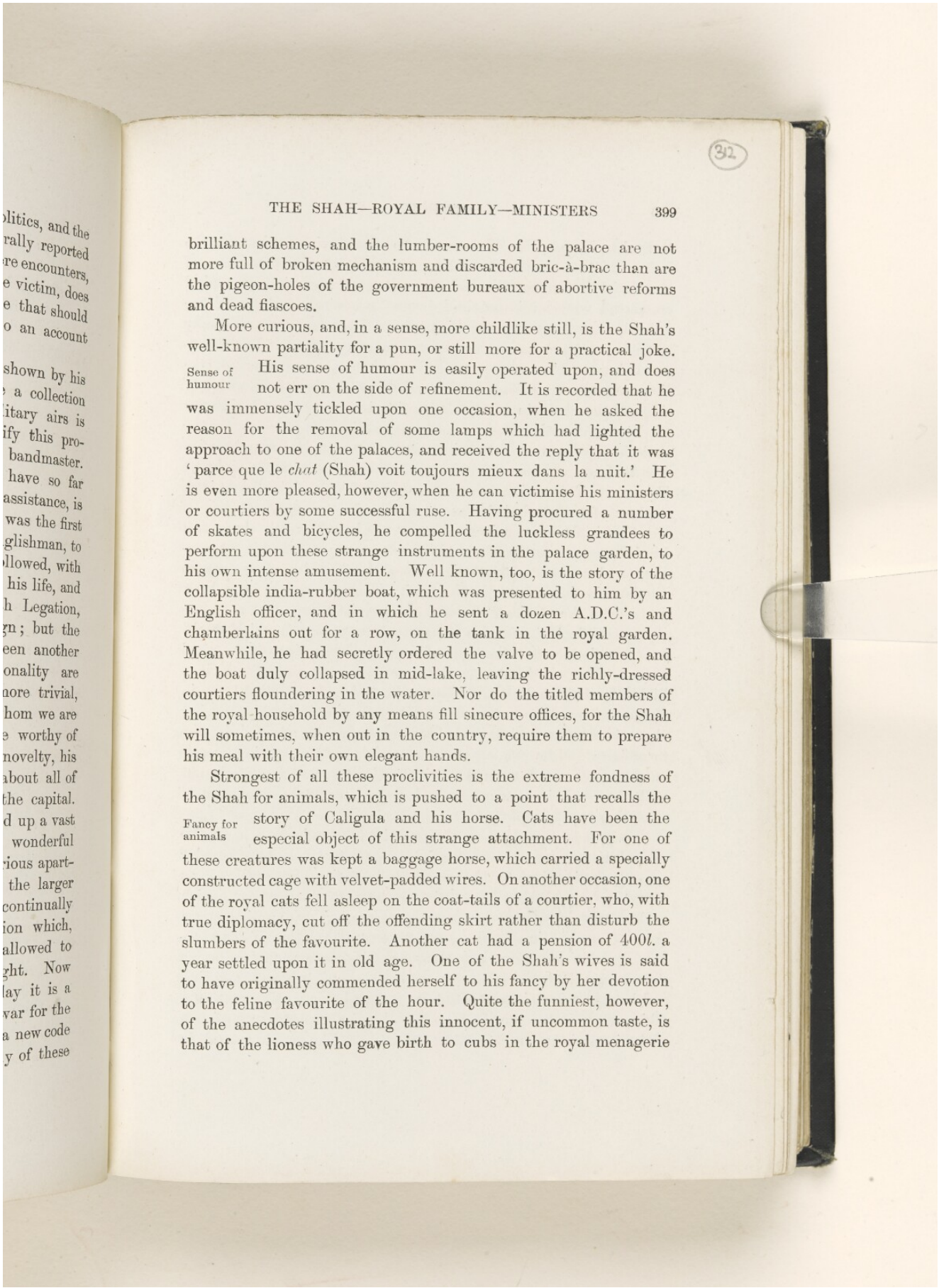



brilliant schemes, and the lumber-rooms of the palace are not more full of broken mechanism and discarded bric-à-brac than are the pigeon-holes of the government bureaux of abortive reforms and dead fiascoes.

More curious, and, in a sense, more childlike still, is the Shah's well-known partiality for a pun, or still more for a practical joke. Sense of humour His sense of humour is easily operated upon, and does not err on the side of refinement. It is recorded that he was immensely tickled upon one occasion, when he asked the reason for the removal of some lamps which had lighted the approach to one of the palaces, and received the reply that it was 'parce que le *chat* (Shah) voit toujours mieux dans la nuit.' He is even more pleased, however, when he can victimise his ministers or courtiers by some successful ruse. Having procured a number of skates and bicycles, he compelled the luckless grandees to perform upon these strange instruments in the palace garden, to his own intense amusement. Well known, too, is the story of the collapsible india-rubber boat, which was presented to him by an English officer, and in which he sent a dozen A.D.C.'s and chamberlains out for a row, on the tank in the royal garden. Meanwhile, he had secretly ordered the valve to be opened, and the boat duly collapsed in mid-lake, leaving the richly-dressed courtiers floundering in the water. Nor do the titled members of the royal household by any means fill sinecure offices, for the Shah will sometimes, when out in the country, require them to prepare his meal with their own elegant hands.

Strongest of all these proclivities is the extreme fondness of the Shah for animals, which is pushed to a point that recalls the Fancy for animals story of Caligula and his horse. Cats have been the especial object of this strange attachment. For one of these creatures was kept a baggage horse, which carried a specially constructed cage with velvet-padded wires. On another occasion, one of the royal cats fell asleep on the coat-tails of a courtier, who, with true diplomacy, cut off the offending skirt rather than disturb the slumbers of the favourite. Another cat had a pension of 400*l.* a year settled upon it in old age. One of the Shah's wives is said to have originally commended herself to his fancy by her devotion to the feline favourite of the hour. Quite the funniest, however, of the anecdotes illustrating this innocent, if uncommon taste, is that of the lioness who gave birth to cubs in the royal menagerie

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at Doshan Tepe. The Shah was so consumed with anxiety for the welfare of the mother that, being detained by the ceremonies of the Tazieh in Teheran, he had the telegraph wires in the capital connected with an improvised bureau opposite the cage of the animal, so as to be in possession of the latest news; and finally cashiered an unsympathetic clerk who telegraphed, 'The beasts are doing well,' on the ground that 'the true beast was not the lion, but the man who could call the lion by such a name.' Almost the same in kind, if superior in degree, is the intense fondness which the Shah has developed in recent years for the little boy, known as the Aziz-es-Sultan, whom he brought with him to England, and whom he seldom allows out of his sight at Teheran. This child, whose name is Gholam Ali Khan, is a nephew of the Amin-i-Akdas (Trusted of the Sovereign), one of the Shah's favourite wives. She was only a Kurdish slave, and her brother, the father of the child, was a peasant, as his appearance and manner sufficiently indicated when he came over to England in the retinue of the Shah. There seems to have been no truth in the stories circulated throughout Europe of a superstitious origin of the Shah's attachment to this boy, which would appear to be no more than one of the peculiar caprices of the royal nature. The child, who is eleven or twelve years of age, is a Field-Marshal, and wears a huge portrait of the Shah, set in diamonds, round his neck. While in Teheran, I saw him driving about in a state and style second only to that adopted by the sovereign; and he was deputed by the latter as a special compliment to make a call upon the British Minister. If the lad is not well, the Shah is at once in a bad humour, and is incapable of attending to affairs of State.

From these anecdotes of personal idiosyncrasies which I have related, not so much because of the interest attached in popular estimation to the deeds and fancies of sovereigns, as because they illustrate the bent of a character which could hardly have been moulded in any other surroundings than those of an Asiatic throne, I turn to a contemplation of Nasr-ed-Din Shah in his more important capacity as a monarch and a statesman. Here he possesses many excellent business qualities, and betrays a voracious appetite for any and every affair of State. Rising early in the morning, he devotes the forenoon to audience with his ministers and to matters of State. The smallest detail is

The Shah as ruler



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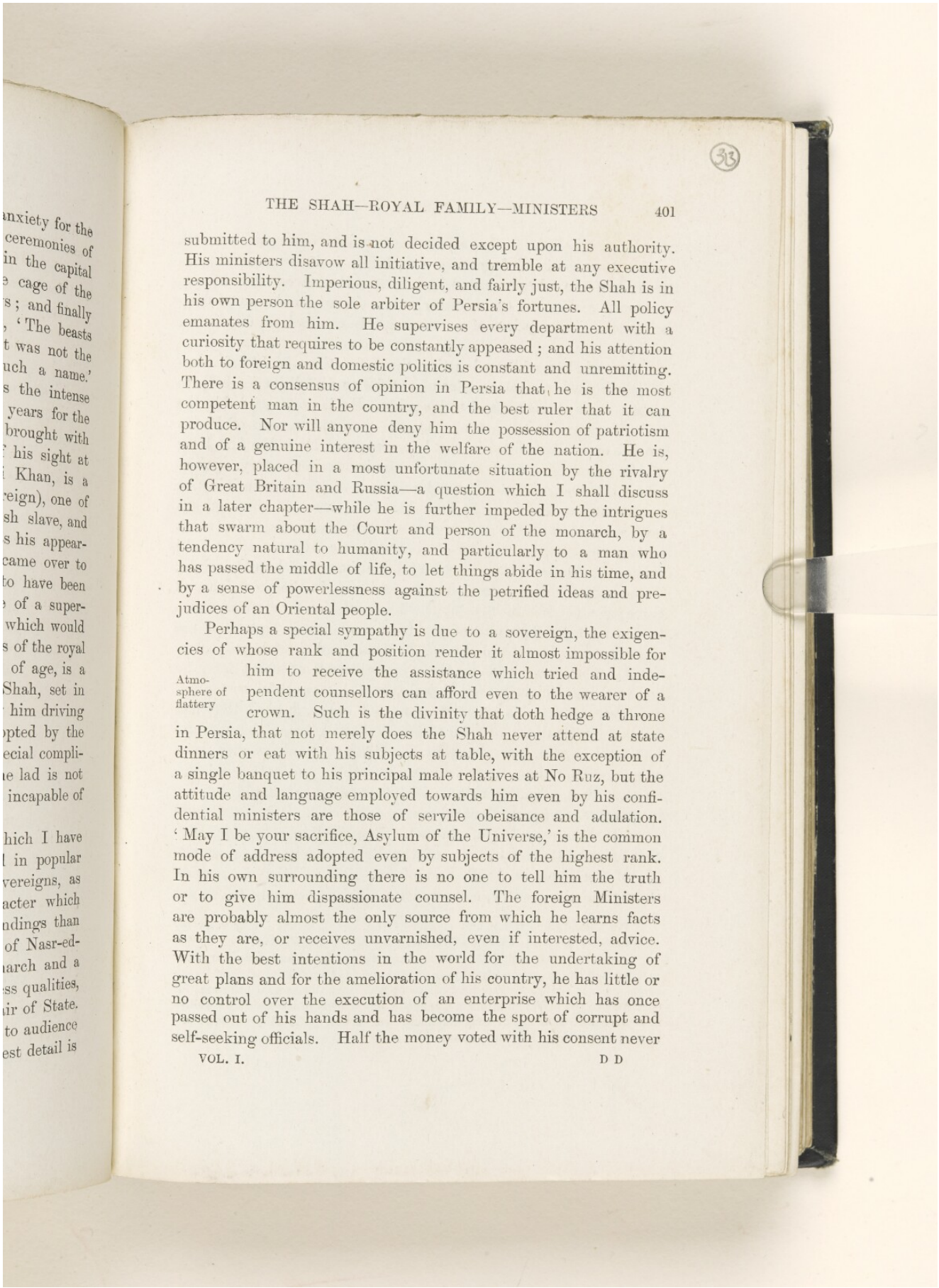



submitted to him, and is not decided except upon his authority. His ministers disavow all initiative, and tremble at any executive responsibility. Imperious, diligent, and fairly just, the Shah is in his own person the sole arbiter of Persia's fortunes. All policy emanates from him. He supervises every department with a curiosity that requires to be constantly appeased; and his attention both to foreign and domestic politics is constant and unremitting. There is a consensus of opinion in Persia that he is the most competent man in the country, and the best ruler that it can produce. Nor will anyone deny him the possession of patriotism and of a genuine interest in the welfare of the nation. He is, however, placed in a most unfortunate situation by the rivalry of Great Britain and Russia—a question which I shall discuss in a later chapter—while he is further impeded by the intrigues that swarm about the Court and person of the monarch, by a tendency natural to humanity, and particularly to a man who has passed the middle of life, to let things abide in his time, and by a sense of powerlessness against the petrified ideas and prejudices of an Oriental people.

Perhaps a special sympathy is due to a sovereign, the exigencies of whose rank and position render it almost impossible for him to receive the assistance which tried and independent counsellors can afford even to the wearer of a crown. Such is the divinity that doth hedge a throne in Persia, that not merely does the Shah never attend at state dinners or eat with his subjects at table, with the exception of a single banquet to his principal male relatives at No Ruz, but the attitude and language employed towards him even by his confidential ministers are those of servile obeisance and adulation. 'May I be your sacrifice, Asylum of the Universe,' is the common mode of address adopted even by subjects of the highest rank. In his own surrounding there is no one to tell him the truth or to give him dispassionate counsel. The foreign Ministers are probably almost the only source from which he learns facts as they are, or receives unvarnished, even if interested, advice. With the best intentions in the world for the undertaking of great plans and for the amelioration of his country, he has little or no control over the execution of an enterprise which has once passed out of his hands and has become the sport of corrupt and self-seeking officials. Half the money voted with his consent never

Atmosphere of flattery



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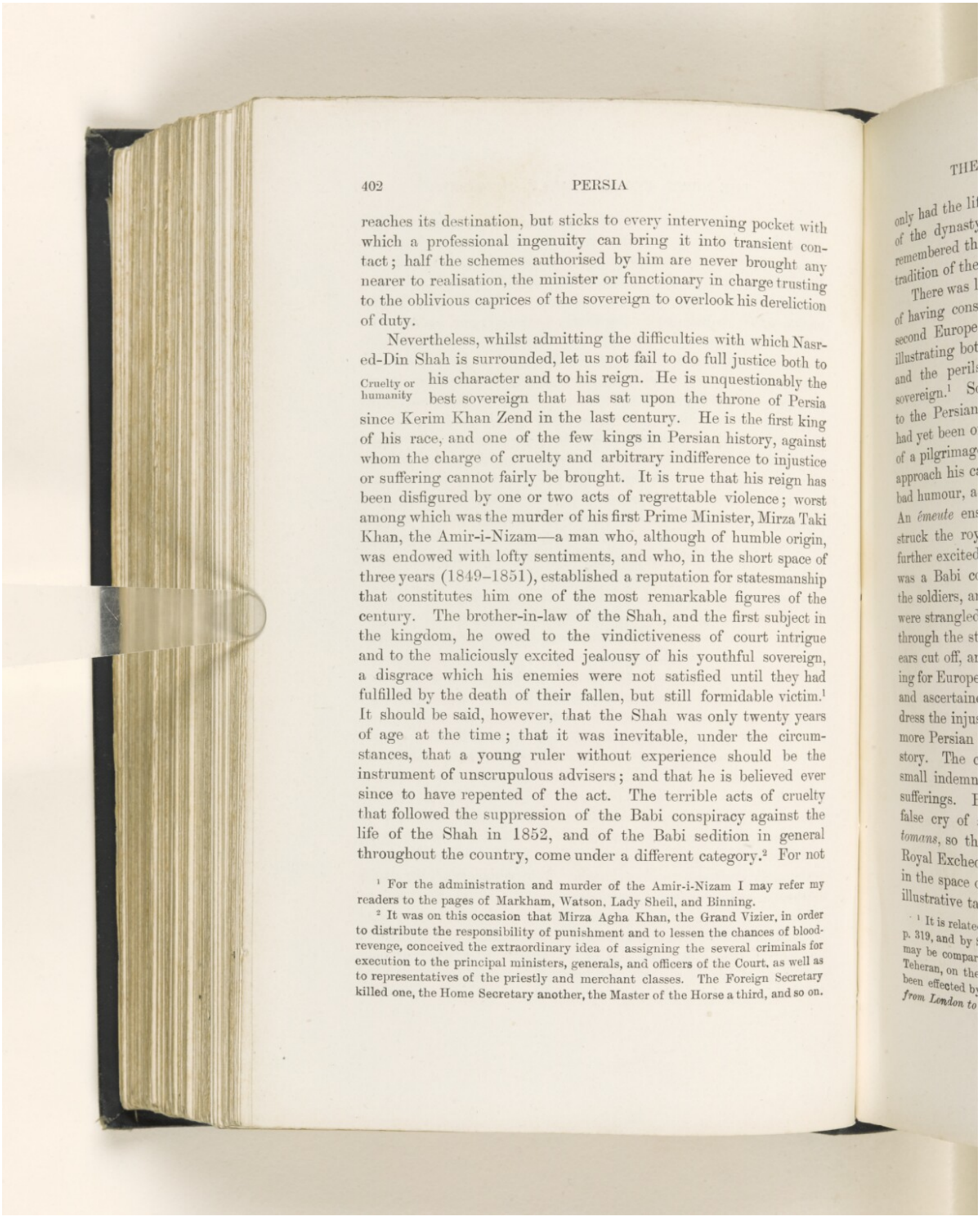



reaches its destination, but sticks to every intervening pocket with which a professional ingenuity can bring it into transient contact; half the schemes authorised by him are never brought any nearer to realisation, the minister or functionary in charge trusting to the oblivious caprices of the sovereign to overlook his dereliction of duty.

Nevertheless, whilst admitting the difficulties with which Nasr-ed-Din Shah is surrounded, let us not fail to do full justice both to his character and to his reign. He is unquestionably the best sovereign that has sat upon the throne of Persia since Kerim Khan Zend in the last century. He is the first king of his race, and one of the few kings in Persian history, against whom the charge of cruelty and arbitrary indifference to injustice or suffering cannot fairly be brought. It is true that his reign has been disfigured by one or two acts of regrettable violence; worst among which was the murder of his first Prime Minister, Mirza Taki Khan, the Amir-i-Nizam—a man who, although of humble origin, was endowed with lofty sentiments, and who, in the short space of three years (1849–1851), established a reputation for statesmanship that constitutes him one of the most remarkable figures of the century. The brother-in-law of the Shah, and the first subject in the kingdom, he owed to the vindictiveness of court intrigue and to the maliciously excited jealousy of his youthful sovereign, a disgrace which his enemies were not satisfied until they had fulfilled by the death of their fallen, but still formidable victim.[1] It should be said, however, that the Shah was only twenty years of age at the time; that it was inevitable, under the circumstances, that a young ruler without experience should be the instrument of unscrupulous advisers; and that he is believed ever since to have repented of the act. The terrible acts of cruelty that followed the suppression of the Babi conspiracy against the life of the Shah in 1852, and of the Babi sedition in general throughout the country, come under a different category.[2] For not

Cruelty or humanity

[1] For the administration and murder of the Amir-i-Nizam I may refer my readers to the pages of Markham, Watson, Lady Sheil, and Binning.

[2] It was on this occasion that Mirza Agha Khan, the Grand Vizier, in order to distribute the responsibility of punishment and to lessen the chances of blood-revenge, conceived the extraordinary idea of assigning the several criminals for execution to the principal ministers, generals, and officers of the Court, as well as to representatives of the priestly and merchant classes. The Foreign Secretary killed one, the Home Secretary another, the Master of the Horse a third, and so on.

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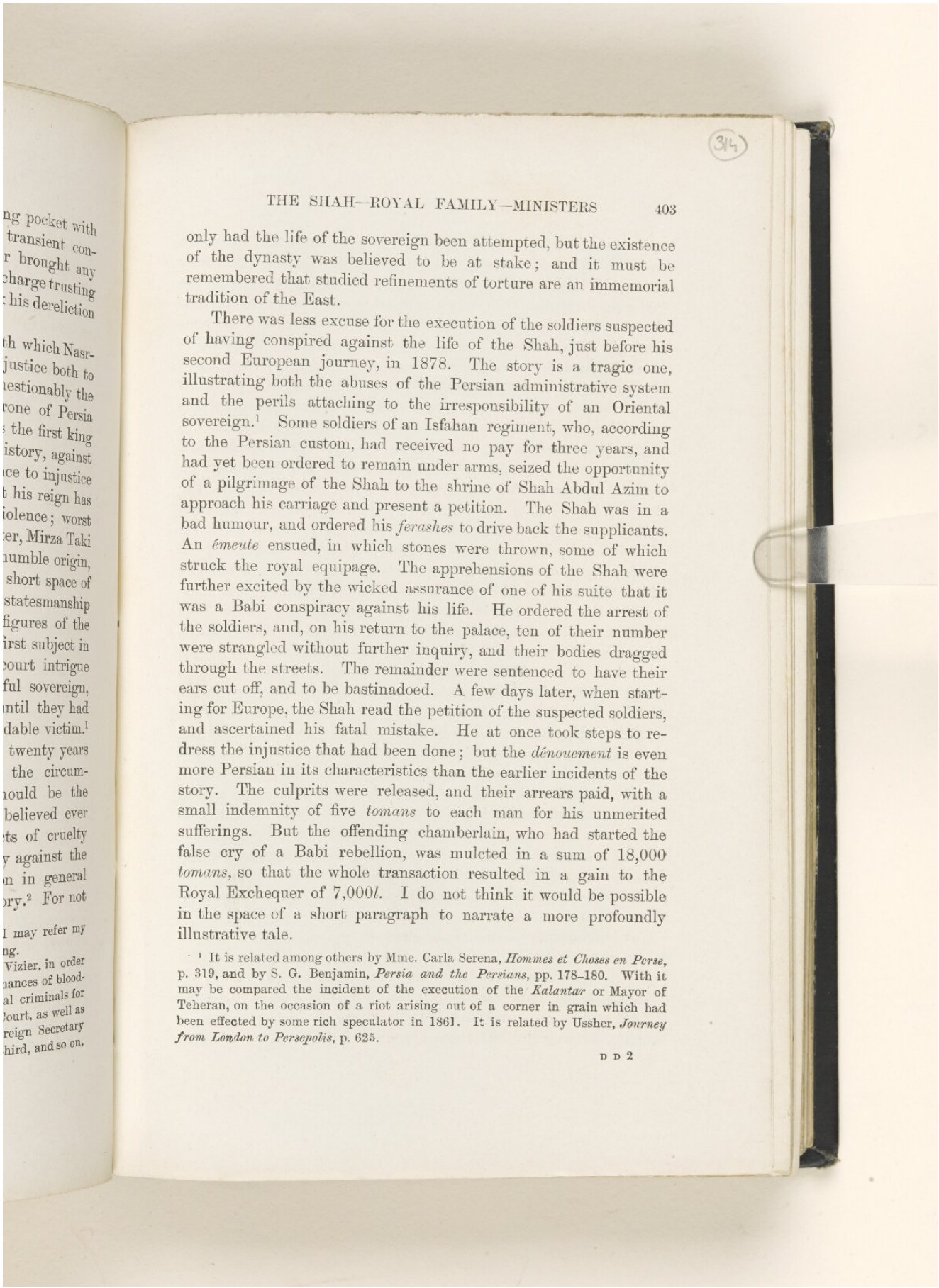



only had the life of the sovereign been attempted, but the existence of the dynasty was believed to be at stake; and it must be remembered that studied refinements of torture are an immemorial tradition of the East.

There was less excuse for the execution of the soldiers suspected of having conspired against the life of the Shah, just before his second European journey, in 1878. The story is a tragic one, illustrating both the abuses of the Persian administrative system and the perils attaching to the irresponsibility of an Oriental sovereign.[1] Some soldiers of an Isfahan regiment, who, according to the Persian custom, had received no pay for three years, and had yet been ordered to remain under arms, seized the opportunity of a pilgrimage of the Shah to the shrine of Shah Abdul Azim to approach his carriage and present a petition. The Shah was in a bad humour, and ordered his *ferashes* to drive back the supplicants. An *émeute* ensued, in which stones were thrown, some of which struck the royal equipage. The apprehensions of the Shah were further excited by the wicked assurance of one of his suite that it was a Babi conspiracy against his life. He ordered the arrest of the soldiers, and, on his return to the palace, ten of their number were strangled without further inquiry, and their bodies dragged through the streets. The remainder were sentenced to have their ears cut off, and to be bastinadoed. A few days later, when starting for Europe, the Shah read the petition of the suspected soldiers, and ascertained his fatal mistake. He at once took steps to redress the injustice that had been done; but the *dénouement* is even more Persian in its characteristics than the earlier incidents of the story. The culprits were released, and their arrears paid, with a small indemnity of five *tomans* to each man for his unmerited sufferings. But the offending chamberlain, who had started the false cry of a Babi rebellion, was mulcted in a sum of 18,000 *tomans*, so that the whole transaction resulted in a gain to the Royal Exchequer of 7,000*l*. I do not think it would be possible in the space of a short paragraph to narrate a more profoundly illustrative tale.

[1] It is related among others by Mme. Carla Serena, *Hommes et Choses en Perse*, p. 319, and by S. G. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians*, pp. 178–180. With it may be compared the incident of the execution of the *Kalantar* or Mayor of Teheran, on the occasion of a riot arising out of a corner in grain which had been effected by some rich speculator in 1861. It is related by Ussher, *Journey from London to Persepolis*, p. 625.



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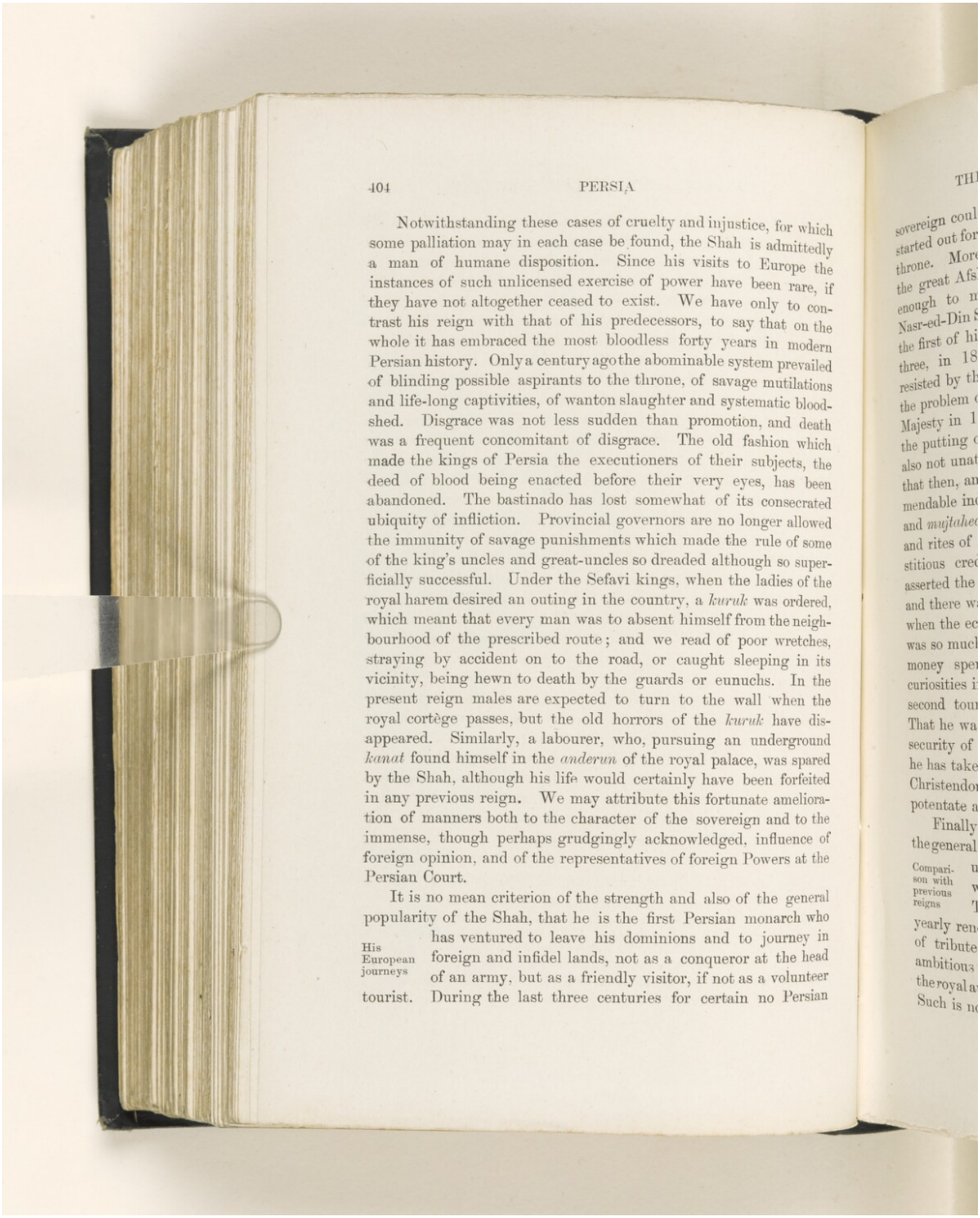



Notwithstanding these cases of cruelty and injustice, for which some palliation may in each case be found, the Shah is admittedly a man of humane disposition. Since his visits to Europe the instances of such unlicensed exercise of power have been rare, if they have not altogether ceased to exist. We have only to contrast his reign with that of his predecessors, to say that on the whole it has embraced the most bloodless forty years in modern Persian history. Only a century ago the abominable system prevailed of blinding possible aspirants to the throne, of savage mutilations and life-long captivities, of wanton slaughter and systematic bloodshed. Disgrace was not less sudden than promotion, and death was a frequent concomitant of disgrace. The old fashion which made the kings of Persia the executioners of their subjects, the deed of blood being enacted before their very eyes, has been abandoned. The bastinado has lost somewhat of its consecrated ubiquity of infliction. Provincial governors are no longer allowed the immunity of savage punishments which made the rule of some of the king's uncles and great-uncles so dreaded although so superficially successful. Under the Sefavi kings, when the ladies of the royal harem desired an outing in the country, a *kuruk* was ordered, which meant that every man was to absent himself from the neighbourhood of the prescribed route; and we read of poor wretches, straying by accident on to the road, or caught sleeping in its vicinity, being hewn to death by the guards or eunuchs. In the present reign males are expected to turn to the wall when the royal cortège passes, but the old horrors of the *kuruk* have disappeared. Similarly, a labourer, who, pursuing an underground *kanat* found himself in the *anderun* of the royal palace, was spared by the Shah, although his life would certainly have been forfeited in any previous reign. We may attribute this fortunate amelioration of manners both to the character of the sovereign and to the immense, though perhaps grudgingly acknowledged, influence of foreign opinion, and of the representatives of foreign Powers at the Persian Court.

It is no mean criterion of the strength and also of the general popularity of the Shah, that he is the first Persian monarch who has ventured to leave his dominions and to journey in foreign and infidel lands, not as a conqueror at the head of an army, but as a friendly visitor, if not as a volunteer tourist. During the last three centuries for certain no Persian

His European journeys

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sovereign could have hazarded such a step. Nadir Shah, before he started out for India, had removed every possible competitor for the throne. Moreover, he took his army with him, and the prospect of the great Afshar returning at the head of a victorious host was enough to make the blood of any would-be upstart run cold. Nasr-ed-Din Shah had to contend with many obstacles in arranging the first of his European journeys, of which there have now been three, in 1873, 1878, and 1889. The project was obstinately resisted by the clergy; great difficulty was experienced in settling the problem of the seraglio, the solitary wife who accompanied His Majesty in 1873 being ultimately sent back from Moscow; and the putting of the government into commission in his absence was also not unattended with hazard. It is to the credit of the Shah that then, and indeed throughout his reign, he has shown a commendable independence of the fanatical element among the *mullahs* and *mujtaheds* of Islam. Though a careful observant of the forms and rites of the Mussulman creed, and though reposing a superstitious credulity in astrology and divination, he has uniformly asserted the superiority of the temporal over the spiritual power, and there was probably never a moment in the history of Persia when the ecclesiastical ascendency, that is of the essence of Islam, was so much in abeyance as at present. The immense amount of money spent by the Shah in the purchase of furniture and curiosities in Europe also excited a feeling of discontent; and his second tour was unquestionably unpopular among his subjects. That he was able to venture upon a third is a proof of the absolute security of his position, but it is also due to the sentiment which he has taken care to diffuse among his subjects, that the princes of Christendom vie with each other in anxiety to entertain so great a potentate and squabble for the honour of his alliance.

Finally, I will apply the double test of a comparison, firstly, of the general state of the country during the Shah's reign with its state under his predecessors; and, secondly, of its condition now with its condition at his accession forty-three years ago. The record of previous reigns is one of internal warfare, yearly renewed against insurgent tribes or recalcitrant chieftains, of tribute refused, of brigandage rampant and unpunished, of ambitious nobles struggling with each other for the ascendency, of the royal authority frequently insulted and sometimes wholly ignored. Such is not the picture which is presented by the Persia of to-day.

Comparison with previous reigns

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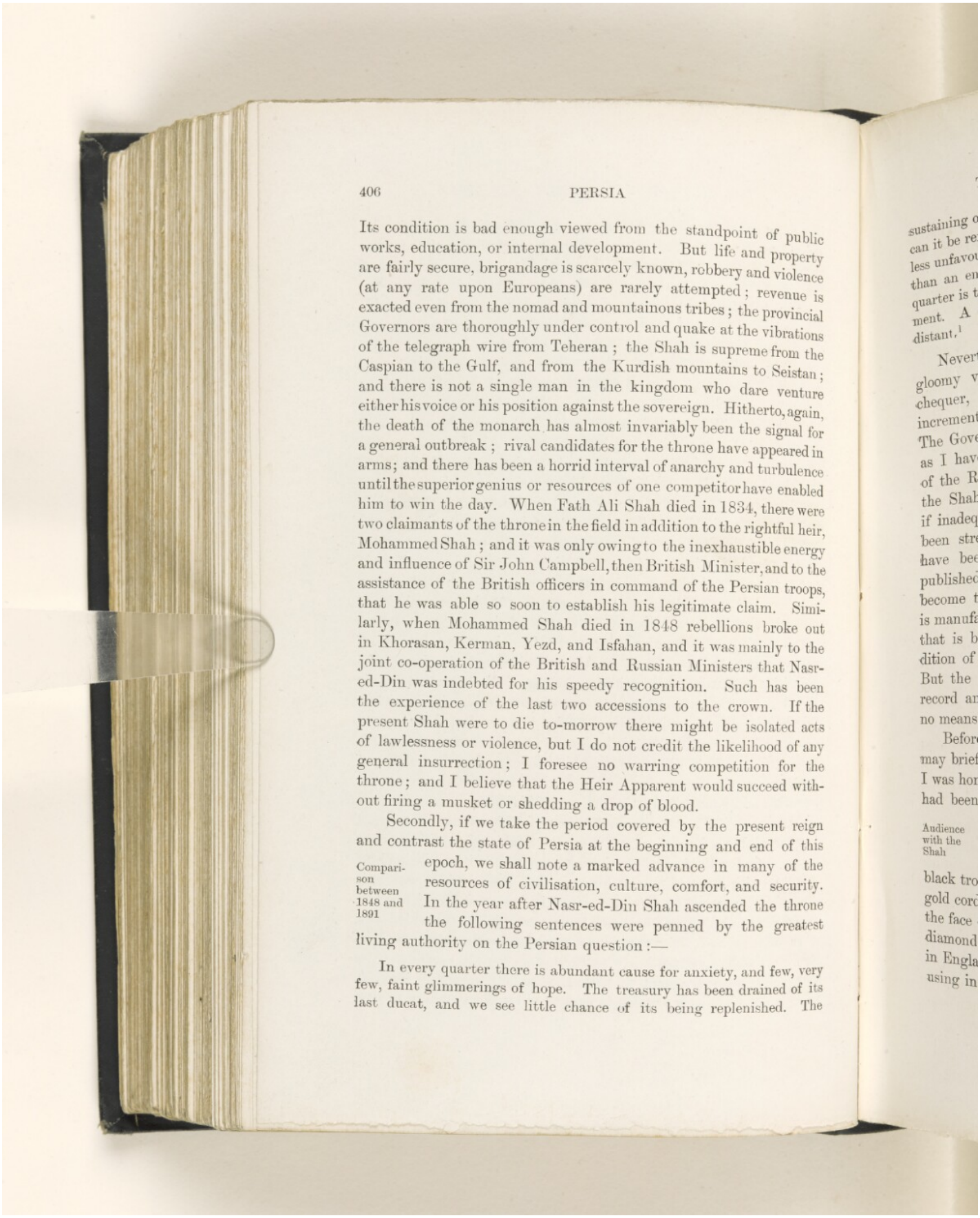



Its condition is bad enough viewed from the standpoint of public works, education, or internal development. But life and property are fairly secure, brigandage is scarcely known, robbery and violence (at any rate upon Europeans) are rarely attempted; revenue is exacted even from the nomad and mountainous tribes; the provincial Governors are thoroughly under control and quake at the vibrations of the telegraph wire from Teheran; the Shah is supreme from the Caspian to the Gulf, and from the Kurdish mountains to Seistan; and there is not a single man in the kingdom who dare venture either his voice or his position against the sovereign. Hitherto, again, the death of the monarch has almost invariably been the signal for a general outbreak; rival candidates for the throne have appeared in arms; and there has been a horrid interval of anarchy and turbulence until the superior genius or resources of one competitor have enabled him to win the day. When Fath Ali Shah died in 1834, there were two claimants of the throne in the field in addition to the rightful heir, Mohammed Shah; and it was only owing to the inexhaustible energy and influence of Sir John Campbell, then British Minister, and to the assistance of the British officers in command of the Persian troops, that he was able so soon to establish his legitimate claim. Similarly, when Mohammed Shah died in 1848 rebellions broke out in Khorasan, Kerman, Yezd, and Isfahan, and it was mainly to the joint co-operation of the British and Russian Ministers that Nasr-ed-Din was indebted for his speedy recognition. Such has been the experience of the last two accessions to the crown. If the present Shah were to die to-morrow there might be isolated acts of lawlessness or violence, but I do not credit the likelihood of any general insurrection; I foresee no warring competition for the throne; and I believe that the Heir Apparent would succeed without firing a musket or shedding a drop of blood.

Comparison between 1848 and 1891

Secondly, if we take the period covered by the present reign and contrast the state of Persia at the beginning and end of this epoch, we shall note a marked advance in many of the resources of civilisation, culture, comfort, and security. In the year after Nasr-ed-Din Shah ascended the throne the following sentences were penned by the greatest living authority on the Persian question:—

> In every quarter there is abundant cause for anxiety, and few, very few, faint glimmerings of hope. The treasury has been drained of its last ducat, and we see little chance of its being replenished. The

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sustaining or motive power of the Government no longer exists, nor can it be renewed. The general condition of the provinces is hardly less unfavourable to the consolidation of the young monarch's power than an empty treasury and impotent and divided councils. In no quarter is there any feeling of confidence in the stability of the Government. A domestic crisis may be imminent, and cannot be very far distant.[1]

Nevertheless, the subsequent period has not ratified these gloomy vaticinations. There is a balance in the Royal Exchequer, regrettable though it be that it should swell by idle increment instead of being devoted to the service of the people. The Government is secure, strong, and respected. The provinces, as I have shown, are in thorough subordination. No member of the Royal Family has ventured to dispute the supremacy of the Shah. Simultaneously there has been a considerable, even if inadequate, expansion of commerce. The telegraph wire has been stretched between all the principal towns; regular posts have been inaugurated; newspapers of an official character are published in the capital; a miniature railway, which may perhaps become the nucleus of a great undertaking, has been built; gas is manufactured at Teheran. The critic of the present finds plenty that is backward and a good deal that is deplorable in the condition of the country. Of these abuses I shall presently speak. But the historian, contrasting the Persia of the two periods, will record an advance, small as measured by European ideas, but by no means contemptible according to the standards of the East.

Before I quit the subject of the Shah and his personality, I may briefly recapitulate the incidents of an interview with which I was honoured in the Palace at Teheran. The Shah, to whom I had been previously introduced in England, received me in the room in which stands the so-called Peacock Throne. There was no other article of furniture in the chamber, and the King was standing alone in the middle. He wore black trousers and a black coat, edged with astrakhan, thick with gold cording in front, and equipped with voluminous skirts. Upon the face of his *kolah*, or sheepskin hat, was a small Lion and Sun in diamonds, a recent commission from a Parisian jeweller. Whereas in England he had employed French, which however he is shy in using in conversation, he now spoke in Persian, through an inter-

Audience with the Shah

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, p. 75.

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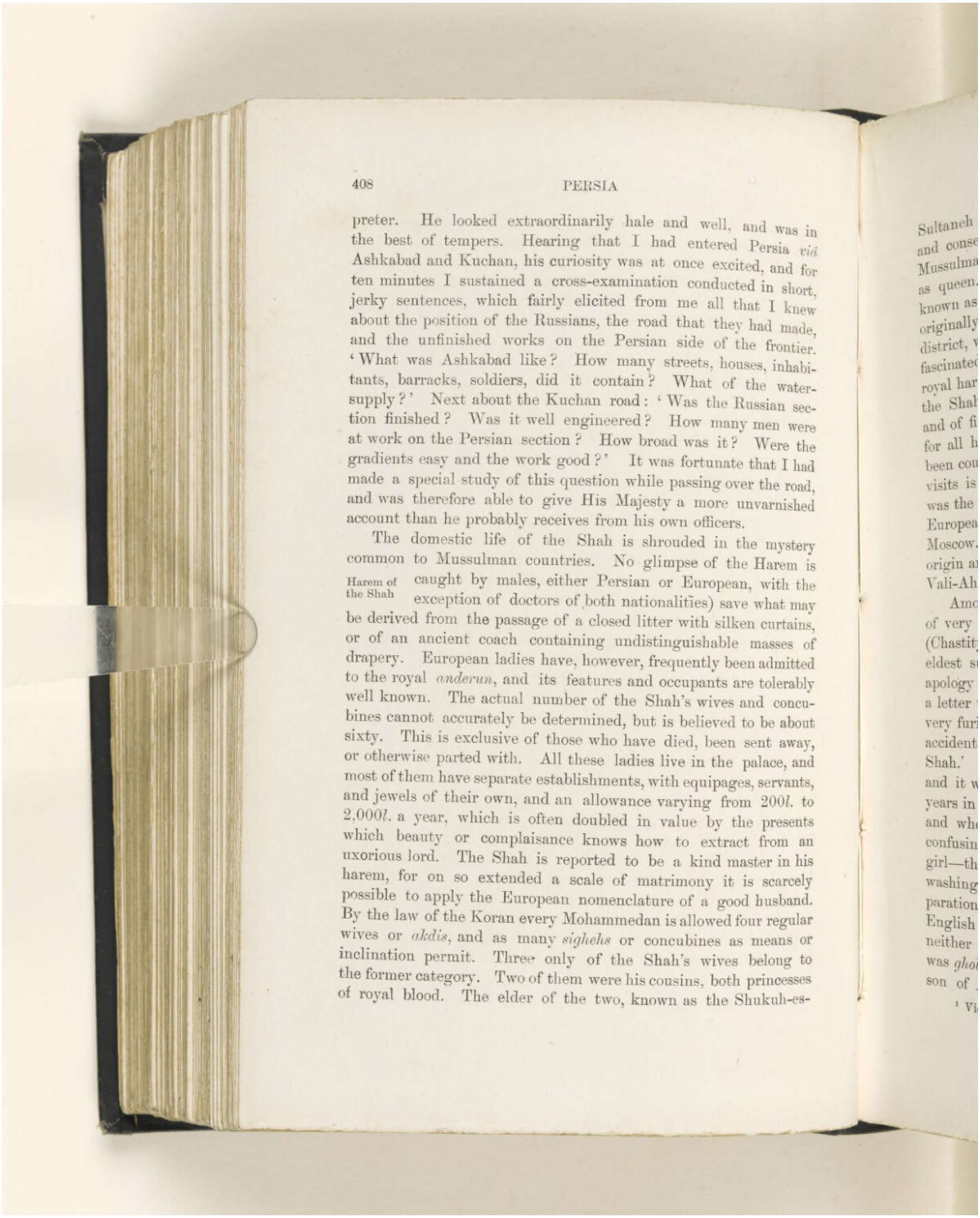



preter. He looked extraordinarily hale and well, and was in the best of tempers. Hearing that I had entered Persia *viâ* Ashkabad and Kuchan, his curiosity was at once excited, and for ten minutes I sustained a cross-examination conducted in short, jerky sentences, which fairly elicited from me all that I knew about the position of the Russians, the road that they had made, and the unfinished works on the Persian side of the frontier. 'What was Ashkabad like? How many streets, houses, inhabitants, barracks, soldiers, did it contain? What of the water-supply?' Next about the Kuchan road: 'Was the Russian section finished? Was it well engineered? How many men were at work on the Persian section? How broad was it? Were the gradients easy and the work good?' It was fortunate that I had made a special study of this question while passing over the road, and was therefore able to give His Majesty a more unvarnished account than he probably receives from his own officers.

Harem of the Shah

The domestic life of the Shah is shrouded in the mystery common to Mussulman countries. No glimpse of the Harem is caught by males, either Persian or European, with the exception of doctors of both nationalities) save what may be derived from the passage of a closed litter with silken curtains, or of an ancient coach containing undistinguishable masses of drapery. European ladies have, however, frequently been admitted to the royal *anderun*, and its features and occupants are tolerably well known. The actual number of the Shah's wives and concubines cannot accurately be determined, but is believed to be about sixty. This is exclusive of those who have died, been sent away, or otherwise parted with. All these ladies live in the palace, and most of them have separate establishments, with equipages, servants, and jewels of their own, and an allowance varying from 200*l.* to 2,000*l.* a year, which is often doubled in value by the presents which beauty or complaisance knows how to extract from an uxorious lord. The Shah is reported to be a kind master in his harem, for on so extended a scale of matrimony it is scarcely possible to apply the European nomenclature of a good husband. By the law of the Koran every Mohammedan is allowed four regular wives or *akdis*, and as many *sighehs* or concubines as means or inclination permit. Three only of the Shah's wives belong to the former category. Two of them were his cousins, both princesses of royal blood. The elder of the two, known as the Shukuh-es-

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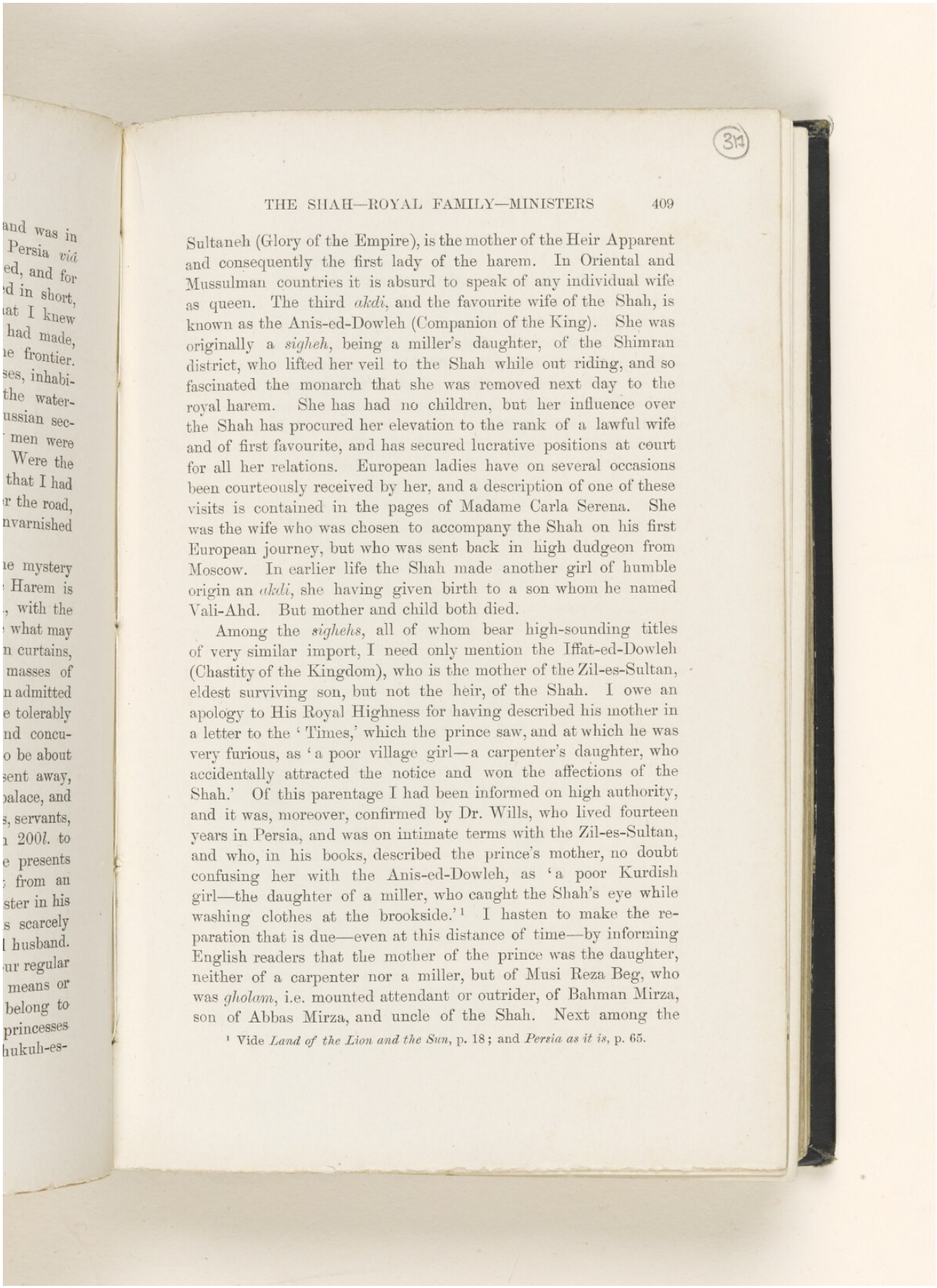



Sultaneh (Glory of the Empire), is the mother of the Heir Apparent and consequently the first lady of the harem. In Oriental and Mussulman countries it is absurd to speak of any individual wife as queen. The third *akdi*, and the favourite wife of the Shah, is known as the Anis-ed-Dowleh (Companion of the King). She was originally a *sigheh*, being a miller's daughter, of the Shimran district, who lifted her veil to the Shah while out riding, and so fascinated the monarch that she was removed next day to the royal harem. She has had no children, but her influence over the Shah has procured her elevation to the rank of a lawful wife and of first favourite, and has secured lucrative positions at court for all her relations. European ladies have on several occasions been courteously received by her, and a description of one of these visits is contained in the pages of Madame Carla Serena. She was the wife who was chosen to accompany the Shah on his first European journey, but who was sent back in high dudgeon from Moscow. In earlier life the Shah made another girl of humble origin an *akdi*, she having given birth to a son whom he named Vali-Ahd. But mother and child both died.

Among the *sighehs*, all of whom bear high-sounding titles of very similar import, I need only mention the Iffat-ed-Dowleh (Chastity of the Kingdom), who is the mother of the Zil-es-Sultan, eldest surviving son, but not the heir, of the Shah. I owe an apology to His Royal Highness for having described his mother in a letter to the 'Times,' which the prince saw, and at which he was very furious, as 'a poor village girl—a carpenter's daughter, who accidentally attracted the notice and won the affections of the Shah.' Of this parentage I had been informed on high authority, and it was, moreover, confirmed by Dr. Wills, who lived fourteen years in Persia, and was on intimate terms with the Zil-es-Sultan, and who, in his books, described the prince's mother, no doubt confusing her with the Anis-ed-Dowleh, as 'a poor Kurdish girl—the daughter of a miller, who caught the Shah's eye while washing clothes at the brookside.'[1] I hasten to make the reparation that is due—even at this distance of time—by informing English readers that the mother of the prince was the daughter, neither of a carpenter nor a miller, but of Musi Reza Beg, who was *gholam*, i.e. mounted attendant or outrider, of Bahman Mirza, son of Abbas Mirza, and uncle of the Shah. Next among the

[1] Vide *Land of the Lion and the Sun*, p. 18; and *Persia as it is*, p. 65.

*sighehs* must be counted the Munir-es-Sultaneh (Grandeur of the Empire), daughter of the late, and sister of the present, Chief Architect of Teheran, who is the mother of the Naib-es-Sultaneh, third son of the Shah, of whom I shall speak presently. The only other *sigheh* who merits attention in this place is the Amin-i-Akdas (Trusted of the Sovereign), a Kurdish slave, who has acquired the confidence of the Shah by her business capacity and honesty, and who is the aunt of the little boy favourite already alluded to. She originally owed her position to having been the devoted attendant of the Shah's favourite cat, which I have before mentioned. In the past year (1890) the Shah sent her to Vienna to submit to an operation for cataract which, unfortunately, was not successful. Deeper into the secrets of the seraglio, or into a further enumeration of Stars, Suns, Lights, and Glories of the Empire, it is unnecessary to advance. Regarding the indoor costume of these ladies, I can, of course, only speak from hearsay. But it is well known that, while in the days of Fath Ali Shah the ladies of high rank wore silk or muslin shifts, loose velvet pantaloons, and an embroidered vest, the reigning sovereign has introduced a more liberal fashion of *toilette*. The upper part of the dress consists of a chemise under a short jacket; below which are worn very short, and very much puffed-out petticoats.[1] In their excursions abroad the ladies of the Harem, as I have before said, are as closely veiled as are Mohammedan women in general, and more closely veiled than the favourites of the Seraglio at Constantinople.

The Kajars as progenitors

Neither in the number of his wives nor in the extent of his progeny, can the Shah, although undeniably a family man, be compared with his great-grandfather, Fath Ali Shah. To the high opinion universally held of the domestic capacities of that monarch must, I imagine, be attributed the divergent estimates that are to be found, in works about Persia, of the number of his concubines and children. Colonel Drouville, in 1813, credits him with 700 wives, 64 sons, and 125 daughters. Colonel Stuart, who was in Persia in the year after Fath Ali's death, gives him 1,000 wives and 105 children. Lady Sheil, in the next decade, mentions 80 sons, and innumerable daughters. Binning names 800 wives, 130 sons, 170 daughters, and 5,000 living descendants, at the time of his death. Madame Dieulafoy

[1] Vide Mrs. Bishop's *Journeys in Persia*, vol. i. pp. 216, 264.

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also names the 5,000 descendants, but as existing at an epoch fifty years later (which has an air of greater probability); she reduces the wives to 700, but increases the children to 600. Rawlinson represents 3,000 direct descendants as existing at the time of his death. The two historians of modern Persia likewise fail to agree; for while Watson mentions 159 children, Markham allows for 300 wives, 150 sons, and 20 daughters. The estimate which appears in the Nasekh-et-Tavarikh, a great modern Persian historical work, fixes the number of Fath Ali's wives as over 1,000, and of his offspring as 260, 110 of whom survived their father.[1] Hence the familiar Persian proverb 'Camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.' The talent of paternity was by no means exhausted in the next generation, for several of Fath Ali's sons could boast of 40 or 50 male offspring; and one of their number—Sheikh Ali Mirza—used to ride abroad with a bodyguard of 60 of his own sons. No royal family has ever afforded a more exemplary illustration of the Scriptural assurance, 'Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have (A. V. shall be thy) children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands;'[2] for there was scarcely a governorship or a post of emolument in Persia that was not filled by one of this beehive of princelings; and to this day the myriad brood of *Shahzadehs*, or descendants of a king, is a perfect curse to the country, although many of these luckless scions of royalty, who consume a large portion of the revenue in annual allowances and pensions, now occupy very inferior positions as telegraph clerks, secretaries, &c. Fraser drew a vivid picture of the misery entailed upon the country fifty years ago by this 'race of royal drones,' who filled the governing posts not merely of every province, but of every *beluk* or district, city, and town; each of whom kept up a court, and a huge harem, and who preyed upon the country like a swarm of locusts.[3]

In contrast to these surprising totals, it is with an air of relief that we learn that the reigning Shah has only had a family of about 40 children, of whom half are still living, viz., 9 sons, and

[1] None of these figures can be compared with those of Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, who left a child for every day in the year. Either of these monarchs might well have spoken in the language of our own Charles II., who, when addressed by an effusive courtier as the Father of his People, replied, 'Well, say of a considerable proportion of them!'

[2] *Psalm* xlv. 16. Compare what is said of Rehoboam in 2 Chron. xi. 23.

[3] *A Winter's Journey*, vol. i. p. 400.

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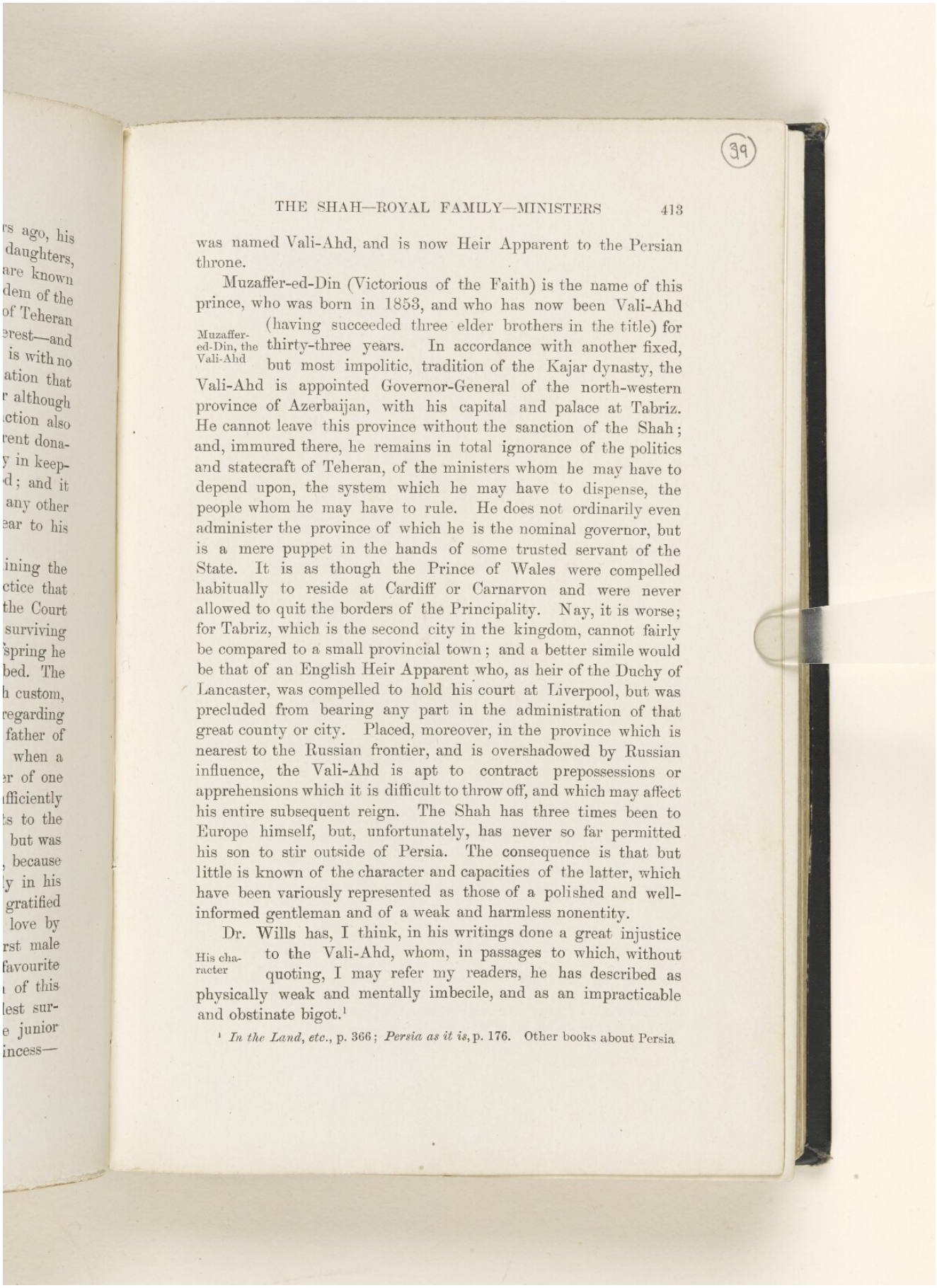
12 daughters. His eldest son was born forty-four years ago, his youngest during the present year. Of his grown-up daughters, who bear similar titles to their mothers, and are known as Pride, Purity, Chastity, Splendour, and Diadem of the Kingdom or Empire, one is married to the Chief Priest of Teheran —an ingenious method of annexing the ecclesiastical interest—and the rest are wedded to princes, or eminent subjects. It is with no special delight that one of the latter receives the intimation that he has been selected as a son-in-law of the sovereign; for although it may bring official promotion for himself, the distinction also involves a large ready-money present, followed by recurrent donations, to his royal father-in-law; it entails a great outlay in keeping up the requisite state for a Princess of the Blood; and it deprives the favoured husband of the liberty of taking any other wife. The Shah, as a rule, gives a dowry of 2,000*l.* a year to his married daughters.

Family of the Shah

Under the Sefavi kings there existed no rule determining the succession to the Persian crown. Differing from the practice that prevails among the Sunni Mussulmans, e.g. in the Court at Constantinople, of the heredity of the eldest surviving male, the Persian ruler selected which of his offspring he pleased, and often did not declare his choice till his deathbed. The Kajars have resumed what is an ancient Tartar or Turkish custom, by instituting the Blood-Royal qualification, and closely regarding the rank of the mother. Mohammed Husein Khan, the father of Agha Mohammed and grandfather of Fath Ali Shah, when a refugee with the Turkomans, refused to wed the daughter of one of their chiefs, on the ground that she was not of sufficiently exalted rank to give birth to a line of possible aspirants to the throne. Abbas Mirza was not the eldest son of Fath Ali, but was preferred above Mohammed Ali Mirza, his elder brother, because he was the son of a Kajar princess. It is true that early in his reign the present Shah departed from this custom, and gratified both the pride of irresponsibility and the instincts of love by nominating as Vali-Ahd, or Heir Apparent (after his first male child and bearer of that title, had died), the son of a favourite *sigheh*, who was of humble birth. But upon the death of this child he reverted to the more normal custom; his eldest surviving son, the Zil-es-Sultan, was passed over, and the junior of the latter by three years—being the son of a princess—

His Sons. Succession to the throne





was named Vali-Ahd, and is now Heir Apparent to the Persian throne.

Muzaffer-ed-Din, the Vali-Ahd

Muzaffer-ed-Din (Victorious of the Faith) is the name of this prince, who was born in 1853, and who has now been Vali-Ahd (having succeeded three elder brothers in the title) for thirty-three years. In accordance with another fixed, but most impolitic, tradition of the Kajar dynasty, the Vali-Ahd is appointed Governor-General of the north-western province of Azerbaijan, with his capital and palace at Tabriz. He cannot leave this province without the sanction of the Shah; and, immured there, he remains in total ignorance of the politics and statecraft of Teheran, of the ministers whom he may have to depend upon, the system which he may have to dispense, the people whom he may have to rule. He does not ordinarily even administer the province of which he is the nominal governor, but is a mere puppet in the hands of some trusted servant of the State. It is as though the Prince of Wales were compelled habitually to reside at Cardiff or Carnarvon and were never allowed to quit the borders of the Principality. Nay, it is worse; for Tabriz, which is the second city in the kingdom, cannot fairly be compared to a small provincial town; and a better simile would be that of an English Heir Apparent who, as heir of the Duchy of Lancaster, was compelled to hold his court at Liverpool, but was precluded from bearing any part in the administration of that great county or city. Placed, moreover, in the province which is nearest to the Russian frontier, and is overshadowed by Russian influence, the Vali-Ahd is apt to contract prepossessions or apprehensions which it is difficult to throw off, and which may affect his entire subsequent reign. The Shah has three times been to Europe himself, but, unfortunately, has never so far permitted his son to stir outside of Persia. The consequence is that but little is known of the character and capacities of the latter, which have been variously represented as those of a polished and well-informed gentleman and of a weak and harmless nonentity.

His character

Dr. Wills has, I think, in his writings done a great injustice to the Vali-Ahd, whom, in passages to which, without quoting, I may refer my readers, he has described as physically weak and mentally imbecile, and as an impracticable and obstinate bigot.[1]

[1] *In the Land, etc.*, p. 366; *Persia as it is*, p. 176. Other books about Persia

I believe (and I have taken steps to procure the best information on the subject) that this is a most unfair account of the personality of the future king of Persia. So far from being either an idiot or an imbecile, he is a man of good intelligence and considerable instruction, being well read in history, professing an interest in botany, and being withal of an amiable and unassuming disposition. The charge of bigotry appears to have arisen from the fact that he pays marked respect to the *mullahs*, and that he is believed to be more or less under the influence of the Sheikhi sect, which may be described as a fanatical agency.[1] Any such prepossession, however, which probably does not amount to more than serious orthodoxy, as contrasted with the free-thinking tendencies of his elder brother, is far from justifying a fear of active religious persecution in the future. If the prince is, as alleged, of weak character and easily led—although such a lack of individuality is denied by others—it is largely owing to the inexcusable position of subordination in which he, a man of nearly forty years of age, the second personage in the kingdom, and the future sovereign, has been placed by the shortsighted apprehensions of his father. Though nominally Governor-General of a great province, he has hitherto been allowed no more voice in the actual administration than a lacquey at his table; a child in leading-strings has more control over his own movements than this pseudo-ruler has had over his subjects.[2] The allowance given to him by the Shah has been

have contained similarly unflattering portraits of the Vali-Ahd, but I cannot ascertain that they amount in any case to more than repetitions of second-hand or third-hand gossip.

[1] The Sheikhi sect are so called from a celebrated Sheikh of Kerman, Haji Mohammed Kerim Khan, who in the early part of the century was a disciple of Sheikh Ahmed Ahsai, the doctrinal parent of Babism. A split occurred between the followers of the Bab and the pupils of the Sheikh, who called themselves by his name. He preached a superior rationalism, reconciling dogma with reason, and had many admirers, including Fath Ali Shah. The three chief points of his creed were, extreme veneration for the Imams, as divine incarnations, belief in his own spiritual communion with them, and denial of a material resurrection. *Vide* E. G. Browne, *Journal of the R.A.S.*, 1889, art. xii.

[2] The Province, as I shall presently show, has been for long administered by the Prince's Vizier—the Amir-i-Nizam. Several years ago, in the absence of a strong hand at the helm, the mis-government was so great that the Vali-Ahd was temporarily deprived of his governorship, which was conferred upon one of the Shah's uncles, an adept in the proper use of the bastinado, the bowstring, and the executioner's knife. The Amir-i-Nizam having been recalled (1891), the Vali-Ahd has now once more a chance.

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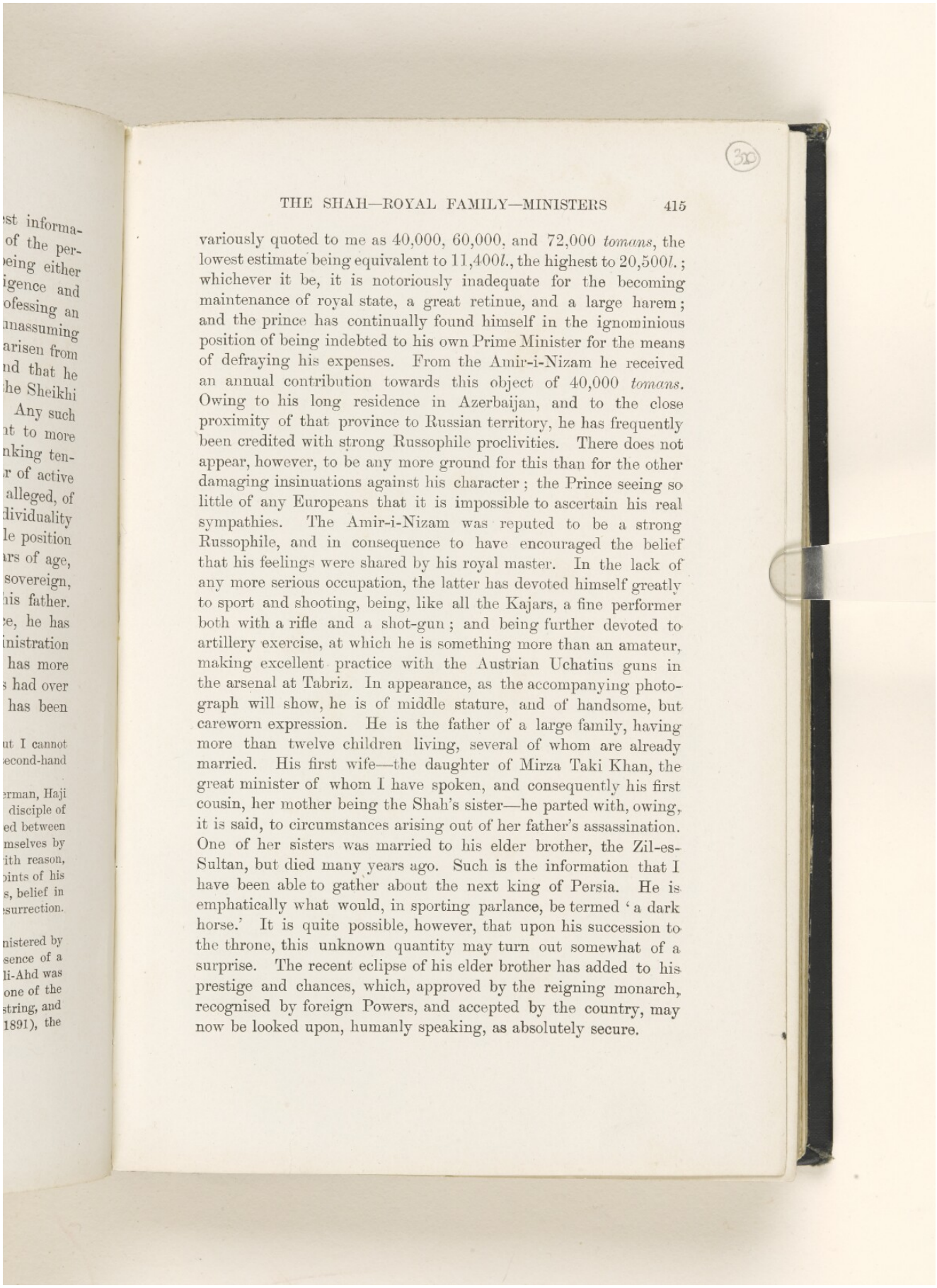



variously quoted to me as 40,000, 60,000, and 72,000 *tomans*, the lowest estimate being equivalent to 11,400*l.*, the highest to 20,500*l.*; whichever it be, it is notoriously inadequate for the becoming maintenance of royal state, a great retinue, and a large harem; and the prince has continually found himself in the ignominious position of being indebted to his own Prime Minister for the means of defraying his expenses. From the Amir-i-Nizam he received an annual contribution towards this object of 40,000 *tomans*. Owing to his long residence in Azerbaijan, and to the close proximity of that province to Russian territory, he has frequently been credited with strong Russophile proclivities. There does not appear, however, to be any more ground for this than for the other damaging insinuations against his character; the Prince seeing so little of any Europeans that it is impossible to ascertain his real sympathies. The Amir-i-Nizam was reputed to be a strong Russophile, and in consequence to have encouraged the belief that his feelings were shared by his royal master. In the lack of any more serious occupation, the latter has devoted himself greatly to sport and shooting, being, like all the Kajars, a fine performer both with a rifle and a shot-gun; and being further devoted to artillery exercise, at which he is something more than an amateur, making excellent practice with the Austrian Uchatius guns in the arsenal at Tabriz. In appearance, as the accompanying photograph will show, he is of middle stature, and of handsome, but careworn expression. He is the father of a large family, having more than twelve children living, several of whom are already married. His first wife—the daughter of Mirza Taki Khan, the great minister of whom I have spoken, and consequently his first cousin, her mother being the Shah's sister—he parted with, owing, it is said, to circumstances arising out of her father's assassination. One of her sisters was married to his elder brother, the Zil-es-Sultan, but died many years ago. Such is the information that I have been able to gather about the next king of Persia. He is emphatically what would, in sporting parlance, be termed 'a dark horse.' It is quite possible, however, that upon his succession to the throne, this unknown quantity may turn out somewhat of a surprise. The recent eclipse of his elder brother has added to his prestige and chances, which, approved by the reigning monarch, recognised by foreign Powers, and accepted by the country, may now be looked upon, humanly speaking, as absolutely secure.

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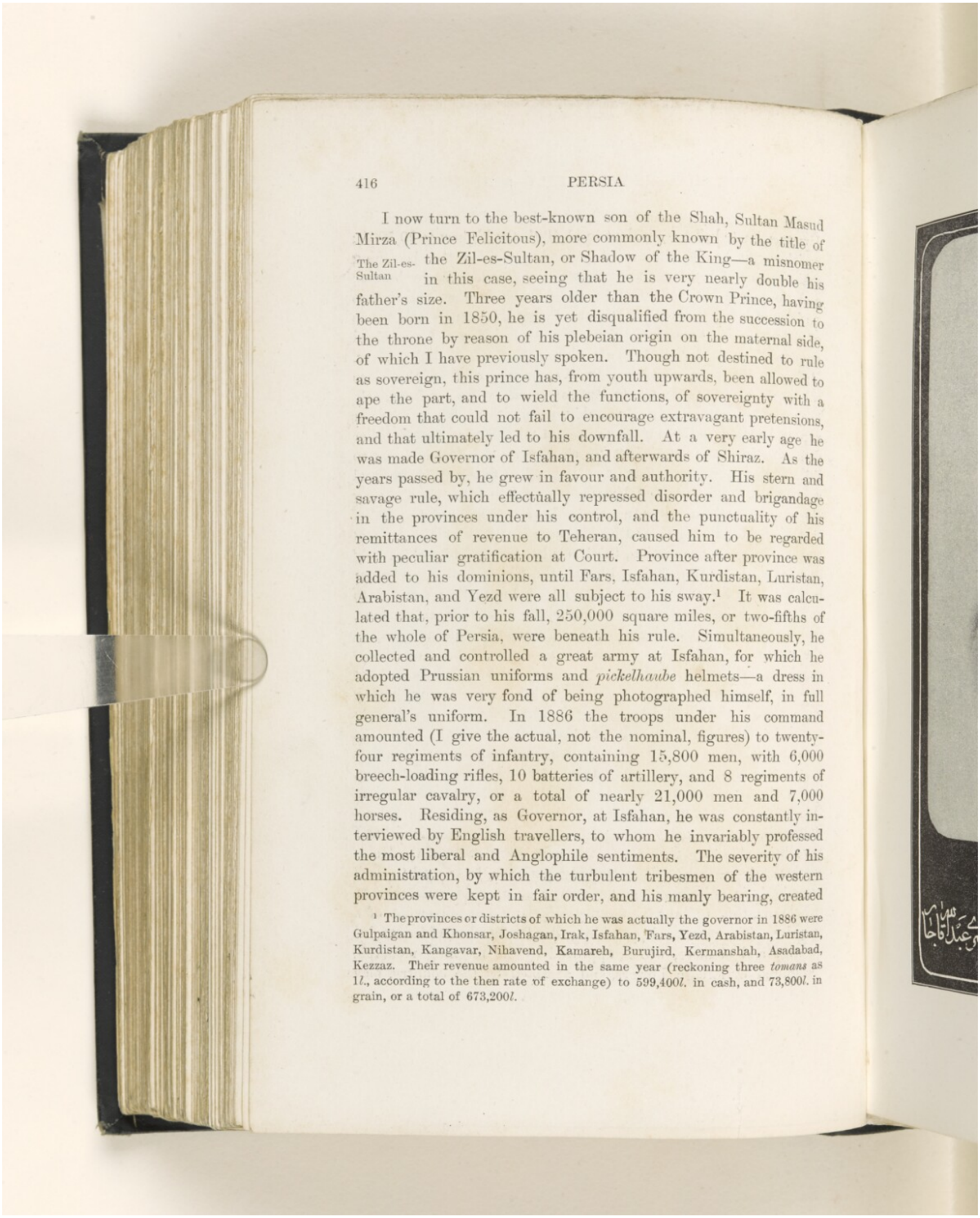



I now turn to the best-known son of the Shah, Sultan Masud Mirza (Prince Felicitous), more commonly known by the title of the Zil-es-Sultan, or Shadow of the King—a misnomer in this case, seeing that he is very nearly double his father's size. Three years older than the Crown Prince, having been born in 1850, he is yet disqualified from the succession to the throne by reason of his plebeian origin on the maternal side, of which I have previously spoken. Though not destined to rule as sovereign, this prince has, from youth upwards, been allowed to ape the part, and to wield the functions, of sovereignty with a freedom that could not fail to encourage extravagant pretensions, and that ultimately led to his downfall. At a very early age he was made Governor of Isfahan, and afterwards of Shiraz. As the years passed by, he grew in favour and authority. His stern and savage rule, which effectually repressed disorder and brigandage in the provinces under his control, and the punctuality of his remittances of revenue to Teheran, caused him to be regarded with peculiar gratification at Court. Province after province was added to his dominions, until Fars, Isfahan, Kurdistan, Luristan, Arabistan, and Yezd were all subject to his sway.[1] It was calculated that, prior to his fall, 250,000 square miles, or two-fifths of the whole of Persia, were beneath his rule. Simultaneously, he collected and controlled a great army at Isfahan, for which he adopted Prussian uniforms and *pickelhaube* helmets—a dress in which he was very fond of being photographed himself, in full general's uniform. In 1886 the troops under his command amounted (I give the actual, not the nominal, figures) to twenty-four regiments of infantry, containing 15,800 men, with 6,000 breech-loading rifles, 10 batteries of artillery, and 8 regiments of irregular cavalry, or a total of nearly 21,000 men and 7,000 horses. Residing, as Governor, at Isfahan, he was constantly interviewed by English travellers, to whom he invariably professed the most liberal and Anglophile sentiments. The severity of his administration, by which the turbulent tribesmen of the western provinces were kept in fair order, and his manly bearing, created

The Zil-es-Sultan

[1] The provinces or districts of which he was actually the governor in 1886 were Gulpaigan and Khonsar, Joshagan, Irak, Isfahan, Fars, Yezd, Arabistan, Luristan, Kurdistan, Kangavar, Nihavend, Kamareh, Burujird, Kermanshah, Asadabad, Kezzaz. Their revenue amounted in the same year (reckoning three *tomans* as 1*l*., according to the then rate of exchange) to 599,400*l*. in cash, and 73,800*l*. in grain, or a total of 673,200*l*.

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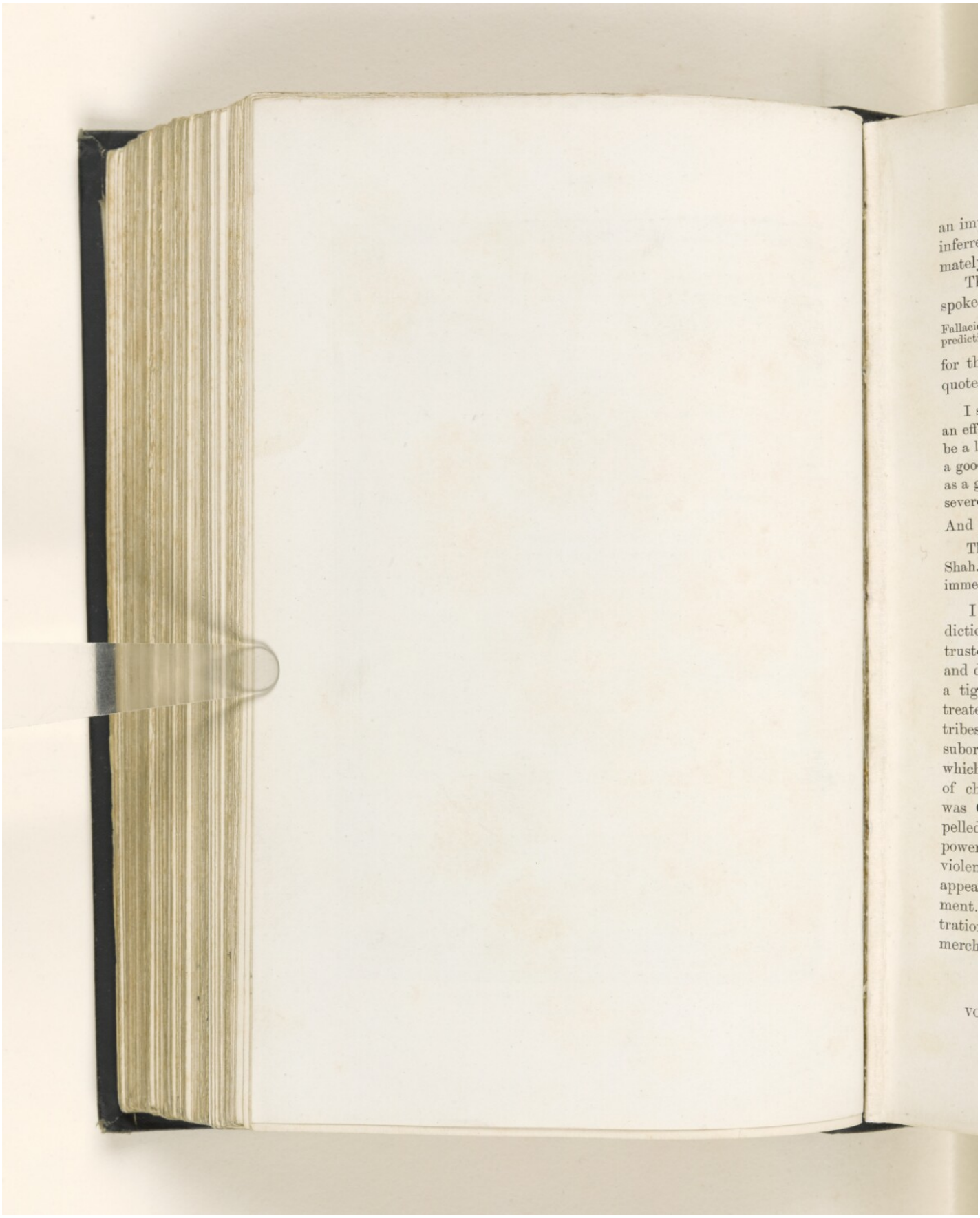
THE VALI-AHD



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an impression of resoluteness and strength; and it was erroneously inferred that the prince thus gifted and smiled upon would ultimately both deserve the throne and win it.

These impressions have nowhere found a more emphatic spokesman than in Dr. Wills, who has already been proved to have cast as erroneous a horoscope for the Zil-es-Sultan as, I believe, he will also be proved in the future to have done for the Vali-Ahd. This is what he says in his two works before quoted:—

Fallacious predictions

> I suppose the time will come when His Royal Highness will make an effort for the throne, probably on the present Shah's death. It will be a lucky day for Persia if he succeeds, as he is clever, tolerant, and a good governor. His personal popularity is very great, and his luck as a governor proverbial. He has a dislike to deeds of blood, but is a severe governor.[1]

And later:—

> There is no shadow of a doubt that the Zil will ultimately become Shah. He is a vigorous and fortunate governor, and his popularity is immense.[2]

I do not know whether, as a statement of facts or as a prediction of the future, these paragraphs are the more to be mistrusted. The Zil-es-Sultan was undoubtedly a ruler of vigour and determination. He held the reins in his own hand, and with a tight grip. Hating and despising the Mussulman clergy, he treated them with refreshing contempt. Never were the nomad tribesmen of the south-west provinces in a state of such acceptable subordination. But these merits, which were undeniable, and which are such as an Oriental respects, were compensated by faults of character and administration that in early days, when he was Governor at Shiraz, caused a popular outbreak which compelled him to fly, and in later times, at the very zenith of his power, were secretly preparing his downfall. Continued acts of violence and extortion on the part of officials to whose licence he appeared indifferent inflamed the public mind against his government. Several lamentable tragedies occurred during his administration—such, for instance, as the execution of the two Babi merchants in 1878[3] and the assassination of the Ilkhani of the

[1] *In the Land of the Lion and the Sun*, p. 366.
[2] *Persia as it is*, p. 176.
[3] *Vide* p. 500.



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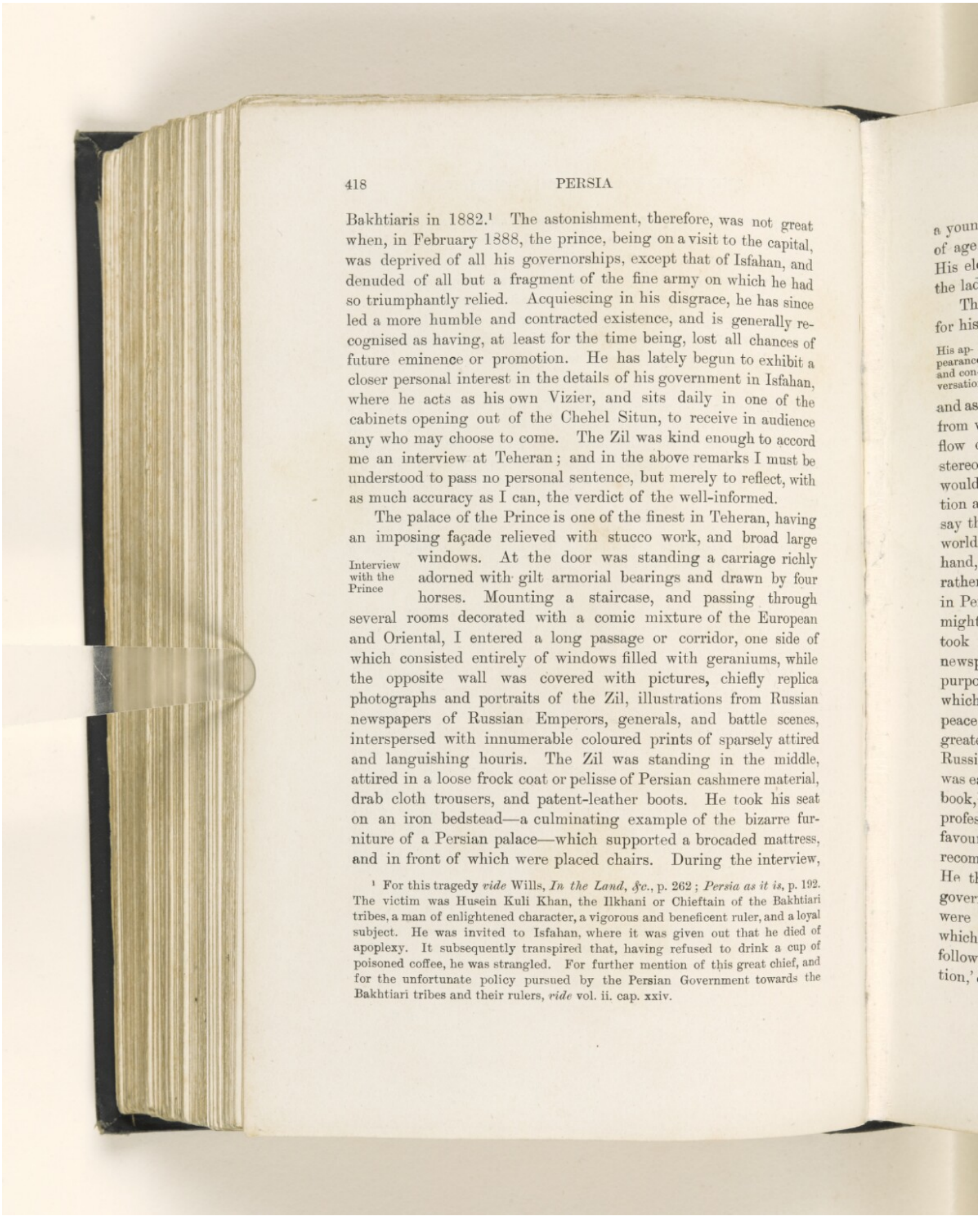



Bakhtiaris in 1882.[1] The astonishment, therefore, was not great when, in February 1888, the prince, being on a visit to the capital, was deprived of all his governorships, except that of Isfahan, and denuded of all but a fragment of the fine army on which he had so triumphantly relied. Acquiescing in his disgrace, he has since led a more humble and contracted existence, and is generally recognised as having, at least for the time being, lost all chances of future eminence or promotion. He has lately begun to exhibit a closer personal interest in the details of his government in Isfahan, where he acts as his own Vizier, and sits daily in one of the cabinets opening out of the Chehel Situn, to receive in audience any who may choose to come. The Zil was kind enough to accord me an interview at Teheran; and in the above remarks I must be understood to pass no personal sentence, but merely to reflect, with as much accuracy as I can, the verdict of the well-informed.

Interview with the Prince

The palace of the Prince is one of the finest in Teheran, having an imposing façade relieved with stucco work, and broad large windows. At the door was standing a carriage richly adorned with gilt armorial bearings and drawn by four horses. Mounting a staircase, and passing through several rooms decorated with a comic mixture of the European and Oriental, I entered a long passage or corridor, one side of which consisted entirely of windows filled with geraniums, while the opposite wall was covered with pictures, chiefly replica photographs and portraits of the Zil, illustrations from Russian newspapers of Russian Emperors, generals, and battle scenes, interspersed with innumerable coloured prints of sparsely attired and languishing houris. The Zil was standing in the middle, attired in a loose frock coat or pelisse of Persian cashmere material, drab cloth trousers, and patent-leather boots. He took his seat on an iron bedstead—a culminating example of the bizarre furniture of a Persian palace—which supported a brocaded mattress, and in front of which were placed chairs. During the interview,

[1] For this tragedy *vide* Wills, *In the Land, &c.*, p. 262; *Persia as it is*, p. 192. The victim was Husein Kuli Khan, the Ilkhani or Chieftain of the Bakhtiari tribes, a man of enlightened character, a vigorous and beneficent ruler, and a loyal subject. He was invited to Isfahan, where it was given out that he died of apoplexy. It subsequently transpired that, having refused to drink a cup of poisoned coffee, he was strangled. For further mention of this great chief, and for the unfortunate policy pursued by the Persian Government towards the Bakhtiari tribes and their rulers, *vide* vol. ii. cap. xxiv.

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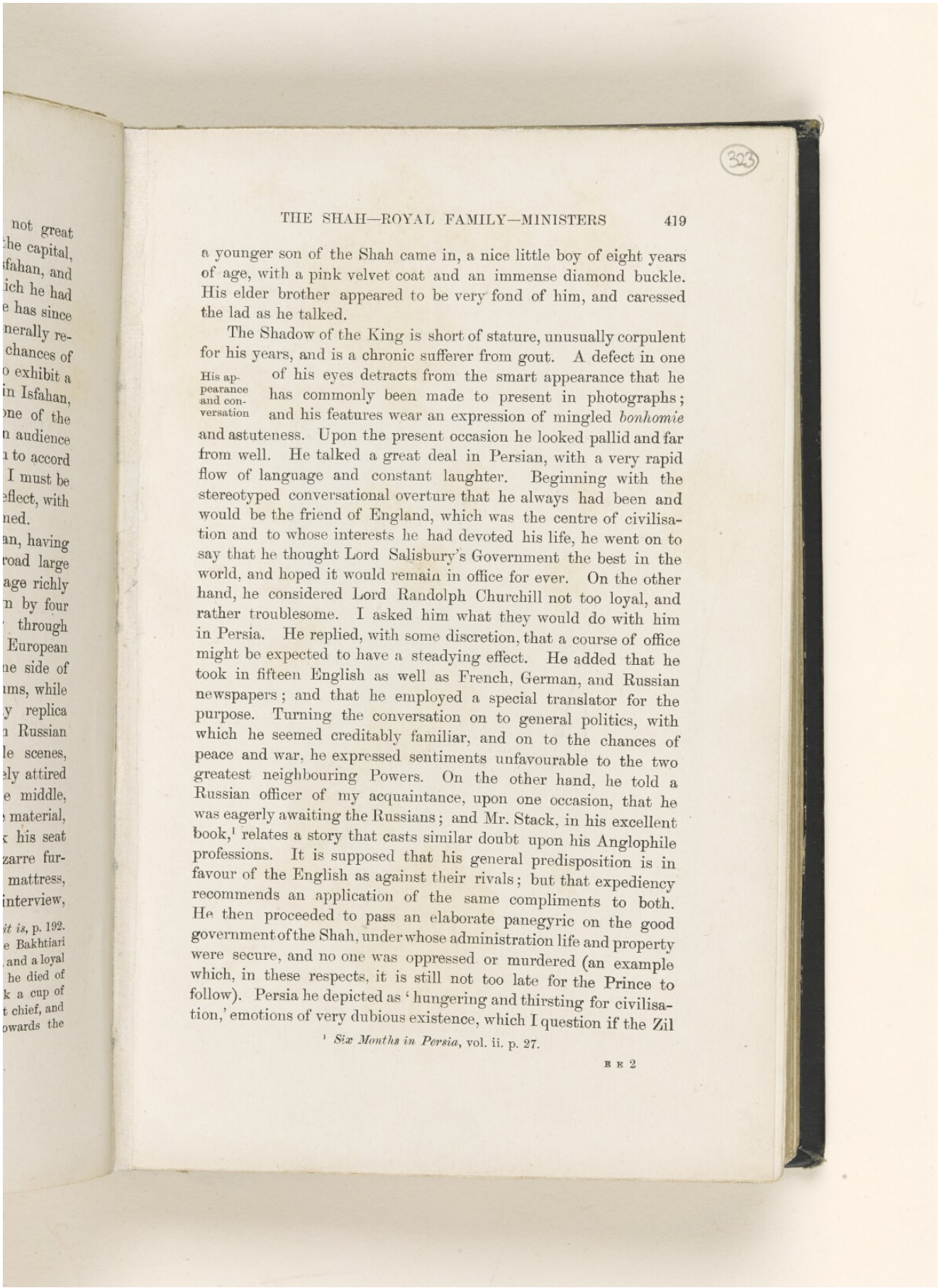

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a younger son of the Shah came in, a nice little boy of eight years of age, with a pink velvet coat and an immense diamond buckle. His elder brother appeared to be very fond of him, and caressed the lad as he talked.

The Shadow of the King is short of stature, unusually corpulent for his years, and is a chronic sufferer from gout. A defect in one of his eyes detracts from the smart appearance that he has commonly been made to present in photographs; and his features wear an expression of mingled *bonhomie* and astuteness. Upon the present occasion he looked pallid and far from well. He talked a great deal in Persian, with a very rapid flow of language and constant laughter. Beginning with the stereotyped conversational overture that he always had been and would be the friend of England, which was the centre of civilisation and to whose interests he had devoted his life, he went on to say that he thought Lord Salisbury's Government the best in the world, and hoped it would remain in office for ever. On the other hand, he considered Lord Randolph Churchill not too loyal, and rather troublesome. I asked him what they would do with him in Persia. He replied, with some discretion, that a course of office might be expected to have a steadying effect. He added that he took in fifteen English as well as French, German, and Russian newspapers; and that he employed a special translator for the purpose. Turning the conversation on to general politics, with which he seemed creditably familiar, and on to the chances of peace and war, he expressed sentiments unfavourable to the two greatest neighbouring Powers. On the other hand, he told a Russian officer of my acquaintance, upon one occasion, that he was eagerly awaiting the Russians; and Mr. Stack, in his excellent book,[1] relates a story that casts similar doubt upon his Anglophile professions. It is supposed that his general predisposition is in favour of the English as against their rivals; but that expediency recommends an application of the same compliments to both. He then proceeded to pass an elaborate panegyric on the good government of the Shah, under whose administration life and property were secure, and no one was oppressed or murdered (an example which, in these respects, it is still not too late for the Prince to follow). Persia he depicted as 'hungering and thirsting for civilisation,' emotions of very dubious existence, which I question if the Zil

His appearance and conversation

[1] *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 27.



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would lift a little finger to appease. He added what was true, that he had come to Teheran in order to reingratiate himself with the Shah, to whom he had brought a fine present of money and horses. The attempt was so far successful—the prince having an alleged enemy in the ruling Grand Vizier, the Amin-es-Sultan —that the governments of Irak and Yezd were added to that of Isfahan. In the Fortune's wheel of Oriental politics, the degraded of one day is the uppermost of the next, and no revolu-



THE ZIL-ES-SULTAN

tion is too astonishing to be possible. But whatever be the ups and downs of the Zil's future career, he can no longer be regarded as a competitor for the throne, or as a formidable factor in the political future of Persia. It should be added that the prince shares to the full the masculine tastes of his family, being a great sportsman and passionately addicted to the saddle and the chase. His first wife died thirteen years ago ; and his eldest son, the Jelal-ed-Dowleh, who, during the Zil's period of grandeur, ruled as deputy

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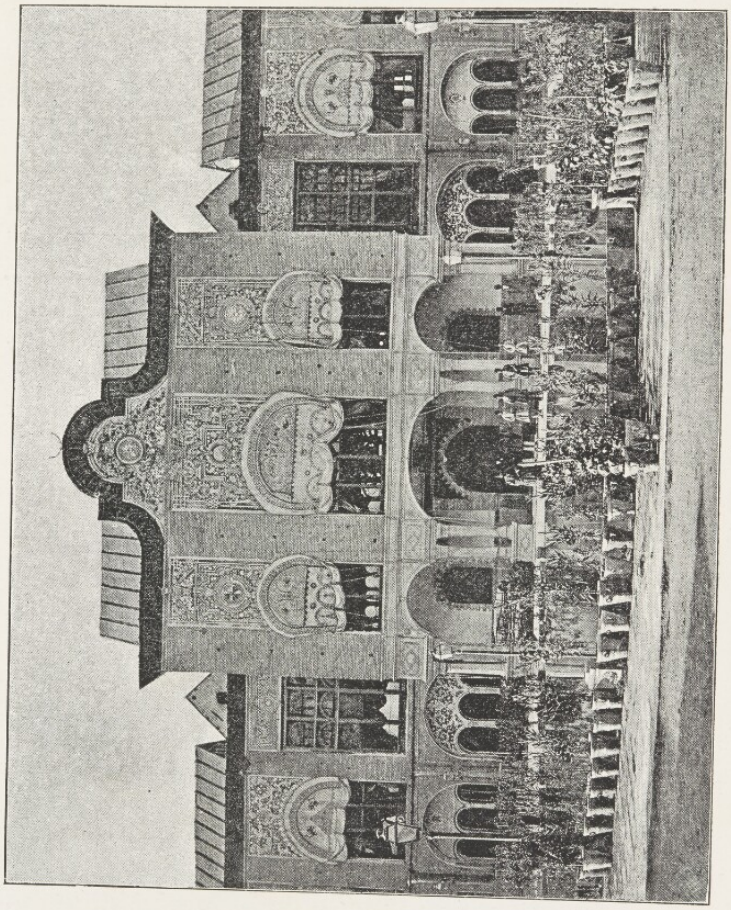
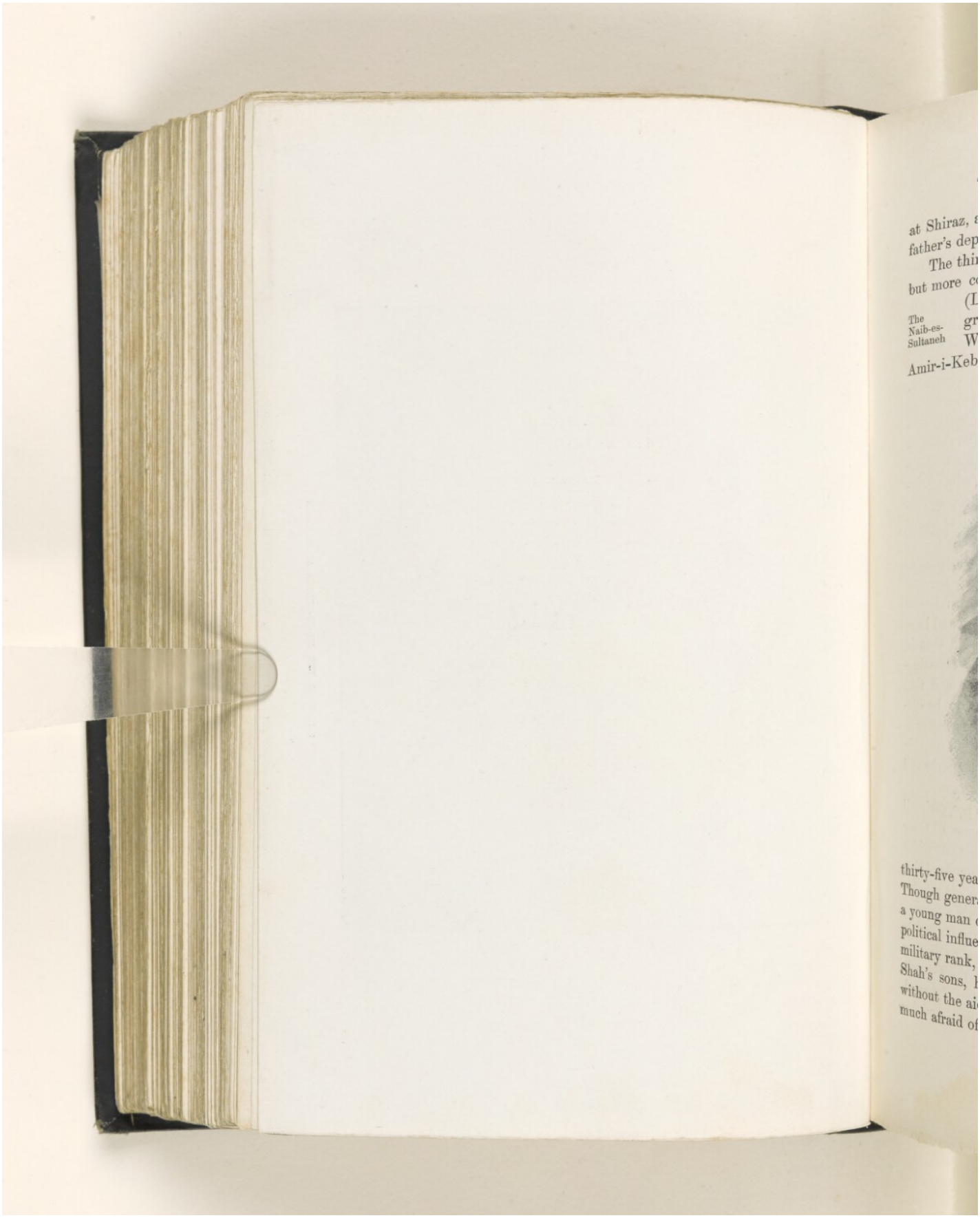


PALACE OF THE ZIL-ES-SULTAN AT TEHERAN



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at Shiraz, and was, in 1890, transferred to Yezd, now rules as his father's deputy in that city. The prince has also several daughters.

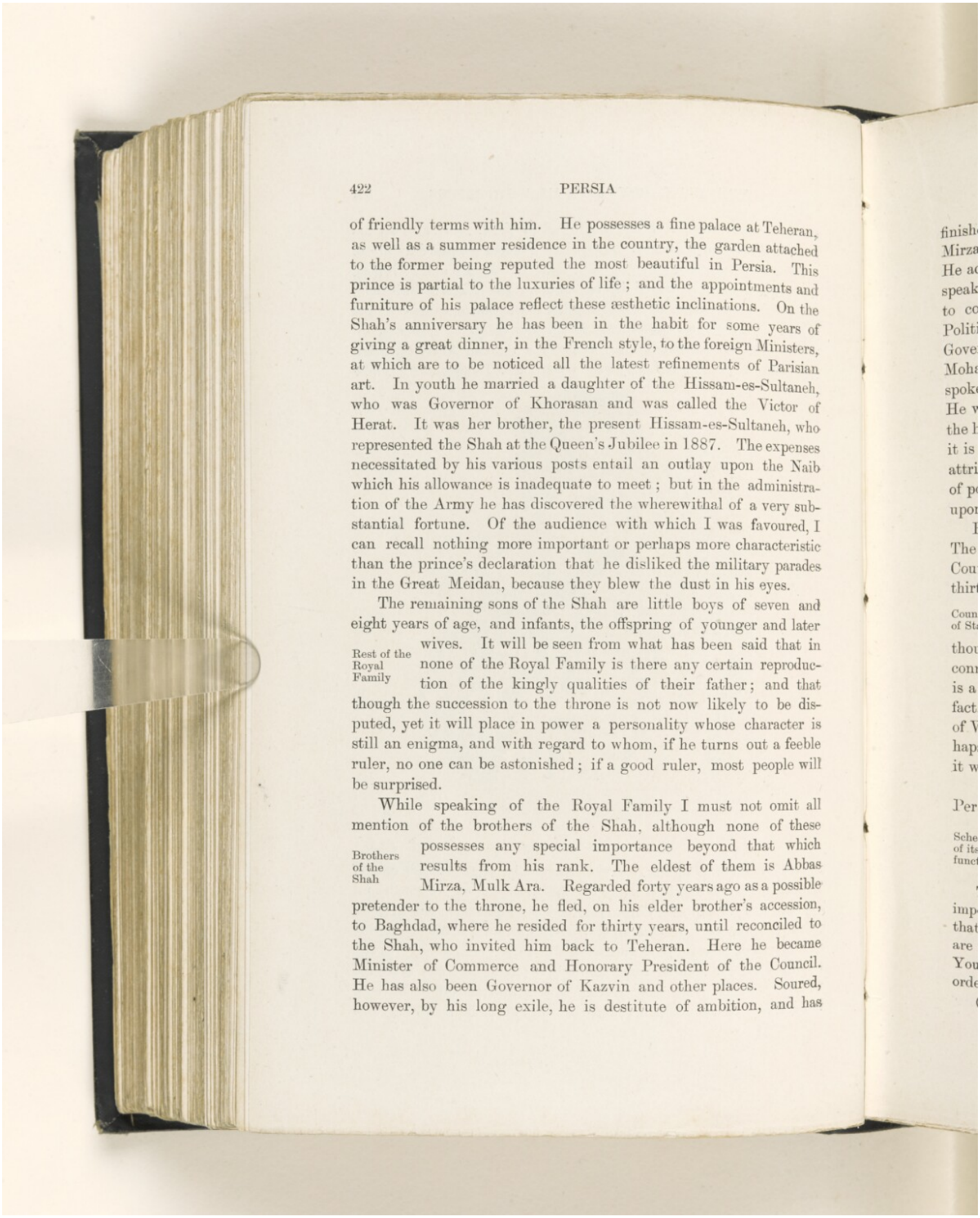
The Naib-es-Sultaneh

The third grown-up son of the Shah, by name Kamran Mirza, but more commonly called by his title of the Naib-es-Sultaneh, (Lieutenant of the Kingdom), with whom also I was granted an audience, holds the posts of Minister of War, Commander-in-Chief of the Persian Army (entitled Amir-i-Kebir, or Great Lord), and Governor of Teheran. He is now



THE NAIB-ES-SULTANEH

thirty-five years of age and is also unusually stout for his years. Though generally reputed to be the favourite son of the Shah and a young man of amiable disposition, he is deficient in capacity or political influence, and, except for the importance attaching to his military rank, fills no part on the public stage. Alone among the Shah's sons, he speaks very tolerable French, and can converse without the aid of an interpreter. He is understood to be very much afraid of his elder brother, the Zil, and to be on the reverse





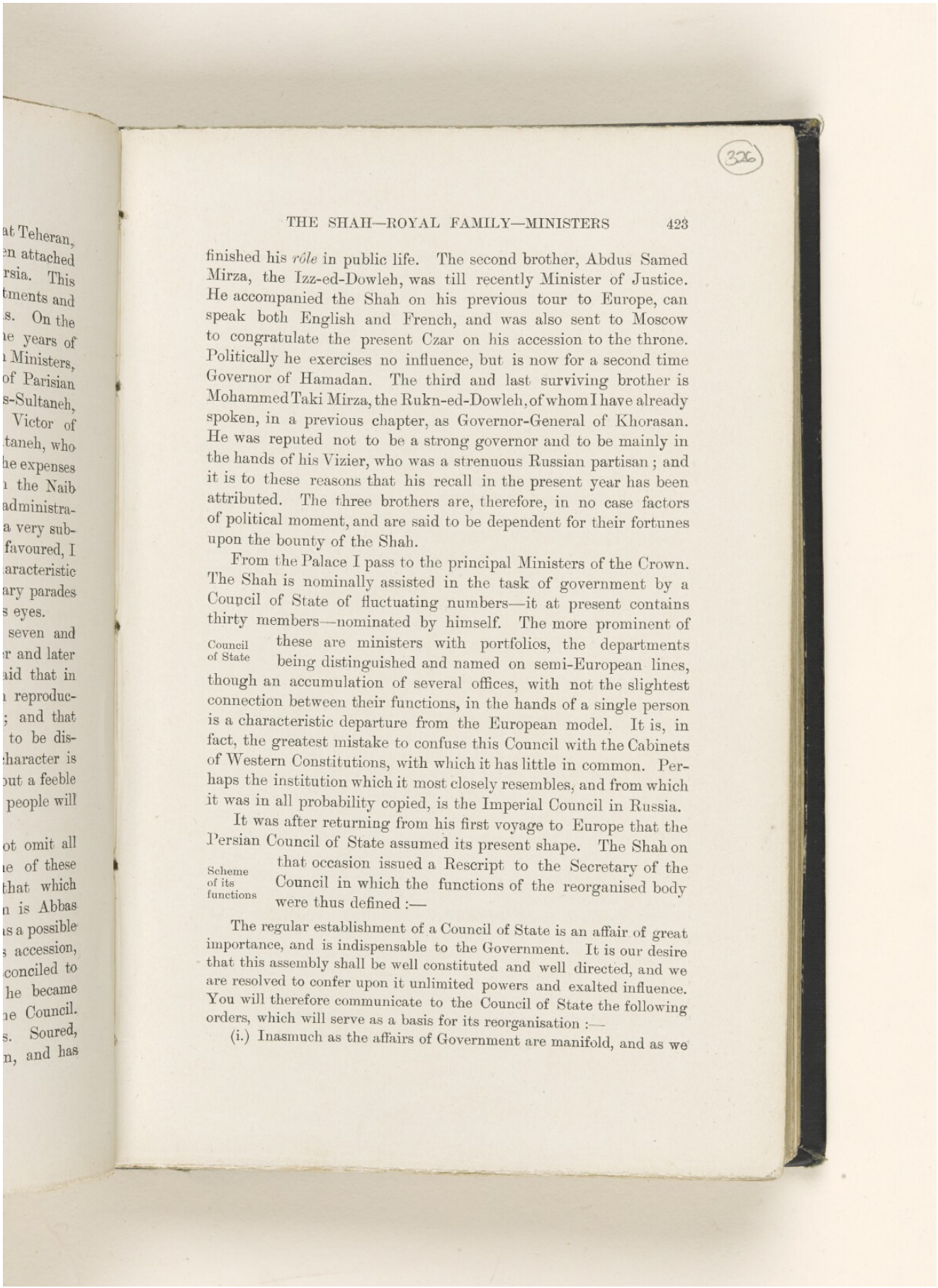
of friendly terms with him. He possesses a fine palace at Teheran, as well as a summer residence in the country, the garden attached to the former being reputed the most beautiful in Persia. This prince is partial to the luxuries of life; and the appointments and furniture of his palace reflect these æsthetic inclinations. On the Shah's anniversary he has been in the habit for some years of giving a great dinner, in the French style, to the foreign Ministers, at which are to be noticed all the latest refinements of Parisian art. In youth he married a daughter of the Hissam-es-Sultaneh, who was Governor of Khorasan and was called the Victor of Herat. It was her brother, the present Hissam-es-Sultaneh, who represented the Shah at the Queen's Jubilee in 1887. The expenses necessitated by his various posts entail an outlay upon the Naib which his allowance is inadequate to meet; but in the administration of the Army he has discovered the wherewithal of a very substantial fortune. Of the audience with which I was favoured, I can recall nothing more important or perhaps more characteristic than the prince's declaration that he disliked the military parades in the Great Meidan, because they blew the dust in his eyes.

Rest of the Royal Family

The remaining sons of the Shah are little boys of seven and eight years of age, and infants, the offspring of younger and later wives. It will be seen from what has been said that in none of the Royal Family is there any certain reproduction of the kingly qualities of their father; and that though the succession to the throne is not now likely to be disputed, yet it will place in power a personality whose character is still an enigma, and with regard to whom, if he turns out a feeble ruler, no one can be astonished; if a good ruler, most people will be surprised.

Brothers of the Shah

While speaking of the Royal Family I must not omit all mention of the brothers of the Shah, although none of these possesses any special importance beyond that which results from his rank. The eldest of them is Abbas Mirza, Mulk Ara. Regarded forty years ago as a possible pretender to the throne, he fled, on his elder brother's accession, to Baghdad, where he resided for thirty years, until reconciled to the Shah, who invited him back to Teheran. Here he became Minister of Commerce and Honorary President of the Council. He has also been Governor of Kazvin and other places. Soured, however, by his long exile, he is destitute of ambition, and has





finished his *rôle* in public life. The second brother, Abdus Samed Mirza, the Izz-ed-Dowleh, was till recently Minister of Justice. He accompanied the Shah on his previous tour to Europe, can speak both English and French, and was also sent to Moscow to congratulate the present Czar on his accession to the throne. Politically he exercises no influence, but is now for a second time Governor of Hamadan. The third and last surviving brother is Mohammed Taki Mirza, the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, of whom I have already spoken, in a previous chapter, as Governor-General of Khorasan. He was reputed not to be a strong governor and to be mainly in the hands of his Vizier, who was a strenuous Russian partisan; and it is to these reasons that his recall in the present year has been attributed. The three brothers are, therefore, in no case factors of political moment, and are said to be dependent for their fortunes upon the bounty of the Shah.

From the Palace I pass to the principal Ministers of the Crown. The Shah is nominally assisted in the task of government by a Council of State of fluctuating numbers—it at present contains thirty members—nominated by himself. The more prominent of these are ministers with portfolios, the departments being distinguished and named on semi-European lines, though an accumulation of several offices, with not the slightest connection between their functions, in the hands of a single person is a characteristic departure from the European model. It is, in fact, the greatest mistake to confuse this Council with the Cabinets of Western Constitutions, with which it has little in common. Perhaps the institution which it most closely resembles, and from which it was in all probability copied, is the Imperial Council in Russia.

Council of State

It was after returning from his first voyage to Europe that the Persian Council of State assumed its present shape. The Shah on that occasion issued a Rescript to the Secretary of the Council in which the functions of the reorganised body were thus defined:—

Scheme of its functions

The regular establishment of a Council of State is an affair of great importance, and is indispensable to the Government. It is our desire that this assembly shall be well constituted and well directed, and we are resolved to confer upon it unlimited powers and exalted influence. You will therefore communicate to the Council of State the following orders, which will serve as a basis for its reorganisation:—

(i.) Inasmuch as the affairs of Government are manifold, and as we

are anxious that they shall be promptly examined, and that our decision shall be immediately executed, two meetings in the week are insufficient. The Council will therefore in future be convened three times in the week.

(ii.) The members of the Council will enjoy full liberty of speech. They must fear nothing, and must deliberate with the greatest impartiality. If one of their number, occupying an inferior position in rank, desires to make observations or criticisms upon the manner in which certain affairs of government have been conducted by the higher officials, the latter will have no right either to be angry or to complain; but they will be able to defend and to justify themselves by reasons and remarks offered in polite language.

(iii.) Every member of the Council, of whatever rank, may submit for discussion any project of merit or public utility.

(iv.) All business will be decided by the majority of votes. The decisions, inscribed upon parchment, will be signed by all the members. Those that are verbally given will have no effect unless they are written out and signed.

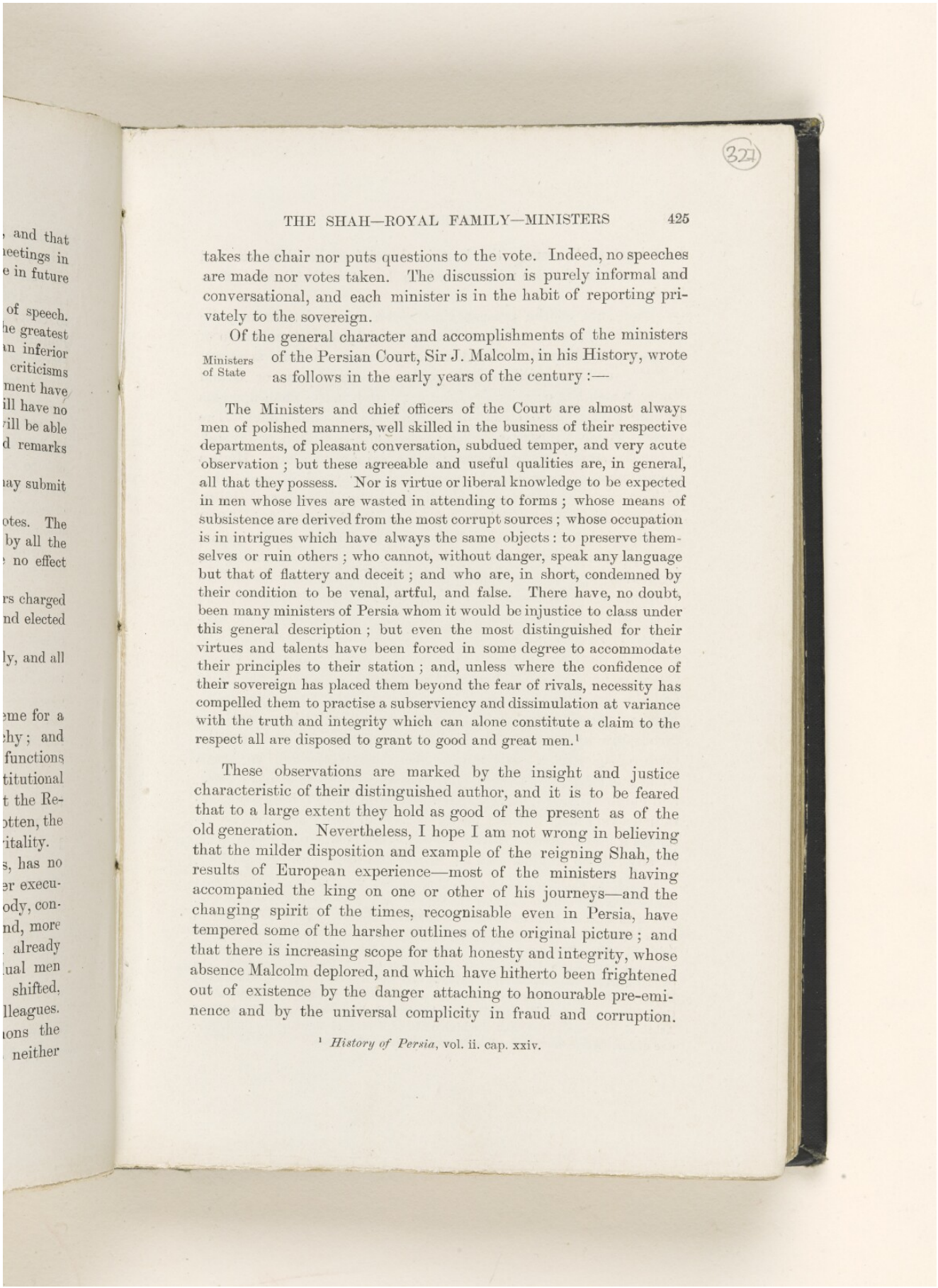
(v.) Henceforward all the provincial governors and officers charged with high functions by the State shall be nominated and elected by the Council of State.

(vi.) The meetings of the Council will take place regularly, and all public matters will be laid before them.

This document possesses undeniable merits as a scheme for a powerful Cabinet of advice, in a constitutional monarchy; and might supply a very respectable charter of the rights of functions of such a body. But Persia is very far from being a constitutional monarchy, and accordingly it is not surprising to find that the Rescript has been either tacitly ignored or diplomatically forgotten, the fifth article in particular never having shown a spark of vitality.

Present condition

The Persian Council of State, as it at present exists, has no ministerial responsibility and no collective authority, either executive or legislative. It is a purely consultative body, convened sometimes to advise the Shah beforehand, more commonly to discuss the fulfilment of his orders when already delivered. Its sole executive power is that of the individual men composing it, who are the Shah's servants, and can be shifted, promoted, or dismissed without any relation to their colleagues. There is a titular President of the Council who summons the meetings, but has no other presidential functions. He neither





takes the chair nor puts questions to the vote. Indeed, no speeches are made nor votes taken. The discussion is purely informal and conversational, and each minister is in the habit of reporting privately to the sovereign.

Ministers of State

Of the general character and accomplishments of the ministers of the Persian Court, Sir J. Malcolm, in his History, wrote as follows in the early years of the century :—

> The Ministers and chief officers of the Court are almost always men of polished manners, well skilled in the business of their respective departments, of pleasant conversation, subdued temper, and very acute observation ; but these agreeable and useful qualities are, in general, all that they possess. Nor is virtue or liberal knowledge to be expected in men whose lives are wasted in attending to forms ; whose means of subsistence are derived from the most corrupt sources ; whose occupation is in intrigues which have always the same objects : to preserve themselves or ruin others ; who cannot, without danger, speak any language but that of flattery and deceit ; and who are, in short, condemned by their condition to be venal, artful, and false. There have, no doubt, been many ministers of Persia whom it would be injustice to class under this general description ; but even the most distinguished for their virtues and talents have been forced in some degree to accommodate their principles to their station ; and, unless where the confidence of their sovereign has placed them beyond the fear of rivals, necessity has compelled them to practise a subserviency and dissimulation at variance with the truth and integrity which can alone constitute a claim to the respect all are disposed to grant to good and great men.[1]

These observations are marked by the insight and justice characteristic of their distinguished author, and it is to be feared that to a large extent they hold as good of the present as of the old generation. Nevertheless, I hope I am not wrong in believing that the milder disposition and example of the reigning Shah, the results of European experience—most of the ministers having accompanied the king on one or other of his journeys—and the changing spirit of the times, recognisable even in Persia, have tempered some of the harsher outlines of the original picture ; and that there is increasing scope for that honesty and integrity, whose absence Malcolm deplored, and which have hitherto been frightened out of existence by the danger attaching to honourable pre-eminence and by the universal complicity in fraud and corruption.

[1] *History of Persia*, vol. ii. cap. xxiv.

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I at least shall assume the best in describing the character and conversations of those ministers whom I met in England and at Teheran.

The Amin-es-Sultan

There are at the present time seven ministers who may be described as possessing portfolios, the division or concentration of which will strike European readers as both arbitrary and eccentric. The rank of Sadr Azem, or Grand Vizier, which has occasionally been conferred by the Shah upon his leading adviser, is not strictly now enjoyed by any individual.[1] The present Prime Minister is known as the Amin-es-Sultan, or Trusted of the Sovereign, his name being Mirza Ali Askar Khan. He is a young man of now (1891) only thirty-four years of age, who, without the advantages of noble birth, has by his dash and ability won for himself the foremost position in Persia, and in 1889 accompanied the Shah on his European tour as the most important personage after his royal master. The grandson of an Armenian, and the son of an official who was originally *abdar* (the 'cup-bearer' of Nehemiah i. 11; the 'chief butler' of Genesis xl. 1) to the Shah on his travelling and hunting excursions, but who subsequently rose to high favour and office, the Amin-es-Sultan now unites in his own person the Ministries of the Interior, Court, Customs, and Treasury, besides being Administrator of the Mint and Governor of the Persian Gulf Ports. He is also practically Foreign Minister as well. I met him several times, and was favourably impressed with his intelligence, energy, and seeming force of character. His appearance is prepossessing, he has a frank and attractive manner, and he talks with great ease, rapidity, and emphasis. Having, like all Persian officials of high rank, attained a very large fortune, partly inherited, partly acquired, he inhabits a fine residence in the capital. He makes no concealment, at any rate to English ears, of liberal and Anglophile sympathies,

[1] Upon the Shah's accession he made Mirza Taki Khan his First Minister; but the latter is said to have declined the title of Sadr Azem, and to have been content with that of Amir-i-Nizam, or Commander-in-Chief. After his murder in 1852, Mirza Agha Khan was appointed Sadr Azem, a title and position which he held till 1858. The Shah did not again confer the rank until 1871, when the recipient was Mirza Husein Khan, the author of the Reuter concession. An official intrigue caused his fall in 1873, but he was afterwards made Minister of Foreign Affairs, and received the title of Sipah Salar, another synonym for Commander-in-Chief. Since 1873 there has been but one Sadr Azem, Mirza Yusuf Ashtiani, who was raised from the high office of Mustofi-el-Mamalek to the higher one of Sadr Azem, and died while in occupation of that post.

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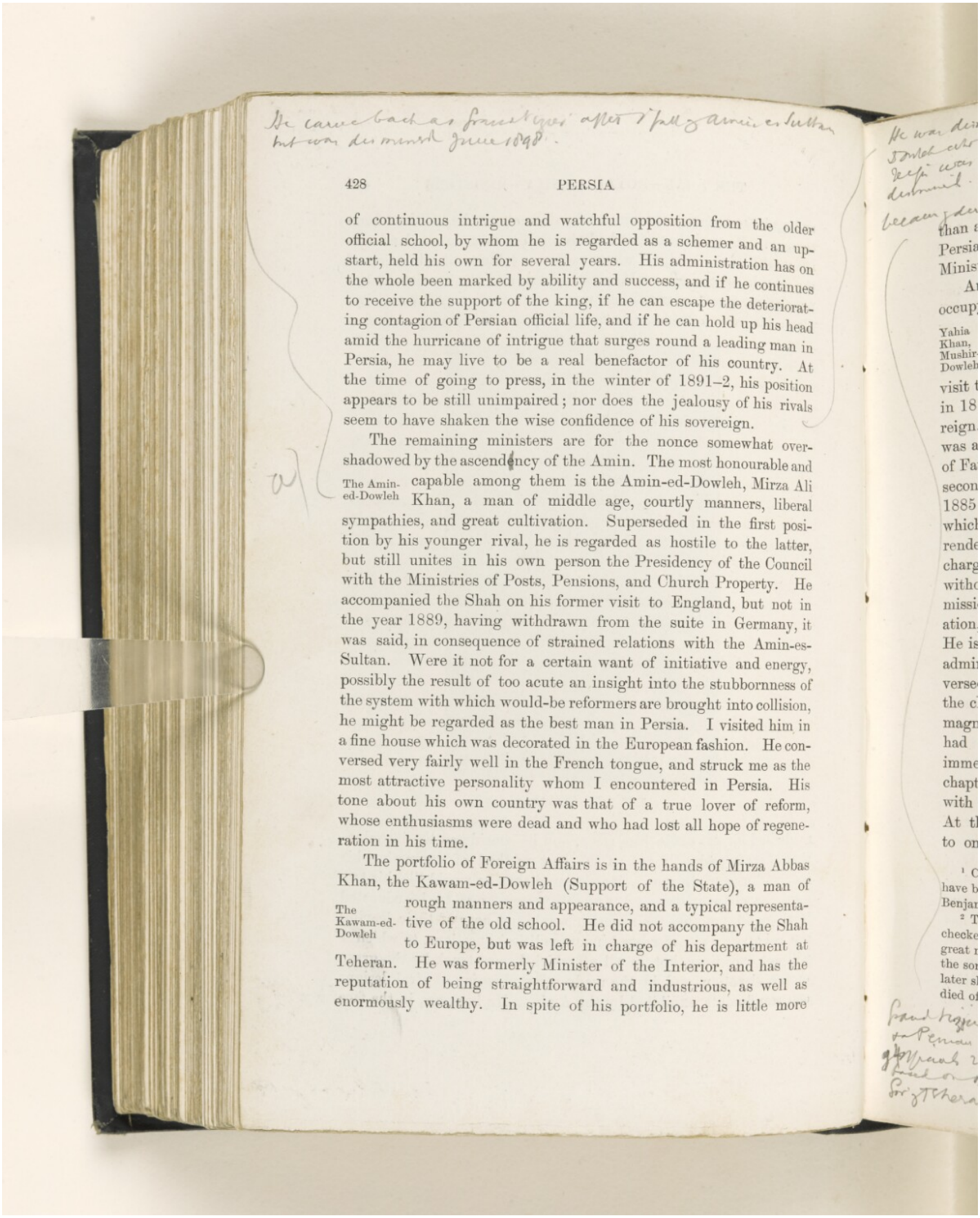
and spoke to me with the utmost freedom about the politics of his country. He said that what had struck him most in England was the wealth of the nobility, where each was a king, the education of the people, where all could philosophise, and the density of the population, where every village was a town and every town a city. Upon his return to his native country, the sight of the Persian



THE AMIN-ES-SULTAN

roads had almost made him weep, and he considered the introduction of roads and railroads as the best method of expressing his indebtedness to Europe. He declared that he would like his two sons, the eldest of whom was twelve years of age, to be educated in England, but that their mother would not hear of their leaving the country. We discussed many political questions, to which I will not here refer, but in all of which I was struck by the grasp of the situation and by the ready comprehension of rival designs and standpoints exhibited by the Amin. He has now, in the face



He came back as Grand Vizier after Zill-es-Sultan but was dismissed June 1898.



of continuous intrigue and watchful opposition from the older official school, by whom he is regarded as a schemer and an upstart, held his own for several years. His administration has on the whole been marked by ability and success, and if he continues to receive the support of the king, if he can escape the deteriorating contagion of Persian official life, and if he can hold up his head amid the hurricane of intrigue that surges round a leading man in Persia, he may live to be a real benefactor of his country. At the time of going to press, in the winter of 1891–2, his position appears to be still unimpaired; nor does the jealousy of his rivals seem to have shaken the wise confidence of his sovereign.

The remaining ministers are for the nonce somewhat overshadowed by the ascendency of the Amin. The most honourable and capable among them is the Amin-ed-Dowleh, Mirza Ali Khan, a man of middle age, courtly manners, liberal sympathies, and great cultivation. Superseded in the first position by his younger rival, he is regarded as hostile to the latter, but still unites in his own person the Presidency of the Council with the Ministries of Posts, Pensions, and Church Property. He accompanied the Shah on his former visit to England, but not in the year 1889, having withdrawn from the suite in Germany, it was said, in consequence of strained relations with the Amin-es-Sultan. Were it not for a certain want of initiative and energy, possibly the result of too acute an insight into the stubbornness of the system with which would-be reformers are brought into collision, he might be regarded as the best man in Persia. I visited him in a fine house which was decorated in the European fashion. He conversed very fairly well in the French tongue, and struck me as the most attractive personality whom I encountered in Persia. His tone about his own country was that of a true lover of reform, whose enthusiasms were dead and who had lost all hope of regeneration in his time.

The Amin-ed-Dowleh

The portfolio of Foreign Affairs is in the hands of Mirza Abbas Khan, the Kawam-ed-Dowleh (Support of the State), a man of rough manners and appearance, and a typical representative of the old school. He did not accompany the Shah to Europe, but was left in charge of his department at Teheran. He was formerly Minister of the Interior, and has the reputation of being straightforward and industrious, as well as enormously wealthy. In spite of his portfolio, he is little more

The Kawam-ed-Dowleh

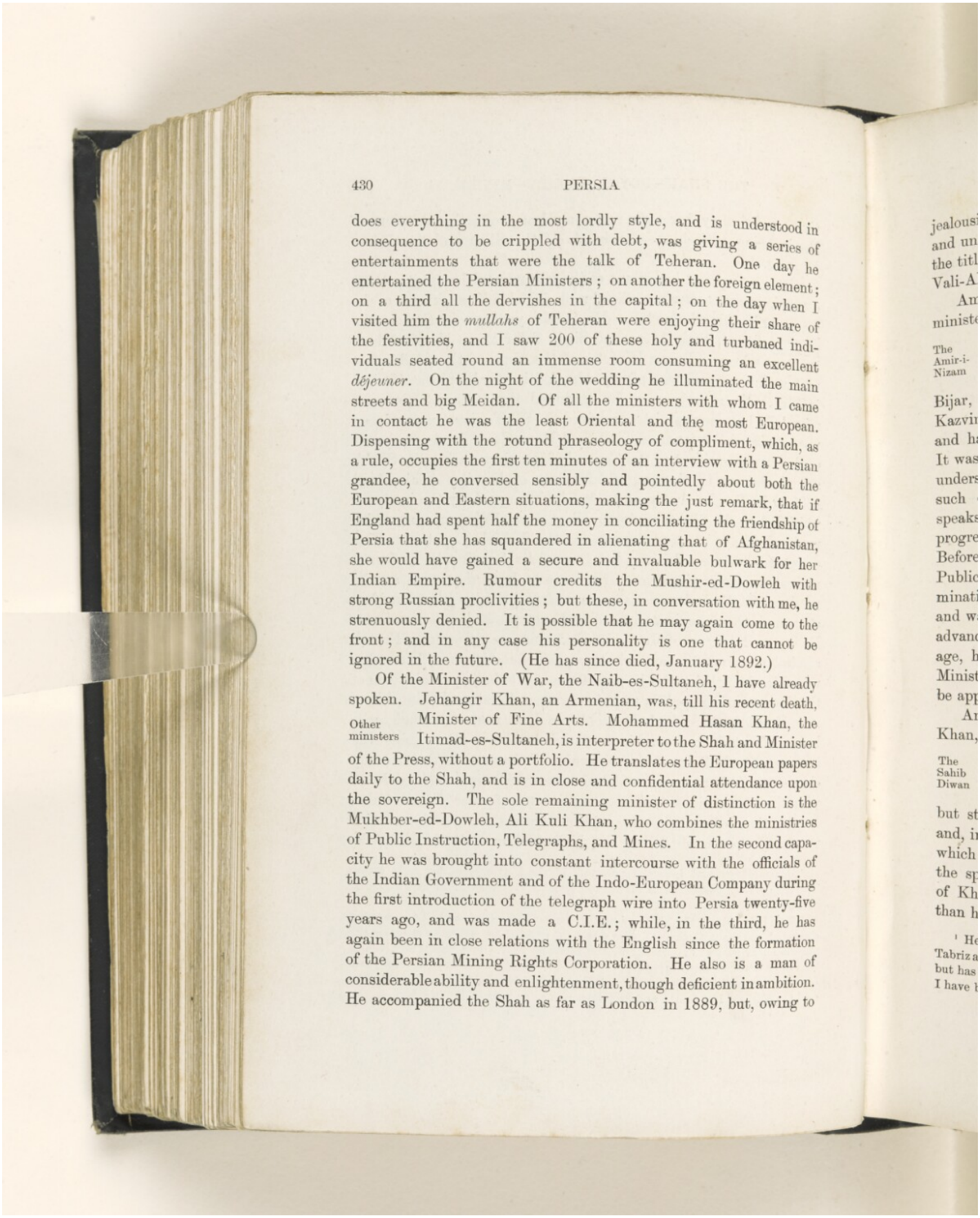
than a political cypher; the real control of the foreign relations of Persia being entirely in the hands of the Shah and the Prime Minister.

Among the most important of the ministers, although at present occupying only a secondary official rank, is Yahia Khan, known as the Mushir-ed-Dowleh. He is the younger brother of the famous Sadr Azem and Sipah Salar Mirza Husein Khan, who was Prime Minister at the time of the Shah's first visit to Europe, and who afterwards died in semi-exile at Meshed in 1881. From early years he attracted the favour of his sovereign.[1] He became a minister, received the Shah's sister in marriage,[2] was appointed Governor of Gilan and Mazanderan, and afterwards of Fars, was President of the Council of Regency during the Shah's second absence in Europe, and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1885 to 1887. In that year he forfeited the post by the intrigues which led to the flight of Ayub Khan from Teheran, and which rendered him a *persona ingrata* to the British Legation. This charge he resolutely denies; but it is to be feared that it is not without serious justification. He has also been sent on a special mission to St. Petersburg, where he was treated with great consideration, and where he is supposed to have imbibed Russian ideas. He is now Minister of Justice and Commerce. Speaking French admirably, the result of an early European education, and thoroughly versed in the politics and habits of the West, he is probably one of the cleverest of the public men in modern Persia. He inhabits a magnificent house, which he holds no loan from the Shah, who had confiscated it from his deceased brother. It adjoins the immense Sipah Salar Mosque, which I have described in my chapter on Teheran, and which he is completing in accordance with the instructions and bequests of the former Sipah Salar. At the time of my visit his eldest son was about to be married to one of the daughters of the Vali-Ahd, and the Mushir, who

Yahia Khan, Mushir-ed-Dowleh

[1] Contradictory and incorrect accounts of the incidents of his early career have been given by Mme. Carla Serena (*Hommes et Choses en Perse*, cap. xx.), and Benjamin, p. 225.

[2] This lady, who is the Shah's sister by the same mother, has had a somewhat checkered matrimonial career. She was first wedded to Mirza Taki Khan, the great minister who was murdered by the Shah in 1852. She was then given to the son of his successor in that post. Upon his disgrace and exile several years later she was again set free, and on this occasion married her uncle, who soon died of cholera. Her fourth and final destiny was as wife of Yahia Khan.





does everything in the most lordly style, and is understood in consequence to be crippled with debt, was giving a series of entertainments that were the talk of Teheran. One day he entertained the Persian Ministers; on another the foreign element; on a third all the dervishes in the capital; on the day when I visited him the *mullahs* of Teheran were enjoying their share of the festivities, and I saw 200 of these holy and turbaned individuals seated round an immense room consuming an excellent *déjeuner*. On the night of the wedding he illuminated the main streets and big Meidan. Of all the ministers with whom I came in contact he was the least Oriental and the most European. Dispensing with the rotund phraseology of compliment, which, as a rule, occupies the first ten minutes of an interview with a Persian grandee, he conversed sensibly and pointedly about both the European and Eastern situations, making the just remark, that if England had spent half the money in conciliating the friendship of Persia that she has squandered in alienating that of Afghanistan, she would have gained a secure and invaluable bulwark for her Indian Empire. Rumour credits the Mushir-ed-Dowleh with strong Russian proclivities; but these, in conversation with me, he strenuously denied. It is possible that he may again come to the front; and in any case his personality is one that cannot be ignored in the future. (He has since died, January 1892.)

Other ministers

Of the Minister of War, the Naib-es-Sultaneh, I have already spoken. Jehangir Khan, an Armenian, was, till his recent death, Minister of Fine Arts. Mohammed Hasan Khan, the Itimad-es-Sultaneh, is interpreter to the Shah and Minister of the Press, without a portfolio. He translates the European papers daily to the Shah, and is in close and confidential attendance upon the sovereign. The sole remaining minister of distinction is the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh, Ali Kuli Khan, who combines the ministries of Public Instruction, Telegraphs, and Mines. In the second capacity he was brought into constant intercourse with the officials of the Indian Government and of the Indo-European Company during the first introduction of the telegraph wire into Persia twenty-five years ago, and was made a C.I.E.; while, in the third, he has again been in close relations with the English since the formation of the Persian Mining Rights Corporation. He also is a man of considerable ability and enlightenment, though deficient in ambition. He accompanied the Shah as far as London in 1889, but, owing to

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jealousies among the suite, obtained permission to retire from there and undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca. One of his sons, who bears the title of the Sani-ed-Dowleh, is married to a daughter of the Vali-Ahd.

Among other prominent personages, though not actually a minister of the Crown, must be mentioned the Amir-i-Nizam, Hasan Ali Khan, who till lately was Vizier to the Heir Apparent in Azerbaijan, and was for years the real governor of that province. This remarkable man is a native of Bijar, a small town in the Gerrus district between Sinna and Kazvin. The country of Bijar, where his family have lived long and have some influence, is Kurdish, though they are Persians. It was no doubt owing to these patrimonial surroundings that he understood the Kurds so well and kept them, on the whole, in such excellent order. Formerly Persian Minister in Paris, he speaks French with perfect facility and is imbued with Western and progressive ideas. He has also been several times in London. Before being raised to his recent high office he was Minister of Public Works in Teheran. A man of very strong will and determination, he reduced turbulence in Azerbaijan to a minimum, and was the best provincial administrator in Persia. Though far advanced in years, being now seventy-five or seventy-six years of age, he is hale and robust, is frequently spoken of as a likely Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in a new reign would possibly be appointed Grand Vizier to the sovereign.[1]

The Amir-i-Nizam

Another powerful individual is the Sahib Diwan, Fathullah Khan, a wealthy nobleman of Shiraz, who has been both Vizier to the Vali-Ahd at Tabriz, and Governor of Isfahan and Fars, and who formerly held office in the capital. His administration at Shiraz was reported to be hard and avaricious, but strong. He is a man of enlightened views and intelligence, and, in spite of his years, is said to covet the post of First Minister, which he sees with reluctance in its present occupant's hands. In the spring of the present year he was appointed Governor-General of Khorasan, where it is to be hoped that he will prove less pliant than his predecessor.

The Sahib Diwan

[1] He was recalled by the Shah (Sept. 1891) on account of the disturbances in Tabriz arising out of the Tobacco Concession, which he is alleged to have fomented; but has since been appointed Governor of Kermanshah and Persian Kurdistan. I have before alluded to his unconcealed Russian proclivities.

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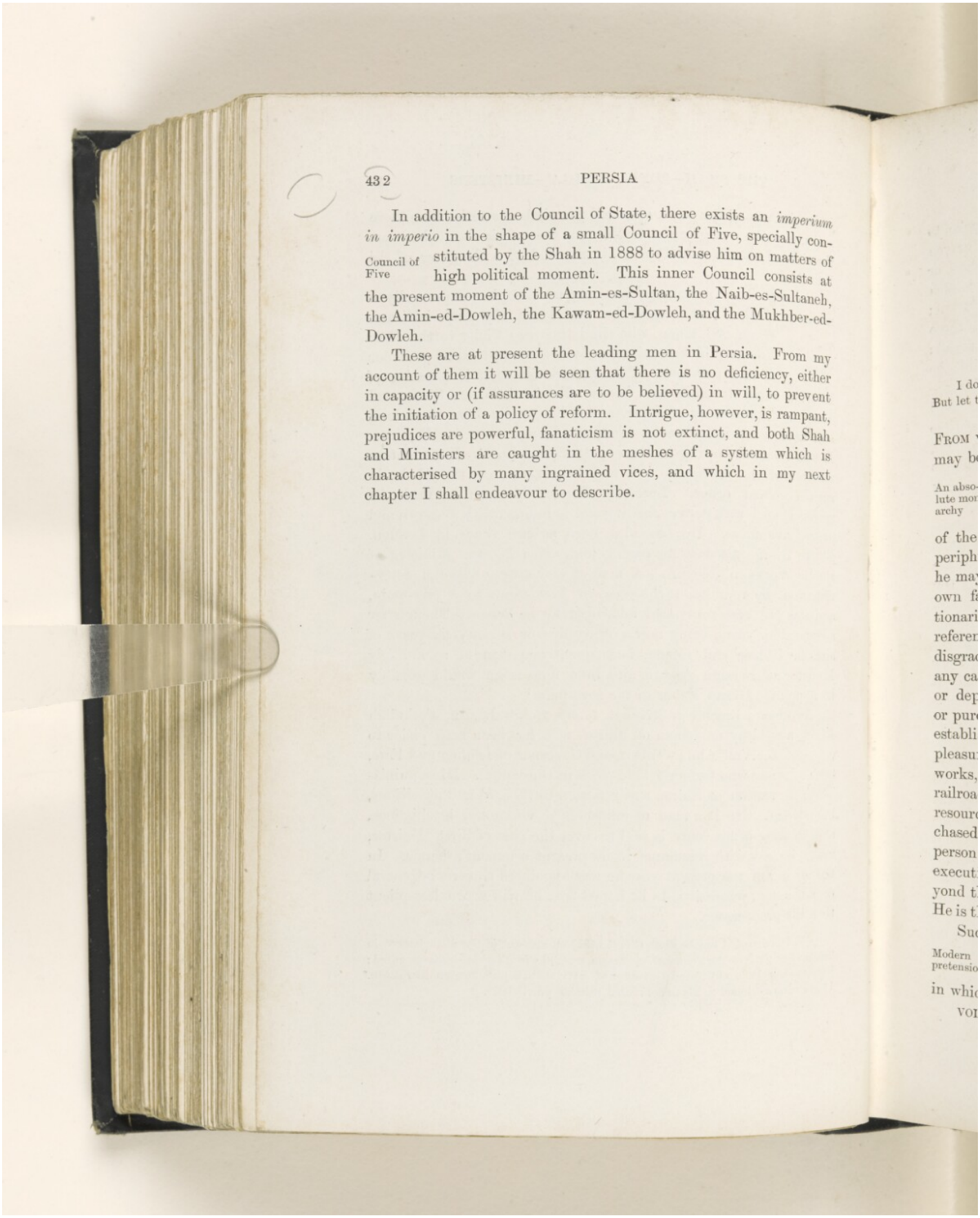
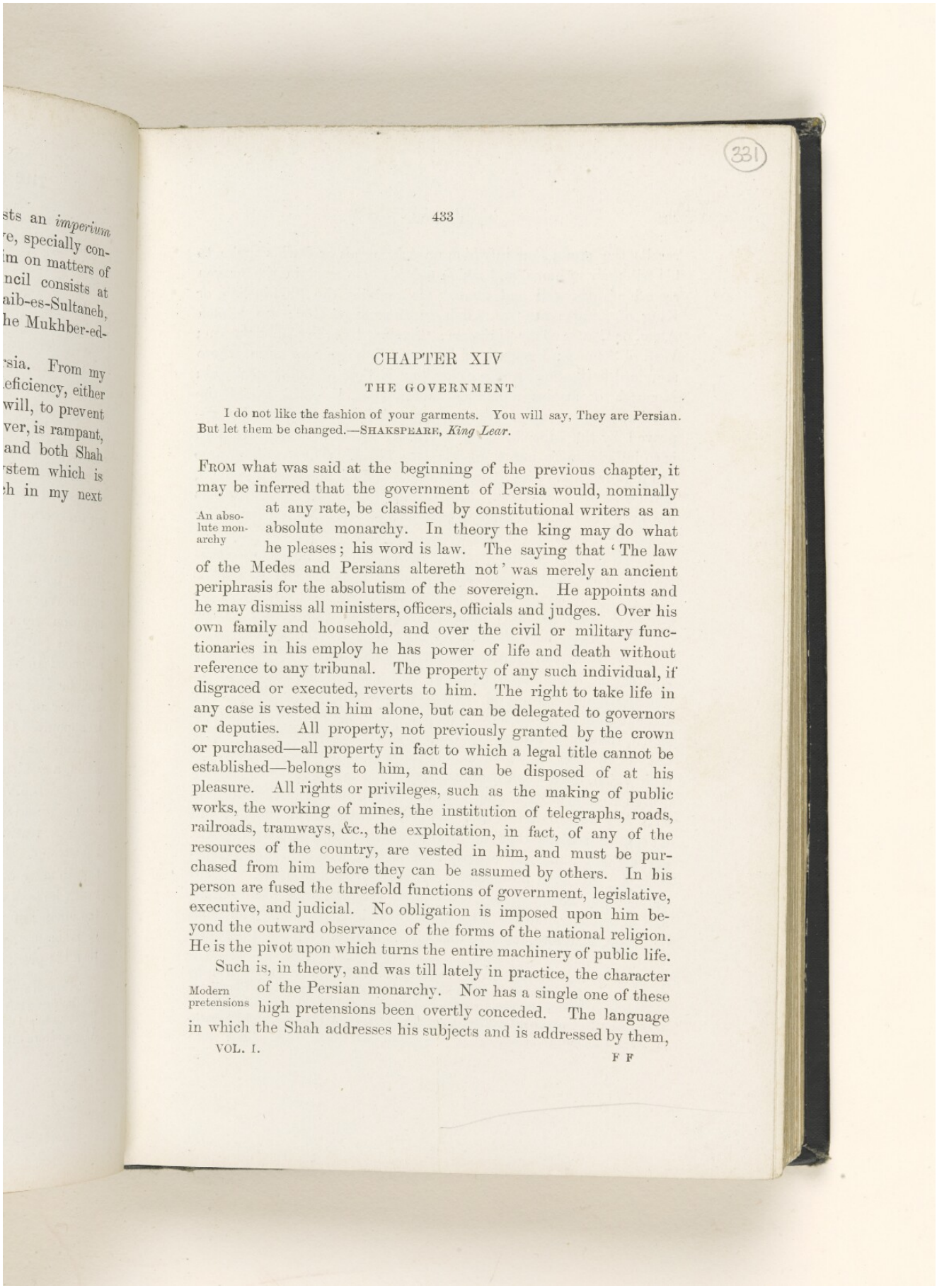




In addition to the Council of State, there exists an *imperium in imperio* in the shape of a small Council of Five, specially constituted by the Shah in 1888 to advise him on matters of high political moment. This inner Council consists at the present moment of the Amin-es-Sultan, the Naib-es-Sultaneh, the Amin-ed-Dowleh, the Kawam-ed-Dowleh, and the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh.

Council of Five

These are at present the leading men in Persia. From my account of them it will be seen that there is no deficiency, either in capacity or (if assurances are to be believed) in will, to prevent the initiation of a policy of reform. Intrigue, however, is rampant, prejudices are powerful, fanaticism is not extinct, and both Shah and Ministers are caught in the meshes of a system which is characterised by many ingrained vices, and which in my next chapter I shall endeavour to describe.



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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GOVERNMENT

I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say, They are Persian. But let them be changed.—SHAKSPEARE, *King Lear*.

FROM what was said at the beginning of the previous chapter, it may be inferred that the government of Persia would, nominally at any rate, be classified by constitutional writers as an absolute monarchy. In theory the king may do what he pleases; his word is law. The saying that 'The law of the Medes and Persians altereth not' was merely an ancient periphrasis for the absolutism of the sovereign. He appoints and he may dismiss all ministers, officers, officials and judges. Over his own family and household, and over the civil or military functionaries in his employ he has power of life and death without reference to any tribunal. The property of any such individual, if disgraced or executed, reverts to him. The right to take life in any case is vested in him alone, but can be delegated to governors or deputies. All property, not previously granted by the crown or purchased—all property in fact to which a legal title cannot be established—belongs to him, and can be disposed of at his pleasure. All rights or privileges, such as the making of public works, the working of mines, the institution of telegraphs, roads, railroads, tramways, &c., the exploitation, in fact, of any of the resources of the country, are vested in him, and must be purchased from him before they can be assumed by others. In his person are fused the threefold functions of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. No obligation is imposed upon him beyond the outward observance of the forms of the national religion. He is the pivot upon which turns the entire machinery of public life.

An absolute monarchy

Such is, in theory, and was till lately in practice, the character of the Persian monarchy. Nor has a single one of these high pretensions been overtly conceded. The language in which the Shah addresses his subjects and is addressed by them,

Modern pretensions



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recalls the proud tone in which an Artaxerxes or Darius spoke to his tributary millions, and which may still be read in the graven record of rock-wall and tomb. He remains the Shahinshah, or King of Kings; the Zil Allah, or Shadow of God; the Kibleh Alem, or Centre of the Universe; 'Exalted like the planet Saturn; Well of Science; Footpath of Heaven; Sublime Sovereign, whose standard is the Sun, whose Splendour is that of the Firmament; Monarch of armies numerous as the stars.'[1] Still would the Persian subject endorse the precept of Sadi, that 'The vice approved by the king becomes a virtue; to seek opposite counsel is to imbrue one's hands in his own blood.' The march of time has imposed upon him neither religious council nor secular council, neither *ulema* nor senate. Elective and representative institutions have not yet intruded their irreverent features. No written check exists upon the royal prerogative.

Real curtailment of prerogative

And yet the power of the Persian king by no means corresponds to its arrogant definition, nor is it now equal to what it once was. In the first place, the Shah is no longer the religious head even of the Shiah community of the Mussulman world. At no time have the sovereigns of Persia enjoyed the spiritual supremacy that was conceded to the Khalifs of Baghdad, and that is still claimed for the Sultan of Constantinople. But the Sefavi monarchs, by virtue of their descent from a famous saint, who was himself a Seyid, or descendant of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, were invested with a semi-sacred character, to which alone can we attribute the passiveness with which, for a whole century, their subjects submitted to the rule of a succession of capricious and dissolute drunkards. Chardin says that they were regarded as vicars or successors of the Imams; and Kaempfer records that the water in which they had washed was deemed holy, and was eagerly sought after as a cure for all complaints. No such pretensions, however, have been made, or could be made, on behalf of any subsequent dynasty; least of all on behalf of a family like the Kajars, of Turkish extraction. The Shah of Persia, therefore, must be dissociated from any claims of personal

[1] *Vide* Fowler's *Three Years in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 12, for an enumeration of the Shah's titles. The name Shah is the Khshayathiya, or Khshatya, of the Cuneiform Inscriptions. From the same root, indicating pre-eminence, come Khshatrapa, *i.e.* Satrap, Khshayarsha, *i.e.* Xerxes, Arthkhshatra, *i.e.* Artaxerxes, and Khshathraputhra = Shaputra = Sapor.

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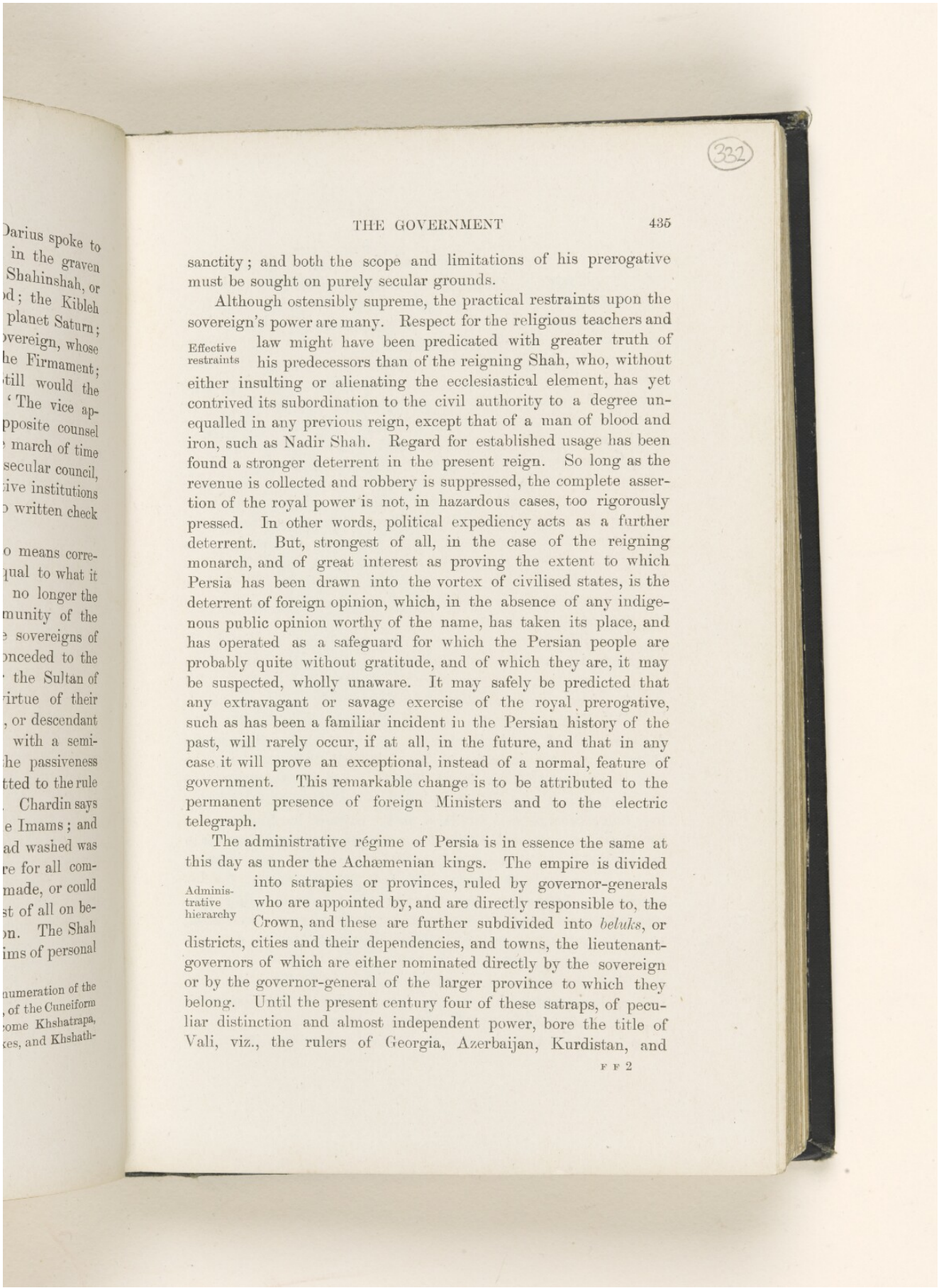



sanctity; and both the scope and limitations of his prerogative must be sought on purely secular grounds.

Effective restraints

Although ostensibly supreme, the practical restraints upon the sovereign's power are many. Respect for the religious teachers and law might have been predicated with greater truth of his predecessors than of the reigning Shah, who, without either insulting or alienating the ecclesiastical element, has yet contrived its subordination to the civil authority to a degree unequalled in any previous reign, except that of a man of blood and iron, such as Nadir Shah. Regard for established usage has been found a stronger deterrent in the present reign. So long as the revenue is collected and robbery is suppressed, the complete assertion of the royal power is not, in hazardous cases, too rigorously pressed. In other words, political expediency acts as a further deterrent. But, strongest of all, in the case of the reigning monarch, and of great interest as proving the extent to which Persia has been drawn into the vortex of civilised states, is the deterrent of foreign opinion, which, in the absence of any indigenous public opinion worthy of the name, has taken its place, and has operated as a safeguard for which the Persian people are probably quite without gratitude, and of which they are, it may be suspected, wholly unaware. It may safely be predicted that any extravagant or savage exercise of the royal prerogative, such as has been a familiar incident in the Persian history of the past, will rarely occur, if at all, in the future, and that in any case it will prove an exceptional, instead of a normal, feature of government. This remarkable change is to be attributed to the permanent presence of foreign Ministers and to the electric telegraph.

Administrative hierarchy

The administrative régime of Persia is in essence the same at this day as under the Achæmenian kings. The empire is divided into satrapies or provinces, ruled by governor-generals who are appointed by, and are directly responsible to, the Crown, and these are further subdivided into *beluks*, or districts, cities and their dependencies, and towns, the lieutenant-governors of which are either nominated directly by the sovereign or by the governor-general of the larger province to which they belong. Until the present century four of these satraps, of peculiar distinction and almost independent power, bore the title of Vali, viz., the rulers of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and



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Luristan. Of these, the last-named alone retains either the title or any shadow of independence. Governor-generals and lieutenant-governors are usually called *hakim*, the latter sometimes *naib-el-hukumah*. Under the governors are the *daroghah*, or head of police; the *kalantar*, or mayor of a city, and the *kedkhoda*, who is either the chief of a ward or parish if in a town, or the headman of a village. The principal governorships are conferred upon the king's sons, brothers, uncles, or relations, but to nothing like the intolerable and almost criminal extent that prevailed at the beginning of the century. The governor is now also, as a rule, resident in his province, instead of being an absentee at the capital. He is commonly assisted in the work of administration, and more especially in the fiscal side of government, by a vizier or minister. Among the nomad and military tribes a different system of appointments and titles prevails, the governors of the Kurdish, Bakhtiari, and other clans being known as *Ilkhani* and *Ilbegi*, and their subordinate chiefs as *khan*, *sheikh*, *tushmal*, &c., all of these being responsible for the collection of revenue to the governor of the province in which they reside.

Modifications of royal power

Ostensibly, in the creation of this governing hierarchy, the sovereign is absolute and supreme. Here again, however, in practice, very considerable checks are found to exist upon his prerogative. As I showed in my chapter upon Khorasan, in the case of the Ilkhanis of Kuchan and Bujnurd, and of the Amir of Kain, and, as I shall subsequently show in a chapter dealing with the Feili and Bakhtiari Lurs, the Shah is practically compelled to choose a governor from the ruling family; nor is it easy for him to interfere with the custom of direct hereditary succession. Similarly, in the cases of local magistrates or head men, such as the *kalantars* in cities, and the *kedkhodas* in wards or villages, although nominally he has a free choice, yet in reality he must make a selection that is agreeable to the inhabitants. Otherwise the authority of government falls into abeyance; and, what is regarded as much more serious in Persia, the revenue fails to come in. Hence, the popular choice as a rule marking out some individual for the exercise of these offices, and the Shah for expediency's sake accepting it as his guide, some writers have seen in this fact an introduction of the elective or representative principle into Persian administration. In many cases it happens that the office is practically hereditary in a single

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ruling family, much after the fashion of the Italian cities before the Renaissance.

Administrative divisions

There is no fixed principle or permanence in the administrative subdivisions of Persia. Their separation or combination is regulated by the ability or reputation of their governors, and by the scope that may be conceded thereto by the confidence or the fears of the sovereign. Thus, for instance, a larger number of provinces were collected under the rule of the Shah's eldest son, the Zil-es-Sultan, prior to his fall, three years ago, than have probably ever before been assigned even to a prince of the royal family. Abbas Mirza, at the height of his power, when Khorasan had been joined to Azerbaijan and placed beneath his sway, did not wield as extensive an authority as this prince. Since his disgrace the vast dominion under his rule has been resolved again into its constituent elements; and the following list of the Persian provinces and administrative districts at the time of my visit in 1889, probably exhibits a larger number of independent posts and functionaries than at any recent period of Persian history. It should further be remarked that no principle, geographical, ethnographical, or political, appears to be adopted in determining the borders and size of the various divisions, which vary in extent from a province larger than the whole of England, to a small and decayed town with its immediate surroundings.

### I. Larger Provinces or Districts

| Administrative Division | Capital | Administrative Division | Capital |
|---|---|---|---|
| Azerbaijan | Tabriz | Arabistan | Shushter |
| Khorasan and Seistan | Meshed | Gilan and Talish | Resht |
| Teheran and Dependencies | Teheran | Mazanderan | Amol |
| Fars | Shiraz | Yezd and Dependencies | Yezd |
| Isfahan and Dependencies | Isfahan | Persian Gulf Littoral and Islands | Bushire |
| Kerman and Persian Beluchistan | Kerman | | |

### II. Smaller Provinces or Districts

| Administrative Division | Capital | Administrative Division | Capital |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kurdistan | Sinna | Kermanshah | Kermanshahan |
| Luristan | Khorremabad | Khamseh | Zinjan |
| Irak and Ferahan | Sultanabad | Malayer and Tusirkan | Dowletabad |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kazvin | Kashan | Hamadan |
| Astrabad | Gulpaigan and Khonsar | Nihavend |
| Semnan and Damghan | Mahallat | Natanz |
| Kum | Kezzaz | Biabanek and Jandek |
| | Gerrus | |

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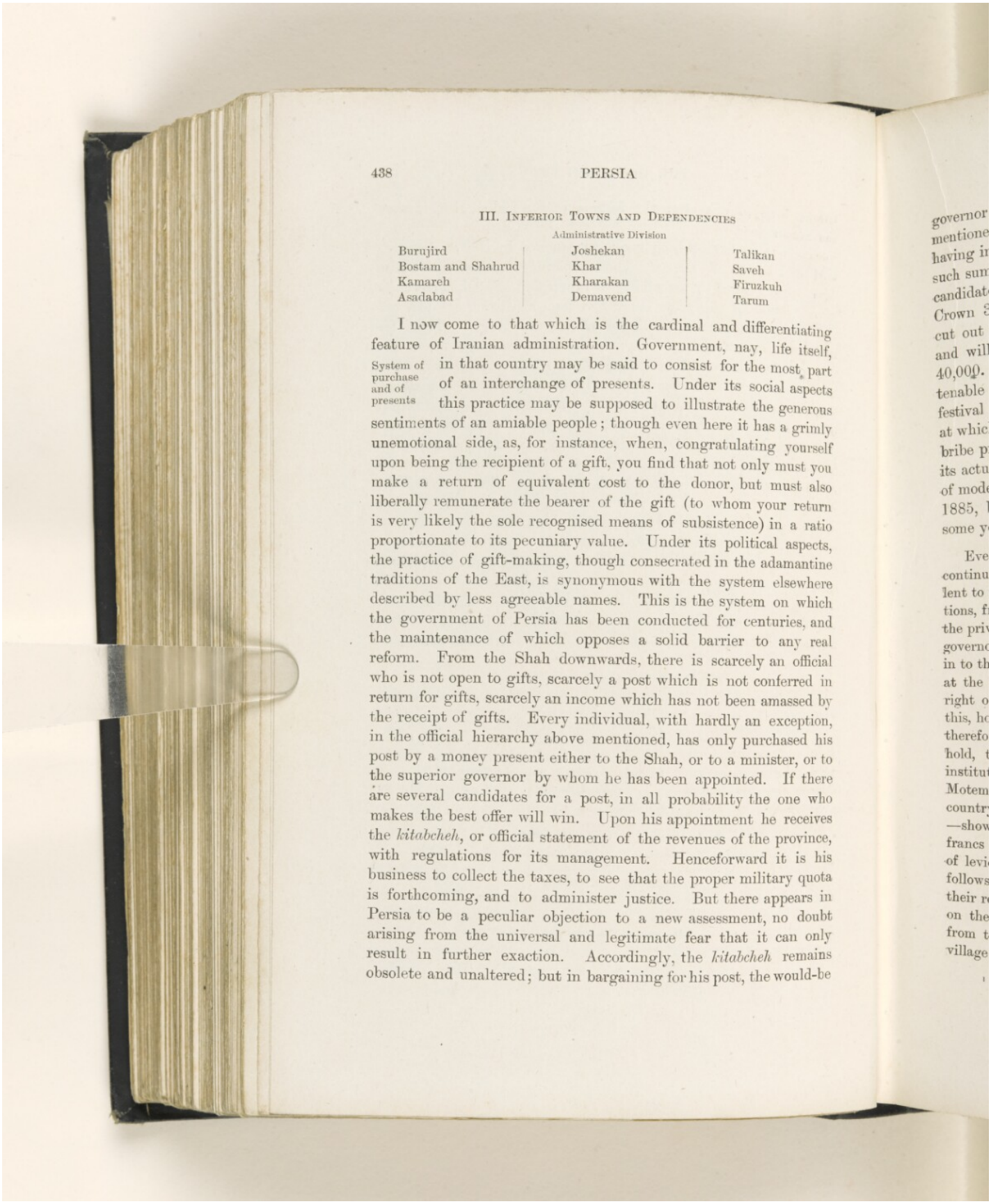



III. Inferior Towns and Dependencies

Administrative Division

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Burujird | Joshekan | Talikan |
| Bostam and Shahrud | Khar | Saveh |
| Kamareh | Kharakan | Firuzkuh |
| Asadabad | Demavend | Tarum |

System of purchase and of presents

I now come to that which is the cardinal and differentiating feature of Iranian administration. Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an interchange of presents. Under its social aspects this practice may be supposed to illustrate the generous sentiments of an amiable people; though even here it has a grimly unemotional side, as, for instance, when, congratulating yourself upon being the recipient of a gift, you find that not only must you make a return of equivalent cost to the donor, but must also liberally remunerate the bearer of the gift (to whom your return is very likely the sole recognised means of subsistence) in a ratio proportionate to its pecuniary value. Under its political aspects, the practice of gift-making, though consecrated in the adamantine traditions of the East, is synonymous with the system elsewhere described by less agreeable names. This is the system on which the government of Persia has been conducted for centuries, and the maintenance of which opposes a solid barrier to any real reform. From the Shah downwards, there is scarcely an official who is not open to gifts, scarcely a post which is not conferred in return for gifts, scarcely an income which has not been amassed by the receipt of gifts. Every individual, with hardly an exception, in the official hierarchy above mentioned, has only purchased his post by a money present either to the Shah, or to a minister, or to the superior governor by whom he has been appointed. If there are several candidates for a post, in all probability the one who makes the best offer will win. Upon his appointment he receives the *kitabcheh*, or official statement of the revenues of the province, with regulations for its management. Henceforward it is his business to collect the taxes, to see that the proper military quota is forthcoming, and to administer justice. But there appears in Persia to be a peculiar objection to a new assessment, no doubt arising from the universal and legitimate fear that it can only result in further exaction. Accordingly, the *kitabcheh* remains obsolete and unaltered; but in bargaining for his post, the would-be

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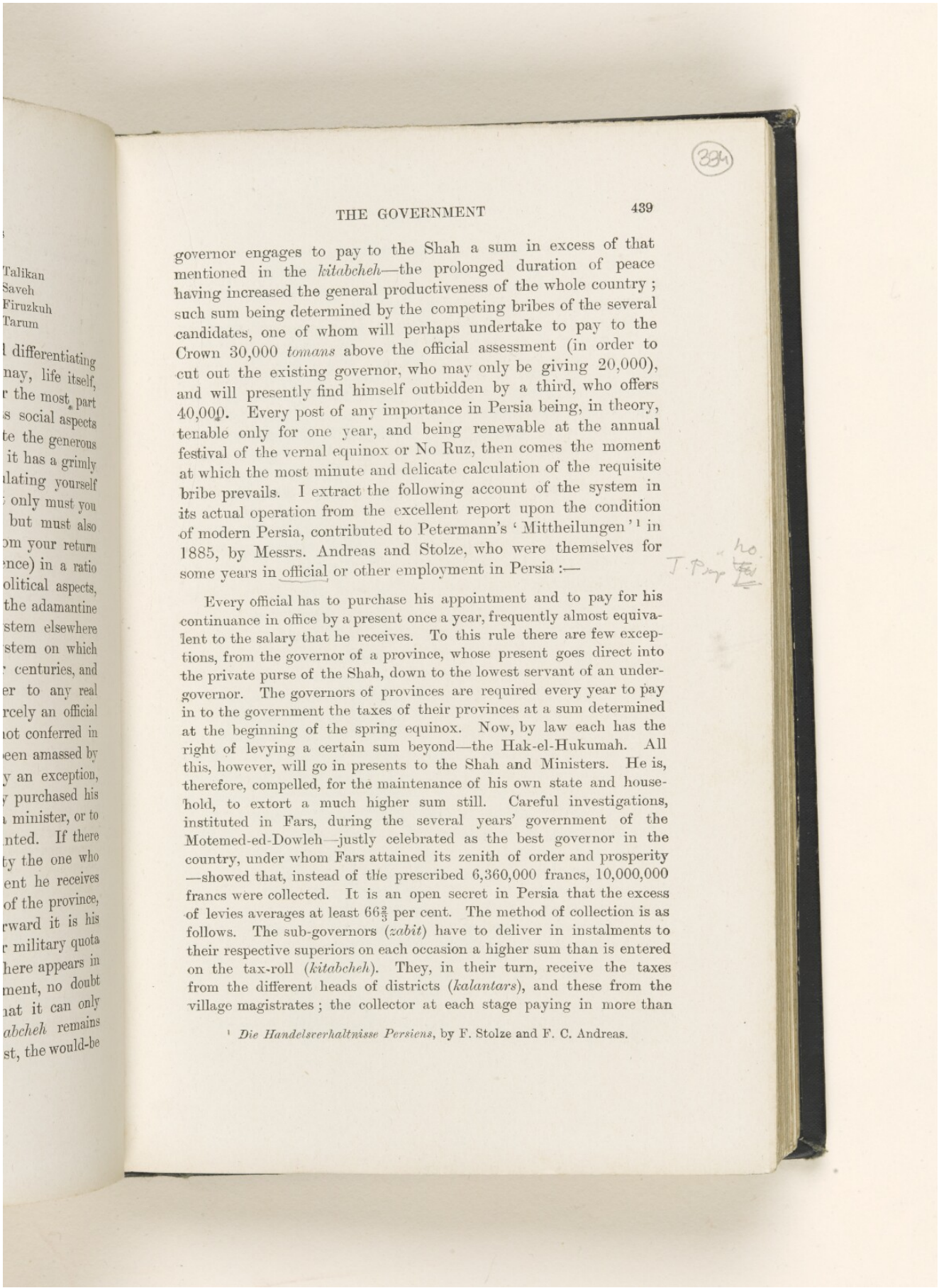

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Saveh
Firuzkuh
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governor engages to pay to the Shah a sum in excess of that mentioned in the *kitabcheh*—the prolonged duration of peace having increased the general productiveness of the whole country; such sum being determined by the competing bribes of the several candidates, one of whom will perhaps undertake to pay to the Crown 30,000 *tomans* above the official assessment (in order to cut out the existing governor, who may only be giving 20,000), and will presently find himself outbidden by a third, who offers 40,000. Every post of any importance in Persia being, in theory, tenable only for one year, and being renewable at the annual festival of the vernal equinox or No Ruz, then comes the moment at which the most minute and delicate calculation of the requisite bribe prevails. I extract the following account of the system in its actual operation from the excellent report upon the condition of modern Persia, contributed to Petermann's 'Mittheilungen'[1] in 1885, by Messrs. Andreas and Stolze, who were themselves for some years in official or other employment in Persia :—

Every official has to purchase his appointment and to pay for his continuance in office by a present once a year, frequently almost equivalent to the salary that he receives. To this rule there are few exceptions, from the governor of a province, whose present goes direct into the private purse of the Shah, down to the lowest servant of an under-governor. The governors of provinces are required every year to pay in to the government the taxes of their provinces at a sum determined at the beginning of the spring equinox. Now, by law each has the right of levying a certain sum beyond—the Hak-el-Hukumah. All this, however, will go in presents to the Shah and Ministers. He is, therefore, compelled, for the maintenance of his own state and household, to extort a much higher sum still. Careful investigations, instituted in Fars, during the several years' government of the Motemed-ed-Dowleh—justly celebrated as the best governor in the country, under whom Fars attained its zenith of order and prosperity—showed that, instead of the prescribed 6,360,000 francs, 10,000,000 francs were collected. It is an open secret in Persia that the excess of levies averages at least 66⅔ per cent. The method of collection is as follows. The sub-governors (*zabit*) have to deliver in instalments to their respective superiors on each occasion a higher sum than is entered on the tax-roll (*kitabcheh*). They, in their turn, receive the taxes from the different heads of districts (*kalantars*), and these from the village magistrates; the collector at each stage paying in more than

[1] *Die Handelsverhaltnisse Persiens*, by F. Stolze and F. C. Andreas.

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is due. All these supplements being regulated at best only by use and wont, there is ample scope for extortion; and terrible are sometimes the cases, complaints whereof are seldom of any avail, the complainant having probably to reckon with the bastinado.

The tax list (*tumar*) is often drawn out years beforehand, according to the number of taxable objects in each district: acres, fruit-trees, water-springs, beasts of labour, herds, &c. Not only is this sum exacted thenceforward year after year, though the taxed objects are meanwhile dwindling, but it is gradually raised. In these lists will figure villages which, from dearth of water or other causes, have been abandoned by their inhabitants. Although, in consequence of the silk-worm disease, and the dreadful famine of 1869–73, the economic condition of Persia became greatly reduced during the twenty years 1864–84, whence it is but recently, through the culture of opium, that it is beginning to revive, the taxes were yet continually going up, in many cases to an almost insupportable figure. Only the extreme frugality of the Persian peasant and of the lower classes in general, on whom presses almost exclusively the burden of the taxes, explains how they are got in at all.

*Mudakhil*

I have quoted the above passage at length, because it is the evidence of eye-witnesses, who lived for years in the country and whose authority is not to be impugned. From a perusal of its contents, a glimpse will have been caught of that which, along with, and perhaps even more than, the bribe or gift required to secure or to retain office of any description, is a cherished national institution in Persia, viz. the *mudakhil*, i.e. consideration, recompense, or profit which is required to balance the personal account, and the exaction of which, in a myriad different forms, whose ingenuity is only equalled by their multiplicity, is the crowning interest and delight of a Persian's existence. This remarkable word, for which Mr. Watson says there is no precise English equivalent,[1] may be variously translated as commission, perquisite, douceur, consideration, pickings and stealings, profit,

[1] 'The word *mudahil*, for which there is no exact English term, has for Persian ears a charm which few Europeans can comprehend. *Mudahil* signifies all that one can acquire by receiving bribes, by swindling and extortion, and by all other irregular means. It is *mudahil* and not salary which every Persian official is anxious to secure. A salary regularly paid affords no scope for the display of the talents in which Persians most excel—for dissimulating and over-reaching, oppressing and cringing—and therefore a post which has only a good salary attached to it, and which affords no good opportunities of making *mudahil*, is looked upon by Persians as being but a poor possession.'—*History of Persia*, p. 372.

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according to the immediate context in which it is employed. Roughly speaking, it signifies that balance of personal advantage, usually expressed in money form, which can be squeezed out of any and every transaction. A negotiation, in which two parties are involved as donor and recipient, as superior and subordinate, or even as equal contracting agents, cannot take place in Persia without the party who can be represented as the author of the favour or service claiming and receiving a definite cash return for what he has done or given. It may of course be said that human nature is much the same all the world over; that a similar system exists under a different name in our own or other countries, and that the philosophic critic will welcome in the Persian a man and a brother. To some extent this is true. But in no country that I have ever seen or heard of in the world, is the system so open, so shameless, or so universal as in Persia. So far from being limited to the sphere of domestic economy or to commercial transactions, it permeates every walk and inspires most of the actions of life. By its operation, generosity or gratuitous service may be said to have been erased in Persia from the category of social virtues, and cupidity has been elevated into the guiding principle of human conduct. Examples, however, explain more clearly than can any verbal generalisation; and I will, therefore, proceed to show how the institution of *mudakhil* works in every channel and department of Persian life.

I have already shown that no office of distinction is conferred by the Crown except for a pecuniary consideration or price, which, in the case of a post bestowed by the Shah, goes into his private exchequer. This is the *mudakhil* of the sovereign. Some of the processes adopted for raising this branch of the revenue will hereafter come under discussion. Here I propose to follow the further ramifications of the system, as it spreads through the entire official hierarchy of which the Shah is the head and exemplar. In the next descending grade the governor who has paid a smart price for his appointment is not one whit behindhand either in the desire or in the capacity to indemnify himself. He farms out the taxes or customs to a third individual for a sum, perhaps, half as much again as that which he himself has given. The balance is his *mudakhil*. So too the *kalantar* or *kedkhoda* in his turn insists upon his squeeze; the 'farming' process, which is universal in Persia, affording an easy basis for

Practical illustrations

the realisation of the desired profit; and the system by which the *mudakhil* is extracted does not come to an end until the bottom of the descending scale has been reached, and there is no further victim from whom to grind out a gain. An Austrian, Baron von Teufenstein, was finance officer of the district of Saveh for a year, from 1881 to 1882, and published a most interesting account of his experiences, in which he said that his predecessor paid 25,000 francs for his office (the *mudakhil* of the sovereign, or of the minister who procured him the post), and cleared 80,000 francs by his year's tenure of it (his own *mudakhil*). If, however, in the sphere of administration this graduated scale of extortion be deemed either not extraordinary or normal, it will perhaps excite greater astonishment when observed in active existence in the army. It may safely be averred that no general officer obtains his post without a substantial money equivalent. His own profit consists in what he can extract from the colonels and majors under his command. They, in their turn, squeeze the captains and lieutenants; and these, not behindhand in resourcefulness, extract moisture from what one would, *prima facie*, imagine to be the flinty consistency of the Persian infantry soldier, by selling to him the privilege of furlough, or leave to work as an artisan in the bazaar. The last illustration which I shall give will be taken from domestic life. Here *mudakhil* is the commission exacted by your servant (in a Persian household usually by a member of the family, specially commissioned) upon every article that you purchase, or every order that you give. This is conceded to him as a matter of right by the vendor, who accordingly names a price, ten per cent. or more, in excess of that which he requires for his own profit, the balance to go to the domestic; and by the master, who knows well enough that he is paying ten per cent. above the market value. Still, *mudakhil* must exist all round; and seeing that he himself is doubtless making it on a larger scale elsewhere, why should he be so unjust as to complain?

Effect on the peasantry

If we examine this system in the light in which it affects the pockets and the interests of the governed, it is obvious that it must result in wholesale and illicit extortion. Take the case of the tenant or farmer of any office who has had to pay a substantial price for his nomination. He requires, in the first place, to recoup himself for this outlay. Next he has to collect the stipulated annual revenue for the Royal or Ministerial

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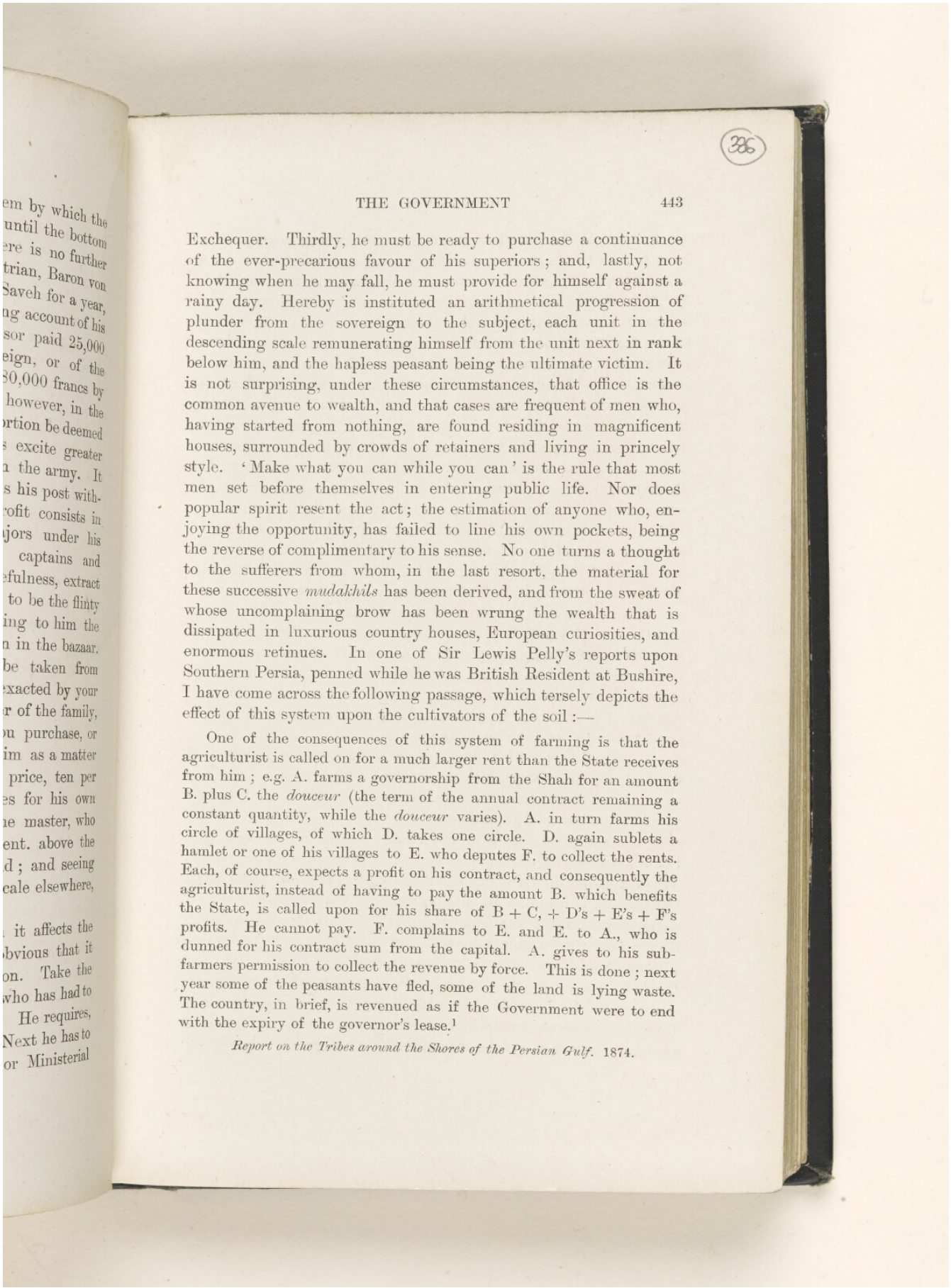



Exchequer. Thirdly, he must be ready to purchase a continuance of the ever-precarious favour of his superiors; and, lastly, not knowing when he may fall, he must provide for himself against a rainy day. Hereby is instituted an arithmetical progression of plunder from the sovereign to the subject, each unit in the descending scale remunerating himself from the unit next in rank below him, and the hapless peasant being the ultimate victim. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that office is the common avenue to wealth, and that cases are frequent of men who, having started from nothing, are found residing in magnificent houses, surrounded by crowds of retainers and living in princely style. 'Make what you can while you can' is the rule that most men set before themselves in entering public life. Nor does popular spirit resent the act; the estimation of anyone who, enjoying the opportunity, has failed to line his own pockets, being the reverse of complimentary to his sense. No one turns a thought to the sufferers from whom, in the last resort, the material for these successive *mudakhils* has been derived, and from the sweat of whose uncomplaining brow has been wrung the wealth that is dissipated in luxurious country houses, European curiosities, and enormous retinues. In one of Sir Lewis Pelly's reports upon Southern Persia, penned while he was British Resident at Bushire, I have come across the following passage, which tersely depicts the effect of this system upon the cultivators of the soil:—

One of the consequences of this system of farming is that the agriculturist is called on for a much larger rent than the State receives from him; e.g. A. farms a governorship from the Shah for an amount B. plus C. the *douceur* (the term of the annual contract remaining a constant quantity, while the *douceur* varies). A. in turn farms his circle of villages, of which D. takes one circle. D. again sublets a hamlet or one of his villages to E. who deputes F. to collect the rents. Each, of course, expects a profit on his contract, and consequently the agriculturist, instead of having to pay the amount B. which benefits the State, is called upon for his share of B + C, + D's + E's + F's profits. He cannot pay. F. complains to E. and E. to A., who is dunned for his contract sum from the capital. A. gives to his sub-farmers permission to collect the revenue by force. This is done; next year some of the peasants have fled, some of the land is lying waste. The country, in brief, is revenued as if the Government were to end with the expiry of the governor's lease.[1]

*Report on the Tribes around the Shores of the Persian Gulf.* 1874.

It may be wondered why a system that seems to press so hardly upon the taxpayers, who are in a numerical majority, and which is attended with such obvious injustice, should be mildly acquiesced in by a people who have never been slow at rebellion. I conceive the reason in part to lie in the fact that, from one point of view, Persia is the most democratic country in the world. Lowness of birth or station is positively not the slightest bar to promotion or office of the most exalted nature. Nor must it necessarily, as in European countries, be compensated or supplemented by distinguished abilities. Interest or the capacity to pay is sufficient to procure a post for anyone, even of menial origin. Many a Persian governor has started by filling a subordinate post in the household or retinue of some great man, and has passed through every grade of society before arriving at the top. The present Grand Vizier, as I have shown, was himself of humble descent, while his father was an attendant in the royal household. The Prime Minister who accompanied the Shah on his first visit to Europe was the grandson of a barber, and the great Amir-i-Nizam, Mirza Taki Khan, was the son of a cook. Consequently, every man sees a chance of some day profiting by the system of which he may for the moment be the victim, and as the present hardship or exaction is not to be compared in ratio with the pecuniary advantage which he may ultimately expect to reap, he is willing to bide his time, and to trust to the fall of the dice in the future.

Reasons of popular acquiescence

A second fact which may variously be regarded as a reason for the continuance, and as a product of the existence, of this system is the low and inadequate figure of official salaries in Persia. In most cases, the government allowance is sufficient for little more than household expenses, and takes no thought of the personal remuneration of the official. What a grudging treasury declines to give, *mudakhil*, it is well understood, is intended to supply, and were it conceivable that by some miraculous transformation of Persian character, or by a decree from some iconoclastic sovereign, this most sacred of institutions should perish without a corresponding rise at the same time of fifty per cent. in official salaries, the machine of government would be brought to a standstill. Quite apart, therefore, from the inherent popularity of a system by which all aspire to profit, so long as a miserly sovereign sits upon the throne, and the

Meagreness of official salaries

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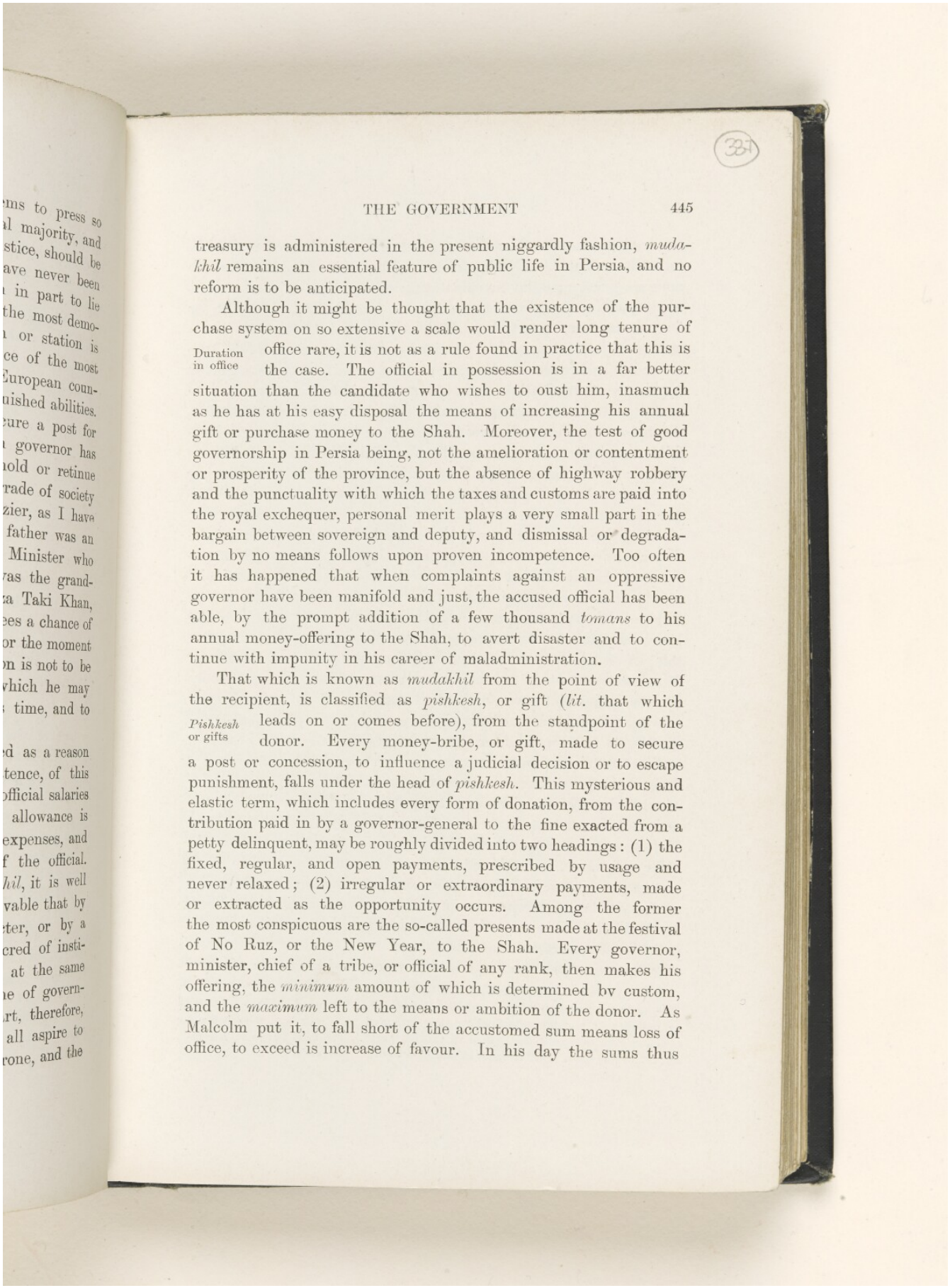



treasury is administered in the present niggardly fashion, *mudakhil* remains an essential feature of public life in Persia, and no reform is to be anticipated.

Duration in office

Although it might be thought that the existence of the purchase system on so extensive a scale would render long tenure of office rare, it is not as a rule found in practice that this is the case. The official in possession is in a far better situation than the candidate who wishes to oust him, inasmuch as he has at his easy disposal the means of increasing his annual gift or purchase money to the Shah. Moreover, the test of good governorship in Persia being, not the amelioration or contentment or prosperity of the province, but the absence of highway robbery and the punctuality with which the taxes and customs are paid into the royal exchequer, personal merit plays a very small part in the bargain between sovereign and deputy, and dismissal or degradation by no means follows upon proven incompetence. Too often it has happened that when complaints against an oppressive governor have been manifold and just, the accused official has been able, by the prompt addition of a few thousand *tomans* to his annual money-offering to the Shah, to avert disaster and to continue with impunity in his career of maladministration.

Pishkesh or gifts

That which is known as *mudakhil* from the point of view of the recipient, is classified as *pishkesh*, or gift (*lit.* that which leads on or comes before), from the standpoint of the donor. Every money-bribe, or gift, made to secure a post or concession, to influence a judicial decision or to escape punishment, falls under the head of *pishkesh*. This mysterious and elastic term, which includes every form of donation, from the contribution paid in by a governor-general to the fine exacted from a petty delinquent, may be roughly divided into two headings: (1) the fixed, regular, and open payments, prescribed by usage and never relaxed; (2) irregular or extraordinary payments, made or extracted as the opportunity occurs. Among the former the most conspicuous are the so-called presents made at the festival of No Ruz, or the New Year, to the Shah. Every governor, minister, chief of a tribe, or official of any rank, then makes his offering, the *minimum* amount of which is determined by custom, and the *maximum* left to the means or ambition of the donor. As Malcolm put it, to fall short of the accustomed sum means loss of office, to exceed is increase of favour. In his day the sums thus

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received amounted to two-fifths of the entire fixed revenue (which he estimated at 3,000,000*l.*), or to 1,200,000*l.* Madame Serena[1] makes a great mistake in calculating the receipts of the present Shah at No Ruz from these sources as 60,000,000 francs, or double the sum ascribed to Fath Ali Shah by Malcolm. As a matter of fact the presents received by the reigning Shah have never been more than a third, or at most a half, of those extorted by his great-grandfather, and the total is said to have dwindled in recent years to only a few thousand pounds. This reduction does not by any means imply that the receipts of the government have fallen, but only that there has been a redistribution of incidence, the greatly increased results from the assessed revenue producing a corresponding diminution in the cash money-presents of the governor and officials.

The Royal *khelat*

A device, more delicate in its regard for the scruples of the donor, but equally certain in its productiveness, is the gift of the Royal *khelat*. Once in each year every provincial governor receives from the sovereign the gift of a *khelat*, or robe of honour (as a sign of his continuance in office), to the bearer of which he must present a *khelat-beha*, or equivalent price, the gift of which is in reality a relief to the pocket of the Shah.[2] The cost of the *khelat* is reckoned as a normal item of expenditure by every provincial governor in the calculation of his budget. Outside every Persian city of any size is a pavilion, or place, known as the *Khelat Pushan*, whither the governor rides out at the head of a brilliant cavalcade to receive the royal present, and whence, having donned the garb or mantle, he returns to the town, the remainder of the day being given up to public rejoicing. The happy recipient knows that he is safe for another year. Extraordinary *khelats* are frequently solicited and paid for on a larger scale, in order to insure the continued favour of the sovereign. The same system is repeated in a descending scale among the lower grades of the official hierarchy, the provincial governor also sending a yearly *khelat* to his subordinate, and being equally gratified by the petition for an extraordinary *khelat*.

These are the more familiar and recognised resources of royal

[1] *Hommes et Choses en Perse*, p. 240.

[2] Thus the function of transmitting the *khelat* is intrusted to some minister or member of the household whom it is intended to favour, and who not uncommonly himself sells the honour to another party. The *khelat-beha* of Khorasan is not less than 1,000 *tomans*, in addition to other perquisites.

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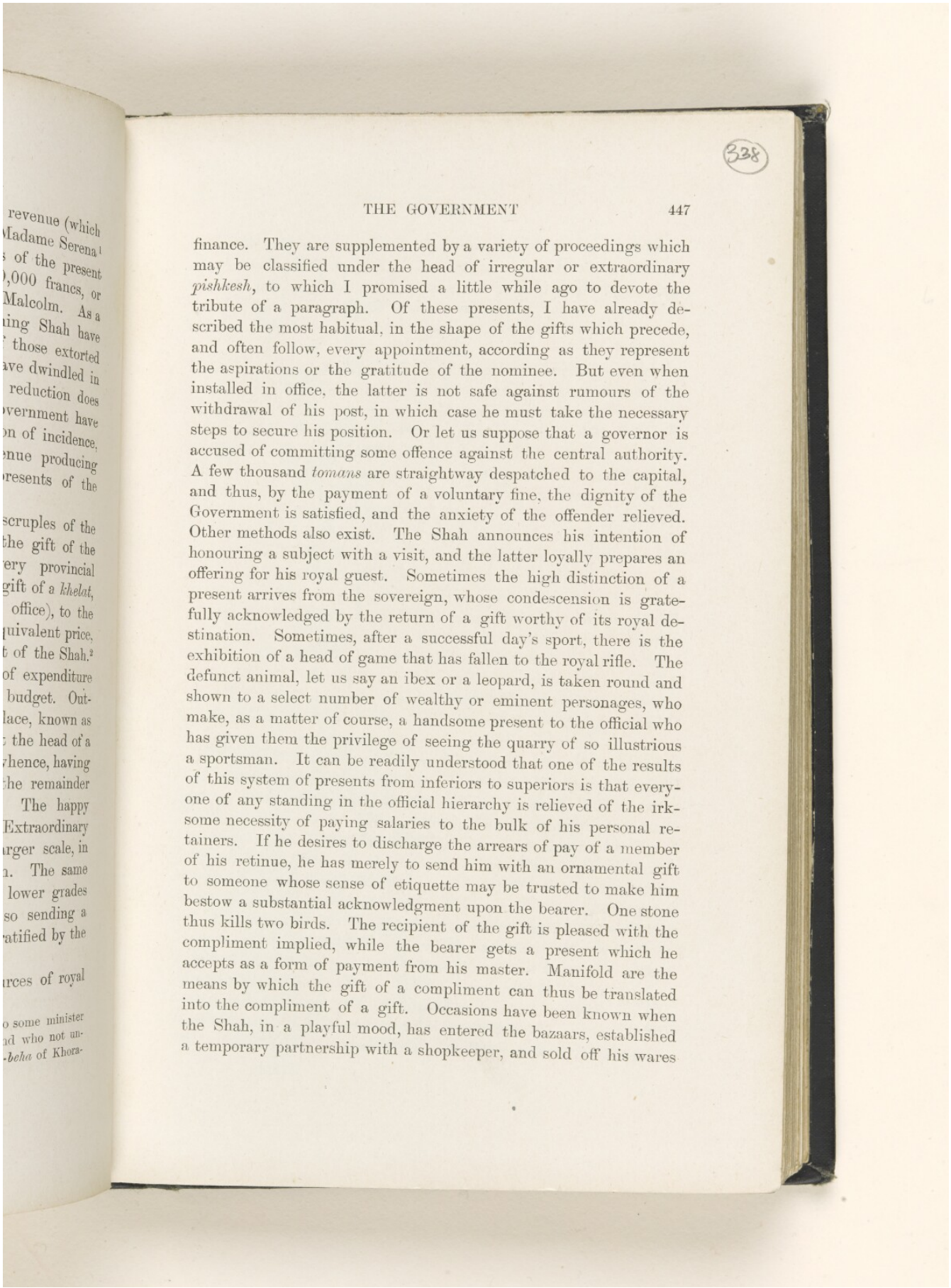



finance. They are supplemented by a variety of proceedings which may be classified under the head of irregular or extraordinary *pishkesh*, to which I promised a little while ago to devote the tribute of a paragraph. Of these presents, I have already described the most habitual, in the shape of the gifts which precede, and often follow, every appointment, according as they represent the aspirations or the gratitude of the nominee. But even when installed in office, the latter is not safe against rumours of the withdrawal of his post, in which case he must take the necessary steps to secure his position. Or let us suppose that a governor is accused of committing some offence against the central authority. A few thousand *tomans* are straightway despatched to the capital, and thus, by the payment of a voluntary fine, the dignity of the Government is satisfied, and the anxiety of the offender relieved. Other methods also exist. The Shah announces his intention of honouring a subject with a visit, and the latter loyally prepares an offering for his royal guest. Sometimes the high distinction of a present arrives from the sovereign, whose condescension is gratefully acknowledged by the return of a gift worthy of its royal destination. Sometimes, after a successful day's sport, there is the exhibition of a head of game that has fallen to the royal rifle. The defunct animal, let us say an ibex or a leopard, is taken round and shown to a select number of wealthy or eminent personages, who make, as a matter of course, a handsome present to the official who has given them the privilege of seeing the quarry of so illustrious a sportsman. It can be readily understood that one of the results of this system of presents from inferiors to superiors is that everyone of any standing in the official hierarchy is relieved of the irksome necessity of paying salaries to the bulk of his personal retainers. If he desires to discharge the arrears of pay of a member of his retinue, he has merely to send him with an ornamental gift to someone whose sense of etiquette may be trusted to make him bestow a substantial acknowledgment upon the bearer. One stone thus kills two birds. The recipient of the gift is pleased with the compliment implied, while the bearer gets a present which he accepts as a form of payment from his master. Manifold are the means by which the gift of a compliment can thus be translated into the compliment of a gift. Occasions have been known when the Shah, in a playful mood, has entered the bazaars, established a temporary partnership with a shopkeeper, and sold off his wares

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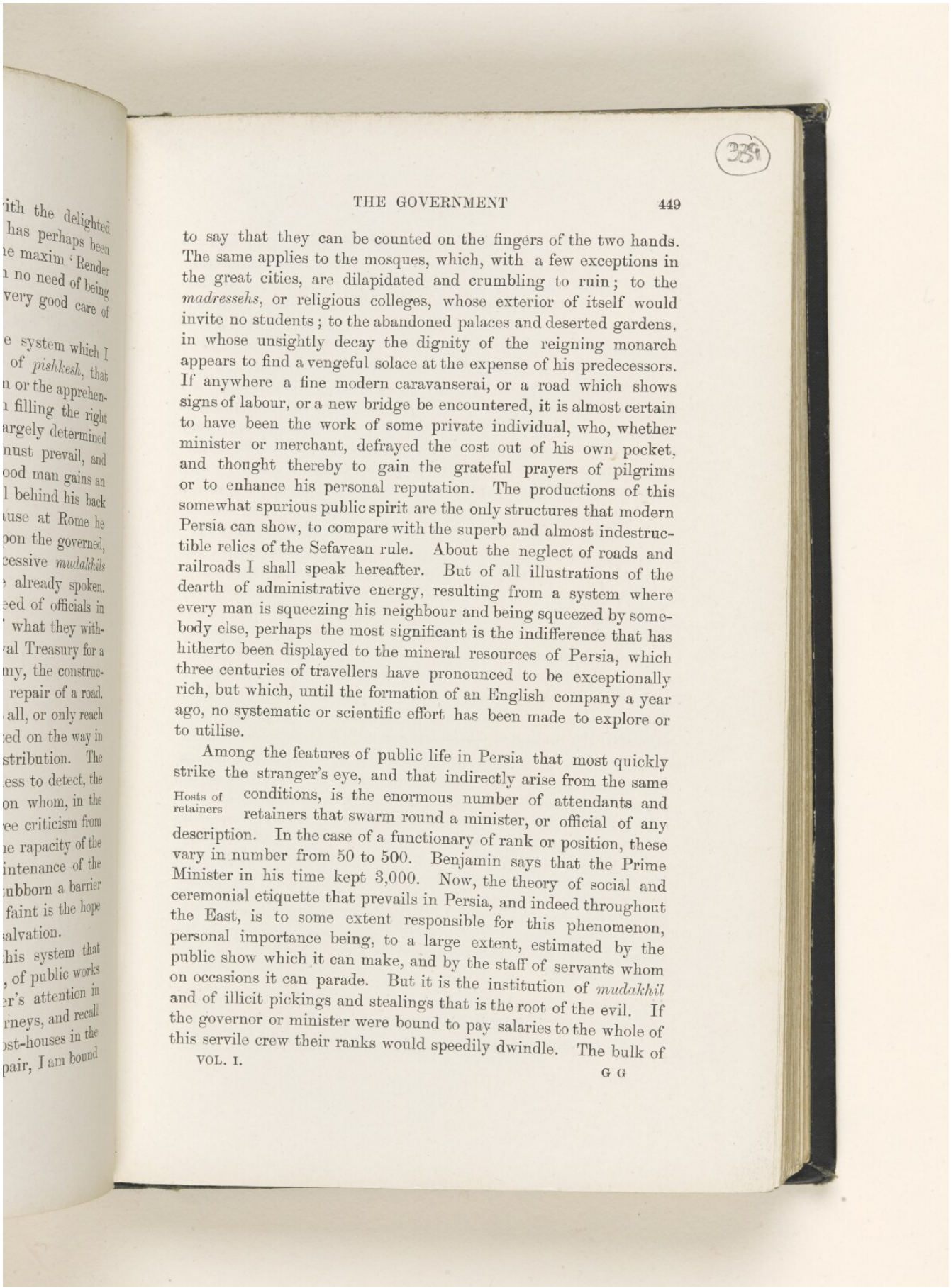
at suitable prices to his courtiers, dividing with the delighted tradesman the proceeds of the sale. Enough has perhaps been said to give some idea of the system. Truly the maxim 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's' stands in no need of being pressed in a country where Cæsar takes such very good care of himself.

It is an obvious result of the administrative system which I have described, and of the proud predominance of *pishkesh*, that there is no guarantee, beyond the wisdom or the apprehensions of the sovereign, for the best men filling the right places. So long as the gift of office is largely determined by the length of purse, corrupt administration must prevail, and honest men will go to the wall. Even if a good man gains an appointment, the intrigues or the bribes of a rival behind his back may oust him at any moment, and he falls because at Rome he failed to do what the Romans do. Of the effect upon the governed, who are the ultimate source from which the successive *mudakhils* and the stipulated *pishkeshes* are drawn, I have already spoken. But the country does not suffer only from the greed of officials in respect of what they extort, but also in respect of what they withhold. Sums of money are assigned from the Royal Treasury for a definite public object—e.g., the payment of an army, the construction of public works, the building of a bridge, the repair of a road. These sums either never reach their destination at all, or only reach it in sadly diminished volume, having been arrested on the way in the pocket of some official responsible for the distribution. The Shah, meanwhile, is quite unaware of, or is powerless to detect, the embezzlement practised by his subordinates, upon whom, in the absence of responsible supervision from above or free criticism from below, it is almost impossible to keep a watch. The rapacity of the entire official world being thus enlisted in the maintenance of the existing system, it will easily be understood how stubborn a barrier is opposed to any administrative reform, and how faint is the hope that Persia will ever, unaided, work out her own salvation.

Corrupt administration

It is also to the peculation engendered by this system that must be attributed the neglect, or the total absence, of public works which so constantly arrests the traveller's attention in Persia. When I think over my long journeys, and recall how many caravanserais, or bridges, or post-houses in the entire country I saw in at all an efficient state of repair, I am bound

Neglect of public works





to say that they can be counted on the fingers of the two hands. The same applies to the mosques, which, with a few exceptions in the great cities, are dilapidated and crumbling to ruin; to the *madressehs*, or religious colleges, whose exterior of itself would invite no students; to the abandoned palaces and deserted gardens, in whose unsightly decay the dignity of the reigning monarch appears to find a vengeful solace at the expense of his predecessors. If anywhere a fine modern caravanserai, or a road which shows signs of labour, or a new bridge be encountered, it is almost certain to have been the work of some private individual, who, whether minister or merchant, defrayed the cost out of his own pocket, and thought thereby to gain the grateful prayers of pilgrims or to enhance his personal reputation. The productions of this somewhat spurious public spirit are the only structures that modern Persia can show, to compare with the superb and almost indestructible relics of the Sefavean rule. About the neglect of roads and railroads I shall speak hereafter. But of all illustrations of the dearth of administrative energy, resulting from a system where every man is squeezing his neighbour and being squeezed by somebody else, perhaps the most significant is the indifference that has hitherto been displayed to the mineral resources of Persia, which three centuries of travellers have pronounced to be exceptionally rich, but which, until the formation of an English company a year ago, no systematic or scientific effort has been made to explore or to utilise.

Among the features of public life in Persia that most quickly strike the stranger's eye, and that indirectly arise from the same conditions, is the enormous number of attendants and retainers that swarm round a minister, or official of any description. In the case of a functionary of rank or position, these vary in number from 50 to 500. Benjamin says that the Prime Minister in his time kept 3,000. Now, the theory of social and ceremonial etiquette that prevails in Persia, and indeed throughout the East, is to some extent responsible for this phenomenon, personal importance being, to a large extent, estimated by the public show which it can make, and by the staff of servants whom on occasions it can parade. But it is the institution of *mudakhil* and of illicit pickings and stealings that is the root of the evil. If the governor or minister were bound to pay salaries to the whole of this servile crew their ranks would speedily dwindle. The bulk of

Hosts of retainers



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them are unpaid; they attach themselves to their master because of the opportunities for extortion with which that connection presents them, and they thrive and batten on plunder. It may readily be conceived how great a drain is this swarm of blood-suckers upon the resources of the country. They are true types of unproductive labourers, absorbing but never creating wealth; and their existence is little short of a national calamity.

Bureaucracy

The same feature that prevails in the private household of an important functionary is carried into the official departments and into the service of the State. Every minister, every governor, every petty official, is surrounded by an immense staff of *munshis*, *mirzas*, and *mustofis*, i.e. clerks, secretaries, and accountants. There is no proper division of labour; confusion and lack of system prevail everywhere. This enormous staff of civil servants justifies itself by no reports, and produces no statistics; official returns, tables, schedules, or calculations either do not exist at all or, if they do, exist in a deceptive shape. There is no means of arriving even at an approximate estimate of so elementary a fact as the population of the country. The figures which I elsewhere print of revenue and taxation have been derived from official sources; but though probably correct in themselves, I cannot tell what omissions they may contain, or how far it is legitimate to make them a basis of induction. Baron Teufenstein, the Austrian Governor of Saveh, whom I have before quoted, thus described the routine of official life:—

> A Ministry in Persia consists of the minister and some scribes, without any determinate place of office, or any of the apparatus that appears indispensable to Europeans. The bureau is set up at whatever spot the minister happens to be, whether in his house, or in an ante-room, or a court of the Royal Palace, or perchance in the street or in a coffee-house. A swarm of scribes buzzes after the chief on all his marches, each bearing with him in his pocket the necessary writing apparatus and documents. Accordingly, an office can be rigged up any or everywhere in a trice. In the pockets of such a *mirza* are often to be found the documents of a series of years past, consisting of little scraps of paper which he has come to regard as private, and in no sense official, property.[1]

My readers will not be surprised to learn that the reforms which Baron Teufenstein laboriously introduced into the administration of

[1] *Petermann's Mittheilungen* (Andreas and Stolze), 1885.

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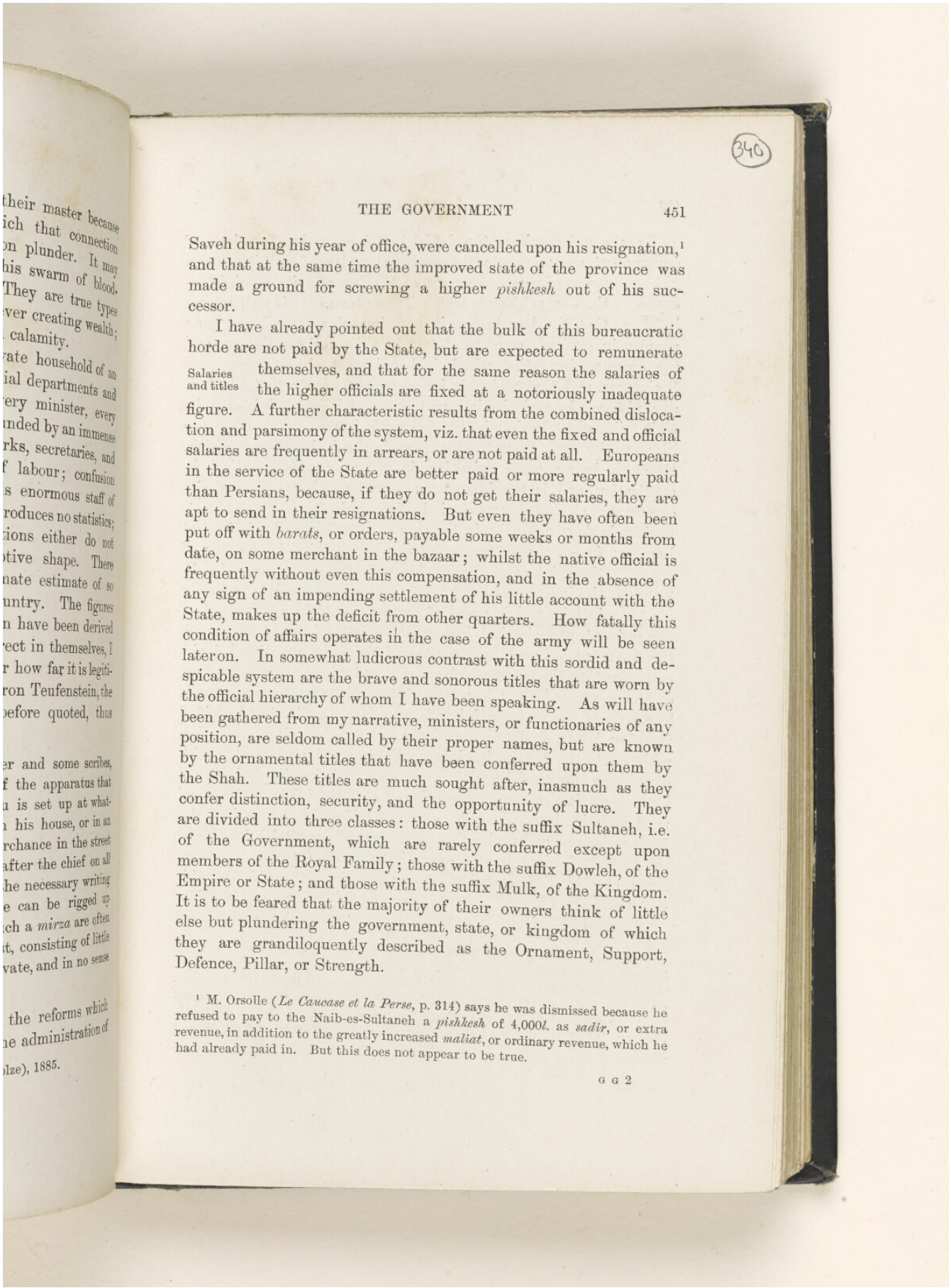



Saveh during his year of office, were cancelled upon his resignation,[1] and that at the same time the improved state of the province was made a ground for screwing a higher *pishkesh* out of his successor.

Salaries and titles

I have already pointed out that the bulk of this bureaucratic horde are not paid by the State, but are expected to remunerate themselves, and that for the same reason the salaries of the higher officials are fixed at a notoriously inadequate figure. A further characteristic results from the combined dislocation and parsimony of the system, viz. that even the fixed and official salaries are frequently in arrears, or are not paid at all. Europeans in the service of the State are better paid or more regularly paid than Persians, because, if they do not get their salaries, they are apt to send in their resignations. But even they have often been put off with *barats*, or orders, payable some weeks or months from date, on some merchant in the bazaar; whilst the native official is frequently without even this compensation, and in the absence of any sign of an impending settlement of his little account with the State, makes up the deficit from other quarters. How fatally this condition of affairs operates in the case of the army will be seen later on. In somewhat ludicrous contrast with this sordid and despicable system are the brave and sonorous titles that are worn by the official hierarchy of whom I have been speaking. As will have been gathered from my narrative, ministers, or functionaries of any position, are seldom called by their proper names, but are known by the ornamental titles that have been conferred upon them by the Shah. These titles are much sought after, inasmuch as they confer distinction, security, and the opportunity of lucre. They are divided into three classes: those with the suffix Sultaneh, i.e. of the Government, which are rarely conferred except upon members of the Royal Family; those with the suffix Dowleh, of the Empire or State; and those with the suffix Mulk, of the Kingdom. It is to be feared that the majority of their owners think of little else but plundering the government, state, or kingdom of which they are grandiloquently described as the Ornament, Support, Defence, Pillar, or Strength.

[1] M. Orsolle (*Le Caucase et la Perse*, p. 314) says he was dismissed because he refused to pay to the Naib-es-Sultaneh a *pishkesh* of 4,000*l.* as *sadir*, or extra revenue, in addition to the greatly increased *maliat*, or ordinary revenue, which he had already paid in. But this does not appear to be true.



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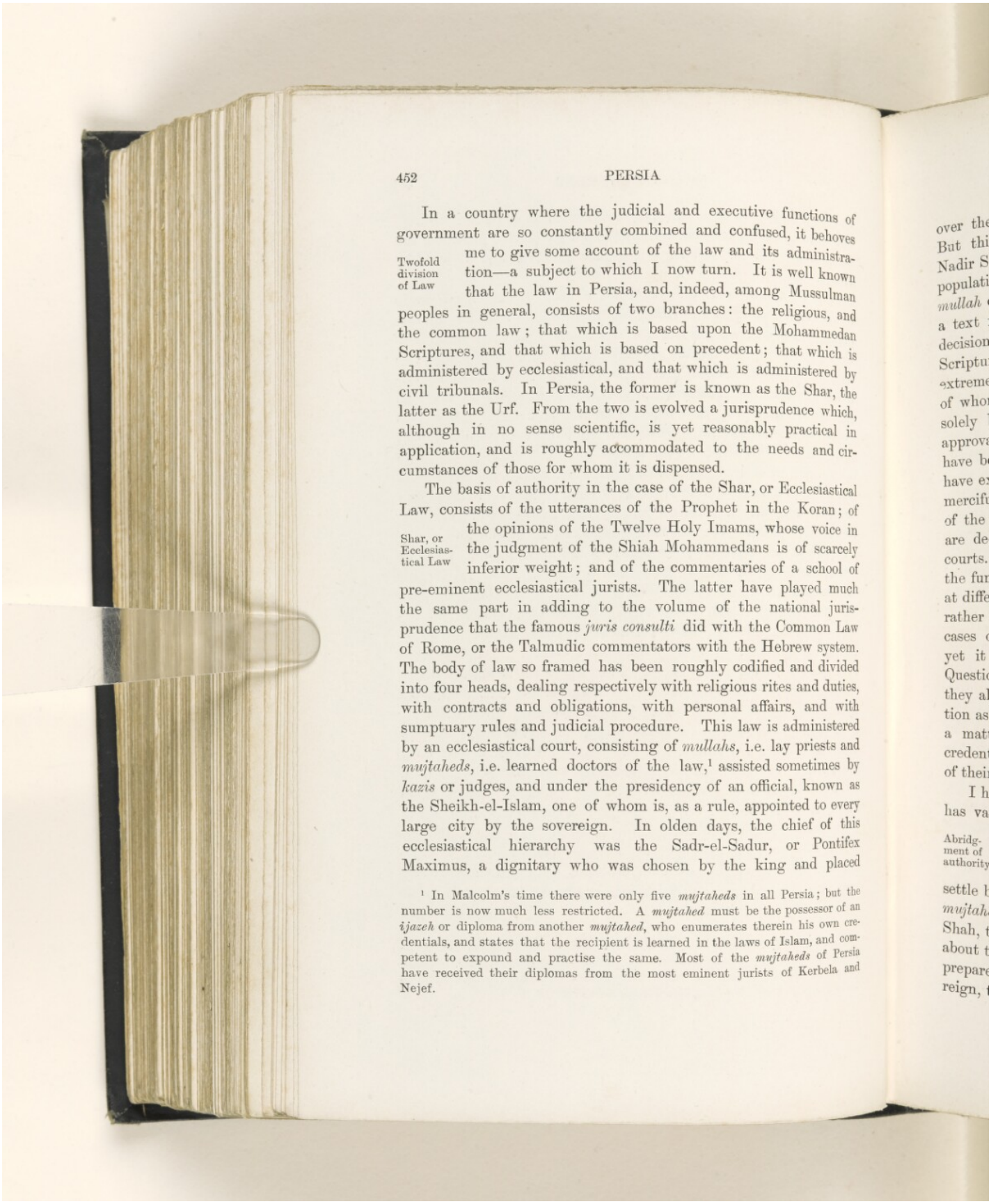



In a country where the judicial and executive functions of government are so constantly combined and confused, it behoves me to give some account of the law and its administration—a subject to which I now turn. It is well known that the law in Persia, and, indeed, among Mussulman peoples in general, consists of two branches: the religious, and the common law; that which is based upon the Mohammedan Scriptures, and that which is based on precedent; that which is administered by ecclesiastical, and that which is administered by civil tribunals. In Persia, the former is known as the Shar, the latter as the Urf. From the two is evolved a jurisprudence which, although in no sense scientific, is yet reasonably practical in application, and is roughly accommodated to the needs and circumstances of those for whom it is dispensed.

Twofold division of Law

The basis of authority in the case of the Shar, or Ecclesiastical Law, consists of the utterances of the Prophet in the Koran; of the opinions of the Twelve Holy Imams, whose voice in the judgment of the Shiah Mohammedans is of scarcely inferior weight; and of the commentaries of a school of pre-eminent ecclesiastical jurists. The latter have played much the same part in adding to the volume of the national jurisprudence that the famous *juris consulti* did with the Common Law of Rome, or the Talmudic commentators with the Hebrew system. The body of law so framed has been roughly codified and divided into four heads, dealing respectively with religious rites and duties, with contracts and obligations, with personal affairs, and with sumptuary rules and judicial procedure. This law is administered by an ecclesiastical court, consisting of *mullahs*, i.e. lay priests and *mujtaheds*, i.e. learned doctors of the law,[1] assisted sometimes by *kazis* or judges, and under the presidency of an official, known as the Sheikh-el-Islam, one of whom is, as a rule, appointed to every large city by the sovereign. In olden days, the chief of this ecclesiastical hierarchy was the Sadr-el-Sadur, or Pontifex Maximus, a dignitary who was chosen by the king and placed

Shar, or Ecclesiastical Law

[1] In Malcolm's time there were only five *mujtaheds* in all Persia; but the number is now much less restricted. A *mujtahed* must be the possessor of an *ijazeh* or diploma from another *mujtahed*, who enumerates therein his own credentials, and states that the recipient is learned in the laws of Islam, and competent to expound and practise the same. Most of the *mujtaheds* of Persia have received their diplomas from the most eminent jurists of Kerbela and Nejef.

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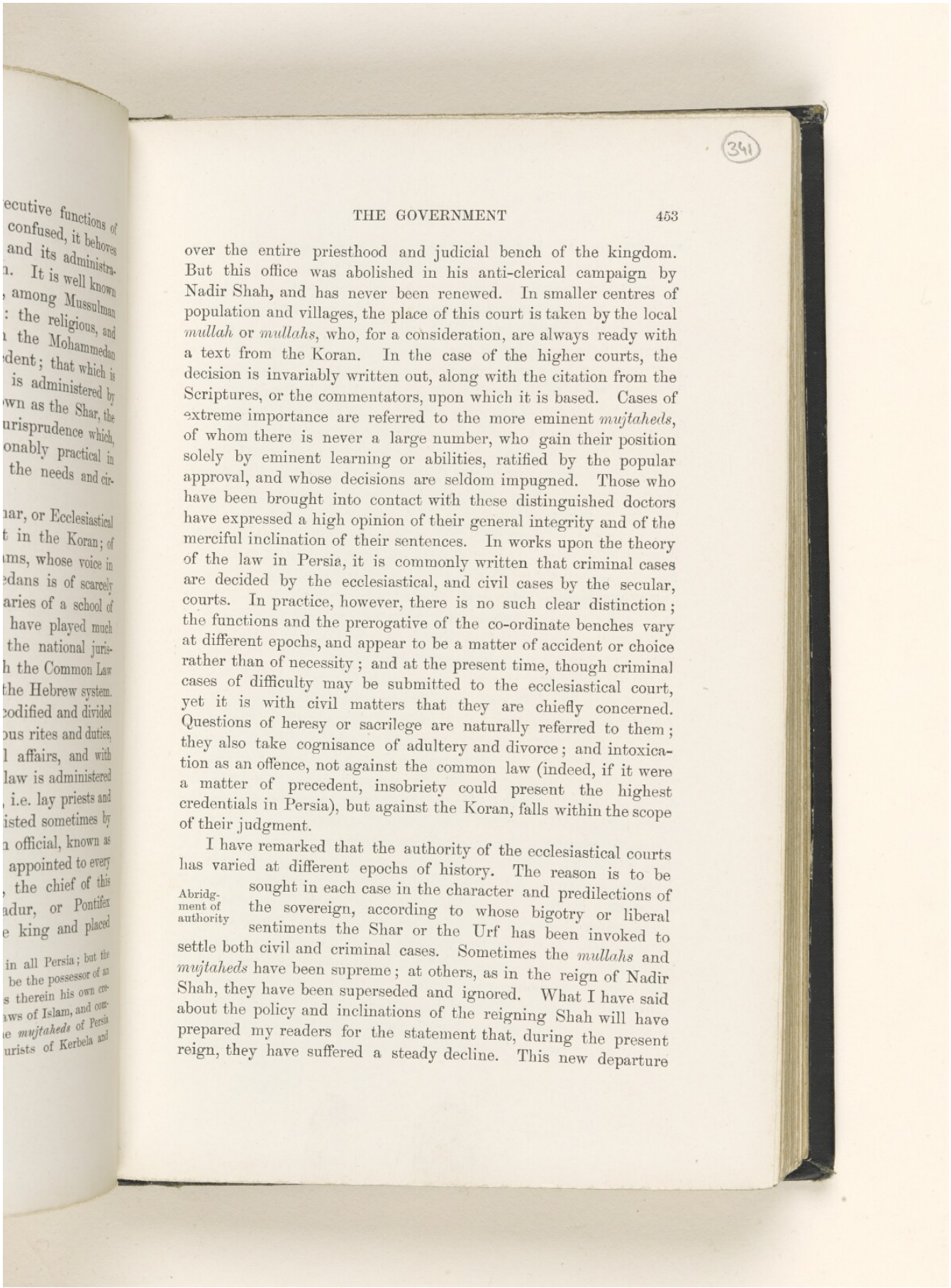



over the entire priesthood and judicial bench of the kingdom. But this office was abolished in his anti-clerical campaign by Nadir Shah, and has never been renewed. In smaller centres of population and villages, the place of this court is taken by the local *mullah* or *mullahs*, who, for a consideration, are always ready with a text from the Koran. In the case of the higher courts, the decision is invariably written out, along with the citation from the Scriptures, or the commentators, upon which it is based. Cases of extreme importance are referred to the more eminent *mujtaheds*, of whom there is never a large number, who gain their position solely by eminent learning or abilities, ratified by the popular approval, and whose decisions are seldom impugned. Those who have been brought into contact with these distinguished doctors have expressed a high opinion of their general integrity and of the merciful inclination of their sentences. In works upon the theory of the law in Persia, it is commonly written that criminal cases are decided by the ecclesiastical, and civil cases by the secular, courts. In practice, however, there is no such clear distinction; the functions and the prerogative of the co-ordinate benches vary at different epochs, and appear to be a matter of accident or choice rather than of necessity; and at the present time, though criminal cases of difficulty may be submitted to the ecclesiastical court, yet it is with civil matters that they are chiefly concerned. Questions of heresy or sacrilege are naturally referred to them; they also take cognisance of adultery and divorce; and intoxication as an offence, not against the common law (indeed, if it were a matter of precedent, insobriety could present the highest credentials in Persia), but against the Koran, falls within the scope of their judgment.

Abridgment of authority

I have remarked that the authority of the ecclesiastical courts has varied at different epochs of history. The reason is to be sought in each case in the character and predilections of the sovereign, according to whose bigotry or liberal sentiments the Shar or the Urf has been invoked to settle both civil and criminal cases. Sometimes the *mullahs* and *mujtaheds* have been supreme; at others, as in the reign of Nadir Shah, they have been superseded and ignored. What I have said about the policy and inclinations of the reigning Shah will have prepared my readers for the statement that, during the present reign, they have suffered a steady decline. This new departure

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was inaugurated, immediately upon his accession, by the great minister Mirza Taki Khan, who showed his contempt for the ecclesiastical order by seizing the person of the Sheikh-el-Islam at Tabriz, and by abolishing the privilege of affording sanctuary in his mosque, hitherto enjoyed by the Imam-i-Jama of Teheran. The complete assertion of the sovereign power, which ever since has been the keynote of the domestic policy of Nasr-ed-Din, is incompatible with the ascendency of an ecclesiastical court. Civil jurisdiction involves a final reference in every case to the sovereign; and one can easily understand the reluctance of a powerful monarch to admit a higher court of appeal. There is, however, in the constitution of the ecclesiastical bench, an inherent check upon their supremacy, of which the civil power can always take advantage to vindicate its own. They pronounce, but they cannot execute, judgment. The latter function devolves upon the officers of government; and although the decisions of the *mujtaheds* are seldom disputed, and are, as a rule, carried into effect, yet the final reference to the civil power is an acknowledgment of its superiority, while it opens the door to the lengthy process of negotiations and bribes that always supervenes when one of the parties engaged is a Persian governor or official.

Urf, or Common Law

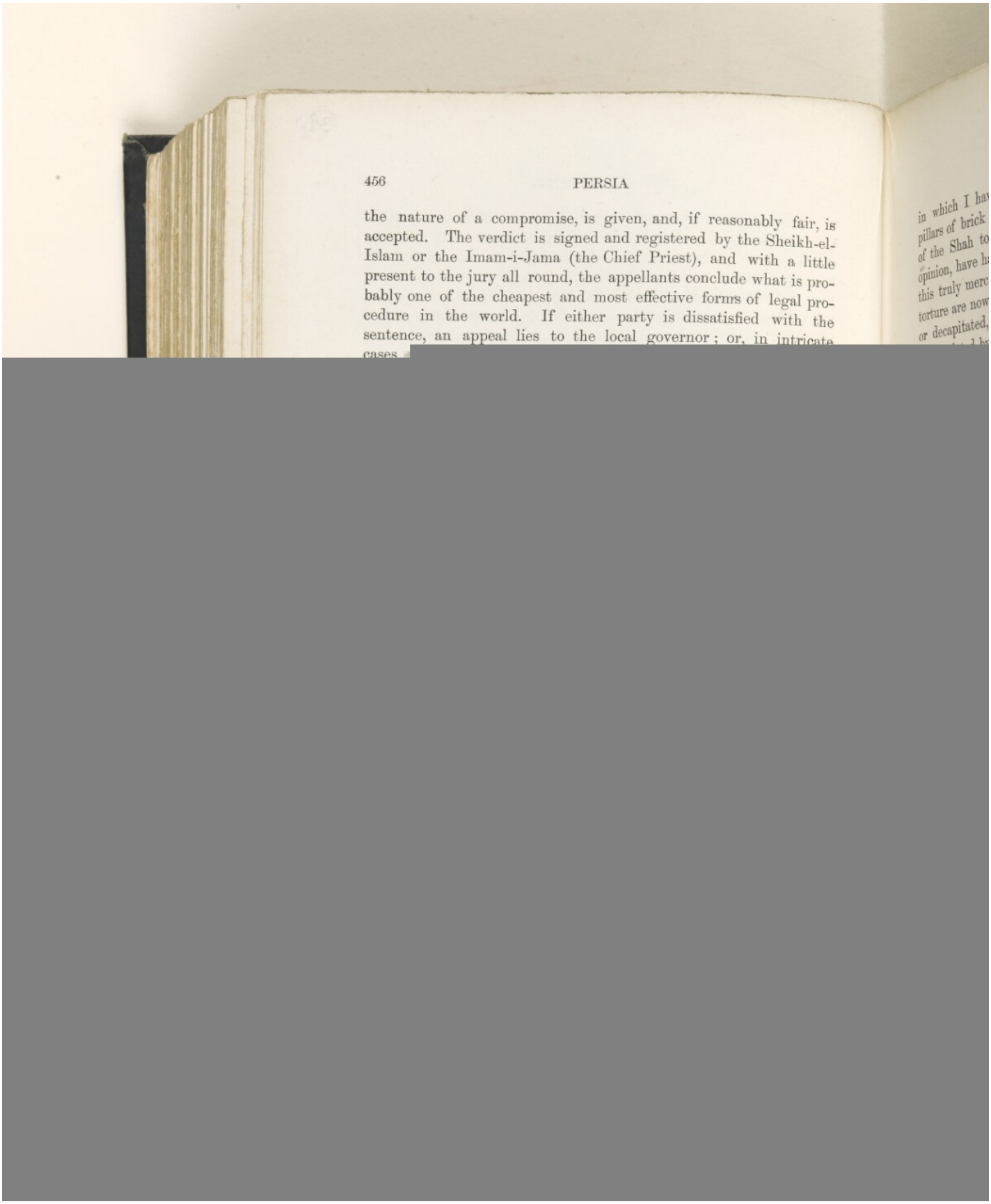
From the Shar, I pass to the Urf, or Common Law. Nominally this is based on oral tradition, on precedent, and on custom. As such, it varies in different parts of the country. But, there being no written or recognised code, it is found to vary still more in practice according to the character or caprice of the individual who administers it; and so far from any attempt being made to hunt up precedents or to ascertain what has been done in parallel cases before, the decision is, as a rule, promptly given and as promptly executed by the civil officer before whom it comes, and whose sole guide, presuming him to be honest (perhaps a rash assumption in Persia), is a rough sense of right and wrong. The administrators of the Urf are the civil magistrates throughout the kingdom, there being no secular court or bench of judges after the Western model. In a village the case will be brought before the *kedkhoda*, or headman; in a town before the *darogha*, or police magistrate. To their judgment are submitted all the petty offences that occupy a city police-court or a bench of country magistrates in England. The penalty in the case of larceny, or assault, or such like offences, is, as a rule, restitution,

either in kind or in money value; while, if lack of means renders this impossible, the criminal is soundly thrashed. All ordinary criminal cases are brought before the *hakim*, or governor of a town; the more important before the provincial governor or governor-general. The ultimate court of appeal in each case is the king, of whose sovereign authority these subordinate exercises of jurisdiction are merely a delegation, although it is rare that a suppliant at any distance from the capital can make his complaint heard so far. The power of life and death, which was formerly wielded with freedom by the governor-general of a province, more especially if of royal blood, is now reserved by the Shah; and in an earlier chapter I have related an incident in which the Ilkhani of Kuchan, having attempted to revive the prerogative enjoyed by his predecessors, found himself in abrupt collision with his sovereign. Justice, as dispensed in this fashion by the officers of government in Persia, obeys no law and follows no system. Publicity is the sole guarantee for fairness; but great is the scope, especially in the lower grades, for *pishkesh* and the bribe. The *daroghas* have the reputation of being both harsh and venal, and there are some who go so far as to say that there is not a sentence of an official in Persia, even of the higher ranks, that cannot be swayed by a pecuniary consideration.

Civil cases and arbitration

Theoretically, the secular court takes cognisance of civil, just as, according to the same criterion, the ecclesiastical court embraces criminal cases. But the distinction is not less fallacious in this than in the other instance. The dread of the civil court, or *diwan-khaneh*, with its crude justice and the long avenues of bribery and rascality that it opens up, deters suitors from submitting to its judgment civil cases of any complexity or importance; and such cases are, as a rule, referred in the first place to private arbitration. Dr. Wills, who has written a most interesting account of the Persian law in its every-day or working aspect,[1] names questions of contracts, titles to landed property, disputed wills, intestate succession, the boundaries or shares of lands, the recovery of debts and bankruptcy, as among the cases which are commonly decided in this fashion. A *mejilis*, or informal council of leading merchants, is convoked in the house of a *mullah* or leading citizen. Both sides state their case; the documents are produced and inspected; and a decision, which is almost always in

[1] *Persia as it is*, caps. v. vi.



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the nature of a compromise, is given, and, if reasonably fair, is accepted. The verdict is signed and registered by the Sheikh-el-Islam or the Imam-i-Jama (the Chief Priest), and with a little present to the jury all round, the appellants conclude what is probably one of the cheapest and most effective forms of legal procedure in the world. If either party is dissatisfied with the sentence, an appeal lies to the local governor; or, in intricate cases

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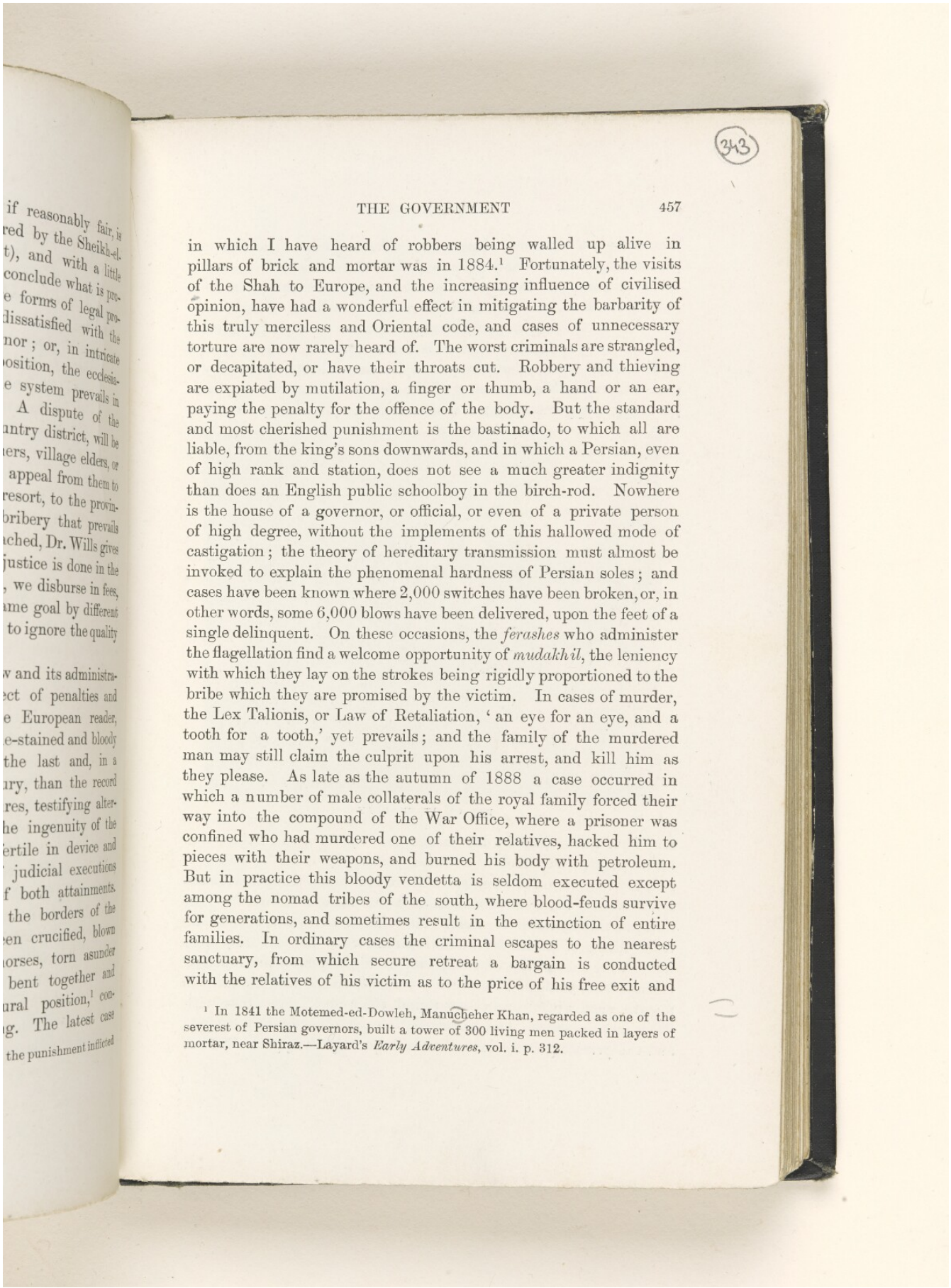



in which I have heard of robbers being walled up alive in pillars of brick and mortar was in 1884.[1] Fortunately, the visits of the Shah to Europe, and the increasing influence of civilised opinion, have had a wonderful effect in mitigating the barbarity of this truly merciless and Oriental code, and cases of unnecessary torture are now rarely heard of. The worst criminals are strangled, or decapitated, or have their throats cut. Robbery and thieving are expiated by mutilation, a finger or thumb, a hand or an ear, paying the penalty for the offence of the body. But the standard and most cherished punishment is the bastinado, to which all are liable, from the king's sons downwards, and in which a Persian, even of high rank and station, does not see a much greater indignity than does an English public schoolboy in the birch-rod. Nowhere is the house of a governor, or official, or even of a private person of high degree, without the implements of this hallowed mode of castigation; the theory of hereditary transmission must almost be invoked to explain the phenomenal hardness of Persian soles; and cases have been known where 2,000 switches have been broken, or, in other words, some 6,000 blows have been delivered, upon the feet of a single delinquent. On these occasions, the *ferashes* who administer the flagellation find a welcome opportunity of *mudakhil*, the leniency with which they lay on the strokes being rigidly proportioned to the bribe which they are promised by the victim. In cases of murder, the Lex Talionis, or Law of Retaliation, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' yet prevails; and the family of the murdered man may still claim the culprit upon his arrest, and kill him as they please. As late as the autumn of 1888 a case occurred in which a number of male collaterals of the royal family forced their way into the compound of the War Office, where a prisoner was confined who had murdered one of their relatives, hacked him to pieces with their weapons, and burned his body with petroleum. But in practice this bloody vendetta is seldom executed except among the nomad tribes of the south, where blood-feuds survive for generations, and sometimes result in the extinction of entire families. In ordinary cases the criminal escapes to the nearest sanctuary, from which secure retreat a bargain is conducted with the relatives of his victim as to the price of his free exit and

[1] In 1841 the Motemed-ed-Dowleh, Manucheher Khan, regarded as one of the severest of Persian governors, built a tower of 300 living men packed in layers of mortar, near Shiraz.—Layard's *Early Adventures*, vol. i. p. 312.

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release from the pursuit of revenge. The majority of crimes perpetrated upon individuals are expiated in this fashion.

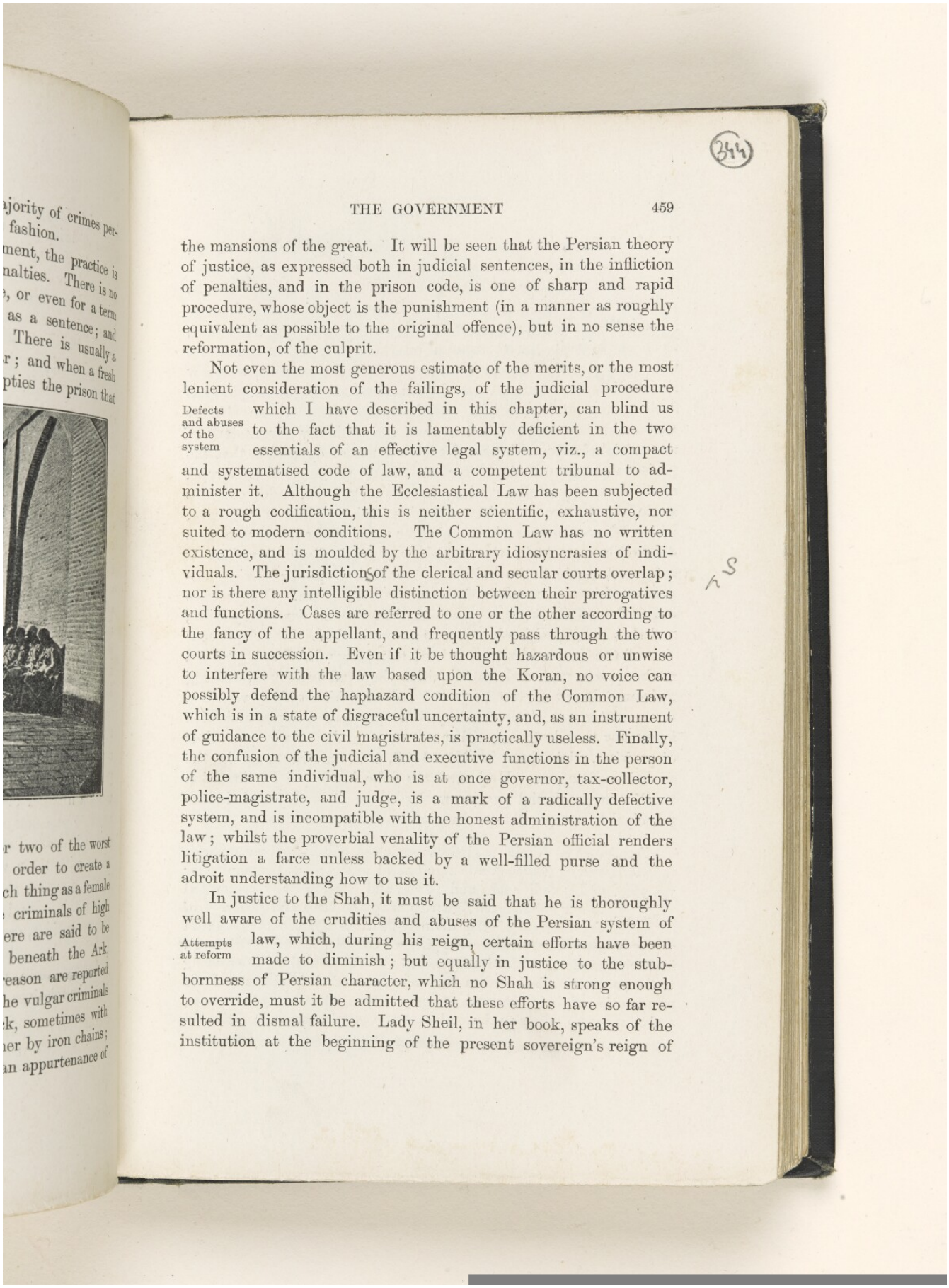
Prisons

Concerning the Persian mode of imprisonment, the practice is as different from our own as in the case of penalties. There is no such thing as penal servitude for life, or even for a term of years; hard labour is unknown as a sentence; and confinement for any lengthy period is rare. There is usually a gaol-delivery at the beginning of the new year; and when a fresh governor is appointed, he not uncommonly empties the prison that



PRISON AT TEHERAN

may have been filled by his predecessor, one or two of the worst cases, perhaps, suffering the death penalty, in order to create a salutary impression of strength. There is no such thing as a female ward, women being detained, as also are male criminals of high rank, in the house of a priest. In Teheran there are said to be three kinds of prison: the subterranean cells beneath the Ark, where criminals guilty of conspiracy or high treason are reported to have been confined; the town prison, where the vulgar criminals may be seen with iron collars round their neck, sometimes with their feet in stocks, and attached to each other by iron chains; and the private guard-house, that is frequently an appurtenance of



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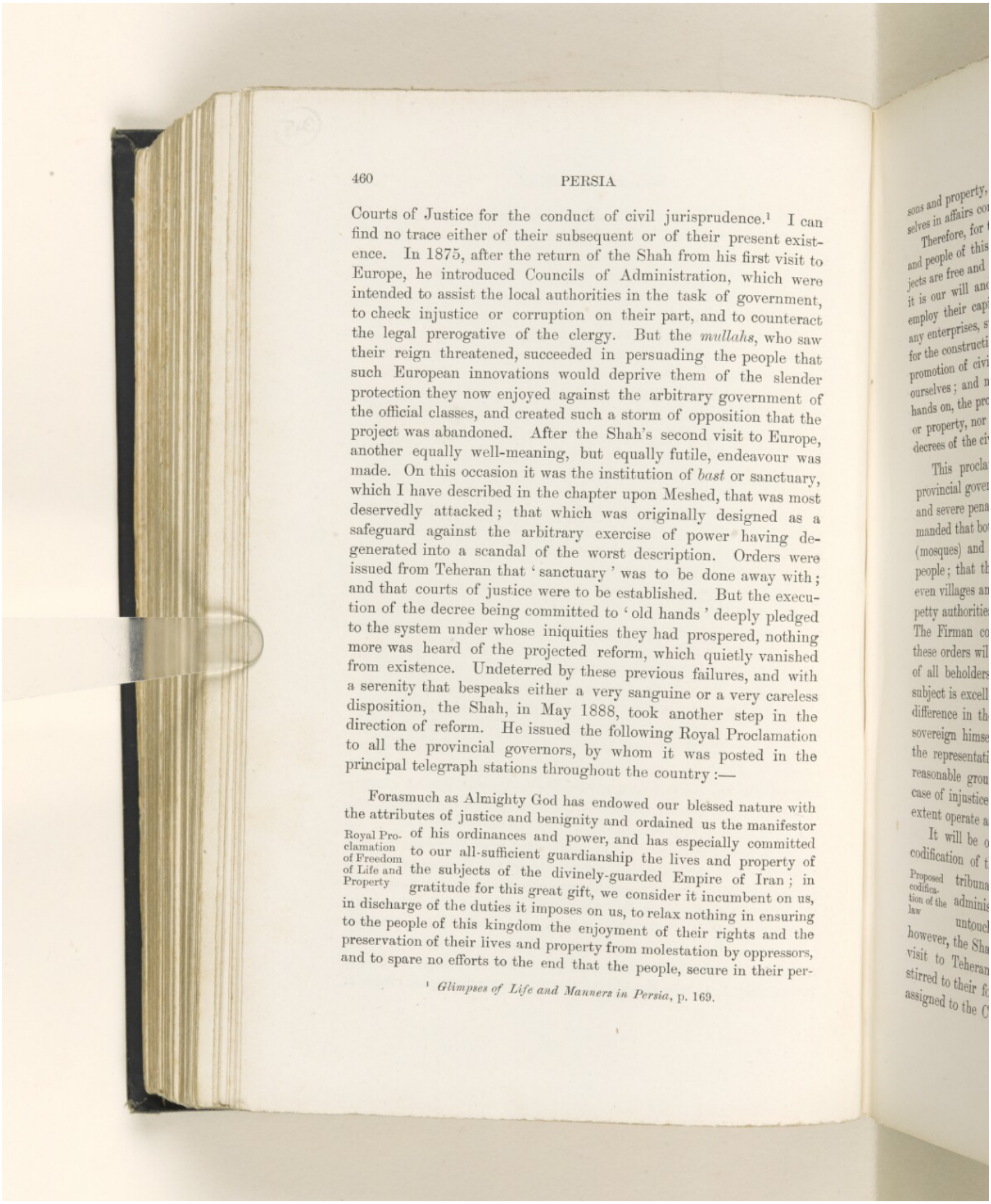
the mansions of the great. It will be seen that the Persian theory of justice, as expressed both in judicial sentences, in the infliction of penalties, and in the prison code, is one of sharp and rapid procedure, whose object is the punishment (in a manner as roughly equivalent as possible to the original offence), but in no sense the reformation, of the culprit.

Not even the most generous estimate of the merits, or the most lenient consideration of the failings, of the judicial procedure which I have described in this chapter, can blind us to the fact that it is lamentably deficient in the two essentials of an effective legal system, viz., a compact and systematised code of law, and a competent tribunal to administer it. Although the Ecclesiastical Law has been subjected to a rough codification, this is neither scientific, exhaustive, nor suited to modern conditions. The Common Law has no written existence, and is moulded by the arbitrary idiosyncrasies of individuals. The jurisdictions of the clerical and secular courts overlap; nor is there any intelligible distinction between their prerogatives and functions. Cases are referred to one or the other according to the fancy of the appellant, and frequently pass through the two courts in succession. Even if it be thought hazardous or unwise to interfere with the law based upon the Koran, no voice can possibly defend the haphazard condition of the Common Law, which is in a state of disgraceful uncertainty, and, as an instrument of guidance to the civil magistrates, is practically useless. Finally, the confusion of the judicial and executive functions in the person of the same individual, who is at once governor, tax-collector, police-magistrate, and judge, is a mark of a radically defective system, and is incompatible with the honest administration of the law; whilst the proverbial venality of the Persian official renders litigation a farce unless backed by a well-filled purse and the adroit understanding how to use it.

Defects and abuses of the system

In justice to the Shah, it must be said that he is thoroughly well aware of the crudities and abuses of the Persian system of law, which, during his reign, certain efforts have been made to diminish; but equally in justice to the stubbornness of Persian character, which no Shah is strong enough to override, must it be admitted that these efforts have so far resulted in dismal failure. Lady Sheil, in her book, speaks of the institution at the beginning of the present sovereign's reign of

Attempts at reform



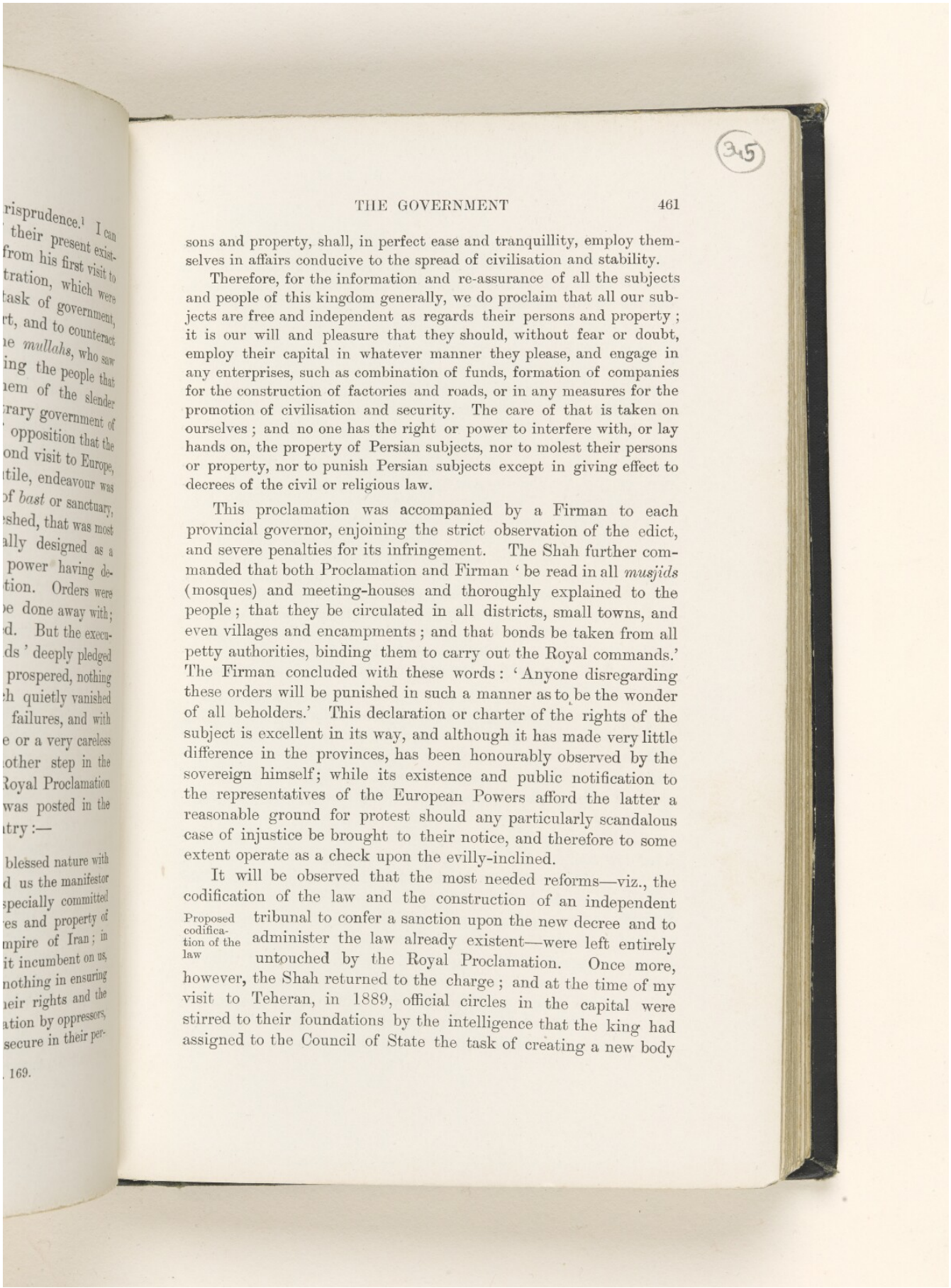


Courts of Justice for the conduct of civil jurisprudence.[1] I can find no trace either of their subsequent or of their present existence. In 1875, after the return of the Shah from his first visit to Europe, he introduced Councils of Administration, which were intended to assist the local authorities in the task of government, to check injustice or corruption on their part, and to counteract the legal prerogative of the clergy. But the *mullahs*, who saw their reign threatened, succeeded in persuading the people that such European innovations would deprive them of the slender protection they now enjoyed against the arbitrary government of the official classes, and created such a storm of opposition that the project was abandoned. After the Shah's second visit to Europe, another equally well-meaning, but equally futile, endeavour was made. On this occasion it was the institution of *bast* or sanctuary, which I have described in the chapter upon Meshed, that was most deservedly attacked; that which was originally designed as a safeguard against the arbitrary exercise of power having degenerated into a scandal of the worst description. Orders were issued from Teheran that 'sanctuary' was to be done away with; and that courts of justice were to be established. But the execution of the decree being committed to 'old hands' deeply pledged to the system under whose iniquities they had prospered, nothing more was heard of the projected reform, which quietly vanished from existence. Undeterred by these previous failures, and with a serenity that bespeaks either a very sanguine or a very careless disposition, the Shah, in May 1888, took another step in the direction of reform. He issued the following Royal Proclamation to all the provincial governors, by whom it was posted in the principal telegraph stations throughout the country:—

Royal Proclamation of Freedom of Life and Property

Forasmuch as Almighty God has endowed our blessed nature with the attributes of justice and benignity and ordained us the manifestor of his ordinances and power, and has especially committed to our all-sufficient guardianship the lives and property of the subjects of the divinely-guarded Empire of Iran; in gratitude for this great gift, we consider it incumbent on us, in discharge of the duties it imposes on us, to relax nothing in ensuring to the people of this kingdom the enjoyment of their rights and the preservation of their lives and property from molestation by oppressors, and to spare no efforts to the end that the people, secure in their per-

[1] *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, p. 169.





sons and property, shall, in perfect ease and tranquillity, employ themselves in affairs conducive to the spread of civilisation and stability.

Therefore, for the information and re-assurance of all the subjects and people of this kingdom generally, we do proclaim that all our subjects are free and independent as regards their persons and property; it is our will and pleasure that they should, without fear or doubt, employ their capital in whatever manner they please, and engage in any enterprises, such as combination of funds, formation of companies for the construction of factories and roads, or in any measures for the promotion of civilisation and security. The care of that is taken on ourselves; and no one has the right or power to interfere with, or lay hands on, the property of Persian subjects, nor to molest their persons or property, nor to punish Persian subjects except in giving effect to decrees of the civil or religious law.

This proclamation was accompanied by a Firman to each provincial governor, enjoining the strict observation of the edict, and severe penalties for its infringement. The Shah further commanded that both Proclamation and Firman 'be read in all *musjids* (mosques) and meeting-houses and thoroughly explained to the people; that they be circulated in all districts, small towns, and even villages and encampments; and that bonds be taken from all petty authorities, binding them to carry out the Royal commands.' The Firman concluded with these words: 'Anyone disregarding these orders will be punished in such a manner as to be the wonder of all beholders.' This declaration or charter of the rights of the subject is excellent in its way, and although it has made very little difference in the provinces, has been honourably observed by the sovereign himself; while its existence and public notification to the representatives of the European Powers afford the latter a reasonable ground for protest should any particularly scandalous case of injustice be brought to their notice, and therefore to some extent operate as a check upon the evilly-inclined.

It will be observed that the most needed reforms—viz., the codification of the law and the construction of an independent tribunal to confer a sanction upon the new decree and to administer the law already existent—were left entirely untouched by the Royal Proclamation. Once more, however, the Shah returned to the charge; and at the time of my visit to Teheran, in 1889, official circles in the capital were stirred to their foundations by the intelligence that the king had assigned to the Council of State the task of creating a new body

Proposed codification of the law

of law for the regulation of justice. In the 'Times' I wrote as follows of this undertaking, purposely couching my remarks in a hopeful strain, so that I might not seem everywhere to see the blacker side of the cloud:—

The Council, who have not the clearest notion of what is required of them, have commenced the translation of the Code Napoléon, and have also been supplied with copies of that code as modified to suit the exigencies of the French Mohammedan populations, and also of our own Indian Mohammedan code; but, beyond this, have come to no decision as to what is incumbent upon them. There are some who regard the Royal command as a mere passing caprice, and expect no practical result. It is to be hoped, however, that this will not be the case, but that the Shah may be encouraged to proceed with a not unpromising design. The new code, however, if it is to be of any service, must contain provisions for tribunals, as well as laws; such provisions being, indeed, embodied in the European codes, upon which it will probably be modelled. A difficulty may be experienced in procuring judges of integrity and worth, and no abrupt change can be expected in the habits or moral standards of an Oriental country. But the eyes of the West will, at least, be directed with interest towards this fresh attempt to emancipate Persia from herself; while the assistance of foreign Governments may legitimately be given both towards the compilation of the new body of law and towards its proper administration when completed.

In response to recent inquiries (1891), I am informed that nothing further has been heard of the new code, whence I am led to infer that one more excellent scheme has gone into the waste-paper basket, and that one more stone must be added to the cairn of abortive reforms that has been so conscientiously piled by Nasr-ed-Din Shah.

Effect on national character

Under a twofold governing system, such as that of which I have now completed the description—namely, an administration in which every actor is, in different aspects, both the briber and the bribed; and a judicial procedure, without either a law or a law court—it will readily be understood that confidence in the Government is not likely to exist, that there is no personal sense of duty or pride of honour, no mutual trust or co-operation (except in the service of ill-doing), no disgrace in exposure, no credit in virtue, above all no national spirit or patriotism. Those philosophers are right who argue that moral must precede material, and internal exterior, reform in Persia. It

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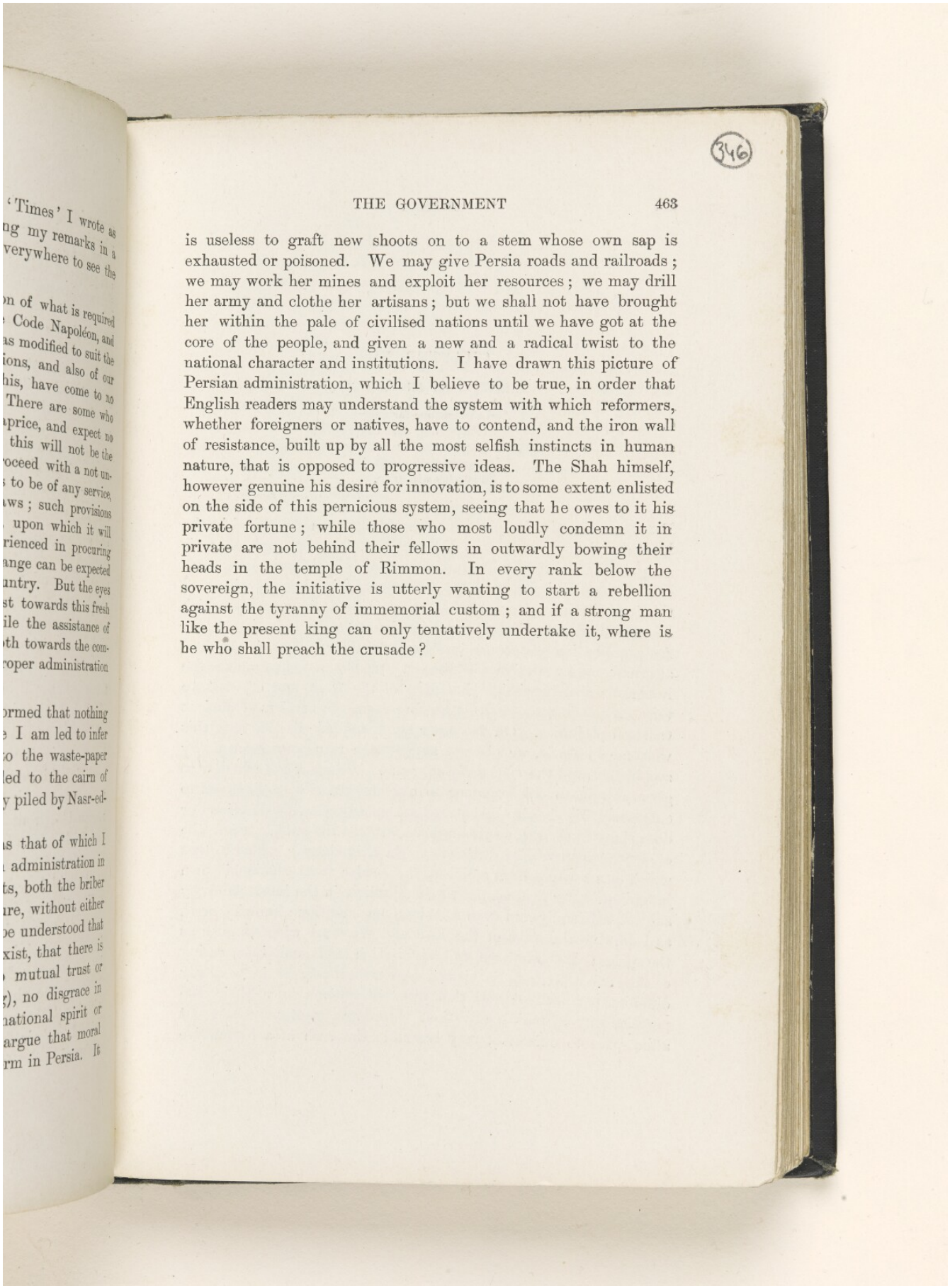
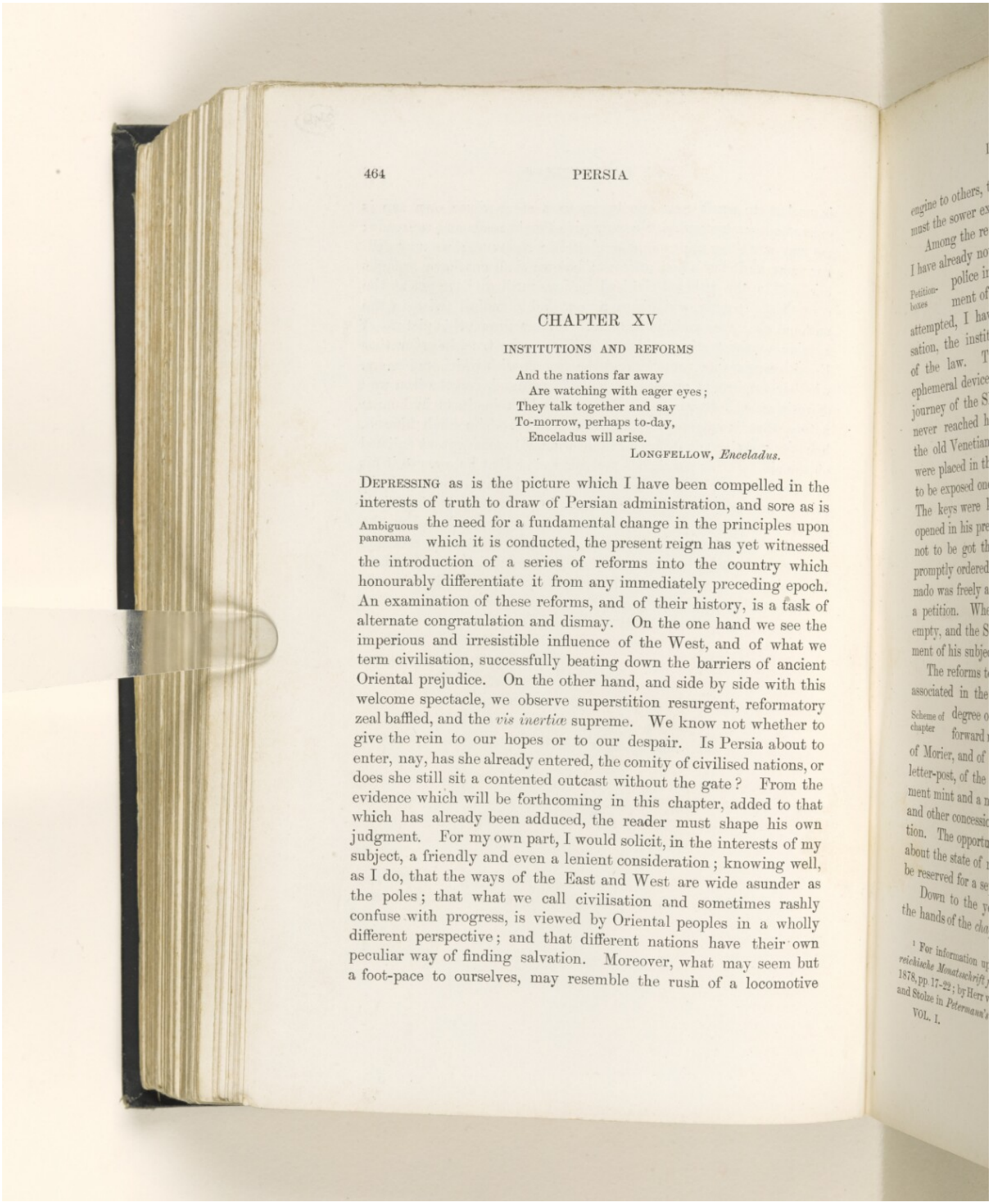




is useless to graft new shoots on to a stem whose own sap is exhausted or poisoned. We may give Persia roads and railroads; we may work her mines and exploit her resources; we may drill her army and clothe her artisans; but we shall not have brought her within the pale of civilised nations until we have got at the core of the people, and given a new and a radical twist to the national character and institutions. I have drawn this picture of Persian administration, which I believe to be true, in order that English readers may understand the system with which reformers, whether foreigners or natives, have to contend, and the iron wall of resistance, built up by all the most selfish instincts in human nature, that is opposed to progressive ideas. The Shah himself, however genuine his desire for innovation, is to some extent enlisted on the side of this pernicious system, seeing that he owes to it his private fortune; while those who most loudly condemn it in private are not behind their fellows in outwardly bowing their heads in the temple of Rimmon. In every rank below the sovereign, the initiative is utterly wanting to start a rebellion against the tyranny of immemorial custom; and if a strong man like the present king can only tentatively undertake it, where is he who shall preach the crusade?





## CHAPTER XV

### INSTITUTIONS AND REFORMS

And the nations far away
Are watching with eager eyes;
They talk together and say
To-morrow, perhaps to-day,
Enceladus will arise.

LONGFELLOW, *Enceladus.*

Ambiguous panorama

DEPRESSING as is the picture which I have been compelled in the interests of truth to draw of Persian administration, and sore as is the need for a fundamental change in the principles upon which it is conducted, the present reign has yet witnessed the introduction of a series of reforms into the country which honourably differentiate it from any immediately preceding epoch. An examination of these reforms, and of their history, is a task of alternate congratulation and dismay. On the one hand we see the imperious and irresistible influence of the West, and of what we term civilisation, successfully beating down the barriers of ancient Oriental prejudice. On the other hand, and side by side with this welcome spectacle, we observe superstition resurgent, reformatory zeal baffled, and the *vis inertiæ* supreme. We know not whether to give the rein to our hopes or to our despair. Is Persia about to enter, nay, has she already entered, the comity of civilised nations, or does she still sit a contented outcast without the gate? From the evidence which will be forthcoming in this chapter, added to that which has already been adduced, the reader must shape his own judgment. For my own part, I would solicit, in the interests of my subject, a friendly and even a lenient consideration; knowing well, as I do, that the ways of the East and West are wide asunder as the poles; that what we call civilisation and sometimes rashly confuse with progress, is viewed by Oriental peoples in a wholly different perspective; and that different nations have their own peculiar way of finding salvation. Moreover, what may seem but a foot-pace to ourselves, may resemble the rush of a locomotive



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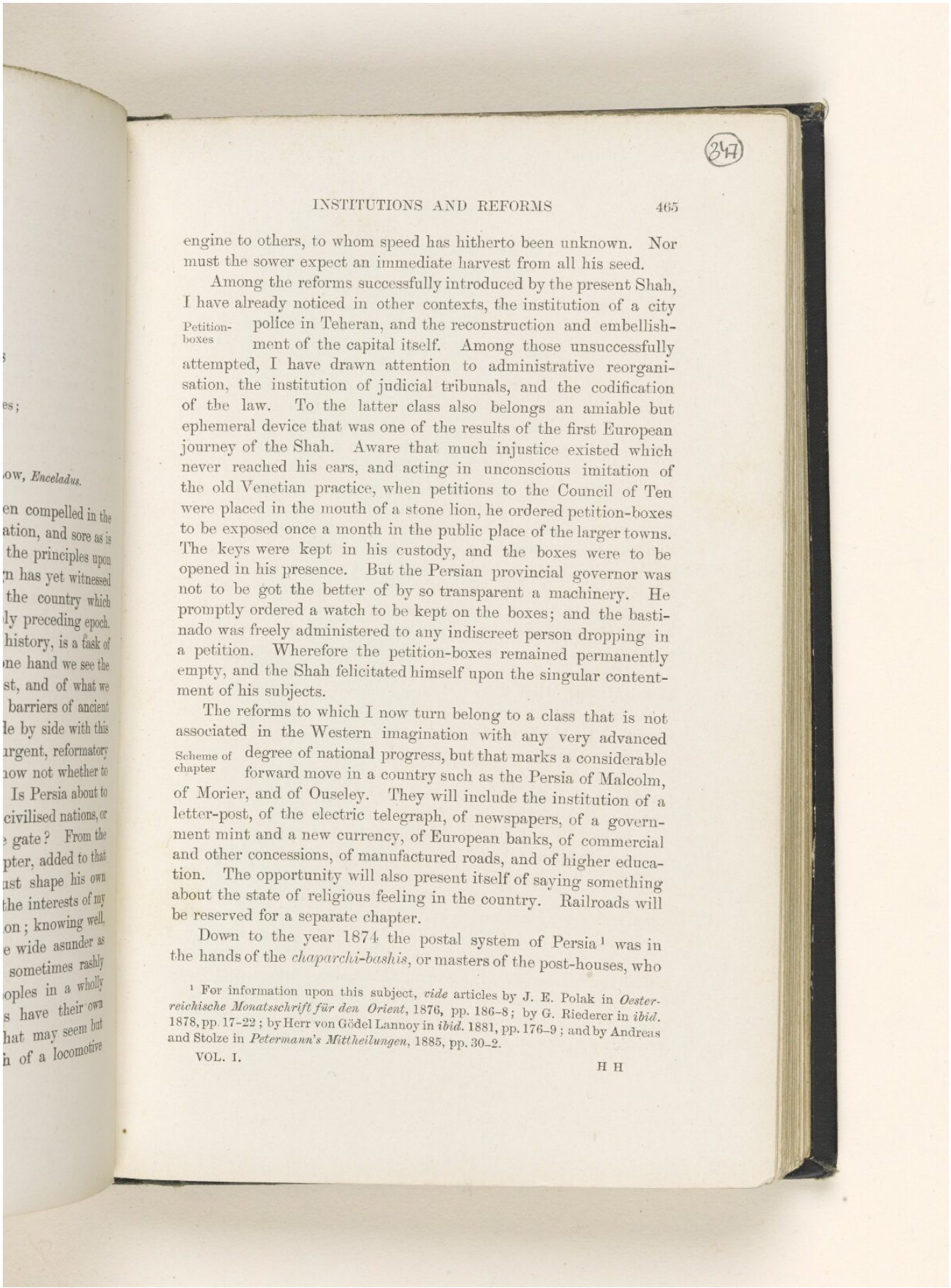



engine to others, to whom speed has hitherto been unknown. Nor must the sower expect an immediate harvest from all his seed.

Among the reforms successfully introduced by the present Shah, I have already noticed in other contexts, the institution of a city police in Teheran, and the reconstruction and embellishment of the capital itself. Among those unsuccessfully attempted, I have drawn attention to administrative reorganisation, the institution of judicial tribunals, and the codification of the law. To the latter class also belongs an amiable but ephemeral device that was one of the results of the first European journey of the Shah. Aware that much injustice existed which never reached his ears, and acting in unconscious imitation of the old Venetian practice, when petitions to the Council of Ten were placed in the mouth of a stone lion, he ordered petition-boxes to be exposed once a month in the public place of the larger towns. The keys were kept in his custody, and the boxes were to be opened in his presence. But the Persian provincial governor was not to be got the better of by so transparent a machinery. He promptly ordered a watch to be kept on the boxes; and the bastinado was freely administered to any indiscreet person dropping in a petition. Wherefore the petition-boxes remained permanently empty, and the Shah felicitated himself upon the singular contentment of his subjects.

Petition-boxes

The reforms to which I now turn belong to a class that is not associated in the Western imagination with any very advanced degree of national progress, but that marks a considerable forward move in a country such as the Persia of Malcolm, of Morier, and of Ouseley. They will include the institution of a letter-post, of the electric telegraph, of newspapers, of a government mint and a new currency, of European banks, of commercial and other concessions, of manufactured roads, and of higher education. The opportunity will also present itself of saying something about the state of religious feeling in the country. Railroads will be reserved for a separate chapter.

Scheme of chapter

Down to the year 1874 the postal system of Persia[1] was in the hands of the *chaparchi-bashis*, or masters of the post-houses, who

[1] For information upon this subject, *vide* articles by J. E. Polak in *Oesterreichische Monatsschrift für den Orient*, 1876, pp. 186–8; by G. Riederer in *ibid.* 1878, pp. 17–22; by Herr von Gödel Lannoy in *ibid.* 1881, pp. 176–9; and by Andreas and Stolze in *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1885, pp. 30–2.



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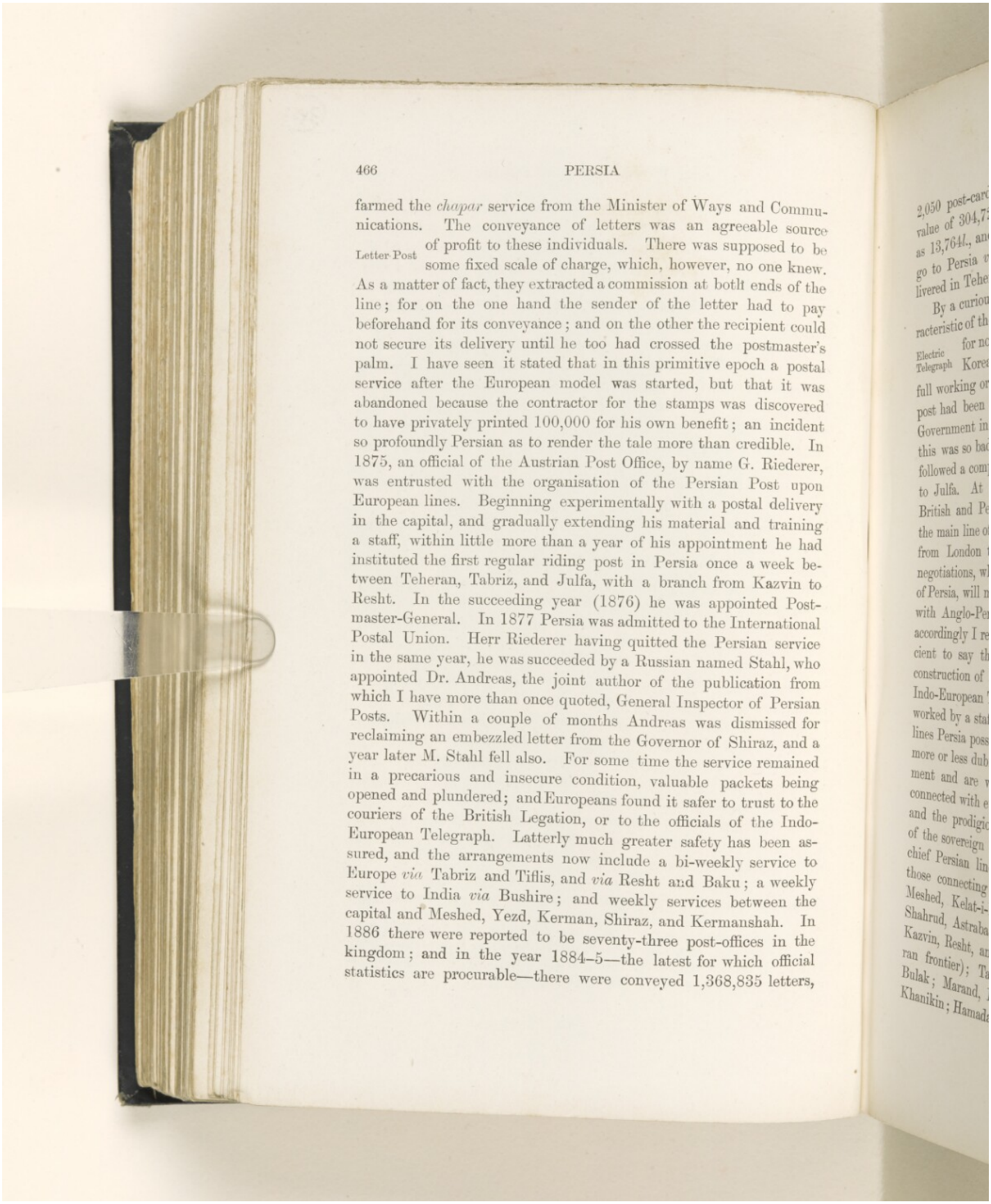



farmed the *chapar* service from the Minister of Ways and Communications. The conveyance of letters was an agreeable source of profit to these individuals. There was supposed to be some fixed scale of charge, which, however, no one knew. As a matter of fact, they extracted a commission at both ends of the line; for on the one hand the sender of the letter had to pay beforehand for its conveyance; and on the other the recipient could not secure its delivery until he too had crossed the postmaster's palm. I have seen it stated that in this primitive epoch a postal service after the European model was started, but that it was abandoned because the contractor for the stamps was discovered to have privately printed 100,000 for his own benefit; an incident so profoundly Persian as to render the tale more than credible. In 1875, an official of the Austrian Post Office, by name G. Riederer, was entrusted with the organisation of the Persian Post upon European lines. Beginning experimentally with a postal delivery in the capital, and gradually extending his material and training a staff, within little more than a year of his appointment he had instituted the first regular riding post in Persia once a week between Teheran, Tabriz, and Julfa, with a branch from Kazvin to Resht. In the succeeding year (1876) he was appointed Postmaster-General. In 1877 Persia was admitted to the International Postal Union. Herr Riederer having quitted the Persian service in the same year, he was succeeded by a Russian named Stahl, who appointed Dr. Andreas, the joint author of the publication from which I have more than once quoted, General Inspector of Persian Posts. Within a couple of months Andreas was dismissed for reclaiming an embezzled letter from the Governor of Shiraz, and a year later M. Stahl fell also. For some time the service remained in a precarious and insecure condition, valuable packets being opened and plundered; and Europeans found it safer to trust to the couriers of the British Legation, or to the officials of the Indo-European Telegraph. Latterly much greater safety has been assured, and the arrangements now include a bi-weekly service to Europe *via* Tabriz and Tiflis, and *via* Resht and Baku; a weekly service to India *via* Bushire; and weekly services between the capital and Meshed, Yezd, Kerman, Shiraz, and Kermanshah. In 1886 there were reported to be seventy-three post-offices in the kingdom; and in the year 1884–5—the latest for which official statistics are procurable—there were conveyed 1,368,835 letters,

Letter-Post

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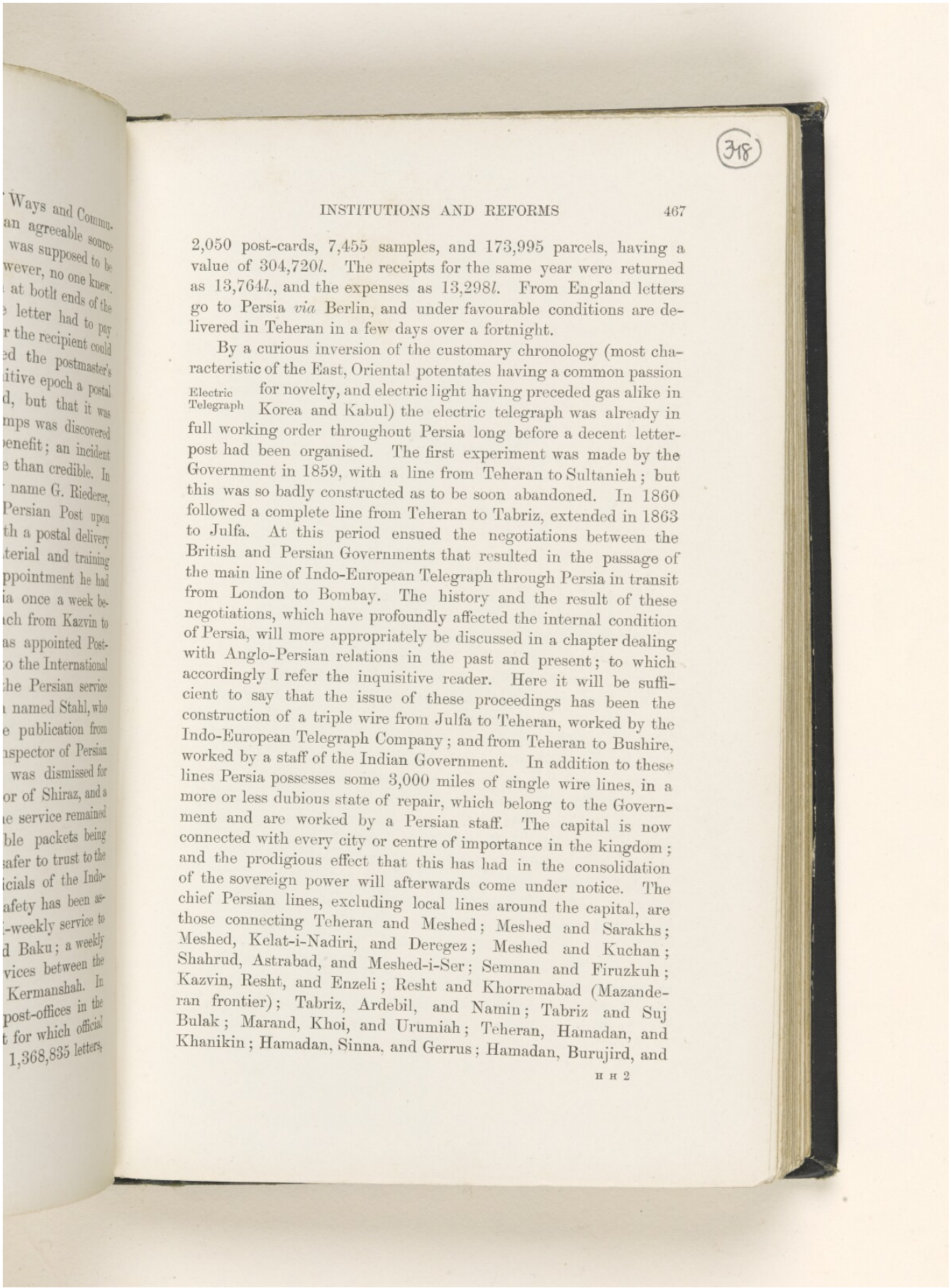



2,050 post-cards, 7,455 samples, and 173,995 parcels, having a value of 304,720*l*. The receipts for the same year were returned as 13,764*l*., and the expenses as 13,298*l*. From England letters go to Persia *via* Berlin, and under favourable conditions are delivered in Teheran in a few days over a fortnight.

By a curious inversion of the customary chronology (most characteristic of the East, Oriental potentates having a common passion for novelty, and electric light having preceded gas alike in Korea and Kabul) the electric telegraph was already in full working order throughout Persia long before a decent letter-post had been organised. The first experiment was made by the Government in 1859, with a line from Teheran to Sultanieh; but this was so badly constructed as to be soon abandoned. In 1860 followed a complete line from Teheran to Tabriz, extended in 1863 to Julfa. At this period ensued the negotiations between the British and Persian Governments that resulted in the passage of the main line of Indo-European Telegraph through Persia in transit from London to Bombay. The history and the result of these negotiations, which have profoundly affected the internal condition of Persia, will more appropriately be discussed in a chapter dealing with Anglo-Persian relations in the past and present; to which accordingly I refer the inquisitive reader. Here it will be sufficient to say that the issue of these proceedings has been the construction of a triple wire from Julfa to Teheran, worked by the Indo-European Telegraph Company; and from Teheran to Bushire, worked by a staff of the Indian Government. In addition to these lines Persia possesses some 3,000 miles of single wire lines, in a more or less dubious state of repair, which belong to the Government and are worked by a Persian staff. The capital is now connected with every city or centre of importance in the kingdom; and the prodigious effect that this has had in the consolidation of the sovereign power will afterwards come under notice. The chief Persian lines, excluding local lines around the capital, are those connecting Teheran and Meshed; Meshed and Sarakhs; Meshed, Kelat-i-Nadiri, and Deregez; Meshed and Kuchan; Shahrud, Astrabad, and Meshed-i-Ser; Semnan and Firuzkuh; Kazvin, Resht, and Enzeli; Resht and Khorremabad (Mazanderan frontier); Tabriz, Ardebil, and Namin; Tabriz and Suj Bulak; Marand, Khoi, and Urumiah; Teheran, Hamadan, and Khanikin; Hamadan, Sinna, and Gerrus; Hamadan, Burujird, and

Electric Telegraph



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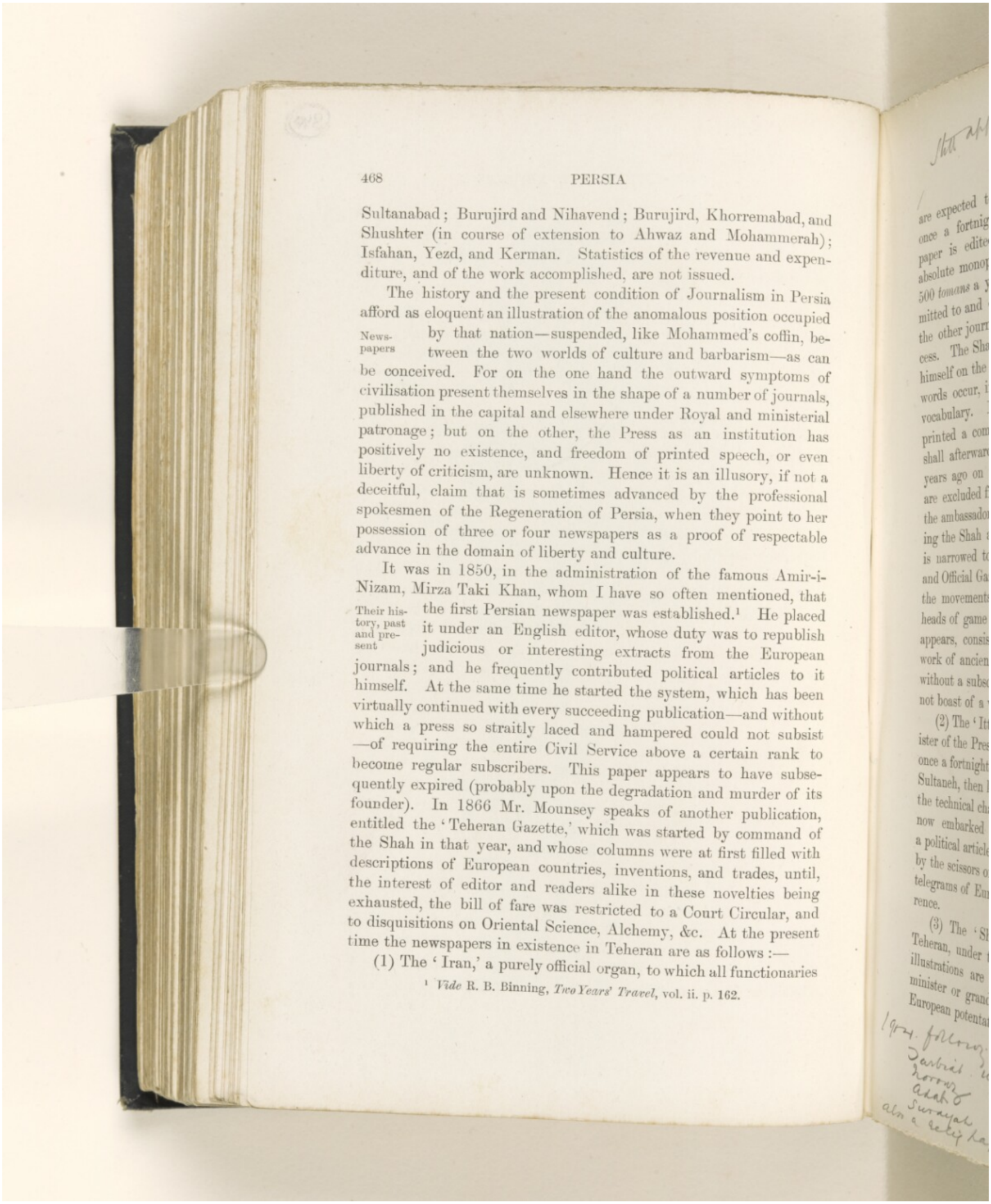




Sultanabad; Burujird and Nihavend; Burujird, Khorremabad, and Shushter (in course of extension to Ahwaz and Mohammerah); Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman. Statistics of the revenue and expenditure, and of the work accomplished, are not issued.

The history and the present condition of Journalism in Persia afford as eloquent an illustration of the anomalous position occupied by that nation—suspended, like Mohammed's coffin, between the two worlds of culture and barbarism—as can be conceived. For on the one hand the outward symptoms of civilisation present themselves in the shape of a number of journals, published in the capital and elsewhere under Royal and ministerial patronage; but on the other, the Press as an institution has positively no existence, and freedom of printed speech, or even liberty of criticism, are unknown. Hence it is an illusory, if not a deceitful, claim that is sometimes advanced by the professional spokesmen of the Regeneration of Persia, when they point to her possession of three or four newspapers as a proof of respectable advance in the domain of liberty and culture.

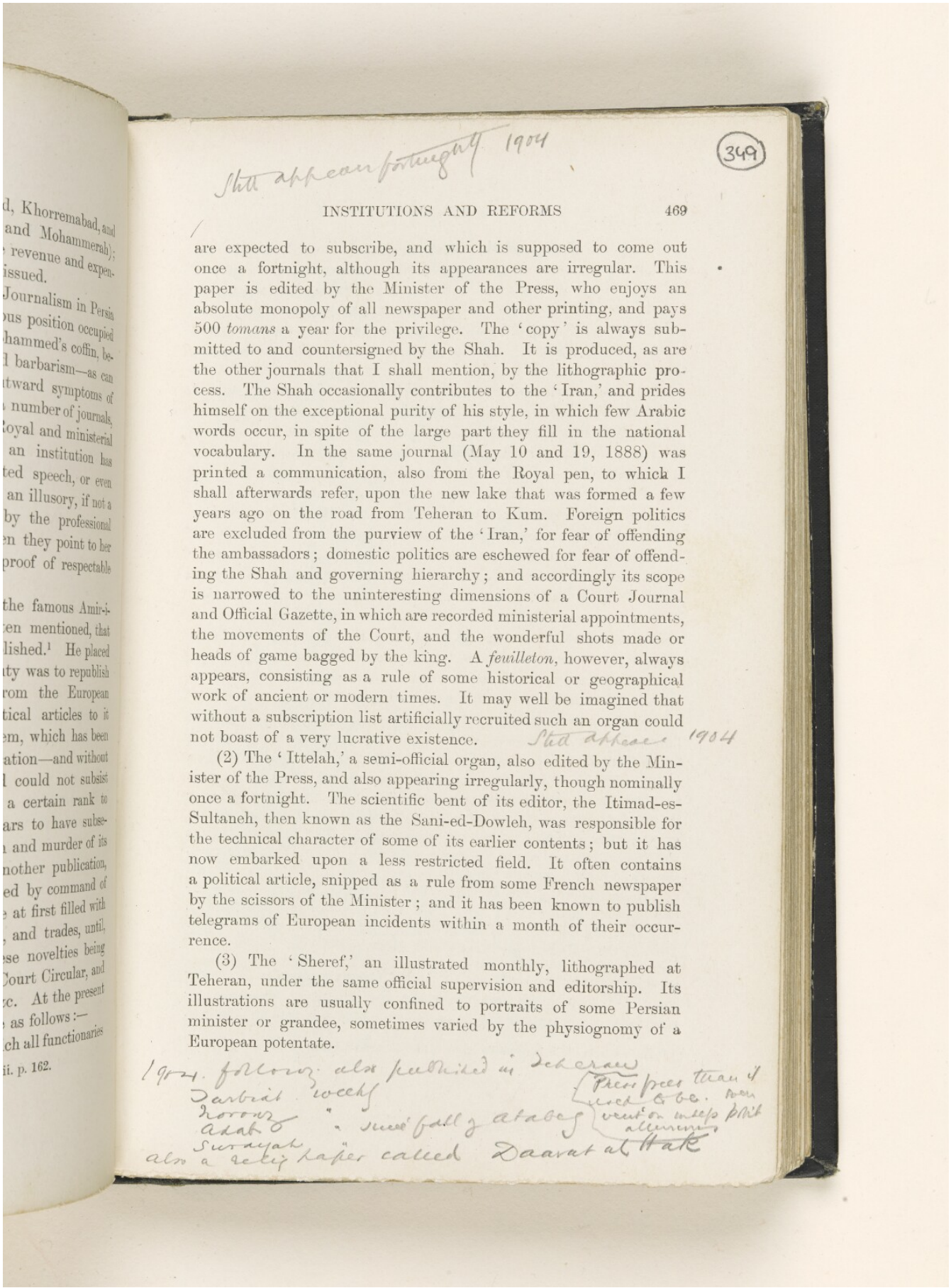
Newspapers

It was in 1850, in the administration of the famous Amir-i-Nizam, Mirza Taki Khan, whom I have so often mentioned, that the first Persian newspaper was established.[1] He placed it under an English editor, whose duty was to republish judicious or interesting extracts from the European journals; and he frequently contributed political articles to it himself. At the same time he started the system, which has been virtually continued with every succeeding publication—and without which a press so straitly laced and hampered could not subsist—of requiring the entire Civil Service above a certain rank to become regular subscribers. This paper appears to have subsequently expired (probably upon the degradation and murder of its founder). In 1866 Mr. Mounsey speaks of another publication, entitled the 'Teheran Gazette,' which was started by command of the Shah in that year, and whose columns were at first filled with descriptions of European countries, inventions, and trades, until, the interest of editor and readers alike in these novelties being exhausted, the bill of fare was restricted to a Court Circular, and to disquisitions on Oriental Science, Alchemy, &c. At the present time the newspapers in existence in Teheran are as follows:—

Their history, past and present

(1) The 'Iran,' a purely official organ, to which all functionaries

[1] *Vide* R. B. Binning, *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. p. 162.



Still appear fortnightly 1904

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are expected to subscribe, and which is supposed to come out once a fortnight, although its appearances are irregular. This paper is edited by the Minister of the Press, who enjoys an absolute monopoly of all newspaper and other printing, and pays 500 *tomans* a year for the privilege. The 'copy' is always submitted to and countersigned by the Shah. It is produced, as are the other journals that I shall mention, by the lithographic process. The Shah occasionally contributes to the 'Iran,' and prides himself on the exceptional purity of his style, in which few Arabic words occur, in spite of the large part they fill in the national vocabulary. In the same journal (May 10 and 19, 1888) was printed a communication, also from the Royal pen, to which I shall afterwards refer, upon the new lake that was formed a few years ago on the road from Teheran to Kum. Foreign politics are excluded from the purview of the 'Iran,' for fear of offending the ambassadors; domestic politics are eschewed for fear of offending the Shah and governing hierarchy; and accordingly its scope is narrowed to the uninteresting dimensions of a Court Journal and Official Gazette, in which are recorded ministerial appointments, the movements of the Court, and the wonderful shots made or heads of game bagged by the king. A *feuilleton*, however, always appears, consisting as a rule of some historical or geographical work of ancient or modern times. It may well be imagined that without a subscription list artificially recruited such an organ could not boast of a very lucrative existence. Still appears 1904

(2) The 'Ittelah,' a semi-official organ, also edited by the Minister of the Press, and also appearing irregularly, though nominally once a fortnight. The scientific bent of its editor, the Itimad-es-Sultaneh, then known as the Sani-ed-Dowleh, was responsible for the technical character of some of its earlier contents; but it has now embarked upon a less restricted field. It often contains a political article, snipped as a rule from some French newspaper by the scissors of the Minister; and it has been known to publish telegrams of European incidents within a month of their occurrence.

(3) The 'Sheref,' an illustrated monthly, lithographed at Teheran, under the same official supervision and editorship. Its illustrations are usually confined to portraits of some Persian minister or grandee, sometimes varied by the physiognomy of a European potentate.

1904. following also published in Tehran
Jarideh-i-Iowdeh
Koroush " semi-fortnightly Arabic
Surayah
also a religious paper called Daarat al Hak
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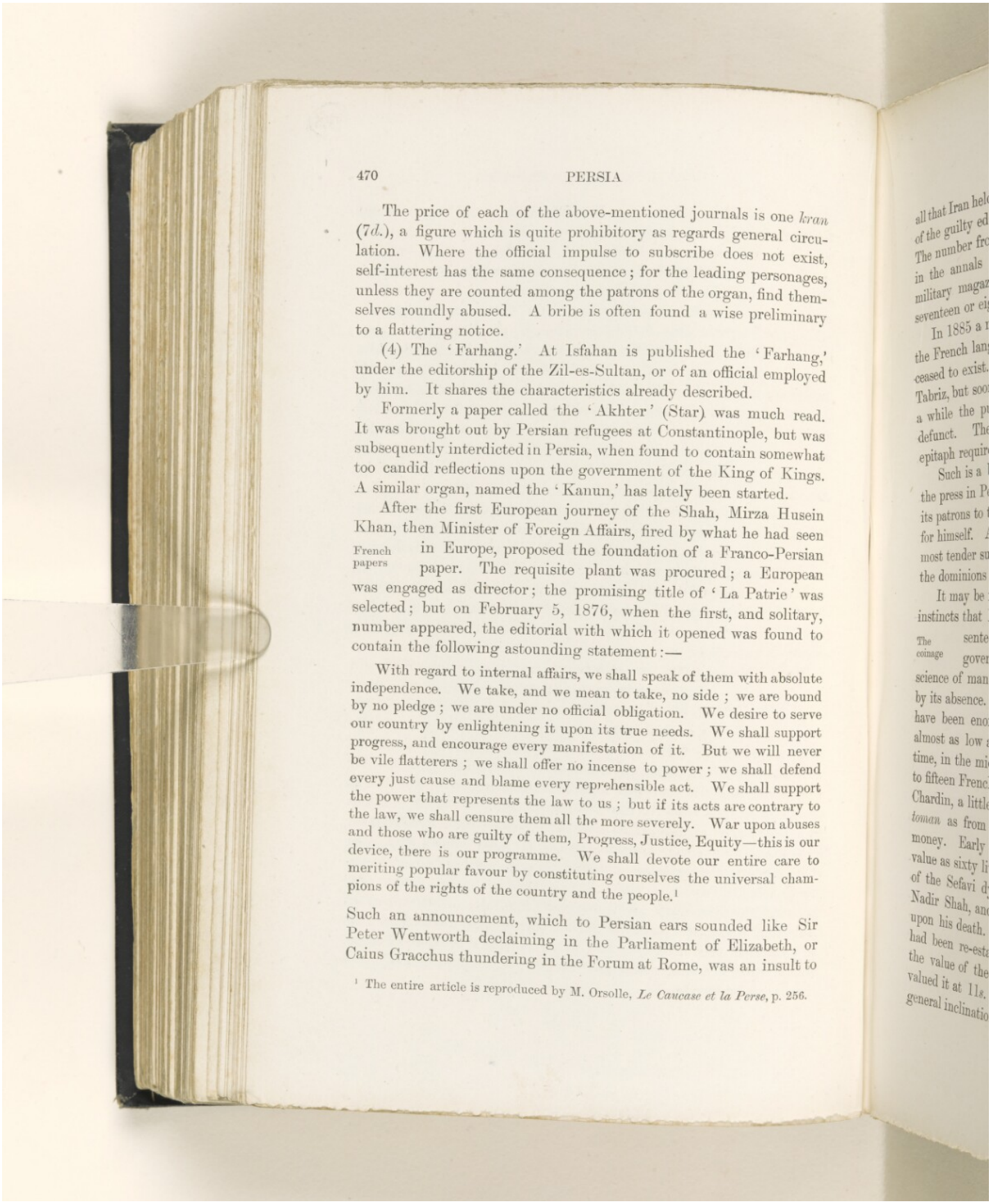



The price of each of the above-mentioned journals is one *kran* (7*d.*), a figure which is quite prohibitory as regards general circulation. Where the official impulse to subscribe does not exist, self-interest has the same consequence; for the leading personages, unless they are counted among the patrons of the organ, find themselves roundly abused. A bribe is often found a wise preliminary to a flattering notice.

(4) The 'Farhang.' At Isfahan is published the 'Farhang,' under the editorship of the Zil-es-Sultan, or of an official employed by him. It shares the characteristics already described.

Formerly a paper called the 'Akhter' (Star) was much read. It was brought out by Persian refugees at Constantinople, but was subsequently interdicted in Persia, when found to contain somewhat too candid reflections upon the government of the King of Kings. A similar organ, named the 'Kanun,' has lately been started.

French papers

After the first European journey of the Shah, Mirza Husein Khan, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, fired by what he had seen in Europe, proposed the foundation of a Franco-Persian paper. The requisite plant was procured; a European was engaged as director; the promising title of 'La Patrie' was selected; but on February 5, 1876, when the first, and solitary, number appeared, the editorial with which it opened was found to contain the following astounding statement:—

With regard to internal affairs, we shall speak of them with absolute independence. We take, and we mean to take, no side; we are bound by no pledge; we are under no official obligation. We desire to serve our country by enlightening it upon its true needs. We shall support progress, and encourage every manifestation of it. But we will never be vile flatterers; we shall offer no incense to power; we shall defend every just cause and blame every reprehensible act. We shall support the power that represents the law to us; but if its acts are contrary to the law, we shall censure them all the more severely. War upon abuses and those who are guilty of them, Progress, Justice, Equity—this is our device, there is our programme. We shall devote our entire care to meriting popular favour by constituting ourselves the universal champions of the rights of the country and the people.[1]

Such an announcement, which to Persian ears sounded like Sir Peter Wentworth declaiming in the Parliament of Elizabeth, or Caius Gracchus thundering in the Forum at Rome, was an insult to

[1] The entire article is reproduced by M. Orsolle, *Le Caucase et la Perse*, p. 256.

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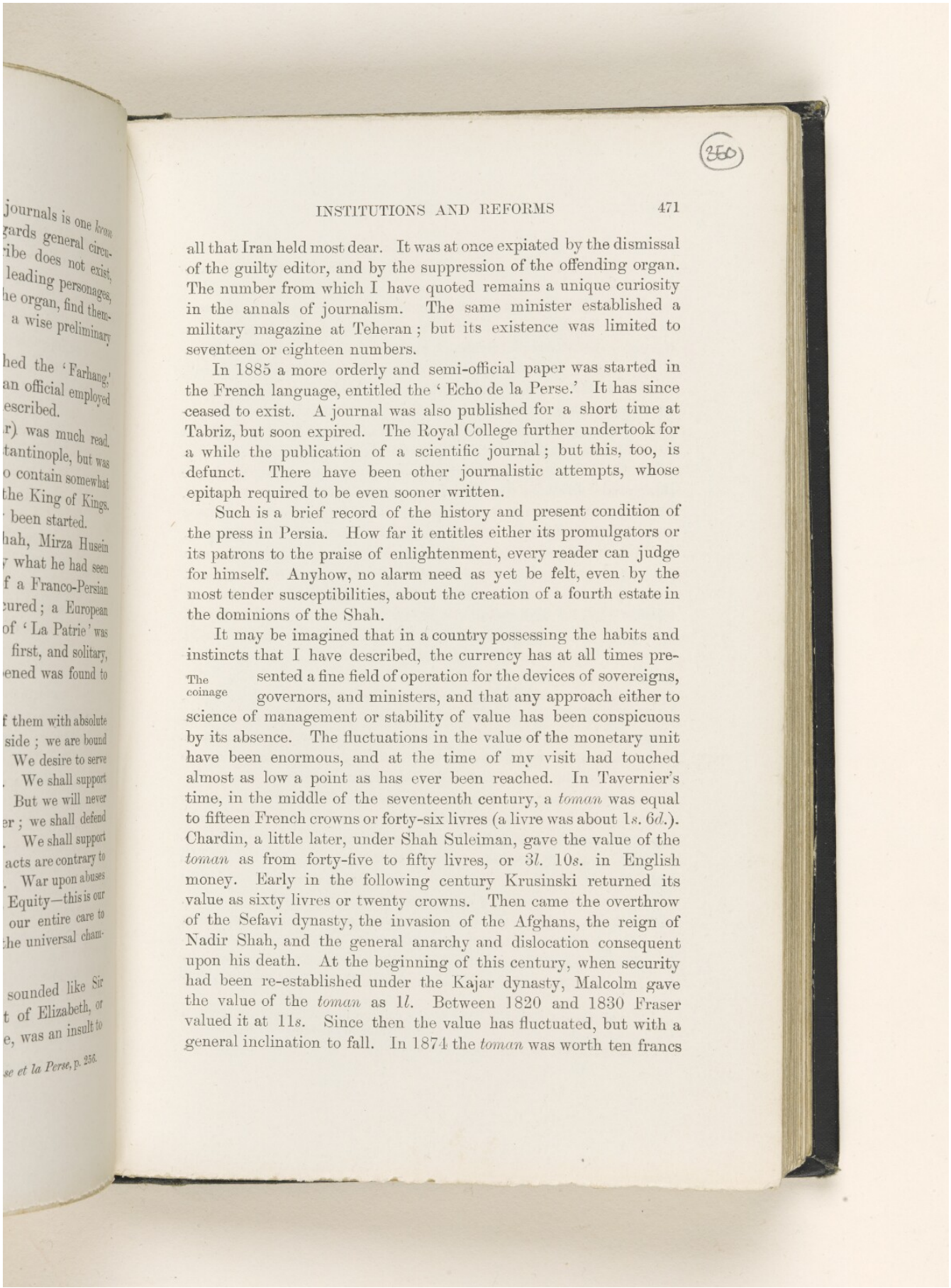

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*se et la Perse*, p. 256.

(350)



all that Iran held most dear. It was at once expiated by the dismissal of the guilty editor, and by the suppression of the offending organ. The number from which I have quoted remains a unique curiosity in the annals of journalism. The same minister established a military magazine at Teheran; but its existence was limited to seventeen or eighteen numbers.

In 1885 a more orderly and semi-official paper was started in the French language, entitled the 'Echo de la Perse.' It has since ceased to exist. A journal was also published for a short time at Tabriz, but soon expired. The Royal College further undertook for a while the publication of a scientific journal; but this, too, is defunct. There have been other journalistic attempts, whose epitaph required to be even sooner written.

Such is a brief record of the history and present condition of the press in Persia. How far it entitles either its promulgators or its patrons to the praise of enlightenment, every reader can judge for himself. Anyhow, no alarm need as yet be felt, even by the most tender susceptibilities, about the creation of a fourth estate in the dominions of the Shah.

The coinage

It may be imagined that in a country possessing the habits and instincts that I have described, the currency has at all times presented a fine field of operation for the devices of sovereigns, governors, and ministers, and that any approach either to science of management or stability of value has been conspicuous by its absence. The fluctuations in the value of the monetary unit have been enormous, and at the time of my visit had touched almost as low a point as has ever been reached. In Tavernier's time, in the middle of the seventeenth century, a *toman* was equal to fifteen French crowns or forty-six livres (a livre was about 1*s.* 6*d.*). Chardin, a little later, under Shah Suleiman, gave the value of the *toman* as from forty-five to fifty livres, or 3*l.* 10*s.* in English money. Early in the following century Krusinski returned its value as sixty livres or twenty crowns. Then came the overthrow of the Sefavi dynasty, the invasion of the Afghans, the reign of Nadir Shah, and the general anarchy and dislocation consequent upon his death. At the beginning of this century, when security had been re-established under the Kajar dynasty, Malcolm gave the value of the *toman* as 1*l.* Between 1820 and 1830 Fraser valued it at 11*s.* Since then the value has fluctuated, but with a general inclination to fall. In 1874 the *toman* was worth ten francs

or 8*s*. In 1889–90, when I was in Persia, it had sunk at one moment to 5½*s*. The rise in the price of silver has since raised it to over 6*s*.

Government Mint

Formerly there was a Government Mint at nearly every big town in Persia—at Hamadan, Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan, Kerman, Meshed, Kermanshah, Résht, Astrabad, Kum, and in Mazanderan and Seistan—and the antiquated products of these local mints are still sometimes encountered.[1] This haphazard system was a great encouragement to forgery, and there was quite a brisk manufacture of spurious coins, the Government being finally compelled to call in the whole of the old hammer-struck currency. It was in 1865 that the reigning Shah, having been persuaded by some interested individual to recoin the currency on the European system, instructed his minister at Paris to purchase the necessary machinery and to engage French engineers. The men duly arrived at Teheran, but the machinery, the packing-cases of which had already been consumed as fuel for the steamer that brought it, was deposited upon the sand at Enzeli, where it lay and rotted, no beasts of burden being strong enough to carry the big boilers and wheels, and the Shah's elephant being even found unequal to the task. These misfortunes delayed for some time the execution of the projected scheme; and it was not till 1877 that the new coinage appeared, a large building on the northern outskirts of Teheran, which had been unsuccessfully tried as a cotton factory, having been converted into the Royal Mint. This establishment, which possesses a German overseer and French dies, and is under the control of the Amin-es-Sultan, is now the sole mint in Persia.

Modern currency

In my volume of appendices will be found a table of the coins issued by the Government Mint. The silver *kran* is the monetary unit. Originally it weighed eighty-three grains, then it was reduced to seventy-seven grains, now it weighs seventy-one grains. The proportion of fine silver was originally ninety-five per cent.; that is, the *kran* contained only five per cent. of alloy. The gold *toman* also contained the same original proportion of pure metal —viz., ninety-five per cent. Later on this was reduced in the silver *kran* to ninety-two per cent., and subsequently again to ninety per cent., at which figure the ratio now nominally

[1] The old *krans* remain the basis of the coinage in Persia; and the Imperial Bank has been compelled to make its notes payable in the old currency, since the new *krans* have been at a constant premium.

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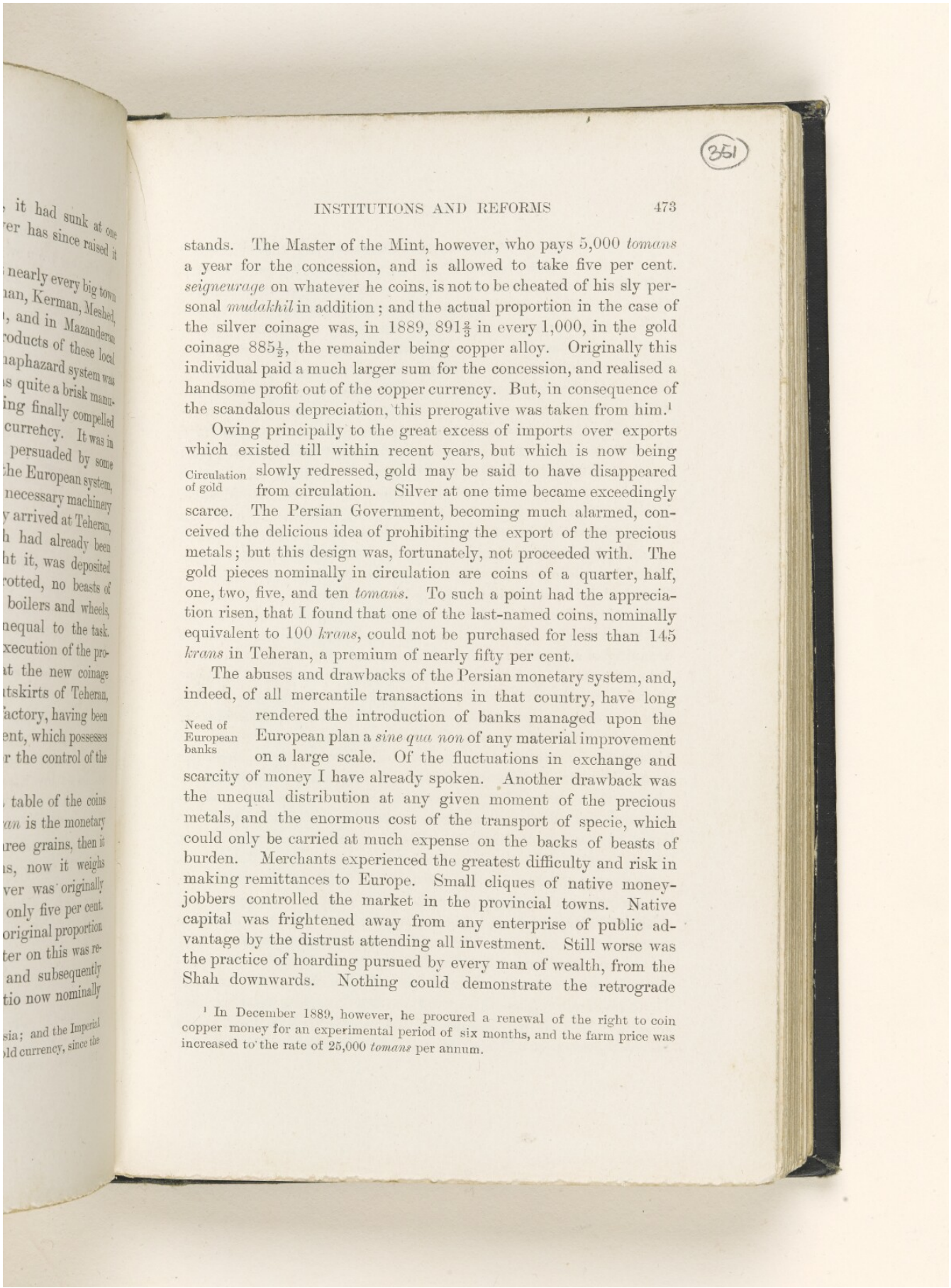




stands. The Master of the Mint, however, who pays 5,000 *tomans* a year for the concession, and is allowed to take five per cent. *seigneurage* on whatever he coins, is not to be cheated of his sly personal *mudakhil* in addition; and the actual proportion in the case of the silver coinage was, in 1889, 891⅔ in every 1,000, in the gold coinage 885½, the remainder being copper alloy. Originally this individual paid a much larger sum for the concession, and realised a handsome profit out of the copper currency. But, in consequence of the scandalous depreciation, this prerogative was taken from him.[1]

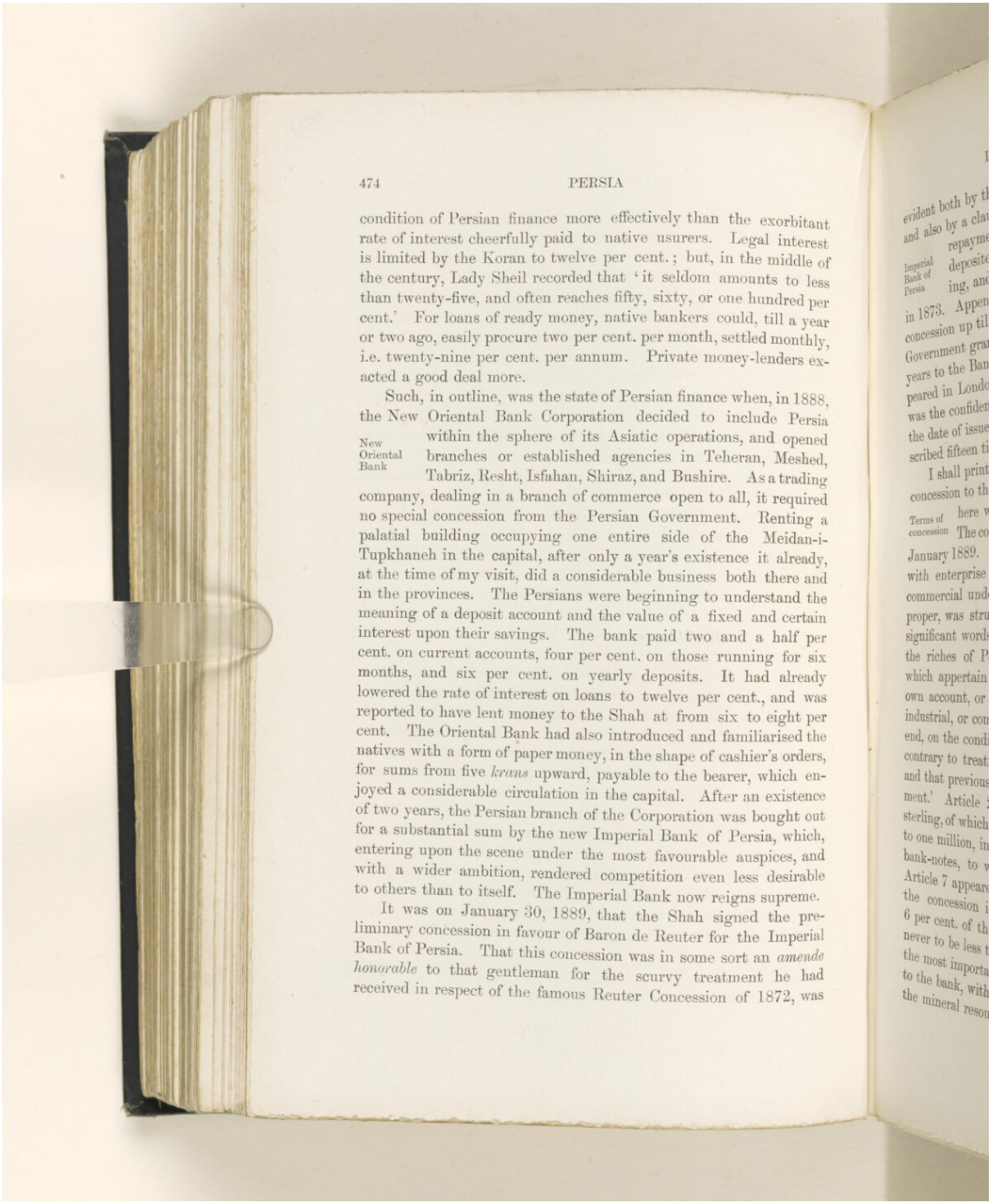
Circulation of gold

Owing principally to the great excess of imports over exports which existed till within recent years, but which is now being slowly redressed, gold may be said to have disappeared from circulation. Silver at one time became exceedingly scarce. The Persian Government, becoming much alarmed, conceived the delicious idea of prohibiting the export of the precious metals; but this design was, fortunately, not proceeded with. The gold pieces nominally in circulation are coins of a quarter, half, one, two, five, and ten *tomans*. To such a point had the appreciation risen, that I found that one of the last-named coins, nominally equivalent to 100 *krans*, could not be purchased for less than 145 *krans* in Teheran, a premium of nearly fifty per cent.

Need of European banks

The abuses and drawbacks of the Persian monetary system, and, indeed, of all mercantile transactions in that country, have long rendered the introduction of banks managed upon the European plan a *sine qua non* of any material improvement on a large scale. Of the fluctuations in exchange and scarcity of money I have already spoken. Another drawback was the unequal distribution at any given moment of the precious metals, and the enormous cost of the transport of specie, which could only be carried at much expense on the backs of beasts of burden. Merchants experienced the greatest difficulty and risk in making remittances to Europe. Small cliques of native money-jobbers controlled the market in the provincial towns. Native capital was frightened away from any enterprise of public advantage by the distrust attending all investment. Still worse was the practice of hoarding pursued by every man of wealth, from the Shah downwards. Nothing could demonstrate the retrograde

[1] In December 1889, however, he procured a renewal of the right to coin copper money for an experimental period of six months, and the farm price was increased to the rate of 25,000 *tomans* per annum.





condition of Persian finance more effectively than the exorbitant rate of interest cheerfully paid to native usurers. Legal interest is limited by the Koran to twelve per cent.; but, in the middle of the century, Lady Sheil recorded that 'it seldom amounts to less than twenty-five, and often reaches fifty, sixty, or one hundred per cent.' For loans of ready money, native bankers could, till a year or two ago, easily procure two per cent. per month, settled monthly, i.e. twenty-nine per cent. per annum. Private money-lenders exacted a good deal more.

Such, in outline, was the state of Persian finance when, in 1888, the New Oriental Bank Corporation decided to include Persia within the sphere of its Asiatic operations, and opened branches or established agencies in Teheran, Meshed, Tabriz, Resht, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Bushire. As a trading company, dealing in a branch of commerce open to all, it required no special concession from the Persian Government. Renting a palatial building occupying one entire side of the Meidan-i-Tupkhaneh in the capital, after only a year's existence it already, at the time of my visit, did a considerable business both there and in the provinces. The Persians were beginning to understand the meaning of a deposit account and the value of a fixed and certain interest upon their savings. The bank paid two and a half per cent. on current accounts, four per cent. on those running for six months, and six per cent. on yearly deposits. It had already lowered the rate of interest on loans to twelve per cent., and was reported to have lent money to the Shah at from six to eight per cent. The Oriental Bank had also introduced and familiarised the natives with a form of paper money, in the shape of cashier's orders, for sums from five *krans* upward, payable to the bearer, which enjoyed a considerable circulation in the capital. After an existence of two years, the Persian branch of the Corporation was bought out for a substantial sum by the new Imperial Bank of Persia, which, entering upon the scene under the most favourable auspices, and with a wider ambition, rendered competition even less desirable to others than to itself. The Imperial Bank now reigns supreme.

New Oriental Bank

It was on January 30, 1889, that the Shah signed the preliminary concession in favour of Baron de Reuter for the Imperial Bank of Persia. That this concession was in some sort an *amende honorable* to that gentleman for the scurvy treatment he had received in respect of the famous Reuter Concession of 1872, was

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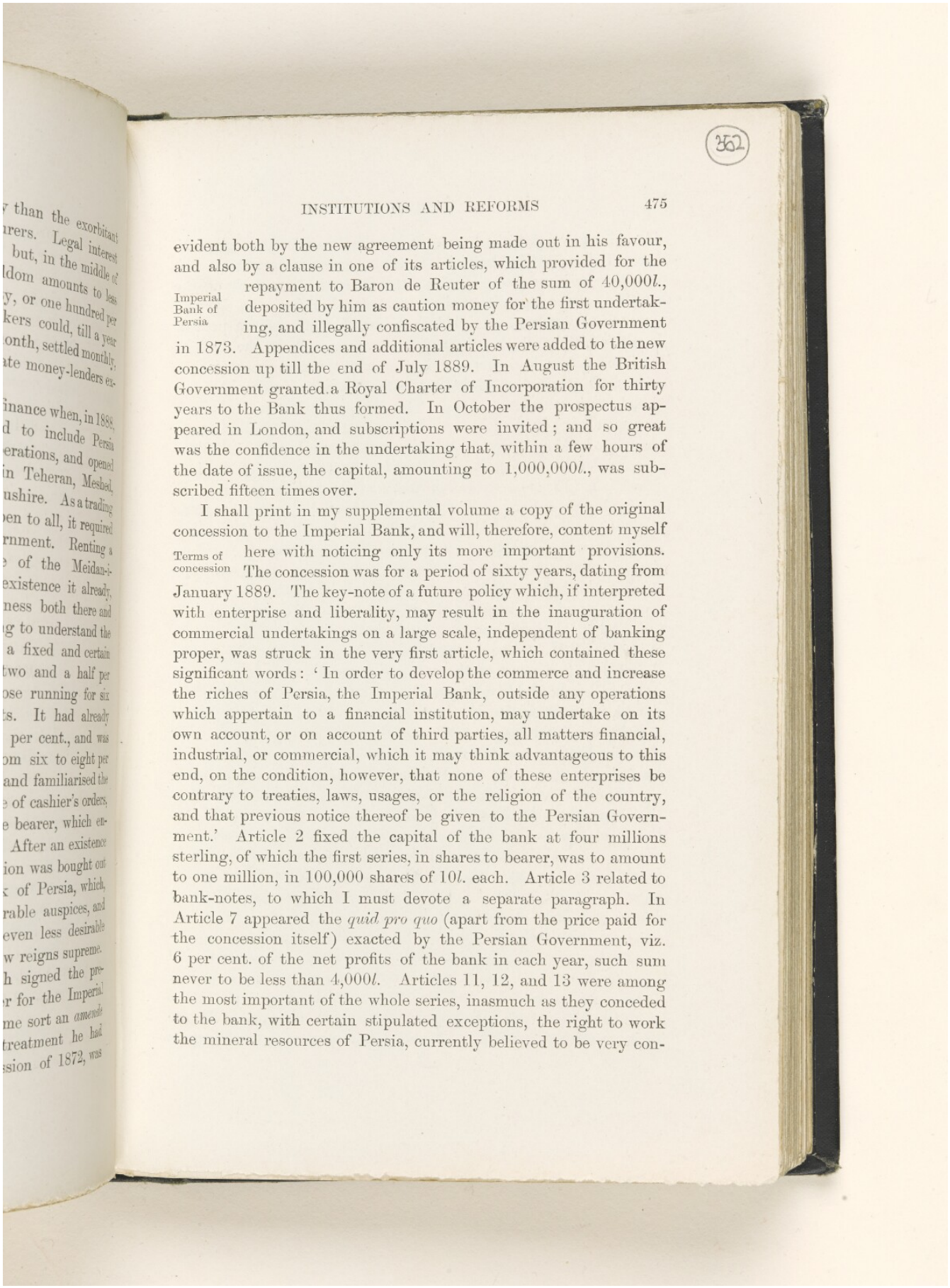


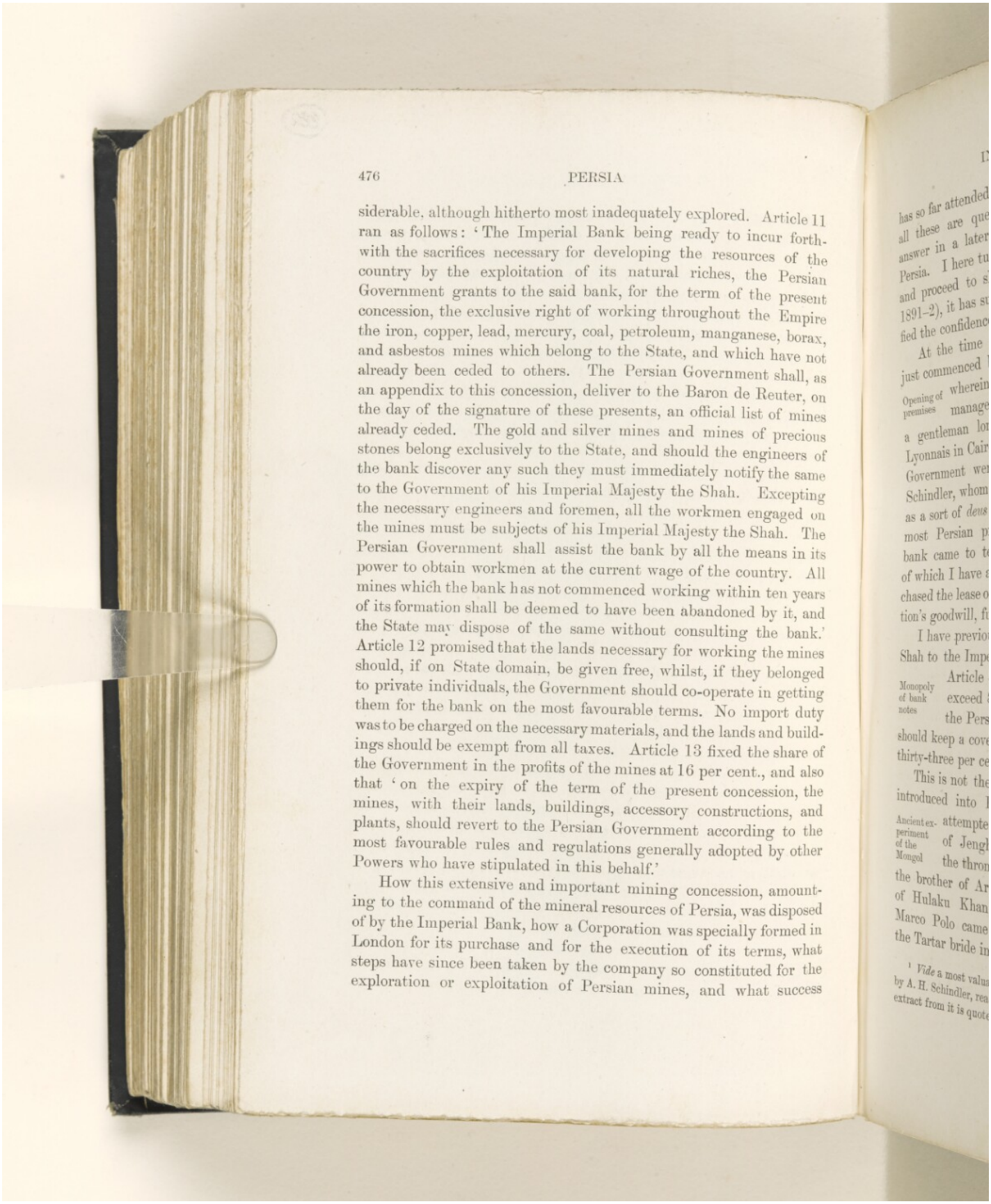


evident both by the new agreement being made out in his favour, and also by a clause in one of its articles, which provided for the repayment to Baron de Reuter of the sum of 40,000*l.*, deposited by him as caution money for the first undertaking, and illegally confiscated by the Persian Government in 1873. Appendices and additional articles were added to the new concession up till the end of July 1889. In August the British Government granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation for thirty years to the Bank thus formed. In October the prospectus appeared in London, and subscriptions were invited; and so great was the confidence in the undertaking that, within a few hours of the date of issue, the capital, amounting to 1,000,000*l.*, was subscribed fifteen times over.

Imperial Bank of Persia

I shall print in my supplemental volume a copy of the original concession to the Imperial Bank, and will, therefore, content myself here with noticing only its more important provisions. The concession was for a period of sixty years, dating from January 1889. The key-note of a future policy which, if interpreted with enterprise and liberality, may result in the inauguration of commercial undertakings on a large scale, independent of banking proper, was struck in the very first article, which contained these significant words: 'In order to develop the commerce and increase the riches of Persia, the Imperial Bank, outside any operations which appertain to a financial institution, may undertake on its own account, or on account of third parties, all matters financial, industrial, or commercial, which it may think advantageous to this end, on the condition, however, that none of these enterprises be contrary to treaties, laws, usages, or the religion of the country, and that previous notice thereof be given to the Persian Government.' Article 2 fixed the capital of the bank at four millions sterling, of which the first series, in shares to bearer, was to amount to one million, in 100,000 shares of 10*l.* each. Article 3 related to bank-notes, to which I must devote a separate paragraph. In Article 7 appeared the *quid pro quo* (apart from the price paid for the concession itself) exacted by the Persian Government, viz. 6 per cent. of the net profits of the bank in each year, such sum never to be less than 4,000*l.* Articles 11, 12, and 13 were among the most important of the whole series, inasmuch as they conceded to the bank, with certain stipulated exceptions, the right to work the mineral resources of Persia, currently believed to be very con-

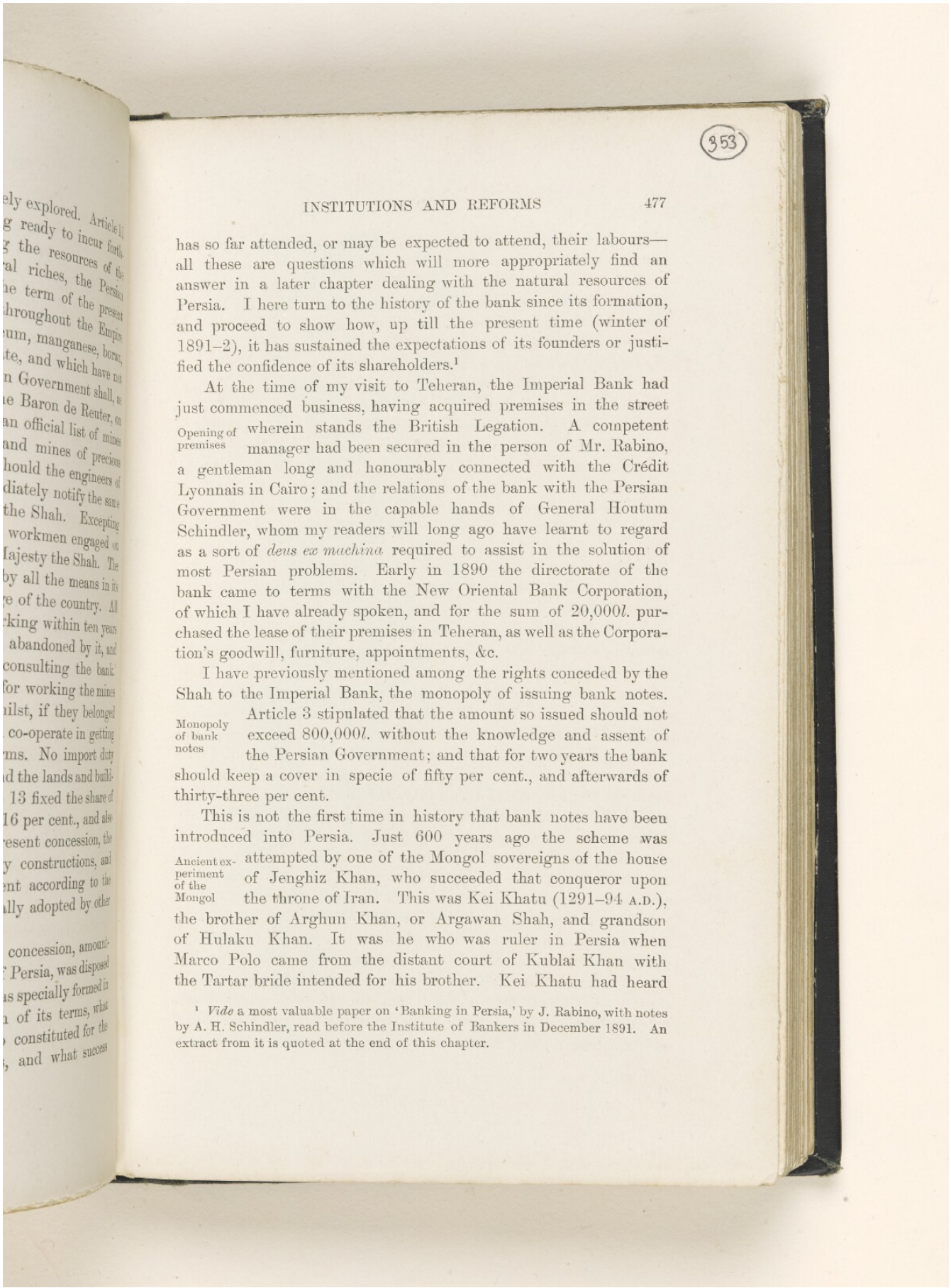
Terms of concession





siderable, although hitherto most inadequately explored. Article 11 ran as follows: 'The Imperial Bank being ready to incur forthwith the sacrifices necessary for developing the resources of the country by the exploitation of its natural riches, the Persian Government grants to the said bank, for the term of the present concession, the exclusive right of working throughout the Empire the iron, copper, lead, mercury, coal, petroleum, manganese, borax, and asbestos mines which belong to the State, and which have not already been ceded to others. The Persian Government shall, as an appendix to this concession, deliver to the Baron de Reuter, on the day of the signature of these presents, an official list of mines already ceded. The gold and silver mines and mines of precious stones belong exclusively to the State, and should the engineers of the bank discover any such they must immediately notify the same to the Government of his Imperial Majesty the Shah. Excepting the necessary engineers and foremen, all the workmen engaged on the mines must be subjects of his Imperial Majesty the Shah. The Persian Government shall assist the bank by all the means in its power to obtain workmen at the current wage of the country. All mines which the bank has not commenced working within ten years of its formation shall be deemed to have been abandoned by it, and the State may dispose of the same without consulting the bank.' Article 12 promised that the lands necessary for working the mines should, if on State domain, be given free, whilst, if they belonged to private individuals, the Government should co-operate in getting them for the bank on the most favourable terms. No import duty was to be charged on the necessary materials, and the lands and buildings should be exempt from all taxes. Article 13 fixed the share of the Government in the profits of the mines at 16 per cent., and also that 'on the expiry of the term of the present concession, the mines, with their lands, buildings, accessory constructions, and plants, should revert to the Persian Government according to the most favourable rules and regulations generally adopted by other Powers who have stipulated in this behalf.'

How this extensive and important mining concession, amounting to the command of the mineral resources of Persia, was disposed of by the Imperial Bank, how a Corporation was specially formed in London for its purchase and for the execution of its terms, what steps have since been taken by the company so constituted for the exploration or exploitation of Persian mines, and what success





has so far attended, or may be expected to attend, their labours—all these are questions which will more appropriately find an answer in a later chapter dealing with the natural resources of Persia. I here turn to the history of the bank since its formation, and proceed to show how, up till the present time (winter of 1891–2), it has sustained the expectations of its founders or justified the confidence of its shareholders.[1]

Opening of premises

At the time of my visit to Teheran, the Imperial Bank had just commenced business, having acquired premises in the street wherein stands the British Legation. A competent manager had been secured in the person of Mr. Rabino, a gentleman long and honourably connected with the Crédit Lyonnais in Cairo; and the relations of the bank with the Persian Government were in the capable hands of General Houtum Schindler, whom my readers will long ago have learnt to regard as a sort of *deus ex machina* required to assist in the solution of most Persian problems. Early in 1890 the directorate of the bank came to terms with the New Oriental Bank Corporation, of which I have already spoken, and for the sum of 20,000*l.* purchased the lease of their premises in Teheran, as well as the Corporation's goodwill, furniture, appointments, &c.

Monopoly of bank notes

I have previously mentioned among the rights conceded by the Shah to the Imperial Bank, the monopoly of issuing bank notes. Article 3 stipulated that the amount so issued should not exceed 800,000*l.* without the knowledge and assent of the Persian Government; and that for two years the bank should keep a cover in specie of fifty per cent., and afterwards of thirty-three per cent.

Ancient experiment of the Mongol

This is not the first time in history that bank notes have been introduced into Persia. Just 600 years ago the scheme was attempted by one of the Mongol sovereigns of the house of Jenghiz Khan, who succeeded that conqueror upon the throne of Iran. This was Kei Khatu (1291–94 A.D.), the brother of Arghun Khan, or Argawan Shah, and grandson of Hulaku Khan. It was he who was ruler in Persia when Marco Polo came from the distant court of Kublai Khan with the Tartar bride intended for his brother. Kei Khatu had heard

[1] *Vide* a most valuable paper on 'Banking in Persia,' by J. Rabino, with notes by A. H. Schindler, read before the Institute of Bankers in December 1891. An extract from it is quoted at the end of this chapter.

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of the attempt made by Thai-tsu of the Sung Dynasty to introduce paper money into China three centuries before, and of its revival in that country within the last fifty years; a proceeding with which we have been rendered familiar by the writings of the learned Venetian, and of Ibn Batutah, the Moor of Tangier. The Persian Mongol, finding himself over two millions sterling in debt, conceived the bright idea that, by issuing a paper currency, which would be bought by his faithful subjects, all the gold and silver in the kingdom would flow into the royal exchequer; while the paper would become the universal medium of exchange. For this purpose a royal edict was issued, forbidding the circulation of the precious metals as currency. Banks, called, after the Chinese name, *Chow-khaneh*, were erected at Tabriz and other places; and notes, or *Chow*, were issued for sums varying from $\frac{3}{4}d.$ to 4*s.* 7*d.*, bearing a Mohammedan inscription and the value written in a circle upon them, and the imperial mandate to accept this novel currency. The subjects of Kei Khatu were, however, less docile or more wide-awake than he had anticipated. A howl of universal execration greeted the promulgation of the scheme; the minister who had suggested it was torn to pieces by an infuriated mob; and within three days the decree was repealed, and the first Persian experiment of paper money ignominiously expired.

Warned by this example, or timorous of empirical finance, no subsequent Persian sovereign repeated the experiment of the Mongol.

Modern opinion

Indeed, in the present century, the introduction of the Russian paper rouble into Persia was regarded with the gravest suspicion by the ruling powers as an insidious attempt to drain the country of its silver and gold. So strong did this feeling become that, in 1883, the Shah actually issued a royal edict which declared that 'the people are very foolish who take dirty pieces of paper for gold and silver, and in future all Russian rouble notes will be confiscated.' Like many royal decrees, this was fortunately allowed to become a dead letter almost as soon as promulgated.

It is, therefore, in the face of inauspicious historical omens, and among a people and court whose ideas of finance are rudimentary,

Notes of the Imperial Bank

that the Imperial Bank has started upon this part of its programme. Some time was spent in selecting a suitable and handsome design; and in 1890 the new bank notes, having a Persian inscription with the badge of the Lion and the Sun on one side, and an English inscription with the

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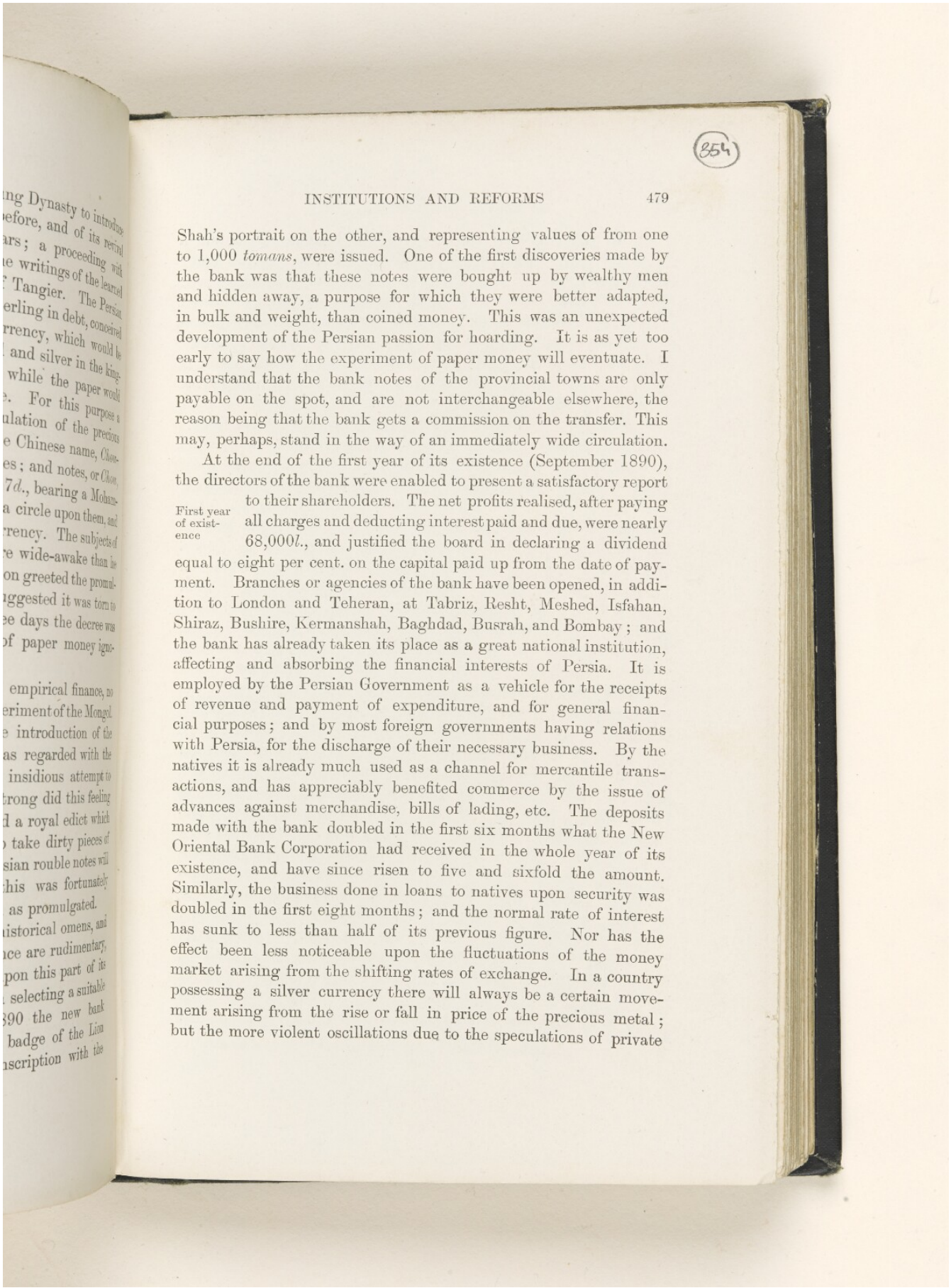



Shah's portrait on the other, and representing values of from one to 1,000 *tomans*, were issued. One of the first discoveries made by the bank was that these notes were bought up by wealthy men and hidden away, a purpose for which they were better adapted, in bulk and weight, than coined money. This was an unexpected development of the Persian passion for hoarding. It is as yet too early to say how the experiment of paper money will eventuate. I understand that the bank notes of the provincial towns are only payable on the spot, and are not interchangeable elsewhere, the reason being that the bank gets a commission on the transfer. This may, perhaps, stand in the way of an immediately wide circulation.

First year of existence

At the end of the first year of its existence (September 1890), the directors of the bank were enabled to present a satisfactory report to their shareholders. The net profits realised, after paying all charges and deducting interest paid and due, were nearly 68,000*l*., and justified the board in declaring a dividend equal to eight per cent. on the capital paid up from the date of payment. Branches or agencies of the bank have been opened, in addition to London and Teheran, at Tabriz, Resht, Meshed, Isfahan, Shiraz, Bushire, Kermanshah, Baghdad, Busrah, and Bombay; and the bank has already taken its place as a great national institution, affecting and absorbing the financial interests of Persia. It is employed by the Persian Government as a vehicle for the receipts of revenue and payment of expenditure, and for general financial purposes; and by most foreign governments having relations with Persia, for the discharge of their necessary business. By the natives it is already much used as a channel for mercantile transactions, and has appreciably benefited commerce by the issue of advances against merchandise, bills of lading, etc. The deposits made with the bank doubled in the first six months what the New Oriental Bank Corporation had received in the whole year of its existence, and have since risen to five and sixfold the amount. Similarly, the business done in loans to natives upon security was doubled in the first eight months; and the normal rate of interest has sunk to less than half of its previous figure. Nor has the effect been less noticeable upon the fluctuations of the money market arising from the shifting rates of exchange. In a country possessing a silver currency there will always be a certain movement arising from the rise or fall in price of the precious metal; but the more violent oscillations due to the speculations of private

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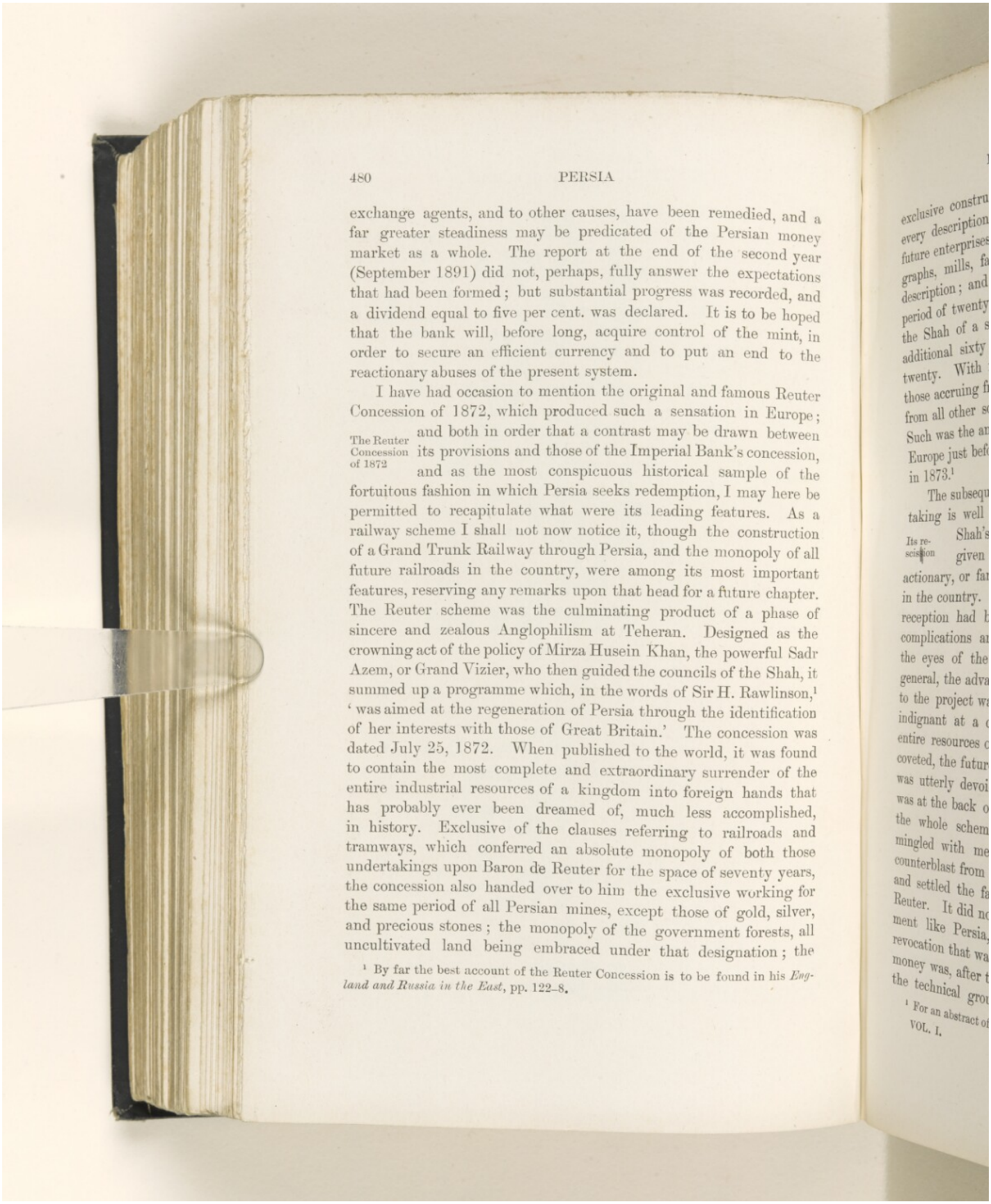



exchange agents, and to other causes, have been remedied, and a far greater steadiness may be predicated of the Persian money market as a whole. The report at the end of the second year (September 1891) did not, perhaps, fully answer the expectations that had been formed; but substantial progress was recorded, and a dividend equal to five per cent. was declared. It is to be hoped that the bank will, before long, acquire control of the mint, in order to secure an efficient currency and to put an end to the reactionary abuses of the present system.

The Reuter Concession of 1872

I have had occasion to mention the original and famous Reuter Concession of 1872, which produced such a sensation in Europe; and both in order that a contrast may be drawn between its provisions and those of the Imperial Bank's concession, and as the most conspicuous historical sample of the fortuitous fashion in which Persia seeks redemption, I may here be permitted to recapitulate what were its leading features. As a railway scheme I shall not now notice it, though the construction of a Grand Trunk Railway through Persia, and the monopoly of all future railroads in the country, were among its most important features, reserving any remarks upon that head for a future chapter. The Reuter scheme was the culminating product of a phase of sincere and zealous Anglophilism at Teheran. Designed as the crowning act of the policy of Mirza Husein Khan, the powerful Sadr Azem, or Grand Vizier, who then guided the councils of the Shah, it summed up a programme which, in the words of Sir H. Rawlinson,[1] 'was aimed at the regeneration of Persia through the identification of her interests with those of Great Britain.' The concession was dated July 25, 1872. When published to the world, it was found to contain the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history. Exclusive of the clauses referring to railroads and tramways, which conferred an absolute monopoly of both those undertakings upon Baron de Reuter for the space of seventy years, the concession also handed over to him the exclusive working for the same period of all Persian mines, except those of gold, silver, and precious stones; the monopoly of the government forests, all uncultivated land being embraced under that designation; the

[1] By far the best account of the Reuter Concession is to be found in his *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 122–8.

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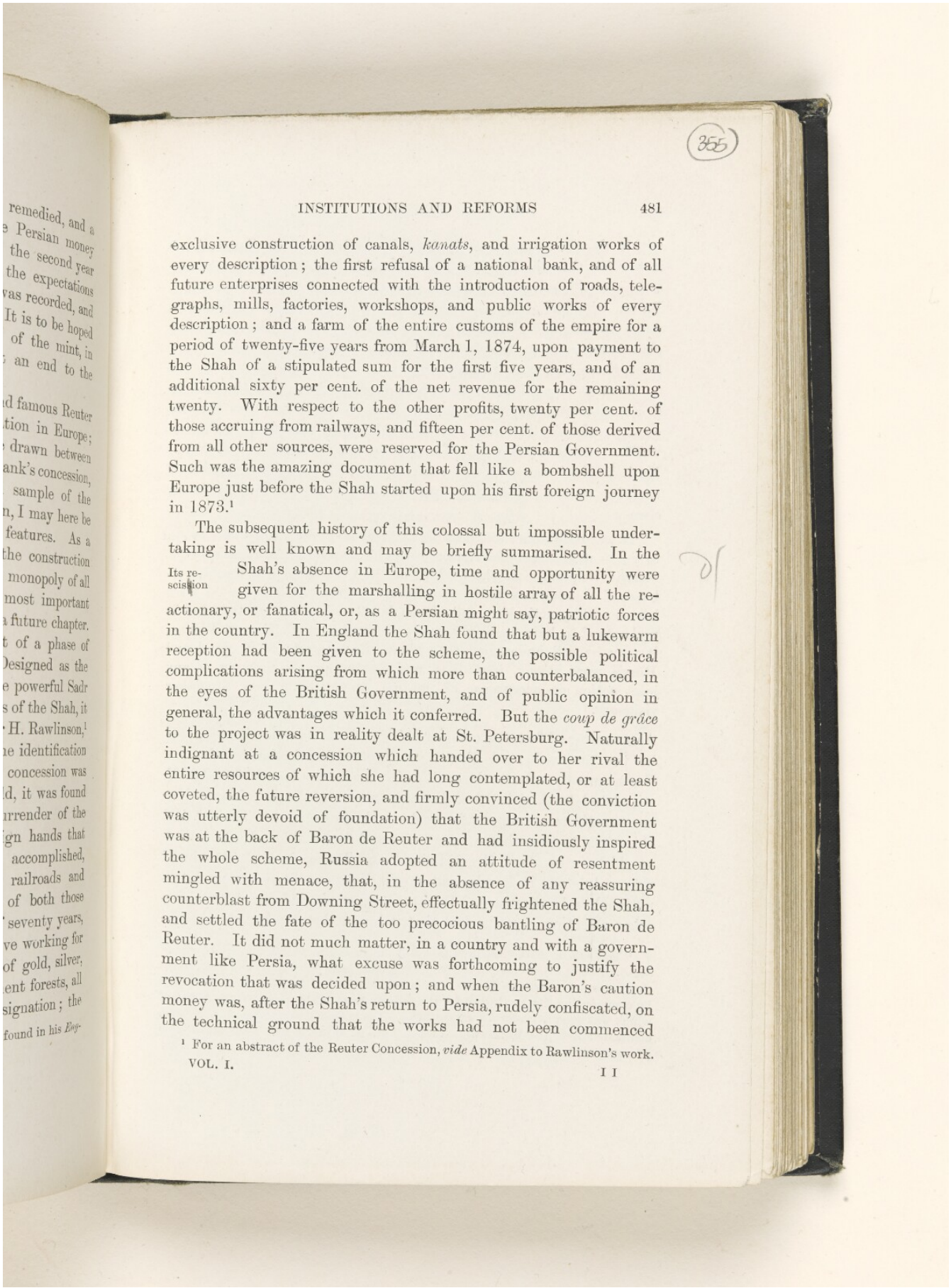



exclusive construction of canals, *kanats*, and irrigation works of every description; the first refusal of a national bank, and of all future enterprises connected with the introduction of roads, telegraphs, mills, factories, workshops, and public works of every description; and a farm of the entire customs of the empire for a period of twenty-five years from March 1, 1874, upon payment to the Shah of a stipulated sum for the first five years, and of an additional sixty per cent. of the net revenue for the remaining twenty. With respect to the other profits, twenty per cent. of those accruing from railways, and fifteen per cent. of those derived from all other sources, were reserved for the Persian Government. Such was the amazing document that fell like a bombshell upon Europe just before the Shah started upon his first foreign journey in 1873.[1]

Its rescission

The subsequent history of this colossal but impossible undertaking is well known and may be briefly summarised. In the Shah's absence in Europe, time and opportunity were given for the marshalling in hostile array of all the reactionary, or fanatical, or, as a Persian might say, patriotic forces in the country. In England the Shah found that but a lukewarm reception had been given to the scheme, the possible political complications arising from which more than counterbalanced, in the eyes of the British Government, and of public opinion in general, the advantages which it conferred. But the *coup de grâce* to the project was in reality dealt at St. Petersburg. Naturally indignant at a concession which handed over to her rival the entire resources of which she had long contemplated, or at least coveted, the future reversion, and firmly convinced (the conviction was utterly devoid of foundation) that the British Government was at the back of Baron de Reuter and had insidiously inspired the whole scheme, Russia adopted an attitude of resentment mingled with menace, that, in the absence of any reassuring counterblast from Downing Street, effectually frightened the Shah, and settled the fate of the too precocious bantling of Baron de Reuter. It did not much matter, in a country and with a government like Persia, what excuse was forthcoming to justify the revocation that was decided upon; and when the Baron's caution money was, after the Shah's return to Persia, rudely confiscated, on the technical ground that the works had not been commenced

[1] For an abstract of the Reuter Concession, *vide* Appendix to Rawlinson's work.



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within the fifteen months stipulated by Article 8 of the Concession,[1] it was felt that the Persian Government had adopted a convenient, even if an illegal, way of escape from an impossible situation. The Baron, who had every right to complain of ill-usage, continued to make appeals and claims for compensation; but until the reparatory clause inserted in the Imperial Bank Concession sixteen years later, these met with no response.

It must be obvious to all impartial critics, both that the Reuter Concession was doomed to failure from its birth and also that its demise was not, on the whole, to be regretted in the interests of Persia. The scheme was overweighted *ab initio*. No individual, nor even any company, would have been capable of carrying even a moiety of it into execution. As Sir H. Rawlinson observes:—

Reasons of failure

> It was only under the possible agreement of the European Powers to the neutralisation of Persia, the Shah's dominions forming a sort of Asiatic Belgium, that the working of the Concession—by means, perhaps, of a great international company or commission—would have been at all practicable; and although this idea was mooted, and is understood to have received some consideration at Berlin and Vienna, it may be well understood that where the interests of England and Russia were strong, immediate, and conflicting, the prospect of any joint action or acceptance of mutual responsibility was altogether visionary.

As a matter of fact, the commercial world was completely staggered by the proposal; and Baron de Reuter found that, without a Government guarantee, he could neither raise the loan of 6,000,000*l.* stipulated by Article 16 of the agreement in the London market, nor constitute a company for working the Concession. The political objections to the scheme were great and formidable. Its execution would have involved Great Britain and Russia in a perpetual and unseemly strife in Persia, and might have produced serious international embarrassment. But stronger, in my judgment, than any other objection, was the fact that it involved the complete abroga-

[1] This article said, 'Should the works not be begun within fifteen months of the date of the Concession, the caution money will be forfeited to the Persian Government.' Baron de Reuter contended that he had fulfilled these conditions by commencing the earthwork for the railway from Resht, the permanent way of which was completed for a short distance. The Persian Government, on their side, contended that the terms were broken because no rails had been laid and no mines opened.

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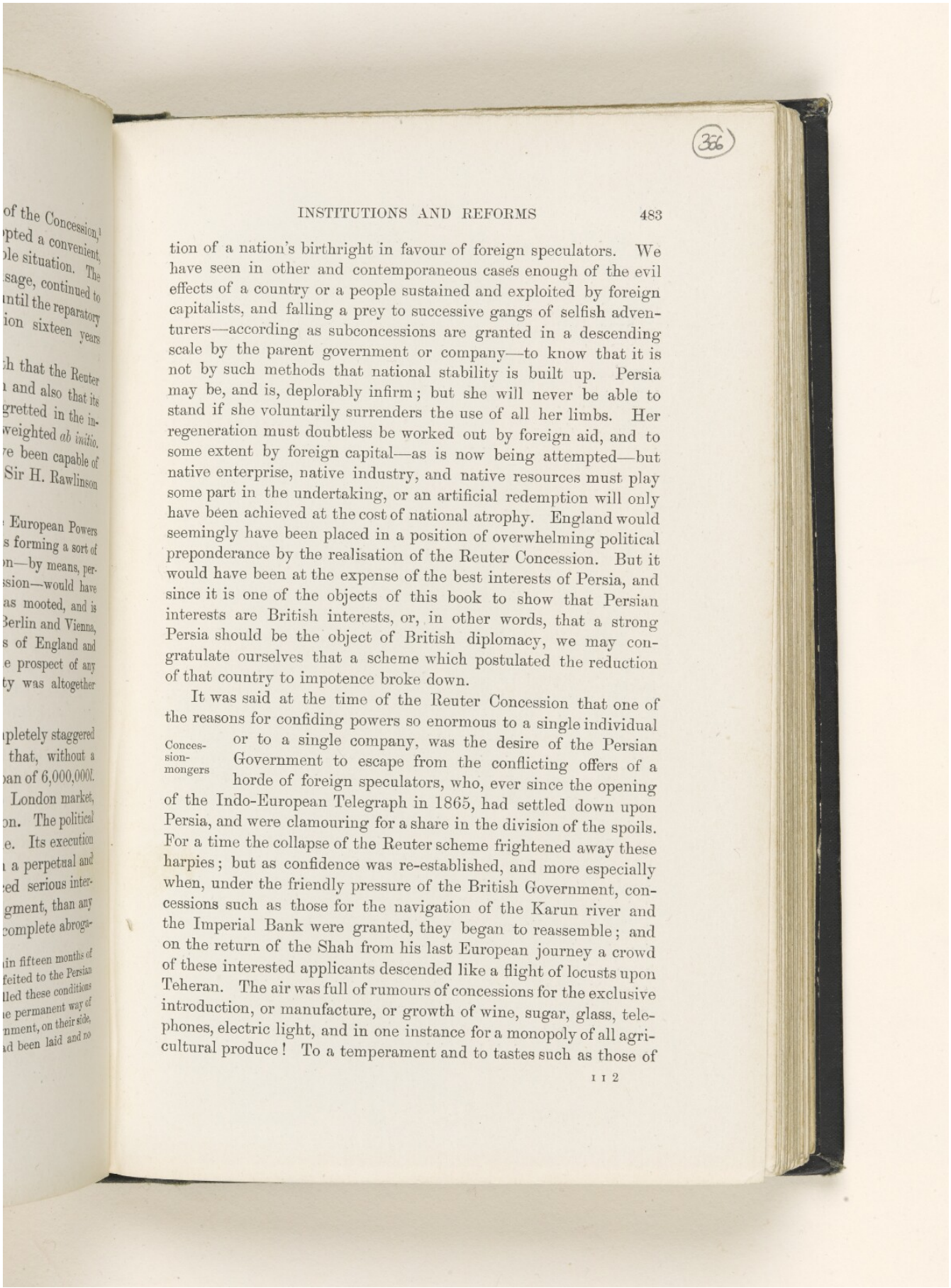



tion of a nation's birthright in favour of foreign speculators. We have seen in other and contemporaneous cases enough of the evil effects of a country or a people sustained and exploited by foreign capitalists, and falling a prey to successive gangs of selfish adventurers—according as subconcessions are granted in a descending scale by the parent government or company—to know that it is not by such methods that national stability is built up. Persia may be, and is, deplorably infirm; but she will never be able to stand if she voluntarily surrenders the use of all her limbs. Her regeneration must doubtless be worked out by foreign aid, and to some extent by foreign capital—as is now being attempted—but native enterprise, native industry, and native resources must play some part in the undertaking, or an artificial redemption will only have been achieved at the cost of national atrophy. England would seemingly have been placed in a position of overwhelming political preponderance by the realisation of the Reuter Concession. But it would have been at the expense of the best interests of Persia, and since it is one of the objects of this book to show that Persian interests are British interests, or, in other words, that a strong Persia should be the object of British diplomacy, we may congratulate ourselves that a scheme which postulated the reduction of that country to impotence broke down.

Concession-mongers

It was said at the time of the Reuter Concession that one of the reasons for confiding powers so enormous to a single individual or to a single company, was the desire of the Persian Government to escape from the conflicting offers of a horde of foreign speculators, who, ever since the opening of the Indo-European Telegraph in 1865, had settled down upon Persia, and were clamouring for a share in the division of the spoils. For a time the collapse of the Reuter scheme frightened away these harpies; but as confidence was re-established, and more especially when, under the friendly pressure of the British Government, concessions such as those for the navigation of the Karun river and the Imperial Bank were granted, they began to reassemble; and on the return of the Shah from his last European journey a crowd of these interested applicants descended like a flight of locusts upon Teheran. The air was full of rumours of concessions for the exclusive introduction, or manufacture, or growth of wine, sugar, glass, telephones, electric light, and in one instance for a monopoly of all agricultural produce! To a temperament and to tastes such as those of



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the Shah, these proposals are peculiarly seductive; for, in any case, they mean the payment of a lump sum down to his own account; if successful, they augment the annual revenue; and if the reverse, they only implicate foreigners in failure.

Whilst applauding the policy of assisting Persia by foreign capital where she cannot assist herself, and in enterprises of unquestioned stability, I am of opinion that she is more likely to lose than to gain from the indiscriminate gift of commercial concessions, and that her best advisers should check any premature zeal in this direction. The first concessionary usually thinks of little but selling his monopoly, and realising a good profit for himself. He is not uncommonly an adventurer, and sometimes a rogue. By the failure of such bogus undertakings, good capital is frightened away from the country, and the natives themselves form an unfavourable impression of European conduct and honesty. The internal development of Persia will fare much better if it follows the broad lines of road and railroad extension, rather than imperil its chances by grotesque monopolies and fanciful concessions to vagrant *chevaliers d'industrie*.

An unfortunate, but significant, illustration of the truth of the above remarks, which appeared originally in the 'Times,' was Recent schemes afforded by a case that occurred almost simultaneously with my visit to Persia. One among the numerous concessions of the class that I have described had been granted by the Shah—who had received his *douceur*—for the introduction, *inter alia*, of State lotteries into Persia; but this concession had subsequently been cancelled in consequence of the inclusion of other and less desirable items in its terms. In apparent ignorance of these facts, the concession was disposed of to a syndicate, and again passed on to a company (the Persian Investment Corporation), whose final collapse agitated the London market in 1890; the result of the entire series of transactions, the moral blame of which I do not pretend to distribute, being that a great shock was given to Persian credit and that capital was scared away from Persian investment. Hence it arose that, when in the autumn of the same year a large scheme was brought out for the formation of the 'Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia,' to acquire and work a concession for a monopoly of the purchase, sale, and manufacture of the entire tobacco crop of the Persian Empire, this project, though warmly commended by high authorities and possessing many

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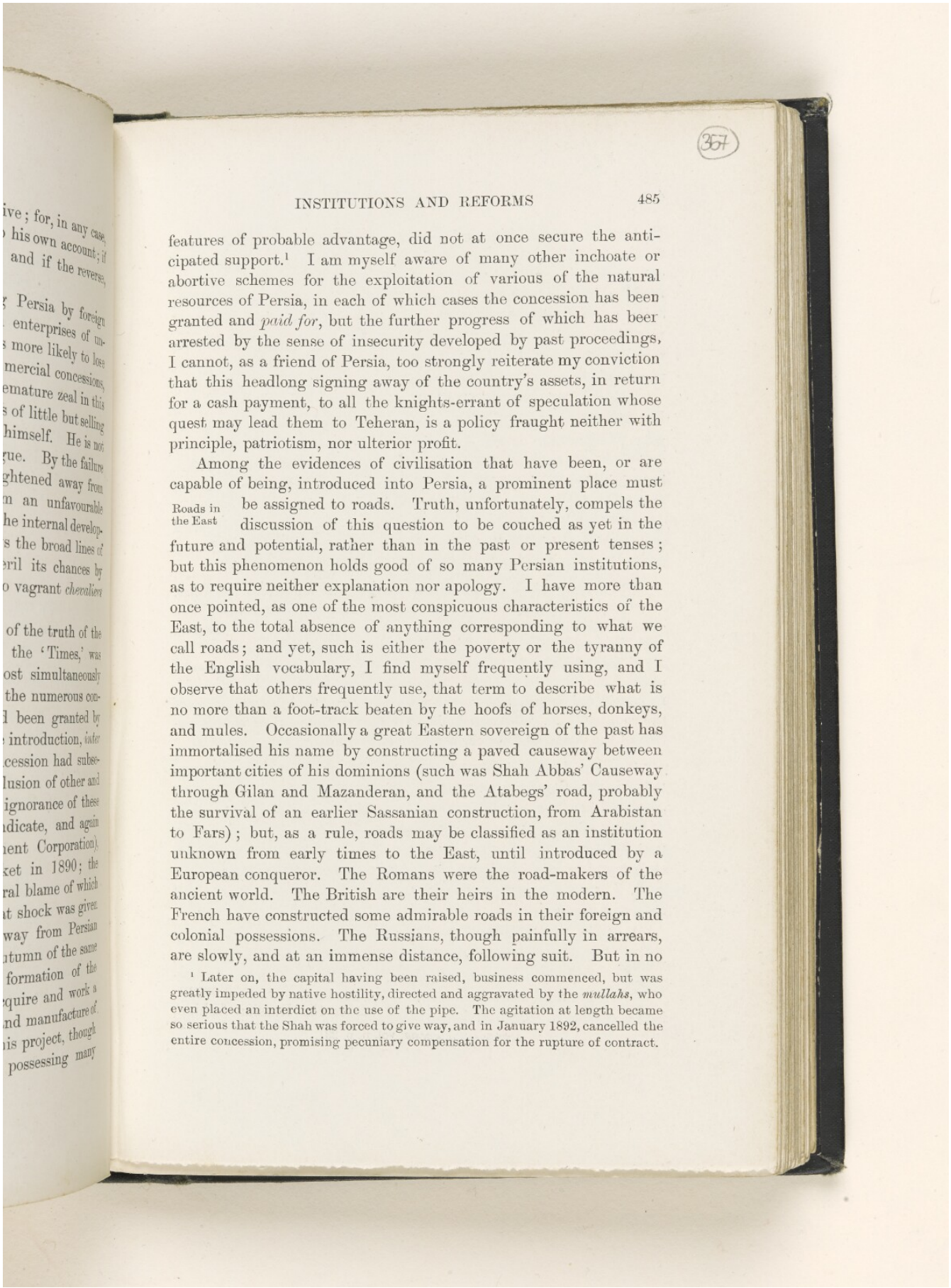


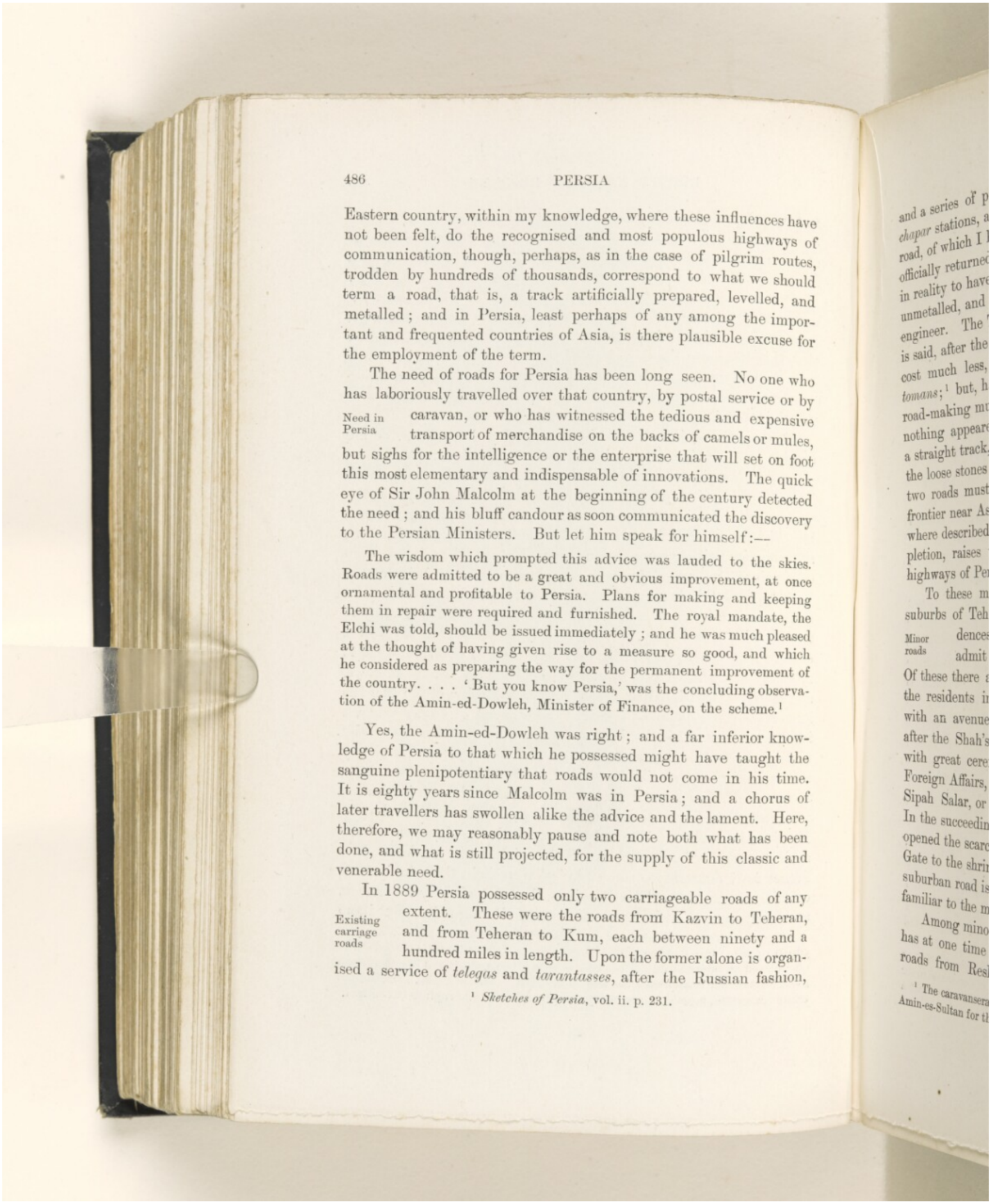


features of probable advantage, did not at once secure the anticipated support.[1] I am myself aware of many other inchoate or abortive schemes for the exploitation of various of the natural resources of Persia, in each of which cases the concession has been granted and *paid for*, but the further progress of which has been arrested by the sense of insecurity developed by past proceedings, I cannot, as a friend of Persia, too strongly reiterate my conviction that this headlong signing away of the country's assets, in return for a cash payment, to all the knights-errant of speculation whose quest may lead them to Teheran, is a policy fraught neither with principle, patriotism, nor ulterior profit.

Roads in the East

Among the evidences of civilisation that have been, or are capable of being, introduced into Persia, a prominent place must be assigned to roads. Truth, unfortunately, compels the discussion of this question to be couched as yet in the future and potential, rather than in the past or present tenses; but this phenomenon holds good of so many Persian institutions, as to require neither explanation nor apology. I have more than once pointed, as one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the East, to the total absence of anything corresponding to what we call roads; and yet, such is either the poverty or the tyranny of the English vocabulary, I find myself frequently using, and I observe that others frequently use, that term to describe what is no more than a foot-track beaten by the hoofs of horses, donkeys, and mules. Occasionally a great Eastern sovereign of the past has immortalised his name by constructing a paved causeway between important cities of his dominions (such was Shah Abbas' Causeway through Gilan and Mazanderan, and the Atabegs' road, probably the survival of an earlier Sassanian construction, from Arabistan to Fars); but, as a rule, roads may be classified as an institution unknown from early times to the East, until introduced by a European conqueror. The Romans were the road-makers of the ancient world. The British are their heirs in the modern. The French have constructed some admirable roads in their foreign and colonial possessions. The Russians, though painfully in arrears, are slowly, and at an immense distance, following suit. But in no

[1] Later on, the capital having been raised, business commenced, but was greatly impeded by native hostility, directed and aggravated by the *mullahs*, who even placed an interdict on the use of the pipe. The agitation at length became so serious that the Shah was forced to give way, and in January 1892, cancelled the entire concession, promising pecuniary compensation for the rupture of contract.





Eastern country, within my knowledge, where these influences have not been felt, do the recognised and most populous highways of communication, though, perhaps, as in the case of pilgrim routes, trodden by hundreds of thousands, correspond to what we should term a road, that is, a track artificially prepared, levelled, and metalled; and in Persia, least perhaps of any among the important and frequented countries of Asia, is there plausible excuse for the employment of the term.

Need in Persia

The need of roads for Persia has been long seen. No one who has laboriously travelled over that country, by postal service or by caravan, or who has witnessed the tedious and expensive transport of merchandise on the backs of camels or mules, but sighs for the intelligence or the enterprise that will set on foot this most elementary and indispensable of innovations. The quick eye of Sir John Malcolm at the beginning of the century detected the need; and his bluff candour as soon communicated the discovery to the Persian Ministers. But let him speak for himself:—

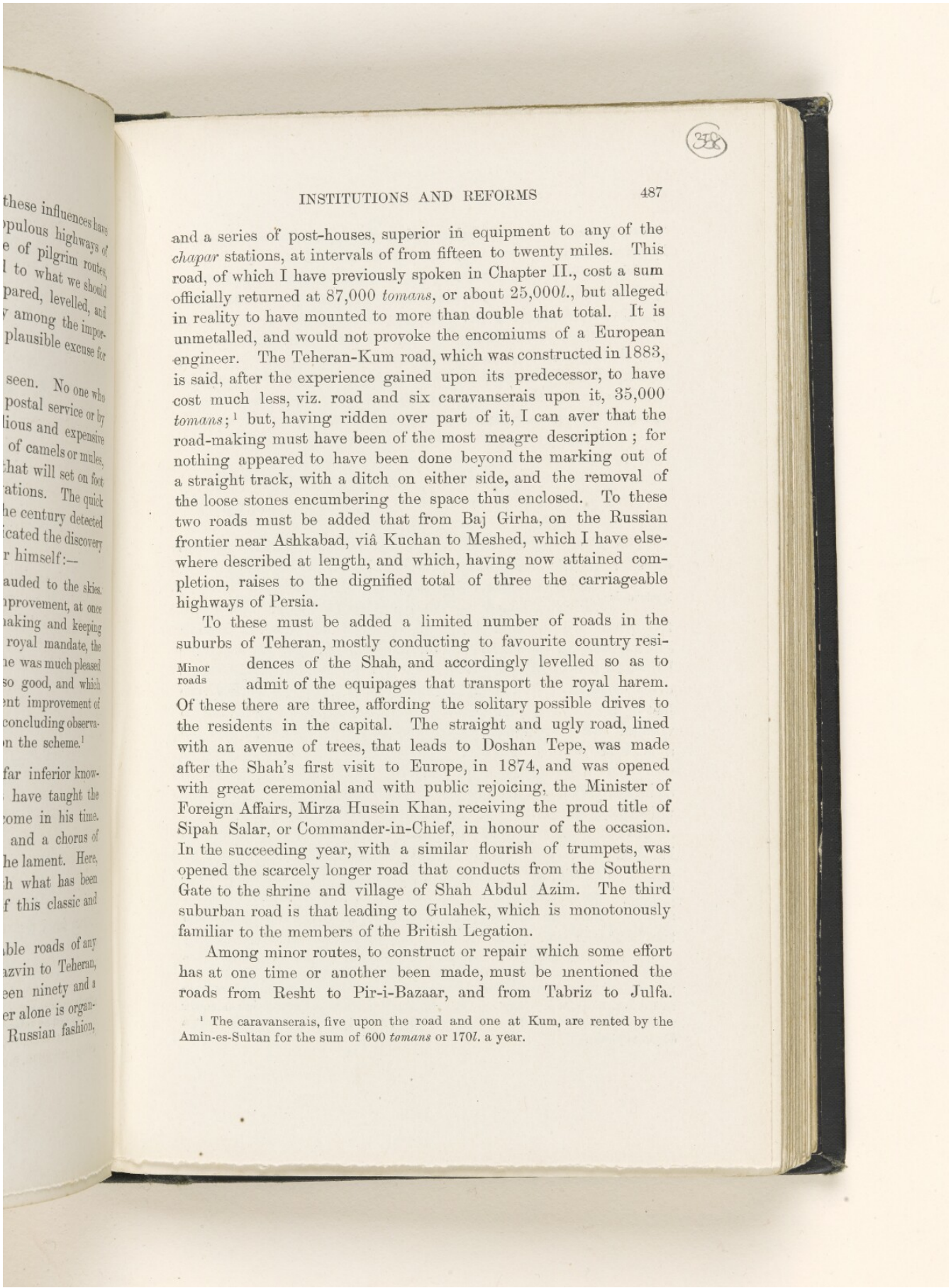
> The wisdom which prompted this advice was lauded to the skies. Roads were admitted to be a great and obvious improvement, at once ornamental and profitable to Persia. Plans for making and keeping them in repair were required and furnished. The royal mandate, the Elchi was told, should be issued immediately; and he was much pleased at the thought of having given rise to a measure so good, and which he considered as preparing the way for the permanent improvement of the country. . . . 'But you know Persia,' was the concluding observation of the Amin-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Finance, on the scheme.[1]

Yes, the Amin-ed-Dowleh was right; and a far inferior knowledge of Persia to that which he possessed might have taught the sanguine plenipotentiary that roads would not come in his time. It is eighty years since Malcolm was in Persia; and a chorus of later travellers has swollen alike the advice and the lament. Here, therefore, we may reasonably pause and note both what has been done, and what is still projected, for the supply of this classic and venerable need.

Existing carriage roads

In 1889 Persia possessed only two carriageable roads of any extent. These were the roads from Kazvin to Teheran, and from Teheran to Kum, each between ninety and a hundred miles in length. Upon the former alone is organised a service of *telegas* and *tarantasses*, after the Russian fashion,

[1] *Sketches of Persia*, vol. ii. p. 231.





and a series of post-houses, superior in equipment to any of the *chapar* stations, at intervals of from fifteen to twenty miles. This road, of which I have previously spoken in Chapter II., cost a sum officially returned at 87,000 *tomans*, or about 25,000*l*., but alleged in reality to have mounted to more than double that total. It is unmetalled, and would not provoke the encomiums of a European engineer. The Teheran-Kum road, which was constructed in 1883, is said, after the experience gained upon its predecessor, to have cost much less, viz. road and six caravanserais upon it, 35,000 *tomans*;[1] but, having ridden over part of it, I can aver that the road-making must have been of the most meagre description; for nothing appeared to have been done beyond the marking out of a straight track, with a ditch on either side, and the removal of the loose stones encumbering the space thus enclosed. To these two roads must be added that from Baj Girha, on the Russian frontier near Ashkabad, viâ Kuchan to Meshed, which I have elsewhere described at length, and which, having now attained completion, raises to the dignified total of three the carriageable highways of Persia.

Minor roads

To these must be added a limited number of roads in the suburbs of Teheran, mostly conducting to favourite country residences of the Shah, and accordingly levelled so as to admit of the equipages that transport the royal harem. Of these there are three, affording the solitary possible drives to the residents in the capital. The straight and ugly road, lined with an avenue of trees, that leads to Doshan Tepe, was made after the Shah's first visit to Europe, in 1874, and was opened with great ceremonial and with public rejoicing, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mirza Husein Khan, receiving the proud title of Sipah Salar, or Commander-in-Chief, in honour of the occasion. In the succeeding year, with a similar flourish of trumpets, was opened the scarcely longer road that conducts from the Southern Gate to the shrine and village of Shah Abdul Azim. The third suburban road is that leading to Gulahek, which is monotonously familiar to the members of the British Legation.

Among minor routes, to construct or repair which some effort has at one time or another been made, must be mentioned the roads from Resht to Pir-i-Bazaar, and from Tabriz to Julfa.

[1] The caravanserais, five upon the road and one at Kum, are rented by the Amin-es-Sultan for the sum of 600 *tomans* or 170*l*. a year.

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These are accessible to vehicles, but are unworthy of any more lavish praise.

I have in my previous volume so fully described the features of the postal or *chapar* service that I need not here recapitulate its characteristics. The *chapar* roads are in no sense of the term made roads; they are superior caravan tracks; and although on the flat, gravelly plains they are often as level as Pall Mall,[1] yet they are commonly strewn with stones and boulders, and in the mountain passes are little more than furrows or ruts. The *chapar* routes in Persia are as follows:

*Chapar routes*

| | |
|---|---|
| Teheran to Khanikin | Kazvin to Resht |
| Teheran to Meshed | Hamadan to Sinna |
| Teheran to Sari | Hamadan to Khorremabad |
| Teheran to Tabriz | Teheran to Shiraz |
| Khoi to Sufian | Kashan to Yezd and Kerman |
| Julfa to Tabriz | |

The remaining highways of Persia may be divided into two classes: caravan or mule tracks, upon which some, however slight, labour has at one time or other been spent, and those to which no labour has ever been devoted at all. Samples of the former are the mountain road leading from Teheran through Mazanderan to Meshed-i-Ser on the Caspian, and the execrable ladder-road from Bushire to Shiraz. To the second class belongs every other track in Persia that has been more or less worn by the feet of beasts of burden passing from town to town or village to village. The distinguishing features of all these pack-roads are a superabundance of loose, jagged stones, the most impossible gradients in steep places, an utter disregard of improvements so elementary that they might be effected for a few pounds, and the universal decay of bridges, caravanserais, and public works.

*Pack roads*

So much for the existing routes. Under the auspices of the Imperial Bank of Persia, an attempt is now being made to supply Persia, not merely with a carriageable road and transport service by carts, but with a new highway of entry into the country, penetrating as far as the capital, from the Southern sea. This is the long-projected and now finally

*New Teheran-Shushter road*

[1] Hence, in the dry season, it is possible for wheeled vehicles to travel upon them in many parts, though, as soon as a mountain pass is reached, the situation becomes critical. The Shah journeyed almost all the way to Baghdad, on his way to Kerbela in 1870, in a carriage; but the road was in the hands of workmen for months beforehand. In the whole of my *chapar* rides I did not encounter half a dozen vehicles.

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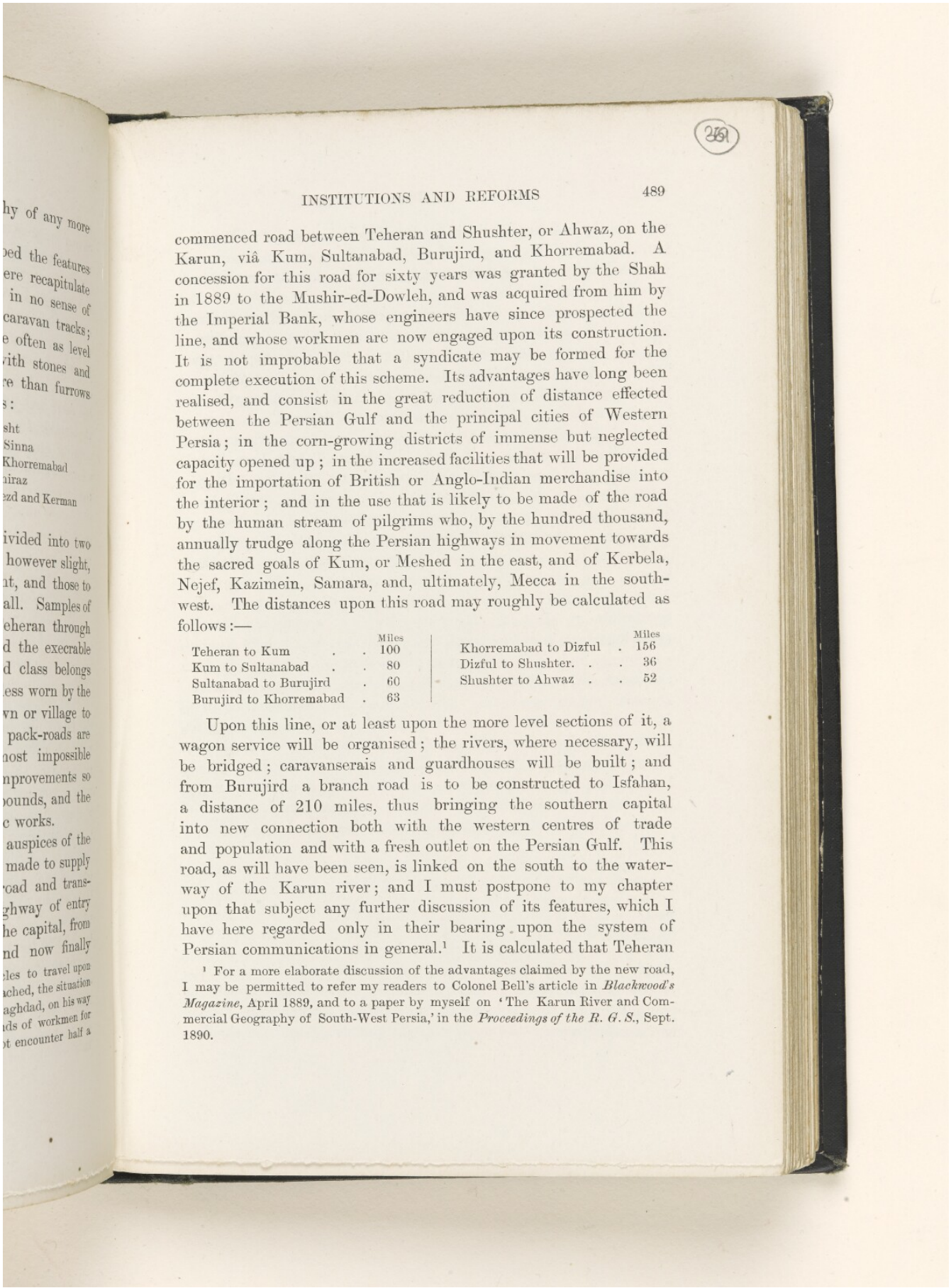



commenced road between Teheran and Shushter, or Ahwaz, on the Karun, viâ Kum, Sultanabad, Burujird, and Khorremabad. A concession for this road for sixty years was granted by the Shah in 1889 to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and was acquired from him by the Imperial Bank, whose engineers have since prospected the line, and whose workmen are now engaged upon its construction. It is not improbable that a syndicate may be formed for the complete execution of this scheme. Its advantages have long been realised, and consist in the great reduction of distance effected between the Persian Gulf and the principal cities of Western Persia; in the corn-growing districts of immense but neglected capacity opened up; in the increased facilities that will be provided for the importation of British or Anglo-Indian merchandise into the interior; and in the use that is likely to be made of the road by the human stream of pilgrims who, by the hundred thousand, annually trudge along the Persian highways in movement towards the sacred goals of Kum, or Meshed in the east, and of Kerbela, Nejef, Kazimein, Samara, and, ultimately, Mecca in the south-west. The distances upon this road may roughly be calculated as follows:—

| | Miles | | Miles |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teheran to Kum . . | 100 | Khorremabad to Dizful . | 156 |
| Kum to Sultanabad . . | 80 | Dizful to Shushter. . . | 36 |
| Sultanabad to Burujird . | 60 | Shushter to Ahwaz . . | 52 |
| Burujird to Khorremabad . | 63 | | |

Upon this line, or at least upon the more level sections of it, a wagon service will be organised; the rivers, where necessary, will be bridged; caravanserais and guardhouses will be built; and from Burujird a branch road is to be constructed to Isfahan, a distance of 210 miles, thus bringing the southern capital into new connection both with the western centres of trade and population and with a fresh outlet on the Persian Gulf. This road, as will have been seen, is linked on the south to the water-way of the Karun river; and I must postpone to my chapter upon that subject any further discussion of its features, which I have here regarded only in their bearing upon the system of Persian communications in general.[1] It is calculated that Teheran

[1] For a more elaborate discussion of the advantages claimed by the new road, I may be permitted to refer my readers to Colonel Bell's article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1889, and to a paper by myself on 'The Karun River and Commercial Geography of South-West Persia,' in the *Proceedings of the R. G. S.*, Sept. 1890.

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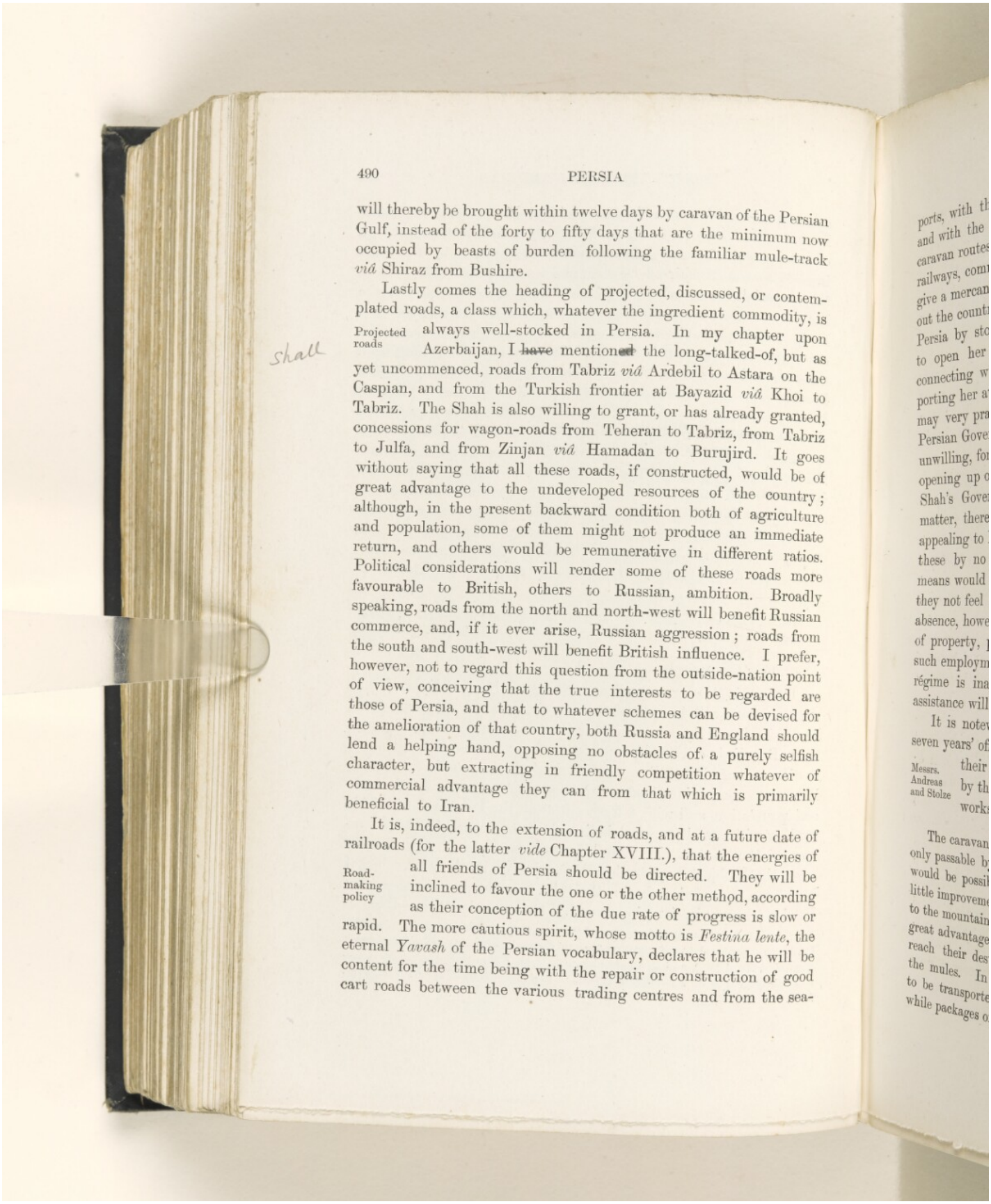



will thereby be brought within twelve days by caravan of the Persian Gulf, instead of the forty to fifty days that are the minimum now occupied by beasts of burden following the familiar mule-track *viâ* Shiraz from Bushire.

Lastly comes the heading of projected, discussed, or contemplated roads, a class which, whatever the ingredient commodity, is always well-stocked in Persia. In my chapter upon Azerbaijan, I ~~have~~ mentioned the long-talked-of, but as yet uncommenced, roads from Tabriz *viâ* Ardebil to Astara on the Caspian, and from the Turkish frontier at Bayazid *viâ* Khoi to Tabriz. The Shah is also willing to grant, or has already granted, concessions for wagon-roads from Teheran to Tabriz, from Tabriz to Julfa, and from Zinjan *viâ* Hamadan to Burujird. It goes without saying that all these roads, if constructed, would be of great advantage to the undeveloped resources of the country; although, in the present backward condition both of agriculture and population, some of them might not produce an immediate return, and others would be remunerative in different ratios. Political considerations will render some of these roads more favourable to British, others to Russian, ambition. Broadly speaking, roads from the north and north-west will benefit Russian commerce, and, if it ever arise, Russian aggression; roads from the south and south-west will benefit British influence. I prefer, however, not to regard this question from the outside-nation point of view, conceiving that the true interests to be regarded are those of Persia, and that to whatever schemes can be devised for the amelioration of that country, both Russia and England should lend a helping hand, opposing no obstacles of a purely selfish character, but extracting in friendly competition whatever of commercial advantage they can from that which is primarily beneficial to Iran.

Projected roads

shall

It is, indeed, to the extension of roads, and at a future date of railroads (for the latter *vide* Chapter XVIII.), that the energies of all friends of Persia should be directed. They will be inclined to favour the one or the other method, according as their conception of the due rate of progress is slow or rapid. The more cautious spirit, whose motto is *Festina lente*, the eternal *Yavash* of the Persian vocabulary, declares that he will be content for the time being with the repair or construction of good cart roads between the various trading centres and from the sea-

Road-making policy

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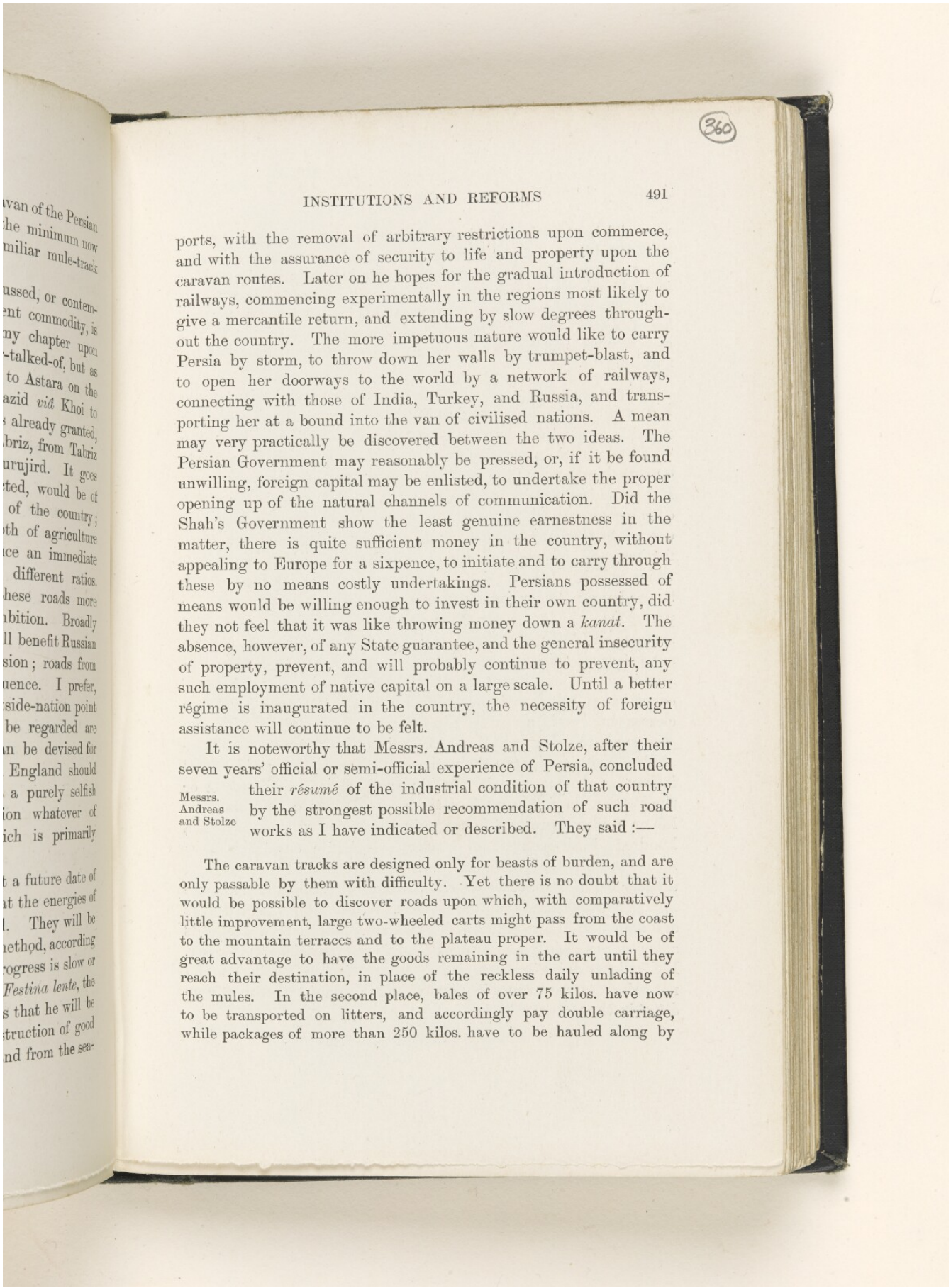



ports, with the removal of arbitrary restrictions upon commerce, and with the assurance of security to life and property upon the caravan routes. Later on he hopes for the gradual introduction of railways, commencing experimentally in the regions most likely to give a mercantile return, and extending by slow degrees throughout the country. The more impetuous nature would like to carry Persia by storm, to throw down her walls by trumpet-blast, and to open her doorways to the world by a network of railways, connecting with those of India, Turkey, and Russia, and transporting her at a bound into the van of civilised nations. A mean may very practically be discovered between the two ideas. The Persian Government may reasonably be pressed, or, if it be found unwilling, foreign capital may be enlisted, to undertake the proper opening up of the natural channels of communication. Did the Shah's Government show the least genuine earnestness in the matter, there is quite sufficient money in the country, without appealing to Europe for a sixpence, to initiate and to carry through these by no means costly undertakings. Persians possessed of means would be willing enough to invest in their own country, did they not feel that it was like throwing money down a *kanat*. The absence, however, of any State guarantee, and the general insecurity of property, prevent, and will probably continue to prevent, any such employment of native capital on a large scale. Until a better régime is inaugurated in the country, the necessity of foreign assistance will continue to be felt.

It is noteworthy that Messrs. Andreas and Stolze, after their seven years' official or semi-official experience of Persia, concluded their *résumé* of the industrial condition of that country by the strongest possible recommendation of such road works as I have indicated or described. They said :—

Messrs. Andreas and Stolze

The caravan tracks are designed only for beasts of burden, and are only passable by them with difficulty. Yet there is no doubt that it would be possible to discover roads upon which, with comparatively little improvement, large two-wheeled carts might pass from the coast to the mountain terraces and to the plateau proper. It would be of great advantage to have the goods remaining in the cart until they reach their destination, in place of the reckless daily unlading of the mules. In the second place, bales of over 75 kilos. have now to be transported on litters, and accordingly pay double carriage, while packages of more than 250 kilos. have to be hauled along by

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manual labour, with the aid of rollers. On carts, weights up to at least 700 kilos. would be transportable. Such an undertaking under European control would be sure of the grandest success, enlarging, as it would, the market range of all the cheaper products at least threefold. The roads would doubtless require improvement, calling for outlay of capital. But be it remembered how cheap labour is in Persia, and how the material for road repair is everywhere to be had for nothing.[1]

Persian education

I have been surprised, in my studies of works on Persia, to note how small is the attention that has been bestowed by their writers upon the subject of the national education. With the conscious superiority of a civilised standard, it is simple enough to expose and to denounce the abuses of an Oriental system. But while complaining of the stupidity of the Persians for not at once recognising the beneficent contents of the cornucopia which is offered to them by Europe, ought not such critics to go a little further, and to examine the foundations of the system upon which is built up the fabric of national prejudice which it is so easy to condemn? Persian character may be obstinate, or retrograde, or perfidious, but, like every other character, it is the product of a system; and if we are to turn our batteries upon its walls, had we not better ascertain of what material they are made? I have even seen it stated—a rash generalisation from the universal existence of education of a sort, without regard to what sort—that the lower classes in Persia are the best educated in the East. A more grotesque paradox could not, I believe, be uttered. A mere ability to read and write the native language, however widespread it may be, acquaintance in the higher classes with the Koran or the Persian classics, carry with them no adaptation to a different life or to liberal propensities. Amid the heroic schemes which a hundred miracle-mongers propose for the revivification of the country no one seems to think of the schools, or to suggest that better teachers, a wider curriculum, different class books, are needed to make the next generation other than the present. A familiarity with the ways and standards of civilisation will breed an anxiety for a share in its advantages which no amount of diplomatic manipulation can implant. If I had any voice in the so-called regeneration of Persia, I would not bring out a company in London, but I would organise a *coup d'état* in the village schools.

[1] *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1885, pp. 54–6.

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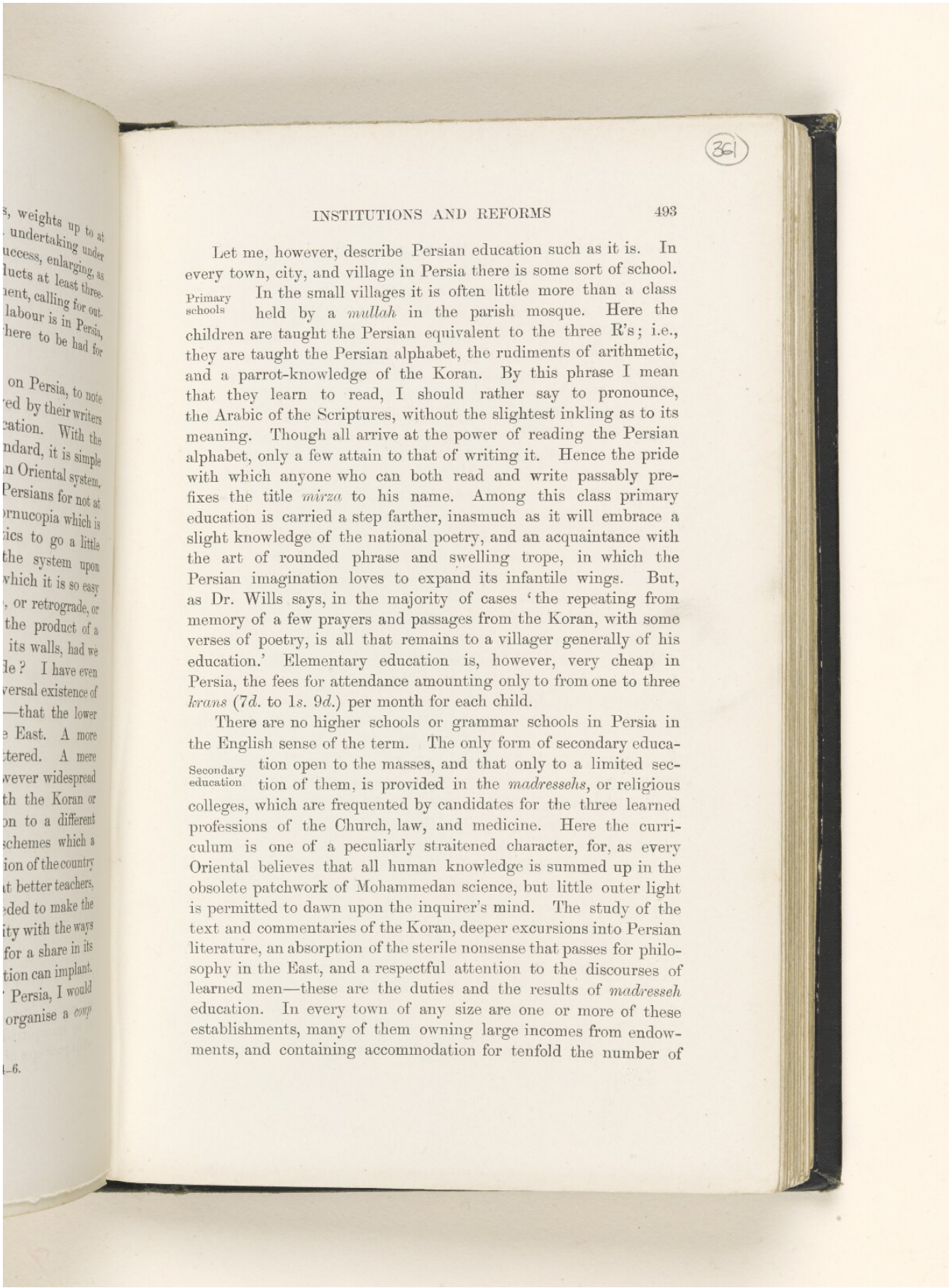




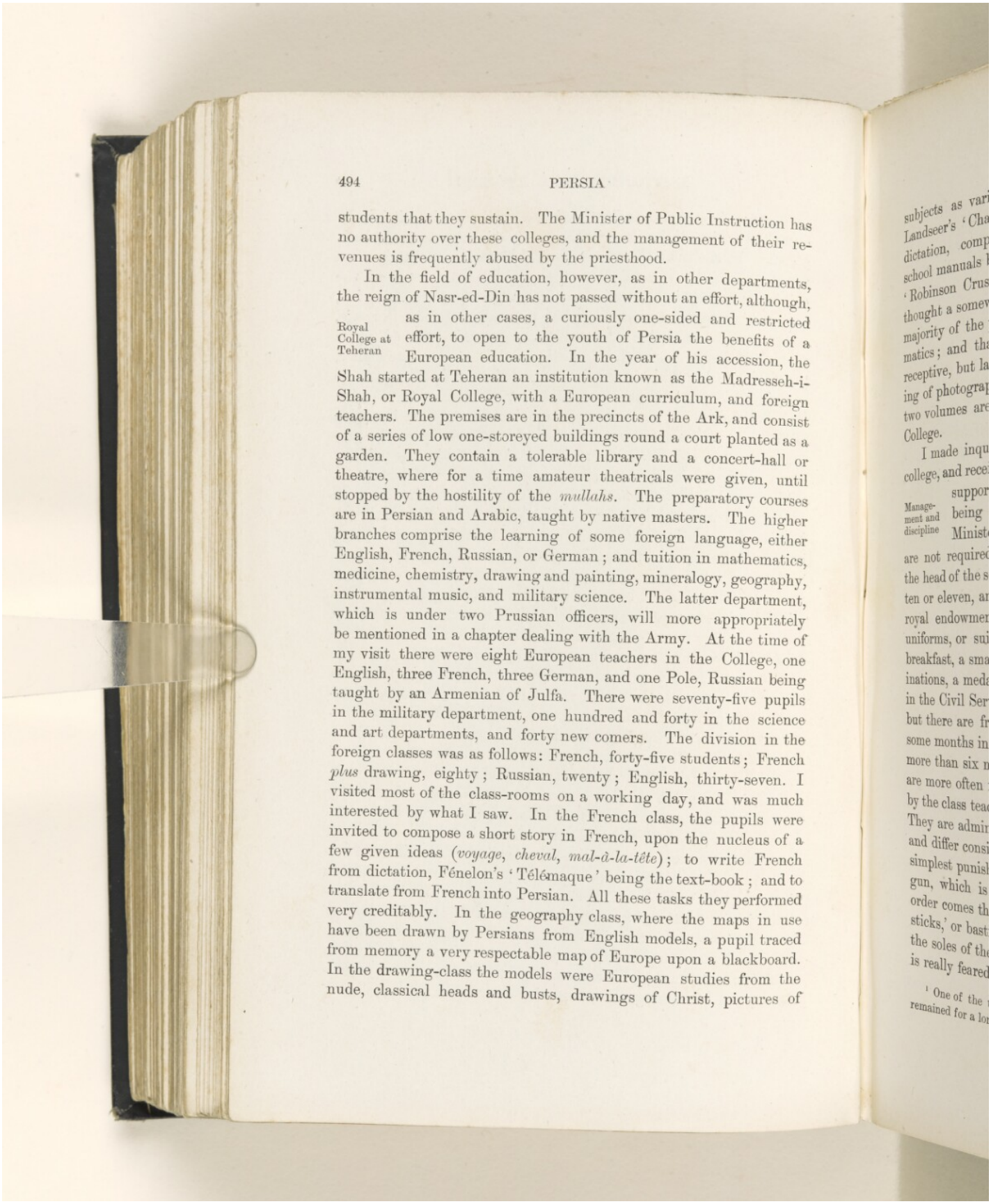
Let me, however, describe Persian education such as it is. In every town, city, and village in Persia there is some sort of school.

Primary schools

In the small villages it is often little more than a class held by a *mullah* in the parish mosque. Here the children are taught the Persian equivalent to the three R's; i.e., they are taught the Persian alphabet, the rudiments of arithmetic, and a parrot-knowledge of the Koran. By this phrase I mean that they learn to read, I should rather say to pronounce, the Arabic of the Scriptures, without the slightest inkling as to its meaning. Though all arrive at the power of reading the Persian alphabet, only a few attain to that of writing it. Hence the pride with which anyone who can both read and write passably prefixes the title *mirza* to his name. Among this class primary education is carried a step farther, inasmuch as it will embrace a slight knowledge of the national poetry, and an acquaintance with the art of rounded phrase and swelling trope, in which the Persian imagination loves to expand its infantile wings. But, as Dr. Wills says, in the majority of cases 'the repeating from memory of a few prayers and passages from the Koran, with some verses of poetry, is all that remains to a villager generally of his education.' Elementary education is, however, very cheap in Persia, the fees for attendance amounting only to from one to three *krans* (7*d.* to 1*s.* 9*d.*) per month for each child.

There are no higher schools or grammar schools in Persia in the English sense of the term. The only form of secondary education open to the masses, and that only to a limited section of them, is provided in the *madressehs*, or religious colleges, which are frequented by candidates for the three learned professions of the Church, law, and medicine. Here the curriculum is one of a peculiarly straitened character, for, as every Oriental believes that all human knowledge is summed up in the obsolete patchwork of Mohammedan science, but little outer light is permitted to dawn upon the inquirer's mind. The study of the text and commentaries of the Koran, deeper excursions into Persian literature, an absorption of the sterile nonsense that passes for philosophy in the East, and a respectful attention to the discourses of learned men—these are the duties and the results of *madresseh* education. In every town of any size are one or more of these establishments, many of them owning large incomes from endowments, and containing accommodation for tenfold the number of

Secondary education





students that they sustain. The Minister of Public Instruction has no authority over these colleges, and the management of their revenues is frequently abused by the priesthood.

In the field of education, however, as in other departments, the reign of Nasr-ed-Din has not passed without an effort, although, as in other cases, a curiously one-sided and restricted effort, to open to the youth of Persia the benefits of a European education. In the year of his accession, the Shah started at Teheran an institution known as the Madresseh-i-Shah, or Royal College, with a European curriculum, and foreign teachers. The premises are in the precincts of the Ark, and consist of a series of low one-storeyed buildings round a court planted as a garden. They contain a tolerable library and a concert-hall or theatre, where for a time amateur theatricals were given, until stopped by the hostility of the *mullahs*. The preparatory courses are in Persian and Arabic, taught by native masters. The higher branches comprise the learning of some foreign language, either English, French, Russian, or German; and tuition in mathematics, medicine, chemistry, drawing and painting, mineralogy, geography, instrumental music, and military science. The latter department, which is under two Prussian officers, will more appropriately be mentioned in a chapter dealing with the Army. At the time of my visit there were eight European teachers in the College, one English, three French, three German, and one Pole, Russian being taught by an Armenian of Julfa. There were seventy-five pupils in the military department, one hundred and forty in the science and art departments, and forty new comers. The division in the foreign classes was as follows: French, forty-five students; French *plus* drawing, eighty; Russian, twenty; English, thirty-seven. I visited most of the class-rooms on a working day, and was much interested by what I saw. In the French class, the pupils were invited to compose a short story in French, upon the nucleus of a few given ideas (*voyage*, *cheval*, *mal-à-la-tête*); to write French from dictation, Fénelon's 'Télémaque' being the text-book; and to translate from French into Persian. All these tasks they performed very creditably. In the geography class, where the maps in use have been drawn by Persians from English models, a pupil traced from memory a very respectable map of Europe upon a blackboard. In the drawing-class the models were European studies from the nude, classical heads and busts, drawings of Christ, pictures of

Royal College at Teheran

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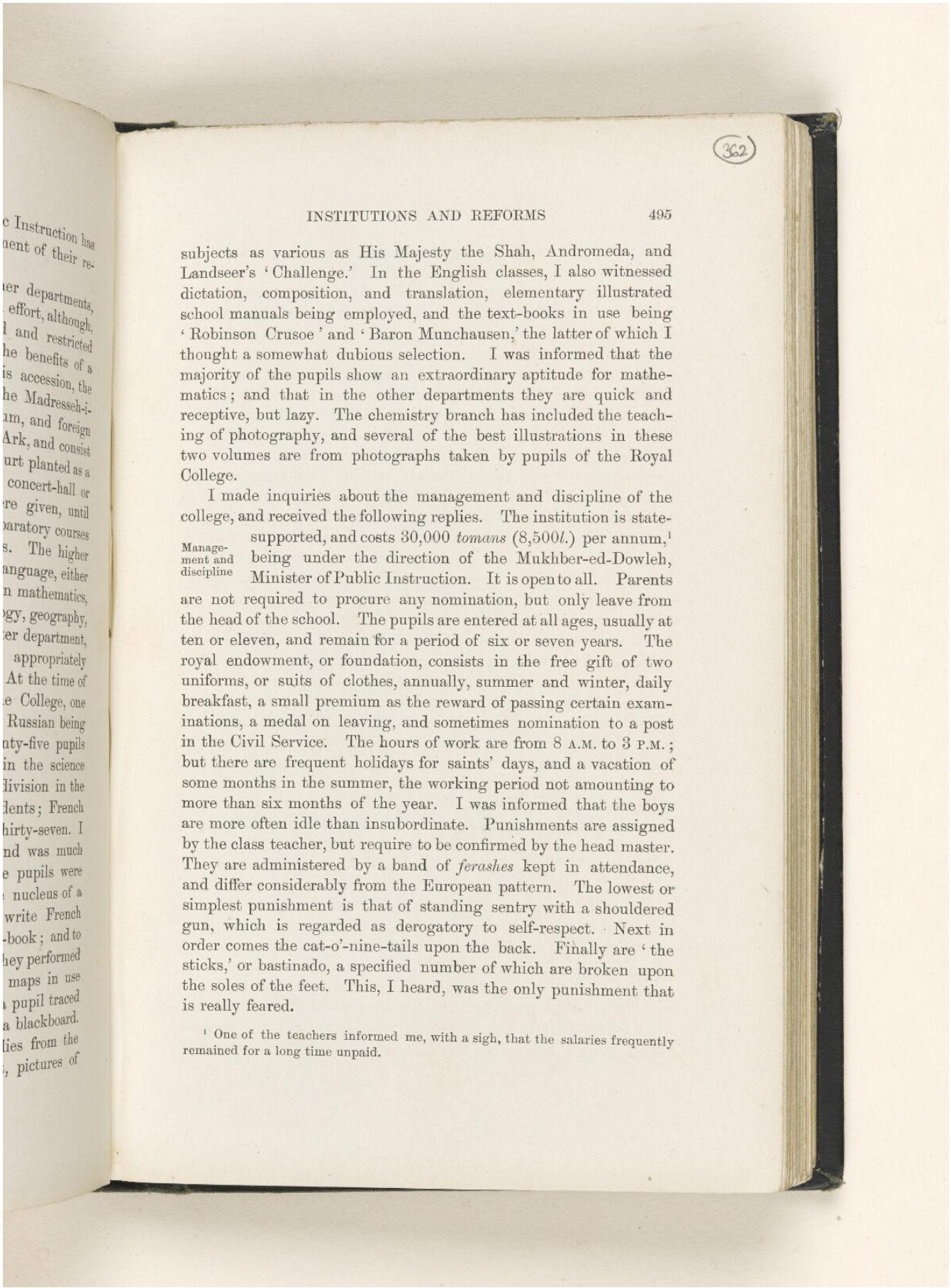



subjects as various as His Majesty the Shah, Andromeda, and Landseer's 'Challenge.' In the English classes, I also witnessed dictation, composition, and translation, elementary illustrated school manuals being employed, and the text-books in use being 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'Baron Munchausen,' the latter of which I thought a somewhat dubious selection. I was informed that the majority of the pupils show an extraordinary aptitude for mathematics; and that in the other departments they are quick and receptive, but lazy. The chemistry branch has included the teaching of photography, and several of the best illustrations in these two volumes are from photographs taken by pupils of the Royal College.

I made inquiries about the management and discipline of the college, and received the following replies. The institution is state-supported, and costs 30,000 *tomans* (8,500*l.*) per annum,[1] being under the direction of the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Public Instruction. It is open to all. Parents are not required to procure any nomination, but only leave from the head of the school. The pupils are entered at all ages, usually at ten or eleven, and remain for a period of six or seven years. The royal endowment, or foundation, consists in the free gift of two uniforms, or suits of clothes, annually, summer and winter, daily breakfast, a small premium as the reward of passing certain examinations, a medal on leaving, and sometimes nomination to a post in the Civil Service. The hours of work are from 8 A.M. to 3 P.M.; but there are frequent holidays for saints' days, and a vacation of some months in the summer, the working period not amounting to more than six months of the year. I was informed that the boys are more often idle than insubordinate. Punishments are assigned by the class teacher, but require to be confirmed by the head master. They are administered by a band of *ferashes* kept in attendance, and differ considerably from the European pattern. The lowest or simplest punishment is that of standing sentry with a shouldered gun, which is regarded as derogatory to self-respect. Next in order comes the cat-o'-nine-tails upon the back. Finally are 'the sticks,' or bastinado, a specified number of which are broken upon the soles of the feet. This, I heard, was the only punishment that is really feared.

Management and discipline

[1] One of the teachers informed me, with a sigh, that the salaries frequently remained for a long time unpaid.

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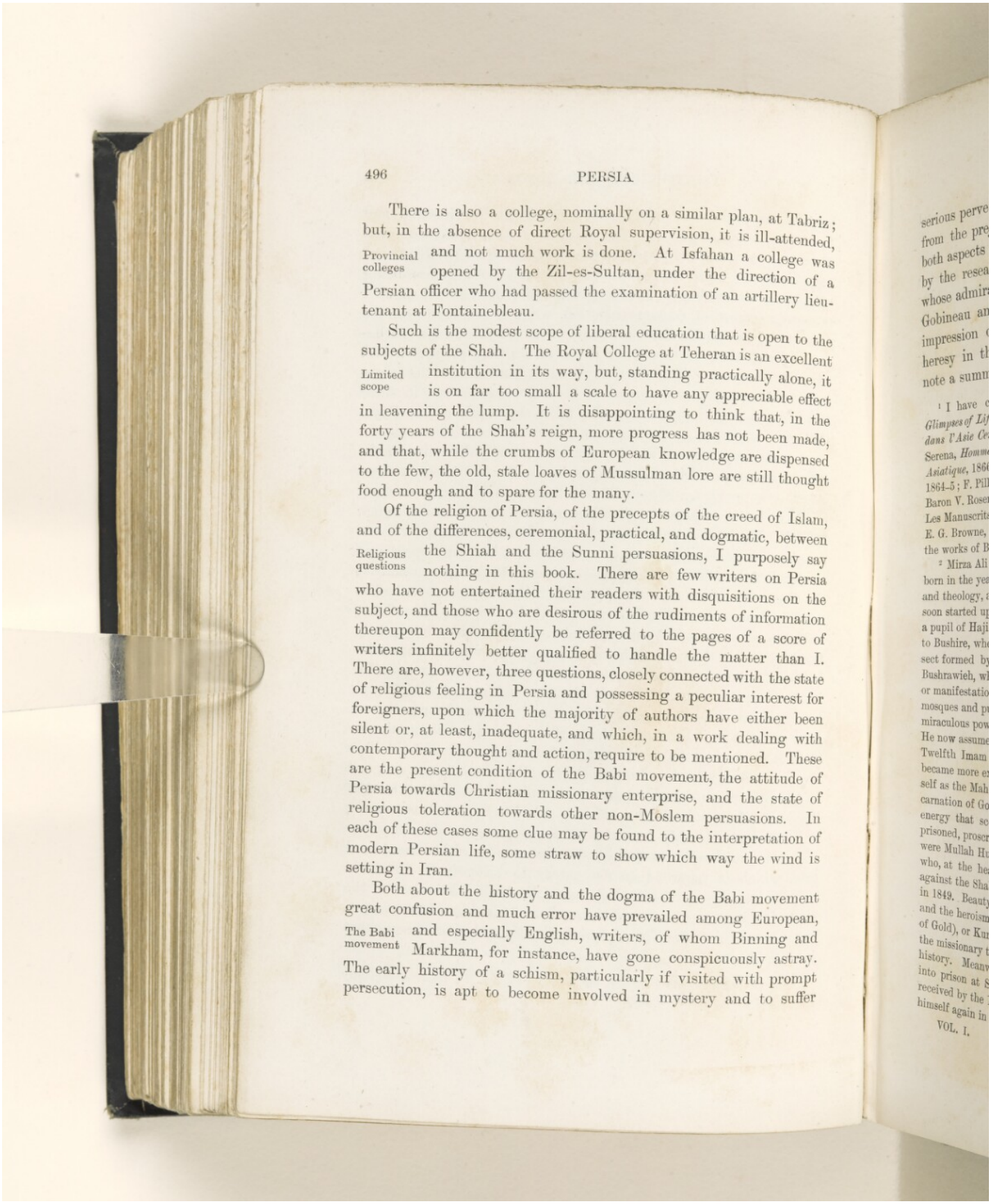



There is also a college, nominally on a similar plan, at Tabriz; but, in the absence of direct Royal supervision, it is ill-attended, and not much work is done. At Isfahan a college was opened by the Zil-es-Sultan, under the direction of a Persian officer who had passed the examination of an artillery lieutenant at Fontainebleau.

Provincial colleges

Such is the modest scope of liberal education that is open to the subjects of the Shah. The Royal College at Teheran is an excellent institution in its way, but, standing practically alone, it is on far too small a scale to have any appreciable effect in leavening the lump. It is disappointing to think that, in the forty years of the Shah's reign, more progress has not been made, and that, while the crumbs of European knowledge are dispensed to the few, the old, stale loaves of Mussulman lore are still thought food enough and to spare for the many.

Limited scope

Of the religion of Persia, of the precepts of the creed of Islam, and of the differences, ceremonial, practical, and dogmatic, between the Shiah and the Sunni persuasions, I purposely say nothing in this book. There are few writers on Persia who have not entertained their readers with disquisitions on the subject, and those who are desirous of the rudiments of information thereupon may confidently be referred to the pages of a score of writers infinitely better qualified to handle the matter than I. There are, however, three questions, closely connected with the state of religious feeling in Persia and possessing a peculiar interest for foreigners, upon which the majority of authors have either been silent or, at least, inadequate, and which, in a work dealing with contemporary thought and action, require to be mentioned. These are the present condition of the Babi movement, the attitude of Persia towards Christian missionary enterprise, and the state of religious toleration towards other non-Moslem persuasions. In each of these cases some clue may be found to the interpretation of modern Persian life, some straw to show which way the wind is setting in Iran.

Religious questions

Both about the history and the dogma of the Babi movement great confusion and much error have prevailed among European, and especially English, writers, of whom Binning and Markham, for instance, have gone conspicuously astray. The early history of a schism, particularly if visited with prompt persecution, is apt to become involved in mystery and to suffer

The Babi movement



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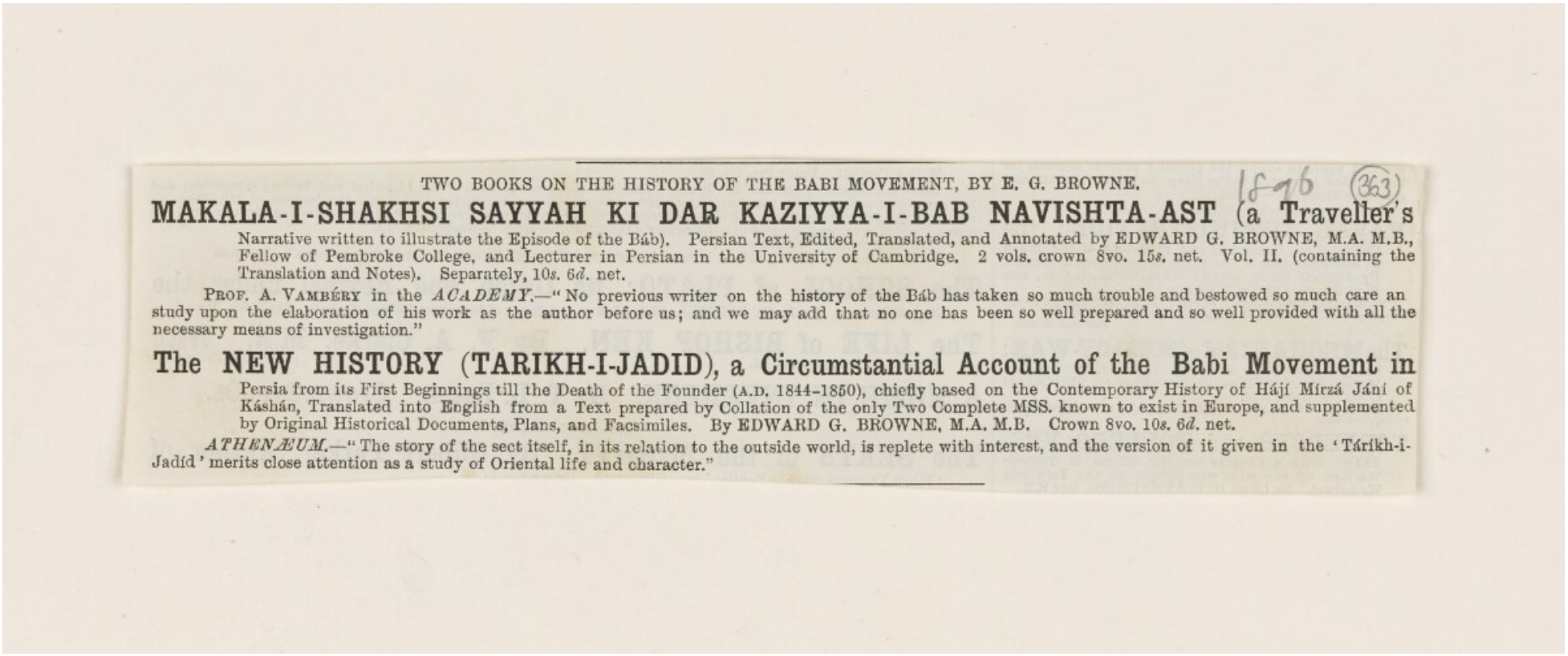

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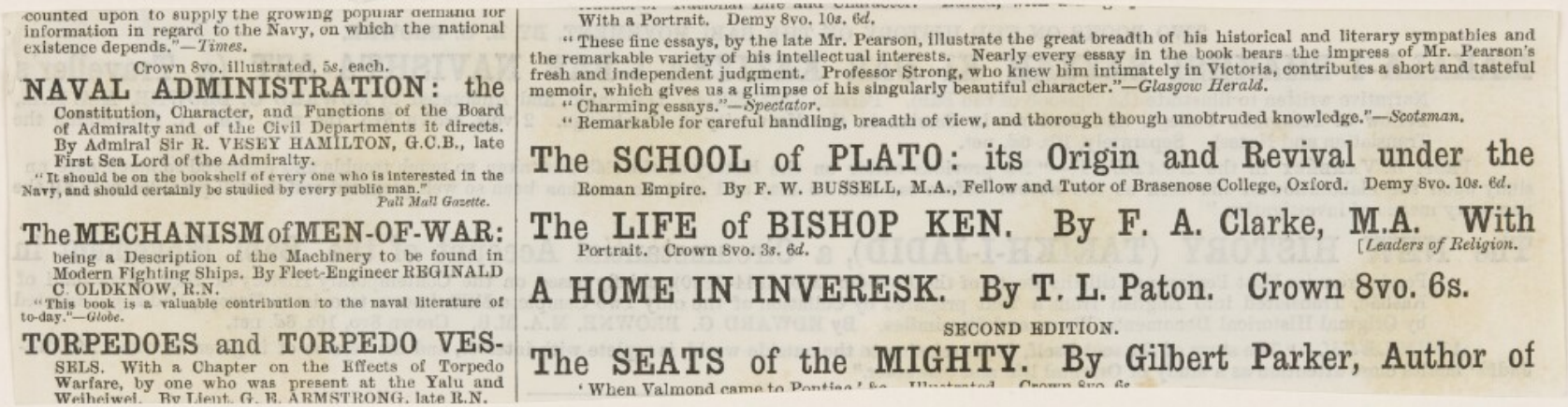

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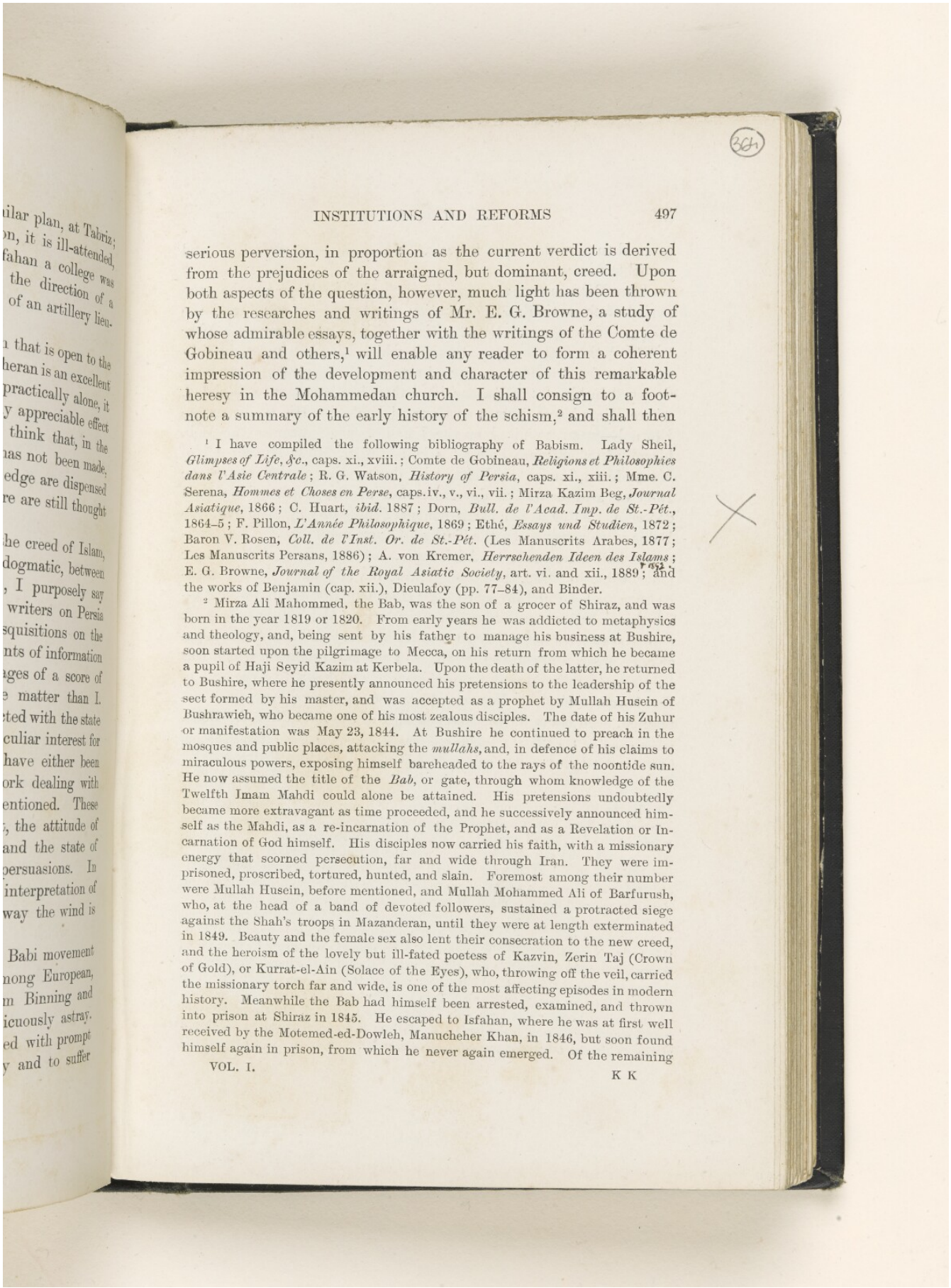



serious perversion, in proportion as the current verdict is derived from the prejudices of the arraigned, but dominant, creed. Upon both aspects of the question, however, much light has been thrown by the researches and writings of Mr. E. G. Browne, a study of whose admirable essays, together with the writings of the Comte de Gobineau and others,[1] will enable any reader to form a coherent impression of the development and character of this remarkable heresy in the Mohammedan church. I shall consign to a foot-note a summary of the early history of the schism,[2] and shall then

[1] I have compiled the following bibliography of Babism. Lady Sheil, *Glimpses of Life, &c.*, caps. xi., xviii.; Comte de Gobineau, *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*; R. G. Watson, *History of Persia*, caps. xi., xiii.; Mme. C. Serena, *Hommes et Choses en Perse*, caps. iv., v., vi., vii.; Mirza Kazim Beg, *Journal Asiatique*, 1866; C. Huart, *ibid.* 1887; Dorn, *Bull. de l'Acad. Imp. de St.-Pét.*, 1864–5; F. Pillon, *L'Année Philosophique*, 1869; Ethé, *Essays und Studien*, 1872; Baron V. Rosen, *Coll. de l'Inst. Or. de St.-Pét.* (Les Manuscrits Arabes, 1877; Les Manuscrits Persans, 1886); A. von Kremer, *Herrschenden Ideen des Islams*; E. G. Browne, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, art. vi. and xii., 1889; and the works of Benjamin (cap. xii.), Dieulafoy (pp. 77–84), and Binder.

[2] Mirza Ali Mahommed, the Bab, was the son of a grocer of Shiraz, and was born in the year 1819 or 1820. From early years he was addicted to metaphysics and theology, and, being sent by his father to manage his business at Bushire, soon started upon the pilgrimage to Mecca, on his return from which he became a pupil of Haji Seyid Kazim at Kerbela. Upon the death of the latter, he returned to Bushire, where he presently announced his pretensions to the leadership of the sect formed by his master, and was accepted as a prophet by Mullah Husein of Bushrawieh, who became one of his most zealous disciples. The date of his Zuhur or manifestation was May 23, 1844. At Bushire he continued to preach in the mosques and public places, attacking the *mullahs*, and, in defence of his claims to miraculous powers, exposing himself bareheaded to the rays of the noontide sun. He now assumed the title of the *Bab*, or gate, through whom knowledge of the Twelfth Imam Mahdi could alone be attained. His pretensions undoubtedly became more extravagant as time proceeded, and he successively announced himself as the Mahdi, as a re-incarnation of the Prophet, and as a Revelation or Incarnation of God himself. His disciples now carried his faith, with a missionary energy that scorned persecution, far and wide through Iran. They were imprisoned, proscribed, tortured, hunted, and slain. Foremost among their number were Mullah Husein, before mentioned, and Mullah Mohammed Ali of Barfurush, who, at the head of a band of devoted followers, sustained a protracted siege against the Shah's troops in Mazanderan, until they were at length exterminated in 1849. Beauty and the female sex also lent their consecration to the new creed, and the heroism of the lovely but ill-fated poetess of Kazvin, Zerin Taj (Crown of Gold), or Kurrat-el-Ain (Solace of the Eyes), who, throwing off the veil, carried the missionary torch far and wide, is one of the most affecting episodes in modern history. Meanwhile the Bab had himself been arrested, examined, and thrown into prison at Shiraz in 1845. He escaped to Isfahan, where he was at first well received by the Motemed-ed-Dowleh, Manucheher Khan, in 1846, but soon found himself again in prison, from which he never again emerged. Of the remaining



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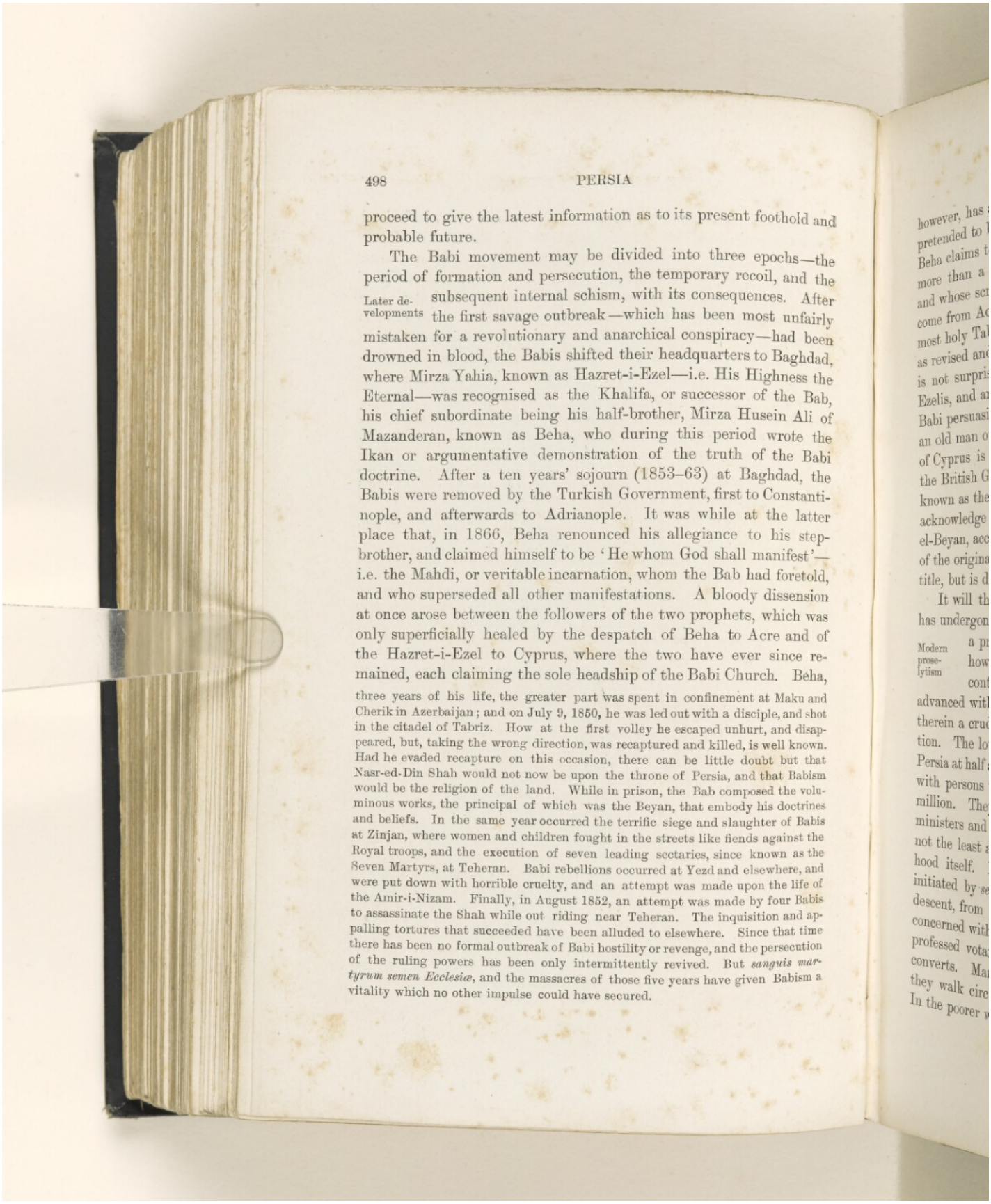



proceed to give the latest information as to its present foothold and probable future.

The Babi movement may be divided into three epochs—the period of formation and persecution, the temporary recoil, and the subsequent internal schism, with its consequences. After the first savage outbreak—which has been most unfairly mistaken for a revolutionary and anarchical conspiracy—had been drowned in blood, the Babis shifted their headquarters to Baghdad, where Mirza Yahia, known as Hazret-i-Ezel—i.e. His Highness the Eternal—was recognised as the Khalifa, or successor of the Bab, his chief subordinate being his half-brother, Mirza Husein Ali of Mazanderan, known as Beha, who during this period wrote the Ikan or argumentative demonstration of the truth of the Babi doctrine. After a ten years' sojourn (1853–63) at Baghdad, the Babis were removed by the Turkish Government, first to Constantinople, and afterwards to Adrianople. It was while at the latter place that, in 1866, Beha renounced his allegiance to his step-brother, and claimed himself to be 'He whom God shall manifest'—i.e. the Mahdi, or veritable incarnation, whom the Bab had foretold, and who superseded all other manifestations. A bloody dissension at once arose between the followers of the two prophets, which was only superficially healed by the despatch of Beha to Acre and of the Hazret-i-Ezel to Cyprus, where the two have ever since remained, each claiming the sole headship of the Babi Church. Beha,

Later developments

three years of his life, the greater part was spent in confinement at Maku and Cherik in Azerbaijan; and on July 9, 1850, he was led out with a disciple, and shot in the citadel of Tabriz. How at the first volley he escaped unhurt, and disappeared, but, taking the wrong direction, was recaptured and killed, is well known. Had he evaded recapture on this occasion, there can be little doubt but that Nasr-ed-Din Shah would not now be upon the throne of Persia, and that Babism would be the religion of the land. While in prison, the Bab composed the voluminous works, the principal of which was the Beyan, that embody his doctrines and beliefs. In the same year occurred the terrific siege and slaughter of Babis at Zinjan, where women and children fought in the streets like fiends against the Royal troops, and the execution of seven leading sectaries, since known as the Seven Martyrs, at Teheran. Babi rebellions occurred at Yezd and elsewhere, and were put down with horrible cruelty, and an attempt was made upon the life of the Amir-i-Nizam. Finally, in August 1852, an attempt was made by four Babis to assassinate the Shah while out riding near Teheran. The inquisition and appalling tortures that succeeded have been alluded to elsewhere. Since that time there has been no formal outbreak of Babi hostility or revenge, and the persecution of the ruling powers has been only intermittently revived. But *sanguis martyrum semen Ecclesiæ*, and the massacres of those five years have given Babism a vitality which no other impulse could have secured.

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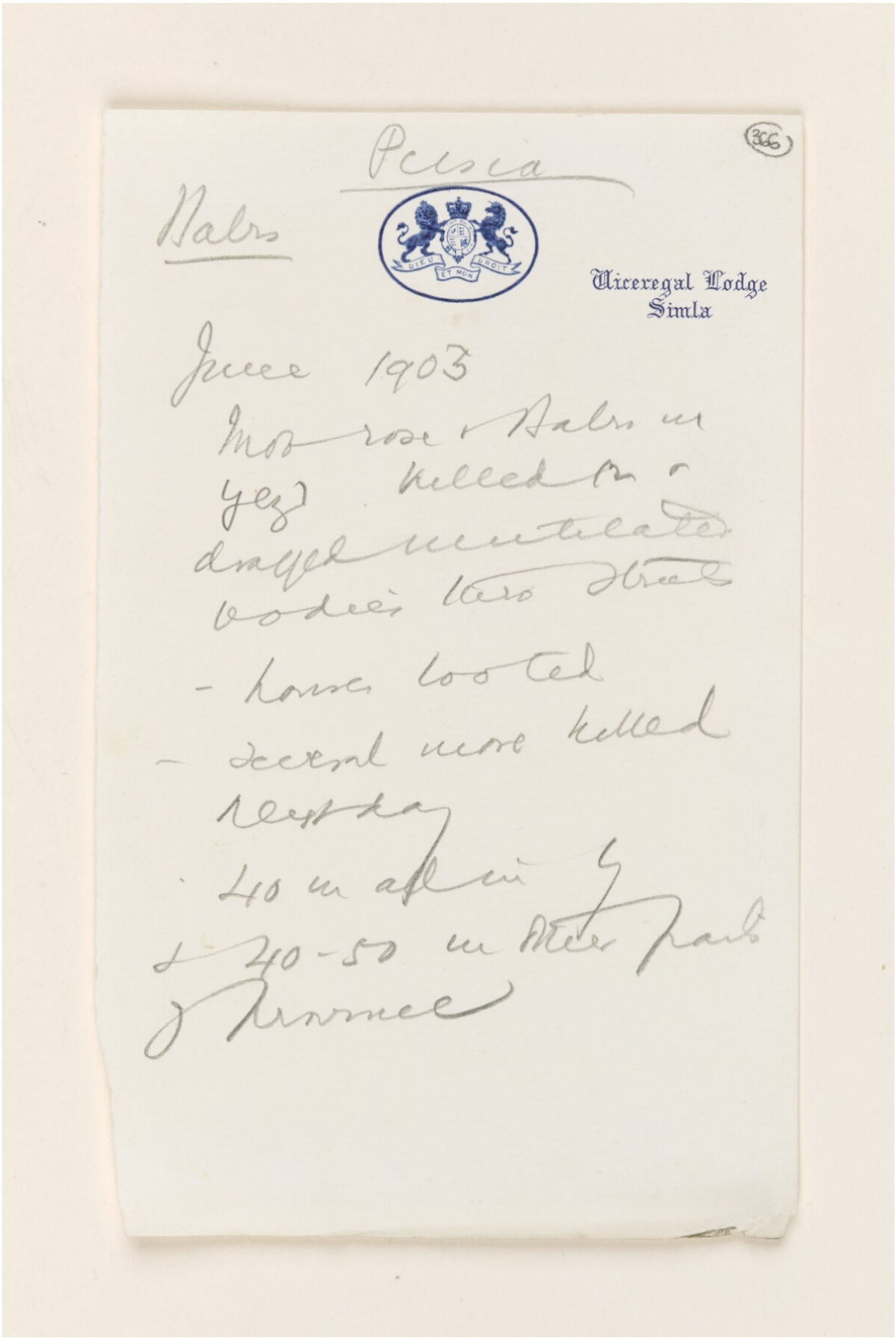
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Simla
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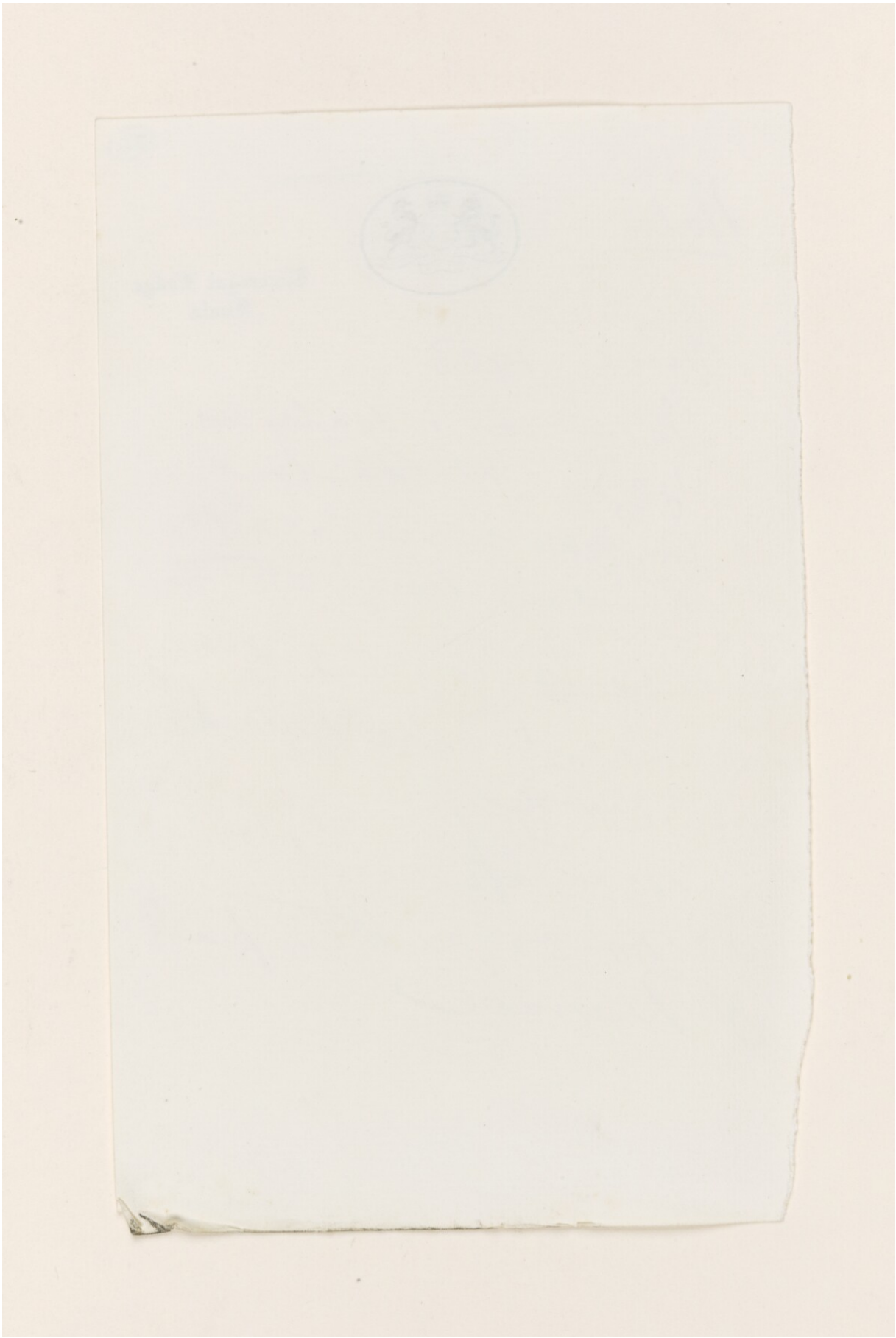

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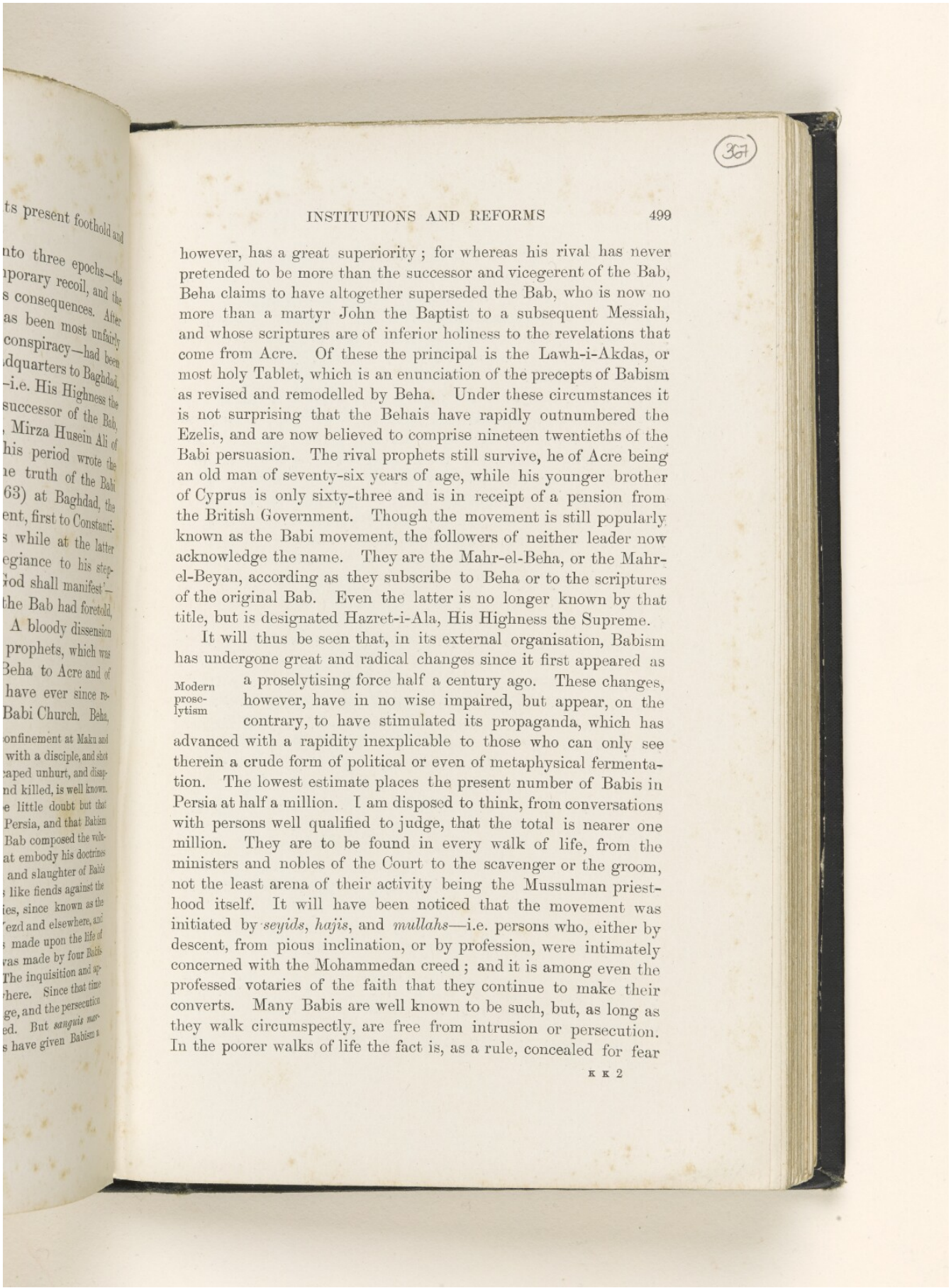



however, has a great superiority; for whereas his rival has never pretended to be more than the successor and vicegerent of the Bab, Beha claims to have altogether superseded the Bab, who is now no more than a martyr John the Baptist to a subsequent Messiah, and whose scriptures are of inferior holiness to the revelations that come from Acre. Of these the principal is the Lawh-i-Akdas, or most holy Tablet, which is an enunciation of the precepts of Babism as revised and remodelled by Beha. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Behais have rapidly outnumbered the Ezelis, and are now believed to comprise nineteen twentieths of the Babi persuasion. The rival prophets still survive, he of Acre being an old man of seventy-six years of age, while his younger brother of Cyprus is only sixty-three and is in receipt of a pension from the British Government. Though the movement is still popularly known as the Babi movement, the followers of neither leader now acknowledge the name. They are the Mahr-el-Beha, or the Mahr-el-Beyan, according as they subscribe to Beha or to the scriptures of the original Bab. Even the latter is no longer known by that title, but is designated Hazret-i-Ala, His Highness the Supreme.

It will thus be seen that, in its external organisation, Babism has undergone great and radical changes since it first appeared as a proselytising force half a century ago. These changes, however, have in no wise impaired, but appear, on the contrary, to have stimulated its propaganda, which has advanced with a rapidity inexplicable to those who can only see therein a crude form of political or even of metaphysical fermentation. The lowest estimate places the present number of Babis in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million. They are to be found in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Mussulman priesthood itself. It will have been noticed that the movement was initiated by *seyids*, *hajis*, and *mullahs*—i.e. persons who, either by descent, from pious inclination, or by profession, were intimately concerned with the Mohammedan creed; and it is among even the professed votaries of the faith that they continue to make their converts. Many Babis are well known to be such, but, as long as they walk circumspectly, are free from intrusion or persecution. In the poorer walks of life the fact is, as a rule, concealed for fear

Modern proselytism



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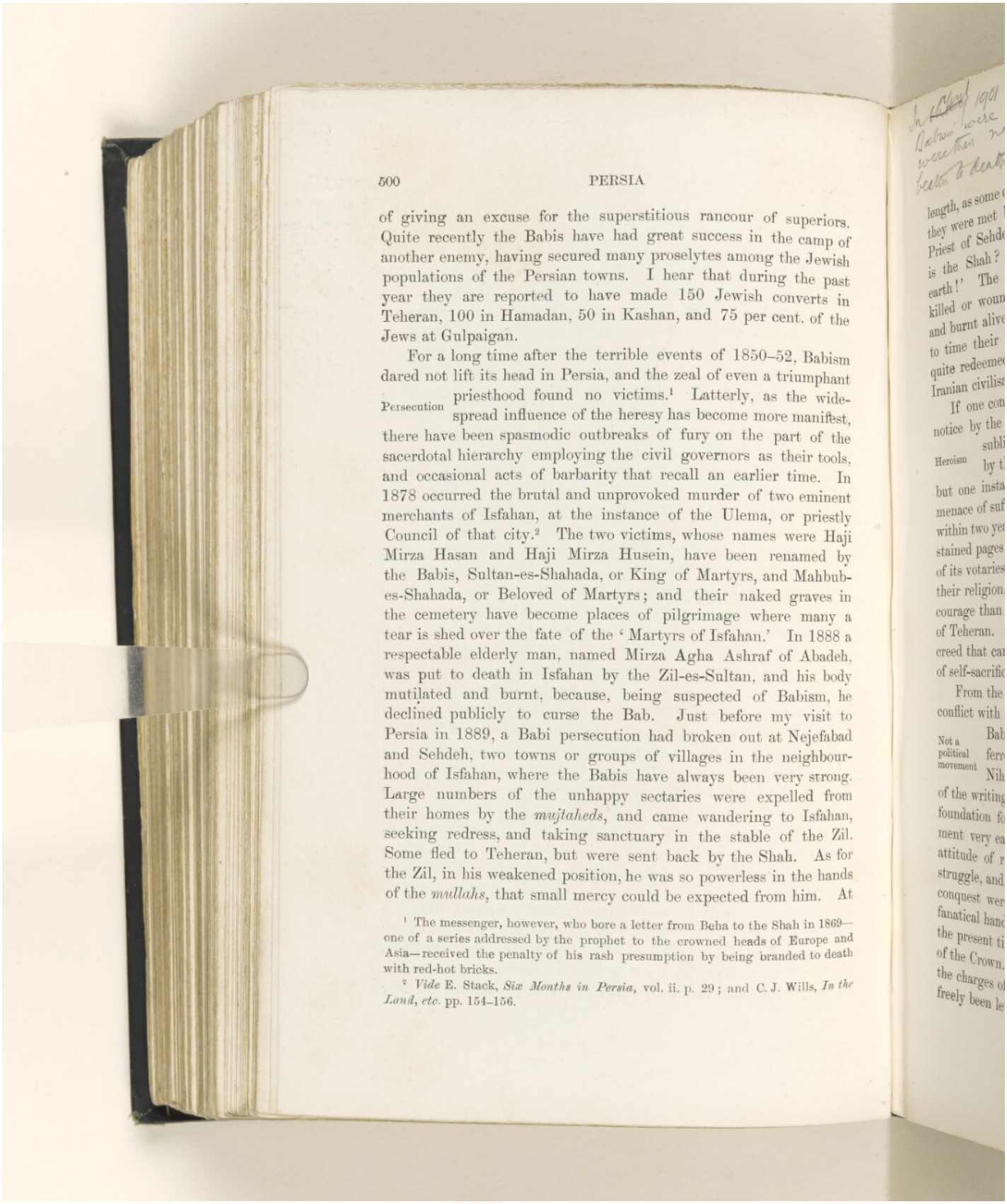



of giving an excuse for the superstitious rancour of superiors. Quite recently the Babis have had great success in the camp of another enemy, having secured many proselytes among the Jewish populations of the Persian towns. I hear that during the past year they are reported to have made 150 Jewish converts in Teheran, 100 in Hamadan, 50 in Kashan, and 75 per cent. of the Jews at Gulpaigan.

Persecution

For a long time after the terrible events of 1850–52, Babism dared not lift its head in Persia, and the zeal of even a triumphant priesthood found no victims.[1] Latterly, as the wide-spread influence of the heresy has become more manifest, there have been spasmodic outbreaks of fury on the part of the sacerdotal hierarchy employing the civil governors as their tools, and occasional acts of barbarity that recall an earlier time. In 1878 occurred the brutal and unprovoked murder of two eminent merchants of Isfahan, at the instance of the Ulema, or priestly Council of that city.[2] The two victims, whose names were Haji Mirza Hasan and Haji Mirza Husein, have been renamed by the Babis, Sultan-es-Shahada, or King of Martyrs, and Mahbub-es-Shahada, or Beloved of Martyrs; and their naked graves in the cemetery have become places of pilgrimage where many a tear is shed over the fate of the 'Martyrs of Isfahan.' In 1888 a respectable elderly man, named Mirza Agha Ashraf of Abadeh, was put to death in Isfahan by the Zil-es-Sultan, and his body mutilated and burnt, because, being suspected of Babism, he declined publicly to curse the Bab. Just before my visit to Persia in 1889, a Babi persecution had broken out at Nejefabad and Sehdeh, two towns or groups of villages in the neighbourhood of Isfahan, where the Babis have always been very strong. Large numbers of the unhappy sectaries were expelled from their homes by the *mujtaheds*, and came wandering to Isfahan, seeking redress, and taking sanctuary in the stable of the Zil. Some fled to Teheran, but were sent back by the Shah. As for the Zil, in his weakened position, he was so powerless in the hands of the *mullahs*, that small mercy could be expected from him. At

[1] The messenger, however, who bore a letter from Beha to the Shah in 1869—one of a series addressed by the prophet to the crowned heads of Europe and Asia—received the penalty of his rash presumption by being branded to death with red-hot bricks.

[2] *Vide* E. Stack, *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 29; and C. J. Wills, *In the Land, etc.* pp. 154–156.

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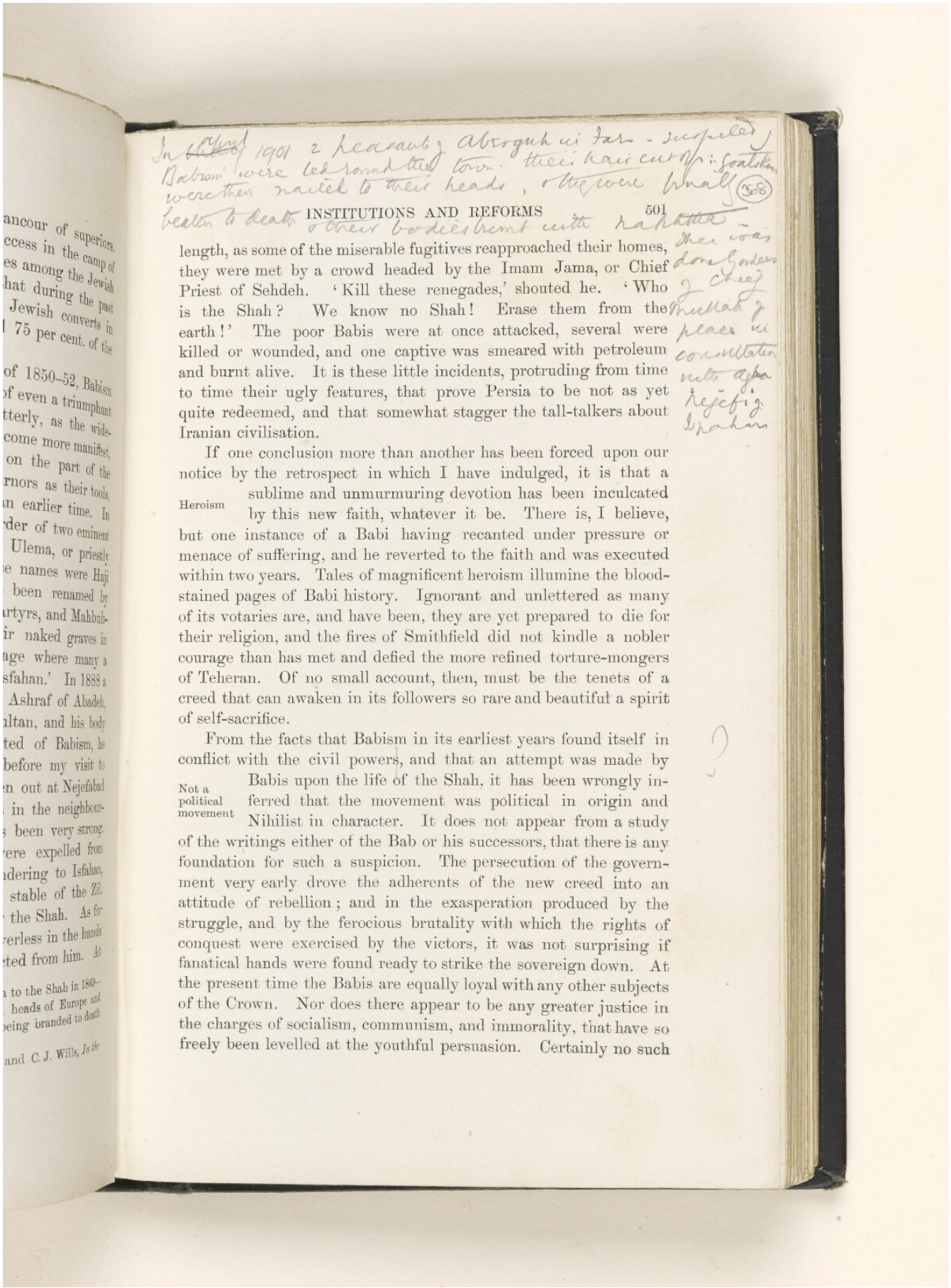



length, as some of the miserable fugitives reapproached their homes, they were met by a crowd headed by the Imam Jama, or Chief Priest of Sehdeh. 'Kill these renegades,' shouted he. 'Who is the Shah? We know no Shah! Erase them from the earth!' The poor Babis were at once attacked, several were killed or wounded, and one captive was smeared with petroleum and burnt alive. It is these little incidents, protruding from time to time their ugly features, that prove Persia to be not as yet quite redeemed, and that somewhat stagger the tall-talkers about Iranian civilisation.

Heroism

If one conclusion more than another has been forced upon our notice by the retrospect in which I have indulged, it is that a sublime and unmurmuring devotion has been inculcated by this new faith, whatever it be. There is, I believe, but one instance of a Babi having recanted under pressure or menace of suffering, and he reverted to the faith and was executed within two years. Tales of magnificent heroism illumine the blood-stained pages of Babi history. Ignorant and unlettered as many of its votaries are, and have been, they are yet prepared to die for their religion, and the fires of Smithfield did not kindle a nobler courage than has met and defied the more refined torture-mongers of Teheran. Of no small account, then, must be the tenets of a creed that can awaken in its followers so rare and beautiful a spirit of self-sacrifice.

Not a political movement

From the facts that Babism in its earliest years found itself in conflict with the civil powers, and that an attempt was made by Babis upon the life of the Shah, it has been wrongly inferred that the movement was political in origin and Nihilist in character. It does not appear from a study of the writings either of the Bab or his successors, that there is any foundation for such a suspicion. The persecution of the government very early drove the adherents of the new creed into an attitude of rebellion; and in the exasperation produced by the struggle, and by the ferocious brutality with which the rights of conquest were exercised by the victors, it was not surprising if fanatical hands were found ready to strike the sovereign down. At the present time the Babis are equally loyal with any other subjects of the Crown. Nor does there appear to be any greater justice in the charges of socialism, communism, and immorality, that have so freely been levelled at the youthful persuasion. Certainly no such

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idea as communism in the European sense, i.e., a forcible redistribution of property, or as socialism in the nineteenth century sense, i.e., the defeat of capital by labour, ever entered the brain of the Bab or his disciples. The only communism known to and recommended by him was that of the New Testament and the early Christian Church, viz., the sharing of goods in common by members of the faith, and the exercise of alms-giving, and an ample charity. The charge of immorality seems to have arisen partly from the malignant inventions of opponents, partly from the much greater freedom claimed for women by the Bab, which in the Oriental mind is scarcely dissociable from profligacy of conduct.

Babism is, in reality, a religious movement whose primary object is a revolt against the tyranny and fanaticism of the Koran, and against the growing laxity of Mussulman practice. Religious tenets As such, it represents what, in our terminology, would be described as an effort after freedom of thought and purity of observance. Foremost among the objects that it inculcates is the emancipation of women, an idea which it seems to have derived, in common with many others, from the Christian doctrine. The Bab and Beha in their writings have enjoined the disuse of the veil, the abolition of divorce, polygamy, and concubinage, in other words, of the harem, and greater liberty of action for the female sex. They recommend a system of poor-law relief, but declare war against mendicancy. As regards the corrupt practices of the modern Mussulman, the Bab forbade smoking, and condemned the *kalian*. Wine-drinking is permitted in moderation by Beha, but is interdicted to the Ezelis. Against the profligate imposture of the ordinary *mullah's* life, both inveigh with acrimony. Broadly regarded, Babism may be defined as a creed of charity, and almost of common humanity. Brotherly love, kindness to children, courtesy combined with dignity, sociability, hospitality, freedom from bigotry, friendliness even to Christians, are included in its tenets. That every Babi recognises or observes these precepts would be a foolish assertion; but let a prophet, if his gospel be in question, be judged by his own preaching.

Only secondarily does Babism present a constructive body of doctrine, which, it may safely be averred, not one tenth of its votaries either understand or could explain. The somewhat mystic and speculative character of the Persian is easily attracted by a pantheistic conception of the Deity, by which all creation is regarded as

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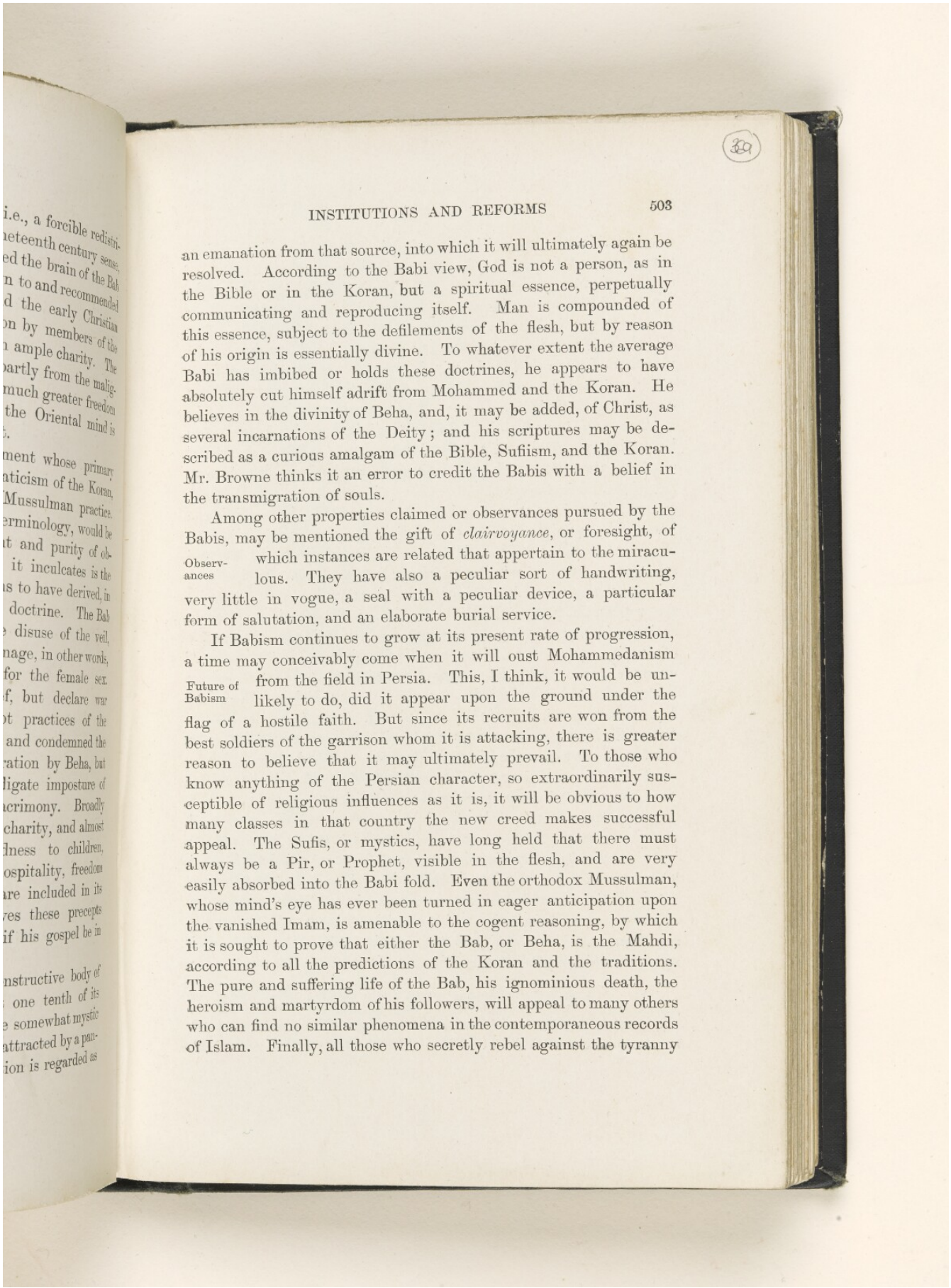




an emanation from that source, into which it will ultimately again be resolved. According to the Babi view, God is not a person, as in the Bible or in the Koran, but a spiritual essence, perpetually communicating and reproducing itself. Man is compounded of this essence, subject to the defilements of the flesh, but by reason of his origin is essentially divine. To whatever extent the average Babi has imbibed or holds these doctrines, he appears to have absolutely cut himself adrift from Mohammed and the Koran. He believes in the divinity of Beha, and, it may be added, of Christ, as several incarnations of the Deity; and his scriptures may be described as a curious amalgam of the Bible, Sufiism, and the Koran. Mr. Browne thinks it an error to credit the Babis with a belief in the transmigration of souls.

Among other properties claimed or observances pursued by the Babis, may be mentioned the gift of *clairvoyance*, or foresight, of which instances are related that appertain to the miraculous. They have also a peculiar sort of handwriting, very little in vogue, a seal with a peculiar device, a particular form of salutation, and an elaborate burial service.

Observances

If Babism continues to grow at its present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Mohammedanism from the field in Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail. To those who know anything of the Persian character, so extraordinarily susceptible of religious influences as it is, it will be obvious to how many classes in that country the new creed makes successful appeal. The Sufis, or mystics, have long held that there must always be a Pir, or Prophet, visible in the flesh, and are very easily absorbed into the Babi fold. Even the orthodox Mussulman, whose mind's eye has ever been turned in eager anticipation upon the vanished Imam, is amenable to the cogent reasoning, by which it is sought to prove that either the Bab, or Beha, is the Mahdi, according to all the predictions of the Koran and the traditions. The pure and suffering life of the Bab, his ignominious death, the heroism and martyrdom of his followers, will appeal to many others who can find no similar phenomena in the contemporaneous records of Islam. Finally, all those who secretly rebel against the tyranny

Future of Babism

of old-fashioned superstition, are inspired by a teaching which, alone among Oriental heresies, seems to be imbued with ideas of amelioration and progress. How far the gentler and more amiable aspects of Babism would prevail if that faith ever found itself in the ascendant, it is more hazardous to predict. I incline to think that the 'old man' would still be found unregenerate; and that, even if such an issue could be described as a victory for civilisation, it would not, as some have fondly imagined, be synonymous with an overture to Christianity.

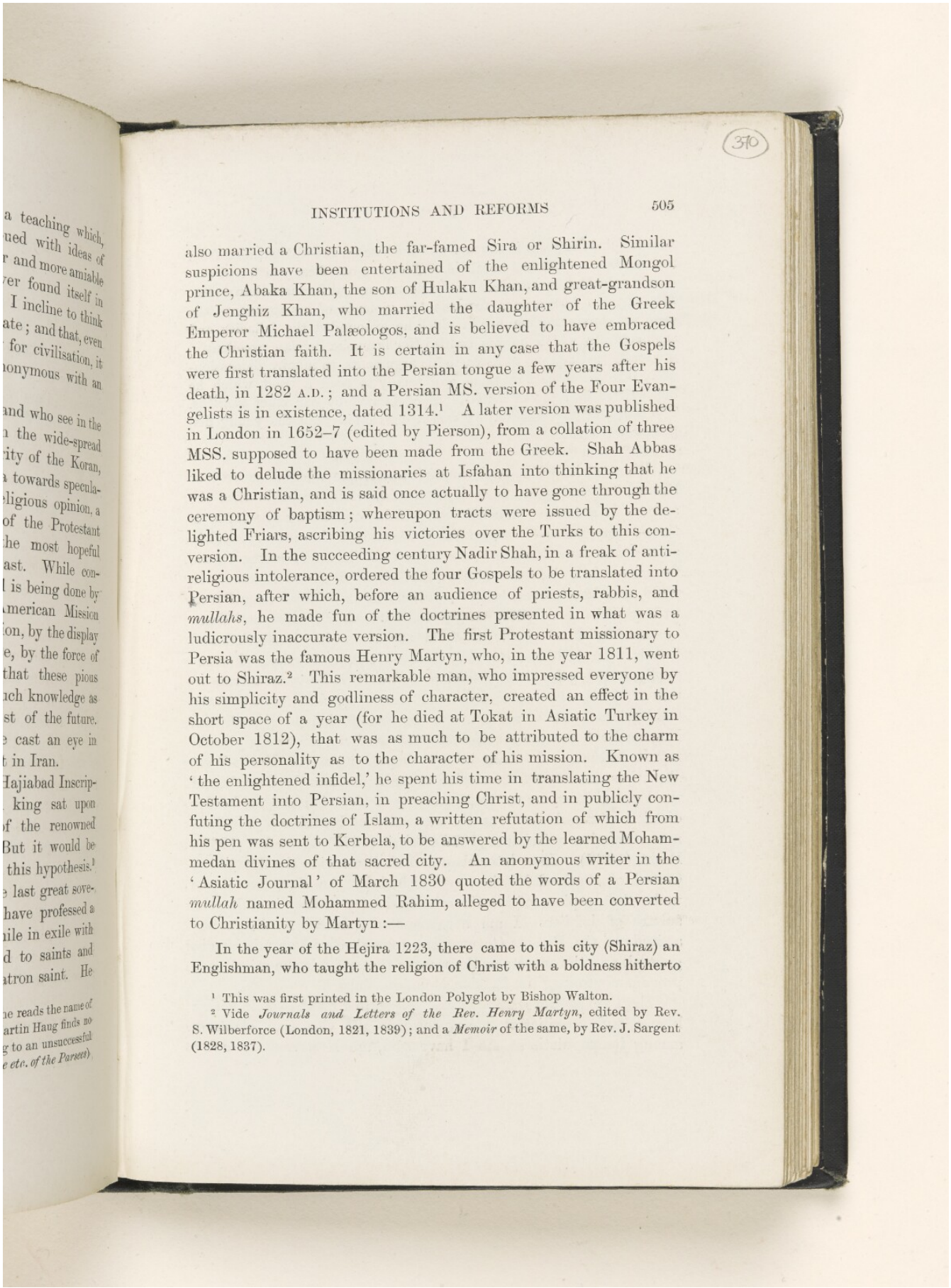
Persia as field for Christian missions

There are some who hold different opinions, and who see in the increasing popularity of the Babi movement, in the wide-spread though secret revolt against the authority of the Koran, and in the prevalent tendency in Persia towards speculative inquiry and extreme latitude of religious opinion, a favourable opening for the proselytising zeal of the Protestant Church. Persia has even been described as the most hopeful among the fields of missionary labour in the East. While conscious of the valuable work that has been and is being done by the representatives of English, French, and American Mission societies in that country, by the spread of education, by the display of charity, by the free gift of medical assistance, by the force of example, and while in no way suggesting that these pious labours should be slackened, I am unable, from such knowledge as I possess, to participate in so sanguine a forecast of the future. Before I give my reasons for this opinion, let me cast an eye in brief retrospect over the history of Christian effort in Iran.

History of Christianity

If Mr. Thomas's suggested translation of the Hajiabad Inscription be correct, it may even be that a Christian king sat upon the throne of Persia, in the person of the renowned Shapur I., as early as 241–272 A.D. But it would be unwise to speak with any confidence of this hypothesis.[1] The second Chosroes or Parviz (A.D. 591–628), the last great sovereign of the same dynasty, seems for a time to have professed a dubious sort of Christianity, which he picked up while in exile with the Romans. He worshipped the Virgin, prayed to saints and martyrs, and adopted St. Sergius as his own patron saint. He

[1] Vide his *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, pp. 73–101, where he reads the name of Jesus in the epigraph. So great a scholar, however, as Dr. Martin Haug finds no such reference at all, and interprets the inscription as referring to an unsuccessful bowshot on the part of the King (*Essays on the Sacred Language etc. of the Parsees*)



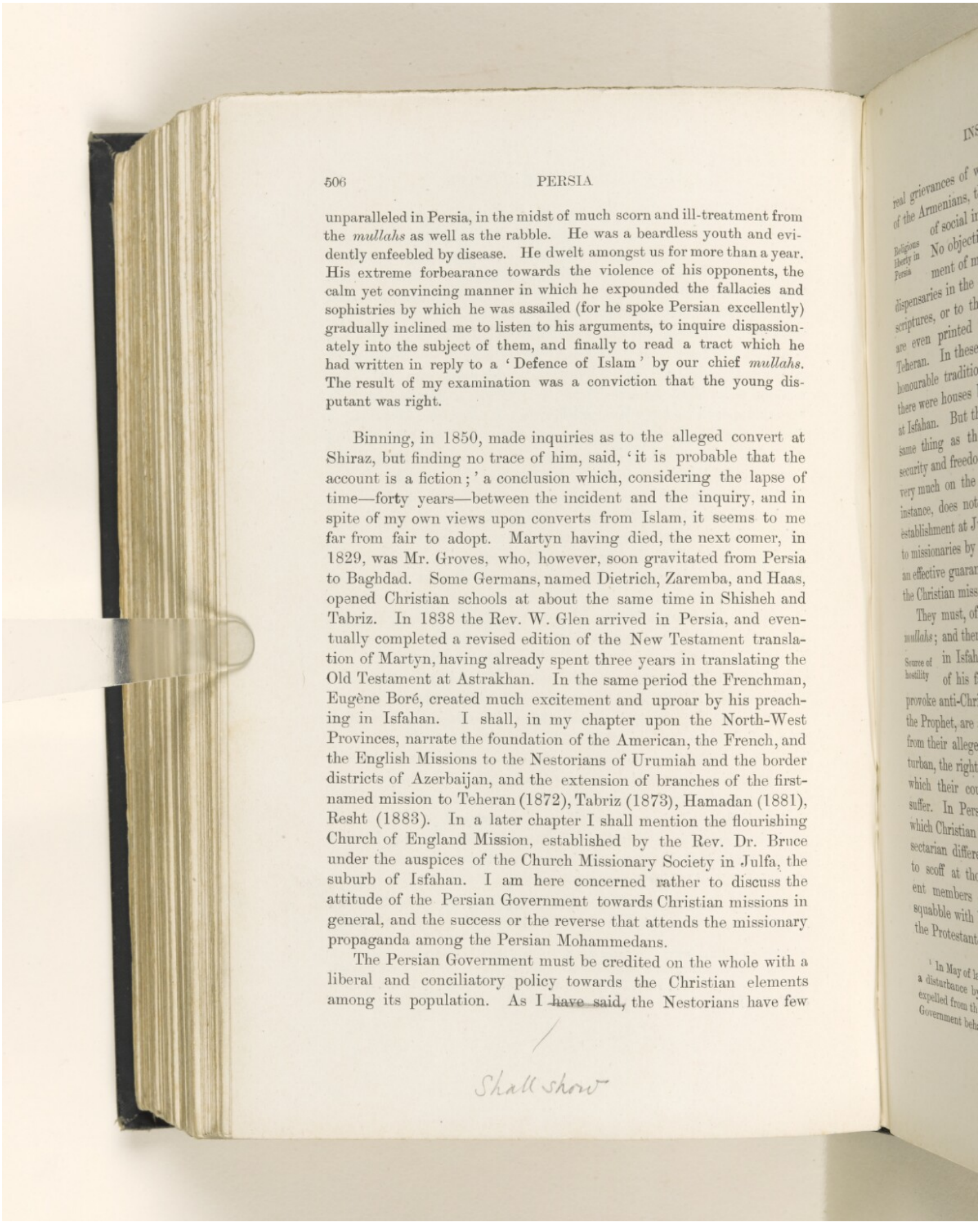


also married a Christian, the far-famed Sira or Shirin. Similar suspicions have been entertained of the enlightened Mongol prince, Abaka Khan, the son of Hulaku Khan, and great-grandson of Jenghiz Khan, who married the daughter of the Greek Emperor Michael Palæologos, and is believed to have embraced the Christian faith. It is certain in any case that the Gospels were first translated into the Persian tongue a few years after his death, in 1282 A.D.; and a Persian MS. version of the Four Evangelists is in existence, dated 1314.[1] A later version was published in London in 1652–7 (edited by Pierson), from a collation of three MSS. supposed to have been made from the Greek. Shah Abbas liked to delude the missionaries at Isfahan into thinking that he was a Christian, and is said once actually to have gone through the ceremony of baptism; whereupon tracts were issued by the delighted Friars, ascribing his victories over the Turks to this conversion. In the succeeding century Nadir Shah, in a freak of anti-religious intolerance, ordered the four Gospels to be translated into Persian, after which, before an audience of priests, rabbis, and *mullahs*, he made fun of the doctrines presented in what was a ludicrously inaccurate version. The first Protestant missionary to Persia was the famous Henry Martyn, who, in the year 1811, went out to Shiraz.[2] This remarkable man, who impressed everyone by his simplicity and godliness of character, created an effect in the short space of a year (for he died at Tokat in Asiatic Turkey in October 1812), that was as much to be attributed to the charm of his personality as to the character of his mission. Known as 'the enlightened infidel,' he spent his time in translating the New Testament into Persian, in preaching Christ, and in publicly confuting the doctrines of Islam, a written refutation of which from his pen was sent to Kerbela, to be answered by the learned Mohammedan divines of that sacred city. An anonymous writer in the 'Asiatic Journal' of March 1830 quoted the words of a Persian *mullah* named Mohammed Rahim, alleged to have been converted to Christianity by Martyn:—

> In the year of the Hejira 1223, there came to this city (Shiraz) an Englishman, who taught the religion of Christ with a boldness hitherto

[1] This was first printed in the London Polyglot by Bishop Walton.

[2] Vide *Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn*, edited by Rev. S. Wilberforce (London, 1821, 1839); and a *Memoir* of the same, by Rev. J. Sargent (1828, 1837).





unparalleled in Persia, in the midst of much scorn and ill-treatment from the *mullahs* as well as the rabble. He was a beardless youth and evidently enfeebled by disease. He dwelt amongst us for more than a year. His extreme forbearance towards the violence of his opponents, the calm yet convincing manner in which he expounded the fallacies and sophistries by which he was assailed (for he spoke Persian excellently) gradually inclined me to listen to his arguments, to inquire dispassionately into the subject of them, and finally to read a tract which he had written in reply to a 'Defence of Islam' by our chief *mullahs*. The result of my examination was a conviction that the young disputant was right.

Binning, in 1850, made inquiries as to the alleged convert at Shiraz, but finding no trace of him, said, 'it is probable that the account is a fiction;' a conclusion which, considering the lapse of time—forty years—between the incident and the inquiry, and in spite of my own views upon converts from Islam, it seems to me far from fair to adopt. Martyn having died, the next comer, in 1829, was Mr. Groves, who, however, soon gravitated from Persia to Baghdad. Some Germans, named Dietrich, Zaremba, and Haas, opened Christian schools at about the same time in Shisheh and Tabriz. In 1838 the Rev. W. Glen arrived in Persia, and eventually completed a revised edition of the New Testament translation of Martyn, having already spent three years in translating the Old Testament at Astrakhan. In the same period the Frenchman, Eugène Boré, created much excitement and uproar by his preaching in Isfahan. I shall, in my chapter upon the North-West Provinces, narrate the foundation of the American, the French, and the English Missions to the Nestorians of Urumiah and the border districts of Azerbaijan, and the extension of branches of the first-named mission to Teheran (1872), Tabriz (1873), Hamadan (1881), Resht (1883). In a later chapter I shall mention the flourishing Church of England Mission, established by the Rev. Dr. Bruce under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society in Julfa, the suburb of Isfahan. I am here concerned rather to discuss the attitude of the Persian Government towards Christian missions in general, and the success or the reverse that attends the missionary propaganda among the Persian Mohammedans.

The Persian Government must be credited on the whole with a liberal and conciliatory policy towards the Christian elements among its population. As I ~~have said~~, the Nestorians have few

Shall show

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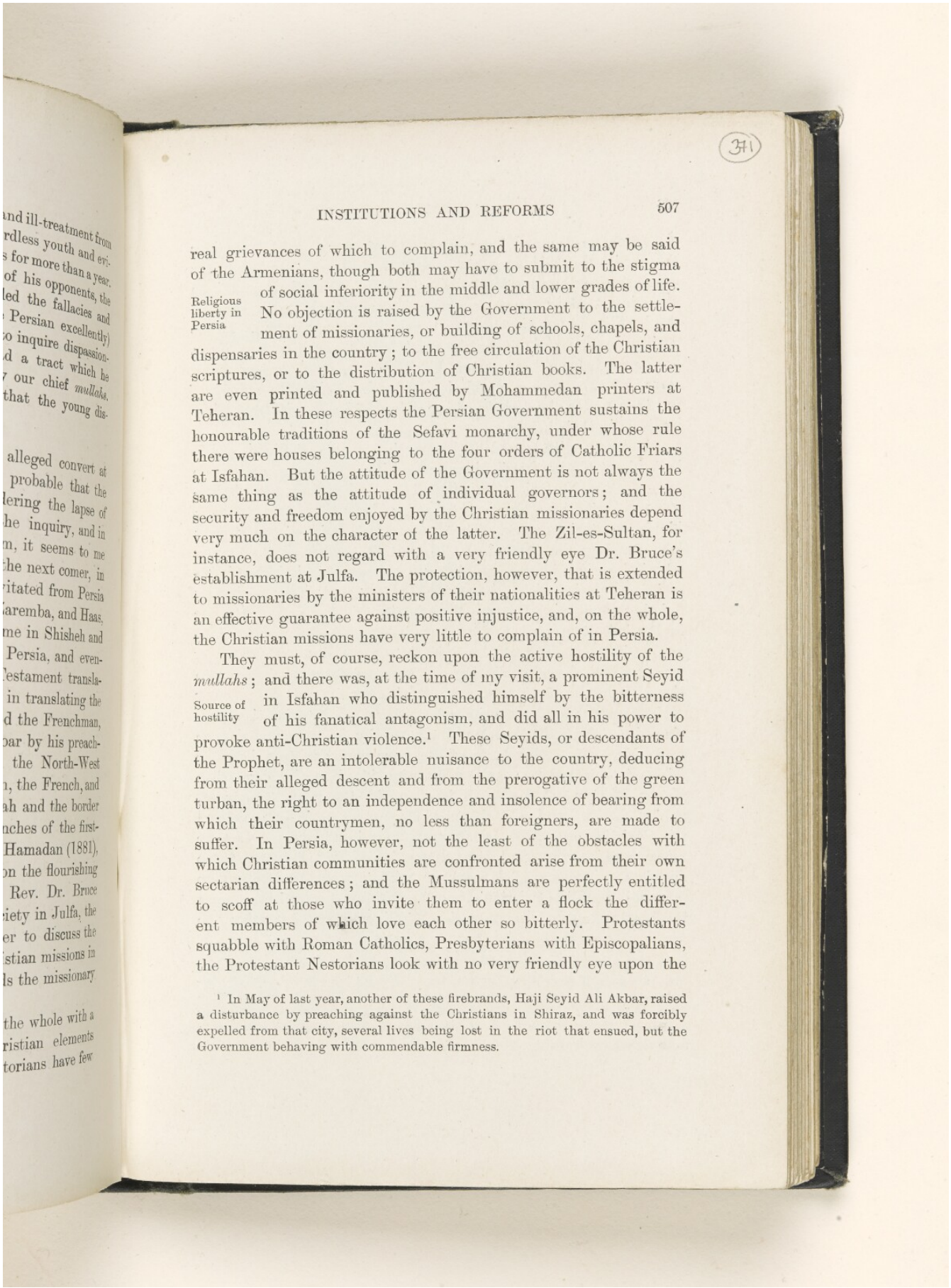




real grievances of which to complain, and the same may be said of the Armenians, though both may have to submit to the stigma of social inferiority in the middle and lower grades of life.

Religious liberty in Persia

No objection is raised by the Government to the settlement of missionaries, or building of schools, chapels, and dispensaries in the country; to the free circulation of the Christian scriptures, or to the distribution of Christian books. The latter are even printed and published by Mohammedan printers at Teheran. In these respects the Persian Government sustains the honourable traditions of the Sefavi monarchy, under whose rule there were houses belonging to the four orders of Catholic Friars at Isfahan. But the attitude of the Government is not always the same thing as the attitude of individual governors; and the security and freedom enjoyed by the Christian missionaries depend very much on the character of the latter. The Zil-es-Sultan, for instance, does not regard with a very friendly eye Dr. Bruce's establishment at Julfa. The protection, however, that is extended to missionaries by the ministers of their nationalities at Teheran is an effective guarantee against positive injustice, and, on the whole, the Christian missions have very little to complain of in Persia.

They must, of course, reckon upon the active hostility of the *mullahs*; and there was, at the time of my visit, a prominent Seyid in Isfahan who distinguished himself by the bitterness of his fanatical antagonism, and did all in his power to provoke anti-Christian violence.[1] These Seyids, or descendants of the Prophet, are an intolerable nuisance to the country, deducing from their alleged descent and from the prerogative of the green turban, the right to an independence and insolence of bearing from which their countrymen, no less than foreigners, are made to suffer. In Persia, however, not the least of the obstacles with which Christian communities are confronted arise from their own sectarian differences; and the Mussulmans are perfectly entitled to scoff at those who invite them to enter a flock the different members of which love each other so bitterly. Protestants squabble with Roman Catholics, Presbyterians with Episcopalians, the Protestant Nestorians look with no very friendly eye upon the

Source of hostility

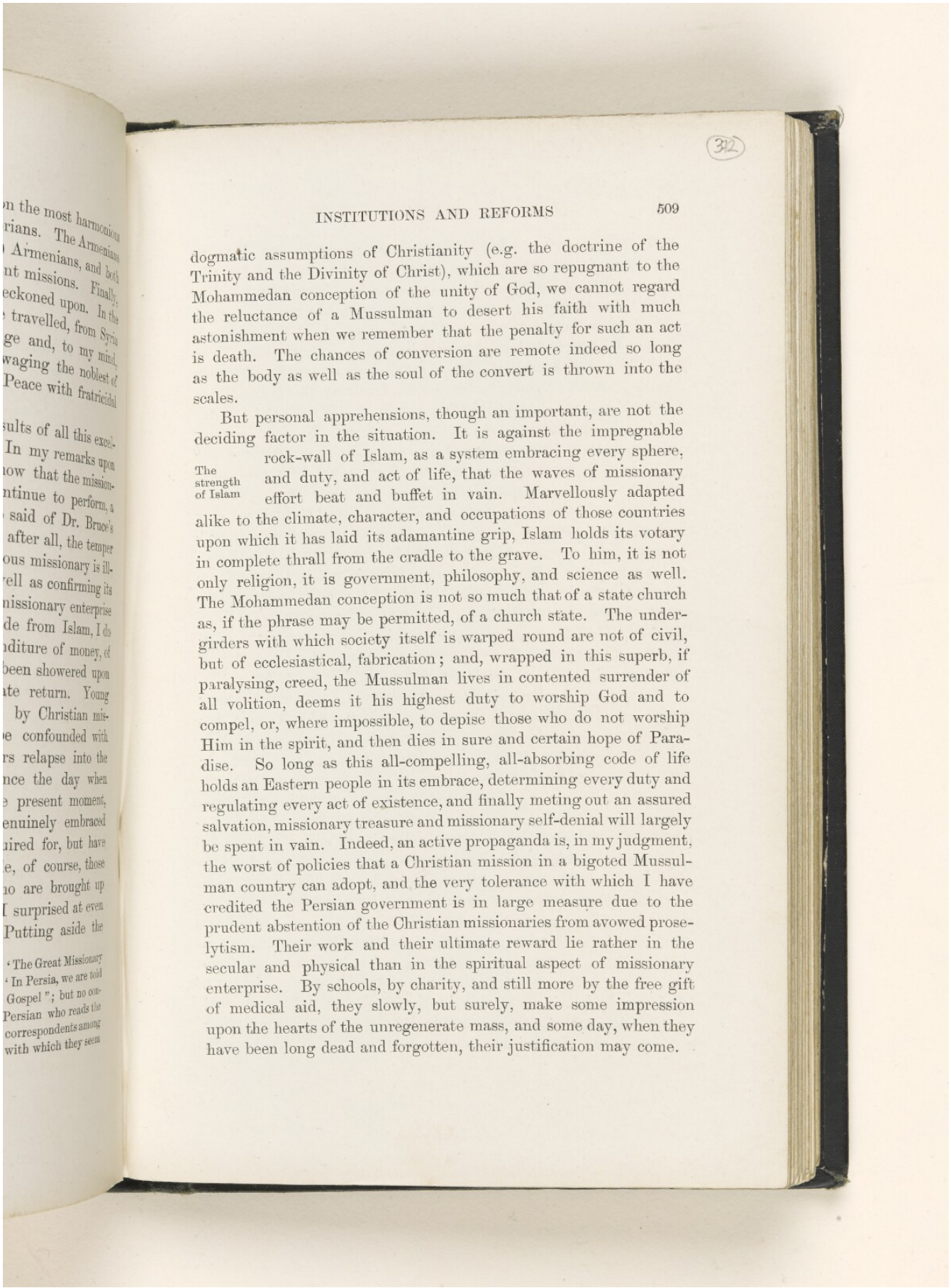
[1] In May of last year, another of these firebrands, Haji Seyid Ali Akbar, raised a disturbance by preaching against the Christians in Shiraz, and was forcibly expelled from that city, several lives being lost in the riot that ensued, but the Government behaving with commendable firmness.

Nestorians proper, and these, again, are not on the most harmonious terms with the Chaldæans, or Catholic Nestorians. The Armenians gaze askance upon the United (or Catholic) Armenians, and both unite in retarding the work of the Protestant missions. Finally, the hostility of the Jews may, as a rule, be reckoned upon. In the various countries of the East in which I have travelled, from Syria to Japan, I have been struck by the strange and, to my mind, sorrowful phenomenon, of missionary bands waging the noblest of warfares under the banner of the King of Peace with fratricidal weapons in their hands.

Practical results

And now, with regard to the practical results of all this excellent, if not always harmonious, enterprise. In my remarks upon the Nestorian Christians I shall show that the missionaries have there performed, and continue to perform, a highly meritorious work. The same may be said of Dr. Bruce's labour among the Armenians at Julfa. But, after all, the temper of mission work is propagandist, and the zealous missionary is ill-satisfied unless he is adding to the fold as well as confirming its existing members. If, then, the criterion of missionary enterprise in Persia be the number of converts it has made from Islam, I do not hesitate to say that the prodigious expenditure of money, of honest effort, and of sacrificing toil that has been showered upon that country has met with a wholly inadequate return. Young Mohammedans have sometimes been baptised by Christian missionaries. But this must not too readily be confounded with conversion, since the bulk of the newcomers relapse into the faith of their fathers; and I question if, since the day when Henry Martyn set foot in Shiraz up till the present moment, half a dozen Persian Mohammedans have genuinely embraced the Christian creed.[1] I have myself often inquired for, but have never seen, a converted Mussulman (I exclude, of course, those derelicts or orphans of Mussulman parents who are brought up from childhood in Christian schools). Nor am I surprised at even the most complete demonstration of failure. Putting aside the

[1] Canon Isaac Taylor, in his well-known article, entitled 'The Great Missionary Failure,' in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1888, said of Persia: 'In Persia, we are told that "a great and wondrous door has been opened for the Gospel"; but no converts are mentioned, and the door seems to consist of a Persian who reads the Bible, which is one of his own sacred books. I have several correspondents among the Persian Moslems, and they continually quote the Bible, with which they seem to be almost as familiar as with the Koran.'





dogmatic assumptions of Christianity (e.g. the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ), which are so repugnant to the Mohammedan conception of the unity of God, we cannot regard the reluctance of a Mussulman to desert his faith with much astonishment when we remember that the penalty for such an act is death. The chances of conversion are remote indeed so long as the body as well as the soul of the convert is thrown into the scales.

But personal apprehensions, though an important, are not the deciding factor in the situation. It is against the impregnable rock-wall of Islam, as a system embracing every sphere, and duty, and act of life, that the waves of missionary effort beat and buffet in vain. Marvellously adapted alike to the climate, character, and occupations of those countries upon which it has laid its adamantine grip, Islam holds its votary in complete thrall from the cradle to the grave. To him, it is not only religion, it is government, philosophy, and science as well. The Mohammedan conception is not so much that of a state church as, if the phrase may be permitted, of a church state. The under-girders with which society itself is warped round are not of civil, but of ecclesiastical, fabrication; and, wrapped in this superb, if paralysing, creed, the Mussulman lives in contented surrender of all volition, deems it his highest duty to worship God and to compel, or, where impossible, to depise those who do not worship Him in the spirit, and then dies in sure and certain hope of Paradise. So long as this all-compelling, all-absorbing code of life holds an Eastern people in its embrace, determining every duty and regulating every act of existence, and finally meting out an assured salvation, missionary treasure and missionary self-denial will largely be spent in vain. Indeed, an active propaganda is, in my judgment, the worst of policies that a Christian mission in a bigoted Mussulman country can adopt, and the very tolerance with which I have credited the Persian government is in large measure due to the prudent abstention of the Christian missionaries from avowed proselytism. Their work and their ultimate reward lie rather in the secular and physical than in the spiritual aspect of missionary enterprise. By schools, by charity, and still more by the free gift of medical aid, they slowly, but surely, make some impression upon the hearts of the unregenerate mass, and some day, when they have been long dead and forgotten, their justification may come.

The strength of Islam

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Finally, let me speak of the attitude of the Persian Government towards the Jews. Five years ago the number of Jews in Persia was conjecturally returned as 19,000; but I incline to the opinion that this total is below the mark. I have, indeed, been supplied with a table in which their total census is fixed at 65,000, but this appears to be a gross exaggeration. The chief centres of Jewish residence are Teheran (4,000), Hamadan (2,000), Isfahan (3,700), Shiraz (3,000), Urumiah, Meshed, Kashan, Saveh, Kermanshah, and Bushire.

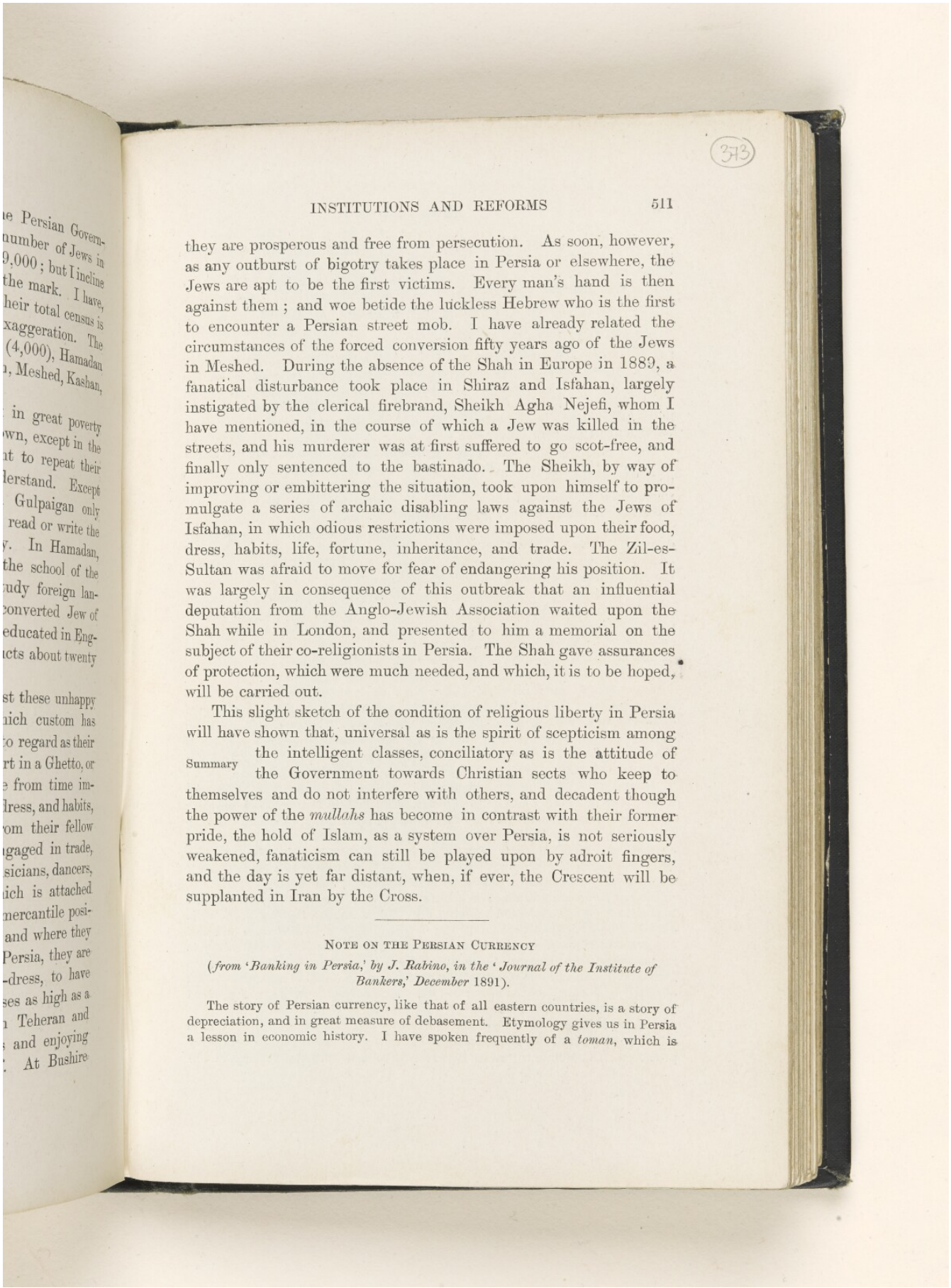
The Jews in Persia

As a community, the Persian Jews are sunk in great poverty and ignorance. They have no schools of their own, except in the synagogues, where they are only taught to repeat their prayers, which the majority do not understand. Except in Teheran, Hamadan, Kashan, Khonsar, and Gulpaigan only Hebrew is taught, and not Persian. Such as can read or write the language of the country have studied it privately. In Hamadan, about a hundred young men receive tuition in the school of the American Mission; in Teheran, about fifteen study foreign languages under similar auspices. In Isfahan, a converted Jew of Teheran, Mirza Nurullah by name, who has been educated in England, has recently started a school, where he instructs about twenty young men in Hebrew, Persian, and English.

Backward condition

Throughout the Mussulman countries of the East these unhappy people have been subjected to the persecution which custom has taught themselves, as well as the world, to regard as their normal lot. Usually compelled to live apart in a Ghetto, or separate quarter of the towns, they have from time immemorial suffered from disabilities of occupation, dress, and habits, which have marked them out as social pariahs from their fellow creatures. The majority of Jews in Persia are engaged in trade, in jewellery, in wine and opium manufacture, as musicians, dancers, scavengers, pedlars, and in other professions to which is attached no great respect. They rarely attain to a leading mercantile position. In Isfahan, where there are said to be 3,700, and where they occupy a relatively better status than elsewhere in Persia, they are not permitted to wear the *kolah* or Persian head-dress, to have shops in the bazaar, to build the walls of their houses as high as a Moslem neighbour's, or to ride in the streets. In Teheran and Kashan they are also to be found in large numbers and enjoying a fair position. In Shiraz they are very badly off. At Bushire

Disabilities and persecution





they are prosperous and free from persecution. As soon, however, as any outburst of bigotry takes place in Persia or elsewhere, the Jews are apt to be the first victims. Every man's hand is then against them; and woe betide the luckless Hebrew who is the first to encounter a Persian street mob. I have already related the circumstances of the forced conversion fifty years ago of the Jews in Meshed. During the absence of the Shah in Europe in 1889, a fanatical disturbance took place in Shiraz and Isfahan, largely instigated by the clerical firebrand, Sheikh Agha Nejefi, whom I have mentioned, in the course of which a Jew was killed in the streets, and his murderer was at first suffered to go scot-free, and finally only sentenced to the bastinado. The Sheikh, by way of improving or embittering the situation, took upon himself to promulgate a series of archaic disabling laws against the Jews of Isfahan, in which odious restrictions were imposed upon their food, dress, habits, life, fortune, inheritance, and trade. The Zil-es-Sultan was afraid to move for fear of endangering his position. It was largely in consequence of this outbreak that an influential deputation from the Anglo-Jewish Association waited upon the Shah while in London, and presented to him a memorial on the subject of their co-religionists in Persia. The Shah gave assurances of protection, which were much needed, and which, it is to be hoped, will be carried out.

Summary

This slight sketch of the condition of religious liberty in Persia will have shown that, universal as is the spirit of scepticism among the intelligent classes, conciliatory as is the attitude of the Government towards Christian sects who keep to themselves and do not interfere with others, and decadent though the power of the *mullahs* has become in contrast with their former pride, the hold of Islam, as a system over Persia, is not seriously weakened, fanaticism can still be played upon by adroit fingers, and the day is yet far distant, when, if ever, the Crescent will be supplanted in Iran by the Cross.

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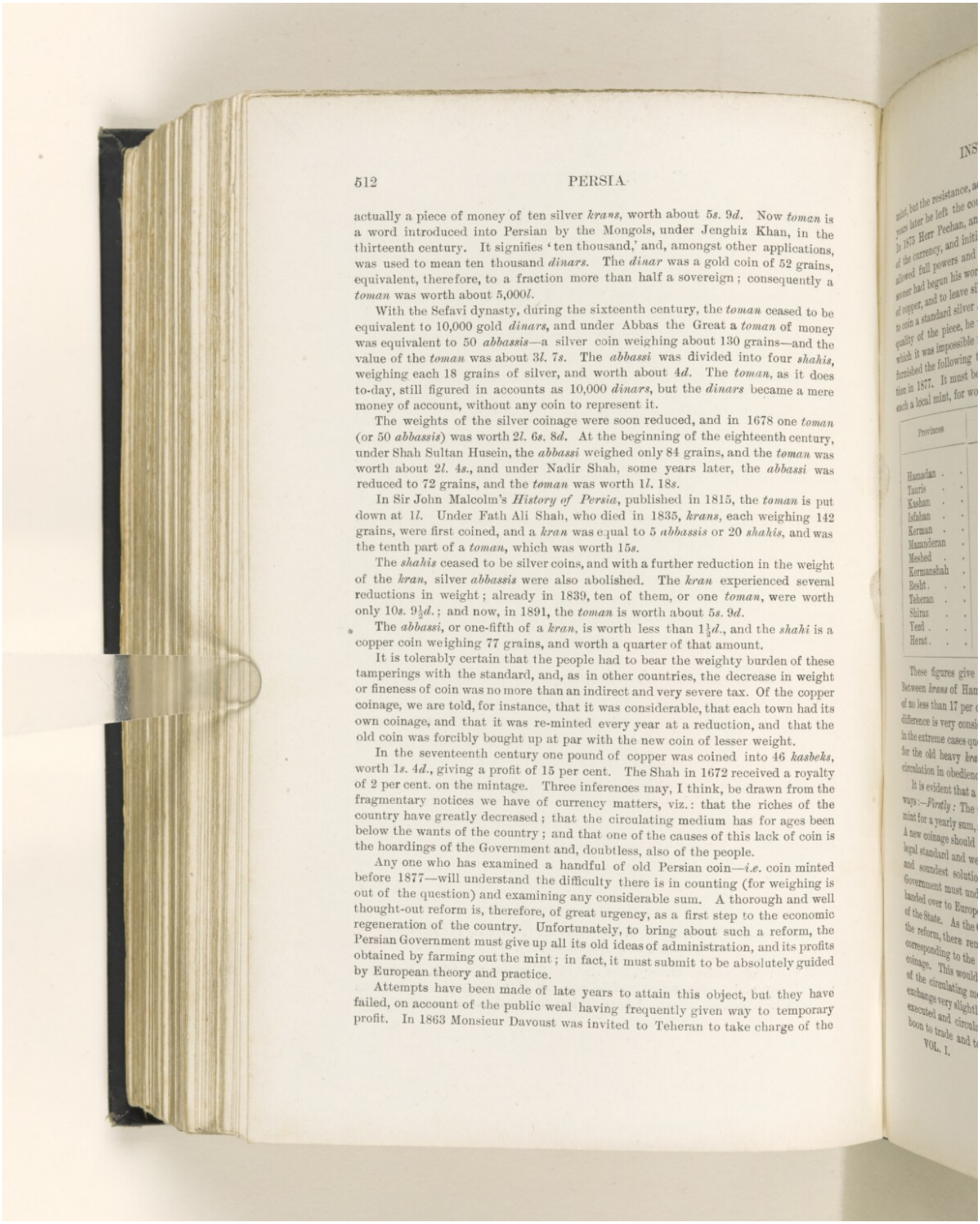
### Note on the Persian Currency

(*from 'Banking in Persia,' by J. Rabino, in the 'Journal of the Institute of Bankers,' December* 1891).

The story of Persian currency, like that of all eastern countries, is a story of depreciation, and in great measure of debasement. Etymology gives us in Persia a lesson in economic history. I have spoken frequently of a *toman*, which is





actually a piece of money of ten silver *krans*, worth about 5*s*. 9*d*. Now *toman* is a word introduced into Persian by the Mongols, under Jenghiz Khan, in the thirteenth century. It signifies 'ten thousand,' and, amongst other applications, was used to mean ten thousand *dinars*. The *dinar* was a gold coin of 52 grains, equivalent, therefore, to a fraction more than half a sovereign; consequently a *toman* was worth about 5,000*l*.

With the Sefavi dynasty, during the sixteenth century, the *toman* ceased to be equivalent to 10,000 gold *dinars*, and under Abbas the Great a *toman* of money was equivalent to 50 *abbassis*—a silver coin weighing about 130 grains—and the value of the *toman* was about 3*l*. 7*s*. The *abbassi* was divided into four *shahis*, weighing each 18 grains of silver, and worth about 4*d*. The *toman*, as it does to-day, still figured in accounts as 10,000 *dinars*, but the *dinars* became a mere money of account, without any coin to represent it.

The weights of the silver coinage were soon reduced, and in 1678 one *toman* (or 50 *abbassis*) was worth 2*l*. 6*s*. 8*d*. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, under Shah Sultan Husein, the *abbassi* weighed only 84 grains, and the *toman* was worth about 2*l*. 4*s*., and under Nadir Shah, some years later, the *abbassi* was reduced to 72 grains, and the *toman* was worth 1*l*. 18*s*.

In Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, published in 1815, the *toman* is put down at 1*l*. Under Fath Ali Shah, who died in 1835, *krans*, each weighing 142 grains, were first coined, and a *kran* was equal to 5 *abbassis* or 20 *shahis*, and was the tenth part of a *toman*, which was worth 15*s*.

The *shahis* ceased to be silver coins, and with a further reduction in the weight of the *kran*, silver *abbassis* were also abolished. The *kran* experienced several reductions in weight; already in 1839, ten of them, or one *toman*, were worth only 10*s*. 9½*d*.; and now, in 1891, the *toman* is worth about 5*s*. 9*d*.

The *abbassi*, or one-fifth of a *kran*, is worth less than 1½*d*., and the *shahi* is a copper coin weighing 77 grains, and worth a quarter of that amount.

It is tolerably certain that the people had to bear the weighty burden of these tamperings with the standard, and, as in other countries, the decrease in weight or fineness of coin was no more than an indirect and very severe tax. Of the copper coinage, we are told, for instance, that it was considerable, that each town had its own coinage, and that it was re-minted every year at a reduction, and that the old coin was forcibly bought up at par with the new coin of lesser weight.

In the seventeenth century one pound of copper was coined into 46 *kasbeks*, worth 1*s*. 4*d*., giving a profit of 15 per cent. The Shah in 1672 received a royalty of 2 per cent. on the mintage. Three inferences may, I think, be drawn from the fragmentary notices we have of currency matters, viz.: that the riches of the country have greatly decreased; that the circulating medium has for ages been below the wants of the country; and that one of the causes of this lack of coin is the hoardings of the Government and, doubtless, also of the people.

Any one who has examined a handful of old Persian coin—*i.e.* coin minted before 1877—will understand the difficulty there is in counting (for weighing is out of the question) and examining any considerable sum. A thorough and well thought-out reform is, therefore, of great urgency, as a first step to the economic regeneration of the country. Unfortunately, to bring about such a reform, the Persian Government must give up all its old ideas of administration, and its profits obtained by farming out the mint; in fact, it must submit to be absolutely guided by European theory and practice.

Attempts have been made of late years to attain this object, but they have failed, on account of the public weal having frequently given way to temporary profit. In 1863 Monsieur Davoust was invited to Teheran to take charge of the



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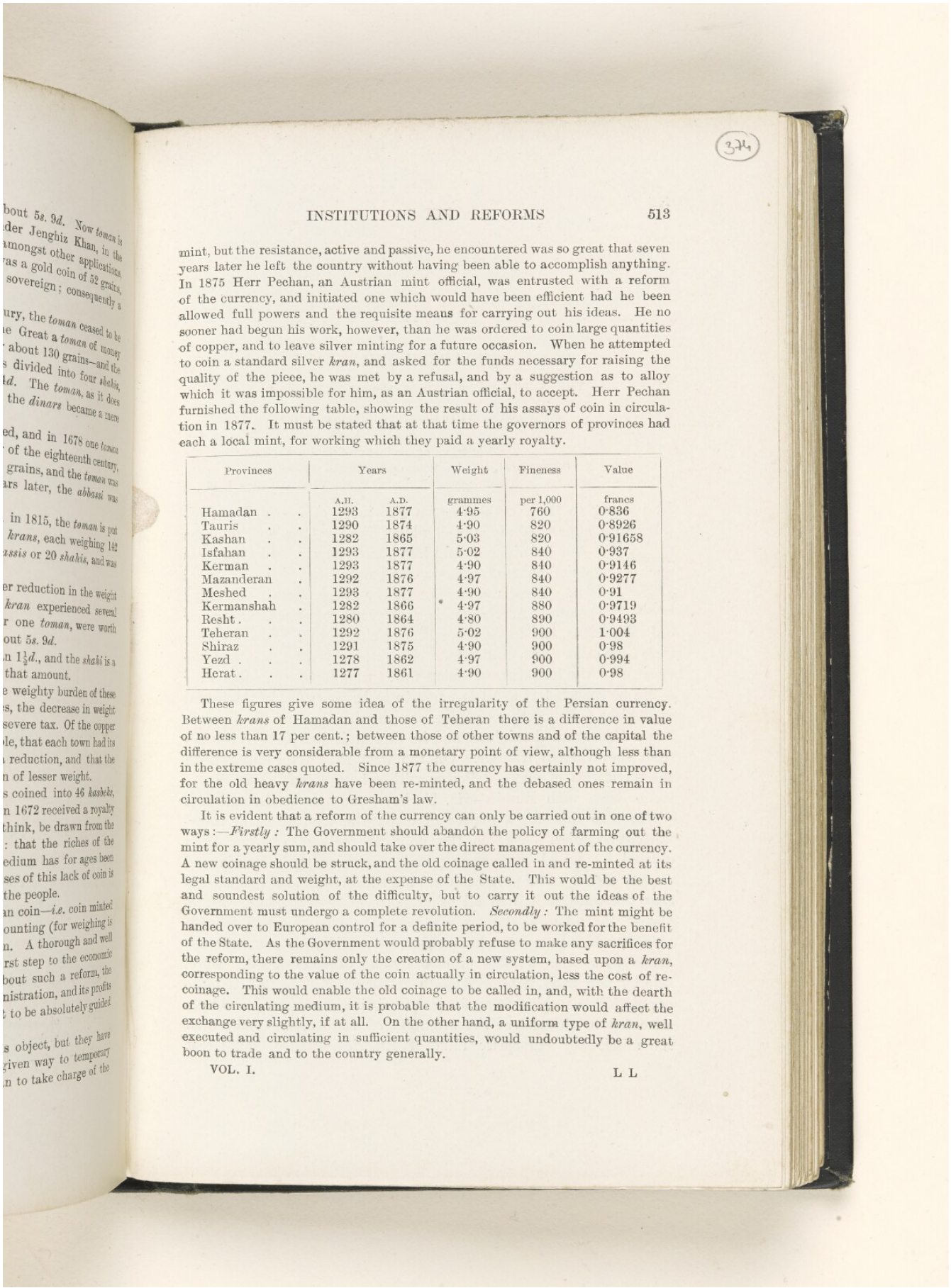



mint, but the resistance, active and passive, he encountered was so great that seven years later he left the country without having been able to accomplish anything. In 1875 Herr Pechan, an Austrian mint official, was entrusted with a reform of the currency, and initiated one which would have been efficient had he been allowed full powers and the requisite means for carrying out his ideas. He no sooner had begun his work, however, than he was ordered to coin large quantities of copper, and to leave silver minting for a future occasion. When he attempted to coin a standard silver *kran*, and asked for the funds necessary for raising the quality of the piece, he was met by a refusal, and by a suggestion as to alloy which it was impossible for him, as an Austrian official, to accept. Herr Pechan furnished the following table, showing the result of his assays of coin in circulation in 1877. It must be stated that at that time the governors of provinces had each a local mint, for working which they paid a yearly royalty.

| Provinces | Years | | Weight | Fineness | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A.H. | A.D. | grammes | per 1,000 | francs |
| Hamadan . . | 1293 | 1877 | 4·95 | 760 | 0·836 |
| Tauris . . | 1290 | 1874 | 4·90 | 820 | 0·8926 |
| Kashan . . | 1282 | 1865 | 5·03 | 820 | 0·91658 |
| Isfahan . . | 1293 | 1877 | 5·02 | 840 | 0·937 |
| Kerman . . | 1293 | 1877 | 4·90 | 840 | 0·9146 |
| Mazanderan . | 1292 | 1876 | 4·97 | 840 | 0·9277 |
| Meshed . . | 1293 | 1877 | 4·90 | 840 | 0·91 |
| Kermanshah . | 1282 | 1866 | 4·97 | 880 | 0·9719 |
| Resht . . . | 1280 | 1864 | 4·80 | 890 | 0·9493 |
| Teheran . . | 1292 | 1876 | 5·02 | 900 | 1·004 |
| Shiraz . . | 1291 | 1875 | 4·90 | 900 | 0·98 |
| Yezd . . . | 1278 | 1862 | 4·97 | 900 | 0·994 |
| Herat . . . | 1277 | 1861 | 4·90 | 900 | 0·98 |

These figures give some idea of the irregularity of the Persian currency. Between *krans* of Hamadan and those of Teheran there is a difference in value of no less than 17 per cent.; between those of other towns and of the capital the difference is very considerable from a monetary point of view, although less than in the extreme cases quoted. Since 1877 the currency has certainly not improved, for the old heavy *krans* have been re-minted, and the debased ones remain in circulation in obedience to Gresham's law.

It is evident that a reform of the currency can only be carried out in one of two ways:—*Firstly:* The Government should abandon the policy of farming out the mint for a yearly sum, and should take over the direct management of the currency. A new coinage should be struck, and the old coinage called in and re-minted at its legal standard and weight, at the expense of the State. This would be the best and soundest solution of the difficulty, but to carry it out the ideas of the Government must undergo a complete revolution. *Secondly:* The mint might be handed over to European control for a definite period, to be worked for the benefit of the State. As the Government would probably refuse to make any sacrifices for the reform, there remains only the creation of a new system, based upon a *kran*, corresponding to the value of the coin actually in circulation, less the cost of re-coinage. This would enable the old coinage to be called in, and, with the dearth of the circulating medium, it is probable that the modification would affect the exchange very slightly, if at all. On the other hand, a uniform type of *kran*, well executed and circulating in sufficient quantities, would undoubtedly be a great boon to trade and to the country generally.



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## CHAPTER XVI

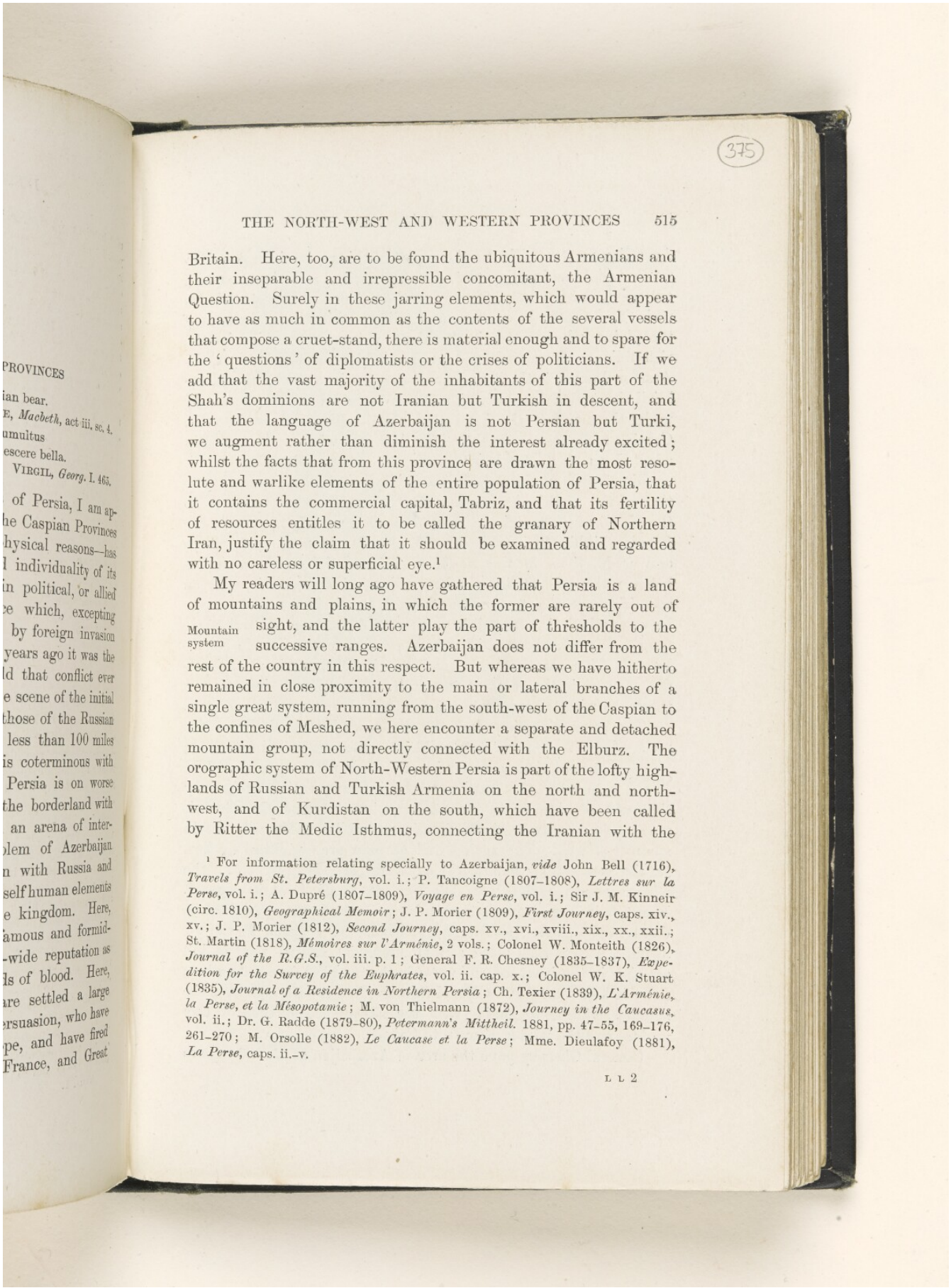
### THE NORTH-WEST AND WESTERN PROVINCES

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear.
SHAKSPEARE, *Macbeth*, act iii. sc. 4.

Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella.
VIRGIL, *Georg.* I. 465.

IN passing to the North-Western Provinces of Persia, I am approaching a part of my subject which, like the Caspian Provinces —but for different and less purely physical reasons—has special characteristics and a marked individuality of its own. These reasons are in the main political, or allied thereto. Azerbaijan is the province which, excepting only Khorasan, has more often been violated by foreign invasion than any other part of Persia. Not seventy years ago it was the theatre of the last Russo-Persian war. Should that conflict ever again be renewed, it is all but certain to be the scene of the initial operations. Its northern borders march with those of the Russian Trans-Caucasian dominions, and its capital is less than 100 miles from the Russian frontier. On the west it is coterminous with the territories of another Power with whom Persia is on worse terms than with Russia—viz. Turkey—and the borderland with whom is to this day a matter of dispute and an arena of intermittent conflict. Nor is the political problem of Azerbaijan created by actual contact or possible collision with Russia and Turkey alone. The province contains within itself human elements that differentiate it from all other parts of the kingdom. Here, and in the adjacent regions, are located the famous and formidable Kurds, whose name has achieved a world-wide reputation as synonymous with a state of anarchy and deeds of blood. Here, side by side with these desperate tribesmen, are settled a large population belonging to an ancient Christian persuasion, who have attracted to themselves the attention of Europe, and have fired the missionary enterprise alike of America, France, and Great

Peculiar political interest of Azerbaijan





Britain. Here, too, are to be found the ubiquitous Armenians and their inseparable and irrepressible concomitant, the Armenian Question. Surely in these jarring elements, which would appear to have as much in common as the contents of the several vessels that compose a cruet-stand, there is material enough and to spare for the 'questions' of diplomatists or the crises of politicians. If we add that the vast majority of the inhabitants of this part of the Shah's dominions are not Iranian but Turkish in descent, and that the language of Azerbaijan is not Persian but Turki, we augment rather than diminish the interest already excited; whilst the facts that from this province are drawn the most resolute and warlike elements of the entire population of Persia, that it contains the commercial capital, Tabriz, and that its fertility of resources entitles it to be called the granary of Northern Iran, justify the claim that it should be examined and regarded with no careless or superficial eye.[1]

Mountain system

My readers will long ago have gathered that Persia is a land of mountains and plains, in which the former are rarely out of sight, and the latter play the part of thresholds to the successive ranges. Azerbaijan does not differ from the rest of the country in this respect. But whereas we have hitherto remained in close proximity to the main or lateral branches of a single great system, running from the south-west of the Caspian to the confines of Meshed, we here encounter a separate and detached mountain group, not directly connected with the Elburz. The orographic system of North-Western Persia is part of the lofty highlands of Russian and Turkish Armenia on the north and north-west, and of Kurdistan on the south, which have been called by Ritter the Medic Isthmus, connecting the Iranian with the

[1] For information relating specially to Azerbaijan, *vide* John Bell (1716), *Travels from St. Petersburg*, vol. i.; P. Tancoigne (1807–1808), *Lettres sur la Perse*, vol. i.; A. Dupré (1807–1809), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i.; Sir J. M. Kinneir (circ. 1810), *Geographical Memoir*; J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, caps. xiv., xv.; J. P. Morier (1812), *Second Journey*, caps. xv., xvi., xviii., xix., xx., xxii.; St. Martin (1818), *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, 2 vols.; Colonel W. Monteith (1826), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. iii. p. 1; General F. R. Chesney (1835–1837), *Expedition for the Survey of the Euphrates*, vol. ii. cap. x.; Colonel W. K. Stuart (1835), *Journal of a Residence in Northern Persia*; Ch. Texier (1839), *L'Arménie, la Perse, et la Mésopotamie*; M. von Thielmann (1872), *Journey in the Caucasus*, vol. ii.; Dr. G. Radde (1879–80), *Petermann's Mittheil.* 1881, pp. 47–55, 169–176, 261–270; M. Orsolle (1882), *Le Caucase et la Perse*; Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, caps. ii.–v.



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Anatolian ranges. The northern part of this region is broken into fertile valleys and rolling plateaux; the ravines sometimes contain extensive, but not lofty, forests; on the hill slopes are pasture-lands which feed the flocks of the nomad tribes; whilst in the hollows of the plains, where water is abundant, villages are buried in the rich foliage of orchards and gardens. A considerable river, the Aras or Araxes, is the boundary of the province on the north, the Kizil Uzun (Red Long River), skirts it on the south, and afterwards, under the name of the Sefid Rud (White River), flows into the Caspian to the east of Resht. Rich in water, with a soil excellently adapted to the growth of cereals, possessing mineral resources, certain though undeveloped, Azerbaijan is indeed a favoured portion of the Shah's dominions. Further south, when we come to the Kurdistan mountains, a name somewhat vaguely applied to the frontier highlands inhabited by the Kurds, the more open valleys and undulations of the north are succeeded by narrow defiles between the several ridges, whose uniform inclination is, with an astonishing regularity, from north-west to south-east, and passage between which is effected by means of deep *tengs* or transverse gorges, due, like those which I have previously described in North-Eastern Khorasan, not to the erosive action of water, but to primordial fracture in the crust of the earth. These mountains unite on the south with the range known to classical writers as the Zagros.

Climate

The great elevation and the more northern latitude of this mountainous region are responsible for extremes of climate more severe than are felt in any other part of Persia. The heat of the Persian Gulf in summer is matched by the cold of Azerbaijan in winter; but whereas the Gulf is never cold in winter, Azerbaijan is apt to be excessively hot in summer as well. The spring and autumn are delightful seasons. In the intervening months the sun's rays are very piercing. The winter begins early, lasts late, and is dreaded for its rigours. Heavy falls of snow block the roads; men are frequently frozen to death in the passes; at Tabriz, a thermometer exposed to the air at night seldom rises above zero (Fahrenheit), and we read of ink freezing in the inkstand and water in the tumblers in a room where a fire is kept burning. Colonel Stewart, in a report, compares the summer climate to India (with the advantage, however, of cool nights) and the winter climate to Canada.

General Chesney gave the area of Azerbaijan as 25,280 square

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miles. Colonel Stewart, now Consul-General at Tabriz, returns it as 43,500, General Schindler as 35,000. The total population is estimated at not far short of 2,000,000,[1] of which the Kurds are reckoned at 450,000, and the Christians at 72,900 (Nestorians, 44,000; Armenians, 28,900). Owing in part to the missionary establishments of the foreign churches, in part to the staffs of the various consulates at Tabriz, and in part to the mercantile importance of the latter city, there are now as many as 120 Europeans and Americans in the province. The name Azerbaijan is said to be derived from *Azer*, fire, and *baijan*, keeper, and to testify to the ancient predominance of the fire-worshippers in this part of Persia. It is identical with the Atropatia or Atropatene of the classical writers.

Population

In the tables which I publish elsewhere of the Persian Revenue for 1888 to 1889, the contribution of Azerbaijan appears at 786,142 *tomans*, plus 60,062 *kharvars* of grain, or a total money value of 966,666 *tomans*, equivalent to 276,190*l*. On the other hand, the revenue for 1889 to 1890 appears in the Consular Report[2] as 385,674*l*. No two tables of Persian accounts were ever found to agree; and there is frequently sufficient ground for divergence in the different bases upon which the conflicting calculations have been framed. In this case the figures in the earlier and smaller estimate are those of revenue from taxes and customs only, and are calculated at the rate of 35 krans to 1*l*. The figures in the Consular Report contain other items, as the following table shows; and the recent remarkable rise in silver having lowered the rate of exchange to 30 *krans* to the 1*l*., they are counted at that rate:—

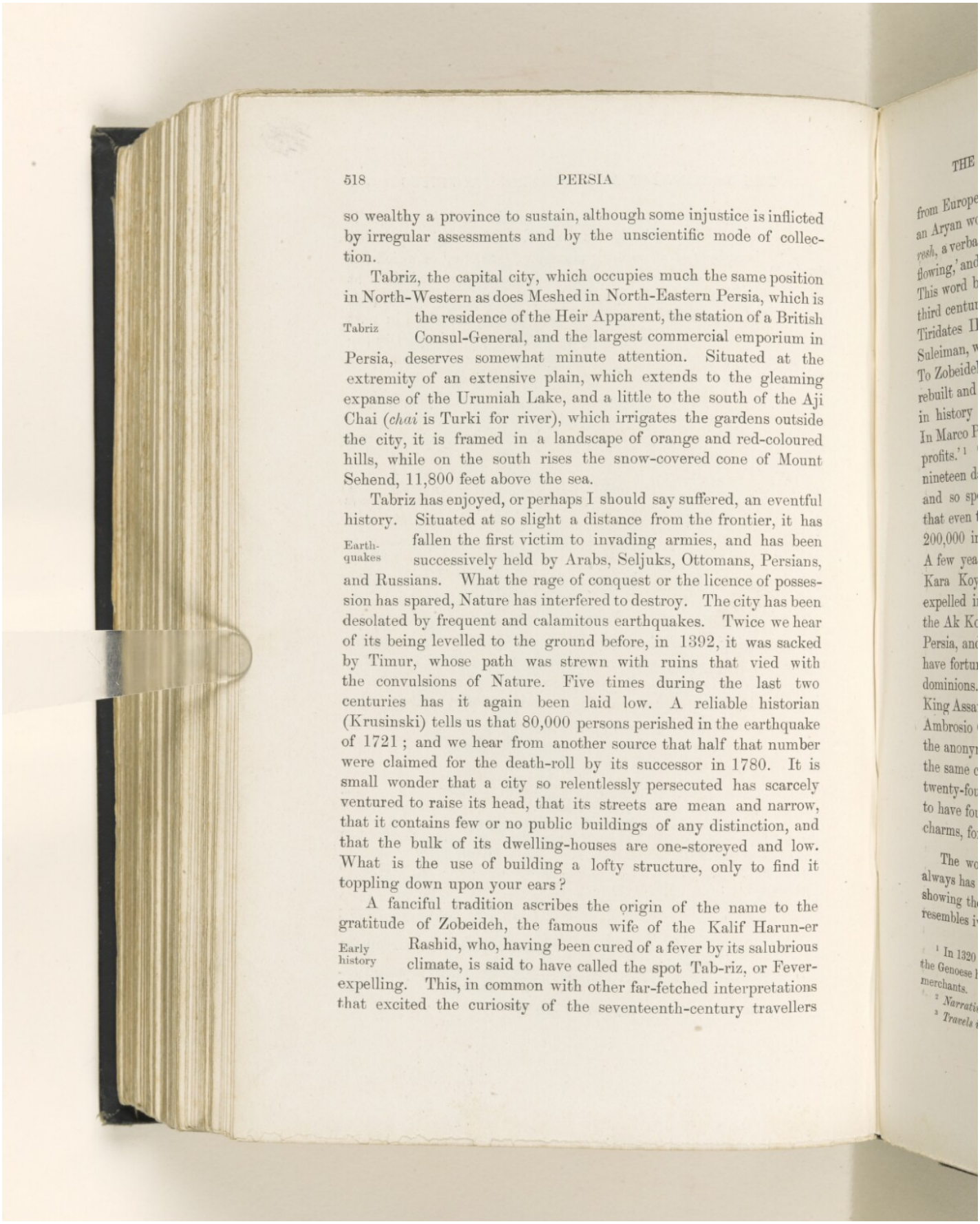
Revenue and expenditure

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'Maliat' (including land tax in money, rent of Crown lands, tax on cattle, and tax on trades), 750,000 *tomans* . . . . = | 275,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Tax in kind, 15,200 *kharvars* (*kharvar* = 1,000 lbs.) of grain = 6,785$\frac{5}{7}$ tons. Value, at 15*s.* a *kharvar* of 1,000 lbs . . . = | 11,400 | 0 | 0 |
| 7,000 *kharvars* of straw = 3,125 tons, at 6*s.* 6*d.* a *kharvar* of 1,000 lbs. . . . . = | 2,275 | 0 | 0 |
| Customs and octroi, 271,000 *tomans* . . . . . = | 90,333 | 6 | 0 |
| Passports, 20,000 *tomans* . . . . . = | 6,666 | 13 | 0 |
| Total . . | 385,674 | 19 | 0 |

This total is not in itself by any means too severe a burden for

[1] If this be correct, Azerbaijan must be by far the most thickly populated province of Persia.

[2] *Diplomatic and Consular Reports*, No. 789, 1890.





so wealthy a province to sustain, although some injustice is inflicted by irregular assessments and by the unscientific mode of collection.

Tabriz

Tabriz, the capital city, which occupies much the same position in North-Western as does Meshed in North-Eastern Persia, which is the residence of the Heir Apparent, the station of a British Consul-General, and the largest commercial emporium in Persia, deserves somewhat minute attention. Situated at the extremity of an extensive plain, which extends to the gleaming expanse of the Urumiah Lake, and a little to the south of the Aji Chai (*chai* is Turki for river), which irrigates the gardens outside the city, it is framed in a landscape of orange and red-coloured hills, while on the south rises the snow-covered cone of Mount Sehend, 11,800 feet above the sea.

Earthquakes

Tabriz has enjoyed, or perhaps I should say suffered, an eventful history. Situated at so slight a distance from the frontier, it has fallen the first victim to invading armies, and has been successively held by Arabs, Seljuks, Ottomans, Persians, and Russians. What the rage of conquest or the licence of possession has spared, Nature has interfered to destroy. The city has been desolated by frequent and calamitous earthquakes. Twice we hear of its being levelled to the ground before, in 1392, it was sacked by Timur, whose path was strewn with ruins that vied with the convulsions of Nature. Five times during the last two centuries has it again been laid low. A reliable historian (Krusinski) tells us that 80,000 persons perished in the earthquake of 1721; and we hear from another source that half that number were claimed for the death-roll by its successor in 1780. It is small wonder that a city so relentlessly persecuted has scarcely ventured to raise its head, that its streets are mean and narrow, that it contains few or no public buildings of any distinction, and that the bulk of its dwelling-houses are one-storeyed and low. What is the use of building a lofty structure, only to find it toppling down upon your ears?

Early history

A fanciful tradition ascribes the origin of the name to the gratitude of Zobeideh, the famous wife of the Kalif Harun-er Rashid, who, having been cured of a fever by its salubrious climate, is said to have called the spot Tab-riz, or Fever-expelling. This, in common with other far-fetched interpretations that excited the curiosity of the seventeenth-century travellers

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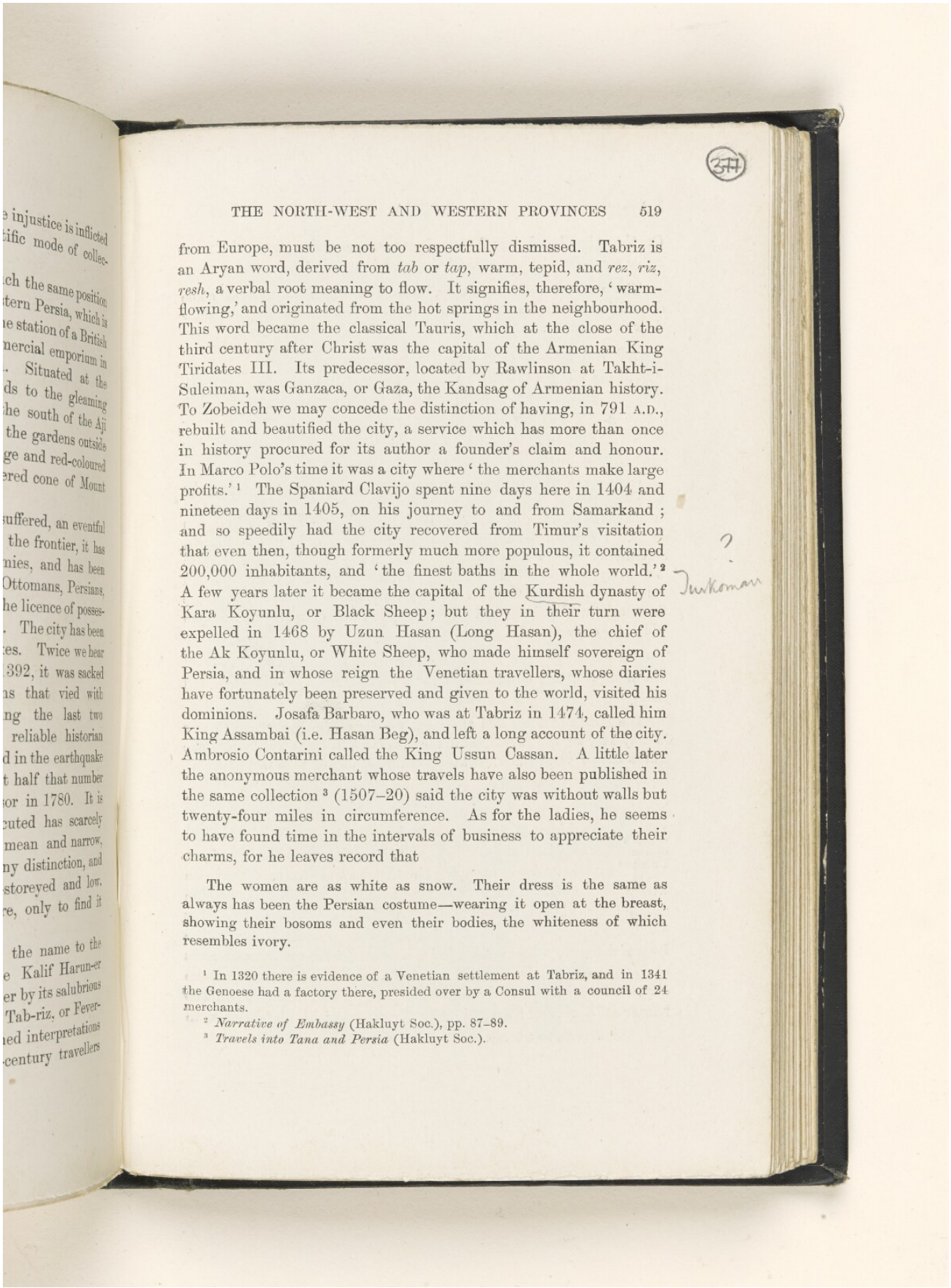



from Europe, must be not too respectfully dismissed. Tabriz is an Aryan word, derived from *tab* or *tap*, warm, tepid, and *rez*, *riz*, *resh*, a verbal root meaning to flow. It signifies, therefore, 'warm-flowing,' and originated from the hot springs in the neighbourhood. This word became the classical Tauris, which at the close of the third century after Christ was the capital of the Armenian King Tiridates III. Its predecessor, located by Rawlinson at Takht-i-Suleiman, was Ganzaca, or Gaza, the Kandsag of Armenian history. To Zobeideh we may concede the distinction of having, in 791 A.D., rebuilt and beautified the city, a service which has more than once in history procured for its author a founder's claim and honour. In Marco Polo's time it was a city where 'the merchants make large profits.'[1] The Spaniard Clavijo spent nine days here in 1404 and nineteen days in 1405, on his journey to and from Samarkand; and so speedily had the city recovered from Timur's visitation that even then, though formerly much more populous, it contained 200,000 inhabitants, and 'the finest baths in the whole world.'[2] A few years later it became the capital of the Kurdish dynasty of Kara Koyunlu, or Black Sheep; but they in their turn were expelled in 1468 by Uzun Hasan (Long Hasan), the chief of the Ak Koyunlu, or White Sheep, who made himself sovereign of Persia, and in whose reign the Venetian travellers, whose diaries have fortunately been preserved and given to the world, visited his dominions. Josafa Barbaro, who was at Tabriz in 1474, called him King Assambai (i.e. Hasan Beg), and left a long account of the city. Ambrosio Contarini called the King Ussun Cassan. A little later the anonymous merchant whose travels have also been published in the same collection[3] (1507–20) said the city was without walls but twenty-four miles in circumference. As for the ladies, he seems to have found time in the intervals of business to appreciate their charms, for he leaves record that

> The women are as white as snow. Their dress is the same as always has been the Persian costume—wearing it open at the breast, showing their bosoms and even their bodies, the whiteness of which resembles ivory.

[1] In 1320 there is evidence of a Venetian settlement at Tabriz, and in 1341 the Genoese had a factory there, presided over by a Consul with a council of 24 merchants.

[2] *Narrative of Embassy* (Hakluyt Soc.), pp. 87–89.

[3] *Travels into Tana and Persia* (Hakluyt Soc.).

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On the other hand, less favoured or more exacting was 'the most noble magnifico' Vincentio d'Alessandri, who in 1571 said—

The women are mostly ugly, though of fine features and noble dispositions. They wear robes of silk, veils on their heads, and show their faces openly.

All the writers of this and the succeeding epoch concur in eulogies of the great commercial wealth and importance of Tabriz. Tavernier, in the middle of the next century, said that 'money trolls about in that place more than any other part of Asia.'[1] Chardin, however, in 1671, has left the most glowing account of its extent and features:—

Commercial importance

It is really and truly a very large and potent city; as being the second in Persia, both in dignity, in grandeur, in Riches, in Trade, and in number of Inhabitants. It contains 15,000 Houses and 15,000 shops. I did not see many palaces or magnificent houses at Tauris. But there are the fairest Basars that are in any place of Asia. And it is a lovely sight to see their vast extent, their largeness, their beautiful Duomos, and the Arches over 'em; the number of people that are there all the day long, and the vast quantities of merchandise with which they are filled.[2]

The enthusiastic Frenchman went on to say that the city contained 250 mosques, 300 caravanserais, and a population of 550,000, and that

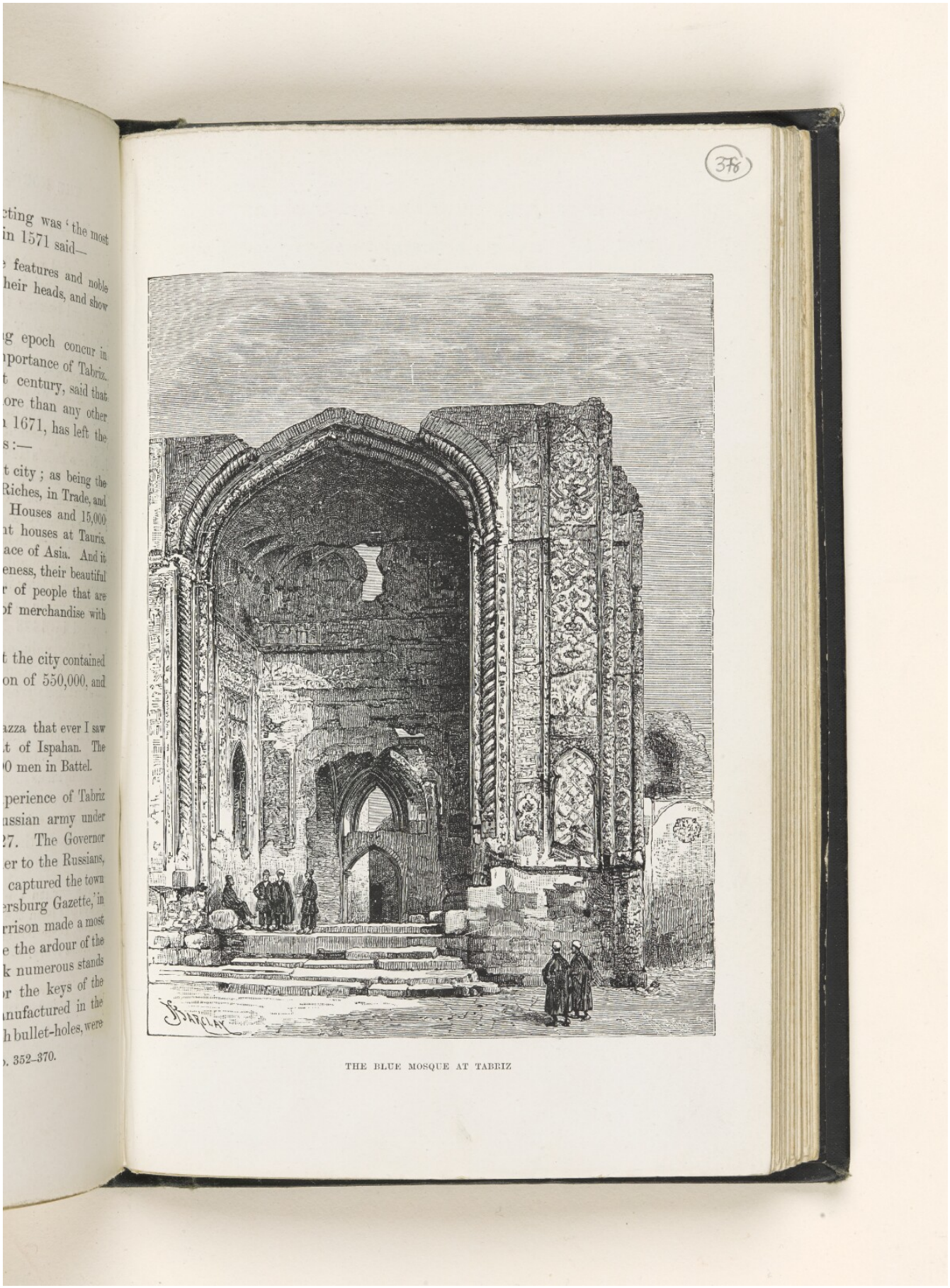
The Piazza of Tauris is the most spacious Piazza that ever I saw in any city of the world, and far surpasses that of Ispahan. The Turks have several times drawn up within it 30,000 men in Battel.

In the present century the most notable experience of Tabriz has been its unresisted occupation by the Russian army under Paskievitch in the campaign of 1827. The Governor was seized and handed over as a prisoner to the Russians, and the latter occupied the Citadel and captured the town without firing a shot. Nevertheless the 'St. Petersburg Gazette,' in chronicling this achievement, stated that the garrison made a most obstinate defence, but that nothing could impede the ardour of the Imperial troops, who carried all before them, took numerous stands of colours, and finally wrested from the Governor the keys of the city. The colours, which had been specially manufactured in the bazaar at Tabriz and then artifically perforated with bullet-holes, were

Capture by the Russians

[1] *Travels*, book i. cap. iii.

[2] *Travels*, pp. 352–370.



THE BLUE MOSQUE AT TABRIZ

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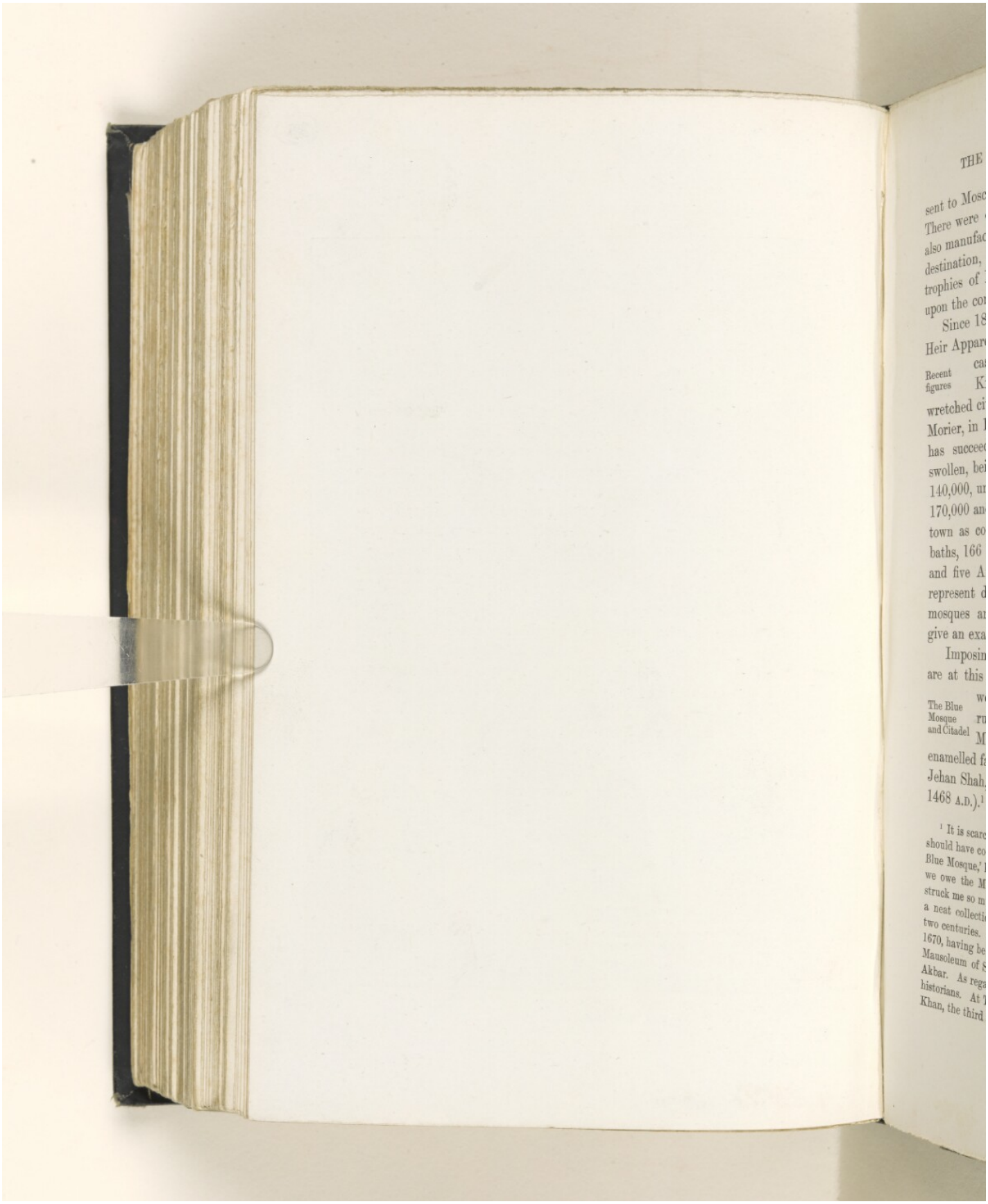

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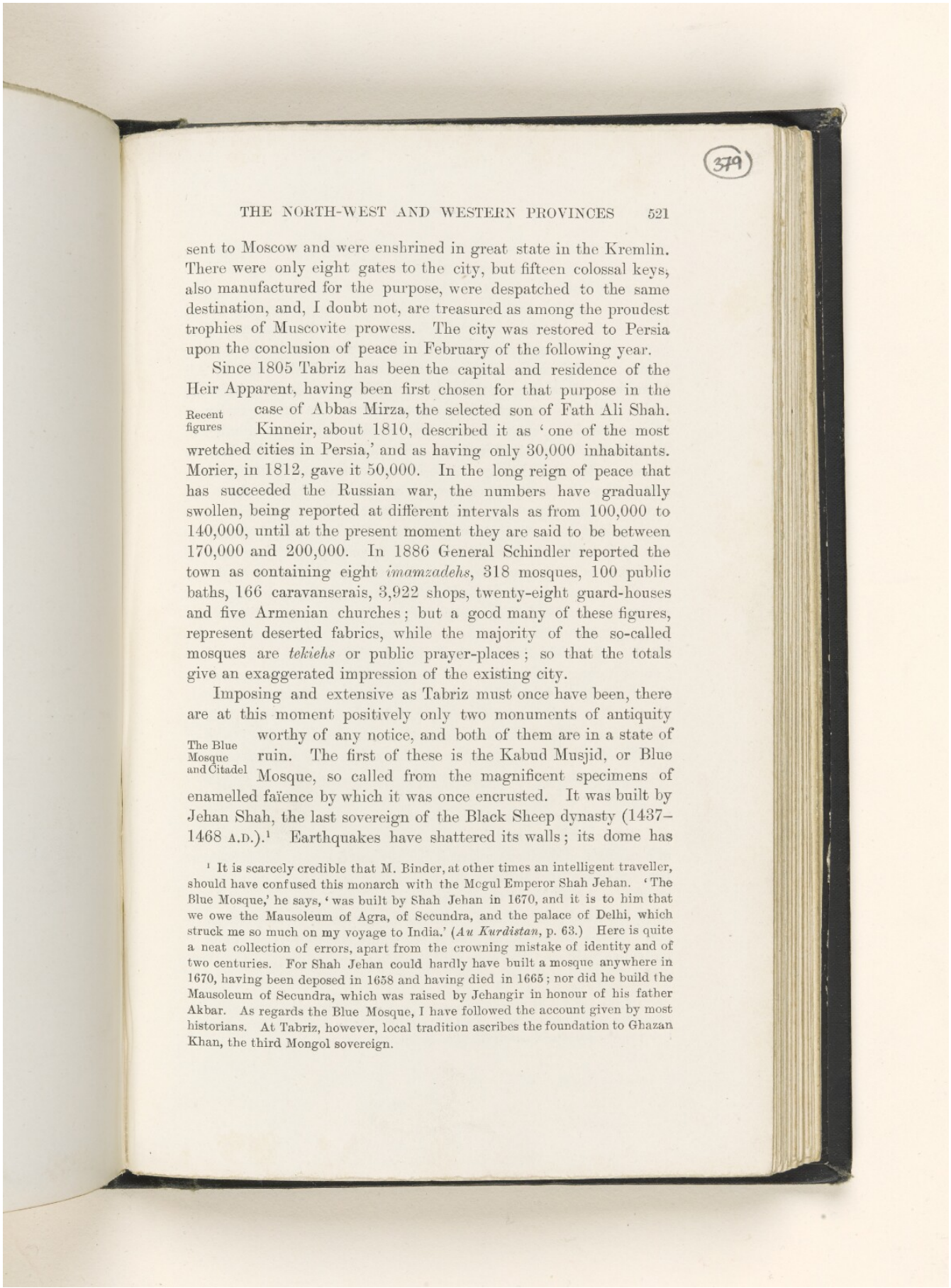




sent to Moscow and were enshrined in great state in the Kremlin. There were only eight gates to the city, but fifteen colossal keys, also manufactured for the purpose, were despatched to the same destination, and, I doubt not, are treasured as among the proudest trophies of Muscovite prowess. The city was restored to Persia upon the conclusion of peace in February of the following year.

Since 1805 Tabriz has been the capital and residence of the Heir Apparent, having been first chosen for that purpose in the case of Abbas Mirza, the selected son of Fath Ali Shah.

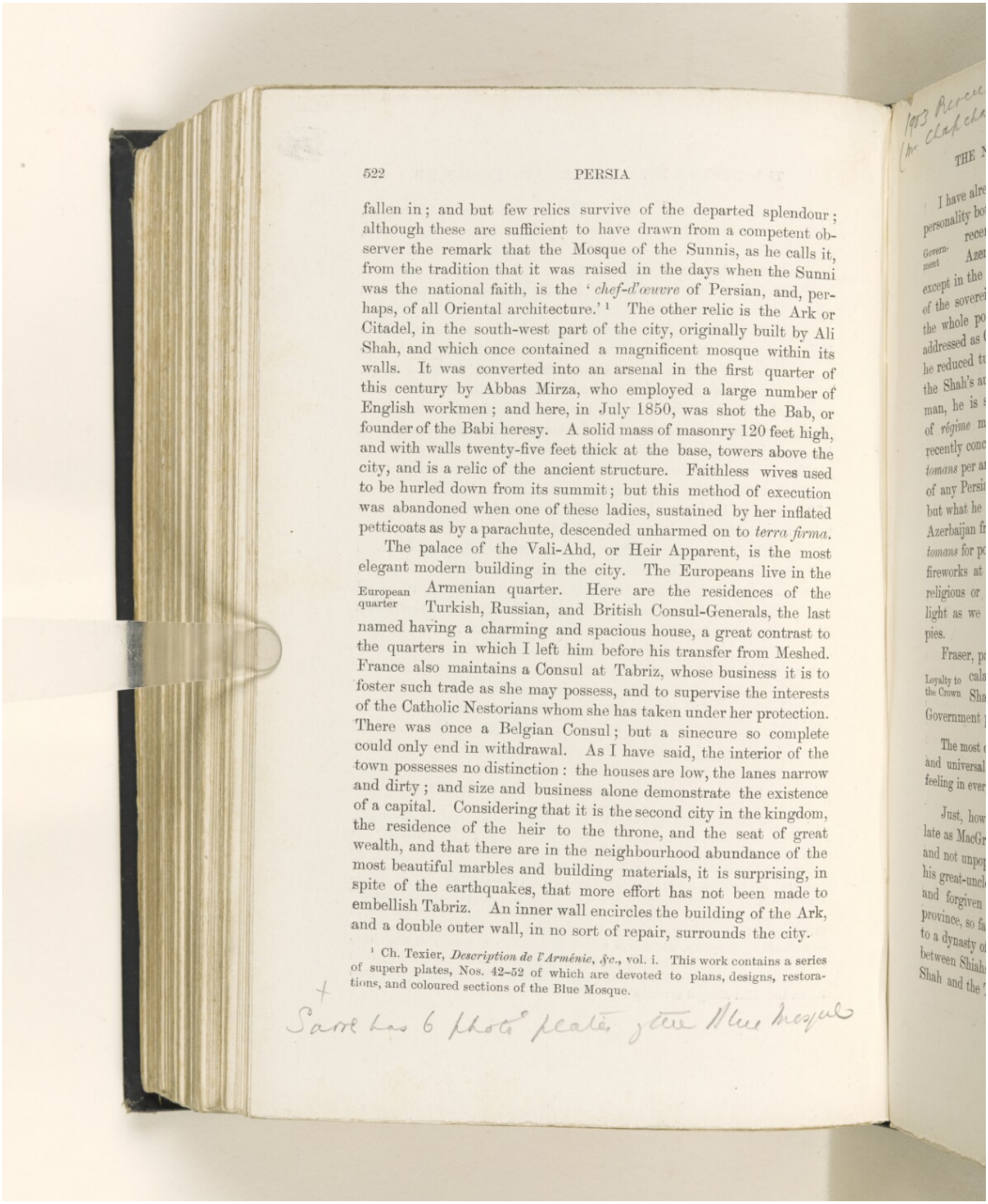
Recent figures

Kinneir, about 1810, described it as 'one of the most wretched cities in Persia,' and as having only 30,000 inhabitants. Morier, in 1812, gave it 50,000. In the long reign of peace that has succeeded the Russian war, the numbers have gradually swollen, being reported at different intervals as from 100,000 to 140,000, until at the present moment they are said to be between 170,000 and 200,000. In 1886 General Schindler reported the town as containing eight *imamzadehs*, 318 mosques, 100 public baths, 166 caravanserais, 3,922 shops, twenty-eight guard-houses and five Armenian churches; but a good many of these figures, represent deserted fabrics, while the majority of the so-called mosques are *tekiehs* or public prayer-places; so that the totals give an exaggerated impression of the existing city.

Imposing and extensive as Tabriz must once have been, there are at this moment positively only two monuments of antiquity worthy of any notice, and both of them are in a state of ruin. The first of these is the Kabud Musjid, or Blue Mosque, so called from the magnificent specimens of enamelled faïence by which it was once encrusted. It was built by Jehan Shah, the last sovereign of the Black Sheep dynasty (1437–1468 A.D.).[1] Earthquakes have shattered its walls; its dome has

The Blue Mosque and Citadel

[1] It is scarcely credible that M. Binder, at other times an intelligent traveller, should have confused this monarch with the Mogul Emperor Shah Jehan. 'The Blue Mosque,' he says, 'was built by Shah Jehan in 1670, and it is to him that we owe the Mausoleum of Agra, of Secundra, and the palace of Delhi, which struck me so much on my voyage to India.' (*Au Kurdistan*, p. 63.) Here is quite a neat collection of errors, apart from the crowning mistake of identity and of two centuries. For Shah Jehan could hardly have built a mosque anywhere in 1670, having been deposed in 1658 and having died in 1665; nor did he build the Mausoleum of Secundra, which was raised by Jehangir in honour of his father Akbar. As regards the Blue Mosque, I have followed the account given by most historians. At Tabriz, however, local tradition ascribes the foundation to Ghazan Khan, the third Mongol sovereign.





fallen in; and but few relics survive of the departed splendour; although these are sufficient to have drawn from a competent observer the remark that the Mosque of the Sunnis, as he calls it, from the tradition that it was raised in the days when the Sunni was the national faith, is the '*chef-d'œuvre* of Persian, and, perhaps, of all Oriental architecture.'[1] The other relic is the Ark or Citadel, in the south-west part of the city, originally built by Ali Shah, and which once contained a magnificent mosque within its walls. It was converted into an arsenal in the first quarter of this century by Abbas Mirza, who employed a large number of English workmen; and here, in July 1850, was shot the Bab, or founder of the Babi heresy. A solid mass of masonry 120 feet high, and with walls twenty-five feet thick at the base, towers above the city, and is a relic of the ancient structure. Faithless wives used to be hurled down from its summit; but this method of execution was abandoned when one of these ladies, sustained by her inflated petticoats as by a parachute, descended unharmed on to *terra firma*.

The palace of the Vali-Ahd, or Heir Apparent, is the most elegant modern building in the city. The Europeans live in the Armenian quarter. Here are the residences of the Turkish, Russian, and British Consul-Generals, the last named having a charming and spacious house, a great contrast to the quarters in which I left him before his transfer from Meshed. France also maintains a Consul at Tabriz, whose business it is to foster such trade as she may possess, and to supervise the interests of the Catholic Nestorians whom she has taken under her protection. There was once a Belgian Consul; but a sinecure so complete could only end in withdrawal. As I have said, the interior of the town possesses no distinction: the houses are low, the lanes narrow and dirty; and size and business alone demonstrate the existence of a capital. Considering that it is the second city in the kingdom, the residence of the heir to the throne, and the seat of great wealth, and that there are in the neighbourhood abundance of the most beautiful marbles and building materials, it is surprising, in spite of the earthquakes, that more effort has not been made to embellish Tabriz. An inner wall encircles the building of the Ark, and a double outer wall, in no sort of repair, surrounds the city.

European quarter

[1] Ch. Texier, *Description de l'Arménie, &c.*, vol. i. This work contains a series of superb plates, Nos. 42–52 of which are devoted to plans, designs, restorations, and coloured sections of the Blue Mosque.

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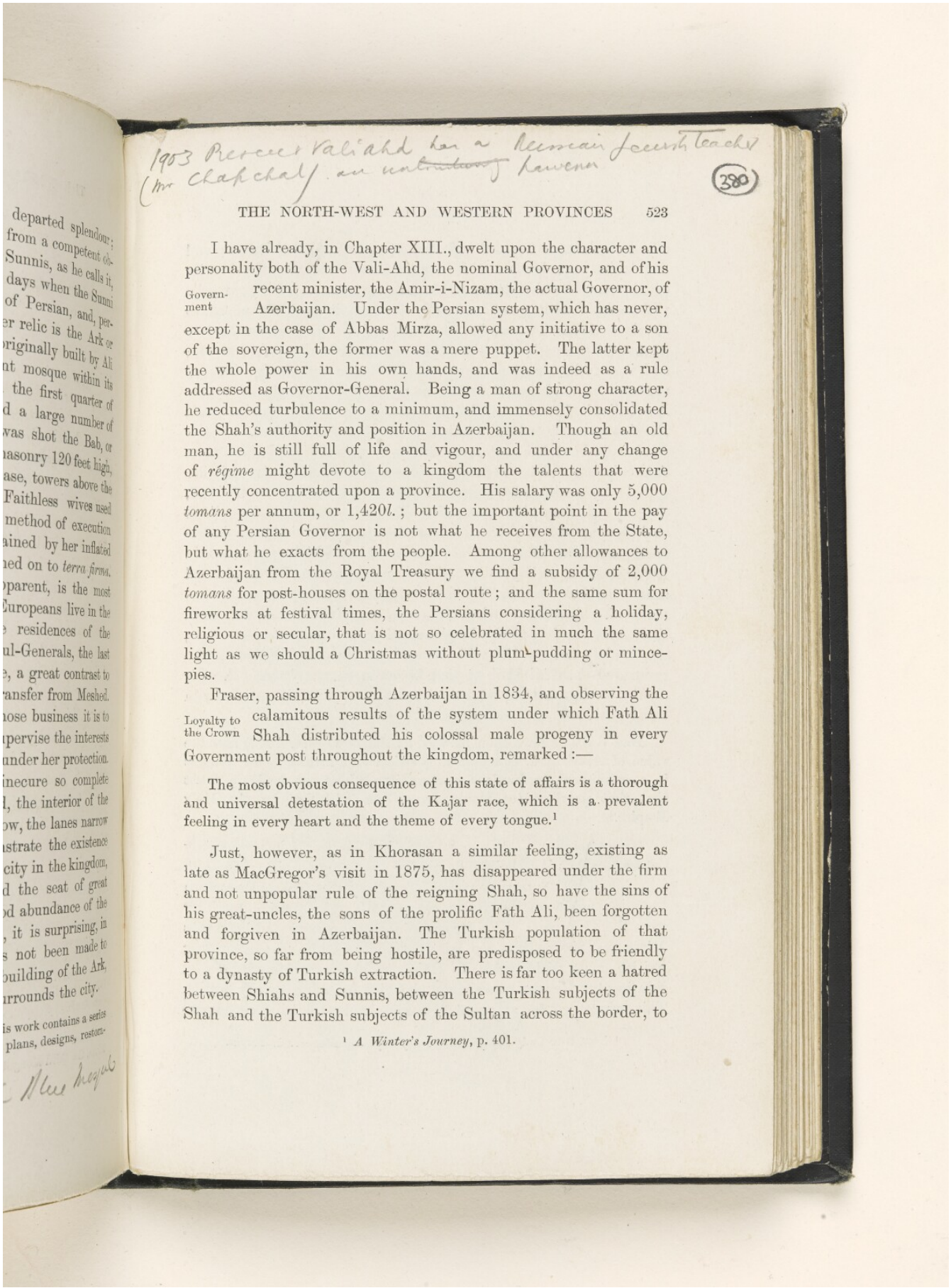

1903 Present Vali Ahd has a Russian Jewish teacher (Mr Chapchal) an ~~unfortunately~~ Lawrence

(380)



Government

I have already, in Chapter XIII., dwelt upon the character and personality both of the Vali-Ahd, the nominal Governor, and of his recent minister, the Amir-i-Nizam, the actual Governor, of Azerbaijan. Under the Persian system, which has never, except in the case of Abbas Mirza, allowed any initiative to a son of the sovereign, the former was a mere puppet. The latter kept the whole power in his own hands, and was indeed as a rule addressed as Governor-General. Being a man of strong character, he reduced turbulence to a minimum, and immensely consolidated the Shah's authority and position in Azerbaijan. Though an old man, he is still full of life and vigour, and under any change of *régime* might devote to a kingdom the talents that were recently concentrated upon a province. His salary was only 5,000 *tomans* per annum, or 1,420*l.*; but the important point in the pay of any Persian Governor is not what he receives from the State, but what he exacts from the people. Among other allowances to Azerbaijan from the Royal Treasury we find a subsidy of 2,000 *tomans* for post-houses on the postal route; and the same sum for fireworks at festival times, the Persians considering a holiday, religious or secular, that is not so celebrated in much the same light as we should a Christmas without plum-pudding or mince-pies.

Loyalty to the Crown

Fraser, passing through Azerbaijan in 1834, and observing the calamitous results of the system under which Fath Ali Shah distributed his colossal male progeny in every Government post throughout the kingdom, remarked:—

> The most obvious consequence of this state of affairs is a thorough and universal detestation of the Kajar race, which is a prevalent feeling in every heart and the theme of every tongue.[1]

Just, however, as in Khorasan a similar feeling, existing as late as MacGregor's visit in 1875, has disappeared under the firm and not unpopular rule of the reigning Shah, so have the sins of his great-uncles, the sons of the prolific Fath Ali, been forgotten and forgiven in Azerbaijan. The Turkish population of that province, so far from being hostile, are predisposed to be friendly to a dynasty of Turkish extraction. There is far too keen a hatred between Shiahs and Sunnis, between the Turkish subjects of the Shah and the Turkish subjects of the Sultan across the border, to

[1] *A Winter's Journey*, p. 401.

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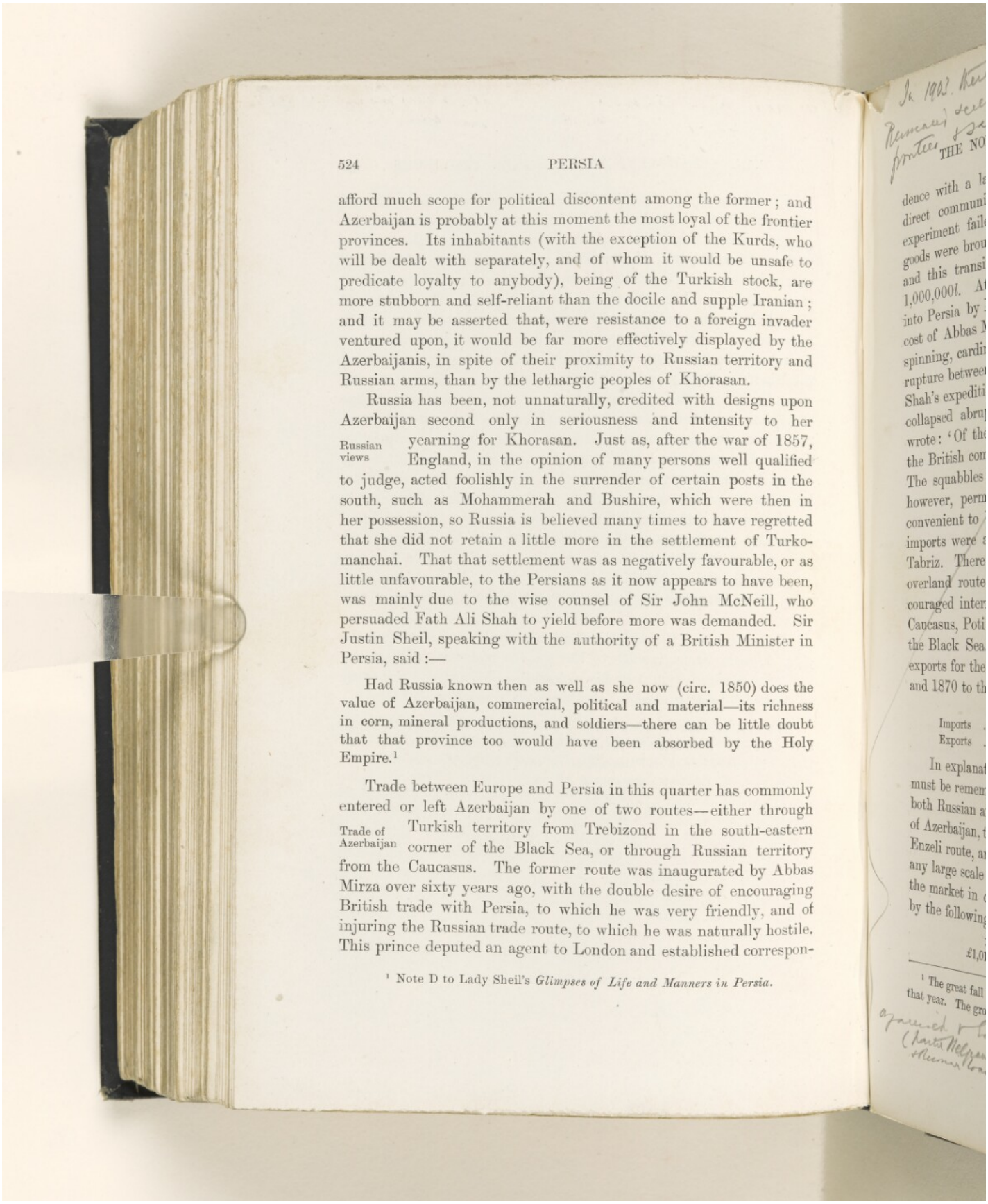



afford much scope for political discontent among the former; and Azerbaijan is probably at this moment the most loyal of the frontier provinces. Its inhabitants (with the exception of the Kurds, who will be dealt with separately, and of whom it would be unsafe to predicate loyalty to anybody), being of the Turkish stock, are more stubborn and self-reliant than the docile and supple Iranian; and it may be asserted that, were resistance to a foreign invader ventured upon, it would be far more effectively displayed by the Azerbaijanis, in spite of their proximity to Russian territory and Russian arms, than by the lethargic peoples of Khorasan.

Russian views

Russia has been, not unnaturally, credited with designs upon Azerbaijan second only in seriousness and intensity to her yearning for Khorasan. Just as, after the war of 1857, England, in the opinion of many persons well qualified to judge, acted foolishly in the surrender of certain posts in the south, such as Mohammerah and Bushire, which were then in her possession, so Russia is believed many times to have regretted that she did not retain a little more in the settlement of Turkomanchai. That that settlement was as negatively favourable, or as little unfavourable, to the Persians as it now appears to have been, was mainly due to the wise counsel of Sir John McNeill, who persuaded Fath Ali Shah to yield before more was demanded. Sir Justin Sheil, speaking with the authority of a British Minister in Persia, said :—

> Had Russia known then as well as she now (circ. 1850) does the value of Azerbaijan, commercial, political and material—its richness in corn, mineral productions, and soldiers—there can be little doubt that that province too would have been absorbed by the Holy Empire.[1]

Trade of Azerbaijan

Trade between Europe and Persia in this quarter has commonly entered or left Azerbaijan by one of two routes—either through Turkish territory from Trebizond in the south-eastern corner of the Black Sea, or through Russian territory from the Caucasus. The former route was inaugurated by Abbas Mirza over sixty years ago, with the double desire of encouraging British trade with Persia, to which he was very friendly, and of injuring the Russian trade route, to which he was naturally hostile. This prince deputed an agent to London and established correspon-

[1] Note D to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia.*

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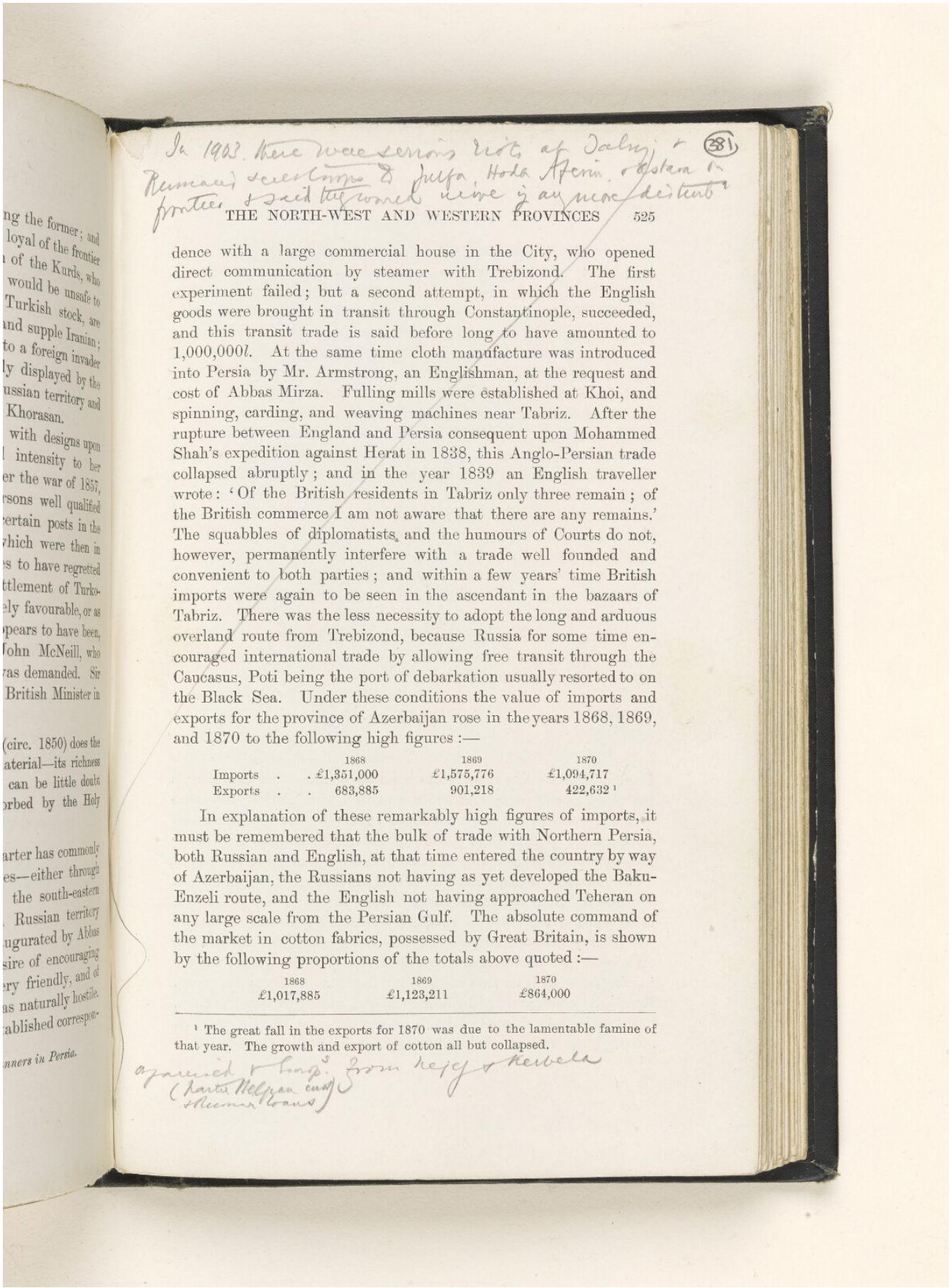




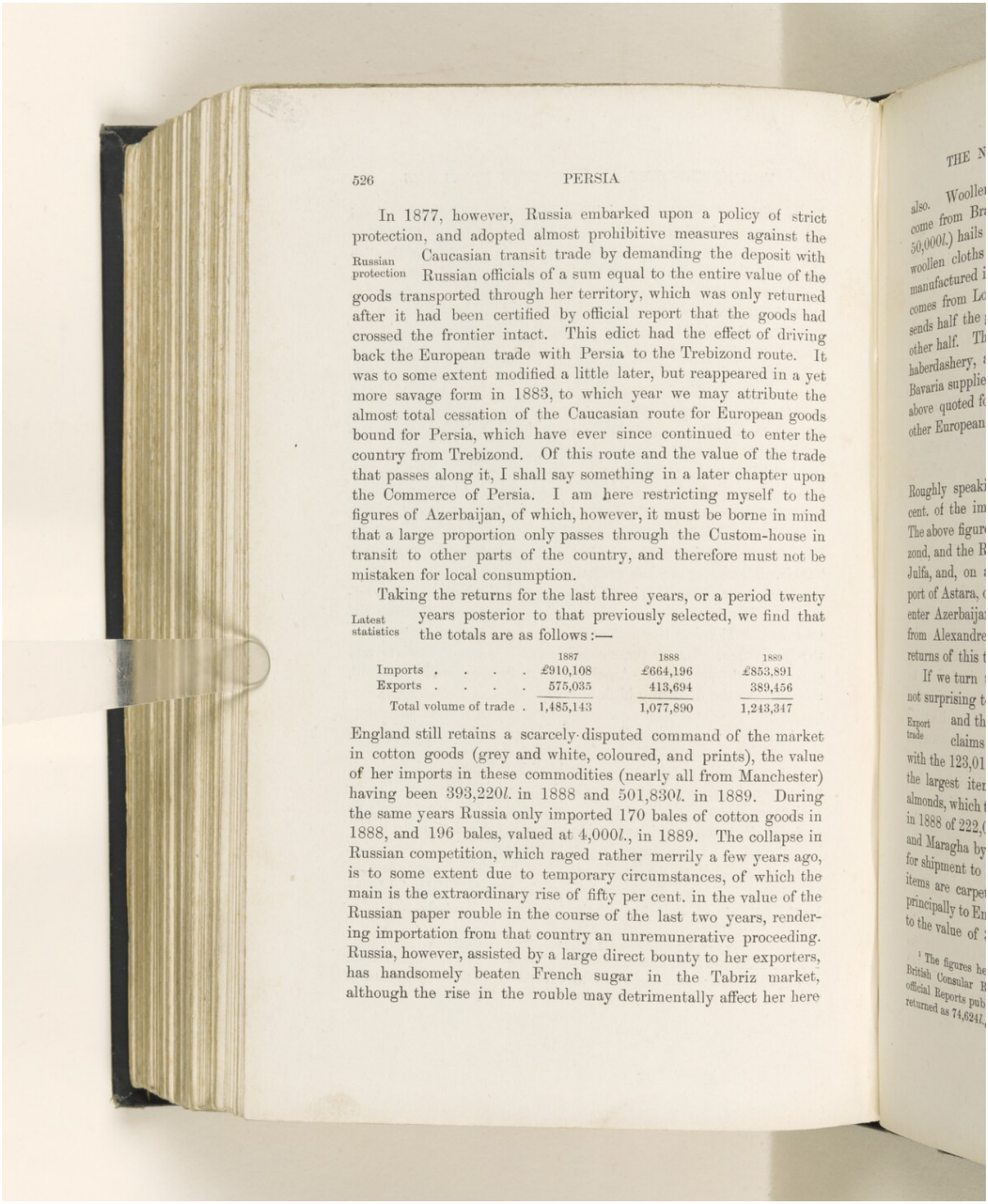
dence with a large commercial house in the City, who opened direct communication by steamer with Trebizond. The first experiment failed; but a second attempt, in which the English goods were brought in transit through Constantinople, succeeded, and this transit trade is said before long to have amounted to 1,000,000*l*. At the same time cloth manufacture was introduced into Persia by Mr. Armstrong, an Englishman, at the request and cost of Abbas Mirza. Fulling mills were established at Khoi, and spinning, carding, and weaving machines near Tabriz. After the rupture between England and Persia consequent upon Mohammed Shah's expedition against Herat in 1838, this Anglo-Persian trade collapsed abruptly; and in the year 1839 an English traveller wrote: 'Of the British residents in Tabriz only three remain; of the British commerce I am not aware that there are any remains.' The squabbles of diplomatists and the humours of Courts do not, however, permanently interfere with a trade well founded and convenient to both parties; and within a few years' time British imports were again to be seen in the ascendant in the bazaars of Tabriz. There was the less necessity to adopt the long and arduous overland route from Trebizond, because Russia for some time encouraged international trade by allowing free transit through the Caucasus, Poti being the port of debarkation usually resorted to on the Black Sea. Under these conditions the value of imports and exports for the province of Azerbaijan rose in the years 1868, 1869, and 1870 to the following high figures:—

| | 1868 | 1869 | 1870 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Imports . . | £1,351,000 | £1,575,776 | £1,094,717 |
| Exports . . | 683,885 | 901,218 | 422,632 [1] |

In explanation of these remarkably high figures of imports, it must be remembered that the bulk of trade with Northern Persia, both Russian and English, at that time entered the country by way of Azerbaijan, the Russians not having as yet developed the Baku-Enzeli route, and the English not having approached Teheran on any large scale from the Persian Gulf. The absolute command of the market in cotton fabrics, possessed by Great Britain, is shown by the following proportions of the totals above quoted:—

| 1868 | 1869 | 1870 |
|---|---|---|
| £1,017,885 | £1,123,211 | £864,000 |

[1] The great fall in the exports for 1870 was due to the lamentable famine of that year. The growth and export of cotton all but collapsed.





In 1877, however, Russia embarked upon a policy of strict protection, and adopted almost prohibitive measures against the Caucasian transit trade by demanding the deposit with Russian officials of a sum equal to the entire value of the goods transported through her territory, which was only returned after it had been certified by official report that the goods had crossed the frontier intact. This edict had the effect of driving back the European trade with Persia to the Trebizond route. It was to some extent modified a little later, but reappeared in a yet more savage form in 1883, to which year we may attribute the almost total cessation of the Caucasian route for European goods bound for Persia, which have ever since continued to enter the country from Trebizond. Of this route and the value of the trade that passes along it, I shall say something in a later chapter upon the Commerce of Persia. I am here restricting myself to the figures of Azerbaijan, of which, however, it must be borne in mind that a large proportion only passes through the Custom-house in transit to other parts of the country, and therefore must not be mistaken for local consumption.

Russian protection

Taking the returns for the last three years, or a period twenty years posterior to that previously selected, we find that the totals are as follows:—

Latest statistics

| | 1887 | 1888 | 1889 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Imports . . . . | £910,108 | £664,196 | £853,891 |
| Exports . . . . | 575,035 | 413,694 | 389,456 |
| Total volume of trade . | 1,485,143 | 1,077,890 | 1,243,347 |

England still retains a scarcely disputed command of the market in cotton goods (grey and white, coloured, and prints), the value of her imports in these commodities (nearly all from Manchester) having been 393,220*l.* in 1888 and 501,830*l.* in 1889. During the same years Russia only imported 170 bales of cotton goods in 1888, and 196 bales, valued at 4,000*l.*, in 1889. The collapse in Russian competition, which raged rather merrily a few years ago, is to some extent due to temporary circumstances, of which the main is the extraordinary rise of fifty per cent. in the value of the Russian paper rouble in the course of the last two years, rendering importation from that country an unremunerative proceeding. Russia, however, assisted by a large direct bounty to her exporters, has handsomely beaten French sugar in the Tabriz market, although the rise in the rouble may detrimentally affect her here

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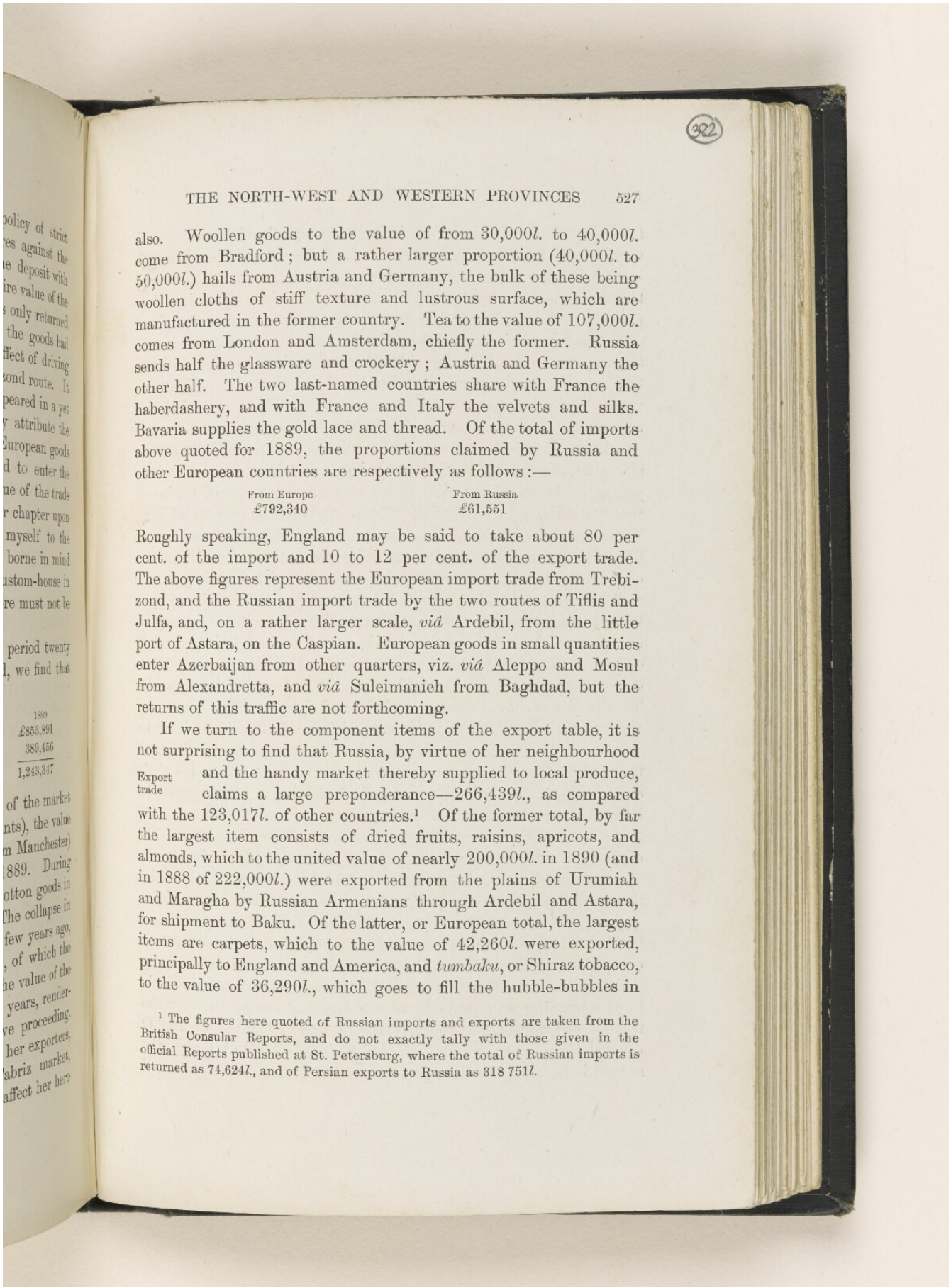



also. Woollen goods to the value of from 30,000*l.* to 40,000*l.* come from Bradford; but a rather larger proportion (40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.*) hails from Austria and Germany, the bulk of these being woollen cloths of stiff texture and lustrous surface, which are manufactured in the former country. Tea to the value of 107,000*l.* comes from London and Amsterdam, chiefly the former. Russia sends half the glassware and crockery; Austria and Germany the other half. The two last-named countries share with France the haberdashery, and with France and Italy the velvets and silks. Bavaria supplies the gold lace and thread. Of the total of imports above quoted for 1889, the proportions claimed by Russia and other European countries are respectively as follows:—

| From Europe | From Russia |
|---|---|
| £792,340 | £61,551 |

Roughly speaking, England may be said to take about 80 per cent. of the import and 10 to 12 per cent. of the export trade. The above figures represent the European import trade from Trebizond, and the Russian import trade by the two routes of Tiflis and Julfa, and, on a rather larger scale, *viâ* Ardebil, from the little port of Astara, on the Caspian. European goods in small quantities enter Azerbaijan from other quarters, viz. *viâ* Aleppo and Mosul from Alexandretta, and *viâ* Suleimanieh from Baghdad, but the returns of this traffic are not forthcoming.

Export trade

If we turn to the component items of the export table, it is not surprising to find that Russia, by virtue of her neighbourhood and the handy market thereby supplied to local produce, claims a large preponderance—266,439*l.*, as compared with the 123,017*l.* of other countries.[1] Of the former total, by far the largest item consists of dried fruits, raisins, apricots, and almonds, which to the united value of nearly 200,000*l.* in 1890 (and in 1888 of 222,000*l.*) were exported from the plains of Urumiah and Maragha by Russian Armenians through Ardebil and Astara, for shipment to Baku. Of the latter, or European total, the largest items are carpets, which to the value of 42,260*l.* were exported, principally to England and America, and *tumbaku*, or Shiraz tobacco, to the value of 36,290*l.*, which goes to fill the hubble-bubbles in

[1] The figures here quoted of Russian imports and exports are taken from the British Consular Reports, and do not exactly tally with those given in the official Reports published at St. Petersburg, where the total of Russian imports is returned as 74,624*l.*, and of Persian exports to Russia as 318 751*l.*

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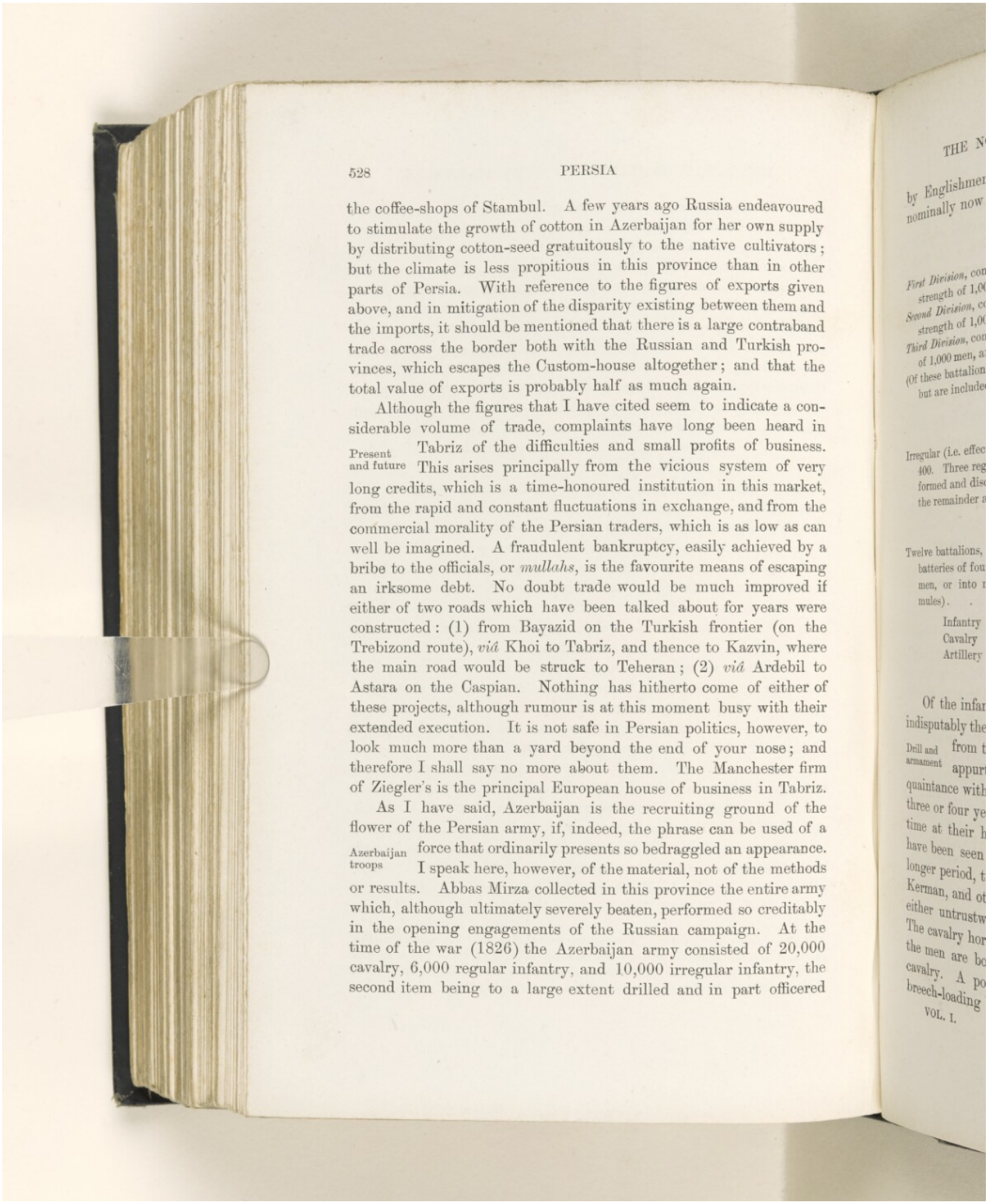



the coffee-shops of Stambul. A few years ago Russia endeavoured to stimulate the growth of cotton in Azerbaijan for her own supply by distributing cotton-seed gratuitously to the native cultivators; but the climate is less propitious in this province than in other parts of Persia. With reference to the figures of exports given above, and in mitigation of the disparity existing between them and the imports, it should be mentioned that there is a large contraband trade across the border both with the Russian and Turkish provinces, which escapes the Custom-house altogether; and that the total value of exports is probably half as much again.

Present and future

Although the figures that I have cited seem to indicate a considerable volume of trade, complaints have long been heard in Tabriz of the difficulties and small profits of business. This arises principally from the vicious system of very long credits, which is a time-honoured institution in this market, from the rapid and constant fluctuations in exchange, and from the commercial morality of the Persian traders, which is as low as can well be imagined. A fraudulent bankruptcy, easily achieved by a bribe to the officials, or *mullahs*, is the favourite means of escaping an irksome debt. No doubt trade would be much improved if either of two roads which have been talked about for years were constructed: (1) from Bayazid on the Turkish frontier (on the Trebizond route), *viâ* Khoi to Tabriz, and thence to Kazvin, where the main road would be struck to Teheran; (2) *viâ* Ardebil to Astara on the Caspian. Nothing has hitherto come of either of these projects, although rumour is at this moment busy with their extended execution. It is not safe in Persian politics, however, to look much more than a yard beyond the end of your nose; and therefore I shall say no more about them. The Manchester firm of Ziegler's is the principal European house of business in Tabriz.

Azerbaijan troops

As I have said, Azerbaijan is the recruiting ground of the flower of the Persian army, if, indeed, the phrase can be used of a force that ordinarily presents so bedraggled an appearance. I speak here, however, of the material, not of the methods or results. Abbas Mirza collected in this province the entire army which, although ultimately severely beaten, performed so creditably in the opening engagements of the Russian campaign. At the time of the war (1826) the Azerbaijan army consisted of 20,000 cavalry, 6,000 regular infantry, and 10,000 irregular infantry, the second item being to a large extent drilled and in part officered



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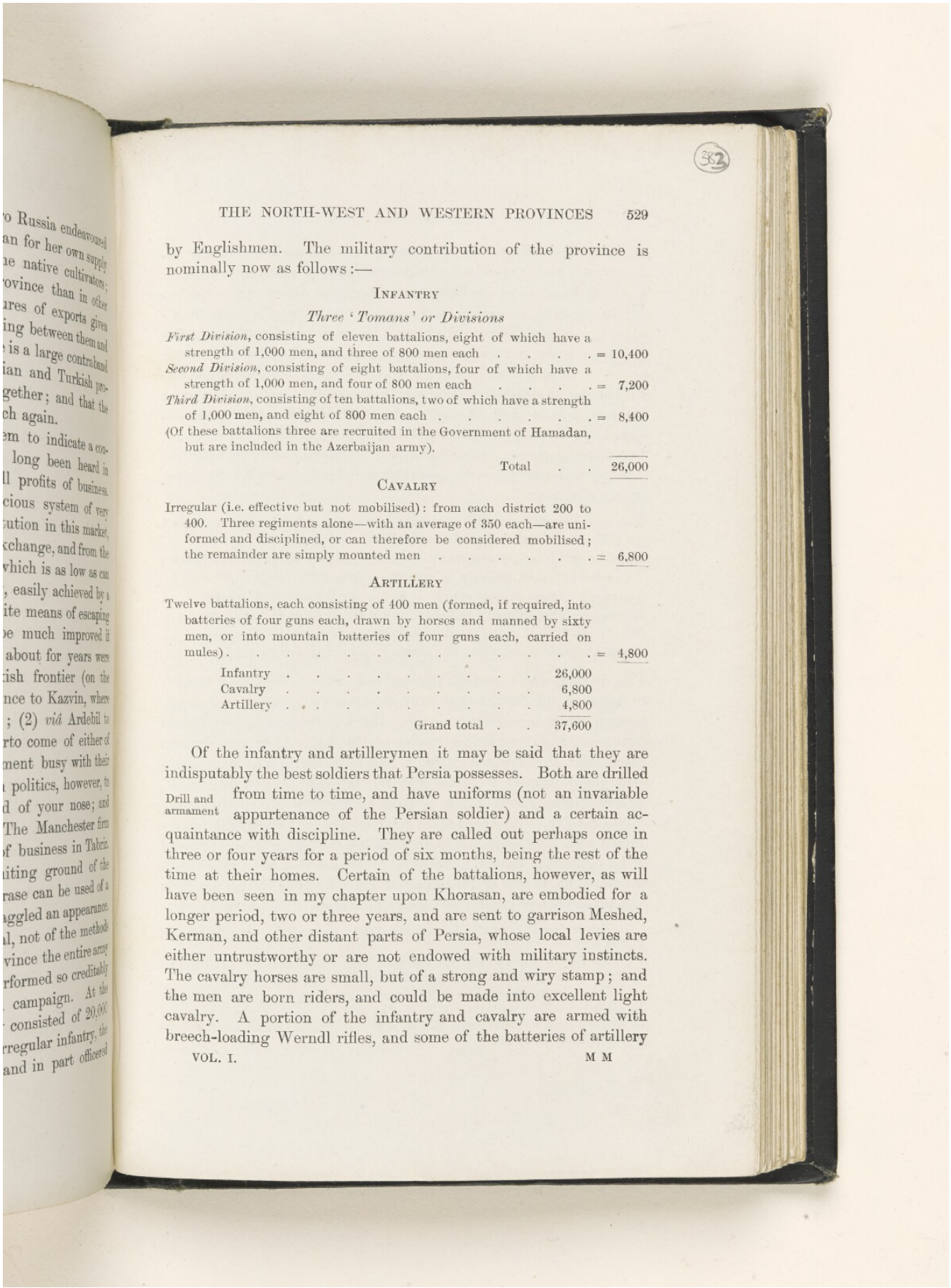



by Englishmen. The military contribution of the province is nominally now as follows:—

INFANTRY

*Three 'Tomans' or Divisions*

*First Division*, consisting of eleven battalions, eight of which have a strength of 1,000 men, and three of 800 men each . . . . = 10,400

*Second Division*, consisting of eight battalions, four of which have a strength of 1,000 men, and four of 800 men each . . . . = 7,200

*Third Division*, consisting of ten battalions, two of which have a strength of 1,000 men, and eight of 800 men each . . . . . = 8,400

(Of these battalions three are recruited in the Government of Hamadan, but are included in the Azerbaijan army).

Total . . 26,000

CAVALRY

Irregular (i.e. effective but not mobilised): from each district 200 to 400. Three regiments alone—with an average of 350 each—are uniformed and disciplined, or can therefore be considered mobilised; the remainder are simply mounted men . . . . . = 6,800

ARTILLERY

Twelve battalions, each consisting of 400 men (formed, if required, into batteries of four guns each, drawn by horses and manned by sixty men, or into mountain batteries of four guns each, carried on mules) . . . . . = 4,800

| | |
|---|---|
| Infantry . . . . . | 26,000 |
| Cavalry . . . . . | 6,800 |
| Artillery . . . . . | 4,800 |
| Grand total . . | 37,600 |

Drill and armament

Of the infantry and artillerymen it may be said that they are indisputably the best soldiers that Persia possesses. Both are drilled from time to time, and have uniforms (not an invariable appurtenance of the Persian soldier) and a certain acquaintance with discipline. They are called out perhaps once in three or four years for a period of six months, being the rest of the time at their homes. Certain of the battalions, however, as will have been seen in my chapter upon Khorasan, are embodied for a longer period, two or three years, and are sent to garrison Meshed, Kerman, and other distant parts of Persia, whose local levies are either untrustworthy or are not endowed with military instincts. The cavalry horses are small, but of a strong and wiry stamp; and the men are born riders, and could be made into excellent light cavalry. A portion of the infantry and cavalry are armed with breech-loading Werndl rifles, and some of the batteries of artillery



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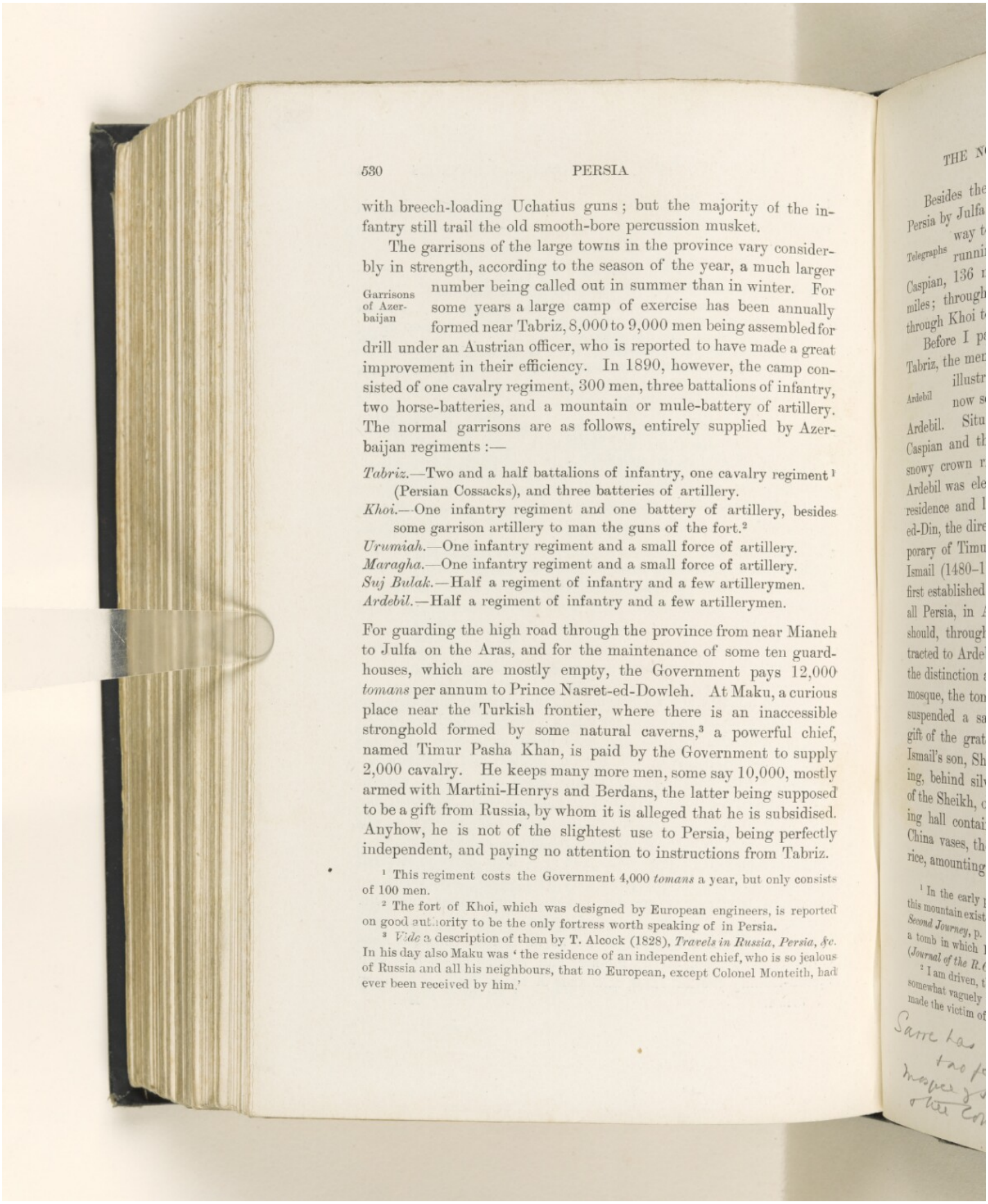



with breech-loading Uchatius guns; but the majority of the infantry still trail the old smooth-bore percussion musket.

Garrisons of Azerbaijan

The garrisons of the large towns in the province vary considerably in strength, according to the season of the year, a much larger number being called out in summer than in winter. For some years a large camp of exercise has been annually formed near Tabriz, 8,000 to 9,000 men being assembled for drill under an Austrian officer, who is reported to have made a great improvement in their efficiency. In 1890, however, the camp consisted of one cavalry regiment, 300 men, three battalions of infantry, two horse-batteries, and a mountain or mule-battery of artillery. The normal garrisons are as follows, entirely supplied by Azerbaijan regiments :—

*Tabriz.*—Two and a half battalions of infantry, one cavalry regiment[1] (Persian Cossacks), and three batteries of artillery.
*Khoi.*—One infantry regiment and one battery of artillery, besides some garrison artillery to man the guns of the fort.[2]
*Urumiah.*—One infantry regiment and a small force of artillery.
*Maragha.*—One infantry regiment and a small force of artillery.
*Suj Bulak.*—Half a regiment of infantry and a few artillerymen.
*Ardebil.*—Half a regiment of infantry and a few artillerymen.

For guarding the high road through the province from near Mianeh to Julfa on the Aras, and for the maintenance of some ten guard-houses, which are mostly empty, the Government pays 12,000 *tomans* per annum to Prince Nasret-ed-Dowleh. At Maku, a curious place near the Turkish frontier, where there is an inaccessible stronghold formed by some natural caverns,[3] a powerful chief, named Timur Pasha Khan, is paid by the Government to supply 2,000 cavalry. He keeps many more men, some say 10,000, mostly armed with Martini-Henrys and Berdans, the latter being supposed to be a gift from Russia, by whom it is alleged that he is subsidised. Anyhow, he is not of the slightest use to Persia, being perfectly independent, and paying no attention to instructions from Tabriz.

[1] This regiment costs the Government 4,000 *tomans* a year, but only consists of 100 men.

[2] The fort of Khoi, which was designed by European engineers, is reported on good authority to be the only fortress worth speaking of in Persia.

[3] *Vide* a description of them by T. Alcock (1828), *Travels in Russia, Persia, &c.* In his day also Maku was 'the residence of an independent chief, who is so jealous of Russia and all his neighbours, that no European, except Colonel Monteith, had ever been received by him.'

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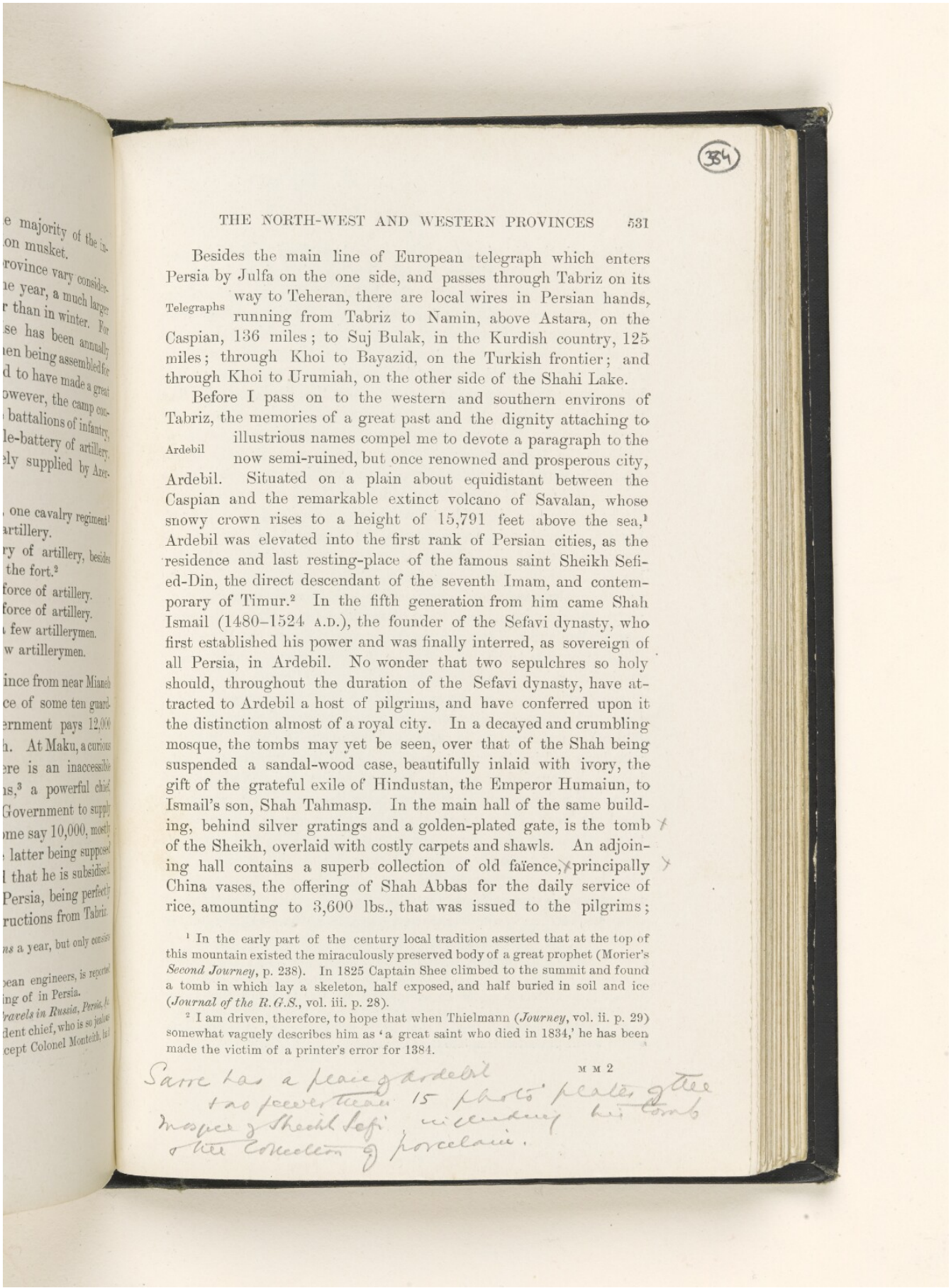




Besides the main line of European telegraph which enters Persia by Julfa on the one side, and passes through Tabriz on its way to Teheran, there are local wires in Persian hands, running from Tabriz to Namin, above Astara, on the Caspian, 136 miles; to Suj Bulak, in the Kurdish country, 125 miles; through Khoi to Bayazid, on the Turkish frontier; and through Khoi to Urumiah, on the other side of the Shahi Lake.

Telegraphs

Before I pass on to the western and southern environs of Tabriz, the memories of a great past and the dignity attaching to illustrious names compel me to devote a paragraph to the now semi-ruined, but once renowned and prosperous city, Ardebil. Situated on a plain about equidistant between the Caspian and the remarkable extinct volcano of Savalan, whose snowy crown rises to a height of 15,791 feet above the sea,[1] Ardebil was elevated into the first rank of Persian cities, as the residence and last resting-place of the famous saint Sheikh Sefi-ed-Din, the direct descendant of the seventh Imam, and contemporary of Timur.[2] In the fifth generation from him came Shah Ismail (1480–1524 A.D.), the founder of the Sefavi dynasty, who first established his power and was finally interred, as sovereign of all Persia, in Ardebil. No wonder that two sepulchres so holy should, throughout the duration of the Sefavi dynasty, have attracted to Ardebil a host of pilgrims, and have conferred upon it the distinction almost of a royal city. In a decayed and crumbling mosque, the tombs may yet be seen, over that of the Shah being suspended a sandal-wood case, beautifully inlaid with ivory, the gift of the grateful exile of Hindustan, the Emperor Humaiun, to Ismail's son, Shah Tahmasp. In the main hall of the same building, behind silver gratings and a golden-plated gate, is the tomb of the Sheikh, overlaid with costly carpets and shawls. An adjoining hall contains a superb collection of old faïence, principally China vases, the offering of Shah Abbas for the daily service of rice, amounting to 3,600 lbs., that was issued to the pilgrims;

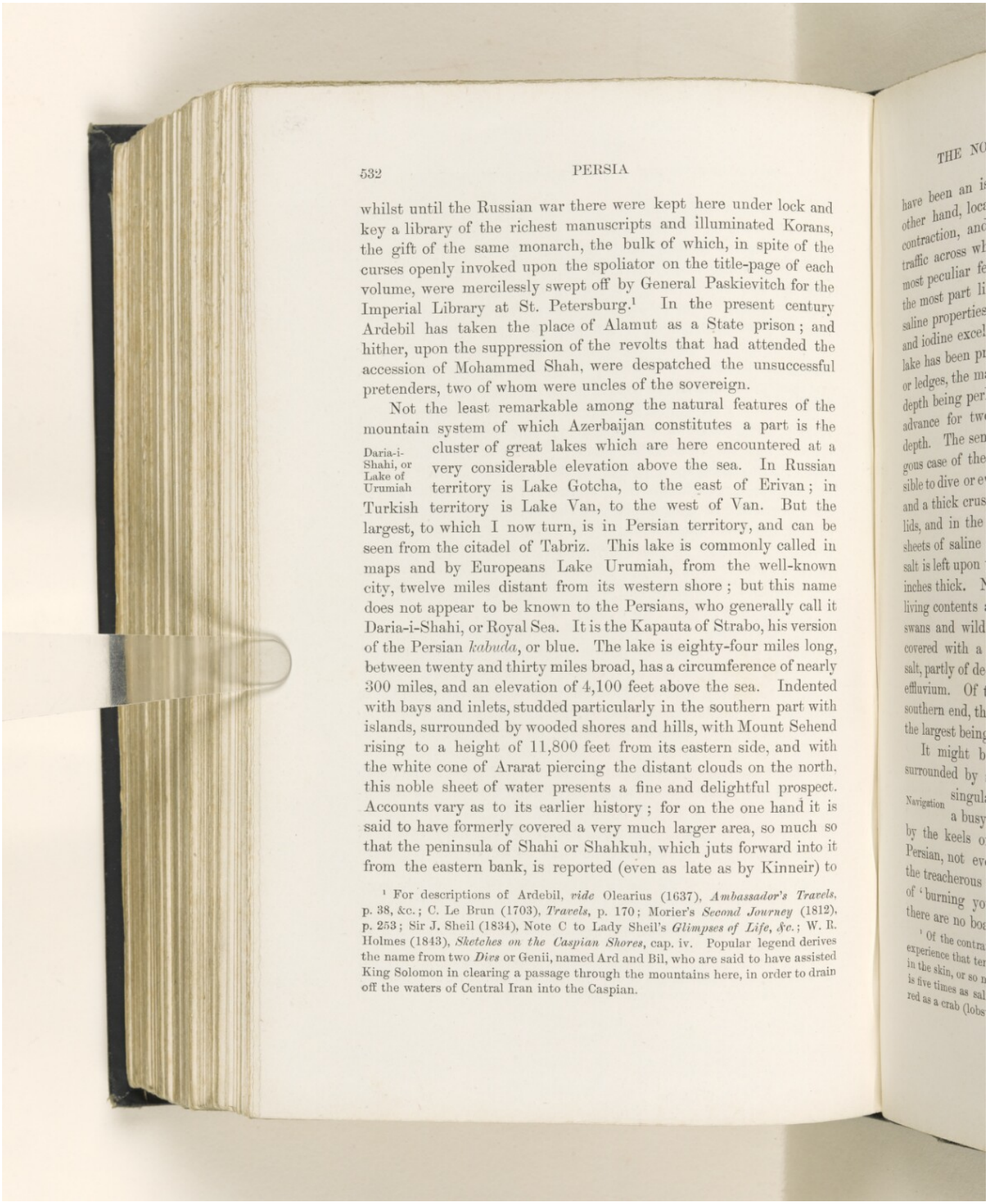
Ardebil

[1] In the early part of the century local tradition asserted that at the top of this mountain existed the miraculously preserved body of a great prophet (Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 238). In 1825 Captain Shee climbed to the summit and found a tomb in which lay a skeleton, half exposed, and half buried in soil and ice (*Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. iii. p. 28).

[2] I am driven, therefore, to hope that when Thielmann (*Journey*, vol. ii. p. 29) somewhat vaguely describes him as 'a great saint who died in 1834,' he has been made the victim of a printer's error for 1384.



Sarre has a plan of Ardebil
two pages with 15 photos: plate of the
mosque & Sheikh Safi including his tomb
& the Collection of porcelain.





whilst until the Russian war there were kept here under lock and key a library of the richest manuscripts and illuminated Korans, the gift of the same monarch, the bulk of which, in spite of the curses openly invoked upon the spoliator on the title-page of each volume, were mercilessly swept off by General Paskievitch for the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg.[1] In the present century Ardebil has taken the place of Alamut as a State prison; and hither, upon the suppression of the revolts that had attended the accession of Mohammed Shah, were despatched the unsuccessful pretenders, two of whom were uncles of the sovereign.

Daria-i-Shahi, or Lake of Urumiah

Not the least remarkable among the natural features of the mountain system of which Azerbaijan constitutes a part is the cluster of great lakes which are here encountered at a very considerable elevation above the sea. In Russian territory is Lake Gotcha, to the east of Erivan; in Turkish territory is Lake Van, to the west of Van. But the largest, to which I now turn, is in Persian territory, and can be seen from the citadel of Tabriz. This lake is commonly called in maps and by Europeans Lake Urumiah, from the well-known city, twelve miles distant from its western shore; but this name does not appear to be known to the Persians, who generally call it Daria-i-Shahi, or Royal Sea. It is the Kapauta of Strabo, his version of the Persian *kabuda*, or blue. The lake is eighty-four miles long, between twenty and thirty miles broad, has a circumference of nearly 300 miles, and an elevation of 4,100 feet above the sea. Indented with bays and inlets, studded particularly in the southern part with islands, surrounded by wooded shores and hills, with Mount Sehend rising to a height of 11,800 feet from its eastern side, and with the white cone of Ararat piercing the distant clouds on the north, this noble sheet of water presents a fine and delightful prospect. Accounts vary as to its earlier history; for on the one hand it is said to have formerly covered a very much larger area, so much so that the peninsula of Shahi or Shahkuh, which juts forward into it from the eastern bank, is reported (even as late as by Kinneir) to

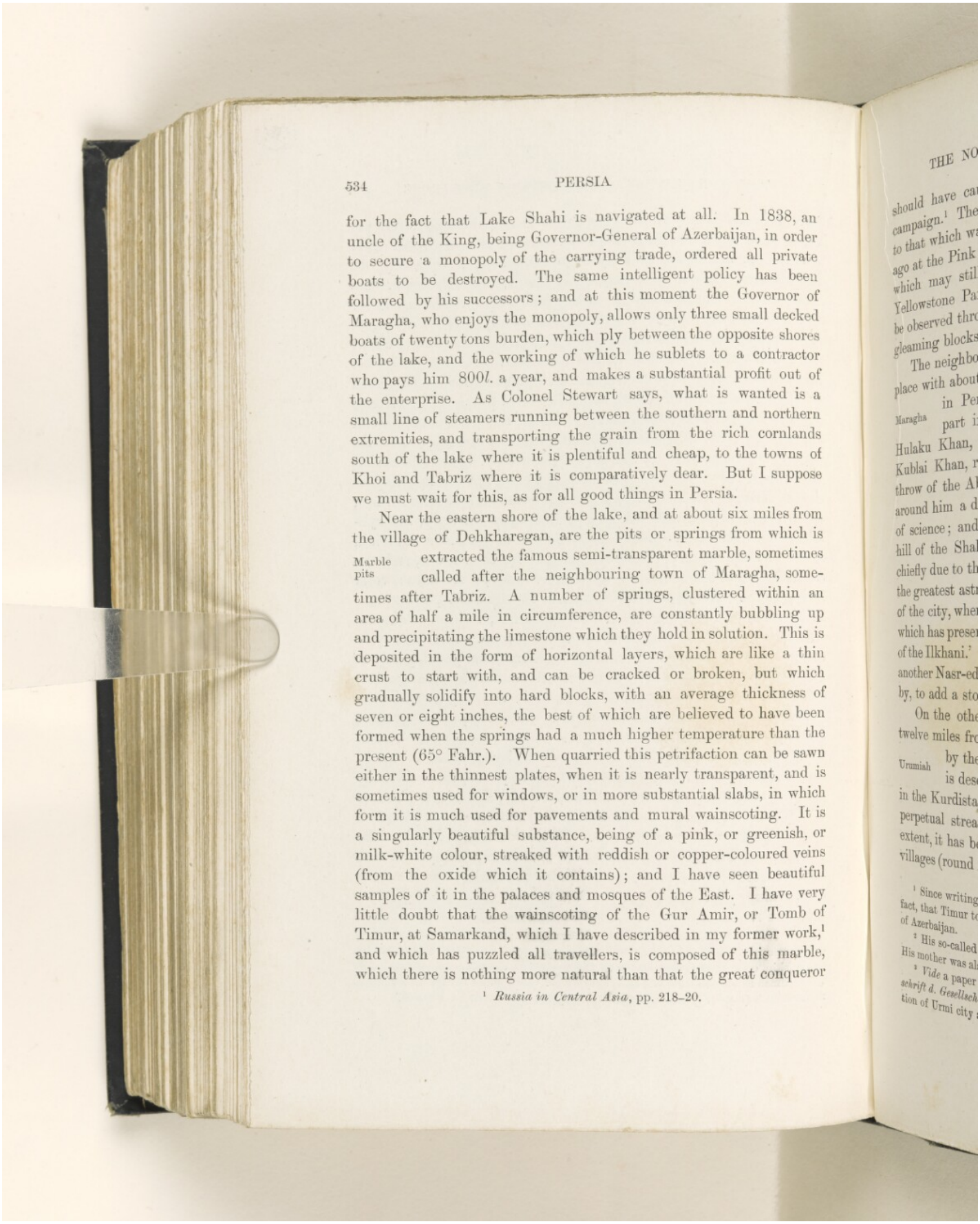
[1] For descriptions of Ardebil, *vide* Olearius (1637), *Ambassador's Travels*, p. 38, &c.; C. Le Brun (1703), *Travels*, p. 170; Morier's *Second Journey* (1812), p. 253; Sir J. Sheil (1834), Note C to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life, &c.*; W. R. Holmes (1843), *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, cap. iv. Popular legend derives the name from two *Divs* or Genii, named Ard and Bil, who are said to have assisted King Solomon in clearing a passage through the mountains here, in order to drain off the waters of Central Iran into the Caspian.

have been an island twenty-five miles in circumference; on the other hand, local tradition is in favour of expansion, rather than contraction, and there is alleged to have been a causeway for traffic across what is now the bed of the lake to Urumiah. Its most peculiar features are its great shallowness, rendering it for the most part little more than a flooded swamp, and its abnormal saline properties, which in salt (of which it contains 22 per cent.) and iodine excel even those of the Dead Sea. The bottom of the lake has been proved by soundings to consist of a series of terraces or ledges, the maximum depth being forty-five feet, and the average depth being perhaps fifteen or sixteen feet, though the bather can advance for two miles from the edge without getting out of his depth. The sensations of the latter, if I may judge by the analogous case of the Dead Sea, are not to be envied;[1] for it is impossible to dive or even swim, the limbs being thrown up to the surface, and a thick crust of salt being deposited upon the body, the eyelids, and in the hair. When the wind blows on Lake Urumiah, sheets of saline foam are seen scudding along the surface, and the salt is left upon the shore in a solid efflorescence, sometimes several inches thick. No fish or molluscs live in the waters, whose sole living contents are a species of small jelly-fish, which sustain the swans and wild fowl that are occasionally seen. The banks are covered with a thick and treacherous slime, composed partly of salt, partly of decomposed vegetable matter, and emitting a horrible effluvium. Of the sixty islets clustered in a group towards the southern end, three are either cultivated or used as pasture-ground, the largest being five miles in length.

Navigation

It might be imagined that so extensive a sheet of water, surrounded by such large cities and fertile plains, and said to be singularly free from storms, would have given birth to a busy and profitable navigation, and have been ploughed by the keels of numerous craft. It is not so in Persia. No Persian, not even a Turkish Persian, ever ventured a yard on to the treacherous element if he could possibly help it. The metaphor of 'burning your boats' can have no home in a country where there are no boats to burn. The instincts of lucre alone account

[1] Of the contrary opinion was Wagner, who said: 'I can affirm from personal experience that ten baths in the German Ocean do not create so much stimulus in the skin, or so much exhilaration in the nerves as the water of this lake. It is five times as salt as the sea at the Equator. You come out of its waters as red as a crab (lobster?) and, moreover, greatly invigorated and refreshed.'





for the fact that Lake Shahi is navigated at all. In 1838, an uncle of the King, being Governor-General of Azerbaijan, in order to secure a monopoly of the carrying trade, ordered all private boats to be destroyed. The same intelligent policy has been followed by his successors; and at this moment the Governor of Maragha, who enjoys the monopoly, allows only three small decked boats of twenty tons burden, which ply between the opposite shores of the lake, and the working of which he sublets to a contractor who pays him 800*l.* a year, and makes a substantial profit out of the enterprise. As Colonel Stewart says, what is wanted is a small line of steamers running between the southern and northern extremities, and transporting the grain from the rich cornlands south of the lake where it is plentiful and cheap, to the towns of Khoi and Tabriz where it is comparatively dear. But I suppose we must wait for this, as for all good things in Persia.

Near the eastern shore of the lake, and at about six miles from the village of Dehkharegan, are the pits or springs from which is extracted the famous semi-transparent marble, sometimes called after the neighbouring town of Maragha, sometimes after Tabriz. A number of springs, clustered within an area of half a mile in circumference, are constantly bubbling up and precipitating the limestone which they hold in solution. This is deposited in the form of horizontal layers, which are like a thin crust to start with, and can be cracked or broken, but which gradually solidify into hard blocks, with an average thickness of seven or eight inches, the best of which are believed to have been formed when the springs had a much higher temperature than the present (65° Fahr.). When quarried this petrifaction can be sawn either in the thinnest plates, when it is nearly transparent, and is sometimes used for windows, or in more substantial slabs, in which form it is much used for pavements and mural wainscoting. It is a singularly beautiful substance, being of a pink, or greenish, or milk-white colour, streaked with reddish or copper-coloured veins (from the oxide which it contains); and I have seen beautiful samples of it in the palaces and mosques of the East. I have very little doubt that the wainscoting of the Gur Amir, or Tomb of Timur, at Samarkand, which I have described in my former work,[1] and which has puzzled all travellers, is composed of this marble, which there is nothing more natural than that the great conqueror

Marble pits

[1] *Russia in Central Asia*, pp. 218–20.

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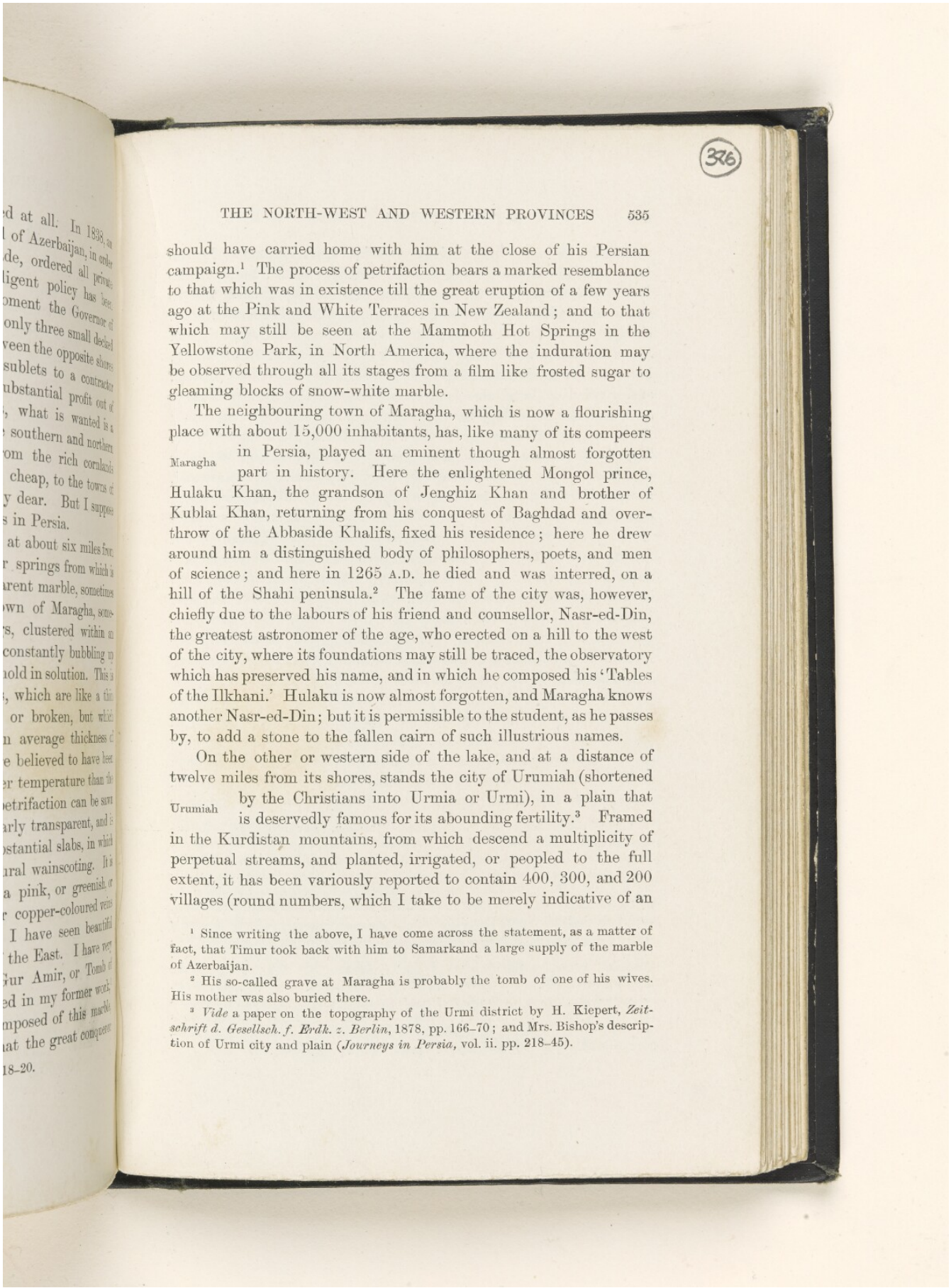



should have carried home with him at the close of his Persian campaign.[1] The process of petrifaction bears a marked resemblance to that which was in existence till the great eruption of a few years ago at the Pink and White Terraces in New Zealand; and to that which may still be seen at the Mammoth Hot Springs in the Yellowstone Park, in North America, where the induration may be observed through all its stages from a film like frosted sugar to gleaming blocks of snow-white marble.

Maragha

The neighbouring town of Maragha, which is now a flourishing place with about 15,000 inhabitants, has, like many of its compeers in Persia, played an eminent though almost forgotten part in history. Here the enlightened Mongol prince, Hulaku Khan, the grandson of Jenghiz Khan and brother of Kublai Khan, returning from his conquest of Baghdad and overthrow of the Abbaside Khalifs, fixed his residence; here he drew around him a distinguished body of philosophers, poets, and men of science; and here in 1265 A.D. he died and was interred, on a hill of the Shahi peninsula.[2] The fame of the city was, however, chiefly due to the labours of his friend and counsellor, Nasr-ed-Din, the greatest astronomer of the age, who erected on a hill to the west of the city, where its foundations may still be traced, the observatory which has preserved his name, and in which he composed his 'Tables of the Ilkhani.' Hulaku is now almost forgotten, and Maragha knows another Nasr-ed-Din; but it is permissible to the student, as he passes by, to add a stone to the fallen cairn of such illustrious names.

Urumiah

On the other or western side of the lake, and at a distance of twelve miles from its shores, stands the city of Urumiah (shortened by the Christians into Urmia or Urmi), in a plain that is deservedly famous for its abounding fertility.[3] Framed in the Kurdistan mountains, from which descend a multiplicity of perpetual streams, and planted, irrigated, or peopled to the full extent, it has been variously reported to contain 400, 300, and 200 villages (round numbers, which I take to be merely indicative of an

[1] Since writing the above, I have come across the statement, as a matter of fact, that Timur took back with him to Samarkand a large supply of the marble of Azerbaijan.

[2] His so-called grave at Maragha is probably the tomb of one of his wives. His mother was also buried there.

[3] *Vide* a paper on the topography of the Urmi district by H. Kiepert, *Zeitschrift d. Gesellsch. f. Erdk. z. Berlin*, 1878, pp. 166–70; and Mrs. Bishop's description of Urmi city and plain (*Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii. pp. 218–45).

unusually extensive population), and has been compared by the fancy or the recollection of different voyagers to the lands at the foot of the Himalayas, to the banks of the Lake of Zurich, and to the wealthy plains of Lombardy. The city, which is situated at an elevation of 4,400 feet above the sea, contains a population of between 30,000 and 40,000, the bulk of whom are Afshar Turks, but which comprises a considerable sprinkling of Nestorian, Jewish, and Armenian families. In ancient history Urumiah is famous as one of the legendary birthplaces of the scarcely less legendary Zoroaster, and also as one of the burial-places of the Three Magi. The city is enclosed within a wall, with seven gates, and an outer ditch. The only interior structure of any importance is the arsenal, a walled building in the centre of the town, the court of which contains a dozen ancient smooth-bore six-pounders and a single brass howitzer. Until recently, and while the Kurdish terror arising out of the rebellion of Sheikh Obeidullah in 1880 prevailed, a garrison of three regiments of regulars, armed with Werndl rifles, was quartered here. To Christian visitors the chief interest of the place will consist in the fact that it is the headquarters of the American, French, and English Missions to the Nestorian populations of the neighbourhood, to which interesting but somewhat intricate subject I now turn.[1]

Origin of the Nestorians

The Nestorian Christians of the Turco-Persian highlands have been variously estimated at figures between 100,000 and 200,000, the higher being in all probability the more correct calculation. Of these by far the greater number are Turkish subjects, the Nestorian population of Azerbaijan being, according to the latest report (which nearly doubles all previous

[1] As a brief bibliography of the Nestorian Question, I have compiled the following: E. Smith and H. G. Dwight, *Missionary Researches, including a Journey into Persia*, 1834; Bishop H. Southgate, *Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, &c.*, 2 vols. 1840; Eug. Boré (1839–40), four reports in *Correspondance et Mémoires*, vol. ii.; Dr. A. Grant (1840), *Account of the Nestorian Christians settled in Ooroomia*; W. F. Ainsworth (1840), *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldæa, and Armenia*, 2 vols. 1842; Rev. J. Perkins, *Eight Years' Residence in Persia among the Nestorians*, 1843; Rev. G. P. Badger (1842), *Nestorians and their Ritual*, 2 vols. 1852; Sir J. Sheil (circ. 1850), Note E to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life, &c.*; D. T. Stoddard, *Mission to Nestorians*, 1858; Rev. J. Bassett (1871–85), *The Land of the Imams*; Rev. E. L. Cutts (1876), *Christians under the Crescent in Asia*; W. G. Abbott (1880), *Report on the Nestorian Christians of Urmia*, No. 55 in Parliamentary Papers, Turkey, No. 5, 1881; Publications of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission, particularly reports by A. Riley and Rev. Canon Maclean (1884–90); Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 221 *et seq.*

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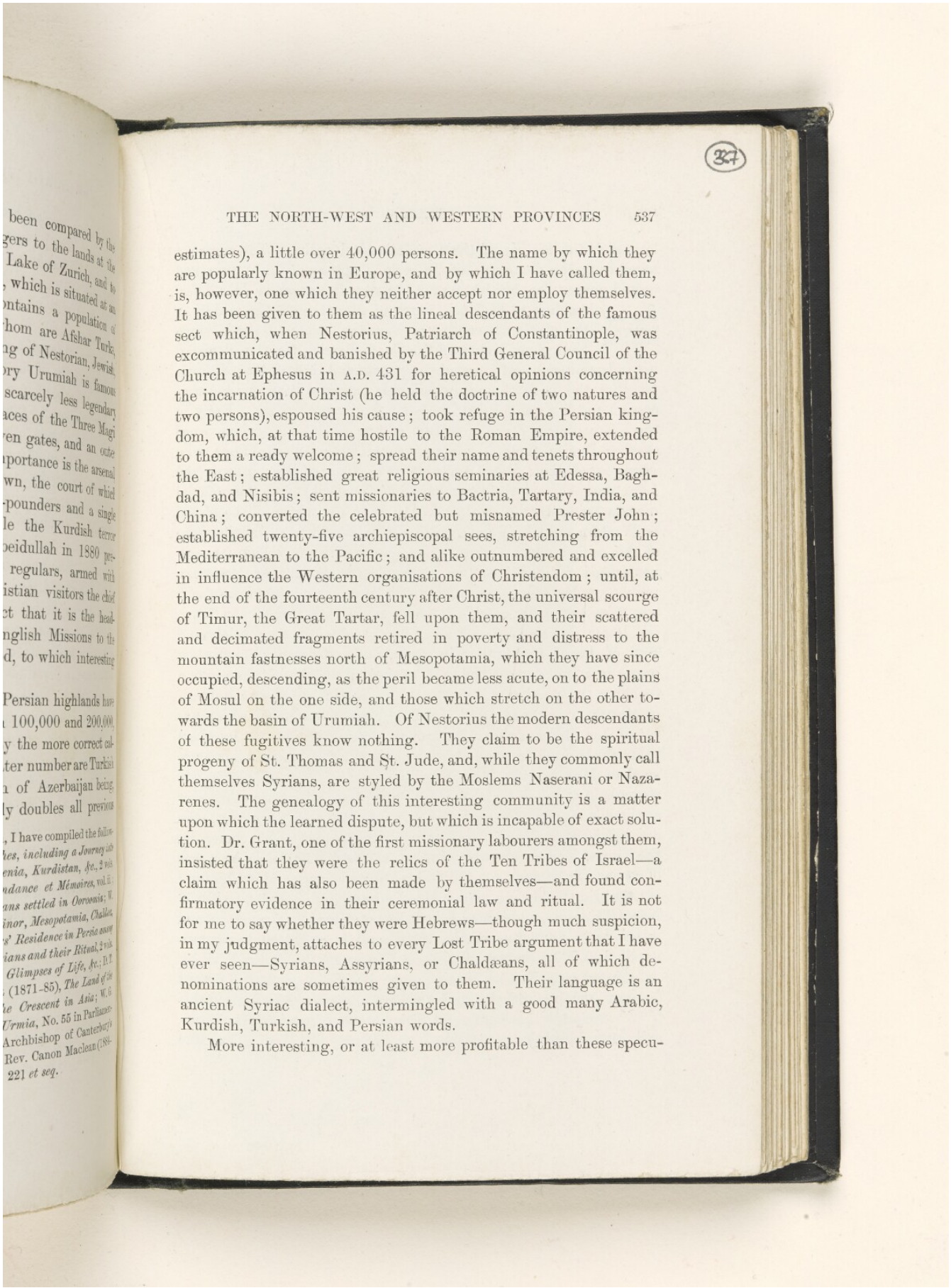



estimates), a little over 40,000 persons. The name by which they are popularly known in Europe, and by which I have called them, is, however, one which they neither accept nor employ themselves. It has been given to them as the lineal descendants of the famous sect which, when Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was excommunicated and banished by the Third General Council of the Church at Ephesus in A.D. 431 for heretical opinions concerning the incarnation of Christ (he held the doctrine of two natures and two persons), espoused his cause; took refuge in the Persian kingdom, which, at that time hostile to the Roman Empire, extended to them a ready welcome; spread their name and tenets throughout the East; established great religious seminaries at Edessa, Baghdad, and Nisibis; sent missionaries to Bactria, Tartary, India, and China; converted the celebrated but misnamed Prester John; established twenty-five archiepiscopal sees, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pacific; and alike outnumbered and excelled in influence the Western organisations of Christendom; until, at the end of the fourteenth century after Christ, the universal scourge of Timur, the Great Tartar, fell upon them, and their scattered and decimated fragments retired in poverty and distress to the mountain fastnesses north of Mesopotamia, which they have since occupied, descending, as the peril became less acute, on to the plains of Mosul on the one side, and those which stretch on the other towards the basin of Urumiah. Of Nestorius the modern descendants of these fugitives know nothing. They claim to be the spiritual progeny of St. Thomas and St. Jude, and, while they commonly call themselves Syrians, are styled by the Moslems Naserani or Nazarenes. The genealogy of this interesting community is a matter upon which the learned dispute, but which is incapable of exact solution. Dr. Grant, one of the first missionary labourers amongst them, insisted that they were the relics of the Ten Tribes of Israel—a claim which has also been made by themselves—and found confirmatory evidence in their ceremonial law and ritual. It is not for me to say whether they were Hebrews—though much suspicion, in my judgment, attaches to every Lost Tribe argument that I have ever seen—Syrians, Assyrians, or Chaldæans, all of which denominations are sometimes given to them. Their language is an ancient Syriac dialect, intermingled with a good many Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian words.

More interesting, or at least more profitable than these specu-

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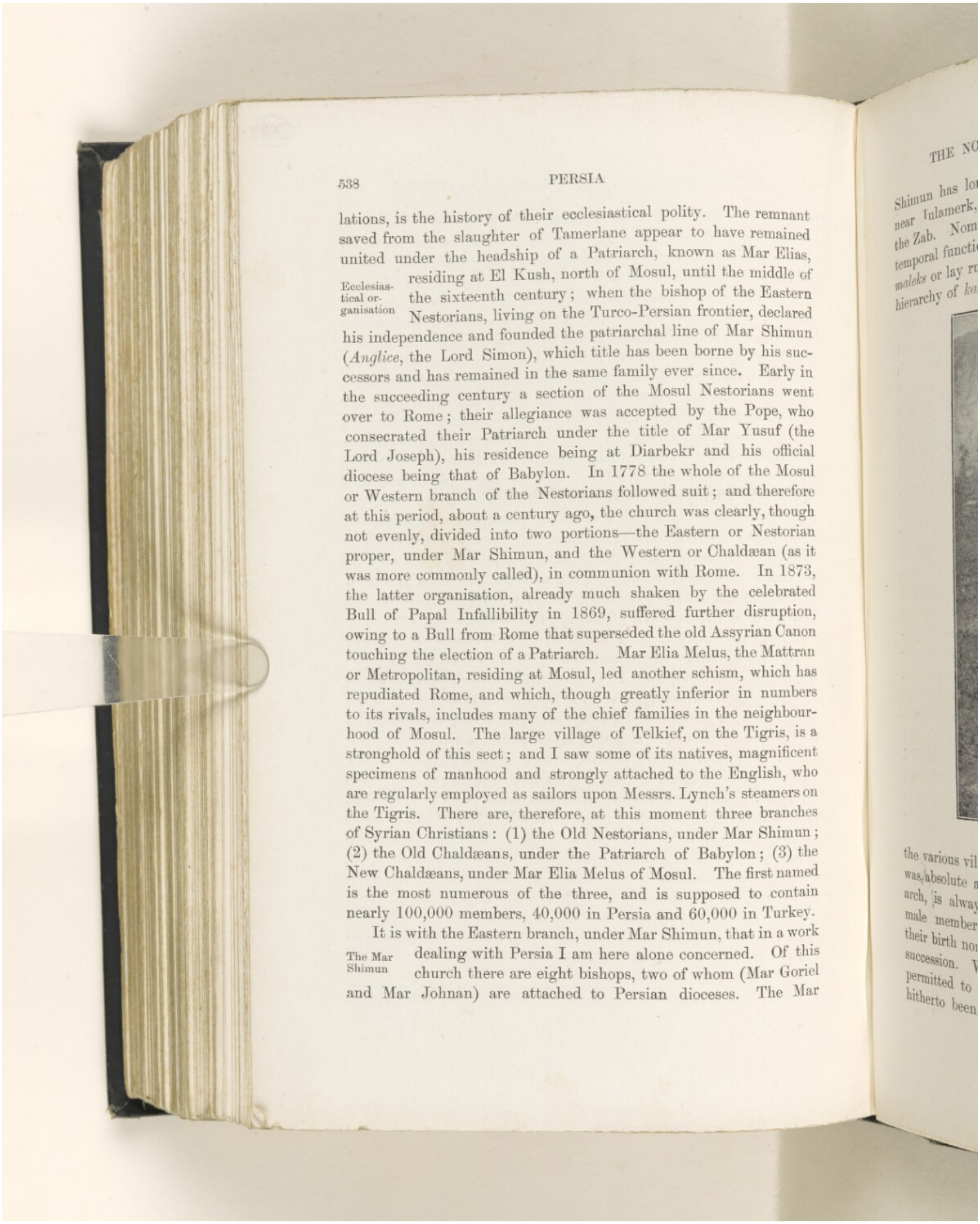




lations, is the history of their ecclesiastical polity. The remnant saved from the slaughter of Tamerlane appear to have remained united under the headship of a Patriarch, known as Mar Elias, residing at El Kush, north of Mosul, until the middle of the sixteenth century; when the bishop of the Eastern Nestorians, living on the Turco-Persian frontier, declared his independence and founded the patriarchal line of Mar Shimun (*Anglice*, the Lord Simon), which title has been borne by his successors and has remained in the same family ever since. Early in the succeeding century a section of the Mosul Nestorians went over to Rome; their allegiance was accepted by the Pope, who consecrated their Patriarch under the title of Mar Yusuf (the Lord Joseph), his residence being at Diarbekr and his official diocese being that of Babylon. In 1778 the whole of the Mosul or Western branch of the Nestorians followed suit; and therefore at this period, about a century ago, the church was clearly, though not evenly, divided into two portions—the Eastern or Nestorian proper, under Mar Shimun, and the Western or Chaldæan (as it was more commonly called), in communion with Rome. In 1873, the latter organisation, already much shaken by the celebrated Bull of Papal Infallibility in 1869, suffered further disruption, owing to a Bull from Rome that superseded the old Assyrian Canon touching the election of a Patriarch. Mar Elia Melus, the Mattran or Metropolitan, residing at Mosul, led another schism, which has repudiated Rome, and which, though greatly inferior in numbers to its rivals, includes many of the chief families in the neighbourhood of Mosul. The large village of Telkief, on the Tigris, is a stronghold of this sect; and I saw some of its natives, magnificent specimens of manhood and strongly attached to the English, who are regularly employed as sailors upon Messrs. Lynch's steamers on the Tigris. There are, therefore, at this moment three branches of Syrian Christians: (1) the Old Nestorians, under Mar Shimun; (2) the Old Chaldæans, under the Patriarch of Babylon; (3) the New Chaldæans, under Mar Elia Melus of Mosul. The first named is the most numerous of the three, and is supposed to contain nearly 100,000 members, 40,000 in Persia and 60,000 in Turkey.

Ecclesiastical organisation

It is with the Eastern branch, under Mar Shimun, that in a work dealing with Persia I am here alone concerned. Of this church there are eight bishops, two of whom (Mar Goriel and Mar Johnan) are attached to Persian dioceses. The Mar

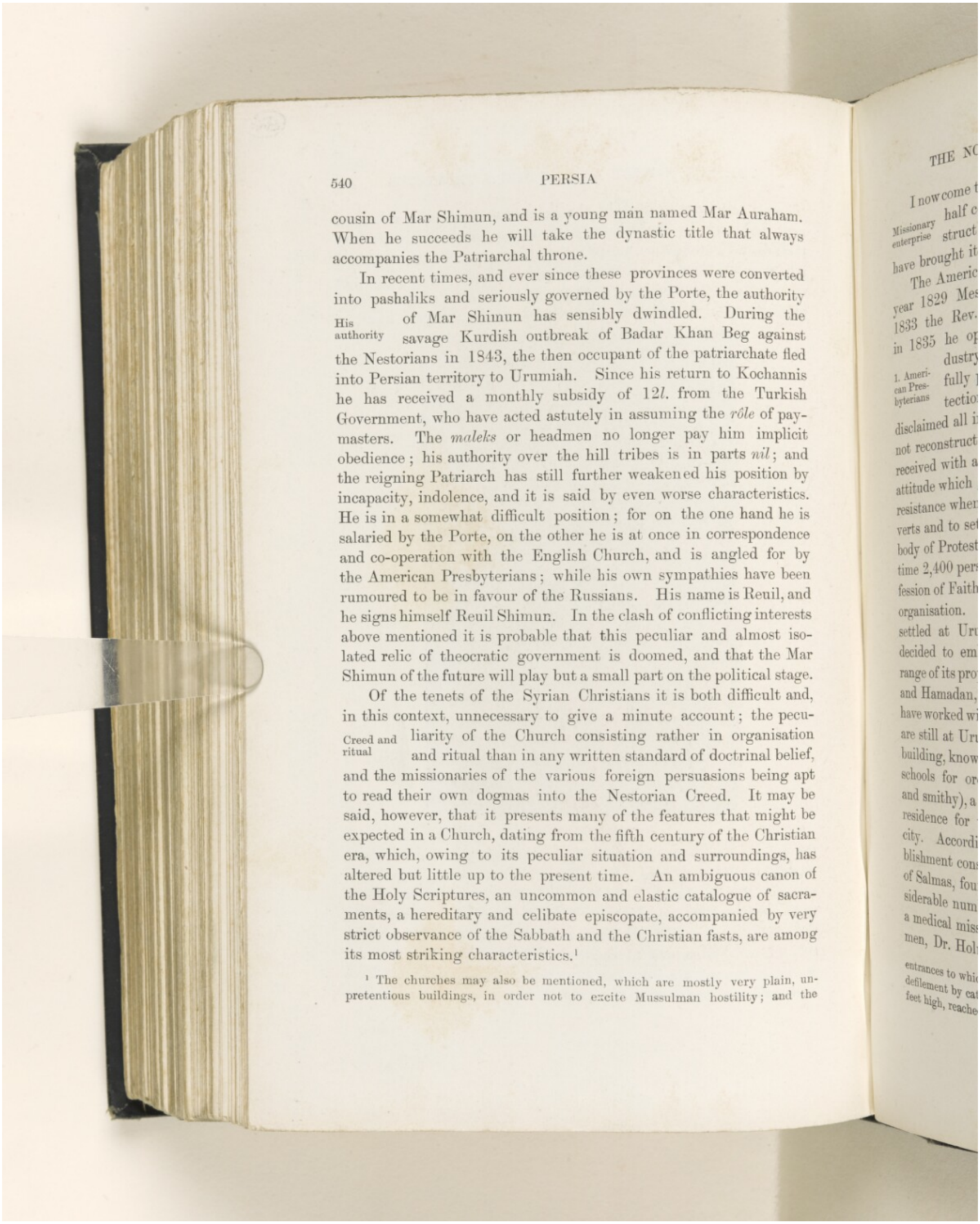
The Mar Shimun

Shimun has long resided in the mountain village of Kochannis, near Tulamerk, in Turkish territory, above the famous waters of the Zab. Nominally he unites in his own person the spiritual and temporal functions of government over his flock; he appoints the *maleks* or lay rulers of each district; he is the head of a sacerdotal hierarchy of *kashishas* and *abunas*, who are the spiritual heads of



THE MAR SHIMUN

the various villages and tribes; and in times past his authority was absolute and unique. The Mar Shimun, or reigning Patriarch, is always chosen from the same family, a number of the male members of which, who have neither eaten meat from their birth nor married, are kept as a school of candidates to the succession. When one of their number is chosen, the rest are permitted to relapse into the enjoyments from which they have hitherto been excluded. The present Patriarch-Designate is the





cousin of Mar Shimun, and is a young man named Mar Auraham. When he succeeds he will take the dynastic title that always accompanies the Patriarchal throne.

In recent times, and ever since these provinces were converted into pashaliks and seriously governed by the Porte, the authority of Mar Shimun has sensibly dwindled. During the savage Kurdish outbreak of Badar Khan Beg against the Nestorians in 1843, the then occupant of the patriarchate fled into Persian territory to Urumiah. Since his return to Kochannis he has received a monthly subsidy of 12*l.* from the Turkish Government, who have acted astutely in assuming the *rôle* of pay-masters. The *maleks* or headmen no longer pay him implicit obedience; his authority over the hill tribes is in parts *nil*; and the reigning Patriarch has still further weakened his position by incapacity, indolence, and it is said by even worse characteristics. He is in a somewhat difficult position; for on the one hand he is salaried by the Porte, on the other he is at once in correspondence and co-operation with the English Church, and is angled for by the American Presbyterians; while his own sympathies have been rumoured to be in favour of the Russians. His name is Reuil, and he signs himself Reuil Shimun. In the clash of conflicting interests above mentioned it is probable that this peculiar and almost isolated relic of theocratic government is doomed, and that the Mar Shimun of the future will play but a small part on the political stage.

His authority

Of the tenets of the Syrian Christians it is both difficult and, in this context, unnecessary to give a minute account; the peculiarity of the Church consisting rather in organisation and ritual than in any written standard of doctrinal belief, and the missionaries of the various foreign persuasions being apt to read their own dogmas into the Nestorian Creed. It may be said, however, that it presents many of the features that might be expected in a Church, dating from the fifth century of the Christian era, which, owing to its peculiar situation and surroundings, has altered but little up to the present time. An ambiguous canon of the Holy Scriptures, an uncommon and elastic catalogue of sacraments, a hereditary and celibate episcopate, accompanied by very strict observance of the Sabbath and the Christian fasts, are among its most striking characteristics.[1]

Creed and ritual

[1] The churches may also be mentioned, which are mostly very plain, unpretentious buildings, in order not to excite Mussulman hostility; and the

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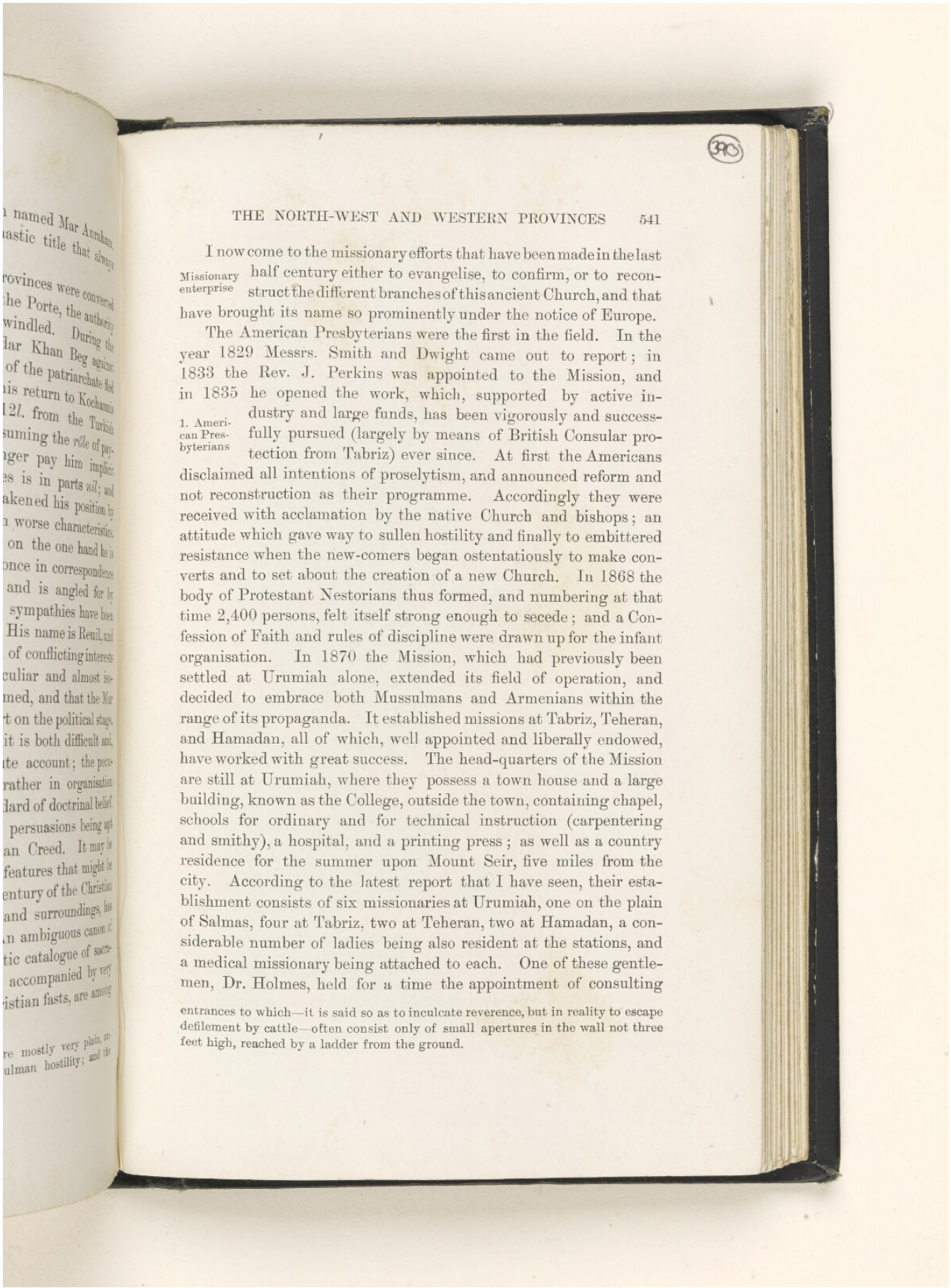



Missionary enterprise

I now come to the missionary efforts that have been made in the last half century either to evangelise, to confirm, or to reconstruct the different branches of this ancient Church, and that have brought its name so prominently under the notice of Europe.

1. American Presbyterians

The American Presbyterians were the first in the field. In the year 1829 Messrs. Smith and Dwight came out to report; in 1833 the Rev. J. Perkins was appointed to the Mission, and in 1835 he opened the work, which, supported by active industry and large funds, has been vigorously and successfully pursued (largely by means of British Consular protection from Tabriz) ever since. At first the Americans disclaimed all intentions of proselytism, and announced reform and not reconstruction as their programme. Accordingly they were received with acclamation by the native Church and bishops; an attitude which gave way to sullen hostility and finally to embittered resistance when the new-comers began ostentatiously to make converts and to set about the creation of a new Church. In 1868 the body of Protestant Nestorians thus formed, and numbering at that time 2,400 persons, felt itself strong enough to secede; and a Confession of Faith and rules of discipline were drawn up for the infant organisation. In 1870 the Mission, which had previously been settled at Urumiah alone, extended its field of operation, and decided to embrace both Mussulmans and Armenians within the range of its propaganda. It established missions at Tabriz, Teheran, and Hamadan, all of which, well appointed and liberally endowed, have worked with great success. The head-quarters of the Mission are still at Urumiah, where they possess a town house and a large building, known as the College, outside the town, containing chapel, schools for ordinary and for technical instruction (carpentering and smithy), a hospital, and a printing press; as well as a country residence for the summer upon Mount Seir, five miles from the city. According to the latest report that I have seen, their establishment consists of six missionaries at Urumiah, one on the plain of Salmas, four at Tabriz, two at Teheran, two at Hamadan, a considerable number of ladies being also resident at the stations, and a medical missionary being attached to each. One of these gentlemen, Dr. Holmes, held for a time the appointment of consulting

entrances to which—it is said so as to inculcate reverence, but in reality to escape defilement by cattle—often consist only of small apertures in the wall not three feet high, reached by a ladder from the ground.

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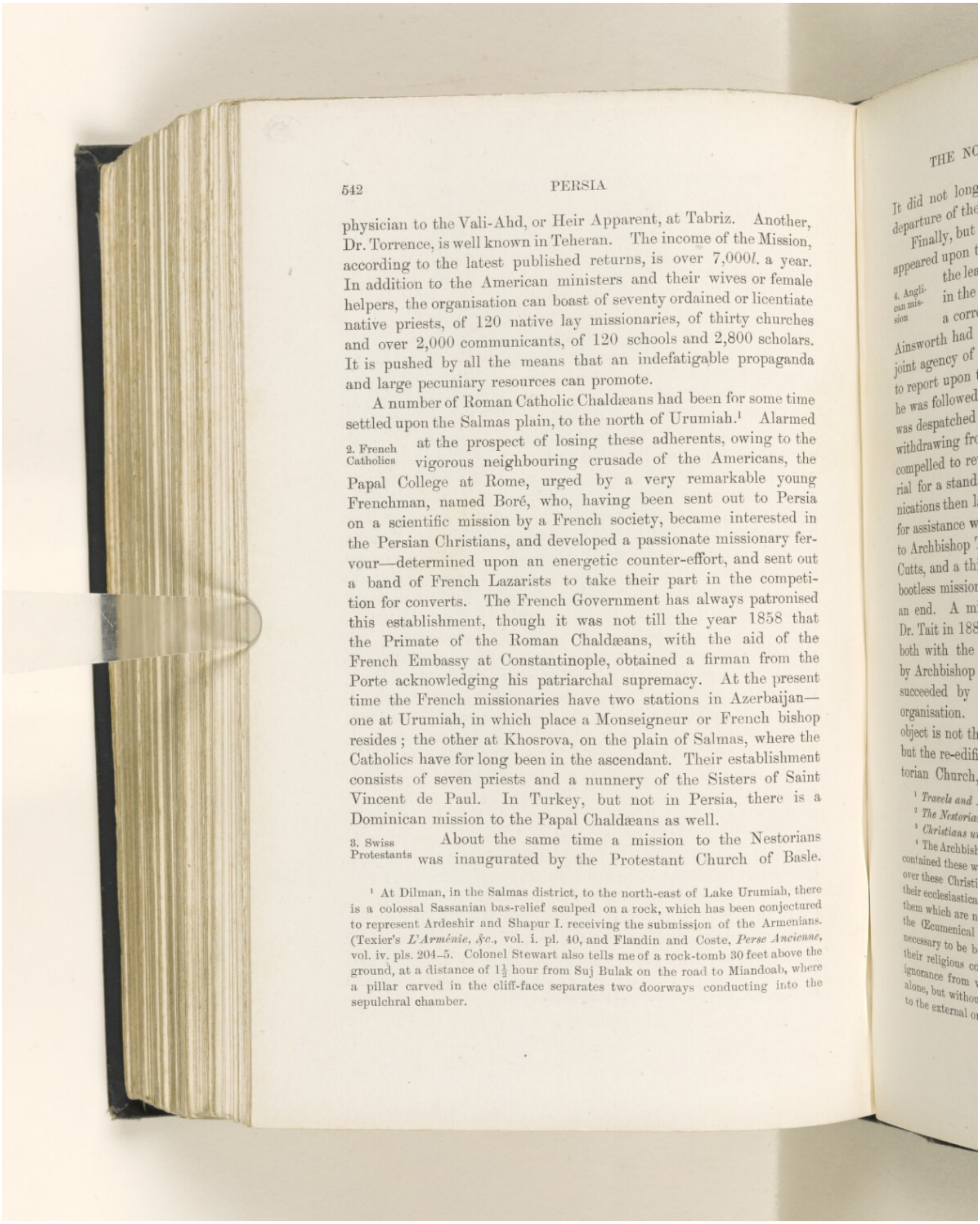



physician to the Vali-Ahd, or Heir Apparent, at Tabriz. Another, Dr. Torrence, is well known in Teheran. The income of the Mission, according to the latest published returns, is over 7,000*l.* a year. In addition to the American ministers and their wives or female helpers, the organisation can boast of seventy ordained or licentiate native priests, of 120 native lay missionaries, of thirty churches and over 2,000 communicants, of 120 schools and 2,800 scholars. It is pushed by all the means that an indefatigable propaganda and large pecuniary resources can promote.

A number of Roman Catholic Chaldæans had been for some time settled upon the Salmas plain, to the north of Urumiah.[1] Alarmed at the prospect of losing these adherents, owing to the vigorous neighbouring crusade of the Americans, the Papal College at Rome, urged by a very remarkable young Frenchman, named Boré, who, having been sent out to Persia on a scientific mission by a French society, became interested in the Persian Christians, and developed a passionate missionary fervour—determined upon an energetic counter-effort, and sent out a band of French Lazarists to take their part in the competition for converts. The French Government has always patronised this establishment, though it was not till the year 1858 that the Primate of the Roman Chaldæans, with the aid of the French Embassy at Constantinople, obtained a firman from the Porte acknowledging his patriarchal supremacy. At the present time the French missionaries have two stations in Azerbaijan—one at Urumiah, in which place a Monseigneur or French bishop resides; the other at Khosrova, on the plain of Salmas, where the Catholics have for long been in the ascendant. Their establishment consists of seven priests and a nunnery of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul. In Turkey, but not in Persia, there is a Dominican mission to the Papal Chaldæans as well.

2. French Catholics

About the same time a mission to the Nestorians was inaugurated by the Protestant Church of Basle.

3. Swiss Protestants

[1] At Dilman, in the Salmas district, to the north-east of Lake Urumiah, there is a colossal Sassanian bas-relief sculped on a rock, which has been conjectured to represent Ardeshir and Shapur I. receiving the submission of the Armenians. (Texier's *L'Arménie, &c.*, vol. i. pl. 40, and Flandin and Coste, *Perse Ancienne*, vol. iv. pls. 204–5. Colonel Stewart also tells me of a rock-tomb 30 feet above the ground, at a distance of 1½ hour from Suj Bulak on the road to Miandoab, where a pillar carved in the cliff-face separates two doorways conducting into the sepulchral chamber.

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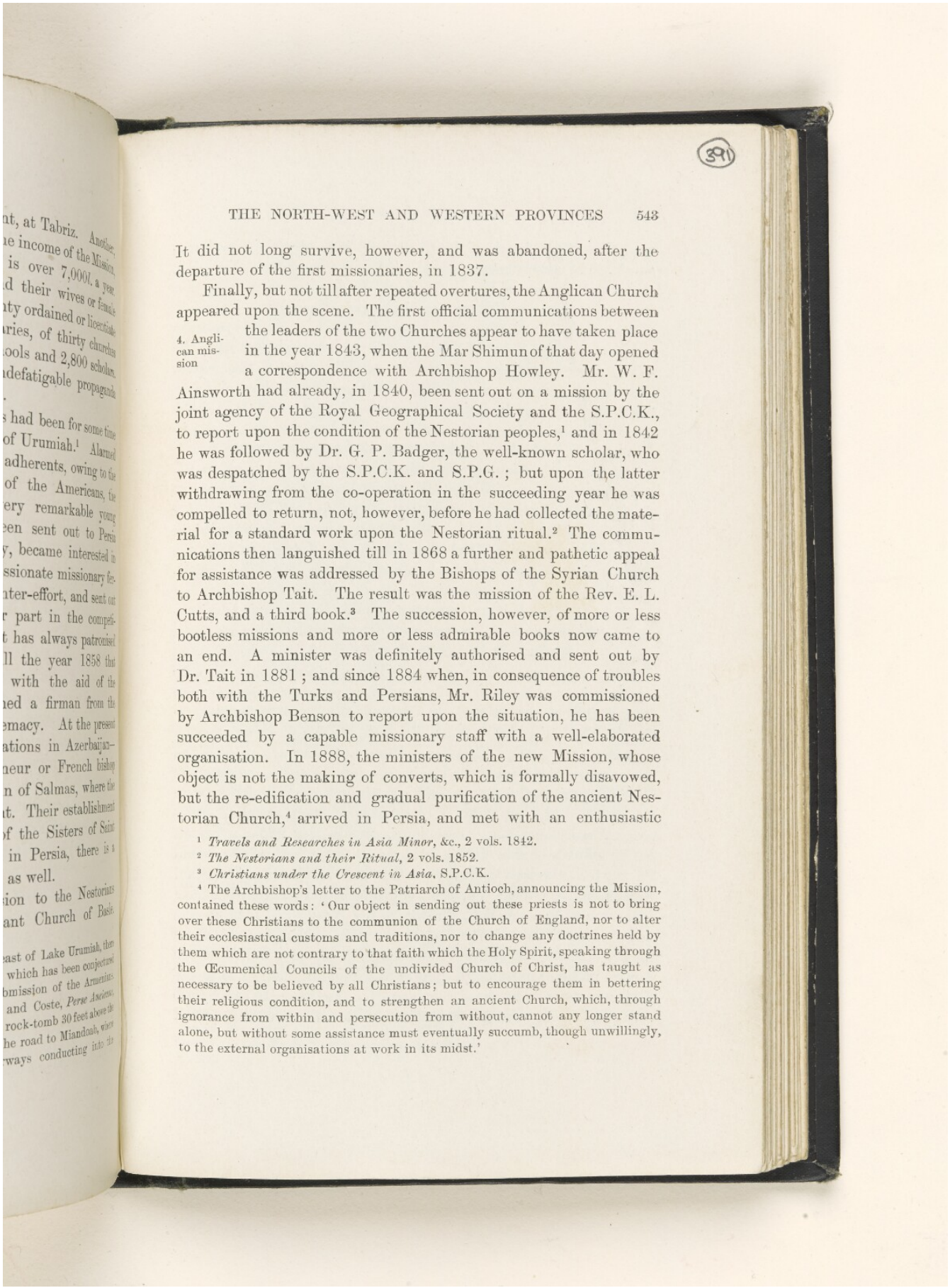



It did not long survive, however, and was abandoned, after the departure of the first missionaries, in 1837.

4. Anglican mission

Finally, but not till after repeated overtures, the Anglican Church appeared upon the scene. The first official communications between the leaders of the two Churches appear to have taken place in the year 1843, when the Mar Shimun of that day opened a correspondence with Archbishop Howley. Mr. W. F. Ainsworth had already, in 1840, been sent out on a mission by the joint agency of the Royal Geographical Society and the S.P.C.K., to report upon the condition of the Nestorian peoples,[1] and in 1842 he was followed by Dr. G. P. Badger, the well-known scholar, who was despatched by the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G.; but upon the latter withdrawing from the co-operation in the succeeding year he was compelled to return, not, however, before he had collected the material for a standard work upon the Nestorian ritual.[2] The communications then languished till in 1868 a further and pathetic appeal for assistance was addressed by the Bishops of the Syrian Church to Archbishop Tait. The result was the mission of the Rev. E. L. Cutts, and a third book.[3] The succession, however, of more or less bootless missions and more or less admirable books now came to an end. A minister was definitely authorised and sent out by Dr. Tait in 1881; and since 1884 when, in consequence of troubles both with the Turks and Persians, Mr. Riley was commissioned by Archbishop Benson to report upon the situation, he has been succeeded by a capable missionary staff with a well-elaborated organisation. In 1888, the ministers of the new Mission, whose object is not the making of converts, which is formally disavowed, but the re-edification and gradual purification of the ancient Nestorian Church,[4] arrived in Persia, and met with an enthusiastic

[1] *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor*, &c., 2 vols. 1842.

[2] *The Nestorians and their Ritual*, 2 vols. 1852.

[3] *Christians under the Crescent in Asia*, S.P.C.K.

[4] The Archbishop's letter to the Patriarch of Antioch, announcing the Mission, contained these words: 'Our object in sending out these priests is not to bring over these Christians to the communion of the Church of England, nor to alter their ecclesiastical customs and traditions, nor to change any doctrines held by them which are not contrary to that faith which the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Œcumenical Councils of the undivided Church of Christ, has taught as necessary to be believed by all Christians; but to encourage them in bettering their religious condition, and to strengthen an ancient Church, which, through ignorance from within and persecution from without, cannot any longer stand alone, but without some assistance must eventually succumb, though unwillingly, to the external organisations at work in its midst.'

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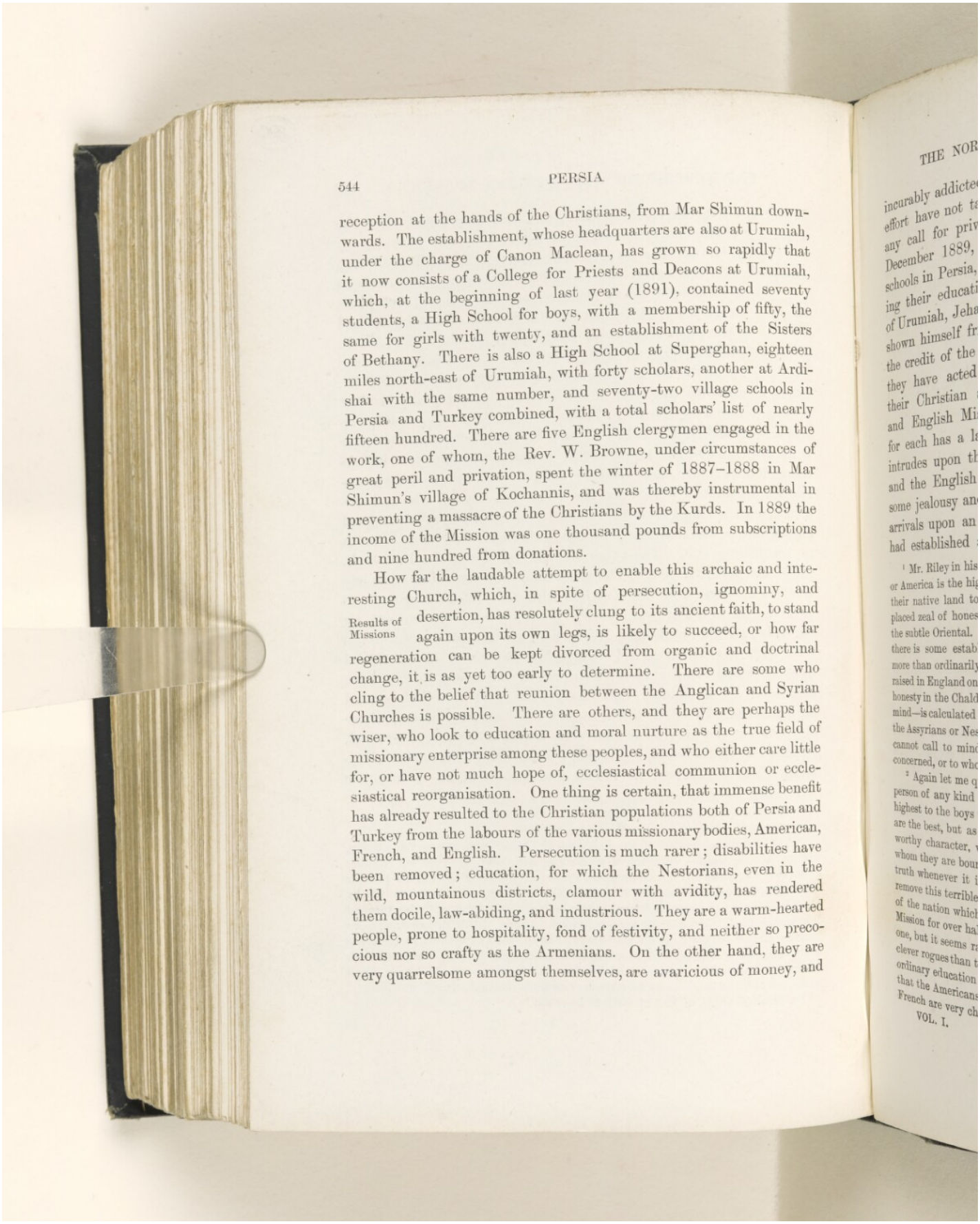



reception at the hands of the Christians, from Mar Shimun downwards. The establishment, whose headquarters are also at Urumiah, under the charge of Canon Maclean, has grown so rapidly that it now consists of a College for Priests and Deacons at Urumiah, which, at the beginning of last year (1891), contained seventy students, a High School for boys, with a membership of fifty, the same for girls with twenty, and an establishment of the Sisters of Bethany. There is also a High School at Superghan, eighteen miles north-east of Urumiah, with forty scholars, another at Ardishai with the same number, and seventy-two village schools in Persia and Turkey combined, with a total scholars' list of nearly fifteen hundred. There are five English clergymen engaged in the work, one of whom, the Rev. W. Browne, under circumstances of great peril and privation, spent the winter of 1887–1888 in Mar Shimun's village of Kochannis, and was thereby instrumental in preventing a massacre of the Christians by the Kurds. In 1889 the income of the Mission was one thousand pounds from subscriptions and nine hundred from donations.

Results of Missions

How far the laudable attempt to enable this archaic and interesting Church, which, in spite of persecution, ignominy, and desertion, has resolutely clung to its ancient faith, to stand again upon its own legs, is likely to succeed, or how far regeneration can be kept divorced from organic and doctrinal change, it is as yet too early to determine. There are some who cling to the belief that reunion between the Anglican and Syrian Churches is possible. There are others, and they are perhaps the wiser, who look to education and moral nurture as the true field of missionary enterprise among these peoples, and who either care little for, or have not much hope of, ecclesiastical communion or ecclesiastical reorganisation. One thing is certain, that immense benefit has already resulted to the Christian populations both of Persia and Turkey from the labours of the various missionary bodies, American, French, and English. Persecution is much rarer; disabilities have been removed; education, for which the Nestorians, even in the wild, mountainous districts, clamour with avidity, has rendered them docile, law-abiding, and industrious. They are a warm-hearted people, prone to hospitality, fond of festivity, and neither so precocious nor so crafty as the Armenians. On the other hand, they are very quarrelsome amongst themselves, are avaricious of money, and



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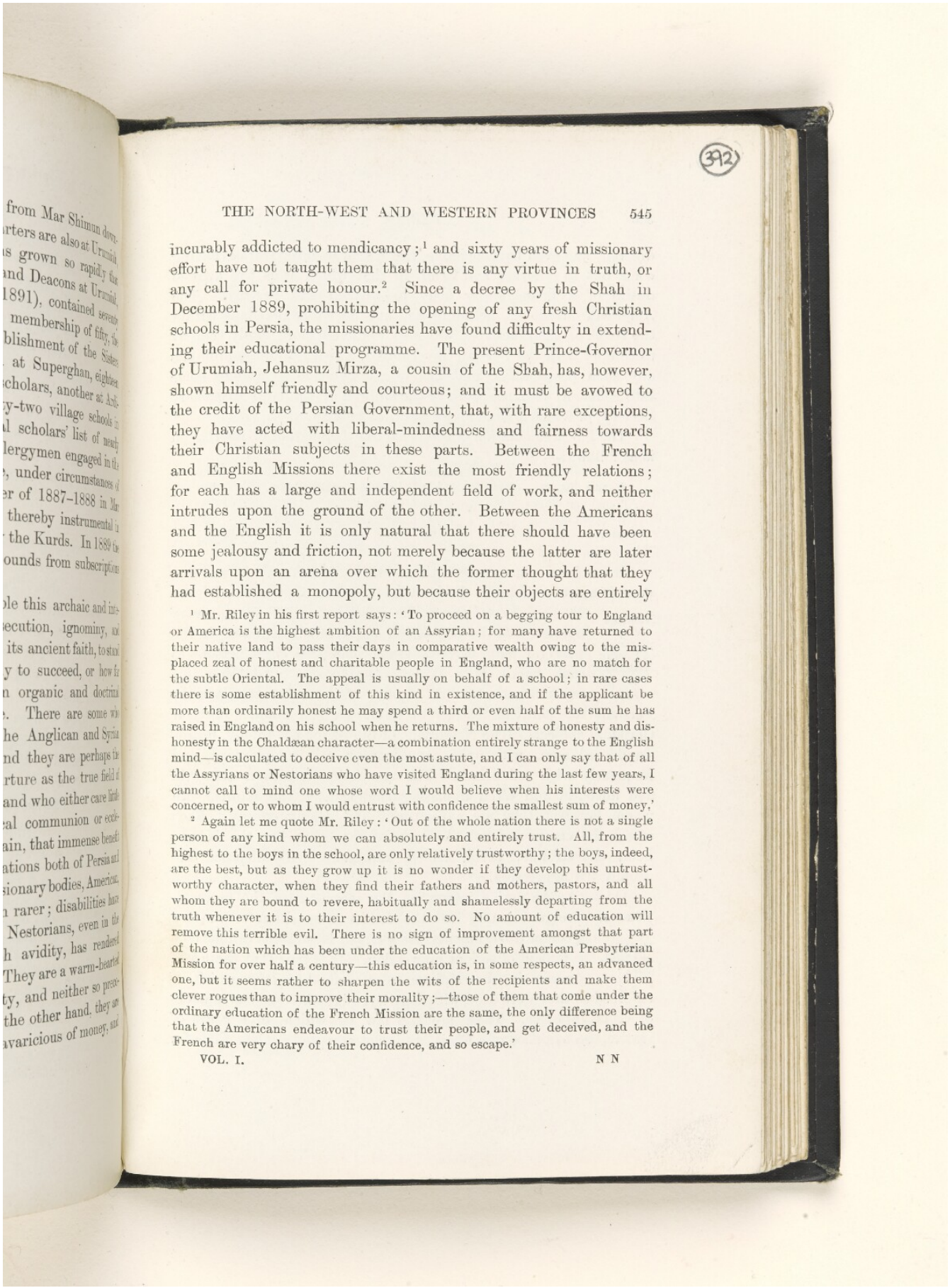



incurably addicted to mendicancy;[1] and sixty years of missionary effort have not taught them that there is any virtue in truth, or any call for private honour.[2] Since a decree by the Shah in December 1889, prohibiting the opening of any fresh Christian schools in Persia, the missionaries have found difficulty in extending their educational programme. The present Prince-Governor of Urumiah, Jehansuz Mirza, a cousin of the Shah, has, however, shown himself friendly and courteous; and it must be avowed to the credit of the Persian Government, that, with rare exceptions, they have acted with liberal-mindedness and fairness towards their Christian subjects in these parts. Between the French and English Missions there exist the most friendly relations; for each has a large and independent field of work, and neither intrudes upon the ground of the other. Between the Americans and the English it is only natural that there should have been some jealousy and friction, not merely because the latter are later arrivals upon an arena over which the former thought that they had established a monopoly, but because their objects are entirely

[1] Mr. Riley in his first report says: 'To proceed on a begging tour to England or America is the highest ambition of an Assyrian; for many have returned to their native land to pass their days in comparative wealth owing to the misplaced zeal of honest and charitable people in England, who are no match for the subtle Oriental. The appeal is usually on behalf of a school; in rare cases there is some establishment of this kind in existence, and if the applicant be more than ordinarily honest he may spend a third or even half of the sum he has raised in England on his school when he returns. The mixture of honesty and dishonesty in the Chaldæan character—a combination entirely strange to the English mind—is calculated to deceive even the most astute, and I can only say that of all the Assyrians or Nestorians who have visited England during the last few years, I cannot call to mind one whose word I would believe when his interests were concerned, or to whom I would entrust with confidence the smallest sum of money.'

[2] Again let me quote Mr. Riley: 'Out of the whole nation there is not a single person of any kind whom we can absolutely and entirely trust. All, from the highest to the boys in the school, are only relatively trustworthy; the boys, indeed, are the best, but as they grow up it is no wonder if they develop this untrustworthy character, when they find their fathers and mothers, pastors, and all whom they are bound to revere, habitually and shamelessly departing from the truth whenever it is to their interest to do so. No amount of education will remove this terrible evil. There is no sign of improvement amongst that part of the nation which has been under the education of the American Presbyterian Mission for over half a century—this education is, in some respects, an advanced one, but it seems rather to sharpen the wits of the recipients and make them clever rogues than to improve their morality;—those of them that come under the ordinary education of the French Mission are the same, the only difference being that the Americans endeavour to trust their people, and get deceived, and the French are very chary of their confidence, and so escape.'



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different and even irreconcilable, the Anglican missionaries having come out to renovate and build up that which it is the avowed desire of a proselytising body to weaken and destroy. The American Missions, including, as they do, Mohammedans within the scope of their activity, are also rendered more likely thereby to conflict with the Persian Government, which resolutely prohibits any such propaganda, and has in consequence sometimes come into collision with the work of the Church of England Missionary Society, of which I shall speak later, at Isfahan.

The latest calculation of the Nestorian population of Azerbaijan is as follows:—

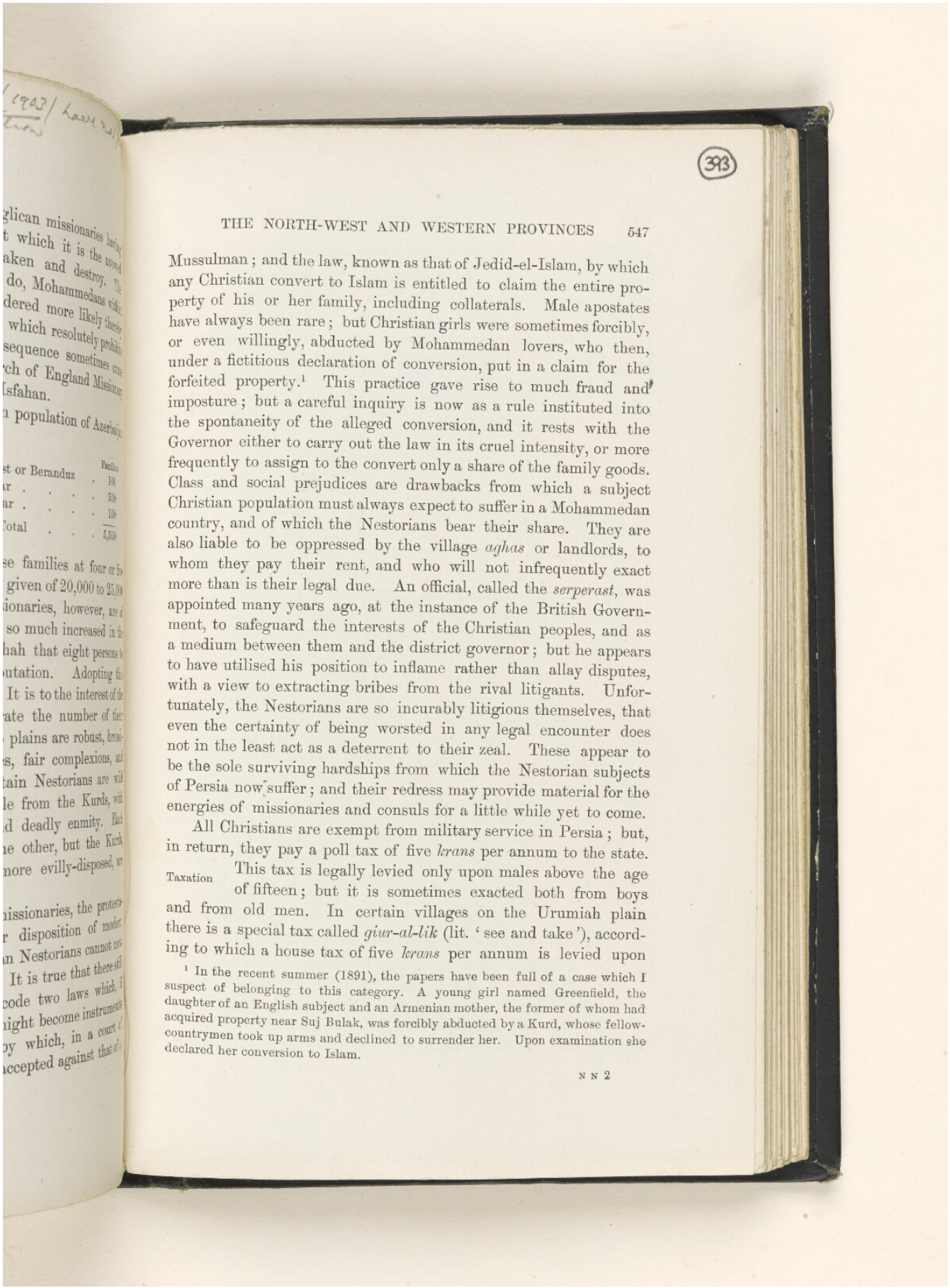
| | Families | | Families |
|---|---|---|---|
| Salmas district | 700 | Baradost or Beranduz | 100 |
| Somai and Chara | 100 | Tergavar | 500 |
| Urumiah district | 3,600 | Mergavar | 100 |
| Sulduz | 400 | Total | 5,500 |

Numbers and appearance of Persian Nestorians

It has been common to estimate these families at four or five persons apiece, and hence the total usually given of 20,000 to 25,000 Persian Nestorians. The missionaries, however, are of opinion that the population has so much increased in the peaceful reign of the present Shah that eight persons to each family is a fairer computation. Adopting this average, we shall get a total of 44,000. It is to the interest of the Persians for political reasons to underrate the number of their Christian subjects. The Nestorians of the plains are robust, broad-shouldered men, with open countenances, fair complexions, and frequently with red beards. The mountain Nestorians are wild and uncouth, and often undistinguishable from the Kurds, with whom, however, they are at constant and deadly enmity. Each attack the camps and rob the flocks of the other, but the Kurds, being the stronger, better armed, and more evilly-disposed, are usually the aggressors.

Disabilities and hardships

Owing to the active interest of the missionaries, the protestations of foreign consuls, and the milder disposition of modern Persian Governments, the Persian Nestorians cannot now complain of serious oppression. It is true that there still remain in the Mohammedan code two laws which, if enforced as they were once, with asperity, might become instruments of cruel injustice. These are the law by which, in a court of justice, the evidence of a Christian is not accepted against that of a





Mussulman; and the law, known as that of Jedid-el-Islam, by which any Christian convert to Islam is entitled to claim the entire property of his or her family, including collaterals. Male apostates have always been rare; but Christian girls were sometimes forcibly, or even willingly, abducted by Mohammedan lovers, who then, under a fictitious declaration of conversion, put in a claim for the forfeited property.[1] This practice gave rise to much fraud and imposture; but a careful inquiry is now as a rule instituted into the spontaneity of the alleged conversion, and it rests with the Governor either to carry out the law in its cruel intensity, or more frequently to assign to the convert only a share of the family goods. Class and social prejudices are drawbacks from which a subject Christian population must always expect to suffer in a Mohammedan country, and of which the Nestorians bear their share. They are also liable to be oppressed by the village *aghas* or landlords, to whom they pay their rent, and who will not infrequently exact more than is their legal due. An official, called the *serperast*, was appointed many years ago, at the instance of the British Government, to safeguard the interests of the Christian peoples, and as a medium between them and the district governor; but he appears to have utilised his position to inflame rather than allay disputes, with a view to extracting bribes from the rival litigants. Unfortunately, the Nestorians are so incurably litigious themselves, that even the certainty of being worsted in any legal encounter does not in the least act as a deterrent to their zeal. These appear to be the sole surviving hardships from which the Nestorian subjects of Persia now suffer; and their redress may provide material for the energies of missionaries and consuls for a little while yet to come.

All Christians are exempt from military service in Persia; but, in return, they pay a poll tax of five *krans* per annum to the state.

Taxation

This tax is legally levied only upon males above the age of fifteen; but it is sometimes exacted both from boys and from old men. In certain villages on the Urumiah plain there is a special tax called *giur-al-lik* (lit. 'see and take'), according to which a house tax of five *krans* per annum is levied upon

[1] In the recent summer (1891), the papers have been full of a case which I suspect of belonging to this category. A young girl named Greenfield, the daughter of an English subject and an Armenian mother, the former of whom had acquired property near Suj Bulak, was forcibly abducted by a Kurd, whose fellow-countrymen took up arms and declined to surrender her. Upon examination she declared her conversion to Islam.



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Mussulmans, but of eight *krans* upon Christians; and an equivalent scale on whatever live stock they possess. Generally speaking, the position of the peasants may be said to depend upon the character of the *agha*, or landlord, who is responsible to Government for the taxes up to the fixed assessment, and who either exacts or renounces his pound of flesh as his inclination determines.

Armenians

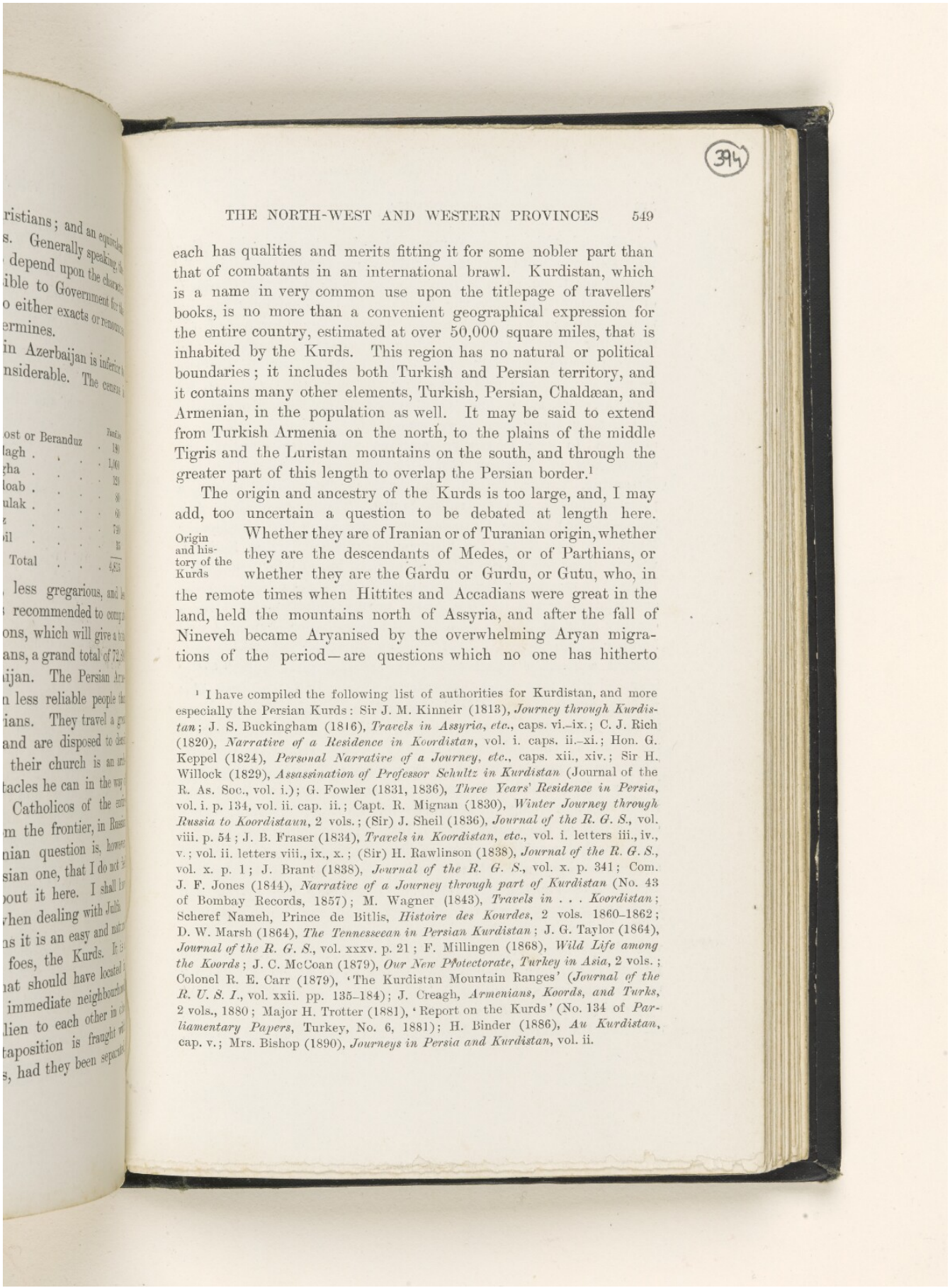
The number of Armenians resident in Azerbaijan is inferior to the Nestorians, but is yet considerable. The census is calculated as follows:—

| | Families | | Families |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maku | 300 | Baradost or Beranduz | 180 |
| Kotur | 100 | Karadagh | 1,000 |
| Khoi | 400 | Maragha | 120 |
| Salmas Plain | 1,200 | Miandoab | 80 |
| Somai and Chara | 100 | Suj Bulak | 60 |
| Urumiah | 400 | Tabriz | 740 |
| Sulduz | 100 | Ardebil | 35 |
| | | Total | 4,815 |

The Armenians being less prolific, less gregarious, and less stay-at-home than the Nestorians, it is recommended to compute their families at an average of six persons, which will give a total of 28,890; or, together with the Nestorians, a grand total of 72,890 for the Christian population of Azerbaijan. The Persian Armenians are a less attractive and an even less reliable people than the mendacious, but peaceable Nestorians. They travel a great deal, and pick up revolutionary ideas, and are disposed to deceit and turbulence. The local head of their church is an archbishop at Tabriz, who throws what obstacles he can in the way of the Christian missions; whilst the Catholicos of the entire Armenian church is located not far from the frontier, in Russian territory, at Echmiadzin. The Armenian question is, however, so much a Turkish and so little a Persian one, that I do not feel called upon to say anything more about it here. I shall have occasion to speak of the people again, when dealing with Julfa.

Kurdistan

From the Nestorians and Armenians it is an easy and natural transition to turn to their hereditary foes, the Kurds. It is a strange caprice of fortune that should have located in this quarter of the globe, in immediate neighbourhood, two, nay, three communities of men, alien to each other in character, race, and religion, whose juxtaposition is fraught with endless and irremediable strife, whereas, had they been separated,



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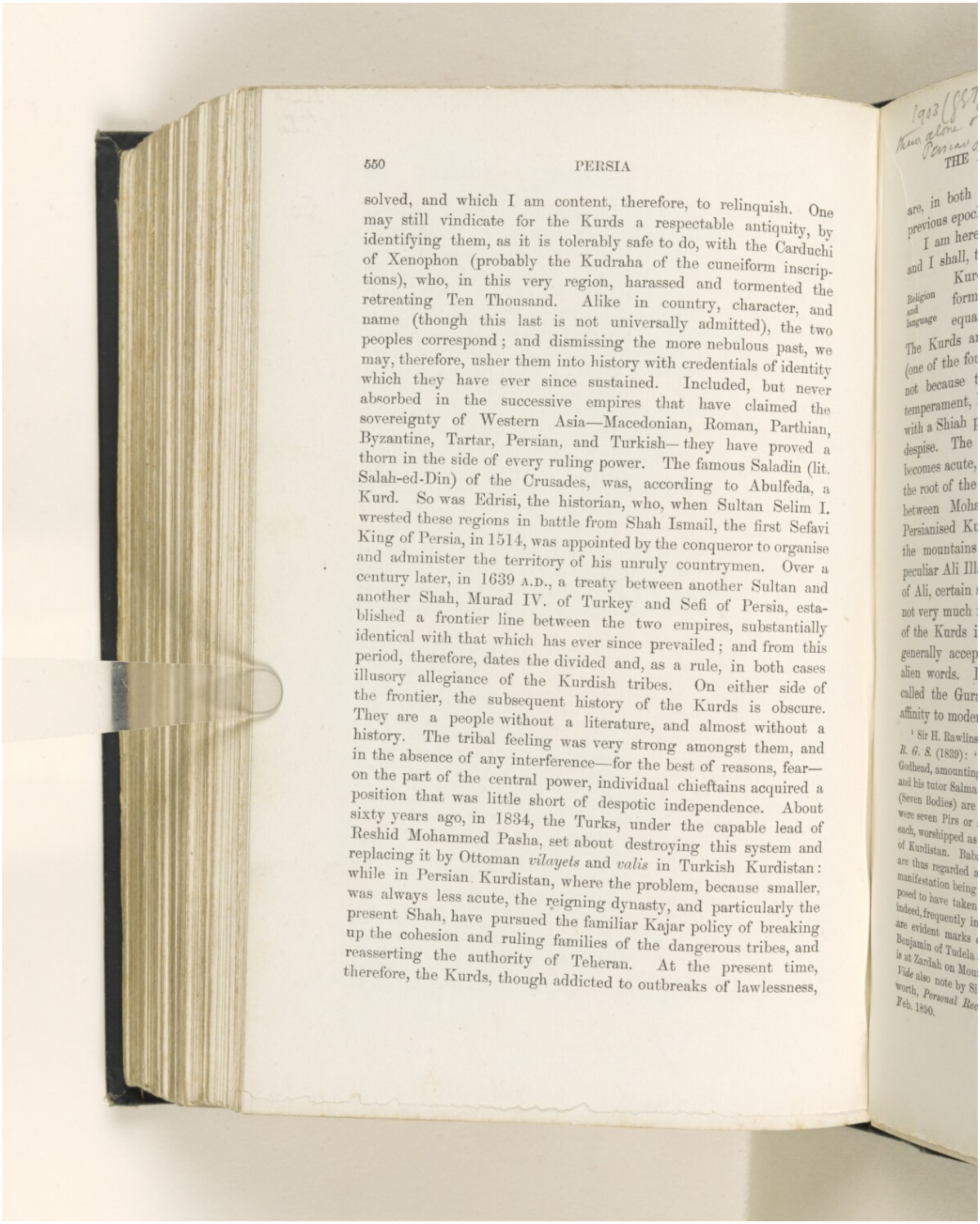
each has qualities and merits fitting it for some nobler part than that of combatants in an international brawl. Kurdistan, which is a name in very common use upon the titlepage of travellers' books, is no more than a convenient geographical expression for the entire country, estimated at over 50,000 square miles, that is inhabited by the Kurds. This region has no natural or political boundaries; it includes both Turkish and Persian territory, and it contains many other elements, Turkish, Persian, Chaldæan, and Armenian, in the population as well. It may be said to extend from Turkish Armenia on the north, to the plains of the middle Tigris and the Luristan mountains on the south, and through the greater part of this length to overlap the Persian border.[1]

Origin and history of the Kurds

The origin and ancestry of the Kurds is too large, and, I may add, too uncertain a question to be debated at length here. Whether they are of Iranian or of Turanian origin, whether they are the descendants of Medes, or of Parthians, or whether they are the Gardu or Gurdu, or Gutu, who, in the remote times when Hittites and Accadians were great in the land, held the mountains north of Assyria, and after the fall of Nineveh became Aryanised by the overwhelming Aryan migrations of the period—are questions which no one has hitherto

[1] I have compiled the following list of authorities for Kurdistan, and more especially the Persian Kurds: Sir J. M. Kinneir (1813), *Journey through Kurdistan*; J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels in Assyria, etc.*, caps. vi.–ix.; C. J. Rich (1820), *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, vol. i. caps. ii.–xi.; Hon. G. Keppel (1824), *Personal Narrative of a Journey, etc.*, caps. xii., xiv.; Sir H. Willock (1829), *Assassination of Professor Schultz in Kurdistan* (Journal of the R. As. Soc., vol. i.); G. Fowler (1831, 1836), *Three Years' Residence in Persia*, vol. i. p. 134, vol. ii. cap. ii.; Capt. R. Mignan (1830), *Winter Journey through Russia to Koordistaun*, 2 vols.; (Sir) J. Sheil (1836), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. viii. p. 54; J. B. Fraser (1834), *Travels in Koordistan, etc.*, vol. i. letters iii., iv., v.; vol. ii. letters viii., ix., x.; (Sir) H. Rawlinson (1838), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. x. p. 1; J. Brant (1838), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. x. p. 341; Com. J. F. Jones (1844), *Narrative of a Journey through part of Kurdistan* (No. 43 of Bombay Records, 1857); M. Wagner (1843), *Travels in . . . Koordistan*; Scheref Nameh, Prince de Bitlis, *Histoire des Kourdes*, 2 vols. 1860–1862; D. W. Marsh (1864), *The Tennesseean in Persian Kurdistan*; J. G. Taylor (1864), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xxxv. p. 21; F. Millingen (1868), *Wild Life among the Koords*; J. C. McCoan (1879), *Our New Protectorate, Turkey in Asia*, 2 vols.; Colonel R. E. Carr (1879), 'The Kurdistan Mountain Ranges' (*Journal of the R. U. S. I.*, vol. xxii. pp. 135–184); J. Creagh, *Armenians, Koords, and Turks*, 2 vols., 1880; Major H. Trotter (1881), 'Report on the Kurds' (No. 134 of *Parliamentary Papers*, Turkey, No. 6, 1881); H. Binder (1886), *Au Kurdistan*, cap. v.; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, vol. ii.





solved, and which I am content, therefore, to relinquish. One may still vindicate for the Kurds a respectable antiquity, by identifying them, as it is tolerably safe to do, with the Carduchi of Xenophon (probably the Kudraha of the cuneiform inscriptions), who, in this very region, harassed and tormented the retreating Ten Thousand. Alike in country, character, and name (though this last is not universally admitted), the two peoples correspond; and dismissing the more nebulous past, we may, therefore, usher them into history with credentials of identity which they have ever since sustained. Included, but never absorbed in the successive empires that have claimed the sovereignty of Western Asia—Macedonian, Roman, Parthian, Byzantine, Tartar, Persian, and Turkish—they have proved a thorn in the side of every ruling power. The famous Saladin (lit. Salah-ed-Din) of the Crusades, was, according to Abulfeda, a Kurd. So was Edrisi, the historian, who, when Sultan Selim I. wrested these regions in battle from Shah Ismail, the first Sefavi King of Persia, in 1514, was appointed by the conqueror to organise and administer the territory of his unruly countrymen. Over a century later, in 1639 A.D., a treaty between another Sultan and another Shah, Murad IV. of Turkey and Sefi of Persia, established a frontier line between the two empires, substantially identical with that which has ever since prevailed; and from this period, therefore, dates the divided and, as a rule, in both cases illusory allegiance of the Kurdish tribes. On either side of the frontier, the subsequent history of the Kurds is obscure. They are a people without a literature, and almost without a history. The tribal feeling was very strong amongst them, and in the absence of any interference—for the best of reasons, fear—on the part of the central power, individual chieftains acquired a position that was little short of despotic independence. About sixty years ago, in 1834, the Turks, under the capable lead of Reshid Mohammed Pasha, set about destroying this system and replacing it by Ottoman *vilayets* and *valis* in Turkish Kurdistan: while in Persian Kurdistan, where the problem, because smaller, was always less acute, the reigning dynasty, and particularly the present Shah, have pursued the familiar Kajar policy of breaking up the cohesion and ruling families of the dangerous tribes, and reasserting the authority of Teheran. At the present time, therefore, the Kurds, though addicted to outbreaks of lawlessness,

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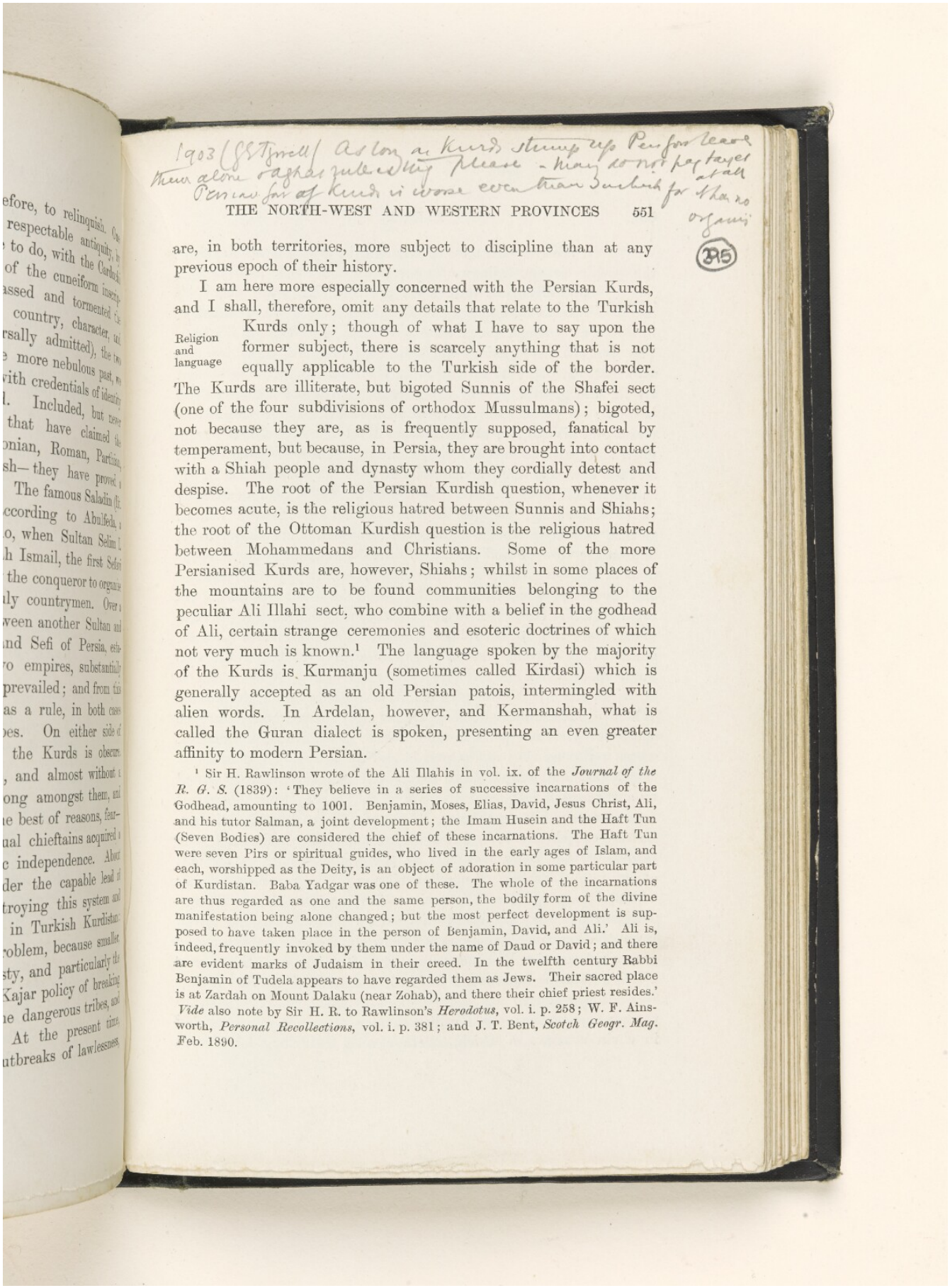

1903 (GST) Well as long as Kurds stump up Pers for leave there alone & ghar zulm why please - many do not pay taxes at all Persian for of Kurd is worse even than Turkish for there no organi



are, in both territories, more subject to discipline than at any previous epoch of their history.

I am here more especially concerned with the Persian Kurds, and I shall, therefore, omit any details that relate to the Turkish Kurds only; though of what I have to say upon the former subject, there is scarcely anything that is not equally applicable to the Turkish side of the border. The Kurds are illiterate, but bigoted Sunnis of the Shafei sect (one of the four subdivisions of orthodox Mussulmans); bigoted, not because they are, as is frequently supposed, fanatical by temperament, but because, in Persia, they are brought into contact with a Shiah people and dynasty whom they cordially detest and despise. The root of the Persian Kurdish question, whenever it becomes acute, is the religious hatred between Sunnis and Shiahs; the root of the Ottoman Kurdish question is the religious hatred between Mohammedans and Christians. Some of the more Persianised Kurds are, however, Shiahs; whilst in some places of the mountains are to be found communities belonging to the peculiar Ali Illahi sect, who combine with a belief in the godhead of Ali, certain strange ceremonies and esoteric doctrines of which not very much is known.[1] The language spoken by the majority of the Kurds is Kurmanju (sometimes called Kirdasi) which is generally accepted as an old Persian patois, intermingled with alien words. In Ardelan, however, and Kermanshah, what is called the Guran dialect is spoken, presenting an even greater affinity to modern Persian.

Religion and language

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson wrote of the Ali Illahis in vol. ix. of the *Journal of the R. G. S.* (1839): 'They believe in a series of successive incarnations of the Godhead, amounting to 1001. Benjamin, Moses, Elias, David, Jesus Christ, Ali, and his tutor Salman, a joint development; the Imam Husein and the Haft Tun (Seven Bodies) are considered the chief of these incarnations. The Haft Tun were seven Pirs or spiritual guides, who lived in the early ages of Islam, and each, worshipped as the Deity, is an object of adoration in some particular part of Kurdistan. Baba Yadgar was one of these. The whole of the incarnations are thus regarded as one and the same person, the bodily form of the divine manifestation being alone changed; but the most perfect development is supposed to have taken place in the person of Benjamin, David, and Ali.' Ali is, indeed, frequently invoked by them under the name of Daud or David; and there are evident marks of Judaism in their creed. In the twelfth century Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela appears to have regarded them as Jews. Their sacred place is at Zardah on Mount Dalaku (near Zohab), and there their chief priest resides.' *Vide* also note by Sir H. R. to Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. i. p. 258; W. F. Ainsworth, *Personal Recollections*, vol. i. p. 381; and J. T. Bent, *Scotch Geogr. Mag.* Feb. 1890.

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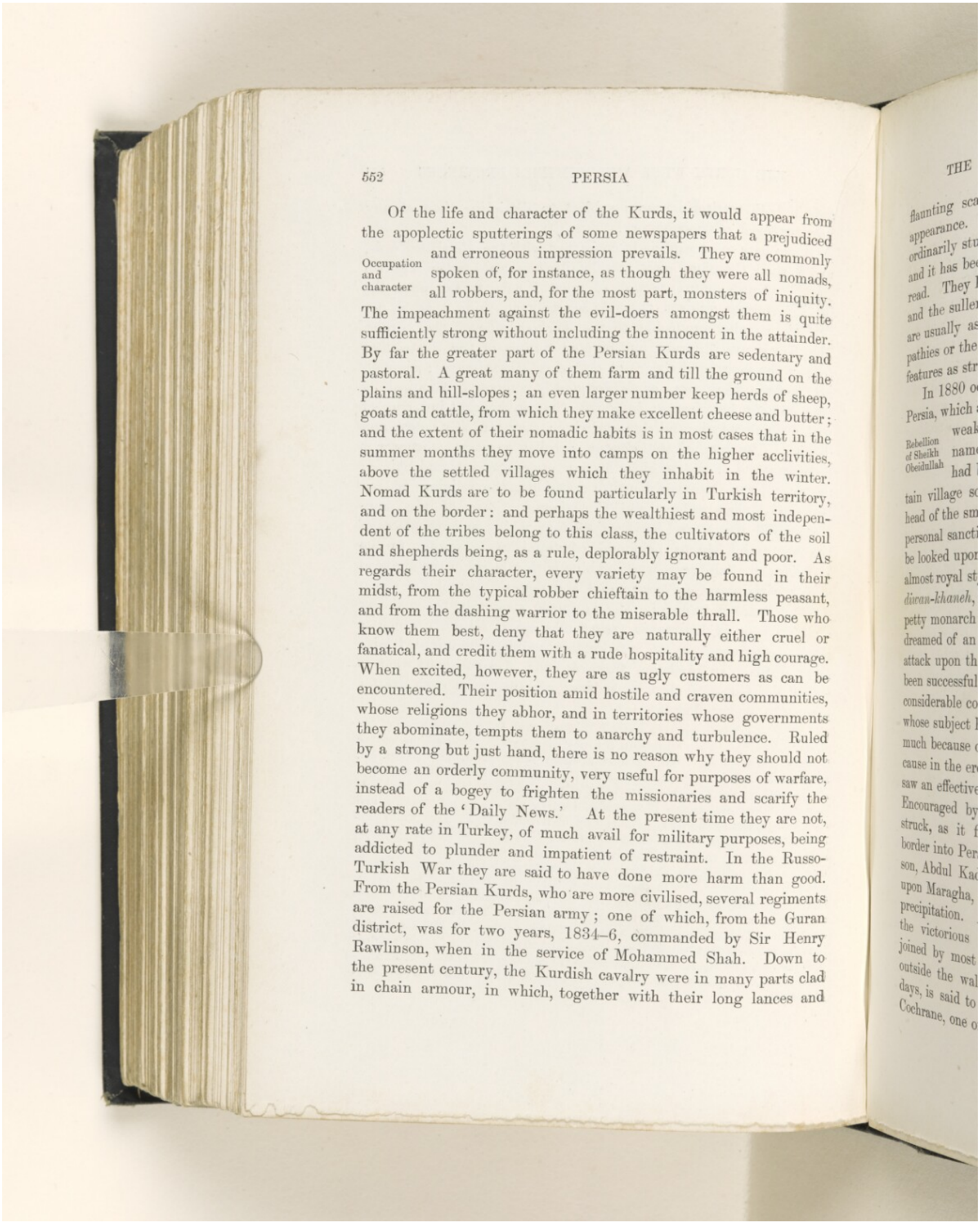



Occupation and character

Of the life and character of the Kurds, it would appear from the apoplectic sputterings of some newspapers that a prejudiced and erroneous impression prevails. They are commonly spoken of, for instance, as though they were all nomads, all robbers, and, for the most part, monsters of iniquity. The impeachment against the evil-doers amongst them is quite sufficiently strong without including the innocent in the attainder. By far the greater part of the Persian Kurds are sedentary and pastoral. A great many of them farm and till the ground on the plains and hill-slopes; an even larger number keep herds of sheep, goats and cattle, from which they make excellent cheese and butter; and the extent of their nomadic habits is in most cases that in the summer months they move into camps on the higher acclivities, above the settled villages which they inhabit in the winter. Nomad Kurds are to be found particularly in Turkish territory, and on the border: and perhaps the wealthiest and most independent of the tribes belong to this class, the cultivators of the soil and shepherds being, as a rule, deplorably ignorant and poor. As regards their character, every variety may be found in their midst, from the typical robber chieftain to the harmless peasant, and from the dashing warrior to the miserable thrall. Those who know them best, deny that they are naturally either cruel or fanatical, and credit them with a rude hospitality and high courage. When excited, however, they are as ugly customers as can be encountered. Their position amid hostile and craven communities, whose religions they abhor, and in territories whose governments they abominate, tempts them to anarchy and turbulence. Ruled by a strong but just hand, there is no reason why they should not become an orderly community, very useful for purposes of warfare, instead of a bogey to frighten the missionaries and scarify the readers of the 'Daily News.' At the present time they are not, at any rate in Turkey, of much avail for military purposes, being addicted to plunder and impatient of restraint. In the Russo-Turkish War they are said to have done more harm than good. From the Persian Kurds, who are more civilised, several regiments are raised for the Persian army; one of which, from the Guran district, was for two years, 1834–6, commanded by Sir Henry Rawlinson, when in the service of Mohammed Shah. Down to the present century, the Kurdish cavalry were in many parts clad in chain armour, in which, together with their long lances and

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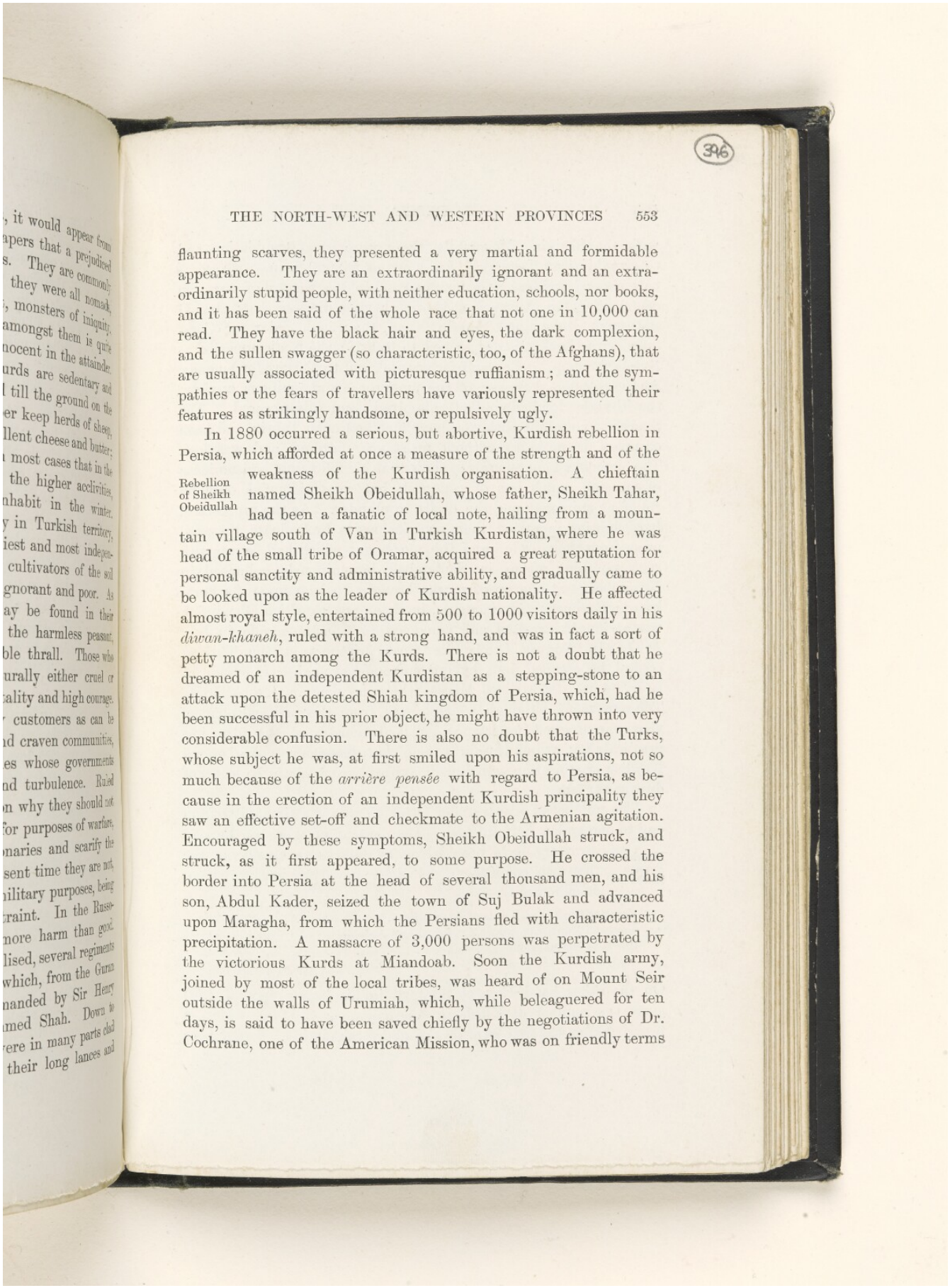



flaunting scarves, they presented a very martial and formidable appearance. They are an extraordinarily ignorant and an extraordinarily stupid people, with neither education, schools, nor books, and it has been said of the whole race that not one in 10,000 can read. They have the black hair and eyes, the dark complexion, and the sullen swagger (so characteristic, too, of the Afghans), that are usually associated with picturesque ruffianism; and the sympathies or the fears of travellers have variously represented their features as strikingly handsome, or repulsively ugly.

In 1880 occurred a serious, but abortive, Kurdish rebellion in Persia, which afforded at once a measure of the strength and of the weakness of the Kurdish organisation. A chieftain named Sheikh Obeidullah, whose father, Sheikh Tahar, had been a fanatic of local note, hailing from a mountain village south of Van in Turkish Kurdistan, where he was head of the small tribe of Oramar, acquired a great reputation for personal sanctity and administrative ability, and gradually came to be looked upon as the leader of Kurdish nationality. He affected almost royal style, entertained from 500 to 1000 visitors daily in his *diwan-khaneh*, ruled with a strong hand, and was in fact a sort of petty monarch among the Kurds. There is not a doubt that he dreamed of an independent Kurdistan as a stepping-stone to an attack upon the detested Shiah kingdom of Persia, which, had he been successful in his prior object, he might have thrown into very considerable confusion. There is also no doubt that the Turks, whose subject he was, at first smiled upon his aspirations, not so much because of the *arrière pensée* with regard to Persia, as because in the erection of an independent Kurdish principality they saw an effective set-off and checkmate to the Armenian agitation. Encouraged by these symptoms, Sheikh Obeidullah struck, and struck, as it first appeared, to some purpose. He crossed the border into Persia at the head of several thousand men, and his son, Abdul Kader, seized the town of Suj Bulak and advanced upon Maragha, from which the Persians fled with characteristic precipitation. A massacre of 3,000 persons was perpetrated by the victorious Kurds at Miandoab. Soon the Kurdish army, joined by most of the local tribes, was heard of on Mount Seir outside the walls of Urumiah, which, while beleaguered for ten days, is said to have been saved chiefly by the negotiations of Dr. Cochrane, one of the American Mission, who was on friendly terms

Rebellion of Sheikh Obeidullah

with the Sheikh. Meanwhile, there were great trepidation and telegraphing at Teheran. An army of 20,000 men, with some batteries of artillery, was marched off to the theatre of war; its commander, the Hishmet-ed-Dowleh having died *en route*, the old statesman ~~Mohammed~~ Husein Khan, the Sipah Salar, or Commander-in-Chief, was despatched to Tabriz; the Shah appealed to Russia for help, to England for counsel, and to Turkey for amends. At the moment, however, of the most tense and ominous anxiety, the thundercloud dwindled, dissolved, and disappeared. The Sheikh, who might with ease have marched upon Tabriz, and have occupied it probably without resistance, faltered and was lost. The time was long enough to show that his following had no ideas of cohesion, much less of conquest, but were animated only by religious animosity and the desire to plunder. As the prospect of hard fighting increased, their own jealousies broke loose, they fell away from their leader, and the movement which had begun with such sanguine omens in September, ignominously collapsed in November. Strong pressure was brought to bear upon the Porte by the European Governments, in deference to which Obeidullah was at length arrested and conveyed to Constantinople in July 1881. In August 1882, like most prisoners at the Turkish capital, he escaped, but, having surrendered again a few months later, he was deported to Mecca, where he died in October 1883. The movement, although a fiasco, was, from the political point of view, one of great importance, for it demonstrated the utter impracticability, owing to family and clan dissensions, of a united Kurdish organisation, which will probably not again be heard of during our time.

Number of Persian Kurds

The number of Kurds under Ottoman rule is estimated at from one to one and a half million. The figures of those on Persian territory have been given as follows (exclusive of the Kurdish colonies, of which I have previously spoken, in Khorasan):—

| | |
|---|---|
| Frontier Kurds and Kurds of Azerbaijan | 250,000 |
| Kurds of Kurdistan proper, i.e. Sinna and Ardelan | 120,000 |
| Kurds of Kermanshah | 230,000 |
| Total | 600,000 |

On the other hand, Colonel Stewart, in his latest report (1890) gives the number of Kurds in Azerbaijan as 450,000, which is nearly double the first item in the above calculation. I may here

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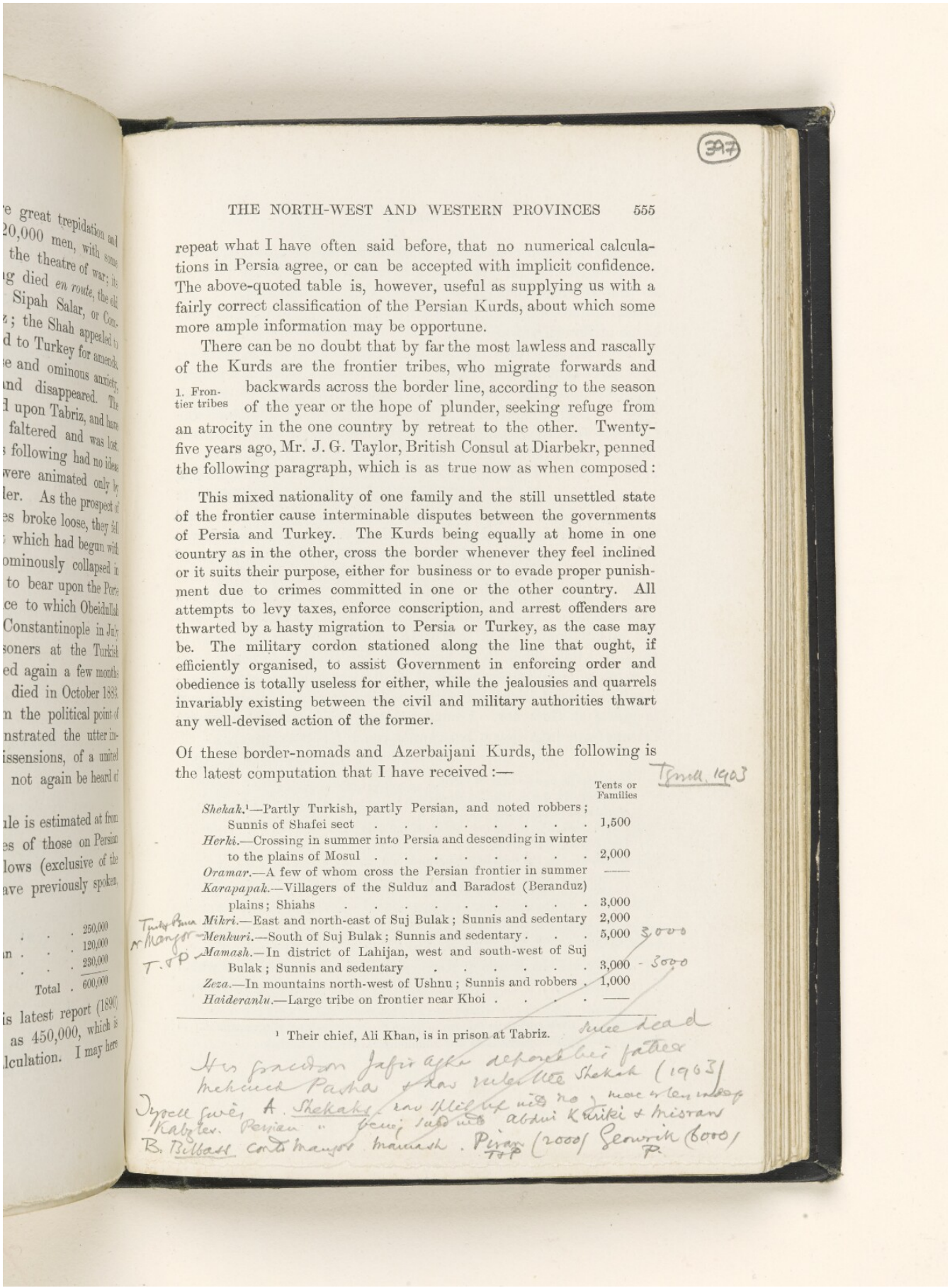

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repeat what I have often said before, that no numerical calculations in Persia agree, or can be accepted with implicit confidence. The above-quoted table is, however, useful as supplying us with a fairly correct classification of the Persian Kurds, about which some more ample information may be opportune.

There can be no doubt that by far the most lawless and rascally of the Kurds are the frontier tribes, who migrate forwards and backwards across the border line, according to the season of the year or the hope of plunder, seeking refuge from an atrocity in the one country by retreat to the other. Twenty-five years ago, Mr. J. G. Taylor, British Consul at Diarbekr, penned the following paragraph, which is as true now as when composed:

1. Frontier tribes

> This mixed nationality of one family and the still unsettled state of the frontier cause interminable disputes between the governments of Persia and Turkey. The Kurds being equally at home in one country as in the other, cross the border whenever they feel inclined or it suits their purpose, either for business or to evade proper punishment due to crimes committed in one or the other country. All attempts to levy taxes, enforce conscription, and arrest offenders are thwarted by a hasty migration to Persia or Turkey, as the case may be. The military cordon stationed along the line that ought, if efficiently organised, to assist Government in enforcing order and obedience is totally useless for either, while the jealousies and quarrels invariably existing between the civil and military authorities thwart any well-devised action of the former.

Of these border-nomads and Azerbaijani Kurds, the following is the latest computation that I have received:—

| | Tents or Families |
|---|---|
| *Shekak.*[1]—Partly Turkish, partly Persian, and noted robbers; Sunnis of Shafei sect | 1,500 |
| *Herki.*—Crossing in summer into Persia and descending in winter to the plains of Mosul | 2,000 |
| *Oramar.*—A few of whom cross the Persian frontier in summer | —— |
| *Karapapak.*—Villagers of the Sulduz and Baradost (Beranduz) plains; Shiahs | 3,000 |
| *Mikri.*—East and north-east of Suj Bulak; Sunnis and sedentary | 2,000 |
| *Menkuri.*—South of Suj Bulak; Sunnis and sedentary | 5,000 |
| *Mamash.*—In district of Lahijan, west and south-west of Suj Bulak; Sunnis and sedentary | 3,000 |
| *Zeza.*—In mountains north-west of Ushnu; Sunnis and robbers | 1,000 |
| *Haideranlu.*—Large tribe on frontier near Khoi | —— |

[1] Their chief, Ali Khan, is in prison at Tabriz.

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Suj Bulak, with a population of 15,000, is the local capital of the Kurds of Azerbaijan. It is ruled by a Kurdish governor (subject to the Governor-General of Tabriz), the present holder of the office, Saif-ed-Din Khan, being a well-educated man, with a knowledge of French.

Between the provinces of Azerbaijan and Kermanshah is situated the small province of Ardelan, or Persian Kurdistan proper, inhabited mainly by sedentary Kurds. The capital, Sinna, is situated in an open, cultivated valley, and the Governor, at present Ferhad Mirza, a cousin of the Shah, occupies a fine palace, also containing the barracks, on an eminence in the centre of the town. Here are commonly stationed two Kurdish regiments of 800 men, and a battery of artillery. It is only within the present reign that this province has been thoroughly subdued to the central authority. For centuries it was ruled by almost independent Guran chieftains, of the house of Beni Ardelan, claiming descent from Saladin, and bearing the title of Wali of Ardelan. When Rich was here, in 1820, he found the Wali absolutely independent of Teheran, and ruling his province like a kingdom. Upon the death, however, of the last male in the direct line, about thirty years ago, the Shah disinherited the remaining male relatives, whose family are now reduced to insignificance, and signalised his recovered sovereignty by appointing his uncle as Governor. I have been supplied with the following list of Kurds in Ardelan, but cannot vouch for its accuracy:—

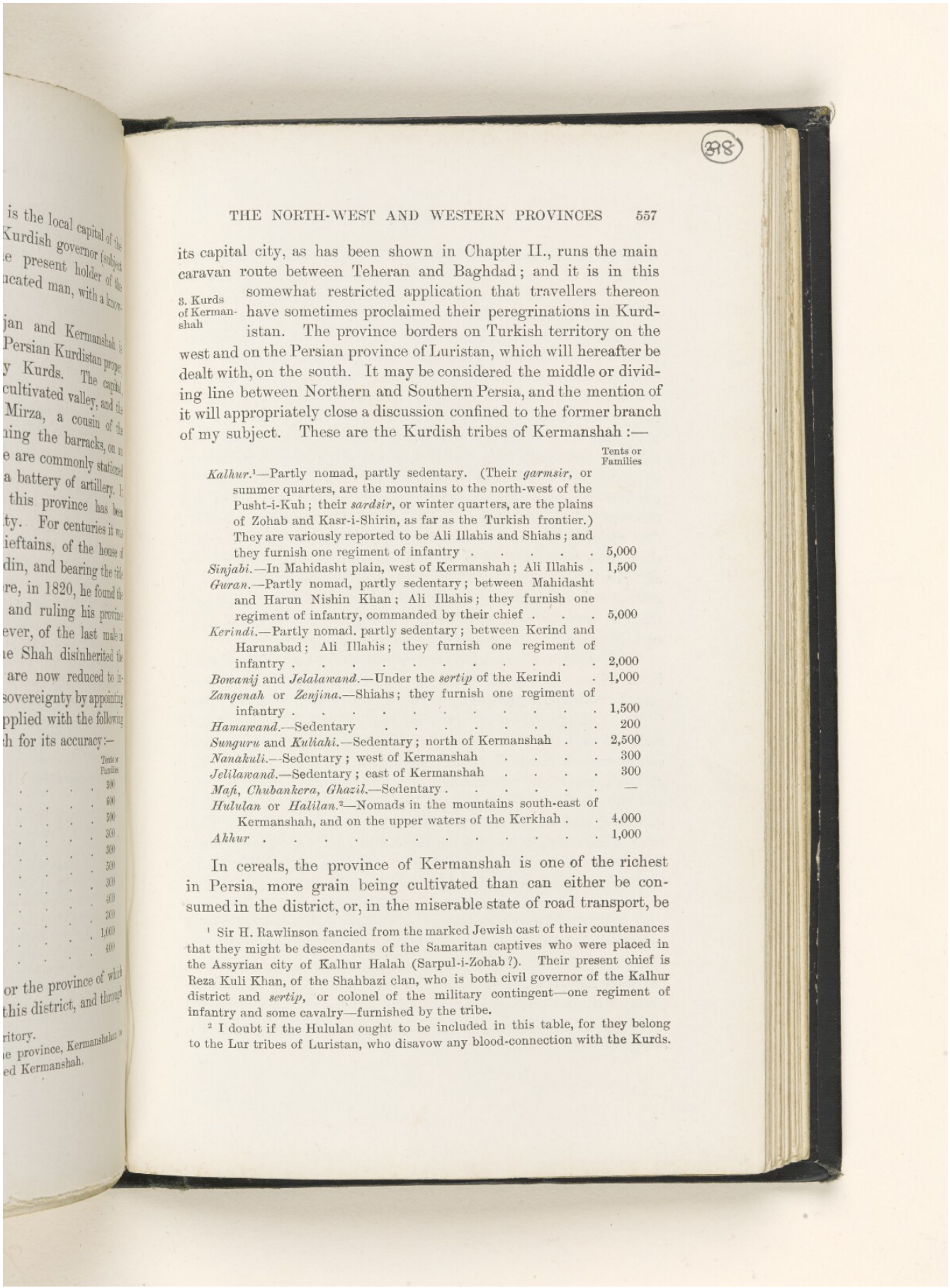
2. Kurdistan proper

| | Tents or Families |
|---|---|
| *Kalhur.*—In the district of Sakiz | 300 |
| *Tailaku.*—In the district of Hawatu | 600 |
| *Gulbaki.*—In the district of Hawatu | 500 |
| *Sheikh Ismail.*[1]—In the district of Isfandabad | 300 |
| *Purpishah.*[1]—In the district of Isfandabad | 300 |
| *Mundami.*—In the district of Hasandabad | 500 |
| *Mamun, Jabraehi.*—In the district of Bilawar | 300 |
| *Gushki.*—In the district of Bilawar | 400 |
| *Gurgai.*—In the district of Lailagh | 300 |
| *Lek.*—In the district of Lailagh | 1,000 |
| *Shamshiri.*[1]—On the frontier | 400 |

Lastly are the Kurds of Kermanshah, or the province of which Kermanshahan [2] is the capital. Through this district, and through

[1] Nomads, migrating in winter into Turkish territory.

[2] Locally, Kermanshah is the name given to the province, Kermanshahan to its capital. By Europeans both are commonly called Kermanshah.





its capital city, as has been shown in Chapter II., runs the main caravan route between Teheran and Baghdad; and it is in this somewhat restricted application that travellers thereon have sometimes proclaimed their peregrinations in Kurdistan. The province borders on Turkish territory on the west and on the Persian province of Luristan, which will hereafter be dealt with, on the south. It may be considered the middle or dividing line between Northern and Southern Persia, and the mention of it will appropriately close a discussion confined to the former branch of my subject. These are the Kurdish tribes of Kermanshah :—

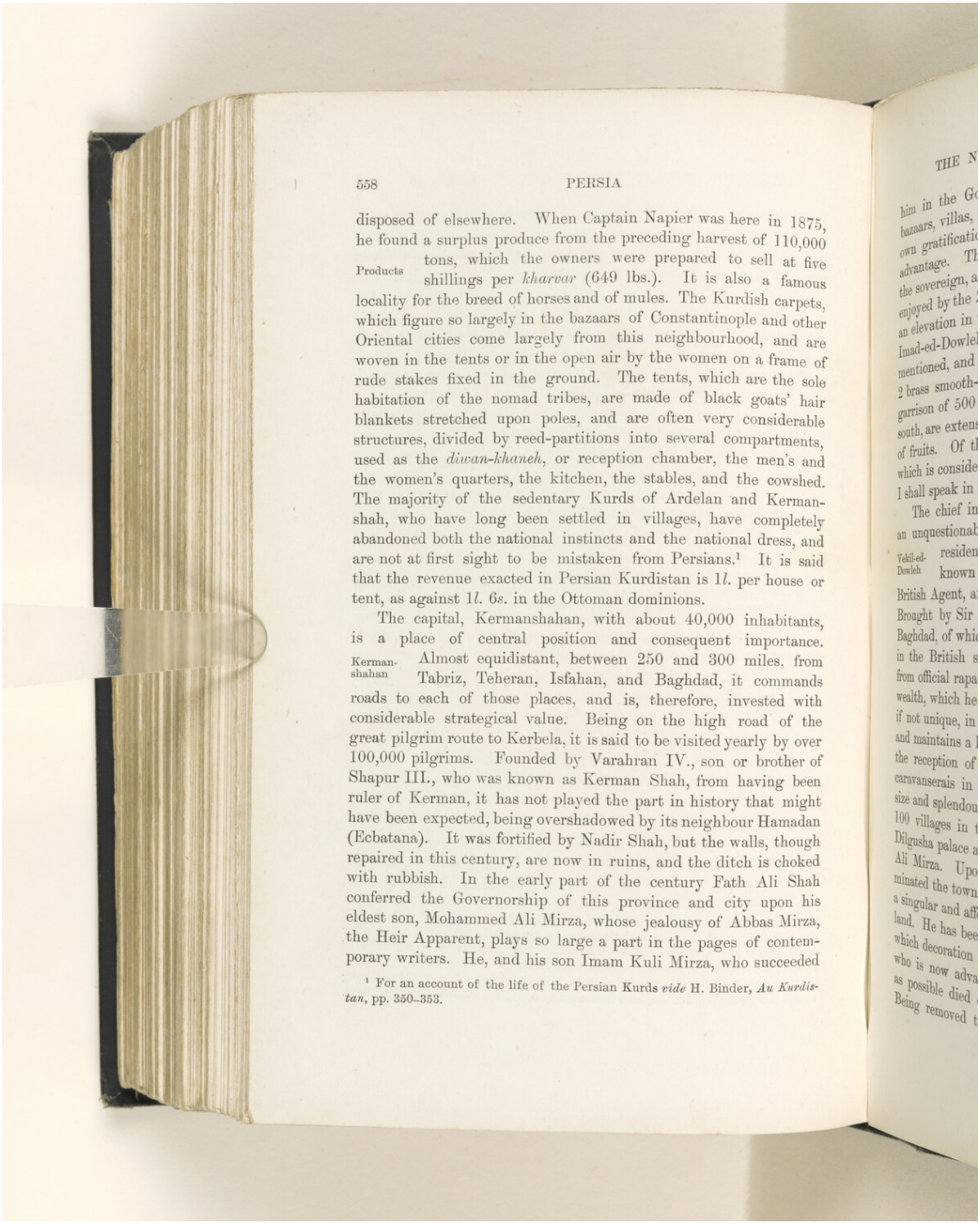
3. Kurds of Kermanshah

| | Tents or Families |
|---|---|
| *Kalhur.*[1]—Partly nomad, partly sedentary. (Their *garmsir*, or summer quarters, are the mountains to the north-west of the Pusht-i-Kuh; their *sardsir*, or winter quarters, are the plains of Zohab and Kasr-i-Shirin, as far as the Turkish frontier.) They are variously reported to be Ali Illahis and Shiahs; and they furnish one regiment of infantry . . . . . | 5,000 |
| *Sinjabi.*—In Mahidasht plain, west of Kermanshah; Ali Illahis . | 1,500 |
| *Guran.*—Partly nomad, partly sedentary; between Mahidasht and Harun Nishin Khan; Ali Illahis; they furnish one regiment of infantry, commanded by their chief . . . | 5,000 |
| *Kerindi.*—Partly nomad, partly sedentary; between Kerind and Harunabad; Ali Illahis; they furnish one regiment of infantry . . . . . | 2,000 |
| *Bowanij* and *Jelalawand.*—Under the *sertip* of the Kerindi . | 1,000 |
| *Zangenah* or *Zenjina.*—Shiahs; they furnish one regiment of infantry . . . . . | 1,500 |
| *Hamawand.*—Sedentary . . . . . | 200 |
| *Sungwru* and *Kuliahi.*—Sedentary; north of Kermanshah . . | 2,500 |
| *Nanakuli.*—Sedentary; west of Kermanshah . . . . | 300 |
| *Jelilawand.*—Sedentary; east of Kermanshah . . . . | 300 |
| *Mafi, Chubankera, Ghazil.*—Sedentary . . . . . | — |
| *Hululan* or *Halilan.*[2]—Nomads in the mountains south-east of Kermanshah, and on the upper waters of the Kerkhah . . | 4,000 |
| *Akhur* . . . . . | 1,000 |

In cereals, the province of Kermanshah is one of the richest in Persia, more grain being cultivated than can either be consumed in the district, or, in the miserable state of road transport, be

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson fancied from the marked Jewish cast of their countenances that they might be descendants of the Samaritan captives who were placed in the Assyrian city of Kalhur Halah (Sarpul-i-Zohab?). Their present chief is Reza Kuli Khan, of the Shahbazi clan, who is both civil governor of the Kalhur district and *sertip*, or colonel of the military contingent—one regiment of infantry and some cavalry—furnished by the tribe.

[2] I doubt if the Hululan ought to be included in this table, for they belong to the Lur tribes of Luristan, who disavow any blood-connection with the Kurds.





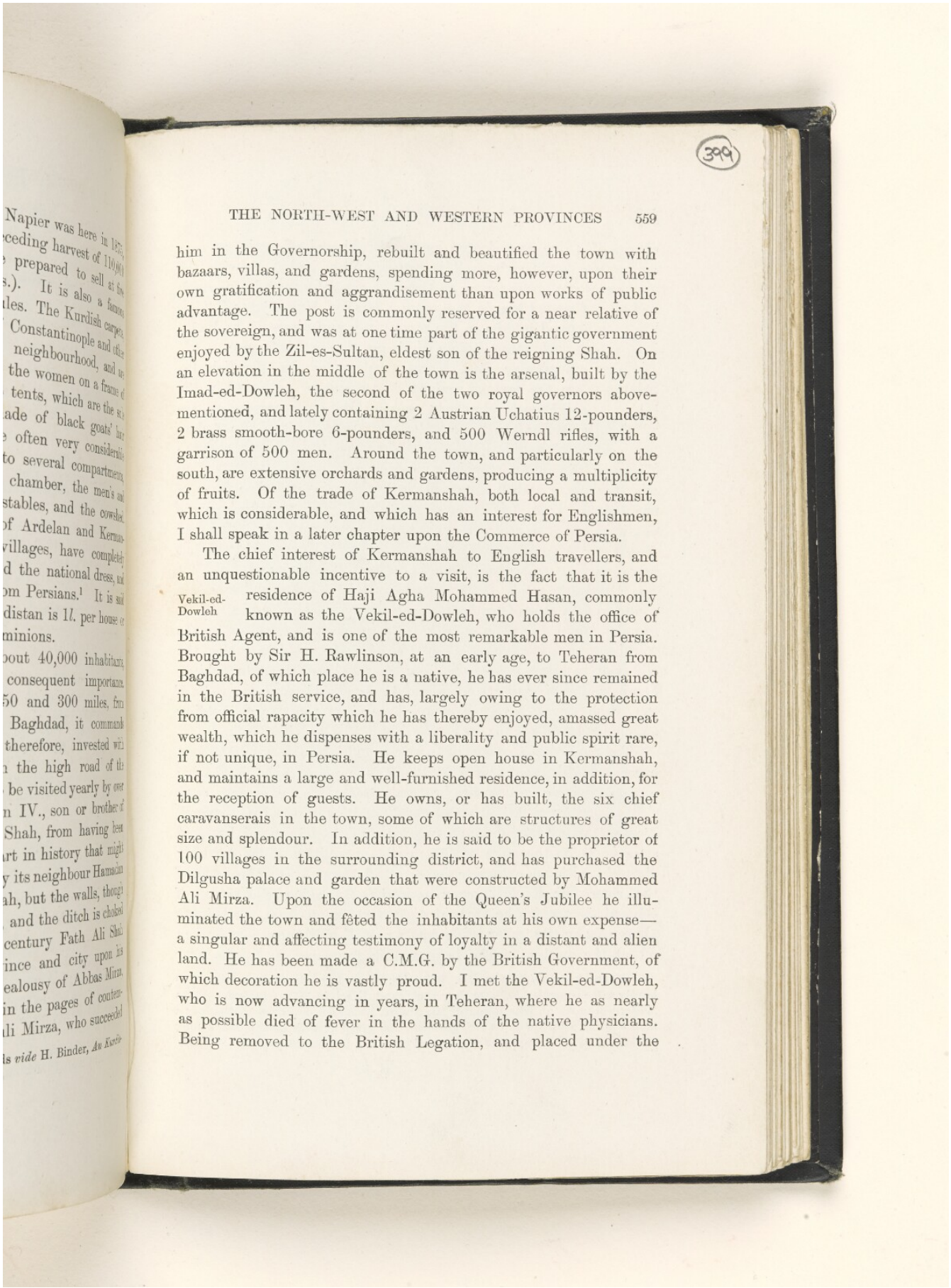
disposed of elsewhere. When Captain Napier was here in 1875, he found a surplus produce from the preceding harvest of 110,000 tons, which the owners were prepared to sell at five shillings per *kharvar* (649 lbs.). It is also a famous locality for the breed of horses and of mules. The Kurdish carpets, which figure so largely in the bazaars of Constantinople and other Oriental cities come largely from this neighbourhood, and are woven in the tents or in the open air by the women on a frame of rude stakes fixed in the ground. The tents, which are the sole habitation of the nomad tribes, are made of black goats' hair blankets stretched upon poles, and are often very considerable structures, divided by reed-partitions into several compartments, used as the *diwan-khaneh*, or reception chamber, the men's and the women's quarters, the kitchen, the stables, and the cowshed. The majority of the sedentary Kurds of Ardelan and Kermanshah, who have long been settled in villages, have completely abandoned both the national instincts and the national dress, and are not at first sight to be mistaken from Persians.[1] It is said that the revenue exacted in Persian Kurdistan is 1*l.* per house or tent, as against 1*l.* 6*s.* in the Ottoman dominions.

Products

The capital, Kermanshahan, with about 40,000 inhabitants, is a place of central position and consequent importance. Almost equidistant, between 250 and 300 miles, from Tabriz, Teheran, Isfahan, and Baghdad, it commands roads to each of those places, and is, therefore, invested with considerable strategical value. Being on the high road of the great pilgrim route to Kerbela, it is said to be visited yearly by over 100,000 pilgrims. Founded by Varahran IV., son or brother of Shapur III., who was known as Kerman Shah, from having been ruler of Kerman, it has not played the part in history that might have been expected, being overshadowed by its neighbour Hamadan (Ecbatana). It was fortified by Nadir Shah, but the walls, though repaired in this century, are now in ruins, and the ditch is choked with rubbish. In the early part of the century Fath Ali Shah conferred the Governorship of this province and city upon his eldest son, Mohammed Ali Mirza, whose jealousy of Abbas Mirza, the Heir Apparent, plays so large a part in the pages of contemporary writers. He, and his son Imam Kuli Mirza, who succeeded

Kermanshahan

[1] For an account of the life of the Persian Kurds *vide* H. Binder, *Au Kurdistan*, pp. 350–353.





him in the Governorship, rebuilt and beautified the town with bazaars, villas, and gardens, spending more, however, upon their own gratification and aggrandisement than upon works of public advantage. The post is commonly reserved for a near relative of the sovereign, and was at one time part of the gigantic government enjoyed by the Zil-es-Sultan, eldest son of the reigning Shah. On an elevation in the middle of the town is the arsenal, built by the Imad-ed-Dowleh, the second of the two royal governors above-mentioned, and lately containing 2 Austrian Uchatius 12-pounders, 2 brass smooth-bore 6-pounders, and 500 Werndl rifles, with a garrison of 500 men. Around the town, and particularly on the south, are extensive orchards and gardens, producing a multiplicity of fruits. Of the trade of Kermanshah, both local and transit, which is considerable, and which has an interest for Englishmen, I shall speak in a later chapter upon the Commerce of Persia.

The chief interest of Kermanshah to English travellers, and an unquestionable incentive to a visit, is the fact that it is the residence of Haji Agha Mohammed Hasan, commonly known as the Vekil-ed-Dowleh, who holds the office of British Agent, and is one of the most remarkable men in Persia. Brought by Sir H. Rawlinson, at an early age, to Teheran from Baghdad, of which place he is a native, he has ever since remained in the British service, and has, largely owing to the protection from official rapacity which he has thereby enjoyed, amassed great wealth, which he dispenses with a liberality and public spirit rare, if not unique, in Persia. He keeps open house in Kermanshah, and maintains a large and well-furnished residence, in addition, for the reception of guests. He owns, or has built, the six chief caravanserais in the town, some of which are structures of great size and splendour. In addition, he is said to be the proprietor of 100 villages in the surrounding district, and has purchased the Dilgusha palace and garden that were constructed by Mohammed Ali Mirza. Upon the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee he illuminated the town and fêted the inhabitants at his own expense—a singular and affecting testimony of loyalty in a distant and alien land. He has been made a C.M.G. by the British Government, of which decoration he is vastly proud. I met the Vekil-ed-Dowleh, who is now advancing in years, in Teheran, where he as nearly as possible died of fever in the hands of the native physicians. Being removed to the British Legation, and placed under the

Vekil-ed-Dowleh

charge of a European doctor, he lightly skipped off again, as soon as he was sufficiently well to emerge from bed, and with the unconquerable obstinacy of an Oriental resought the advice which had all but landed him in the grave. His son, Haji Abdur Rahim, has been trained by him in the same tastes and interests, and will, it is to be hoped, succeed alike to his position and influence.

More remarkable than Kermanshahan or its Kurdish inhabitants, are the famous sculptured remains of antiquity in the neighbourhood, where, on smoothed surfaces of rock, are chiselled the pictorial or written records of the Achæmenian and Sassanian kings, of Darius son of Hystaspes, and the Shapurs; the former of which sculptures will for ever be associated with the name and discovery of Sir H. Rawlinson. The later of the two monuments is situated at Tak-i-Bostan, the Arch of the Garden, at a distance of four miles from Kermanshah. The road passes, at three miles from the city, the great triple-storeyed, but now decaying palace of Imadieh, built on the banks of the Kara Su (Black water) by the Imad-ed-Dowleh, before mentioned, and conducts to a spur of the same great rocky mass, rising in rugged grandeur from the plain, that, twenty miles away, presents to the world the imperishable tablets of Darius. Here, at the base of the cliff-wall, a stream gushes out from the rock, and is conducted into two large tanks or reservoirs, planted around with trees, the work of the same prince-governor, who also raised the large building adjoining, lately purchased by the Vekil-ed-Dowleh.

Tak-i-Bostan

The monuments consist of two deep and lofty arches or grottoes, excavated with great labour and skill in the face of the mountain; within which are several bas-reliefs, executed with remarkable spirit and excellence; while a little beyond, where the mountain recedes, a flight of several hundred steps is cut on the edge of the nearly precipitous cliffs, finishing abruptly with an extensive ledge or platform. On the edge of the river, Sir R. K. Porter noticed the remains of a statue of colossal size, which he thought must have fallen from the heights above; as on the upper ledge was a row of sculptured feet broken off at the ankles.[1] The largest arch measures in height over

Sculptures of the Sassanian Kings

[1] Mounsey in 1867 (*Journey*, p. 297) said: 'Near lies a torso, so mutilated as hardly to be recognisable.' On the other hand, Kiach in 1878 (*Ancient Persian Sculptures*) gives an illustration of the statue, which he describes as that of 'a man wearing a turban and a rich garment, and grasping with both hands a long stick,' and which he says was dug up and placed in its present position.

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thirty feet, in width twenty-four feet, and in depth twenty-two; and the face of the rock has been smoothed for a great distance above the sweep of the arch, and on each side. On the surface to the right and to the left are two upright entablatures, containing exquisitely carved ornamentation adorned with foliage in a classical style. Above the keystone is a crescent, and in the spandrels on either side are winged female figures, resembling the usual type of



TAK-I-BOSTAN

Victory on Roman coins; the artists who carved them having possibly been Greeks of Constantinople. The inner wall of the excavation is divided into two compartments, the upper one of which contains three figures, viz., Chosroes II. in the centre in robes of state, and wearing the Sassanian diadem; and two supporters engaged in presenting him with chaplets. It has been suggested that this group may commemorate the double gift by the Emperor Mauricius



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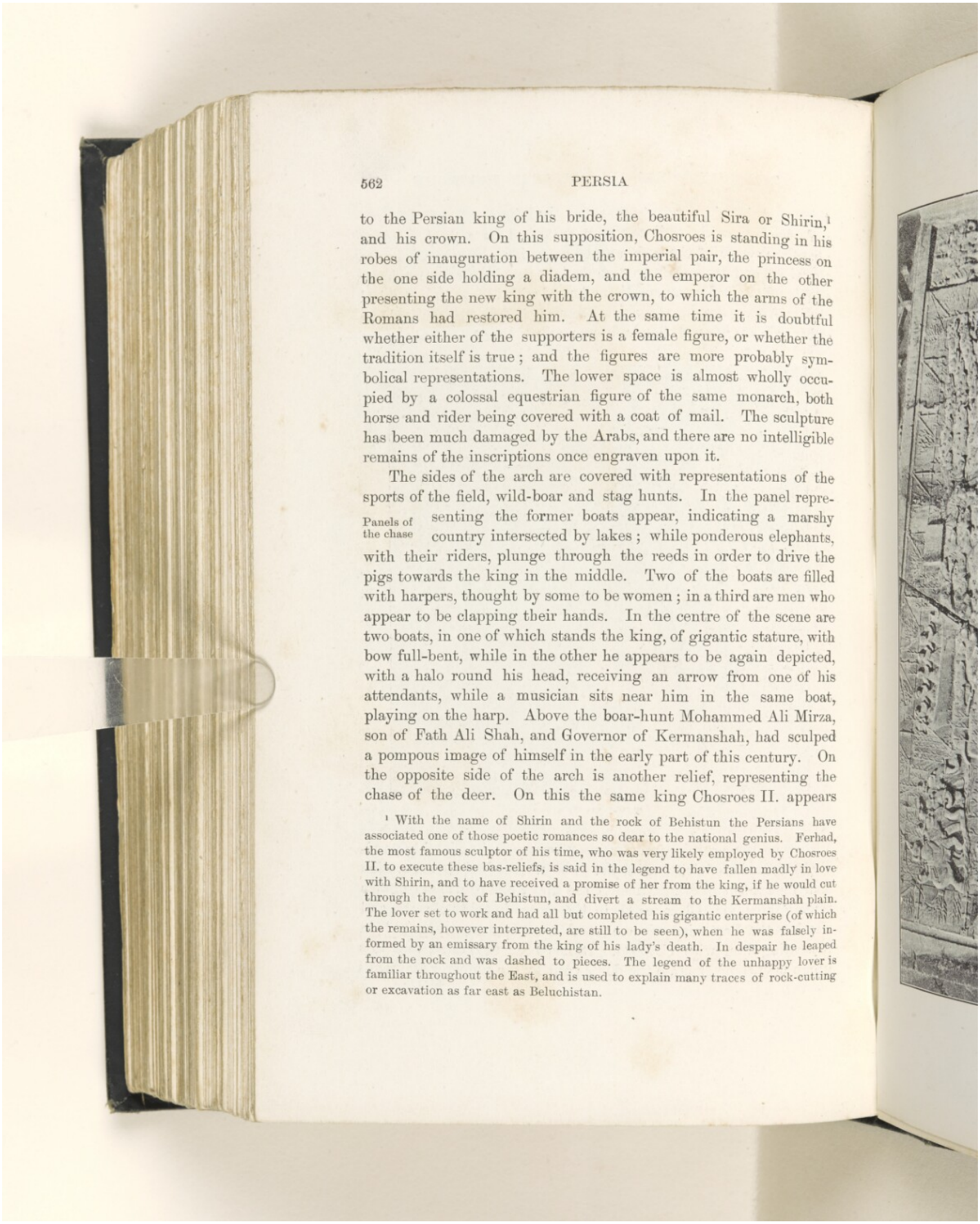



to the Persian king of his bride, the beautiful Sira or Shirin,[1] and his crown. On this supposition, Chosroes is standing in his robes of inauguration between the imperial pair, the princess on the one side holding a diadem, and the emperor on the other presenting the new king with the crown, to which the arms of the Romans had restored him. At the same time it is doubtful whether either of the supporters is a female figure, or whether the tradition itself is true; and the figures are more probably symbolical representations. The lower space is almost wholly occupied by a colossal equestrian figure of the same monarch, both horse and rider being covered with a coat of mail. The sculpture has been much damaged by the Arabs, and there are no intelligible remains of the inscriptions once engraven upon it.

Panels of the chase

The sides of the arch are covered with representations of the sports of the field, wild-boar and stag hunts. In the panel representing the former boats appear, indicating a marshy country intersected by lakes; while ponderous elephants, with their riders, plunge through the reeds in order to drive the pigs towards the king in the middle. Two of the boats are filled with harpers, thought by some to be women; in a third are men who appear to be clapping their hands. In the centre of the scene are two boats, in one of which stands the king, of gigantic stature, with bow full-bent, while in the other he appears to be again depicted, with a halo round his head, receiving an arrow from one of his attendants, while a musician sits near him in the same boat, playing on the harp. Above the boar-hunt Mohammed Ali Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah, and Governor of Kermanshah, had sculped a pompous image of himself in the early part of this century. On the opposite side of the arch is another relief, representing the chase of the deer. On this the same king Chosroes II. appears

[1] With the name of Shirin and the rock of Behistun the Persians have associated one of those poetic romances so dear to the national genius. Ferhad, the most famous sculptor of his time, who was very likely employed by Chosroes II. to execute these bas-reliefs, is said in the legend to have fallen madly in love with Shirin, and to have received a promise of her from the king, if he would cut through the rock of Behistun, and divert a stream to the Kermanshah plain. The lover set to work and had all but completed his gigantic enterprise (of which the remains, however interpreted, are still to be seen), when he was falsely informed by an emissary from the king of his lady's death. In despair he leaped from the rock and was dashed to pieces. The legend of the unhappy lover is familiar throughout the East, and is used to explain many traces of rock-cutting or excavation as far east as Beluchistan.

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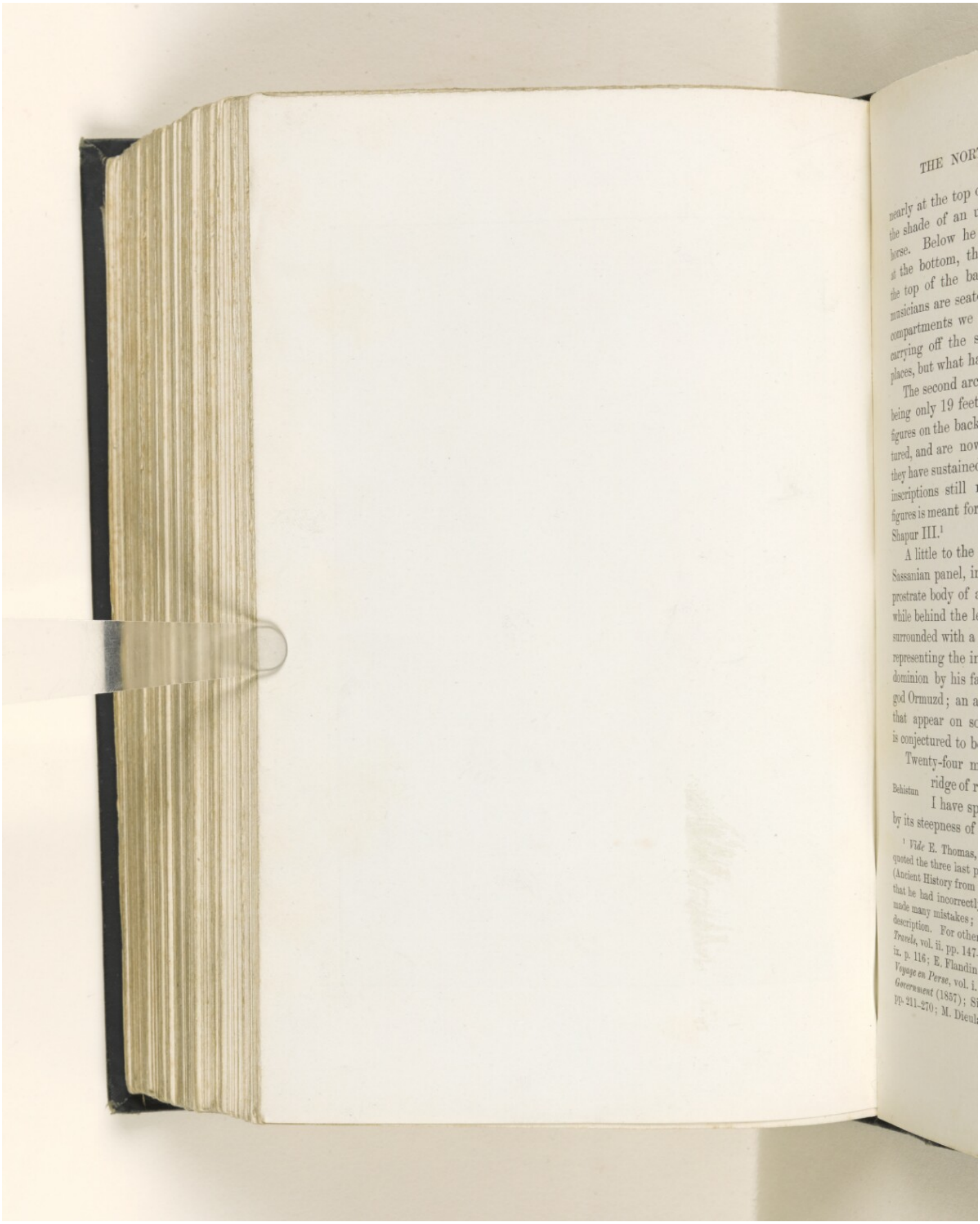
PANEL OF THE CHASE



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nearly at the top of the sculpture, entering the field in state, under the shade of an umbrella, and mounted on a richly caparisoned horse. Below he is again pourtrayed riding at full speed, while at the bottom, the chase over, he canters gaily home. Towards the top of the bas-relief is raised a scaffold, on which rows of musicians are seated, playing on various instruments. In adjoining compartments we see elephants in pursuit of the deer, and camels carrying off the spoil. This bas-relief is finished in only a few places, but what has been completed is executed in a masterly style.

The second arch is smaller in its dimensions than the former, being only 19 feet wide by 11½ in depth and 17 in height. The figures on the back wall were originally rudely and carelessly sculptured, and are now still less visible owing to the wilful mutilation they have sustained. The monument, however, is of value from the inscriptions still remaining on it, which prove that one of the figures is meant for Shapur II. (Zulaktaf), and the other for his son Shapur III.[1]

A little to the right on the face of the cliff, is sculped another Sassanian panel, in which two crowned figures, standing upon the prostrate body of a third, are holding the *cydaris* or royal circlet; while behind the left-hand king is a fourth figure, whose head is surrounded with a radiated nimbus. This is generally accepted as representing the investiture of Shapur I. with a share of the royal dominion by his father Ardeshir Babekan, in the presence of the god Ormuzd; an act which is also indicated by the double heads that appear on some of Ardeshir's coins. The prostrate figure is conjectured to be that of Artabanus, the last Parthian king.

Behistun

Twenty-four miles to the east of Kermanshah the splendid ridge of rock, 1,500 feet in height above the plain, of which I have spoken, and whose grandeur of outline is matched by its steepness of face, presents upon a smoothed portion of its

[1] *Vide* E. Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, p. 104. I had originally quoted the three last paragraphs in inverted commas from W. S. Vaux, *Persia* (Ancient History from the Monuments) 1884; but a closer examination revealed that he had incorrectly copied them from R. K. Porter, who had also himself made many mistakes; and accordingly I have been obliged to recast the whole description. For other accounts of Tak-i-Bostan *vide* Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 147–163; Sir H. Rawlinson (1836), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. ix. p. 116; E. Flandin and P. Coste (1841), *Perse Ancienne*, vol. i. pls. 1–14, and *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. caps. xxvi.–vii.; Com. F. Jones (1844), *Records of Bombay Government* (1857); Silvestre de Sacy, *Mém. sur div. Antiq. de la Perse*, 1793, pp. 211–270; M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, 1890, Part V. pp. 95–108.



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surface, at a height of 300 feet from the ground, the triumphal engravings of Darius son of Hystaspes, and the cuneiform record of his conquering reign, first copied and deciphered nearly fifty years ago by Sir H. Rawlinson. The name is variously spelt and pronounced as Behistun or Bisitun, and was the Mons Bagistanus or Βαγίστανον ὄρος of the classical writers. Bisitun might mean either 'twenty pillars' or 'without pillars,' but Baghestan has been supposed by modern scholars to signify 'abode of the gods,' which would agree with the Διὸς ὄρος or title given to it by Diodorus Siculus.[1] If his account, cited from Ctesias, be credited, the sculptures of Semiramis, whom he alleges to have visited the place on her march from Babylon to Ecbatana, and to have caused her own image and that of her hundred guards to be graven on the rock, must have been obliterated by successors or have perished in the lapse of time. Before the secret of the cuneiform alphabet had been won, the rock and its aerial bas-reliefs had been made known to Europe by the descriptions of a number of travellers; but how deeply their ignorance allowed them to plunge, and how wild a goose chase they were led by a fine imagination, may be seen from the conjectures of the romantic Ker Porter, that the principal sculpture represented Shalmaneser and the ten captive tribes of Israel; of the Frenchman Gardanne that they were Christ and the twelve disciples; and of Keppel, that the train of prisoners were the attendants of Esther, with the queen at their head, supplicating King Ahasuerus on behalf of her condemned countrymen!

We now know that the bas-reliefs are those of Darius and of the rebels, tied to each other by the neck, whom he overcame, and upon the prostrate body of one of whom his heel is planted. Behind the king stand two warriors armed with bow and spear. The humiliation of the conquered is typified by their diminutive size, but the majesty of the king demands a superhuman stature. That there may be no mistake, tablets with the names of those referred to are placed above the monarch and the prisoners. Over the head of the king himself we read: 'I am Darius the king, the king of kings, the king of Persia, the great king of the provinces, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achæmenian. Says Darius the king: My father was Hystaspes; of Hystaspes, the father was Arsames; of Arsames

Sculptures of Darius

[1] I should prefer simply to translate Baghestan as the 'place of gardens,' and to regard Bisitun and Bostan as versions, or contractions, of the same name.

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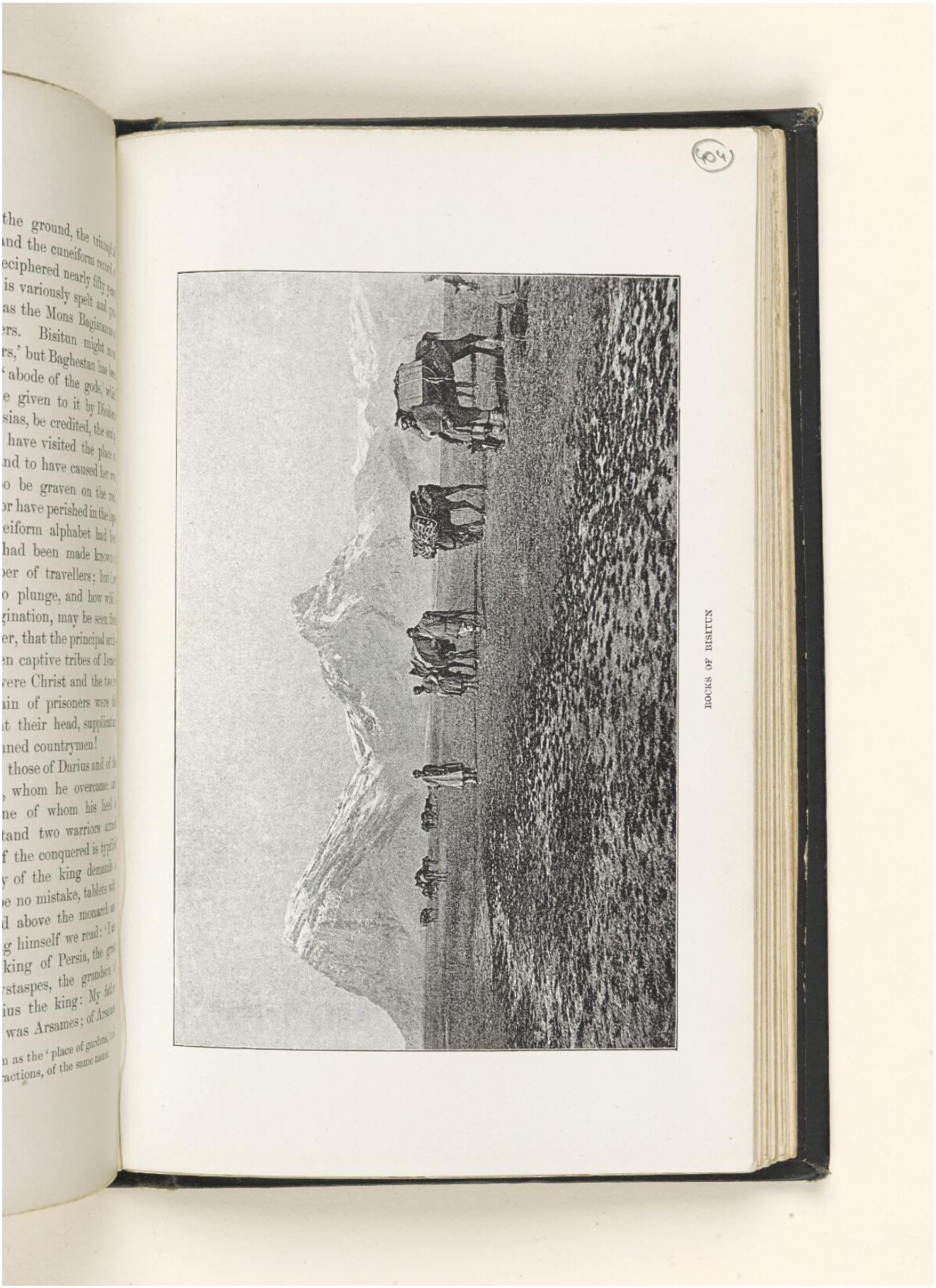

ROCKS OF BISITUN

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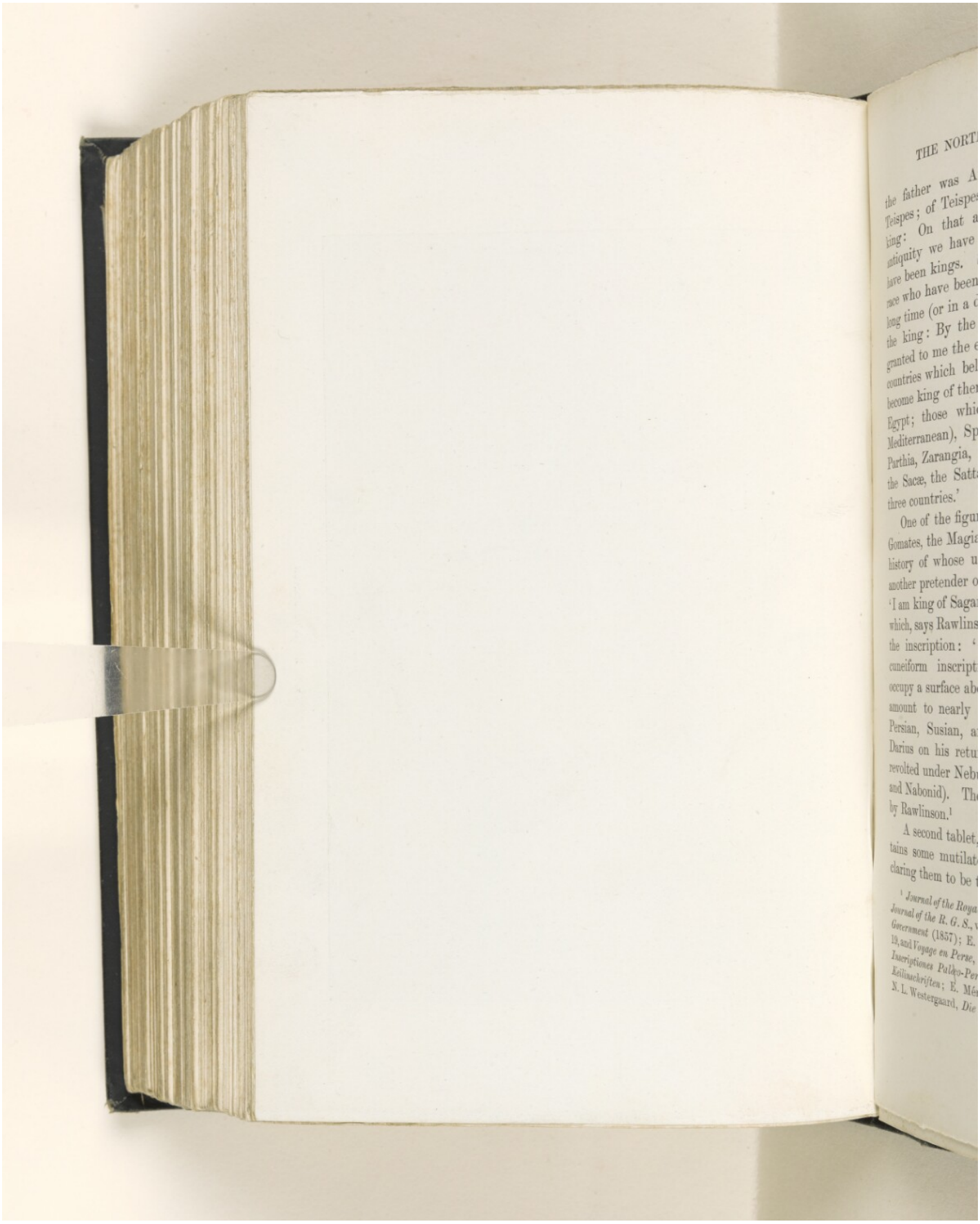

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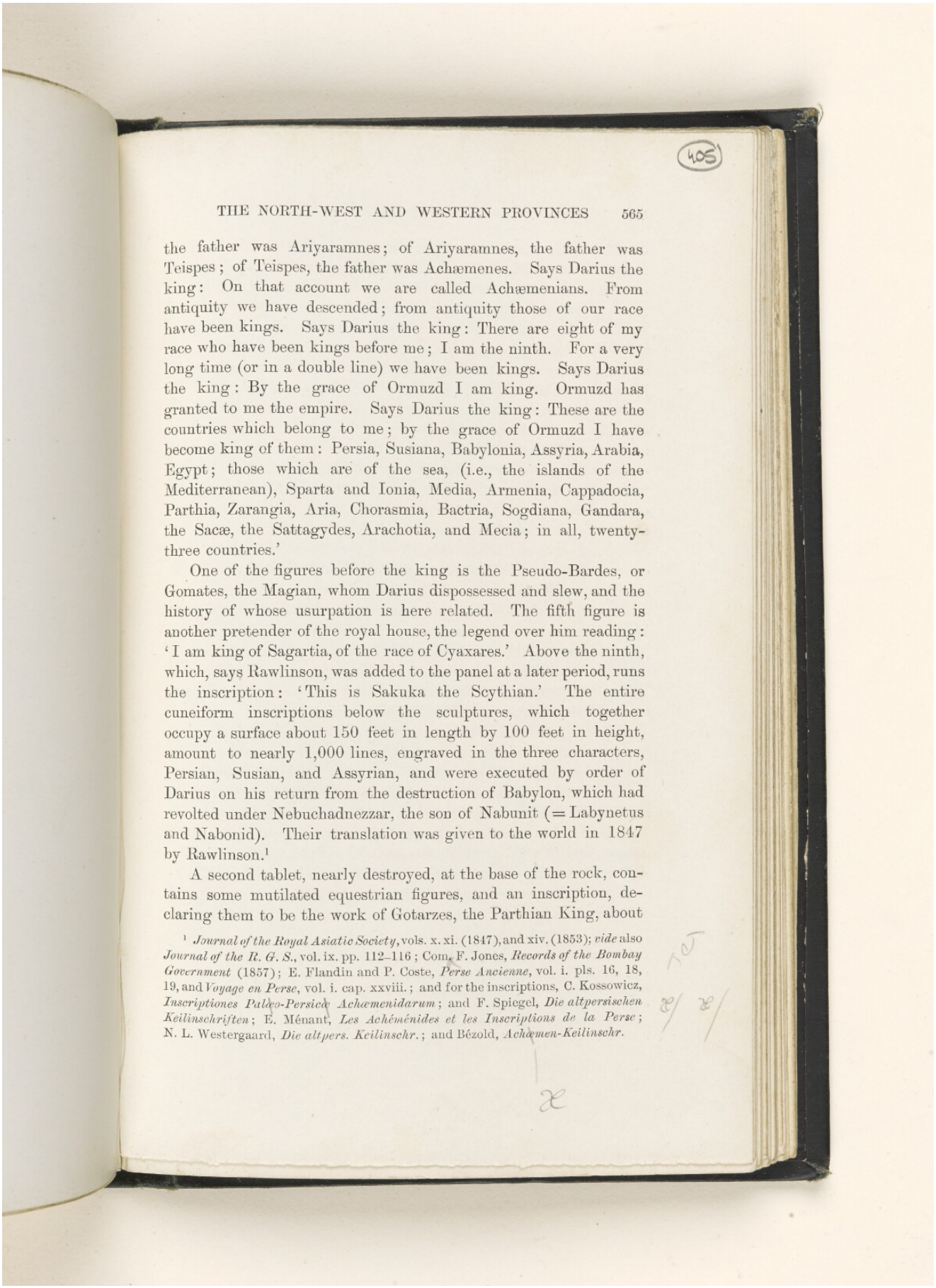



the father was Ariyaramnes; of Ariyaramnes, the father was Teispes; of Teispes, the father was Achæmenes. Says Darius the king: On that account we are called Achæmenians. From antiquity we have descended; from antiquity those of our race have been kings. Says Darius the king: There are eight of my race who have been kings before me; I am the ninth. For a very long time (or in a double line) we have been kings. Says Darius the king: By the grace of Ormuzd I am king. Ormuzd has granted to me the empire. Says Darius the king: These are the countries which belong to me; by the grace of Ormuzd I have become king of them: Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt; those which are of the sea, (i.e., the islands of the Mediterranean), Sparta and Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, the Sacæ, the Sattagydes, Arachotia, and Mecia; in all, twenty-three countries.'

One of the figures before the king is the Pseudo-Bardes, or Gomates, the Magian, whom Darius dispossessed and slew, and the history of whose usurpation is here related. The fifth figure is another pretender of the royal house, the legend over him reading: 'I am king of Sagartia, of the race of Cyaxares.' Above the ninth, which, says Rawlinson, was added to the panel at a later period, runs the inscription: 'This is Sakuka the Scythian.' The entire cuneiform inscriptions below the sculptures, which together occupy a surface about 150 feet in length by 100 feet in height, amount to nearly 1,000 lines, engraved in the three characters, Persian, Susian, and Assyrian, and were executed by order of Darius on his return from the destruction of Babylon, which had revolted under Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabunit (= Labynetus and Nabonid). Their translation was given to the world in 1847 by Rawlinson.[1]

A second tablet, nearly destroyed, at the base of the rock, contains some mutilated equestrian figures, and an inscription, declaring them to be the work of Gotarzes, the Parthian King, about

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vols. x. xi. (1847), and xiv. (1853); *vide* also *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. ix. pp. 112–116; Com. F. Jones, *Records of the Bombay Government* (1857); E. Flandin and P. Coste, *Perse Ancienne*, vol. i. pls. 16, 18, 19, and *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.; and for the inscriptions, C. Kossowicz, *Inscriptiones Palæo-Persicæ Achæmenidarum*; and F. Spiegel, *Die altpersischen Keilinschriften*; E. Ménant, *Les Achéménides et les Inscriptions de la Perse*; N. L. Westergaard, *Die altpers. Keilinschr.*; and Bézold, *Achæmen-Keilinschr.*

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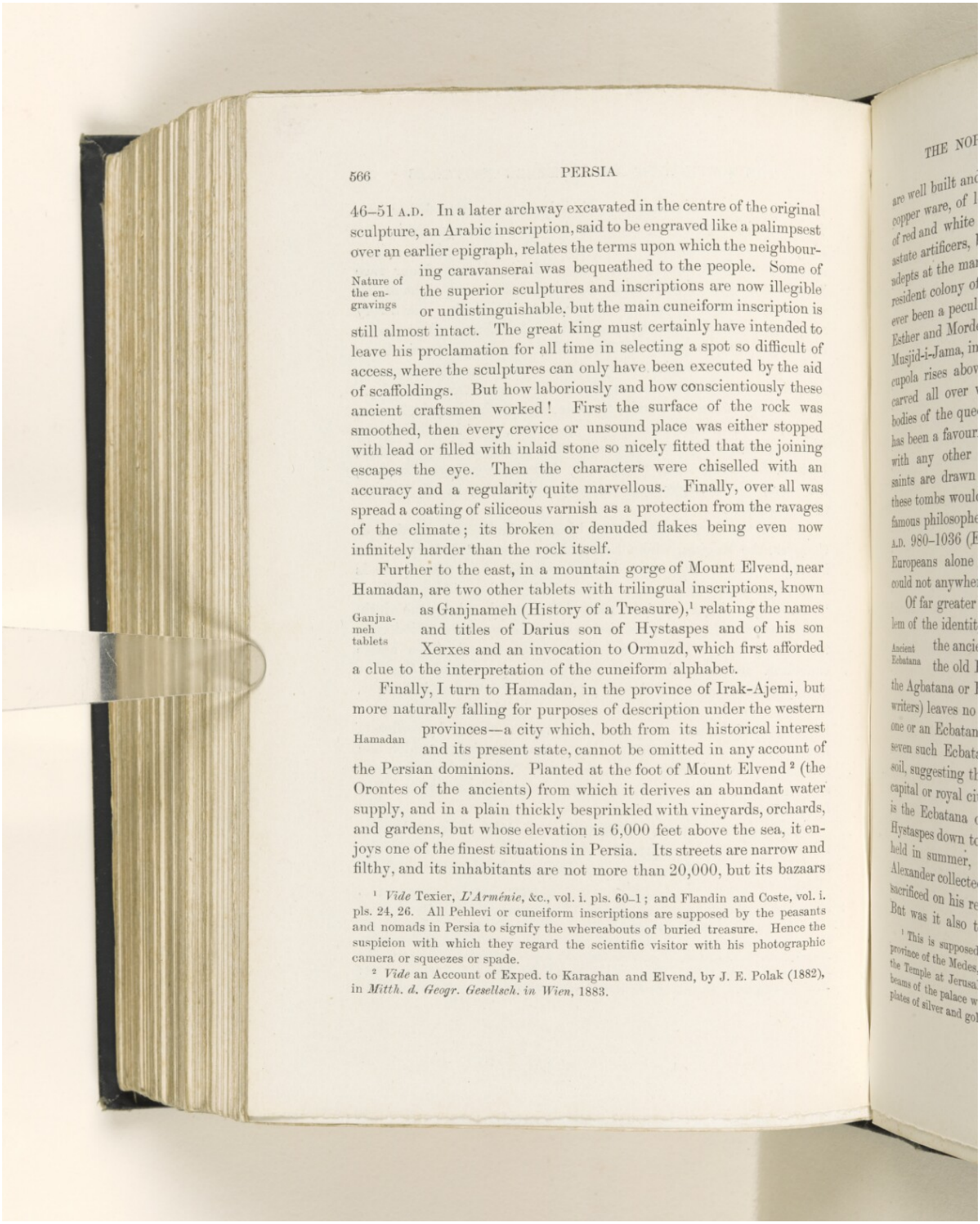



46–51 A.D. In a later archway excavated in the centre of the original sculpture, an Arabic inscription, said to be engraved like a palimpsest over an earlier epigraph, relates the terms upon which the neighbouring caravanserai was bequeathed to the people. Some of the superior sculptures and inscriptions are now illegible or undistinguishable, but the main cuneiform inscription is still almost intact. The great king must certainly have intended to leave his proclamation for all time in selecting a spot so difficult of access, where the sculptures can only have been executed by the aid of scaffoldings. But how laboriously and how conscientiously these ancient craftsmen worked! First the surface of the rock was smoothed, then every crevice or unsound place was either stopped with lead or filled with inlaid stone so nicely fitted that the joining escapes the eye. Then the characters were chiselled with an accuracy and a regularity quite marvellous. Finally, over all was spread a coating of siliceous varnish as a protection from the ravages of the climate; its broken or denuded flakes being even now infinitely harder than the rock itself.

Nature of the engravings

Further to the east, in a mountain gorge of Mount Elvend, near Hamadan, are two other tablets with trilingual inscriptions, known as Ganjnameh (History of a Treasure),[1] relating the names and titles of Darius son of Hystaspes and of his son Xerxes and an invocation to Ormuzd, which first afforded a clue to the interpretation of the cuneiform alphabet.

Ganjnameh tablets

Finally, I turn to Hamadan, in the province of Irak-Ajemi, but more naturally falling for purposes of description under the western provinces—a city which, both from its historical interest and its present state, cannot be omitted in any account of the Persian dominions. Planted at the foot of Mount Elvend[2] (the Orontes of the ancients) from which it derives an abundant water supply, and in a plain thickly besprinkled with vineyards, orchards, and gardens, but whose elevation is 6,000 feet above the sea, it enjoys one of the finest situations in Persia. Its streets are narrow and filthy, and its inhabitants are not more than 20,000, but its bazaars

Hamadan

[1] *Vide* Texier, *L'Arménie*, &c., vol. i. pls. 60–1; and Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pls. 24, 26. All Pehlevi or cuneiform inscriptions are supposed by the peasants and nomads in Persia to signify the whereabouts of buried treasure. Hence the suspicion with which they regard the scientific visitor with his photographic camera or squeezes or spade.

[2] *Vide* an Account of Exped. to Karaghan and Elvend, by J. E. Polak (1882), in *Mitth. d. Geogr. Gesellsch. in Wien*, 1883.

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are well built and populous with trade, its local manufactures of copper ware, of leather (largely used for trunks and saddlery), and of red and white wine, are widely known and patronised; and its astute artificers, besides working in silver and gold, are said to be adepts at the manufacture of spurious coins. It contains a large resident colony of 1,500 to 2,000 Jews, with whom Hamadan has ever been a peculiarly sacred spot, owing to the alleged tombs of Esther and Mordecai, which are shown in a building adjoining the Musjid-i-Jama, in the heart of the town. A conspicuously modern cupola rises above the chamber in which, in wooden sarcophagi carved all over with Hebrew characters, are said to repose the bodies of the queen and her uncle. From early times this shrine has been a favourite resort of Hebrew pilgrims; nor is it regarded with any other feeling by the Mohammedans, many of whose saints are drawn from the Old Testament calendar. To them these tombs would appeal far more than the grave of the once famous philosopher and physician, Abu Ali-ibn-Sena of Bokhara, A.D. 980–1036 (Europeanised, by those strange processes of which Europeans alone are capable, into Avicenna), to which Layard could not anywhere find a guide.

Of far greater interest is the historical and archæological problem of the identity of Hamadan with the celebrated Ecbatana of the ancient world. The identity of the names (Hamadan, the old Persian Hagmatana of the inscriptions, which is the Agbatana or Ecbatana, signifying treasure-house, of the Greek writers) leaves no doubt that the modern city occupies the site of one or an Ecbatana of ancient times. But there were no less than seven such Ecbatanas, of which four were on Persian or Median soil, suggesting that the name was a descriptive designation of a capital or royal city. It is now generally admitted that Hamadan is the Ecbatana of the Achæmenian kings,[1] from Darius son of Hystaspes down to the Macedonian conquest, where their court was held in summer, where their treasures were accumulated, where Alexander collected such vast piles of plunder, where he halted and sacrificed on his return from the East, and where Hephæstion died. But was it also the Ecbatana of Herodotus, the capital of the

Ancient Ecbatana

[1] This is supposed to be the Achmetha where 'in the palace that is in the province of the Medes,' the decree of Cyrus was found, ordering the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, *Ezra*, vi. 2. According to Polybius, the columns and beams of the palace were of cedar and cypress, and were entirely covered with plates of silver and gold.

earlier Median kingdom, where Deioces erected the citadel with seven concentric and coloured walls, painted like those of the terraced temples of Babylon to represent the celestial spheres? Upon this point authorities differ, and are likely to continue to differ, until the discovery of some relic or inscription throws light upon one of the dark places of history. Outside the modern town is an elevation, known as the Musallah, which has always been occupied by a citadel (until levelled by Agha Mohammed Shah); but it is doubtful whether this eminence can be made to correspond with the Herodotean description. Sir H. Rawlinson has boldly sought a solution of the difficulty, by locating the Median Ecbatana at a spot called Takht-i-Suleiman (Throne of Solomon), about half-way between Hamadan and Tabriz, where, upon a conical hill, are to be found extensive ruins and the remains of a great fire-temple.[1] It is certainly strange, if Hamadan be the site of a city, said by the early Greeks to have been scarcely inferior to Babylon, that barely a remnant worthy of the name should have been discovered. A rudely carved stone lion, or rather the battered semblance thereof, lies not far from the city, and is locally regarded as a talisman or palladium against famine and cold. But the great beast tells no tale, and until a really scientific attempt with pick and shovel be made at Hamadan we can but imitate its silence.[2]

Turco-Persian frontier

Before I quit the subject of the western provinces of Persia, let me revert once more to the boundary with Turkey, in order to say that, ill-defined or dubiously recognised as I have described the frontier of Persia as being on the east, any uncertainty existing in that quarter is as nothing compared with the lack of exact delimitation that prevails here. Nearly half a century ago, in order to prevent an impending collision between Persia and Turkey on the Kurdish border, Great Britain and Russia secured the appointment of a Turco-Persian

[1] *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. x. p. 1.

[2] For accounts of Hamadan *vide* A. Dupré (1807), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. cap. xxiii; J. P. Morier (1812), *Second Journey*, pp. 264–270; Sir H. Layard (1840), *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 252–254, 269–273; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 35–42; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii. letter xxiii. The only Achæmenian remains found near Hamadan have been five or six bases of columns, one of which, presenting an inscription with the name of Artaxerxes II. or Mnemon, was on view in the Paris Exhibition in 1889 (*vide* Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 115; and Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. v. pp. 501, 755–6); and, on another spot, two other bases of columns (Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 25).

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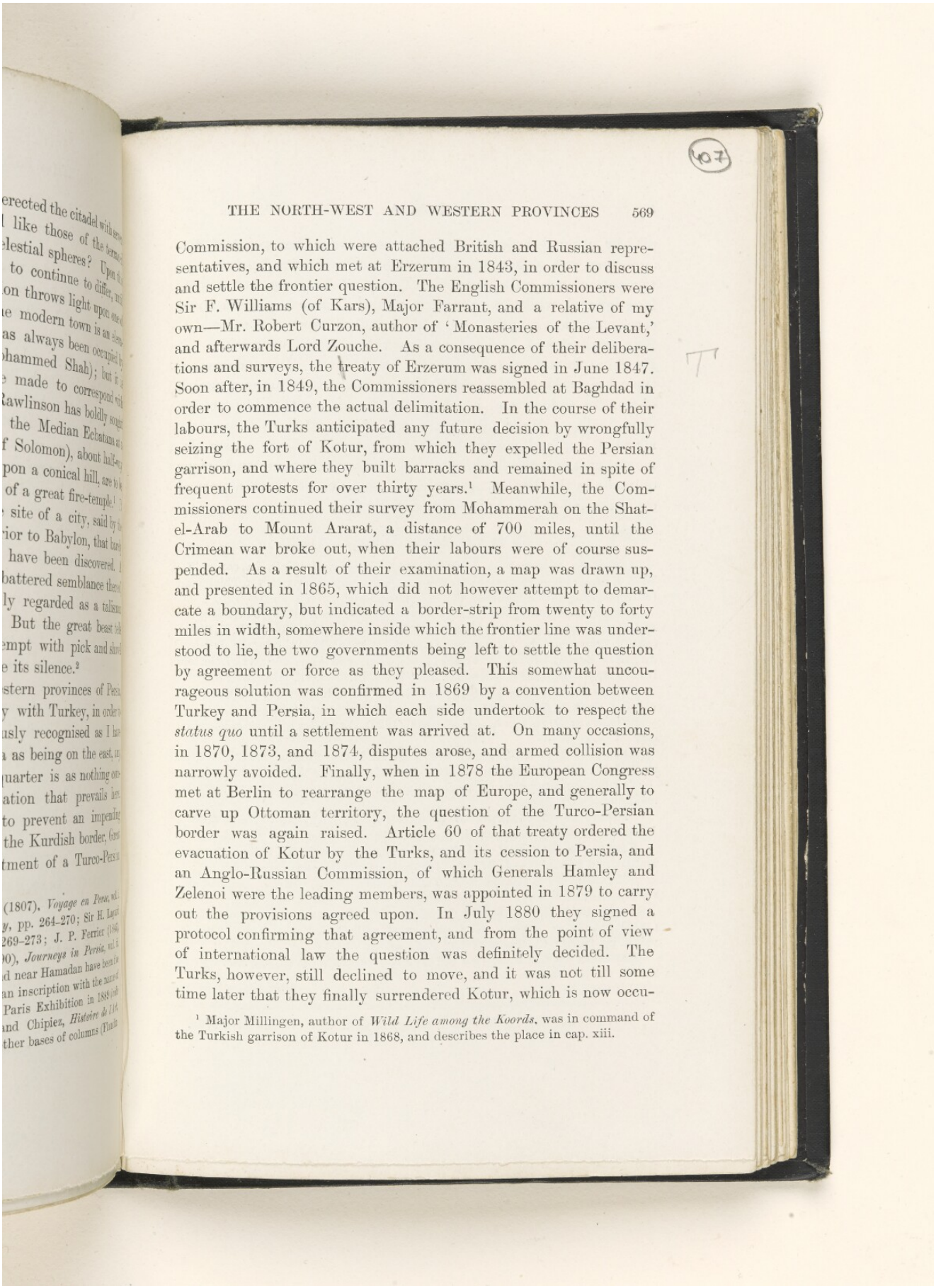



Commission, to which were attached British and Russian representatives, and which met at Erzerum in 1843, in order to discuss and settle the frontier question. The English Commissioners were Sir F. Williams (of Kars), Major Farrant, and a relative of my own—Mr. Robert Curzon, author of 'Monasteries of the Levant,' and afterwards Lord Zouche. As a consequence of their deliberations and surveys, the treaty of Erzerum was signed in June 1847. Soon after, in 1849, the Commissioners reassembled at Baghdad in order to commence the actual delimitation. In the course of their labours, the Turks anticipated any future decision by wrongfully seizing the fort of Kotur, from which they expelled the Persian garrison, and where they built barracks and remained in spite of frequent protests for over thirty years.[1] Meanwhile, the Commissioners continued their survey from Mohammerah on the Shat-el-Arab to Mount Ararat, a distance of 700 miles, until the Crimean war broke out, when their labours were of course suspended. As a result of their examination, a map was drawn up, and presented in 1865, which did not however attempt to demarcate a boundary, but indicated a border-strip from twenty to forty miles in width, somewhere inside which the frontier line was understood to lie, the two governments being left to settle the question by agreement or force as they pleased. This somewhat uncourageous solution was confirmed in 1869 by a convention between Turkey and Persia, in which each side undertook to respect the *status quo* until a settlement was arrived at. On many occasions, in 1870, 1873, and 1874, disputes arose, and armed collision was narrowly avoided. Finally, when in 1878 the European Congress met at Berlin to rearrange the map of Europe, and generally to carve up Ottoman territory, the question of the Turco-Persian border was again raised. Article 60 of that treaty ordered the evacuation of Kotur by the Turks, and its cession to Persia, and an Anglo-Russian Commission, of which Generals Hamley and Zelenoi were the leading members, was appointed in 1879 to carry out the provisions agreed upon. In July 1880 they signed a protocol confirming that agreement, and from the point of view of international law the question was definitely decided. The Turks, however, still declined to move, and it was not till some time later that they finally surrendered Kotur, which is now occu-

[1] Major Millingen, author of *Wild Life among the Koords*, was in command of the Turkish garrison of Kotur in 1868, and describes the place in cap. xiii.

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pied by a small body of Persian troops. Another point of disagreement was Zohab, a partition of which district between the two powers was ordered by the Treaty of Erzerum, but was for long ignored, whilst quite recently a third dispute has arisen about certain districts round Bagsai and Ghoreibeh, west of the Pusht-i-Kuh mountains of Luristan, and near the Tigris, over which the Persians claim disputed rights of cultivation. These cases are typical of others that might at any moment arise upon a stretch of frontier so long and so completely lacking either in precision or in finality. Were not Turkey and Persia each so desperately afraid of war, and so apprehensive of unloosing the turbulent elements that, at the best of times, preserve but an ambiguous quietude in the border mountains, a state of affairs so abnormal could not fail to lead to international conflict.

### Routes in the North-West Provinces.[1]

Tabriz to Ardebil.—A. Jaubert (1805), *Voyage en Arménie, &c.*, cap. xviii.; W. R. Holmes (1843), *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, caps. i.–iv.; M. von Thielmann (1872), *Journey in the Caucasus, &c.*, vol. ii. cap. v.

Tabriz to Suleimanieh (1. *viâ* Van).—(Sir) J. Sheil (1836), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. viii. p. 54. (2. *viâ* Urumiah, Ushnu, and Suj Bulak).—Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 448–98; Capt. R. Mignan (1830), *Winter's Journey, &c.*, vol. i. caps. ix–xii.; J B. Fraser (1835), *Travels in Koordistan*, vol. i. letters iv., v.; M. Wagner (1843), *Travels in Persia*, vol. iii. caps. vi., vii.

Tabriz to Suj Bulak (*viâ* Ajebshir).—A. H. Schindler (1881–2), *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erdk. z. Berlin*, 1883, pp. 320–44.

Suleimanieh to Sinna.—C. J. Rich (1820), *Narrative of Residence*, vol. i. caps. vi., vii.

Tabriz to Takht-i-Suleiman.—Sir R. K. Porter (1819), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 527–59; (Sir) H. Rawlinson (1838), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. x. 1.

Takht-i-Suleiman to Zinjan.—(Sir) H. Rawlinson (1838), *ibid.*; A. H Schindler (1880), *ibid.*

Ardebil to Sultanieh (*viâ* Khalkal and Zinjan).—A. Jaubert (1805), *Voyage en Arménie, &c.*, cap. xxii.

Kazvin to Hamadan (*viâ* Farsian, Ruak, Aliabad, Kulanjin, Ainabad, Harian, and Faminin).—J. D. Rees (1885), *Notes of a Journey* (Madras).

Sultanieh to Hamadan.—Ch. Texier (1839), *Description de l'Arménie, &c.*, vol. ii.

Hamadan to Isfahan (*viâ* Gulpaigan and Khonsar).—J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels in Assyria*, vol. i. caps. x. xi.; Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 59–91; Ch. Texier (1839), *ibid.*, vol. ii.

Hamadan to Urumiah (*viâ* Suj Bulak).—Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii. letters xxv.–xxvii.

Urumiah to Kochannis.—Mrs. Bishop (1890), *ibid.*, vol. ii. letter xxviii.

[1] In this table *ibid.* signifies the work by the same writer before mentioned.

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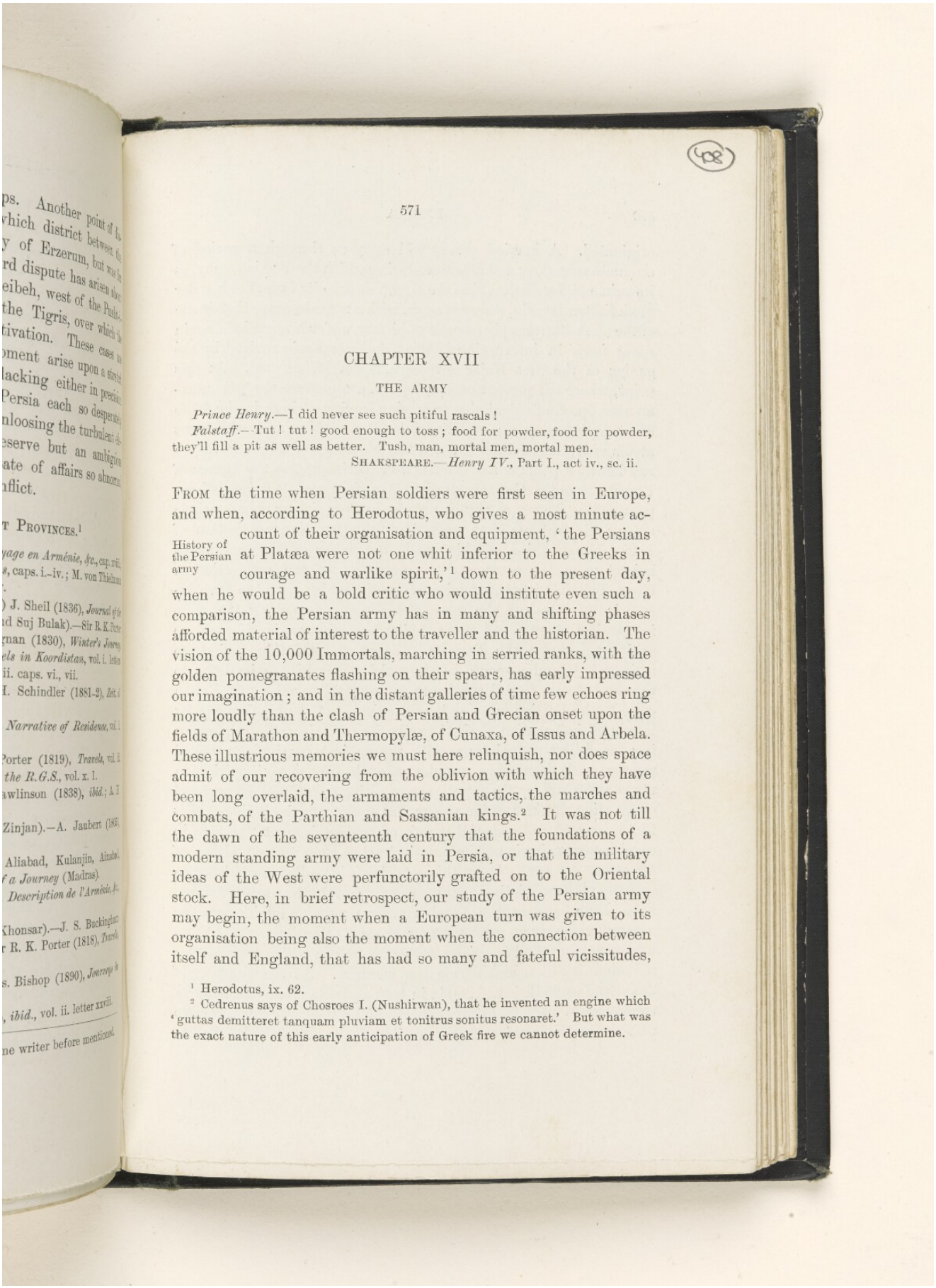




# CHAPTER XVII

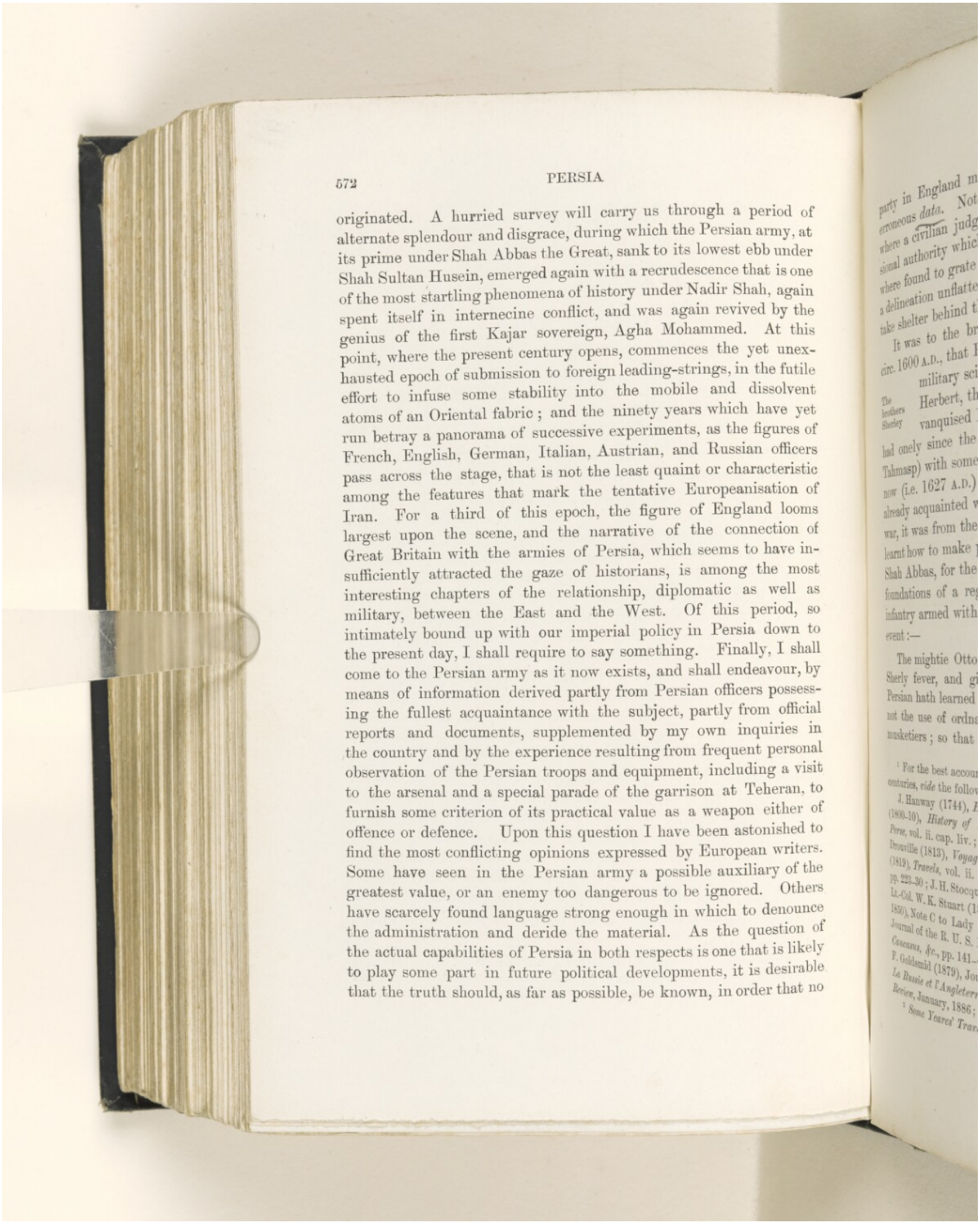
## THE ARMY

*Prince Henry.*—I did never see such pitiful rascals!
*Falstaff.*—Tut! tut! good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder, they'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.
SHAKSPEARE.—*Henry IV.*, Part I., act iv., sc. ii.

History of the Persian army

FROM the time when Persian soldiers were first seen in Europe, and when, according to Herodotus, who gives a most minute account of their organisation and equipment, 'the Persians at Platæa were not one whit inferior to the Greeks in courage and warlike spirit,'[1] down to the present day, when he would be a bold critic who would institute even such a comparison, the Persian army has in many and shifting phases afforded material of interest to the traveller and the historian. The vision of the 10,000 Immortals, marching in serried ranks, with the golden pomegranates flashing on their spears, has early impressed our imagination; and in the distant galleries of time few echoes ring more loudly than the clash of Persian and Grecian onset upon the fields of Marathon and Thermopylæ, of Cunaxa, of Issus and Arbela. These illustrious memories we must here relinquish, nor does space admit of our recovering from the oblivion with which they have been long overlaid, the armaments and tactics, the marches and combats, of the Parthian and Sassanian kings.[2] It was not till the dawn of the seventeenth century that the foundations of a modern standing army were laid in Persia, or that the military ideas of the West were perfunctorily grafted on to the Oriental stock. Here, in brief retrospect, our study of the Persian army may begin, the moment when a European turn was given to its organisation being also the moment when the connection between itself and England, that has had so many and fateful vicissitudes,

[1] Herodotus, ix. 62.
[2] Cedrenus says of Chosroes I. (Nushirwan), that he invented an engine which 'guttas demitteret tanquam pluviam et tonitrus sonitus resonaret.' But what was the exact nature of this early anticipation of Greek fire we cannot determine.





originated. A hurried survey will carry us through a period of alternate splendour and disgrace, during which the Persian army, at its prime under Shah Abbas the Great, sank to its lowest ebb under Shah Sultan Husein, emerged again with a recrudescence that is one of the most startling phenomena of history under Nadir Shah, again spent itself in internecine conflict, and was again revived by the genius of the first Kajar sovereign, Agha Mohammed. At this point, where the present century opens, commences the yet unexhausted epoch of submission to foreign leading-strings, in the futile effort to infuse some stability into the mobile and dissolvent atoms of an Oriental fabric; and the ninety years which have yet run betray a panorama of successive experiments, as the figures of French, English, German, Italian, Austrian, and Russian officers pass across the stage, that is not the least quaint or characteristic among the features that mark the tentative Europeanisation of Iran. For a third of this epoch, the figure of England looms largest upon the scene, and the narrative of the connection of Great Britain with the armies of Persia, which seems to have insufficiently attracted the gaze of historians, is among the most interesting chapters of the relationship, diplomatic as well as military, between the East and the West. Of this period, so intimately bound up with our imperial policy in Persia down to the present day, I shall require to say something. Finally, I shall come to the Persian army as it now exists, and shall endeavour, by means of information derived partly from Persian officers possessing the fullest acquaintance with the subject, partly from official reports and documents, supplemented by my own inquiries in the country and by the experience resulting from frequent personal observation of the Persian troops and equipment, including a visit to the arsenal and a special parade of the garrison at Teheran, to furnish some criterion of its practical value as a weapon either of offence or defence. Upon this question I have been astonished to find the most conflicting opinions expressed by European writers. Some have seen in the Persian army a possible auxiliary of the greatest value, or an enemy too dangerous to be ignored. Others have scarcely found language strong enough in which to denounce the administration and deride the material. As the question of the actual capabilities of Persia in both respects is one that is likely to play some part in future political developments, it is desirable that the truth should, as far as possible, be known, in order that no

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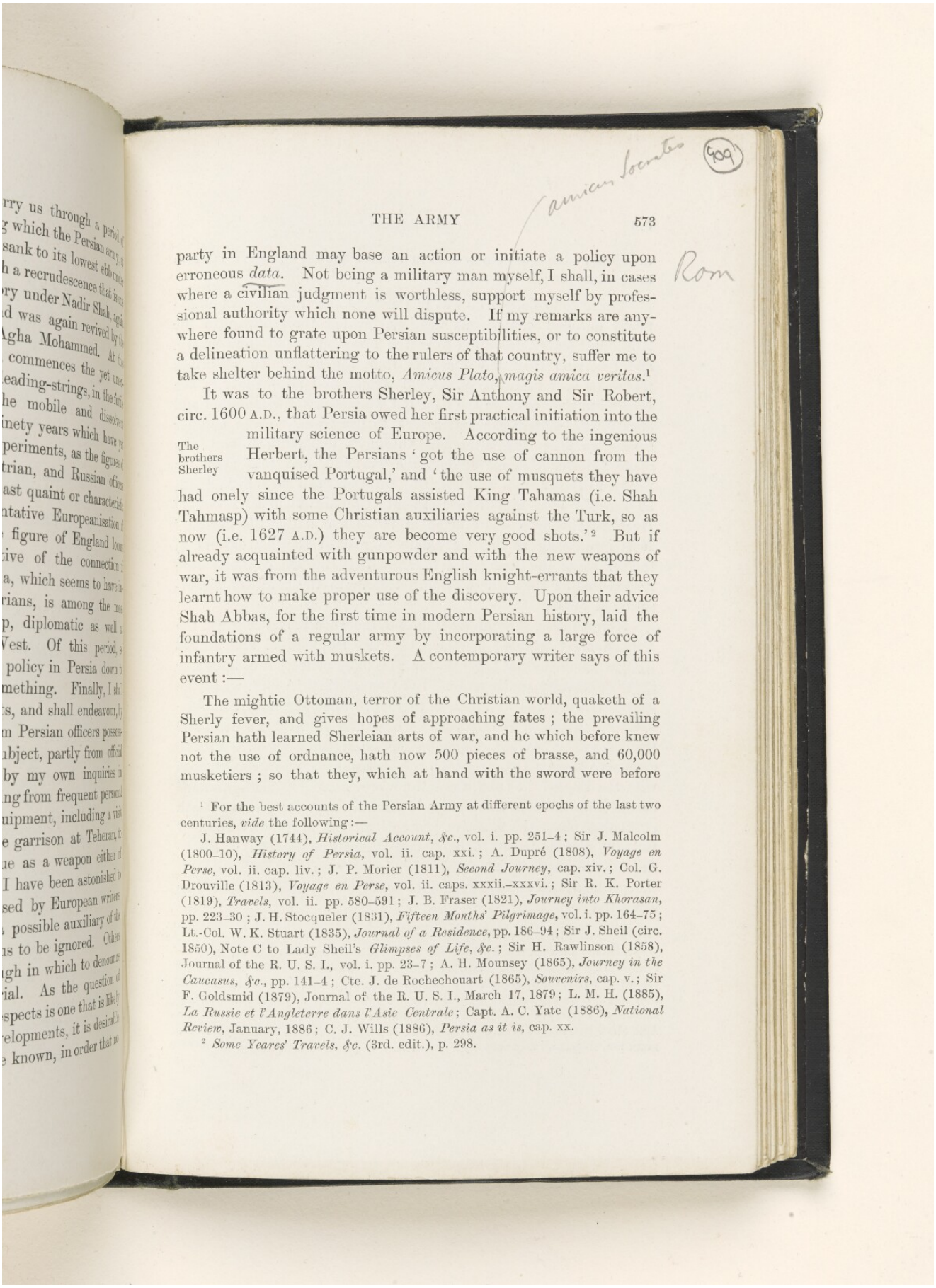




party in England may base an action or initiate a policy upon erroneous *data*. Not being a military man myself, I shall, in cases where a civilian judgment is worthless, support myself by professional authority which none will dispute. If my remarks are anywhere found to grate upon Persian susceptibilities, or to constitute a delineation unflattering to the rulers of that country, suffer me to take shelter behind the motto, *Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas*.[1]

The brothers Sherley

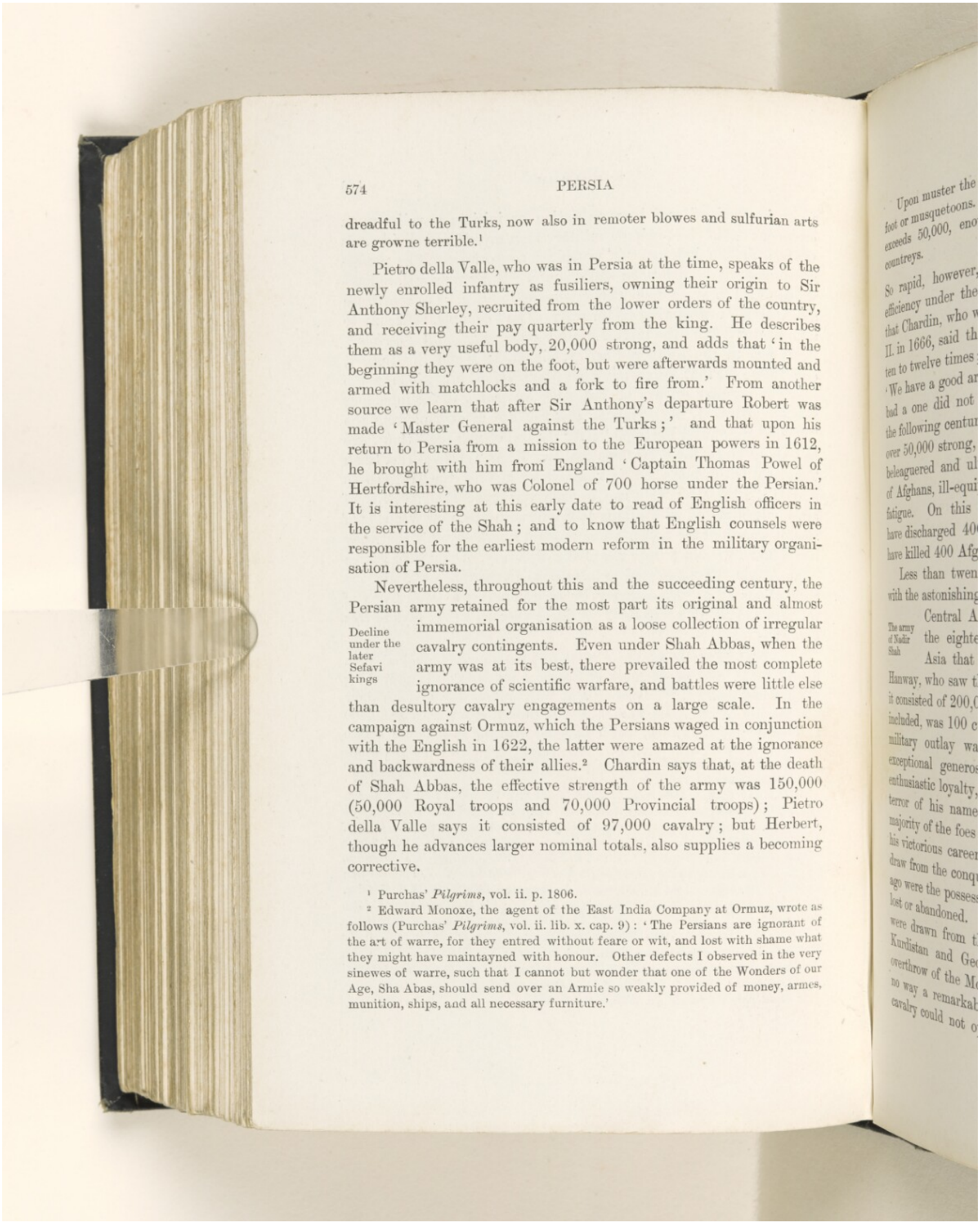
It was to the brothers Sherley, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert, circ. 1600 A.D., that Persia owed her first practical initiation into the military science of Europe. According to the ingenious Herbert, the Persians 'got the use of cannon from the vanquised Portugal,' and 'the use of musquets they have had onely since the Portugals assisted King Tahamas (i.e. Shah Tahmasp) with some Christian auxiliaries against the Turk, so as now (i.e. 1627 A.D.) they are become very good shots.'[2] But if already acquainted with gunpowder and with the new weapons of war, it was from the adventurous English knight-errants that they learnt how to make proper use of the discovery. Upon their advice Shah Abbas, for the first time in modern Persian history, laid the foundations of a regular army by incorporating a large force of infantry armed with muskets. A contemporary writer says of this event :—

> The mightie Ottoman, terror of the Christian world, quaketh of a Sherly fever, and gives hopes of approaching fates ; the prevailing Persian hath learned Sherleian arts of war, and he which before knew not the use of ordnance, hath now 500 pieces of brasse, and 60,000 musketiers ; so that they, which at hand with the sword were before

[1] For the best accounts of the Persian Army at different epochs of the last two centuries, *vide* the following :—

J. Hanway (1744), *Historical Account, &c.*, vol. i. pp. 251–4 ; Sir J. Malcolm (1800–10), *History of Persia*, vol. ii. cap. xxi. ; A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii. cap. liv. ; J. P. Morier (1811), *Second Journey*, cap. xiv. ; Col. G. Drouville (1813), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii. caps. xxxii.–xxxvi. ; Sir R. K. Porter (1819), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 580–591 ; J. B. Fraser (1821), *Journey into Khorasan*, pp. 223–30 ; J. H. Stocqueler (1831), *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. pp. 164–75 ; Lt.-Col. W. K. Stuart (1835), *Journal of a Residence*, pp. 186–94 ; Sir J. Sheil (circ. 1850), Note C to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life, &c.* ; Sir H. Rawlinson (1858), Journal of the R. U. S. I., vol. i. pp. 23–7 ; A. H. Mounsey (1865), *Journey in the Caucasus, &c.*, pp. 141–4 ; Cte. J. de Rochechouart (1865), *Souvenirs*, cap. v. ; Sir F. Goldsmid (1879), Journal of the R. U. S. I., March 17, 1879 ; L. M. H. (1885), *La Russie et l'Angleterre dans l'Asie Centrale* ; Capt. A. C. Yate (1886), *National Review*, January, 1886 ; C. J. Wills (1886), *Persia as it is*, cap. xx.

[2] *Some Yeares' Travels, &c.* (3rd. edit.), p. 298.





dreadful to the Turks, now also in remoter blowes and sulfurian arts are growne terrible.[1]

Pietro della Valle, who was in Persia at the time, speaks of the newly enrolled infantry as fusiliers, owning their origin to Sir Anthony Sherley, recruited from the lower orders of the country, and receiving their pay quarterly from the king. He describes them as a very useful body, 20,000 strong, and adds that 'in the beginning they were on the foot, but were afterwards mounted and armed with matchlocks and a fork to fire from.' From another source we learn that after Sir Anthony's departure Robert was made 'Master General against the Turks;' and that upon his return to Persia from a mission to the European powers in 1612, he brought with him from England 'Captain Thomas Powel of Hertfordshire, who was Colonel of 700 horse under the Persian.' It is interesting at this early date to read of English officers in the service of the Shah; and to know that English counsels were responsible for the earliest modern reform in the military organisation of Persia.

Nevertheless, throughout this and the succeeding century, the Persian army retained for the most part its original and almost immemorial organisation as a loose collection of irregular cavalry contingents. Even under Shah Abbas, when the army was at its best, there prevailed the most complete ignorance of scientific warfare, and battles were little else than desultory cavalry engagements on a large scale. In the campaign against Ormuz, which the Persians waged in conjunction with the English in 1622, the latter were amazed at the ignorance and backwardness of their allies.[2] Chardin says that, at the death of Shah Abbas, the effective strength of the army was 150,000 (50,000 Royal troops and 70,000 Provincial troops); Pietro della Valle says it consisted of 97,000 cavalry; but Herbert, though he advances larger nominal totals, also supplies a becoming corrective.

Decline under the later Sefavi kings

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. p. 1806.

[2] Edward Monoxe, the agent of the East India Company at Ormuz, wrote as follows (Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. x. cap. 9): 'The Persians are ignorant of the art of warre, for they entred without feare or wit, and lost with shame what they might have maintayned with honour. Other defects I observed in the very sinewes of warre, such that I cannot but wonder that one of the Wonders of our Age, Sha Abas, should send over an Armie so weakly provided of money, armes, munition, ships, and all necessary furniture.'

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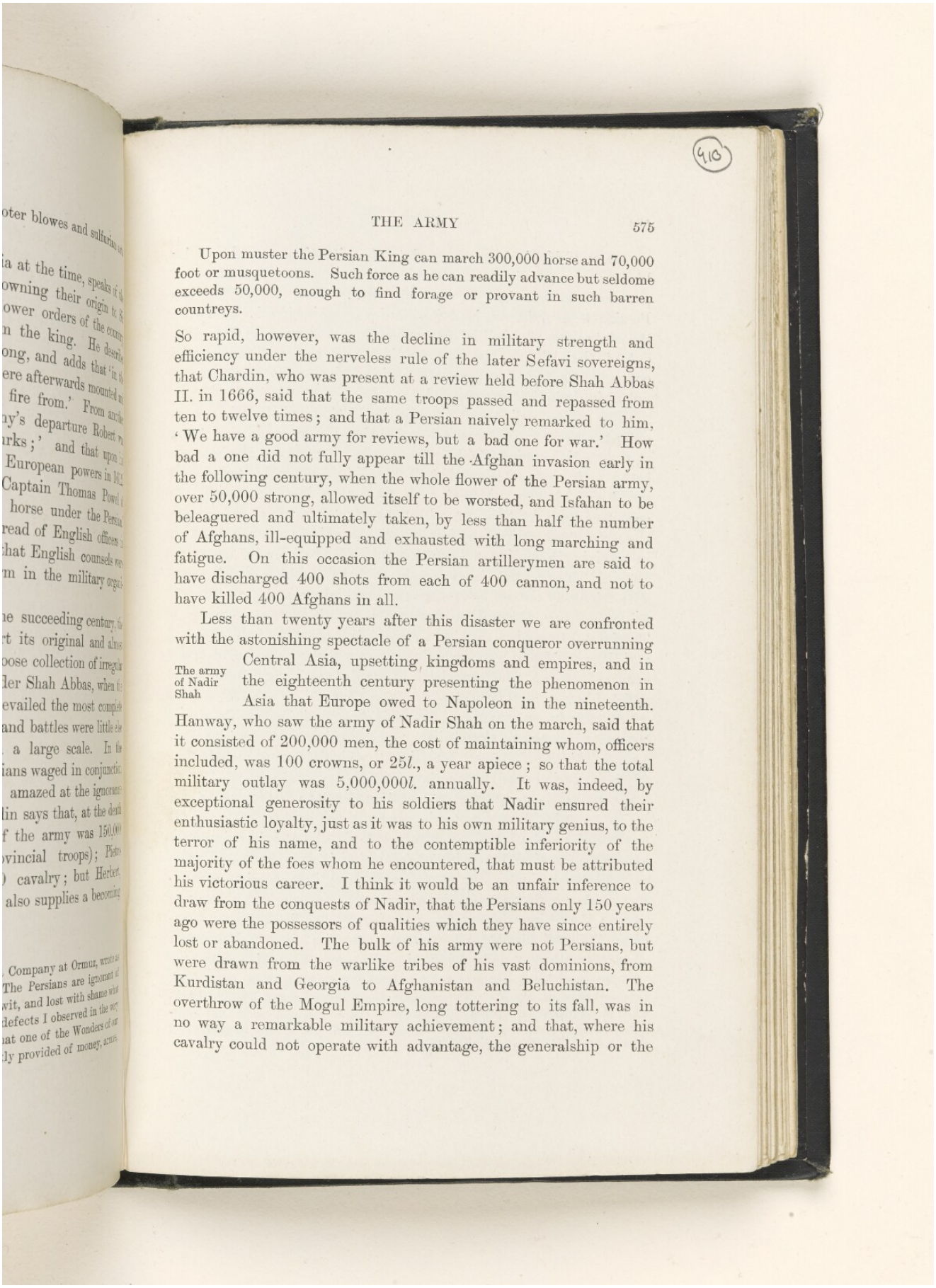


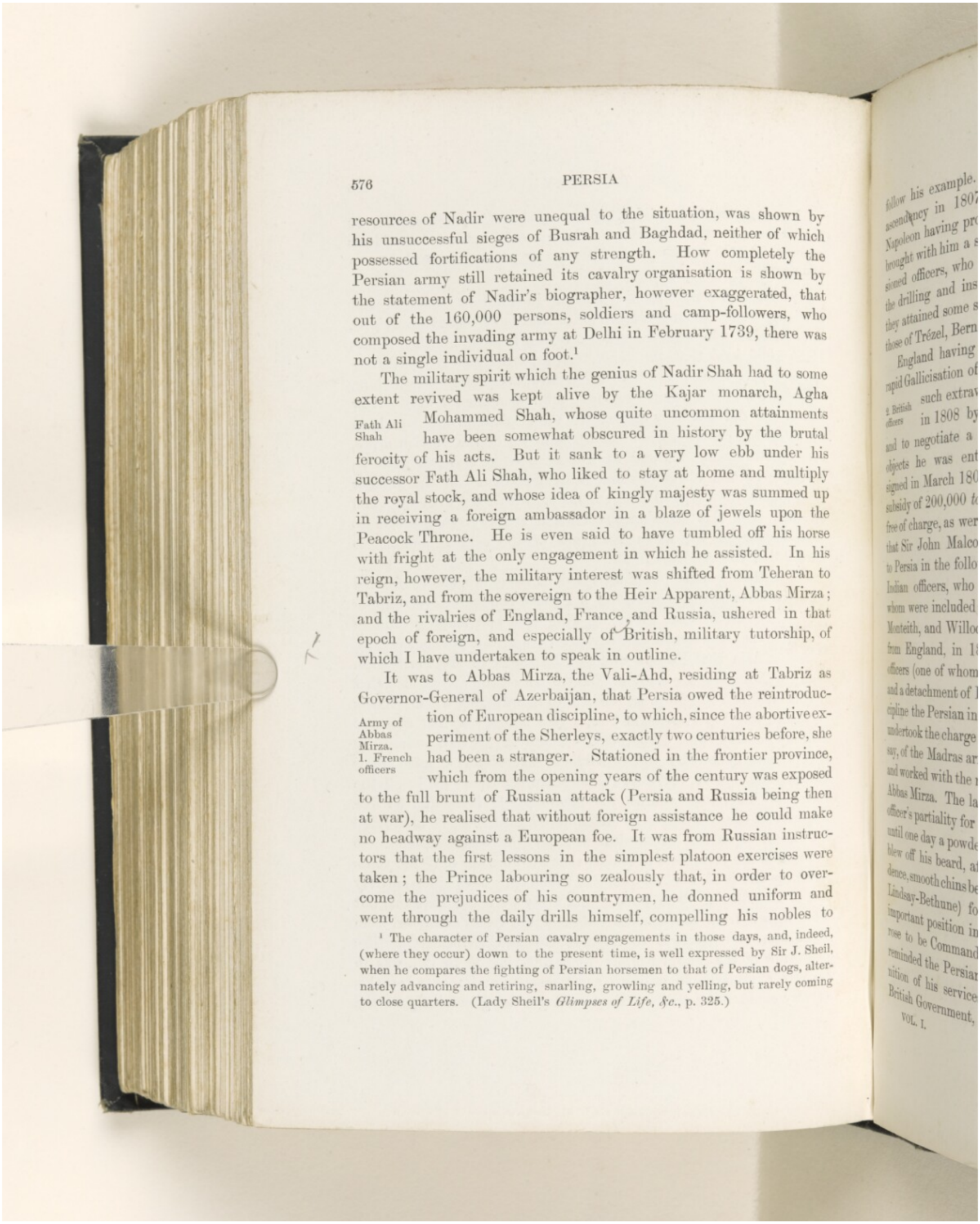


Upon muster the Persian King can march 300,000 horse and 70,000 foot or musquetoons. Such force as he can readily advance but seldome exceeds 50,000, enough to find forage or provant in such barren countreys.

So rapid, however, was the decline in military strength and efficiency under the nerveless rule of the later Sefavi sovereigns, that Chardin, who was present at a review held before Shah Abbas II. in 1666, said that the same troops passed and repassed from ten to twelve times; and that a Persian naively remarked to him, 'We have a good army for reviews, but a bad one for war.' How bad a one did not fully appear till the Afghan invasion early in the following century, when the whole flower of the Persian army, over 50,000 strong, allowed itself to be worsted, and Isfahan to be beleaguered and ultimately taken, by less than half the number of Afghans, ill-equipped and exhausted with long marching and fatigue. On this occasion the Persian artillerymen are said to have discharged 400 shots from each of 400 cannon, and not to have killed 400 Afghans in all.

The army of Nadir Shah

Less than twenty years after this disaster we are confronted with the astonishing spectacle of a Persian conqueror overrunning Central Asia, upsetting kingdoms and empires, and in the eighteenth century presenting the phenomenon in Asia that Europe owed to Napoleon in the nineteenth. Hanway, who saw the army of Nadir Shah on the march, said that it consisted of 200,000 men, the cost of maintaining whom, officers included, was 100 crowns, or 25*l.*, a year apiece; so that the total military outlay was 5,000,000*l.* annually. It was, indeed, by exceptional generosity to his soldiers that Nadir ensured their enthusiastic loyalty, just as it was to his own military genius, to the terror of his name, and to the contemptible inferiority of the majority of the foes whom he encountered, that must be attributed his victorious career. I think it would be an unfair inference to draw from the conquests of Nadir, that the Persians only 150 years ago were the possessors of qualities which they have since entirely lost or abandoned. The bulk of his army were not Persians, but were drawn from the warlike tribes of his vast dominions, from Kurdistan and Georgia to Afghanistan and Beluchistan. The overthrow of the Mogul Empire, long tottering to its fall, was in no way a remarkable military achievement; and that, where his cavalry could not operate with advantage, the generalship or the





resources of Nadir were unequal to the situation, was shown by his unsuccessful sieges of Busrah and Baghdad, neither of which possessed fortifications of any strength. How completely the Persian army still retained its cavalry organisation is shown by the statement of Nadir's biographer, however exaggerated, that out of the 160,000 persons, soldiers and camp-followers, who composed the invading army at Delhi in February 1739, there was not a single individual on foot.[1]

Fath Ali Shah

The military spirit which the genius of Nadir Shah had to some extent revived was kept alive by the Kajar monarch, Agha Mohammed Shah, whose quite uncommon attainments have been somewhat obscured in history by the brutal ferocity of his acts. But it sank to a very low ebb under his successor Fath Ali Shah, who liked to stay at home and multiply the royal stock, and whose idea of kingly majesty was summed up in receiving a foreign ambassador in a blaze of jewels upon the Peacock Throne. He is even said to have tumbled off his horse with fright at the only engagement in which he assisted. In his reign, however, the military interest was shifted from Teheran to Tabriz, and from the sovereign to the Heir Apparent, Abbas Mirza; and the rivalries of England, France, and Russia, ushered in that epoch of foreign, and especially of British, military tutorship, of which I have undertaken to speak in outline.

Army of Abbas Mirza. 1. French officers

It was to Abbas Mirza, the Vali-Ahd, residing at Tabriz as Governor-General of Azerbaijan, that Persia owed the reintroduction of European discipline, to which, since the abortive experiment of the Sherleys, exactly two centuries before, she had been a stranger. Stationed in the frontier province, which from the opening years of the century was exposed to the full brunt of Russian attack (Persia and Russia being then at war), he realised that without foreign assistance he could make no headway against a European foe. It was from Russian instructors that the first lessons in the simplest platoon exercises were taken; the Prince labouring so zealously that, in order to overcome the prejudices of his countrymen, he donned uniform and went through the daily drills himself, compelling his nobles to

[1] The character of Persian cavalry engagements in those days, and, indeed, (where they occur) down to the present time, is well expressed by Sir J. Sheil, when he compares the fighting of Persian horsemen to that of Persian dogs, alternately advancing and retiring, snarling, growling and yelling, but rarely coming to close quarters. (Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life, &c.*, p. 325.)



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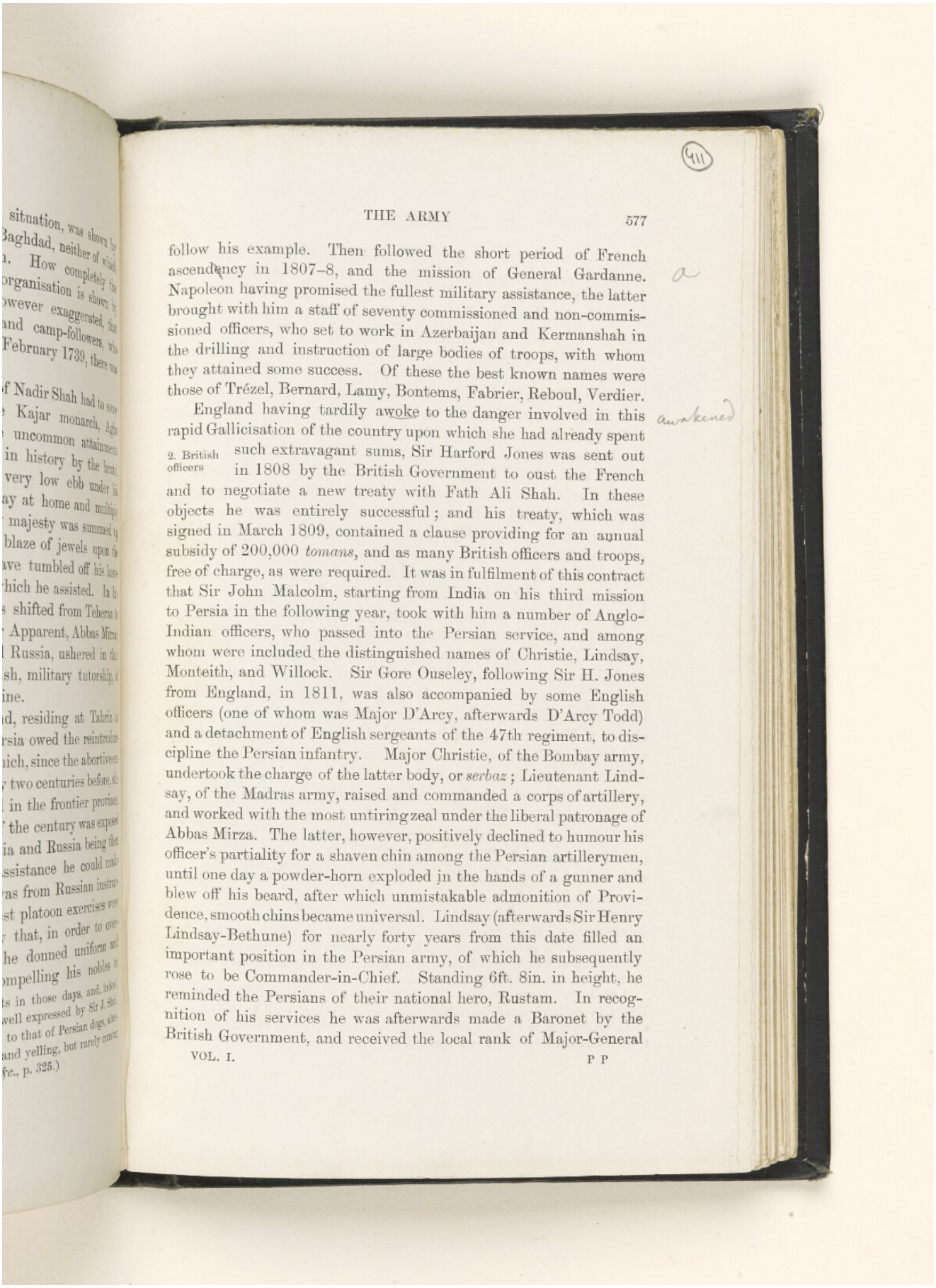



follow his example. Then followed the short period of French ascendency in 1807–8, and the mission of General Gardanne. Napoleon having promised the fullest military assistance, the latter brought with him a staff of seventy commissioned and non-commissioned officers, who set to work in Azerbaijan and Kermanshah in the drilling and instruction of large bodies of troops, with whom they attained some success. Of these the best known names were those of Trézel, Bernard, Lamy, Bontems, Fabrier, Reboul, Verdier.

England having tardily awoke to the danger involved in this rapid Gallicisation of the country upon which she had already spent such extravagant sums, Sir Harford Jones was sent out in 1808 by the British Government to oust the French and to negotiate a new treaty with Fath Ali Shah. In these objects he was entirely successful; and his treaty, which was signed in March 1809, contained a clause providing for an annual subsidy of 200,000 *tomans*, and as many British officers and troops, free of charge, as were required. It was in fulfilment of this contract that Sir John Malcolm, starting from India on his third mission to Persia in the following year, took with him a number of Anglo-Indian officers, who passed into the Persian service, and among whom were included the distinguished names of Christie, Lindsay, Monteith, and Willock. Sir Gore Ouseley, following Sir H. Jones from England, in 1811, was also accompanied by some English officers (one of whom was Major D'Arcy, afterwards D'Arcy Todd) and a detachment of English sergeants of the 47th regiment, to discipline the Persian infantry. Major Christie, of the Bombay army, undertook the charge of the latter body, or *serbaz*; Lieutenant Lindsay, of the Madras army, raised and commanded a corps of artillery, and worked with the most untiring zeal under the liberal patronage of Abbas Mirza. The latter, however, positively declined to humour his officer's partiality for a shaven chin among the Persian artillerymen, until one day a powder-horn exploded in the hands of a gunner and blew off his beard, after which unmistakable admonition of Providence, smooth chins became universal. Lindsay (afterwards Sir Henry Lindsay-Bethune) for nearly forty years from this date filled an important position in the Persian army, of which he subsequently rose to be Commander-in-Chief. Standing 6ft. 8in. in height, he reminded the Persians of their national hero, Rustam. In recognition of his services he was afterwards made a Baronet by the British Government, and received the local rank of Major-General

2. British officers



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in Asia, as well as a salary of 2,200*l.* a year while in Persia. He finally died, and was buried in the Armenian cemetery at Teheran in February, 1851. In 1812, a rumour having reached Tabriz of reconciliation between Great Britain and Russia in Europe, Sir Gore Ouseley ordered the English officers in the Persian service to take no further part in the Perso-Russian campaign still proceeding in Azerbaijan. Abbas Mirza, however, pleaded so urgently, that two officers, Christie and Lindsay, and thirteen sergeants were permitted to stay. Christie paid the penalty with his life, being killed by a Russian officer while lying wounded on the ground, on the battle-field of Aslanduz, in October 1812. He was succeeded in command of the Persian infantry by Major Hart, of the Royal army, who, till his death of cholera at Tabriz in 1830,[1] occupied a position unequalled by that of any other British officer in Persia. He acquired an extraordinary influence alike over the king, who entrusted him with the money for the payment of the Azerbaijan troops, 'having more confidence in the honour of an English major than in that of his own son'; over Abbas Mirza, who never failed to support him, even when he ordered the Royal Princes to mount guard, and gave them no rations but dry bread for three days; and over the Persian soldiers, who, in spite of the strict discipline that he enforced, regarded him with respect and admiration. The termination of the Perso-Russian War by the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, was followed by a third Anglo-Persian Treaty, signed at Teheran in November 1814, in pursuance of the terms of which the British Government continued to supply officers for drill and discipline, arms and munitions of warfare, and the material and workmen for a foundry at Tabriz, where guns and shot of every description were cast, gun-carriages built, and very tolerable powder manufactured at a cost of 4*d.* per lb., in a mill outside the town.[2] The war with Russia being, however, at an end, and no immediate peril overhanging, Abbas Mirza, who was

[1] He died on the same day in June, 1830, as the British Minister, Sir John Macdonald Kinneir. Having expired outside the city, and the Persians having a prejudice against the conveyance of corpses through city gates, his body was dressed in full uniform, and brought in, sitting upright, as if alive, in a *takht-i-ravan*, or litter, for interment in the Armenian Church.

[2] Sir J. Sheil spoke very favourably of the foundry and arsenal of Tabriz; but Fraser, in 1821, delivered the following uncomplimentary verdict: 'The arsenal of Abbas Mirza is on a scale more suited to the shooting closet of a private gentleman than the magazine of a state.'—*Journey into Khorasan*, pp. 223–30.

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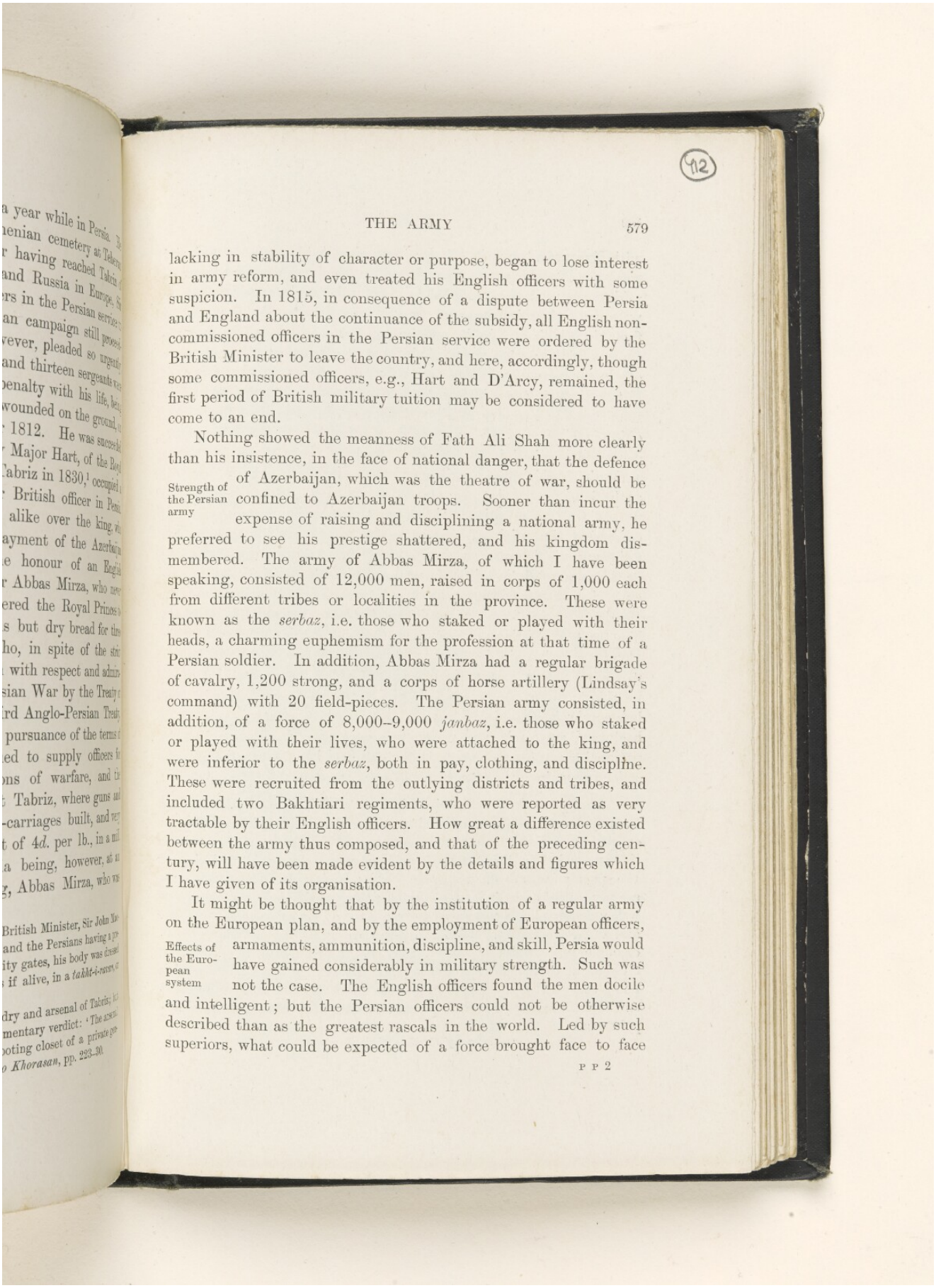



lacking in stability of character or purpose, began to lose interest in army reform, and even treated his English officers with some suspicion. In 1815, in consequence of a dispute between Persia and England about the continuance of the subsidy, all English non-commissioned officers in the Persian service were ordered by the British Minister to leave the country, and here, accordingly, though some commissioned officers, e.g., Hart and D'Arcy, remained, the first period of British military tuition may be considered to have come to an end.

Strength of the Persian army

Nothing showed the meanness of Fath Ali Shah more clearly than his insistence, in the face of national danger, that the defence of Azerbaijan, which was the theatre of war, should be confined to Azerbaijan troops. Sooner than incur the expense of raising and disciplining a national army, he preferred to see his prestige shattered, and his kingdom dismembered. The army of Abbas Mirza, of which I have been speaking, consisted of 12,000 men, raised in corps of 1,000 each from different tribes or localities in the province. These were known as the *serbaz*, i.e. those who staked or played with their heads, a charming euphemism for the profession at that time of a Persian soldier. In addition, Abbas Mirza had a regular brigade of cavalry, 1,200 strong, and a corps of horse artillery (Lindsay's command) with 20 field-pieces. The Persian army consisted, in addition, of a force of 8,000–9,000 *janbaz*, i.e. those who staked or played with their lives, who were attached to the king, and were inferior to the *serbaz*, both in pay, clothing, and discipline. These were recruited from the outlying districts and tribes, and included two Bakhtiari regiments, who were reported as very tractable by their English officers. How great a difference existed between the army thus composed, and that of the preceding century, will have been made evident by the details and figures which I have given of its organisation.

Effects of the European system

It might be thought that by the institution of a regular army on the European plan, and by the employment of European officers, armaments, ammunition, discipline, and skill, Persia would have gained considerably in military strength. Such was not the case. The English officers found the men docile and intelligent; but the Persian officers could not be otherwise described than as the greatest rascals in the world. Led by such superiors, what could be expected of a force brought face to face



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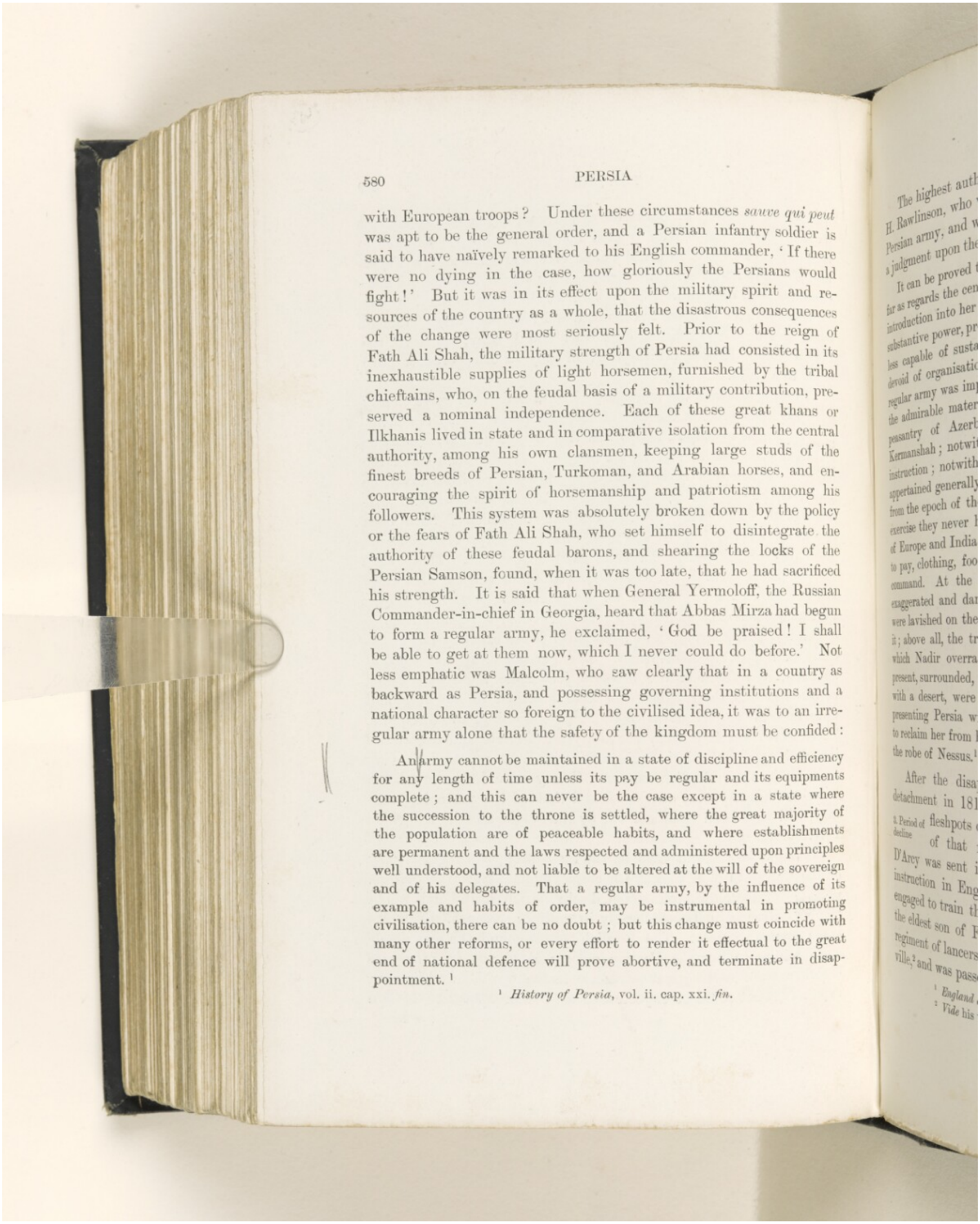



with European troops? Under these circumstances *sauve qui peut* was apt to be the general order, and a Persian infantry soldier is said to have naïvely remarked to his English commander, 'If there were no dying in the case, how gloriously the Persians would fight!' But it was in its effect upon the military spirit and resources of the country as a whole, that the disastrous consequences of the change were most seriously felt. Prior to the reign of Fath Ali Shah, the military strength of Persia had consisted in its inexhaustible supplies of light horsemen, furnished by the tribal chieftains, who, on the feudal basis of a military contribution, preserved a nominal independence. Each of these great khans or Ilkhanis lived in state and in comparative isolation from the central authority, among his own clansmen, keeping large studs of the finest breeds of Persian, Turkoman, and Arabian horses, and encouraging the spirit of horsemanship and patriotism among his followers. This system was absolutely broken down by the policy or the fears of Fath Ali Shah, who set himself to disintegrate the authority of these feudal barons, and shearing the locks of the Persian Samson, found, when it was too late, that he had sacrificed his strength. It is said that when General Yermoloff, the Russian Commander-in-chief in Georgia, heard that Abbas Mirza had begun to form a regular army, he exclaimed, 'God be praised! I shall be able to get at them now, which I never could do before.' Not less emphatic was Malcolm, who saw clearly that in a country as backward as Persia, and possessing governing institutions and a national character so foreign to the civilised idea, it was to an irregular army alone that the safety of the kingdom must be confided:

> An army cannot be maintained in a state of discipline and efficiency for any length of time unless its pay be regular and its equipments complete; and this can never be the case except in a state where the succession to the throne is settled, where the great majority of the population are of peaceable habits, and where establishments are permanent and the laws respected and administered upon principles well understood, and not liable to be altered at the will of the sovereign and of his delegates. That a regular army, by the influence of its example and habits of order, may be instrumental in promoting civilisation, there can be no doubt; but this change must coincide with many other reforms, or every effort to render it effectual to the great end of national defence will prove abortive, and terminate in disappointment. [1]

[1] *History of Persia*, vol. ii. cap. xxi. *fin.*

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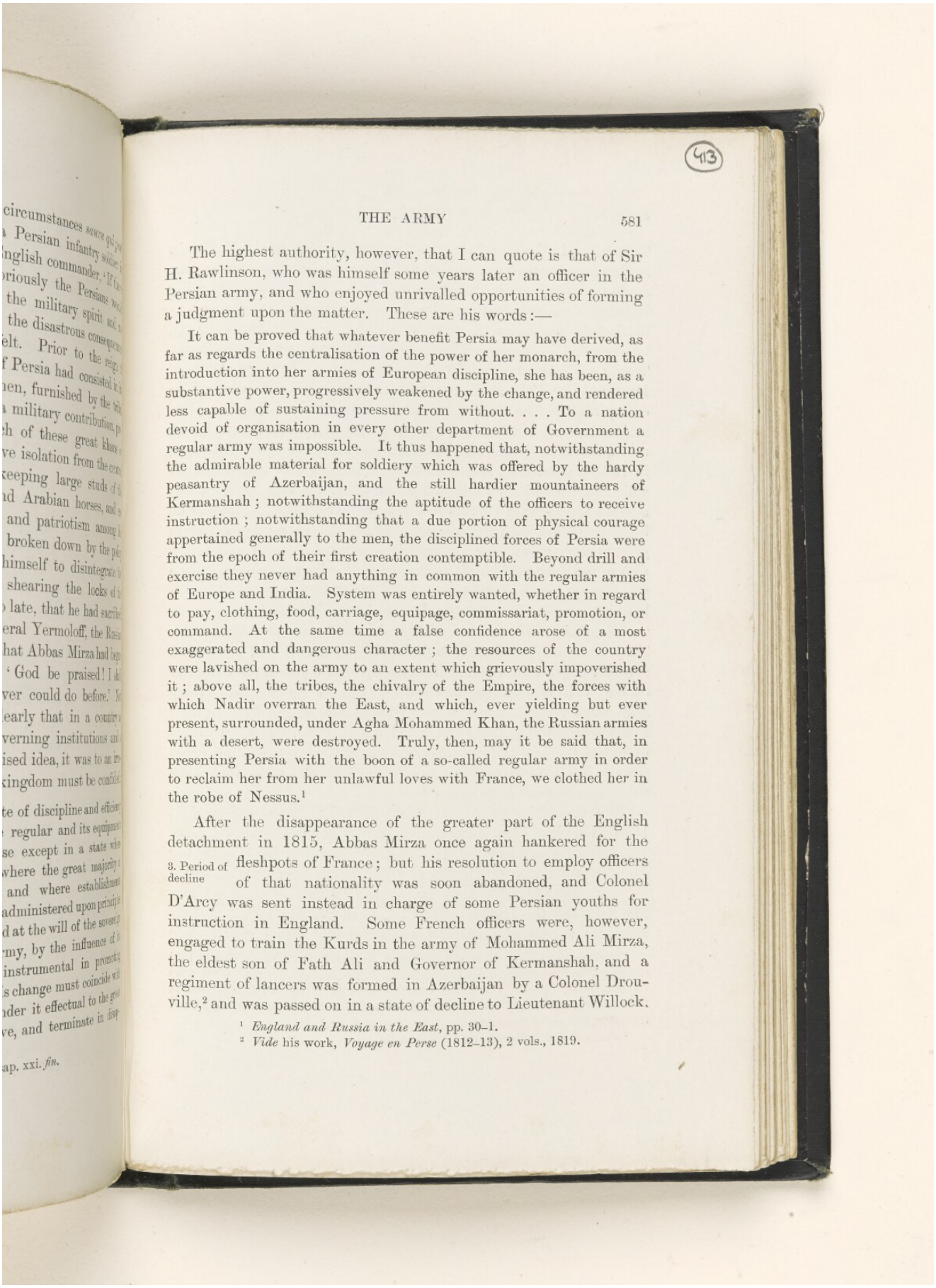




The highest authority, however, that I can quote is that of Sir H. Rawlinson, who was himself some years later an officer in the Persian army, and who enjoyed unrivalled opportunities of forming a judgment upon the matter. These are his words:—

It can be proved that whatever benefit Persia may have derived, as far as regards the centralisation of the power of her monarch, from the introduction into her armies of European discipline, she has been, as a substantive power, progressively weakened by the change, and rendered less capable of sustaining pressure from without. . . . To a nation devoid of organisation in every other department of Government a regular army was impossible. It thus happened that, notwithstanding the admirable material for soldiery which was offered by the hardy peasantry of Azerbaijan, and the still hardier mountaineers of Kermanshah; notwithstanding the aptitude of the officers to receive instruction; notwithstanding that a due portion of physical courage appertained generally to the men, the disciplined forces of Persia were from the epoch of their first creation contemptible. Beyond drill and exercise they never had anything in common with the regular armies of Europe and India. System was entirely wanted, whether in regard to pay, clothing, food, carriage, equipage, commissariat, promotion, or command. At the same time a false confidence arose of a most exaggerated and dangerous character; the resources of the country were lavished on the army to an extent which grievously impoverished it; above all, the tribes, the chivalry of the Empire, the forces with which Nadir overran the East, and which, ever yielding but ever present, surrounded, under Agha Mohammed Khan, the Russian armies with a desert, were destroyed. Truly, then, may it be said that, in presenting Persia with the boon of a so-called regular army in order to reclaim her from her unlawful loves with France, we clothed her in the robe of Nessus.[1]

3. Period of decline

After the disappearance of the greater part of the English detachment in 1815, Abbas Mirza once again hankered for the fleshpots of France; but his resolution to employ officers of that nationality was soon abandoned, and Colonel D'Arcy was sent instead in charge of some Persian youths for instruction in England. Some French officers were, however, engaged to train the Kurds in the army of Mohammed Ali Mirza, the eldest son of Fath Ali and Governor of Kermanshah, and a regiment of lancers was formed in Azerbaijan by a Colonel Drouville,[2] and was passed on in a state of decline to Lieutenant Willock.

[1] *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 30–1.
[2] *Vide* his work, *Voyage en Perse* (1812–13), 2 vols., 1819.

Then ensued a long period of apathy, until, in August 1826, Russia having for some time assumed an attitude of studied provocation, war again broke out on the N.W. frontier. The effects of the preceding lethargy were soon visible. Persia cut a very sorry figure on the battle-field, and, after the war had lasted for a year and a half, and had resulted in sufficient Persian discomfiture, it was closed by the Treaty of Turkomanchai in February 1828. After the death of Hart in 1830, Colonel Shee was the only remaining English officer of any rank in the Persian service.[1] He and some English drill-sergeants, among whom was Sergeant Gibbons, whom I have before now quoted, accompanied Abbas Mirza on his campaign in Khorasan in 1831–2; but the successes of the Prince in that expedition, in which he successively reduced Kerman, Kuchan, and Sarakhs, had a most unfortunate effect upon the temper of the Persians, who became inflated with unreasonable pride, and thought themselves good enough to conquer any enemy without European assistance. One of the most curious elements in the Persian army at this time was a corps known as the Russian Deserters, being the half of a battalion who had been taken prisoners by the Persians on the march to Shisheh in 1826, and had enlisted in the service of their captors. They were commanded by a Colonel Samson Khan, a Russian serjeant-major who deserted his countrymen, married the daughter of the Vali of Georgia, and betook himself to Persia. These *Bahaderan* (or grenadiers) were well paid, and fought well for their new masters, until finally disbanded about 1840. Colonel Stuart described them in 1835 as 'wearing heavy shakos with high green plumes, red coutees with wings of blue cloth and white lace, loose white trousers and high boots.'[2]

4. English officers

The expedition of Abbas Mirza into Khorasan and against Herat, the siege of which place was only raised because of his death in the autumn of 1833, had re-aroused the languishing solicitude or alarms of the Indian Government, and a more decisive step in support of British interests was now taken by the Governor-General, Lord W. Bentinck. A considerable supply of arms and accoutrements was despatched to

[1] Stocqueler (*Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage, &c.*, vol. i., p. 170) says that in 1831 the only European commissioned officers still in the service of Abbas Mirza were Captains Shee, Burgess, Littlejohn, and Borowski (a Pole). Captain Mignan in 1830 (*Winter's Journey*) had mentioned Colonel Shee, Lieutenants Burgess and Christian, and eight sergeants.

[2] *Journal of a Residence, &c.*, p. 187.

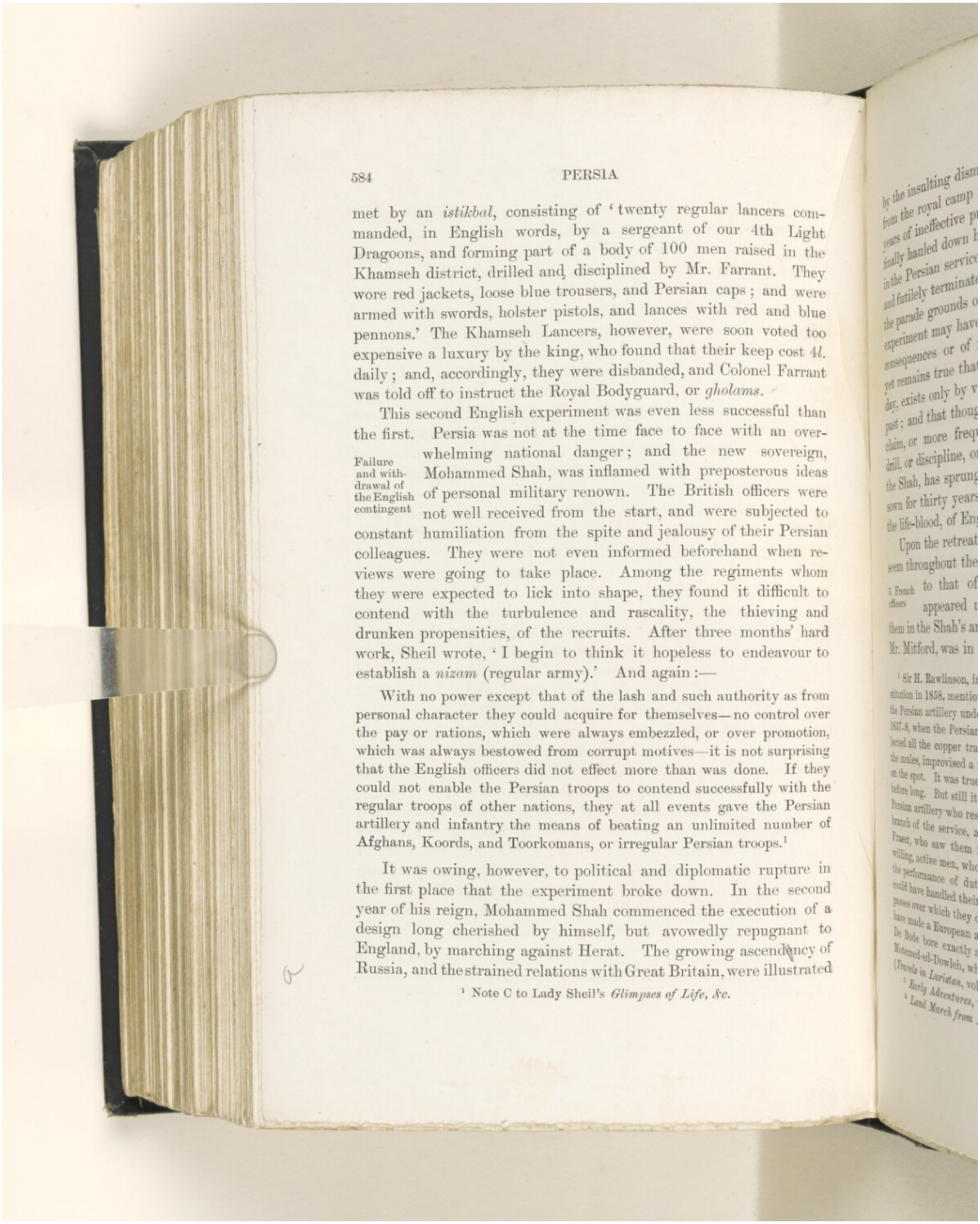
Persia in 1832–3; and in March 1834, six months before the death of the old king, Fath Ali Shah, there arrived in Teheran a large detachment of officers and sergeants from India, with ample provision for every branch of the military service. Included among the officers were the names of Sir Justin Sheil and Sir H. Rawlinson (both of them afterwards Ministers to the Persian Court), Colonel Farrant (afterwards *Chargé d'affaires*), Colonel Passmore, in command, Colonel Stoddart (murdered in Bokhara in 1842), and Colonel D'Arcy Todd, who was placed at the head of the artillery. Colonel Sheil was sent to recruit a regiment among the Shekaki tribe in Azerbaijan; Major Rawlinson was given the command of regiments drawn from the two famous Kurdish tribes of Kalhur and Guran, and in 1836 marched with part of the army of Bahman Mirza, Prince Governor of Kermanshah, through Luristan and Khuzistan to Shushter.[1] Sir H. Bethune was now again in Persia, and, upon the death of the old king, was placed in command of the army, which safely and expeditiously conducted the new sovereign, Mohammed Shah, to the capital, and seated him upon the throne. In the same year (1835) he crushed the rebellion of the king's uncle, Husein Ali Mirza, the Firman Firma, at Shiraz. In the re-awakened burst of military activity, a sum of 2,800*l.* was granted to him for two years for the re-establishment of a foundry; and he was authorised to lay out 400*l.* in the purchase of musical instruments! Two thousand rifles and accoutrements and 500,000 flints were despatched from England as presents for the Shah; and Lieutenant Wilbraham and eight sergeants of the Rifle Brigade came out in 1836 to instruct the Persians in the use of the European arms. Such were the character and the dimensions of the last serious attempt made by the British Government to remodel the army of Persia.

A very good account of the army at this period has been left by Colonel Stuart, who came to Persia in 1835 as private secretary to the British envoy, Sir H. Ellis.[2] The relics of old and the introduction of new uniforms, the varying age and character of the weapons employed, and the *bizarre* combination of Eastern and Western ideas, rendered it a decidedly peculiar institution. When the envoy reached Zinjan, he was

Army of Mohammed Shah

[1] He wrote an account of this march, and of the country traversed, entitled 'Notes on a March from Zohab to Khuzistan,' in the *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. ix. (1839).

[2] *Journal of a Residence, &c.*, pp. 186–94.





met by an *istikbal*, consisting of 'twenty regular lancers commanded, in English words, by a sergeant of our 4th Light Dragoons, and forming part of a body of 100 men raised in the Khamseh district, drilled and disciplined by Mr. Farrant. They wore red jackets, loose blue trousers, and Persian caps; and were armed with swords, holster pistols, and lances with red and blue pennons.' The Khamseh Lancers, however, were soon voted too expensive a luxury by the king, who found that their keep cost 4*l.* daily; and, accordingly, they were disbanded, and Colonel Farrant was told off to instruct the Royal Bodyguard, or *gholams*.

This second English experiment was even less successful than the first. Persia was not at the time face to face with an overwhelming national danger; and the new sovereign, Mohammed Shah, was inflamed with preposterous ideas of personal military renown. The British officers were not well received from the start, and were subjected to constant humiliation from the spite and jealousy of their Persian colleagues. They were not even informed beforehand when reviews were going to take place. Among the regiments whom they were expected to lick into shape, they found it difficult to contend with the turbulence and rascality, the thieving and drunken propensities, of the recruits. After three months' hard work, Sheil wrote, 'I begin to think it hopeless to endeavour to establish a *nizam* (regular army).' And again:—

Failure and withdrawal of the English contingent

With no power except that of the lash and such authority as from personal character they could acquire for themselves—no control over the pay or rations, which were always embezzled, or over promotion, which was always bestowed from corrupt motives—it is not surprising that the English officers did not effect more than was done. If they could not enable the Persian troops to contend successfully with the regular troops of other nations, they at all events gave the Persian artillery and infantry the means of beating an unlimited number of Afghans, Koords, and Toorkomans, or irregular Persian troops.[1]

It was owing, however, to political and diplomatic rupture in the first place that the experiment broke down. In the second year of his reign, Mohammed Shah commenced the execution of a design long cherished by himself, but avowedly repugnant to England, by marching against Herat. The growing ascendency of Russia, and the strained relations with Great Britain, were illustrated

[1] Note C to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life, &c.*

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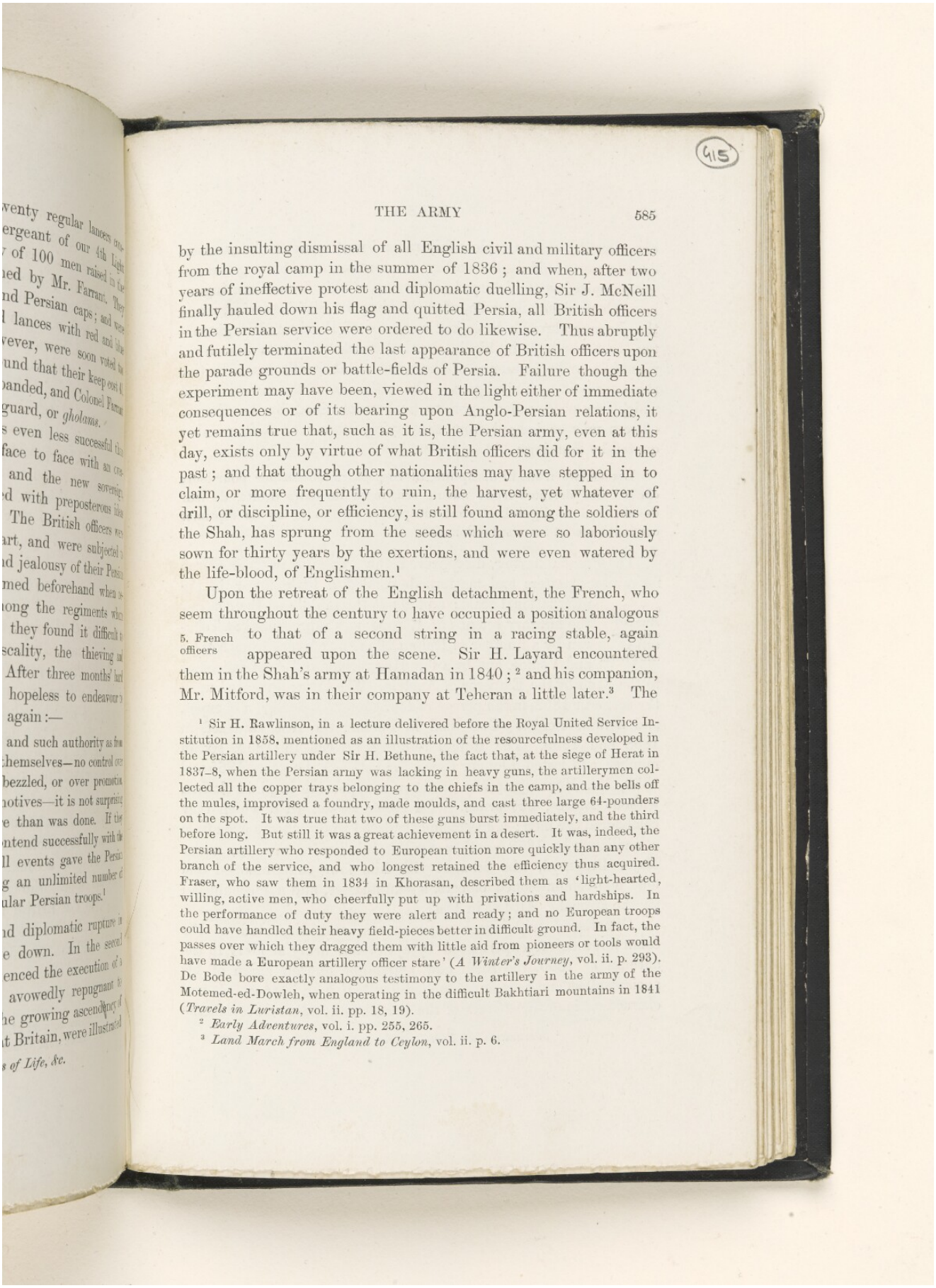




by the insulting dismissal of all English civil and military officers from the royal camp in the summer of 1836; and when, after two years of ineffective protest and diplomatic duelling, Sir J. McNeill finally hauled down his flag and quitted Persia, all British officers in the Persian service were ordered to do likewise. Thus abruptly and futilely terminated the last appearance of British officers upon the parade grounds or battle-fields of Persia. Failure though the experiment may have been, viewed in the light either of immediate consequences or of its bearing upon Anglo-Persian relations, it yet remains true that, such as it is, the Persian army, even at this day, exists only by virtue of what British officers did for it in the past; and that though other nationalities may have stepped in to claim, or more frequently to ruin, the harvest, yet whatever of drill, or discipline, or efficiency, is still found among the soldiers of the Shah, has sprung from the seeds which were so laboriously sown for thirty years by the exertions, and were even watered by the life-blood, of Englishmen.[1]

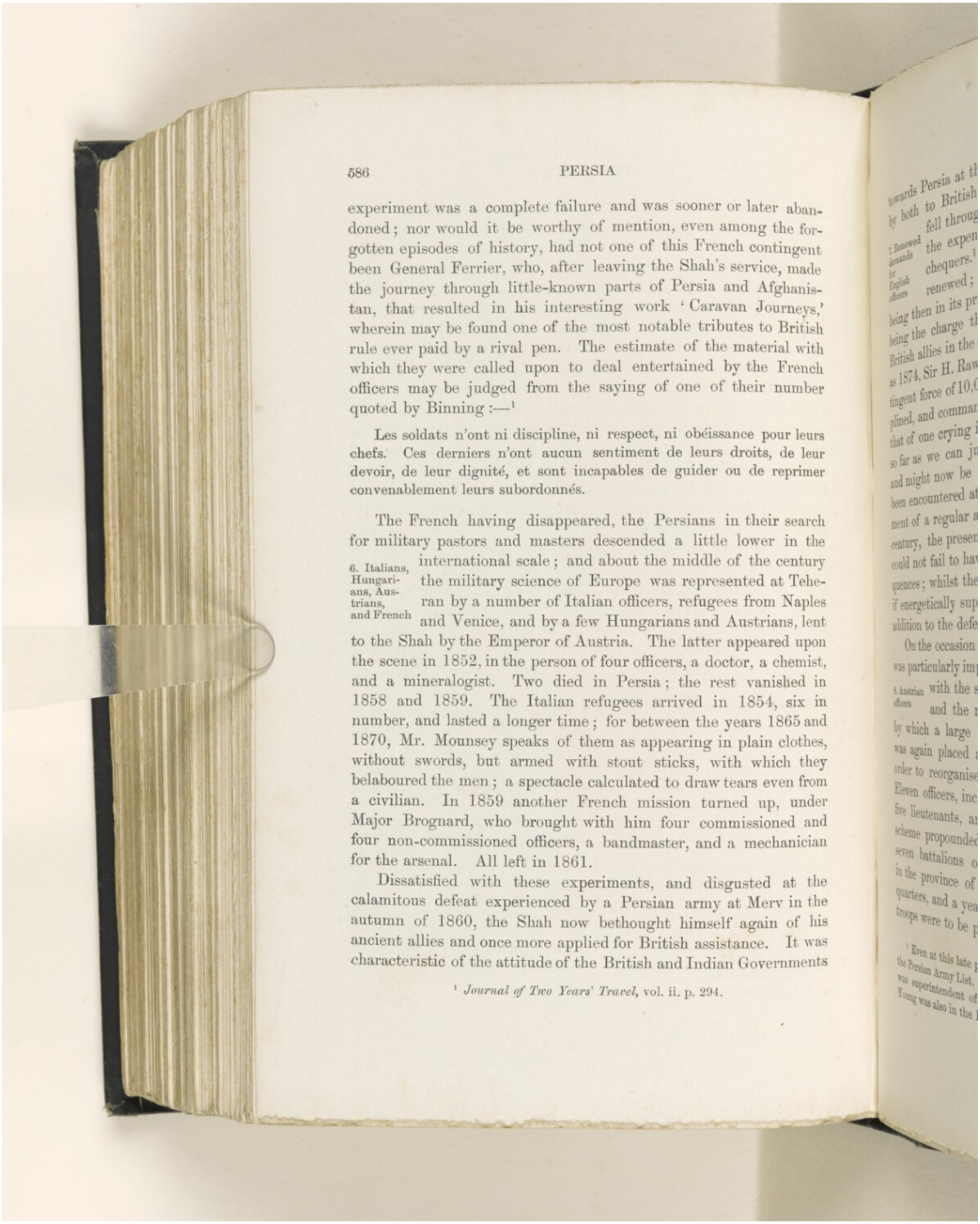
5. French officers

Upon the retreat of the English detachment, the French, who seem throughout the century to have occupied a position analogous to that of a second string in a racing stable, again appeared upon the scene. Sir H. Layard encountered them in the Shah's army at Hamadan in 1840;[2] and his companion, Mr. Mitford, was in their company at Teheran a little later.[3] The

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson, in a lecture delivered before the Royal United Service Institution in 1858, mentioned as an illustration of the resourcefulness developed in the Persian artillery under Sir H. Bethune, the fact that, at the siege of Herat in 1837–8, when the Persian army was lacking in heavy guns, the artillerymen collected all the copper trays belonging to the chiefs in the camp, and the bells off the mules, improvised a foundry, made moulds, and cast three large 64-pounders on the spot. It was true that two of these guns burst immediately, and the third before long. But still it was a great achievement in a desert. It was, indeed, the Persian artillery who responded to European tuition more quickly than any other branch of the service, and who longest retained the efficiency thus acquired. Fraser, who saw them in 1834 in Khorasan, described them as 'light-hearted, willing, active men, who cheerfully put up with privations and hardships. In the performance of duty they were alert and ready; and no European troops could have handled their heavy field-pieces better in difficult ground. In fact, the passes over which they dragged them with little aid from pioneers or tools would have made a European artillery officer stare' (*A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 293). De Bode bore exactly analogous testimony to the artillery in the army of the Motemed-ed-Dowleh, when operating in the difficult Bakhtiari mountains in 1841 (*Travels in Luristan*, vol. ii. pp. 18, 19).

[2] *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 255, 265.

[3] *Land March from England to Ceylon*, vol. ii. p. 6.





experiment was a complete failure and was sooner or later abandoned; nor would it be worthy of mention, even among the forgotten episodes of history, had not one of this French contingent been General Ferrier, who, after leaving the Shah's service, made the journey through little-known parts of Persia and Afghanistan, that resulted in his interesting work 'Caravan Journeys,' wherein may be found one of the most notable tributes to British rule ever paid by a rival pen. The estimate of the material with which they were called upon to deal entertained by the French officers may be judged from the saying of one of their number quoted by Binning:—[1]

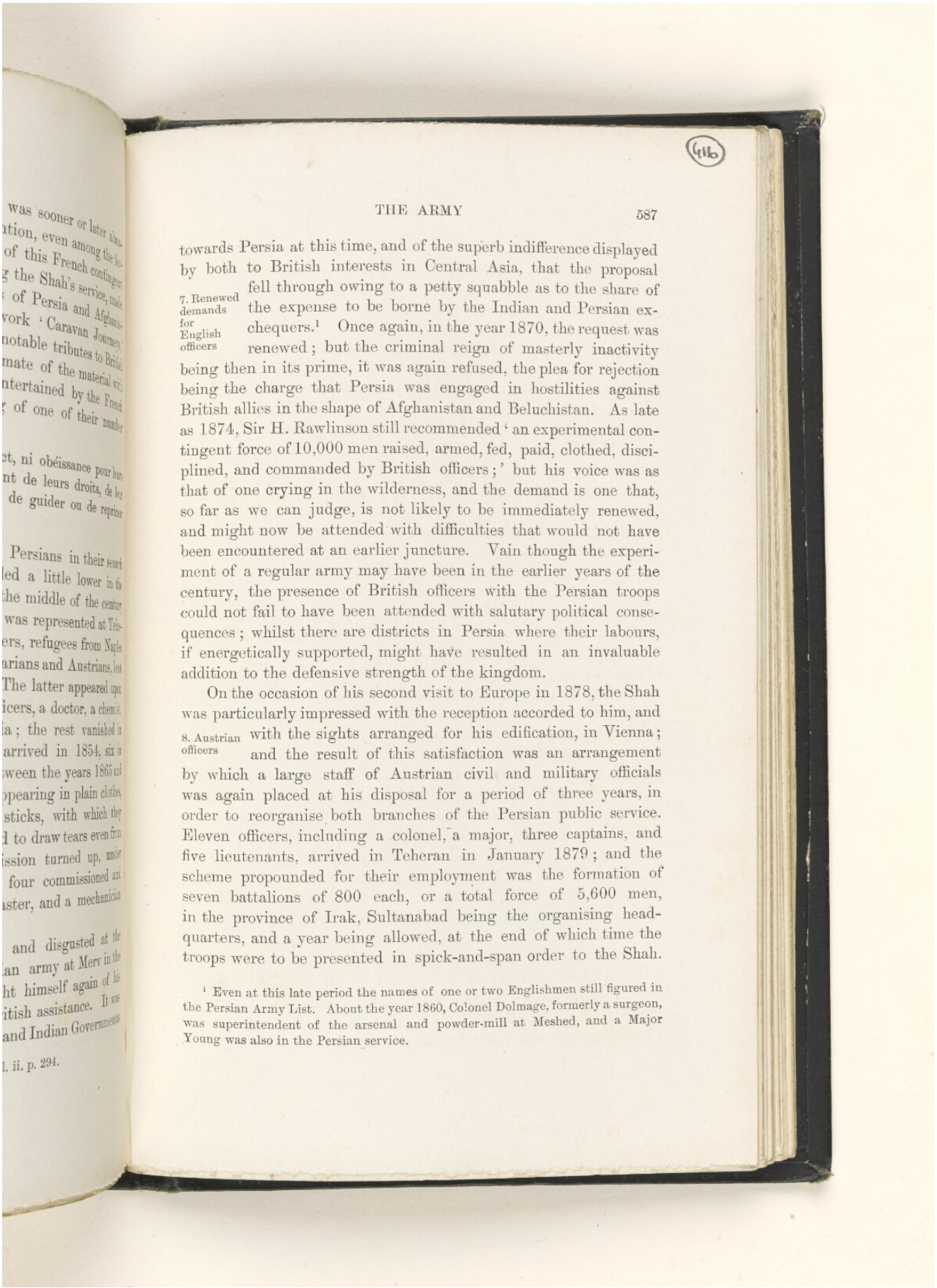
Les soldats n'ont ni discipline, ni respect, ni obéissance pour leurs chefs. Ces derniers n'ont aucun sentiment de leurs droits, de leur devoir, de leur dignité, et sont incapables de guider ou de reprimer convenablement leurs subordonnés.

6. Italians, Hungarians, Austrians, and French

The French having disappeared, the Persians in their search for military pastors and masters descended a little lower in the international scale; and about the middle of the century the military science of Europe was represented at Teheran by a number of Italian officers, refugees from Naples and Venice, and by a few Hungarians and Austrians, lent to the Shah by the Emperor of Austria. The latter appeared upon the scene in 1852, in the person of four officers, a doctor, a chemist, and a mineralogist. Two died in Persia; the rest vanished in 1858 and 1859. The Italian refugees arrived in 1854, six in number, and lasted a longer time; for between the years 1865 and 1870, Mr. Mounsey speaks of them as appearing in plain clothes, without swords, but armed with stout sticks, with which they belaboured the men; a spectacle calculated to draw tears even from a civilian. In 1859 another French mission turned up, under Major Brognard, who brought with him four commissioned and four non-commissioned officers, a bandmaster, and a mechanician for the arsenal. All left in 1861.

Dissatisfied with these experiments, and disgusted at the calamitous defeat experienced by a Persian army at Merv in the autumn of 1860, the Shah now bethought himself again of his ancient allies and once more applied for British assistance. It was characteristic of the attitude of the British and Indian Governments

[1] *Journal of Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. p. 294.





towards Persia at this time, and of the superb indifference displayed by both to British interests in Central Asia, that the proposal fell through owing to a petty squabble as to the share of the expense to be borne by the Indian and Persian exchequers.[1] Once again, in the year 1870, the request was renewed; but the criminal reign of masterly inactivity being then in its prime, it was again refused, the plea for rejection being the charge that Persia was engaged in hostilities against British allies in the shape of Afghanistan and Beluchistan. As late as 1874, Sir H. Rawlinson still recommended 'an experimental contingent force of 10,000 men raised, armed, fed, paid, clothed, disciplined, and commanded by British officers;' but his voice was as that of one crying in the wilderness, and the demand is one that, so far as we can judge, is not likely to be immediately renewed, and might now be attended with difficulties that would not have been encountered at an earlier juncture. Vain though the experiment of a regular army may have been in the earlier years of the century, the presence of British officers with the Persian troops could not fail to have been attended with salutary political consequences; whilst there are districts in Persia where their labours, if energetically supported, might have resulted in an invaluable addition to the defensive strength of the kingdom.

7. Renewed demands for English officers

On the occasion of his second visit to Europe in 1878, the Shah was particularly impressed with the reception accorded to him, and with the sights arranged for his edification, in Vienna; and the result of this satisfaction was an arrangement by which a large staff of Austrian civil and military officials was again placed at his disposal for a period of three years, in order to reorganise both branches of the Persian public service. Eleven officers, including a colonel, a major, three captains, and five lieutenants, arrived in Teheran in January 1879; and the scheme propounded for their employment was the formation of seven battalions of 800 each, or a total force of 5,600 men, in the province of Irak, Sultanabad being the organising headquarters, and a year being allowed, at the end of which time the troops were to be presented in spick-and-span order to the Shah.

8. Austrian officers

[1] Even at this late period the names of one or two Englishmen still figured in the Persian Army List. About the year 1860, Colonel Dolmage, formerly a surgeon, was superintendent of the arsenal and powder-mill at Meshed, and a Major Young was also in the Persian service.

Needless to say, this brave forecast was not realised. The Austrian officers, who do not appear to have been of a high stamp, made little or no attempt to learn the language, squabbled with each other and with the Persian Government, and finally, for the most part, retired in disgust. After their disappearance, a number of non-commissioned officers of the same nationality were either engaged or kept on as drill instructors to the Persian infantry and artillery; and a relic of the Austrian régime still survives in the person of the Austrian corps, consisting of Persians who were drilled by the Austrians as officers of regiments belonging to the so-called Corps d'Armée d'Autriche, which has since been disbanded and resolved into the territorial elements from which it sprang. The officers linger on, but no longer receive any pay.

Simultaneously with the introduction of the Austrian element, the steadily increasing influence of Russia at Teheran was exemplified by the appearance upon the scene of Russian officers, uniforms, equipment, and drill. Colonel Dumantovitch, an officer who had served under General Tergukasoff in the early Turkoman campaigns, with three commissioned and five non-commissioned officers, was engaged to organise a regiment on the Cossack model at Teheran. Very effectively did the Russians proceed with their work. One thousand Berdan rifles, costing 3*l.* apiece, and some steel cannon for two light field batteries were presented gratis to the Shah by his very good friend the Emperor of Russia; swords were manufactured at Teheran on the Russian pattern at a cost of 12½ *krans*, or 7*s.* apiece; the men were dressed and accoutred without the smallest deviation from the model of the West; and the Shah could presently congratulate himself upon a faithful reproduction of the genuine Caucasian article. At the present moment there are three of these Persian Cossack regiments, drawing pay for a nominal strength of 600 each—i.e., 1,800 men; though in reality they consist only of two regiments of 600 each—i.e., 1,200 men, represented, however, as three regiments with a reduced strength of 400 each. Their full complement of Russian officers is one colonel, three captains, one lieutenant, and ten non-commissioned officers; but when I was in Teheran these had been reduced to one colonel, one captain, one lieutenant, and six non-commissioned officers. I shall have something more to say about them when I come to an enumeration of the component

9. Russian officers

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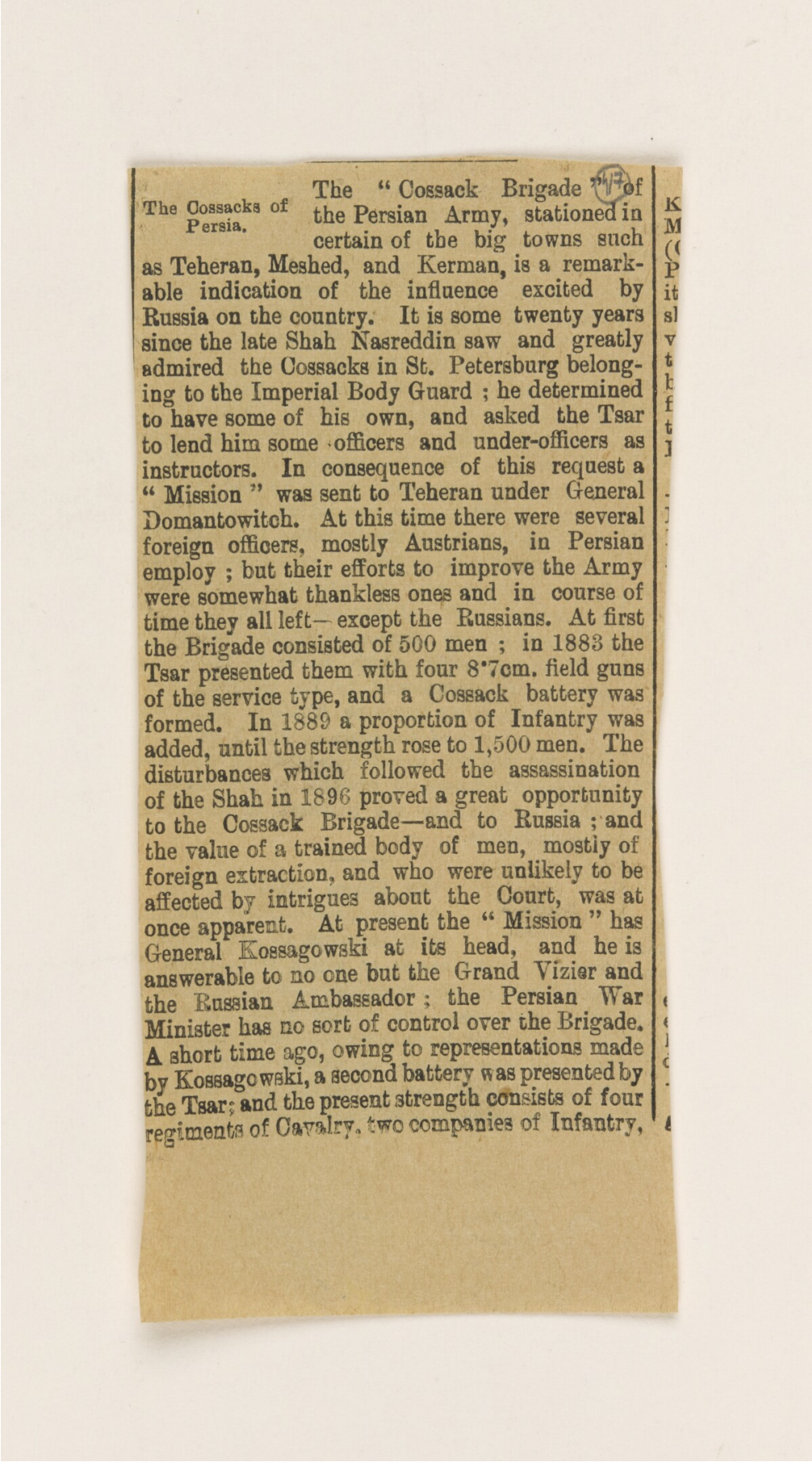
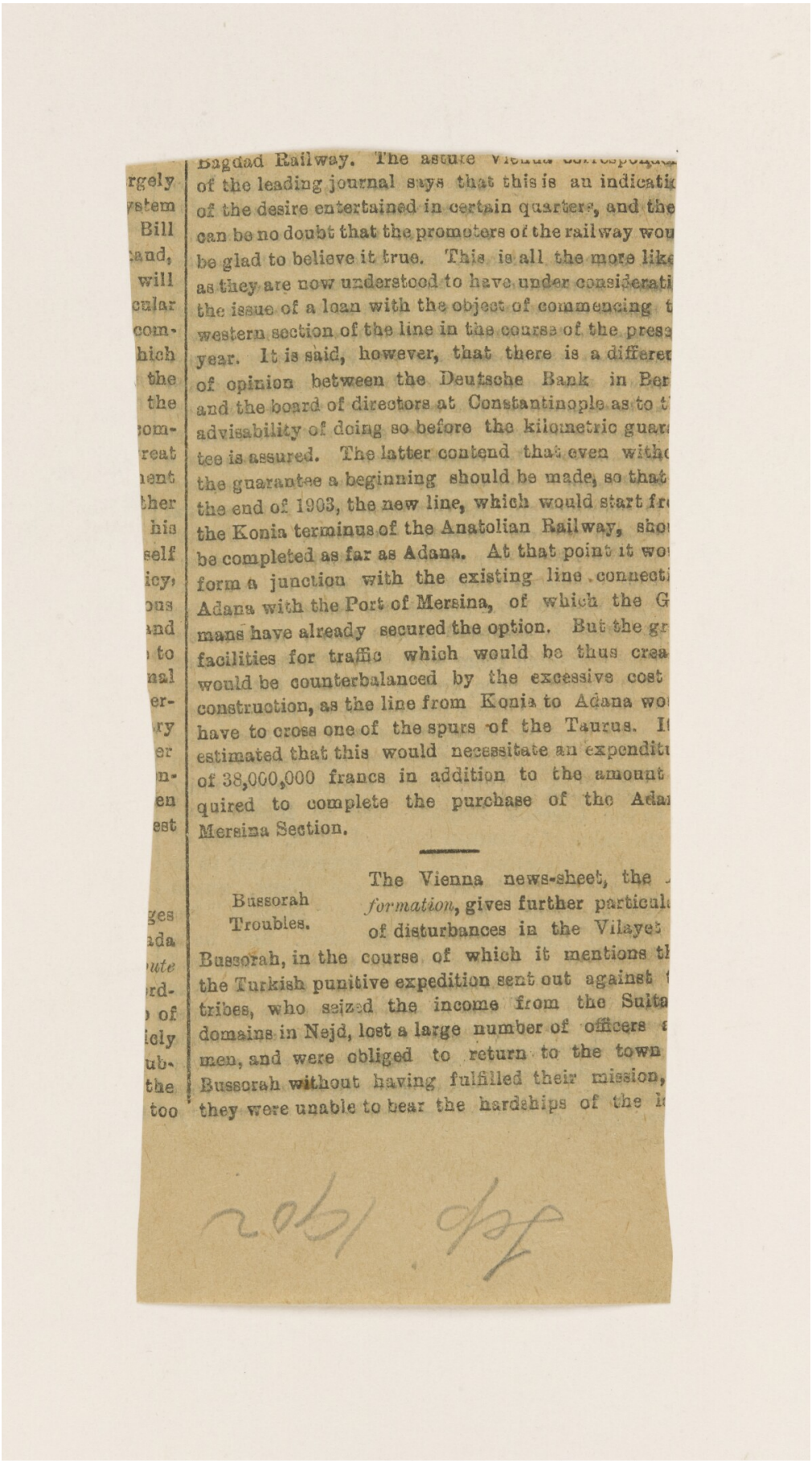


The Cossacks of Persia.

The "Cossack Brigade" of the Persian Army, stationed in certain of the big towns such as Teheran, Meshed, and Kerman, is a remarkable indication of the influence excited by Russia on the country. It is some twenty years since the late Shah Nasreddin saw and greatly admired the Cossacks in St. Petersburg belonging to the Imperial Body Guard; he determined to have some of his own, and asked the Tsar to lend him some officers and under-officers as instructors. In consequence of this request a "Mission" was sent to Teheran under General Domantowitch. At this time there were several foreign officers, mostly Austrians, in Persian employ; but their efforts to improve the Army were somewhat thankless ones and in course of time they all left—except the Russians. At first the Brigade consisted of 500 men; in 1883 the Tsar presented them with four 8·7cm. field guns of the service type, and a Cossack battery was formed. In 1889 a proportion of Infantry was added, until the strength rose to 1,500 men. The disturbances which followed the assassination of the Shah in 1896 proved a great opportunity to the Cossack Brigade—and to Russia; and the value of a trained body of men, mostly of foreign extraction, and who were unlikely to be affected by intrigues about the Court, was at once apparent. At present the "Mission" has General Kossagowski at its head, and he is answerable to no one but the Grand Vizier and the Russian Ambassador; the Persian War Minister has no sort of control over the Brigade. A short time ago, owing to representations made by Kossagowski, a second battery was presented by the Tsar; and the present strength consists of four regiments of Cavalry, two companies of Infantry,



Bagdad Railway. The astute Vienna correspond
of the leading journal says that this is an indicati
of the desire entertained in certain quarters, and the
can be no doubt that the promoters of the railway wou
be glad to believe it true. This is all the more like
as they are now understood to have under considerati
the issue of a loan with the object of commencing t
western section of the line in the course of the pres
year. It is said, however, that there is a differe
of opinion between the Deutsche Bank in Ber
and the board of directors at Constantinople as to t
advisability of doing so before the kilometric guar
tee is assured. The latter contend that even with
the guarantee a beginning should be made, so that
the end of 1903, the new line, which would start fr
the Konia terminus of the Anatolian Railway, sho
be completed as far as Adana. At that point it wo
form a junction with the existing line connecti
Adana with the Port of Mersina, of which the G
mans have already secured the option. But the gr
facilities for traffic which would be thus crea
would be counterbalanced by the excessive cost
construction, as the line from Konia to Adana wo
have to cross one of the spurs of the Taurus. It
estimated that this would necessitate an expenditu
of 38,000,000 francs in addition to the amount
quired to complete the purchase of the Ada
Mersina Section.

---

Bussorah Troubles.

The Vienna news-sheet, the *formation*, gives further particul
of disturbances in the Vilayet
Bussorah, in the course of which it mentions th
the Turkish punitive expedition sent out against
tribes, who seized the income from the Suita
domains in Nejd, lost a large number of officers
men, and were obliged to return to the town
Bussorah without having fulfilled their mission,
they were unable to bear the hardships of the

and two Horse Batteries. There are three Russian captains and a dozen Russian under-officers; most of the 200 officers of the Brigade are Persians; on the General's Staff there is a Chief who is a Persian, and an Armenian, and both these officers were educated in Russia. The Adjutant of the Brigade is also an Armenian. (418)

The training and internal economy is absolutely Russian, even the uniform. The men are volunteers, and mostly long service men; they enter into no contract with the Government as to their length of service, but can leave when they like; but there is a system somewhat resembling our "deferred pay," as two months' pay is cut and given to the man when he resigns. The men are recruited but little from the Persians, but mostly consist of the Tartar, Turkoman and Kurdish tribesmen in the neighbourhood of the Northern Frontier; they appear to be in every way enormously superior to the Regular Army. The headquarters of the Brigade are in Teheran, where barracks of the usual Russian pattern are provided; but a considerable proportion is always "on commando" doing a variety of duties. They are employed as escorts for Provincial Governors, frontier guards, escorts for bullion, which mostly belongs to foreign banks, suppression of dacoity and rebellions, and guards for the foreign Ambassadors. For two months very year they go into camp and undergo a regular course of training. The connection of the Brigade, actually and morally, with Russia, is never lost sight of, and along with Russian loans and roads and other things forms a link which serves to bind Persia to that country. Any one seeking for further enlightenment about the army of Persia may be recommended to consult the first volume of Lord Curzon's work, which contains the only complete historical account thereof. They will find there an explanation of the efforts made by British officers to rehabilitate Persian arms during the early part of last century; and also a prophetic suggestion that "it may well be that the nomad tribes of the South, from the Persian Beluchis on the east to the Iliat Bakhtiari and other Lurs on the west, may one day stand in line with British red-coats in the defence of their native country."

hastening the decadence which their European fri nd foretold with so much glee, have come to this fre land in search of funds to alleviate some of th misery brought upon their country by the corrupt crew that dragged her into war. In such circumstances it was, as Major Hume says, in keeping with the magnanimity of the British character, that those who but the other day were in arms against the King should be received with the respectful courtesy due to vanquished foes. "But," he continues, "the blood of our thousands slain in the war is hardly dry, the mourning of our bereaved ones not yet assuaged; and it is indecent, it is cruel, that thoughtless thousands should cheer themselves hoarse in fulsome greeting to a procession consisting of Botha, Delarey, De Wet, Mr. Fischer, and above all Dr. Clark. It might have been thought that the least reflective person would have recollected how the too impulsive magnanimity of England has on former occasions led astray the Transvaalers and their Continental backers; and that the dire results of our misplaced generosity would have restrained the transports of the crowds on Saturday, at least within the bounds of dignity." Moreover, Major Martin Hume points out that the Boer leaders are on their way to Holland to confer with the junta of enemies who are still plotting ill to our country. "Are they to carry with them the false impression, justified by the effusiveness of their welcome in London, that the population of the Imperial capital is solidly pro-Boer, and that another turn of the political wheel may, after all, give to the vanquished another Majuba Settlement extorted from our magnanimity? It cannot be wondered at if the spirits of the Kruger gang in Holland rise in anticipation of final triumph, when they see Dr. Clark and his kind ride in triumph cheered through the streets of London.

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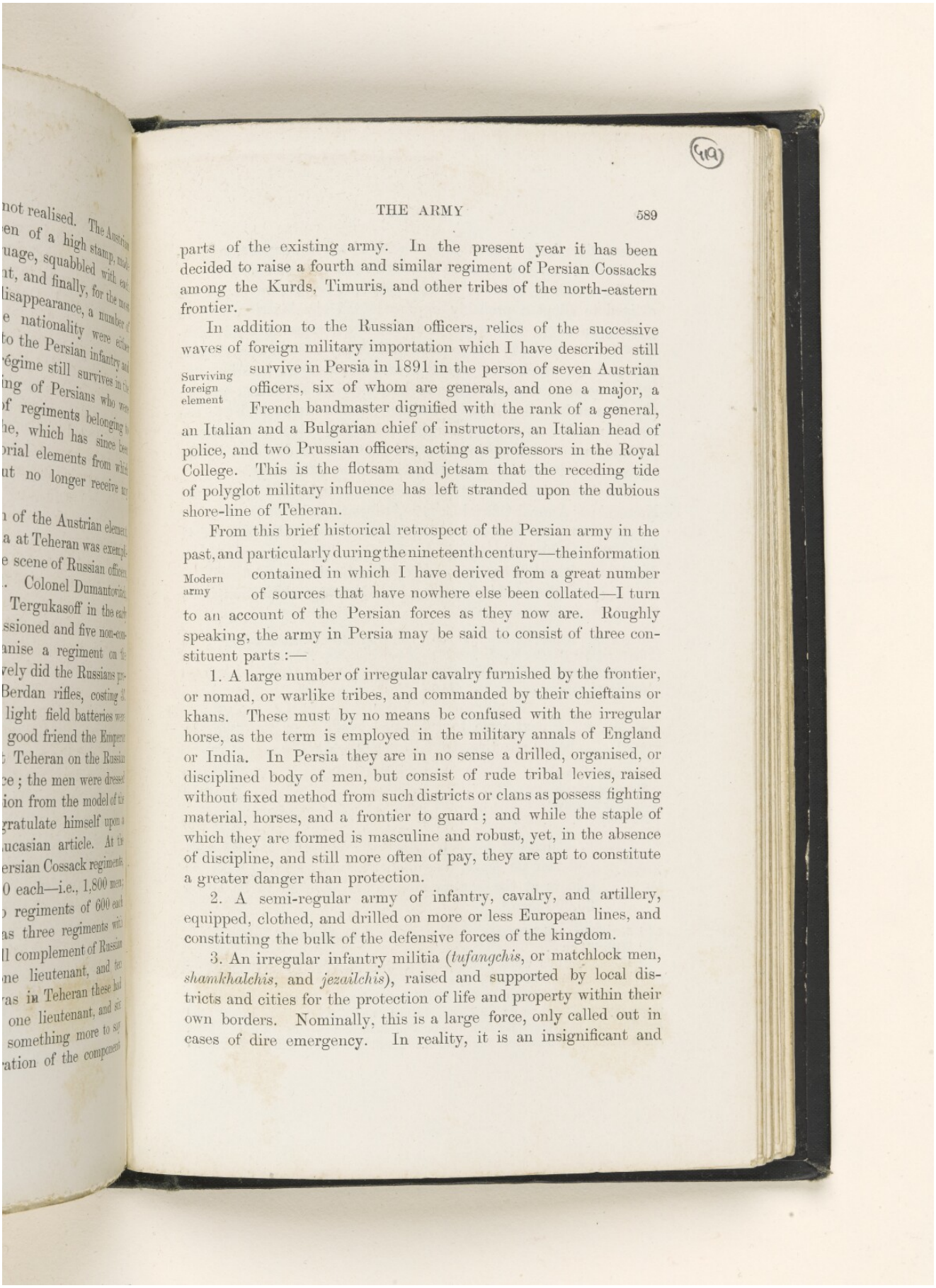
The South African Settlement.

A new and critical chapter of political history in South Africa opens with the meeting of the Legislature of Capetown. In his speech on Wednesday, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, the Governor, stated that a Bill would be introduced indemnifying the Governor and all concerned for acts committed under Martial Law. As soon as this measure is passed Martial Law will be removed. Further Indemnity Bills will be submitted to Parliament to cover the unavoidable infringement of the law in consequence of Parliament not having been





parts of the existing army. In the present year it has been decided to raise a fourth and similar regiment of Persian Cossacks among the Kurds, Timuris, and other tribes of the north-eastern frontier.

Surviving foreign element

In addition to the Russian officers, relics of the successive waves of foreign military importation which I have described still survive in Persia in 1891 in the person of seven Austrian officers, six of whom are generals, and one a major, a French bandmaster dignified with the rank of a general, an Italian and a Bulgarian chief of instructors, an Italian head of police, and two Prussian officers, acting as professors in the Royal College. This is the flotsam and jetsam that the receding tide of polyglot military influence has left stranded upon the dubious shore-line of Teheran.

Modern army

From this brief historical retrospect of the Persian army in the past, and particularly during the nineteenth century—the information contained in which I have derived from a great number of sources that have nowhere else been collated—I turn to an account of the Persian forces as they now are. Roughly speaking, the army in Persia may be said to consist of three constituent parts :—

1. A large number of irregular cavalry furnished by the frontier, or nomad, or warlike tribes, and commanded by their chieftains or khans. These must by no means be confused with the irregular horse, as the term is employed in the military annals of England or India. In Persia they are in no sense a drilled, organised, or disciplined body of men, but consist of rude tribal levies, raised without fixed method from such districts or clans as possess fighting material, horses, and a frontier to guard; and while the staple of which they are formed is masculine and robust, yet, in the absence of discipline, and still more often of pay, they are apt to constitute a greater danger than protection.

2. A semi-regular army of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, equipped, clothed, and drilled on more or less European lines, and constituting the bulk of the defensive forces of the kingdom.

3. An irregular infantry militia (*tufangchis*, or matchlock men, *shamkhalchis*, and *jezailchis*), raised and supported by local districts and cities for the protection of life and property within their own borders. Nominally, this is a large force, only called out in cases of dire emergency. In reality, it is an insignificant and

contemptible body of men, armed with obsolete weapons and performing with much reluctance the duties of local guards.

Numerical strength

The numbers of these various elements are as follows. I am obliged to adopt a probably unprecedented classification, and to arrange them under four headings, representing respectively:—(1) the hypothetical Army List of the Persian Government, which is an official record based upon imagination; (2) the nominal strength liable to be called out for active service; (3) the number alleged to be habitually under arms; and (4) the actual number at present serving with the colours. There is probably no other army in the world that can be depicted by its apologists or its critics as figuring in so many categories.

1. The Army List

The theoretical Army List of the Shah, published in the 'Sal Nameh,' or 'Annual Official Gazette,' gives the total of the Persian army as 200,000—150,000 in the regular army and 50,000 in the militia or reserves. These figures may be dismissed without either comment or examination.

2. Nominal strength

The nominal strength liable to mobilisation is as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Irregular or Nomad Cavalry | 16,350 | Camel Artillery (*Zamburakchis*)[2] | 80 |
| Semi-regular Cavalry | 2,493 | Austrian Corps | 169 |
| Regular Infantry | 63,700 | Militia | 3,600 |
| Artillery[1] | 4,000 | | 90,392 |

3. Effective strength

I next come to the third heading, containing the alleged effective strength under arms:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Irregular Cavalry | 12,427 | Austrian Corps | 169 |
| Semi-regular Cavalry | 2,493 | Militia | 2,000 |
| Regular Infantry | 25,000 | | |
| Artillery[3] | 1,800 | | 43,889 |

4. Number embodied

Finally, deducting for false returns, deficient complement, and men on leave, the number actually serving with the colours at the present moment is believed to be about 30,000 men.[4]

[1] 540 officers and 3,460 men.

[2] 10 officers and 70 men.

[3] With 164 guns.

[4] The information which I have since received renders a fifth column necessary, depicting the still smaller total under arms in the spring of 1891. This total relates, except where otherwise specified, to infantry. Teheran, six battalions, nominally of 800 men each; Khorasan, Meshed, one battalion; Kelat-i-Nadiri and Sarakhs, one battalion; Kerman and Persian Beluchistan, one battalion; Fars, one battalion; Luristan and Burujird, one battalion and four guns; Isfahan and

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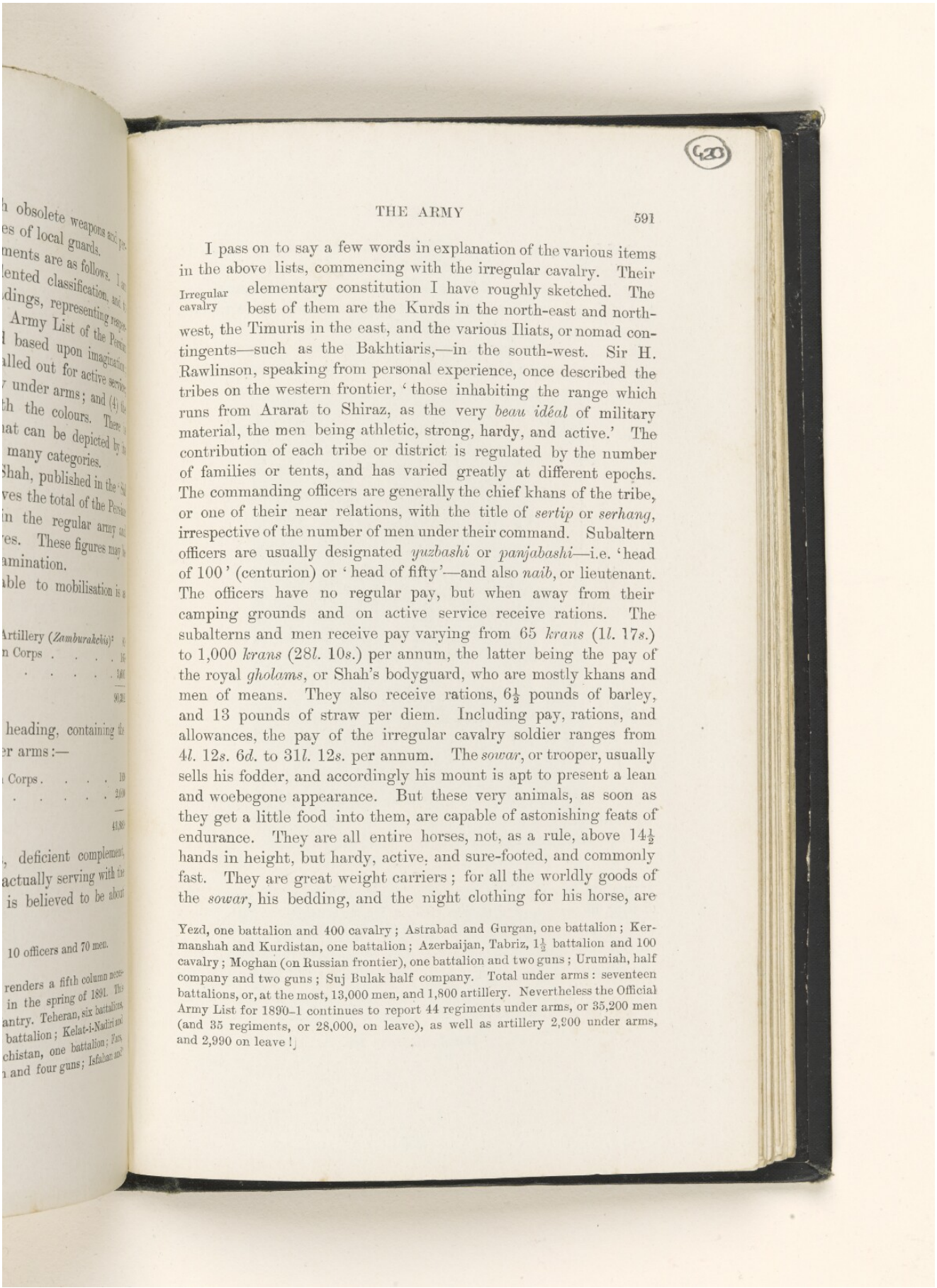



I pass on to say a few words in explanation of the various items in the above lists, commencing with the irregular cavalry. Their elementary constitution I have roughly sketched. The best of them are the Kurds in the north-east and north-west, the Timuris in the east, and the various Iliats, or nomad contingents—such as the Bakhtiaris,—in the south-west. Sir H. Rawlinson, speaking from personal experience, once described the tribes on the western frontier, 'those inhabiting the range which runs from Ararat to Shiraz, as the very *beau idéal* of military material, the men being athletic, strong, hardy, and active.' The contribution of each tribe or district is regulated by the number of families or tents, and has varied greatly at different epochs. The commanding officers are generally the chief khans of the tribe, or one of their near relations, with the title of *sertip* or *serhang*, irrespective of the number of men under their command. Subaltern officers are usually designated *yuzbashi* or *panjabashi*—i.e. 'head of 100' (centurion) or 'head of fifty'—and also *naib*, or lieutenant. The officers have no regular pay, but when away from their camping grounds and on active service receive rations. The subalterns and men receive pay varying from 65 *krans* (1*l.* 17*s.*) to 1,000 *krans* (28*l.* 10*s.*) per annum, the latter being the pay of the royal *gholams*, or Shah's bodyguard, who are mostly khans and men of means. They also receive rations, 6½ pounds of barley, and 13 pounds of straw per diem. Including pay, rations, and allowances, the pay of the irregular cavalry soldier ranges from 4*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* to 31*l.* 12*s.* per annum. The *sowar*, or trooper, usually sells his fodder, and accordingly his mount is apt to present a lean and woebegone appearance. But these very animals, as soon as they get a little food into them, are capable of astonishing feats of endurance. They are all entire horses, not, as a rule, above 14½ hands in height, but hardy, active, and sure-footed, and commonly fast. They are great weight carriers; for all the worldly goods of the *sowar*, his bedding, and the night clothing for his horse, are

Irregular cavalry

Yezd, one battalion and 400 cavalry; Astrabad and Gurgan, one battalion; Kermanshah and Kurdistan, one battalion; Azerbaijan, Tabriz, 1½ battalion and 100 cavalry; Moghan (on Russian frontier), one battalion and two guns; Urumiah, half company and two guns; Suj Bulak half company. Total under arms: seventeen battalions, or, at the most, 13,000 men, and 1,800 artillery. Nevertheless the Official Army List for 1890–1 continues to report 44 regiments under arms, or 35,200 men (and 35 regiments, or 28,000, on leave), as well as artillery 2,200 under arms, and 2,990 on leave!

packed into the saddle-bags which he throws across its back. In the thick felts which cover it from head to tail, the Persian horse is quite independent of the stable. These excellent animals can be purchased anywhere for very cheap sums, from 6*l.* upwards, and, when in marching trim, they easily accomplish from 24 to 30 miles in the day in any weather, over a country that would break the heart of a more highly-bred beast. Their riders have no uni-



CAVALRY OF THE ZIL-ES-SULTAN

forms, but provide their own mounts, kit, and arms, the latter consisting, as a rule, of a native rifle, a short, straight sword, and a pistol. They are for the most part splendid horsemen, being trained to ride from childhood, and being able to perform remarkable feats of agility or marksmanship while proceeding at full gallop. Herodotus said that the ancient Persians taught their sons three things —to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth.[1] Though the

[1] Herod., lib. i. cap. 136.

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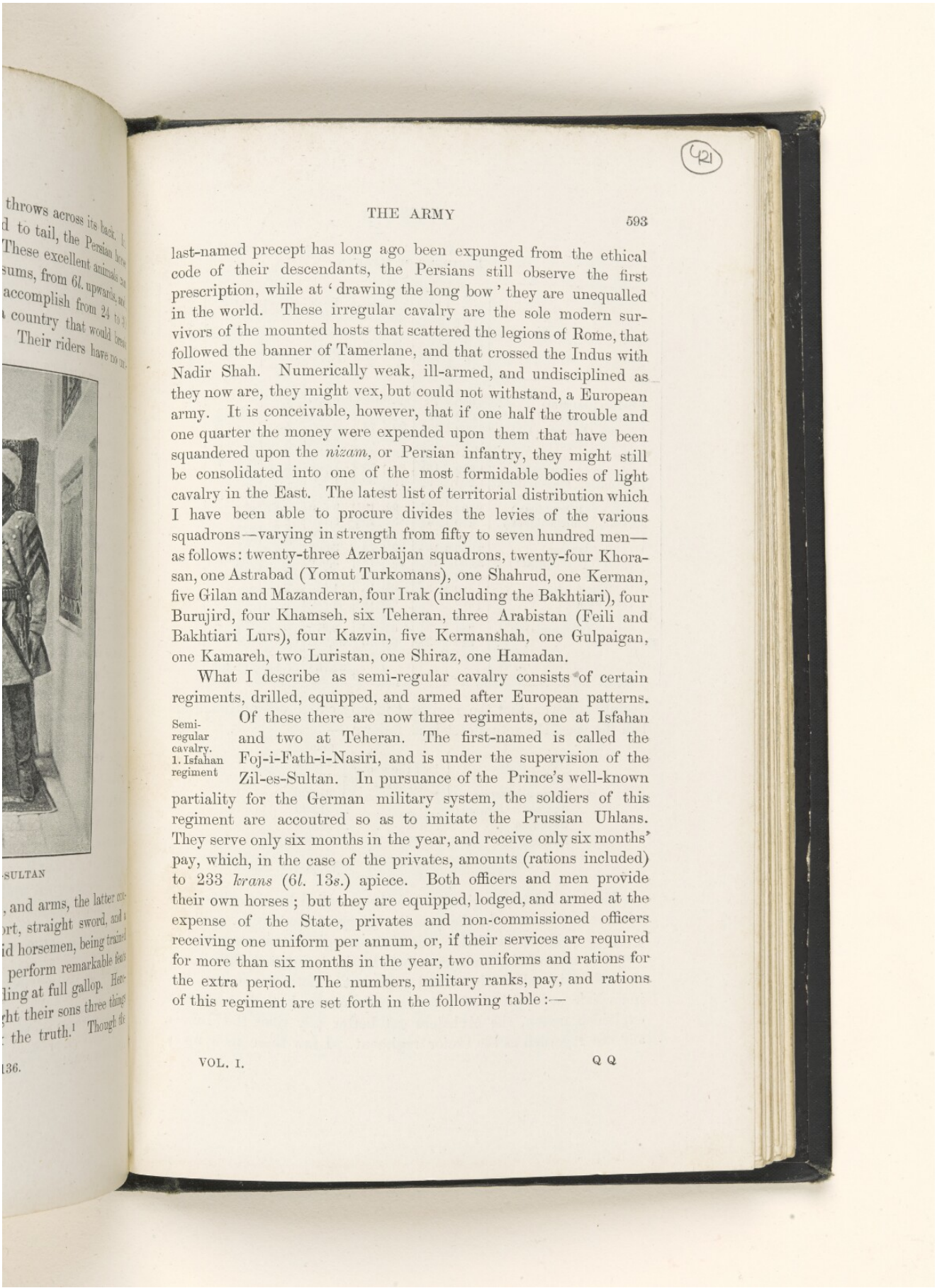
Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [421r] (844/1814)







last-named precept has long ago been expunged from the ethical code of their descendants, the Persians still observe the first prescription, while at 'drawing the long bow' they are unequalled in the world. These irregular cavalry are the sole modern survivors of the mounted hosts that scattered the legions of Rome, that followed the banner of Tamerlane, and that crossed the Indus with Nadir Shah. Numerically weak, ill-armed, and undisciplined as they now are, they might vex, but could not withstand, a European army. It is conceivable, however, that if one half the trouble and one quarter the money were expended upon them that have been squandered upon the *nizam*, or Persian infantry, they might still be consolidated into one of the most formidable bodies of light cavalry in the East. The latest list of territorial distribution which I have been able to procure divides the levies of the various squadrons—varying in strength from fifty to seven hundred men—as follows: twenty-three Azerbaijan squadrons, twenty-four Khorasan, one Astrabad (Yomut Turkomans), one Shahrud, one Kerman, five Gilan and Mazanderan, four Irak (including the Bakhtiari), four Burujird, four Khamseh, six Teheran, three Arabistan (Feili and Bakhtiari Lurs), four Kazvin, five Kermanshah, one Gulpaigan, one Kamareh, two Luristan, one Shiraz, one Hamadan.

What I describe as semi-regular cavalry consists of certain regiments, drilled, equipped, and armed after European patterns.

Semi-regular cavalry. 1. Isfahan regiment

Of these there are now three regiments, one at Isfahan and two at Teheran. The first-named is called the Foj-i-Fath-i-Nasiri, and is under the supervision of the Zil-es-Sultan. In pursuance of the Prince's well-known partiality for the German military system, the soldiers of this regiment are accoutred so as to imitate the Prussian Uhlans. They serve only six months in the year, and receive only six months' pay, which, in the case of the privates, amounts (rations included) to 233 *krans* (6*l.* 13*s.*) apiece. Both officers and men provide their own horses; but they are equipped, lodged, and armed at the expense of the State, privates and non-commissioned officers receiving one uniform per annum, or, if their services are required for more than six months in the year, two uniforms and rations for the extra period. The numbers, military ranks, pay, and rations of this regiment are set forth in the following table:—



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REGIMENT OF ISFAHAN

| Rank and number | Muwajib, annual pay per man | Jireh, daily rations per man—Wheat | Alik, daily horse allowance: Barley | Alik, daily horse allowance: Straw | Totals for Regiment per annum in krans: Muwajjib | Jireh | Alik | Grand total of pay and allowances per annum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | krans | lbs. | lbs. | lbs. | | | | krans |
| 1 Sertip (General) | 6,000 | 78 | 156 | 312 | 6,000 | 362 tons of wheat, at 30 krans per kharvar of 650 lbs. = krans 37,440 | 724 tons of barley at 15 krs. per kharvar, 37,440<br>1,448 " straw at 5 krs. 24,960<br>krans 62,400 | 332,628 |
| 1 Serhang (Colonel) | 4,000 | 39 | 78 | 156 | 4,000 | | | |
| 1 Nazem (Inspector) | 3,200 | 19½ | 39 | 78 | 3,200 | | | |
| 2 Yawar (Major) | 1,800 | 19½ | 39 | 78 | 3,600 | | | |
| 4 Sultan (Captain) | 1,200 | 9 | 19½ | 39 | 4,800 | | | |
| 1 Ajudan (Adjutant) | 1,800 | 19 | 39 | 78 | 1,800 | | | |
| 1 Beirakdar (Flag-bearer), with rank of Sultan | 1,200 | 9 | 19½ | 39 | 1,200 | | | |
| 8 Naib awal (1st Lieut.) | 1,200 | 4 | 9 | 19 | 9,600 | | | |
| 8 Naib doyum (2nd Lieut.) | 840 | 4 | 9 | 19 | 6,720 | | | |
| 1 Polis mayur (Provost?) | 1,800 | 9 | 19 | 39 | 1,800 | | | |
| 1 Tabib (Surgeon) | 3,000 | 19 | 39 | 78 | 3,000 | | | |
| 1 Mushrif (Accountant) | 3,000 | 19 | 39 | 78 | 3,000 | | | |
| 1 Vekil-i-Kul | 420 | 3 | 6½ | 13 | 420 | | | |
| 4 Vekil Bashi | 380 | 3 | 6½ | 13 | 1,520 | | | |
| 16 Vekil awal (Sergeants) | 370 | 3 | 6½ | 13 | 5,920 | | | |
| 16 Vekil doyum | 346 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 5,536 | | | |
| 8 Sarjuki (Corporals) | 334 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 2,672 | | | |
| 525 privates | 320 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 168,000 | | | |
| | | | | | 232,788 | 37,440 | 62,400 | |

Seeing, however, that the regiment is only called out and paid for half the year, the actual cost is as follows:—

| | Krans |
|---|---|
| Pay, Rations, Horse allowance (half the above amounts) | 116,394 + 18,720 + 31,200 |
| Surgeon's allowance | 1,200 |
| Uniforms | 18,000 |
| Barracks | 5,000 |
| | 190,514 = £5,443 |

2. Cossack regiments

The two Teheran regiments are the so-called Persian Cossacks, who are supposed to be the peculiar glory of the capital and the pride of the Shah. One of these regiments is composed of men of the Muhajer tribe, and is designated therefrom; the other is called the Bumi regiment. Both are under the immediate supervision of Russian instructors; but, for some unexplained reason, the Muhajers get better pay than the Bumis and are regarded as the senior regiment. I saw these men upon

parade and frequently in the streets. They have a smart and workmanlike appearance, being dressed in a facsimile of the Russian Caucasian uniform, consisting of a shako, and long brown *tcherkess* or pelisse, drawn in by a belt round the waist. Thanks to the unremitting exertions of their Russian instructors, they are probably the best stuff in the Persian army; though the detach-

COSSACK REGIMENTS OF TEHERAN

| Rank and number | Muwajjib, annually per man | Jireh, daily rations per man | Alik, horse allowance per diem | | | Totals for regiment per annum | | | Grand total of pay and allowances per ann. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Barley | Straw | Hay | Muwajjib | Jireh | Alik | |
| **I. Muhajer Regiment** | | | | | | | | | |
| | krs. | The first and second lieutenants, the N.C. officers, and the privates, 589 men altogether, receive daily rations of 3¼ lbs. of bread, 2⅜ oz. cheese, 6½ oz. meat, and, in summer, 5½ oz. of grapes once a week, rice and curry. Rations are compounded for at 8 shahis per diem. | Horse allowance is compounded for as follows: Barley, 15 krans per kharvar (650 lbs.) Straw, 4 krans ditto Hay, 10 krans ditto | | | krs. | krs. | krs. | krs. |
| | | | lbs. | lbs. | lbs. | | | | |
| 1 Sertip (General) | 14,000 | | 39 | 78 | 19½ | 14,000 | | | |
| 1 Serhang (Col.) | 3,000 | | 19½ | 39 | 9¾ | 3,000 | | | |
| 2 Yawar (Major) | 2,400 | | 16¼ | 32½ | 8⅛ | 4,800 | | | |
| 4 Sultan (Capt.) | 1,800 | | 13 | 26 | 6½ | 7,200 | | | |
| 1 Ajudan (Adjt.) | 1,800 | | 13 | 26 | 6½ | 1,800 | | | |
| 8 Naib awal (1st Lieut.) | 1,200 | | 9¾ | 19½ | 4⅞ | 9,600 | | | |
| 8 Naibdoyum (2nd Lieut.) | 840 | | 9¾ | 19½ | 4⅞ | 6,720 | | | |
| 1 Mushrif (Accnt.) | 1,500 | | 13 | 26 | 6½ | 1,500 | | | |
| 1 Tabib (Surgeon) | 3,000 | | 16¼ | 32½ | 8⅛ | 3,000 | | | |
| 1 Vekil-i-Kul (Col. Sergt.) | 400 | | 6½ | 13 | 3¼ | 400 | | | |
| 4 Vekil (Sergt.) | 350 | | 6½ | 13 | 3¼ | 1,400 | | | |
| 8 Sarjuki (Corp.) | 315 | | 6½ | 13 | 3¼ | 2,520 | | | |
| 560 privates | 300 | | 6½ | 13 | 3¼ | 168,000 | | | |
| | | | | | | 223,940 | 85,994 | 68,495 | 378,429 |
| **II. Bumi Regiment** | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Sertip (General) | 12,000 | — | — | — | — | 12,000 | — | — | |
| Other officers and N.C. officers, same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | Same as I. | |
| 560 privates | 180 | — | — | — | — | 100,800 | — | — | |
| | | | | | | 154,740 | 85,994 | 68,495 | 309,229 |
| *Extras for I. and II.* | | | | | | | | | |
| Russian Instructors (1 colonel, 2 captains, and some N.C. officers); pay, rations, and allowances | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 80,000 |
| 1 interpreter, with rank of general | 8,000 | None | 39 | 78 | 19½ | 8,000 | — | 660 | |
| | | | | | | 8,000 | — | 660 | 88,660 |



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ment that was sent against the Yomut Turkomans near Astrabad in 1889, is said to have borne its due share in the general ignominy. The men supply their own horses, but receive an extra allowance of 100 *krans* per annum for 'wear and tear' of animal. Barracks [1] and stabling are provided at the Government cost. The privates of the Muhajer regiment receive pay and rations to the annual value of 655 *krans* (18*l.* 14*s.*); those of the Bumi regiment to that of 535 *krans* (15*l.* 6*s.*). The subalterns, non-commissioned officers, and privates receive also per annum one uniform of European cloth, one uniform of Persian woollen stuff, two uniforms of thin cotton, and one pair of boots, amounting in all to an annual value of 100 *krans*. Their arms and accoutrements, viz., Berdan rifle, sword, saddle, and bridle, are also furnished by the State. One of the chief causes of the superior efficiency of these troops is that the men are paid, from the Persian Treasury it is true, but through the hands of the Russian officers. The latter, however, do not control the promotion, which is a corresponding source of weakness. I append the foregoing table of the two regiments. To sum up, the annual cost of the two regiments, if kept at their full complement, would be as follows :—

| | | Krans | Krans |
|---|---|---|---|
| Instructors | | | 80,000 |
| Interpreter | | | 8,660 |
| Regiment I. | Pay | 223,940 | |
| | Rations | 85,994 | |
| | Horse allowance | 68,495 | |
| | Medicines | 1,200 | |
| | Wear and tear of horses | 58,900 | |
| | Uniforms | 58,900 | |
| | | | 497,429 |
| Regiment II. | Pay | 154,740 | |
| | Rations | 85,994 | |
| | Horse allowance | 68,495 | |
| | Medicines | 1,200 | |
| | Wear and tear of horses | 58,900 | |
| | Uniforms | 58,900 | |
| | | | 428,229 |
| Barracks and stables maintenance | | | 10,000 |
| | | | 1,024,318 |
| | | | or £29,266 |

[1] Persian barracks are built on the model of caravanserais, and consist of a number of empty rooms, without windows, but with an extra allowance of door, on the four sides of large open courtyards. The soldiers have no beds, but sleep on the floor or on carpets.

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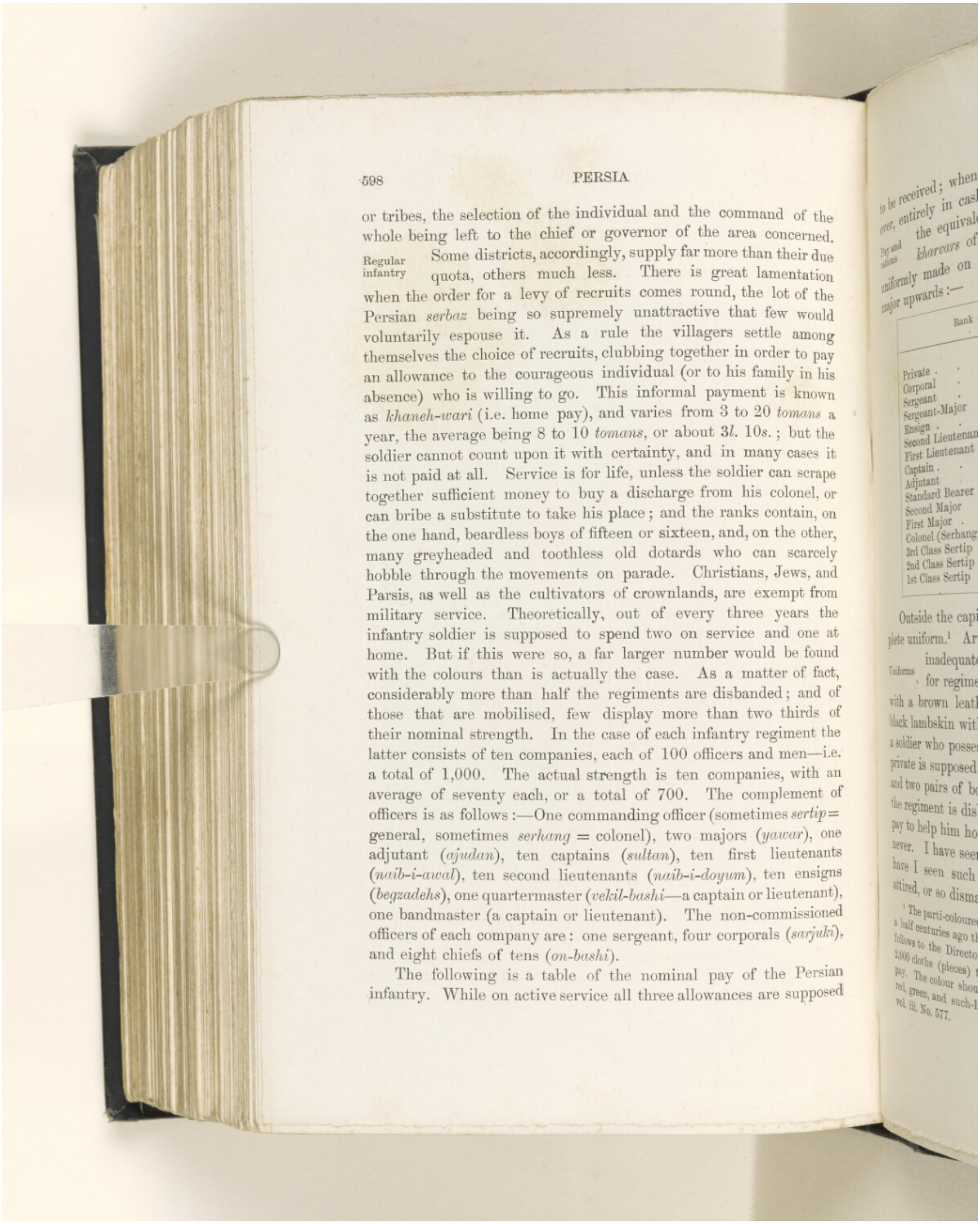
Neither regiment, however, is kept up to its full strength; and they have sometimes been less than 300 strong; although no corresponding reduction takes place in the number of superior officers and instructors. The average annual expenditure is



INFANTRY OF THE ZIL-ES-SULTAN

reduced by the deficient complement to about 20,000*l*. About 30 of the privates have been taught music, and form a military band.

The regular infantry rest upon a territorial and tribal organisation. They are recruited in no fixed numerical proportion, but in the most arbitrary fashion from provinces, districts, villages,





or tribes, the selection of the individual and the command of the whole being left to the chief or governor of the area concerned.

Regular infantry

Some districts, accordingly, supply far more than their due quota, others much less. There is great lamentation when the order for a levy of recruits comes round, the lot of the Persian *serbaz* being so supremely unattractive that few would voluntarily espouse it. As a rule the villagers settle among themselves the choice of recruits, clubbing together in order to pay an allowance to the courageous individual (or to his family in his absence) who is willing to go. This informal payment is known as *khaneh-wari* (i.e. home pay), and varies from 3 to 20 *tomans* a year, the average being 8 to 10 *tomans*, or about 3*l.* 10*s.*; but the soldier cannot count upon it with certainty, and in many cases it is not paid at all. Service is for life, unless the soldier can scrape together sufficient money to buy a discharge from his colonel, or can bribe a substitute to take his place; and the ranks contain, on the one hand, beardless boys of fifteen or sixteen, and, on the other, many greyheaded and toothless old dotards who can scarcely hobble through the movements on parade. Christians, Jews, and Parsis, as well as the cultivators of crownlands, are exempt from military service. Theoretically, out of every three years the infantry soldier is supposed to spend two on service and one at home. But if this were so, a far larger number would be found with the colours than is actually the case. As a matter of fact, considerably more than half the regiments are disbanded; and of those that are mobilised, few display more than two thirds of their nominal strength. In the case of each infantry regiment the latter consists of ten companies, each of 100 officers and men—i.e. a total of 1,000. The actual strength is ten companies, with an average of seventy each, or a total of 700. The complement of officers is as follows:—One commanding officer (sometimes *sertip* = general, sometimes *serhang* = colonel), two majors (*yawar*), one adjutant (*ajudan*), ten captains (*sultan*), ten first lieutenants (*naib-i-awal*), ten second lieutenants (*naib-i-doyum*), ten ensigns (*begzadehs*), one quartermaster (*vekil-bashi*—a captain or lieutenant), one bandmaster (a captain or lieutenant). The non-commissioned officers of each company are: one sergeant, four corporals (*sarjuki*), and eight chiefs of tens (*on-bashi*).

The following is a table of the nominal pay of the Persian infantry. While on active service all three allowances are supposed

to be received; when not on active service the last alone, not, however, entirely in cash, 30 out of the 80 *krans* being so paid, and the equivalent of the remainder being supplied in two *kharvars* of wheat. A deduction of 20 per cent. is also uniformly made on the salaries of all officers from the rank of major upwards :—

Pay and rations

| Rank | Military pay | Rations | Home pay |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Krans | Krans | Krans |
| Private | 70 | 90 | 80 |
| Corporal | 80 | 90 | 80 |
| Sergeant | 90 | 90 | 80 |
| Sergeant-Major | 190 | 138 | 80 |
| Ensign | 190 | 126 | 80 |
| Second Lieutenant | 190 | 126 | 80 |
| First Lieutenant | 280 | 126 | 80 |
| Captain, Adjutant, Standard Bearer | 580 | 540 | 80 |
| Second Major | 1,000 | 1,140 | 80 |
| First Major | 1,200 | 1,140 | 80 |
| Colonel (Serhang) | 4,000 | 1,860 | 0 |
| 3rd Class Sertip | 7,500 | 3,000 | 0 |
| 2nd Class Sertip | 9,000 | 3,960 | 0 |
| 1st Class Sertip | 12,000 | 6,000 | 0 |

Outside the capital the Persian soldier is seldom seen in a complete uniform.[1] Articles of private clothing fill the gaps left by the inadequate or absent official garb. The ordinary uniform for regiments of the line is a tunic of coarse blue serge, with a brown leather belt, trousers of the same, and a shako of black lambskin with a brass badge in front; but it is rare to find a soldier who possesses the entire equipment. Theoretically, every private is supposed to receive two suits of cotton, one suit of cloth, and two pairs of boots per annum; whilst, every two years, when the regiment is disbanded, he is entitled to a bonus of six months' pay to help him home. The former he seldom receives; the latter never. I have seen soldiers in many parts of the world, but rarely have I seen such creditable specimens of manhood so woefully attired, or so dismally furnished.

Uniforms

[1] The parti-coloured diversity of Persian uniforms is no new thing. Two and a half centuries ago the Factors of the East India Company at Isfahan wrote as follows to the Directors: 'The King (Shah Abbas) has determined to distribute 2,000 cloths (pieces) to his soldiers, who are to the number of 35,000, in yearly pay. The colour should be hare colour, deer colour, popinjay, peach, brimstone, red, green, and such-like light colours.'—*Calendar of State Papers* (East Indies), vol. iii. No. 577.

Army reform

Army reform has been essayed by the present Shah, but has shared the same premature fate as have the majority of his ill-digested undertakings. The Amir-i-Nizam, whom he put to death in 1851, had turned his statesmanlike attention to the military, in common with the other resources of the country; and, had he lived, the army of Persia might to-day have been a very different body to that which it is. Again, in 1875, the Shah, under the influence of the powerful minister, Mirza Husein Khan, who then guided his counsels, promulgated what we should describe as a new army warrant, containing the most extensive reforms and involving a practical reconstruction of the entire army. Conscription was ordered, and the term of compulsory service fixed at twelve years. A permanent peace-strength of the army was instituted; promotion according to length of service was guaranteed; and provision was made for regular payment and retiring pensions. In common with most reforms in Persia, these salutary measures remained a dead letter, and have never been carried into execution. The old haphazard system continues, and will survive till it crumbles under the iron heel of a conqueror.

Territorial distribution

In 1886, the Persian Army List gave the territorial distribution of the regiments of the line as follows. Allowance must be made for the customary exaggeration, the majority of the regiments being unmobilised.

| Name and District of Regiment | Garrison stations |
|---|---|
| 26 Azerbaijan Regiments (nominally 800-1,000, really 600–700 strong) . . . . . | Tabriz, Teheran, Miandoab, Ardebil, Suj Bulak, Meshed, the Russian and Turkoman frontier |
| 12 Khorasan Regiments (Karai-Turshiz, Bostam, Semnan, 2 Kain, 3 Kerman, and 3 regiments of *Tufangchis*, 1 Kerman and Beluchi, 1 Astrabad, and 1 Meshed) . . . . . | Sarakhs, Astrabad, Kain, Nasratabad, Teheran, Beluch frontier |
| 7 Mazanderan Regiments . . . . . | Astrabad |
| 1 Gilan . . . . . | Enzeli |
| 5 Isfahan . . . . . | Isfahan and Mohammerah |
| 5 Khamseh . . . . . | Meshed and Kelat |
| 4 Demavend . . . . . | Teheran |
| 3 Kazvin . . . . . | Teheran |
| 4 Kermanshah . . . . . | Kurdish frontier |
| 6 Kezzaz and Ferahan . . . . . | Bushire, Bunder Abbas |
| 1 Gerrus, 1 Kamareh, 1 Gulpaigan, 2 Luristan, 1 Malair, 1 Nihavend, 4 Hamadan, 1 Kurdistan . | Shiraz |

The *personnel* of the artillery is officially supposed to consist of fifteen battalions, and of the following regiments, more than half

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of which are never embodied: thirteen Azerbaijan regiments, and one each from Khorasan, Astrabad, Shahrud and Bostam, Kerman, Isfahan, Burujird, Khamseh, Karaghan, Arabistan, Kazvin, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Gerrus, Kezzaz, Luristan, Malair, Nihavend, Hamadan, Teheran, Saveh, and Shiraz. Artillerymen receive double the pay of the soldiers of the line, but the same rations. The scale is as follows :—

Artillery

| Rank | Military Pay | Rations | Home Pay |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Krans. | Krans. | Krans. |
| Private | 140 | 90 | 80 |
| Corporal | 160 | 90 | 80 |
| Sergeant | 180 | 90 | 80 |
| Sergeant-Major | 380 | 138 | 80 |
| Ensign / Second Lieutenant | 380 | 126 | 80 |
| First Lieutenant | 560 | 126 | 80 |
| Captain / Adjutant / Standard-Bearer | 1,160 | 540 | 80 |
| Second Major | 2,000 | 1,140 | 80 |
| First Major | 2,400 | 1,140 | 80 |
| Colonel | 5,000 | 1,860 | — |
| 3rd Class Sertip | 7,500 | 3,000 | — |
| 2nd Class Sertip | 9,000 | 3,960 | — |
| 1st Class Sertip | 12,000 | 6,000 | — |

Of the arms it is impossible to speak with much respect. I have given the figures of guns available for use—i.e. alleged to possess carriages and to be in a more or less serviceable condition—as 164. There are four Russian guns of 8·7 centimètre calibre on the Krupp model. These are the best. The Austrian *régime* has left its mark in the shape of a large collection of muzzle-loading Uchatius guns, which are stored in the various arsenals in Teheran and the provincial capitals. Thirty of these are 7-centimètre mountain guns for mule batteries, divided between Teheran and Tabriz. At Teheran there are also eight Uchatius of 9-centimètre and ten of 1-centimètre calibre, as well as 72 rifled brass guns, made at Teheran, but possessing no carriages, and 350 venerable smooth-bores of every pattern and calibre from 24-pounders to 12-pounders, without carriages and absolutely worthless. A few of them are exhibited in the artillery square at Teheran, with the object of demonstrating to the inhabitants the overwhelming defensive strength of the place. At Tabriz, in addition to the mountain guns mentioned, there are eight Uchatius

Guns

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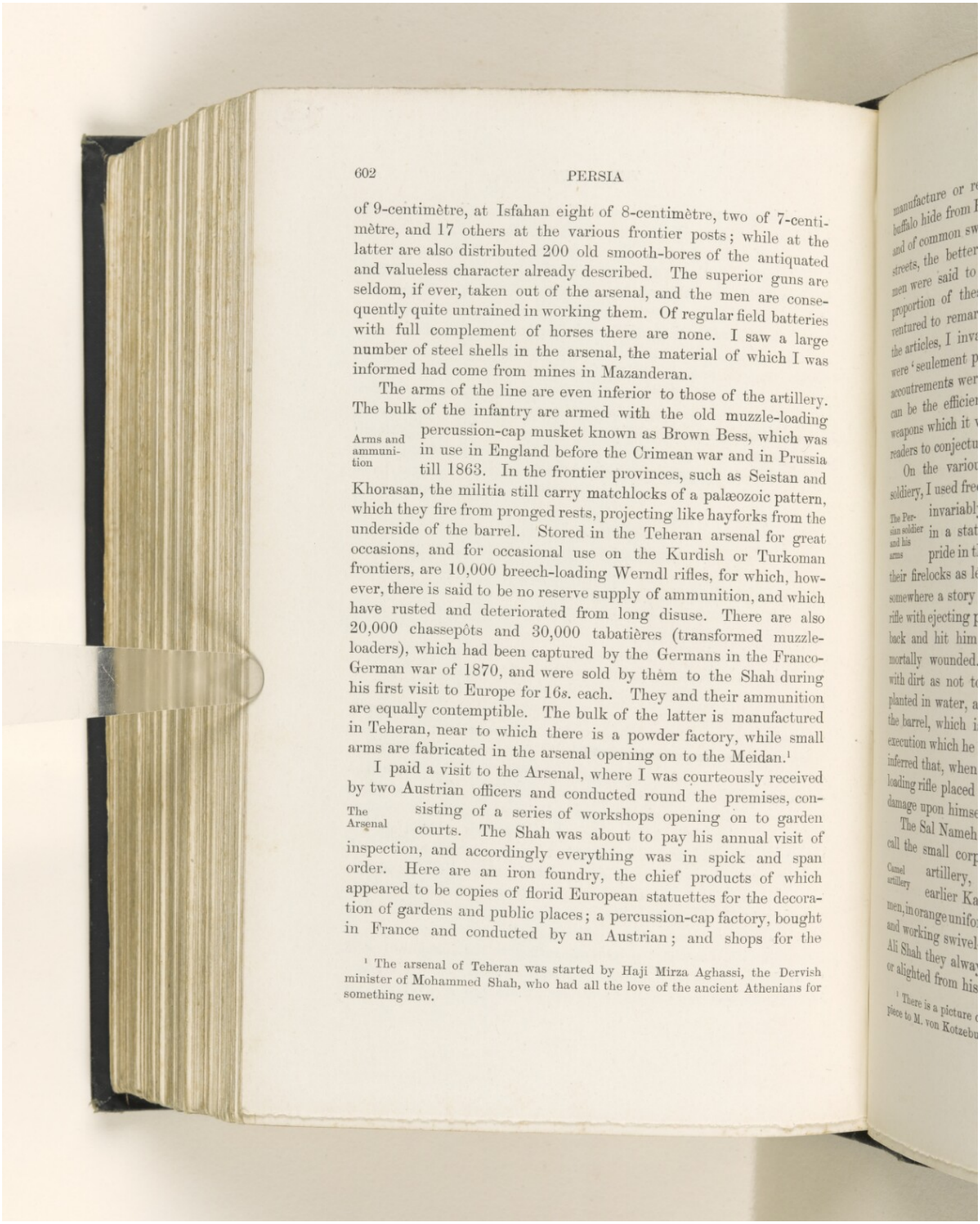




of 9-centimètre, at Isfahan eight of 8-centimètre, two of 7-centimètre, and 17 others at the various frontier posts; while at the latter are also distributed 200 old smooth-bores of the antiquated and valueless character already described. The superior guns are seldom, if ever, taken out of the arsenal, and the men are consequently quite untrained in working them. Of regular field batteries with full complement of horses there are none. I saw a large number of steel shells in the arsenal, the material of which I was informed had come from mines in Mazanderan.

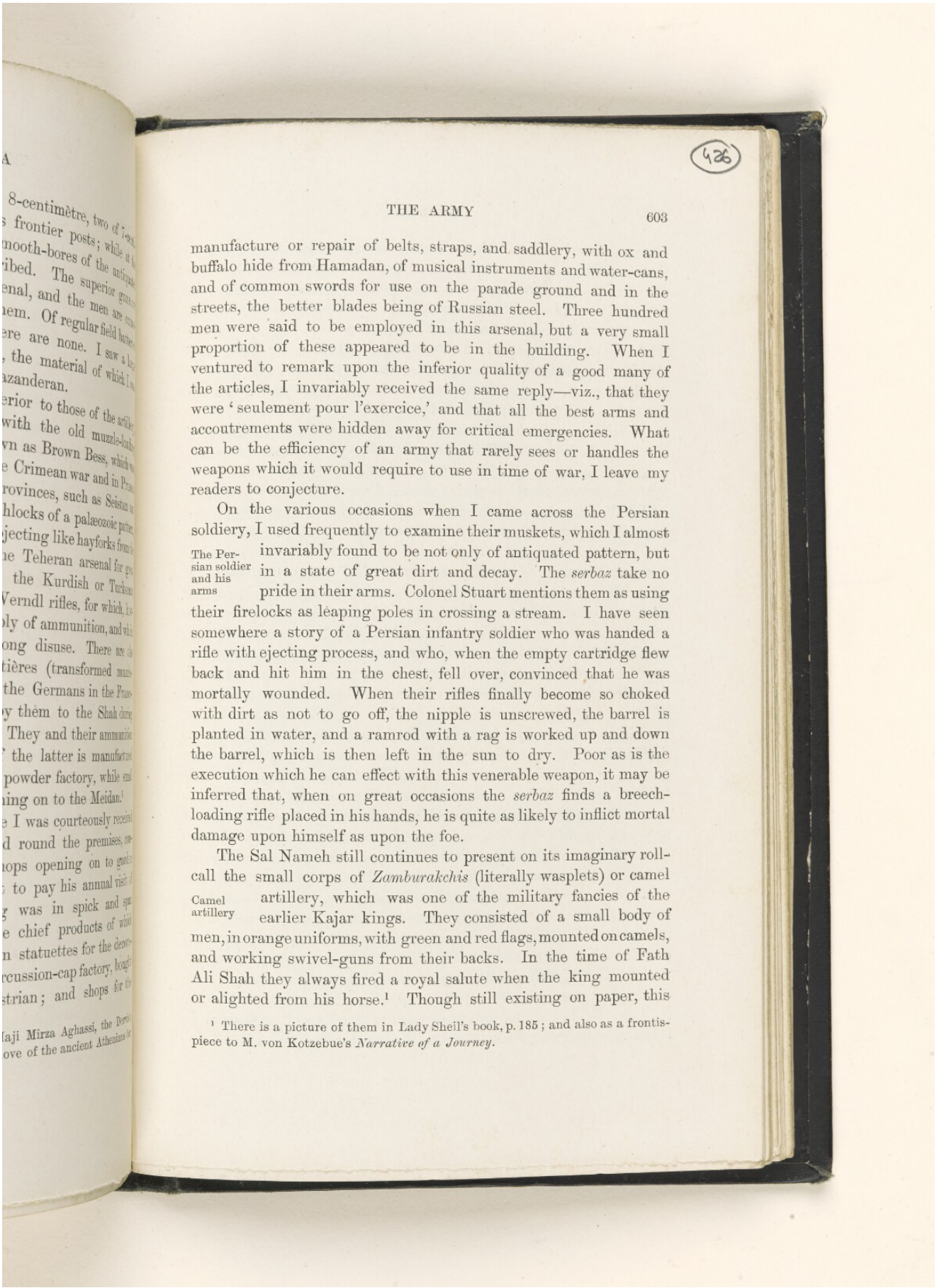
Arms and ammunition

The arms of the line are even inferior to those of the artillery. The bulk of the infantry are armed with the old muzzle-loading percussion-cap musket known as Brown Bess, which was in use in England before the Crimean war and in Prussia till 1863. In the frontier provinces, such as Seistan and Khorasan, the militia still carry matchlocks of a palæozoic pattern, which they fire from pronged rests, projecting like hayforks from the underside of the barrel. Stored in the Teheran arsenal for great occasions, and for occasional use on the Kurdish or Turkoman frontiers, are 10,000 breech-loading Werndl rifles, for which, however, there is said to be no reserve supply of ammunition, and which have rusted and deteriorated from long disuse. There are also 20,000 chassepôts and 30,000 tabatières (transformed muzzle-loaders), which had been captured by the Germans in the Franco-German war of 1870, and were sold by them to the Shah during his first visit to Europe for 16*s.* each. They and their ammunition are equally contemptible. The bulk of the latter is manufactured in Teheran, near to which there is a powder factory, while small arms are fabricated in the arsenal opening on to the Meidan.[1]

The Arsenal

I paid a visit to the Arsenal, where I was courteously received by two Austrian officers and conducted round the premises, consisting of a series of workshops opening on to garden courts. The Shah was about to pay his annual visit of inspection, and accordingly everything was in spick and span order. Here are an iron foundry, the chief products of which appeared to be copies of florid European statuettes for the decoration of gardens and public places; a percussion-cap factory, bought in France and conducted by an Austrian; and shops for the

[1] The arsenal of Teheran was started by Haji Mirza Aghassi, the Dervish minister of Mohammed Shah, who had all the love of the ancient Athenians for something new.





manufacture or repair of belts, straps, and saddlery, with ox and buffalo hide from Hamadan, of musical instruments and water-cans, and of common swords for use on the parade ground and in the streets, the better blades being of Russian steel. Three hundred men were said to be employed in this arsenal, but a very small proportion of these appeared to be in the building. When I ventured to remark upon the inferior quality of a good many of the articles, I invariably received the same reply—viz., that they were 'seulement pour l'exercice,' and that all the best arms and accoutrements were hidden away for critical emergencies. What can be the efficiency of an army that rarely sees or handles the weapons which it would require to use in time of war, I leave my readers to conjecture.

The Persian soldier and his arms

On the various occasions when I came across the Persian soldiery, I used frequently to examine their muskets, which I almost invariably found to be not only of antiquated pattern, but in a state of great dirt and decay. The *serbaz* take no pride in their arms. Colonel Stuart mentions them as using their firelocks as leaping poles in crossing a stream. I have seen somewhere a story of a Persian infantry soldier who was handed a rifle with ejecting process, and who, when the empty cartridge flew back and hit him in the chest, fell over, convinced that he was mortally wounded. When their rifles finally become so choked with dirt as not to go off, the nipple is unscrewed, the barrel is planted in water, and a ramrod with a rag is worked up and down the barrel, which is then left in the sun to dry. Poor as is the execution which he can effect with this venerable weapon, it may be inferred that, when on great occasions the *serbaz* finds a breech-loading rifle placed in his hands, he is quite as likely to inflict mortal damage upon himself as upon the foe.

Camel artillery

The Sal Nameh still continues to present on its imaginary roll-call the small corps of *Zamburakchis* (literally wasplets) or camel artillery, which was one of the military fancies of the earlier Kajar kings. They consisted of a small body of men, in orange uniforms, with green and red flags, mounted on camels, and working swivel-guns from their backs. In the time of Fath Ali Shah they always fired a royal salute when the king mounted or alighted from his horse.[1] Though still existing on paper, this

[1] There is a picture of them in Lady Sheil's book, p. 185; and also as a frontispiece to M. von Kotzebue's *Narrative of a Journey*.

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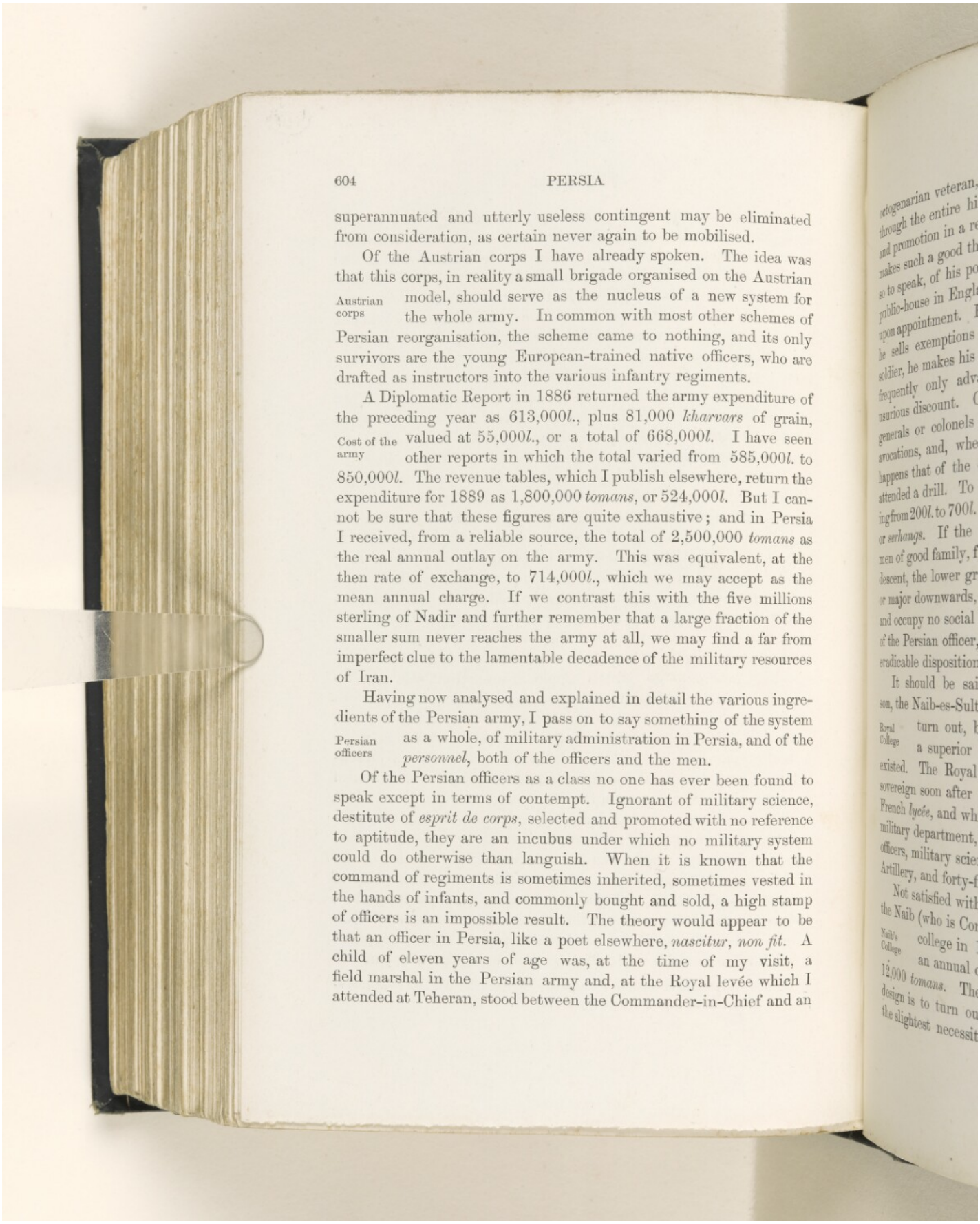



superannuated and utterly useless contingent may be eliminated from consideration, as certain never again to be mobilised.

Of the Austrian corps I have already spoken. The idea was that this corps, in reality a small brigade organised on the Austrian model, should serve as the nucleus of a new system for the whole army. In common with most other schemes of Persian reorganisation, the scheme came to nothing, and its only survivors are the young European-trained native officers, who are drafted as instructors into the various infantry regiments.

Austrian corps

A Diplomatic Report in 1886 returned the army expenditure of the preceding year as 613,000*l.*, plus 81,000 *kharvars* of grain, valued at 55,000*l.*, or a total of 668,000*l.* I have seen other reports in which the total varied from 585,000*l.* to 850,000*l.* The revenue tables, which I publish elsewhere, return the expenditure for 1889 as 1,800,000 *tomans*, or 524,000*l.* But I cannot be sure that these figures are quite exhaustive; and in Persia I received, from a reliable source, the total of 2,500,000 *tomans* as the real annual outlay on the army. This was equivalent, at the then rate of exchange, to 714,000*l.*, which we may accept as the mean annual charge. If we contrast this with the five millions sterling of Nadir and further remember that a large fraction of the smaller sum never reaches the army at all, we may find a far from imperfect clue to the lamentable decadence of the military resources of Iran.

Cost of the army

Having now analysed and explained in detail the various ingredients of the Persian army, I pass on to say something of the system as a whole, of military administration in Persia, and of the *personnel*, both of the officers and the men.

Persian officers

Of the Persian officers as a class no one has ever been found to speak except in terms of contempt. Ignorant of military science, destitute of *esprit de corps*, selected and promoted with no reference to aptitude, they are an incubus under which no military system could do otherwise than languish. When it is known that the command of regiments is sometimes inherited, sometimes vested in the hands of infants, and commonly bought and sold, a high stamp of officers is an impossible result. The theory would appear to be that an officer in Persia, like a poet elsewhere, *nascitur, non fit*. A child of eleven years of age was, at the time of my visit, a field marshal in the Persian army and, at the Royal levée which I attended at Teheran, stood between the Commander-in-Chief and an

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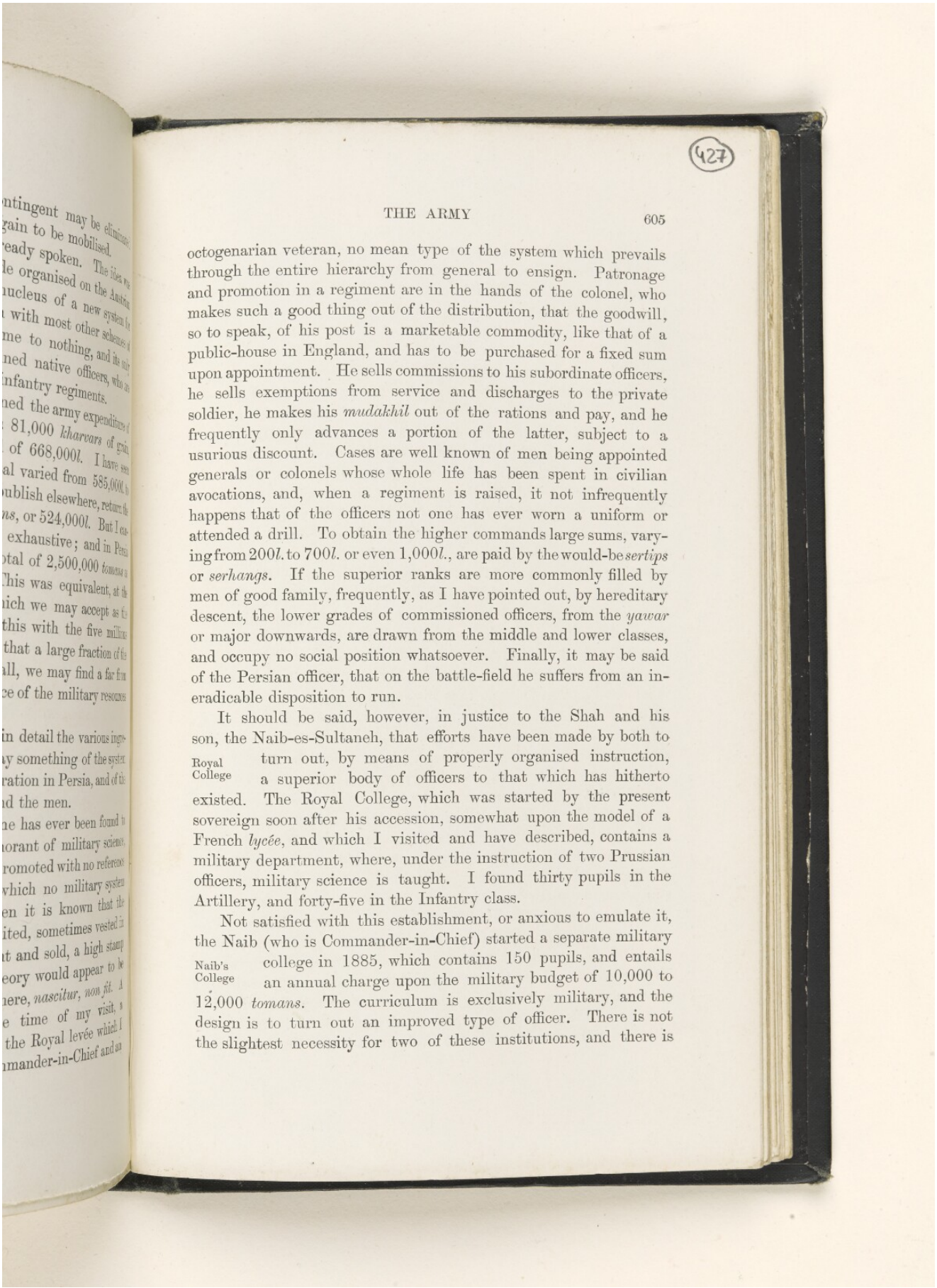




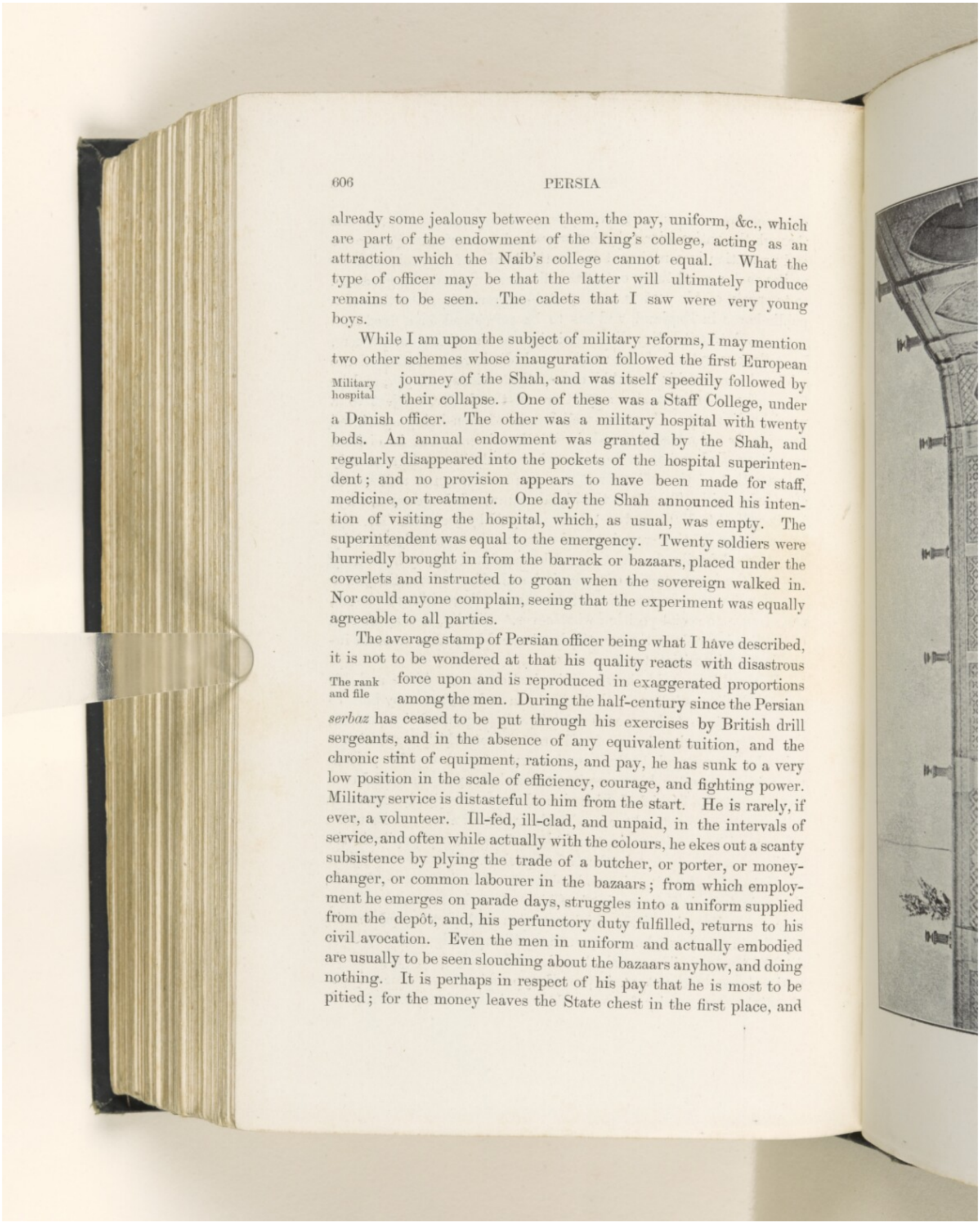
octogenarian veteran, no mean type of the system which prevails through the entire hierarchy from general to ensign. Patronage and promotion in a regiment are in the hands of the colonel, who makes such a good thing out of the distribution, that the goodwill, so to speak, of his post is a marketable commodity, like that of a public-house in England, and has to be purchased for a fixed sum upon appointment. He sells commissions to his subordinate officers, he sells exemptions from service and discharges to the private soldier, he makes his *mudakhil* out of the rations and pay, and he frequently only advances a portion of the latter, subject to a usurious discount. Cases are well known of men being appointed generals or colonels whose whole life has been spent in civilian avocations, and, when a regiment is raised, it not infrequently happens that of the officers not one has ever worn a uniform or attended a drill. To obtain the higher commands large sums, varying from 200*l.* to 700*l.* or even 1,000*l.*, are paid by the would-be *sertips* or *serhangs*. If the superior ranks are more commonly filled by men of good family, frequently, as I have pointed out, by hereditary descent, the lower grades of commissioned officers, from the *yawar* or major downwards, are drawn from the middle and lower classes, and occupy no social position whatsoever. Finally, it may be said of the Persian officer, that on the battle-field he suffers from an ineradicable disposition to run.

It should be said, however, in justice to the Shah and his son, the Naib-es-Sultaneh, that efforts have been made by both to turn out, by means of properly organised instruction, a superior body of officers to that which has hitherto existed. The Royal College, which was started by the present sovereign soon after his accession, somewhat upon the model of a French *lycée*, and which I visited and have described, contains a military department, where, under the instruction of two Prussian officers, military science is taught. I found thirty pupils in the Artillery, and forty-five in the Infantry class.

Royal College

Not satisfied with this establishment, or anxious to emulate it, the Naib (who is Commander-in-Chief) started a separate military college in 1885, which contains 150 pupils, and entails an annual charge upon the military budget of 10,000 to 12,000 *tomans*. The curriculum is exclusively military, and the design is to turn out an improved type of officer. There is not the slightest necessity for two of these institutions, and there is

Naib's College





already some jealousy between them, the pay, uniform, &c., which are part of the endowment of the king's college, acting as an attraction which the Naib's college cannot equal. What the type of officer may be that the latter will ultimately produce remains to be seen. The cadets that I saw were very young boys.

Military hospital

While I am upon the subject of military reforms, I may mention two other schemes whose inauguration followed the first European journey of the Shah, and was itself speedily followed by their collapse. One of these was a Staff College, under a Danish officer. The other was a military hospital with twenty beds. An annual endowment was granted by the Shah, and regularly disappeared into the pockets of the hospital superintendent; and no provision appears to have been made for staff, medicine, or treatment. One day the Shah announced his intention of visiting the hospital, which, as usual, was empty. The superintendent was equal to the emergency. Twenty soldiers were hurriedly brought in from the barrack or bazaars, placed under the coverlets and instructed to groan when the sovereign walked in. Nor could anyone complain, seeing that the experiment was equally agreeable to all parties.

The rank and file

The average stamp of Persian officer being what I have described, it is not to be wondered at that his quality reacts with disastrous force upon and is reproduced in exaggerated proportions among the men. During the half-century since the Persian *serbaz* has ceased to be put through his exercises by British drill sergeants, and in the absence of any equivalent tuition, and the chronic stint of equipment, rations, and pay, he has sunk to a very low position in the scale of efficiency, courage, and fighting power. Military service is distasteful to him from the start. He is rarely, if ever, a volunteer. Ill-fed, ill-clad, and unpaid, in the intervals of service, and often while actually with the colours, he ekes out a scanty subsistence by plying the trade of a butcher, or porter, or money-changer, or common labourer in the bazaars; from which employment he emerges on parade days, struggles into a uniform supplied from the depôt, and, his perfunctory duty fulfilled, returns to his civil avocation. Even the men in uniform and actually embodied are usually to be seen slouching about the bazaars anyhow, and doing nothing. It is perhaps in respect of his pay that he is most to be pitied; for the money leaves the State chest in the first place, and

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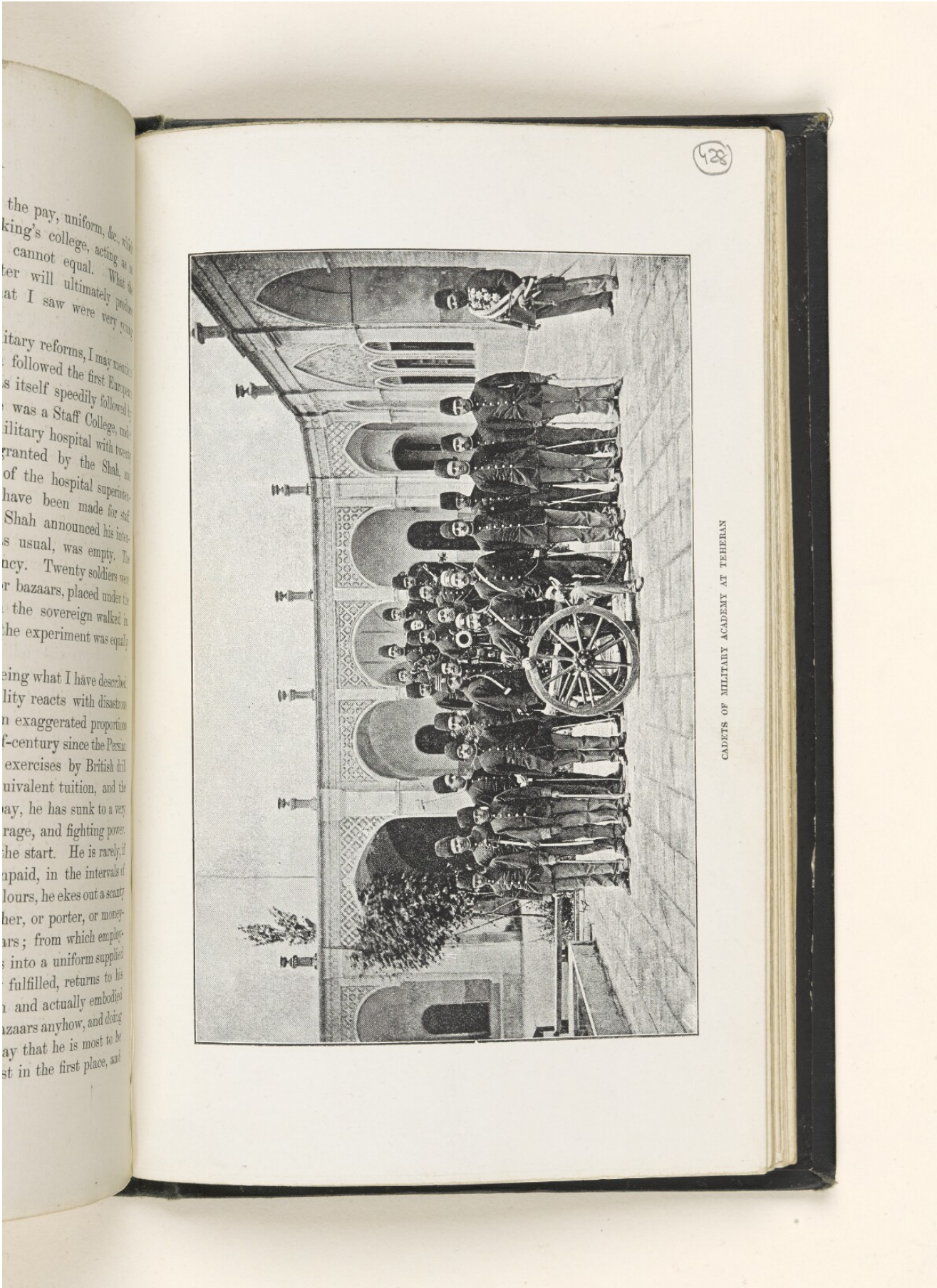

CADETS OF MILITARY ACADEMY AT TEHERAN

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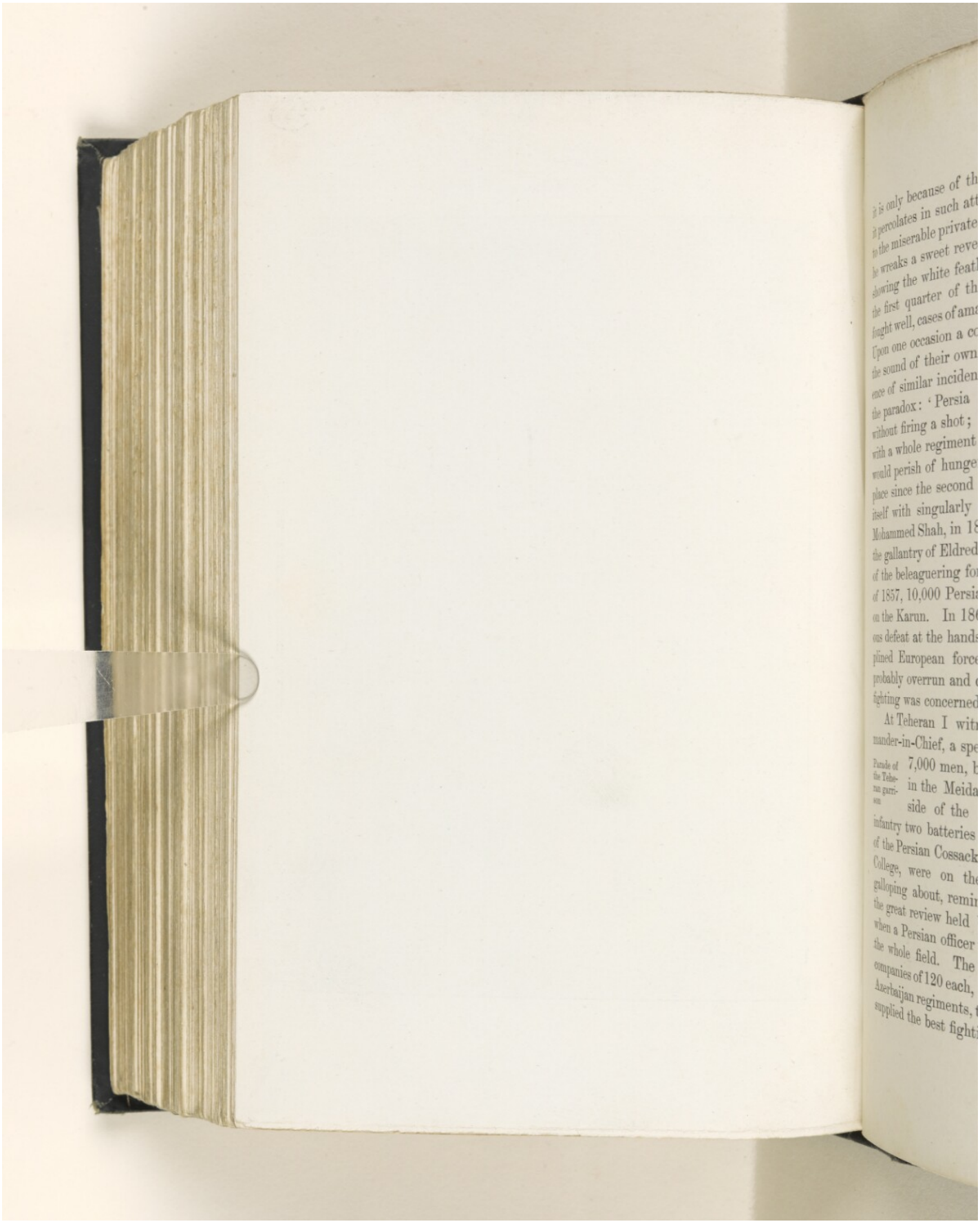

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fought well, cases of ama
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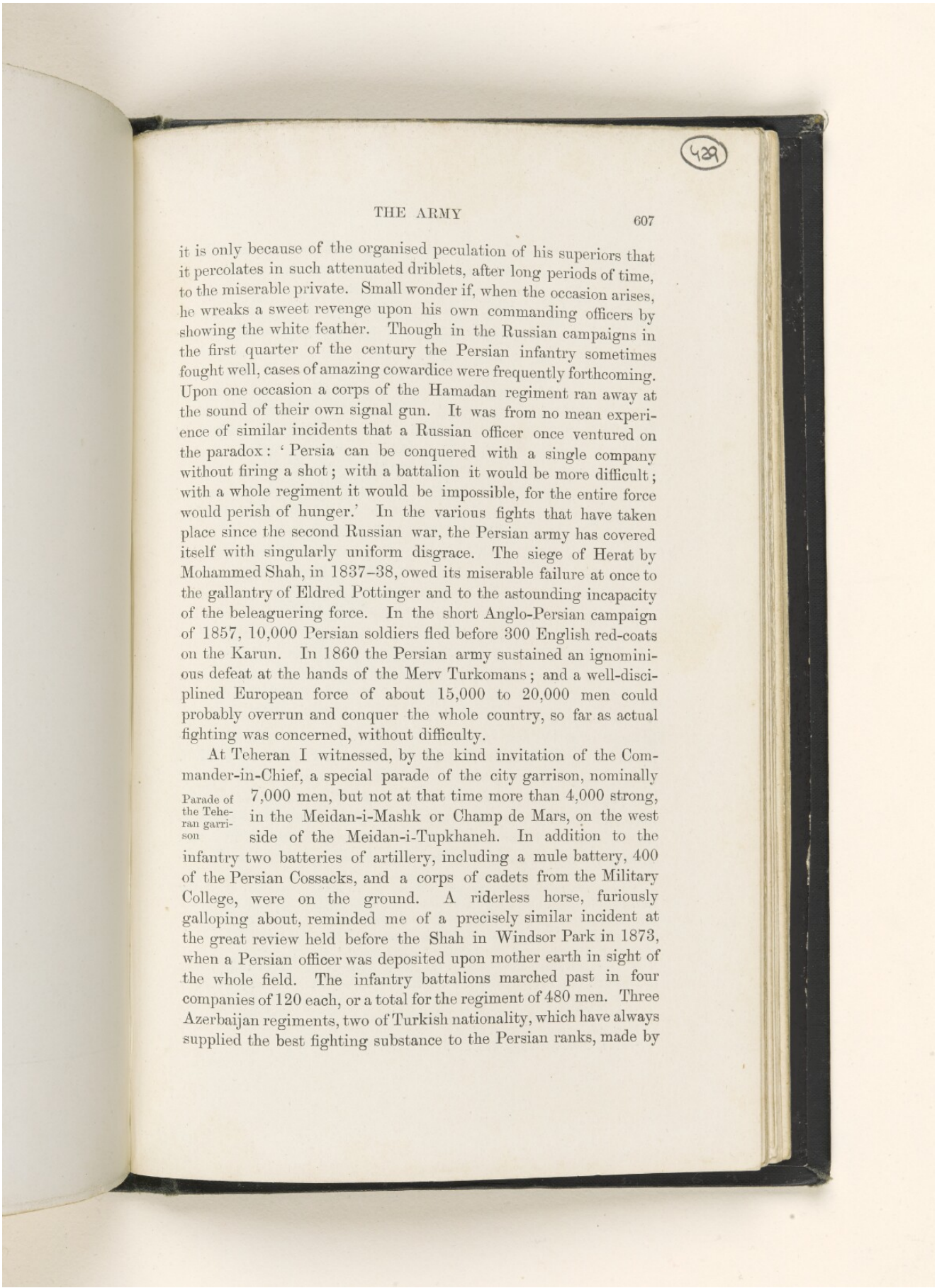
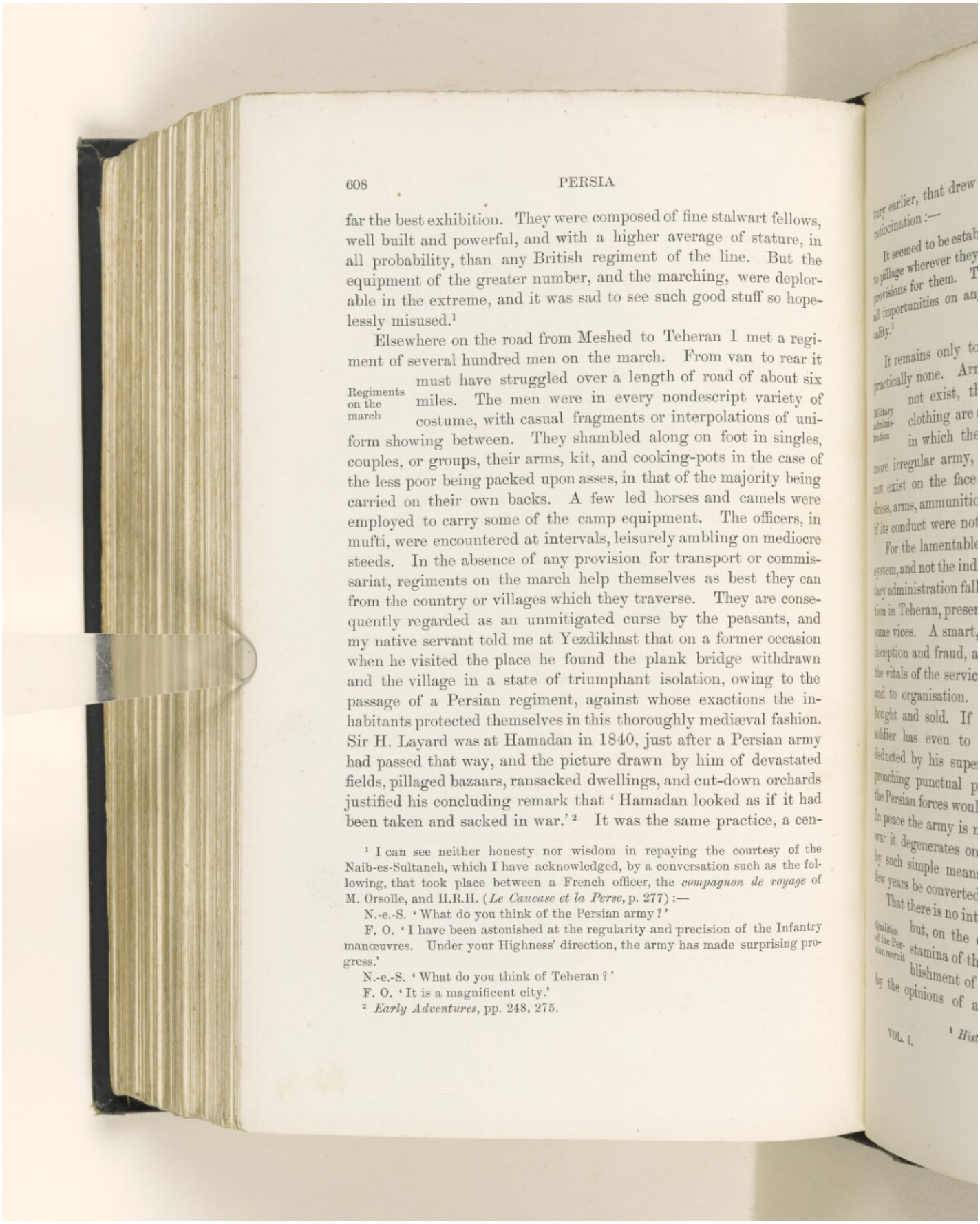




it is only because of the organised peculation of his superiors that it percolates in such attenuated driblets, after long periods of time, to the miserable private. Small wonder if, when the occasion arises, he wreaks a sweet revenge upon his own commanding officers by showing the white feather. Though in the Russian campaigns in the first quarter of the century the Persian infantry sometimes fought well, cases of amazing cowardice were frequently forthcoming. Upon one occasion a corps of the Hamadan regiment ran away at the sound of their own signal gun. It was from no mean experience of similar incidents that a Russian officer once ventured on the paradox: 'Persia can be conquered with a single company without firing a shot; with a battalion it would be more difficult; with a whole regiment it would be impossible, for the entire force would perish of hunger.' In the various fights that have taken place since the second Russian war, the Persian army has covered itself with singularly uniform disgrace. The siege of Herat by Mohammed Shah, in 1837–38, owed its miserable failure at once to the gallantry of Eldred Pottinger and to the astounding incapacity of the beleaguering force. In the short Anglo-Persian campaign of 1857, 10,000 Persian soldiers fled before 300 English red-coats on the Karun. In 1860 the Persian army sustained an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Merv Turkomans; and a well-disciplined European force of about 15,000 to 20,000 men could probably overrun and conquer the whole country, so far as actual fighting was concerned, without difficulty.

Parade of the Teheran garrison

At Teheran I witnessed, by the kind invitation of the Commander-in-Chief, a special parade of the city garrison, nominally 7,000 men, but not at that time more than 4,000 strong, in the Meidan-i-Mashk or Champ de Mars, on the west side of the Meidan-i-Tupkhaneh. In addition to the infantry two batteries of artillery, including a mule battery, 400 of the Persian Cossacks, and a corps of cadets from the Military College, were on the ground. A riderless horse, furiously galloping about, reminded me of a precisely similar incident at the great review held before the Shah in Windsor Park in 1873, when a Persian officer was deposited upon mother earth in sight of the whole field. The infantry battalions marched past in four companies of 120 each, or a total for the regiment of 480 men. Three Azerbaijan regiments, two of Turkish nationality, which have always supplied the best fighting substance to the Persian ranks, made by





far the best exhibition. They were composed of fine stalwart fellows, well built and powerful, and with a higher average of stature, in all probability, than any British regiment of the line. But the equipment of the greater number, and the marching, were deplorable in the extreme, and it was sad to see such good stuff so hopelessly misused.[1]

Regiments on the march

Elsewhere on the road from Meshed to Teheran I met a regiment of several hundred men on the march. From van to rear it must have struggled over a length of road of about six miles. The men were in every nondescript variety of costume, with casual fragments or interpolations of uniform showing between. They shambled along on foot in singles, couples, or groups, their arms, kit, and cooking-pots in the case of the less poor being packed upon asses, in that of the majority being carried on their own backs. A few led horses and camels were employed to carry some of the camp equipment. The officers, in mufti, were encountered at intervals, leisurely ambling on mediocre steeds. In the absence of any provision for transport or commissariat, regiments on the march help themselves as best they can from the country or villages which they traverse. They are consequently regarded as an unmitigated curse by the peasants, and my native servant told me at Yezdikhast that on a former occasion when he visited the place he found the plank bridge withdrawn and the village in a state of triumphant isolation, owing to the passage of a Persian regiment, against whose exactions the inhabitants protected themselves in this thoroughly mediæval fashion. Sir H. Layard was at Hamadan in 1840, just after a Persian army had passed that way, and the picture drawn by him of devastated fields, pillaged bazaars, ransacked dwellings, and cut-down orchards justified his concluding remark that 'Hamadan looked as if it had been taken and sacked in war.'[2] It was the same practice, a cen-

[1] I can see neither honesty nor wisdom in repaying the courtesy of the Naib-es-Sultaneh, which I have acknowledged, by a conversation such as the following, that took place between a French officer, the *compagnon de voyage* of M. Orsolle, and H.R.H. (*Le Caucase et la Perse*, p. 277):—

N.-e.-S. 'What do you think of the Persian army?'

F. O. 'I have been astonished at the regularity and precision of the Infantry manœuvres. Under your Highness' direction, the army has made surprising progress.'

N.-e.-S. 'What do you think of Teheran?'

F. O. 'It is a magnificent city.'

[2] *Early Adventures*, pp. 248, 275.



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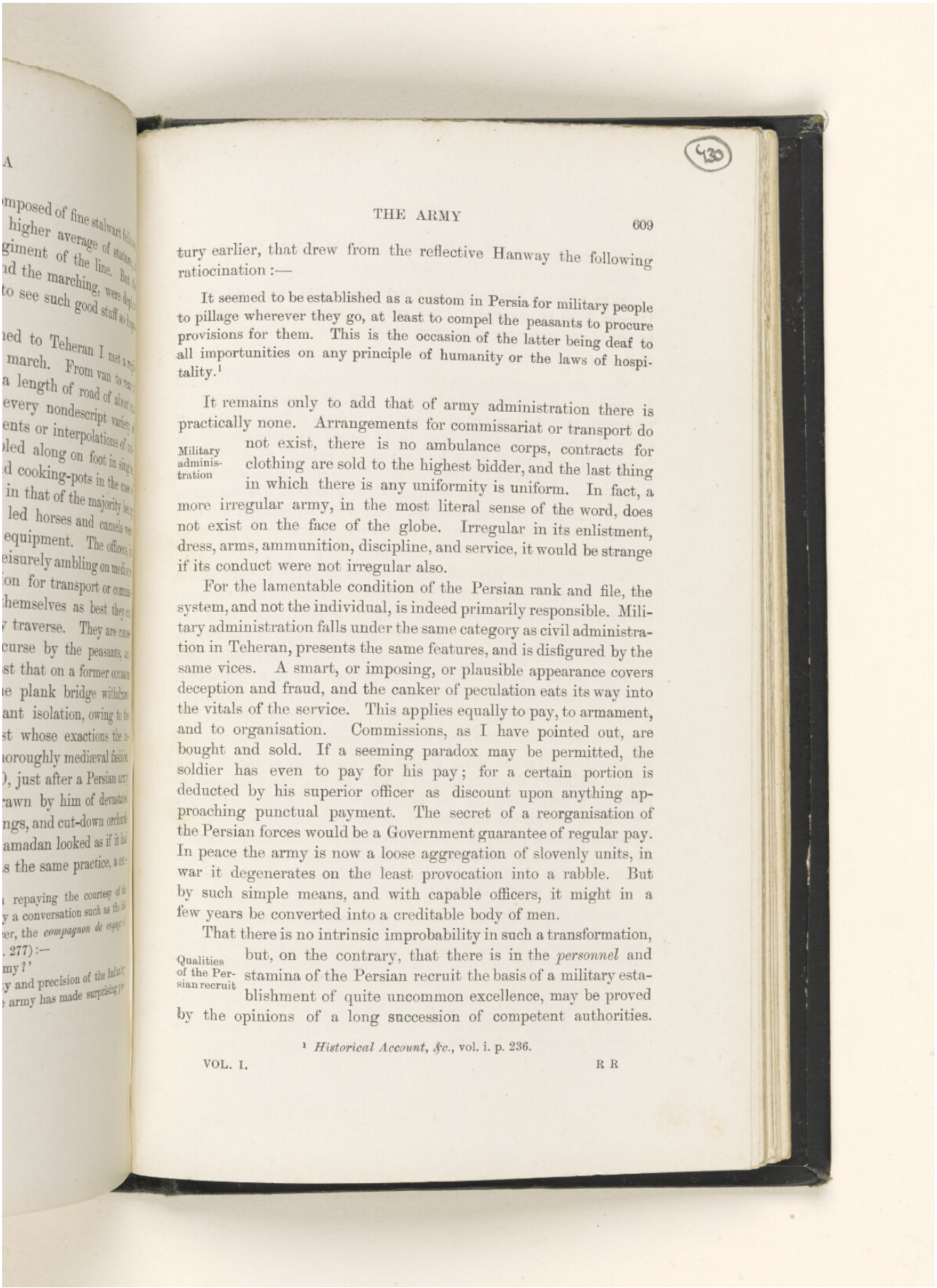



tury earlier, that drew from the reflective Hanway the following ratiocination :—

It seemed to be established as a custom in Persia for military people to pillage wherever they go, at least to compel the peasants to procure provisions for them. This is the occasion of the latter being deaf to all importunities on any principle of humanity or the laws of hospitality.[1]

It remains only to add that of army administration there is practically none. Arrangements for commissariat or transport do not exist, there is no ambulance corps, contracts for clothing are sold to the highest bidder, and the last thing in which there is any uniformity is uniform. In fact, a more irregular army, in the most literal sense of the word, does not exist on the face of the globe. Irregular in its enlistment, dress, arms, ammunition, discipline, and service, it would be strange if its conduct were not irregular also.

Military administration

For the lamentable condition of the Persian rank and file, the system, and not the individual, is indeed primarily responsible. Military administration falls under the same category as civil administration in Teheran, presents the same features, and is disfigured by the same vices. A smart, or imposing, or plausible appearance covers deception and fraud, and the canker of peculation eats its way into the vitals of the service. This applies equally to pay, to armament, and to organisation. Commissions, as I have pointed out, are bought and sold. If a seeming paradox may be permitted, the soldier has even to pay for his pay; for a certain portion is deducted by his superior officer as discount upon anything approaching punctual payment. The secret of a reorganisation of the Persian forces would be a Government guarantee of regular pay. In peace the army is now a loose aggregation of slovenly units, in war it degenerates on the least provocation into a rabble. But by such simple means, and with capable officers, it might in a few years be converted into a creditable body of men.

That there is no intrinsic improbability in such a transformation, but, on the contrary, that there is in the *personnel* and stamina of the Persian recruit the basis of a military establishment of quite uncommon excellence, may be proved by the opinions of a long succession of competent authorities.

Qualities of the Persian recruit

[1] *Historical Account, &c.*, vol. i. p. 236.



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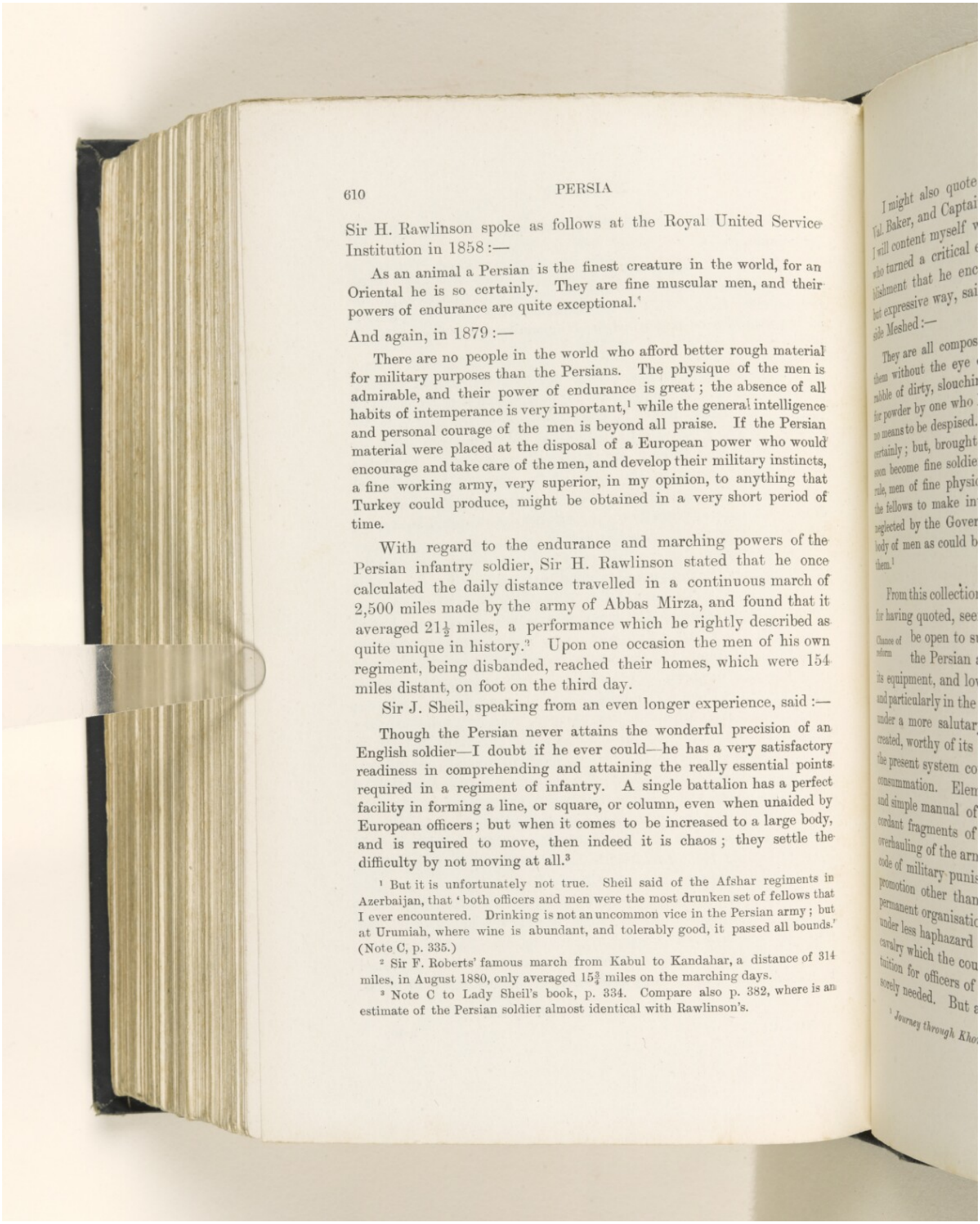



Sir H. Rawlinson spoke as follows at the Royal United Service Institution in 1858:—

As an animal a Persian is the finest creature in the world, for an Oriental he is so certainly. They are fine muscular men, and their powers of endurance are quite exceptional.

And again, in 1879:—

There are no people in the world who afford better rough material for military purposes than the Persians. The physique of the men is admirable, and their power of endurance is great; the absence of all habits of intemperance is very important,[1] while the general intelligence and personal courage of the men is beyond all praise. If the Persian material were placed at the disposal of a European power who would encourage and take care of the men, and develop their military instincts, a fine working army, very superior, in my opinion, to anything that Turkey could produce, might be obtained in a very short period of time.

With regard to the endurance and marching powers of the Persian infantry soldier, Sir H. Rawlinson stated that he once calculated the daily distance travelled in a continuous march of 2,500 miles made by the army of Abbas Mirza, and found that it averaged 21½ miles, a performance which he rightly described as quite unique in history.[2] Upon one occasion the men of his own regiment, being disbanded, reached their homes, which were 154 miles distant, on foot on the third day.

Sir J. Sheil, speaking from an even longer experience, said:—

Though the Persian never attains the wonderful precision of an English soldier—I doubt if he ever could—he has a very satisfactory readiness in comprehending and attaining the really essential points required in a regiment of infantry. A single battalion has a perfect facility in forming a line, or square, or column, even when unaided by European officers; but when it comes to be increased to a large body, and is required to move, then indeed it is chaos; they settle the difficulty by not moving at all.[3]

[1] But it is unfortunately not true. Sheil said of the Afshar regiments in Azerbaijan, that 'both officers and men were the most drunken set of fellows that I ever encountered. Drinking is not an uncommon vice in the Persian army; but at Urumiah, where wine is abundant, and tolerably good, it passed all bounds.' (Note C, p. 335.)

[2] Sir F. Roberts' famous march from Kabul to Kandahar, a distance of 314 miles, in August 1880, only averaged 15¾ miles on the marching days.

[3] Note C to Lady Sheil's book, p. 334. Compare also p. 382, where is an estimate of the Persian soldier almost identical with Rawlinson's.

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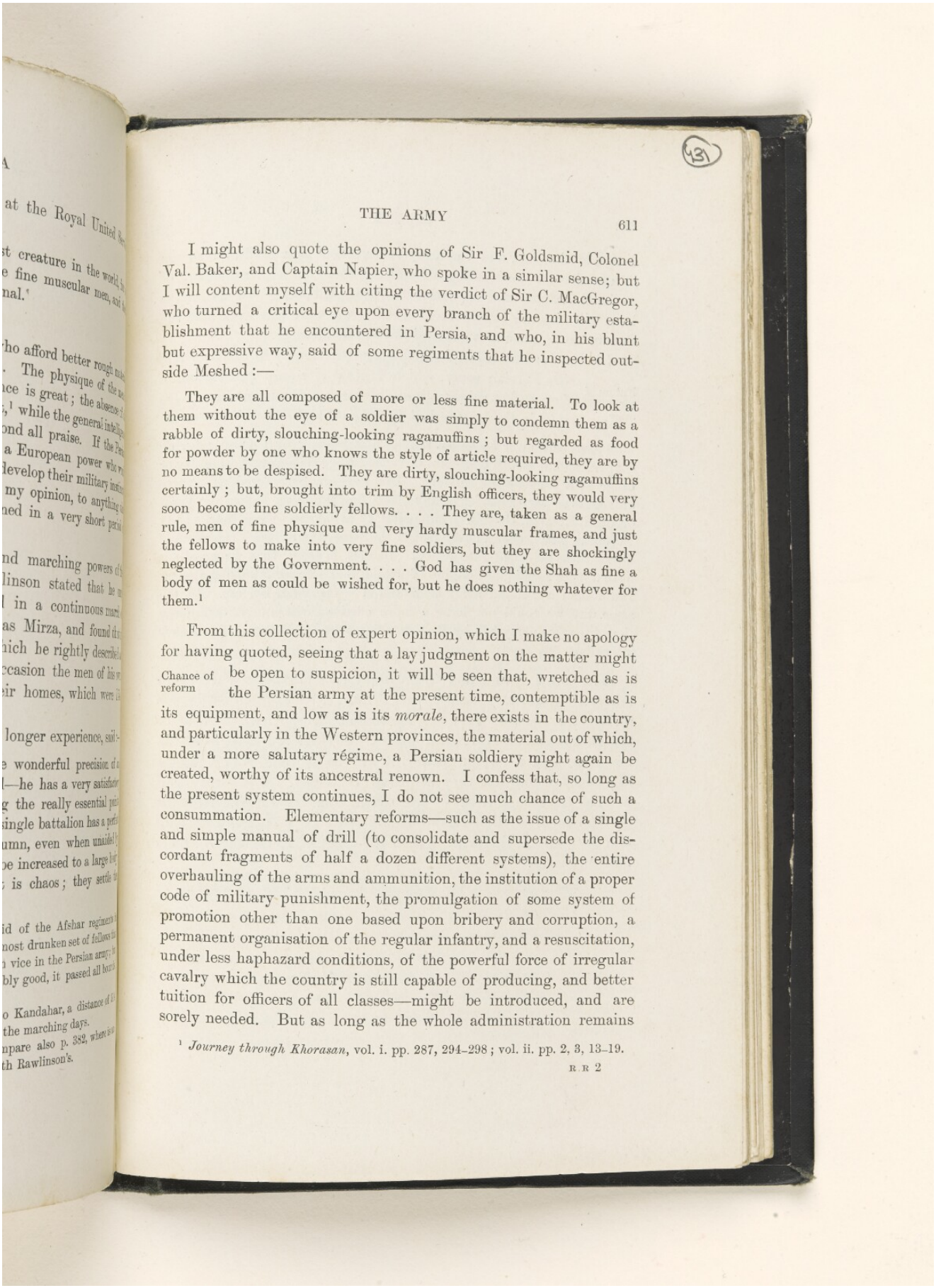



I might also quote the opinions of Sir F. Goldsmid, Colonel Val. Baker, and Captain Napier, who spoke in a similar sense; but I will content myself with citing the verdict of Sir C. MacGregor, who turned a critical eye upon every branch of the military establishment that he encountered in Persia, and who, in his blunt but expressive way, said of some regiments that he inspected outside Meshed :—

They are all composed of more or less fine material. To look at them without the eye of a soldier was simply to condemn them as a rabble of dirty, slouching-looking ragamuffins ; but regarded as food for powder by one who knows the style of article required, they are by no means to be despised. They are dirty, slouching-looking ragamuffins certainly ; but, brought into trim by English officers, they would very soon become fine soldierly fellows. . . . They are, taken as a general rule, men of fine physique and very hardy muscular frames, and just the fellows to make into very fine soldiers, but they are shockingly neglected by the Government. . . . God has given the Shah as fine a body of men as could be wished for, but he does nothing whatever for them.[1]

Chance of reform

From this collection of expert opinion, which I make no apology for having quoted, seeing that a lay judgment on the matter might be open to suspicion, it will be seen that, wretched as is the Persian army at the present time, contemptible as is its equipment, and low as is its *morale*, there exists in the country, and particularly in the Western provinces, the material out of which, under a more salutary régime, a Persian soldiery might again be created, worthy of its ancestral renown. I confess that, so long as the present system continues, I do not see much chance of such a consummation. Elementary reforms—such as the issue of a single and simple manual of drill (to consolidate and supersede the discordant fragments of half a dozen different systems), the entire overhauling of the arms and ammunition, the institution of a proper code of military punishment, the promulgation of some system of promotion other than one based upon bribery and corruption, a permanent organisation of the regular infantry, and a resuscitation, under less haphazard conditions, of the powerful force of irregular cavalry which the country is still capable of producing, and better tuition for officers of all classes—might be introduced, and are sorely needed. But as long as the whole administration remains

[1] *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. pp. 287, 294–298 ; vol. ii. pp. 2, 3, 13–19.



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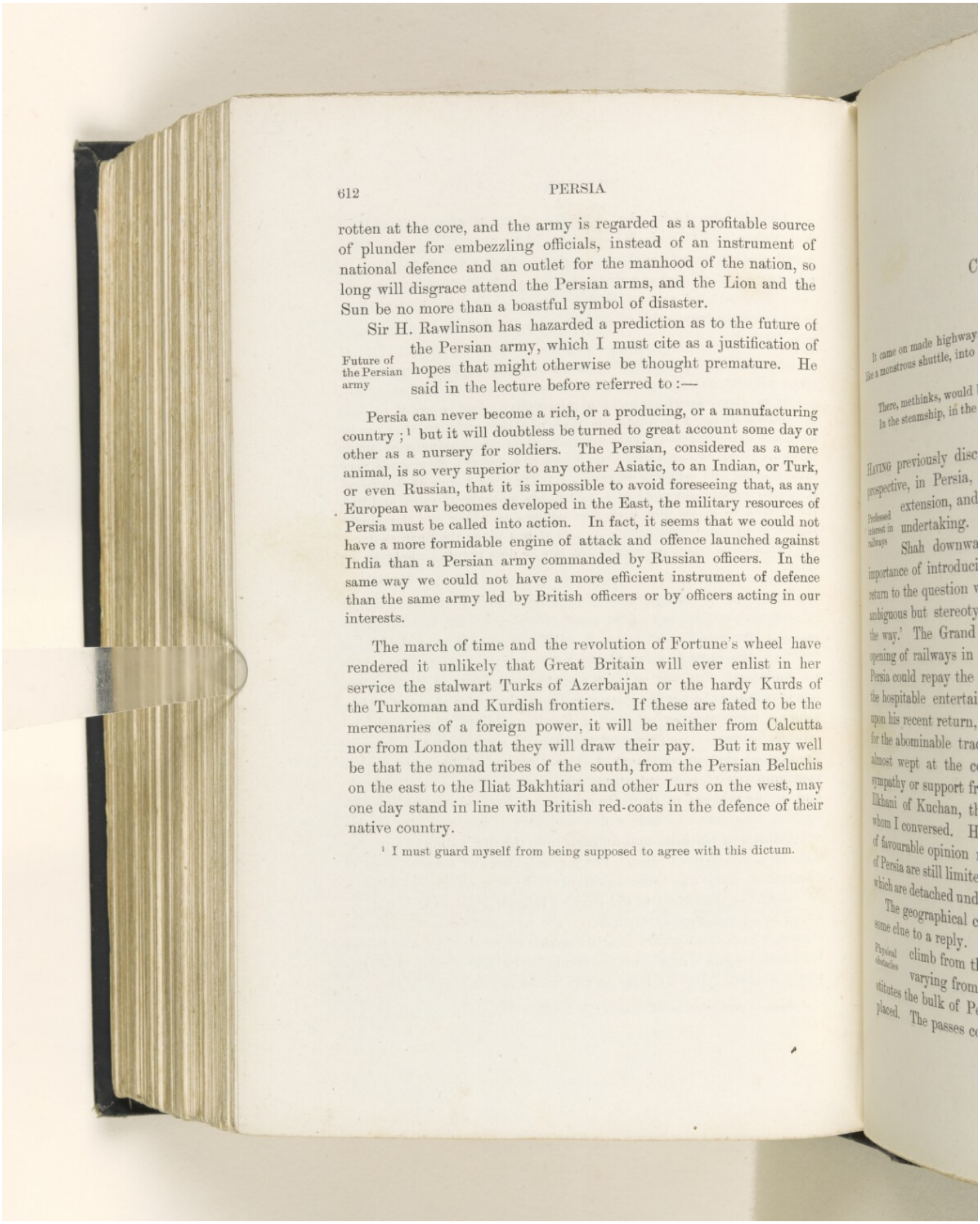




rotten at the core, and the army is regarded as a profitable source of plunder for embezzling officials, instead of an instrument of national defence and an outlet for the manhood of the nation, so long will disgrace attend the Persian arms, and the Lion and the Sun be no more than a boastful symbol of disaster.

Future of the Persian army

Sir H. Rawlinson has hazarded a prediction as to the future of the Persian army, which I must cite as a justification of hopes that might otherwise be thought premature. He said in the lecture before referred to:—

Persia can never become a rich, or a producing, or a manufacturing country;[1] but it will doubtless be turned to great account some day or other as a nursery for soldiers. The Persian, considered as a mere animal, is so very superior to any other Asiatic, to an Indian, or Turk, or even Russian, that it is impossible to avoid foreseeing that, as any European war becomes developed in the East, the military resources of Persia must be called into action. In fact, it seems that we could not have a more formidable engine of attack and offence launched against India than a Persian army commanded by Russian officers. In the same way we could not have a more efficient instrument of defence than the same army led by British officers or by officers acting in our interests.

The march of time and the revolution of Fortune's wheel have rendered it unlikely that Great Britain will ever enlist in her service the stalwart Turks of Azerbaijan or the hardy Kurds of the Turkoman and Kurdish frontiers. If these are fated to be the mercenaries of a foreign power, it will be neither from Calcutta nor from London that they will draw their pay. But it may well be that the nomad tribes of the south, from the Persian Beluchis on the east to the Iliat Bakhtiari and other Lurs on the west, may one day stand in line with British red-coats in the defence of their native country.

[1] I must guard myself from being supposed to agree with this dictum.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## RAILWAYS

> It came on made highways, from far cities towards far cities; weaving them, like a monstrous shuttle, into closer and closer union.
>
> CARLYLE, *Sartor Resartus*, bk. ii., cap. ii.

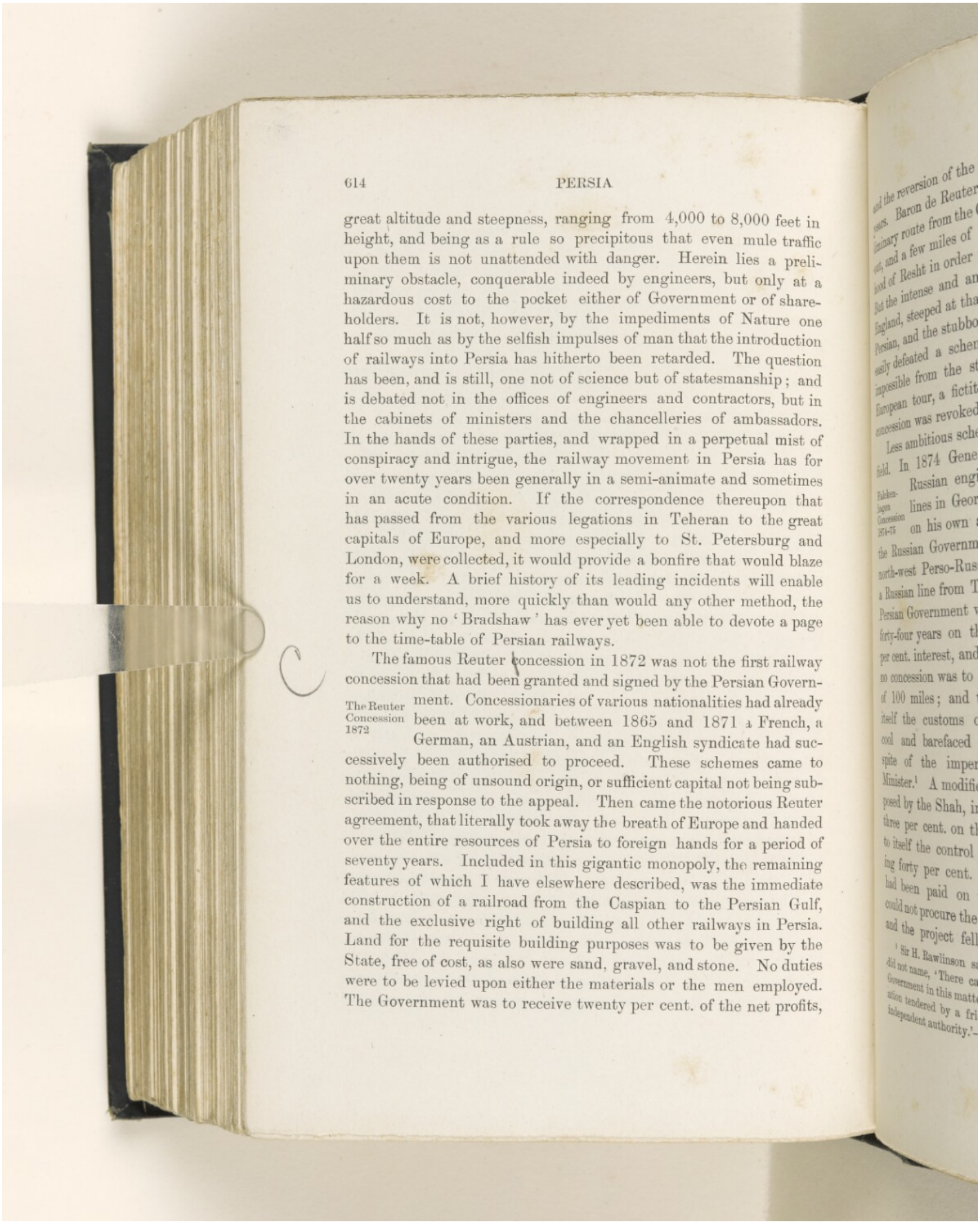
> There, methinks, would be enjoyment more than in the march of mind,
> In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.
>
> TENNYSON, *Locksley Hall.*

HAVING previously discussed the subject of roads, present and prospective, in Persia, I now pass to the question of railway extension, and the conditions that favour or retard the undertaking. Every prominent man in Persia, from the Shah downwards, professes to be keenly alive to the importance of introducing railroads into the country, and can only return to the question why they are not forthwith commenced the ambiguous but stereotyped rejoinder that 'there are obstacles in the way.' The Grand Vizier assured me that he regarded the opening of railways in the country as the only method by which Persia could repay the debt of gratitude she owed to Europe for the hospitable entertainment of the Shah. He said that when, upon his recent return, he exchanged the splendid lines of Europe for the abominable tracks that lead from the Persian frontier, he almost wept at the contrast. I received similar assurances of sympathy or support from the Governor-General of Khorasan, the Ilkhani of Kuchan, the royal princes, and every minister with whom I conversed. How then comes it that with this consensus of favourable opinion no progress is made, and that the railroads of Persia are still limited to two short lines of a few miles in length which are detached undertakings and not parts of a general scheme?

Professed interest in railways

The geographical configuration of the country affords in itself some clue to a reply. Every railway from the coast must perforce climb from the sea level to that of the elevated plateau, varying from 3,000 to 4,000 feet in height, which constitutes the bulk of Persia, and upon which all the great cities are placed. The passes conducting to this plateau are commonly of

Physical obstacles





great altitude and steepness, ranging from 4,000 to 8,000 feet in height, and being as a rule so precipitous that even mule traffic upon them is not unattended with danger. Herein lies a preliminary obstacle, conquerable indeed by engineers, but only at a hazardous cost to the pocket either of Government or of shareholders. It is not, however, by the impediments of Nature one half so much as by the selfish impulses of man that the introduction of railways into Persia has hitherto been retarded. The question has been, and is still, one not of science but of statesmanship; and is debated not in the offices of engineers and contractors, but in the cabinets of ministers and the chancelleries of ambassadors. In the hands of these parties, and wrapped in a perpetual mist of conspiracy and intrigue, the railway movement in Persia has for over twenty years been generally in a semi-animate and sometimes in an acute condition. If the correspondence thereupon that has passed from the various legations in Teheran to the great capitals of Europe, and more especially to St. Petersburg and London, were collected, it would provide a bonfire that would blaze for a week. A brief history of its leading incidents will enable us to understand, more quickly than would any other method, the reason why no 'Bradshaw' has ever yet been able to devote a page to the time-table of Persian railways.

The famous Reuter concession in 1872 was not the first railway concession that had been granted and signed by the Persian Government. Concessionaries of various nationalities had already been at work, and between 1865 and 1871 a French, a German, an Austrian, and an English syndicate had successively been authorised to proceed. These schemes came to nothing, being of unsound origin, or sufficient capital not being subscribed in response to the appeal. Then came the notorious Reuter agreement, that literally took away the breath of Europe and handed over the entire resources of Persia to foreign hands for a period of seventy years. Included in this gigantic monopoly, the remaining features of which I have elsewhere described, was the immediate construction of a railroad from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf, and the exclusive right of building all other railways in Persia. Land for the requisite building purposes was to be given by the State, free of cost, as also were sand, gravel, and stone. No duties were to be levied upon either the materials or the men employed. The Government was to receive twenty per cent. of the net profits,

The Reuter Concession 1872

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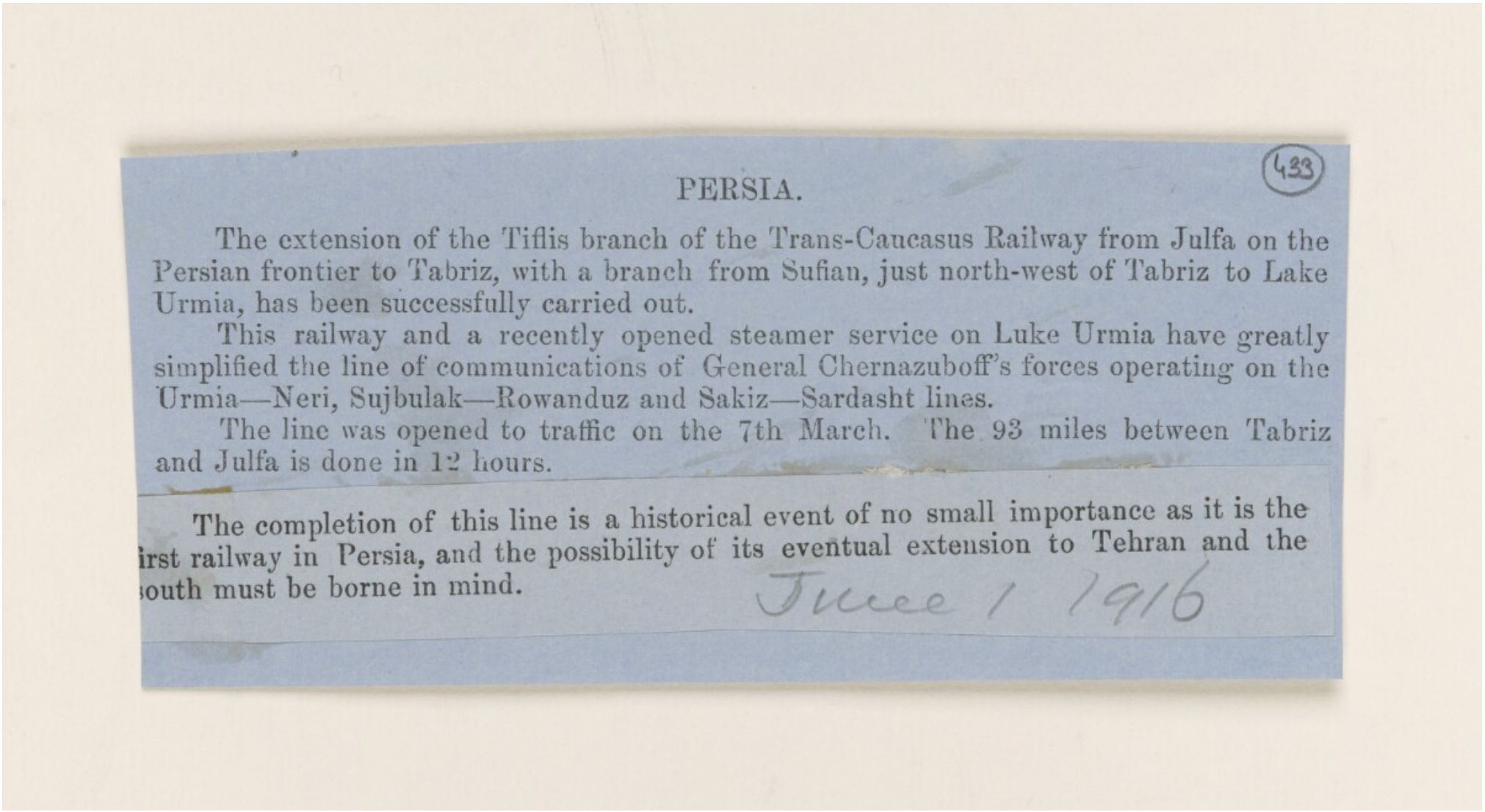


PERSIA.

433

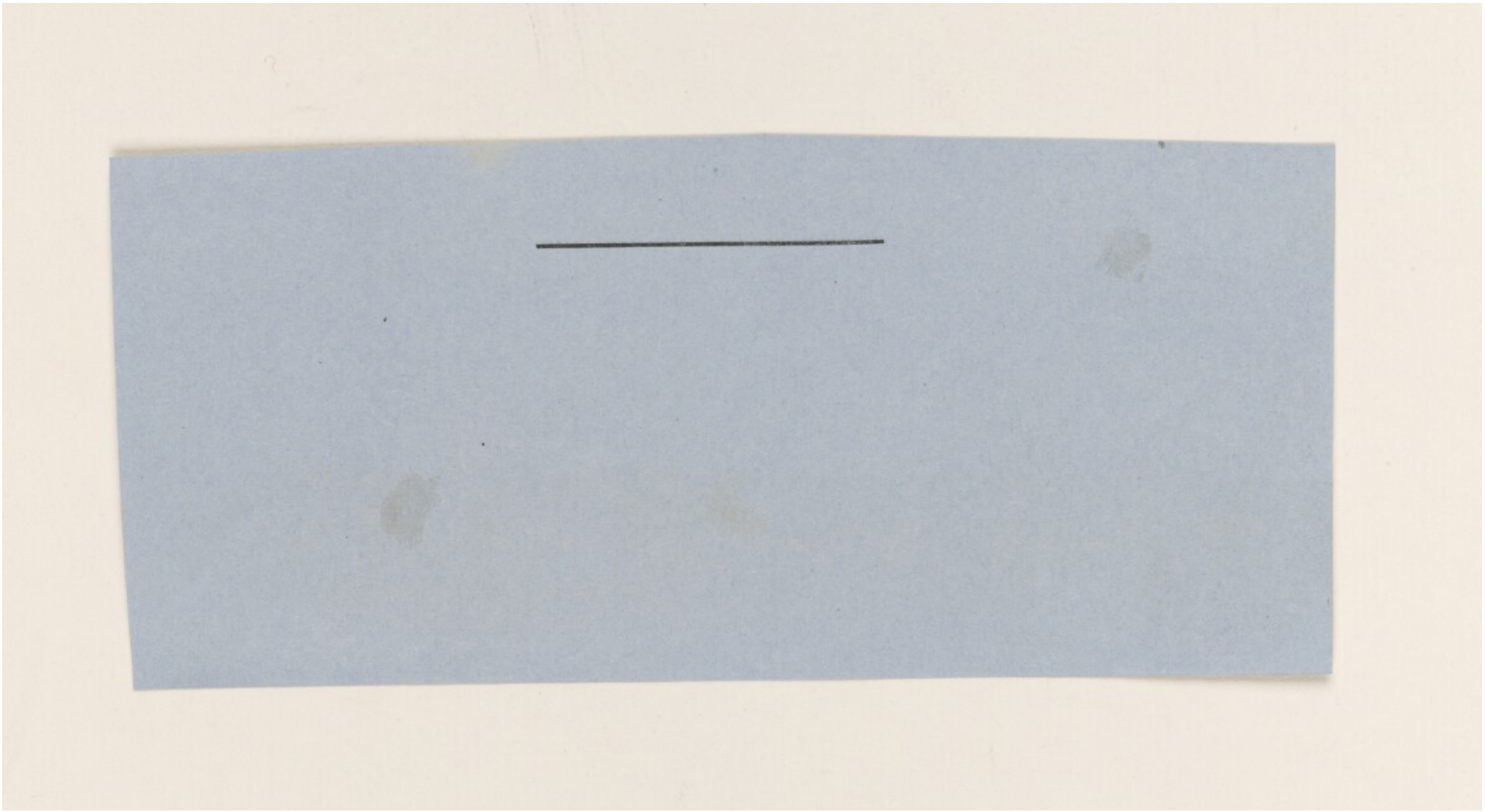
The extension of the Tiflis branch of the Trans-Caucasus Railway from Julfa on the Persian frontier to Tabriz, with a branch from Sufian, just north-west of Tabriz to Lake Urmia, has been successfully carried out.

This railway and a recently opened steamer service on Luke Urmia have greatly simplified the line of communications of General Chernazuboff's forces operating on the Urmia—Neri, Sujbulak—Rowanduz and Sakiz—Sardasht lines.

The line was opened to traffic on the 7th March. The 93 miles between Tabriz and Julfa is done in 12 hours.

The completion of this line is a historical event of no small importance as it is the irst railway in Persia, and the possibility of its eventual extension to Tehran and the outh must be borne in mind.

June 1 1916



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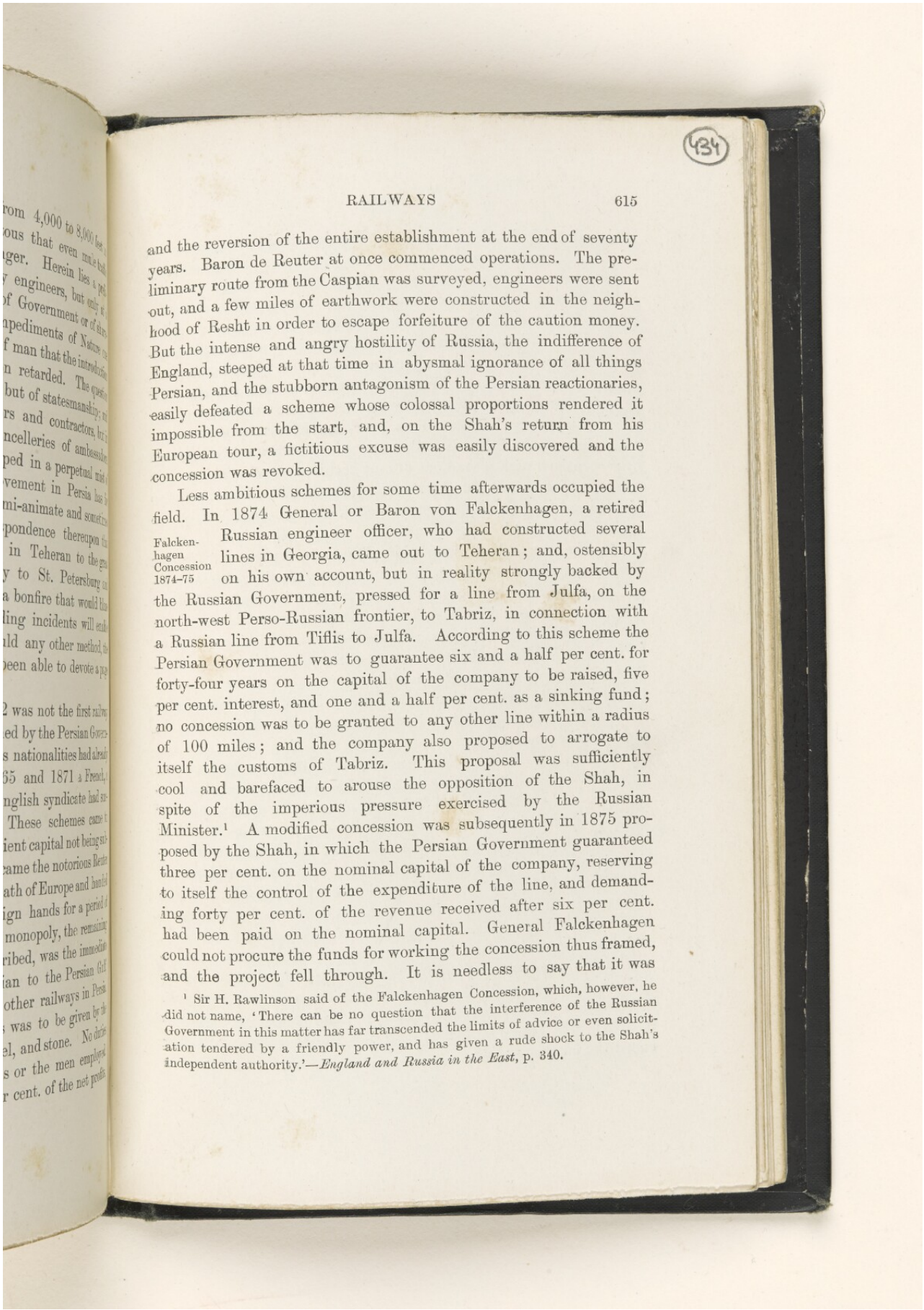


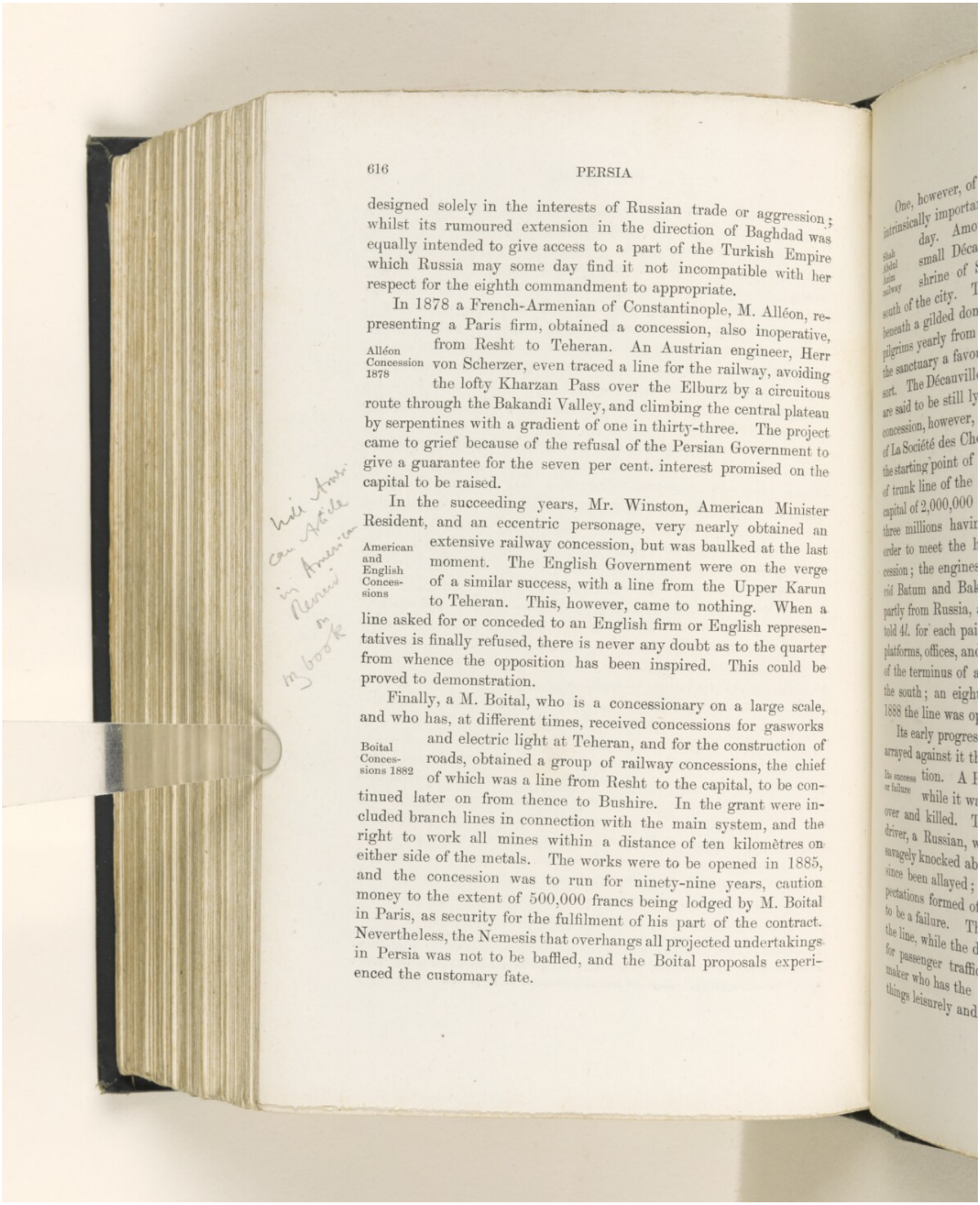


and the reversion of the entire establishment at the end of seventy years. Baron de Reuter at once commenced operations. The preliminary route from the Caspian was surveyed, engineers were sent out, and a few miles of earthwork were constructed in the neighbourhood of Resht in order to escape forfeiture of the caution money. But the intense and angry hostility of Russia, the indifference of England, steeped at that time in abysmal ignorance of all things Persian, and the stubborn antagonism of the Persian reactionaries, easily defeated a scheme whose colossal proportions rendered it impossible from the start, and, on the Shah's return from his European tour, a fictitious excuse was easily discovered and the concession was revoked.

Less ambitious schemes for some time afterwards occupied the field. In 1874 General or Baron von Falckenhagen, a retired Russian engineer officer, who had constructed several lines in Georgia, came out to Teheran; and, ostensibly on his own account, but in reality strongly backed by the Russian Government, pressed for a line from Julfa, on the north-west Perso-Russian frontier, to Tabriz, in connection with a Russian line from Tiflis to Julfa. According to this scheme the Persian Government was to guarantee six and a half per cent. for forty-four years on the capital of the company to be raised, five per cent. interest, and one and a half per cent. as a sinking fund; no concession was to be granted to any other line within a radius of 100 miles; and the company also proposed to arrogate to itself the customs of Tabriz. This proposal was sufficiently cool and barefaced to arouse the opposition of the Shah, in spite of the imperious pressure exercised by the Russian Minister.[1] A modified concession was subsequently in 1875 proposed by the Shah, in which the Persian Government guaranteed three per cent. on the nominal capital of the company, reserving to itself the control of the expenditure of the line, and demanding forty per cent. of the revenue received after six per cent. had been paid on the nominal capital. General Falckenhagen could not procure the funds for working the concession thus framed, and the project fell through. It is needless to say that it was

Falckenhagen Concession 1874–75

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson said of the Falckenhagen Concession, which, however, he did not name, 'There can be no question that the interference of the Russian Government in this matter has far transcended the limits of advice or even solicitation tendered by a friendly power, and has given a rude shock to the Shah's independent authority.'—*England and Russia in the East*, p. 340.





designed solely in the interests of Russian trade or aggression; whilst its rumoured extension in the direction of Baghdad was equally intended to give access to a part of the Turkish Empire which Russia may some day find it not incompatible with her respect for the eighth commandment to appropriate.

Alléon Concession 1878

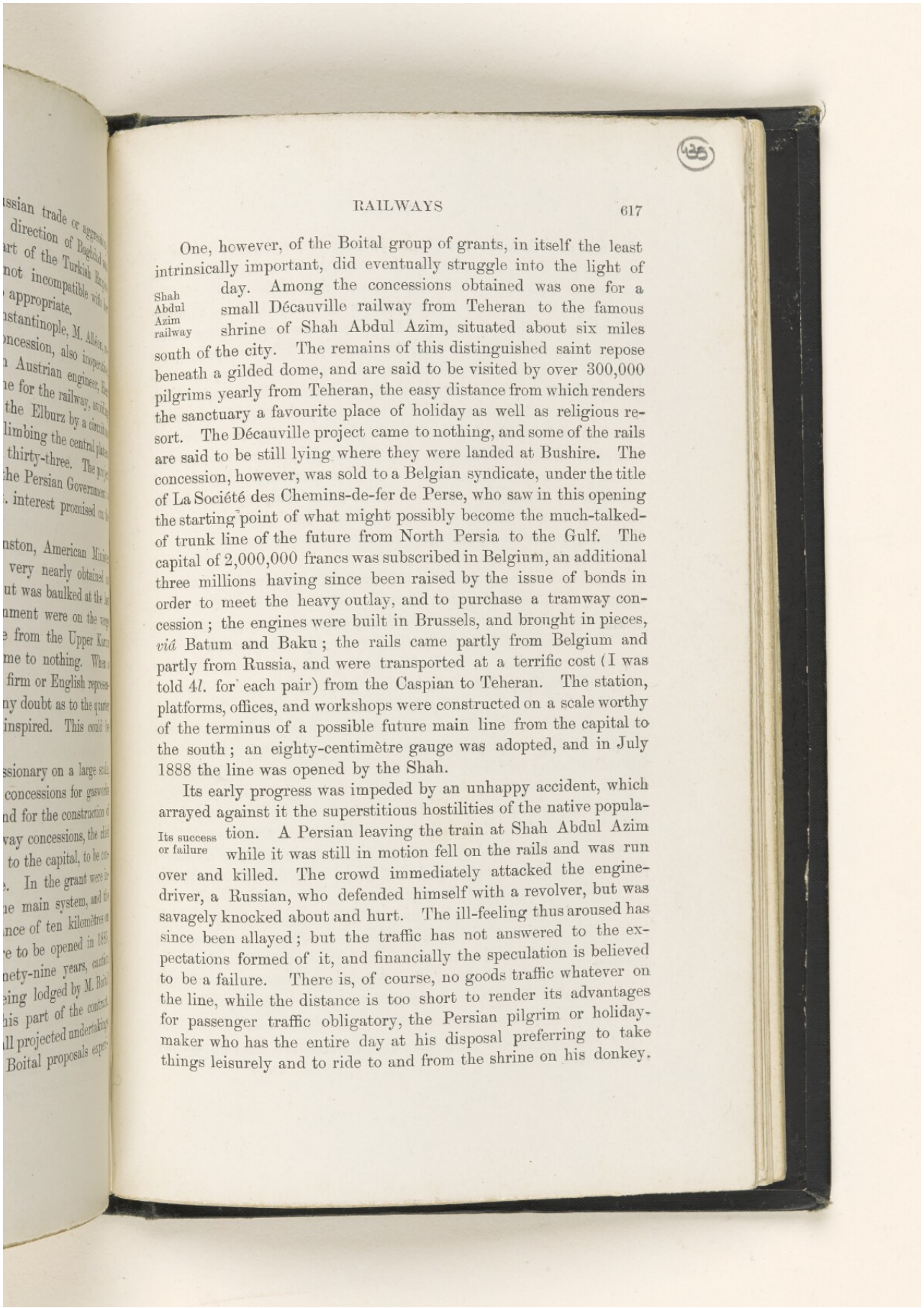
In 1878 a French-Armenian of Constantinople, M. Alléon, representing a Paris firm, obtained a concession, also inoperative, from Resht to Teheran. An Austrian engineer, Herr von Scherzer, even traced a line for the railway, avoiding the lofty Kharzan Pass over the Elburz by a circuitous route through the Bakandi Valley, and climbing the central plateau by serpentines with a gradient of one in thirty-three. The project came to grief because of the refusal of the Persian Government to give a guarantee for the seven per cent. interest promised on the capital to be raised.

American and English Concessions

In the succeeding years, Mr. Winston, American Minister Resident, and an eccentric personage, very nearly obtained an extensive railway concession, but was baulked at the last moment. The English Government were on the verge of a similar success, with a line from the Upper Karun to Teheran. This, however, came to nothing. When a line asked for or conceded to an English firm or English representatives is finally refused, there is never any doubt as to the quarter from whence the opposition has been inspired. This could be proved to demonstration.

Boital Concessions 1882

Finally, a M. Boital, who is a concessionary on a large scale, and who has, at different times, received concessions for gasworks and electric light at Teheran, and for the construction of roads, obtained a group of railway concessions, the chief of which was a line from Resht to the capital, to be continued later on from thence to Bushire. In the grant were included branch lines in connection with the main system, and the right to work all mines within a distance of ten kilomètres on either side of the metals. The works were to be opened in 1885, and the concession was to run for ninety-nine years, caution money to the extent of 500,000 francs being lodged by M. Boital in Paris, as security for the fulfilment of his part of the contract. Nevertheless, the Nemesis that overhangs all projected undertakings in Persia was not to be baffled, and the Boital proposals experienced the customary fate.



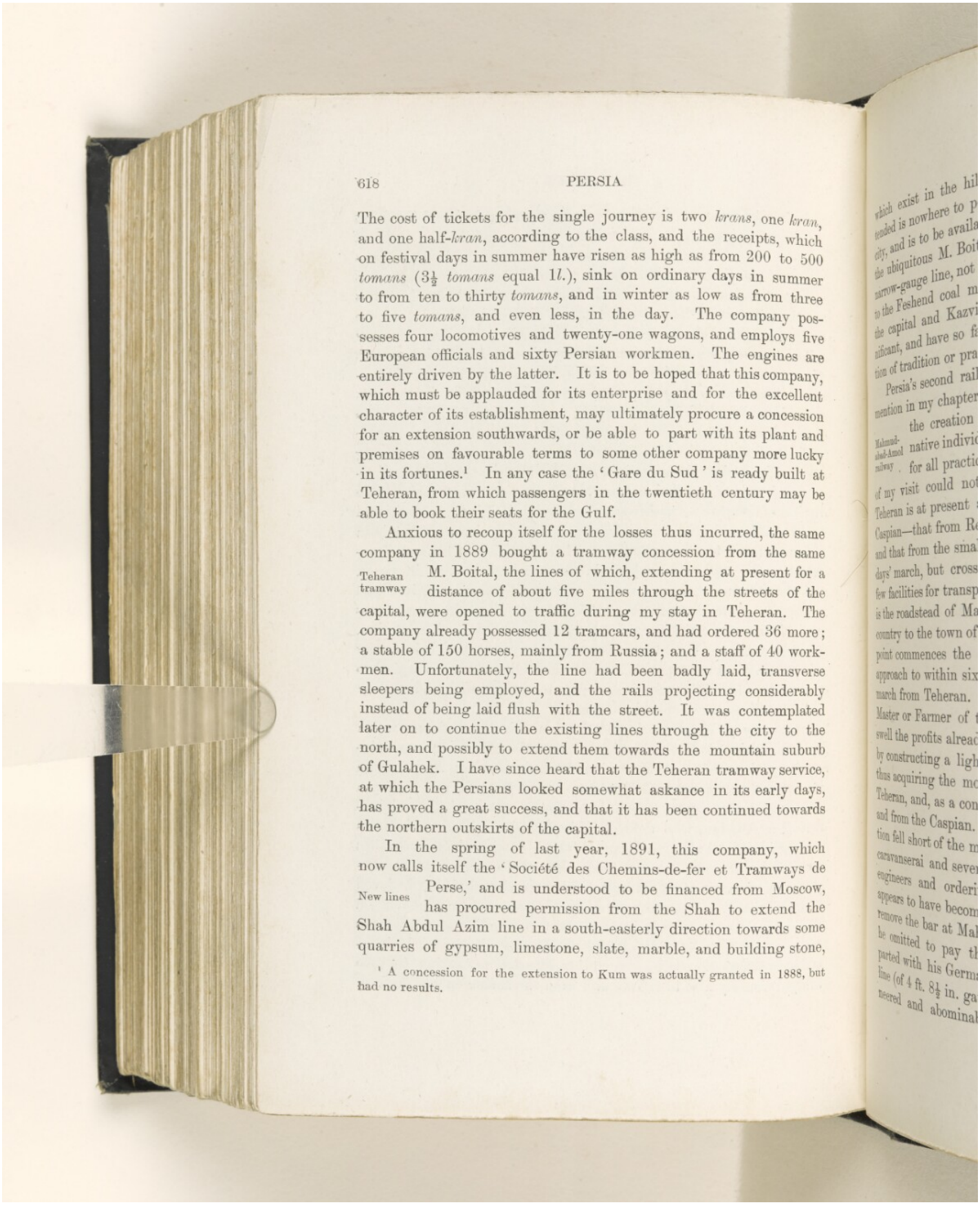


One, however, of the Boital group of grants, in itself the least intrinsically important, did eventually struggle into the light of day. Among the concessions obtained was one for a small Décauville railway from Teheran to the famous shrine of Shah Abdul Azim, situated about six miles south of the city. The remains of this distinguished saint repose beneath a gilded dome, and are said to be visited by over 300,000 pilgrims yearly from Teheran, the easy distance from which renders the sanctuary a favourite place of holiday as well as religious resort. The Décauville project came to nothing, and some of the rails are said to be still lying where they were landed at Bushire. The concession, however, was sold to a Belgian syndicate, under the title of La Société des Chemins-de-fer de Perse, who saw in this opening the starting point of what might possibly become the much-talked-of trunk line of the future from North Persia to the Gulf. The capital of 2,000,000 francs was subscribed in Belgium, an additional three millions having since been raised by the issue of bonds in order to meet the heavy outlay, and to purchase a tramway concession; the engines were built in Brussels, and brought in pieces, *viâ* Batum and Baku; the rails came partly from Belgium and partly from Russia, and were transported at a terrific cost (I was told 4*l.* for each pair) from the Caspian to Teheran. The station, platforms, offices, and workshops were constructed on a scale worthy of the terminus of a possible future main line from the capital to the south; an eighty-centimètre gauge was adopted, and in July 1888 the line was opened by the Shah.

Shah Abdul Azim railway

Its early progress was impeded by an unhappy accident, which arrayed against it the superstitious hostilities of the native population. A Persian leaving the train at Shah Abdul Azim while it was still in motion fell on the rails and was run over and killed. The crowd immediately attacked the engine-driver, a Russian, who defended himself with a revolver, but was savagely knocked about and hurt. The ill-feeling thus aroused has since been allayed; but the traffic has not answered to the expectations formed of it, and financially the speculation is believed to be a failure. There is, of course, no goods traffic whatever on the line, while the distance is too short to render its advantages for passenger traffic obligatory, the Persian pilgrim or holiday-maker who has the entire day at his disposal preferring to take things leisurely and to ride to and from the shrine on his donkey.

Its success or failure





The cost of tickets for the single journey is two *krans*, one *kran*, and one half-*kran*, according to the class, and the receipts, which on festival days in summer have risen as high as from 200 to 500 *tomans* (3½ *tomans* equal 1*l.*), sink on ordinary days in summer to from ten to thirty *tomans*, and in winter as low as from three to five *tomans*, and even less, in the day. The company possesses four locomotives and twenty-one wagons, and employs five European officials and sixty Persian workmen. The engines are entirely driven by the latter. It is to be hoped that this company, which must be applauded for its enterprise and for the excellent character of its establishment, may ultimately procure a concession for an extension southwards, or be able to part with its plant and premises on favourable terms to some other company more lucky in its fortunes.[1] In any case the 'Gare du Sud' is ready built at Teheran, from which passengers in the twentieth century may be able to book their seats for the Gulf.

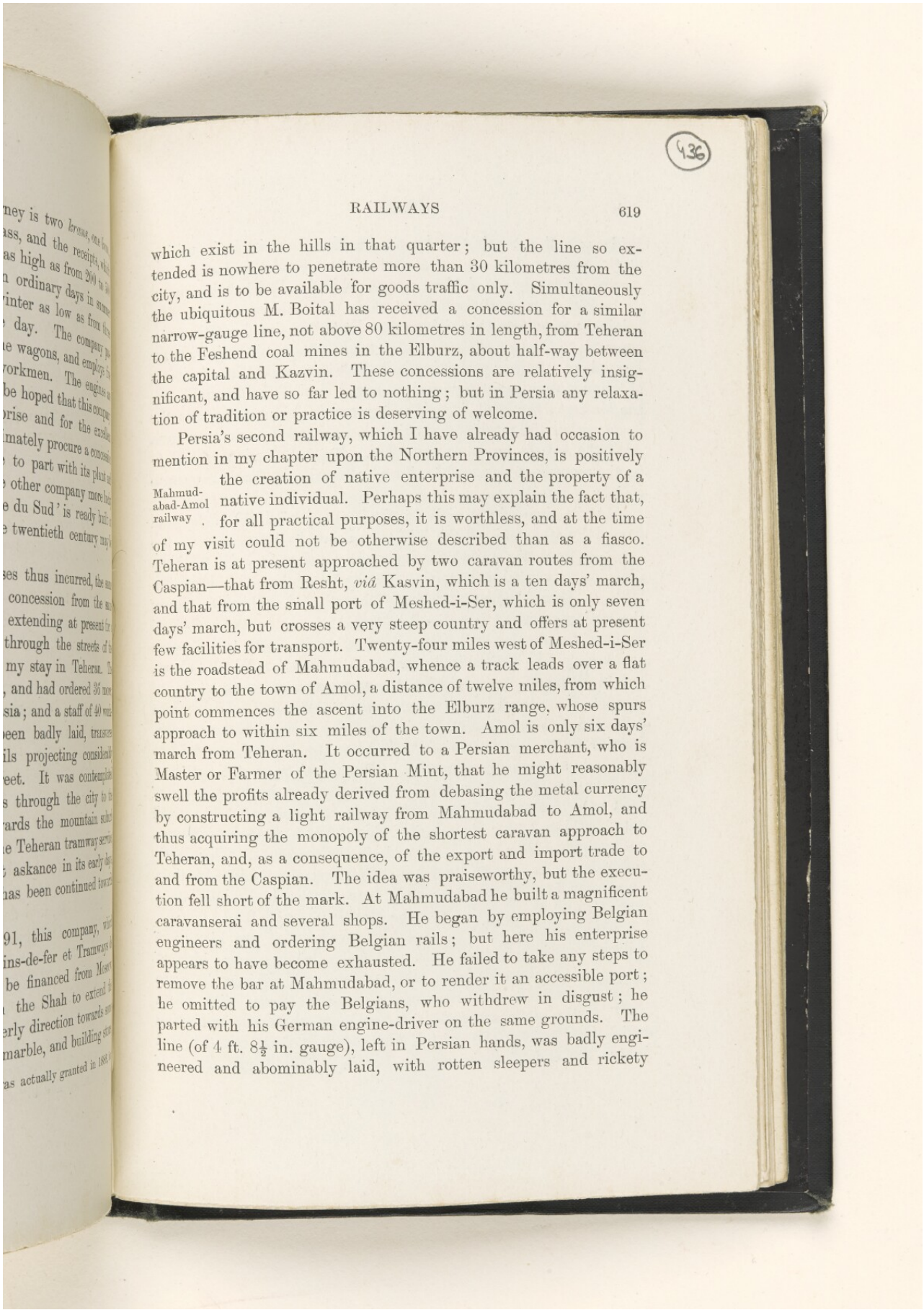
Anxious to recoup itself for the losses thus incurred, the same company in 1889 bought a tramway concession from the same M. Boital, the lines of which, extending at present for a distance of about five miles through the streets of the capital, were opened to traffic during my stay in Teheran. The company already possessed 12 tramcars, and had ordered 36 more; a stable of 150 horses, mainly from Russia; and a staff of 40 workmen. Unfortunately, the line had been badly laid, transverse sleepers being employed, and the rails projecting considerably instead of being laid flush with the street. It was contemplated later on to continue the existing lines through the city to the north, and possibly to extend them towards the mountain suburb of Gulahek. I have since heard that the Teheran tramway service, at which the Persians looked somewhat askance in its early days, has proved a great success, and that it has been continued towards the northern outskirts of the capital.

Teheran tramway

In the spring of last year, 1891, this company, which now calls itself the 'Société des Chemins-de-fer et Tramways de Perse,' and is understood to be financed from Moscow, has procured permission from the Shah to extend the Shah Abdul Azim line in a south-easterly direction towards some quarries of gypsum, limestone, slate, marble, and building stone,

New lines

[1] A concession for the extension to Kum was actually granted in 1888, but had no results.





which exist in the hills in that quarter; but the line so extended is nowhere to penetrate more than 30 kilometres from the city, and is to be available for goods traffic only. Simultaneously the ubiquitous M. Boital has received a concession for a similar narrow-gauge line, not above 80 kilometres in length, from Teheran to the Feshend coal mines in the Elburz, about half-way between the capital and Kazvin. These concessions are relatively insignificant, and have so far led to nothing; but in Persia any relaxation of tradition or practice is deserving of welcome.

Mahmud-abad-Amol railway.

Persia's second railway, which I have already had occasion to mention in my chapter upon the Northern Provinces, is positively the creation of native enterprise and the property of a native individual. Perhaps this may explain the fact that, for all practical purposes, it is worthless, and at the time of my visit could not be otherwise described than as a fiasco. Teheran is at present approached by two caravan routes from the Caspian—that from Resht, *viâ* Kasvin, which is a ten days' march, and that from the small port of Meshed-i-Ser, which is only seven days' march, but crosses a very steep country and offers at present few facilities for transport. Twenty-four miles west of Meshed-i-Ser is the roadstead of Mahmudabad, whence a track leads over a flat country to the town of Amol, a distance of twelve miles, from which point commences the ascent into the Elburz range, whose spurs approach to within six miles of the town. Amol is only six days' march from Teheran. It occurred to a Persian merchant, who is Master or Farmer of the Persian Mint, that he might reasonably swell the profits already derived from debasing the metal currency by constructing a light railway from Mahmudabad to Amol, and thus acquiring the monopoly of the shortest caravan approach to Teheran, and, as a consequence, of the export and import trade to and from the Caspian. The idea was praiseworthy, but the execution fell short of the mark. At Mahmudabad he built a magnificent caravanserai and several shops. He began by employing Belgian engineers and ordering Belgian rails; but here his enterprise appears to have become exhausted. He failed to take any steps to remove the bar at Mahmudabad, or to render it an accessible port; he omitted to pay the Belgians, who withdrew in disgust; he parted with his German engine-driver on the same grounds. The line (of 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge), left in Persian hands, was badly engineered and abominably laid, with rotten sleepers and rickety

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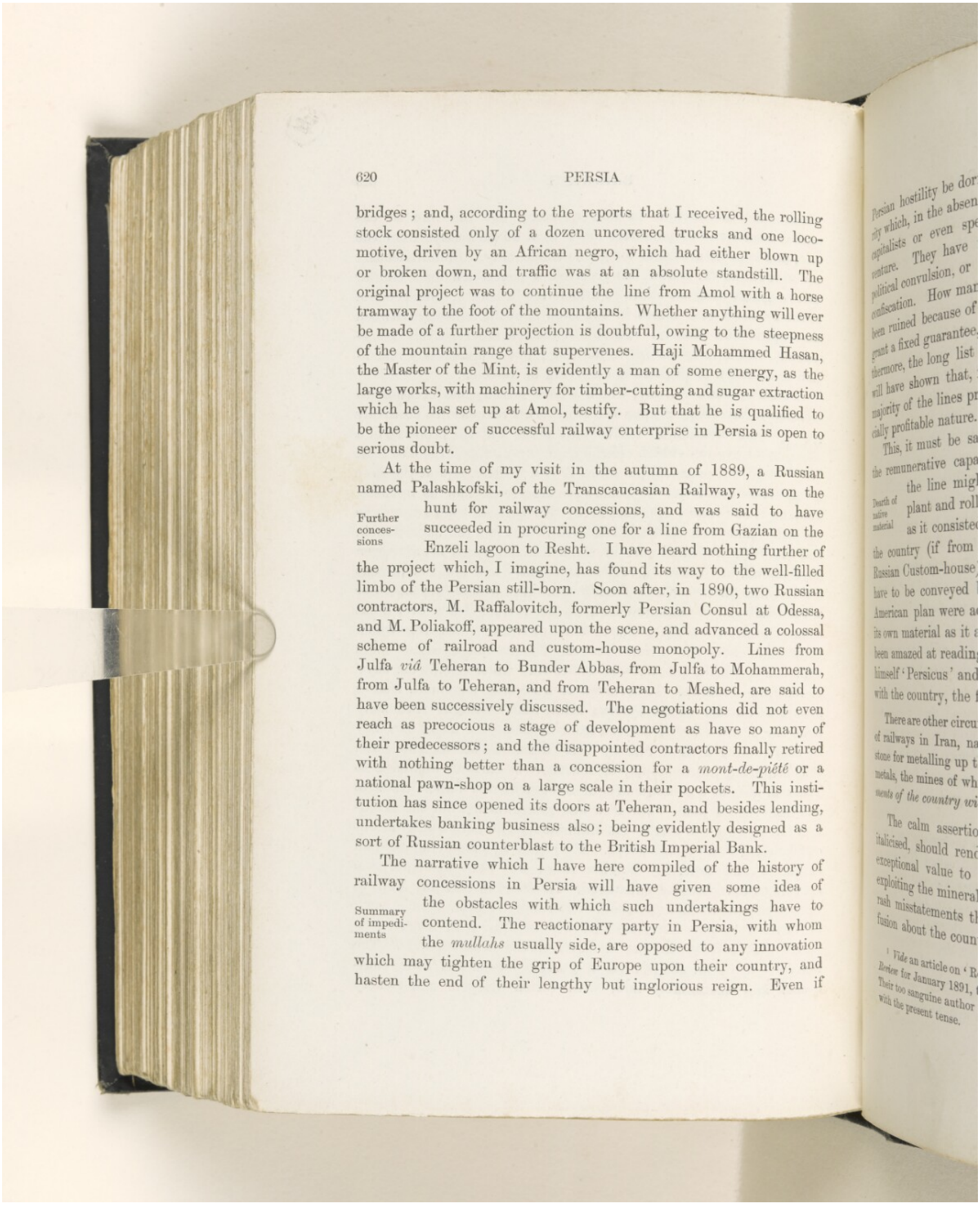




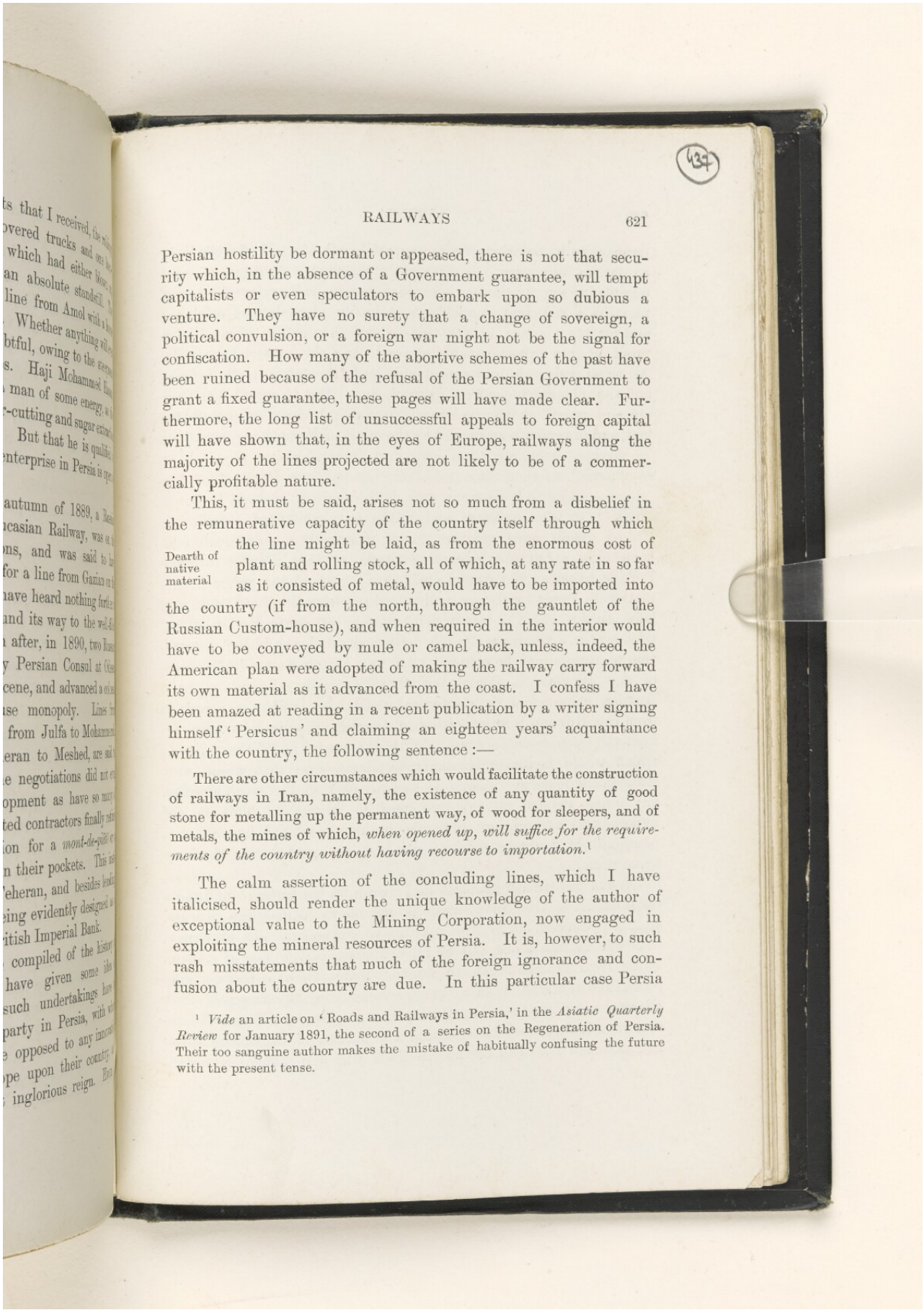
bridges; and, according to the reports that I received, the rolling stock consisted only of a dozen uncovered trucks and one locomotive, driven by an African negro, which had either blown up or broken down, and traffic was at an absolute standstill. The original project was to continue the line from Amol with a horse tramway to the foot of the mountains. Whether anything will ever be made of a further projection is doubtful, owing to the steepness of the mountain range that supervenes. Haji Mohammed Hasan, the Master of the Mint, is evidently a man of some energy, as the large works, with machinery for timber-cutting and sugar extraction which he has set up at Amol, testify. But that he is qualified to be the pioneer of successful railway enterprise in Persia is open to serious doubt.

At the time of my visit in the autumn of 1889, a Russian named Palashkofski, of the Transcaucasian Railway, was on the hunt for railway concessions, and was said to have succeeded in procuring one for a line from Gazian on the Enzeli lagoon to Resht. I have heard nothing further of the project which, I imagine, has found its way to the well-filled limbo of the Persian still-born. Soon after, in 1890, two Russian contractors, M. Raffalovitch, formerly Persian Consul at Odessa, and M. Poliakoff, appeared upon the scene, and advanced a colossal scheme of railroad and custom-house monopoly. Lines from Julfa *viâ* Teheran to Bunder Abbas, from Julfa to Mohammerah, from Julfa to Teheran, and from Teheran to Meshed, are said to have been successively discussed. The negotiations did not even reach as precocious a stage of development as have so many of their predecessors; and the disappointed contractors finally retired with nothing better than a concession for a *mont-de-piété* or a national pawn-shop on a large scale in their pockets. This institution has since opened its doors at Teheran, and besides lending, undertakes banking business also; being evidently designed as a sort of Russian counterblast to the British Imperial Bank.

Further concessions

The narrative which I have here compiled of the history of railway concessions in Persia will have given some idea of the obstacles with which such undertakings have to contend. The reactionary party in Persia, with whom the *mullahs* usually side, are opposed to any innovation which may tighten the grip of Europe upon their country, and hasten the end of their lengthy but inglorious reign. Even if

Summary of impediments





Persian hostility be dormant or appeased, there is not that security which, in the absence of a Government guarantee, will tempt capitalists or even speculators to embark upon so dubious a venture. They have no surety that a change of sovereign, a political convulsion, or a foreign war might not be the signal for confiscation. How many of the abortive schemes of the past have been ruined because of the refusal of the Persian Government to grant a fixed guarantee, these pages will have made clear. Furthermore, the long list of unsuccessful appeals to foreign capital will have shown that, in the eyes of Europe, railways along the majority of the lines projected are not likely to be of a commercially profitable nature.

This, it must be said, arises not so much from a disbelief in the remunerative capacity of the country itself through which the line might be laid, as from the enormous cost of plant and rolling stock, all of which, at any rate in so far as it consisted of metal, would have to be imported into the country (if from the north, through the gauntlet of the Russian Custom-house), and when required in the interior would have to be conveyed by mule or camel back, unless, indeed, the American plan were adopted of making the railway carry forward its own material as it advanced from the coast. I confess I have been amazed at reading in a recent publication by a writer signing himself 'Persicus' and claiming an eighteen years' acquaintance with the country, the following sentence :—

Dearth of native material

> There are other circumstances which would facilitate the construction of railways in Iran, namely, the existence of any quantity of good stone for metalling up the permanent way, of wood for sleepers, and of metals, the mines of which, *when opened up, will suffice for the requirements of the country without having recourse to importation.*[1]

The calm assertion of the concluding lines, which I have italicised, should render the unique knowledge of the author of exceptional value to the Mining Corporation, now engaged in exploiting the mineral resources of Persia. It is, however, to such rash misstatements that much of the foreign ignorance and confusion about the country are due. In this particular case Persia

[1] *Vide* an article on 'Roads and Railways in Persia,' in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* for January 1891, the second of a series on the Regeneration of Persia. Their too sanguine author makes the mistake of habitually confusing the future with the present tense.

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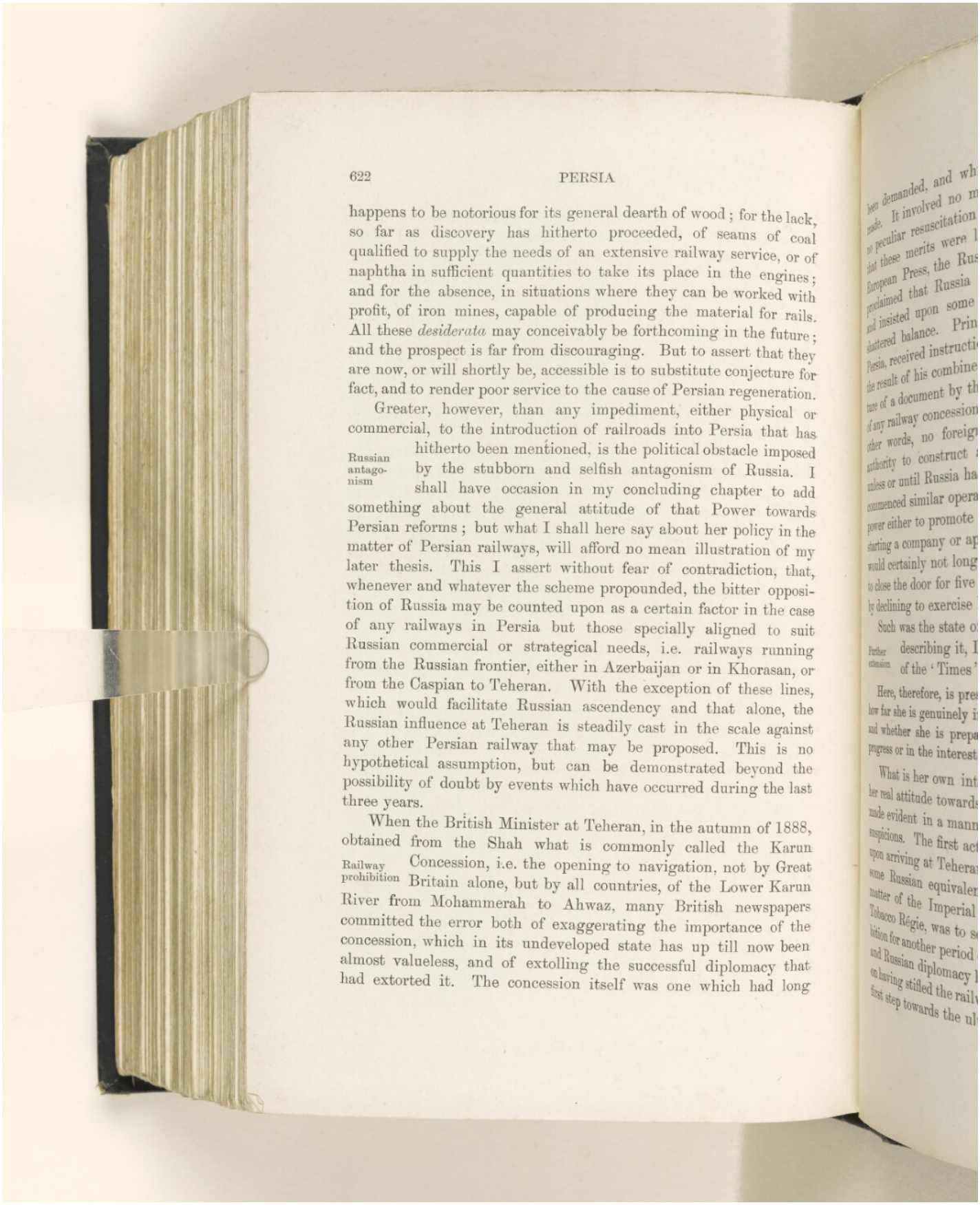



happens to be notorious for its general dearth of wood; for the lack, so far as discovery has hitherto proceeded, of seams of coal qualified to supply the needs of an extensive railway service, or of naphtha in sufficient quantities to take its place in the engines; and for the absence, in situations where they can be worked with profit, of iron mines, capable of producing the material for rails. All these *desiderata* may conceivably be forthcoming in the future; and the prospect is far from discouraging. But to assert that they are now, or will shortly be, accessible is to substitute conjecture for fact, and to render poor service to the cause of Persian regeneration.

Greater, however, than any impediment, either physical or commercial, to the introduction of railroads into Persia that has hitherto been mentioned, is the political obstacle imposed by the stubborn and selfish antagonism of Russia. I shall have occasion in my concluding chapter to add something about the general attitude of that Power towards Persian reforms; but what I shall here say about her policy in the matter of Persian railways, will afford no mean illustration of my later thesis. This I assert without fear of contradiction, that, whenever and whatever the scheme propounded, the bitter opposition of Russia may be counted upon as a certain factor in the case of any railways in Persia but those specially aligned to suit Russian commercial or strategical needs, i.e. railways running from the Russian frontier, either in Azerbaijan or in Khorasan, or from the Caspian to Teheran. With the exception of these lines, which would facilitate Russian ascendency and that alone, the Russian influence at Teheran is steadily cast in the scale against any other Persian railway that may be proposed. This is no hypothetical assumption, but can be demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt by events which have occurred during the last three years.

Russian antagonism

When the British Minister at Teheran, in the autumn of 1888, obtained from the Shah what is commonly called the Karun Concession, i.e. the opening to navigation, not by Great Britain alone, but by all countries, of the Lower Karun River from Mohammerah to Ahwaz, many British newspapers committed the error both of exaggerating the importance of the concession, which in its undeveloped state has up till now been almost valueless, and of extolling the successful diplomacy that had extorted it. The concession itself was one which had long

Railway prohibition

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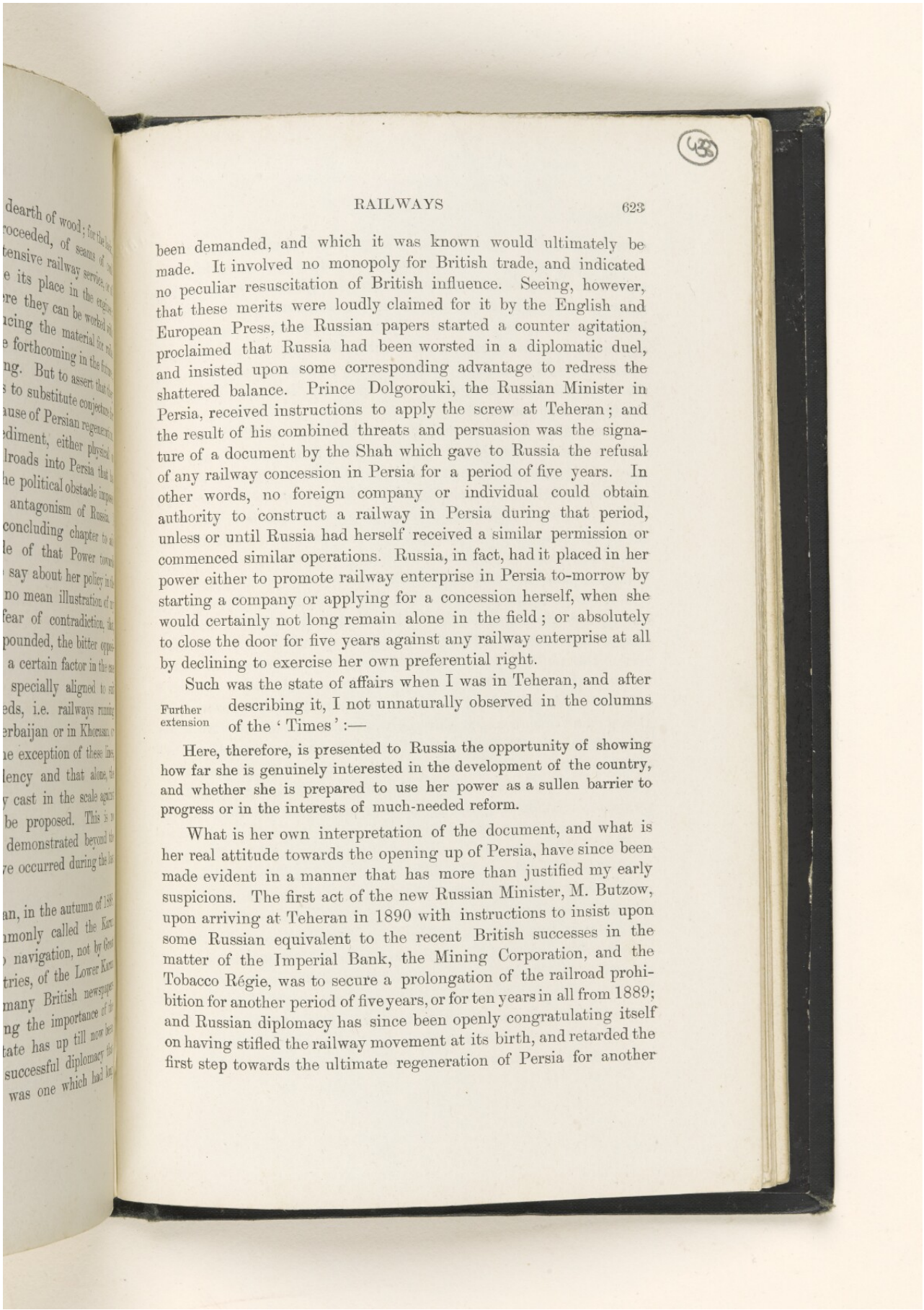




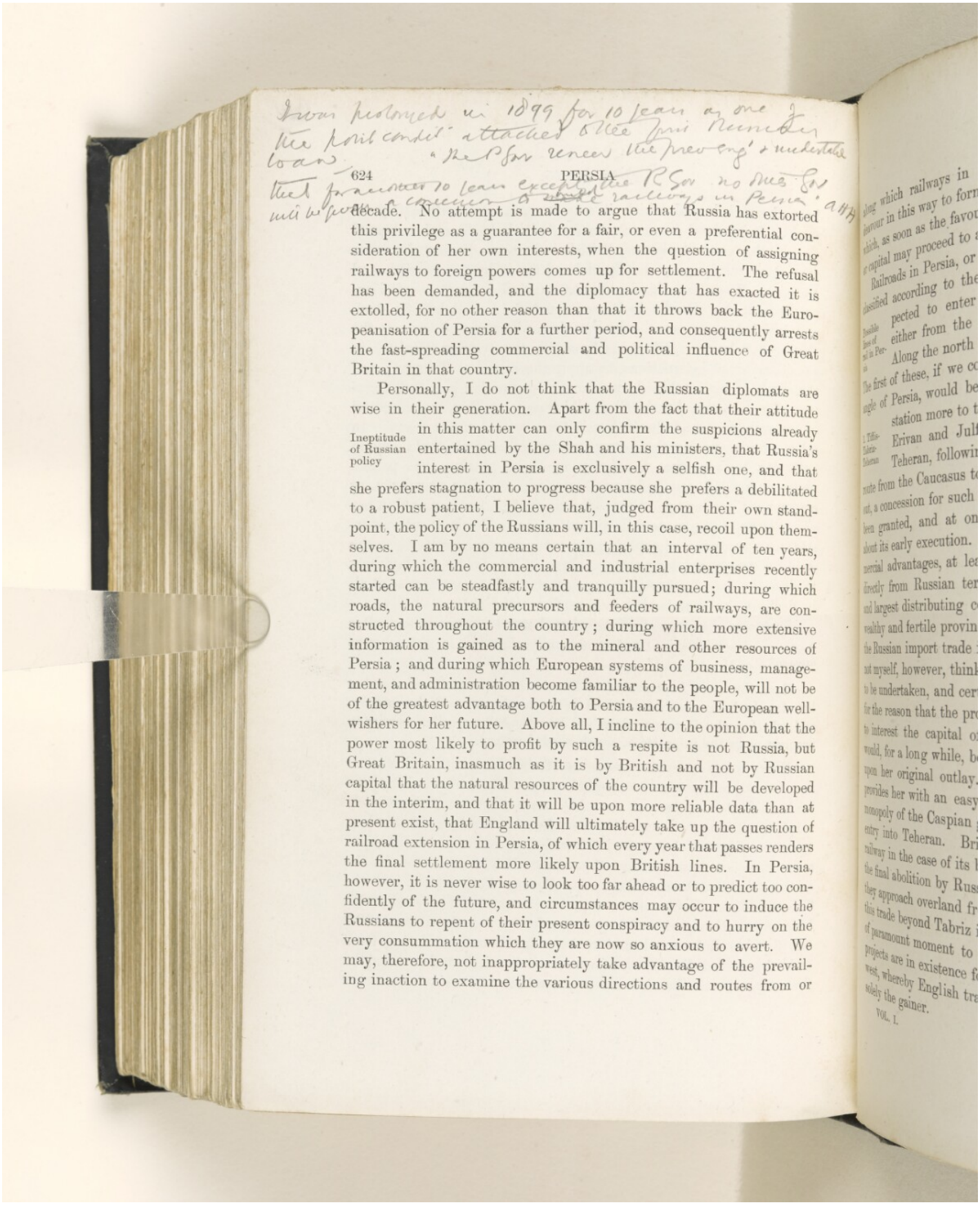
been demanded, and which it was known would ultimately be made. It involved no monopoly for British trade, and indicated no peculiar resuscitation of British influence. Seeing, however, that these merits were loudly claimed for it by the English and European Press, the Russian papers started a counter agitation, proclaimed that Russia had been worsted in a diplomatic duel, and insisted upon some corresponding advantage to redress the shattered balance. Prince Dolgorouki, the Russian Minister in Persia, received instructions to apply the screw at Teheran; and the result of his combined threats and persuasion was the signature of a document by the Shah which gave to Russia the refusal of any railway concession in Persia for a period of five years. In other words, no foreign company or individual could obtain authority to construct a railway in Persia during that period, unless or until Russia had herself received a similar permission or commenced similar operations. Russia, in fact, had it placed in her power either to promote railway enterprise in Persia to-morrow by starting a company or applying for a concession herself, when she would certainly not long remain alone in the field; or absolutely to close the door for five years against any railway enterprise at all by declining to exercise her own preferential right.

Such was the state of affairs when I was in Teheran, and after describing it, I not unnaturally observed in the columns of the 'Times':—

Further extension

Here, therefore, is presented to Russia the opportunity of showing how far she is genuinely interested in the development of the country, and whether she is prepared to use her power as a sullen barrier to progress or in the interests of much-needed reform.

What is her own interpretation of the document, and what is her real attitude towards the opening up of Persia, have since been made evident in a manner that has more than justified my early suspicions. The first act of the new Russian Minister, M. Butzow, upon arriving at Teheran in 1890 with instructions to insist upon some Russian equivalent to the recent British successes in the matter of the Imperial Bank, the Mining Corporation, and the Tobacco Régie, was to secure a prolongation of the railroad prohibition for another period of five years, or for ten years in all from 1889; and Russian diplomacy has since been openly congratulating itself on having stifled the railway movement at its birth, and retarded the first step towards the ultimate regeneration of Persia for another



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decade. No attempt is made to argue that Russia has extorted this privilege as a guarantee for a fair, or even a preferential consideration of her own interests, when the question of assigning railways to foreign powers comes up for settlement. The refusal has been demanded, and the diplomacy that has exacted it is extolled, for no other reason than that it throws back the Europeanisation of Persia for a further period, and consequently arrests the fast-spreading commercial and political influence of Great Britain in that country.

Personally, I do not think that the Russian diplomats are wise in their generation. Apart from the fact that their attitude in this matter can only confirm the suspicions already entertained by the Shah and his ministers, that Russia's interest in Persia is exclusively a selfish one, and that she prefers stagnation to progress because she prefers a debilitated to a robust patient, I believe that, judged from their own standpoint, the policy of the Russians will, in this case, recoil upon themselves. I am by no means certain that an interval of ten years, during which the commercial and industrial enterprises recently started can be steadfastly and tranquilly pursued; during which roads, the natural precursors and feeders of railways, are constructed throughout the country; during which more extensive information is gained as to the mineral and other resources of Persia; and during which European systems of business, management, and administration become familiar to the people, will not be of the greatest advantage both to Persia and to the European well-wishers for her future. Above all, I incline to the opinion that the power most likely to profit by such a respite is not Russia, but Great Britain, inasmuch as it is by British and not by Russian capital that the natural resources of the country will be developed in the interim, and that it will be upon more reliable data than at present exist, that England will ultimately take up the question of railroad extension in Persia, of which every year that passes renders the final settlement more likely upon British lines. In Persia, however, it is never wise to look too far ahead or to predict too confidently of the future, and circumstances may occur to induce the Russians to repent of their present conspiracy and to hurry on the very consummation which they are now so anxious to avert. We may, therefore, not inappropriately take advantage of the prevailing inaction to examine the various directions and routes from or

Ineptitude of Russian policy



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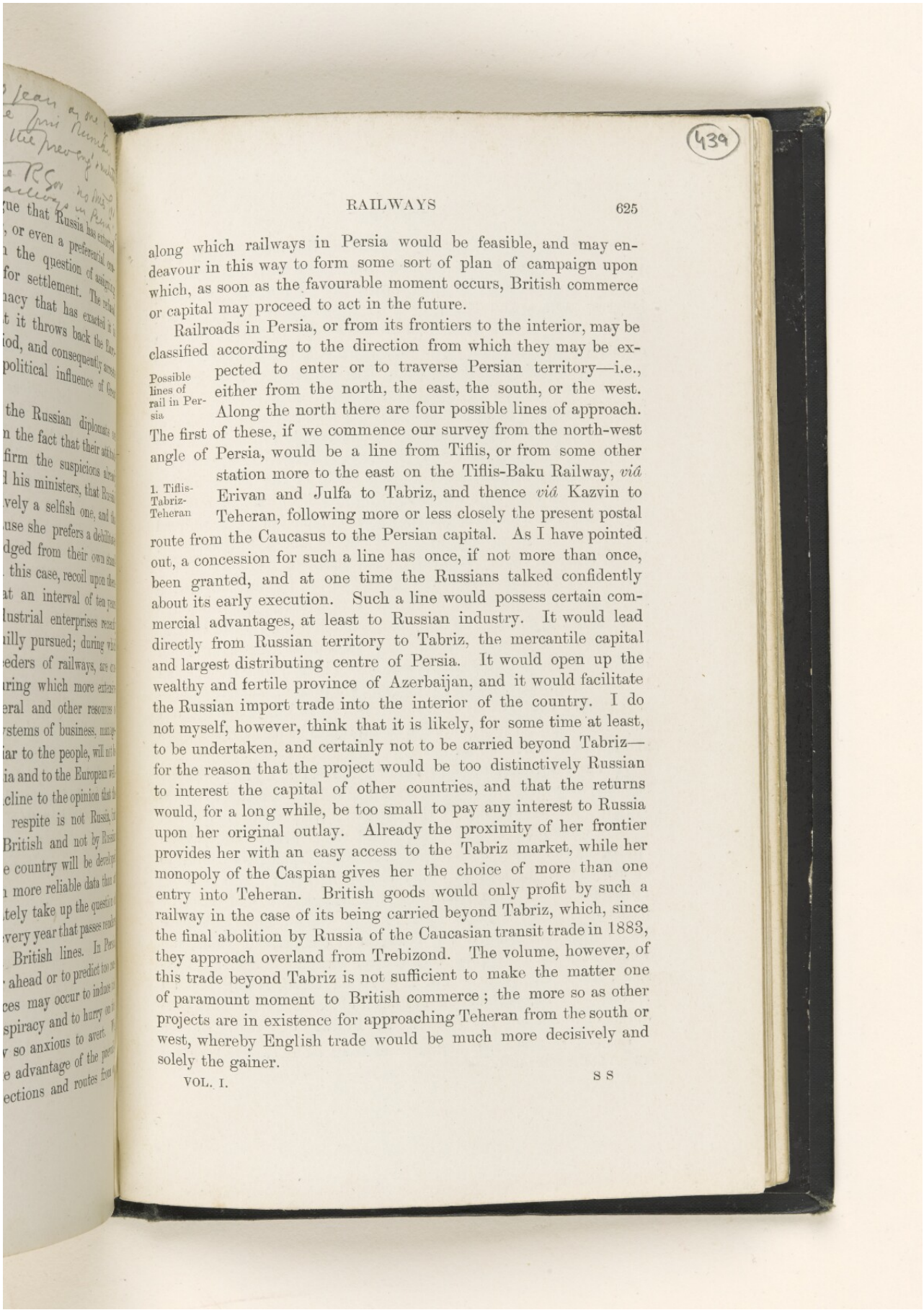



along which railways in Persia would be feasible, and may endeavour in this way to form some sort of plan of campaign upon which, as soon as the favourable moment occurs, British commerce or capital may proceed to act in the future.

Railroads in Persia, or from its frontiers to the interior, may be classified according to the direction from which they may be expected to enter or to traverse Persian territory—i.e., either from the north, the east, the south, or the west.

Possible lines of rail in Persia

Along the north there are four possible lines of approach. The first of these, if we commence our survey from the north-west angle of Persia, would be a line from Tiflis, or from some other station more to the east on the Tiflis-Baku Railway, *viâ* Erivan and Julfa to Tabriz, and thence *viâ* Kazvin to Teheran, following more or less closely the present postal route from the Caucasus to the Persian capital. As I have pointed out, a concession for such a line has once, if not more than once, been granted, and at one time the Russians talked confidently about its early execution. Such a line would possess certain commercial advantages, at least to Russian industry. It would lead directly from Russian territory to Tabriz, the mercantile capital and largest distributing centre of Persia. It would open up the wealthy and fertile province of Azerbaijan, and it would facilitate the Russian import trade into the interior of the country. I do not myself, however, think that it is likely, for some time at least, to be undertaken, and certainly not to be carried beyond Tabriz—for the reason that the project would be too distinctively Russian to interest the capital of other countries, and that the returns would, for a long while, be too small to pay any interest to Russia upon her original outlay. Already the proximity of her frontier provides her with an easy access to the Tabriz market, while her monopoly of the Caspian gives her the choice of more than one entry into Teheran. British goods would only profit by such a railway in the case of its being carried beyond Tabriz, which, since the final abolition by Russia of the Caucasian transit trade in 1883, they approach overland from Trebizond. The volume, however, of this trade beyond Tabriz is not sufficient to make the matter one of paramount moment to British commerce; the more so as other projects are in existence for approaching Teheran from the south or west, whereby English trade would be much more decisively and solely the gainer.

1. Tiflis-Tabriz-Teheran



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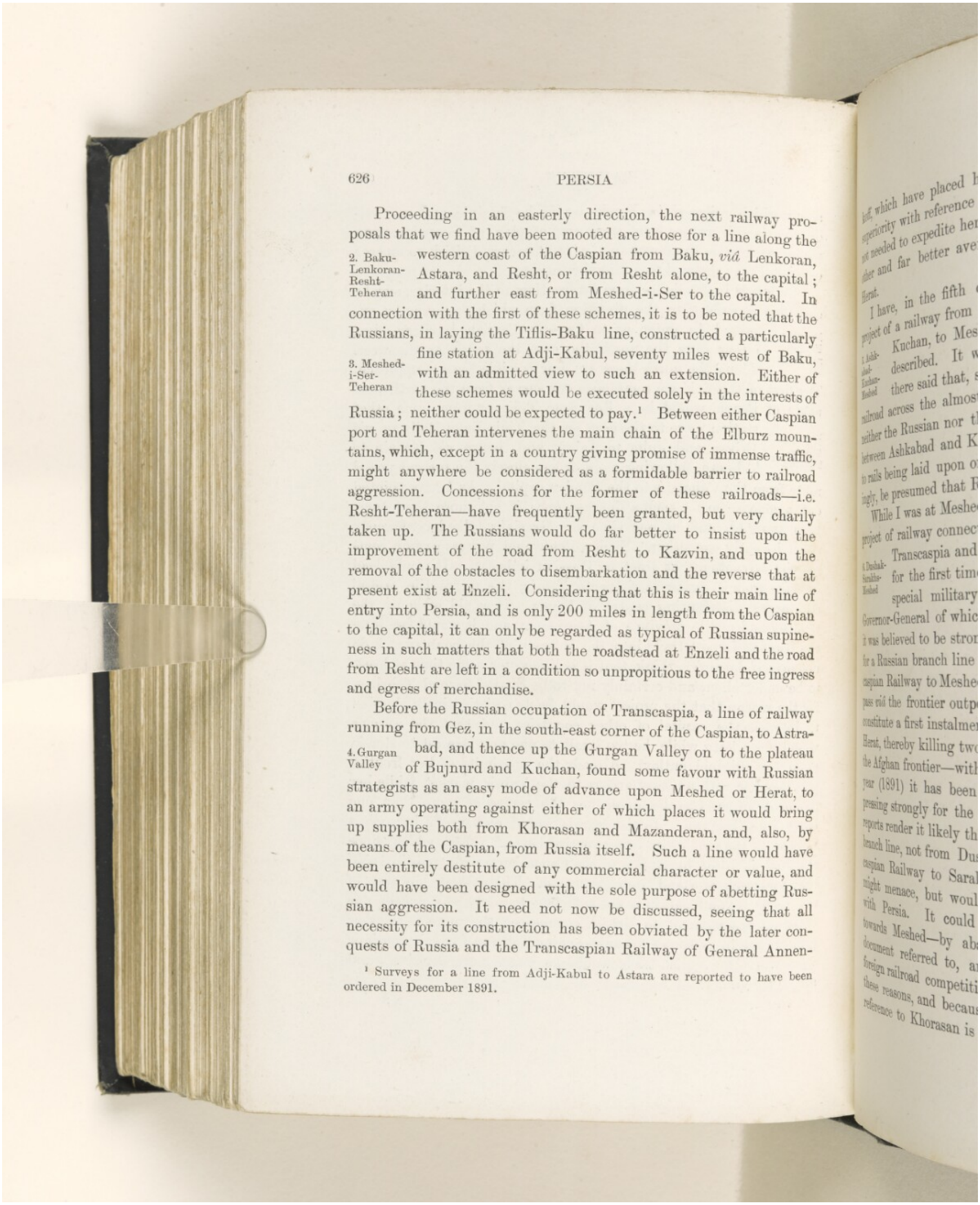




Proceeding in an easterly direction, the next railway proposals that we find have been mooted are those for a line along the western coast of the Caspian from Baku, *viâ* Lenkoran, Astara, and Resht, or from Resht alone, to the capital; and further east from Meshed-i-Ser to the capital. In connection with the first of these schemes, it is to be noted that the Russians, in laying the Tiflis-Baku line, constructed a particularly fine station at Adji-Kabul, seventy miles west of Baku, with an admitted view to such an extension. Either of these schemes would be executed solely in the interests of Russia; neither could be expected to pay.[1] Between either Caspian port and Teheran intervenes the main chain of the Elburz mountains, which, except in a country giving promise of immense traffic, might anywhere be considered as a formidable barrier to railroad aggression. Concessions for the former of these railroads—i.e. Resht-Teheran—have frequently been granted, but very charily taken up. The Russians would do far better to insist upon the improvement of the road from Resht to Kazvin, and upon the removal of the obstacles to disembarkation and the reverse that at present exist at Enzeli. Considering that this is their main line of entry into Persia, and is only 200 miles in length from the Caspian to the capital, it can only be regarded as typical of Russian supineness in such matters that both the roadstead at Enzeli and the road from Resht are left in a condition so unpropitious to the free ingress and egress of merchandise.

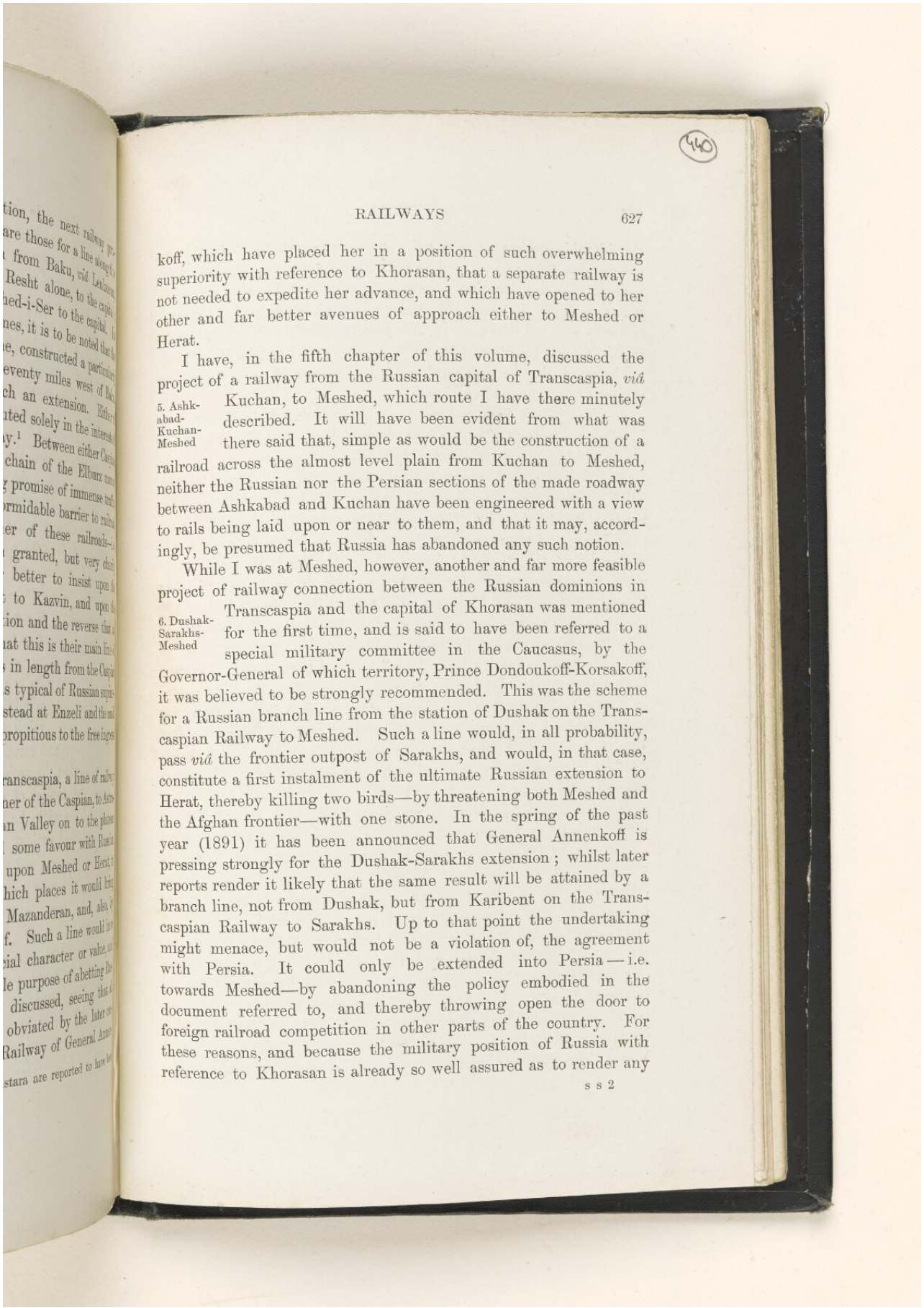
2. Baku-Lenkoran-Resht-Teheran

3. Meshed-i-Ser-Teheran

Before the Russian occupation of Transcaspia, a line of railway running from Gez, in the south-east corner of the Caspian, to Astrabad, and thence up the Gurgan Valley on to the plateau of Bujnurd and Kuchan, found some favour with Russian strategists as an easy mode of advance upon Meshed or Herat, to an army operating against either of which places it would bring up supplies both from Khorasan and Mazanderan, and, also, by means of the Caspian, from Russia itself. Such a line would have been entirely destitute of any commercial character or value, and would have been designed with the sole purpose of abetting Russian aggression. It need not now be discussed, seeing that all necessity for its construction has been obviated by the later conquests of Russia and the Transcaspian Railway of General Annen-

4. Gurgan Valley

[1] Surveys for a line from Adji-Kabul to Astara are reported to have been ordered in December 1891.





koff, which have placed her in a position of such overwhelming superiority with reference to Khorasan, that a separate railway is not needed to expedite her advance, and which have opened to her other and far better avenues of approach either to Meshed or Herat.

5. Ashkabad-Kuchan-Meshed

I have, in the fifth chapter of this volume, discussed the project of a railway from the Russian capital of Transcaspia, *viâ* Kuchan, to Meshed, which route I have there minutely described. It will have been evident from what was there said that, simple as would be the construction of a railroad across the almost level plain from Kuchan to Meshed, neither the Russian nor the Persian sections of the made roadway between Ashkabad and Kuchan have been engineered with a view to rails being laid upon or near to them, and that it may, accordingly, be presumed that Russia has abandoned any such notion.

6. Dushak-Sarakhs-Meshed

While I was at Meshed, however, another and far more feasible project of railway connection between the Russian dominions in Transcaspia and the capital of Khorasan was mentioned for the first time, and is said to have been referred to a special military committee in the Caucasus, by the Governor-General of which territory, Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, it was believed to be strongly recommended. This was the scheme for a Russian branch line from the station of Dushak on the Transcaspian Railway to Meshed. Such a line would, in all probability, pass *viâ* the frontier outpost of Sarakhs, and would, in that case, constitute a first instalment of the ultimate Russian extension to Herat, thereby killing two birds—by threatening both Meshed and the Afghan frontier—with one stone. In the spring of the past year (1891) it has been announced that General Annenkoff is pressing strongly for the Dushak-Sarakhs extension; whilst later reports render it likely that the same result will be attained by a branch line, not from Dushak, but from Karibent on the Transcaspian Railway to Sarakhs. Up to that point the undertaking might menace, but would not be a violation of, the agreement with Persia. It could only be extended into Persia — i.e. towards Meshed—by abandoning the policy embodied in the document referred to, and thereby throwing open the door to foreign railroad competition in other parts of the country. For these reasons, and because the military position of Russia with reference to Khorasan is already so well assured as to render any



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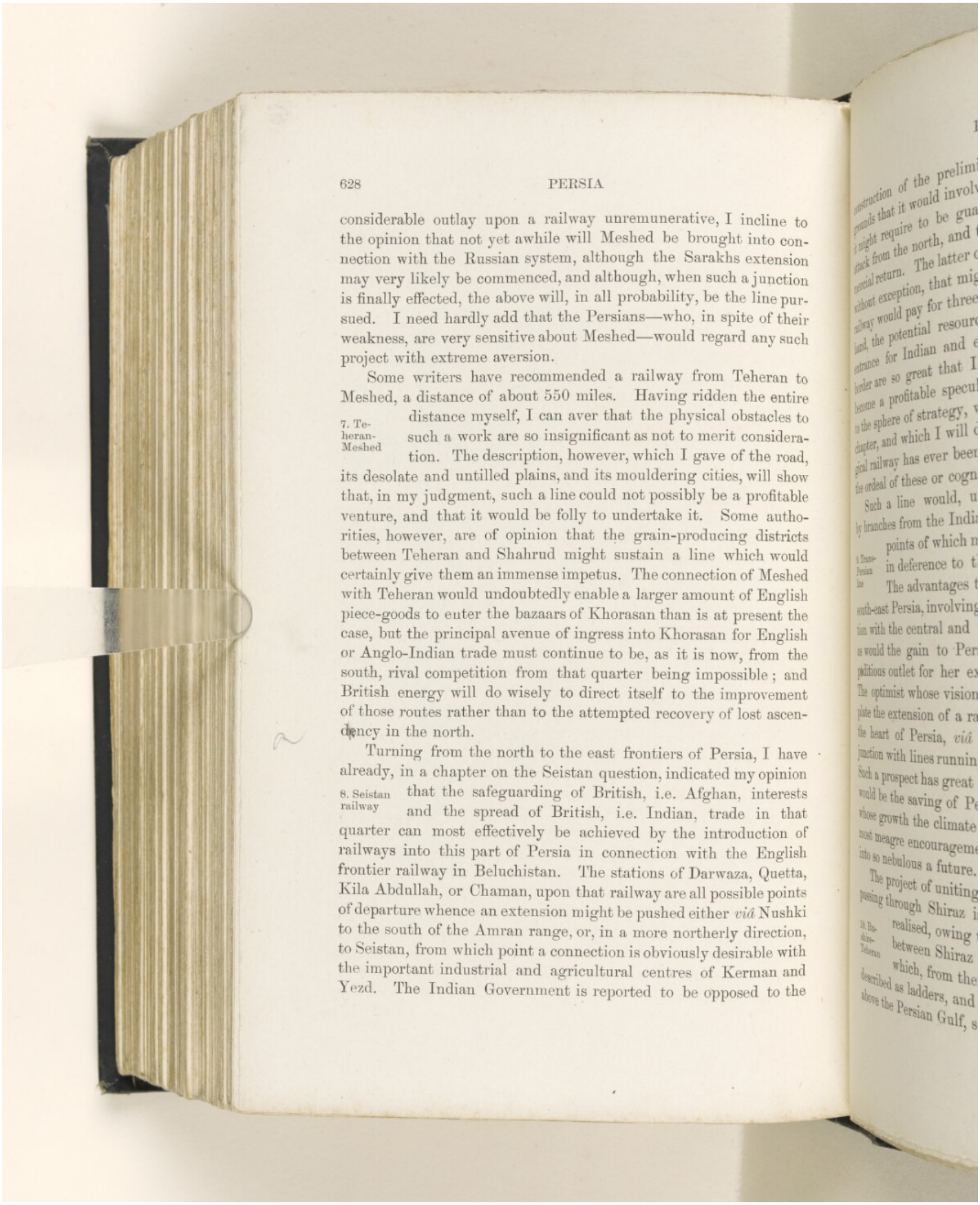



considerable outlay upon a railway unremunerative, I incline to the opinion that not yet awhile will Meshed be brought into connection with the Russian system, although the Sarakhs extension may very likely be commenced, and although, when such a junction is finally effected, the above will, in all probability, be the line pursued. I need hardly add that the Persians—who, in spite of their weakness, are very sensitive about Meshed—would regard any such project with extreme aversion.

Some writers have recommended a railway from Teheran to Meshed, a distance of about 550 miles. Having ridden the entire distance myself, I can aver that the physical obstacles to such a work are so insignificant as not to merit consideration. The description, however, which I gave of the road, its desolate and untilled plains, and its mouldering cities, will show that, in my judgment, such a line could not possibly be a profitable venture, and that it would be folly to undertake it. Some authorities, however, are of opinion that the grain-producing districts between Teheran and Shahrud might sustain a line which would certainly give them an immense impetus. The connection of Meshed with Teheran would undoubtedly enable a larger amount of English piece-goods to enter the bazaars of Khorasan than is at present the case, but the principal avenue of ingress into Khorasan for English or Anglo-Indian trade must continue to be, as it is now, from the south, rival competition from that quarter being impossible; and British energy will do wisely to direct itself to the improvement of those routes rather than to the attempted recovery of lost ascendency in the north.

7. Teheran-Meshed

Turning from the north to the east frontiers of Persia, I have already, in a chapter on the Seistan question, indicated my opinion that the safeguarding of British, i.e. Afghan, interests and the spread of British, i.e. Indian, trade in that quarter can most effectively be achieved by the introduction of railways into this part of Persia in connection with the English frontier railway in Beluchistan. The stations of Darwaza, Quetta, Kila Abdullah, or Chaman, upon that railway are all possible points of departure whence an extension might be pushed either *viâ* Nushki to the south of the Amran range, or, in a more northerly direction, to Seistan, from which point a connection is obviously desirable with the important industrial and agricultural centres of Kerman and Yezd. The Indian Government is reported to be opposed to the

8. Seistan railway

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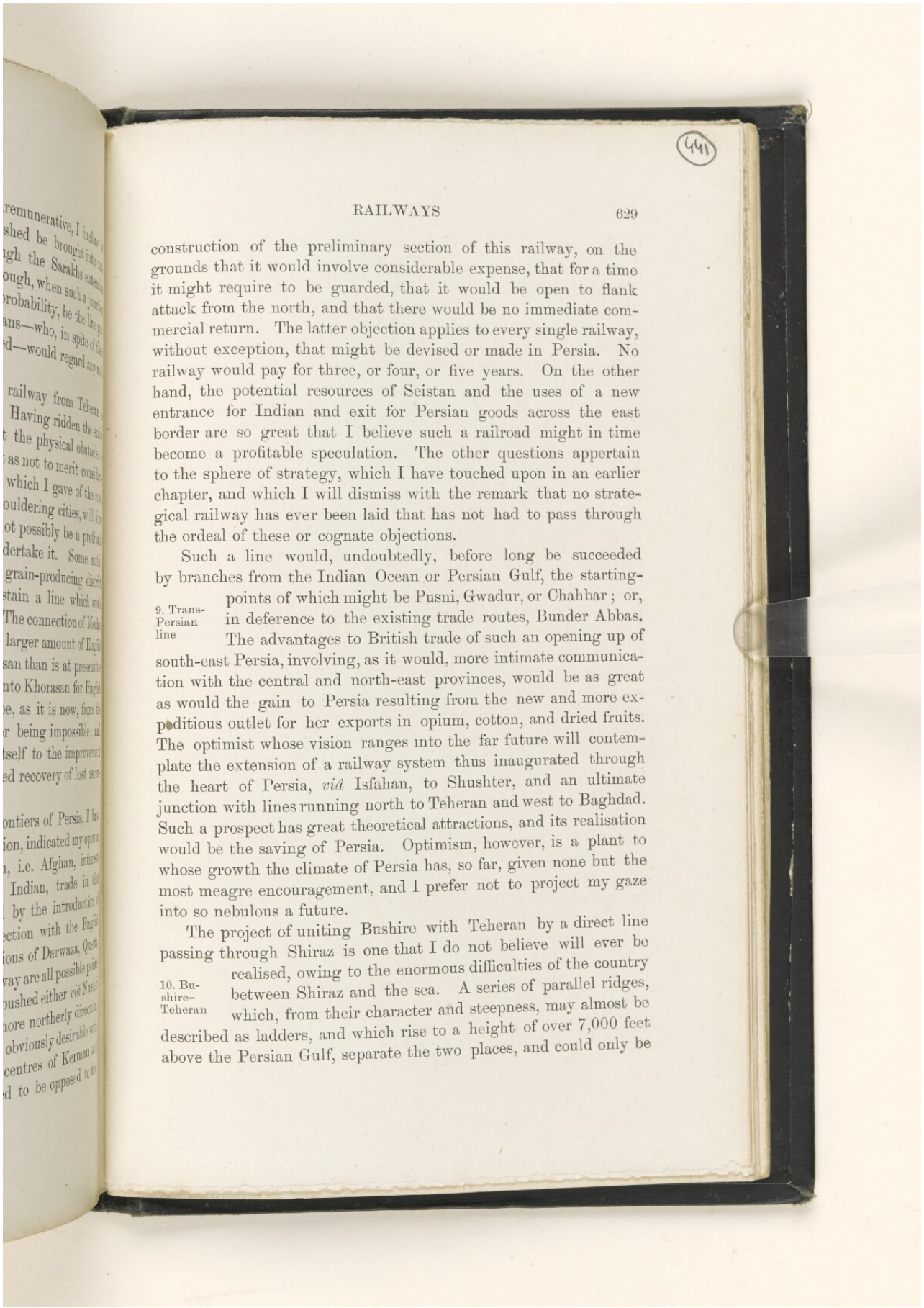



construction of the preliminary section of this railway, on the grounds that it would involve considerable expense, that for a time it might require to be guarded, that it would be open to flank attack from the north, and that there would be no immediate commercial return. The latter objection applies to every single railway, without exception, that might be devised or made in Persia. No railway would pay for three, or four, or five years. On the other hand, the potential resources of Seistan and the uses of a new entrance for Indian and exit for Persian goods across the east border are so great that I believe such a railroad might in time become a profitable speculation. The other questions appertain to the sphere of strategy, which I have touched upon in an earlier chapter, and which I will dismiss with the remark that no strategical railway has ever been laid that has not had to pass through the ordeal of these or cognate objections.

9. Trans-Persian line

Such a line would, undoubtedly, before long be succeeded by branches from the Indian Ocean or Persian Gulf, the starting-points of which might be Pusni, Gwadur, or Chahbar; or, in deference to the existing trade routes, Bunder Abbas. The advantages to British trade of such an opening up of south-east Persia, involving, as it would, more intimate communication with the central and north-east provinces, would be as great as would the gain to Persia resulting from the new and more expeditious outlet for her exports in opium, cotton, and dried fruits. The optimist whose vision ranges into the far future will contemplate the extension of a railway system thus inaugurated through the heart of Persia, *viâ* Isfahan, to Shushter, and an ultimate junction with lines running north to Teheran and west to Baghdad. Such a prospect has great theoretical attractions, and its realisation would be the saving of Persia. Optimism, however, is a plant to whose growth the climate of Persia has, so far, given none but the most meagre encouragement, and I prefer not to project my gaze into so nebulous a future.

10. Bushire–Teheran

The project of uniting Bushire with Teheran by a direct line passing through Shiraz is one that I do not believe will ever be realised, owing to the enormous difficulties of the country between Shiraz and the sea. A series of parallel ridges, which, from their character and steepness, may almost be described as ladders, and which rise to a height of over 7,000 feet above the Persian Gulf, separate the two places, and could only be

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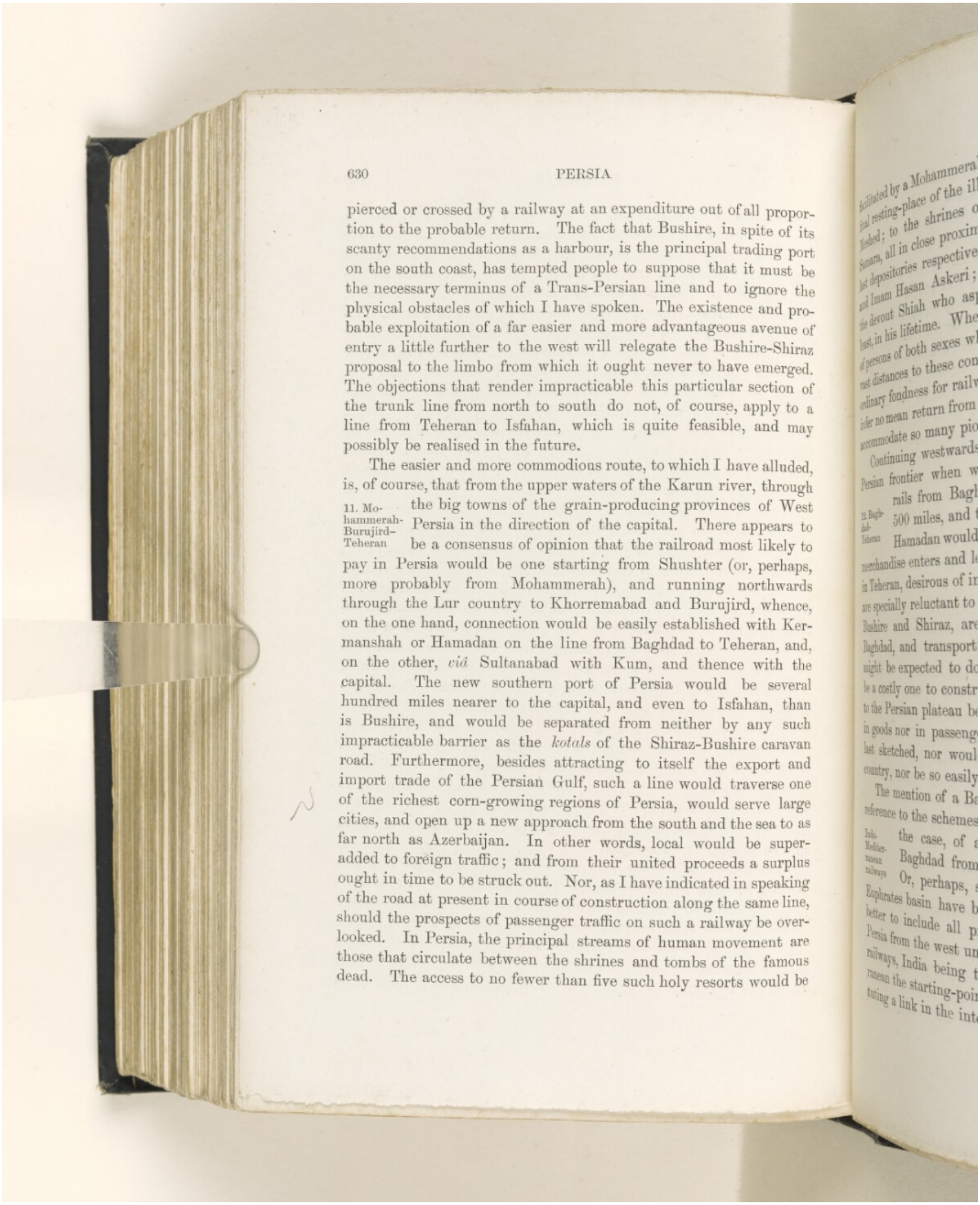
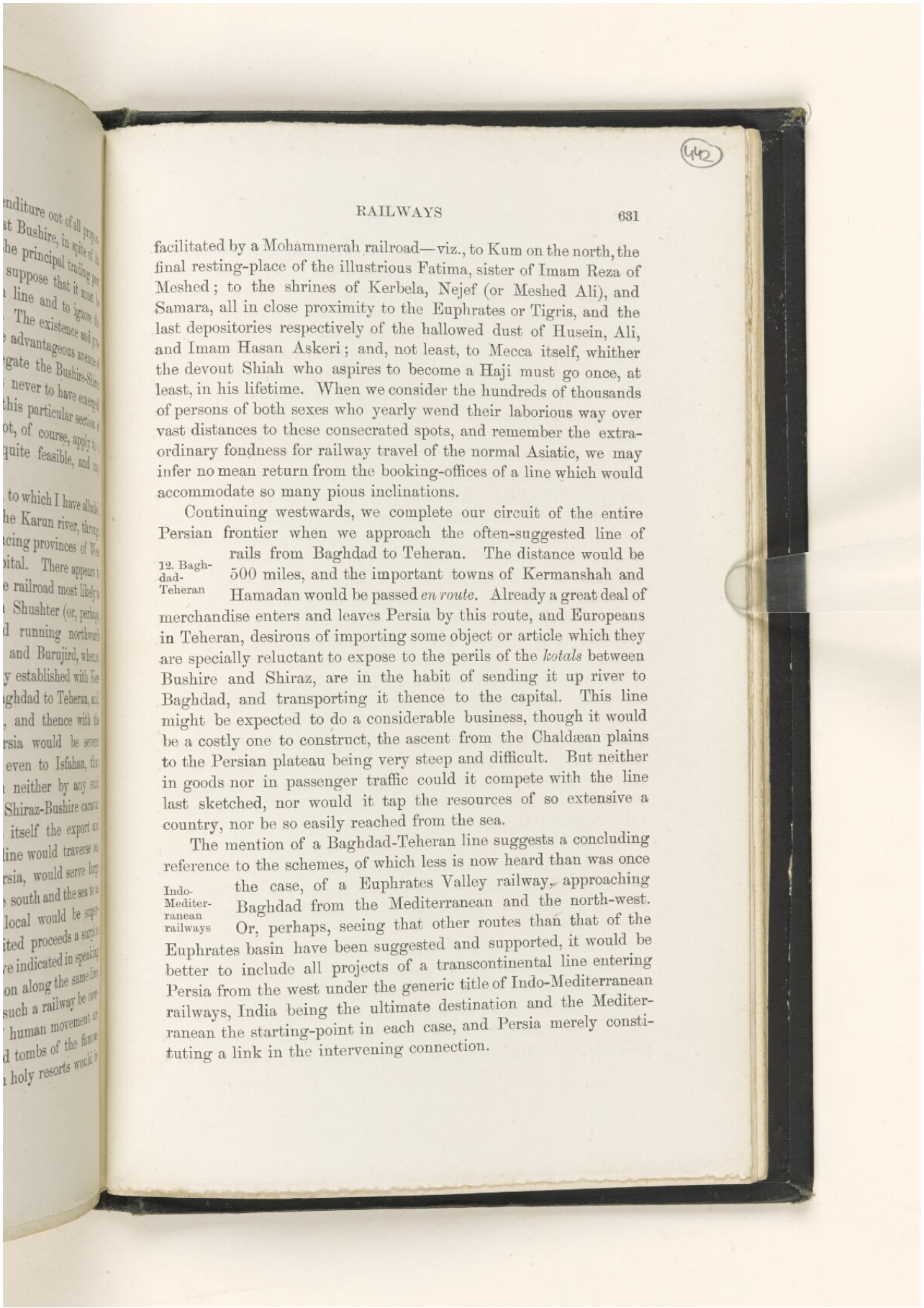




pierced or crossed by a railway at an expenditure out of all proportion to the probable return. The fact that Bushire, in spite of its scanty recommendations as a harbour, is the principal trading port on the south coast, has tempted people to suppose that it must be the necessary terminus of a Trans-Persian line and to ignore the physical obstacles of which I have spoken. The existence and probable exploitation of a far easier and more advantageous avenue of entry a little further to the west will relegate the Bushire-Shiraz proposal to the limbo from which it ought never to have emerged. The objections that render impracticable this particular section of the trunk line from north to south do not, of course, apply to a line from Teheran to Isfahan, which is quite feasible, and may possibly be realised in the future.

The easier and more commodious route, to which I have alluded, is, of course, that from the upper waters of the Karun river, through the big towns of the grain-producing provinces of West Persia in the direction of the capital. There appears to be a consensus of opinion that the railroad most likely to pay in Persia would be one starting from Shushter (or, perhaps, more probably from Mohammerah), and running northwards through the Lur country to Khorremabad and Burujird, whence, on the one hand, connection would be easily established with Kermanshah or Hamadan on the line from Baghdad to Teheran, and, on the other, *viâ* Sultanabad with Kum, and thence with the capital. The new southern port of Persia would be several hundred miles nearer to the capital, and even to Isfahan, than is Bushire, and would be separated from neither by any such impracticable barrier as the *kotals* of the Shiraz-Bushire caravan road. Furthermore, besides attracting to itself the export and import trade of the Persian Gulf, such a line would traverse one of the richest corn-growing regions of Persia, would serve large cities, and open up a new approach from the south and the sea to as far north as Azerbaijan. In other words, local would be superadded to foreign traffic; and from their united proceeds a surplus ought in time to be struck out. Nor, as I have indicated in speaking of the road at present in course of construction along the same line, should the prospects of passenger traffic on such a railway be overlooked. In Persia, the principal streams of human movement are those that circulate between the shrines and tombs of the famous dead. The access to no fewer than five such holy resorts would be

11. Mohammerah-Burujird-Teheran





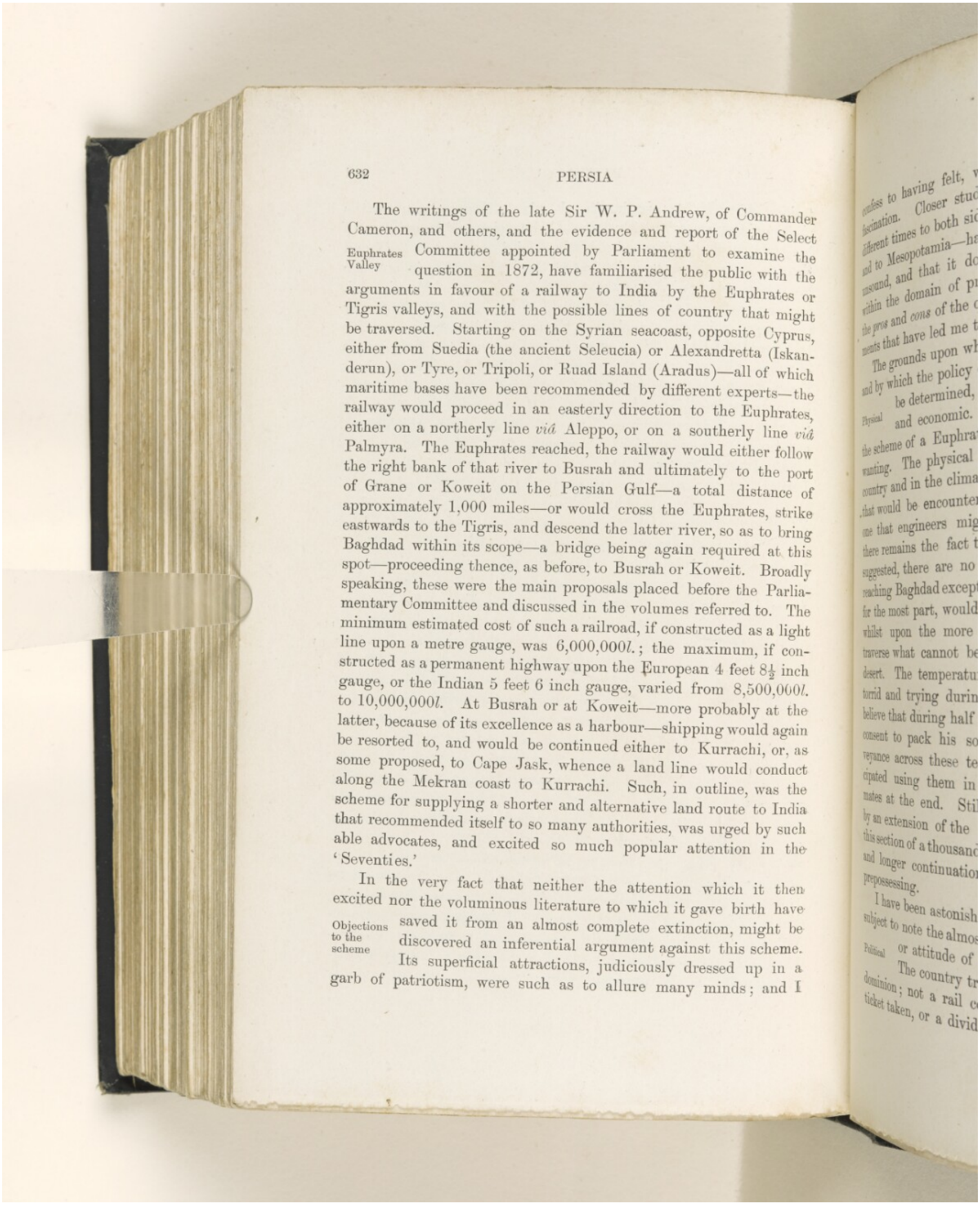
facilitated by a Mohammerah railroad—viz., to Kum on the north, the final resting-place of the illustrious Fatima, sister of Imam Reza of Meshed; to the shrines of Kerbela, Nejef (or Meshed Ali), and Samara, all in close proximity to the Euphrates or Tigris, and the last depositories respectively of the hallowed dust of Husein, Ali, and Imam Hasan Askeri; and, not least, to Mecca itself, whither the devout Shiah who aspires to become a Haji must go once, at least, in his lifetime. When we consider the hundreds of thousands of persons of both sexes who yearly wend their laborious way over vast distances to these consecrated spots, and remember the extraordinary fondness for railway travel of the normal Asiatic, we may infer no mean return from the booking-offices of a line which would accommodate so many pious inclinations.

Continuing westwards, we complete our circuit of the entire Persian frontier when we approach the often-suggested line of rails from Baghdad to Teheran. The distance would be 500 miles, and the important towns of Kermanshah and Hamadan would be passed *en route*. Already a great deal of merchandise enters and leaves Persia by this route, and Europeans in Teheran, desirous of importing some object or article which they are specially reluctant to expose to the perils of the *kotals* between Bushire and Shiraz, are in the habit of sending it up river to Baghdad, and transporting it thence to the capital. This line might be expected to do a considerable business, though it would be a costly one to construct, the ascent from the Chaldæan plains to the Persian plateau being very steep and difficult. But neither in goods nor in passenger traffic could it compete with the line last sketched, nor would it tap the resources of so extensive a country, nor be so easily reached from the sea.

12. Baghdad-Teheran

The mention of a Baghdad-Teheran line suggests a concluding reference to the schemes, of which less is now heard than was once the case, of a Euphrates Valley railway, approaching Baghdad from the Mediterranean and the north-west. Or, perhaps, seeing that other routes than that of the Euphrates basin have been suggested and supported, it would be better to include all projects of a transcontinental line entering Persia from the west under the generic title of Indo-Mediterranean railways, India being the ultimate destination and the Mediterranean the starting-point in each case, and Persia merely constituting a link in the intervening connection.

Indo-Mediterranean railways



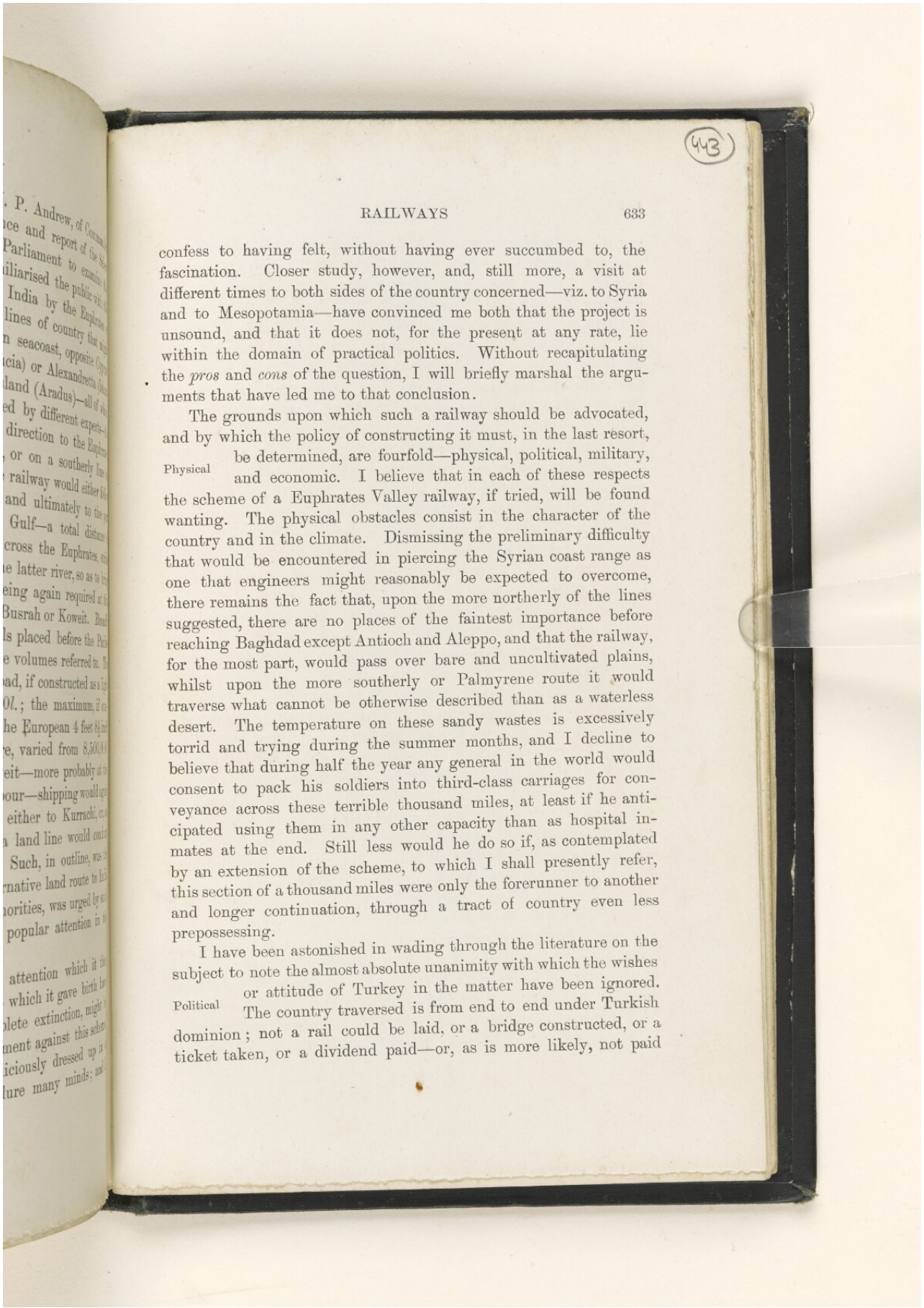


Euphrates Valley

The writings of the late Sir W. P. Andrew, of Commander Cameron, and others, and the evidence and report of the Select Committee appointed by Parliament to examine the question in 1872, have familiarised the public with the arguments in favour of a railway to India by the Euphrates or Tigris valleys, and with the possible lines of country that might be traversed. Starting on the Syrian seacoast, opposite Cyprus, either from Suedia (the ancient Seleucia) or Alexandretta (Iskanderun), or Tyre, or Tripoli, or Ruad Island (Aradus)—all of which maritime bases have been recommended by different experts—the railway would proceed in an easterly direction to the Euphrates, either on a northerly line *viâ* Aleppo, or on a southerly line *viâ* Palmyra. The Euphrates reached, the railway would either follow the right bank of that river to Busrah and ultimately to the port of Grane or Koweit on the Persian Gulf—a total distance of approximately 1,000 miles—or would cross the Euphrates, strike eastwards to the Tigris, and descend the latter river, so as to bring Baghdad within its scope—a bridge being again required at this spot—proceeding thence, as before, to Busrah or Koweit. Broadly speaking, these were the main proposals placed before the Parliamentary Committee and discussed in the volumes referred to. The minimum estimated cost of such a railroad, if constructed as a light line upon a metre gauge, was 6,000,000*l.*; the maximum, if constructed as a permanent highway upon the European 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, or the Indian 5 feet 6 inch gauge, varied from 8,500,000*l.* to 10,000,000*l.* At Busrah or at Koweit—more probably at the latter, because of its excellence as a harbour—shipping would again be resorted to, and would be continued either to Kurrachi, or, as some proposed, to Cape Jask, whence a land line would conduct along the Mekran coast to Kurrachi. Such, in outline, was the scheme for supplying a shorter and alternative land route to India that recommended itself to so many authorities, was urged by such able advocates, and excited so much popular attention in the 'Seventies.'

Objections to the scheme

In the very fact that neither the attention which it then excited nor the voluminous literature to which it gave birth have saved it from an almost complete extinction, might be discovered an inferential argument against this scheme. Its superficial attractions, judiciously dressed up in a garb of patriotism, were such as to allure many minds; and I





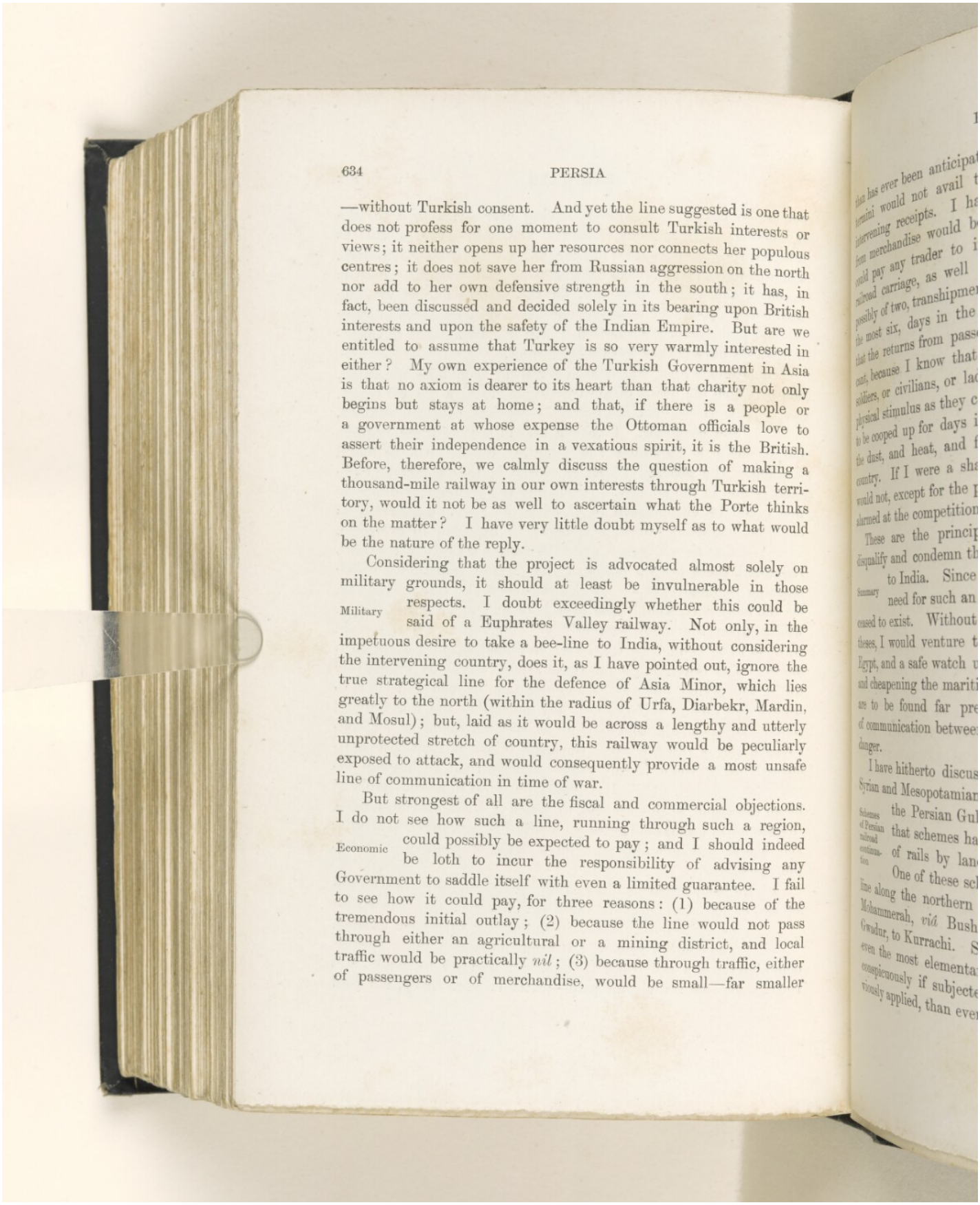
confess to having felt, without having ever succumbed to, the fascination. Closer study, however, and, still more, a visit at different times to both sides of the country concerned—viz. to Syria and to Mesopotamia—have convinced me both that the project is unsound, and that it does not, for the present at any rate, lie within the domain of practical politics. Without recapitulating the *pros* and *cons* of the question, I will briefly marshal the arguments that have led me to that conclusion.

The grounds upon which such a railway should be advocated, and by which the policy of constructing it must, in the last resort, be determined, are fourfold—physical, political, military, and economic. I believe that in each of these respects the scheme of a Euphrates Valley railway, if tried, will be found wanting. The physical obstacles consist in the character of the country and in the climate. Dismissing the preliminary difficulty that would be encountered in piercing the Syrian coast range as one that engineers might reasonably be expected to overcome, there remains the fact that, upon the more northerly of the lines suggested, there are no places of the faintest importance before reaching Baghdad except Antioch and Aleppo, and that the railway, for the most part, would pass over bare and uncultivated plains, whilst upon the more southerly or Palmyrene route it would traverse what cannot be otherwise described than as a waterless desert. The temperature on these sandy wastes is excessively torrid and trying during the summer months, and I decline to believe that during half the year any general in the world would consent to pack his soldiers into third-class carriages for conveyance across these terrible thousand miles, at least if he anticipated using them in any other capacity than as hospital inmates at the end. Still less would he do so if, as contemplated by an extension of the scheme, to which I shall presently refer, this section of a thousand miles were only the forerunner to another and longer continuation, through a tract of country even less prepossessing.

Physical

I have been astonished in wading through the literature on the subject to note the almost absolute unanimity with which the wishes or attitude of Turkey in the matter have been ignored. The country traversed is from end to end under Turkish dominion; not a rail could be laid, or a bridge constructed, or a ticket taken, or a dividend paid—or, as is more likely, not paid

Political





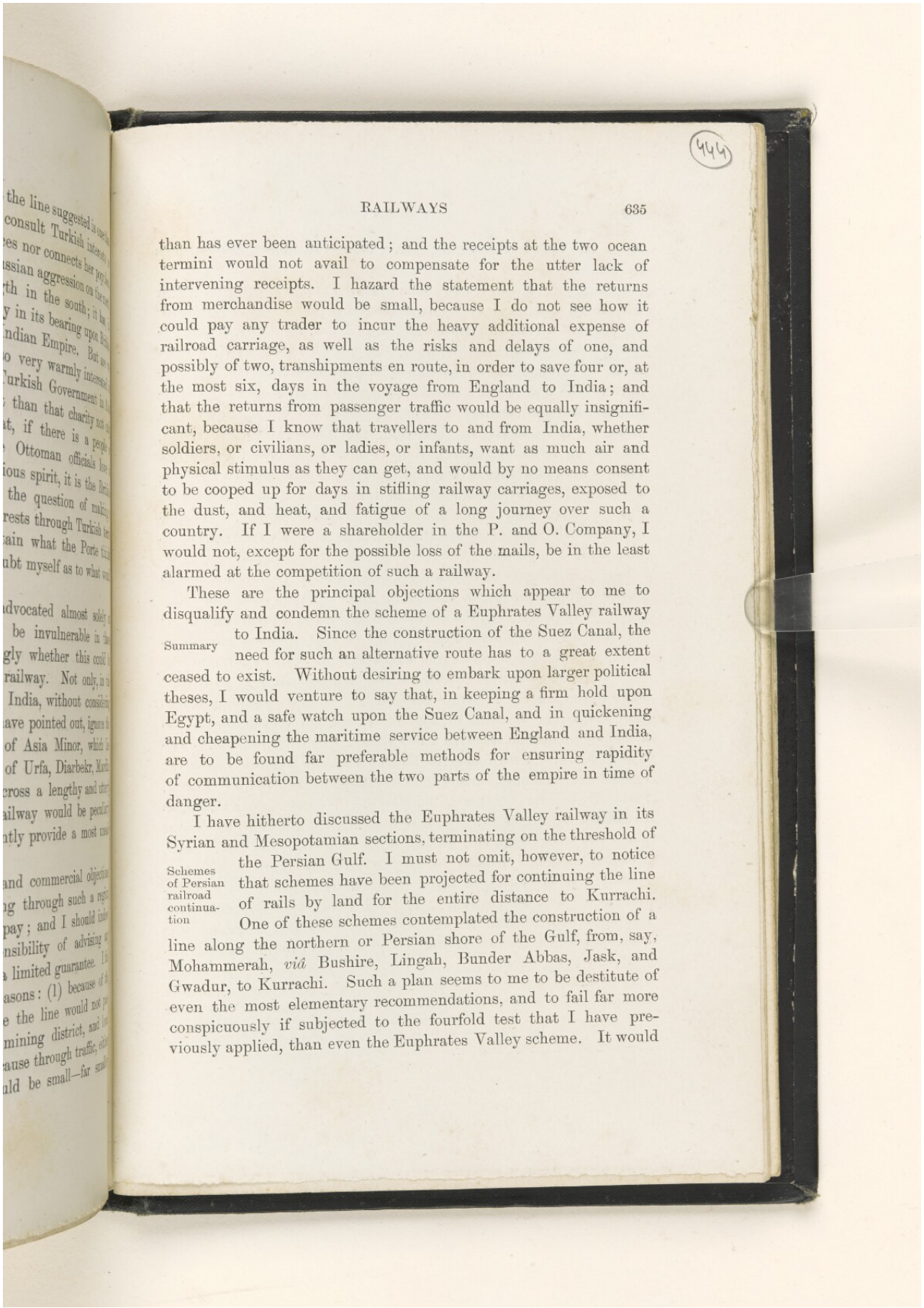
—without Turkish consent. And yet the line suggested is one that does not profess for one moment to consult Turkish interests or views; it neither opens up her resources nor connects her populous centres; it does not save her from Russian aggression on the north nor add to her own defensive strength in the south; it has, in fact, been discussed and decided solely in its bearing upon British interests and upon the safety of the Indian Empire. But are we entitled to assume that Turkey is so very warmly interested in either? My own experience of the Turkish Government in Asia is that no axiom is dearer to its heart than that charity not only begins but stays at home; and that, if there is a people or a government at whose expense the Ottoman officials love to assert their independence in a vexatious spirit, it is the British. Before, therefore, we calmly discuss the question of making a thousand-mile railway in our own interests through Turkish territory, would it not be as well to ascertain what the Porte thinks on the matter? I have very little doubt myself as to what would be the nature of the reply.

Considering that the project is advocated almost solely on military grounds, it should at least be invulnerable in those respects. I doubt exceedingly whether this could be said of a Euphrates Valley railway. Not only, in the impetuous desire to take a bee-line to India, without considering the intervening country, does it, as I have pointed out, ignore the true strategical line for the defence of Asia Minor, which lies greatly to the north (within the radius of Urfa, Diarbekr, Mardin, and Mosul); but, laid as it would be across a lengthy and utterly unprotected stretch of country, this railway would be peculiarly exposed to attack, and would consequently provide a most unsafe line of communication in time of war.

Military

But strongest of all are the fiscal and commercial objections. I do not see how such a line, running through such a region, could possibly be expected to pay; and I should indeed be loth to incur the responsibility of advising any Government to saddle itself with even a limited guarantee. I fail to see how it could pay, for three reasons: (1) because of the tremendous initial outlay; (2) because the line would not pass through either an agricultural or a mining district, and local traffic would be practically *nil*; (3) because through traffic, either of passengers or of merchandise, would be small—far smaller

Economic





than has ever been anticipated; and the receipts at the two ocean termini would not avail to compensate for the utter lack of intervening receipts. I hazard the statement that the returns from merchandise would be small, because I do not see how it could pay any trader to incur the heavy additional expense of railroad carriage, as well as the risks and delays of one, and possibly of two, transhipments en route, in order to save four or, at the most six, days in the voyage from England to India; and that the returns from passenger traffic would be equally insignificant, because I know that travellers to and from India, whether soldiers, or civilians, or ladies, or infants, want as much air and physical stimulus as they can get, and would by no means consent to be cooped up for days in stifling railway carriages, exposed to the dust, and heat, and fatigue of a long journey over such a country. If I were a shareholder in the P. and O. Company, I would not, except for the possible loss of the mails, be in the least alarmed at the competition of such a railway.

Summary

These are the principal objections which appear to me to disqualify and condemn the scheme of a Euphrates Valley railway to India. Since the construction of the Suez Canal, the need for such an alternative route has to a great extent ceased to exist. Without desiring to embark upon larger political theses, I would venture to say that, in keeping a firm hold upon Egypt, and a safe watch upon the Suez Canal, and in quickening and cheapening the maritime service between England and India, are to be found far preferable methods for ensuring rapidity of communication between the two parts of the empire in time of danger.

Schemes of Persian railroad continuation

I have hitherto discussed the Euphrates Valley railway in its Syrian and Mesopotamian sections, terminating on the threshold of the Persian Gulf. I must not omit, however, to notice that schemes have been projected for continuing the line of rails by land for the entire distance to Kurrachi. One of these schemes contemplated the construction of a line along the northern or Persian shore of the Gulf, from, say, Mohammerah, *viâ* Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Jask, and Gwadur, to Kurrachi. Such a plan seems to me to be destitute of even the most elementary recommendations, and to fail far more conspicuously if subjected to the fourfold test that I have previously applied, than even the Euphrates Valley scheme. It would

be costly, absolutely unremunerative, useless to Persia, and perilous to health.

There are, however, two other lines of Persian extension, which have been discussed or recommended by the eminent authority of Sir F. Goldsmid,[1] and which are, therefore, deserving of careful consideration. In either case, starting from Baghdad, in connection with a Euphrates or Tigris Valley railway, the line recommended would pass in an easterly direction through Persian territory, avoiding the Gulf, by Shushter and Ram Hormuz, or possibly by Hawizeh, and Ahwaz, to Behbehan, whence an existing caravan route would be followed to Shiraz. From Shiraz two lines of communication are available to the sea; a northerly line by Fasa, Darab, and Forg,[2] or a more southerly line by Lar, both debouching upon Bunder Abbas. Thence the railroad would be continued along the Mekran coast to Kurrachi.

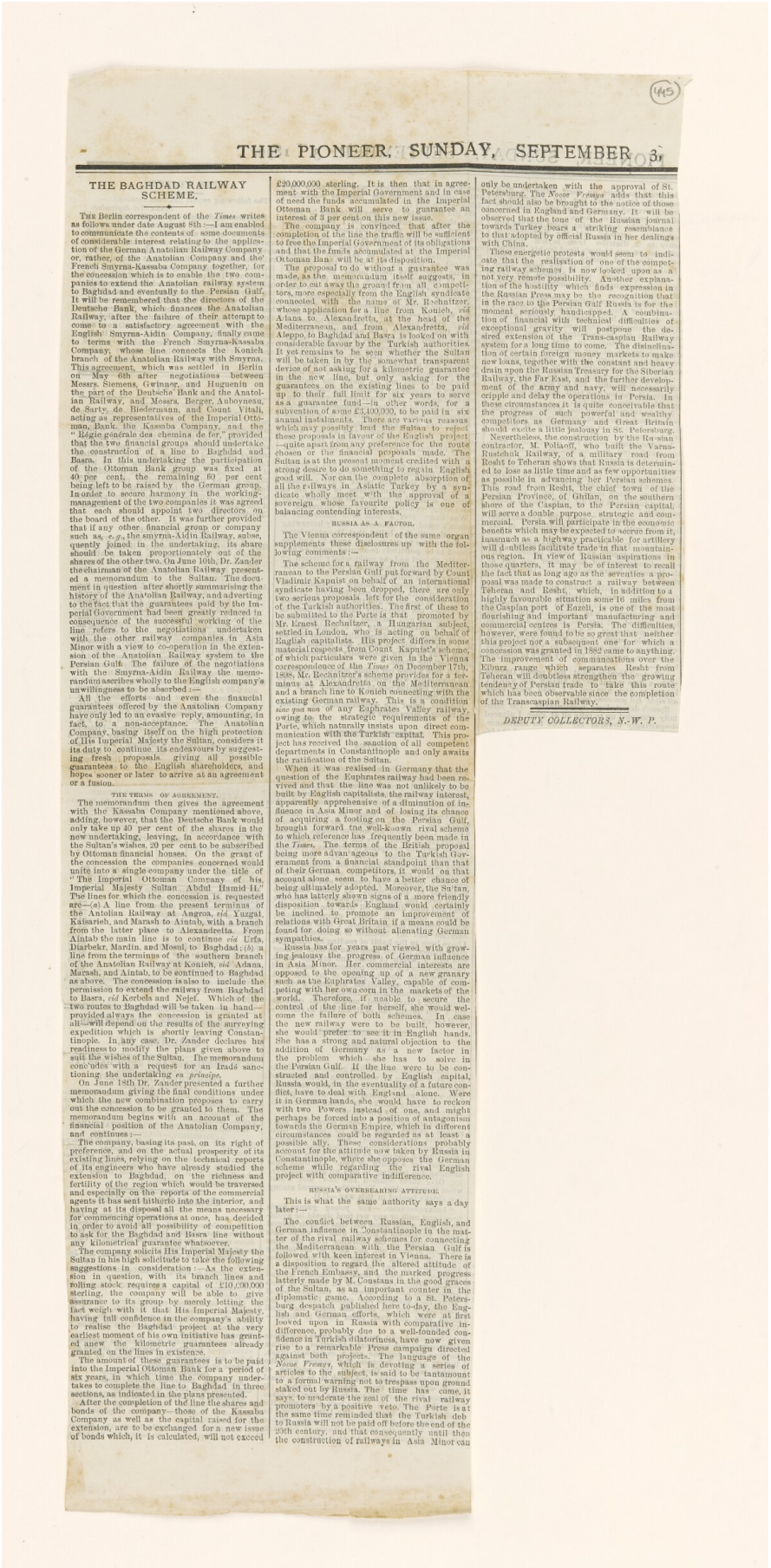
Shushter-Shiraz-Bunder-Abbas

Of this scheme I will merely say that it would meet with physical difficulties by no means easily or cheaply overcome, that it predicates the long Mekran coast continuation, for which I have no liking, and that it appears to me to forsake the true line of Trans-Persian railway communication, which I should be inclined to place a good deal more to the north. If ever a railroad is built in a transverse direction across the breadth of Persia, it will surely not be by so southerly or unremunerative a line that it will be conducted. The true line would seem rather to be one that shall unite the great agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial centres of Persia, and that shall be constructed with reference to Persian as well as to British requirements. Such a line is more likely to be found along the track Baghdad, Kermanshah, Burujird, Isfahan, Yezd, Kerman, which I believe to be the ultimate route of through communication by rail, in the far distant days when such a development becomes possible. What I have elsewhere said with reference to a Seistan railway will show how this scheme might connect with the Indian railways, and how it would possess the

True line of Central Persian communication

[1] *Vide* a Lecture entitled *On Communications with British India under Possible Contingencies*, read before the R. U. S. I. on June 14, 1878; and a paper on *A Railway through Southern Persia*, read at the British Association in September 1890, and printed in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for December, 1890.

[2] Explored by Mr. J. R. Preece in 1885. Vide *Supplementary Proceedings of the R. G. S.*, vol. i. 1886, Part III.



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THE PIONEER, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3,

## THE BAGHDAD RAILWAY SCHEME.

THE Berlin correspondent of the *Times* writes as follows under date August 8th:—I am enabled to communicate the contents of some documents of considerable interest relating to the application of the German Anatolian Railway Company or, rather, of the Anatolian Company and the French Smyrna-Kassaba Company together, for the concession which is to enable the two companies to extend the Anatolian railway system to Baghdad and eventually to the Persian Gulf. It will be remembered that the directors of the Deutsche Bank, which finances the Anatolian Railway, after the failure of their attempt to come to a satisfactory agreement with the English Smyrna-Aidin Company, finally came to terms with the French Smyrna-Kassaba Company, whose line connects the Konieh branch of the Anatolian Railway with Smyrna. This agreement, which was settled in Berlin on May 6th after negotiations between Messrs. Siemens, Gwinner, and Huguenin on the part of the Deutsche Bank and the Anatolian Railway, and Messrs. Berger, Anbovneau, de Sarre, de Biedermann, and Count Vitali, acting as representatives of the Imperial Ottoman, Bank, the Kassaba Company, and the "Régie générale des chemins de fer," provided that the two financial groups should undertake the construction of a line to Baghdad and Basra. In this undertaking the participation of the Ottoman Bank group was fixed at 40 per cent, the remaining 60 per cent being left to be raised by the German group. In order to secure harmony in the working-management of the two companies it was agreed that each should appoint two directors on the board of the other. It was further provided that if any other financial group or company such as, *e.g.*, the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, subsequently joined in the undertaking, its share should be taken proportionately out of the shares of the other two. On June 10th, Dr. Zander the chairman of the Anatolian Railway presented a memorandum to the Sultan. The document in question after shortly summarising the history of the Anatolian Railway, and adverting to the fact that the guarantees paid by the Imperial Government had been greatly reduced in consequence of the successful working of the line refers to the negotiations undertaken with the other railway companies in Asia Minor with a view to co-operation in the extension of the Anatolian Railway system to the Persian Gulf. The failure of the negotiations with the Smyrna-Aidin Railway the memorandum ascribes wholly to the English company's unwillingness to be absorbed:—

All the efforts and even the financial guarantees offered by the Anatolian Company have only led to an evasive reply, amounting, in fact, to a non-acceptance. The Anatolian Company, basing itself on the high protection of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, considers it its duty to continue its endeavours by suggesting fresh proposals, giving all possible guarantees to the English shareholders, and hopes sooner or later to arrive at an agreement or a fusion.

THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT.

The memorandum then gives the agreement with the Kassaba Company mentioned above, adding, however, that the Deutsche Bank would only take up 40 per cent of the shares in the new undertaking, leaving, in accordance with the Sultan's wishes, 20 per cent to be subscribed by Ottoman financial houses. On the grant of the concession the companies concerned would unite into a single company under the title of "The Imperial Ottoman Company of his Imperial Majesty Sultan Abdul Hamid II." The lines for which the concession is requested are—(*a*) A line from the present terminus of the Anatolian Railway at Angora, *viâ* Yuzgal, Kaisarieh, and Marash to Aintab, with a branch from the latter place to Alexandretta. From Aintab the main line is to continue *viâ* Urfa, Diarbekr, Mardin, and Mosul, to Baghdad; (*b*) a line from the terminus of the southern branch of the Anatolian Railway at Konieh, *viâ* Adana, Marash, and Aintab, to be continued to Baghdad as above. The concession is also to include the permission to extend the railway from Baghdad to Basra, *viâ* Kerbela and Nejef. Which of the two routes to Baghdad will be taken in hand—provided always the concession is granted at all—will depend on the results of the surveying expedition which is shortly leaving Constantinople. In any case, Dr. Zander declares his readiness to modify the plans given above to suit the wishes of the Sultan. The memorandum concludes with a request for an Iradé sanctioning the undertaking *en principe*.

On June 18th Dr. Zander presented a further memorandum giving the final conditions under which the new combination proposes to carry out the concession to be granted to them. The memorandum begins with an account of the financial position of the Anatolian Company, and continues:—

The company, basing its past, on its right of preference, and on the actual prosperity of its existing lines, relying on the technical reports of its engineers who have already studied the extension to Baghdad, on the richness and fertility of the region which would be traversed and especially on the reports of the commercial agents it has sent hitherto into the interior, and having at its disposal all the means necessary for commencing operations at once, has decided in order to avoid all possibility of competition to ask for the Baghdad and Basra line without any kilometrical guarantee whatsoever.

The company solicits His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in his high solicitude to take the following suggestions in consideration:—As the extension in question, with its branch lines and rolling stock, requires a capital of £10,000,000 sterling, the company will be able to give assurance to its group by merely letting the fact weigh with it that His Imperial Majesty, having full confidence in the company's ability to realise the Baghdad project at the very earliest moment of his own initiative has granted anew the kilometric guarantees already granted on the lines in existence.

The amount of these guarantees is to be paid into the Imperial Ottoman Bank for a period of six years, in which time the company undertakes to complete the line to Baghdad in three sections, as indicated in the plans presented.

After the completion of the line the shares and bonds of the company—those of the Kassaba Company as well as the capital raised for the extension, are to be exchanged for a new issue of bonds which, it is calculated, will not exceed £20,000,000 sterling. It is then that in agreement with the Imperial Government and in case of need the funds accumulated in the Imperial Ottoman Bank will serve to guarantee an interest of 3 per cent on this new issue.

The company is convinced that after the completion of the line the traffic will be sufficient to free the Imperial Government of its obligations and that the funds accumulated at the Imperial Ottoman Bank will be at its disposition.

The proposal to do without a guarantee was made, as the memorandum itself suggests, in order to cut away the ground from all competitors, more especially from the English syndicate connected with the name of Mr. Rechnitzer, whose application for a line from Konieh, *viâ* Adana to Alexandretta, at the head of the Mediterranean, and from Alexandretta, *viâ* Aleppo, to Baghdad and Basra is looked on with considerable favour by the Turkish authorities. It yet remains to be seen whether the Sultan will be taken in by the somewhat transparent device of not asking for a kilometric guarantee in the new line, but only asking for the guarantees on the existing lines to be paid up to their full limit for six years to serve as a guarantee fund—in other words, for a subvention of some £3,000,000, to be paid in six annual instalments. There are various reasons which may possibly lead the Sultan to reject these proposals in favour of the English project—quite apart from any preference for the route chosen or the financial proposals made. The Sultan is at the present moment credited with a strong desire to do something to regain English good will. Nor can the complete absorption of all the railways in Asiatic Turkey by a syndicate wholly meet with the approval of a sovereign whose favourite policy is one of balancing contending interests.

RUSSIA AS A FACTOR.

The Vienna correspondent of the same organ supplements these disclosures up with the following comments:—

The scheme for a railway from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf put forward by Count Vladimir Kapnist on behalf of an international syndicate having been dropped, there are only two serious proposals left for the consideration of the Turkish authorities. The first of these to be submitted to the Porte is that promoted by Mr. Ernest Rechnitzer, a Hungarian subject, settled in London, who is acting on behalf of English capitalists. His project differs in some material respects from Count Kapnist's scheme, of which particulars were given in the Vienna correspondence of the *Times* on December 17th, 1898. Mr. Rechnitzer's scheme provides for a terminus at Alexandretta on the Mediterranean and a branch line to Konieh connecting with the existing German railway. This is a condition *sine qua non* of any Euphrates Valley railway, owing to the strategic requirements of the Porte, which naturally insists upon direct communication with the Turkish capital. This project has received the sanction of all competent departments in Constantinople and only awaits the ratification of the Sultan.

When it was realised in Germany that the question of the Euphrates railway had been revived and that the line was not unlikely to be built by English capitalists, the railway interest, apparently apprehensive of a diminution of influence in Asia Minor and of losing its chance of acquiring a footing on the Persian Gulf, brought forward the well-known rival scheme to which reference has frequently been made in the *Times*. The terms of the British proposal being more advantageous to the Turkish Government from a financial standpoint than that of their German competitors, it would on that account alone seem to have a better chance of being ultimately adopted. Moreover, the Sultan, who has latterly shown signs of a more friendly disposition towards England would certainly be inclined to promote an improvement of relations with Great Britain if a means could be found for doing so without alienating German sympathies.

Russia has for years past viewed with growing jealousy the progress of German influence in Asia Minor. Her commercial interests are opposed to the opening up of a new granary such as the Euphrates Valley, capable of competing with her own corn in the markets of the world. Therefore, if unable to secure the control of the line for herself, she would welcome the failure of both schemes. In case the new railway were to be built, however, she would prefer to see it in English hands. She has a strong and natural objection to the addition of Germany as a new factor in the problem which she has to solve in the Persian Gulf. If the line were to be constructed and controlled by English capital, Russia would, in the eventuality of a future conflict, have to deal with England alone. Were it in German hands, she would have to reckon with two Powers instead of one, and might perhaps be forced into a position of antagonism towards the German Empire, which in different circumstances could be regarded as at least a possible ally. These considerations probably account for the attitude now taken by Russia in Constantinople, where she opposes the German scheme while regarding the rival English project with comparative indifference.

RUSSIA'S OVERBEARING ATTITUDE.

This is what the same authority says a day later:—

The conflict between Russian, English, and German influence in Constantinople in the matter of the rival railway schemes for connecting the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf is followed with keen interest in Vienna. There is a disposition to regard the altered attitude of the French Embassy, and the marked progress latterly made by M. Constans in the good graces of the Sultan, as an important counter in the diplomatic game. According to a St. Petersburg despatch published here to-day, the English and German efforts, which were at first looked upon in Russia with comparative indifference, probably due to a well-founded confidence in Turkish dilatoriness, have now given rise to a remarkable Press campaign directed against both projects. The language of the *Novoe Vremya*, which is devoting a series of articles to the subject, is said to be tantamount to a formal warning not to trespass upon ground staked out by Russia. The time has come, it says, to moderate the zeal of the rival railway promoters by a positive veto. The Porte is at the same time reminded that the Turkish debt to Russia will not be paid off before the end of the 20th century, and that consequently until then the construction of railways in Asia Minor can only be undertaken with the approval of St. Petersburg. The *Novoe Vremya* adds that this fact should also be brought to the notice of those concerned in England and Germany. It will be observed that the tone of the Russian journal towards Turkey bears a striking resemblance to that adopted by official Russia in her dealings with China.

These energetic protests would seem to indicate that the realisation of one of the competing railway schemes is now looked upon as a not very remote possibility. Another explanation of the hostility which finds expression in the Russian Press may be the recognition that in the race to the Persian Gulf Russia is for the moment seriously handicapped. A combination of financial with technical difficulties of exceptional gravity will postpone the desired extension of the Trans-caspian Railway system for a long time to come. The disinclination of certain foreign money markets to make new loans, together with the constant and heavy drain upon the Russian Treasury for the Siberian Railway, the Far East, and the further development of the army and navy, will necessarily cripple and delay the operations in Persia. In these circumstances it is quite conceivable that the progress of such powerful and wealthy competitors as Germany and Great Britain should excite a little jealousy in St. Petersburg.

Nevertheless, the construction by the Russian contractor, M. Poliacff, who built the Varna-Rustchuk Railway, of a military road from Resht to Teheran shows that Russia is determined to lose as little time and as few opportunities as possible in advancing her Persian schemes. This road from Resht, the chief town of the Persian Province, of Ghilan, on the southern shore of the Caspian, to the Persian capital, will serve a double purpose, strategic and commercial. Persia will participate in the economic benefits which may be expected to accrue from it, inasmuch as a highway practicable for artillery will doubtless facilitate trade in that mountainous region. In view of Russian aspirations in those quarters, it may be of interest to recall the fact that as long ago as the seventies a proposal was made to construct a railway between Teheran and Resht, which, in addition to a highly favourable situation some 16 miles from the Caspian port of Enzeli, is one of the most flourishing and important manufacturing and commercial centres in Persia. The difficulties, however, were found to be so great that neither this project nor a subsequent one for which a concession was granted in 1882 came to anything. The improvement of communications over the Elburz range which separates Resht from Teheran will doubtless strengthen the growing tendency of Persian trade to take this route which has been observable since the completion of the Transcaspian Railway.

DEPUTY COLLECTORS, N.-W. P.

PIONEER, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1899.

ies want to cover up their furniture with
se things for" till at last the draperies in
estion were all so creased and soiled that they
d to be removed *en masse*.

"I must take more pains about getting him
mfortably settled," said the Memsahib, in
swer to a diatribe from myself heaping
athemas on our visitor's head for his destruc-
ve, restless and untidy habits. "Perhaps
I take care always to be in the room before
e turns up," and she finished her sen-
nce with something that sounded suspiciously
ke a sigh.

For all that he was beforehand with her *that*
fternoon, for when she entered the drawing-
oom she found him already at work twisting
ll the curtains into wips and tucking them on
ne side on the ground that "it was impos-
ible to see anything in that light?" and
after one glance at her crumpled and ruined
reasures she sat down listlessly and left him to
work what further destruction he pleased.

"Let me tell the fellow to go," I said resent-
ully to the Memsahib. But she shook her head,
leclaring it was her own fault and she must put
ip with it to the bitter end.

Nobody is braver than the Memsahib as long
s there isn't a mouse involved in the question.
However, I didn't feel so brave about it myself,
so I went out and cogitated.

Just one minute before the dinner hour next
day, and having first ascertained it was just
about to be announced, I went into my wife's
room "I've some news for you," said I.
I've been ordered to do some work which
will take me out in the district, and I've got to
go at once. You'll come with me, I suppose?
You can take tents and all that kind of thing
you know."

"Oh yes, what fun" cried the Memsahib de-
lightedly, with a blissful forgetfulness of her
position.

"Good! Then I'll make arrangements," said
I as unconcernedly as I could manage, and
escaped under cover of the dinner bell just as
the Memsahib began suddenly——"Oh! but Ri-
chard——!"

Conversation rattled gaily all through that
dinner till having reached the dessert I
turned suddenly to Dawson and, explain-
ing how sorry I was, informed him I had
been ordered out into the district and would
have to go at once. "And," added I after a
perceptible pause, "my wife always comes
with me on these occasions, so you see—that
is—we—er—we—shall be very sorry to lose you
but——"

"Oh don't trouble about me," put in Dawson
with a grin meant to be affable but which I
longed to kick him for, "*I shall worry along
all right till you come back.*"

Speech deserted me momentarily. Too men-
tally crumpled up to rally all at once, I glanced
despairingly towards my wife for assistance,
four hours that any anxiety was observable on
either countenance was the moment when the
dak was brought in.

On the eighth day, as I was beginning to feel
some shade of uneasiness, for I had hardly
expected Dawson to last out more than half
that time seeing what his servant was, there
came the happy release. Dawson wrote half
in sorrow half in anger to say that he had
held out as long as he could, but having
the last four days been forced to take all
meals at the Dak Bungalow, owing to reasons
he would not distress us by detailing, he was
now unable to continue this arrangement any
longer. The unexpected amount of wet weather
they were experiencing in the station had
already given him a severe chill that he feared
might turn to fever if he neglected it further
and continued to tramp out in the damp for all
his meals. He was therefore leaving the station
by the 10-30 a.m. train that day, but trusted he
should be able to finish his stay with us at some
future and more opportune occasion: an occa-
sion when I would not be under the painful
necessity of leaving my pleasant and charmingly
managed quarters (the words are Dawson's own)
at the instance of a brutal Government, in order
to carry out foolish investigations in a district
that did very well without them! &c. &c. In fact
Mr. Dawson wasn't pleased and as he wrote
on his anger overcame his sorrow. But what
cared I for that or anything now that he had
gone.

Six hours later saw us packed and starting
for home; but—fresh farce—the Memsahib who
had traversed this road, under what appeared
to me unhappy circumstances, in such fits of
laughter, retraced it, under what appeared to me
quite happy conditions, silent and distressed.

Was there ever a man who understood a
woman's mind yet. She was actually harrowing
her soul with the belief that Dawson's letter
was only a *ruse* to get us back again! And she
refused to be positively re-assured until we had
actually arrived and she could satisfy herself by
personal inspection and enquiry that the dreud-
ed Dawson had really gone.

Then, in a moment of sudden expansion con-
sequent on this happy re-installation in our
dainty little bungalow and the flinging off of her
secret fears, the Memsahib buried her head in
my waistcoat and declared in a muffled voice
that "whatever any nasty M. P. might say" (it
is to be hoped on the Memsahib's account that no
M. P. will see this), in future she should never
again want to show hospitality to people she
knew nothing about.

I am sure I hope her tender heart and instinc-
tive hospitality will permit her to abide by this.
There only remains now to have it out with the
William Smiths.

But this, under the circumstances, is, I consi-
der, rather a large order still.

MAGA.

## *QUERIES.*

Is there any rule whereby an old soldier of
over 24 years' service, nearly all in India, can
obtain a small pension from the Lord Clive
Fund on his being discharged from the service,
owing to illness brought on in active service?—B.

HEAD-ACHES.—Will some of your readers
oblige me with a remedy for bad head-
aches. I have tried all sorts of things, but can-
not get rid of them. For the past three months
I have, with the exception of perhaps a few days
off, had head-aches every day. The head
starts paining on awaking in the mornings and
sometimes it reaches a very severe form, but
generally subsides by evening, and the night
is passed in quiet sleep. At times the pain
starts over the left eye and shoots up into the
head and then diffuses all over the head. My
general health is good, except dyspesia,
which troubles me sometimes. I take very little
exercise and my business is a sedentary one.
I have been in the habit of reading by lamplight
after dinner, but not more than an hour or hour
and half. I weigh 14 stone and my age is 43.
Perhaps from the above particulars some kind
person will be able to judge of my case and
help me with suggestions for getting rid of
these terrible head-aches. Doctors say it is neur-
algia and I have dosed myself with quinine
till I am pretty full of it, and still no relief.—
A MARTYR.

## *ANSWERS.*

"INEXPERIENCED."—When guinea fowl chicks
are hatched, keep in wooden box with hen—and
feed on eggs hard boiled, and bran moistened
with warm water. Never allow either guinea
fowl or turkey chicks to drink water until
well feathered.—AN OLD HAND.

"INEXPERIENCED."—I reared more than sixty
guinea chicks last year by feeding them
on white ants (*demadi*) and *bajra* twice a
day, morning and evening. *Bajra* must be given
twice during the day, no water. Keep them on
this diet for a month or two. Let them loose
morning and evening to pick up grass-hoppers,
&c. Give them common rice (raw) and wheat
when they are older. No deaths occurred among
my chicks treated in this way.—C.D.

"INEXPERIENCED."—For young guinea fowls
bread and milk or any wet food should be avoid-
ed, as they would never eat that in their natural
state. Give them a liberal dish of white ants
the first thing in the morning from the time
they are 24 hours old, and keep up the feeding
on yolk of egg for one week only. After
that *bajra* or any of the small grains (a
mixture is always best) or coarsely ground
*dudlia*. They will do well on plenty of fresh
green grass and the flower of the grass out of
which they will pick the seeds. Let them out
daily for a run, as they also enjoy the small
black ants, and give them water to drink—
POULTRY.

"SINGHER."—To repair tyre tubes:—Remove
the canvas patch near valve insertion. This can
be done with benzene and a camel hair brush,
lightly applied between the canvas and the
rubber tube. (2) Then find the position of
leak on rubber tube, and patch it in the usual
way with very thin patching rubber. (3)
Replace the canvas piece in its original place
over this patch. (4) If the leak is between the
valve tube and the tyre, the latter should be
firmly fixed to the former with some rubber
cement before the piece of canvas is put back
in its original place.—AN OLD HAND.

## *THE WEATHER.*

The following report has been received:—

SIMLA, *1st September.*

Pressure has changed by small amounts, the
changes showing a downward tendency in
Burma, the south and west of the Peninsula,
and North Bombay, and an upward tendency
over the remainder of India. Moderately heavy
rain has fallen in North and East Bengal, where
Barisal, Narayanganj, Mymensing, Dhubri, Dar-
jeeling and Dinapur have received 2 inches, but
only light showers are reported from the remain-
ing districts of Bengal and from Burma. A few
light showers have fallen in Gujarat, but no rain
has fallen in any other province. The tempera-
ture is in slight defect in Behar and Gujarat,
and is normal in Assam, Bengal, Orissa and
Sind. In all other parts of the country it is in
excess. The rainfall has decreased everywhere,
and the whole country is practically rainless
with the exception of Burma and Bengal.

## Local:

THE SPHINX MINSTRELS.

AN entertainment by this talented com-
pany of the 1st Gloucestershire Regiment will be
given under the patronage of Colonel Wilford
and Officers in the Railway Theatre on Monday
night. The programme is a long and very at-
tractive one, and includes many of the latest
London comic songs. In addition to 17 items
of vocal and instrumental music (including a
piccolo solo by the accomplished player, Mr. T.
Jeal) the screaming farce entitled *Caught in
his own Trap* will be presented. The proceeds
of the entertainment will be given to Mr. Luker's
Christmas Charity Fund.

CHURCH NOTICES.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Holy Trinity Church—Sunday—Morning Prayer,
Sermon and Holy Communion, 8 A.M.; Children's
Service 4-45 P.M.; Evening Prayer and Sermon,
6 P.M. Friday—Evening Prayer, 6-30 P.M.; Choir
Practice, 7 P.M.

All Saints' Cathedral—Sunday—Litany, Holy Com-
munion, and Sermon 8 A.M.; Children's Service,
5 P.M.; Evensong and Sermon, 6-30 P.M. Monday
—Matins, 8 A.M.; Evensong, 6-30 P.M. Tuesday—
Matins, 8 A.M.; Evensong 6-30 P.M. Wednesday
Matins and Litany, 8 A.M.; Choral Evensong and
Address, 6-30 P.M. Thursday—Holy Communion,
8 A.M.; Evensong, 6-30 P.M. Friday—Matins and
Litany, 8 A.M.; Evensong, 6-30 P.M. Saturday—
Matins, 8 A.M.; Evensong, 6-30 P.M. Sunday—
Matins and Sermon, 8 A.M.; Holy Communion,
9 A.M.; Evensong and Sermon, 6-30 P.M.

St. Andrew's Church—Sunday—Services at 7 A.M.
and 6-30 P.M. (Collection for Darjeeling Mission.)
Bible Class, 5-30 P.M.; Sunday School, 8 A.M.;
Monday—Monthly Missionary Prayer Meeting
at Bible House, Clive Road, 6-30 P.M. Thursday—
Service at 6-30 P.M.; Choir Practice, 7-30 P.M.

Methodist Episcopal Church—Sunday—Preaching
Services, 7 A.M. and 6-30 P.M.; Sunday School, 3
A.M.—Tuesday—Believer's Meeting, 7 P.M. Thurs-
day, Song and Prayer Service, 7 P.M. Saturday
—F. P. S. C. E. Meeting, 7 P.M.; Holy Communi-
nion the first Sunday evening in every month
after the preaching service.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS
RECORDED AT ALLAHABAD DURING THE 24 HOURS
ENDING 8 A.M. ON THE 2ND SEPTEMBER, 1899.

| | 10 A.M. | 4 P.M. | 10 P.M. | 6 A.M. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barometer reduced to 32° F. | 29·374 | 29·289 | 29·353 | 29·355 |
| Temperature of the air. | 88·3 | 85·5 | 83·0 | 78·3 |
| Humidity Saturation=100). | 66 | 68 | 82 | 82 |
| Wind direction ... | W.N.W. | W. | S.S.W. | W.S.W. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Maximum temperature in shade ... ... | 91·6 |
| Maximum temperature in sun's rays ... ... | 145·4 |
| Minimum temperature in shade ... ... | 77·5 |
| Minimum temperature on grass ... ... | 72·6 |
| Mean temperature of the day ... ... | 84·7 |
| Normal temperature of the day ... ... | 83·4 |
| Rain ... ... | 0·00 |
| Total rain from 1st January ... ... | 38·70 |
| Normal total up to date ... ... | 32·64 |
| Hours of bright sunshine ... ... | 1·45 |
| Percentage of total possible ... ... | 12 |

N.B.—The normal temperature and rainfall of each
day are derived from the observations of 23 years,
1870-98.

## Appointments, Promotions, Transfers, &c.

N.-W. PROVINCES AND OUDH GAZETTE.

(*2nd September*, 1899).

APPOINTMENT DEPARTMENT.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Captain W. H. Gray, IMS, whose services have
been temporarily placed at the disposal of the
Government, to officiate as Superintendent, Central
Prison, Lucknow.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT.

APPOINTMENT—VOLUNTEER CORPS.

*Oudh Light Horse and Oudh Volunteer Rifle Corps*

Lieutenant C. W. Compton, Prince Albert's
(Somersetshire Light Infantry), to be Adjutant
with effect from the 2nd August, 1899, inclusive
vice Captain K. P. Apthorp, whose tenure of the
appointment has expired.

## COMMAND ORDERS.

*Murree, 24th August*, 1899.

THE undermentioned officers having passed the
required tests for the Indian Staff Corps on the
dates specified, are qualified for permanent employ-
ment with native troops:—

Lieutenant W. S. Leslie, 10th Pathans, 3rd July
1899.

Lieutenant A. Young, 1st Battalion 1st Gurkha
10th July, 1899.

Lieutenant G. Dodd, 27th Punjab Infantry, 10
July, 1899.

Under instructions received from Army He
Quarters, Lieutenant R. H. McVittie, No. 9 C
pany, Western Division, Royal Garrison Artille
has been appointed Adjutant of the Rangoon F
Defence Volunteers.

It is notified that the War Office has sanctioned
exchange of Battalions between the officers nam
below on condition that the public be put to
expense by the arrangement:—

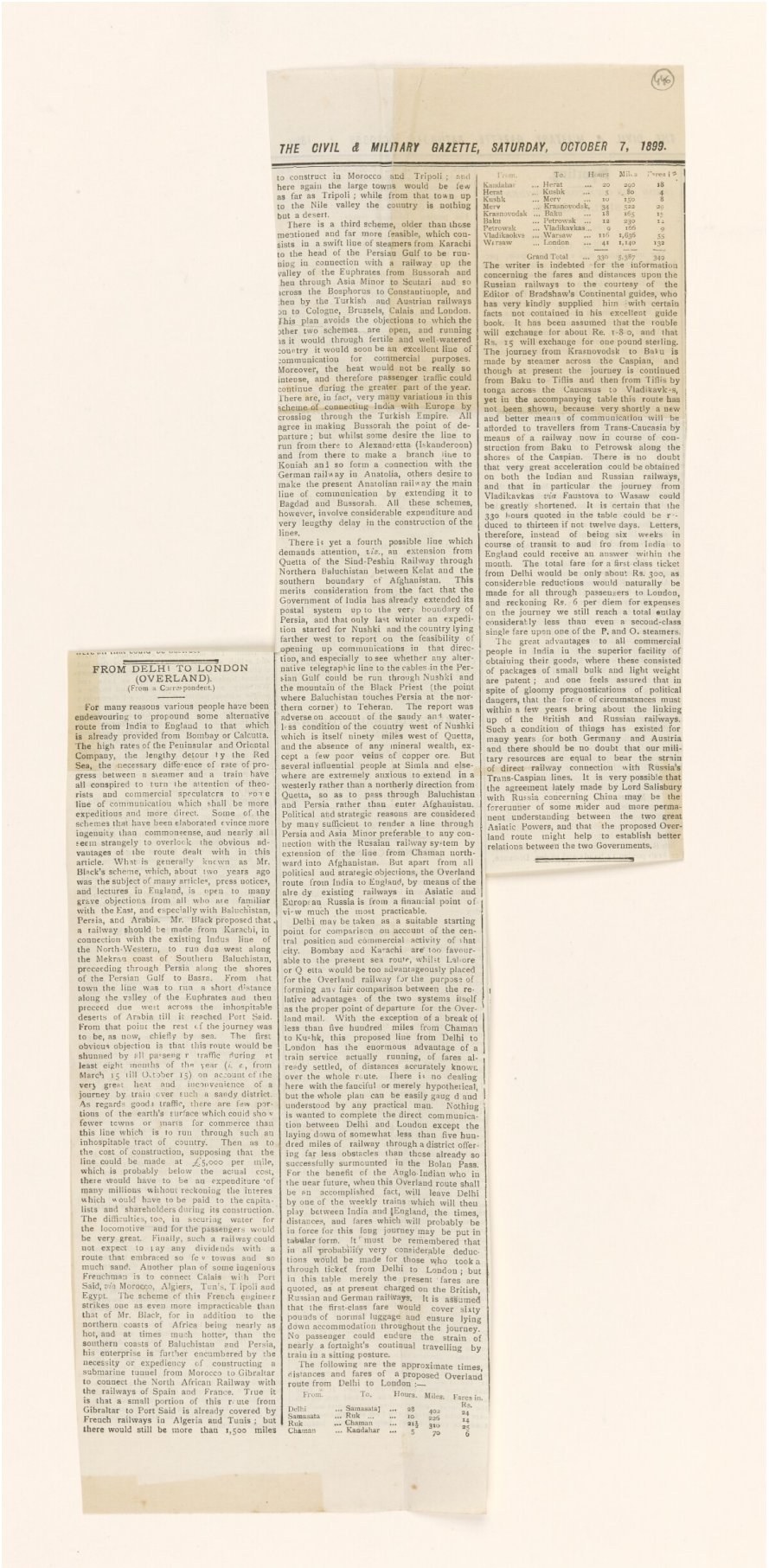
*Somersetshire Light Infantry.*

Major and Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel G. H.
Couchman, from 2nd to 1st Battalion.

Captain S. L. V. Crealock, from 1st to 2nd Battal

Captain Crealock is accordingly directed
proceed to England at his own expense and
the 2nd Battalion.

Under instructions received from the War O
Major A. Capel Cure, on promotion to that r



THE CIVIL & MILITARY GAZETTE, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1899.

to construct in Morocco and Tripoli; and here again the large towns would be few as far as Tripoli; while from that town up to the Nile valley the country is nothing but a desert.

There is a third scheme, older than those mentioned and far more feasible, which consists in a swift line of steamers from Karachi to the head of the Persian Gulf to be running in connection with a railway up the valley of the Euphrates from Bussorah and then through Asia Minor to Scutari and so across the Bosphorus to Constantinople, and then by the Turkish and Austrian railways on to Cologne, Brussels, Calais and London. This plan avoids the objections to which the other two schemes are open, and running as it would through fertile and well-watered country it would soon be an excellent line of communication for commercial purposes. Moreover, the heat would not be really so intense, and therefore passenger traffic could continue during the greater part of the year. There are, in fact, very many variations in this scheme of connecting India with Europe by crossing through the Turkish Empire. All agree in making Bussorah the point of departure; but whilst some desire the line to run from there to Alexandretta (Iskanderoun) and from there to make a branch line to Koniah and so form a connection with the German railway in Anatolia, others desire to make the present Anatolian railway the main line of communication by extending it to Bagdad and Bussorah. All these schemes, however, involve considerable expenditure and very lengthy delay in the construction of the lines.

There is yet a fourth possible line which demands attention, viz., an extension from Quetta of the Sind-Peshin Railway through Northern Baluchistan between Kelat and the southern boundary of Afghanistan. This merits consideration from the fact that the Government of India has already extended its postal system up to the very boundary of Persia, and that only last winter an expedition started for Nushki and the country lying farther west to report on the feasibility of opening up communications in that direction, and especially to see whether any alternative telegraphic line to the cables in the Persian Gulf could be run through Nushki and the mountain of the Black Priest (the point where Baluchistan touches Persia at the northern corner) to Teheran. The report was adverse on account of the sandy and waterless condition of the country west of Nushki which is itself ninety miles west of Quetta, and the absence of any mineral wealth, except a few poor veins of copper ore. But several influential people at Simla and elsewhere are extremely anxious to extend in a westerly rather than a northerly direction from Quetta, so as to pass through Baluchistan and Persia rather than enter Afghanistan. Political and strategic reasons are considered by many sufficient to render a line through Persia and Asia Minor preferable to any connection with the Rusalau railway system by extension of the line from Chaman northward into Afghanistan. But apart from all political and strategic objections, the Overland route from India to England, by means of the already existing railways in Asiatic and European Russia is from a financial point of view much the most practicable.

Delhi may be taken as a suitable starting point for comparison on account of the central position and commercial activity of that city. Bombay and Karachi are too favourable to the present sea route, whilst Lahore or Quetta would be too advantageously placed for the Overland railway for the purpose of forming any fair comparison between the relative advantages of the two systems itself as the proper point of departure for the Overland mail. With the exception of a break of less than five hundred miles from Chaman to Kushk, this proposed line from Delhi to London has the enormous advantage of a train service actually running, of fares already settled, of distances accurately known over the whole route. There is no dealing here with the fanciful or merely hypothetical, but the whole plan can be easily gauged and understood by any practical man. Nothing is wanted to complete the direct communication between Delhi and London except the laying down of somewhat less than five hundred miles of railway through a district offering far less obstacles than those already so successfully surmounted in the Bolan Pass. For the benefit of the Anglo-Indian who in the near future, when this Overland route shall be an accomplished fact, will leave Delhi by one of the weekly trains which will then play between India and England, the times, distances, and fares which will probably be in force for this long journey may be put in tabular form. It must be remembered that in all probability very considerable deductions would be made for those who took a through ticket from Delhi to London; but in this table merely the present fares are quoted, as at present charged on the British, Russian and German railways. It is assumed that the first-class fare would cover sixty pounds of normal luggage and ensure lying down accommodation throughout the journey. No passenger could endure the strain of nearly a fortnight's continual travelling by train in a sitting posture.

The following are the approximate times, distances and fares of a proposed Overland route from Delhi to London :—

| From. | To. | Hours. | Miles. | Fares in Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Delhi | ... Samasata | ... 28 | 402 | 24 |
| Samasata | ... Ruk | ... 10 | 226 | 14 |
| Ruk | ... Chaman | ... 21½ | 310 | 25 |
| Chaman | ... Kandahar | ... 5 | 70 | 6 |
| Kandahar | ... Herat | ... 20 | 290 | 18 |
| Herat | ... Kushk | ... 3 | 80 | 4 |
| Kushk | ... Merv | ... 10 | 150 | 8 |
| Merv | ... Krasnovodsk | 34 | 522 | 20 |
| Krasnovodsk | ... Baku | ... 18 | 165 | 15 |
| Baku | ... Petrowsk | ... 12 | 230 | 12 |
| Petrowsk | ... Vladikavkas | ... 9 | 166 | 9 |
| Vladikaokva | ... Warsaw | ... 116 | 1,636 | 55 |
| Warsaw | ... London | ... 42 | 1,140 | 132 |
| | Grand Total | ... 330 | 5,387 | 342 |

The writer is indebted for the information concerning the fares and distances upon the Russian railways to the courtesy of the Editor of Bradshaw's Continental guides, who has very kindly supplied him with certain facts not contained in his excellent guide book. It has been assumed that the rouble will exchange for about Re. 1-8-0, and that Rs. 15 will exchange for one pound sterling. The journey from Krasnovodsk to Baku is made by steamer across the Caspian, and though at present the journey is continued from Baku to Tiflis and then from Tiflis by tonga across the Caucasus to Vladikavkas, yet in the accompanying table this route has not been shown, because very shortly a new and better means of communication will be afforded to travellers from Trans-Caucasia by means of a railway now in course of construction from Baku to Petrowsk along the shores of the Caspian. There is no doubt that very great acceleration could be obtained on both the Indian and Russian railways, and that in particular the journey from Vladikavkas *viâ* Faustova to Wasaw could be greatly shortened. It is certain that the 330 hours quoted in the table could be reduced to thirteen if not twelve days. Letters, therefore, instead of being six weeks in course of transit to and fro from India to England could receive an answer within the month. The total fare for a first class ticket from Delhi would be only about Rs. 300, as considerable reductions would naturally be made for all through passengers to London, and reckoning Rs. 6 per diem for expenses on the journey we still reach a total outlay considerably less than even a second-class single fare upon one of the P. and O. steamers.

The great advantages to all commercial people in India in the superior facility of obtaining their goods, where these consisted of packages of small bulk and light weight are patent; and one feels assured that in spite of gloomy prognosticutions of political dangers, that the force of circumstances must within a few years bring about the linking up of the British and Russian railways. Such a condition of things has existed for many years for both Germany and Austria and there should be no doubt that our military resources are equal to bear the strain of direct railway connection with Russia's Trans-Caspian lines. It is very possible that the agreement lately made by Lord Salisbury with Russia concerning China may be the forerunner of some wider and more permanent understanding between the two great Asiatic Powers, and that the proposed Overland route might help to establish better relations between the two Governments.

## FROM DELHI TO LONDON (OVERLAND).

(From a Correspondent.)

For many reasons various people have been endeavouring to propound some alternative route from India to England to that which is already provided from Bombay or Calcutta. The high rates of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the lengthy detour by the Red Sea, the necessary difference of rate of progress between a steamer and a train have all conspired to turn the attention of theorists and commercial speculators to move line of communication which shall be more expeditious and more direct. Some of the schemes that have been elaborated evince more ingenuity than commonsense, and nearly all seem strangely to overlook the obvious advantages of the route dealt with in this article. What is generally known as Mr. Black's scheme, which, about two years ago was the subject of many articles, press notices, and lectures in England, is open to many grave objections from all who are familiar with the East, and especially with Baluchistan, Persia, and Arabia. Mr. Black proposed that a railway should be made from Karachi, in connection with the existing Indus line of the North-Western, to run due west along the Mekran coast of Southern Baluchistan, proceeding through Persia along the shores of the Persian Gulf to Basra. From that town the line was to run a short distance along the valley of the Euphrates and then proceed due west across the inhospitable deserts of Arabia till it reached Port Said. From that point the rest of the journey was to be, as now, chiefly by sea. The first obvious objection is that this route would be shunned by all passenger traffic during at least eight months of the year (*i. e.*, from March 15 till October 15) on account of the very great heat and inconvenience of a journey by train over such a sandy district. As regards goods traffic, there are few portions of the earth's surface which could show fewer towns or marts for commerce than this line which is to run through such an inhospitable tract of country. Then as to the cost of construction, supposing that the line could be made at £5,000 per mile, which is probably below the actual cost, there would have to be an expenditure of many millions without reckoning the interes which would have to be paid to the capitalists and shareholders during its construction. The difficulties, too, in securing water for the locomotive and for the passengers would be very great. Finally, such a railway could not expect to pay any dividends with a route that embraced so few towns and so much sand. Another plan of some ingenious Frenchman is to connect Calais with Port Said, *viâ* Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and Egypt. The scheme of this French engineer strikes one as even more impracticable than that of Mr. Black, for in addition to the northern coasts of Africa being nearly as hot, and at times much hotter, than the southern coasts of Baluchistan and Persia, his enterprise is further encumbered by the necessity or expediency of constructing a submarine tunnel from Morocco to Gibraltar to connect the North African Railway with the railways of Spain and France. True it is that a small portion of this route from Gibraltar to Port Said is already covered by French railways in Algeria and Tunis; but there would still be more than 1,500 miles

THE CIVIL & MILITARY GAZETTE, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1899.

# Sporting.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.)

## SIMLA RACES.

(By Telegram.)

SIMLA, Oct. 5.

FIRST DAY.

The attendance was extremely poor, perhaps the smallest on record, a large number of racing men having left the station, and others being unable to come up. Amongst those present were the Maharaja of Patiala and the Kaur Sahib. The racing was fairly good.

1st Race.—Autumn Stakes. Value, Rs. 200. A hurdle race for Arab and C.-B. ponies 14 hands and under, and other ponies 13-3 and under that have never won a hurdle or steeplechase value Rs. 400 or over. Distance, about 1½ miles over 7 flights.

Major Turner's Talkover walked over.

2nd Race.—Stick Stakes. Value, Rs. 200. For Arab and C.-B. ponies 14 hands and under that have never won a race value Rs. 700 or over, and other maiden ponies 13-2 and under. Distance, about 1,400 yards.

Mr. Otto's Fuch, Mr. Hesketh .. .. 1
Major Turner's Talkover, Owner .. .. 2
Colonel Sandbach and Captain Marker's Viva, Captain Marker .. .. 3

Betting—2 to 1 on Fuch, 2 to 1 against the others.

An excellent race won by a head, the third pony being a length and a half behind.

3rd Race.—Monsoon Stakes. Value, Rs. 200. For Arab and C.-B. ponies 14 hands and under that have never won a race value Rs. 50 or over. Distance, ¾ mile.

Colonel Sandbach's Brown Sherry, Captain Marker .. .. 1
„ Peacock's Peter, Major Turner .. 2
Captain Cook's Howitzer, Owner .. .. 3

Also ran—Red Rover and Dodge.

Betting—6 to 4 on Dodge, 2 to 1 against Brown Sherry and Peter, 3 to 1 Red Rover, and 5 to 1 Howitzer.

A good race won by half a length; the same distance between second and third.

4th Race.—Hack Stakes.

Mr. Lambert's Picquet, Mr. Hesketh .. 1
Captain Holden's Little Mars, Native .. 2
„ Douglas's Bert, Major Turner .. 3

Also ran—Snapping Pride.

Betting—Evens Picquet, 6 to 4 against Bert, 5 to 1 Little Mars and 6 to 1 Snapping Pride.

This was an excellent race, won by a head on the post.

5th Race.—Annandale Stakes. Value, Rs. 200. A handicap for Polo ponies that have been regularly played at Simla during the present season. Distance, about 600 yards.

Lord Suffolk's Ariel, General Elliot .. 1
Captain Adam's Quail, Major Turner .. 2
Colonel Sandbach's Brown Sherry, Captain Marker .. .. .. .. 3

Also ran—Bert.

Betting—3 to 1 on Ariel, 2 to 1 against Brown Sherry, and 10 to 1 Bert and Quail.

Won by half a length.

6th Race.—Sutlej Stakes. Value, Rs. 200. For Arab ponies 14 hands and under. Distance, race home ensued. Joody staying out won by three quarters of a length; half a length between second and third. Time, 58 secs.

3rd Race.—Consolation Handicap. Value, Rs. 200 to the winner and Rs. 50 to the second. For ponies. Distance, ½ mile.

Colonel Grant Dalton's Cumshaw, 8-7 (carried 8-11), Hobday .. .. 1
Mr. Alexander's Janus, 8-11, Lansdowne .. 2
„ Bland's Ghalib, 11-7, Bence .. .. 3

Also ran—Bright 'Un, 9-2 (carried 9-4) Jacob, 8-2 (carried 9-1).

Betting—6 to 4 on Ghalib, 2 to 1 Cumshaw and Janus, 6 to 1 Bright 'Un, 10 to 1 Jacob.

Janus attended by Ghalib made the running till the distance, where Cumshaw passed Ghalib and shortly collared the leader, and after an exciting finish won by half a length; a length between second and third. Time, 59 secs.

4th Race.—The Scurry. Value, Rs. 150 to the winner and Rs. 50 to the second. For ponies. Distance, ¾ furlongs.

Mr. James's Selim, 10-0, Lansdowne .. 1
„ Alexander's Jasper, 9-6, Hobday .. 2
Captain Chapman's Go-Bang, 9-6, Jai Ram .. .. .. .. 3

Also ran—Ranger, 10-0 and Sheriff 9-10.

Betting—2 to 1 on Selim, 2 to 1 Ranger, 3 to 1 Sheriff, 6 to 1 Jasper, 10 to 1 Go Bang.

Selim attended by Jasper and Go-Bang jumped away from the start and was never headed. He won easily by a length. Time, 44½ secs.

5th Race.—Dealers' Plate. Value, Rs. 200 to the winner and Rs. 50 to the second. Selling race for ponies. Distance, 3 furlongs.

Captain McCormick's Mary, Rs. 250, 9-8, Bence .. .. .. .. 1
Mr. Armstrong's Fatima, Rs. 200, 8-4 (carried 8-11), Hobday .. .. .. 2
„ Alexander's Peri, Rs. 350, 8-4 (carried 8-9), Lansdowne .. .. 3

Also ran—Mystery, Rs. 400, 10-9; Pallad, Rs. 100, 8-10; Bright 'Un, Rs. 400, 10-0.

Betting—2 to 1 on Mary, 3 to 1 Fatima and Peri, 6 to 1 Bright 'Un, 10 to 1 Mystery, 20 to 1 Balled.

After innumerable breaks away, in one of which Bright 'Un bolted to the full distance before being pulled up, and on re joining the field after some more delay, they were sent away when Mary attended by Fatima early drew in front, and leading the whole way won by three lengths. Time, 42 secs.

Winner sold for Rs. 340.

## BOMBAY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT.

(By Telegram.)

BOMBAY, Oct. 5.

Another draw in the Bombay Association Football Tournament was played last night, the Royal Irish Rifles tying with the South Lancashires at one goal each. The draw was played off this morning, and the Royal Irish Rifles won by four goals to nothing.

## "THINGS CHINESE."

The following is a report of the speech made by Colonel E. G. Barrow C.B., after Captain Wingate's lecture on "Thing Chinese" at the United Service Institution on Tuesday:—

Captain Wingate has asked me to say a few words because, as Commandant of the Hong Kong Regiment I had some opportunity of becoming acquainted with things Chinese. I have acceded to his request because I, from sad experience, know there is nothing more depressing to a lecturer than the chilling silence which usually greets the chairman's invitation to the members of this institution to make a few remarks. I would begin by observing that the fact of Captain Wingate having traversed some of the most turbulent districts of China without getting into trouble is a remarkable testimony to his tact, discretion and self-control, for I know nothing more calculated to rile an English gentleman than a hooting Chinese crowd. For these evil looking children of Cain enjoy greatly greeting the stranger within their gates by pelting him with mud, brickbats and other still more disagreeable missiles. This I may tell you is a common experience, even near Canton or Shanghai, where the foreigner has been a familiar object for over half a century. Then again the Chinaman has an unpleasant way of showing his contempt for the foreigner by making insulting remarks, especially if he thinks he can do so with impunity. I remember once at Mess an officer calling for his servant, whereupon another servant called out—"Ah Chu don't you hear your dog barking for you?" Unfortunately for Ah Chu and his friend a guest at the table understood Chinese; but I need not relate the harrowing sequel of my tale. Another drawback to Chinese travel is that China is, without exception, the most odoriferous country I know; so if any of you wish to emulate Captain Wingate, my advice is "don't" unless you have an angelic temper and a scent-proof nose. I will now venture to make a few generalisations which I trust may not be out of place. What first strikes the stranger in China is the extraordinary industry of John Chinaman and the thoroughness of his work. He is the hardest labourer in the world, and perhaps the most methodical. I will give you a few examples of his practicality. From our earliest infancy we have been taught the proverbial difficulty of taking pigs to market. We all know that one little pig goes to market and the other little pig stays at home; but in China the little pig is never given the chance of staying at home. He is just crammed into a crate or basket, slung on to a bamboo, and then carried off by two Chinamen thereby saving much time and temper, for no true Chinaman would dream of driving a pig to market. Another instance I may give is the Chinese wheelbarrow. Capt. Wingate has shown you a photograph of one. It is truly a remarkable vehicle. As he has told you, on this the Chinese coolie will easily transport loads of over 200lbs in weight, and I am sure that on good roads he could almost keep up with infantry at Delhi. The official class as corrupt, ignorant and selfish as any Indian Courts of the last century could produce. Great imperial armies without leaders or discipline, such as Lake and Wellesley so easily vanquished, and finally a people without patriotism ready to sell themselves to the highest bidder. On the other hand, we have in the treaty ports of China, an almost exact re-production of the Indian factories. In the commercial rivalries and political jealousies of foreign nations, all the disturbing elements of intrigue and interference, such as the European rivals of the 18th century so effectively utilised for their own advantage; and finally in the necessities of commerce the same incentives to territorial aggrandisement which the East India Company found it so hopeless to resist:—

For Delhi read Pekin; for Madras read Hong Kong; for Calcutta read Shanghai; for Pondicherry ready Port Arthur; for Chandernagore read Kiau Chau; for French bugbear read Russian bugbey; for Tippoo read Li-Hung Chang; and for Peishwah read Chang Chi-Tung; and then if you know the history of India under the last Mogals you may form a forecast of China's probable destiny. It is not difficult to imagine contests like those of Clive and Dupleix being repeated on the banks of the Yang Tse or the Pai Ho, and so I now leave you to evolve whatever moral you please from the parallel I have started for your consideration.

## OUT-STATION ITEMS.

(From our Own Correspondents.)

SIMLA.

Oct. 3.

The Metropolitan held a confirmation at Christ Church Simla on Wednesday afternoon last, when 77 candidates were presented. Lady Curzon was present at the service.

DERA ISMAIL KHAN.

Oct. 4.

Mr. H. A. Anderson Commissioner and Superintendent, Derajat Division, is expected here on the 7th instant. Owing to the scarcity of rain, the water tanks at Sheik Budin have only 2 feet of water left in them. The drinking water for the residents at Sheikh Budin is taken up to them from Pezoo miles distant, and is sold at two annas a chatti full. Some of the residents are paying Rs. 20, to Rs. 25 for water only.

Col. and Mrs. Pollock are still at Sheikh Budin, Mrs. Pollock is doing well and her fever is low.

Lieutenant Thomas, R.E., Assistant Engineer, P. W. D., who was brought in from Tank with high fever, is now well, though still weak.

A strong breeze has been blowing here for the last two mornings. But the sky is as steely as ever and there is not the slightest sign of any rain. The zamindars complain bitterly of the export of grain from these districts into other parts of India, and urge that, but for this exportation they might manage the Famine tolerably well.

SENSATIONAL DISCOVERY AT NEWCHWANG.—The Shanghai telegram to the *China Mail*, dated September 9th, says:—A foreign doctor has made a most alarming and sensational discovery in four godowns at Newchwang. In the godowns were ranged up in tiers two thousand coffins containing the corpses of Chinese who recently died from plague. The coffins were awaiting shipment by junks to southern ports, Shantung and Chihli.

It is understood that the visit of the Metropolitan to Simla may result in some additions to the rules for the use of Anglican Churches which may tend to make them more accept ble to Presbyterians and Wesleyans. Dr. Welldon is said to be most anxious to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of this question, and his visit to the Viceroy, whose broad sympathies are well known, is expected to result in further concessions. But these will probably have to be submitted to the Secretary of State, so that there may be some delay in announcing them.—*Pioneer*.

oil-bearing nut, although the two are not alike in any other particular.

The *Chisochiton cumingianus* (Harms) is described as half ellipsoidal in shape, when fresh, and as averaging 3 centimetres (1·18 in.) in length, and 2·5 centimetres in width at the widest portion. The shell is rather hard, constituting about 60 per cent. of the total weight, and it is difficult to separate it from the meat. In a quantity of shelled nuts tested by the Bureau of Science, which used petroleum ether for the purpose, about 31 per cent. of the whole nut was a reddish brown oil. The composition of the dry kernels was found to be as follows: Fat (by extraction), 44·12 per cent.; protein, 9 per cent.; ash, 3·19 per cent.

The dry kernel yielded 35·56 per cent. of oil on expression. The oil had a rancid odour, and was non-drying. On experiment it was found to have purgative properties. This oil, however, was found to have a weaker laxative effect than castor oil, five parts of it being approximately equivalent to one part of castor oil. This oil, more commonly called cato, was found by the Bureau of Science to be valuable for soap-making. One local firm now employs the oil in that industry.

## OPENING OF THE FIRST RAILWAY IN PERSIA.

The following account of the opening of the first railway in Persia is from a report on the subject written by the United States Commercial Attaché at Petrograd (Mr. H. D. Baker), who had the opportunity of witnessing this extremely important event in the history of Persia. Mr. Baker reached Tabriz about the beginning of March last, travelling part of the way from the Russian frontier by the new railway, which was almost completed, and part of the way by carriage. Several days after, the railway was completed, and the first train arrived in Tabriz gaily decorated with the flags of Russia and of Persia. Thousands of people, including all the foreign Consuls and other officials in the city, came to witness the entrance of the first train, and there was immense excitement as the blowing of whistles announced its approach. In front of the locomotive was a huge emblem showing the Persian lion with the sword, with the sun in the background. The train consisted only of goods waggons, the railway being at present intended, not for carrying passengers, but for military purposes.

The great crowds waited to see the train start on its return journey. Through the courtesy of the Russian military authorities, the Commercial Attaché was permitted to be the first passenger on this first train on its return to the international boundary, one of the waggons being specially furnished for his accommodation. The train left Tabriz about 5 p.m., and the distance of ninety-three miles to Jhulfa, on the Aras River, separating Russian Transcaucasia from Persia, was covered by 5 a.m. the following morning. The journey would have taken three days travelling by carriage.

After the train left Tabriz it was interesting to watch the excitement occasioned among the rural population. In the different villages the people climbed up on the roofs of their mud houses to see this great spectacle; it was probaby the first time that most of them had ever seen a railway train. The sheep and cattle and teams of horses along the route were greatly terrified.

When the train crossed the bridge over the Aras River, its trip on the Persian side was ended. As there is railway connection here for Tiflis, and thence for all parts of Russia, there is no reason, says the Commercial Attaché, why it might not be possible for trains to run from any part of Russia to Tabriz, the chief commercial city of Persia. The gauge of the new line is the same as that of the Russian railway system, and the railway is under Russian control and management. Possibly the railway may be extended to Teheran, and thence south-east to Ispahan, in Central Persia, and into Baluchistan, where it could connect up at Nushki with the railway system of British India.

The railway now follows between Jhulfa and Tabriz the line of the Indo-European telegraph system of India. From the town of Sophian, about twenty-five miles from Tabriz, a branch of the railway has already been completed to Lake Urumiah, which is a great body of intensely salt water extending about 100 miles from north to south in north-western Persia. Around this lake is one of the richest districts of Persia, producing large quantities of raisins and other dried fruit, as well as considerable wine and wool. The completion of the railway to Lake Urumiah has made it possible to bring big motor-boats to take the place of the old primitive sailing-boats.

The railway to Tabriz, with its branch line from Sophian to Lake Urumiah, will doubtless cause an enormous development through all this part of Persia. Much new land will be opened up to agriculture, and various mines, chiefly copper and wolfram, will be worked, which have not been developed because of transportation difficulties. Although the railway is to be used at present only for military purposes, it is the intention later to devote it to the interests of trade between Russia and Persia. The railway will doubtless cause a diversion of traffic to a large extent from the caravan route from Trebizond in Turkey to the railway route *via* Tiflis and other cities of the Caucasus. Before the war the greater part of the trade of north-western Russia went through the port of Trebizond and through Persian and Russian ports on the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea

ports will still be used for business originating in and around Teheran, the capital of Persia, but it will be unnecessary hereafter for any of the business of Tabriz, the largest commercial city of Persia, to be conducted through Caspian Sea ports or through Trebizond on the Black Sea. The commercial importance of Tabriz, now the leading carpet market of the world, should be greatly increased. It is understood to have at present a population of about 200,000. Its bazaars cover many miles of arcaded streets, and its carpet bazaars are specially noted. Besides the enormous trade in carpets, there is an important trade in cotton, dried fruits, tragacanth, etc.

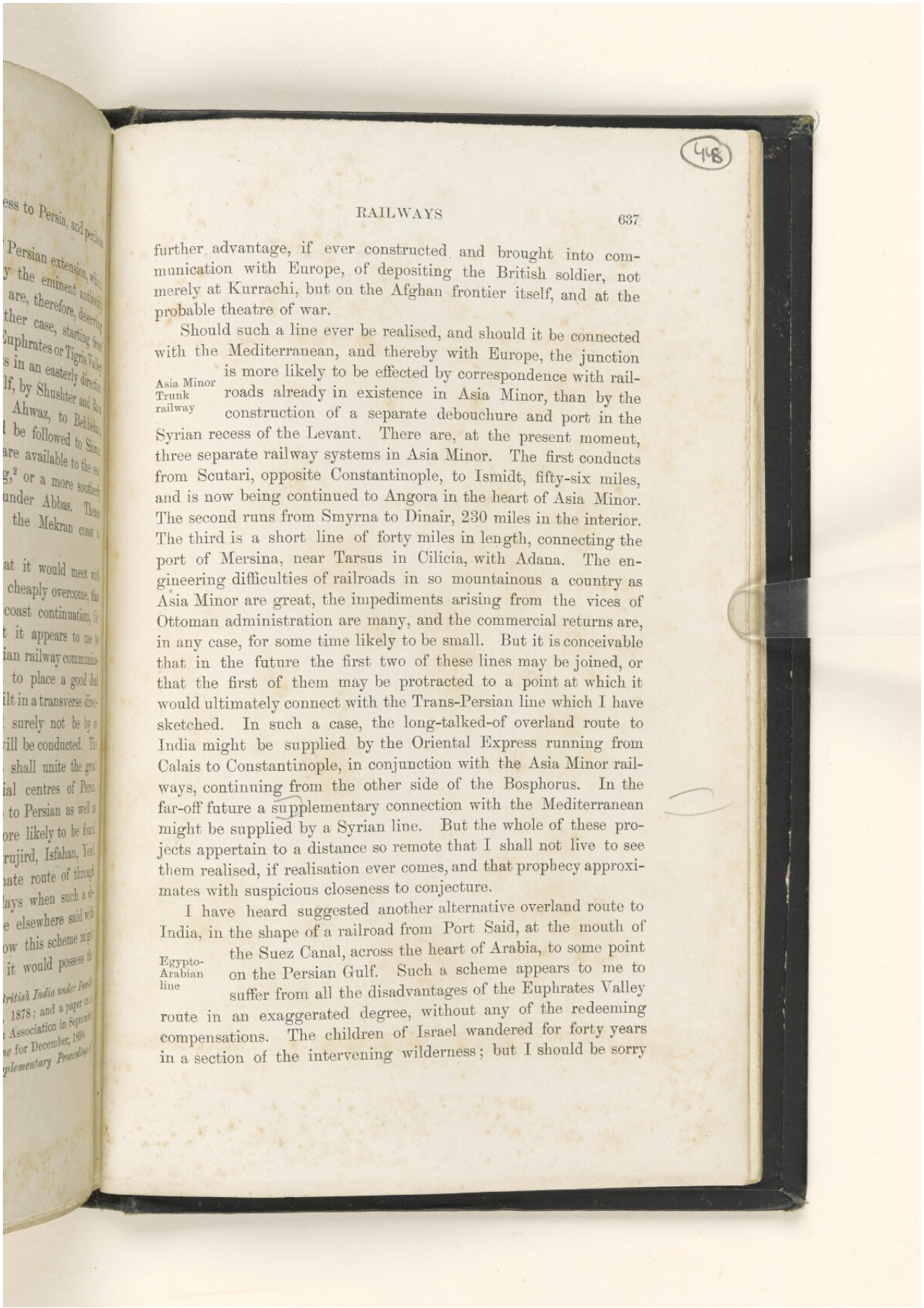
## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRIES.

*Mutual Accommodations.* — The common problem is that of satisfying the demand for goods with a constantly dwindling number of men, and its solution is necessarily one of increasing difficulty. Hitherto the task has consistently turned out a little easier than could be expected. Circumstances adapt themselves in a mysterious way to the troubled manufacturer. Demand grows up for the sorts of goods which can be produced rather than for those which cannot, and by grace of small accommodations industry is enabled to proceed to good purpose. Cash turnovers receive the assistance of higher prices, and the amount of skilled work to be done in maintaining them is reduced by the avoidance of changes in the kind of work in hand. Carried beyond a certain point the reduction of man-power inevitably implies reduction of productive capacity, but it has been shown that upon an emergency unanticipated results are possible. There are mills and works producing goods of more total value than ever with the staff of skilled men cut down by one-half or two-thirds. As a fact of this kind is liable to misconstruction, it is necessary to emphasise the distinction between value and volume.

*Restrictive Influences.*—Manufacturers of goods indispensable for war occupy the privileges of their situation. They have first call upon the supplies of fuel, and are permitted to extend buildings while others are not; they have less difficulty in retaining the services of men of military years, and their applications for new machinery receive priority at the machine works. They alone are allowed to receive raw materials of particular sorts, but the privileges are bought at a certain price. Contracts are issued on terms which severely limit the charges which may be made, and convert the contractor virtually into an agent of the War Department. Increasingly the war becomes the first business of the industry, and the opportunities of attending to any other market diminish. Export cloths and home trade goods continue to be made upon one scale or another, but manufacturers have nothing like a free hand at present, and are perhaps destined to have less before regaining their liberty to go as they will. Doubtless it is widely recognised abroad that the situation of our textile manufacturers is singularly cramped, but without a strong effort of the imagination their exact position can scarcely be realised. The pre-occupation with war contracts removes the participants from their old trades, and precludes them from embarking upon the new ones that will have to be sought later.

*Work after the War.*—The resolute opposition to the proposal to apply the unemployment provisions of the National Insurance Act to workers in wool affords a test of opinion as to the effect of the ending of the war. Were it held seriously likely that large numbers of workers would be brought to destitution, a small weekly payment insuring a modest relief in case of need need hardly be grudged in present conditions. Virtually all the employers and all the employed concerned vigorously resisted the application of the Act, and were not dismayed to learn that no other financial assistance need be expected from the State. The industry accepted full responsibility for its own hardships gaily. The disbanding of the forces will bring the woollen industry contracts for the civilian suits, overcoats and cardigan jackets for which the King's Regulations provide, and were the war to end to-morrow it would catch the woollen warehousemen and clothiers almost without a piece in stock. While the war lasts the need for army clothing must be continuous and heavy, and when peace comes the call for goods will almost certainly be great.

*Discarded Uniforms.* — Arrangements have been made for firms of dry-cleaners in this country to receive soiled service uniforms, and to clean and repair them and send them out in a condition not very different from new. The bargain promises economies, and contracts have been made for the renovation of tens of thousands of uniforms weekly. Uniforms beyond repair are being collected for dispatch to the rag-wool district, where they are being bought at about £80 a ton for conversion into new cloth. Ordinary rag-picking is one of the industries that has been seriously disorganised by the war, and military rags, by virtue of the size and systematisation of the supply, are becoming the chief staple of the market. Except in a limited way, second-hand official khaki cannot be used to make standard khaki again, although it may serve for inferior qualities. Blended with rags of other colours, its fibres





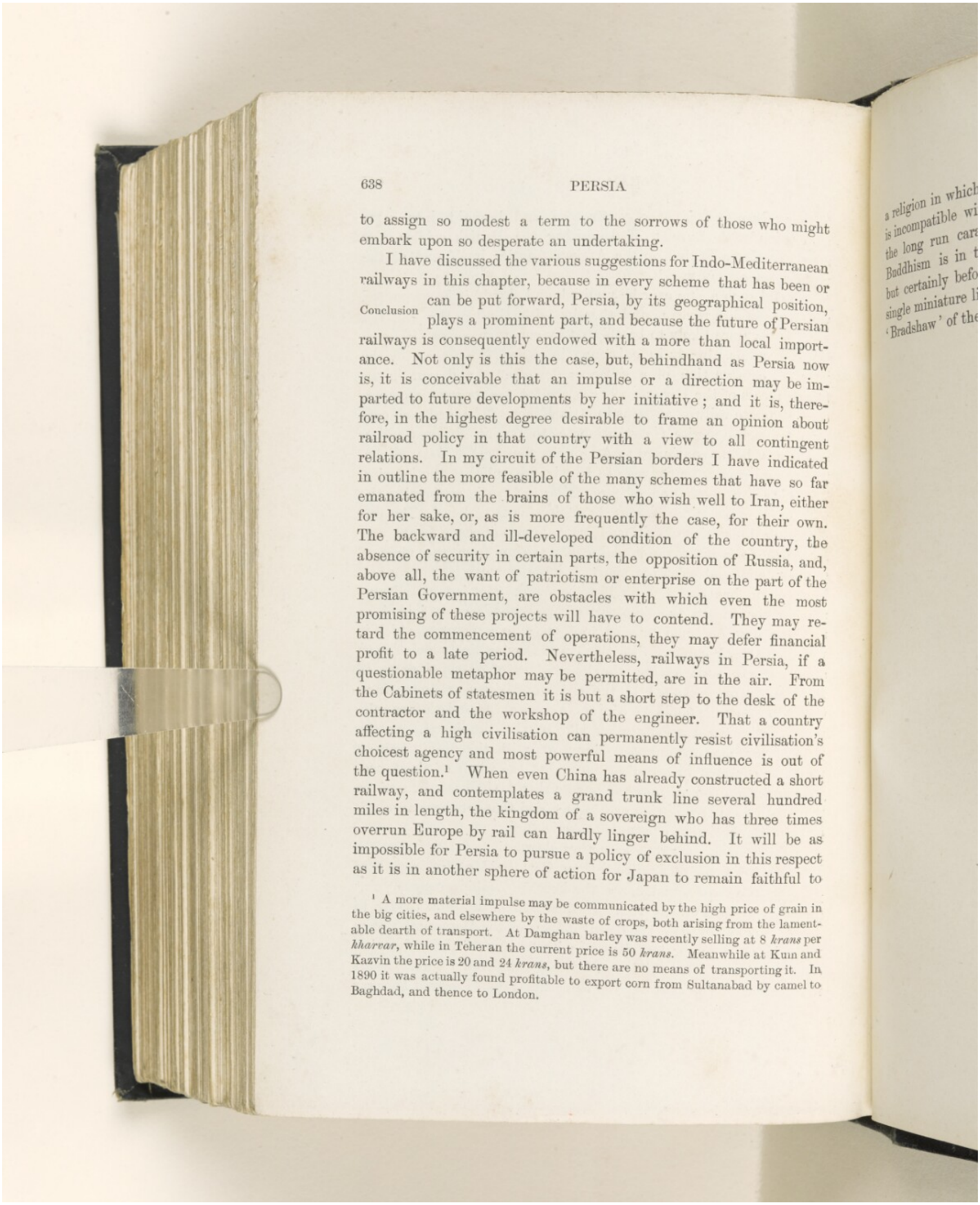
further advantage, if ever constructed and brought into communication with Europe, of depositing the British soldier, not merely at Kurrachi, but on the Afghan frontier itself, and at the probable theatre of war.

Should such a line ever be realised, and should it be connected with the Mediterranean, and thereby with Europe, the junction is more likely to be effected by correspondence with railroads already in existence in Asia Minor, than by the construction of a separate debouchure and port in the Syrian recess of the Levant. There are, at the present moment, three separate railway systems in Asia Minor. The first conducts from Scutari, opposite Constantinople, to Ismidt, fifty-six miles, and is now being continued to Angora in the heart of Asia Minor. The second runs from Smyrna to Dinair, 230 miles in the interior. The third is a short line of forty miles in length, connecting the port of Mersina, near Tarsus in Cilicia, with Adana. The engineering difficulties of railroads in so mountainous a country as Asia Minor are great, the impediments arising from the vices of Ottoman administration are many, and the commercial returns are, in any case, for some time likely to be small. But it is conceivable that in the future the first two of these lines may be joined, or that the first of them may be protracted to a point at which it would ultimately connect with the Trans-Persian line which I have sketched. In such a case, the long-talked-of overland route to India might be supplied by the Oriental Express running from Calais to Constantinople, in conjunction with the Asia Minor railways, continuing from the other side of the Bosphorus. In the far-off future a supplementary connection with the Mediterranean might be supplied by a Syrian line. But the whole of these projects appertain to a distance so remote that I shall not live to see them realised, if realisation ever comes, and that prophecy approximates with suspicious closeness to conjecture.

Asia Minor Trunk railway

I have heard suggested another alternative overland route to India, in the shape of a railroad from Port Said, at the mouth of the Suez Canal, across the heart of Arabia, to some point on the Persian Gulf. Such a scheme appears to me to suffer from all the disadvantages of the Euphrates Valley route in an exaggerated degree, without any of the redeeming compensations. The children of Israel wandered for forty years in a section of the intervening wilderness; but I should be sorry

Egypto-Arabian line





to assign so modest a term to the sorrows of those who might embark upon so desperate an undertaking.

Conclusion

I have discussed the various suggestions for Indo-Mediterranean railways in this chapter, because in every scheme that has been or can be put forward, Persia, by its geographical position, plays a prominent part, and because the future of Persian railways is consequently endowed with a more than local importance. Not only is this the case, but, behindhand as Persia now is, it is conceivable that an impulse or a direction may be imparted to future developments by her initiative; and it is, therefore, in the highest degree desirable to frame an opinion about railroad policy in that country with a view to all contingent relations. In my circuit of the Persian borders I have indicated in outline the more feasible of the many schemes that have so far emanated from the brains of those who wish well to Iran, either for her sake, or, as is more frequently the case, for their own. The backward and ill-developed condition of the country, the absence of security in certain parts, the opposition of Russia, and, above all, the want of patriotism or enterprise on the part of the Persian Government, are obstacles with which even the most promising of these projects will have to contend. They may retard the commencement of operations, they may defer financial profit to a late period. Nevertheless, railways in Persia, if a questionable metaphor may be permitted, are in the air. From the Cabinets of statesmen it is but a short step to the desk of the contractor and the workshop of the engineer. That a country affecting a high civilisation can permanently resist civilisation's choicest agency and most powerful means of influence is out of the question.[1] When even China has already constructed a short railway, and contemplates a grand trunk line several hundred miles in length, the kingdom of a sovereign who has three times overrun Europe by rail can hardly linger behind. It will be as impossible for Persia to pursue a policy of exclusion in this respect as it is in another sphere of action for Japan to remain faithful to

[1] A more material impulse may be communicated by the high price of grain in the big cities, and elsewhere by the waste of crops, both arising from the lamentable dearth of transport. At Damghan barley was recently selling at 8 *krans* per *kharvar*, while in Teheran the current price is 50 *krans*. Meanwhile at Kum and Kazvin the price is 20 and 24 *krans*, but there are no means of transporting it. In 1890 it was actually found profitable to export corn from Sultanabad by camel to Baghdad, and thence to London.

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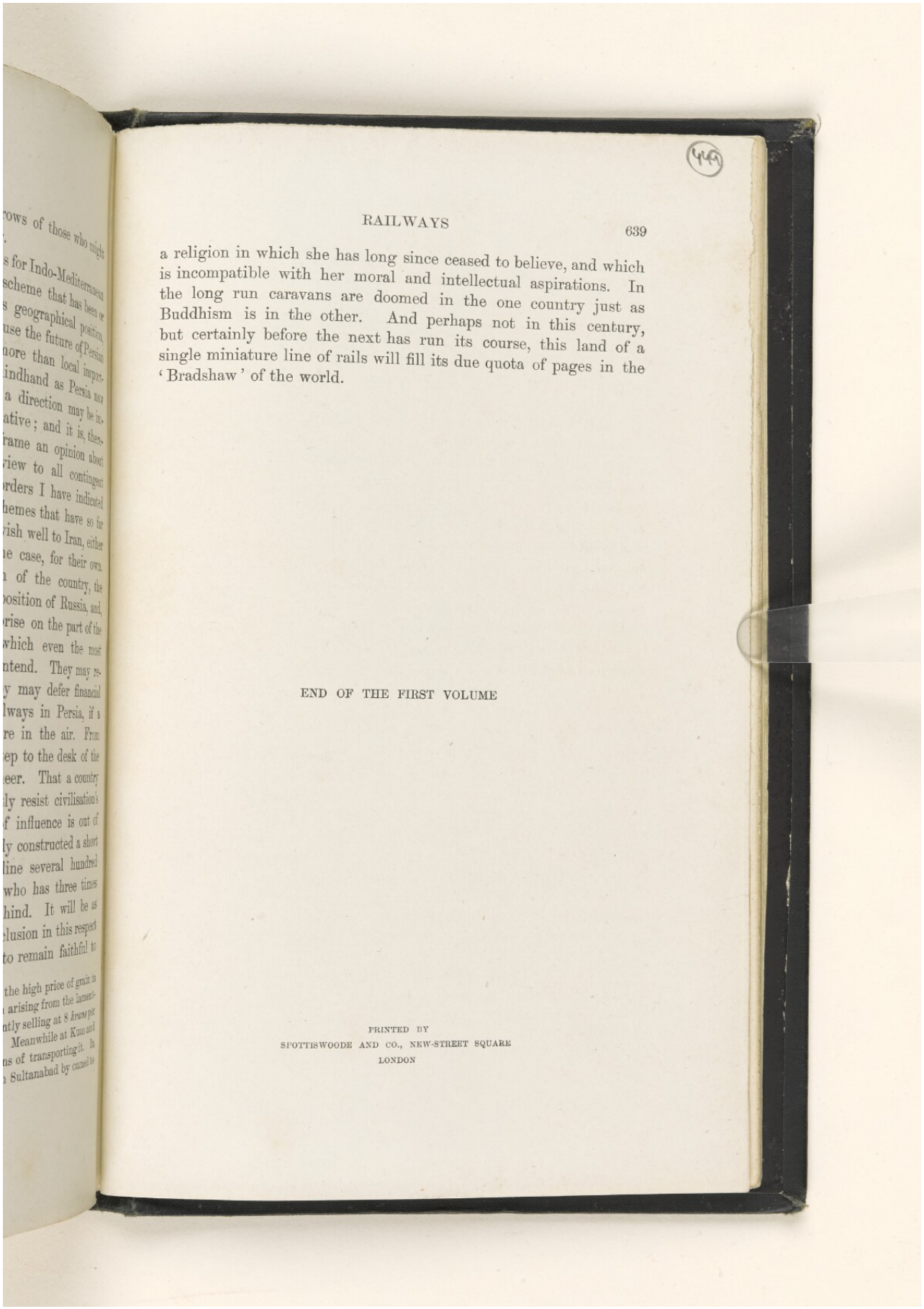



a religion in which she has long since ceased to believe, and which is incompatible with her moral and intellectual aspirations. In the long run caravans are doomed in the one country just as Buddhism is in the other. And perhaps not in this century, but certainly before the next has run its course, this land of a single miniature line of rails will fill its due quota of pages in the 'Bradshaw' of the world.

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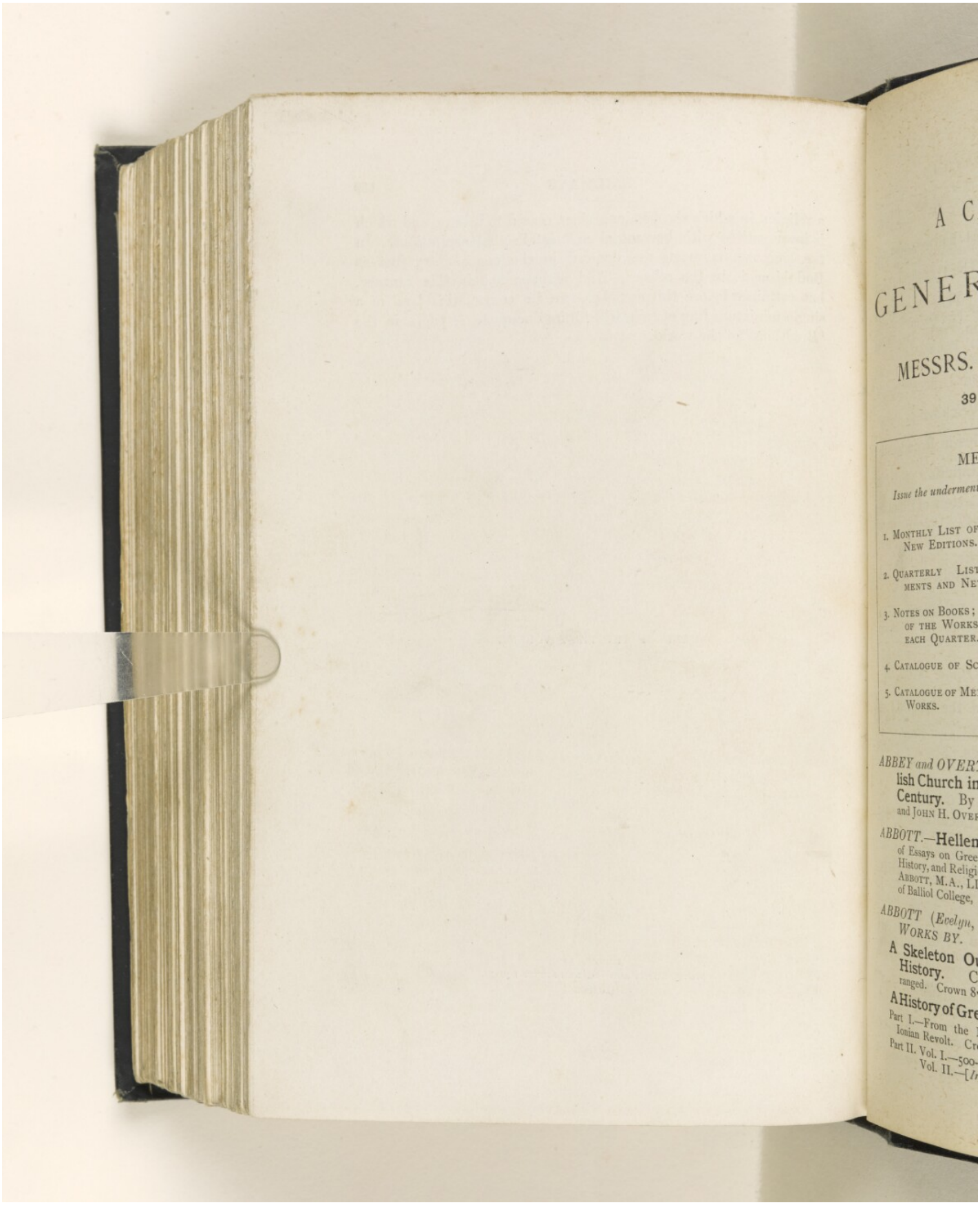

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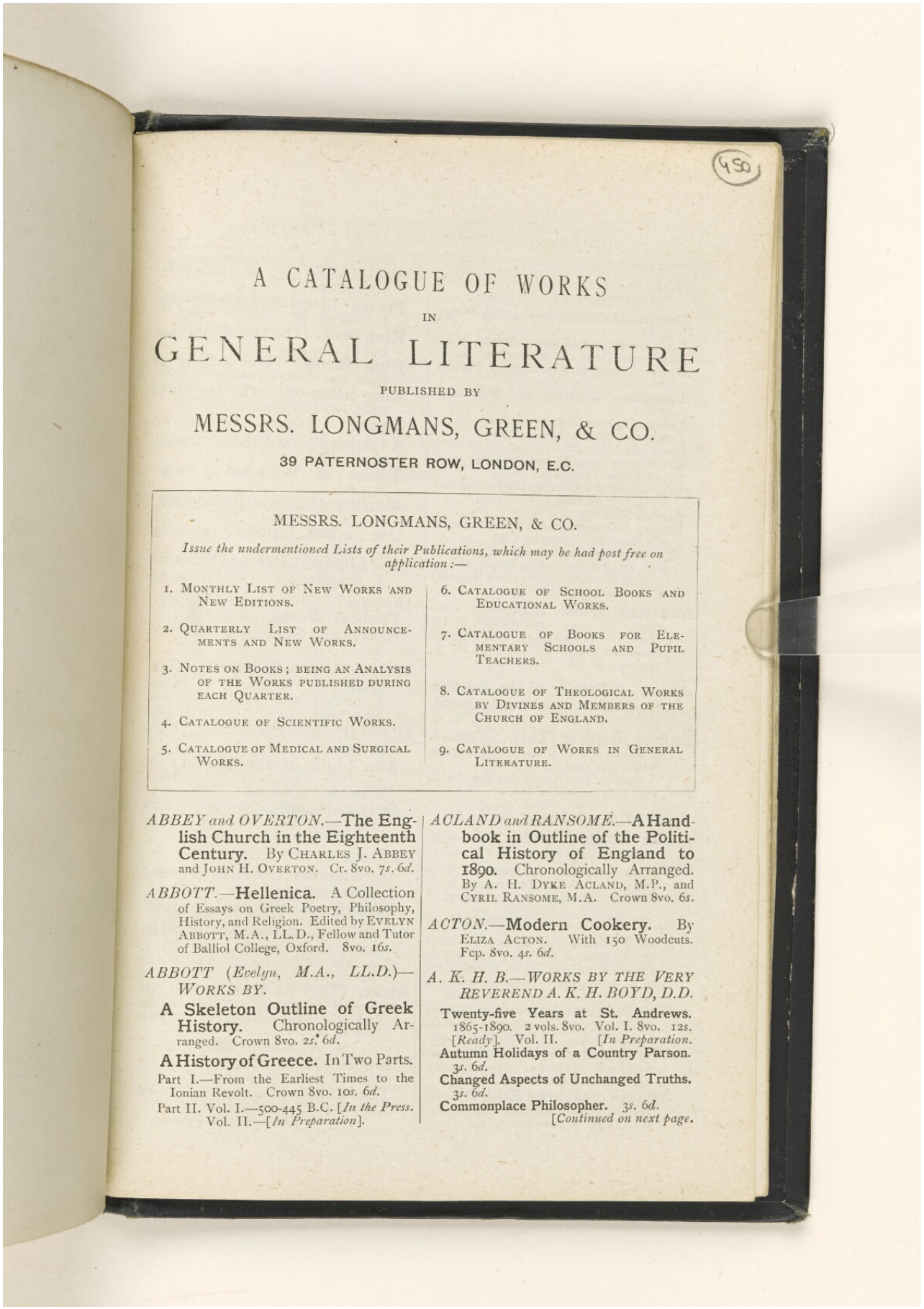

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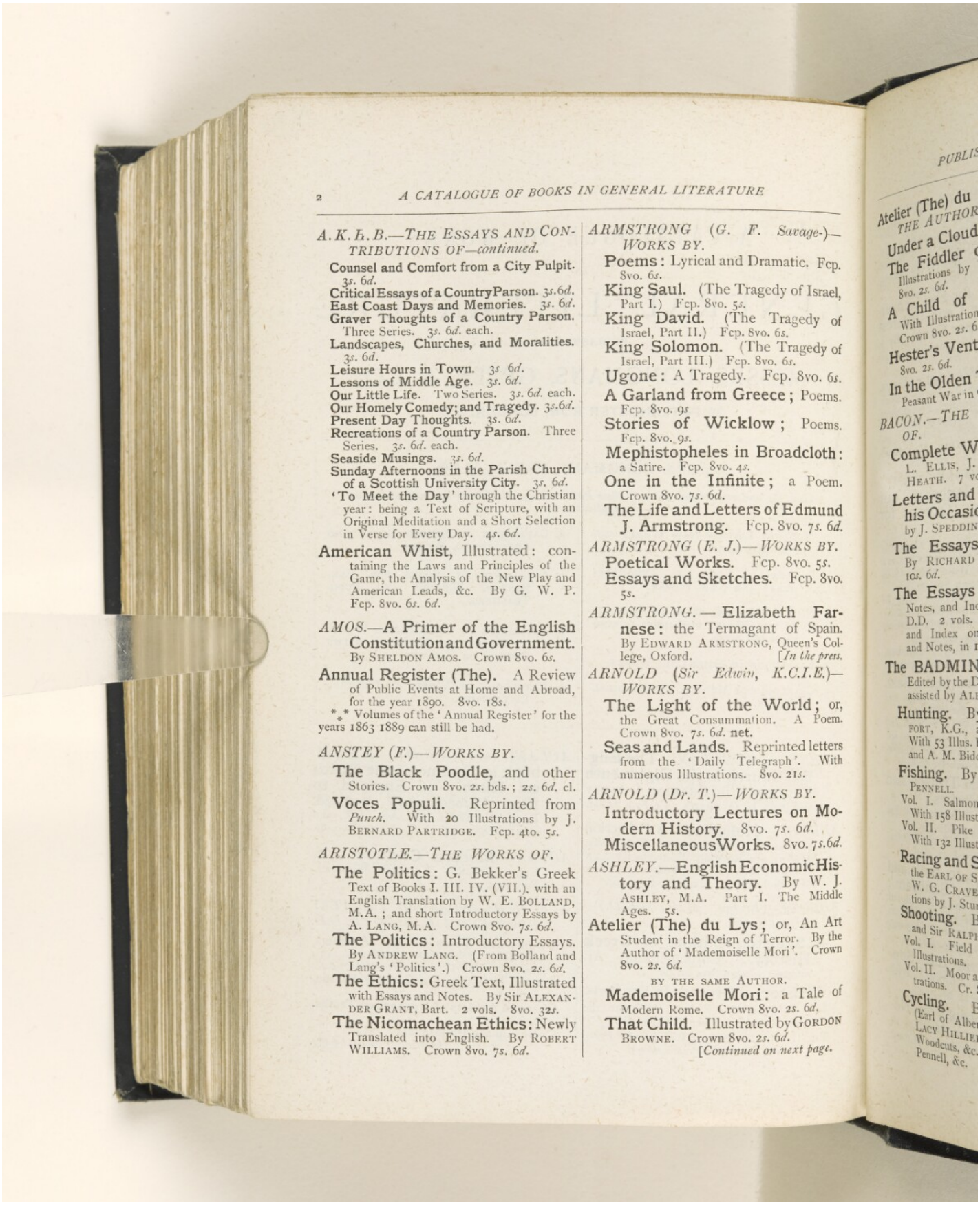



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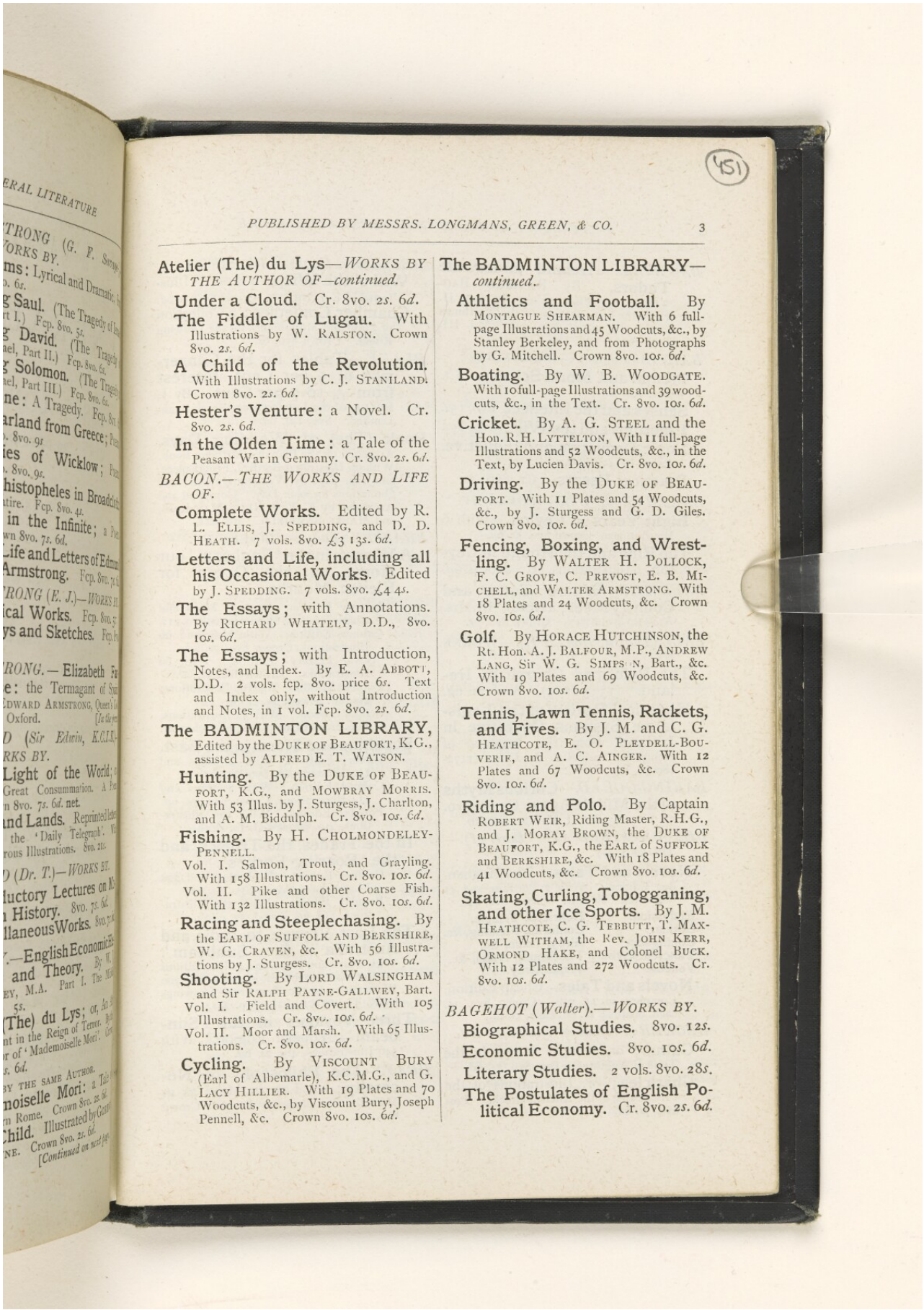



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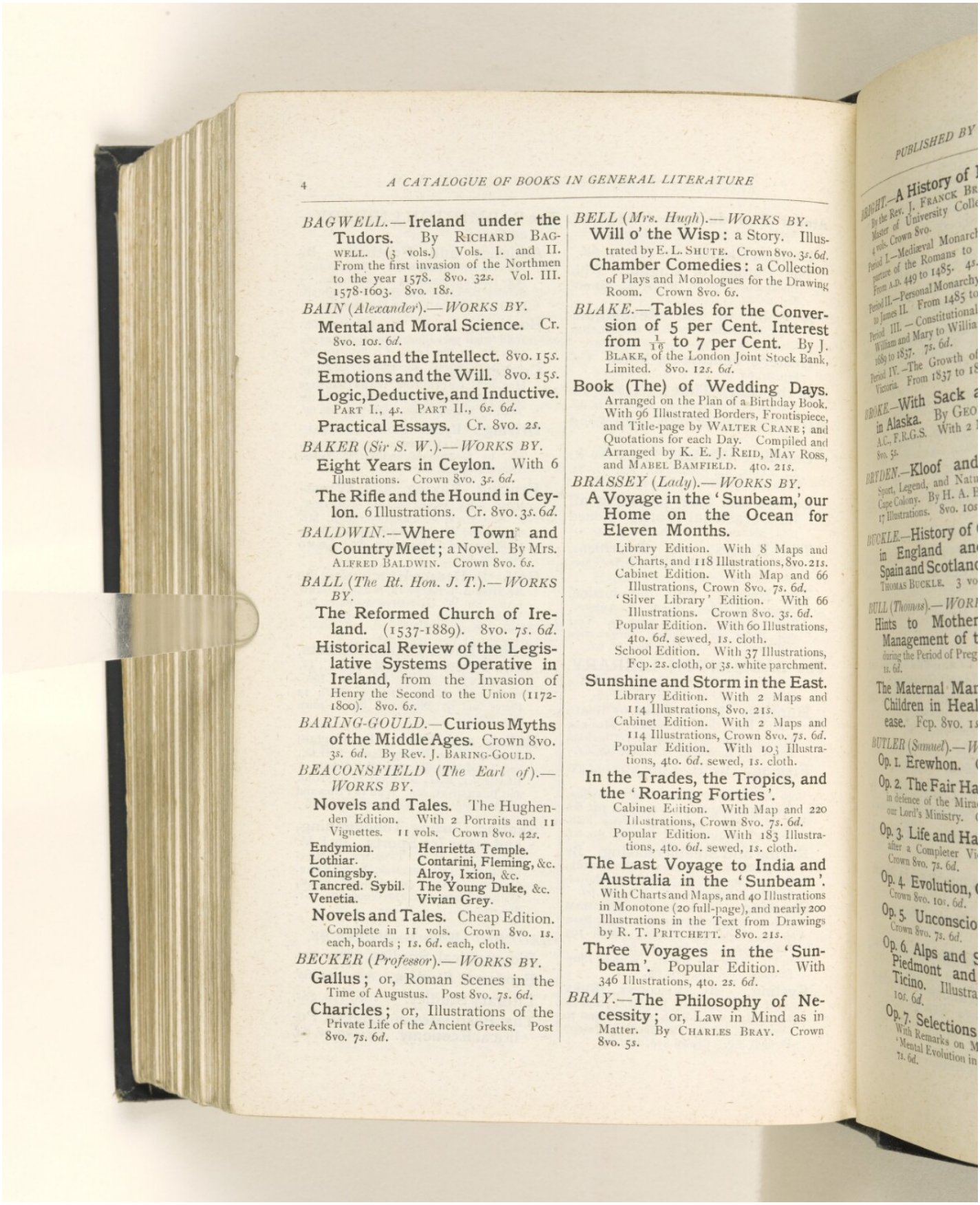



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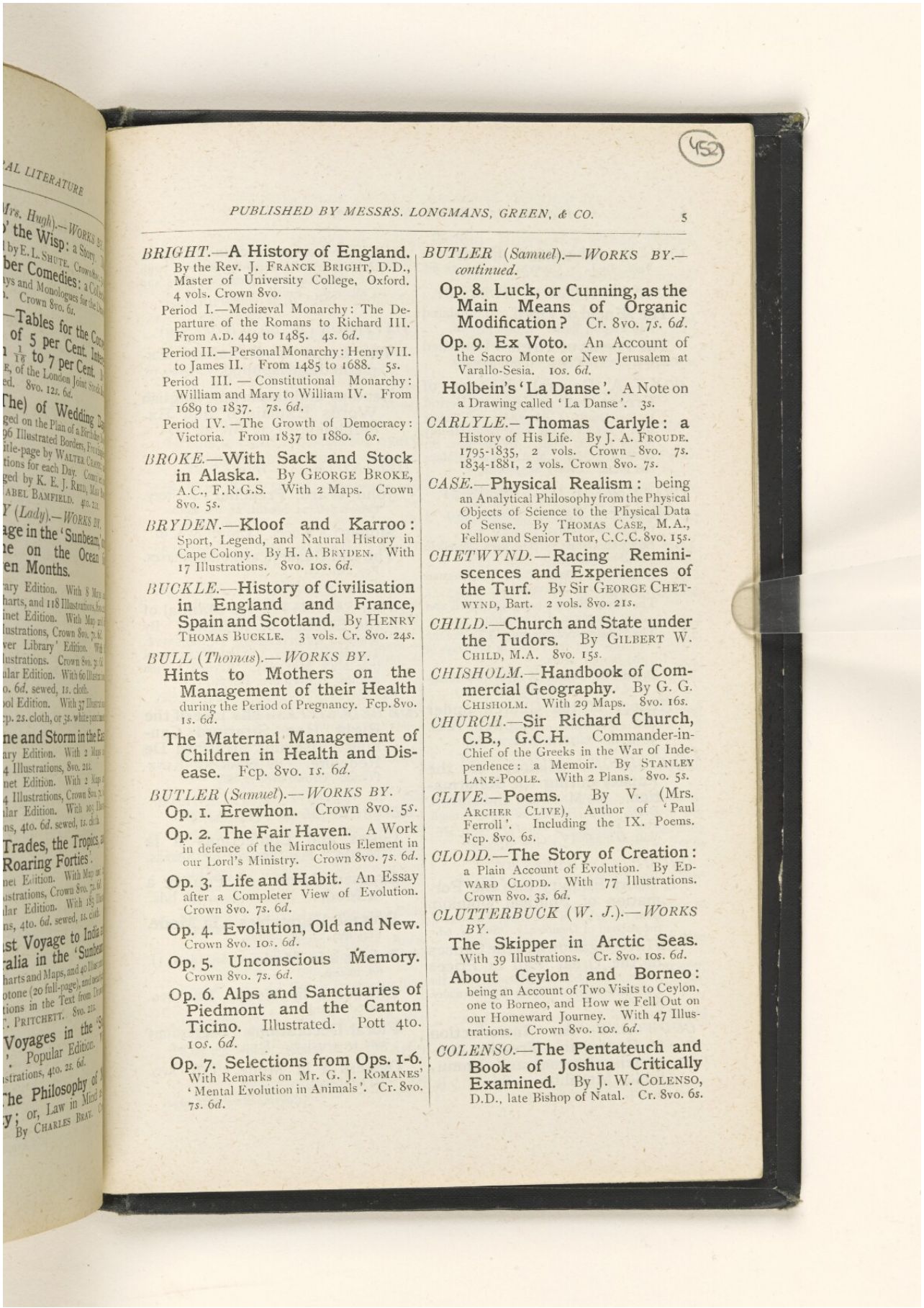



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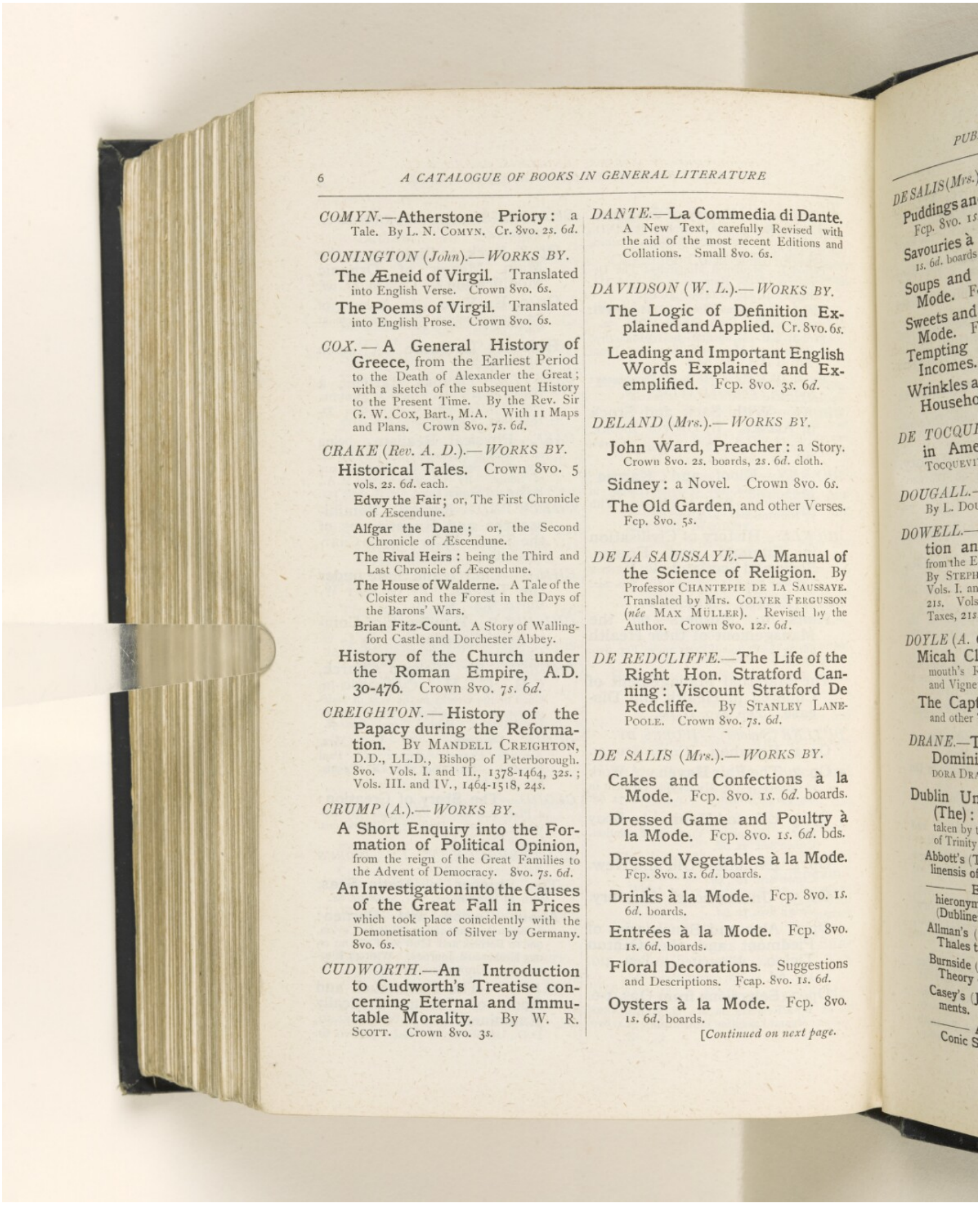



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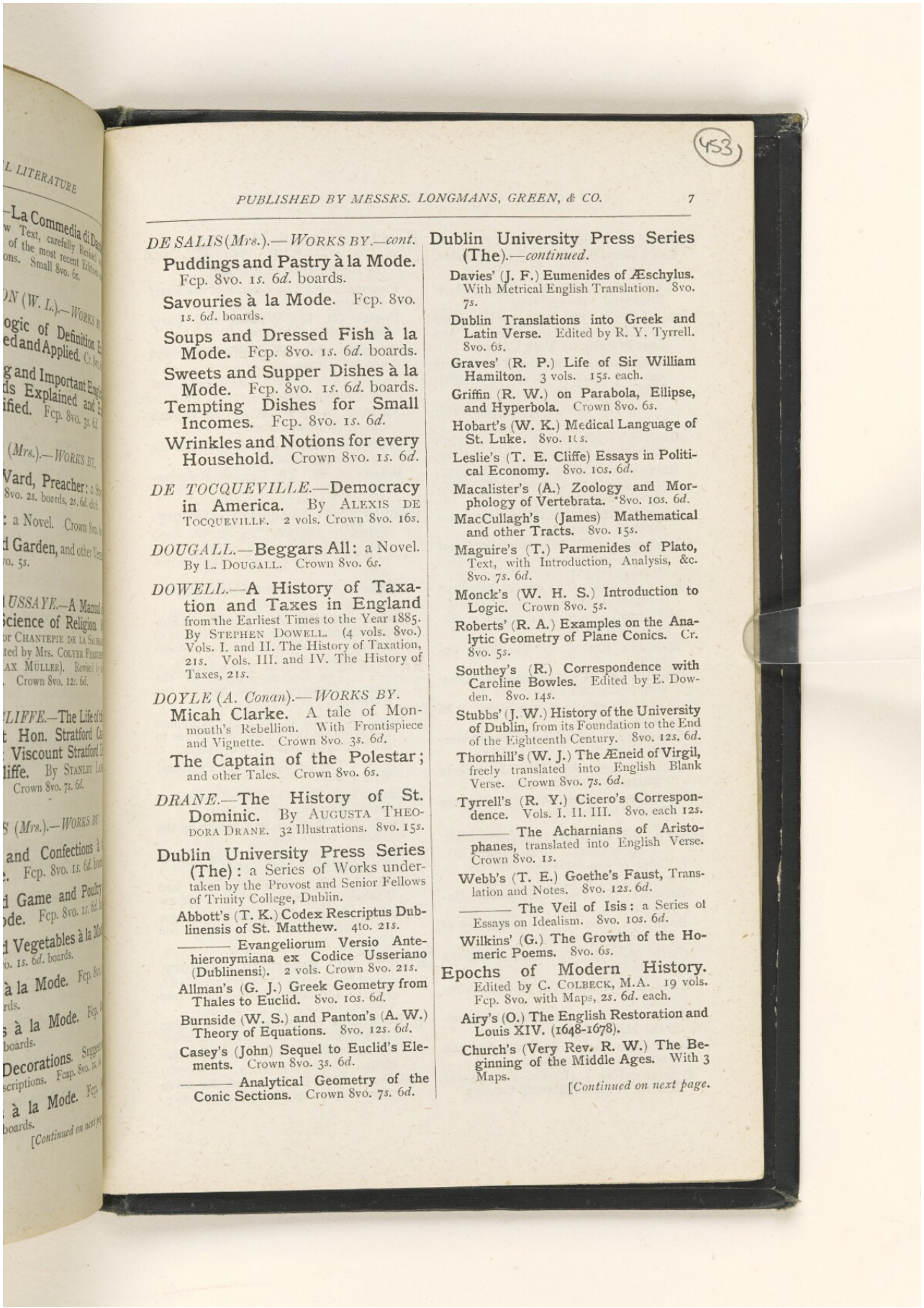



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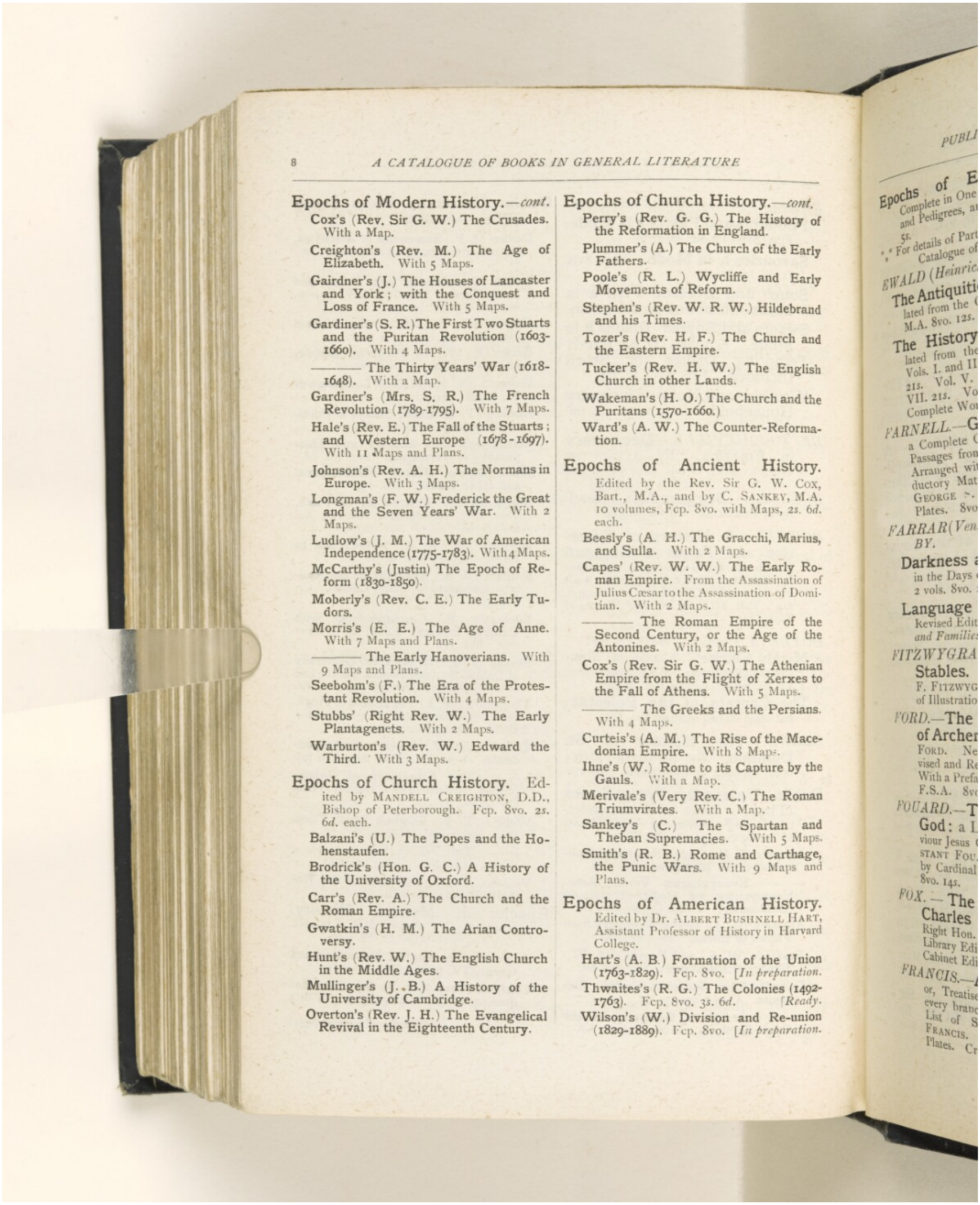



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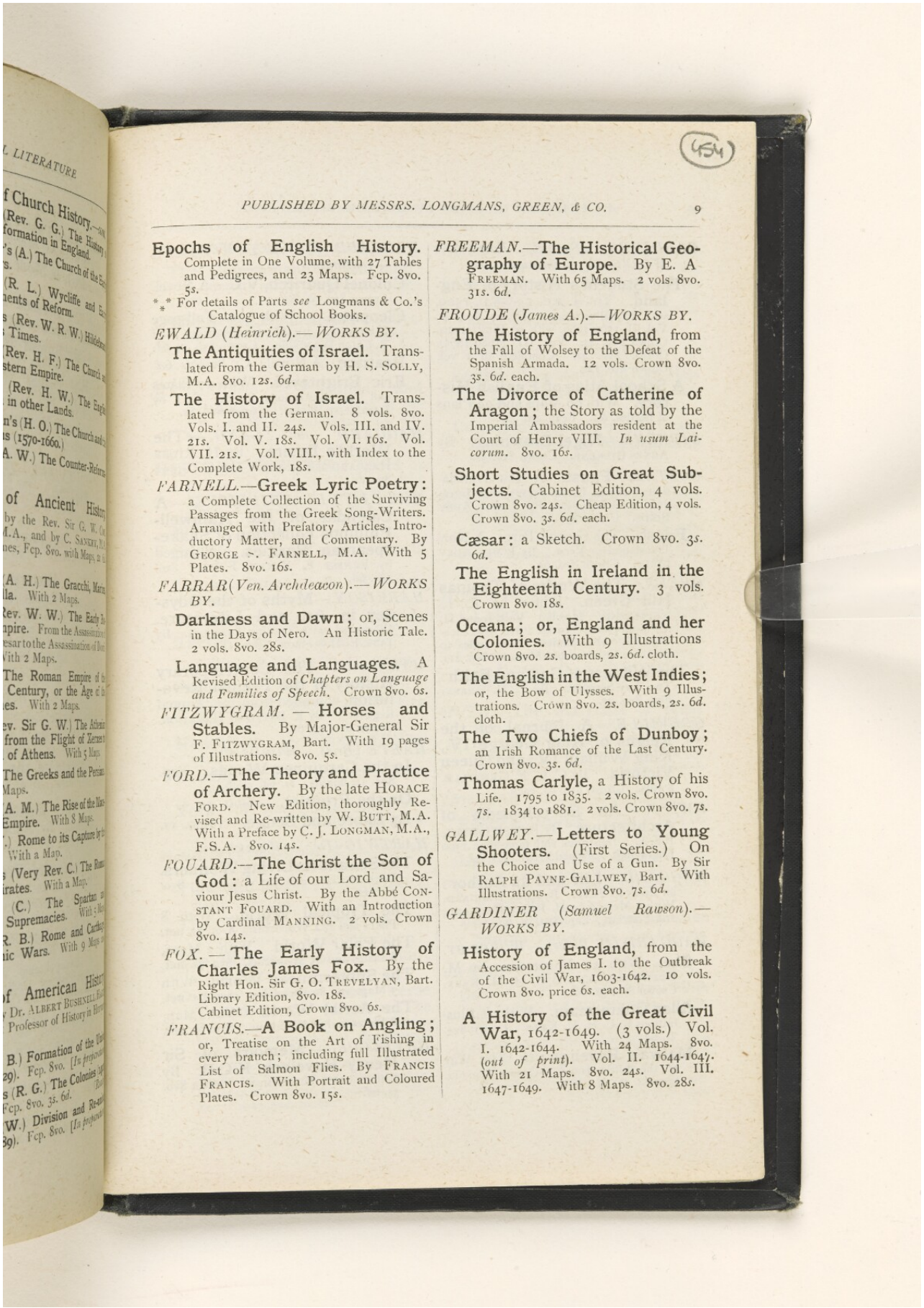



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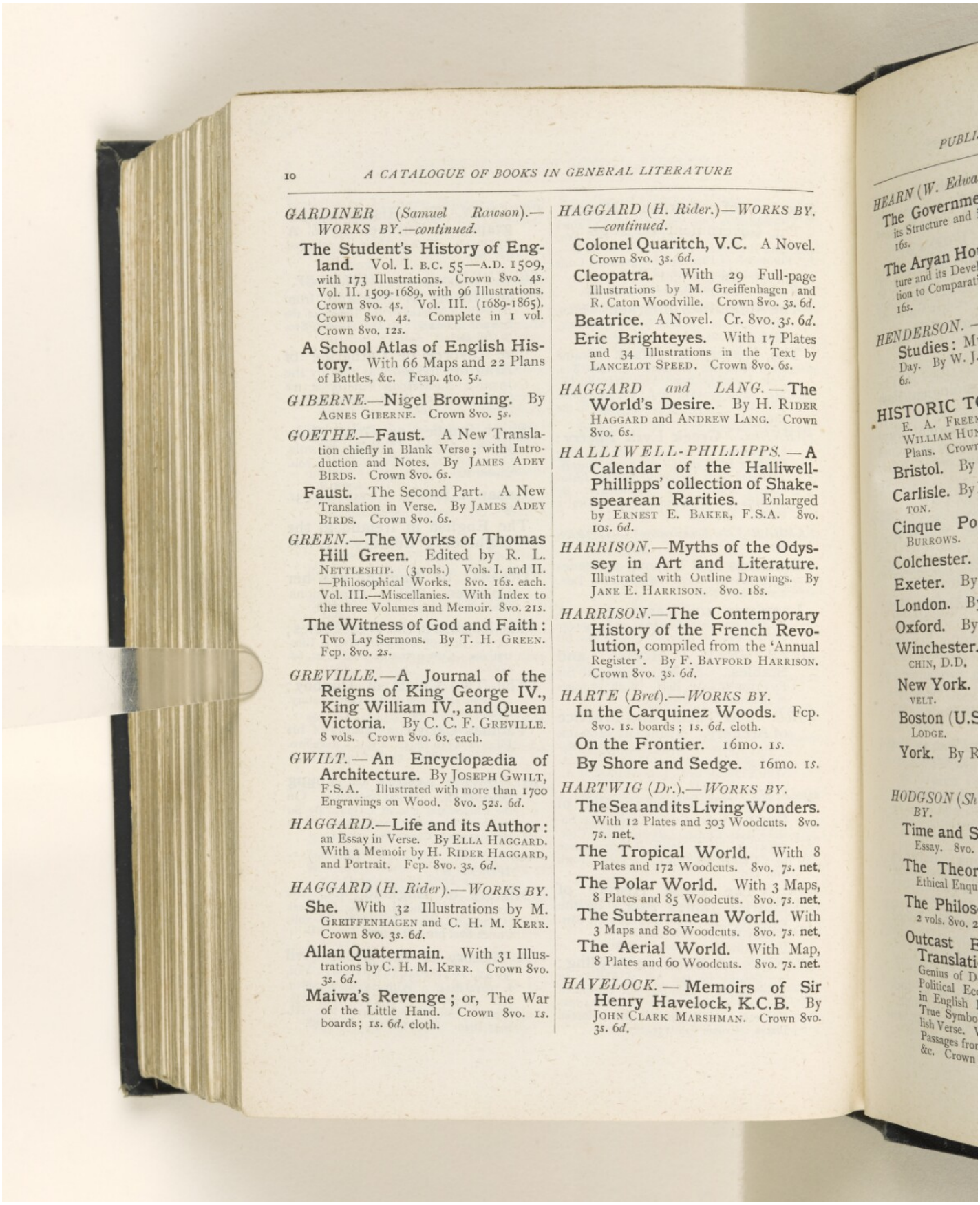



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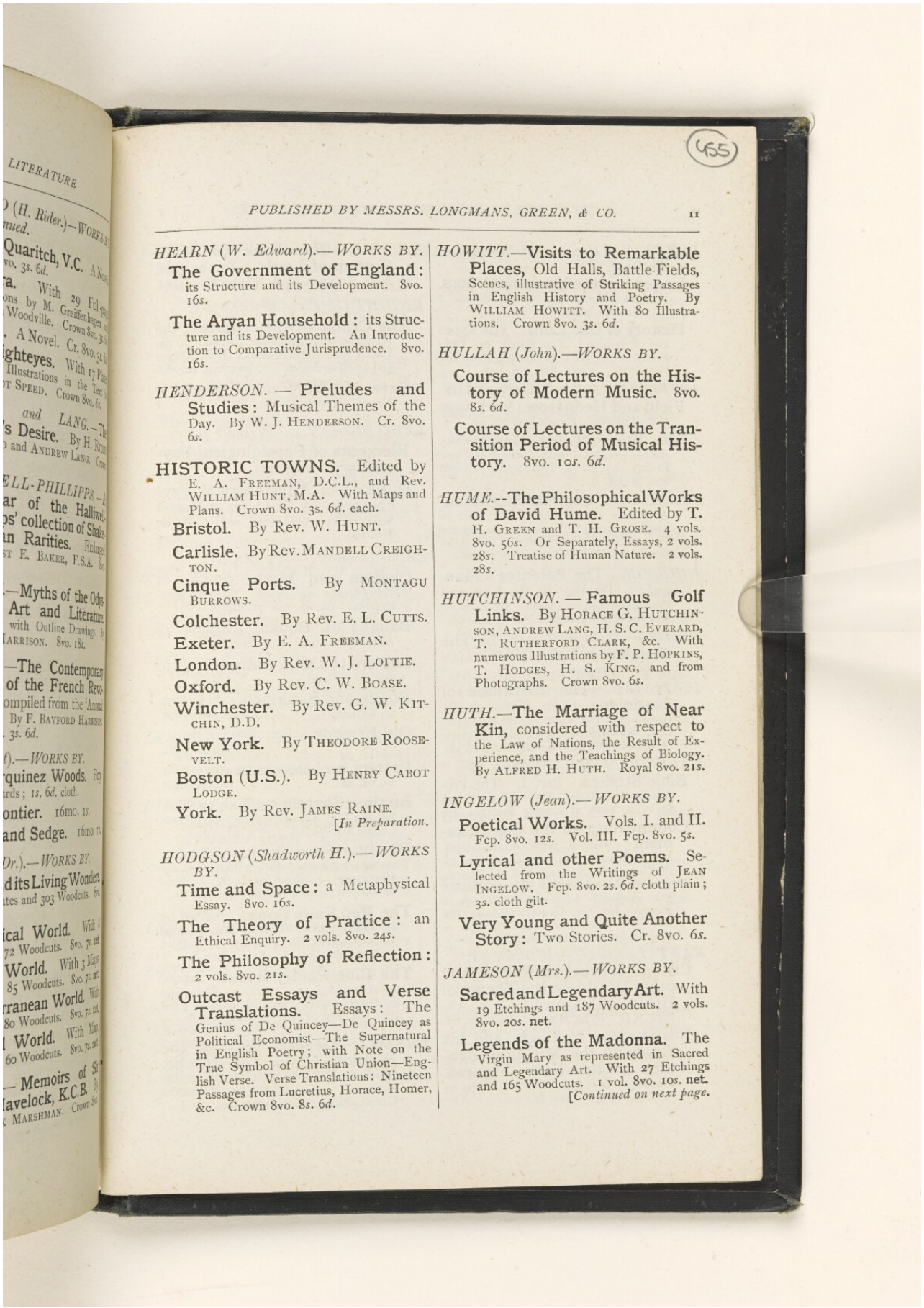



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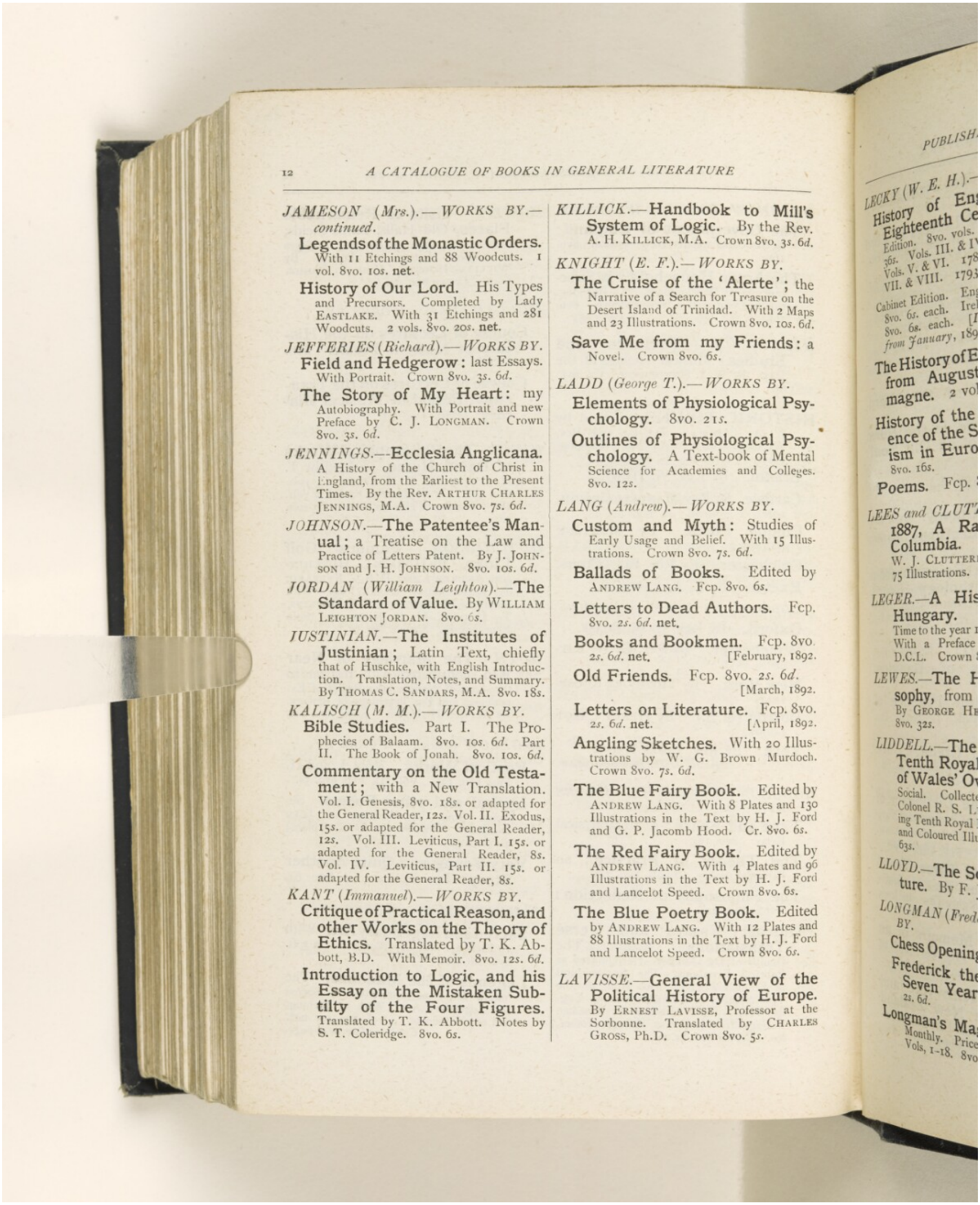



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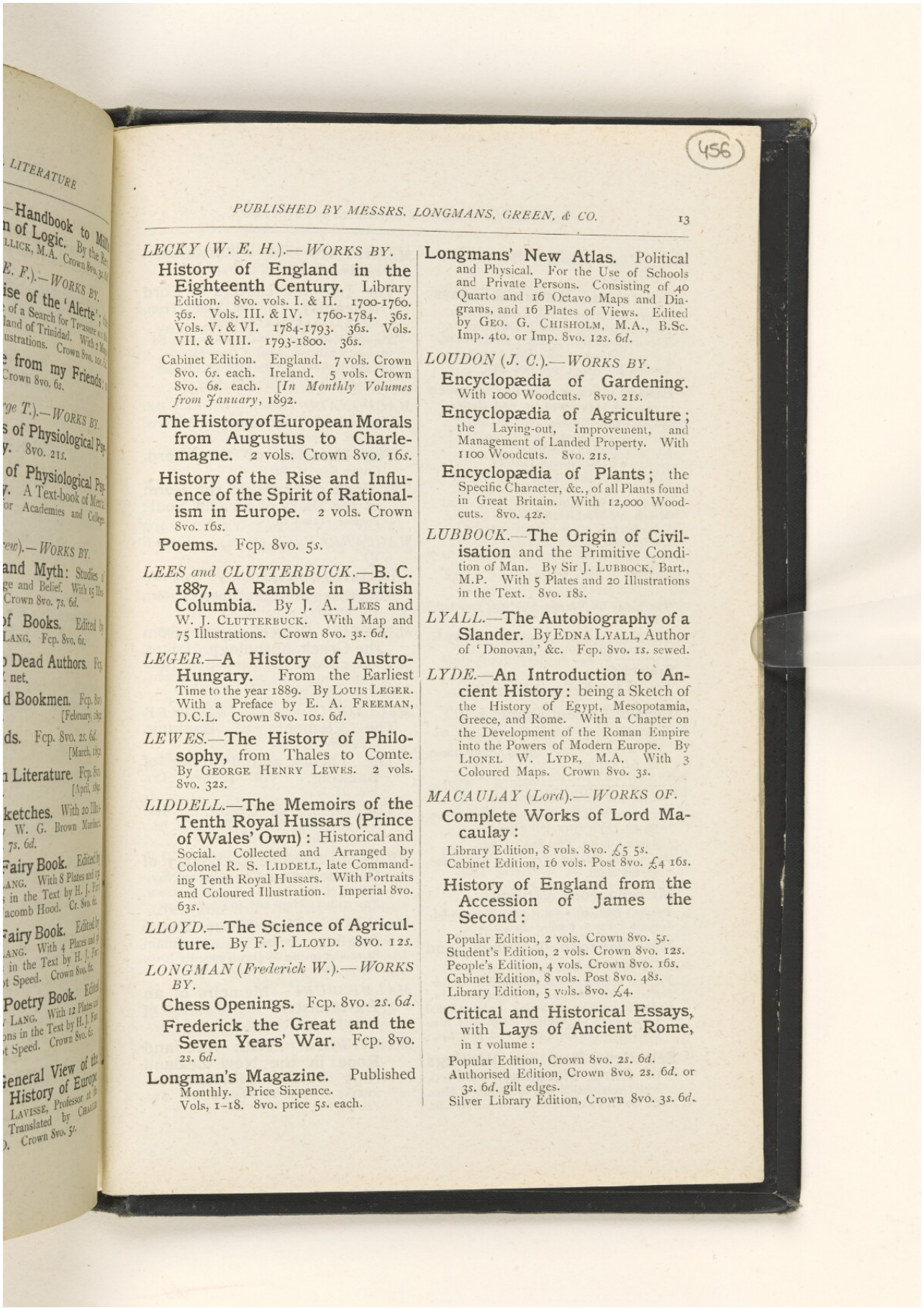

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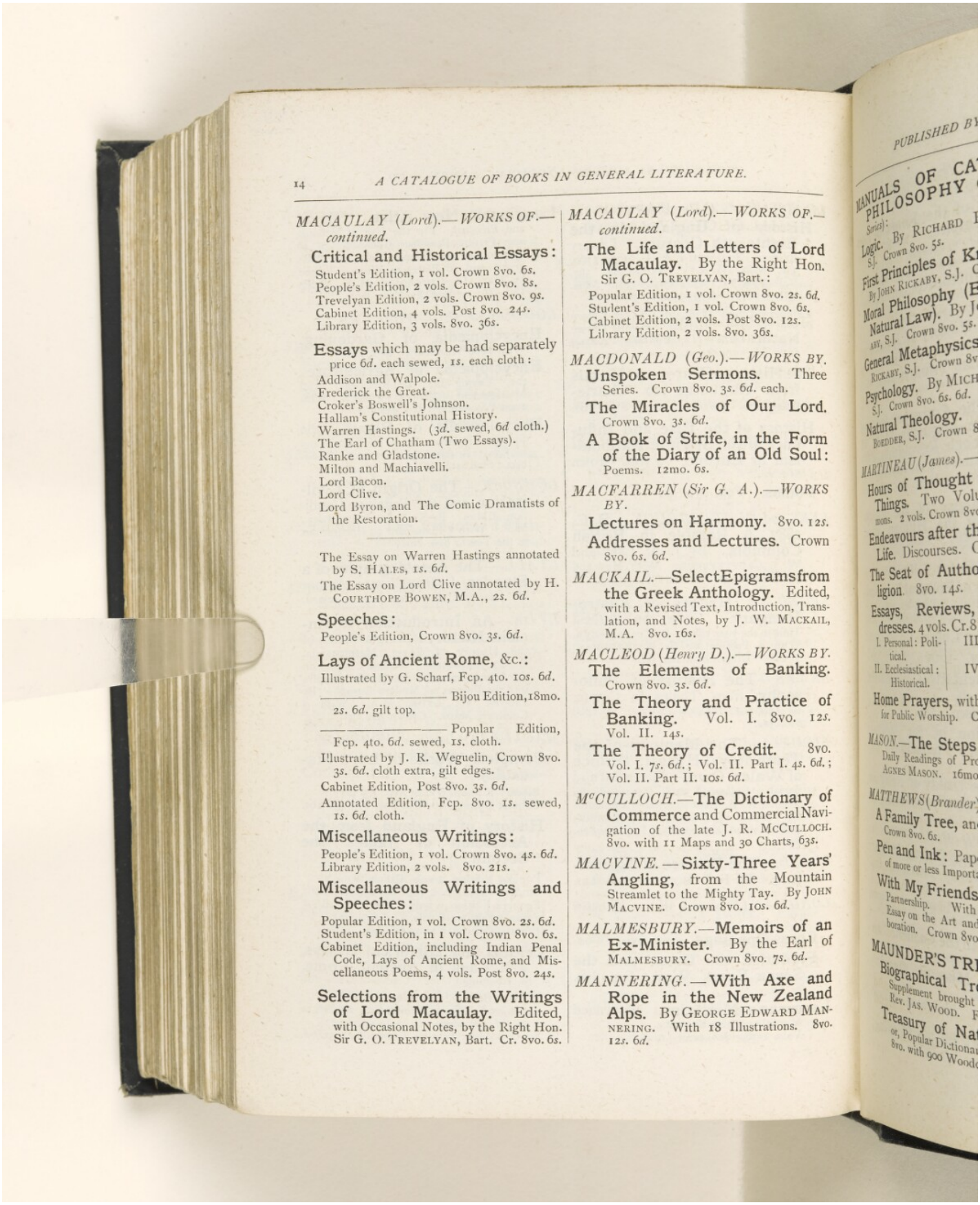



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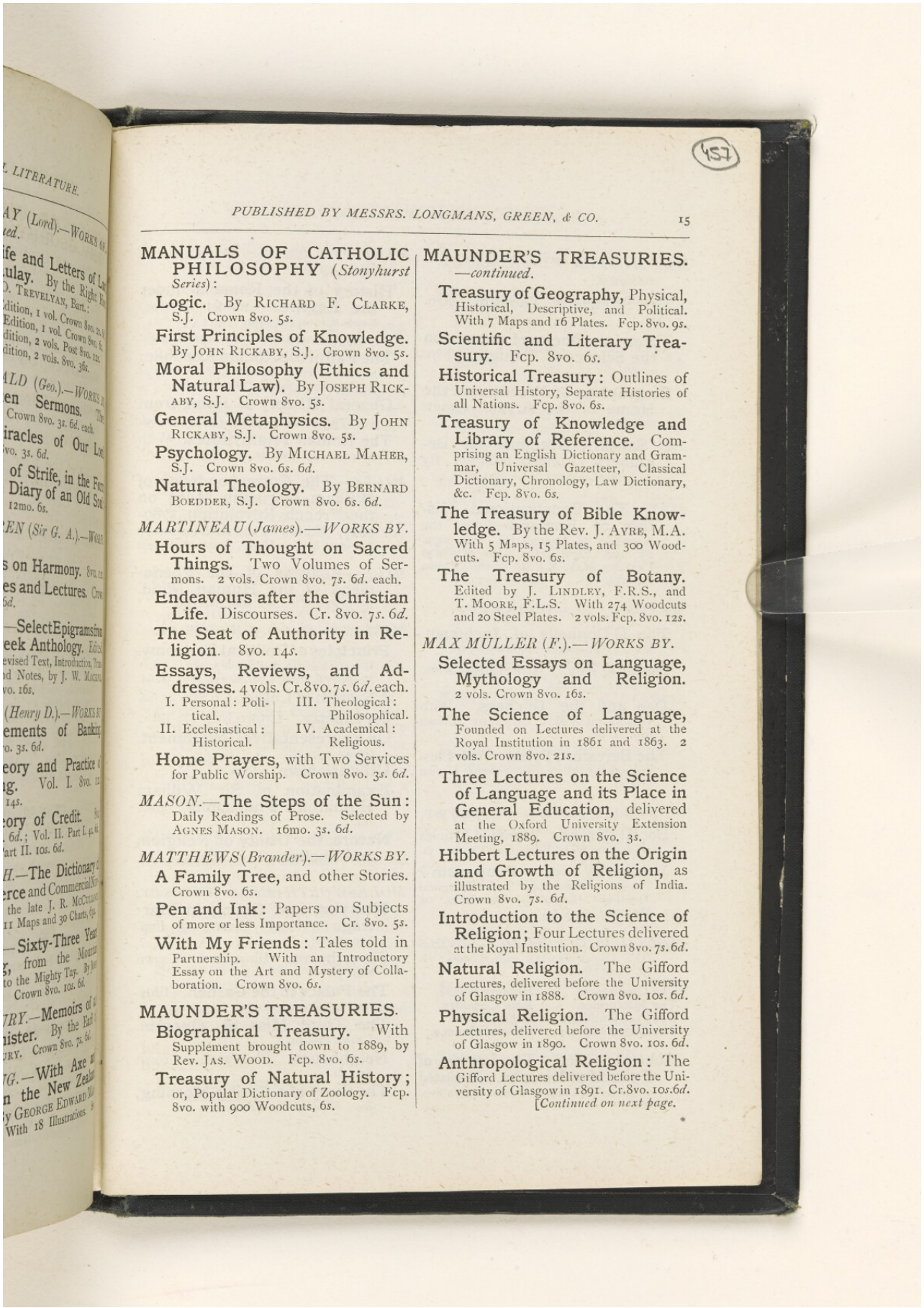



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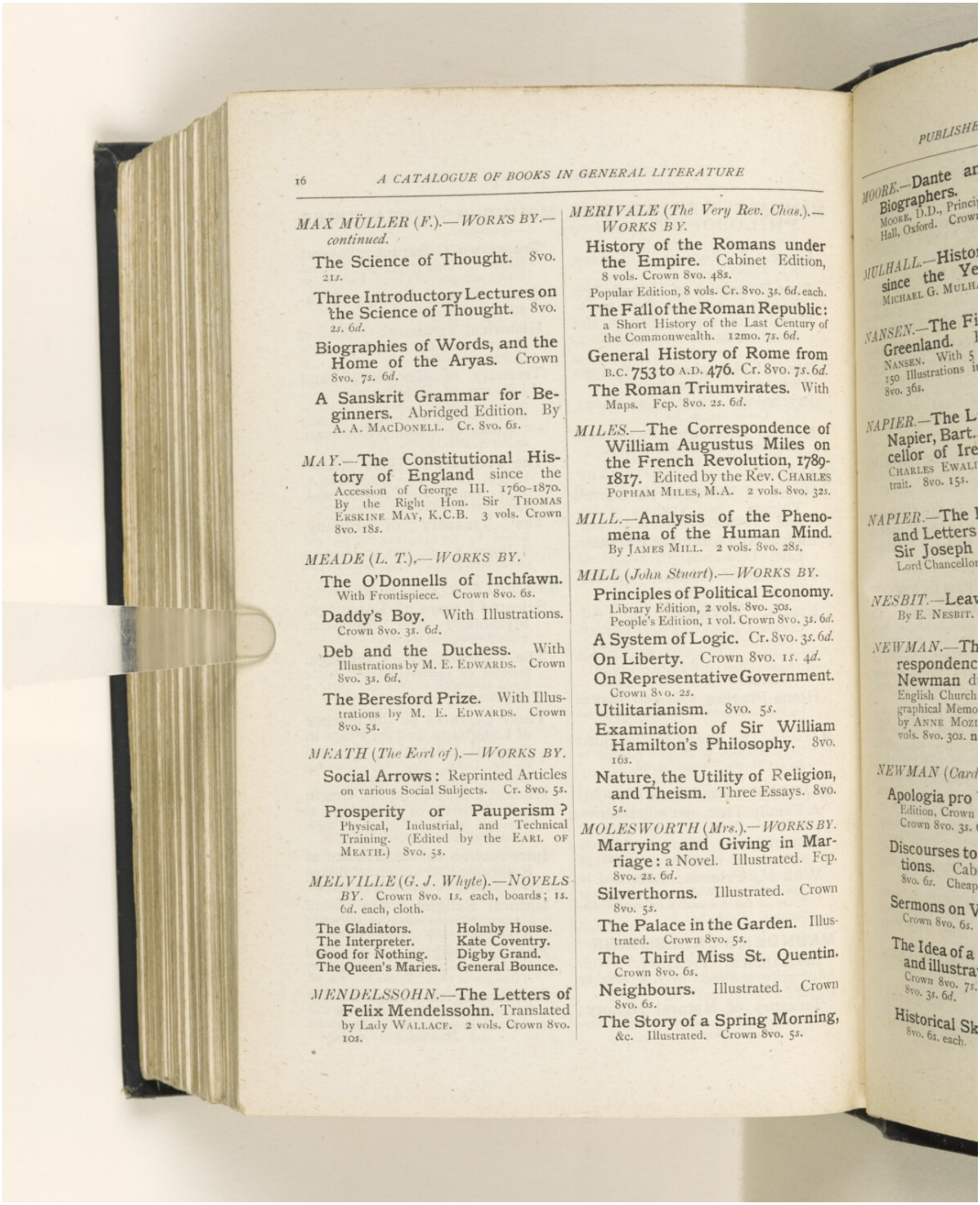



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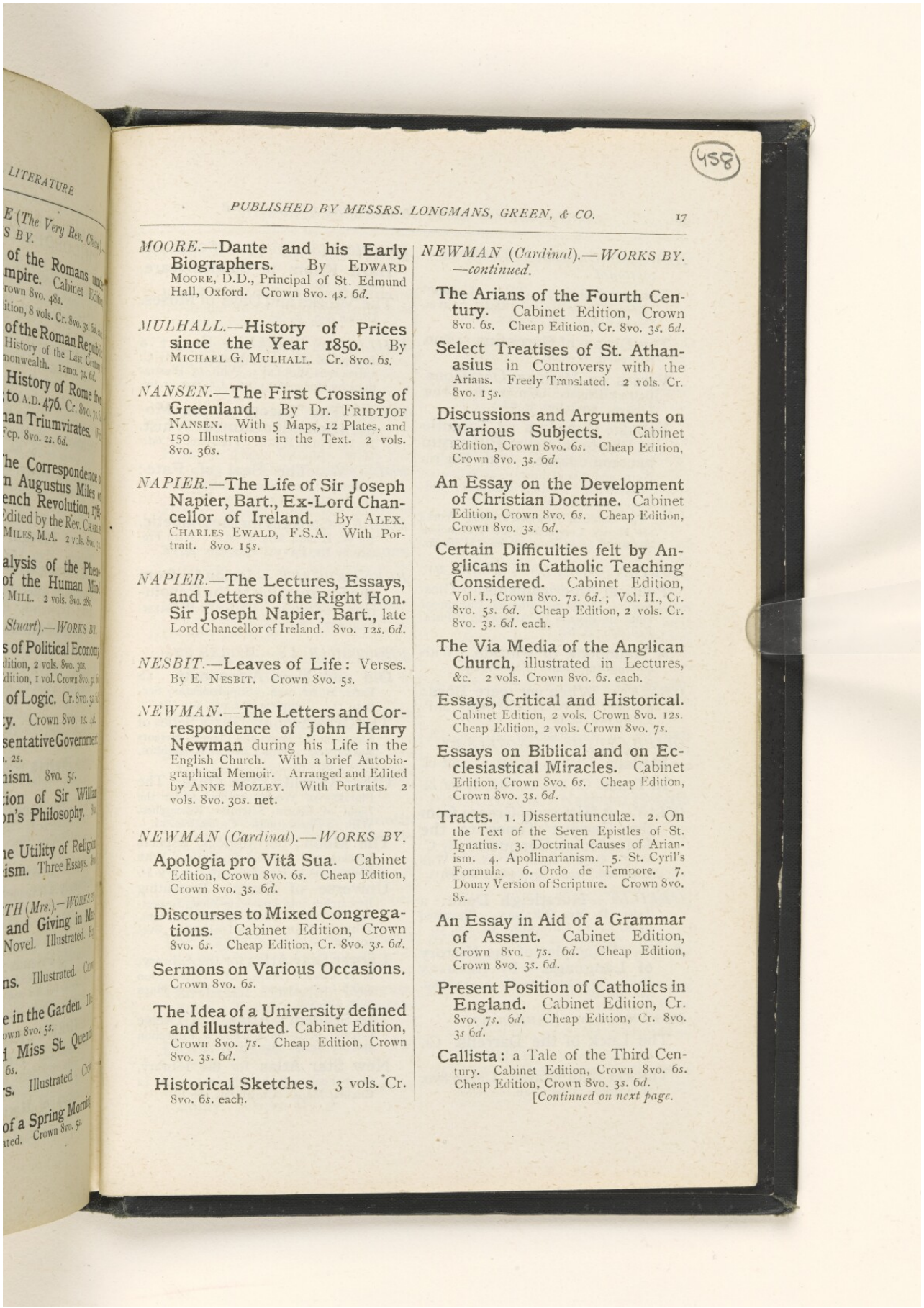

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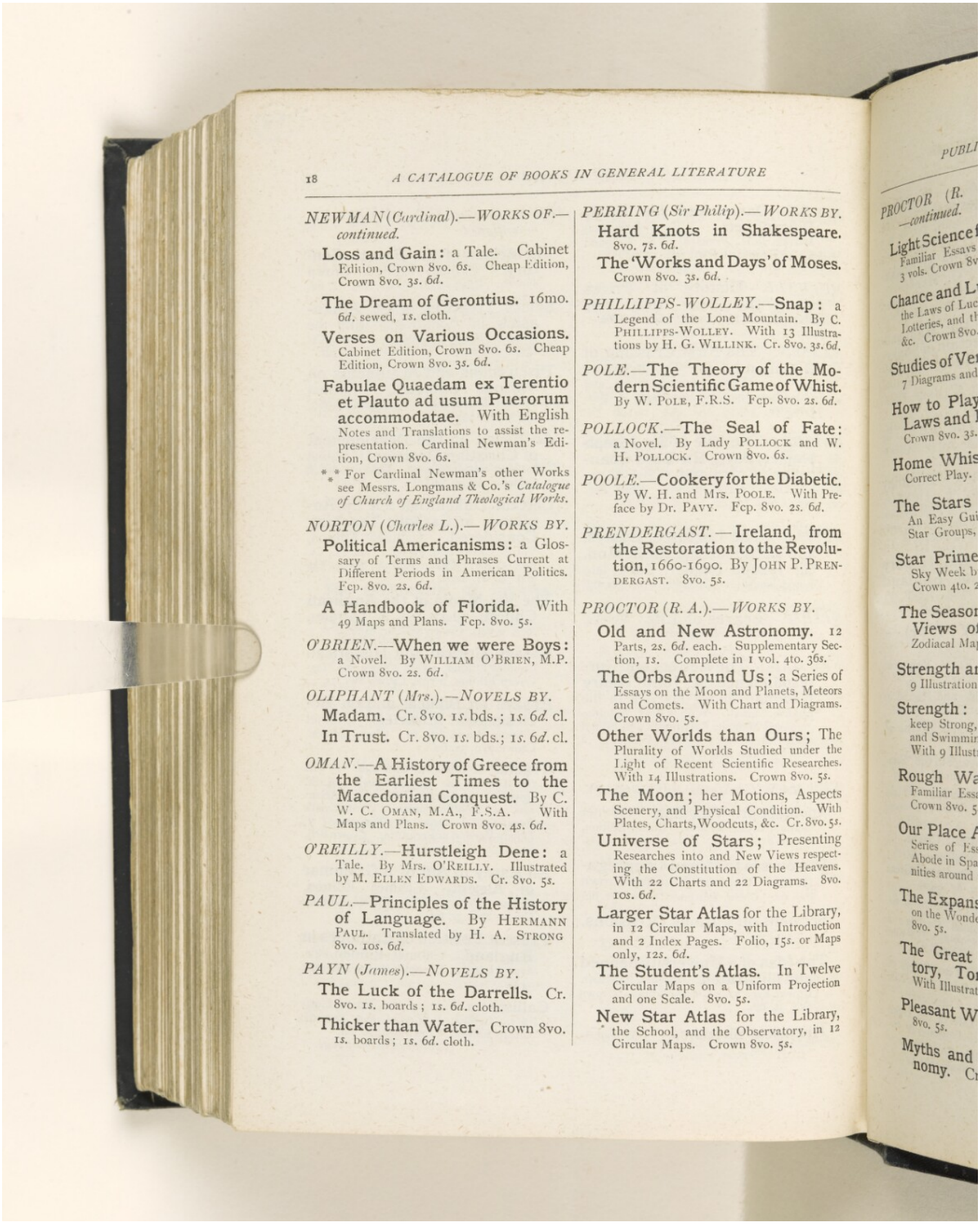



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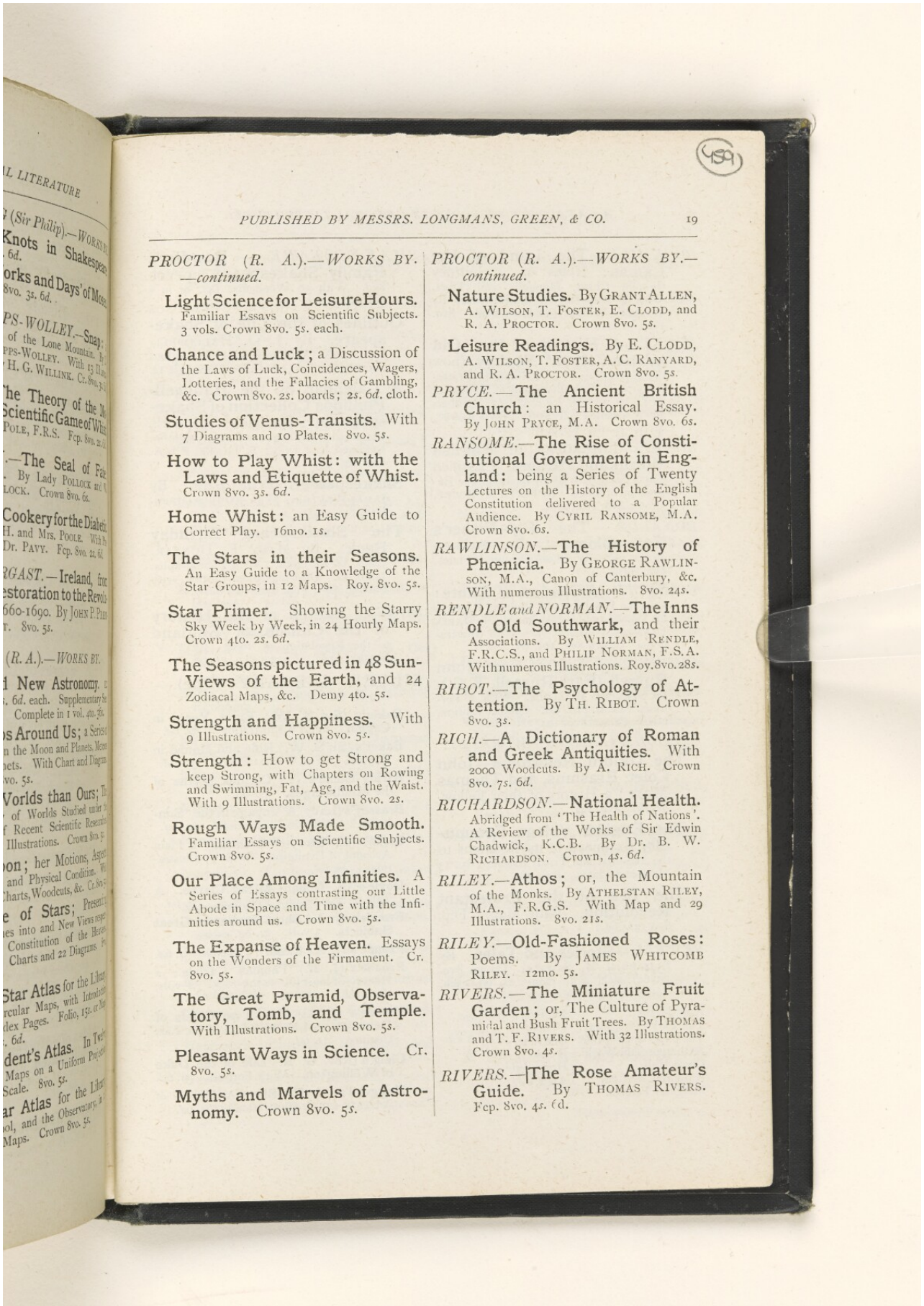



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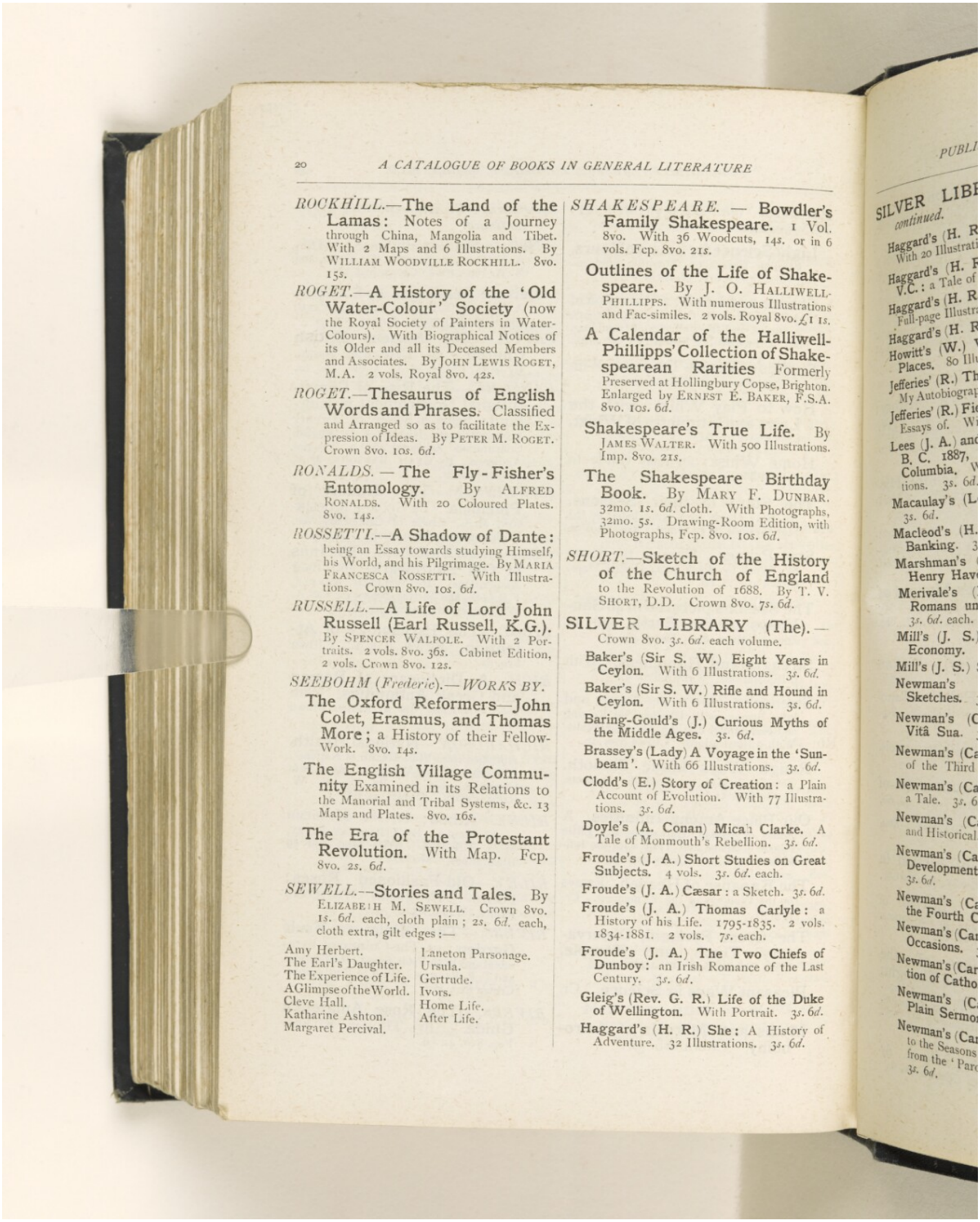



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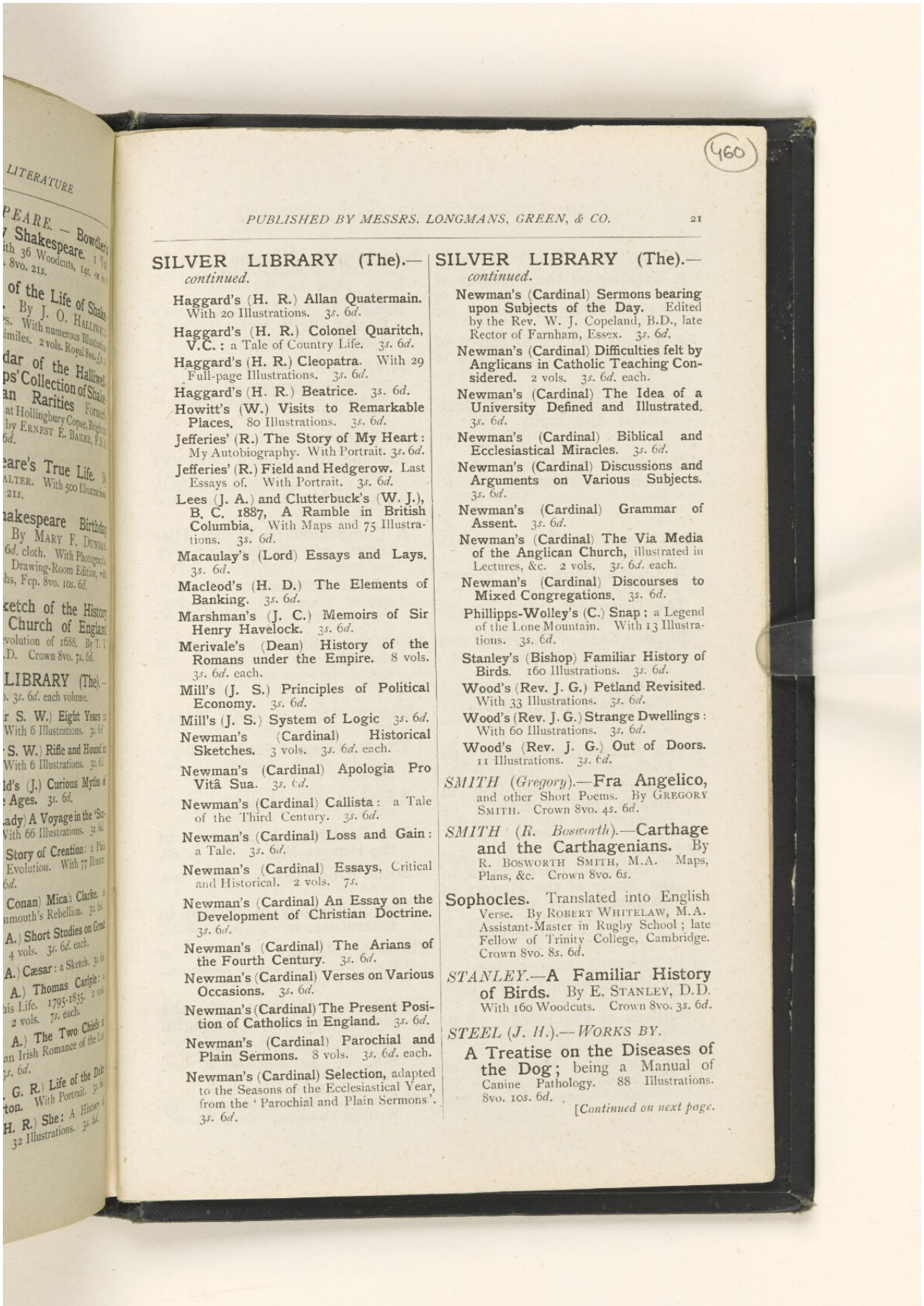



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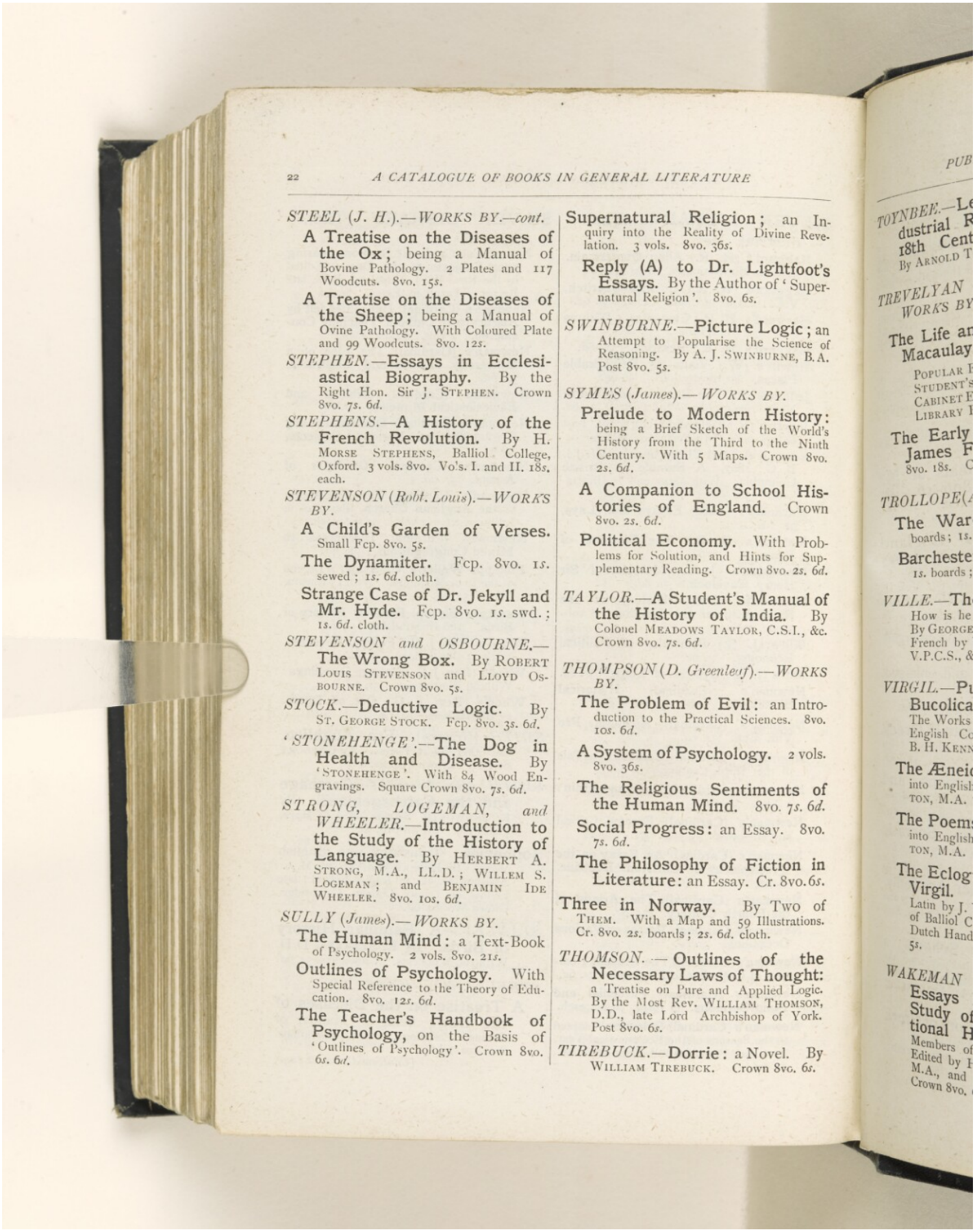



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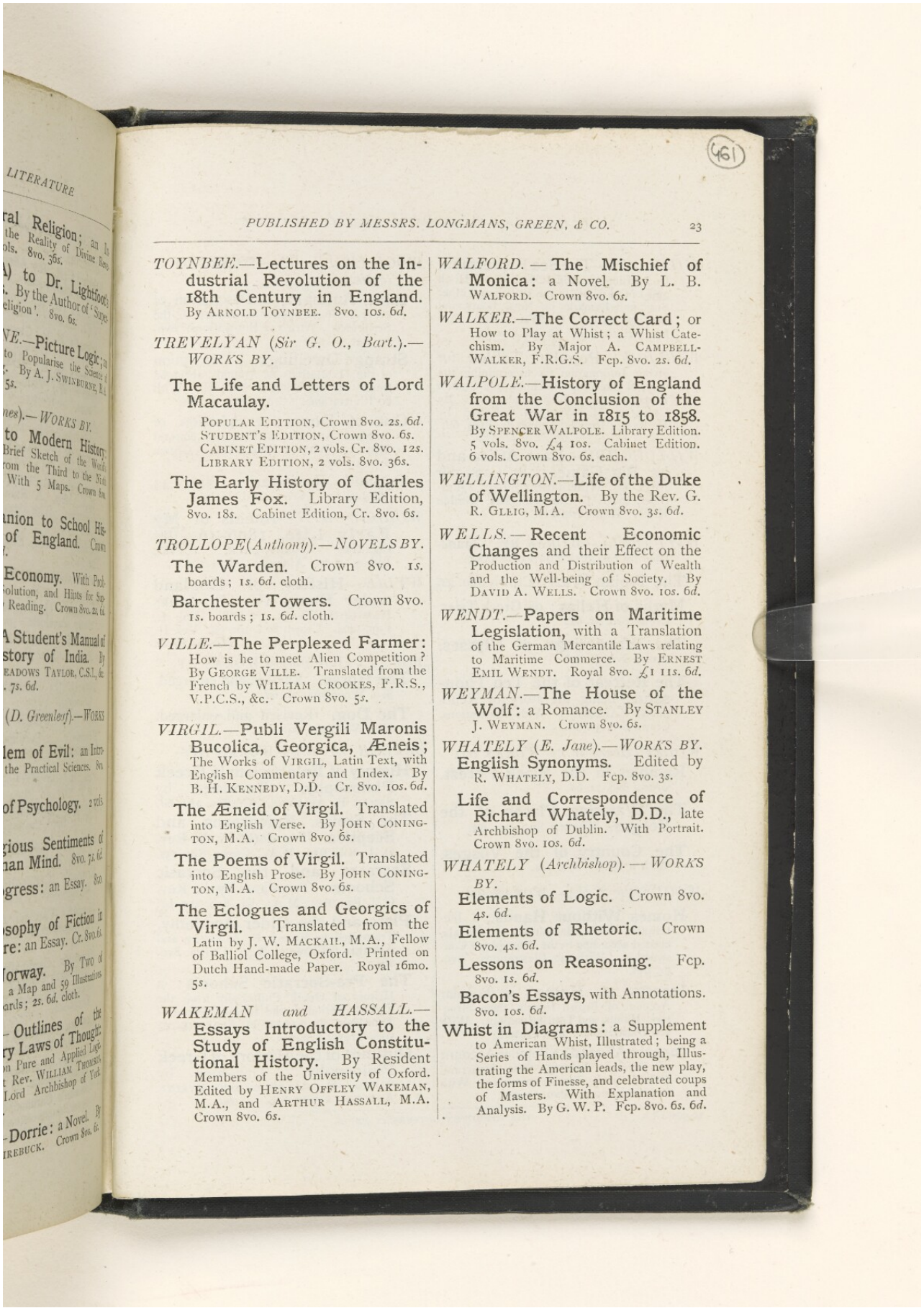



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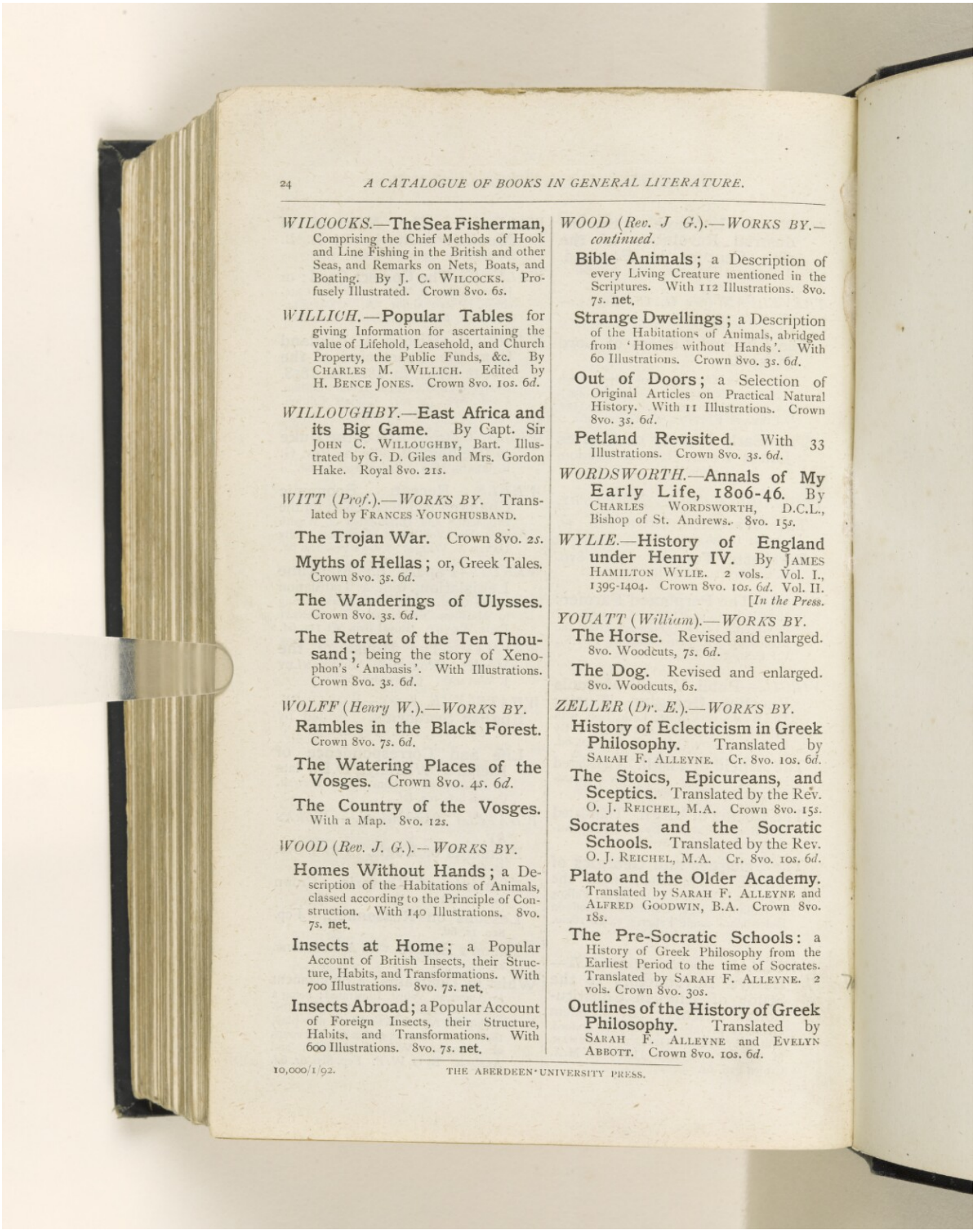



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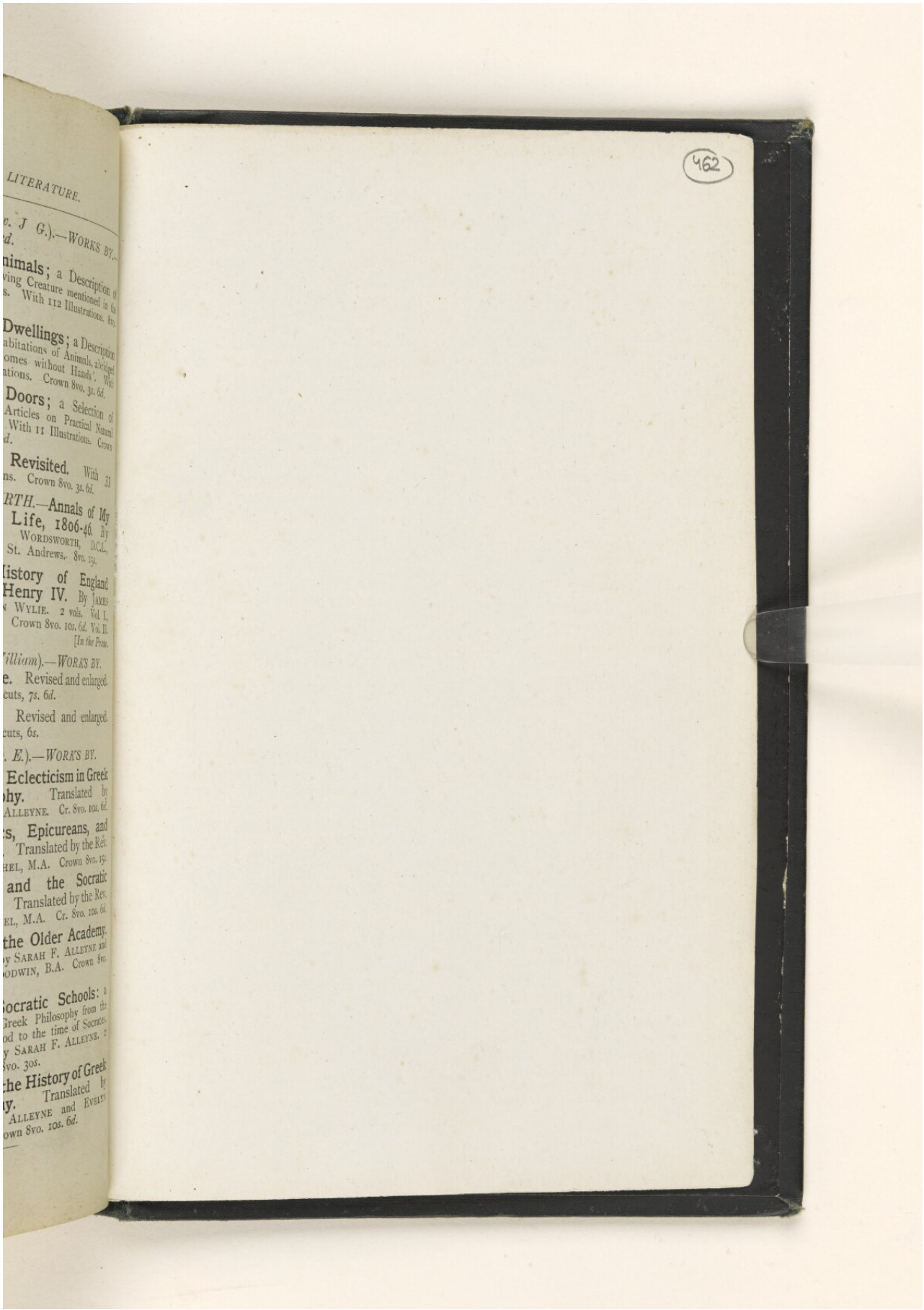
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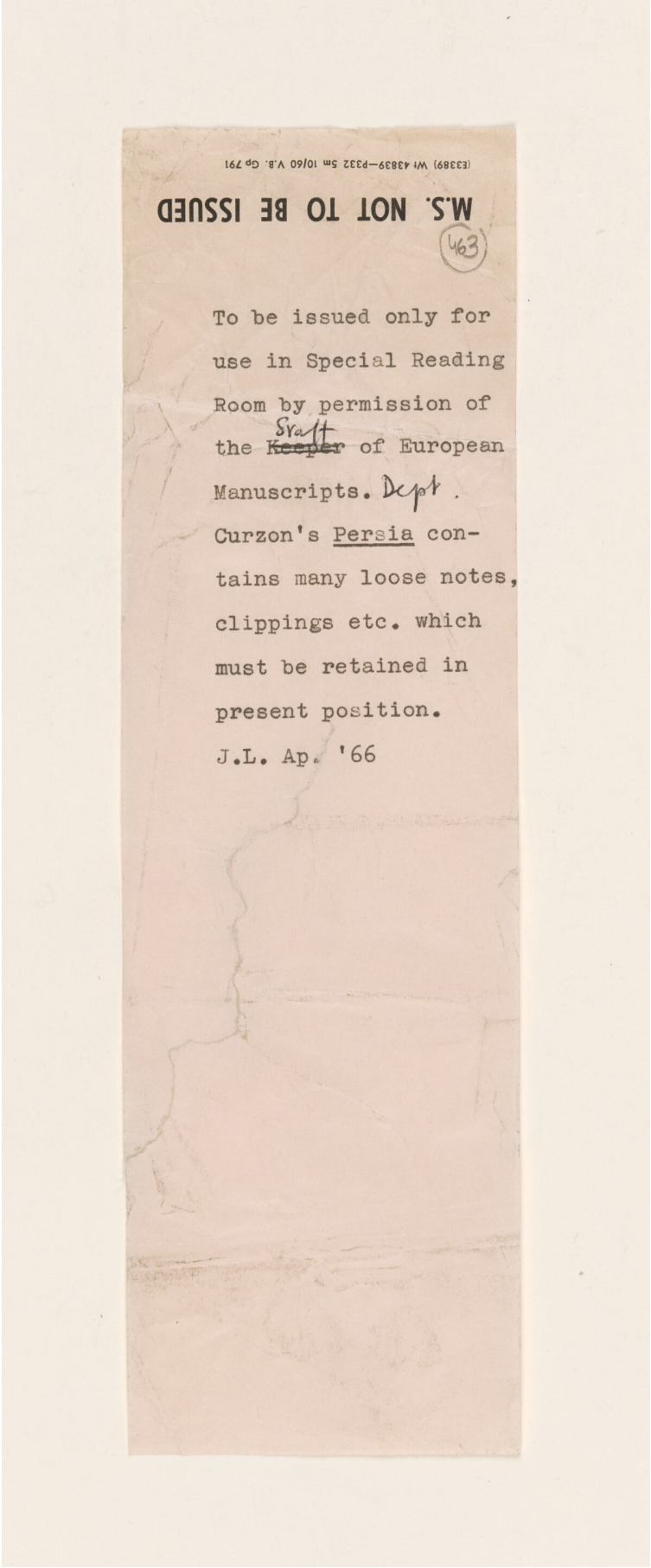

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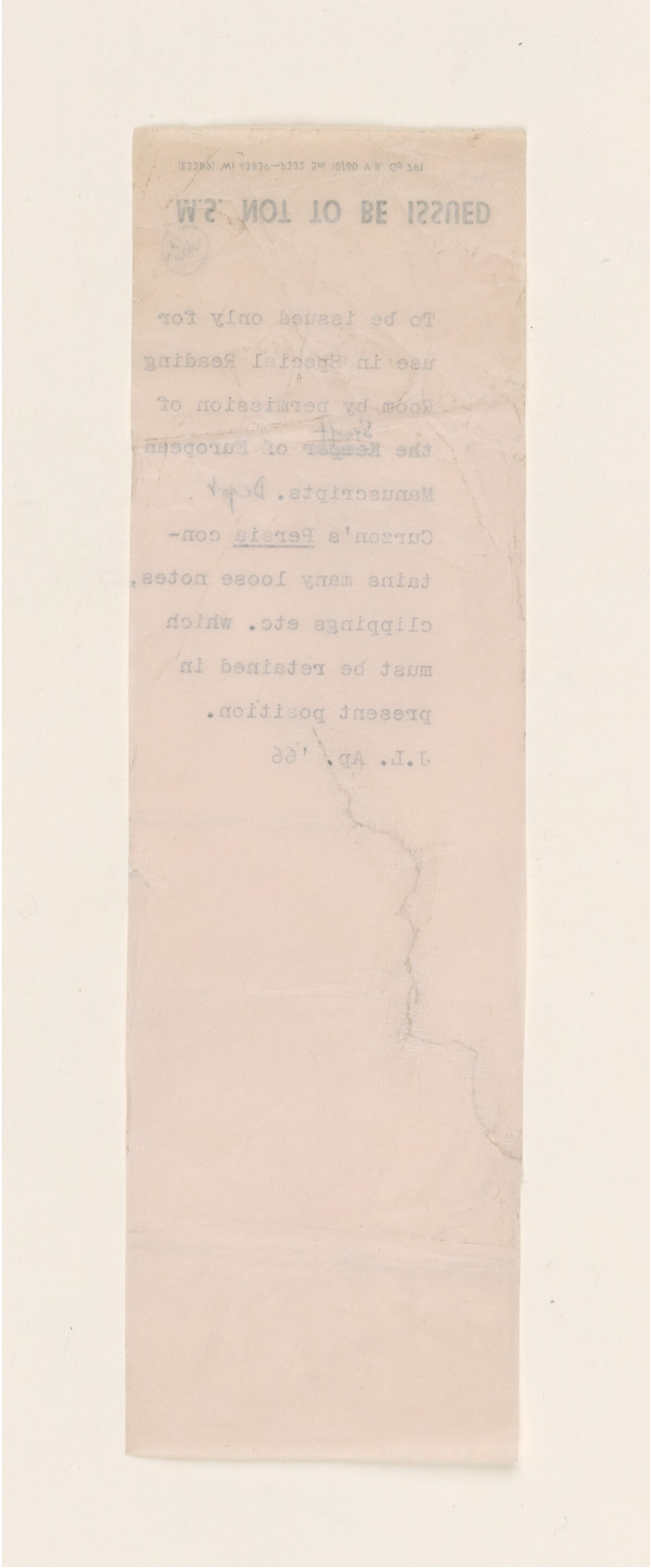

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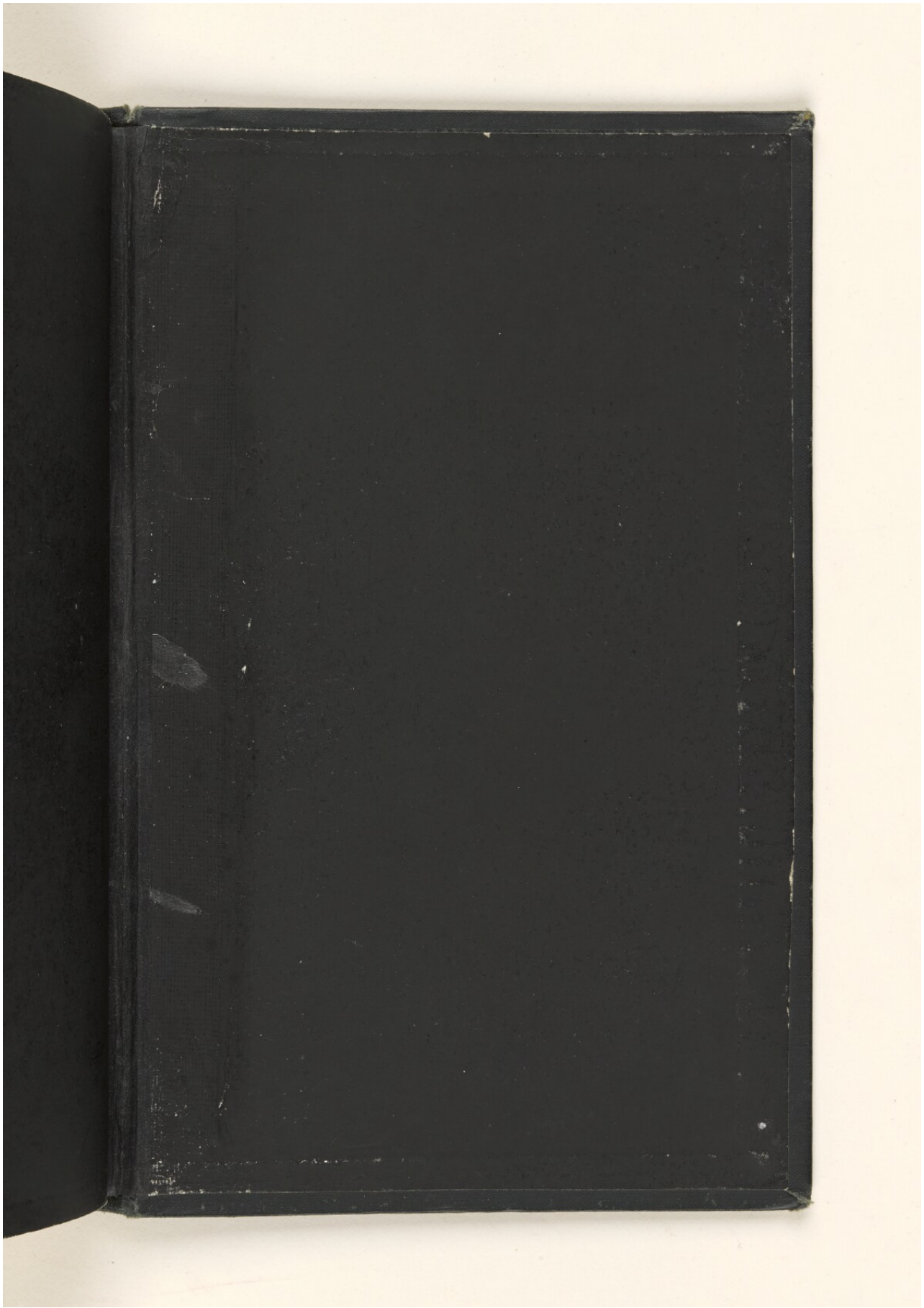

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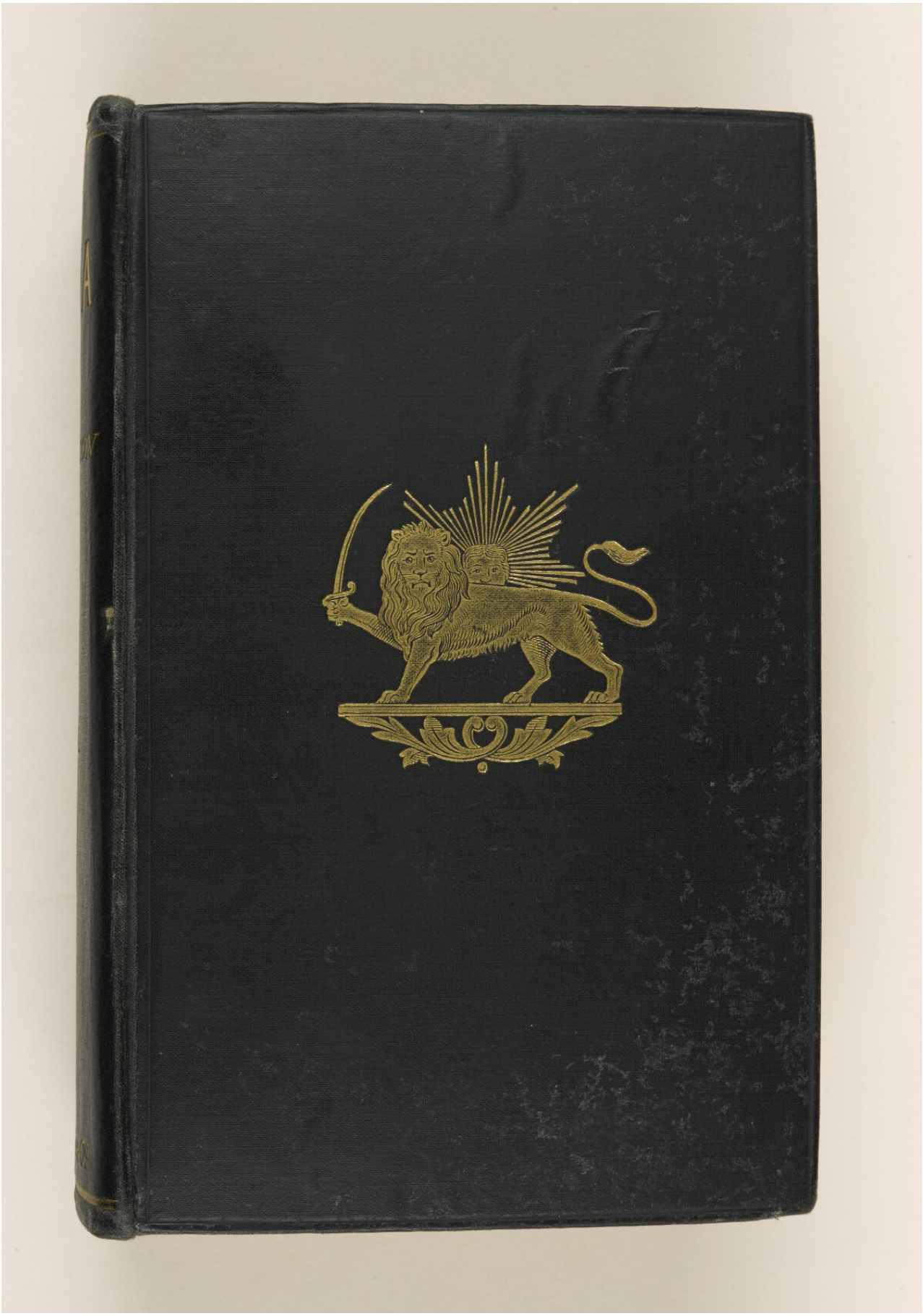

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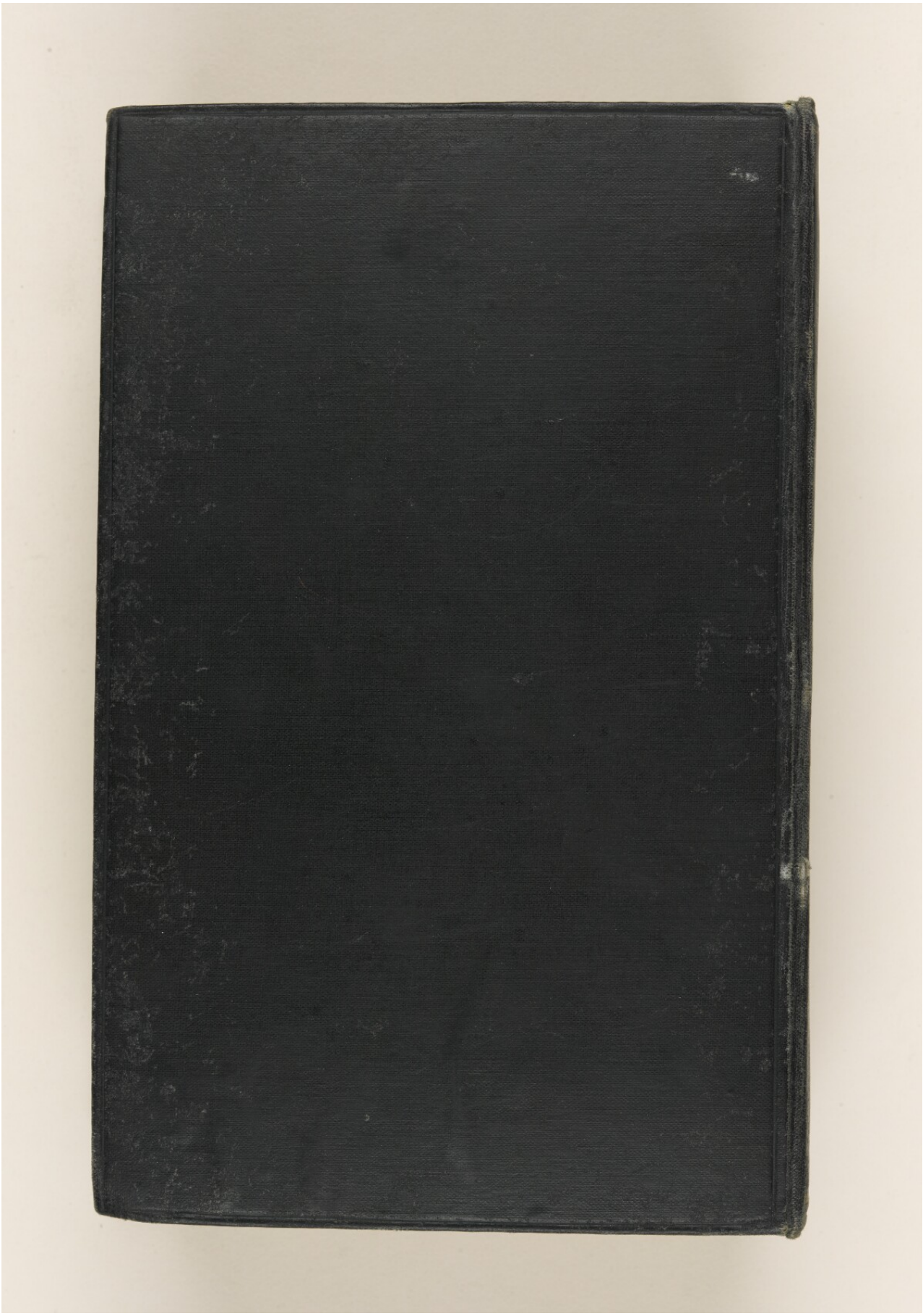

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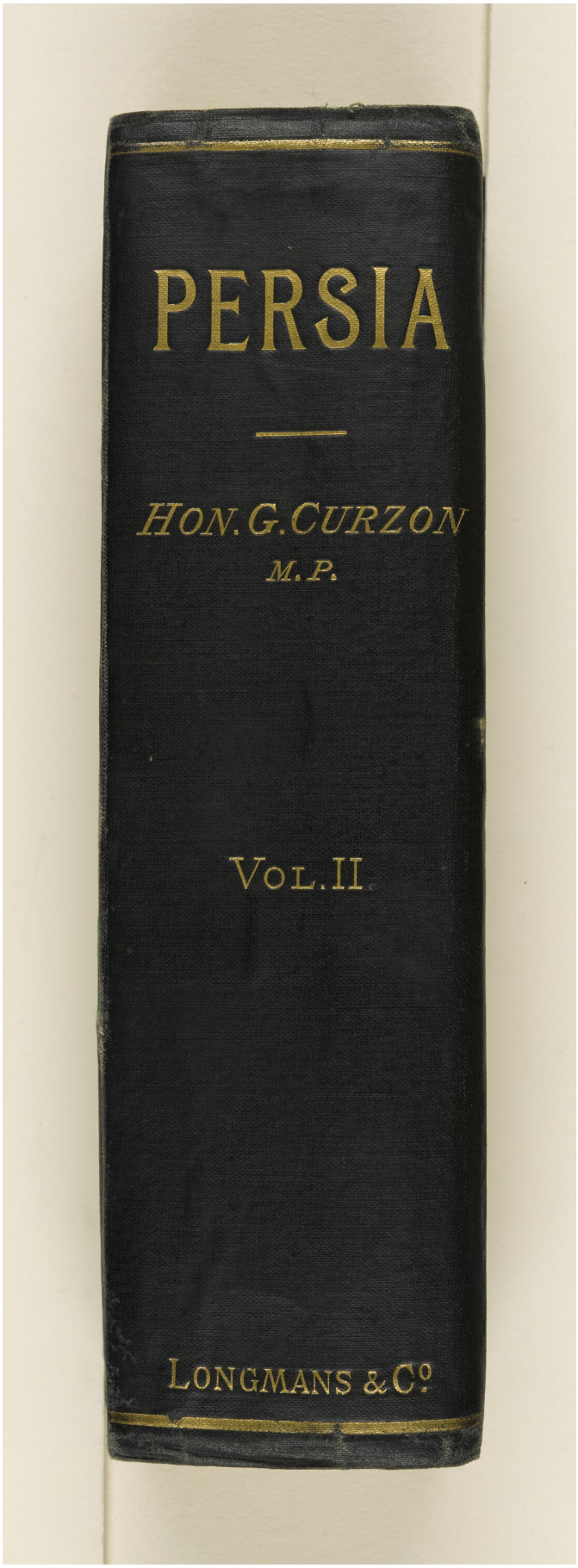
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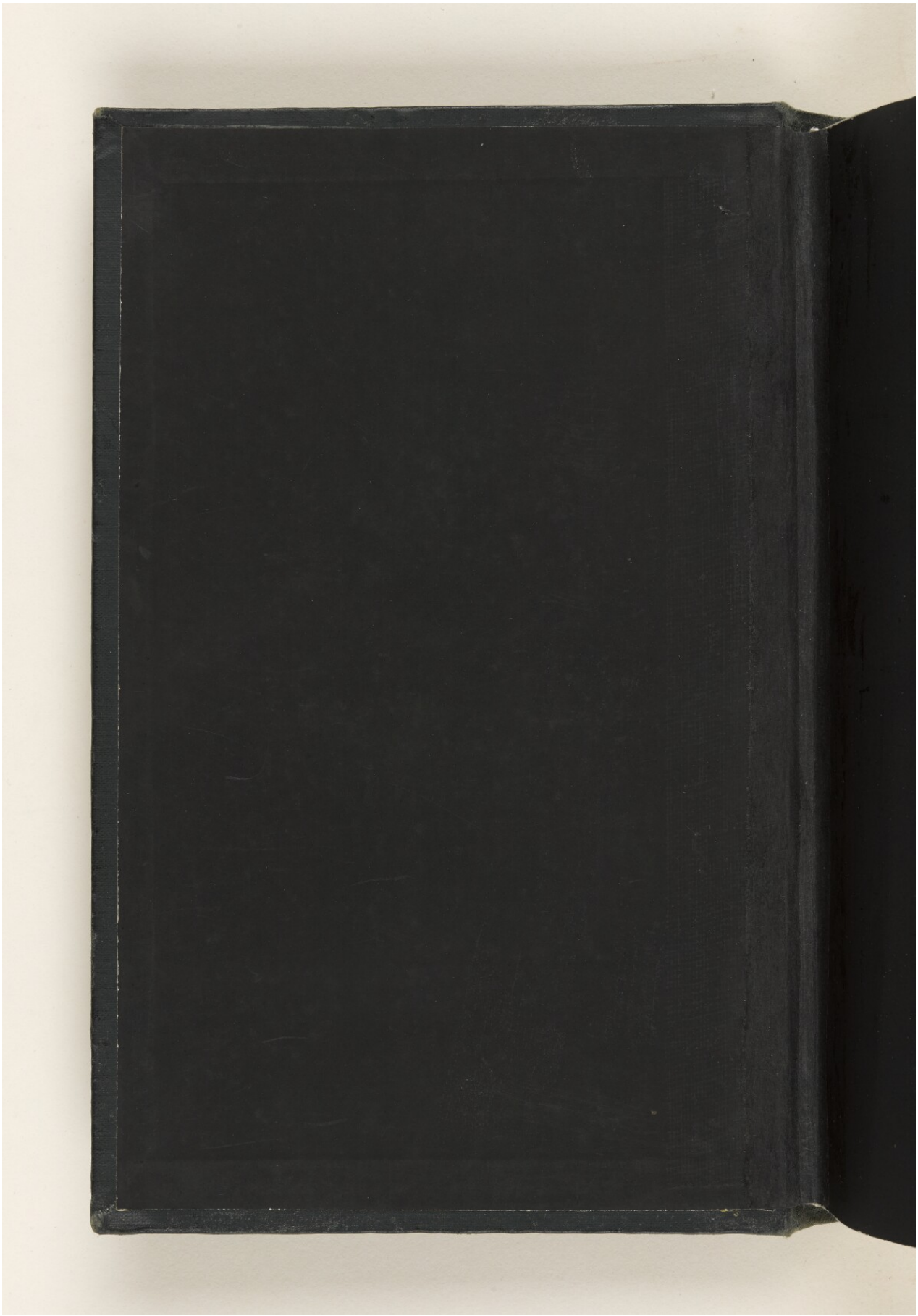

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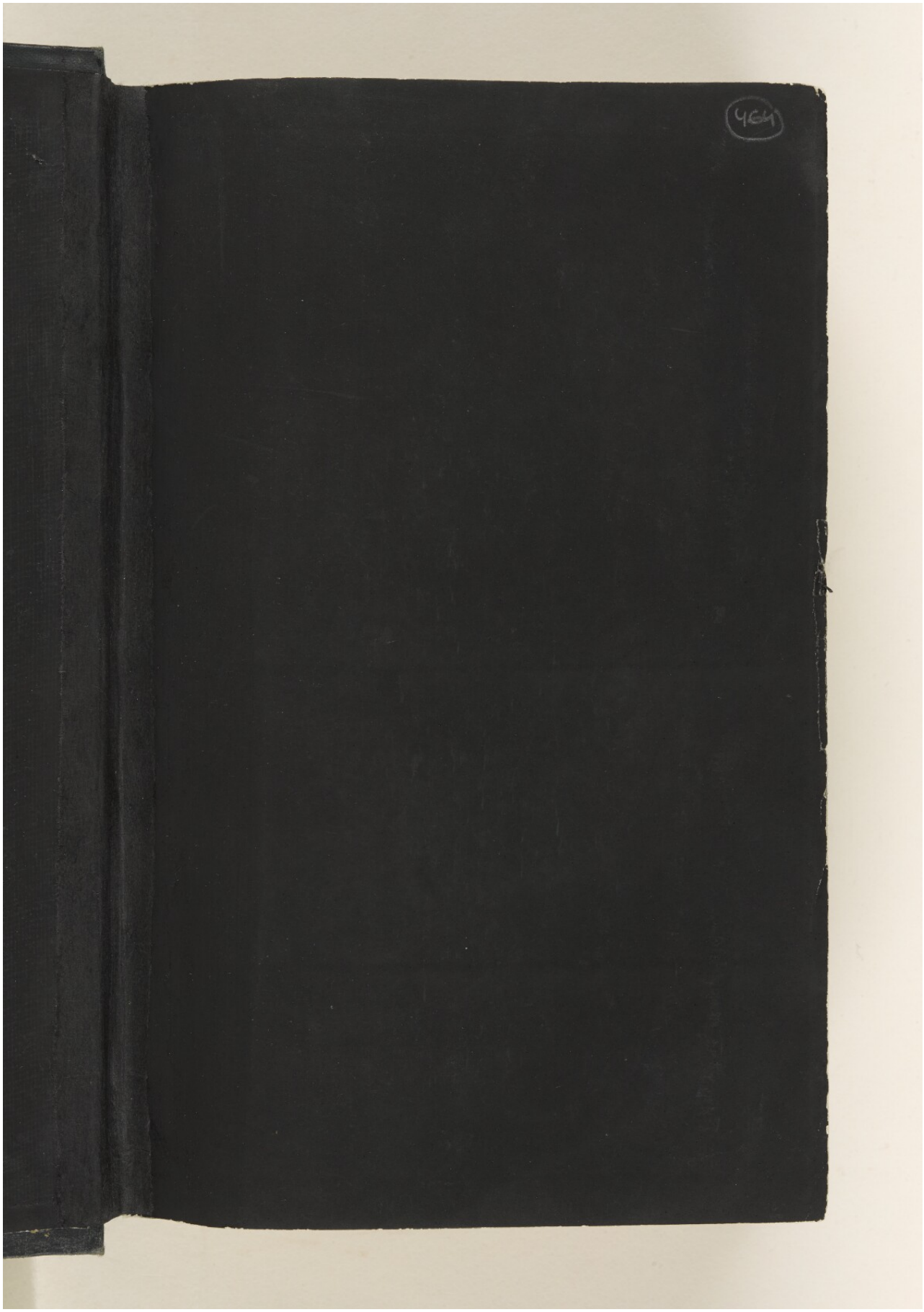


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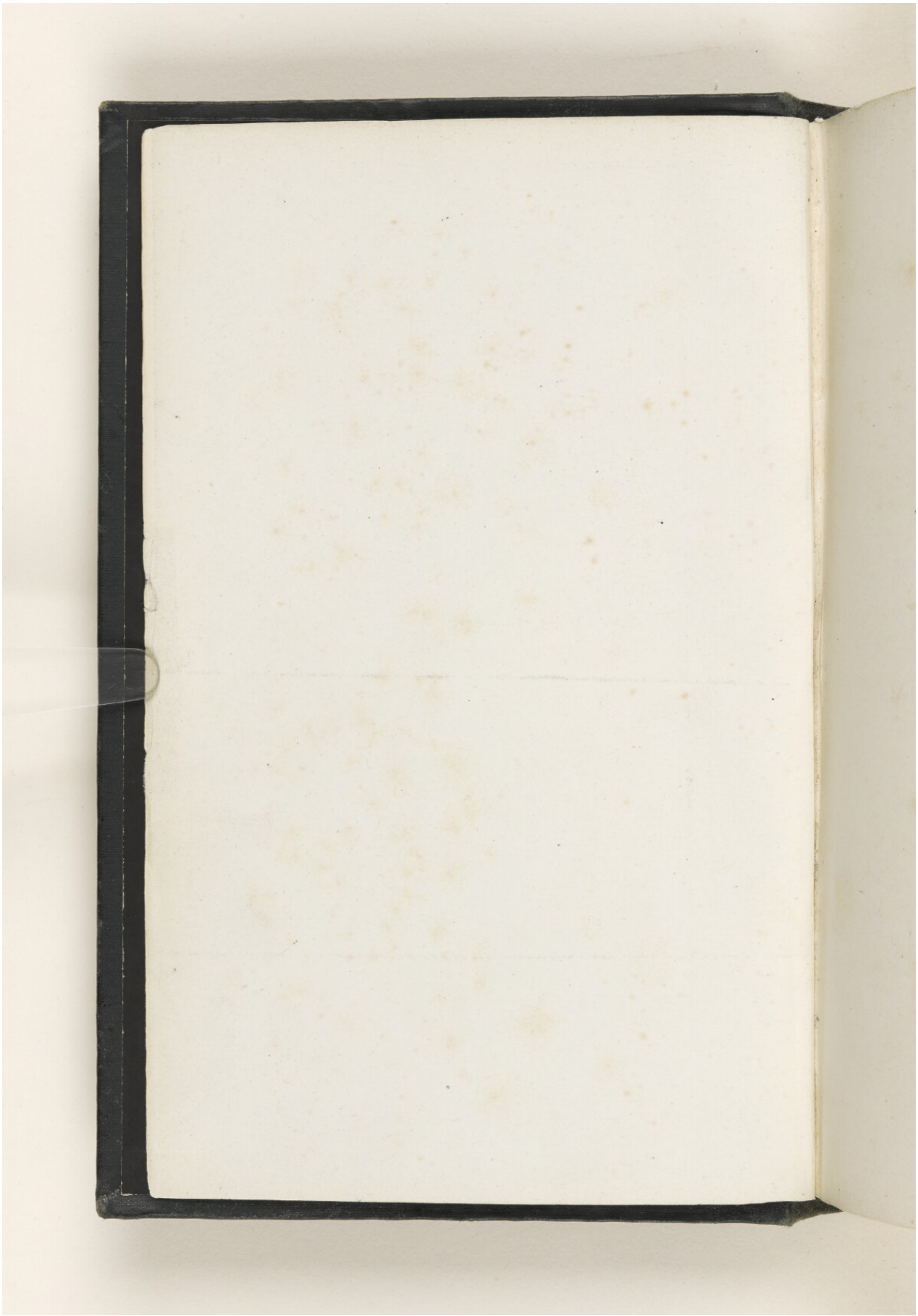

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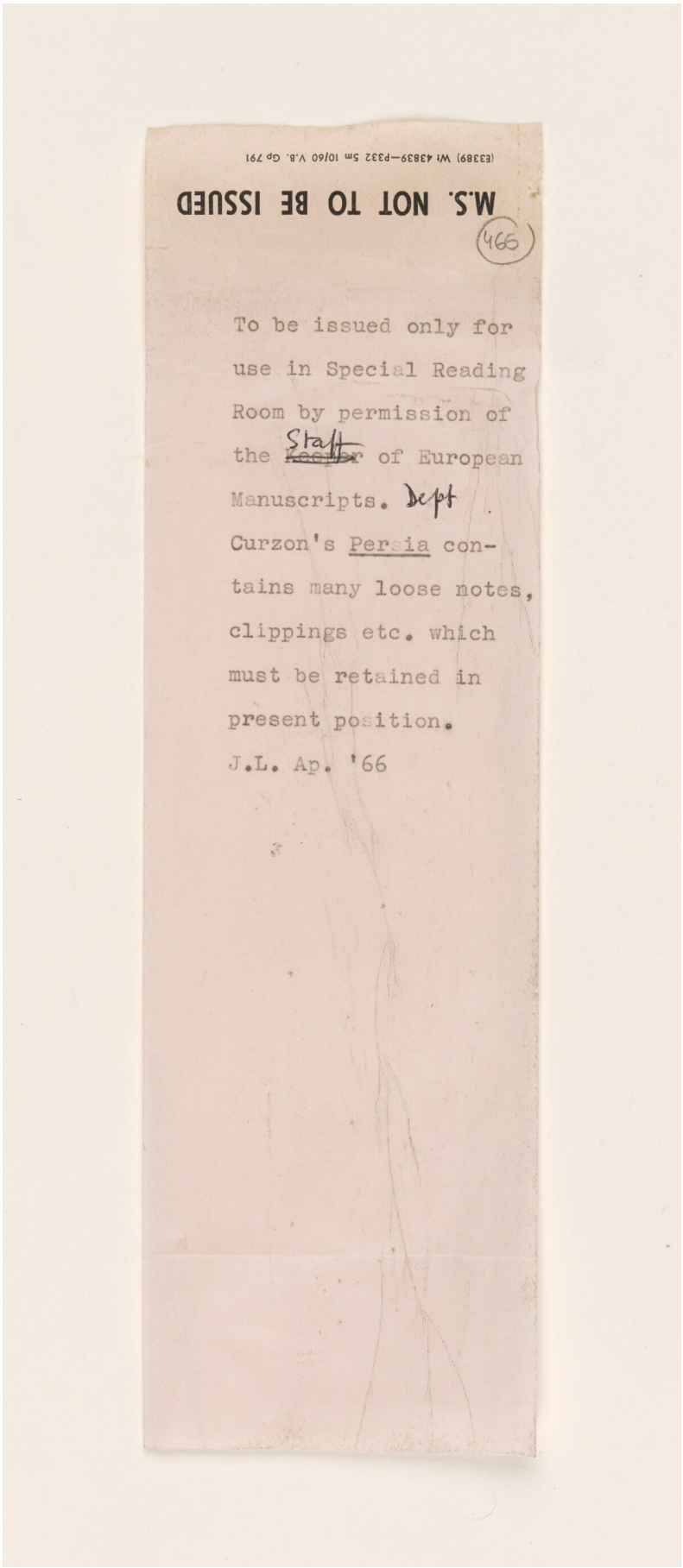
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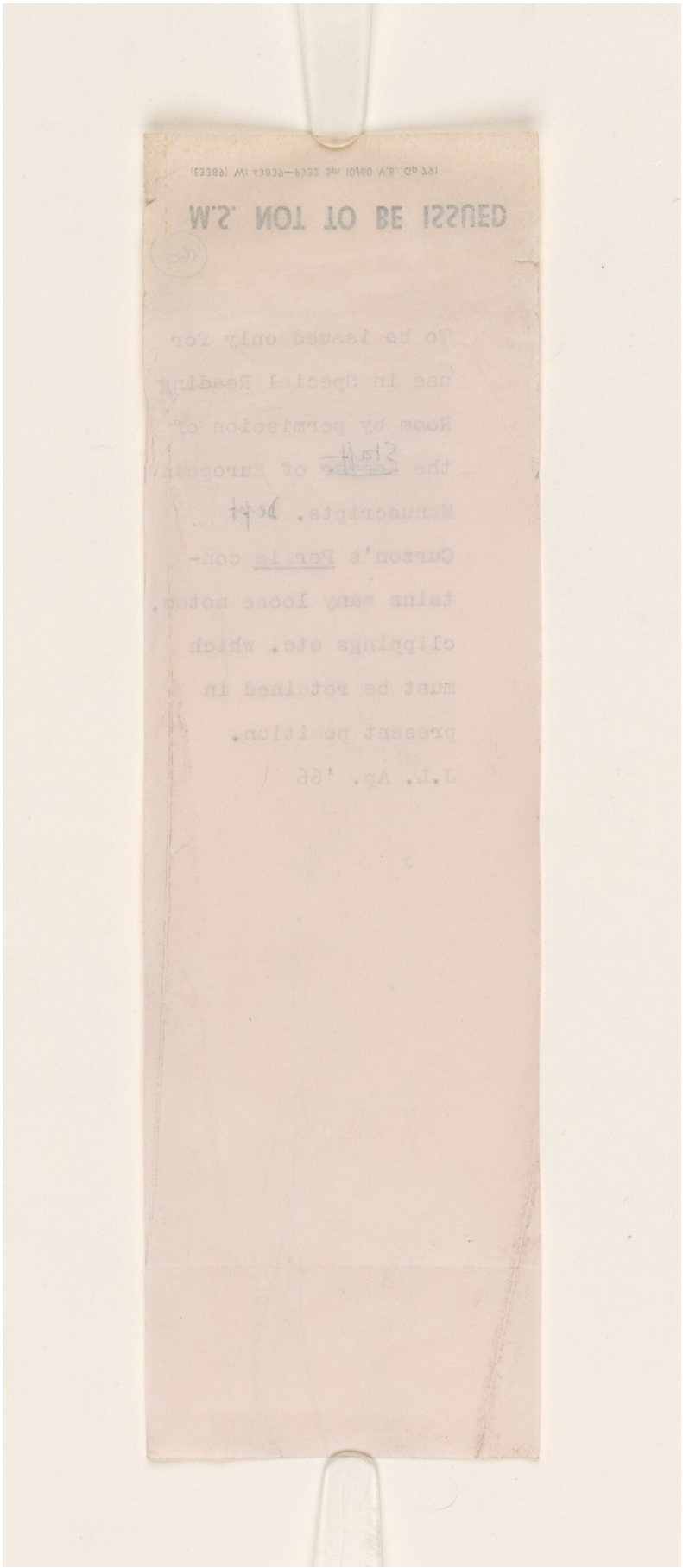

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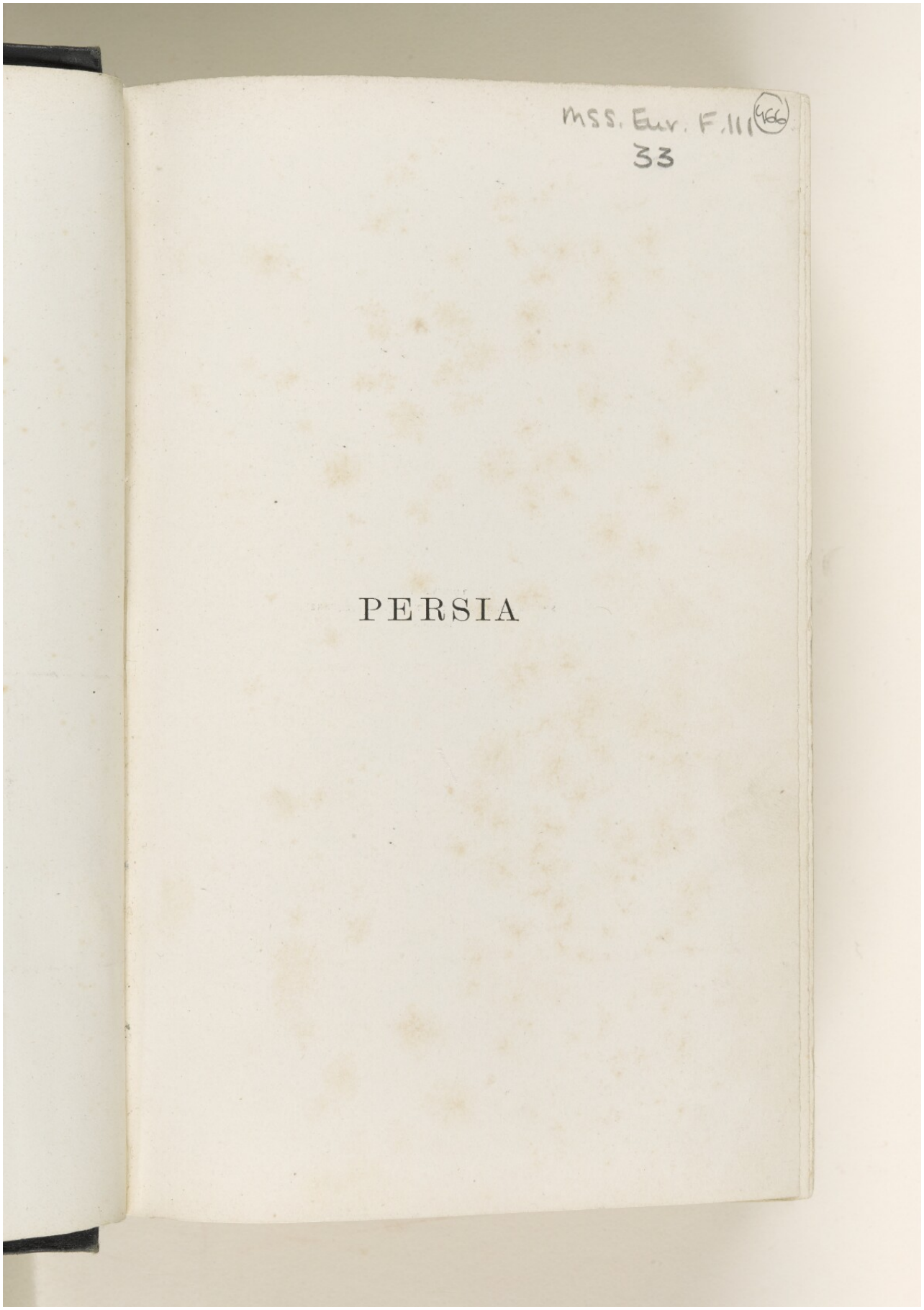


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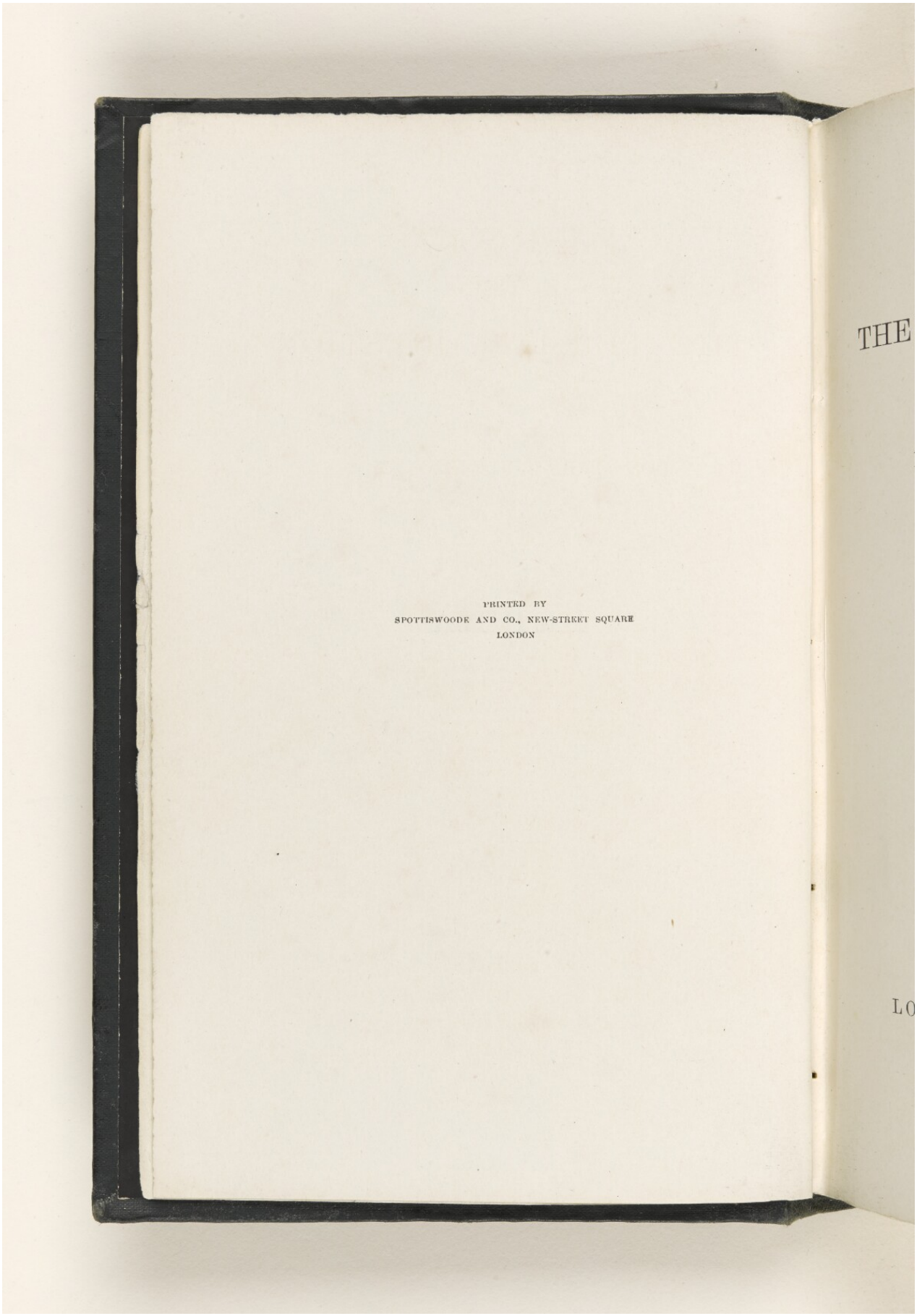


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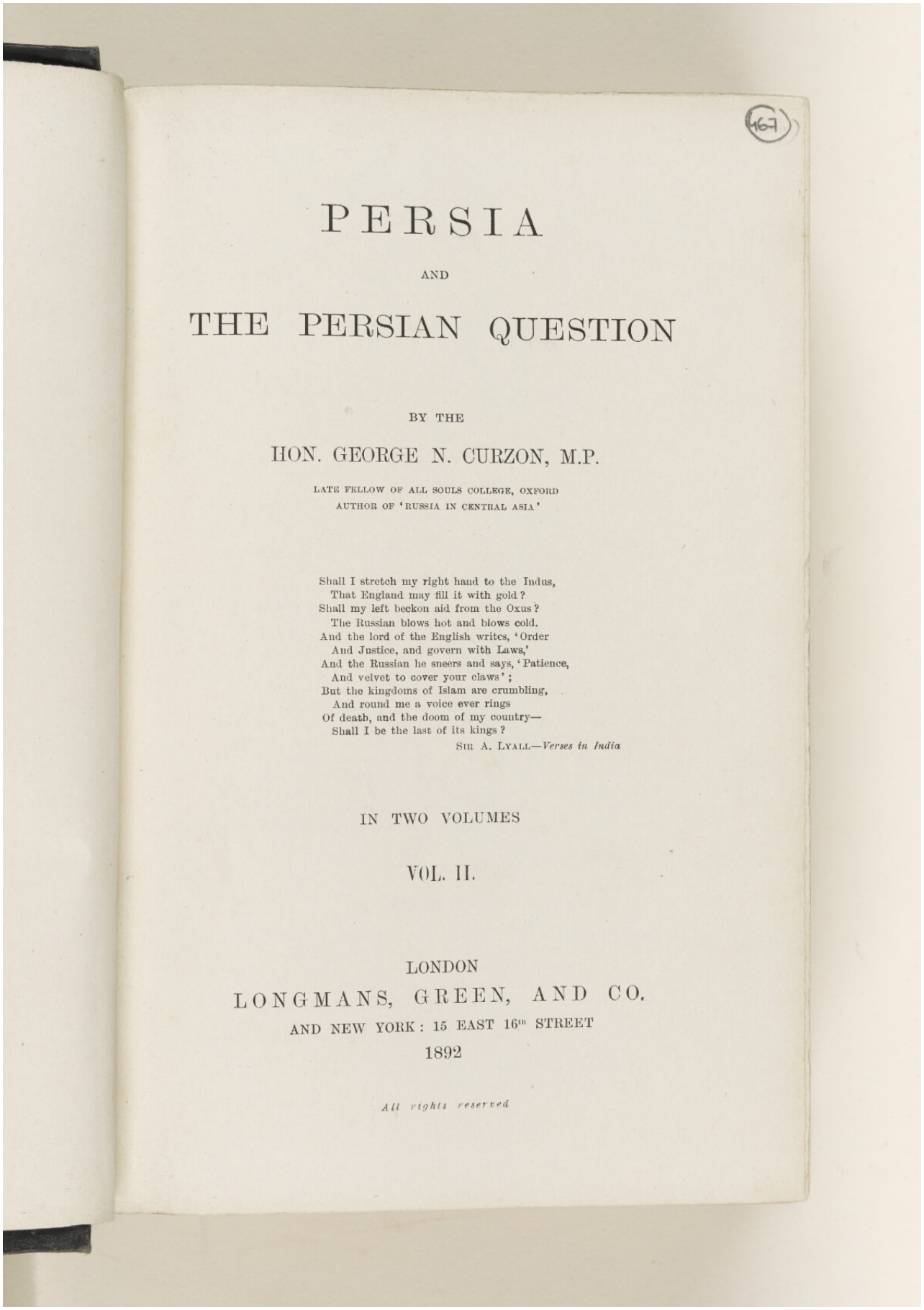

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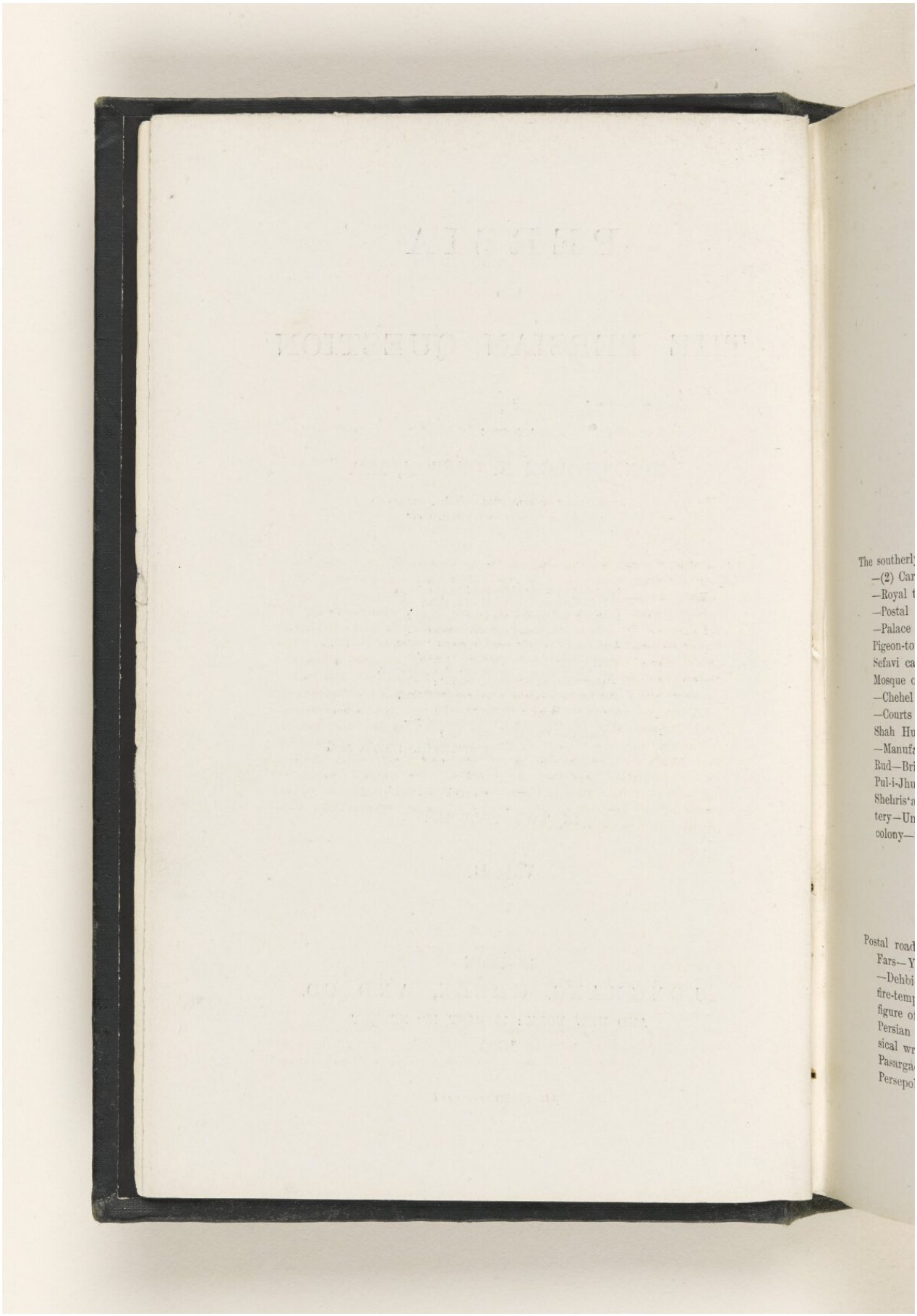

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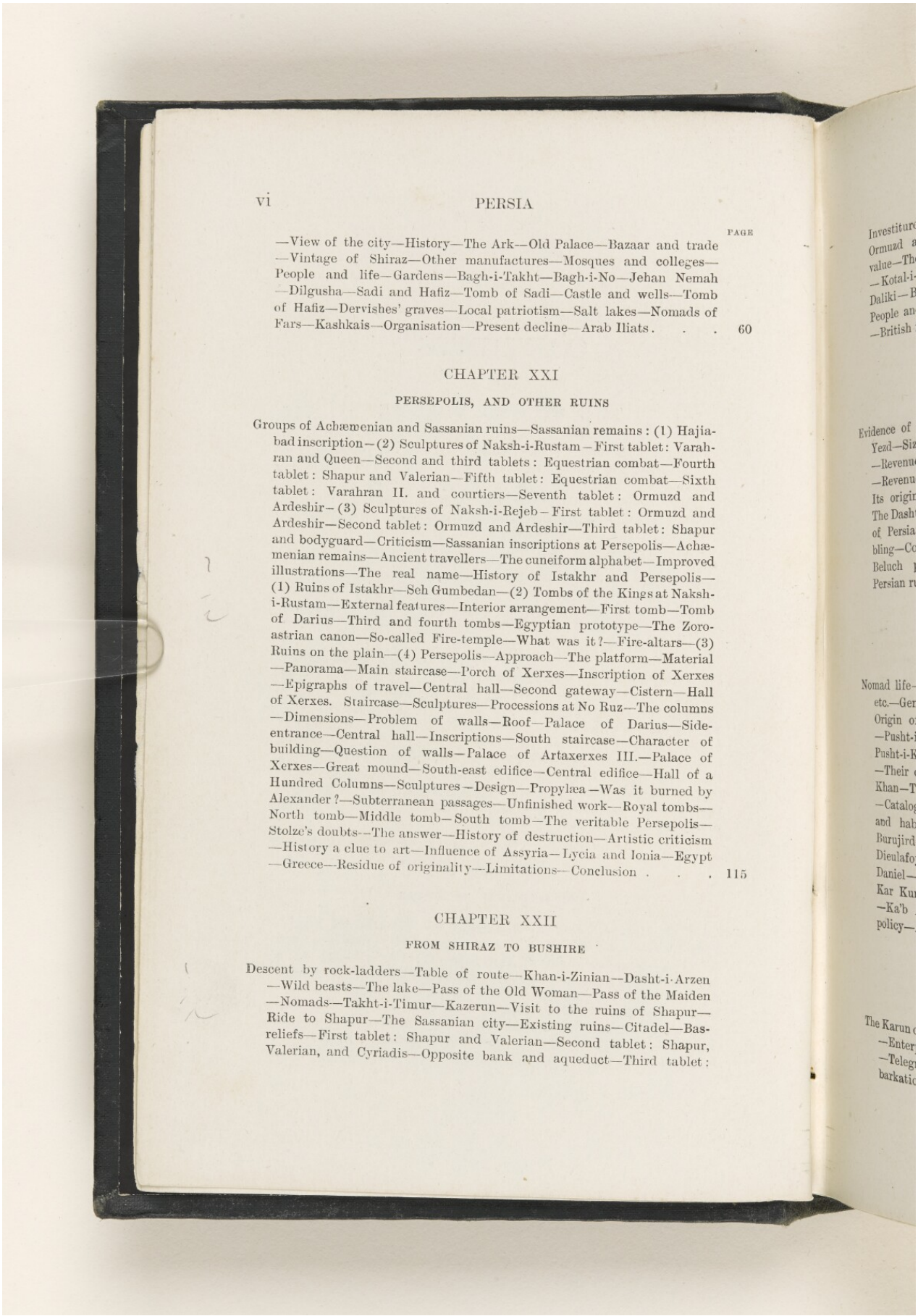



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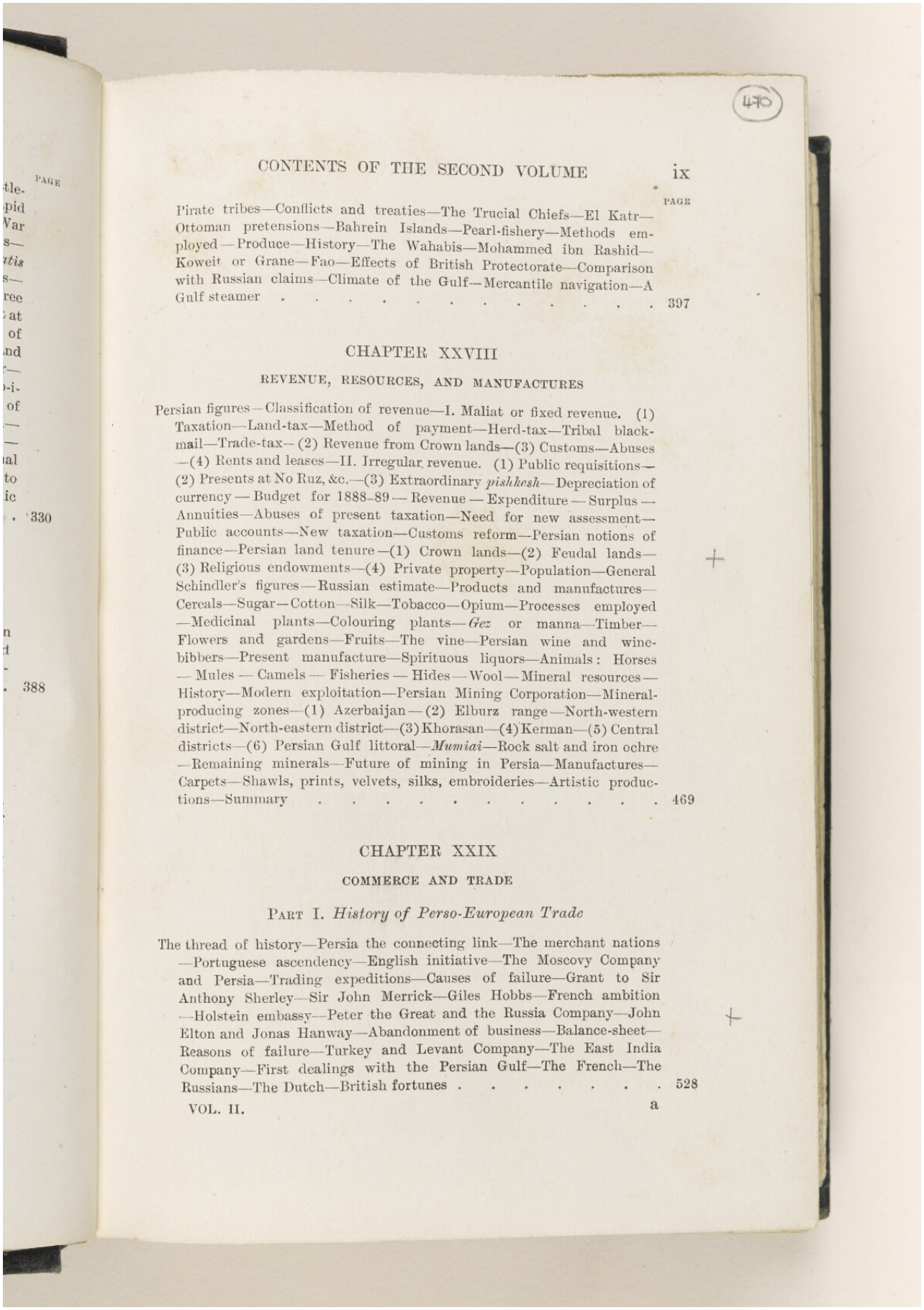

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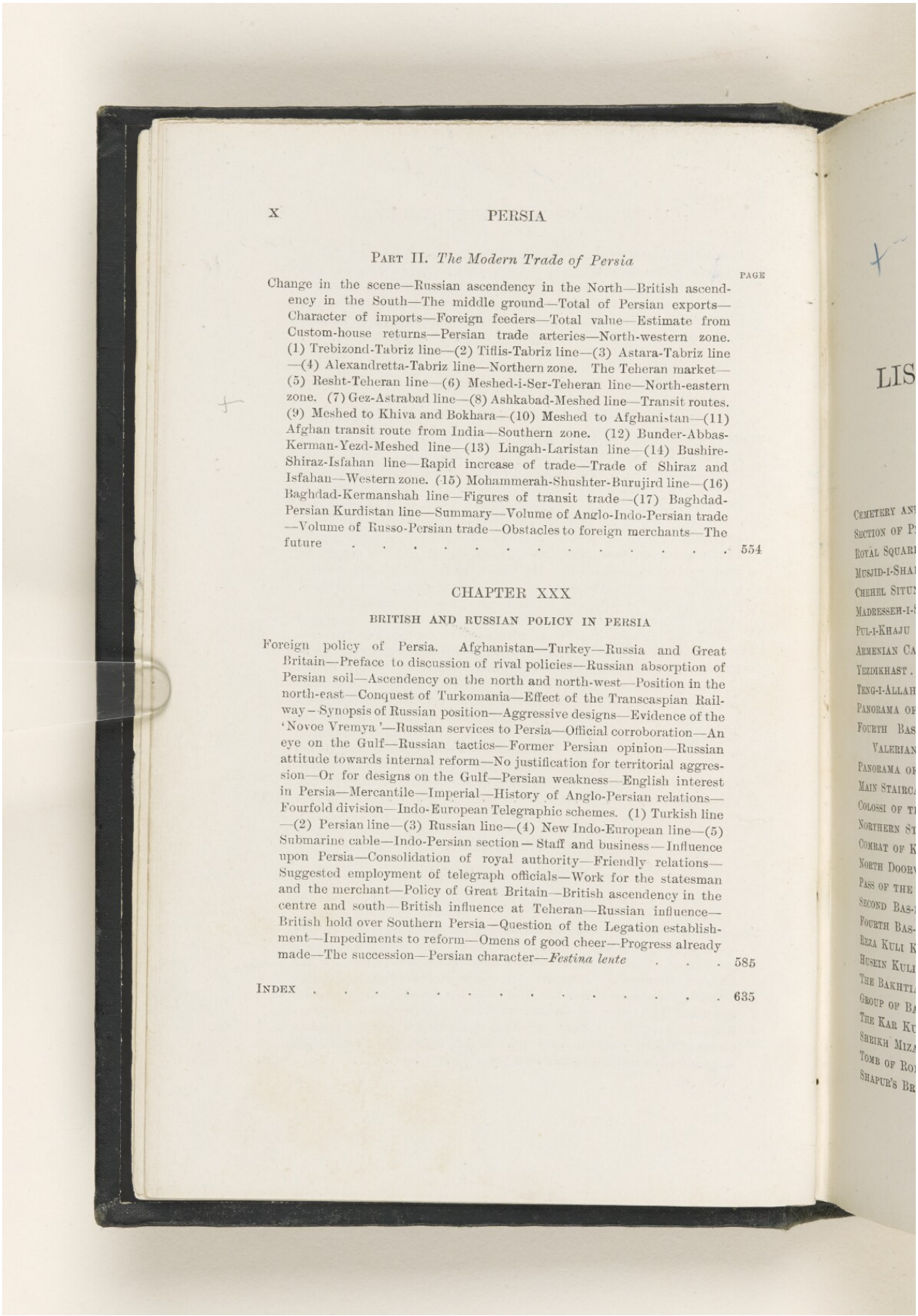



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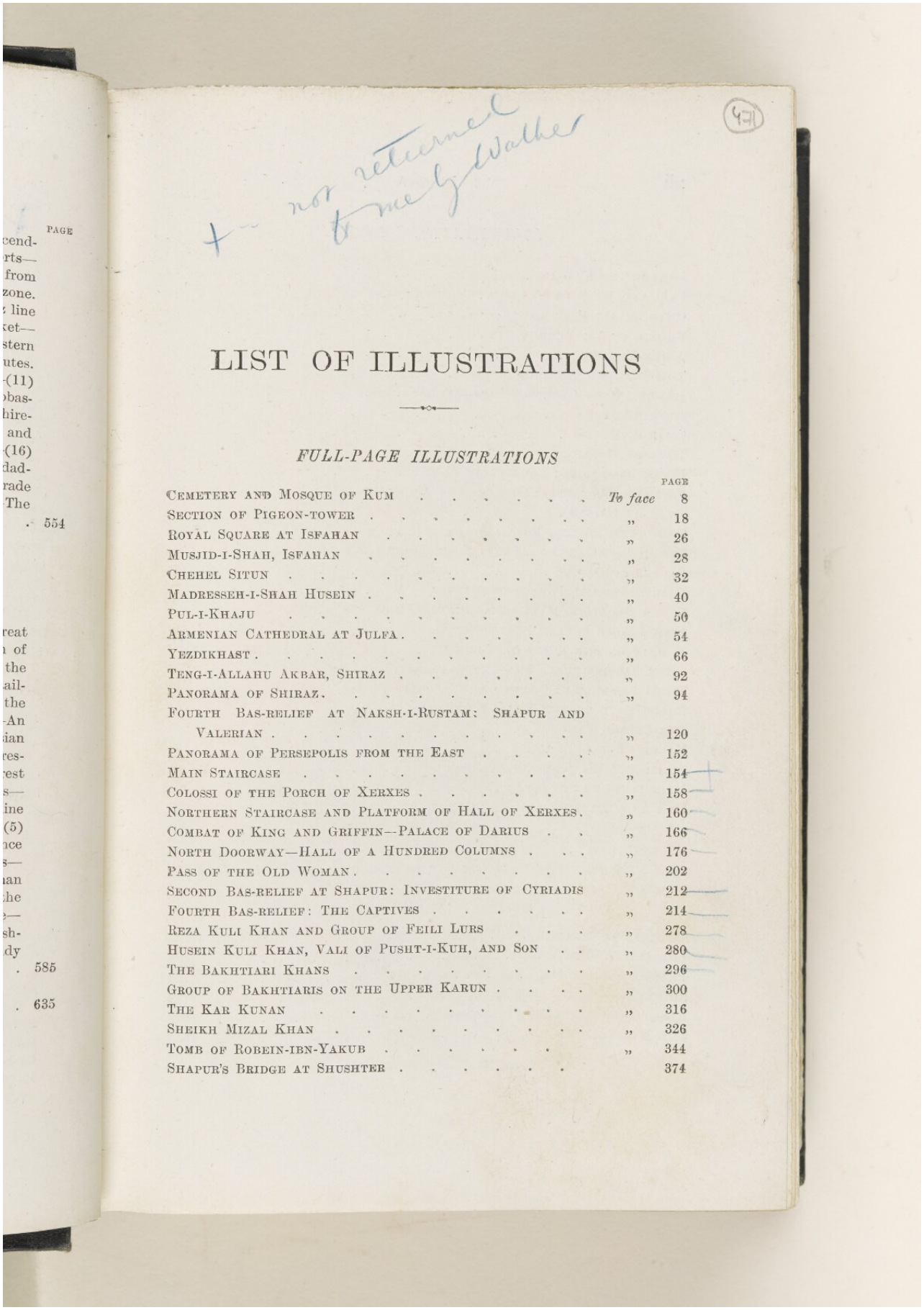

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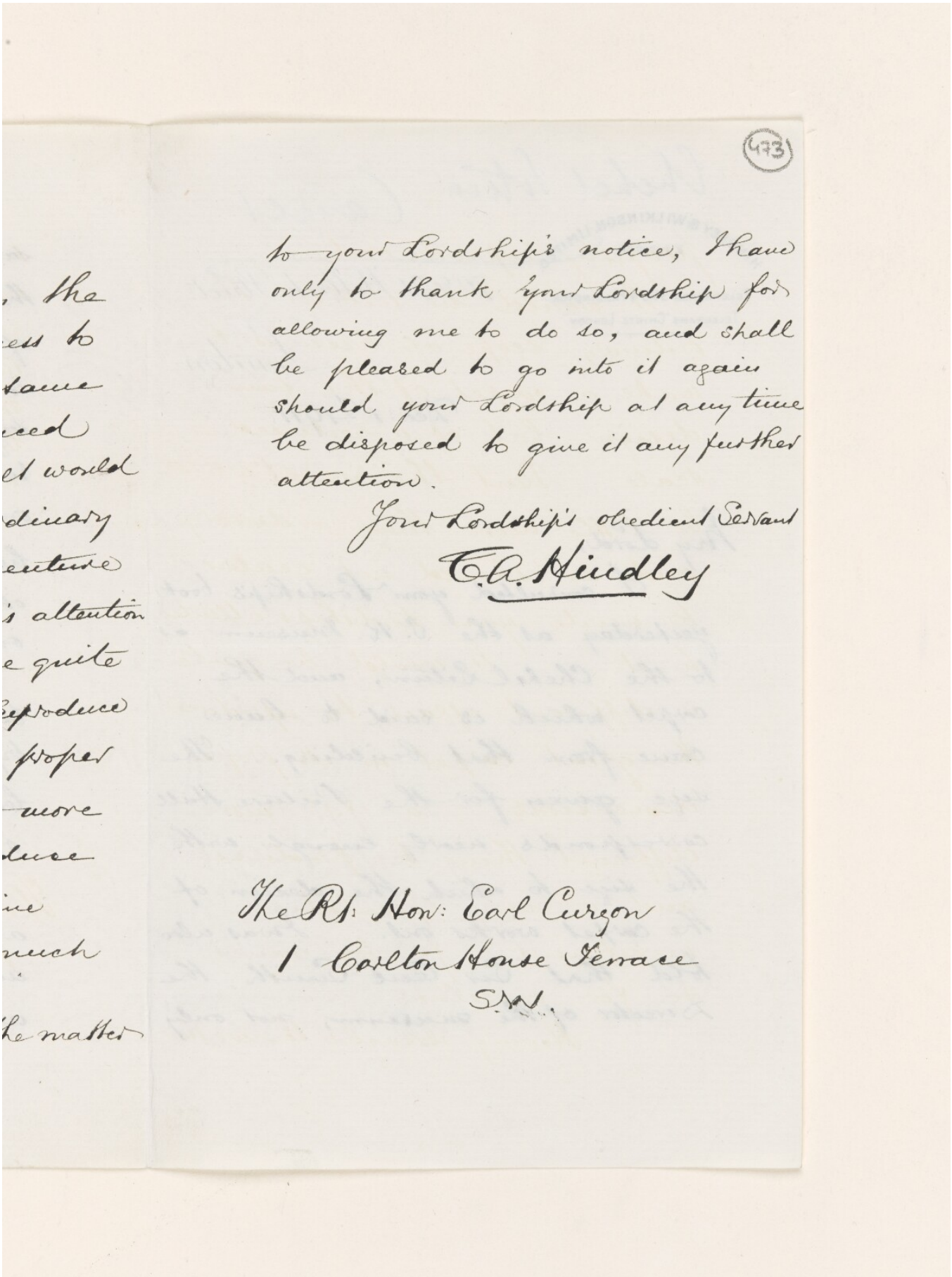
saw the remains of the carpet there, but brought a fragment of it away with him which is now at the museum. He says that although the remains of the carpet were still on the floor, the building was being used by camels and other animals and for storage or some similar purpose.

Such an astonishing state of a building is, of course, elucidated by your Lordship's book, and leaves no need to doubt the origin of the carpet.

What interests us most about it is the great style and beauty of the design, and our object is to get it

properly reproduced.
It would be within the ordinary scope of business to make a carpet of the same design but of a reduced scale. But the result would be little more than ordinary and we should not venture to invite your Lordship's attention to it. It would be quite a different affair, to reproduce the great carpet in its proper dimensions — a far more difficult thing to produce and a very speculative investment — far too much so for ourselves.
Having brought the matter



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to your Lordship's notice, I have only to thank your Lordship for allowing me to do so, and shall be pleased to go into it again should your Lordship at any time be disposed to give it any further attention.

Your Lordship's obedient Servant

C. A. Hindley

The Rt. Hon: Earl Curzon
1 Carlton House Terrace
S.W.

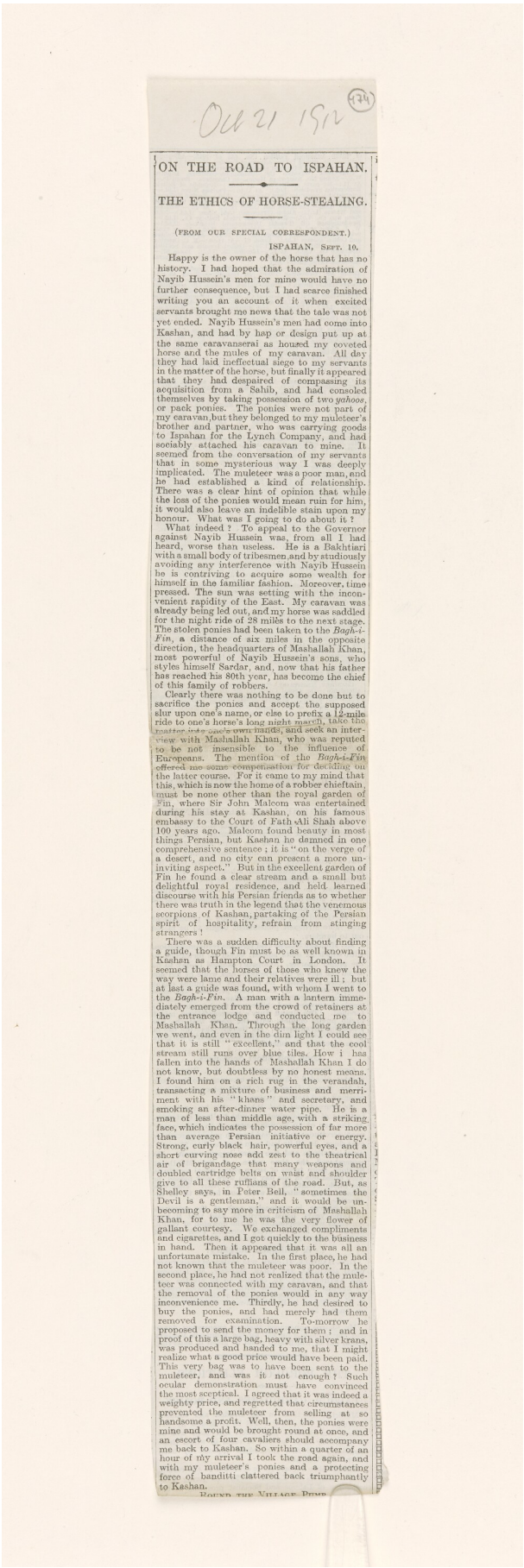
Chehel Situn Carpet

HINDLEY & WILKINSON, LIMITED.
Estᵇ 1750.
Telephones: 5413-4 Paddington.
Telegrams "Chintz. London."
70 & 71, Welbeck Street,
London,
W.

Dec: 1st 1911

My Lord,

I consulted your Lordship's book yesterday at the S. K. Museum as to the Chehel Situn, and the carpet which is said to have come from that building. The size given for the Picture Hall corresponds nearly enough with the size to which the design of the carpet works out. I was also told that Sir Cecil Smith, the Director of the museum, not only



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# ON THE ROAD TO ISPAHAN.

## THE ETHICS OF HORSE-STEALING.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

ISPAHAN, SEPT. 10.

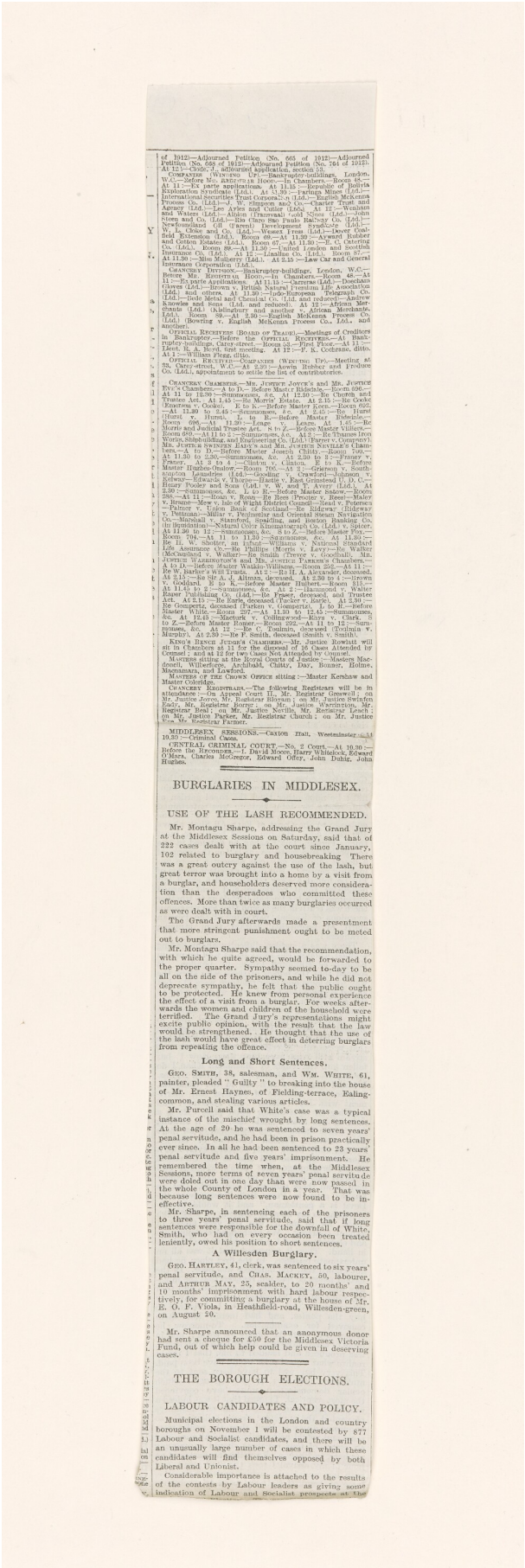
Happy is the owner of the horse that has no history. I had hoped that the admiration of Nayib Hussein's men for mine would have no further consequence, but I had scarce finished writing you an account of it when excited servants brought me news that the tale was not yet ended. Nayib Hussein's men had come into Kashan, and had by hap or design put up at the same caravanserai as housed my coveted horse and the mules of my caravan. All day they had laid ineffectual siege to my servants in the matter of the horse, but finally it appeared that they had despaired of compassing its acquisition from a Sahib, and had consoled themselves by taking possession of two *yahoos*, or pack ponies. The ponies were not part of my caravan, but they belonged to my muleteer's brother and partner, who was carrying goods to Ispahan for the Lynch Company, and had sociably attached his caravan to mine. It seemed from the conversation of my servants that in some mysterious way I was deeply implicated. The muleteer was a poor man, and he had established a kind of relationship. There was a clear hint of opinion that while the loss of the ponies would mean ruin for him, it would also leave an indelible stain upon my honour. What was I going to do about it?

What indeed? To appeal to the Governor against Nayib Hussein was, from all I had heard, worse than useless. He is a Bakhtiari with a small body of tribesmen, and by studiously avoiding any interference with Nayib Hussein he is contriving to acquire some wealth for himself in the familiar fashion. Moreover, time pressed. The sun was setting with the inconvenient rapidity of the East. My caravan was already being led out, and my horse was saddled for the night ride of 28 miles to the next stage. The stolen ponies had been taken to the *Bagh-i-Fin*, a distance of six miles in the opposite direction, the headquarters of Mashallah Khan, most powerful of Nayib Hussein's sons, who styles himself Sardar, and, now that his father has reached his 80th year, has become the chief of this family of robbers.

Clearly there was nothing to be done but to sacrifice the ponies and accept the supposed slur upon one's name, or else to prefix a 12-mile ride to one's horse's long night march, take the matter into one's own hands, and seek an interview with Mashallah Khan, who was reputed to be not insensible to the influence of Europeans. The mention of the *Bagh-i-Fin* offered me some compensation for deciding on the latter course. For it came to my mind that this, which is now the home of a robber chieftain, must be none other than the royal garden of Fin, where Sir John Malcom was entertained during his stay at Kashan, on his famous embassy to the Court of Fath-Ali Shah above 100 years ago. Malcom found beauty in most things Persian, but Kashan he damned in one comprehensive sentence; it is "on the verge of a desert, and no city can present a more uninviting aspect." But in the excellent garden of Fin he found a clear stream and a small but delightful royal residence, and held learned discourse with his Persian friends as to whether there was truth in the legend that the venemous scorpions of Kashan, partaking of the Persian spirit of hospitality, refrain from stinging strangers!

There was a sudden difficulty about finding a guide, though Fin must be as well known in Kashan as Hampton Court in London. It seemed that the horses of those who knew the way were lame and their relatives were ill; but at last a guide was found, with whom I went to the *Bagh-i-Fin*. A man with a lantern immediately emerged from the crowd of retainers at the entrance lodge and conducted me to Mashallah Khan. Through the long garden we went, and even in the dim light I could see that it is still "excellent," and that the cool stream still runs over blue tiles. How it has fallen into the hands of Mashallah Khan I do not know, but doubtless by no honest means. I found him on a rich rug in the verandah, transacting a mixture of business and merriment with his "khans" and secretary, and smoking an after-dinner water pipe. He is a man of less than middle age, with a striking face, which indicates the possession of far more than average Persian initiative or energy. Strong, curly black hair, powerful eyes, and a short curving nose add zest to the theatrical air of brigandage that many weapons and doubled cartridge belts on waist and shoulder give to all these ruffians of the road. But, as Shelley says, in Peter Bell, "sometimes the Devil is a gentleman," and it would be unbecoming to say more in criticism of Mashallah Khan, for to me he was the very flower of gallant courtesy. We exchanged compliments and cigarettes, and I got quickly to the business in hand. Then it appeared that it was all an unfortunate mistake. In the first place, he had not known that the muleteer was poor. In the second place, he had not realized that the muleteer was connected with my caravan, and that the removal of the ponies would in any way inconvenience me. Thirdly, he had desired to buy the ponies, and had merely had them removed for examination. To-morrow he proposed to send the money for them: and in proof of this a large bag, heavy with silver krans, was produced and handed to me, that I might realize what a good price would have been paid. This very bag was to have been sent to the muleteer, and was it not enough? Such ocular demonstration must have convinced the most sceptical. I agreed that it was indeed a weighty price, and regretted that circumstances prevented the muleteer from selling at so handsome a profit. Well, then, the ponies were mine and would be brought round at once, and an escort of four cavaliers should accompany me back to Kashan. So within a quarter of an hour of my arrival I took the road again, and with my muleteer's ponies and a protecting force of banditti clattered back triumphantly to Kashan.

ROUND THE VILLAGE PUMP



of 1912)—Adjourned Petition (No. 665 of 1912)—Adjourned Petition (No. 764 of 1912). At 12:—Ovide, J., adjourned application, section 55.

COMPANIES (WINDING UP).—Bankruptcy-buildings, London, W.C.—Before Mr. REGISTRAR HOOD.—In Chambers.—Room 48.—At 11:—Ex parte applications. At 11.15:—Republic of Bolivia Exploration Syndicate (Ltd.). At 11.30:—Tartagus Mines (Ltd.)—International Securities Trust Corporation (Ltd.)—English McKenna Process Co. (Ltd.)—J. W. Simpson and Co.—Charter Trust and Agency (Ltd.)—Lee Ayles and Cutler (Ltd.). At 12:—Wenham and Waters (Ltd.)—Alden (Transvaal) Gold Mines (Ltd.)—John Storm and Co. (Ltd.)—Rio Claro São Paulo Railway Co. (Ltd.)—Wrayfoxland (H. Farrell) Development Syndicate (Ltd.)—Bell, Bell and Co. (Ltd.)—Wessex Trust (Ltd.)—Lloyd's Coalfield Extension (Ltd.). Room 68.—At 11.30:—Para Rubber and Cotton Estates (Ltd.). Room 67.—At 12.30:—P. C. Catering Co. (Ltd.). Room 80.—At 12:—United London and Scottish Insurance Co. (Ltd.). At 12:—Lloydus Co. (Ltd.). Room 87.—At 11.30:—Miss Mulberry (Ltd.). At 2.15:—Law Car and General Insurance Corporation (Ltd.).

CHANCERY DIVISION.—Bankruptcy-buildings, London, W.C.—Before Mr. REGISTRAR HOOD.—In Chambers.—Room 46.—At 11:—Ex parte Applications. At 11.15:—Carreras (Ltd.)—Doncham Givers (Ltd.)—Brown v. British Natural Premium Life Association (Ltd.) and others. At 11.30:—Indo-European Telegraph Co. (Ltd.)—Bede Metal and Chemical Co. (Ltd. and reduced)—Andrew Knowles and Sons (Ltd. and reduced). At 12:—African Mercantile (Ltd.) Oklahoma and another v. African Mercantile (Ltd.). Room 80.—At 2.30:—English McKenna Process Co. (Ltd.) (Bowtell v. English McKenna Process Co., Ltd., and another).

OFFICIAL RECEIVER (BOARD OF TRADE).—Meetings of Creditors in Bankruptcy.—Before the OFFICIAL RECEIVER.—At Bankruptcy-buildings, Carey-street.—Room 53.—First Floor.—At 11:—Lieut. R. A. Hovil, first meeting. At 12:—F. R. Cochrane, ditto. At 1:—William Flegg, ditto.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER.—Companies (Winding Up).—Meeting at 33, Carey-street, W.C.—At 2.30:—Anwin Rubber and Produce Co. (Ltd.), appointment to settle the list of contributories.

CHANCERY CHAMBERS.—Mr. JUSTICE JOYCE'S and Mr. JUSTICE TEAR'S Chambers.—A to D.—Before Master Ridsdale.—Room 696.—At 11 to 12.30:—Summonses, &c. At 12.30:—Re Chorley and Trustee Act, &c. At 1.45:—Re Morris' Estate. At 2.15:—Re Lake (Executors of), &c. At 2.45:—Re Morris' Estate. Room 692.—At 11.30 to 1.45:—Summonses, &c. At 2.45:—Re Hurst (Hurst v. Hurst). L. to R.—Before Master Ridsdale.—Room 696.—At 11.30:—Lange v. Lewis. At 1.45:—Re Morris and Judicial Trustee Act. S to Z.—Before Master Villiers.—Room 693.—At 11 to 1:—Summonses, &c. At 2:—Re Thames Iron Works, Shipbuilding, and Engineering Co. (Ltd.) (Parker v. Company). Mr. JUSTICE SWINFEN EADY'S and Mr. JUSTICE NEVILLE'S Chambers.—A to D.—Before Master Joseph Chitty.—Room 700.—At 11.30 to 2.30:—Summonses, &c. At 2.30 to 3:—Feney v. Fraser. At 3 to 4:—Clinton v. Clinton. E to K.—Before Master Hughes-Onslow.—Room 706.—At 2:—Grayson v. Southkingdon Laundries (Ltd.)—Gooding v. Crawford—Johnson v. Bilbey—Edwards v. Thorpe—Hastie v. East Grinstead U. D. C.—Henry Pooley and Sons (Ltd.) v. W. and T. Avery (Ltd.). At 2.30:—Whittingham, &c. L. to R.—Before Master Isaacs.—Room 708.—At 11:—Re Rees. Room 705.—Re Rees (Procter v. Rees)—Mabey v. Bruce—Mc—Re Estate of Mary Ann

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# PERSIA
AND
# THE PERSIAN QUESTION

## CHAPTER XIX

### FROM TEHERAN TO ISFAHAN

Then pomp and pleasure dwelt within her walls,
The merchants of the East and of the West
Met in her arched bazaars.
All day the active poor
Showered a cool comfort o'er her thronging streets.
Labour was busy in her looms,
Through all her open gates
Long troops of laden camels lined the roads.
SOUTHEY, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, bk. v.

AFTER some weeks spent in the enjoyment of the hospitality of the British Legation, and in the interesting and often highly-charged political atmosphere of the capital, it was with no slight reluctance that I again resigned myself to the tender mercies of the *chapar-khaneh* and the Persian post-horse, and started forth on my 800 miles' ride to the Gulf. In justice, however, to a much abused institution and animal, I must observe that along the stretch of road from Teheran to Shiraz, which is the most frequented in Persia, the former is in a better state of repair, and the latter is sprightlier in his movements, than in other parts of the country. Execrable horses and an inhospitable track had been the distinguishing features of my ride from Meshed to Teheran. With a tolerable mount, with the chance of European converse and entertainment in the Telegraph stations, encountered at distances of from sixty to seventy miles along the road, and with the prospect of great cities and world-famed ruins before him, with leisure to rest in the one or to linger over the other, the

The southerly route



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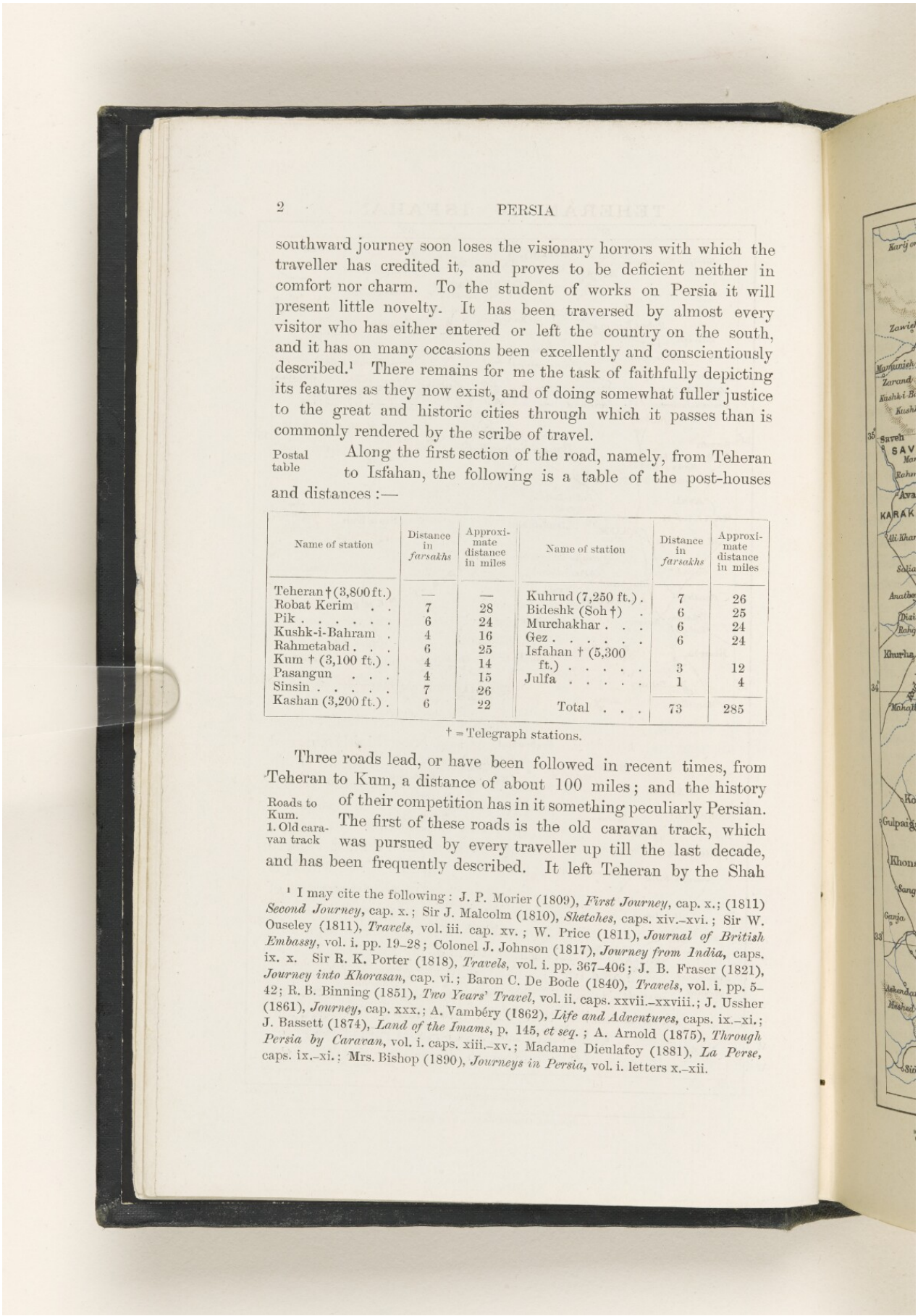




southward journey soon loses the visionary horrors with which the traveller has credited it, and proves to be deficient neither in comfort nor charm. To the student of works on Persia it will present little novelty. It has been traversed by almost every visitor who has either entered or left the country on the south, and it has on many occasions been excellently and conscientiously described.[1] There remains for me the task of faithfully depicting its features as they now exist, and of doing somewhat fuller justice to the great and historic cities through which it passes than is commonly rendered by the scribe of travel.

Postal table

Along the first section of the road, namely, from Teheran to Isfahan, the following is a table of the post-houses and distances :—

| Name of station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles | Name of station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teheran † (3,800 ft.) | — | — | Kuhrud (7,250 ft.) | 7 | 26 |
| Robat Kerim | 7 | 28 | Bideshk (Soh †) | 6 | 25 |
| Pik | 6 | 24 | Murchakhar | 6 | 24 |
| Kushk-i-Bahram | 4 | 16 | Gez | 6 | 24 |
| Rahmetabad | 6 | 25 | Isfahan † (5,300 ft.) | 3 | 12 |
| Kum † (3,100 ft.) | 4 | 14 | Julfa | 1 | 4 |
| Pasangun | 4 | 15 | | | |
| Sinsin | 7 | 26 | | | |
| Kashan (3,200 ft.) | 6 | 22 | Total | 73 | 285 |

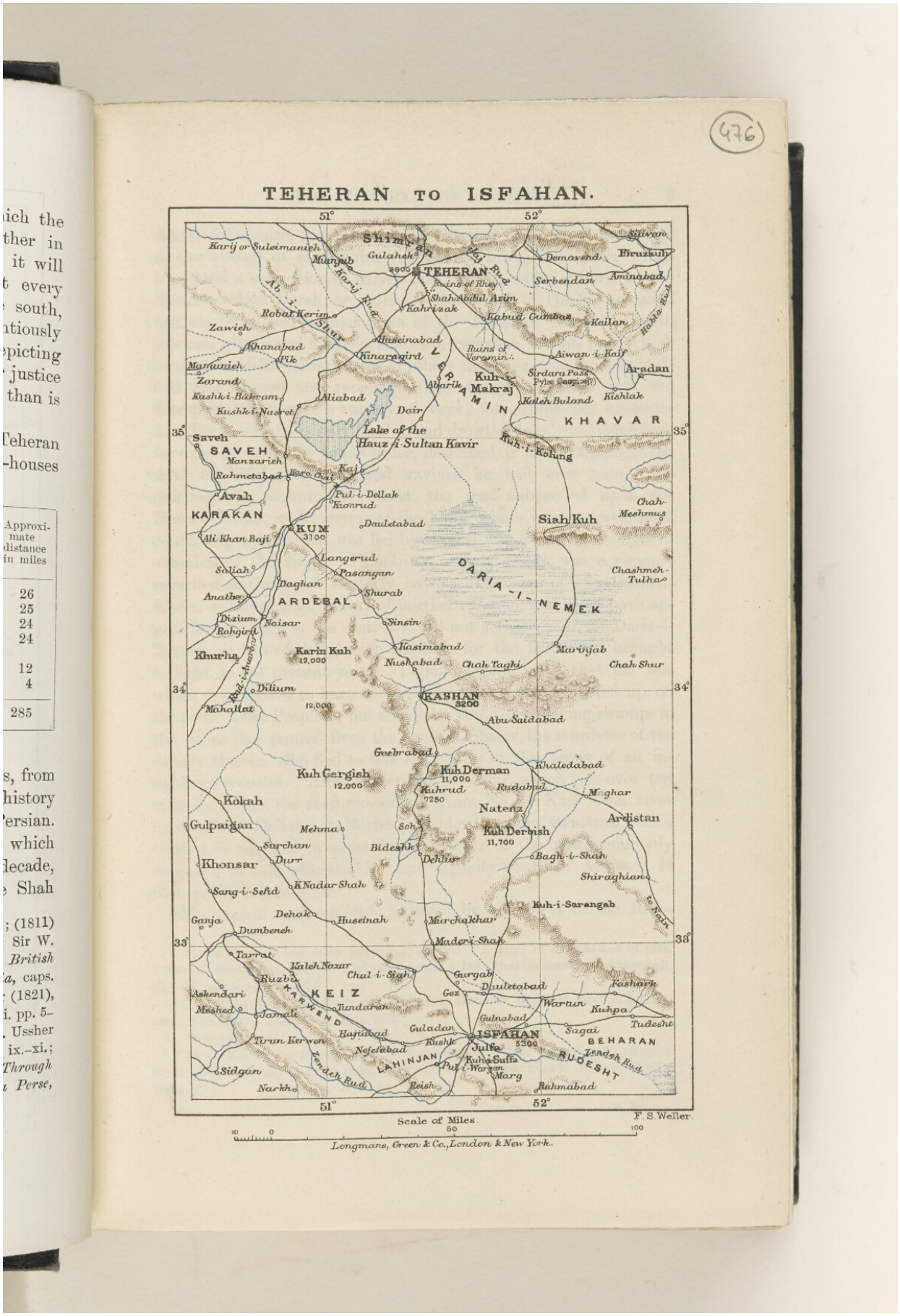
† = Telegraph stations.

Three roads lead, or have been followed in recent times, from Teheran to Kum, a distance of about 100 miles; and the history of their competition has in it something peculiarly Persian.

Roads to Kum. 1. Old caravan track

The first of these roads is the old caravan track, which was pursued by every traveller up till the last decade, and has been frequently described. It left Teheran by the Shah

[1] I may cite the following: J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, cap. x.; (1811) *Second Journey*, cap. x.; Sir J. Malcolm (1810), *Sketches*, caps. xiv.–xvi.; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. iii. cap. xv.; W. Price (1811), *Journal of British Embassy*, vol. i. pp. 19–28; Colonel J. Johnson (1817), *Journey from India*, caps. ix. x. Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 367–406; J. B. Fraser (1821), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. vi.; Baron C. De Bode (1840), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 5–42; R. B. Binning (1851), *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. caps. xxvii.–xxviii.; J. Ussher (1861), *Journey*, cap. xxx.; A. Vambéry (1862), *Life and Adventures*, caps. ix.–xi.; J. Bassett (1874), *Land of the Imams*, p. 145, *et seq.*; A. Arnold (1875), *Through Persia by Caravan*, vol. i. caps. xiii.–xv.; Madame Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, caps. ix.–xi.; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, vol. i. letters x.–xii.

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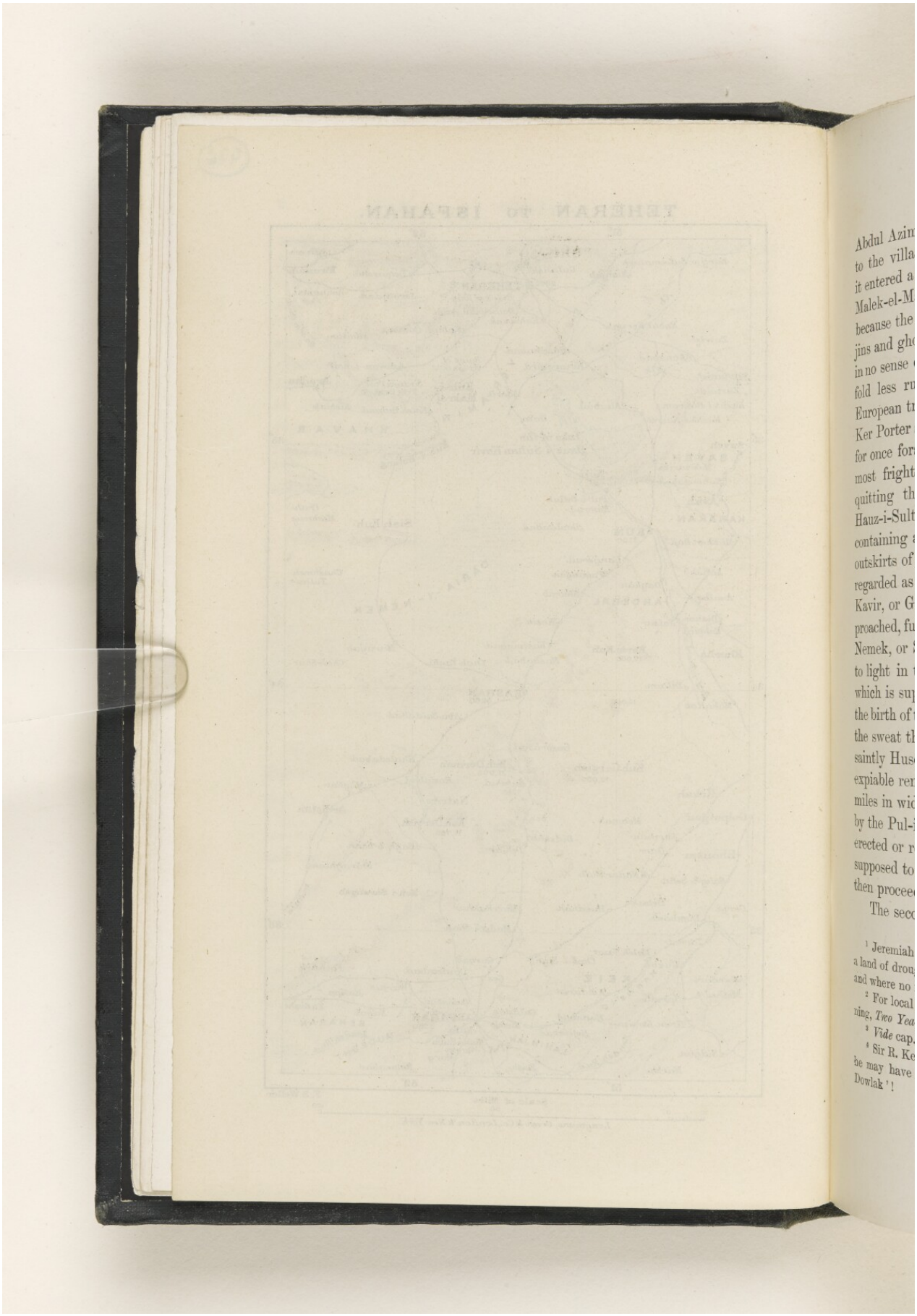

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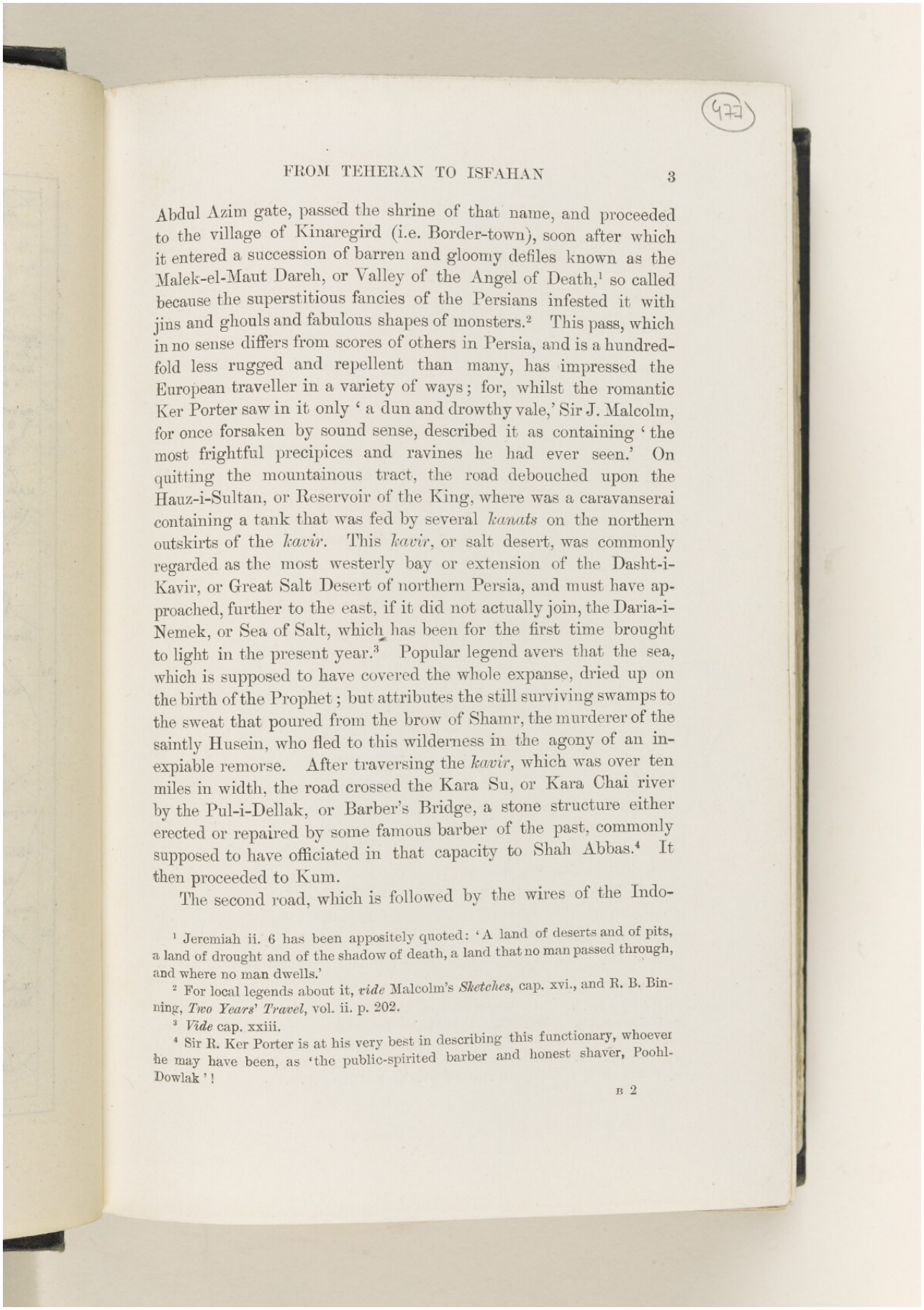



Abdul Azim gate, passed the shrine of that name, and proceeded to the village of Kinaregird (i.e. Border-town), soon after which it entered a succession of barren and gloomy defiles known as the Malek-el-Maut Dareh, or Valley of the Angel of Death,[1] so called because the superstitious fancies of the Persians infested it with jins and ghouls and fabulous shapes of monsters.[2] This pass, which in no sense differs from scores of others in Persia, and is a hundredfold less rugged and repellent than many, has impressed the European traveller in a variety of ways; for, whilst the romantic Ker Porter saw in it only 'a dun and drowthy vale,' Sir J. Malcolm, for once forsaken by sound sense, described it as containing 'the most frightful precipices and ravines he had ever seen.' On quitting the mountainous tract, the road debouched upon the Hauz-i-Sultan, or Reservoir of the King, where was a caravanserai containing a tank that was fed by several *kanats* on the northern outskirts of the *kavir*. This *kavir*, or salt desert, was commonly regarded as the most westerly bay or extension of the Dasht-i-Kavir, or Great Salt Desert of northern Persia, and must have approached, further to the east, if it did not actually join, the Daria-i-Nemek, or Sea of Salt, which has been for the first time brought to light in the present year.[3] Popular legend avers that the sea, which is supposed to have covered the whole expanse, dried up on the birth of the Prophet; but attributes the still surviving swamps to the sweat that poured from the brow of Shamr, the murderer of the saintly Husein, who fled to this wilderness in the agony of an inexpiable remorse. After traversing the *kavir*, which was over ten miles in width, the road crossed the Kara Su, or Kara Chai river by the Pul-i-Dellak, or Barber's Bridge, a stone structure either erected or repaired by some famous barber of the past, commonly supposed to have officiated in that capacity to Shah Abbas.[4] It then proceeded to Kum.

The second road, which is followed by the wires of the Indo-

[1] Jeremiah ii. 6 has been appositely quoted: 'A land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwells.'

[2] For local legends about it, *vide* Malcolm's *Sketches*, cap. xvi., and R. B. Binning, *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. p. 202.

[3] *Vide* cap. xxiii.

[4] Sir R. Ker Porter is at his very best in describing this functionary, whoever he may have been, as 'the public-spirited barber and honest shaver, Poohl-Dowlak'!



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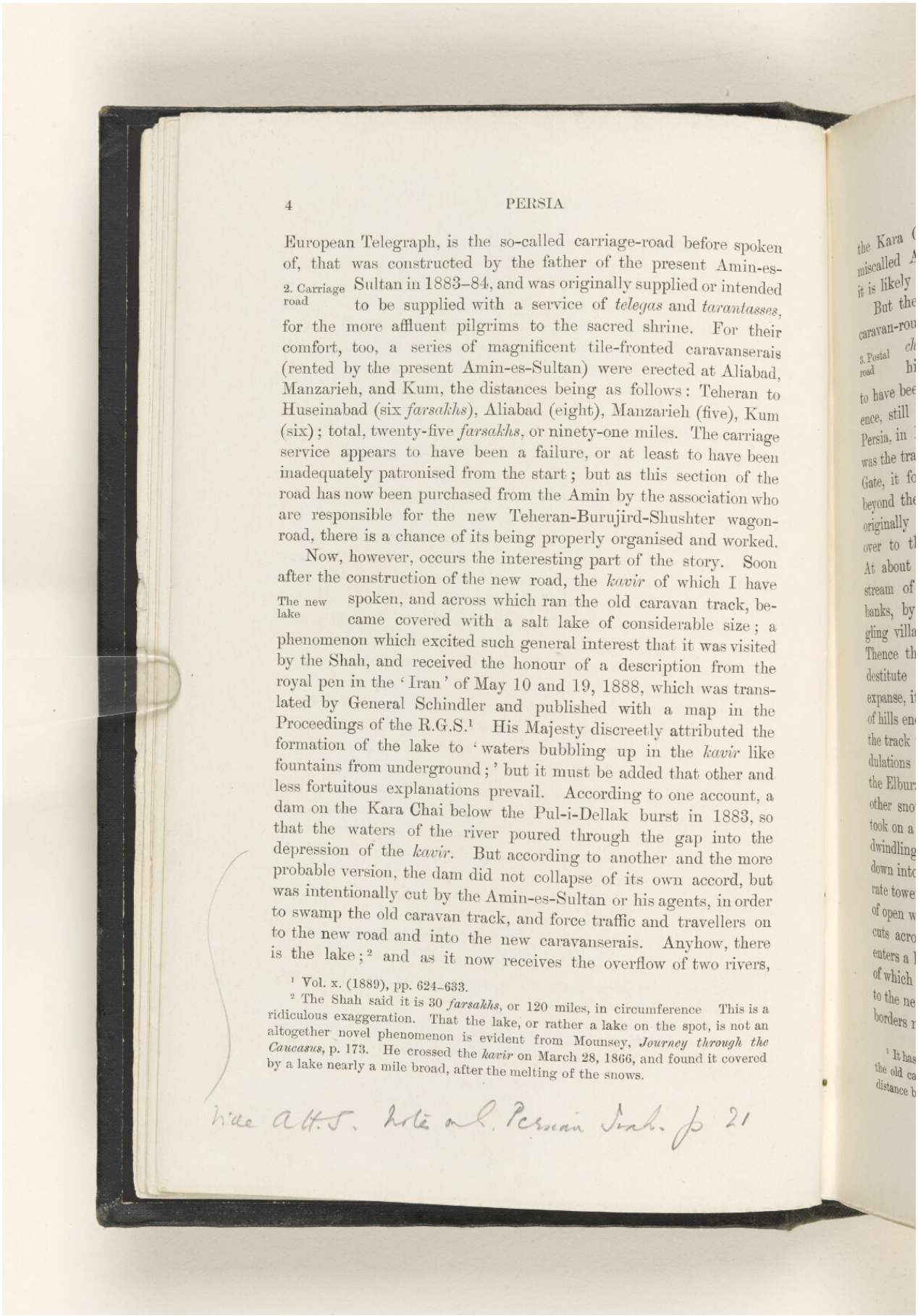




European Telegraph, is the so-called carriage-road before spoken of, that was constructed by the father of the present Amin-es-Sultan in 1883–84, and was originally supplied or intended to be supplied with a service of *telegas* and *tarantasses*, for the more affluent pilgrims to the sacred shrine. For their comfort, too, a series of magnificent tile-fronted caravanserais (rented by the present Amin-es-Sultan) were erected at Aliabad, Manzarieh, and Kum, the distances being as follows: Teheran to Huseinabad (six *farsakhs*), Aliabad (eight), Manzarieh (five), Kum (six); total, twenty-five *farsakhs*, or ninety-one miles. The carriage service appears to have been a failure, or at least to have been inadequately patronised from the start; but as this section of the road has now been purchased from the Amin by the association who are responsible for the new Teheran-Burujird-Shushter wagon-road, there is a chance of its being properly organised and worked.

2. Carriage road

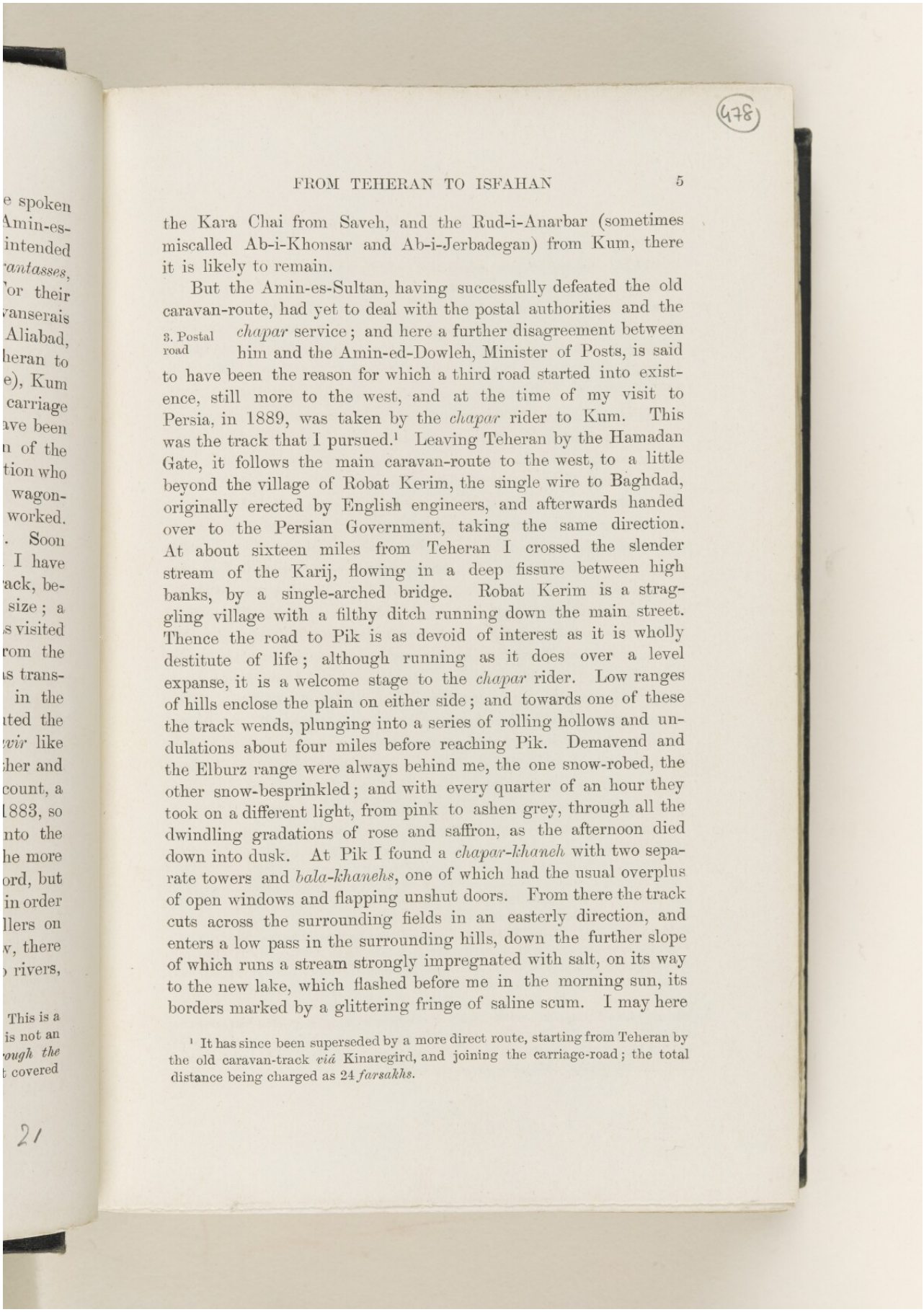
Now, however, occurs the interesting part of the story. Soon after the construction of the new road, the *kavir* of which I have spoken, and across which ran the old caravan track, became covered with a salt lake of considerable size; a phenomenon which excited such general interest that it was visited by the Shah, and received the honour of a description from the royal pen in the 'Iran' of May 10 and 19, 1888, which was translated by General Schindler and published with a map in the Proceedings of the R.G.S.[1] His Majesty discreetly attributed the formation of the lake to 'waters bubbling up in the *kavir* like fountains from underground;' but it must be added that other and less fortuitous explanations prevail. According to one account, a dam on the Kara Chai below the Pul-i-Dellak burst in 1883, so that the waters of the river poured through the gap into the depression of the *kavir*. But according to another and the more probable version, the dam did not collapse of its own accord, but was intentionally cut by the Amin-es-Sultan or his agents, in order to swamp the old caravan track, and force traffic and travellers on to the new road and into the new caravanserais. Anyhow, there is the lake;[2] and as it now receives the overflow of two rivers,

The new lake

[1] Vol. x. (1889), pp. 624–633.

[2] The Shah said it is 30 *farsakhs*, or 120 miles, in circumference This is a ridiculous exaggeration. That the lake, or rather a lake on the spot, is not an altogether novel phenomenon is evident from Mounsey, *Journey through the Caucasus*, p. 173. He crossed the *kavir* on March 28, 1866, and found it covered by a lake nearly a mile broad, after the melting of the snows.

Vide Att. S. Note on l. Persian Shah. p 21





the Kara Chai from Saveh, and the Rud-i-Anarbar (sometimes miscalled Ab-i-Khonsar and Ab-i-Jerbadegan) from Kum, there it is likely to remain.

But the Amin-es-Sultan, having successfully defeated the old caravan-route, had yet to deal with the postal authorities and the *chapar* service; and here a further disagreement between him and the Amin-ed-Dowleh, Minister of Posts, is said to have been the reason for which a third road started into existence, still more to the west, and at the time of my visit to Persia, in 1889, was taken by the *chapar* rider to Kum. This was the track that I pursued.[1] Leaving Teheran by the Hamadan Gate, it follows the main caravan-route to the west, to a little beyond the village of Robat Kerim, the single wire to Baghdad, originally erected by English engineers, and afterwards handed over to the Persian Government, taking the same direction. At about sixteen miles from Teheran I crossed the slender stream of the Karij, flowing in a deep fissure between high banks, by a single-arched bridge. Robat Kerim is a straggling village with a filthy ditch running down the main street. Thence the road to Pik is as devoid of interest as it is wholly destitute of life; although running as it does over a level expanse, it is a welcome stage to the *chapar* rider. Low ranges of hills enclose the plain on either side; and towards one of these the track wends, plunging into a series of rolling hollows and undulations about four miles before reaching Pik. Demavend and the Elburz range were always behind me, the one snow-robed, the other snow-besprinkled; and with every quarter of an hour they took on a different light, from pink to ashen grey, through all the dwindling gradations of rose and saffron, as the afternoon died down into dusk. At Pik I found a *chapar-khaneh* with two separate towers and *bala-khanehs*, one of which had the usual overplus of open windows and flapping unshut doors. From there the track cuts across the surrounding fields in an easterly direction, and enters a low pass in the surrounding hills, down the further slope of which runs a stream strongly impregnated with salt, on its way to the new lake, which flashed before me in the morning sun, its borders marked by a glittering fringe of saline scum. I may here

3. Postal road

[1] It has since been superseded by a more direct route, starting from Teheran by the old caravan-track *viâ* Kinaregird, and joining the carriage-road; the total distance being charged as 24 *farsakhs*.

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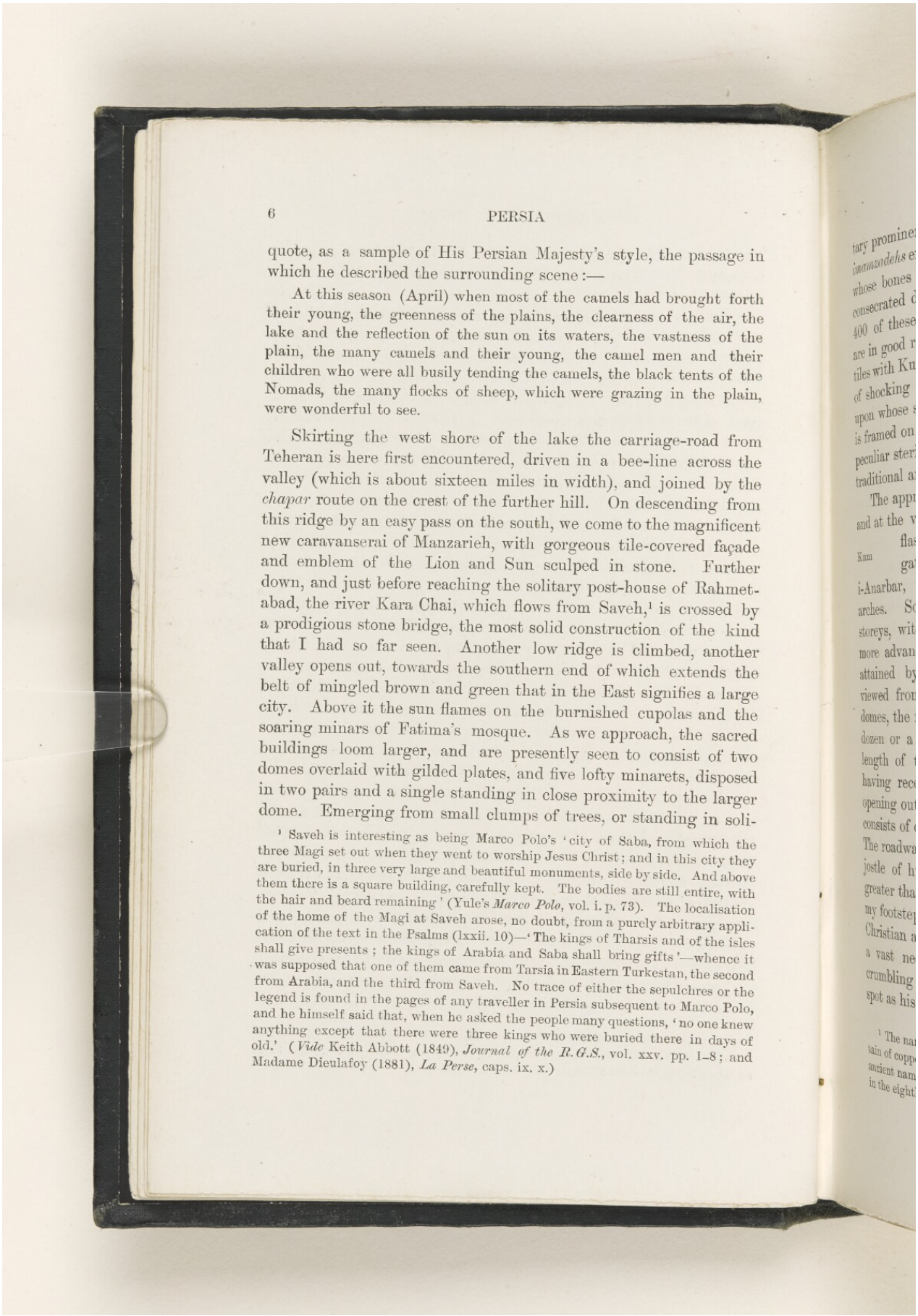



quote, as a sample of His Persian Majesty's style, the passage in which he described the surrounding scene:—

At this season (April) when most of the camels had brought forth their young, the greenness of the plains, the clearness of the air, the lake and the reflection of the sun on its waters, the vastness of the plain, the many camels and their young, the camel men and their children who were all busily tending the camels, the black tents of the Nomads, the many flocks of sheep, which were grazing in the plain, were wonderful to see.

Skirting the west shore of the lake the carriage-road from Teheran is here first encountered, driven in a bee-line across the valley (which is about sixteen miles in width), and joined by the *chapar* route on the crest of the further hill. On descending from this ridge by an easy pass on the south, we come to the magnificent new caravanserai of Manzarieh, with gorgeous tile-covered façade and emblem of the Lion and Sun sculped in stone. Further down, and just before reaching the solitary post-house of Rahmet-abad, the river Kara Chai, which flows from Saveh,[1] is crossed by a prodigious stone bridge, the most solid construction of the kind that I had so far seen. Another low ridge is climbed, another valley opens out, towards the southern end of which extends the belt of mingled brown and green that in the East signifies a large city. Above it the sun flames on the burnished cupolas and the soaring minars of Fatima's mosque. As we approach, the sacred buildings loom larger, and are presently seen to consist of two domes overlaid with gilded plates, and five lofty minarets, disposed in two pairs and a single standing in close proximity to the larger dome. Emerging from small clumps of trees, or standing in soli-

[1] Saveh is interesting as being Marco Polo's 'city of Saba, from which the three Magi set out when they went to worship Jesus Christ; and in this city they are buried, in three very large and beautiful monuments, side by side. And above them there is a square building, carefully kept. The bodies are still entire, with the hair and beard remaining' (Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. i. p. 73). The localisation of the home of the Magi at Saveh arose, no doubt, from a purely arbitrary application of the text in the Psalms (lxxii. 10)—'The kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give presents; the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts'—whence it was supposed that one of them came from Tarsia in Eastern Turkestan, the second from Arabia, and the third from Saveh. No trace of either the sepulchres or the legend is found in the pages of any traveller in Persia subsequent to Marco Polo, and he himself said that, when he asked the people many questions, 'no one knew anything except that there were three kings who were buried there in days of old.' (*Vide* Keith Abbott (1849), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxv. pp. 1–8; and Madame Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, caps. ix. x.)

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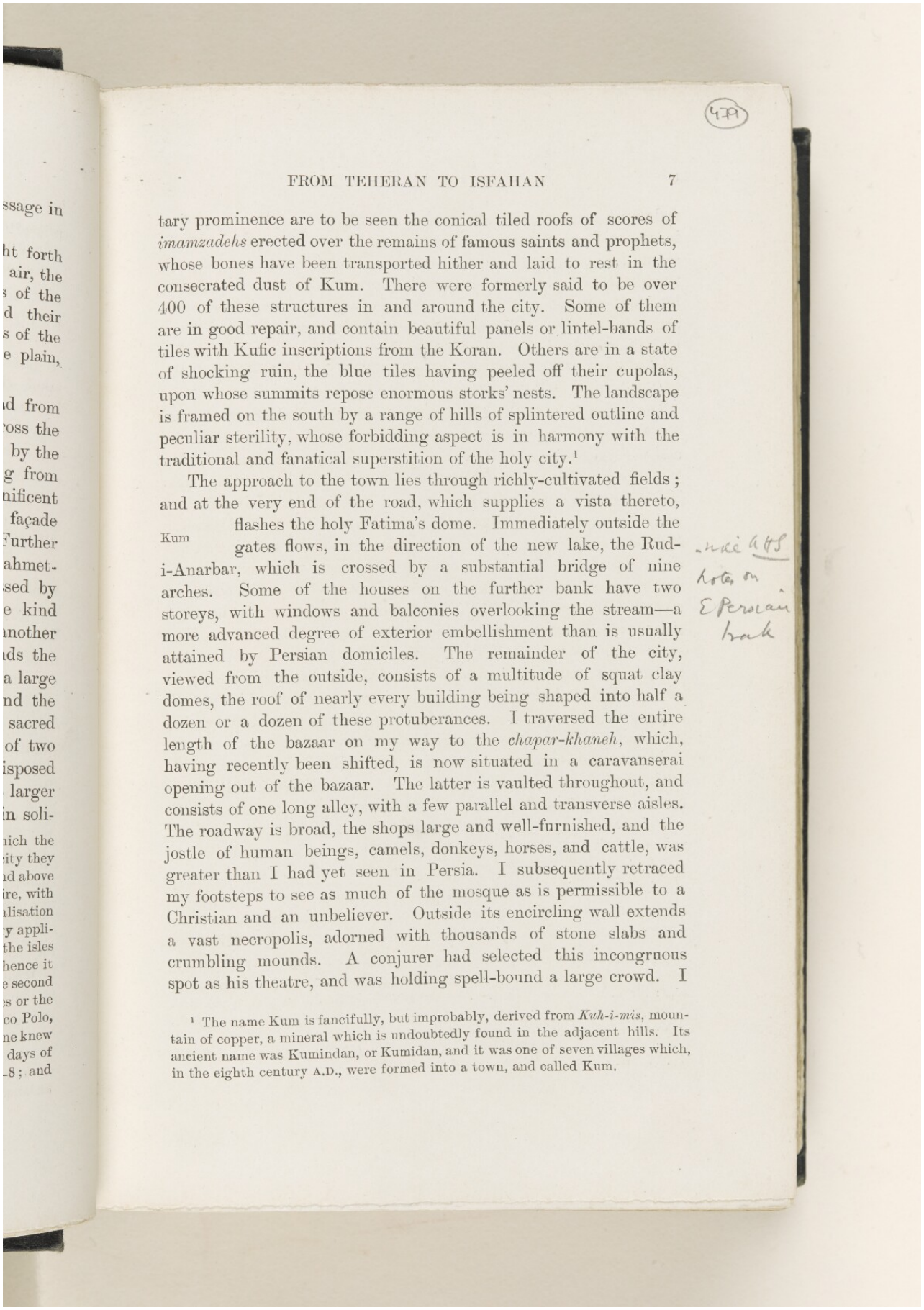



tary prominence are to be seen the conical tiled roofs of scores of *imamzadehs* erected over the remains of famous saints and prophets, whose bones have been transported hither and laid to rest in the consecrated dust of Kum. There were formerly said to be over 400 of these structures in and around the city. Some of them are in good repair, and contain beautiful panels or lintel-bands of tiles with Kufic inscriptions from the Koran. Others are in a state of shocking ruin, the blue tiles having peeled off their cupolas, upon whose summits repose enormous storks' nests. The landscape is framed on the south by a range of hills of splintered outline and peculiar sterility, whose forbidding aspect is in harmony with the traditional and fanatical superstition of the holy city.[1]

The approach to the town lies through richly-cultivated fields; and at the very end of the road, which supplies a vista thereto, flashes the holy Fatima's dome. Immediately outside the gates flows, in the direction of the new lake, the Rud-i-Anarbar, which is crossed by a substantial bridge of nine arches. Some of the houses on the further bank have two storeys, with windows and balconies overlooking the stream—a more advanced degree of exterior embellishment than is usually attained by Persian domiciles. The remainder of the city, viewed from the outside, consists of a multitude of squat clay domes, the roof of nearly every building being shaped into half a dozen or a dozen of these protuberances. I traversed the entire length of the bazaar on my way to the *chapar-khaneh*, which, having recently been shifted, is now situated in a caravanserai opening out of the bazaar. The latter is vaulted throughout, and consists of one long alley, with a few parallel and transverse aisles. The roadway is broad, the shops large and well-furnished, and the jostle of human beings, camels, donkeys, horses, and cattle, was greater than I had yet seen in Persia. I subsequently retraced my footsteps to see as much of the mosque as is permissible to a Christian and an unbeliever. Outside its encircling wall extends a vast necropolis, adorned with thousands of stone slabs and crumbling mounds. A conjurer had selected this incongruous spot as his theatre, and was holding spell-bound a large crowd. I

Kum

[1] The name Kum is fancifully, but improbably, derived from *Kuh-i-mis*, mountain of copper, a mineral which is undoubtedly found in the adjacent hills. Its ancient name was Kumindan, or Kumidan, and it was one of seven villages which, in the eighth century A.D., were formed into a town, and called Kum.

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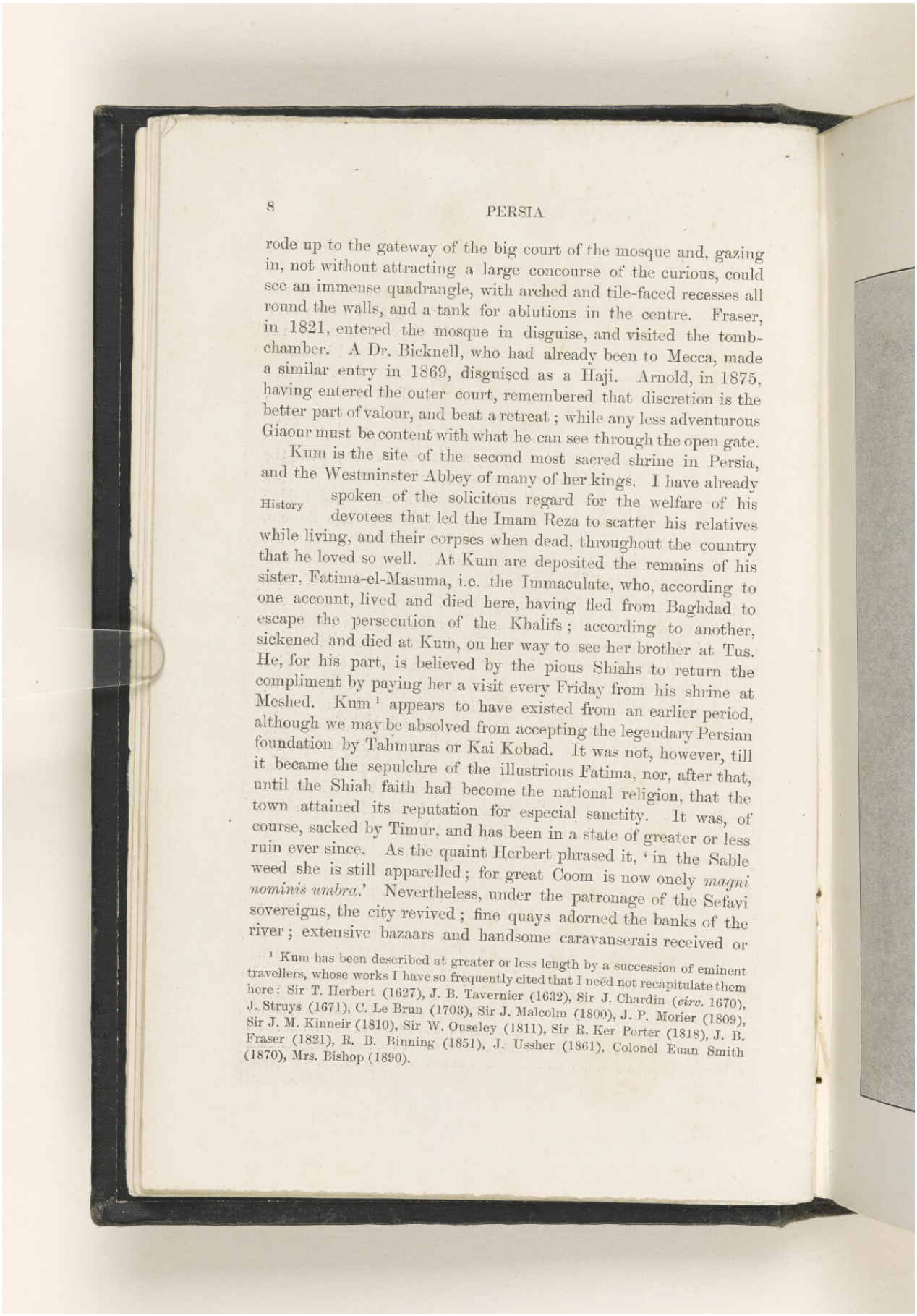



rode up to the gateway of the big court of the mosque and, gazing in, not without attracting a large concourse of the curious, could see an immense quadrangle, with arched and tile-faced recesses all round the walls, and a tank for ablutions in the centre. Fraser, in 1821, entered the mosque in disguise, and visited the tomb-chamber. A Dr. Bicknell, who had already been to Mecca, made a similar entry in 1869, disguised as a Haji. Arnold, in 1875, having entered the outer court, remembered that discretion is the better part of valour, and beat a retreat; while any less adventurous Giaour must be content with what he can see through the open gate.

History

Kum is the site of the second most sacred shrine in Persia, and the Westminster Abbey of many of her kings. I have already spoken of the solicitous regard for the welfare of his devotees that led the Imam Reza to scatter his relatives while living, and their corpses when dead, throughout the country that he loved so well. At Kum are deposited the remains of his sister, Fatima-el-Masuma, i.e. the Immaculate, who, according to one account, lived and died here, having fled from Baghdad to escape the persecution of the Khalifs; according to another, sickened and died at Kum, on her way to see her brother at Tus. He, for his part, is believed by the pious Shiahs to return the compliment by paying her a visit every Friday from his shrine at Meshed. Kum[1] appears to have existed from an earlier period, although we may be absolved from accepting the legendary Persian foundation by Tahmuras or Kai Kobad. It was not, however, till it became the sepulchre of the illustrious Fatima, nor, after that, until the Shiah faith had become the national religion, that the town attained its reputation for especial sanctity. It was, of course, sacked by Timur, and has been in a state of greater or less ruin ever since. As the quaint Herbert phrased it, 'in the Sable weed she is still apparelled; for great Coom is now onely *magni nominis umbra*.' Nevertheless, under the patronage of the Sefavi sovereigns, the city revived; fine quays adorned the banks of the river; extensive bazaars and handsome caravanserais received or

[1] Kum has been described at greater or less length by a succession of eminent travellers, whose works I have so frequently cited that I need not recapitulate them here: Sir T. Herbert (1627), J. B. Tavernier (1632), Sir J. Chardin (*circ.* 1670), J. Struys (1671), C. Le Brun (1703), Sir J. Malcolm (1800), J. P. Morier (1809), Sir J. M. Kinneir (1810), Sir W. Ouseley (1811), Sir R. Ker Porter (1818), J. B. Fraser (1821), R. B. Binning (1851), J. Ussher (1861), Colonel Euan Smith (1870), Mrs. Bishop (1890).

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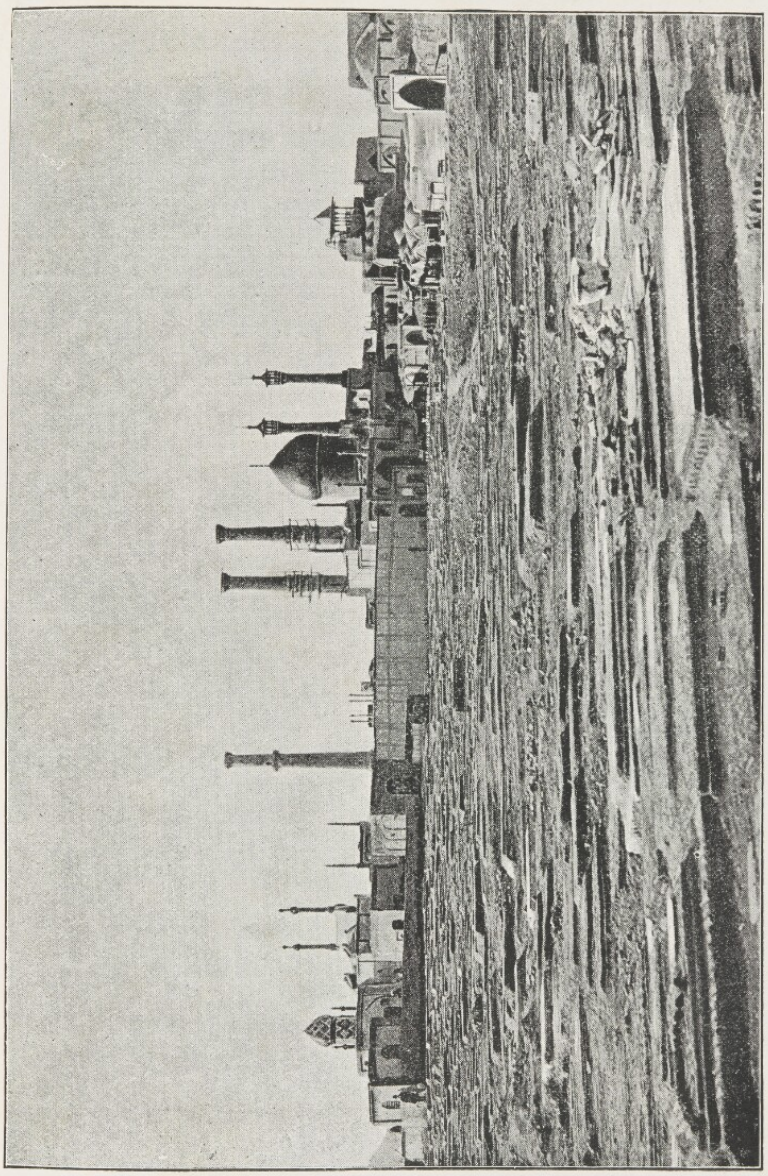

CEMETERY AND MOSQUE OF KUM

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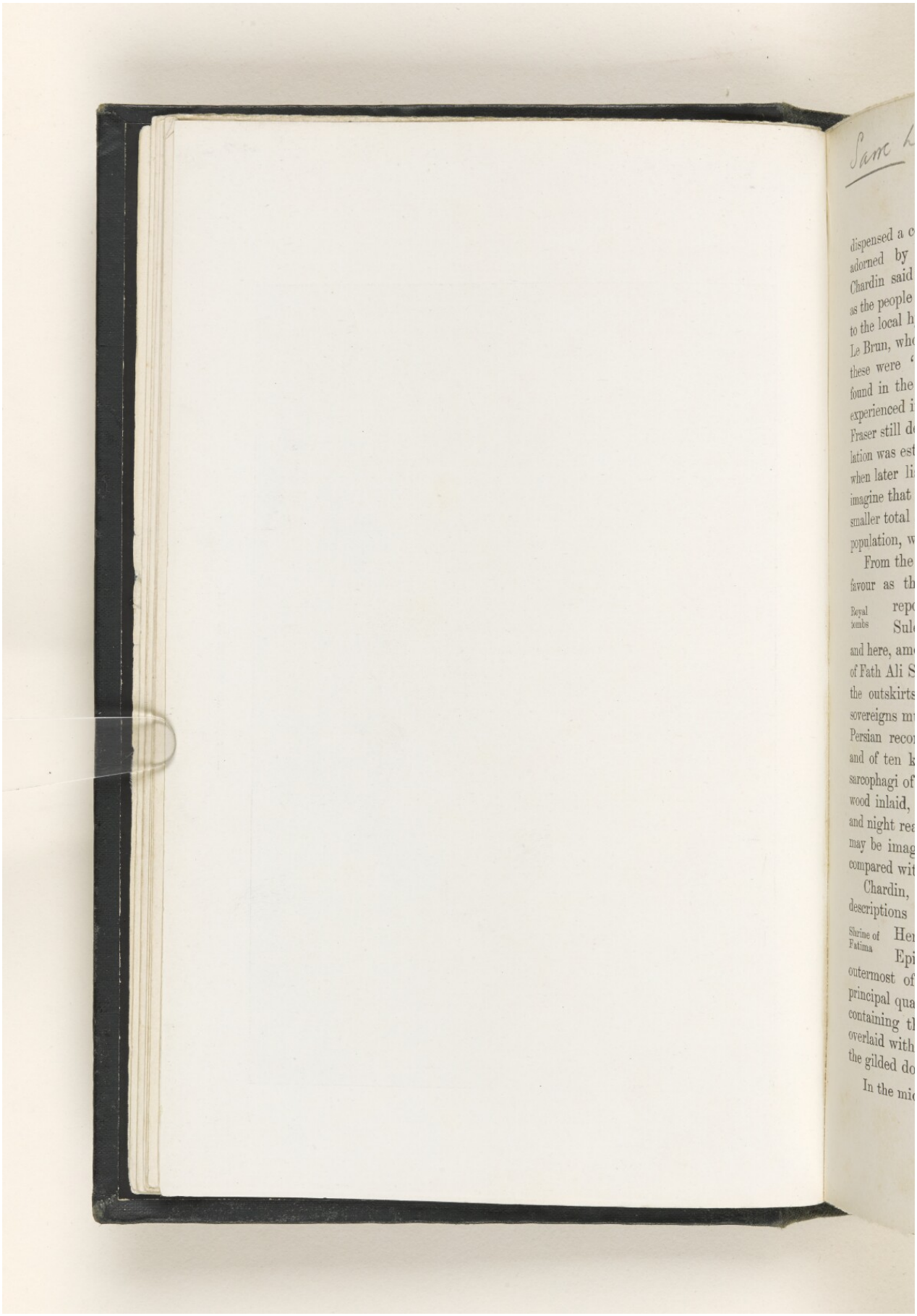

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Same has 2 photos of buildings at Kum (481)



dispensed a considerable trade; and the shrine was added to and adorned by the devout munificence of successive sovereigns. Chardin said that in his day the city contained '15,000 houses, as the people say;' but a measure, both to our own credulity and to the local hyperbole, is set by the earlier Herbert and the later Le Brun, who unite in crediting it with only 2,000 houses, albeit these were 'wel-built, sweet, and wel-furnished.' In 1722 it found in the Afghans an even more savage enemy than it had experienced in Timur, and was all but destroyed. A century later Fraser still described it as 'a wretched mass of ruins.' Its population was estimated as 4,000 in 1872, and as 7,000 in 1884; and when later lists have returned it as 20,000 to 30,000 persons, I imagine that the discrepancy is to be reconciled by regarding the smaller total as the permanent, and the higher as the fluctuating population, which is much swollen by pilgrims.

From the seventeenth century onwards Kum has been in high favour as the sepulchre of many of the Persian kings. Here repose the bodies of Shah Sefi I., Shah Abbas II., Shah Suleiman, and Shah Sultan Husein of the Sefavi dynasty; and here, among the Kajar monarchs, have been laid the remains of Fath Ali Shah (with two of his sons) in a separate building in the outskirts of the town, and of Mohammed Shah. Other sovereigns must also have been interred in the same spot; for the Persian records speak of the graves of 444 saints and princes, and of ten kings. Over their bodies, enshrined in magnificent sarcophagi of alabaster, of marble and ivory, of ebony, and camphor wood inlaid, which are covered with rich draperies, *mullahs* day and night read passages from the Koran. But of small account, it may be imagined, in the pilgrim's eyes, is even the royal dust, compared with that of the Lady Fatima herself.

Royal tombs

Chardin, Tavernier, Le Brun, and others have given minute descriptions or illustrations of the principal shrine; of which Herbert obscurely remarks that 'the mesquit is of Epirotique form.' It is preceded by several courts, the outermost of which is planted with trees. From the inner or principal quadrangle twelve marble steps lead up to the enclosure containing the saint's tomb. Three large doors, one of which is overlaid with silver plates, open into an octagonal chamber beneath the gilded dome.

Shrine of Fatima

In the midst of that chappel stands the tomb of Fatima, overlaid

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with tiles of China, painted à la Moresca, and overspread with cloth of gold that hangs down to the ground on every side. It is enclosed with a gate of massy silver, ten foot high, distant half a foot from the tomb, and at each corner crowned as it were with large apples of fine gold. Several breadths of velvet, hung about the inside of the gate, hide it from the view of the people, so that only favour or money can procure a sight of it. Over the tomb, about ten foot in height, hang several silver vessels, which they call candil, being a sort of lamp. But they never light up any fire therein, which they are not made to hold, nor any sort of Liquor, as not having any bottom. Upon the grate hang several inscriptions in Letters of gold upon thick velloms, as large as a large sheet of paper, which inscriptions contain the elegies of the saint and her family.[1]

It is when he ascends the twelve marble steps that the pilgrim removes his shoes, and leaves behind his staff or his arms. Then, as he enters, he kneels and kisses the threshold. Again he kisses the silver rails, through which he peers at the shrouded sarcophagus; he breathes the prescribed prayers; and with further genuflection and salutations, and fees to the hovering *mullahs*, he retires. He is one step nearer to heaven.

Restoration

For its present splendour of golden cupola and tile-encrusted minars the shrine is indebted to the reigning family. In his early life Fath Ali Shah registered a vow that should he ever succeed to the throne, he would enrich Kum, and relieve its people of taxation. It is more than doubtful whether he ever carried out the latter pledge, though he gave the city and district as a private estate to his mother; but his promise as to the shrine was amply redeemed. He stripped off the tiles with which the dome had hitherto been covered, and replaced them with plates of gilt copper; he erected a neighbouring *madresseh* or religious college, with endowments and quarters for 100 students; he built at Kum a hospital and a *mehman-khaneh* or inn; he was said to have spent 100,000 *tomans* annually upon the shrine; when he visited it, he always came on foot; and when he died, hard by his body was by his orders laid to rest. In more recent times a second dome has been gilt; a clock was erected by one of the royal princes, who was Governor of Hamadan; and the glittering elegance of the large court into which I gazed was due, as I heard,

[1] *Travels* of Sir J. Chardin, p. 394. Fraser, however, in 1821 (*Journey into Khorasan*, p. 139), said that the tomb was enclosed in a sandal-wood box, 12 feet by 8, and 7 to 8 feet high. The silver grating is still there.

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to a restoration by the late Amin-es-Sultan. In one of the sanctuaries is an inscription to Ali, the refreshing originality of which entitles it to be quoted. It runs thus: 'Oh, inexpressible man! By thee, in truth, is Nature enriched and adorned! Had not thy perfect self been in the Creator's thought, Eve had remained for ever a virgin, and Adam a bachelor.'

The city

Kum is indeed the possessor of a situation that might appear, at first sight, to recommend it for the capital city of Persia. It stands upon a river; it occupies a very central position; and it is the meeting-point of many important roads, from Teheran, from Kazvin, from Sultanabad and Burujird, from Yezd, and from Isfahan. It contains one of the two only inns or hotels in Persia that are worthy of the name,—a fine building standing in close proximity to the mosque. On the other hand, although there is a river, the water-supply is inadequate for a great city; and the heat in summer is excruciating. The city has been famous in past and present times chiefly for its melons and cucumbers, its armourers, its shoemakers, and its long-necked earthenware jars for cooling water. Of the last-named Chardin observed:—

> This is peculiar to the white ware which is thence transported, that in the summer it cools the water wonderfully and very suddenly by reason of continual transpiration. So that they who desire to drink cool and deliciously never drink in the same pot above five or six days at most. They wash it with rose water the first time, to take away the ill smell of the Earth; and they hang it in the air full of water, wrapt up in a moist linen cloth. A fourth part of the water transpires in six hours the first time, after that, still less from day to day, till at last the pores are closed up by the thick matter contained in the water which stops in the pores. But so soon as the pores are stopped, the water stinks in the pots, and you must take new ones.

Its people

As might be expected from so holy a place, the population contains a large number of *seyids*—fanatics inured to long impunity of conduct—and is much addicted to bigotry and superstition. No Jews or Parsis live here; and English ladies, resident in the Telegraph offices, have usually found it prudent to veil in public. These superstitions are now dying fast throughout the East; but Kum is one of the places where an accidental spark might still be fanned into a disagreeable flame. Its title of Dar-el-Aman or Seat of Safety is an indication that its

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shrine is a particularly favourite sanctuary for Mussulman refugees; and many is the malefactor who has escaped retribution by a flight to the inviolate asylum of its walls. Apparently, too, the good folk of Kum are without honour in their own country; for there is a Persian proverb that says: 'A dog of Kashan is better than a noble of Kum, albeit a dog is better than a man of Kashan.'

In leaving Kum, it took me three-quarters of an hour to get quit of the maze of intricate streets and alleys of which the greater part of the city outside the bazaar is composed, and to emerge upon the open country. There a fast gallop on an excellent little horse conducted me to the post-house of Pasangun, standing, with a caravanserai, near the base of a range of hills on the south-east. Skirting this range, the track now becomes very stony, then crosses a stream, passes the big caravanserai of Shurab (salt water), which was built about eighty years ago, and winds by a long and arid pass through the range, till it debouches upon another plain, whereon the *chapar-khaneh* and caravanserai of Sinsin (erected by the Amin-ed-Dowleh, a prominent minister of Fath Ali Shah) are situated immediately at the foot of the hills. Sinsin was once a flourishing place, but was ruined by the Turkomans at the end of the last century—to such a distance did those incorrigible freebooters (of the Yomut tribe in this instance) push their marauding expeditions. Malcolm, on his way up to Teheran in 1810, himself conversed with one of the survivors of the catastrophe. Thence, over a perfectly level expanse, we press forward to Kashan, thin wreaths of smoke in the distance betraying the existence of the city at the base of what is sometimes called, for want of a general title, the Kuhrud range (from the village of which I shall speak presently), but is in reality a spur of the same mountain system that continues without a break from Kashan to Yezd, and thence to Kerman.

Postal road

Local tradition ascribes the foundation of Kashan[1] to Zobeideh, the wife of Harun-er-Rashid. But it appears certain that the town existed much earlier; for there is in a native historian a reference both to Kashan and Kum as having contributed a force of 20,000 soldiers to the army of the last Sassanian monarch; and some have seen in the name a contraction from

Kashan

[1] For Kashan, in addition to the authorities quoted in the case of Kum, *vide* Olearius (1637), *Narrative of Embassy*; John Bell (1717), *Travels*; and Madame Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*.

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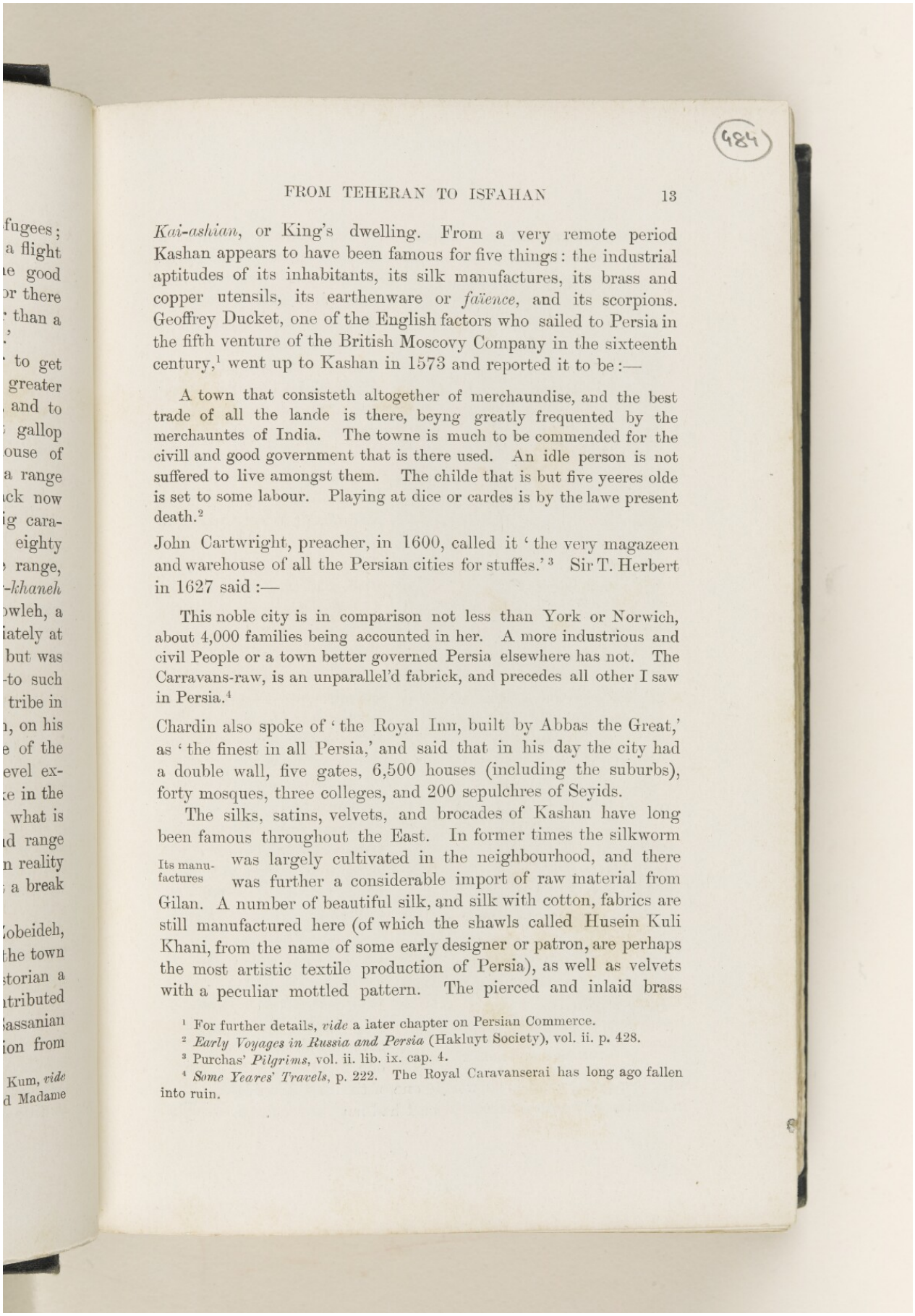



*Kai-ashian*, or King's dwelling. From a very remote period Kashan appears to have been famous for five things: the industrial aptitudes of its inhabitants, its silk manufactures, its brass and copper utensils, its earthenware or *faïence*, and its scorpions. Geoffrey Ducket, one of the English factors who sailed to Persia in the fifth venture of the British Moscovy Company in the sixteenth century,[1] went up to Kashan in 1573 and reported it to be:—

> A town that consisteth altogether of merchaundise, and the best trade of all the lande is there, beyng greatly frequented by the merchauntes of India. The towne is much to be commended for the civill and good government that is there used. An idle person is not suffered to live amongst them. The childe that is but five yeeres olde is set to some labour. Playing at dice or cardes is by the lawe present death.[2]

John Cartwright, preacher, in 1600, called it 'the very magazeen and warehouse of all the Persian cities for stuffes.'[3] Sir T. Herbert in 1627 said:—

> This noble city is in comparison not less than York or Norwich, about 4,000 families being accounted in her. A more industrious and civil People or a town better governed Persia elsewhere has not. The Carravans-raw, is an unparallel'd fabrick, and precedes all other I saw in Persia.[4]

Chardin also spoke of 'the Royal Inn, built by Abbas the Great,' as 'the finest in all Persia,' and said that in his day the city had a double wall, five gates, 6,500 houses (including the suburbs), forty mosques, three colleges, and 200 sepulchres of Seyids.

Its manufactures

The silks, satins, velvets, and brocades of Kashan have long been famous throughout the East. In former times the silkworm was largely cultivated in the neighbourhood, and there was further a considerable import of raw material from Gilan. A number of beautiful silk, and silk with cotton, fabrics are still manufactured here (of which the shawls called Husein Kuli Khani, from the name of some early designer or patron, are perhaps the most artistic textile production of Persia), as well as velvets with a peculiar mottled pattern. The pierced and inlaid brass

[1] For further details, *vide* a later chapter on Persian Commerce.
[2] *Early Voyages in Russia and Persia* (Hakluyt Society), vol. ii. p. 428.
[3] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. ix. cap. 4.
[4] *Some Yeares' Travels*, p. 222. The Royal Caravanserai has long ago fallen into ruin.

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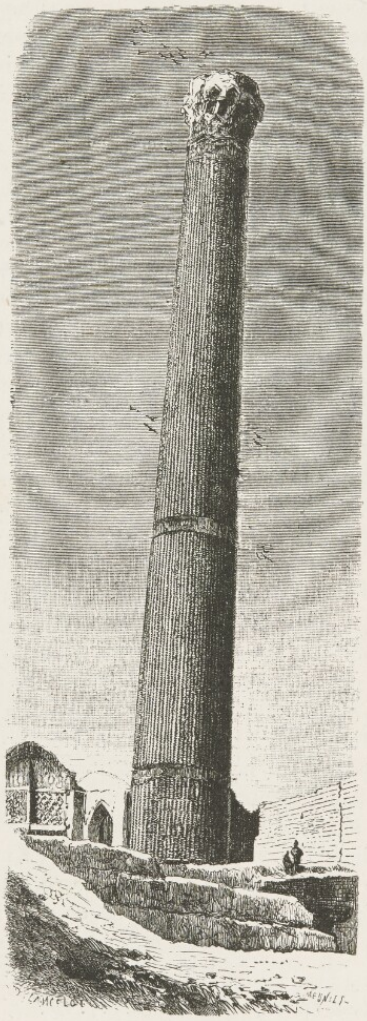
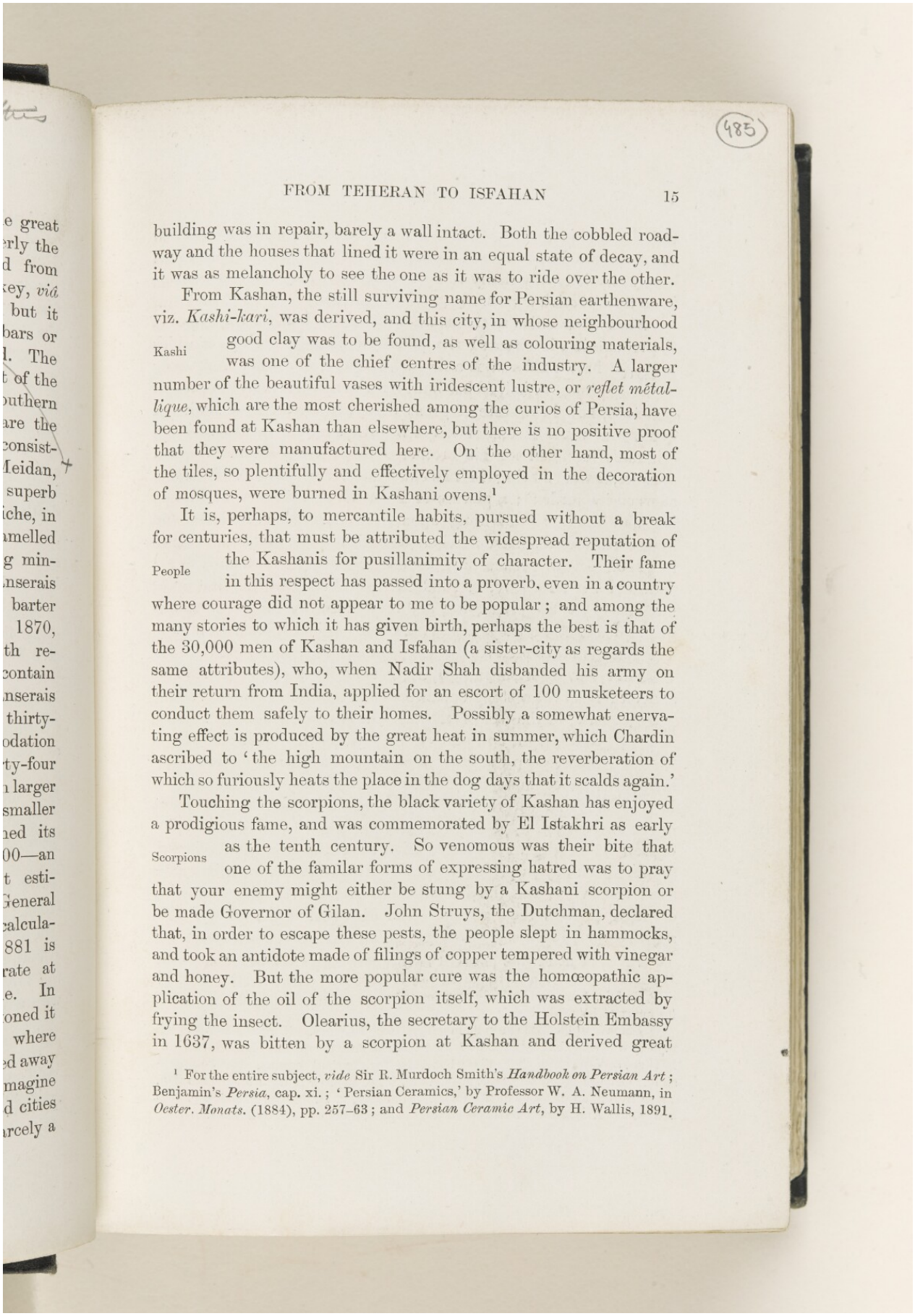
and copper wares are also remarkable; and Kashan is the great native manufactory of domestic utensils in copper. Formerly the metal was procured from Sivas in Asiatic Turkey, *viâ* Erzerum and Tabriz, but it is now imported in bars or sheets from England. The bazaars and busy part of the town are in its southern quarter, where also are the principal buildings, consisting of the Musjid-i-Meidan, which contains a superb *mihrab*, or prayer niche, in embossed and enamelled *faïence*, a tall leaning minaret, and vast caravanserais for the storage or barter of merchandise. In 1870, Colonel Euan Smith reported the city to contain twenty-four caravanserais for the sale of goods, thirty-five for the accommodation of strangers, thirty-four public baths, eighteen larger mosques, and ninety smaller shrines. He returned its population as 90,000—an altogether exorbitant estimate, although General Gasteiger Khan's calculation of 5,000 in 1881 is scarcely less inaccurate at the opposite extreme. In 1885, Schindler reckoned it as 30,000, though where these people are stowed away one is at a loss to imagine after inspecting what is outwardly one of the most dilapidated cities in Persia. A more funereal place I had not yet seen. Scarcely a



MINARET OF KASHAN





building was in repair, barely a wall intact. Both the cobbled roadway and the houses that lined it were in an equal state of decay, and it was as melancholy to see the one as it was to ride over the other.

From Kashan, the still surviving name for Persian earthenware, viz. *Kashi-kari*, was derived, and this city, in whose neighbourhood good clay was to be found, as well as colouring materials, was one of the chief centres of the industry. A larger number of the beautiful vases with iridescent lustre, or *reflet métallique*, which are the most cherished among the curios of Persia, have been found at Kashan than elsewhere, but there is no positive proof that they were manufactured here. On the other hand, most of the tiles, so plentifully and effectively employed in the decoration of mosques, were burned in Kashani ovens.[1]

Kashi

It is, perhaps, to mercantile habits, pursued without a break for centuries, that must be attributed the widespread reputation of the Kashanis for pusillanimity of character. Their fame in this respect has passed into a proverb, even in a country where courage did not appear to me to be popular; and among the many stories to which it has given birth, perhaps the best is that of the 30,000 men of Kashan and Isfahan (a sister-city as regards the same attributes), who, when Nadir Shah disbanded his army on their return from India, applied for an escort of 100 musketeers to conduct them safely to their homes. Possibly a somewhat enervating effect is produced by the great heat in summer, which Chardin ascribed to 'the high mountain on the south, the reverberation of which so furiously heats the place in the dog days that it scalds again.'

People

Touching the scorpions, the black variety of Kashan has enjoyed a prodigious fame, and was commemorated by El Istakhri as early as the tenth century. So venomous was their bite that one of the familar forms of expressing hatred was to pray that your enemy might either be stung by a Kashani scorpion or be made Governor of Gilan. John Struys, the Dutchman, declared that, in order to escape these pests, the people slept in hammocks, and took an antidote made of filings of copper tempered with vinegar and honey. But the more popular cure was the homœopathic application of the oil of the scorpion itself, which was extracted by frying the insect. Olearius, the secretary to the Holstein Embassy in 1637, was bitten by a scorpion at Kashan and derived great

Scorpions

[1] For the entire subject, *vide* Sir R. Murdoch Smith's *Handbook on Persian Art*; Benjamin's *Persia*, cap. xi.; 'Persian Ceramics,' by Professor W. A. Neumann, in *Oester. Monats.* (1884), pp. 257–63; and *Persian Ceramic Art*, by H. Wallis, 1891.

relief from this remedy.[1] There is a tradition that still survives that the creatures do not attack strangers, but this modest display of hospitality is hardly likely to induce a longer stay than is possible in so unattractive a spot.

Palace of Fin

About four miles to the south-west of Kashan, on the slopes of the mountains, is situated the palace of Fin, the springs of which have rendered it a favourite resort of royalty from early times. Shah Abbas built a residence here, but the present structure, now in a state of great decay, is the work of Fath Ali Shah, who made it one of his favourite summer retreats, though originally intended for his brother Husein Kuli Khan. Cypress avenues, water flowing in marble canals, and jets for fountains adorned its gardens; a picture of Fath Ali and his sons and hunting and battle scenes hung upon its walls. Sir J. Malcolm and his escort were accommodated here on their upward march to Teheran in 1810. In later times, a gloomier memory has attached to the palace of Fin; for here, in 1852, Mirza Taki Khan, the first great minister of the reigning Shah, and brother-in-law of the king, was put to death by the Royal order, his veins being opened in a bath. The place is now deserted.

Bund of Shah Abbas

After leaving Kashan, the track runs for a distance of about sixteen miles over a stony expanse, nearly flat, though with a slight rise, to the foot of the mountains, where it turns sharply to the right and plunges into the main range. At a little distance up the pass, in what the foolish Ker Porter described as 'a confined dell of this darkling labyrinth,' stands the large dilapidated caravanserai of Guebrabad—a ruined settlement of the Zoroastrians. Here we finally lose sight of the snowy spire of Demavend, which has accompanied us all the way from Teheran, gaining each day in pride and stature as his inferior satellites have sunk from view, and the monarch has stood forth alone with his crowned head in the heavens. The distance, as the crow flies, is a little over 150 miles.[2] Continuing up the pass, the road enters

[1] The same notion has prevailed in countries widely removed from Persia. Madame de Sévigné, in a letter dated July 8, 1672, wrote: 'Je vous prie, quoi qu'on dise, de faire faire de l'huile de scorpion, afin que nous trouvions en même temps les maux et les médecines.'

[2] Demavend has been seen at much greater distances. Morier (*First Journey*, p. 402) was told that it could be seen from the minaret of the Musjid-i-Shah at Isfahan, a distance of 230 miles; but this, for physical reasons, must be impossible. General Monteith (*Proc. R.G.S.* vol. iii. p. 18) saw it from Mount Savalan, above Ardebil, a distance of 270 miles. Similarly, P. H. Bruce (*Memoirs*, p. 282) saw Mount Ararat from Derbend on the Caspian, a distance of 240 miles.

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a rocky gorge, which, of course, elicits from Porter the descriptive epithets of 'a tremendous abyss, an insurmountable pass, overwhelmingly grand, vieing with any part of the Caucasus for sublimity in form, hue, and bearing.' The rhodomontade of the worthy baronet proceeds from such inexhaustible wells that he could afford to leave the tap perpetually running. Presently we arrive at the great stone *bund* of Ali Verdi Khan, Commander-in-Chief under Shah Abbas and builder of the famous galleried bridge of Isfahan. This great structure, which completely blocks the valley from side to side, damming up the waters of a mountain stream in spring



PASS AND BUND OF KUHRUD

time, and forming thereby a lake of some depth and size, whose outflow towards the plain of Kashan is regulated by a sluice, still answers to the description of it left by Tavernier :—

At the end of the valley you meet a great wall which crosses it and joyns the two mountains together. This wall is above 100 paces long, above thirty foot thick, and fifty high. It was the work of the great Sha Abas, whose design it was to stop the waters that fall from the mountain, and to make a receptacle for water in that place to serve his occasions. At the foot of the wall there is a sluice, which being let



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down keeps in the water; but is pull'd up to let out the water over all the neighbouring lands to the plains of Cachan.[1]

When I passed in the early winter the bed of the lake was dry, and such water as remained in the stream was frozen, for at this elevation, about 7,000 feet, it was very cold. Other travellers have reported the reservoir as half-full, or full, with the water spilling over the *bund* in a fine cascade. In January and February, after the deep snows have fallen, the pass, which below Kuhrud has an altitude of 7,250, and further on, at its highest point, of 8,750 feet, is sometimes impassable.

Above this point the valley widens somewhat, and, about four miles further on, encloses a succession of charming orchards thickly planted with walnut, pear, plum, and apple trees, for the fruit of which Kuhrud is famous. The sight of a little timber was a welcome relief after the long leagues of bare plain and brown mountain, and Kuhrud is to be congratulated on its snug little inheritance, which in summer-time is considered a terrestrial Paradise by the sentimental sons of Iran. Above the terraced orchards is situated the village—a typical Persian mountain hamlet of rude houses built one above the other in ascending tiers upon the side of the hill, such as I had seen daily in Khorasan, but not before in Central Persia.[2] The people of Kuhrud and Soh speak a dialect or patois of their own, containing many archaic words and idioms, and said by philologists to be closely allied to the Lur dialect, to the Dari of Yezd, and to that of Sivend near Persepolis.[3]

Kuhrud

Thence for over twenty miles the track lies amid the spurs and ramifications of the mountain range, climbing one ridge only to reveal another beyond, and wearying the tired traveller with the perpetual new vista of the same mountain maze. At length the caravanserai and imposing Telegraph station of Soh are reached, at a point where the ridge really begins to dip towards the plain of Isfahan. A *farsakh* further are the village and post-house of Bideshk. A descent among the lower undulations carries us on to the flat, where a canter can be enjoyed for miles, a thin streak of verdure in the distant hollow of the plain marking the

Road to Isfahan

[1] *Voyages*, lib. i. cap. vi.

[2] I have called the place Kuhrud (i.e. Mountain River), vulg. Kohrud, which appears to be the generally accepted name; though Kahrud (i.e. Laughing River) has been suggested, and is, perhaps, supported, by the Carou of Chardin.

[3] *Vide* A. H. Schindler, 'Beiträge zum Kurdischen Wortschatze,' in *Zeit. d. M. G.*, 1884.

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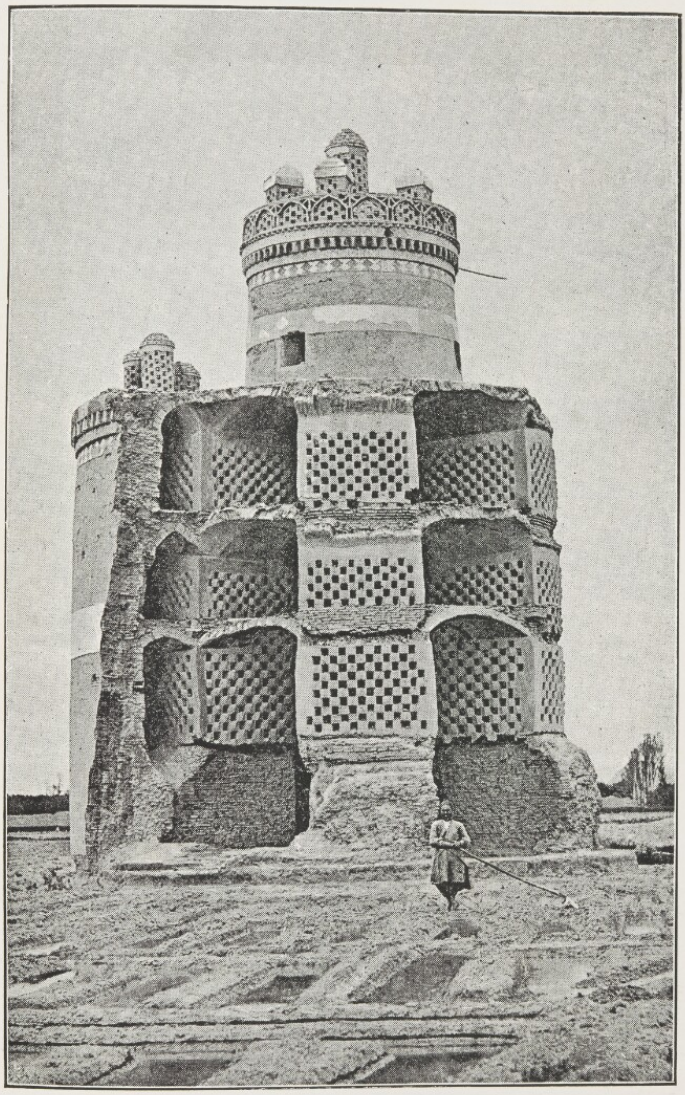
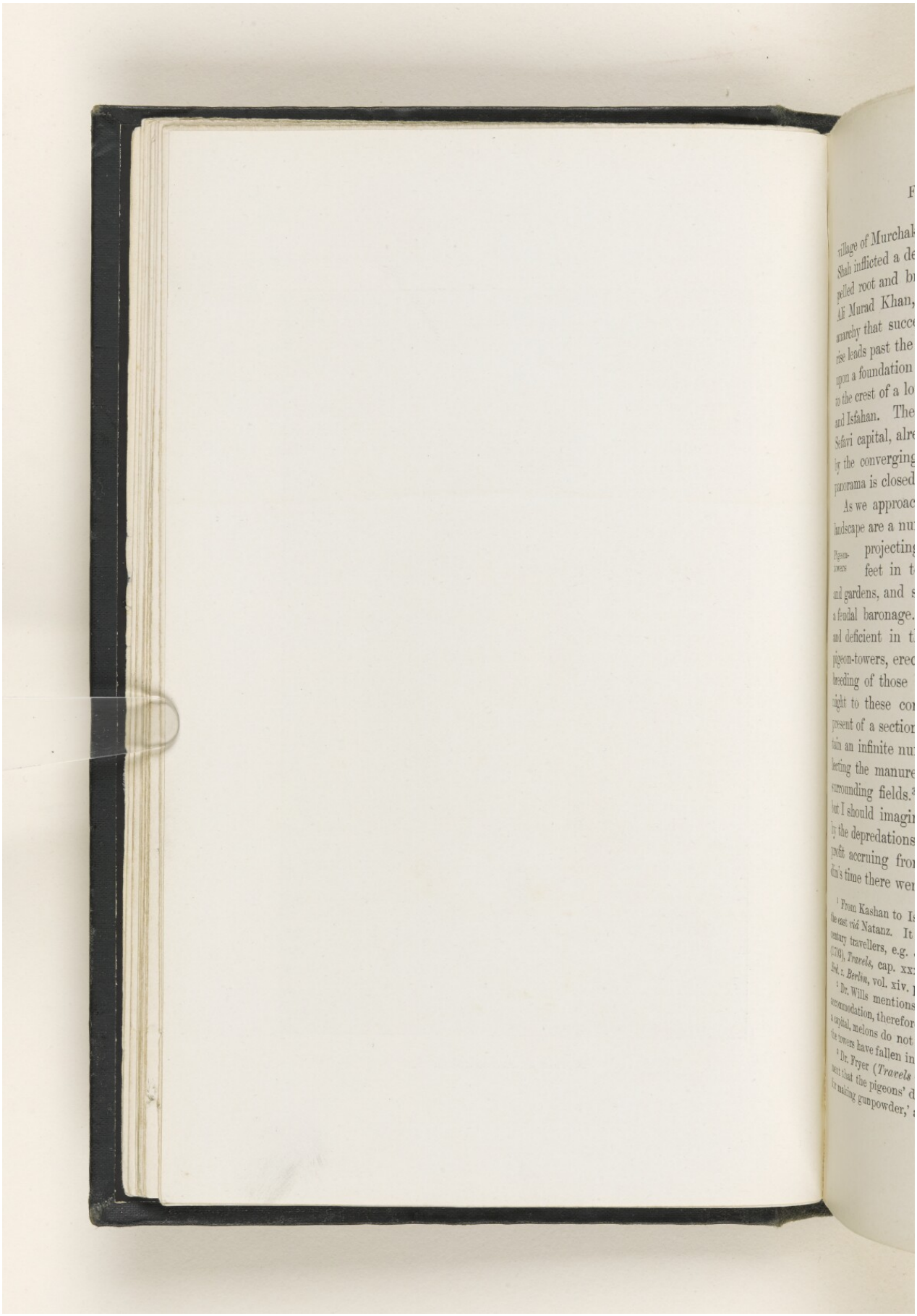


SECTION OF PIGEON-TOWER



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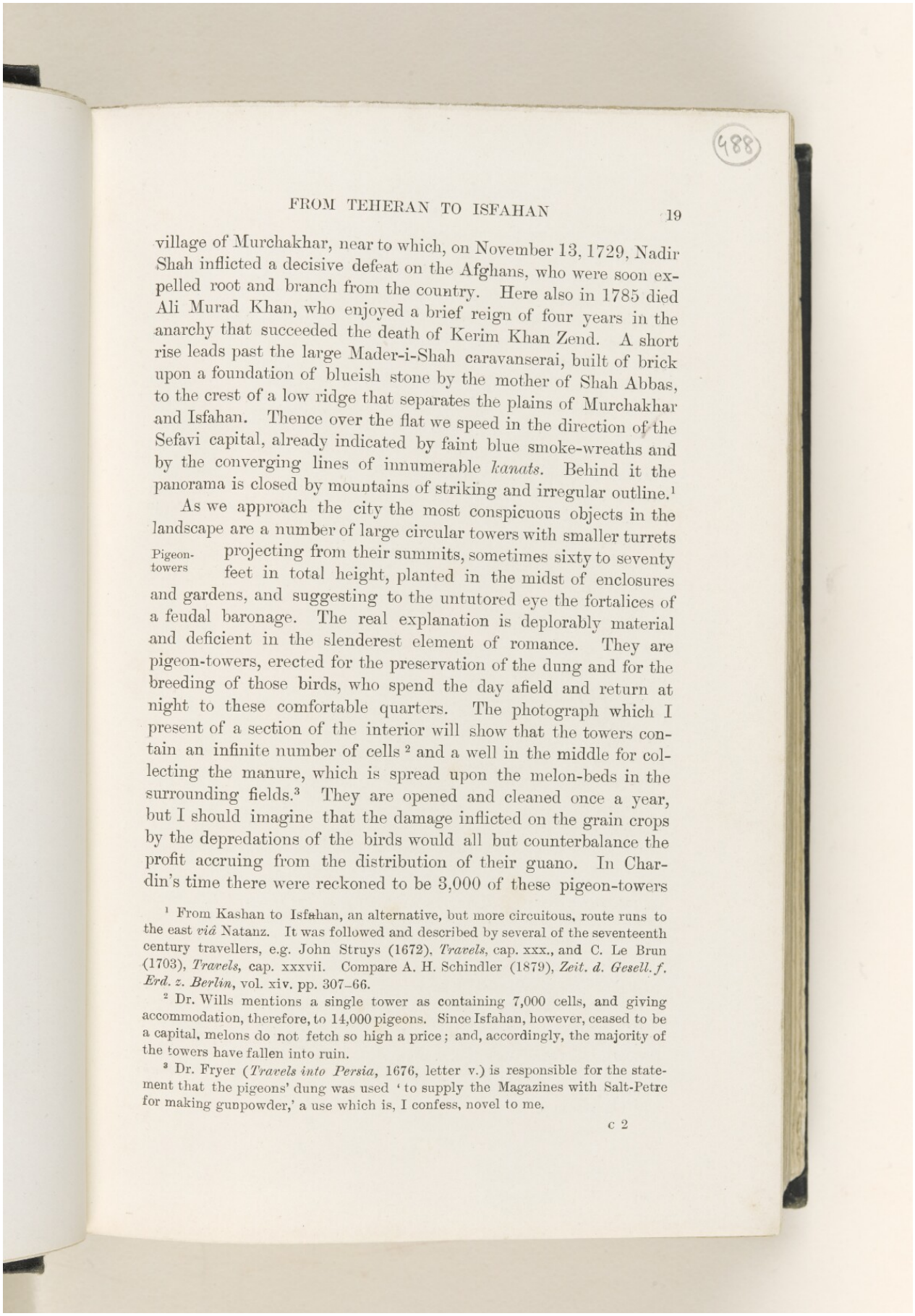

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village of Murchakhar, near to which, on November 13, 1729, Nadir Shah inflicted a decisive defeat on the Afghans, who were soon expelled root and branch from the country. Here also in 1785 died Ali Murad Khan, who enjoyed a brief reign of four years in the anarchy that succeeded the death of Kerim Khan Zend. A short rise leads past the large Mader-i-Shah caravanserai, built of brick upon a foundation of blueish stone by the mother of Shah Abbas, to the crest of a low ridge that separates the plains of Murchakhar and Isfahan. Thence over the flat we speed in the direction of the Sefavi capital, already indicated by faint blue smoke-wreaths and by the converging lines of innumerable *kanats*. Behind it the panorama is closed by mountains of striking and irregular outline.[1]

As we approach the city the most conspicuous objects in the landscape are a number of large circular towers with smaller turrets projecting from their summits, sometimes sixty to seventy feet in total height, planted in the midst of enclosures and gardens, and suggesting to the untutored eye the fortalices of a feudal baronage. The real explanation is deplorably material and deficient in the slenderest element of romance. They are pigeon-towers, erected for the preservation of the dung and for the breeding of those birds, who spend the day afield and return at night to these comfortable quarters. The photograph which I present of a section of the interior will show that the towers contain an infinite number of cells [2] and a well in the middle for collecting the manure, which is spread upon the melon-beds in the surrounding fields.[3] They are opened and cleaned once a year, but I should imagine that the damage inflicted on the grain crops by the depredations of the birds would all but counterbalance the profit accruing from the distribution of their guano. In Chardin's time there were reckoned to be 3,000 of these pigeon-towers

Pigeon-towers

[1] From Kashan to Isfahan, an alternative, but more circuitous, route runs to the east *viâ* Natanz. It was followed and described by several of the seventeenth century travellers, e.g. John Struys (1672), *Travels*, cap. xxx., and C. Le Brun (1703), *Travels*, cap. xxxvii. Compare A. H. Schindler (1879), *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z. Berlin*, vol. xiv. pp. 307–66.

[2] Dr. Wills mentions a single tower as containing 7,000 cells, and giving accommodation, therefore, to 14,000 pigeons. Since Isfahan, however, ceased to be a capital, melons do not fetch so high a price; and, accordingly, the majority of the towers have fallen into ruin.

[3] Dr. Fryer (*Travels into Persia*, 1676, letter v.) is responsible for the statement that the pigeons' dung was used 'to supply the Magazines with Salt-Petre for making gunpowder,' a use which is, I confess, novel to me.



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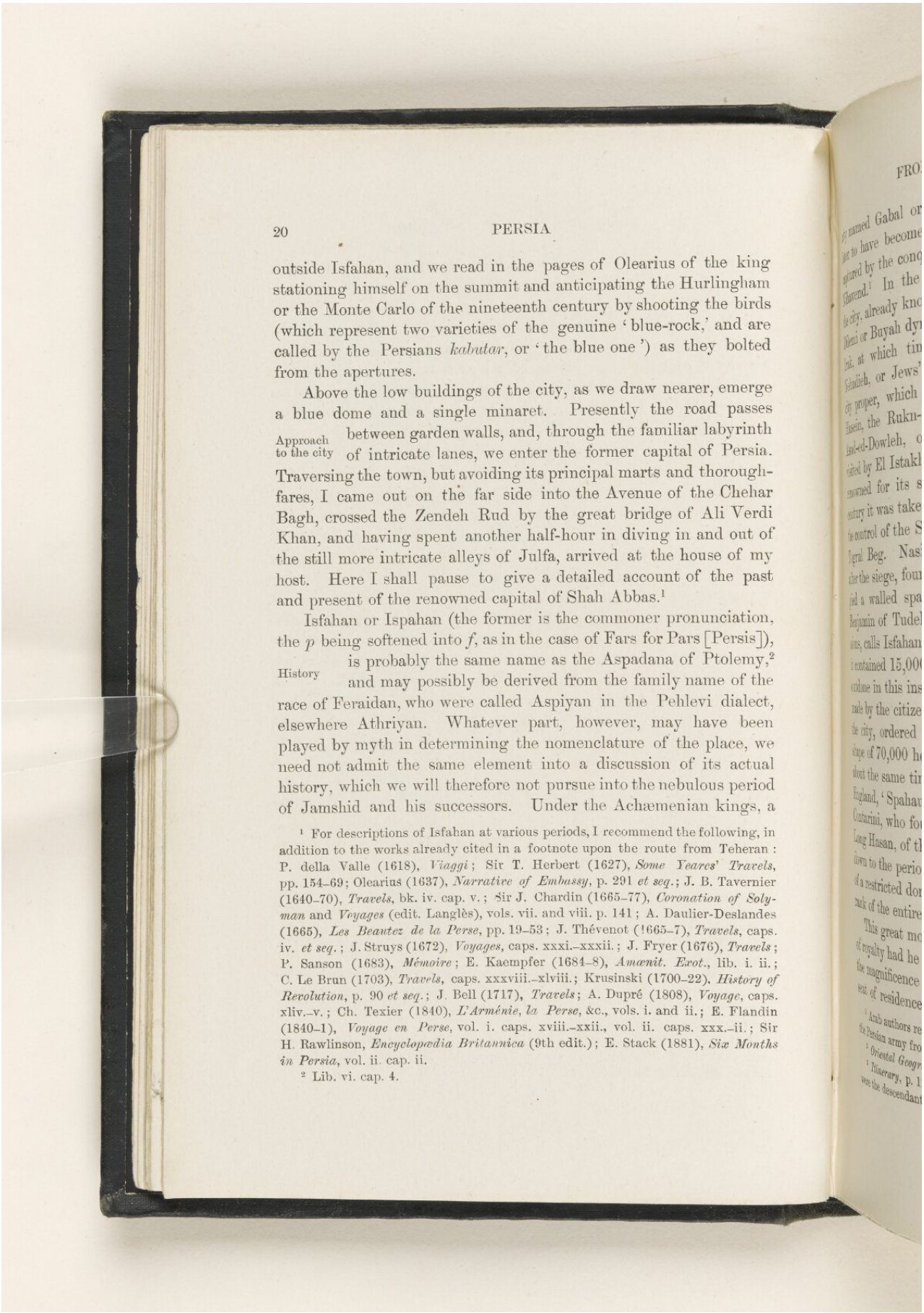




outside Isfahan, and we read in the pages of Olearius of the king stationing himself on the summit and anticipating the Hurlingham or the Monte Carlo of the nineteenth century by shooting the birds (which represent two varieties of the genuine 'blue-rock,' and are called by the Persians *kabutar*, or 'the blue one') as they bolted from the apertures.

Above the low buildings of the city, as we draw nearer, emerge a blue dome and a single minaret. Presently the road passes between garden walls, and, through the familiar labyrinth of intricate lanes, we enter the former capital of Persia. Traversing the town, but avoiding its principal marts and thoroughfares, I came out on the far side into the Avenue of the Chehar Bagh, crossed the Zendeh Rud by the great bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, and having spent another half-hour in diving in and out of the still more intricate alleys of Julfa, arrived at the house of my host. Here I shall pause to give a detailed account of the past and present of the renowned capital of Shah Abbas.[1]

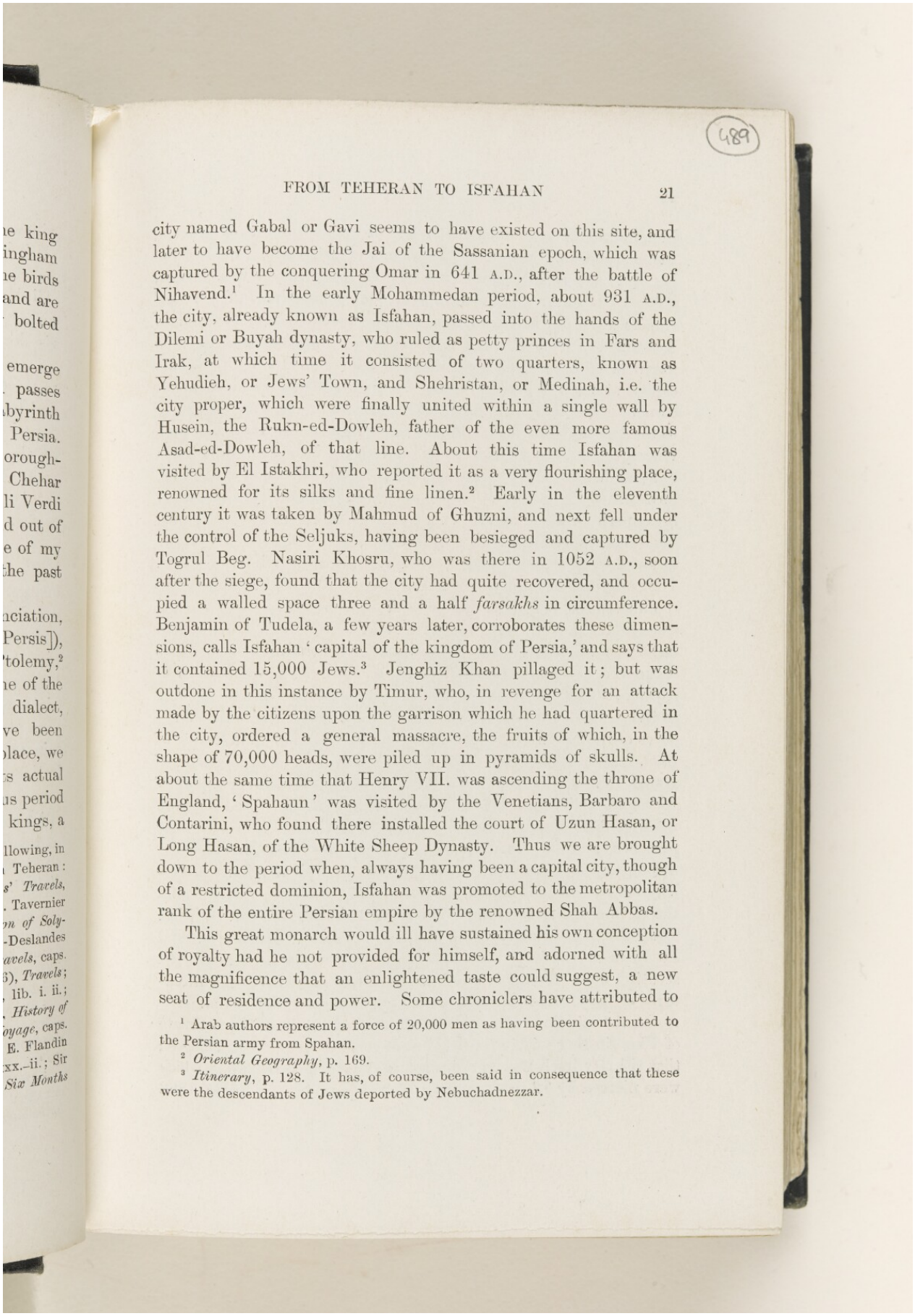
Approach to the city

Isfahan or Ispahan (the former is the commoner pronunciation, the *p* being softened into *f*, as in the case of Fars for Pars [Persis]), is probably the same name as the Aspadana of Ptolemy,[2] and may possibly be derived from the family name of the race of Feraidan, who were called Aspiyan in the Pehlevi dialect, elsewhere Athriyan. Whatever part, however, may have been played by myth in determining the nomenclature of the place, we need not admit the same element into a discussion of its actual history, which we will therefore not pursue into the nebulous period of Jamshid and his successors. Under the Achæmenian kings, a

History

[1] For descriptions of Isfahan at various periods, I recommend the following, in addition to the works already cited in a footnote upon the route from Teheran: P. della Valle (1618), *Viaggi*; Sir T. Herbert (1627), *Some Yeares' Travels*, pp. 154–69; Olearius (1637), *Narrative of Embassy*, p. 291 *et seq.*; J. B. Tavernier (1640–70), *Travels*, bk. iv. cap. v.; Sir J. Chardin (1665–77), *Coronation of Solyman* and *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vols. vii. and viii. p. 141; A. Daulier-Deslandes (1665), *Les Beautez de la Perse*, pp. 19–53; J. Thévenot (1665–7), *Travels*, caps. iv. *et seq.*; J. Struys (1672), *Voyages*, caps. xxxi.–xxxii.; J. Fryer (1676), *Travels*; P. Sanson (1683), *Mémoire*; E. Kaempfer (1684–8), *Amœnit. Exot.*, lib. i. ii.; C. Le Brun (1703), *Travels*, caps. xxxviii.–xlviii.; Krusinski (1700–22), *History of Revolution*, p. 90 *et seq.*; J. Bell (1717), *Travels*; A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage*, caps. xliv.–v.; Ch. Texier (1840), *L'Arménie, la Perse*, &c., vols. i. and ii.; E. Flandin (1840–1), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. caps. xviii.–xxii., vol. ii. caps. xxx.–ii.; Sir H. Rawlinson, *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edit.); E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. ii.

[2] Lib. vi. cap. 4.





city named Gabal or Gavi seems to have existed on this site, and later to have become the Jai of the Sassanian epoch, which was captured by the conquering Omar in 641 A.D., after the battle of Nihavend.[1] In the early Mohammedan period, about 931 A.D., the city, already known as Isfahan, passed into the hands of the Dilemi or Buyah dynasty, who ruled as petty princes in Fars and Irak, at which time it consisted of two quarters, known as Yehudieh, or Jews' Town, and Shehristan, or Medinah, i.e. the city proper, which were finally united within a single wall by Husein, the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, father of the even more famous Asad-ed-Dowleh, of that line. About this time Isfahan was visited by El Istakhri, who reported it as a very flourishing place, renowned for its silks and fine linen.[2] Early in the eleventh century it was taken by Mahmud of Ghuzni, and next fell under the control of the Seljuks, having been besieged and captured by Togrul Beg. Nasiri Khosru, who was there in 1052 A.D., soon after the siege, found that the city had quite recovered, and occupied a walled space three and a half *farsakhs* in circumference. Benjamin of Tudela, a few years later, corroborates these dimensions, calls Isfahan 'capital of the kingdom of Persia,' and says that it contained 15,000 Jews.[3] Jenghiz Khan pillaged it; but was outdone in this instance by Timur, who, in revenge for an attack made by the citizens upon the garrison which he had quartered in the city, ordered a general massacre, the fruits of which, in the shape of 70,000 heads, were piled up in pyramids of skulls. At about the same time that Henry VII. was ascending the throne of England, 'Spahaun' was visited by the Venetians, Barbaro and Contarini, who found there installed the court of Uzun Hasan, or Long Hasan, of the White Sheep Dynasty. Thus we are brought down to the period when, always having been a capital city, though of a restricted dominion, Isfahan was promoted to the metropolitan rank of the entire Persian empire by the renowned Shah Abbas.

This great monarch would ill have sustained his own conception of royalty had he not provided for himself, and adorned with all the magnificence that an enlightened taste could suggest, a new seat of residence and power. Some chroniclers have attributed to

[1] Arab authors represent a force of 20,000 men as having been contributed to the Persian army from Spahan.

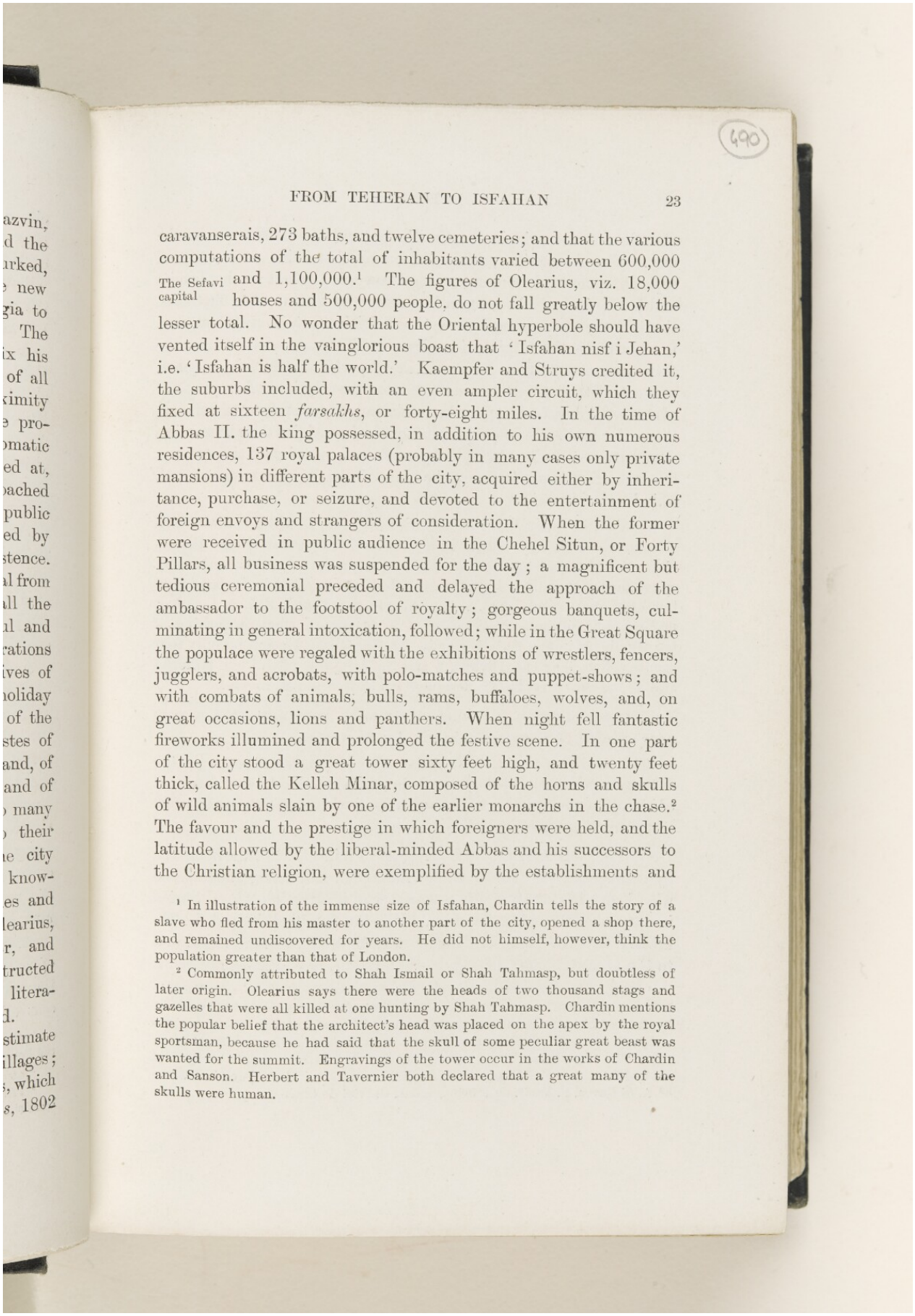
[2] *Oriental Geography*, p. 169.

[3] *Itinerary*, p. 128. It has, of course, been said in consequence that these were the descendants of Jews deported by Nebuchadnezzar.

him inferior or subsidiary motives: the unhealthiness of Kazvin, the distance of Sultanieh, the omens of astrology. Behind the superficial vainglory which he so dearly loved, lurked, however, an idea of true statesmanship. Of the new empire which he had won, and which stretched from Georgia to Aghanistan, Isfahan was the natural geographical centre. The instincts of a prudent centralisation commanded him to fix his capital at a spot where he would be within equal distance of all corners of his huge dominion, and where, in reasonable proximity to the Persian Gulf, he could at once overawe the maritime provinces, control the foreign trade, and enter into easy diplomatic relations with the potentates of Europe. This decision arrived at, he sketched the outlines of a colossal plan. A new city, approached by superb bridges and stately avenues, furnished with public buildings, as beautiful as they were large, and embellished by terraced gardens, and palaces, and pavilions, sprang into existence. The embassies of mighty sovereigns flocked to the new capital from the uttermost parts of Europe, and were received with all the splendour of a court immensely rich and versed in a fanciful and fastidious etiquette. The factors of great trading corporations occupied a position little short of the accredited representatives of royalty; and a life of gorgeous ceremonial, mingled with holiday festivity, rendered Isfahan the most famous and romantic of the cities of the East. It is fortunate that the cosmopolitan tastes of this great monarch—the contemporary of Elizabeth in England, of Henri IV. in France, of Gustavus Adolphus in Sweden, and of Akbar in India—and his successors, should have tempted so many intelligent foreigners to the Persian court; for it is to their presence and, in some cases, prolonged residence in the city throughout the seventeenth century, that we owe a minute knowledge of the life and habits, the pomp and parade, the virtues and the vices of the Sefavi kings. Pietro della Valle, Herbert, Olearius, Tavernier, Chardin, Sanson, Daulier-Deslandes, Kaempfer, and Le Brun successively shed the light of an acute and instructed scrutiny upon the scene, and have added to the respective literatures of Italy, Great Britain, Germany, France, and Holland.

Abbas the Great

In the middle of the seventeenth century we have the estimate of Chardin that within ten leagues of Isfahan were 1,500 villages; that the city itself was 24 miles round; that inside the walls, which were pierced by 12 gates, were 162 mosques, 48 *madressehs*, 1802





caravanserais, 273 baths, and twelve cemeteries; and that the various computations of the total of inhabitants varied between 600,000 and 1,100,000.[1] The figures of Olearius, viz. 18,000 houses and 500,000 people, do not fall greatly below the lesser total. No wonder that the Oriental hyperbole should have vented itself in the vainglorious boast that 'Isfahan nisf i Jehan,' i.e. 'Isfahan is half the world.' Kaempfer and Struys credited it, the suburbs included, with an even ampler circuit, which they fixed at sixteen *farsakhs*, or forty-eight miles. In the time of Abbas II. the king possessed, in addition to his own numerous residences, 137 royal palaces (probably in many cases only private mansions) in different parts of the city, acquired either by inheritance, purchase, or seizure, and devoted to the entertainment of foreign envoys and strangers of consideration. When the former were received in public audience in the Chehel Situn, or Forty Pillars, all business was suspended for the day; a magnificent but tedious ceremonial preceded and delayed the approach of the ambassador to the footstool of royalty; gorgeous banquets, culminating in general intoxication, followed; while in the Great Square the populace were regaled with the exhibitions of wrestlers, fencers, jugglers, and acrobats, with polo-matches and puppet-shows; and with combats of animals, bulls, rams, buffaloes, wolves, and, on great occasions, lions and panthers. When night fell fantastic fireworks illumined and prolonged the festive scene. In one part of the city stood a great tower sixty feet high, and twenty feet thick, called the Kelleh Minar, composed of the horns and skulls of wild animals slain by one of the earlier monarchs in the chase.[2] The favour and the prestige in which foreigners were held, and the latitude allowed by the liberal-minded Abbas and his successors to the Christian religion, were exemplified by the establishments and

The Sefavi capital

[1] In illustration of the immense size of Isfahan, Chardin tells the story of a slave who fled from his master to another part of the city, opened a shop there, and remained undiscovered for years. He did not himself, however, think the population greater than that of London.

[2] Commonly attributed to Shah Ismail or Shah Tahmasp, but doubtless of later origin. Olearius says there were the heads of two thousand stags and gazelles that were all killed at one hunting by Shah Tahmasp. Chardin mentions the popular belief that the architect's head was placed on the apex by the royal sportsman, because he had said that the skull of some peculiar great beast was wanted for the summit. Engravings of the tower occur in the works of Chardin and Sanson. Herbert and Tavernier both declared that a great many of the skulls were human.

churches of the principal monastic fraternities of Europe in the city. The Augustines, Carmelites, and Capuchins were allowed separate quarters belonging to the Crown in Isfahan ;[1] the Jesuits and Dominicans had convents in Julfa. Of the various factories, that of the representative of the British East India Company, from 1617 to the Afghan invasion in 1722, was situated in the Bazaar near the Great Meidan. It is perhaps only fair to quote, as a set-off to the doubtless exaggerated descriptions of some of the afore-mentioned travellers when relating the wonders of Isfahan, the cooler and more cynical verdict of the French jeweller Tavernier, who was not to be deluded by surface show or factitious pomp, but who mercilessly stripped the tinsel from the gilt gingerbread. This is what he said :—

Ispahan in general, unless it be the Meydan, and some few arch'd streets, where the merchants live, is more like a great village than a city ; the Houses standing at a distance one from the other with every one a garden, but ill look'd after, not having anything in it perchance but only one pitiful tree . . . . As for the King's Palace, I cannot make any handsome description of it in regard there is nothing of beauty either in the Building or in the Gardens. Excepting only four rooms which they call Divans, I saw nothing but pitiful low galleries and so narrrow that hardly two men could pass abrest in 'em.

As for the Christian Missions and monks, he entertained a very poor opinion of their propaganda, for he wrote :—

The number of the Religious Teachers is far greater than the number of hearers, for in all Ispahan and Julfa, take the Franks that come out of Europe, or born in Persia, as well men as women, there are not 600 persons that profess the Catholic Religion.

He further declared that the city was ill laid-out, the walls broken by great gaps, the streets narrow, unequal, and dark, encumbered with heaps of ordure and the carcasses of dead animals, and buried in summer dust or winter mire. We are justified, indeed, in believing that the pomp of Isfahan was limited to outer show, and to the appurtenances of royalty ; and that, one grade only below

[1] Of these the Augustines were the first European monks who ever lived in Isfahan. Their first representative was Antonio di Govea, who in 1598 was sent by the Archbishop of Goa as ambassador for Spain and Portugal. The Carmelites under Père Simon arrived as envoys from Pope Clement VIII. to Shah Abbas in 1608. The Capuchins (Père Pacifique de Provins and Père Gabriel) were sent out by Richelieu with letters from Louis XIV. in 1628. *Vide* the published works of A. di Govea, P. Pacif. de Provins, and P. Gabriel de Chinon.

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these, were encountered the slovenliness and the filth of the unregenerate East. Such as it was, however—a strange but truly Oriental mixture of splendour and squalor, of dignity and decay—the city continued with little alteration till the first quarter of the eighteenth century, when, the virtues of the reigning dynasty having been sapped by an inherited course of debauchery and intoxication, the capital and its monarch both fell a disgraceful prey to the Afghans in 1722. The horrors of the siege—when the Zendeh Rud was choked with corpses, when mothers devoured their children in the extremity of famine, and when the inhuman conqueror, after massacring all the princes and nobles on whom he could lay hands, surrendered the city for fifteen days to an indiscriminate carnage—have been powerfully described by the Polish Jesuit Krusinski, who was himself a resident in the capital at the time.[1] From this shock, and from the brutal savagery of the Afghans, who overturned, and sacked, and defiled out of all recognition, palaces, and avenues, and gardens, and whatever of beauty or grandeur met the eye, Isfahan has never recovered. It was patronised by Nadir Shah, but was less esteemed by him than Meshed. Kerim Khan Zend shifted the seat of Government to Shiraz. Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar shifted it again to Teheran, when he dismantled the fortifications of Isfahan. Fath Ali Shah sometimes visited the city, and ultimately died there in 1834. It has only once, in 1851, been favoured by the presence of the reigning monarch. Under the depressing influence of all these circumstances, Isfahan has fallen from its high estate, and now in perpetual sackcloth and ashes—no inapt metaphor to apply to the present appearance of the town—bewails an irrecoverable past.

Plan of the city

The method which I shall adopt of describing the city will be to give an indication of its general features, and then, step by step, to visit its most renowned or interesting localities, depicting at each stage the contrast between a past of grandeur and a present of sorrowfulness and decay. The only plan of Isfahan that I know appears among the plates of M. Coste's splendid work, entitled 'Monuments Modernes de la Perse.' Roughly speaking, Isfahan lies to the north of the Zendeh Rud, Julfa to the south. In about the centre of the former is situated the great block of buildings, gardens, and pavilions constituting

[1] *History of the Revolutions of Persia*, taken from the Memoirs of Father Krusinski, by Père Ducerceau. Translated into English. 1729.

the Palace enclosure, and abutting on the western side upon the Great Meidan, a parallelogram, whose length is from north to south and width from east to west. South-east of the Meidan is the Ark or Citadel. From the western flank of the palace enclosure runs the Chehar Bagh, or principal avenue to the great bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, conducting to Julfa. Further to the east, a similar avenue leads down to the second storeyed bridge, known as Pul-i-Khaju. Older bridges exist at some little distance both to the east and west of these two structures, while between them a fifth conducts to the palace of Haft Dest.

Meidan-i-Shah

The centre of Isfahan is the Meidan-i-Shah, or Royal Square, which is undoubtedly one of the most imposing piazzas in the world. It was laid out and surrounded with buildings by Shah Abbas; the king's palace, the principal mosque, and the Great Bazaar opened on to it; and it was both the scene of the principal royal pageants, and the nucleus of city life. This Meidan is 560 yards in length by 174 in width.[1] It is surrounded by a long low range of brick buildings, divided into two storeys of recessed arches, one above the other. Originally the lower of these were shops, opening on to the Meidan, and communicating at the back with the big Bazaar, while the upper storey consisted of chambers with balconies, that were thronged on festival occasions. They have since been used as barracks, and now present a blank and deserted appearance. A row of trees was planted all round in front of these arcades, and in front of the trees was a stone-edged canal filled with water. In 1809 Morier reported that there was not a single tree in the Meidan and that the canal was empty. A scanty row of *chenars* and poplars has

[1] Nowhere have I been so bewildered at the confusing and contradictory accounts of previous travellers as in their descriptions of the sights of Isfahan. They differ irreconcilably in their orientation of buildings, in their figures of dimensions, in the number of avenues, pillars, bridges, arches, &c. To correct or even to notice these countless inaccuracies would be a futile task. But as an illustration of them I may here give the dimensions in yards or paces of the Meidan-i-Shah as recorded by the principal historians of Isfahan, from which it will be seen how absurd is the divergence between two independent visions. Della Valle 690–230, Olearius 700–250, Tavernier 700–250, Chardin 440–160, Sanson 600–300, D. Deslandes 600–400, Kaempfer 660–212, Struys 700–250, Le Brun 710–210, Olivier 700–230, Johnson 500–200, Porter 860–230, Binning 800–200, Ussher 880–250, Pollington 600–200, Stack 300–180, Wills 440–220, Rawlinson 660–230. Here there is a maximum divergence of 580 yards in length, and 240 yards in width, or a cumulative error of over 125 per cent.

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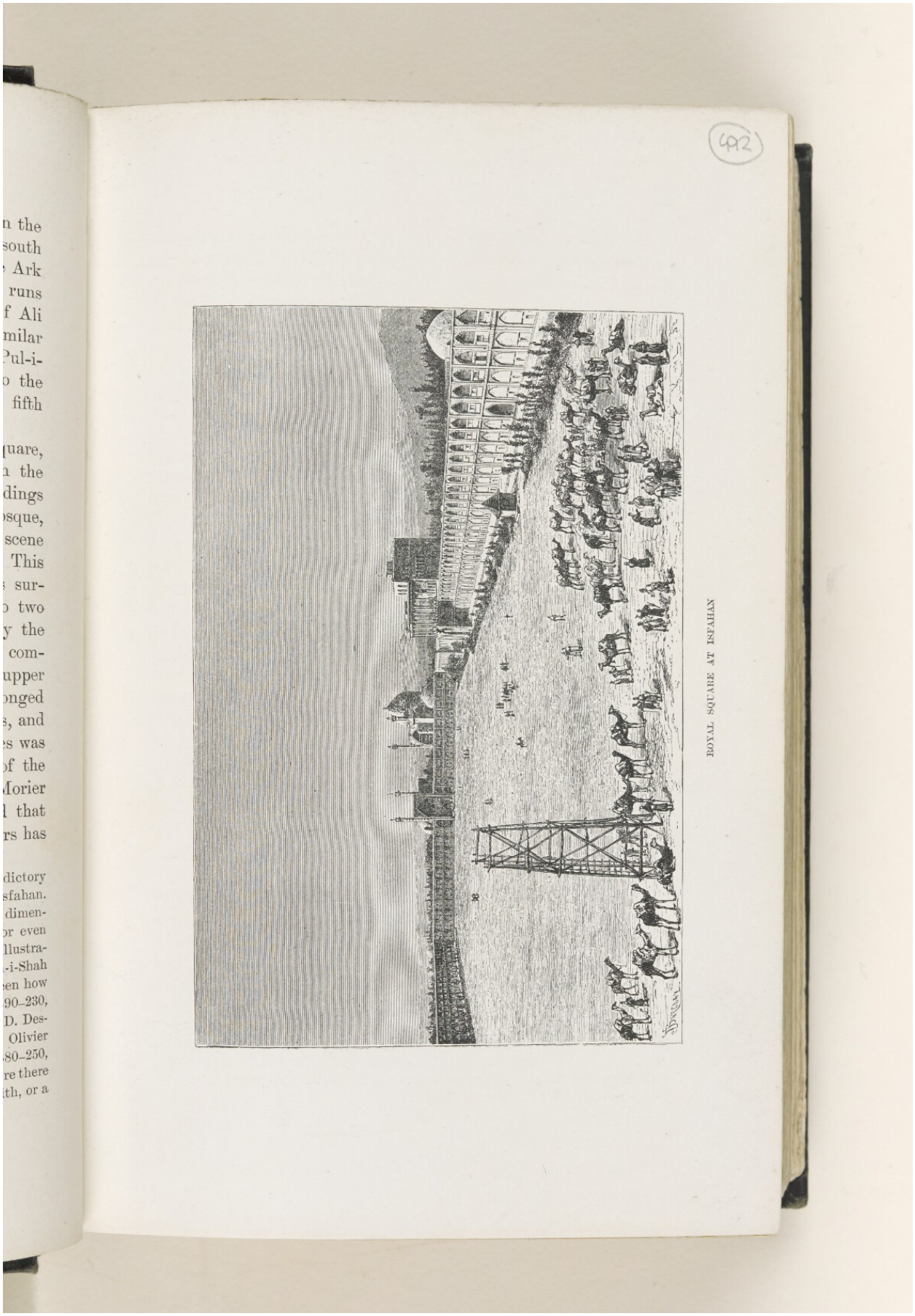


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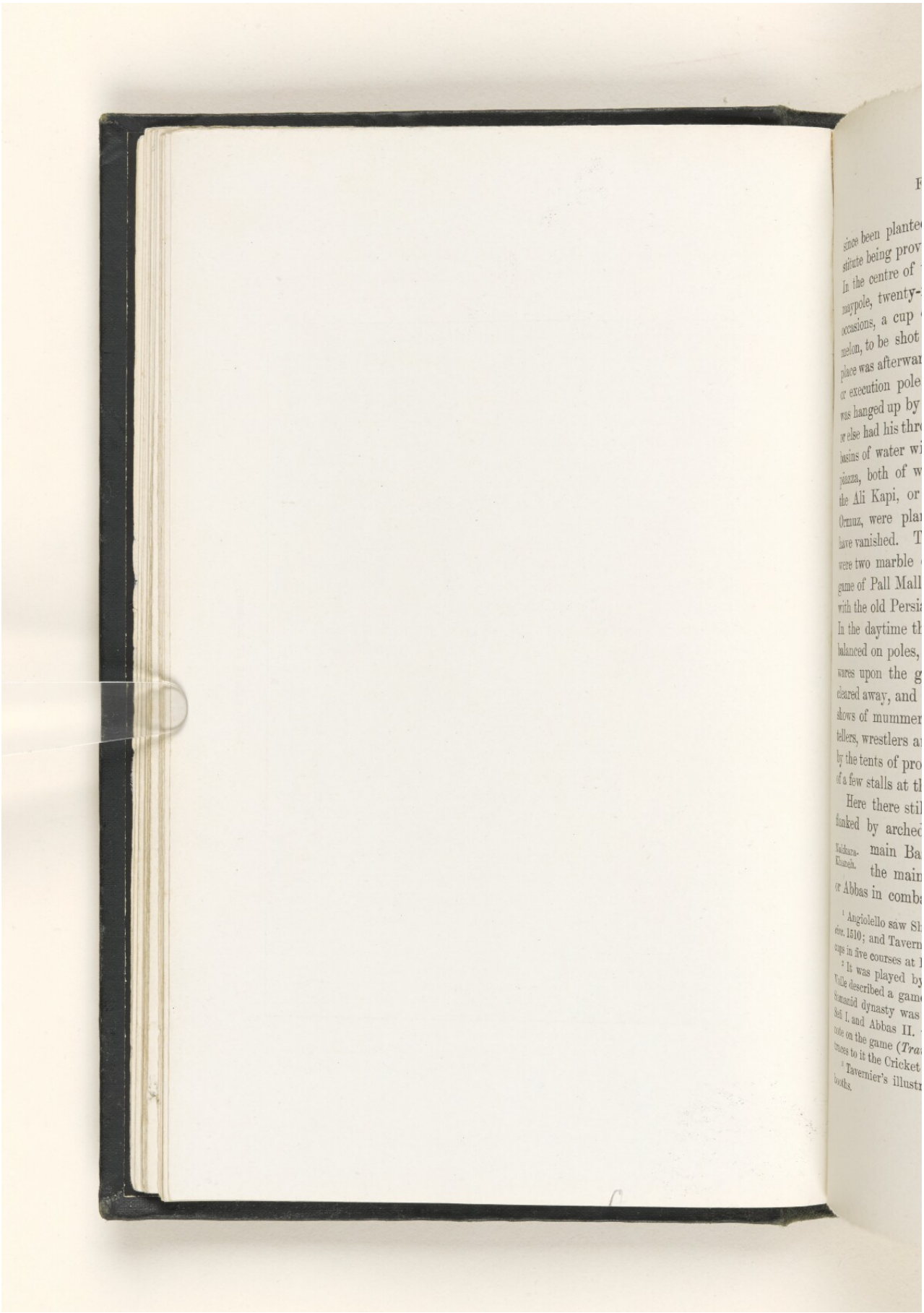

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[1] Angiolello saw Sh
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[3] Tavernier's illustr
booths.

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since been planted; but the canal was dry when I saw it, a substitute being provided by occasional fountains of drinking-water. In the centre of the Meidan, in the Sefavi days, stood a mast or maypole, twenty-five feet high, on which was placed, on great occasions, a cup of gold, but on ordinary occasions an apple or melon, to be shot at by archers passing at full gallop below.[1] Its place was afterwards taken by a more sinister object, viz., the *kapuk*, or execution pole, with notches on the side, by which the culprit was hanged up by the heels, and subsequently dashed to the ground, or else had his throat cut. This, too, has disappeared. Two great basins of water with porphyry coping adorned the two ends of the piazza, both of which survive, and are kept full. In front of the Ali Kapi, or Palace Gate, over 100 cannon, the spoils of Ormuz, were planted behind a wooden balustrade. These also have vanished. The only other permanent objects in the Meidan were two marble columns, which served as the goal posts in the game of Pall Mall or Polo, called *chugan*, which was very popular with the old Persian nobility, but has also died a natural death.[2] In the daytime the Meidan was all but filled with booths or tents balanced on poles, under which the petty hucksters displayed their wares upon the ground;[3] but on great occasions all these were cleared away, and in the evenings were ordinarily replaced by the shows of mummers, jugglers, and acrobats, by groups of story-tellers, wrestlers and dervishes, by cock-fights and ram-fights, and by the tents of prostitutes. All these are gone, with the exception of a few stalls at the northern extremity.

Here there still stands in a bay or recess a majestic portico, flanked by arched galleries, and opening into the Kaiserieh or main Bazaar. This lofty and ornamental structure, in the main arch of which is a painting of Shah Ismail or Abbas in combat, is the Nakkara-Khaneh or Drum-Tower of

Nakkara-Khaneh.

[1] Angiolello saw Shah Ismail bring down seven out of ten shots at Tabriz, *circ.* 1510; and Tavernier saw Shah Sefi I., who was a great athlete, strike three cups in five courses at Isfahan.

[2] It was played by numbers varying from five to twenty a side. P. della Valle described a game that he saw at Kazvin in 1618. Abdul Malek of the Samanid dynasty was killed by a fall from his horse while playing *chugan*. Sefi I. and Abbas II. were both excellent performers. Ouseley has an erudite note on the game (*Travels*, vol. i. app. 6), but is very wide of the mark when he traces to it the Cricket of England and the Golf of Scotland.

[3] Tavernier's illustration of the Meidan represents it as covered with these booths.

Isfahan; for here, in the flanking galleries, is dispensed the appalling music at sundown which indicates the residence of royalty, and of which I have already spoken at Teheran.[1] In the lower galleries, looking out into the square, the people used to smoke and drink their morning coffee; and here the paternally-minded Shah Abbas deputed *mullahs* to entertain them with serious discourse. Above the main arch, in a space still visible, but filled with modern tile-work, was fixed a great clock (Tavernier alone calls it a sun-dial) which, according to Olearius, was made by an Englishman named Festy for Shah Abbas; but, the maker having been killed by a Persian, it remained out of order ever afterwards. Above the clock was a big bronze bell, which contained an inscription round the edge: 'Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis mulieribus,' and had, in fact, been wrested from a Portuguese nunnery at Ormuz. It was never sounded, and nearly a hundred years ago was taken down and melted for cannon. The clock survived till the beginning of this century, and was seen by Olivier in 1796; but in 1808 it was removed by Haji Mohammed Husein, Amin-ed-Dowleh, and Beglerbeg of Isfahan under Fath Ali Shah, on the pretext of repairing the fresco in the archway.

On the eastern side of the square stood, and still stands, the Mosque of Sheikh Lutfullah, frequently called the Mosque of the Grand Pontiff, i.e. the Sadr or Chief Priest (Chardin wrote it Cèdre) of Isfahan. In modern times it seems to have been less frequented than was once the case; but its dome is still covered by the ancient enamelled tiles, with a flowing, almost Florentine, pattern. A little beyond, or to the south of this, formerly existed a tower, which the French writers called Pavilion des Horloges, or des Machines, and which was built for the amusement of Shah Abbas II. by some of his European artificers. It contained a mechanical clock with marionettes and figures of animals that moved. Not a trace of it now remains.

Mosque of Lutfullah.

[1] Chardin says it sounded at sunset and midnight; Sanson at noon, sunset, and two hours after midnight; and on fête days almost all the day and night. A passage in the *Ghazaliat* of Sadi seems to suggest a morning performance also: 'Till you hear in early morning from the Friday mosque, or from the door of the Atabeg's palace, the noise of the big drum.' Le Brun names the instruments employed, and they have changed but little: 'tambours, trumpets, tymbals, clavecins, hautbois, drums, flutes, harps, cymbals.' Thévenot says the trumpets were over 8 feet long. The custom is referred by Persian MSS. to as far back as the time of Alexander.

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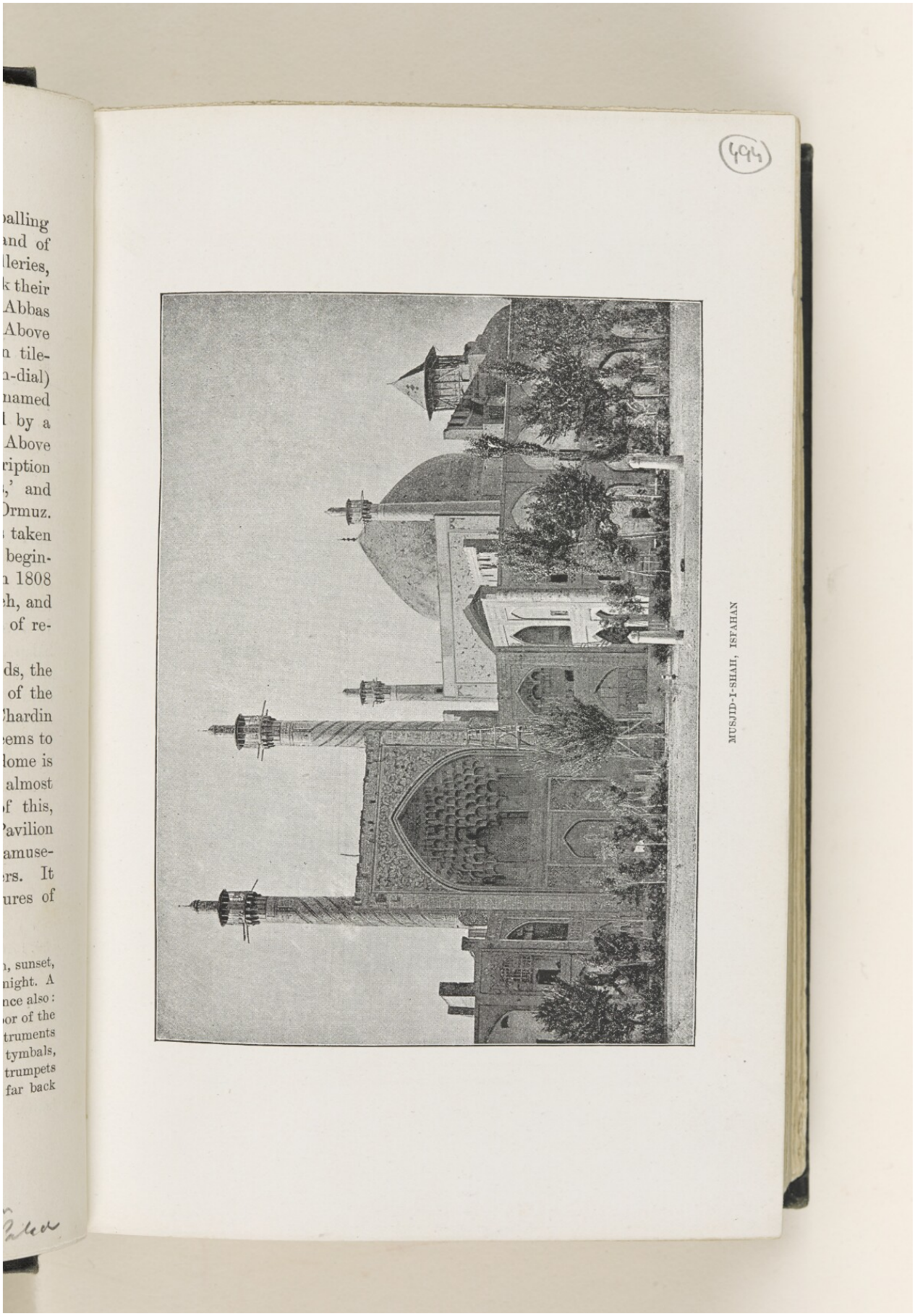
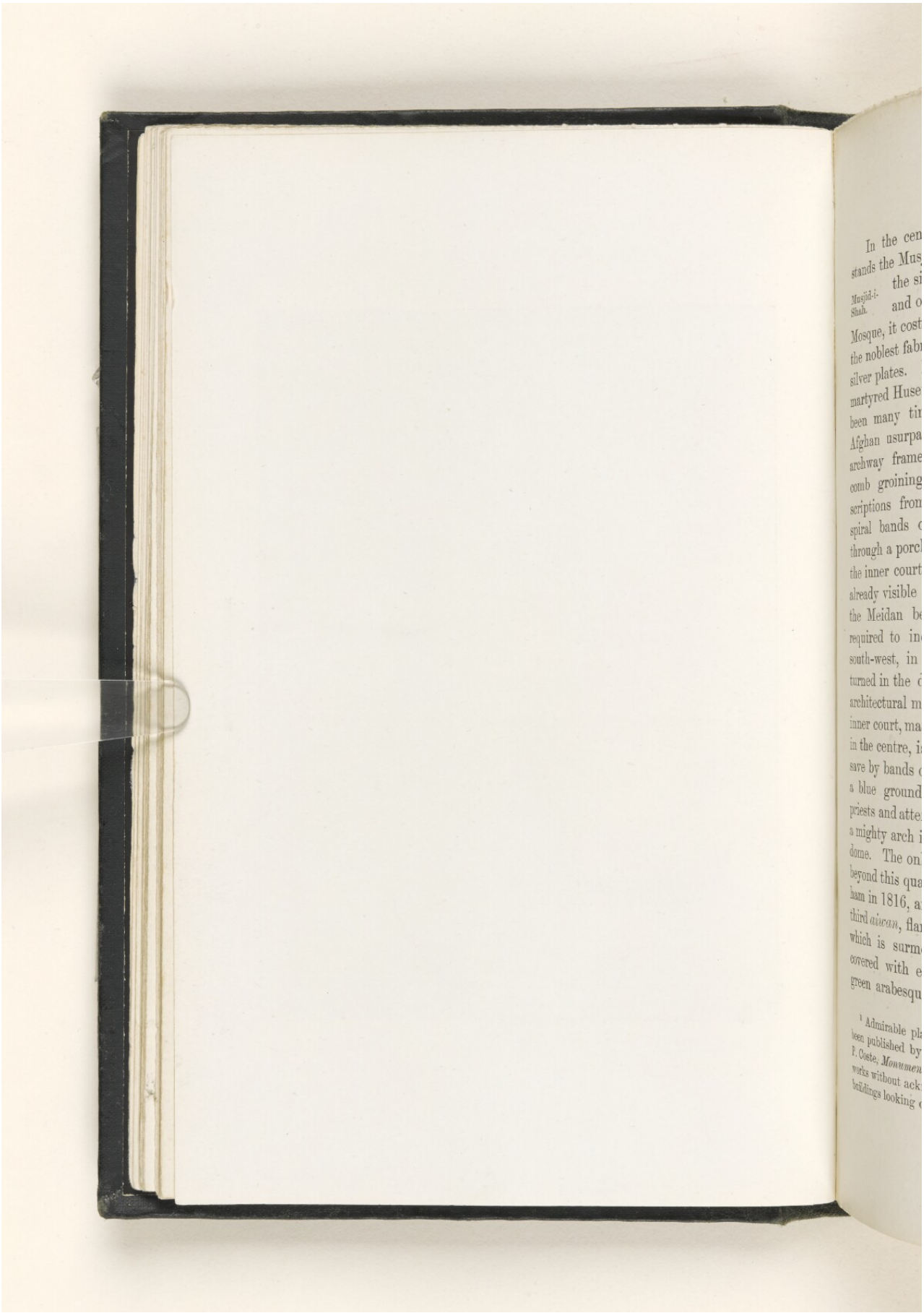


MUSJID-I-SHAH, ISFAHAN



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In the centre of the southern or narrow end of the Meidan stands the Musjid-i-Shah or Royal Mosque of Isfahan. Erected on the site of a melon-garden in 1612–13 by Shah Abbas, and originally intended as the Musjid-i-Jama or Friday Mosque, it cost over 175,000*l.*, and was from the beginning one of the noblest fabrics in the city. Shah Sefi I. covered its doors with silver plates. Inside were preserved the blood-stained shirt of the martyred Husein, and a Koran written by the Imam Reza. It has been many times restored, notably by Nadir Shah, after the Afghan usurpation, and again by Ali Murad Khan. A lofty archway framed in a recess, embellished with interior honeycomb groining in enamelled faïence, surrounded by tile inscriptions from the Koran, and flanked by two minarets with spiral bands of similar ornamentation, leads from the Meidan through a porch, containing a great vase or font of porphyry, into the inner court. Here the peculiar construction of the Mosque, already visible from the exterior, is fully apparent. The axis of the Meidan being almost due north and south, the architect required to incline the axis of the mosque considerably to the south-west, in order that the *mihrab* or prayer-niche might be turned in the direction of Mecca. This purpose was effected by architectural means that are at once grandiose and simple. The inner court, marble-paved and containing a great tank for ablutions in the centre, is surrounded by a two-storeyed arcade, undecorated save by bands of Kufic inscription in tile-work, white letters upon a blue ground. The arches are kept for the accommodation of priests and attendants. On either side rises a lofty tile-faced *aiwan*, a mighty arch in which opens access to a space covered by a low dome. The only Europeans of whom I know as having penetrated beyond this quadrangle into the mosque itself, were J. S. Buckingham in 1816, and E. Flandin in 1840.[1] Opposite the entrance a third *aiwan*, flanked by minarets, conducts into the mosque proper, which is surmounted by the principal cupola, whose exterior, covered with exquisite tiles containing patterns in dark blue and green arabesque on an azure ground, is one of the principal land-

Musjid-i-Shah.

[1] Admirable plans, elevations, and restorations of the entire building have been published by Ch. Texier, *L'Arménie, la Perse*, &c., vol. i. pls. 70–72; and P. Coste, *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*. Mme. Dieulafoy borrows from these works without acknowledgment; but was herself admitted on to the roofs of the buildings looking down into the great court.

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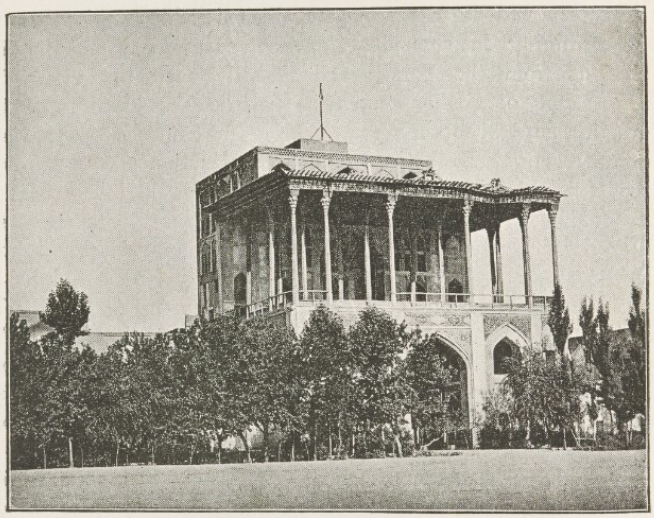
marks in the city. On either side of the shrine are further courts, with basins and porticoes, to which the public are admitted on Fridays. The decorative treatment of this beautiful building, though falling, like all other works of art in Persia, into decay, yet remains a superb sample of the style of the Sefavi kings. The four minarets have never been used by the *muezzin*, the kings being afraid that from their summits too much might be seen of the secrets of the royal seraglio adjoining. Their place for the call to prayer is taken by an ugly and stunted cage on the summit of one of the *aiwans*.



GATE OF ALI KAPI AND TALAR

Gate of Ali Kapi.

We now pass to the western side of the Meidan, the principal structure in which, near the southern end, is a lofty building in the form of a great archway overlooking the square, and itself crowned in the fore part by an immense open throne-room or verandah supported by wooden columns, while the hinder part is elevated to a height of three storeys higher. This is the *talar* of the royal palace, and the porch below is the celebrated Ali Kapi or Sacred Gate. The name of the latter has been variously explained by different writers, some writing it as Allah Kapi, or the Gate of God, so called because of its extreme sanctity; others as Ali

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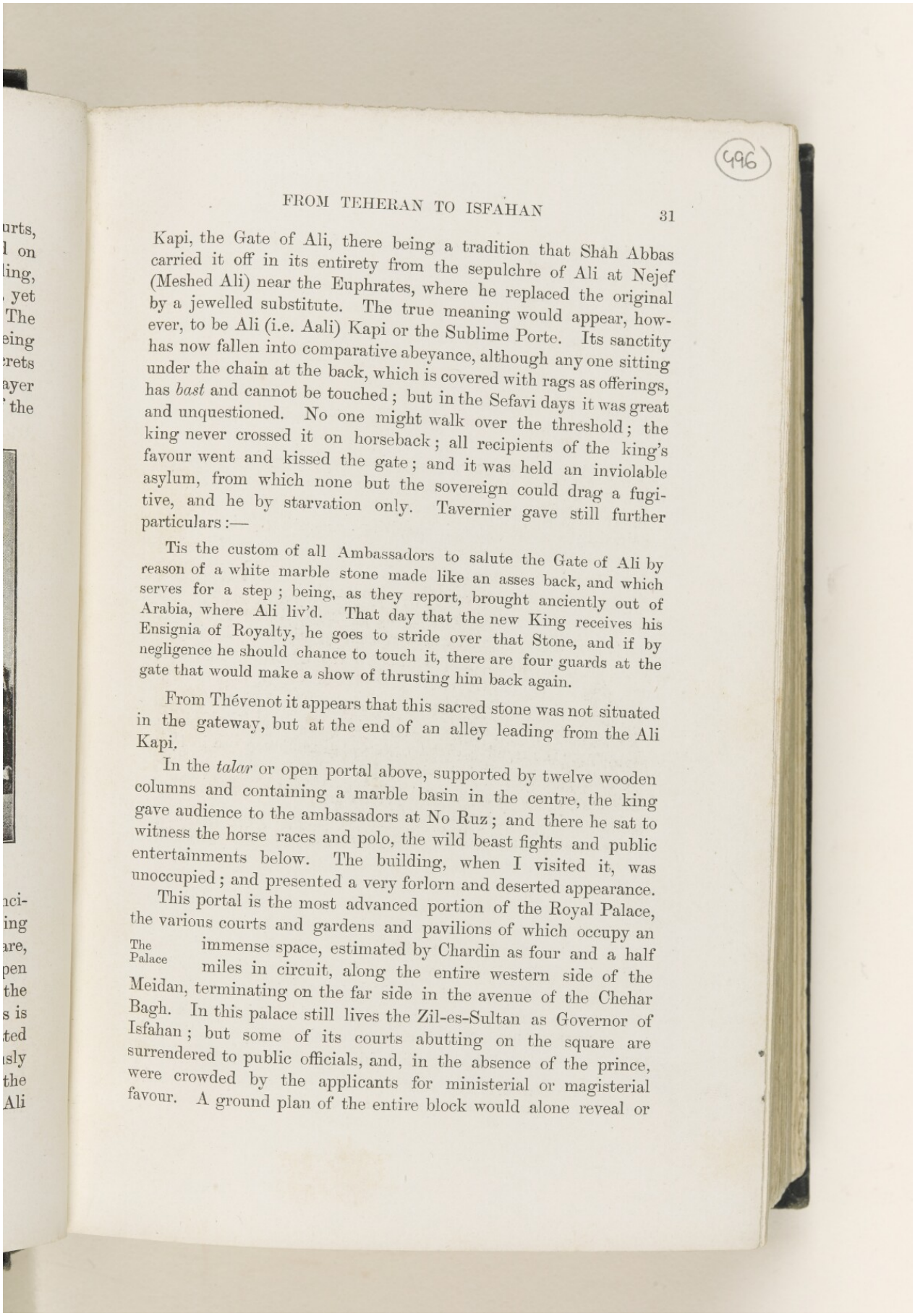




Kapi, the Gate of Ali, there being a tradition that Shah Abbas carried it off in its entirety from the sepulchre of Ali at Nejef (Meshed Ali) near the Euphrates, where he replaced the original by a jewelled substitute. The true meaning would appear, however, to be Ali (i.e. Aali) Kapi or the Sublime Porte. Its sanctity has now fallen into comparative abeyance, although any one sitting under the chain at the back, which is covered with rags as offerings, has *bast* and cannot be touched; but in the Sefavi days it was great and unquestioned. No one might walk over the threshold; the king never crossed it on horseback; all recipients of the king's favour went and kissed the gate; and it was held an inviolable asylum, from which none but the sovereign could drag a fugitive, and he by starvation only. Tavernier gave still further particulars:—

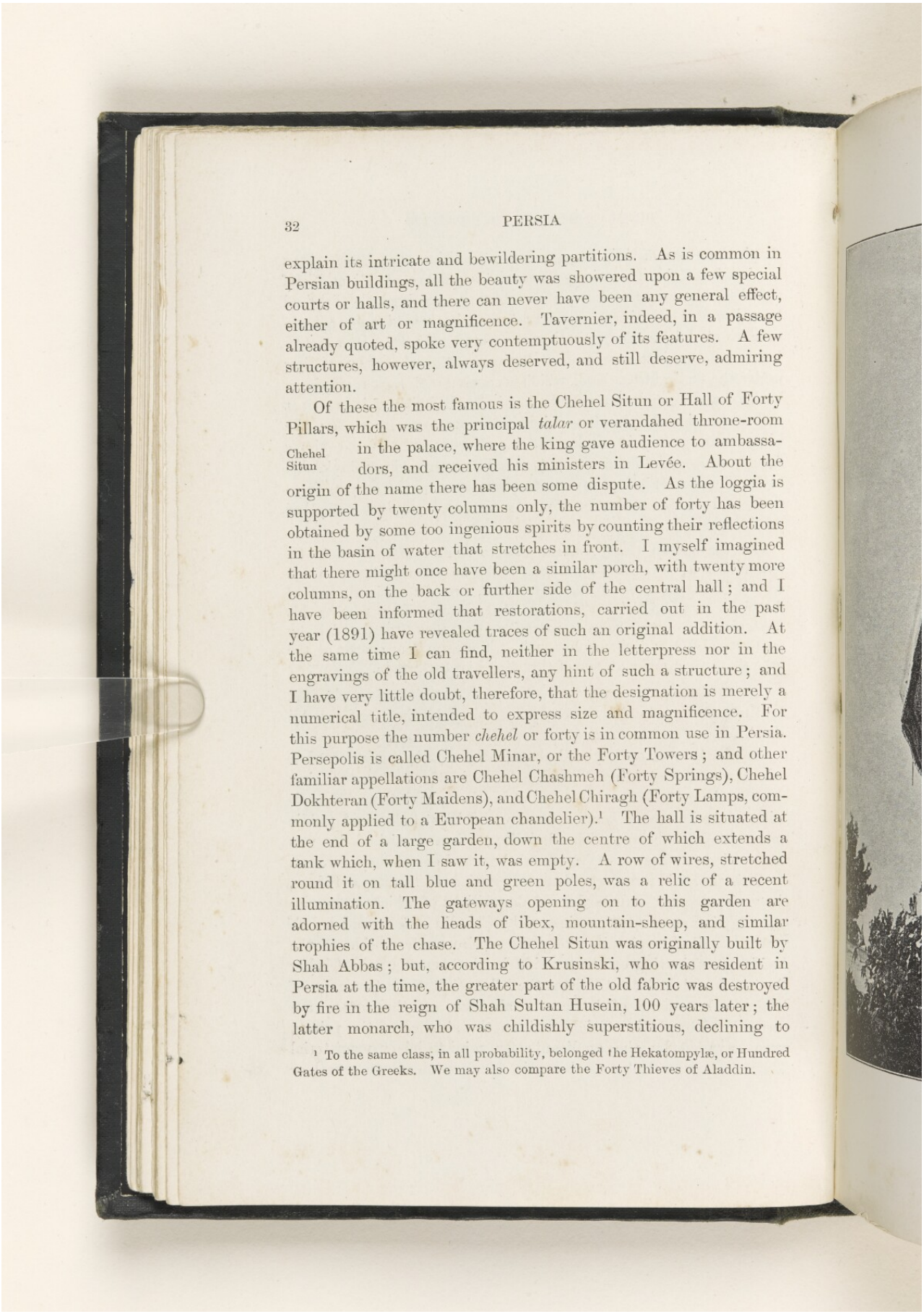
> Tis the custom of all Ambassadors to salute the Gate of Ali by reason of a white marble stone made like an asses back, and which serves for a step; being, as they report, brought anciently out of Arabia, where Ali liv'd. That day that the new King receives his Ensignia of Royalty, he goes to stride over that Stone, and if by negligence he should chance to touch it, there are four guards at the gate that would make a show of thrusting him back again.

From Thévenot it appears that this sacred stone was not situated in the gateway, but at the end of an alley leading from the Ali Kapi.

In the *talar* or open portal above, supported by twelve wooden columns and containing a marble basin in the centre, the king gave audience to the ambassadors at No Ruz; and there he sat to witness the horse races and polo, the wild beast fights and public entertainments below. The building, when I visited it, was unoccupied; and presented a very forlorn and deserted appearance.

The Palace

This portal is the most advanced portion of the Royal Palace, the various courts and gardens and pavilions of which occupy an immense space, estimated by Chardin as four and a half miles in circuit, along the entire western side of the Meidan, terminating on the far side in the avenue of the Chehar Bagh. In this palace still lives the Zil-es-Sultan as Governor of Isfahan; but some of its courts abutting on the square are surrendered to public officials, and, in the absence of the prince, were crowded by the applicants for ministerial or magisterial favour. A ground plan of the entire block would alone reveal or





explain its intricate and bewildering partitions. As is common in Persian buildings, all the beauty was showered upon a few special courts or halls, and there can never have been any general effect, either of art or magnificence. Tavernier, indeed, in a passage already quoted, spoke very contemptuously of its features. A few structures, however, always deserved, and still deserve, admiring attention.

Chehel Situn

Of these the most famous is the Chehel Situn or Hall of Forty Pillars, which was the principal *talar* or verandahed throne-room in the palace, where the king gave audience to ambassadors, and received his ministers in Levée. About the origin of the name there has been some dispute. As the loggia is supported by twenty columns only, the number of forty has been obtained by some too ingenious spirits by counting their reflections in the basin of water that stretches in front. I myself imagined that there might once have been a similar porch, with twenty more columns, on the back or further side of the central hall; and I have been informed that restorations, carried out in the past year (1891) have revealed traces of such an original addition. At the same time I can find, neither in the letterpress nor in the engravings of the old travellers, any hint of such a structure; and I have very little doubt, therefore, that the designation is merely a numerical title, intended to express size and magnificence. For this purpose the number *chehel* or forty is in common use in Persia. Persepolis is called Chehel Minar, or the Forty Towers; and other familiar appellations are Chehel Chashmeh (Forty Springs), Chehel Dokhteran (Forty Maidens), and Chehel Chiragh (Forty Lamps, commonly applied to a European chandelier).[1] The hall is situated at the end of a large garden, down the centre of which extends a tank which, when I saw it, was empty. A row of wires, stretched round it on tall blue and green poles, was a relic of a recent illumination. The gateways opening on to this garden are adorned with the heads of ibex, mountain-sheep, and similar trophies of the chase. The Chehel Situn was originally built by Shah Abbas; but, according to Krusinski, who was resident in Persia at the time, the greater part of the old fabric was destroyed by fire in the reign of Shah Sultan Husein, 100 years later; the latter monarch, who was childishly superstitious, declining to

[1] To the same class, in all probability, belonged the Hekatompylæ, or Hundred Gates of the Greeks. We may also compare the Forty Thieves of Aladdin.

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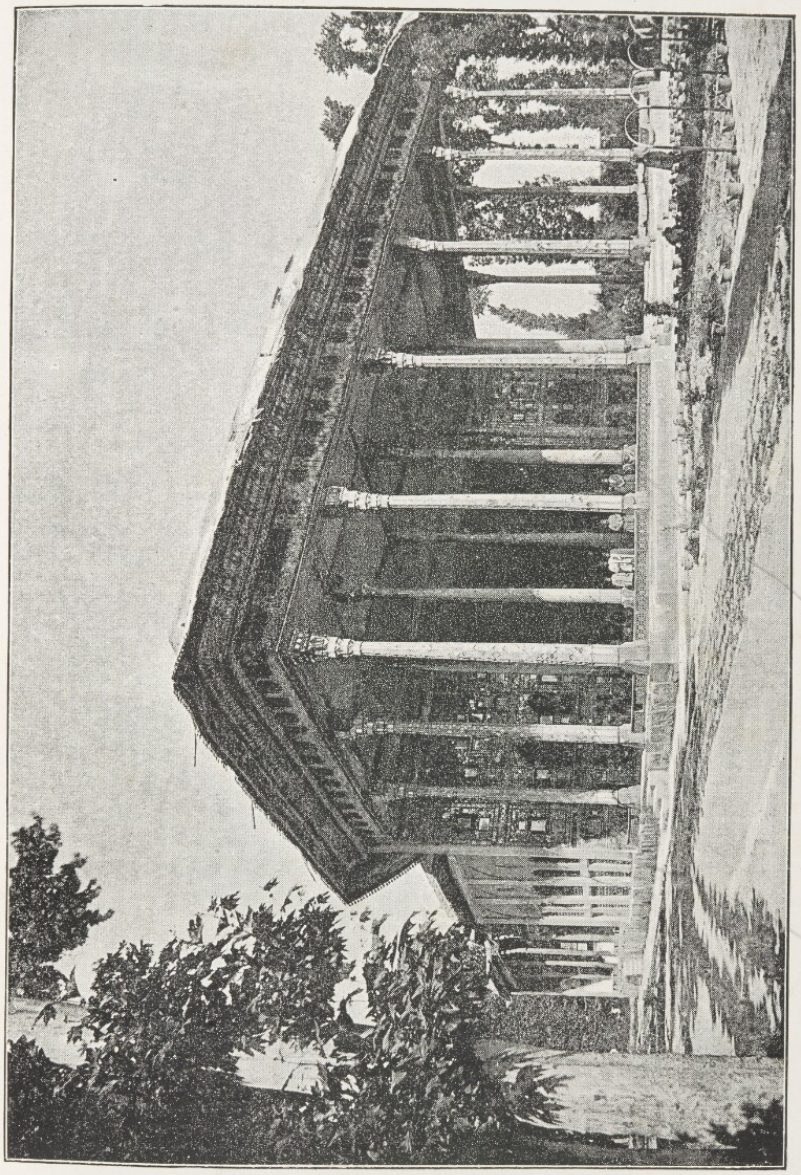
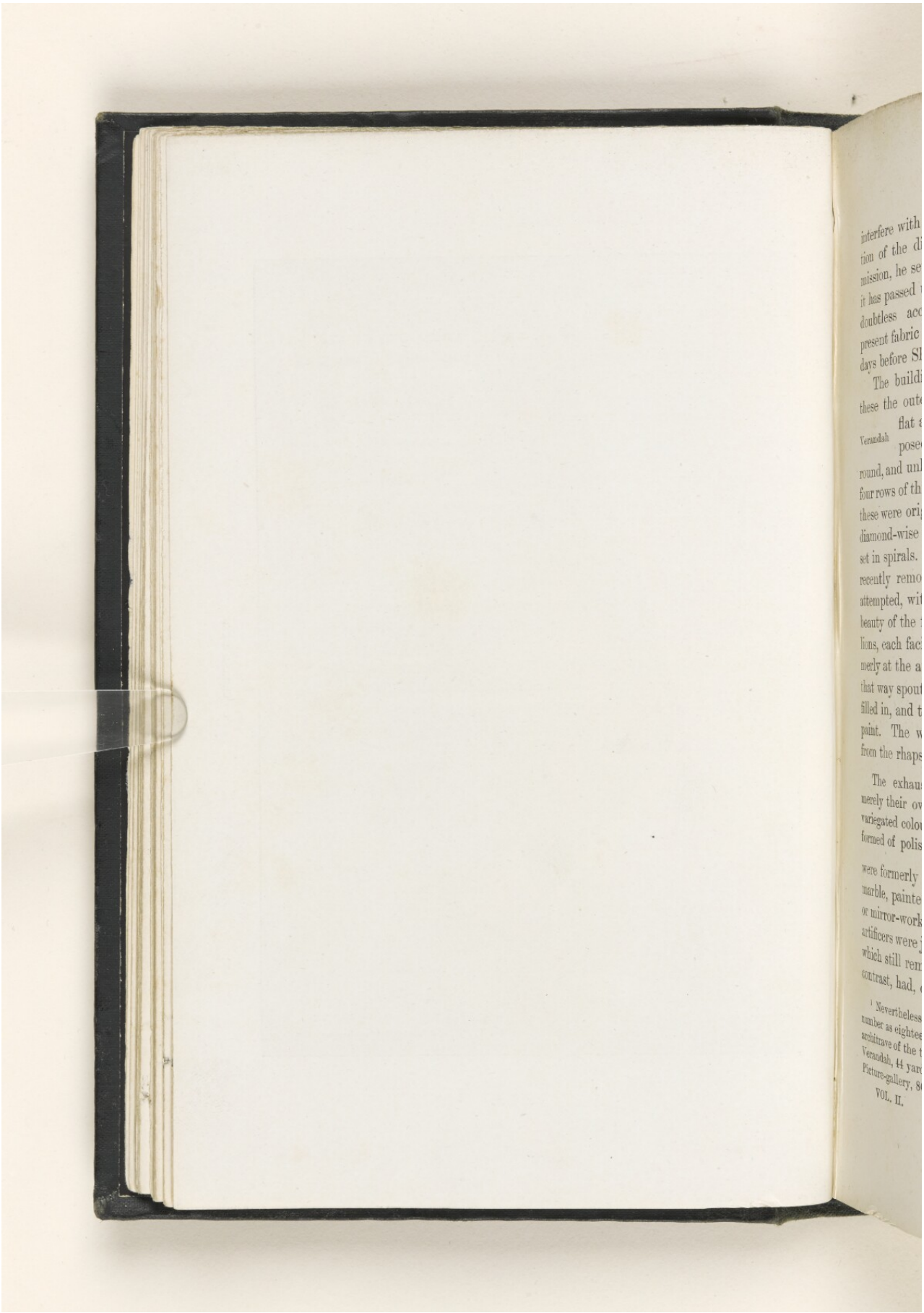


CHEHEL SITUN





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interfere with the flames, whose ravages he regarded as a dispensation of the divine will. However, when they had fulfilled their mission, he set about rebuilding the edifice; a fact which, though it has passed unnoticed by every writer with scarcely an exception, doubtless accounts for the occasional differences between the present fabric and that described by Chardin, Tavernier, etc., in the days before Shah Sultan Husein.

The building consists of four stages or compartments. Of these the outermost is the pillared verandah. Its roof, which is flat and immensely solid, some of the rafters being composed of the boles of entire *chenars* or planes, seven feet round, and unhewn, is supported upon twenty wooden columns, in four rows of three each, and two rows of four each.[1] The outer row of these were originally covered with small facets of looking-glass, set diamond-wise in perpendicular bands; the inner rows with glass set in spirals. All these facings had, at the time of my visit, been recently removed, a vulgar restoration having apparently been attempted, with the result of irreparable damage to the artistic beauty of the fabric. The interior columns rest on groups of stone lions, each facing outwards, and the four central pillars stood formerly at the angles of a marble basin, into which the lions that look that way spouted water from their mouths. But the basin had been filled in, and the lions, too, had succumbed to a recent daub of paint. The walls of this beautiful loggia, whose effulgence drew from the rhapsodical Ker Porter the following tribute:—

Verandah

> The exhaustless profusion of its splendid materials reflected not merely their own golden or crystal lights on each other, but all the variegated colours of the garden; so that the whole surface seemed formed of polished silver and mother of pearl, set with precious stones,

were formerly covered at the bottom with a wainscoting of white marble, painted and gilt, and above with the beautiful *aineh-kari*, or mirror-work, set in facets and panels, for which the Persian artificers were justly renowned. The bulk of this superb decoration, which still remains in the throne-room behind to point the bitter contrast, had, on the walls of the loggia, been ruthlessly obliterated

[1] Nevertheless Morier, Binning, and Dieulafoy, as also Chardin, give the number as eighteen, not reckoning, I imagine, the two columns that support the architrave of the throne-room. The dimensions of the various compartments are: Verandah, 44 yards by 22; Talar, 19 yards by 16; Shahnishin, 23 feet by 19; Picture-gallery, 80 feet by 40.



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by the brush of the painter, who had left in its place a pale pink wash. Had I caught the pagan, I would gladly have suffocated him in a barrel of his own paint.

Immediately behind the verandah is the *talar*, or throne-room; and from this, but on a rather higher level, opens a deeply recessed compartment or dais, or Shahnishin, whereon stood the royal throne. The decorations of this chamber, when I saw it, were still intact; and the prismatic flash of the mirror panels and facets on the walls, the painting in gold, blue, red and green on the coffered ceiling, and the honeycomb vaulting of the recess, produced a sumptuous effect. Out of the throne-room small compartments open on either side, that were intended for the king's ministers.

Throne-room

Finally, behind the throne-room, and communicating with it by three doors, is a great hall, extending the entire length of the building (Lumsden gives its dimensions as seventy-five feet by forty-five feet), crowned by three low cupolas, and adorned over almost the entire surface of its walls by six immense oil-paintings, three on either side. Pietro della Valle, speaking of the paintings in the palace at Isfahan in the reign of Shah Abbas, made the remark that they were so badly drawn that he was very apprehensive of losing the European artist whom he had brought out to take private pictures for himself, if the king should become aware of his merit. Notwithstanding this criticism, which is so far just that the ignorance of perspective, the ill proportion, and the angular stiffness apparent in all Persian portraiture might well have shocked a seventeenth-century European, whose vision had been trained in the school of the Italian Renaissance, these pictures of the Chehel Situn are both admirable as works of art and invaluable as historical documents. They transport us straight to the court of the lordly Abbas and his predecessors or successors on the throne. We see the king engaged in combat, or at some royal festivity, enjoying the pleasures of the bowl. The big moustaches and smooth chins, and abundant turbans, represent a fashion of coiffure that has long expired. The arms and accoutrements of the warriors, the instruments of the musicians, the very gestures of the dancing-girls, open to us the locked doors of the past; and we seem to share in the feasts and fights, in the pomp and dalliance of the Sefavi kings. Whether these pictures are the originals that were painted by order of those sovereigns, or whether

Picture gallery

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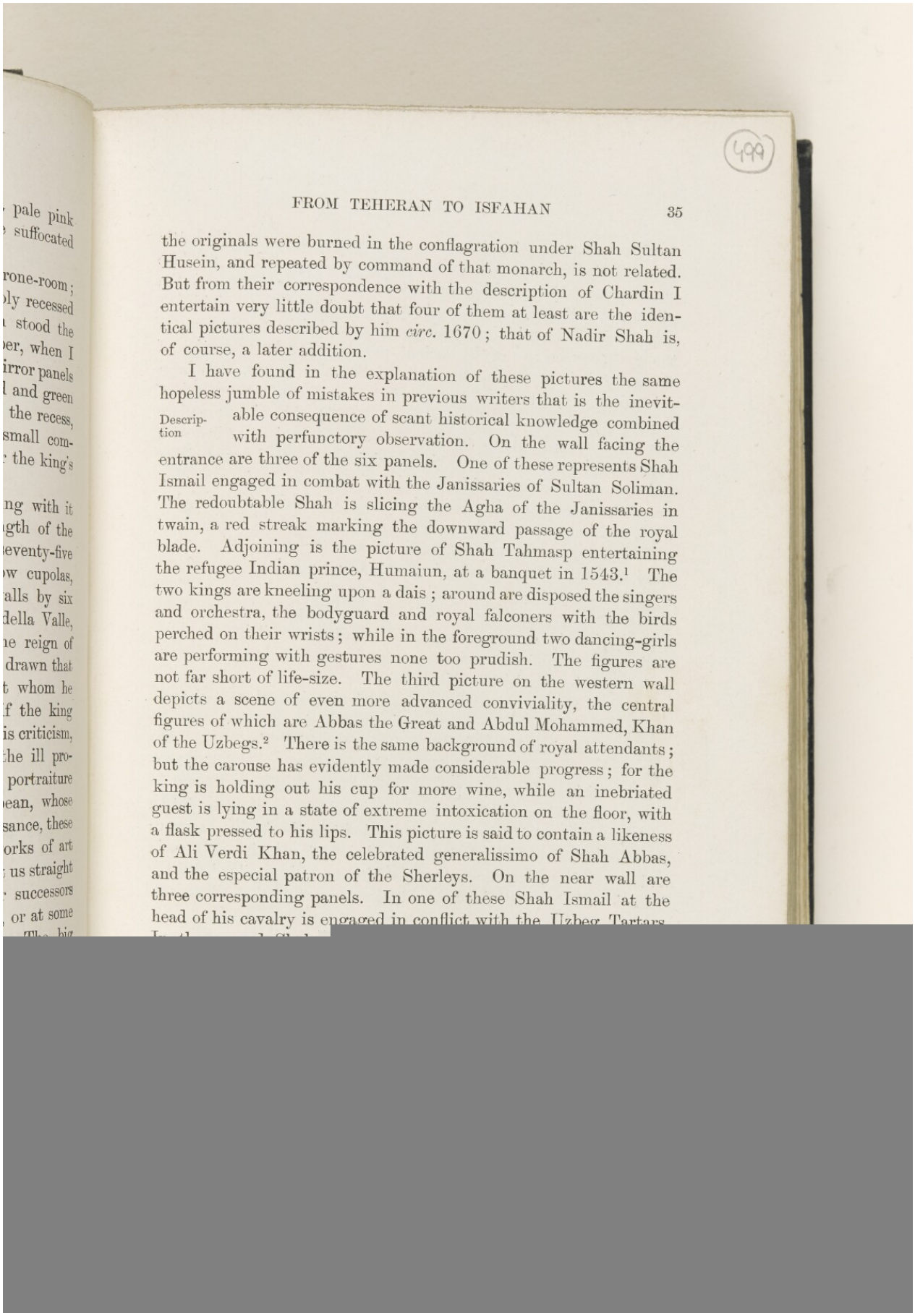



the originals were burned in the conflagration under Shah Sultan Husein, and repeated by command of that monarch, is not related. But from their correspondence with the description of Chardin I entertain very little doubt that four of them at least are the identical pictures described by him *circ.* 1670; that of Nadir Shah is, of course, a later addition.

I have found in the explanation of these pictures the same hopeless jumble of mistakes in previous writers that is the inevitable consequence of scant historical knowledge combined with perfunctory observation. On the wall facing the entrance are three of the six panels. One of these represents Shah Ismail engaged in combat with the Janissaries of Sultan Soliman. The redoubtable Shah is slicing the Agha of the Janissaries in twain, a red streak marking the downward passage of the royal blade. Adjoining is the picture of Shah Tahmasp entertaining the refugee Indian prince, Humaiun, at a banquet in 1543.[1] The two kings are kneeling upon a dais; around are disposed the singers and orchestra, the bodyguard and royal falconers with the birds perched on their wrists; while in the foreground two dancing-girls are performing with gestures none too prudish. The figures are not far short of life-size. The third picture on the western wall depicts a scene of even more advanced conviviality, the central figures of which are Abbas the Great and Abdul Mohammed, Khan of the Uzbegs.[2] There is the same background of royal attendants; but the carouse has evidently made considerable progress; for the king is holding out his cup for more wine, while an inebriated guest is lying in a state of extreme intoxication on the floor, with a flask pressed to his lips. This picture is said to contain a likeness of Ali Verdi Khan, the celebrated generalissimo of Shah Abbas, and the especial patron of the Sherleys. On the near wall are three corresponding panels. In one of these Shah Ismail at the head of his cavalry is engaged in conflict with the Uzbeg Tartars

Description

tambourines and castanets. The last picture represents the battle between Nadir Shah and Sultan Mahmud (mounted on a white elephant), that decided the fate of Delhi. The colours and the gilding on these pictures retain an extraordinary vividness. A portrait of the reigning Shah has been added on the archway of the roof between two of the ancient panels. The lower portion of this great hall, as well as the walls of the side rooms, have been painted an ugly green. There are four fire-places, two on each of the longer sides. In the past year (1891) the picture-gallery has been turned into a species of conservatory, being filled with flowering plants. Smaller cabinets originally opened out at either end, and were adorned with portraits of European ladies and gentlemen of the days of Shah Abbas. All round the Chehel Situn were, and I dare say still are, hung great curtains of needle-work and brocade, which were let down against the sun. Mounsey in 1866, and Madame Dieulafoy in 1881, found the loggia employed as a workshop for the tent-makers of the Prince-Governor. This particular form of desecration has been abandoned; and quite recently (1891) I hear of the Zil-es-Sultan as sitting in daily audience in one of the cabinets to receive the addresses or complaints of his astonished subjects.

Courts and pavilions

Among the other pavilions or courts in the palace enclosure, which I have not the space more minutely to describe, may be mentioned the Sar Puchideh (of which Coste publishes an engraving), a hall of which the octagonal pillars, encrusted with glass, rest upon the shoulders of female figures in marble, themselves holding lions' heads which spout water into a basin; the Imaret-i-Ashraf, or pavilion built by the Afghan usurper; the Imaret-i-Nau, built for Fath Ali Shah by the Amin-ed-Dowleh, and containing many pictures of the king and his family;[1] and the Talar-i-Tavileh, or Hall of the Stables, a part of the palace now used for official business.

Hasht Behesht

On the extreme western side of the royal precincts, opening on to the Chehar Bagh, are a garden and building that merit a less curt notice. These are the Hasht Behesht, or Eight Paradises, a title which some writers have erroneously ascribed to the eight gardens bordering on either side upon the Chehar Bagh. The name, which appears, like the Chehel Situn, to be a numerical expression indicating size and splendour, was

[1] It is well described by Morier, *First Journey*, p. 167.

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given to the place by Shah Suleiman when, in about 1670, he built this palace in a garden previously called Bagh-i-Bulbul, or Garden of the Nightingale. The chief building is a pavilion standing in the centre of a large enclosure. At its prime this must have been a remarkable structure, for it was thus described in 1677 by the rhetorical Dr. Fryer:—

> It is a sweet Place, doubtless, were it cloathed with its glory; but as it is, it is a Rich Piece; the Summer House in the middle is saluted by two Channels, in which are Ships and Boats to represent a Naval scene of War; Swans and Pelicans find here their diversion; the Summer House is built entirely of polished Marble, the Arch of the Cupilo is Inlaid with Massy Gold, upon the Walls are depainted the famous Actions of their Heroes; the Tank in the middle is all of Silver, the Posts are stuck with Looking glasses, reflecting the Posture of the Body, and the Figures of the whole Fabrick; an Hemispherical Turret presses on Four Pillars which are the main supporters.[1]

Even Chardin, enthusiastic but seldom sentimental, was inspired to an unwonted outburst by the charms of the Hasht Behesht.

> When one walks in this place expressly made for the delights of love, and when one passes through all these cabinets and niches, one's heart is melted to such an extent that, to speak candidly, one always leaves with a very ill grace. The climate without doubt contributes much towards exciting this amorous disposition; but assuredly these places, although in some respects little more than cardboard castles, are nevertheless more smiling and agreeable than our most sumptuous palaces.[2]

Later on this pavilion fell into decay, but it was rebuilt or restored by Fath Ali Shah, who in the main hall, covered by a dome and surrounded by galleries with small chambers in the angles, caused to be executed frescoes and oil-paintings of himself seated in state with his court, and mounted on horseback spearing a lion. Other contemporary pictures adorn the neighbouring walls, including one of Istarji, or Strachey, the English Adonis. This heptagonal pavilion, which is now neglected and falling to decay, is sometimes placed by the Governor at the disposal of strangers of consideration or officials of foreign governments. It stands in a garden laid out in parterres, planted with fruit-trees, and with avenues bordered with cypresses and *chenars*. Like all Persian gardens, this is no

[1] *Travels in Persia*, p. 214. [2] *Voyages* (ed. Langlès), vol. viii. p. 43.

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doubt very lovely in spring-time and summer, but at any other season of the year it has an unkempt and bedraggled appearance. Tavernier very truly remarked of the royal gardens of Isfahan, even at the zenith of their splendour, that

> You must not imagine that these gardens are so curiously set out nor so well kept as ours in Europe. For they have no such lovely borders, nor such close walks of honeysuckles and jasmin as are to be seen in the Gardens of Europe. They suffer the grass to grow in many places; contented only with a good many great Fruit Trees, tufted atop, and planted in a line, which is all the grace of the Gardens of Persia.

From the palace I now pass to the Great Avenue, already mentioned, that conducts from the centre of the city for a distance of 1,350 yards to the Bridge of Ali Verdi Khan. Its name, the Chehar Bagh, or Four Gardens, is not derived from the gardens that open out of it, but recalls the fact that the site was originally occupied by four vineyards which Shah Abbas rented at 9,000 *francs* a year and converted into a splendid approach to his capital. Of all the sights of Isfahan, this in its present state is the most pathetic in the utter and pitiless decay of its beauty. Let me indicate what it was and what it is. At the upper extremity, a two-storeyed pavilion, connected by a corridor with the Seraglio of the palace, so as to enable the ladies of the harem to gaze unobserved upon the merry scene below, looked out upon the centre of the avenue. Water, conducted in stone channels, ran down the centre, falling in miniature cascades from terrace to terrace, and was occasionally collected in great square or octagonal basins, where cross roads cut the avenue. On either side of the central channel was a row of *chenars* and a paved pathway for pedestrians. Then occurred a succession of open parterres, usually planted or sown. Next on either side was a second row of *chenars*, between which and the flanking walls was a raised causeway for horsemen. The total breadth is now 52 yards. At intervals corresponding with the successive terraces and basins, arched doorways with recessed open chambers overhead conducted through these walls into the various royal or noble gardens that stretched on either side, and were known as the Gardens of the Throne, Nightingale, Vines, Mulberries, Dervishes, &c. Some of these pavilions were places of public resort and were used as coffee-houses, where, when the business of the day was over, the good burghers of

Chehar Bagh

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Isfahan assembled to sip that beverage and to inhale their *kalians*, the while, as Fryer puts it,

> Night drawing on, all the Pride of Spahaun was met in the Chaurbaug, and the Grandees were Airing themselves, prancing about with their numerous Trains, striving to outvie each other in Pomp and Generosity.

At the bottom, quays lined the banks of the river, and were bordered with the mansions of the nobility.

Such was the Chehar Bagh in the plenitude of its fame. But now what a tragical contrast! The channels are empty, their stone borders crumbled and shattered, the terraces are broken down, the parterres are unsightly bare patches, the trees, all lopped and pollarded, have been chipped and hollowed out[1] or cut down for fuel by the soldiery of the Zil, the side pavilions are abandoned and tumbling to pieces, and the gardens are wildernesses. Two centuries of decay could never make the Champs Elysées in Paris, the Unter der Linden in Berlin, or Rotten Row in London, look one half as miserable as does the ruined avenue of Shah Abbas. It is in itself an epitome of modern Iran.

Towards the upper end of the Chehar Bagh on the eastern side, is a once splendid covered bazaar, through which one can turn aside to enter the Meidan. It is now empty and forlorn; but a short time ago was turned into stables for his *gholams*, by the Zil-es-Sultan.[2] On the same side is the entrance to the Hasht Behesht. A little further down stands a building that is still one of the spectacles of Isfahan. This is the Madresseh-i-Shah Husein, called also Madresseh-i-Mader-i-Shah, which was built, according to Krusinski, about the year 1710, by that monarch as 'a monastery for the Dervishes.' The Polish Jesuit further says that the chief gate was of solid silver; but he probably alludes to the chased silver plates with which the wooden doors are adorned. Beneath a deeply recessed archway, vaulted with honeycomb decoration, we pass into a dome-covered portico or vestibule, on either side of which petty hucksters sell fruit on

Madresseh-i-Shah Husein

[1] Fraser (*A Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. p. 70) mentions a native superstition that when the *chenar* attains three hundred years, it perishes of self-combustion, and appears to have been taken in by it. I prefer the Isfahan rationalisation.

[2] In the early part of the century, a riot having broken out in this bazaar, the governor planted a cannon at its entrance, and fired straight down the central avenue into the crowd, killing or maiming everyone there—a slight contrast to the methods of Trafalgar Square.

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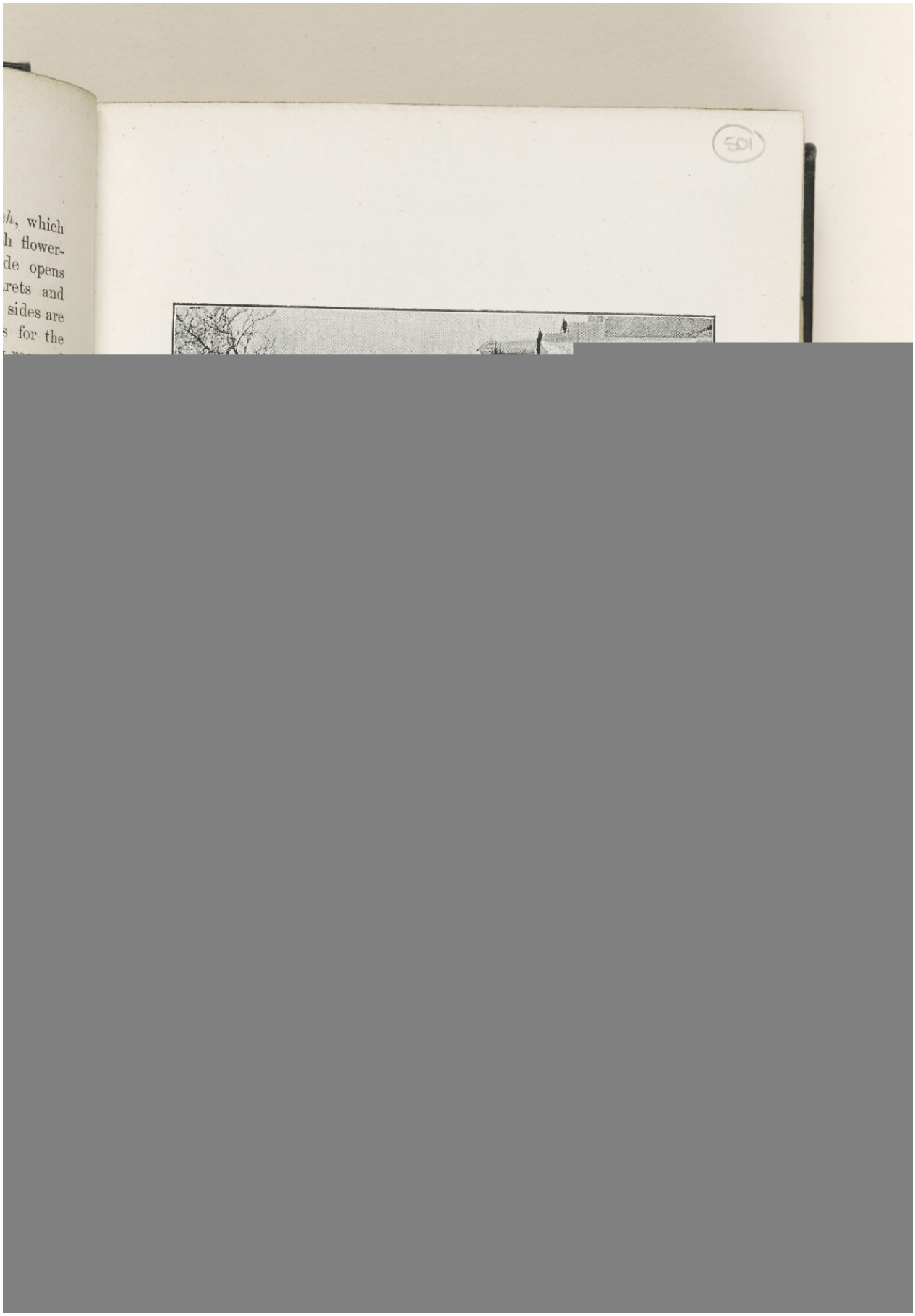
stalls, and thence into the main court of the *madresseh*, which contains long basins filled with water, and is planted with flower-beds and overshadowed by trees. On the right-hand side opens the mosque or prayer-chamber, flanked by two minarets and crowned by a dome. In the centre of the remaining sides are similar arched chambers. Two storeys of arched cells for the students extend all round, and the corners are cut off by recessed arches. But it is in the surface decoration of the walls that this noble building still arrests and compels admiration. A wainscoting of the marble of Yezd runs round the base; and above this the archways and recesses, the lintels and façades, are covered with magnificent tiles and panels of enamelled arabesque. It was one of the stateliest ruins that I saw in Persia. I was informed that though there are 160 chambers or cells, there were only 50 pupils, and that the *vakf* or endowment had seriously dwindled, being for the most part appropriated by the Government.

Before I pass from Isfahan to the southern bank of the river and to Julfa, I may mention a few other buildings of interest. Of these the most considerable is the Musjid-i-Jama, or Friday mosque, said to have been originally raised by Abbas Khalif Al Mansur, in 755 A.D. The successive restorations of Malek Shah the Seljuk, of Shah Tahmasp, and of Abbas II., have deprived it of genuine artistic value, and it fell into the second rank after the erection of the Musjid-i-Shah by Abbas the Great. But it still retains titular pre-eminence as the Town Mosque, though its minarets and quadrangle are in a state of decay. There is also another and older *meidan*, entrance to which is gained through the bazaars.

Musjid-i-Jama

The bazaars of Isfahan are very fine, stretching for a great distance on the north and east sides of the Meidan-i-Shah. Several of them are unoccupied or but partially occupied; but those where business still centres are, next to Kerim Khan Zend's bazaar at Shiraz, the finest in Asia. All the life of the city throbs in the daytime in their packed and clamorous alleys; here is visible an ever-changing kaleidoscope of the unchanged Orient; and the crush of men and beasts renders locomotion slow and bewildering. From the main avenues open out immense courts or caravanserais, piled high with bales of merchandise; and here the clank of weighing-machines, the jostle of camels and mules, and the noise of human barter, are incessant.

Bazaars

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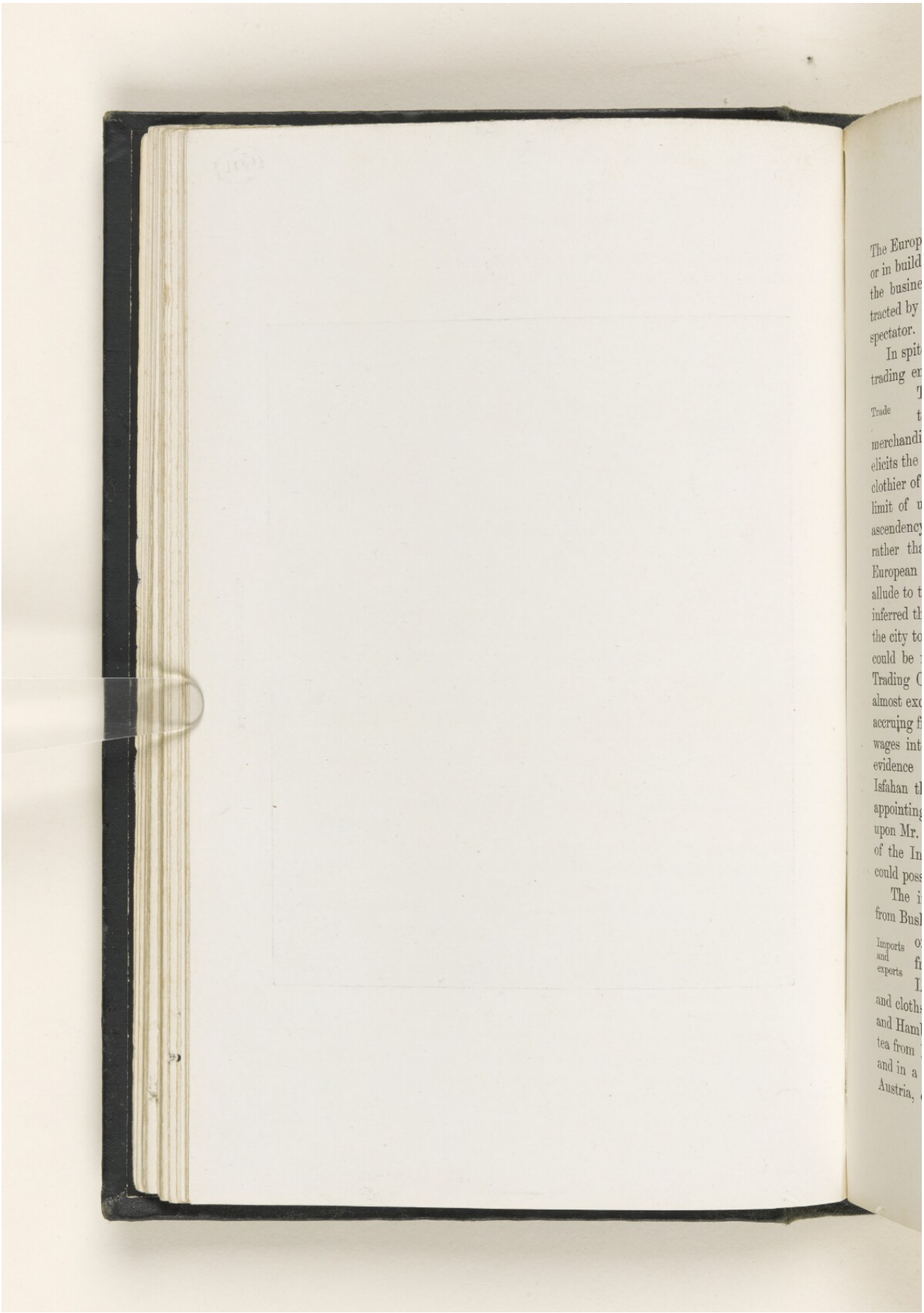

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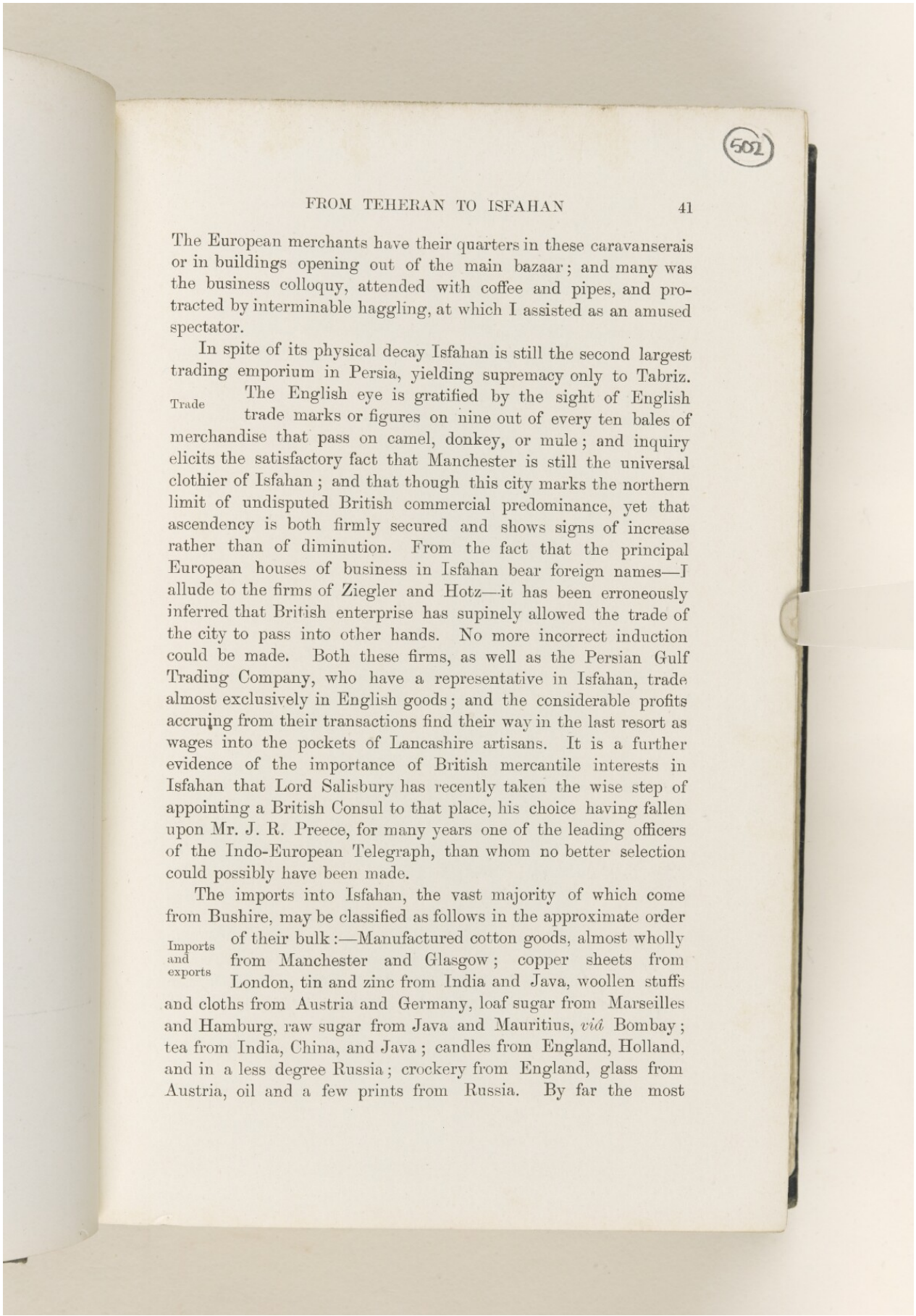



The European merchants have their quarters in these caravanserais or in buildings opening out of the main bazaar; and many was the business colloquy, attended with coffee and pipes, and protracted by interminable haggling, at which I assisted as an amused spectator.

In spite of its physical decay Isfahan is still the second largest trading emporium in Persia, yielding supremacy only to Tabriz.

Trade

The English eye is gratified by the sight of English trade marks or figures on nine out of every ten bales of merchandise that pass on camel, donkey, or mule; and inquiry elicits the satisfactory fact that Manchester is still the universal clothier of Isfahan; and that though this city marks the northern limit of undisputed British commercial predominance, yet that ascendency is both firmly secured and shows signs of increase rather than of diminution. From the fact that the principal European houses of business in Isfahan bear foreign names—I allude to the firms of Ziegler and Hotz—it has been erroneously inferred that British enterprise has supinely allowed the trade of the city to pass into other hands. No more incorrect induction could be made. Both these firms, as well as the Persian Gulf Trading Company, who have a representative in Isfahan, trade almost exclusively in English goods; and the considerable profits accruing from their transactions find their way in the last resort as wages into the pockets of Lancashire artisans. It is a further evidence of the importance of British mercantile interests in Isfahan that Lord Salisbury has recently taken the wise step of appointing a British Consul to that place, his choice having fallen upon Mr. J. R. Preece, for many years one of the leading officers of the Indo-European Telegraph, than whom no better selection could possibly have been made.

The imports into Isfahan, the vast majority of which come from Bushire, may be classified as follows in the approximate order

Imports and exports

of their bulk:—Manufactured cotton goods, almost wholly from Manchester and Glasgow; copper sheets from London, tin and zinc from India and Java, woollen stuffs and cloths from Austria and Germany, loaf sugar from Marseilles and Hamburg, raw sugar from Java and Mauritius, *viâ* Bombay; tea from India, China, and Java; candles from England, Holland, and in a less degree Russia; crockery from England, glass from Austria, oil and a few prints from Russia. By far the most

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valuable portion of this import is either English or Indian, and it will argue great imbecility if this advantage is ever lost. Of the exports, whose value and bulk are both greatly inferior to the imports, the principal are:—Opium, a great deal of which is grown in the Isfahan district, and about 4,500 cases of which, with an average value of 70*l.* to 90*l.* per case, are annually exported from the city, in the proportion of three-fourths to China and one-fourth to London; tobacco, the average annual yield of which from the same district is 60,000 bags, of from 100lb. to 110lb. each, with a value of 45,000*l.*, of which 30,000 bags are exported *viâ* Bushire to Egypt and Syria, 20,000 *viâ* Tabriz to Constantinople, and 10,000 to Baghdad; carpets, manufactured in the provinces of Ferahan, Kurdistan, Khorasan, and Fars, and exported to the annual value of 100,000*l.* from the whole of Persia to England, America, and France; cotton, of which about 50,000 *shahmans* (one *shahman* = 12⅘ lb.), with an approximate value of 25,000*l.*, are exported *viâ* Bushire, mainly to Bombay; almonds, sent to India, Russia, and London; and rice for consumption within the country itself. A good deal of trade is done by native merchants; but the bulk of mercantile transactions passes through the hands of what may indisputably be described as English firms, whose activity here is in pleasing contrast with the apathy that has been displayed in other parts of Central Asia. Further observations upon trade I reserve for a subsequent chapter upon the Commerce of Persia.

Manufactures

Formerly Isfahan was famous for its armour; and a certain amount is now manufactured in imitation of the old. A good deal of the local industry appears indeed to be devoted to the reproduction of articles or styles that once won a world-wide renown. Of these, perhaps the most noticeable are the chiselled brass ware, in bowls, vases, trays, lamps, and ornaments (far superior, in my judgment, to the analogous products of Benares or Lucknow), the *kalemdans* or painted pen-cases, the mirror cases, and book-backs similarly painted and varnished; and the pottery and tiles, directly copying old patterns, which may be seen stacked in the curio-shops of Constantinople, or, for the matter of that, of London. Also celebrated are the *kalemkars* or printed calicoes of Isfahan, in which elegant native designs are stamped by hand-dies on cotton fabrics imported from England, and the *kadaks*, a sort of nankeen, much used in dress.

At different times since the Afghan invasion, and the great fall

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of Isfahan, exaggerated and conflicting accounts have been given of its population. In 1784–5, Ferrières-Sauvebœuf actually named 300,000 as the total. In 1810, Malcolm reduced this to 200,000; but in the previous year Morier had doubled it to 400,000; although the value of his own figures, as well as their correspondence with contemporary calculations, are betrayed by the figures which he gave only two years later, in 1811, when, at the very same time that he returned a census of 60,000, Ouseley, a member of the same party, mentioned 200,000. Any Persian will probably give the last-named total at the present day; but it is reduced by competent authorities to a maximum of not more than 70,000 to 80,000, although the city and its trade have recently experienced an undoubted revival. Amid their own countrymen the Isfahanis enjoy an unenviable reputation alike for cowardice and morals. They are inordinately vain of their city and of themselves, and in a country where lying is a fine art, are said to be incomparable artists. Their niggardliness and closeness in business matters are illustrated by a story told by Malcolm,[1] which has been crystallised into the saying that 'The merchant of Isfahan will put his cheese into a bottle, and rub his bread on the outside to give it a flavour.' Cowardly though the people are alleged to be, they have also acquired a reputation for petty disorder; and the *lutis* of Isfahan are justly regarded as the biggest blackguards in Persia.

Population and character

Isfahan is also one of those places where a spirit of religious intolerance prevails or can easily be excited, its victims being as a rule the Jews, who are here treated with great contumely; the Babis, whose numbers are vastly on the increase, and against whom sallies are frequently stimulated by the *mullahs*; and in a less degree the Armenians and other Christian communities, who require to conduct themselves with circumspection. The arrogance of the clerical order has been very much augmented since the fall from high estate of the Zil-es-Sultan, as described in a previous chapter. When at the zenith of his power he maintained a style at Isfahan, and ruled with an autocratic independence that kept these unruly gentry in order; but, in his present contracted state of authority, he courts support or popularity wherever he can get it, and fawns upon those whom he once despised. A

Court

[1] *Sketches of Persia*, cap. xiii. Compare also Morier's *Adventures of Haji Baba*, passim.

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greater contrast cannot be imagined than between Isfahan a few years ago, and the same seat of government now. Then it was the capital of a prince who affected the monarch, and resounded with the pomp and circumstance of military rule; now it is the residence of a provincial governor, whose power is precarious, and who is all but destitute of armed men. Such is no uninteresting example of the operation in Persia of the irresponsible authority of the sovereign.

I have elsewhere mentioned that at the height of his power the Zil controlled an army of nearly 21,000 men. He took immense interest in the equipment and proficiency of these troops, whom he clad in a variety of foreign uniforms, and whom he constantly paraded for the edification of foreign visitors. One Kerim Khan, known as the Mir-i-Panj, commanded the Zil's cavalry in those days and still follows the fortunes of his master; but only 400 to 500 horsemen are now available, although in the barracks and stores, which were well built and maintained, are equipments and arms for 1,000 cavalry, and rifles and ammunition it is said, for 10,000 men. The policy of the Zil, in treacherously slaying the Ilkhani of the Bakhtiari tribes, has permanently alienated from him those potent auxiliaries, upon whom a wise and ambitious governor of the central provinces would have relied for help.

Army

South of Isfahan, and separating it from a number of former suburbs, of which the sole survival is the Armenian colony of Julfa, flows the Zendeh or Zaiendeh Rud. In a later chapter I shall trace this river to its springs in the Kuh-i-rang among the Bakhtiari mountains. Rapid and rushing in its upper courses, it spreads over a wider bed as it enters the plain of Lahinjan, to the south-west of Isfahan. There its waters are largely drawn off for purposes of irrigation, and by the time the river has reached the storeyed bridges of the capital, though swollen in spring time to a powerful torrent, at other seasons it fills but a contracted channel or lies in detached pools. Below Isfahan it fertilises the districts of Berahan and Rudesht, in which its flow is regulated by the *bunds* or dykes of Ali Kuli Khan and Mervan. Later on its surplus waters are lost in the Gavkhaneh marsh.

The Zendeh Rud

At Isfahan the Zendeh Rud is crossed by five bridges of differing style and antiquity. Highest up the stream and most ancient of these is the Pul-i-Marnun,[1] which was built by Shah Tahmasp,

[1] Kaempfer named it Maranbuun, and explained it as meaning 'viper-hunter'

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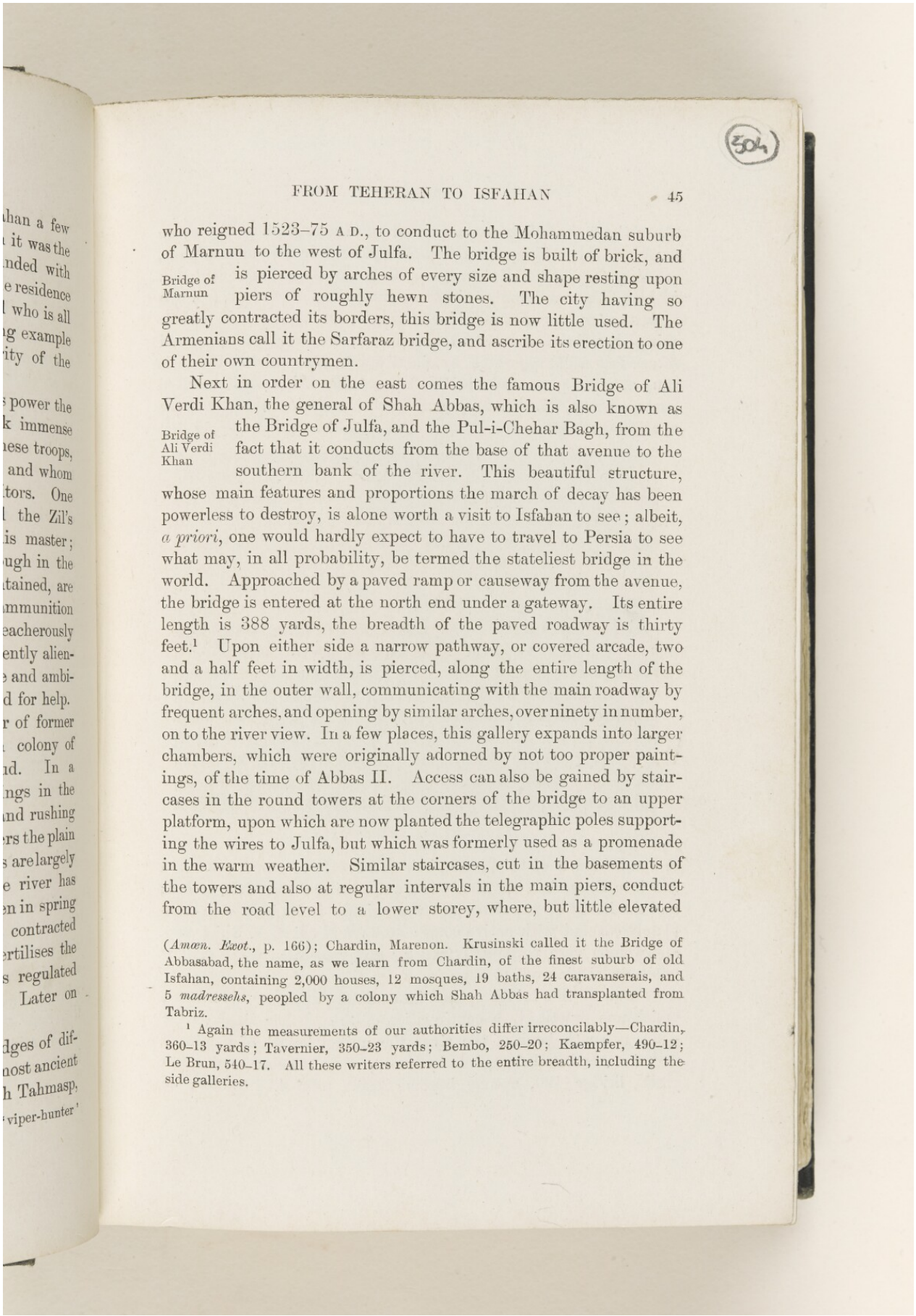



who reigned 1523–75 A D., to conduct to the Mohammedan suburb of Marnun to the west of Julfa. The bridge is built of brick, and is pierced by arches of every size and shape resting upon piers of roughly hewn stones. The city having so greatly contracted its borders, this bridge is now little used. The Armenians call it the Sarfaraz bridge, and ascribe its erection to one of their own countrymen.

Bridge of Marnun

Next in order on the east comes the famous Bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, the general of Shah Abbas, which is also known as the Bridge of Julfa, and the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh, from the fact that it conducts from the base of that avenue to the southern bank of the river. This beautiful structure, whose main features and proportions the march of decay has been powerless to destroy, is alone worth a visit to Isfahan to see; albeit, *a priori*, one would hardly expect to have to travel to Persia to see what may, in all probability, be termed the stateliest bridge in the world. Approached by a paved ramp or causeway from the avenue, the bridge is entered at the north end under a gateway. Its entire length is 388 yards, the breadth of the paved roadway is thirty feet.[1] Upon either side a narrow pathway, or covered arcade, two and a half feet in width, is pierced, along the entire length of the bridge, in the outer wall, communicating with the main roadway by frequent arches, and opening by similar arches, over ninety in number, on to the river view. In a few places, this gallery expands into larger chambers, which were originally adorned by not too proper paintings, of the time of Abbas II. Access can also be gained by staircases in the round towers at the corners of the bridge to an upper platform, upon which are now planted the telegraphic poles supporting the wires to Julfa, but which was formerly used as a promenade in the warm weather. Similar staircases, cut in the basements of the towers and also at regular intervals in the main piers, conduct from the road level to a lower storey, where, but little elevated

Bridge of Ali Verdi Khan

(*Amœn. Exot.*, p. 166); Chardin, Marenon. Krusinski called it the Bridge of Abbasabad, the name, as we learn from Chardin, of the finest suburb of old Isfahan, containing 2,000 houses, 12 mosques, 19 baths, 24 caravanserais, and 5 *madressehs*, peopled by a colony which Shah Abbas had transplanted from Tabriz.

[1] Again the measurements of our authorities differ irreconcilably—Chardin, 360–13 yards; Tavernier, 350–23 yards; Bembo, 250–20; Kaempfer, 490–12; Le Brun, 540–17. All these writers referred to the entire breadth, including the side galleries.

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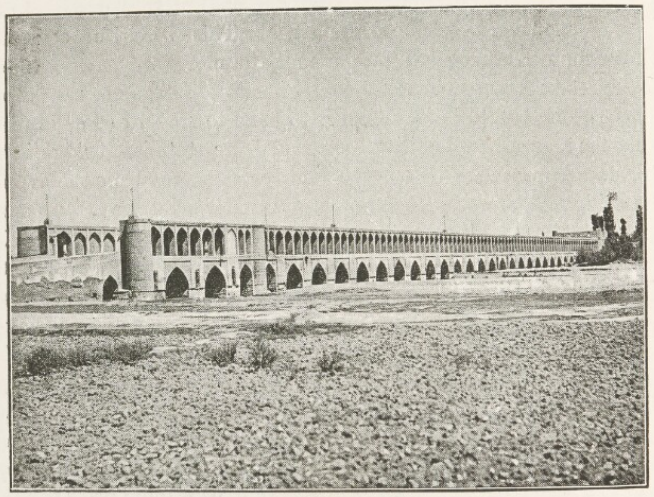
above the bed of the river, a vaulted passage runs along the entire length of the bridge, through arches pierced in the central piers, crossing the channel of the river by huge stepping stones planted in its bed. Colonel Johnson gives the dimensions of these transverse arches as ten feet span and nine feet high; and of the main arches, thirty-three in number, which they bisect, as twenty feet span, and fifteen feet high, separated by piers eleven feet thick. There is thus a triple promenade in this remarkable bridge—the vaulted passage below, the roadway and lateral galleries above, and the open footpath at the top of all. I should add that the upper part



BRIDGE OF ALI VERDI KHAN

of the bridge is of brick, the piers and towers of stone. When I saw it in December, but little water was flowing through the arches; and the banks of the river, and the shingle in its bed, were completely covered with native cotton stuffs and chintzes, which men and women were perpetually rinsing and bleaching in the shallow pools, and laying out to dry.

Formerly this bridge opened immediately upon another avenue, which was practically a continuation of the Chehar Bagh on the south bank of the river, the united length of the three sections being given by Kaempfer as: Chehar Bagh 1,620 yards, bridge 490, avenue beyond 2,200, total 4,310 yards, or

Hazar Jerib

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nearly 2½ miles.[1] This avenue was laid out in the same style as the Chehar Bagh, being planted with rows of trees and adorned by channels filled with water, that fell from tier to tier and at regular intervals expanded into larger basins or pools. On either side also were situated the palaces and mansions of the princes or grandees; whilst at the upper end was a royal enclosure, known as the Hazar Jerib or Thousand Acres.[2] This great pleasaunce was laid out in terraces, built on stone walls one above the other, and adorned with alleys and canals. It was Crown property, but was apparently open to the public. The surrounding enclosure was utilised as a game preserve, and we read in Olearius of wild asses being hunted there by the king. Of the Hazar Jerib not a trace now remains; whilst the southern avenue is far more ruined even than the Chehar Bagh, and speaks only in choked and faltering accents of its vanished glory.

Three hundred yards below the Bridge of Julfa, and at about the same distance above the Pul-i-Khaju, the river is crossed by the Pul-i-Jhubi,[3] a plain brick bridge of fourteen uniform arches, which was constructed as an aqueduct to convey water to the Palace of Haft Dest on the southern bank. Hence the origin of the name *jui*, vulgo, *jûb*, signifying a water-course. In the company of its splendid neighbours it excites no attention.

Pul-i-Jhubi

The suburb upon the southern bank at this spot was originally known as Guebristan, from being inhabited by the Zoroastrians; but the ground was cleared by Abbas II., and converted into a royal residence, which he designated Sadetabad, or Abode of Felicity, and where he kept his seraglio. The bank of the river from the Pul-i-Khaju upwards was lined with gardens, and by means of the sluice-gates at the lower bridge the king was in the habit of damming up the river, till it formed a great lake before the *talar* known as the Aineh-Khaneh, upon which he disported himself in boats with his ladies, and which at

Haft Dest and Aineh-Khaneh

[1] Le Brun's measurements were not broadly different—1,751 + 540 + 2,045 = 4,336 yards.

[2] The *jerib* was a land measurement, amounting to 1,000 to 1,066 Persian square yards (of 41·34 inches). The total of 1,000 was, however, a numerical title and



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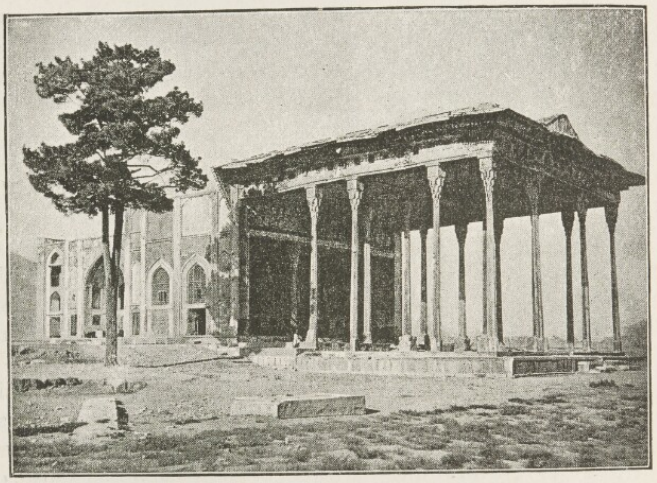
night was made the scene of fairy illuminations. The actual building of the *harem* was known as Haft Dest, the Seven Suites, or Compartments. Here were received and entertained Sir Harford Jones and Sir Gore Ouseley, on their respective missions in 1810 and 1811, and here also have been accommodated subsequent distinguished guests. In one of the lower chambers of the Haft Dest, surrounded by a wainscoting of Tabriz marble, and adorned with a marble cistern, Fath Ali Shah died in 1834. No attention has since been bestowed upon the place, which, when I visited it, looked as if it had been abandoned for years. Hard by the Haft



AINEH-KHANEH

Dest stands a *talar*, very similar to that of the Chehel Situn. It is called the Aineh-Khaneh, or Hall of Mirrors, from the glass facets that formerly adorned its pillars and walls, and consists of a great projecting verandah, sustained by twelve wooden columns, the inner of which repose upon the clustered bodies of marble lions. A *hauz*, or basin, occupies the centre, and a second stands in the recessed throne-room at the back, behind which open several chambers, once embellished with paintings of Shah Abbas and his Circassian ladies. The lower walls were wainscoted with marble, upon which were painted and gilded designs of flowers and birds. In the garden at the back stood the Nemekdan or Salt Cellar, a pavilion of the class described by the Persians as *Kolah Feringhi*, from their supposed

resemblance to the crown and brim of a European hat, which was occupied by some of Ouseley's suite. It would appear that in the last eighty years not a step has been taken to arrest the march of decay in these once elegant and beautiful structures. The Nemek-dan, after tumbling almost to pieces, has been pulled down. The Aineh-Khaneh is in the last throes of dissolution, the pavement being broken, the decorations peeled off, the chambers defiled, and the whole place open to any loafer to camp in, or any vandal so-minded to destroy. Almost touching it on the eastern side is a solitary pine, sole relic of the vanished pleasure-ground. Its tufted crown waves like a funeral plume over the scene of departed grandeur.

At a slight distance below the Aineh-Khaneh, the Zendeh Rud is spanned by the second of the historic bridges of the Sefavi kings. Pul-i-Khaju. This is variously known as the Pul-i-Khaju, from the quarter of the city of that name; the Pul-i-Baba Rukn, from a famous dervish named Rukn-ed-Din, who was interred in an adjacent cemetery; the Bridge of the Guebres (Krusinski), because it led to the suburb of Guebristan, and was built by Abbas II., in order that the Guebres might not pass across the main bridge to Julfa; and the Bridge of Hasanabad, because it led to the Bazaar of that name in Isfahan, which was restored by the Governor of Isfahan under Fath Ali Shah, who also replanted an avenue, like the Chehar Bagh, from the bridge to the city. The Pul-i-Khaju is shorter than the bridge of Ali Verdi Khan, being only 154 yards in length, owing to a contraction in the bed of the river, which here flows over a ledge of rock. The structure consists, in fact, of a bridge superimposed upon a dam. The latter is built of solid blocks of stone and is pierced by narrow channels, the flow in which can be regulated by sluices. This great platform is broken on its outer edge, the stones being arranged in the form of steps descending to the river-level. Upon the platform or dam repose the twenty-four main arches of the bridge, which is of brick, and the chief external features of which are four projecting two-storeyed hexagonal pavilions, one at each corner, and two larger pavilions of similar shape in the centre, a third storey being erected upon the roof of the more westerly of the two. As in the case of the Julfa bridge, the basement is pierced by a vaulted passage, running the entire length of the bridge through the piers on the top of the dam, and crossing the successive channels by stepping-stones six feet deep. The main



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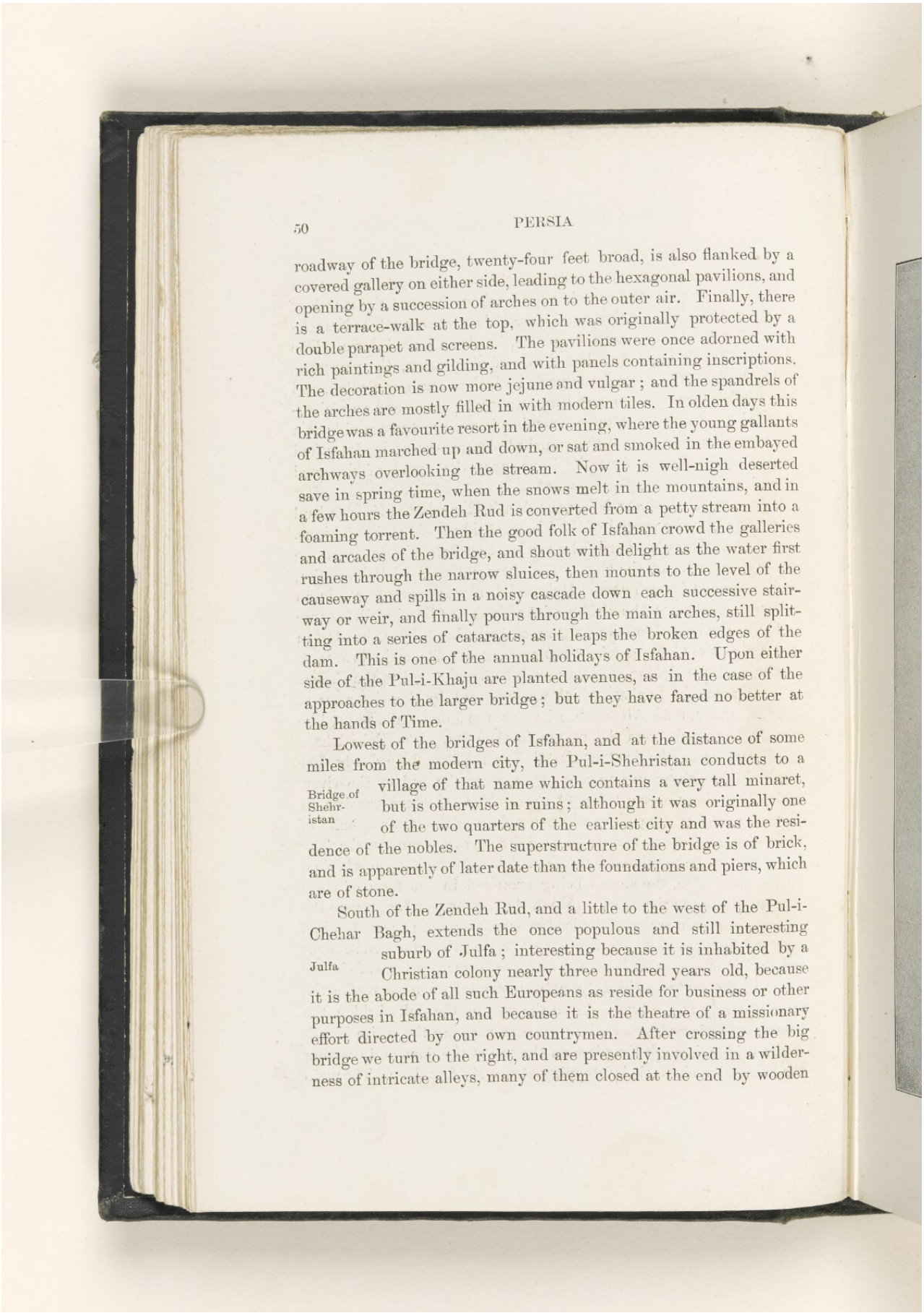



roadway of the bridge, twenty-four feet broad, is also flanked by a covered gallery on either side, leading to the hexagonal pavilions, and opening by a succession of arches on to the outer air. Finally, there is a terrace-walk at the top, which was originally protected by a double parapet and screens. The pavilions were once adorned with rich paintings and gilding, and with panels containing inscriptions. The decoration is now more jejune and vulgar; and the spandrels of the arches are mostly filled in with modern tiles. In olden days this bridge was a favourite resort in the evening, where the young gallants of Isfahan marched up and down, or sat and smoked in the embayed archways overlooking the stream. Now it is well-nigh deserted save in spring time, when the snows melt in the mountains, and in a few hours the Zendeh Rud is converted from a petty stream into a foaming torrent. Then the good folk of Isfahan crowd the galleries and arcades of the bridge, and shout with delight as the water first rushes through the narrow sluices, then mounts to the level of the causeway and spills in a noisy cascade down each successive stairway or weir, and finally pours through the main arches, still splitting into a series of cataracts, as it leaps the broken edges of the dam. This is one of the annual holidays of Isfahan. Upon either side of the Pul-i-Khaju are planted avenues, as in the case of the approaches to the larger bridge; but they have fared no better at the hands of Time.

Bridge of Shehristan

Lowest of the bridges of Isfahan, and at the distance of some miles from the modern city, the Pul-i-Shehristan conducts to a village of that name which contains a very tall minaret, but is otherwise in ruins; although it was originally one of the two quarters of the earliest city and was the residence of the nobles. The superstructure of the bridge is of brick, and is apparently of later date than the foundations and piers, which are of stone.

Julfa

South of the Zendeh Rud, and a little to the west of the Pul-i-Chehar Bagh, extends the once populous and still interesting suburb of Julfa; interesting because it is inhabited by a Christian colony nearly three hundred years old, because it is the abode of all such Europeans as reside for business or other purposes in Isfahan, and because it is the theatre of a missionary effort directed by our own countrymen. After crossing the big bridge we turn to the right, and are presently involved in a wilderness of intricate alleys, many of them closed at the end by wooden

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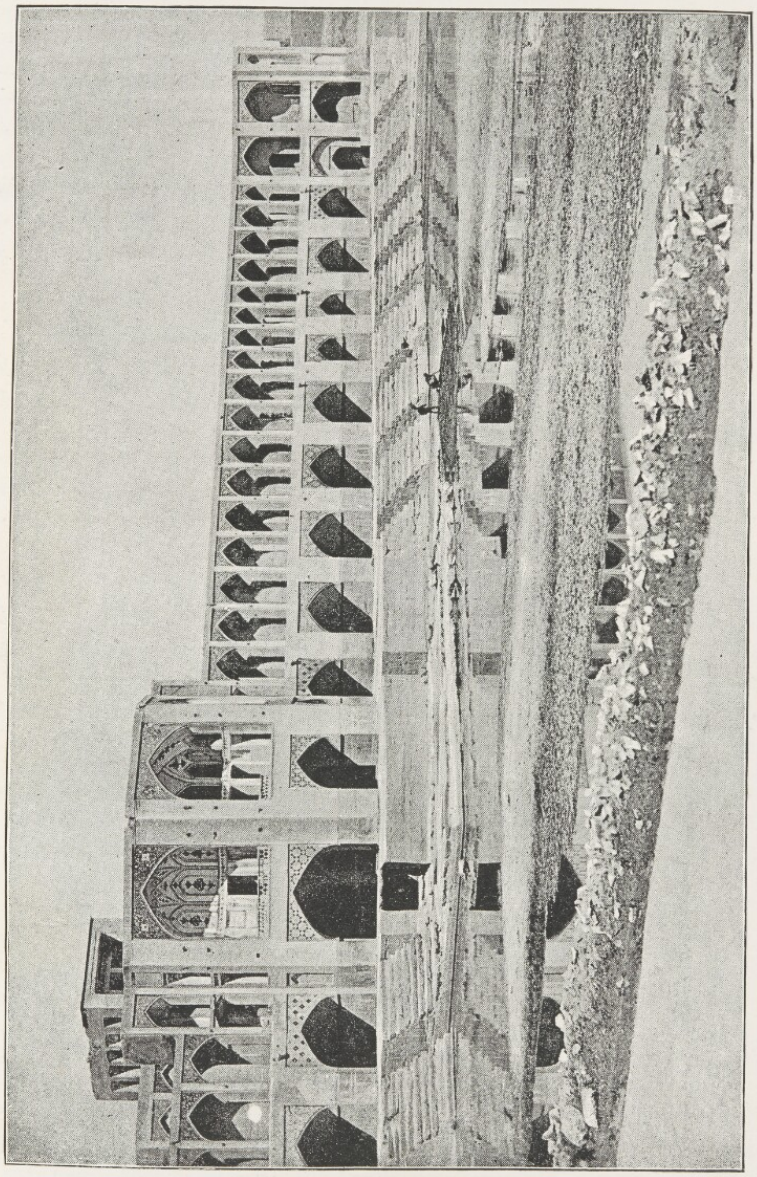
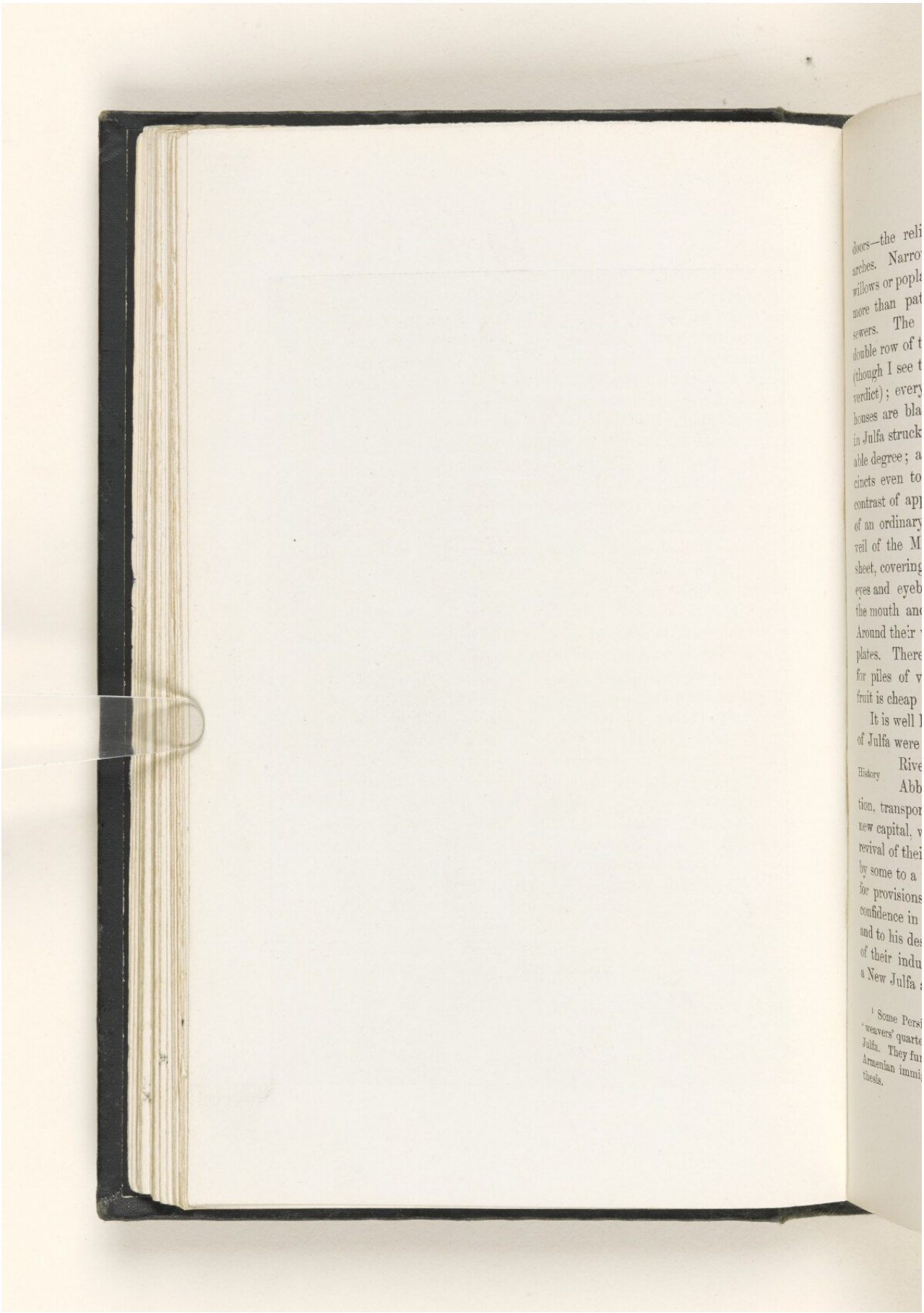


PUL-I-KHAJU



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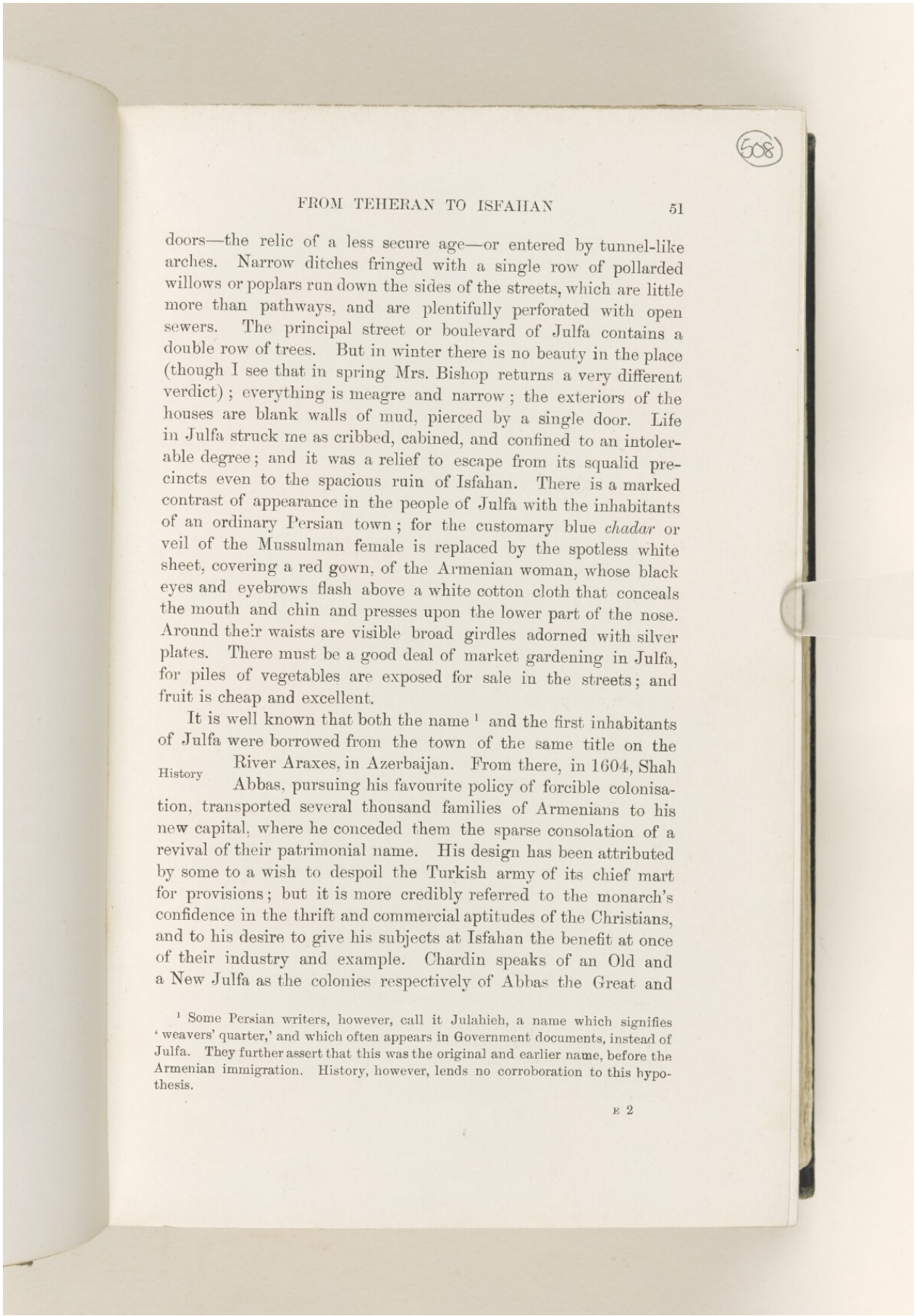



doors—the relic of a less secure age—or entered by tunnel-like arches. Narrow ditches fringed with a single row of pollarded willows or poplars run down the sides of the streets, which are little more than pathways, and are plentifully perforated with open sewers. The principal street or boulevard of Julfa contains a double row of trees. But in winter there is no beauty in the place (though I see that in spring Mrs. Bishop returns a very different verdict); everything is meagre and narrow; the exteriors of the houses are blank walls of mud, pierced by a single door. Life in Julfa struck me as cribbed, cabined, and confined to an intolerable degree; and it was a relief to escape from its squalid precincts even to the spacious ruin of Isfahan. There is a marked contrast of appearance in the people of Julfa with the inhabitants of an ordinary Persian town; for the customary blue *chadar* or veil of the Mussulman female is replaced by the spotless white sheet, covering a red gown, of the Armenian woman, whose black eyes and eyebrows flash above a white cotton cloth that conceals the mouth and chin and presses upon the lower part of the nose. Around their waists are visible broad girdles adorned with silver plates. There must be a good deal of market gardening in Julfa, for piles of vegetables are exposed for sale in the streets; and fruit is cheap and excellent.

History

It is well known that both the name [1] and the first inhabitants of Julfa were borrowed from the town of the same title on the River Araxes, in Azerbaijan. From there, in 1604, Shah Abbas, pursuing his favourite policy of forcible colonisation, transported several thousand families of Armenians to his new capital, where he conceded them the sparse consolation of a revival of their patrimonial name. His design has been attributed by some to a wish to despoil the Turkish army of its chief mart for provisions; but it is more credibly referred to the monarch's confidence in the thrift and commercial aptitudes of the Christians, and to his desire to give his subjects at Isfahan the benefit at once of their industry and example. Chardin speaks of an Old and a New Julfa as the colonies respectively of Abbas the Great and

[1] Some Persian writers, however, call it Julahieh, a name which signifies 'weavers' quarter,' and which often appears in Government documents, instead of Julfa. They further assert that this was the original and earlier name, before the Armenian immigration. History, however, lends no corroboration to this hypothesis.



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Abbas II.; but I infer that the latter connoted new streets and buildings rather than a second immigration, of which I have found no corroborative record. Encouraged by its royal founder, who gave the new arrivals many privileges, exempting them from servitude, granting them the free exercise of their religion, and a *kalantar* or mayor of their own nationality, and lending them money without interest, Julfa soon became a thriving and populous place. By the time of Herbert's visit (1627), the number had swollen to 10,000 souls. In Chardin's day Julfa contained 3,400 houses and 30,000 persons (Fryer at the same time says 6,000 families), more than a dozen churches or chapels,[1] a monastery, a nunnery, 'where were about thirty poor widows or girls, ugly and ill-shapen,' and 100 to 120 priests. The Jesuits possessed an establishment there (the ruins of their church can still be seen), having arrived in 1645 under Père Rigourdi with letters from the Pope and the King of France. For a time the prosperity of the colony was free from cloud or blemish, although the taxation levied from it gradually increased in proportion to the dwindling sympathies or the growing cupidity of the later Sefavi kings. Shah Suleiman was the first who systematically overtaxed and persecuted the Armenians. Under Shah Sultan Husein, who prided himself upon an unbending orthodoxy, the outlook became blacker still, a law being promulgated that if a Persian killed an Armenian he need only pay one load of corn to the family of the deceased. In and after the Afghan invasion, the Julfans suffered terribly; but the storm did not finally culminate till the reign of Nadir Shah, who alleging, most unjustifiably, that they had helped the Afghans in the siege of Isfahan, visited them with savage penalties and exactions, interdicted their worship, and placed them under a ban of permanent social ostracism. Immediately upon the news of his death in 1747, the miserable Armenians flocked away in hundreds, if not thousands, to Georgia, to India, and to Baghdad; and the population shrank to limits upon which it has never since been able to make any appreciable advance. Olivier in 1796 reported 800 families, Morier and Ouseley 300 to 400 in 1811, Martyn 500 in 1812, Ker Porter 300 in 1818, Lumsden 500 in

[1] The foundations of the principal churches were as follows: St. Joseph, or the Cathedral, in 1605; St. Stephen in 1691; St. John in 1695. St. George is not now used for worship, but is a great place of pilgrimage, owing to its possession of some miracle-working stones, prayer in front of which is fraught with great benefit to the sick.

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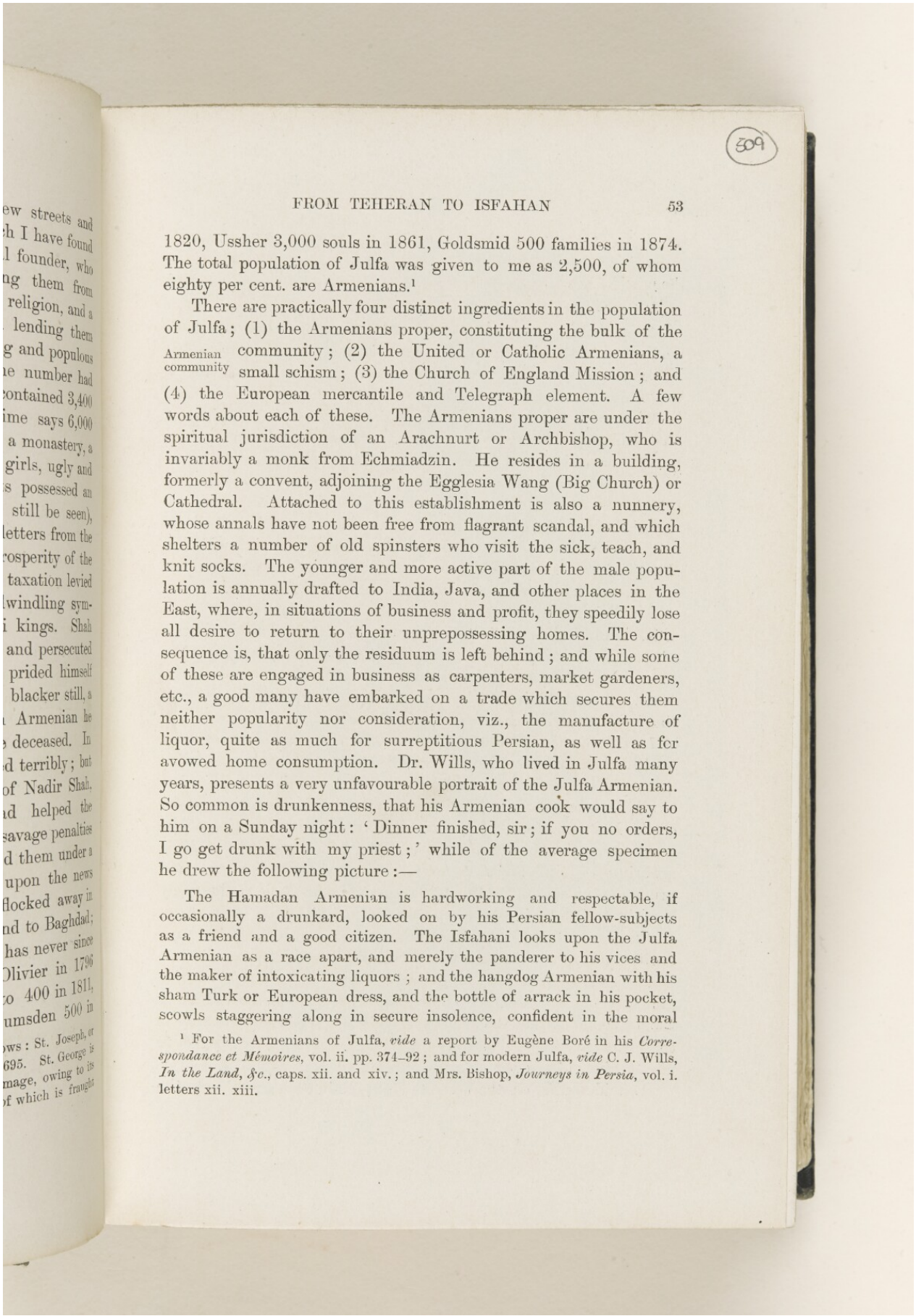



1820, Ussher 3,000 souls in 1861, Goldsmid 500 families in 1874. The total population of Julfa was given to me as 2,500, of whom eighty per cent. are Armenians.[1]

Armenian community

There are practically four distinct ingredients in the population of Julfa; (1) the Armenians proper, constituting the bulk of the community; (2) the United or Catholic Armenians, a small schism; (3) the Church of England Mission; and (4) the European mercantile and Telegraph element. A few words about each of these. The Armenians proper are under the spiritual jurisdiction of an Arachnurt or Archbishop, who is invariably a monk from Echmiadzin. He resides in a building, formerly a convent, adjoining the Egglesia Wang (Big Church) or Cathedral. Attached to this establishment is also a nunnery, whose annals have not been free from flagrant scandal, and which shelters a number of old spinsters who visit the sick, teach, and knit socks. The younger and more active part of the male population is annually drafted to India, Java, and other places in the East, where, in situations of business and profit, they speedily lose all desire to return to their unprepossessing homes. The consequence is, that only the residuum is left behind; and while some of these are engaged in business as carpenters, market gardeners, etc., a good many have embarked on a trade which secures them neither popularity nor consideration, viz., the manufacture of liquor, quite as much for surreptitious Persian, as well as for avowed home consumption. Dr. Wills, who lived in Julfa many years, presents a very unfavourable portrait of the Julfa Armenian. So common is drunkenness, that his Armenian cook would say to him on a Sunday night: 'Dinner finished, sir; if you no orders, I go get drunk with my priest;' while of the average specimen he drew the following picture:—

The Hamadan Armenian is hardworking and respectable, if occasionally a drunkard, looked on by his Persian fellow-subjects as a friend and a good citizen. The Isfahani looks upon the Julfa Armenian as a race apart, and merely the panderer to his vices and the maker of intoxicating liquors; and the hangdog Armenian with his sham Turk or European dress, and the bottle of arrack in his pocket, scowls staggering along in secure insolence, confident in the moral

[1] For the Armenians of Julfa, *vide* a report by Eugène Boré in his *Correspondance et Mémoires*, vol. ii. pp. 374–92; and for modern Julfa, *vide* C. J. Wills, *In the Land, &c.*, caps. xii. and xiv.; and Mrs. Bishop, *Journeys in Persia*, vol. i. letters xii. xiii.

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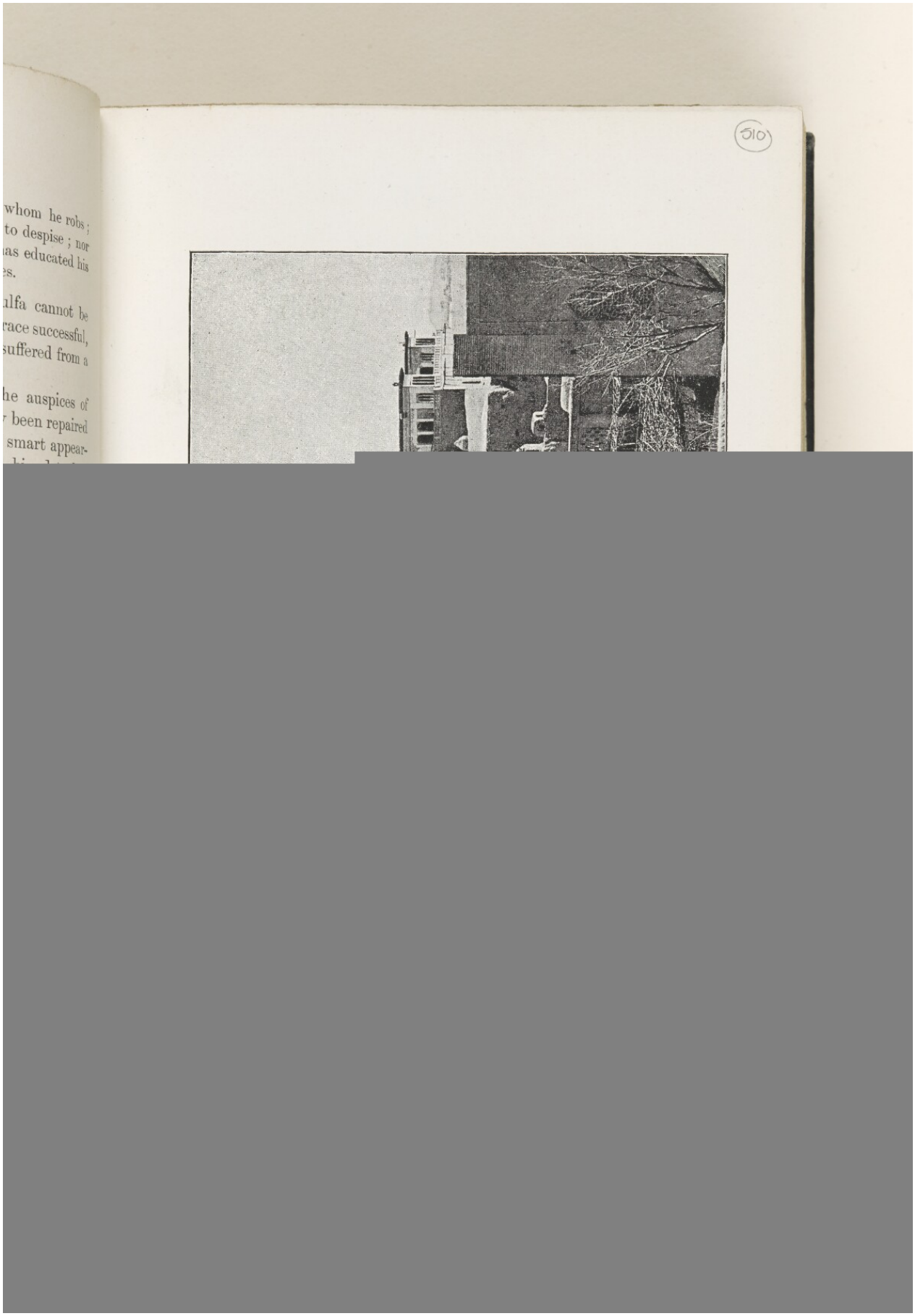
protection given him by the presence of the English whom he robs; respecting neither his priest, whom he has been taught to despise; nor the missionary whom he dislikes at heart (though he has educated his children gratuitously) and whom his priest openly reviles.

It is, I fear, too true that the Armenian of Julfa cannot be credited with the virtues or gifts that have made his race successful, if also unpopular, elsewhere in the East. He has suffered from a too long expatriation among the tents of Kedar.

The main church or cathedral was built under the auspices of Shah Abbas by his imported colonists. Having lately been repaired and decorated with new tiles it presents a smart appearance. In the courtyard outside stands a big detached belfry. Four stone pillars support a brick gallery with a railing, to which there is no access from below. Above this rises the bell-tower and bell, which is pulled by a rope communicating with the church opposite. In the corner of the courtyard are a number of graves, of Protestant Christians as well as of Armenians. Upon a passage immediately outside the church, open a number of small cells. Entering the main building we find that its shape is a parallelogram, consisting of two squares, with a semicircular apse at the end. The first square is the nave, the second is the choir beneath a dome. A wainscoting of ornamental tiles runs round the base, and above this the walls are covered with strange old paintings of rich and sombre hue. Chardin tells us that they were the gift of a wealthy Armenian merchant, named Avadich, who, having travelled in Italy and acquired a taste for art, persuaded his co-religionists to allow of the execution of these paintings, greatly to the scandal of the Mohammedans, who were shocked at the delineation of the human form. The pictures depict Old Testament scenes, and the sufferings of saints and martyrs, whilst over the door is a great and gruesome tableau of the Day of Judgment. Above is the heavenly host, but all the skill of the artist has been lavished on the tortures of the damned, who are being ushered into perdition by huge devils and symbolical monsters. Higher up in the walls are windows filled with stained glass; while the apse is painted with miniatures of saints and cherubim, and with a figure of Christ. It should be added that the liturgy in this and the other churches is conducted in the ancient Armenian tongue, which is gibberish to ninety-nine out of every hundred Armenians who repeat it.

Cathedral

Outside Julfa, on the desolate stony plain that stretches to the

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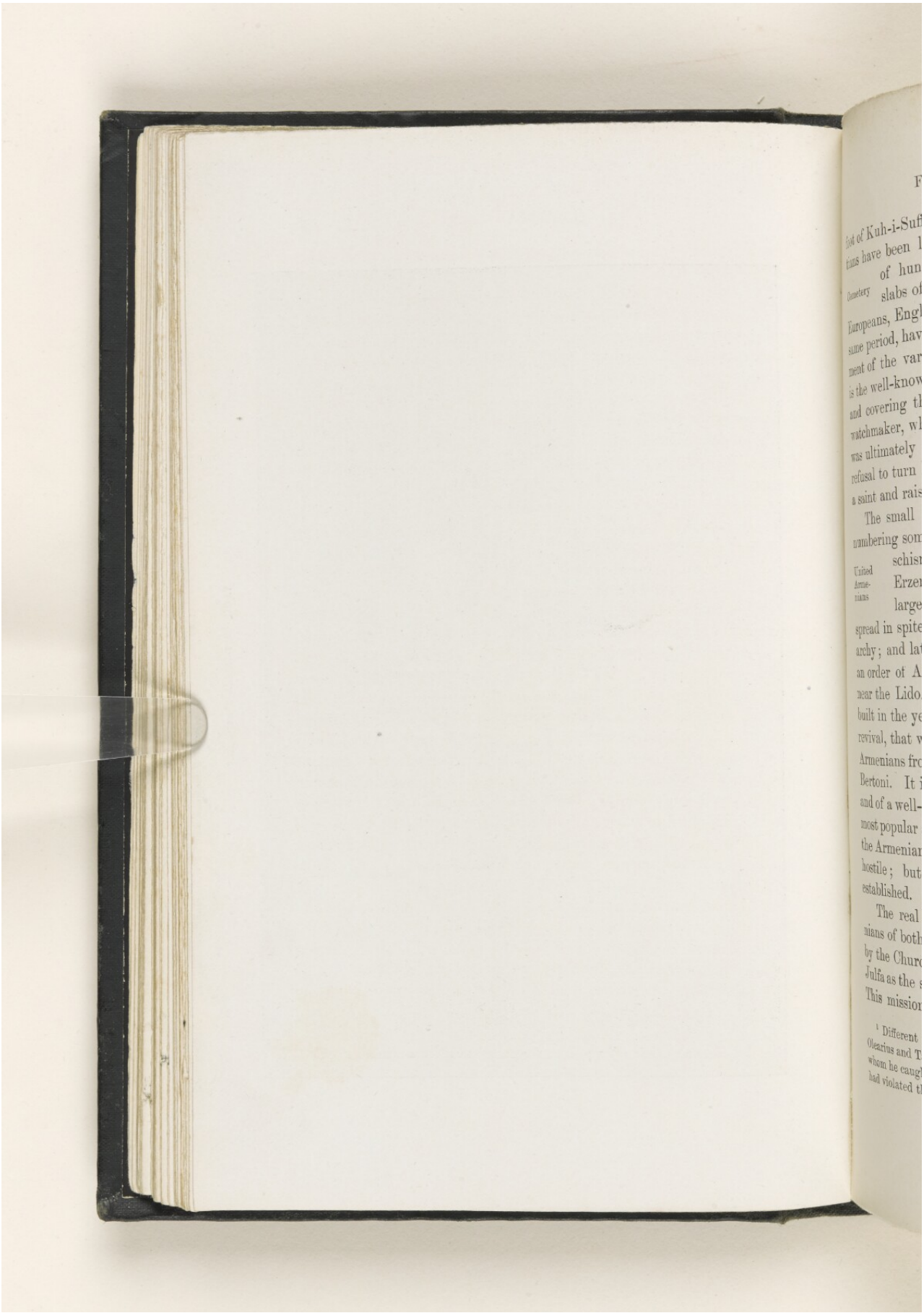

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foot of Kuh-i-Suffa, is the cemetery, where three centuries of Christians have been laid to rest. Here are not merely the tombstones of hundreds of departed Armenians—great blocks or slabs of stone, chiselled and sculptured—but also of many Europeans, English, French, Dutch, and Russian, who, during the same period, have lived and died at Isfahan or Julfa, in the employment of the various factories or in other pursuits. Among them is the well-known gravestone bearing the inscription *Cy git Rodolfe*, and covering the remains of Ralph or Rodolph Stadler, a Swiss watchmaker, who enjoyed great favour at the Court of Sefi I., but was ultimately put to death by that monarch in 1637, upon his refusal to turn Mohammedan.[1] The Armenians converted him into a saint and raised a tomb over his remains.

Cemetery

The small community of United or Catholic Armenians, now numbering some sixty families, is the representative at Julfa of a schism two hundred years old, a Jesuit missionary at Erzerum having converted an Armenian bishop and a large number of his flock in the year 1688. The schism spread in spite of the vigorous persecution of the Armenian hierarchy; and later a young Armenian priest named Mechitar founded an order of Armenian monks on the little island of St. Lazarus near the Lido. In Julfa the church of this small community was built in the year 1705; but the present movement is the fruit of a revival, that was effected early in the present century by Catholic Armenians from India, and sustained by an energetic priest named Bertoni. It is now under the jurisdiction of a Jesuit Monsignor, and of a well-known monk, Père Pascal Arakélian, who is one of the most popular and agreeable figures in Julfan society. Relations with the Armenian Church have commonly been strained and frequently hostile; but an outward harmony appears now to have been established.

United Armenians

The real jealousy, it is useless to deny, is between the Armenians of both persuasions, and the Mission, sent out and supported by the Church of England Missionary Society, which has selected Julfa as the scene of an active propaganda and a large annual outlay. This mission is under the control of the well-known and greatly

[1] Different versions are given of the circumstances that led to his death by Olearius and Tavernier, the former alleging that Stadler had first killed a Persian whom he caught breaking into his house, the latter that the burglarious Persian had violated the watchmaker's harem.

respected Dr. Bruce, of whom it may be said that he is as good a type as can anywhere be seen of the nineteenth-century Crusader. In an earlier age the red cross would have been upon his shoulder, and he would have been hewing infidels in conflict for the Holy Sepulchre, instead of translating the Bible, and teaching in schools at Julfa. Going out to Persia for the first time in 1869, he has been engaged ever since in a revision of the translation of the New and Old Testaments into Persian, and in a translation of the Book of Common Prayer into the Armenian dialect of Julfa. The establishment over which he presides is large and commodious, comprising a fine church with accommodation for 300, and a congregation in 1889 of 184 native baptised Christians and 90 communicants; a boys' school, which in the same year was attended by 177 pupils, from the ages of six to sixteen; a girls' school with an attendance of 164; a staff of two or three European clergy, and of thirty lay teachers, native and Europeans, and a dispensary for Mohammedans and Christians alike. I shall, I hope, be doing no injustice to Dr. Bruce's self-sacrificing and unflagging labours, if I say that his converts are drawn exclusively from the Christian and not from the Moslem fold. Mohammedans have been baptised; but as I have elsewhere said they have relapsed, and I have never myself encountered a full-grown converted Mussulman. It would, perhaps, savour of disrespect to an institution excellently managed, if I added that here, as in many other parts of the East, the results do not, in my opinion, justify the expenditure both of labour and of money. The mission is not over popular with the Zil-es-Sultan, and is naturally much disliked by the Armenian hierarchy, who look upon its agents as poachers on their own preserves. To an English traveller it is in the highest degree agreeable to alight, in a strange land, upon a small colony of his own countrymen, which is also a centre of hospitable culture and of learning.

Church of England Mission

Finally, there is resident at Julfa a small European lay community numbering about a dozen and composed of the officials of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and of the representatives of the British or foreign mercantile houses already named, who are engaged in trade in Isfahan. Nothing can exceed the friendliness and warmth of welcome that are extended by this little community to strangers. I see no reason myself, beyond that of old custom, why they should continue to reside in Julfa

European colony

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rather than in the city, where are their places of business, and whither they have to walk or ride a distance of three miles every morning. Rents are much higher in Julfa, and the atmosphere is, as I have said, cramped and narrow. In former times the large Christian population of Julfa conferred a sort of protection upon European Christians compelled to live in or near the capital. But the obligation is now entirely reversed. There is no doubt that foreigners might reside in Isfahan with perfect impunity, and it is the Armenians of Julfa who benefit by the existing arrangement, which gives them a security that they would not otherwise enjoy. In considering the small estimation in which Christians generally are held by the uneducated masses in Persia, it must further be remembered that the Armenians are the only Christian population known to them; and that if a traveller protests his faith and finds the declaration received either with indifference or with contempt, it is in nine cases out of ten because he is at once associated with the none too desirable attainments of his fellow-Christians of Julfa.

In conclusion, let me devote a paragraph to the few sights of interest in the immediate neighbourhood of Isfahan. Of these the best known are the Minari Jumban, or Shaking Minarets, of Kalehdan, or Guladan, a village about six miles to the west of Isfahan. Here there is the tomb of a Sheikh Abdullah, though what particular Abdullah no one appears to know. His sarcophagus, a big rectangular chest, stands in an open, vaulted recess, and upon either side of the façade above the arch rise the two minarets to an additional height of about twenty feet, the entire structure being of brick. A small spiral staircase in the interior of either minaret leads to the summit, which is pierced with open arches.[1] An individual usually ascends the right-hand tower, where, by pressing against the walls and swaying to and fro, he imparts an oscillation to the minaret, which, passing along the intervening platform about thirty feet in length, is communicated to the other tower; so that both of them visibly sway in company with the operator, describing a deviation of several inches from the perpendicular. Writers have exhausted their ingenuity in the attempt to explain this phenomenon, which is, of course, attributed by the Persians to the wonderful properties of the defunct Sheikh.

Shaking minarets

[1] Tavernier included in his *Travels* an engraving of the Shaking Minarets, which shook in his day; although why he should represent a figure as swarming up the exterior of the minaret, in contempt of the stairway, I cannot explain.

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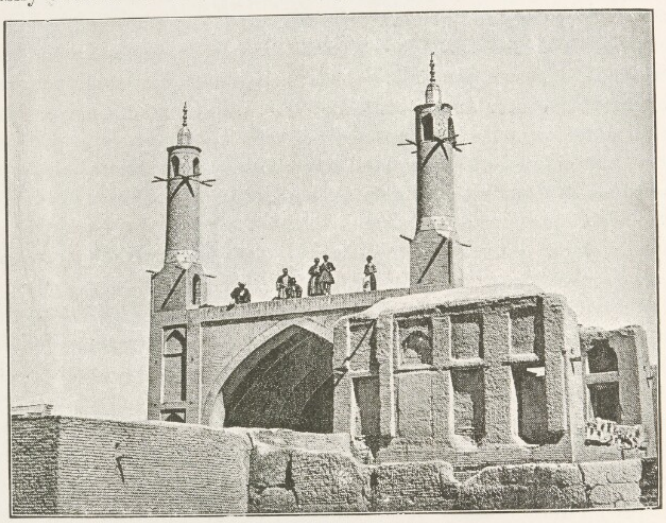
One traveller is convinced that the towers are connected by a chain concealed beneath the platform; another says that from the ground to the summit they are detached from and, so to speak, enclosed in the main building, which experiences and transmits the oscillation easily excited in the separate towers. Mme. Dieulafoy says that each tower has for its vertical axis a wooden framework fixed in the staircase, and can thus, when agitated, describe slight oscillations round its own axis. More probably the elasticity of the bricks and mortar employed have something to do with it, the vibration easily excited in one tower being then communicated along the



THE SHAKING MINARETS

tympanum of the main arch to the other. Dr. Wills calls them 'a terrible fraud,' though for what reason I do not understand. There is no fraud, and still less is there any miracle. The only folly is that of the visitor who is in the smallest degree excited by so commonplace, even if uncommon, a manifestation.

Sites and ruins

At a slight distance from the Shrine of Abdullah rises an isolated rocky hill, the summit of which is crowned by some ruined buildings of mud-brick. This is called the Atesh Gah, from a tradition that a fire-altar was here erected by Ardeshir (Artaxerxes) Longimanus. The tradition may be true, but the present ruins are not old. Immediately to the south of Julfa the red rocky ramparts of the Kuh-i-Suffa (from an Arabic

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Sufa means a bench or Chabutra origin your 'Sofa'

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word signifying a house on a high place or terrace) frame the landscape with their gaunt and ragged outlines. In a recess or terrace on their northern front, less than half-way up and overlooking the capital, a pavilion or summer-house was built by Shah Suleiman, and called Takht-i-Suleiman, upon the site of a former hermitage. Only the ruins of the villa now remain, but the climb is repaid by the fine view. A neighbouring rocky height supports some ruins, also of modern date, but bearing the name of Kaleh or Takht-i-Rustam, from a tradition that the national hero built a fortress on this site. At the foot of the Kuh-i-Suffa was situated the famous palace of Ferahabad (Abode of Joy), to which its royal architect and master, Shah Sultan Husein, was so devotedly attached that when the Afghans invaded Persia, he was quite ready to sacrifice his capital if only the barbarians would leave him his palace. The latter was distinguished less for its buildings than for its wonderful terraces, and lakes, and gardens, which were the admiration of observers. The Afghans, it is needless to say, spared neither the scruples nor the person of the accommodating monarch. Ferahabad, having been hastily evacuated by him, was occupied by them and was burned to the ground when, a few years later, they were expelled from Isfahan. Its site is now a wilderness of ruins. But little more imposing are the remains of the celebrated castle of Tabarrak, which was the deposit of the Royal Treasure under the Sefavi kings, and whose fortifications were described in such glowing terms by Chardin, Kaempfer, and others. Already, in 1704, Le Brun found them shattered and tottering, and the surviving walls are now little more than heaps of clay.

Truly, as he turns his back on Isfahan after completing the local itinerary, which I have here marked out for him, may the traveller observe, in the words of Shelley—

> Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.

### Supplementary Routes.

Kashan to Isfahan (*viâ* Natanz), A. H. Schindler (1879), *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z. Berlin*, 1881, pp. 307–66.

Kum to Gulpaigan or Khonsar, E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. v.; Col. M. S. Bell (1884), *Blackwood's Magazine*, June 1889.

Isfahan to Gulpaigan, E. Stack (1881), *ibid.*; Col. Bell (1884), *ibid.*

Isfahan to Kangavar, E. Flandin (1840), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.; E. Floyer (1877), *Unexplored Beluchistan*, caps. xvi.–xviii.

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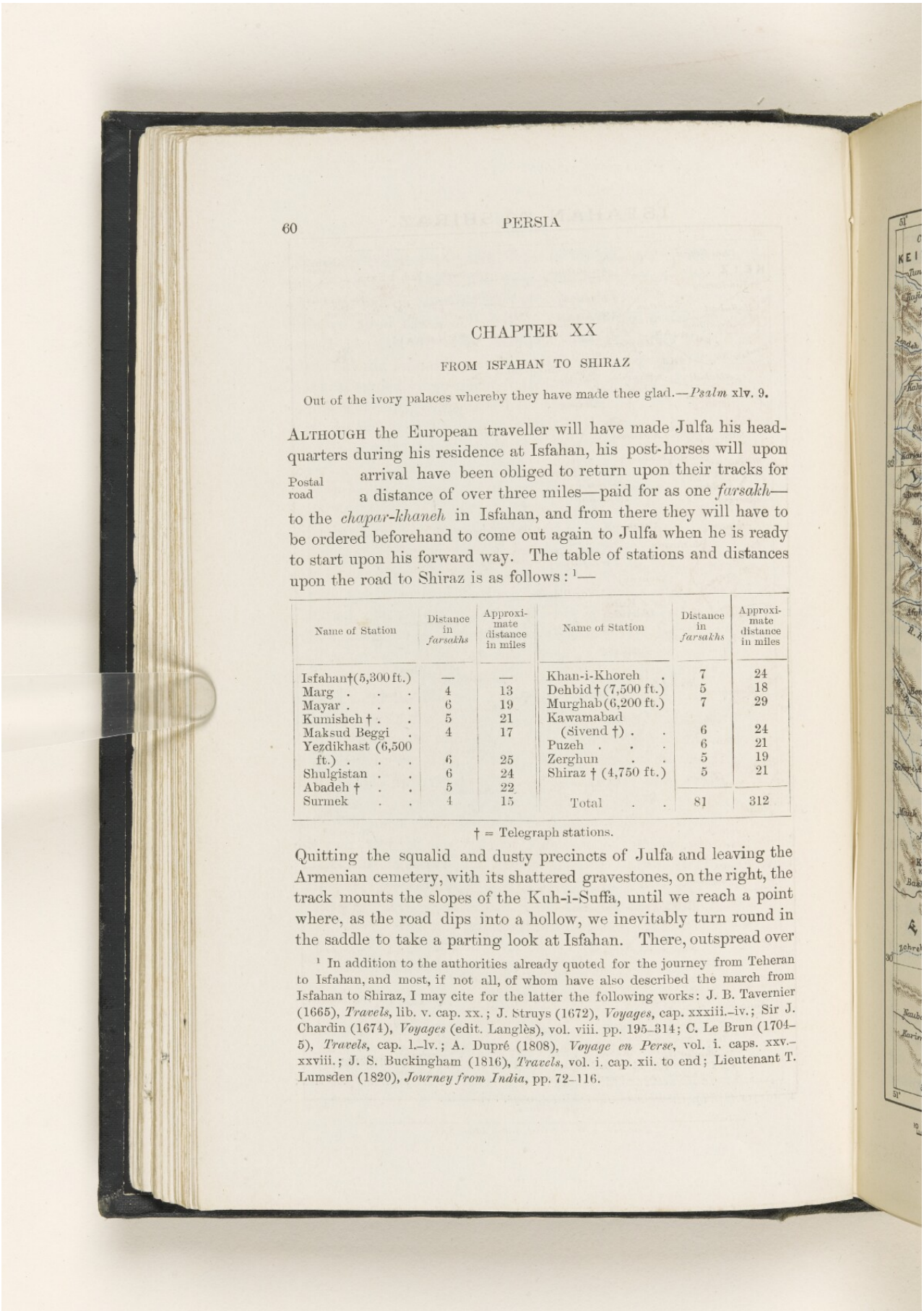



## CHAPTER XX

### FROM ISFAHAN TO SHIRAZ

Out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad.—*Psalm* xlv. 9.

ALTHOUGH the European traveller will have made Julfa his head-quarters during his residence at Isfahan, his post-horses will upon arrival have been obliged to return upon their tracks for a distance of over three miles—paid for as one *farsakh*—to the *chapar-khaneh* in Isfahan, and from there they will have to be ordered beforehand to come out again to Julfa when he is ready to start upon his forward way. The table of stations and distances upon the road to Shiraz is as follows:[1]—

Postal road

| Name of Station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles | Name of Station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Isfahan†(5,300 ft.) | — | — | Khan-i-Khoreh . | 7 | 24 |
| Marg . . . | 4 | 13 | Dehbid † (7,500 ft.) | 5 | 18 |
| Mayar . . . | 6 | 19 | Murghab (6,200 ft.) | 7 | 29 |
| Kumisheh † . . | 5 | 21 | Kawamabad (Sivend †) . . | 6 | 24 |
| Maksud Beggi . | 4 | 17 | Puzeh . . . | 6 | 21 |
| Yezdikhast (6,500 ft.) . . . | 6 | 25 | Zerghun . . | 5 | 19 |
| Shulgistan . . | 6 | 24 | Shiraz † (4,750 ft.) | 5 | 21 |
| Abadeh † . . | 5 | 22 | | | |
| Surmek . . | 4 | 15 | Total . . | 81 | 312 |

† = Telegraph stations.

Quitting the squalid and dusty precincts of Julfa and leaving the Armenian cemetery, with its shattered gravestones, on the right, the track mounts the slopes of the Kuh-i-Suffa, until we reach a point where, as the road dips into a hollow, we inevitably turn round in the saddle to take a parting look at Isfahan. There, outspread over

[1] In addition to the authorities already quoted for the journey from Teheran to Isfahan, and most, if not all, of whom have also described the march from Isfahan to Shiraz, I may cite for the latter the following works: J. B. Tavernier (1665), *Travels*, lib. v. cap. xx.; J. Struys (1672), *Voyages*, cap. xxxiii.–iv.; Sir J. Chardin (1674), *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. viii. pp. 195–314; C. Le Brun (1704–5), *Travels*, cap. l.–lv.; A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. caps. xxv.–xxviii.; J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels*, vol. i. cap. xii. to end; Lieutenant T. Lumsden (1820), *Journey from India*, pp. 72–116.

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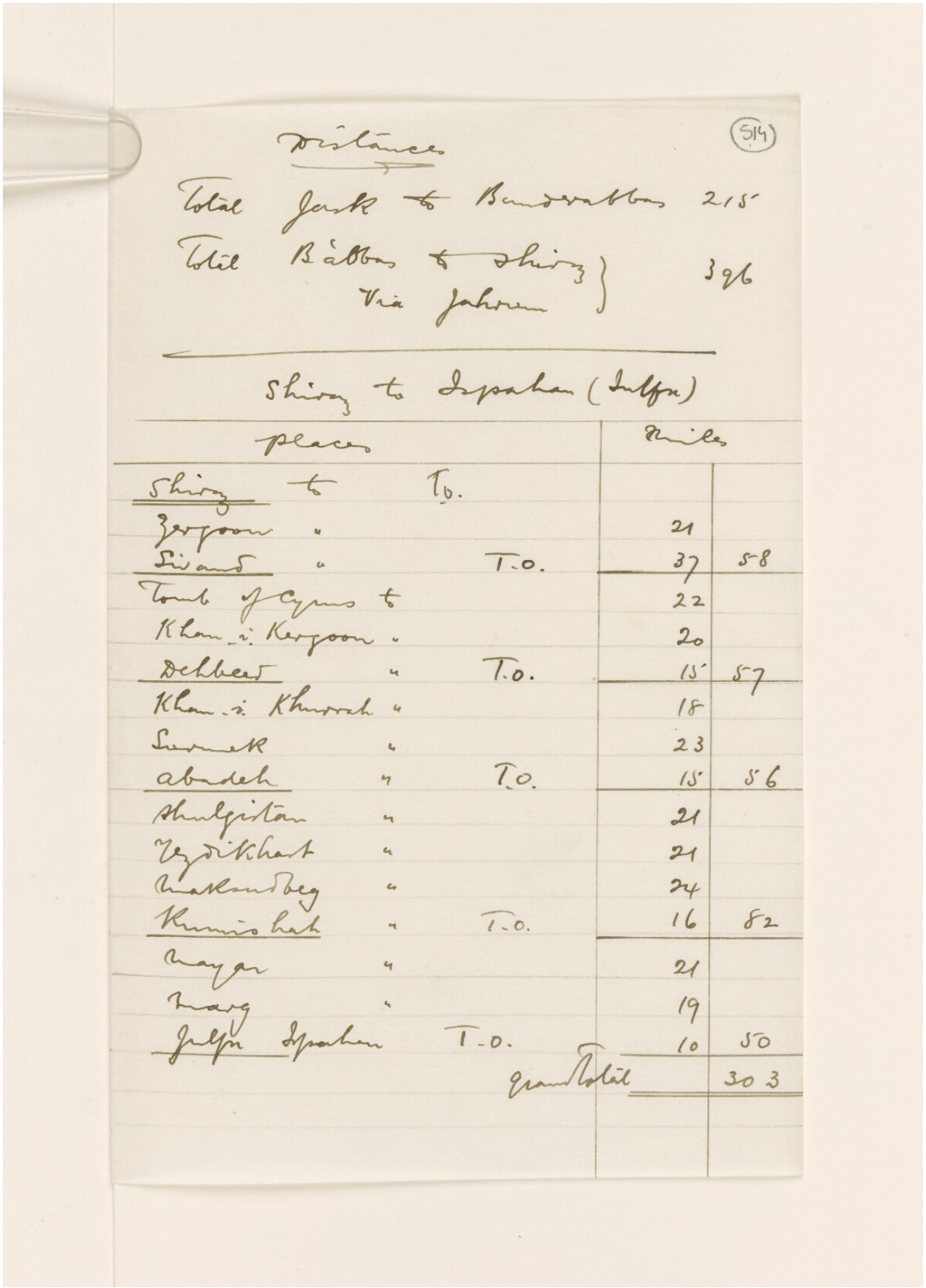

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Distances

Total Jask to Bunderabbas 215

Total Bábbas to Shiraz Via Jahrum } 396

Shiraz to Ispahan (Julfa)

| Places | | | Miles | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shiraz | to | T.O. | | |
| Zergoon | " | | 21 | |
| Sivand | " | T.O. | 37 | 58 |
| Tomb of Cyrus | to | | 22 | |
| Khan-i-Kergoon | " | | 20 | |
| Dehbeed | " | T.O. | 15 | 57 |
| Khan-i-Khurrah | " | | 18 | |
| Sermek | " | | 23 | |
| abadeh | " | T.O. | 15 | 56 |
| Shulgistan | " | | 21 | |
| Yezdikhast | " | | 21 | |
| Maksudbeg | " | | 24 | |
| Kumishah | " | T.O. | 16 | 82 |
| Mayar | " | | 21 | |
| Marg | " | | 19 | |
| Julfa Ispahan | | T.O. | 10 | 50 |
| | | Grand Total | | 303 |

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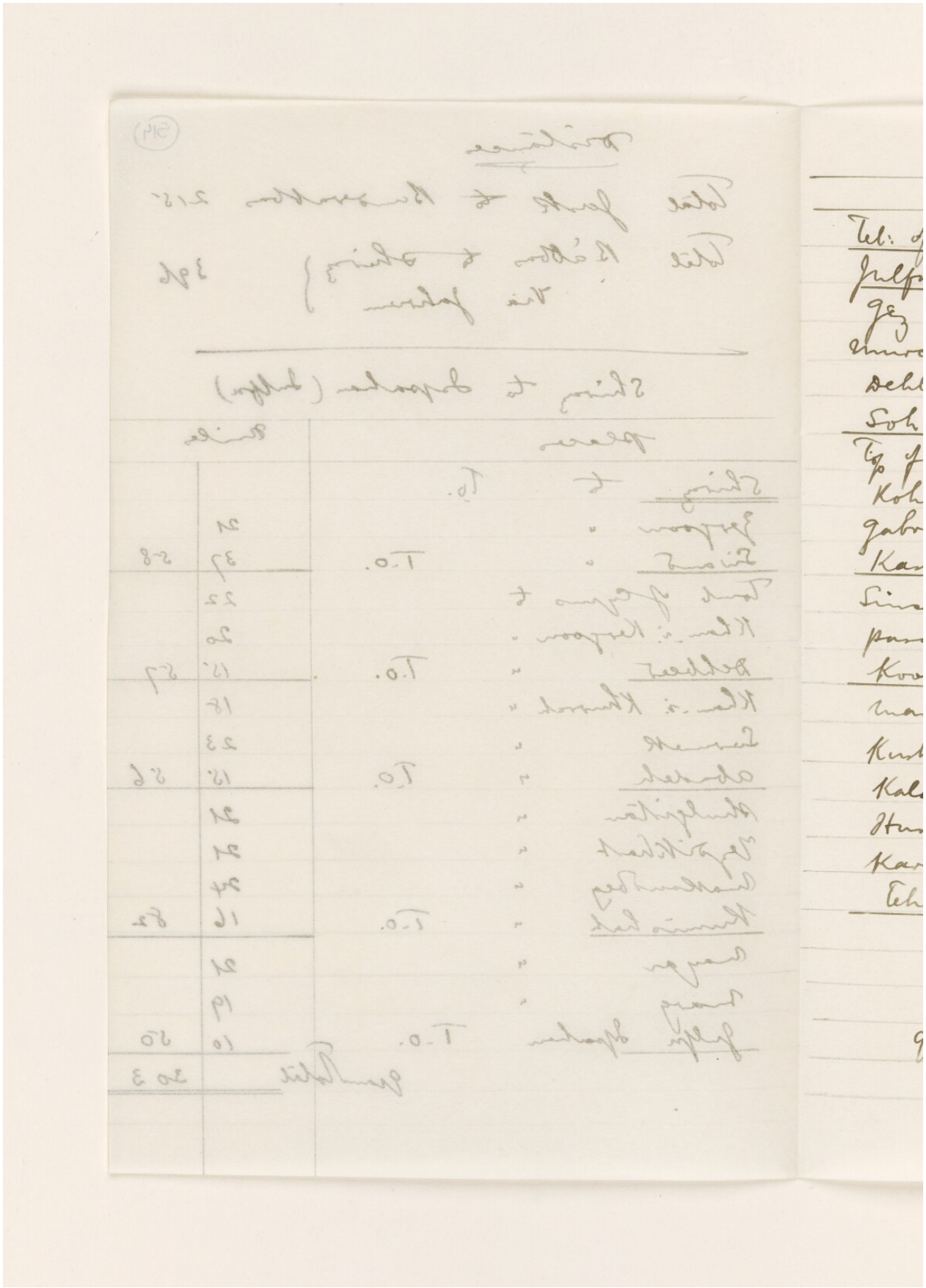

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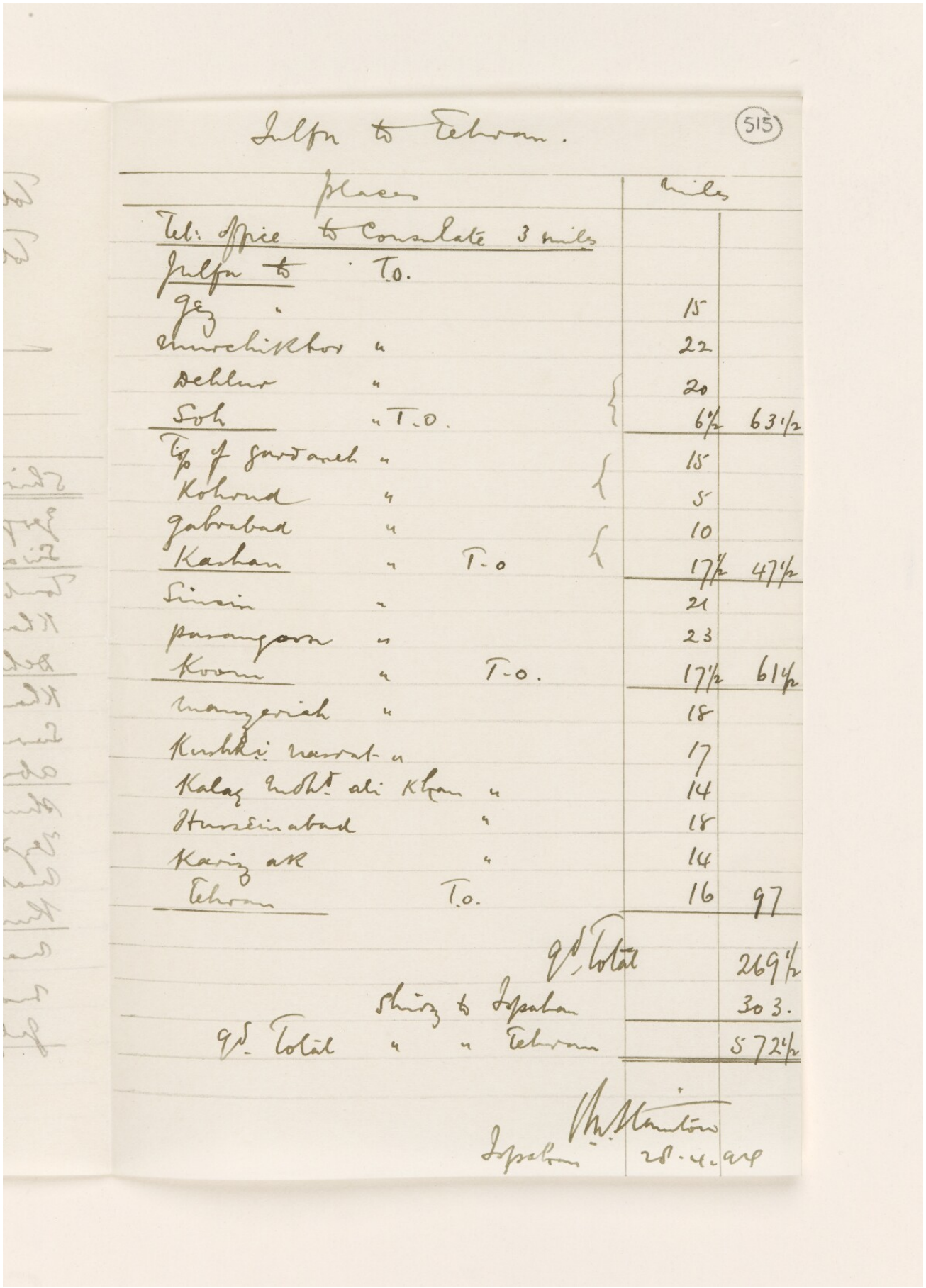

Julfa to Tehran. (515)

| Places | | Miles | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tel: Office to Consulate 3 miles | | | |
| Julfa to | T.O. | | |
| Gez | " | 15 | |
| Murchikhor | " | 22 | |
| Dehlur | " | 20 | |
| Soh | " T.O. | 6½ | 63½ |
| Top of Gardaneh | " | 15 | |
| Kohrud | " | 5 | |
| Gabrabad | " | 10 | |
| Kashan | " T.O | 17½ | 47½ |
| Sinsin | " | 21 | |
| Pasangoon | " | 23 | |
| Koom | " T.O. | 17½ | 61½ |
| Manzeriah | " | 18 | |
| Kushki nasrat | " | 17 | |
| Kalag Moht ali Khan | " | 14 | |
| Husseinabad | " | 18 | |
| Kariz ak | " | 14 | |
| Tehran | T.O. | 16 | 97 |
| | Qd. Total | | 269½ |
| | Shiraz to Ispahan | | 303. |
| Qd. Total | " " Tehran | | 572½ |

M. Stanton
Ispahan 28.4.94

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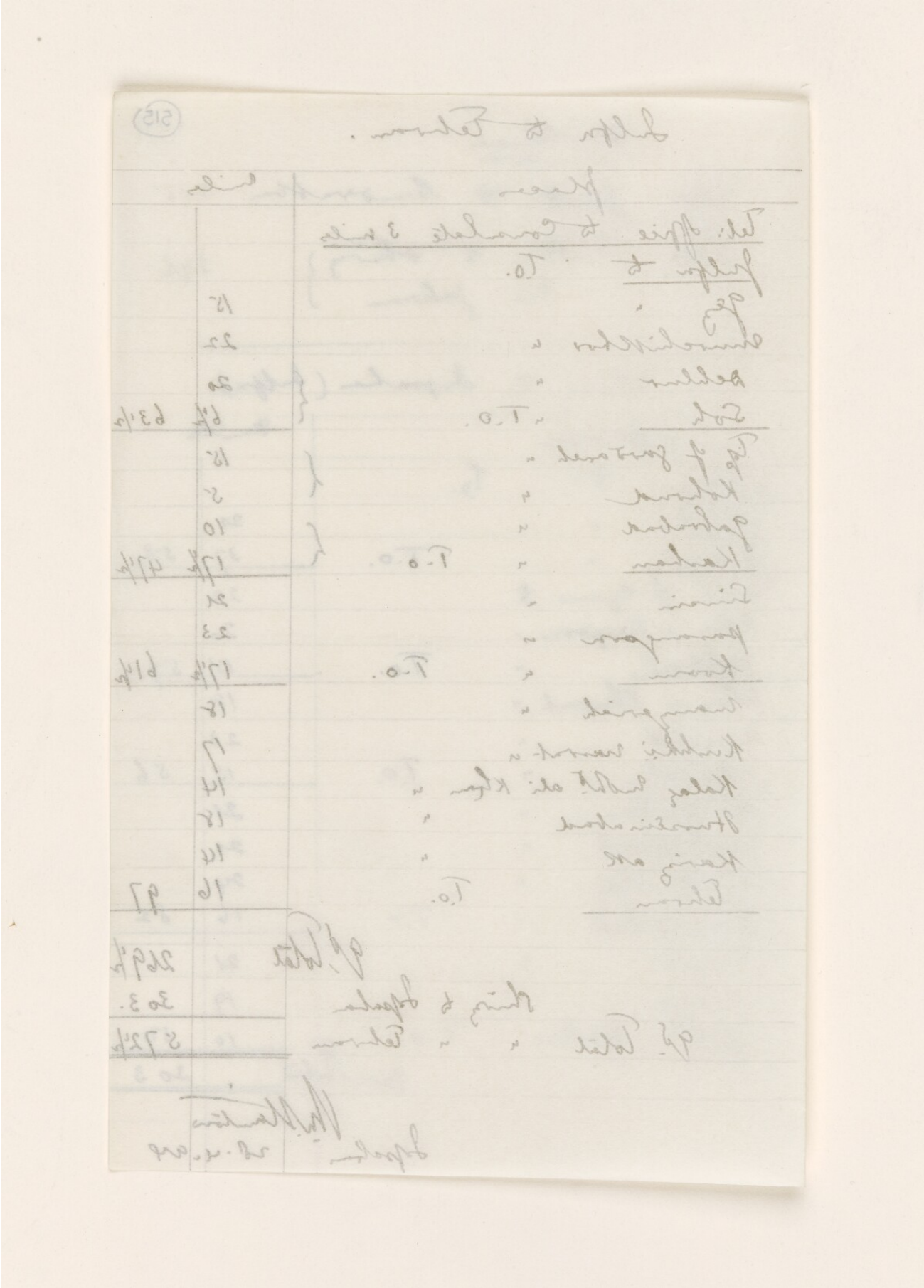

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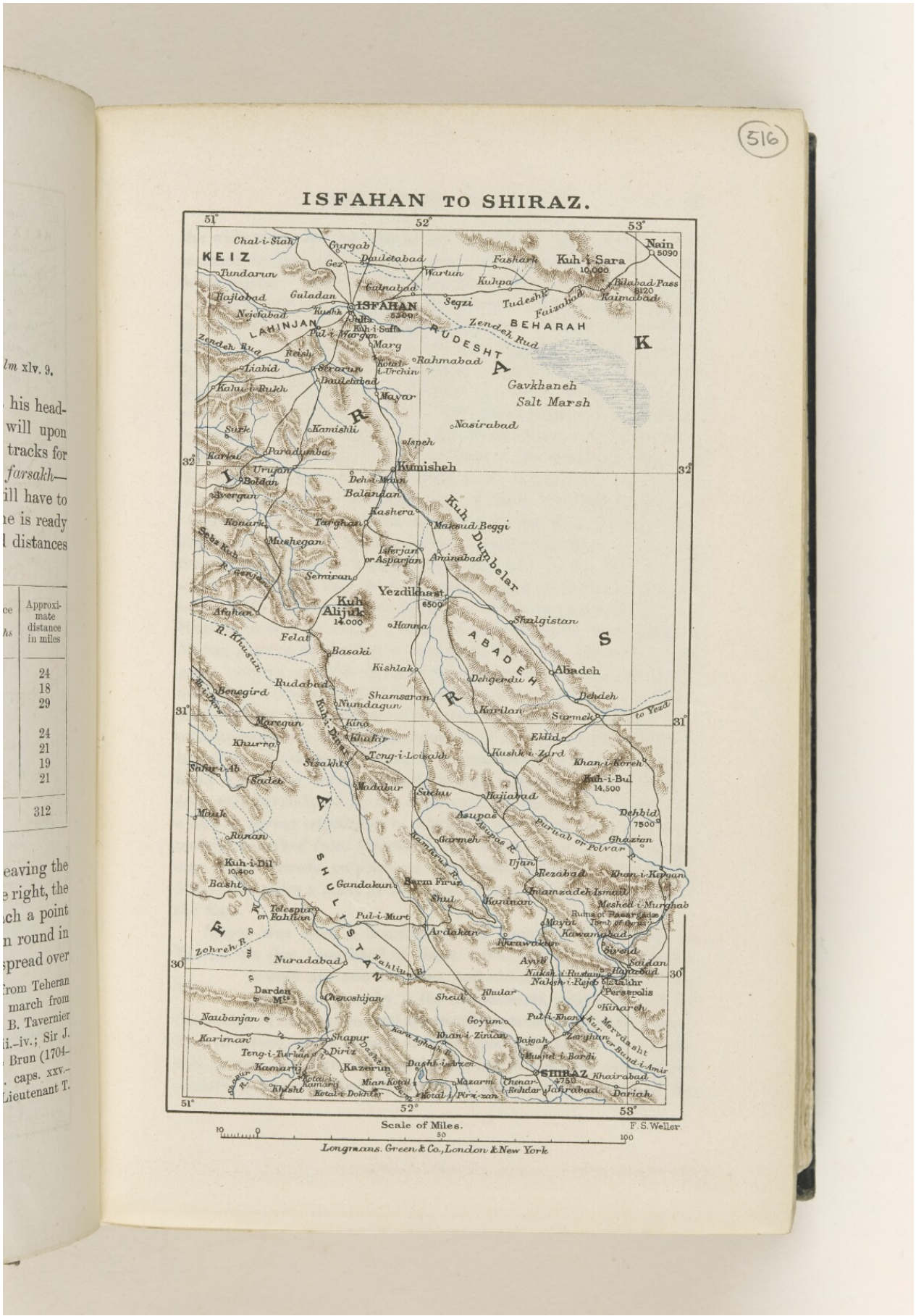
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Gez
Tundarun
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Faizabad
Nejefabad
Kushk
Julfa
LAHINJAN
Kuh-i-Sufia
Pul-i-Margan
Marg
Zendeh Rud
Reish
Rahmabad
Kotal-i-Urchin
Serorun
Daidelabad
Liabid
Kalat-i-Rukh
Mayar
Gavkhaneh
Salt Marsh
Nasirabad
Kamishli
Ispeh
Paradumba
Kumisheh
Urujan
Boldan
Dehsi-Mian
Balandan
Svergan
Kashera
Kuh Dumbelar
Maksud Beggi
Konark
Targhan
Mushegan
Aferjan or Asparjan
Aminabad
Semiran
Yezdikhast
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Kuh-i-Alijuk
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Shalgistan
Afghan
Felat
Basaki
Kishlak
Abadeh
Dehgerdu
Rudabad
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Shamsaran
Numdagun
Karilan
Dehdeh
Sarmek
to Yezd
Maregun
Kino
Khurra
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Teng-i-Loisakh
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Basht
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Shul
Kanunan
Meshed-i-Murghab
Telespuro or Pahlian
Pul-i-Murt
Ardakan
Mayar
Kawamabad
Zireid
Nuradabad
Pahlian R.
Nukah-i-Rustam
Hamadad
Naksh-i-Rejeb
Takhr
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Naubanjan
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Put-i-Khan
Karirman
Shapur
Khan-i-Zinian
Bajgah
Zergbur
Mervdasht
Rud-i-Amir
Teng-i-Tarkun
Diriz
Kamarij
Kazerun
Dasht-i-Arzen
Mushid-i-Bardi
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Khairabad
Khisht
Kotal-i-Dokhtar
Mian Kotal
Mazarni
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Jahrabad
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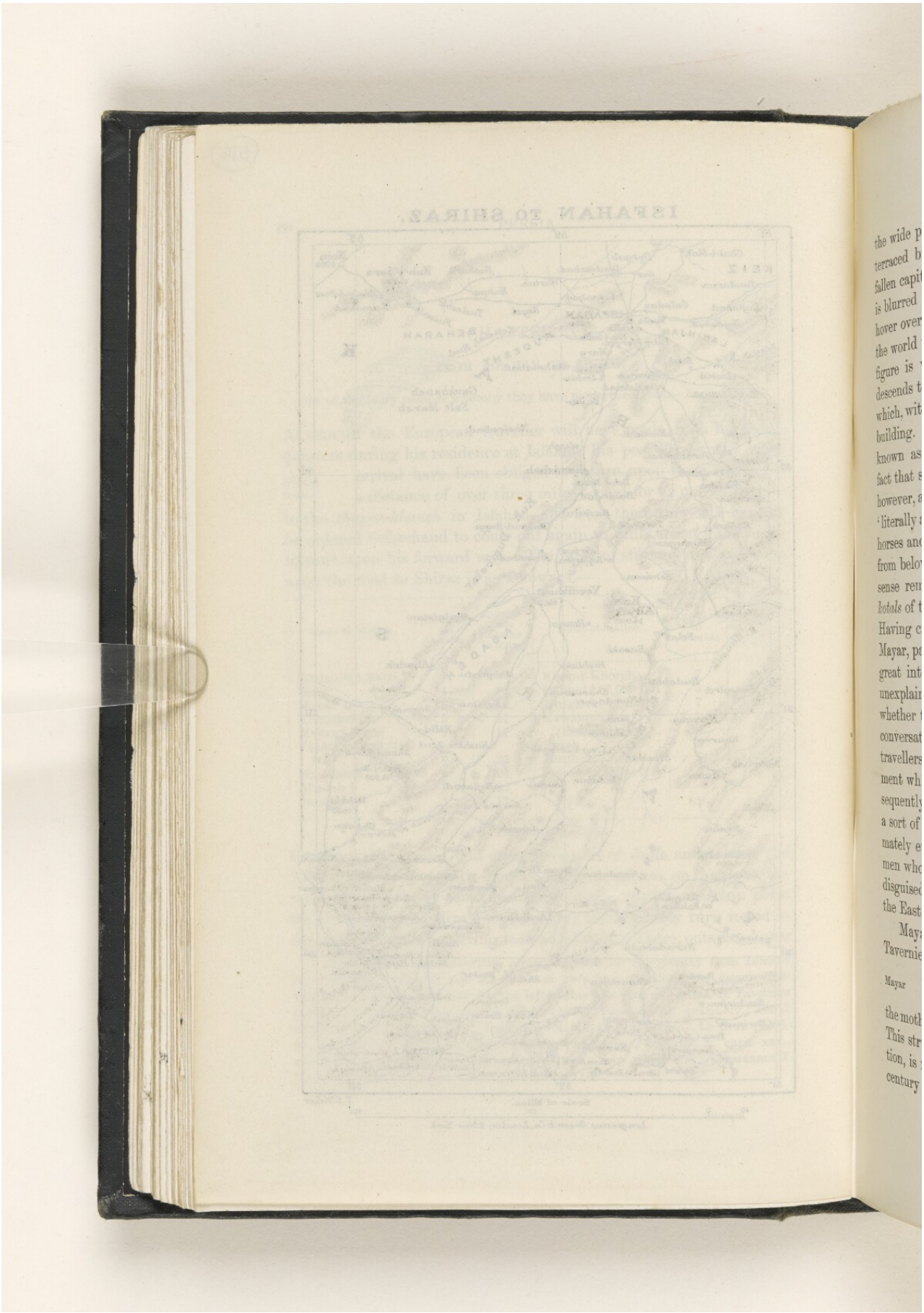
Longmans, Green & Co., London & New York



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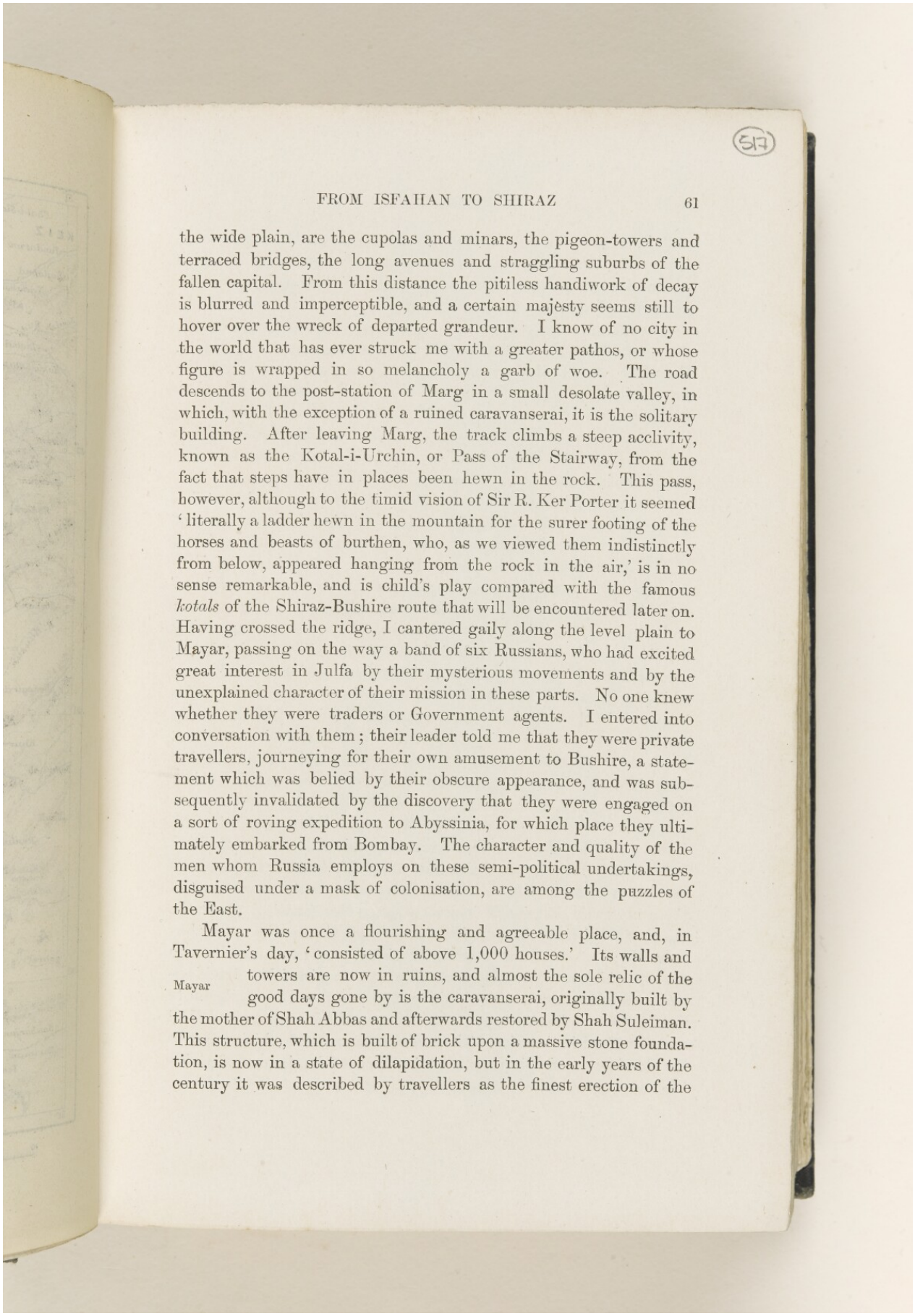
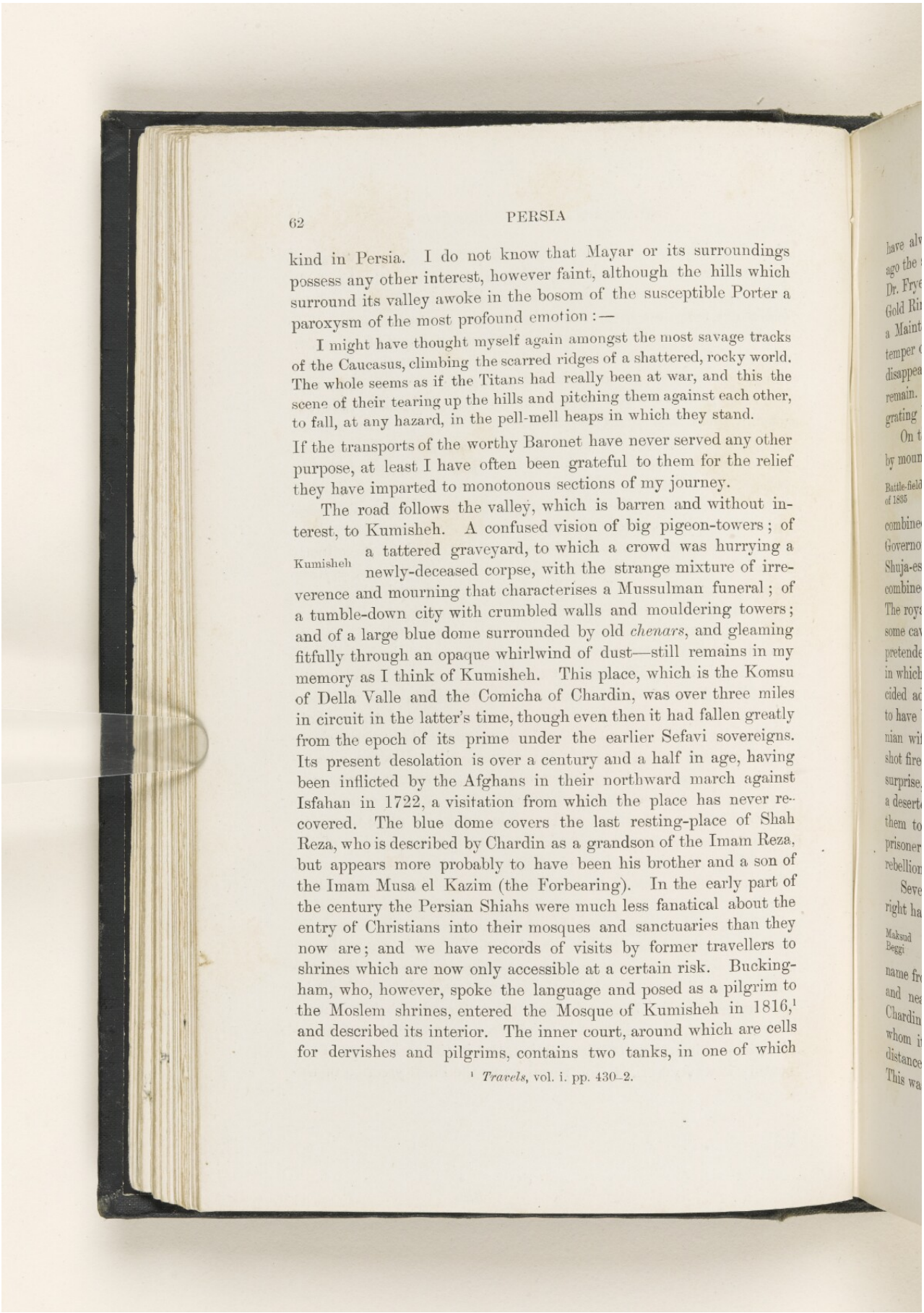




the wide plain, are the cupolas and minars, the pigeon-towers and terraced bridges, the long avenues and straggling suburbs of the fallen capital. From this distance the pitiless handiwork of decay is blurred and imperceptible, and a certain majesty seems still to hover over the wreck of departed grandeur. I know of no city in the world that has ever struck me with a greater pathos, or whose figure is wrapped in so melancholy a garb of woe. The road descends to the post-station of Marg in a small desolate valley, in which, with the exception of a ruined caravanserai, it is the solitary building. After leaving Marg, the track climbs a steep acclivity, known as the Kotal-i-Urchin, or Pass of the Stairway, from the fact that steps have in places been hewn in the rock. This pass, however, although to the timid vision of Sir R. Ker Porter it seemed 'literally a ladder hewn in the mountain for the surer footing of the horses and beasts of burthen, who, as we viewed them indistinctly from below, appeared hanging from the rock in the air,' is in no sense remarkable, and is child's play compared with the famous *kotals* of the Shiraz-Bushire route that will be encountered later on. Having crossed the ridge, I cantered gaily along the level plain to Mayar, passing on the way a band of six Russians, who had excited great interest in Julfa by their mysterious movements and by the unexplained character of their mission in these parts. No one knew whether they were traders or Government agents. I entered into conversation with them; their leader told me that they were private travellers, journeying for their own amusement to Bushire, a statement which was belied by their obscure appearance, and was subsequently invalidated by the discovery that they were engaged on a sort of roving expedition to Abyssinia, for which place they ultimately embarked from Bombay. The character and quality of the men whom Russia employs on these semi-political undertakings, disguised under a mask of colonisation, are among the puzzles of the East.

Mayar

Mayar was once a flourishing and agreeable place, and, in Tavernier's day, 'consisted of above 1,000 houses.' Its walls and towers are now in ruins, and almost the sole relic of the good days gone by is the caravanserai, originally built by the mother of Shah Abbas and afterwards restored by Shah Suleiman. This structure, which is built of brick upon a massive stone foundation, is now in a state of dilapidation, but in the early years of the century it was described by travellers as the finest erection of the





kind in Persia. I do not know that Mayar or its surroundings possess any other interest, however faint, although the hills which surround its valley awoke in the bosom of the susceptible Porter a paroxysm of the most profound emotion :—

I might have thought myself again amongst the most savage tracks of the Caucasus, climbing the scarred ridges of a shattered, rocky world. The whole seems as if the Titans had really been at war, and this the scene of their tearing up the hills and pitching them against each other, to fall, at any hazard, in the pell-mell heaps in which they stand.

If the transports of the worthy Baronet have never served any other purpose, at least I have often been grateful to them for the relief they have imparted to monotonous sections of my journey.

The road follows the valley, which is barren and without interest, to Kumisheh. A confused vision of big pigeon-towers ; of

Kumisheh

a tattered graveyard, to which a crowd was hurrying a newly-deceased corpse, with the strange mixture of irreverence and mourning that characterises a Mussulman funeral ; of a tumble-down city with crumbled walls and mouldering towers ; and of a large blue dome surrounded by old *chenars*, and gleaming fitfully through an opaque whirlwind of dust—still remains in my memory as I think of Kumisheh. This place, which is the Komsu of Della Valle and the Comicha of Chardin, was over three miles in circuit in the latter's time, though even then it had fallen greatly from the epoch of its prime under the earlier Sefavi sovereigns. Its present desolation is over a century and a half in age, having been inflicted by the Afghans in their northward march against Isfahan in 1722, a visitation from which the place has never recovered. The blue dome covers the last resting-place of Shah Reza, who is described by Chardin as a grandson of the Imam Reza, but appears more probably to have been his brother and a son of the Imam Musa el Kazim (the Forbearing). In the early part of the century the Persian Shiahs were much less fanatical about the entry of Christians into their mosques and sanctuaries than they now are ; and we have records of visits by former travellers to shrines which are now only accessible at a certain risk. Buckingham, who, however, spoke the language and posed as a pilgrim to the Moslem shrines, entered the Mosque of Kumisheh in 1816,[1] and described its interior. The inner court, around which are cells for dervishes and pilgrims, contains two tanks, in one of which

[1] *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 430–2.

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have always been kept a number of sacred fish. Two centuries ago the sanctity of these creatures was indicated, as Chardin and Dr. Fryer acquaint us, by 'their Noses and Finns being hung with Gold Rings; besides these here were Ducks devoted to as foppish a Maintenance.' The declining fervour or the more practical temper of modern times may be variously held accountable for the disappearance of these evidences of distinction, but the fish still remain. The tomb of the saint reposes behind a brass trellis or grating beneath the blue-tiled dome.

On the further side of Kumisheh extends a level plain, fringed by mountains on the left or eastern side, which was the scene of a battle fought in 1835 between the army of Mohammed Shah, commanded by Sir H. Lindsay-Bethune, and the combined forces of two of his uncles, the Firman Firma (previously Governor-General of Fars) and his brother, Hasan Ali Mirza (the Shuja-es-Sultaneh), who, upon the death of old Fath Ali Shah, combined to dispute the succession of their nephew to the throne. The royal forces consisted only of two regiments of regular infantry, some cavalry, and twenty guns—less than 4,000 men in all. The pretenders had a much larger army, but were deficient in artillery, in which Lindsay (or Linji, as the Persians called him) had a decided advantage. A mist separated the two forces, who are said to have been unaware of each other's propinquity until the Armenian wife of Colonel Shee, serving in the Shah's army, heard a shot fired in the opposite camp. Bethune then took the enemy by surprise, and aided by his guns, which battered down the walls of a deserted village in which they had stationed themselves, soon put them to flight. Marching rapidly upon Shiraz, he there took prisoner the two claimants and sent them captive to Teheran. The rebellion was thus crushed at the outset.

Battle-field of 1835

Several villages are passed in the hollow of the plain on the right hand, and eventually the hamlet of Kishara is reached lying in a depression at a little distance off the road. Here is a village and the *chapar-khaneh*, but the stage takes its name from the walled village of Maksud Beggi (a little further on and nearer the eastern valley-wall), which itself, according to Chardin, was named from 'the late Lord Steward of Persia,' to whom it owed its elevation. On the next stage to Yezdikhast, a distance of twenty-five miles, I only passed one place on the way. This was Aminabad, the Abode of Trust or Safety, originally erected

Maksud Beggi

as a fortified redoubt against the Bakhtiari freebooters by Daud Khan, brother of Imam Kuli Khan, the celebrated Governor-General of Fars under Shah Abbas. For two centuries the locality continued to attract the hostile notice of those formidable tribesmen, and in about 1815 the whole place was rebuilt for the protection of wayfarers, the walled enclosure including a mud fort, a caravanserai, a mosque, and baths. The members of the early British Embassies to Persia and travellers in the first half of the present century were always instructed to keep a very sharp look-out in the belt of country stretching southwards from this neighbourhood to Dehbid; and in their pages Bakhtiari is a designation almost interchangeable with the name of robber. The nomads are now kept in better order, and Aminabad is no longer a necessary haven of security. Nevertheless, there are but few signs of life or habitation on this part of the southward track, so effectually have the risks and exactions arising from contiguity to the main road driven away a sedentary population. Neither on the road from Isfahan to the Gulf did I observe many signs of through traffic. Caravans of mules and camels are passed, but there is no general stream of wayfarers nor any migration of families similar to those so frequently encountered on the Meshed-Teheran road. If the present extent of traffic between the capital and the cities of Isfahan and Shiraz is of at all a fixed or normal description there would be some difficulty in filling a single railway train *per diem* between those centres. On the plains hereabouts grows the wild plant from which the gum ammoniac, or *ushak*, is derived, and which is more or less common in the hilly country from Kerman to Kermanshah.

A little beyond Aminabad, the administrative frontier between Irak-Ajemi and Fars is crossed; and we enter upon the province

Fars

which, both in name, in history, and in population, has the best right to be regarded as Persia Proper, and as the central hearthstone of Iran. Fars, or Farsistan, is the same word as the Greek Persis; and, originally the title of a section only of the empire of Iran, has begotten the name which Europeans have, from remote times, applied to the whole. In this province were the capitals of the Achæmenian kings, Pasargadæ, Persepolis, Istakhr; here the Sassanian monarchs, whilst they favoured a more western capital, frequently resided, and have left, in close proximity to the palaces and tombs of their predecessors, the sculptured records of their own majestic rule;

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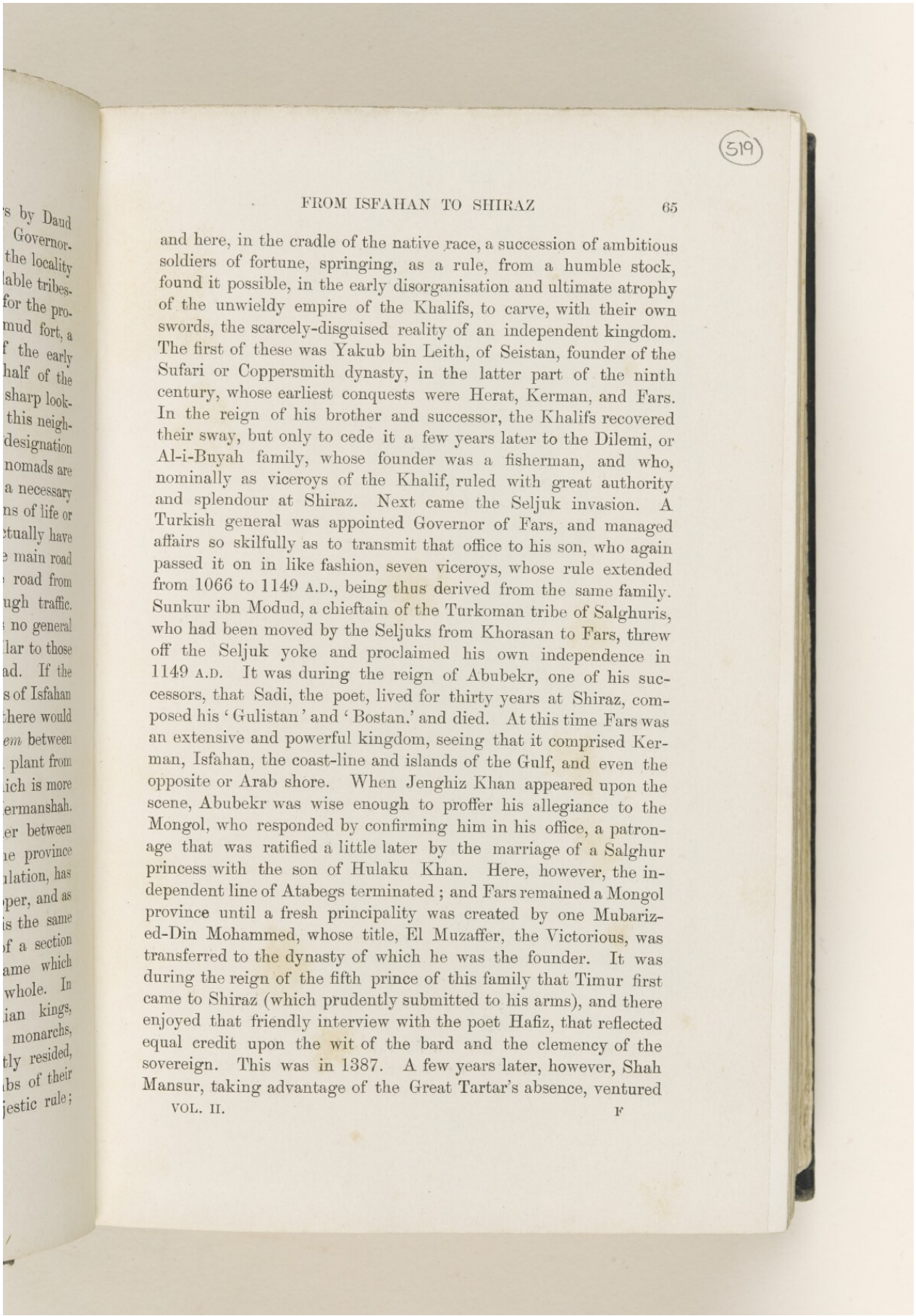



and here, in the cradle of the native race, a succession of ambitious soldiers of fortune, springing, as a rule, from a humble stock, found it possible, in the early disorganisation and ultimate atrophy of the unwieldy empire of the Khalifs, to carve, with their own swords, the scarcely-disguised reality of an independent kingdom. The first of these was Yakub bin Leith, of Seistan, founder of the Sufari or Coppersmith dynasty, in the latter part of the ninth century, whose earliest conquests were Herat, Kerman, and Fars. In the reign of his brother and successor, the Khalifs recovered their sway, but only to cede it a few years later to the Dilemi, or Al-i-Buyah family, whose founder was a fisherman, and who, nominally as viceroys of the Khalif, ruled with great authority and splendour at Shiraz. Next came the Seljuk invasion. A Turkish general was appointed Governor of Fars, and managed affairs so skilfully as to transmit that office to his son, who again passed it on in like fashion, seven viceroys, whose rule extended from 1066 to 1149 A.D., being thus derived from the same family. Sunkur ibn Modud, a chieftain of the Turkoman tribe of Salghuris, who had been moved by the Seljuks from Khorasan to Fars, threw off the Seljuk yoke and proclaimed his own independence in 1149 A.D. It was during the reign of Abubekr, one of his successors, that Sadi, the poet, lived for thirty years at Shiraz, composed his 'Gulistan' and 'Bostan.' and died. At this time Fars was an extensive and powerful kingdom, seeing that it comprised Kerman, Isfahan, the coast-line and islands of the Gulf, and even the opposite or Arab shore. When Jenghiz Khan appeared upon the scene, Abubekr was wise enough to proffer his allegiance to the Mongol, who responded by confirming him in his office, a patronage that was ratified a little later by the marriage of a Salghur princess with the son of Hulaku Khan. Here, however, the independent line of Atabegs terminated; and Fars remained a Mongol province until a fresh principality was created by one Mubariz-ed-Din Mohammed, whose title, El Muzaffer, the Victorious, was transferred to the dynasty of which he was the founder. It was during the reign of the fifth prince of this family that Timur first came to Shiraz (which prudently submitted to his arms), and there enjoyed that friendly interview with the poet Hafiz, that reflected equal credit upon the wit of the bard and the clemency of the sovereign. This was in 1387. A few years later, however, Shah Mansur, taking advantage of the Great Tartar's absence, ventured



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upon rebellion. Timur knew no mercy. The Persian army was routed, Mansur was slain, and all the princes of his house were put to death. After the break-up of the empire of the conqueror, Fars fell successively into the hands of the Turkoman Black Sheep and White Sheep Dynasties; from whom it passed with the rest of Persia under the sway of Shah Ismail, the founder of the Sefavi royal line; since which time it has remained an appanage of the Persian crown. Few territories have ever succeeded in retaining for so long a period, namely six centuries, the almost continuous reality of an *imperium in imperio*; an achievement largely due to the mountainous barriers by which it is on all sides defended.

In every book upon Persia that I had studied, I had read of Yezdikhast (explained by the old writers as a Pehlevi word, signifying 'God willed it') as a village perched upon a remarkable rock in the centre of a deep valley. Great, therefore, was my surprise, as I drew near the end of my stage, to see what looked like a low line of houses, just emerging above the level of the plain. This, I thought, could never be Yezdikhast; and I must have alighted once more upon the elastic *farsakh* of Khorasan. It was not till I was within 200 yards of the place that I realised my mistake, or that the exact nature of the phenomenon became visible. Yezdikhast is, truly enough, built on the top of a remarkable rock, and this rock does stand in the middle of a deep valley; but the latter, so far from being a valley in the ordinary application of the term, is a deep gash or trench cut down to a depth of over 100 feet, without the slightest warning, in the middle of the plain, the edge being as clearly defined as Shakspeare's Cliff at Dover. One is almost on the brink of the gully before one is aware of its existence. At the bottom flows a swift and dirty stream towards the east; and upon the far side the plain resumes its normal level at the top of the fissure, as though nothing had occurred to break its even expanse. Fraser said the trench was 200 yards in width, Binning half mile. The former is much nearer the mark, but is somewhat below it. This extraordinary trench has exactly the appearance of the dried-up bed of a great river; and there is a tradition, probably founded on fact, that it was once so filled, and was navigable by boats. Fraser said that a road to Yezd lies for three days in the hollow; while Chardin declared that the latter extended for twenty leagues, seven to the east, and thirteen to the west of Yezdikhast. But I

Yezdikhast

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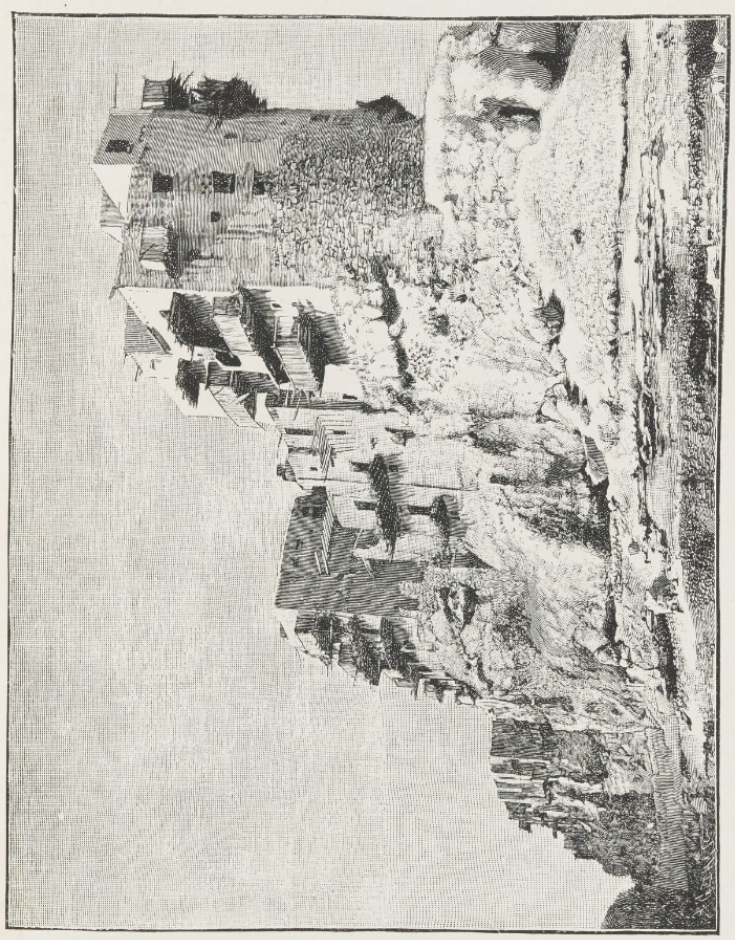
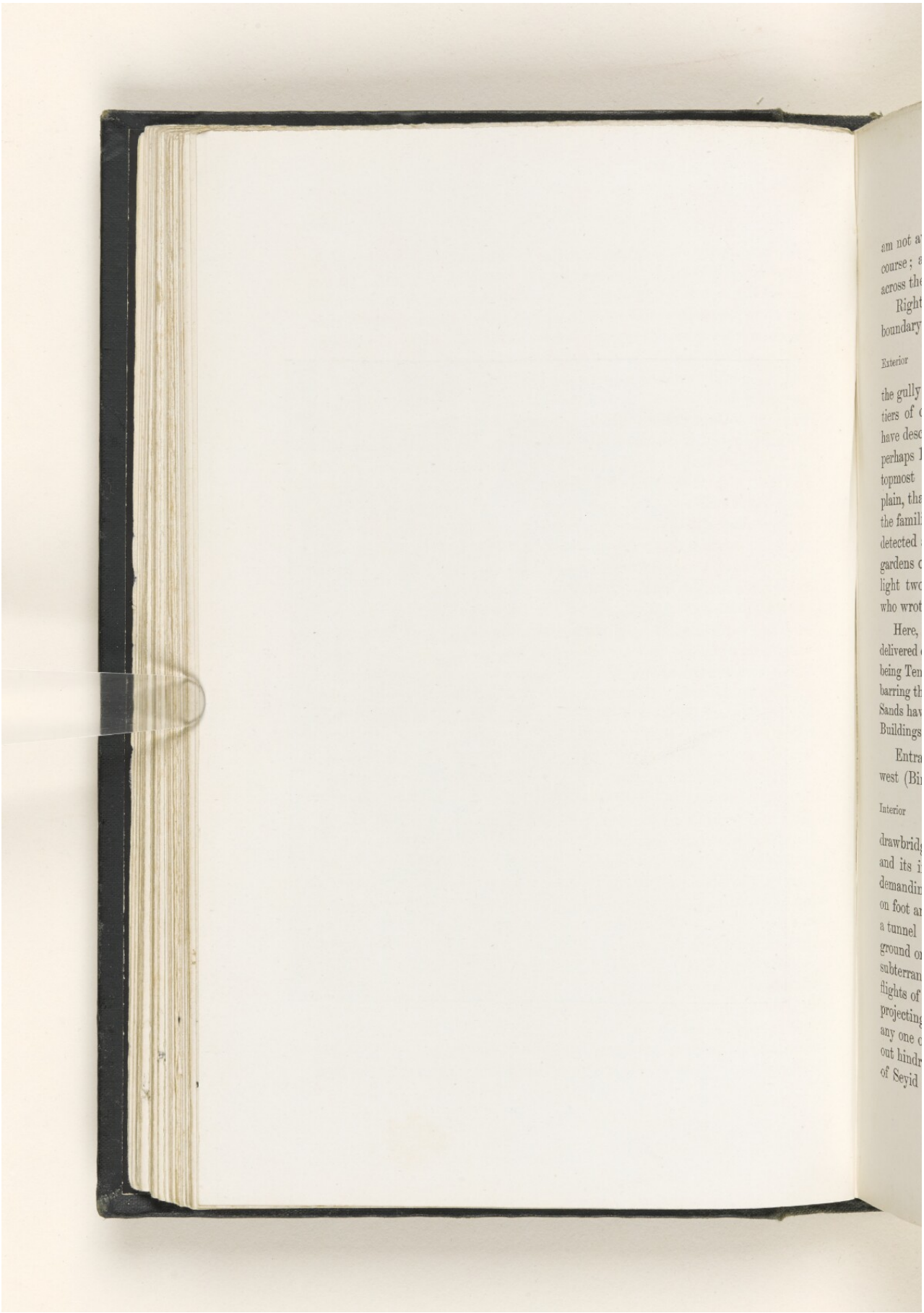


YEZDIKHAST



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am not aware that any traveller has either traced or surveyed its course; and I would recommend to some future explorer a march across the desert, by this track, to Yezd.

Exterior

Right in the middle of this strange ditch, which was the old boundary between Fars and Irak, is a long, narrow hump of rock, from 300 to 400 yards in length, severed from the ravine walls on either side, and standing absolutely isolated in the gully bottom. Upon the summit of this rock have been built tiers of cottages, not unlike the man-roost of Lasgird, which I have described in my ride from Meshed to Teheran, to a height of perhaps 120 to 150 feet from the valley bottom; and it was the topmost storey of these edifices, peering above the level of the plain, that had looked, on my approach, like a Persian village of the familiar squat elevation. I own I should never myself have detected any analogy in the rock of Yezdikhast to the hanging gardens of Babylon; but the matter presented itself in a different light two centuries ago to the vision of the excellent Dr. Fryer, who wrote:—

> Here, at Esduchos, was truly verified what might be Fabulously delivered of Semiramis's Pendulous Gardens and Summer Houses, there being Tenements made over this Moat out of the ancient Fortifications, barring the Persian Incroachments on their Confines, whose Mouldring Sands have left the jetting Rocks the bare supporters of these hanging Buildings.

Interior

Entrance to the village is gained at one spot only, on the south-west (Binning erroneously says north-east) side, by a bridge of wooden rafters thrown across the ravine and leading to a single low doorway pierced in the rock. When this drawbridge is removed or destroyed the place is quite inaccessible, and its inhabitants can laugh at marauding Bakhtiari or soldiers demanding a billet, or tax-collectors unduly extortionate. I entered on foot and made my way down the main street, which is more like a tunnel than a road, inasmuch as the greater part of it is underground or has been so completely built over as to form a veritable subterranean alley. Small vaulted passages diverge from this, and flights of steps lead up to the higher cottages, which have rude projecting balconies with wooden palings on the exterior. From any one of these a fall would mean certain death. I entered without hindrance a decrepit mosque, which is said to be the *imamzadeh* of Seyid Ali, son of the Imam Musa, who is reported to have



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endowed the world with an offspring numbered at 1,000—a performance that must have greatly stirred the envy of Fath Ali Shah, the philoprogenitive Kajar. The rock, with its strange superstructure, narrows towards the eastern end, where, from below, it looks like the bow of some gigantic ship. This was the spot from which Zeki Khan, the inhuman half-brother of Kerim Khan Zend, who had assumed the real sovereignty on the Vekil's death, while marching northwards in 1779 against his nephew Ali Murad Khan, ordered the leading inhabitants of Yezdikhast, one after the other, to be hurled down, because the villagers declined to satisfy his merciless cupidity. Eighteen had already perished. For his nineteenth victim the monster selected a *seyid*, whose wife and daughter he commanded at the same time to be delivered to the soldiery. This sacrilege proved too much for the tolerance even of his own attendants. That night they cut the ropes of his tent, which collapsed upon him. The villagers rushed in and satisfied a legitimate vengeance by stabbing the brute to death.[1]

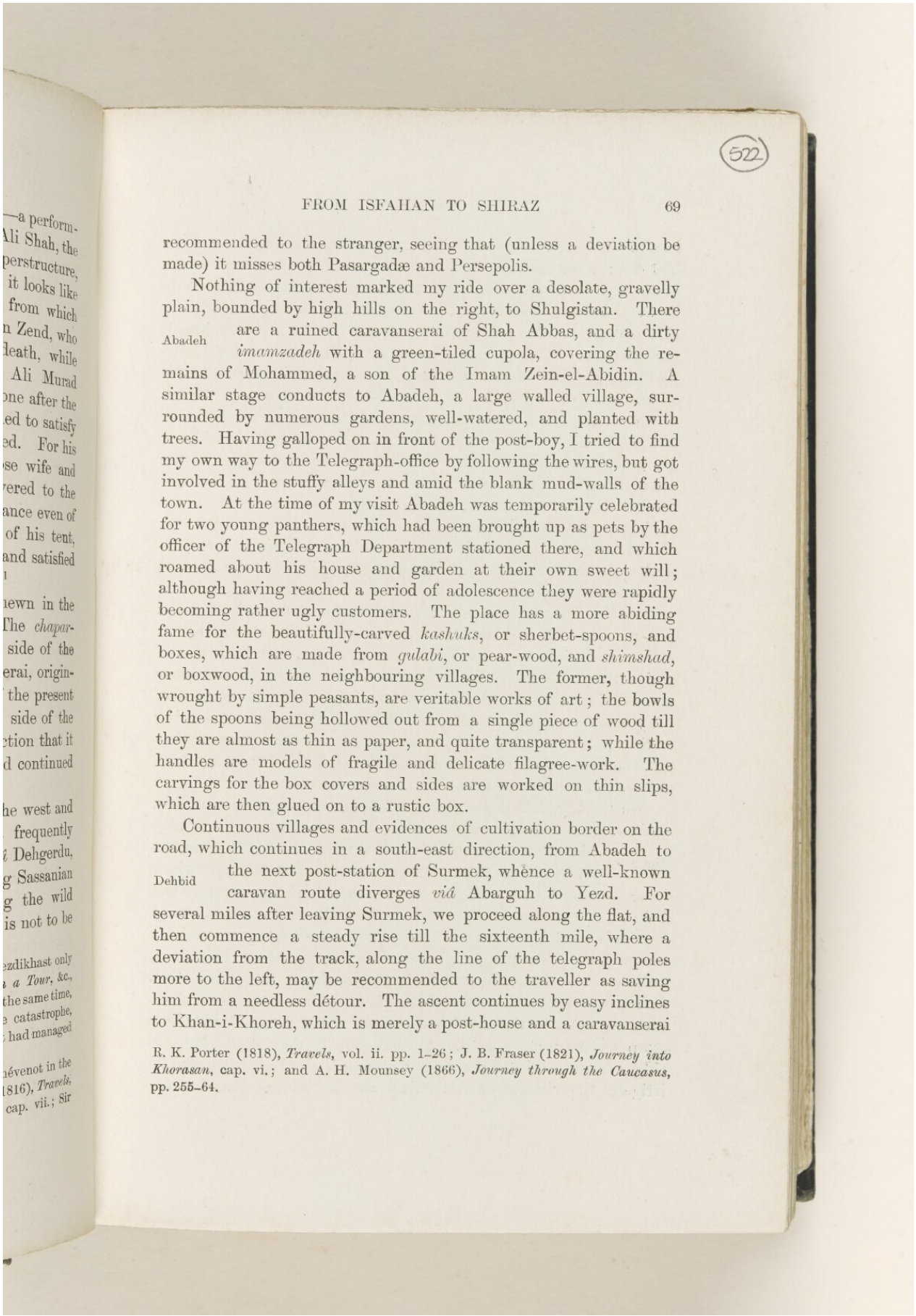
At the base of the cliffs are a number of caves hewn in the rocks, which are used as sheep-folds and stables. The *chapar-khâneh* is in the bottom of the ravine on the near side of the stream below the town. On the far side is a caravanserai, originally of the Sefavi age, but restored in the early years of the present century by a governor of Fars. Climbing the reverse side of the gully, I turned my back on Yezdikhast with the reflection that it was one of the most curious places I had ever seen, and continued my ride towards Shulgistan.

Alternative route

In summer an alternative route, lying more to the west and shorter by twenty-five miles than the postal road, is frequently taken from Yezdikhast to Shiraz. It runs *viâ* Dehgerdu, Asupas, Ujan (where Bahram Gur, the sporting Sassanian monarch, lost his life in a quicksand while pursuing the wild ass, from which he was named), and Mayin.[2] But it is not to be

[1] The story is first related by Ensign Franklin, who was at Yezdikhast only seven years after the tragedy had occurred (*Observations made on a Tour*, &c., pp. 316–22). Sir R. K. Porter, in 1818, and other travellers at about the same time, conversed at Yezdikhast with an old man, the sole survivor of the catastrophe, who, though cruelly maimed by the fall, had not been killed by it, but had managed to crawl away and save his life.

[2] This route was taken and is described by both Tavernier and Thévenot in the seventeenth century, and in more recent times by J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 450–75; Colonel Johnson (1817), *Journey from India*, cap. vii.; Sir



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recommended to the stranger, seeing that (unless a deviation be made) it misses both Pasargadæ and Persepolis.

Nothing of interest marked my ride over a desolate, gravelly plain, bounded by high hills on the right, to Shulgistan. There

Abadeh

are a ruined caravanserai of Shah Abbas, and a dirty *imamzadeh* with a green-tiled cupola, covering the remains of Mohammed, a son of the Imam Zein-el-Abidin. A similar stage conducts to Abadeh, a large walled village, surrounded by numerous gardens, well-watered, and planted with trees. Having galloped on in front of the post-boy, I tried to find my own way to the Telegraph-office by following the wires, but got involved in the stuffy alleys and amid the blank mud-walls of the town. At the time of my visit Abadeh was temporarily celebrated for two young panthers, which had been brought up as pets by the officer of the Telegraph Department stationed there, and which roamed about his house and garden at their own sweet will; although having reached a period of adolescence they were rapidly becoming rather ugly customers. The place has a more abiding fame for the beautifully-carved *kashuks*, or sherbet-spoons, and boxes, which are made from *gulabi*, or pear-wood, and *shimshad*, or boxwood, in the neighbouring villages. The former, though wrought by simple peasants, are veritable works of art; the bowls of the spoons being hollowed out from a single piece of wood till they are almost as thin as paper, and quite transparent; while the handles are models of fragile and delicate filagree-work. The carvings for the box covers and sides are worked on thin slips, which are then glued on to a rustic box.

Continuous villages and evidences of cultivation border on the road, which continues in a south-east direction, from Abadeh to

Dehbid

the next post-station of Surmek, whence a well-known caravan route diverges *viâ* Abarguh to Yezd. For several miles after leaving Surmek, we proceed along the flat, and then commence a steady rise till the sixteenth mile, where a deviation from the track, along the line of the telegraph poles more to the left, may be recommended to the traveller as saving him from a needless détour. The ascent continues by easy inclines to Khan-i-Khoreh, which is merely a post-house and a caravanserai

R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 1–26; J. B. Fraser (1821), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. vi.; and A. H. Mounsey (1866), *Journey through the Caucasus*, pp. 255–64.

in a bleak desert. Already, since leaving Surmek, we have risen 500 feet; but a further climb of 700 is necessary before we arrive at our next halting-place, which is the highest point on the route between Isfahan and Shiraz. Very desolate and unattractive is this belt of country; nor is Dehbid (lit. Village of the Willow), the place of which I speak, situated in its least unattractive portion. In the middle of a bleak upland plain, surrounded by a network of small watercourses, are seen the post-house, telegraph-station, and one or two huts that constitute the sum total of Dehbid. There is no village, and there are no willows. An artificial mound of earth is attributed by MacGregor to the era of the Fire Worshippers in Persia, and in the first half of the present century was called by the natives Gumbaz-i-Bahur, and explained by them as the site of one of the eight shooting-boxes of Bahram Gur. Dehbid is 7,500 feet above the sea, and though healthy enough from its bracing atmosphere, is considered one of the coldest inhabited places in Persia. A few days before my arrival the thermometer had registered twenty degrees of frost; but a change in the weather had fortunately occurred; and I found travelling very pleasant. The rolling hills and upland plains round Dehbid are the haunts of the Kashkais and other nomad tribes of Fars, who pass to and fro, at regular seasons of the year, driving their flocks to the highlands in the spring, grazing as they go, exchanging milk for bread, and thieving wherever they get the chance. I shall have something more to say about them at the close of this chapter.

On leaving Dehbid the track continues to wind over the hills, until, at about the fourteenth mile, it crosses a stream by a very high-backed bridge of five arches, built by a recent Governor of Fars. Close to this is the large ruined caravanserai of Khaneh Kurgan, originally built by Kerim Khan Vekil. The stream is the upper part of the Polvar River, which from this point is almost continually with us, watering successively the plains of Murghab, Hajiabad, and Mervdasht or Persepolis, until it flows into the Kur or Bund-Amir, at the Pul-i-Khan. Following the valley down for a short distance the track then turns abruptly to the right, and climbs a big range of hills by a steep and very stony path. A succession of desolate valleys and ridges follow, until the source of a stream is reached that presently irrigates the villages of Kadarabad and Murghab. Gushing out

Murghab

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in great abundance from the hillside it races down the slope, for all the world just like an English trout-stream. At the bottom of the descent, the village of Murghab is seen, clustered against the hillside in an open valley. The distance from Dehbid is reckoned as seven *farsakhs*, but is probably a little more, or about twenty-nine miles. It took me exactly four hours to accomplish, cantering whenever there was fifty yards of possible ground. At Murghab the stream was peopled by a number of wild fowl. I saw several wild duck, a number of snipe, which were quite tame, and a great many plovers. Riding down the valley by the side of a creek infested with these and other water-fowl, I crossed a second small valley containing the tiny hamlet of Deh-i-Nau, and passed over a slight acclivity into a third, which contains the ruins of the famous capital of Cyrus. Here I must pause to deal with some fulness with a question that has throughout this century been a disputed point of archæology and history, and which, if it cannot be definitely solved by travellers who have been to the spot, can still less be decided *ex cathedrâ* by professors or students sitting, with their Arrian and Strabo, or with translations of the cuneiform inscriptions open before them, at home. I have endeavoured to master both sides of the controversy; and the result at which I arrive, even if it carries conviction to the mind of any reader, is advanced with no dogmatism.

Ruins of Pasargadæ. 1. Platform

The method that I propose to adopt will be first to describe the nature of the remains still surviving in the valley of the Polvar, and, secondly, to state the arguments that have been, or can be, advanced for or against their identification with the ancient Pasargadæ. The ruins fall into six separate groups, the site and relative positions of which have been much confused by writers who have not been to the spot.[1]

[1] The names of the scholars who have discussed the question without ocular knowledge will be given presently. The travellers who have visited and described the remains at Murghab are as follows: J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, p. 144, (1811) *Second Journey*, p. 117; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. cap. xii. and App. xiii.; Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. i. p. 485 *et seq.*; C. J. Rich (1821), *Journey to Persepolis*, p. 240; Ch. Texier (1840), *L'Arménie*, &c., vol. ii.; Baron de Bode (1841), *Travels*, vol. i. p. 71 *et seq.*; E. Flandin and P. Coste (1841), *Perse Ancienne*, Text, pp. 156–63, vol. iv. pls. 194–203; R. B. Binning (1851), *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. cap. xxiii.; M. Dieulafoy (1881), *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, part i. Ker Porter and Flandin both give useful maps of the ruins. For their present condition, *vide* the photographs in Stolze's *Persepolis*, and in Dieulafoy. That a comparative idea may be formed of their state at different periods,

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The first of these that are encountered by a traveller coming from the north are the remains of a great terrace or platform, built out from the summit of a hill on the left-hand side of the road, at about 300 yards distance. This is known as the Takht-i-Suleiman, or Throne of Solomon, that potentate being the Persian's synonym for any great unknown monarch of the past.[2] The terrace consists of a parallelogram, two of the sides of which have recessed centres and projecting wings, their dimensions being as follows: left wing 72 feet long, retiring angle 54 feet, central recess 168 feet, corresponding returning angle 54 feet, right wing 48 feet, or about 290 feet in total length. The length of the main front, facing towards the north-west, is about the same. Its height is 38½ feet, and is composed of fourteen layers of stone. The whole is built of great blocks of a whitish stone resembling marble, the outer surface of which is rusticated—i.e. chiselled in low relief—at a slight distance from the edge, exactly like the great blocks that are said to have formed part of the substructure of the Temple at Jerusalem, and that are kissed by the Jews in the Friday observance at the 'Place of Wailing.' So beautifully are the stones (of which Rich measured one over fourteen feet in length[1]) adjusted, that no mortar was used between them. At most of the angles of junction deep holes have been wantonly scooped in the blocks, in order to extract the metal clamps (probably of iron and lead) by which they were originally held together. These interstices are now the homes of crowds of pigeons. Many of the blocks contain on their outer surface curious workmen's signs; and it appears probable from the evidence of the upper part of the platform and from the absence of any staircase, that it was never completed. The outer facing has peeled or been stripped off from much of the surface, and the character of the interior masonry, which is composed of the blue limestone of the mountain, can clearly be seen. It seems to be generally admitted that this platform must have been intended to support

and of the work of the various artists above mentioned, I append a table that may be useful to the student:—

| Subject of Plate | Texier (1840), vol. ii. | Fl. & Coste (1841), vol. iv. | Stolze (1878), vol. ii. | Dieulafoy (1881), Part I. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Takht-i-Suleiman | — | 201–2 | 136 | 3, 4 |
| Zindan, or Tomb | 85 | 200 | 135 | 5 |
| General remains | — | 197 | 131 | 12–14 |
| Inscriptions | — | 199 | 133, 134 | — |
| Bas-reliefs | — | — | 137 | — |
| Figure of Cyrus | 84 | 198 | 132 | 17 |
| Tomb of Cyrus | 81–3 | 194–6 | 128, 129 | 18–20 |

[1] Flandin said that some of the stones are fifteen to seventeen metres long; but no one else has observed these.

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a palace or hall of audience, similar to those that were raised by the successors of Cyrus at Persepolis.

Descending towards the south on to the level of the plain, the next ruin, at a distance of over 300 yards, is that of the single wall of a four-sided building that has been commonly called the Fire-temple; (Ouseley said that the local designation was Zindan-i-Suleiman or Prison of Solomon). I am not aware that there is the slightest justification for this purely arbitrary nomenclature, beyond the fact that this building appears to have been an exact facsimile of the square tower that stands in front of the royal rock-tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam (*vide* the next chapter) and the interior chamber of which, being blackened by smoke, was hastily conjectured to have been used for the rites of their worship by the Zoroastrians. There is, however, every reason to suppose that neither edifice ever was, or could have been, a fire-temple. The upper chamber in each, entered by a staircase from outside, was an apartment without aperture or outlet except the door. It was roofed over, and had no communication with the roof; nor could the latter have supported a fire-altar, seeing that it was slightly convex in shape. Moreover, the form of the Persian *atesh-gahs*, or fire-altars, still remaining or reproduced in sculptures and on coins, is entirely different. There can be little doubt that both of these towers were sepulchral in character, the means of hauling up the heavy weight of a sarcophagus having even been traced in that of Naksh-i-Rustam; and the analogy to some of the Lycian tombs discovered in Asia Minor, notably that at Telmessus, is so minute as to confirm this belief. We need not, however, rush to the conjectural extreme of M. Dieulafoy in identifying the Murghab tomb as that of Cambyses, the father of Cyrus. The aperture of the doorway that led into the inner chamber gapes in the still surviving wall,[1] and the remains of the staircase are visible below it. The entire structure is 42 ft. 3 in. high, and 23 ft. 3 in. square, and the blocks are of the same material as the Takht-i-Suleiman, held together, not by mortar, but by cramps. They are also pitted with the same incised orifices, probably designed with decorative intent, that are visible in the tower at Naksh-i-Rustam.

2. Not a fire-temple

At about the same distance to the south, the third ruin is visible in the shape of a single tall monolith, or block of chiselled stone, eighteen feet high, one side of which is hollowed in the form of a niche (perhaps in order to receive the crude brick-work of which we may assume the walls of the building to have been composed), while high up on the exterior surface are engraved in four

3. Inscribed pillar

[1] Early in the century parts of all four walls were standing, and as late as 1840 parts of two. The stones are carried off by the natives for housebuilding purposes.

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lines a trilingual inscription, containing the words 'Adam Kurush Khshayathiya Hakhamanishiya,' in the Persian, Susian and Assyrian tongues—i.e. 'I am Cyrus, the King, the Achæmenian.' The upper extremity of this great shaft is curiously mortised in order to receive the beams of the roof that covered the hall of whose walls it formed a portion.

Another 300 yards in a southerly direction conducts us to the fourth collection of remains, which consists of a single circular limestone column, 36 feet high, and 3 ft. 4 in. diameter at the base, destitute of a capital, and standing on a small plinth of black basalt, in the centre of an oblong paved space, the outer walls of which are marked by three hollowed angle-piers, similar to that already described, each bearing on one of its surfaces the same trilingual inscription that proclaims the handiwork of Cyrus. This is one of the few unfluted columns that now remain in Persia,[1] and may with little hesitation be referred to an earlier and less developed architectural style than the fluted pillars of Istakhr and Persepolis. The enclosure further contains remains of the bases of eight columns, and the stumps or bases of former doorways, on which are visible a row of feet, that doubtless once belonged to a processional bas-relief similar to those at Persepolis. The probable character of the building has secured for it from recent writers the name of the Palace of Cyrus.

4. Column and pilasters

At about half the distance to the south-east is the platform that once supported another building or palace, the bases of some of whose columns, in two rows of six each, are still visible; while at the distance of eight yards from one of these stands a squared limestone block, 11 ft. 7 in. high, whose upper surface formerly displayed the same proud assertion of authorship,[2] while below it is sculped in low relief—now defaced and indistinct from ill usage and the lapse of time—the famous winged figure that has been variously taken for the *fravashi* or genius of Cyrus, and for Cyrus himself. The figure is in profile, more than life-size, and faces towards the right. From the head springs the strange symbolical crown that has been found on Egyptian sculptures, and which puzzled travellers have compared to three decanters in a row with balls on the top. It is formed of two rams' horns, surmounted by two *uræi*, which in turn are surmounted by the *hemhem* or crown of Harpocrates. The

5. Alleged figure of Cyrus

[1] Morier in 1809 mentioned the remains of another at Istakhr (*First Journey*, p. 142), but it has since disappeared. The columns of the *peribolos* of the tomb of Cyrus were also unfluted. So are the single column on the cliff-top at Naksh-i-Rustam, and a fragment which I shall mention at Persepolis; and so are the columns on the façades of the royal tombs at the same place.

[2] The drawings of Porter and others reproduce the inscription. The engraved part of the monolith has since been broken off and has disappeared.

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body is clothed in a long closely-fitting fringed garment from the neck to the ankles. The hair and beard are crisply curled, and somewhat resemble the well-known archaic figure at Athens, called the Warrior of Marathon. Two pairs of immense wings spring from the shoulders, the one pair uplifted, the other sweeping to the ground, and the figure carries in its right hand an object which no one has been able to explain, until the fanciful vision of M. Dieulafoy detected in it a statuette surmounted with the Egyptian *pshent* or double crown, and the sacred *uræus*. The majority of writers have seen in this likeness the tutelary genius of Cyrus.[1] Others, relying upon the literal accuracy of the inscription, believe that it is the conqueror himself, adorned with attributes borrowed from the pantheon of the peoples whom he had vanquished. M. Perrot, seeing that Egypt was not subdued by the Persians until the reign of Cambyses, suggests that the pillar was not erected in the lifetime of Cyrus, but after his death and deification, either by Cambyses or by Darius. Mr. Cecil Smith reminds me, in furtherance of the same idea, of the fact that the wife of Cyrus, and mother of Cambyses, was, according to one account, an Egyptian, Nitetis (Herod. iii. 1–3), a name evidently connected with the goddess Nit, or Neith, and the daughter of Apries, who was king of that country. If there be any truth in this story, which Herodotus rejected, but which the Egyptians affirmed, we may find therein a simultaneous explanation of the Egyptian attributes accorded to Cyrus in the bas-relief, and of the invasion of Egypt by his son Cambyses.



BAS RELIEF OF CYRUS AT PASARGADÆ

The sixth ruin, situated considerably to the west, is the most interesting of all; for it is the structure that, according to the theory which I shall sustain, in all probability once held the gold coffin and the corpse of Cyrus. It consists of a small fabric built of great blocks of white limestone, with a pedimented roof, like that of a Greek temple, the whole standing upon the summit

6. Musjid-i-Mader-i-Suleiman

[1] The four-winged genius is a conception directly borrowed from the religion and art of Assyria. So are the fringed robe and the curled hair of the king. *Vide* Babelon's *Manual of Oriental Antiquities* (translated), pp. 92–3. Compare with these the winged cherubim of the Jewish Ark.

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of a pedestal, which consists of seven successive steps or tiers of stone diminishing in size as they approach the summit. The total height from the level of the ground to the top of the roof—which, however, is much worn away—is at present thirty-six feet. This curious edifice, which is called by the natives Kabr or Musjid-i-Mader-i-Suleiman—i.e. the Tomb or the Mosque of the Mother of Solomon—stands in a forlorn and dilapidated enclosure, thickly strewn with the slabs of Mussulman graves. The bases or shattered drums of a number of pillars are still seen embedded in a low mud wall, or standing alone in



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mausoleum and pedestal, is composed of great blocks of white, calcareous stone like marble, as smoothly cut and perfectly laid as those in the preceding fabrics, and like them held together in several places with metal cramps, which have been as ruthlessly dug out and plundered. The lowest terrace is a plinth, elevated only thirteen inches above the ground.[1] The next three courses are much deeper, and are composed of enormous blocks.[2] The three uppermost are shallower.[3] The dimensions of the plinth at the base are 47 ft. 2 in. by 43 ft. 9 in.; those of the topmost tier are 26 ft. by 20 ft.; and upon this stands the tomb, which is 21 ft. long by 17 ft. wide and 18 ft. 2 in. high. A bush has intruded its roots into the crannies of one of the upper terraces on the south-west side, while another has established a lodgment on the roof itself.

weld-
Blunted
uncovered
lower steps

The tomb-chamber

Climbing the terraced steps we are confronted with the mausoleum, which is built of three courses of limestone blocks, the lowest corresponding in depth with the height of the doorway. Above the highest runs a thin projecting cornice, and upon this is superimposed the gabled roof, consisting of two tiers of immense stones, two blocks composing the lower course, and one being laid upon them for the summit. Access is gained to the interior by a low, narrow doorway, 2 ft. 3 in. in width and only 4 ft. 3 in. in height. If M. Dieulafoy is right, the entrance, which is commensurate with the thickness of the surrounding walls, was once closed by two doors opening upon each other, so that both could not be thrown back at the same time—a further device for securing the interior from the sacrilege of prying eyes. Crouching so as to enter, we find ourselves in an empty chamber, the ceiling and walls of which are blackened with smoke. The floor consists of two great slabs, polished quite smooth with age, the larger one being mutilated by great holes, perhaps hacked open with a view to the discovery of what lay below. There are similar mutilations in the walls, and at the far end a string suspended from side to side bears a number of brass, bell-shaped trinkets or offerings. On the right-hand wall is carved an Arabic inscription within an ornamented border, in the form of a *mihrab* or prayer-niche. The dimensions of the cell are: length 10 ft. 5 in., breadth 7 ft. 6 in., height 6 ft. 10 in. I have entered into these particulars with a view to the theory of identification which I shall presently sustain.

[1] In the early part of the century it was all but concealed beneath the surface, whence some travellers have only reported six terraces instead of seven. Some limestone steps are reared against the lower tiers, which Flandin says belong to one of two *atesh-gahs*, or fire-altars, whose remains are to be seen on the banks of a small tributary of the Polvar, to the north-west of the Takht-i-Suleiman (vol. iv. pl. 203).

[2] Their depths are 5 ft. 5 in., 3 ft. 5 in., and 3 ft. 5 in.

[3] Their depth is uniform, 1 ft. 10 in. each.

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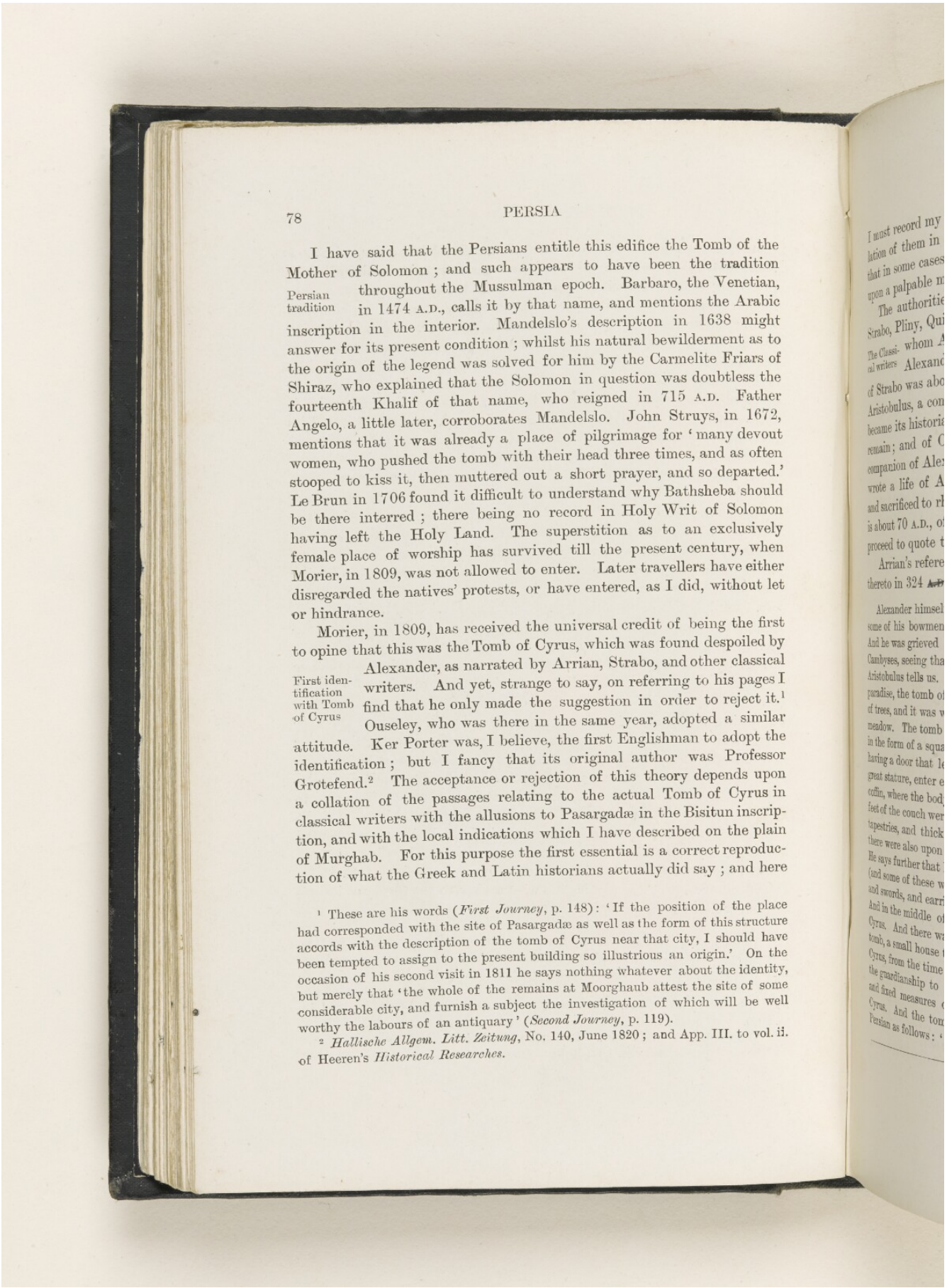



I have said that the Persians entitle this edifice the Tomb of the Mother of Solomon; and such appears to have been the tradition throughout the Mussulman epoch. Barbaro, the Venetian, in 1474 A.D., calls it by that name, and mentions the Arabic inscription in the interior. Mandelslo's description in 1638 might answer for its present condition; whilst his natural bewilderment as to the origin of the legend was solved for him by the Carmelite Friars of Shiraz, who explained that the Solomon in question was doubtless the fourteenth Khalif of that name, who reigned in 715 A.D. Father Angelo, a little later, corroborates Mandelslo. John Struys, in 1672, mentions that it was already a place of pilgrimage for 'many devout women, who pushed the tomb with their head three times, and as often stooped to kiss it, then muttered out a short prayer, and so departed.' Le Brun in 1706 found it difficult to understand why Bathsheba should be there interred; there being no record in Holy Writ of Solomon having left the Holy Land. The superstition as to an exclusively female place of worship has survived till the present century, when Morier, in 1809, was not allowed to enter. Later travellers have either disregarded the natives' protests, or have entered, as I did, without let or hindrance.

Persian tradition

Morier, in 1809, has received the universal credit of being the first to opine that this was the Tomb of Cyrus, which was found despoiled by Alexander, as narrated by Arrian, Strabo, and other classical writers. And yet, strange to say, on referring to his pages I find that he only made the suggestion in order to reject it.[1] Ouseley, who was there in the same year, adopted a similar attitude. Ker Porter was, I believe, the first Englishman to adopt the identification; but I fancy that its original author was Professor Grotefend.[2] The acceptance or rejection of this theory depends upon a collation of the passages relating to the actual Tomb of Cyrus in classical writers with the allusions to Pasargadæ in the Bisitun inscription, and with the local indications which I have described on the plain of Murghab. For this purpose the first essential is a correct reproduction of what the Greek and Latin historians actually did say; and here

First identification with Tomb of Cyrus

[1] These are his words (*First Journey*, p. 148): 'If the position of the place had corresponded with the site of Pasargadæ as well as the form of this structure accords with the description of the tomb of Cyrus near that city, I should have been tempted to assign to the present building so illustrious an origin.' On the occasion of his second visit in 1811 he says nothing whatever about the identity, but merely that 'the whole of the remains at Moorghaub attest the site of some considerable city, and furnish a subject the investigation of which will be well worthy the labours of an antiquary' (*Second Journey*, p. 119).

[2] *Hallische Allgem. Litt. Zeitung*, No. 140, June 1820; and App. III. to vol. ii. of Heeren's *Historical Researches*.

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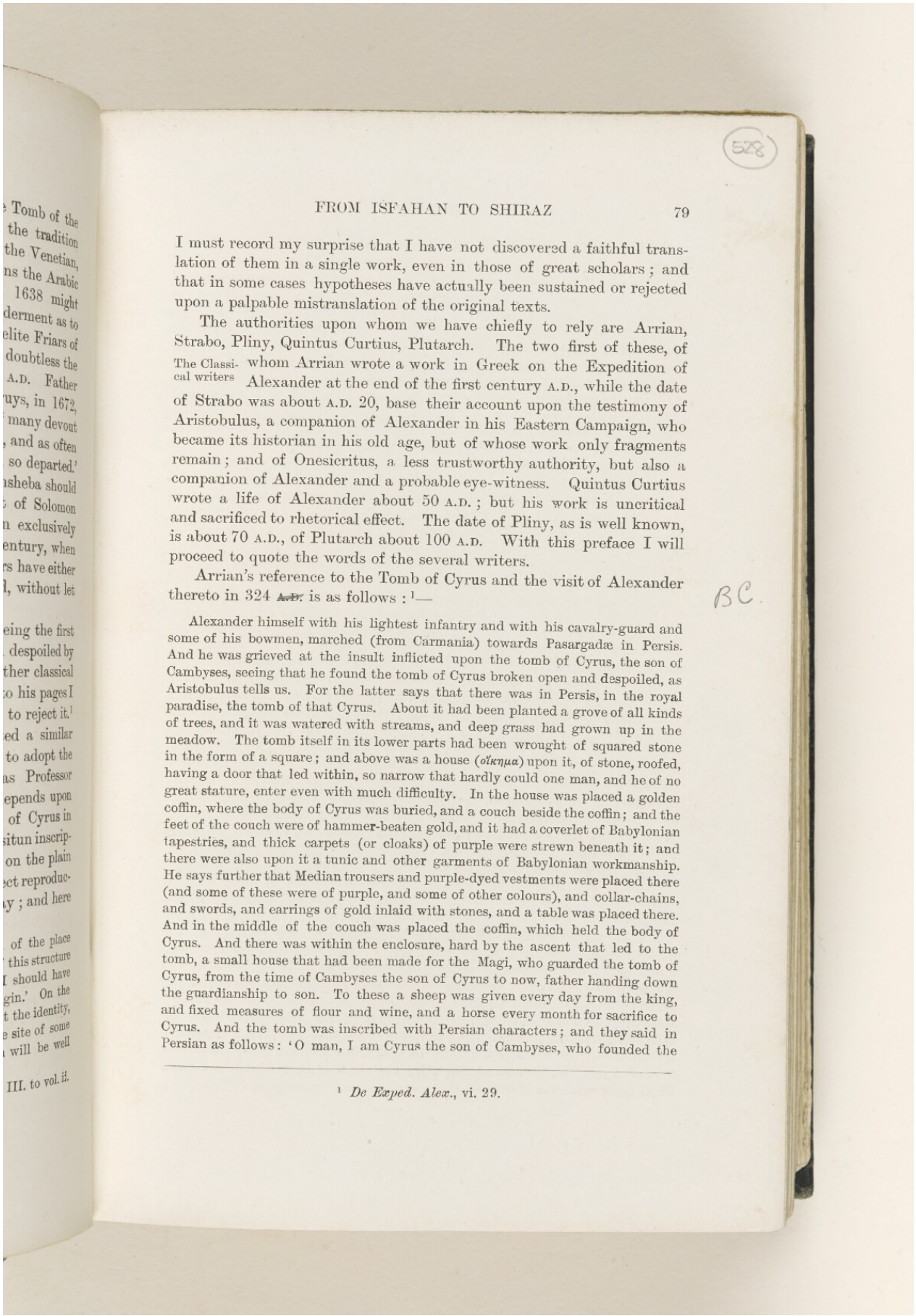

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I must record my surprise that I have not discovered a faithful translation of them in a single work, even in those of great scholars; and that in some cases hypotheses have actually been sustained or rejected upon a palpable mistranslation of the original texts.

The authorities upon whom we have chiefly to rely are Arrian, Strabo, Pliny, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch. The two first of these, of whom Arrian wrote a work in Greek on the Expedition of Alexander at the end of the first century A.D., while the date of Strabo was about A.D. 20, base their account upon the testimony of Aristobulus, a companion of Alexander in his Eastern Campaign, who became its historian in his old age, but of whose work only fragments remain; and of Onesicritus, a less trustworthy authority, but also a companion of Alexander and a probable eye-witness. Quintus Curtius wrote a life of Alexander about 50 A.D.; but his work is uncritical and sacrificed to rhetorical effect. The date of Pliny, as is well known, is about 70 A.D., of Plutarch about 100 A.D. With this preface I will proceed to quote the words of the several writers.

The Classical writers

Arrian's reference to the Tomb of Cyrus and the visit of Alexander thereto in 324 ~~A.D.~~ is as follows:[1]—

BC.

Alexander himself with his lightest infantry and with his cavalry-guard and some of his bowmen, marched (from Carmania) towards Pasargadæ in Persis. And he was grieved at the insult inflicted upon the tomb of Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, seeing that he found the tomb of Cyrus broken open and despoiled, as Aristobulus tells us. For the latter says that there was in Persis, in the royal paradise, the tomb of that Cyrus. About it had been planted a grove of all kinds of trees, and it was watered with streams, and deep grass had grown up in the meadow. The tomb itself in its lower parts had been wrought of squared stone in the form of a square; and above was a house (οἴκημα) upon it, of stone, roofed, having a door that led within, so narrow that hardly could one man, and he of no great stature, enter even with much difficulty. In the house was placed a golden coffin, where the body of Cyrus was buried, and a couch beside the coffin; and the feet of the couch were of hammer-beaten gold, and it had a coverlet of Babylonian tapestries, and thick carpets (or cloaks) of purple were strewn beneath it; and there were also upon it a tunic and other garments of Babylonian workmanship. He says further that Median trousers and purple-dyed vestments were placed there (and some of these were of purple, and some of other colours), and collar-chains, and swords, and earrings of gold inlaid with stones, and a table was placed there. And in the middle of the couch was placed the coffin, which held the body of Cyrus. And there was within the enclosure, hard by the ascent that led to the tomb, a small house that had been made for the Magi, who guarded the tomb of Cyrus, from the time of Cambyses the son of Cyrus to now, father handing down the guardianship to son. To these a sheep was given every day from the king, and fixed measures of flour and wine, and a horse every month for sacrifice to Cyrus. And the tomb was inscribed with Persian characters; and they said in Persian as follows: 'O man, I am Cyrus the son of Cambyses, who founded the

[1] *De Exped. Alex.*, vi. 29.

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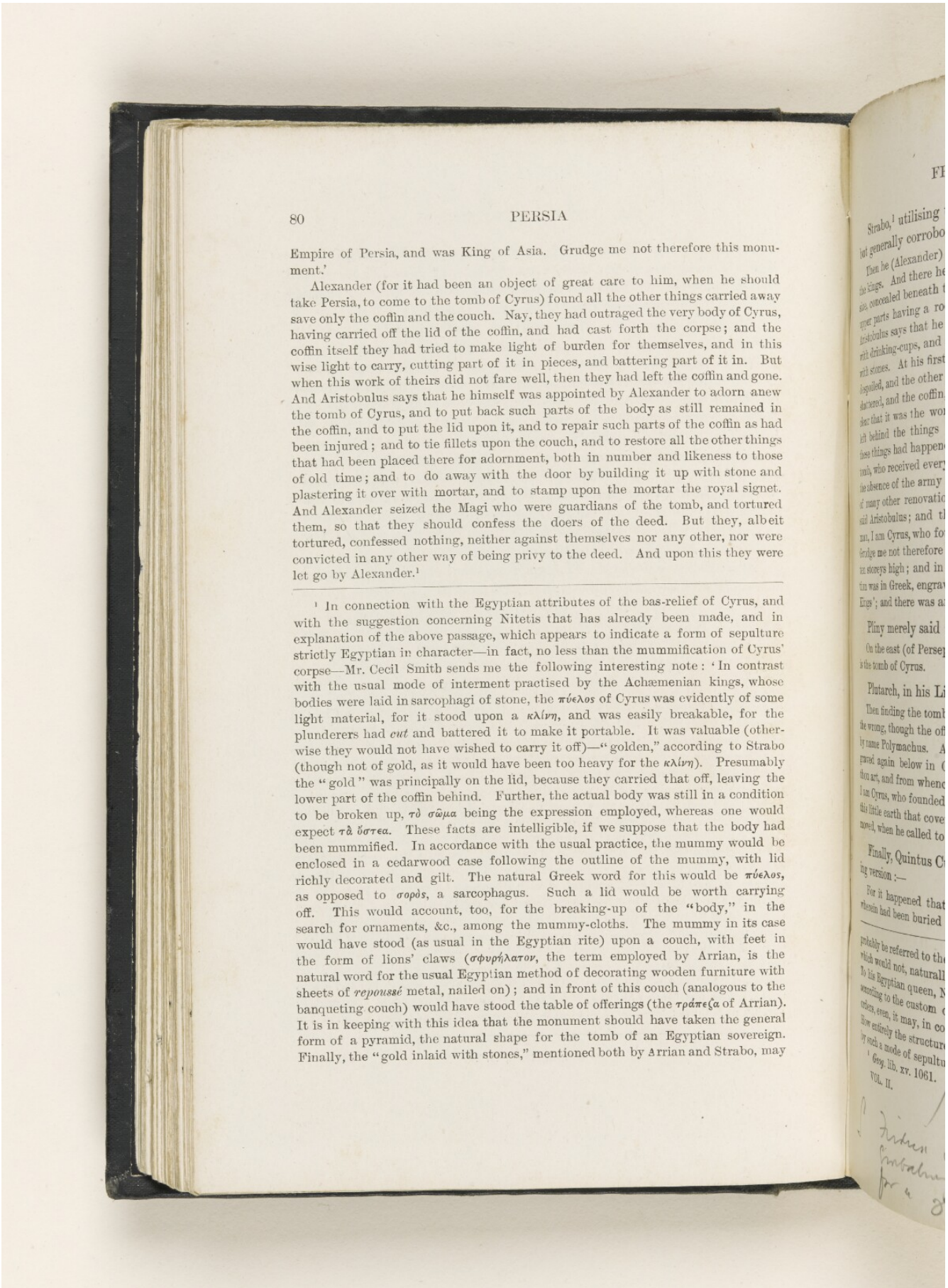



Empire of Persia, and was King of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.'

Alexander (for it had been an object of great care to him, when he should take Persia, to come to the tomb of Cyrus) found all the other things carried away save only the coffin and the couch. Nay, they had outraged the very body of Cyrus, having carried off the lid of the coffin, and had cast forth the corpse; and the coffin itself they had tried to make light of burden for themselves, and in this wise light to carry, cutting part of it in pieces, and battering part of it in. But when this work of theirs did not fare well, then they had left the coffin and gone. And Aristobulus says that he himself was appointed by Alexander to adorn anew the tomb of Cyrus, and to put back such parts of the body as still remained in the coffin, and to put the lid upon it, and to repair such parts of the coffin as had been injured; and to tie fillets upon the couch, and to restore all the other things that had been placed there for adornment, both in number and likeness to those of old time; and to do away with the door by building it up with stone and plastering it over with mortar, and to stamp upon the mortar the royal signet. And Alexander seized the Magi who were guardians of the tomb, and tortured them, so that they should confess the doers of the deed. But they, albeit tortured, confessed nothing, neither against themselves nor any other, nor were convicted in any other way of being privy to the deed. And upon this they were let go by Alexander.[1]

[1] In connection with the Egyptian attributes of the bas-relief of Cyrus, and with the suggestion concerning Nitetis that has already been made, and in explanation of the above passage, which appears to indicate a form of sepulture strictly Egyptian in character—in fact, no less than the mummification of Cyrus' corpse—Mr. Cecil Smith sends me the following interesting note: 'In contrast with the usual mode of interment practised by the Achæmenian kings, whose bodies were laid in sarcophagi of stone, the πύελος of Cyrus was evidently of some light material, for it stood upon a κλίνη, and was easily breakable, for the plunderers had *cut* and battered it to make it portable. It was valuable (otherwise they would not have wished to carry it off)—"golden," according to Strabo (though not of gold, as it would have been too heavy for the κλίνη). Presumably the "gold" was principally on the lid, because they carried that off, leaving the lower part of the coffin behind. Further, the actual body was still in a condition to be broken up, τὸ σῶμα being the expression employed, whereas one would expect τὰ ὀστεα. These facts are intelligible, if we suppose that the body had been mummified. In accordance with the usual practice, the mummy would be enclosed in a cedarwood case following the outline of the mummy, with lid richly decorated and gilt. The natural Greek word for this would be πύελος, as opposed to σορὸς, a sarcophagus. Such a lid would be worth carrying off. This would account, too, for the breaking-up of the "body," in the search for ornaments, &c., among the mummy-cloths. The mummy in its case would have stood (as usual in the Egyptian rite) upon a couch, with feet in the form of lions' claws (σφυρήλατον, the term employed by Arrian, is the natural word for the usual Egyptian method of decorating wooden furniture with sheets of *repoussé* metal, nailed on); and in front of this couch (analogous to the banqueting couch) would have stood the table of offerings (the τράπεζα of Arrian). It is in keeping with this idea that the monument should have taken the general form of a pyramid, the natural shape for the tomb of an Egyptian sovereign. Finally, the "gold inlaid with stones," mentioned both by Arrian and Strabo, may



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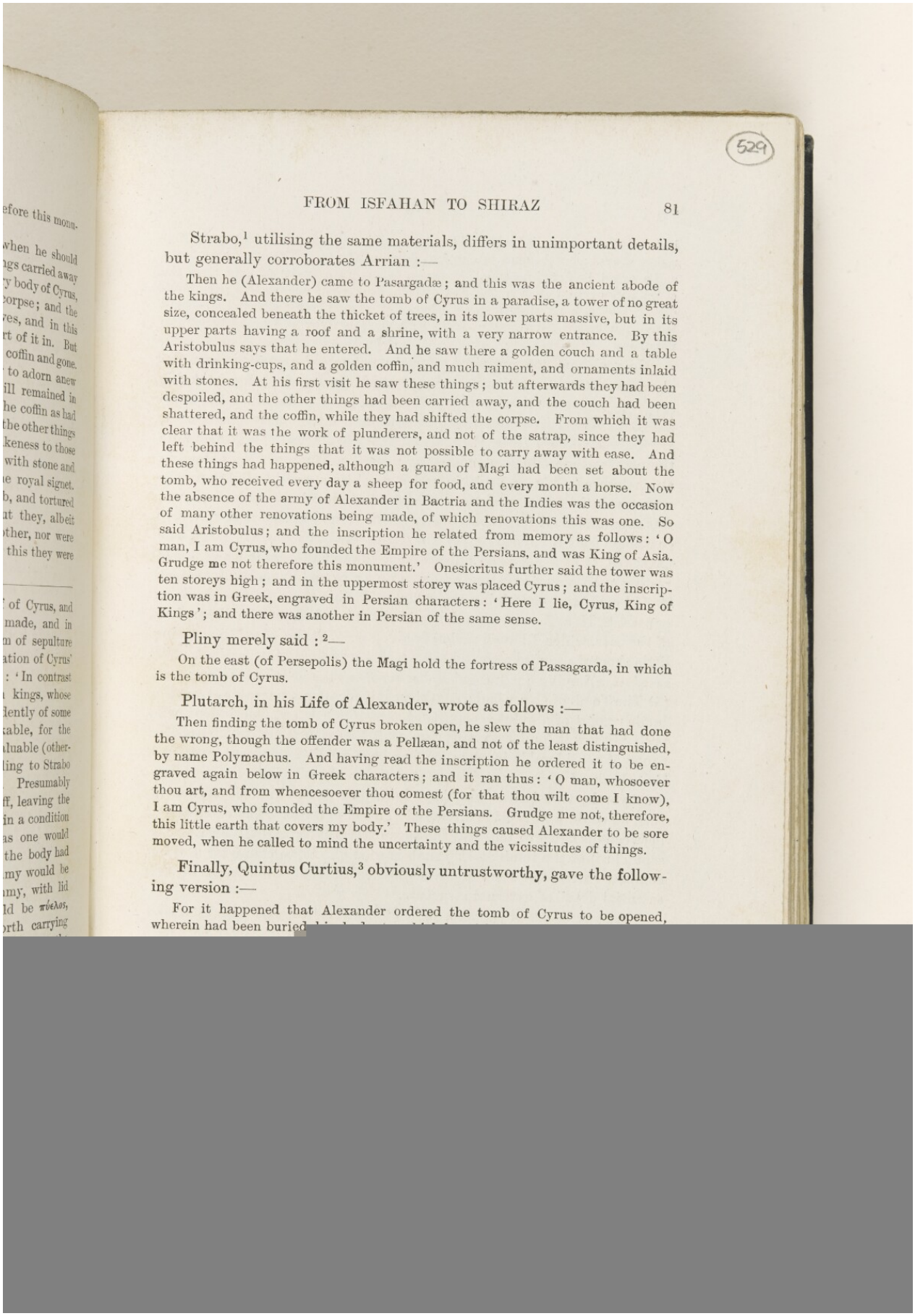

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Strabo,[1] utilising the same materials, differs in unimportant details, but generally corroborates Arrian :—

Then he (Alexander) came to Pasargadæ; and this was the ancient abode of the kings. And there he saw the tomb of Cyrus in a paradise, a tower of no great size, concealed beneath the thicket of trees, in its lower parts massive, but in its upper parts having a roof and a shrine, with a very narrow entrance. By this Aristobulus says that he entered. And he saw there a golden couch and a table with drinking-cups, and a golden coffin, and much raiment, and ornaments inlaid with stones. At his first visit he saw these things; but afterwards they had been despoiled, and the other things had been carried away, and the couch had been shattered, and the coffin, while they had shifted the corpse. From which it was clear that it was the work of plunderers, and not of the satrap, since they had left behind the things that it was not possible to carry away with ease. And these things had happened, although a guard of Magi had been set about the tomb, who received every day a sheep for food, and every month a horse. Now the absence of the army of Alexander in Bactria and the Indies was the occasion of many other renovations being made, of which renovations this was one. So said Aristobulus; and the inscription he related from memory as follows: 'O man, I am Cyrus, who founded the Empire of the Persians, and was King of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.' Onesicritus further said the tower was ten storeys high; and in the uppermost storey was placed Cyrus; and the inscription was in Greek, engraved in Persian characters: 'Here I lie, Cyrus, King of Kings'; and there was another in Persian of the same sense.

Pliny merely said :[2]—

On the east (of Persepolis) the Magi hold the fortress of Passagarda, in which is the tomb of Cyrus.

Plutarch, in his Life of Alexander, wrote as follows :—

Then finding the tomb of Cyrus broken open, he slew the man that had done the wrong, though the offender was a Pellæan, and not of the least distinguished, by name Polymachus. And having read the inscription he ordered it to be engraved again below in Greek characters; and it ran thus: 'O man, whosoever thou art, and from whencesoever thou comest (for that thou wilt come I know), I am Cyrus, who founded the Empire of the Persians. Grudge me not, therefore, this little earth that covers my body.' These things caused Alexander to be sore moved, when he called to mind the uncertainty and the vicissitudes of things.

Finally, Quintus Curtius,[3] obviously untrustworthy, gave the following version :—

For it happened that Alexander ordered the tomb of Cyrus to be opened, wherein had been buried

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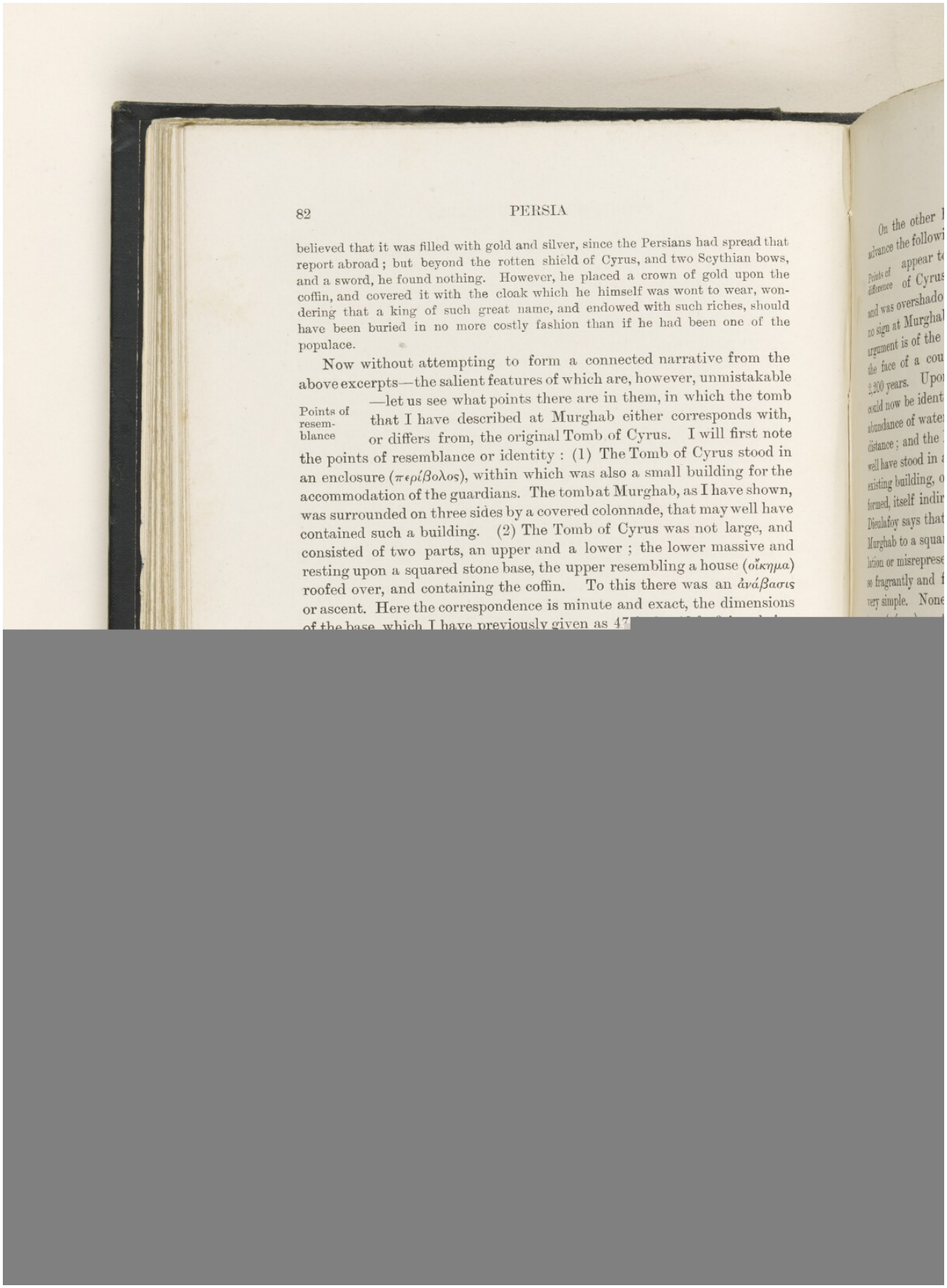



believed that it was filled with gold and silver, since the Persians had spread that report abroad; but beyond the rotten shield of Cyrus, and two Scythian bows, and a sword, he found nothing. However, he placed a crown of gold upon the coffin, and covered it with the cloak which he himself was wont to wear, wondering that a king of such great name, and endowed with such riches, should have been buried in no more costly fashion than if he had been one of the populace.

Now without attempting to form a connected narrative from the above excerpts—the salient features of which are, however, unmistakable —let us see what points there are in them, in which the tomb that I have described at Murghab either corresponds with, or differs from, the original Tomb of Cyrus. I will first note the points of resemblance or identity : (1) The Tomb of Cyrus stood in an enclosure (περίβολος), within which was also a small building for the accommodation of the guardians. The tomb at Murghab, as I have shown, was surrounded on three sides by a covered colonnade, that may well have contained such a building. (2) The Tomb of Cyrus was not large, and consisted of two parts, an upper and a lower ; the lower massive and resting upon a squared stone base, the upper resembling a house (οἴκημα) roofed over, and containing the coffin. To this there was an ἀνάβασις or ascent. Here the correspondence is minute and exact, the dimensions of the base which I have previously given as 47

Points of resemblance

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On the other hand, the opponents of the theory of identification advance the following arguments, to which I will append such replies as

Points of difference

appear to be both reasonable and adequate. (1) The Tomb of Cyrus was surrounded by gardens and streams and grass, and was overshadowed with the foliage of trees, whereas there is now no sign at Murghab of any of these. I really cannot think that this argument is of the slightest value, looking to the prodigious change in the face of a country that is effected in a single century, let alone 2,200 years. Upon this hypothesis, scarcely a single site in Persia could now be identified with its forerunner in ancient days. There is abundance of water in the valley of Murghab, for the river runs at no distance; and the little sepulchre and its surrounding colonnade may well have stood in a copse of trees. Moreover, the modest height of the existing building, over which a sylvan canopy might easily have been formed, itself indirectly corroborates the assertion of Strabo. (2) M. Dieulafoy says that a Greek would never have compared the edifice at Murghab to a square tower. Here I have to complain of the mistranslation or misrepresentation of the originals, of which no critic has been so fragrantly and frequently guilty as M. Dieulafoy. The answer is very simple. None of the Greeks did so compare it. Strabo called it a tower (*πύργος*)—a term frequently applied in later Greek to isolated buildings—but never said that it was square. Arrian added that it rested upon a squared base, which I have shown to be true.[1] (3) M. Dieulafoy argues that the tomb chamber at Murghab is too small to have contained the objects before enumerated, to which he gratuitously adds, without the slightest excuse, 'une auge dorée propre à se laver ou à se baigner.'[2] This is largely a matter of opinion. I gather myself from the passages before cited that the contents of the mausoleum of Cyrus were a decorated couch upon which the coffin was laid, and a table covered with cups, ornaments, and arms. For these there appears to me to have been ample room. (4) M. Dieulafoy, perpetrating a still further enormity, says that in the tomb at Murghab there is no trace of an inner staircase leading down to the chamber of the guards. Neither, I reply, was there in the Tomb of Cyrus. The staircase is an unpardonable figment of M. Dieulafoy's own imagination.[3] (5) There

[1] His words are: *ἀυτὸν δὲ τὸν τάφον τὰ μὲν κάτω λίθου τετραπέδου ἐς τετράγωνον σχῆμα πεποιῆσθαι.*

[2] This is a second mistranslation. M. Dieulafoy translates *πύελος* in its primary meaning of a bathing-tub, ignoring that Arrian is applying it, in its secondary meaning of a coffin, to the receptacle that held the body of Cyrus. This is clear enough from Arrian's own words: *ἡ πύελος ἡ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Κύρου ἔχουσα.*

[3] To make this point clear, let me cite the words both of M. Dieulafoy and of Arrian. The former says (*L'Art Antique de la Perse*, p. 26): 'On communiquait



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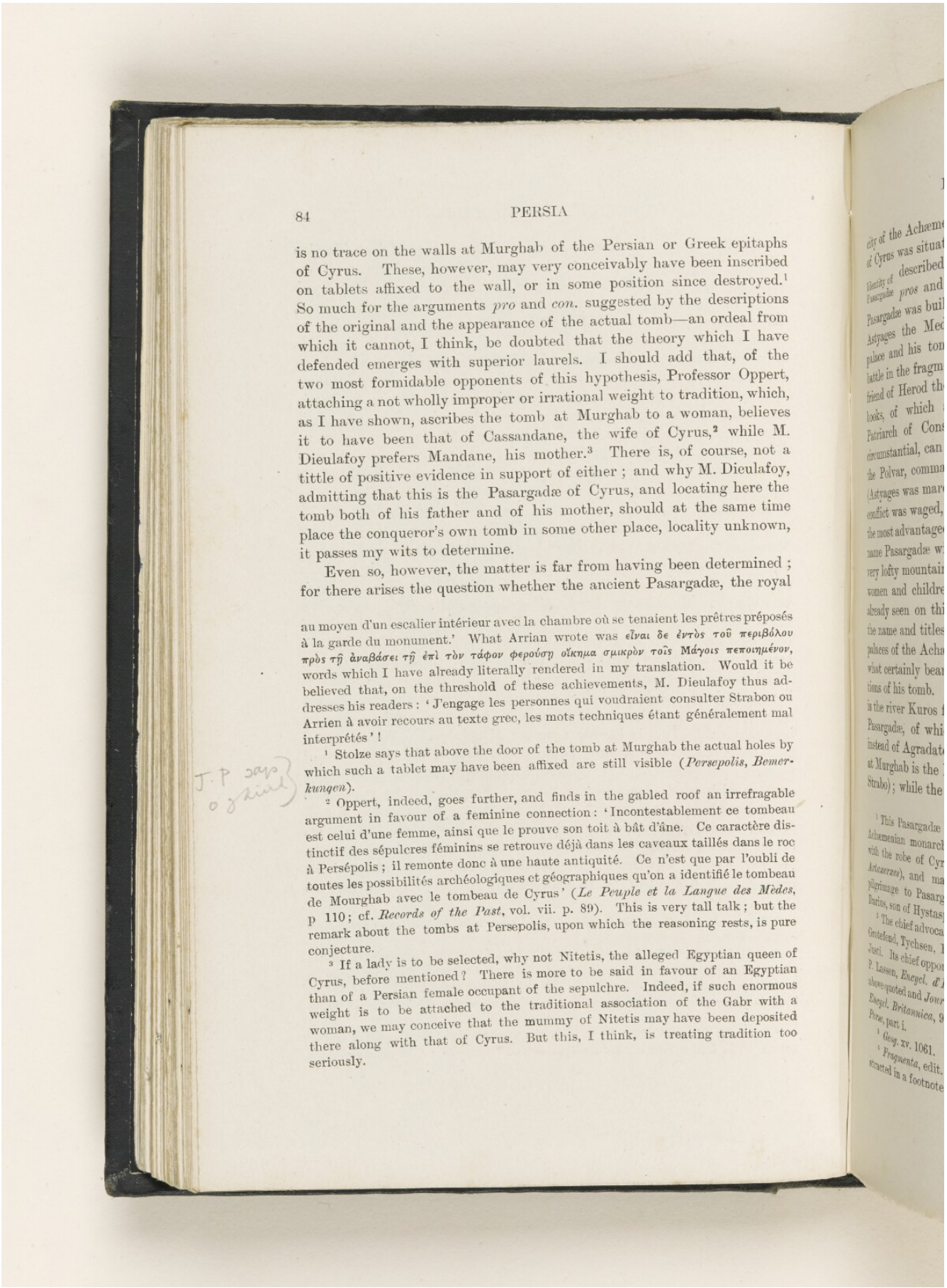



is no trace on the walls at Murghab of the Persian or Greek epitaphs of Cyrus. These, however, may very conceivably have been inscribed on tablets affixed to the wall, or in some position since destroyed.[1] So much for the arguments *pro* and *con.* suggested by the descriptions of the original and the appearance of the actual tomb—an ordeal from which it cannot, I think, be doubted that the theory which I have defended emerges with superior laurels. I should add that, of the two most formidable opponents of this hypothesis, Professor Oppert, attaching a not wholly improper or irrational weight to tradition, which, as I have shown, ascribes the tomb at Murghab to a woman, believes it to have been that of Cassandane, the wife of Cyrus,[2] while M. Dieulafoy prefers Mandane, his mother.[3] There is, of course, not a tittle of positive evidence in support of either; and why M. Dieulafoy, admitting that this is the Pasargadæ of Cyrus, and locating here the tomb both of his father and of his mother, should at the same time place the conqueror's own tomb in some other place, locality unknown, it passes my wits to determine.

Even so, however, the matter is far from having been determined; for there arises the question whether the ancient Pasargadæ, the royal

au moyen d'un escalier intérieur avec la chambre où se tenaient les prêtres préposés à la garde du monument.' What Arrian wrote was εἶναι δε ἐντὸς τοῦ περιβόλου πρὸς τῇ ἀναβάσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον φερούσῃ οἴκημα σμικρὸν τοῖς Μάγοις πεποιημένον, words which I have already literally rendered in my translation. Would it be believed that, on the threshold of these achievements, M. Dieulafoy thus addresses his readers: 'J'engage les personnes qui voudraient consulter Strabon ou Arrien à avoir recours au texte grec, les mots techniques étant généralement mal interprétés'!

[1] Stolze says that above the door of the tomb at Murghab the actual holes by which such a tablet may have been affixed are still visible (*Persepolis, Bemerkungen*).

[2] Oppert, indeed, goes further, and finds in the gabled roof an irrefragable argument in favour of a feminine connection: 'Incontestablement ce tombeau est celui d'une femme, ainsi que le prouve son toit à bât d'âne. Ce caractère distinctif des sépulcres féminins se retrouve déjà dans les caveaux taillés dans le roc à Persépolis; il remonte donc à une haute antiquité. Ce n'est que par l'oubli de toutes les possibilités archéologiques et géographiques qu'on a identifié le tombeau de Mourghab avec le tombeau de Cyrus' (*Le Peuple et la Langue des Mèdes*, p 110; cf. *Records of the Past*, vol. vii. p. 89). This is very tall talk; but the remark about the tombs at Persepolis, upon which the reasoning rests, is pure conjecture.

[3] If a lady is to be selected, why not Nitetis, the alleged Egyptian queen of Cyrus, before mentioned? There is more to be said in favour of an Egyptian than of a Persian female occupant of the sepulchre. Indeed, if such enormous weight is to be attached to the traditional association of the Gabr with a woman, we may conceive that the mummy of Nitetis may have been deposited there along with that of Cyrus. But this, I think, is treating tradition too seriously.

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city of the Achæmenians, in which it is beyond doubt that the tomb of Cyrus was situated,[1] can be identified with the ruins which I have described in the valley of the Polvar. Again let me state the *pros* and *cons*.[2] (1) Anaximenes tells us that the city of Pasargadæ was built by Cyrus on the site of his famous victory over Astyages the Mede, and Strabo that this city contained both his palace and his tomb.[3] Now we happen to have an account of this battle in the fragments of Nicolaus of Damascus, a contemporary and friend of Herod the Great, who composed a Universal History in 144 books, of which some excerpts have been preserved by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople.[4] His narrative, which is here very circumstantial, can scarcely leave a doubt that it was in the valley of the Polvar, commanding the sole entrance from the north into Fars (Astyages was marching from Media and Ecbatana), that the decisive conflict was waged, Cyrus and the Persians having naturally selected the most advantageous field of combat. Moreover, Nicolaus connects the name Pasargadæ with this site, describing it as τὸ ὑψηλότατον ὄρος, the very lofty mountain, overlooking the plain, to which Cyrus sent the women and children for safety during the battle. Finally, we have already seen on this very plain the remains of buildings inscribed with the name and titles of Cyrus, and one or more of which are certainly palaces of the Achæmenian type ; whilst in another edifice I have shown what certainly bears an extraordinary likeness to the authentic descriptions of his tomb. (2) Strabo says of the river at Pasargadæ : 'There is the river Kuros flowing through Persis which is called Koile, round Pasargadæ, of which the king changed the name, calling it Kuros, instead of Agradates.'[5] Now this is not strictly correct ; for the river at Murghab is the Polvar (or Medus of the ancients, also mentioned by Strabo) ; while the Kuros or Kur is another name for the Araxes, or

Identity of Pasargadæ

[1] This Pasargadæ was associated with many religious observances of the Achæmenian monarchs. Here they were consecrated by the Magi, and invested with the robe of Cyrus. Here they partook of the sacred banquet (Plutarch's *Artaxerxes*), and made many offerings. Cyrus, the younger, performed the pilgrimage to Pasargadæ no less than seven times (Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii.). Darius, son of Hystaspes, made the same journey (Ctesias, *Pers.*, cap. xix.).

[2] The chief advocates of the identification have been Rennell, Burnouf, Heeren, Grotefend, Tychsen, Fergusson, C. Ritter, Spiegel, Kiepert, Rawlinson, Menke, Justi. Its chief opponents are Hoeck, *Veteris Persiæ et Mediæ Monumenta*, p. 58 ; P. Lassen, *Encycl. d'Ersch et Grüber*, *sub tit.* Pasargada ; J. Oppert, the works above quoted and *Journal de la Société Asiatique*, vol. xix. 1872 ; Prof. A. H. Sayce, *Encycl. Britannica*, 9th edit. *sub tit.* Cyrus ; M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, part i.

[3] *Geog.* xv. 1061.

[4] *Fragmenta*, edit. Muller, vol. iii. p. 101. The passages are collected and abstracted in a footnote by M. Dieulafoy.

[5] *Geog.* xv. 1061.

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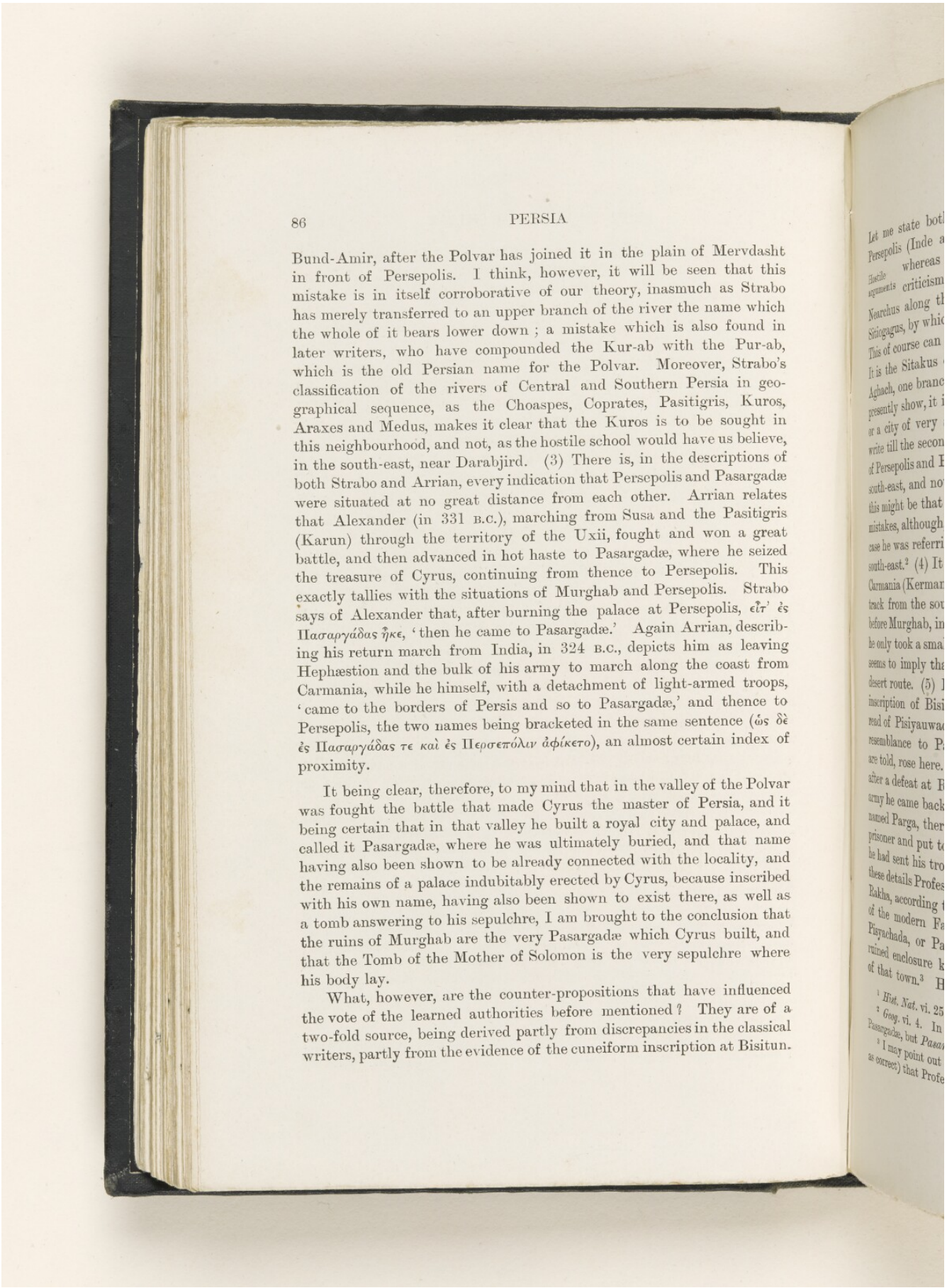



Bund-Amir, after the Polvar has joined it in the plain of Mervdasht in front of Persepolis. I think, however, it will be seen that this mistake is in itself corroborative of our theory, inasmuch as Strabo has merely transferred to an upper branch of the river the name which the whole of it bears lower down ; a mistake which is also found in later writers, who have compounded the Kur-ab with the Pur-ab, which is the old Persian name for the Polvar. Moreover, Strabo's classification of the rivers of Central and Southern Persia in geographical sequence, as the Choaspes, Coprates, Pasitigris, Kuros, Araxes and Medus, makes it clear that the Kuros is to be sought in this neighbourhood, and not, as the hostile school would have us believe, in the south-east, near Darabjird. (3) There is, in the descriptions of both Strabo and Arrian, every indication that Persepolis and Pasargadæ were situated at no great distance from each other. Arrian relates that Alexander (in 331 B.C.), marching from Susa and the Pasitigris (Karun) through the territory of the Uxii, fought and won a great battle, and then advanced in hot haste to Pasargadæ, where he seized the treasure of Cyrus, continuing from thence to Persepolis. This exactly tallies with the situations of Murghab and Persepolis. Strabo says of Alexander that, after burning the palace at Persepolis, εἶτ' ἐς Πασαργάδας ἦκε, 'then he came to Pasargadæ.' Again Arrian, describing his return march from India, in 324 B.C., depicts him as leaving Hephæstion and the bulk of his army to march along the coast from Carmania, while he himself, with a detachment of light-armed troops, 'came to the borders of Persis and so to Pasargadæ,' and thence to Persepolis, the two names being bracketed in the same sentence (ὡς δὲ ἐς Πασαργάδας τε καὶ ἐς Περσεπόλιν ἀφίκετο), an almost certain index of proximity.

It being clear, therefore, to my mind that in the valley of the Polvar was fought the battle that made Cyrus the master of Persia, and it being certain that in that valley he built a royal city and palace, and called it Pasargadæ, where he was ultimately buried, and that name having also been shown to be already connected with the locality, and the remains of a palace indubitably erected by Cyrus, because inscribed with his own name, having also been shown to exist there, as well as a tomb answering to his sepulchre, I am brought to the conclusion that the ruins of Murghab are the very Pasargadæ which Cyrus built, and that the Tomb of the Mother of Solomon is the very sepulchre where his body lay.

What, however, are the counter-propositions that have influenced the vote of the learned authorities before mentioned? They are of a two-fold source, being derived partly from discrepancies in the classical writers, partly from the evidence of the cuneiform inscription at Bisitun.

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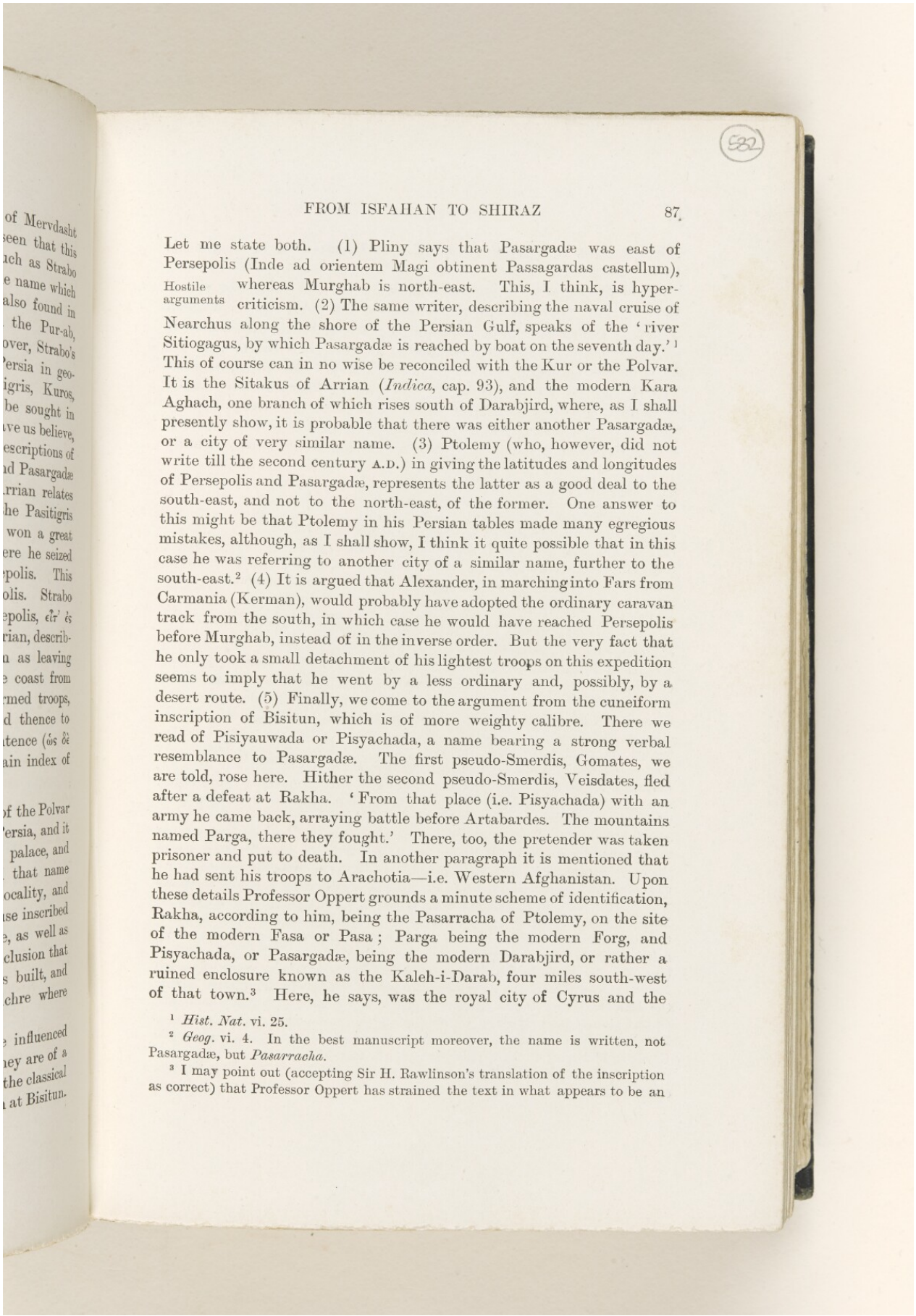




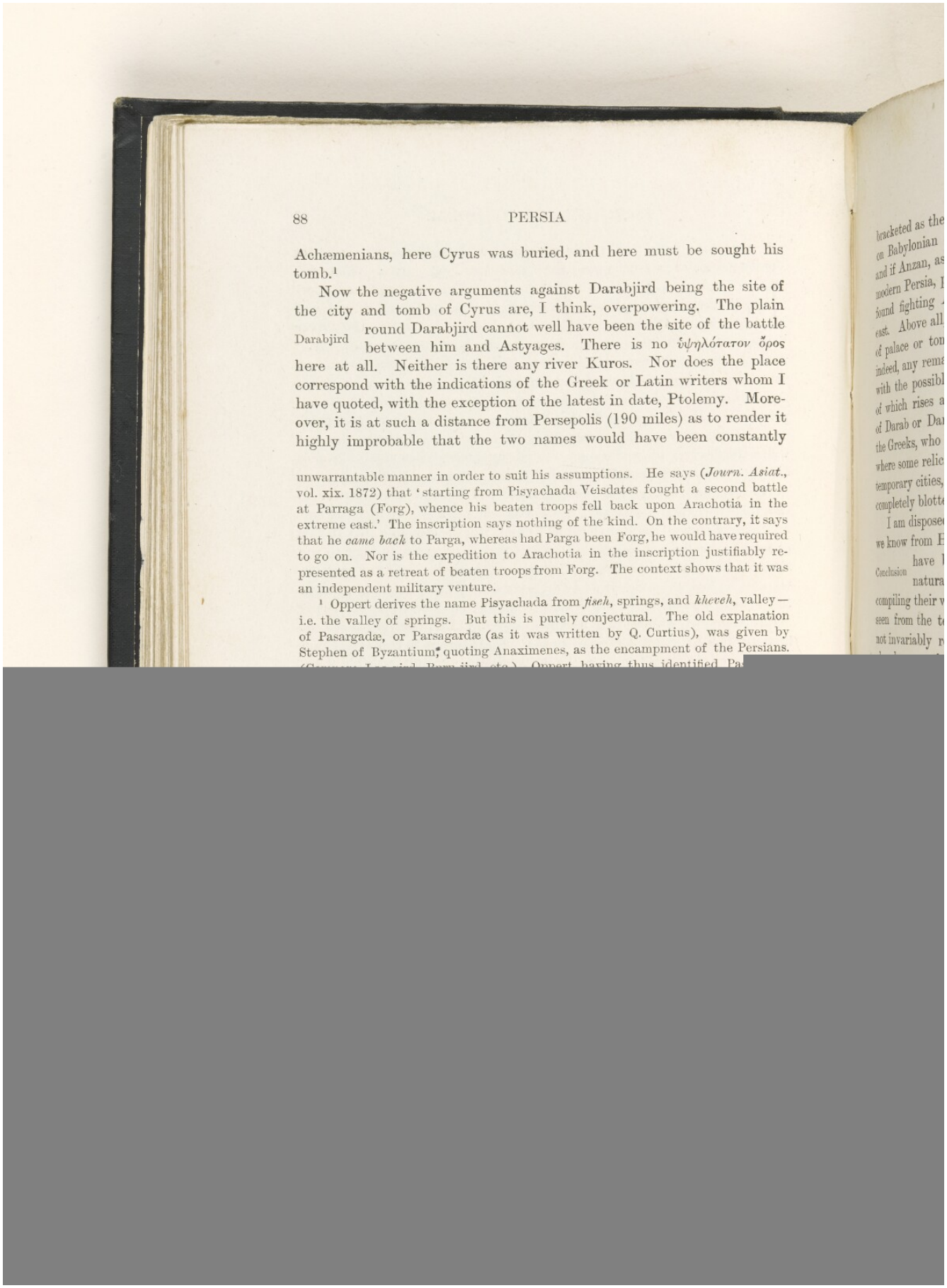
Let me state both. (1) Pliny says that Pasargadæ was east of Persepolis (Inde ad orientem Magi obtinent Passagardas castellum), whereas Murghab is north-east. This, I think, is hyper-criticism. (2) The same writer, describing the naval cruise of Nearchus along the shore of the Persian Gulf, speaks of the 'river Sitiogagus, by which Pasargadæ is reached by boat on the seventh day.'[1] This of course can in no wise be reconciled with the Kur or the Polvar. It is the Sitakus of Arrian (*Indica*, cap. 93), and the modern Kara Aghach, one branch of which rises south of Darabjird, where, as I shall presently show, it is probable that there was either another Pasargadæ, or a city of very similar name. (3) Ptolemy (who, however, did not write till the second century A.D.) in giving the latitudes and longitudes of Persepolis and Pasargadæ, represents the latter as a good deal to the south-east, and not to the north-east, of the former. One answer to this might be that Ptolemy in his Persian tables made many egregious mistakes, although, as I shall show, I think it quite possible that in this case he was referring to another city of a similar name, further to the south-east.[2] (4) It is argued that Alexander, in marching into Fars from Carmania (Kerman), would probably have adopted the ordinary caravan track from the south, in which case he would have reached Persepolis before Murghab, instead of in the inverse order. But the very fact that he only took a small detachment of his lightest troops on this expedition seems to imply that he went by a less ordinary and, possibly, by a desert route. (5) Finally, we come to the argument from the cuneiform inscription of Bisitun, which is of more weighty calibre. There we read of Pisiyauwada or Pisyachada, a name bearing a strong verbal resemblance to Pasargadæ. The first pseudo-Smerdis, Gomates, we are told, rose here. Hither the second pseudo-Smerdis, Veisdates, fled after a defeat at Rakha. 'From that place (i.e. Pisyachada) with an army he came back, arraying battle before Artabardes. The mountains named Parga, there they fought.' There, too, the pretender was taken prisoner and put to death. In another paragraph it is mentioned that he had sent his troops to Arachotia—i.e. Western Afghanistan. Upon these details Professor Oppert grounds a minute scheme of identification, Rakha, according to him, being the Pasarracha of Ptolemy, on the site of the modern Fasa or Pasa; Parga being the modern Forg, and Pisyachada, or Pasargadæ, being the modern Darabjird, or rather a ruined enclosure known as the Kaleh-i-Darab, four miles south-west of that town.[3] Here, he says, was the royal city of Cyrus and the

Hostile arguments

[1] *Hist. Nat.* vi. 25.

[2] *Geog.* vi. 4. In the best manuscript moreover, the name is written, not Pasargadæ, but *Pasarracha*.

[3] I may point out (accepting Sir H. Rawlinson's translation of the inscription as correct) that Professor Oppert has strained the text in what appears to be an



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Achæmenians, here Cyrus was buried, and here must be sought his tomb.[1]

Now the negative arguments against Darabjird being the site of the city and tomb of Cyrus are, I think, overpowering. The plain round Darabjird cannot well have been the site of the battle between him and Astyages. There is no ὑψηλότατον ὄρος here at all. Neither is there any river Kuros. Nor does the place correspond with the indications of the Greek or Latin writers whom I have quoted, with the exception of the latest in date, Ptolemy. Moreover, it is at such a distance from Persepolis (190 miles) as to render it highly improbable that the two names would have been constantly

Darabjird

unwarrantable manner in order to suit his assumptions. He says (*Journ. Asiat.*, vol. xix. 1872) that 'starting from Pisyachada Veisdates fought a second battle at Parraga (Forg), whence his beaten troops fell back upon Arachotia in the extreme east.' The inscription says nothing of the kind. On the contrary, it says that he *came back* to Parga, whereas had Parga been Forg, he would have required to go on. Nor is the expedition to Arachotia in the inscription justifiably represented as a retreat of beaten troops from Forg. The context shows that it was an independent military venture.

[1] Oppert derives the name Pisyachada from *fiseh*, springs, and *kheveh*, valley—i.e. the valley of springs. But this is purely conjectural. The old explanation of Pasargadæ, or Parsagardæ (as it was written by Q. Curtius), was given by Stephen of Byzantium, quoting Anaximenes, as the encampment of the Persians.

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bracketed as they were. Furthermore, we know from the inscriptions on Babylonian cylinders that Cyrus was originally king of Anzan; and if Anzan, as appears probable, was identical with the west part of modern Persia, perhaps with Susiana, it is unlikely that he would be found fighting Astyages and founding a royal city in the distant east. Above all, there is not at or near Darabjird the smallest vestige of palace or tomb of Cyrus, not a single cuneiform inscription, nor, indeed, any remains that can conceivably be regarded as Achæmenian, with the possible exception of a species of rampart in the middle of which rises a rugged rock, identified by tradition with the citadel of Darab or Darius,[1] generally supposed to be the Darius Nothus of the Greeks, who reigned 423 B.C. It is difficult to believe, in a country where some relics, at least, have been found of nearly all the great contemporary cities, that Pasargadæ, had it been here, could have been so completely blotted out from the face of the earth.

Conclusion

I am disposed myself to think that the name Pasargadæ, which, as we know from Herodotus, was that of the royal tribe of Persia, may have been given to more than one site, and may thus very naturally have confused the Greek and Latin writers, who were compiling their works about countries which they had never themselves seen from the testimony of earlier writers, whose accounts they could not invariably reconcile, and who thus led them astray. We have already seen that the title of Pasargadæ was applied to a lofty mountain in one locality (which I have identified with the valley of the Polvar); whilst in another passage of Ptolemy we find a second place of the same name in Kerman. I even think it likely, for reasons that will be stated in the next chapter, that Pasargadæ may have been the Persian title of Persepolis itself. It is possible, therefore, that there may also have been a Pasargadæ or Pasarracha in south-east Fars, at or near Darabjird or Fasa, to which the few allusions in the classical writers which postulate such a situation may have referred. But that

[1] Ouseley, who visited it in 1811, called it Kaleh-i-Dehayeh (probably a misunderstanding of Darayeh), *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 177. Keith Abbot in 1850 described it as a mud rampart, thirty to forty feet high, surrounding an isolated rock at a distance of 800 yards (*Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 189). Flandin and Coste visited it in 1841, and have included a ground plan and illustration in their beautiful collection of plates, vol. i. plate 31. J. R. Preece, the latest visitor, in 1884, said that the remains consisted of walls of clay, twenty feet high, with a ditch forty feet broad, surrounding two small rocky hills, the higher of which is 100 feet. He added: 'After searching the whole place and most carefully examining the rocks all about, not the slightest trace of a stonemason's handiwork could be found, and the rocks show no sign of ever having been touched. The place did not give the idea of any great antiquity. It doubtless belongs to the Sassanian peri

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the Pasargadæ of Cyrus, in life and in death, was the city whose fragmentary ruins I have described in the valley of the Polvar, I am inclined strongly to believe ; and therefore it is that in face of the recent attacks that have been made upon it by men of science, I have ventured to refurbish the armoury of its defence.[1]

Approach to Persepolis

Soon after leaving the Musjid-i-Mader-i-Suleiman, the walls of which gleam like a white patch on the sombre landscape, we bid farewell to the plain of Murghab, and enter a lofty range of mountains by a fine gorge, along the base of which rushes the river Polvar. When the water is low, the bed of the stream, or its banks, provide a roadway ; for seasons when the channel is full, a path, called Sangbur, has been hewn many centuries ago, for a distance of over fifty yards in the side of the lofty limestone cliff.[2] Twice this dark ravine expands into open valleys, and twice again contracts into narrow defiles, admitting little beyond the track and the noisy river. So we continue for several miles, until, at the far end of one of the valley-windings, we espy the miserable post-house and imposing caravanserai of Kawamabad. This place takes its name from its founder, the Haji Kawam, who was minister at Shiraz fifty years ago. Turning to the left, and pursuing the same ravine, I came, after thirty-five minutes' sharp riding to the village and Telegraph-station of Sivend. The village, which is said to be inhabited by Lurs, is built in ascending tiers on the mountain side, while the valley bottom is thickly planted with vines. From here the track continues in a south-easterly direction, skirting the river, and arrives at the Lur village of Saidan, to which point there is also a shorter track from Murghab than that followed by the postal and telegraph route, running over the hills *viâ* Kamin. An abrupt turn to the right, or west, then brings us into a valley, bordered on either side by mountains and cut up by water-courses and irrigation channels, which, in the darkness, the sun

[1] Since writing the above lengthy—but not, I hope, gratuitous—argument, I have seen the new volume of MM. Perrot and Chipiez' magnificent work, entitled *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, tome v., *Perse* (1890); and I am delighted to find that, limiting his own discussion to the identity of the tomb, without embarking upon the larger question of Pasargadæ, M. Perrot has arrived by arguments very similar to my own at precisely the same conclusion; although he has hardly realised the full measure of M. Dieulafoy's peccadilloes, and has based his identification upon structural, rather than topographical, resemblances.

[2] *Vide* Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 127.

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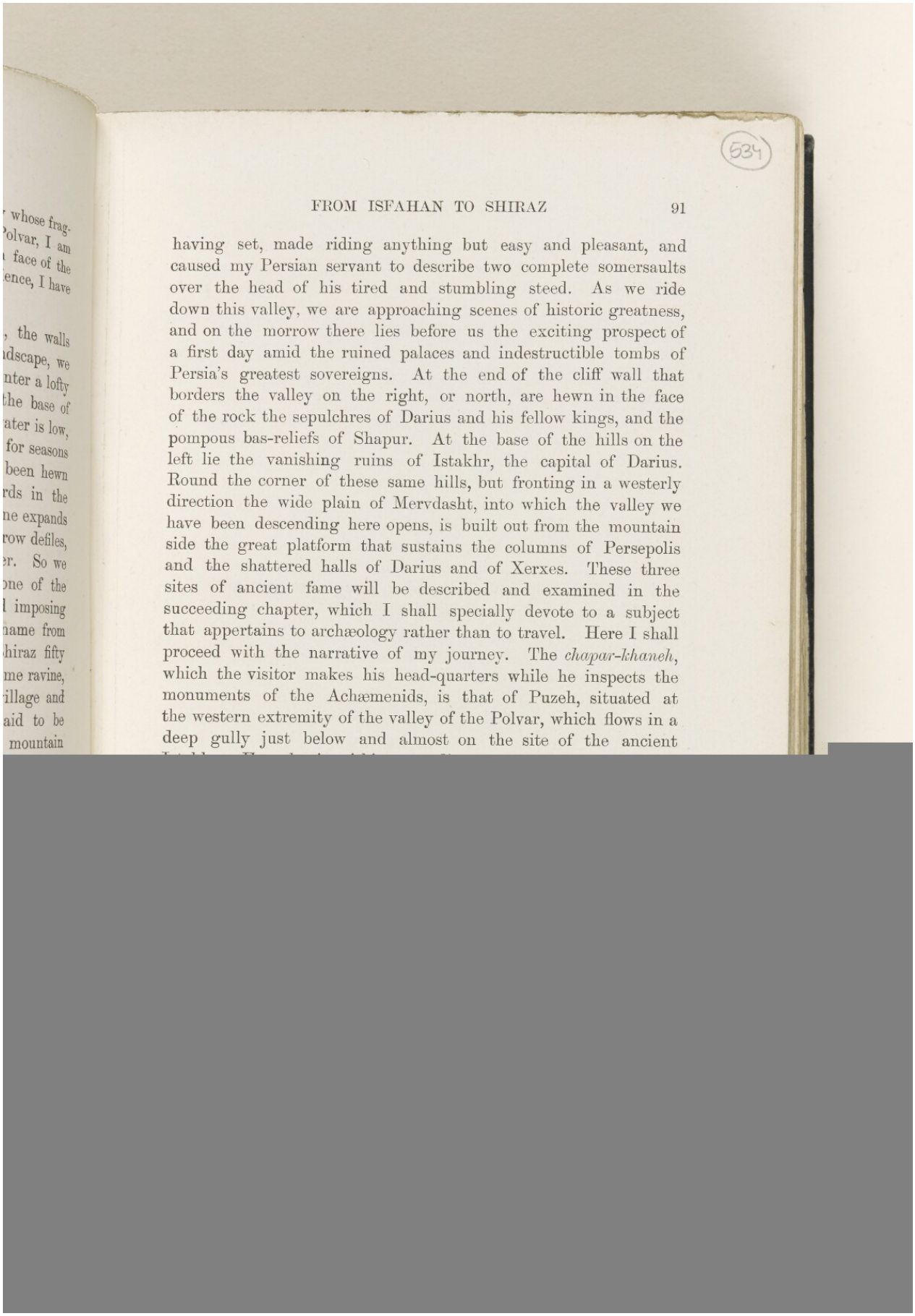

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having set, made riding anything but easy and pleasant, and caused my Persian servant to describe two complete somersaults over the head of his tired and stumbling steed. As we ride down this valley, we are approaching scenes of historic greatness, and on the morrow there lies before us the exciting prospect of a first day amid the ruined palaces and indestructible tombs of Persia's greatest sovereigns. At the end of the cliff wall that borders the valley on the right, or north, are hewn in the face of the rock the sepulchres of Darius and his fellow kings, and the pompous bas-reliefs of Shapur. At the base of the hills on the left lie the vanishing ruins of Istakhr, the capital of Darius. Round the corner of these same hills, but fronting in a westerly direction the wide plain of Mervdasht, into which the valley we have been descending here opens, is built out from the mountain side the great platform that sustains the columns of Persepolis and the shattered halls of Darius and of Xerxes. These three sites of ancient fame will be described and examined in the succeeding chapter, which I shall specially devote to a subject that appertains to archæology rather than to travel. Here I shall proceed with the narrative of my journey. The *chapar-khaneh*, which the visitor makes his head-quarters while he inspects the monuments of the Achæmenids, is that of Puzeh, situated at the western extremity of the valley of the Polvar, which flows in a deep gully just below and almost on the site of the ancient

hundred villages, this total has now dwindled to fifty; while so inadequate is the control of the water-supply, that the plain often lies half under water, and is converted into stagnant pools and swamps. As I left Persepolis, after completing my study of its ruins, I was obliged to strike back in a north-westerly direction, in order to escape this network of watery trenches. Passing the village of Kushk, I then kept straight forward in a south-westerly line, towards the Pul-i-Khan, a very lofty bridge, with two main arches of irregular size and shape, which crosses the river Kur (the Araxes of the ancients) a little below its confluence with the Polvar.[1] The conjoint stream formed a deep, wide pool below the bridge, and there was more water in it than in any river that I had yet seen in Persia. From the fact that eight miles further down, this river is crossed by a great dam, upon which stands a bridge of thirteen arches, 120 yards in length, the work of an enlightened ruler of the Al-i-Buyah or Dilemi dynasty, known as the Asad-ed-Dowleh, in about 970 A.D., its lower course has received the name of the Bund-Amir[2] (*lit.* dyke of the Amir), or Bendemeer of Moore, whose rhapsodical description of its charms I shall allow myself, almost alone among modern writers on Persia, the luxury of not quoting.

dam

Approach to Shiraz

From here the road continues towards the mountains that fringe the plain of Mervdasht on the south-west side, and, entering a deep bay in these, proceeds for a distance of some miles over an expanse that is occupied, in the rainy season, by a marsh, across which the track is carried for over

[1] Higher up the Kur, whose main source is the Chashmeh-i-Durdaneh, is known successively as the Asupas and Kamfiruz. Eight *farsakhs* above the Pul-i-Khan it is dammed by the Bund-i-Nasiri, so called from the reigning Shah, who in 1890 repaired a structure, originally erected by the Achæmenian kings, and frequently restored since. The Polvar, whose course I have followed, and which flows in above the Pul-i-Khan, is the Medus of the ancients, and the Faruab or Puruab of Persian geographers. After the confluence the river is called the Kur. Two *farsakhs* lower down is the celebrated dam of Asad-ed-Dowleh, from which the river derives its title in these lower reaches of Bund-Amir. Five more dams obstruct its course and divert its waters, before the remainder finally falls into the great salt lake of Bakhtegan (called by the natives Bichegan), or Niriz. *Vide* 'Notes on the Kur River' by A. H. Schindler in *Proceedings of the R. G. S.*, vol. xiii. p. 287 (1891).

[2] The dam was visited and described by J. P. Morier (1811), *Second Journey*, p. 73; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 180–5; C. J. Rich (1821), *Journey to Persepolis*, p. 261.



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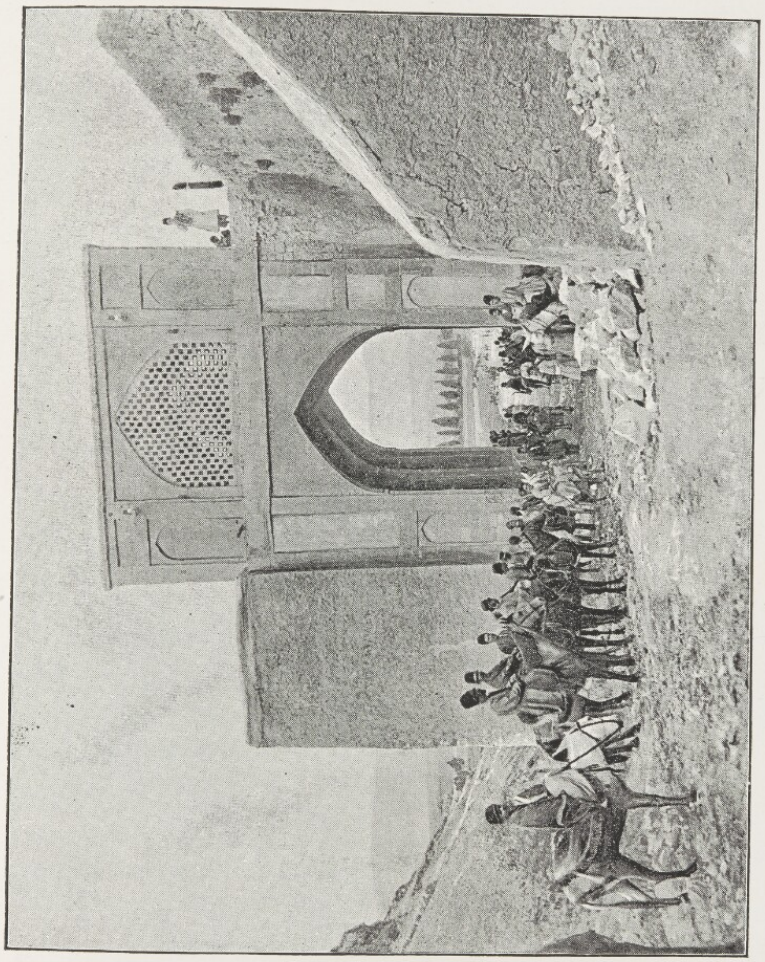
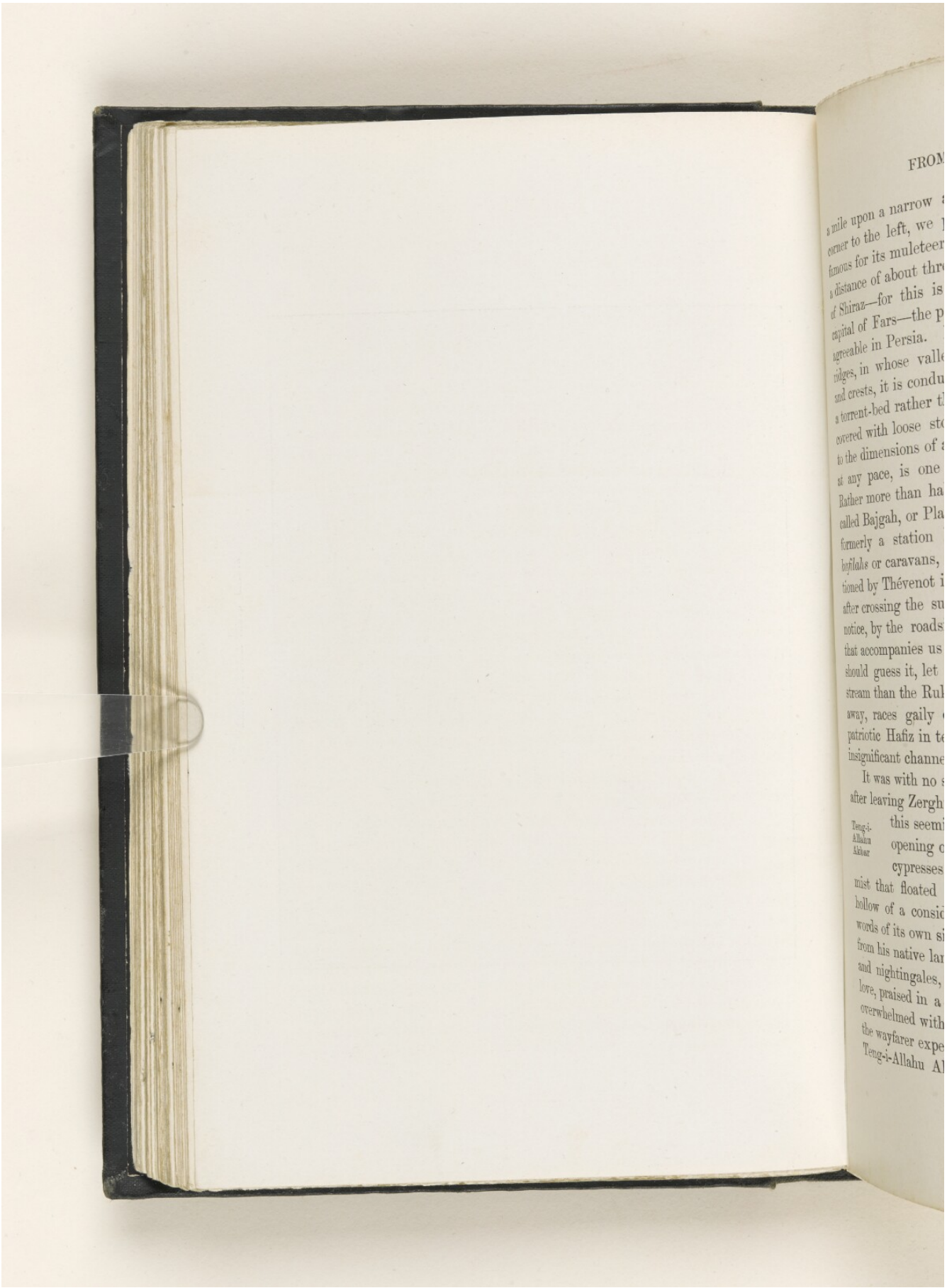


TENG-I-ALLAHU AKBAR, SHIRAZ



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a mile upon a narrow and irregular causeway. Turning a sharp corner to the left, we presently arrive at the village of Zerghun, famous for its muleteers, built at the base of a rocky chain. From a distance of about three miles from Zerghun, to the very outskirts of Shiraz—for this is the last stage that separates us from the capital of Fars—the post-road is one of the stoniest and most disagreeable in Persia. Its course lies over a succession of mountain ridges, in whose valleys and undulations, and over whose peaks and crests, it is conducted in a line that in many places resembles a torrent-bed rather than a made road. The ground is completely covered with loose stones and boulders, from the size of an orange to the dimensions of a football; and riding over these, particularly at any pace, is one of the most painful of human experiences. Rather more than half-way in a naked mountain-plain, at a spot called Bajgah, or Place of the Tolls, from the fact that there was formerly a station here of *rahdars*, or toll-gatherers upon the *kafilahs* or caravans, is a large, forlorn-looking caravanserai (mentioned by Thévenot in 1666) with a tank of water in front. It is after crossing the subsequent ridge of the Kuh-i-Bamu that we notice, by the roadside, a tiny channel filled with running water that accompanies us for some distance on our march. Lest none should guess it, let me say that this slender rivulet is no less a stream than the Ruknabad, which, rising in the hills twelve miles away, races gaily down to Shiraz, and was celebrated by the patriotic Hafiz in terms that would lead one to expect some less insignificant channel.

It was with no slight relief that, two and three-quarter hours after leaving Zerghun, and while descending the ultimate ridge of this seemingly interminable chain, I caught sight, in the opening of a mountain pass, of a great cluster of solemn cypresses, and, below, the shimmer of mingled smoke and mist that floated above the roofs of a large town, lying in the hollow of a considerable plain. This was Shiraz, which, in the words of its own singer, Sadi, 'turns aside the heart of the traveller from his native land;' Shiraz, the home of poets, and rose-bowers, and nightingales, the haunt of jollity, and the Elysian fields of love, praised in a hundred odes as the fairest gem of Iran. So overwhelmed with astonishment at the beauty of the panorama is the wayfarer expected to be, that even the pass takes its name of Teng-i-Allahu Akbar, the Pass of God is Most Great, from the

Teng-i-Allahu Akbar

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expression that is supposed to leap to his lips as he gazes upon the entrancing spectacle. I confess that my own gratitude to Providence bore far less relation to the view, in which I saw nothing very wonderful, than to the relief which I experienced at having reached the end of this section of my journey. In the Sefavi days, an aqueduct brought water into Shiraz down this pass, but is now in complete ruin. In the rock on the right-hand side of the road is sculped here a bas-relief of Fath Ali Shah, smoking a *kalian* with two of his sons; and hard by is another of Rustam transfixing a lion which holds a man in its claws. The end of this pass was formerly fortified and completely filled by an arched gateway, stretching from mountain to mountain. This gateway fell into ruin, but was rebuilt by Zeki Khan, who was Vizier of Shiraz in 1820, in the style and manner apparent in the accompanying photograph. In the upper storey, above the arch, is a chamber, containing, upon a desk surrounded by a wooden rail, a ponderous and monumental Koran. This colossal manuscript, which is said to weigh seventeen *mans*, or eight stone, and of which it is popularly believed that if one leaf were withdrawn, it would equal in weight the entire volume, is variously reported to have been written by the younger Ali or Imam Zein-el-Abidin (Ornament of the Pious), the son of Husein, or by Sultan Ibrahim, the son of Shah Rukh, and grandson of Timur. One may be reconciled to either legend, according as one prefers a sacred or a secular authorship.

In the Sefavean days a species of Chehar Bagh, or broad avenue, planted with cypresses, adorned with marble basins of water in the middle, and lined with rows of walled gardens, entered by arched pavilions, led from the mountain gate to a bridge over the stream that flows outside the city walls. Almost all traces of this approach have disappeared, and the intervening stretch of road is bare and desolate. The stream was all but dry at the time of my visit, though, when the snows melt, it sometimes contains a good deal of water. The panorama of the modern town contains nothing of distinction except three blue domes appearing above a crumbling wall and numerous enclosures thickly planted with cypresses, which seem, in their sable stoles, to mourn like funeral mutes over a vanished past. A low wall of mud, flanked with semicircular towers—both of them in a state of ruin—describes a circumference of between three and four miles, although in the security of modern times the suburbs

View of the city

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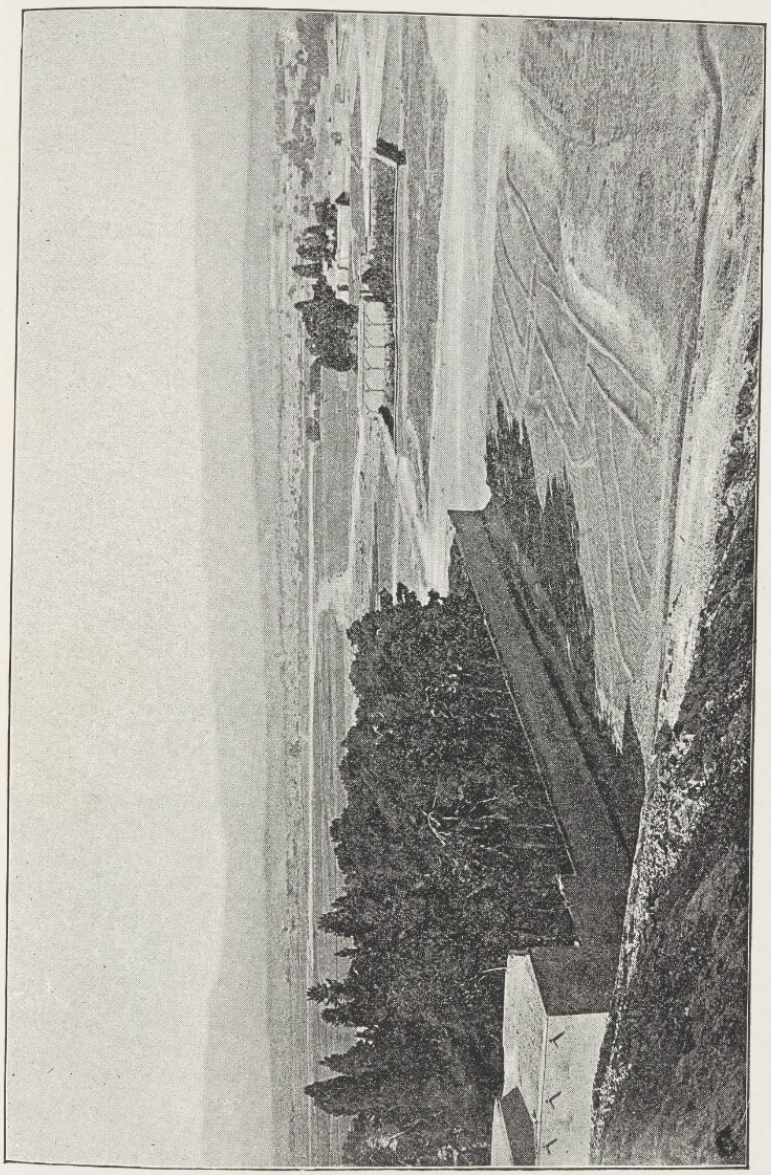
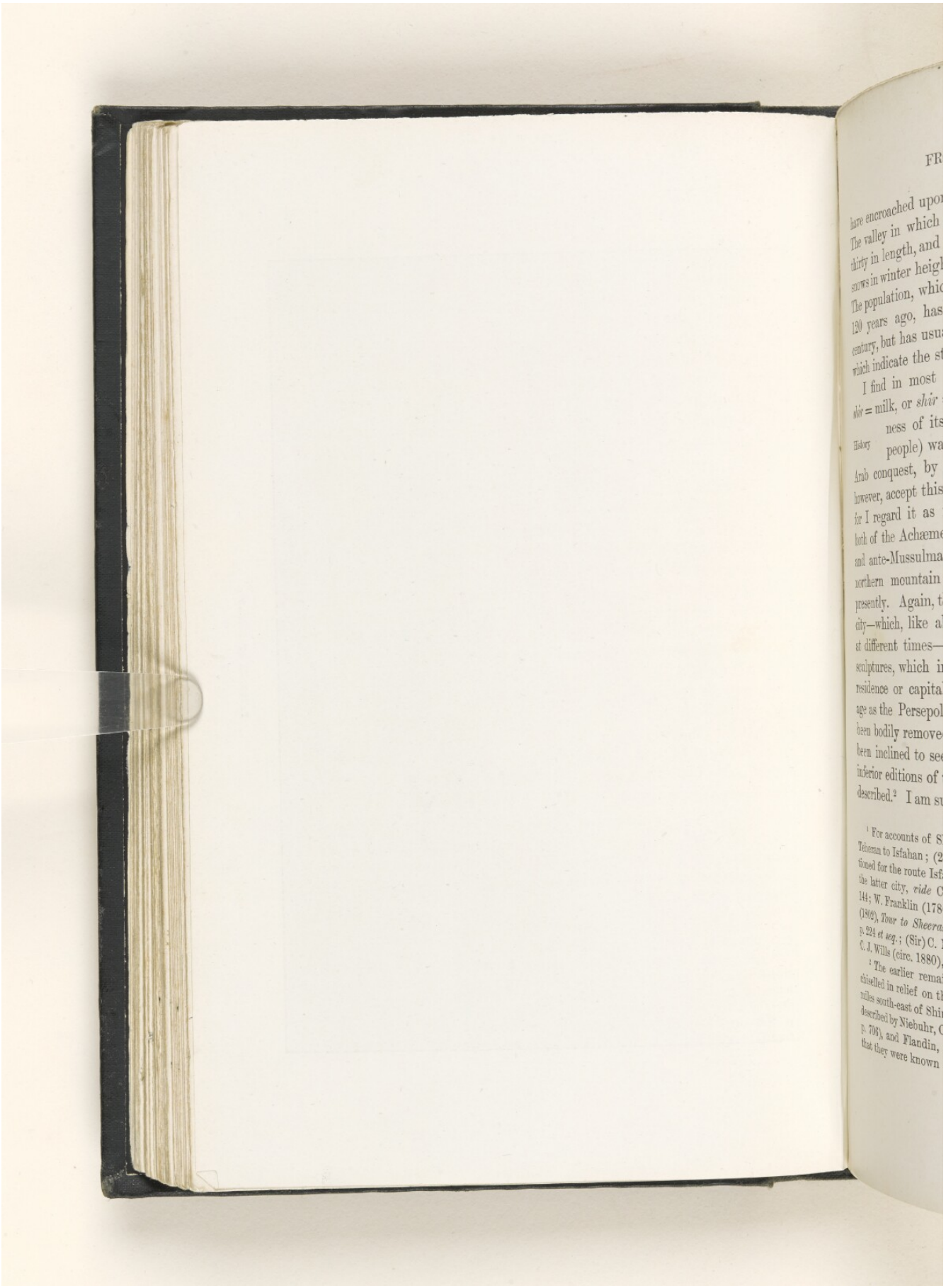


PANORAMA OF SHIRAZ



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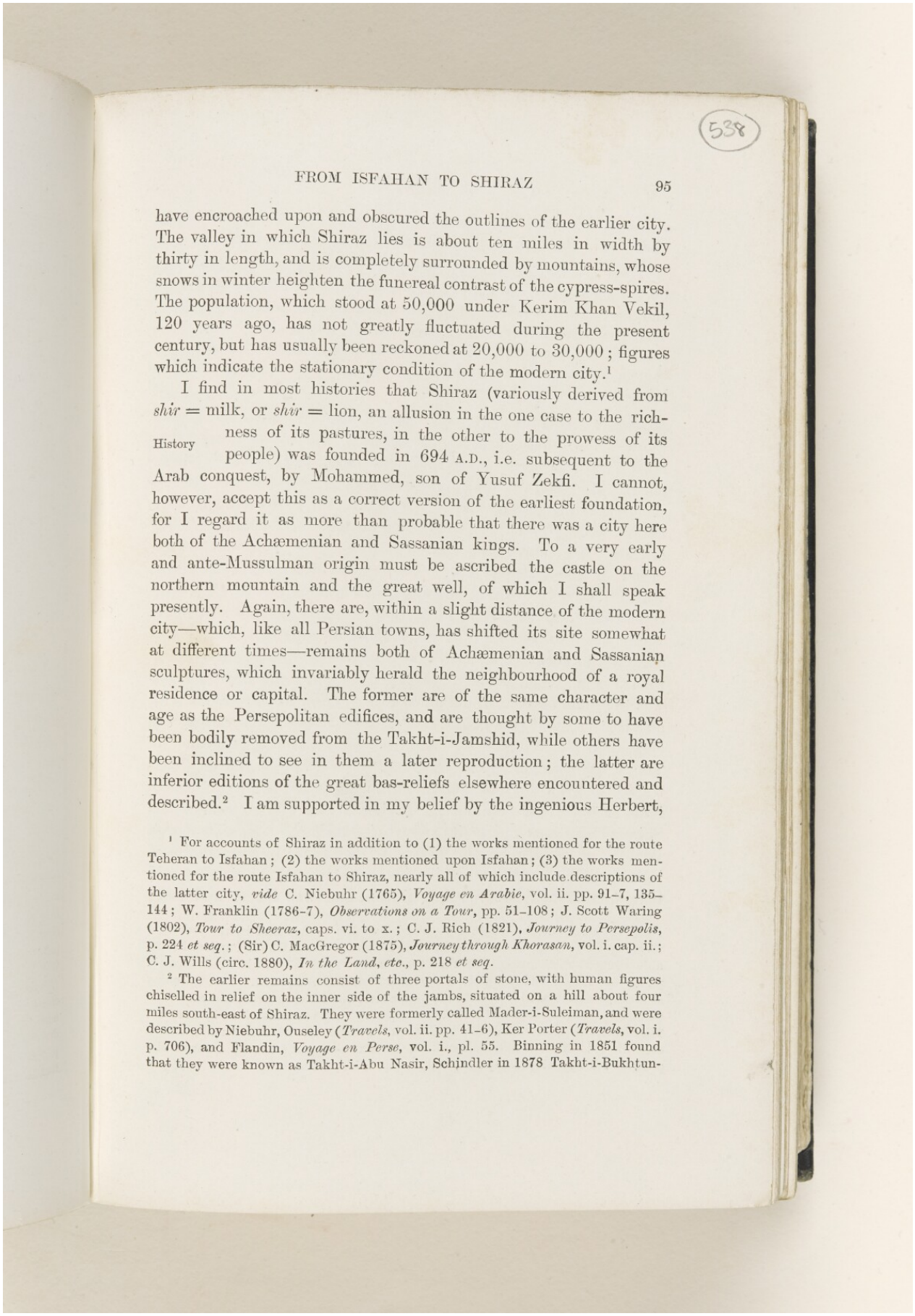



have encroached upon and obscured the outlines of the earlier city. The valley in which Shiraz lies is about ten miles in width by thirty in length, and is completely surrounded by mountains, whose snows in winter heighten the funereal contrast of the cypress-spires. The population, which stood at 50,000 under Kerim Khan Vekil, 120 years ago, has not greatly fluctuated during the present century, but has usually been reckoned at 20,000 to 30,000; figures which indicate the stationary condition of the modern city.[1]

History

I find in most histories that Shiraz (variously derived from *shir* = milk, or *shir* = lion, an allusion in the one case to the richness of its pastures, in the other to the prowess of its people) was founded in 694 A.D., i.e. subsequent to the Arab conquest, by Mohammed, son of Yusuf Zekfi. I cannot, however, accept this as a correct version of the earliest foundation, for I regard it as more than probable that there was a city here both of the Achæmenian and Sassanian kings. To a very early and ante-Mussulman origin must be ascribed the castle on the northern mountain and the great well, of which I shall speak presently. Again, there are, within a slight distance of the modern city—which, like all Persian towns, has shifted its site somewhat at different times—remains both of Achæmenian and Sassanian sculptures, which invariably herald the neighbourhood of a royal residence or capital. The former are of the same character and age as the Persepolitan edifices, and are thought by some to have been bodily removed from the Takht-i-Jamshid, while others have been inclined to see in them a later reproduction; the latter are inferior editions of the great bas-reliefs elsewhere encountered and described.[2] I am supported in my belief by the ingenious Herbert,

[1] For accounts of Shiraz in addition to (1) the works mentioned for the route Teheran to Isfahan; (2) the works mentioned upon Isfahan; (3) the works mentioned for the route Isfahan to Shiraz, nearly all of which include descriptions of the latter city, *vide* C. Niebuhr (1765), *Voyage en Arabie*, vol. ii. pp. 91–7, 135–144; W. Franklin (1786–7), *Observations on a Tour*, pp. 51–108; J. Scott Waring (1802), *Tour to Sheeraz*, caps. vi. to x.; C. J. Rich (1821), *Journey to Persepolis*, p. 224 *et seq.*; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. cap. ii.; C. J. Wills (circ. 1880), *In the Land, etc.*, p. 218 *et seq.*

[2] The earlier remains consist of three portals of stone, with human figures chiselled in relief on the inner side of the jambs, situated on a hill about four miles south-east of Shiraz. They were formerly called Mader-i-Suleiman, and were described by Niebuhr, Ouseley (*Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 41–6), Ker Porter (*Travels*, vol. i. p. 706), and Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i., pl. 55. Binning in 1851 found that they were known as Takht-i-Abu Nasir, Schindler in 1878 Takht-i-Bukhtun-

although I cannot say that the evidences of antiquity which he cites would stand the test of the modern scientific school.

Here art magick was first hatched ; here Nimrod for some time lived ; here Cyrus, the most excellent of Heathen Princes, was born ; and here (all but his head, which was sent to Pisigard) intombed. Here the Great Macedonian glutted his avarice and Bacchism. Here the first Sibylla sung our Saviour's incarnation. Hence the Magi are thought to have set out towards Bethlehem, and here a series of 200 Kings have swayed their scepters.

However, no other record that I am aware of, beyond those before mentioned, exists of this ancient Shiraz. The later city was much improved and beautified by the Dilemi rulers, of whom the Samsam-ed-Dowleh, son of the famous Asad-ed-Dowleh, was the first to surround it with a wall, twelve miles in circuit, while the channel of Ruknabad had already been excavated and named by the Rukn-ed-Dowleh, father of the latter prince. The various dynasties of Atabegs, whom I have previously described, and who governed Fars, with Shiraz as their capital, still further adorned the city. Towers were added to the wall by Sherif-ed-Din Mahmud Shah. Ibn Batutah, in about 1330, said that its most celebrated mosque was that of Ahmed ibn Musa, a brother of Imam Reza, in which also was the tomb of Abu Abdullah, who wandered about Ceylon with a sanctity so well established that it was recognised even by the elephants. The mercy of Jenghiz Khan, and the vengeance of Timur have already been recorded. Nevertheless, the city continued to grow in size and importance—as a memory of which, in later days, the vainglorious saying arose, 'When Shiraz was Shiraz, Cairo was one of its suburbs'—until the Venetian Josafa Barbaro, in 1474, represented it as twenty miles in circumference, including the outskirts, while his countryman, Angiolello, said that it contained 200,000 inhabitants, and was larger and more

Nasr. Mme. Dieulafoy in 1881 reported that the stones had been upset by a recent governor digging underneath them for the treasure which Persians invariably connect with inscriptions that they cannot read. *Vide* also Stolze, vol ii. pl. 96, and Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. v. p. 754. The Sassanian sculptures are situated a little further on, nearer the Maharlu lake, and consist of three tablets, sculped in the rock above a pool. They were described by Chardin, Thévenot, Kaempfer, Mandelslo, Le Brun, etc., under the title Kadamgah, but are called by Binning Naksh-i-Burmedillek, i.e. Barm-i-dilek from the name of the pool. *Vide* Flandin, *ibid.* pl. 56, and Stolze, *ibid.* pl. 145.



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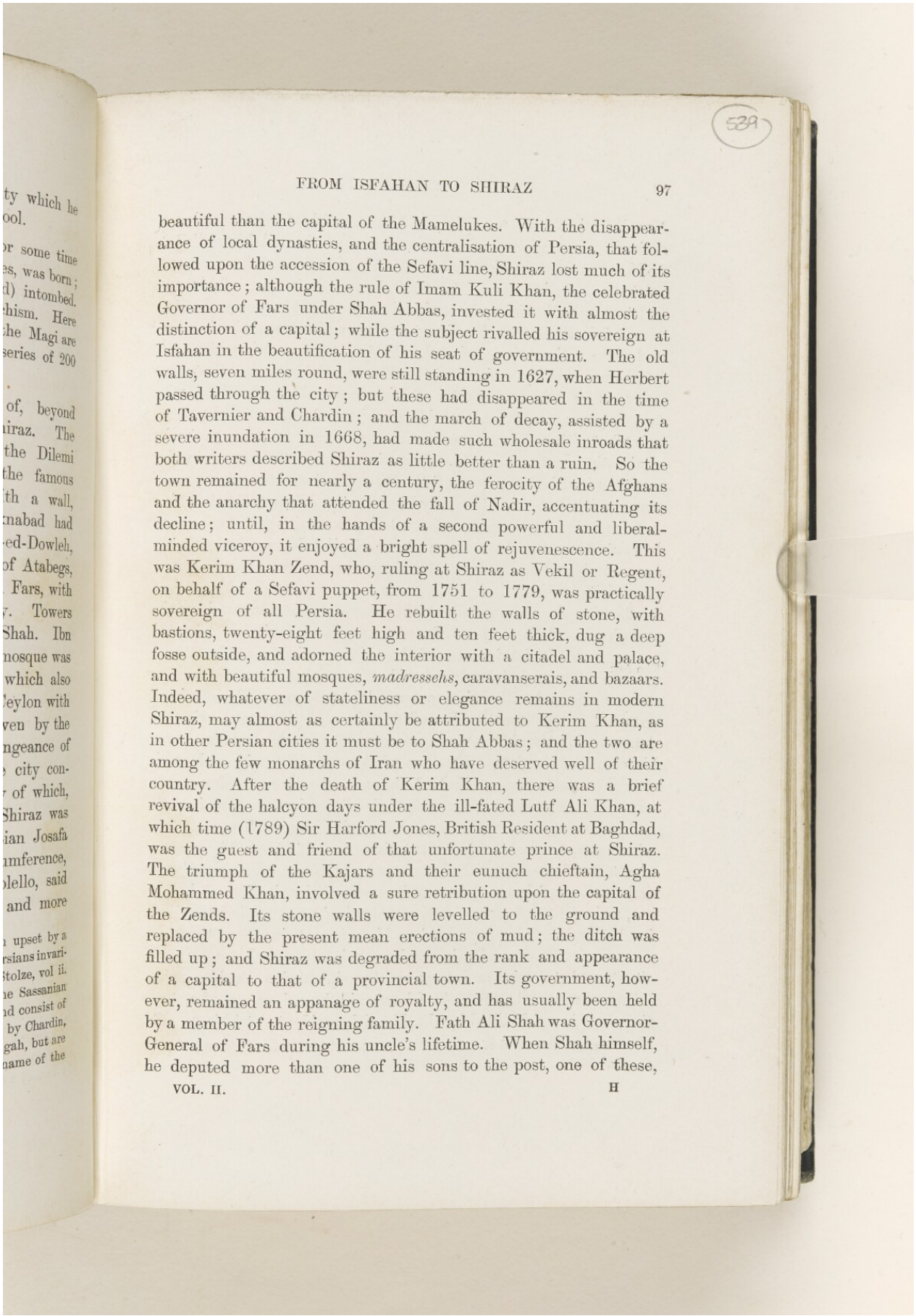



beautiful than the capital of the Mamelukes. With the disappearance of local dynasties, and the centralisation of Persia, that followed upon the accession of the Sefavi line, Shiraz lost much of its importance; although the rule of Imam Kuli Khan, the celebrated Governor of Fars under Shah Abbas, invested it with almost the distinction of a capital; while the subject rivalled his sovereign at Isfahan in the beautification of his seat of government. The old walls, seven miles round, were still standing in 1627, when Herbert passed through the city; but these had disappeared in the time of Tavernier and Chardin; and the march of decay, assisted by a severe inundation in 1668, had made such wholesale inroads that both writers described Shiraz as little better than a ruin. So the town remained for nearly a century, the ferocity of the Afghans and the anarchy that attended the fall of Nadir, accentuating its decline; until, in the hands of a second powerful and liberal-minded viceroy, it enjoyed a bright spell of rejuvenescence. This was Kerim Khan Zend, who, ruling at Shiraz as Vekil or Regent, on behalf of a Sefavi puppet, from 1751 to 1779, was practically sovereign of all Persia. He rebuilt the walls of stone, with bastions, twenty-eight feet high and ten feet thick, dug a deep fosse outside, and adorned the interior with a citadel and palace, and with beautiful mosques, *madressehs*, caravanserais, and bazaars. Indeed, whatever of stateliness or elegance remains in modern Shiraz, may almost as certainly be attributed to Kerim Khan, as in other Persian cities it must be to Shah Abbas; and the two are among the few monarchs of Iran who have deserved well of their country. After the death of Kerim Khan, there was a brief revival of the halcyon days under the ill-fated Lutf Ali Khan, at which time (1789) Sir Harford Jones, British Resident at Baghdad, was the guest and friend of that unfortunate prince at Shiraz. The triumph of the Kajars and their eunuch chieftain, Agha Mohammed Khan, involved a sure retribution upon the capital of the Zends. Its stone walls were levelled to the ground and replaced by the present mean erections of mud; the ditch was filled up; and Shiraz was degraded from the rank and appearance of a capital to that of a provincial town. Its government, however, remained an appanage of royalty, and has usually been held by a member of the reigning family. Fath Ali Shah was Governor-General of Fars during his uncle's lifetime. When Shah himself, he deputed more than one of his sons to the post, one of these,



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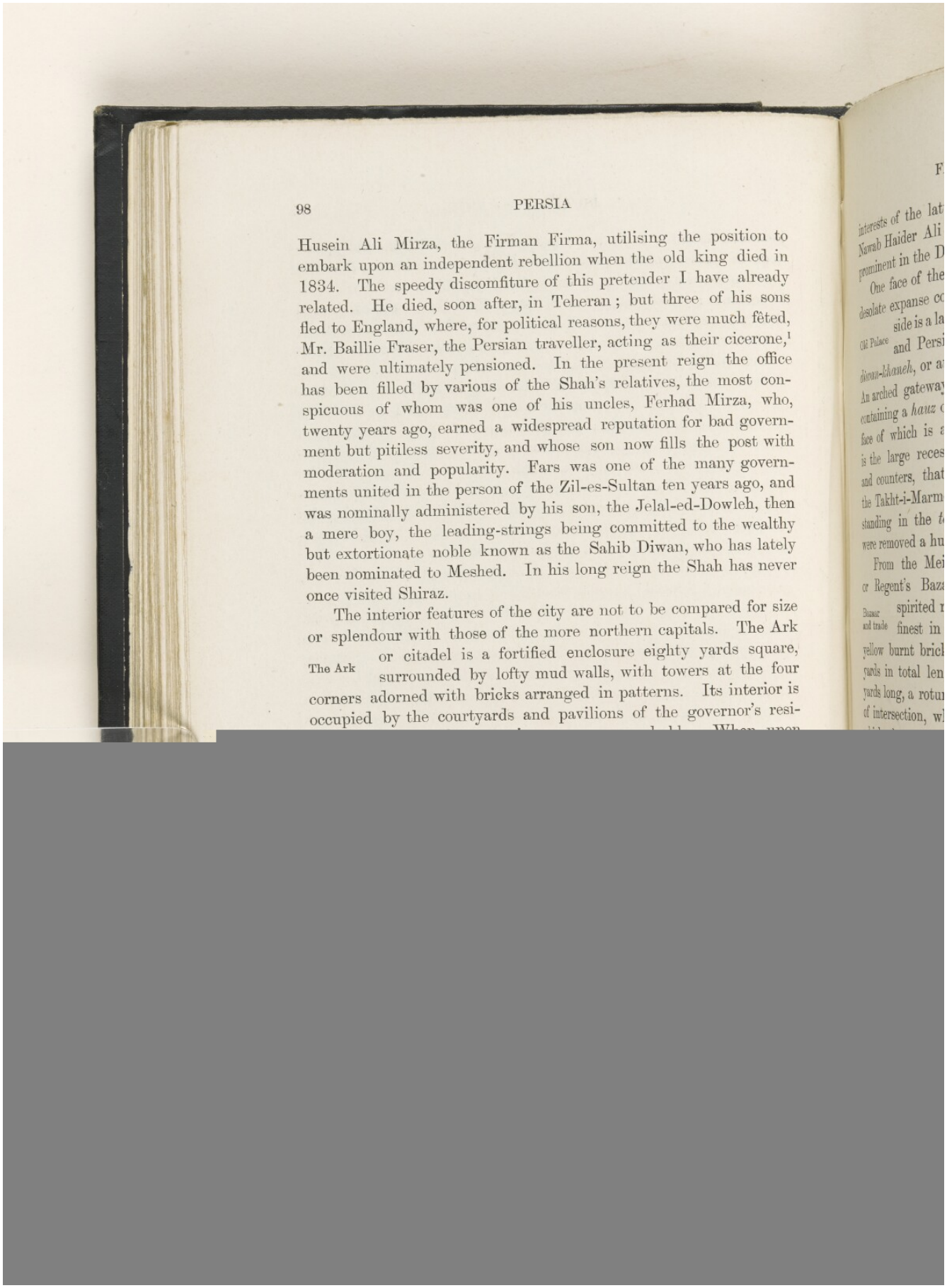



Husein Ali Mirza, the Firman Firma, utilising the position to embark upon an independent rebellion when the old king died in 1834. The speedy discomfiture of this pretender I have already related. He died, soon after, in Teheran; but three of his sons fled to England, where, for political reasons, they were much fêted, Mr. Baillie Fraser, the Persian traveller, acting as their cicerone,[1] and were ultimately pensioned. In the present reign the office has been filled by various of the Shah's relatives, the most conspicuous of whom was one of his uncles, Ferhad Mirza, who, twenty years ago, earned a widespread reputation for bad government but pitiless severity, and whose son now fills the post with moderation and popularity. Fars was one of the many governments united in the person of the Zil-es-Sultan ten years ago, and was nominally administered by his son, the Jelal-ed-Dowleh, then a mere boy, the leading-strings being committed to the wealthy but extortionate noble known as the Sahib Diwan, who has lately been nominated to Meshed. In his long reign the Shah has never once visited Shiraz.

The interior features of the city are not to be compared for size or splendour with those of the more northern capitals. The Ark

The Ark

or citadel is a fortified enclosure eighty yards square, surrounded by lofty mud walls, with towers at the four corners adorned with bricks arranged in patterns. Its interior is occupied by the courtyards and pavilions of the governor's resi-

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interests of the latter are officially represented in the city by the Nawab Haider Ali Khan, a member of a distinguished family once prominent in the Deccan, but for many years resident in Persia.

One face of the palace fronts the principal Meidan, which is a desolate expanse containing a number of guns.[1] On its northern side is a large building, now occupied by the Indo-European and Persian Telegraph establishments, but formerly the *diwan-khaneh*, or audience-chamber, of the palace of Kerim Khan. An arched gateway opens from the square on to a fine garden, containing a *hauz* or tank, at whose upper end, on a platform, the face of which is adorned with sculptured bas-reliefs in marble, is the large recessed chamber, now filled with official bureaux and counters, that once held the twisted marble columns and the Takht-i-Marmor, or Marble Throne, previously described as standing in the *talar* or throne-room at Teheran, whither they were removed a hundred years ago by Agha Mohammed.

Old Palace

From the Meidan, access is gained to the Bazaar-i-Vekil, or Regent's Bazaar, an enduring monument of the public-spirited rule of Kerim Khan. This bazaar, which is the finest in Persia, consists of a covered avenue, built of yellow burnt bricks, and arched at the top, about five hundred yards in total length. It is crossed by a shorter transept, 120 yards long, a rotunda or circular domed place marking the point of intersection, where are a cistern and a platform above it, at which the merchants meet for talk or consultation. From the bazaar, gateways lead into extensive caravanserais, the most spacious of which appeared to be that occupied by the Persian Custom-house. In the Bazaar-i-Vekil were all the din and jabber, the crush and jostle, of an Eastern mart, which is the focus of city life in the daytime, and is apt to give to a stranger an exaggerated impression of the volume of business. In the increased activity, however, of the southern trade-routes in Persia in recent years, Shiraz, both as a consuming and as an export market, has borne its share. An immense trade in all European goods has sprung up with Bombay, most of the Persian merchants having agents in that city. The chief imports are cotton fabrics from Manchester; woollen tissues from Austria and Germany; loaf sugar from Marseilles (Russian loaf sugar stopping short at

Bazaar and trade

[1] There were reported to me to be only 1,800 infantry and 300 artillery in the province.



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Isfahan); raw sugar from Java and Mauritius; French, German and Austrian cutlery and crockery; copper sheets from England and Holland; tea from India, Java, Ceylon, and China, and candles from Amsterdam. I found the Shirazis very apprehensive of the opening of the new trade route by the Karun, which, without interfering with their local traffic, would, if it superseded the Teheran-Bushire line as the main commercial avenue into Persia from the south, destroy their transit trade altogether. I had myself quite sufficient confidence in the temperate pace at which progress advances in Iran to assure them that there was no immediate ground for alarm. So obstinate is custom in the East, that to kill a caravan track that has been followed for a century is no slight undertaking. I found the chief exports to consist of opium, 10,000 to 15,000 cases of which were said to be despatched yearly from the neighbourhoods of Shiraz and Yezd; cotton, pressed in Bushire and sold in Bombay; dried fruits, especially almonds and apricots; and the famous *tumbaku*, or tobacco of Shiraz, of which the local crops appeared to be, for the most part, locally consumed, the bulk of the export to Syria and Turkey coming from other districts. The wine, for which Shiraz is famous, is also in such extensive local demand as to leave no residue for exportation.

Vintage of Shiraz

Of the vintage of Shiraz I shall have something to say in a later chapter upon the resources and products of Persia. I may here mention that there are two varieties, a red and a white wine, which are stored in jars and sold in glass bottles of curious shape, locally manufactured. I thought that some old Shiraz wine which I tasted was by far the best that I had drunk in Persia, an opinion which has apparently been shared by others before me, seeing that, two centuries ago, John Struys plaintively remarked that it was 'held in such esteem that it was as dear as Canary Sack in the Low Countreys,' whilst Dr. Fryer, who may be supposed to have given a more scientific verdict, observed:—

> The Wines of the Growth of this Country are esteemed the most Stomachical and Generous in all Persia, and fittest for common drinking, when allayed a little with Water, otherwise too heady for the Brain and heavy for the Stomach, their Passage being retarded for want of that proper Vehicle. It is incredible to see what quantities they drink at a merry meeting, and how unconcerned the next day they appear, and

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brisk about their Business, and will quaff you thus a whole week together.[1]

Worthy doctor! His genial testamur would have raised a tempest about his ears, and have provoked a fortnight's controversy in the 'Times,' had it been proffered in another country nearer home at the latter end of the nineteenth century.

Other manufactures

Among the other manufactures of Shiraz which came under my notice, and for which the place is famous, are the enamelled bowls and stems of *kalians* or water-pipes, *repoussé* silver work, of which very elegant frames and salt-cellars with Oriental designs are fabricated for European customers; *khatem bandi*, a species of mosaic work in wood, brass, silver, ivory, and stained bone, small fragments of which are fixed in a bed of glue, and then planed smooth, the strips being fitted together as the sides and lids of very pretty boxes; seals, engraved on cornelians and other stones; and jewellery. Of the natural products I may mention the moss-roses and the *bulbul* or nightingale, which appears to be almost the precise counterpart of the English bird.

Mosques and colleges

Shiraz, like most Persian cities, has its epithet of personal glorification, which is in this case Dar-el-Ilm, or Abode of Science, a pretension for which I should have thought that its notoriously convivial habits would have admittedly disqualified it. Nevertheless, for a city of its present size, it is well supplied with religious edifices, although these, alike by their size and decay, tell the story of a deposed capital rather than of a devout population.[2] The oldest mosque is the Musjid-i-Jama, built in 875 A.D. by Amru bin Leith, brother and successor of the famous Yakub of that name. But little remains of the original structure, the whole being in a shocking state of ruin from earthquakes and the ravages of time; but in the centre of the main court is a small, square, stone building, reported to be a copy of the Kaaba at Mecca, with circular towers at the corners, presenting in blue Kufic inscriptions round their summits the date 1450 A.D. This curious edifice is known as the Khoda-Khaneh, or House of

[1] *Travels in Persia*, p. 245. Compare Chardin, *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. viii. pp. 436–7; Kaempfer, *Amœn. Exot.*, pp. 376–381, and Franklin, *Observations on Tour*, vol. iii. p. 17.

[2] The only good account that I know of the buildings of Shiraz at the present day is contained in Mme. Dieulafoy's book, accompanied by admirable illustrations. *La Perse*, cap. xxiv.

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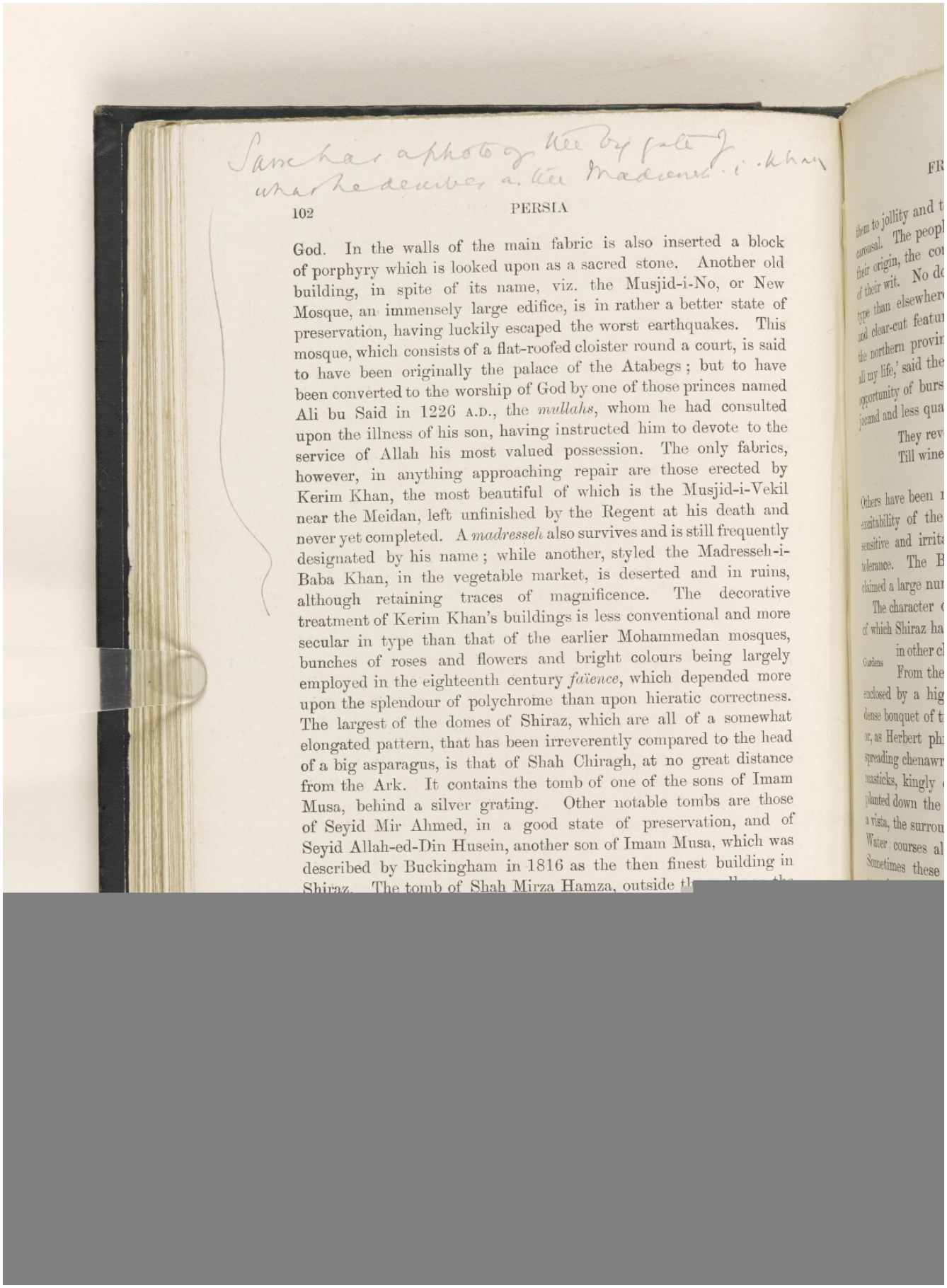

Sarre has a photo of the big gate of what he describes as the Madresseh-i-Khan



God. In the walls of the main fabric is also inserted a block of porphyry which is looked upon as a sacred stone. Another old building, in spite of its name, viz. the Musjid-i-No, or New Mosque, an immensely large edifice, is in rather a better state of preservation, having luckily escaped the worst earthquakes. This mosque, which consists of a flat-roofed cloister round a court, is said to have been originally the palace of the Atabegs; but to have been converted to the worship of God by one of those princes named Ali bu Said in 1226 A.D., the *mullahs*, whom he had consulted upon the illness of his son, having instructed him to devote to the service of Allah his most valued possession. The only fabrics, however, in anything approaching repair are those erected by Kerim Khan, the most beautiful of which is the Musjid-i-Vekil near the Meidan, left unfinished by the Regent at his death and never yet completed. A *madresseh* also survives and is still frequently designated by his name; while another, styled the Madresseh-i-Baba Khan, in the vegetable market, is deserted and in ruins, although retaining traces of magnificence. The decorative treatment of Kerim Khan's buildings is less conventional and more secular in type than that of the earlier Mohammedan mosques, bunches of roses and flowers and bright colours being largely employed in the eighteenth century *faïence*, which depended more upon the splendour of polychrome than upon hieratic correctness. The largest of the domes of Shiraz, which are all of a somewhat elongated pattern, that has been irreverently compared to the head of a big asparagus, is that of Shah Chiragh, at no great distance from the Ark. It contains the tomb of one of the sons of Imam Musa, behind a silver grating. Other notable tombs are those of Seyid Mir Ahmed, in a good state of preservation, and of Seyid Allah-ed-Din Husein, another son of Imam Musa, which was described by Buckingham in 1816 as the then finest building in Shiraz. The tomb of Shah Mirza Hamza, outside th

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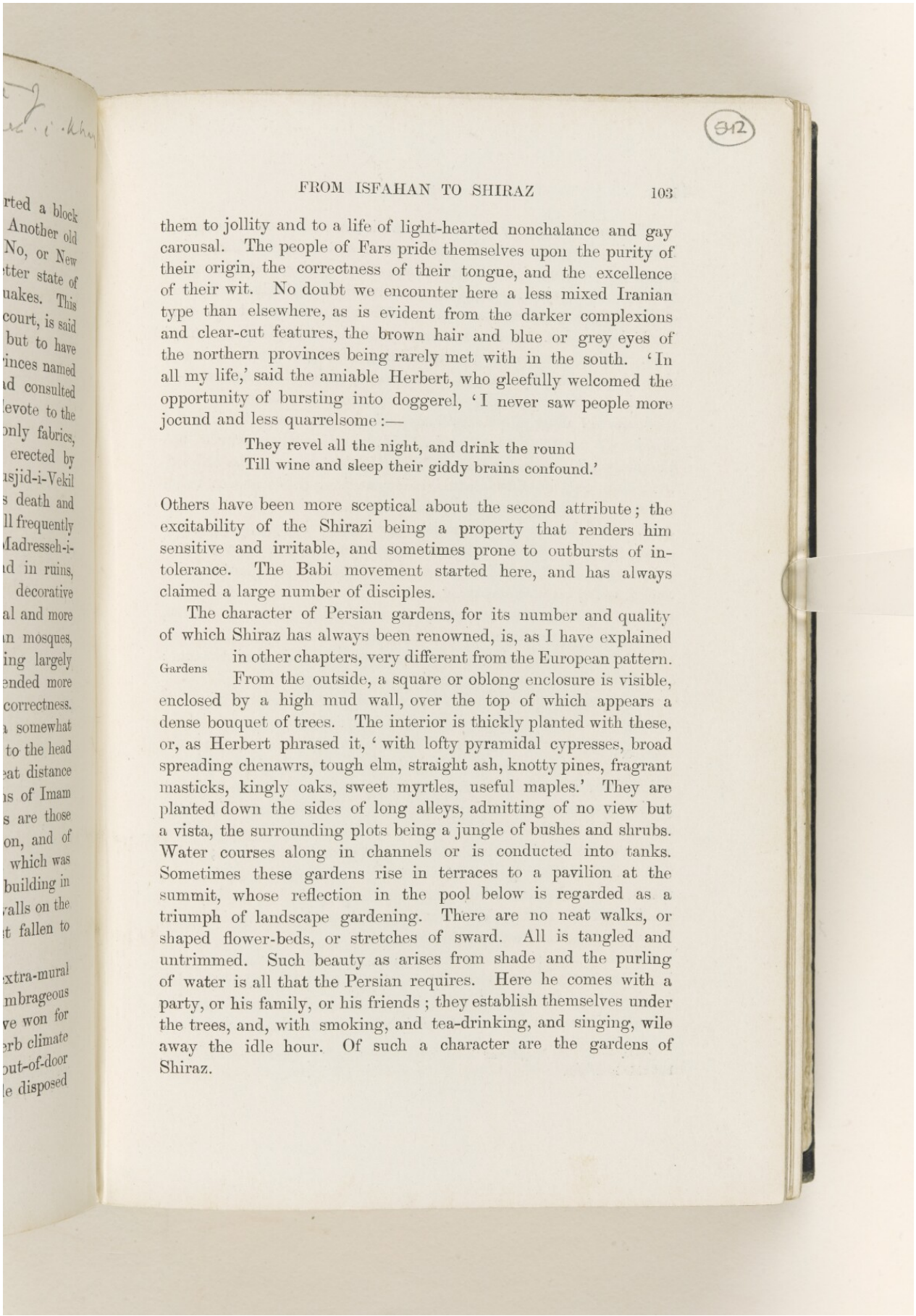



them to jollity and to a life of light-hearted nonchalance and gay carousal. The people of Fars pride themselves upon the purity of their origin, the correctness of their tongue, and the excellence of their wit. No doubt we encounter here a less mixed Iranian type than elsewhere, as is evident from the darker complexions and clear-cut features, the brown hair and blue or grey eyes of the northern provinces being rarely met with in the south. 'In all my life,' said the amiable Herbert, who gleefully welcomed the opportunity of bursting into doggerel, 'I never saw people more jocund and less quarrelsome:—

They revel all the night, and drink the round
Till wine and sleep their giddy brains confound.'

Others have been more sceptical about the second attribute; the excitability of the Shirazi being a property that renders him sensitive and irritable, and sometimes prone to outbursts of intolerance. The Babi movement started here, and has always claimed a large number of disciples.

Gardens

The character of Persian gardens, for its number and quality of which Shiraz has always been renowned, is, as I have explained in other chapters, very different from the European pattern. From the outside, a square or oblong enclosure is visible, enclosed by a high mud wall, over the top of which appears a dense bouquet of trees. The interior is thickly planted with these, or, as Herbert phrased it, 'with lofty pyramidal cypresses, broad spreading chenawrs, tough elm, straight ash, knotty pines, fragrant masticks, kingly oaks, sweet myrtles, useful maples.' They are planted down the sides of long alleys, admitting of no view but a vista, the surrounding plots being a jungle of bushes and shrubs. Water courses along in channels or is conducted into tanks. Sometimes these gardens rise in terraces to a pavilion at the summit, whose reflection in the pool below is regarded as a triumph of landscape gardening. There are no neat walks, or shaped flower-beds, or stretches of sward. All is tangled and untrimmed. Such beauty as arises from shade and the purling of water is all that the Persian requires. Here he comes with a party, or his family, or his friends; they establish themselves under the trees, and, with smoking, and tea-drinking, and singing, wile away the idle hour. Of such a character are the gardens of Shiraz.

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The most northerly of these, at a distance of about one and a half mile from the city, is that known as the Bagh-i-Takht, i.e. Garden of the Throne, or Takht-i-Kajar, i.e. Throne of the Kajars. A palace was first built on this site by one of the Salghur Atabegs, named Karajeh, and was called from him Takht-i-Karajieh. Seven hundred years later Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar commenced the rebuilding of a palace on the same site, whose name, by a slight verbal transposition, became Takht-i-Kajarieh. The building was completed by Fath Ali, when Governor of Fars, and was occupied for three months by the Mission of Sir Gore Ouseley, in 1811, when on their way to the Persian capital. It stood, as the name indicates, upon the hillside, the conformation of the latter being utilised to construct seven terraces, one above the other, faced with tiles, with a long *hauz* or tank, called the *dariacheh*, or little sea, at the bottom, and a two-storeyed edifice at the summit. The whole is now in a state of utter ruin. The wall is broken down, the alleys, planted with orange trees, are unkempt and deserted, the pavilion is falling to pieces. In common with many other of the gardens of Shiraz, this is Crown property; but the notorious parsimony of the Shah forbids him from issuing funds adequate for their maintenance; and accordingly decay makes unimpeded progress.

Bagh-i-Takht

I also visited the Bagh-i-No, or New Garden, on the right of the Isfahan road, leading down into Shiraz. It was new about seventy years ago, when it was constructed, with the usual features of walks, canals, and cascades, by Husein Ali Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah. In one of its *imarets*, or pavilions, was a portrait of the latter monarch, seated in state, and receiving the British Mission of Sir John Malcolm. The walled enclosure is still filled with cypress and fruit-trees; but I found the summer palace at the top in a state of complete ruin, the wood-work crumbling away and the painting and stucco peeling off the walls. Water remained in a large circular tank, but was covered with an unsightly scum.

Bagh-i-No

On the other side of the Isfahan road, and a little above the Hafizieh, is the Jehan Nemah,[1] or Displayer of the World, which was known as the Bagh-i-Vekil in the time of Kerim Khan, but changed its name under Fath Ali, who, when Governor of Fars,

[1] Dr. Wills has explained it as Bagh-i-Jan-i-ma, i.e. Garden of our Souls, but this is wrong.

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built a summer-house here. It occupies a walled enclosure, about 200 yards square, but contains little beyond cypresses and ruin.

Jehan Nemah

In the early part of the century its central pavilion, or Kolah Feringhi, was in good repair, and was assigned to English travellers of distinction, of whom C. J. Rich, British Resident at Baghdad and the explorer of Kurdistan, died there of cholera, on October 5, 1821, and was buried in the garden.

Higher up, on the same side of the road, is the Dilgusha or Heart's Ease, which was laid out by Haji Ibrahim, when *Kalantar*,

Dilgusha

over a hundred years ago, and is irrigated by a stream that flows down from the Sadieh, a little above. In 1811 Morier reported it as in a state of ruin; but when I visited it in 1889 it was in better repair than any other garden in the outskirts of Shiraz, having passed into the hands of the Sahib Diwan. Its alleys and trees and tank were in good condition, and a large party of closely-veiled Persian ladies, waddling along like bales of blue cotton set up on end, had been spending an agreeable afternoon under its shade.

But, after all, the chief suburban glory of Shiraz is neither its cypresses, nor its tanks, nor its gardens, but its two poets' graves.

Sadi and Hafiz

The literature of a country never produced two more differently constituted exponents than Sadi and Hafiz, nor two whose opposite temperaments and philosophy appealed more closely to the moralising and the lighter-hearted instincts of their countrymen. Perhaps it is the predominance of the latter ingredient in the composition, at least, of the inhabitants of Fars, that has accounted for Hafiz' greater popularity. Sheikh Maslah-ed-Din, surnamed Sadi, was the elder by a century. Born at Shiraz in 1193 A.D. (some say in 1184), he lived to little short of one hundred years, although his enthusiastic countrymen have sometimes credited him with a considerable excess above the century. He was one of the greatest travellers of the Middle Ages. There were few countries between the Mediterranean and Hindustan that he did not explore in the guise of a dervish, being taken prisoner by the Crusaders in Palestine, making the pilgrimage to Mecca fourteen times, and assuming the religion of Vishnu in India in order to extend his knowledge. Well might he say of himself —and I cannot imagine a better traveller's motto—'I have wandered through many regions of the world, and everywhere have I mingled with the people. In each corner I have gathered

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something of good. From every sheaf I have gleaned an ear.' Returning from his peregrinations, the poet resided for the last thirty years of his life at his native city, devoting himself to literary production, of which his 'Gulistan,' or Rose Garden, and his 'Bostan,' or Fruit Garden, are the most famous. Sadi had not been long dead when Hafiz was born; this being the poetical sobriquet worn by Mohammed Shems-ed-Din, also of Shiraz. Of his life we know little, but his mingled vein of gaiety and mysticism, expressed in a hundred odes and sonnets, in praise of wine, women, music, and love, with a higher strain of allegory sometimes lurking behind, have endeared him to his emotional countrymen, while they alternately remind us of the odes of Horace and the Song of Solomon. It is disputed by erudite Persians whether the efforts of Hafiz' more abandoned Muse are to be literally or figuratively interpreted. For my own part, I would not inflict upon the genial memory of the poet the affront of misconstruction that has twisted the beautiful epithalamium of Solomon into an incomprehensible rhapsody about the Church. Hafiz died and was buried at Shiraz in A.D. 1388.

Tomb of Sadi

The Sadieh, or enclosure that holds the tomb of Sadi, is at the distance of about one mile from the town in a north-easterly direction, and lies just under the mountains. A garden precedes a building, containing some small rooms in the centre, and an arched *diwan* on either side, in one of which, with plain, whitewashed, unpretentious walls, behind a tall brass lattice or screen, reposes the sarcophagus of the poet.[1] This is an oblong chest of stone, open at the top, and covered with Arabic inscriptions. A friendly green-turbaned *seyid* did the honours of the place. A hundred years ago, when Franklin saw it, this tomb, which is the original fabric, was covered with a very ancient wooden case, painted black and inscribed with an ode of Sadi. In 1811, also, Ouseley saw a lid lying near; but I did not observe any such addition. In Tavernier's time (1665) the tomb 'had been very fair; but it runs to ruine.' Kerim Khan restored the building, without altering the sarcophagus; but at the beginning of the present century it had again fallen into such decay that Scott Waring in 1802 and Sir John Malcolm in 1810 offered to repair it at their own expense. It has since been subjected to some sort

[1] Illustrations of it are given by Ouseley, vol. ii. plate xxv., and Mme. Dieulafoy, p. 429.



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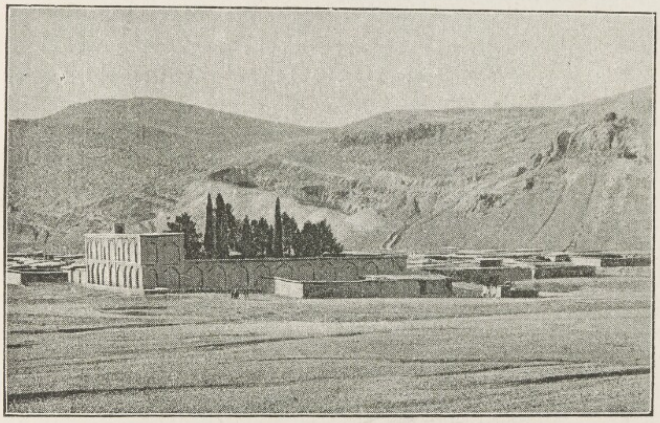
of restoration, but even now has a forlorn and friendless look. Hard by is a descent by a long flight of steps to a subterranean well, containing fish that are or were regarded as sacred to Sadi, the water proceeding from a *kanat* that subsequently irrigates the garden of Dilgusha.

Above the Sadieh is a place in the mountain known as Gahwareh-i-Div or Demon's Cradle, from a fissure or channel, leading to an arched passage, cut in the rock. A little to the east on the summit of a peak are the few surviving remains of a castle commonly called Kaleh-i-Bander (Ouseley says it is properly Fahender) supposed to have been a Sassanian

Castle and wells



TOMB OF SADI

structure. Here, too, are two wells, whose shafts are hewn to an immense depth in the solid limestone of the mountains. The largest, which is commonly called Chah Ali Bunder, is of unknown or uncertain depth. Chardin said he rehearsed a *paternoster* before a stone reached the bottom. Le Brun reported 420 feet and Stack 500 feet, but Morier's servant claimed to have measured a depth of 350 yards, while Dr. Wills let down 600 yards of string and never reached the bottom. I merely mention these conflicting estimates as illustrations of the ambiguity that is found in travellers' descriptions of almost every site or object in Persia. The seventeenth century writers said that in former days women convicted of adultery were pitched down this well; but Dr. Wills speaks of this summary mode of execution as a recent practice.

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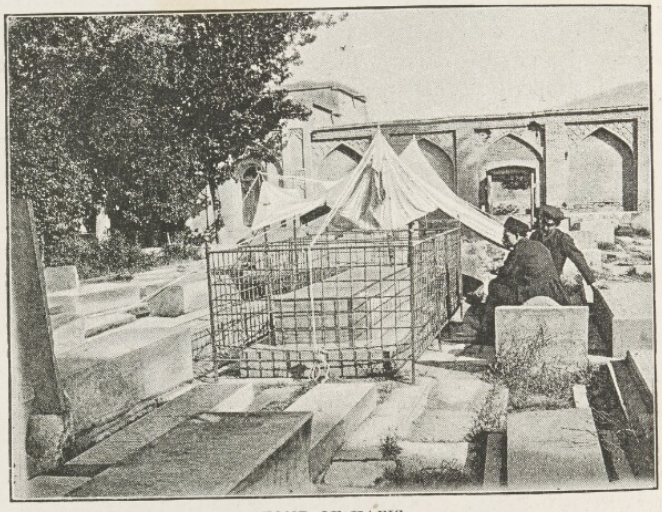
Whatever be the history or origin of these remarkable shafts, for which of course the natives have a miraculous explanation, they undoubtedly appertain to a time long anterior to Mussulman days, when the hill in which they are sunk was occupied by a considerable fortress and used as a place of strength. The third well, which is called Chah-i-Murtaza Ali, is situated in a grotto hewn out of the rock, and is visited by pilgrims who regard its waters as sacred.



TOMB OF HAFIZ

Nearer the city, and on the outskirts of its northern suburbs, the tomb of Hafiz stands in a cemetery crowded with Moslem graves. The enclosure, known as the Hafizieh, consists of an upper and a lower part, i.e. the graveyard and a garden, separated by a summer-house. The cemetery is of comparatively modern growth; for ancient authors describe the poet's tomb as surrounded by trees, the last survivor of which, a cypress, said to have been planted by himself at the head of his grave, was cut down about 1814 A.D. The copy of the poet's works that was once chained to the tomb was carried off by Ashraf the Afghan. Nadir Shah, having come here and been opportunely presented with an encouraging *fal* or fortune from the manuscript kept by the *mullahs*,[1] embellished and repaired the tomb. But the original

Tomb of Hafiz

[1] This practice, an Oriental counterpart of the *Sortes Virgilianæ* (rendered

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# VANDALISM IN PERSIA.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "BOMBAY GAZETTE."

SIR,—One fails to see, in spite of the rosy accounts of the state of Persia, given by interested writers, whether her progress is backwards or forwards. The special correspondent of a Persian weekly called the *Sureyya*, published at Cairo, writing from Sheraz, mentions a very shocking circumstance, in the pages of its issue to hand by the last mail. It is an act of unparalleled Vandalism in these modern times. Curiously enough, the head of the Shiah sect in Persia, called the *Hujjat-ul-Islam*, who wields the same sort ofpower there as thePopes of the middle Ages, to-day seven hundred years after his death, suspected the celebrated poet Hafez of being a fire worshipper, and the *fiat* went forth from him to raze his tomb and its surroundings to the ground. And it has been done. Hafez counts amongst his readers men from Europe and America, Asia and Africa, and his tomb with its literary associations had come to be a place of pilgrimage, a veritable Persian Stratford-on-Avon, to numerous European scholars, and tourists, I have no doubt that this wanton act of sacrilege will not fail to inspire all scholars and lovers of literature with feeling of indignation and horror. H. I. M. The Shah of Persia has issued orders to re-collect the timber and the stones, torn away from the poets' last resting place, and to re-build with the very same material the same building, but the same paper also says, that the bigoted Haji, is firmly determined not to allow any such thing to be done i When this news spreads in Europe one feels sure. that in spite of its being a domestic event, with no political significance, pressure would be brought to bear upon the Shah, through at least the English and German Ambassadors, by the combined protests of the poets' students, to do the needful in the matter and to remove all the traces of a deed which has caused a deep blot to settle on the literary fame of Persia.—Yours etc. K.

Bombay, Nov. 13, 1899.

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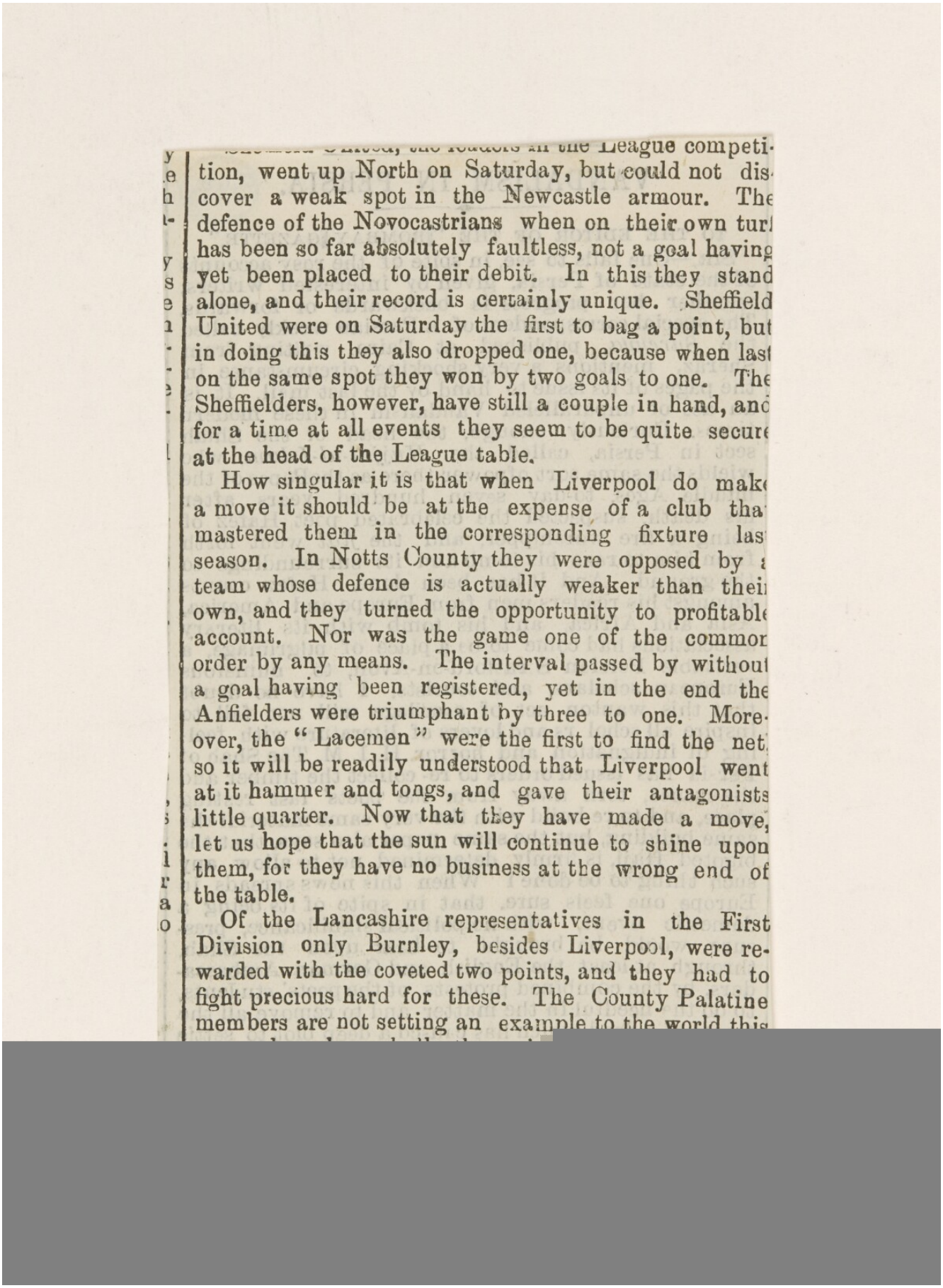

tion, went up North on Saturday, but could not dis-
cover a weak spot in the Newcastle armour. The
defence of the Novocastrians when on their own turf
has been so far absolutely faultless, not a goal having
yet been placed to their debit. In this they stand
alone, and their record is certainly unique. Sheffield
United were on Saturday the first to bag a point, but
in doing this they also dropped one, because when last
on the same spot they won by two goals to one. The
Sheffielders, however, have still a couple in hand, and
for a time at all events they seem to be quite secure
at the head of the League table.

How singular it is that when Liverpool do make
a move it should be at the expense of a club that
mastered them in the corresponding fixture last
season. In Notts County they were opposed by a
team whose defence is actually weaker than their
own, and they turned the opportunity to profitable
account. Nor was the game one of the common
order by any means. The interval passed by without
a goal having been registered, yet in the end the
Anfielders were triumphant by three to one. More-
over, the "Lacemen" were the first to find the net,
so it will be readily understood that Liverpool went
at it hammer and tongs, and gave their antagonists
little quarter. Now that they have made a move,
let us hope that the sun will continue to shine upon
them, for they have no business at the wrong end of
the table.

Of the Lancashire representatives in the First
Division only Burnley, besides Liverpool, were re-
warded with the coveted two points, and they had to
fight precious hard for these. The County Palatine
members are not setting an example to the world this





marble slab on which was said to have been sculped a cypress, was taken away by Kerim Khan, who built it into the tank in the Jehan Nemah, and replaced it by the present sarcophagus. This is made of yellow Yezd marble, and has two odes from the Diwan, or collection of the poet's works, beautifully chiselled in relief in a number of elegant panels upon its lid.[1] Of that which is sculped on the centre panels I have made a translation in elegiacs, a metre that seems to me to do least offence to the structure and spirit of the original :—

Tell the glad tidings abroad that my soul may arise in communion,
I, with celestial wings, rise from the snares of the world.
Didst thou but call me to come and wait as a slave on thy bidding,
Yet should I rise in esteem over the lords of the world.
Lord, may the cloud of Thy mercy descend in raindrops upon me,
Now ere my body arise, scattered as dust on the wind.
Sit on my tomb, ye friends, with mirth of minstrel and flagon,
So shall I rise from the grave dancing, aglow with desire.
Though I be old, one night do thou lie in my loving embraces,
Then from thy side in the morn fresh in my youth shall I rise.
Image of deeds that are lovely, on high shine forth, that as Hafiz
I from the grave may arise, soar above life and the world.

A frail iron railing now surrounds the tomb, which is visited by bands of admiring pilgrims, on devotional or festive aim intent; but I confess I think that in any other country in the world a greater distinction would encompass the last resting-place of a national hero and the object of adoration to millions. It is interesting to contrast the grave of the Persian poet with that of his European contemporary, Dante, whose sepulchre is not less an object of pilgrimage at Ravenna.

Adjoining the Hafizieh are two other enclosures, which are also consecrated by much-respected graves. Of these, one is the Chehel Tan, or Forty Bodies, so called from forty dervishes who were there interred, and were, I suppose, very eminent personages in their day. The other is the Haft Tan, or Seven Bodies, built by Kerim Khan over the remains of seven

Dervishes' graves

so famous by the stories of Charles I. and Lord Falkland), and which consisted in drawing an omen by opening at random the pages of the poet, was in existence even during the lifetime of Hafiz. It has been described by most writers, best by Binning, vol. i. pp. 222–5.

[1] There is an excellent engraving of this in W. Price's *Narrative of Embassy to Persia* (1811).

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other holy persons, as well, it is said, as of Sultan Shuja, one of the old princes of Fars. The pavilion at the upper end of this garden contains, or contained (for I did not see its interior), a number of paintings of Bible scenes (e.g. Abraham and ~~Isaac~~, Moses tending Jethro's flocks, etc.), as well as two illustrations of Sadi and Hafiz. These pictures are of no antiquity, nor is there any reason to suppose that they are likenesses. Sadi is depicted as an old man with a white beard, an axe over his shoulder, and a dervish's begging-bowl in his right hand. Hafiz is a much younger man, with an immense pair of black moustaches and a huge club.[1]

Such is a fairly complete summary of the buildings and charms, or shall I not rather say the ruins and mourning, of modern Shiraz. It is, perhaps, difficult for a foreigner to place himself in the precise mental or emotional environment that would enable him to comprehend the extraordinary effect which these have long exercised, and continue to exercise, over the imagination of Persians. I can believe that in spring-time, when the plain is a sea of verdure, and the brooks dispense a welcome coolness as they run beneath the trees, and a brilliant sun shines from the undimmed sky, the gardens of Shiraz may constitute an agreeable retreat. But it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, in the eyes of the Shirazi, every local goose is a swan, and that there neither is nor has been in the site and surroundings of the city anything to excite such extravagance of laudation. The place is very liable to earthquakes, by one of which in 1855 half the houses are said to have been destroyed, and 10,000 persons to have perished. Some writers, notably Kinneir and Rich (the latter little thinking that he was going to die there), have extolled the climate of Shiraz as among the finest in the world; but this opinion does not appear to be altogether shared by modern European residents. The atmosphere is dry, and certainly far more equable than in the north; but intermittent fever is very rife, and is attributed by some to miasma arising from the abundance of stagnant water.

Local patriotism

About seven miles in a south-easterly direction from the city is a swamp, called Karabagh, from the mountains by which it is overhung on the south. Here, in the reed-beds and on the marsh, I

[1] Copies of these pictures are given by Ouseley, vol. ii. plate lv., and Colonel Johnson, *Journey from India*, p. 59.

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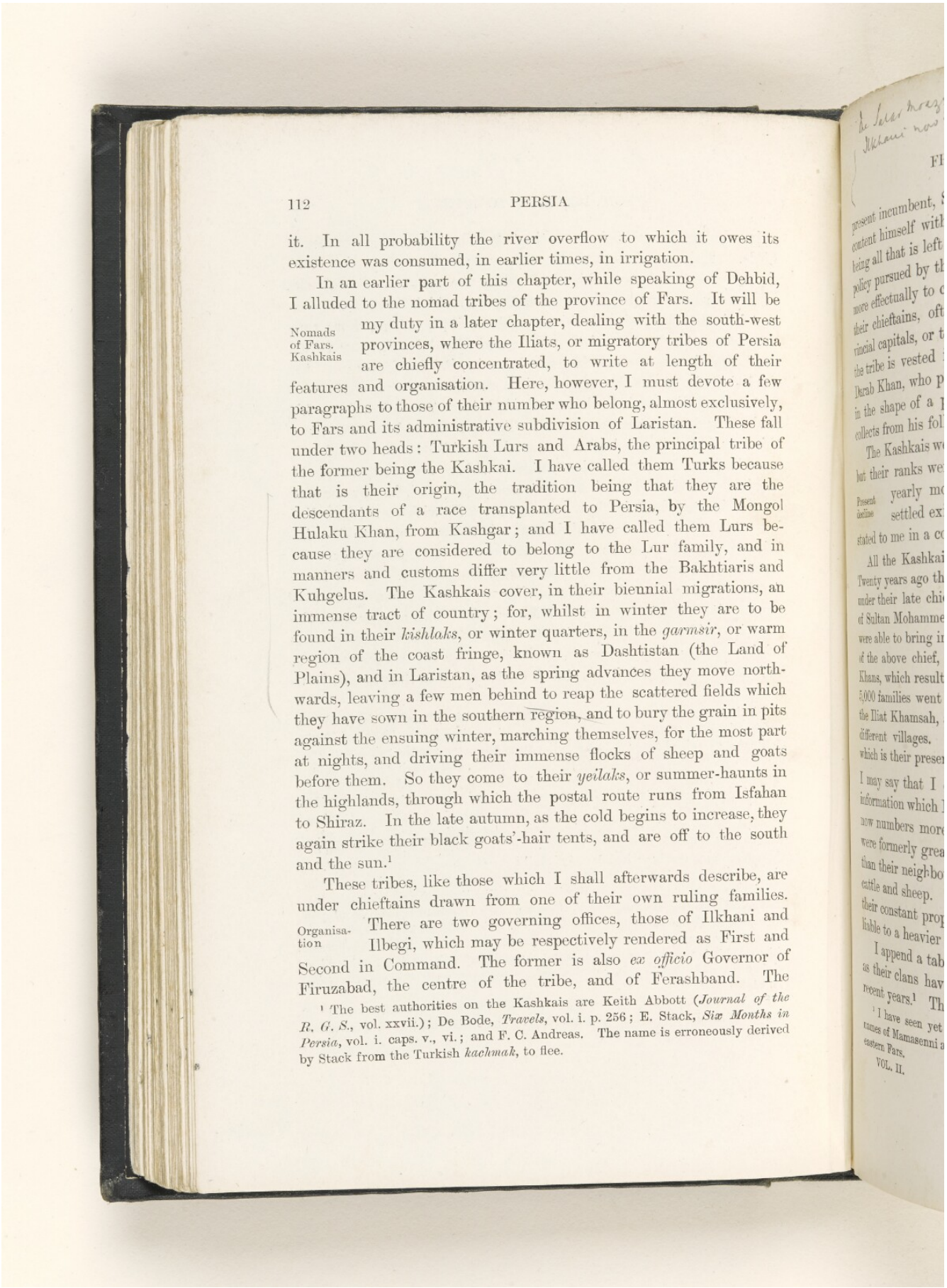
enjoyed a good day's snipe-shooting, there being a great number of birds. This marsh lies at the upper end of a valley, the lower extremity of which is filled by the salt-lake of Maharlu, some twenty miles in length, into which flows the stream that irrigates the plain of Shiraz. Along its southern shore runs the caravan-track to Sarvistan, Fasa, and Darab.[1] Further to the north-east is the second largest lake in Persia, known as the Daria-i-Niriz, or Bakhtegan, which possesses a very indented and fantastic outline, being almost divided into two lakes by a big projecting promontory or island. Though the chief confluent of this lake is the Bund-Amir, or Kur river, which I have previously traced from Persepolis, its waters, which are frequented by flamingoes and wild fowl, are extremely salt, and, in dry seasons, the desiccated bed is found to be covered with a thick saline incrustation.[2] It is doubtful, indeed, whether we ought to describe this expanse of water as a lake, seeing that it is, in reality, only an area under more or less permanent inundation. There is no depth of water, Captain Wells having walked in for a quarter of a mile without getting above his knees. It would appear from the negative evidence of history that the lake cannot be of very ancient origin; seeing that it is never mentioned by the ancient writers, and that El Istakhri, in the tenth century, is the first to allude to

Salt lakes

[1] This route has been described by Dupré, Ouseley, Flandin, Keith Abbott, Stolze, Dieulafoy, and Preece, whose works will be cited in the Table of Routes at the end of this chapter. At ten miles from Sarvistan are the ruins of a great building, whose central hall is covered by a dome, and which shows traces of spacious side-galleries and courts. This is commonly supposed to have been a Sassanian palace, but is credited by some with an Achæmenian origin. (*Vide* Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pls. 28–9, Canon G. Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, cap. xxvii., and M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, pt. iv. pls. 1–8). At Fasa there are no remains of antiquity, with the exception of a big mound, apparently artificial, styled Tell-i-Zohak (Flandin and Coste, pl. 30). At Darab, or Darabjird, in addition to the ruined rampart or Kaleh-i-Darab before mentioned, there is a great Sassanian bas-relief, like those of Naksh-i-Rustam and Shapur, representing the monarch on horseback above a prostrate figure, conferring the crown of Valerian upon the obscure Cyriadis (*ibid.* pl. 31). There is also a vast underground hall hewn in the mountain, and divided into aisles by solid pillars. This is now known as the Caravanserai Dub, but is supposed to have been originally a rock-temple. It contains neither sculptures nor inscription. (*Ibid.* pls. 31–3.)

[2] *Vide* Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. cap. viii.; Keith Abbott (1850), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxvii.; and Capt. H. L. Wells (1881), *Ibid. Proceedings*, (new series), vol. v. pp. 138–144.

Also by Pietro della Valle. (1621) who went from Shiraz ni Fasa. Darabjird & Jarom to Minaw vide Pinkerton's Travels vol. IX p 111-119





it. In all probability the river overflow to which it owes its existence was consumed, in earlier times, in irrigation.

In an earlier part of this chapter, while speaking of Dehbid, I alluded to the nomad tribes of the province of Fars. It will be my duty in a later chapter, dealing with the south-west provinces, where the Iliats, or migratory tribes of Persia are chiefly concentrated, to write at length of their features and organisation. Here, however, I must devote a few paragraphs to those of their number who belong, almost exclusively, to Fars and its administrative subdivision of Laristan. These fall under two heads: Turkish Lurs and Arabs, the principal tribe of the former being the Kashkai. I have called them Turks because that is their origin, the tradition being that they are the descendants of a race transplanted to Persia, by the Mongol Hulaku Khan, from Kashgar; and I have called them Lurs because they are considered to belong to the Lur family, and in manners and customs differ very little from the Bakhtiaris and Kuhgelus. The Kashkais cover, in their biennial migrations, an immense tract of country; for, whilst in winter they are to be found in their *kishlaks*, or winter quarters, in the *garmsir*, or warm region of the coast fringe, known as Dashtistan (the Land of Plains), and in Laristan, as the spring advances they move northwards, leaving a few men behind to reap the scattered fields which they have sown in the southern region, and to bury the grain in pits against the ensuing winter, marching themselves, for the most part at nights, and driving their immense flocks of sheep and goats before them. So they come to their *yeilaks*, or summer-haunts in the highlands, through which the postal route runs from Isfahan to Shiraz. In the late autumn, as the cold begins to increase, they again strike their black goats'-hair tents, and are off to the south and the sun.[1]

Nomads of Fars. Kashkais

These tribes, like those which I shall afterwards describe, are under chieftains drawn from one of their own ruling families. There are two governing offices, those of Ilkhani and Ilbegi, which may be respectively rendered as First and Second in Command. The former is also *ex officio* Governor of Firuzabad, the centre of the tribe, and of Ferashband. The

Organisation

[1] The best authorities on the Kashkais are Keith Abbott (*Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xxvii.); De Bode, *Travels*, vol. i. p. 256; E. Stack, *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. caps. v., vi.; and F. C. Andreas. The name is erroneously derived by Stack from the Turkish *kachmak*, to flee.



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The Salar Moazzam told me at Bushire in Nov 1903 that the Ilkhani now resides at Shiraz (548)



present incumbent, Sultan Mohammed Khan, has been obliged to content himself with these distinctions, the titular rank of Ilkhani being all that is left to him of tribal power. This is a part of the policy pursued by the Government of the Shah, which, in order more effectually to control the nomad element, keeps a hold upon their chieftains, often summoning them as hostages to the provincial capitals, or to Teheran. In the meantime, the headship of the tribe is vested in the Ilbegi, a cousin of the Ilkhani, named Darab Khan, who pays in to the provincial governor the revenue, in the shape of a poll-tax upon their flocks and herds, which he collects from his followers.

The Kashkais were once a numerous and powerful aggregation; but their ranks were greatly thinned by the famine of 1871–2; yearly more and more abandon nomadic and take to settled existence; and other causes of decline were thus stated to me in a communication derived from the tribe:—

Present decline

All the Kashkai tribes are now under the Ilbegi Darab Khan. Twenty years ago there were over 60,000 families of these tribes, all under their late chief and leader Mohammed Kuli Khan, the father of Sultan Mohammed Khan, the present Ilkhani. At that time they were able to bring into the field 120,000 (?) horse, but after the death of the above chief, the tribal affairs fell into the hands of smaller Khans, which resulted in internal dissension. Owing to this, about 5,000 families went over to the Bakhtiaris, and an equal number to the Iliat Khamsah, and about 4,000 families dispersed themselves to different villages. This reduced the total to about 25,000 families, which is their present number.

I may say that I do not accept even the reduced total, the latest information which I possess rendering it doubtful whether the tribe now numbers more than 10,000 to 12,000 tents. The Kashkais were formerly great breeders of horses, and having richer pastures than their neighbours more to the west, possessed a finer stock of cattle and sheep. But this superiority is also being forfeited, while their constant propinquity to the seat of government renders them liable to a heavier taxation.

I append a table both of the Kashkai and Arab Iliats of Fars, as their clans have been returned by different authorities during recent years.[1] The Arab tribes known under the collective title

[1] I have seen yet other and longer tables, but they contain a great many names of Mamasenni and Bakhtiari tribes, who occupy in their migrations parts of eastern Fars.



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of Khamsah, are far less numerous than the Turks, and are said not to number more than 3,000 tents. They are scattered over the same region, and claim descent from the Beni Sharban tribe of Arabia. They bear a much worse reputation than the Kashkais, robbers as the latter are apt to be. There is a certain well-judged immunity about nomad larceny: seeing that to-night they steal, and to-morrow their place knows them no more.

Arab Iliats

NOMADS OF FARS AND LARISTAN

| KASHKAI TRIBES (Turks) | | KHAMSAH TRIBES (Arabs) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1875 | 1890 | Col. Ross, 1875 | Self, 1889 | 1890 |
| Kashkuli | 1. *Nomad:* | | Arab | |
| Darashuli | Kashkuli | Baseri | Bajri | Basiri |
| Shish Beluki | Darashuli | Napar | Nofar | Nafar |
| Farsi Madan | Shish Beluki | Baharlu | Baharlu | Baharlu |
| Safi Khani | Farsi Madan | Arayalu | Apatiu | Ainalu |
| Igdar | Safakhani | Abulwardi | | Shaiwani |
| Ali Kuli Khani | Ikdir | Amalah Shahi | | Safari |
| Gallazan | Alakuini | Mamasenni[1] | | Jabbarah |
| Kuruni | Gallazan | | | |
| Karachai | Haji Masih Khan | | | |
| Dadagai | Arkapan | | | |
| Rahimi | Bulli | | | |
| Kur-i-Shuli | Kizili | | | |
| Urd-i-Shiri | Khawanin | | | |
| Jafir Begi | Naukarbab | | | |
| Imam Kuli Khani | 2. *Stationary:* | | | |
| Darab Khani | Cheharpinjah | | | |
| Amala-i-Ilkhani | Pablisi | | | |
| Bahadur Khani | Zangiun | | | |
| Kubad Khani | Alabeglu | | | |

[1] Turks.

## ROUTES IN FARS AND LARISTAN [1]

SHIRAZ TO FASA AND DARAB.—A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. i. cap. xxviii.; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. cap. viii.; E. Flandin (1841), *Voyage*, vol. ii. caps. xlvii.–viii.; Keith Abbott (1850), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 149; F. Stolze (1875), *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. zu Berlin*, 1877; Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, caps. xxv–vi.; J. R. Preece (1884), *Supplem. Procs. of the R. G. S.*, vol. i. part iii.

SHIRAZ TO BUNDER ABBAS (GOMBRUN).—(1), *viâ* Darab and Forg: A. Dupré (1808), *ibid.* vol. i. caps. xxix., xxx.; J. R. Preece (1884), *ibid.*; (2), *viâ* Jahrum and Lar: Sir T. Herbert (1627), *Some Yeares' Travel*, pp. 116–127; J. A. Mandelslo (1638), *Travels*, pp. 7, 8; J. B. Tavernier (1666), *Travels*, book v. cap. xxii.; J. Struys (1672), *Voyages*, caps. xxxiv.–v.; Sir J. Chardin (1673), *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. viii. pp. 459–506; Dr. J. Fryer (1676), *Travels*, letter v.; C. Le Brun (1705), *Travels*, cap. lviii.; A. Dupré (1808), *ibid.*, vol. ii. cap. xl.

SHIRAZ TO FIRUZABAD AND BUSHIRE.—J. Scott Waring (1802), *Tour to Sheeraz*, cap. xxvi.; Aucher Eloy (1837), *Relations de Voyages*, pp. 511–536; F. Stolze (1875), *ibid.*; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. cap. iv.; Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *ibid.*, caps. xxvi.–viii.

FIRUZABAD TO LAR.—E. Stack (1881), *ibid.*, vol. i. cap. vi.

[1] In this table *ibid.* signifies the work by the same writer before mentioned.

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# CHAPTER XXI

## PERSEPOLIS, AND OTHER RUINS

Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns and wild images
Of more than man, where marble demons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on these speechless shapes, nor when the morn
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

SHELLEY, *Alastor*, 116-28.

I SHALL devote this chapter to a critical examination of the several ruins and monuments of antiquity that are encountered within the space of a few miles in the valleys of the Polvar and of Mervdasht, through which the traveller rides at a distance of forty miles to the north of Shiraz. Here, within easy reach and almost within sight of each other, is grouped in all probability the most considerable collection of important remains, belonging to widely different historical periods, that so circumscribed an area can anywhere display. They belong to two epochs, the Achæmenian and the Sassanian, and they represent three forms of antiquarian art: the structure of palaces, the excavation of rock-tombs, and the chiselling in high relief of sculptures on stone. The Achæmenian remains may be divided into four groups: (1) the ruins of the royal city at Istakhr (to which must be appended an account of its successor in Sassanian and Mohammedan days, with the few surviving relics of mediæval handiwork); (2) the royal sepulchres, the fire altars, and other remains at Naksh-i-Rustam; (3) fragments on the plain of Mervdasht; and (4) the great platform of Persepolis, with its series of ruined halls and palaces, and its rock-sepulchres behind. The Sassanian remains also fall into four groups, which will be dealt with in the order of their occurrence to a traveller coming from the north: (1) the Pehlevi

Groups of Achæmenian and Sassanian ruins



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inscriptions in the cave of Hajiabad; (2) the series of bas-reliefs representing the investiture, combats, and triumph of the sovereigns of this dynasty, which are carved in the cliff-face below the tombs of the Achæmenian kings, and which have given to the place the name of Naksh-i-Rustam, or Pictures of Rustam, from the prevalent Persian belief that the national hero is the individual therein depicted; (3) similar rock-carvings on the other or southern side of the valley of the Polvar, to which has been given, for a similarly foolish reason, the name of Naksh-i-Rejeb, though who Rejeb was I am unable to explain; (4) Pehlevi inscriptions on the platform of Persepolis. Though the Sassanian sculptures are later in date by at least six to seven hundred years, and in some cases by more, than the Achæmenian trophies, I shall yet deal with them first; both because they are first encountered, and because I desire to clear the ground for that which is the main object of this chapter, viz. a discussion of the architecture and ruins of Persepolis.

In the previous chapter I mentioned that after leaving Sivend the wayfarer whose face is turned southward enters a broad cliff-confined valley, through whose level bottom the Polvar has scoured for itself a deep bed in the soft soil. About half-way down this valley is the village of Hajiabad, the cliff-wall to the north of which, about one mile distant, is pierced by several natural caverns of considerable depth and dimensions. In the entrance to one of these, which is commonly named from Sheikh Ali, no doubt some venerable recluse who selected this spot for his retreat, but which is also known as Teng-i-Shah Sarvan, five square tablets or panels have been smoothed in the rock at a height of six to seven feet from the ground for the purpose of receiving inscriptions. Two only are so filled; and they contain the celebrated bilingual epigraph of Shapur I., which I have previously mentioned in vol. i., and upon his interpretation of which Mr. Thomas has based the theory, for which there is no external confirmation, of the conversion to Christianity of that king. Morier appears to have been the first to visit the cave;[1] Ker Porter the first to copy the inscription,[2] of which illustrations were afterwards given by Flandin and Coste,[3] and more recently by Stolze,[4] and of which plaster casts were brought to England in 1835 by Sir E. Stannus, British Resident at Bushire. That the decipherment of the Pehlevi character has reached no scientific stage of development, is manifest from the different readings that have been given of the Hajiabad lines; and sooner than pin my faith either to the philo-Christian theory of Mr. Thomas,[5] or to the bowshot theory

Sassanian remains: 1. Hajiabad Inscription

[1] *Second Journey*, p. 80.
[2] *Travels*, vol. i. p. 513.
[3] *Perse Ancienne*, vol. ii. pl. 164; vol. iv. pl. 193.
[4] *Persepolis*, vol. ii. pl. 126.
[5] *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, pp. 73–101.

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of Dr. M. Haug,[1] although I believe that the latter has secured the verdict of most scholars, I prefer the security of unshamed ignorance.

2. Sculptures of Naksh-i-Rustam

It was from the ragged *chapar-khaneh* of Puzeh, as stated in the last chapter, that I set forth to visit the combined Achæmenian and Sassanian remains at the western extremity of the cliff wall, known as Husein Kuh, that bounds the valley of the Polvar on the north, some three miles from Hajiabad, and sinks immediately beyond the sculptures into the broad plain of Mervdasht. From the post-house they cannot be more than one mile and a quarter distant in a straight line; and, standing on the roof of the stables, I could easily trace the three colossal cruciform cuttings in the rock face that marked the site of three out of the four royal tombs, a small black spot in the centre of each transverse limb indicating the violated portal. Yet, though the distance is insignificant, so cut up is the valley with gullies and water-courses that I was obliged to make a détour of at least one mile further, and to approach the cliff from the eastern side. At other seasons of the year the traveller is sometimes conducted by a similar détour to the west. The entire extent of cliff occupied by the tombs and bas-reliefs is less than two hundred yards in length; and the latter were executed by order of the Sassanian sovereigns, on panels of the rock, purposely smoothed, below the sepulchres of their illustrious predecessors, either on a level with the soil, which is here very much in excess of its original height, or a little above it.[2] Broadly speaking, the sculptures fall into two classes, those of the early Sassanian period, of Ardeshir and of Shapur I., in the middle of the third century A.D., and those of the middle Sassanian period, about the time of Varahran IV. and V. at the end of the fourth century and later. For the art of the later Sassanians, at the beginning of the seventh century, we must refer to the grottoes of Bisitun. It is only in the present century that the true historical reference of the bas-reliefs of Naksh-i-Rustam has been definitely ascertained, although Persians can still be found in abundance who decline to recognise in the crowned and bearded equestrian giant of the portraits any other than their beloved Rustam—an error which was even shared by the learned Niebuhr little more than one hundred years ago. Small wonder, then, that in the fifteenth century Barbaro the Venetian, all unconscious of the absurdity of his hypothesis, should

[1] *Essays on the Sacred Language of the Parsees.*

[2] The best accounts of Naksh-i-Rustam in modern times are those of J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, pp. 125–8; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 293 *et seq.*; Sir R. Ker Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 530–61; and the works, containing plates, which are cited later on. More recent writers, such as Ussher and Mounsey, have mainly copied their predecessors.

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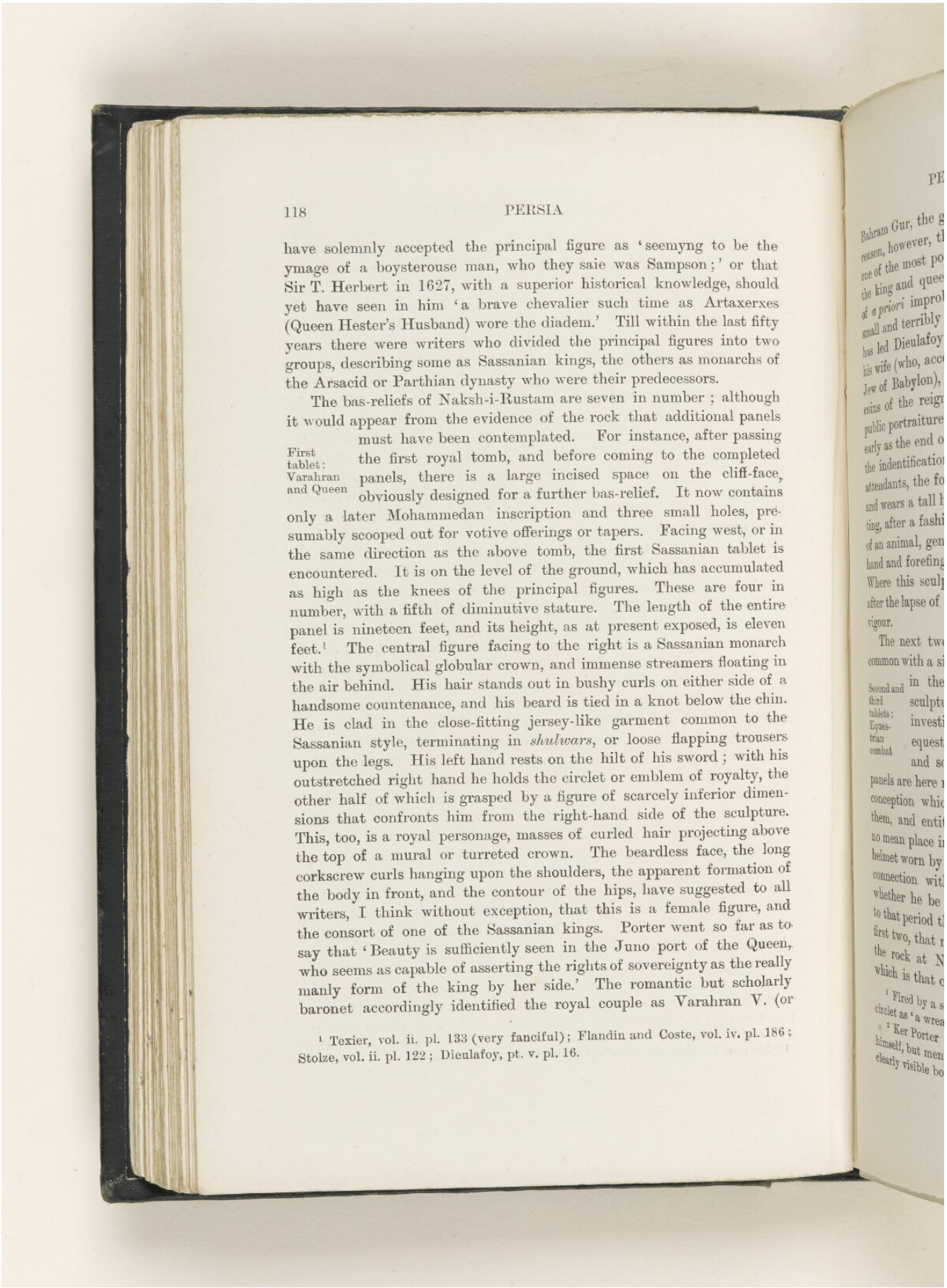



have solemnly accepted the principal figure as 'seemyng to be the ymage of a boysterouse man, who they saie was Sampson;' or that Sir T. Herbert in 1627, with a superior historical knowledge, should yet have seen in him 'a brave chevalier such time as Artaxerxes (Queen Hester's Husband) wore the diadem.' Till within the last fifty years there were writers who divided the principal figures into two groups, describing some as Sassanian kings, the others as monarchs of the Arsacid or Parthian dynasty who were their predecessors.

The bas-reliefs of Naksh-i-Rustam are seven in number; although it would appear from the evidence of the rock that additional panels must have been contemplated. For instance, after passing the first royal tomb, and before coming to the completed panels, there is a large incised space on the cliff-face, obviously designed for a further bas-relief. It now contains only a later Mohammedan inscription and three small holes, presumably scooped out for votive offerings or tapers. Facing west, or in the same direction as the above tomb, the first Sassanian tablet is encountered. It is on the level of the ground, which has accumulated as high as the knees of the principal figures. These are four in number, with a fifth of diminutive stature. The length of the entire panel is nineteen feet, and its height, as at present exposed, is eleven feet.[1] The central figure facing to the right is a Sassanian monarch with the symbolical globular crown, and immense streamers floating in the air behind. His hair stands out in bushy curls on either side of a handsome countenance, and his beard is tied in a knot below the chin. He is clad in the close-fitting jersey-like garment common to the Sassanian style, terminating in *shulwars*, or loose flapping trousers upon the legs. His left hand rests on the hilt of his sword; with his outstretched right hand he holds the circlet or emblem of royalty, the other half of which is grasped by a figure of scarcely inferior dimensions that confronts him from the right-hand side of the sculpture. This, too, is a royal personage, masses of curled hair projecting above the top of a mural or turreted crown. The beardless face, the long corkscrew curls hanging upon the shoulders, the apparent formation of the body in front, and the contour of the hips, have suggested to all writers, I think without exception, that this is a female figure, and the consort of one of the Sassanian kings. Porter went so far as to say that 'Beauty is sufficiently seen in the Juno port of the Queen, who seems as capable of asserting the rights of sovereignty as the really manly form of the king by her side.' The romantic but scholarly baronet accordingly identified the royal couple as Varahran V. (or

First tablet: Varahran and Queen

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 133 (very fanciful); Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 186; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 122; Dieulafoy, pt. v. pl. 16.

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Bahram Gur, the great hunter) and his spouse, for no other apparent reason, however, than that the story of their separation and reunion is one of the most popular of Persian legends.[1] Between the images of the king and queen (if, indeed, the latter be a woman, which, in spite of *a priori* improbability, it seems somewhat difficult to doubt) is a small and terribly defaced figure, apparently that of a boy.[2] This fact has led Dieulafoy to conjecture that the royal trio are Varahran II., his wife (who, according to Darmesteter was daughter of the leading Jew of Babylon), and their son, whose united figures appear on the coins of the reign. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether the public portraiture of the female form would have been admissible as early as the end of the third century A.D. I prefer therefore to leave the indentification uncertain. Behind the king are two warriors or attendants, the foremost of whom has a thick beard and braided hair, and wears a tall helmet (Binning calls it 'a high-peaked hat') terminating, after a fashion not unfamiliar in Sassanian likenesses, in the head of an animal, generally supposed in this case to be a horse. His right hand and forefinger are uplifted in the conventional attitude of respect. Where this sculpture has escaped mutilation, it is well executed, and after the lapse of 1300 to 1500 years retains an astonishing sharpness and vigour.

Second and third tablets: Equestrian combat

The next two tablets, as well as the fifth in sequence, belong, in common with a similar bas-relief at Firuzabad (which will be mentioned in the next chapter), to a different class of monumental sculptures. They illustrate neither the pomp of regal investiture nor the triumph over a captive foe, but the equestrian prowess of warring kings. Accordingly, the stiff and somewhat ponderous forms and pose of the ceremonial panels are here replaced by a freedom of movement and a vivacity of conception which reflect infinite credit on the artist who designed them, and entitle the sculpture of the middle Sassanian period to no mean place in the history of art. The particular form of crown or helmet worn by the king in one of these bas-reliefs has suggested their connection with the name of Varahran IV. (A.D. 388–399), and whether he be the actual monarch depicted or not, it is probably to that period that all the equestrian panels should be attributed. The first two, that now claim our notice, are carved one above the other in the rock at Naksh-i-Rustam, below the second Achæmenian tomb, which is that of Darius, son of Hystaspes. It was not till fifty years

[1] Fired by a similar enthusiasm, Mounsey (*Journey*, p. 209) describes the royal circlet as 'a wreath held in token of the bond of love which united them'!

[2] Ker Porter (*Travels*, vol. i. p. 531) did not, apparently, discern this figure himself, but mentions having seen it in an old drawing at Shiraz. It is, however, clearly visible both to the naked eye and in photographs.

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ago that the lower of the two panels was laid bare by Messrs. Flandin and Coste, having previously been concealed behind the accumulations of soil. It is even now buried up to the flanks of the horses.[1] Two mounted figures are depicted therein, charging each other at full gallop with lances in rest. The cavalier on the left hand is presumably the king; he on the right wears a helmet with a knob or some sort of projection on the top. The upper panel represents a similar combat, but at a more advanced stage.[2] Here the horse of the figure on the right is thrown upon its haunches, and its rider is driven back in his saddle, while his lance is tilted up in the air by the impetuous onset of the charging king. The latter wears a peculiar helmet, consisting of two wings on either side of the Sassanian globe (the headdress of Varahran IV.), carries a great quiver at his belt, and wears a sort of tuft on either shoulder, a similar ornament decorating the head of his charger.[3] Behind him stands an attendant or standard-bearer, carrying a peculiar standard, consisting of a ring at the end of a staff and of a cross bar below it, from which depend tassels. The king's horse further tramples under foot a prostrate figure. Both on the bodies of the cavaliers in these bas-reliefs, and on their steeds, are traces of coats of mail; and the combined panels are invaluable as documents concerning the military equipment of the period. The lower of the two, owing to its long concealment, is by far the better preserved, the upper tablet having been shockingly defaced. The latter is 24 feet long, by 12 feet high.

Between the second and third royal sepulchres occurs the fourth bas-relief, which is the first (hitherto mentioned) of the series at Naksh-i-Rustam, Shapur, and Darabjird devoted to the

Fourth tablet:



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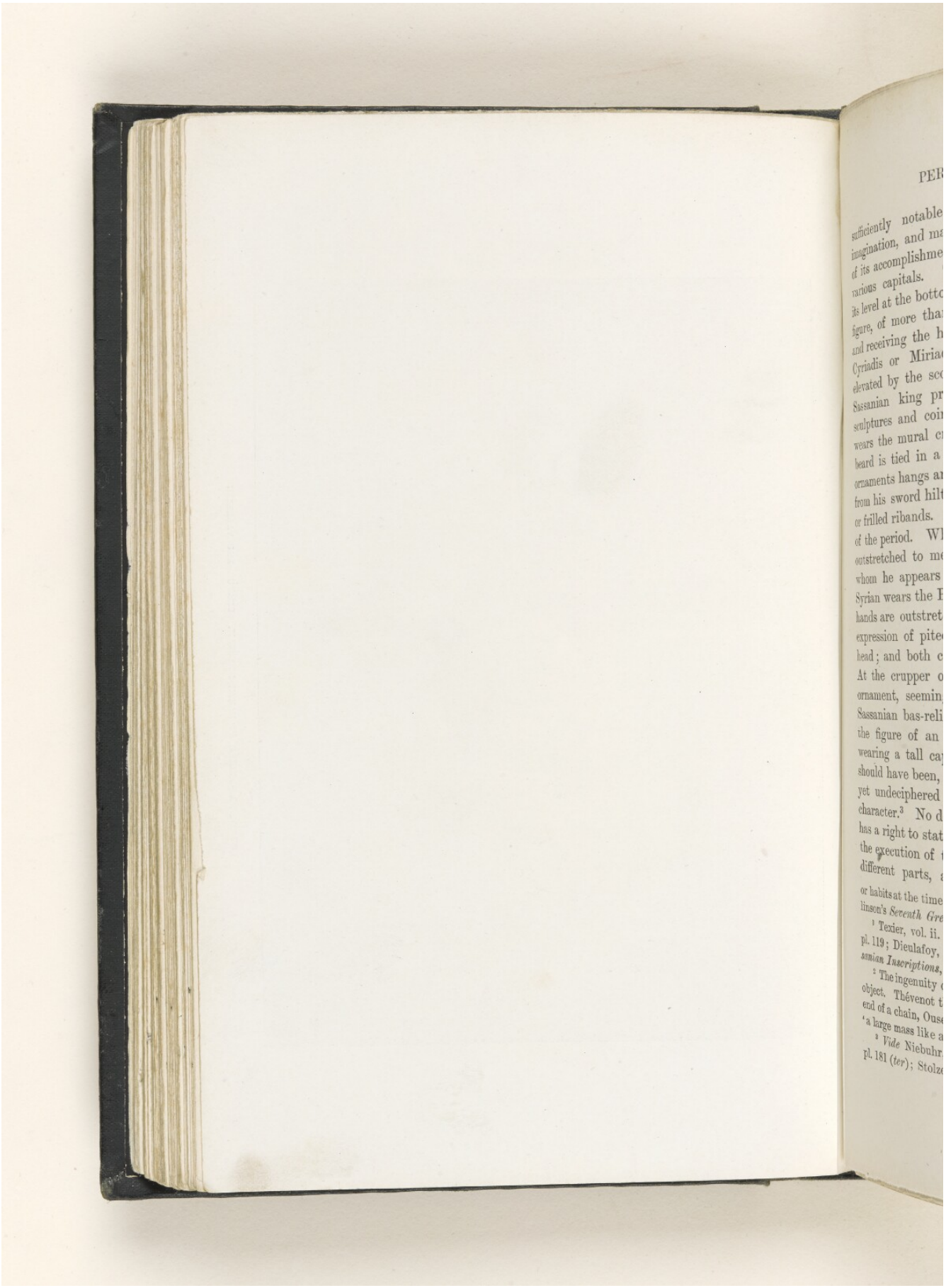
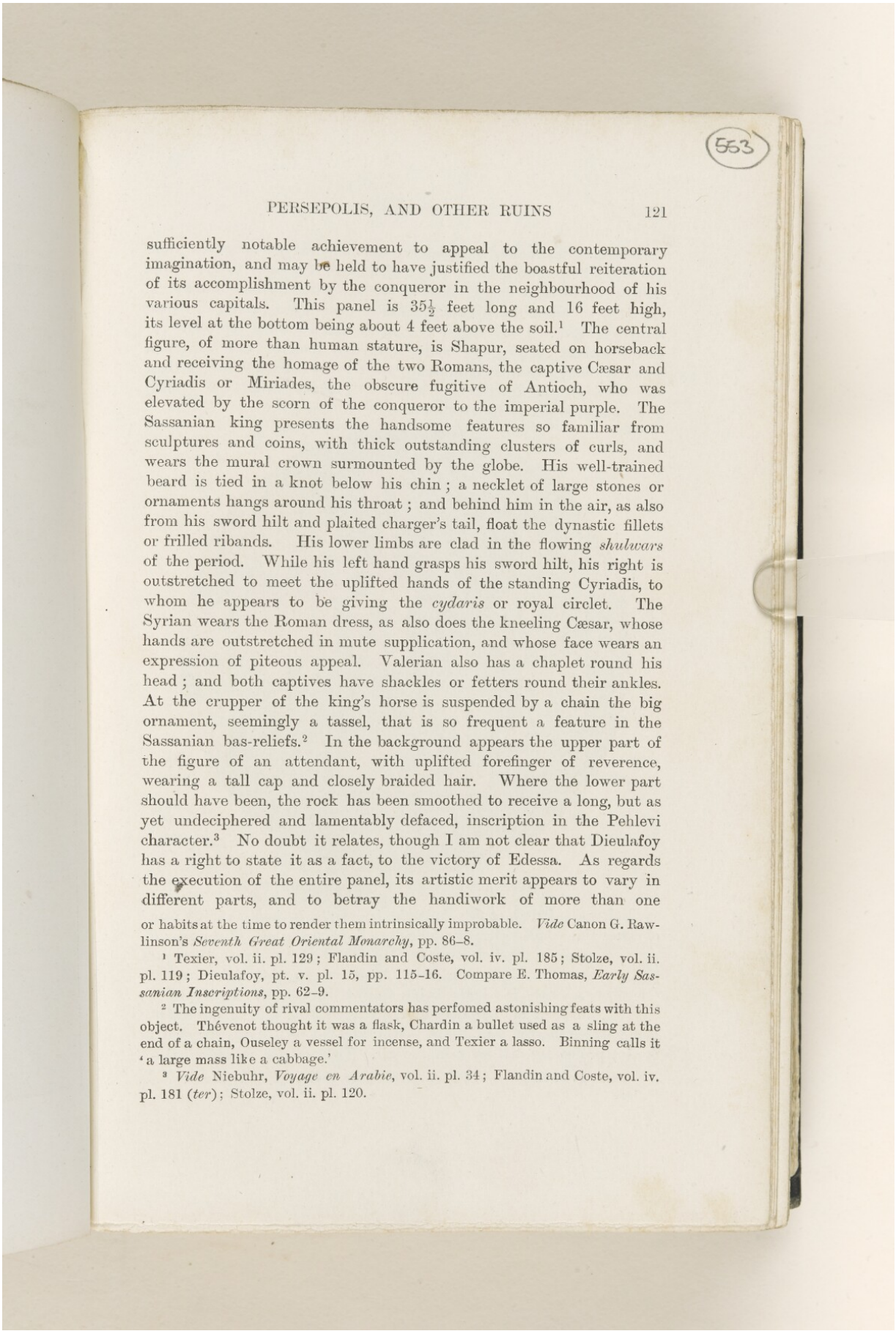
FOURTH BAS-RELIEF AT NAKSH-I-RUSTAM, SHAPUR AND VALERIAN







sufficiently notable achievement to appeal to the contemporary imagination, and may be held to have justified the boastful reiteration of its accomplishment by the conqueror in the neighbourhood of his various capitals. This panel is 35½ feet long and 16 feet high, its level at the bottom being about 4 feet above the soil.[1] The central figure, of more than human stature, is Shapur, seated on horseback and receiving the homage of the two Romans, the captive Cæsar and Cyriadis or Miriades, the obscure fugitive of Antioch, who was elevated by the scorn of the conqueror to the imperial purple. The Sassanian king presents the handsome features so familiar from sculptures and coins, with thick outstanding clusters of curls, and wears the mural crown surmounted by the globe. His well-trained beard is tied in a knot below his chin; a necklet of large stones or ornaments hangs around his throat; and behind him in the air, as also from his sword hilt and plaited charger's tail, float the dynastic fillets or frilled ribands. His lower limbs are clad in the flowing *shulwars* of the period. While his left hand grasps his sword hilt, his right is outstretched to meet the uplifted hands of the standing Cyriadis, to whom he appears to be giving the *cydaris* or royal circlet. The Syrian wears the Roman dress, as also does the kneeling Cæsar, whose hands are outstretched in mute supplication, and whose face wears an expression of piteous appeal. Valerian also has a chaplet round his head; and both captives have shackles or fetters round their ankles. At the crupper of the king's horse is suspended by a chain the big ornament, seemingly a tassel, that is so frequent a feature in the Sassanian bas-reliefs.[2] In the background appears the upper part of the figure of an attendant, with uplifted forefinger of reverence, wearing a tall cap and closely braided hair. Where the lower part should have been, the rock has been smoothed to receive a long, but as yet undeciphered and lamentably defaced, inscription in the Pehlevi character.[3] No doubt it relates, though I am not clear that Dieulafoy has a right to state it as a fact, to the victory of Edessa. As regards the execution of the entire panel, its artistic merit appears to vary in different parts, and to betray the handiwork of more than one

or habits at the time to render them intrinsically improbable. *Vide* Canon G. Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 86–8.

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 129; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 185; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 119; Dieulafoy, pt. v. pl. 15, pp. 115–16. Compare E. Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, pp. 62–9.

[2] The ingenuity of rival commentators has perfomed astonishing feats with this object. Thévenot thought it was a flask, Chardin a bullet used as a sling at the end of a chain, Ouseley a vessel for incense, and Texier a lasso. Binning calls it 'a large mass like a cabbage.'

[3] *Vide* Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie*, vol. ii. pl. 34; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 181 (*ter*); Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 120.

craftsman. Shapur and Valerian are both admirably pourtrayed ; and the king's horse also is finely rendered, though it is open to the charge that can be directed against most of the horses in Sassanian sculptures, viz. that it resembles a sturdy Flemish dray-horse much more than a royal charger. I now regret very much that I did not reproduce for this work the photograph which I myself took of this bas-relief, because, though smaller, it appears to me to be infinitely better than the accompanying engraving, which I procured from the French publisher of Madame Dieulafoy's book.



FIFTH BAS-RELIEF : EQUESTRIAN COMBAT

Fifth tablet: Equestrian combat

Below the fourth of the Achæmenian tombs is the remaining panel of equestrian combat already alluded to. It is on the level of the ground, and is 20 feet long by 11½ feet high.[1] Again there are two cavaliers engaged ; again he on the right hand is worsted, his horse being thrown back on its haunches, he himself all but dislodged from his seat by his adversary's lance, which pierces him in the throat, and his own spear, snapped in twain, projecting aimlessly in the air. This warrior wears a helmet

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 131 ; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 183 ; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 118.

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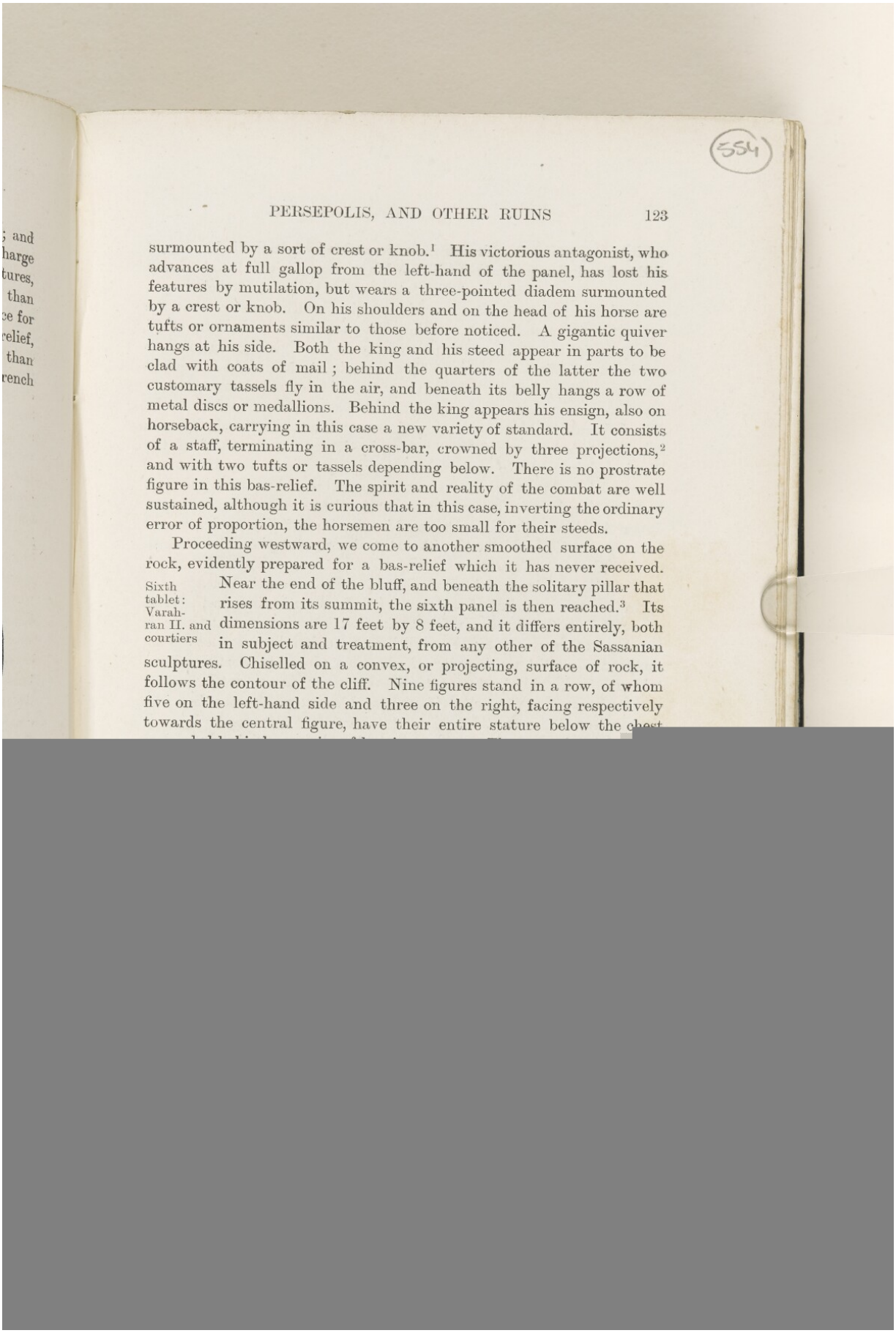

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surmounted by a sort of crest or knob.[1] His victorious antagonist, who advances at full gallop from the left-hand of the panel, has lost his features by mutilation, but wears a three-pointed diadem surmounted by a crest or knob. On his shoulders and on the head of his horse are tufts or ornaments similar to those before noticed. A gigantic quiver hangs at his side. Both the king and his steed appear in parts to be clad with coats of mail; behind the quarters of the latter the two customary tassels fly in the air, and beneath its belly hangs a row of metal discs or medallions. Behind the king appears his ensign, also on horseback, carrying in this case a new variety of standard. It consists of a staff, terminating in a cross-bar, crowned by three projections,[2] and with two tufts or tassels depending below. There is no prostrate figure in this bas-relief. The spirit and reality of the combat are well sustained, although it is curious that in this case, inverting the ordinary error of proportion, the horsemen are too small for their steeds.

Proceeding westward, we come to another smoothed surface on the rock, evidently prepared for a bas-relief which it has never received.

Sixth tablet: Varah-ran II. and courtiers

Near the end of the bluff, and beneath the solitary pillar that rises from its summit, the sixth panel is then reached.[3] Its dimensions are 17 feet by 8 feet, and it differs entirely, both in subject and treatment, from any other of the Sassanian sculptures. Chiselled on a convex, or projecting, surface of rock, it follows the contour of the cliff. Nine figures stand in a row, of whom five on the left-hand side and three on the right, facing respectively towards the central figure, have their entire stature below the chest

sculptures at Shapur), his hair is puffed and curled, and his hands rest in front upon the pommel of his sword. His figure is visible to half-way between the knees and feet, the latter being hidden from below by a projecting surface of rock, of curving outline, which has somewhat the appearance of a rostrum, but which, being smoothed in the form of an empty tablet, may, it occurs to me, have been originally designed to receive a subsidiary sculpture. The whole is at the height of several feet above the ground. Acting upon the hint of the helmet, Canon Rawlinson suggests as the subject of this bas-relief an incident in the life of Varahran II., who, having commenced to rule tyrannically, was taken to task by his principal nobles, instigated by the chief of the Magi, and in reply to their expostulations, promised amendment and reform. I doubt, however, whether a monarch would voluntarily select such an incident in his career for eternal commemoration. Had a Royal Academy existed in England in the days of King John, would he have commissioned the President to paint a great picture of Runnymede and Magna Carta ?

Adjoining this panel is what Flandin describes as the *ébauche* of a figure on the rock, but of which, as I did not notice it myself, I will quote the words of other writers who did. Morier says: 'There is besides another curious figure at full length, behind the rock, close to the sculpture, but still making part of the same piece.'[1] Porter writes: 'At one end, entirely distinct from the group, is the outline of an extraordinary figure notched in the marble, not unlike the first idle drawings of a schoolboy.'[2]

Separated only by two or three feet of rock from the bas-relief last described, is the seventh and concluding one of the series.[3] It is, also, in all probability, the earliest in date, representing, as it does, a scene which is again pourtrayed on the opposite side of the valley in the rock-recess of Naksh-i-Rejeb, as well as in the neighbourhood of Firuzabad, namely, the investiture of Ardeshir Babekan, or Artaxerxes, son of Babek or Papak, founder of the Sassanian line, with the imperial *cydaris* by the god Ormuzd. The two main figures face each other on horseback, their steeds, which, with an excess of disproportion, are here little bigger than stout cobs or ponies, touching their foreheads in the centre of the panel, whose total length is over 22 feet. The figure on the right hand of the spectator, as an inscription on the shoulder of his horse reveals, is that of the god. Upon his head is the mural crown, with curled hair piled above it, and subsequently falling upon the shoulders. His beard is

Seventh tablet: Ormuzd and Ardeshir

[1] *First Journey*, p. 127. [2] *Travels*, vol. i. p. 559.

[3] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 130; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 182; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 115; Dieulafoy, pt. v. pl. 14, pp. 113–14.

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square-cut, not tasselled. In his left hand he holds a sceptre, which in the Sassanian sculptures appears to be an emblem of divinity. With his outstretched right he grasps one-half of the *cydaris*, or circlet with pendent ribands, the other side of which is held by the king. Both figures wear long, flowing trousers, and at each horse's hind-quarters hangs the usual big tuft or tassel. Ardeshir wears a globe-crowned helmet, of which the balloon-like, inflated globe is commonly supposed to typify fire, while the close-fitting helmet with cheek-plates and back-plate supplies an interesting contribution to the history of ancient



SEVENTH BAS-RELIEF: ORMUZD AND ARDESHIR

armour. His left hand is uplifted, and, apparently, held to his mouth. He wears a rounded beard, and hair which hangs uncurled upon his shoulders. Around his horse's chest is a band adorned with circular medallions, the corresponding ornaments upon the horse of Ormuzd being lions' heads in metal. Behind the king stands a single figure holding a fly-flap, not unlike the attendants who are so conspicuous in the processional bas-reliefs of the Achæmenian kings. A prostrate figure lies on the ground, beneath either horse's hoofs, that beneath the charger of the king wearing a helmet or head-piece with a mark on

the right side and streamers behind, and being commonly supposed to represent Artabanus, the last Parthian king. On the other hand, the figure whom the god tramples underfoot appears to have snakes wreathed round his head, a symbolism which has been variously explained. Ker Porter identifies him, somewhat vaguely, with the 'gorgon-headed demon of the Arsacidian idolatry.' Thomas talks, not less obscurely, about the 'snake-crested helmet of the Mede.' Rawlinson decides for Ahriman, the embodiment of evil; Perrot, for Zohak or Azi-Dahaka, another incarnation of the evil principle.[1] Inscriptions, bilingual, but trilateral—*i.e.* in two forms of the Pehlevi character, and in Greek—are cut upon the shoulders of both horses. That upon the charger of the king, which was first deciphered by De Sacy,[2] runs as follows:—

This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the god Artakshatr (Ardeshir), King of kings Arian, of the race of the Gods, son of the God, Papak, the King.

The Greek inscription on the horse of Ormuzd says:—

This is the image of the god Zeus.

This is the sum-total of the Sassanian sculptures of Naksh-i-Rustam. We will now cross the valley again to its southern side, where, soon after turning the angle of the mountains that face the plain of Mervdasht, and setting our faces towards Persepolis, at about two miles distance from the palace-platform we come across a small natural recess[3] in the base of the cliff, the sides and back wall of which have been artificially smoothed in order to receive the work of the chisel. So snugly hidden is this rock-nook, and so littered are its approaches with loosely-piled boulders, that four travellers out of five would probably pass it unobserved. Its sides converge towards the back wall of the natural rock; and all three surfaces are adorned with bas-reliefs of the earliest Sassanian period, representing incidents similar to those which have already been described. They have suffered, however, from more deliberate and savage mutilation than their fellows on the other side of the valley, this being due, perhaps, to their greater proximity to Persepolis, whither, we are told by Chardin that the Prime Minister of Shah Sefi I. sent sixty men with orders to deface the sculptures, so as to discourage the

3. Sculptures of Naksh-i-Rejeb

[1] *Vide* Professor J. Darmesteter, *Introduction au Vendidad*, p. lxv.

[2] Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 116; E. Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, p. 29.

[3] Ouseley says it was artificially hewn, but I do not agree with him. For a plan, *vide* Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 189: and for authorities, *vide* J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, pp. 137–9; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 291–3; Sir R. K. Porter, *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 571–5; J. Ussher (1861), *Journey*, p. 546, *et seq.*; K. D. Kiach (1878), *Ancient Persian Sculptures*; as well as the works containing engravings or photographs which will be referred to.

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visits of Europeans. If the bas-reliefs of Naksh-i-Rejeb had escaped the earlier violence of the Arab invaders, to this barbarous ruffian may perhaps be attributed their cruel fate. Nevertheless, they still present one portrait-group of unsurpassed excellence, and have been preferred, by some writers, to the tablets of Naksh-i-Rustam, and by others have been ranked as equal with those of Shapur.

On the right-hand wall of the recess, the first tablet repeats the familiar scene of the investiture of Ardeshir by the god Ormuzd.[1]

First tablet: Ormuzd and Ardeshir

Its dimensions are 21 feet in length, and 9½ feet in height. The two horsemen meet in the centre of the panel; and Ormuzd, wearing, as before, the mural crown, extends the *cydaris* to the king. Here, however, are no prostrate figures beneath the horses' hoofs. The costumes and draperies have been almost obliterated by wanton outrage, and the head of Ardeshir has well-nigh disappeared.

The middle panel depicts a similar scene, in which, however, the principal actors are on foot, and other accessories are introduced.[2]

Second tablet: Ormuzd and Ardeshir

It is 18 feet long, and 10 feet high. The central figures, of colossal size, are again Ormuzd and Ardeshir, who stand confronting each other, holding the circlet in their right hands. The deity wears the mural crown, and carries a bâton or sceptre in his left hand. The king, on the left, is crowned with the inflated globe. Between the two, but nearly destroyed, appear two diminutive figures, seemingly those of children, whom conjecture has identified with two sons of Shapur, born before he ascended the throne. Behind the king are two attendants, one holding a fly-flap, the other being a bearded bodyguard, all but effaced. Behind Ormuzd, but in a separate panel, which may perhaps have an independent connection, are two other figures, with their backs turned upon him and their hands lifted to their faces. The beardless contour of these has led to the belief that they are women, and one commentator has gone so far as to recognise in one of the pair the daughter of Artabanus and mother of Shapur, and in the other the wife of Ardeshir's vizier. I am far from ready to accept the hypothesis that any of the earlier Sassanian sculptures contain the likenesses of women, and am more disposed to attribute a smooth face and braided hair to the palace eunuchs. To the left of the main tablet, on a fragment of the rock, is the bust of a figure, pointing with his finger to a Pehlevi inscription at

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 140; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 192 *bis*; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 100.

[2] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 141; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 192; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 101; Dieulafoy, pt. v. pl. 17. The two latter photographs are obscure and unsatisfactory. But so, it may be said, is the original.

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a considerable height from the ground.[1] Flandin and Coste speak of this supplemental tablet as a discovery on their part, apparently unconscious that it had been described both by Morier and Ouseley thirty years before.

Third tablet: Shapur and bodyguard

By far the best-preserved of the trio, although the faces in it have been hacked to pieces, is the concluding panel, on the left-hand side of the recess.[2] Its dimensions are also greater, being 23 feet in length by 14½ feet in breadth. Shapur I. rides upon the scene, followed by nine of his principal bodyguard, whose pose and stature are accommodated to the configuration of the rock. The perspective is extremely faulty, and there are the errors of disproportion so universal in the Sassanian sculptures; yet for a certain solemn dignity, and also as a likeness of contemporary dress and arms, this panel has a peculiar value. The king wears the globular crown, the curled hair, the tunic fastened with a clasp on the left breast, the clinging jersey, and the streaming *shulwars*, with which we are now so familiar. The charger is lifelike, and its trappings are carefully executed. His followers, with one exception, wear high round-topped caps or tiaras, upon which are symbols, supposed to be indicative of rank. Three are on foot, and stand leaning upon their long, straight swords; the rest are mounted. The identity of the main figure is left in no doubt by an inscription, in Pehlevi and Greek, first deciphered by De Sacy, upon the chest of the king's horse,[3] there being another inscription close by, on the smooth rock. It runs as follows:—

> This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the god, Shapur, King of kings Arian and non-Arian, of the race of the gods, son of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the God, Artakshatr (Ardeshir), King of kings Arian, of the race of the gods, the offspring of the god, Papak, the king.

Criticism

Before taking final leave of the Sassanian sculptures of Naksh-i-Rustam and Naksh-i-Rejeb, let us endeavour to sum up our impressions upon the phase of art which they represent. Its defects of proportion, design, and treatment are on the surface, and are very apparent. There are a clumsiness and a ponderous solidity about the forms and movements, except in the panels of equestrian combat, that produce a sense of fatigue; and a want of that higher imagination that at once idealises and impresses. Yet, for all that, we may observe in the work of the Sassanian artists a decided originality of conception, and a consciousness of the dignity of art.

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 142; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 190; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 104; Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*, pp. 30–1.

[2] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 139; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 191; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 102 (very unsuccessful); Dieulafoy, pt. v. pl. 17.

[3] Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 103; Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*.

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Their style is in no sense borrowed from the Achæmenian models that stared them in the face. On the contrary, it is the offspring of its own age, and while it is unmistakably affected, and in its later periods may even have been actually assisted, by those Roman influences with which Persia, under its Parthian rulers, had come into such close contact, it yet remains a Persian, not a Roman, art, as its handling of Roman figures and costumes sufficiently betrays. There is a certain simplicity, and even nobility, in its presentment of the monarch, who is everywhere the centre of the piece; and in the modelling of flesh and form, particularly of the horses' bodies, as well as in the treatment of armour, equipments, and dress, there is a notable advance upon any previous Persian sculpture. To me this appears the more remarkable because it arose in such swift succession to a period when there is little or no evidence that art existed at all. With the overthrow of the Arsacidæ, and the restitution of the national religion, there must have been a genuine re-awakening of the national spirit. This is expressed in the vigorous bas-reliefs of the first Sassanian kings, as well as in the palaces and public works which they constructed. Then followed a decline of art, until the second revival, in or about the time of Varahran IV. A further reaction was succeeded by one final effort of recovery, probably under Byzantine influence, in the days of the splendid Chosroes II. or Parviz. Into the effects of Sassanian art and sculpture upon other countries and later times, a subject which has been somewhat conjecturally treated by certain writers, I must here forbear from entering. Let me, however, recommend, in addition to M. Dieulafoy's somewhat fanciful work, a paper by Mr. A. Phené Spiers, published in the 'Proceedings' of the Institute of British Architects, 1892.

There remain only to be noticed two Pehlevi inscriptions, one of eleven, the other of twelve lines, which occur on the south portal of the Palace of Darius on the platform at Persepolis.[1] They relate to the reigns of Shapur II. and Shapur III., and were first copied and brought to England by Ouseley in 1811.[2] Their existence must have been overlooked by those who have written that there is no trace on the Achæmenian platform either of Seleucid, Parthian, or Sassanian rule.

Sassanian inscriptions at Persepolis

From the Sassanian monuments in the valley of the Polvar I now retrace my footsteps, and reascend the stream of time to discuss the far more complex and absorbing topic of the relics that exist in the same neighbourhood, belonging to the greatest epoch of Persian history, and revealing to us in stupendous, albeit ruined, guise the indestructible

[1] E. Thomas (*Early Sassanian Inscriptions*) erroneously says, in 'an inner chamber of the Hall of Columns.'

[2] *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 238, pl. 42. For a photograph, *vide* Stolze, vol. i. pl. 49.



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handiwork of the Achæmenian sovereigns—of Darius, of Xerxes, and of Artaxerxes. Already a prelude to this discussion has been offered in the passages relating to the city and sepulchre of Cyrus at Pasargadæ; and from the older ruins and the earlier monarch we pass, by a natural sequence, to the later capital of his more remarkable successor.

Achæmenian remains

The subject may not inaptly be introduced by a few general remarks on the history and character of the four groups of remains that lie before us, all appertaining to the same period, and exemplifying in greater or less degree the same design. The ruins of Istakhr, the rock-tombs above Naksh-i-Rustam, the scattered fragments on the plain, and the pillar-strewn platform of Persepolis, are now recognised beyond possibility of doubt as the work of the successors of Cyrus, the abodes in life and after death of the celebrated Kings of Kings. And yet this knowledge is of no great antiquity in the modern world. The earliest mention of the Persepolitan ruins, of which I am aware by a European writer, is that of Friar Odoricus, who in about 1325 A.D. journeyed from Iest (Yezd) to Huz (Khuzistan) and on the way encountered

Ancient travellers

> a certain city named Comerum, which formerly was a great city, and in the olden time did great scathe to the Romans. The compass of its walls is a good fifty miles; and there be therein palaces yet standing entire, but without inhabitants.[1]

The worthy friar had evidently no idea of the real identity of Comerum. Even less, if possible, 150 years later, had the travelled Venetian, Josafa Barbaro, who, having recognised Samson in Rustam, naturally saw in Persepolis, which he called Camara, a work of Hebrew origin, and in the Bund-Amir a structure of Solomon. In the seventeenth century, Mandelslo was better informed:—

> The religious men of Schiras told me that the learned were clearly of opinion that the ancient Persepolis had stood thereabouts (i.e. at Chehel Minar), and that these were the ruines of Cyrus' Palace.[2]

Well would it have been if the friars of Shiraz had had a wider audience. Otherwise we should hardly have seen, as we have during the last two centuries only, the ruins of Persepolis variously interpreted as the work of Lamech and the tomb of Noah, as due to volcanic eruption and to the worship of idols; or have heard their date promiscuously bandied about over a space of 3000 years.[3]

[1] *Cathay and the Way thither* (Hakluyt Society).

[2] *Travels* (trans. by J. Davies), p. 4.

[3] In the present century, M. Bailly, author of *Histoire de l'Astronomie Ancienne*, wrote: 'I think I have demonstrated that the Persian Empire and the foundation of Persepolis mounted to 3209 B.C.' M. d'Hancarville was of the same opinion.

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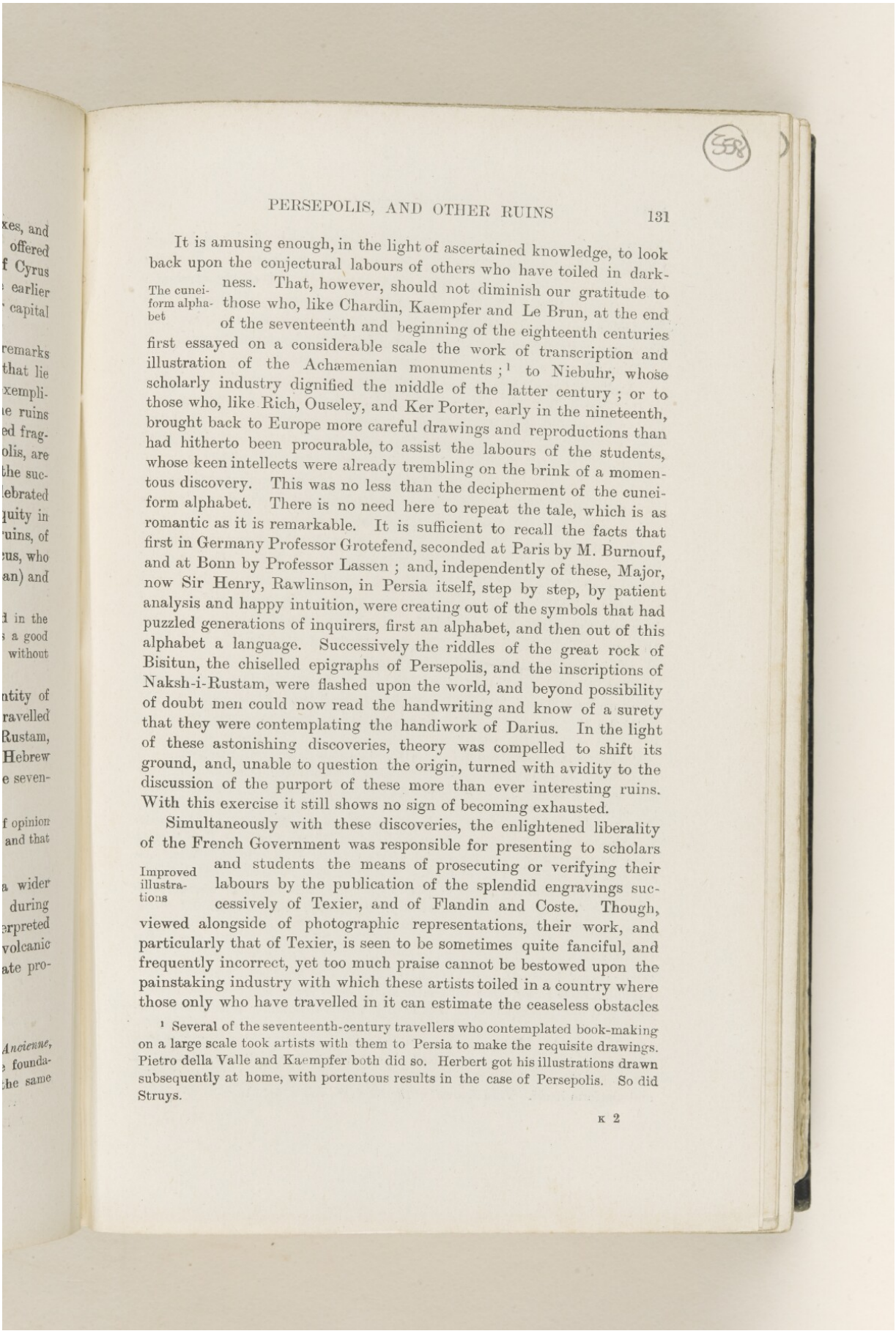



The cuneiform alphabet

It is amusing enough, in the light of ascertained knowledge, to look back upon the conjectural labours of others who have toiled in darkness. That, however, should not diminish our gratitude to those who, like Chardin, Kaempfer and Le Brun, at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries first essayed on a considerable scale the work of transcription and illustration of the Achæmenian monuments;[1] to Niebuhr, whose scholarly industry dignified the middle of the latter century; or to those who, like Rich, Ouseley, and Ker Porter, early in the nineteenth, brought back to Europe more careful drawings and reproductions than had hitherto been procurable, to assist the labours of the students, whose keen intellects were already trembling on the brink of a momentous discovery. This was no less than the decipherment of the cuneiform alphabet. There is no need here to repeat the tale, which is as romantic as it is remarkable. It is sufficient to recall the facts that first in Germany Professor Grotefend, seconded at Paris by M. Burnouf, and at Bonn by Professor Lassen; and, independently of these, Major, now Sir Henry, Rawlinson, in Persia itself, step by step, by patient analysis and happy intuition, were creating out of the symbols that had puzzled generations of inquirers, first an alphabet, and then out of this alphabet a language. Successively the riddles of the great rock of Bisitun, the chiselled epigraphs of Persepolis, and the inscriptions of Naksh-i-Rustam, were flashed upon the world, and beyond possibility of doubt men could now read the handwriting and know of a surety that they were contemplating the handiwork of Darius. In the light of these astonishing discoveries, theory was compelled to shift its ground, and, unable to question the origin, turned with avidity to the discussion of the purport of these more than ever interesting ruins. With this exercise it still shows no sign of becoming exhausted.

Improved illustrations

Simultaneously with these discoveries, the enlightened liberality of the French Government was responsible for presenting to scholars and students the means of prosecuting or verifying their labours by the publication of the splendid engravings successively of Texier, and of Flandin and Coste. Though, viewed alongside of photographic representations, their work, and particularly that of Texier, is seen to be sometimes quite fanciful, and frequently incorrect, yet too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the painstaking industry with which these artists toiled in a country where those only who have travelled in it can estimate the ceaseless obstacles

[1] Several of the seventeenth-century travellers who contemplated book-making on a large scale took artists with them to Persia to make the requisite drawings. Pietro della Valle and Kaempfer both did so. Herbert got his illustrations drawn subsequently at home, with portentous results in the case of Persepolis. So did Struys.



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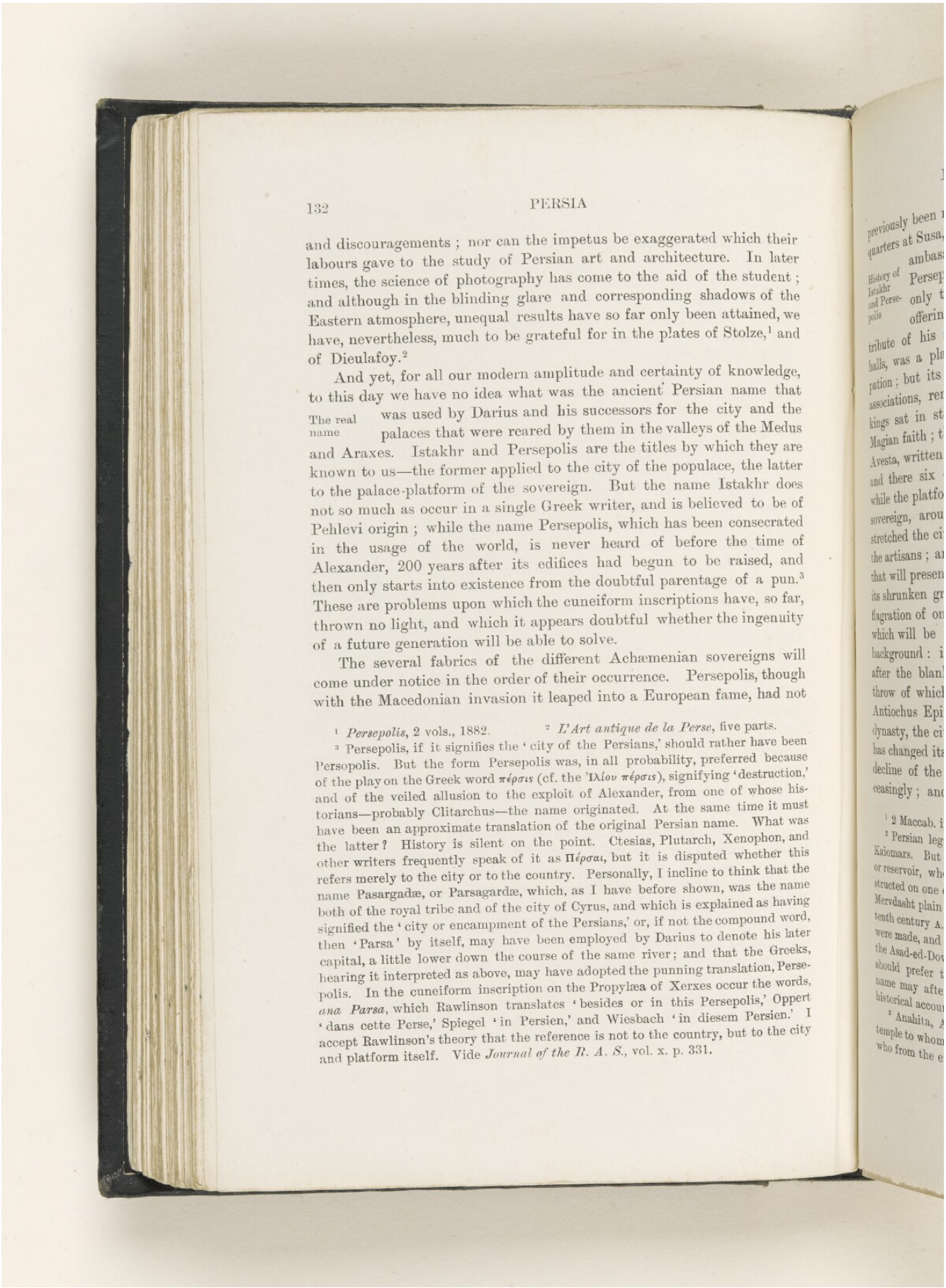



and discouragements ; nor can the impetus be exaggerated which their labours gave to the study of Persian art and architecture. In later times, the science of photography has come to the aid of the student ; and although in the blinding glare and corresponding shadows of the Eastern atmosphere, unequal results have so far only been attained, we have, nevertheless, much to be grateful for in the plates of Stolze,[1] and of Dieulafoy.[2]

And yet, for all our modern amplitude and certainty of knowledge, to this day we have no idea what was the ancient Persian name that was used by Darius and his successors for the city and the palaces that were reared by them in the valleys of the Medus and Araxes. Istakhr and Persepolis are the titles by which they are known to us—the former applied to the city of the populace, the latter to the palace-platform of the sovereign. But the name Istakhr does not so much as occur in a single Greek writer, and is believed to be of Pehlevi origin ; while the name Persepolis, which has been consecrated in the usage of the world, is never heard of before the time of Alexander, 200 years after its edifices had begun to be raised, and then only starts into existence from the doubtful parentage of a pun.[3] These are problems upon which the cuneiform inscriptions have, so far, thrown no light, and which it appears doubtful whether the ingenuity of a future generation will be able to solve.

The real name

The several fabrics of the different Achæmenian sovereigns will come under notice in the order of their occurrence. Persepolis, though with the Macedonian invasion it leaped into a European fame, had not

[1] *Persepolis*, 2 vols., 1882. [2] *L'Art antique de la Perse*, five parts.

[3] Persepolis, if it signifies the 'city of the Persians,' should rather have been Persopolis. But the form Persepolis was, in all probability, preferred because of the play on the Greek word πέρσις (cf. the Ἰλίου πέρσις), signifying 'destruction,' and of the veiled allusion to the exploit of Alexander, from one of whose historians—probably Clitarchus—the name originated. At the same time it must have been an approximate translation of the original Persian name. What was the latter? History is silent on the point. Ctesias, Plutarch, Xenophon, and other writers frequently speak of it as Πέρσαι, but it is disputed whether this refers merely to the city or to the country. Personally, I incline to think that the name Pasargadæ, or Parsagardæ, which, as I have before shown, was the name both of the royal tribe and of the city of Cyrus, and which is explained as having signified the 'city or encampment of the Persians,' or, if not the compound word, then 'Parsa' by itself, may have been employed by Darius to denote his later capital, a little lower down the course of the same river; and that the Greeks, hearing it interpreted as above, may have adopted the punning translation, Persepolis. In the cuneiform inscription on the Propylæa of Xerxes occur the words, *ana Parsa*, which Rawlinson translates 'besides or in this Persepolis,' Oppert 'dans cette Perse,' Spiegel 'in Persien,' and Wiesbach 'in diesem Persien.' I accept Rawlinson's theory that the reference is not to the country, but to the city and platform itself. Vide *Journal of the R. A. S.*, vol. x. p. 331.

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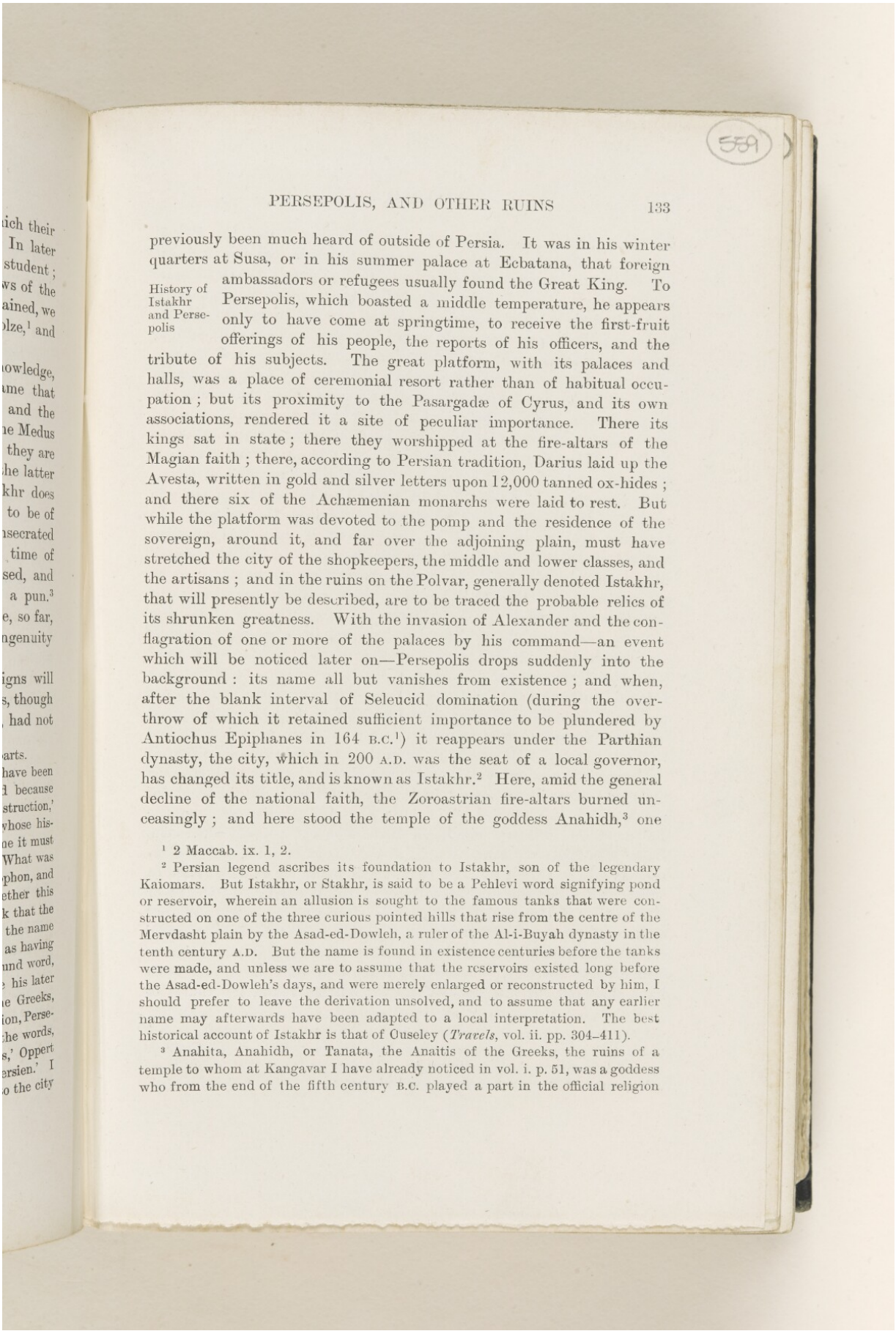



previously been much heard of outside of Persia. It was in his winter quarters at Susa, or in his summer palace at Ecbatana, that foreign ambassadors or refugees usually found the Great King. To Persepolis, which boasted a middle temperature, he appears only to have come at springtime, to receive the first-fruit offerings of his people, the reports of his officers, and the tribute of his subjects. The great platform, with its palaces and halls, was a place of ceremonial resort rather than of habitual occupation; but its proximity to the Pasargadæ of Cyrus, and its own associations, rendered it a site of peculiar importance. There its kings sat in state; there they worshipped at the fire-altars of the Magian faith; there, according to Persian tradition, Darius laid up the Avesta, written in gold and silver letters upon 12,000 tanned ox-hides; and there six of the Achæmenian monarchs were laid to rest. But while the platform was devoted to the pomp and the residence of the sovereign, around it, and far over the adjoining plain, must have stretched the city of the shopkeepers, the middle and lower classes, and the artisans; and in the ruins on the Polvar, generally denoted Istakhr, that will presently be described, are to be traced the probable relics of its shrunken greatness. With the invasion of Alexander and the conflagration of one or more of the palaces by his command—an event which will be noticed later on—Persepolis drops suddenly into the background: its name all but vanishes from existence; and when, after the blank interval of Seleucid domination (during the overthrow of which it retained sufficient importance to be plundered by Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C.[1]) it reappears under the Parthian dynasty, the city, which in 200 A.D. was the seat of a local governor, has changed its title, and is known as Istakhr.[2] Here, amid the general decline of the national faith, the Zoroastrian fire-altars burned unceasingly; and here stood the temple of the goddess Anahidh,[3] one

History of Istakhr and Persepolis

[1] 2 Maccab. ix. 1, 2.

[2] Persian legend ascribes its foundation to Istakhr, son of the legendary Kaiomars. But Istakhr, or Stakhr, is said to be a Pehlevi word signifying pond or reservoir, wherein an allusion is sought to the famous tanks that were constructed on one of the three curious pointed hills that rise from the centre of the Mervdasht plain by the Asad-ed-Dowleh, a ruler of the Al-i-Buyah dynasty in the tenth century A.D. But the name is found in existence centuries before the tanks were made, and unless we are to assume that the reservoirs existed long before the Asad-ed-Dowleh's days, and were merely enlarged or reconstructed by him, I should prefer to leave the derivation unsolved, and to assume that any earlier name may afterwards have been adapted to a local interpretation. The best historical account of Istakhr is that of Ouseley (*Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 304–411).

[3] Anahita, Anahidh, or Tanata, the Anaitis of the Greeks, the ruins of a temple to whom at Kangavar I have already noticed in vol. i. p. 51, was a goddess who from the end of the fifth century B.C. played a part in the official religion

of whose priests, named Sassan, the father of Babek or Papak, was the grandfather of that Artaxerxes or Ardeshir who in 226 A.D. overthrew the Parthian yoke, and founded the dynasty that still bears his grandsire's name. In the revival of religion and of national spirit that followed, Istakhr became again the ceremonial capital of the empire; and although Ardeshir moved his own residence to Gur or Jur, and his successors theirs to Ctesiphon, and Seleucia, and Shapur, and Dastagird, yet at Istakhr remained the treasury and fire-altar of the royal house, and here the heads of conquered kings were hung up. Its population is said to have been seriously diminished by Shapur II., who transported twelve thousands families (doubtless an exaggeration) to Nisibis. When the Arabs invaded Persia in 639 A.D., Istakhr was one of the places that at first successfully resisted the assaults of Omar. Five years later it yielded, but its population having again risen in revolt in 648 and slain the Arab governor, it was forcibly reduced. In the same century its citadel, on the summit of one of the curious isolated rocks that have been mentioned, was built by the Khalif Moaviyah. In the tenth century it is alluded to by three Arab geographers: by Masudi, who saw there a book containing the portraits and history of all the Sassanian kings; by one of its own natives, Abu Ishak el-Istakhri, who described it as 'a city of middle size, with a strong citadel, about a mile in extent'; and by Mukadessi, who specially mentioned its mosque. At the close of the same century it is said to have been destroyed in consequence of frequent rebellions under the Samsam-ed-Dowleh, of the Al-i-Buyah dynasty; but it must have experienced a complete revival, if any credence is to be attached to the testimony of Hamdallah, who in the fourteenth century returned its dimensions as fourteen *farsakhs* by ten, the platform of Persepolis included, embracing, no doubt, in this generous estimate the whole of the more or less peopled plain from the Achæmenian city on the Polvar, to the mediæval citadel of Istakhr on the pointed hill. The latter was made a state-prison by the Atabegs of Fars, and was so used as late as 1576 A.D.[1] In 1621 it was found by P. della Valle in ruins. Of other remains than those of the platform and tombs of Persepolis, and the sepulchres of Naksh-i-Rustam, the seventeenth and eighteenth-century travellers do not say much, and it has been reserved for the explorers of more modern times to bring to light such relics as still exist of the city, whatever its name may have been, that must have sheltered the vast population ever buzzing round the courts of

of Persia somewhat similar to the Phœnician Astarte, the Babylonian Mylitta, the Arabian Alitta, and the Hellenic Aphrodite. According to Plutarch, statues to her were put up in all the great cities of the empire. She is supposed to have been of Armenian or Cappadocian origin. The popular translation of her name into Artemis, or Diana, appears to me to be incorrect.

[1] Sheref Nameh.

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Darius and Xerxes, and that, under a succession of dynasties, was the theoretical metropolis of Iran.

The surviving ruins, to which travellers have given the name of Istakhr, fall into two groups—those on the banks of the Polvar, a little before it emerges into the plain of Mervdasht between Persepolis and Naksh-i-Rustam, and those of the hill-fortress or acropolis before alluded to. The former occupy a space of rising ground, round which the river flows in a loop, a slight distance to the east of the *chapar-khaneh* of Puzeh. Travellers have sought to recognise in the remains a palace, a temple, and a fort; but it appears to me to be doubtful how far this particularisation can be sustained.[1] What is certain is, that the ruins, such as they are, are those of an Achæmenian city contemporary with the neighbouring structures of Persepolis, and posterior to the edifices of Pasargadæ. Material, style, and treatment are closely analogous to the building upon the palace-platform, although the disposition at Istakhr is different, and even obscure. Close to the mountain, on the southern side, are the remains of a great gateway, built of blocks of limestone, which was doubtless the main eastern entrance to the city. It consists of two passages in the centre for animals and caravans, and of two side-alleys for foot-passengers, the stone piers that separate them being still *in situ*. A little to the north of this are the remains of what is thought to have been a palace, consisting of the bases and fragments of the shafts of eight pillars, of several door-cases and niches, and of a detached, dark-grey fluted column, 25 feet high, and nearly 2 feet in diameter, with a double bull-headed capital, similar to those that remain at Persepolis and have been found at Susa. The survival of this column provides a clue to, and is itself explained by, an interesting passage already alluded to in Mukadessi, where that writer says :—

1. Ruins of Istakhr

> The principal mosque of Istakhr is situated beside the bazaars. It is built in the manner of the most beautiful mosques of Syria; it has round columns. Upon the top of each column is a cow. It is said formerly to have been a fire-temple. The bazaars surround it on three sides.

This was the condition in which the place was seen in the tenth century; and it can leave no doubt in our minds that the Achæmenian structure had been converted by the Moslems into a mosque.[2] Ker

[1] The writers who have described or illustrated this (i.e. the Achæmenian Istakhr) are: J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, p. 141; Sir R. K. Porter (1818), *Travels*, vol. i. p. 573; C. J. Rich (1821), *Journey to Persepolis*; Texier, vol. ii. pls. 137, 138; Flandin and Coste, vol. ii. pls. 58–61, and text; R. B. Binning (1851), *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii.; Stolze, vol. ii. pls. 123–5.

[2] A fantastic description, and a still more ludicrous illustration, of this mosque is given, in 1672, by John Struys, the Dutchman, who, in all probability, never saw it at all. He calls it the Royal Sepulchre, and says that the bones of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet were preserved there (*Voyages*, p. 332).

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Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [560v] (1133/1814)



Porter and other modern travellers mention the local name as being the Harem of Jamshid. On the northern side, near the river, the remains are encompassed by the ruins of a wall of irregular outline, with the trace of semicircular bastions on one side, and of a ditch once filled from the Polvar. This wall is probably of much later date than the original city, and may have been added in Mohammedan times. Such are the sole surviving relics of what was no doubt the populous and mercantile quarter of the city of Darius. Excavations in the mounds and piles of débris might produce more satisfactory results.

Seh Gumbedan

To a person standing on the platform of Persepolis, and looking over the plain of Mervdasht, the most conspicuous objects in the landscape are three insulated rocky bluffs, rising abruptly at a distance of from seven to eight miles to the north-west. Their lower parts consist of steep slopes, above which a precipitous scarp shoots into the air, terminating in a sharp and jagged summit. These hills are known as Seh Gumbedan, or the Three Domes; and their names have been returned by Hamdallah in the fourteenth century as Istakhr, Shekesteh, and Sangwan; and in the present century by Fraser as Istakhr, Shekusteh, and Shemgan; by Binning as Istakhr, Shahrek, and Kumfiruz; and by Stack as Ghila and Ghilan. Nöldeke, who is our latest reference, says that the middlemost, which contained the mediæval citadel of Istakhr and the tanks, has now lost its old name, and is called Mian Kaleh, or Middle Fort. It has been ascended and described by Morier, De Bode, and Flandin, the last-named of whom called it Kaleh-i-Sarb, or Fort of the Cypress. He gives a plan of the three tanks or reservoirs before alluded to as dating from the tenth century.[1] Advantage was taken in their construction of natural hollows or rifts in the mountain; and they accordingly remind us of the celebrated Tanks of Aden. Upon the same rock are remains of a gateway, and of the walls and towers of the ancient castle; similar ruins being visible upon the adjacent rock of Shahrek.[2] Its summit is 1,200 feet above the plain. I imagine that the entire space between the mediæval and Achæmenian Istakhr must, at one time or another, have been more or less peopled by outskirts or suburbs, all bearing the same name. A city of the populace, which, as a rule in the East, consists of no more than mud and wattled huts, is very easily wiped out of existence.

I now return to the cliff-wall of the Husein Kuh, and to the sculptured section of it, nearly 200 yards in length, that presents, above the chiselled tablets of the Sassanian kings, the magnificent rock-

[1] Flandin and Coste, vol. ii. pl. 62.

[2] Fergusson is, therefore, wrong when he says (p. 91): 'No trace of buildings, I believe, exists upon them.'

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sepulchres of their greater predecessors. These are four in number, and with the exception of the second from the east, which is the tomb of Darius son of Hystaspes, their general features, both structural and decorative, are so identical that one description will suffice for them all.[1] The Husein Kuh, which at its highest point has attained an elevation of 800 feet above the plain, sinks towards its western extremity to a height of from 200 to 100 feet, and finally even less; and in its sheer front to one half or two-thirds of the total height, and facing the valley were hewn by the masons of the Great King the hollow rock-vaults that were to contain the royal corpses. Outwardly, these present the appearance of a gigantic cross, of somewhat stunted dimensions, which is cut to a greater or less depth, according to the slope of the cliff, in the rock. Each limb of the cross is the same in height, viz. 24 feet, or a total height of 72 feet; but whereas the upper and lower segments are 35½ feet in breadth, the central or transverse segment is 59½ feet from end to end. The bottom of the lowermost cutting is as a rule from 25 to 35 feet above the surface of the ground, and is all but inaccessible to the climber, who requires to be hauled up thither, and still more to the portal in the transverse limb, by the aid of a rope. It is by these means, as I shall show, that the royal corpses were originally drawn up; and that the numerous travellers who in this century have examined the interiors of the tombs have been enabled to compass their object.

2. Tombs of the Kings at Naksh-i-Rustam

Externally, the tombs present the following features. The lowest segment of the cross is a bare cutting, 5 to 6 feet deep at the base, vertical at the back, and absolutely unadorned. Next comes the main or transverse limb, which contains the entrance to the sepulchre. This takes the shape of a reproduction in rock-carving of the façade of an Achæmenian palace. Four semi-detached bull-headed columns rise from a platform, formed by the deeply recessed incision into the cliff, and support a massive entablature, adorned with an elegant moulding or cornice. Between the two central columns is the doorway, framed in a case, the decorative treatment of the upper or projecting part of which is an unmistakable loan from Egypt. The door is divided outwardly into four compartments, the three uppermost of which were never pierced, but are of the solid rock. The lowest compartment, about four feet in height, was pierced for the entrance, but was originally closed by a stone block hung upon a pivot. This has in every instance now disappeared, and the aperture, which has in some cases suffered violent mutilation, yawns blackly in the façade.

External features

[1] For illustrations, *vide* Texier, vol. ii. pl. 135; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pls. 169–73; Stolze, vol. ii. pls. 106, 107, 112.

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It is, however, upon the upper limb of the cross that the skill of the sculptor was mainly lavished, and that the solemn character of the entire monument is expressed. The entablature already spoken of sustains a curious platform or throne, consisting of two stages, each of which is upheld by fourteen figures (i.e. twenty-eight in the two superimposed rows), with both arms uplifted to sustain the weight above their heads.[1] These figures wear different garbs and represent differing nationalities. The sides or corner posts of the terrace, which is doubtless a copy of the platform that supported the royal throne, are curiously moulded and carved, and terminate in griffins' or bulls' heads at the top. Upon its summit appear two objects. On the left hand side is a small dais or platform of three receding steps, upon which stands the king, seven feet in stature, clad in the royal robe and tiara, holding in his left hand a bow, which rests upon the ground, while his right hand is uplifted with a gesture of oath or adoration towards an object that floats in the air overhead. This we now know from the inscriptions to be the image of the god Ahuramazda or Ormuzd; a symbolism that is directly borrowed from the representation of the god Assur in Assyrian sculptures. The deity is depicted as a small figure, with the upper part of a man, and with hair and headdress similar to those of the king, but with the lower part of his body terminating in plumes. A disc encircles his waist, long streamers float behind him, and he is upborne in space by outspread horizontal wings. He faces the king and lifts one hand in attitude of benediction; in the other he holds a ring.[2] Behind the god is sculped in relief the second object upon the platform, viz. a fire-altar, upon which the undying flame is depicted in the form of a cone of fire. In the right-hand corner above, the disc of the sun hangs in the sky. It should be added that on either side of the terraced platform, and in the returning angles of the rock, are chiselled a triple vertical row of figures, singly, or in pairs, which, according as they are armed or unarmed, represent the bodyguards or the attendants of the sovereign.

The interior arrangement differs slightly in each case, as will

[1] The fanciful use to which this platform has been put in argument by Fergusson will be noted later.

[2] Very quaint sounds the description of these sculptures given by Barbaro, the Venetian, four hundred years ago: 'There is one ymage, like unto that that we resemble to God the Father, in a cercle, who in either hande holdeth a globe, under whom arr other little ymages, and before hym the image of a man leanyng on an arche, which they saie was the fygure of Salomon. Under them arr many other ymages, which seeme to susteyne those that be above. Amongest whom there is one that seemeth to have a Popes myter on his hedde, holding up his hande open as though he ment to blesse all that arr under him, liek as they looking towardes hym seeme also to gape for his blisseng' (*Travels to Tana and Persia*, Hakluyt Society).

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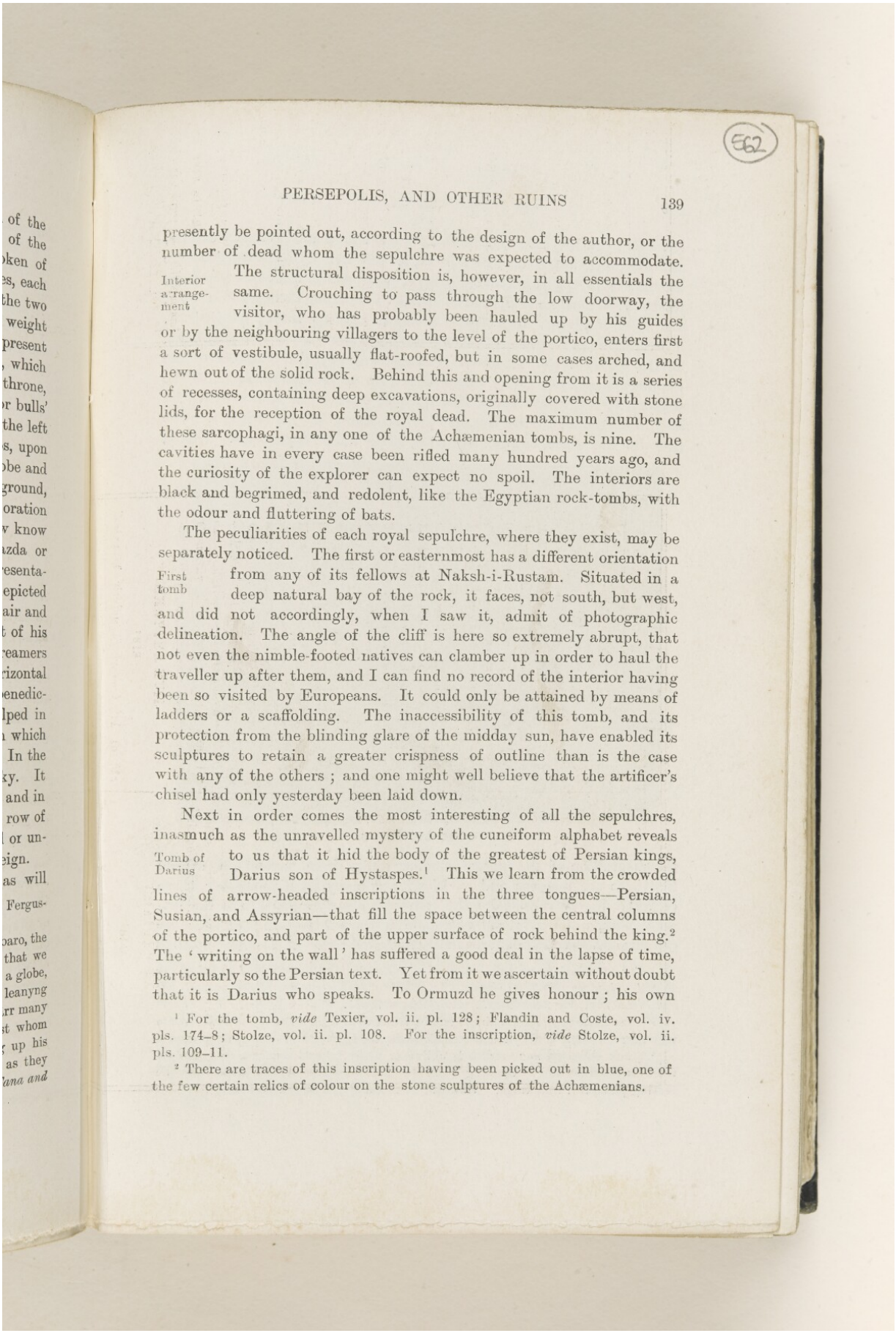



presently be pointed out, according to the design of the author, or the number of dead whom the sepulchre was expected to accommodate.

Interior arrangement

The structural disposition is, however, in all essentials the same. Crouching to pass through the low doorway, the visitor, who has probably been hauled up by his guides or by the neighbouring villagers to the level of the portico, enters first a sort of vestibule, usually flat-roofed, but in some cases arched, and hewn out of the solid rock. Behind this and opening from it is a series of recesses, containing deep excavations, originally covered with stone lids, for the reception of the royal dead. The maximum number of these sarcophagi, in any one of the Achæmenian tombs, is nine. The cavities have in every case been rifled many hundred years ago, and the curiosity of the explorer can expect no spoil. The interiors are black and begrimed, and redolent, like the Egyptian rock-tombs, with the odour and fluttering of bats.

The peculiarities of each royal sepulchre, where they exist, may be separately noticed. The first or easternmost has a different orientation

First tomb

from any of its fellows at Naksh-i-Rustam. Situated in a deep natural bay of the rock, it faces, not south, but west, and did not accordingly, when I saw it, admit of photographic delineation. The angle of the cliff is here so extremely abrupt, that not even the nimble-footed natives can clamber up in order to haul the traveller up after them, and I can find no record of the interior having been so visited by Europeans. It could only be attained by means of ladders or a scaffolding. The inaccessibility of this tomb, and its protection from the blinding glare of the midday sun, have enabled its sculptures to retain a greater crispness of outline than is the case with any of the others ; and one might well believe that the artificer's chisel had only yesterday been laid down.

Next in order comes the most interesting of all the sepulchres, inasmuch as the unravelled mystery of the cuneiform alphabet reveals

Tomb of Darius

to us that it hid the body of the greatest of Persian kings, Darius son of Hystaspes.[1] This we learn from the crowded lines of arrow-headed inscriptions in the three tongues—Persian, Susian, and Assyrian—that fill the space between the central columns of the portico, and part of the upper surface of rock behind the king.[2] The 'writing on the wall' has suffered a good deal in the lapse of time, particularly so the Persian text. Yet from it we ascertain without doubt that it is Darius who speaks. To Ormuzd he gives honour ; his own

[1] For the tomb, *vide* Texier, vol. ii. pl. 128 ; Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pls. 174–8 ; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 108. For the inscription, *vide* Stolze, vol. ii. pls. 109–11.

[2] There are traces of this inscription having been picked out in blue, one of the few certain relics of colour on the stone sculptures of the Achæmenians.

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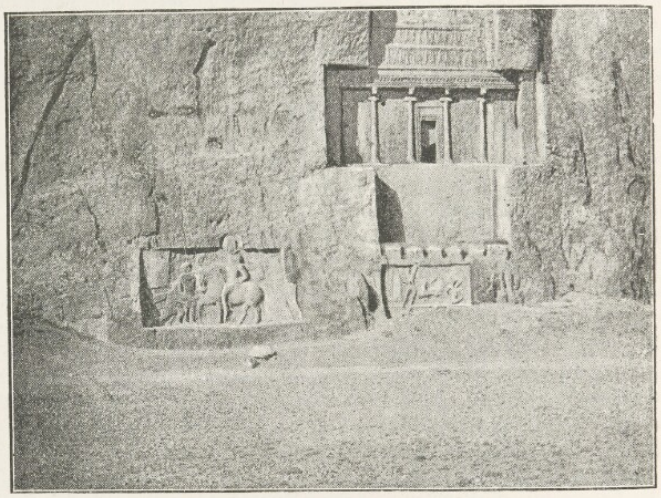
titles and genealogy he sets forth; the provinces of his mighty empire, and the people who paid him tribute, he unrolls.[1] Doubtless therefore the figures, of differing garb and type, who sustain the royal platform, represent the widestrewn nationalities that acknowledged him king, and King of kings. Nay, this has recently been proved; for in 1885, MM. Babin and Houssay, two of the collaborateurs of M. Dieulafoy, having ascended by means of a scaffolding, found the names of the various satrapies actually engraved beneath the feet of some of the supporters. The interior of the tomb of Darius has been visited by several travellers in this century;[2] but Ker Porter, I think, was the first who identified it as the sepulchre of the son of Hystaspes. Inside,



TOMB OF DARIUS

the disposition of the funeral chamber differs from that of any other; for there are recesses and cavities for as many as nine corpses, three of which however, opposite the entrance, clearly appertain to the original plan, while a lateral extension to the left to admit of six more coffins must have been subsequently hollowed out.[3] A pathetic interest

[1] For translations of this inscription, *vide* Sir H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.A.S.*, vol. x. pp. 289–312; Oppert, *Le Peuple et la Langue des Mèdes*, pp. 201–14; and Weisbach, *Die Achämenidinschriften*, pp. 79–81.

[2] The earlier explorers, such as P. della Valle, Chardin, Le Brun, and Fryer, seem with one accord to have yielded to their fears, and to have shirked the experiment.

[3] Stack, however, was needlessly oblivious of the funeral requirements of royal families when he said: 'Opening back are three recesses, each of which was the resting-place of three kings.' How did he make up his tale of monarchs?

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attaches to this gloomy rock-vault, apart from the personality of the illustrious dead for whom it was hewn, in the historical fact that for seven years after his demise it provided a cell for the favourite eunuch of Darius, who could not be persuaded to forsake his master's remains. Perhaps even more interesting is the recollection of the tragedy that accompanied its execution, and that pictures itself before our eyes as we stand below. For here it was that the father and mother of the king, having expressed a wish to see the progress of the work, and forty of the Magi having been ordered by Darius to wind them up by means of ropes, the clumsy priests, frightened it is said by the sudden appearance of some serpents, let go, and the unhappy



THIRD AND FOURTH ROYAL TOMBS

couple were dashed to the ground and killed. The forty culprits, for all their sanctity, paid the penalty with their lives.[1]

Third and fourth tombs

The sculptured work of the third tomb is remarkable for its good preservation. Nothing at Persepolis exceeds the fresh distinctness of the bull-headed capitals of the portico columns, or the corner-posts of the terraced throne. On the other hand, the façade of the fourth tomb is more blurred and spoiled than that of any other. The capitals are quite defaced; so is the cornice above the doorway; and so are the supporters of the platform. This tomb has been more frequently explored than its fellows, because of its greater accessibility from below; Captain Sutherland, Sir W. Ouseley,

[1] Ctesias, *Persica*, § 19.

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Colonel D'Arcy, Sir Robert Ker Porter, Baron de Bode, Flandin, and Mounsey, being among the European visitors who have ascended to it in this century. It has three arched recesses at the back, each containing a cavity, the stone slabs that formerly covered which have either been displaced or broken. None of the sepulchres, with the exception of that of Darius, which is doubtless the oldest, have any inscriptions, or present any clue to their identification. No very great stretch of fancy, however, is required to believe that they were in all probability constructed by his three successors, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I., and Darius II. When they were rifled it is impossible to tell.

Of all the Achæmenian sculptures, these on the royal tombs alone have a purely religious character. At Persepolis, the king walks into the palace or audience-hall, or sits in state to receive the homage of his subjects; at Bisitun he triumphs over the rebels against his throne. In both cases he makes acknowledgment to the divine power. But here he is depicted as engaged in the sacrificial act, a monarch, but a Mazdean, the lord of mankind, but the servant of the deity. There is something, alike in the selection of the sepulchral site, in the mode of interment, and in the external decoration of the tomb, that is in keeping with the stately pretensions of the Achæmenian monarchy, and that at the distance of 2,500 years sounds in our ears no faint echo of the majesty of the Great King. Among the royal sepulchres that I have seen in many parts of the world, few of the fabrics reared by man, and none of those in which nature is made to play the principal part, are more impressive than these. A comparison naturally suggests itself with the royal rock-tombs of Egyptian Thebes; the more so as in my opinion the idea of the sepulchral excavations of Naksh-i-Rustam and Persepolis must have been directly borrowed from the valley of the Nile. The body of Cyrus was laid, as we have seen, in a raised mausoleum; where and how Cambyses was interred we do not positively know;[1] but Darius, profiting by the experience of the Egyptian campaign of his predecessors, and inspired with recollections, if not actually equipped with workmen, from the Nile, was content with no meaner resting-place than one which, while providing for the inviolability of his remains by the perils of access, should yet display to the world the imperishable record of his grandeur. Herein lies at once the analogy and the difference. The rulers of both empires are interred with vast toil and expense in the hollowed heart of the mountain, where their bodies should be free from touch or pollution. But whereas the Egyptian theology prescribes the uttermost concealment of the mummy, and

Egyptian prototype

[1] Ctesias says his body was taken back ἐς Πέρσας, an ambiguous phrase upon which I have previously commented.

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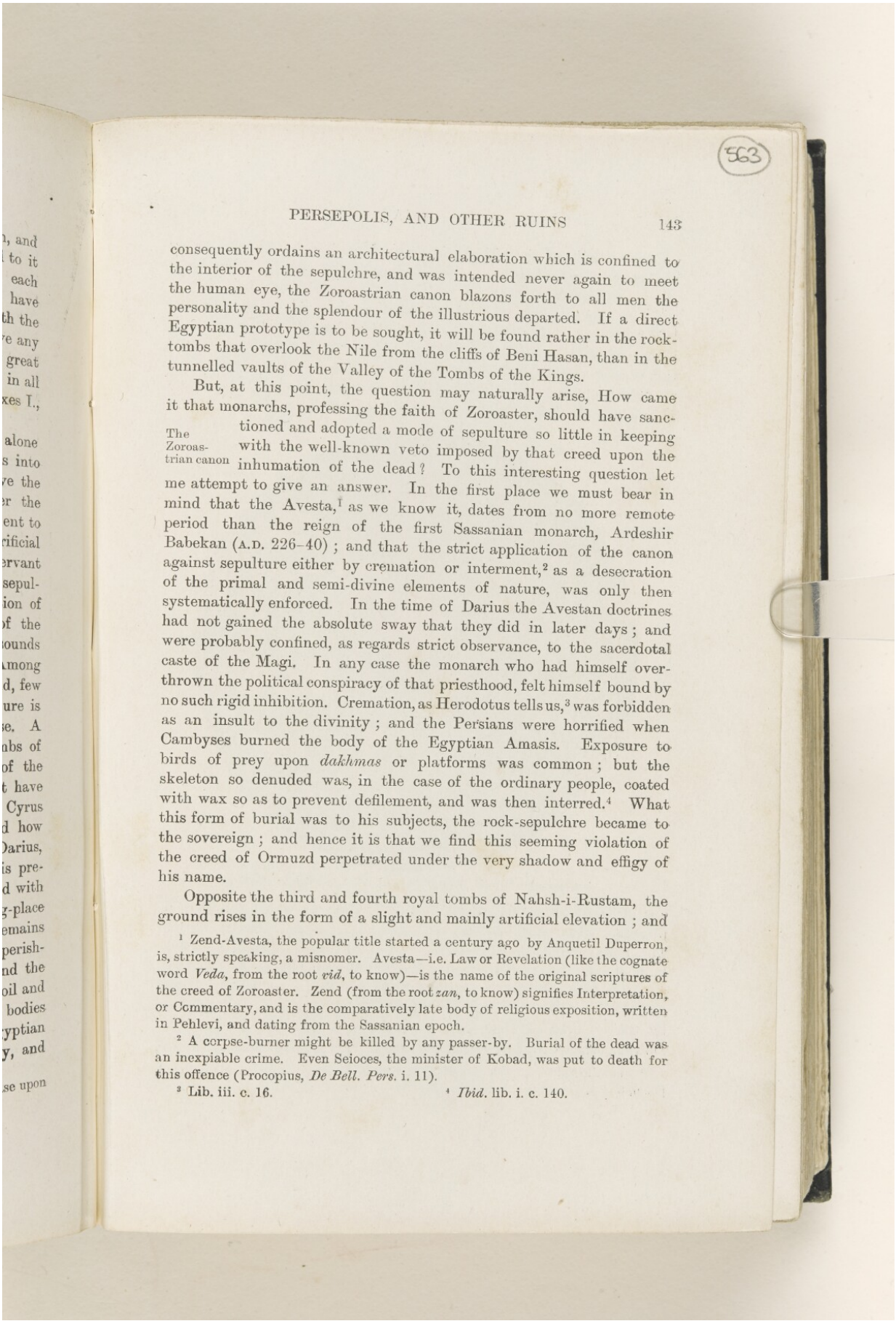

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consequently ordains an architectural elaboration which is confined to the interior of the sepulchre, and was intended never again to meet the human eye, the Zoroastrian canon blazons forth to all men the personality and the splendour of the illustrious departed. If a direct Egyptian prototype is to be sought, it will be found rather in the rock-tombs that overlook the Nile from the cliffs of Beni Hasan, than in the tunnelled vaults of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.

But, at this point, the question may naturally arise, How came it that monarchs, professing the faith of Zoroaster, should have sanctioned and adopted a mode of sepulture so little in keeping with the well-known veto imposed by that creed upon the inhumation of the dead? To this interesting question let me attempt to give an answer. In the first place we must bear in mind that the Avesta,[1] as we know it, dates from no more remote period than the reign of the first Sassanian monarch, Ardeshir Babekan (A.D. 226–40); and that the strict application of the canon against sepulture either by cremation or interment,[2] as a desecration of the primal and semi-divine elements of nature, was only then systematically enforced. In the time of Darius the Avestan doctrines had not gained the absolute sway that they did in later days; and were probably confined, as regards strict observance, to the sacerdotal caste of the Magi. In any case the monarch who had himself overthrown the political conspiracy of that priesthood, felt himself bound by no such rigid inhibition. Cremation, as Herodotus tells us,[3] was forbidden as an insult to the divinity; and the Persians were horrified when Cambyses burned the body of the Egyptian Amasis. Exposure to birds of prey upon *dakhmas* or platforms was common; but the skeleton so denuded was, in the case of the ordinary people, coated with wax so as to prevent defilement, and was then interred.[4] What this form of burial was to his subjects, the rock-sepulchre became to the sovereign; and hence it is that we find this seeming violation of the creed of Ormuzd perpetrated under the very shadow and effigy of his name.

The Zoroastrian canon

Opposite the third and fourth royal tombs of Nahsh-i-Rustam, the ground rises in the form of a slight and mainly artificial elevation; and

[1] Zend-Avesta, the popular title started a century ago by Anquetil Duperron, is, strictly speaking, a misnomer. Avesta—i.e. Law or Revelation (like the cognate word *Veda*, from the root *vid*, to know)—is the name of the original scriptures of the creed of Zoroaster. Zend (from the root *zan*, to know) signifies Interpretation, or Commentary, and is the comparatively late body of religious exposition, written in Pehlevi, and dating from the Sassanian epoch.

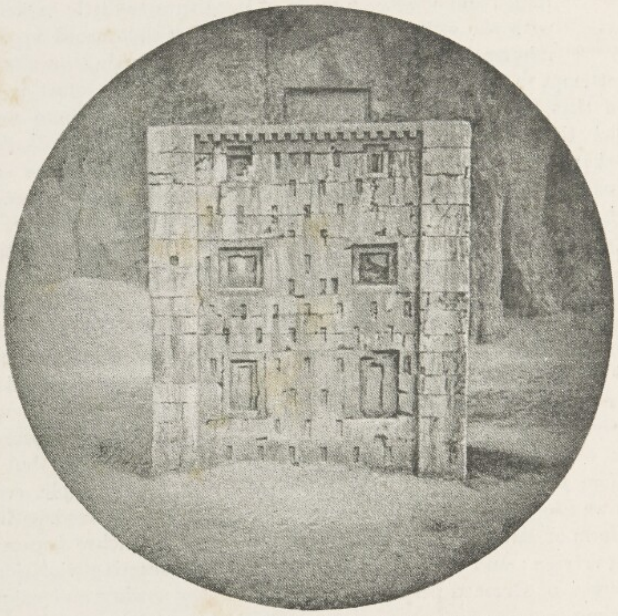
[2] A corpse-burner might be killed by any passer-by. Burial of the dead was an inexpiable crime. Even Seioces, the minister of Kobad, was put to death for this offence (Procopius, *De Bell. Pers.* i. 11).

[3] Lib. iii. c. 16.

[4] *Ibid.* lib. i. c. 140.

on the summit of the hillock thus reared, and facing the fourth or westernmost sepulchre, rises a square building of peculiar shape and disputed object, to which European tradition has, for no better reasons than that the Zoroastrians were what is termed fire-worshippers, and that the interior of this structure is blackened with smoke, assigned throughout this century the designation of a fire-temple.[1] By the natives it appears to have been called at different times Kurnai-Khaneh or Nakkara-Khaneh, i.e. Drum House, and Kaabah-i-Zerdusht, or Sanctuary of Zoroaster, the former

So-called Fire-temple



TOMB (MISCALLED FIRE-TEMPLE) AT NAKSH-I-RUSTAM

one of those stupid blunders of nomenclature to which the Persian peasant is addicted, the latter a repetition of the before-quoted tradition The building consists of a square tower, 23½ feet in each direction built of solid blocks of white limestone, that might almost be mistaken for marble, to a height of 35½ feet from the real base, which is concealed below the encircling mound, but which was partially laid bare by the excavations, some fifteen years ago, of the late Motemed-ed Dowleh, when Governor-General of Fars. Three of its sides are blank,

[1] Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 179; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 113; Dieulafoy, pt. i. pls. 6, 8.

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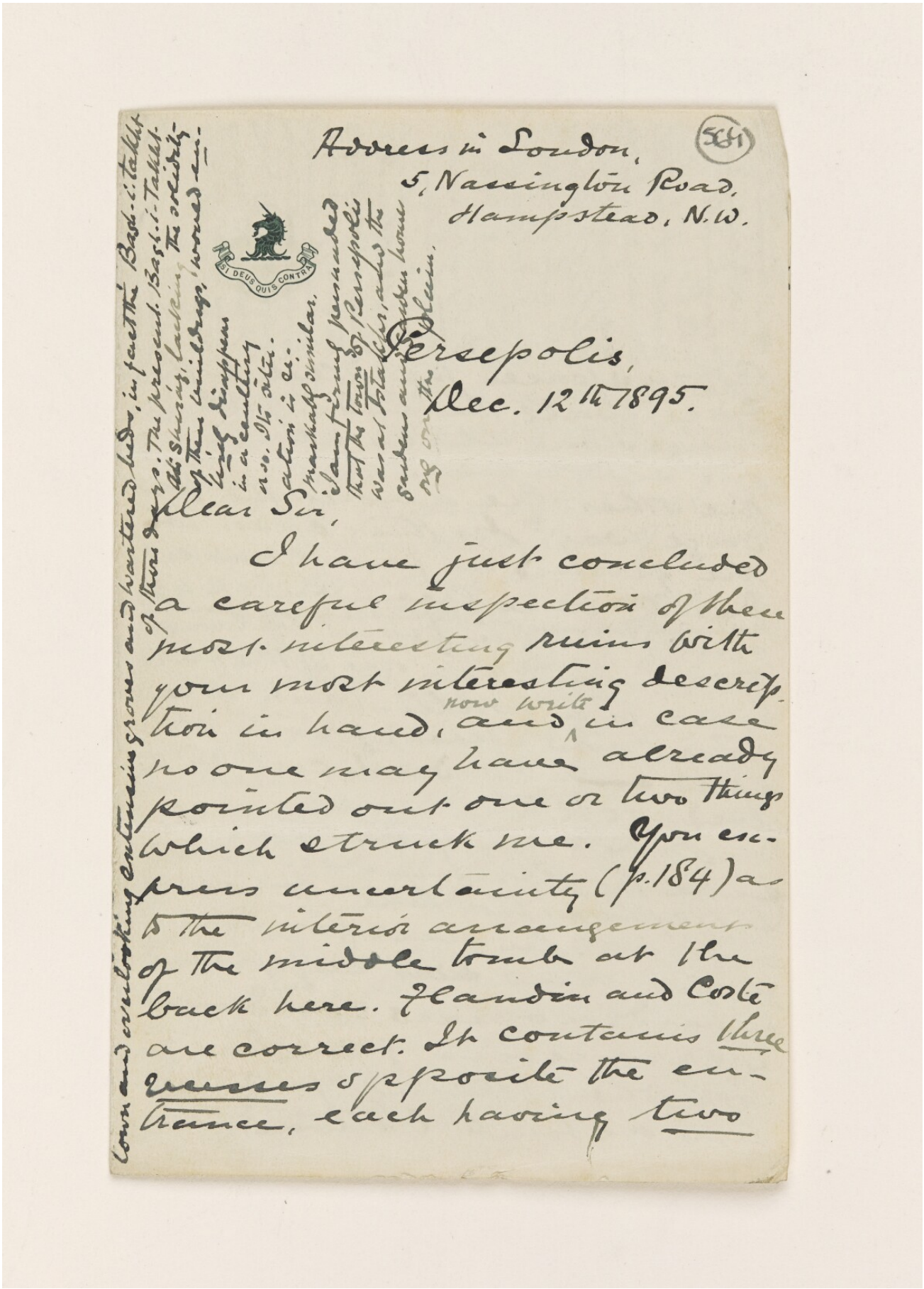


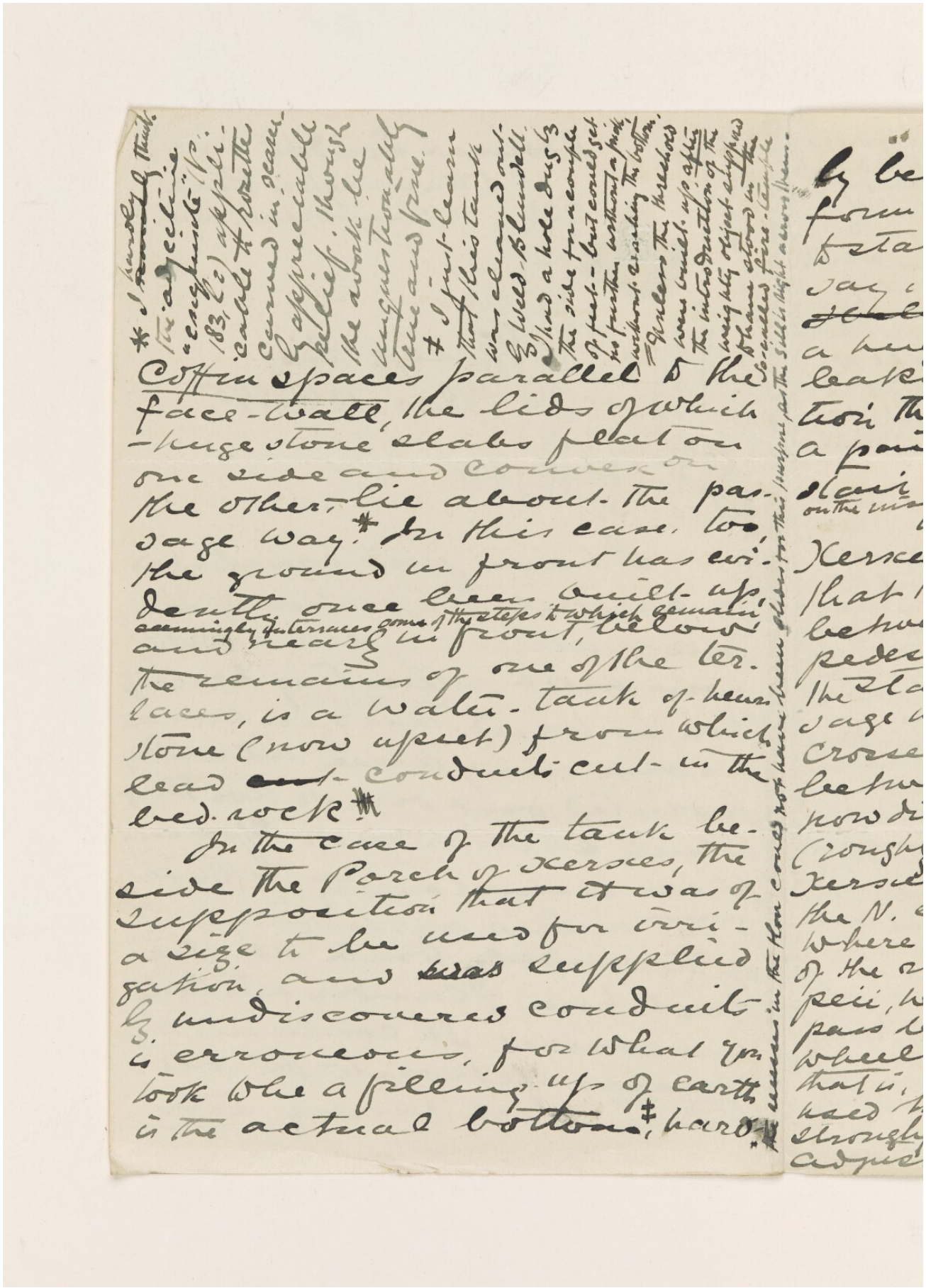
Address in London,
5, Nassington Road,
Hampstead, N.W.

(564)

Persepolis,
Dec. 12th 1895.

Clear Sir,

I have just concluded a careful inspection of these most interesting ruins with your most interesting descrip-tion in hand, and in case no one may have already pointed out one or two things which struck me. You ex-press uncertainty (p. 184) as to the interior arrangements of the middle tomb at the back here. Flandin and Coste are correct. It contains three recesses opposite the en-trance, each having two



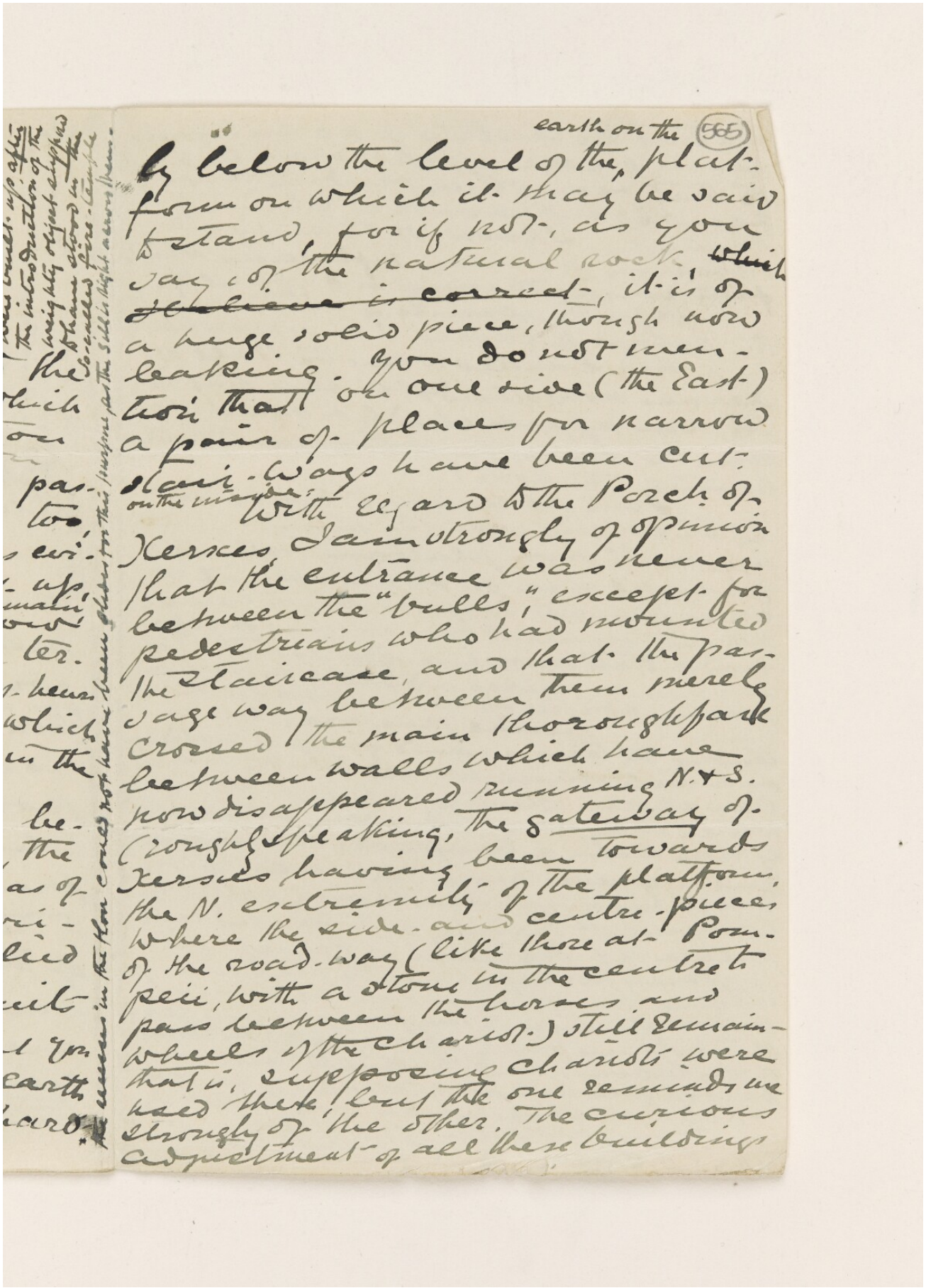
Coffin spaces parallel to the face-wall, the lids of which - huge stone slabs flat on one side and convex on the other - lie about. The passage way.* In this case, too, the ground in front has evidently once been built-up, seemingly in terraces, some of the steps to which remain and near in front, below the remains of one of the terraces, is a water-tank of hewn stone (now upset) from which lead - conduit cut - in the red rock.#

In the case of the tank beside the Porch of Xerxes, the supposition that it was a sluice to be used for irrigation, and was supplied by underground conduit is erroneous, for what we took to be a filling up of earth is the actual bottom, hard

* I hurriedly made the acquaintance of "caughing" (Sept. 13, 83) & explained I could not [illegible] camel & [illegible] carried in search of [illegible] [illegible] the above-the [illegible] Cave and [illegible]

# I found [illegible] that this tank was [illegible] & [illegible] Blundell. Found a hole 8 or 9 ft. to the rock - but comes [illegible] to [illegible] without a [illegible] [illegible] Evidently the [illegible] [illegible] the interior [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] Staircase [illegible] [illegible]

## [illegible] from [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



earth on the (565)

by below the level of the plat-
form on which it may be said
to stand, for if not, as you
say of the natural rock which
you believe is correct, it is of
a huge solid piece, though now
cracking. You do not mean
that on one side (the East)
a pair of places for narrow
stairways have been cut
on the inside. With regard to the Porch of
Xerxes I am strongly of opinion
that the entrance was never
between the "bulls," except for
pedestrians who had mounted
the staircase, and that the pas-
sage way between them merely
crossed the main thoroughfare
between walls which have
now disappeared running N. & S.
(roughly speaking), the gateway of
Xerxes having been towards
the N. extremity of the platform,
where the side and centre-pieces
of the road-way (like those at Pom-
peii, with a stone in the centre to
pass between the horses and
wheels of the chariot.) still remain-
that is, supposing chariots were
used there, but the one reminds me
strongly of the other. The curious
adjustment of all these buildings

so that the centres of no entrances seem to correspond, may be due to that fear which finds the most decided expression in China, of the Countries I know, of the easy admission of malign influences which find corner turning a difficulty.

As for the absence of a stair-way to the palace of Darius, is it not probable that this existed where the Hall of Xerxes now stands? Or else that it too, was approached by a causeway over the rocks, as I conceive to have existed to the North?

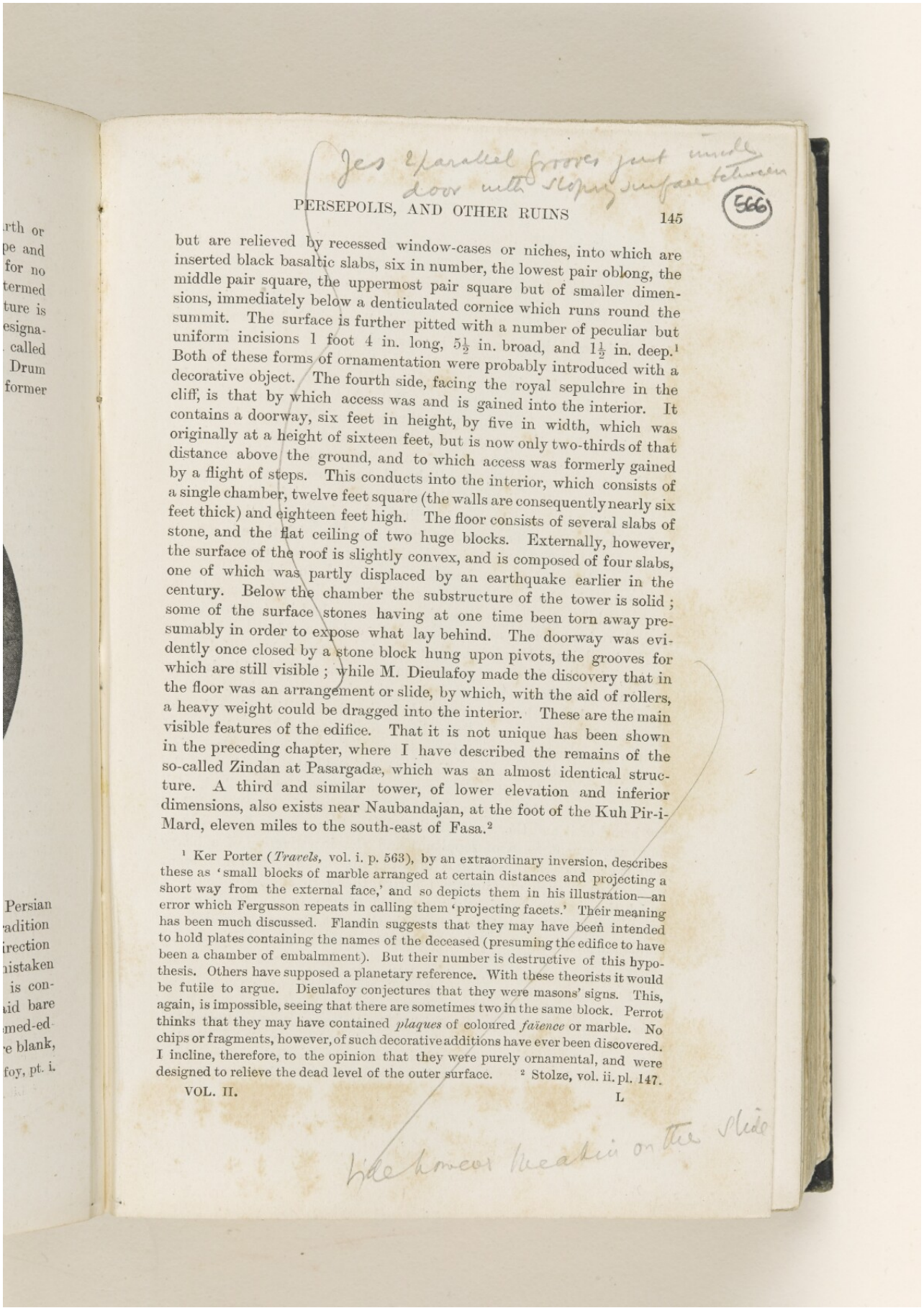
I see no reason to doubt that the S.E. edifice was the original building, on its own platform, intended for royal use on some special occasions, not impossibly in connection with funeral ceremonies or a period of state mourning,* and that each successive ruler added a more imposing edifice of his own for the same unknown special purpose, thus extending the terraces and group of buildings on a site which would hardly have been chosen otherwise for such a collection which may never have been surrounded by more than a temporary encampment and may never have been meant for dwellings or palaces, though within a convenient distance of the town and real palace at Istakhr or Persepolis.

I may perhaps have the pleasure of talking the question over with you on the conclusion of my journey in a year or two. I have fully appreciated the result of your labours here (of which the Gaekwar of Baroda gave me a copy) as also of your work on Korea etc which I read in those parts last year.

Yours faithfully J. E. Budgett Meakin

The Hon G. N. Curzon London

*unless the whole group be but the garden houses of successive monarchs, away from the





but are relieved by recessed window-cases or niches, into which are inserted black basaltic slabs, six in number, the lowest pair oblong, the middle pair square, the uppermost pair square but of smaller dimensions, immediately below a denticulated cornice which runs round the summit. The surface is further pitted with a number of peculiar but uniform incisions 1 foot 4 in. long, 5½ in. broad, and 1½ in. deep.[1] Both of these forms of ornamentation were probably introduced with a decorative object. The fourth side, facing the royal sepulchre in the cliff, is that by which access was and is gained into the interior. It contains a doorway, six feet in height, by five in width, which was originally at a height of sixteen feet, but is now only two-thirds of that distance above the ground, and to which access was formerly gained by a flight of steps. This conducts into the interior, which consists of a single chamber, twelve feet square (the walls are consequently nearly six feet thick) and eighteen feet high. The floor consists of several slabs of stone, and the flat ceiling of two huge blocks. Externally, however, the surface of the roof is slightly convex, and is composed of four slabs, one of which was partly displaced by an earthquake earlier in the century. Below the chamber the substructure of the tower is solid; some of the surface stones having at one time been torn away presumably in order to expose what lay behind. The doorway was evidently once closed by a stone block hung upon pivots, the grooves for which are still visible; while M. Dieulafoy made the discovery that in the floor was an arrangement or slide, by which, with the aid of rollers, a heavy weight could be dragged into the interior. These are the main visible features of the edifice. That it is not unique has been shown in the preceding chapter, where I have described the remains of the so-called Zindan at Pasargadæ, which was an almost identical structure. A third and similar tower, of lower elevation and inferior dimensions, also exists near Naubandajan, at the foot of the Kuh Pir-i-Mard, eleven miles to the south-east of Fasa.[2]

[1] Ker Porter (*Travels*, vol. i. p. 563), by an extraordinary inversion, describes these as 'small blocks of marble arranged at certain distances and projecting a short way from the external face,' and so depicts them in his illustration—an error which Fergusson repeats in calling them 'projecting facets.' Their meaning has been much discussed. Flandin suggests that they may have been intended to hold plates containing the names of the deceased (presuming the edifice to have been a chamber of embalmment). But their number is destructive of this hypothesis. Others have supposed a planetary reference. With these theorists it would be futile to argue. Dieulafoy conjectures that they were masons' signs. This, again, is impossible, seeing that there are sometimes two in the same block. Perrot thinks that they may have contained *plaques* of coloured *faïence* or marble. No chips or fragments, however, of such decorative additions have ever been discovered. I incline, therefore, to the opinion that they were purely ornamental, and were designed to relieve the dead level of the outer surface. [2] Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 147.



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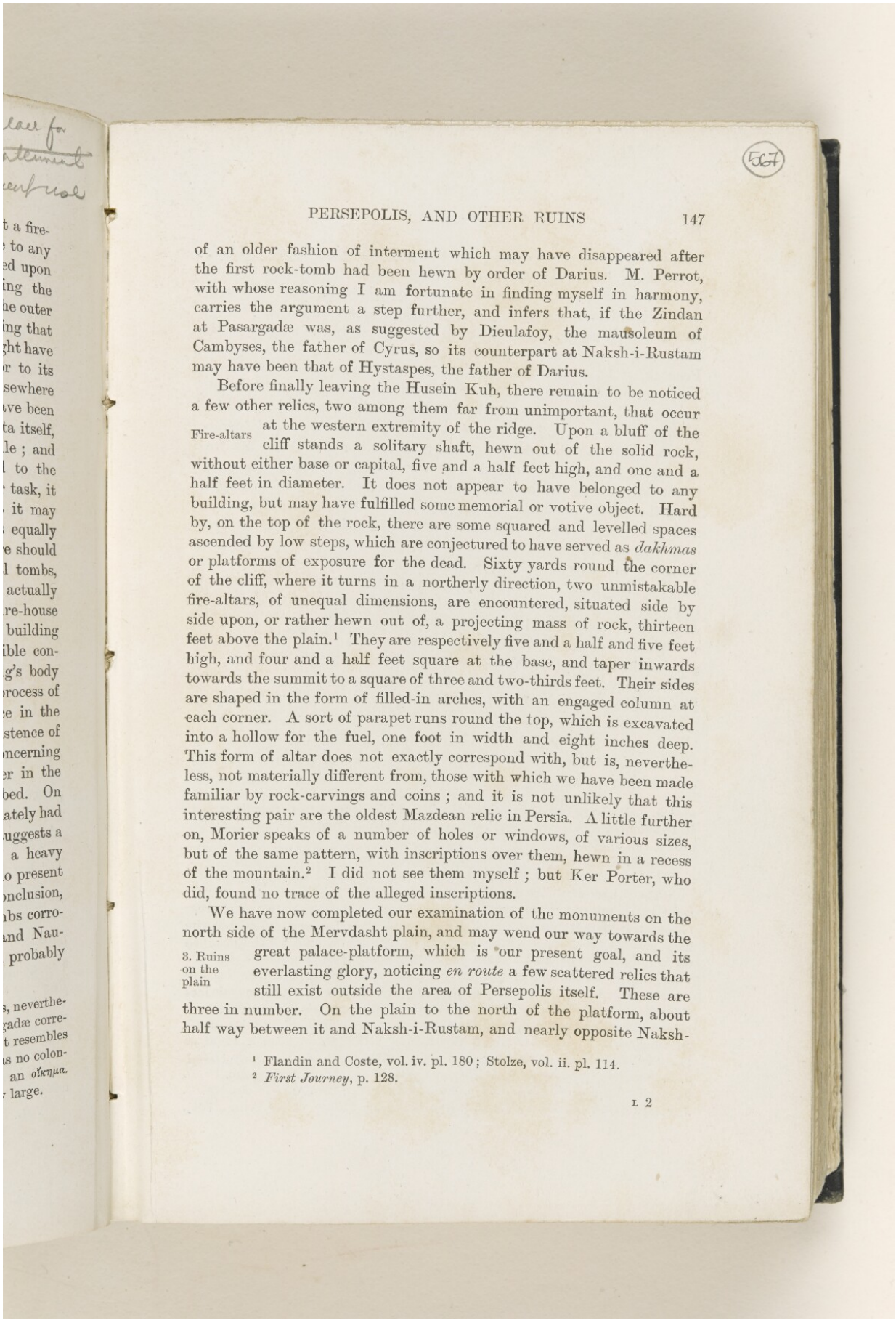
I pass next to the discussion of its purport. That it was not a fire-temple I consider certain, from its utter lack of resemblance to any Persian fire-altar that exists, either in ruins or figured upon coins. What could have been the object of keeping the sacred flame in a prison-like cell, hermetically concealed from the outer air? Neither could a fire-altar have stood upon the roof, seeing that it is not flat. Flandin and Coste thought that the chamber might have been used for embalming and preparing the royal corpse, prior to its deposit in the rock-tomb opposite. But, although I have elsewhere shown reasons for believing that the body of Cyrus may have been mummified, there is no passage in any author, or in the Avesta itself, that favours the existence of such a practice as a general rule; and why, even if it were so, there should have been assigned to the embalmers a small unlighted cell, so little convenient for their task, it is impossible to say. Canon Rawlinson has suggested that it may have been the Royal Treasury,[1] an hypothesis for which there is equally scant support; since no reason is forthcoming why the treasure should have been stored here, in immediate proximity to the royal tombs, rather than in the city, where, according to Diodorus, it was actually kept; and since, although Pasargadæ may have had its treasure-house also, there is no conceivable reason for the existence of such a building at Naubandajan. Dieulafoy, approximating to the only possible conclusion, viz. that it was a mausoleum, suggests that the king's body may have been temporarily deposited therein, to await the process of dissolution before being committed to its final resting-place in the opposite cliff. But, again, there is no authority for the existence of such a practice; nor could the precepts of the Avesta concerning exposure have thus been carried out; nor does the chamber in the least degree resemble any *dakhma* ever encountered or described. On the contrary, Dieulafoy's own discovery, if correct (I unfortunately had not heard of it and therefore failed to verify it on the spot), suggests a more permanent form of sepulture and the introduction of a heavy weight or probable sarcophagus into the interior, although no present trace exists of such an object. I arrive, therefore, at the conclusion, which the analogy, previously mentioned, of the Lycian tombs corroborates, that this fabric, along with those at Pasargadæ and Naubandajan, was a royal or princely sepulchre,[2] the last survival probably

What was it?

[1] *Fifth Great Oriental Monarchy*, vol. iii. p. 350.

[2] I think it scarcely necessary to discuss the suggestion—which has, nevertheless, found advocates—that this mausoleum or its counterpart at Pasargadæ corresponds with the Tomb of Cyrus, as described by Arrian and Strabo. It resembles the latter in no particular except in being a πυργὸς, and square. It has no colonnade. Its solitary chamber does not answer to the description of an οἴκημα. Above all, the doorway is neither small nor narrow, but is comfortably large.





of an older fashion of interment which may have disappeared after the first rock-tomb had been hewn by order of Darius. M. Perrot, with whose reasoning I am fortunate in finding myself in harmony, carries the argument a step further, and infers that, if the Zindan at Pasargadæ was, as suggested by Dieulafoy, the mausoleum of Cambyses, the father of Cyrus, so its counterpart at Naksh-i-Rustam may have been that of Hystaspes, the father of Darius.

Before finally leaving the Husein Kuh, there remain to be noticed a few other relics, two among them far from unimportant, that occur

Fire-altars

at the western extremity of the ridge. Upon a bluff of the cliff stands a solitary shaft, hewn out of the solid rock, without either base or capital, five and a half feet high, and one and a half feet in diameter. It does not appear to have belonged to any building, but may have fulfilled some memorial or votive object. Hard by, on the top of the rock, there are some squared and levelled spaces ascended by low steps, which are conjectured to have served as *dakhmas* or platforms of exposure for the dead. Sixty yards round the corner of the cliff, where it turns in a northerly direction, two unmistakable fire-altars, of unequal dimensions, are encountered, situated side by side upon, or rather hewn out of, a projecting mass of rock, thirteen feet above the plain.[1] They are respectively five and a half and five feet high, and four and a half feet square at the base, and taper inwards towards the summit to a square of three and two-thirds feet. Their sides are shaped in the form of filled-in arches, with an engaged column at each corner. A sort of parapet runs round the top, which is excavated into a hollow for the fuel, one foot in width and eight inches deep. This form of altar does not exactly correspond with, but is, nevertheless, not materially different from, those with which we have been made familiar by rock-carvings and coins; and it is not unlikely that this interesting pair are the oldest Mazdean relic in Persia. A little further on, Morier speaks of a number of holes or windows, of various sizes, but of the same pattern, with inscriptions over them, hewn in a recess of the mountain.[2] I did not see them myself; but Ker Porter, who did, found no trace of the alleged inscriptions.

We have now completed our examination of the monuments on the north side of the Mervdasht plain, and may wend our way towards the

3. Ruins on the plain

great palace-platform, which is our present goal, and its everlasting glory, noticing *en route* a few scattered relics that still exist outside the area of Persepolis itself. These are three in number. On the plain to the north of the platform, about half way between it and Naksh-i-Rustam, and nearly opposite Naksh-

[1] Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 180; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 114.
[2] *First Journey*, p. 128.



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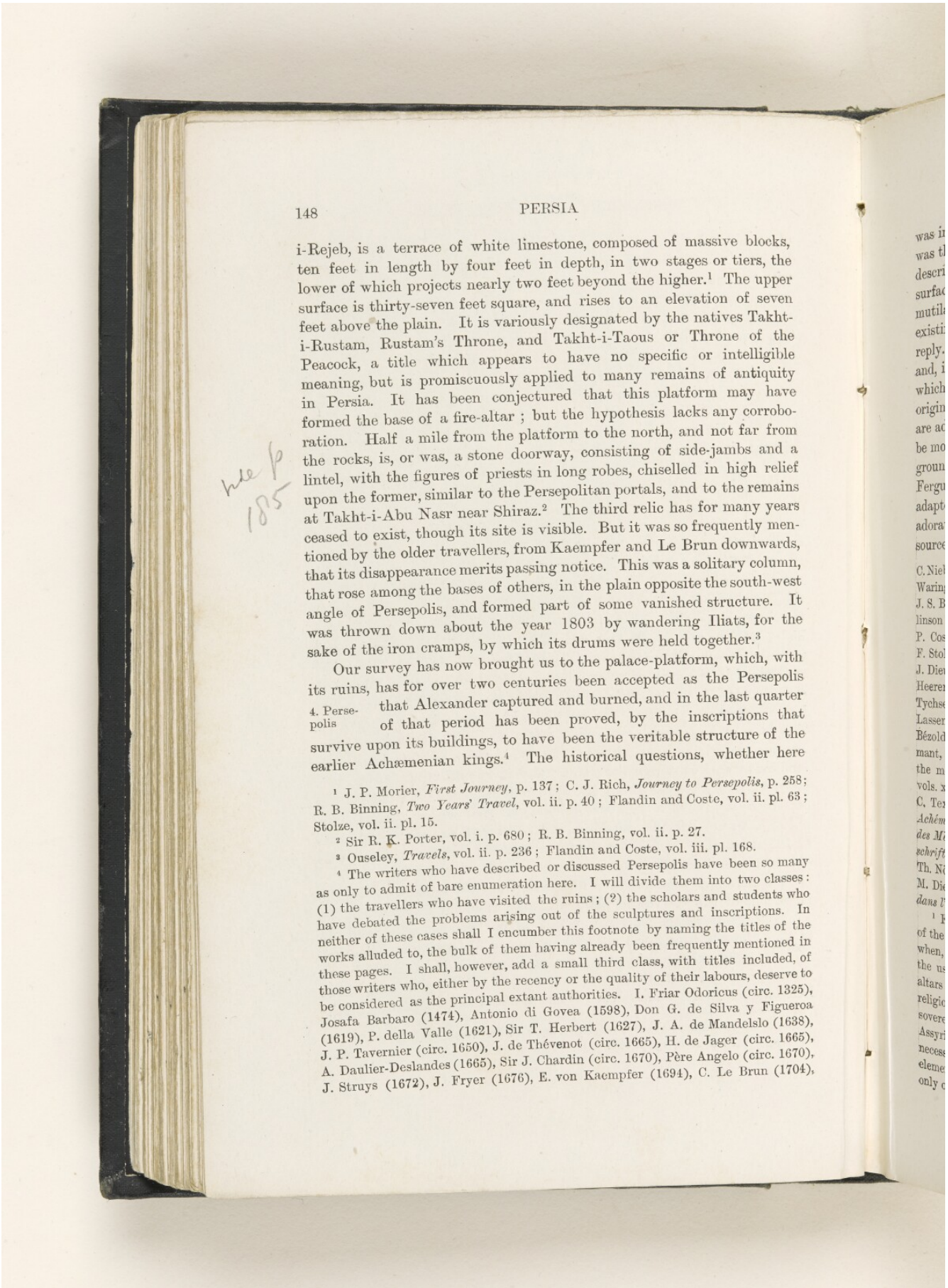




i-Rejeb, is a terrace of white limestone, composed of massive blocks, ten feet in length by four feet in depth, in two stages or tiers, the lower of which projects nearly two feet beyond the higher.[1] The upper surface is thirty-seven feet square, and rises to an elevation of seven feet above the plain. It is variously designated by the natives Takht-i-Rustam, Rustam's Throne, and Takht-i-Taous or Throne of the Peacock, a title which appears to have no specific or intelligible meaning, but is promiscuously applied to many remains of antiquity in Persia. It has been conjectured that this platform may have formed the base of a fire-altar ; but the hypothesis lacks any corroboration. Half a mile from the platform to the north, and not far from the rocks, is, or was, a stone doorway, consisting of side-jambs and a lintel, with the figures of priests in long robes, chiselled in high relief upon the former, similar to the Persepolitan portals, and to the remains at Takht-i-Abu Nasr near Shiraz.[2] The third relic has for many years ceased to exist, though its site is visible. But it was so frequently mentioned by the older travellers, from Kaempfer and Le Brun downwards, that its disappearance merits passing notice. This was a solitary column, that rose among the bases of others, in the plain opposite the south-west angle of Persepolis, and formed part of some vanished structure. It was thrown down about the year 1803 by wandering Iliats, for the sake of the iron cramps, by which its drums were held together.[3]

4. Persepolis

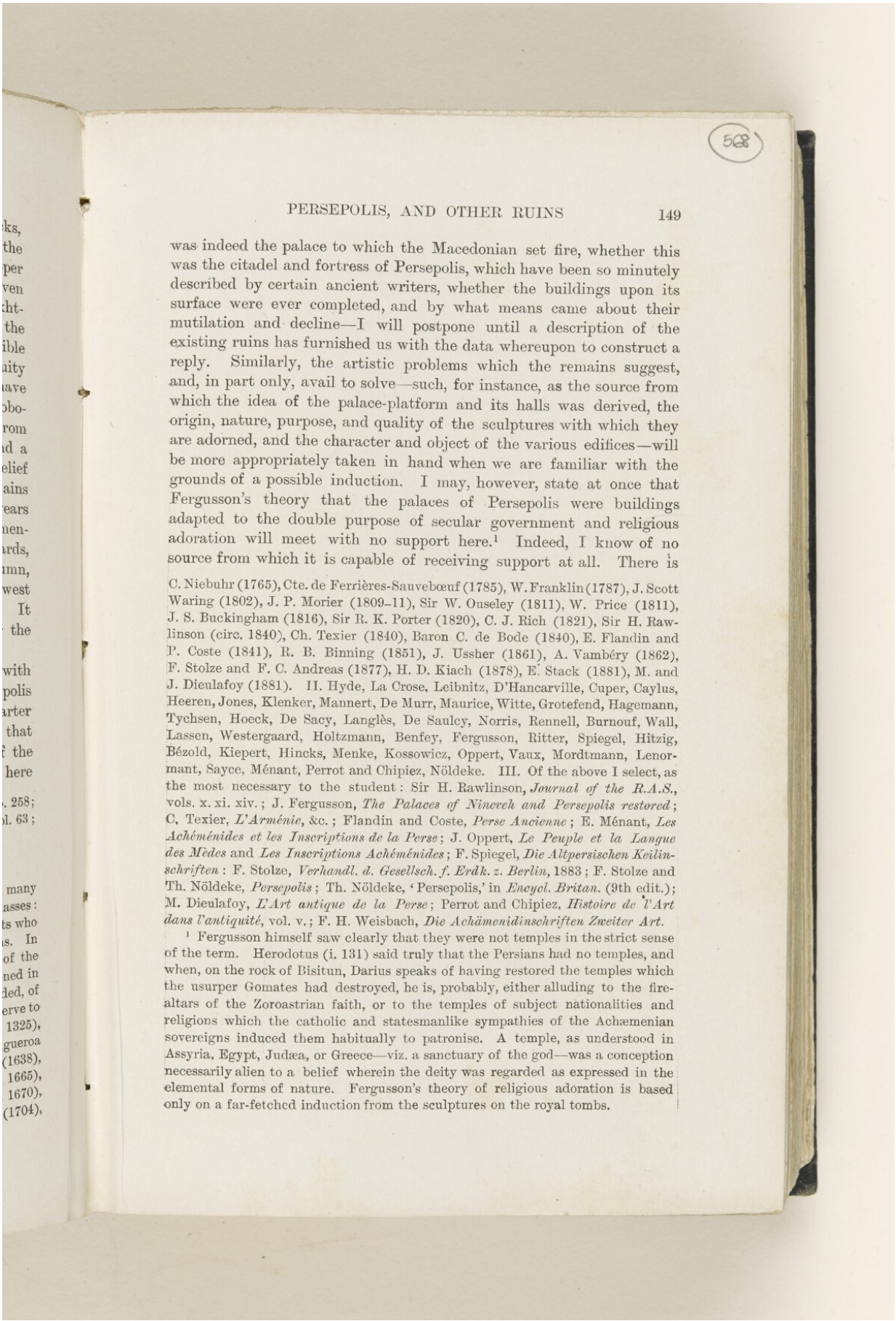
Our survey has now brought us to the palace-platform, which, with its ruins, has for over two centuries been accepted as the Persepolis that Alexander captured and burned, and in the last quarter of that period has been proved, by the inscriptions that survive upon its buildings, to have been the veritable structure of the earlier Achæmenian kings.[4] The historical questions, whether here

[1] J. P. Morier, *First Journey*, p. 137 ; C. J. Rich, *Journey to Persepolis*, p. 258; R. B. Binning, *Two Years' Travel*, vol. ii. p. 40 ; Flandin and Coste, vol. ii. pl. 63 ; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 15.

[2] Sir R. K. Porter, vol. i. p. 680 ; R. B. Binning, vol. ii. p. 27.

[3] Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 236 ; Flandin and Coste, vol. iii. pl. 168.

[4] The writers who have described or discussed Persepolis have been so many as only to admit of bare enumeration here. I will divide them into two classes : (1) the travellers who have visited the ruins ; (2) the scholars and students who have debated the problems arising out of the sculptures and inscriptions. In neither of these cases shall I encumber this footnote by naming the titles of the works alluded to, the bulk of them having already been frequently mentioned in these pages. I shall, however, add a small third class, with titles included, of those writers who, either by the recency or the quality of their labours, deserve to be considered as the principal extant authorities. I. Friar Odoricus (circ. 1325), Josafa Barbaro (1474), Antonio di Govea (1598), Don G. de Silva y Figueroa (1619), P. della Valle (1621), Sir T. Herbert (1627), J. A. de Mandelslo (1638), J. P. Tavernier (circ. 1650), J. de Thévenot (circ. 1665), H. de Jager (circ. 1665), A. Daulier-Deslandes (1665), Sir J. Chardin (circ. 1670), Père Angelo (circ. 1670), J. Struys (1672), J. Fryer (1676), E. von Kaempfer (1694), C. Le Brun (1704),





was indeed the palace to which the Macedonian set fire, whether this was the citadel and fortress of Persepolis, which have been so minutely described by certain ancient writers, whether the buildings upon its surface were ever completed, and by what means came about their mutilation and decline—I will postpone until a description of the existing ruins has furnished us with the data whereupon to construct a reply. Similarly, the artistic problems which the remains suggest, and, in part only, avail to solve—such, for instance, as the source from which the idea of the palace-platform and its halls was derived, the origin, nature, purpose, and quality of the sculptures with which they are adorned, and the character and object of the various edifices—will be more appropriately taken in hand when we are familiar with the grounds of a possible induction. I may, however, state at once that Fergusson's theory that the palaces of Persepolis were buildings adapted to the double purpose of secular government and religious adoration will meet with no support here.[1] Indeed, I know of no source from which it is capable of receiving support at all. There is

C. Niebuhr (1765), Cte. de Ferrières-Sauvebœuf (1785), W. Franklin (1787), J. Scott Waring (1802), J. P. Morier (1809–11), Sir W. Ouseley (1811), W. Price (1811), J. S. Buckingham (1816), Sir R. K. Porter (1820), C. J. Rich (1821), Sir H. Rawlinson (circ. 1840), Ch. Texier (1840), Baron C. de Bode (1840), E. Flandin and P. Coste (1841), R. B. Binning (1851), J. Ussher (1861), A. Vambéry (1862), F. Stolze and F. C. Andreas (1877), H. D. Kiach (1878), E. Stack (1881), M. and J. Dieulafoy (1881). II. Hyde, La Crose, Leibnitz, D'Hancarville, Cuper, Caylus, Heeren, Jones, Klenker, Mannert, De Murr, Maurice, Witte, Grotefend, Hagemann, Tychsen, Hoeck, De Sacy, Langlès, De Saulcy, Norris, Rennell, Burnouf, Wall, Lassen, Westergaard, Holtzmann, Benfey, Fergusson, Ritter, Spiegel, Hitzig, Bézold, Kiepert, Hincks, Menke, Kossowicz, Oppert, Vaux, Mordtmann, Lenormant, Sayce, Ménant, Perrot and Chipiez, Nöldeke. III. Of the above I select, as the most necessary to the student: Sir H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.A.S.*, vols. x. xi. xiv.; J. Fergusson, *The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis restored*; C. Texier, *L'Arménie*, &c.; Flandin and Coste, *Perse Ancienne*; E. Ménant, *Les Achéménides et les Inscriptions de la Perse*; J. Oppert, *Le Peuple et la Langue des Mèdes* and *Les Inscriptions Achéménides*; F. Spiegel, *Die Altpersischen Keilinschriften*: F. Stolze, *Verhandl. d. Gesellsch. f. Erdk. z. Berlin*, 1883; F. Stolze and Th. Nöldeke, *Persepolis*; Th. Nöldeke, 'Persepolis,' in *Encycl. Britan.* (9th edit.); M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art antique de la Perse*; Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'antiquité*, vol. v.; F. H. Weisbach, *Die Achämenidinschriften Zweiter Art.*

[1] Fergusson himself saw clearly that they were not temples in the strict sense of the term. Herodotus (i. 131) said truly that the Persians had no temples, and when, on the rock of Bisitun, Darius speaks of having restored the temples which the usurper Gomates had destroyed, he is, probably, either alluding to the fire-altars of the Zoroastrian faith, or to the temples of subject nationalities and religions which the catholic and statesmanlike sympathies of the Achæmenian sovereigns induced them habitually to patronise. A temple, as understood in Assyria, Egypt, Judæa, or Greece—viz. a sanctuary of the god—was a conception necessarily alien to a belief wherein the deity was regarded as expressed in the elemental forms of nature. Fergusson's theory of religious adoration is based only on a far-fetched induction from the sculptures on the royal tombs.

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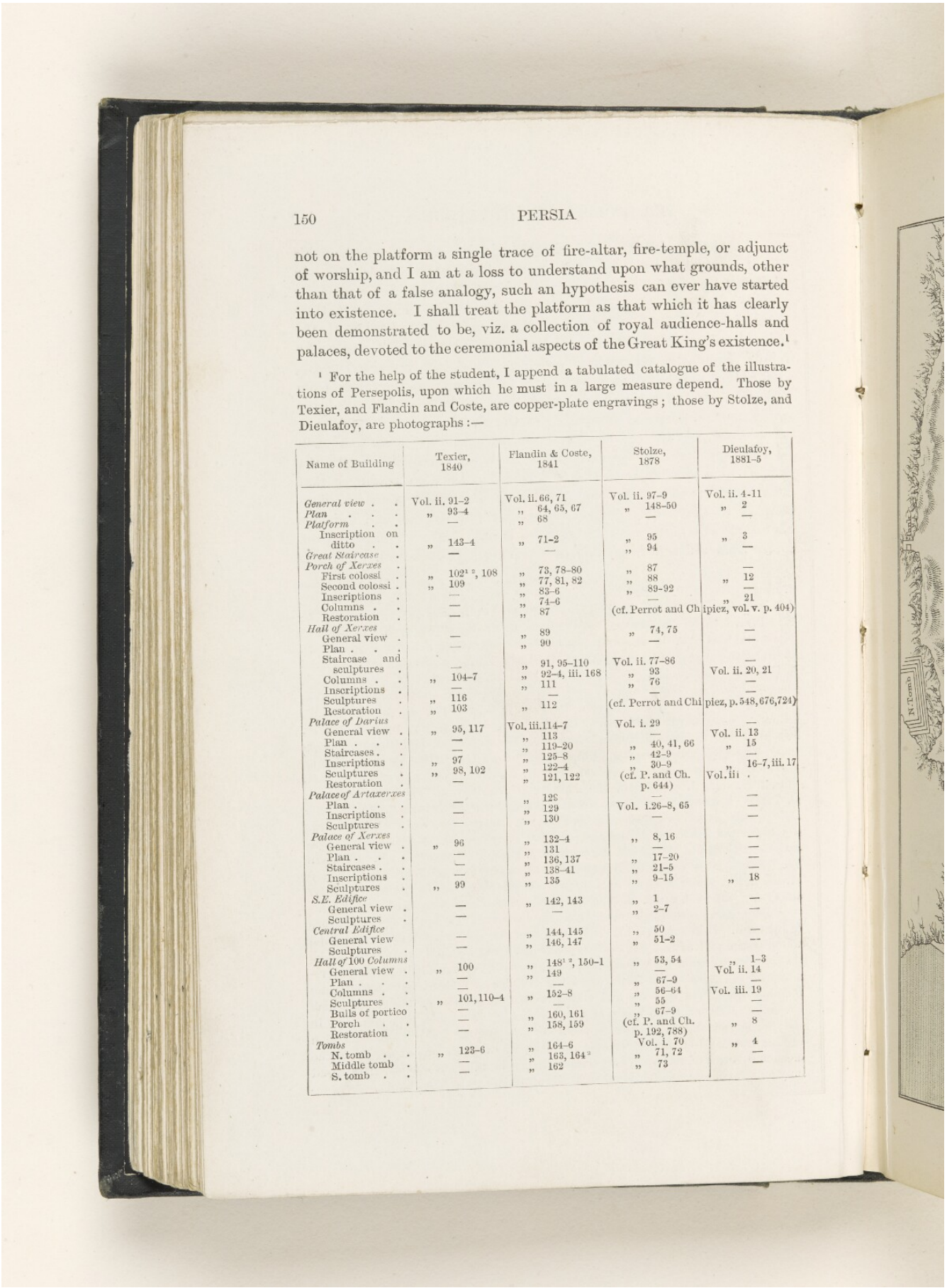



not on the platform a single trace of fire-altar, fire-temple, or adjunct of worship, and I am at a loss to understand upon what grounds, other than that of a false analogy, such an hypothesis can ever have started into existence. I shall treat the platform as that which it has clearly been demonstrated to be, viz. a collection of royal audience-halls and palaces, devoted to the ceremonial aspects of the Great King's existence.[1]

[1] For the help of the student, I append a tabulated catalogue of the illustrations of Persepolis, upon which he must in a large measure depend. Those by Texier, and Flandin and Coste, are copper-plate engravings; those by Stolze, and Dieulafoy, are photographs:—

| Name of Building | Texier, 1840 | Flandin & Coste, 1841 | Stolze, 1878 | Dieulafoy, 1881–5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *General view* | Vol. ii. 91–2 | Vol. ii. 66, 71 | Vol. ii. 97–9 | Vol. ii. 4-11 |
| *Plan* | „ 93–4 | „ 64, 65, 67 | „ 148–50 | „ 2 |
| *Platform* | — | „ 68 | — | — |
| Inscription on ditto | „ 143–4 | „ 71–2 | „ 95 | „ 3 |
| *Great Staircase* | — | — | „ 94 | — |
| *Porch of Xerxes* | | | | |
| First colossi | „ 102[1,2], 108 | „ 73, 78–80 | „ 87 | — |
| Second colossi | „ 109 | „ 77, 81, 82 | „ 88 | „ 12 |
| Inscriptions | — | „ 83–6 | „ 89–92 | — |
| Columns | — | „ 74–6 | — | „ 21 |
| Restoration | — | „ 87 | (cf. Perrot and Chipiez, vol. v. p. 404) | |
| *Hall of Xerxes* | | | | |
| General view | — | „ 89 | „ 74, 75 | — |
| Plan | — | „ 90 | — | — |
| Staircase and sculptures | — | „ 91, 95–110 | Vol. ii. 77–86 | — |
| Columns | „ 104–7 | „ 92–4, iii. 168 | „ 93 | Vol. ii. 20, 21 |
| Inscriptions | — | „ 111 | „ 76 | — |
| Sculptures | „ 116 | — | — | — |
| Restoration | „ 103 | „ 112 | (cf. Perrot and Chipiez, p. 548, 676, 724) | |
| *Palace of Darius* | | | | — |
| General view | „ 95, 117 | Vol. iii. 114–7 | Vol. i. 29 | Vol. ii. 13 |
| Plan | — | „ 113 | — | „ 15 |
| Staircases | — | „ 119–20 | „ 40, 41, 66 | — |
| Inscriptions | „ 97 | „ 125–8 | „ 42–9 | „ 16–7, iii. 17 |
| Sculptures | „ 98, 102 | „ 122–4 | „ 30–9 | Vol. iii |
| Restoration | — | „ 121, 122 | (cf. P. and Ch. p. 644) | |
| *Palace of Artaxerxes* | | „ 128 | — | — |
| Plan | — | „ 129 | Vol. i. 26–8, 65 | — |
| Inscriptions | — | „ 130 | — | — |
| Sculptures | — | | | — |
| *Palace of Xerxes* | | „ 132–4 | „ 8, 16 | — |
| General view | „ 96 | „ 131 | — | — |
| Plan | — | „ 136, 137 | „ 17–20 | — |
| Staircases | — | „ 138–41 | „ 21–5 | — |
| Inscriptions | — | „ 135 | „ 9–15 | „ 18 |
| Sculptures | „ 99 | | | |
| *S.E. Edifice* | | „ 142, 143 | „ 1 | — |
| General view | — | — | „ 2–7 | — |
| Sculptures | — | | | |
| *Central Edifice* | | „ 144, 145 | „ 50 | — |
| General view | — | „ 146, 147 | „ 51–2 | — |
| Sculptures | — | | | |
| *Hall of 100 Columns* | | „ 148[1,2], 150–1 | „ 53, 54 | „ 1–3 |
| General view | „ 100 | „ 149 | — | Vol. ii. 14 |
| Plan | — | — | „ 67–9 | — |
| Columns | — | „ 152–8 | „ 56–64 | Vol. iii. 19 |
| Sculptures | „ 101, 110–4 | — | „ 55 | — |
| Bulls of portico | — | „ 160, 161 | „ 67–9 | — |
| Porch | — | „ 158, 159 | (cf. P. and Ch. p. 192, 788) | „ 8 |
| Restoration | — | | Vol. i. 70 | |
| *Tombs* | | „ 164–6 | „ 71, 72 | „ 4 |
| N. tomb | „ 123–6 | „ 163, 164[2] | „ 73 | — |
| Middle tomb | — | „ 162 | | — |
| S. tomb | — | | | |

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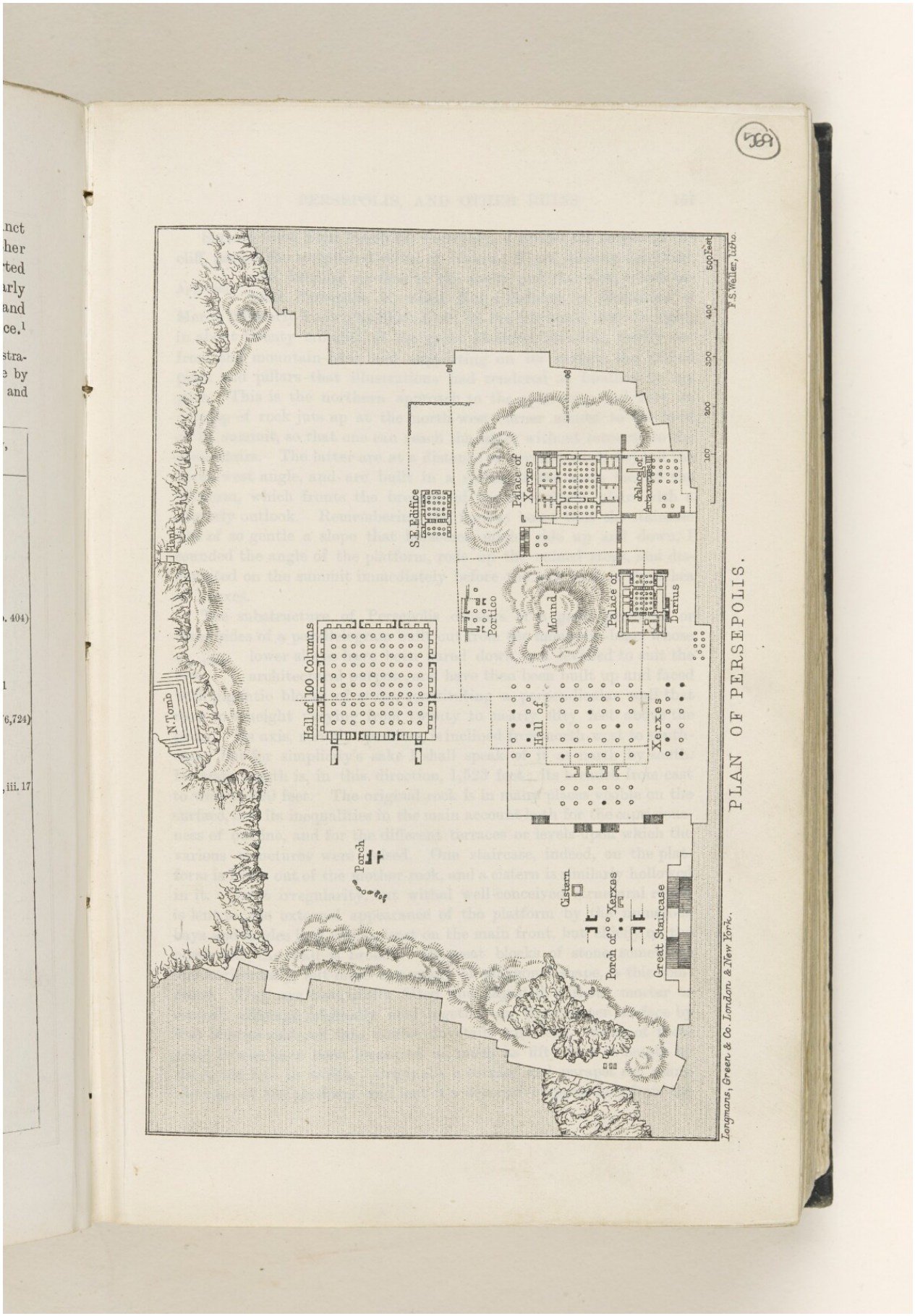
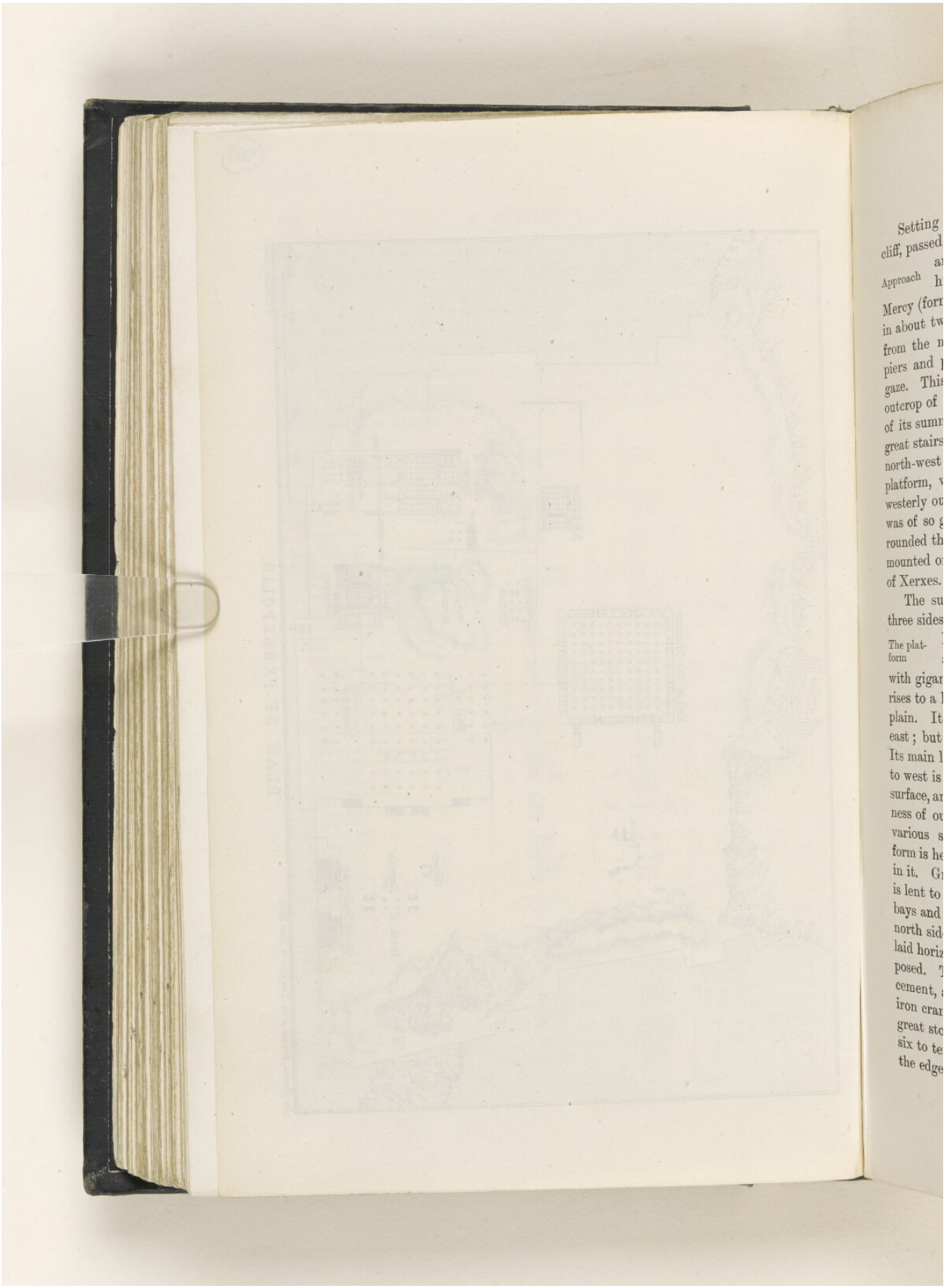

569
PLAN OF PERSEPOLIS.
Hall of 100 Columns
N. Tomb
Porch
Cistern
Porch of Xerxes
Great Staircase
Hall of Xerxes
Portico
Mound
Palace of Darius
Palace of Xerxes
S.E. Edifice
Palace of Artaxerxes
100
200
300
400
500 Feet
F.S. Weller, litho.
Longmans, Green & Co. London & New York.



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Setting forth from Puzeh for Persepolis, I turned the corner of the cliff, passed the sculptured recess of Naksh-i-Rejeb, already described, and, keeping my face to the south, and the rock, which behind Persepolis is called Kuh-i-Rahmet or Mountain of Mercy (formerly known as Shah Kuh) on the left hand, came in sight, in about twenty minutes, of the great platform, standing boldly out from the mountain-base, and supporting on its surface the ruined piers and pillars that illustrations had rendered so familiar to my gaze. This is the northern approach to the platform; and here an outcrop of rock juts up at the north-west corner almost to the level of its summit, so that one can reach the latter without recourse to the great stairs. The latter are at a distance of seventy yards beyond the north-west angle, and are built in a recess of the main face of the platform, which fronts the breadth of the Mervdasht plain with a westerly outlook. Remembering the famous boast that the staircase was of so gentle a slope that horsemen might ride up and down, I rounded the angle of the platform, rode up the ruined steps, and dismounted on the summit immediately before the bull-flanked Propylæa of Xerxes.

Approach

The substructure of Persepolis consists of a great platform, or three sides of a parallelogram built out from the mountain-base, whose lower slopes have been pared down and levelled to suit the architectural purpose, and have then been built up and faced with gigantic blocks of stone, constituting a perpendicular wall that rises to a height varying from twenty to nearly fifty feet above the plain. Its axis, strictly speaking, is inclined from north-west to south-east; but for simplicity's sake I shall speak of it as north by south. Its main length is, in this direction, 1,523 feet; its breadth from east to west is 920 feet. The original rock is in many places visible on the surface, and its inequalities in the main account both for the capriciousness of outline, and for the different terraces or levels upon which the various structures were raised. One staircase, indeed, on the platform is hewn out of the mother-rock, and a cistern is similarly hollowed in it. Great irregularity, but withal well-conceived structural relief, is lent to the external appearance of the platform by the numerous bays and angles into which, least on the main front, but chiefly on the north side, the wall is broken. Of great blocks of stone, sometimes laid horizontally, but more commonly of polygonal shape, is this composed. They are beautifully fitted and adjusted, without mortar or cement, although originally held together on their upper surface by iron cramps soldered into double dovetails with lead. Some of these great stones have been measured as much as fifty feet in length by six to ten feet in width. Originally a cornice and parapet ran round the edge of the platform, and lent it a decorative appearance from the

The platform

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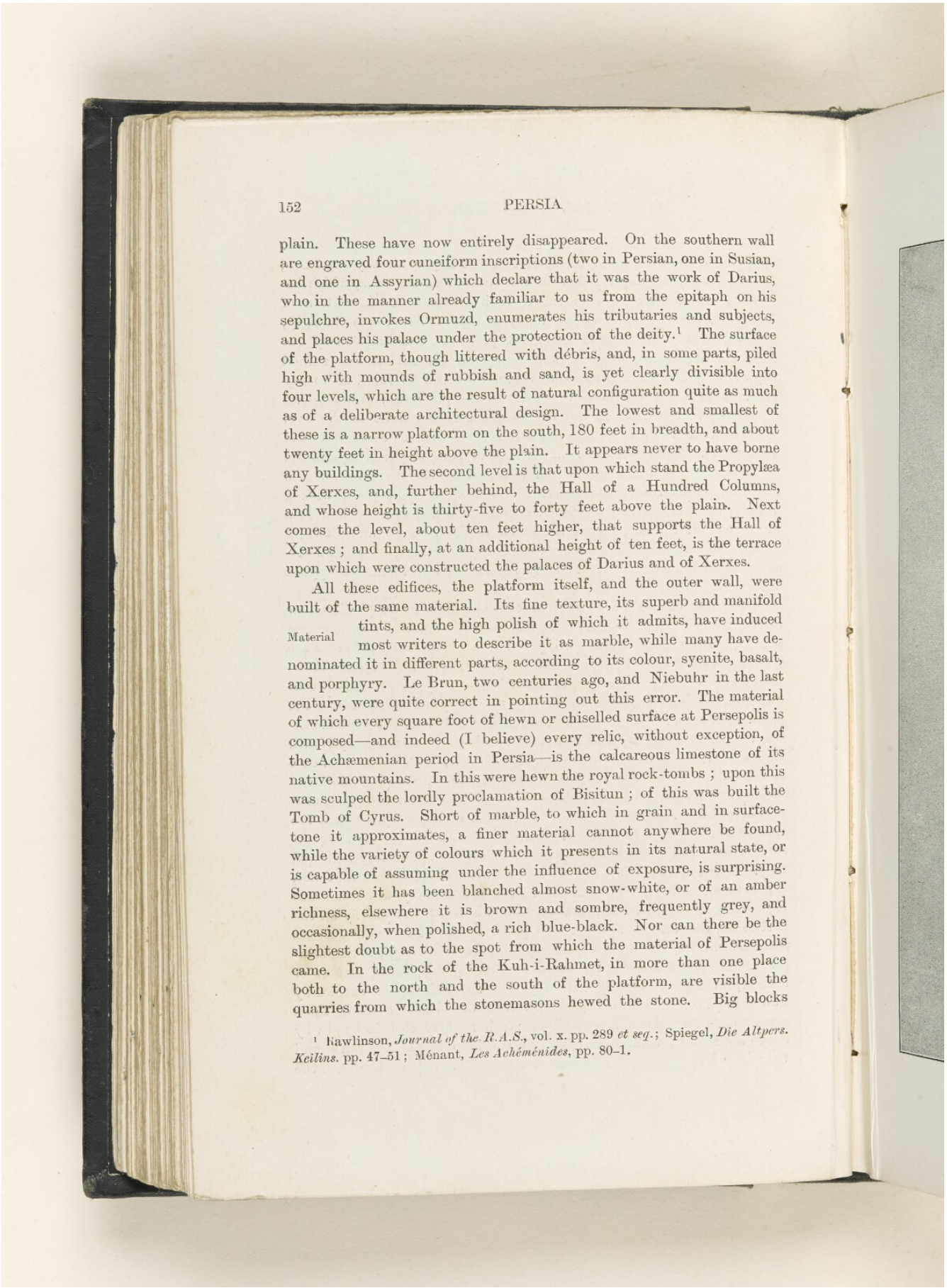



plain. These have now entirely disappeared. On the southern wall are engraved four cuneiform inscriptions (two in Persian, one in Susian, and one in Assyrian) which declare that it was the work of Darius, who in the manner already familiar to us from the epitaph on his sepulchre, invokes Ormuzd, enumerates his tributaries and subjects, and places his palace under the protection of the deity.[1] The surface of the platform, though littered with débris, and, in some parts, piled high with mounds of rubbish and sand, is yet clearly divisible into four levels, which are the result of natural configuration quite as much as of a deliberate architectural design. The lowest and smallest of these is a narrow platform on the south, 180 feet in breadth, and about twenty feet in height above the plain. It appears never to have borne any buildings. The second level is that upon which stand the Propylæa of Xerxes, and, further behind, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and whose height is thirty-five to forty feet above the plain. Next comes the level, about ten feet higher, that supports the Hall of Xerxes; and finally, at an additional height of ten feet, is the terrace upon which were constructed the palaces of Darius and of Xerxes.

All these edifices, the platform itself, and the outer wall, were built of the same material. Its fine texture, its superb and manifold tints, and the high polish of which it admits, have induced most writers to describe it as marble, while many have denominated it in different parts, according to its colour, syenite, basalt, and porphyry. Le Brun, two centuries ago, and Niebuhr in the last century, were quite correct in pointing out this error. The material of which every square foot of hewn or chiselled surface at Persepolis is composed—and indeed (I believe) every relic, without exception, of the Achæmenian period in Persia—is the calcareous limestone of its native mountains. In this were hewn the royal rock-tombs; upon this was sculped the lordly proclamation of Bisitun; of this was built the Tomb of Cyrus. Short of marble, to which in grain and in surface-tone it approximates, a finer material cannot anywhere be found, while the variety of colours which it presents in its natural state, or is capable of assuming under the influence of exposure, is surprising. Sometimes it has been blanched almost snow-white, or of an amber richness, elsewhere it is brown and sombre, frequently grey, and occasionally, when polished, a rich blue-black. Nor can there be the slightest doubt as to the spot from which the material of Persepolis came. In the rock of the Kuh-i-Rahmet, in more than one place both to the north and the south of the platform, are visible the quarries from which the stonemasons hewed the stone. Big blocks

Material

[1] Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.A.S.*, vol. x. pp. 289 *et seq.*; Spiegel, *Die Altpers. Keilins.* pp. 47–51; Ménant, *Les Achéménides*, pp. 80–1.

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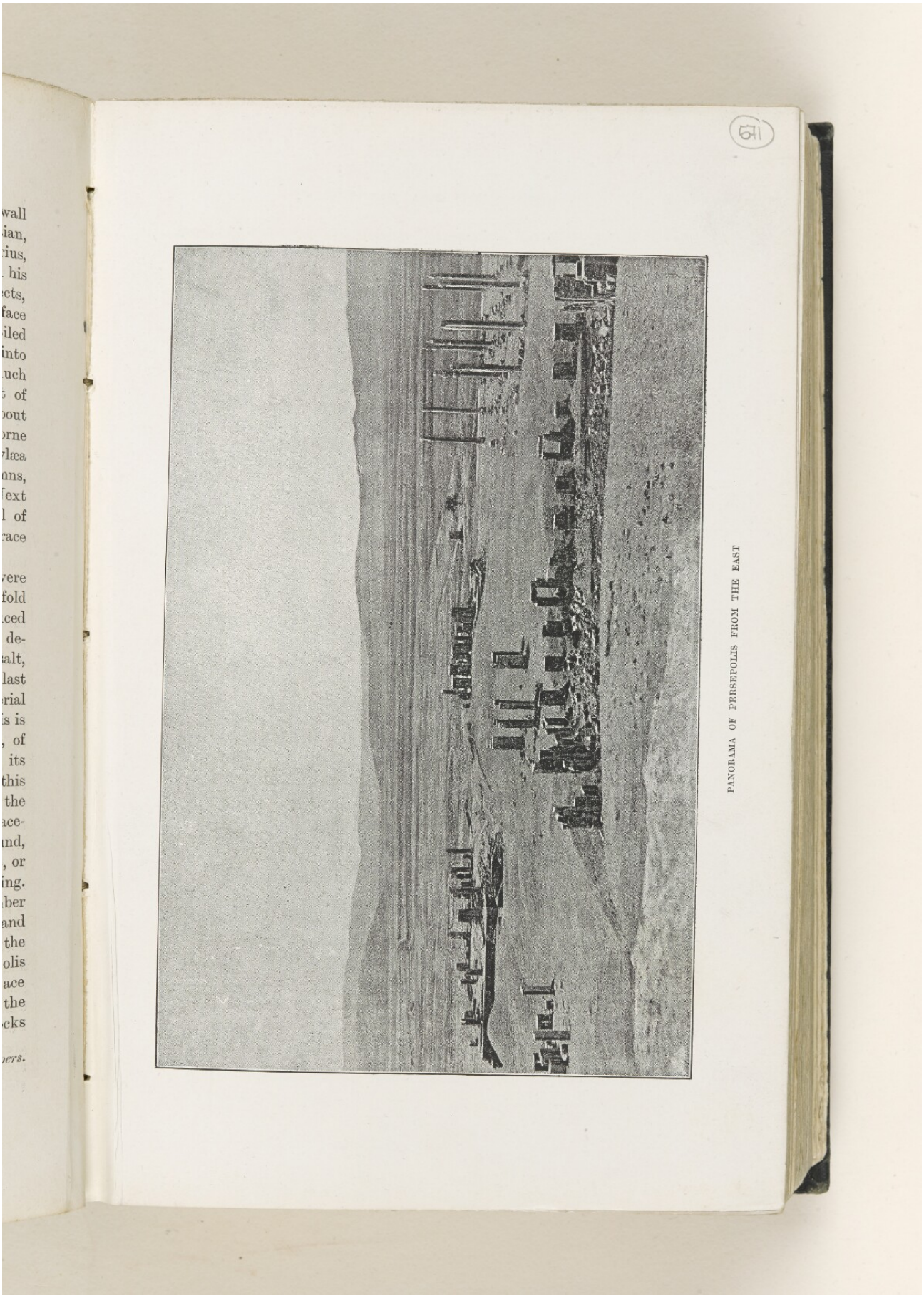

PANORAMA OF PERSEPOLIS FROM THE EAST

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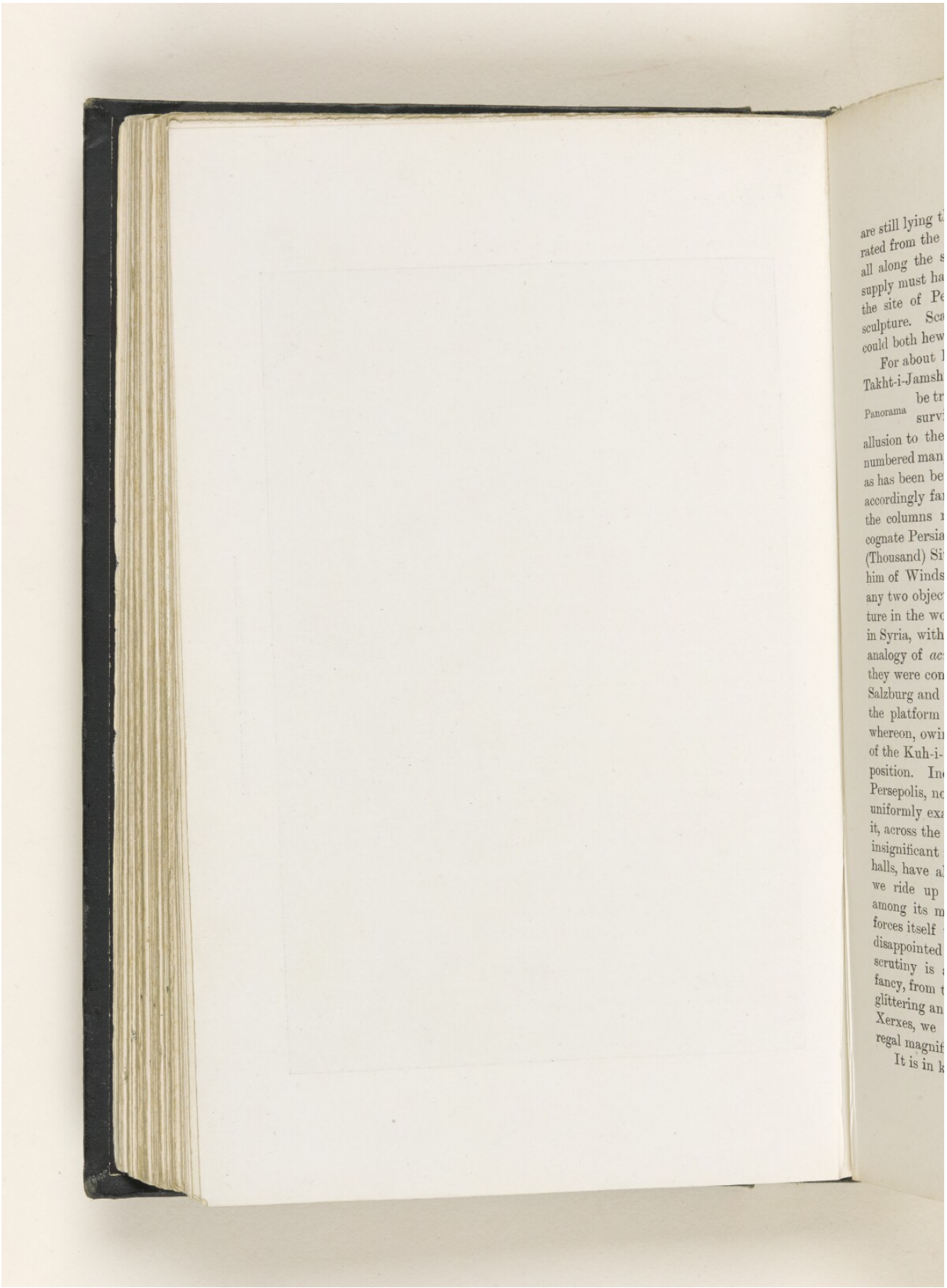

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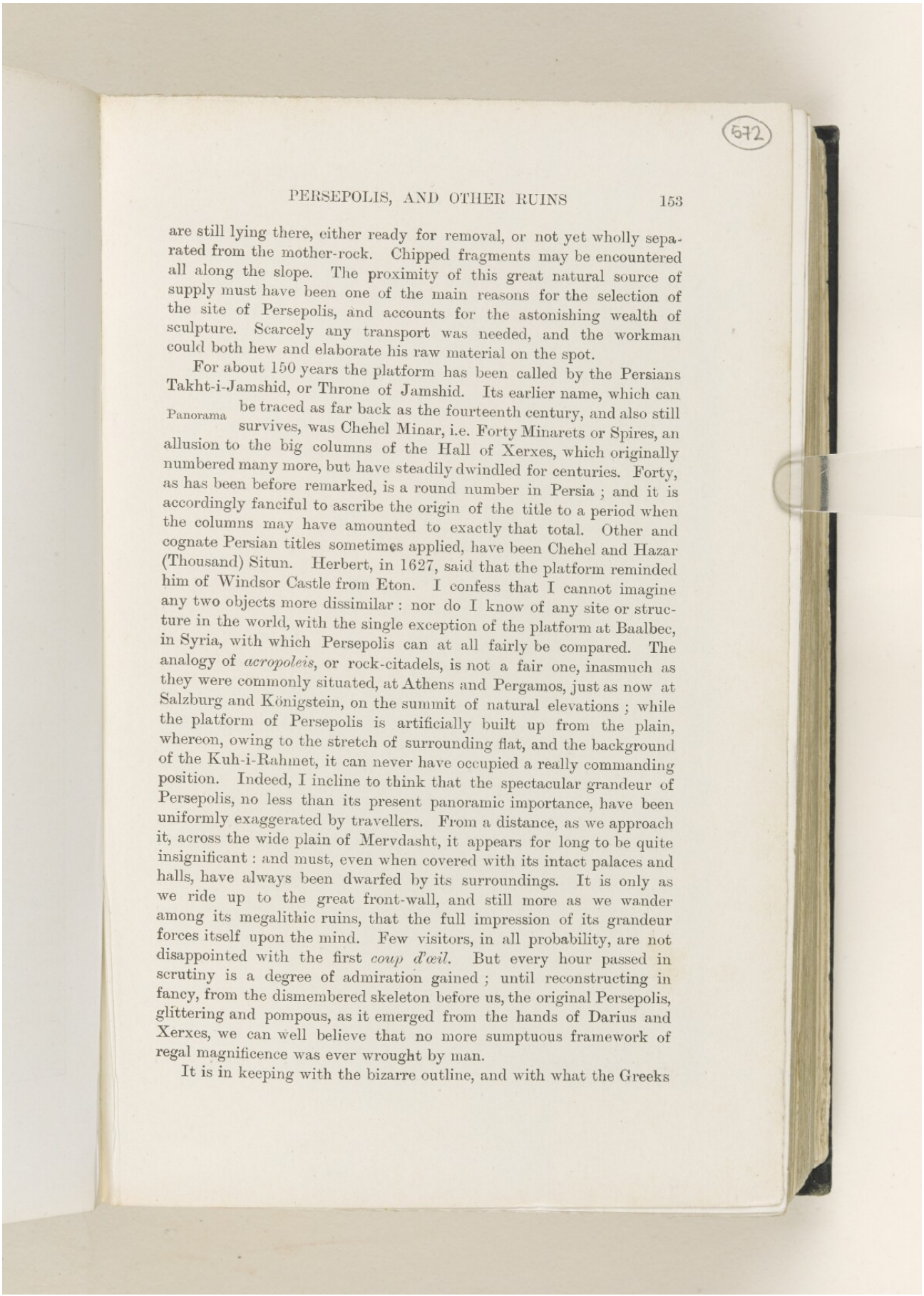

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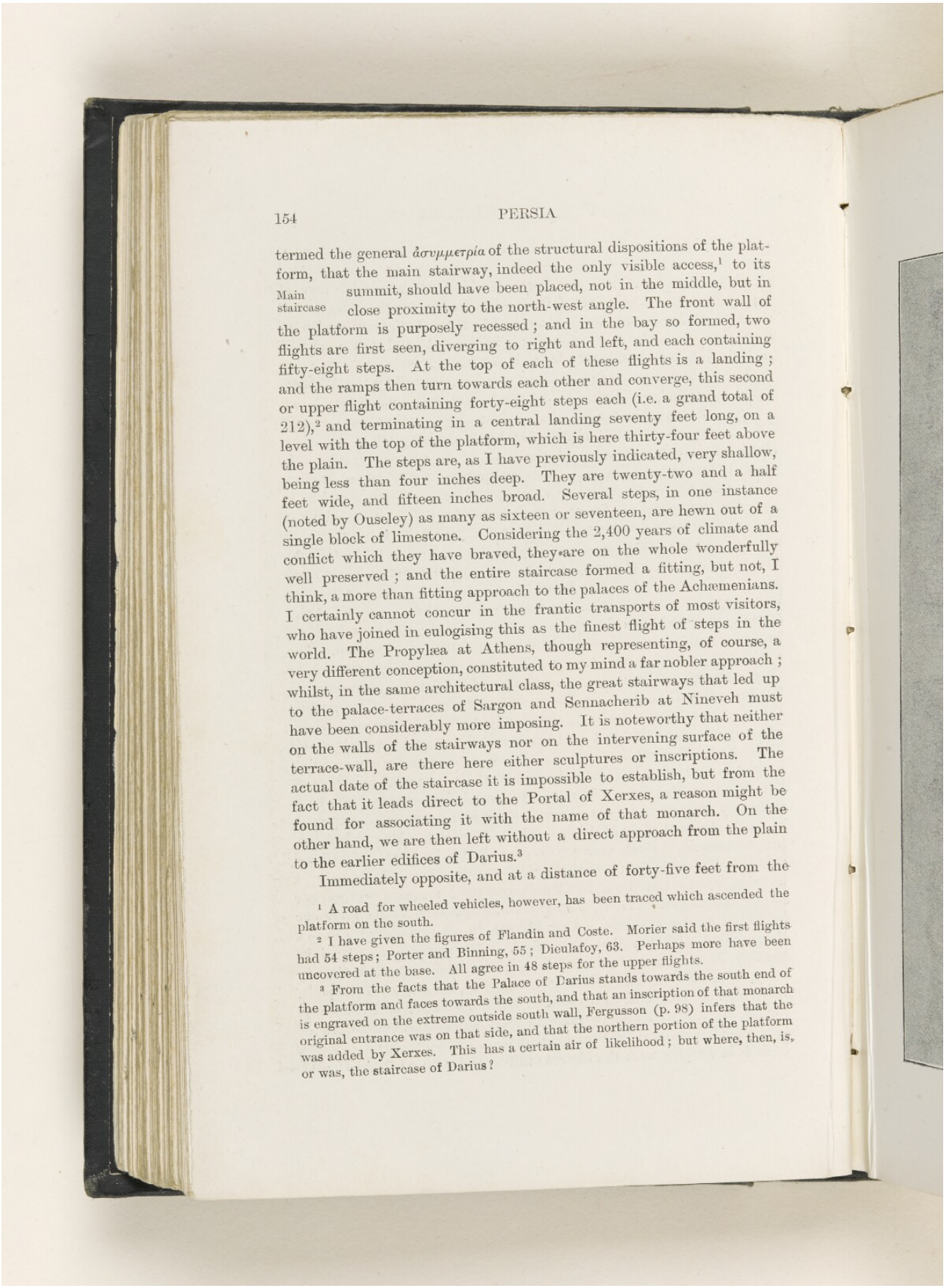
are still lying there, either ready for removal, or not yet wholly separated from the mother-rock. Chipped fragments may be encountered all along the slope. The proximity of this great natural source of supply must have been one of the main reasons for the selection of the site of Persepolis, and accounts for the astonishing wealth of sculpture. Scarcely any transport was needed, and the workman could both hew and elaborate his raw material on the spot.

For about 150 years the platform has been called by the Persians Takht-i-Jamshid, or Throne of Jamshid. Its earlier name, which can Panorama be traced as far back as the fourteenth century, and also still survives, was Chehel Minar, i.e. Forty Minarets or Spires, an allusion to the big columns of the Hall of Xerxes, which originally numbered many more, but have steadily dwindled for centuries. Forty, as has been before remarked, is a round number in Persia ; and it is accordingly fanciful to ascribe the origin of the title to a period when the columns may have amounted to exactly that total. Other and cognate Persian titles sometimes applied, have been Chehel and Hazar (Thousand) Situn. Herbert, in 1627, said that the platform reminded him of Windsor Castle from Eton. I confess that I cannot imagine any two objects more dissimilar : nor do I know of any site or structure in the world, with the single exception of the platform at Baalbec, in Syria, with which Persepolis can at all fairly be compared. The analogy of *acropoleis*, or rock-citadels, is not a fair one, inasmuch as they were commonly situated, at Athens and Pergamos, just as now at Salzburg and Königstein, on the summit of natural elevations ; while the platform of Persepolis is artificially built up from the plain, whereon, owing to the stretch of surrounding flat, and the background of the Kuh-i-Rahmet, it can never have occupied a really commanding position. Indeed, I incline to think that the spectacular grandeur of Persepolis, no less than its present panoramic importance, have been uniformly exaggerated by travellers. From a distance, as we approach it, across the wide plain of Mervdasht, it appears for long to be quite insignificant : and must, even when covered with its intact palaces and halls, have always been dwarfed by its surroundings. It is only as we ride up to the great front-wall, and still more as we wander among its megalithic ruins, that the full impression of its grandeur forces itself upon the mind. Few visitors, in all probability, are not disappointed with the first *coup d'œil*. But every hour passed in scrutiny is a degree of admiration gained ; until reconstructing in fancy, from the dismembered skeleton before us, the original Persepolis, glittering and pompous, as it emerged from the hands of Darius and Xerxes, we can well believe that no more sumptuous framework of regal magnificence was ever wrought by man.

It is in keeping with the bizarre outline, and with what the Greeks





termed the general ἀσυμμετρία of the structural dispositions of the platform, that the main stairway, indeed the only visible access,[1] to its summit, should have been placed, not in the middle, but in close proximity to the north-west angle. The front wall of the platform is purposely recessed; and in the bay so formed, two flights are first seen, diverging to right and left, and each containing fifty-eight steps. At the top of each of these flights is a landing; and the ramps then turn towards each other and converge, this second or upper flight containing forty-eight steps each (i.e. a grand total of 212),[2] and terminating in a central landing seventy feet long, on a level with the top of the platform, which is here thirty-four feet above the plain. The steps are, as I have previously indicated, very shallow, being less than four inches deep. They are twenty-two and a half feet wide, and fifteen inches broad. Several steps, in one instance (noted by Ouseley) as many as sixteen or seventeen, are hewn out of a single block of limestone. Considering the 2,400 years of climate and conflict which they have braved, they are on the whole wonderfully well preserved; and the entire staircase formed a fitting, but not, I think, a more than fitting approach to the palaces of the Achæmenians. I certainly cannot concur in the frantic transports of most visitors, who have joined in eulogising this as the finest flight of steps in the world. The Propylæa at Athens, though representing, of course, a very different conception, constituted to my mind a far nobler approach; whilst, in the same architectural class, the great stairways that led up to the palace-terraces of Sargon and Sennacherib at Nineveh must have been considerably more imposing. It is noteworthy that neither on the walls of the stairways nor on the intervening surface of the terrace-wall, are there here either sculptures or inscriptions. The actual date of the staircase it is impossible to establish, but from the fact that it leads direct to the Portal of Xerxes, a reason might be found for associating it with the name of that monarch. On the other hand, we are then left without a direct approach from the plain to the earlier edifices of Darius.[3]

Main staircase

Immediately opposite, and at a distance of forty-five feet from the

[1] A road for wheeled vehicles, however, has been traced which ascended the platform on the south.

[2] I have given the figures of Flandin and Coste. Morier said the first flights had 54 steps; Porter and Binning, 55; Dieulafoy, 63. Perhaps more have been uncovered at the base. All agree in 48 steps for the upper flights.

[3] From the facts that the Palace of Darius stands towards the south end of the platform and faces towards the south, and that an inscription of that monarch is engraved on the extreme outside south wall, Fergusson (p. 98) infers that the original entrance was on that side, and that the northern portion of the platform was added by Xerxes. This has a certain air of likelihood; but where, then, is, or was, the staircase of Darius?

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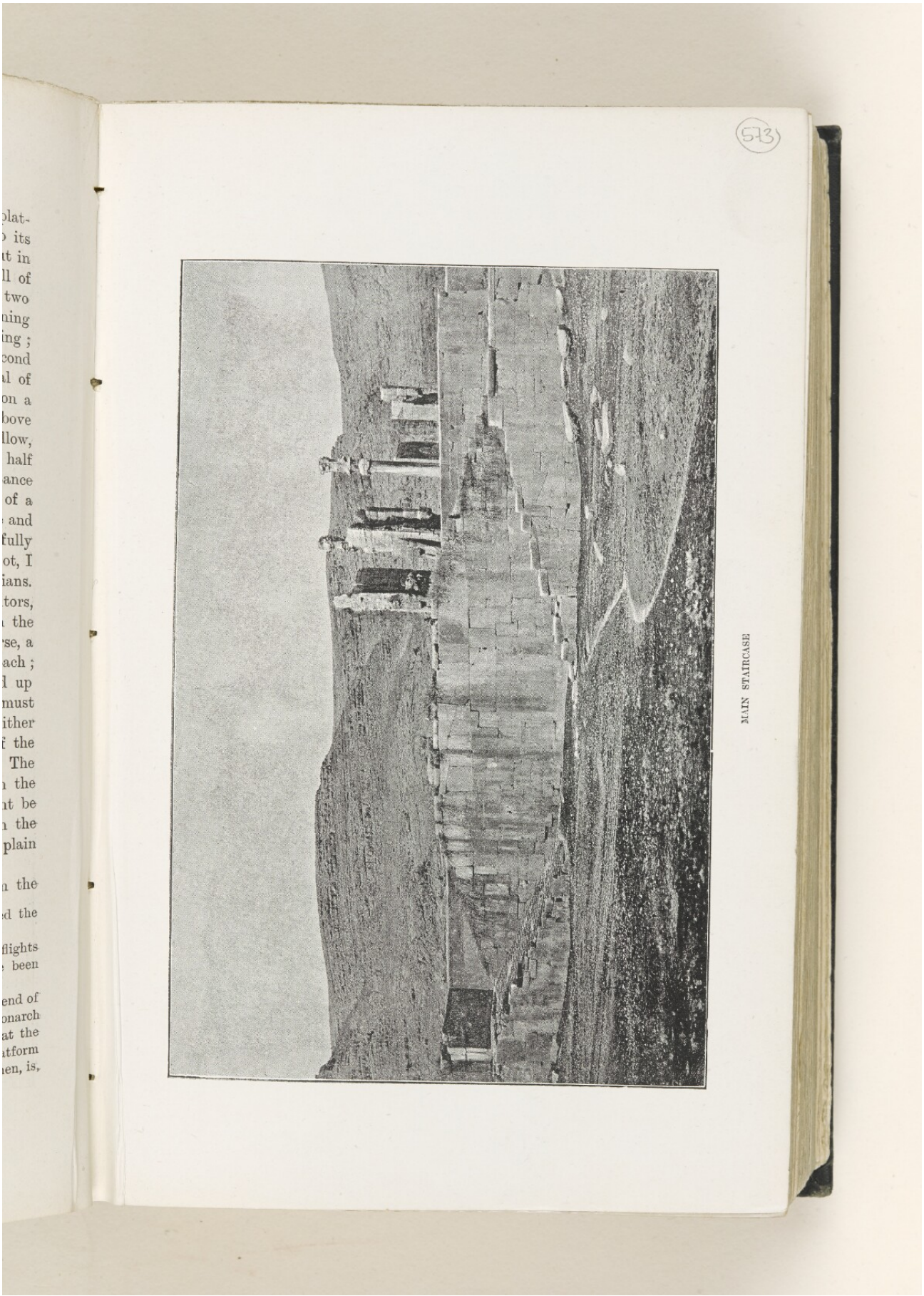
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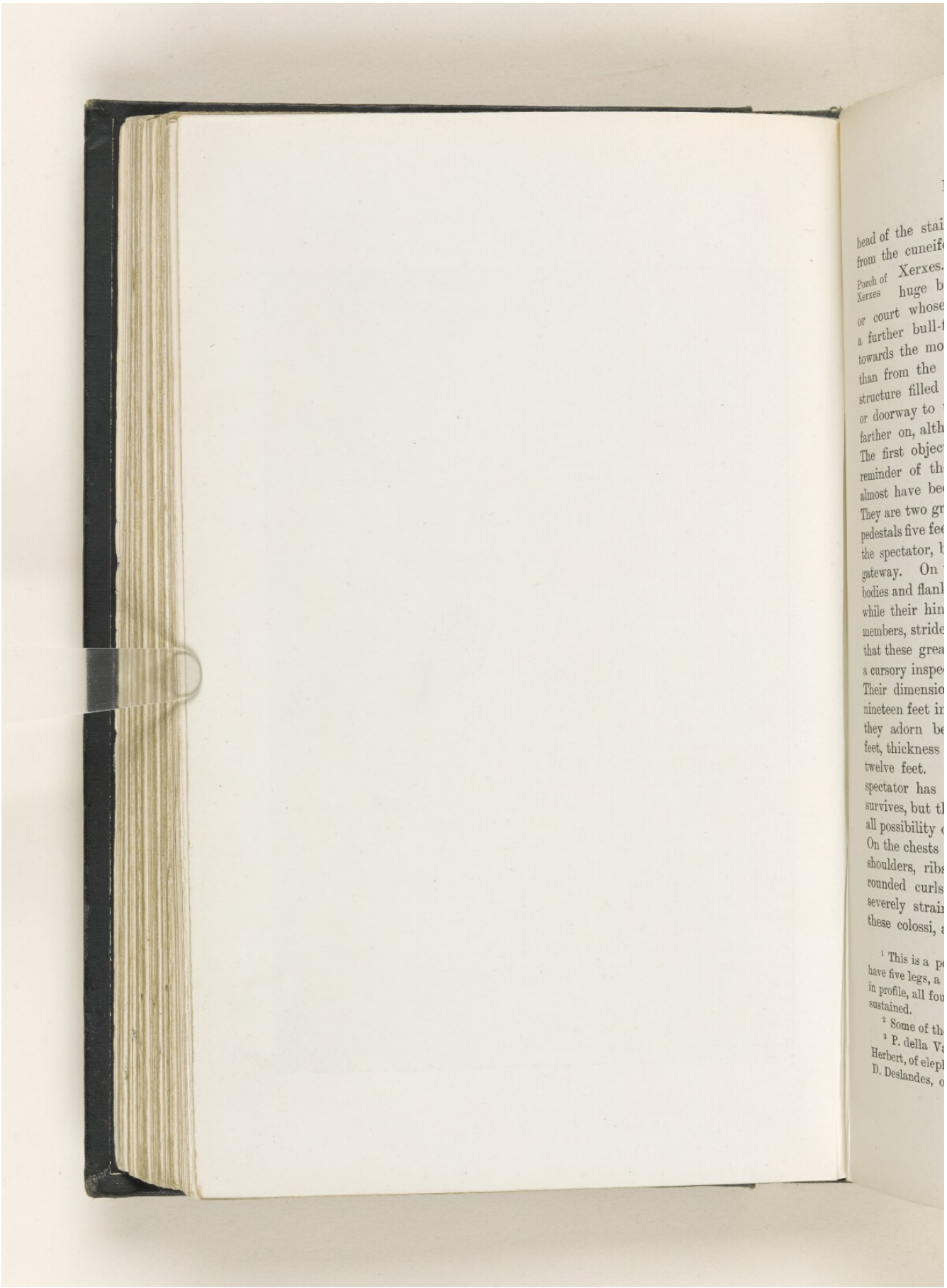
MAIN STAIRCASE



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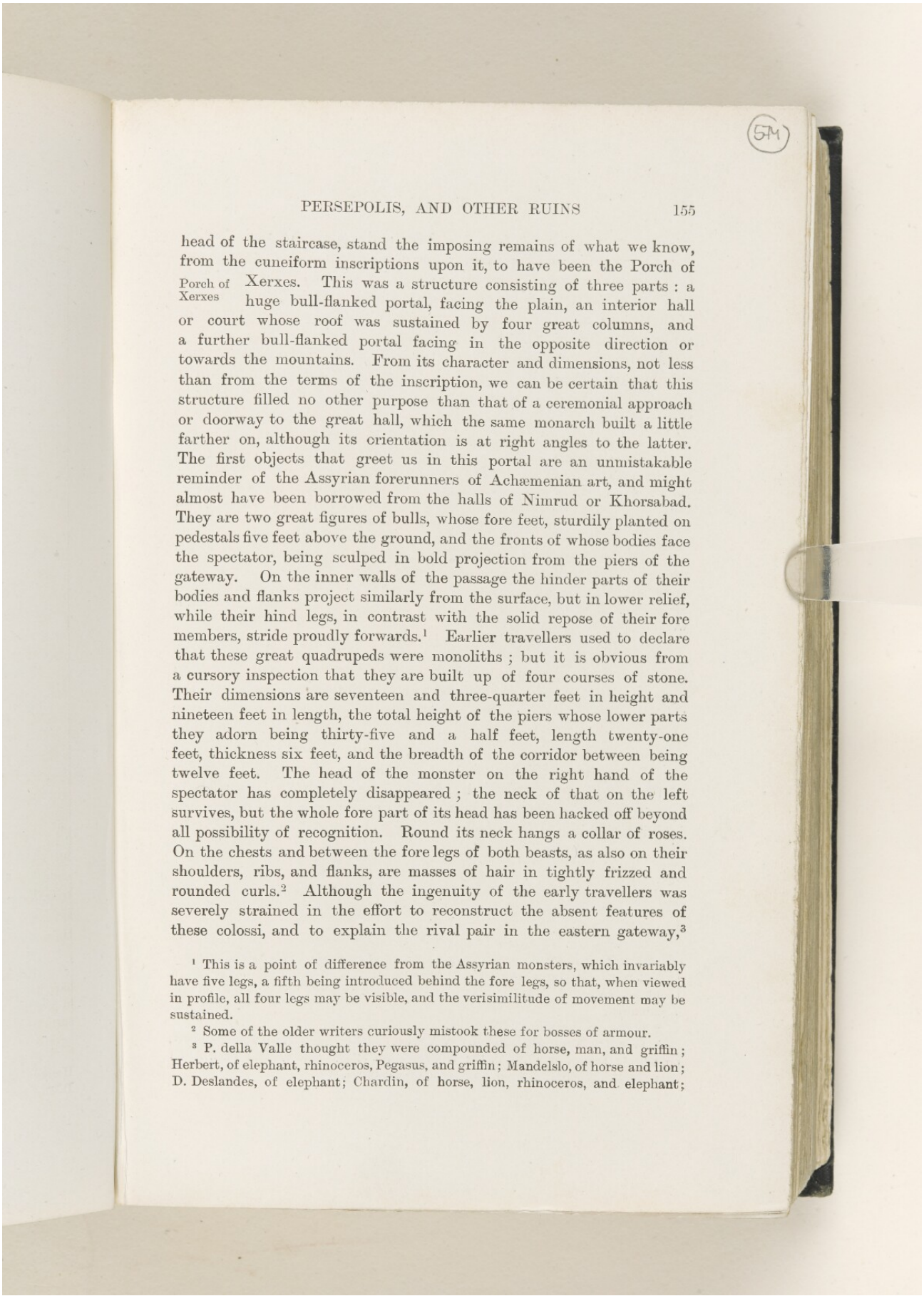



head of the staircase, stand the imposing remains of what we know, from the cuneiform inscriptions upon it, to have been the Porch of Xerxes. This was a structure consisting of three parts : a huge bull-flanked portal, facing the plain, an interior hall or court whose roof was sustained by four great columns, and a further bull-flanked portal facing in the opposite direction or towards the mountains. From its character and dimensions, not less than from the terms of the inscription, we can be certain that this structure filled no other purpose than that of a ceremonial approach or doorway to the great hall, which the same monarch built a little farther on, although its orientation is at right angles to the latter. The first objects that greet us in this portal are an unmistakable reminder of the Assyrian forerunners of Achæmenian art, and might almost have been borrowed from the halls of Nimrud or Khorsabad. They are two great figures of bulls, whose fore feet, sturdily planted on pedestals five feet above the ground, and the fronts of whose bodies face the spectator, being sculped in bold projection from the piers of the gateway. On the inner walls of the passage the hinder parts of their bodies and flanks project similarly from the surface, but in lower relief, while their hind legs, in contrast with the solid repose of their fore members, stride proudly forwards.[1] Earlier travellers used to declare that these great quadrupeds were monoliths ; but it is obvious from a cursory inspection that they are built up of four courses of stone. Their dimensions are seventeen and three-quarter feet in height and nineteen feet in length, the total height of the piers whose lower parts they adorn being thirty-five and a half feet, length twenty-one feet, thickness six feet, and the breadth of the corridor between being twelve feet. The head of the monster on the right hand of the spectator has completely disappeared ; the neck of that on the left survives, but the whole fore part of its head has been hacked off beyond all possibility of recognition. Round its neck hangs a collar of roses. On the chests and between the fore legs of both beasts, as also on their shoulders, ribs, and flanks, are masses of hair in tightly frizzed and rounded curls.[2] Although the ingenuity of the early travellers was severely strained in the effort to reconstruct the absent features of these colossi, and to explain the rival pair in the eastern gateway,[3]

Porch of Xerxes

[1] This is a point of difference from the Assyrian monsters, which invariably have five legs, a fifth being introduced behind the fore legs, so that, when viewed in profile, all four legs may be visible, and the verisimilitude of movement may be sustained.

[2] Some of the older writers curiously mistook these for bosses of armour.

[3] P. della Valle thought they were compounded of horse, man, and griffin ; Herbert, of elephant, rhinoceros, Pegasus, and griffin ; Mandelslo, of horse and lion ; D. Deslandes, of elephant; Chardin, of horse, lion, rhinoceros, and elephant;

there cannot be a doubt, from the shape and anatomy of their bodies, that they were intended for bulls ; and any hesitation on this score was finally removed by the discovery of the débris of one of the bull-heads by Flandin and Coste. The muscles are finely indicated on the bodies of the beasts, and their pose and mien typify the proud challenge of arrogance and strength.

Above the bulls, high up, on the inner walls of the gateway, are chiselled on either side, in parallel tablets, the inscriptions in three tongues, which reveal the handiwork of Xerxes. This is what the king says :—

Inscription of Xerxes

A great God is Ormuzd, who hath created the earth, who hath created the heavens, who hath created man, who hath given to mankind the good spirit (life), who hath made Xerxes King, the sole King of many Kings, the sole Lord of many Lords. I am Xerxes, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of the many-tongued countries, the King of this great universe, the son of Darius, the King, the Achæmenian. Xerxes, the Great King, saith: By the grace of Ormuzd I have made this portal, whereon are depicted all the countries.[1] Many other noble monuments there are in this Parsa,[2] which I have wrought, and which my father hath wrought. That which hath been wrought is good. All of it we have wrought by the grace of Ormuzd. Xerxes the King saith, May Ormuzd protect me and my empire. Both that which I have wrought, and that which my father hath wrought, may Ormuzd protect them.[3]

From this proud memorial it is, I believe, with affected disgust that most travellers turn to the records of many generations of European visitors, who have either cut or painted their names on the lower surfaces of this gateway, in some cases even on the bodies of the bulls. I confess that I do not share this spurious emotion. A structure so hopelessly ruined is not rendered the less impressive—on the contrary, to my thinking, it becomes the more interesting—by reason of the records graven upon it, in many cases with their own hands, by famous voyagers of the past, with whose names and studies the intelligent visitor to Persepolis is likely to be almost as familiar as he

Epigraphs of travel

Kaempfer, of camelopard; Le Brun, of sphinx, horse, lion, and ape; Franklin, of lion, griffin, and elephant. Herbert's illustration represents them as most parlous-looking monsters, principally elephant. From Niebuhr downwards it became fashionable to call them sphinxes. Even Morier thought the first pair had the heads of horses.

[1] The word is Visadahyaus (derived from *visa*, for *vispa* = all, and *dahyaus*, or country). Rawlinson variously renders it 'gate of entrance' and 'public portal.' Oppert translates it as above. Spiegel has 'diesen Thorweg der alle Völker zeigt.' Dieulafoy supposes it to be a proper name, and renders 'ce portique nommé Viçadhahyu.'

[2] *Vide* a previous footnote, p. 132.

[3] *Vide* Rawlinson, *Journ. R. A. S.* vol. x. pp. 329–34; Spiegel, pp. 58–9; Oppert, pp. 223–4; Dieulafoy, pt. ii. p. 19; Weisbach, pp. 82–3. The translation which I have given is a collation from several of these sources.

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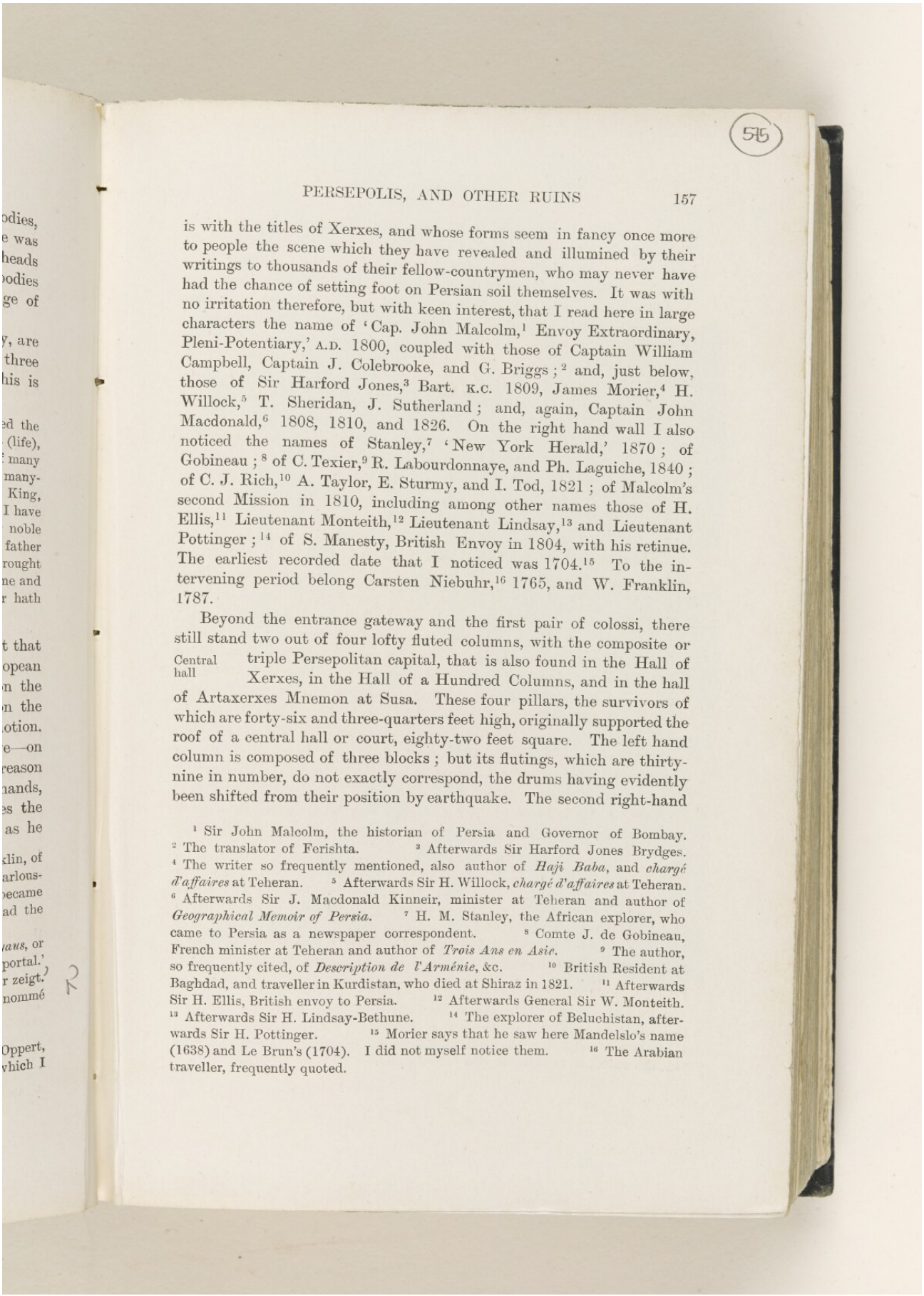



is with the titles of Xerxes, and whose forms seem in fancy once more to people the scene which they have revealed and illumined by their writings to thousands of their fellow-countrymen, who may never have had the chance of setting foot on Persian soil themselves. It was with no irritation therefore, but with keen interest, that I read here in large characters the name of 'Cap. John Malcolm,[1] Envoy Extraordinary, Pleni-Potentiary,' A.D. 1800, coupled with those of Captain William Campbell, Captain J. Colebrooke, and G. Briggs;[2] and, just below, those of Sir Harford Jones,[3] Bart. K.C. 1809, James Morier,[4] H. Willock,[5] T. Sheridan, J. Sutherland; and, again, Captain John Macdonald,[6] 1808, 1810, and 1826. On the right hand wall I also noticed the names of Stanley,[7] 'New York Herald,' 1870; of Gobineau;[8] of C. Texier,[9] R. Labourdonnaye, and Ph. Laguiche, 1840; of C. J. Rich,[10] A. Taylor, E. Sturmy, and I. Tod, 1821; of Malcolm's second Mission in 1810, including among other names those of H. Ellis,[11] Lieutenant Monteith,[12] Lieutenant Lindsay,[13] and Lieutenant Pottinger;[14] of S. Manesty, British Envoy in 1804, with his retinue. The earliest recorded date that I noticed was 1704.[15] To the intervening period belong Carsten Niebuhr,[16] 1765, and W. Franklin, 1787.

Central hall

Beyond the entrance gateway and the first pair of colossi, there still stand two out of four lofty fluted columns, with the composite or triple Persepolitan capital, that is also found in the Hall of Xerxes, in the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and in the hall of Artaxerxes Mnemon at Susa. These four pillars, the survivors of which are forty-six and three-quarters feet high, originally supported the roof of a central hall or court, eighty-two feet square. The left hand column is composed of three blocks; but its flutings, which are thirty-nine in number, do not exactly correspond, the drums having evidently been shifted from their position by earthquake. The second right-hand

[1] Sir John Malcolm, the historian of Persia and Governor of Bombay. [2] The translator of Ferishta. [3] Afterwards Sir Harford Jones Brydges. [4] The writer so frequently mentioned, also author of *Haji Baba*, and *chargé d'affaires* at Teheran. [5] Afterwards Sir H. Willock, *chargé d'affaires* at Teheran. [6] Afterwards Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir, minister at Teheran and author of *Geographical Memoir of Persia*. [7] H. M. Stanley, the African explorer, who came to Persia as a newspaper correspondent. [8] Comte J. de Gobineau, French minister at Teheran and author of *Trois Ans en Asie*. [9] The author, so frequently cited, of *Description de l'Arménie*, &c. [10] British Resident at Baghdad, and traveller in Kurdistan, who died at Shiraz in 1821. [11] Afterwards Sir H. Ellis, British envoy to Persia. [12] Afterwards General Sir W. Monteith. [13] Afterwards Sir H. Lindsay-Bethune. [14] The explorer of Beluchistan, afterwards Sir H. Pottinger. [15] Morier says that he saw here Mandelslo's name (1638) and Le Brun's (1704). I did not myself notice them. [16] The Arabian traveller, frequently quoted.

column has fallen, and parts of its segments lie embedded in the soil. The capital and small pieces of the shaft of the corresponding left-hand column are similarly buried. In Chardin's time all four were standing. Stolze thinks that the topmost capitals of these pillars were shaped in the form of a horse; but I see no reason for supposing that they terminated in anything else than the familiar bull-headed capital of the composite Achæmenian column, like their counterparts in other contemporary fabrics.

This hall leads to a second or corresponding gateway on the eastern face, where, similarly projecting from the side and fronts of two massive stone piers, another pair of colossal monsters look towards the mountain. Their character and physiognomy, however, differ from their pendants on the western face, and indicate a closer adherence to the Assyrian prototype. The bodies and the legs are again those of bulls, massive, masculine, majestic; but above their backs rise lofty wings, sweeping upwards into the air (instead of being laid back, as in the case of the Assyrian colossi), with the plumes exquisitely carved in high and seemingly imperishable relief. A second and more striking difference is that these colossi are or were human-faced. The pickaxe of the destroyer has mutilated their features out of all masculine appearance; but the great ringleted beards still depend intact upon the stalwart chests; earrings hang from their ears; bunches of hair frame heavily the vanished faces; and the heads are crowned by lofty tiaras, terminating at the summit in a fringe or coronet of feathers, while circular bands, curling upwards in the shape of horns, adorn the front. The bewilderment and obfuscation which appear in equal degree to have been excited in ancient travellers by these remarkable monsters are well illustrated in the description of the excellent Dr. Fryer, two centuries ago :—

Second gateway

> Being entred the Pomærium of Cambyses Hall, at the Hall Gates we encountred two horrid Shapes both for Grandeur and Unwontedness, being all in Armour of Coat of Mail, striking a Terror on those about to intrude; their Countenances were of the fiercest Lions, and might pass for such had not huge Wings made them flying Gryffons, and their Bulk and Hinder Parts exceeded the largest Elephants.[1]

Why the bull-headed colossi should have been turned towards the plain, or the main front of the platform, and the winged and man-headed bulls, which are infinitely more imposing, towards the mountain, is a problem which, so far as I know, no one has discussed, and which no one is likely to solve. Similar panels of cuneiform inscription

[1] *Travels*, p. 251. The moderns have not been much wiser. M. Anquetil Duperron interpreted these monsters as symbolical representations of Noah; M. de Sacy as emblems of the mythical Kaiomurs. Of course, the truth is simply that the artist had been in Babylon or in Assyria.

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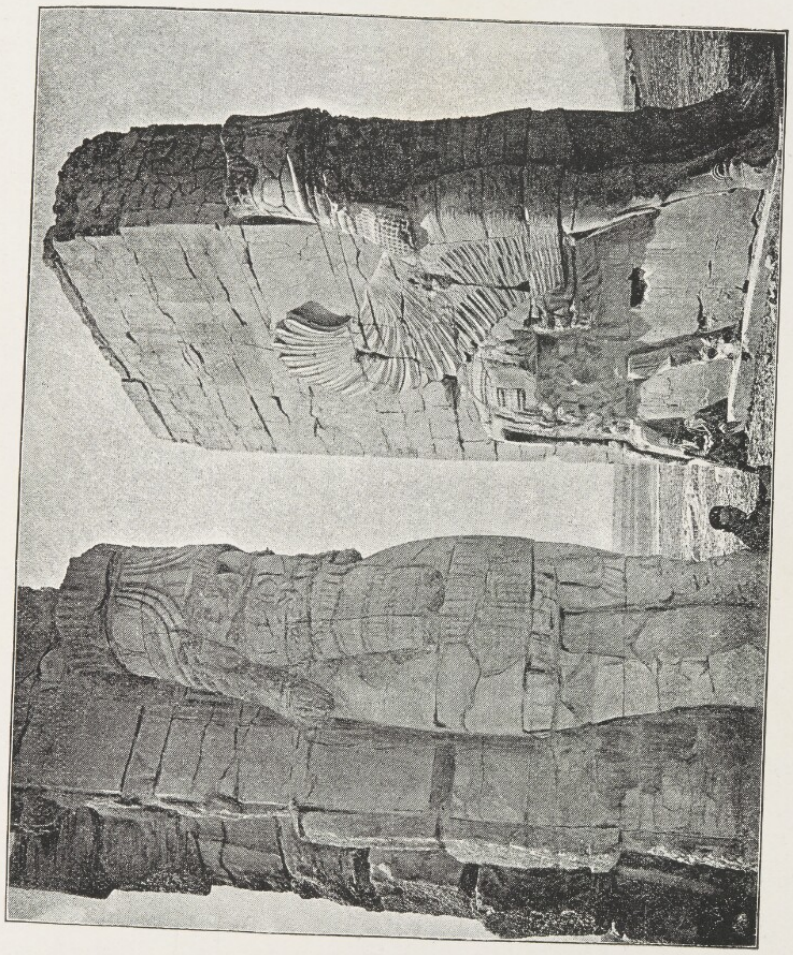

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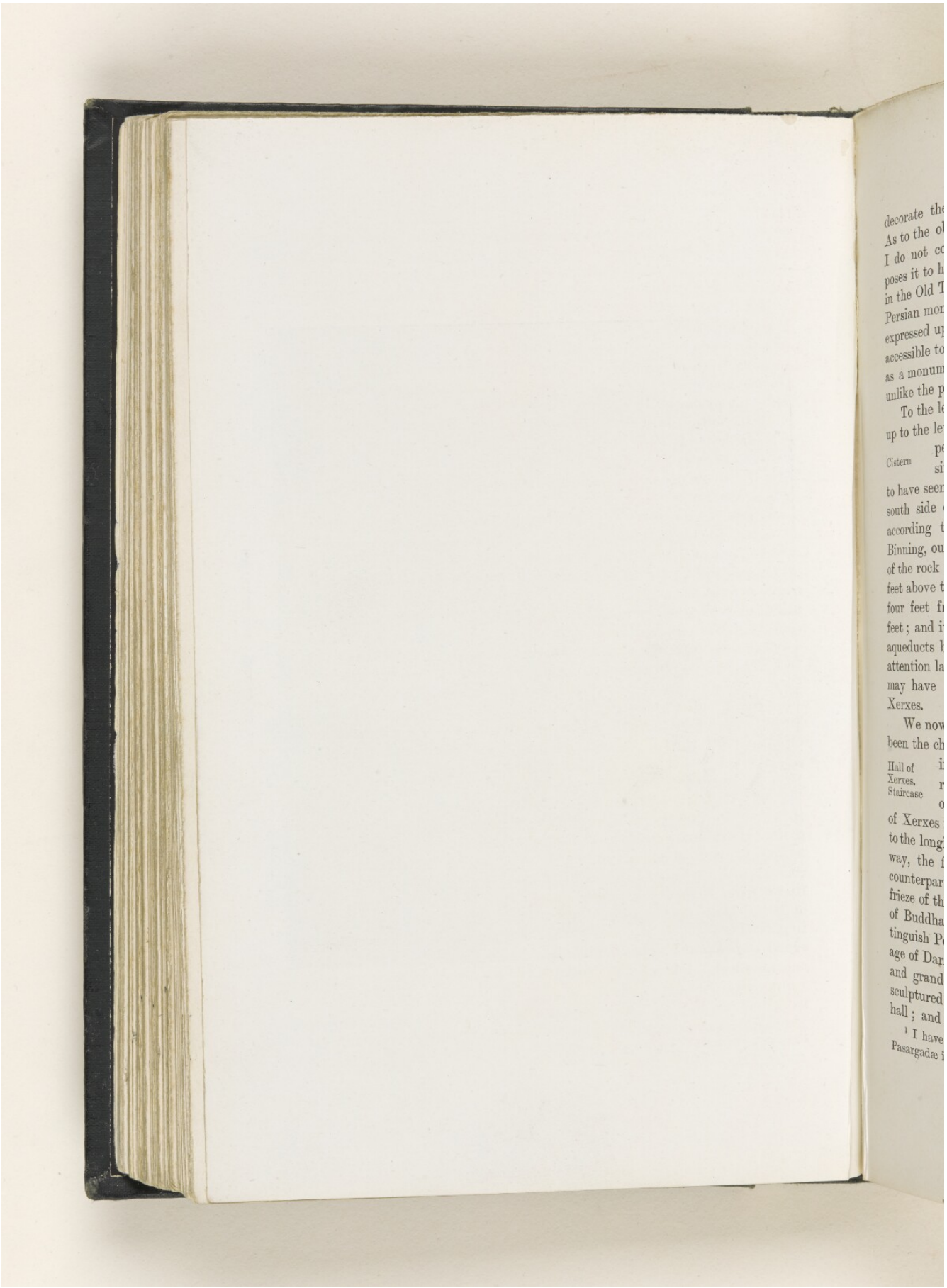

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decorate the inner face of the eastern, as of the previous, gateway. As to the object of this great twofold gateway, with its interior hall, I do not conceive that there can be much dispute. Fergusson supposes it to have been a gate or seat of judgment, like those mentioned in the Old Testament, but I know of no ground for believing that the Persian monarchs so far derogated from the exalted idea of monarchy expressed upon all their sculptures, as to render themselves thus easily accessible to their subjects. Consequently, I regard the porch merely as a monumental entry to the palaces and audience-halls beyond, not unlike the pylons of Luxor and Karnak.

Cistern

To the left or north of the Porch of Xerxes, the natural rock crops up to the level of the platform, and here are the foundations of some perished structure, with the bases of pillars, and with a single drum of an unfluted column, which I do not remember to have seen noticed as such in any previous work.[1] On the other or south side of the further gateway is a tank or cistern, composed, according to Buckingham, of large stones, hollowed, according to Binning, out of a single mass of stone, but, as my notes say, hewn out of the rock itself. It is surrounded by a coping or parapet, about three feet above the surface, and is at present filled with soil to a depth of four feet from the top. Its dimensions are eighteen feet by fifteen feet; and it is supposed to have been fed by one of the subterranean aqueducts beneath the surface of the platform, to which I shall draw attention later on, and to have irrigated or embellished a garden which may have stretched between the Porch and the Audience-hall of Xerxes.

Hall of Xerxes. Staircase

We now approach the latter edifice, which must undoubtedly have been the chief glory of the original Persepolis, whose columns gave it in mediæval times its title of Chehel Minar, and whose remains are still the noblest survival of the reign of the son of Darius. At a distance of fifty-four yards from the Porch of Xerxes in a southerly direction, and at right angles both to it and to the longitudinal axis of the platform, we encounter a superb stairway, the finest of those sculptured adornments—the Achæmenian counterpart to the pylons of Egypt, the tympana and metopes and frieze of the Hellenic temple, the graven walls of the great sanctuaries of Buddha, and the western façade of the Gothic minster—that distinguish Persepolis from all other ruins, and lift the architecture of the age of Darius and his successors into an order of separate individuality and grandeur. For a total length of seventy-two yards extends the sculptured front of the elevated platform that sustains the audience-hall; and its original height was eleven and a half feet above the

[1] I have already, on p. 74, disproved Perrot's assertion that the column at Pasargadæ is the sole unfluted column in Persia.

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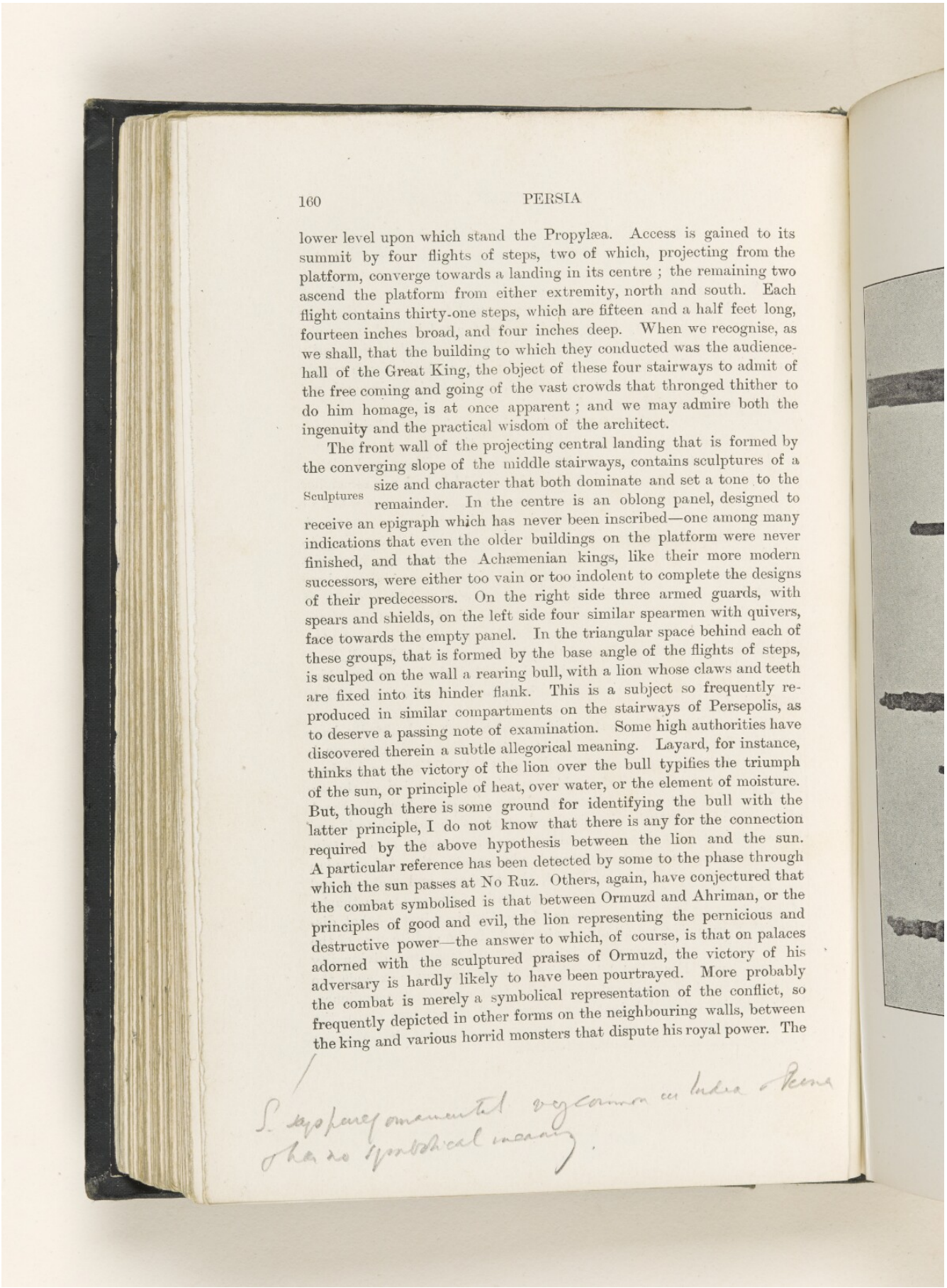



lower level upon which stand the Propylæa. Access is gained to its summit by four flights of steps, two of which, projecting from the platform, converge towards a landing in its centre ; the remaining two ascend the platform from either extremity, north and south. Each flight contains thirty-one steps, which are fifteen and a half feet long, fourteen inches broad, and four inches deep. When we recognise, as we shall, that the building to which they conducted was the audience-hall of the Great King, the object of these four stairways to admit of the free coming and going of the vast crowds that thronged thither to do him homage, is at once apparent ; and we may admire both the ingenuity and the practical wisdom of the architect.

Sculptures

The front wall of the projecting central landing that is formed by the converging slope of the middle stairways, contains sculptures of a size and character that both dominate and set a tone to the remainder. In the centre is an oblong panel, designed to receive an epigraph which has never been inscribed—one among many indications that even the older buildings on the platform were never finished, and that the Achæmenian kings, like their more modern successors, were either too vain or too indolent to complete the designs of their predecessors. On the right side three armed guards, with spears and shields, on the left side four similar spearmen with quivers, face towards the empty panel. In the triangular space behind each of these groups, that is formed by the base angle of the flights of steps, is sculped on the wall a rearing bull, with a lion whose claws and teeth are fixed into its hinder flank. This is a subject so frequently reproduced in similar compartments on the stairways of Persepolis, as to deserve a passing note of examination. Some high authorities have discovered therein a subtle allegorical meaning. Layard, for instance, thinks that the victory of the lion over the bull typifies the triumph of the sun, or principle of heat, over water, or the element of moisture. But, though there is some ground for identifying the bull with the latter principle, I do not know that there is any for the connection required by the above hypothesis between the lion and the sun. A particular reference has been detected by some to the phase through which the sun passes at No Ruz. Others, again, have conjectured that the combat symbolised is that between Ormuzd and Ahriman, or the principles of good and evil, the lion representing the pernicious and destructive power—the answer to which, of course, is that on palaces adorned with the sculptured praises of Ormuzd, the victory of his adversary is hardly likely to have been pourtrayed. More probably the combat is merely a symbolical representation of the conflict, so frequently depicted in other forms on the neighbouring walls, between the king and various horrid monsters that dispute his royal power. The

S. says perfectly ornamental very common in India & Persia & has no symbolical meaning.

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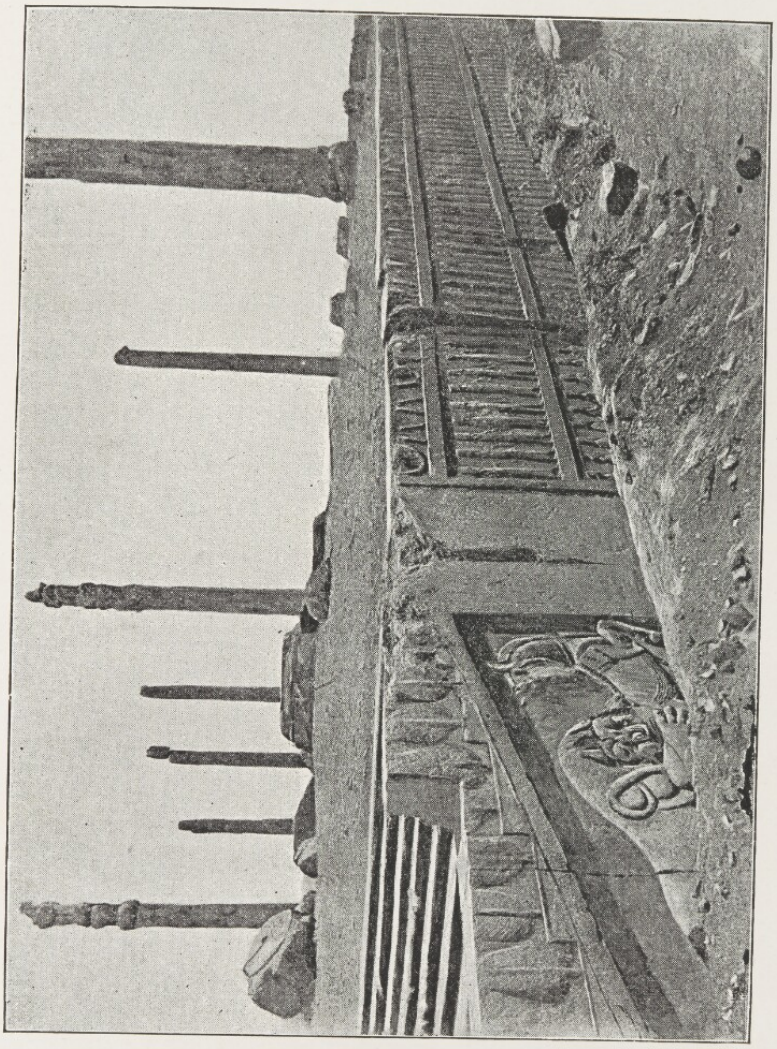
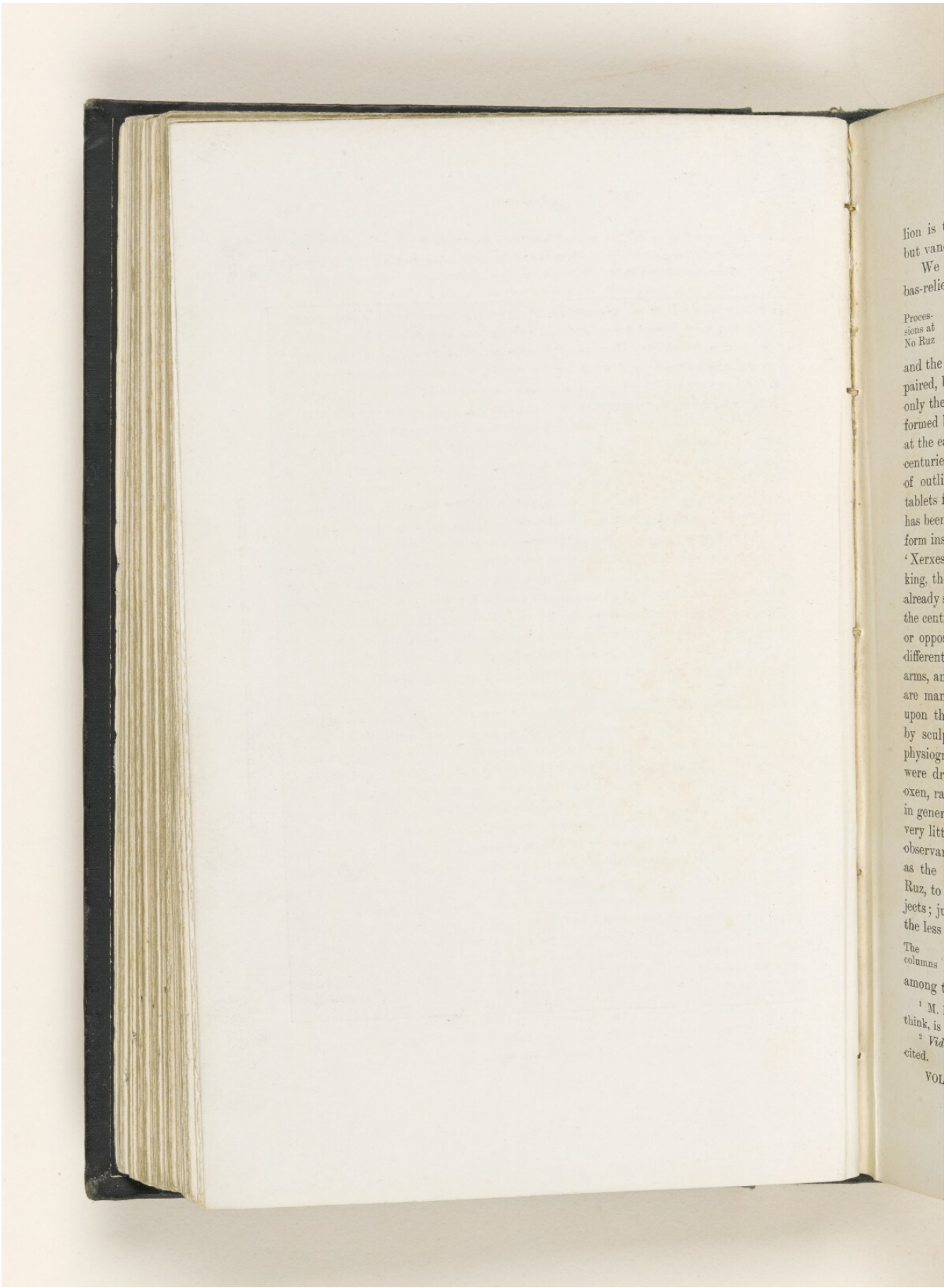


NORTHERN STAIRCASE AND PLATFORM OF HALL OF XERXES



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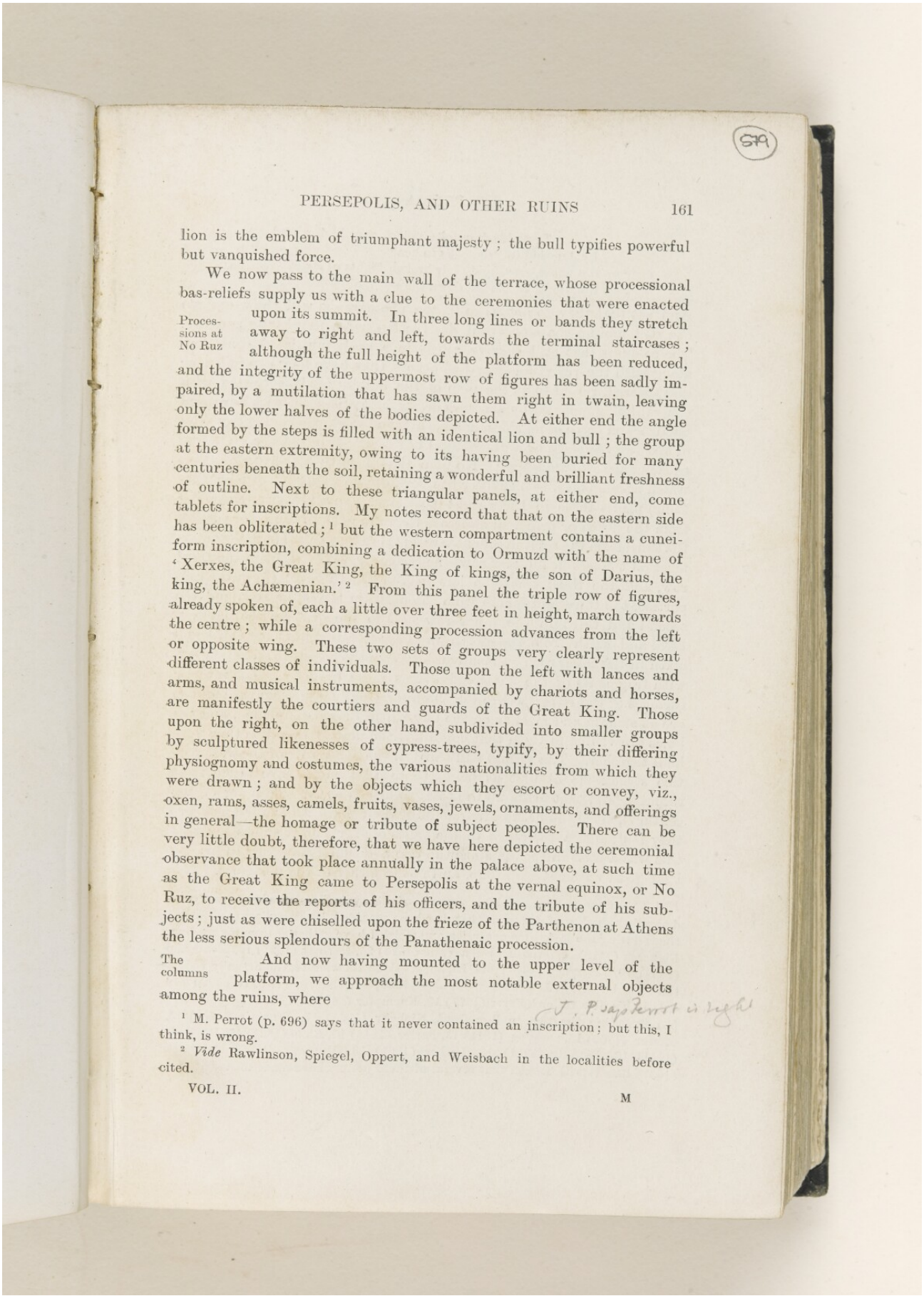



lion is the emblem of triumphant majesty; the bull typifies powerful but vanquished force.

We now pass to the main wall of the terrace, whose processional bas-reliefs supply us with a clue to the ceremonies that were enacted upon its summit. In three long lines or bands they stretch away to right and left, towards the terminal staircases; although the full height of the platform has been reduced, and the integrity of the uppermost row of figures has been sadly impaired, by a mutilation that has sawn them right in twain, leaving only the lower halves of the bodies depicted. At either end the angle formed by the steps is filled with an identical lion and bull; the group at the eastern extremity, owing to its having been buried for many centuries beneath the soil, retaining a wonderful and brilliant freshness of outline. Next to these triangular panels, at either end, come tablets for inscriptions. My notes record that that on the eastern side has been obliterated;[1] but the western compartment contains a cuneiform inscription, combining a dedication to Ormuzd with the name of 'Xerxes, the Great King, the King of kings, the son of Darius, the king, the Achæmenian.'[2] From this panel the triple row of figures, already spoken of, each a little over three feet in height, march towards the centre; while a corresponding procession advances from the left or opposite wing. These two sets of groups very clearly represent different classes of individuals. Those upon the left with lances and arms, and musical instruments, accompanied by chariots and horses, are manifestly the courtiers and guards of the Great King. Those upon the right, on the other hand, subdivided into smaller groups by sculptured likenesses of cypress-trees, typify, by their differing physiognomy and costumes, the various nationalities from which they were drawn; and by the objects which they escort or convey, viz., oxen, rams, asses, camels, fruits, vases, jewels, ornaments, and offerings in general—the homage or tribute of subject peoples. There can be very little doubt, therefore, that we have here depicted the ceremonial observance that took place annually in the palace above, at such time as the Great King came to Persepolis at the vernal equinox, or No Ruz, to receive the reports of his officers, and the tribute of his subjects; just as were chiselled upon the frieze of the Parthenon at Athens the less serious splendours of the Panathenaic procession.

Processions at No Ruz

And now having mounted to the upper level of the platform, we approach the most notable external objects among the ruins, where

The columns

J. P. says Perrot is right

[1] M. Perrot (p. 696) says that it never contained an inscription; but this, I think, is wrong.

[2] *Vide* Rawlinson, Spiegel, Oppert, and Weisbach in the localities before cited.



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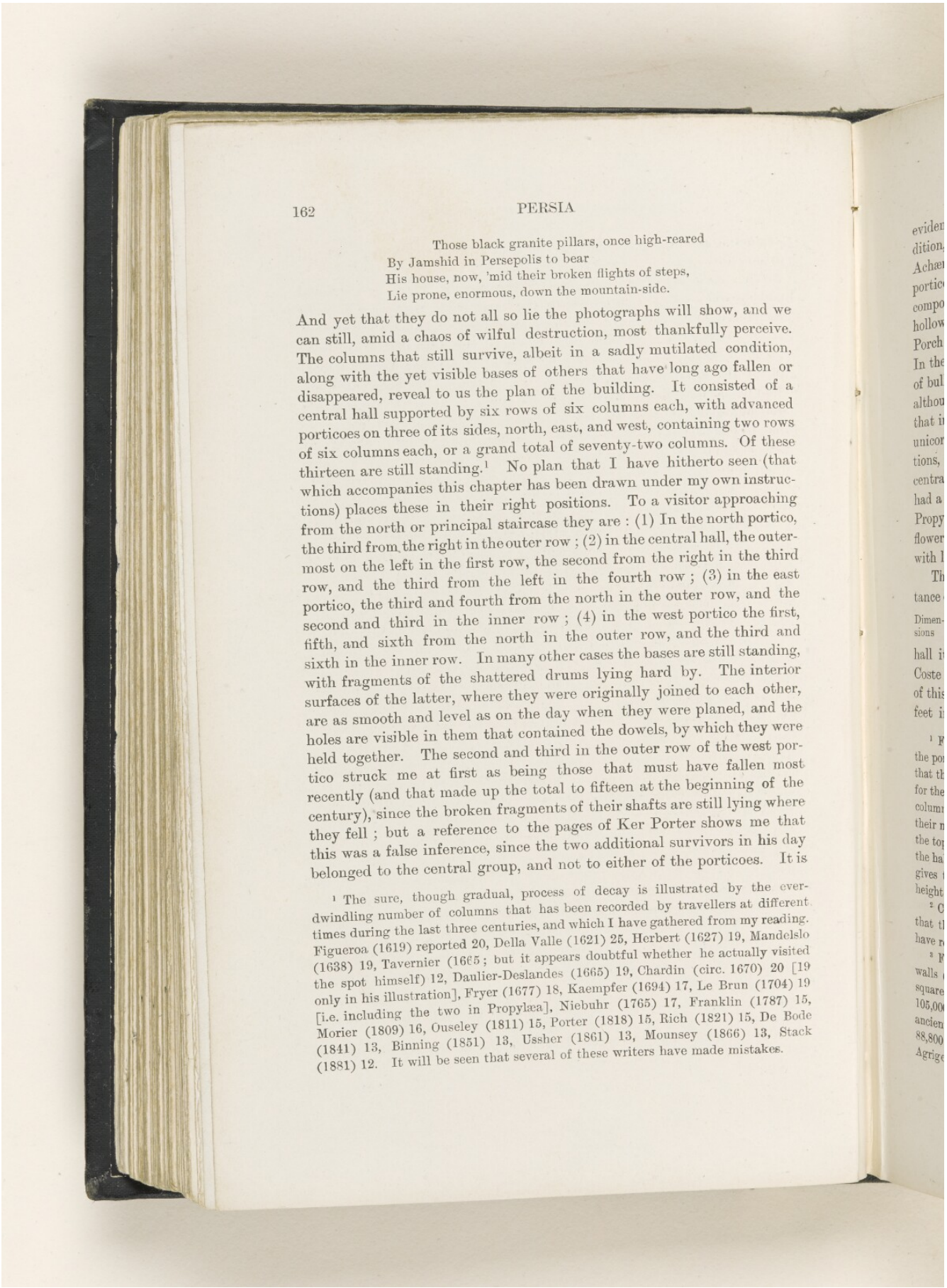



Those black granite pillars, once high-reared
By Jamshid in Persepolis to bear
His house, now, 'mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain-side.

And yet that they do not all so lie the photographs will show, and we can still, amid a chaos of wilful destruction, most thankfully perceive. The columns that still survive, albeit in a sadly mutilated condition, along with the yet visible bases of others that have long ago fallen or disappeared, reveal to us the plan of the building. It consisted of a central hall supported by six rows of six columns each, with advanced porticoes on three of its sides, north, east, and west, containing two rows of six columns each, or a grand total of seventy-two columns. Of these thirteen are still standing.[1] No plan that I have hitherto seen (that which accompanies this chapter has been drawn under my own instructions) places these in their right positions. To a visitor approaching from the north or principal staircase they are: (1) In the north portico, the third from the right in the outer row; (2) in the central hall, the outermost on the left in the first row, the second from the right in the third row, and the third from the left in the fourth row; (3) in the east portico, the third and fourth from the north in the outer row, and the second and third in the inner row; (4) in the west portico the first, fifth, and sixth from the north in the outer row, and the third and sixth in the inner row. In many other cases the bases are still standing, with fragments of the shattered drums lying hard by. The interior surfaces of the latter, where they were originally joined to each other, are as smooth and level as on the day when they were planed, and the holes are visible in them that contained the dowels, by which they were held together. The second and third in the outer row of the west portico struck me at first as being those that must have fallen most recently (and that made up the total to fifteen at the beginning of the century), since the broken fragments of their shafts are still lying where they fell; but a reference to the pages of Ker Porter shows me that this was a false inference, since the two additional survivors in his day belonged to the central group, and not to either of the porticoes. It is

[1] The sure, though gradual, process of decay is illustrated by the ever-dwindling number of columns that has been recorded by travellers at different times during the last three centuries, and which I have gathered from my reading. Figueroa (1619) reported 20, Della Valle (1621) 25, Herbert (1627) 19, Mandelslo (1638) 19, Tavernier (1665; but it appears doubtful whether he actually visited the spot himself) 12, Daulier-Deslandes (1665) 19, Chardin (circ. 1670) 20 [19 only in his illustration], Fryer (1677) 18, Kaempfer (1694) 17, Le Brun (1704) 19 [i.e. including the two in Propylæa], Niebuhr (1765) 17, Franklin (1787) 15, Morier (1809) 16, Ouseley (1811) 15, Porter (1818) 15, Rich (1821) 15, De Bode (1841) 13, Binning (1851) 13, Ussher (1861) 13, Mounsey (1866) 13, Stack (1881) 12. It will be seen that several of these writers have made mistakes.

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evident from the capitals still *in situ* in a more or less mutilated condition, and from the remains of others that lie below, that the two Achæmenian orders were both represented in this fabric. In the front portico and in the central hall, the columns were surmounted by the composite or triple capital, terminating in two demi-bulls, whose hollowed necks supported the architrave, in the same manner as in the Porch of Xerxes. The shafts of these pillars are formed of three blocks. In the two lateral porticoes the simpler type of capital, consisting only of bulls' heads, superimposed upon a shaft of four blocks, prevails; although even here this nomenclature is not strictly accurate, seeing that in the east portico the animals' heads depicted seem to have been unicorns and not bulls. All the seventy-two columns, without exceptions, were fluted, and all were of the same height.[1] Those in the central hall rested upon a simple squared plinth; those in the porticoes had a more ornate circular base, resembling that of the columns in the Propylæa, which has sometimes been compared to an inverted lotus-flower, but is more correctly described as a bell-shaped block, adorned with long leaves, the points of which are turned downwards.

The outer porticoes are 140½ feet long, by 28 feet broad. A distance of 71 feet separates them from the central hall; but between the north portico and the latter are four massive substructures, the meaning of which is not clear.[2] We then enter the great hall itself, through and around which were traced by Flandin and Coste the relics of subterranean aqueducts. The exterior dimensions of this hall, which was, doubtless, the chief glory of Persepolis, are 140 feet in each direction, or not far short of a square of 50 yards.[3] It

Dimensions

[1] Fergusson (p. 163), observing the greater apparent height of the columns of the porticoes than of those of the central hall, and inferring (erroneously, I think) that the latter did not have the bull-capitals, invents a particular kind of capital for them, so as to redress the inequality. He gives the dimensions of the portico-columns as 67⅓ feet high to the top of the bulls' heads, 64 feet to the hollow of their necks; shaft, 54 feet 10 inches high, 5⅓ feet in diameter at base, 4⅓ feet at the top; base, 5½ feet high; capitals, 7 feet high, 12 feet 2 inches broad; and of the hall-columns: shaft, 41¾ feet high; triple capital, 16½ feet high. Ker Porter gives the number of flutings as 52 (Ouseley, 40). Flandin and Coste give the height as 63 feet 10 inches, and distance from axis to axis, 29 feet.

[2] Coste, in his restoration, suggested, and Perrot has accepted the suggestion, that these may have supported colossal figures of bulls. Fergusson and others have regarded them as the bases of doorways.

[3] Fergusson (pp. 170–1) says that it contained 40,000 square feet, or, with the walls (which are his own creation), 55,700. Adding to these, porticoes, 42,500 square feet, and guard-rooms (again imaginary) 6,800, he arrives at a total of 105,000 square feet. He then gives the dimensions of the famous buildings of ancient and modern times: Great Hall at Karnak, 58,300 square feet inside, 88,800 + halls and porticoes; Temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens, 59,000; at Agrigentum, 56,000; Cologne Cathedral, 81,500; Milan Cathedral, 107,800; and



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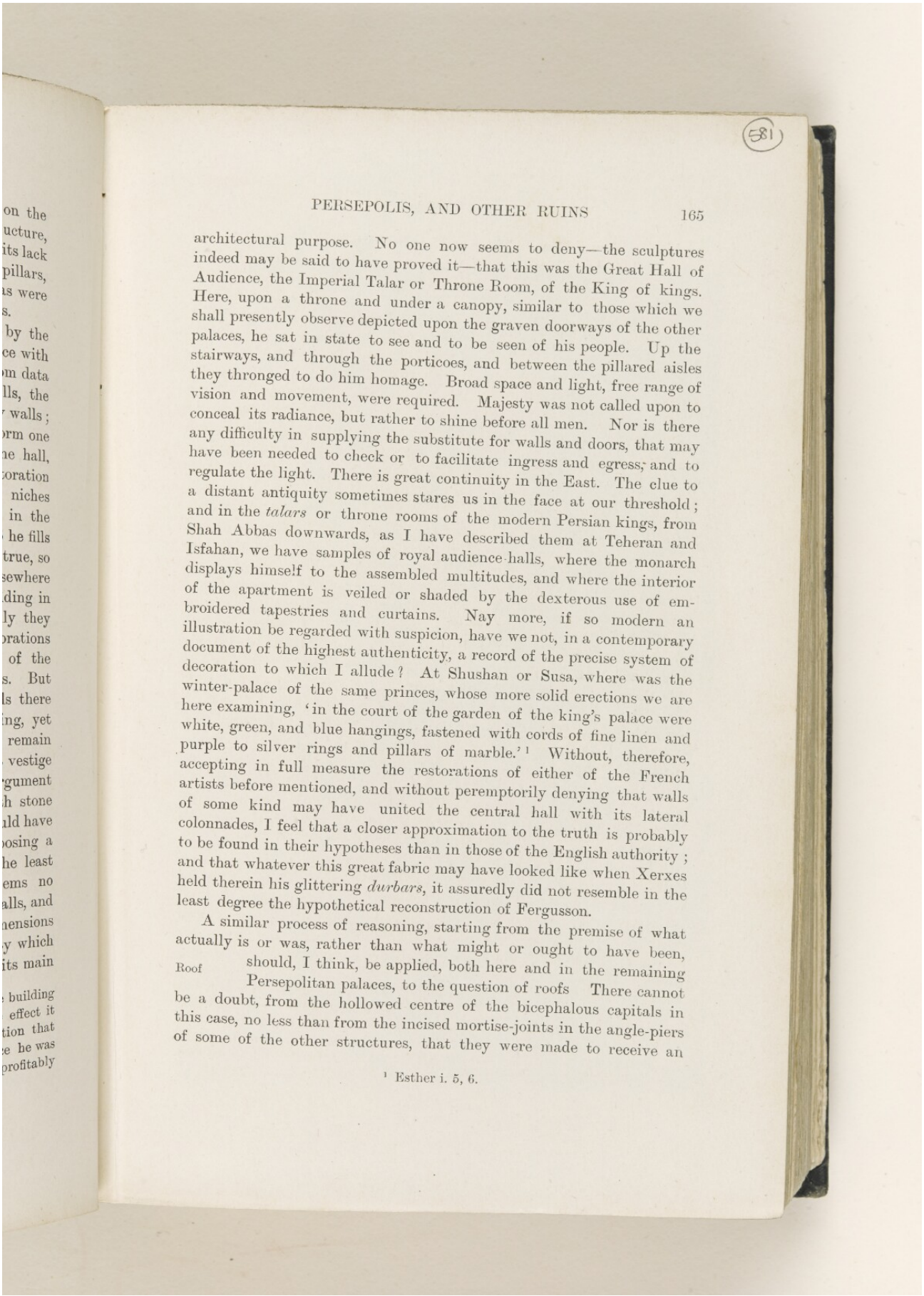
may not inaptly be compared with the pillared hall of Karnak on the Nile; and it must, in my judgment, have been a more artistic structure, since, in spite of the cumbrous disproportion of its capitals, and its lack of the varied sculptures that adorn the surface of the Egyptian pillars, its superficial area was less crowded, and its interlacing vistas were consequently less obstructed than in the temple of the Thothmes.

There remain two important questions that are suggested by the Hall of Xerxes, and that have hitherto been solved in accordance with the preconceived theories of writers, rather than from data collected on the spot. The first is that of the walls, the second is that of the roof. Was the central hall surrounded by walls; and was it connected by walls with the porticoes, so as to form one great quadrilateral? Fergusson thus conceives it. Round the hall, and framing the porticoes at either end, he places in his restoration a wall of crude brick eighteen feet thick with windows and niches similar in shape to those which we shall presently observe in the Palace of Darius. The angles at either end of the north portico he fills with imaginary guard-rooms, similarly constructed. Now it is true, so far as I know, that there is no other instance, in Persia or elsewhere (but amid what a paucity of cognate remains), of porticoes standing in entire independence of the central fabric to which structurally they belong. To this extent may we regard with suspicion the restorations of Coste and Chipiez. It is also true that the majority of the remaining buildings on the platform appear to have had walls. But the very fact that the indestructible remnants of these walls there survive; that, though mud and brick have wasted to nothing, yet the stone portals, and window cases, and niches, in every case remain *in situ*; whilst in the Hall of Xerxes there is not the faintest vestige of window, niche, or door—is to my mind an unanswerable argument against the construction at any time of a similar enclosure with stone fittings here. It is inconceivable that, if such had existed, it could have wholly disappeared. Fergusson meets this difficulty by supposing a wall of mud bricks only, faced with enamelled tiles. Not the least trace of either has however been discovered; and there seems no reason why stone should have been employed in all the other walls, and not in this. Furthermore, walls of such a character and dimensions would have deprived the building of the particular individuality which it appears to have claimed, and would have interfered with its main

Problem of walls

concludes by saying: 'Taken all in all, Milan Cathedral is, perhaps, the building that resembles it most, both in style and the general character of the effect it must have produced on the spectator.' This is the kind of appreciation that could only have been written by a critic who had never seen the place he was describing, and was a slave to his own theories of reconstruction. As profitably might we compare Westminster Abbey with the Taj at Agra.





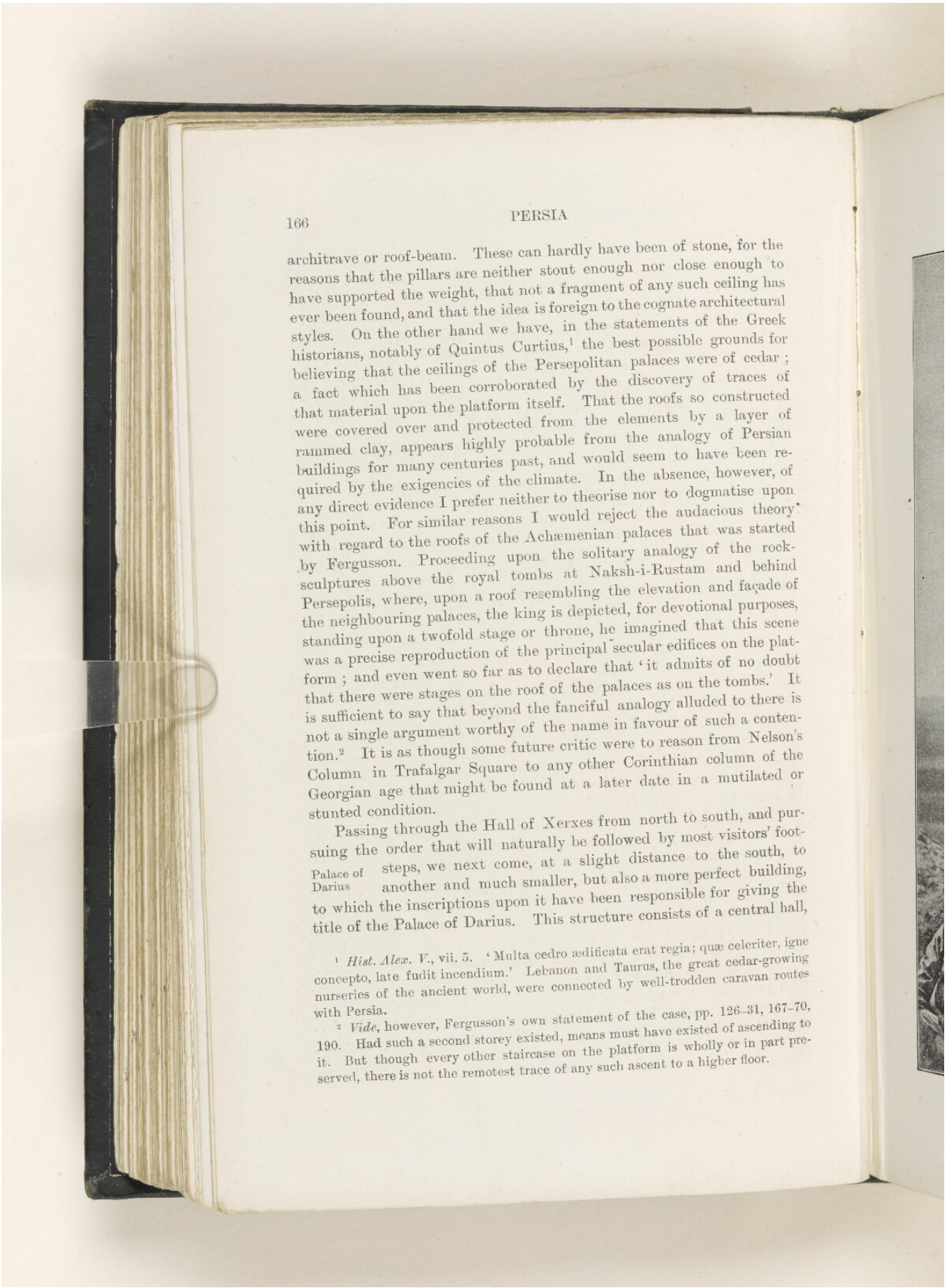
architectural purpose. No one now seems to deny—the sculptures indeed may be said to have proved it—that this was the Great Hall of Audience, the Imperial Talar or Throne Room, of the King of kings. Here, upon a throne and under a canopy, similar to those which we shall presently observe depicted upon the graven doorways of the other palaces, he sat in state to see and to be seen of his people. Up the stairways, and through the porticoes, and between the pillared aisles they thronged to do him homage. Broad space and light, free range of vision and movement, were required. Majesty was not called upon to conceal its radiance, but rather to shine before all men. Nor is there any difficulty in supplying the substitute for walls and doors, that may have been needed to check or to facilitate ingress and egress, and to regulate the light. There is great continuity in the East. The clue to a distant antiquity sometimes stares us in the face at our threshold; and in the *talars* or throne rooms of the modern Persian kings, from Shah Abbas downwards, as I have described them at Teheran and Isfahan, we have samples of royal audience-halls, where the monarch displays himself to the assembled multitudes, and where the interior of the apartment is veiled or shaded by the dexterous use of embroidered tapestries and curtains. Nay more, if so modern an illustration be regarded with suspicion, have we not, in a contemporary document of the highest authenticity, a record of the precise system of decoration to which I allude? At Shushan or Susa, where was the winter-palace of the same princes, whose more solid erections we are here examining, 'in the court of the garden of the king's palace were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble.'[1] Without, therefore, accepting in full measure the restorations of either of the French artists before mentioned, and without peremptorily denying that walls of some kind may have united the central hall with its lateral colonnades, I feel that a closer approximation to the truth is probably to be found in their hypotheses than in those of the English authority; and that whatever this great fabric may have looked like when Xerxes held therein his glittering *durbars*, it assuredly did not resemble in the least degree the hypothetical reconstruction of Fergusson.

A similar process of reasoning, starting from the premise of what actually is or was, rather than what might or ought to have been,

Roof

should, I think, be applied, both here and in the remaining Persepolitan palaces, to the question of roofs. There cannot be a doubt, from the hollowed centre of the bicephalous capitals in this case, no less than from the incised mortise-joints in the angle-piers of some of the other structures, that they were made to receive an

[1] Esther i. 5, 6.





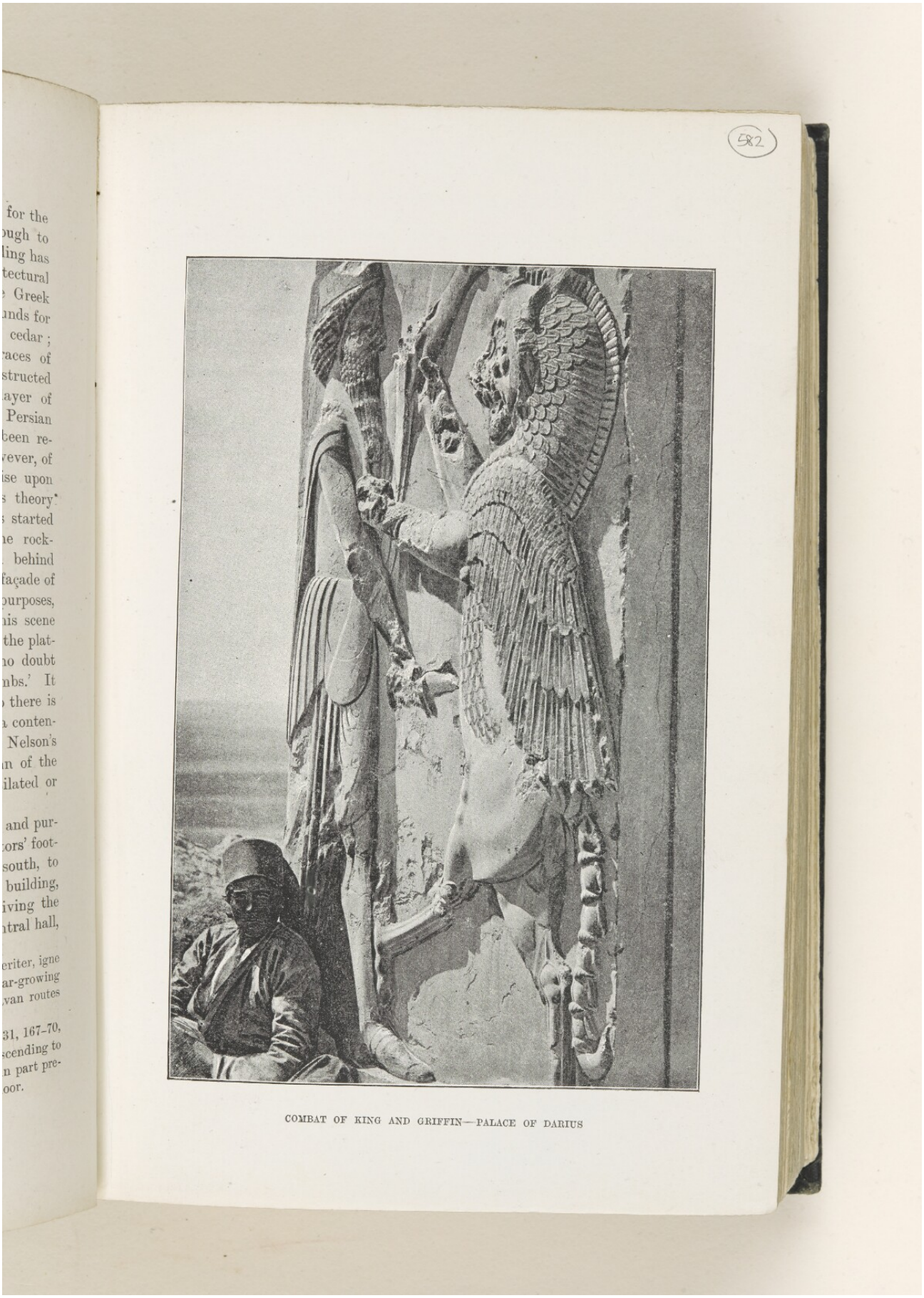
architrave or roof-beam. These can hardly have been of stone, for the reasons that the pillars are neither stout enough nor close enough to have supported the weight, that not a fragment of any such ceiling has ever been found, and that the idea is foreign to the cognate architectural styles. On the other hand we have, in the statements of the Greek historians, notably of Quintus Curtius,[1] the best possible grounds for believing that the ceilings of the Persepolitan palaces were of cedar; a fact which has been corroborated by the discovery of traces of that material upon the platform itself. That the roofs so constructed were covered over and protected from the elements by a layer of rammed clay, appears highly probable from the analogy of Persian buildings for many centuries past, and would seem to have been required by the exigencies of the climate. In the absence, however, of any direct evidence I prefer neither to theorise nor to dogmatise upon this point. For similar reasons I would reject the audacious theory with regard to the roofs of the Achæmenian palaces that was started by Fergusson. Proceeding upon the solitary analogy of the rock-sculptures above the royal tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam and behind Persepolis, where, upon a roof resembling the elevation and façade of the neighbouring palaces, the king is depicted, for devotional purposes, standing upon a twofold stage or throne, he imagined that this scene was a precise reproduction of the principal secular edifices on the platform; and even went so far as to declare that 'it admits of no doubt that there were stages on the roof of the palaces as on the tombs.' It is sufficient to say that beyond the fanciful analogy alluded to there is not a single argument worthy of the name in favour of such a contention.[2] It is as though some future critic were to reason from Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square to any other Corinthian column of the Georgian age that might be found at a later date in a mutilated or stunted condition.

Passing through the Hall of Xerxes from north to south, and pursuing the order that will naturally be followed by most visitors' footsteps, we next come, at a slight distance to the south, to another and much smaller, but also a more perfect building, to which the inscriptions upon it have been responsible for giving the title of the Palace of Darius. This structure consists of a central hall,

Palace of Darius

[1] *Hist. Alex. V.*, vii. 5. 'Multa cedro ædificata erat regia; quæ celeriter, igne concepto, late fudit incendium.' Lebanon and Taurus, the great cedar-growing nurseries of the ancient world, were connected by well-trodden caravan routes with Persia.

[2] *Vide*, however, Fergusson's own statement of the case, pp. 126–31, 167–70, 190. Had such a second storey existed, means must have existed of ascending to it. But though every other staircase on the platform is wholly or in part preserved, there is not the remotest trace of any such ascent to a higher floor.



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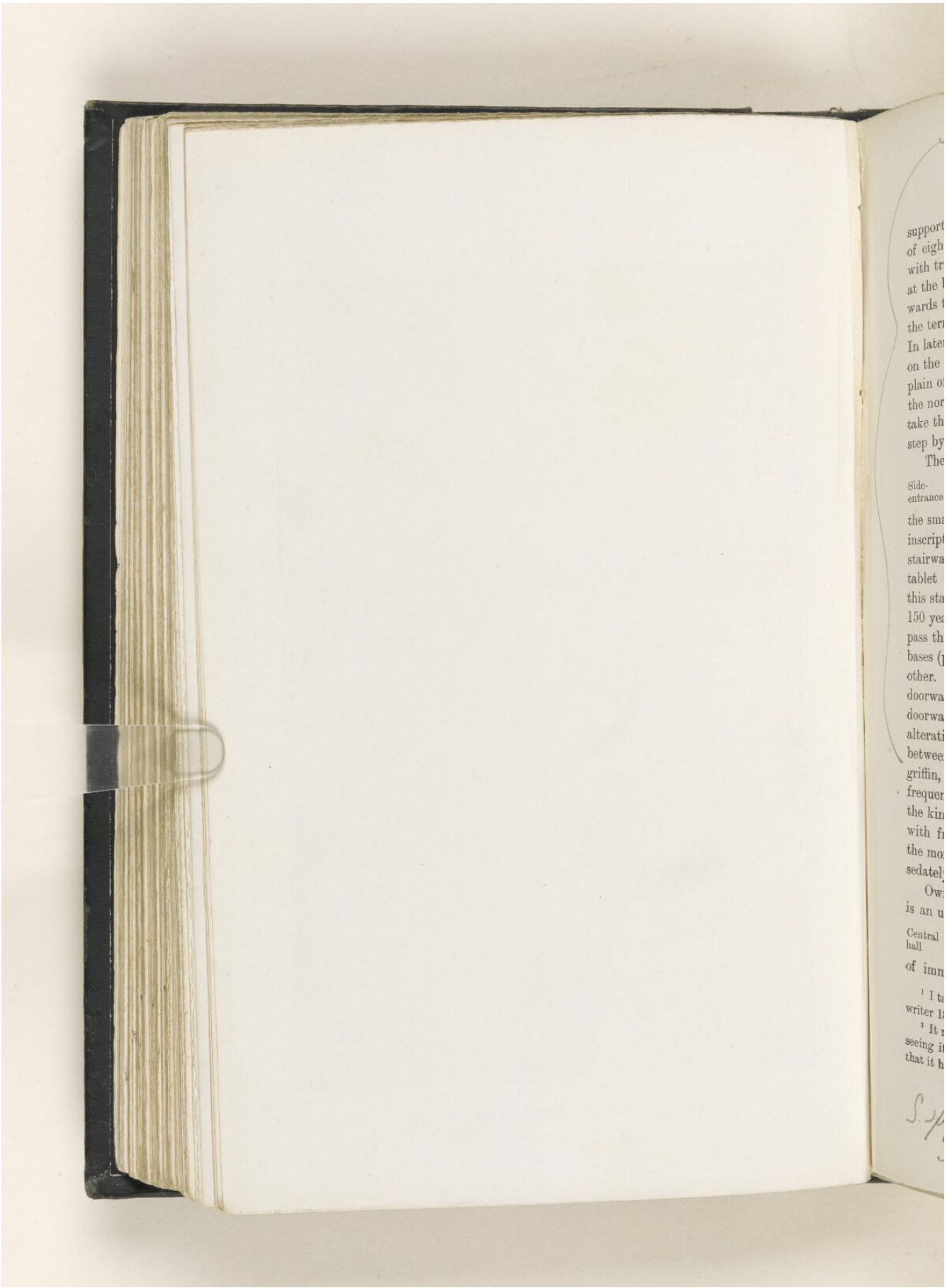
COMBAT OF KING AND GRIFFIN—PALACE OF DARIUS



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supported by sixteen columns in four rows of four each, with a portico of eight columns, in two corresponding rows on the south front, and with traces of what apparently were chambers on the longer sides and at the back. This is the only building on the platform that faces towards the south; and there two flights of steps, one at either end of the terrace on which it stands, furnished the principal means of access. In later times a third staircase was added, and another entrance effected on the west side, overlooking the brink of the main platform and the plain of Mervdasht. To a visitor approaching, as we are doing, from the north this will be the natural mode of entry; and I will therefore take the building, so to speak, in the rear, and describe it therefrom, step by step.

Side-entrance

The entire edifice stands upon a stylobate or platform, nearly ten feet higher than that of the Durbar-Hall of Xerxes. Its dimensions are 132½ feet long by 96 feet broad.[1] Ascending the small double stairway on the west front, we observe a partly buried inscription on the wall of the platform; while on the front wall of the stairway, flanked by the familiar lion and bull in either spandrel, is a tablet containing a splendidly preserved inscription, telling us that this staircase was the work of Artaxerxes III. or Ochus (B.C. 361–338),[2] 150 years posterior to the edifice itself. At the top of the steps we pass through a doorway, the side-walls of which have shifted on their bases (probably owing to earthquake) and are inclined towards each other. Continuing through a small antechamber or porch, a second doorway introduces us into the central hall. On either jamb of this doorway (which, like its predecessor, appears to have been a structural alteration of Artaxerxes) is sculped one of those symbolical combats between a king and a monster (at different times a bull, a unicorn, a griffin, or a strange compound of opposite attributes) which we shall so frequently notice in the remaining buildings. In all these bas-reliefs the king with girt loins, but in an absolutely unconcerned fashion, and with frigid uniformity of attitude, plunges a dagger into the belly of the monster, which rears on its hind legs before him, but which he sedately grasps by the horn projecting from its head.

Central hall

Owing to the introduction of this (probably later) entrance, there is an unusual lack of uniformity in the structural disposition of the central hall. Its dimensions, which are a square of fifty feet, are clearly marked by the existence *in situ* of a number of immense blocks of chiselled stone, bearing a high polish,[3] and

[1] I take these figures from Fergusson. Porter says 170 feet by 95, and another writer 180 by 96. [2] Rawlinson, *J.R.A.S.*, vol. x. p. 342; Spiegel, pp. 68–71.

[3] It must have been in this building that Don Silva y Figueroa's mastiff, from seeing itself reflected in the mirror-like polish of the walls, became so furious that it had to be chained up when it entered.

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coloured almost black with exposure, which stand detached from each other all round the line which we may assume to have been occupied by the walls of the building, in which they constituted the principal feature. Some of them—the largest and loftiest—are doorways, with projecting fluted cornice; the smaller are either pierced as windows to admit light, or are hollowed into the form of niches or *takhches*, which to this day remain the favourite Persian form of mural decoration, besides supplying a receptacle for ornaments or furniture. On the north side of the hall are two doorways and three niches; on the west side, two doorways and two niches; on the east side, one doorway and three niches; on the south side, or original front, one doorway and



PALACE OF DARIUS

four windows. In this doorway is sculped another familiar Achæmenian group, viz. the king passing out of the palace with the royal parasol held by two attendants above his head.[1] On the floor are traces of the substructures of what were once sixteen columns that supported the roof, but of the plinths, shafts, or capitals of which no relics have been found.[2] Outside the wall with the windows, eight similar columns adorned a portico, the east and west walls of which contain each a doorway and a niche, besides a gigantic monolith or

[1] Binning says that the king's head-dress is perforated with numerous small holes, as though for nails to fasten plates of gold or some other substance upon it. I do not think that any other writer has noticed this.

[2] Hence the inference, in which some have indulged, that, like the columns of the Achæmenian palace at Ecbatana, they were made of wood.

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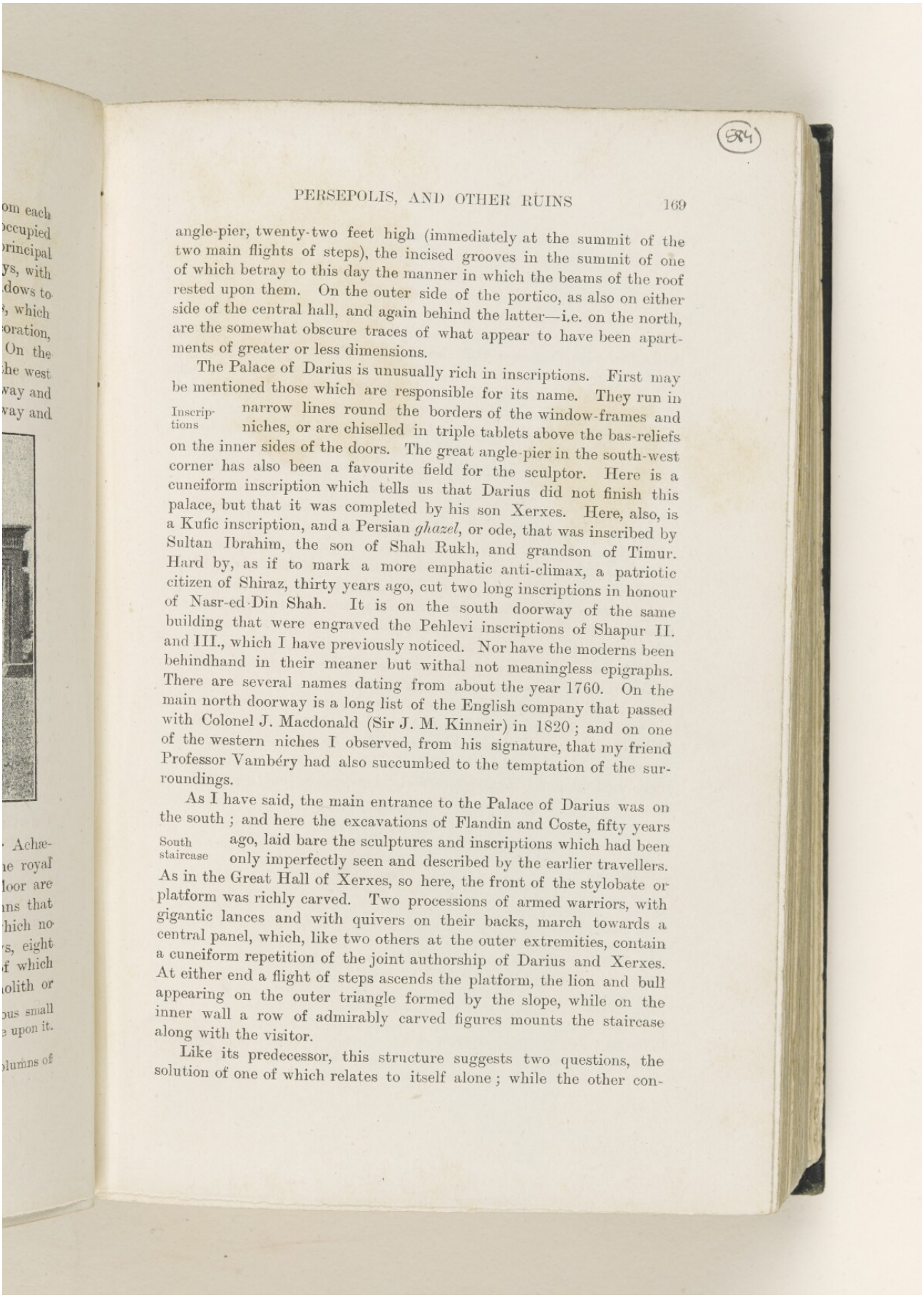



angle-pier, twenty-two feet high (immediately at the summit of the two main flights of steps), the incised grooves in the summit of one of which betray to this day the manner in which the beams of the roof rested upon them. On the outer side of the portico, as also on either side of the central hall, and again behind the latter—i.e. on the north, are the somewhat obscure traces of what appear to have been apartments of greater or less dimensions.

Inscriptions

The Palace of Darius is unusually rich in inscriptions. First may be mentioned those which are responsible for its name. They run in narrow lines round the borders of the window-frames and niches, or are chiselled in triple tablets above the bas-reliefs on the inner sides of the doors. The great angle-pier in the south-west corner has also been a favourite field for the sculptor. Here is a cuneiform inscription which tells us that Darius did not finish this palace, but that it was completed by his son Xerxes. Here, also, is a Kufic inscription, and a Persian *ghazel*, or ode, that was inscribed by Sultan Ibrahim, the son of Shah Rukh, and grandson of Timur. Hard by, as if to mark a more emphatic anti-climax, a patriotic citizen of Shiraz, thirty years ago, cut two long inscriptions in honour of Nasr-ed-Din Shah. It is on the south doorway of the same building that were engraved the Pehlevi inscriptions of Shapur II. and III., which I have previously noticed. Nor have the moderns been behindhand in their meaner but withal not meaningless epigraphs. There are several names dating from about the year 1760. On the main north doorway is a long list of the English company that passed with Colonel J. Macdonald (Sir J. M. Kinneir) in 1820; and on one of the western niches I observed, from his signature, that my friend Professor Vambéry had also succumbed to the temptation of the surroundings.

South staircase

As I have said, the main entrance to the Palace of Darius was on the south; and here the excavations of Flandin and Coste, fifty years ago, laid bare the sculptures and inscriptions which had been only imperfectly seen and described by the earlier travellers. As in the Great Hall of Xerxes, so here, the front of the stylobate or platform was richly carved. Two processions of armed warriors, with gigantic lances and with quivers on their backs, march towards a central panel, which, like two others at the outer extremities, contain a cuneiform repetition of the joint authorship of Darius and Xerxes. At either end a flight of steps ascends the platform, the lion and bull appearing on the outer triangle formed by the slope, while on the inner wall a row of admirably carved figures mounts the staircase along with the visitor.

Like its predecessor, this structure suggests two questions, the solution of one of which relates to itself alone; while the other con-

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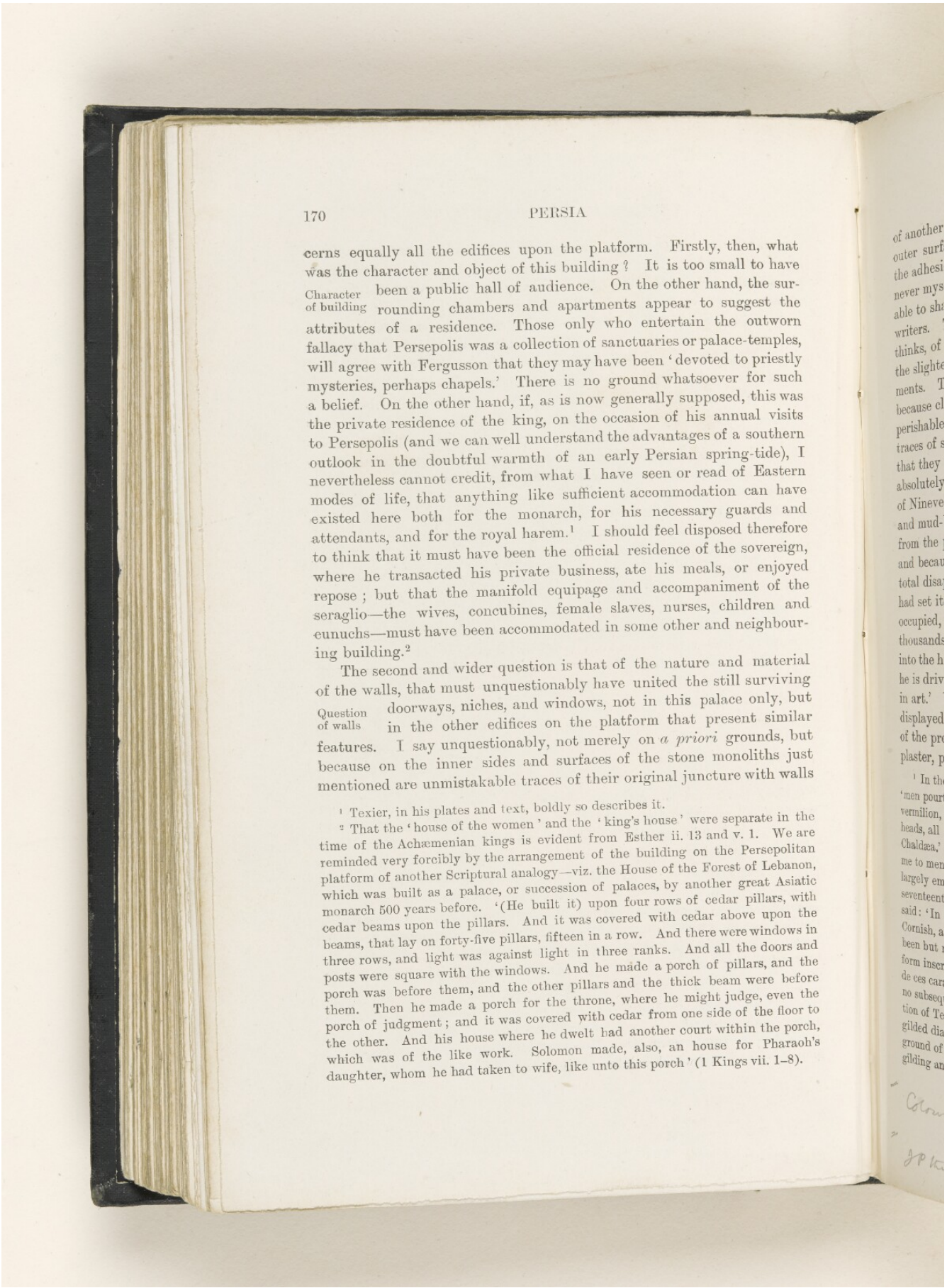



cerns equally all the edifices upon the platform. Firstly, then, what was the character and object of this building? It is too small to have been a public hall of audience. On the other hand, the surrounding chambers and apartments appear to suggest the attributes of a residence. Those only who entertain the outworn fallacy that Persepolis was a collection of sanctuaries or palace-temples, will agree with Fergusson that they may have been 'devoted to priestly mysteries, perhaps chapels.' There is no ground whatsoever for such a belief. On the other hand, if, as is now generally supposed, this was the private residence of the king, on the occasion of his annual visits to Persepolis (and we can well understand the advantages of a southern outlook in the doubtful warmth of an early Persian spring-tide), I nevertheless cannot credit, from what I have seen or read of Eastern modes of life, that anything like sufficient accommodation can have existed here both for the monarch, for his necessary guards and attendants, and for the royal harem.[1] I should feel disposed therefore to think that it must have been the official residence of the sovereign, where he transacted his private business, ate his meals, or enjoyed repose; but that the manifold equipage and accompaniment of the seraglio—the wives, concubines, female slaves, nurses, children and eunuchs—must have been accommodated in some other and neighbouring building.[2]

Character of building

The second and wider question is that of the nature and material of the walls, that must unquestionably have united the still surviving doorways, niches, and windows, not in this palace only, but in the other edifices on the platform that present similar features. I say unquestionably, not merely on *a priori* grounds, but because on the inner sides and surfaces of the stone monoliths just mentioned are unmistakable traces of their original juncture with walls

Question of walls

[1] Texier, in his plates and text, boldly so describes it.

[2] That the 'house of the women' and the 'king's house' were separate in the time of the Achæmenian kings is evident from Esther ii. 13 and v. 1. We are reminded very forcibly by the arrangement of the building on the Persepolitan platform of another Scriptural analogy—viz. the House of the Forest of Lebanon, which was built as a palace, or succession of palaces, by another great Asiatic monarch 500 years before. '(He built it) upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row. And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks. And all the doors and posts were square with the windows. And he made a porch of pillars, and the porch was before them, and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them. Then he made a porch for the throne, where he might judge, even the porch of judgment; and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other. And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made, also, an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch' (1 Kings vii. 1–8).

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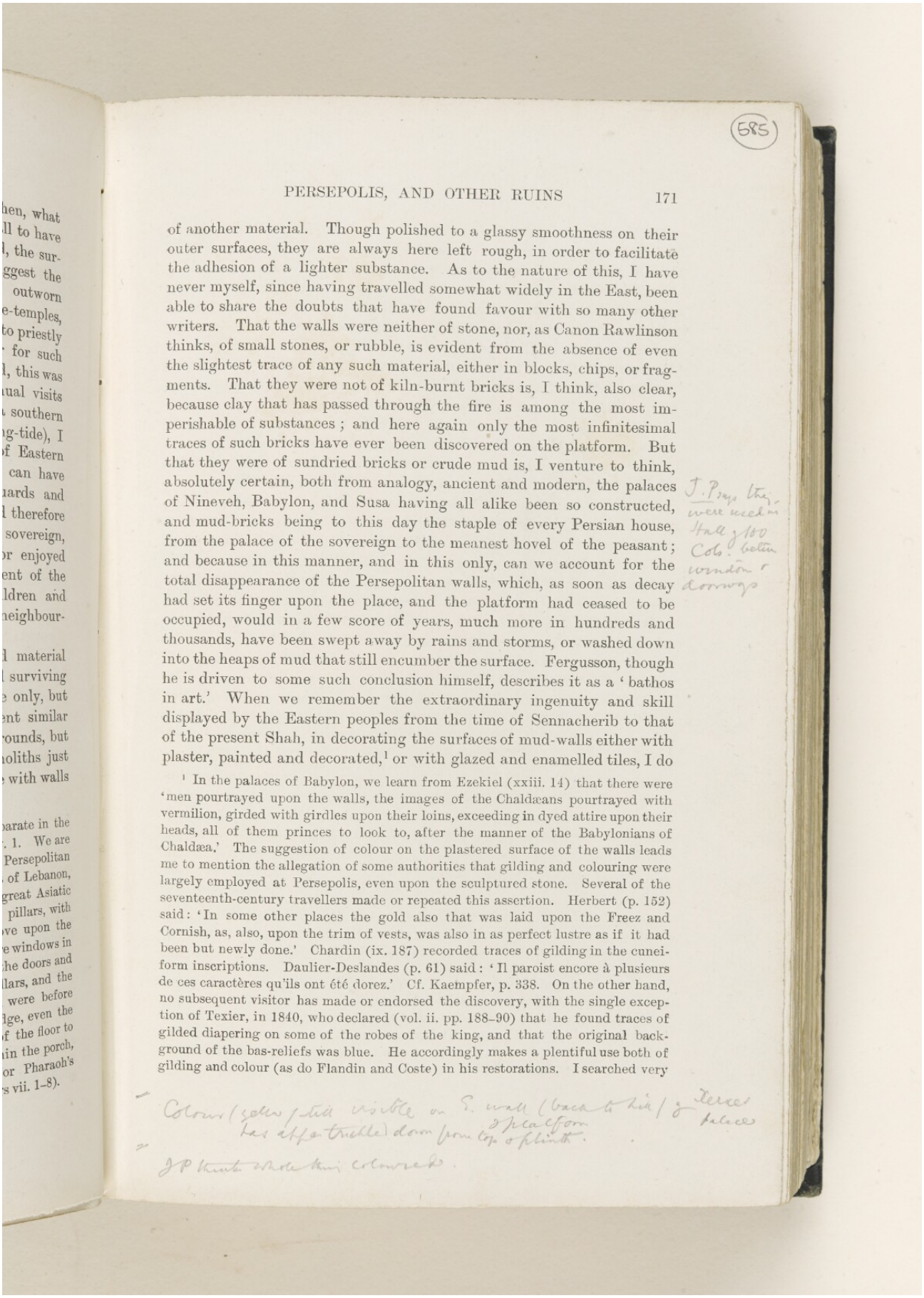





of another material. Though polished to a glassy smoothness on their outer surfaces, they are always here left rough, in order to facilitate the adhesion of a lighter substance. As to the nature of this, I have never myself, since having travelled somewhat widely in the East, been able to share the doubts that have found favour with so many other writers. That the walls were neither of stone, nor, as Canon Rawlinson thinks, of small stones, or rubble, is evident from the absence of even the slightest trace of any such material, either in blocks, chips, or fragments. That they were not of kiln-burnt bricks is, I think, also clear, because clay that has passed through the fire is among the most imperishable of substances; and here again only the most infinitesimal traces of such bricks have ever been discovered on the platform. But that they were of sundried bricks or crude mud is, I venture to think, absolutely certain, both from analogy, ancient and modern, the palaces of Nineveh, Babylon, and Susa having all alike been so constructed, and mud-bricks being to this day the staple of every Persian house, from the palace of the sovereign to the meanest hovel of the peasant; and because in this manner, and in this only, can we account for the total disappearance of the Persepolitan walls, which, as soon as decay had set its finger upon the place, and the platform had ceased to be occupied, would in a few score of years, much more in hundreds and thousands, have been swept away by rains and storms, or washed down into the heaps of mud that still encumber the surface. Fergusson, though he is driven to some such conclusion himself, describes it as a 'bathos in art.' When we remember the extraordinary ingenuity and skill displayed by the Eastern peoples from the time of Sennacherib to that of the present Shah, in decorating the surfaces of mud-walls either with plaster, painted and decorated,[1] or with glazed and enamelled tiles, I do

J. P. says they were used in Hall of 100 Cols. betw. windows & doorways

[1] In the palaces of Babylon, we learn from Ezekiel (xxiii. 14) that there were 'men pourtrayed upon the walls, the images of the Chaldæans pourtrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldæa.' The suggestion of colour on the plastered surface of the walls leads me to mention the allegation of some authorities that gilding and colouring were largely employed at Persepolis, even upon the sculptured stone. Several of the seventeenth-century travellers made or repeated this assertion. Herbert (p. 152) said: 'In some other places the gold also that was laid upon the Freez and Cornish, as, also, upon the trim of vests, was also in as perfect lustre as if it had been but newly done.' Chardin (ix. 187) recorded traces of gilding in the cuneiform inscriptions. Daulier-Deslandes (p. 61) said: 'Il paroist encore à plusieurs de ces caractères qu'ils ont été dorez.' Cf. Kaempfer, p. 338. On the other hand, no subsequent visitor has made or endorsed the discovery, with the single exception of Texier, in 1840, who declared (vol. ii. pp. 188–90) that he found traces of gilded diapering on some of the robes of the king, and that the original background of the bas-reliefs was blue. He accordingly makes a plentiful use both of gilding and colour (as do Flandin and Coste) in his restorations. I searched very

Colour (yellow) still visible on E. wall (back to hill) of Xerxes palace has apparently down from top of plinth. of platform

J P thinks whole thing coloured.

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not think that we shall endorse this phrase. At Persepolis the former, rather than the latter type of surface decoration would appear to have been mainly employed; but very few fragments of tiles having ever been picked up on the platform, and those in the main of doubtful antiquity. At Susa the reverse was the case; but at Susa too the main body of the interior walls appears to have been of stucco, coloured red, and adorned with tapestries and hangings. Later excavations at Persepolis in the big heaps of débris between the palaces may perhaps bring to light additional evidence, but I doubt whether, broadly speaking, they will invalidate the above conclusion.[1]

Before leaving this part of the platform, I may observe that on its outer edge, to the north-west of the Palace of Darius, are traces of a building, first noted by Niebuhr, and marked by Flandin and Coste. Though too indeterminate in form and size to justify reconstruction, it has been assumed by some writers to be the 'House of the Women.' Continuing in a direct line south from the Palace of Darius, we arrive at the ruins of a building occupying the extreme south-west corner of the upper platform, where the latter rises with a sheer edge above the lower or southern unoccupied level. Access is gained to this ruin by a mutilated double stairway on the north face,[2] upon the front of which are a row of processional figures, and two cuneiform inscriptions, similar to those that we have seen on the western stairway of the Palace of Darius. They proclaim the handiwork of Artaxerxes III. or Ochus; but whether they signify that

Palace of Artaxerxes III.

carefully, but nowhere found any trace either of gilding or colouring myself. How, then, are we to reconcile these conflicting records? I confess I think that the seventeenth-century travellers either greatly exaggerated or copied, each in turn, from the earliest who had originated the statement; for I do not see why gilding which had retained 'a perfect lustre' for 2,100 years should suddenly disappear *in toto* after the lapse of 2,200. Some of these writers may have been mistaken by the sun shining on the siliceous varnish with which the ancient Persians appear to have overlaid their sculptures. On the other hand, it is far from improbable that colour may have been employed, to some extent, even on the stone. I have elsewhere mentioned that traces of blue paint have been found on the cuneiform epitaph on Darius's tomb, and it may equally have been applied at Persepolis. The analogy of Assyrian art is in favour both of colour and gilding. Perrot points out that none of the horns or ears of the bull-capitals have been found on the platform, though the holes are there in which they were fixed. He therefore suggests that they may have been of gilt bronze.

[1] Since writing the above, I have received the satisfactory assurance from Mr. Cecil Smith that in one of the buildings on the platform he actually picked up some fragments of stucco painted red, which are now in the British Museum.

[2] Ker Porter, in his plan, places a double staircase in the north-west corner; but this is a mistake. Flandin and Coste, also, fail to do justice to the north stairways, but add a small flight of steps (which I overlooked) at right angles to the platform near the west extremity.

J. P. says this is part of the still existing floor of Palace Darius

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the building was originally raised, or was only restored, or added to, by him, it is impossible to say. From the fact that this building faced the Palace of Darius, and that, as I have pointed out, the accommodation of the latter would appear to have been inadequate for a large household, it has been called by some the House of the Women. There is nothing, however, positively to justify such a designation, and the remains consist only of a number of bases of columns, represented by Ker Porter as two rows of five, preceding three rows of four; but by Flandin and Coste as an irregular number (three only are marked on their plan), preceding four rows of four. By them the ruin is described as No. 4; by others as the south-west edifice.

To the east of this building, and in continuation of the main upper platform, on which it is the most elevated of all the Persepolitan remains, are the ruins of what must originally have been the third largest structure of the entire palace-group. The inscriptions on its staircases and doorways, and on its lofty angle-piers,[1] reveal that, like the Propylæa and the Great Audience-Hall, it was the work of Xerxes, whence it has not unnaturally been conjectured to represent the palace of that monarch. Its structural arrangements, indeed, bear a marked resemblance to those of the palace of his father, with the exception that the fabric faced towards the north, and that each component part was on a considerably larger scale. In front was a platform, to which access was gained by a quadruple flight of steps, which appears in my photograph on the east,[2] and by a double flight on the western side. They are sadly ruined. Mounting the stairs, we find the remains of the main or entrance-portico of the palace, in the shape of the bases of two rows of columns of six each. This opened by doorways into a central pillared hall, the roof of which was sustained by thirty-six columns, in six rows of six each, covering a square surface of eighty-seven and a half feet each way. Their circular bases alone survive. Down the centre of this hall runs at a slight distance below the surface, but now exposed to view, a subterranean aqueduct, which procured for it from Texier the somewhat precipitate title of the Baths. There is no ground for connecting the building with such a purpose; nor is there the faintest trace of any of the requisite dispositions; and there can be

Palace of Xerxes

[1] The inscriptions occur in a greater variety of situations in this palace than elsewhere: (1) in panels on both the east and west staircases; (2) round the doorways; (3) in tablets above the king and parasol; (4) on the folds of the king's robe in the north and east doorways; (5) round the windows; (6) on the big angle-pier.

[2] At the summit of the east staircase are four great substructures, or blocks of stone, which Fergusson conjectures, but without sufficient reason, to have been the bases of a porch or Propylæa, similar to those before the Hall of a Hundred Columns and the Hall of Xerxes.

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little doubt that the conduit is merely part of the system either of drainage or of water-supply, the traces of which exist in other parts of the platform—e.g. under the Hall of Xerxes. Whether Ker Porter is justified in connecting it directly both with the relics of a tank at the foot of the mountain on the east, and with the stone cistern already noticed near the Porch of Xerxes, I have not the means of ascertaining. As in the case of the Palace of Darius, so also here, the building is flanked by a number of smaller compartments, of which there appear to have been four on either side, those two into which access is gained from the central or pillared hall having also contained four columns each, and having, therefore, constituted subsidiary pillared courts. The doorways, windows, and niches surrounding the



EAST STAIRCASE, PALACE OF XERXES

main hall are adorned with sculptures similar in character to those in the elder palace, the sovereign with parasol and fly-flap, held by attendants, being sculped on the door-jambs; but in several of the windows are depicted what appear to be evidences of royal luxury and entertainment, in the shape of attendants leading animals, or carrying cups, dishes, and vases of perfume. On the south side two staircases lead up from its eastern and western ends on to the palace platform, in the outer front of which four niches with a cornice are disposed; while—a unique feature in this structure—from the south-west corner another flight of steps, hewn in the natural rock, at right angles to the terrace, and without either parapet or sculptures, leads up from the lower or southern to the upper platform. The general

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remarks which have previously been made upon the purpose of Darius' Palace will apply equally to that of his son. Here, in all probability, we have the building in which Xerxes lived, and in which he conducted business of state, and gave ceremonial banquets; reserving for his great *levées* the audience-hall with the porticoes and big columns.

Before leaving this palace, let us notice that between the terrace that precedes it on the north, and the hindermost pillars of the Great Hall of Xerxes, is a space of ground about a hundred yards in length, which is now occupied only by a mound, rising in parts to a very considerable height above the true level of the platform. It has not unreasonably been conjectured that this great pile of accumulated soil may cover the relics of some other and yet unknown fabric, and Ker Porter sanguinely located here the banqueting hall where Alexander feasted, and which 'fell a sacrifice to the drunken revelry of the Macedonian.' Thirteen years ago, Messrs. Stolze and Andreas drove a trench through part of this great mound, and found no more remunerative spoil than masons' rubbish and chips. Yet I cannot but hope that a more thorough investigation might produce ampler results, even though the *trouvaille* were limited to the discovery, not of an unsuspected palace, but of what would be nearly as important, viz. authentic traces of tiles, bricks, or whatever method of mural decoration was employed by the Achæmenian architects on the platform. Personally, I shall not feel any sense of contentment that the limits of possible discovery have been reached until, like the Acropolis at Athens, the surface of the rock or true level of the platform has everywhere been laid bare. Then only will archæology have had its final say.

Great mound

On the lower or principal platform, at a distance of 180 yards behind or to the east of the Palace of Xerxes, are the remains of a further building, which has a stunted appearance, owing to the fact that it is buried in the soil up to half the height of its niches and doorways. These, which are composed of a stone the blackness of which resembles the material of the Palace of Darius, enclose a space eighty-nine feet in length by sixty-one in breadth, preceded by a portico fifty and a half feet by thirty and a half feet. The former appears to have contained sixteen columns, in four rows of four each; the latter eight columns, in two rows of four each. There are no traces of lateral chambers; and the entire building appears to have been either a reproduction or a prototype on a small scale of the great Hall of a Hundred Columns, which we shall presently notice. That it was a royal palace or hall is evident from the sculptured images of the king, with the fly-chaser in the south door, and the parasol in the north, and of the king fighting with the symbolical monster on its hind legs in the east and west; but no

South-east edifice

inscription remains to enable us to identify the monarch. Fergusson, indeed, assumes that this is the earliest structure on the platform, because it has 'a monolithic character of solidity and a massiveness of proportion greater than that possessed by any other edifice;' and he conjectures that it may have been the work of Cyrus or Cambyses. But it must be remembered, both that Fergusson never saw Persepolis himself, and also that there is not anywhere the slightest trace of any edifice or fabric on the platform prior to Darius. Indeed, it seems to me certain that Cyrus and Cambyses were both in their graves before the first stone of Persepolis was laid.

Returning towards the north, we arrive, immediately behind the big mound that flanks the Palace of Darius on the east, at a build-

Central Edifice

ing which, in the absence of any distinguishing mark or inscription, has generally been called the Central Edifice. It is of peculiar plan, and has afforded a welcome scope to the theorists. It consists of three great doorways, on the inner surface or jambs of which are chiselled the monarch, seated or standing under the royal umbrella, with the image of the god Ormuzd floating in a winged halo overhead. In the east doorway we meet with the first specimen that we have hitherto encountered of a type that is very familiar on the next ensuing building, viz. the king seated on a triple-staged throne, supported by three rows of nine figures each, with uplifted arms—a variation of the scene already depicted on the tombs at Naksh-i-Rustam. In the centre, between the north and south doorways, are the bases of four columns. What may have been the object of this small but remarkable structure it is impossible to say. Ker Porter, anxious to do a good turn to the Holy Place school of thought, supposed it to be the private oratory of the king, and the four plinths to be the bases of a fire-altar. For this suggestion there is no support. Fergusson thinks it was a second Propylæa, in front of the Palace of Xerxes. It does not, however, resemble any of the other remains of porches; and does not either confront or lead to any other building, least of all the Palace of Xerxes. I prefer therefore to classify it with the other Persepolitan halls or palaces, and not to spin cobwebs in hypothetical identification.

Finally we come to the last—and if we speak of a hall itself, without adjuncts—the largest of the Persepolitan structures. This is the

Hall of 100 Columns

building which, ever since its ground plan was ascertained in the middle of the century, and with even greater precision since the excavations of 1877–8, has been known as the Hall of a Hundred Columns. It is situated on a lower level (identical with that of the Porch of Xerxes) than the edifices recently described, and is nearest of all the ruins to the mountain, from whose base it is removed but a short distance. It consists of a single great hall, the

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narch. Fergusson, e on the platform, nd a massiveness of er edifice;' and he yrus or Cambyses, ever saw Persepolis ghtest trace of any Indeed, it seems to their graves before

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of a hall itself, tures. This is the was ascertained greater precision n known as the er level (identical ecently described, whose base it is e great hall, the

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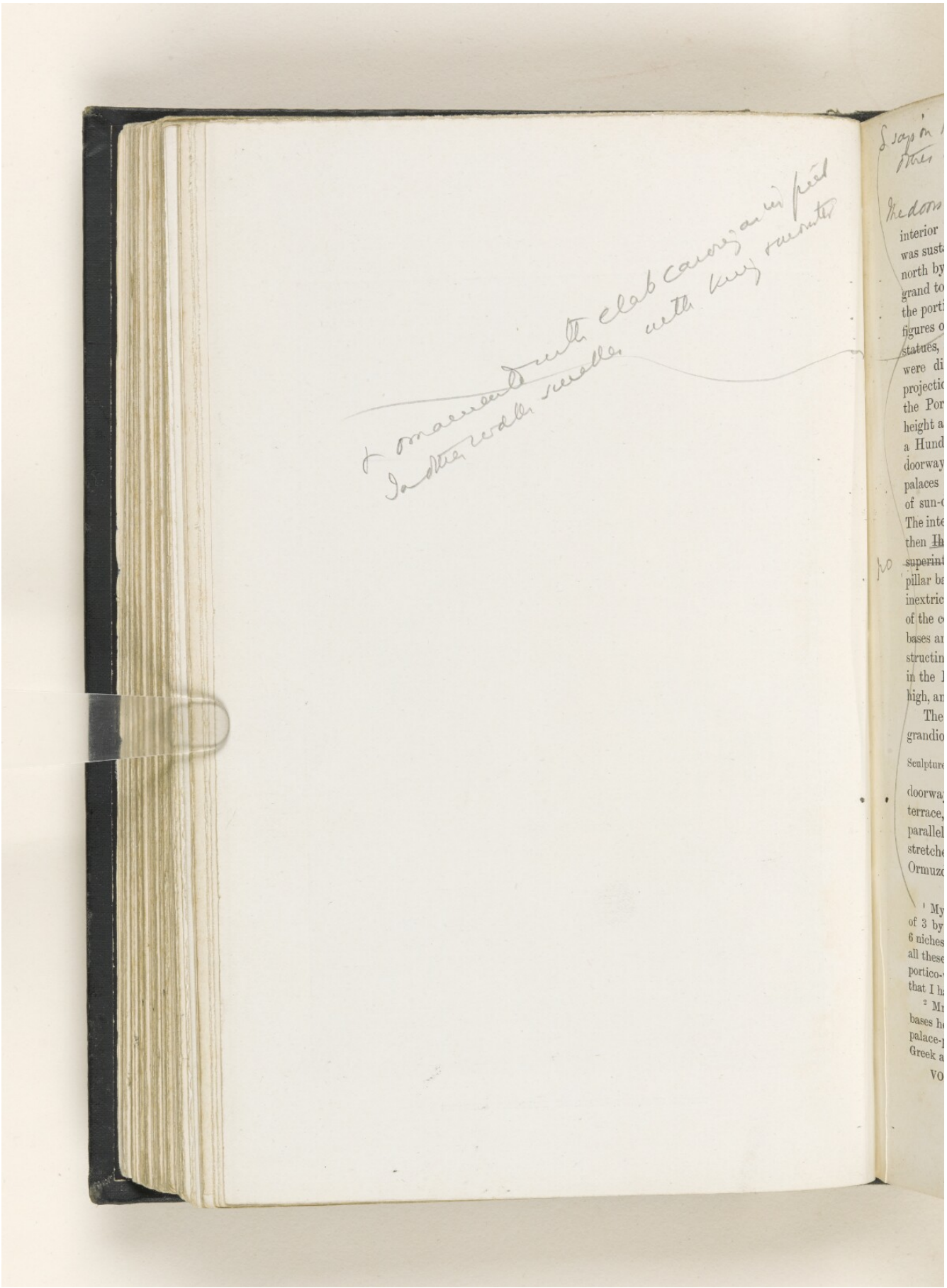
NORTH DOORWAY—HALL OF HUNDRED COLUMNS



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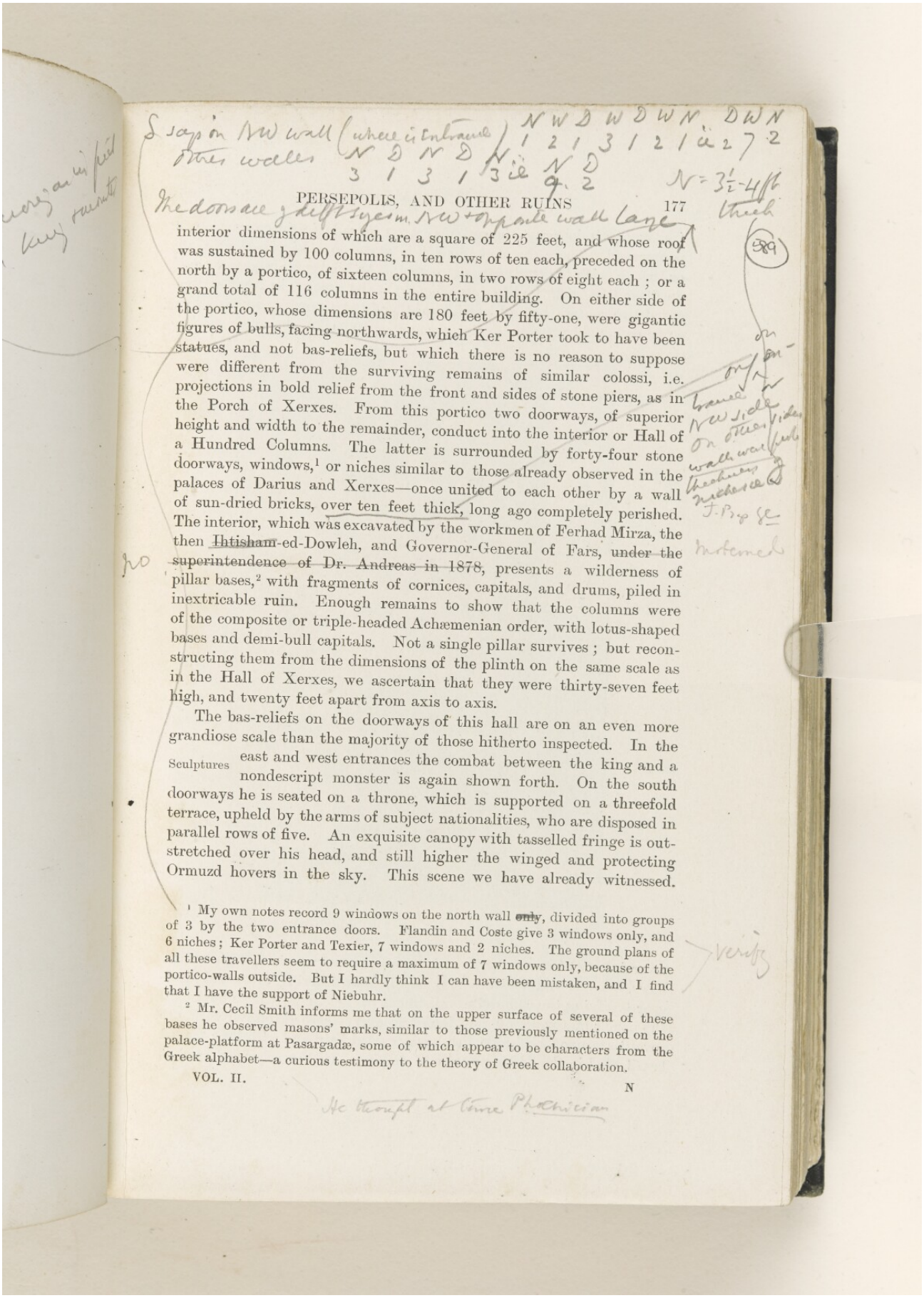



interior dimensions of which are a square of 225 feet, and whose roof was sustained by 100 columns, in ten rows of ten each, preceded on the north by a portico, of sixteen columns, in two rows of eight each ; or a grand total of 116 columns in the entire building. On either side of the portico, whose dimensions are 180 feet by fifty-one, were gigantic figures of bulls, facing northwards, which Ker Porter took to have been statues, and not bas-reliefs, but which there is no reason to suppose were different from the surviving remains of similar colossi, i.e. projections in bold relief from the front and sides of stone piers, as in the Porch of Xerxes. From this portico two doorways, of superior height and width to the remainder, conduct into the interior or Hall of a Hundred Columns. The latter is surrounded by forty-four stone doorways, windows,[1] or niches similar to those already observed in the palaces of Darius and Xerxes—once united to each other by a wall of sun-dried bricks, over ten feet thick, long ago completely perished. The interior, which was excavated by the workmen of Ferhad Mirza, the then Ihtisham-ed-Dowleh, and Governor-General of Fars, under the superintendence of Dr. Andreas in 1878, presents a wilderness of pillar bases,[2] with fragments of cornices, capitals, and drums, piled in inextricable ruin. Enough remains to show that the columns were of the composite or triple-headed Achæmenian order, with lotus-shaped bases and demi-bull capitals. Not a single pillar survives ; but reconstructing them from the dimensions of the plinth on the same scale as in the Hall of Xerxes, we ascertain that they were thirty-seven feet high, and twenty feet apart from axis to axis.

The bas-reliefs on the doorways of this hall are on an even more grandiose scale than the majority of those hitherto inspected. In the Sculptures east and west entrances the combat between the king and a nondescript monster is again shown forth. On the south doorways he is seated on a throne, which is supported on a threefold terrace, upheld by the arms of subject nationalities, who are disposed in parallel rows of five. An exquisite canopy with tasselled fringe is outstretched over his head, and still higher the winged and protecting Ormuzd hovers in the sky. This scene we have already witnessed.

[1] My own notes record 9 windows on the north wall only, divided into groups of 3 by the two entrance doors. Flandin and Coste give 3 windows only, and 6 niches ; Ker Porter and Texier, 7 windows and 2 niches. The ground plans of all these travellers seem to require a maximum of 7 windows only, because of the portico-walls outside. But I hardly think I can have been mistaken, and I find that I have the support of Niebuhr.

[2] Mr. Cecil Smith informs me that on the upper surface of several of these bases he observed masons' marks, similar to those previously mentioned on the palace-platform at Pasargadæ, some of which appear to be characters from the Greek alphabet—a curious testimony to the theory of Greek collaboration.



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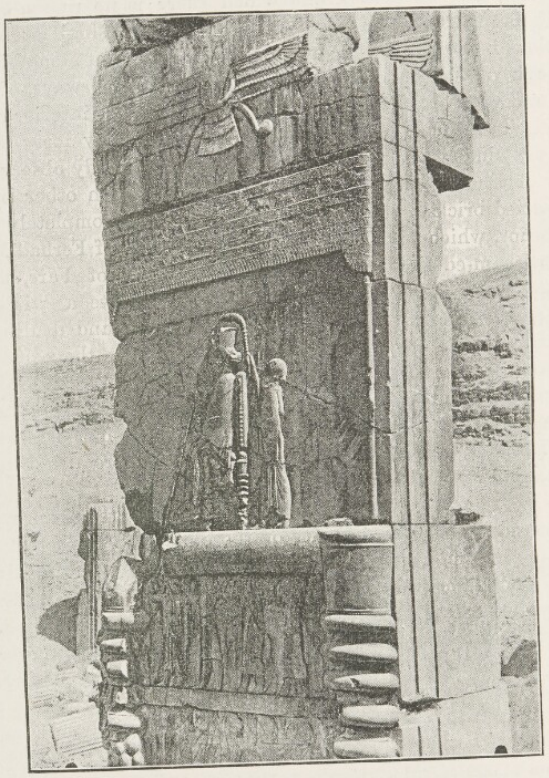
On the north doorways, however, an even more majestic conception is pourtrayed. There the monarch sits in state on a high-backed chair or throne, with his feet upon a footstool. At his back are guards, and an attendant with the lifted fly-wisp. On the ground in front of him stand two censers, behind which two other figures, possibly ambassadors or ministers, advance to render account or to make obeisance to the



SOUTH DOORWAY, HALL OF A HUNDRED COLUMNS

sovereign. Below are five superimposed rows of warriors, with spears, bows, quivers, and bucklers, fifty in all, their differing dress and head-gear typifying the composite enlistment of the Great King's host. In the panels of royal state he himself is everywhere displayed with the royal tiara upon his head, with bushy curled hair, and with long frizzed beard, clad in the flowing purple of empire. In the scenes of combat

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his loins are girt, and he solemnly grapples with and transfixes the foe.

This great hall, which next to that of Karnak in Egypt was the largest in the ancient world, was doubtless, as its sculptures indicate, the throne-room or audience-hall of the Great King. Less striking, though more spacious than the Hall of Xerxes, inasmuch as it was lower in elevation, and in all probability worse lighted,[1] it must have served an analogous purpose. Here, in the manner depicted upon the doorways, one of the Achæmenian sovereigns must have sat in state to receive the homage or the tribute of his people. With which of the dynasty are we to connect it? Sir H. Rawlinson has been induced by the superior preservation of the sculptures to refer it to the latest reasonable period, viz., to the reign of Artaxerxes III. From the same premise I should draw quite the opposite conclusion. Looking to the facts, that under the reign of Darius the national art appears to have touched its apogee of splendour, that there is no other hall on the platform which we are justified in identifying with a throne-room such as he must undoubtedly have used, and that both the ground plan and structure represent the simplest and least complicated form of Persepolitan hall, I should be inclined to argue that this was the building where the son of Hystaspes sat in royal state; and that it was with the familiar ambition of the Oriental to create some novel type, at once emulating and transcending his predecessor, that Xerxes departed from the model of his father, and raised the Great Hall with the porticoes on another part of the terrace. Moreover, when the Hall of a Hundred Columns was built, the decorative massing of sculpture on the fronts of stairways had seemingly not been developed, and the scenes of royal pageantry which Xerxes depicted on the stylobate of his stately platform are here concentrated and disposed vertically on the jambs of the entrance doorways. A further difference may be noted in the absence of any groove or socket in the doorways, as in the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, to contain the pivots on which the folding doors were hung. This lends an additional support to the theory that we have here an audience-chamber merely; since the doorways can only have been closed or concealed by hangings, like those described in the book of Esther.

Design

At a distance of 190 feet to the north of the portico are the remains of what is generally admitted to have been a bull-flanked

[1] The only apparent means by which light can have been admitted to the interior was by the nine windows in the northern wall, the bays on the other side being all filled and constituting niches. The limited and feeble radiance that must have spread therefrom down the long, pillared aisles necessitates, in my opinion, the theory of windows or open spaces left to admit light in the sides of the timbered roof.



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porch, or Propylæa, leading thereto. In the earlier part of the century these ruins were in a more recognisable shape than now; and north again of them stood an enormous isolated column. My notes and photographs record only a few dilapidated blocks of stone, retaining however the unmistakable disposition of a gateway and on one side the form of what was once a bull. Flandin inferred from the apparently unfinished workmanship of some of these fragments, that the porch to which they belonged was never completed, and may have been a later addition to the original design. Such a condition, however, if true, need not necessarily postulate a later origin in the East, where, as I have frequently remarked, to leave the edifices of a predecessor either incomplete or a prey to ruin, is no uncommon manifestation of the ὕβρις of royalty.

Propylæa

A far more interesting question, however, than the date or the object of this building, is raised by its remains. Whereas none of the earlier travellers found in any of the edifices on the platform the least traces of destruction by fire, and were therefore puzzled how to reconcile with the visible ruins the story, attested by a consensus of ancient historians,[1] of the conflagration of one or more of the Persepolitan palaces by Alexander, more recent discoveries have acquainted us with the fact that the Hall of a Hundred Columns contains precisely the evidence of which we stand in need.[2] On the soil above the pavement was found, in the excavations of thirteen years ago, a thick layer of ashes, proved by microscopic analysis to be carbonised cedar, of which not a vestige has been brought to light in any other of the palaces.[3] It is probable, therefore, that these are the remains of the cedar roof, which crumbled into ashes just where it fell, carrying down with it the columns and supports that had previously sustained its splendour. It is not the least among the fascinations of the site that we can—without positive certainty it

Was it burned by Alexander?

[1] Diodorus Siculus, lib. xvii.; Strabo, lib. xv.; Q. Curtius, lib. v. c. 7; Plutarch's *Vita Alexandri*; Clitarchus in *Athenæus*, lib. xiii.; Arrian, lib. iii. c. 18. Q. Curtius is responsible for the statement that the palace set on fire was largely composed of cedar.

[2] It was with an unconscious prescience, therefore, that Ouseley wrote (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 281): 'From the very durable nature of charcoal, we might, perhaps, reasonably hope to discover fragments of carbonised cedar.'

[3] Texier and Stolze, however, have both opined that the stones in the Palace of Xerxes show traces of having been sundered by violent heat. Madame Dieulafoy (*La Perse*, p. 407) says: 'Seated in the doorway of the Hall of Xerxes, I reread Plutarch's account of the burning of Persepolis by Alexander, and was compelled, in presence of these calcined stones, these columns reddened by the flames, these débris of carbonised timbers, to accept the version of the Greek historian.' This I believe to be fancy. No one else, so far as I know, has observed any of these things in the Hall of Xerxes.

J. P agrees with me. No sign

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is true, but at least with more than moderate probability—feel ourselves contemplating, at a distance of 2,200 years, the speaking wreck of what was either, if the Greek historians are to be believed, the drunken freak of the conqueror, or, more probably, the act of a merciless but deliberate premeditation.

I have now completed my account of the still surviving ruins upon the platform of Persepolis. Before I leave it, there are one or two subsidiary features that require to be mentioned. Of these the most interesting, if also not the least obscure, is the existence of a large number of what were described by the ancient travellers as underground passages, but are more probably channels for the passage of water. The entrance to these in former times must have been far more exposed than at present; the aqueduct beneath the Palace of Xerxes being the only one that now openly attracts the eye. The most complete exploration of these underground passages that is recorded was made by Chardin over 200 years ago. He represented them as extending in every direction at a depth of five feet below the surface, but principally in the eastern corner, where he entered and walked, for thirty-five minutes, a distance of a quarter of a league, till he was compelled to retire by the terror of his attendants. Their sides, he said, were like polished glass. Morier in 1809 repeated the experiment :—

Subterranean passages

> The great aqueduct is to be discovered among a confused heap of stones in the rear of the front row of buildings, and almost adjacent to a ruined staircase. We descended into its bed, which in some cases is cut 10 feet into the rock. This bed leads east and west: to the east its descent is rapid about 25 paces; it then narrows, so that we could only crawl through it; and again it enlarges, so that a man of common height may stand upright in it.[1]

The position and direction of several of these channels, but probably of only a small proportion of their real number, is given in the plans of Flandin and Coste.[2] In parts they are hewn in the live rock; elsewhere they are paved and walled with stone. The passages quoted show that they vary in height from low drains to ample channels. A layer of mud on the floor reveals the purpose for which they were originally intended. This appears to have been two-fold; either as aqueducts to convey drinking water or water for the gardens from cisterns in the mountain,[3] or as drain-pipes to carry off rain-water

[1] *First Journey*, p. 131. On his second visit, in 1811 (*Second Journey*, p. 77), Morier took candles and lights; but was stopped by the narrowness of the passage after crawling for some time on his stomach. Ouseley (vol. ii. p. 273) recorded the same result.

[2] Vol. ii. pls. 67, 90.

[3] One such cistern, already mentioned, has been noticed by most travellers just at the foot of the mountain behind the platform, between the first and second royal tombs.

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from the roofs of the palaces, and surplus water in general from the platform. A more extended examination of these passages might not be fraught with valuable consequences, but is nevertheless desirable.

Unfinished work

I have before mentioned that, in digging into the big mound behind the palace of Darius, Messrs. Stolze and Andreas found little beyond remains of masons' unfinished work, indicating that the structures on the platform never reached completion, but were suspended either by caprice or war, or, more likely, by the fall of the monarchy itself. Similar evidences exist on other parts of the platform. Tablets gape blankly for the inscriptions that were never engraved upon them; there are staircases on which the sculptures were only in part executed. Fragments of stone may be seen on which the chisel had only wrought half of its work. Stolze even hazards the conjecture that all the columns of the Hall of Xerxes may not have been set up, because of the almost complete disappearance of the expected wealth of ruin. To the caprice of Oriental sovereigns, as I have more than once argued, quite as much as to political vicissitudes, I should be disposed to attribute this phenomenon.

Royal tombs

The contents of the platform do not, however, exhaust the interest of Persepolis. Just as Darius and three of his successors selected the cliff now known as Naksh-i-Rustam for their rock-hewn and inaccessible sepulchres, so did three other sovereigns of the same line, but doubtless later in date, make similar choice of the Kuh-i-Rahmet, in immediate proximity to the palaces where they had reigned and feasted. One of these royal mausoleums stares from the rock immediately behind the Hall of a Hundred Columns, but has an outlook inclined rather more to south than west; the second is in a recess of the mountain a little to the south-east of the platform; the third, which was never completed, is on the outer edge of the sloping rock, nearly three-quarters of a mile to the south. The mountain background here being neither so lofty nor so precipitous as at Naksh-i-Rustam, there are necessary differences between the two groups. At Persepolis the sepulchre is not hewn high up in the vertical cliff, impenetrable save by ropes or machines. On the contrary, it is now easy of access from below, although, in the case of the north tomb, an attempt was made to render approach from the platform more difficult by means of a wall built up of big polygonal stones in five tiers or terraces from the lower level. The dimensions of the Persepolitan tombs also differ slightly from their predecessors, being (as calculated from the visible parts of the cruciform cutting in the mountain): height, seventy-nine feet, breadth of the upper limb, thirty-three feet, breadth of the transverse limb, containing the tomb-chamber, fifty-four and a half feet. A third and instructive difference, pointing to a later and more ornate period of art, is perceptible in the sculptured

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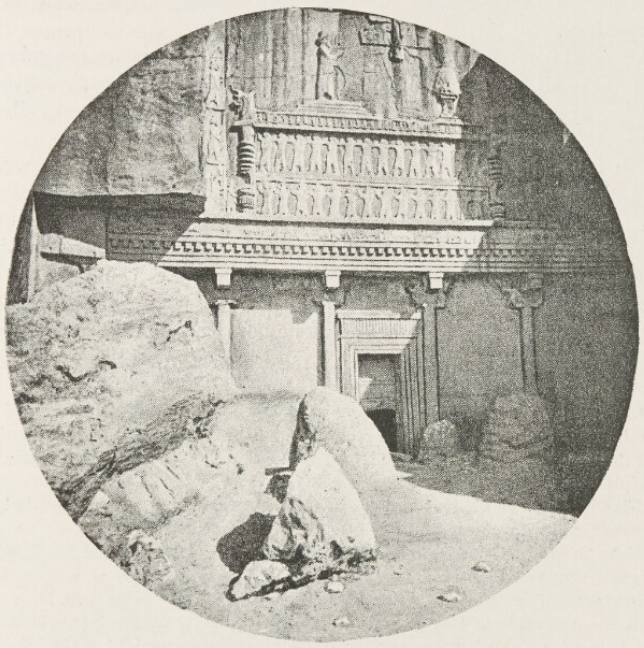
surface of the façade. The doorways are surrounded with three rows of exquisitely carved rosettes on the lintel and jambs ; and the roof or architrave which supports the twin-staged throne has carved on its front a spirited frieze of lions.[1] The four tombs of Naksh-i-Rustam having been hypothetically assigned to Darius I. (B.C. 521–485), Xerxes (485–465), Artaxerxes I. or Longimanus (465–424), and Darius II. or Nothus (424–405), we shall not be far wrong in allotting those at Persepolis to the later sovereigns of the Achæmenian dynasty, viz. Artaxerxes II. or Mnemon (405–361), Artaxerxes III. or Ochus



NORTH TOMB BEHIND PERSEPOLIS

(361–338), and the unfinished tomb either to Arses (338–336) or to Darius III. or Codomannus (336–330).

In the early part of the century the entry to the first or northernmost tomb was choked with sand and clay. The labours of the English artillerymen, who formed part of the escort of Sir Gore Ouseley, cleared these away in 1811, and the accumulations were, by the labours of Ferhad Mirza in 1878, still further reduced ; until now the front is exposed down to the base of the doorway

North tomb

[1] Mistaken by several writers for dogs.

conducting into the tomb.[1] Of this the lower part has been forcibly broken away,[2] and we can now enter without difficulty. Passing into a chamber or vestibule with arched vault, hewn out of the live rock, we encounter at a distance of nine feet from the door a wall, four feet high, also in the solid rock, constituting the front of the first of two cavities or sarcophagi, excavated one behind the other in a recess. A partition, one foot in width, separates the pair; and the furthest extends to within three feet of the end of the cutting.[3] They are four feet in depth, nine and one-third feet long, and four feet broad, and their broken lids, which formerly were arched at the top, lie across the openings.[4]

Middle tomb

At a distance of three hundred yards to the south is the second rock tomb. It differs only from its predecessor in containing three arched niches or recesses at the back of the main vestibule, each containing a rifled cavity or sarcophagus.[5]

South tomb

The most southerly tomb, at some distance from the others, was first noticed by Niebuhr in 1765. Its lower part is hewn out of the rock in the familiar fashion, but its upper portion is built up with large rectangular stones to supply the superior limb of the cross. Nor was this tomb ever finished, as the state of the sculptures sufficiently shows. The king, and Ormuzd, and the fire-altar, and the terrace, are there; but immediately below the cornice of

[1] The lower limb of the cross does not, therefore, exist in this case, being built up by the polygonal wall.

[2] Chardin declared that the door was always a sham door forming part of the natural rock, and thought that the real entry to the tomb must have been gained by a subterranean passage. There is no evidence in support of this, and analogy is against it.

[3] Flandin, both in his text and plates (vol. iii. pls. 164–6), has committed the curious error of representing only one sarcophagus in this tomb.

[4] Near this tomb Herbert, in 1627, described as being 'sculptured the Image of their grand Pagotha, a Dæmon of as uncouth and ugly a Shape as well could be imagined; and if reverenced by those wretches, sure it was not in love, but rather with a Ne nocear, base fear too often drawing dastardly spirits into vile subjection. It is of a gigantish size or magnitude, standing as upright as his deformed posture will admit, discovering a most dreadful visage twixt man and beast.' No one has ever been able to make out what this horrible and purely imaginary monster (which Herbert's London artist introduced in fine style into his drawing) can have been. I fancy that the excellent knight must have carried away an indistinct recollection of the nondescript creatures with whom the king is so often represented in combat on the doorways, and must finally have written his account at home.

[5] I am puzzled by the interior of this tomb, upon which my own notes and recollections do not enlighten me. Ouseley, Johnson, Rich, Binning, and Ussher, all of whom entered it, concur in the above description. Flandin and Coste, however (vol. iv. pls. 163–4), depict it as containing six tombs instead of three. I think they are again wrong.

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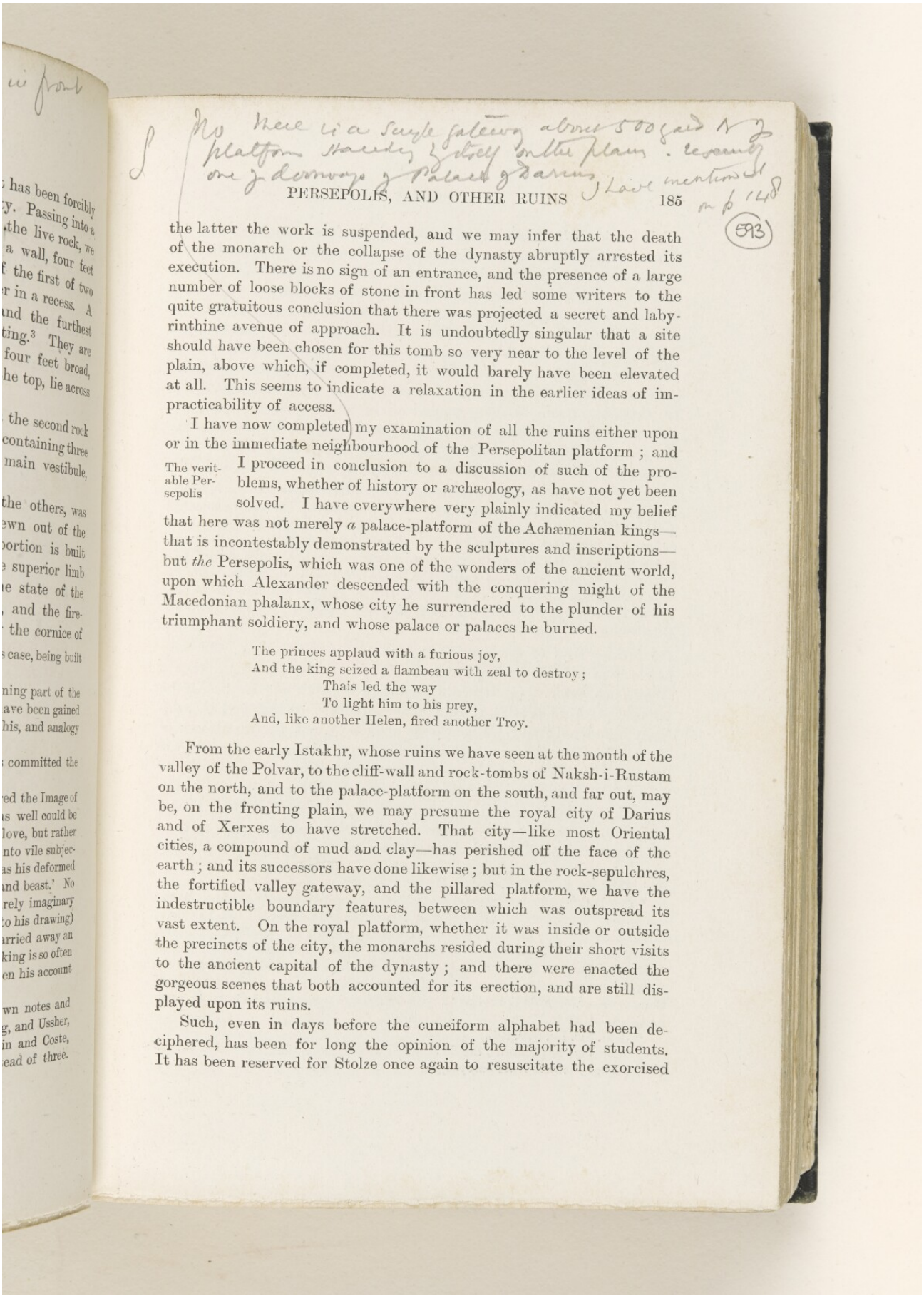

PERSEPOLIS, AND OTHER RUINS 185

the latter the work is suspended, and we may infer that the death of the monarch or the collapse of the dynasty abruptly arrested its execution. There is no sign of an entrance, and the presence of a large number of loose blocks of stone in front has led some writers to the quite gratuitous conclusion that there was projected a secret and labyrinthine avenue of approach. It is undoubtedly singular that a site should have been chosen for this tomb so very near to the level of the plain, above which, if completed, it would barely have been elevated at all. This seems to indicate a relaxation in the earlier ideas of impracticability of access.

I have now completed my examination of all the ruins either upon or in the immediate neighbourhood of the Persepolitan platform; and I proceed in conclusion to a discussion of such of the problems, whether of history or archæology, as have not yet been solved. I have everywhere very plainly indicated my belief that here was not merely *a* palace-platform of the Achæmenian kings—that is incontestably demonstrated by the sculptures and inscriptions—but *the* Persepolis, which was one of the wonders of the ancient world, upon which Alexander descended with the conquering might of the Macedonian phalanx, whose city he surrendered to the plunder of his triumphant soldiery, and whose palace or palaces he burned.

The verit-able Per-sepolis

> The princes applaud with a furious joy,
> And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
> Thais led the way
> To light him to his prey,
> And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

From the early Istakhr, whose ruins we have seen at the mouth of the valley of the Polvar, to the cliff-wall and rock-tombs of Naksh-i-Rustam on the north, and to the palace-platform on the south, and far out, may be, on the fronting plain, we may presume the royal city of Darius and of Xerxes to have stretched. That city—like most Oriental cities, a compound of mud and clay—has perished off the face of the earth; and its successors have done likewise; but in the rock-sepulchres, the fortified valley gateway, and the pillared platform, we have the indestructible boundary features, between which was outspread its vast extent. On the royal platform, whether it was inside or outside the precincts of the city, the monarchs resided during their short visits to the ancient capital of the dynasty; and there were enacted the gorgeous scenes that both accounted for its erection, and are still displayed upon its ruins.

Such, even in days before the cuneiform alphabet had been deciphered, has been for long the opinion of the majority of students. It has been reserved for Stolze once again to resuscitate the exorcised

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spirit of doubt.[1] The character and object of the platform and its structures he does not, of course, any more than other scholars, dispute.

Stolze's doubts

But he boldly denies that this was the royal castle of Persepolis which Alexander seized, and which, whether in a drunken brawl or with a fixed purpose, he set on fire.[2] Diodorus Siculus, who wrote in the half-century immediately preceding the Christian era, and who derived most of his material for the history of Alexander from Clitarchus, is his mainstay. The Sicilian describes the citadel and palaces of Persepolis (using the names ἄκρα and βασίλεια without distinction), as surrounded by a triple wall, of which the outermost was sixteen cubits or twenty-seven feet high, crowned with battlements, the second, thirty-two cubits or fifty-four feet, and the third or innermost, sixty cubits or one hundred and two feet high. He continues :—

> The third enclosure in shape was four-sided, and the wall thereof was in height sixty cubits, made of hard stone, well suited to last for ever. Each of the sides had gates of brass, and by them palisades (the word is σταυρούς, lit. crosses) of brass of twenty cubits, the one set up for safety, the others to strike terror into the beholders. And on the side of the citadel towards the east, at a distance of four hundred feet, is a mountain called the Royal Mountain, in which were the sepulchres of the kings. . . . In this citadel were many lodgings, both of the king and of his generals, of very costly equipment, and treasuries well contrived for the guarding of money.

He further says of the royal rock-tombs, that the coffins could only be elevated to them by means of machines.[3] From this description it is at once evident (1) that the historian is either not describing the pillared platform at all, but some other structure, or that he has hopelessly blundered ; and (2) that he is describing, not the sepulchres of Persepolis, but those at Naksh-i-Rustam. Stolze, accepting the hypothesis most favourable to Diodorus, conjectures that the citadel with triple concentric enclosure did exist ; that it was situated in the immediate neighbourhood, on the western side, of Naksh-i-Rustam, and that there were the palaces which Alexander destroyed by fire.[4] He disposes of the layer of charred cedar on the floor of the Hall of

[1] *Verhand. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z. Berlin*, 1883.

[2] The bulk of the historians, basing their narrative upon Clitarchus, favour the former theory ; and Dryden, in the famous passage above quoted, has given poetical form to the familiar story of Thais, the courtesan. Diodorus, however, suggests a more deliberate motive, viz. revenge for the burning of the temples of Athens by Xerxes. This is a far likelier hypothesis; and Nöldeke, looking to the impression produced upon an Oriental people by such a display of the power of the conqueror, regards the act as 'a well-considered measure, calculated to work on the Asiatic mind.'

[3] Diod. Sic. lib. xvii. 215.

[4] According to Diodorus, the destruction was of more than one palace—ταχὺ πᾶς ὁ περὶ τὰ βασίλεια τόπος κατεφλέχθη.

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a Hundred Columns by supposing that it was the result of natural decomposition, and he apparently forgets the traces of conflagration, for which he has pleaded elsewhere on the ruined platform. He argues that the Naksh-i-Rustam position was a much better and more probable site for the royal residence and citadel, because of the better water-supply, and because it was out of sight of the tombs, which the Mazdean monarchs would not have consented always to keep in view. In fine, he gives the go-by to the platform altogether, and leaves it, with brilliant contumely, to account for itself.

Now, in answer to all this it may be pointed out that an ounce of fact is worth a hundredweight of theory, particularly when theory rests upon an ancient but not contemporary writer, quoting in the most perfunctory fashion from another writer, notoriously reckless. The solid and incontrovertible fact of the platform and its palaces remains; while not a trace of the great threefold structure of Diodorus and Stolze has ever been discovered. Why should all the buildings have survived in one spot, and all have perished in the other? The confusion between the two groups of royal tombs is a very natural mistake, and might easily occur; nor can any valid reasoning, in my opinion, be grounded upon this statement. What, then, are we to believe of the general description by Diodorus, or Clitarchus, whichever it really was, concerning the triple, concentric, lofty-walled enclosure? That such a description could ever have been intended to apply to the existing platform, I am quite unable to credit.[1] Two hypotheses suggest themselves. The first is

The answer

[1] Some writers have laboured the minute and possible features of identity between the two, arguing that the platform was the uppermost or innermost of the three enclosures. It is sufficient to point out that even its maximum elevation above the plain is wholly inadequate, that it must always have rested upon a wall instead of being encompassed by a wall, and that not a trace has ever been noted on the ground below of either of the two inferior enclosures, their contents, or their fortifications. Why, again, should one only have survived, and the two others have perished? Some writers have sought a feeble support in the discovery (which Texier, vol. ii. p. 161, claims for one of his party, but which was really made by Ker Porter twenty years before) of what is alleged to have been a triple line of circumvallation, consisting of mud walls and towers, on the brow of the hill behind the platform, at a little distance above the royal tombs. Such a work was a very natural and necessary scheme of protection to the platform, which might otherwise have been open either to attack or to robbery on that side; but, of course, it answers in no respect to the account of Diodorus, nor can it be proved to date from Achæmenian times. A far more reasonable hypothesis is suggested to me by Mr. Cecil Smith, who thinks that the triple wall of Diodorus may have resulted from a misunderstanding of Clitarchus' description of the three walls of the Persepolitan platform, which were of differing height and were crowned with a parapet. He also ingeniously suggests that σταυρούς, the brazen palisades above mentioned, which in themselves are an unintelligible architectural feature, may

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that Diodorus may in reality have been describing another building or group of buildings at Persepolis, the citadel, in fact, as distinguished from the palaces (although he erroneously identified them), and that such an enclosure may have existed in the neighbourhood of Naksh-i-Rustam. Now, it is true that on the platform there appears to be inadequate provision for the treasure-house, the barracks of the body-guard, and the other concomitants of royal residence that we know, or must believe, to have existed at Persepolis ; and to that extent may we be prepared to believe that a citadel or fort existed in a detached situation ; though even so, there would appear to have been no reason for the erection on the plain of Mervdasht of such an imposing place-of-arms as Diodorus has described ; nor does it seem likely that palace and fort would have been placed three miles apart. But until some positive traces of the whereabouts of this citadel have been brought to light, I shall prefer myself to accept the rival hypothesis that Clitarchus or Diodorus did not know or confused what they were writing about, transferring to Persepolis the structural features which existed at Ecbatana and in other contemporaneous and neighbouring capitals, and seasoning a nucleus of fact with a magniloquent garniture of fancy.

We have seen when and by whom the palaces on the platform were set up. We have seen that the entire work appears to have been suspended, or, at any rate, that several of the edifices lacked completion. I have given reasons for attributing the initial destruction of one palace at least to Alexander. The only remaining historical question is at what period the sculptures and ruins were reduced to their present mutilated condition. The fall of the Persian monarchy, the neglect of the Seleucidæ and Parthians, the preference of the Sassanian sovereigns for other capitals, are all land-marks in the long history of decline. From the Arab invasion, in all probability, dated the first deliberate and wholesale mutilation, the defacement of the king's features wherever they could be reached, and the brutal employment of every available instrument of destruction. And yet I think that the moderns, too, have borne their share in the iconoclastic campaign. Centuries of Persians have carried off thousands of tons of building-material from the ruins. We have the authority of Chardin that Abbas the Great sent hither for marble [*sic*] for his palaces and mosques ; that Imam Kuli Khan, the great viceroy of Fars, did the same for his capital at Shiraz ; and that the Minister of

History of destruction

also have resulted from a mistaken reproduction of Clitarchus' *ταύρους*, a very natural allusion to the colossal bulls, who might well strike terror, where a palisade could not, and to whom the attribute brazen might easily have been shifted from the gates. On the other hand, there is no trace of gates ever having existed in the Porch of Xerxes.

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Shah Sefi I., disgusted at the number of studious Europeans who visited Persepolis, and for whose entertainment he was required to provide, despatched a party of sixty men with orders to destroy every sculpture upon which they could lay hands. Nor do I feel altogether happy—for the credit of these self-same Europeans—when I read in the pages of Le Brun that he took a mason from Shiraz, and blunted all his tools, in the effort to break off and carry away desirable fragments, and that he confesses to having shattered several figures in pieces. Perhaps we may seek relief from such remorse in the fact that on the 1,200 sculptured figures, reported by that traveller to have existed in his day, only a small impression ever has been or can be produced by these petty depredations. A thousand years hence our descendants will still find ample cause both for pilgrimage and for marvel in the monuments of Persepolis.

Though this is not a treatise on art, and though I do not profess to be an art critic, I yet feel justified in making a few observations in conclusion upon the artistic features and merits of the Persepolitan ruins, having at least examined them carefully on the spot, in the comparative light that is thrown upon them by other ancient Asiatic styles of architecture which I have also inspected *in situ*—credentials that I have been astonished to find are advanced by but few of those who, from the serene solitude of their studies, have pronounced *urbi et orbi* upon the nature and origin of Achæmenian architecture. And yet our authorities do not always agree, for whilst I read in the pages of one that this art was mimetic and nothing else,[1] I am informed by another that 'in its main and best features it was, so far as we can tell, original.'[2] I shall argue that the truth lies, as it commonly does, between these extremes; but in this case very much nearer to the former than to the latter.

Artistic criticism

The first and most obligatory step is to correlate this Achæmenian art with the times and circumstances in which it was produced, and to see in what respects the page of history may provide us with a clue. Essentially it was an art—so far as we can trace it—of sudden birth, of brief-lived span, and of abrupt and premature decay. It was comprised within a maximum period of about 200 years, starting into being with the union of the kingdoms of Anzan, Persia, and Media into a single empire by the Great Cyrus, and perishing beneath the assault of Alexander. Its existence, in fact, was synchronous with that of the dynasty who fostered or created it, and after expressing and immortalising their triumphs, it shared the swift

History a clue to art

[1] Z. A. Ragozin, *Media* (Story of the Nations), p. 303: 'Persian Art was from first to last, and in its very essence, imitative, with the single exception of the Aryan principle of building, consisting in the profuse use of columns.'

[2] Canon Rawlinson, *Fifth Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 307.

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revulsion of their fall. What then was the historical environment of Persia during this period, and with what foreign peoples and styles was she brought into direct contact? The answer is simple and suggestive. The campaigns of Cyrus left the new-born dominion the heir of the glories of Nineveh and Babylon, and planted the conqueror upon those illustrious thrones. For centuries they had supported a long line of sovereigns, of exceeding magnificence and power, the stately splendour of whose courts was the talk of the ancient world, and is equally stamped upon the pages of Herodotus, on the records of Holy Writ, and on the exhumed relics of their glory. Succeeding victories threw open to the Persians the stored wealth and the highly developed arts of Asia Minor, and brought them into relations with the Hellenic colonies on the maritime fringe. Cambyses, still further widening the horizon of ambition, found and absorbed in Egypt the most ancient of civilisations, the most elaborate and systematised of arts. Finally, under Darius and Xerxes, war was waged between the invading armaments of the Great King, and those European republics, already the cradle of freedom, and soon to become the nursery of the purest and freest art that the world had seen. The East was repelled by the West; but in its retreat it carried off much plunder, and by its wealth continued to command the expanding talents of the rising nationality. Chaldæa, Assyria, Lycia, Ionia, Egypt, Greece—this was the historical sequence of conflict; and this too will be found to mark the order of artistic influence and progression.

Influence of Assyria

The nearest and the most akin of civilisations naturally exercised the most powerful control. To no one who has studied Chaldæo-Assyrian art, as unearthed from the earlier Mesopotamian *tells* or mounds, or who is familiar with the spoils of Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Kouyunjik, will the bulk of the Achæmenian forms present any novelty. Let me enumerate in the order of their occurrence on the platform at Persepolis, the indubitable legacies of the art of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. The artificially built-up terrace, or mound, stone-faced (the Assyrian platforms were usually brick-faced, but there was a stone-casing to that of the palace of Sargon), surmounted by a battlement, and ascended by great flights of steps (again in Assyria, as a rule, of brick, but sometimes also of stone), was the familiar substructure of the royal palaces on the Tigris. The winged man-faced bulls of the Propylæa are almost a facsimile of the monstrous gate-keepers of Kouyunjik and Khorsabad. There is the same pose, the same attitude, the same lofty tiara and curled hair, the same backward sweep of the feathered wings. The Persepolitan types mark, however, a later age, and a perceptible artistic refinement. There is less grotesque exaggeration in their form; the fifth leg, as before noticed, has disappeared; the muscular development of limb is kept

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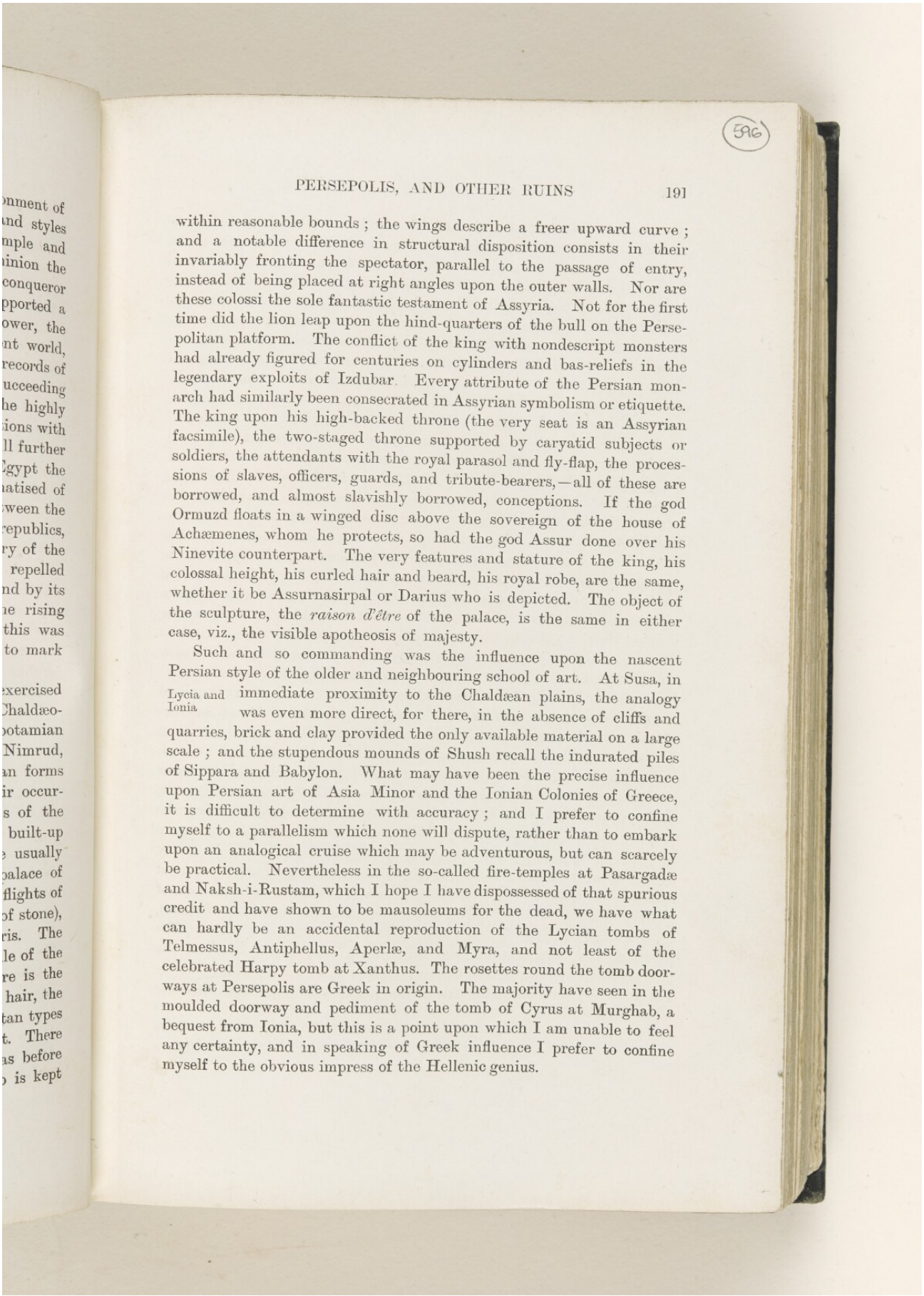



within reasonable bounds; the wings describe a freer upward curve; and a notable difference in structural disposition consists in their invariably fronting the spectator, parallel to the passage of entry, instead of being placed at right angles upon the outer walls. Nor are these colossi the sole fantastic testament of Assyria. Not for the first time did the lion leap upon the hind-quarters of the bull on the Persepolitan platform. The conflict of the king with nondescript monsters had already figured for centuries on cylinders and bas-reliefs in the legendary exploits of Izdubar. Every attribute of the Persian monarch had similarly been consecrated in Assyrian symbolism or etiquette. The king upon his high-backed throne (the very seat is an Assyrian facsimile), the two-staged throne supported by caryatid subjects or soldiers, the attendants with the royal parasol and fly-flap, the processions of slaves, officers, guards, and tribute-bearers,—all of these are borrowed, and almost slavishly borrowed, conceptions. If the god Ormuzd floats in a winged disc above the sovereign of the house of Achæmenes, whom he protects, so had the god Assur done over his Ninevite counterpart. The very features and stature of the king, his colossal height, his curled hair and beard, his royal robe, are the same, whether it be Assurnasirpal or Darius who is depicted. The object of the sculpture, the *raison d'être* of the palace, is the same in either case, viz., the visible apotheosis of majesty.

Such and so commanding was the influence upon the nascent Persian style of the older and neighbouring school of art. At Susa, in immediate proximity to the Chaldæan plains, the analogy was even more direct, for there, in the absence of cliffs and quarries, brick and clay provided the only available material on a large scale; and the stupendous mounds of Shush recall the indurated piles of Sippara and Babylon. What may have been the precise influence upon Persian art of Asia Minor and the Ionian Colonies of Greece, it is difficult to determine with accuracy; and I prefer to confine myself to a parallelism which none will dispute, rather than to embark upon an analogical cruise which may be adventurous, but can scarcely be practical. Nevertheless in the so-called fire-temples at Pasargadæ and Naksh-i-Rustam, which I hope I have dispossessed of that spurious credit and have shown to be mausoleums for the dead, we have what can hardly be an accidental reproduction of the Lycian tombs of Telmessus, Antiphellus, Aperlæ, and Myra, and not least of the celebrated Harpy tomb at Xanthus. The rosettes round the tomb doorways at Persepolis are Greek in origin. The majority have seen in the moulded doorway and pediment of the tomb of Cyrus at Murghab, a bequest from Ionia, but this is a point upon which I am unable to feel any certainty, and in speaking of Greek influence I prefer to confine myself to the obvious impress of the Hellenic genius.

Lycia and Ionia

Egypt

Nowhere is the translation of history into art and architecture more manifest, and nowhere was it ever more rapidly effected, than in the case of Egypt and Persia. Cyrus cannot have been long dead, when he is already represented with the symbolical crown of an Egyptian divinity upon his brow. There is even reason to believe, as I have argued, that his body may have been embalmed. We learn from Diodorus that Cambyses carried away with him Egyptian workmen from his Nile expedition. Very early must these artificers have been set to work ; for already, in the reign of his successor, we find another and a novel form of royal sepulture coming into vogue, viz. the hewing of tombs in inaccessible places in the face of the rock. I am strongly of opinion myself that Darius derived this idea, foreign to the habits of his country, alien to the precepts of his religion, from the spectacle of the rock-tombs in the valley of the Nile. In both cases the hermetic concealment of the royal corpse, and the sculptured blazoning of his title and prowess, are the objects of the architect ; although the differing religions of the two countries prescribed, in the one case secrecy, in the other publicity, for the epigraphic display. An equally obvious loan from Egypt is the fluted moulding of the elegant projecting cornices above the Persepolitan niches and windows and doors. Above all I venture to express the opinion that the Achæmenian column, though possibly based upon a Median prototype,[1] though undoubtedly adorned with Greek attributes and though crowned with an original capital, was yet Egyptian before it was either Greek, Median, or indigenous, and that it adds one more Persian debt to the artistic storehouse of the valley of the Nile.[2] I attach considerable weight to the fact that, in spite of Media and Mazanderan, the use of stone columns on a large scale, which was unknown in Assyria and Chaldæa, was equally unknown in Persia until the reign of Darius, i.e. until after the Egyptian campaign of Cambyses. From what other quarter did the architects of Persepolis

[1] The Median columns—e.g., those in the famous palace at Ecbatana, ascribed by Herodotus to Deioces—were of wood, adorned with plates of metal. But even so they were, I believe, Chaldæan in origin, precisely the same metal-plated columns having been found in the sculptures of the Chaldæan *tells*. I observe that most writers (e.g., Rawlinson and Dieulafoy) believe that the Persians derived the original use of the pillar in palatial architecture from the wooden columns that supported the humble tenements of Mazanderan and Gilan. I see no reason for accepting this theory. Those provinces and their peoples have always existed, and still exist, in almost entire isolation from Persia proper; and I doubt if they have ever influenced in the slightest degree the Persians south of the Elburz.

[2] I cannot claim the support of Canon Rawlinson, who says : 'It is the glory of the Persians in art to have invented this style; it is certainly not from Assyria nor from Egypt.'

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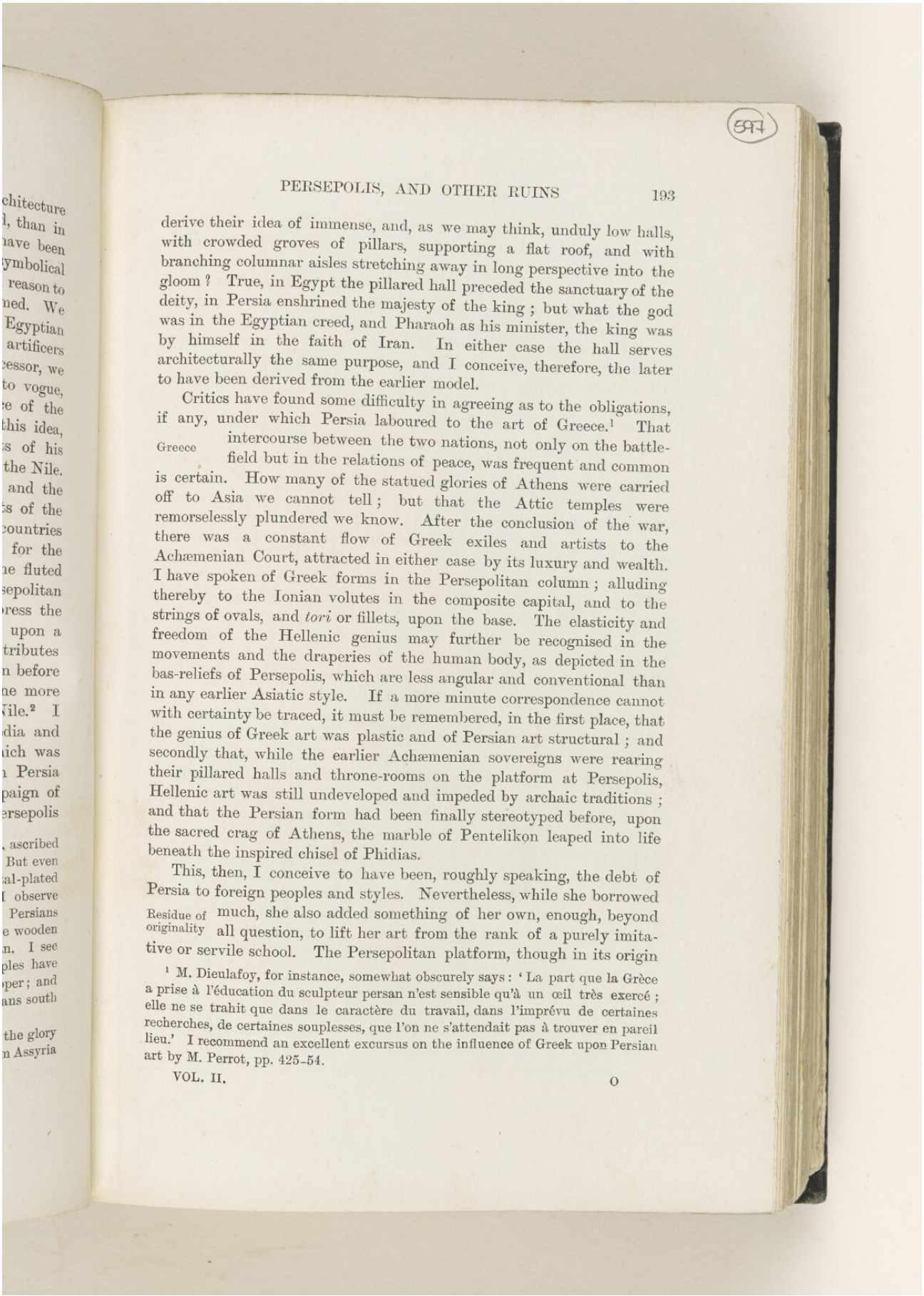



derive their idea of immense, and, as we may think, unduly low halls, with crowded groves of pillars, supporting a flat roof, and with branching columnar aisles stretching away in long perspective into the gloom? True, in Egypt the pillared hall preceded the sanctuary of the deity, in Persia enshrined the majesty of the king; but what the god was in the Egyptian creed, and Pharaoh as his minister, the king was by himself in the faith of Iran. In either case the hall serves architecturally the same purpose, and I conceive, therefore, the later to have been derived from the earlier model.

Critics have found some difficulty in agreeing as to the obligations, if any, under which Persia laboured to the art of Greece.[1] That

Greece

intercourse between the two nations, not only on the battle-field but in the relations of peace, was frequent and common is certain. How many of the statued glories of Athens were carried off to Asia we cannot tell; but that the Attic temples were remorselessly plundered we know. After the conclusion of the war, there was a constant flow of Greek exiles and artists to the Achæmenian Court, attracted in either case by its luxury and wealth. I have spoken of Greek forms in the Persepolitan column; alluding thereby to the Ionian volutes in the composite capital, and to the strings of ovals, and *tori* or fillets, upon the base. The elasticity and freedom of the Hellenic genius may further be recognised in the movements and the draperies of the human body, as depicted in the bas-reliefs of Persepolis, which are less angular and conventional than in any earlier Asiatic style. If a more minute correspondence cannot with certainty be traced, it must be remembered, in the first place, that the genius of Greek art was plastic and of Persian art structural; and secondly that, while the earlier Achæmenian sovereigns were rearing their pillared halls and throne-rooms on the platform at Persepolis, Hellenic art was still undeveloped and impeded by archaic traditions; and that the Persian form had been finally stereotyped before, upon the sacred crag of Athens, the marble of Pentelikon leaped into life beneath the inspired chisel of Phidias.

This, then, I conceive to have been, roughly speaking, the debt of Persia to foreign peoples and styles. Nevertheless, while she borrowed

Residue of originality

much, she also added something of her own, enough, beyond all question, to lift her art from the rank of a purely imitative or servile school. The Persepolitan platform, though in its origin

[1] M. Dieulafoy, for instance, somewhat obscurely says: 'La part que la Grèce a prise à l'éducation du sculpteur persan n'est sensible qu'à un œil très exercé; elle ne se trahit que dans le caractère du travail, dans l'imprévu de certaines recherches, de certaines souplesses, que l'on ne s'attendait pas à trouver en pareil lieu.' I recommend an excellent excursus on the influence of Greek upon Persian art by M. Perrot, pp. 425-54.



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a foreign idea, is elevated into a class and a dignity of its own by the monumental solidity of its construction. No merely slavish copyist would have detected in the footslopes of the Kuh-i-Rahmet so magnificent an opportunity. The polygonal facing of the platform is an equally ancient contrivance ; but I doubt if anywhere it was so well executed, or displayed with such majestic effect, as on the plain of Mervdasht. It is, however, when we come to the sculptures of the staircases, with their long processional panels, their inscriptions, and their figures that ascend the steps with the ascending visitor, that we see the Persian architect at his most original and his best. For staircases, and their capacities of sculptural display, the Egyptians cared little, and the Greeks hardly at all. They had other iconostases for their delineation of the pageantry either of religious ceremonial or of royal magnificence. It was the distinction of the Persian artist to have invented and brought to its highest perfection a method which served the triple purpose of economising space, of adding to the elevation and consequent grandeur of the buildings, and of realising the sole aim and object of his employment, viz., the glorification of royalty. Similarly in the case of the rock-tombs, though the idea was Egyptian in origin, the execution owes no external debt in point of combined dignity and skill. The deeply-incised cross in the cliff, the noble façade, the repetition of the palace-frontal upon the rock, the terraced platform of the adoring king—all these are Persian, and Persian only. Native, too, in all probability, is the great demi-bull capital of the composite Græco-Egyptian column, that so successfully crowned its somewhat clumsy shape and so suitably supported the timbered rafters of the ceiling. Above all, we may congratulate the Persian artist upon his slow, but very perceptible, advance along the pathway of genuine artistic progress. Not yet had he learned to make beauty his main canon, to subordinate subject to shape, to thrill to the enchantment of movement and form. His footsteps were clearly prescribed for him : he could diverge little to the right or to the left ; the king in his majesty, and nothing but the king, was his pre-ordained theme. And yet he had left far behind the stiff and often ludicrous conventionality of the earlier styles. The bizarre, the grotesque, the disproportionate, the '*horrendum, informe, ingens*,' that form so large a feature in Egyptian and Assyrian architecture, have been relegated to a secondary place ; and although the conception of majesty and its attributes must still conform to well-established rules, the sculptor can yet find scope for some of the statelier elegances of the statuary's art.

Having thus rendered to the Persian artist his due, we are at liberty to notice his limitations, both of theme and style. No one can wander over the Persepolitan platform, from storied stairway to stairway, from sculptured doorway to graven pier, no one can contemplate the

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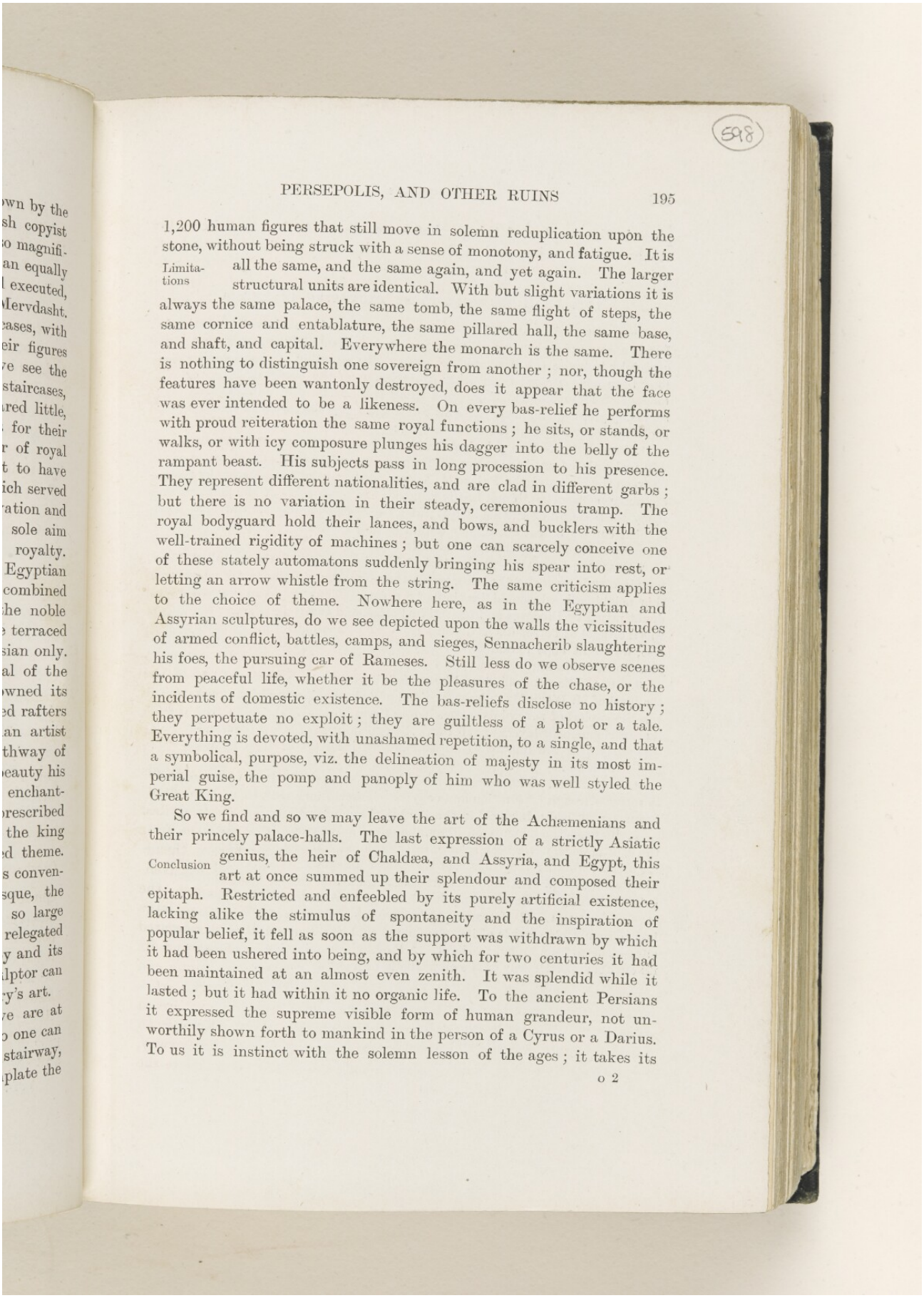



1,200 human figures that still move in solemn reduplication upon the stone, without being struck with a sense of monotony, and fatigue. It is all the same, and the same again, and yet again. The larger structural units are identical. With but slight variations it is always the same palace, the same tomb, the same flight of steps, the same cornice and entablature, the same pillared hall, the same base, and shaft, and capital. Everywhere the monarch is the same. There is nothing to distinguish one sovereign from another; nor, though the features have been wantonly destroyed, does it appear that the face was ever intended to be a likeness. On every bas-relief he performs with proud reiteration the same royal functions; he sits, or stands, or walks, or with icy composure plunges his dagger into the belly of the rampant beast. His subjects pass in long procession to his presence. They represent different nationalities, and are clad in different garbs; but there is no variation in their steady, ceremonious tramp. The royal bodyguard hold their lances, and bows, and bucklers with the well-trained rigidity of machines; but one can scarcely conceive one of these stately automatons suddenly bringing his spear into rest, or letting an arrow whistle from the string. The same criticism applies to the choice of theme. Nowhere here, as in the Egyptian and Assyrian sculptures, do we see depicted upon the walls the vicissitudes of armed conflict, battles, camps, and sieges, Sennacherib slaughtering his foes, the pursuing car of Rameses. Still less do we observe scenes from peaceful life, whether it be the pleasures of the chase, or the incidents of domestic existence. The bas-reliefs disclose no history; they perpetuate no exploit; they are guiltless of a plot or a tale. Everything is devoted, with unashamed repetition, to a single, and that a symbolical, purpose, viz. the delineation of majesty in its most imperial guise, the pomp and panoply of him who was well styled the Great King.

Limitations

So we find and so we may leave the art of the Achæmenians and their princely palace-halls. The last expression of a strictly Asiatic genius, the heir of Chaldæa, and Assyria, and Egypt, this art at once summed up their splendour and composed their epitaph. Restricted and enfeebled by its purely artificial existence, lacking alike the stimulus of spontaneity and the inspiration of popular belief, it fell as soon as the support was withdrawn by which it had been ushered into being, and by which for two centuries it had been maintained at an almost even zenith. It was splendid while it lasted; but it had within it no organic life. To the ancient Persians it expressed the supreme visible form of human grandeur, not unworthily shown forth to mankind in the person of a Cyrus or a Darius. To us it is instinct with the solemn lesson of the ages; it takes its

Conclusion



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place in the chapter of things that have ceased to be; and its mute stones find a voice, and address us with the ineffable pathos of ruin.

### Note on Ruins still to be excavated in Persia

I may not unfitly append to a chapter on the chief antiquarian remains in Persia a note upon the sites, still unexplored or inadequately explored, that seem especially to invite the excavator's concern. The attention of archæologists has long been concentrated upon other countries, upon the tombs of Egypt or the mounds of Mesopotamia. And yet I think that Persia still contains, and may some day yield up, no mean increment of spoil. The sites which I commend for such future investigation are the following:—

1. Persepolis.—The principal buildings have been exposed, but no student will feel satisfied until the entire platform has been laid bare. The great mound between the Hall and the Palace of Xerxes needs careful examination by means of transverse trenches, if not bodily removal. In other parts of the platform are many yards' depth of rubbish. Not till such a painstaking scrutiny has been applied can we be certain of our data. It may solve many disputed problems touching roofs, tiles, colouring, and walls.

2. Naksh-i-Rustam.—The artificial elevation on which the so-called Fire-temple stands, opposite the cliff, needs thorough examination. All mounds in this neighbourhood should be similarly tested. Thus only can we settle the doubt raised by Diodorus and revived by Stolze, and ascertain whether there ever was a citadel of Persepolis as distinct from the palace-platform. By these means, also, we might hope to add to our very scanty knowledge of the ancient city of Persepolis, or Istakhr.

3. Susa.—Excavations should be carried down into the great mound far below the level of M. Dieulafoy's discoveries and of Achæmenian trophies. Susa, which was the capital of several dynasties before Cyrus, ought to resemble Hissarlik in its superincumbent layers of ruin; and the expenditure of a few thousand pounds —possibly of a few hundreds—might shed an incalculable light upon the dark riddles of Elam.

4. Mal Amir.—I have argued in the text that no site in Persia is more likely to repay thorough exploration and copying of inscriptions than this. Archæology has never yet had a fair field in the Bakhtiari mountains.

5. Rhey.—The mounds of Rhey, though at a distance of only six miles from the capital, have never been scientifically explored. Indeed, it is not yet known for certain whether they represent the site of Rhages or not. They are rich in minute fragments of Arabic ruin, and an ampler and earlier spoil may well lie below. The same remarks apply in a less degree to the mounds of Veramin.

6. Ecbatana.—If Hamadan be indeed the Ecbatana of the ancients, some less contemptible records of its splendour should be discovered than those which have hitherto been brought to light. A thorough examination should be made of its environs, particularly of the elevation known as the Musalla.

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# THE SITUATION.

599

The situation arising out of the Russian outrage on British fishermen has, for the present, passed entirely out of the critical stage.

Negotiations for the constitution of the Court of Inquiry proceed with apparent smoothness. The constitution of the Court seems to be already agreed upon.

Among the Russian witnesses there will be nobody above the rank of lieutenant. Capt. Clado states that he is to return to Vladivostock as soon as he has presented Admiral Rojestvensky's report to the Czar. All these officers are now in Paris.

So far as British naval preparations are concerned, the mobilisation ordered at Gibraltar came to an end yesterday. All the Admirals on the Australasian and Far Eastern Stations are, however, assembling in conference.

A report has obtained currency at Algiers that one of the torpedo-boats of the Russian Baltic Fleet is missing.

The finding of the coroner's jury at Hull upon the outrage, will be found in another column.

## THE INQUIRY.

### RUSSIA'S PUPPET WITNESSES.

### CAPT. CLADO NOT TO APPEAR.

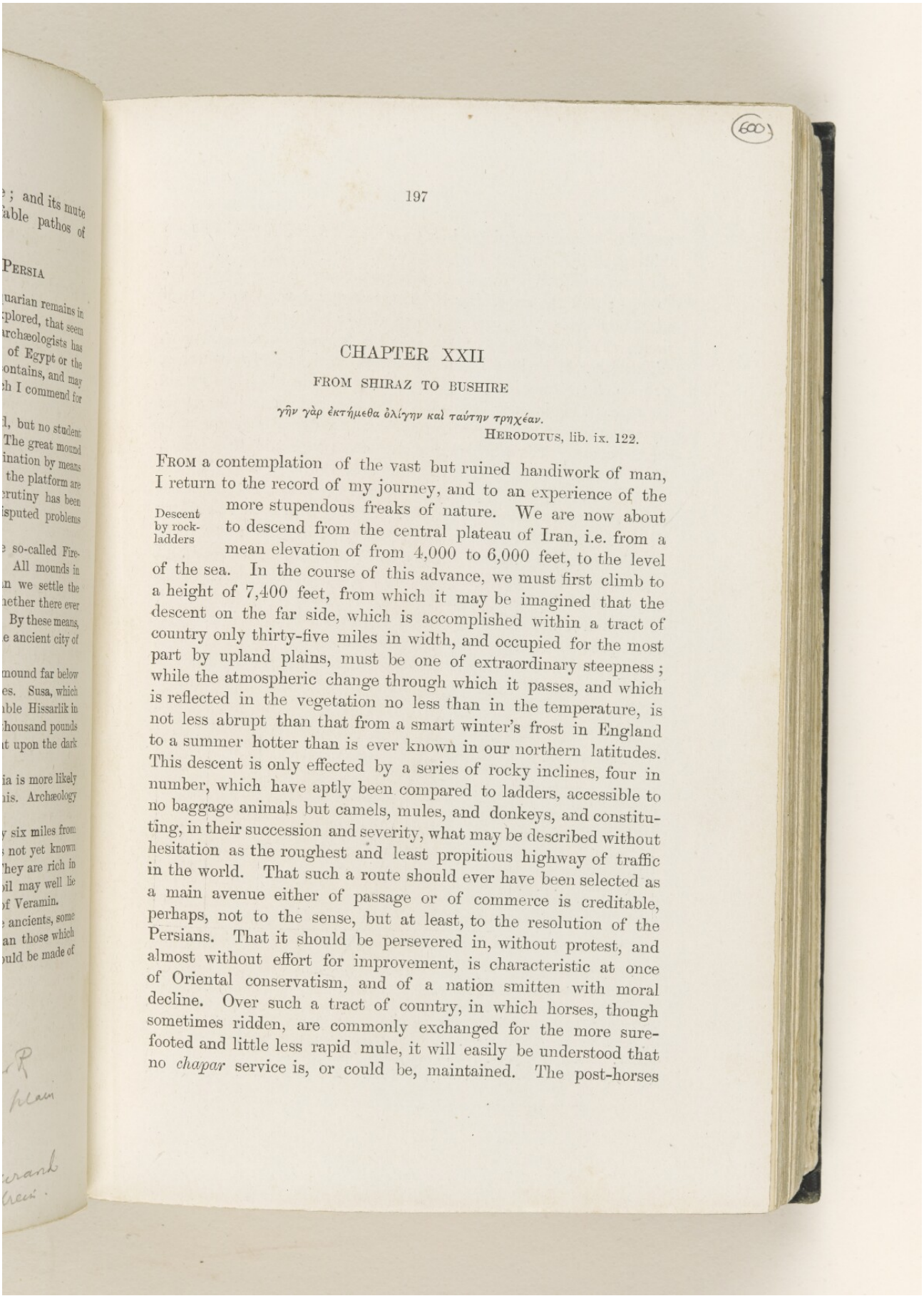
Paris, November 3.

The "Echo de Paris" contains the following to-day:—Capt. Clado, and Lieuts. Ivan Ellis, Ott, and Schram Chenko, who were left at Vigo by the Russian Squadron, have arrived here. They are going to give evidence

# DISCOVERIES IN PERSIA.

News has just been received of some very interesting discoveries which have been made in the mountains of Western Persia. Two French engineers travelling in the Bakhtiyari mountains visited the pass of Mal Amir—about 60 miles east of Susa. The pass, which gives access to the lowlands of Susiania and the plain watered by the upper waters of the Karun and Dizful, also gives access to a fertile tableland enclosed by hills. The region has long been known as of archæological importance, for in the walls of the pass is a sacred cave, beside which are the rock sculptures of some Elamite or Ansanian kings, accompanied by long inscriptions in cuneiform character. These texts belong to Elamite kings ruling in the eighth century before our era. The pass was visited by Sir Henry Rawlinson Layard and Baron de Bode, who have described these sculptures. These travellers all mentioned a large mound which stands in the fertile plain, and which, from the mass of broken pottery and brickwork, was evidently the site of an ancient city, but owing to the lawless character of the hill tribes it was impossible to make any excavations. The French travellers, however, stayed at Mal Amir for some time and made an examination of the site. They found extensive remains of buildings similar to those found by De Morgan at Susa, the bricks bearing inscriptions in the Elamite character. There were also found several large blocks of stone inscribed with a very archaic style of writing. It is to be hoped that an attempt will be made to explore this important site systematically, for from this region we may expect the solution of many difficult problems regarding the beginnings of civilisation over Western Asia.

Another important find throwing light upon Persian history is the discovery at Babylon by the German explorers of a portion of a black dolerite column inscribed with the Babylonian version of the Behistun inscription of Darius Arystaspes and containing the text of the Armenian revolts, and also that of Bardiya—the pseudo Smerdis. This column was probably the standard text on which the great rock inscription was based.





## CHAPTER XXII

### FROM SHIRAZ TO BUSHIRE

*γῆν γὰρ ἐκτήμεθα ὀλίγην καὶ ταύτην τρηχέαν.*

HERODOTUS, lib. ix. 122.

Descent by rock-ladders

FROM a contemplation of the vast but ruined handiwork of man, I return to the record of my journey, and to an experience of the more stupendous freaks of nature. We are now about to descend from the central plateau of Iran, i.e. from a mean elevation of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, to the level of the sea. In the course of this advance, we must first climb to a height of 7,400 feet, from which it may be imagined that the descent on the far side, which is accomplished within a tract of country only thirty-five miles in width, and occupied for the most part by upland plains, must be one of extraordinary steepness; while the atmospheric change through which it passes, and which is reflected in the vegetation no less than in the temperature, is not less abrupt than that from a smart winter's frost in England to a summer hotter than is ever known in our northern latitudes. This descent is only effected by a series of rocky inclines, four in number, which have aptly been compared to ladders, accessible to no baggage animals but camels, mules, and donkeys, and constituting, in their succession and severity, what may be described without hesitation as the roughest and least propitious highway of traffic in the world. That such a route should ever have been selected as a main avenue either of passage or of commerce is creditable, perhaps, not to the sense, but at least, to the resolution of the Persians. That it should be persevered in, without protest, and almost without effort for improvement, is characteristic at once of Oriental conservatism, and of a nation smitten with moral decline. Over such a tract of country, in which horses, though sometimes ridden, are commonly exchanged for the more sure-footed and little less rapid mule, it will easily be understood that no *chapar* service is, or could be, maintained. The post-horses

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would be knocked to pieces in a fortnight. Accordingly, we have said good-bye to the *chapar-khaneh*, the *chaparchi*, and the *chapar-shagird*, who have loomed large in our daily existence for so long; and the remaining 160 miles of our descent to the Gulf must be traversed by caravan, the traveller hiring such number of mules as are necessary for him and his baggage, and sleeping at night either, if invited, in the Telegraph stations and rest-houses, or in such surroundings, at caravanserais and elsewhere, as he can procure. The journey is usually accomplished in five or in six days, the former being regarded as fairly good time, seeing that in such a country it is cruel on the animals to expect of them much more than a *maximum* of thirty miles in the day; and that the muleteer or *charvadar*, who contracts for the party, himself accompanies it throughout on foot. For my own march I paid at the rate of five *tomans* per mule for the whole distance; this being a little above the ordinary charge, as I postulated extra speed. I preferred to ride a *yabu*, or pony, myself, having no fondness for a mule, and having accepted a challenge at Shiraz as to the number of miles over which it was possible to proceed at anything beyond a foot-pace between that city and the Gulf.

Table of route

The following is the table of stations and distances, as reckoned according to Persian and English standards of measurement:—

| Name of Station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles | Name of Station | Distance in *farsakhs* | Approximate distance in miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shiraz * (4,750 ft.) . | — | — | Konar Takhteh * ‡ (1,800 ft.) . . . | 3 | 12 |
| Khan-i-Zinian ‡ (6,100 ft.) . . . | 7 | 30 | Daliki † (250 ft.) . | 4 | 15 |
| Dasht-i-Arzen * (6,400 ft.) . . . | 3 | 12 | Borazjun *‡ (100 ft.) | 4 | 15 |
| Mian Kotal ‡ (5,500 ft.) . . . | 3 | 11 | Ahmedi ‡ or Shif . | 4 or 7 | 15 or 25 |
| Kazerun * (2,750 ft.) | 6 | 21 | Bushire * . . . . | 6 | 22 |
| Kamarij † (2,950 ft.) | 5 | 20 | Total . . | 45 | 173 [1] |

* = Telegraph Station. † = Telegraph Rest-house. ‡ = Caravanserai.

[1] Total distance to Shif (whence boat to Bushire) 42 *farsakhs*, or 161 miles. The route from Shiraz to Bushire has been described by many of the travellers, whose works I have already cited as references for the journey from Shiraz to Isfahan, or from Isfahan to Teheran, viz. by C. Niebuhr (1765), W. Franklin (1787), E. Scott Waring (1802), Sir J. Malcolm (1800, 1810), J. P. Morier (1809, 1811), Sir W. Ouseley (1811), W. Price (1811), J. S. Buckingham (1816), Col. Johnson (1817), Lieutenant Lumsden (1817), Sir R. K. Porter (1818), J. B. Fraser (1821),




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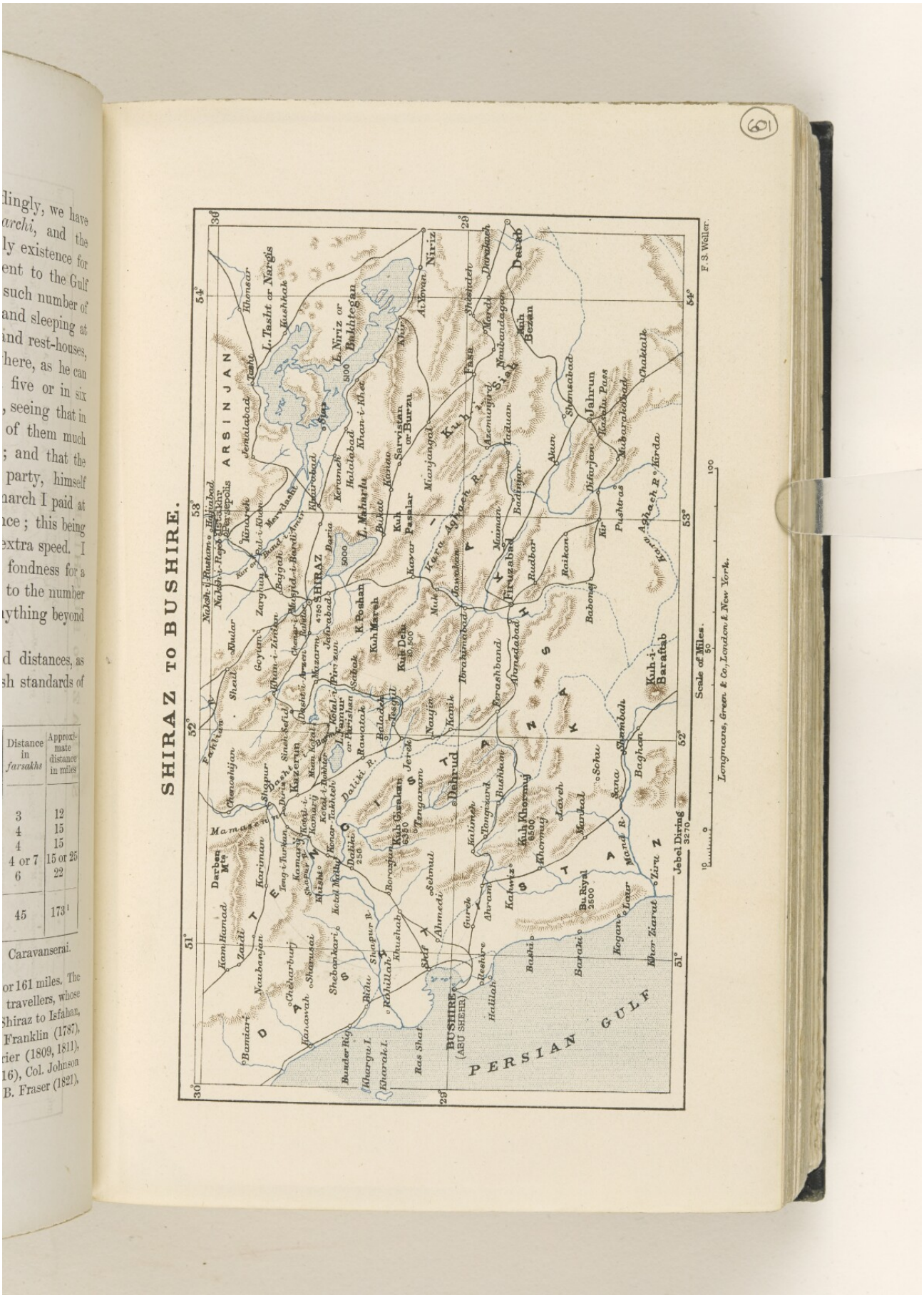
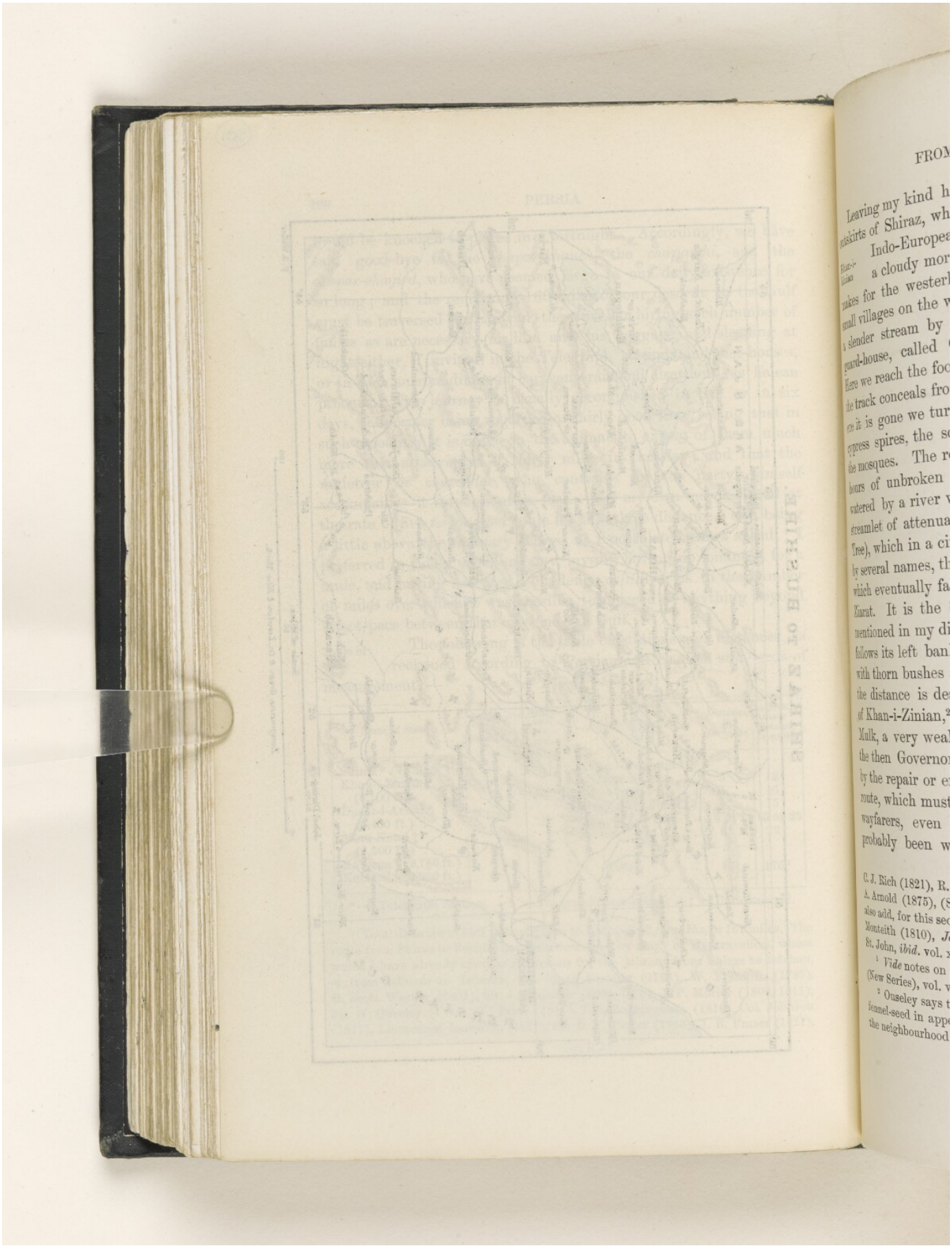

SHIRAZ TO BUSHIRE.
601
F. S. Weller.
ARSINJAN
SHIRAZ
Persepolis
Niriz
Dasht-i-Arjan
L. Tasht or Nargis
L. Niriz or Bakhtegan
Kuh-i-Barfiab
Kuh Khormuj
6500
Kuh Dena
30,500
Kuh Gisakan
6580
Kuh Bezan
Kuh Khaki
Kuh Marsh
Kuh Pasalar
Kuh Sarvistan or Burzu
Kuh Mayanga
Kuh Asmundi
Kuh Siah
Kuh Shemdeh
Kuh Mahru
Kuh Bukat
Kuh Pasa
Kuh Deh
Kuh Khaki
Kuh Gisakan
Kuh Khormuj
Kuh-i-Barfiab
Kara Agiaen R.
Mand R.
Shapur R.
Dalki R.
Kul-i-Fenur
Kul-i-Famur or Tarishan
Kul-i-Khosh
Kul-i-Rahdar
Kul-i-Zinjan
Kul-i-Rud
Kul-i-Barrik
Kul-i-Mahru
Kul-i-Bukat
Kul-i-Pasa
Kul-i-Deh
Kul-i-Khaki
Kul-i-Gisakan
Kul-i-Khormuj
Kul-i-Barfiab
Kul-i-Mand R.
Kul-i-Shapur R.
Kul-i-Dalki R.



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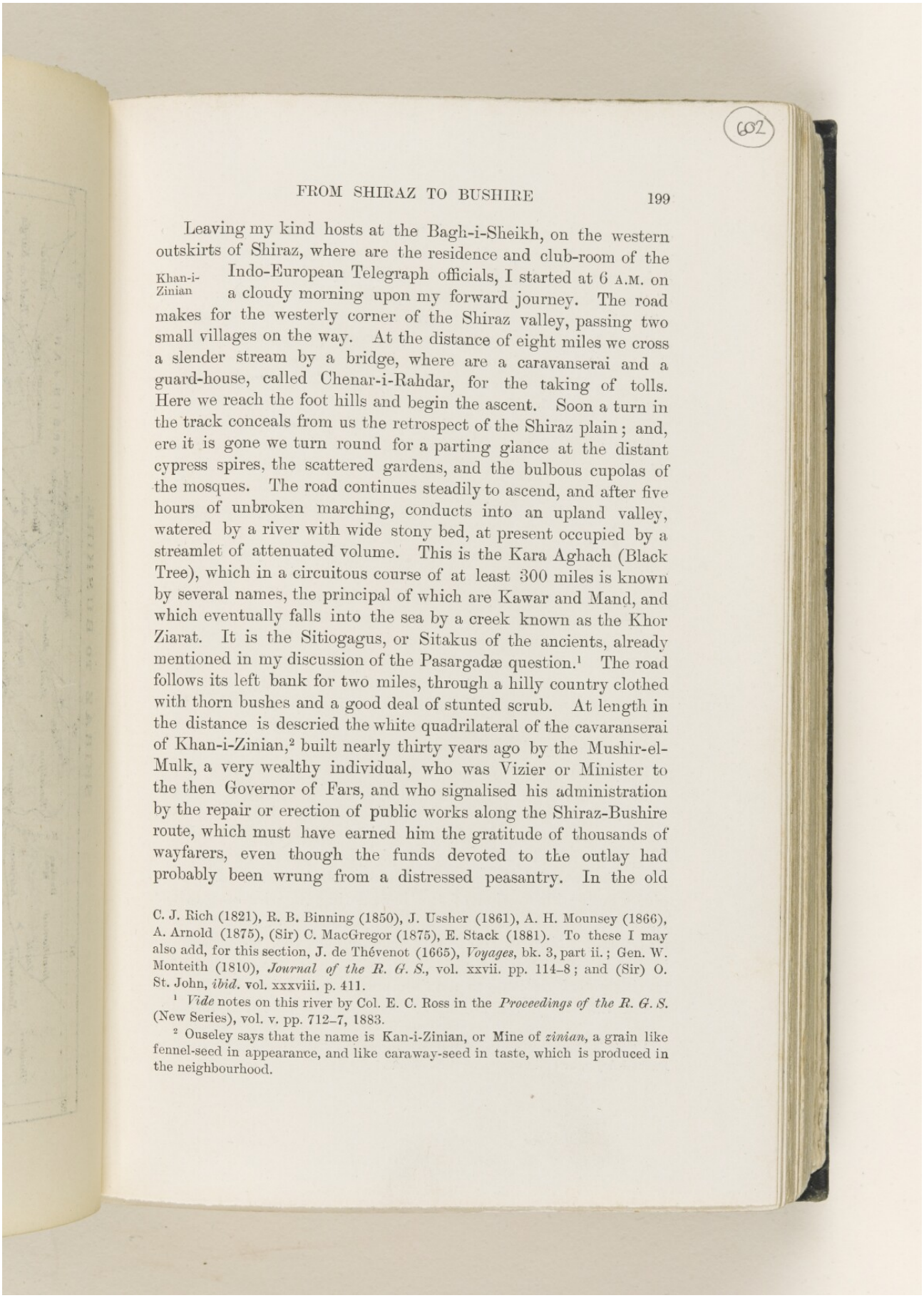






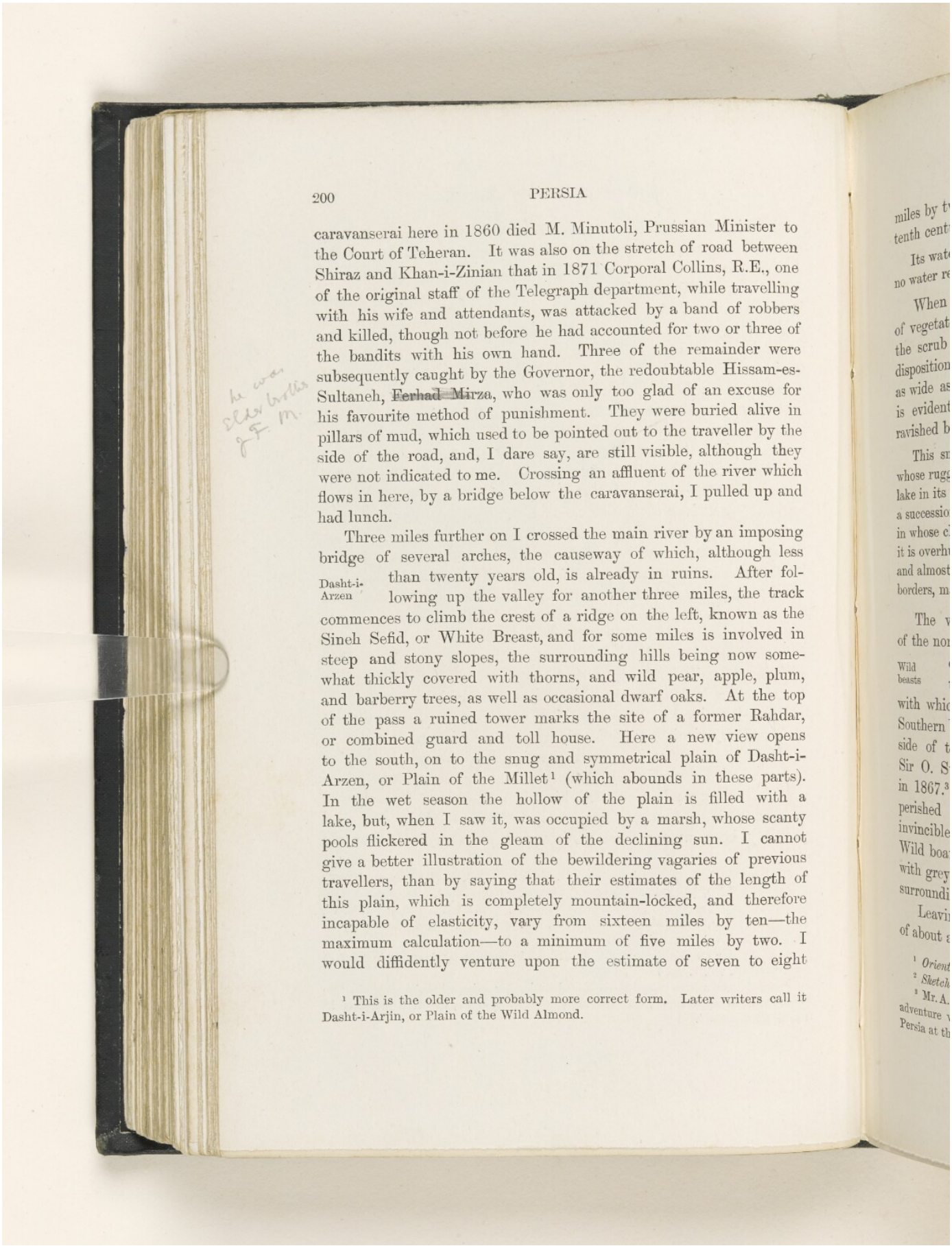
Leaving my kind hosts at the Bagh-i-Sheikh, on the western outskirts of Shiraz, where are the residence and club-room of the Indo-European Telegraph officials, I started at 6 A.M. on a cloudy morning upon my forward journey. The road makes for the westerly corner of the Shiraz valley, passing two small villages on the way. At the distance of eight miles we cross a slender stream by a bridge, where are a caravanserai and a guard-house, called Chenar-i-Rahdar, for the taking of tolls. Here we reach the foot hills and begin the ascent. Soon a turn in the track conceals from us the retrospect of the Shiraz plain; and, ere it is gone we turn round for a parting glance at the distant cypress spires, the scattered gardens, and the bulbous cupolas of the mosques. The road continues steadily to ascend, and after five hours of unbroken marching, conducts into an upland valley, watered by a river with wide stony bed, at present occupied by a streamlet of attenuated volume. This is the Kara Aghach (Black Tree), which in a circuitous course of at least 300 miles is known by several names, the principal of which are Kawar and Mand, and which eventually falls into the sea by a creek known as the Khor Ziarat. It is the Sitiogagus, or Sitakus of the ancients, already mentioned in my discussion of the Pasargadæ question.[1] The road follows its left bank for two miles, through a hilly country clothed with thorn bushes and a good deal of stunted scrub. At length in the distance is descried the white quadrilateral of the cavaranserai of Khan-i-Zinian,[2] built nearly thirty years ago by the Mushir-el-Mulk, a very wealthy individual, who was Vizier or Minister to the then Governor of Fars, and who signalised his administration by the repair or erection of public works along the Shiraz-Bushire route, which must have earned him the gratitude of thousands of wayfarers, even though the funds devoted to the outlay had probably been wrung from a distressed peasantry. In the old

Khan-i-Zinian

C. J. Rich (1821), R. B. Binning (1850), J. Ussher (1861), A. H. Mounsey (1866), A. Arnold (1875), (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), E. Stack (1881). To these I may also add, for this section, J. de Thévenot (1665), *Voyages*, bk. 3, part ii.; Gen. W. Monteith (1810), *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xxvii. pp. 114–8; and (Sir) O. St. John, *ibid.* vol. xxxviii. p. 411.

[1] *Vide* notes on this river by Col. E. C. Ross in the *Proceedings of the R. G. S.* (New Series), vol. v. pp. 712–7, 1883.

[2] Ouseley says that the name is Kan-i-Zinian, or Mine of *zinian*, a grain like fennel-seed in appearance, and like caraway-seed in taste, which is produced in the neighbourhood.



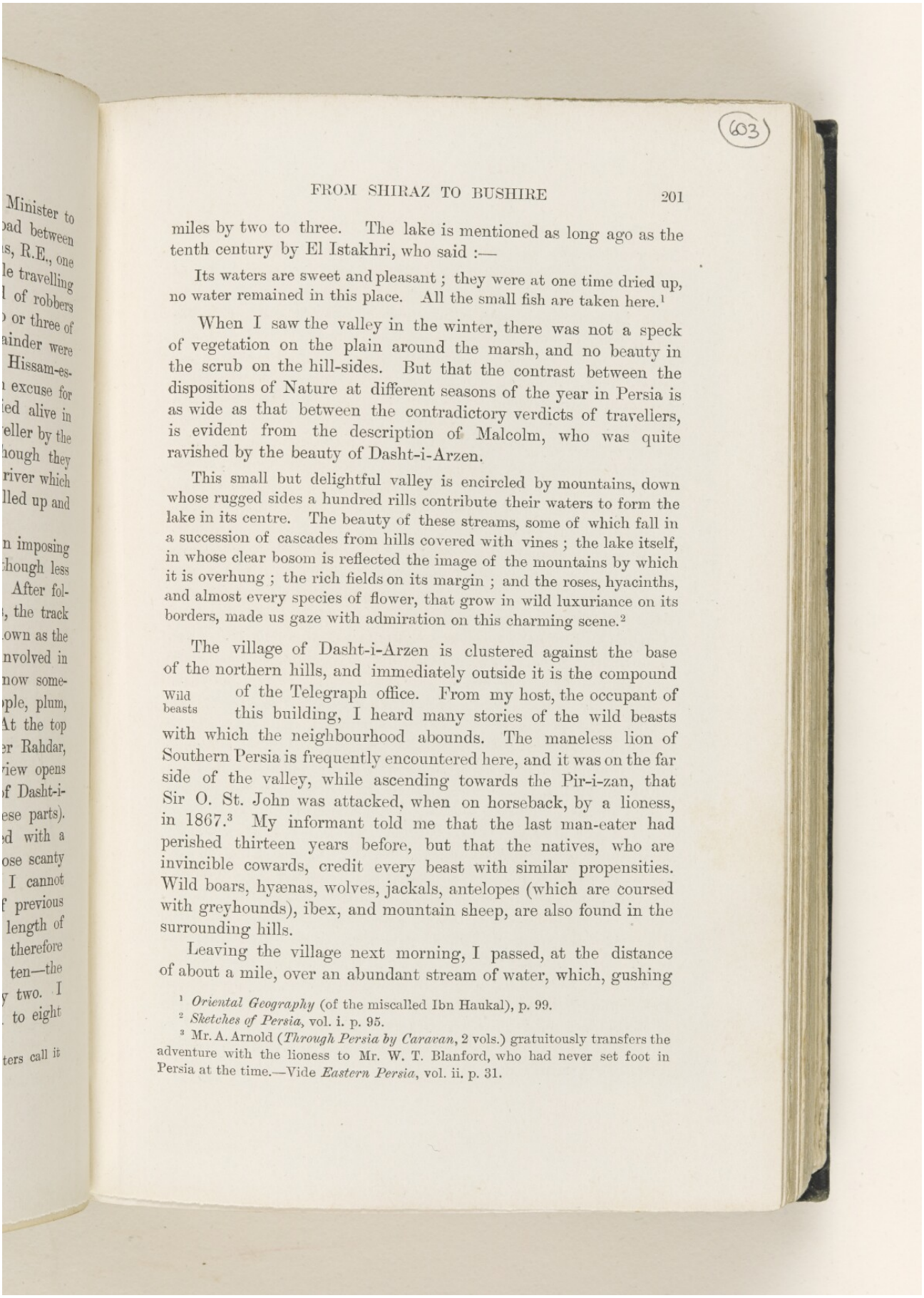


caravanserai here in 1860 died M. Minutoli, Prussian Minister to the Court of Teheran. It was also on the stretch of road between Shiraz and Khan-i-Zinian that in 1871 Corporal Collins, R.E., one of the original staff of the Telegraph department, while travelling with his wife and attendants, was attacked by a band of robbers and killed, though not before he had accounted for two or three of the bandits with his own hand. Three of the remainder were subsequently caught by the Governor, the redoubtable Hissam-es-Sultaneh, Ferhad Mirza, who was only too glad of an excuse for his favourite method of punishment. They were buried alive in pillars of mud, which used to be pointed out to the traveller by the side of the road, and, I dare say, are still visible, although they were not indicated to me. Crossing an affluent of the river which flows in here, by a bridge below the caravanserai, I pulled up and had lunch.

Three miles further on I crossed the main river by an imposing bridge of several arches, the causeway of which, although less than twenty years old, is already in ruins. After following up the valley for another three miles, the track commences to climb the crest of a ridge on the left, known as the Sineh Sefid, or White Breast, and for some miles is involved in steep and stony slopes, the surrounding hills being now somewhat thickly covered with thorns, and wild pear, apple, plum, and barberry trees, as well as occasional dwarf oaks. At the top of the pass a ruined tower marks the site of a former Rahdar, or combined guard and toll house. Here a new view opens to the south, on to the snug and symmetrical plain of Dasht-i-Arzen, or Plain of the Millet[1] (which abounds in these parts). In the wet season the hollow of the plain is filled with a lake, but, when I saw it, was occupied by a marsh, whose scanty pools flickered in the gleam of the declining sun. I cannot give a better illustration of the bewildering vagaries of previous travellers, than by saying that their estimates of the length of this plain, which is completely mountain-locked, and therefore incapable of elasticity, vary from sixteen miles by ten—the maximum calculation—to a minimum of five miles by two. I would diffidently venture upon the estimate of seven to eight

Dasht-i-Arzen

[1] This is the older and probably more correct form. Later writers call it Dasht-i-Arjin, or Plain of the Wild Almond.





miles by two to three. The lake is mentioned as long ago as the tenth century by El Istakhri, who said :—

Its waters are sweet and pleasant ; they were at one time dried up, no water remained in this place. All the small fish are taken here.[1]

When I saw the valley in the winter, there was not a speck of vegetation on the plain around the marsh, and no beauty in the scrub on the hill-sides. But that the contrast between the dispositions of Nature at different seasons of the year in Persia is as wide as that between the contradictory verdicts of travellers, is evident from the description of Malcolm, who was quite ravished by the beauty of Dasht-i-Arzen.

This small but delightful valley is encircled by mountains, down whose rugged sides a hundred rills contribute their waters to form the lake in its centre. The beauty of these streams, some of which fall in a succession of cascades from hills covered with vines ; the lake itself, in whose clear bosom is reflected the image of the mountains by which it is overhung ; the rich fields on its margin ; and the roses, hyacinths, and almost every species of flower, that grow in wild luxuriance on its borders, made us gaze with admiration on this charming scene.[2]

The village of Dasht-i-Arzen is clustered against the base of the northern hills, and immediately outside it is the compound of the Telegraph office. From my host, the occupant of this building, I heard many stories of the wild beasts with which the neighbourhood abounds. The maneless lion of Southern Persia is frequently encountered here, and it was on the far side of the valley, while ascending towards the Pir-i-zan, that Sir O. St. John was attacked, when on horseback, by a lioness, in 1867.[3] My informant told me that the last man-eater had perished thirteen years before, but that the natives, who are invincible cowards, credit every beast with similar propensities. Wild boars, hyænas, wolves, jackals, antelopes (which are coursed with greyhounds), ibex, and mountain sheep, are also found in the surrounding hills.

Wild beasts

Leaving the village next morning, I passed, at the distance of about a mile, over an abundant stream of water, which, gushing

[1] *Oriental Geography* (of the miscalled Ibn Haukal), p. 99.
[2] *Sketches of Persia*, vol. i. p. 95.
[3] Mr. A. Arnold (*Through Persia by Caravan*, 2 vols.) gratuitously transfers the adventure with the lioness to Mr. W. T. Blanford, who had never set foot in Persia at the time.—Vide *Eastern Persia*, vol. ii. p. 31.

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from the base of the rock a little above, flows down through a cluster of *chenars* and willows, and wends its way to the swamp.

The lake

A small domed building here covers a *kadamgah*, or slab, that is said to bear the imprint of Ali's horse-hoofs, in connection with which an astounding miracle is, of course, related by the villagers. In the face of the rock a cave is regarded as a sacred place, and contains little tin sconces for votive tapers. Skirting the west shore of the lake, at the sixth mile we pass a ruined caravanserai. The fen was alive with wild fowl. Hundreds of geese rose from their swampy feeding-grounds, and their clamorous flight resounded for miles. I saw gazelles (the *ahu*, or so-called antelope) down in the hollow, which was white with the frost of the previous night, and a fox crossed my path. Having reached the southern extremity of the marsh, the path begins to climb the hills that confine the lake-basin. The ascent is steep and joyless; but it is as nothing compared with the descent on the other side, which is long, precipitous, and inconceivably nasty. This is the famous Kotal-i-Pir-i-zan, or Pass of the Old Woman.

Some writers have wondered at the origin of the name. I feel no such surprise. On the contrary, I admire the apposite felicity of the title. For, in Persia, if one aspired, by the aid of a local metaphor, to express anything that was peculiarly uninviting, timeworn, and repulsive, a Persian old woman would be the first and most forcible simile to suggest itself. I saw many hundreds of old women during my travels in that country—they always took care to be seen (which was more than could be said of their younger, and, it is to be hoped, fairer sisters)—and I crossed the Kotal-i-Pir-i-zan, and I can honestly say that whatever derogatory or insulting remarks the most copious of vocabularies might be capable of expending upon the one, could be transferred, with equal justice, to the other. From the Lake of Dasht-i-Arzen to the top of the pass, where the descent begins, and which is 7,400 feet above the sea, is perhaps two miles; and at this point is a magnificent outlook over ridge succeeding ridge in oblique parallels, towards the Dashtistan, or Land of Plains, that is itself succeeded by the Gulf. The total descent is over 3,000 feet within a distance of four to five miles, and is down a path, which resembles an Alpine torrent-bed, minus only the torrent. No Englishman would do

Pass of the Old Woman

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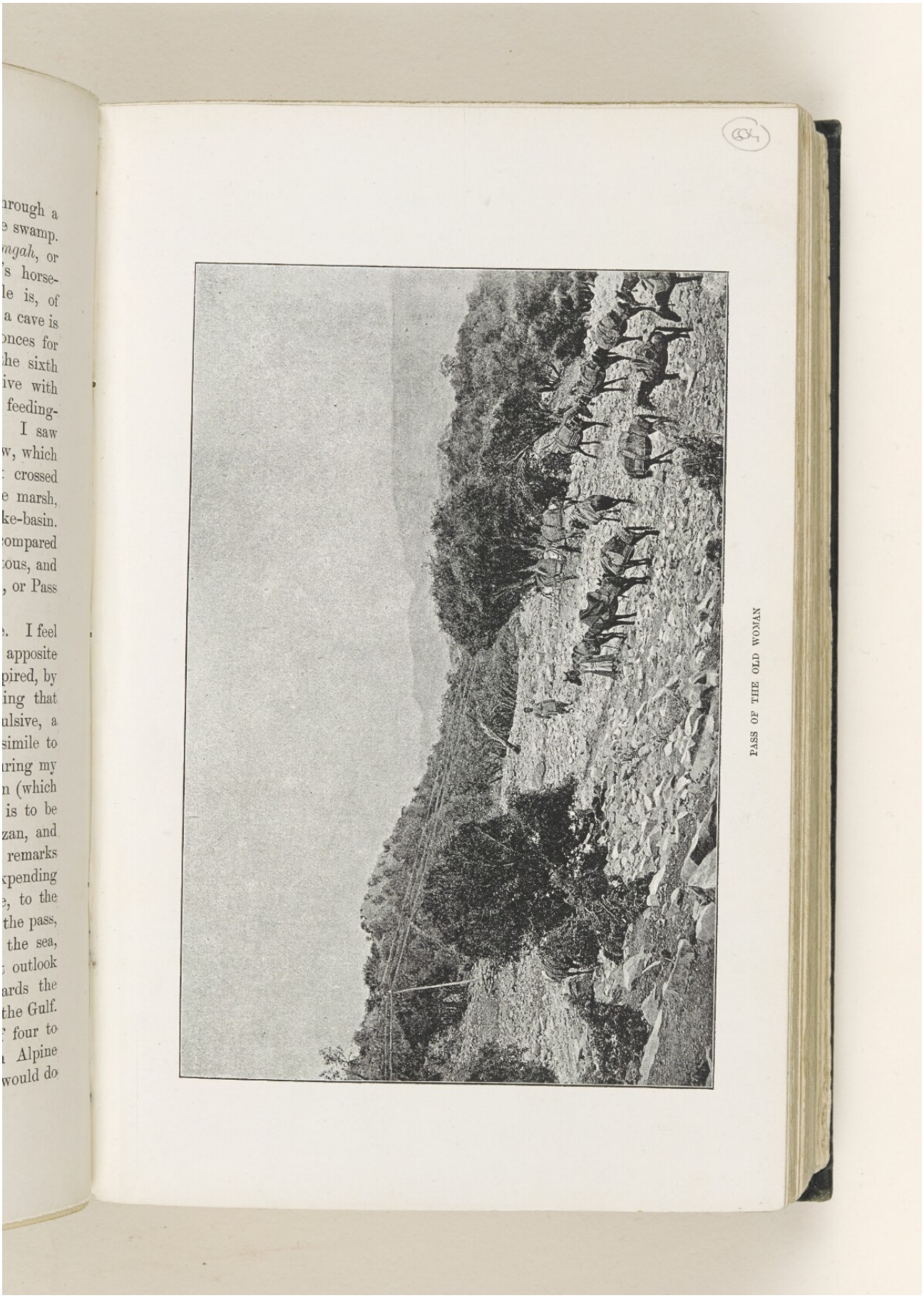

PASS OF THE OLD WOMAN

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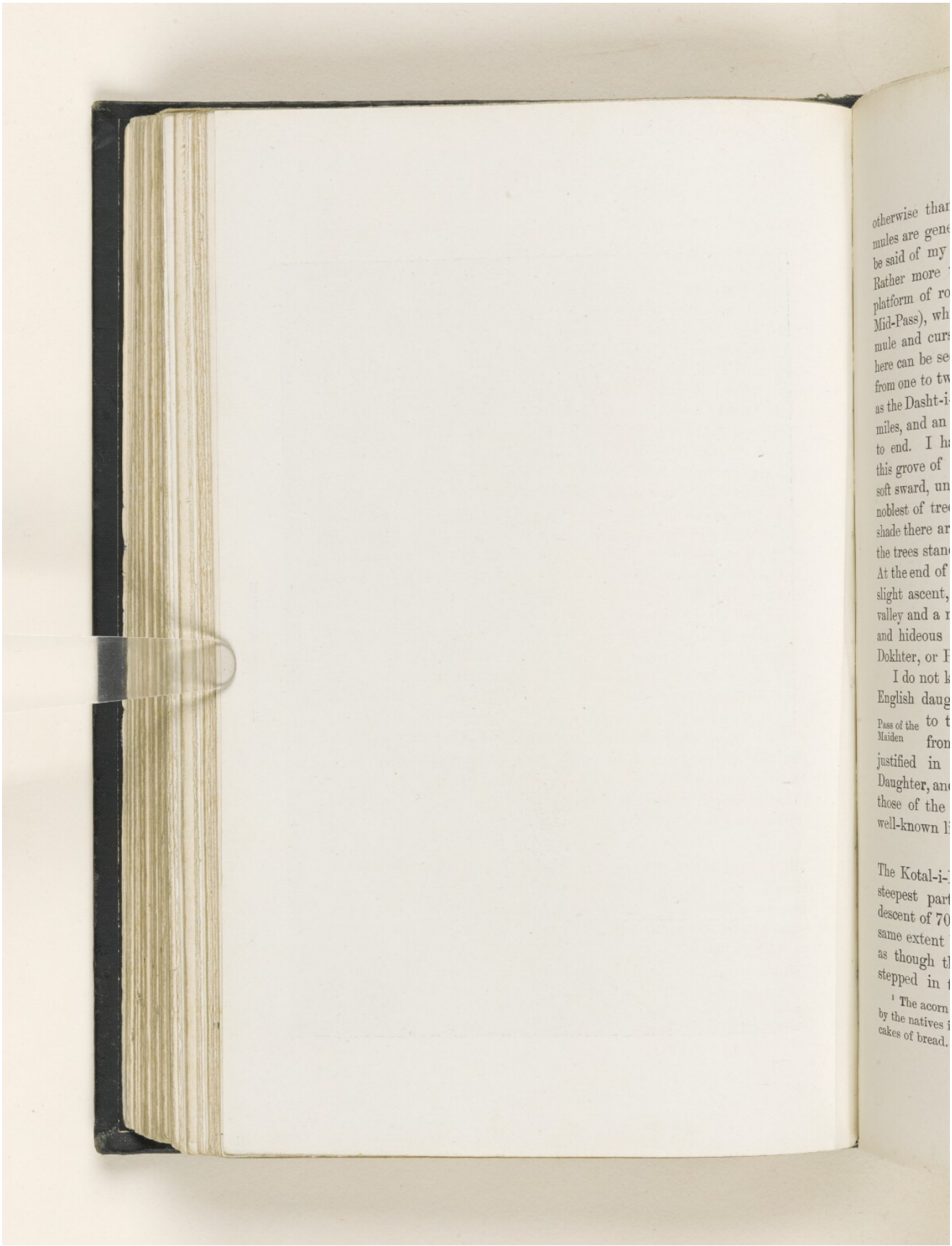

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by the natives i
cakes of bread.

otherwise than dismount and descend on foot, albeit the Persian mules are generally surefooted and reliable. The same could not be said of my little horse or *yabu*, which came down repeatedly. Rather more than half-way down the Old Woman, on a peak or platform of rock, is situated the caravanserai of Mian Kotal (or Mid-Pass), which has afforded rest and shelter to many a weary mule and cursing muleteer since travelling days began. From here can be seen outspread below a valley, five miles in length by from one to two in width, thickly sown with dwarf oaks, and known as the Dasht-i-Barm. The descent to the level occupies another two miles, and an hour is then spent in traversing the valley from end to end. I had read in previous books of the sylvan delights of this grove of oaks, and had pictured to myself a joyous ride over soft sward, under the shade, and between the gnarled boles of the noblest of trees. The oaks, it is true, are there; but sward and shade there are none. The road is a desolate track of stones, and the trees stand far too wide apart to afford any overhead canopy.[1] At the end of the valley the track turns sharply to the left, makes a slight ascent, and then, at the crest of the ridge, where a further valley and a new landscape simultaneously open, discloses a steep and hideous descent, known to fame, or infamy, as the Kotal-i-Dokhter, or Pass of the Maiden.

Pass of the Maiden

I do not know if the *dokhter* in question (the same word as the English daughter) is supposed to have been allied by the filial tie to the Old Woman whom I have already described; but from the strong family likeness between the pair, I feel justified in assuming the relationship. As I descended the Daughter, and alternately compared and contrasted her features with those of the Old Woman, I fear that I irreverently paraphrased a well-known line,

O matre læda filia lædior!

The Kotal-i-Dokhter is shorter than the Kotal-i-Pir-i-zan, but its steepest part is undeniably steeper, there being a sharp zigzag descent of 700 feet in the perpendicular, and a further drop of the same extent before the plain of Kazerun is reached. Furthermore, as though the paving of nature was not bad enough, man has stepped in to make it worse. In many places the road has

[1] The acorn of this oak (called *belut*), which is very long and large, is pounded by the natives into a flour, kneaded up with barley meal, and baked into thin cakes of bread.

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been buttressed up, parapetted, and artificially paved with huge boulders;[1] but whatever of soil there may once have been between these having been washed out and having disappeared, the blocks stand up like isolated reefs in the sea; and down this hideous stairway man and beast alike are compelled to scramble at imminent peril of twisted ankle, if not of broken limb. My horse jammed his foot between two stones and had a very nasty fall. The descent of the Maiden on foot took me about an hour and a half. From the summit of the *kotal* the plain of Kazerun had unrolled itself to the eye, bounded at the nearer or south-east extremity by an extensive lake, and stretching westwards to a distant range of hills. The lake is known as Daria-i-Pirishum, or Famur (from a village at its eastern end), and is the haunt of innumerable wild fowl. It terminates in a dense fringe of reeds and in swampy flats, which the sportsman eyes with enthusiasm, and which he does not quit without ample return.

At the foot of the pass the track turns sharply round a projecting angle of rock. Here in the recess of the mountain side is

Nomads

a favourite camping-ground of the Mamasenni or nomads, who roam over the adjacent plains. Their black goats' hair tents were pitched just under the cliff, and from the women, who were unveiled, I procured some very acceptable milk. The Mamasenni, of whom I shall have more to say in a subsequent chapter on the South-west Provinces, were formerly inveterate robbers, but were cowed into comparative innocence by the truculent severity of the afore-mentioned Prince-Governor of Fars. The nomads of this camp had, I noticed, a peculiar method of hiving honey. The hives consisted of a number of earthenware jars or cylinders, in shape like a big drain-pipe, laid side by side, and covered over with a thatch of thorns. The entrance was through

[1] From my reading I learn that this artificial causeway was first made by the mother of Imam Kuli Khan, Viceroy of Fars under Shah Abbas, at which time Thévenot says it was called Kotal-i-Oshanek, or Pass of the wild marjoram, a name that still survives. At the end of the last century it was reconstructed by Haji Mohammed Husein, a wealthy merchant of Bushire, his motive being variously described as philanthropic, and as strictly mercenary, and having relation only to the losses previously incurred by accidents to his own caravans. About 1820 it was put in thorough repair by Kelb Ali Khan, Governor of Kazerun, and impressed Rich so greatly that he called it the Simplon of Persia! It was again repaired in 1834 by the mother of Timur Mirza, and in about 1870 by the Mushir-el-Mulk, Vizier of Fars; since which date I should imagine that not a penny has been spent upon it.

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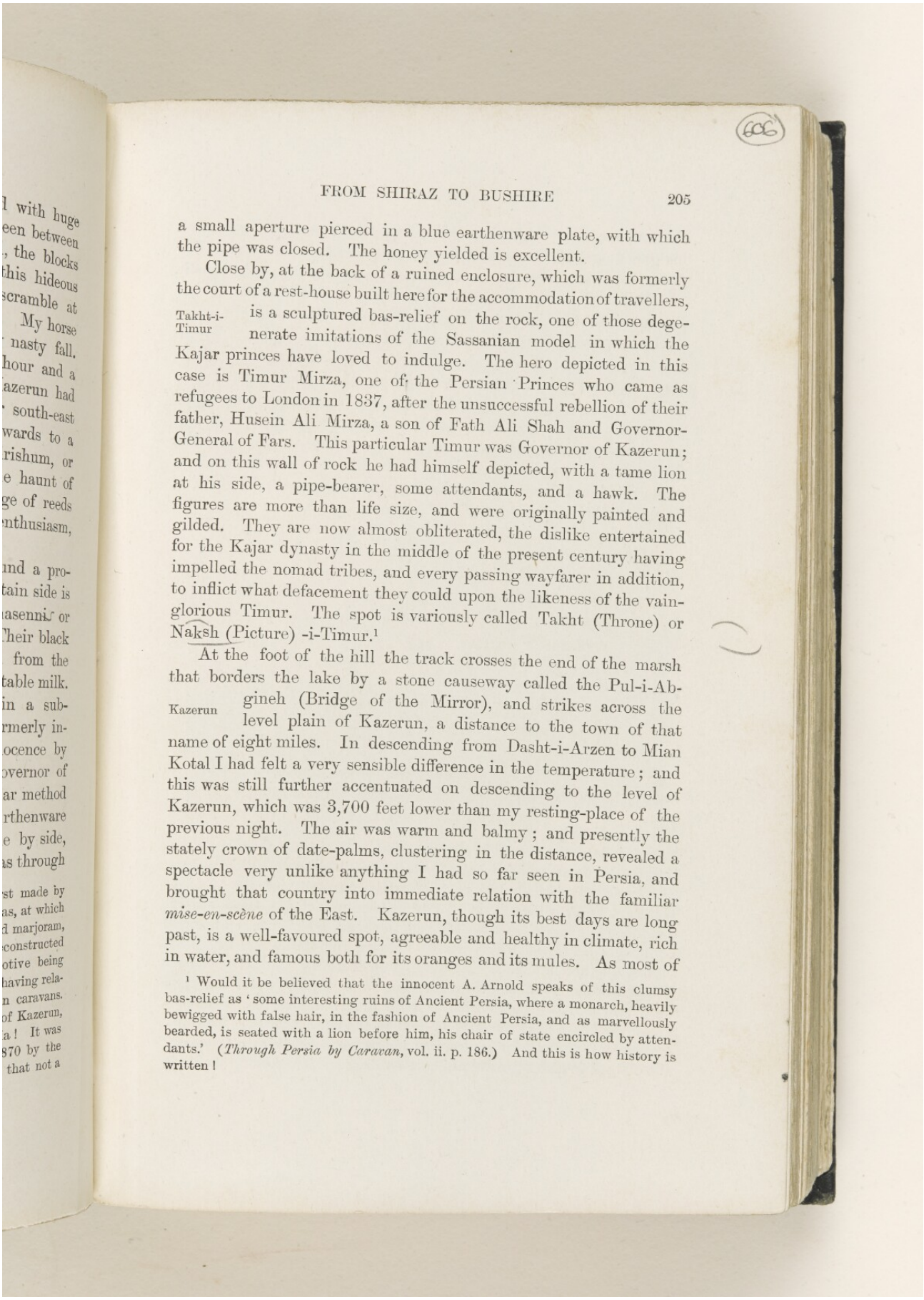



a small aperture pierced in a blue earthenware plate, with which the pipe was closed. The honey yielded is excellent.

Close by, at the back of a ruined enclosure, which was formerly the court of a rest-house built here for the accommodation of travellers, Takht-i-Timur is a sculptured bas-relief on the rock, one of those degenerate imitations of the Sassanian model in which the Kajar princes have loved to indulge. The hero depicted in this case is Timur Mirza, one of the Persian Princes who came as refugees to London in 1837, after the unsuccessful rebellion of their father, Husein Ali Mirza, a son of Fath Ali Shah and Governor-General of Fars. This particular Timur was Governor of Kazerun; and on this wall of rock he had himself depicted, with a tame lion at his side, a pipe-bearer, some attendants, and a hawk. The figures are more than life size, and were originally painted and gilded. They are now almost obliterated, the dislike entertained for the Kajar dynasty in the middle of the present century having impelled the nomad tribes, and every passing wayfarer in addition, to inflict what defacement they could upon the likeness of the vain-glorious Timur. The spot is variously called Takht (Throne) or Naksh (Picture) -i-Timur.[1]

At the foot of the hill the track crosses the end of the marsh that borders the lake by a stone causeway called the Pul-i-Ab-gineh (Bridge of the Mirror), and strikes across the Kazerun level plain of Kazerun, a distance to the town of that name of eight miles. In descending from Dasht-i-Arzen to Mian Kotal I had felt a very sensible difference in the temperature; and this was still further accentuated on descending to the level of Kazerun, which was 3,700 feet lower than my resting-place of the previous night. The air was warm and balmy; and presently the stately crown of date-palms, clustering in the distance, revealed a spectacle very unlike anything I had so far seen in Persia, and brought that country into immediate relation with the familiar *mise-en-scène* of the East. Kazerun, though its best days are long past, is a well-favoured spot, agreeable and healthy in climate, rich in water, and famous both for its oranges and its mules. As most of

[1] Would it be believed that the innocent A. Arnold speaks of this clumsy bas-relief as 'some interesting ruins of Ancient Persia, where a monarch, heavily bewigged with false hair, in the fashion of Ancient Persia, and as marvellously bearded, is seated with a lion before him, his chair of state encircled by attendants.' (*Through Persia by Caravan*, vol. ii. p. 186.) And this is how history is written!

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the muleteers also hail from this village, the traveller must be on his guard against the most audacious pretexts, which are invariably devised by his *charvadar*, as the latter nears his domestic hearth, and thinks how far more agreeable would be an idle day in the bosom of his family, than a march of thirty miles over the *kotals* of the Tengistan (or country of *tengs*, defiles, as this region is appropriately termed). Kazerun is credited by patriotic Kazerunis with a very hoary antiquity; but it is doubtful whether the city existed prior to the Arab conquest. Ibn Batutah, the Moor, came here about 1330 A.D., to visit the shrine of Abu Ishak el Kazeruni; but this individual seems since those days to have lapsed into oblivion. The modern town, which consisted of an upper and a lower quarter, was ruined and dismantled of its fortifications by Jafir Khan Zend in the troubles at the end of the last century, and has never since recovered. It now contains 2,000–2,500 inhabitants. In addition to the specialities before mentioned, Kazerun has always been famous for its school of *pehlevans* or wrestlers, as also for a kind of rough shoe of cotton and hide, which MacGregor recommended for our Indian army. Outside is a shady garden, called the Bagh-i-Nazar, that formerly belonged to Arnold's 'Ancient Persian monarch,' Timur Mirza, and is sometimes placed at the disposal of strangers. I secured comfortable quarters in the Telegraph office. A good deal of opium and coarse tobacco are also cultivated in the valley, which is irrigated by *kanats*, and is well adapted for many kinds of vegetable and cereal produce.

Visit to the ruins of Shapur

While at Kazerun, whether in his upward or downward journey to or from the Gulf, no traveller should miss the opportunity of going to see the ruins and sculptured bas-reliefs of the ancient capital of King Shapur, which also bears his name, and the rock-tablets of which are superior both in number, size, and interest to those which I have already described at Naksh-i-Rustam. Shapur is situated at the north-western extremity of the plain of Kazerun, from which it is distant fifteen miles, one third of this distance lying along the road towards the Gulf, which can accordingly be rejoined after the deviation to Shapur, and its objects have been successfully accomplished. In coming up from the Gulf, the stranger should arrange to make the excursion from Kamarij, starting from there very early in the morning in order to have a long day at Shapur, where there is no accommodation, and to get at nightfall to Kazerun. As my own contract for mules was independent of this divergence, I was obliged to hire separate animals at Kazerun for the expedition to

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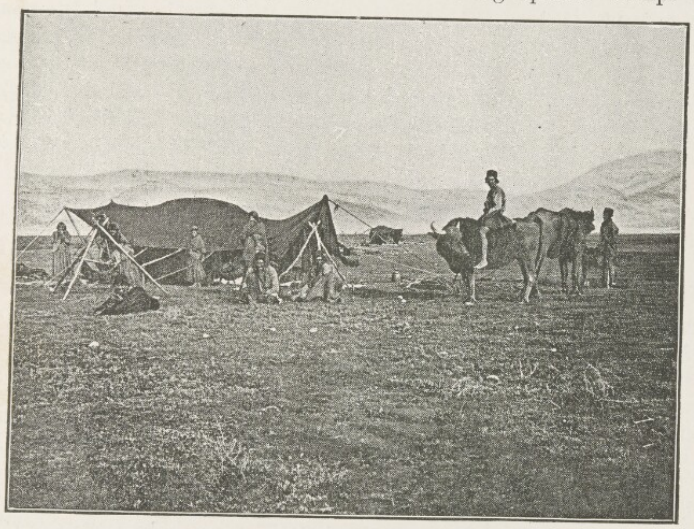
Shapur, although I did not succeed in this without invoking the aid of the governor, who put an abrupt check upon the arrogance of the local *charvadars*.

Ride to Shapur

Different travellers have been conducted to Shapur by slightly different routes over the Kazerun plain. I followed the telegraph poles along the Kamarij road for a little over five miles, and then, diverging to the right, struck across the plain in the direction of the north-westerly cliff-wall. The ground was thickly covered with a very prickly thorn bush, whose pretty green leaf is apparently a favourite dainty of the camel, large numbers of whom I saw munching the boughs, regardless of the big spines. Camps of



NOMADS ON THE PLAIN OF KAZERUN

Mamasenni Iliats with large flocks tenant the whole of the neighbouring valleys, and I encountered many of their black tents. The men have a manly air and civil bearing, and the women take no pains to veil. Near the Shapur river their dwellings are made and thatched with reeds from the river-bed, and are of the most primitive description. A *kharbast* or fence of cut thorns takes the place of a wall, and forms an admirable enclosure for the flocks. Having crossed the plain towards its northern extremity, the track becomes involved in a wilderness of tumuli, consisting of loose stones and tumbled-down structures, filling a circuit of several miles, at the base of the mountains. These mounds rise to a height of fifty to sixty feet above the level of the surrounding plain. Right down through them hundreds of *kanat-*

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shafts have been dug to the lower surface; and the accumulation of their contents, alongside of the already existing débris, makes such a litter of stones and rubbish as can scarcely be imagined. Here and there is a fragment of wall built of larger stones, so firmly welded together that it has resisted the shock of centuries. These are the ruins of the city of Shapur. I had heard and read a great deal, however, of the valley of Shapur, and of the river dancing merrily through it, and of the sculptures overhanging its banks, and began to wonder where these could be; when suddenly the northern cliff, which is here a great sloping face of bare rock, opened abruptly, and disclosed a gorge, a little over a hundred yards in width, cloven right through it from top to bottom. Down the fissure came glancing and tumbling the Shapur river, occupying a stony bed between lofty banks, fringed on either side with a dense growth of reeds, plumy grasses, and flowering trees. Already above its further bank I could discern the famous sculptures of the Sassanian monarch. The gorge, which is known as the Teng-i-Chakan, at its inner or further end widened to 400 yards, and then expanded into a valley, round which the mountains formed an amphitheatrical rampart, with a sheer rock-face in many parts of several hundred feet in height.

The Sassanian city

Though Istakhr or Persepolis was the theoretical metropolis of the Sassanid sovereigns, and long retained its ceremonial importance as the centre of the revived national religion, yet, like their Achæmenian predecessors, the monarchs of this dynasty shared the Oriental fondness for change of residence and for separate evidences of royal sumptuousness and display. Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital, was a secondary abode of the kings. In later times, under Chosroes II., we read of a splendid palace at Dastagird, also in the Chaldæan plains. Allusion is made elsewhere to the ruined palaces of Sarvistan and Firuzabad. None, however, of the Sassanian monarchs gratified, to the same extent as the first Shapur or Sapor, the taste for building on a large scale. His were the great works at Shushter, of which I shall speak later; his the city between Dizful and Shushter, whose ruins are now known as Jund-i-Shapur. To him is attributed by some the bridge of Dizful. At Naksh-i-Rustam we have seen the bas-reliefs that record his victories and his splendour; and now, on a site to which he gave his own name,[1] we have come to the royal city which he founded and adorned as the most enduring monument of his reign. Persian tradition, of course, ascribes a more remote and fabulous origin to the place, and relates that the ancient city was destroyed by Alexander, and only rebuilt, rather than founded, by

[1] Shah-pur (the classical Sapor) is a contraction of *Khshayathiya*, shah or king, and *putr*, son, *i.e.* king's son, or prince.

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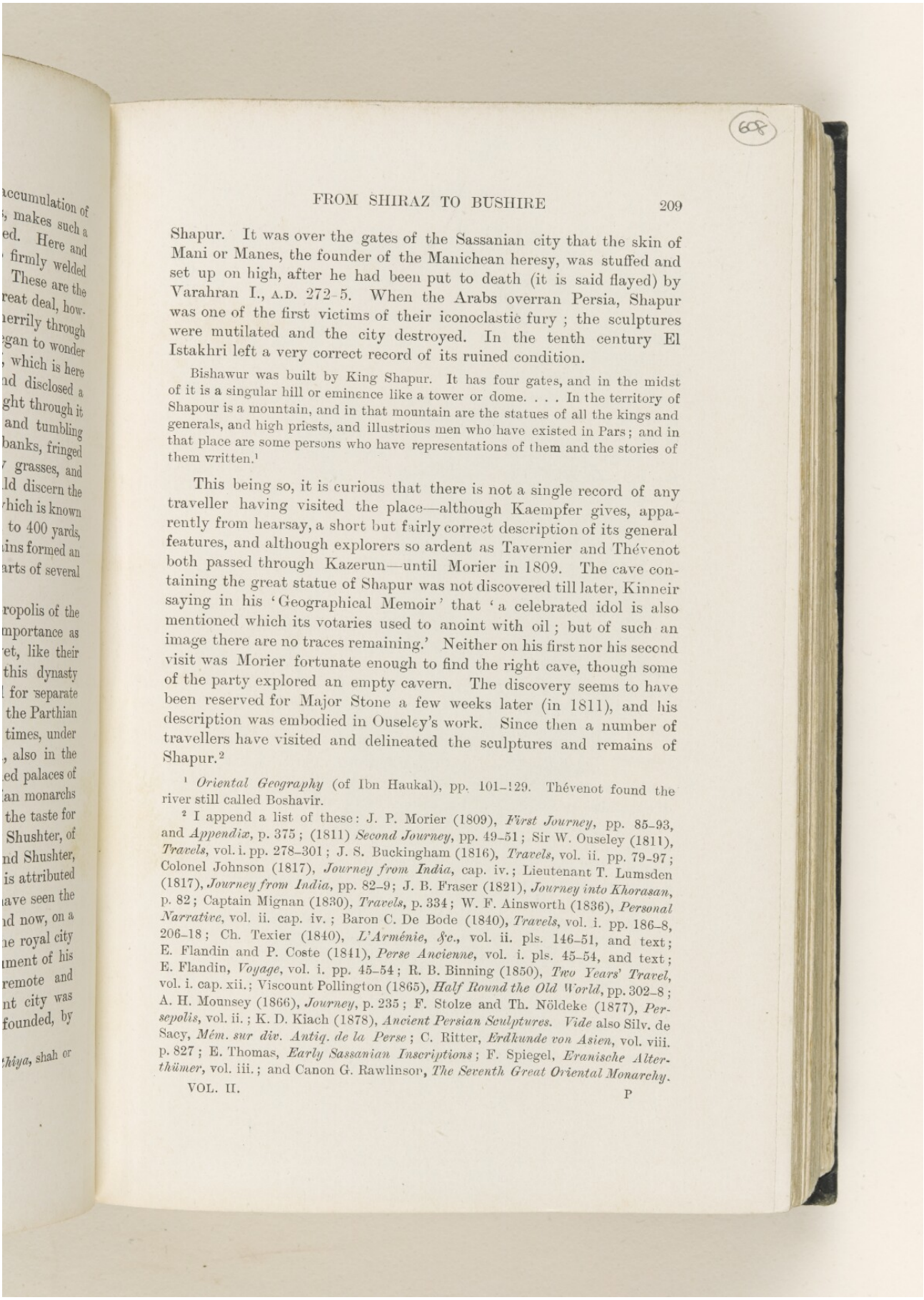



Shapur. It was over the gates of the Sassanian city that the skin of Mani or Manes, the founder of the Manichean heresy, was stuffed and set up on high, after he had been put to death (it is said flayed) by Varahran I., A.D. 272–5. When the Arabs overran Persia, Shapur was one of the first victims of their iconoclastic fury; the sculptures were mutilated and the city destroyed. In the tenth century El Istakhri left a very correct record of its ruined condition.

> Bishawur was built by King Shapur. It has four gates, and in the midst of it is a singular hill or eminence like a tower or dome. . . . In the territory of Shapour is a mountain, and in that mountain are the statues of all the kings and generals, and high priests, and illustrious men who have existed in Pars; and in that place are some persons who have representations of them and the stories of them written.[1]

This being so, it is curious that there is not a single record of any traveller having visited the place—although Kaempfer gives, apparently from hearsay, a short but fairly correct description of its general features, and although explorers so ardent as Tavernier and Thévenot both passed through Kazerun—until Morier in 1809. The cave containing the great statue of Shapur was not discovered till later, Kinneir saying in his 'Geographical Memoir' that 'a celebrated idol is also mentioned which its votaries used to anoint with oil; but of such an image there are no traces remaining.' Neither on his first nor his second visit was Morier fortunate enough to find the right cave, though some of the party explored an empty cavern. The discovery seems to have been reserved for Major Stone a few weeks later (in 1811), and his description was embodied in Ouseley's work. Since then a number of travellers have visited and delineated the sculptures and remains of Shapur.[2]

[1] *Oriental Geography* (of Ibn Haukal), pp. 101–129. Thévenot found the river still called Boshavir.

[2] I append a list of these: J. P. Morier (1809), *First Journey*, pp. 85–93, and *Appendix*, p. 375; (1811) *Second Journey*, pp. 49–51; Sir W. Ouseley (1811), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 278–301; J. S. Buckingham (1816), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 79–97; Colonel Johnson (1817), *Journey from India*, cap. iv.; Lieutenant T. Lumsden (1817), *Journey from India*, pp. 82–9; J. B. Fraser (1821), *Journey into Khorasan*, p. 82; Captain Mignan (1830), *Travels*, p. 334; W. F. Ainsworth (1836), *Personal Narrative*, vol. ii. cap. iv.; Baron C. De Bode (1840), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 186–8, 206–18; Ch. Texier (1840), *L'Arménie, &c.*, vol. ii. pls. 146–51, and text; E. Flandin and P. Coste (1841), *Perse Ancienne*, vol. i. pls. 45–54, and text; E. Flandin, *Voyage*, vol. i. pp. 45–54; R. B. Binning (1850), *Two Years' Travel*, vol. i. cap. xii.; Viscount Pollington (1865), *Half Round the Old World*, pp. 302–8; A. H. Mounsey (1866), *Journey*, p. 235; F. Stolze and Th. Nöldeke (1877), *Persepolis*, vol. ii.; K. D. Kiach (1878), *Ancient Persian Sculptures*. *Vide* also Silv. de Sacy, *Mém. sur div. Antiq. de la Perse*; C. Ritter, *Erdkunde von Asien*, vol. viii. p. 827; E. Thomas, *Early Sassanian Inscriptions*; F. Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthümer*, vol. iii.; and Canon G. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*.



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Existing ruins

In the stony wilderness of ruin that marks the site of the ancient city, few remains are now capable of identification. Morier spoke of underground passages as believed to exist in great number, and as requiring exploration; but he could gain no information himself on the point, nor have subsequent travellers been more successful. The ruins of an enclosure, one hundred feet square, have been variously supposed to be those of a fortress or a mosque. Buckingham, in 1816, discovered two small fire altars like those of which I have spoken, near the Tomb of Cyrus; but, as he advertised their portability, it would appear that they have since been carried off. The only ruin of any moment is that of a building fifty feet square, one wall of which, composed of beautiful masonry, is still standing, though half-buried in the soil; and which presents a section of an arched window and the remains of some bull-headed capitals, no doubt an imitation of those at Persepolis, that probably once supported an architrave or roof. Behind it, Morier thought that he saw the traces of a theatre.

Citadel

In the very jaws of the gorge, a spur of the south-east cliff stands forward, in the shape of a solitary pinnacle-like rock, the sides of which are covered with old walls, and the summit with the remains of an old castle. There can be no doubt that this edifice, to which the Persians give the popular appellation of Kaleh-i-Dokhter, or Maiden's Fortress, is the remains of the ancient citadel, absolutely commanding as it does the mouth of the defile. It is the structure alluded to by El Istakhri in the passage already quoted.

Bas-reliefs

Turning the corner of this rock, we enter the gorge, and are immediately confronted with the sculptured bas-reliefs, which, like those at Naksh-i-Rustam, have survived the more perishable structures of brick or stone, and when all other records of man's handiwork have perished, will still transmit to future ages the proud record of Sassanian splendour. Of these, there are two on the right-hand side of the gorge, i.e. on the left bank of the river; and four on the opposite, or left-hand, side, above the right bank of the river. I will first describe the two former, which, being on the level of the spectator, and immediately alongside of the road running into the valley, are very easy of access.

The first tablet encountered has suffered severely from time and the hands of destroyers.[1] Its upper portion has entirely perished, but in the lower part are visible the legs of two horses confronting each other, whose riders have been obliterated out of all recognition. The horse

[1] Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 48. This engraving, compared with Stolze's photograph (*Persepolis*, vol. ii. pl. 142), and Dieulafoy's (*L'Art Antique de la Perse*, part v. pl. 18), as well as with my own, will be found to share the inaccuracy not uncommon in the Frenchmen's reproductions of the Sassanian sculptures.

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First tablet: Shapur and Valerian

on the right-hand side tramples under foot a prostrate figure, who lies with his face turned outwards and resting on his right hand, while his left arm is stretched along his side. In front of the horseman is a kneeling figure, dressed in the Roman tunic, with outstretched suppliant arms, and uplifted face of appeal. The features have gone, but in the pose and attitude of the suppliant's body, of which I took and here reproduce a photograph, there is a simplicity and pathos that destruction has been powerless to



FIRST BAS-RELIEF AT SHAPUR: VALERIAN SUPPLIANT

destroy. There can be little doubt that the subject of this bas-relief is the familiar triumph of Shapur over the fallen Cæsar.[1] The figure on horseback before whom the suppliant kneels is the victorious king; the suppliant is Valerian; the prostrate figure typifies the vanquished Roman army.

[1] I should say here that the Shapur-Valerian series of bas-reliefs is explained by Mordtmann as referring to the victory of Shapur II., in 363 A.D., at Samara over the Emperor Julian, who was killed in the battle, and to the ignominious peace that was wrung by the conqueror from his successor Jovian. I see nothing, however, in this incident to explain the third figure who so constantly appears in the sculptures, or to justify the imploring attitude of the suppliant.



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Second tablet: Shapur, Valerian, and Cyriadis

A hundred yards further on, a second and much larger tablet comes in sight, one of the series that pourtray the investiture of the obscure Syrian of Antioch, Cyriadis, or Miriades, with the imperial purple in the presence of the captive Valerian.[1] The length of the entire panel is forty-one feet, and height twenty feet, the sculptures having been much protected by an overhanging canopy of rock. It is divided into three portions—Shapur, on horseback, with the remaining chief actors, are in the centre, occupying a tablet 12 feet 1 inch long, by 8 feet 2 inches high; behind him—i.e. on the left-hand side of the bas-relief—are two tablets, one above the other, with five horsemen in each, following the king; facing him, three more tablets in the lower row, and two above them, each 4 feet 11 inches long, and 9 feet 10 inches high, containing warriors and other figures on foot. I will now proceed to a more minute analysis, beginning with the central tablet. Shapur is easily recognised by his turreted crown with superimposed globe, by his flowing curled locks and handsome features, and by his beard tied into a knot below the chin. From his head stream the Sassanian fillets; an immense quiver hangs at his side; upon his legs are the flowing *shalwars*, or loose Sassanian trousers. He rides a sturdy horse, disproportionate, as in all these sculptures, to the heroic size of the rider. With his right hand he holds the right hand of a figure standing by the hind-quarters of his horse, wearing a laurel wreath on his head,[2] a Roman tunic, and fetters round his ankles. As in the former bas-relief, the king's horse tramples under foot a prostrate figure, typical of the overthrown army of the Romans. Facing the king is a kneeling figure, also wearing a laurel wreath and a Roman tunic, but carrying a sword at his side. In front of the horse's head is an inscription in five lines, but not in the ordinary Persian character. Above it a winged cherub or genius floats in the air and presents an unrolled fillet, or *bandeau*, to the king.[3] The important question in this, as in all the bas-reliefs representing the same scene, is the identity of the kneeling and the standing figures. Is the suppliant Cyriadis, and the upright personage Valerian, or *vice versa*? I was at first inclined to adopt the former belief for reasons into which I need not enter. But after a careful examination of all the sculptures, I am disposed to identify the kneeling individual in each case with the deposed Emperor, and the figure whose hands are

[1] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 146; Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 49; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 143; Dieulafoy, part v. pl. 23.

[2] Morier said a helmet, but this is wrong.

[3] Morier calls this well-known Sassanian emblem 'the scroll of fame,' and the cherub's figure a Victory! Texier, quite mistaking its character, identifies it with a cornucopia, and regards this as a convincing proof that the bas-relief was executed either by Roman prisoners, or by Western artists.

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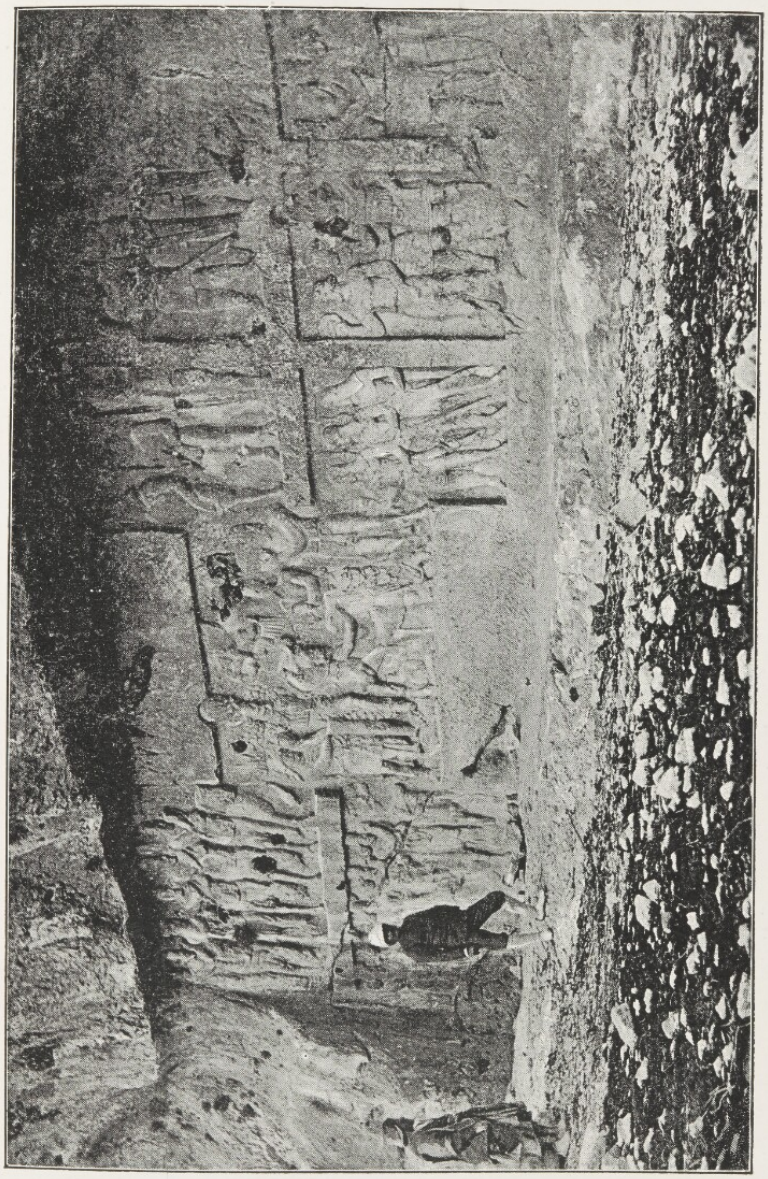

SECOND BAS-RELIEF AT SHAPUR. INVESTITURE OF CYRIADIS

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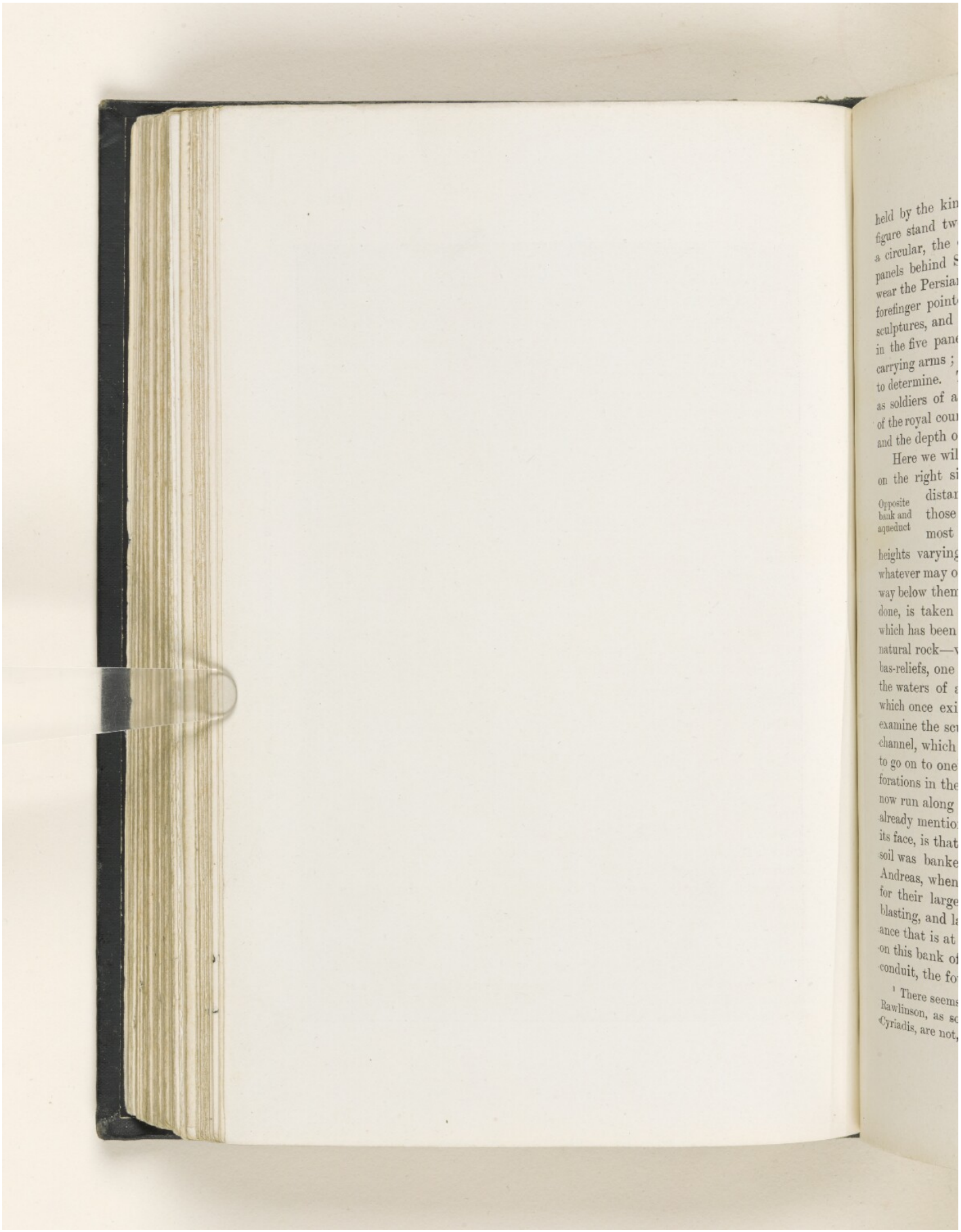

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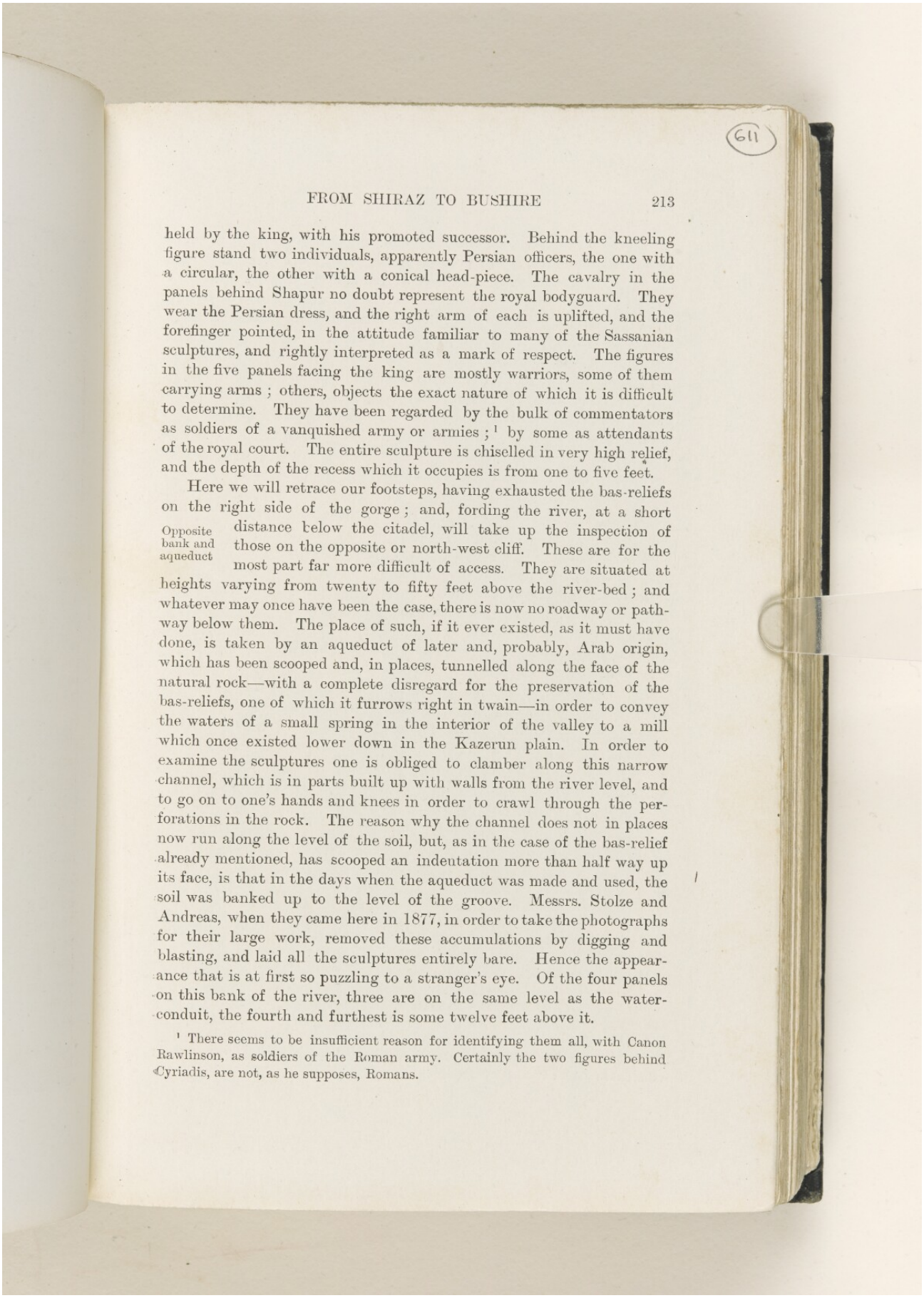



held by the king, with his promoted successor. Behind the kneeling figure stand two individuals, apparently Persian officers, the one with a circular, the other with a conical head-piece. The cavalry in the panels behind Shapur no doubt represent the royal bodyguard. They wear the Persian dress, and the right arm of each is uplifted, and the forefinger pointed, in the attitude familiar to many of the Sassanian sculptures, and rightly interpreted as a mark of respect. The figures in the five panels facing the king are mostly warriors, some of them carrying arms ; others, objects the exact nature of which it is difficult to determine. They have been regarded by the bulk of commentators as soldiers of a vanquished army or armies ;[1] by some as attendants of the royal court. The entire sculpture is chiselled in very high relief, and the depth of the recess which it occupies is from one to five feet.

Opposite bank and aqueduct

Here we will retrace our footsteps, having exhausted the bas-reliefs on the right side of the gorge ; and, fording the river, at a short distance below the citadel, will take up the inspection of those on the opposite or north-west cliff. These are for the most part far more difficult of access. They are situated at heights varying from twenty to fifty feet above the river-bed ; and whatever may once have been the case, there is now no roadway or path-way below them. The place of such, if it ever existed, as it must have done, is taken by an aqueduct of later and, probably, Arab origin, which has been scooped and, in places, tunnelled along the face of the natural rock—with a complete disregard for the preservation of the bas-reliefs, one of which it furrows right in twain—in order to convey the waters of a small spring in the interior of the valley to a mill which once existed lower down in the Kazerun plain. In order to examine the sculptures one is obliged to clamber along this narrow channel, which is in parts built up with walls from the river level, and to go on to one's hands and knees in order to crawl through the per-forations in the rock. The reason why the channel does not in places now run along the level of the soil, but, as in the case of the bas-relief already mentioned, has scooped an indentation more than half way up its face, is that in the days when the aqueduct was made and used, the soil was banked up to the level of the groove. Messrs. Stolze and Andreas, when they came here in 1877, in order to take the photographs for their large work, removed these accumulations by digging and blasting, and laid all the sculptures entirely bare. Hence the appear-ance that is at first so puzzling to a stranger's eye. Of the four panels on this bank of the river, three are on the same level as the water-conduit, the fourth and furthest is some twelve feet above it.

[1] There seems to be insufficient reason for identifying them all, with Canon Rawlinson, as soldiers of the Roman army. Certainly the two figures behind Cyriadis, are not, as he supposes, Romans.

Third tablet: Investiture of Cyriadis

The first bas-relief, on the left-hand side of the gorge, is chiselled in a great semicircular bay or apse of the rock, more than thirty feet in length, which has been tinged a deep blue by discolouration. Hence, and on account of the great size and minute detail of the original, the photograph which I took of it will not repay reproduction.[1] The panel is divided into four parallel bands or zones, extending entirely round the apse, and crowded with figures. The two lower bands are about five and a half feet high, the two upper three feet high. In the middle of the second row from the bottom is the same king Shapur I. on horseback, enacting a scene similar to that which I have last described. Here also he holds a figure, clad in Roman costume, by the hand; here also he treads under foot a prostrate foe; the kneeling form in front of him has the same characteristics as in the former sculpture; while behind the suppliant a fifth figure holds out a royal chaplet to the king.[2] This being so, I identify the kneeling figure, as in the former case, with Valerian, the upright figure with Cyriadis, about to be invested, and the figure in the background with an attendant presenting to Shapur the wreath which he is about to bestow upon his Syrian protégé.[3] A winged genius again floats overhead, and presents an unrolled chaplet to Shapur. In the sculptured tiers behind the king are depicted his mounted and helmeted guards, fifty-seven in all, with the uplifted forefinger of reverence, fifteen in the bottom row, fourteen in each of the three upper zones. The panels on the other side, facing the monarch, are filled with a most interesting representation of prisoners, tribute-bearers, trophies of victory, and attendants. In the lowest band is a two-horsed chariot, or Roman *biga*,[4] and a standard supposed to represent a captured Roman eagle; also a number of attendants who appear to be carrying trays. The second band, parallel with the king, contains a double row of figures, of whom those in front escort the captured war-horse of

[1] *Vide*, however, Texier, vol. ii. pl. 147; Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 53; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 141; Dieulafoy, part v. pl. 19.

[2] Texier thinks this figure is a woman. I doubt if a woman appears in any of the earlier Sassanian sculptures.

[3] Rawlinson (p. 91), who has accepted the suppliant as Valerian in the former tablet, very strangely ignores his existence in this sculpture, including him among 'three principal tribute-bearers in front of the king'; and recognises Valerian in the prone figure. On p. 608, however, he gives a different explanation of the same bas-relief, where he calls the suppliant 'a third Roman, the representative of the defeated nation.'

[4] Canon Rawlinson (pp. 648–9) mistakes this obviously Roman chariot, part of the spoil of Valerian, for a Sassanian vehicle, although in the same paragraph he says that 'the principal change which time had brought about in Sassanian warfare was an almost entire disuse of the war-chariot,' and that 'there is no mention of their actual employment in any battle.'

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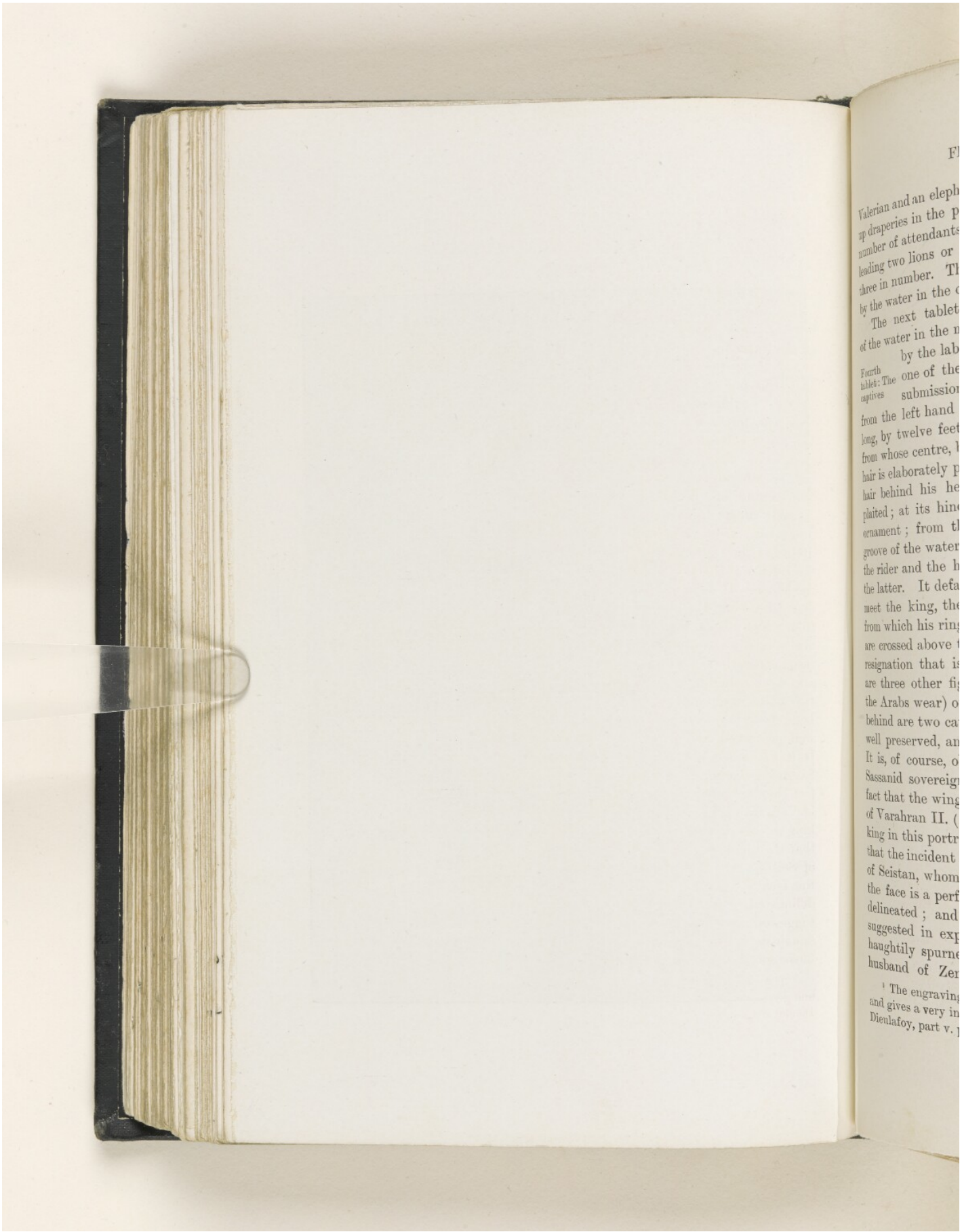
FOURTH BAS-RELIEF. THE CAPTIVES



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Valerian and an elephant, while, according to Texier, those behind hold up draperies in the path of the cortège. The two upper rows depict a number of attendants carrying spoil or offerings on their shoulders, and leading two lions or leopards. The figures facing the king are thirty-three in number. The bottom of the entire panel has been eaten away by the water in the channel before described.

The next tablet is that which has been defaced by the erosion of the water in the mill-stream, and the lower half of which was bared by the labours of Messrs. Stolze and Andreas.[1] It represents one of the Sassanian sovereigns on horseback, receiving the submission and offerings of captives. The monarch advances from the left hand of the sculpture, which is about twenty-one feet long, by twelve feet high. On his head he wears a winged helmet, from whose centre, between the wings, rises the symbolical globe. His hair is elaborately puffed and curled; the dynastic fillets stream in the hair behind his head and shoulders; his charger's tail is thickly plaited; at its hind-quarter hangs by a chain the familiar tassel or ornament; from the king's side depends an immense quiver. The groove of the water-conduit has cut right through the figure both of the rider and the horse, completely obliterating the nose and mouth of the latter. It defaces, in a similar manner, the figures who advance to meet the king, the first of whom is a warrior, wearing a skull cap, from which his ringlets hang in a curled bush behind, while his arms are crossed above the hilt of an enormous sword. He wears a look of resignation that is admirably pourtrayed on the stone. Behind him are three other figures, with a sort of *kefieh* or handkerchief (such as the Arabs wear) on the head, accompanying a horse. In a higher tier behind are two camels with two attendants. One camel's head is very well preserved, and an air of great dignity pervades the entire group. It is, of course, obvious that the scene represented is the victory of a Sassanid sovereign, and the submission of the conquered. From the fact that the winged helmet does not appear upon coins till the reign of Varahran II. (A.D 275–292), it has been supposed by some that the king in this portrait is that monarch; and Canon Rawlinson suggests that the incident depicted is the submission of the Segestani, or people of Seistan, whom he fought against and subdued. On the other hand, the face is a perfect and faithful likeness of Shapur I., as elsewhere delineated; and among the scenes in his reign, which have been suggested in explanation, are the embassy which he received, and so haughtily spurned, from Odenathus, the Arab chief of Palmyra and husband of Zenobia; the capture of Nisibis, in his first Roman

Fourth tablet: The captives

[1] The engraving of Flandin and Coste (vol. i. pl. 51) is most unsatisfactory, and gives a very inadequate idea of the original. *Vide* Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 140, and Dieulafoy, part v. pl. 21.

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campaign ; or his victory over the Syrian king, Sitarun. I incline to some such hypothesis, from the resemblance of the head-dress of the captives to that of the Bedouin tribes of Mesopotamia and Syria.[1]

Fifth tablet: Ormuzd and Narses

The superior elevation of the next bas-relief has fortunately saved it from the aqueous disfigurement of the last, the channel in this case merely cutting into the hocks and pasterns of the horses at the base of the tablet. It is about sixteen to eighteen feet high.[2] Two figures on horseback meet each other, that on the left side presenting the royal circlet with streamers, which the opposing figure holds out his right hand to receive. A Pehlevi inscription in the right-hand corner, first deciphered by M. Longpérier,[3] contains these words :—

This is the image of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the God, Narses, King of kings Arian and non-Arian, of the race of the Gods, the son of the Ormuzd-worshipper, the God, Shapur, King of kings Arian and non-Arian, of the race of the Gods, the offspring of the God, Artakshatr, King of kings.

We learn, therefore, that the figure of one of the horsemen is that of Narses, who reigned from 292 to 301 A.D., when he abdicated. He has usually been supposed to be the son or brother of Varahran II., i.e. grandson or great-grandson of Shapur I., but here he calls himself the son of the latter monarch, and the grandson of Ardeshir or Artaxerxes. It has been suggested by Thomas that this may possibly have been a figure of speech on the part of Narses, in the desire to ignore the intermediate succession of less renowned monarchs ; but it appears to me that we shall do well to let Narses speak for himself, and to accept his own account of his parentage, in which there is no inherent improbability. Of the two figures, that on the right is doubtless the young king. He wears a diadem, or spiked crown, with the conventional globe rising above it. His hair is elegantly curled, and flows behind his head in ringlets ;[4] his expression is mild and benign, and his short beard is tied in a knot. The left-hand figure, conferring the *cydaris*, is doubtless that of Ormuzd. He wears the mural or turreted crown, above and behind which emerge his bushy locks. The features are well preserved, and the beard and hair are those of an older man than his *vis-à-vis*. The twisted tail of his horse, the trappings of both steeds, and the veins and muscles depicted on their forelegs are in a wonderful state of preservation, and indicate no mean level of

[1] Morier is very wide afield when he calls this 'the commencement of a hunting piece.'

[2] Texier, vol. ii. pl. 148; Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 52; Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 139.

[3] *Médailles des Sassanides*, 1840.

[4] It does, not, however, in the least resemble the stiff trim curls depicted by Flandin and Coste, which are wholly imaginary.

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glyptic ability. The rock in which this sculpture is carved has assumed quite a bluish tint from time.

The sixth and last tablet is in a much ruder and clumsier style of art, and is the least well executed of the entire series. It is in a recess so deeply shaded by a deep black tree (the *narven* or wych elm), that I found it impossible to take a photograph.[1] The tablet consists of a great oblong panel, thirty-four feet in length, divided into two rows or bands of figures, one above the other. In the middle of the upper row sits the king, directly facing the

Sixth tablet: Triumph of Chosroes



FIFTH BAS-RELIEF: ORMUZD AND NARSES

spectator. He wears a double crown, like a quartern loaf, on his head, and his hair is puffed out in immense bushes on either side. His legs are wide apart, and his uplifted right hand grasps what Flandin describes as a standard, but what looked to me like a gigantic battle-axe, while his left hand rests on the hilt of his sword. In the left-hand upper panel are a row of his own courtiers with uplifted forefingers. In the panel below it are a number of Persian nobles (their coiffure,

[1] *Vide* Texier, vol. ii. pl. 151; Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 50; and Stolze, vol. ii. pl. 138.

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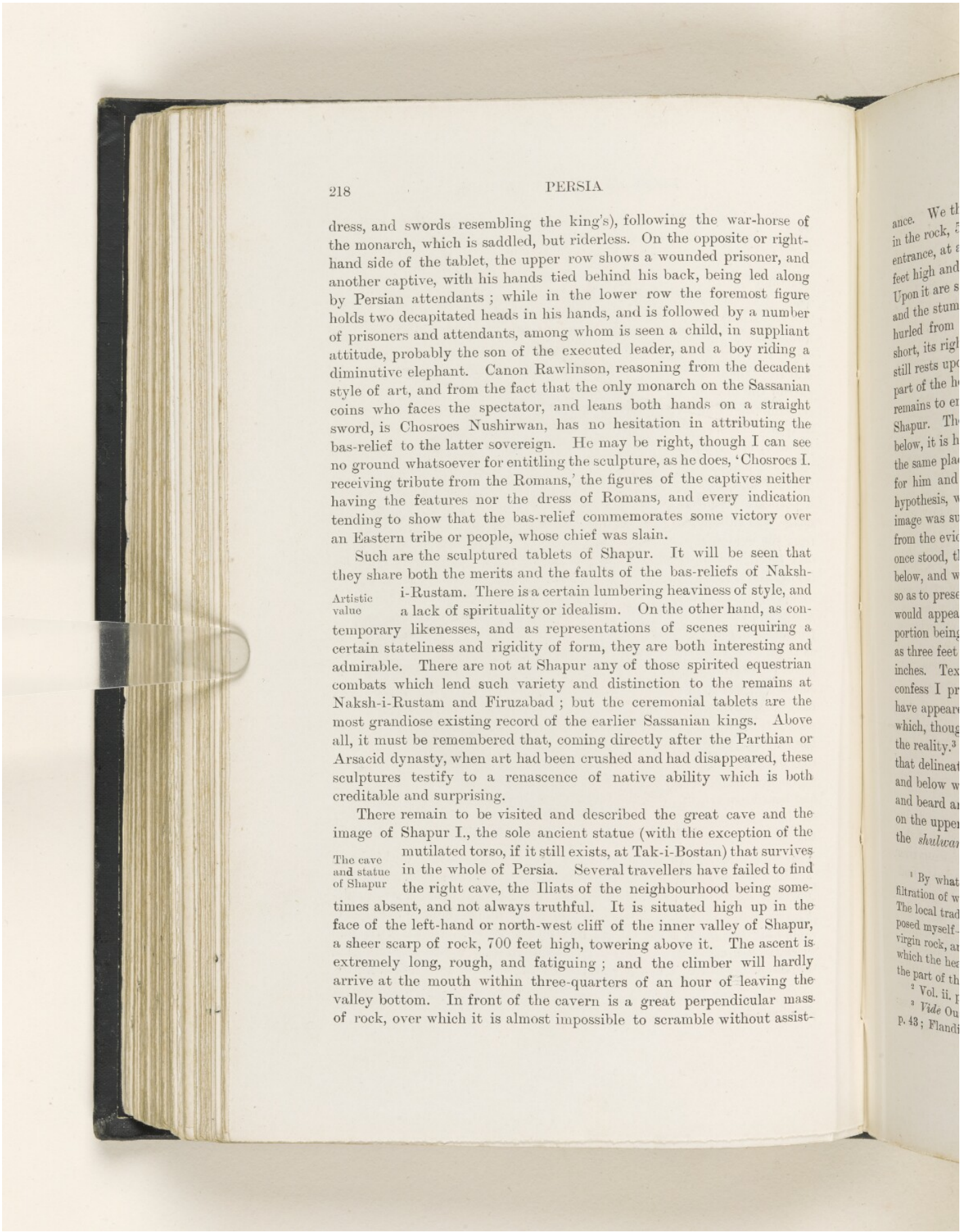




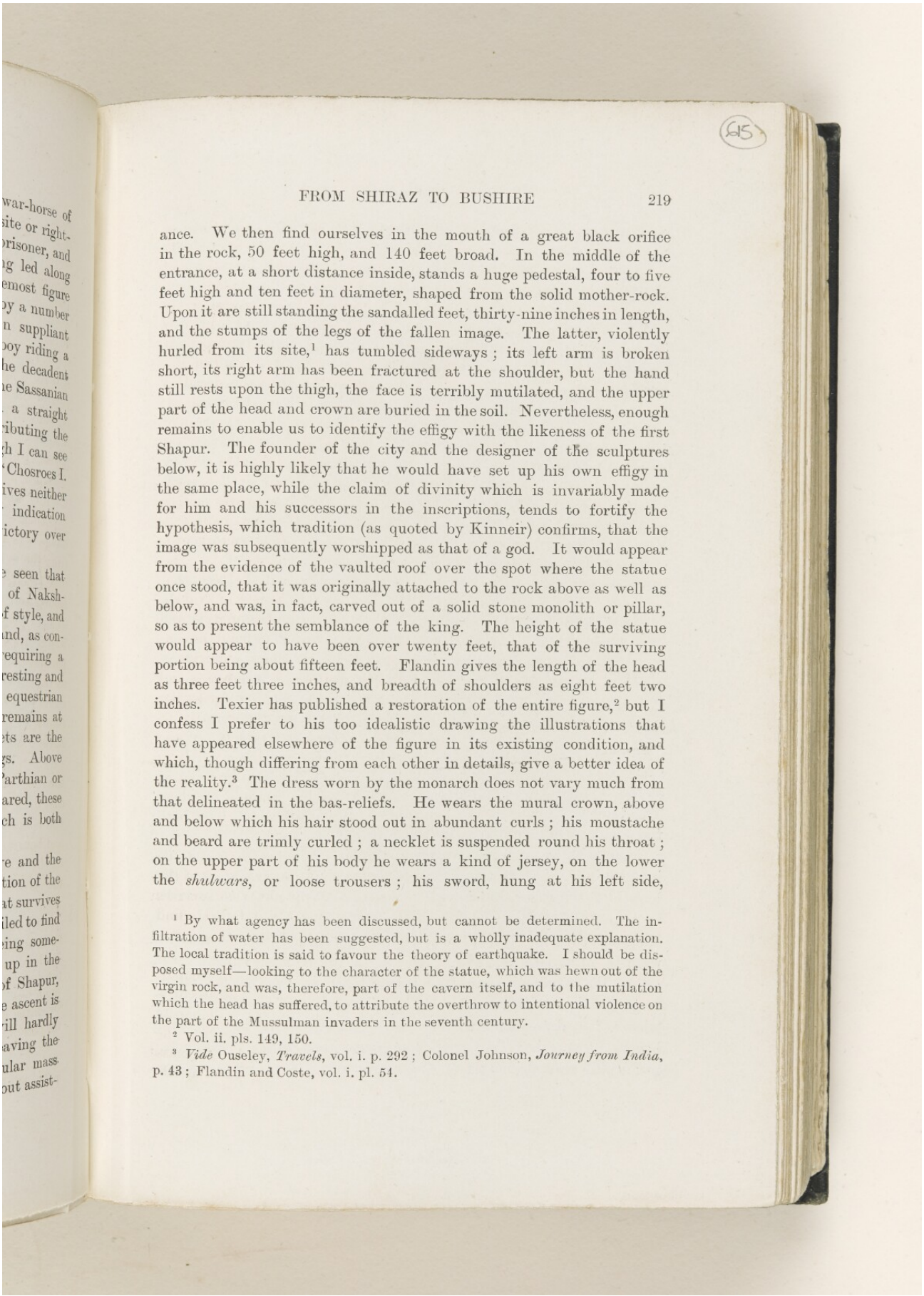
dress, and swords resembling the king's), following the war-horse of the monarch, which is saddled, but riderless. On the opposite or right-hand side of the tablet, the upper row shows a wounded prisoner, and another captive, with his hands tied behind his back, being led along by Persian attendants; while in the lower row the foremost figure holds two decapitated heads in his hands, and is followed by a number of prisoners and attendants, among whom is seen a child, in suppliant attitude, probably the son of the executed leader, and a boy riding a diminutive elephant. Canon Rawlinson, reasoning from the decadent style of art, and from the fact that the only monarch on the Sassanian coins who faces the spectator, and leans both hands on a straight sword, is Chosroes Nushirwan, has no hesitation in attributing the bas-relief to the latter sovereign. He may be right, though I can see no ground whatsoever for entitling the sculpture, as he does, 'Chosroes I. receiving tribute from the Romans,' the figures of the captives neither having the features nor the dress of Romans, and every indication tending to show that the bas-relief commemorates some victory over an Eastern tribe or people, whose chief was slain.

Such are the sculptured tablets of Shapur. It will be seen that they share both the merits and the faults of the bas-reliefs of Naksh-i-Rustam. There is a certain lumbering heaviness of style, and a lack of spirituality or idealism. On the other hand, as contemporary likenesses, and as representations of scenes requiring a certain stateliness and rigidity of form, they are both interesting and admirable. There are not at Shapur any of those spirited equestrian combats which lend such variety and distinction to the remains at Naksh-i-Rustam and Firuzabad; but the ceremonial tablets are the most grandiose existing record of the earlier Sassanian kings. Above all, it must be remembered that, coming directly after the Parthian or Arsacid dynasty, when art had been crushed and had disappeared, these sculptures testify to a renascence of native ability which is both creditable and surprising.

Artistic value

There remain to be visited and described the great cave and the image of Shapur I., the sole ancient statue (with the exception of the mutilated torso, if it still exists, at Tak-i-Bostan) that survives in the whole of Persia. Several travellers have failed to find the right cave, the Iliats of the neighbourhood being sometimes absent, and not always truthful. It is situated high up in the face of the left-hand or north-west cliff of the inner valley of Shapur, a sheer scarp of rock, 700 feet high, towering above it. The ascent is extremely long, rough, and fatiguing; and the climber will hardly arrive at the mouth within three-quarters of an hour of leaving the valley bottom. In front of the cavern is a great perpendicular mass of rock, over which it is almost impossible to scramble without assist-

The cave and statue of Shapur





ance. We then find ourselves in the mouth of a great black orifice in the rock, 50 feet high, and 140 feet broad. In the middle of the entrance, at a short distance inside, stands a huge pedestal, four to five feet high and ten feet in diameter, shaped from the solid mother-rock. Upon it are still standing the sandalled feet, thirty-nine inches in length, and the stumps of the legs of the fallen image. The latter, violently hurled from its site,[1] has tumbled sideways; its left arm is broken short, its right arm has been fractured at the shoulder, but the hand still rests upon the thigh, the face is terribly mutilated, and the upper part of the head and crown are buried in the soil. Nevertheless, enough remains to enable us to identify the effigy with the likeness of the first Shapur. The founder of the city and the designer of the sculptures below, it is highly likely that he would have set up his own effigy in the same place, while the claim of divinity which is invariably made for him and his successors in the inscriptions, tends to fortify the hypothesis, which tradition (as quoted by Kinneir) confirms, that the image was subsequently worshipped as that of a god. It would appear from the evidence of the vaulted roof over the spot where the statue once stood, that it was originally attached to the rock above as well as below, and was, in fact, carved out of a solid stone monolith or pillar, so as to present the semblance of the king. The height of the statue would appear to have been over twenty feet, that of the surviving portion being about fifteen feet. Flandin gives the length of the head as three feet three inches, and breadth of shoulders as eight feet two inches. Texier has published a restoration of the entire figure,[2] but I confess I prefer to his too idealistic drawing the illustrations that have appeared elsewhere of the figure in its existing condition, and which, though differing from each other in details, give a better idea of the reality.[3] The dress worn by the monarch does not vary much from that delineated in the bas-reliefs. He wears the mural crown, above and below which his hair stood out in abundant curls; his moustache and beard are trimly curled; a necklet is suspended round his throat; on the upper part of his body he wears a kind of jersey, on the lower the *shulwars*, or loose trousers; his sword, hung at his left side,

[1] By what agency has been discussed, but cannot be determined. The infiltration of water has been suggested, but is a wholly inadequate explanation. The local tradition is said to favour the theory of earthquake. I should be disposed myself—looking to the character of the statue, which was hewn out of the virgin rock, and was, therefore, part of the cavern itself, and to the mutilation which the head has suffered, to attribute the overthrow to intentional violence on the part of the Mussulman invaders in the seventh century.

[2] Vol. ii. pls. 149, 150.

[3] *Vide* Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. i. p. 292; Colonel Johnson, *Journey from India*, p. 43; Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pl. 54.

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depending from a sash round his right shoulder, with a cross belt meeting it from the left; a knot of ribands is tied at his waist.

At the side of the fallen statue are places in the wall of the cavern which would appear to have been smoothed, preparatory to receiving an inscription or a bas-relief that has never been executed. If the traveller has been wise enough to provide himself with candles, he will next continue his exploration far into the bowels of the mountain. A very proper distrust of the Mamasenni guides has dissuaded a good many visitors from making this experiment. A good deal, however, remains to be seen. At fifty yards from the entrance the cave, which has steadily contracted, expands again into a large dome, 100 feet high, and 120 feet in diameter. From this two passages lead still further into the interior. One of these has at its entrance a stone cistern or tank hewn in the rock, but after running for fifty yards or so comes to an end. The other descends through pools of water into an immense hall, with huge stalactite pillars depending from the roof. The total length of this fork, to which the natives declare that there is no end, is about 400 yards. There are other galleries and ramifications which have never been properly explored.

Interior ramifications

Leaving the ruins of Shapur, after this examination, I returned in a south-western direction over the outer plain towards the exit from the Kazerun valley, and rejoined the caravan-track from Kazerun, after one and a half hour, having passed the village of Shabur, or Shabud, and left the Shapur river on the right. It is at its western corner that the road leaves the Kazerun plain, crossing a low ridge of hills, after which it traverses a piece of very broken ground, and then enters a winding gorge, known as the Teng-i-Turkan, that leads down to the plain of Kamarij. The telegraph-poles follow the crest of the hills to the right, and the track, formerly taken, followed the same line. There is also a mountain path from Kazerun direct to Kamarij, across the intervening ridge of the Kuh-i-Mahas. It is less than half the length of the other, but is very steep, and seems never to be taken by beasts of burden. It was in this neighbourhood that Captain Napier's caravan was attacked and plundered by Mamasenni robbers, in as late as 1874. At length the Teng-i-Turkan opens on to the Kamarij plain, four miles long, by two broad, at the further end of which can be distinguished the village of Kamarij, with a few date-palms waving their plumes above its miserable hovels. There is a Telegraph Rest-house here, with a *bala-khaneh*, not unlike a superior sort of *chapar-khaneh*. Here I was rejoined

Kamarij

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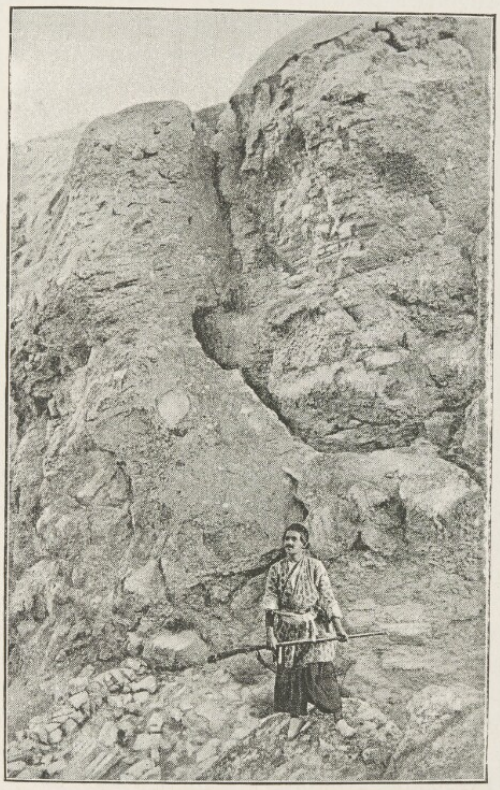
by my original beasts which had lounged comfortably over from Kazerun.

Immediately behind the village the road rises, and climbs a stony acclivity. In about half an hour we find ourselves at the Kotal-i-Kamarij top of the third of the notorious natural stairways between Shiraz and the sea. It takes its name from the place just left, and is the steepest, and, in some respects, most



ROAD-GUARD ON THE KOTAL-I-KAMARIJ

perilous of the four *kotals*, there being a sheer drop of 1,200 feet in a distance of less than a mile, and the track being so narrow in parts that an up-coming cannot pass a down-going mule, without itself going over the precipice. But though so steep, it is a far less unpleasant experience than either the Old or the Young

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Woman, owing to the fact that the track is worn in the bare rock, instead of being covered with loose stones, or tesselated with a broken pavement. In fact, it is neither more nor less than a staircase, the hoofs of generations of mules having worn deep indentations, at regular intervals, one above or below the other into the rock. In the steepest parts, where the road overhangs a vertical ravine, it has been artificially walled. The surrounding scenery is singularly wild and grand, the mountains being split by mighty fissures, exhibiting a stratification that is almost uniformly perpendicular, and being decked on their naked sides by streaks of many-coloured marls. It was on the worst part of this descent, known as the *kamar*, or ledge of Asad Khan, that, in 1752, the Afghan chief of that name, who, upon the death of Nadir Shah, was one of the claimants to the throne, was attacked by Kerim Khan Zend, acting upon the advice of Rustam Sultan, chief of Khisht. The followers of the latter were hidden among the crags above; the soldiery of Kerim Khan, who had already been driven out from Isfahan and Shiraz, were posted in the valley below. Between the devil and the deep sea there is small loophole for escape, as Asad Khan found to his cost, in this horrible man-trap. He himself escaped, and was subsequently pardoned, and elevated to favour by his generous conqueror. The descent of the *kotal* took me about three-quarters of an hour. Following the ravine at its foot, I then again struck the Shapur river, followed its left bank for some distance, and then turning south, across the plain of Khisht, reached the hamlet of Konar Takhteh (Plateau of *konars*), which is situated almost midway down the valley.

I saw very little beauty in the plain of Khisht, except that arising from two extensive groves of date-palms. There was a great deal of camel-thorn and other scrub growing around; but at what opposite poles of outward complexion the seasons stand in Persia, may again be illustrated from the pages of a former traveller, who, passing this way in spring-time, left the following record:—

Plain of Khisht

'Among the grain in the fields, I remarked red poppies, larkspur, daisies, wild oats, wild pinks, mallows, and some flowers of the convolvulus, and other genera which I had never seen before. This being the spring season they were all in blow, and gave an enchanting effect to the scene, which reminded me of a summer's day in England.'[1]

[1] Colonel Johnson, *Journey from India* (1817), p. 36.

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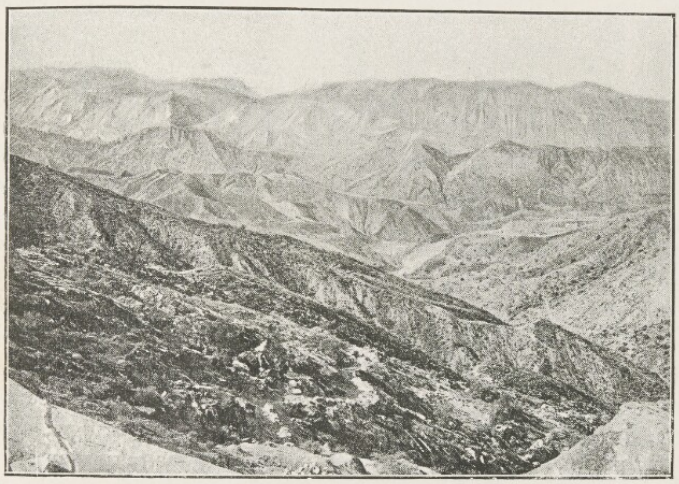
The Frenchman, Petis de la Croix, was at Khisht in 1674, and found it so hot that he spent the whole day lying in the river, where he said that he was surrounded by hundreds of fish, who nosed him all over, and were so tame that he caught as many as he pleased with his hands.

For three and a half miles from Konar Takhteh, the track lies across the plain to the south, and then, mounting a slight rise, takes a downward plunge of 1,000 feet, in the Kotal-i-Mallu, or Cursed Pass.[1] The curses are, in all probability, those of the ascending, and not of the descending wayfarer; for it

Kotal-i-Mallu



THE CURSED PASS

is with the most profound relief that the latter contemplates the approaching exhaustion of the horrors of the Tengistan *kotals*; and tears of joy are far more likely to leap from his eyes than oaths from his lips. Nor is the Kotal-i-Mallu either so precipitous, so stony, or so uncomfortable as those which have preceded it; although the first part is steep, and recalls the definition that was once given of a Persian *kotal*, as the kind of mark that would be left by the impression of a gigantic corkscrew on the vertical side of a mountain. A causeway had at some time been built in zigzags up the side of this *kotal*, and was in better preservation

[1] This derivation, which would be a contraction from the Arabic *mal'un*, is popular, but doubtful.

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than any work of the kind that I had seen in Persia. Its surface, however, was so slippery that it had prudently been abandoned by the caravans, which had worn a tortuous stairway in the rock alongside of it.

From a gorge far down below came the welcome roar of waters; and at a turn in the descent was visible the blue current of the so-called Daliki river, racing merrily towards the south-west. This river rises in the mountains of Fars to the south of Shiraz, runs north-west under different names, the commonest of which it derives from the village of Daliki, which it presently waters, and, having reached the Dashtistan or Plain-land, joins the Shapur river, of which I have already spoken, the two falling into the Gulf to the north of Bushire under the name of Rohillah (Rud-hillah) or Rud-i-Shapur. From the summit of the *kotal* to the banks of the river was an easy walk of one hour and twenty minutes. A light breeze ruffled the stream, which here spreads out into a wide pool, and I observed fish rising everywhere to natural flies. The road now follows, for a little over a mile, the right bank of the river, passing a ruined bridge, all but one or two arches of which have disappeared, and then crosses the stream by a fine stone bridge of six arches, terminating in a causeway on the far side. This bridge and its pavement were both in better preservation than any kindred structure that I had seen in Persia, and were the work of the Mushir-el-Mulk before mentioned. A lofty square tower guards the north entrance to the bridge; and a seedy patrol, armed with a percussion musket, was taking an airing on the parapet. Traffic over the passes is now comparatively safe, although it is not twenty years since no party could proceed without an armed guard; but a few *rahdars* or sentinels are still stationed on the road, their maintenance being a tax on the nearest village; and a few of these apologies for a *gendarmerie* I encountered. The road follows the river down a gorge for nearly two miles further, and then strikes up a lateral ravine, where an evil smell betrays the presence of sulphur in the water that oozes from the ground. In this ravine we continue for some time, until we reach the top of a steep declivity, whence a seemingly endless plain can be discerned stretching away in the direction of the sea, darkened by occasional clumps of date-palms, and terminating in sand hills that hide the waters of the Gulf. The last remaining descent, down an inclined plane formed by a peculiar pitch of the

Daliki river

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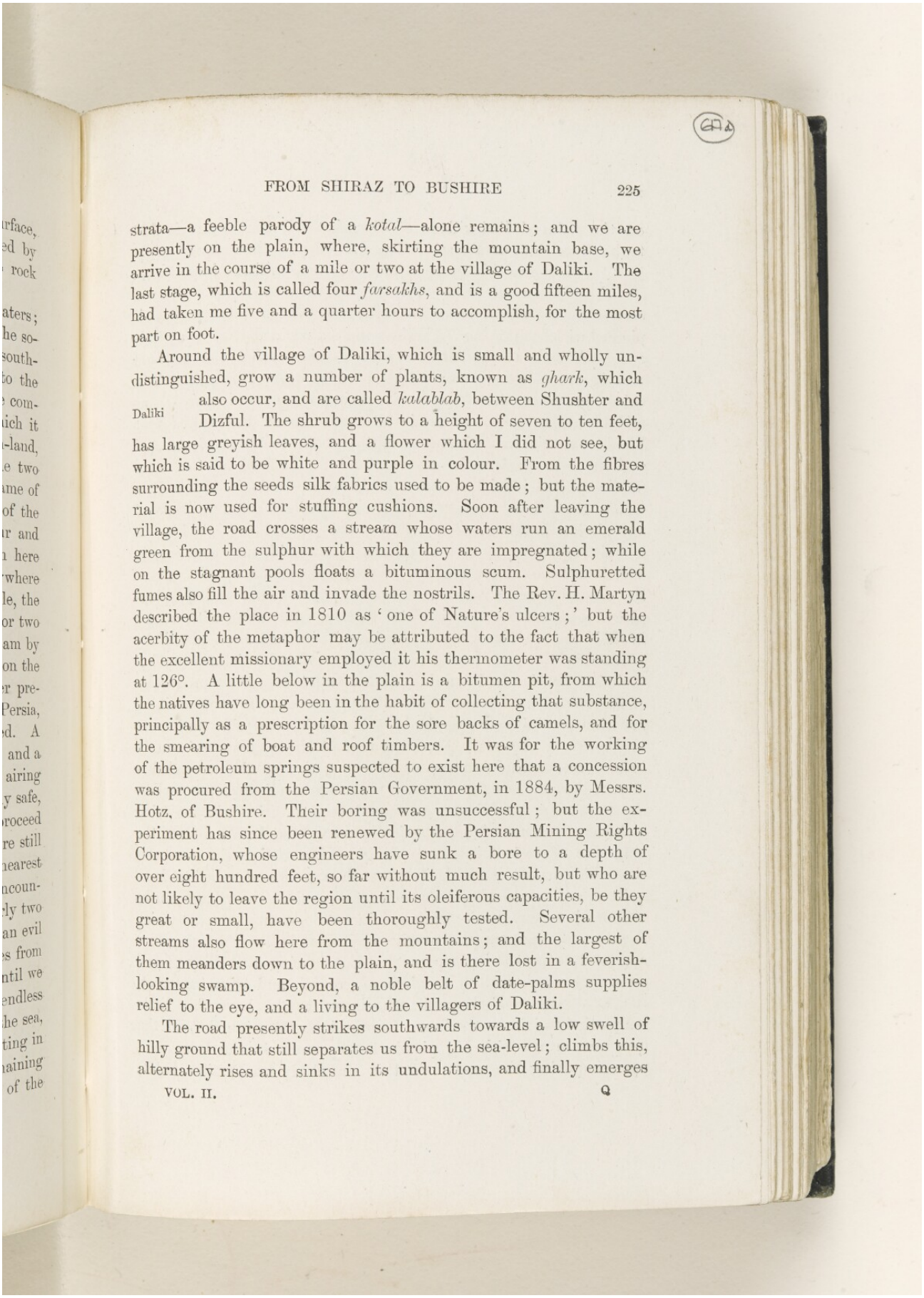



strata—a feeble parody of a *kotal*—alone remains; and we are presently on the plain, where, skirting the mountain base, we arrive in the course of a mile or two at the village of Daliki. The last stage, which is called four *farsakhs*, and is a good fifteen miles, had taken me five and a quarter hours to accomplish, for the most part on foot.

Around the village of Daliki, which is small and wholly undistinguished, grow a number of plants, known as *ghark*, which also occur, and are called *kalablab*, between Shushter and Dizful. The shrub grows to a height of seven to ten feet, has large greyish leaves, and a flower which I did not see, but which is said to be white and purple in colour. From the fibres surrounding the seeds silk fabrics used to be made; but the material is now used for stuffing cushions. Soon after leaving the village, the road crosses a stream whose waters run an emerald green from the sulphur with which they are impregnated; while on the stagnant pools floats a bituminous scum. Sulphuretted fumes also fill the air and invade the nostrils. The Rev. H. Martyn described the place in 1810 as 'one of Nature's ulcers;' but the acerbity of the metaphor may be attributed to the fact that when the excellent missionary employed it his thermometer was standing at 126°. A little below in the plain is a bitumen pit, from which the natives have long been in the habit of collecting that substance, principally as a prescription for the sore backs of camels, and for the smearing of boat and roof timbers. It was for the working of the petroleum springs suspected to exist here that a concession was procured from the Persian Government, in 1884, by Messrs. Hotz, of Bushire. Their boring was unsuccessful; but the experiment has since been renewed by the Persian Mining Rights Corporation, whose engineers have sunk a bore to a depth of over eight hundred feet, so far without much result, but who are not likely to leave the region until its oleiferous capacities, be they great or small, have been thoroughly tested. Several other streams also flow here from the mountains; and the largest of them meanders down to the plain, and is there lost in a feverish-looking swamp. Beyond, a noble belt of date-palms supplies relief to the eye, and a living to the villagers of Daliki.

Daliki

The road presently strikes southwards towards a low swell of hilly ground that still separates us from the sea-level; climbs this, alternately rises and sinks in its undulations, and finally emerges



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on the palm-girdled village of Borazjun (the true name is said to be Gurazdun, or Place of Boars). From a distance one might imagine this to be a place of some military importance; for several miles away can be seen the lofty walls and corner towers of an immense structure, whose outer surface is pierced with loopholes only, and presents a decidedly feudal appearance. A longer acquaintance with Persia teaches the wayfarer that it cannot possibly be a fort, because every Persian fort is in ruins, and warns him that he is gazing upon nothing more formidable than a caravanserai; although among the scores that I had seen, this was without exception both the best constructed and the best preserved. It was built in 1875–6 by the same public-spirited official whom I have before eulogised, travellers before that date having bitterly complained of the lack of any similar building. I went in and inspected the interior. It is built of solid stone, well quarried and laid, and contains, in addition to the normal recesses, rooms, and stables, opening out of the central court, a number of upstairs apartments and sleeping-places, designed for the rich and for those travelling with women in their train. The walls of these chambers had been plentifully adorned by the pencils of Persian visitors of an artistic turn; but their imagination had found no higher outlet than the reproduction of steamboats and vessels with all sails spread, the most striking maritime reminiscence, no doubt, to a people possessing an hereditary terror of the sea. From the roof of the caravanserai can be gained an extensive prospect of the plain, of the town below (reputed to contain 6,000 persons), of the site at a little distance where the Persians ignominiously evacuated their position without firing a shot, in the short Anglo-Persian campaign of 1857; and of the long line of mountains, concealing behind their grim ramparts those hideous *kotals* which it was such a profound relief to have quitted, and which I hope never to tread again. The village youths of Borazjun were busily engaged in rustic games, among which hockey and rounders (the precise equivalent to the English game) appeared to be the most popular. Considering that they played on a very rough and stony piece of ground, and with bare feet, the most eager of English schoolboys would have felt little temptation to join in the fun. I noticed at Borazjun that all the men were armed with big pistols, loosely stuck in the belt; and, upon inquiring the reason of this singularly un-Persian habit,

Borazjun

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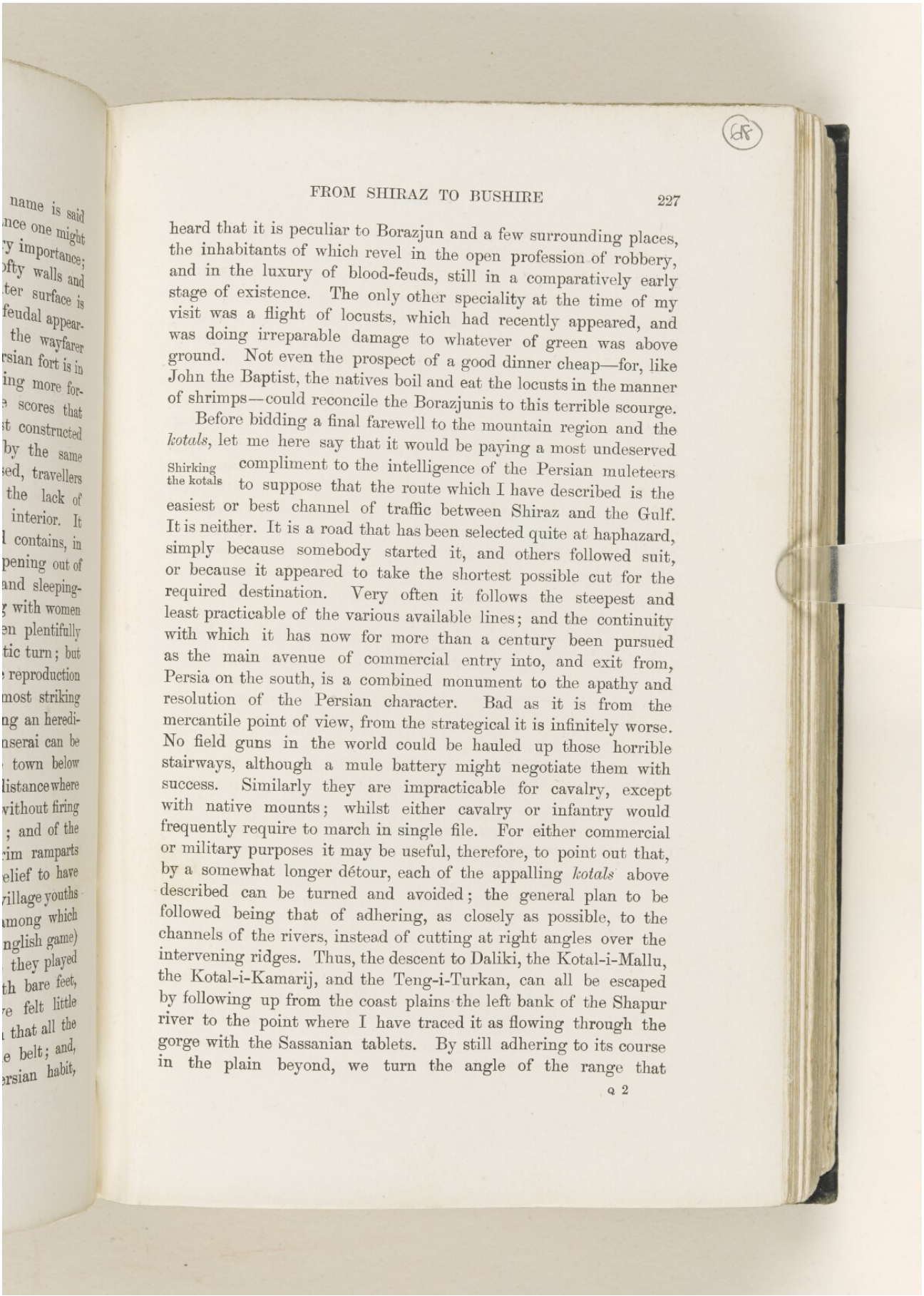

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heard that it is peculiar to Borazjun and a few surrounding places, the inhabitants of which revel in the open profession of robbery, and in the luxury of blood-feuds, still in a comparatively early stage of existence. The only other speciality at the time of my visit was a flight of locusts, which had recently appeared, and was doing irreparable damage to whatever of green was above ground. Not even the prospect of a good dinner cheap—for, like John the Baptist, the natives boil and eat the locusts in the manner of shrimps—could reconcile the Borazjunis to this terrible scourge.

Before bidding a final farewell to the mountain region and the *kotals*, let me here say that it would be paying a most undeserved compliment to the intelligence of the Persian muleteers to suppose that the route which I have described is the easiest or best channel of traffic between Shiraz and the Gulf. It is neither. It is a road that has been selected quite at haphazard, simply because somebody started it, and others followed suit, or because it appeared to take the shortest possible cut for the required destination. Very often it follows the steepest and least practicable of the various available lines; and the continuity with which it has now for more than a century been pursued as the main avenue of commercial entry into, and exit from, Persia on the south, is a combined monument to the apathy and resolution of the Persian character. Bad as it is from the mercantile point of view, from the strategical it is infinitely worse. No field guns in the world could be hauled up those horrible stairways, although a mule battery might negotiate them with success. Similarly they are impracticable for cavalry, except with native mounts; whilst either cavalry or infantry would frequently require to march in single file. For either commercial or military purposes it may be useful, therefore, to point out that, by a somewhat longer détour, each of the appalling *kotals* above described can be turned and avoided; the general plan to be followed being that of adhering, as closely as possible, to the channels of the rivers, instead of cutting at right angles over the intervening ridges. Thus, the descent to Daliki, the Kotal-i-Mallu, the Kotal-i-Kamarij, and the Teng-i-Turkan, can all be escaped by following up from the coast plains the left bank of the Shapur river to the point where I have traced it as flowing through the gorge with the Sassanian tablets. By still adhering to its course in the plain beyond, we turn the angle of the range that

Shirking the kotals



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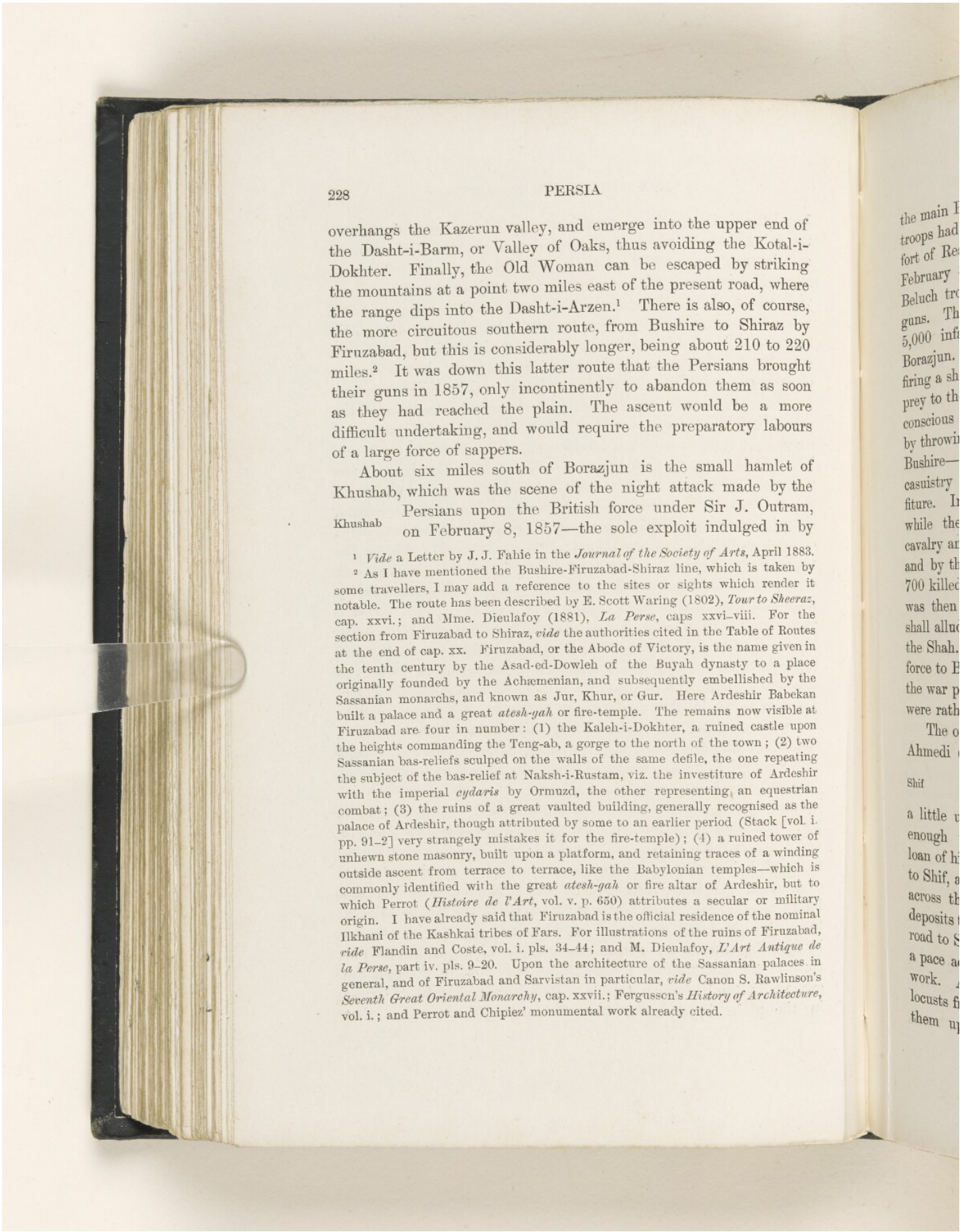



overhangs the Kazerun valley, and emerge into the upper end of the Dasht-i-Barm, or Valley of Oaks, thus avoiding the Kotal-i-Dokhter. Finally, the Old Woman can be escaped by striking the mountains at a point two miles east of the present road, where the range dips into the Dasht-i-Arzen.[1] There is also, of course, the more circuitous southern route, from Bushire to Shiraz by Firuzabad, but this is considerably longer, being about 210 to 220 miles.[2] It was down this latter route that the Persians brought their guns in 1857, only incontinently to abandon them as soon as they had reached the plain. The ascent would be a more difficult undertaking, and would require the preparatory labours of a large force of sappers.

Khushab

About six miles south of Borazjun is the small hamlet of Khushab, which was the scene of the night attack made by the Persians upon the British force under Sir J. Outram, on February 8, 1857—the sole exploit indulged in by

[1] *Vide* a Letter by J. J. Fahie in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, April 1883.

[2] As I have mentioned the Bushire-Firuzabad-Shiraz line, which is taken by some travellers, I may add a reference to the sites or sights which render it notable. The route has been described by E. Scott Waring (1802), *Tour to Sheeraz*, cap. xxvi.; and Mme. Dieulafoy (1881), *La Perse*, caps xxvi–viii. For the section from Firuzabad to Shiraz, *vide* the authorities cited in the Table of Routes at the end of cap. xx. Firuzabad, or the Abode of Victory, is the name given in the tenth century by the Asad-ed-Dowleh of the Buyah dynasty to a place originally founded by the Achæmenian, and subsequently embellished by the Sassanian monarchs, and known as Jur, Khur, or Gur. Here Ardeshir Babekan built a palace and a great *atesh-gah* or fire-temple. The remains now visible at Firuzabad are four in number: (1) the Kaleh-i-Dokhter, a ruined castle upon the heights commanding the Teng-ab, a gorge to the north of the town; (2) two Sassanian bas-reliefs sculped on the walls of the same defile, the one repeating the subject of the bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam, viz. the investiture of Ardeshir with the imperial *cydaris* by Ormuzd, the other representing an equestrian combat; (3) the ruins of a great vaulted building, generally recognised as the palace of Ardeshir, though attributed by some to an earlier period (Stack [vol. i. pp. 91–2] very strangely mistakes it for the fire-temple); (4) a ruined tower of unhewn stone masonry, built upon a platform, and retaining traces of a winding outside ascent from terrace to terrace, like the Babylonian temples—which is commonly identified with the great *atesh-gah* or fire altar of Ardeshir, but to which Perrot (*Histoire de l'Art*, vol. v. p. 650) attributes a secular or military origin. I have already said that Firuzabad is the official residence of the nominal Ilkhani of the Kashkai tribes of Fars. For illustrations of the ruins of Firuzabad, *vide* Flandin and Coste, vol. i. pls. 34–44; and M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, part iv. pls. 9–20. Upon the architecture of the Sassanian palaces in general, and of Firuzabad and Sarvistan in particular, *vide* Canon S. Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, cap. xxvii.; Fergusson's *History of Architecture*, vol. i.; and Perrot and Chipiez' monumental work already cited.

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the main Persian army in that short-lived campaign. The British troops had landed south of Bushire in December, had stormed the fort of Reshire, and had shelled and captured Bushire. Then on February 3 they advanced: 2,200 English, 2,000 Indian and Beluch troops, 420 Indian cavalry, 2 light field batteries, and 18 guns. The Persian army, under the Shuja-el-Mulk, consisting of 5,000 infantry, 800 cavalry, and 18 guns, was encamped at Borazjun. Upon the approach of Outram they bolted without firing a shot, leaving their camp, equipments, and ammunition as a prey to the British. Outram blew up their powder magazine, and, conscious that nothing was to be gained, but everything lost, by throwing himself into the *kotals*, began to march back towards Bushire—a movement which the Persians, who are learned in the casuistry of retreat, have always interpreted as a sign of discomfiture. In the night the Persian cavalry attacked the column, while the infantry were found drawn up at Khushab. The cavalry and artillery of the British very soon decided the contest, and by the early morning the Persians were in full flight, leaving 700 killed, as against 16 of the British force. The theatre of war was then transferred to the Karun, where, in a later chapter, I shall allude to the even less creditable show made by the *serbaz* of the Shah. It was probably not a very wise step to send a British force to Bushire at all, unless we meant to hold the place. As it was, the war partook of the nature of a series of demonstrations, which were rather summarily cut short by the Treaty of Paris in March.

The ordinary caravan-track from Borazjun to Bushire runs *viâ* Ahmedi (where is a caravanserai), and across the low-lying, often swampy ground, called the Mashileh, that connects the peninsula of Bushire with the mainland. The distance is a little under forty miles. For such, however, as are fortunate enough to receive the British Resident's hospitality, and the loan of his steam-launch, a shorter route is available from Borazjun to Shif, a distance of twenty-five miles; whence a short sea passage across the arm of the Gulf that severs Bushire from the coast deposits the delighted traveller at the terminus of his journey. The road to Shif is as smooth as a billiard table, crawling over which at a pace adapted to the movements of tired baggage-mules is slow work. At Khushab the inhabitants were engaged in shaking the locusts from the boughs of the tamarisk trees, and greedily picking them up and stuffing them into sacks for future use at the

Shif

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breakfast table. Here I left the telegraph poles, which take a more southerly line to Ahmedi, and steered a westerly course for Shif. A good many sand-grouse were visible on the way, and, after the fashion of game in general, were as annoyingly tame to the unarmed voyager on horseback as they are wild to the sportsman on foot with a gun. Though the temperature was cool and pleasant, a mirage trembled above the heated soil, and gave frequent glimpses of a sea that ever receded, and of islets that resolved themselves into tiny heaps of sand. The distorting powers of the illusion (called *sirab* by the Persians) seemed to be limited to objects near the surface, but upon that level there was no limit to its achievements; for what appeared at some distance to be the ruins of an extensive marble edifice were converted upon approach into the lank members of an old white horse browsing upon the scrub.[1] At length was visible a square building with a tower, that turned out to be the solitary glory, nay, the sole structure of Shif. It is a dilapidated caravanserai, standing within a few yards of a slimy beach, where a sluggish water laps the sand. Colonel Ross's launch was lying a quarter of a mile off; and a boat was waiting to transfer me to its welcome variety of locomotion. How glad I was to take off the saddle and saddlebags and holsters, to say good-bye to my rickety *yabu*, and to feel that I had without any accident passed through Persia from sea to sea. Shif faces a shallow bay, on the opposite side of which is the small fishing village of Sheikh Saad. Rounding this point, we came out into the open bay, and steered a line straight across for Bushire, whose wind-towers and occasional palms swelled into larger prominence above the waves. Steamers tossing in the offing, quite three miles away, revealed the nature of the anchorage at the first port in Persia. Skirting the eastern face of the town, which, though squalid enough to a new comer, deserves a high rank amongst Persian maritime cities, the launch deposited me at the Governor's Bunder. The Union Jack streaming from the top of a gigantic mast —by far the loftiest object in Bushire—proclaimed the site of the British Residency; and in ten minutes' time I was the guest and inmate of an English home.

Bushire (lit. Abu Shehr)[2] is a town without a history, or at

[1] For an excellent description of the Asiatic mirage, as encountered by Alexander in his march through Sogdiana, *vide* Quint. Curt. lib. vii. c. 5.

[2] The common derivation, i.e. Father of Cities, cannot be correct, because

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Bushire

least with only such a history as an existence of 150 years can supply. Originally a small fishing village, it was selected by Nadir Shah in the middle of the last century as his southern port, and as the dockyard of the navy which he aspired to create in the Gulf. A little later, after the collapse of their business at Bunder Abbas, the East India Company transferred their factory to Bushire, where they received *firmans* conferring trading privileges upon them from Kerim Khan Zend. Matters progressed very slowly at the outset, there being only one English merchant in the place when Niebuhr was there in 1765. Gradually, however, as the mercantile marine of the Gulf was developed, and caravans into the interior began to adopt the route of the *kotals*, Bushire grew in size and importance,[1] and at the beginning of the present century had about 6,000–8,000 inhabitants. Under the immense increase in recent years of traffic both by land and sea, the place has swollen to larger dimensions, and now contains a mixed population of 15,000 persons. The town is situated at the northern extremity of a peninsula, eleven miles long by four broad, which is identified with the Mesambria of Arrian, where the fleet of Nearchus cast anchor, and found plantations and gardens. This peninsula has at some period been recovered from the sea, which only a century ago used sometimes to flow across the narrow neck immediately south of the town, converting the latter into an island. Since then the land has steadily risen, and this phenomenon no longer occurs; but the water from the interior or eastern bay occasionally overflows the low-lying flats near the walls, and turns them into a swamp. The town itself has a rather better elevation, being situated upon a ledge of sandy conglomerate stone, which projects above the sea-level, and gives the place from a distance a more imposing appearance than is warranted by a closer inspection.

The people of Bushire, as of all the coast towns in the

*Shehr* is singular, not plural; and because *Abu* is Arabic, while *Shehr* is Persian. General Schindler informs me that in the Karnamek of Ardeshir Babekan, the first Sassanian monarch, is a passage which says that on his retreat to the coast of the Gulf, pursued by the Parthian army, Ardeshir 'when he saw the sea praised God, and there named a place Bokht-Artakhshir, and erected a fire-temple.' This may have been contracted into Bushir, on the analogy of Gavashir, Bahmeshir, Reshire.

[1] There is an interesting account of Bushire in 1775, in *Travels in Asia*, by Abraham Parsons.

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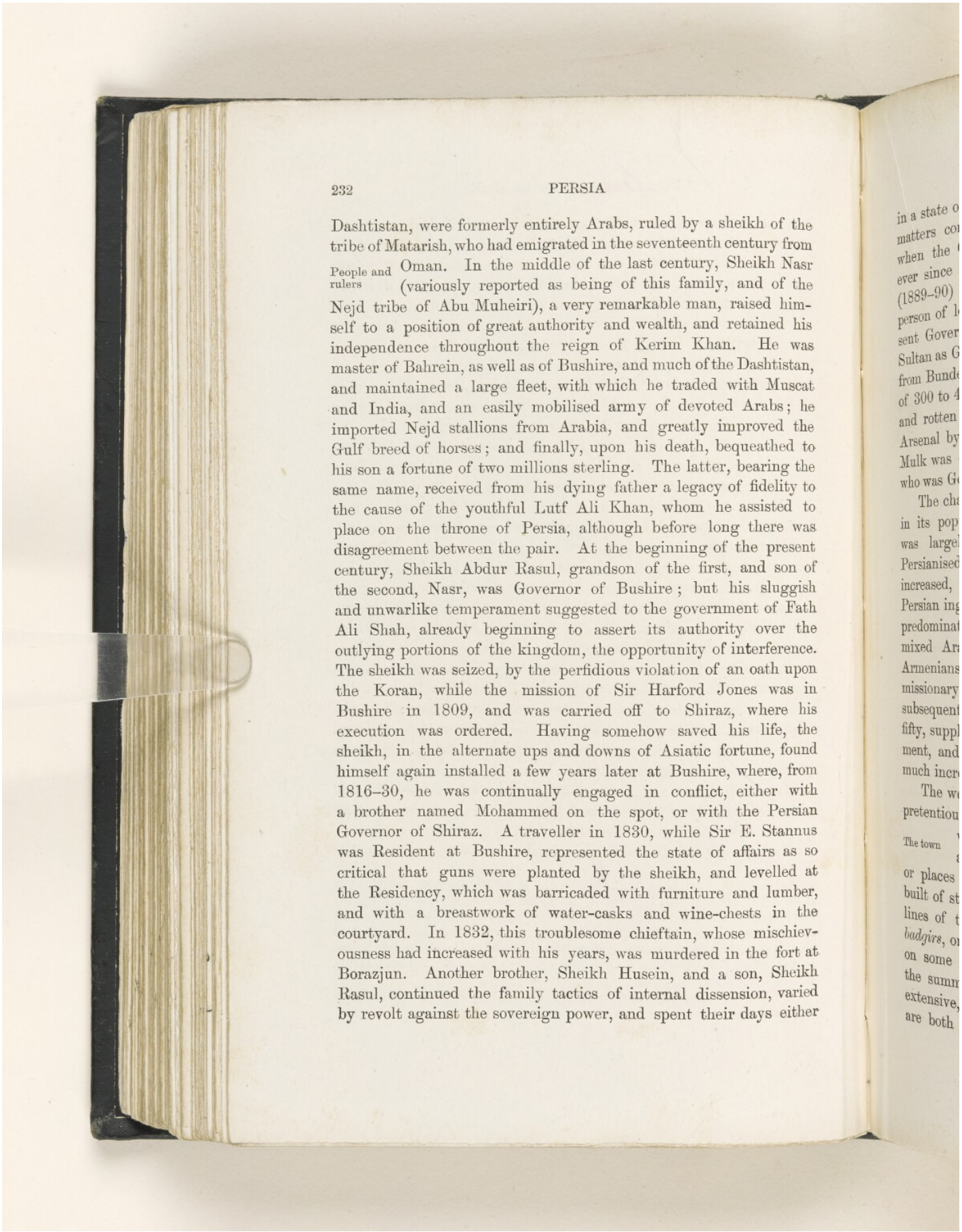



Dashtistan, were formerly entirely Arabs, ruled by a sheikh of the tribe of Matarish, who had emigrated in the seventeenth century from Oman. In the middle of the last century, Sheikh Nasr (variously reported as being of this family, and of the Nejd tribe of Abu Muheiri), a very remarkable man, raised himself to a position of great authority and wealth, and retained his independence throughout the reign of Kerim Khan. He was master of Bahrein, as well as of Bushire, and much of the Dashtistan, and maintained a large fleet, with which he traded with Muscat and India, and an easily mobilised army of devoted Arabs; he imported Nejd stallions from Arabia, and greatly improved the Gulf breed of horses; and finally, upon his death, bequeathed to his son a fortune of two millions sterling. The latter, bearing the same name, received from his dying father a legacy of fidelity to the cause of the youthful Lutf Ali Khan, whom he assisted to place on the throne of Persia, although before long there was disagreement between the pair. At the beginning of the present century, Sheikh Abdur Rasul, grandson of the first, and son of the second, Nasr, was Governor of Bushire; but his sluggish and unwarlike temperament suggested to the government of Fath Ali Shah, already beginning to assert its authority over the outlying portions of the kingdom, the opportunity of interference. The sheikh was seized, by the perfidious violation of an oath upon the Koran, while the mission of Sir Harford Jones was in Bushire in 1809, and was carried off to Shiraz, where his execution was ordered. Having somehow saved his life, the sheikh, in the alternate ups and downs of Asiatic fortune, found himself again installed a few years later at Bushire, where, from 1816–30, he was continually engaged in conflict, either with a brother named Mohammed on the spot, or with the Persian Governor of Shiraz. A traveller in 1830, while Sir E. Stannus was Resident at Bushire, represented the state of affairs as so critical that guns were planted by the sheikh, and levelled at the Residency, which was barricaded with furniture and lumber, and with a breastwork of water-casks and wine-chests in the courtyard. In 1832, this troublesome chieftain, whose mischievousness had increased with his years, was murdered in the fort at Borazjun. Another brother, Sheikh Husein, and a son, Sheikh Rasul, continued the family tactics of internal dissension, varied by revolt against the sovereign power, and spent their days either

People and rulers

in a state of armed siege at Bushire, or in prison at Shiraz. So matters continued till a little after the middle of the century, when the Government finally asserted its force, and Bushire has ever since received a Persian nominee. At the time of my visit (1889–90) it was under the jurisdiction of the Saad-el-Mulk, a person of low origin, and formerly a *munshi*, or clerk, to the present Governor of Fars, who had been placed by the Amin-es-Sultan as Governor of the Gulf Ports, in charge of the coast-fringe from Bunder Dilam to Jask. The garrison of Bushire consisted of 300 to 400 *serbaz*, and 50 to 60 artillerymen, with some old and rotten guns, lying near the Governor's Bunder, miscalled the Arsenal by the Persians. In the past year (1891) the Saad-el-Mulk was displaced by his elder brother, the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, who was Governor of Arabistan when I was at Shushter.

The change effected in the rulers of Bushire has been reflected in its population. Till the last twenty years the Arab element was largely in the ascendant, although, to a great extent, Persianised both in dress and religion. As trade, however, has increased, and purely maritime occupations have declined, the Persian ingredients have gained the upper hand, and now largely predominate, although the bulk of the people are still of Arab, or mixed Arab and Persian descent. There are about a hundred Armenians in Bushire engaged in trade (fifty years ago, the missionary Dr. J. Wolff founded a school for them here, which subsequently collapsed), and a European contribution of about fifty, supplied by the staff of the Residency and Telegraph department, and by the representatives of business houses, who have much increased in recent years.

The town

The western front of Bushire, facing the open sea, is the most pretentious, for here are the British Residency—a large building with two courts, at whose doorway is always stationed an Indian guard—and the principal European residences or places of business, some of which are lofty and two-storeyed, built of stone, and with verandahs facing the sea. The horizontal lines of the natives' houses at Bushire are broken by frequent *badgirs*, or wind-towers, with narrow slits to admit the air; and on some of the roof-tops may be seen awnings, for sleeping in the summer. Considering the size of the town, the bazaars are extensive, though narrow and confined. The bulk of the streets are both narrow and filthy, and in the open spaces on the shore

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line may be seen encampments of low tents, and *kapars* or huts, made of date-sticks and leaves, the nauseous domiciles of the lower classes of the population. Such pretentiousness of air as the modern town can claim is largely due to the wise expenditure, by Sir L. Pelly, of part of the Mansion House Persian Famine Relief Fund in 1870–1, in the employment of local labour. On the southern side, or along the base of the triangle formed by the apex of the peninsula, the town was formerly fortified by a high wall with twelve towers and bastions and two gates, in front of which stood some old Portuguese guns, brought either from Reshire or Ormuz. The last time that this wall was repaired was in 1838, when Mohammed Shah rebuilt it, to withstand a possible attack from the English, who had occupied Kharak Island in that year. It has since fallen to pieces, and is now a model of nineteenth century Persian fortification.

Climate and water

The climate of Bushire is trying though not acutely unhealthy. In summer, however, the heat is exhausting, and the thermometer frequently registers over 100° Fahr. in the shade. The average rainfall is about twelve inches in the year. Water is scarce: and most of the neighbouring supplies are brackish. The wells most commonly in use are situated on the plain at the distance of over a mile from the town gate; but the best sources are at five and six miles distant in the direction of Reshire. At the time of my visit the price of the ordinary quality was 5–6 *puls* ($\frac{3}{4}d.$), of the better quality 16 *puls* ($2\frac{1}{4}d.$) per donkey-load. A large reservoir to collect rain-water was built on the sea-front some years ago by a native merchant, and was opened for the public use in April and May; but its contents were found to be infested with the *reshta* or guinea-worm, which 200 years ago was complained of by Chardin[1] and Kaempfer,[2] as tainting the water-supplies along the Gulf-coast.

The port

Though Bushire is the main port of Persia, it possesses nothing that could by the wildest exaggeration be described under present conditions as a harbour. The anchorage is in an open and unprotected roadstead at the distance of some three miles from the shore, is much exposed to gales, and in bad weather is inaccessible. Every cargo has to be embarked or disembarked in native buggalows, and the process of lading and unlading is in consequence very slow. The inner bay on the

[1] *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. viii. pp. 470–4. [2] *Amœn. Exot.* pp. 525–35.

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western side is intended by nature, and was formerly used, as a harbour, there being deep water close up to the town. A bar, however, has formed opposite its entrance, and boats drawing over ten feet of water cannot pass. The use of a dredger, and the expenditure of a few hundred pounds, would remedy this, without the need of any costly piers or structure; and the impotence of the Persian Government in this respect lends an additional argument to those who contend that Great Britain should not have evacuated Bushire, for the retention of which the Persians thoroughly expected us to stipulate, in 1857. Of the trade of the port I shall speak in subsequent chapters upon the Gulf, and upon Persian Commerce. I may here say that in 1889 the customs were sold by the Saad-el-Mulk for 91,000 *tomans*, or 26,000*l.* + 5,000 *tomans*, or 1,400*l.*, *pishkesh*, i.e. present to himself; the farmer also making a large profit, so that the actual amount levied upon imports and exports was greatly in excess of this sum.

Reshire

About six miles to the south of the town are the ruins of the old Portuguese fort of Reshire.[1] This was no doubt the earliest settlement on the peninsula of Mesambria; for in the mounds here have been found bricks with cuneiform characters, and other remains of a considerable antiquity.[2] The Portuguese established a trading station and built a fort here in the sixteenth century, but were turned out by the Persians after the capture of Ormuz in 1622. The fort was repaired in 1856, and occupied by Persian troops, who made a gallant but ineffectual resistance against the British, the latter losing four officers in the attack. It covers a quadrangular space, 250 yards in diameter, and the ramparts still retain a steep and lofty profile, and the remains

[1] Ouseley suggests the impossible derivation *Reis shehr*, i.e. chief or captain of cities. It might be *Ras-shehr* (cape of the city) or *Rig-shehr*. General Schindler explains it as Riv-Ardeshir.

[2] The principal of these are a number of old sculptured tombstones, probably of the Arab period (*vide* Morier's *Second Journey*, p. 45); and an immense collection of stone and earthenware vases of rude shape and fabrication, sealed up with earthenware lids or with coverings of talc, sometimes lined inside with a coating of bitumen, and containing human skulls and bones. A great number of these have been found between Bushire and Reshire, at a depth of about two feet below the surface, usually placed horizontally in a long line, one after the other. The jars are about three feet in length and one foot in diameter. They are supposed to have contained the remains of Zoroastrians, after the body had perished by exposure.—*Vide* Ouseley, vol. i. p. 217, and Colonel Johnson, *Journey from India*, pp. 19–20.

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of the old ditch. Near here the Indo-European Telegraph department shifted its quarters from Bushire in 1876, to a series of fine buildings, six in number, with a club-room, garden, and lawn-tennis court. Just below, the wires run down into the sea. A little further inland is Sebzabad, the summer quarters of the British Resident, a commodious verandahed building with a pretty garden, and a mud volcano in the grounds. Hither he retires with his staff in the hot months; but it struck me that the place is situated too far from the sea to get the full benefit of whatever breeze may be generated by the Persian Gulf.

The Union Jack fluttering from the summit of the Residency flag-staff is no vain symbol of British ascendency in Bushire. British influence The steamers lying at the anchorage are with scarcely an exception British steamers; the goods that crowd the stalls in the bazaar are British or Indian goods; the rupee is as readily, nay more readily, accepted than the *kran*. There must be many a Persian who has contrasted the smart bodyguard of the British Resident with the slatternly escort of the native Governor. In appearance and structure the English quarter of the town is not unlike an Indian station; while the friendly sentiments of the populace were unmistakably shown by the manner in which was celebrated at Bushire the Jubilee of the British Queen. For nearly twenty years the interests of this country have been in the faithful keeping of Colonel Ross in this distant outport, not of British power, but of British influence; and he has lately handed over to his successor a position whose unwritten authority is among the many silent monuments to the British name.

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# PERSIAN SHORE.

## Bushire as a Terminus.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

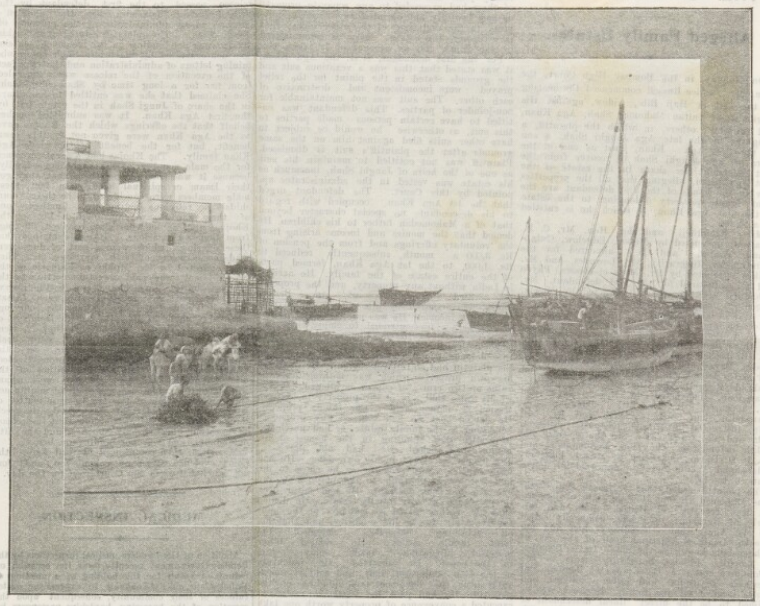
BUSHIRE, January.

On the voyage from Bombay to Mahomerah it was my good fortune to travel with a distinguished savant who probably knows more of the geography of Southern Persia and Turkish Arabistan than any other living European. And we fell a' talking, as everyone must who visits the Gulf, of the Baghdad railway and the most suitable terminus. Statesmen and publicists attack the railway problem sporadically; for those who live in the Gulf it is the ever recurring question of the day. It is impossible for anyone who has not spent pleasant hours in these waters to realise the tremendous chance that will be effected by the advent of the iron road into regions where the only transporting agency is the pack saddle and the only highway an erratic mule track; where commerce moves languidly under the mild stimulus of Arab individuality or wilts under the blight of Persian misrule; where the only strong hand is that of Great Britain, which has grasped nothing for herself that is not open to all the world—equality of opportunity in waters where British guns beat down piracy and lawlessness. The suggestion was made that a s'ution would best be found by the internationali ation of the line beyond Ereglı on the model of the Suez Canal. "Then," said our savant, passing his finger over a map criss-crossed with the record of his journeyings "why not terminate it at Bushire?"

Why not Bushire? Well because when you reach Bushire you have violently to readjust all your notions of what constitutes a harbour. For harbour there is none, in the true sense of the term. There is a long, open roadstead so indifferently protected that in stormy weather it is dangerous to maintain communication with the shore. Even this indifferent roadstead is so shallow that the outer anchorage is seven miles from the landing place. The British men-of-war, of which one or another is generally to be found in touch with the Residency, moor so far out that they are barely identifiable smudges. True there is an inner anchorage; but thereby hangs a tale. A narrow bar cuts off the inner anchorage from the open sea, and the channel has silted up until there are only ten feet of water at low tide. Consequently shallow draught vessels, or those which can afford to wait for high water, alone can use this anchorage. There is a legend—a scarcely credible one to those who have seen the Persian Government at work—that a dredger was once bought to clear the channel, and that it decayed in halcyon idleness until it found a permanent home at the bottom of the sea. Without ocular proof no-one who has seen Persia will believe that a dredger was bought. If it were, the last thing it would accomplish, in Persian hands, would be the removal of so much as a teaspoonful of mud.

If these incurable natural defects were not sufficient to remove Bushire from the category of possible railway termini, remains the fact that it is smitten with the palsy of Persian rule. To learn how worthless civilised Government can be, you must come under the shadow of Teheran. Viewed from the sea, in the sparkling freshness of a December morning, Bushire is not unpleasing to the eye. On the Western face of a low sandy promontory spreads the town. First the palace of the Ilvya Begi, crowned by a low tower which might have been spoiled from some schloss in the Rhineland or the Tirol; then a horde of mean mud-coloured dwellings, distinguished only by their "bagirs," or wind towers; next an array of flagstaffed palaces, the residences of the Consuls who have—perhaps one ought to say have not—interests in the Gulf; until in the remote distance there cluster the big buildings which house the Telegraph staff; and finally, as lonely as the Bombay Government at Mahableshwar, the British Residency. But wherever it touches Persian rule, this outward pleasantness of Bushire is a whited sepulchre.

Draw near, and you begin to understand the art how not to rule. There is, near the Customs House, a wretched apology for a quay; but you are bidden hasten your departure from the mail steamer, lest even the flat-bottomed launch be unable to reach the shore. And this is the principal sea-port in the Gulf, which has been open for a century and a half to foreign trade, and admits, in good years, a commerce worth million and a half sterling! There is not a street or a road in the town towards which the Persian Government has contributed a penny. The narrow, beaten mud tracks between prison-like houses, reek of filth. The covered bazaar, pulsating as it is with activity, is a picture of squalor in comparison with the cool cleanliness of Koweit; you must be ever on your guard last a loosely-ridden donkey or a burly mule thrust you violently against the shanties which they call shops. On the western face of the peninsula, facing the sea, there is the possibility of a delightful marina; the crumbling track threatens to disappear into the water. This is Persian rule in the Gulf. Wherever foreign influence is touched, there



The Harbour Front at Bushire.

barter chickens for a livelihood—the outward and visible sign of Persian sovereignty. Nothing could better illustrate the difference between the two forces at work in Bushire; it is impossible to discover any form of government activity except the collection of taxes.

And just think for a moment of the history of Bushire. When the East India Company founded a Factory here in 1763 there was nothing on the sandy promontory but a wretched fishing village. Whatever Bushire is to-day, with its population of twenty thousand and trade of one and a half millions, British enterprise has made it. During that century and a half Bushire has owed nothing to government except for a few months in 1857, when to punish the Persians for their aggressive policy towards Herat, Bushire was seized, and a British officer reigned as a benevolently despotic governor of the town. There are those who argue that having occupied Bushire we should have held it; certainly we owe the Gulf some reparation for the destruction of Portuguese power at Ormuz; we bent into desolation the only entrepot of trade in these waters, and set up nothing in its place. It would have been better, perhaps, to have stiffened the authority of the local Arabs, for it was not until the middle of the last century that the centralising policy of Teheran succeeded in crushing the authority of the local Sheikhs. As Koweit and Bahrein show, something can be done with the Arab: the Persian shore is painful witness to the fact that nothing can be done with the Persian. For behind the jealous incompetence that has begrudged every step in the British development of Bushire, lies the incapacity which has done nothing to foster, much to obstruct, its trade with the interior. Bushire has very little local traffic: it is the port of entry and departure for Shiraz, Isfahan and the central tableland. The road to Shiraz is a natural mule track, owing nothing whatsoever to man, and ascends to the tableland by a series of appalling Kotals. Teheran can neither make a road nor even guard a track; robberies are of common occurrence and riots in Shiraz part of the daily life.

Bushire is typical of the whole of the Persian littoral. Lingah is the most attractive of the three southern Persian ports. It has only an open roadstead; but it is a fairly convenient and protected anchorage. The houses which stretch along the sea front are well built, and the palm groves, backed by delicately-chiselled hills, lend a certain air of grace to the town. But the prosperity of Lingah has departed. It is the terminus of no caravan routes to the interior, and owed its importance to the transit trade for the Persian Coast. Not content with the rigid collection of the customary dues, the Belgian officials imposed special levies on the transit trade with the result that the commerce port which a handful of English publicists were desperately anxious to present to Russia, without thought of the fact that Russia has absolutely no trade interests here, no share in the caravan trade from Bunder Abbas to the interior, no part whatsoever in the life of the town except the maintenance of a Consul who has no legitimate business to transact. This is the one port in the Gulf which has been declared within the sphere of British influence in Southern Persia.

And what a port! An anchorage miles from the shore; a long line of dingy houses built on a dingy coast; a climate unutterably vile, for the town is scorched between the rays of a pitiless sun and those which are reflected from the sheer wall of mountain rock that rises just fifteen miles to the landward. In the drab life of the Persian shore, existence in Bunder Abbas is of a unique drabness. For a description of its climate we cannot do better than turn to the pages of Master John Fitch who wrote in 1583 words that are true to-day: "Nature seemed not to have designed that it should be inhabited. It is situated at the foot of a ridge of mountains of excessive height; the air you breathe seems to be on fire; mortal vapours continually exhale from the bowels of the earth; the fields are black and dry as if they had been scorched by fire." As a trade centre Bunder Abbas is not without advantages. It is the natural port of entry for Yezd and Central Persia in one direction and for Seistan and Khorassan in the other, and though it has suffered from the competition of the Seistan route, will remain a considerable port unless rail connections are made from other centres with Central Persia and Seistan. Of the possibility of so equipping Bunder Abbas with facilities for transit that it will be able to compete with other trade centres in the new conditions which will soon be established in the Gulf, I will deal later. But the chief importance of Bunder Abbas lies in its strategic position. Situated at the entrance to the Gulf, it overlooks the entrance to the Clarence Straits, between Kishm and the mainland, where the Navies of the world might lie at their ease. Anywhere towards the eastern end of the Clarence Straits a magnificent harbour might be made by any Power which cared to find the money, and protected by fortifications on Kishm, Ormuz and Larak, it could be rendered immune against attack. The Power which controlled Bunder Abbas and the adjacent island might also control every ton of shipping which entered the Gulf. There could be no stronger illustration of the insensate folly, or ignorance, which dictated the Persian section of the Anglo-Russian Agreement than this painful fact—the limit of the British sphere was drawn at Bunder Abbas, leaving in the neutral zone those islands without which

progressive freedom of constitutional rule. We can only deal with things as we find them. The first-fruits of the revolution in Persia are to make the conditions of trade infinitely worse than they used to be. In Bushire the talk was all of faction fights in Shiraz, and of the dangers of the Shiraz road. In Bunder Abbas the town was ablaze with riot, and for long not a boat would venture from the shore. The Kerman route is more insecure than it has been for many a year. Out of this welter Persia may throw up a better rule than the old corrupt despotism; but the march of events will not await that day. The destiny of the Gulf is in stronger hands; it will be settled on lines remote from the Persian shore.

## ST. ANDREW'S HOME.

The Rev. Dr. Graham of Kalimpong addressed a large meeting of the Bombay Missionary Conference in the Hall of the Young Men's Christian Association on Monday night upon the work of the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes. The lecture was illustrated by a series of lantern slides which not only gave a good idea of the beautiful surroundings of these cottage Homes in the Eastern Himalayas, but also formed a striking record of the growth and success of the Institution, started only seven years ago with two children in a small bungalow hired for the purpose, the Homes now educate and provide for over two hundred children, drawn from the poorest classes of the domiciled Anglo-Indian community. From the beginning Dr. Graham's purpose was to get these children away from the slums of Calcutta and other Indian towns and from the equally depressing environment of life among natives on the tea gardens of Assam and Sylhet, and to train them in habits of industry and self-reliance in the bracing climate of the Kalimpong hills. Kalimpong is about 26 miles east of Darjeeling, and the Homes are built at the planters' favourite elevation of about 5,000ft. It was intended, at first, to train the children for colonial life. The late Dr. Barnardo had promised to cooperate in starting the boys in the Colonies along with his own home-bred children. For that reason the word "colonial" was introduced into the name of the Homes, and the training was specially intended to fit the children for emigration to the colonies. There are no servants in the whole institution. The children do their own cooking and washing; and latterly as the first children admitted have begun to grow big, the carpentry and garden-work have also been undertaken by the pupils themselves.

Each cottage holds twenty-six children, and is presided over by two ladies, called respectively, the House Mother and the Aunt. The cottage have all been built at different times by private subscription and are distinguished by different names.

The school teachers, like the House-Mothers, have come from Home or from the colonies, and in addition to the literary teachers, there are qualified instructors in agriculture and horticulture. The agricultural work has developed so rapidly that it now pro-

## THE AGA KHAN'S CASE.

### Alleged Family Estates.

On Monday, in the Bombay High Court, the Hon. Mr. Justice Russell commenced the hearing of the suit of Haji Bibi, widow, against His Highness Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan, and thirteen others, in which the plaintiff, a daughter of the late Aga Janghi Shah, a son of the first Aga Khan, sued as one of the heirs of Aga Janghi Shah to recover from the first defendant her share in the estate of the first Aga Khan, alleging that all the properties now in the hands of the first defendant are the joint family property belonging to the estate of the first Aga Khan, in which she is entitled to a share.

Mr. Bahadurji and the Hon. Mr. C. H. Setalvad, instructed by Messrs. Edgelow, Gulabchand, Wadia, and Co., appeared for the plaintiff. Mr. Inverarity, Mr. Lowndes, and Mr. Raikes instructed by Mr. Moos of Messrs. Payne and Co., appeared for the first defendant. Mr. Bahadurji and Mr. Desai, instructed by Messrs. ...gelow, ...ulabchand Wadia and Co., appeared for the second defendant Bechee ...ahib. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Jardine, instructed by Mr. Moos of Messrs. Payne and Co., appeared for the third defendant Bechee Shamsood Mooluk. Mr. Branson and Mr. Vicaji instructed by ...essrs. Payne and Co., appeared for the fourth and sixth defendants. Khudiagah Bebee and Shahzade Begum. The Hon. Mr. Scott and Mr. Strangman, instructed by Messrs. Payne and Co., appeared for the fifth defendant Aga Shamsudin Shah. Mr. Padshah and Mr. Lala ...kaka, instructed by Messrs Pestonji. Rustom, Kola and Co., appeared for the seventh and eighth defendants. The Hon. Mr. Setalvad and Mr. J. D. Davar, instructed by Messrs. Edgelow, Gulabchand, Wadia and Co., appeared for defendants 9 to 14.

The plaintiff stated that Hasan Alli Shah, alias Mahomed Hassan Hossain, late of Bombay but less recently of British Sind, and formerly of Kerman in Persia, commonly called the 1st Aga Khan, hereditary chief and undisputed Imam or spiritual head of the sect of Mahomedans known as the Shiah Imam Ismailia, or Ismaili Shiahs, hereditary Imam of the community known as the Khojas of Bombay and elsewhere in India and other countries, and titular head of his own family, deceased, was or claimed to be the direct lineal descendant of Imam Ismail, son of one Jaffer Sadig, 6th Imam of the Shiahs through the Fatemaid Khalifs of Cairo. As such spiritual head, the first Aga Khan was the recipient of large, valuable, and frequent offerings and presents from the Khojas and also from Ismaili Shiahs. He also received an allowance of Rs. 3,000 per month from the Government of India. All the emoluments or the investments now representing the same, formed parts of the entire estate of the family wherein plaintiff claimed to have rights. The 1st Aga Khan arrived in Bombay in 1845, prior to which year he possessed extensive estates in Persia and elsewhere, and after 1845 he commenced to purchase estates in British India out of the income thereof and the allowance and the gains of his office. The first defendant is now the titular head of the family, and as such received the offerings and presents and an allowance from Government, held and managed immovable property and cash, etc., of the estimated value of about Rs. 20,000,000 (two crores). The first defendant had from time to time sold off several properties and had invested the sale proceeds in the purchase of other properties now standing in the names of his nominees, all of which, however, formed part of the family estate, wherein the plaintiff claimed to have rights. The plaint, after giving a genealogy of the family of the 1st Aga Khan's family, said that every member of the family had resided rent free in some house or houses belonging to the estate, and had received personal monthly allowances, and the salaries of servants, etc., and had also been provided with food, servants, carriages, etc. These allowances and comforts were enjoyed by the members as heirs and heiresses jointly entitled to shares in the family estate, as a portion or on account of what they would be entitled to receive as heirs under the Mahomedan law of inheritance. The shares had been undivided and had never been actually ascertained. The right of the members as heirs was never once questioned by any member of the family until the execution of an indenture of release. The first Aga Khan died in 1881, leaving three widows, three sons, and three daughters; and all his heirs and heiresses jointly succeeded to his estate. After giving a genealogy of the various descendants of the 1st Aga Khan, the plaint stated, that his widows, sons, and daughters, and their issue continued to live as an undivided family. Upon the death of the 2nd Aga Khan, the first defendant succeeded him as titular head of the family. He was, however, a minor aged ten years, and accordingly his mother, Bibi Shamsool Mooluk, defendant No 3 acted as manager of the joint family estate during his minority, that is, till the year 1897, when he attained majority and assumed the management of the estate. In the year 1899, disputes began to arise in the family and had continued up to the present time. Since 1901 the personal allowances of the members of the family had been considerably reduced by the first defendant, and threats were in certain instances held out that the same would be entirely stopped. The plaint then referred to an indenture of 11th September, 1901, and its recitals, and stated that the estate of Aga Janghi Shah, the right and claim whereof upon the family estate were surrendered, was worth more than Rs. 30,00,000 (forty lakhs) on the supposition that the value of the entire family estate was only Rs. 2,00,00,000 (two crores) which the plaintiff believed, was an under estimate. Plaintiff was advised that Aga Shamsudin Shah had legally no right to execute the indenture of release of 11th September, 1901. Plaintiff was never consulted regarding the indenture, nor was she informed of it. It was not binding upon her and she altogether repudiated it. The plaintiff also challenged recitals in an indenture of 26th September, 1901. She was informed that several of the defendants claimed to be entitled as joint heirs to share on the entire estate and to maintenance out of the estate in virtue of a family custom and usage. Plaintiff prayed among other things, that it may be declared that, upon the death of the 1st Aga Khan, his heirs and heiresses and his descendants still formed a family joint and undivided in estate, that none of them had succeeded to any separate property or had lawfully appropriated any specific property to the exclusion, of the other heirs; that if necessary, the estate may be administered by the Court, and an account of it taken, etc.

For the first defendant, H.H. the Aga Khan, it was stated that this was a vexatious suit and the grounds stated in the plaint for the relief prayed were inconsistent and destructive of each other. The suit was not maintainable for non-joinder of parties. This defendant was entitled to have certain persons made parties to this suit, as otherwise he would be subject to have other suits filed against him on the same grounds after the plaintiff's suit is dismissed. Plaintiff was not entitled to maintain his suit as one of the heirs of Janghi Shah, inasmuch as his estate was vested in the administrator appointed by this Court. The defendant urged that the 1st Aga Khan occupied with regard to his descendants no special character beyond that of a Mahomedan father to his children. He denied that the monies and income arising from the voluntary offerings and from the pension of Rs. 3,000 a month, subsequently reduced to Rs. 1,000, to the 1st Aga Khan, formed parts of the entire estate of the family. He arrived in India without any property, and the property he died possessed of in British India, was acquired by him out of the savings of his own income. He was not "a titular head" of the phrase was intended to imply that his property belonged to the family, which allegation he denied. The offerings and pension to the defendant were his private property; and the plaintiff had no interest therein. He managed his own property which was nothing like the value of two crores of rupees as alleged. It was wholly false that any of the property in his possession or management was family property. He denied that he had sold off any properties belonging to the family estate, or had purchased properties now standing in the names of his nominees as alleged. He had not purchased any properties except in his own name. He had dealt with his own property as he chose to do, and was not accountable to the plaintiff or any one else for such dealings. He had never been in possession of any family estate. He denied that his mother acted as manager of the joint family estate during his minority, and that he, on attaining majority, managed the joint family estate. He denied other material allegations made against him in the paint. He admitted the indenture of the 11th September, 1901, and said it was a valid bona fide document and binding on the plaintiff. He had paid Rs. 40,000 in cash and executed a conveyance of property worth one lakh of rupees. He believed that the plaintiff had received portion of the Rs. 40,000 from Aga Shamsudin Shah. He said that the defendants Nos. 9, 10, 11, and 13 were acting in collusion with the plaintiff and that they were made parties to the suit to set up a false claim. He denied that these defendants were joint heirs in virtue of a family custom or usage as alleged. The bulk of the property that he possessed was derived from the voluntary offerings which were made by his followers. He lived in a manner befitting his position. Plaintiff had nothing to do with the way in which he chose to spend his property. He admitted that he reduced the personal allowances and advantages given to some of the persons who were in the receipt of the same because he desired that they should not lead an altogether idle life and should have some incentive to work. He stopped the allowances and advantages that the plaintiff had enjoyed because she set up a legal right to the same from him. The defendant further averred that the expenditure made on different members of the family had always been made out of the private income of the Aga Khan for the time being, and since the 1st Aga Khan's death had not been made out of the income of the property left by the 1st Aga Khan. The amount so expended for the benefit of the persons who were heirs of the 1st Aga Khan was very much in excess of the share which such persons were entitled to according to Mahomedan law, and in particular the amounts received by or expended on Jangi Shah and his heirs was very much in excess of Jangi Shah's legal share in the 1st Aga Khan's estate, and if it was held by the Court that such allowances and expenditure were matters of bounty and favour, but were paid by reason of any legal obligation or on account of the share of the person receiving the benefit thereof in the 1st Aga Khan's estate, the defendant counterclaimed against the plaintiff and claimed to have credit for all such allowances and expenditure against the plaintiff's claim and to recover the amount that might be found to have been overpaid. Plaintiff had misjoined several causes of action in this suit and had also joined claims by her personally with claims made as heir of Janghi Shah. He said the suit ought to be dismissed with costs.

Mr. Bahadurji read the plaint and written statement.

Mr. Bahadurji in his opening address traced the history of the Aga Khans from the time the first Aga Khan arrived in Bombay. He maintained that when the first Aga Khan left Persia he was possessed of considerable property in that country. He then travelled through Beluchistan and arrived in Sind. Whilst there he rendered assistance to the British with the irregular troops whom he had brought with him and earned as a reward a monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 from the Government of India. He also acquired large properties in that province from the offerings which he received from his followers there. He arrived in Bombay in 1845, and as was usual with the people here he was given a very warm welcome by the Khojas and presented with large offerings. The first Aga Khan, Hasan Ali Shah died leaving behind him three widows, three sons and three daughters. His eldest son Ali Shah succeeded him as the spiritual head of the Khojas. After Ali Shah's death the mother of the present Aga Khan managed the affairs during the latter's minority. Counsel submitted that during all this time the various members of the Aga Khan's family lived in the different family residences and received allowances, comforts and other requisites. When a male member of the family attained majority he was given a separate residence and a suitable allowance; while a female member was got married at the expense of the Aga Khan for the time being and suitably maintained. This went on during the time of the first and second Aga Khans and of the present Aga Khan's mother and even in the time of the present Aga Khan. In 1896, however, certain unfortunate events occurred which embittered the feelings of the plaintiff and other members of Jungi Shah's family, which in September 1901 culminated in the execution of a release passed to the first defendant by the fifth defendant Shamsudin Shah, the plaintiff's brother, as an administrator of the property of Jungi Shah. The plaintiff stated that this release was not binding on her inasmuch as she was not consulted by Shamsudin Shah before obtaining letters of administration and that the fact of the execution of the release was concealed from her for a long time by Shamsudin Shah. She claimed that she was entitled to her share in the share of Jungi Shah in the estate left by the first Aga Khan. It was submitted on her behalf that the offerings which the Khojas gave to the Aga Khan were given not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole Aga Khan family. The Khojas had a great reverence for the male, members of the Aga Khan's family, because it was from among them that they got their Imam or spiritual head. In fact, these male members were considered to be their "murshids" or religious instructors. Further, one of them was always appointed a Pir of the Khojas, and as such he also received offerings from them on occasions. It was explained that these offerings, which were a sort of dues were made on occasions of birth, marriage, etc. They were collected by the Mukhi or Kamadia of the Khoja jamat, who paid a certain portion to the expenses of the Jamatkhana and to the reserve fund set apart in connection with each Jamatkhana. Besides the Aga Khan, the offerings were also made to the other male members of the Aga Khan whenever they went to the jamatkhanas and they were dealt with in the same manner as the offerings made to the Aga Khan were treated. Counsel submitted that the contention of the first defendant that these offerings were meant for his own personal use and that he maintained the other members of the family as a matter of bounty and not of right was wholly incorrect. Counsel cited authorities to show that the release in question affected only the first and the fifth defendants, and was not binding on her.

Mr. Desai then commenced to read before the Court evidence taken on commission, and had not concluded when the Court rose for the day.

## MEDICAL INSPECTION.

Abolition of the Bunders medical inspections by the Bombay Government recently, was the occasion on Saturday evening for the holding of a meeting of Mahomedans, chiefly Konkanis, to express the gratefulness of their community, consequent upon the cessation of the harassing hardships undergone by coasting steamers often experienced, and upon the relief obtained by the cancellation of the quarantine rules promulgated in this behalf. About a week ago the Hindus held a great meeting for a similar purpose in the Jain Dharamasthan in Chinchpoogly, Bombay, under the presidency of Sir Bhalchandra Krishna; a report of its proceedings was published in these columns on Tuesday, the 28th January. Sir Bhalchandra criticised, in the course of his remarks, the precautionery measures, demanded by the Venice Convention to prevent the spread of the plague in Europe, backed up as they were by the opinions of European experts. He pointed out that it required no little courage to break through a long record of official obstruction, and to brush aside the fictitious terrors which had paralysed the predecessors in office of his Excellency Sir George Clarke, the present Governor of Bombay. Mr. James Macdonald, who presided at Saturday's meeting of Konkani Musalmans, gave other side of these points.

The meeting was held in the spacious hall of the newly-built Ahmed Dewji and Brothers' house, in the Chandan Baug, which is also known as Kazi Mohalla, owning to the residence of the Kazis there. Mr. Mahomed Hasan Makba proposed, and Khan Saheb Kazi Mahomedali Murgay, seconded, that Mr. James Macdonald do take the chair. The Kazi explained that the meeting was specially of Konkani Musalmans, who chiefly were concerned with the passenger traffic of the coasting vessels going to Ratnagiri and the Konkan.

Petition forwarded by the Kazi to Government about the hardships experienced under the Bunder medical inspection regulations, and the reply to it by Government, were read to the meeting after which Moulvi Bafiuddin Ahmed moved the following proposition, making some appropriate remarks in the matter:—"This public meeting of Bombay Mahomedans desires to express its great satisfaction at the ready and sympathetic response which H. E. the Governor-in-Council has given to the petition submitted by Khan Saheb Kazi Mahomedali Murgay, and others, on the 1st January on behalf of the Konkani Mahomedans resident in Bombay, which prayed for a discontinuance of the Bunder medical inspection for passengers travelling in the Presidency by coasting vessels; and it sincerely thanked H. E. in Council for the relief given."

Seconded by Mr. M. Ahmed Khan, and supported by Mr. Mahomed Hoosen Baig, the proposition was unanimously agreed to. A second resolution was passed, authorising the Chairman to forward the foregoing resolution to H. E. the Governor.

Mr. Macdonald then addressed the meeting in English. He said, he had to thank those present cordially for the honour they had done him in asking him to preside at this meeting. But he was not quite clear as to whether he was justified in assuming the position, and with their kind permission, he would tell them the reason why! He was one of those who believed in avoiding danger to life, almost at any cost to inconvenience and even harassment—at that he had known cases of reported harassment, which on close examinati n, had proved to be almost infinitesimal. All along, he had held that one case of plague kept out of a town or village, prevented the loss of ten, twenty, or possibly more, lives. Segregation also had caused much family inconvenience; notwithstanding which, it had led to the salvation of many lives. In favour of inoculation, he had pleaded from the earliest days of its introduction exemplifying its protective efficacy in his own person several times, and recommending it strongly whenever and wherever he could. On everyone present in the meeting, he would most strongly urge to undergo the comparatively trifling inconvenience of submitting to the operation for gaining the security it brought. In passing the resolution of thanks to H. E. the Governor-in-Council, it was, he trusted, clearly understood that no reflection was cast upon the previous Governors, who had felt it to be their duty to try, amongst other means to prevent the spreading of plague, the unpalatable one of examining travellers by coasting vessels. Understanding the sense of the meeting to be such, he would have great pleasure in forwarding it to Government. (Applause.)

A vote of thanks to Mr. Macdonald as chairman, and to other gentlemen connected with the movement, was passed, Mr. Macdonald was presented with flowers.

## BOMBAY CORPORATION.

### The Stores Defalcations.

A meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation was held on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Joseph Baptista in the chair.

The Committee considered a letter from the Municipal Commissioner, notifying that in response to the invitation of tenders for the supply of stationery and drawing and surveying materials during the year 1908-09, three tenders were received and that the tender of Mr. G. Abdul Hussein was the lowest both for stationery and drawing and surveying materials. This tenderer had, however, lodged very few samples of stationery and none of drawing and surveying materials, although in the notice inviting tenders the tenderers were specially asked to lodge samples of approved quality and were distinctly given to understand that no notice would be taken of tenders unless they were accompanied by samples of approved quality. The samples of stationery lodged by him were also not of approved quality. He was requested to call at the Municipal Office to show his samples, but as he was not found at the address given by him in his tender the letter was posted. He not having responded to the call the packet of his samples was opened in his absence, with the result given above. He (the Commissioner) had therefore decided to reject his tender. The next lowest tender was that of Mr. Hasanali Abdulalli for both articles and as he had lodged all samples, which were of approved quality, the Commissioner requested the sanction of the Standing Committee to a contract being entered into with him for the supply of stationery at rates aggregating Rs. 19,132-9-0.

The necessary sanction was granted.

The Committee considered a letter from the Municipal Commissioner forwarding for sanction a proposal from the Municipal solicitors for compromising the suit filed against Messrs King, King and Co., for recovery of the amount misappropriated by the late storekeeper, Bowden.

The Municipal solicitors, in their letter to the Commissioner, said:—We have the honour to state that overtures for a settlement of this claim having been made by Messrs. Craigie, Lynch and Owen on behalf of the defendants. We suggested to them that they should write to us officially stating what amount their clients were prepared to pay in settlement of the claim so that we could obtain instructions on the matter and they informed us, without prejudice, that with a view to avoiding litigation, with the Municipality, their clients were prepared to pay one half of the Municipal claim against them, each party paying their own cost of the suit to date.

We thereupon communicated with the solicitors of the Indian Guarantee and Suretyship Association, Limited, the Guarantors of the Municipality (at whose request the suit was filed), as to the proposal of Messrs. Craigie, Lynch and Owen and they informed us that in their client's opinion, the amount offered in settlement was too small considering the heavy legal expenses already incurred but that they were willing to settle for Rs. 7,000, each party bearing their own cost.

As, however, the amount of the Municipal claim in this suit is Rs. 19,961-4-7 of which only Rs. 10,000 is guaranteed by the Association, we wrote to the solicitors of the Association asking them to place it on record that Rs. 961-4-7 was to be paid in the first instance out of any sum received in settlement from Messrs. King, King and Co. and that in determining the balance payable by the Association under their guarantee and the agreement entered into by the Association with the Municipality they would only be credited with such amount received from Messrs. King, King and Co. as remained after deducting this unguaranteed sum of Rs. 961-4-7 and we enclose herewith for your information copy of a letter dated the 28th ultimo received by us from the solicitors of the Indian Guarantee and Suretyship Association stating that their clients would settle for Rs. 8,000, and that of this offer was accepted Rs. 961-4-7 would be paid by their clients to the Municipality in addition to the Rs 10,000 already guaranteed. We accordingly wrote to Messrs. Craigie, Lynch and Owen informing them that if their clients made an offer to pay Rs. 8,000 in full settlement each party to pay their own cost, the same would be acceptable and that we had no doubt the Standing Committee would sanction a compromise on these terms and we have now heard from them in reply informing us that their clients will increase their offer to Rs. 8,000 which amount is to be accepted by the Municipality in full settlement of their claim and each party to bear their own cost and that they will send us a cheque for the amount on being informed that the proposed compromise has been sanctioned by the Standing Committee.

Under the above circumstances we shall be obliged by your obtaining the sanction of the Standing Committee at the earliest possible date to a compromise of this suit on the above terms. By such compromise the Municipality will secure payment of the unguaranteed amount of Rs. 961-4-7 (which they could only recover if the suit were successful) in addition to the Rs. 10,000 already guaranteed that is the whole amount of this claim (less the interest on Rs. 961-4-7 at 9 per cent from 30th June 1907) the cost of the suit and 4 per cent interest on the Rs. 10,000 guaranteed being payable by the Association.

The Committee sanctioned the proposed compromise of the suit.

The Committee considered a complaint from Mr. Sumebaud Dharsi and others against certain dust-bin carts at the corner of Musjid Bunder Road and Shak Gully. The Deputy Health Officer of the division in reporting on the complaint said: "The application refers to two dust-bin carts in Kazi Syed Street. These dust-bin carts have stood on this site for over 10 years. I have carefully inspected the vicinity and I find no other suitable site. The vicinity is very congested and every little place has been built upon. Fully one-half of this street is used as a vegetable market which of necessity in a great measure to the nuisance; the vegetable leavings are deposited in these carts. The contents of the carts are removed three daily and every effort is made to keep the cart and its surroundings as clean and inoffensive as practicable."

The Municipal Commissioner stated that as regards the market, the action taken by the Executive Engineer for the removal of the quarters was not effectual, he had requested the Police Commissioner to take necessary steps in the matter.

Mr. Dwarakadas Dharamsi contended that if no complaint was made by the Deputy Health Officer against the market until the petitioners complained against the nuisance caused by the dust-bin carts. He thought it unfair to remove the market, as such a course would cause great inconvenience to many people. If dust-bins were a cause of nuisance why should they not be removed to another site, especially when another site was available.

It was resolved to postpone the consideration of the subject.

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# CHAPTER XXIII

## THE EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN PROVINCES

Vadimus in campos steriles exustaque mundi,
Qua nimius Titan, et raræ in fontibus undæ,
Siccaque letiferis squalent serpentibus arva,
Durum iter.

LUCAN, *Pharsal.*, lib. ix.

IN previous chapters I have described the great province of Khorasan, occupying the entire north-eastern portion of the Shah's dominions; and also the smaller district of Seistan, which, lying on the frontier midway between Transcaspia and the Indian Ocean, is strictly speaking the most easterly portion of Iran. There remains for me to say something of what may be called the eastern-central and the south-eastern provinces, which in the one case by physical conditions, and in the other by ethnological differences, are separated from the rest of the country, and have been commonly either passed over or ignored by such travellers as prefer the beaten track, and have little taste for exploration. Nevertheless, these regions, though somewhat disconnected from the rest of Persia, are intensely Persian in their characteristics; for they contain, as a glance at the map will show, on the one hand, great commercial cities, remote from the crowded areas of population, but subsisting in the main upon export and import trade; and on the other enormous expanses of sandy or saline wilderness, responsible for ghastly voids on the map, which the intrepidity of no traveller has ever, in the face of an implacable nature, been able to fill. Of such blanks in Persian cartography there are commonly two possible explanations. Either the empty space is unexplored, or it is unexplorable. Both explanations will be found to apply to the regions which we are about to examine; although such has in recent years been the well-directed activity of British officers, sent out on surveying expeditions by the Indian Government to these parts of Persia, that my map, which embodies the results of much of their labour, will be found to contain far fewer redeemable voids

Evidence of the map

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than any previously issued; while the sadly disproportionate expanse of the two mighty deserts is a visitation from which Persia will hardly free herself till the end of time.

Cities and deserts

I will deal with the cities before I come to the deserts; and from the two I will then pass to the interesting but little-known subject of Persian Beluchistan.

Each distinct division of the Persian territories has its populous city. In the north-west is Tabriz, in the north Teheran, in the north-east Meshed, in the centre Isfahan, in the south Shiraz. The provinces of which I speak can claim two cities of similar rank, Yezd and Kerman, the former situated 200 miles (by caravan track) south-east of Isfahan, the latter rather more than the same distance south-east of Yezd, and 380 miles from the sea at Bunder Abbas. Both are famous and populous cities: both are sustained by local industry and foreign barter; and both present much the same features of habit and appearance; although Kerman must yield to Yezd, alike in number of inhabitants, in wealth, and in general prosperity.

Yezd and Kerman

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Yezd,[1] which is the capital of a district bearing the same name, is ordinarily approached, on the north, by caravan route from Kashan *viâ* Nain, or from Isfahan; on the south by similar routes from Bunder Abbas, usually traversed by camels, either *viâ* Saidabad or *viâ* Kerman. In the Persian hyperbole the city is known as Dar-el-Ibadeh, or Seat of Worship, a not inapt designation, seeing that its people, whether Mohammedans, or Babis, or Parsis, are distinguished for great strictness and zeal, and that it contains a large number of the fanatical firebrands who call themselves *seyids*. In history it has long been known; but, from its proximity to no frontier, has played both a less troublous and a less distinguished part than other cities of less importance. It was one of the legendary halting-places of Zal and Rustam while on their march from Seistan

History of Yezd

[1] Yezd has been visited and described by the following Europeans in the present century: A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii. cap. xlii.; Dr. A. Petermann (1854), *Reisen im Orient*; N. de Khanikoff (1859), *Mémoire*, pp. 200–204 (with a map); Sir F. Goldsmid (1865), *Telegraph and Travel*, pp. 570–572; Colonel Euan-Smith (1870), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 173–175; (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. pp. 71–80; E. Floyer (1877), *Unexplored Beluchistan*, cap. xiv.; A. H. Schindler (1879), *Zeit. f. Gesell. d. Erd. zu Berlin*, 1881; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. p. 256; H. B. Vaughan (1888), *Proceedings of the R. G. S.* (new series), vol. xii., 1890. The first city of Yezd was also called Askizar.

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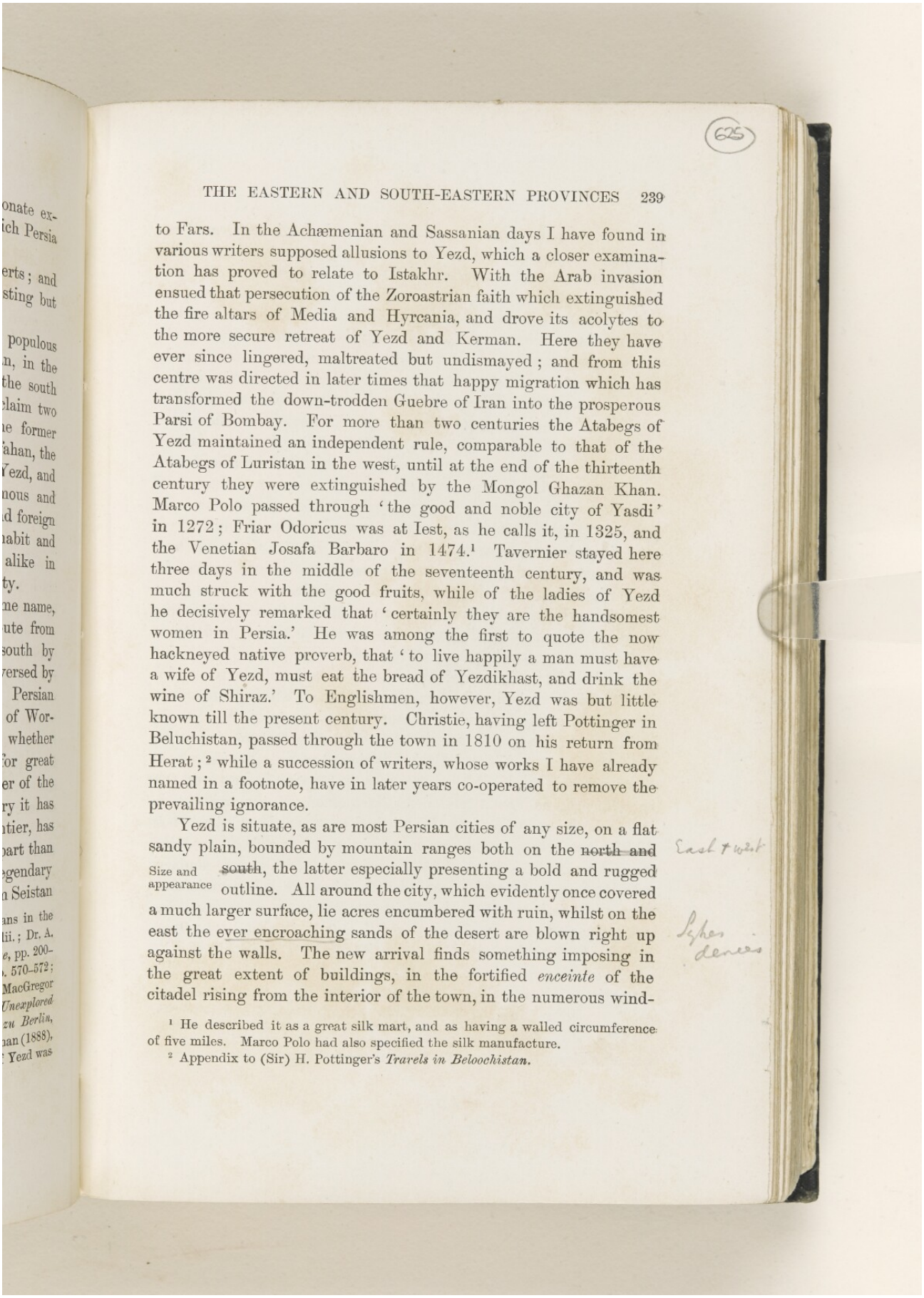

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to Fars. In the Achæmenian and Sassanian days I have found in various writers supposed allusions to Yezd, which a closer examination has proved to relate to Istakhr. With the Arab invasion ensued that persecution of the Zoroastrian faith which extinguished the fire altars of Media and Hyrcania, and drove its acolytes to the more secure retreat of Yezd and Kerman. Here they have ever since lingered, maltreated but undismayed; and from this centre was directed in later times that happy migration which has transformed the down-trodden Guebre of Iran into the prosperous Parsi of Bombay. For more than two centuries the Atabegs of Yezd maintained an independent rule, comparable to that of the Atabegs of Luristan in the west, until at the end of the thirteenth century they were extinguished by the Mongol Ghazan Khan. Marco Polo passed through 'the good and noble city of Yasdi' in 1272; Friar Odoricus was at Iest, as he calls it, in 1325, and the Venetian Josafa Barbaro in 1474.[1] Tavernier stayed here three days in the middle of the seventeenth century, and was much struck with the good fruits, while of the ladies of Yezd he decisively remarked that 'certainly they are the handsomest women in Persia.' He was among the first to quote the now hackneyed native proverb, that 'to live happily a man must have a wife of Yezd, must eat the bread of Yezdikhast, and drink the wine of Shiraz.' To Englishmen, however, Yezd was but little known till the present century. Christie, having left Pottinger in Beluchistan, passed through the town in 1810 on his return from Herat;[2] while a succession of writers, whose works I have already named in a footnote, have in later years co-operated to remove the prevailing ignorance.

Size and appearance

Yezd is situate, as are most Persian cities of any size, on a flat sandy plain, bounded by mountain ranges both on the ~~north and~~ ~~south~~, the latter especially presenting a bold and rugged outline. All around the city, which evidently once covered a much larger surface, lie acres encumbered with ruin, whilst on the east the ever encroaching sands of the desert are blown right up against the walls. The new arrival finds something imposing in the great extent of buildings, in the fortified *enceinte* of the citadel rising from the interior of the town, in the numerous wind-

East & West

Sykes

[1] He described it as a great silk mart, and as having a walled circumference of five miles. Marco Polo had also specified the silk manufacture.

[2] Appendix to (Sir) H. Pottinger's *Travels in Beloochistan.*

towers, and in the minars and front of the Musjid-i-Jama, or Great Mosque. The modern city covers a space about two miles in length, by one and a quarter in breadth, but is not entirely, as it once was, enclosed by walls. On the other hand, the fort in the interior, though for the most part ruined and built into or over, still retains a double wall, with a broad, deep ditch before the outer rampart; while the *ark* or citadel inside the fort, where the Governor resides, is separately walled to the height of thirty to forty feet. None of these defences, however, which are built of mud or of sun-dried brick, have any military value, and neither city nor situation has the least strength. The town is divided into two parts—the Old and the New—separated by a wall with two gates. The Old or southern town has seven quarters and three gates; the New or northern town has six quarters and five gates. Water is brought by underground channels, of which there are said to be over seventy, from the Shir Kuh, on the south and south-west; and the domed *abambars* or reservoirs, approached by steep flights of steps, are among the chief glories of Yezd. Otherwise its public buildings, although reported to comprise fifty mosques, eight *madressehs*, and sixty-five public baths, are deficient both in number and importance, the only edifice of any distinction being the Musjid-i-Jama, inside the fort, the erection of which is attributed to Amir Chakmak, an officer of Timur, and whose imposing blue-tiled façade and soaring minarets, although the main structure is a ruin, are the most imposing features in a *coup d'œil* of the city. The population, which at the beginning of the century is said to have been 100,000, but which sank to 40,000 in 1860–70, is now reported to have risen, if the suburbs be included, to something like the original figure, although 70,000 to 80,000 is a more probable estimate for the city itself. These totals include a variety of elements, there being a Jewish population now calculated at 2,000 (they are distinguished by being obliged to wear a patch in front of their coats), a fluctuating Hindu contingent, engaged in trade (in 1866 Sir F. Goldsmid found seventeen, in 1871 five), and a large Guebre or Parsi contribution.

The Guebres

To an English visitor the latter constitute perhaps the main attraction of Yezd. Here for hundreds of years has resided this interesting and venerable community, lending to the city and its neighbourhood, where they possess a number of villages, the service of untiring industry and respectable

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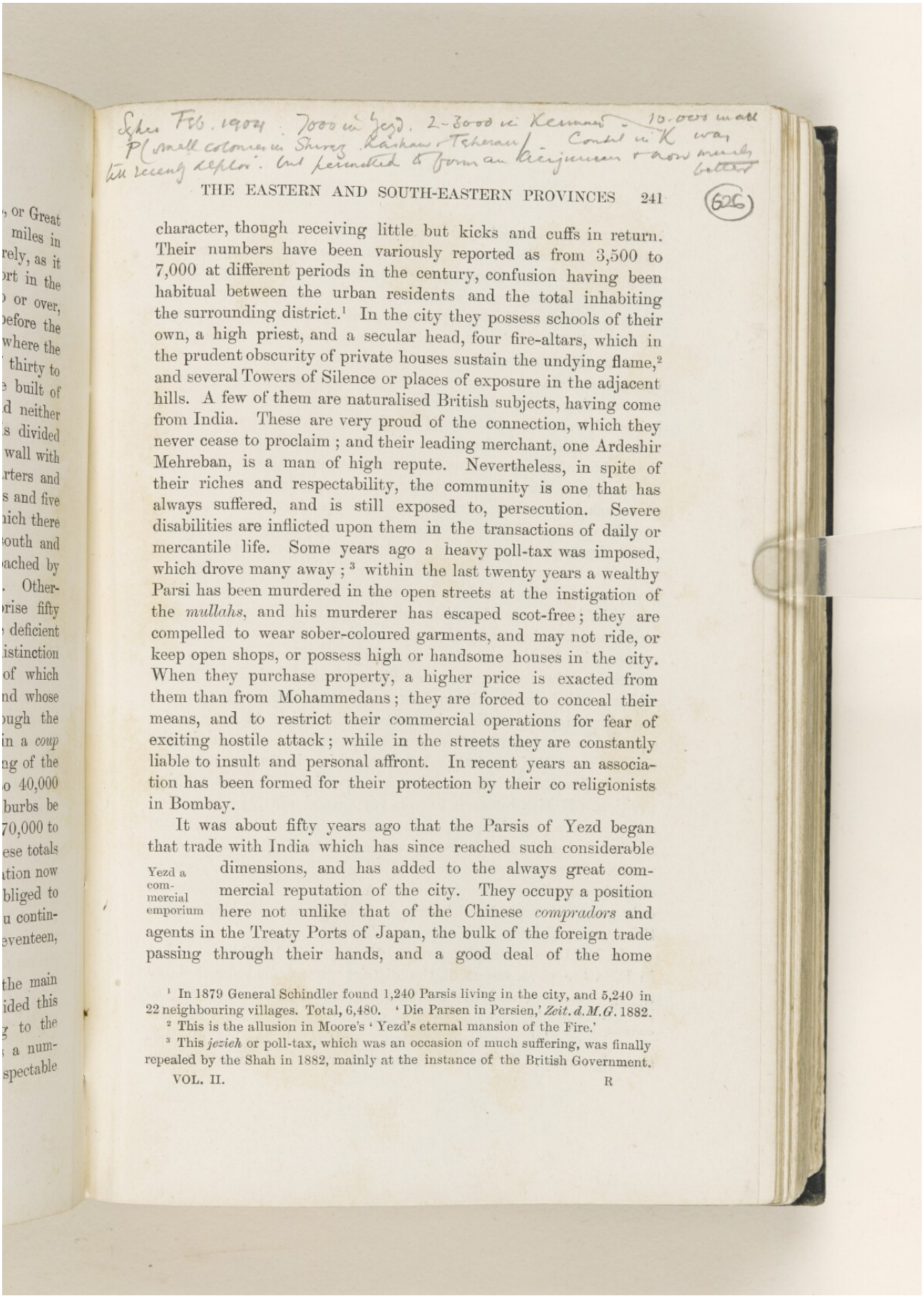

Schr Feb. 1904. 7000 in Yezd. 2-3000 in Kerman - 10-000 in all
P( small colonies in Shiraz Kashan + Teheran / Consul in K was
till recent depln. but permitted to form an Anjuman + now mostly
Gabbar



(626)

character, though receiving little but kicks and cuffs in return. Their numbers have been variously reported as from 3,500 to 7,000 at different periods in the century, confusion having been habitual between the urban residents and the total inhabiting the surrounding district.[1] In the city they possess schools of their own, a high priest, and a secular head, four fire-altars, which in the prudent obscurity of private houses sustain the undying flame,[2] and several Towers of Silence or places of exposure in the adjacent hills. A few of them are naturalised British subjects, having come from India. These are very proud of the connection, which they never cease to proclaim; and their leading merchant, one Ardeshir Mehreban, is a man of high repute. Nevertheless, in spite of their riches and respectability, the community is one that has always suffered, and is still exposed to, persecution. Severe disabilities are inflicted upon them in the transactions of daily or mercantile life. Some years ago a heavy poll-tax was imposed, which drove many away;[3] within the last twenty years a wealthy Parsi has been murdered in the open streets at the instigation of the *mullahs*, and his murderer has escaped scot-free; they are compelled to wear sober-coloured garments, and may not ride, or keep open shops, or possess high or handsome houses in the city. When they purchase property, a higher price is exacted from them than from Mohammedans; they are forced to conceal their means, and to restrict their commercial operations for fear of exciting hostile attack; while in the streets they are constantly liable to insult and personal affront. In recent years an association has been formed for their protection by their co religionists in Bombay.

Yezd a commercial emporium

It was about fifty years ago that the Parsis of Yezd began that trade with India which has since reached such considerable dimensions, and has added to the always great commercial reputation of the city. They occupy a position here not unlike that of the Chinese *compradors* and agents in the Treaty Ports of Japan, the bulk of the foreign trade passing through their hands, and a good deal of the home

[1] In 1879 General Schindler found 1,240 Parsis living in the city, and 5,240 in 22 neighbouring villages. Total, 6,480. 'Die Parsen in Persien,' *Zeit. d. M. G.* 1882.

[2] This is the allusion in Moore's 'Yezd's eternal mansion of the Fire.'

[3] This *jezieh* or poll-tax, which was an occasion of much suffering, was finally repealed by the Shah in 1882, mainly at the instance of the British Government.



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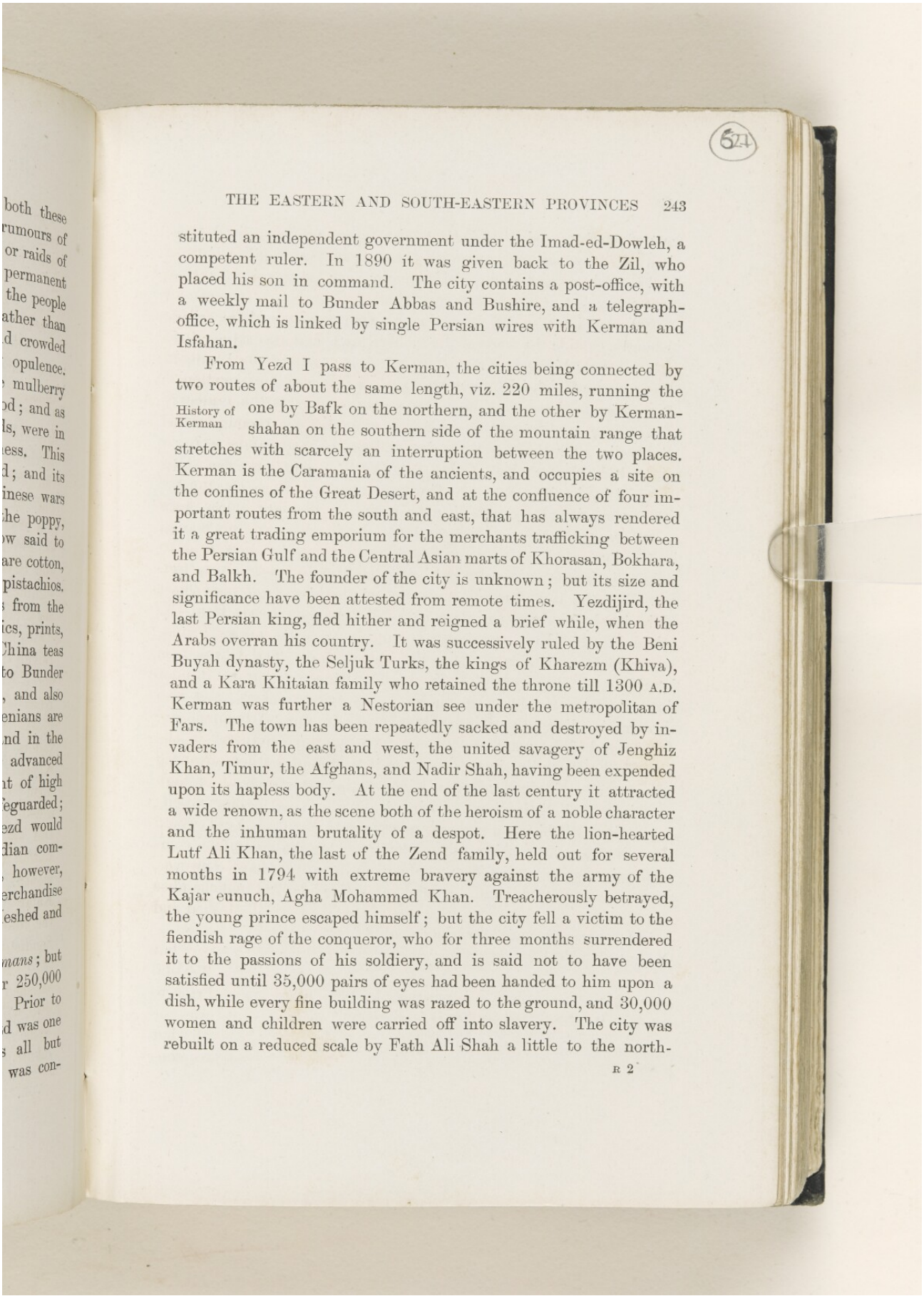
industry being likewise under their direction. In both these respects Yezd stands alone in Persia. No wars or rumours of wars affect a place situated so far inland, no *chapaus* or raids of marauding nomads now sweep up to its walls; a permanent garrison is dispensed with; the mercantile instincts of the people are even indicated in their preference for donkeys rather than horses as riding animals; and the well-kept houses and crowded bazaars sustain the impression of peaceful and busy opulence. Silk-weaving was formerly the chief local industry, the mulberry being cultivated in great abundance in the neighbourhood; and as many as 1,800 factories, employing some 9,000 hands, were in the middle of the present century engaged in the business. This has, however, declined, for reasons elsewhere displayed; and its place has been taken, particularly since the Anglo-Chinese wars and the opening of Hong Kong, by the cultivation of the poppy, 2,000 chests of the opium extracted from which are now said to leave Yezd annually. Among the remaining exports are cotton, wool, carpets, felts, madder roots, henna, almonds, and pistachios. The chief imports are English and Anglo-Indian goods from the south, and Russian wares from the north. Cotton fabrics, prints, copper, tin, lead, iron, drugs and spices, India and China teas are among the former, and are shipped from Bombay to Bunder Abbas; Russia sends oil, candles, sugar, furs, crockery, and also competes in piece-goods. A number of Russian Armenians are engaged in the import and export trade with Russia, and in the promotion of their country's interest, which is further advanced by a native Russian agent, who is a Persian merchant of high position. British interests have never been similarly safeguarded; although the appointment of a consular agent at Yezd would result in a certain and lucrative extension to Anglo-Indian commerce. Messrs. Hotz & Son and Ziegler & Co. have, however, recently established agencies here. A great deal of merchandise only passes through Yezd in transit to the bazaars of Meshed and Sebzewar, and even of Kashan and Teheran.

Revenue and government

In 1870 the revenue was reported as only 100,000 *tomans*; but in 1888 the government of the district was farmed for 250,000 *tomans*, and the customs for 47,000 *tomans*. Prior to the disgrace of the Zil-es-Sultan in 1888, Yezd was one of the many governments subjected to his all but sovereign sway. It was then separated from Fars, and was con-





stituted an independent government under the Imad-ed-Dowleh, a competent ruler. In 1890 it was given back to the Zil, who placed his son in command. The city contains a post-office, with a weekly mail to Bunder Abbas and Bushire, and a telegraph-office, which is linked by single Persian wires with Kerman and Isfahan.

History of Kerman

From Yezd I pass to Kerman, the cities being connected by two routes of about the same length, viz. 220 miles, running the one by Bafk on the northern, and the other by Kerman-shahan on the southern side of the mountain range that stretches with scarcely an interruption between the two places. Kerman is the Caramania of the ancients, and occupies a site on the confines of the Great Desert, and at the confluence of four important routes from the south and east, that has always rendered it a great trading emporium for the merchants trafficking between the Persian Gulf and the Central Asian marts of Khorasan, Bokhara, and Balkh. The founder of the city is unknown; but its size and significance have been attested from remote times. Yezdijird, the last Persian king, fled hither and reigned a brief while, when the Arabs overran his country. It was successively ruled by the Beni Buyah dynasty, the Seljuk Turks, the kings of Kharezm (Khiva), and a Kara Khitaian family who retained the throne till 1300 A.D. Kerman was further a Nestorian see under the metropolitan of Fars. The town has been repeatedly sacked and destroyed by invaders from the east and west, the united savagery of Jenghiz Khan, Timur, the Afghans, and Nadir Shah, having been expended upon its hapless body. At the end of the last century it attracted a wide renown, as the scene both of the heroism of a noble character and the inhuman brutality of a despot. Here the lion-hearted Lutf Ali Khan, the last of the Zend family, held out for several months in 1794 with extreme bravery against the army of the Kajar eunuch, Agha Mohammed Khan. Treacherously betrayed, the young prince escaped himself; but the city fell a victim to the fiendish rage of the conqueror, who for three months surrendered it to the passions of his soldiery, and is said not to have been satisfied until 35,000 pairs of eyes had been handed to him upon a dish, while every fine building was razed to the ground, and 30,000 women and children were carried off into slavery. The city was rebuilt on a reduced scale by Fath Ali Shah a little to the north-



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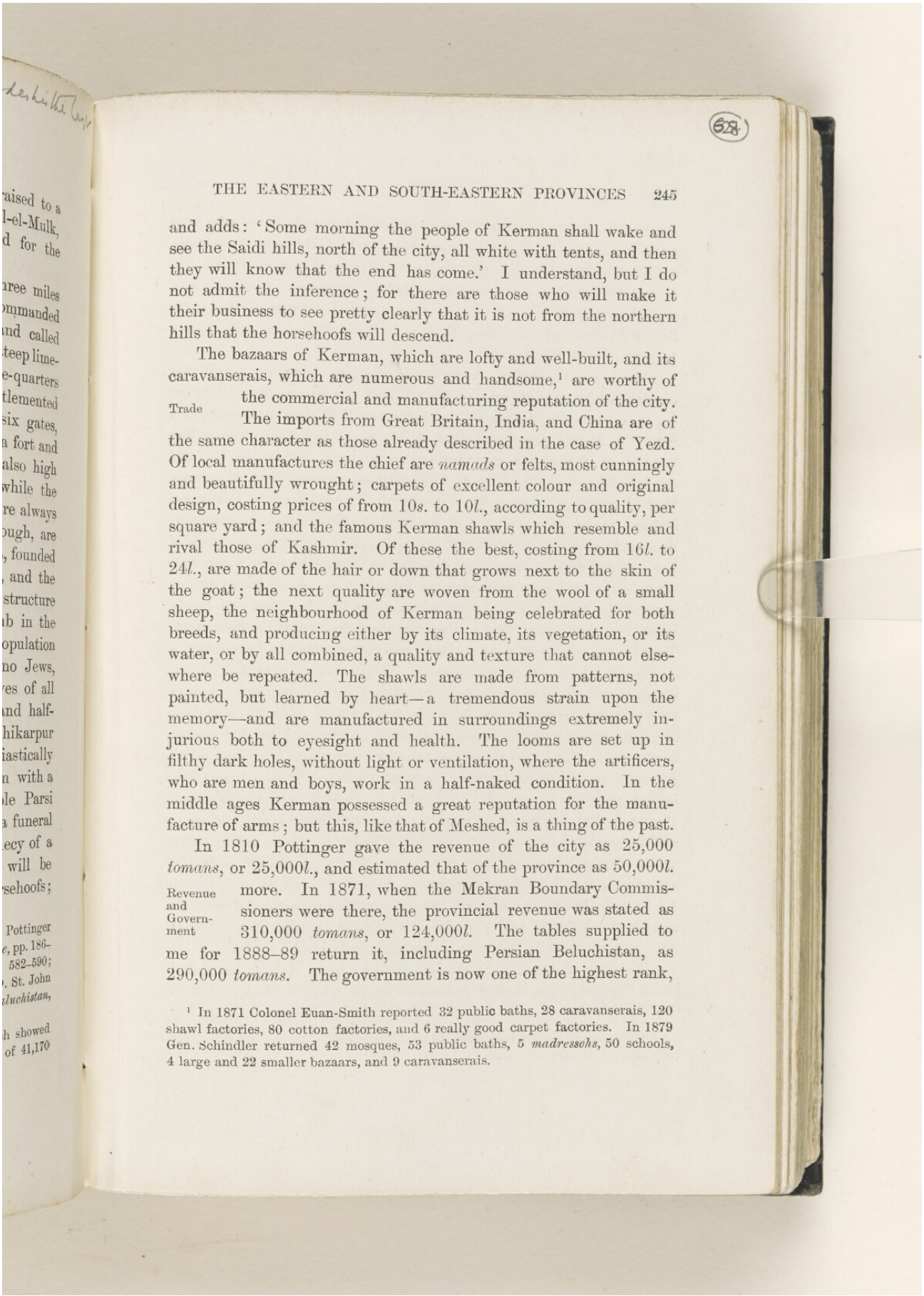
west of the former site,[1] and about thirty years ago was raised to a pitch of great prosperity under the rule of the Vekil-el-Mulk, who, though a hard and avaricious governor, recovered for the place somewhat of its ancient prestige.

The remains of old Kerman occupy a space about three miles in length outside the walls of the modern town, and are commanded by a big ruined fort, attributed to Ardeshir, and called the Kaleh-i-Dokhter, or Maiden's Fort, upon a steep limestone ridge to the east. The modern city is about three-quarters of a square mile in extent, and is surrounded by battlemented mud walls, after the usual Persian fashion, pierced by six gates, with a broad half-choked ditch. Like Yezd, it contains a fort and a citadel in the fort, where the Governor resides. Here also high dark mountains at a slight distance overhang the city, while the snow-streaked peaks of loftier ranges to the north-west are always in the landscape. The public buildings, naturally enough, are lacking in interest, the principal being the Musjid-i-Jama, founded A.D. 1349, the two-storeyed *madresseh* of Ibrahim Khan, and the Kuba-i-Sebz, or Green Cupola, a cylindrical dome-covered structure raised in A.D. 1155, containing a mutilated marble tomb in the centre, and the remains of a blue tile wainscoting. The population is said to be about 40,000.[2] In 1810 Pottinger found no Jews, Armenians, or Hindus; but there are now representatives of all three nationalities, the Hindus, some forty in number, and half-Persianised in dress and appearance, being traders from Shikarpur and Sind. They live in a caravanserai apart, and enthusiastically welcome any English traveller, whose notice invests them with a superior social distinction. There is also a considerable Parsi population, inhabiting a separate quarter, and possessing a funeral tower in the neighbouring hills. Stack quotes the prophecy of a local saint, who predicted a century ago that Isfahan will be destroyed by water, Yezd by sand, and Kerman by horsehoofs;

Modern city

[1] In the present century it has been visited and described by (Sir) H. Pottinger (1810), *Travels in Beloochistan*, cap. x.; N. de Khanikoff (1859), *Mémoire*, pp. 186–198 (with a map); Sir F. Goldsmid (1866), *Telegraph and Travel*, pp. 582–590; Colonel Euan-Smith (1871), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 183–191; (Sir) O. St. John (1872), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 92–102; E. Floyer (1876), *Unexplored Baluchistan*, cap. xiii.; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. p. 202.

[2] In 1878 a careful census was made by the then governor, which showed 39,718 Mohammedans, 1,341 Parsis, 85 Jews, and 26 Hindus, or a total of 41,170 persons.





and adds: 'Some morning the people of Kerman shall wake and see the Saidi hills, north of the city, all white with tents, and then they will know that the end has come.' I understand, but I do not admit the inference; for there are those who will make it their business to see pretty clearly that it is not from the northern hills that the horsehoofs will descend.

The bazaars of Kerman, which are lofty and well-built, and its caravanserais, which are numerous and handsome,[1] are worthy of the commercial and manufacturing reputation of the city.

Trade

The imports from Great Britain, India, and China are of the same character as those already described in the case of Yezd. Of local manufactures the chief are *namads* or felts, most cunningly and beautifully wrought; carpets of excellent colour and original design, costing prices of from 10*s.* to 10*l.*, according to quality, per square yard; and the famous Kerman shawls which resemble and rival those of Kashmir. Of these the best, costing from 16*l.* to 24*l.*, are made of the hair or down that grows next to the skin of the goat; the next quality are woven from the wool of a small sheep, the neighbourhood of Kerman being celebrated for both breeds, and producing either by its climate, its vegetation, or its water, or by all combined, a quality and texture that cannot elsewhere be repeated. The shawls are made from patterns, not painted, but learned by heart—a tremendous strain upon the memory—and are manufactured in surroundings extremely injurious both to eyesight and health. The looms are set up in filthy dark holes, without light or ventilation, where the artificers, who are men and boys, work in a half-naked condition. In the middle ages Kerman possessed a great reputation for the manufacture of arms; but this, like that of Meshed, is a thing of the past.

In 1810 Pottinger gave the revenue of the city as 25,000 *tomans*, or 25,000*l.*, and estimated that of the province as 50,000*l.* more. In 1871, when the Mekran Boundary Commissioners were there, the provincial revenue was stated as 310,000 *tomans*, or 124,000*l.* The tables supplied to me for 1888–89 return it, including Persian Beluchistan, as 290,000 *tomans*. The government is now one of the highest rank,

Revenue and Government

[1] In 1871 Colonel Euan-Smith reported 32 public baths, 28 caravanserais, 120 shawl factories, 80 cotton factories, and 6 really good carpet factories. In 1879 Gen. Schindler returned 42 mosques, 53 public baths, 5 *madressehs*, 50 schools, 4 large and 22 smaller bazaars, and 9 caravanserais.

inasmuch as it includes Persian Beluchistan, which is administered by a deputy of the Governor-General. The latter is usually a prince of the blood royal, and at the time of my visit was the Nasr-ed-Dowleh, a cousin of the Shah. His province contains as varied a population as can be found anywhere within the same limits in Persia; Iranians, Turkis, Kurds, Beluchis, and Rinds being included in the total.

The great deserts

Yezd and Kerman both stand, as has been seen, on the outskirts of a desert, and north of both, for league upon league, extends the appalling waste that has here stamped upon Persia the imprint of an eternal desolation. From the haunts of busy life and commerce I turn, therefore, to the contemplation of a Sahara as funereal and more unique than any that Tartary or Africa can display. In existing works upon Persia there will be found hesitating, and often conflicting, accounts about both the extent, the ramifications, and the limits of the main Persian desert or deserts, arising from the scant and often untrustworthy information upon which those descriptions have been based. The more reliable intelligence that has lately been procured enables us to formulate a more accurate conception. There are, practically speaking, two great deserts, covering a combined length, from north-west to south-east, of over 500 miles, but separated from each other, between the thirty-second and thirty-fourth parallels of latitude, by a belt of hilly country, along which runs one of the main caravan tracks from the centre to the north-east. Of these deserts, the more northerly, extending from 33° to 36° north latitude, and from 52° to 57° east longitude, is that generally known as the Great Salt Desert, or Dasht-i-Kavir. The second or southerly, extending from 29° to 32° north latitude, and from 57° to 60° east longitude, is that described on the maps as the Dasht-i-Lut. Both are salt, in so far as *nemeksar*, or saline swamp, is found in the depressions of each, which average about 1,000 feet above the sea; but the far greater proportion of *kavir* in the northern desert and the almost complete absence of vegetation have procured for it the unenviable monopoly of the name.

By some the name Dasht-i-Kavir has been simply translated Great Desert, *kavir* being presumed to be a local modification of the Arabic *kabir*, great.[1] Such a derivation, however, altogether

[1] Malcolm and Morier both spoke of it as the Daria-i-Kabir, or Great Sea, but they must have been mistaken.

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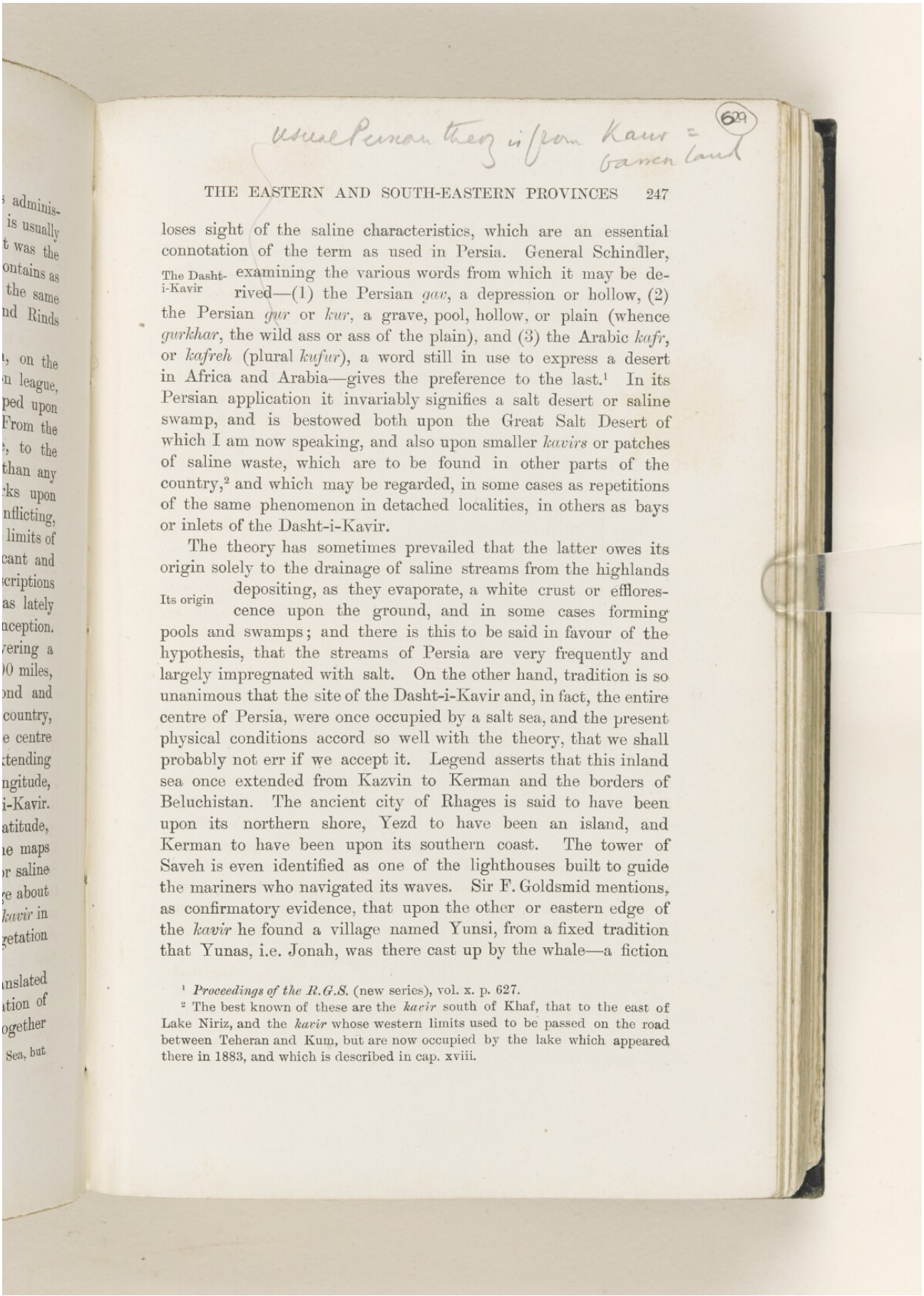



loses sight of the saline characteristics, which are an essential connotation of the term as used in Persia. General Schindler, examining the various words from which it may be derived—(1) the Persian *gav*, a depression or hollow, (2) the Persian *gur* or *kur*, a grave, pool, hollow, or plain (whence *gurkhar*, the wild ass or ass of the plain), and (3) the Arabic *kafr*, or *kafreh* (plural *kufur*), a word still in use to express a desert in Africa and Arabia—gives the preference to the last.[1] In its Persian application it invariably signifies a salt desert or saline swamp, and is bestowed both upon the Great Salt Desert of which I am now speaking, and also upon smaller *kavirs* or patches of saline waste, which are to be found in other parts of the country,[2] and which may be regarded, in some cases as repetitions of the same phenomenon in detached localities, in others as bays or inlets of the Dasht-i-Kavir.

The Dasht-i-Kavir

The theory has sometimes prevailed that the latter owes its origin solely to the drainage of saline streams from the highlands depositing, as they evaporate, a white crust or efflorescence upon the ground, and in some cases forming pools and swamps; and there is this to be said in favour of the hypothesis, that the streams of Persia are very frequently and largely impregnated with salt. On the other hand, tradition is so unanimous that the site of the Dasht-i-Kavir and, in fact, the entire centre of Persia, were once occupied by a salt sea, and the present physical conditions accord so well with the theory, that we shall probably not err if we accept it. Legend asserts that this inland sea once extended from Kazvin to Kerman and the borders of Beluchistan. The ancient city of Rhages is said to have been upon its northern shore, Yezd to have been an island, and Kerman to have been upon its southern coast. The tower of Saveh is even identified as one of the lighthouses built to guide the mariners who navigated its waves. Sir F. Goldsmid mentions, as confirmatory evidence, that upon the other or eastern edge of the *kavir* he found a village named Yunsi, from a fixed tradition that Yunas, i.e. Jonah, was there cast up by the whale—a fiction

Its origin

[1] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. x. p. 627.

[2] The best known of these are the *kavir* south of Khaf, that to the east of Lake Niriz, and the *kavir* whose western limits used to be passed on the road between Teheran and Kum, but are now occupied by the lake which appeared there in 1883, and which is described in cap. xviii.

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which could hardly have been localised upon dry land. Guides and superstitious villagers, living near the various *kavirs*, tell marvellous tales of the circumstances under which they ceased to be seas and were dried up; but these are interesting only to students of folklore, and need not be here repeated.

Different kinds of *kavir*

In different parts, the *kavir* presents a different aspect, according to the nature of the soil and the amount of salt water that refuses to be drained. Sometimes it is quite dry and soft, with a thin glazed crust on the top, which crackles beneath the horse's hoof, and with powdery soil beneath. Sometimes it presents an expanse of hard baked clay. Again it will take the form of mobile hillocks and dangerous quicksands. When the water is lying upon the surface, particularly in winter, it will in one place resemble a great lake, in another it will be a slimy swamp; while after the evaporation of the early summer suns the saline incrustation on the dried up patches will glitter in the distance like sheets of ice.[1]

Travellers in the Great Kavir

Of travellers who have crossed or skirted the Great Kavir there are few. Marco Polo has been said to have traversed a portion of it on his supposed route from Tabbas to Damghan about 1272; although it is more probable that he marched further to the east, and crossed the northern portion of the Dasht-i-Lut.[2] Dr. Buhse, a Russian, crossed a portion of it on a journey from Yezd to Damghan in 1849, and was said by Sir O. St. John to have been the sole European who had done so.[3] Sir F. Goldsmid and the Seistan Boundary Commission were near to its eastern fringe in 1872. Sir C. MacGregor, on his march from Yezd to Tabbas, *viâ* Khur, in 1875, was upon its southern border. Finally, in 1887 and 1888, two young Indian officers, Lieutenant R. E. Galindo and Lieutenant H. B. Vaughan, travelling, the former from Khur to Damghan, the latter from Anarek to Semnan, alighted at intervening points upon the true Dasht-i-

[1] *Vide* the description given by Colonel C. E. Stewart, *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. iii. (1881), p. 518.

[2] Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. i. p. 131. The Tunogan of the text, which was originally mistaken for Damghan, is correctly explained by Yule as Tun-o- (i.e. and) Kain.

[3] 'Notice sur trois plantes médicinales et sur le grand désert salé de la Perse.' par F. A. Buhse. Extrait du *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Naturelle de Moscou*, 1850, No. 4. *Vide* also a notice by Dr. C. Greninck in his 'Geographical Description of N. Persia,' published in the *Trans. of the Mineralogical Soc. of St. Petersburg* in 1852.

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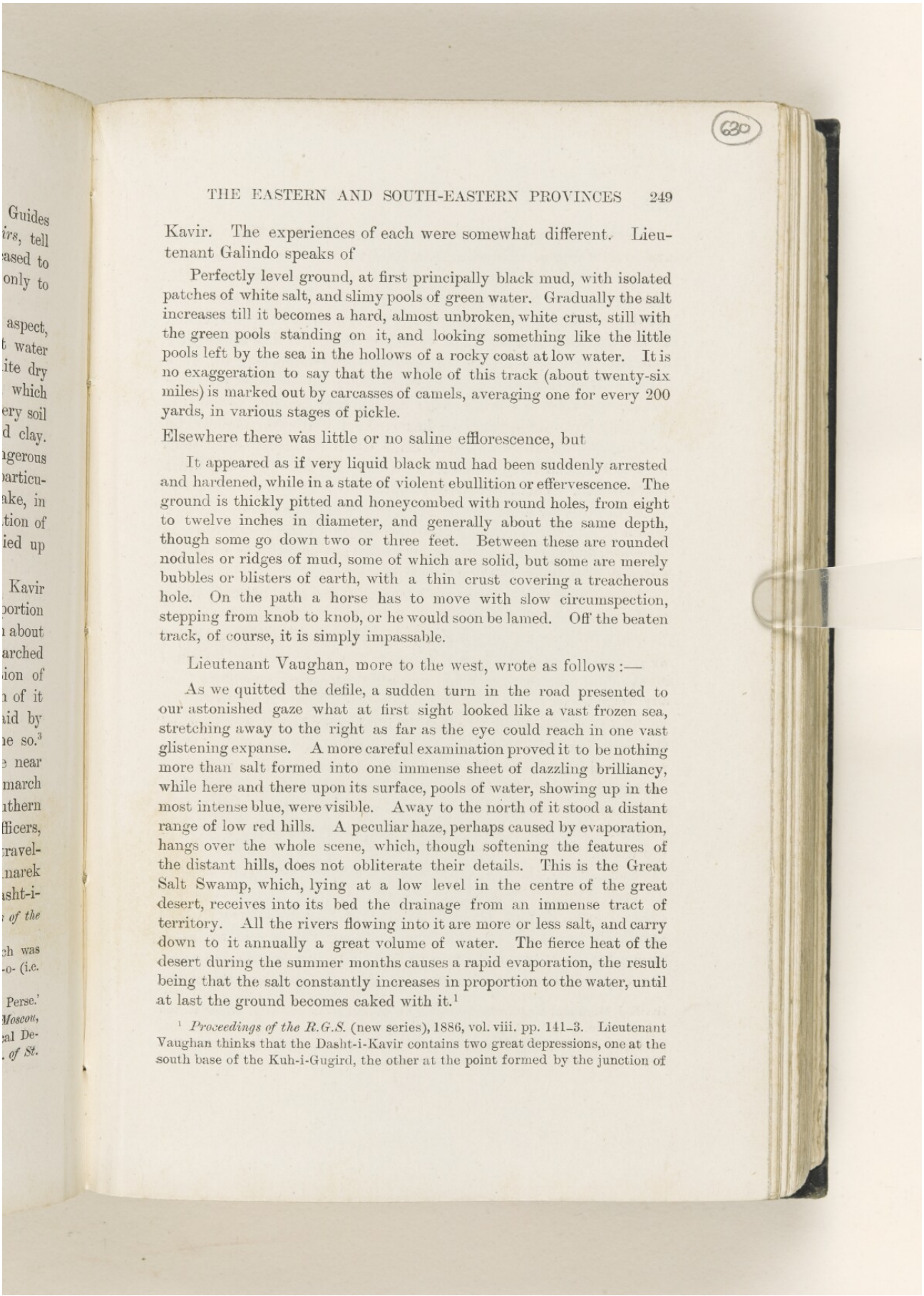



Kavir. The experiences of each were somewhat different. Lieutenant Galindo speaks of

Perfectly level ground, at first principally black mud, with isolated patches of white salt, and slimy pools of green water. Gradually the salt increases till it becomes a hard, almost unbroken, white crust, still with the green pools standing on it, and looking something like the little pools left by the sea in the hollows of a rocky coast at low water. It is no exaggeration to say that the whole of this track (about twenty-six miles) is marked out by carcasses of camels, averaging one for every 200 yards, in various stages of pickle.

Elsewhere there was little or no saline efflorescence, but

It appeared as if very liquid black mud had been suddenly arrested and hardened, while in a state of violent ebullition or effervescence. The ground is thickly pitted and honeycombed with round holes, from eight to twelve inches in diameter, and generally about the same depth, though some go down two or three feet. Between these are rounded nodules or ridges of mud, some of which are solid, but some are merely bubbles or blisters of earth, with a thin crust covering a treacherous hole. On the path a horse has to move with slow circumspection, stepping from knob to knob, or he would soon be lamed. Off the beaten track, of course, it is simply impassable.

Lieutenant Vaughan, more to the west, wrote as follows :—

As we quitted the defile, a sudden turn in the road presented to our astonished gaze what at first sight looked like a vast frozen sea, stretching away to the right as far as the eye could reach in one vast glistening expanse. A more careful examination proved it to be nothing more than salt formed into one immense sheet of dazzling brilliancy, while here and there upon its surface, pools of water, showing up in the most intense blue, were visible. Away to the north of it stood a distant range of low red hills. A peculiar haze, perhaps caused by evaporation, hangs over the whole scene, which, though softening the features of the distant hills, does not obliterate their details. This is the Great Salt Swamp, which, lying at a low level in the centre of the great desert, receives into its bed the drainage from an immense tract of territory. All the rivers flowing into it are more or less salt, and carry down to it annually a great volume of water. The fierce heat of the desert during the summer months causes a rapid evaporation, the result being that the salt constantly increases in proportion to the water, until at last the ground becomes caked with it.[1]

[1] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), 1886, vol. viii. pp. 141–3. Lieutenant Vaughan thinks that the Dasht-i-Kavir contains two great depressions, one at the south base of the Kuh-i-Gugird, the other at the point formed by the junction of

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In the past year (1891), yet another section of the Great Kavir, and itself a new phenomenon, has been for the first time brought to light by the same officer, travelling in company with Mr. C. E. Biddulph. This is no less than a great expanse of solid rock salt, the deposit for countless centuries of numerous salt streams, called by the natives Daria-i-Nemek, or Sea of Salt. It has apparently been traversed for long years by native caravans, crossing from the Meshed-Teheran road to Kashan, from which its southern border is distant less than 40 miles to the north-east; but during all this period no hint of its existence has reached European ears. The two English travellers suddenly came upon it, having climbed a crest of the Siah Kuh, a prominent ridge that rises from the heart of the desert. This is what they saw:—

At our feet lay what looked like a frozen sea, but was in reality a deposit of salt, which entirely filled the hollow in the plains towards the south, and stretched away as far as the eye could reach on either side, glittering in the sun like a sheet of glass.

Descending to the brink they marched across it till they came to the actual sheet of salt.

This at the edge was soft and sloppy like half-melted ice; but, as we proceeded, it gained in consistency till at a distance of 3 or 4 miles it resembled nothing more than very solid ice, strong enough to bear any weight.

The travellers tried to ascertain its depth; but it was so hard that with iron tent-pegs they could only detach a few chips. The natives said it was several feet thick. Crossing this astonishing expanse by moonlight, in order to escape the blinding glare of the sun, they estimated its breadth as 25 miles, and its length as even greater. This sea of solid rock-salt is probably without a rival in the world.[1]

Such, then, is the superficial aspect of the Dasht-i-Kavir. Traversed only with difficulty by routes lying higher than the general level, it may be said within the vast area of its limits absolutely to cut off northern from southern Persia, and to interpose a barrier between the two as grim and insurmountable as, at the opposite extreme of nature, do the mighty ramparts of the

the Kal Mura and Kal Lada rivers, both containing vast sheets of water in the rainy season.

[1] Vide *Proc. of the R.G.S.*, Nov. 1891, and *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1891.

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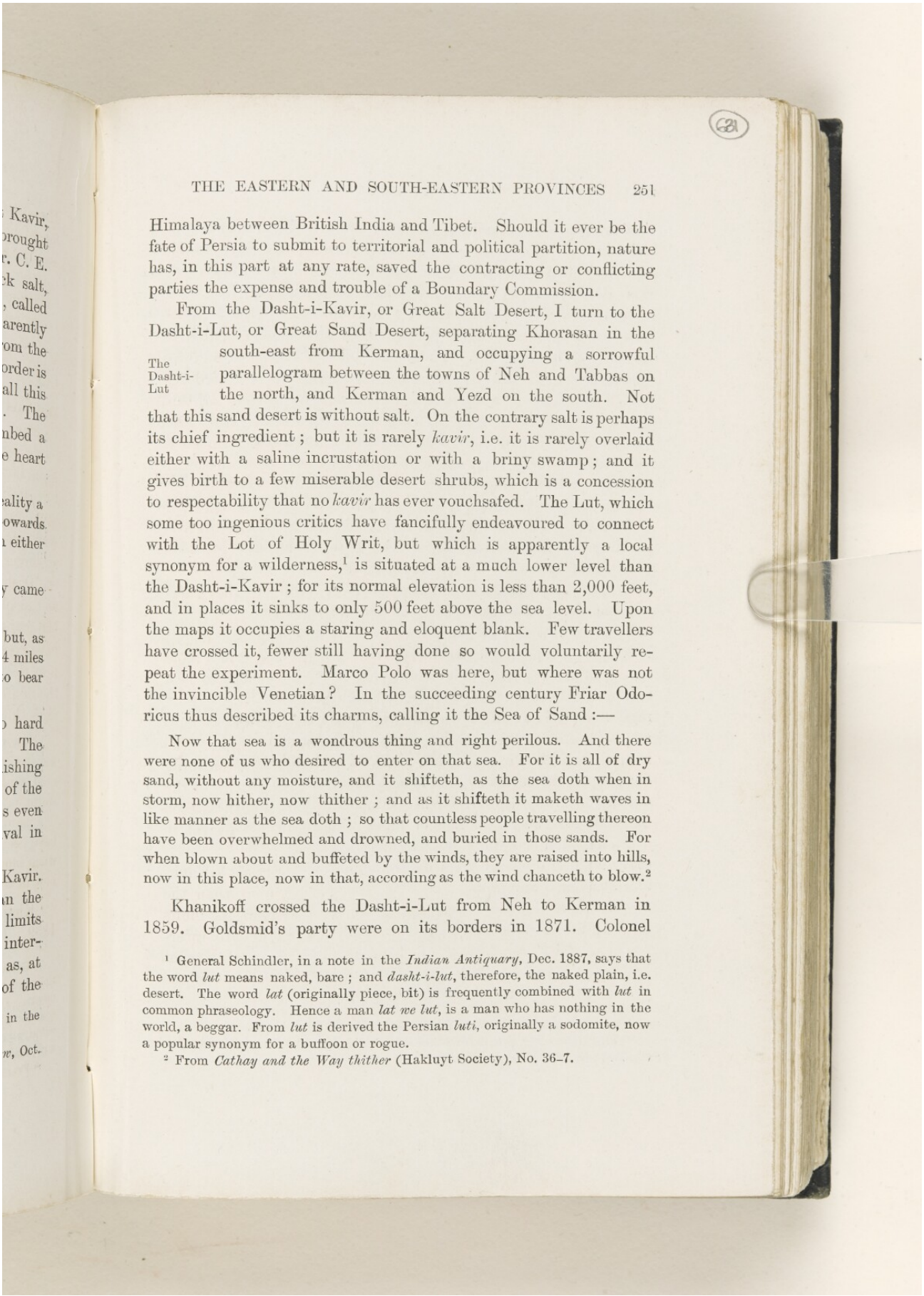



Himalaya between British India and Tibet. Should it ever be the fate of Persia to submit to territorial and political partition, nature has, in this part at any rate, saved the contracting or conflicting parties the expense and trouble of a Boundary Commission.

From the Dasht-i-Kavir, or Great Salt Desert, I turn to the Dasht-i-Lut, or Great Sand Desert, separating Khorasan in the south-east from Kerman, and occupying a sorrowful parallelogram between the towns of Neh and Tabbas on the north, and Kerman and Yezd on the south. Not that this sand desert is without salt. On the contrary salt is perhaps its chief ingredient; but it is rarely *kavir*, i.e. it is rarely overlaid either with a saline incrustation or with a briny swamp; and it gives birth to a few miserable desert shrubs, which is a concession to respectability that no *kavir* has ever vouchsafed. The Lut, which some too ingenious critics have fancifully endeavoured to connect with the Lot of Holy Writ, but which is apparently a local synonym for a wilderness,[1] is situated at a much lower level than the Dasht-i-Kavir; for its normal elevation is less than 2,000 feet, and in places it sinks to only 500 feet above the sea level. Upon the maps it occupies a staring and eloquent blank. Few travellers have crossed it, fewer still having done so would voluntarily repeat the experiment. Marco Polo was here, but where was not the invincible Venetian? In the succeeding century Friar Odoricus thus described its charms, calling it the Sea of Sand:—

The Dasht-i-Lut

Now that sea is a wondrous thing and right perilous. And there were none of us who desired to enter on that sea. For it is all of dry sand, without any moisture, and it shifteth, as the sea doth when in storm, now hither, now thither; and as it shifteth it maketh waves in like manner as the sea doth; so that countless people travelling thereon have been overwhelmed and drowned, and buried in those sands. For when blown about and buffeted by the winds, they are raised into hills, now in this place, now in that, according as the wind chanceth to blow.[2]

Khanikoff crossed the Dasht-i-Lut from Neh to Kerman in 1859. Goldsmid's party were on its borders in 1871. Colonel

[1] General Schindler, in a note in the *Indian Antiquary*, Dec. 1887, says that the word *lut* means naked, bare; and *dasht-i-lut*, therefore, the naked plain, i.e. desert. The word *lat* (originally piece, bit) is frequently combined with *lut* in common phraseology. Hence a man *lat we lut*, is a man who has nothing in the world, a beggar. From *lut* is derived the Persian *luti*, originally a sodomite, now a popular synonym for a buffoon or rogue.

[2] From *Cathay and the Way thither* (Hakluyt Society), No. 36–7.

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Stewart made an expedition into it in 1882.[1] Lieutenant Galindo twice crossed it, once in six days, and once in five days, in 1887 and 1888, traversing a belt of 120 miles entirely without water. His description is almost identical with that of the worthy Minorite friar 550 years earlier. He could not fail to notice the extraordinary resemblance presented by the blown sand to the waves of a chopping sea. These sand billows alternate with bare expanses of black gravel, and with a phenomenon not previously described. This is a region of curious square-cut clay bluffs, believed by the natives to be the ruins of an ancient city, and called by them the Shehr-i-Lut, but consisting in reality of 'natural formations of hard clay, cut and carved by the fierce north-west wind into strange shapes, suggestive of walls and towers.' Lieutenant Galindo found everywhere beneath the sand a substratum of hard rock-salt some eight or nine inches below the surface, thus proving the saline character of the desert, and here and there patches of genuine *kavir*, the ground being mapped out in irregular polygons with dividing walls of solid salt, or studded with hard round white bubbles of the same material, like a lot of half-buried ostrich eggs, or covered with a sort of moss of delicate-looking salt spiculæ, standing up like needles an inch long, but strong as steel spikes. The worst part of this desert is its south-east corner between Neh and Bam, which is one of the most awful regions on the face of the earth.[2] Here the prevailing north-west winds have swept the sand together, and banked it up in huge mounds and hills, ever shifting and eddying. A fierce sun beats down upon the surface which is as fiery hot as incandescent metal; and almost always the *bad-i-sam* or simoom is blowing, 'so desiccated by its passage over hundreds of miles of burning desert, that if it overtakes man or animal its parched breath in a moment sucks every atom of moisture from his frame, and leaves him a withered and blackened mummy.'

This horrible desert extends as far south as Bam-Narmashir, for long the frontier district of Kerman. Its capital is Bam, 140 miles south-east of Kerman, now a big straggling village, situated on both banks of the Bam river, amid groves of date palms, and possessing only a mean bazaar. Bam,

Bam

[1] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. viii. pp. 141–3, 1886.

[2] *Vide* the excellent description of Elisée Reclus, *Universal Geography*, vol. ix. (South-west Asia), p. 94.

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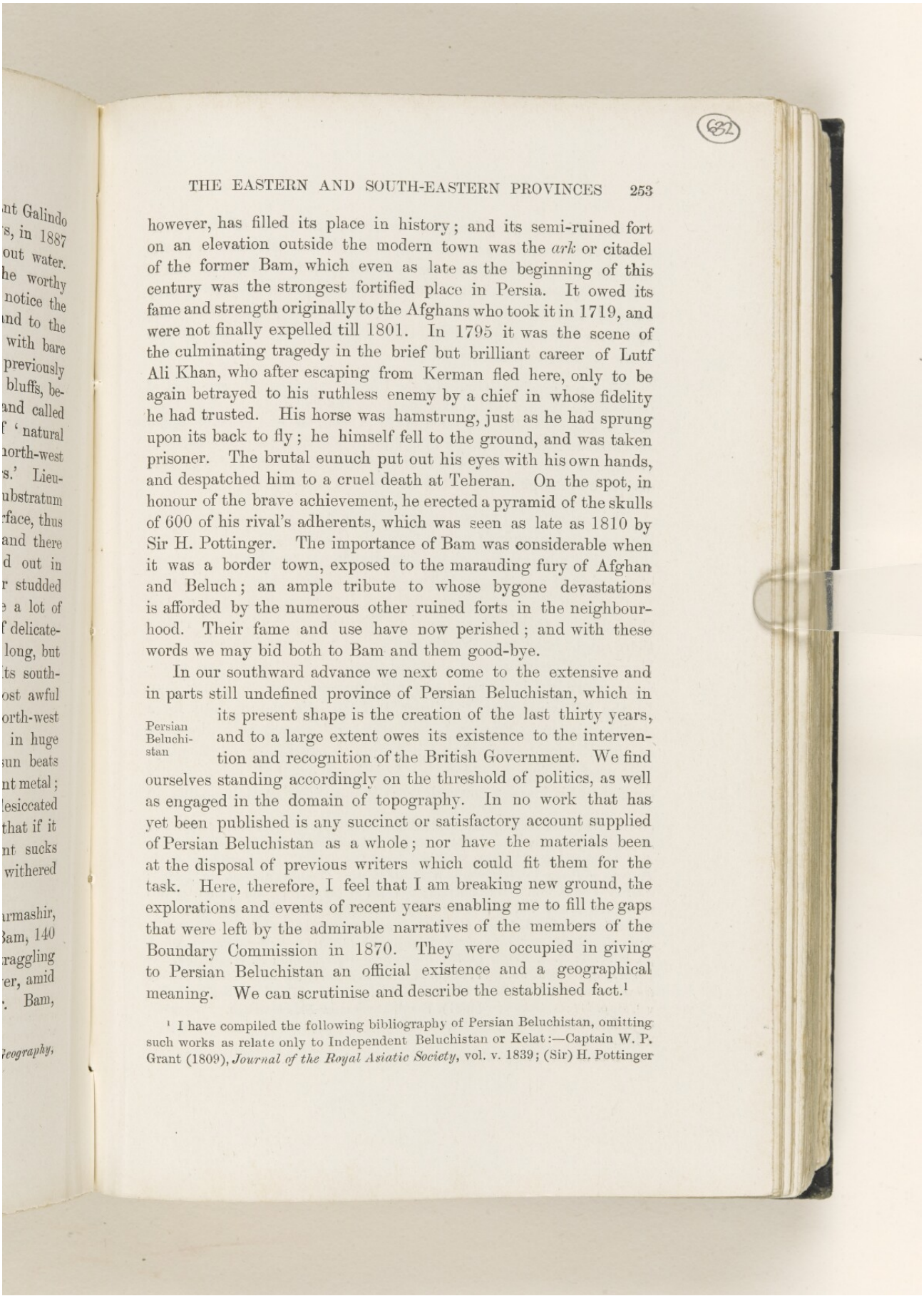



however, has filled its place in history; and its semi-ruined fort on an elevation outside the modern town was the *ark* or citadel of the former Bam, which even as late as the beginning of this century was the strongest fortified place in Persia. It owed its fame and strength originally to the Afghans who took it in 1719, and were not finally expelled till 1801. In 1795 it was the scene of the culminating tragedy in the brief but brilliant career of Lutf Ali Khan, who after escaping from Kerman fled here, only to be again betrayed to his ruthless enemy by a chief in whose fidelity he had trusted. His horse was hamstrung, just as he had sprung upon its back to fly; he himself fell to the ground, and was taken prisoner. The brutal eunuch put out his eyes with his own hands, and despatched him to a cruel death at Teheran. On the spot, in honour of the brave achievement, he erected a pyramid of the skulls of 600 of his rival's adherents, which was seen as late as 1810 by Sir H. Pottinger. The importance of Bam was considerable when it was a border town, exposed to the marauding fury of Afghan and Beluch; an ample tribute to whose bygone devastations is afforded by the numerous other ruined forts in the neighbourhood. Their fame and use have now perished; and with these words we may bid both to Bam and them good-bye.

Persian Beluchistan

In our southward advance we next come to the extensive and in parts still undefined province of Persian Beluchistan, which in its present shape is the creation of the last thirty years, and to a large extent owes its existence to the intervention and recognition of the British Government. We find ourselves standing accordingly on the threshold of politics, as well as engaged in the domain of topography. In no work that has yet been published is any succinct or satisfactory account supplied of Persian Beluchistan as a whole; nor have the materials been at the disposal of previous writers which could fit them for the task. Here, therefore, I feel that I am breaking new ground, the explorations and events of recent years enabling me to fill the gaps that were left by the admirable narratives of the members of the Boundary Commission in 1870. They were occupied in giving to Persian Beluchistan an official existence and a geographical meaning. We can scrutinise and describe the established fact.[1]

[1] I have compiled the following bibliography of Persian Beluchistan, omitting such works as relate only to Independent Beluchistan or Kelat:—Captain W. P. Grant (1809), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. v. 1839; (Sir) H. Pottinger

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Record of travel

Beluchistan comprises the Gedrosia, and parts of the Drangiana, of the ancients; and it is a significant illustration of the obscurity that has rarely lifted from these regions, and of the precarious political existence which till lately they enjoyed, that the words of Gibbon, written of a period 1700 years ago, were equally applicable to their condition up till the middle of the century still unexpired :—

> We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the sea coast of Gedrosia or Macran, which extends along the Indian Ocean from Cape Jask to Cape Gwadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of ichthyophagi, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world.[1]

History of Persian encroachment

It is an extraordinary, but nevertheless a true fact, that from the time of Alexander's march through Gedrosia, and the navigation of his admiral Nearchus along its shores, we have no record of the visit of a European to the interior of Beluchistan until 1809. In that year Sir J. Malcolm, who had just been appointed on his third mission to Persia, anxious to discover what overland routes there might exist from Persia to India, for the possible advance of French or Russian armies, deputed Captain Grant (who was afterwards murdered in Luristan) to report upon Western Beluchistan. In the following year, Pottinger and Christie volunteered for a similar mission in Eastern Beluchistan, and started forth disguised as the European servants of a Hindu horse-dealer of Bombay. Pottinger, having parted from Christie at Nushki, subsequently continued his journey through what is now Persian Beluchistan in

(1810), *Travels in Beloochistan*; Haji Abdun Nabi (1838–9), *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. xiii. 1844; Colonel E. C. Ross (1867), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 139–219; Sir F. Goldsmid (1861–1871), *Correspondence on the Progress of Persia in Mekran and West Beluchistan* (Bombay Government), 1869; *Eastern Persia*, vol. i., Introduction; *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxxiii. p. 181, vol. xxxvii. p. 269, vol. xliii. p. 65; (Sir) O. St. John (1872), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 18–117; Major B. Lovett (1870–1), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. p. 219, *Journal*, vol. xlii. p. 202; Colonel Euan-Smith (1870-1), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 143–225; E. A. Floyer (1876), *Unexplored Baluchistan*; A. W. Hughes, *The Country of Balochistan*, 1877; Major Mockler, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (new series), vol. ix. 1877, p. 121, vol. xi. 1879, p. 129; Mirza Mehdi Khan, *ibid.* vol. xi. p. 147; A. Gasteiger (1881), *Von Teheran nach Beludschistan*. The travels of Captain Jennings and Lieutenant Galindo (before quoted) have not been published.

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. cap. viii.

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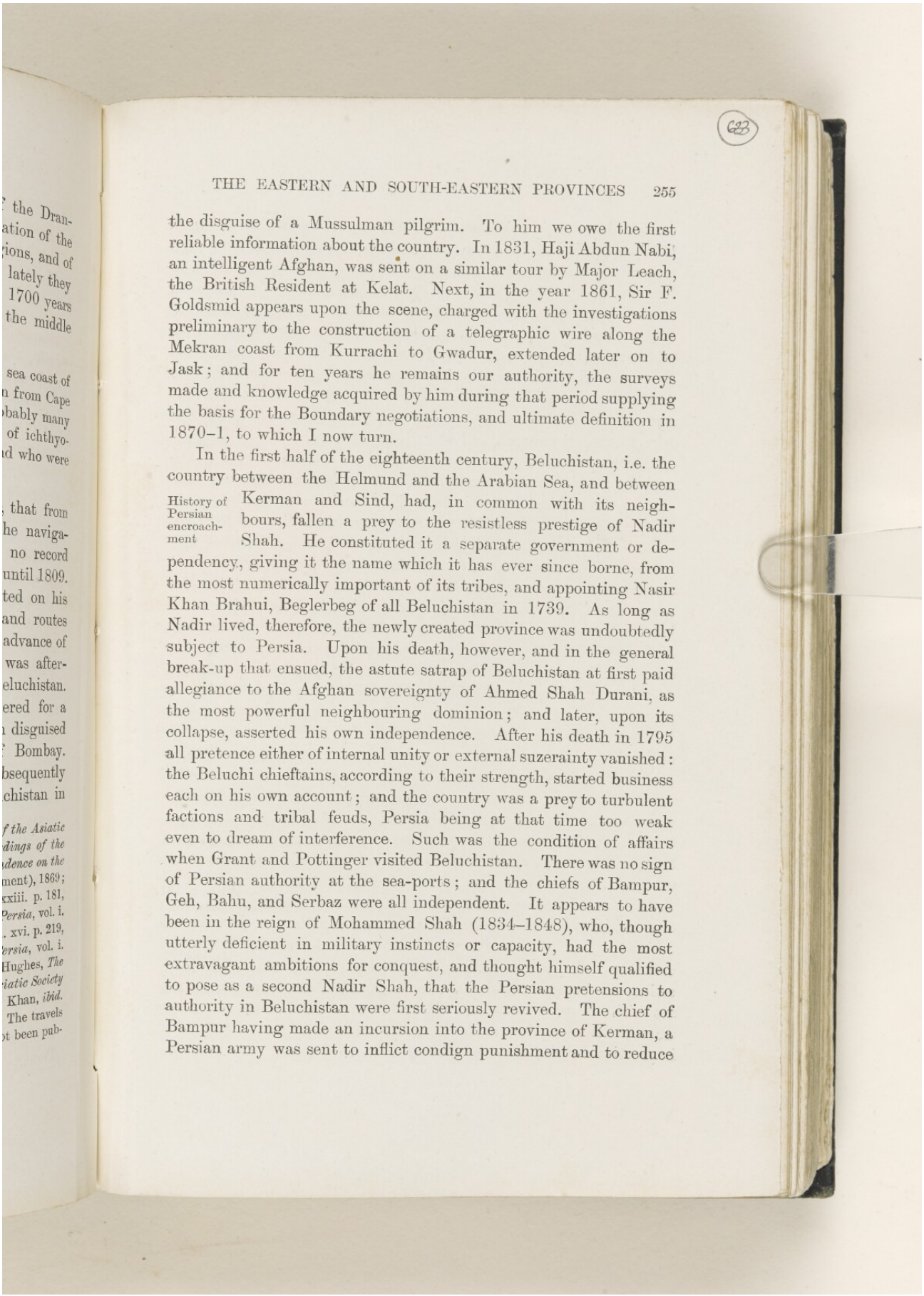



the disguise of a Mussulman pilgrim. To him we owe the first reliable information about the country. In 1831, Haji Abdun Nabi, an intelligent Afghan, was sent on a similar tour by Major Leach, the British Resident at Kelat. Next, in the year 1861, Sir F. Goldsmid appears upon the scene, charged with the investigations preliminary to the construction of a telegraphic wire along the Mekran coast from Kurrachi to Gwadur, extended later on to Jask; and for ten years he remains our authority, the surveys made and knowledge acquired by him during that period supplying the basis for the Boundary negotiations, and ultimate definition in 1870–1, to which I now turn.

History of Persian encroachment

In the first half of the eighteenth century, Beluchistan, i.e. the country between the Helmund and the Arabian Sea, and between Kerman and Sind, had, in common with its neighbours, fallen a prey to the resistless prestige of Nadir Shah. He constituted it a separate government or dependency, giving it the name which it has ever since borne, from the most numerically important of its tribes, and appointing Nasir Khan Brahui, Beglerbeg of all Beluchistan in 1739. As long as Nadir lived, therefore, the newly created province was undoubtedly subject to Persia. Upon his death, however, and in the general break-up that ensued, the astute satrap of Beluchistan at first paid allegiance to the Afghan sovereignty of Ahmed Shah Durani, as the most powerful neighbouring dominion; and later, upon its collapse, asserted his own independence. After his death in 1795 all pretence either of internal unity or external suzerainty vanished: the Beluchi chieftains, according to their strength, started business each on his own account; and the country was a prey to turbulent factions and tribal feuds, Persia being at that time too weak even to dream of interference. Such was the condition of affairs when Grant and Pottinger visited Beluchistan. There was no sign of Persian authority at the sea-ports; and the chiefs of Bampur, Geh, Bahu, and Serbaz were all independent. It appears to have been in the reign of Mohammed Shah (1834–1848), who, though utterly deficient in military instincts or capacity, had the most extravagant ambitions for conquest, and thought himself qualified to pose as a second Nadir Shah, that the Persian pretensions to authority in Beluchistan were first seriously revived. The chief of Bampur having made an incursion into the province of Kerman, a Persian army was sent to inflict condign punishment and to reduce

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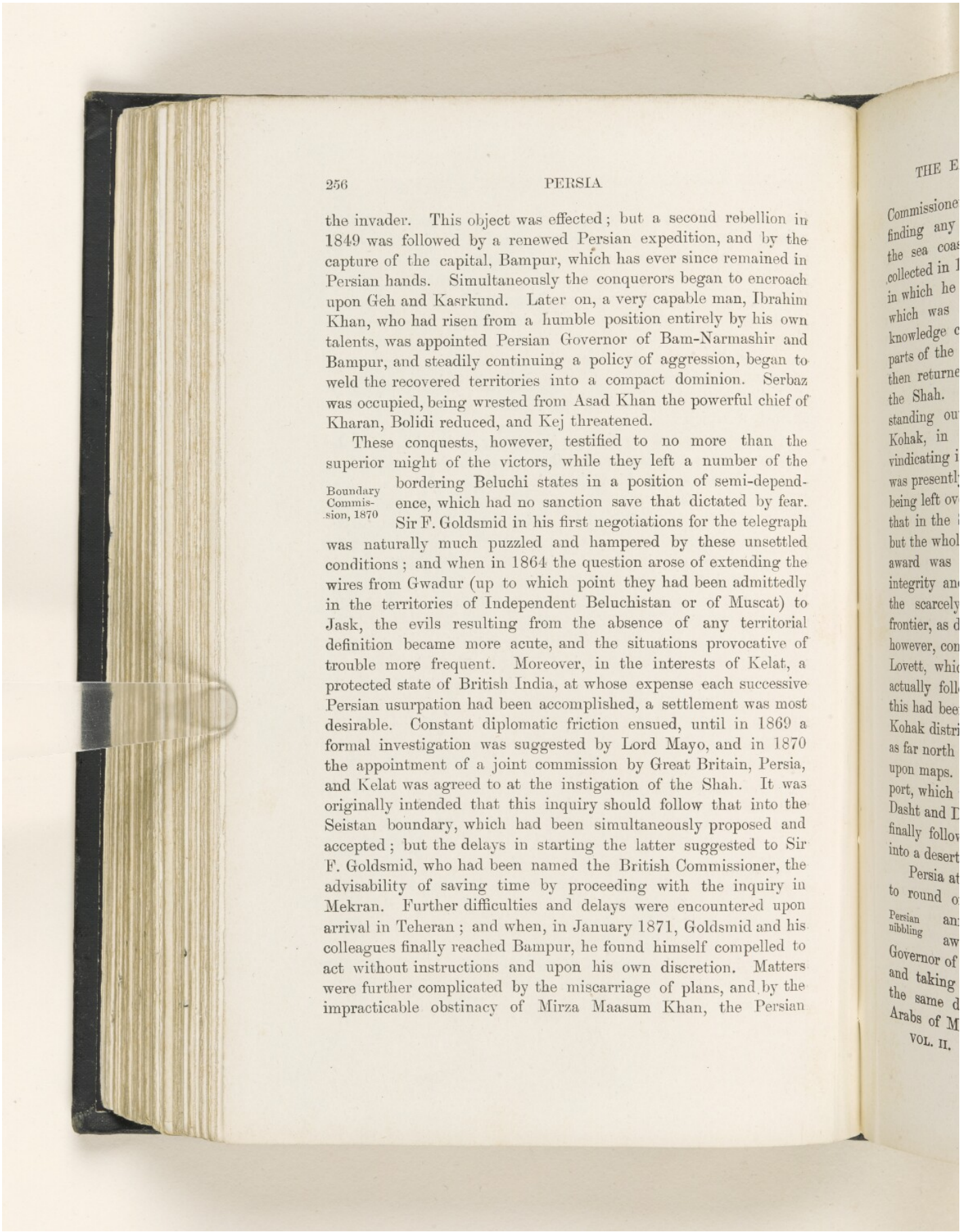



the invader. This object was effected; but a second rebellion in 1849 was followed by a renewed Persian expedition, and by the capture of the capital, Bampur, which has ever since remained in Persian hands. Simultaneously the conquerors began to encroach upon Geh and Kasrkund. Later on, a very capable man, Ibrahim Khan, who had risen from a humble position entirely by his own talents, was appointed Persian Governor of Bam-Narmashir and Bampur, and steadily continuing a policy of aggression, began to weld the recovered territories into a compact dominion. Serbaz was occupied, being wrested from Asad Khan the powerful chief of Kharan, Bolidi reduced, and Kej threatened.

These conquests, however, testified to no more than the superior might of the victors, while they left a number of the bordering Beluchi states in a position of semi-dependence, which had no sanction save that dictated by fear. Sir F. Goldsmid in his first negotiations for the telegraph was naturally much puzzled and hampered by these unsettled conditions; and when in 1864 the question arose of extending the wires from Gwadur (up to which point they had been admittedly in the territories of Independent Beluchistan or of Muscat) to Jask, the evils resulting from the absence of any territorial definition became more acute, and the situations provocative of trouble more frequent. Moreover, in the interests of Kelat, a protected state of British India, at whose expense each successive Persian usurpation had been accomplished, a settlement was most desirable. Constant diplomatic friction ensued, until in 1869 a formal investigation was suggested by Lord Mayo, and in 1870 the appointment of a joint commission by Great Britain, Persia, and Kelat was agreed to at the instigation of the Shah. It was originally intended that this inquiry should follow that into the Seistan boundary, which had been simultaneously proposed and accepted; but the delays in starting the latter suggested to Sir F. Goldsmid, who had been named the British Commissioner, the advisability of saving time by proceeding with the inquiry in Mekran. Further difficulties and delays were encountered upon arrival in Teheran; and when, in January 1871, Goldsmid and his colleagues finally reached Bampur, he found himself compelled to act without instructions and upon his own discretion. Matters were further complicated by the miscarriage of plans, and by the impracticable obstinacy of Mirza Maasum Khan, the Persian

Boundary Commission, 1870

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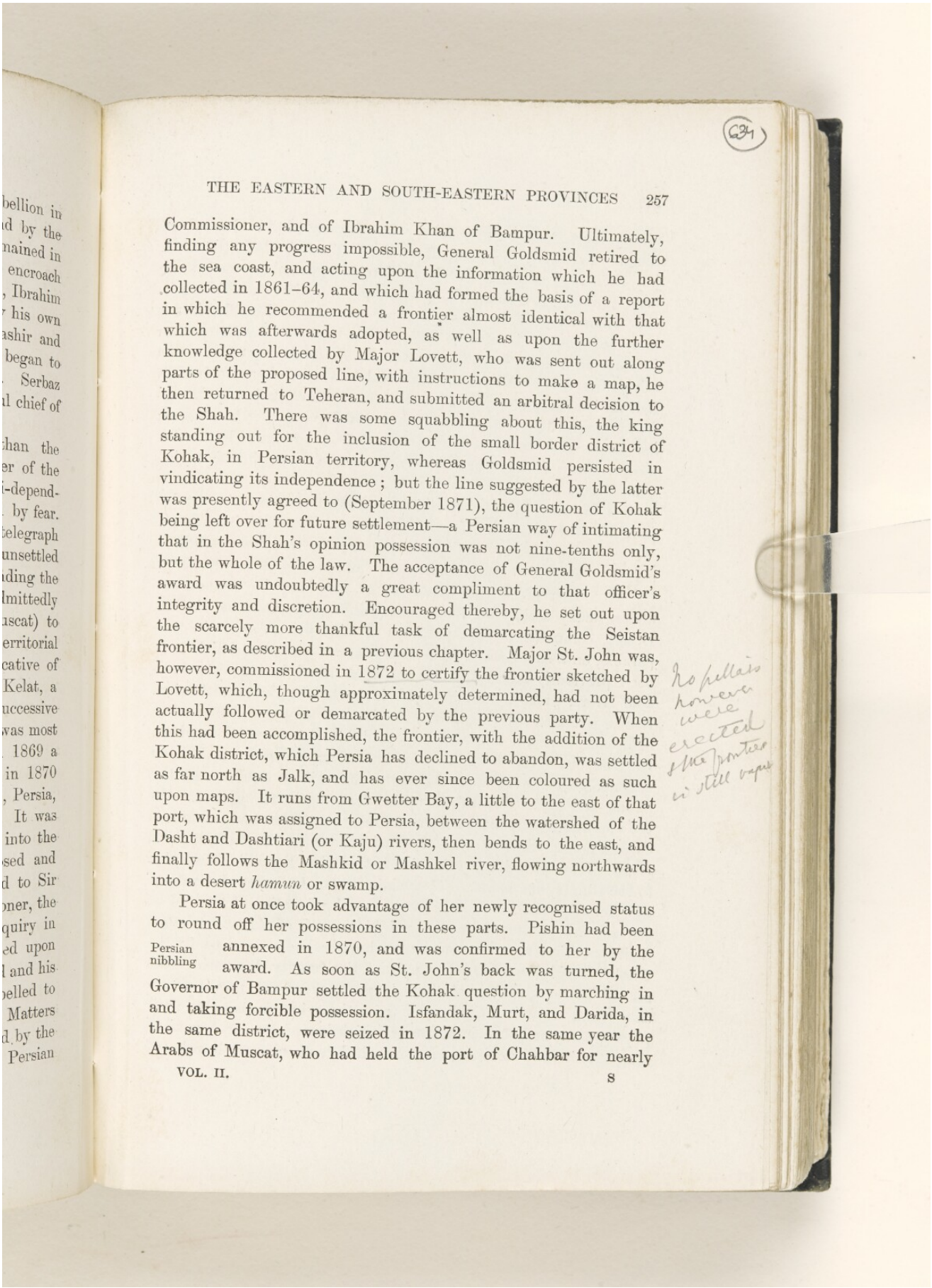



Commissioner, and of Ibrahim Khan of Bampur. Ultimately, finding any progress impossible, General Goldsmid retired to the sea coast, and acting upon the information which he had collected in 1861–64, and which had formed the basis of a report in which he recommended a frontier almost identical with that which was afterwards adopted, as well as upon the further knowledge collected by Major Lovett, who was sent out along parts of the proposed line, with instructions to make a map, he then returned to Teheran, and submitted an arbitral decision to the Shah. There was some squabbling about this, the king standing out for the inclusion of the small border district of Kohak, in Persian territory, whereas Goldsmid persisted in vindicating its independence; but the line suggested by the latter was presently agreed to (September 1871), the question of Kohak being left over for future settlement—a Persian way of intimating that in the Shah's opinion possession was not nine-tenths only, but the whole of the law. The acceptance of General Goldsmid's award was undoubtedly a great compliment to that officer's integrity and discretion. Encouraged thereby, he set out upon the scarcely more thankful task of demarcating the Seistan frontier, as described in a previous chapter. Major St. John was, however, commissioned in 1872 to certify the frontier sketched by Lovett, which, though approximately determined, had not been actually followed or demarcated by the previous party. When this had been accomplished, the frontier, with the addition of the Kohak district, which Persia has declined to abandon, was settled as far north as Jalk, and has ever since been coloured as such upon maps. It runs from Gwetter Bay, a little to the east of that port, which was assigned to Persia, between the watershed of the Dasht and Dashtiari (or Kaju) rivers, then bends to the east, and finally follows the Mashkid or Mashkel river, flowing northwards into a desert *hamun* or swamp.

No pillars however were erected & the frontier is still vague

Persian nibbling

Persia at once took advantage of her newly recognised status to round off her possessions in these parts. Pishin had been annexed in 1870, and was confirmed to her by the award. As soon as St. John's back was turned, the Governor of Bampur settled the Kohak question by marching in and taking forcible possession. Isfandak, Murt, and Darida, in the same district, were seized in 1872. In the same year the Arabs of Muscat, who had held the port of Chahbar for nearly



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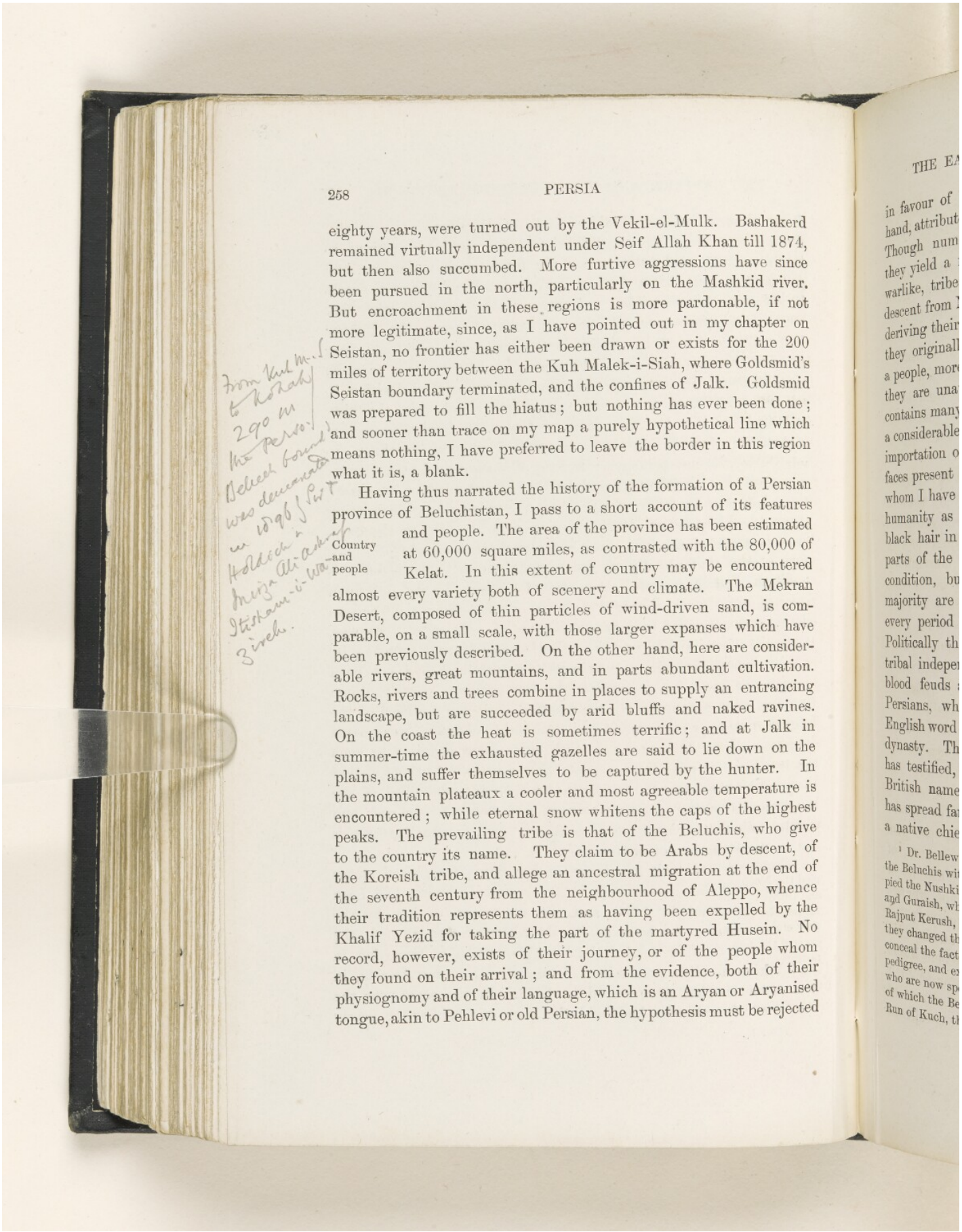



eighty years, were turned out by the Vekil-el-Mulk. Bashakerd remained virtually independent under Seif Allah Khan till 1874, but then also succumbed. More furtive aggressions have since been pursued in the north, particularly on the Mashkid river. But encroachment in these regions is more pardonable, if not more legitimate, since, as I have pointed out in my chapter on Seistan, no frontier has either been drawn or exists for the 200 miles of territory between the Kuh Malek-i-Siah, where Goldsmid's Seistan boundary terminated, and the confines of Jalk. Goldsmid was prepared to fill the hiatus; but nothing has ever been done; and sooner than trace on my map a purely hypothetical line which means nothing, I have preferred to leave the border in this region what it is, a blank.

Country and people

Having thus narrated the history of the formation of a Persian province of Beluchistan, I pass to a short account of its features and people. The area of the province has been estimated at 60,000 square miles, as contrasted with the 80,000 of Kelat. In this extent of country may be encountered almost every variety both of scenery and climate. The Mekran Desert, composed of thin particles of wind-driven sand, is comparable, on a small scale, with those larger expanses which have been previously described. On the other hand, here are considerable rivers, great mountains, and in parts abundant cultivation. Rocks, rivers and trees combine in places to supply an entrancing landscape, but are succeeded by arid bluffs and naked ravines. On the coast the heat is sometimes terrific; and at Jalk in summer-time the exhausted gazelles are said to lie down on the plains, and suffer themselves to be captured by the hunter. In the mountain plateaux a cooler and most agreeable temperature is encountered; while eternal snow whitens the caps of the highest peaks. The prevailing tribe is that of the Beluchis, who give to the country its name. They claim to be Arabs by descent, of the Koreish tribe, and allege an ancestral migration at the end of the seventh century from the neighbourhood of Aleppo, whence their tradition represents them as having been expelled by the Khalif Yezid for taking the part of the martyred Husein. No record, however, exists of their journey, or of the people whom they found on their arrival; and from the evidence, both of their physiognomy and of their language, which is an Aryan or Aryanised tongue, akin to Pehlevi or old Persian, the hypothesis must be rejected

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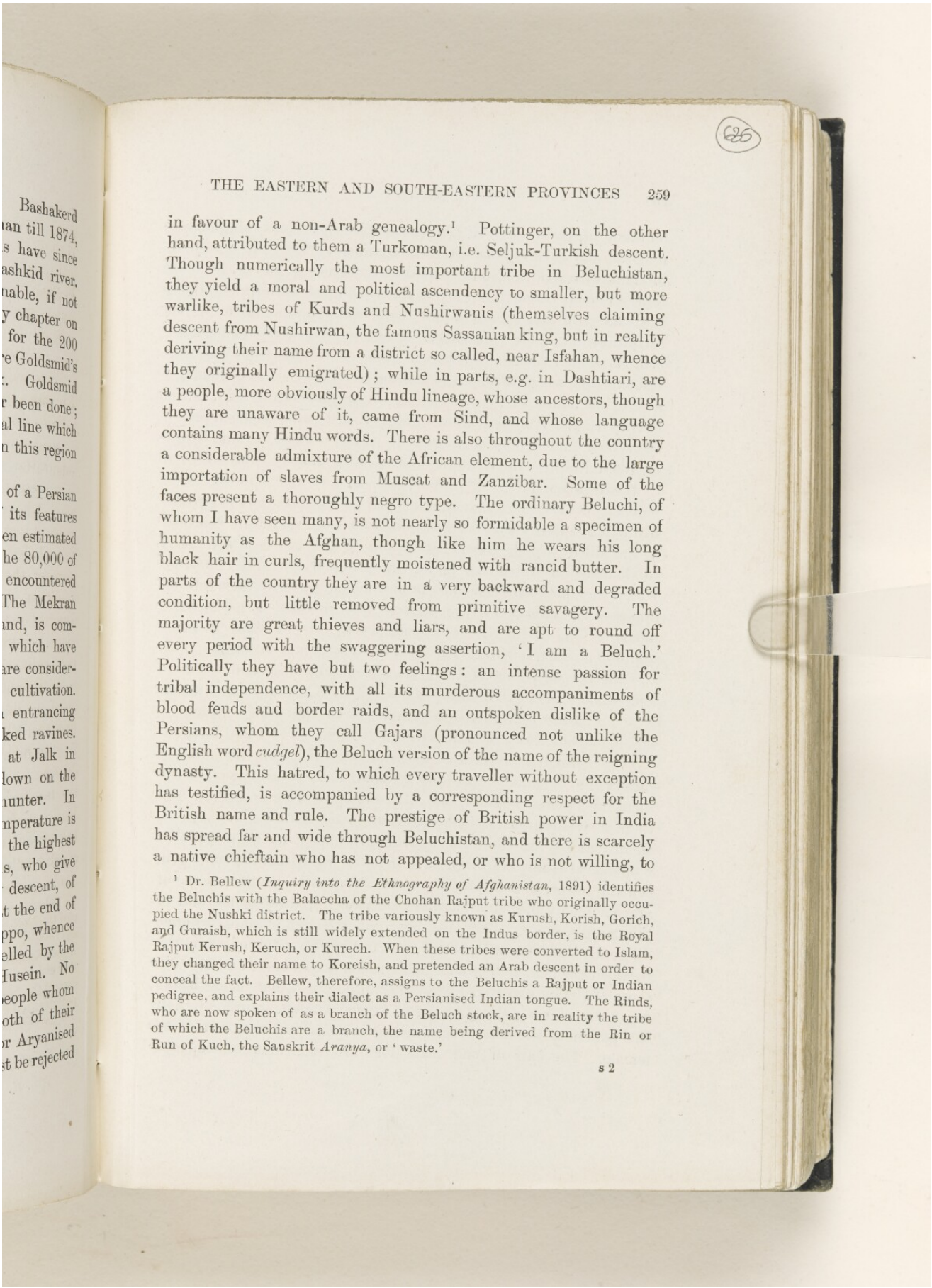



in favour of a non-Arab genealogy.[1] Pottinger, on the other hand, attributed to them a Turkoman, i.e. Seljuk-Turkish descent. Though numerically the most important tribe in Beluchistan, they yield a moral and political ascendency to smaller, but more warlike, tribes of Kurds and Nushirwanis (themselves claiming descent from Nushirwan, the famous Sassanian king, but in reality deriving their name from a district so called, near Isfahan, whence they originally emigrated); while in parts, e.g. in Dashtiari, are a people, more obviously of Hindu lineage, whose ancestors, though they are unaware of it, came from Sind, and whose language contains many Hindu words. There is also throughout the country a considerable admixture of the African element, due to the large importation of slaves from Muscat and Zanzibar. Some of the faces present a thoroughly negro type. The ordinary Beluchi, of whom I have seen many, is not nearly so formidable a specimen of humanity as the Afghan, though like him he wears his long black hair in curls, frequently moistened with rancid butter. In parts of the country they are in a very backward and degraded condition, but little removed from primitive savagery. The majority are great thieves and liars, and are apt to round off every period with the swaggering assertion, 'I am a Beluch.' Politically they have but two feelings: an intense passion for tribal independence, with all its murderous accompaniments of blood feuds and border raids, and an outspoken dislike of the Persians, whom they call Gajars (pronounced not unlike the English word *cudgel*), the Beluch version of the name of the reigning dynasty. This hatred, to which every traveller without exception has testified, is accompanied by a corresponding respect for the British name and rule. The prestige of British power in India has spread far and wide through Beluchistan, and there is scarcely a native chieftain who has not appealed, or who is not willing, to

[1] Dr. Bellew (*Inquiry into the Ethnography of Afghanistan*, 1891) identifies the Beluchis with the Balaecha of the Chohan Rajput tribe who originally occupied the Nushki district. The tribe variously known as Kurush, Korish, Gorich, and Guraish, which is still widely extended on the Indus border, is the Royal Rajput Kerush, Keruch, or Kurech. When these tribes were converted to Islam, they changed their name to Koreish, and pretended an Arab descent in order to conceal the fact. Bellew, therefore, assigns to the Beluchis a Rajput or Indian pedigree, and explains their dialect as a Persianised Indian tongue. The Rinds, who are now spoken of as a branch of the Beluch stock, are in reality the tribe of which the Beluchis are a branch, the name being derived from the Rin or Run of Kuch, the Sanskrit *Aranya*, or 'waste.'



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be taken under the protection of the British *raj*. Their religion is as uncouth and primitive as are their manners. They are nominally Mohammedans of the Sunni persuasion (whence an added contempt for the Persian Shiahs); but practically they know nothing of religion but the rival names and a few Arab formulæ, and have neither scriptures, ritual, nor mosques. A flavour of indigenous superstition is added by the worship of *pirs* or saints, whose shrines, bearing the same title, are looked upon as charms, particularly if a stone be added by the worshipper to the piled-up heap. In the Serbaz district is a sect, known as the Zikris, who have a belief of their own, and a holy book (which is little more or less than a modified Koran) alleged to have been miraculously communicated to them, much as the Mormon bible was to Joe Smith. They omit all mention of Mohammed from their prayers, but expect the ultimate reappearance of the Mahdi, who will rise out of the earth at the hill of Kuh-i-Murad (Mountain of Desire), at Turbat Kej, in Beluchistan proper, where are the headquarters of the sect, and where they perform their rites, sometimes alleged, though without apparent foundation, to be strange and incestuous. A Persian authority has calculated the population of Persian Beluchistan as 250,000; which is believed to be a fairly accurate estimate.

The Beluch village is a cluster of squalid huts round a central keep or fort where the Khan resides. In the south, these huts are made of wattled palm leaves; in the north, where it is colder, of mud and sun-dried bricks. The chieftain's fort, which is typical of a primitive and semifeudal state of society, is a much more picturesque and ambitious structure than its Persian counterpart. In Persia, a fort is seldom more than a rectangular walled enclosure with flanking towers. In Beluchistan it has more the appearance, except for its material, of a mediæval European keep, having lower walled courts and a lofty central tower, with a watch turret above all. Fort and village are commonly placed in a valley or grove of date palms, whence the people derive their livelihood, at the same time that they diligently cultivate with wheat and barley the intervening spaces between the stems. The date palm which grows here, and of which those of Bampur in Persia, and of Panjgur in Kelati Beluchistan, enjoy the widest reputation, is, as is well known, impregnated by the pollen of the male tree, which is inserted in the flower of the female. The ears of one male tree are sufficient to fecundate

Villages and cultivation

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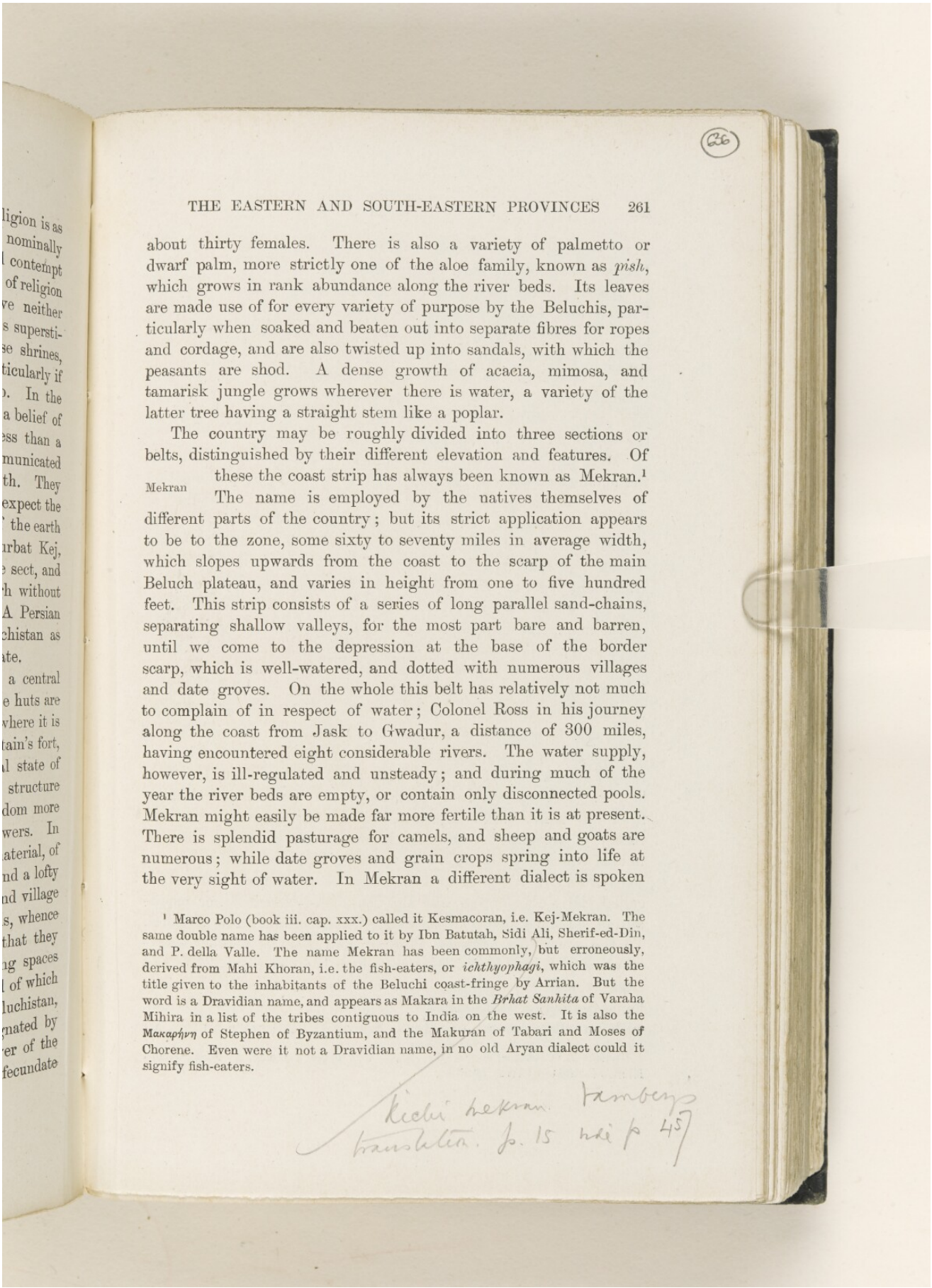



about thirty females. There is also a variety of palmetto or dwarf palm, more strictly one of the aloe family, known as *pish*, which grows in rank abundance along the river beds. Its leaves are made use of for every variety of purpose by the Beluchis, particularly when soaked and beaten out into separate fibres for ropes and cordage, and are also twisted up into sandals, with which the peasants are shod. A dense growth of acacia, mimosa, and tamarisk jungle grows wherever there is water, a variety of the latter tree having a straight stem like a poplar.

The country may be roughly divided into three sections or belts, distinguished by their different elevation and features. Of these the coast strip has always been known as Mekran.[1]

Mekran

The name is employed by the natives themselves of different parts of the country; but its strict application appears to be to the zone, some sixty to seventy miles in average width, which slopes upwards from the coast to the scarp of the main Beluch plateau, and varies in height from one to five hundred feet. This strip consists of a series of long parallel sand-chains, separating shallow valleys, for the most part bare and barren, until we come to the depression at the base of the border scarp, which is well-watered, and dotted with numerous villages and date groves. On the whole this belt has relatively not much to complain of in respect of water; Colonel Ross in his journey along the coast from Jask to Gwadur, a distance of 300 miles, having encountered eight considerable rivers. The water supply, however, is ill-regulated and unsteady; and during much of the year the river beds are empty, or contain only disconnected pools. Mekran might easily be made far more fertile than it is at present. There is splendid pasturage for camels, and sheep and goats are numerous; while date groves and grain crops spring into life at the very sight of water. In Mekran a different dialect is spoken

[1] Marco Polo (book iii. cap. xxx.) called it Kesmacoran, i.e. Kej-Mekran. The same double name has been applied to it by Ibn Batutah, Sidi Ali, Sherif-ed-Din, and P. della Valle. The name Mekran has been commonly, but erroneously, derived from Mahi Khoran, i.e. the fish-eaters, or *ichthyophagi*, which was the title given to the inhabitants of the Beluchi coast-fringe by Arrian. But the word is a Dravidian name, and appears as Makara in the *Brhat Sanhita* of Varaha Mihira in a list of the tribes contiguous to India on the west. It is also the Μακαρήνη of Stephen of Byzantium, and the Makuran of Tabari and Moses of Chorene. Even were it not a Dravidian name, in no old Aryan dialect could it signify fish-eaters.

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from Northern Beluchistan, and is supposed to be a *patois* of Persian intermingled with Indian words, or *vice versa*.

The Beluch plateau

Above Mekran and along the entire extent of Beluchistan, both Persian and Kelati, extends the elevated area, 3,000 to 4,000 feet in height, of what has been designated the Beluch plateau. North of the scarp, which constitutes the water parting, the rivers—as, for instance, the Bampur and Mashkid—flow away from the sea, and are ultimately lost in large *hamuns* or swamps, which at different periods of the year present the appearance of vast lagoons and shallow marshes.

Serhad

Merging on the north in the plateau of Persian Beluchistan is the mountain region of Serhad, in reality the southern prolongation of the great elevated mass forming the highlands of Khorasan. This remote and inaccessible district has long baffled the zeal of European explorers, Pottinger and St. John having both tried in vain to enter it. At length in 1885 Captain R. H. Jennings, an officer deputed by the Indian Government, was the first to penetrate its mysteries, and to give to it an existence on the map. Its local name is, not inappropriately, Yaghistan, i.e. the country of the Yaghis, or outlaws of Beluchistan, Afghanistan, and Seistan. He reported it to consist of a mountain plateau, from 3,500 to 6,000 feet in height, surrounded by higher ranges, beyond which are deserts on the north-east and west, while on the south are the districts of Bampur and Dizak. It contains two of the *hamuns* or swamps which I have mentioned, and, what is more remarkable, an active volcano with three craters 12,681 feet in height. This extraordinary mountain, at a distance of 200 miles from the coast, might appear to violate the commonly accepted theory of a subtle connection between volcanoes and the sea, unless, which is probable, we suppose it to have stood upon the southern shore of the great central sea of prehistoric Iran. It is called the Kuh-i-Tuftan, and also the Kuh-i-Naushada, or mountain of sal ammoniac, that substance being obtained from its sides. To the south-east between Bampur and Bam is another snow-crowned peak, the Kuh-i-Basman, which is an extinct volcano, and rises in splendid isolation from the desert. Captain Jennings found Serhad to be inhabited by Beluchi, Kurd, and Brahui tribes, with an alleged total of 13,500 families.[1] All were Sunnis, all

[1] This is, of course, a mistake. So, at the other extreme, is Mirza Mehdi Khan's estimate of 1,425 families.

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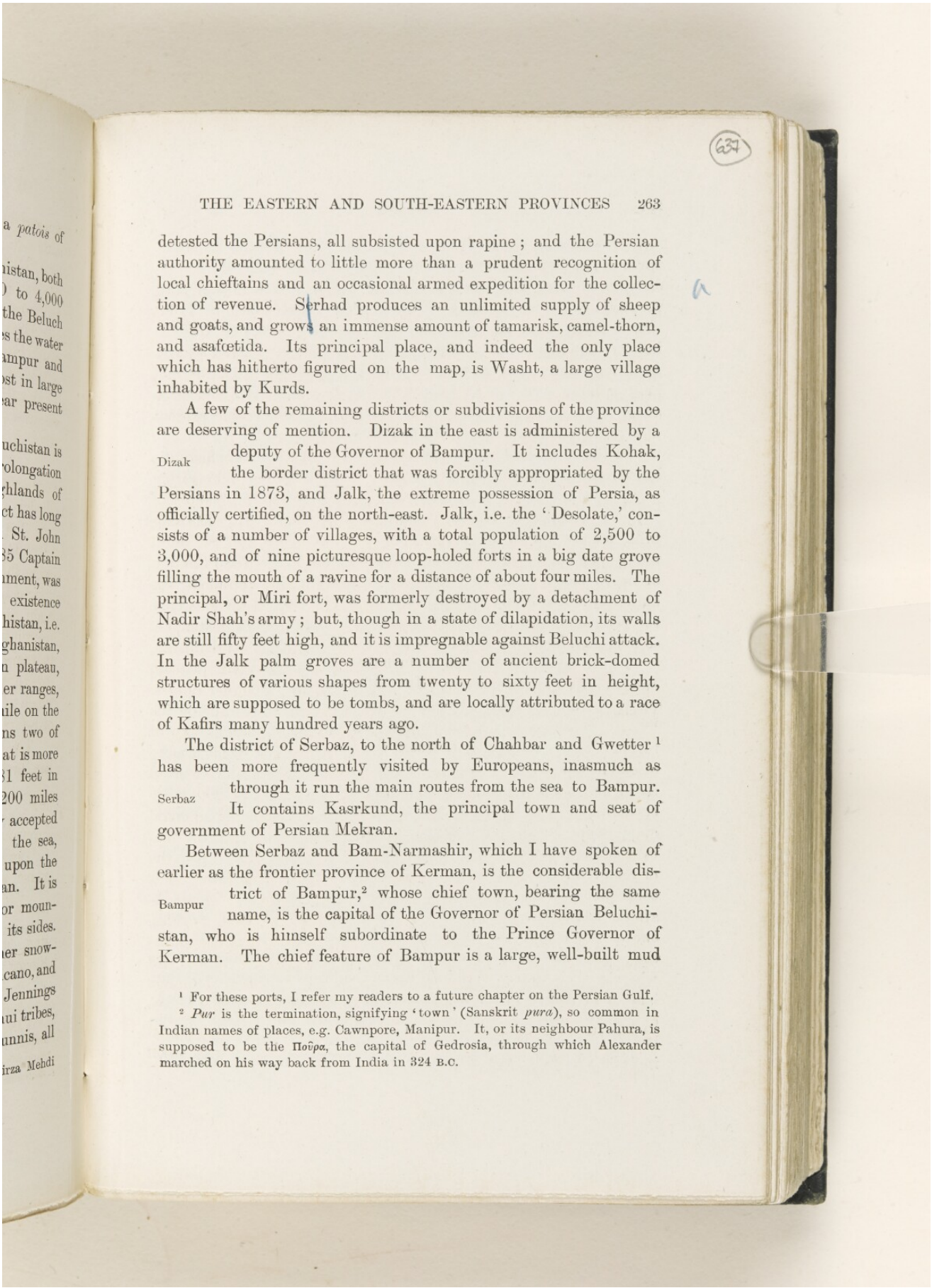



detested the Persians, all subsisted upon rapine; and the Persian authority amounted to little more than a prudent recognition of local chieftains and an occasional armed expedition for the collection of revenue. Serhad produces an unlimited supply of sheep and goats, and grows an immense amount of tamarisk, camel-thorn, and asafœtida. Its principal place, and indeed the only place which has hitherto figured on the map, is Washt, a large village inhabited by Kurds.

A few of the remaining districts or subdivisions of the province are deserving of mention. Dizak in the east is administered by a deputy of the Governor of Bampur. It includes Kohak, the border district that was forcibly appropriated by the Persians in 1873, and Jalk, the extreme possession of Persia, as officially certified, on the north-east. Jalk, i.e. the 'Desolate,' consists of a number of villages, with a total population of 2,500 to 3,000, and of nine picturesque loop-holed forts in a big date grove filling the mouth of a ravine for a distance of about four miles. The principal, or Miri fort, was formerly destroyed by a detachment of Nadir Shah's army; but, though in a state of dilapidation, its walls are still fifty feet high, and it is impregnable against Beluchi attack. In the Jalk palm groves are a number of ancient brick-domed structures of various shapes from twenty to sixty feet in height, which are supposed to be tombs, and are locally attributed to a race of Kafirs many hundred years ago.

Dizak

The district of Serbaz, to the north of Chahbar and Gwetter[1] has been more frequently visited by Europeans, inasmuch as through it run the main routes from the sea to Bampur. It contains Kasrkund, the principal town and seat of government of Persian Mekran.

Serbaz

Between Serbaz and Bam-Narmashir, which I have spoken of earlier as the frontier province of Kerman, is the considerable district of Bampur,[2] whose chief town, bearing the same name, is the capital of the Governor of Persian Beluchistan, who is himself subordinate to the Prince Governor of Kerman. The chief feature of Bampur is a large, well-built mud

Bampur

[1] For these ports, I refer my readers to a future chapter on the Persian Gulf.

[2] *Pur* is the termination, signifying 'town' (Sanskrit *pura*), so common in Indian names of places, e.g. Cawnpore, Manipur. It, or its neighbour Pahura, is supposed to be the Πούρα, the capital of Gedrosia, through which Alexander marched on his way back from India in 324 B.C.

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fort, crowning an elevation about 100 feet in height, three miles north of the Bampur river, whose waters, regulated by dykes, are distributed over the grain-producing lands, which are Crown property, of the surrounding villages. A garrison is kept here of fifty artillery with six guns, as well as three hundred regular infantry and fifty cavalry. There is also a permanent Beluch militia five hundred strong in the neighbourhood. The Persians have lately built a large new fort at Pahura (where also is a lofty old fort), about fourteen miles to the east of Bampur. It covers a square of 200 yards, has four towers, and can accommodate 1,000 men.

To the south-east of Bampur, and north of Jask, is the little known and almost unexplored region of Bashakerd, whose principal town is Anguhran. It is a backward and impracticable region, consisting of a labyrinth of rugged hills, intersected by huge rocky watercourses, and containing a scanty population of half-naked savages, with a marked infusion of negro blood. In the region between Jask and Bint, Persian authority is less firmly established than on the eastern border; and the petty chieftains in this neighbourhood are practically left alone so long as a moderate revenue is paid into the royal exchequer.

Bashakerd

I have described Persian Beluchistan as it now exists in the hands of its Persian masters. It cannot be contended that their rule has been a success. On the contrary, it has been attended with oppression, corruption, and consequent revolt. I have frequently depicted the Persian petty governor or official as one of the most undesirable and flagitious of the human race; and with a poor, unarmed population, such as they have encountered in Beluchistan, the members of his class have found ample scope for all their talents. Taxes have been collected twice over at the point of the bayonet; local chiefs have been arrested or removed; the people have been driven from their homes. The consequence is that agriculture has fallen into decay, the irrigation system has broken down, and the miserable peasants have flocked out of the country in hundreds to India or Muscat. Owing to the neglect and collapse of the dykes on all the smaller rivers, whereby their waters were held up and diffused in canals over the land, the channels of the main rivers have widened to an enormous extent, the water furrowing an aimless course down their sandy beds. Thus the Dasht, which in 1876 was 357 yards in width, in 1889 was 860; the Rapch or Rabj, which in 1869 was 220

Persian rule

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yards across, in 1889 was 616. At Bampur, the exasperation aroused by the Persian Governor, one Abul Fath Khan, a notable specimen of his breed, was so great that, in June 1889, the people arose, and besieged him in his fort; nor was the revolt allayed till a more politic successor had appeared upon the scene, and sent the delinquent in chains to Kerman. The new Governor, Jemal-ed-Din Khan, is a strong man, and has ruled well. The discontent is now subsiding, and the poor Beluchis, having made their protest, will probably relapse into the stagnant acquiescence that is begotten by the fearful sight of breech-loaders and mountain-guns.

Britain across the border

The spectacle that may be witnessed across the border is not one that is calculated to increase their contentment with Persian rule, while it augments the respect in which they have long held the British name. There, their brethren in Independent or Kelati Beluchistan, under the ægis of British protection, are living in comparative security and quietude, in the enjoyment of a liberty which their own violence or mutiny alone can endanger. The recent journey of Sir R. Sandeman,[1] the capable administrator of British Beluchistan, in the winter of 1890–91, from Kurrachi *viâ* Bela to Panjgur, the border state adjoining the Persian Kohak, while projected in order to reopen the old *kafilah* route between Sind and Seistan, has had the further effect of confirming the Beluchi chieftains, from the Khan of Kelat downwards, in their loyalty to the British Crown. A detachment of Beluchi levies keeps the peace in Panjgur; the entire state of Beluchistan may be said to be passing as placidly under British rule as has Bokhara under that of her northern rival; and the real neighbour of Persia on the south-east is not the Khan of Kharan. or of Kej, or even of Kelat, but the British *raj* who holds the keys of empire at Calcutta.

### Routes in the Eastern Provinces.[2]

#### *I. Eastern-Central Provinces.*

Kashan to Yezd.—Sergeant Gibbons (1831), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xi.; A. Petermann (1860), *Reisen im Orient*, vol. ii. pp. 210–220.

[1] I grieve to say that this excellent frontier officer has, just when starting upon a second tour in South Beluchistan, died at Lus Bela (Jan. 1892). An hour before hearing by telegram of his death, I received a long and enthusiastic letter from him about his frontier policy, of which I was a cordial advocate.

[2] In this table *ibid.* signifies the work by the same writer before mentioned.

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ISFAHAN TO YEZD (*viâ* Gulnabad, Nau Gumbaz, and Akda).—K. Abbott (1849), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxv. pp. 10–20; Sir F. Goldsmid (1865), *Telegraph and Travel*, pp. 563–9; Colonel Euan-Smith (1870), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 164–173; E. Floyer (1876), *Unexplored Beluchistan*, cap. xv.; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. i.

DEHBID TO YEZD (*viâ* Abarguh and Taft).—Colonel Trézel (1807); (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. cap. iii.

SHIRAZ TO YEZD (*viâ* Zerghun, Seidun, Mehrabad, and Abarguh).—A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii. cap. xli.

YEZDIKHAST TO KERMAN.—Sergeant Gibbons (1831), *ibid.*

YEZD TO KERMAN (*viâ* Kermanshahan, Anar, and Bahramabad).—K. Abbott (1849), *ibid.*, pp. 21–9; Sir F. Goldsmid (1866), *ibid.*, pp. 573–580; Colonel Euan-Smith (1870), *ibid.*, pp. 176–183; E. Floyer (1876), *ibid.*, cap. xiv.; E. Stack (1881), *ibid.*, vol. i.

YEZD TO KABUL.—M. A'Court (1826), *Narrative of Journey*.

YEZD TO HERAT (*viâ* Khaf).—Captain Christie (1810), Appendix to Pottinger's *Travels in Beloochistan*.

YEZD TO MESHED.—Captain Truilhier (1807), *Mémoire*, par M. Daussy.

YEZD TO TABBAS (*viâ* Sukand, Pusht-i-Badan, Khur, and Mehrjan).—(Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), *ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 81–121; Colonel C. E. Stewart (1880), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. iii.

YEZD TO SEMNAN (*viâ* Anarek).—Lieutenant H. B. Vaughan (1888), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. xii.

KERMAN TO SHIRAZ. 1. (*viâ* Shehr-i-Babek and Arsinjan).—(Sir) H. Pottinger (1810), *ibid.*, cap. xvii. 2. (*viâ* Saidabad and Niriz)—(Sir) O. St. John (1872), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 92–111.

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KERMAN TO BAMPUR (*viâ* Bam and Regan).—(Sir) H. Pottinger (1810), *ibid.*, caps. xii.–xv.; Sir F. Goldsmid (1866), *ibid.*, pp. 590–605; Colonel Euan-Smith (1871), *ibid.*, pp. 191–206; (Sir) O. St. John (1872), *ibid.*, pp. 79–91.

KERMAN TO BIRJAND.—J. P. Ferrier (1845), *Caravan Journeys*, p. 440.

KERMAN TO NEH.—N. de Khanikoff (1859), *Mémoire*, pp. 156–186.

KERMAN TO BUNDER ABBAS. 1. (*viâ* Baft and Urzu); 2. (*viâ* Rudbar and Rahbur).—A. H. Schindler (1879), *Zeit. der Gesell. für Erd. zu Berlin*, 1881, pp. 307–366.

LINGAH TO YEZD (*viâ* Bastak and Forg).—Lieutenant H. B. Vaughan (1888), *ibid.*

## II. *Persian Beluchistan.*

BUNDER ABBAS TO BAM.—Sir F. Goldsmid (1872), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvii. p. 188; Colonel Euan-Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 227–240.

JASK TO BUNDER ABBAS.—Captain W. P. Grant (1809), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. v., 1839.

JASK TO KERMAN (*viâ* Anguhran, Manujan, Kahnu, and Raian).—E. Floyer (1876), *ibid.*, caps. vii.–xii.

JASK TO BAMPUR. 1. (*viâ* Geh).—Captain W. P. Grant (1809), *ibid.* 2. (*viâ* Bint and Fanoch Pass).—E. Floyer (1876), *ibid.*, pp. 4–78, and *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xlvii. p. 188.

JASK TO GWADUR (*viâ* Chahbar).—Colonel E. C. Ross (1867), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. p. 139.

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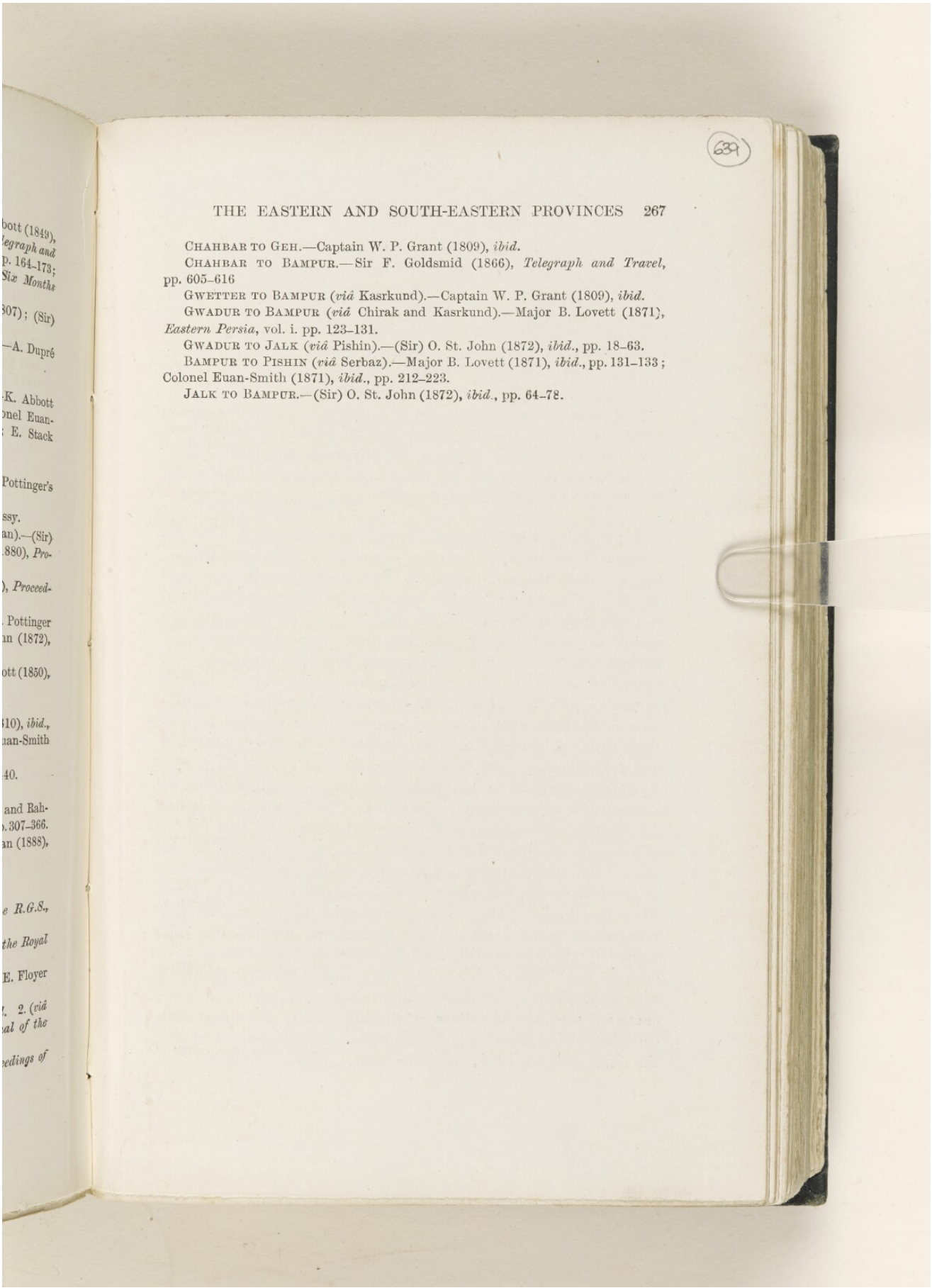



CHAHBAR TO GEH.—Captain W. P. Grant (1809), *ibid.*

CHAHBAR TO BAMPUR.—Sir F. Goldsmid (1866), *Telegraph and Travel*, pp. 605–616

GWETTER TO BAMPUR (*viâ* Kasrkund).—Captain W. P. Grant (1809), *ibid.*

GWADUR TO BAMPUR (*viâ* Chirak and Kasrkund).—Major B. Lovett (1871), *Eastern Persia*, vol. i. pp. 123–131.

GWADUR TO JALK (*viâ* Pishin).—(Sir) O. St. John (1872), *ibid.*, pp. 18–63.

BAMPUR TO PISHIN (*viâ* Serbaz).—Major B. Lovett (1871), *ibid.*, pp. 131–133; Colonel Euan-Smith (1871), *ibid.*, pp. 212–223.

JALK TO BAMPUR.—(Sir) O. St. John (1872), *ibid.*, pp. 64–78.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## THE SOUTH-WESTERN PROVINCES

Medus infestus sibi luctuosis
Dissidet armis.

HORACE, *Carm.* iii. 8.

The Persian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monarchies might be gained in a morning with faith and the flourish of a sabre.

B. DISRAELI, *Tancred.*

THE physical conformation of Persia, presenting as it does the extreme vicissitudes of climate, corresponding with those of altitude, from the enervating heat of the coast plains to the rigour of mountain heights rarely left by the snow; the racial features and archaic habits of many of its peoples; and the unsettled character of its government, are responsible for a phenomenon that has almost disappeared from the organisation of other states upon which civilisation has in any degree laid its crystallising finger. In countries with which the ordinary Englishman is familiar, be it as native, or colonist, or resident, population, attracted by agriculture or congested by industry, is settled, and for the most part sedentary, movement to and fro being limited to the more or less permanent migrations of families, in deference to the exigencies of comfort, of livelihood, or of space. An alternative residence, according to the season of year, is the privilege of wealth and the mark of luxury. In Persia, on the other hand, where population is sparse, where the cultivable area is relatively small, and where great spaces are occupied by bleak mountain districts, remote from the control of government, and adapted to pastoral rather than agricultural pursuits, the immemorial prescription of the East still survives; the tribes move in compact detachments according to the period of the year, carrying with them their entire household furniture and wealth, and exchanging the lowland valleys or riverain plains, which they have occupied during the winter, for the higher and cooler crests, where life is supportable in the summer heats. *Kishlak* (from *kish*, i.e.

Nomad life

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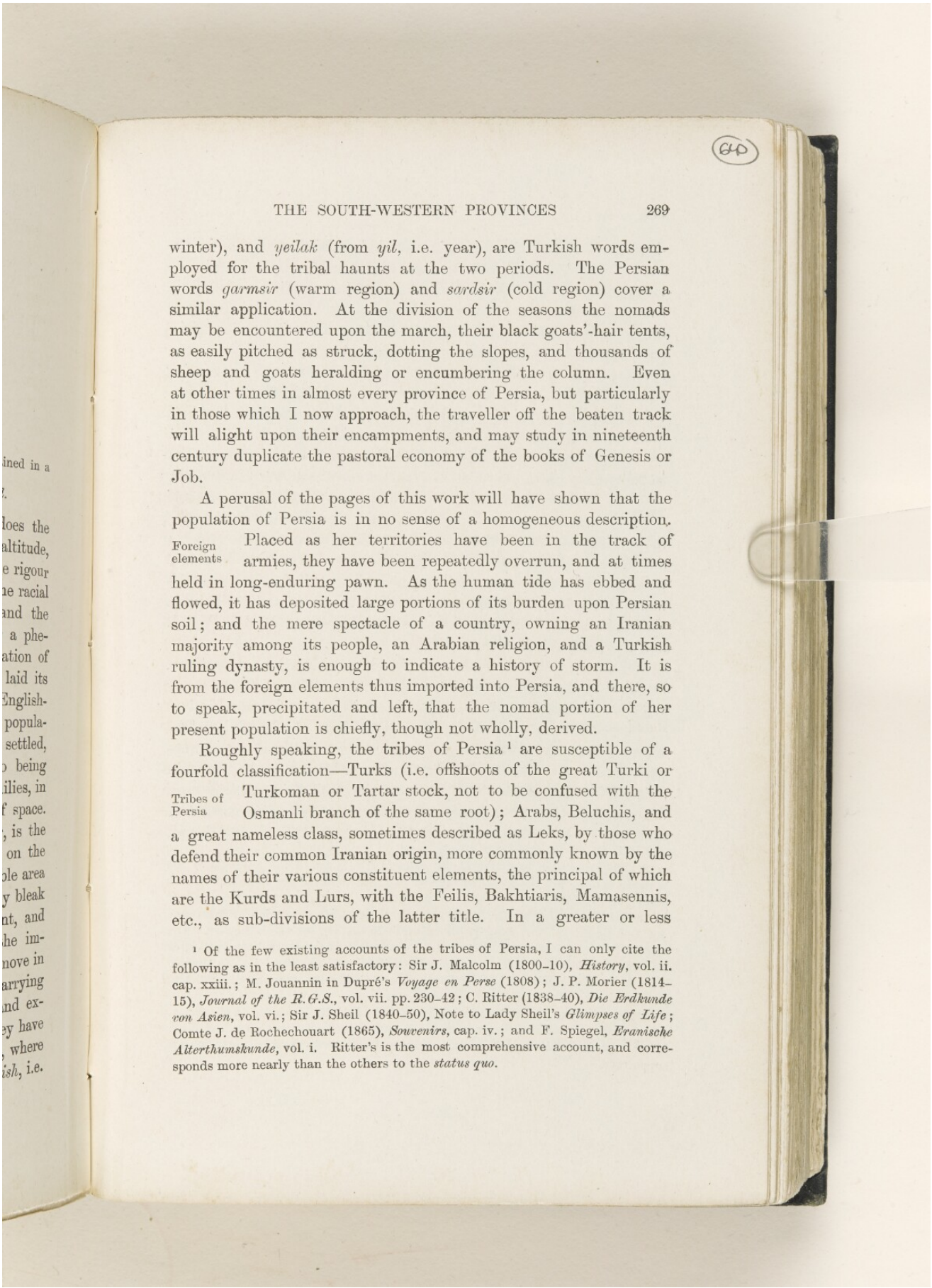



winter), and *yeilak* (from *yil*, i.e. year), are Turkish words employed for the tribal haunts at the two periods. The Persian words *garmsir* (warm region) and *sardsir* (cold region) cover a similar application. At the division of the seasons the nomads may be encountered upon the march, their black goats'-hair tents, as easily pitched as struck, dotting the slopes, and thousands of sheep and goats heralding or encumbering the column. Even at other times in almost every province of Persia, but particularly in those which I now approach, the traveller off the beaten track will alight upon their encampments, and may study in nineteenth century duplicate the pastoral economy of the books of Genesis or Job.

A perusal of the pages of this work will have shown that the population of Persia is in no sense of a homogeneous description.

Foreign elements

Placed as her territories have been in the track of armies, they have been repeatedly overrun, and at times held in long-enduring pawn. As the human tide has ebbed and flowed, it has deposited large portions of its burden upon Persian soil; and the mere spectacle of a country, owning an Iranian majority among its people, an Arabian religion, and a Turkish ruling dynasty, is enough to indicate a history of storm. It is from the foreign elements thus imported into Persia, and there, so to speak, precipitated and left, that the nomad portion of her present population is chiefly, though not wholly, derived.

Tribes of Persia

Roughly speaking, the tribes of Persia[1] are susceptible of a fourfold classification—Turks (i.e. offshoots of the great Turki or Turkoman or Tartar stock, not to be confused with the Osmanli branch of the same root); Arabs, Beluchis, and a great nameless class, sometimes described as Leks, by those who defend their common Iranian origin, more commonly known by the names of their various constituent elements, the principal of which are the Kurds and Lurs, with the Feilis, Bakhtiaris, Mamasennis, etc., as sub-divisions of the latter title. In a greater or less

[1] Of the few existing accounts of the tribes of Persia, I can only cite the following as in the least satisfactory: Sir J. Malcolm (1800–10), *History*, vol. ii. cap. xxiii.; M. Jouannin in Dupré's *Voyage en Perse* (1808); J. P. Morier (1814–15), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. vii. pp. 230–42; C. Ritter (1838–40), *Die Erdkunde von Asien*, vol. vi.; Sir J. Sheil (1840–50), Note to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life*; Comte J. de Rochechouart (1865), *Souvenirs*, cap. iv.; and F. Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, vol. i. Ritter's is the most comprehensive account, and corresponds more nearly than the others to the *status quo*.

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degree all these tribes contain a settled population, which in the case of the Turks constitutes an enormously preponderant majority, in that of the Arabs and Beluchis a decided majority, in that of the Kurds and Lurs a decided minority. The settled peoples are known as *shehr-nishins* or *deh-nishins*, i.e. dwellers in cities or villages; the nomads as *sahra-nishins*, i.e. dwellers in the open country. All nomads may further be grouped under the designation *Iliat*, a Turkish word, which is the plural of *Il*, a family or clan. Of the entire population of Persia it has been assumed that one quarter, or over 2,000,000, are in the nomadic state.[1]

Among the Turkish tribes of Persia, which are most numerous in the north and north-west, the best known are the Kajars (the tribe of the Shah), the Afshars (the tribe of Nadir Shah), the Karaguzlus of Hamadan, the Shah Sevens of Ardebil[2] (supplying the Royal Bodyguard), the Turkomans of the Gurgan and Atrek valleys, and the Kashkai hordes of Fars and Laristan. Of these the last three contain the only remaining nomad elements, changing their pastures according to the season of the year. The Goklan and Yomut Turkomans have been dealt with in Vol. I. and the Kashkais in Chapter XX.

Turks

Of the Arab tribes, I have previously mentioned some sections, localised in the eastern districts of Khorasan. There are also many Persianised Arab tribes both in the neighbourhood of Teheran and along the coast-fringe of the Gulf. The Kurds I have already described, both on the north-east and north-west frontiers. Similarly the Beluchis, who are to be found in Seistan, Persian Beluchistan, and on the Gulf fringe, have been dealt with in Chapter XXIII. The most conspicuous illustrations, however, of both the second and the third class, above mentioned,

Arabs, Kurds, etc.

[1] It is impossible to arrive at any scientific estimate of the numbers of the nomad population. No census or register of births is kept; the scale of military contribution affords no clue; and an approximate calculation is only arrived at by taking the number of the families, which are roughly ascertained for revenue purposes by the chiefs. Equally difficult is it to explore their past history. The nomad tribes appear never to have developed a folk-lore, or produced a book, or harboured an historian. Such historical details as are contained in this chapter have been laboriously gleaned from a wide variety of sources, partly written, partly oral.

[2] The Shah Sevens or King-lovers were so called by Shah Abbas the Great, who, in order to break the excessive power of the seven Kizilbash, or Red-Head tribes, who had raised Ismail to the throne, constituted a new tribe of his own supporters.

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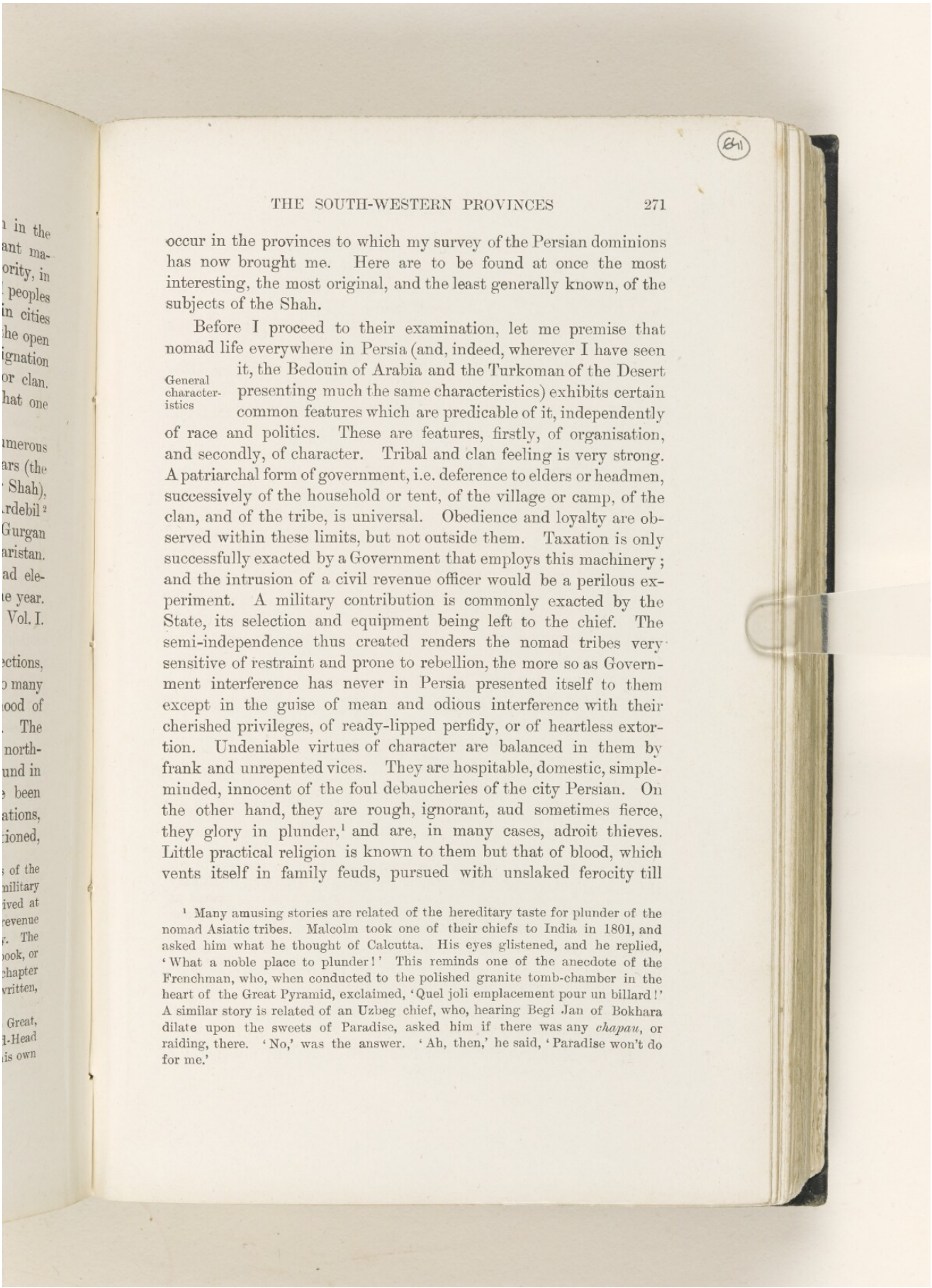


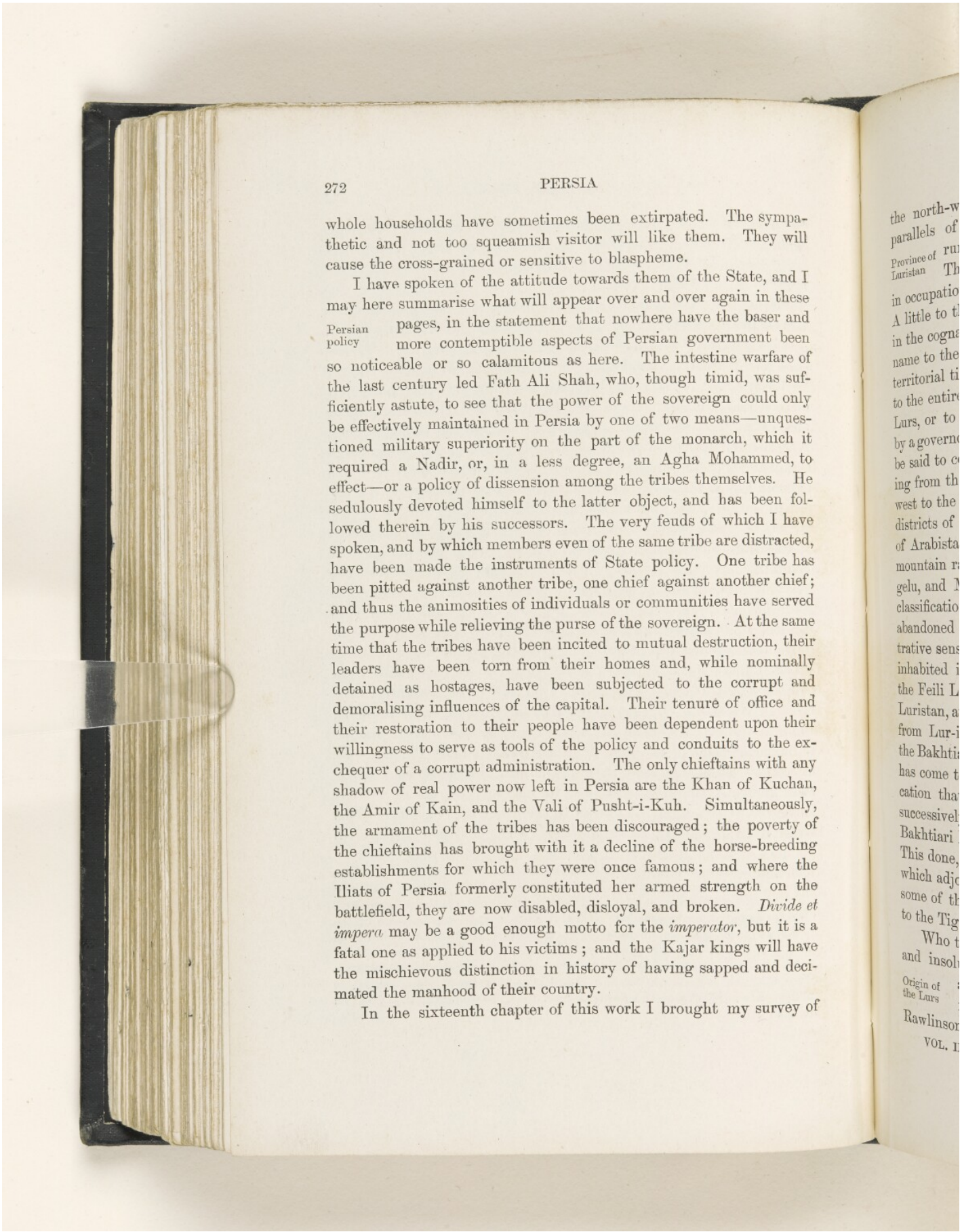


occur in the provinces to which my survey of the Persian dominions has now brought me. Here are to be found at once the most interesting, the most original, and the least generally known, of the subjects of the Shah.

General characteristics

Before I proceed to their examination, let me premise that nomad life everywhere in Persia (and, indeed, wherever I have seen it, the Bedouin of Arabia and the Turkoman of the Desert presenting much the same characteristics) exhibits certain common features which are predicable of it, independently of race and politics. These are features, firstly, of organisation, and secondly, of character. Tribal and clan feeling is very strong. A patriarchal form of government, i.e. deference to elders or headmen, successively of the household or tent, of the village or camp, of the clan, and of the tribe, is universal. Obedience and loyalty are observed within these limits, but not outside them. Taxation is only successfully exacted by a Government that employs this machinery; and the intrusion of a civil revenue officer would be a perilous experiment. A military contribution is commonly exacted by the State, its selection and equipment being left to the chief. The semi-independence thus created renders the nomad tribes very sensitive of restraint and prone to rebellion, the more so as Government interference has never in Persia presented itself to them except in the guise of mean and odious interference with their cherished privileges, of ready-lipped perfidy, or of heartless extortion. Undeniable virtues of character are balanced in them by frank and unrepented vices. They are hospitable, domestic, simple-minded, innocent of the foul debaucheries of the city Persian. On the other hand, they are rough, ignorant, and sometimes fierce, they glory in plunder,[1] and are, in many cases, adroit thieves. Little practical religion is known to them but that of blood, which vents itself in family feuds, pursued with unslaked ferocity till

[1] Many amusing stories are related of the hereditary taste for plunder of the nomad Asiatic tribes. Malcolm took one of their chiefs to India in 1801, and asked him what he thought of Calcutta. His eyes glistened, and he replied, 'What a noble place to plunder!' This reminds one of the anecdote of the Frenchman, who, when conducted to the polished granite tomb-chamber in the heart of the Great Pyramid, exclaimed, 'Quel joli emplacement pour un billard!' A similar story is related of an Uzbeg chief, who, hearing Begi Jan of Bokhara dilate upon the sweets of Paradise, asked him if there was any *chapau*, or raiding, there. 'No,' was the answer. 'Ah, then,' he said, 'Paradise won't do for me.'



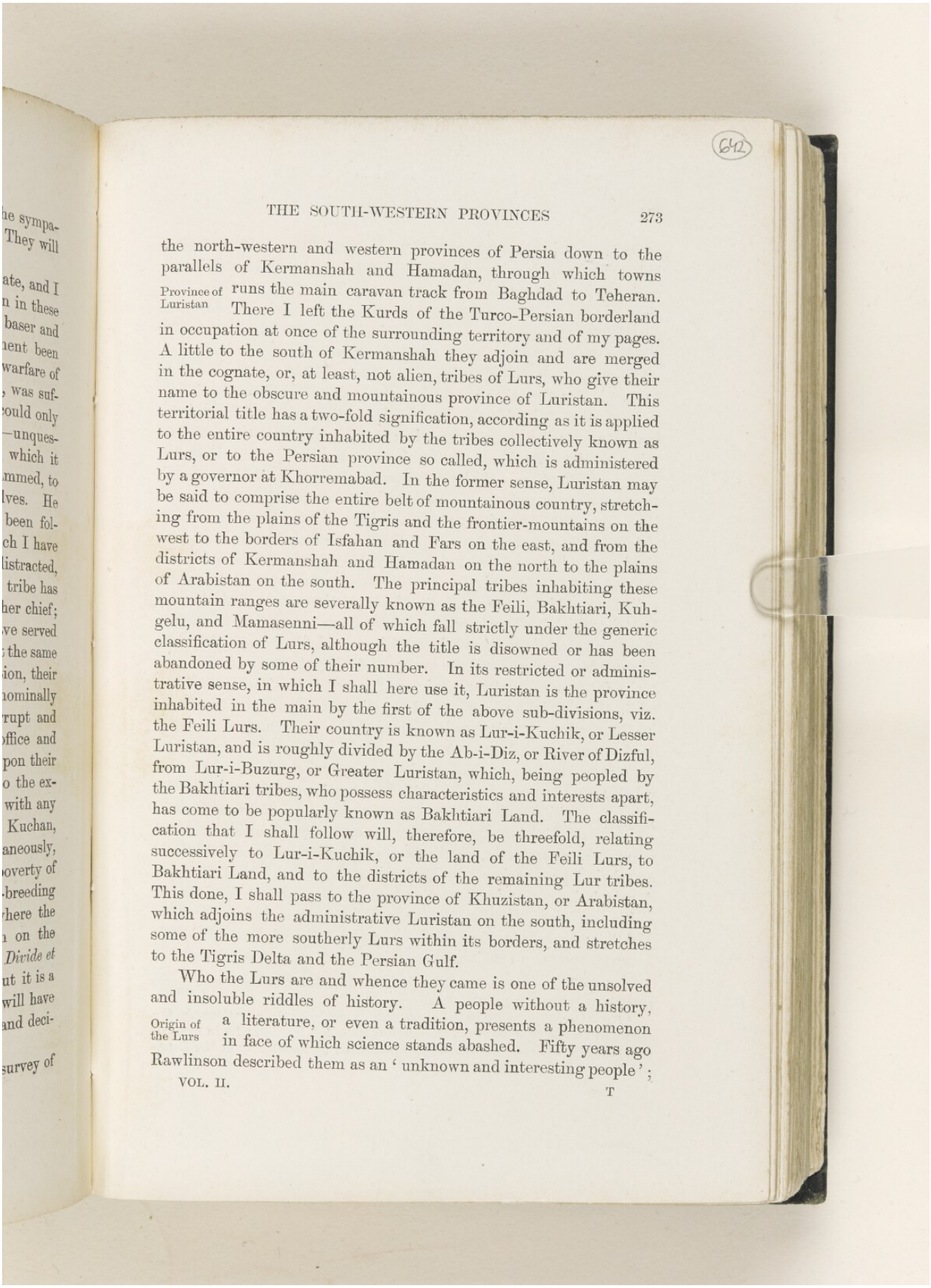


whole households have sometimes been extirpated. The sympathetic and not too squeamish visitor will like them. They will cause the cross-grained or sensitive to blaspheme.

I have spoken of the attitude towards them of the State, and I may here summarise what will appear over and over again in these pages, in the statement that nowhere have the baser and more contemptible aspects of Persian government been so noticeable or so calamitous as here. The intestine warfare of the last century led Fath Ali Shah, who, though timid, was sufficiently astute, to see that the power of the sovereign could only be effectively maintained in Persia by one of two means—unquestioned military superiority on the part of the monarch, which it required a Nadir, or, in a less degree, an Agha Mohammed, to effect—or a policy of dissension among the tribes themselves. He sedulously devoted himself to the latter object, and has been followed therein by his successors. The very feuds of which I have spoken, and by which members even of the same tribe are distracted, have been made the instruments of State policy. One tribe has been pitted against another tribe, one chief against another chief; and thus the animosities of individuals or communities have served the purpose while relieving the purse of the sovereign. At the same time that the tribes have been incited to mutual destruction, their leaders have been torn from their homes and, while nominally detained as hostages, have been subjected to the corrupt and demoralising influences of the capital. Their tenure of office and their restoration to their people have been dependent upon their willingness to serve as tools of the policy and conduits to the exchequer of a corrupt administration. The only chieftains with any shadow of real power now left in Persia are the Khan of Kuchan, the Amir of Kain, and the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh. Simultaneously, the armament of the tribes has been discouraged; the poverty of the chieftains has brought with it a decline of the horse-breeding establishments for which they were once famous; and where the Iliats of Persia formerly constituted her armed strength on the battlefield, they are now disabled, disloyal, and broken. *Divide et impera* may be a good enough motto for the *imperator*, but it is a fatal one as applied to his victims; and the Kajar kings will have the mischievous distinction in history of having sapped and decimated the manhood of their country.

Persian policy

In the sixteenth chapter of this work I brought my survey of





the north-western and western provinces of Persia down to the parallels of Kermanshah and Hamadan, through which towns runs the main caravan track from Baghdad to Teheran. There I left the Kurds of the Turco-Persian borderland in occupation at once of the surrounding territory and of my pages. A little to the south of Kermanshah they adjoin and are merged in the cognate, or, at least, not alien, tribes of Lurs, who give their name to the obscure and mountainous province of Luristan. This territorial title has a two-fold signification, according as it is applied to the entire country inhabited by the tribes collectively known as Lurs, or to the Persian province so called, which is administered by a governor at Khorremabad. In the former sense, Luristan may be said to comprise the entire belt of mountainous country, stretching from the plains of the Tigris and the frontier-mountains on the west to the borders of Isfahan and Fars on the east, and from the districts of Kermanshah and Hamadan on the north to the plains of Arabistan on the south. The principal tribes inhabiting these mountain ranges are severally known as the Feili, Bakhtiari, Kuhgelu, and Mamasenni—all of which fall strictly under the generic classification of Lurs, although the title is disowned or has been abandoned by some of their number. In its restricted or administrative sense, in which I shall here use it, Luristan is the province inhabited in the main by the first of the above sub-divisions, viz. the Feili Lurs. Their country is known as Lur-i-Kuchik, or Lesser Luristan, and is roughly divided by the Ab-i-Diz, or River of Dizful, from Lur-i-Buzurg, or Greater Luristan, which, being peopled by the Bakhtiari tribes, who possess characteristics and interests apart, has come to be popularly known as Bakhtiari Land. The classification that I shall follow will, therefore, be threefold, relating successively to Lur-i-Kuchik, or the land of the Feili Lurs, to Bakhtiari Land, and to the districts of the remaining Lur tribes. This done, I shall pass to the province of Khuzistan, or Arabistan, which adjoins the administrative Luristan on the south, including some of the more southerly Lurs within its borders, and stretches to the Tigris Delta and the Persian Gulf.

Province of Luristan

Who the Lurs are and whence they came is one of the unsolved and insoluble riddles of history. A people without a history, a literature, or even a tradition, presents a phenomenon in face of which science stands abashed. Fifty years ago Rawlinson described them as an 'unknown and interesting people';

Origin of the Lurs



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and although in these pages will be presented more aids to knowledge than can elsewhere be found, yet I cannot profess to lift the curtain of an inscrutable past. Are they Turks? Are they Persians? Are they Semites? All three hypotheses have been urged. They appear to belong to the same ethnical group as the Kurds, their neighbours on the north; nor does their language, which is a dialect of Persian, differ materially from the Kurdish tongue.[1] On the other hand, they themselves consider it an insult to be confounded with the Kurds, whom they call Leks; and the majority of writers have agreed in regarding them as the veritable relics of the old Aryan or Iranian stock, who preceded Arabs, Turks, and Tartars in the land. Rawlinson says that their language is descended from the old Farsi, which was coæval with, but distinct from, the Pehlevi tongue in the days of the Sassanian kings. Whilst, however, we may accept this as the most probable hypothesis, and may even be led thereby to regard with heightened interest these last survivals of an illustrious stock, we are not compelled to endorse the conjectural connection of Bakhtiari with Bactria, which has been propounded by some writers,[2] or to localise their ancestral home. It is sufficient to believe that they are Aryans by descent, and to know that they have lived for centuries in their present mountains. The word Feili means a rebel, while the word Lur is commonly applied as a synonym for a boor by the modern Persians, who detest the Lurs almost as cordially as they are detested by them.

Numbers

Of the numbers of the Lurs it is scarcely possible to speak with greater confidence. In 1836 Rawlinson gave the numbers of the Feili Lurs and their dependencies as 56,000 families; in 1843 Layard returned them as 49,000 families. In the same years respectively, Rawlinson gave the totals of the Bakhtiaris and their dependencies as 28,000 families, Layard as 37,700 families. A calculation made in 1881 fixed the total of persons as follows: Feilis and dependencies 210,000; Bakhtiaris and dependencies, 170,000; Kuhgelus, etc., 41,000; grand total of Lurs, 421,000. I am disposed to think that this is an exaggerated census;

[1] Rich, the traveller in Kurdistan, declared that the Bakhtiaris were Kurds (*Narrative*, etc., vol. i. p. 130).

[2] Some have gone so far as to base on this resemblance the assertion that the Bakhtiari are the relics of one of the Greek colonies left by Alexander in Asia, an hypothesis for which the further support is claimed of a similarity in the Greek and Bakhtiari national dances.

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although the prevalence of polygamy among the tribes, and the large families reported by recent travellers, may be held to justify the opposite opinion.

Lur-i-Kuchik, or Lesser Luristan, embraces the region between Dizful on the south, and the confines of Kermanshah on the north, and between the Ab-i-Diz on the east, and the Turkish frontier on the west. It is subdivided into two sections called respectively Pish-Kuh, i.e. Before the Mountains, or Cismontane Luristan, and Pusht-i-Kuh, i.e. Behind the Mountains, or Transmontane Luristan, the dividing ridge being that section of the Zagros range which is locally known as the Kebir Kuh. Till the accession of the Kajar dynasty there was no political distinction between the two; but Pish-Kuh was taken away by Agha Mohammed Shah from the Vali of Luristan, who has ever since been forced to content himself with Pusht-i-Kuh. Hence it arises that the Feili nomenclature, which was formerly applied to the whole of Lur-i-Kuchik, has become restricted in popular usage to the Pusht-i-Kuh, the Feilis proper constituting the bulk of the population in the latter district.

The Feilis

Pish-Kuh, which is the eastern portion of the Luristan province, has for its boundaries Kermanshah on the north, the Ab-i-Diz and the Bakhtiari country on the east and south, and the River Kerkhah on the west. It differs both in political organisation and in the character of its people from Pusht-i-Kuh. For since the partition before mentioned, it has remained under the control of a Persian Governor, instead of a native chief, the *tushmals* or petty chieftains (lit. heads of the house) being subordinate and answerable to him; whilst, owing to the proximity of large towns, such as Kermanshah, Khorremabad, and Burujird, to the accessibility of the district, and to the neighbourhood of the electric telegraph, its population has been much more exposed to the influence of Government, and has consequently become more sedentary than is the case in the mountain fastnesses further to the west. The two main tribal divisions of Pish-Kuh are the Gulek and Selewerzi; and these are subdivided respectively into the Amala and Bala Giriwa, and the Sila Sila and Dilfan tribes, which in Rawlinson's and Layard's time were, as now, the principal names. The subheadings or clans of these tribes have, however, changed very much since those days, having in some cases disappeared, and in others changed their names; so that it is useless for

Pish-Kuh



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me to reproduce or refer to the old lists.[1] Among the branches of the Bala Giriwa, however, the Dirikwand have retained their old pre-eminence for turbulence and brigandage. They are now under one Mir Haji Khan, who is at chronic enmity with his nephew Mir Namdar Khan. Both are great robbers, and when not exercising their predatory inclinations at each other's expense, are apt to vent them upon travellers by the Dizful-Khorremabad road, of the greater part of which, on the principle, I imagine, of 'set a thief to catch a thief,' they have been placed in charge by the government.[2] For this service they are supposed to receive a subsidy from the latter; but as this is rarely, if ever, paid, an apologist for their excesses may find therein some excuse.

I have spoken of Khorremabad as the present seat of government in Luristan; a distinction which the central position of the town and its physical advantages have secured to it since the Middle Ages.[3] A solitary rock rises suddenly in the jaws of a pass, opening upon a rich plain. At its foot lies the modern town, which does not contain more than 2,000 inhabitants. Its summit is crowned by the Bala Hissar or ruined castle of the Atabegs, which stands up with gloomy outline of walls and towers like some robber stronghold of the Rhine. Here these all-but-independent rulers of a bygone age lived in lordly style, the castle being supplied with water by a deep shaft sunk in the rock to a magnificent spring below. Within the shell of the old fort Mohammed Ali Mirza, the eldest son of Fath Ali Shah, and governor of Luristan, built himself a palace, which is now also in a state of decay. The present governor lives in an edifice at the foot of the rock. The Khorremabad river, spanned by a long bridge of twenty-eight arches, flows below. On the opposite bank, at a little distance, lie the ruins of the Atabegs' city, of which a quadrangular

Khorrem-abad

[1] The latest list that I have seen of the Pish-Kuh tribes is that of A. H. Schindler (1878), *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z. Berlin*, vol. xiv. p. 82. They then numbered, according to official documents, 39,550 families.

[2] This is a favourite plan with the Persians. A few years ago there was a noted robber chief of the Hamawand tribe, named Jan Mir Khan, who was the terror of the frontier district near Kasr-i-Shirin. Unable to coerce him into good behaviour, the Persians, in 1886, made him guardian of the frontier, with a salary of 3,000 *tomans*. As he continued his depredations, he was invited to a friendly interview with an emissary from Teheran—another well-recognised Persian device—and was treacherously seized and slain.

[3] It is thought to have been the Samha of the Middle Ages. The castle was called Diz-i-Siah.

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brick tower with a Naskh inscription, bearing the date 1123 A.D., is a speaking memorial. A battalion of 400 shabby Lurs, called out annually in the spring, is stationed here as a local garrison. The filth and misery of the present town have been well depicted by Mrs. Bishop.[1]

Pusht-i-Kuh

In the Pusht-i-Kuh, or country of the Feilis proper, we come to a region of superior interest, because of greater obscurity. This district consists of the mountain ranges, with their intervening valleys, that extend in arduous and almost impenetrable succession from the right bank of the Kerkhah to the Turkish frontier. It is a remote and inaccessible country; and it is not surprising, therefore, to find that the tribes are entirely nomadic in character, and that their chieftain occupies a position almost independent of the central Government, a position, indeed, that still leaves some flavour of distinction to the title which he continues to bear, of Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh. Of the Feili Lurs whom he rules, I have only received lists so misspelt and inaccurate, that I am unwilling to publish them; the more so as I am unable in any but the most fragmentary degree to reconcile them with the now obsolete lists of Rawlinson and Layard. The history, however, and the pedigree that I shall give of the ruling family have been derived from the Persian Governor of the adjoining province, and are correct.

History

In the old days Pish-Kuh and Pusht-i-Kuh, and a considerable surrounding territory in addition, were united under the rule of the aforementioned Atabegs of Luristan. The only detailed account of their dynasty, known as the Khurshidi dynasty,[2] is contained in the Sheref Nameh. They ruled from 1155 A.D. till the beginning of the seventeenth century; and their dominion was counted by Marco Polo as one of the eight kingdoms of Persia. At this early period the Lurs had already vindicated for themselves the unenviable reputation as thieves and bandits which their successors have diligently maintained. Mangu Khan the Mongol, when commissioning his brother Hulaku Khan to the government of Iran, gave him particular instructions to make things uncomfortable for the Kurds and Lurs, in revenge for their plundering on the high roads. Timur marched against them,

[1] *Journeys in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 122.

[2] My Persian authority says: 'They considered themselves the descendants of Akil, son of Abi Talib. But God knows best.'

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because they could not keep their fingers from the caravans of the Mecca-bound pilgrims, and took both Khorremabad and Burujird in 1386 A.D. The last of the dynasty was the famous Shah Verdi Khan, Mir of Wirkond, who, by his position and power, excited the jealousy of Shah Abbas the Great, by whom he was seized and put to death. The title of Atabeg was suppressed; but the vacant office was conferred, with the new title of Vali of Luristan,[1] upon one Husein Khan, who had risen to some distinction in the service of the defunct ruler. My Persian informant declares that the family of the promoted Husein was Arab in origin, being descended from a chief of the Rubaia tribe, on the west side of the Tigris, who had quarrelled with his countrymen, migrated to Luristan, and there intermarried with the Feilis. However this may be, the dynasty thus promoted has retained the office ever since, and its present incumbent is, as the accompanying pedigree will show, a lineal descendant of the *protégé* of Shah Abbas.

PEDIGREE OF THE RULING FAMILY OF THE FEILI LURS (PUSHT-I-KUH).

HUSEIN KHAN (circ. 1600). Appointed Vali of Luristan by Shah Abbas in succession to Shah Verdi Khan

descended from

HUSEIN KHAN, Vali

ISMAIL KHAN, Vali

ASAD KHAN, Vali

HASAN KHAN, Vali . Died circ. 1840 . related to KELB ALI KHAN, who murdered Captain Grant and Lieut. Fotheringham in 1810, and was himself murdered by Mohammed Ali Mirza

ALI KHAN, Vali | AHMED KHAN | HAIDER ALI KHAN, Vali

(On the death of their father the three brothers divided the tribes. Ali Khan called himself Vali at first, but fled when the Shah recognised Haider Ali Khan)

HUSEIN KULI KHAN, Vali. The present ruler, known as El Feili. Is an Amir-i-Toman, or major-general. Æt. 55.

REZA KULI KHAN. Æt. 28. A Persian *sertip*

I am not aware that a single English or even European traveller ever penetrated into the Pusht-i-Kuh before Captain

[1] At that time there were four Valis in Persia, all enjoying a semi-independent prestige and rule. They were the Valis of Gurjistan (Georgia), Ardelan (Persian Kurdistan), Luristan, and Hawizeh. Of these, the last two alone survive, and the third alone retains any semblance of freedom.

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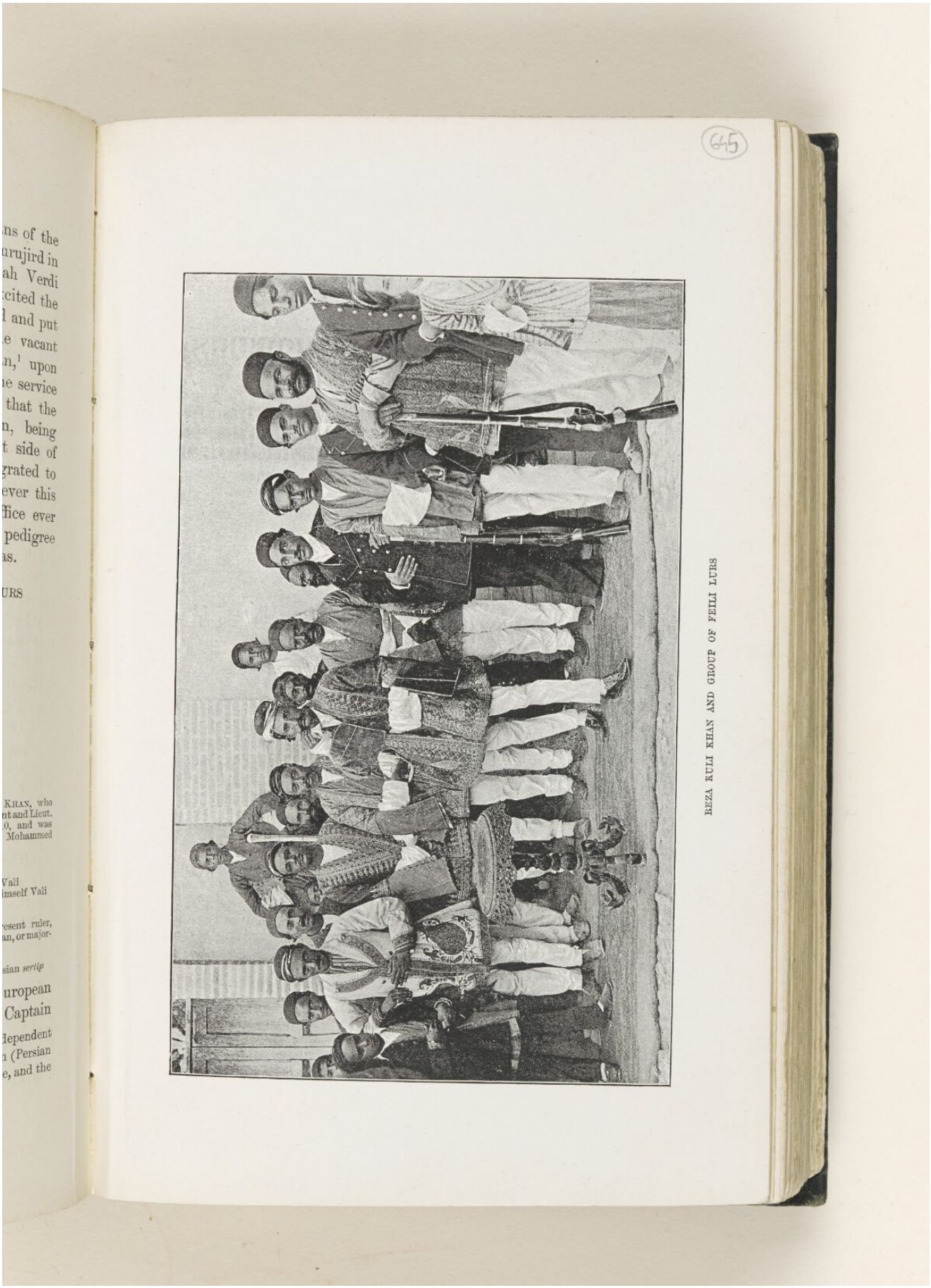

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REZA KULI KHAN AND GROUP OF FEILI LURS

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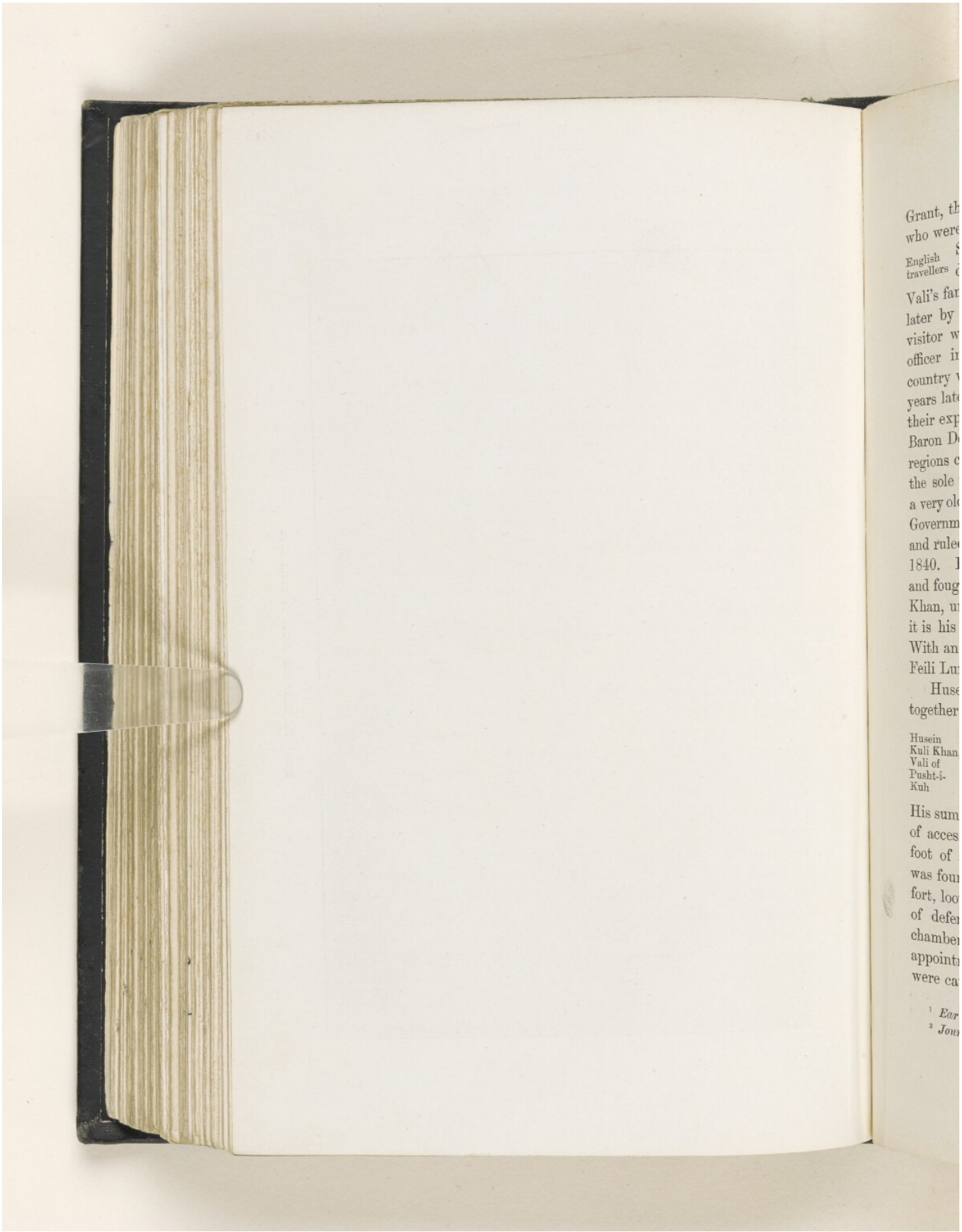

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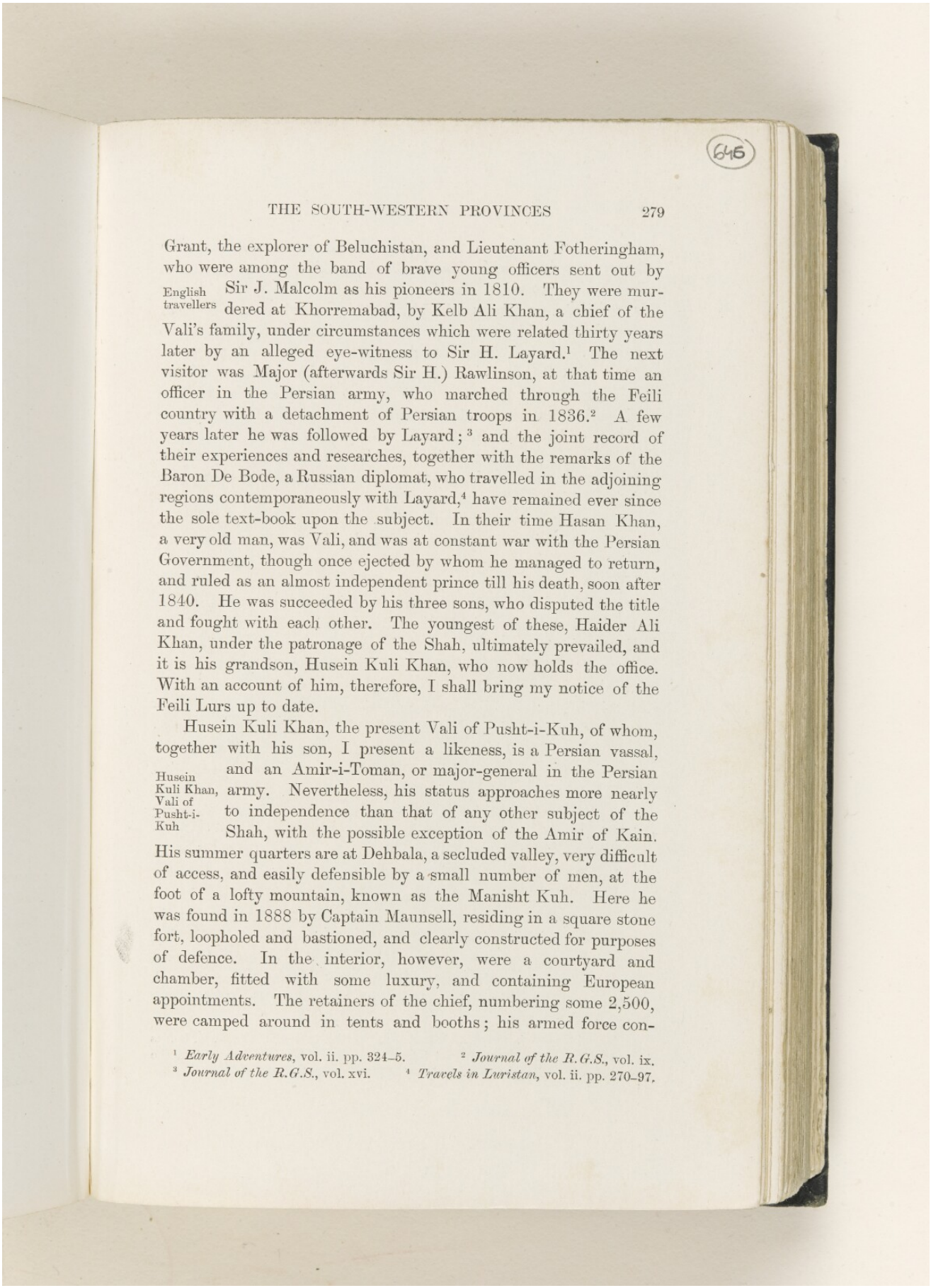



Grant, the explorer of Beluchistan, and Lieutenant Fotheringham, who were among the band of brave young officers sent out by Sir J. Malcolm as his pioneers in 1810. They were murdered at Khorremabad, by Kelb Ali Khan, a chief of the Vali's family, under circumstances which were related thirty years later by an alleged eye-witness to Sir H. Layard.[1] The next visitor was Major (afterwards Sir H.) Rawlinson, at that time an officer in the Persian army, who marched through the Feili country with a detachment of Persian troops in 1836.[2] A few years later he was followed by Layard;[3] and the joint record of their experiences and researches, together with the remarks of the Baron De Bode, a Russian diplomat, who travelled in the adjoining regions contemporaneously with Layard,[4] have remained ever since the sole text-book upon the subject. In their time Hasan Khan, a very old man, was Vali, and was at constant war with the Persian Government, though once ejected by whom he managed to return, and ruled as an almost independent prince till his death, soon after 1840. He was succeeded by his three sons, who disputed the title and fought with each other. The youngest of these, Haider Ali Khan, under the patronage of the Shah, ultimately prevailed, and it is his grandson, Husein Kuli Khan, who now holds the office. With an account of him, therefore, I shall bring my notice of the Feili Lurs up to date.

English travellers

Husein Kuli Khan, Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh

Husein Kuli Khan, the present Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh, of whom, together with his son, I present a likeness, is a Persian vassal, and an Amir-i-Toman, or major-general in the Persian army. Nevertheless, his status approaches more nearly to independence than that of any other subject of the Shah, with the possible exception of the Amir of Kain. His summer quarters are at Dehbala, a secluded valley, very difficult of access, and easily defensible by a small number of men, at the foot of a lofty mountain, known as the Manisht Kuh. Here he was found in 1888 by Captain Maunsell, residing in a square stone fort, loopholed and bastioned, and clearly constructed for purposes of defence. In the interior, however, were a courtyard and chamber, fitted with some luxury, and containing European appointments. The retainers of the chief, numbering some 2,500, were camped around in tents and booths; his armed force con-

[1] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. pp. 324–5. [2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix.
[3] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. [4] *Travels in Luristan*, vol. ii. pp. 270–97.

sisting of 700 horsemen, well mounted and armed, and of 2,000 infantry, provided with Martini-Peabody rifles, that had been looted from across the Turkish border. The Vali seldom leaves this position, or places himself in contact with the Persian authorities, and has evidently very little intention of falling to any decoy. He is a fine-looking man, with commanding presence, and a flowing beard, which has procured for him the appellation of *Rish-i-buzurg*, or Longbeard. He is also known as El Feili, The Feili, and from his cruel and murderous propensities as *Abu Kadareh*, or Father of the Sword. The latter title testifies to his character and rule, the severity of which has driven many of his people across the Turkish border, and has made him unpopular with his subjects. Though only fifty-five years of age, he is considerably broken down through drink. His son, Reza Kuli Khan, a young man of twenty-eight, is a *sertip* in the Persian service, and was for some time kept as an hostage for his father's good behaviour by the Zil-es-Sultan in Isfahan. He is a handsome young fellow, and a keen sportsman, and is reported to have a less tyrannical and more amiable disposition than his parent. If the Vali and his people move from their quarters, it is in the direction of Turkey rather than of Persia that they shift their tents. Their winter domicile is at Huseinieh, at the foot of the Pusht-i-Kuh, just within the Turkish border; it is with Baghdad *viâ* Kut-el-Amarah, on the Tigris, that the Vali trades; it is upon Turkish territory that he makes his raids, constant disputes occurring about the occupation by the Lurs of Ottoman soil;[1] and his sworn and inveterate enemies are the Beni Lam Arabs, who are Turkish subjects. He is probably the best living representative of the old style of Border chieftain, and is said to be able to call out 30,000 fighting men.

Mountains and rivers

Nowhere is the peculiar physical conformation of south-west Persia, analogous, as I have elsewhere remarked, in its features to that of north-east Khorasan, more observable than in the mountain abodes of the Feili Lurs. The ranges run in parallel files, inclined from north-west to south-east, projecting steep and craggy masses of limestone, which are frequently sawn at right angles to their own trend by the *tengs* or cañons through which the streams or rivers force their way.[2] In the narrow

[1] *Vide* vol. i. p. 569.

[2] A good description of these extraordinary defiles was given by W. K. Loftus in a paper on the 'Geology of Portions of the Turko-Persian Frontier,' in the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society* (1854), vol. xi. p. 247 *et seq.*

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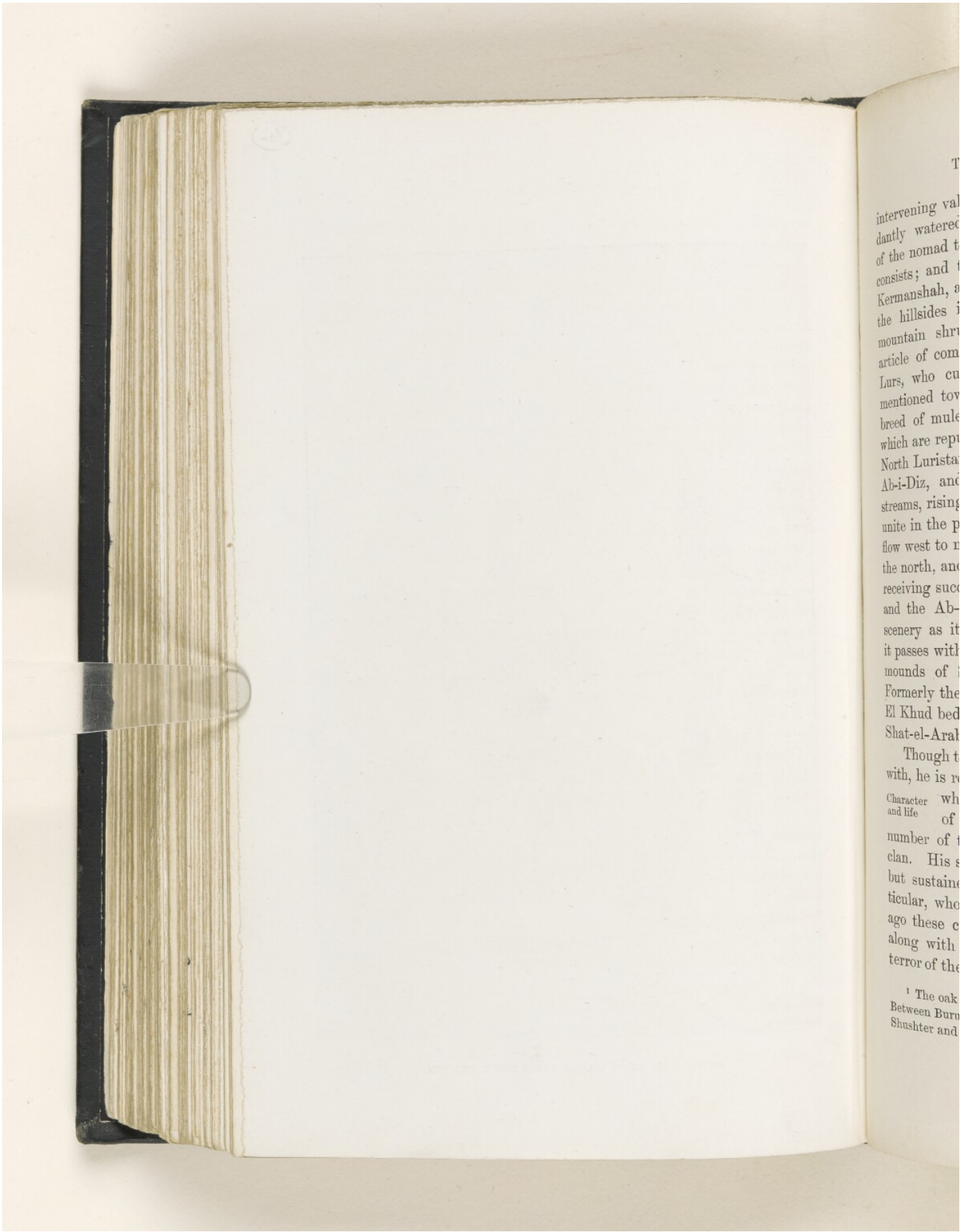
HUSEIN KULI KHAN, VALI OF PUSHT-I-KUH, AND SON



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intervening valleys opening out into occasional plains, and abundantly watered, there is rich fodder for the flocks and herds of the nomad tribes. In sheep and goats their principal wealth consists; and they provide the towns of Khorremabad, Burujird, Kermanshah, and Hamadan with mutton, curds, and butter. On the hillsides is a somewhat scanty growth of dwarf-oak [1] and mountain shrubs, the former bearing gall-nuts, which are an article of commerce. The timber is but little respected by the Lurs, who cut it remorselessly for fuel, and supply the aforementioned towns with charcoal. El Feili himself has a splendid breed of mules which he exports through Turkish territory, and which are reputed to be the finest in Persia. The great river of North Luristan is the Kerkhah; just as Central Luristan has the Ab-i-Diz, and Southern Luristan the Karun. Three parent streams, rising in the neighbourhood of Hamadan and Burujird, unite in the plain of Kangavar, and, under the title of Gamasiab, flow west to near Bisitun. Here the Ab-i-Dinawar flows in from the north, and the augmented stream turns south-west and south, receiving successively the Kara Su, the Ab-i-Chenara, the Kashgan, and the Ab-i-Zal, until, after traversing the most magnificent scenery as it breaks the ramparts of the mighty Zagros range, it passes within ten miles of Dizful on the west, skirts the great mounds of Susa, and is dissipated in the Hawizeh marshes. Formerly the Kerkhah had two outlets into the Tigris, one by the El Khud bed at Amarah, the other a little below Kurnah into the Shat-el-Arab; but these appear now, as a rule, to be dry.

Character and life

Though the Vali enjoys an authority which is but little interfered with, he is responsible to Government for a fixed annual revenue, which is collected by the various tribal chiefs and heads of families upon a rough scale determined partly by the number of tents, partly by the pastoral wealth of the particular clan. His subjects have a bad reputation, in the main inherited, but sustained by the plundering habits of the Sagwands in particular, who are a sub-division of the Bajilan tribe. Fifty years ago these confirmed freebooters were *yaghi*, i.e. in rebellion; and, along with the Dirikwands before mentioned, they are still the terror of the passing caravan. Colonel Bell in 1884 marched with a

[1] The oak forests extend from Kurdistan in the north to Shiraz in the south. Between Burujird and Dizful the wooded zone is 110–120 miles in breadth, between Shushter and Isfahan somewhat more.

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section of this people, whose chief, Haji Ali Khan, tried to rob him, and worthily sustained the tribal reputation.[1] Nevertheless Colonel Bell formed a favourable opinion of the Lurs as a whole, being struck with their decorum and obedience in camp, with their modest and frugal habits, and with their natural simplicity. They are a lighthearted people, much addicted to singing and chanting; and their rebellious and thieving propensities are more probably due to the life of semi-outlawry which the suicidal policy of the State has compelled them to lead, and to the licence that is born of a self-acquired freedom, than to any ineradicable taint of vice. The Feili Lurs are smaller in stature than the Bakhtiaris further south, and dress in brighter colours. Polygamy is the fashion among them, the extent of the *harem* depending upon the wealth of the lord and master. Colonel Bell's rascally host, for instance, possessed the respectable total of twenty-five wives. Their religion is of the most nebulous description. Most are Shiah Mohammedans, but they entertain very little respect either for the Prophet or the Koran, and have *pirs* or Holy men of their own, whose tombs are regarded as sacred places, and the chief of whom, Baba Buzurg, or the Great Father, is buried in their country. Traces of Judaism have been detected in their worship, and have excited those amiable theorists who ride the outworn hobby-horse of the Lost Tribes; and there are also to be found among them Ali Illahis, of which sect I have spoken in my chapter on Azerbaijan. The females, after the fashion of all the Lur tribes, are unveiled, and in youth are as well-favoured and comely as, at an age when a western woman is at her prime, they become shrivelled and decayed. Their costume is a loose shapeless dress, with little or no underclothing. They lead a hard life, tending and milking the flocks, churning the milk in suspended skins, and clarifying the butter, assisting to pitch and strike the tents, and weaving carpets and the black goats' hair tents in which they dwell. These are of all sizes and shapes, being supported by poles and partitioned by carpets or matting into separate chambers for the women, the kitchen, and the stables, a large *diwan-khaneh* or reception chamber being the first or outer compartment. In settled villages, mat or mud huts take the place of the tent. The men lead a life of robust but careless ease, sowing and reaping the crops where tillage is possible, cutting wood for charcoal, robbing and

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1889.

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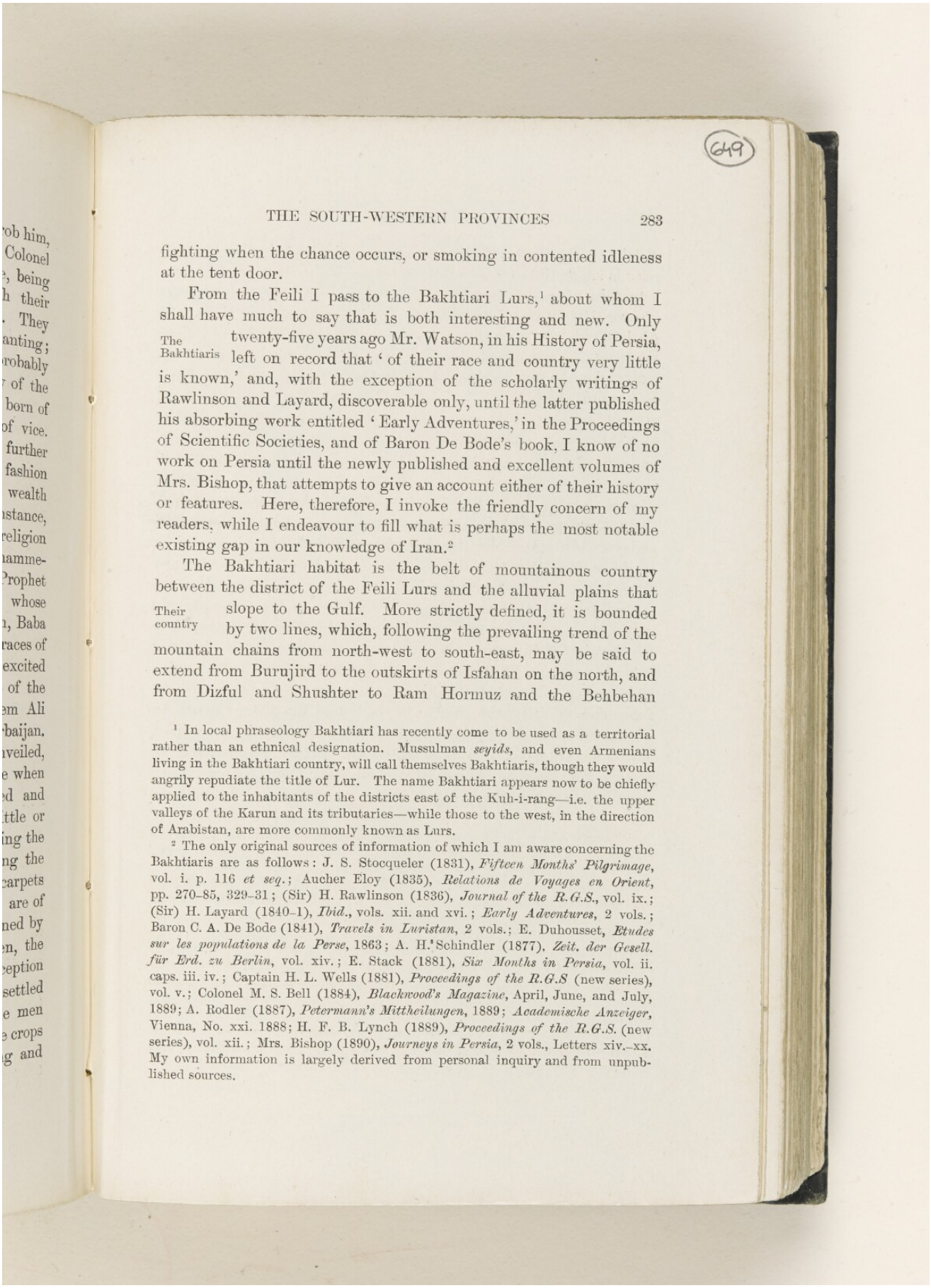

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fighting when the chance occurs, or smoking in contented idleness at the tent door.

The Bakhtiaris

From the Feili I pass to the Bakhtiari Lurs,[1] about whom I shall have much to say that is both interesting and new. Only twenty-five years ago Mr. Watson, in his History of Persia, left on record that 'of their race and country very little is known,' and, with the exception of the scholarly writings of Rawlinson and Layard, discoverable only, until the latter published his absorbing work entitled 'Early Adventures,' in the Proceedings of Scientific Societies, and of Baron De Bode's book, I know of no work on Persia until the newly published and excellent volumes of Mrs. Bishop, that attempts to give an account either of their history or features. Here, therefore, I invoke the friendly concern of my readers, while I endeavour to fill what is perhaps the most notable existing gap in our knowledge of Iran.[2]

Their country

The Bakhtiari habitat is the belt of mountainous country between the district of the Feili Lurs and the alluvial plains that slope to the Gulf. More strictly defined, it is bounded by two lines, which, following the prevailing trend of the mountain chains from north-west to south-east, may be said to extend from Burujird to the outskirts of Isfahan on the north, and from Dizful and Shushter to Ram Hormuz and the Behbehan

[1] In local phraseology Bakhtiari has recently come to be used as a territorial rather than an ethnical designation. Mussulman *seyids*, and even Armenians living in the Bakhtiari country, will call themselves Bakhtiaris, though they would angrily repudiate the title of Lur. The name Bakhtiari appears now to be chiefly applied to the inhabitants of the districts east of the Kuh-i-rang—i.e. the upper valleys of the Karun and its tributaries—while those to the west, in the direction of Arabistan, are more commonly known as Lurs.

[2] The only original sources of information of which I am aware concerning the Bakhtiaris are as follows: J. S. Stocqueler (1831), *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. p. 116 *et seq.*; Aucher Eloy (1835), *Relations de Voyages en Orient*, pp. 270–85, 329–31; (Sir) H. Rawlinson (1836), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix.; (Sir) H. Layard (1840–1), *Ibid.*, vols. xii. and xvi.; *Early Adventures*, 2 vols.; Baron C. A. De Bode (1841), *Travels in Luristan*, 2 vols.; E. Duhousset, *Etudes sur les populations de la Perse*, 1863; A. H. Schindler (1877), *Zeit. der Gesell. für Erd. zu Berlin*, vol. xiv.; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. caps. iii. iv.; Captain H. L. Wells (1881), *Proceedings of the R.G.S* (new series), vol. v.; Colonel M. S. Bell (1884), *Blackwood's Magazine*, April, June, and July, 1889; A. Rodler (1887), *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, 1889; *Academische Anzeiger*, Vienna, No. xxi. 1888; H. F. B. Lynch (1889), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. xii.; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journeys in Persia*, 2 vols., Letters xiv.–xx. My own information is largely derived from personal inquiry and from unpublished sources.

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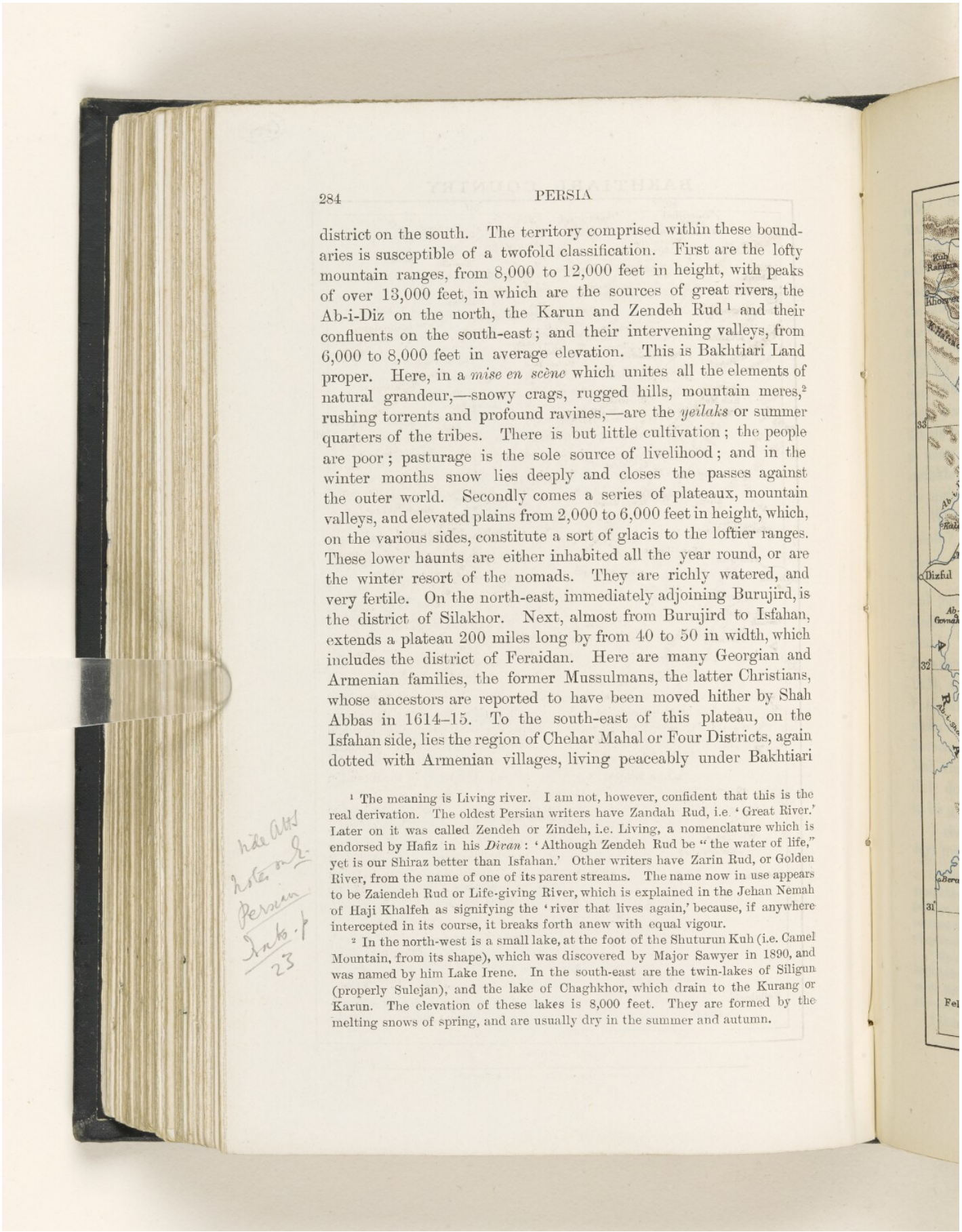



district on the south. The territory comprised within these boundaries is susceptible of a twofold classification. First are the lofty mountain ranges, from 8,000 to 12,000 feet in height, with peaks of over 13,000 feet, in which are the sources of great rivers, the Ab-i-Diz on the north, the Karun and Zendeh Rud[1] and their confluents on the south-east; and their intervening valleys, from 6,000 to 8,000 feet in average elevation. This is Bakhtiari Land proper. Here, in a *mise en scène* which unites all the elements of natural grandeur,—snowy crags, rugged hills, mountain meres,[2] rushing torrents and profound ravines,—are the *yeilaks* or summer quarters of the tribes. There is but little cultivation; the people are poor; pasturage is the sole source of livelihood; and in the winter months snow lies deeply and closes the passes against the outer world. Secondly comes a series of plateaux, mountain valleys, and elevated plains from 2,000 to 6,000 feet in height, which, on the various sides, constitute a sort of glacis to the loftier ranges. These lower haunts are either inhabited all the year round, or are the winter resort of the nomads. They are richly watered, and very fertile. On the north-east, immediately adjoining Burujird, is the district of Silakhor. Next, almost from Burujird to Isfahan, extends a plateau 200 miles long by from 40 to 50 in width, which includes the district of Feraidan. Here are many Georgian and Armenian families, the former Mussulmans, the latter Christians, whose ancestors are reported to have been moved hither by Shah Abbas in 1614–15. To the south-east of this plateau, on the Isfahan side, lies the region of Chehar Mahal or Four Districts, again dotted with Armenian villages, living peaceably under Bakhtiari

[1] The meaning is Living river. I am not, however, confident that this is the real derivation. The oldest Persian writers have Zandah Rud, i.e. 'Great River.' Later on it was called Zendeh or Zindeh, i.e. Living, a nomenclature which is endorsed by Hafiz in his *Divan*: 'Although Zendeh Rud be "the water of life," yet is our Shiraz better than Isfahan.' Other writers have Zarin Rud, or Golden River, from the name of one of its parent streams. The name now in use appears to be Zaiendeh Rud or Life-giving River, which is explained in the Jehan Nemah of Haji Khalfeh as signifying the 'river that lives again,' because, if anywhere intercepted in its course, it breaks forth anew with equal vigour.

[2] In the north-west is a small lake, at the foot of the Shuturun Kuh (i.e. Camel Mountain, from its shape), which was discovered by Major Sawyer in 1890, and was named by him Lake Irene. In the south-east are the twin-lakes of Siligun (properly Sulejan), and the lake of Chaghkhor, which drain to the Kurang or Karun. The elevation of these lakes is 8,000 feet. They are formed by the melting snows of spring, and are usually dry in the summer and autumn.

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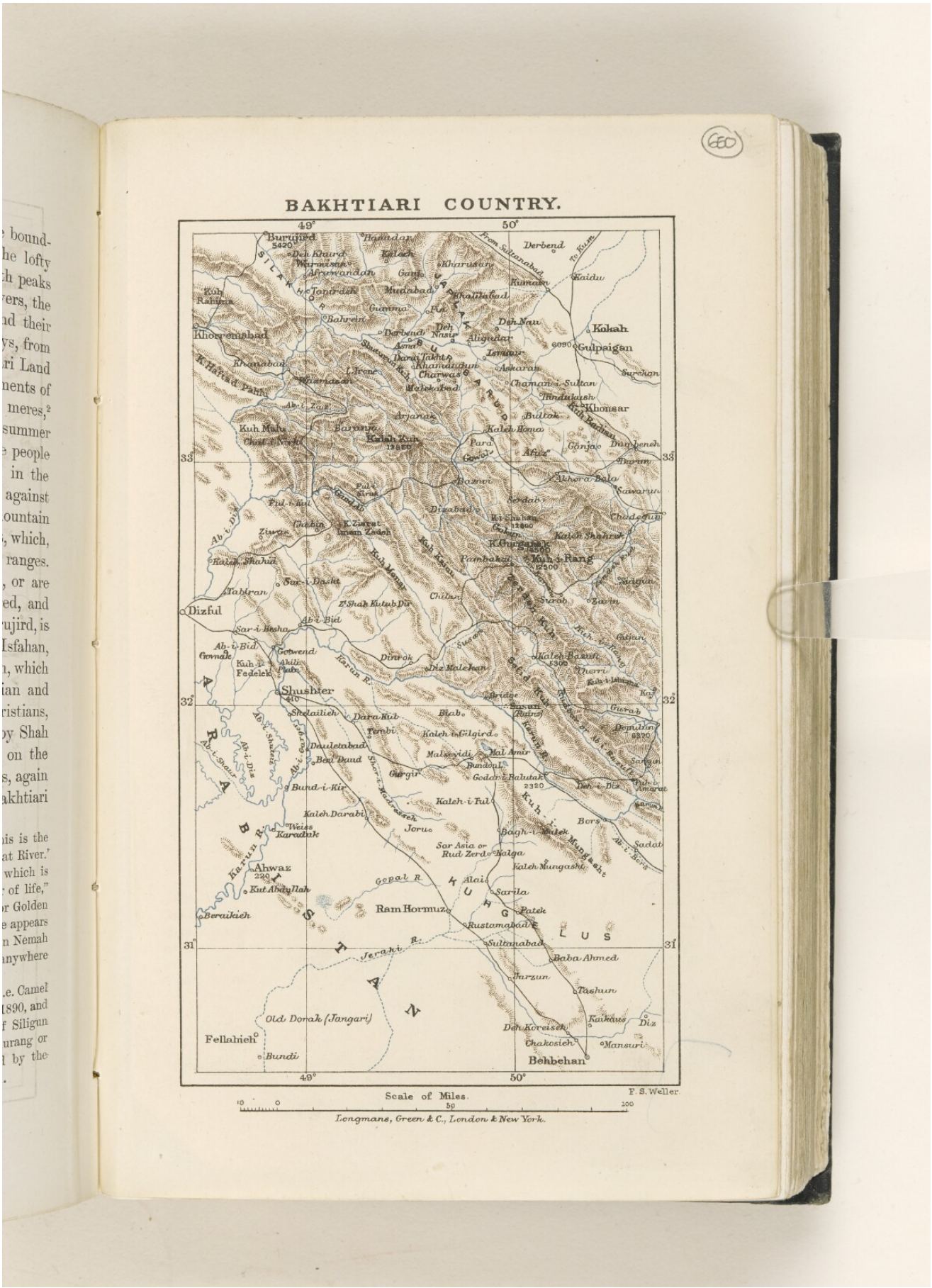
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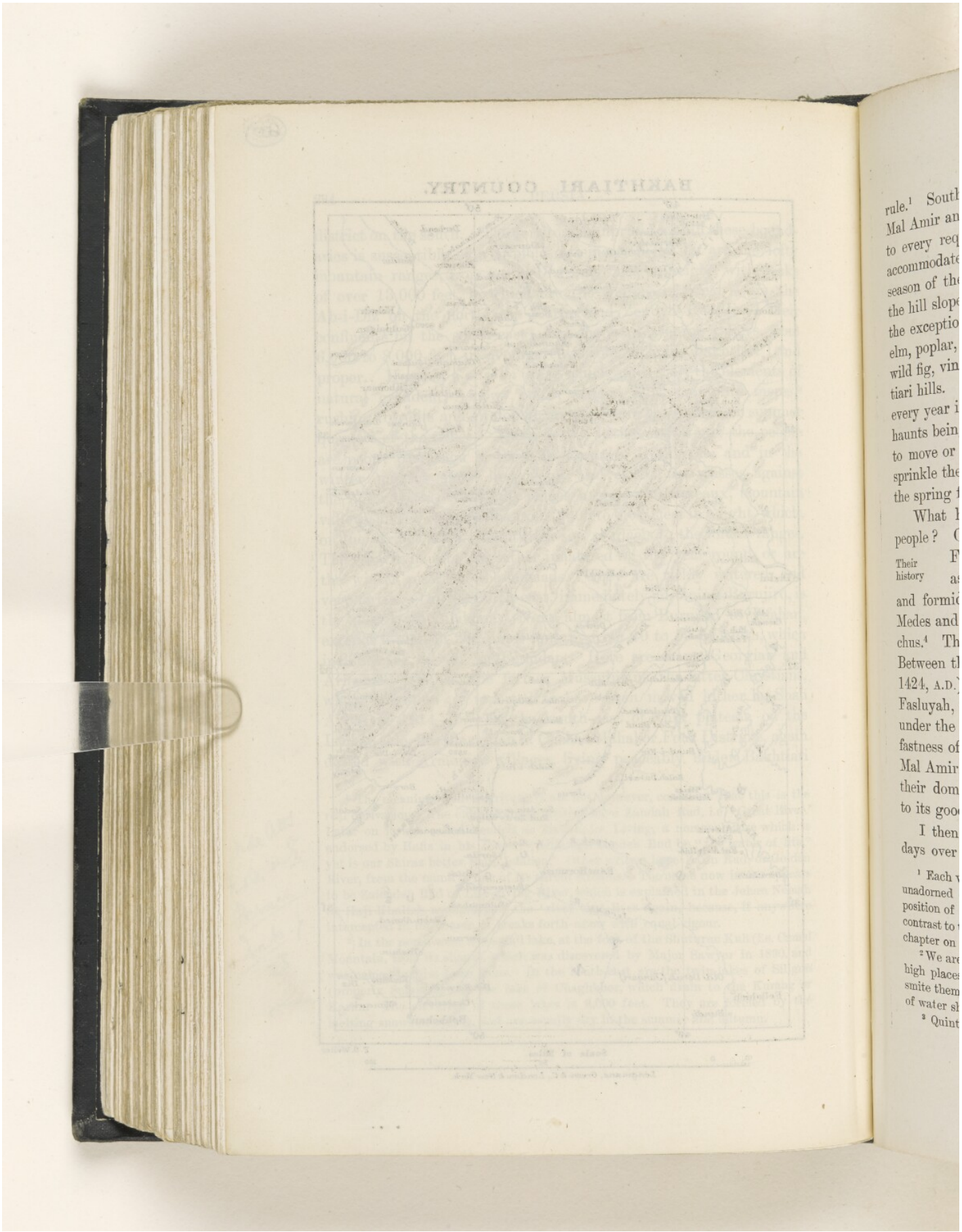
Scale of Miles.
F. S. Weller
Longmans, Green & C., London & New York.



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rule.[1] South of the main range are the similar elevated valleys of Mal Amir and Kaleh-i-Tul. It is a lovely country and well suited to every requirement of nomad existence. Its inhabitants can accommodate their level to the climate, choosing, according to the season of the year, any elevation from 2,000 to 12,000 feet.[2] On the hill slopes there is more timber than in any part of Persia with the exception of the Caspian provinces. Oak, ash, walnut, plane, elm, poplar, willow, ilex, beech, wild rose, briar, hawthorn, maple, wild fig, vine, hop, and almond, have all been found in the Bakhtiari hills. To the same camps or spots in the mountains come every year in the summer the same families or clans, their peculiar haunts being marked by white stones, which the tribal code forbids to move or to transgress. Before they start in the autumn they sprinkle the seed in the cultivable places; and on their return in the spring find a thirty-fold and gratuitous harvest.

What has been the history of this interesting country and people? Of the mystery of their origin I have previously spoken.

Their history

From the earliest days we read of this mountain country as a wild and inaccessible region, inhabited by uncouth and formidable tribes. They set at nought the authority of the Medes and Persians; they defied Alexander,[3] and provoked Antiochus.[4] The invading Arabs found them a hard nut to crack. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, however (1155 to 1424, A.D.), we find a powerful Mussulman dynasty, known as the Fasluyah, ruling the Bakhtiari country from Isfahan to Shushter under the title of Atabegs. Their stronghold was the mountain fastness of Mungasht, and their winter quarters were at Idej near Mal Amir. Ibn Batutah, the Moorish pilgrim, travelled through their dominion about 1330 A.D., and left the following testimony to its good governance:—

I then travelled (i.e. after leaving Tostar or Shushter) for three days over high mountains, and found in every stage a cell with food,

[1] Each village contains its priest and its *κάτοικον*, or church—a mud building unadorned outside, but more or less embellished within. The amicable juxtaposition of Armenians and Bakhtiaris in this part of Persia presents a striking contrast to the cat-and-dog existence of Nestorians and Kurds, as depicted in my chapter on the North-west Provinces.

[2] We are irresistibly reminded of Isaiah xlix. 9: 'Their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun nor heat smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.'

[3] Quintus Curtius, lib. v. cap. iii.

[4] Pliny, lib. vi. cap. xxi.

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## I. Haft Lang

| Rawlinson, 1836 | De Bode, 1841 | Layard, 1844 | Self, 1889 | 1890 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ulaki and<br>Mal Ahmedi<br>Bakhtiariwand<br>Duraki<br>Sallaki<br><br><br>(Classified as Dependency)<br>Dinaruni | Bakhtiyarvend<br>Durrki<br>Zalaghi<br>Babadi<br>Mamivend<br>Lek<br>Ashtiraki<br>Burburudi<br>(Dependency)<br>Dinaruni | Ulaki and<br>Mal Ahmedi<br>Beidarwand<br>Durkai<br>Salak<br><br><br>(Dependency)<br>Dinaruni | Mal Ahmedi<br>Bakhtiarwand<br>Duraki<br><br>Babadi<br><br>Ragi or Rebgi[1]<br>Dinaruni | Behdarwand<br>Duraki<br><br>Babadi<br><br><br>Dinaruni |
| *Sub-divisions of the above Tribes* | | | | |
| Bakhtiarwand | | Ali Ladiwand<br>Beliwand<br>Mashmerdosi<br>Takki<br>Ushnayi<br>Gandayi<br>Makomrayi<br>Kiyurzi<br>Ali Jemali<br>Leruzeni<br>Mah Sapatan<br>Akili<br>Jiveran<br>Sohrab<br>Monjezi<br>Sheikh<br>Dinoshi<br>Gashtul<br>Bramali | Allah-ed-dinwand<br>Beliwand<br>Mahmud Shah Mor-[dosi<br><br>Makum Jerri<br>Kyarsi<br><br>Leller | Alaiwand<br>Belliband<br>Mashmardusi<br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Munjesi<br><br><br>Asmaki<br>Newambli<br>Iskander Khan |
| Duraki | | Seraswand<br>Asiwand<br>Bawadi<br>Ba Hamedi<br>Raki<br>Mari<br>Kandali<br>Malmali<br>Berjuwi<br>Salachin<br>Sheint | Zurasund<br>Huseinwand<br><br>Baba Ahmedi<br><br>Mori<br>Kandali<br><br><br>Shehi<br>Jamusi | Rarasfund<br>Resewund<br><br>Baba Ahmedi<br><br>Maori<br>Gandali<br><br><br>Zalaki<br>Arab |
| Babadi | | | Ghali Anur<br>Akasha<br>Ghella<br>Ahmed Mahmedi<br>Rubathi | Gosha<br>Gaila<br><br>Reki |
| Dinaruni | | | (Classified *sub* Haft Lang) | (Classified *sub* Haft) Lang) |
| Bawai<br>Urak<br>Shaluh | Bawai<br>Urak<br>Saluh<br>Gugirdi *or* Gulgiri | Buwayi<br>Aurek<br>Shalu<br>Ali Mohammedi<br>Lejmi Aurek<br>Serkulu<br>Sehid<br>Goruwi<br>Sheikh Aliwand<br>Noruzi<br>Kurkhur | Uruk<br>Shahalu<br>Ali Mahmudi<br>Lah Mir Uruk<br>Serkulli<br><br>Kurui<br><br>Noruzi<br>Kurkur<br>Tah<br>Baghiezi | Aurak<br>Salu<br>Ali Mahmudi<br>Laj Miaurak<br>Sar Kulli<br><br>Guhrui<br><br><br><br>Boveri |

[1] Sub-divisions of Ragi or Rebgi.—Malmelli, Barjuni, Tahmasp Khani, Shemeni, Nazir Gomar, Salirchin, Serjuni Hasan Khani, Mezmullah Shaffar Khani, Mullah Haji Khosru.

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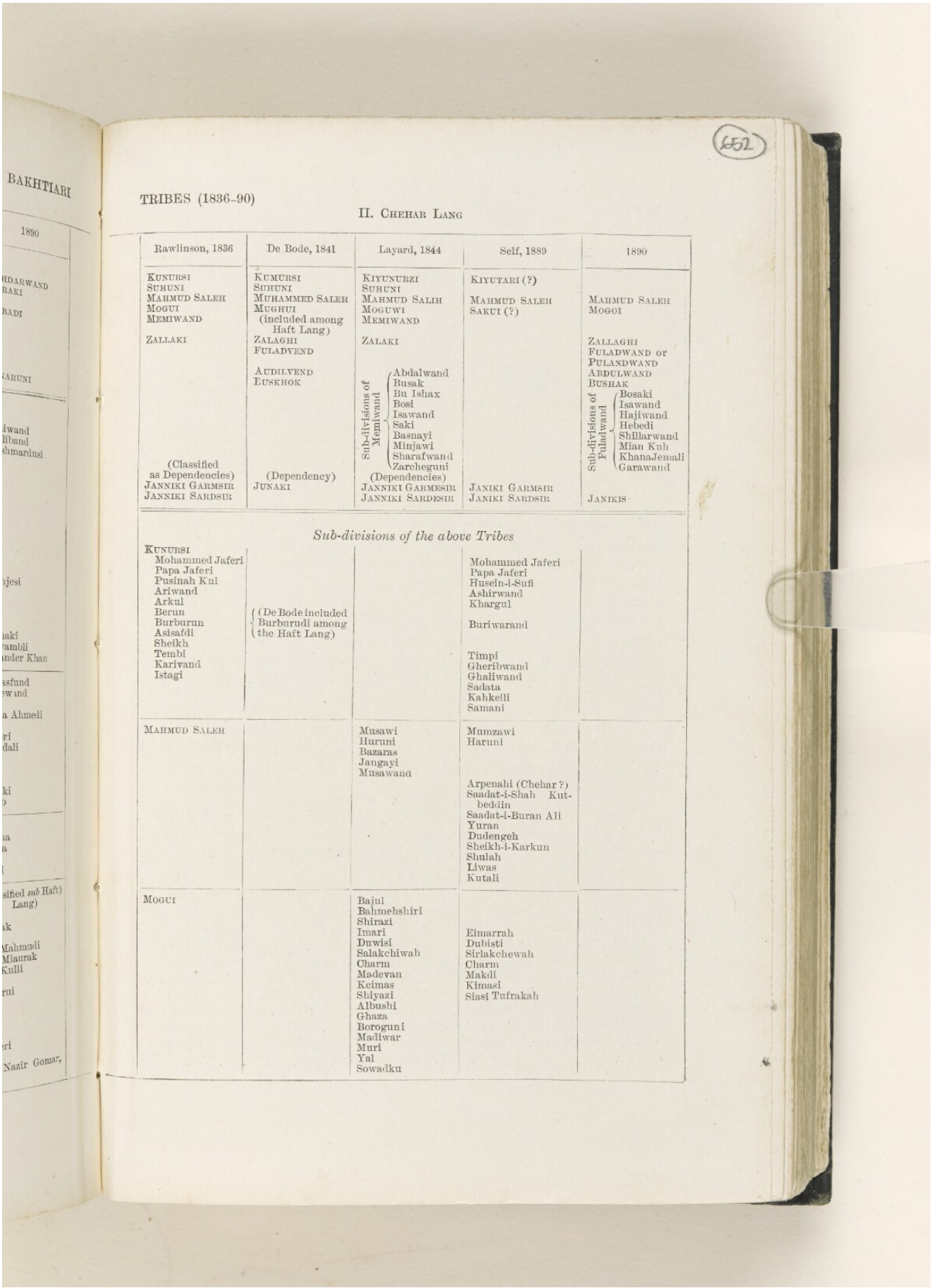

BAKHTIARI

1890

(652)

TRIBES (1836–90)

II. Chehar Lang

| Rawlinson, 1836 | De Bode, 1841 | Layard, 1844 | Self, 1889 | 1890 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kunursi<br>Suhuni<br>Mahmud Saleh<br>Mogui<br>Memiwand | Kumursi<br>Suhuni<br>Muhammed Saleh<br>Mughui<br>(included among Haft Lang) | Kiyunurzi<br>Suhuni<br>Mahmud Salih<br>Moguwi<br>Memiwand | Kiyutari (?)<br><br>Mahmud Saleh<br>Sakui (?) | <br><br>Mahmud Saleh<br>Mogoi |
| Zallaki | Zalaghi<br>Fuladvend<br><br>Audilvend<br>Euskhok | Zalaki<br><br>Sub-divisions of Memiwand: Abdalwand, Busak, Bu Ishax, Bosi, Isawand, Saki, Basnayi, Minjawi, Sharafwand, Zarcheguni | | Zallaghi<br>Fuladwand or<br>Pulandwand<br>Abdulwand<br>Bushak<br>Sub-divisions of Puladwand: Bosaki, Isawand, Hajiwand, Hebedi, Shillarwand, Mian Kuh, KhanaJemali, Garawand |
| (Classified as Dependencies)<br>Janniki Garmsir<br>Janniki Sardsir | (Dependency)<br>Junaki | (Dependencies)<br>Janniki Garmesir<br>Janniki Sardesir | Janiki Garmsir<br>Janiki Sardsir | Janikis |

*Sub-divisions of the above Tribes*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kunursi<br>Mohammed Jaferi<br>Papa Jaferi<br>Pusinah Kul<br>Ariwand<br>Arkul<br>Berun<br>Burburun<br>Asisafdi<br>Sheikh<br>Tembi<br>Karivand<br>Istagi | (De Bode included Burburudi among the Haft Lang) | | Mohammed Jaferi<br>Papa Jaferi<br>Husein-i-Sufi<br>Ashirwand<br>Khargul<br><br>Buriwarand<br><br>Timpi<br>Gheribwand<br>Ghaliwand<br>Sadata<br>Kahkelli<br>Samani | |
| Mahmud Saleh | | Musawi<br>Huruni<br>Bazaras<br>Jangayi<br>Musawand | Mumzawi<br>Haruni<br><br>Arpenahi (Chehar ?)<br>Saadat-i-Shah Kut-beddin<br>Saadat-i-Buran Ali<br>Yuran<br>Dudengeh<br>Sheikh-i-Karkun<br>Shulah<br>Liwas<br>Kutali | |
| Mogui | | Bajul<br>Bahmehshiri<br>Shirazi<br>Imari<br>Duwisi<br>Salakchiwah<br>Charm<br>Madevan<br>Keimas<br>Shiyazi<br>Albushi<br>Ghaza<br>Boroguni<br>Madiwar<br>Muri<br>Yal<br>Sowadku | Eimarrah<br>Dubisti<br>Sirlakchewah<br>Charm<br>Makdi<br>Kimasi<br>Siasi Tufrakah | |

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SUB-DIVISIONS OF CHEHAR LANG TRIBES—*continued.*

| Rawlinson, 1836 | De Bode, 1841 | Layard, 1844 | Self, 1889 | 1890 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MOGUI | | Gholam<br>Ivesi<br>Asa<br>Khalil<br>Husami<br>Terdeni | Fahdar<br>Saadat-i-Said<br>Saadat-i-Saleh Kutah | |
| JANIKI GARMSIR | Makavendi<br>Mumbeni<br>Bulveisi<br>Arab Gomish (Classified as Dependency)<br>Zenghaneh | Makiyawand<br>Mombeni<br>Bulawasi, *i.e.* Abul Abbasi<br>Zangenah | | Makawand<br>Mumabun<br>Zanganah<br>Galgiri (included by De Bode among the Dinarunì) |

for the accommodation of travellers. I then came to the city Idhaj, which belongs to the Sultan Atabek Afrasiab. The country is called El Lur. It abounds with high mountains, and has roads cut in the rocks.[1] The extent in length is seventeen days' journey, in breadth ten. Its King sends presents to the King of Irak, and sometimes comes to see him. In every one of the stations in this country there are cells provided for the religious, enquirers, and travellers, and for every one who arrives there are bread, flesh, and sweetmeats. I travelled for ten days in this country over high mountains, with ten other religious. Having finished the districts belonging to this King, on the tenth day we entered those of Isphahan.[2]

Three centuries later we have the witness of Chardin, whose words might be taken as strictly applicable to the present day—an indication of the slow foot with which Time marches over the more remote spots of the earth's surface :—

The people that inhabit Lour-Estom (i.e. Luristan) never mind the building cities, nor have any settled abodes, but live in tents, for the most part feeding their flocks and their herds, of which they have an

[1] The allusion is no doubt to the famous paved causeway, known as the Jaddeh-i-Atabeg, or Rah-i-Sultani, which ran from Shushter, over the Bakhtiari mountains, to Isfahan (*vide* Schindler in the *Journal of the R. As. Soc.* 1880). The remains of this great work are still visible on the banks of the Karun in the elevated valley of Susan, and on the mountains above Mal Amir. It was, however, in all probability no work of the Atabegs, but may with greater likelihood be referred to Sassanian, or even to Achæmenian, days. De Bode erroneously identified it with the κλίμαξ μεγάλη, or Great Ladder road, encountered by the soldiers of Alexander (Diod. Siculus, lib. vi. cap. xix.; Pliny, lib. vi. cap. xxxi.), and had a hankering to attribute it to the Kings of Elam, including our Old Testament friend, Chedorlaomer. The Climax Megale was more probably one of the *kotals* of Fars.

[2] *Travels* (trans. by Rev. S. Lee), cap. vii. pp. 37–8.

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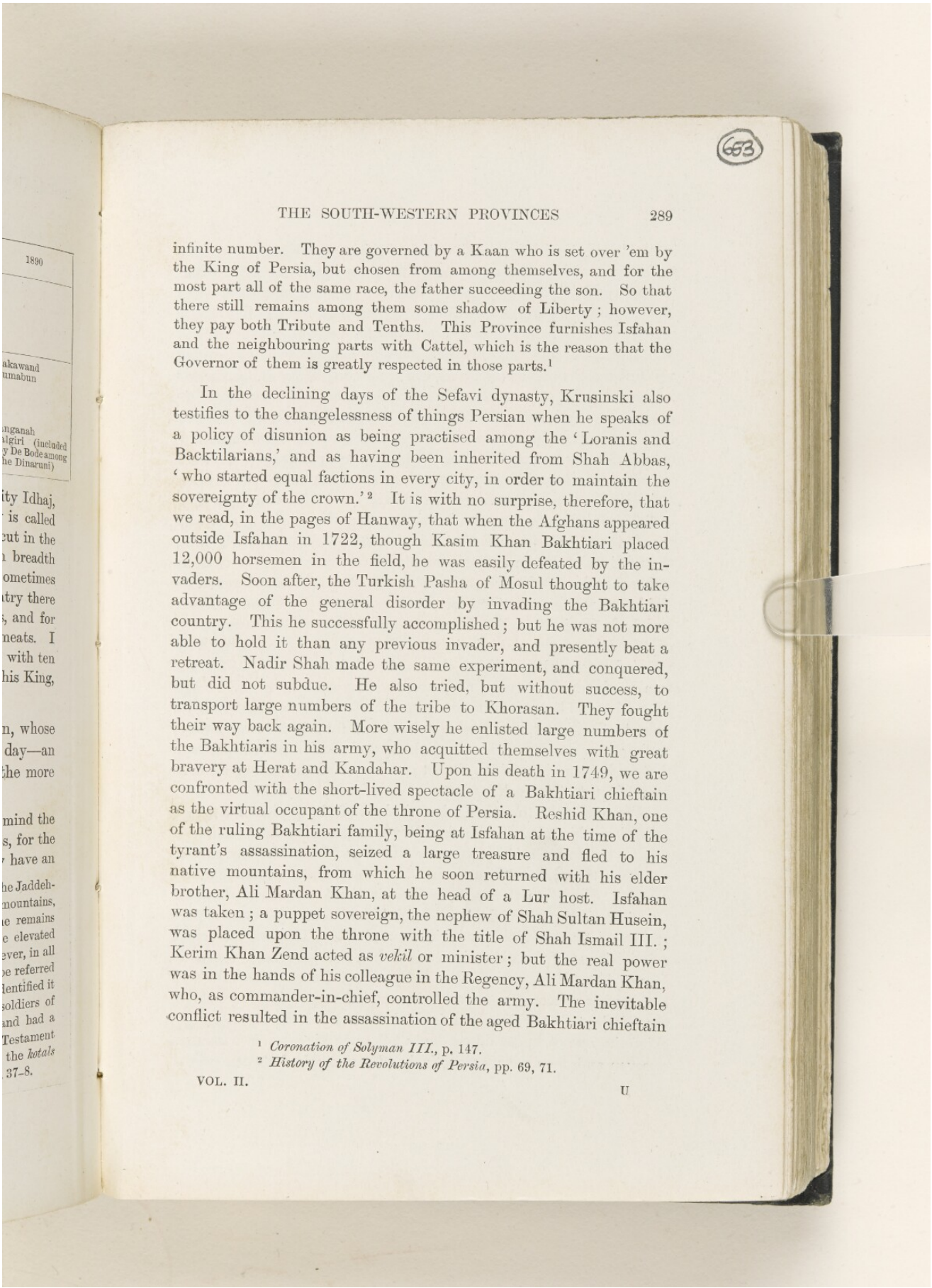



infinite number. They are governed by a Kaan who is set over 'em by the King of Persia, but chosen from among themselves, and for the most part all of the same race, the father succeeding the son. So that there still remains among them some shadow of Liberty; however, they pay both Tribute and Tenths. This Province furnishes Isfahan and the neighbouring parts with Cattel, which is the reason that the Governor of them is greatly respected in those parts.[1]

In the declining days of the Sefavi dynasty, Krusinski also testifies to the changelessness of things Persian when he speaks of a policy of disunion as being practised among the 'Loranis and Backtilarians,' and as having been inherited from Shah Abbas, 'who started equal factions in every city, in order to maintain the sovereignty of the crown.'[2] It is with no surprise, therefore, that we read, in the pages of Hanway, that when the Afghans appeared outside Isfahan in 1722, though Kasim Khan Bakhtiari placed 12,000 horsemen in the field, he was easily defeated by the invaders. Soon after, the Turkish Pasha of Mosul thought to take advantage of the general disorder by invading the Bakhtiari country. This he successfully accomplished; but he was not more able to hold it than any previous invader, and presently beat a retreat. Nadir Shah made the same experiment, and conquered, but did not subdue. He also tried, but without success, to transport large numbers of the tribe to Khorasan. They fought their way back again. More wisely he enlisted large numbers of the Bakhtiaris in his army, who acquitted themselves with great bravery at Herat and Kandahar. Upon his death in 1749, we are confronted with the short-lived spectacle of a Bakhtiari chieftain as the virtual occupant of the throne of Persia. Reshid Khan, one of the ruling Bakhtiari family, being at Isfahan at the time of the tyrant's assassination, seized a large treasure and fled to his native mountains, from which he soon returned with his elder brother, Ali Mardan Khan, at the head of a Lur host. Isfahan was taken; a puppet sovereign, the nephew of Shah Sultan Husein, was placed upon the throne with the title of Shah Ismail III.; Kerim Khan Zend acted as *vekil* or minister; but the real power was in the hands of his colleague in the Regency, Ali Mardan Khan, who, as commander-in-chief, controlled the army. The inevitable conflict resulted in the assassination of the aged Bakhtiari chieftain

[1] *Coronation of Solyman III.*, p. 147.
[2] *History of the Revolutions of Persia*, pp. 69, 71.



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in 1751. Later in the century Agha Mohammed Khan, ambitious to fortify his rising fortunes, essayed a campaign in 1785 against these formidable mountaineers. He was not more successful than Nadir had been; and during the rest of his reign left the Bakhtiaris wisely alone. In the early years of the present century, Asad Khan, of the Haft Lang tribe, defied the Persian Government, raided up to the walls of Teheran, and when pursued took refuge in his impregnable hill-fort of the Diz near Shushter. Ultimately, however, he surrendered to Mohammed Ali Mirza, the son of Fath Ali Shah, and made his peace with the Government. At this time (1810) Morier calculated the Bakhtiaris as possessing 500,000 families, an altogether extravagant estimate. A little later, when British officers appeared in Persia to drill the native troops, a force of 3,000 Bakhtiaris was raised and placed under Major Hart, who found them orderly and tractable in their relations with him, though insubordinate and contemptuous towards Persian officers. Subsequently, Duhousset, the Frenchman, also commanded a Bakhtiari regiment. A curious story is related by Colonel Stuart and Lady Sheil of an Englishman who, in about 1830, having been captured by some Bakhtiari brigands, became domesticated and married among them, taking the name of Dervish Ali, and living as a Moslem. In process of time, having grown tired of savage life and of his Bakhtiari bride, he sold her for a jackass, which he rode to Trebizond, and embarked thence for his native country, having turned a few shillings on the speculation. Lady Sheil says that he kept a diary; if so, it is to be regretted that this has never been given to the world.

The Chehar Lang

We now come to a time when, jealous of the power of a great Bakhtiari chieftain, the Persian Government once again made a resolute attempt to assert its authority in the Lur mountains; and when, owing to the accidental presence of an Englishman, Sir H. Layard, in these regions, we have for the first time presented to us, in vivid and contemporaneous portraiture, a page of Bakhtiari history and life. The two principal subdivisions of the Bakhtiari tribes had for long been the Haft Lang (Seven Feet) and Chehar Lang (Four Feet). According to the popular account, current among the people themselves, the whole tribe originally migrated from Syria under a single chieftain, one of whose descendants left upon his death two families of seven and four sons respectively, the struggle between whom

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for the supremacy originated a tribal division that has lasted ever since. According to another account, the numbers of seven and four represented the respective scales of military contribution in bygone days, the Haft Lang, who were always the poorer and more nomadic section of the tribe, being taxed in the proportion of one-seventh of their property, while the Chehar Lang, who possessed villages and agricultural wealth, were assessed upon a quarter of their possessions. However this may be, a bitter enmity had from early times existed between the tribes, for which a perhaps sufficient reason was to be found in the fact that some of their pastures overlapped, and that they crossed each other while moving from their winter to their summer quarters. Between the years 1830–40, one Mohammed Taki Khan, of the Kunurzi tribe of the Chehar Lang subdivision, and a lineal descendant of Reshid, the brother of Ali Mardan Khan, before mentioned, rose by his own eminence and abilities to a commanding position among the Bakhtiari peoples. Starting as chief of his own clan, he was presently recognised as head of the Janiki (lit. Juwaniki) Garmsir, a larger tribal unit, which as a rule carried with it the supremacy of the entire Chehar Lang. At his prime his sway was likewise acknowledged by many of the Haft Lang Bakhtiaris, and by some of the Feili and Kuhgelu Lurs. This was the powerful and remarkable chieftain whom Mohammed Ali Shah, thirsting for military renown, determined to subdue; and of whose individuality and misfortunes so affecting a picture has been drawn by the pen of Layard.[1]

Mohammed Taki Khan

Mohammed Taki Khan was one of those men who exist to show that primitive surroundings and a wild existence can still develop a high ideal both of statesmanship and manhood. A brave warrior, an excellent swordsman, shot, and horseman, abstemious in his private life, affable and humane in his public relations, liberal-minded in political views, and possessed of no common abilities, 'he had a very noble air, and was the *beau idéal* of a great feudal chief.' His policy was much in advance of what might have been expected from his environment. He sternly repressed brigandage, encouraged settled as against nomadic existence, attempted colonisation on a large scale, fostered trade, and was keenly in sympathy with Layard's proposals

[1] *Vide Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 8, 15, 47–9, and *Early Adventures*, pp. 371–5, *et passim*. Compare, also: (Sir) H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.G.S* vol. ix. p. 104; and Baron C. A. De Bode, *Travels in Luristan*, vol. ii. pp. 78–81.



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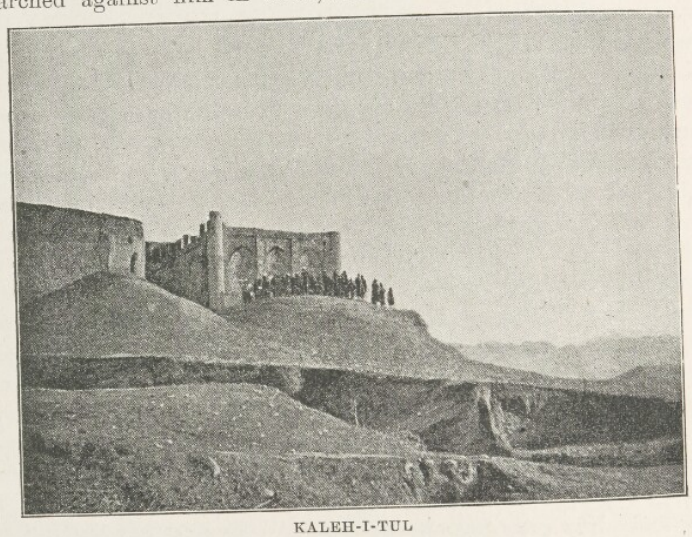
for opening up the Bakhtiari mountains to British commerce. By his tribesmen, whom he ruled with a fair hand and from whom he collected an equitable revenue, he was respected and beloved. He wielded the power of life and death, and could command a well-armed force of 10,000 to 12,000 men, including 2,000 to 3,000 horsemen. Besides ruling his own and other kindred tribes,[1] he held Shushter, and had great influence in Dizful; he farmed Ram Hormuz from the government of Fars; he twice occupied Behbehan, and once took Hawizeh; he replaced a Ka'b Sheikh in Fellahieh. Already a Persian army, in which Rawlinson was an officer, had marched against him in 1836, but had received his submission



KALEH-I-TUL

The Shah, however, was jealous both of his power and of his rumoured wealth. He was again declared *yaghi*, i.e. in rebellion, in 1840; and an army under Manucheher Khan, the Motemed-ed-Dowleh, who in the Government of Isfahan had acquired a reputation for merciless severity, marched into the Bakhtiari hills in 1841. The incidents of the campaign have been related by Layard, and should be read as affording an excellent illustration of Persian tactics in civil warfare. The family of the chieftain were

[1] The right of Mohammed Taki Khan to the title of Ilkhani is disputed by the Haft Lang tribe, who look upon his period of ascendency as the usurpation of a prerogative which appertains to them.

seized by an act of ill-faith; he himself took refuge with the Ka'b Sheikh Thamer, but was persuaded to surrender to the Motemed upon a guarantee of safety sworn upon the Koran. This too-familiar device of Persian government was successful. The hero was seized, cast into chains, and carried off to Teheran, where he died in imprisonment in 1851. His brothers and sons were either killed or experienced a similar fate. With the removal of Mohammed Taki Khan, the fortunes of the Chehar Lang suffered eclipse, and have never since revived. Some member of the same family has usually remained in occupation of Kaleh-i-Tul, the headquarters of the chief; and I present a photograph of the fort and its inmates as they appeared in 1890.[1] The present head of the tribe is Chiragh Ali Khan, who married a daughter of the Haft Lang Ilkhani, Husein Kuli Khan, and is therefore brother-in-law to the present Ilbegi, Isfendiar Khan. Appended, too, is a pedigree of the Ilkhani's dynasty, which I have compiled from a number of sources.

The Haft Lang

After the fall of the Chehar Lang chieftain, the Haft Lang regained their supremacy, which has never since been disputed. Jafir Kuli Khan, son of the Asad Khan whom I have before named, was recognised as Ilkhani by the Motemed; and if pre-eminence in crime were considered a qualification for leadership, he certainly deserved it. To attain the position, he had already slain fourteen of his relatives, including his own brother. Like his father, when engaged in hostilities with the Persian Government—a position into which he soon drifted—he withdrew to his impregnable stronghold of the Diz, where he was unsuccessfully besieged. Later he took to flight, and was succeeded by Kelb Ali Khan of the Duraki tribe, who also possessed a famous Diz, that, along with its fellow phenomenon, will presently be described. About the year 1850, however, the son of Jafir, Husein Kuli Khan, began to assert his authority over the tribes. He slew Kelb Ali Khan, and rapidly gained a predominance, which for thirty years remained uncontested, and rendered him a worthy successor to Layard's hero and patron. He was a man of com-

[1] Kaleh-i-Tul is a large stone and mud-brick fort, built upon a *tepe*, or mound about 100 feet high, in a plain 80 miles east of Shushter. The fort is a square with five towers, and is built in two tiers. In the interior it contains two courts, and would hold a powerful garrison. A village of mud huts clusters at the foot of the mound, and the black tents of the nomads are pitched around.

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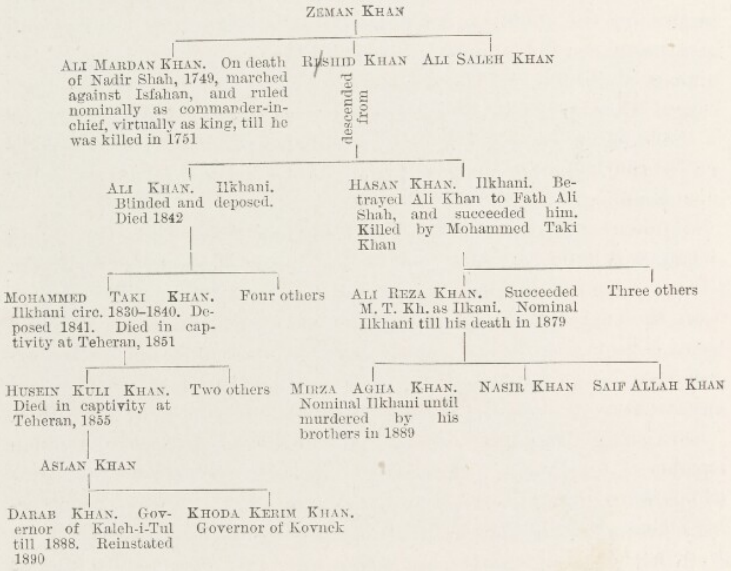
manding appearance and character, and ruled his followers with an iron hand. Like his prototype, he suppressed brigandage, made the caravan tracks safe, built caravanserais, constructed roads, and was willing to enter into relations with British merchants for the opening up of the route between Isfahan and Shushter.[1] Individual pre-eminence, however, has never been very safe in Persia; and least of all under a centralising administration like that of the present monarch. In June 1882, Husein Kuli Khan, who had

I. Ruling Family of the Chehar Lang (Kunurzi).




not long previously entertained the Zil-es-Sultan in regal style in his native mountains, was invited to Isfahan; and was there either strangled or poisoned by order of his princely host. The Zil-es-Sultan throws the responsibility upon the Shah. The Shah was probably aware of, even if he did not actually command, the deed. Simultaneously, Isfendiar Khan, the eldest son of the murdered man, was thrown into prison, where he remained for six years. The entire series of events was profoundly characteristic of Persian policy in its attitude towards the nomad tribes.

[1] He received, with every mark of favour, Mr. G. Mackenzie, of the firm of Gray, Paul, & Co., in 1875 and 1878; Gen. Schindler in 1877; and Captain Wells and Mr. Baring (of the Teheran Legation) in 1881.

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There are three official posts associated with the leadership of the Bakhtiari tribes; and these, although never conferred upon any candidate who is not a member of the ruling family, are both salaried by, and in the gift of, the Shah—at once a fruitful source of bribery and an indication of the extent to which the Crown has succeeded in vindicating its prerogative. They are the offices of Ilkhani or Chieftain, Ilbegi or Second in Command, and Hakim, or Governor, of Chehar Mahal. The latter, although not a tribal rank *per se*, is closely bound up with tribal politics, inasmuch as the ruling family are the principal landed proprietors in the district concerned. After the assassination of Husein Kuli Khan, his next brother, Imam Kuli Khan, was appointed Ilkhani in his place, while a third brother, Reza Kuli Khan, became Ilbegi; other members of the family were kept at Teheran as hostages. With the fall of the Zil-es-Sultan, however, in February 1888, came another turn of Fortune's wheel. Isfendiar Khan, son of the late Ilkhani, was released from confinement and taken under the Shah's protection. His uncle, Imam Kuli Khan, was deposed, Reza received his place, and Isfendiar that of Ilbegi. Upon the disgraced Ilkhani refusing to evacuate his position, the successful rivals, with the aid of Persian troops, marched against him, fell upon his following at Chaghkhor, and compelled him to fly. Isfendiar emerged from the combat the bearer of the ornamental title of Samsam-es-Sultaneh, or Sword of the State. The existing arrangement was then confirmed, but only remained in operation for two years. In 1890, just after my visit, all three chiefs were ordered up to Teheran, and at No Ruz (March 21), when all offices are either renewed or change hands, the wheel described yet another and a backward revolution, inasmuch as Imam Kuli Khan was reinstated as Ilkhani, Isfendiar remaining Ilbegi, while Reza became Governor of Chehar Mahal. Such is the triangular arrangement that still prevails.

The ruling triumvirate

Though outwardly friendly, the triumvirate is secretly divided, and the present *modus vivendi* is destitute of any stability. The two uncles are separated by age, temperament, and tradition from the nephew, who carries with him the sympathies of his people. Imam Kuli Khan, the present chief, is a man of sixty-eight years of age. He is variously known as the Haji Ilkhani, from having made the pilgrimage to Mecca soon after his first accession to office, and as *El Kambakht*, or the Unfortunate,

Character and feeling

Isfendiar Khan of Tumbu because of the Ilkhani. He was honest sensible straightforward man. He died of gangrene imperfectly treated by a native doctor in July 1903



from the vicissitudes of his eventful career. With some of his subjects he is popular, being regarded as considerate and just, and he produced a favourable impression upon Colonel Bell in 1884. But his history has left its mark upon his character no less than upon his countenance, and distrust and suspicion are written on both. As Ilkhani he receives an annual salary of 1,000 *tomans* or 280*l.*, and pays a tribute to the Shah which is calculated at about two *tomans* per household. His brother, Reza, who is five years his junior, pays 5,700*l.* a year as farm-money for Chehar Mahal, and is reported to be avaricious and mean. Though he was a partisan of his nephew in 1888, the two are not now on speaking terms. His son is *sertip* of the Bakhtiari force that is maintained in their native hills. Isfendiar Khan has not passed unscathed through the ordeal of his earlier years. His father's murder and his own imprisonment have not rendered him an admirer of the powers that be, while the spectacle of others filling the place which he is entitled and qualified to occupy himself, scarcely tends to mitigate the sentiment. He is still, however, a comparatively young man, and, unless the Persian Government be contemplating any fresh wiles, is likely before long to become the *de jure* ruler of his people. The physiognomies of the three chieftains are not inadequately portrayed in the adjoining illustration. The pedigree which I have drawn up, and which has been out to Persia for confirmation, gives further particulars of the ruling family. Once annually the triumvirate meets in conference at Chaghkhor to settle the tribal affairs for the ensuing year. During the past summer (1891), I have not been surprised to hear that hostilities have again broken out. But so far they do not appear to have involved a direct rupture of the official *status quo*.

Catalogue of tribes

One result of the continued ascendency of the Haft Lang chieftains has been to bring the long-standing feud between the old tribal divisions to an end. The Chehar Lang ruling house is now united by marriage to the Ilkhani's family, and the tribal camping-grounds having ceased, to a large extent, to be distinct, there remains less ground for quarrel. As regards the sub-divisions and clans of the Bakhtiari Lurs, I have drawn up a comparative table, showing their names and numbers at different periods in the past half-century. Three previous lists have been published —by Rawlinson in 1836, by De Bode in 1841, and by Layard in 1844. In parallel columns with these I have placed a catalogue

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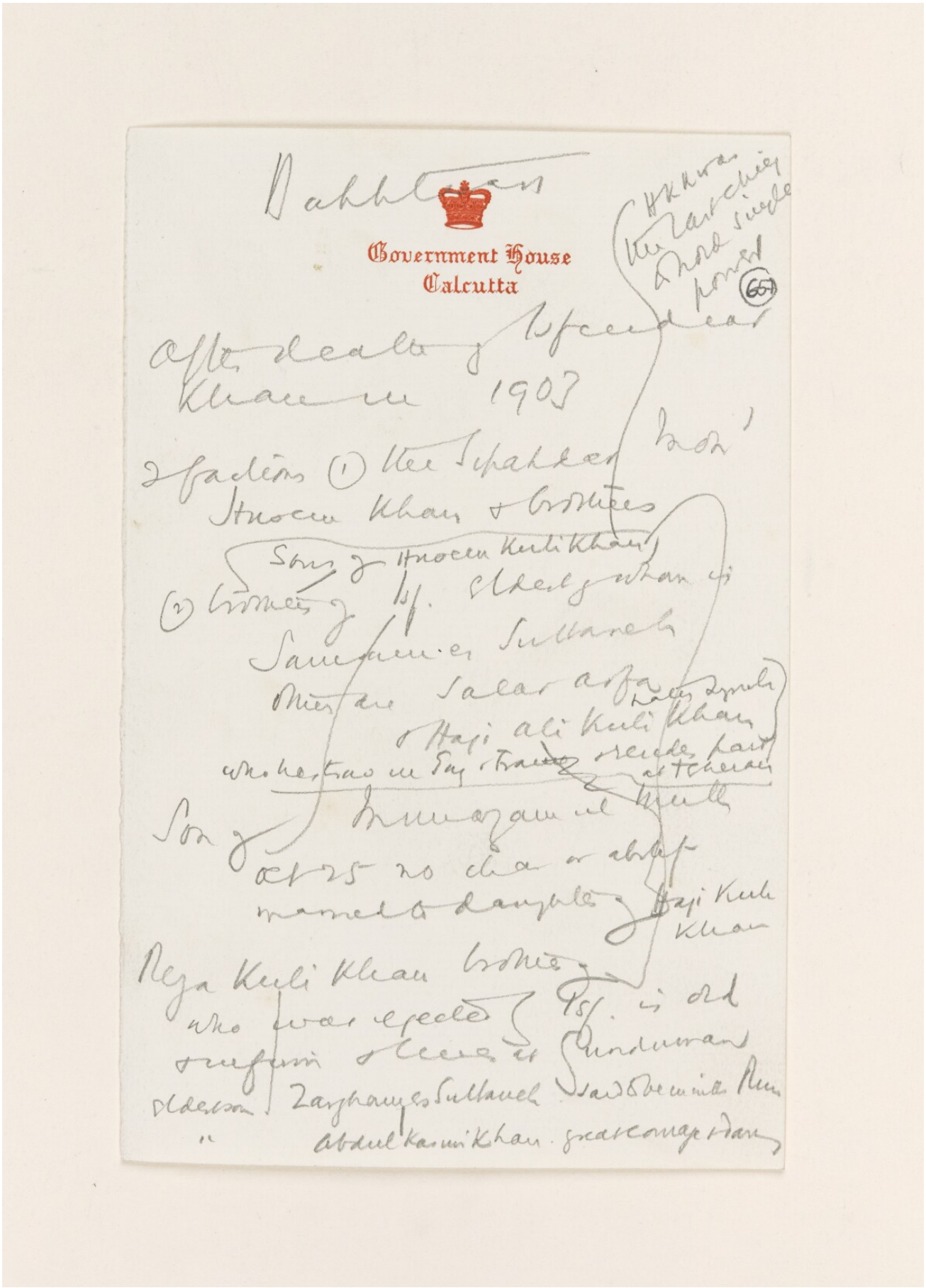


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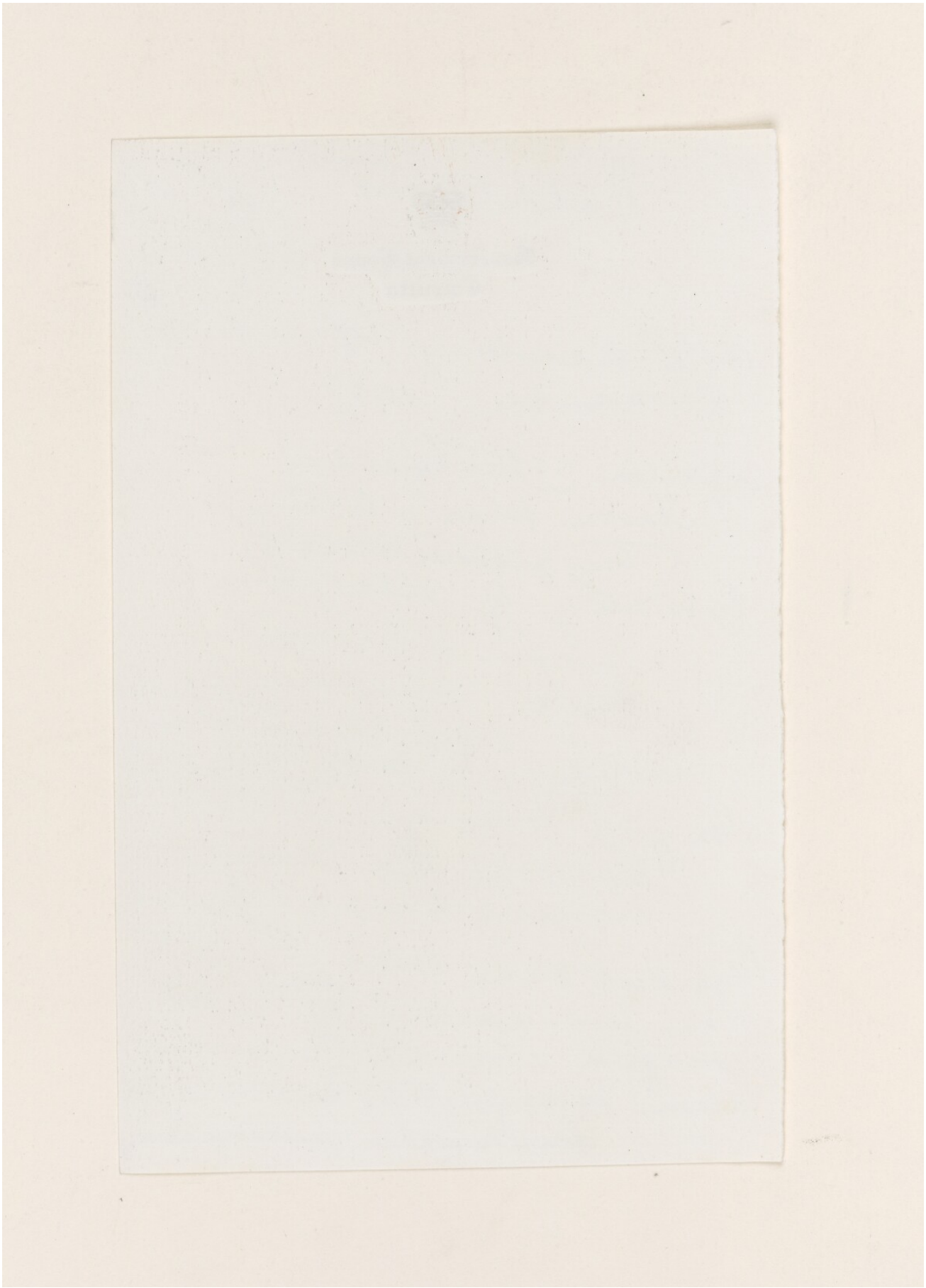

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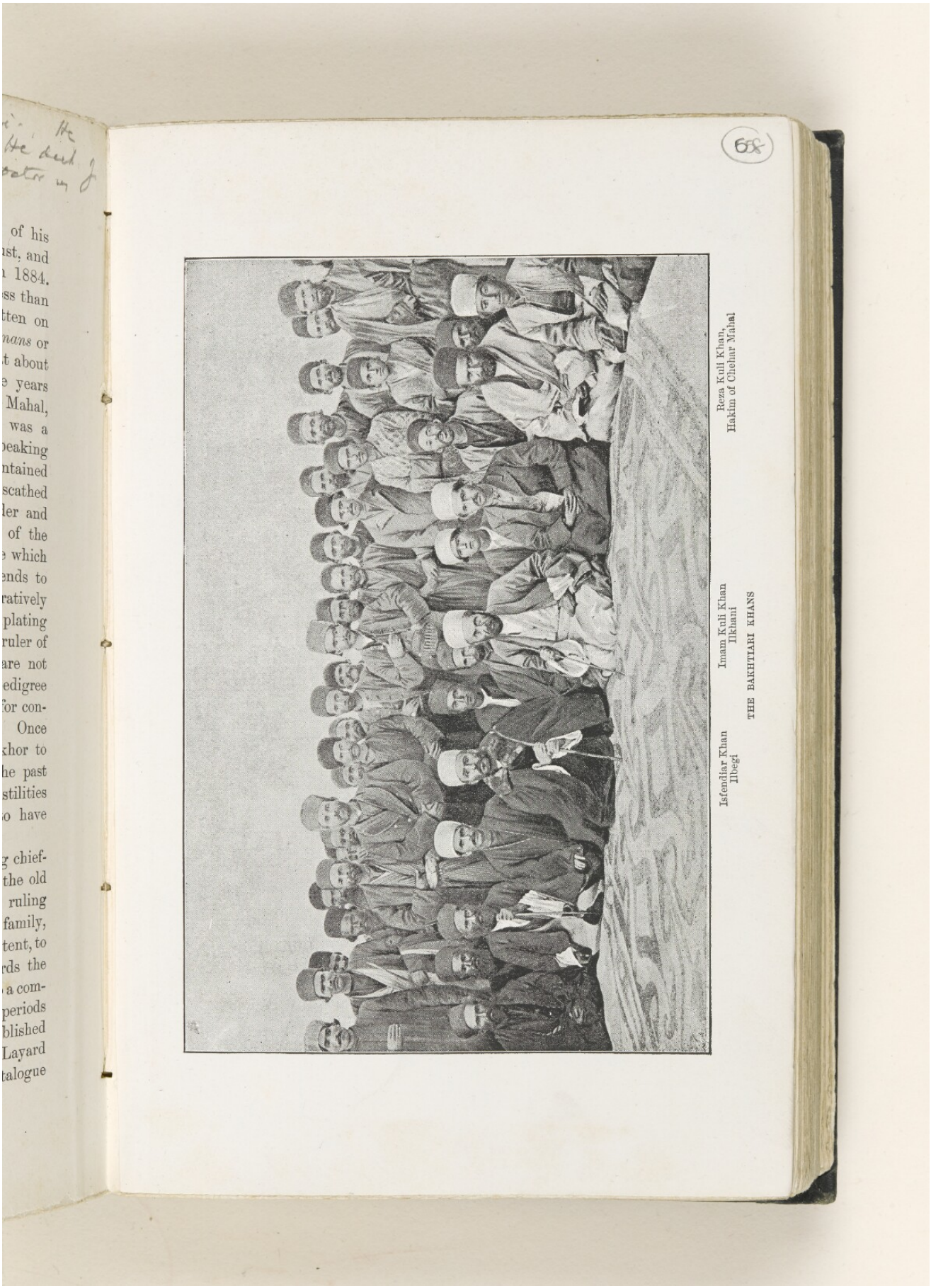

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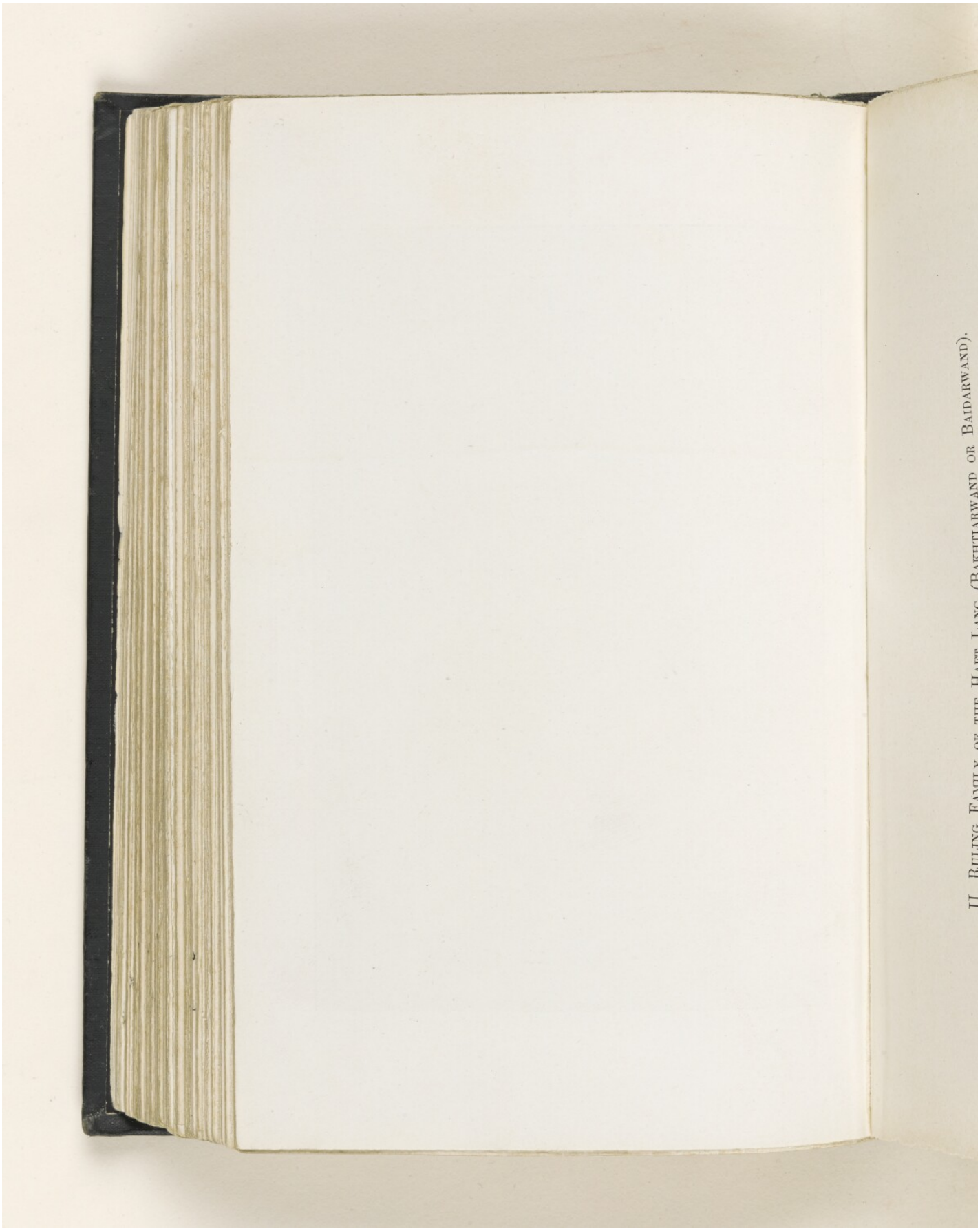
Hakim of Chehar Mahal

Imam Kuli Khan
Ikhani

Isfendiar Khan
Ilbegi

THE BAKHTIARI KHANS



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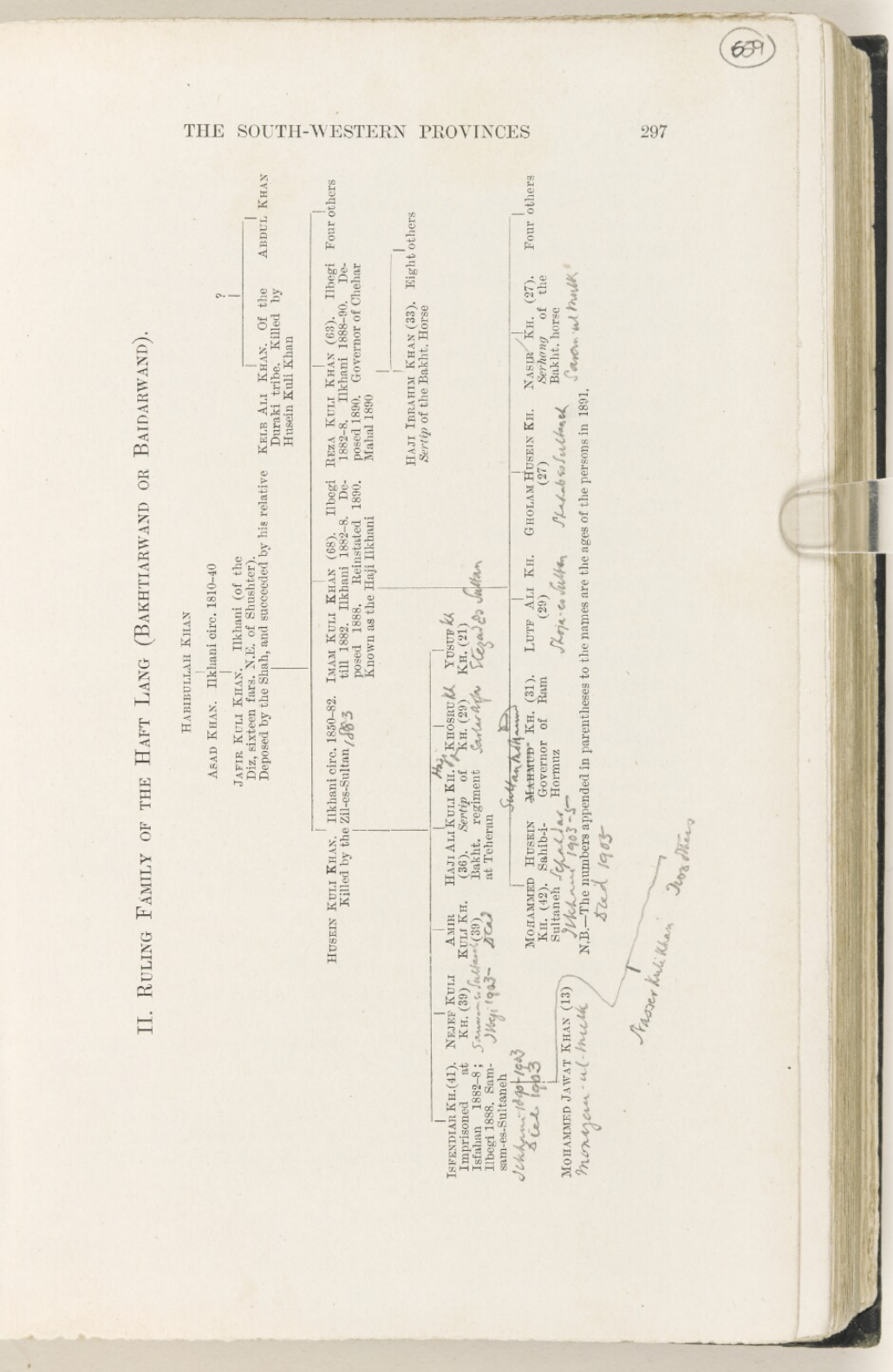
## II. Ruling Family of the Haft Lang (Bakhtiarwand or Baidarwand).



that was furnished to me in 1889 by the Bakhtiaris themselves, and an independent catalogue which was supplied from similar sources to a friend in 1890. It will be seen that in the lapse of time a great many clans have disappeared—a fate which, considering the internal feuds by which the tribes were for so long sundered, can excite no astonishment. The present assessment of Bakhtiari Land, paid by the Ilkhani, is 22,000 *tomans* to the Governor of Isfahan, and 15,000 *tomans* to the Governor of Arabistan.

Winter and summer quarters

In winter the Khans and their people are to be found encamped in the plains about Shushter and Dizful. In 1884 the Ilkhani was encountered by Colonel Bell at Ab-i-Bid, between those two places. In spring and autumn, i.e. in the transition period between the extremes of cold and heat, their headquarters are at Ardal in the south-east portion of the Bakhtiari mountains. There, at the height of 6,000 feet, the Ilkhani possesses an unpretentious, two-storeyed building, adjoining a fortified tower, and now falling into decay. When the summer suns begin to burn, the nomads move still higher into the mountains, and encamp on the loftier slopes from Burujird to Isfahan. The headquarters of the Ilkhani are then at Chaghkhor,[1] near Ardal, but 2,000 feet higher, where, in a mountain valley containing a small lake, a fort was built, upon a mound 100 feet high, by Husein Kuli Khan. In his days it was a smart and pretentious residence, being fitted with European chairs, couches, chandeliers, mirrors, and paintings.[2] Since the fall of its founder it has itself fallen into ruin and has also been much shaken by earthquakes. At a distance of twenty miles, however, in the direction of Isfahan, the Ilkhani possesses a modern country-house at Paradumba, elegantly laid out and furnished; a reminder of the extent to which, under the influence of frequent visits to the capital, these nomad chieftains have succumbed to the inroads of civilisation. They themselves take up their abode either in the buildings or in pavilions pitched below. Around are scattered the black tents of the tribesmen.

I have spoken of the lives of the chiefs; let me say something about that of their people. Pasture is their chief occupation, sheep

[1] The name is variously derived from Chagh-Khor (Hill of Pasturage), Chaghakhor (Hill of the Sun), and Jah-i-Akhor (the Place of Horses, or Paddock).

[2] There he was visited by Stack in 1881 (*Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. pp. 59–71), and his successor by Mrs. Bishop in 1890 (*Journeys in Persia*, vol. i p. 375).

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and cows the principal source of wealth. Of the former there are estimated to be 300,000 in the Bakhtiari mountains. But little trade is conducted by the nomads except the supply of mutton to the Isfahan market and the growth of tobacco in the plains towards Shushter and Dizful. A scanty surplus of grain is sometimes exported, but the bulk disappears in home consumption. In former days the chiefs kept large studs of horses, and the Bakhtiari breed gained a repute that has not yet perished. These animals, which are of a mixed stock with a strong strain of Arab blood, are admirably adapted to the country, being nimble, sure-footed, and enduring; but their number has greatly diminished, and the tribe could no longer turn out, as in the days of Mohammed Taki Khan, a cavalry contingent of several thousand men. Mules are not now reared or kept by the Bakhtiaris, except for transport purposes, but they have a fine breed of donkeys. The bulk of the tribesmen are very poor, and in their black tents will be found neither gold nor silver, but vessels only of iron and copper. There is next to no education, except among the families of the chiefs, who sometimes keep a *munshi*. In the settled villages the parish *mullah* acts as a sort of self-constituted schoolmaster, but his attainments and curriculum are equally narrow. Outwardly and by hereditary descent the Bakhtiaris are Mohammedans, but they care little for Koran or Prophet, scoff at *mullahs* and *seyids*, and have no mosques. The shrines of *pirs*, or departed saints, are an object of attention and pilgrimage, and each stone added to the little commemorative pile signifies a vow fulfilled or a prayer uttered. Nevertheless the Bakhtiaris are not without a crude and simple faith of their own. They are believers alike in the existence and in the unity of God, and entertain elementary notions of Heaven and Hell, of a future life, and of a judgment day. Their burial places are usually located on low mounds, unfenced. A rough-hewn lion, whereon are sculped in rude imagery the sword, musket, dagger, powder-flask, and cartridge-belt of the deceased, marks the tribesman's grave.[1] Their character presents a strange combination of dignity and licence. For, on the one hand, they are modest,

Bakhtiari life and habits

[1] Fryer, in the seventeenth century (*Travels*, p. 385), was told in Persia that the emblem of a lion on a tombstone denoted one who had died in the strength of his age. Compare the tale related by Pausanias (*Bæot.* 40) of the Thebans who had perished in battle against Philip, and whose graves were marked by a lion to signify their magnanimous heroism.

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though self-contained, in deportment, obedient and hospitable, loyal to family and tribal ties, and wholly free from the abominable vices of the Persians. On the other hand, they are savage when excited, particularly in the pursuit of blood feuds, which are perpetuated from generation to generation, until sometimes entire families have been extinguished, and are adroit and incurable thieves. There is not a traveller amongst them who has not spoken with suffering admiration of their dexterity in the latter respect, from Stocqueler in 1831 to Mrs. Bishop in 1890. To the denizen of cities their bearing presents a refreshing contrast to that of the urban Persian. Smooth rascality finds no place here, but in their character and mien is the free breath of their native hills.

Alike in costume and complexion, darkness is the prevailing hue of the external man. Their hair is black, with its two long uncut tufts curled behind the ear, black their bushy eyebrows and flashing eyes beneath, black the beard and moustache, black the small skull-cap upon the head, black the coat of the male, and blue-black the indigo-dyed cloak of the female. The men are robust and muscular in appearance, and have a very manly bearing. They wear loose trousers and a skirted coat. Round the waist a cartridge-belt holds the ammunition for the Martini-Peabody that is slung over the shoulder, a sword hangs under the saddle flaps, a dagger and pistol are carried in the belt. The women are tall and dark, of shapely limbs and erect carriage. They are not veiled, and but little privacy marks the economy of tented life. Polygamy appears to be almost universal, even amongst the poor. On the other hand, matrimonial infidelity is rare and domestic happiness common. The picture drawn by Layard of the family life of the Chehar Lang chieftain is one of the most touching features of his romantic tale. The women wear full Turkish trousers, or, in the *fin de siècle* vernacular, a divided skirt, a loose chemisette, and a shawl above all. Cleanliness, it is to be feared, is little known or appreciated by the nomads, and to this must be attributed the diseases, both of the skin and eye, to which they are liable. The latter ailment is exaggerated by the blinding glare of the sun from rock and sand, and by the scant protection afforded by the national head-dress.[1]

Appearance and dress

It is as a horseman that the Bakhtiari has always been famous.

[1] By far the best modern account of the habits and beliefs of the Bakhtiaris is to be found in the vivacious pages of Mrs. Bishop.

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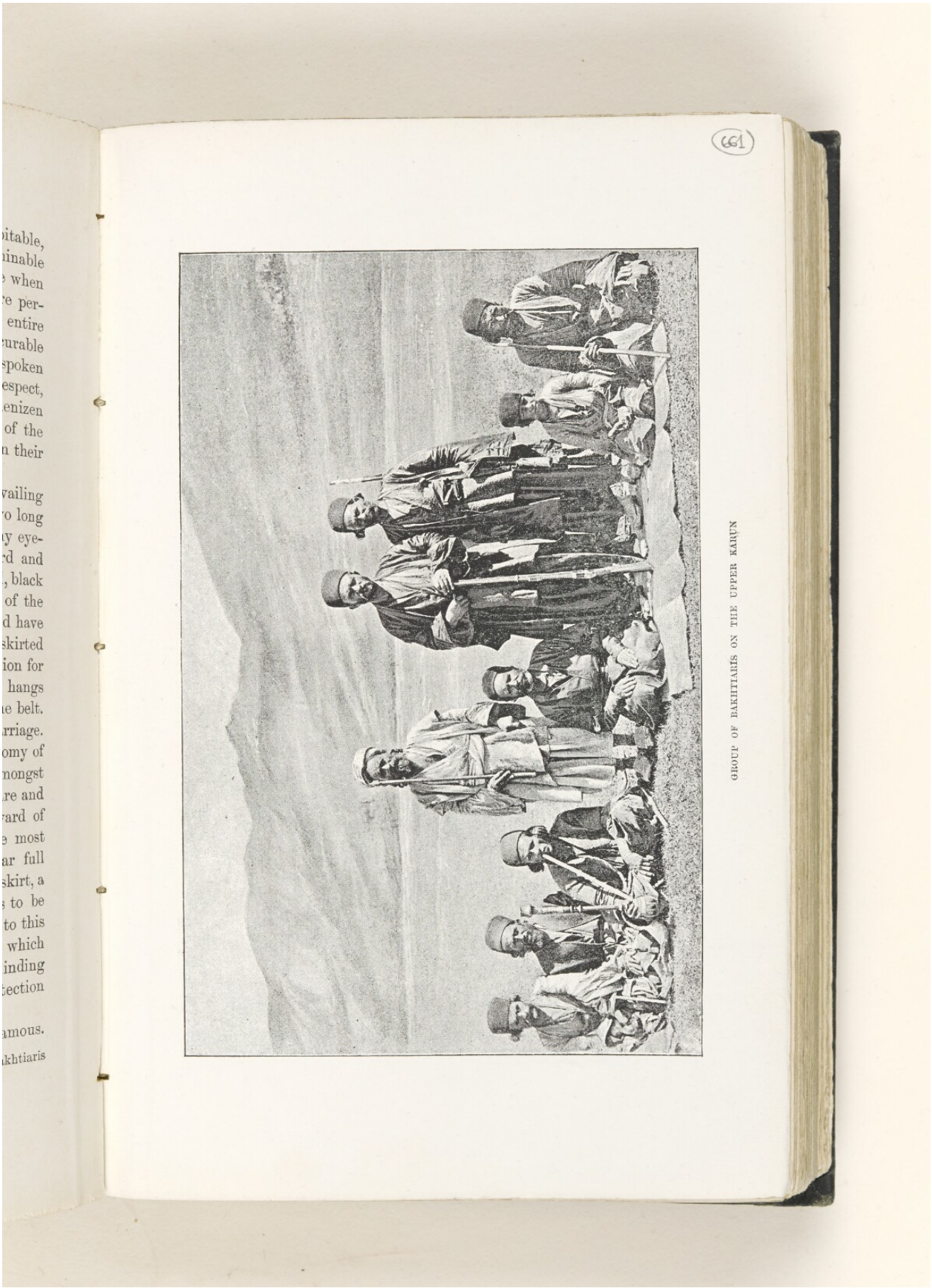

GROUP OF BAKHTIARIS ON THE UPPER KARUN

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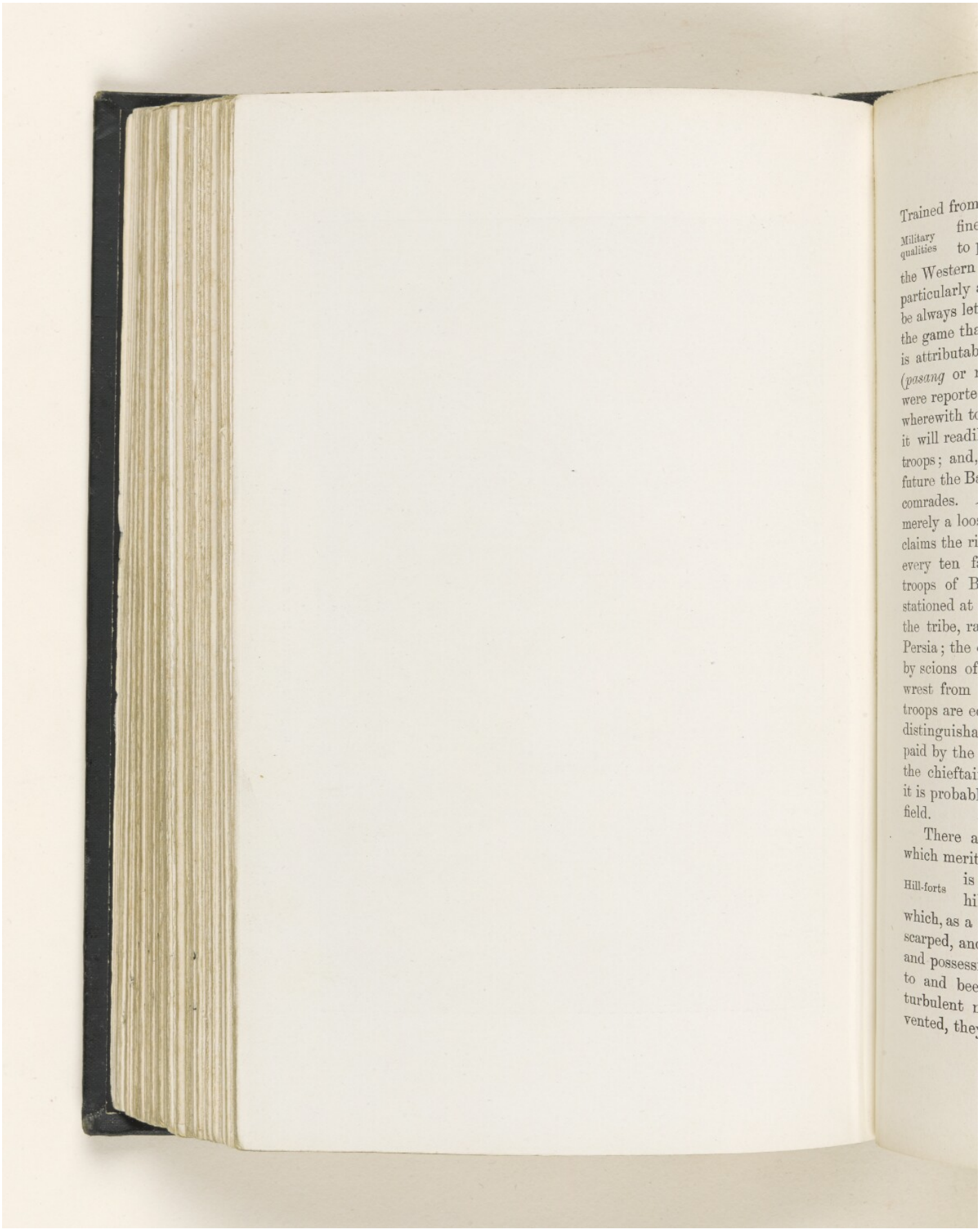

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Trained from his youth to the saddle, he is a rough-rider of the finest type, able to fire while going at full gallop, and to perform feats on horseback that recall the prowess of the Western Hemisphere. He is a fine shot, with rifle or shot gun, particularly at short ranges; and it is to his insatiable desire to be always letting off at something, that the great diminution in the game that was once to be found in the Bakhtiari mountains is attributable. Fifty years ago, when Layard was there, ibex (*pasang* or rock-footed), mouflon, deer, gazelles, wolves, and bears were reported as numerous. Recent travellers have discovered little wherewith to slake the sportsman's appetite. Such men, however, it will readily be comprehended, afford the finest raw material for troops; and, as I have elsewhere hinted, it is possible that in the future the Bakhtiari highlanders may be seen in line with European comrades. At present they are ignorant of discipline, and are merely a loose collection of capable units. Nominally, the Shah claims the right to levy one horseman and two foot-soldiers upon every ten families. In practice, there are only two mobilised troops of Bakhtiari horse, each 100 strong, one of which is stationed at Teheran, really as a hostage for the good behaviour of the tribe, rather than as an addition to the fighting strength of Persia; the other in their native mountains. Both are commanded by scions of the ruling family; nor would the Shah venture to wrest from them the inherited prerogative of lead. Both these troops are equipped, mounted, and armed by the Ilkhani (they are distinguishable by a white instead of a black cap), but they are paid by the Shah in the form of a rebate on the revenue due from the chieftain. Of irregulars, in the strictest sense of the term, it is probable that the latter could put in all 8,000 to 10,000 in the field.

Military qualities

There are further natural features of the Bakhtiari country which merit specification. One of the most remarkable of these is the occurrence in the mountainous regions of natural hill-forts, known in Persia as *diz*. These strongholds, which, as a rule, consist of isolated mountain or hill-tops, artificially scarped, and difficult of access, containing pasture on the summits, and possessing natural wells or springs, have both lent themselves to and been utilised by the requirements of a semi-feudal and turbulent mode of existence. In days before artillery was invented, they supplied an impregnable retreat to the rebellious or

Hill-forts

outlawed chieftain. They are still formidable in a country which does not lend itself to the easy transport of guns. Of these natural phenomena the most remarkable are two in the neighbourhood of Shushter and Dizful. The Diz Asad Khan (so called because it was the winter residence of that chief, and subsequently of his son, Jafir Kuli Khan), is situated sixteen *farsakhs*, or two days' march, north-east of Shushter. Before belonging to the Haft Lang, it was the stronghold of the Moguwi tribe, and was known as Diz Malekan, or Fort of the Angels, from the idea that so wonderful a place could only have been rendered accessible to man by favour of the heavenly powers. Layard resided for several days upon its summit, and described it as a rock, three miles round, and ascended only by long ladders and holes in the cliff, conducting to a lower platform, where were natural springs and a collection of huts, a still higher platform being attained by an equally precipitous climb.[1] The second Diz, known as Diz Shahi, or Kaleh-i-Diz, was in Layard's time the property of Kelb Ali Khan, before mentioned, but passed, upon his death, to Husein Kuli Khan. It is situated fifteen miles north-east of Dizful, near the Ab-i-Diz, and consists of an elevated tableland, several miles in circumference, on the summit of a hill, with perpendicular sides, 150 feet sheer. A single pathway, partly hewn, partly built out, conducts to the top, where are huts, caves, springs, and good cultivated soil. Both of these hill-forts now belong to the Ilkhani of the Bakhtiari tribes. A third and analogous *diz* is that of Mungasht, which was the stronghold of the Atabegs in the Middle Ages, and held out for nine months against the Mongol Hulaku Khan. In the first half of this century it was the fastness of Mohammed Taki Khan, and is said never to have been taken. Like its fellows, it consists of a rock artificially scarped to a depth of 150 feet, with a summit half a mile round, containing perennial springs, and natural caves, capable of accommodating 1,000 men. Similar hill-forts exist more to the south in the Mamasenni country, notably that of Gul-i-Gulab, south of Behbehan,[2] and the famous Diz-i-Sefid, which will be mentioned later on. Another and different sort of *diz* is encountered in the cañon of Arjanak, in the north-west portion of the Bakhtiari mountains. There the *diz* consists of a number of shallow caves piercing the perpendicular

[1] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 16, 17; *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. pp. 244–6.

[2] De Bode, *Travels*, vol. i. p. 292.

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face of one of the cliff walls of the valley. The largest of these, twelve feet deep by twenty feet long, is defended by a loop-holed parapet, and is only accessible by a single steep path. It is the possession of Mihrab Khan, chief of the Isawand tribe of Bakhtiari Lurs. It is characteristic of every one of the natural fortresses here described that, though impervious to pedestrian attack, they could easily be shelled from opposite or neighbouring eminences. In modern warfare, therefore, their strategic value would dwindle.

In the extreme north-east corner of the Bakhtiari country lies the important town of Burujird (5,400 feet).[1] The district of which it is the centre and capital belongs, strictly speaking, to Irak; but inasmuch as several of the *mahals* which it contains are peopled by Bakhtiaris, and as its governor exercises jurisdiction over a large number of the latter tribe, it is more appropriately mentioned here. The commercial importance of the town, as situated at the junction of routes leading from Dizful, Kermanshah, Hamadan, Teheran, and Isfahan, has been pointed out in other chapters, and must always render it a place of importance either for trading or strategical purposes. Burujird is a thriving resort of business, with a population of 17,000, well situated in a valley watered by the upper springs of the Ab-i-Diz, and thickly studded with villages, whose orchards are renowned for their fruits. It is surrounded by a mud wall, five miles in circumference, pierced by five gates. The chief local manufacture is a species of printed calico, on which native designs are stamped by means of hand-dies cut in wood.

Burujird

On the western limits of Bakhtiari Land, and on the lower reaches of the Ab-i-Diz, is situated the less important but interesting town of Dizful. Its name (Diz-pul, i.e. Fort of the Bridge) is derived from the splendid bridge, doubtless of Sassanian structure, that here spans the stream.[2] Its lower part is of stone, and evidently of greater antiquity than the superstructure, which is of brick. It is 430 yards in length, and contains twenty-two arches of varying shape and span. Like its fellow and contemporary at Shushter, it is in a dilapidated condition, two of the arches having recently fallen in, although communication between the opposite banks is not thereby suspended as at Shushter. At a little distance upstream, a number of flour-mills

Dizful

[1] For modern Burujird, *vide* Mrs. Bishop, vol. ii. Letter xxi.
[2] *Vide* M. Dieulafoy *L'Art antique de la Perse*, part v. pp. 105–9.

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built on rocks and connected by frail bridges or causeways, are turned by the current, and present a picturesque appearance. Dizful is in most respects so faithful a counterpart of Shushter (from which it is distant less than forty miles) that I shall dispense with a detailed description of its features, referring my readers to the next chapter, wherein will be related my own experiences at the sister-city. The population of Dizful, which was once inferior to that of Shushter, is said now to amount to over 16,000, or double the latter's total. Both places contain crowds of holy but fanatical impostors; life and its surroundings are much the same in each;



RIVER AND WATER-MILLS AT DIZFUL

alike in architecture the towns are similar, in general neglect of trade and tillage, and in contented evidence of universal and incorrigible decay. The chief local manufacture at Dizful is indigo, of which there are said to be 120 factories in the town. But so little has the value of the combined waterways of its own river and of the Karun, into which the Ab-i-Diz flows further down, been appraised by native merchants, that the import and export trade of the place, which might easily be doubled or trebled in volume, is at present conducted by an overland track from the Turkish landing-place of Amarah on the Tigris, merchandise being brought

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up the river from Busrah, and despatched by mule caravans starting twice a month for Dizful.[1] In the earlier part of this century, until replaced by Shushter, it was the seat of government of Arabistan, and a large palace was built here by Mohammed Ali Mirza.

At Dizful, at Shushter, at Hawizeh, and at Mohammerah, are still to be found a few relics of the interesting and obscure community, known as the Sabians, frequently miscalled the Christians of St. John. In former days the sectaries of this faith were very numerous in Mesopotamia; and in the seventeenth century Petis de la Croix reported 10,000 in Busrah alone. Even in 1840 Layard found 300 to 400 families in Shushter; but in 1877 Schindler only heard of 50 families on Persian soil, and of not more than 500 families elsewhere. These are very poor, and are mostly employed either as peasants or as silversmiths. I have some engraved seals of their workmanship. The greatest uncertainty and confusion have prevailed as to the religious beliefs of this sect, who have been alternately classified as Hebrews and Christians, though widely removed from either. A still further and more serious confusion has arisen from their name, which has caused them to be mistaken for the Sabæans, who were star-worshippers and who are mentioned as such in the Old Testament, the name of the latter (which appears in the Koran as Sabiuna) being variously derived from the Arabic *Saba*, the heavenly host, or Sab, grandson of Enoch, who was a great prophet of that sect. Similarly in the time of the Khalif Mamun, A.D. 830, the people of Harran, who were polytheists and star-worshippers, appear, perhaps for the protection that it might afford them, to have assumed the name of Sabians, to which in all probability they had no right. The name of the true Sabians is believed to be derived from the Aramaic *Sabi-yun*, i.e. Baptists. They call themselves Mandai Yahiai or Followers of St. John. The latter, i.e. the Baptist, is their chief prophet, although they recognise the divinity of God, and are said to have some conception of the Trinity. They have no churches, but water plays a large part in their ritual observance, baptism, frequently renewed, being the principal ceremony, while marriage and prayer both require the use of running water. Some of them employ the sign of the Cross, which is variously explained as an act of symbolism, or as a relic of a possible conversion to Christianity

Sabians

[1] This route was followed by Madame Dieulafoy in 1882 (*La Perse*, cap. xxxvii.).



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in bygone days. They have five books, the principal of which is the Sidra or Book of Adam, written in a dialect of the Aramaic language, with an alphabet closely allied to the Syriac. Though the present Sidra is post-Mohammedan in date, its language and ideas alike point to an earlier origin. The Sabians are monogamous and do not practise circumcision, but have peculiar ordinances with regard to the eating of meat. Some of them also entertain a hazy belief in the gnostic idea of dualism, or a war of rival principles. But no two travellers ever received from them either a coherent or a consistent account of their faith. In appearance and dress they are not to be distinguished from the Arabs, among whom their lot is cast. They only intermarry amongst themselves; but their general poverty and obscurity are reflected in their numerical decline.[1]

Ruins of the past

I have more than once indicated that in ancient days the whole country which I have been describing was the scene of greater population and busier life, and of a truly royal rule. Evidences of bygone splendour, both of the Elamite or Susian period, that mysterious blank space in history, of the Achæmenian times, the golden age of the Medes and Persians, and of the later but still notable Sassanian epoch—in each of which Persia attained to considerable grandeur—lie scattered throughout this region from east to west. In the neighbourhood of Dizful, where the mountain ranges are succeeded by the plains of Susiana or Elam, occurs the most stately of these monuments to a vanished order, in the shape of the great mounds of Shush, or Susa.

A problem that agitated and divided the *savants* of an earlier generation,[2] and misled even so penetrative a critic as Rawlinson

[1] For a short bibliography of the Sabians, I may mention, in addition to the standard works of D'Anville, Assemann, D'Herbelot, Hyde, Ritter, De Sacy, Picart, Hottinger, Gobineau, the following: Tavernier, bk. iii. cap. viii.; Langlès on Chardin, vol. vi. pp. 136–152; Sir. W. Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. i. app. xii.; Dr. Wolff, *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 330–4; (Sir) H. Layard, *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. pp. 163–4, 171–2; De Bode, *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 171–9; Madame Dieulafoy, *La Perse*, p. 547; and the following learned essays: Gesenius, *Mandaer o Zabier*, 1817; Chwolsohn, *Ssabier und Ssabismus*, 1856; Nöldeke, *Mundart der Mandaer*, 1862, and *Mandaische Grammatik*, 1875; *Edinburgh Review*, July 1880; Siouffi, *Etudes sur la religion des Soubbas ou Sabiens*, Paris, 1880; Babelon, *Les Mandites, leur histoire et leur doctrine*, Paris, 1882. *Vide* also A. H. Schindler, *Proc. of the R G.S.* Nov. 1891.

[2] Among those who debated the Shushan-Susa question, may be cited the names of Ouseley, Kinneir, Gosselin (ed. of Strabo), Long, Barbié du Bocage, Hoeck, D'Herbelot, D'Anville, Vincent, Mannert, Von Hammer. A hint might

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—namely, the identity of the Shushan of the ancients—may now be considered as definitively settled. Shushter, Susan, and other claimants have disappeared from the lists, and the site to which I now turn has established its incontestable identity. From the dawn of history Shushan has figured in the pageants and combats of kings. Here, in the earliest recorded times, a Turanian people, ruled by a Semitic nobility,[1] lifted to a pitch of great power the independent kingdom of Elam.[2] They spoke the language, generally designated Susian, which appears in the second place in the trilingual inscriptions of the Achæmenian monarchs, but which has not yet been deciphered. Shushinak was their capital; about 2000 B.C. Chedorlaomer (Khudar Lagamar) was one of their most famous sovereigns. Elam was engaged in perpetual warfare with the neighbouring empires of Babylonia and Assyria, and suffered as much, if not more, injury than she dealt. The great invasion of Sennacherib was arrested by the winter snows of 697 B.C.; but fifty years later, in 645 B.C., Assurbanipal, the son and successor of Esarhaddon, appeared in triumph outside the walls of Shushan, broke open the Royal Treasure House, whence he carried off thirty-two statues of its kings 'of silver and gold and bronze and alabaster,' penetrated to the Holy of Holies in the Elamite temple and plundered the image of the national god, upon which to look was death, levelled the Great Tower of Shushan, and burned the city to the ground. Such was the vengeance of Assyria and the fate of the first Shushan.[3]

Shushan

well have been taken by some of these learned disputants from the Spanish Jew, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who, having visited Susa in the course of his travels 700 years before, remarked: 'Among the ruins of the province of Khuzistan, the Elam of Scripture, are the remains of Shushan, the metropolis and palace of King Achashverosh, which still contains very large and handsome buildings of ancient date' (*Itinerary*, vol. i. p. 117.)

[1] This is supposed to be referred to in the representation of Elam as a son of Shem in Genesis x. 22.

[2] Elam, which is the title found in Scripture, is a Semitic version of the Accadian *numma*, or 'highlands.' It was afterwards called Susiana by the classical writers, from its capital Shushan, or Susa. Professor Sayce says that Susa or Susun signified the 'old city,' and was derived from *suse-ti*, which means 'former' in the Susian texts.

[3] The conquest of Assurbanipal is depicted on the sculptures of Nineveh discovered by Sir H. Layard and Mr. H. Rassam. For the verdict of scholars, *vide* A. H. Sayce, 'Cuneiform Inscriptions of Elam and Media,' in the *Trans. of the Soc. of Bibl. Arch.* vol. iii. 1874; and J. Oppert, *Trans. of Oriental Congress*, 1854, and *Records of the Past*, vol. vii. 1877.



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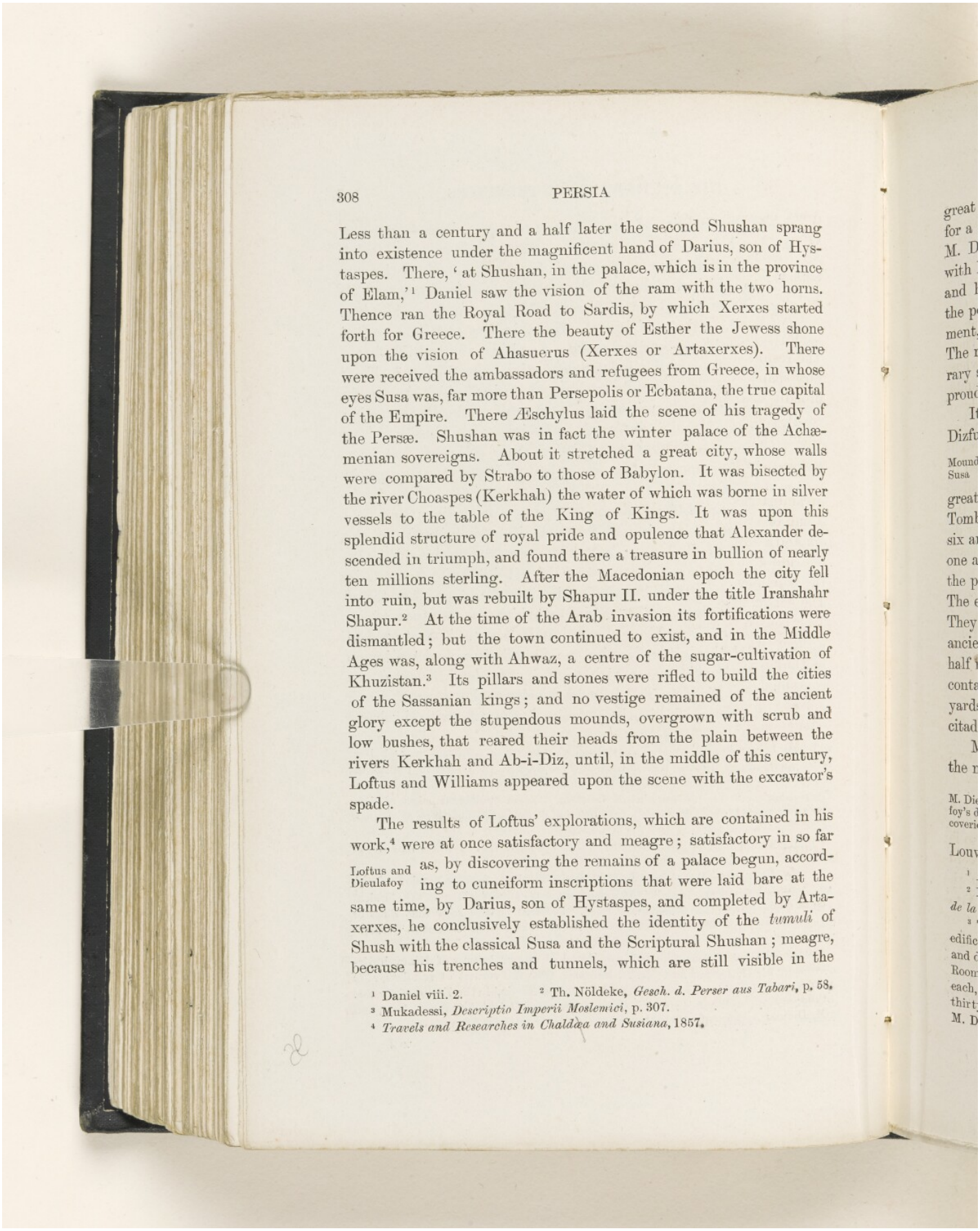



Less than a century and a half later the second Shushan sprang into existence under the magnificent hand of Darius, son of Hystaspes. There, 'at Shushan, in the palace, which is in the province of Elam,'[1] Daniel saw the vision of the ram with the two horns. Thence ran the Royal Road to Sardis, by which Xerxes started forth for Greece. There the beauty of Esther the Jewess shone upon the vision of Ahasuerus (Xerxes or Artaxerxes). There were received the ambassadors and refugees from Greece, in whose eyes Susa was, far more than Persepolis or Ecbatana, the true capital of the Empire. There Æschylus laid the scene of his tragedy of the Persæ. Shushan was in fact the winter palace of the Achæmenian sovereigns. About it stretched a great city, whose walls were compared by Strabo to those of Babylon. It was bisected by the river Choaspes (Kerkhah) the water of which was borne in silver vessels to the table of the King of Kings. It was upon this splendid structure of royal pride and opulence that Alexander descended in triumph, and found there a treasure in bullion of nearly ten millions sterling. After the Macedonian epoch the city fell into ruin, but was rebuilt by Shapur II. under the title Iranshahr Shapur.[2] At the time of the Arab invasion its fortifications were dismantled; but the town continued to exist, and in the Middle Ages was, along with Ahwaz, a centre of the sugar-cultivation of Khuzistan.[3] Its pillars and stones were rifled to build the cities of the Sassanian kings; and no vestige remained of the ancient glory except the stupendous mounds, overgrown with scrub and low bushes, that reared their heads from the plain between the rivers Kerkhah and Ab-i-Diz, until, in the middle of this century, Loftus and Williams appeared upon the scene with the excavator's spade.

The results of Loftus' explorations, which are contained in his work,[4] were at once satisfactory and meagre; satisfactory in so far as, by discovering the remains of a palace begun, according to cuneiform inscriptions that were laid bare at the same time, by Darius, son of Hystaspes, and completed by Artaxerxes, he conclusively established the identity of the *tumuli* of Shush with the classical Susa and the Scriptural Shushan; meagre, because his trenches and tunnels, which are still visible in the

Loftus and Dieulafoy

[1] Daniel viii. 2.
[2] Th. Nöldeke, *Gesch. d. Perser aus Tabari*, p. 58.
[3] Mukadessi, *Descriptio Imperii Moslemici*, p. 307.
[4] *Travels and Researches in Chaldæa and Susiana*, 1857.

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great mound, brought so little to light, and left the larger spoil for a later worker in the same field. This was the Frenchman, M. Dieulafoy, who, having previously visited Persia in 1881–82 with his versatile wife, who became the historian of their travels,[1] and having inspected the mounds of Susa, returned in 1884, with the permission of the Shah and the assistance of the French Government, to prosecute investigations upon a large and scientific scale. The results of these labours have been given to the world in literary shape by the explorer and his wife;[2] their visible outcome is proudly displayed in a *salon* of the Musée du Louvre at Paris.

Mounds of Susa

It is at a distance of fifteen miles in a south-west direction from Dizful that the prodigious mounds of Shush, or Susa, stand up against the sky. They are situated on the left bank of the little river Shaur (originally Shapur), which rises at no great distance to the north and flows in a deep, narrow bed below the Tomb of Daniel, and between the larger rivers Ab-i-Diz (Eulæus), six and a half miles distant on the east, and the Kerkhah (Choaspes) one and a half mile distant on the west. The latter river divided the populous quarter of the ancient city from the citadel and palace. The entire circumference of the mounds is from six to seven miles. They consist of three levels: the lowest conceals the remains of the ancient city; the second, which is a rectangular platform two and a half miles round and 72 feet high, was the fortified enceinte that contained the palace; the uppermost, 120 feet in height, 1,100 yards round the base, and 850 yards round the summit, was the citadel, and is still known as Kaleh-i-Shush.

M. Dieulafoy's discoveries

M. Dieulafoy discovered that the palace of Darius had been in the main destroyed by fire, and that upon its ruins another and more splendid edifice was raised, over a century later, by Artaxerxes Mnemon (405–359 B.C.). Of this edifice there is a fancifully restored model by M. Dieulafoy in the Louvre.[3] The principal relics of the original fabric that were

[1] *La Perse, la Chaldée et la Susiane*, 1887.

[2] Mme. Dieulafoy, *A Suse; Journal de fouilles*, 1888; M. Dieulafoy, *L'Acropole de la Suse*, 1890; Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. v. p. 757 *et seq.*

[3] The Hall of Darius and Artaxerxes at Susa (for it appears probable that the edifice was to a large extent a restoration of the older building) seems in shape and design to have been almost a facsimile on a larger scale of the Hall or Throne Room of Xerxes at Persepolis. There were three porticoes with twelve columns each, of the simple order of Achæmenian capital. The central hall contained thirty-six columns with the complex or triple bull-headed capital, of which M. Dieulafoy transported a magnificent specimen to the Louvre.

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recovered by him were the remains, since most carefully pieced together and liberally restored, of the two superb friezes of the Archers and the Lions that decorated the façade of the later palace. They are the finest existing specimens of that art of enamelling in polychrome upon brick which was invented by the Babylonians (though unknown to Nineveh), and was adopted from them by the Achæmenian monarchs, more especially for the decoration of the palace of Susa, itself at no great distance from Babylon and situated in a region where stone was not, as at Persepolis, easily procurable, but where there was abundance of clay for bricks. The Frieze of Archers represents a procession of warriors in relief, some five feet in height. Their beard and hair are close-curled, after the Assyrian fashion; on their back they carry a big quiver and a curving bow; they wear a yellow tunic, patterned and diapered. The twisted turbans on their heads and the golden-knobbed spears which they hold in their hands identify these warriors with the Ten Thousand Immortals, as described by Herodotus, who formed the Body-guard of the Great King.[1] Their complexions, which vary from black to white, typify the opposite quarters of the globe from which they were recruited. The Frieze of the Lions, which is framed between bricks presenting elegant symmetrical designs, represents the beasts as striding forward with opened jaw and glaring eye, with swelling muscle and outstretched tail. The prevailing colours are green, pink, blue, and yellow; and a gorgeous spectacle they must have presented as they glittered under the hot sun of Susiana from the palace wall.[2] M. Dieulafoy also discovered, and there are exposed to view in the Louvre, a number of Royal seals, coins, vases, cylinders, and glass and terra-cotta implements of the same epoch. Nevertheless, what was brought to light by him is probably but little compared with the remains of a still older past that doubtless lie entombed below. The edifices of the Achæmenian monarchs, being latest in date, would naturally be encountered near the summit of the mounds. Subsequent explorers may expect to find in their lower strata the relics of a far more

[1] Lib. vii. cap. 83.

[2] The Lions' Frieze is composed of bricks in relief, 1 ft. 2 in. long by 7 in. high, and 9 in. thick. The lions are 11 ft. 3 in. long, by 5 ft. 6 in. high. The Archers' Frieze is differently made, of small squares, 1 ft. 1 in. each way, and 3 in. thick, of artificial concrete, which combines the whiteness of plaster with the resistance of limestone.

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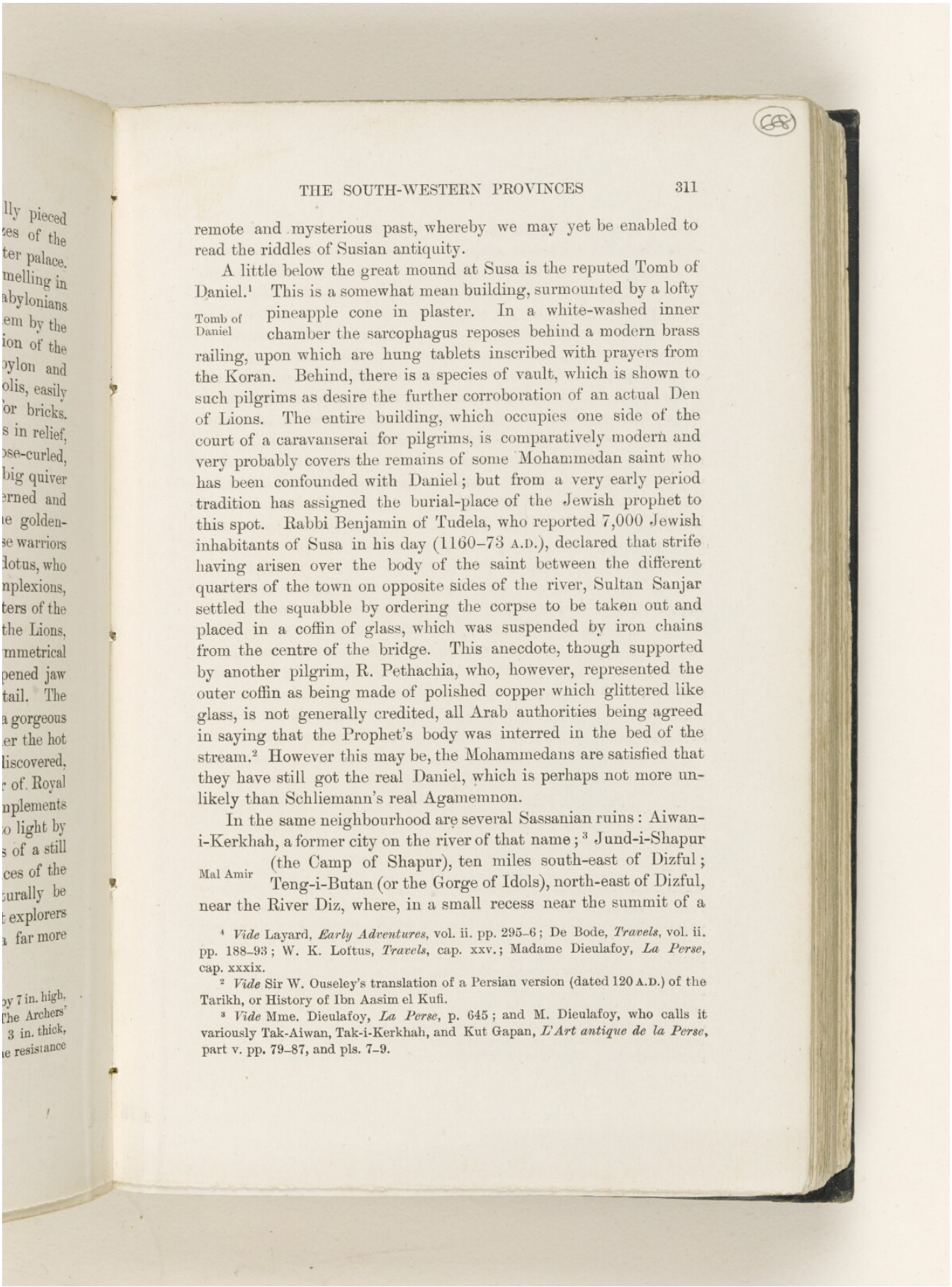



remote and mysterious past, whereby we may yet be enabled to read the riddles of Susian antiquity.

A little below the great mound at Susa is the reputed Tomb of Daniel.[1] This is a somewhat mean building, surmounted by a lofty pineapple cone in plaster. In a white-washed inner chamber the sarcophagus reposes behind a modern brass railing, upon which are hung tablets inscribed with prayers from the Koran. Behind, there is a species of vault, which is shown to such pilgrims as desire the further corroboration of an actual Den of Lions. The entire building, which occupies one side of the court of a caravanserai for pilgrims, is comparatively modern and very probably covers the remains of some Mohammedan saint who has been confounded with Daniel; but from a very early period tradition has assigned the burial-place of the Jewish prophet to this spot. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, who reported 7,000 Jewish inhabitants of Susa in his day (1160–73 A.D.), declared that strife having arisen over the body of the saint between the different quarters of the town on opposite sides of the river, Sultan Sanjar settled the squabble by ordering the corpse to be taken out and placed in a coffin of glass, which was suspended by iron chains from the centre of the bridge. This anecdote, though supported by another pilgrim, R. Pethachia, who, however, represented the outer coffin as being made of polished copper which glittered like glass, is not generally credited, all Arab authorities being agreed in saying that the Prophet's body was interred in the bed of the stream.[2] However this may be, the Mohammedans are satisfied that they have still got the real Daniel, which is perhaps not more unlikely than Schliemann's real Agamemnon.

Tomb of Daniel

In the same neighbourhood are several Sassanian ruins: Aiwan-i-Kerkhah, a former city on the river of that name;[3] Jund-i-Shapur (the Camp of Shapur), ten miles south-east of Dizful; Teng-i-Butan (or the Gorge of Idols), north-east of Dizful, near the River Diz, where, in a small recess near the summit of a

Mal Amir

[4] *Vide* Layard, *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. pp. 295–6; De Bode, *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 188–93; W. K. Loftus, *Travels*, cap. xxv.; Madame Dieulafoy, *La Perse*, cap. xxxix.

[2] *Vide* Sir W. Ouseley's translation of a Persian version (dated 120 A.D.) of the Tarikh, or History of Ibn Aasim el Kufi.

[3] *Vide* Mme. Dieulafoy, *La Perse*, p. 645; and M. Dieulafoy, who calls it variously Tak-Aiwan, Tak-i-Kerkhah, and Kut Gapan, *L'Art antique de la Perse*, part v. pp. 79–87, and pls. 7–9.

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mountain, are twelve figures, sculped in high relief, with an inscription, upon the rock—for accounts or theories as to which I may refer my readers to the narratives of Rawlinson, Layard, and Schindler. Let me now transport them, some distance to the east, to Bakhtiari Land proper, where in the regions described a little earlier are to be found some noteworthy relics of the four periods of Susian, Achæmenian, Sassanian, and Mohammedan rule. The most conspicuous of these occur at Mal Amir,[1] a mountain plain, twelve miles long by five and a half broad, containing a small lake, in the basin of the Upper Karun, which has been described by Layard as 'the most remarkable place in the whole of the Bakhtiari mountains.'[2] The ruins here consist of five groups:—(1) The remains of an ancient city, occupying a large *tepe*, or mound, in the east part of the plain, identified with the Sassanian Idej or Izej (the Khidi of the local inscriptions and Khiteik of the Susian texts), thought by some to have been also the site of Anzan, the capital of the old Persian monarchy, and of Cyrus, before it was moved to Pasargadæ and Persepolis; (2) five tablets containing 341 small figures sculped in the rock in the ravine of Kul Fara, or Faraun, at the north end of the plain, together with a long cuneiform inscription,[3] of which Layard said that they are 'of higher antiquity than any other sculptures of the kind in Persia'; (3) a bas-relief, near the *imamzadeh* of Shah Suwar, on the east side of the plain; (4) a large number of sculptures in an extensive cavern called Shikafti Salman in a gorge on the south side of the plain, the figures representing

[1] The name signifies House, or country of the Amir; and is an obsolete Persian word (cf. *tushmal*) still used by the Lurs and Kurds.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 74–80, and *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 404–9, vol. ii. pp. 12–13. Compare De Bode, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiii. pp. 100–2, and *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 31–3 (with an illustration); A. H. Schindler, *Zeit. der Gesell. für Erd. zu Berlin*, vol. xiv.; Captain H. L. Wells, *Proc. of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. 1883; H. B. Lynch, *ibid.* vol. xii. 1890.

[3] This inscription was copied by Layard, and published by him in *Cuneiform Inscriptions from Assyrian Monuments*, pls. 36–7. It has been deciphered by Professor Sayce, *Actes du 6me Congrès des Orient. à Leyde*, 1885, pp. 648, 681. He calls the third cuneiform character (which Norris interpreted as Scythian and Oppert holds to be Median) Amardian or Elamite. Cf. *Trans. of the Soc. of Bibl. Arch.*, vol. iii. p. 465. Illustrations of two of the tablets, from photographs by M. Houssay, have been published for the first time by Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. v. pp. 775–6. Both represent a sacrificial scene, in which animals are or have been slaughtered in the presence of a being of superhuman size, who is doubtless a god. In the larger and more elaborate panel, the treatment and dress recall some of the Assyrian sculptures. The second is coarse and clumsy; but neither resembles, either in style or treatment, the Achæmenian sculptures.

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priests and worshippers in an attitude of supplication, and being explained by an inscription of thirty-six lines in a complicated cuneiform character.[1] The above sculptures are either Susian or Achæmenian in origin, and date from the eighth or ninth centuries B.C. and later. (5) In a neighbouring gorge, called Hong, are some Sassanian sculptures, the central figure of which is a monarch with the familiar bushy mop of hair.

About twenty miles to the north-west of Mal Amir, and on the right bank of the Karun, is the small plain of Susan. The Susan recurrence of this name, the presence here of a second, but even more insignificant, Tomb of Daniel, and the stories that were told him by the Lurs of wonderful ruins in the neighbourhood, led Rawlinson, who did not visit the locality himself, to think that here, rather than at Susa, might be the Shushan of the ancients. Layard, who visited the spot under circumstances of great difficulty and hardship,[2] reduced the patriotic hyperbole of the Lurs to its proper dimensions. Some insignificant remains of roughly-hewn stone, the probable foundations of a Sassanian building, were called by them Musjid-i-Suleiman, or the Temple of Solomon, a monarch much venerated in Lur tradition; some further heaps of old masonry were similarly designated Mal-i-Wiran, or Ruined Settlement. As the Karun enters this valley from the east, it is flanked on either side by the paved causeway, attributed to the Atabegs, which I have mentioned; and a little below are the remains of the famous bridge of Harah-zad, which here spanned the torrent, and was regarded as one of the wonders of the ancient world.[3] In mid-stream are two huge masses of brickwork, probably Sassanian, that supported the arches; on the mountain sides are visible the earlier Kaianian abutments, from which they sprang. The occurrence of these numerous relics of

[1] Also printed by Layard, *ibid.*, pls. 81–2, and deciphered by Sayce, *Actes, &c.*, pp. 653, 699. De Bode made drawings of two sculptures in an adjoining cavern, which were published by Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 228. The natives call the inscriptions Khat-i-Feringhi, or European writing, and are much disappointed when a foreigner cannot read them. Their belief, which would seem to be an unconscious corroboration of the Asiatic-Aryan theory, is that the ancient inhabitants of Persia, upon migrating to the west, buried their treasure with instructions as to the site, sculped in a language which their modern European descendants must naturally know.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 61–2; *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 415–28.

[3] So called from the mother of Ardeshir, the first Sassanian king. There is a long account of it in the *Athar el beldan, &c.*, of Zak. Mohammed Kazvini.

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a past which has vanished from memory, and almost from knowledge, is not the least among the recompenses that await the traveller in this romantic portion of the Shah's dominions; and I at once urge and envy the scholar who, with time and means at his disposal, shall in the future visit and exhaustively examine the whole of this interesting region. I believe that he may return with a spoil that will shed a valuable light upon history, besides conferring upon himself well-merited distinction.

Other remains

Further to the south, amid the mountain ranges inhabited by various tribes of the Lur family, other remains have been discovered and described. Of these the most important are some sculptures, of which drawings were made by De Bode,[1] in a gorge called the Teng-i-Saulek, at a distance of seven *farsakhs* from Behbehan, in the territory of the Bahmei tribe of Bakhtiaris. At a Mamasenni village named Nurabad, between Behbehan and Kazerun, and on the banks of a small river, is a great Sassanian bas-relief, representing a seated monarch and his courtiers, not unlike one of the tablets at Shapur. It is called Naksh-i-Bahram, and the plain Sahra-i-Bahram.[2]

The Karun river

The most remarkable natural feature of the region which I have been describing is, undoubtedly, the splendid and self-willed torrent of the Upper Karun. This river, of the lower reaches of which I shall have so much to say in the ensuing chapter, is called, in these volumes, by the name which it commonly bears, alike in Arabistan and in popular terminology. Its true orthography, however, would appear to be Kuran, from the Kuh-i-rang, or Variegated Mountain, in which it rises.[3] Though parts of the upper course of this great river have been followed or traced by the travellers to whom I have so frequently referred, and though its reputed source was visited by Stack in 1881, it was not till two years ago (1890) that its impetuous and zigzag current was tracked to its real birthplace, and pursued through the gorges and valleys of its parent mountains, by Major Sawyer, of the Indian Intelligence Department. In the very heart of Bakhtiari Land stands the lofty mountain cluster known as the Kuh-i-rang, or

[1] Engraved and published by Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pls. 224–7.

[2] *Vide* Flandin and Coste, vol. iv. pl. 229; De Bode, vol. ii. p. 225; Stolze, *Persepolis*, vol. ii. pl. 146.

[3] The Portuguese writers, De Barros and Cotinho, called it Rio Carom. Other appellations in European writers of the last two centuries have been Correng, Kureng, Kuren, Keren, and Couran.

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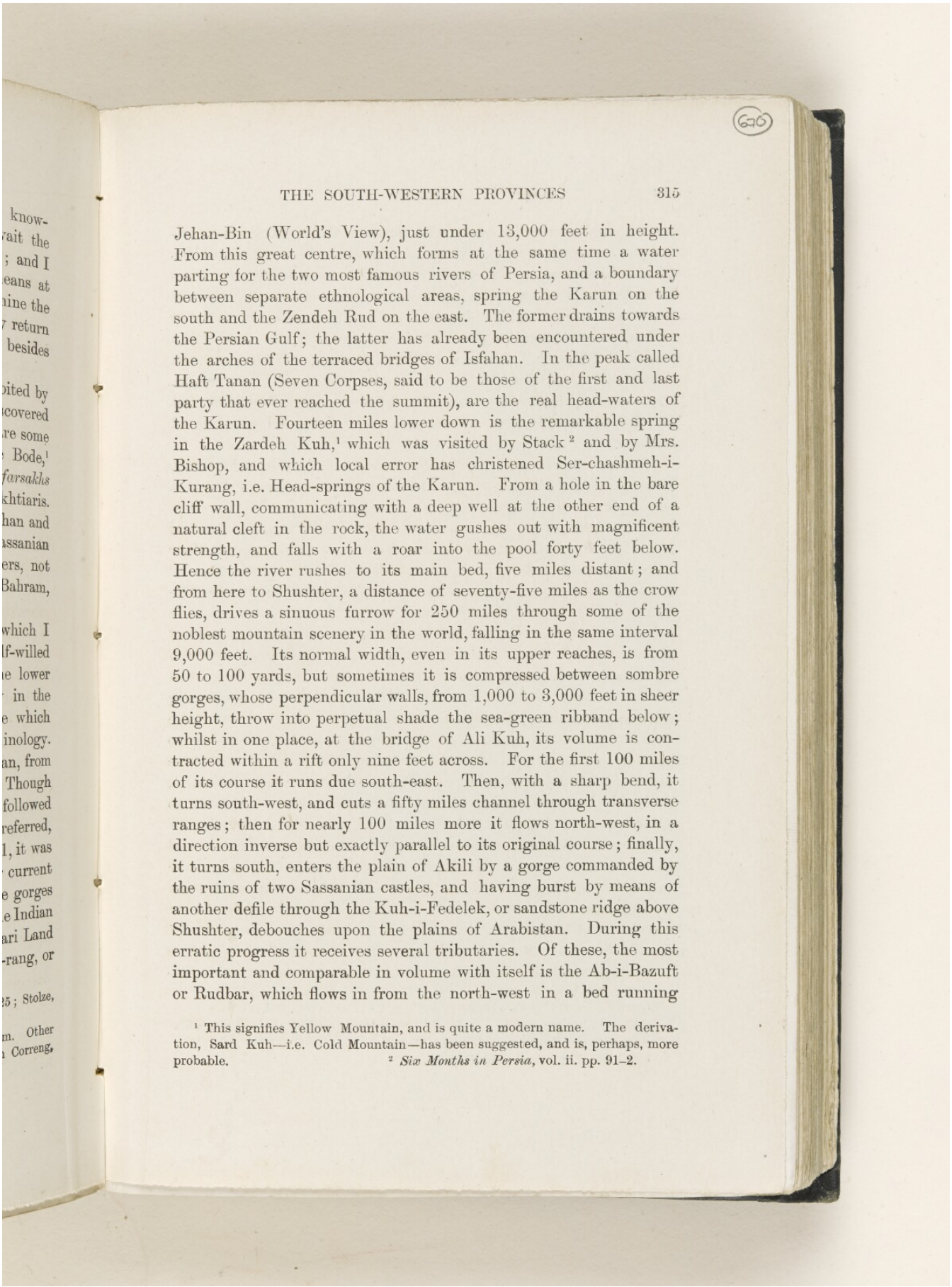



Jehan-Bin (World's View), just under 13,000 feet in height. From this great centre, which forms at the same time a water parting for the two most famous rivers of Persia, and a boundary between separate ethnological areas, spring the Karun on the south and the Zendeh Rud on the east. The former drains towards the Persian Gulf; the latter has already been encountered under the arches of the terraced bridges of Isfahan. In the peak called Haft Tanan (Seven Corpses, said to be those of the first and last party that ever reached the summit), are the real head-waters of the Karun. Fourteen miles lower down is the remarkable spring in the Zardeh Kuh,[1] which was visited by Stack[2] and by Mrs. Bishop, and which local error has christened Ser-chashmeh-i-Kurang, i.e. Head-springs of the Karun. From a hole in the bare cliff wall, communicating with a deep well at the other end of a natural cleft in the rock, the water gushes out with magnificent strength, and falls with a roar into the pool forty feet below. Hence the river rushes to its main bed, five miles distant; and from here to Shushter, a distance of seventy-five miles as the crow flies, drives a sinuous furrow for 250 miles through some of the noblest mountain scenery in the world, falling in the same interval 9,000 feet. Its normal width, even in its upper reaches, is from 50 to 100 yards, but sometimes it is compressed between sombre gorges, whose perpendicular walls, from 1,000 to 3,000 feet in sheer height, throw into perpetual shade the sea-green ribband below; whilst in one place, at the bridge of Ali Kuh, its volume is contracted within a rift only nine feet across. For the first 100 miles of its course it runs due south-east. Then, with a sharp bend, it turns south-west, and cuts a fifty miles channel through transverse ranges; then for nearly 100 miles more it flows north-west, in a direction inverse but exactly parallel to its original course; finally, it turns south, enters the plain of Akili by a gorge commanded by the ruins of two Sassanian castles, and having burst by means of another defile through the Kuh-i-Fedelek, or sandstone ridge above Shushter, debouches upon the plains of Arabistan. During this erratic progress it receives several tributaries. Of these, the most important and comparable in volume with itself is the Ab-i-Bazuft or Rudbar, which flows in from the north-west in a bed running

[1] This signifies Yellow Mountain, and is quite a modern name. The derivation, Sard Kuh—i.e. Cold Mountain—has been suggested, and is, perhaps, more probable.

[2] *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. pp. 91–2.

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almost parallel with its own upper waters. Other noticeable confluents are a river from the east receiving the overflow of the Chaghkhor Lake, and a stream from the north, called the Ab-i-Beheshtabad (Abode of Paradise), or Darkash Warkash (from the *teng* through which it cuts its way), that drains Chehar Mahal. Near Dopulun (Two Bridges), flows in the Ab-i-Sabzu (also called Dahinur, Dinaran, and Ab-i-Gurab). From the south comes the Ab-i-Bors, hailing from the lofty Kuh-i-Dina range. From this point to Shushter its tributaries are frequent, but relatively insignificant; they include several salt or naphtha-stained streams.

I have said that the Zendeh Rud also rises in the Kuh-i-rang, although on its opposite side. Between the two rivers extends a mountain spur, through which, into the Shurab (Salt Water) valley, it was the design of the earlier Sefavi kings to divert the waters of the Karun, so as to recruit their beloved Zendeh Rud, too often a slender streamlet by the time it reached Isfahan. The place is known as Kar Kunan, or The Workers. This ambitious but sensible project, of which mention is made by Herbert,[1] Olearius,[2] Tavernier,[3] Sanson,[4] and Chardin,[5] appears to have been initiated in the sixteenth century by Shah Tahmasp, who began to excavate a tunnel, but is said to have been repelled by the noxious vapours. Abbas the Great, abandoning the tunnel scheme, for which the appliances of that age were hardly adequate, commenced a cutting, upon which, according to Herbert, he employed 40,000, and sometimes 100,000 men. He was vanquished by the snows and by the cold in winter. Abbas II. tried the simultaneous experiment of damming the river, so as to raise its level, and of mining the rock, under the direction of M. Genest, a French engineer. Both schemes were failures; and there the matter has rested till the present time. Stack visited the unfinished cutting in 1881, and reported it to be a huge cleft, sawn right across the crest of the hill, 300 yards in length, 15 in breadth, and 50 feet deep (measurements which, I believe, are not correct).[6] The quarried rocks are still symmetrically piled in heaps, and the ruins of the stone huts, built for the workmen, are

The Kar Kunan

[1] *Some Yeares' Travels*, p. 166.
[2] *Voyage*, col. 754.
[3] *Travels*, lib. iv. cap. vi.
[4] *Etat présent de la Perse*, p. 78.
[5] *Voyages* (ed. Langlès), vol. vii. pp. 279–84.
[6] *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 84.

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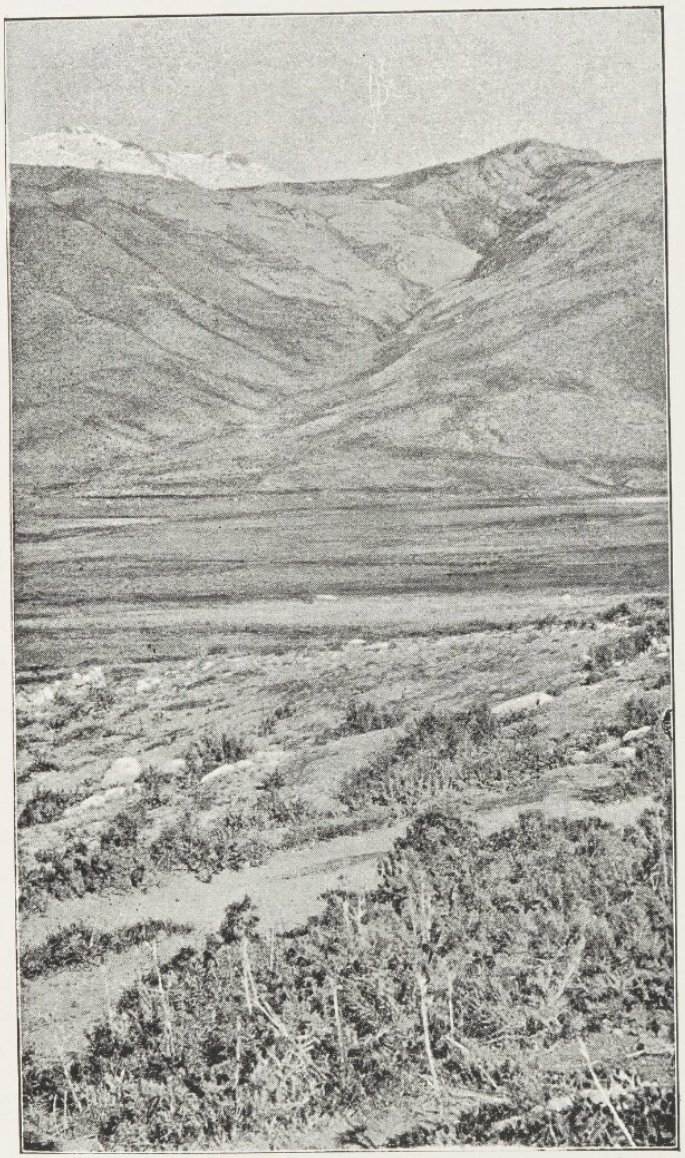
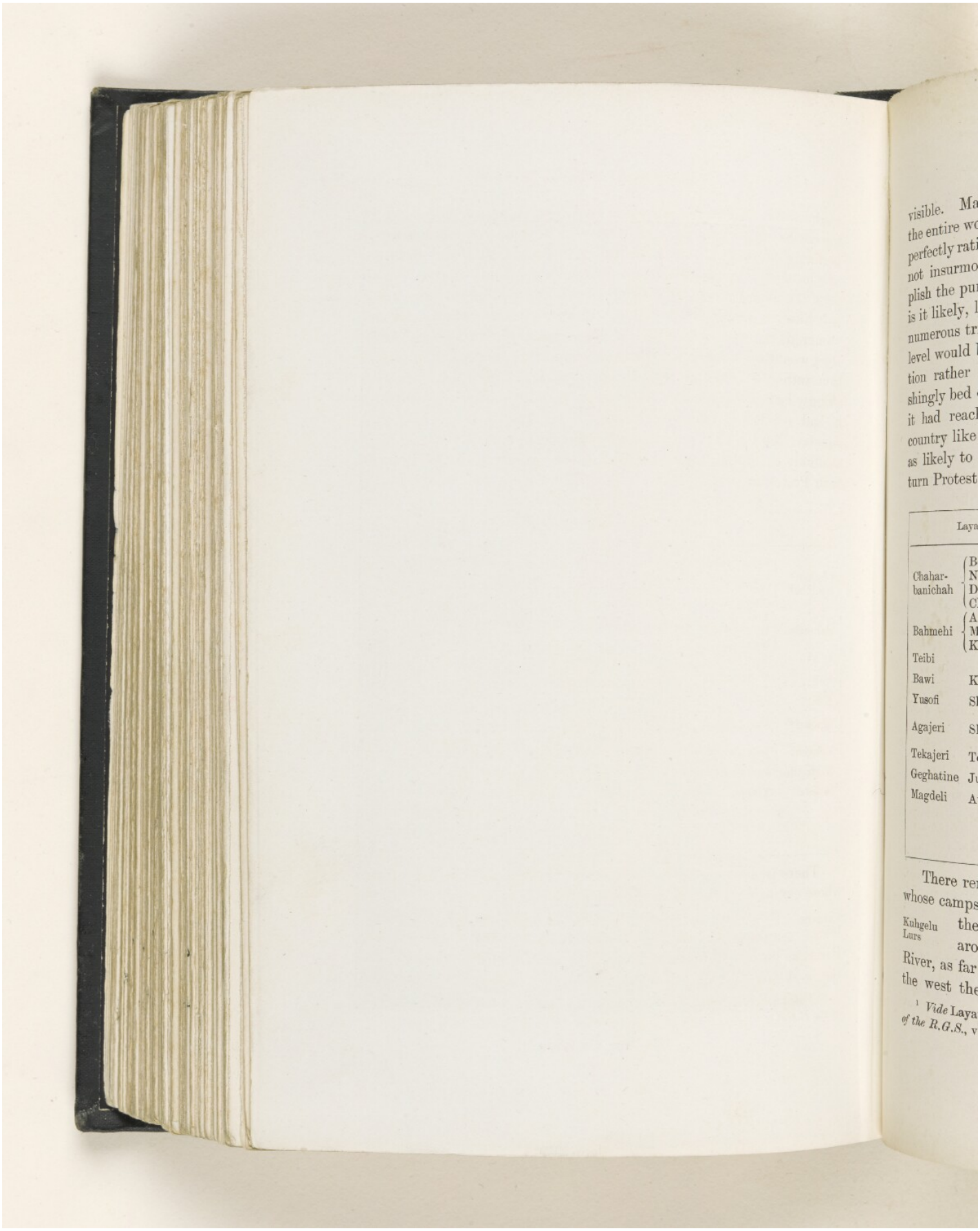


THE KAR KUNAN



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| Laya | |
|---|---|
| Chahar-banichah | B<br>N<br>D<br>C |
| Bahmehi | A<br>M<br>K |
| Teibi | |
| Bawi | K |
| Yusofi | Sl |
| Agajeri | Sl |
| Tekajeri | T |
| Geghatine | Ju |
| Magdeli | A |

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Kuhgelu the
Lurs aro
River, as far
the west the

[1] *Vide* Laya
*of the R.G.S.*, v

visible. Major Sawyer estimated that less than one-twentieth of the entire work was completed. Nevertheless, the experiment was a perfectly rational one, the levels being favourable, and the obstacles not insurmountable. Modern engineering science would accomplish the purpose without difficulty by dams and tunnelling. Nor is it likely, looking to the volume of water in the Karun, and the numerous tributaries by which it is subsequently fed, that the river level would be lowered one inch thereby at Shushter. The question rather is, whether the diverted water, turned into the flat shingly bed of the Zendeh Rud, would not be scattered long before it had reached Isfahan. All such speculations, however, in a country like Persia, are in reality superfluous. The Shah is about as likely to undertake a genuinely great public work as he is to turn Protestant.

KUHGELU TRIBES (LURS).

| Layard, 1844 | | Sheil, circ. 1850 | Baring, 1882 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chahar-banichah | Boher Ahmed | Boveir | Pusht-i-Kuh | Bah-i-Rahmet |
| | Nuwi | Nooee | | Nowi |
| | Dushmanziyori | Dooshmen Zeearee | | Dushmen Ziari |
| | Cherumi | Chooroom | | Charum |
| Bahmehi | Ahmedi | Behmaee | | Bahmei |
| | Mohammedi | Malahmedee | | |
| | Kalakal | | | |
| Teibi | | Tyebbee | | Teibi |
| Bawi | Kuhmarrah | Bewee | | Dehdast |
| Yusofi | Shir Ali | Kohmerree | | |
| Agajeri | Shahruwi | Sheer Ali | Zer-i-Kuh | Yusufi |
| Tekajeri | Telah Kuri | Shehrooee | | Agha Jeri |
| Geghatine | Jumah Bozurgi | Yoosoofee | | |
| Magdeli | Afshar | Aghajeree | | |
| | | Teelehkoohee | | Humei |
| | | Jaghatai | | Zeidan |
| | | Jameh Boozoorgee | | Tang-i-Tekao |
| | | Thawi | | Sirawi |
| | | Keshteel | | Bunder Dilam |
| | | Beelehloo | | |

There remain to be noticed other offshoots of the Lur stock, whose camps are pitched in the same quarter of Persia. Of these

Kuhgelu Lurs

the Kuhgelu [1] occupy the country south of the Bakhtiaris, around the Kuh-i-Dina and the sources of the Jerahi River, as far as a line drawn from Ram Hormuz to Behbehan. On the west they march with the Arabs of Khuzistan, on the east

[1] *Vide* Layard, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 21–5; and De Bode, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiii. p. 75, and *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 275–89.

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with the Mamasenni Lurs. I append a list of their tribal divisions as they have been recorded at different times in the past half-century by Sir H. Layard, Sir J. Sheil, and Mr. W. Baring (of the Teheran Legation). They consider themselves distinct from the Bakhtiaris, having, with few exceptions, been under separate chiefs and another government (namely, Behbehan, which is an administrative sub-division of Fars). Nevertheless they differ from the Bakhtiaris but little in dialect, and not at all in manners, customs, or religion. They had always enjoyed the worst of reputations for lawlessness and cruelty until they were severely taken in hand by Ferhad Mirza, who was Governor of Fars up till 1882, and who by his merciless visitation soon purged them of the dross of turbulence. The tribe has never raised its head since. De Bode, in whose and Layard's time they were ruled by a *seyid* of Arab origin, Mirza Koma or Kumo of Behbehan, says that their common food was bread made from pounded acorns.[1]

Mamasenni Lurs

Adjoining the Kuhgelus on the East are the tents of the Mamasenni (qy. Mohammed Huseini) Lurs,[2] occupying the country still known as Shulistan,[3] and extending as far east and south-east as Fars and the plain of Kazerun. This tribe prides itself on its origin, claiming to have come from Seistan, and to be directly descended from Rustam, whose name is still borne by one of the Mamasenni clans. Their subdivisions have been almost identically reported by different travellers in this century, and are as follows:—Rustam, Bekshi (or Bakesh), Javi, Dushman Ziari (the last-named, as has been seen, also included among the Kuhgelu Lurs, an indication of the slightness of

[1] The Arabic word for this acorn, which grows on a dwarf-oak and is of abnormal length, is *belut*, whence the title of the tree, *quercus ballota*, and whence also *bellota*, the Spanish word for acorn. Both names are possibly derived from the Greek *βάλανος*, and so originally from the Aryan root *gar*, *gal* (cf. the Latin *glans*). The flour derived from the crushed acorns they either eat raw in the form of paste, or baked into cakes. Compare the *βαλανηφάγοι* of Arcadia in Herod. i. 66.

[2] The popular etymologists, who like nothing so much as a fanciful resemblance, have connected them with the Mamakeni of Quintus Curtius (lib. vii. cap. vi.), who valiantly resisted Alexander in Bactria, near Maracanda (Samarkand). Others identify them with the Mammisei of Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* v. 19), who inhabited the tetrarchy of Mammisca in Cœle-Syria.

[3] This is the Shuolstan of Marco Polo, i.e. the country of the Shuls, who, in the twelfth century, were expelled by the Lurs from Luristan, and settled in the country between Khuzistan and Shiraz. Ibn Batutah, on his first day's march from Shiraz to Kazerun, encamped in the country of the Shuls, whom he described as 'a Persian desert tribe which includes some pious persons.'

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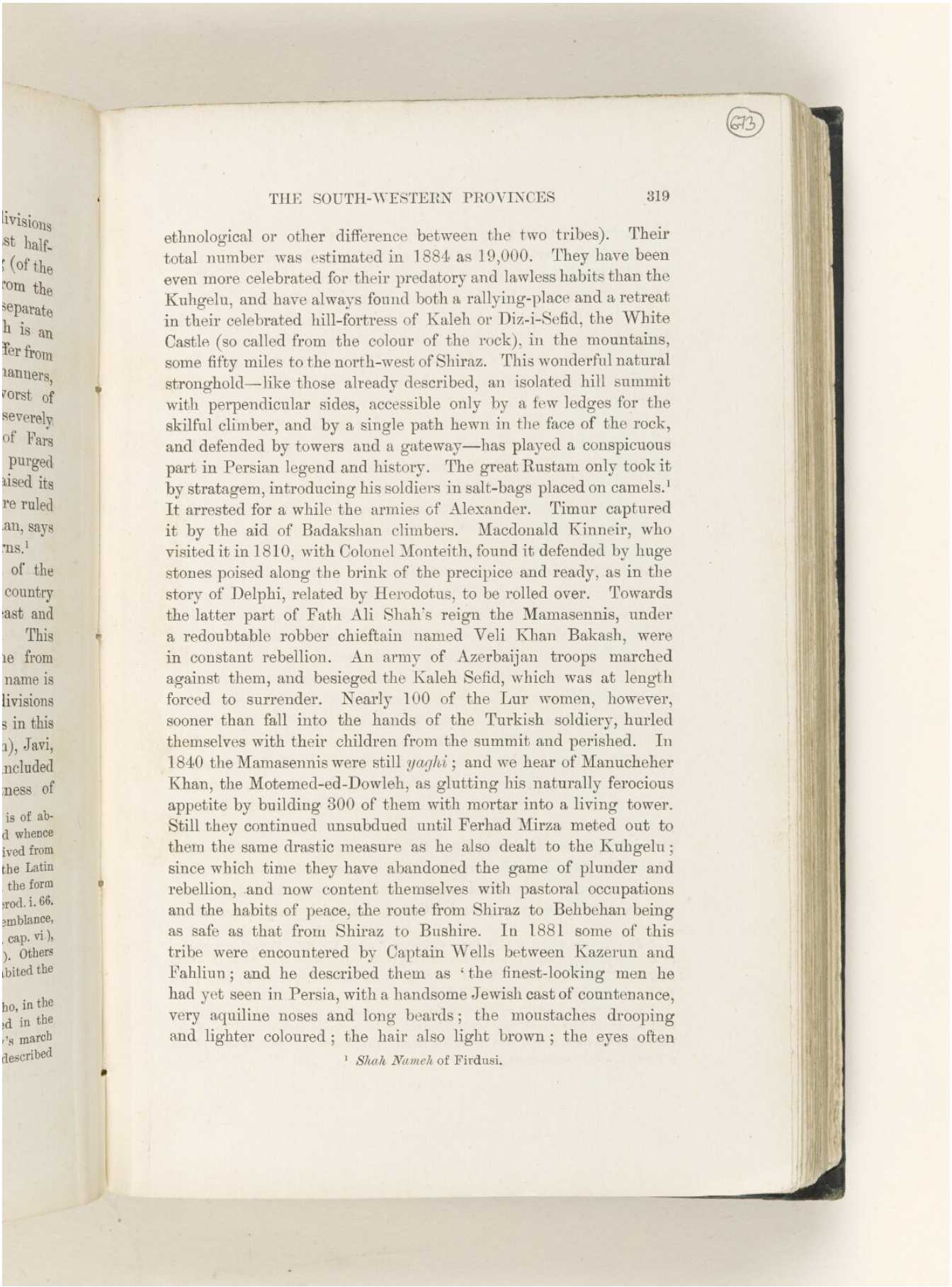



ethnological or other difference between the two tribes). Their total number was estimated in 1884 as 19,000. They have been even more celebrated for their predatory and lawless habits than the Kuhgelu, and have always found both a rallying-place and a retreat in their celebrated hill-fortress of Kaleh or Diz-i-Sefid, the White Castle (so called from the colour of the rock), in the mountains, some fifty miles to the north-west of Shiraz. This wonderful natural stronghold—like those already described, an isolated hill summit with perpendicular sides, accessible only by a few ledges for the skilful climber, and by a single path hewn in the face of the rock, and defended by towers and a gateway—has played a conspicuous part in Persian legend and history. The great Rustam only took it by stratagem, introducing his soldiers in salt-bags placed on camels.[1] It arrested for a while the armies of Alexander. Timur captured it by the aid of Badakshan climbers. Macdonald Kinneir, who visited it in 1810, with Colonel Monteith, found it defended by huge stones poised along the brink of the precipice and ready, as in the story of Delphi, related by Herodotus, to be rolled over. Towards the latter part of Fath Ali Shah's reign the Mamasennis, under a redoubtable robber chieftain named Veli Khan Bakash, were in constant rebellion. An army of Azerbaijan troops marched against them, and besieged the Kaleh Sefid, which was at length forced to surrender. Nearly 100 of the Lur women, however, sooner than fall into the hands of the Turkish soldiery, hurled themselves with their children from the summit and perished. In 1840 the Mamasennis were still *yaghi*; and we hear of Manucheher Khan, the Motemed-ed-Dowleh, as glutting his naturally ferocious appetite by building 300 of them with mortar into a living tower. Still they continued unsubdued until Ferhad Mirza meted out to them the same drastic measure as he also dealt to the Kuhgelu; since which time they have abandoned the game of plunder and rebellion, and now content themselves with pastoral occupations and the habits of peace, the route from Shiraz to Behbehan being as safe as that from Shiraz to Bushire. In 1881 some of this tribe were encountered by Captain Wells between Kazerun and Fahliun; and he described them as 'the finest-looking men he had yet seen in Persia, with a handsome Jewish cast of countenance, very aquiline noses and long beards; the moustaches drooping and lighter coloured; the hair also light brown; the eyes often

[1] *Shah Nameh* of Firdusi.

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black, but sometimes grey. They wear the tall brown felt hat of the ancient Persians, which is much more imposing than the round-headed cap of the Bakhtiari and Kuhgelu Lurs.'[1] These various tribes were once on terms of perpetual enmity and conflict; but they now collide more rarely, their leading families being united by marriage ties, and the veto of the State having become less susceptible of defiance. Of the Kashkai Lurs I have previously spoken in my chapter on the route from Isfahan to Shiraz.

From the survey of Luristan and the Lurs inhabiting the highlands, I now pass to the coast-plains and to an Arab population. The administrative title of Arabistan, literally the Land of the Wanderers, is applied to a larger area than that embraced by the plains alone, many of the Bakhtiaris being under the jurisdiction of its Governor, whose official residence is at Shushter. Nevertheless the title more correctly describes the alluvial levels between the mountains and the sea, including the respective plains of Dizful, Shushter, Hawizeh, and Ram Hormuz. Its boundaries may be defined as a line from the Kerkhah River to Mohammerah on the west, the Bakhtiari hills on the north, the Shat-el-Arab and Persian Gulf on the south, and the Hindian River on the east. This province is identical with the ancient Elam, the classical Susiana, and the more modern Khuzistan. The latter designation appears now to have fallen into disuse.[2] The present administrative partition of the province is into eight districts, subordinate to the Governor-General. These are Dizful, Shushter, Hawizeh, Ahwaz, Mohammerah, Fellahieh, Deh Mullah, and Ram Hormuz, which are respectively administered by a Persian Deputy-governor or by a sheikh of one of the ruling Arab families, appointed by the Government. In olden days they were all united under the Vali of Arabistan, the Arab descendant of an illustrious family of *seyids*, who ruled at Hawizeh almost as an independent prince, and shared the proud title of Vali with only three other

Arabistan

[1] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. pp. 156–63. For other accounts of the Mamasennis and the Kaleh Sefid, *vide* Colonel Monteith, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 113; (Sir) H. Layard, *ibid.*, vol. xvi. pp. 25–6; Baron De Bode, *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 229, 262–75.

[2] Khuzistan is thought to be derived from the word Uwaja, signifying aborigines, that occurs in the cuneiform inscriptions, and is, perhaps, also the origin of the Uxii of Strabo and Pliny. On the other hand, Mordtmann derives Khuzistan from a Persian word meaning sugar-cane.

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Persian subjects, the rulers of Gurjistan (Georgia), Ardelan, and Luristan. The villages or camps are under their respective sheikhs, who are responsible for the revenue, paid in a lump sum to the district governor, who again passes it on to the provincial exchequer.

The Arabs

The population of this region is either pure Arab, or, more frequently, mixed Arab and Persian. The introduction of the former element commenced with the Arab conquests in 641 A.D., and has been recruited ever since by spontaneous immigration from the other side of the Tigris and the Persian Gulf, as well as by direct importation, Shah Ismail having, it is said, brought a large number of Arab colonists from the district of Nejd. Few of these Arab tribes have kept their blood undefiled. The majority have intermingled with the Persians, and the result is a strange hybrid, such as I shall afterwards describe, at Shushter and elsewhere, where the Persian dress and even the Persian religion have been in the main adopted, where sedentary has replaced nomad existence, and where the natural dignity of the Bedouin, or Wanderer, has succumbed to Persian wiles. Of the Arab peoples the most important are the Ka'b (vulg. Cha'b) Arabs, of whom there were originally seventy-two tribes. The bulk of these have died out or disappeared; but the race is still the most numerous in Arabistan. Layard in 1841 gave a tabulated list of their tribal divisions and subdivisions, many of which are not now known in the country. From a list compiled by Mr. Robertson, the late British Consul at Busrah, I take the following names as those of the Arab tribes of the province, not Ka'bs alone, who are said still to number 500 or more adult males. They are the Al-bu-Ghubaish, Asakirah, Khanafirah, Bawieh, Bait-el-Haji, Beni Rushaid, Beni Saleh, Beni Turuf, Hamudi, Humaid, Kindazli, Jurf, Kathir, Muhaisen, Naisieh, Nasara, Sharaifat, Shurafa, Suwari, Sudan, Suleiman. The number of smaller tribes is very large. On the eastern borders of the province are some other Arab tribes not included in the above list, notably the Muntefik of Hawizeh, and those dreaded robbers the Beni Lam. The bulk of these, however, particularly the Beni Lam, are in Turkish territory; and of the latter, therefore, I shall not again speak. The Arab and semi-Arab tribes of the province have been reckoned at various totals between 170,000 and 200,000, the larger sum being thus arrived at:—



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| | |
|---|---|
| Ka'b Arabs . . . . . | 62,000 |
| Mixed Arabs and Persians:— | |
| Ram Hormuz . . . . . | 27,000 |
| Shushter, Dizful, and Hawizeh . . | 110,000 |
| | 199,000 |

Ka'b Arabs

The history of the Ka'b Arabs, which is typical of that of most of their neighbours, has been as follows.[1] They are said originally to have migrated from the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf to the marshes near the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates, where they became Turkish subjects, and acted as buffalo herdsmen; until, being propelled by drought, or expelled by another Arab tribe, they moved southwards and established a new settlement on a canal leading from the Karun, which they called Kaban or Gobban. Pushing eastwards towards the Jerahi River they presently came into collision with the tribe of Afshars, whose head-quarters were at Dorak on that river. They themselves fortified a camp at Fellahieh, twelve miles lower down, and, taking advantage of the general anarchy that followed upon the death of Nadir Shah, violently ousted the Afshars and got the whole country into their hands. About this time they were ruled by a sheikh, who owed to a powerful personality a far more than local renown. This was Sheikh Salman, or Suleiman, who for thirty years directed and aggrandised the fortunes of the tribe. In 1758, fired with a larger ambition, he commenced to build a fleet, and by 1765, when Niebuhr was in the country, had acquired ten large and seventy smaller vessels. So extensive were his depredations that Kerim Khan despatched a punitive expedition against him in that year. Malcolm says that he bought off the invader by a large indemnity, and by the promise of a regular tribute. But it is more currently believed that by cutting the dykes, which everywhere regulated the ditches, canals, and streams of a country rich in water-supply, and so converting the plains into a swamp, he reduced his adversaries to impotence.[2] His piratical

[1] *Vide* C. Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie*, vol. ii. p. 160; (Sir) H. Layard, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. pp. 36–45, and *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. *passim*; (Sir) H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 185; W. F. Ainsworth, *Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, vol. ii. pp. 207–18; Baron C. A. De Bode, *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 110–20.

[2] Colonel Monteith found the swamps still out when he passed through Dorak in 1810, and the desiccated channel of the Karun-el-Amieh, or Blind Karun, is an existing witness to the destruction of the old Ka'b dam across the Karun.

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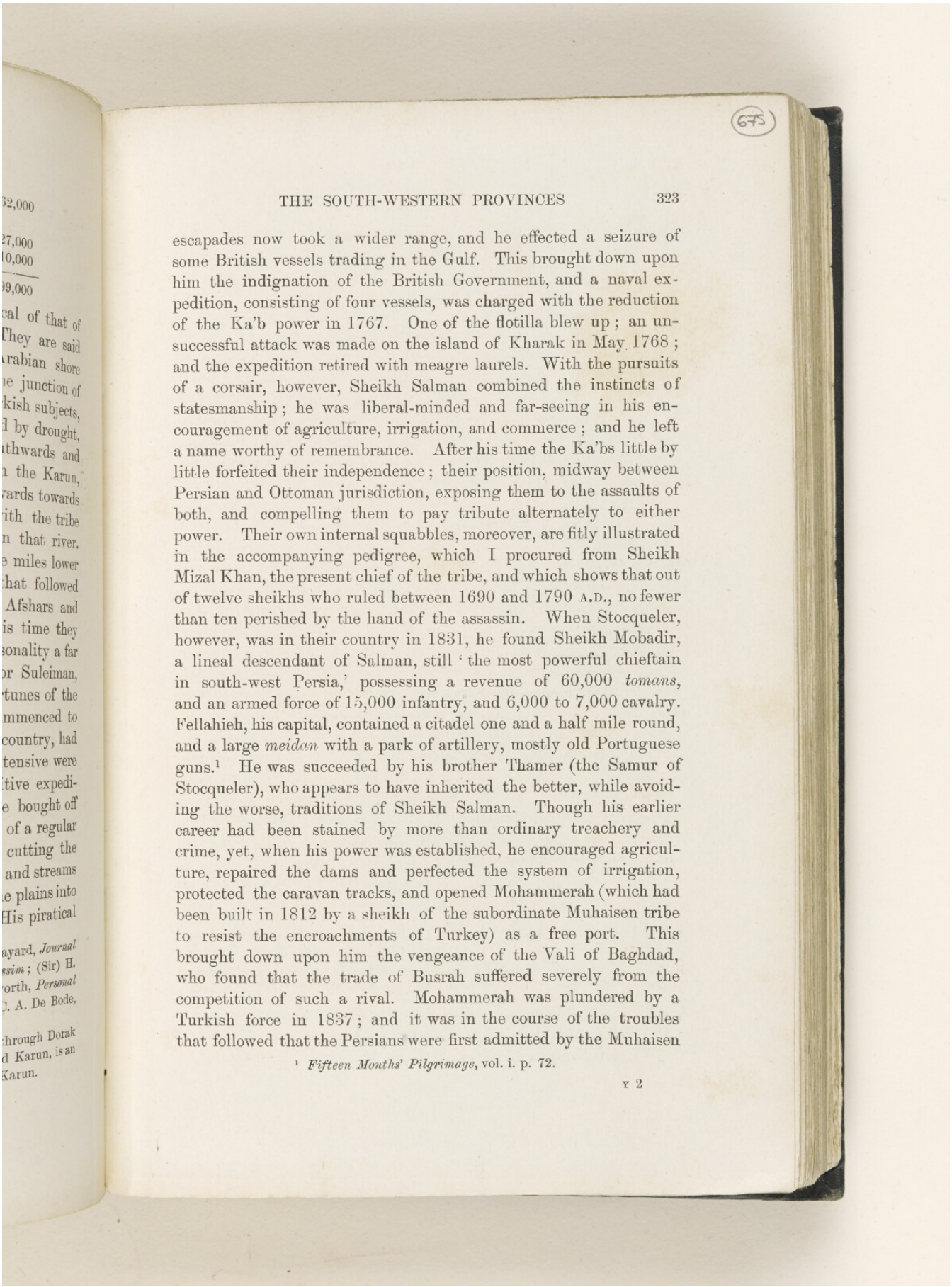



escapades now took a wider range, and he effected a seizure of some British vessels trading in the Gulf. This brought down upon him the indignation of the British Government, and a naval expedition, consisting of four vessels, was charged with the reduction of the Ka'b power in 1767. One of the flotilla blew up; an unsuccessful attack was made on the island of Kharak in May 1768; and the expedition retired with meagre laurels. With the pursuits of a corsair, however, Sheikh Salman combined the instincts of statesmanship; he was liberal-minded and far-seeing in his encouragement of agriculture, irrigation, and commerce; and he left a name worthy of remembrance. After his time the Ka'bs little by little forfeited their independence; their position, midway between Persian and Ottoman jurisdiction, exposing them to the assaults of both, and compelling them to pay tribute alternately to either power. Their own internal squabbles, moreover, are fitly illustrated in the accompanying pedigree, which I procured from Sheikh Mizal Khan, the present chief of the tribe, and which shows that out of twelve sheikhs who ruled between 1690 and 1790 A.D., no fewer than ten perished by the hand of the assassin. When Stocqueler, however, was in their country in 1831, he found Sheikh Mobadir, a lineal descendant of Salman, still 'the most powerful chieftain in south-west Persia,' possessing a revenue of 60,000 *tomans*, and an armed force of 15,000 infantry, and 6,000 to 7,000 cavalry. Fellahieh, his capital, contained a citadel one and a half mile round, and a large *meidan* with a park of artillery, mostly old Portuguese guns.[1] He was succeeded by his brother Thamer (the Samur of Stocqueler), who appears to have inherited the better, while avoiding the worse, traditions of Sheikh Salman. Though his earlier career had been stained by more than ordinary treachery and crime, yet, when his power was established, he encouraged agriculture, repaired the dams and perfected the system of irrigation, protected the caravan tracks, and opened Mohammerah (which had been built in 1812 by a sheikh of the subordinate Muhaisen tribe to resist the encroachments of Turkey) as a free port. This brought down upon him the vengeance of the Vali of Baghdad, who found that the trade of Busrah suffered severely from the competition of such a rival. Mohammerah was plundered by a Turkish force in 1837; and it was in the course of the troubles that followed that the Persians were first admitted by the Muhaisen

[1] *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. p. 72.



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## I. Sheikhs of the Ka'b Arabs

(belonging to the Al-bu-Nasir family).

1. Nasir bin Mohammed (the first known chief), murdered
2. Abdullah, murdered
3. Sarhan, murdered
4. Mir Rahmah, murdered
5. Farajullah (1722–1734), murdered

(1690–1722 A.D.)

?

6 Tahmaz Khanfar, murdered (1735)

8. Salman

9. Othman

(These two brothers ruled jointly 1737–64, when Othman died. Salman continued to rule till 1766)

Shinawa

7. Bander (1735–37) murdered by Salman
10. Ghanim (1766–69), murdered
11. Barakat (1770–82), murdered
12. Ghadban (1782–92), murdered

Son

Mohammed

13. Mubarek (1792–94), ousted by
14. Faris (1794–95), ousted by

Son

15. Alwan (1795–1801), ousted by
16. Barakat (1801–12)

17. Ghreyth (1812–28). The first to be called Sheikh. Murdered

18. Mobadir (1828–31)

20. Thamer (1837–40)

19. Abdullah (1831–37)

21. Faris (1840–?)

22. Lutfullah Mohammed Khan

23. Rahmah

24. Mir Abdullah, Governor of Deh Mullah

(These three Sheikhs ruled conjointly)

22. Jafir Khan (1881– ). Deposed 1888. Reinstated 1889. Present ruler of Fellahieh. Known as Sheikh-el-Mushaikh

## II. Sheikhs of the Muhaisen Tribe.

(formerly dependent on the Ka'b Arabs, but now known by the same name)

Mardu

1. Haji Yusuf (the first known chief). Built Mohammerah
2. Haji Jabir Khan (?–1881). Originally acted as deputy of Sheikh Thamer at Mohammerah. Made Governor by the Persians
3. Mizal Khan (1881–). Present Sheikh of the Ka'bs, and Governor of Mohammerah. murdered June 1897

Mohammed

Khadal

Salman

## III. Mullahs or Sheikhs of the Muntefik Tribe of Hawizeh.

(Seyids and members of the old ruling family[1])

1. Mullah Farajullah (circ. 1840)
2. Mullah Abdullah
3. Mullah Muttalib (circ. 1883)
4. Mullah Nasrullah. Present Chief of Hawizeh

[1] For the pedigree of this family *vide* Layard, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. p. 34.

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when batting well. The only other interesting feature was the stand for the ninth wicket by Stileman and Caddel. Munton being absent, Bombay batted one short. Ballygunge were left with only 46 to win and lost one wicket in knocking them off. This completed the tour of the Bombay team, who in losing two matches out of three, have not done so well as they hoped.

(676)

BOMBAY.

| 1st Innings. | | 2nd Innings. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| H K Kitson, st Frost, b F Gould | 16 | c Shallow, b A Gould | 28 |
| Reid | | c Sub, b F Gould | 0 |
| A K D Tillard, b White | 1 | b A Gontd | 8 |
| G A Cooke, c F Gould, b A Gould | 4 | c and b A Gould | 2 |
| E Marsden, c A Gould, b F Gould | 32 | c Yeoman, b F Gould | 29 |
| A E Wright, b F Gould | 4 | c Yeoman, b F Gould | 25 |
| G O Phillips, b A Gould | 40 | c Shallow, b Yeoman | 11 |
| E C Reid, run out | 0 | c sub, b F Gould | 0 |
| G S Arbuthnot, b F Gould | 12 | c and b A Gould | 1 |
| V R Munton, c A Shallow, b A Gould | 7 | absent. | |
| P R Cadell, c and b F Gould | 2 | not out | 12 |
| C G Stileman, not out | 11 | b Quin | 23 |
| Extras | 2 | Extras | 8 |
| Total | 131 | Total | 147 |

BALLYGUNGE C. C.

| 1st Innings. | | 2nd Innings. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| H F Yeoman, b Tillard | 0 | not out | 10 |
| D S Shallow, c Reid, b Tillard | 4 | not out | 23 |
| E Studd, c and b Stileman | 4 | Studd, c Phillips, b Arbuthnot | 11 |
| B A White, c Cooke, b Arbuthnot | 78 | Shallow, not out | 23 |
| A W Shallow, b Tillard | 15 | | |
| A Gould, c Phillips, b Arbuthnot | 22 | | |

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December 31, [illegible]

# THE BAR OF SHAT-EL-ARAB.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES OF INDIA.

Sir,—Will you allow me to point out two or three minor discrepancies in one of the series of interesting articles written by your special correspondent, viz., "The Bar of the Shat-el-Arab" which appeared in the weekly issue of the 2nd December.

The Sheikh of Mahommerah is not a man of over seventy years of age with a long grey beard stretching to his waist. He is still on the right side of fifty and the lime has not yet touched his beard. Also regarding his fleet—it has for some time consisted of two river-boats and a third is in the process of completion, this will give just three times the strength given by your correspondent who mentions only a single boat.

Thirdly and lastly, the salutes fired when the mail-boat pass the Sheikh's residence at Fehlia, are fired as a compliment to the Sheikh and not as stated, to salute the mail-flag. This interesting ceremony originated in connection with a now almost forgotten incident. Many years ago the British India steamer Kashmir was raided by a band of robbers while at anchor in Busreh harbour, The present Sheik's father, Hajee Jabar Khan, rendered signal service by apprehending and bringing to justice many of the gang of robbers. Ever since then the British India boats have always fired a salute of two guns both on their way up and on their way down the river, when passing the Sheikh's residence at Fehlia. This custom is now observed by nearly all passenger and cargo boats that enter the Shat-el-Arab.

Mahommerah,
December 26.

ONE INTERESTED.

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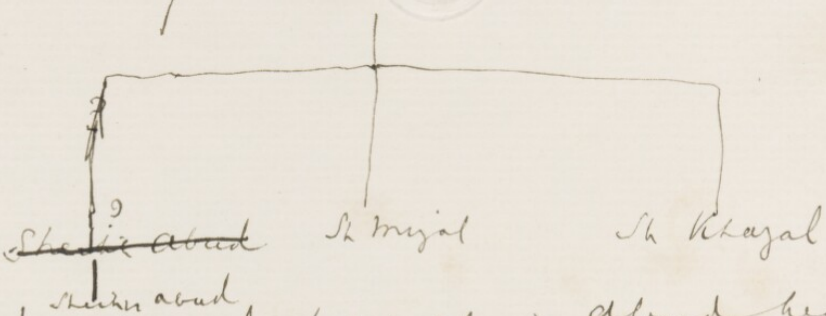
# Persia

June. 97




Mizal named his nephew Abud his heir. passing over his younger brother Khazal

Latter conspired & shot both M. & Ab. in a boat on Shatt el arab

Who succeeded purely & was recog. by Pers Govt

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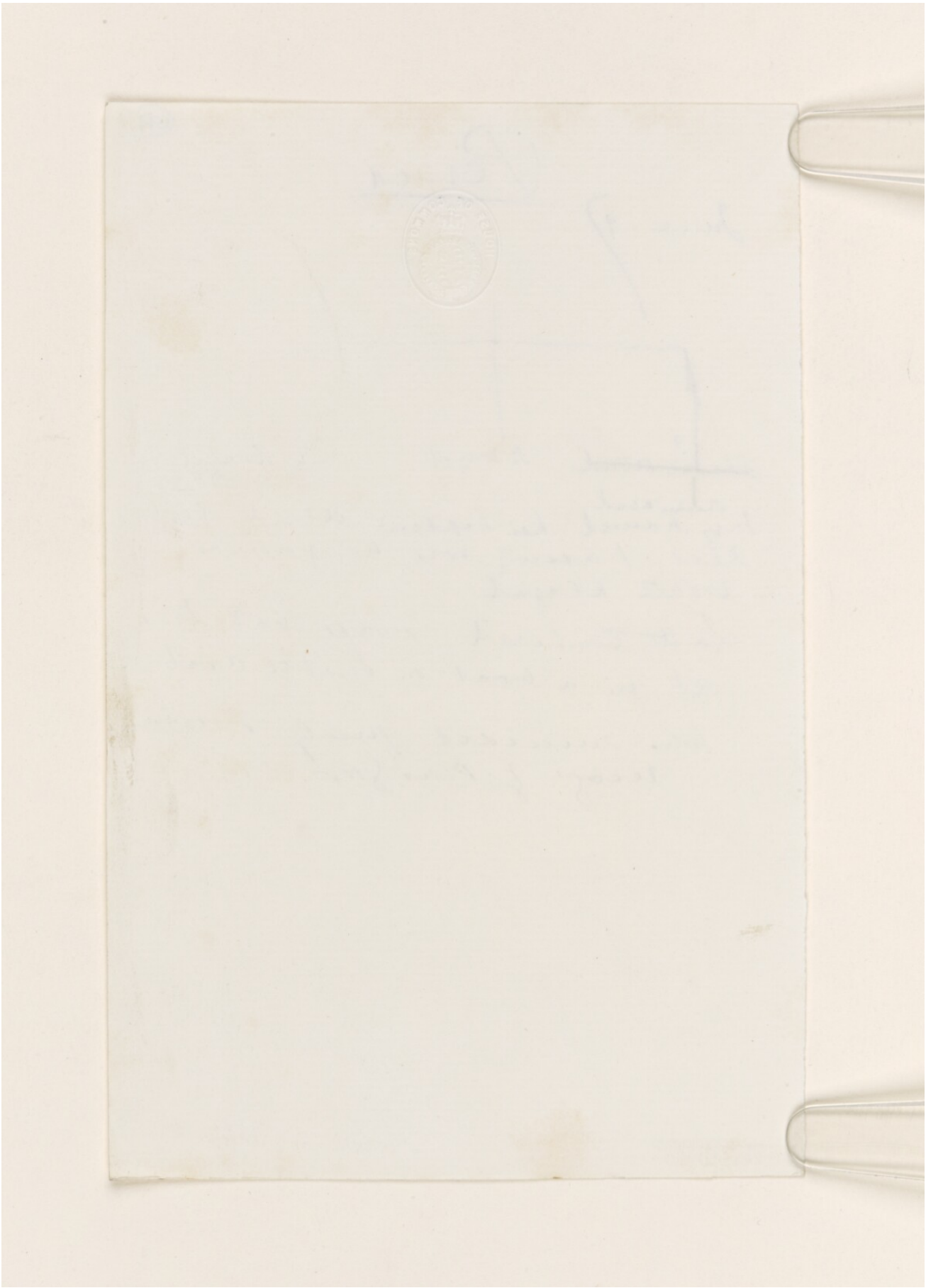

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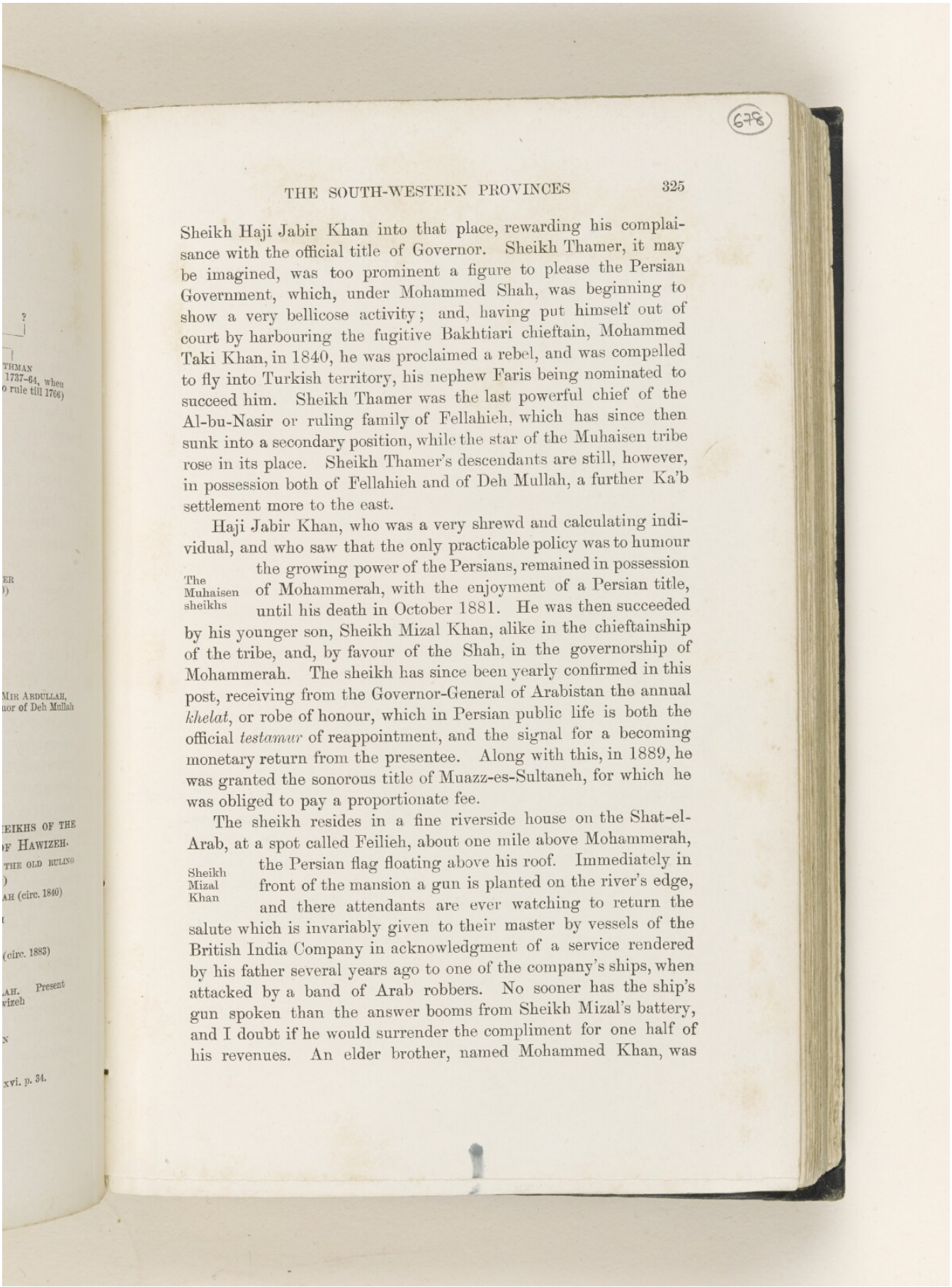



Sheikh Haji Jabir Khan into that place, rewarding his complaisance with the official title of Governor. Sheikh Thamer, it may be imagined, was too prominent a figure to please the Persian Government, which, under Mohammed Shah, was beginning to show a very bellicose activity; and, having put himself out of court by harbouring the fugitive Bakhtiari chieftain, Mohammed Taki Khan, in 1840, he was proclaimed a rebel, and was compelled to fly into Turkish territory, his nephew Faris being nominated to succeed him. Sheikh Thamer was the last powerful chief of the Al-bu-Nasir or ruling family of Fellahieh, which has since then sunk into a secondary position, while the star of the Muhaisen tribe rose in its place. Sheikh Thamer's descendants are still, however, in possession both of Fellahieh and of Deh Mullah, a further Ka'b settlement more to the east.

The Muhaisen sheikhs

Haji Jabir Khan, who was a very shrewd and calculating individual, and who saw that the only practicable policy was to humour the growing power of the Persians, remained in possession of Mohammerah, with the enjoyment of a Persian title, until his death in October 1881. He was then succeeded by his younger son, Sheikh Mizal Khan, alike in the chieftainship of the tribe, and, by favour of the Shah, in the governorship of Mohammerah. The sheikh has since been yearly confirmed in this post, receiving from the Governor-General of Arabistan the annual *khelat*, or robe of honour, which in Persian public life is both the official *testamur* of reappointment, and the signal for a becoming monetary return from the presentee. Along with this, in 1889, he was granted the sonorous title of Muazz-es-Sultaneh, for which he was obliged to pay a proportionate fee.

Sheikh Mizal Khan

The sheikh resides in a fine riverside house on the Shat-el-Arab, at a spot called Feilieh, about one mile above Mohammerah, the Persian flag floating above his roof. Immediately in front of the mansion a gun is planted on the river's edge, and there attendants are ever watching to return the salute which is invariably given to their master by vessels of the British India Company in acknowledgment of a service rendered by his father several years ago to one of the company's ships, when attacked by a band of Arab robbers. No sooner has the ship's gun spoken than the answer booms from Sheikh Mizal's battery, and I doubt if he would surrender the compliment for one half of his revenues. An elder brother, named Mohammed Khan, was

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for some time kept as a hostage by the Persian Government, whose policy in these parts has always been to play off one member of a family against another. He has since been released, and now lives higher up on the Shat-el-Arab, in receipt of a pension of 1,200 *tomans* from the Persian Government, but is on the worst of terms with Sheikh Mizal. A younger brother resides with the latter, none of whose fifteen wives has succeeded in bearing him any children. The sheikh is a man of over fifty years of age, of fine stature and dignified appearance, and is reported to be very rich, having made a large fortune by the horse trade with Bombay.

For the present the relations between Sheikh Mizal and the Persian Government are ostensibly smooth and harmonious; but the Arab chief has long been apprehensive of the future. For years past he has seen the policy of Teheran directed towards the gradual suppression of all semi-dependent authority in non-Persian hands, and the centralisation of executive power. One after another the poppy-heads, to quote the old Roman fable, have been smitten off; and Arab sheikhs and Lur chieftains alike have vanished into compulsory retirement, or more frequently into the silent prisons of Teheran. For the pursuance of these tactics in south-west Persia, the opening of the Karun River to foreign trade, and the consequent necessity for new Custom-house officers and Foreign Office representatives, have supplied the Central Government with a welcome excuse; and it was with no slight alarm that Sheikh Mizal saw the first steamer of Messrs. Lynch ascend the Karun. Naturally, and by instinct a friend of the English, with whom, and particularly with the late Mr. Robertson, he has for long been upon intimate terms, he yet feels himself compelled to walk circumspectly. Accordingly, he regards everything and everybody with suspicion. He declines to go on board any vessel or steamer for fear that there may be a plot to deport him. In a creek immediately alongside of his house is moored his own paddle-steamer, the 'Karun,' ready at any moment to carry him into a safe retreat; and his deputy at Mohammerah was much distressed when I announced my intention of inspecting the new buildings at the corner, and gave private instructions that I should be deceived as to their character. More lately he has seen the wisdom of making friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness; and having invested both his interest and his wealth in the native commercial speculation for the development of the Karun trade

Persian policy

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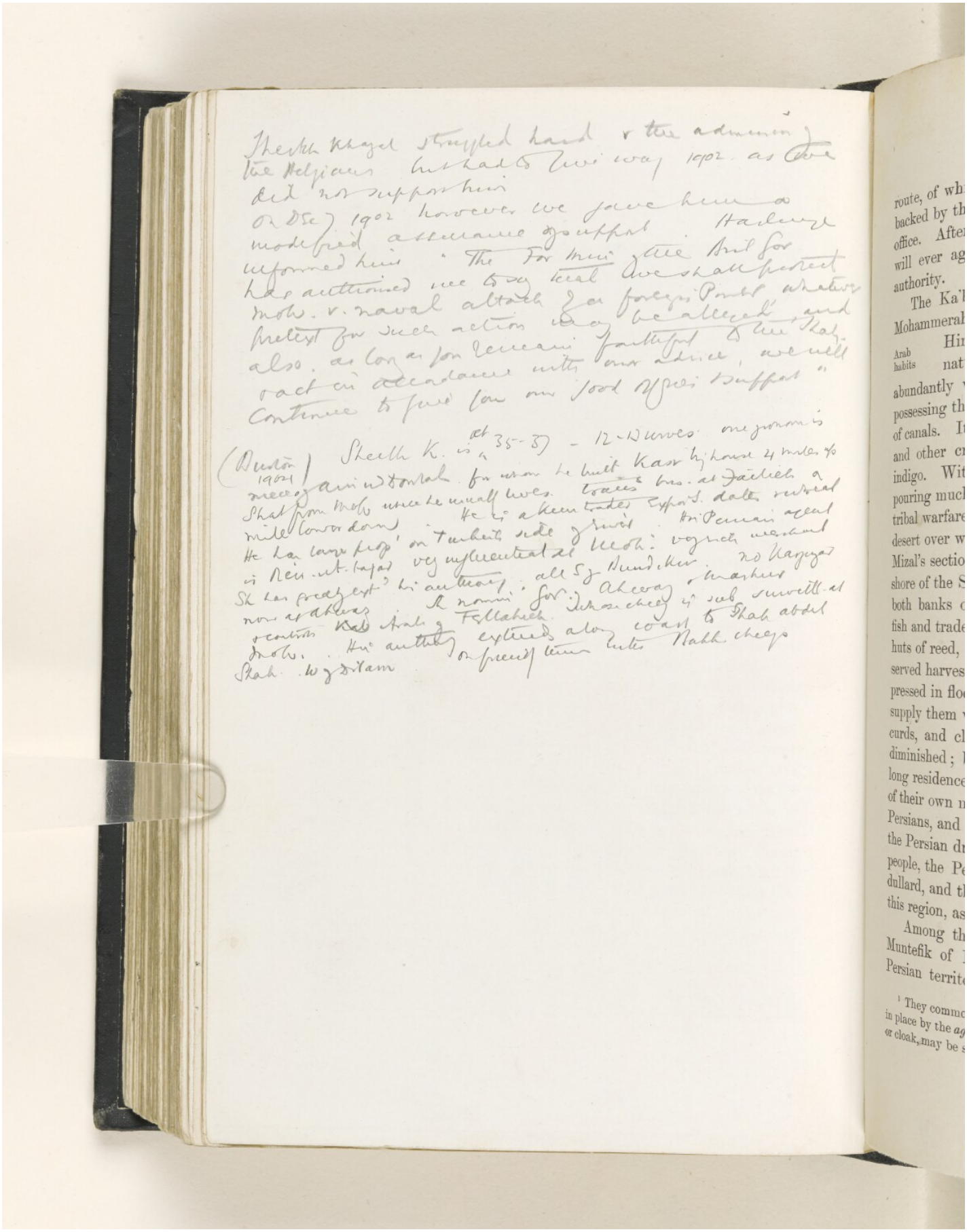
SHEIKH MIZAL KHAN



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route, of which I shall speak in the next chapter, and which is backed by the Grand Vizier, he may succeed in retaining his twofold office. After him it is doubtful whether the Persian Government will ever again tolerate an Arab chieftain possessing any real authority.

Arab habits

The Ka'b Arabs occupy the entire extent of territory from Mohammerah and the Karun River eastwards towards the River Hindian, a distance of over one hundred miles. The natural richness of this region is enormous. It is more abundantly watered than any track of similar size in Persia, possessing the Karun, Jerahi, and Hindian rivers, and a network of canals. It is capable of producing an immense variety of cereal and other crops: wheat, barley, rice, sugar, cotton, opium, and indigo. With proper care it might become one vast grain-field, pouring much needed wealth into a depleted exchequer. As it is, tribal warfare and Government oppression have turned it into a desert over which the eye may roam unarrested for miles. Sheikh Mizal's section of the tribe dwell in the palm-groves upon the left shore of the Shat-el-Arab above and at Mohammerah, and occupy both banks of the Karun as far as Weiss. Upon the rivers they fish and trade and export their date crops; inland they camp in huts of reed, and supply their own needs by extracting an undeserved harvest from the prolific soil. Their wealth is chiefly expressed in flocks of sheep and goats, particularly the former, which supply them with their woollen blankets and tents, and with milk, curds, and clarified butter. Their breed of horses has greatly diminished; but they possess large numbers of donkeys. From long residence on Persian territories the Ka'b Arabs have lost much of their own national character. They have intermarried with the Persians, and have adopted the Shiah religion, as well as parts of the Persian dress.[1] None the less no love is lost between the two people, the Persian regarding the Arab as an interloper and a dullard, and the Arab regarding the Persian, with some justice in this region, as a plotter and a rogue.

Among the remaining Arab tribes I need only notice the Muntefik of Hawizeh, on the extreme south-eastern border of Persian territory. They appear to have migrated thither from

[1] They commonly wear the Arab *kefieh*, or silk handkerchief, on the head, kept in place by the *aghal*, or twisted camel's hair bands. But, beneath the Arab *aba* or cloak, may be seen a Persian tunic and drawers.

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Turkish soil in 1812, and to have ousted that section of the Ka'b Arabs who occupied this district. Hawizeh was once an important place, with a population of 24,000 souls, at the time when it was the capital of the Vali of Arabistan. Its agricultural wealth depended upon the River Kerkhah, whose waters spread bounty over the land. In 1837, however, the main dam burst; the river dissipated itself in futile swamps, and Hawizeh shrank from a great town to a petty village. It is still governed by a sheikh of the old ruling family, claiming a sacred lineage; and according to his strength or weakness he receives the allegiance of a larger or smaller number of tribes. The majority of his people have always remained Sunnis. Surrounded by their marshes, they are fairly safe from encroachment.

The Muntefik

I have now completed my survey of the only part of the Persian dominions where anything like independence still exists among the component chiefs and tribes. That independence is fast vanishing before a power that is in command of the electric telegraph, and possesses breech-loading guns. It has already been sapped by the tribal jealousy and the petty rivalries of which the Central Government has never been slow to take advantage. Personally I shall regret its disappearance, convinced as I am that these people, Lurs and Arabs alike, have within them a manhood which alone can sustain the nation in time of need, and that firm but honourable rule and an equitable taxation were all that was needed to convert them into loyal subjects. As it is, they dislike the Persians, and detest the Government; and, when the call comes for their co-operation, 'To your tents, O Israel' is more likely to be the nomads' response.

Summary

### Supplementary Routes in South-west Persia.[1]

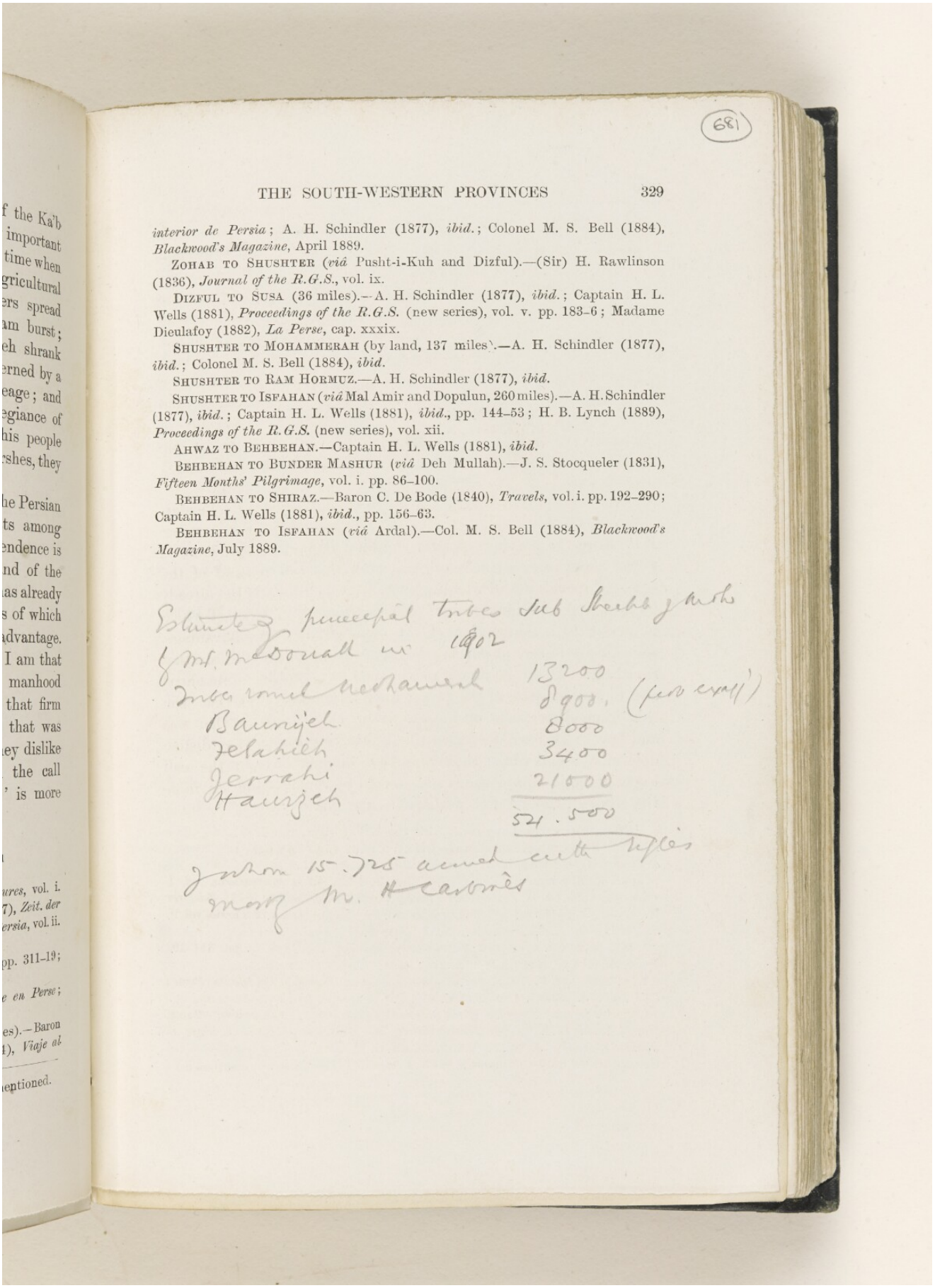
Burujird to Hamadan.—(Sir) H. Layard (1841), *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 277–88; J. P. Ferrier (1845), *ibid.*, pp. 33–4; A. H. Schindler (1877), *Zeit. der Gesell. für Erd. zu Berlin*, vol. xiv.; Mrs. Bishop (1890), *Journey in Persia*, vol. ii. Letter xxii.

Burujird to Kum.—Baron C. De Bode (1840), *Travels*, vol. ii. pp. 311–19; A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*

Burujird to Isfahan (*viâ* Khonsar).—J. Otter (1737), *Voyage en Perse*; A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*

Burujird to Shushter (*viâ* Khorremabad and Dizful, 250 miles).—Baron C. De Bode (1840), *ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 162–268; A. Rivadeneyra (1874), *Viaje al*

[1] In this table *ibid.* signifies the work by the same writer before mentioned.



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*interior de Persia*; A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*; Colonel M. S. Bell (1884), *Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1889.

ZOHAB TO SHUSHTER (*viâ* Pusht-i-Kuh and Dizful).—(Sir) H. Rawlinson (1836), *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix.

DIZFUL TO SUSA (36 miles).—A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*; Captain H. L. Wells (1881), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. v. pp. 183–6; Madame Dieulafoy (1882), *La Perse*, cap. xxxix.

SHUSHTER TO MOHAMMERAH (by land, 137 miles).—A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*; Colonel M. S. Bell (1884), *ibid.*

SHUSHTER TO RAM HORMUZ.—A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*

SHUSHTER TO ISFAHAN (*viâ* Mal Amir and Dopulun, 260 miles).—A. H. Schindler (1877), *ibid.*; Captain H. L. Wells (1881), *ibid.*, pp. 144–53; H. B. Lynch (1889), *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. xii.

AHWAZ TO BEHBEHAN.—Captain H. L. Wells (1881), *ibid.*

BEHBEHAN TO BUNDER MASHUR (*viâ* Deh Mullah).—J. S. Stocqueler (1831), *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. pp. 86–100.

BEHBEHAN TO SHIRAZ.—Baron C. De Bode (1840), *Travels*, vol. i. pp. 192–290; Captain H. L. Wells (1881), *ibid.*, pp. 156–63.

BEHBEHAN TO ISFAHAN (*viâ* Ardal).—Col. M. S. Bell (1884), *Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1889.

Shuster — principal tribes Sub Sheikhs with
of Mr. McDonald in 1902
Inca roud Nechawerk 13200
Baunjeh 8900. (per cent)
Jelahieh 8000
Jerrahi 3400
Haunjeh 21000
524.500

Jahon 15.725 armed with rifles
many M. H. Carones

# CHAPTER XXV

## THE KARUN RIVER

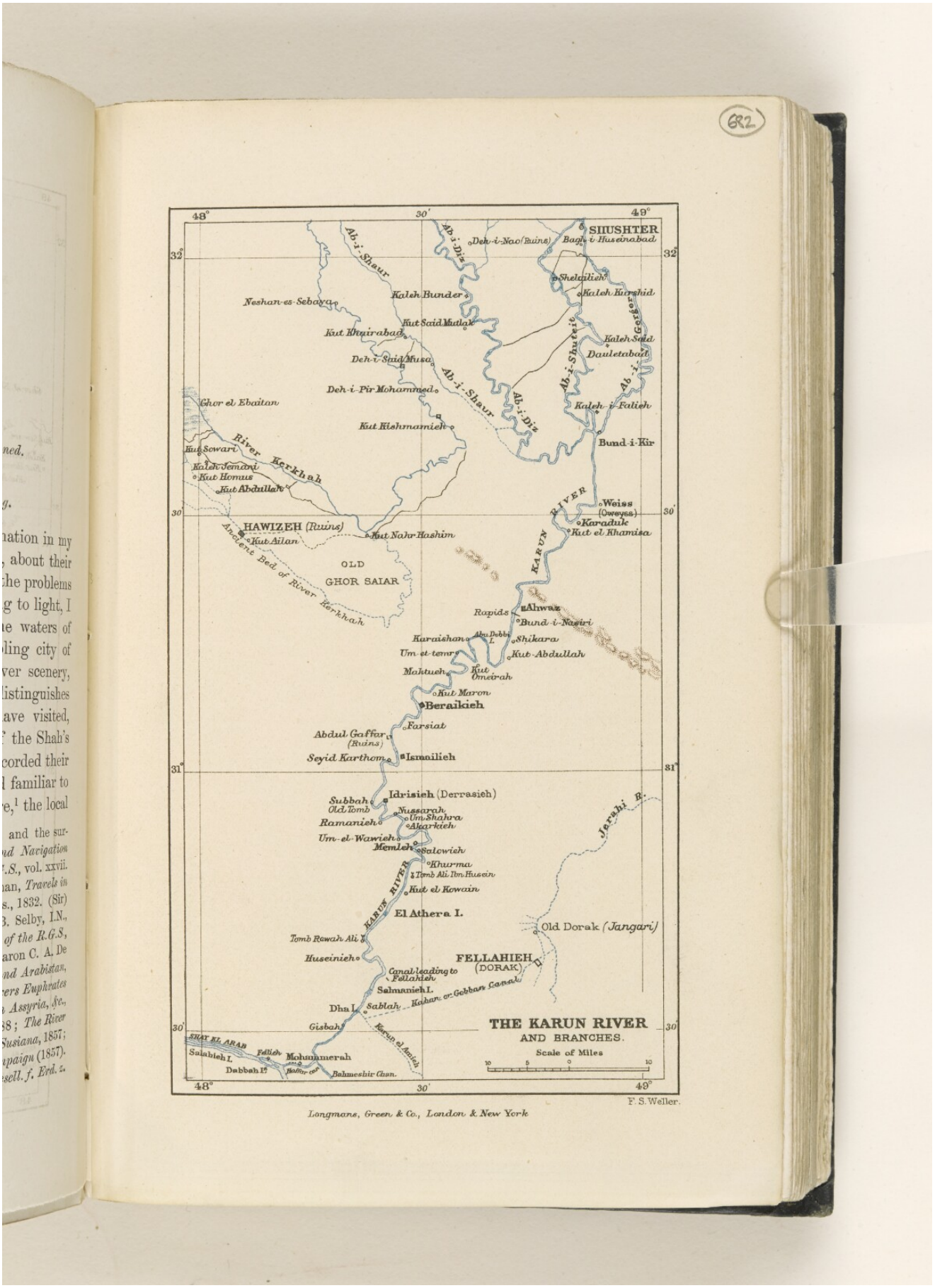
From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the South
Of Susiana to Balsara's haven.
MILTON, *Paradise Regained.*

Fardah Inshallah—
Please God, to-morrow!
*Persian Saying.*

The Karun country

HAVING in the previous chapter supplied all the information in my power about the provinces of Arabistan and Luristan, about their peculiar and warring populations, and about the problems of local and foreign politics which they bring to light, I now turn to a description of my own journey up the waters of the Karun River, as far as the fanatical and crumbling city of Shushter. There is much in the country, in the river scenery, and in the character of the people upon its banks, that distinguishes this from other parts of Persia. Few Englishmen have visited, and fewer still have described this interesting corner of the Shah's dominions; and whilst those who have done so have recorded their experiences in compilations not devoid of romance and familiar to the student, though not perhaps to the public at large,[1] the local

[1] The writers who have dealt with the Karun river, Shushter, and the surrounding districts are as follows:—Dean Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients*, 2 vols., 1807. Gen. W. Monteith, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 108. J. M. Kinneir, *Geographical Memoir*, 1813. Capt. R. Mignan, *Travels in Chaldæa*, 1829. J. H. Stocqueler, *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, 2 vols., 1832. (Sir) H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix., 1839. Lieut. W. B. Selby, I.N., *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiv., 1844. (Sir) A. H. Layard, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xii., 1842, vol. xvi., 1846; *Early Adventures*, 2 vols., 1887. Baron C. A. De Bode, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiii., 1843; *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*, 2 vols., 1845. Col. F. R. Chesney, *Expeditions for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris in* 1835–7, 2 vols., 1850. W. F. Ainsworth, *Researches in Assyria, &c.*, 1838; *A Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, 2 vols., 1888; *The River Karun*, 1890. W. K. Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Chaldæa and Susiana*, 1857; *Journal of the R. G.S.*, vol. xxvii. 1857. Capt. G. H. Hunt, *Persian Campaign* (1857). Gen. A. H. Schindler, 'Travels in S.-W. Persia in 1877–8,' *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z.*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48°
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SHUSHTER
Bagh-i-Huseinabad
Deh-i-Nao (Ruins)
Ab-i-Shaur
Ab-i-Diz
Shelalieh
Kaleh Bunder
Kaleh Kurshid
Neshan-es-Sebaya
Kut Said Mutlak
Kut Khairabad
Kaleh Said
Dauletabad
Deh-i-Said Musa
Ab-i-Shuteit
Ab-i-Gerger
Deh-i-Pir Mohammed
Chor el Ebaitan
Kaleh-i-Falieh
Kut Kishmamieh
Bund-i-Kir
River Kerkhah
Kut Sowari
Kaleh Jemani
Kut Homus
Kut Abdullah
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Karaduk
Kut el Khamisa
HAWIZEH (Ruins)
Kut Ailan
Kut Nahr Hashim
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Rapids
Ahwaz
Bund-i-Nasiri
Karaishan
Abu Debbi I.
Shikara
Um-et-temr
Kut Abdullah
Mahtuch
Kut Omeirah
Kut Maron
Beraikieh
Farsiat
Abdul Gaffar (Ruins)
Seyid Karthom
Ismailieh
Idrisieh (Derrasieh)
Subbah
Old Tomb
Nussarah
Um Shahra
Ramanieh
Alkarkieh
Um-el-Wawieh
Memleh
Salowieh
Khurma
Tomb Ali Ibn Husein
Kut el Kowain
KARUN RIVER
El Athera I.
Jarrahi R.
Old Dorak (Jangari)
Tomb Rewah Ali I.
Huseinieh
FELLAHIEH (DORAK)
Canal leading to Fellahieh
Salmanieh I.
Kaiban or Gebban Canal
Dha I.
Sablah
Gisbah
THE KARUN RIVER AND BRANCHES.
Scale of Miles
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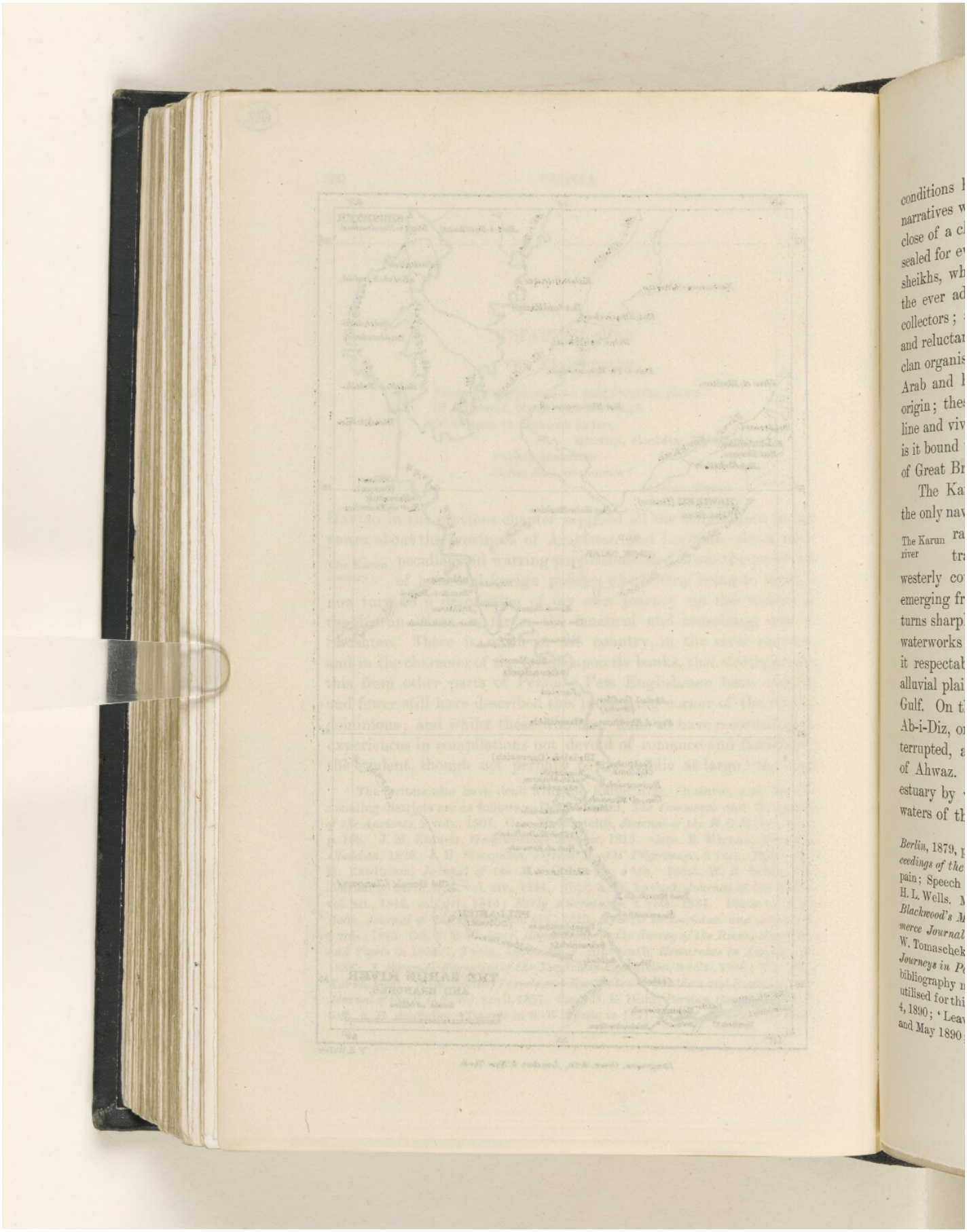
SHAT EL ARAB
Salabieh I.
Fellieh
Mohammerah
Dabbah I.
Bahmeshir Chan.
Karun el Amieh
F. S. Weller.
Longmans, Green & Co., London & New York



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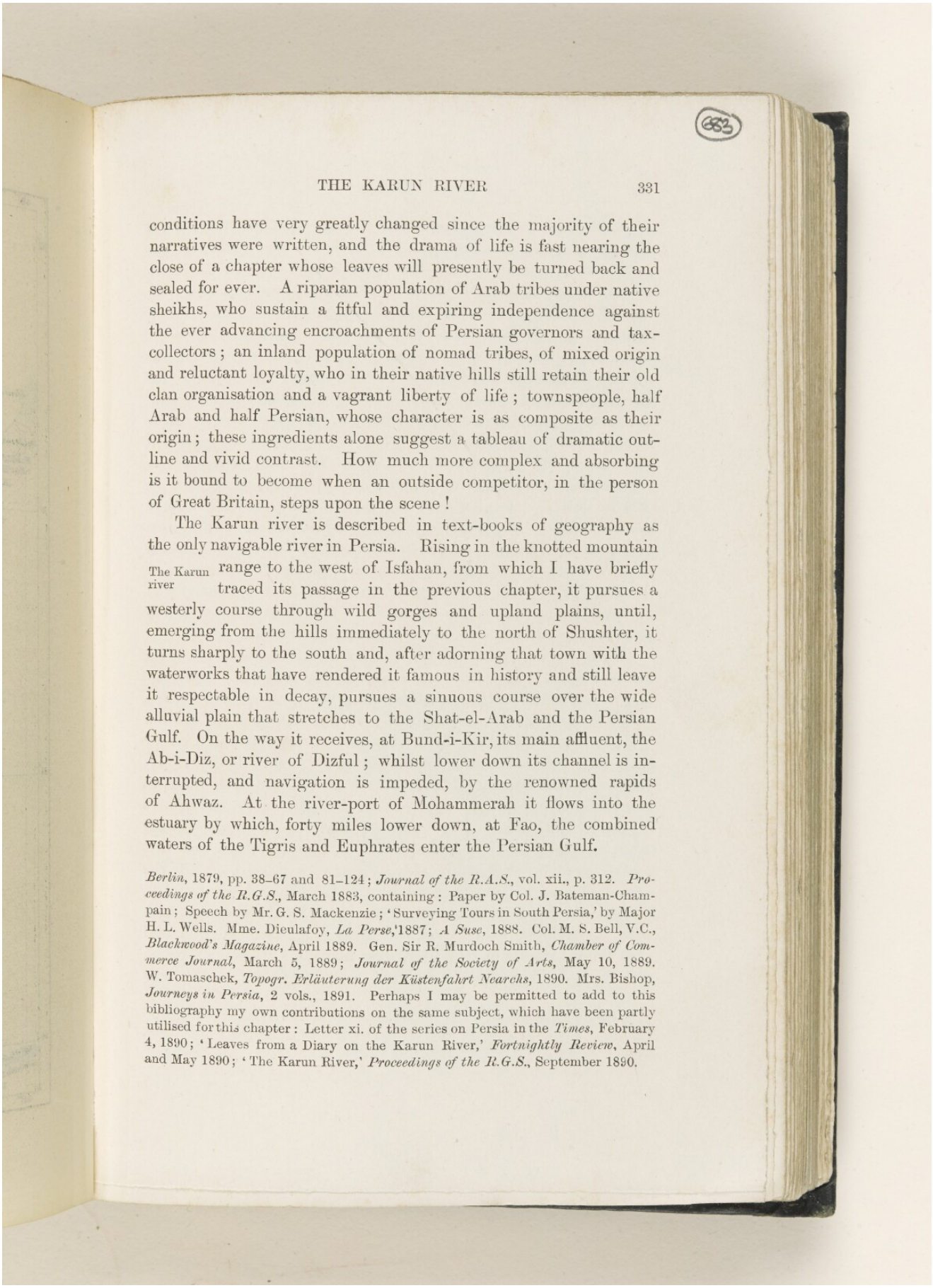



conditions have very greatly changed since the majority of their narratives were written, and the drama of life is fast nearing the close of a chapter whose leaves will presently be turned back and sealed for ever. A riparian population of Arab tribes under native sheikhs, who sustain a fitful and expiring independence against the ever advancing encroachments of Persian governors and tax-collectors; an inland population of nomad tribes, of mixed origin and reluctant loyalty, who in their native hills still retain their old clan organisation and a vagrant liberty of life; townspeople, half Arab and half Persian, whose character is as composite as their origin; these ingredients alone suggest a tableau of dramatic outline and vivid contrast. How much more complex and absorbing is it bound to become when an outside competitor, in the person of Great Britain, steps upon the scene!

The Karun river

The Karun river is described in text-books of geography as the only navigable river in Persia. Rising in the knotted mountain range to the west of Isfahan, from which I have briefly traced its passage in the previous chapter, it pursues a westerly course through wild gorges and upland plains, until, emerging from the hills immediately to the north of Shushter, it turns sharply to the south and, after adorning that town with the waterworks that have rendered it famous in history and still leave it respectable in decay, pursues a sinuous course over the wide alluvial plain that stretches to the Shat-el-Arab and the Persian Gulf. On the way it receives, at Bund-i-Kir, its main affluent, the Ab-i-Diz, or river of Dizful; whilst lower down its channel is interrupted, and navigation is impeded, by the renowned rapids of Ahwaz. At the river-port of Mohammerah it flows into the estuary by which, forty miles lower down, at Fao, the combined waters of the Tigris and Euphrates enter the Persian Gulf.

*Berlin*, 1879, pp. 38–67 and 81–124; *Journal of the R.A.S.*, vol. xii., p. 312. *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, March 1883, containing: Paper by Col. J. Bateman-Champain; Speech by Mr. G. S. Mackenzie; 'Surveying Tours in South Persia,' by Major H. L. Wells. Mme. Dieulafoy, *La Perse*,'1887; *A Suse*, 1888. Col. M. S. Bell, V.C., *Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1889. Gen. Sir R. Murdoch Smith, *Chamber of Commerce Journal*, March 5, 1889; *Journal of the Society of Arts*, May 10, 1889. W. Tomaschek, *Topogr. Erläuterung der Küstenfahrt Nearchs*, 1890. Mrs. Bishop, *Journeys in Persia*, 2 vols., 1891. Perhaps I may be permitted to add to this bibliography my own contributions on the same subject, which have been partly utilised for this chapter: Letter xi. of the series on Persia in the *Times*, February 4, 1890; 'Leaves from a Diary on the Karun River,' *Fortnightly Review*, April and May 1890; 'The Karun River,' *Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, September 1890.

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With ancient history, and with the disputed questions of the Ulai or Eulæus, the Coprates, the Choaspes, the Pasitigris, and their identity with the modern river-beds in the Tigris and Euphrates delta, I shall not greatly trouble my readers. The channels, and even the entire course of the rivers of Susiana—where from time to time great masses of snow-fed water are suddenly propelled through a sandy and friable soil, and where vast artificial irrigation works have sometimes reversed the dispositions of nature—have shifted frequently and irrecognisably. Unless we adopt this explanation, which charity as well as nature recommends, we shall be forced to the conclusion that the ancient chroniclers and geographers who dealt with these rivers were a very muddle-headed set of people; an hypothesis to which I am only inclined by the discovery that the majority of their modern successors have been guilty of confusions at least as startling, but over which the impulse of common impartiality tempts me equally to draw a veil. I will merely say that I identify the Karun with the Pasitigris (i.e. Lesser Tigris),[1] up which Nearchus sailed with the Macedonian fleet to join Alexander. Other historical identifications will be reserved for the foot-notes as I proceed.

Ancient channels

Here we may take up the history of the Karun river at the moment when it first concerns ourselves, and when its commercial advantages began to be recognised, not by the British public, who are habitually ill-informed, but by the few pioneers whose invariable fate it is to be snubbed by their own generation and applauded by the next. It is just fifty years since the immense latent value of the Karun trade route, as an avenue of expeditious approach to the great cities and centres of grain cultivation in the west of Persia, and as an opening more especially for British and Anglo-Indian commerce, was first brought prominently before the attention of Englishmen by the united labours and writings of Sir H. Layard and Lieut. Selby. The former of these explorers, from his intimate relations, both with Mohammed Taki Khan, the great Bakhtiari chieftain, and with the merchants of Shushter, was enabled to guarantee Persian reciprocity in any such enterprise; and he penned at the same

Early negotiations

[1] *Pas* (vulgo *past*) and *pastar* are still used in modern Persian to signify inferiority. The same meaning—i.e. Lesser Tigris—was expressed in the name, given by others to the Karun river, of Dijleh Kudek, and in the Arab designation Dojeil.

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time a report to the Home Government, and a letter to the Chamber of Commerce at Bombay, urging the prompt utilisation of so favourable an opportunity. Political convulsions in Persia frustrated the further prosecution of the design, and it was not till thirty years later that the opening of the Karun river to foreign commerce appears to have been made the subject of formal official communications between the Governments of Downing Street and Teheran. In 1878 Husein Kuli Khan, the second redoubtable Ilkhani whom the Bakhtiari clans have produced in this century, made offers of co-operation to Mr. G. Mackenzie, member of the large trading firm of Gray, Paul & Co. at Bushire, not less cordial than those which his famous predecessor had made to Layard; and the firm above mentioned volunteered to place steamers upon the river. The independent action, however, and conspicuous authority of these chieftains in each case excited the jealousy of the Central Government. The permission was refused; Layard's friend died in imprisonment at Teheran; Mackenzie's friend was put to death at Isfahan by the Zil-es-Sultan. At length, after seventeen years of diplomatic fencing, with feint and counterfeint, and all the diversified tricks of the Oriental school—in the course of which France at one time appeared as a combatant in the arena, and all but carried off an exclusive concession for the navigation of the river and the development of the surrounding lands [1]—the matter was, through the successful instrumentality of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, settled by a decree of the Shah, issued in October 1888, by which the Karun river as far as Ahwaz was, subject to certain somewhat vexatious conditions, opened to the mercantile marine of the world.

Enterprise of Messrs. Lynch

The leave, such as it was, having been obtained, Messrs. Lynch Brothers, of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, who have for many years owned the English steamers navigating the Tigris, detached one of their boats for the Karun service, and have continued to run a boat at intervals of a fortnight from Mohammerah to Ahwaz ever since.

[1] This concession, twice granted and twice cancelled between 1876 and 1878, was obtained by the influence of Dr Tholozan, the French physician of the Shah, strongly supported by Russian influence at Teheran. It was proposed to rebuild the dam at Ahwaz, with locks (the French having the exclusive right of navigation), to irrigate the surrounding country, and even to work mines and forests. A French engineer was sent out to report upon the Ahwaz rapids, and, in connection with the projected enterprise, a line of French steamers was established between Marseilles and Busrah, and a French official was placed at Mohammerah.

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The boat at first employed was the 'Blosse Lynch,' a fine paddle steamer employed in the Tigris navigation between Busrah and Baghdad. She was found, however, to be both too long for the abrupt bends and zigzags of the Karun, and of too deep a draught to pass over the shoals in low water. Accordingly, after running for some months, she was replaced by the 'Shushan,' a smaller stern-wheel boat, with three rudders to allow of her answering very quickly to the helm. The latter was one of seven or eight boats built by Yarrow, of Poplar, for the English Government at the time of the Nile expedition, but never apparently used for that purpose. Some of them were sold to Messrs. Cook for pleasure-boats on the Nile, while the 'Shushan' found its way to the Karun. She was supposed to be able to steam from ten to twelve knots an hour, but against a current running four miles could not certainly manage more than four. It was in the 'Shushan' that I ascended the river as far as Ahwaz. She was subsequently, in the spring of 1890, taken up the rapids in flood-time, and has since plied on one or other of the upper channels to Shushter. Advantage of the Karun concession was also originally taken by the Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company, who, for a short time, ran a small steamer named the 'Iran' up the river; but, finding that they obtained no return, gave up the experiment. Messrs. Lynch Brothers have, in spite of a steady loss, continued the service up to the present time, and in the face of the greatest difficulties have laid the foundations of what it is to be hoped may become an important and lucrative trade in the future.

Having thus disposed of the preliminaries necessary to a comprehension of what follows, I now proceed to a record of my own journey. One hundred and seventeen miles after leaving Bushire, the British India steamer which navigates the Persian Gulf, sailing from Bombay to Busrah, drops anchor for a while off the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, until the rising tide shall admit of her passing over the bar. At high water there is a good eighteen feet upon the bar, but the tide rises and falls as much as from eight to ten feet, and vessels at all heavily laden have invariably to cut their way through a shifting bottom of mud, while they sometimes stick fast for days. No effort appears to be made to keep open a channel by dredging or other artificial means —an apt reminder that we are on the brink of Ottoman jurisdiction—and the present passage solved the difficulty by arbitrarily

The Shat-el-Arab

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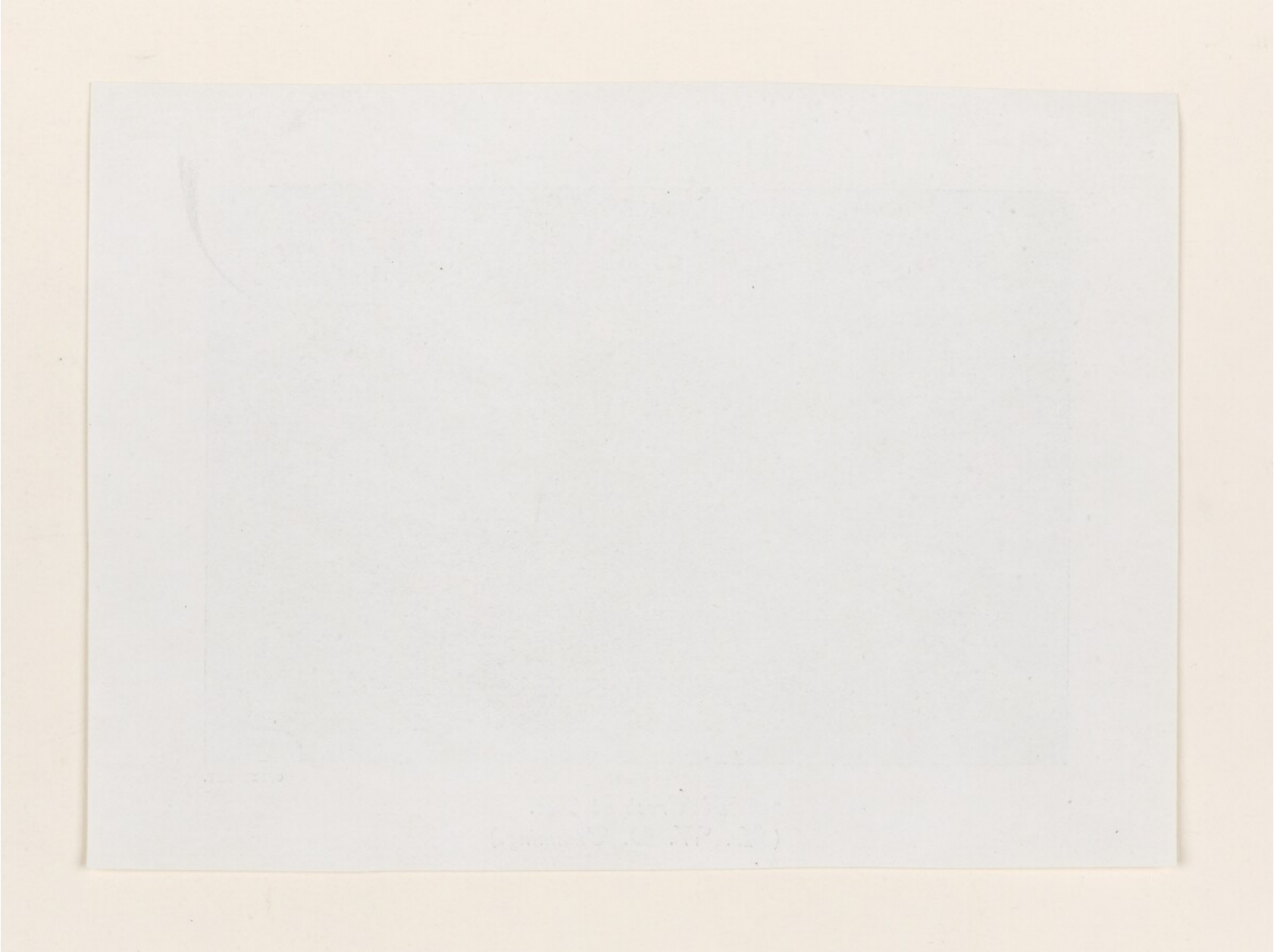
*A Creek at Fāo.*
*(Mr. W. D. Cumming.)*

'A Creek at Fāo.' [685v] (2/2)



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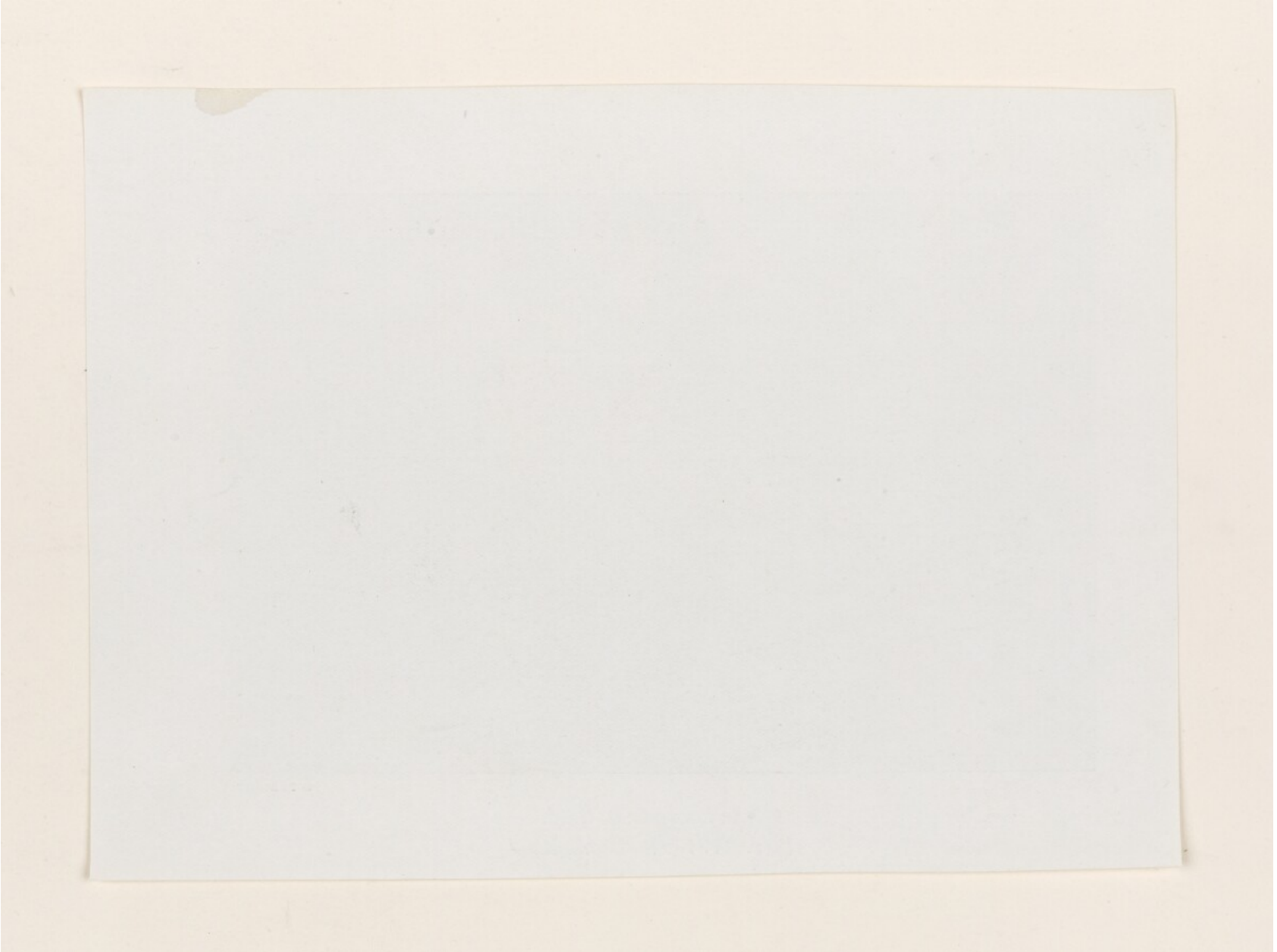
*Date harvest at Fāo.*
*(Mr. W. D. Cumming.)*



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cutting its own course in the year 1880. The Shat-el-Arab, as is well known, is the estuary by which the mingled waters of the Euphrates and Tigris, uniting at Kurnah, the legendary Garden of Eden, fifty miles above Busrah, descend to the Persian Gulf. Its northern bank is Persian, to a point upon the river beyond Mohammerah; its southern bank is Turkish throughout. At its entrance from the sea it presents the appearance of a noble river, a mile in width, flowing between low banks which, especially on the Turkish side, are fringed with a dense and magnificent belt of date palms. The opposite shore is more sandy, and is marked by the occasional tomb of some departed saint.

Turkish fort at Fao

The Turks in these parts are disposed to be very nasty towards the Persians, against whom they have cherished a particular grudge ever since the cession of the port of Mohammerah to the latter by the joint Anglo-Russian Commission more than forty years ago. They are jealous of the intrusion of any other power upon the Shat-el-Arab; and they are still more jealous of the rising fortunes of Mohammerah itself, which, in the event of any considerable development of the Karun trade route, will divert much of the traffic that now finds its way to Busrah and Baghdad, and, through their Custom-houses, to and from the Persian interior. Accordingly, they adopt every means in their power of hampering, irritating, and menacing their rivals' interests; the most conspicuous illustration of this attitude being the erection of a large fort upon a shelving sandspit at Fao, absolutely commanding the entrance to the Shat-el-Arab on the south. By a clause in the Treaty of Erzerum (1847) Turkey and Persia, the two contracting powers, bound themselves by a reciprocal engagement not to erect fortifications on either bank of the estuary, Great Britain and Russia being the two witnessing parties; and the action of the Turks appears consequently to be a violation of this agreement, which is not atoned for by their complacent invitation to the Persians to go and do likewise. In 1886 they commenced the construction of the fort, and in spite of frequent protests since, both from the English and Persian Governments, met by the traditional diplomatic disclaimer from Constantinople, they have now completed it to a point at which the guns only are wanting to render it a serious and intolerable menace both to their Persian neighbours and to the interests of the British trade and shipping engaged upon the Mesopotamian rivers. Some time ago an English telegraph-clerk

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Conf Nov 93. Grand Vizier have Brit Amb. at Const. assure that work on Fao Fort should be stopped



from the neighbouring telegraph-station at Fao landed from a boat at the fort, meeting with no interruption, and succeeded in making drawings and plans of the fortifications. When this vagary was discovered the Turks were furious, and have since fanatically excluded every prying eye. But from the deck of each passing steamer enough can be seen to show the actual progress of affairs, and to reduce to their proper proportions the diplomatic denials from Stambul. When I add that early in 1890 the Turks also commenced to build two other forts in the immediate neighbourhood of Mohammerah higher up the river; that the soldiers at Fao fired without provocation upon the captain and boat's crew of a British man-of-war (an act for which an apology arrived just in time from Constantinople); and that daily and weekly they place every obstacle that a perverse ingenuity can suggest in the way of the (English) Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, who own the right to ply with two vessels between Busrah and Baghdad, it will be seen that to represent their action as dictated by any other spirit than one of provocation both to Persia and this country is difficult.

Telegraph station

A little beyond the new fort is the joint British and Turkish Telegraph station at Fao, where the cable of the Gulf section of the Indo-European Telegraph Department comes up from the sea, and is prolonged by an overland wire to Constantinople. Two buildings or sheds accommodate the respective officials of the two nationalities, and recently provided a further illustration of the suspicious hostility of the Turks. For when the English superintendent began to build a low wall round his shed to keep off the encroachments of the river, the Sublime Porte, which is ready to detect a menace in any proceedings but its own, formally protested against the fortification on its territory of a hostile place of arms!

Haffar channel

About sixty miles above the bar outside the Shat-el-Arab, forty miles above the entrance to that estuary at Fao, and twenty miles below the Turkish port of Busrah, the present main exit of the Karun river flows into the Shat-el-Arab from the north-east by an artificial channel, whose etymology testifies to its origin, known as the Haffar Canal.[1] When this canal was cut no one knows, and I shall not attempt to conjecture.[2] The reason for

[1] Haffar signifies 'dug.'

[2] Mr. Watson, in his *History of Persia*, p. 445, says it was cut by Alexander the Great, in order to avoid the necessity of sailing down the Karun into the Persian Gulf. But I know of no ground for this hypothesis.



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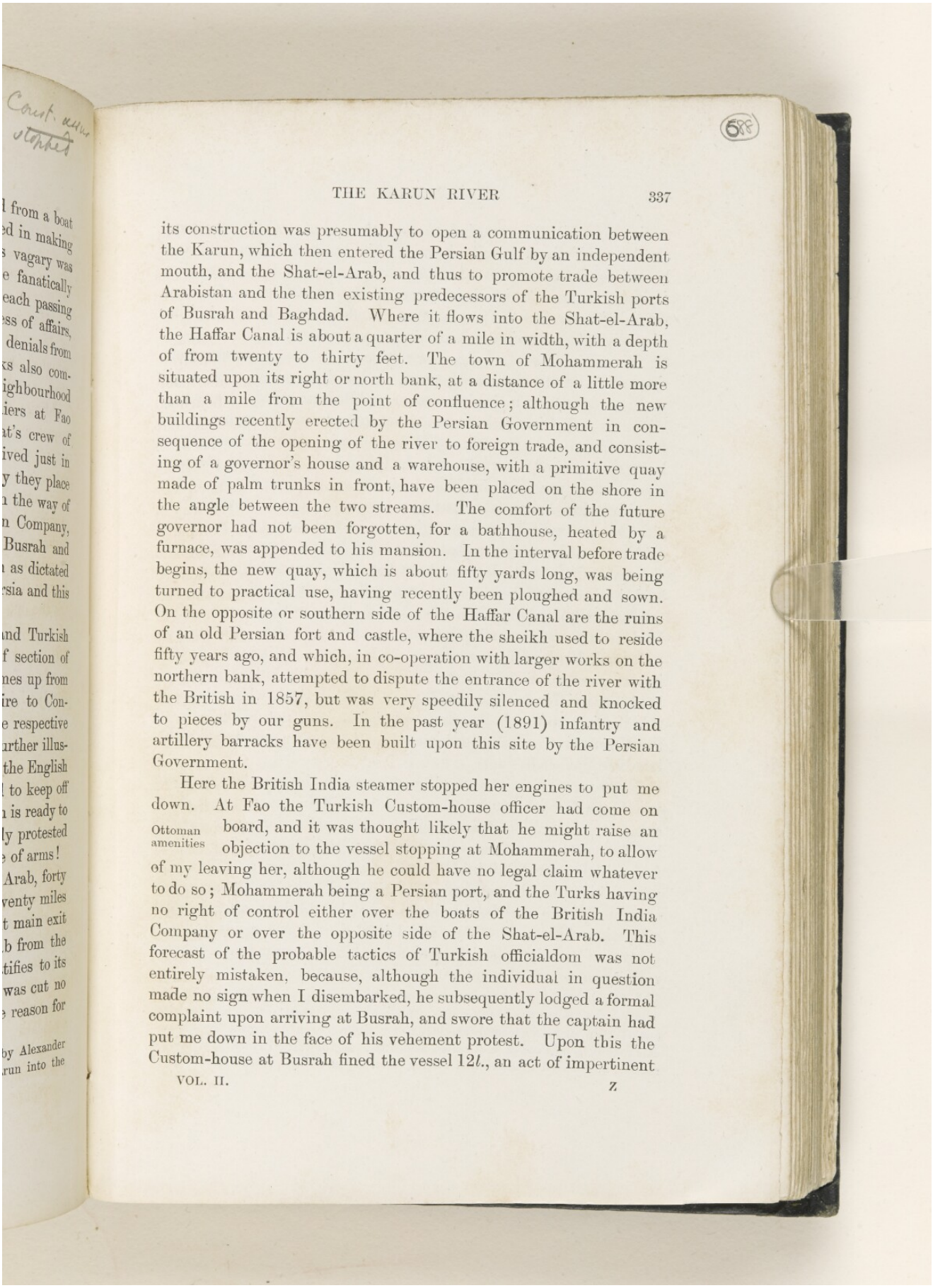



its construction was presumably to open a communication between the Karun, which then entered the Persian Gulf by an independent mouth, and the Shat-el-Arab, and thus to promote trade between Arabistan and the then existing predecessors of the Turkish ports of Busrah and Baghdad. Where it flows into the Shat-el-Arab, the Haffar Canal is about a quarter of a mile in width, with a depth of from twenty to thirty feet. The town of Mohammerah is situated upon its right or north bank, at a distance of a little more than a mile from the point of confluence; although the new buildings recently erected by the Persian Government in consequence of the opening of the river to foreign trade, and consisting of a governor's house and a warehouse, with a primitive quay made of palm trunks in front, have been placed on the shore in the angle between the two streams. The comfort of the future governor had not been forgotten, for a bathhouse, heated by a furnace, was appended to his mansion. In the interval before trade begins, the new quay, which is about fifty yards long, was being turned to practical use, having recently been ploughed and sown. On the opposite or southern side of the Haffar Canal are the ruins of an old Persian fort and castle, where the sheikh used to reside fifty years ago, and which, in co-operation with larger works on the northern bank, attempted to dispute the entrance of the river with the British in 1857, but was very speedily silenced and knocked to pieces by our guns. In the past year (1891) infantry and artillery barracks have been built upon this site by the Persian Government.

Here the British India steamer stopped her engines to put me down. At Fao the Turkish Custom-house officer had come on board, and it was thought likely that he might raise an objection to the vessel stopping at Mohammerah, to allow of my leaving her, although he could have no legal claim whatever to do so; Mohammerah being a Persian port, and the Turks having no right of control either over the boats of the British India Company or over the opposite side of the Shat-el-Arab. This forecast of the probable tactics of Turkish officialdom was not entirely mistaken, because, although the individual in question made no sign when I disembarked, he subsequently lodged a formal complaint upon arriving at Busrah, and swore that the captain had put me down in the face of his vehement protest. Upon this the Custom-house at Busrah fined the vessel 12*l.*, an act of impertinent

Ottoman amenities



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malice to which, I am glad to say, the agents of the company absolutely declined to submit, and which was still the subject of heated controversy when I left the river a month later. I mention it only as an additional instance of the amenities of Ottoman officials in a region too remote from head-quarters to admit either of prompt intervention or becoming chastisement.

Disembarkation

Disembarking in a *bellam*,[1] or native boat—a long, narrow craft, shaped rather like a racing punt, and either sailed with a big lateen on a single mast, or paddled, or poled—I was propelled in the last-named fashion round the corner of the Haffar Canal up to the town of Mohammerah. Against the opposite bank was moored the rusty and decaying hulk of an old steamer, owned many years ago by Haji Jabir Khan, the late Sheikh of the neighbouring Arabs, who had procured from the Government at Teheran a monopoly of the navigation of the Lower Karun as far as Ahwaz. The story ran that when laden with a cargo of petroleum the vessel had been destroyed by fire. Mohammerah, as I have said, is situated rather more than a mile up the Haffar Canal, the total length of which, from the Shat-el-Arab to the Karun proper is about three miles, with an average breadth of a quarter of a mile, and depth of from twenty to thirty feet. It is probable that in the passage of time it has been considerably enlarged, as the banks are liable to be chafed away in flood time, while the sea-tide flowing up the Bahmeshir, or original and natural mouth of the Karun river, piles up the waters of the latter and forces them into the Haffar channel.

Mohammerah

Those who, from the glowing accounts in the newspapers three years ago, formed a roseate conception of Mohammerah as a great trading emporium, will be disappointed to hear that it is a small and exceptionally filthy place with a ruined fort, a little over 2,000 inhabitants (of whom, however, 40 per cent. were said to have been swept off by the cholera in 1889), and as yet only an insignificant foreign trade. In the old days, six centuries ago, when Ahwaz, Shushter, and Dizful were large cities and the centres of popular districts and an extensive commerce, Mohammerah was a port of some renown.[2]

[1] The word signifies originally 'cotton-pod,' and hence a cockleshell boat.

[2] On or near the site of the modern Mohammerah, Alexander the Great founded one of his numerous Alexandrias. This city having been destroyed by flood, it was rebuilt by Antiochus, and called Antiochia. Again washed away, it was again rebuilt, and called Charax; and having been captured by an Arab chief named




*Persian Battery at Muhammareh.*
*( Maj: P. Z. Cox. )*

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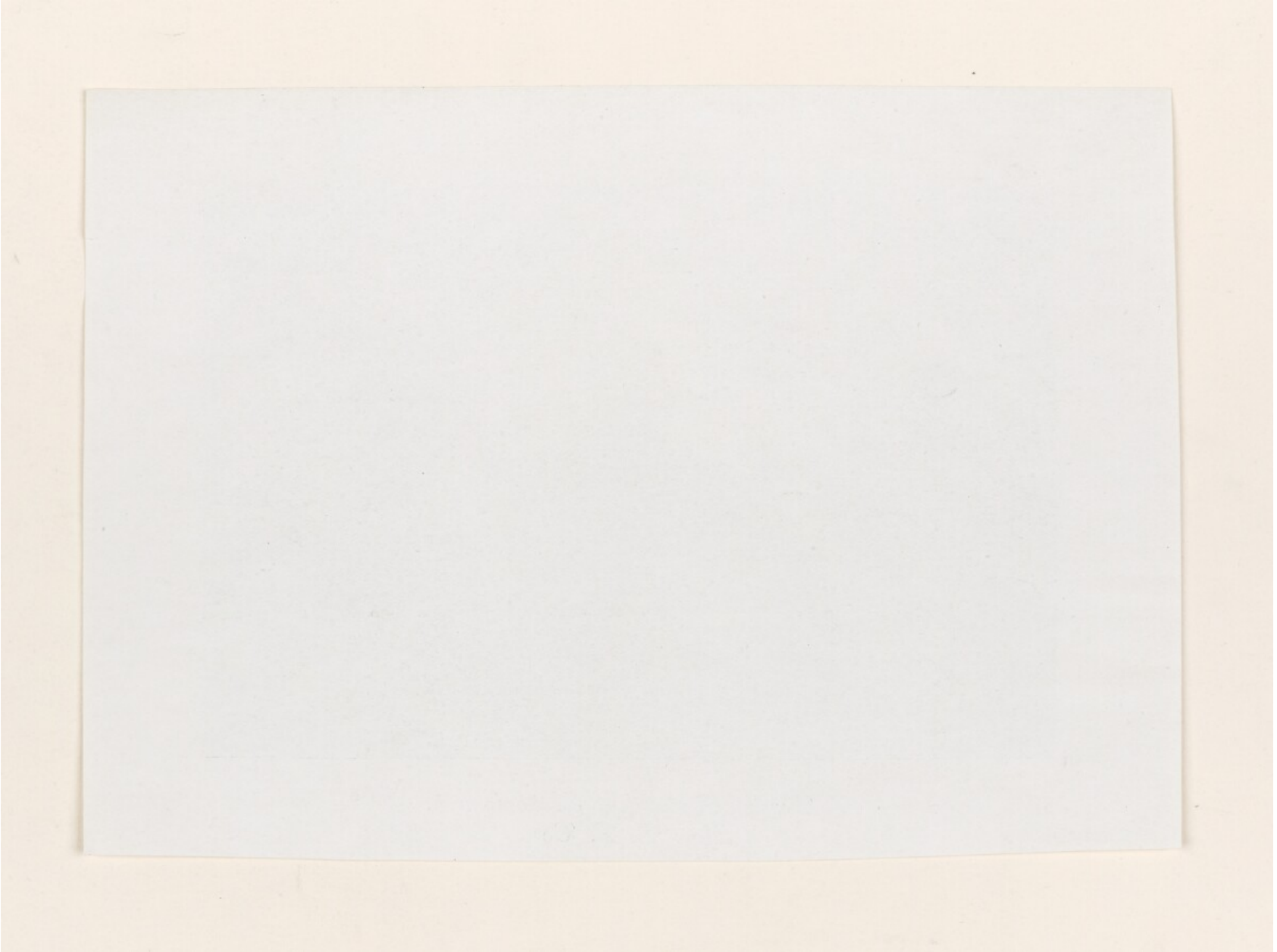

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*River Scene Muhammareh.*
*( Maj: P. Z. Cox.)*

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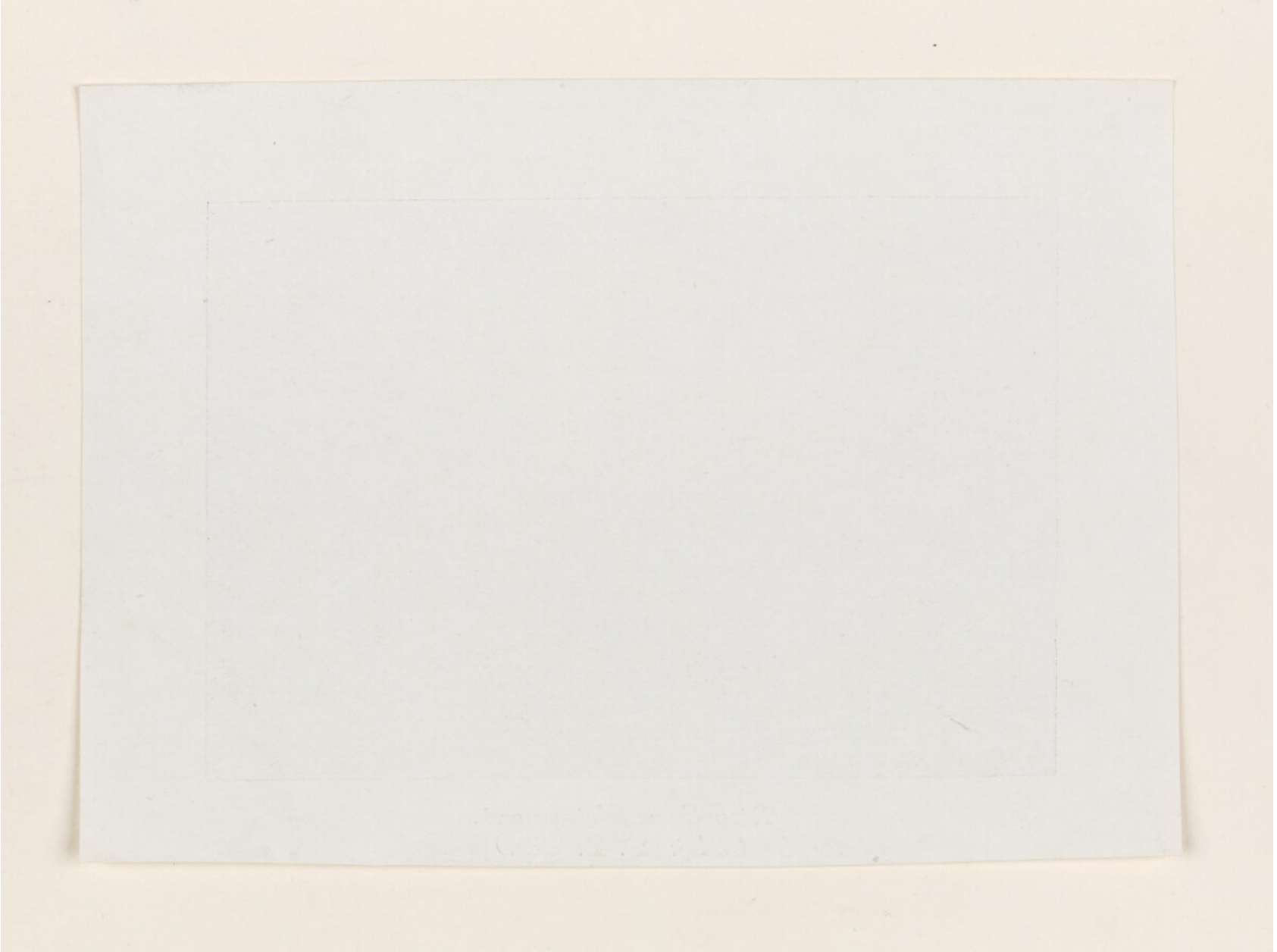

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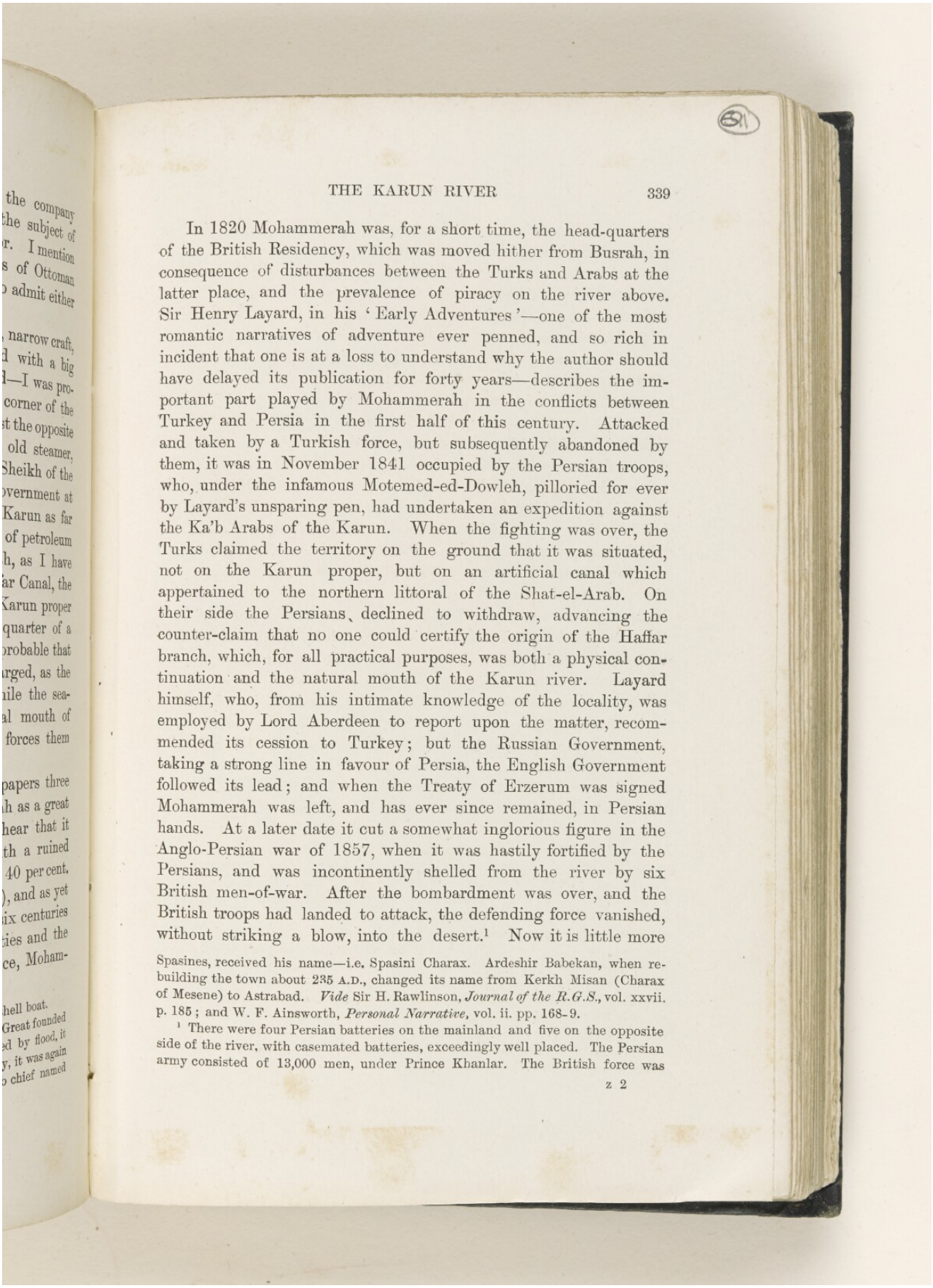



In 1820 Mohammerah was, for a short time, the head-quarters of the British Residency, which was moved hither from Busrah, in consequence of disturbances between the Turks and Arabs at the latter place, and the prevalence of piracy on the river above. Sir Henry Layard, in his 'Early Adventures'—one of the most romantic narratives of adventure ever penned, and so rich in incident that one is at a loss to understand why the author should have delayed its publication for forty years—describes the important part played by Mohammerah in the conflicts between Turkey and Persia in the first half of this century. Attacked and taken by a Turkish force, but subsequently abandoned by them, it was in November 1841 occupied by the Persian troops, who, under the infamous Motemed-ed-Dowleh, pilloried for ever by Layard's unsparing pen, had undertaken an expedition against the Ka'b Arabs of the Karun. When the fighting was over, the Turks claimed the territory on the ground that it was situated, not on the Karun proper, but on an artificial canal which appertained to the northern littoral of the Shat-el-Arab. On their side the Persians declined to withdraw, advancing the counter-claim that no one could certify the origin of the Haffar branch, which, for all practical purposes, was both a physical continuation and the natural mouth of the Karun river. Layard himself, who, from his intimate knowledge of the locality, was employed by Lord Aberdeen to report upon the matter, recommended its cession to Turkey; but the Russian Government, taking a strong line in favour of Persia, the English Government followed its lead; and when the Treaty of Erzerum was signed Mohammerah was left, and has ever since remained, in Persian hands. At a later date it cut a somewhat inglorious figure in the Anglo-Persian war of 1857, when it was hastily fortified by the Persians, and was incontinently shelled from the river by six British men-of-war. After the bombardment was over, and the British troops had landed to attack, the defending force vanished, without striking a blow, into the desert.[1] Now it is little more

Spasines, received his name—i.e. Spasini Charax. Ardeshir Babekan, when rebuilding the town about 235 A.D., changed its name from Kerkh Misan (Charax of Mesene) to Astrabad. *Vide* Sir H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xxvii. p. 185; and W. F. Ainsworth, *Personal Narrative*, vol. ii. pp. 168-9.

[1] There were four Persian batteries on the mainland and five on the opposite side of the river, with casemated batteries, exceedingly well placed. The Persian army consisted of 13,000 men, under Prince Khanlar. The British force was



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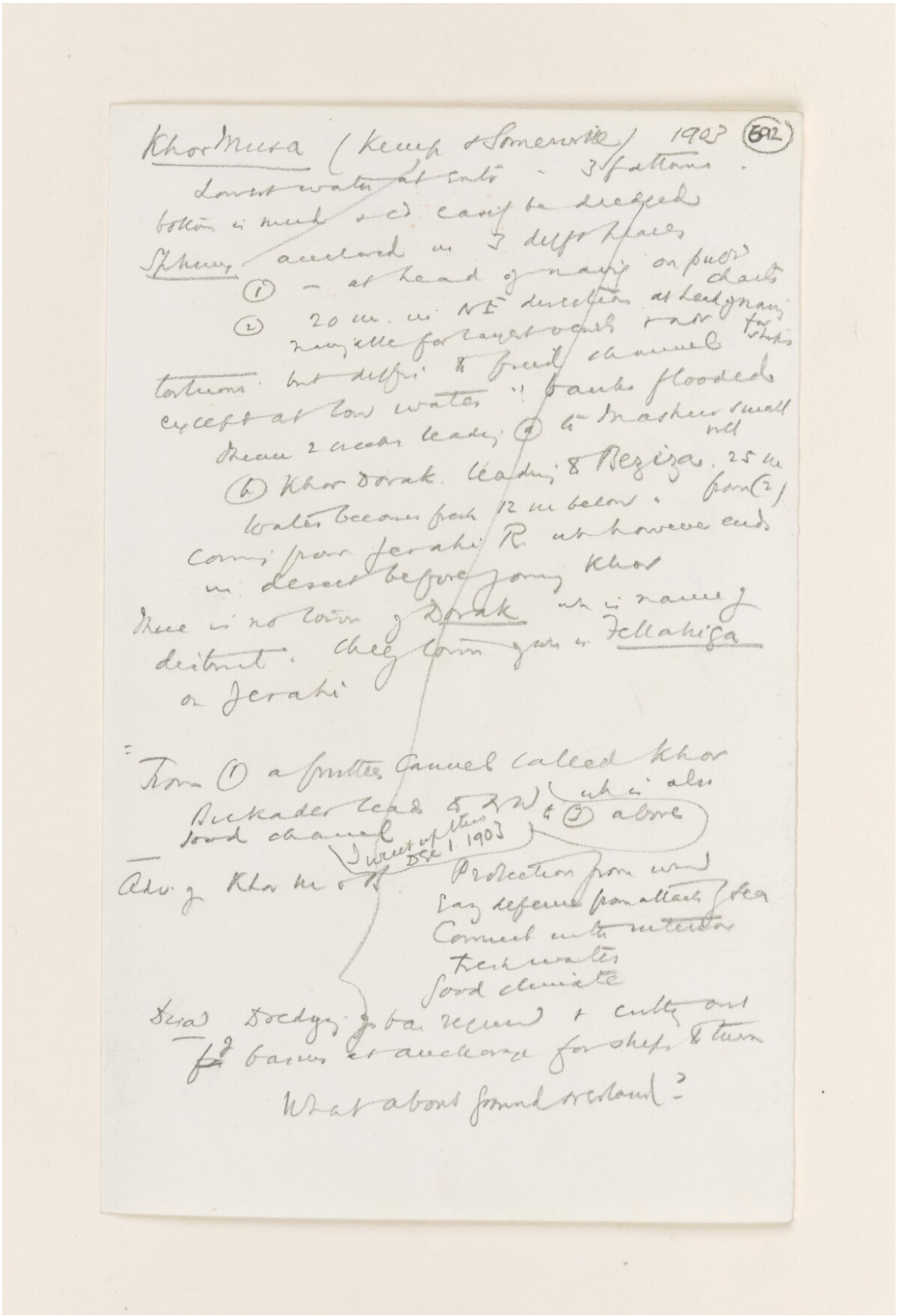
than a local mart for the needs of the Arab tribes, and for a limited export of native produce, such as grain, opium, wool, and dates. Its customs were farmed a few years ago for 1,500*l.*; but as the duty was levied on the number of packages or bales, irrespective of bulk or value, no criterion was thereby afforded of the total volume of trade. Selby in 1842 laid stress upon the exceptional healthiness of the place, which he said was superior in this respect to any other part of the adjacent country, to which he attributed the continued immunity from bad fever of himself and ship's crew, and which he explained by the coolness of the snow-fed stream. This testimonial, if it be applicable to the river, which has been disputed by other witnesses,[1] can scarcely be transferred to the town, whose main street is also its *cloaca maxima*, and which riots in smells. Nothing, indeed, redeems the place from insignificance but its palm-groves, which are superb, and its physical situation, which in any other country and under any other government would long ago have been turned to enduring profit. In the river off the town were moored some twenty *mehalas*, the large native boat, ranging from five to fifty tons, and having a draught of from three to six feet, built with raking prow, lofty poop, and a single vast lateen sail, which is the immemorial cargo boat of the Karun.

Here I embarked on board the 'Shushan,' too late, however, to proceed till the next morning. The Persian Government maintained an agent at Mohammerah, one Mirza Kasim Khan, known as the Karguzar, to superintend mercantile operations, represent the Foreign Office, and watch Messrs. Lynch. The first of these functions was easily performed, because the

A Persian official

composed of 5,000 men, with twelve guns, four armed steamers, and two sloops of war. At daybreak on March 26, 1857, the British guns opened fire upon the Persian batteries, which were silenced in less than an hour. The troopships then advanced, passed the batteries amid musketry fire, landed under Sir H. Havelock, drove the Persians out of the batteries (these alone of the enemy showed fight), and advanced through the palm-groves towards the camp where the main Persian army was entrenched. The latter fled precipitately, leaving their tents, stores, ammunition, and sixteen guns. The officers were afterwards publicly disgraced by order of the Shah, being dragged along the ranks by rings through their noses, beaten, and cast into prison. The arch-coward, however, Khanlar Mirza, who ought to have been shot, having made a present of 8,000*l.* to the prime minister, received a sword and robe of honour.

[1] W. K. Loftus (*Travels in Chaldæa*, p. 278), W. F. Ainsworth (*Personal Narrative*, vol. ii. p. 175).



Khor Musa (Kemp & Somerville) 1903 (692)

Lowest water at ends - 3 fathoms.
bottom is mud & cd easily be dredged
Sphinx anchored in 3 diff places
(1) - at head of navig on pub charts
(2) 20 m. in NE direction at head of navig for ships
navigable for largest vessels & not
tortuous but diffic to find channel
except at low water " banks flooded
Thence 2 creeks leading (a) to Mashur small well
(b) Khor Dorak leading to Beziza. 25 m from (2)
water becomes fresh 12 m below.
Coming from Jerahi R. wh however ends
in desert before joining Khor
There is no town of Dorak wh is name of
district. Chief town given is Fellahiga
on Jerahi

From (1) a further Cannel called Khor
Bukader leads to NW wh is also
good channel & (3) above
I went up this Dec 1. 1903

Adv of Khor M & B
Protection from wind
Easy defence from attack of sea
Connect with interior
Fresh water
Good climate

Disad Dredging of bar required & cutting out
of basins at anchorage for ships & turn

What about ground overland?

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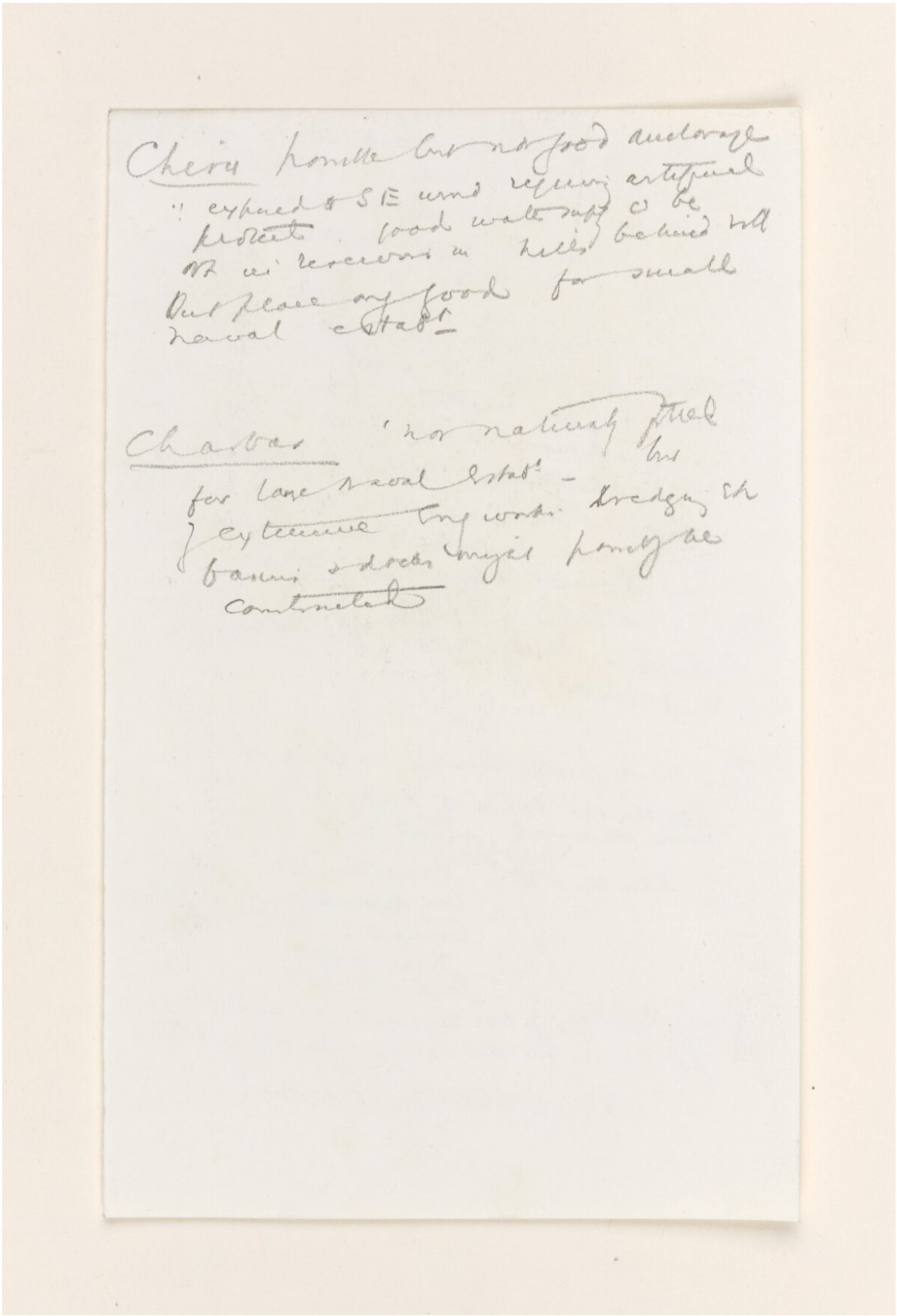

Chiru possible but not good anchorage
" exposed to SE wind requiring artificial
protect. good water supply to be
obt in reservoirs in hills behind will
But place any good for small
naval estab^t

Charbar 'not naturally fitted
for large naval estab^t - but
of extensive long works. dredging etc
basins & docks might possibly be
constructed

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operations could not be said as yet to have begun; the second became an excuse for protracted delays, caused by a dutiful reference to official superiors; while the third offered a boundless field for meddlesome and nonsensical activity. It did not argue a high level of practical intelligence to insist that the import duty upon foreign merchandise should be levied on the price, whatever it might be, that the article would fetch at the moment in the local bazaar. But commercial law did not happen to be the *forte* of the Karguzar. On this occasion he was very much interested in myself and my future movements. He had already complained of the steamer being detained on my account; and had peremptorily ordered it, quite *ultra vires*, to quit. A series of messages now passed, the Karguzar requiring my passport, which had not once been asked for during three months of previous travel in Persia, and finally bidding me to call upon him at sunrise before starting next morning. This I felt myself quite unable to do; and leaving him to devise fresh toils for the bird that had flown, our steamer weighed anchor at 6 A.M. and started up the river.

Bahmeshir Channel

Some two miles above Mohammerah, and, therefore, three miles from the mouth of the Haffar, we come to the Bahmeshir (derivation disputed),[1] or alternative channel, by which a portion of the waters of the Karun still enter, and the whole, in all probability, once entered, the Persian Gulf. It runs in a line from north-west to south-east, parallel with the Shat-el-Arab, for a total length of over forty miles, and flows into the sea by a wide mouth at a distance of several miles from the embouchure of the estuary. Along its shores, as on those of the Shat-el-Arab near Busrah, are to be seen screens of reeds planted at low water level, in order to catch the fish which are left in great numbers on the muddy banks when the tide retires. In ancient times the Bahmeshir was the eastern mouth of the Tigris, and the Shat-el-Arab the western. The island enclosed between them, the Haffar, and the sea, is the Dilmun of the cuneiform inscriptions, and the Persian Mian-i-Rudan, i.e. Between the Rivers, or Mesopotamia.[2]

[1] Some spell it Bahr-el-Mashir (Sea of Mashir?). But the name is probably a contraction of Bahman Ardeshir, to whom are attributed many works in these parts. The district on the lower Tigris was called Khorah Shad Bahman, the maritime border Bahman Ardeshir.

[2] It was also called Muharzi, from the port of Muharzeh at the north end of the island. Yakut described it as a triangle, with the Persian Gulf as base, and the two mouths of the Dijleh (Tigris) as sides.

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Should the unfriendly attitude of the Turks lead at any time to positive collision, it may be of incalculable importance to Persia to have an alternative and independent way of entry into and exit from the Karun. Such a channel is provided by the Bahmeshir. With both its banks and its mouth exclusively Persian, and safely removed from risk either of Ottoman menace or violence, it may be that the Bahmeshir will once again be utilised for navigation. It was ascended by the steamship 'Euphrates' under Major Estcourt, in connection with the Euphrates expedition of 1836. In 1841 Lieutenant Selby steamed down it from Mohammerah to the sea and back, and found a channel of not less than nine feet at low water. Layard described it as having a good navigable channel to its junction with the sea of not less than four fathoms depth, and over half a mile in width, and said that its entrance at low water, during spring tides, was more than three fathoms deep, and therefore practicable for ships of large burden. Since then shoals appear to have formed outside its sea-mouth, pierced only by a tortuous and shifting channel. There is a rise and fall of tide of about nine feet, and the water throughout its course is rumoured to be growing shallower. It would be well if a careful survey were made of this channel; and it is possible that by dredging or other artificial means it might again become accessible throughout, and thus provide an exclusively Persian entry to the Karun. I doubt if the Persians themselves, who are commercially apathetic, except in the cause of obstruction, have at all realised the possible value of this stream. By us, however, it should not be overlooked.

Mohammerah itself is buried in palm-groves that would consecrate any landscape; but at Gisbah, about eight miles up the river, this edging of green suddenly ceases, and henceforward as far as Bund-i-Kir the banks are absolutely bare, or are covered only with low scrub and tamarisk bushes and willows,[1] here and there intersected by creeks or the desiccated beds of forgotten canals. In this lower part of its course the banks are everywhere low and flat, but farther on they increase in height till they attain an altitude above the water, sometimes of from twenty

Landscape

[1] This tree, half poplar and half willow, called *gharab* (or 'tear') by the Persians, is, without doubt, says General Schindler, the true *Salix Babylonica*, or willow of scripture (Levit. xxiii. 40; Job xl. 22; Psalm cxxxviii. 2; Isaiah xv. 7, xliv. 4). The tree which we know as *Salix Babylonica*, or weeping willow, is not found in Chaldæa or Susiana, but is the Persian *Bid-i-majnun*.

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No. 2.

(694)

*The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir A. Hardinge.*

(No. 61.)
(Telegraphic.) *Foreign Office, November* 26, 1902, 4·40 P.M.

YOUR telegram No. 72.

In your despatch No. 71 you stated that Agent of Sheikh of Mohammerah asked for an assurance that England would not permit Russian ships of war to attack Mohammerah in support of any attempts of Persian Government to coerce the Sheikh.

From your telegram No. 71 of 20th November I understand that you desire to extend this assurance so as to make it apply to coercion by Persian Government or any foreign Power, whether by land or sea.

In your despatch No. 82 of 11th May, you reported that the Agent asked if His Majesty's Government would give the Sheikh an assurance of protection similar to that accorded to Sheikh of Koweit. That assurance, as you know, is limited to a promise of good offices. You, however, inquired in what form the Sheikh of Mohammerah wished to have the assurance, and the Agent asked for a promise that His Majesty's Government would prevent the Persian Government from diminishing the Sheikh's present authority, or otherwise causing him trouble, so long as he remained loyal, paid his taxes, and observed terms of his Agreement with Persian Government.

There are obvious objections to a personal guarantee of this kind, which the Sheikh might at any moment invoke for the purpose of compelling us to support him against the Shah, whose subject he is, nor is it desirable to place him in the position of being able to call upon us to support him, both by land and sea, in the event of a threat from Persia with Russia behind her.

On the other hand, we should certainly not acquiesce in the seizure of Mohammerah by Russia upon any pretext.

My despatch No. 2 of 6th January, which you have communicated to the Persian Government, should leave no doubt as to this, and Mr. des Graz in notes inclosed in his despatches Nos. 137 and 140 has again reminded Persian Government of their engagement to consult His Majesty's Government before any change is made in position of Sheikh.

Could you not communicate substance of these announcements to the Sheikh, telling him at the same time that assurance given to him in terms of my telegram No. 59 is practically identical with that given to Sheikh of Koweit.

The best means of maintaining our influence will surely be a more frequent visit of British gun-boats to the port, and not the giving of personal assurances which, if in general terms, afford no satisfaction, and, if precise, commit us to a very inconvenient extent.

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No. 4.

*Sir M. Herbert to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 26, 10·30 P.M.)

(No. 48.)
(Telegraphic.) *Washington, November* 26, 1902.

SAMOAN Award.

Your despatch No. 213.

Secretary of State much prefers that King of Sweden should not settle question of claims, and he will let me have an answer to your Lordship's suggestion next week when he returns from New York.

United States' Ambassador in London was instructed on 21st instant to propose to your Lordship dispatch of a Commission to Samoa to discuss question of liability, but Secretary of State is not committed to this plan.

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No. 5.

*Sir M. Herbert to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 26, 10·40 P.M.)

(No. 49.)
(Telegraphic.) *Washington, November* 26, 1902.

YOUR telegram No. 51.

Secretary of State will be very glad to allow United States' Minister at Carácas to look after British interests in Venezuela in the event of His Majesty's Minister's withdrawal, provided that Venezuelan Government do not object. Colombian Government recently made a similar request to the United States' Minister, who acceded to it, but Venezuelan Government refused to consent. Does your Lordship wish Secretary of State to instruct United States' Minister before His Majesty's Minister is actually withdrawn?

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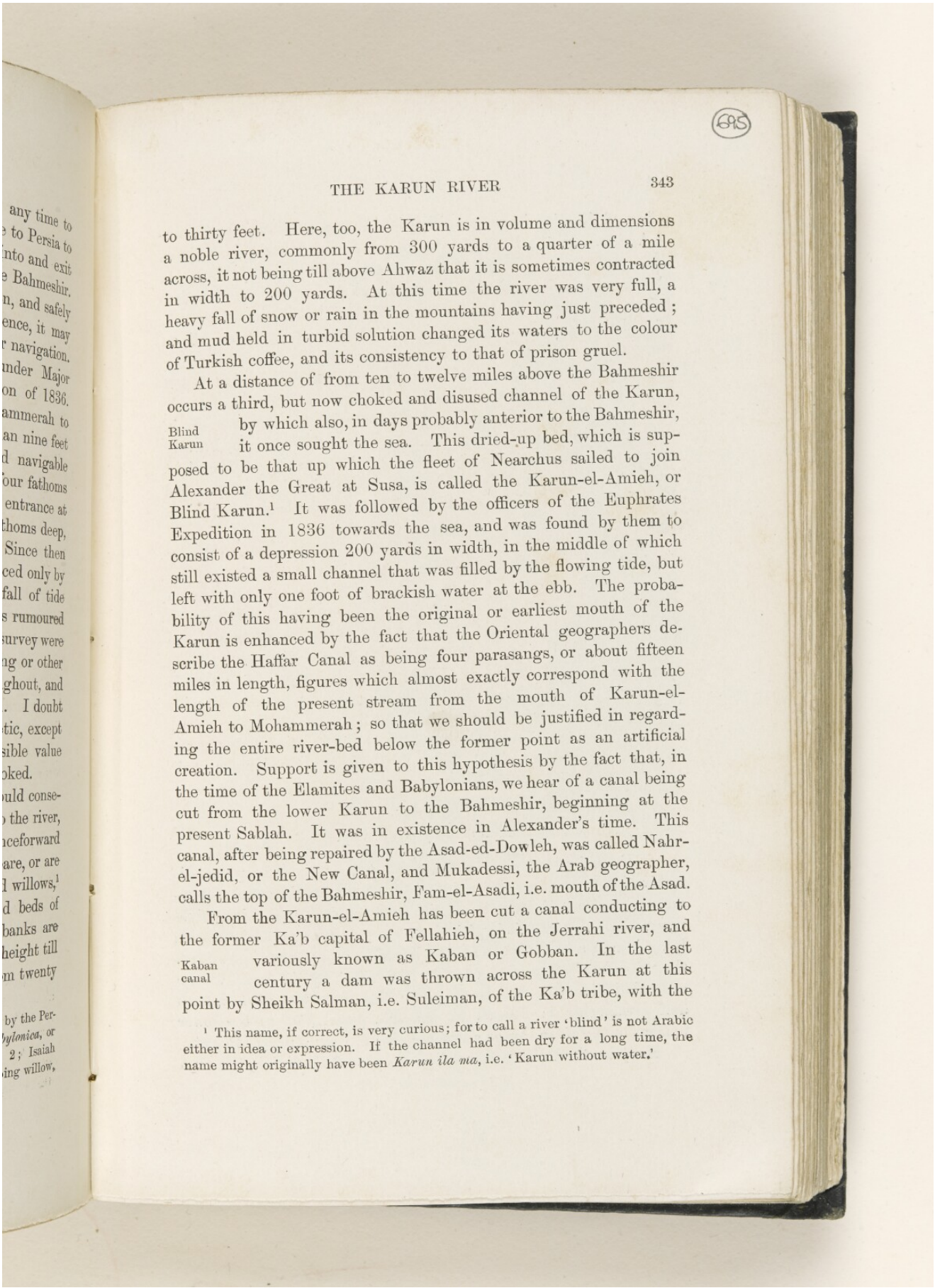
No. 6.

*Sir A. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*—(*Received November* 27, 7·30 A.M.)

(No. 73.)
(Telegraphic.) *Tehran, November* 26, 1902, 4·20 P.M.

MOHAMMERAH Envoy to-day pressed hard for secret written assurance that we should prohibit further curtailment of rights of Sheikh and Arabs, so long as latter





to thirty feet. Here, too, the Karun is in volume and dimensions a noble river, commonly from 300 yards to a quarter of a mile across, it not being till above Ahwaz that it is sometimes contracted in width to 200 yards. At this time the river was very full, a heavy fall of snow or rain in the mountains having just preceded; and mud held in turbid solution changed its waters to the colour of Turkish coffee, and its consistency to that of prison gruel.

At a distance of from ten to twelve miles above the Bahmeshir occurs a third, but now choked and disused channel of the Karun, by which also, in days probably anterior to the Bahmeshir, it once sought the sea. This dried-up bed, which is supposed to be that up which the fleet of Nearchus sailed to join Alexander the Great at Susa, is called the Karun-el-Amieh, or Blind Karun.[1] It was followed by the officers of the Euphrates Expedition in 1836 towards the sea, and was found by them to consist of a depression 200 yards in width, in the middle of which still existed a small channel that was filled by the flowing tide, but left with only one foot of brackish water at the ebb. The probability of this having been the original or earliest mouth of the Karun is enhanced by the fact that the Oriental geographers describe the Haffar Canal as being four parasangs, or about fifteen miles in length, figures which almost exactly correspond with the length of the present stream from the mouth of Karun-el-Amieh to Mohammerah; so that we should be justified in regarding the entire river-bed below the former point as an artificial creation. Support is given to this hypothesis by the fact that, in the time of the Elamites and Babylonians, we hear of a canal being cut from the lower Karun to the Bahmeshir, beginning at the present Sablah. It was in existence in Alexander's time. This canal, after being repaired by the Asad-ed-Dowleh, was called Nahr-el-jedid, or the New Canal, and Mukadessi, the Arab geographer, calls the top of the Bahmeshir, Fam-el-Asadi, i.e. mouth of the Asad.

Blind Karun

From the Karun-el-Amieh has been cut a canal conducting to the former Ka'b capital of Fellahieh, on the Jerrahi river, and variously known as Kaban or Gobban. In the last century a dam was thrown across the Karun at this point by Sheikh Salman, i.e. Suleiman, of the Ka'b tribe, with the

Kaban canal

[1] This name, if correct, is very curious; for to call a river 'blind' is not Arabic either in idea or expression. If the channel had been dry for a long time, the name might originally have been *Karun ila ma*, i.e. 'Karun without water.'

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object of diverting its waters either into this canal or into the Karun-el-Amieh. In the Persian invasion of Kerim Khan this dam was destroyed, and the Blind Karun consequently achieved blindness. The canal is still navigable at seasons to Fellahieh. A long time before reaching it, the pyramidal tomb, in thirteen steps or stages, of Robein-ibn-Yakub, or, as it is sometimes called, Rewah Ali, on the right bank stands out the sole feature in the 'the level waste, the rounding grey,' appearing alternately on the right and left hand as the river twists and turns. Beyond, another small tomb, known as Imamzadeh Ali-ibn-Husein, shaded by a cluster of six palms, succeeds and is in turn caught up and left behind. Further on we pass Imam Sabah (i.e. Sâb'a, or the seventh) on the right bank, the half-way stage to Ahwaz. Beyond this, a post named Kajarieh has lately been established on the right bank, where is a Telegraph office and halting place of the steamers.

In the summer the banks of the river in this part are wholly destitute either of population or verdure. But at the time of my visit occasional Arab encampments were to be seen on the water's edge, consisting either of black tents or of a square enclosure composed of mat huts with a fence of thorns, the horses and cattle being folded at night in the interior to keep them from the attack of wild beasts. These nomads move upwards in the winter months from the date groves, loosely turn the soil with rude wooden ploughs drawn either by donkeys, horses, or cattle, scatter the seed, and await the harvest. Having gathered this in the early spring, and procured flour for bread and fodder for their horses during the remainder of the year, they

Arab camps

Fold their tents
And silently steal away.

In the neighbourhood only of these temporary encampments is cultivation to be seen, the rest of the country having the appearance of a desert. But the entire district is one of incredible natural fertility, and it is pitiable to see stores of potential wealth lying idle in a land that is always bewailing its poverty. At 8 P.M. the 'Shushan' dropped anchor for the night by the small village of Ismailieh, on the left bank. The tide from the Shat-el-Arab and Bahmeshir is felt as far as this place, and in the lower reaches of the river causes a rise and fall of from four to five feet.

Early in the following morning we passed Beraikieh, the first

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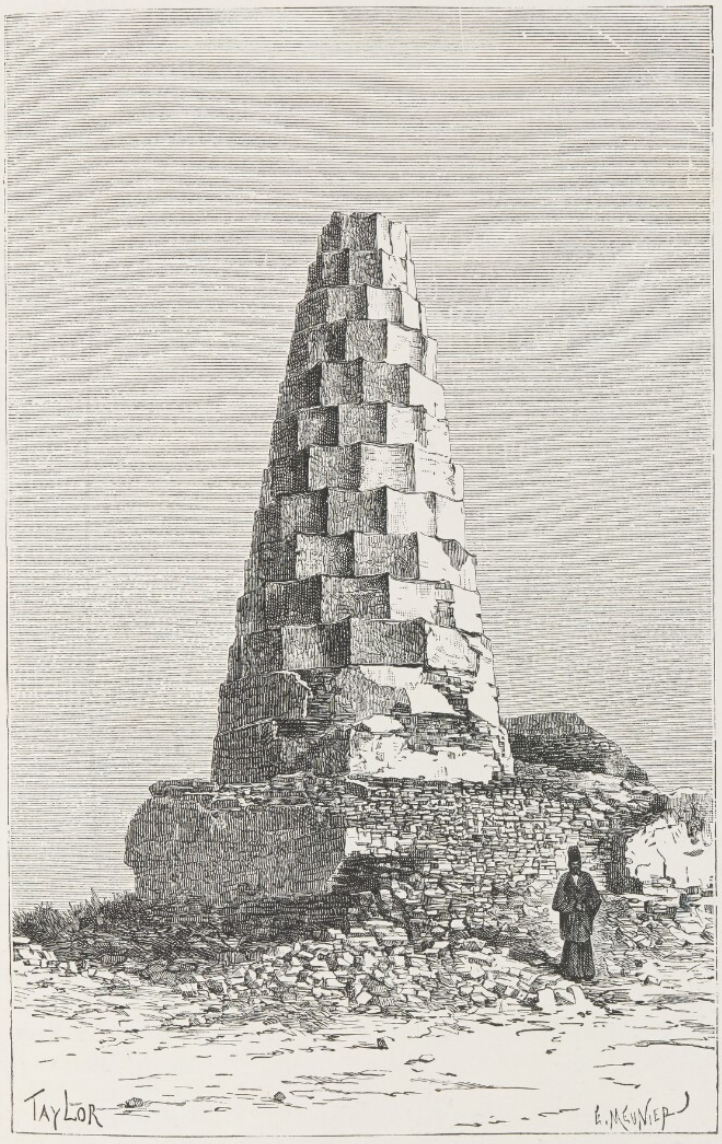
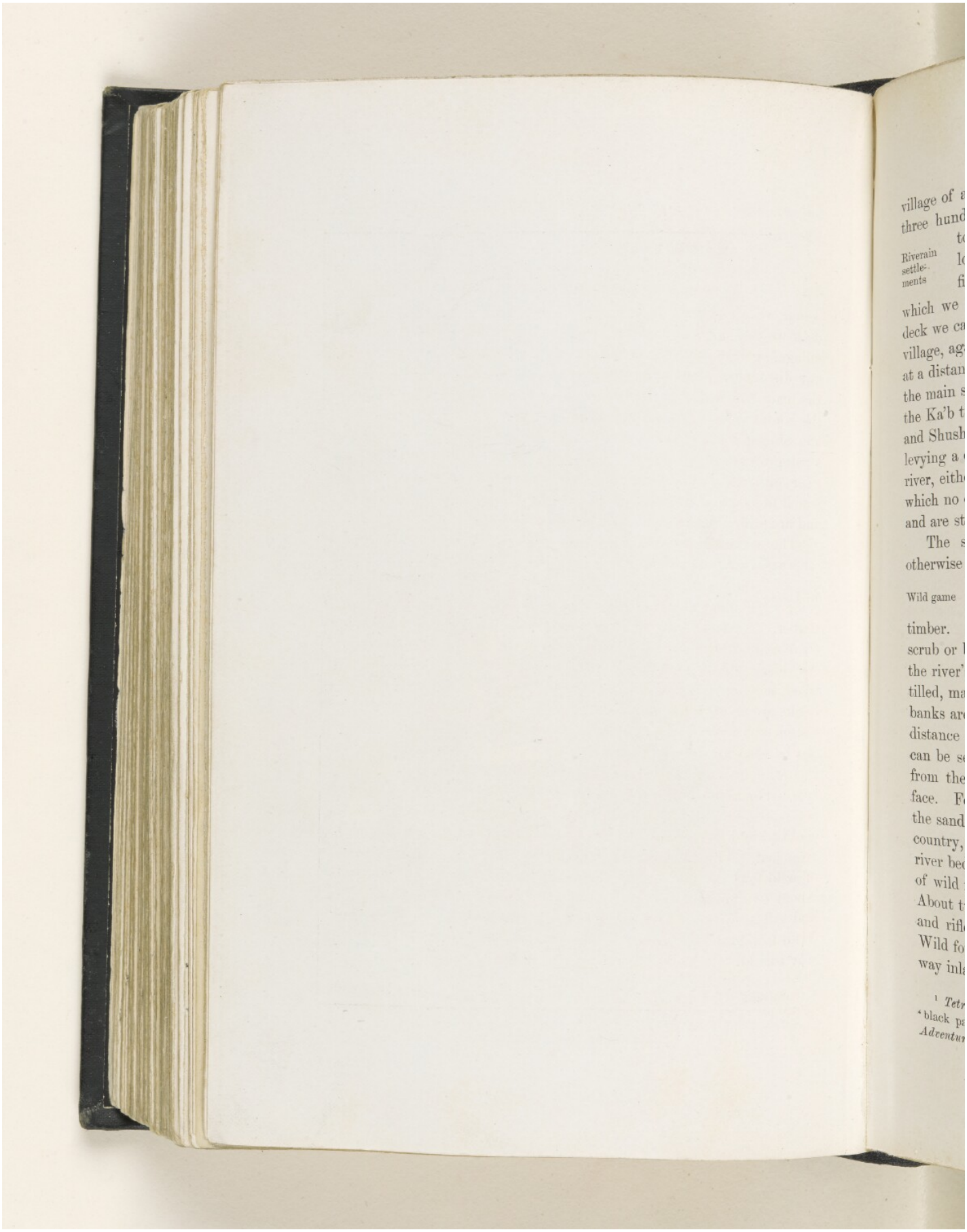



TOMB OF ROBEIN-IBN-YAKUB



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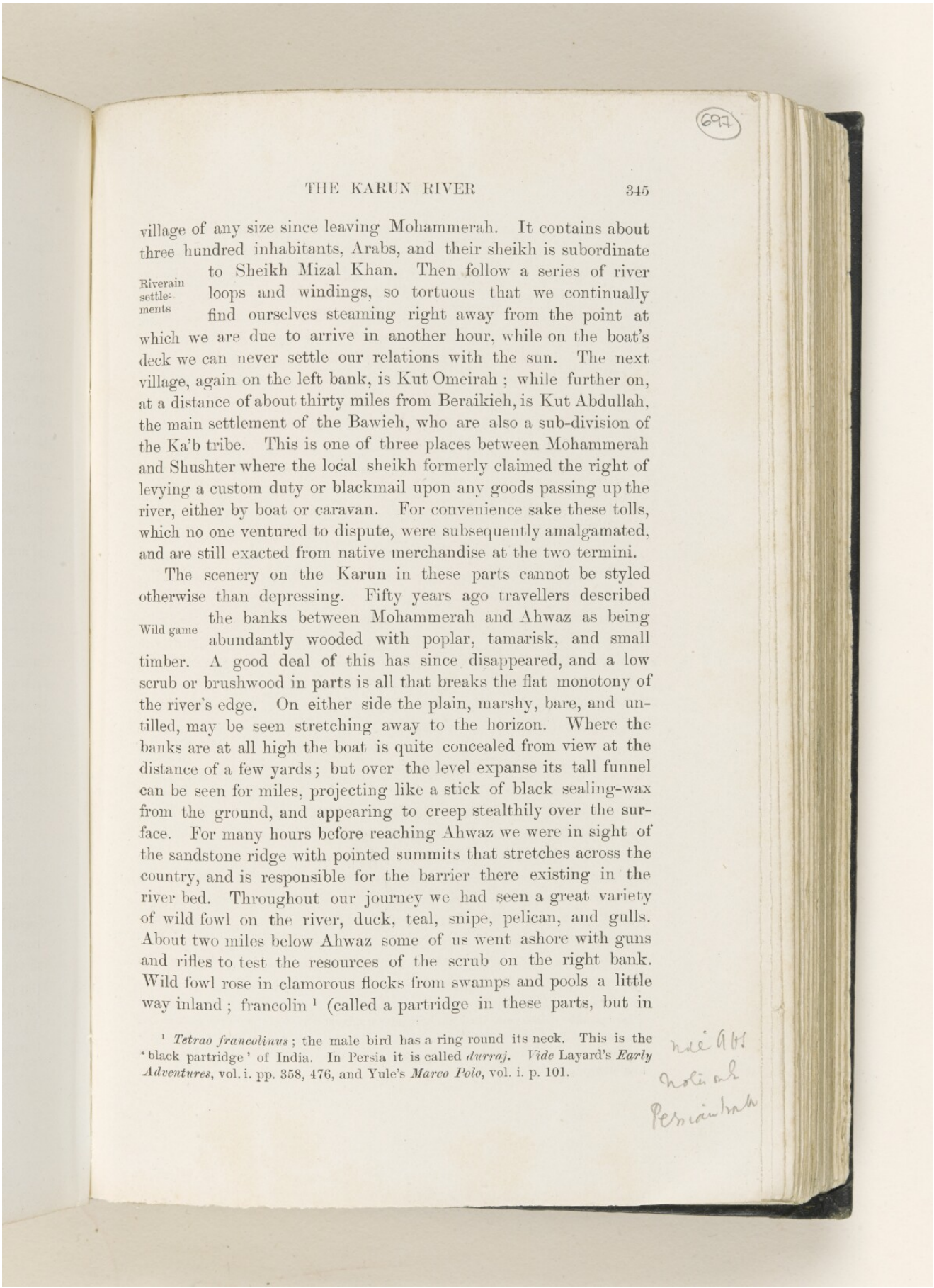



village of any size since leaving Mohammerah. It contains about three hundred inhabitants, Arabs, and their sheikh is subordinate to Sheikh Mizal Khan. Then follow a series of river loops and windings, so tortuous that we continually find ourselves steaming right away from the point at which we are due to arrive in another hour, while on the boat's deck we can never settle our relations with the sun. The next village, again on the left bank, is Kut Omeirah; while further on, at a distance of about thirty miles from Beraikieh, is Kut Abdullah, the main settlement of the Bawieh, who are also a sub-division of the Ka'b tribe. This is one of three places between Mohammerah and Shushter where the local sheikh formerly claimed the right of levying a custom duty or blackmail upon any goods passing up the river, either by boat or caravan. For convenience sake these tolls, which no one ventured to dispute, were subsequently amalgamated, and are still exacted from native merchandise at the two termini.

Riverain settlements

The scenery on the Karun in these parts cannot be styled otherwise than depressing. Fifty years ago travellers described the banks between Mohammerah and Ahwaz as being abundantly wooded with poplar, tamarisk, and small timber. A good deal of this has since disappeared, and a low scrub or brushwood in parts is all that breaks the flat monotony of the river's edge. On either side the plain, marshy, bare, and untilled, may be seen stretching away to the horizon. Where the banks are at all high the boat is quite concealed from view at the distance of a few yards; but over the level expanse its tall funnel can be seen for miles, projecting like a stick of black sealing-wax from the ground, and appearing to creep stealthily over the surface. For many hours before reaching Ahwaz we were in sight of the sandstone ridge with pointed summits that stretches across the country, and is responsible for the barrier there existing in the river bed. Throughout our journey we had seen a great variety of wild fowl on the river, duck, teal, snipe, pelican, and gulls. About two miles below Ahwaz some of us went ashore with guns and rifles to test the resources of the scrub on the right bank. Wild fowl rose in clamorous flocks from swamps and pools a little way inland; francolin [1] (called a partridge in these parts, but in

Wild game

[1] *Tetrao francolinus*; the male bird has a ring round its neck. This is the 'black partridge' of India. In Persia it is called *durraj*. *Vide* Layard's *Early Adventures*, vol. i. pp. 358, 476, and Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. i. p. 101.

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size and appearance more resembling a hen pheasant) jumped up at our feet and whirred away with a flight like that of a grouse; several hares scampered hither and thither. I shot a big wild cat which turned out to be a lynx, and was as large as an Indian cheetah, and some monster wild boar appeared within easy range. It would be difficult to ride them in this country, because of the swamps and deep nullahs or cracks in the surface; but some years ago pig-sticking expeditions were regularly organised from Baghdad. For anyone content with small game a richer preserve could not be found than the Karun valley; while, for the more ambitious, lions are also forthcoming, and further north, in the Bakhtiari Mountains, a number of antelope, ibex, and wild goat.

At 3 P.M. the 'Shushan' was anchored in mid-stream below the rapids of Ahwaz, having occupied twenty-three hours' steaming in the ascent.[1] The distance from Mohammerah by river is about 117 miles; the land march is much less, being calculated by different authorities as from seventy-four to eighty-two miles. Here I continued my walk up the right bank in order to inspect the ruins of the famous *bund* or dam, and the not less famous rapids. It should be added that the town of Ahwaz is 220 feet above the level of the Persian Gulf.

Ahwaz

Navigation is abruptly suspended at Ahwaz, and the crux of the Karun difficulty is created by the existence in the immediate neighbourhood of the river of a formidable outcrop of tertiary sandstone, which, after constituting the somewhat remarkable ridge already mentioned as rising with oblique stratification and zigzag outline, at a slight distance from the left bank, suddenly obtrudes itself in the shape of a number of ledges right across the river bed, and then vanishes under the surface of the plain, only to reappear in another and lower ridge some miles further to the west. It is the obstacle formed by these ledges, of which there are four, cutting the stream almost at right angles, and the abrupt fall of about eight to ten feet between the water level above and below, that constitute the rapids. There are

The rapids

[1] The descent subsequently occupied 11½ hours, there being a great deal of water in the river. The average time occupied by the 'Blosse Lynch,' a much larger paddle-wheel vessel, with which Messrs. Lynch have resumed the navigation, was 16½ hours in the ascent and 10½ in the descent, in the high waters of the preceding spring. The velocity of a full current is from 4 to 5 miles in the hour; of a low current, from 1 to 1½.

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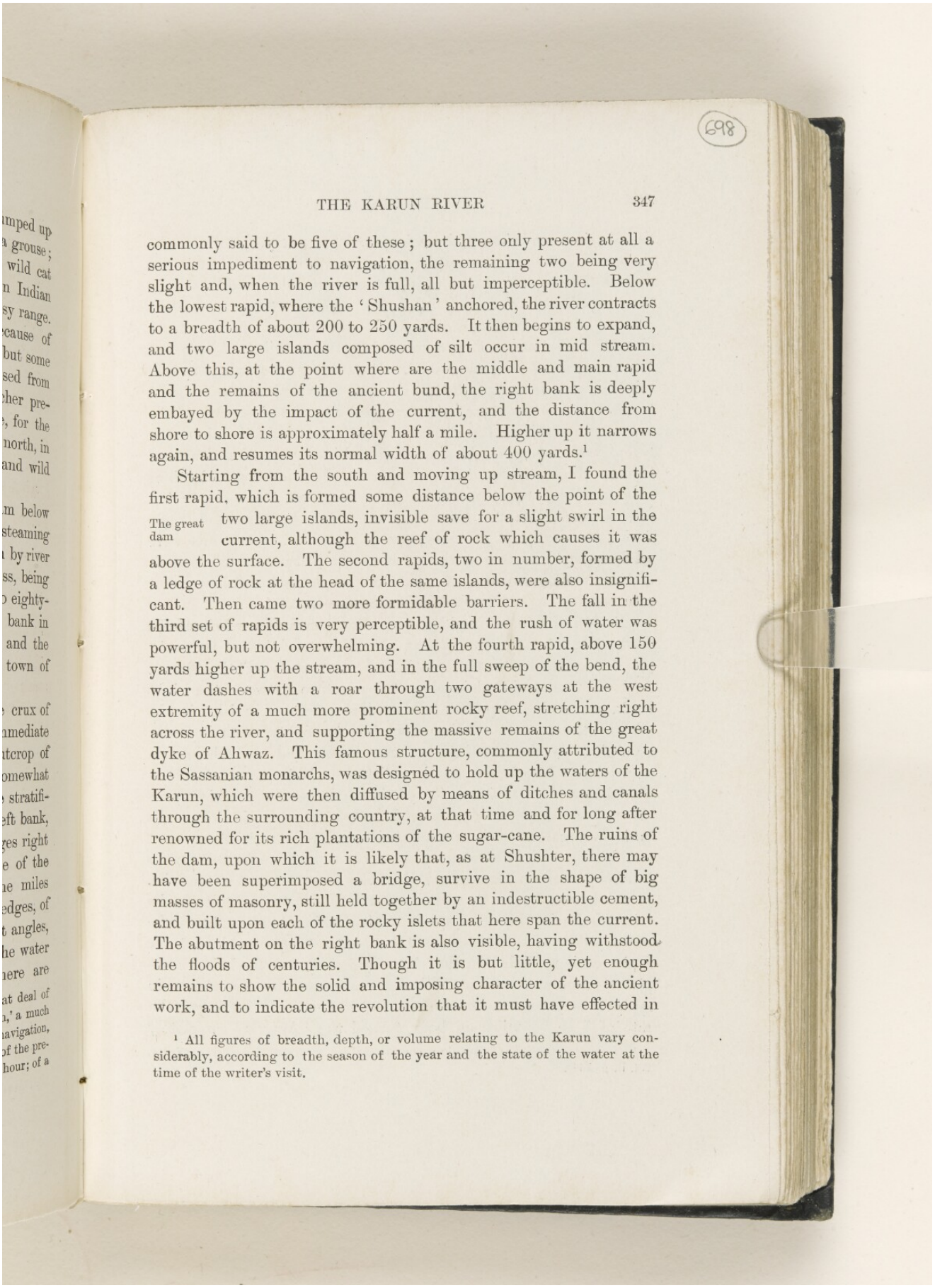




commonly said to be five of these; but three only present at all a serious impediment to navigation, the remaining two being very slight and, when the river is full, all but imperceptible. Below the lowest rapid, where the 'Shushan' anchored, the river contracts to a breadth of about 200 to 250 yards. It then begins to expand, and two large islands composed of silt occur in mid stream. Above this, at the point where are the middle and main rapid and the remains of the ancient bund, the right bank is deeply embayed by the impact of the current, and the distance from shore to shore is approximately half a mile. Higher up it narrows again, and resumes its normal width of about 400 yards.[1]

Starting from the south and moving up stream, I found the first rapid, which is formed some distance below the point of the two large islands, invisible save for a slight swirl in the current, although the reef of rock which causes it was above the surface. The second rapids, two in number, formed by a ledge of rock at the head of the same islands, were also insignificant. Then came two more formidable barriers. The fall in the third set of rapids is very perceptible, and the rush of water was powerful, but not overwhelming. At the fourth rapid, above 150 yards higher up the stream, and in the full sweep of the bend, the water dashes with a roar through two gateways at the west extremity of a much more prominent rocky reef, stretching right across the river, and supporting the massive remains of the great dyke of Ahwaz. This famous structure, commonly attributed to the Sassanian monarchs, was designed to hold up the waters of the Karun, which were then diffused by means of ditches and canals through the surrounding country, at that time and for long after renowned for its rich plantations of the sugar-cane. The ruins of the dam, upon which it is likely that, as at Shushter, there may have been superimposed a bridge, survive in the shape of big masses of masonry, still held together by an indestructible cement, and built upon each of the rocky islets that here span the current. The abutment on the right bank is also visible, having withstood the floods of centuries. Though it is but little, yet enough remains to show the solid and imposing character of the ancient work, and to indicate the revolution that it must have effected in

The great dam

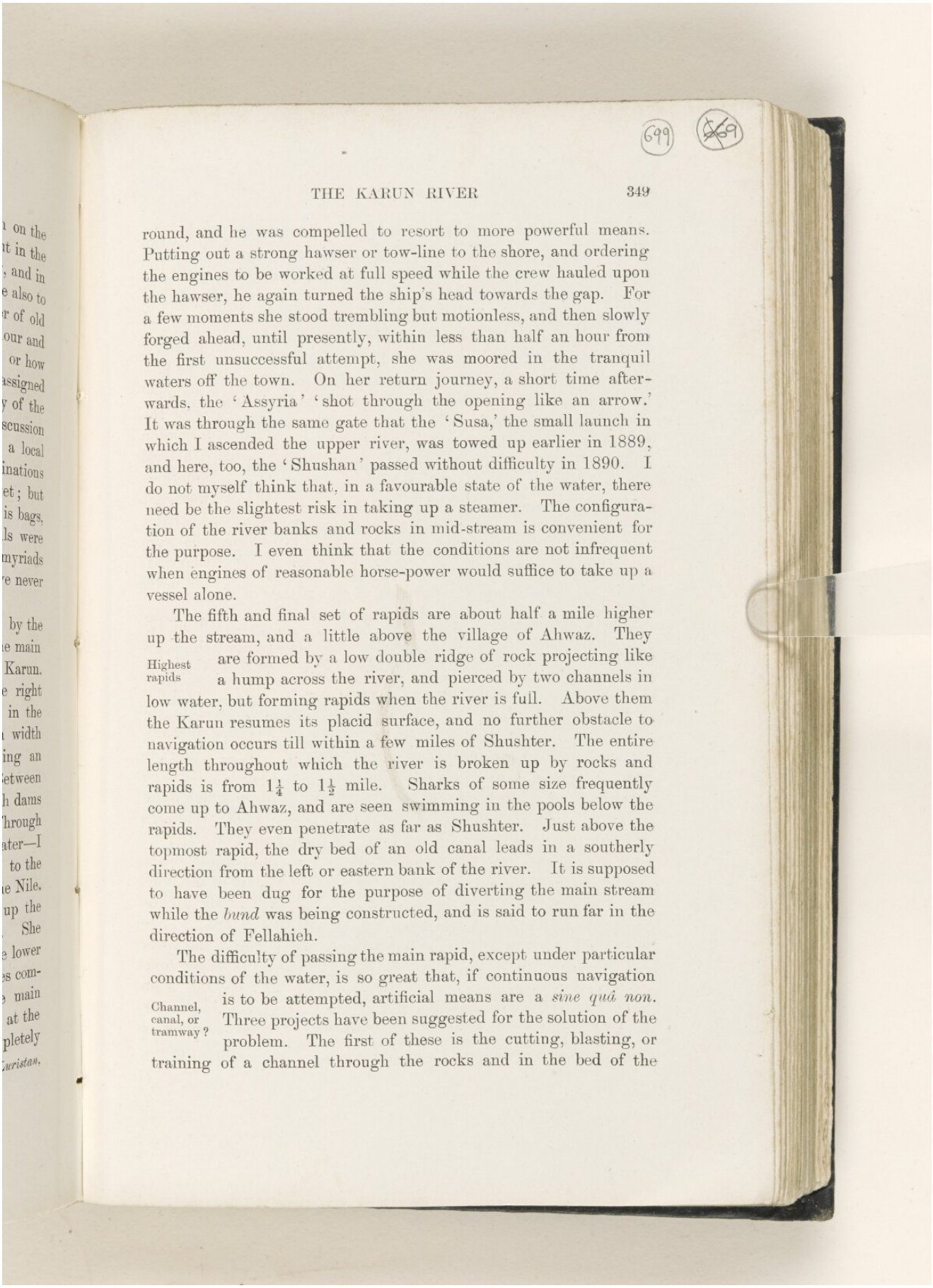
[1] All figures of breadth, depth, or volume relating to the Karun vary considerably, according to the season of the year and the state of the water at the time of the writer's visit.

the physical condition of the neighbouring country. Both on the right and left banks passages and tunnels have been cut in the rock at the water level, in which water-wheels originally, and in the case of some on the left bank, still revolve. There are also to be seen in the neighbourhood of the town a large number of old circular mill-stones, which were used for the grinding of flour and the crushing of the sugar-cane. It is not known when or how the *bund* was destroyed, though the date may probably be assigned to the thirteenth century, when we read that the prosperity of the town and neighbourhood fell into utter decay. At the discussion before the Society of Arts General Schindler mentioned a local legend, which attributed the disaster to the wicked machinations of a mediæval sugar merchant, who cornered the market; but after a time, when the price had risen and he opened his bags, found them full, not of sugar, but of scorpions, whose tails were so sharp that they cut a thick felt carpet in two. Such myriads of these scorpions came out that the people fled, and have never returned.[1]

Main rapid

It is the twofold rapid racing through the gaps left by the destruction of the *bund* that has ever since constituted the main obstacle to the continuous navigation of the Karun. The main channel is the aperture between the right bank, which is steep and lofty, and the first rocky islet in the current, the passage varying from fifty to eighty yards in width according to the condition of the water, and there being an approximate fall of three feet in a distance of fifty yards. Between the islets and the main section of the sandstone ledge which dams the rest of the stream is a second and narrower rapid. Through both these gateways there was a swift and noisy rush of water—I can hardly call it a cataract, for it was not comparable to the headlong sweep of the Great Bab at the First Cataract of the Nile. It was by the larger or western channel that Selby took up the 'Assyria,' with Sir H. Layard on board, in March 1842. She was a paddle-wheel steamer, 100 feet long. They passed the lower rapids without difficulty, the river being full and the ledges completely concealed. Twice did Selby attempt to force the main rapid by steam alone, but the force of the current, running at the rate of 5 to 5¼ miles an hour, turned the 'Assyria' completely

[1] Two other versions of the tale are mentioned by De Bode (*Travels in Luristan*, vol. ii. p. 154).





round, and he was compelled to resort to more powerful means. Putting out a strong hawser or tow-line to the shore, and ordering the engines to be worked at full speed while the crew hauled upon the hawser, he again turned the ship's head towards the gap. For a few moments she stood trembling but motionless, and then slowly forged ahead, until presently, within less than half an hour from the first unsuccessful attempt, she was moored in the tranquil waters off the town. On her return journey, a short time afterwards, the 'Assyria' 'shot through the opening like an arrow.' It was through the same gate that the 'Susa,' the small launch in which I ascended the upper river, was towed up earlier in 1889, and here, too, the 'Shushan' passed without difficulty in 1890. I do not myself think that, in a favourable state of the water, there need be the slightest risk in taking up a steamer. The configuration of the river banks and rocks in mid-stream is convenient for the purpose. I even think that the conditions are not infrequent when engines of reasonable horse-power would suffice to take up a vessel alone.

The fifth and final set of rapids are about half a mile higher up the stream, and a little above the village of Ahwaz. They

Highest rapids

are formed by a low double ridge of rock projecting like a hump across the river, and pierced by two channels in low water, but forming rapids when the river is full. Above them the Karun resumes its placid surface, and no further obstacle to navigation occurs till within a few miles of Shushter. The entire length throughout which the river is broken up by rocks and rapids is from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Sharks of some size frequently come up to Ahwaz, and are seen swimming in the pools below the rapids. They even penetrate as far as Shushter. Just above the topmost rapid, the dry bed of an old canal leads in a southerly direction from the left or eastern bank of the river. It is supposed to have been dug for the purpose of diverting the main stream while the *bund* was being constructed, and is said to run far in the direction of Fellahieh.

The difficulty of passing the main rapid, except under particular conditions of the water, is so great that, if continuous navigation

Channel, canal, or tramway?

is to be attempted, artificial means are a *sine quâ non*. Three projects have been suggested for the solution of the problem. The first of these is the cutting, blasting, or training of a channel through the rocks and in the bed of the

river itself, which should be available for the passage of vessels. This scheme may be dismissed from consideration as being both costly in execution and problematical in issue, it being quite uncertain how the level of the two parts of the river would be affected by this sudden and violent readjustment of the fall. The second plan is the cutting of a canal with locks for a distance of about a mile and a half from the lower to the upper river, through the nearly level ground on the left bank. Though a perfectly feasible undertaking, and one that has the merit of obviating transhipment, it is not in the least likely to be commenced by the Persian Government, both because it would involve a considerable outlay, and because they would forfeit thereby their control of the upper river navigation. The third alternative, which I strongly recommended in writing to the 'Times,' was the construction of a light horse-tramway over the same piece of ground on the left bank, from the river below to the pool above the rapids. Traversing the distance on foot, I found it to consist of a slight slope with insignificant undulations, the distance, if the village of Ahwaz were skirted, being about a mile and three quarters. This work has since been undertaken by a native company, the Nasiri, of whom I shall have more to say later on. A tramway, however, only facilitates, without obviating, transhipment; and I incline to the opinion that should a railroad ever be laid upon this line it should be continued as far as Mohammerah, so as to prevent the double break of bulk in transhipment there and at Ahwaz; whilst the new road now being constructed from Teheran may even find it advisable to make Ahwaz rather than Shushter its terminus.

Ahwaz, or Aginis

The modern village of Ahwaz is situated on the left bank of the river, which rises to some height above the stream, at a point nearly parallel with the highest rapids. It is a wretched collection of mud-hovels, with a small rectangular fort in a state of ruin upon the brink, and an Arab population of about 700. Nothing redeems the place from abomination but the possession of a humble *imamzadeh*, or saint's tomb, whose white plastered cupola gleams agreeably from a cluster of dark green trees. This is all that survives in the room of the once famous Aginis,[1] the mediæval capital of a province, the residence of royalty,

[1] The yet earlier history of Ahwaz may be remitted to a footnote. Nearchus, ascending the Pasitigris (Karun), came to a lake, into the northern end of which the Tigris flowed, and on which was situated the Susian town or village Aginis,

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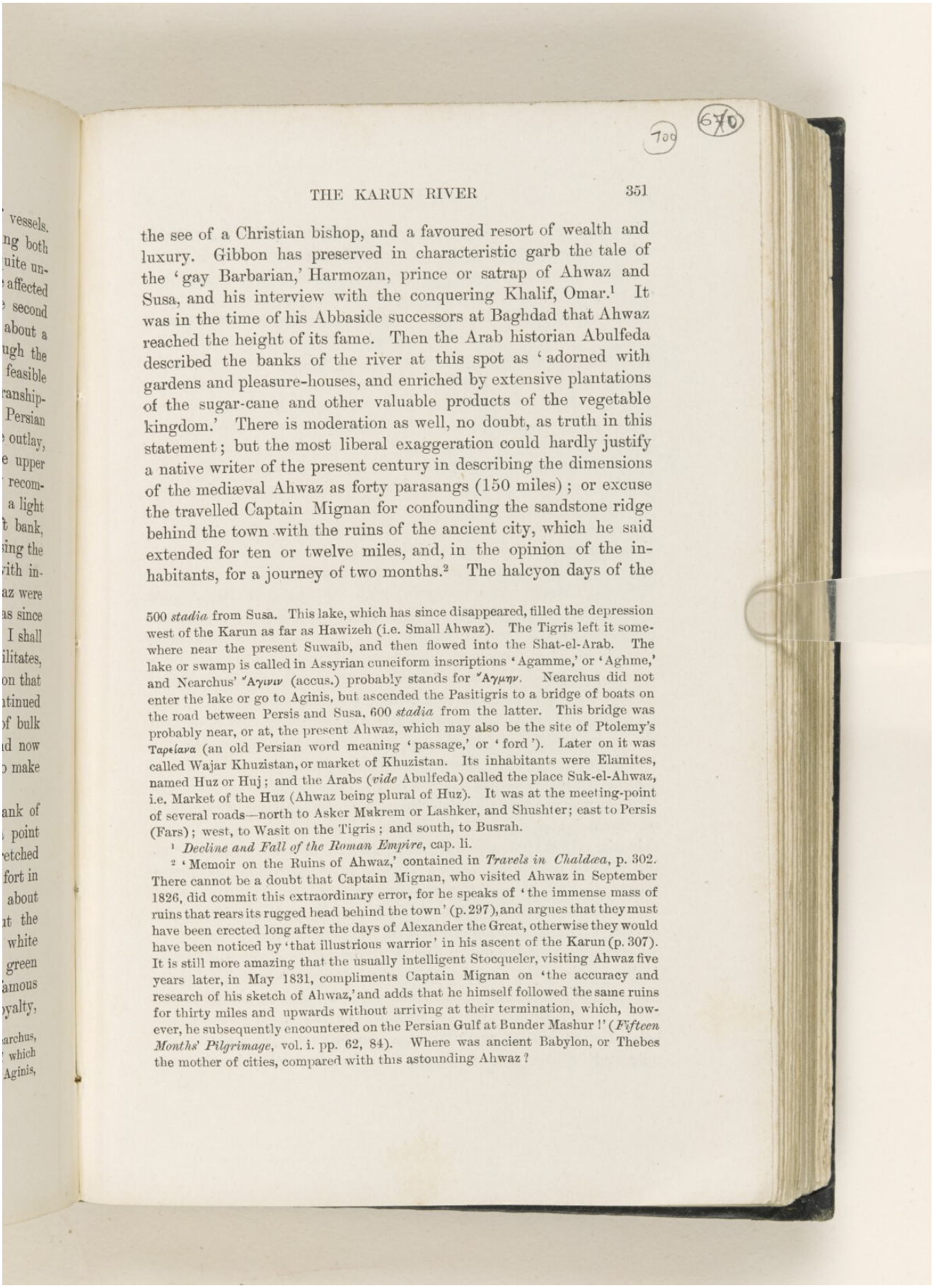



the see of a Christian bishop, and a favoured resort of wealth and luxury. Gibbon has preserved in characteristic garb the tale of the 'gay Barbarian,' Harmozan, prince or satrap of Ahwaz and Susa, and his interview with the conquering Khalif, Omar.[1] It was in the time of his Abbaside successors at Baghdad that Ahwaz reached the height of its fame. Then the Arab historian Abulfeda described the banks of the river at this spot as 'adorned with gardens and pleasure-houses, and enriched by extensive plantations of the sugar-cane and other valuable products of the vegetable kingdom.' There is moderation as well, no doubt, as truth in this statement; but the most liberal exaggeration could hardly justify a native writer of the present century in describing the dimensions of the mediæval Ahwaz as forty parasangs (150 miles); or excuse the travelled Captain Mignan for confounding the sandstone ridge behind the town with the ruins of the ancient city, which he said extended for ten or twelve miles, and, in the opinion of the inhabitants, for a journey of two months.[2] The halcyon days of the

500 *stadia* from Susa. This lake, which has since disappeared, filled the depression west of the Karun as far as Hawizeh (i.e. Small Ahwaz). The Tigris left it somewhere near the present Suwaib, and then flowed into the Shat-el-Arab. The lake or swamp is called in Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions 'Agamme,' or 'Aghme,' and Nearchus' Ἄγινιν (accus.) probably stands for Ἄγμην. Nearchus did not enter the lake or go to Aginis, but ascended the Pasitigris to a bridge of boats on the road between Persis and Susa, 600 *stadia* from the latter. This bridge was probably near, or at, the present Ahwaz, which may also be the site of Ptolemy's Ταρείανα (an old Persian word meaning 'passage,' or 'ford'). Later on it was called Wajar Khuzistan, or market of Khuzistan. Its inhabitants were Elamites, named Huz or Huj; and the Arabs (*vide* Abulfeda) called the place Suk-el-Ahwaz, i.e. Market of the Huz (Ahwaz being plural of Huz). It was at the meeting-point of several roads—north to Asker Mukrem or Lashker, and Shushter; east to Persis (Fars); west, to Wasit on the Tigris; and south, to Busrah.

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, cap. li.

[2] 'Memoir on the Ruins of Ahwaz,' contained in *Travels in Chaldæa*, p. 302. There cannot be a doubt that Captain Mignan, who visited Ahwaz in September 1826, did commit this extraordinary error, for he speaks of 'the immense mass of ruins that rears its rugged head behind the town' (p. 297), and argues that they must have been erected long after the days of Alexander the Great, otherwise they would have been noticed by 'that illustrious warrior' in his ascent of the Karun (p. 307). It is still more amazing that the usually intelligent Stocqueler, visiting Ahwaz five years later, in May 1831, compliments Captain Mignan on 'the accuracy and research of his sketch of Ahwaz,' and adds that he himself followed the same ruins for thirty miles and upwards without arriving at their termination, which, however, he subsequently encountered on the Persian Gulf at Bunder Mashur!' (*Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. pp. 62, 84). Where was ancient Babylon, or Thebes the mother of cities, compared with this astounding Ahwaz?

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old Aginis came to an end with the rebellion against the Khalifs of the African negroes who had been imported to labour in the sugar plantations. The revolt was suppressed; but the city and its surroundings never recovered, and fell into deeper and more forlorn decay, until the emigrant Ka'b Arabs turned their nomad steps in this direction, and reared their clay hovels amid the piles of débris that still mark the ancient site. Evidence of a yet earlier period and of a dead religion, as well as a vanished splendour, exists in the sandstone ridge above mentioned, where may be seen hollow excavations high up in the rock, hewn in the olden days of the fire-worshippers for the exposure of the dead, and in some of which bones were actually discovered by Lieutenant Selby's party. In the mountain cliffs near Shushter have been found similar rock Towers of Silence.

Ahwaz played a memorable but an even less distinguished part than Mohammerah in the incidents of 1857. After the occupation of the latter place, three small river-steamers, the 'Comet,' 'Planet,' and 'Assyria,' with 300 men, and three gun-boats in tow, were detached to pursue the retreating force up the river to Ahwaz. Captain Rennie was in command of the flotilla, Captain Hunt of the soldiers, Captain Selby commanded one of the vessels and acted as guide. At Ahwaz the Persian infantry, 7,000 strong, with a large force of cavalry, was found encamped a few hundred yards from the right bank; a garrison of 500 men held the town and fort upon the opposite shore. No sooner did the English prepare to land than the garrison decamped, while simultaneously the defending army melted into the desert. The dissolution was not less complete than when the mirage, so common on the neighbouring Chaldæan plains, wastes on approach into thin air. It is true, as I have said, that the Persian Commander-in-Chief, by paying the Grand Vizier a bribe of 8,000*l.*, or at the rate of about 1*l.* for every man who ran away, received a sword of honour from the Shah. But no historian will be disposed to speak harshly of so superlative a sample of Eastern equity.

War of 1857

Since the opening of the Karun to foreign commerce in October 1888, another small settlement, called Bunder-i-Nasiri, in compliment to the Shah (Nasr-ed-Din), had been established on a slight elevation overlooking the river at the point below the rapids where steamers come to anchor, and about one mile south of the native village. So far the reality hardly cor-

Bunder-i-Nasiri

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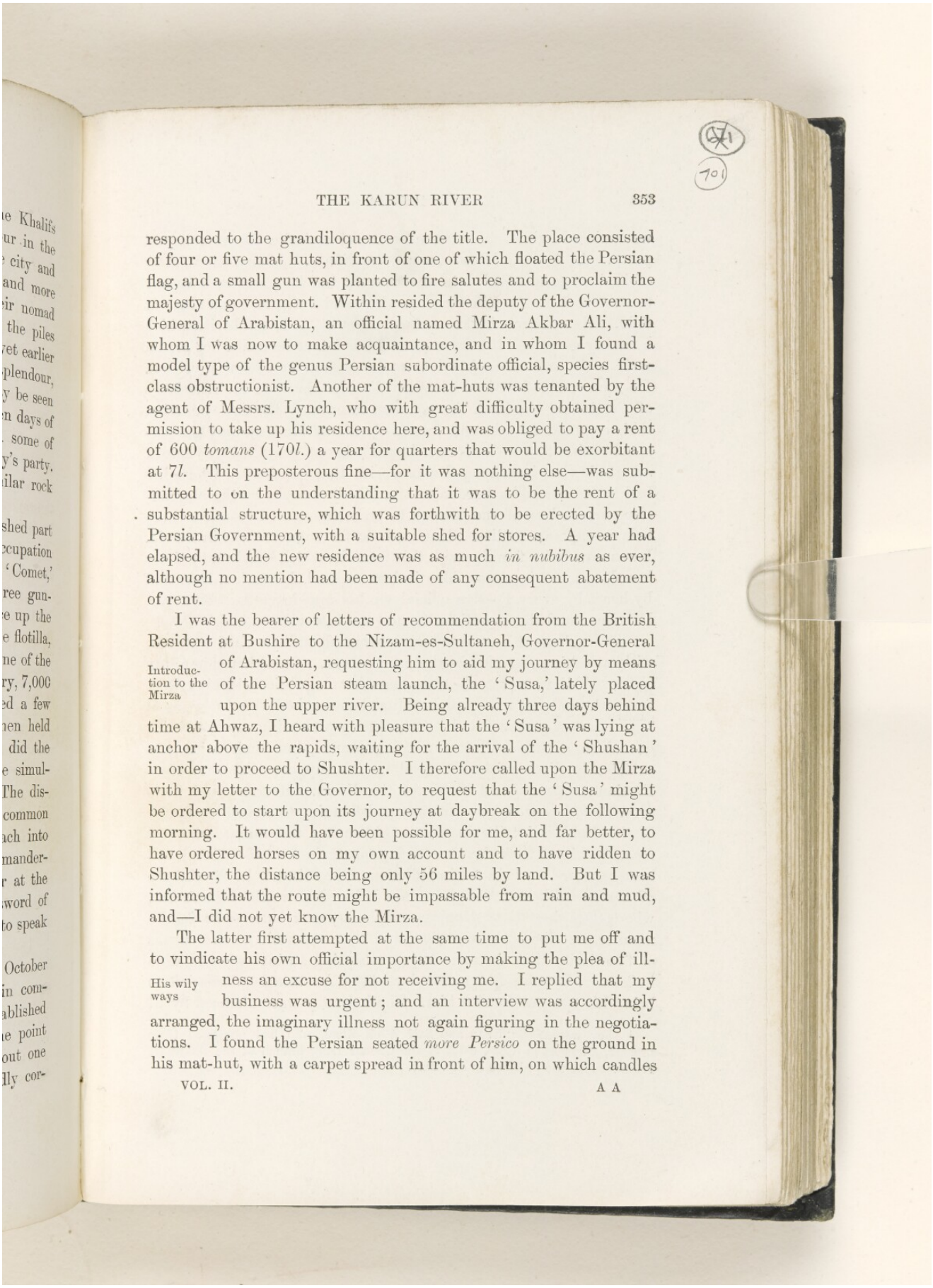



responded to the grandiloquence of the title. The place consisted of four or five mat huts, in front of one of which floated the Persian flag, and a small gun was planted to fire salutes and to proclaim the majesty of government. Within resided the deputy of the Governor-General of Arabistan, an official named Mirza Akbar Ali, with whom I was now to make acquaintance, and in whom I found a model type of the genus Persian subordinate official, species first-class obstructionist. Another of the mat-huts was tenanted by the agent of Messrs. Lynch, who with great difficulty obtained permission to take up his residence here, and was obliged to pay a rent of 600 *tomans* (170*l.*) a year for quarters that would be exorbitant at 7*l.* This preposterous fine—for it was nothing else—was submitted to on the understanding that it was to be the rent of a substantial structure, which was forthwith to be erected by the Persian Government, with a suitable shed for stores. A year had elapsed, and the new residence was as much *in nubibus* as ever, although no mention had been made of any consequent abatement of rent.

Introduction to the Mirza

I was the bearer of letters of recommendation from the British Resident at Bushire to the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, Governor-General of Arabistan, requesting him to aid my journey by means of the Persian steam launch, the 'Susa,' lately placed upon the upper river. Being already three days behind time at Ahwaz, I heard with pleasure that the 'Susa' was lying at anchor above the rapids, waiting for the arrival of the 'Shushan' in order to proceed to Shushter. I therefore called upon the Mirza with my letter to the Governor, to request that the 'Susa' might be ordered to start upon its journey at daybreak on the following morning. It would have been possible for me, and far better, to have ordered horses on my own account and to have ridden to Shushter, the distance being only 56 miles by land. But I was informed that the route might be impassable from rain and mud, and—I did not yet know the Mirza.

His wily ways

The latter first attempted at the same time to put me off and to vindicate his own official importance by making the plea of illness an excuse for not receiving me. I replied that my business was urgent; and an interview was accordingly arranged, the imaginary illness not again figuring in the negotiations. I found the Persian seated *more Persico* on the ground in his mat-hut, with a carpet spread in front of him, on which candles



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were placed, while chairs were arranged opposite for myself and party. At first the Mirza was all compliance. After a slight show of hesitation he acceded to my request; the boat was to be ready to start at 7 on the following morning, and I was to be on shore at 6.30. He only required to see my passport, a demand with which I readily complied, the more so as I knew that he could not read a word of it, and only wished to make a show of official precision. He then rambled off into a lengthy disquisition upon the friendship of Persia and England, the common interest of the two countries, their common friends and foes (a sly dig at Russia), and his personal desire, to which Messrs. Lynch's agent could testify (here I am afraid that I exchanged winks with that gentleman, whose life had been rendered a burden to him for six months by the obstructive persecutions of the Mirza), to promote concord between these heaven-appointed allies. Having been for some months in Persia, I was now quite familiar with this formula, which I had many times heard, couched in almost identical terms, and, I imagine, learnt off by heart by every Persian official on his appointment. However, I reciprocated the compliments, and the interview closed.

Throughout this colloquy an interested audience had watched, without taking any part in the proceedings. On either side of the Mirza squatted two somewhat lugubrious-looking personages, who said nothing, but smoked the *kalian* as it was passed round. One of them was minus an eye, which gave him a rather ill-favoured appearance, but their mien was sufficiently distinguished to lead me to suppose that they were Persian gentlemen and friends of the Mirza. It transpired, however, that they were two malefactors belonging to the ruling family of the Bakhtiari tribe in the neighbouring mountains, who had recently killed their brother and nephew in cold blood, and had been captured while in the jurisdiction of the Mirza.[1] In the absence of any guard-house, they were now being kept in the Mirza's hut, where they shared his sleeping apartment, took their seats in the manner described at the durbar, and were on such general terms of familiarity that upon the Mirza accepting an invitation to dine in Messrs. Lynch's hut a few days later, he asked permission to bring his two guests with him. The harmony was enhanced by all

His distinguished guests

[1] They were Nasir Khan and Saif Allah Khan, who had murdered their brother, Mirza Agha Khan, chief of the Chehar Lang branch of the Bakhtiari Tribes. *Vide* the pedigree in cap. xxiv.

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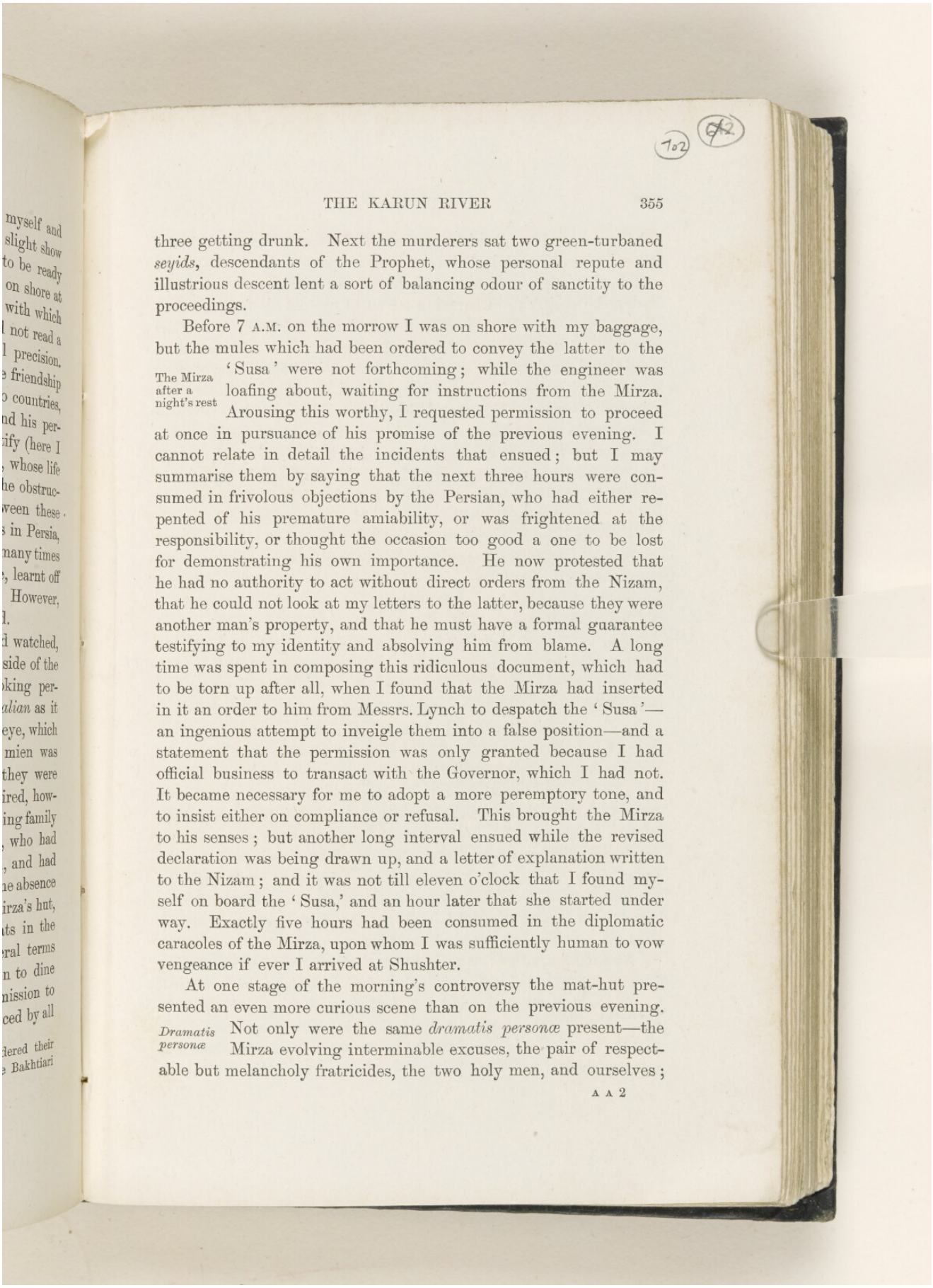



three getting drunk. Next the murderers sat two green-turbaned *seyids*, descendants of the Prophet, whose personal repute and illustrious descent lent a sort of balancing odour of sanctity to the proceedings.

The Mirza after a night's rest

Before 7 A.M. on the morrow I was on shore with my baggage, but the mules which had been ordered to convey the latter to the 'Susa' were not forthcoming; while the engineer was loafing about, waiting for instructions from the Mirza. Arousing this worthy, I requested permission to proceed at once in pursuance of his promise of the previous evening. I cannot relate in detail the incidents that ensued; but I may summarise them by saying that the next three hours were consumed in frivolous objections by the Persian, who had either repented of his premature amiability, or was frightened at the responsibility, or thought the occasion too good a one to be lost for demonstrating his own importance. He now protested that he had no authority to act without direct orders from the Nizam, that he could not look at my letters to the latter, because they were another man's property, and that he must have a formal guarantee testifying to my identity and absolving him from blame. A long time was spent in composing this ridiculous document, which had to be torn up after all, when I found that the Mirza had inserted in it an order to him from Messrs. Lynch to despatch the 'Susa'—an ingenious attempt to inveigle them into a false position—and a statement that the permission was only granted because I had official business to transact with the Governor, which I had not. It became necessary for me to adopt a more peremptory tone, and to insist either on compliance or refusal. This brought the Mirza to his senses; but another long interval ensued while the revised declaration was being drawn up, and a letter of explanation written to the Nizam; and it was not till eleven o'clock that I found myself on board the 'Susa,' and an hour later that she started under way. Exactly five hours had been consumed in the diplomatic caracoles of the Mirza, upon whom I was sufficiently human to vow vengeance if ever I arrived at Shushter.

*Dramatis personæ*

At one stage of the morning's controversy the mat-hut presented an even more curious scene than on the previous evening. Not only were the same *dramatis personæ* present—the Mirza evolving interminable excuses, the pair of respectable but melancholy fratricides, the two holy men, and ourselves;



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but there was also a Persian gentleman who wanted to go up in the 'Susa' himself, and had intervened as peacemaker; the Arab sheikh of Ahwaz, a dignified old gentleman with grey beard; and finally, the sheikh's son, carrying a gun to protect his father, whose life was threatened by a blood feud, but himself attended by another man with a gun, being in reality a prisoner, like the Bakhtiari couple, and having been sentenced to the sticks for an act of robbery. In this mixed society of *seyids* and scoundrels, gaolers and prisoners, Persians, Arabs, and English—as diversified a *mejilis* on a small scale as was ever assembled—the momentous question was fought out as to whether I should travel sixty miles by river or by road.

The 'Susa'

Two more hours were wasted, and it was not till long after noon that we were under way, and had definitively entered upon the journey to Shushter. As the hours wore on, however, and against a current running less than 4 miles an hour the 'Susa' appeared unable to achieve a higher rate of progress than about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles—a speed which enabled the villagers in the river-side camps to keep pace with us by slowly walking along the bank—I began to think that the victory over the Mirza and the loan of the 'Susa' had been somewhat dearly purchased. In 1889, after the Karun concession had been granted, this vessel, which is one of the two items composing the Persian Navy, had been taken by an English captain to Ahwaz, and towed by Persians up the rapids; since which time she had remained on the upper river, under the orders of the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, nominally for purposes of trade, but in reality serving no other purpose than to carry him up and down the river. Her draught of water was too great to allow of her being much used as a cargo boat, except when the water is high. She was piloted and steered by Arabs; but her engineer, a Turk from Baghdad, had never been on the upper river before, and vindicated his ignorance by a series of assurances that would have excited the jealous envy of the Mirza. I was to be landed without fail at Shushter at noon on the day after we had weighed anchor from Ahwaz.

The Karun above Ahwaz

Above Ahwaz the Karun is confined within lofty banks, varying from ten to twenty, and even thirty feet in height, with vertical profile of marl, and a bed of from 200 to 350 yards in width. Water for irrigation is drawn up from pools hollowed in the river bank, by means of leather skins and a pulley worked by oxen pacing up and down an inclined plane on

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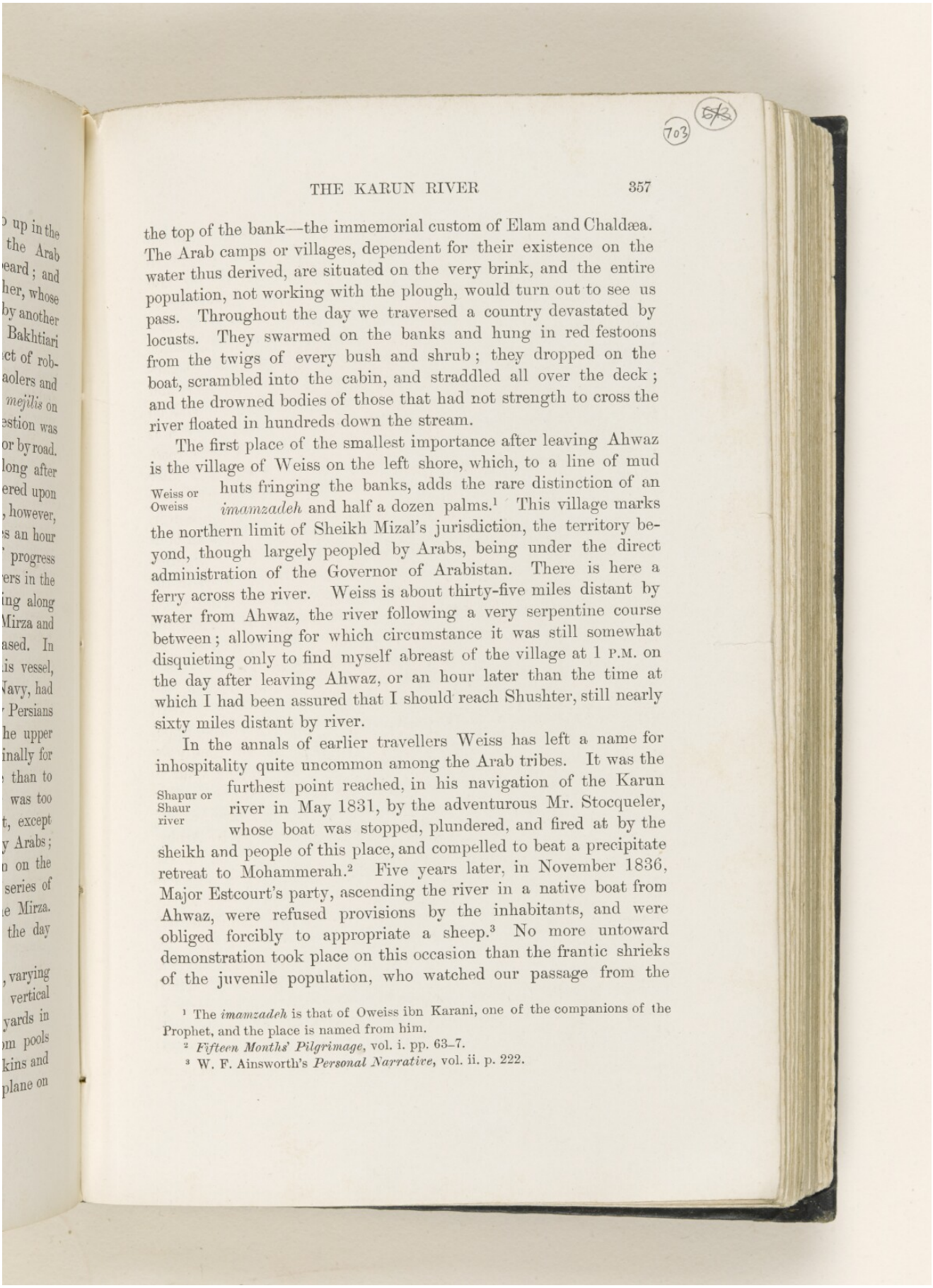



the top of the bank—the immemorial custom of Elam and Chaldæa. The Arab camps or villages, dependent for their existence on the water thus derived, are situated on the very brink, and the entire population, not working with the plough, would turn out to see us pass. Throughout the day we traversed a country devastated by locusts. They swarmed on the banks and hung in red festoons from the twigs of every bush and shrub; they dropped on the boat, scrambled into the cabin, and straddled all over the deck; and the drowned bodies of those that had not strength to cross the river floated in hundreds down the stream.

Weiss or Oweiss

The first place of the smallest importance after leaving Ahwaz is the village of Weiss on the left shore, which, to a line of mud huts fringing the banks, adds the rare distinction of an *imamzadeh* and half a dozen palms.[1] This village marks the northern limit of Sheikh Mizal's jurisdiction, the territory beyond, though largely peopled by Arabs, being under the direct administration of the Governor of Arabistan. There is here a ferry across the river. Weiss is about thirty-five miles distant by water from Ahwaz, the river following a very serpentine course between; allowing for which circumstance it was still somewhat disquieting only to find myself abreast of the village at 1 P.M. on the day after leaving Ahwaz, or an hour later than the time at which I had been assured that I should reach Shushter, still nearly sixty miles distant by river.

Shapur or Shaur river

In the annals of earlier travellers Weiss has left a name for inhospitality quite uncommon among the Arab tribes. It was the furthest point reached, in his navigation of the Karun river in May 1831, by the adventurous Mr. Stocqueler, whose boat was stopped, plundered, and fired at by the sheikh and people of this place, and compelled to beat a precipitate retreat to Mohammerah.[2] Five years later, in November 1836, Major Estcourt's party, ascending the river in a native boat from Ahwaz, were refused provisions by the inhabitants, and were obliged forcibly to appropriate a sheep.[3] No more untoward demonstration took place on this occasion than the frantic shrieks of the juvenile population, who watched our passage from the

[1] The *imamzadeh* is that of Oweiss ibn Karani, one of the companions of the Prophet, and the place is named from him.

[2] *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. pp. 63–7.

[3] W. F. Ainsworth's *Personal Narrative*, vol. ii. p. 222.

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banks. Originally the Shapur, commonly pronounced Shaur river, which washes the western face of the great mound of Shush or Susa (Shushan the palace), flowed into the Karun from the north-west a little below Weiss. After deserting this bed it adopted a more southerly channel, joining the main river near Ahwaz. Later again it struck northwards, and at the time of Layard's and Selby's explorations in 1842, was found entering the Ab-i-Diz, or Dizful River, at a point twelve miles above Bund-i-Kir.[1] The comparatively recent and well-ascertained history of this river, whose various channels can be distinctly traced, is typical of that of all the rivers of Susiana, including the Karun itself, and accounts for the difficulty that has been felt by writers in identifying and reconciling the obsolete descriptions of the ancients.

For at least twelve miles above Weiss the Karun is followed in a perfectly straight line to Bund-i-Kir, where, for the first time since leaving Mohammerah, we find the river split up into several confluents; this being the point of junction of three streams, the Ab-i-Gerger, or artificial canal that runs from Shushter on the east; the Ab-i-Shuteit, or Karun proper, that runs also from Shushter in the centre; and the Ab-i-Diz, or river of Dizful, that runs from Dizful on the west. Comparing the singular straightness of the twelve-mile stretch of water below the angle of confluence with the accounts of old Arab geographers, who reported the artificial canal of the Ab-i-Gerger as being continued to Ahwaz, Selby thought that he saw therein a survival of the latter work; an hypothesis whose likelihood is only invalidated by the complete absence of any ancient bed, such as ought in that case to be forthcoming in the neighbourhood, of the main body of the Karun.

Point of confluence

Bund-i-Kir, called by Kinneir Bundekeel, and by Loftus Benderghil, signifies the *bund* or dyke of *kir* or bitumen, the stones of an artificial dam which, like those of Shushter and Ahwaz, once spanned the river at this point, and which tradition ascribes to Darius, having doubtless been cemented by that material. The members of the Euphrates Expedition found it in 1836 to be a small walled town, with a population of nearly 600; and General Chesney's book contains an illustration of the place as it then existed from the pencil of Major Estcourt

Bund-i-Kir

[1] *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xvi. p. 57.

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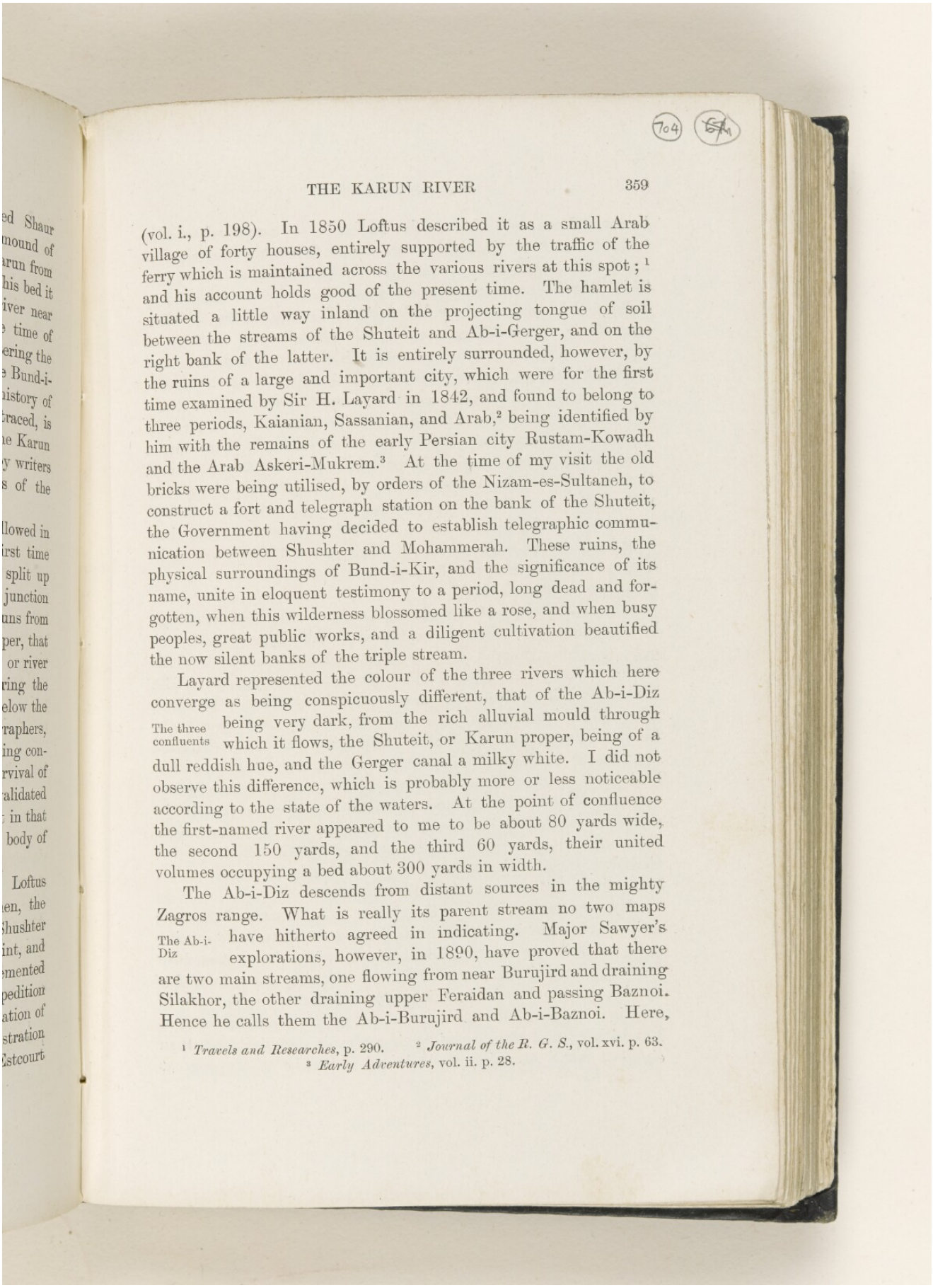



(vol. i., p. 198). In 1850 Loftus described it as a small Arab village of forty houses, entirely supported by the traffic of the ferry which is maintained across the various rivers at this spot;[1] and his account holds good of the present time. The hamlet is situated a little way inland on the projecting tongue of soil between the streams of the Shuteit and Ab-i-Gerger, and on the right bank of the latter. It is entirely surrounded, however, by the ruins of a large and important city, which were for the first time examined by Sir H. Layard in 1842, and found to belong to three periods, Kaianian, Sassanian, and Arab,[2] being identified by him with the remains of the early Persian city Rustam-Kowadh and the Arab Askeri-Mukrem.[3] At the time of my visit the old bricks were being utilised, by orders of the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, to construct a fort and telegraph station on the bank of the Shuteit, the Government having decided to establish telegraphic communication between Shushter and Mohammerah. These ruins, the physical surroundings of Bund-i-Kir, and the significance of its name, unite in eloquent testimony to a period, long dead and forgotten, when this wilderness blossomed like a rose, and when busy peoples, great public works, and a diligent cultivation beautified the now silent banks of the triple stream.

The three confluents

Layard represented the colour of the three rivers which here converge as being conspicuously different, that of the Ab-i-Diz being very dark, from the rich alluvial mould through which it flows, the Shuteit, or Karun proper, being of a dull reddish hue, and the Gerger canal a milky white. I did not observe this difference, which is probably more or less noticeable according to the state of the waters. At the point of confluence the first-named river appeared to me to be about 80 yards wide, the second 150 yards, and the third 60 yards, their united volumes occupying a bed about 300 yards in width.

The Ab-i-Diz

The Ab-i-Diz descends from distant sources in the mighty Zagros range. What is really its parent stream no two maps have hitherto agreed in indicating. Major Sawyer's explorations, however, in 1890, have proved that there are two main streams, one flowing from near Burujird and draining Silakhor, the other draining upper Feraidan and passing Baznoi. Hence he calls them the Ab-i-Burujird and Ab-i-Baznoi. Here,

[1] *Travels and Researches*, p. 290. [2] *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xvi. p. 63.
[3] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 28.

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however, I am only concerned with its lower course, when, after passing the town of Dizful, it meanders through a jungle-grown and untilled plain until its union with the Karun at Bund-i-Kir. This river has only once been ascended in a steamer, namely, by Selby and Layard in the 'Assyria' in the late spring of 1842, after their successful ascents of the Shuteit and the Gerger. Pursuing with some difficulty an exceedingly tortuous channel, they at length came to a spot called Kaleh Bunder, about twenty-five miles in a direct line, and a good deal more by water, from Bund-i-Kir. There they found the river divided into two branches by an island, and a natural *bund* or rocky reef stretching across both. Penetrating by an opening in the right barrier, they continued their ascent for a few miles further, and then, finding the stream very shallow and the current strong, turned round and steamed back to Bund-i-Kir. So far as I know, the Diz has never since been ascended or explored by an Englishman. The jungle on its banks is said to abound in lions, and I recommend it to any adventurous sportsman.

The Ab-i-Shuteit

The second river of the trio that unite at Bund-i-Kir, though locally known below Shushter as the Ab-i-Shuteit, is in reality the main channel of the Karun. It was the first of the channels navigated by Selby in the 'Assyria' in 1842. He ascended it to within six miles of Valerian's bridge at Shushter, where the boat ran aground, and was only got off by a lucky freshet of water descending from the hills. Both he and Layard described it as admirably adapted for steam communication, and as having a deep channel. It was reported to me as being broken up near Shushter into numerous shallow channels, separated by shoals or islets, and impassable to navigation; but it has since been adopted by the 'Shushan' as a preferable channel to the Gerger, although the steamer can get no nearer to Shushter than Shahrdinga, a distance of ten miles by land.

The Ab-i-Gerger

My own course in the 'Susa' was to lie up the Gerger, or artificial canal, which, owing to its greater depth and less shifting bed, was at that time utilised as the river approach to the capital. How I ended by steaming down instead of up the Gerger, the circumstances which I shall now narrate will explain. It was 6.30 P.M. when we ran up alongside the bank at Bund-i-Kir; and the 'Susa' having already occupied more than eighteen hours' steaming, exclusive of twelve hours' stoppage at

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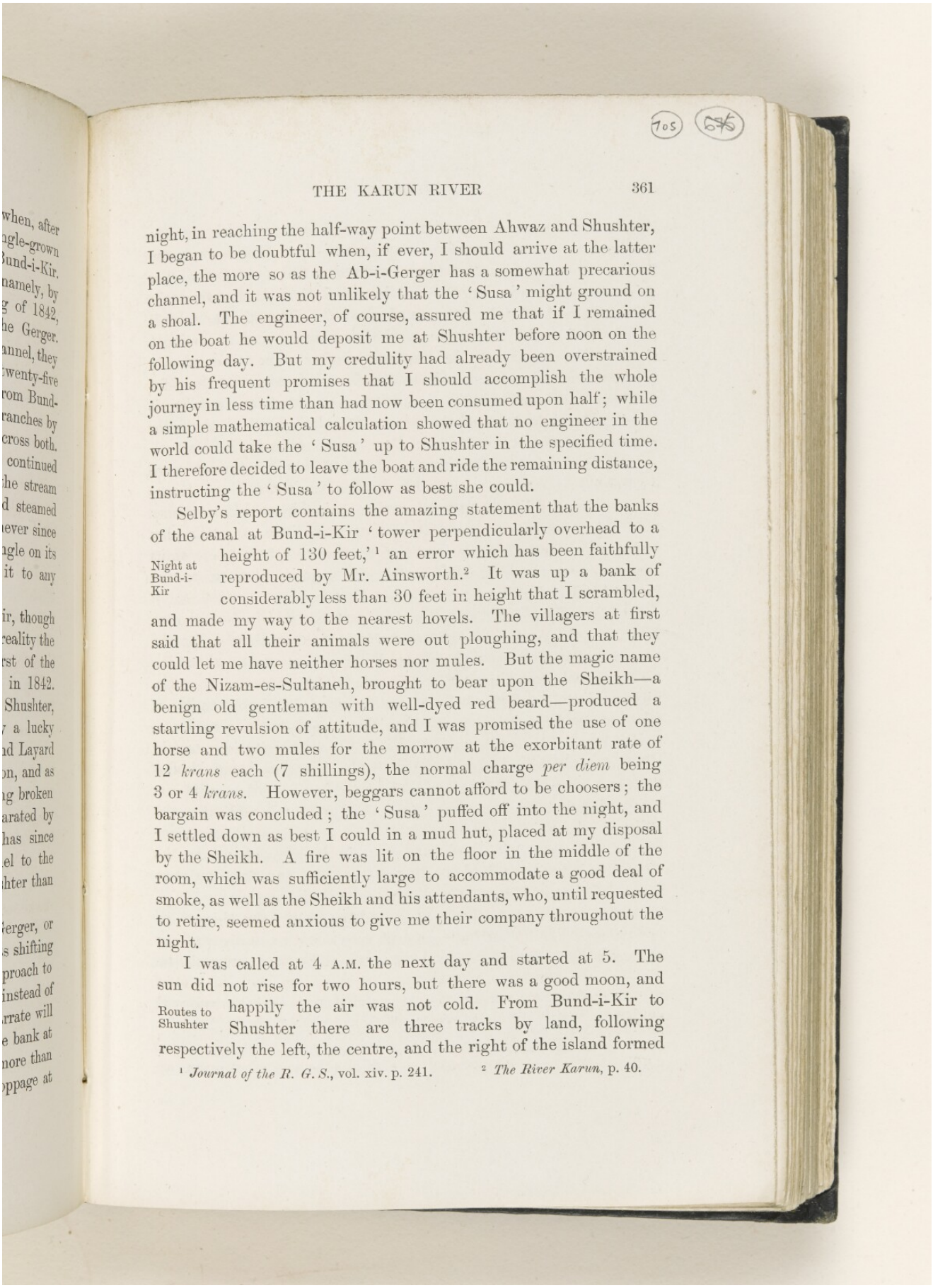



night, in reaching the half-way point between Ahwaz and Shushter, I began to be doubtful when, if ever, I should arrive at the latter place, the more so as the Ab-i-Gerger has a somewhat precarious channel, and it was not unlikely that the 'Susa' might ground on a shoal. The engineer, of course, assured me that if I remained on the boat he would deposit me at Shushter before noon on the following day. But my credulity had already been overstrained by his frequent promises that I should accomplish the whole journey in less time than had now been consumed upon half; while a simple mathematical calculation showed that no engineer in the world could take the 'Susa' up to Shushter in the specified time. I therefore decided to leave the boat and ride the remaining distance, instructing the 'Susa' to follow as best she could.

Night at Bund-i-Kir

Selby's report contains the amazing statement that the banks of the canal at Bund-i-Kir 'tower perpendicularly overhead to a height of 130 feet,'[1] an error which has been faithfully reproduced by Mr. Ainsworth.[2] It was up a bank of considerably less than 30 feet in height that I scrambled, and made my way to the nearest hovels. The villagers at first said that all their animals were out ploughing, and that they could let me have neither horses nor mules. But the magic name of the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, brought to bear upon the Sheikh—a benign old gentleman with well-dyed red beard—produced a startling revulsion of attitude, and I was promised the use of one horse and two mules for the morrow at the exorbitant rate of 12 *krans* each (7 shillings), the normal charge *per diem* being 3 or 4 *krans*. However, beggars cannot afford to be choosers; the bargain was concluded; the 'Susa' puffed off into the night, and I settled down as best I could in a mud hut, placed at my disposal by the Sheikh. A fire was lit on the floor in the middle of the room, which was sufficiently large to accommodate a good deal of smoke, as well as the Sheikh and his attendants, who, until requested to retire, seemed anxious to give me their company throughout the night.

Routes to Shushter

I was called at 4 A.M. the next day and started at 5. The sun did not rise for two hours, but there was a good moon, and happily the air was not cold. From Bund-i-Kir to Shushter there are three tracks by land, following respectively the left, the centre, and the right of the island formed

[1] *Journal of the R. G. S.*, vol. xiv. p. 241. [2] *The River Karun*, p. 40.

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by the two streams of the Shuteit and the Gerger, which separate at Shushter just as they reunite at Bund-i-Kir. I was conducted by the left or westernmost track, which is a full eight *farsakhs*, or thirty-two miles, in length, and is called Beni Hasan from the name of the Arab tribe encamped upon it. The middle road is called Beni Kaid Hasan for a similar reason, and is no doubt shorter, but appears to be impassable after rain. The easterly track, which was taken by Colonel Bell, strikes across to the right to Dowletabad, or Beni Daud, a distance of eleven miles, where it touches the right bank of the Gerger Canal, and follows the latter more or less closely to Shushter, twenty-one miles further on.

Sir H. Layard relates that in 1842, Selby and himself were confronted immediately outside Bund-i-Kir by a huge black-maned lion.[1] It was a curious coincidence that soon after starting we heard a lion roar a little way off. My guide, who was walking in front, informed me at the same moment that my horse was so much accustomed to go in advance, that he would himself facilitate my progress by dropping to the rear; an act of friendly consideration on his part for which I shall ever remember the Arab. The entire country between Bund-i-Kir and Shushter was crowded with game. Wild fowl of every description, mallard, teal, snipe, plover of two kinds, francolin, sand-grouse, pigeons, jackal—all these I saw within easy shot in the course of my ride; and a sportsman might without doubt make a large and varied bag. The fertility of the soil is beyond conception; and in the spring-time Layard has depicted the island as 'clothed with the most luxuriant vegetation, and enamelled with flowers of the most brilliant hues, the grass being so high that it reached to the belly of a horse.'[2] In winter there is no verdure, and the greater part of the ground is allowed to waste in jungle and swamp; no sign of cultivation being visible till I reached the Arab encampment of Beni Hasan, about twelve miles from Bund-i-Kir. There the entire population was abroad and astir, ploughing with horses, mules, buffaloes, bullocks, and even donkeys, and scattering the seed the moment the rude wooden share had scraped the

The island

[1] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 353. Lions are not uncommon in the jungle and brushwood bordering on the rivers, particularly the little-known and unexplored Ab-i-Diz. For some interesting remarks upon their haunts and peculiarities, *vide* the same work, vol. i. pp. 439–447; and De Bode, *Travels in Luristan*, vol. ii. p. 196.

[2] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 346.

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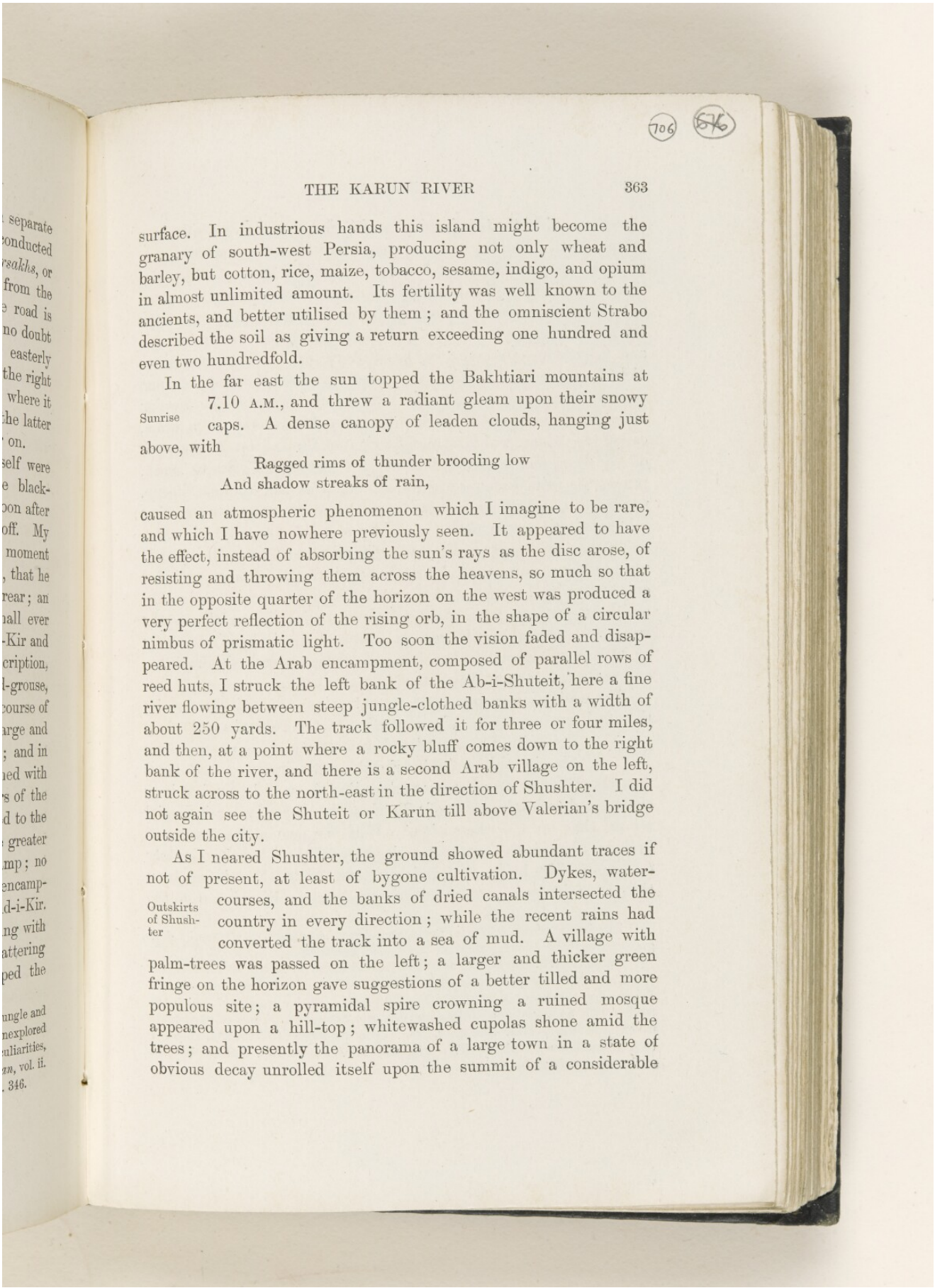



surface. In industrious hands this island might become the granary of south-west Persia, producing not only wheat and barley, but cotton, rice, maize, tobacco, sesame, indigo, and opium in almost unlimited amount. Its fertility was well known to the ancients, and better utilised by them; and the omniscient Strabo described the soil as giving a return exceeding one hundred and even two hundredfold.

Sunrise

In the far east the sun topped the Bakhtiari mountains at 7.10 A.M., and threw a radiant gleam upon their snowy caps. A dense canopy of leaden clouds, hanging just above, with

> Ragged rims of thunder brooding low
> And shadow streaks of rain,

caused an atmospheric phenomenon which I imagine to be rare, and which I have nowhere previously seen. It appeared to have the effect, instead of absorbing the sun's rays as the disc arose, of resisting and throwing them across the heavens, so much so that in the opposite quarter of the horizon on the west was produced a very perfect reflection of the rising orb, in the shape of a circular nimbus of prismatic light. Too soon the vision faded and disappeared. At the Arab encampment, composed of parallel rows of reed huts, I struck the left bank of the Ab-i-Shuteit, here a fine river flowing between steep jungle-clothed banks with a width of about 250 yards. The track followed it for three or four miles, and then, at a point where a rocky bluff comes down to the right bank of the river, and there is a second Arab village on the left, struck across to the north-east in the direction of Shushter. I did not again see the Shuteit or Karun till above Valerian's bridge outside the city.

Outskirts of Shushter

As I neared Shushter, the ground showed abundant traces if not of present, at least of bygone cultivation. Dykes, water-courses, and the banks of dried canals intersected the country in every direction; while the recent rains had converted the track into a sea of mud. A village with palm-trees was passed on the left; a larger and thicker green fringe on the horizon gave suggestions of a better tilled and more populous site; a pyramidal spire crowning a ruined mosque appeared upon a hill-top; whitewashed cupolas shone amid the trees; and presently the panorama of a large town in a state of obvious decay unrolled itself upon the summit of a considerable

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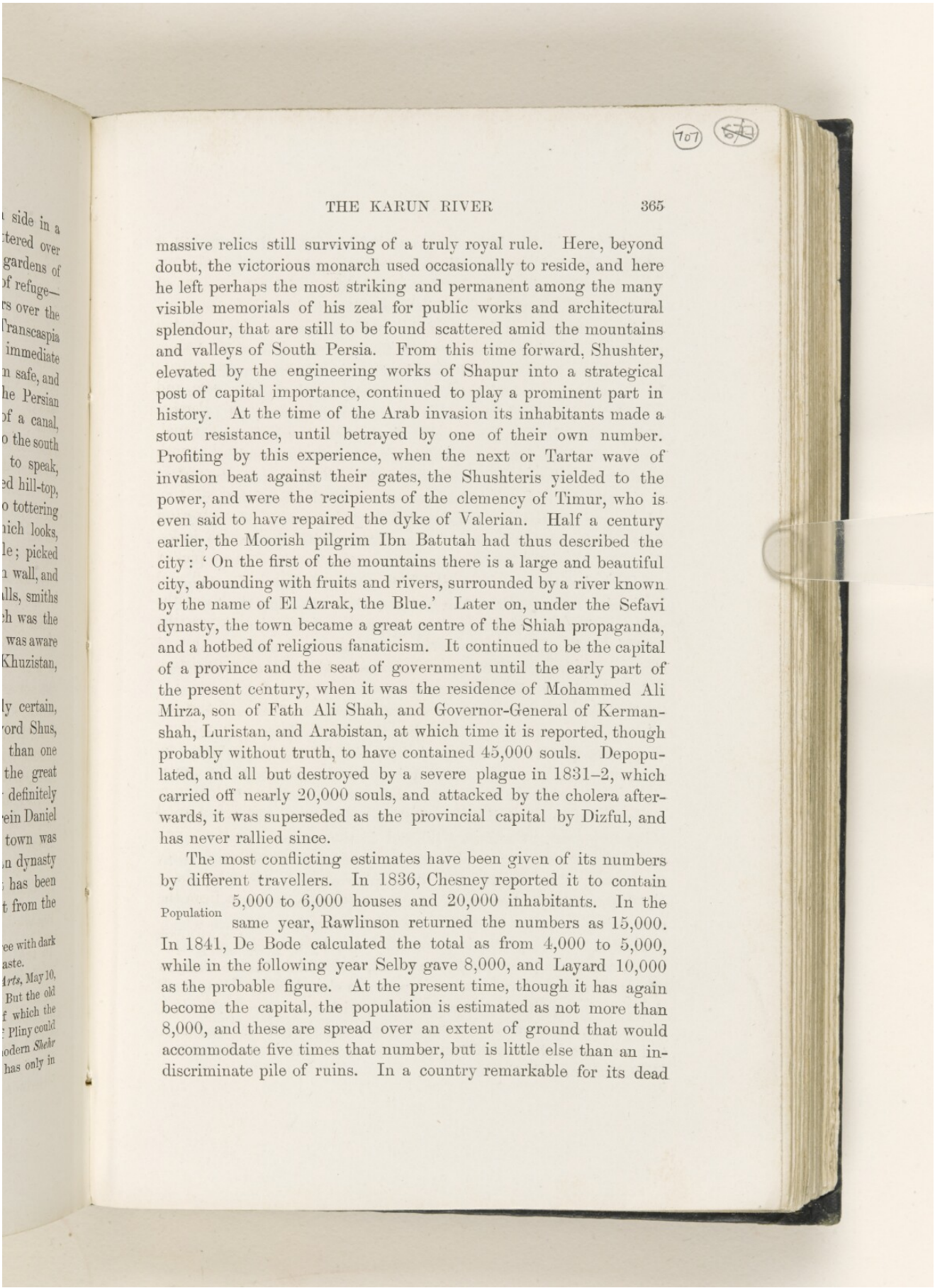
elevation, evidently terminating on its right or eastern side in a steep gorge. Thick groves of *konar* trees[1] were scattered over what are now arable plots, but were once the famous gardens of Shushter; in the midst of which numerous brick towers of refuge—not unlike those that I have seen dotted in such numbers over the old hunting-grounds of the Turkoman freebooters in Transcaspia and Khorasan—showed that agriculture, even in the immediate vicinity of the town, can at one period have been far from safe, and paid an eloquent homage to the lawless proclivities of the Persian nomads in the past. I forded the shrunken stream of a canal, called the Minau, which formerly irrigated the suburbs to the south of Shushter, and of which I shall have occasion again to speak, passed the ruined *imamzadeh* of Abdullah on its isolated hill-top, the building being flanked on its northern front by two tottering minarets, and surmounted by a hideous plaster cone which looks, as Loftus said, exactly like the extinguisher of a candle; picked my way through heaps of débris that once marked a town wall, and emerged on to an open space round which, in open stalls, smiths and brass-workers were making a horrid din, and which was the wreck of a once extensive bazaar. Thus, almost before I was aware of it, I found myself in the interior of the capital of Khuzistan, and perhaps the most dilapidated city in Persia.

History

The derivation of the name Shushter is not positively certain, though it appears to be a comparative of the Pehlevi word Shus, signifying 'pleasant,' and consecrated to more than one site in this neighbourhood, particularly to the great mounds of Sus or Shush, commonly called Susa, and now definitely ascertained to be the ruins of 'Shushan the palace,' wherein Daniel relates that he saw the vision.[2] Whether or not the town was built by Shapur, the famous warrior king of the Sassanian dynasty (the probability being that it is of earlier date), that it has been the city of kings is certain, not merely from tradition but from the

[1] The *konar* (Greek, κόνναρος; Latin, *Zizyphus lotus vulgaris*) is a tree with dark green foliage and a long, yellowish berry, acid, but agreeable to the taste.

[2] Daniel, viii. 2. Sir R. Murdoch-Smith (*Journal of the Society of Arts*, May 10, 1889) suggested the derivation Shah Shatra, or City of the King. But the old Persian for these words would be Khshathra and Khshatya, out of which the modern Shushter, mediæval Tostar, and Sostrate, Sosirate, or Sostra of Pliny could never have been formed. Moreover, from Khshathra was derived the modern *Shehr* (e.g. Abu Shehr = Bushire), which originally meant a country, and has only in modern times stood for a city.





massive relics still surviving of a truly royal rule. Here, beyond doubt, the victorious monarch used occasionally to reside, and here he left perhaps the most striking and permanent among the many visible memorials of his zeal for public works and architectural splendour, that are still to be found scattered amid the mountains and valleys of South Persia. From this time forward, Shushter, elevated by the engineering works of Shapur into a strategical post of capital importance, continued to play a prominent part in history. At the time of the Arab invasion its inhabitants made a stout resistance, until betrayed by one of their own number. Profiting by this experience, when the next or Tartar wave of invasion beat against their gates, the Shushteris yielded to the power, and were the recipients of the clemency of Timur, who is even said to have repaired the dyke of Valerian. Half a century earlier, the Moorish pilgrim Ibn Batutah had thus described the city: 'On the first of the mountains there is a large and beautiful city, abounding with fruits and rivers, surrounded by a river known by the name of El Azrak, the Blue.' Later on, under the Sefavi dynasty, the town became a great centre of the Shiah propaganda, and a hotbed of religious fanaticism. It continued to be the capital of a province and the seat of government until the early part of the present century, when it was the residence of Mohammed Ali Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah, and Governor-General of Kermanshah, Luristan, and Arabistan, at which time it is reported, though probably without truth, to have contained 45,000 souls. Depopulated, and all but destroyed by a severe plague in 1831–2, which carried off nearly 20,000 souls, and attacked by the cholera afterwards, it was superseded as the provincial capital by Dizful, and has never rallied since.

Population

The most conflicting estimates have been given of its numbers by different travellers. In 1836, Chesney reported it to contain 5,000 to 6,000 houses and 20,000 inhabitants. In the same year, Rawlinson returned the numbers as 15,000. In 1841, De Bode calculated the total as from 4,000 to 5,000, while in the following year Selby gave 8,000, and Layard 10,000 as the probable figure. At the present time, though it has again become the capital, the population is estimated as not more than 8,000, and these are spread over an extent of ground that would accommodate five times that number, but is little else than an indiscriminate pile of ruins. In a country remarkable for its dead

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and dying cities, for immense groups of human habitations, either wholly deserted or crumbling into irretrievable decay, Shushter earns a well-merited palm. Not even Isfahan, with all its majestic solemnity of ruins, can show, in proportion to its size, such heaps of débris, so many structures fallen, falling, or abandoned. What were once dwelling-houses are now formless mounds of brick, and many of the buildings still inhabited are in an intermediate stage between the two. A blight seems to overhang the spot, and Shushter might well stand for what a poet has dolefully styled the City of Dreadful Night. Among all writers there has been an absolute consensus of opinion that this fall of a once famous and inherently wealthy place has been due far less to visitations of nature than to the shameful iniquity and oppressions of the Persian Governors who have successively been deputed to this remote province, and have combined the rapacity of a Verres with the cruelty of an Alva.

Such, however, as it is, Shushter possesses features uncommon in Persian towns. From the familiar clusters of low mud huts, it is with relief as well as surprise that we come to a place where the houses still standing are commonly of two storeys, the lower half of stone and the upper part of bricks embedded in clay, and that rise to a height most unusual in Persian habitations. The flat roofs of many of these edifices, which have a low parapet, and upon which the inhabitants sleep at nights, are over thirty feet from the ground. In the interior court there is commonly a large *aiwan*, or reception-chamber, one side of which opens, without either wall or doorway, into the court. The houses possess a further peculiarity, which redeems them from all risk of being forgotten. Shafts are pierced in the masonry of the walls from the roof to the ground, opening by an aperture or spout on to the street. They are the sole drain-pipe of each dwelling, down which the refuse is inexpensively discharged into the roadway, each vent being a nucleus of odours not less filthy than the filth which it exudes. A receptacle is provided below by a species of gutter which occupies the centre of the street, and which, in the absence of any scavengers, would be an impassable slough, were it not that, the town being situated on an elevation with a sandy soil, the rains sweep down much of the accumulations, and that these are found to have a marketable value in autumn as manure for the opium plantations outside the town.

Modern features

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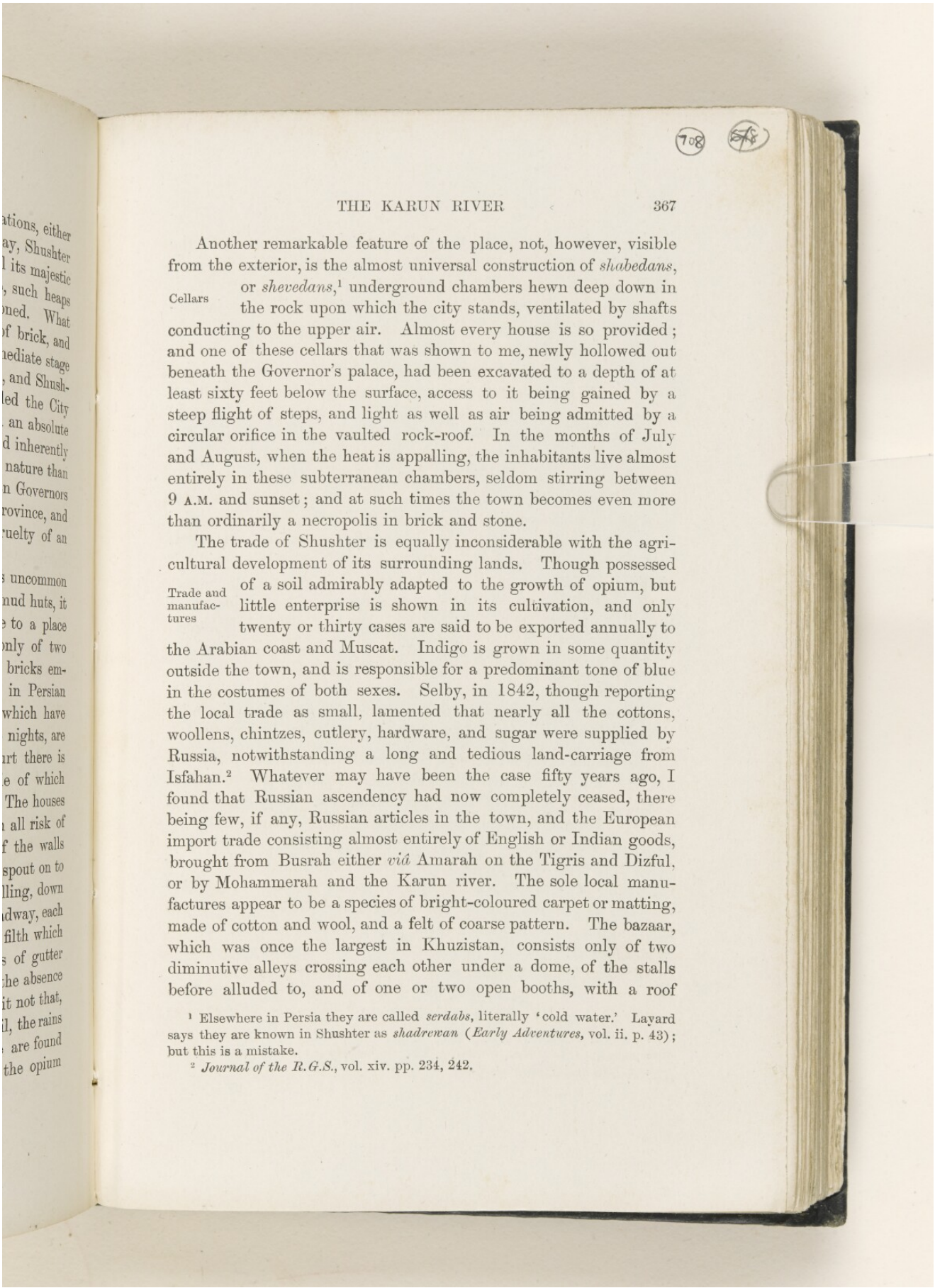



Another remarkable feature of the place, not, however, visible from the exterior, is the almost universal construction of *shabedans*, or *shevedans*,[1] underground chambers hewn deep down in the rock upon which the city stands, ventilated by shafts conducting to the upper air. Almost every house is so provided; and one of these cellars that was shown to me, newly hollowed out beneath the Governor's palace, had been excavated to a depth of at least sixty feet below the surface, access to it being gained by a steep flight of steps, and light as well as air being admitted by a circular orifice in the vaulted rock-roof. In the months of July and August, when the heat is appalling, the inhabitants live almost entirely in these subterranean chambers, seldom stirring between 9 A.M. and sunset; and at such times the town becomes even more than ordinarily a necropolis in brick and stone.

Cellars

The trade of Shushter is equally inconsiderable with the agricultural development of its surrounding lands. Though possessed of a soil admirably adapted to the growth of opium, but little enterprise is shown in its cultivation, and only twenty or thirty cases are said to be exported annually to the Arabian coast and Muscat. Indigo is grown in some quantity outside the town, and is responsible for a predominant tone of blue in the costumes of both sexes. Selby, in 1842, though reporting the local trade as small, lamented that nearly all the cottons, woollens, chintzes, cutlery, hardware, and sugar were supplied by Russia, notwithstanding a long and tedious land-carriage from Isfahan.[2] Whatever may have been the case fifty years ago, I found that Russian ascendency had now completely ceased, there being few, if any, Russian articles in the town, and the European import trade consisting almost entirely of English or Indian goods, brought from Busrah either *viâ* Amarah on the Tigris and Dizful, or by Mohammerah and the Karun river. The sole local manufactures appear to be a species of bright-coloured carpet or matting, made of cotton and wool, and a felt of coarse pattern. The bazaar, which was once the largest in Khuzistan, consists only of two diminutive alleys crossing each other under a dome, of the stalls before alluded to, and of one or two open booths, with a roof

Trade and manufactures

[1] Elsewhere in Persia they are called *serdabs*, literally 'cold water.' Layard says they are known in Shushter as *shadrewan* (*Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 43); but this is a mistake.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiv. pp. 234, 242.

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resting on stone supports, that still survive in the centre of the miserable *agora*. There are no *khans*, or caravanserais, for merchants such as are usually found in Oriental cities.

A very large proportion of the population are *seyids* (i.e. descendants of the Prophet), whose voluminous green turban, here even more than elsewhere, seems to be an excuse for insufferable airs, gross superstition, and an indolent life. Of their attitude towards strangers, however, the most conflicting accounts have been left by English visitors. Layard [1] and Selby [2] have spoken thereof in terms of the highest praise; and I cannot but attribute the favourable reception of Selby and his crew to the personal popularity and prestige of the great traveller under whose auspices they came.

Layard and Selby on the people

Nor was the verdict of the quartermaster of the 'Assyria' much less complimentary, when in reply to a question from Sir H. Layard as to what he thought of Shushter, 'Well, sir,' he said, 'it ain't a bad place, but there bain't a public in it.' [3]

That Selby, however, felt a little nervous as to the justice of his tribute is evident from his next paragraph, where he says:—

> In writing thus highly of the Shushteris, I fear I may be considered as having drawn too highly-coloured and flattering a picture. Let future experience and knowledge of them decide the point, nor, until they are found unworthy of the character I have given them, let them be classed with their oppressive neighbours, the Persians.

Unfortunately 'future experience and knowledge,' which we are now in a position to invoke, have decided the point both against Selby and his friends the Shushteris. Only eight years later, Mr. Loftus described 'the countenances of the inhabitants as not prepossessing, low cunning, deceit, and mistrust being universal among the lower classes;' [4] while the advent of Messrs. Lynch's agents and the opening of the Karun have supplied the present generation with the opportunity of giving the lie to the benignant assurances of their predecessors to Sir H. Layard. When Messrs. Lynch's representative first took up his abode there, in 1888, he found difficulty even in procuring drinking water and the commonest necessaries of life, so loth were the people to have any dealing with such 'an unclean thing;' and every obstacle was

Modern character

[1] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 282; *cf.* pp. 44, 340, 357.
[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xiv. p. 230.
[3] *Early Adventures*, vol. ii. p. 357.
[4] *Travels and Researches*, p. 296.

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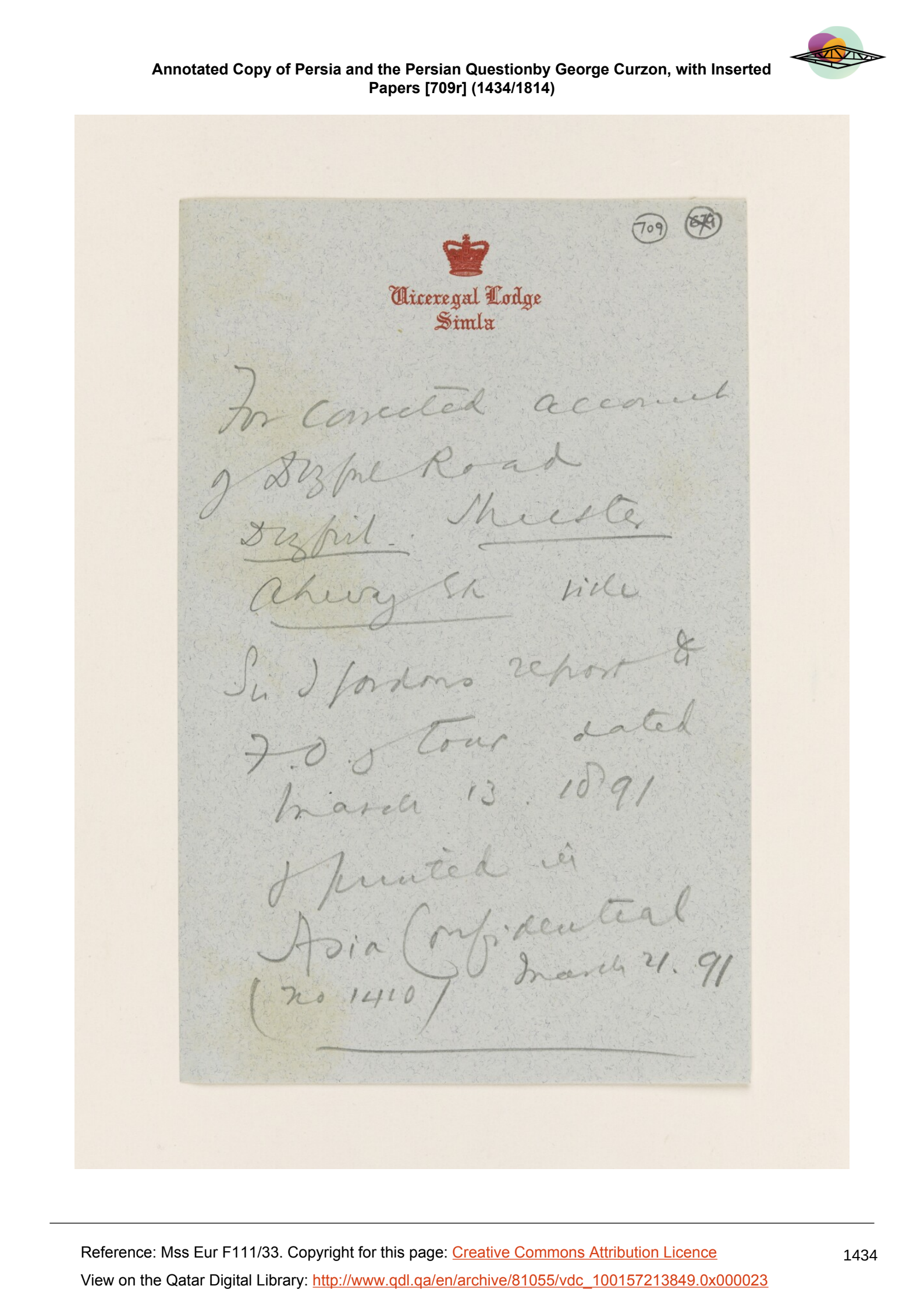

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Viceregal Lodge
Simla

For corrected account
of Dizful Road
Dizful. Shuster
Ahwaz Sh vide
Sir J Gordons report &
F.O. of tour dated
March 13. 1891
& printed in
Asia Confidential
(no 1410) March 21. 91

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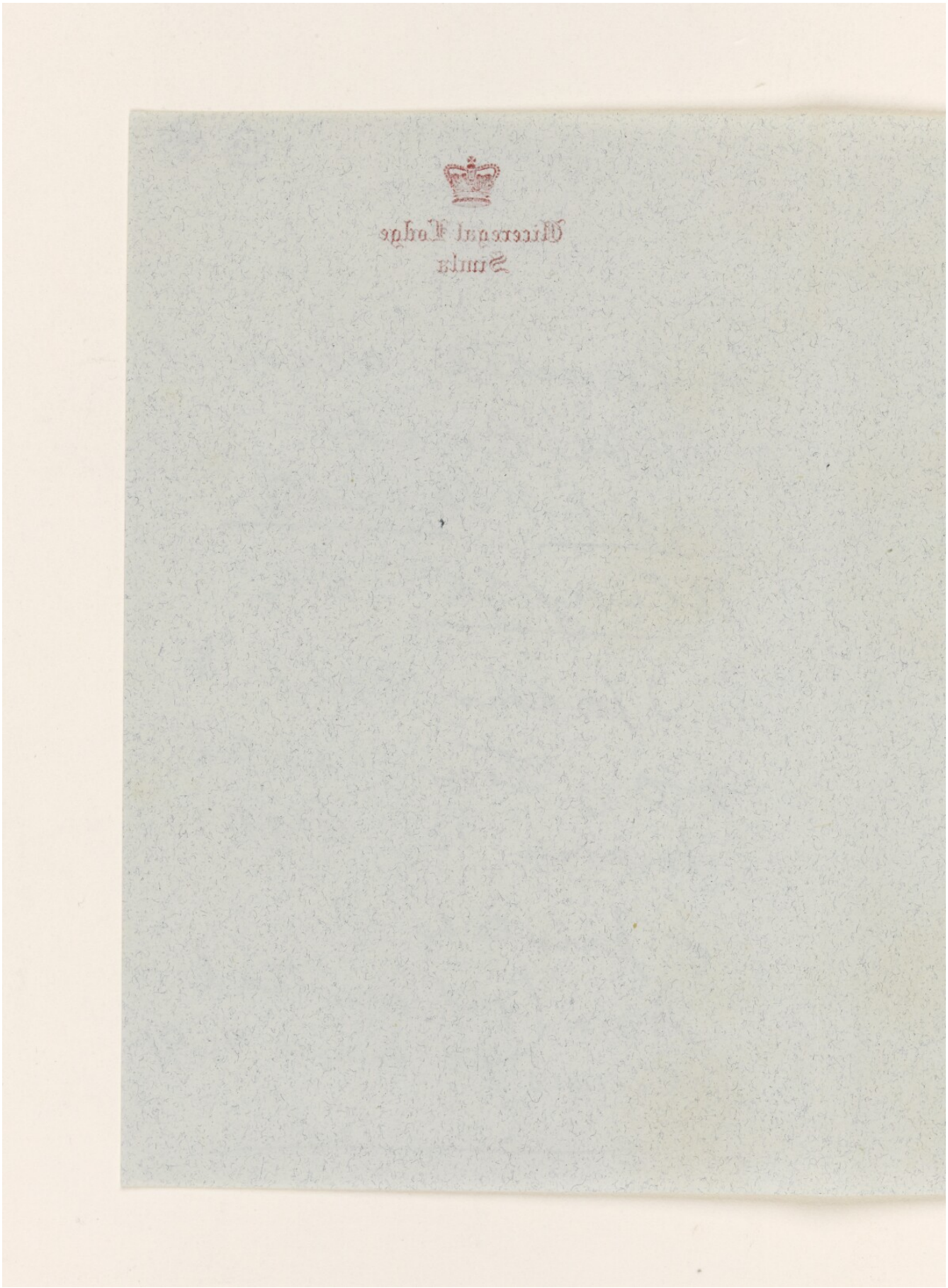

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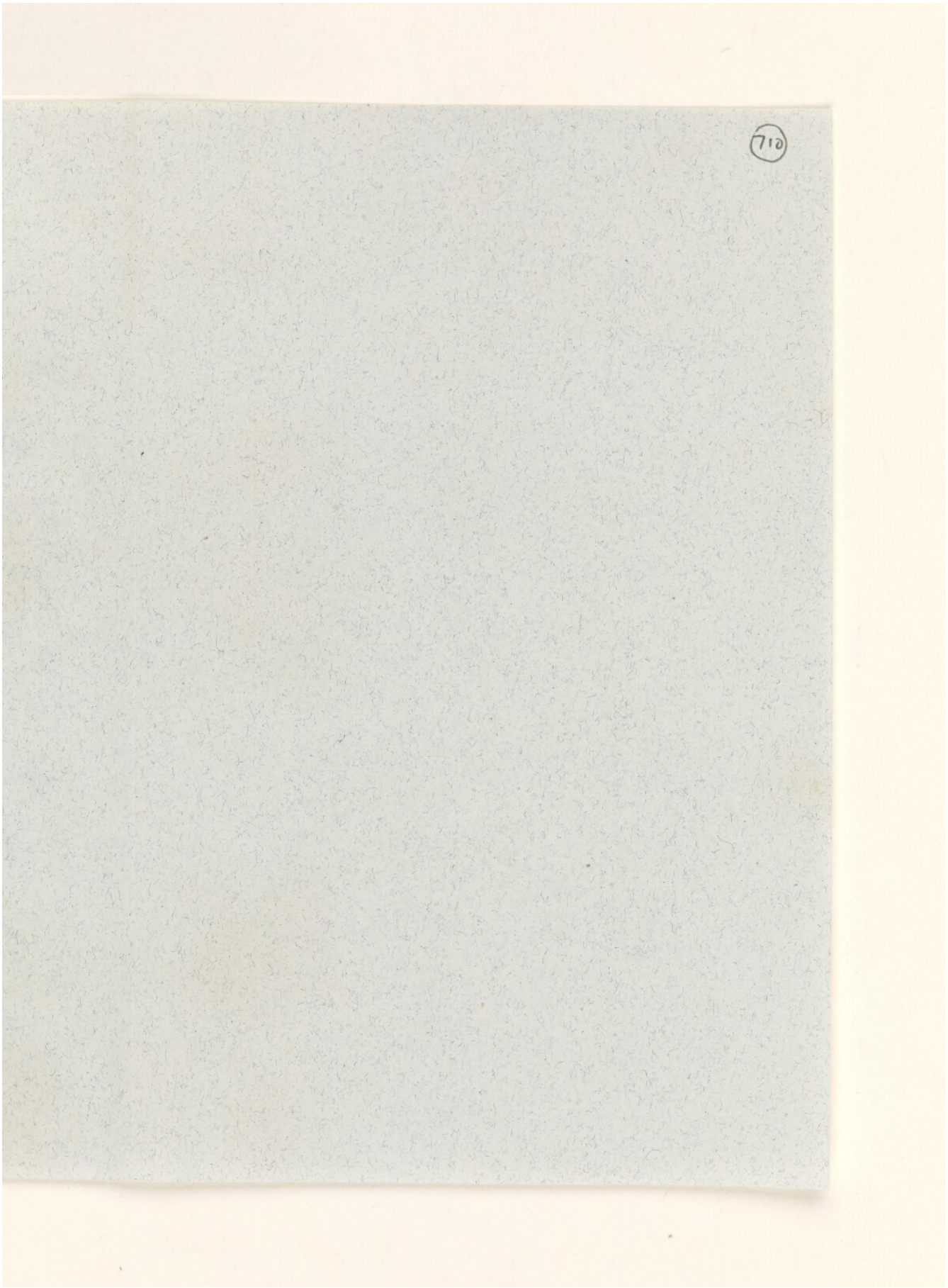


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still placed by the *mullahs* and *seyids* in the way of trade. The inhabitants had, in fact, been ordered not to purchase from the English, and the word for a general 'boycott' had been passed round. This unreasoning hostility might be expected in time to give place to a more sensible attitude; but it is illustrative of the difficulties with which Western influence is everywhere confronted in its first collision with Oriental prejudice, and which are often so little understood at home.



MERCHANTS OF SHUSHTER

The Shushteris, of whom I have said so much, are as peculiar in their origin, appearance, and dress as they are in their character and surroundings. Neither pure Arab nor pure Persian in descent, but a hybrid between the two, with a greater admixture of Arab blood, they seem to possess the less attractive features of either race. Their appearance is ill-favoured, and the reverse of healthy; a fact which may be due either to the drinking water, which is slightly brackish, or to the enervating heat in summer, or to their colossal neglect of the most elementary laws of hygiene, or to a combination of all three. Even in their apparel there is something distinctive, for along with the flowing cloak of the Arab they wear a dark or parti-coloured turban, one end of which is tucked up in front, while the other hangs down

Appearance and dress



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behind, not unlike the Afghan's head-dress. One who was well qualified to speak informed me that 'in character they are close, seldom spending money on anything but actual necessaries; that in bargaining they can hold their own with any Oriental people, and that to call them sharp in business matters is not saying much.' The town is divided into several wards or quarters, each with its own khan, and the population into corresponding factions; and where in England local conflicts are decided on November 5 by the peaceful arbitrament of the polling-booth, the Shushteri wire-pullers, who would probably confess a hearty contempt for representative institutions, adopt the more primitive method of fighting it out in the streets.[1] Finally, Layard may be quoted for the statement that 'the Shushteri ladies are renowned for their beauty, but not for their virtue;' with which concluding touch I may take literary leave of the good folks of Shushter.

Situation of town

In the situation of the town there is much that both harmonises with and accounts for the idiosyncrasies of its people. Unlike most Persian cities of any size, which are commonly built in plains at no great distance from the base of mountains whence they derive their water, Shushter is built upon a rock, and is at once sustained and fortified by the command of a noble river. Emerging from a pink sandstone ridge at a distance of about three miles to the north of the town, the Karun river, hitherto pent up in narrow gorges, and foaming over an obstructed bed, expands itself with all the luxury of new-found ease in the flat alluvial plains that stretch from here to the sea. By this mountain barrier, which is, so to speak, the advance-guard of the mighty Zagros range behind, Shushter is shut off from easy contact with the rest of Persia, and is brought into direct association both with the Iliats, or nomad tribes of the mountains, forming the various branches of the great family of Lurs, and with the Arabs of the plains. Its position at the outlet of the hills explains both its political and commercial importance; since it is at once the spot

[1] When the Nizam-es-Sultaneh was deprived of his post at No Ruz in 1891, and when news of the change of governors reached Shushter, that town and its people showed in their true colours. Everyone armed himself, and started out to wreak his private vengeance. Business was suspended; the shops were closed; the rival chiefs seized, and tortured, and mutilated each other; there was fighting in the streets; and patrols of armed men with difficulty kept the peace at night. The same phenomenon was repeated up and down Arabistan, and the governors of Hawizeh and Fellahieh were expelled by former tenants of their office.

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from which these unruly tribesmen can be most effectively controlled, and the natural channel through which trade must pass to and fro between the rich inland districts of Burujird, Kermanshah, and Hamadan, and the Southern seas. To these advantages no inconsiderable strategical strength has been added by the happy natural juxtaposition of river and rock, as well as by artificial works which I shall now proceed to describe.

Water-works

It has already been indicated that the town is situated on an eminence at the northern extremity of an island formed by two branches of the Karun, the one the original river-bed, the other a canal partly cut by man, which reunite some twenty-five miles in a straight line further down at Bund-i-Kir. About 600 yards above the town, the Ab-i-Gerger canal diverges from the left bank of the main stream, and pursues a straight southerly course, intersected by two dams of which I shall speak, through a gorge artificially hewn for its reception in the rock upon which the city stands, thereby constituting an important military defence upon its eastern flank. Meanwhile the main body of the river, which from the point of bifurcation to that of reunion at Bund-i-Kir is popularly called the Ab-i-Shuteit, after parting with some of its waters in the manner described, makes a broad sweep to the west, laves the base of the rock upon which the *kaleh* or citadel, and behind it the city, stand, and then turns southwards, its channel being barred at this point by the celebrated *bund* and bridge of Valerian. While skirting the castle rock it sacrifices a further portion of its waters, which pass into a subterranean tunnel pierced beneath the citadel, and opening on to a further artificial canal on the western side of the town, manifestly designed in order to irrigate the suburbs, which are situated at too great an elevation above the Karun itself to get their requisite water supply therefrom. These three features, the Ab-i-Gerger, the Ab-i-Shuteit, and the Minau Canal, are the determining characteristics of the situation, and it is to their history, nature, and purpose, as well as to the elucidation of the problem in hydraulics which they present, and which Rawlinson described as 'one of the most intricate and contradictory objects of research upon which he was ever engaged,'[1] that I now turn. If my explanation or description does not exactly coincide with that of previous writers, it is not in either case given without careful study of all that has been written

[1] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix. p. 75.



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on the subject, nor without personal examination on the spot—a task which some of my predecessors appear to have discharged in the most perfunctory fashion.

1. The Ab-i-Gerger Canal. At the point of its divergence from the Karun, 600 yards above the town of Shushter, an artificial dyke is thrown across the opening of the canal. This dyke is constructed of large blocks of hewn stone, which in the low water of the summer months are left quite bare, with six sluices or passages for the water between. It appears to have been repaired, at the same time as Valerian's bridge, by Mohammed Ali Mirza, in the early part of this century, and to have then exchanged its previous name of Bund-i-Kaisar (a probable allusion to the legendary handiwork of Valerian in the reign of Shapur) for that of Bund-i-Shahzadeh, or Prince's Dyke. I did not, however, gather that either name is now in use.

1. The Ab-i-Gerger

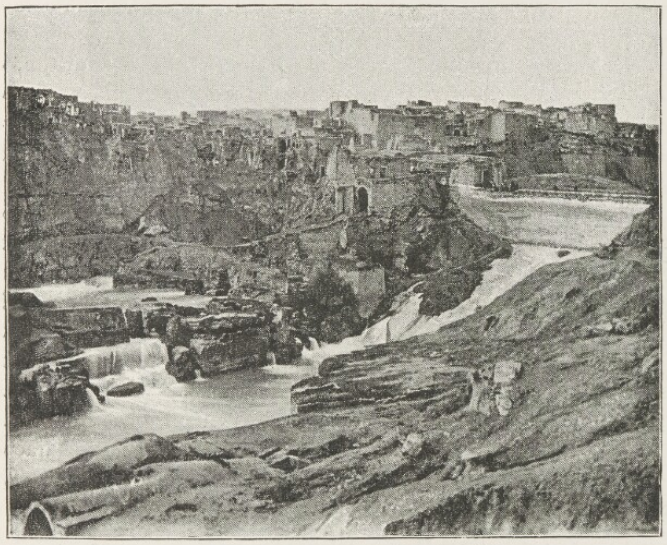
At a little distance below this dam commences the artificial cutting in the sandstone rock through which the canal is conducted, and at half a mile from it occurs a second *bund* or dam, which now completely blocks the progress of the stream. The present structure cannot be of ancient date; for when Sir J. Kinneir visited Shushter in 1810, he describes this *bund* as 'a bridge of one arch, upwards of eighty feet high, from the summit of which the Persians frequently throw themselves into the water without sustaining the slightest injury;'[1] and Rawlinson, in 1836, still speaks of 'a bridge of a single arch,'[2] although, from his description of the lower part of the dam, I cannot help thinking that he was mistaken therein. Anyhow, by 1841, when Layard first visited Shushter, the arch had disappeared, and the present solid stone barrier had taken its place. This is in the form of a wall, about sixty yards long, and twenty-five feet high, built right across the artificial cleft in the rock, which is here nearly a hundred feet in depth; the masonry of the wall rising on the south side from a sloping dam, also made of big stones, with an approximate elevation of forty feet; so that the entire height of the *bund* from

Dams and mills

[1] *Geographical Memoir*, by J. M. Kinneir, p. 97. I shall have occasion more than once to allude to the extraordinary errors of previous writers in describing the waterworks of Shushter. But not one of them is comparable with that of Kinneir, who, both in his narrative and in his map, confounded the river and the canal, and reversed their geographical positions. After this it is not surprising to find him mistake the *bund* of Ahwaz for the continuation of an old palace wall across the river.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix. p. 77.

the water to the parapet is about sixty-five feet.[1] A roadway, supplying the eastern entrance to Shushter, runs along the top; and from the fact of its having once led to the now deserted village or suburb of Boleiti on the farther side, caused the dam to be called Pul-i-Boleiti (i.e. bridge of Boleiti), a name which also appears to have passed into disuse. This *bund* has at no time borne any connection with irrigation, but was raised for a distinct and definite object. At a short distance above it four or five tunnels have been pierced in the rock on either side of the gorge below the canal level; and through these the water is diverted from the



DAM AND MILLS ON THE AB-I-GERGER

stream, emerging with a rush from several openings on the lower side of the *bund*, and turning in its passage a large number of wheels for the grinding of barley. The spectacle below the dam on the town side is indeed a very curious and interesting one; for there a number of pools are formed by the water as it gushes from the tunnels, and at different levels the mills have been placed so as

[1] Loftus (*Travels and Researches*), though correct in his description of the Pul-i-Boleiti in other respects, transferred these features—viz., the cutting through the rock and the solid masonry wall—to the upper dam, or Bund-i-Kaisar, of which neither of them is true.

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Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [713v] (1443/1814)



to utilise the force, the grindstones revolving in small circular towers. The water passing on falls with a splash and a roar into the canal below, and the entire appearance of the place awakens positive though discordant recollections of the tunnels and cascades of the Horatian Tivoli. Of the further progress of the Ab-i-Gerger I shall speak when describing my return journey.

2. The Ab-i-Shuteit

2. I now pass to the Karun proper, or Shuteit, and its co-ordinate system of dams, bridges, and canals. Immediately after the point at which it parts with the Gerger Canal, the main river takes a bend to the west, considerably widens its bed, and forms a broad sheet of water as it washes the base of the castle rock. This is the part of the river that was paved with stones by Shapur, and called, in consequence, Shadurwan, or 'flooring.'[1] Rounding the western angle of the citadel, the river then turns towards the south, and at a point about 500 yards lower down, where it is nearly a quarter of a mile in width, is spanned by the famous so-called *bund* and bridge of Valerian.

Bund and Bridge of Valerian

These great works consist of a stone *bund* or dam, with sluices for the passage of water, constructed of massive blocks of granite, iron cramped, right across the stream, and of a stone bridge of forty-one arches, built upon the top of the dam. The *bund* was formerly called the Bund-i-Mizan, or Dyke of the Balance, for reasons which will presently be manifest; and the bridge, Pul-i-Kaisar, from the supposed authorship of the Emperor Valerian. The bridge has evidently been built and rebuilt scores of times, as may be seen from the differing character of the material and the different style and size of the arches.[2] The roadway upon it is cobble-paved, and is twenty-one feet wide, and the bridge, so far from being straight, winds about in the most picturesque and random fashion, its total length being 570 yards. It is approached from the town by a modern gateway adorned with gaudy tiles, while two pillars guard the further extremity. At the time of my visit a great gap, over seventy yards in width, yawned in the very middle of the bridge, both *bund* and bridge having been entirely swept away by a

[1] *Vide* El Istakhri's (misnamed by Ouseley Ibn Haukal) *Oriental Geography*, pp. 74–76.

[2] The oldest bridge was destroyed by Hejaj-ibn-Yusuf during the reign of Abdul Malek-ibn-Mervan (A.D. 684–705). The dam is said to have been repaired by Timur in A.D. 1393. *Vide* also M. Dieulafoy, *L'Art antique de la Perse*, part v. pp. 109–112.

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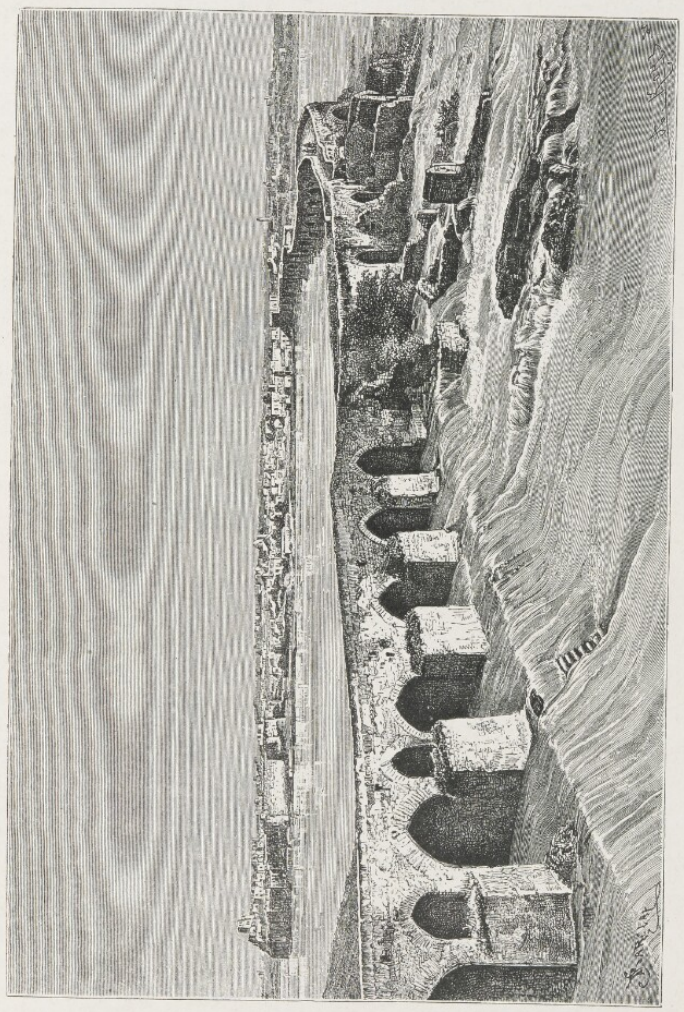
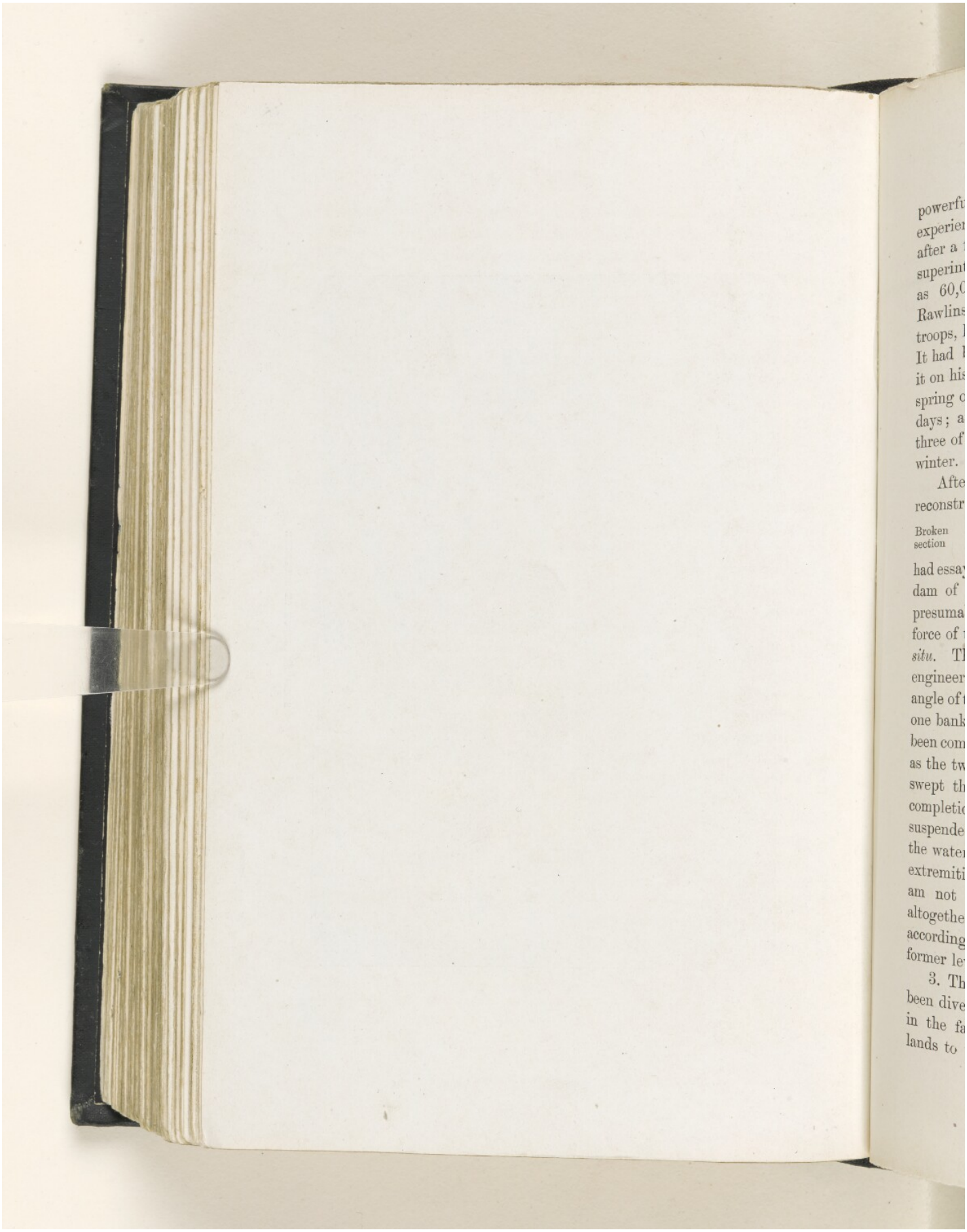


SHAPUR'S BRIDGE AT SHUSHTER



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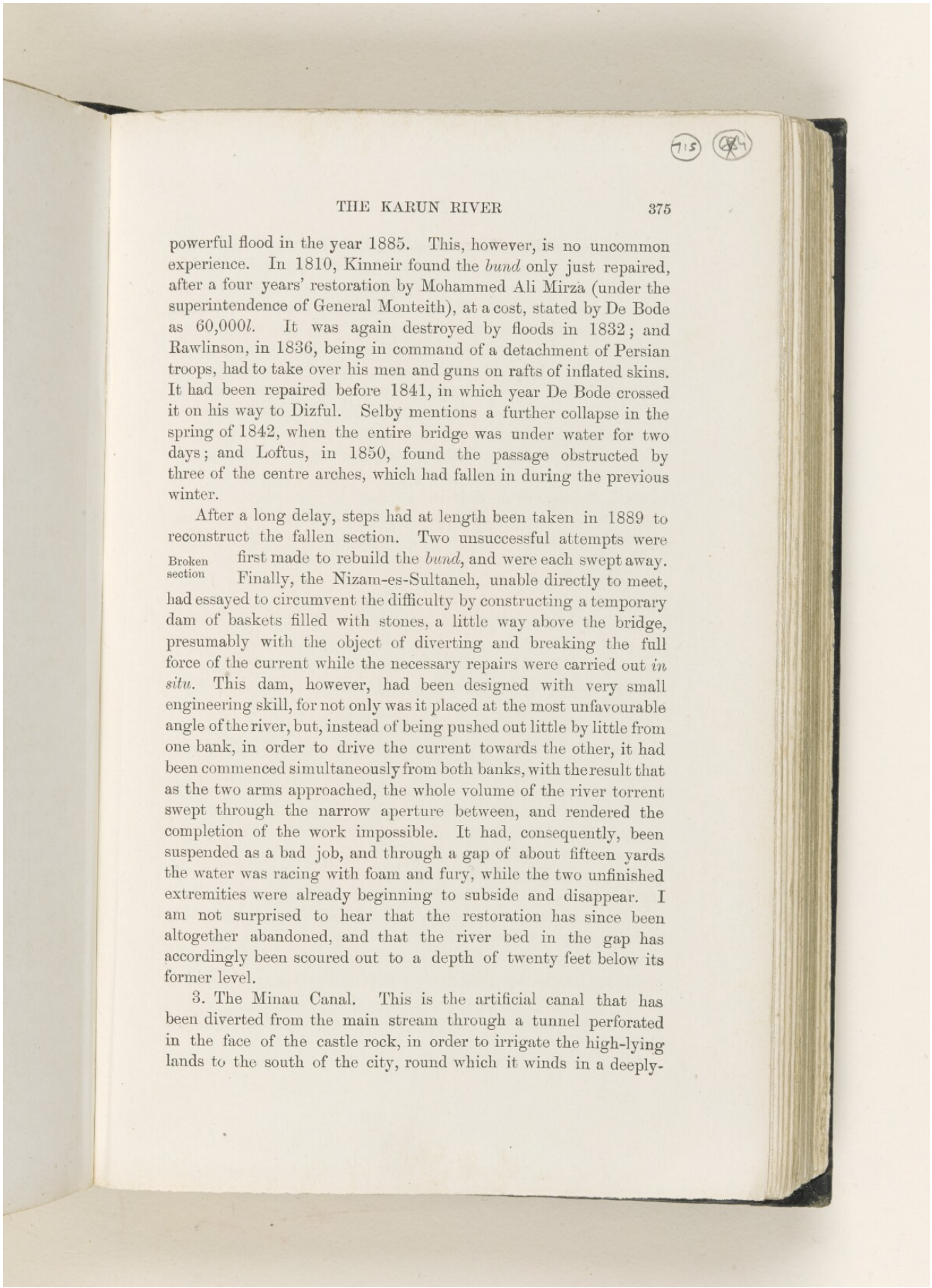



powerful flood in the year 1885. This, however, is no uncommon experience. In 1810, Kinneir found the *bund* only just repaired, after a four years' restoration by Mohammed Ali Mirza (under the superintendence of General Monteith), at a cost, stated by De Bode as 60,000*l*. It was again destroyed by floods in 1832; and Rawlinson, in 1836, being in command of a detachment of Persian troops, had to take over his men and guns on rafts of inflated skins. It had been repaired before 1841, in which year De Bode crossed it on his way to Dizful. Selby mentions a further collapse in the spring of 1842, when the entire bridge was under water for two days; and Loftus, in 1850, found the passage obstructed by three of the centre arches, which had fallen in during the previous winter.

After a long delay, steps had at length been taken in 1889 to reconstruct the fallen section. Two unsuccessful attempts were first made to rebuild the *bund*, and were each swept away. Finally, the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, unable directly to meet, had essayed to circumvent the difficulty by constructing a temporary dam of baskets filled with stones, a little way above the bridge, presumably with the object of diverting and breaking the full force of the current while the necessary repairs were carried out *in situ*. This dam, however, had been designed with very small engineering skill, for not only was it placed at the most unfavourable angle of the river, but, instead of being pushed out little by little from one bank, in order to drive the current towards the other, it had been commenced simultaneously from both banks, with the result that as the two arms approached, the whole volume of the river torrent swept through the narrow aperture between, and rendered the completion of the work impossible. It had, consequently, been suspended as a bad job, and through a gap of about fifteen yards the water was racing with foam and fury, while the two unfinished extremities were already beginning to subside and disappear. I am not surprised to hear that the restoration has since been altogether abandoned, and that the river bed in the gap has accordingly been scoured out to a depth of twenty feet below its former level.

Broken section

3. The Minau Canal. This is the artificial canal that has been diverted from the main stream through a tunnel perforated in the face of the castle rock, in order to irrigate the high-lying lands to the south of the city, round which it winds in a deeply-

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furrowed loop. Rawlinson and other travellers have designated it the Nahr-i-Darian,[1] or Ab-i-Miandab—the latter, which signifies 'river between two waters,' being a perfectly correct description of its situation, and being identical with the modern contraction Minau (i.e. Mian-i-ab)—while Colonel Bell calls it the Ab-i-Khurd. After leaving the cutting through the rock which is said by Rawlinson to be 300 yards long and 15 feet broad,[2] it passes into the sandy soil behind the town, and here its level was till lately regulated by artificial dams, of which the most curious is a *bund*, thrown right across the ravine cut by the canal and supporting a quaintly irregular bridge, the roadway of which is stone-paved, and runs sharply uphill on one side in order to reach the top of the bank, where is a ruined gateway and guard-house. This bridge is called the Pul-i-Lashker. When I inspected it no water was flowing through the arches of the *bund*, whilst I have already mentioned that on entering the town I was able to ford the shrunken continuation of the same canal at a point further to the east. The reason of its failure has been the rupture of Valerian's *bund* and bridge, by which the level of the river, at the point where it formerly fed the canal, has been seriously lowered, and its consequence is visible in the desiccation and sterility that have overtaken the small Mesopotamia which it was intended to irrigate.

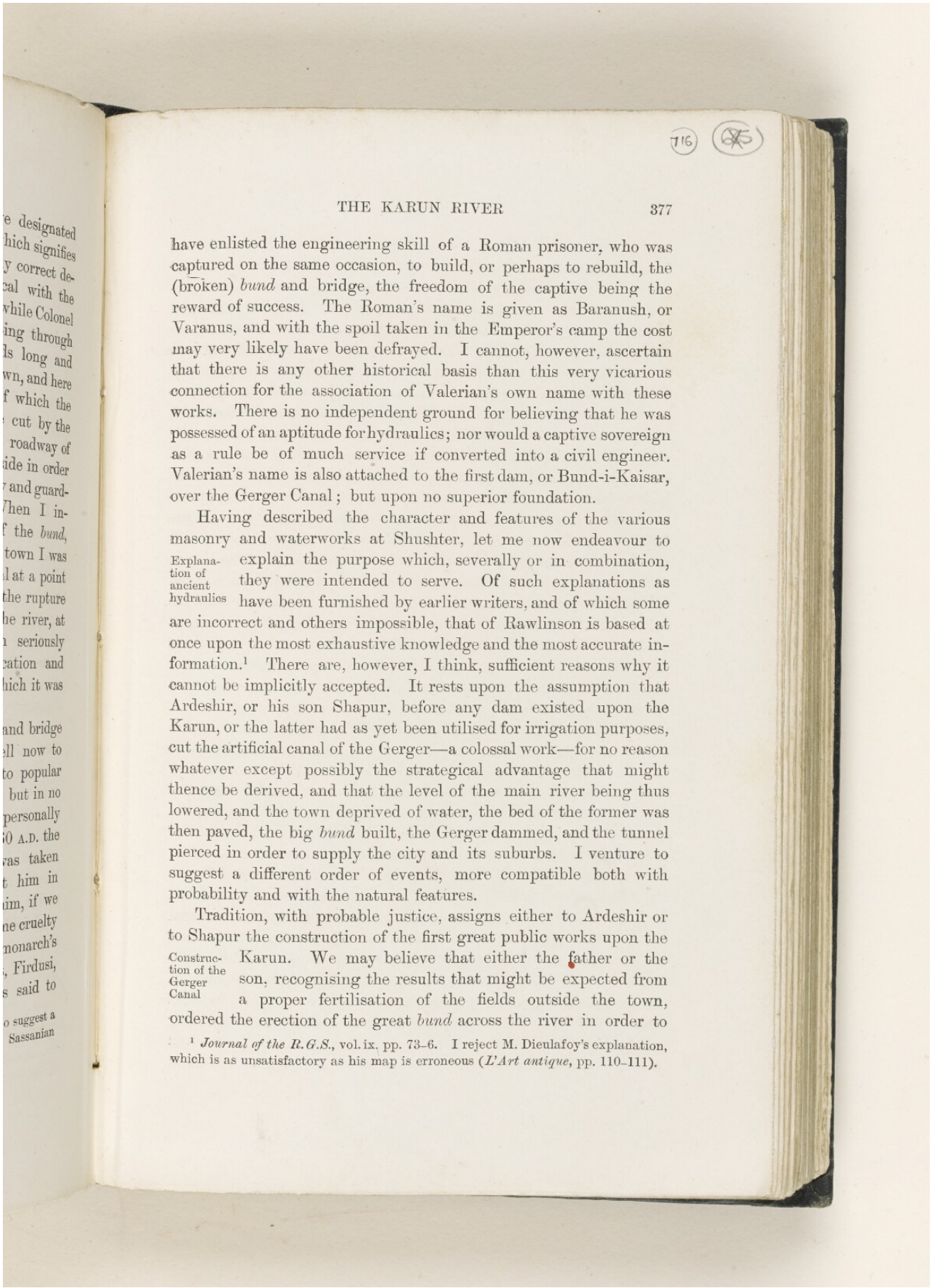
3. The Minau Canal

I have so frequently used the terms Valerian's *bund* and bridge in speaking of the Bund-i-Mizan, that it will be well now to explain that I have only done so in deference to popular legend, and because they are always so called; but in no sense because I believe that the Emperor Valerian was personally engaged in their execution. It is well known that in 260 A.D. the Roman Emperor, in attempting to relieve Edessa, was taken prisoner by King Shapur, who for seven years kept him in captivity (it is said in the castle at Shushter), treating him, if we are to believe a somewhat questionable legend, with extreme cruelty and indignity, and perpetuating his insults even upon the monarch's corpse. In the Shah Nameh of the Persian epic poet, Firdusi, occurs an interesting passage, in which the conqueror is said to

Tradition of Valerian

[1] The name Darian (which is a contraction of Darabian) seems to suggest a connection with Darius, who may conceivably have anticipated the Sassanian kings in the waterworks of Shushter.

[2] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix. p. 76.





have enlisted the engineering skill of a Roman prisoner, who was captured on the same occasion, to build, or perhaps to rebuild, the (broken) *bund* and bridge, the freedom of the captive being the reward of success. The Roman's name is given as Baranush, or Varanus, and with the spoil taken in the Emperor's camp the cost may very likely have been defrayed. I cannot, however, ascertain that there is any other historical basis than this very vicarious connection for the association of Valerian's own name with these works. There is no independent ground for believing that he was possessed of an aptitude for hydraulics; nor would a captive sovereign as a rule be of much service if converted into a civil engineer. Valerian's name is also attached to the first dam, or Bund-i-Kaisar, over the Gerger Canal; but upon no superior foundation.

Explanation of ancient hydraulics

Having described the character and features of the various masonry and waterworks at Shushter, let me now endeavour to explain the purpose which, severally or in combination, they were intended to serve. Of such explanations as have been furnished by earlier writers, and of which some are incorrect and others impossible, that of Rawlinson is based at once upon the most exhaustive knowledge and the most accurate information.[1] There are, however, I think, sufficient reasons why it cannot be implicitly accepted. It rests upon the assumption that Ardeshir, or his son Shapur, before any dam existed upon the Karun, or the latter had as yet been utilised for irrigation purposes, cut the artificial canal of the Gerger—a colossal work—for no reason whatever except possibly the strategical advantage that might thence be derived, and that the level of the main river being thus lowered, and the town deprived of water, the bed of the former was then paved, the big *bund* built, the Gerger dammed, and the tunnel pierced in order to supply the city and its suburbs. I venture to suggest a different order of events, more compatible both with probability and with the natural features.

Construction of the Gerger Canal

Tradition, with probable justice, assigns either to Ardeshir or to Shapur the construction of the first great public works upon the Karun. We may believe that either the father or the son, recognising the results that might be expected from a proper fertilisation of the fields outside the town, ordered the erection of the great *bund* across the river in order to

[1] *Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. ix. pp. 73–6. I reject M. Dieulafoy's explanation, which is as unsatisfactory as his map is erroneous (*L'Art antique*, pp. 110–111).

hold up its waters, and the excavation of the tunnel and Minau Canal leading therefrom, in order to carry off a different portion of the waters so collected for irrigation purposes. Before long, however, the river, scouring a soft and friable bed, deepened its channel and ceased to fill the canal, a process which would be accelerated, if, as is probable, the *bund* had also broken down. It was at this critical juncture that we may assume the engineering ability of the Roman prisoner to have been invoked in order to redress the evil, and the series of waterworks which have made both the place and its founders famous, to have been initiated in their entirety. Realising the difficulty of repairing the *bund* and of adequately controlling the often swollen torrent of the Karun as long as there remained no other exit for its superfluous waters, the monarch or the engineer ordered the excavation of the Gerger Canal through the rock on the eastern side of the town. No sooner was the cutting finished than the entire volume of the Karun rushed through it, entirely deserting the old river bed, a fact which I regard as established by two considerations. At some distance below the Gerger *bund*, where are the existing water-mills, is another artificial *bund*, on which are the remains of numerous disused water-mills at such a height above the present level of the canal that it is obvious they must have been placed there when the canal occupied a much higher level. Further, throughout the entire course of the Gerger from Shushter to Bund-i-Kir, whilst the canal at present occupies a narrow bed of from 60 to 70 yards in width with steep banks, there are visible at distances varying from a few yards to half a mile from these inland, others and higher banks, now standing up like cliff walls from the plain, but unmistakably indicating a time when they formed the confines of a much larger and more powerful stream.

Building of the big *bund*

The Karun having thus been emptied into the Gerger Canal, the big *bund* was rebuilt, or, if no previous operations be attributed to Ardeshir, was now, along with the tunnel, constructed for the first time. Simultaneously the opportunity was seized for raising and paving the river-bed below the castle rock, in order to prevent any further detrition of the bottom. These undertakings being completed, and the system of irrigation which, according to my hypothesis, was their main, if not their sole *raison d'être*, being available for use, orders were now given partially to dam the Gerger Canal, so as to turn back the Karun

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into its original bed. At this stage, then, were constructed the various *bunds* that obstruct the course of the Gerger, whose diminished contents naturally receded from the broad channel which they had hitherto occupied, and in process of time cut for themselves their present narrow and sinuous track, which has only to be followed down to Bund-i-Kir to show that it cannot at any time have been artificially cut by man.

Such is the explanation which I offer of the hydraulic and engineering works of Shushter. They may be summed up in the following propositions:—Valerian's *bund* was built (the bridge being raised upon it so as to admit of communication with the opposite bank, and particularly with Dizful) in order to hold up the waters of the Karun for irrigation purposes.[1] The Minau Canal was cut in order to convey the waters thus dammed to the lands behind the towns, which were otherwise wholly without water-supply. The Gerger Canal was cut, not for independent purposes of irrigation, but simply in order to facilitate the above operations, and to carry off the surplus waters of the main river.[2] In fact, a utilitarian purpose was behind each of these great undertakings, which, at a distance of sixteen hundred years, survive to demonstrate the public spirit and the spacious conception of their illustrious founder.

Upon arriving at Shushter—which, thanks to my just appreciation both of the steam-power of the 'Susa' and of the mendacity of her engineer, I succeeded in doing about nine hours in advance of the passengers by the canal—I forwarded my credentials to the

[1] Consequently I reject the theory of Loftus, for which I do not see any foundation, that the Bund-i-Mizan was constructed, partly so as to provide a foundation for the bridge, partly to accumulate a sheet of water before the castle for the delectation of its occupant.

[2] The irrigation theory, and the recent date of the contraction of the Gerger, which have both been urged, are negatived by the fact mentioned by Layard, that 'the excavations at Shushter, and particularly the steps leading from the town to the bed of the canal, which are evidently very ancient, are carried *to the present level* of the Ab-i-Gerger (*Journal of the R.G.S.*, vol. xvi. p. 60). The origin of the name Gerger is doubtful. It may be onomatopœic (from the sound of the water gurgling through the tunnels of the dam). Compare the origin of the well Zemzem at Mecca. On the other hand, a native historian says it was so called from a colony, who came to Shushter from Gerger in Azerbaijan. In the time of Timur the Gerger was known as Do Dank, and the Shuteit (which is a modern appellation, diminutive of Shat, i.e. river), or Karun proper, as Chehar Dank, from the proportions of water—two-sixths and four-sixths—that flowed in the two channels. The name Mashrekan, strictly belonging to the Chehar Dank, was also commonly applied to both.

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Governor, and intimated my desire to pay an early call. The customary civilities passed in the interim, consisting of presents of cakes, fruit, and sweetmeats from the Nizam, and tips of corresponding or superior value to his servants from myself. In the afternoon I rode to the citadel at the hour fixed for the interview. This building, to which are annexed barracks and an arsenal, is situated on the summit and at the extremity of the rock, where it rises with a precipitous face of over one hundred feet from the river-bed. Nature has designated this locality as the obvious site for a citadel, and from the days of Shapur downwards it has been occupied by a *kaleh*, or fort, which at the time of the Arab conquest was known by the name of Selasil.[1] The present edifice is a modern structure, containing no remains of the ancient castle, while it has been further altered and modernised by the reigning Governor, who has rebuilt the habitable portion in the shape of a lofty two-storeyed tower, from whose summit a magnificent panorama is enjoyed of the river scenery and town. The entire space occupied by the buildings is said to be three or four acres, and the walls of the barracks are loopholed towards the city, from which they are separated by an open plot—a very necessary precaution in a place of such unstable quietude as Shushter, where Governor and people have often been engaged in bloody conflict. The *kaleh* is entered by a gateway glittering with the showy tiles that represent the debauched taste of modern Persian art, and its interior contains some pretty garden-terraces and points of outlook. Nothing, indeed, could be fairer than the landscape from the large open window at which I sat with the Nizam. The river, emerging from the rugged mountain range, sunned itself placidly in the broad sweep below the cliff, while on its further bank stretched a park-like expanse of ground, dotted with venerable trees. One of the rooms in the castle contained a large tank of running water in the centre, above which was placed a wooden platform or lounge, for purposes of slumber or repose. It breathed a coolness beyond expression.

The citadel

The then Governor of Arabistan, whose official title was the Nizam-es-Sultaneh, had only within the last two years been appointed to that office, but during this time he seemed to have acquired a fair reputation for justice as well as energy of adminis-

[1] Identified by some with the Sele of Ptolemy and Ammianus Marcellinus, who mention it as one of the four great towns of Susiana.

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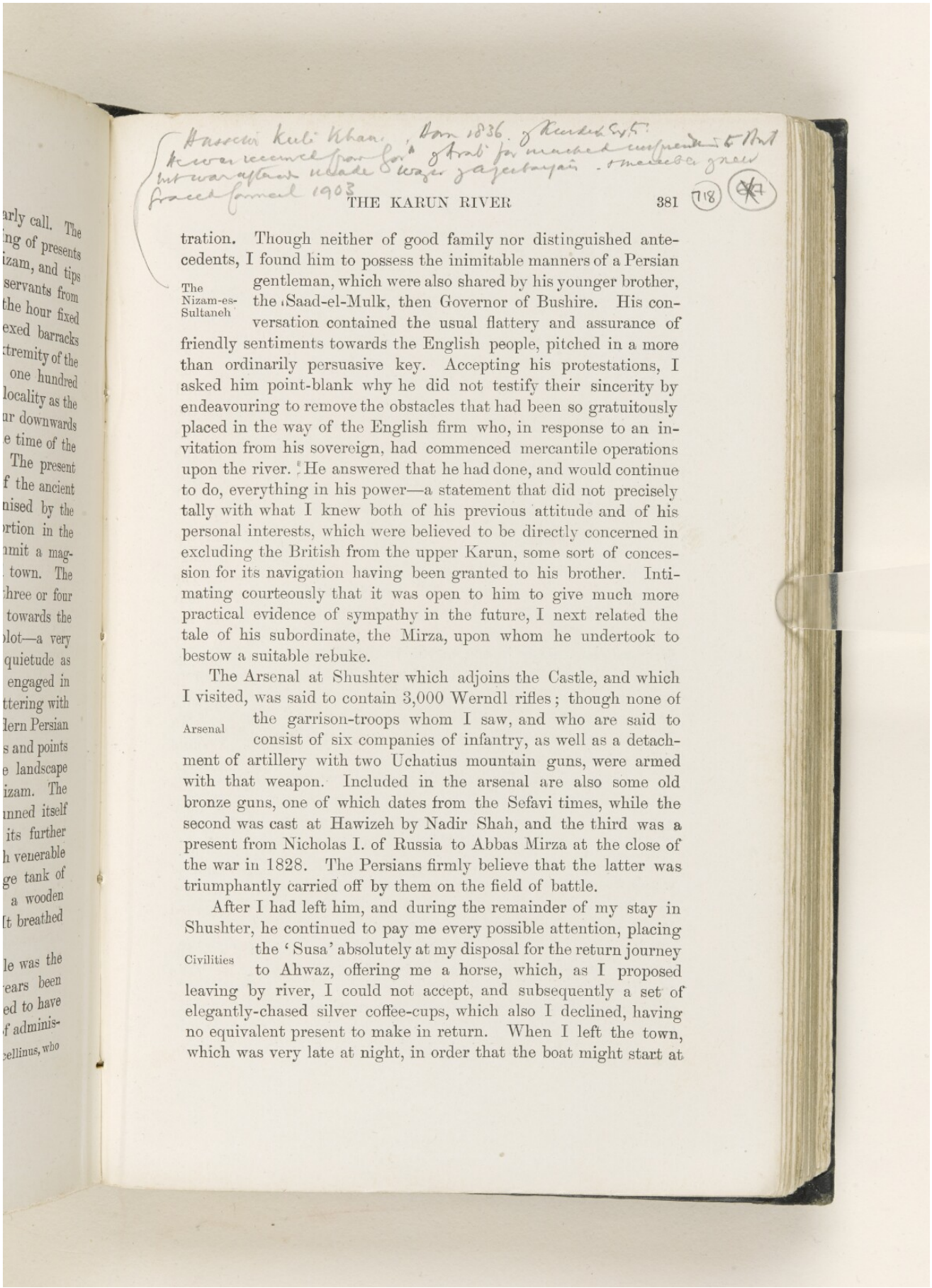



tration. Though neither of good family nor distinguished antecedents, I found him to possess the inimitable manners of a Persian gentleman, which were also shared by his younger brother, the Saad-el-Mulk, then Governor of Bushire. His conversation contained the usual flattery and assurance of friendly sentiments towards the English people, pitched in a more than ordinarily persuasive key. Accepting his protestations, I asked him point-blank why he did not testify their sincerity by endeavouring to remove the obstacles that had been so gratuitously placed in the way of the English firm who, in response to an invitation from his sovereign, had commenced mercantile operations upon the river. He answered that he had done, and would continue to do, everything in his power—a statement that did not precisely tally with what I knew both of his previous attitude and of his personal interests, which were believed to be directly concerned in excluding the British from the upper Karun, some sort of concession for its navigation having been granted to his brother. Intimating courteously that it was open to him to give much more practical evidence of sympathy in the future, I next related the tale of his subordinate, the Mirza, upon whom he undertook to bestow a suitable rebuke.

The Nizam-es-Sultaneh

The Arsenal at Shushter which adjoins the Castle, and which I visited, was said to contain 3,000 Werndl rifles; though none of the garrison-troops whom I saw, and who are said to consist of six companies of infantry, as well as a detachment of artillery with two Uchatius mountain guns, were armed with that weapon. Included in the arsenal are also some old bronze guns, one of which dates from the Sefavi times, while the second was cast at Hawizeh by Nadir Shah, and the third was a present from Nicholas I. of Russia to Abbas Mirza at the close of the war in 1828. The Persians firmly believe that the latter was triumphantly carried off by them on the field of battle.

Arsenal

After I had left him, and during the remainder of my stay in Shushter, he continued to pay me every possible attention, placing the 'Susa' absolutely at my disposal for the return journey to Ahwaz, offering me a horse, which, as I proposed leaving by river, I could not accept, and subsequently a set of elegantly-chased silver coffee-cups, which also I declined, having no equivalent present to make in return. When I left the town, which was very late at night, in order that the boat might start at

Civilities

sunrise, he was most anxious that I should not ride out to the place of anchorage till the next morning, in order that he might send a large mounted escort with me.

Descent of the Gerger

The starting-point and terminus of navigation on the Ab-i-Gerger is at a spot called Shelailieh, between six and seven miles below the town, the course of the canal above that point being obstructed by more than one semi-natural, semi-artificial *bund*, although the 'Assyria' in 1842 succeeded in threading a passage to within two miles of the city. At Shelailieh, where is a miserable village on the right bank, boats are in the habit of lading or unlading their cargo, which must be conveyed to or from Shushter on donkeys or mules. I fancy that by a little blasting a channel could be opened to a point nearer the town, and that the nuisance of this rather lengthy land portage might accordingly be abridged. My descent of the Gerger Canal as far as Bund-i-Kir occupied 7½ hours, the same time being consumed between Bund-i-Kir and Ahwaz. The canal follows a very tortuous course, and has worn in time a bed deeply sunk between banks of clay, the old banks on the higher level looking strangely forlorn in the absence of the big stream which they once confined. There is far more and thicker jungle on the banks of the Gerger than on those of the Karun; and throughout our voyage winged game, starting up from the water's edge, whirred over our heads from one bank to the other. The average width of the canal is from 50 to 75 yards; and a boat of over 100 feet would find it almost impossible to make some of the turns.

The Mirza again

As a special compliment the Nizam had sent two of his suite to accompany me as far as Ahwaz. They were also bearers of letters to the Mirza, whom, however, I had now so entirely forgotten in my satisfaction at having successfully accomplished the journey, and at having further caught the 'Shushan,' which was to wait for me up to a certain date at Ahwaz, that I went on board Messrs. Lynch's steamer without lending a thought to my obstructionist professor of a few days before. I was just turning in at 1 A.M., when a knock at my cabin-door revealed the figure of the Mirza, slightly the worse for liquor, and in a pitiable condition of mingled humiliation and fright. He explained that the Nizam had written him a severe reprimand, and had threatened to cancel a whole year's salary for his behaviour on my upward journey; and he submissively implored me to write a parting

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letter to his chief, saying that my vengeance was satisfied, and requesting that no further punishment should be imposed. I had no wish to inflict an injury upon the poor wretch, who had already suffered so serious a fright that he would be most unlikely to repeat the same tactics when the next English visitor should ascend the river; so I wrote the desired epistle, and we parted good friends. But whenever I hear mentioned the name of the Karun river, or of the rapids of Ahwaz, amid the din and whirl of the waters humming over the ledges there intrudes upon my memory the vision of that inimitable Mirza, seated in his mat-hut between the two melancholy fratricides, with the silent *seyids*, the imperilled sheikh, and the stalwart robber-son looking chilly and imperturbably on.

Opposition to British navigation

I will not here recapitulate the facts set forth at sufficient length in my communication to the 'Times,' and of which the attitude of the various Persian officials whom I encountered was only a casual illustration, that led me to believe that at that time a determined attempt was being made upon the spot to destroy, by means of a general 'boycott,' the value of the Karun Concession. The reasons for such a policy were not hard to seek. The Arab sheikhs, who with their tribes inhabit the banks of the river and have for long enjoyed a practical independence of the central authority, though exceedingly well-disposed to the English and hostile to the Persians, whom they detest, disliked the intrusion of an element that brought down upon them the attention, dictation, and exactions of the Government, and that located Persian officials at Ahwaz and Mohammerah. The local traders resented competition with the hallowed monopoly of their caravans. The Persian officials, alive to the great possibilities of the trade, were furious at seeing it slip through their fingers; and, though they had never hitherto lifted a little finger to develop the route themselves, were disgusted that the task should be undertaken by those from whom they could expect to make no *mudakhil* and to receive no bribes. Above all, some sort of concession for the navigation of the upper river appeared to have been given to the Governor of Bushire and to a wealthy merchant of the same place; and there was ground for believing that the Nizam's interests were preoccupied in the same direction, and that he was secretly aiming at retaining the monopoly of the upper river in Persian hands.

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At the time I wrote that I did not think that these tactics would be likely in the long run to succeed; partly because every fresh introduction of foreign influence into Persia had met with, but by patience had ultimately vanquished, the same antagonism, partly because the intrinsic prospects of trade were so good that the Persians were unlikely for long to turn the cold shoulder upon a project by which money might stick to their own fingers, and because the Government, by the construction of public buildings and of a telegraphic wire, had already shown a personal, even if a selfish, interest in the development of the concern. After a lapse of one and a half year I will now narrate how far these anticipations have been realised, and what was the position of affairs in the summer of 1891.

Prospect in 1889

Of the steps that have since been taken for the furtherance of trade either by the Persian or the British authorities, three were recommended by me in 1889 as essential. The first of these was an arrangement for the navigation of the river above Ahwaz in correspondence with the steamers running below. The 'Susa' now navigates the Gerger to Shushter in connection with Persian vessels on the lower river, while the 'Shushan,' which was presented by Messrs. Lynch to the Persian Government, plies on the Shuteit in connection with the 'Blosse Lynch' below. There is thus a double steam service in existence from Mohammerah to Shushter. Secondly, a British Vice-Consul has most wisely been appointed at Mohammerah, and has already found time to pen an official report to his department.[1] And, thirdly, an attempt is now being made by the Imperial Bank, in co-operation with the Persian Government, to reopen the northern road from Khorremabad to Dizful, about which I have spoken as a future trade artery into the interior of Persia. The Persians are slowly building caravanserais upon this route, and in a still more leisurely fashion are taking steps to check the lawless vagaries of the Sagwand and Derikwand tribes of Lurs, who are usually out on the war-path, and who have up till now rendered this section of road quite unsafe for merchandise. A little firmness on the part of the Central Government would result in the suppression of these sporadic disorders, and would give the new commercial avenue that fair chance which has hitherto been denied to it. I think it unlikely that the through *fourgon*, or wagon-service, from

Subsequent progress

[1] Annual series of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, No. 826 (1891).

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Shushter to Teheran, which has been talked about, will be organised for some time to come, owing to the expense that would be entailed in constructing the requisite roadway. But upon the rougher and more mountainous sections of the route mule transport may still be wisely employed, and with greater security improvements will gradually follow.

Public works

Among other measures that have been adopted by the Persian Government may be mentioned the reconstruction of a telegraphic wire formerly in existence between Khorremabad and Dizful (in connection with Teheran), and its extension to Shushter, Ahwaz, and Mohammerah. Like most such works, however, in Persia, this has been badly executed; and the wire is usually cut in the troubled belt of Lur country of which I have spoken. There are times, indeed, when in this region the authority of the Central Government is absolutely *nil*. If we turn our gaze to the Karun itself, a more gratifying advance may be recorded. My obstructive friends have disappeared from the scene, and have been replaced by officials, if not of perfect friendliness, at least of a superior stamp. Bunder-i-Nasiri, or the new settlement at Ahwaz, is now a flourishing place, containing a respectable cluster of government buildings, barracks for a detachment of artillery and two companies of infantry under a *sertip*, a large caravanserai and a bazaar at the landing-place below the rapids, and a similar caravanserai in course of erection on the opposite bank, in order to attract to the Karun the trade of Hawizeh, forty-five miles distant to the west. At Mohammerah the government buildings have been completed at the mouth of the Haffar, and the new settlement is called Bunder Sahib Kerani. Barracks have been raised on the other bank of the river. A weekly Persian post has been organised between Mohammerah and Shushter.

Native enterprise

By far the most remarkable change, however, that has taken place is the active, though tardily aroused, interest of the Persians themselves in the river traffic. Instead of limiting their energies to thwarting the efforts of Messrs. Lynch, they have set about the task of cutting them out. The Nasiri Company, already mentioned, is responsible for this new development. Its leading spirit is the Muin-et-Tajar, a wealthy merchant of Bushire; Sheikh Mizal Khan, detecting a new loophole of salvation in co-operation with those whom he has hitherto distrusted and feared, has joined the undertaking; and there is



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not a doubt that behind both looms the powerful personality of the Grand Vizier, the Amin-es-Sultan. It is this company who have constructed the buildings already mentioned at new Ahwaz, and who have also laid a light horse tramway, with a three feet gauge, between the lower and the upper river. One of their steamers, the 'Nasiri,' plies on the lower river, in correspondence with the 'Susa' on the upper, towing after it two barges; it is shortly to be replaced by two larger vessels. Simultaneously with these evidences of activity, schemes have been heard of, also of Persian origin, for developing by irrigation the fertile plains on either side of the river, for establishing a pumping station at Kajarieh, and for extensive plantations of the sugar-cane, cereals, and the date palm. The value of land is rising at Mohammerah, and there is abundant reason for believing that the start thus made will be vigorously pursued.

British fortunes

It is only natural that this enterprise, which, while perfectly legitimate and even praiseworthy, has been conceived in a spirit of undeniable hostility to Messrs. Lynch, should to some extent have affected the fortunes of the English company. Native merchants are discouraged and even prohibited from shipping their goods by the English steamers, in spite of the lower freights offered by the latter. The old difficulty of depôts, wharves, and warehouses remains unsolved, foreigners being forbidden to erect these necessary appurtenances of successful traffic themselves; and the Persian Government being slow to fulfil their part of the original concession. The long-promised regulation of the customs, though more than once authorised at Teheran, has never been carried out on the spot, and, in the utter insecurity of the country north of Dizful, facilities for caravan traffic into the interior may be said not as yet to exist. Messrs. Lynch have, with unabated energy, sustained their fortnightly service to Ahwaz, carrying, for the most part, their own goods, sugar, copper, and cotton fabrics, and, for return freights, buying wheat, sesame seed, and other local products. In the year 1890 they also conveyed 2,000 passengers. In the same year the figures of Mohammerah trade, both English and Persian, were returned as follows in the Vice-Consular report: Imports 146,140*l.*, exports 53,100*l.* Traffic is still, for the reasons that I have specified, chiefly local in character; but the interests of the Persians will lead them in time to insist upon those conditions by which a wider and proportionately

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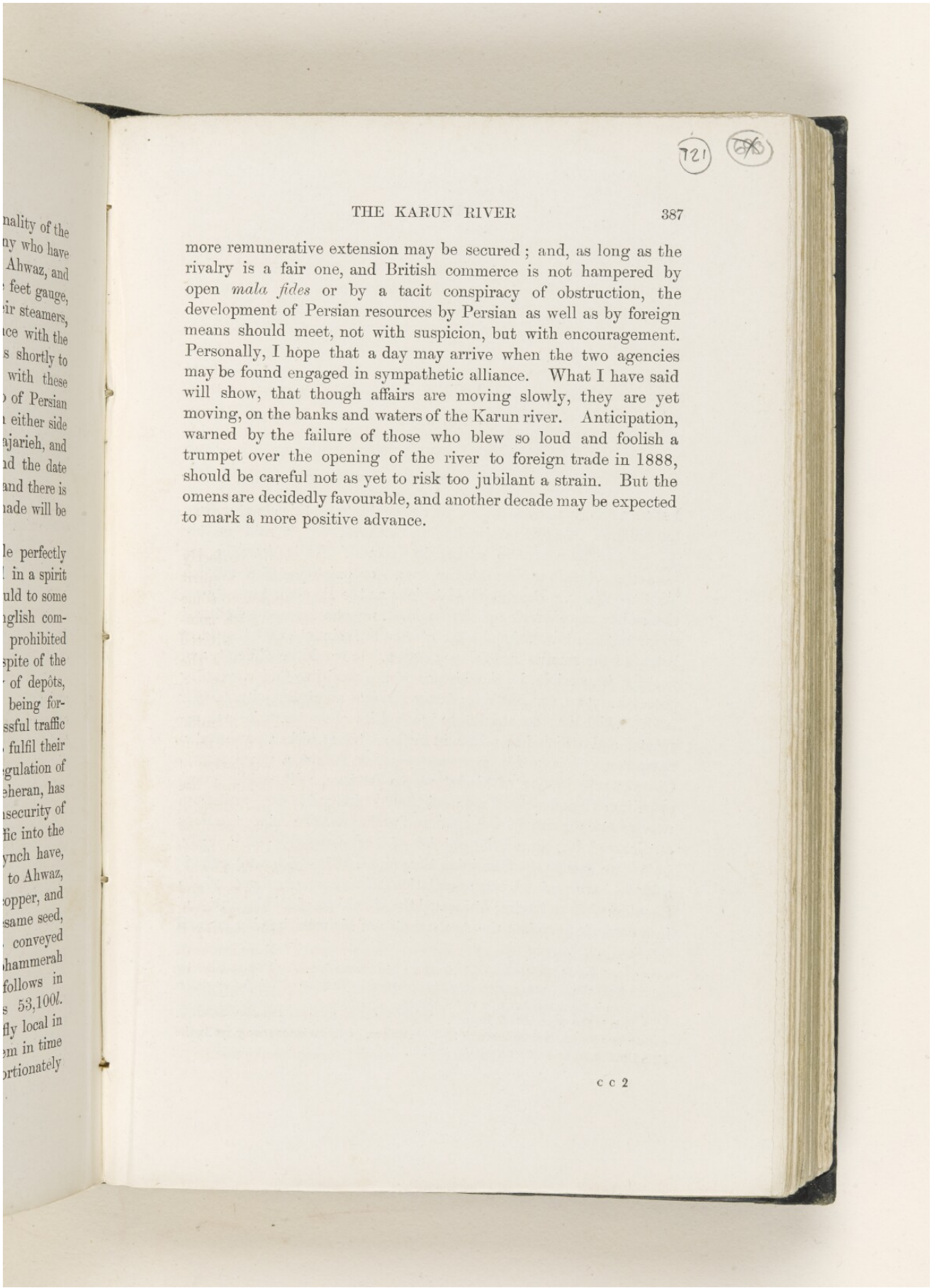



more remunerative extension may be secured; and, as long as the rivalry is a fair one, and British commerce is not hampered by open *mala fides* or by a tacit conspiracy of obstruction, the development of Persian resources by Persian as well as by foreign means should meet, not with suspicion, but with encouragement. Personally, I hope that a day may arrive when the two agencies may be found engaged in sympathetic alliance. What I have said will show, that though affairs are moving slowly, they are yet moving, on the banks and waters of the Karun river. Anticipation, warned by the failure of those who blew so loud and foolish a trumpet over the opening of the river to foreign trade in 1888, should be careful not as yet to risk too jubilant a strain. But the omens are decidedly favourable, and another decade may be expected to mark a more positive advance.



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# CHAPTER XXVI

## THE NAVY

The Spanish fleet thou can'st not see, because
It is not yet in sight.

R. B. SHERIDAN, *The Critic*, act. ii. sc. ii.

Persian dread of the sea

I MIGHT almost borrow a hint for the contents of this chapter from the famous chapter on Snakes in Iceland, which said merely 'There are no snakes in Iceland.' It is scarcely less difficult to discover the traces or existence of a Persian Navy. Brave and victorious as the Persians have shown themselves at different epochs on land, no one has ever ventured so far to belie the national character as to insinuate that they have betrayed the smallest proficiency at sea. It would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, in the history of the world to find a country possessing two considerable seaboards, and admirably situated for trade, which has so absolutely ignored its advantages in both respects, and which has never in modern times either produced a navigator, or manned a merchant fleet, or fought a naval battle. Cicero wrote in one of his letters to Atticus, '[Pompeii] omne consilium Themistocleum est; existimat enim, qui mare teneat, eum necesse esse rerum potiri.'[1] But no Persian monarch since the days of Xerxes[2] has shared the opinion of Themistocles or of Pompey, unless we except the Sassanian Shapur II. (310–379 A.D.), who is said to have gained the appellation Zhulaktaf or 'Lord of the Shoulders,' from having dislocated the shoulders of all his captives,[3] in a campaign against the Arab pirates of his maritime border, and

[1] *Ep. ad Attic.*, x. 8.

[2] The fleets of Mardonius and Xerxes were manned, not by Persians, but by sailors from the tributary provinces of the empire. In none of the Achæmenian sculptures is there any trace of naval affairs.

[3] This is the account of Masudi. Mirkhond says he strung his prisoners together by piercing a hole through their shoulders. Gibbon erroneously spells the title Dhulaknaf or Protector of the Nation.

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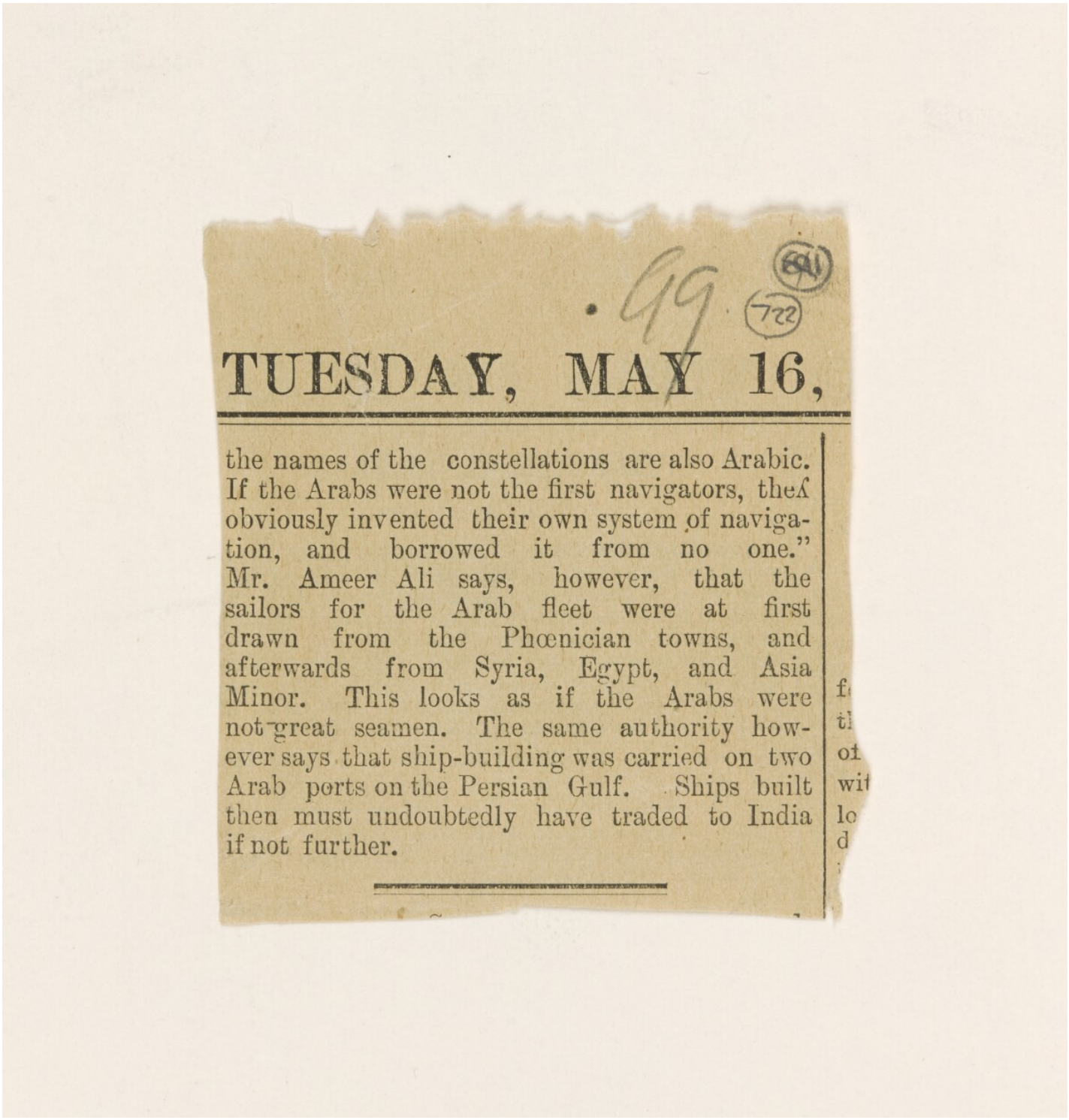

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TUESDAY, MAY 16,

the names of the constellations are also Arabic. If the Arabs were not the first navigators, they obviously invented their own system of navigation, and borrowed it from no one." Mr. Ameer Ali says, however, that the sailors for the Arab fleet were at first drawn from the Phœnician towns, and afterwards from Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor. This looks as if the Arabs were not great seamen. The same authority however says that ship-building was carried on two Arab ports on the Persian Gulf. Ships built then must undoubtedly have traded to India if not further.



IE TIMES OF INDIA

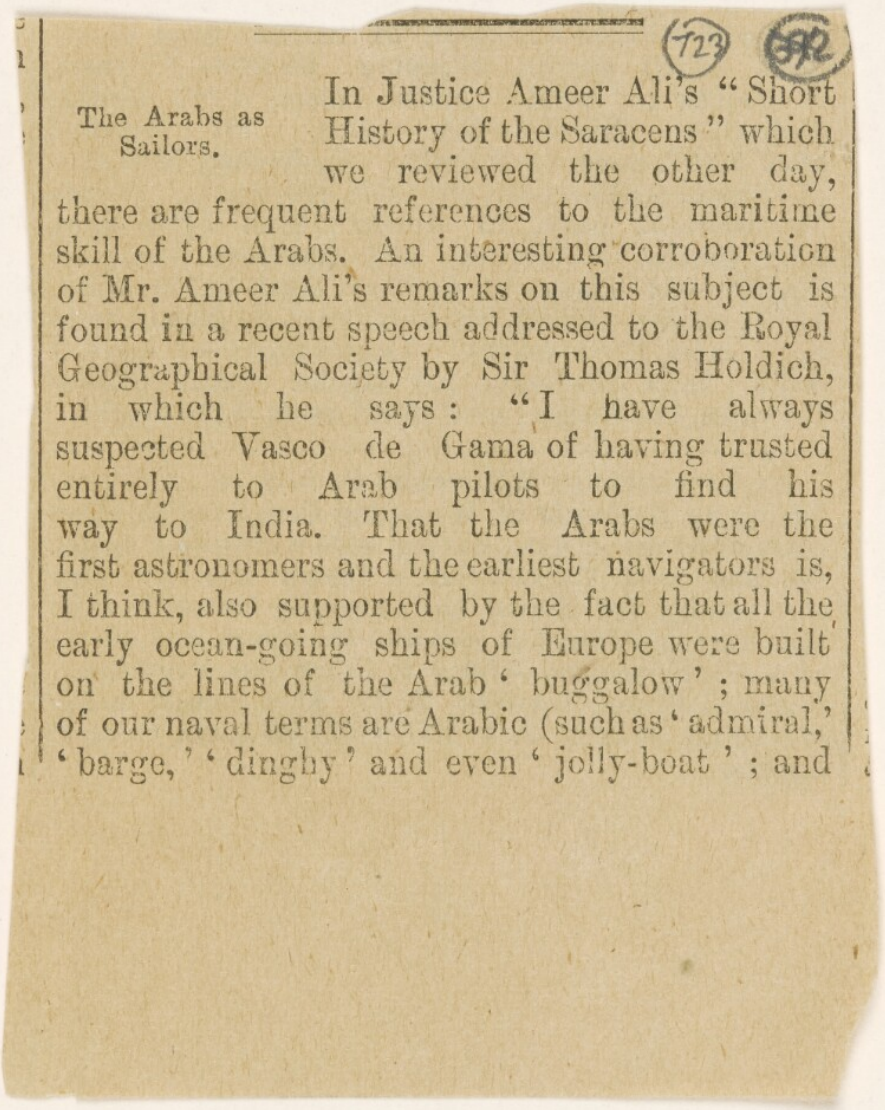
## THE CHINA TRADE.

According to Mr. Pestonjee Eduljee's fortnightly circul issued for the mail of the 29th April, the sales of Indi grey yarn in Hongkong aggregated, from 14th to 27 April, 11,282 bales, excluding sales effected in Shangh Japan, and the coast ports. The arrivals in Hongko during the interval were 8,495 bales. There were, besid 8,509 bales shipped direct to Shanghai. The expo to Coast Ports, Shanghai, and Japan was 2,000 bales. T total sales of the different counts were as follows :—

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | 6s ..... | 15 bales. | | No. | 12s ..... | 2,470 | bale |
| „ | 8s ..... | 40 | „ | „ | 16s ..... | 227 | „ |
| „ | 10s ..... | 5,839 | „ | „ | 20s ..... | 2,691 | „ |

The estimated unsold stock was, on the date of t departure of the mail, 65,000 bales. The stocks compri as follows of the different numbers :—

No. 6s ... 1,500 bale | No. 12s ..... 8,000 bale



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The Arabs as Sailors.

In Justice Ameer Ali's "Short History of the Saracens" which we reviewed the other day, there are frequent references to the maritime skill of the Arabs. An interesting corroboration of Mr. Ameer Ali's remarks on this subject is found in a recent speech addressed to the Royal Geographical Society by Sir Thomas Holdich, in which he says: "I have always suspected Vasco de Gama of having trusted entirely to Arab pilots to find his way to India. That the Arabs were the first astronomers and the earliest navigators is, I think, also supported by the fact that all the early ocean-going ships of Europe were built on the lines of the Arab 'buggalow'; many of our naval terms are Arabic (such as 'admiral,' 'barge,' 'dinghy' and even 'jolly-boat'; and

Dharwar District—25 cases, 18 deaths; total 37,987 cases, 30,821 deaths. Bijapore District—5 cases, 4 deaths; total 2,316 cases, 1,883 deaths. Kurrachee District—254 cases, 181 deaths; total 10,474 cases, 8,089 deaths. Hyderabad District—15 cases,12 deaths; total 603 cases, 460 deaths. Baroda Territory—22 cases, 16 deaths; total 7,892 cases, 5,908 deaths. Kolhapore and Southern Mahratta Country—42 cases, 30 deaths; total 15,789 cases, 11,774 deaths. Aundh State—no case, no death; total 1,876 cases, 1,332 deaths. Janjira State.—3 cases, 1 death; total 373 cases, 235 deaths. Cutch State—161 cases, 125 deaths; total 10,037 cases, 8,280 deaths.

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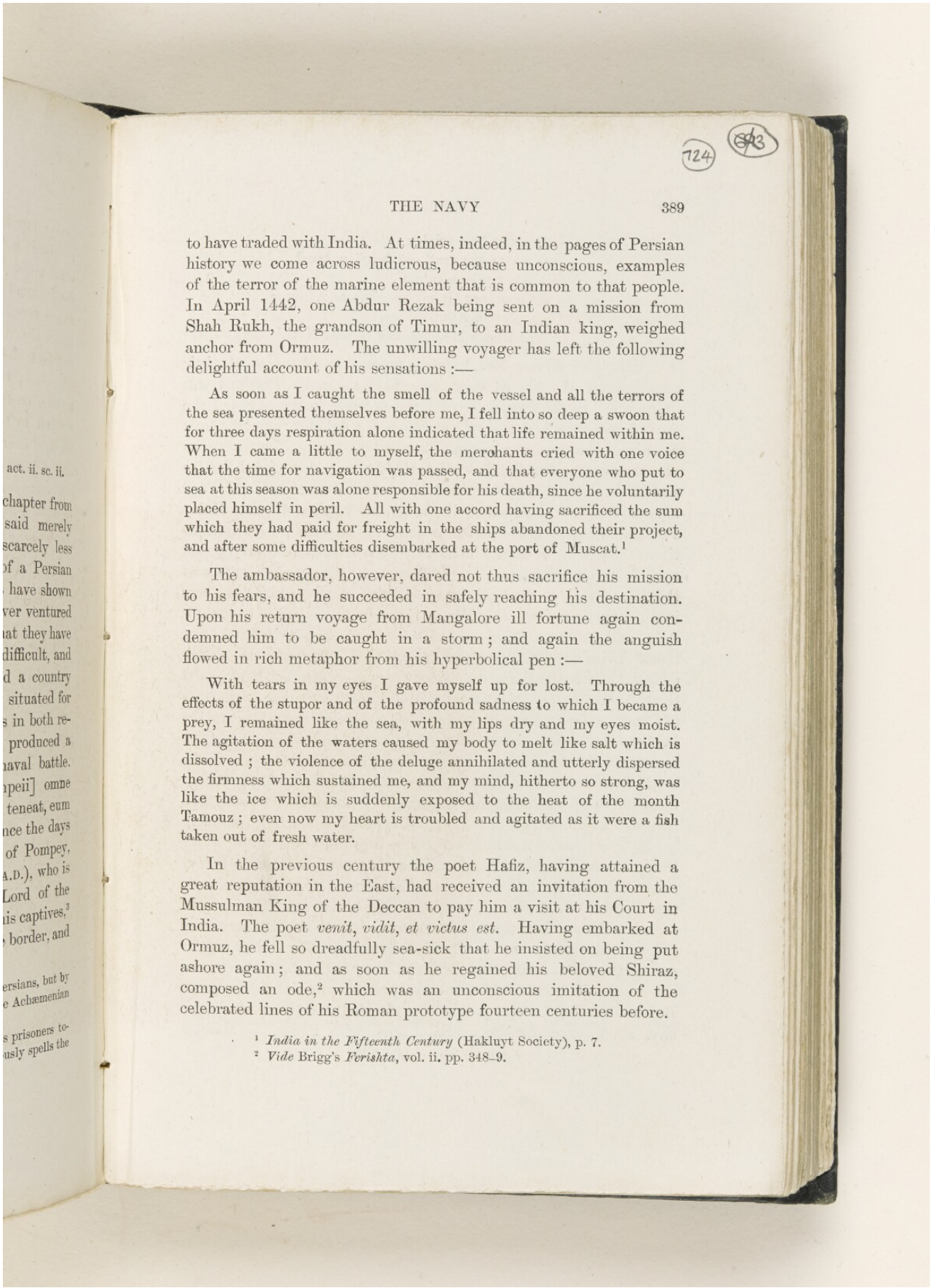
AN EPIDEMIC OF WHOOPING COUGH.—Last Winter during an Epidemic of Whooping Cough my children contracted the disease, having severe coughing spells. We had used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy very successfully for Croup and naturally turned to it at that time and found it relieved the cough and effected a complete cure.—JOHN E. CLIFFORD, Proprietor, Norwood House, Norwood, N. Y. This remedy is for sale by all Dealers. J. A. KIRKBRIDE & Co., General Agents.





to have traded with India. At times, indeed, in the pages of Persian history we come across ludicrous, because unconscious, examples of the terror of the marine element that is common to that people. In April 1442, one Abdur Rezak being sent on a mission from Shah Rukh, the grandson of Timur, to an Indian king, weighed anchor from Ormuz. The unwilling voyager has left the following delightful account of his sensations :—

As soon as I caught the smell of the vessel and all the terrors of the sea presented themselves before me, I fell into so deep a swoon that for three days respiration alone indicated that life remained within me. When I came a little to myself, the merchants cried with one voice that the time for navigation was passed, and that everyone who put to sea at this season was alone responsible for his death, since he voluntarily placed himself in peril. All with one accord having sacrificed the sum which they had paid for freight in the ships abandoned their project, and after some difficulties disembarked at the port of Muscat.[1]

The ambassador, however, dared not thus sacrifice his mission to his fears, and he succeeded in safely reaching his destination. Upon his return voyage from Mangalore ill fortune again condemned him to be caught in a storm ; and again the anguish flowed in rich metaphor from his hyperbolical pen :—

With tears in my eyes I gave myself up for lost. Through the effects of the stupor and of the profound sadness to which I became a prey, I remained like the sea, with my lips dry and my eyes moist. The agitation of the waters caused my body to melt like salt which is dissolved ; the violence of the deluge annihilated and utterly dispersed the firmness which sustained me, and my mind, hitherto so strong, was like the ice which is suddenly exposed to the heat of the month Tamouz ; even now my heart is troubled and agitated as it were a fish taken out of fresh water.

In the previous century the poet Hafiz, having attained a great reputation in the East, had received an invitation from the Mussulman King of the Deccan to pay him a visit at his Court in India. The poet *venit, vidit, et victus est.* Having embarked at Ormuz, he fell so dreadfully sea-sick that he insisted on being put ashore again ; and as soon as he regained his beloved Shiraz, composed an ode,[2] which was an unconscious imitation of the celebrated lines of his Roman prototype fourteen centuries before.

[1] *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society), p. 7.
[2] *Vide* Brigg's *Ferishta*, vol. ii. pp. 348–9.

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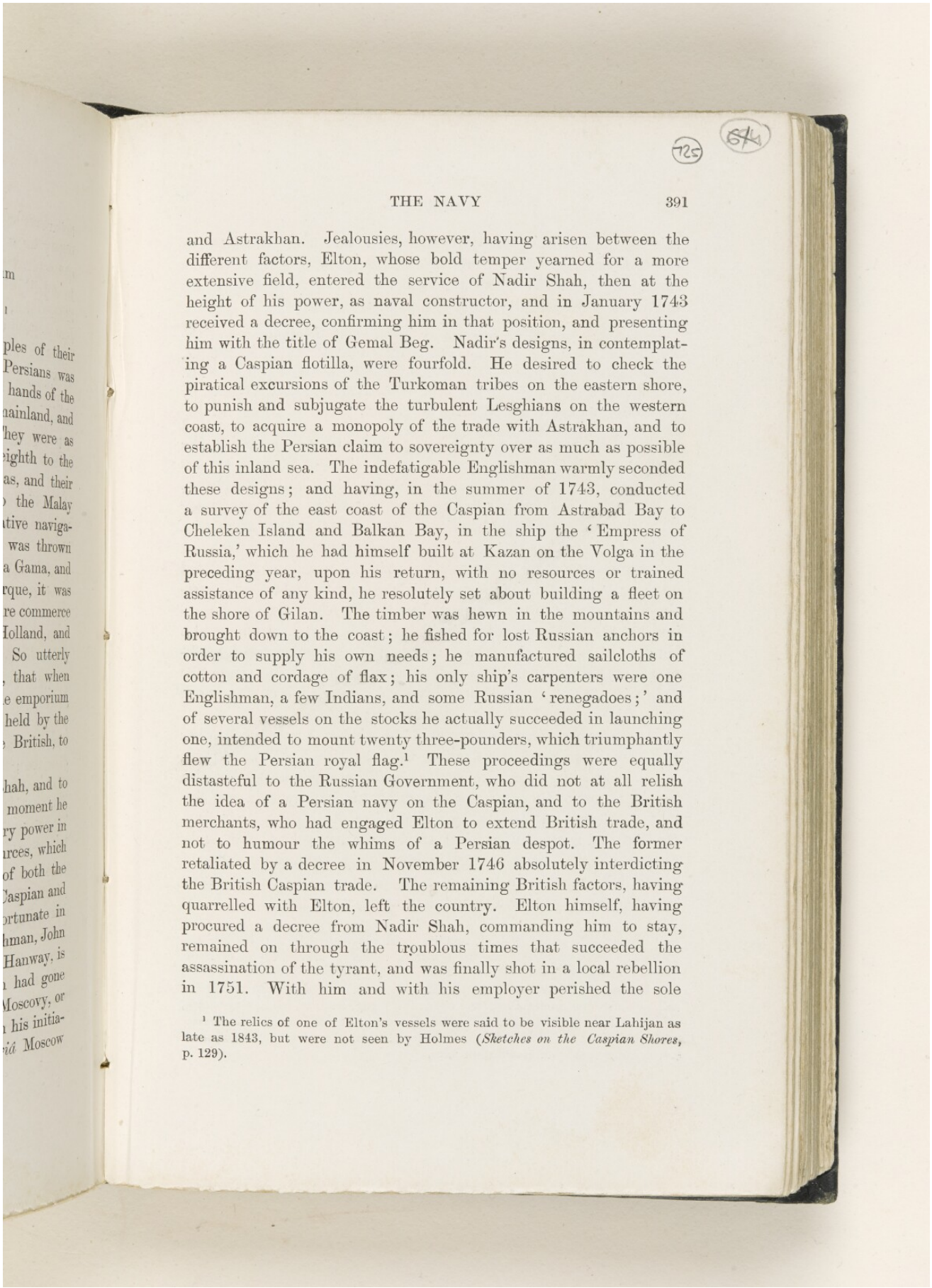
Illi robur et æs triplex
Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci
Commisit pelago ratem
Primus, nec timuit præcipitem Africum
Decertantem Aquilonibus,
Nec tristes Hyadas, nec rabiem Noti.[1]

Hafiz and Abdur Rezak were no unfair examples of their countrymen. In the Caspian Sea navigation by Persians was unknown. In the Persian Gulf it was entirely in the hands of the Arab tribes, who had crossed over from the Arabian mainland, and colonised the entire maritime border of Iran. They were as venturesome as the Persians were timid; from the eighth to the sixteenth century they retained the trade of the seas, and their merchant fleets penetrated to India, to Ceylon, to the Malay Peninsula, and to China; even to this very day the native navigation of the Gulf is in their hands. When that sea was thrown open to European vessels, by the discovery of Vasco da Gama, and the buccaneering expeditions of Alfonso d'Albuquerque, it was into European and not into Persian hands that the entire commerce fell; and the successive monopolies of Portugal, Holland, and Great Britain will be related in another chapter. So utterly deficient were the Persians in any naval capacities, that when Shah Abbas wanted to possess himself of the mercantile emporium of Ormuz, only a few miles from the mainland, then held by the Portuguese, he was compelled to invoke the aid of the British, to undertake the maritime part of the engagement.

Maritime ambitions of Nadir Shah. 1. The Caspian

It is no mean testimony to the genius of Nadir Shah, and to the wide range of his ambition, that, while for a brief moment he elevated Persia to the rank of the first military power in Asia, he also dreamed of creating naval resources, which should ensure her dominion over the shores of both the northern and the southern seas, i.e. over the Caspian and the Persian Gulf. On the former waters he was fortunate in securing the services of an able and adventurous Englishman, John Elton, whose career, as told by his fellow factor Jonas Hanway, is one of the most dramatic episodes of the time. Elton had gone out to Persia in 1739 in the employ of the British Moscovy, or Russian Trading Company, who had decided, mainly on his initiative, upon reopening the overland trade with Persia *viâ* Moscow

[1] Horace, *Carm.*, Lib. I. iii.





and Astrakhan. Jealousies, however, having arisen between the different factors, Elton, whose bold temper yearned for a more extensive field, entered the service of Nadir Shah, then at the height of his power, as naval constructor, and in January 1743 received a decree, confirming him in that position, and presenting him with the title of Gemal Beg. Nadir's designs, in contemplating a Caspian flotilla, were fourfold. He desired to check the piratical excursions of the Turkoman tribes on the eastern shore, to punish and subjugate the turbulent Lesghians on the western coast, to acquire a monopoly of the trade with Astrakhan, and to establish the Persian claim to sovereignty over as much as possible of this inland sea. The indefatigable Englishman warmly seconded these designs; and having, in the summer of 1743, conducted a survey of the east coast of the Caspian from Astrabad Bay to Cheleken Island and Balkan Bay, in the ship the 'Empress of Russia,' which he had himself built at Kazan on the Volga in the preceding year, upon his return, with no resources or trained assistance of any kind, he resolutely set about building a fleet on the shore of Gilan. The timber was hewn in the mountains and brought down to the coast; he fished for lost Russian anchors in order to supply his own needs; he manufactured sailcloths of cotton and cordage of flax; his only ship's carpenters were one Englishman, a few Indians, and some Russian 'renegadoes;' and of several vessels on the stocks he actually succeeded in launching one, intended to mount twenty three-pounders, which triumphantly flew the Persian royal flag.[1] These proceedings were equally distasteful to the Russian Government, who did not at all relish the idea of a Persian navy on the Caspian, and to the British merchants, who had engaged Elton to extend British trade, and not to humour the whims of a Persian despot. The former retaliated by a decree in November 1746 absolutely interdicting the British Caspian trade. The remaining British factors, having quarrelled with Elton, left the country. Elton himself, having procured a decree from Nadir Shah, commanding him to stay, remained on through the troublous times that succeeded the assassination of the tyrant, and was finally shot in a local rebellion in 1751. With him and with his employer perished the sole

[1] The relics of one of Elton's vessels were said to be visible near Lahijan as late as 1843, but were not seen by Holmes (*Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, p. 129).

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attempt ever made by the Persians to institute a naval armament on the Caspian. The story is told at greater length in the fascinating pages of Hanway,[1] who adds, in confirmation of an opinion that I have previously expressed:—

But there cannot be a stronger instance of the ignorance of the Persians in regard to maritime affairs than that of Myrza Mehtie (i.e. Mirza Mehdi) who was appointed Admiral of the Coast before he had ever seen a ship. This was the man who was afterwards nominated by Nadir to examine into the Christian religion.

The maritime ambitions of Nadir Shah were not limited to the northern Persian littoral. He possessed a fleet of between twenty and thirty ships in the Persian Gulf, built in Europe, Pegu, and Surat, and manned by Indians and Portuguese.[2] Not content with this, he designed the institution of a native dockyard on the southern sea, ordered timber to be hewn and transported from Mazanderan, and is said to have contemplated an interchange of inhabitants on his two maritime borders, a contingent of Arabs to be transported to the shores of the Caspian, to instruct the northern sailors in the science of navigation; and a batch of Mazanderanis to be moved to the southern coast as workmen in the shipyards. The only results of this project were the rude ribs of an unfinished vessel, which were visible on the beach at Bushire in the early part of the present century.

2. The Persian Gulf

Later in the same century, in 1775, Sadek Khan, the brother of Kerim Khan Zend, then ruling with the title Vekil, or Regent, at Shiraz, undertook an expedition against the Turkish port of Busrah: and marching himself by land was followed on the sea by a small fleet of thirty vessels from Bushire and Bunder Rig. But these were Arab-built, and Arab-manned; and I mention the incident only because, so far as I know, it is a unique instance of a Persian force, in modern times, operating on any other element than *terra firma*.

Kerim Khan Zend

[1] *Historical Account*, vols. i. and ii. Compare with this the *Voyages and Travels* of Dr. J. Cook, who was in Northern Persia in 1747, the year of Nadir Shah's assassination.

[2] C. Niebuhr (*Travels through Arabia*, vol. ii. p. 139) says that no Persian sailors being forthcoming, Nadir was obliged to engage Indians, who, being Sunnis, refused to fight against the Arab Sunnis, turned upon their Shiah officers, massacred them, and carried off the ships. In 1761, the remains of some of these vessels were seen by Niebuhr at Bushire.

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Whatever dreams of naval ambition on the Caspian Persia may ever have indulged were rudely shattered in the early years of the present century by the treaty stipulations that concluded the two Perso-Russian wars. The Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 contained a clause, renewed and confirmed in the Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828, by which it was declared that Russia alone should have the right of maintaining vessels of war on the Caspian, and that no other Power should fly a military flag on that sea.[1] So crushing a penalty has seldom been inflicted by the victor in any campaign upon the vanquished, and could only have been submitted to by a power as weak as Persia at the dictation of a power as strong as Russia. It has transformed the Caspian into a Russian lake, destroyed the last shred of Persian autonomy or authority on the northern sea, and left the Shah's dominions in a position of abject defencelessness on the north. It is true that Russia has herself elsewhere set an example, in which Persia might discover an apposite precedent here, by tearing up the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. But modern Persia is not a power that can afford to infringe any treaty; nor are the modern Persians so untrue to the traditions of their nation as to be willing to run any risk for sake of the sea.

Treaties of Gulistan and Turkomanchai

The Russians have not been slow to profit by the advantage thus secured. Only ten years after the Treaty of Turkomanchai was signed, they made it an excuse for that occupation of the Island of Ashurada at the mouth of Astrabad Bay, the incidents of which I have narrated in an earlier chapter. The Persian Government, disabled from maintaining the police of the seas by a flotilla flying its own flag, had applied to Russia for the loan of two small vessels of war, in order to suppress the piratical excursions of the Turkomans. The Czar generously replied that he was willing to take the trouble upon his own shoulders; and as a consequence the island of Ashurada, which is as much Persian as the Isle of Thanet is Kentish, has ever since supported a Russian naval establishment. Hasan Kuli Bay, Chikishliar, Cheleken Island, and Balkan Bay—all of them points either nominally or actually in Persian territory upon the eastern shore of the Caspian—have since been similarly seized, and the impotence of Persia cannot be more forcibly demonstrated than by a coasting voyage along the 400 miles of maritime border which she owns

Occupation of Ashurada

[1] Treaty of Gulistan, Article V.; Treaty of Turkomanchai, Article VIII.

upon the north, in which entire distance not a single Persian craft will be encountered upon the waters.

It is true that on the Murdab, or Lagoon of Enzeli, the Shah possesses a small dilapidated paddle-wheel steamer bearing the proud title of 'Shahinshah Nasr-ed-Din,' which was specially constructed in order to convey his Majesty to the limits of Persian territory on his first journey to Europe. But not even is this royal plaything exempt from the stern law of the Muscovite taskmaster, for, upon one occasion, having proceeded as far as Baku, gaily flying the Persian flag, the vessel was greeted by a shot from the fort. The Persian commander, delighted at the graceful compliment, kept merrily on. Bang came another shot, rather closer than the first. Still he proceeded: a third brought him to his senses, and the Persian flag was hurriedly hauled down. Such is the majesty of the King of Kings on the Caspian.

The Shah's yacht

Thus cribbed and cabined on the north, the Persian Government has at times turned an aspiring eye upon the Persian Gulf, where no hostile Leviathan guards the waves, and dreams of naval supremacy whereon have occasionally floated before her eyes. About the year 1865, the Shah mooted the idea of a Persian naval flotilla in the Gulf, to consist of two or three steamers, manned by Indian or Arabian crews, and commanded by an English naval officer. The idea was discountenanced by the British Government, to whom it was known that the project really concealed aggressive designs upon the independence of the islands and pearl fisheries of Bahrein.

The Persian Gulf

Finally, in 1883, the scheme was revived in a more innocent shape, and there was then laid the foundation, and also the coping-stone of the modern Persian navy, which consists of the proud total of one vessel, designated the 'Persepolis.' In that year the son of the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh was despatched to Europe to order a man-of-war for the Shah. Having previously received a German education, he naturally went to Germany; and after protracted negotiations, and a still longer haggle when the bill was presented for payment, the 'Persepolis,' a screw steamship of 600 tons, of 450 horse-power, was turned out from the dockyard of Bremerhaven in January 1885, and despatched with German officers and a German crew to the Gulf. With her was sent out in sections, which were put together at Mohammerah, a

The 'Persepolis'

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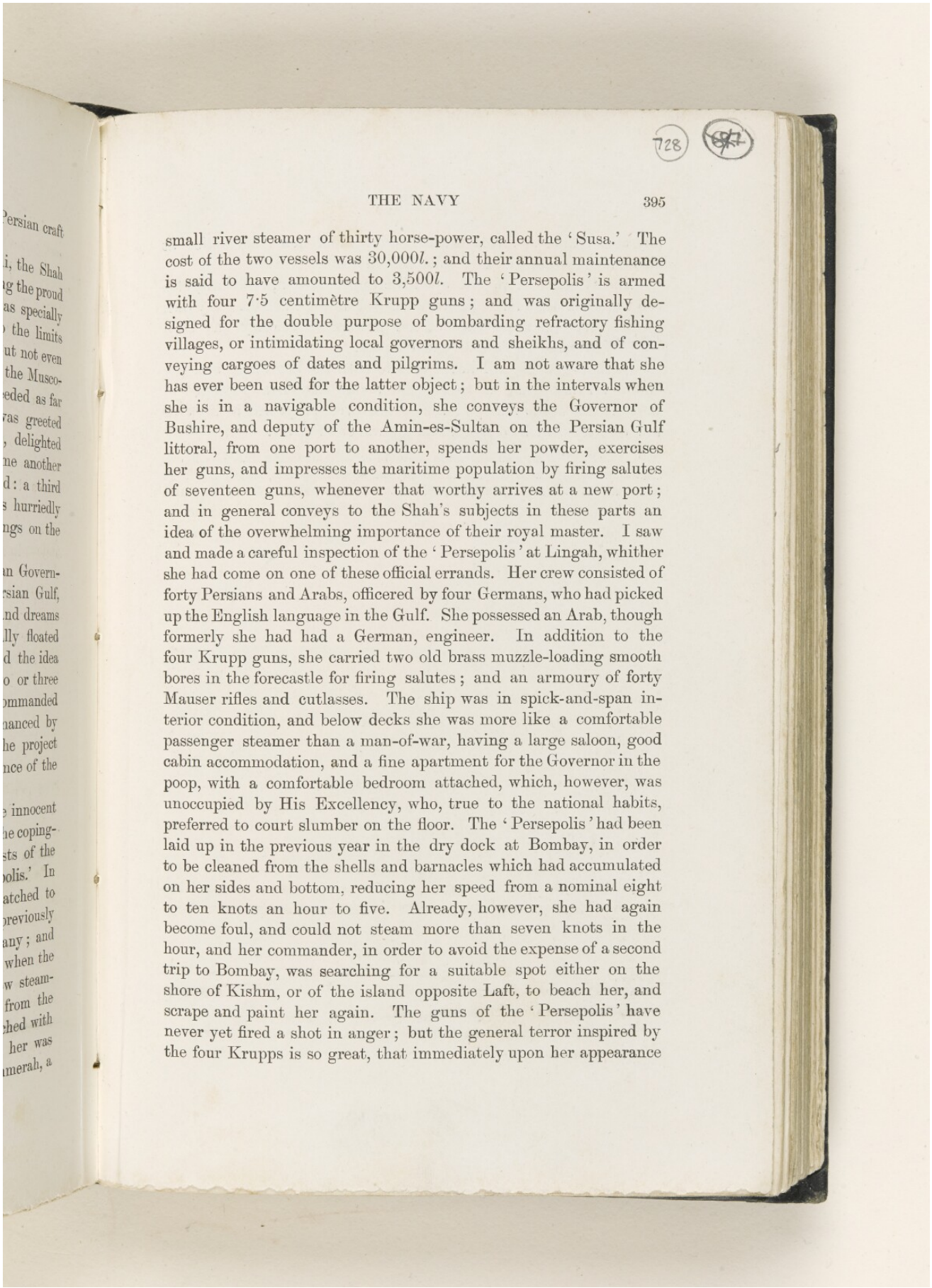



small river steamer of thirty horse-power, called the 'Susa.' The cost of the two vessels was 30,000*l.*; and their annual maintenance is said to have amounted to 3,500*l.* The 'Persepolis' is armed with four 7·5 centimètre Krupp guns; and was originally designed for the double purpose of bombarding refractory fishing villages, or intimidating local governors and sheikhs, and of conveying cargoes of dates and pilgrims. I am not aware that she has ever been used for the latter object; but in the intervals when she is in a navigable condition, she conveys the Governor of Bushire, and deputy of the Amin-es-Sultan on the Persian Gulf littoral, from one port to another, spends her powder, exercises her guns, and impresses the maritime population by firing salutes of seventeen guns, whenever that worthy arrives at a new port; and in general conveys to the Shah's subjects in these parts an idea of the overwhelming importance of their royal master. I saw and made a careful inspection of the 'Persepolis' at Lingah, whither she had come on one of these official errands. Her crew consisted of forty Persians and Arabs, officered by four Germans, who had picked up the English language in the Gulf. She possessed an Arab, though formerly she had had a German, engineer. In addition to the four Krupp guns, she carried two old brass muzzle-loading smooth bores in the forecastle for firing salutes; and an armoury of forty Mauser rifles and cutlasses. The ship was in spick-and-span interior condition, and below decks she was more like a comfortable passenger steamer than a man-of-war, having a large saloon, good cabin accommodation, and a fine apartment for the Governor in the poop, with a comfortable bedroom attached, which, however, was unoccupied by His Excellency, who, true to the national habits, preferred to court slumber on the floor. The 'Persepolis' had been laid up in the previous year in the dry dock at Bombay, in order to be cleaned from the shells and barnacles which had accumulated on her sides and bottom, reducing her speed from a nominal eight to ten knots an hour to five. Already, however, she had again become foul, and could not steam more than seven knots in the hour, and her commander, in order to avoid the expense of a second trip to Bombay, was searching for a suitable spot either on the shore of Kishm, or of the island opposite Laft, to beach her, and scrape and paint her again. The guns of the 'Persepolis' have never yet fired a shot in anger; but the general terror inspired by the four Krupps is so great, that immediately upon her appearance

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any disturbance as a rule ceases, and a threatened insurrection at Chahbar had incontinently collapsed in 1888.

The 'Susa'[1] is placed upon the upper Karun, and navigates the waters of that river between Ahwaz and Shushter. My own doleful experience of her powers of velocity has been related in the previous chapter.

The 'Susa'

In these few pages I have come to both the beginning and the end of all that there is to be said about the naval strength of Persia. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; and I am even surprised at my own tale of bricks, with so modest an allowance of straw.

[1] The 'Susa' is a screw steamship (resembling what in England we should call a harbour-launch), with engines nominally of 30 horse-power, length about 80 feet, beam 16 feet, tonnage 36 tons, draught of water over three feet.

In 1902 the Belgian yacht Selika was purchased by the Persian Govt. & a Belgian renamed the Mozaffari. Capt. was placed in charge with 2 Europ. engineers. — is to be used for Customs work

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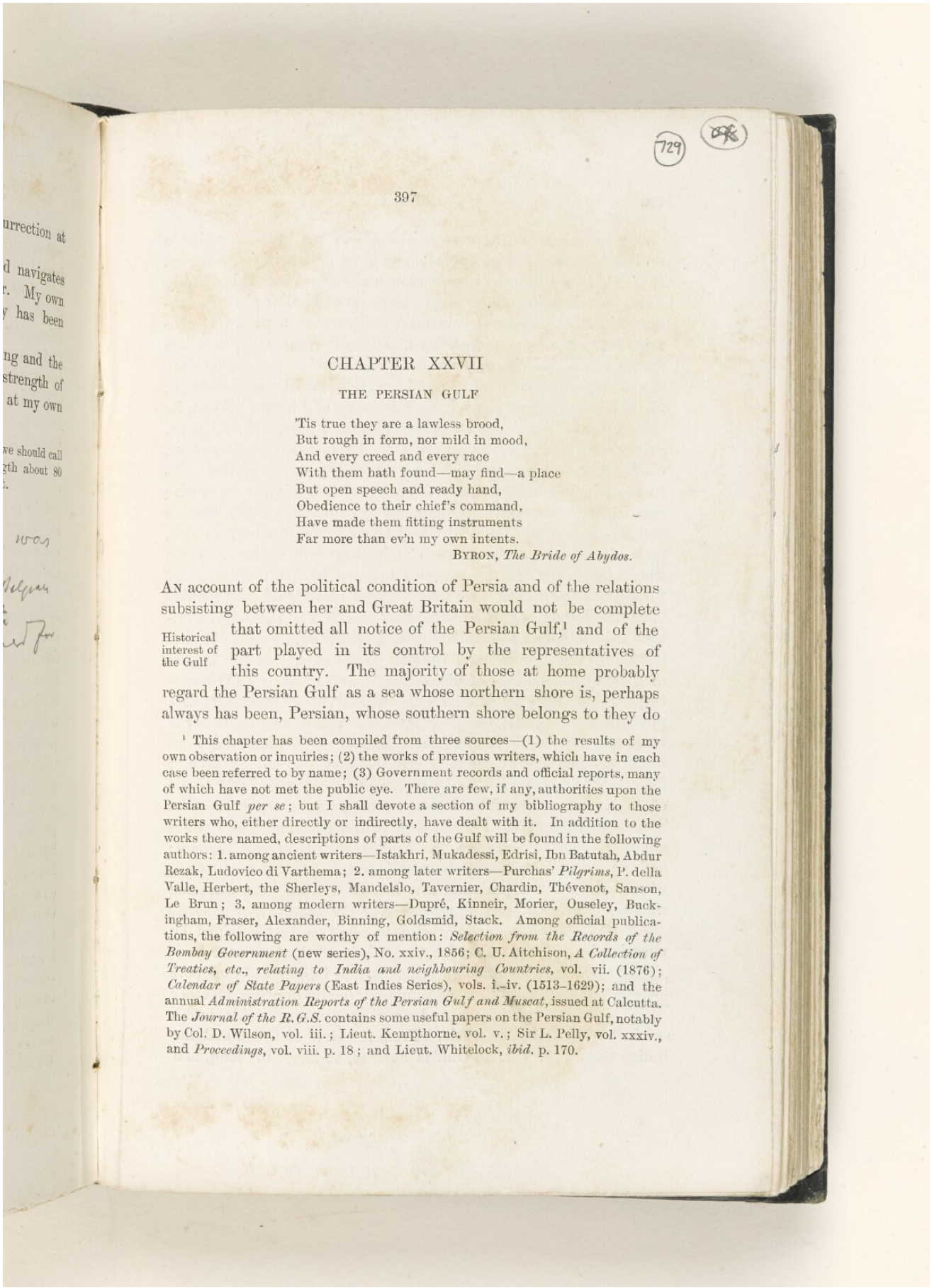



# CHAPTER XXVII

## THE PERSIAN GULF

'Tis true they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood,
And every creed and every race
With them hath found—may find—a place
But open speech and ready hand,
Obedience to their chief's command,
Have made them fitting instruments
Far more than ev'n my own intents.

BYRON, *The Bride of Abydos.*

Historical interest of the Gulf

AN account of the political condition of Persia and of the relations subsisting between her and Great Britain would not be complete that omitted all notice of the Persian Gulf,[1] and of the part played in its control by the representatives of this country. The majority of those at home probably regard the Persian Gulf as a sea whose northern shore is, perhaps always has been, Persian, whose southern shore belongs to they do

[1] This chapter has been compiled from three sources—(1) the results of my own observation or inquiries; (2) the works of previous writers, which have in each case been referred to by name; (3) Government records and official reports, many of which have not met the public eye. There are few, if any, authorities upon the Persian Gulf *per se*; but I shall devote a section of my bibliography to those writers who, either directly or indirectly, have dealt with it. In addition to the works there named, descriptions of parts of the Gulf will be found in the following authors: 1. among ancient writers—Istakhri, Mukadessi, Edrisi, Ibn Batutah, Abdur Rezak, Ludovico di Varthema; 2. among later writers—Purchas' *Pilgrims*, P. della Valle, Herbert, the Sherleys, Mandelslo, Tavernier, Chardin, Thévenot, Sanson, Le Brun; 3. among modern writers—Dupré, Kinneir, Morier, Ouseley, Buckingham, Fraser, Alexander, Binning, Goldsmid, Stack. Among official publications, the following are worthy of mention: *Selection from the Records of the Bombay Government* (new series), No. xxiv., 1856; C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, etc., relating to India and neighbouring Countries*, vol. vii. (1876); *Calendar of State Papers* (East Indies Series), vols. i.–iv. (1513–1629); and the annual *Administration Reports of the Persian Gulf and Muscat*, issued at Calcutta. The *Journal of the R. G.S.* contains some useful papers on the Persian Gulf, notably by Col. D. Wilson, vol. iii.; Lieut. Kempthorne, vol. v.; Sir L. Pelly, vol. xxxiv., and *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 18; and Lieut. Whitelock, *ibid.* p. 170.

not know whom, and where a British official can have little else to do but to protect British subjects and safeguard British commerce. Such a view would be at once narrow and erroneous. It is scarcely possible to imagine a quarter of the globe of similar physical configuration that has had so romantic and varying a past, that contains more diverse nationalities and clashing interests, or where graver responsibilities are imposed upon a foreign power than here devolve upon Great Britain. At intervals, from the earliest times, the Gulf has loomed large upon the stage of history. Along its shores, carefully noting in his log-book each island, and anchorage, and seaboard village, came Nearchus, the Admiral of Alexander, on his famous voyage in 326–5 B.C., from the mouth of the Indus to the Tigris delta. To this day we may identify the successive mooring-grounds of the Hellenic navigator. Down the Persian Gulf, from Busrah (Balsora) sailed the Arab Columbus, Sinbad, upon his seven adventurous voyages in the ninth century. From the same port sailed the argosies manned by Arab sailors, that throughout the middle ages interchanged in Turkish and Persian havens the products of the remote East and West. Upon this maritime field Portugal and Holland and England have fought out their battles for the supremacy of the seas; it is even now the theatre of the rival pretensions of discordant powers. Early in this century Arab corsairs desolated its shores and swept its waters with piratical flotillas; slave-hunting flourished; and security either of trade or dominion there was none. The hands by which this long-standing anarchy was subdued are also those by which present differences are composed, and a maritime peace assured that is one of the most successful achievements of practical statesmanship. The pacification of the Persian Gulf in the past and the maintenance of the *status quo* are the exclusive work of this country; and the British Resident at Bushire is to this hour the umpire to whom all parties appeal, and who has by treaties been intrusted with the duty of preserving the peace of the waters.

A synopsis of the present situation will be best attained by pursuing in geographical order the circuit of the Gulf, and indicating the status, government, and interests of each port or district as it is encountered, finally drawing together the several threads, and weaving them, if possible, into a succinct and intelligible whole. From the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf is entered, at about 57° long. and

Synopsis. Northern coast line

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The 'Ashshār creek in Basrah Town.
(Mr. A. C. Wratislaw.)

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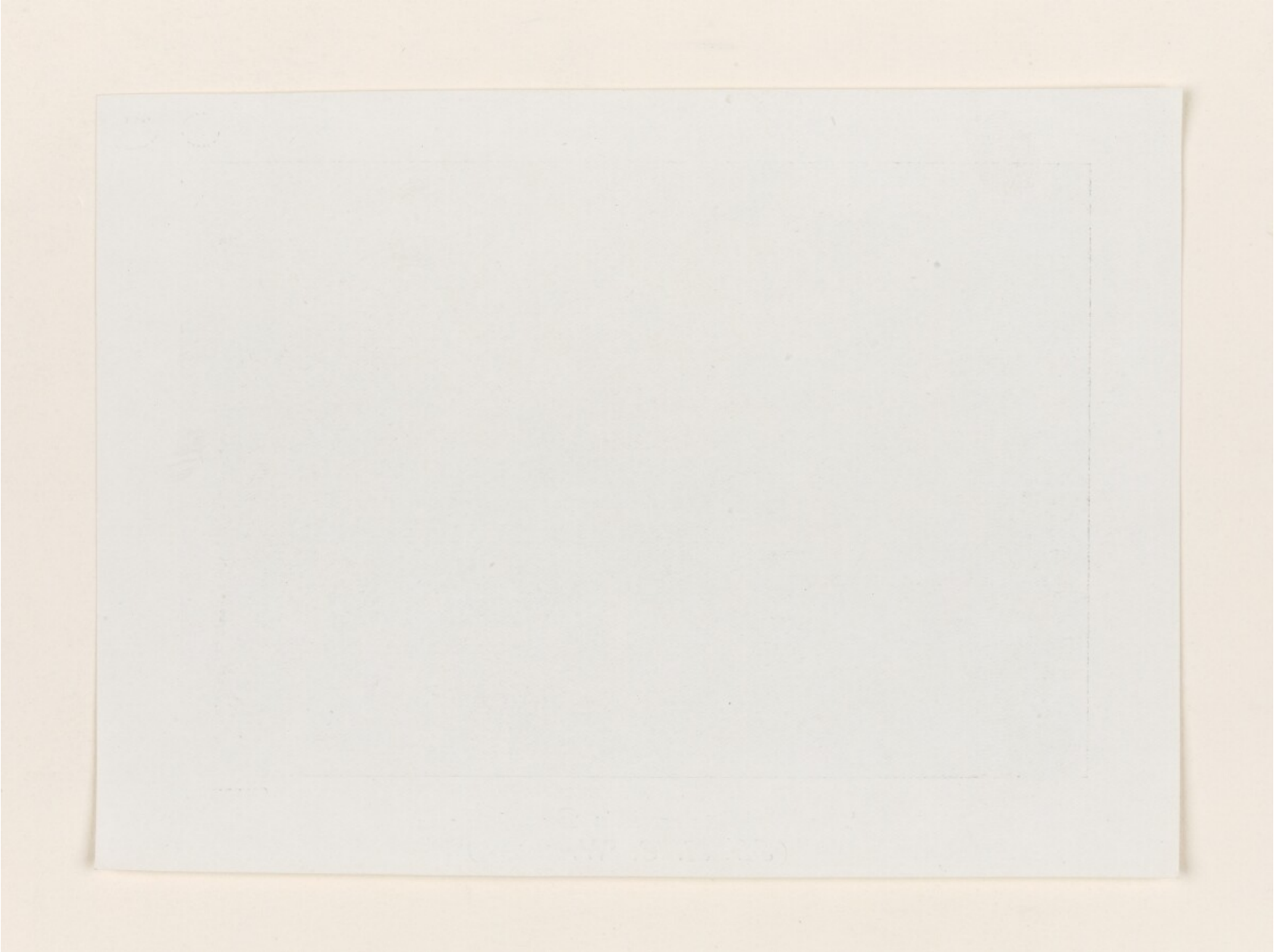
'The ‘Ashshār creek in Basrah Town.' [730v] (2/2)



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26° lat., through the Straits of Ormuz (properly Hormuz), so called from the celebrated island of that name, lying a few miles from the mainland on the northern coast line. Persian territory itself does not begin here, but at a point more than 300 miles to the eastward, where, at the tiny port of Gwetter, the frontier line between Persia and Beluchistan touches the sea. From Gwetter the coast line, running westwards, first to the Straits of Ormuz, next along the northern shore of the Persian Gulf, and finally to a point a little beyond Mohammerah on the Shat-el-Arab,[1] is exclusively under the control, directly exercised or delegated, of the Persian Government. The inhabitants of this maritime fringe are Persians, or Persian Arabs, i.e.—either Arabs under Persian rule or Arabs denationalised by long subjection and intermarriage. The latter are in the numerical ascendant in the coast villages and ports; but, as I shall show, have been powerless, from their own intestine feuds, to resist the encroachments of the Persian authority, which has been pushed in these regions with uncompromising vigour, not exempt from much injustice and cruelty.

Southern coast line

The southern coast line of the Persian Gulf, with which I shall here include the Kingdom of Muscat, or Oman, occupying the eastern shore line of the Arabian peninsula outside Cape Mussendom (Ras Musandim), extends in a north-westerly direction from that cape to where the estuary of the Shat-el-Arab mingles its waters with the sea. Broadly speaking, this extensive coast line is inhabited by tribes of Arab origin, either wholly independent, or admitting in different degrees the sovereignty of Turkey, now exercised from the *vilayet* of Busrah, which, in order to add to the prestige of Ottoman dominion, was severed a few years ago from that of Baghdad, and was constituted an independent Pashalik, with special reference to the claims of the Commander of the Faithful over Arabia.[2] The great trade that exists between the two shores of the Gulf, the occasional pretensions advanced by Persia to the right of interference on its southern littoral, the rival, and even hostile interests of Persia and Turkey on the Shat-el-Arab, and the position filled by England in

[1] The western, or Turkish, frontier of Persia was defined by the Treaty of Erzerum in 1847, and was demarcated by a mixed Anglo-Russian Commission during the following years. *Vide* cap. xvi.

[2] Busrah was first made a separate vilayet in 1875. In 1880 it was reincorporated with Baghdad. But in 1884 the experiment of independence was again tried, and is not now likely to be revoked.

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relation to all parties, Persians, Turks, and Arab tribes alike, render a discussion of the southern shore and its concerns as necessary as that of the northern or Persian coast, even in a work professedly dealing with Persia alone. The order I shall follow will be that of my return journey down the Gulf from Mohammerah; at which point I will commence my survey of the Persian maritime border, and will describe such places as I personally visited as far as Gwadur, a little beyond Gwetter, in Beluchistan. Thence I shall cross over to Muscat, and with my face turned in the opposite direction shall proceed along the Arab coast, until, at Fao, I have completed the periplus of the Gulf.

Bunder Mashur and Hindian

I have, in an earlier chapter upon the South-West Provinces, described the present condition and waning fortunes of the once independent Ka'b Arab tribes, who are situated upon the banks of the Shat-el-Arab and Bahmeshir, eastwards of Mohammerah. Sheikh Mizal Khan still retains a nominal supremacy at the western extremity of the region which they inhabit, though every day falling more under the control of the Persian Governor-General of Arabistan. Further east, the country lying round the Jerahi river, and continuing along the coast nearly as far as Bunder Dilam, has been placed under the Persian deputy-governor of Behbehan, who is himself a subordinate of the Prince-Governor of Shiraz. This district includes the petty coast ports of Bunder Mashur and Hindian. The first of these, which has long ago seen its best days, is on a wide inlet that receives the waters of the Dorak or Jerahi River, descending from Dorak or Fellahieh, the easternmost settlement of the Ka'b tribe, and irrigating in its upper course the cultivated plain of Ram Hormuz. The second is a minor *entrepôt* of the inland trade with Behbehan. At both ports this local traffic is carried on by native craft, chiefly buggalows (probably from the Arabic root *baghl*, which means 'carrying a burden'), importing piece goods to clothe the people and dates to feed them, in return for an export of wheat, barley, wool, *ghi* (clarified butter) and rice.

Persian jurisdiction

At Bunder Dilam we come upon a strip of coast, inhabited partly by Persians, partly by Arabs, which in the political rearrangement of the Persian Gulf littoral that followed the fall of the Zil-es-Sultan in 1888, has been subjected to the Amin-es-Sultan, or Grand Vizier, as Governor of the Gulf ports, and has been committed by him to the local

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management of the governor of Bushire, an official named Mohammed Hasan Khan, and entitled the Saad-el-Mulk, brother to my amiable host at Shushter.[1] This functionary has been placed in direct supervision of the coast-line and islands from Dilam in a south-easterly direction to beyond Bushire, a strip which includes the ports of Dilam, Rig, and Bushire, and the islands of Kharg or Kharak and Khargu; and further eastwards, again, of a prolonged stretch of coast, with important ports and islands, which I shall presently mention. In the various maritime towns and villages, he leases the customs for a stipulated sum, as a rule, to some enterprising local merchant, frequently a Hindu Buniah; while, in the larger places, subordinate officers are planted to represent the central authority. The Saad-el-Mulk himself, with all the pride and circumstance suggested by a flotilla consisting of a single vessel, makes periodical tours of inspection in the 'Persepolis' to the various sea-ports within his jurisdiction; religiously exacts his salute of seventeen guns; and, amid salvoes of artillery from his flag-ship, feebly responded to by some old brass carronade on shore, no doubt fancies himself an heir to the august traditions of Albuquerque.

Bunder Dilam

Dilam was once a place of some size and importance. In the eighteenth century it was a trading-port of the Dutch, the remains of whose factory are still to be traced. Possessing one of the best roadsteads in the Gulf, it is the starting-point of the principal caravan-route to Behbehan and Ram Hormuz, though the town itself has dwindled to a petty village of a few hundred souls. From the interior are brought grain, cotton, wool, *ghi*, and dried fruits for transmission to the other Gulf ports; while sugar, tea, and cotton fabrics are imported in the main from Bushire, and dates from Busrah or Mohammerah. Its customs were farmed in 1889–90 for 7,200 *tomans*. Dilam, like Mohammerah, is one of those places from which an alternative route from the coast into the interior of Persia has been examined and reported upon by those who are anxious to expedite trade connection with Isfahan and Teheran. From Dilam the track proceeds to Behbehan, 48 miles, thence to Ardal, 265 miles, thence to Isfahan, 102 miles, total 415 miles. A shorter but more arduous diversion from Behbehan *via* Felat and Kumisheh would reduce this total to 345 miles. The time occupied by caravans over this journey is fifteen days, which is only about half of that now consumed on the

[1] The latter has since superseded him at Bushire.



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Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [732v] (1481/1814)



Bushire-Shiraz line; while the distance from the sea to Isfahan is from 100 to 150 miles less. The insecurity, however, of the country, the absence of villages or caravanserais, where provisions for man and fodder for beasts can be procured *en route*, and the severity of the winter season, by which the passes are closed during four months of the year, have combined effectively to close this route against through communication; and it must be confessed that there is not the remotest likelihood of its being opened up.

Bunder Rig

Bunder Rig is a small port situated further to the south, on a creek by which one of the mouths of the Shapur or Rohillah River enters the sea. Here, in 1754, the English East India Company, whose Gulf trade had been seriously crippled by the troubles arising out of the Afghan invasion, endeavoured to found a factory, and sent out an agent. The attempt was a failure, owing to Dutch intrigues and opposition; but a few years later Bushire was selected as a substitute. Bunder Rig was one of the strongholds, a little later in the century, of a famous Gulf pirate, known as Mir Mohannah, whose fort was taken and razed by British troops.[1] Its local trade is of the same character as that previously described; and its customs are now farmed for 5,000 *tomans*.

Bushire

We next come to Bushire, the principal landing-place (I cannot call it port) on the southern coast of Persia. I have already described the position and features of Bushire at the end of my Trans-Persian ride, and have there shown how slender are the qualifications that have secured for it the premier position. From the sea the town presents a more striking and compact appearance than any other port on the northern shore of the Gulf, completely occupying with its buildings the end of the peninsula upon which it is situated, and rising sharply with its two-storeyed houses and its somewhat pretentious sea-front from the water-level. Till about forty years ago, the town, whose indigenous population is Arab rather than Persian, was ruled by its own sheikh. But here, as at so many other points along the coast, the internecine feuds of the tribes supplied the central authority with the occasion which its own venturesomeness would never have won for it. Advantage was taken of one of these local conflicts; Persian soldiers appeared upon the scene; the weaker disputant was coerced, and Bushire received a Persian governor. It is re-

[1] The history of this exceptional ruffian is related by Niebuhr (*Travels through Arabia*, vol. ii. p. 147).

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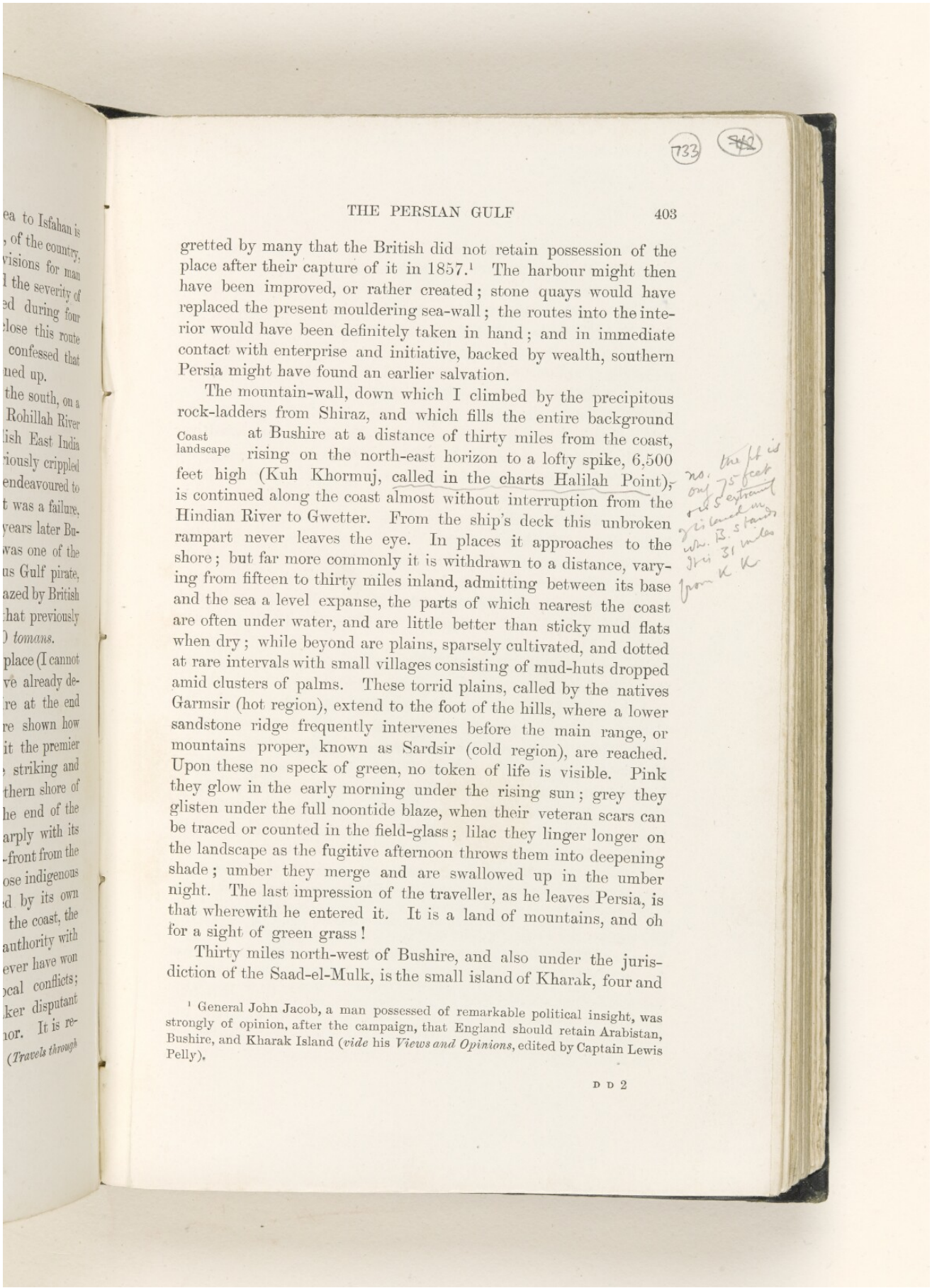



gretted by many that the British did not retain possession of the place after their capture of it in 1857.[1] The harbour might then have been improved, or rather created; stone quays would have replaced the present mouldering sea-wall; the routes into the interior would have been definitely taken in hand; and in immediate contact with enterprise and initiative, backed by wealth, southern Persia might have found an earlier salvation.

Coast landscape

The mountain-wall, down which I climbed by the precipitous rock-ladders from Shiraz, and which fills the entire background at Bushire at a distance of thirty miles from the coast, rising on the north-east horizon to a lofty spike, 6,500 feet high (Kuh Khormuj, called in the charts Halilah Point), is continued along the coast almost without interruption from the Hindian River to Gwetter. From the ship's deck this unbroken rampart never leaves the eye. In places it approaches to the shore; but far more commonly it is withdrawn to a distance, varying from fifteen to thirty miles inland, admitting between its base and the sea a level expanse, the parts of which nearest the coast are often under water, and are little better than sticky mud flats when dry; while beyond are plains, sparsely cultivated, and dotted at rare intervals with small villages consisting of mud-huts dropped amid clusters of palms. These torrid plains, called by the natives Garmsir (hot region), extend to the foot of the hills, where a lower sandstone ridge frequently intervenes before the main range, or mountains proper, known as Sardsir (cold region), are reached. Upon these no speck of green, no token of life is visible. Pink they glow in the early morning under the rising sun; grey they glisten under the full noontide blaze, when their veteran scars can be traced or counted in the field-glass; lilac they linger longer on the landscape as the fugitive afternoon throws them into deepening shade; umber they merge and are swallowed up in the umber night. The last impression of the traveller, as he leaves Persia, is that wherewith he entered it. It is a land of mountains, and oh for a sight of green grass!

Thirty miles north-west of Bushire, and also under the jurisdiction of the Saad-el-Mulk, is the small island of Kharak, four and

[1] General John Jacob, a man possessed of remarkable political insight, was strongly of opinion, after the campaign, that England should retain Arabistan, Bushire, and Kharak Island (*vide* his *Views and Opinions*, edited by Captain Lewis Pelly).



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a half miles broad by three miles long. Its inhabitants are a few miserable Arabs, who catch fish and supply pilots for the Shat-el-Arab. This tiny island once enjoyed a short-lived prosperity under the vigorous rule of the Dutch, who, retiring from Busrah because of a difference with the Turks in 1748, transferred their trading emporium to this spot, raised its population in a few years from a few hundreds to 12,000, and then as suddenly collapsed, being forcibly expelled by Arab pirates, under the famous Mir Mohannah, Sheikh of Bunder Rig, in 1765. The leading spirit of this enterprise had been one Baron Kniphausen, of whom an old chronicler said that, 'Beneath the character of a merchant he concealed the statesman and man of genius'; and the withdrawal of his inspiration preluded the national disaster.[1] Even in the time of its fame Kharak was always dependent upon the neighbouring islet of Kharaku (i.e. little Kharak) Khargu, or Corgo, and upon the mainland for its supplies; and it is related by one authority that the stratagem by which it fell was the employment by the invading corsairs of a ship containing poultry, whose cackling aroused no alarm in the garrison. In the fugitive appearances made by France upon the arena of Persian politics, Kharak has twice passed nominally into her hands. Kerim Khan Zend ceded it to the French by a treaty negotiated by M. Pyrault at Busrah, and signed at Paris; but the suppression of the French East India Company followed, and the treaty lapsed. It was again surrendered, or was about to be surrendered, to France during the short burst of Napoleonic ascendency in 1807–8,[2] but with the expulsion of the French Embassy from Persia in 1809, this second cession shared the fate of its predecessor. Sir John Malcolm was then instructed to occupy the island in defence of British interests in the Gulf;

Karak Island

[1] The story of the brief Dutch occupation of Kharak is told in E. Ives' *Voyage from England to India*, etc., pp. 207–226, the author having visited Kharak in 1758, while Kniphausen was still in command; by C. Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie*, vol. ii pp. 149–61, 164–6, and *Description de l'Arabie* (Heron's trans. vol. ii. cap. vii.), the writer having visited Kharak in 1765, the very year that it fell; and by J. Price, *Free Merchants' Letters*, p. 172. Ives draws a very flattering picture of the energy and activity of Kniphausen, who was a Prussian, not a Dutch, by birth. Niebuhr says that he presided over the Dutch factory for five years, and was succeeded by Messrs. Van der Hulst, Buschmann, and Van Houting. It was under the latter's rule that Mohannah, the pirate, being foolishly allowed to enter the fort with an armed retinue, seized the place and expelled the Hollanders.

[2] G. A. Olivier, *Voyage dans l'Empire Othoman*, etc., vol. v. p. 157.

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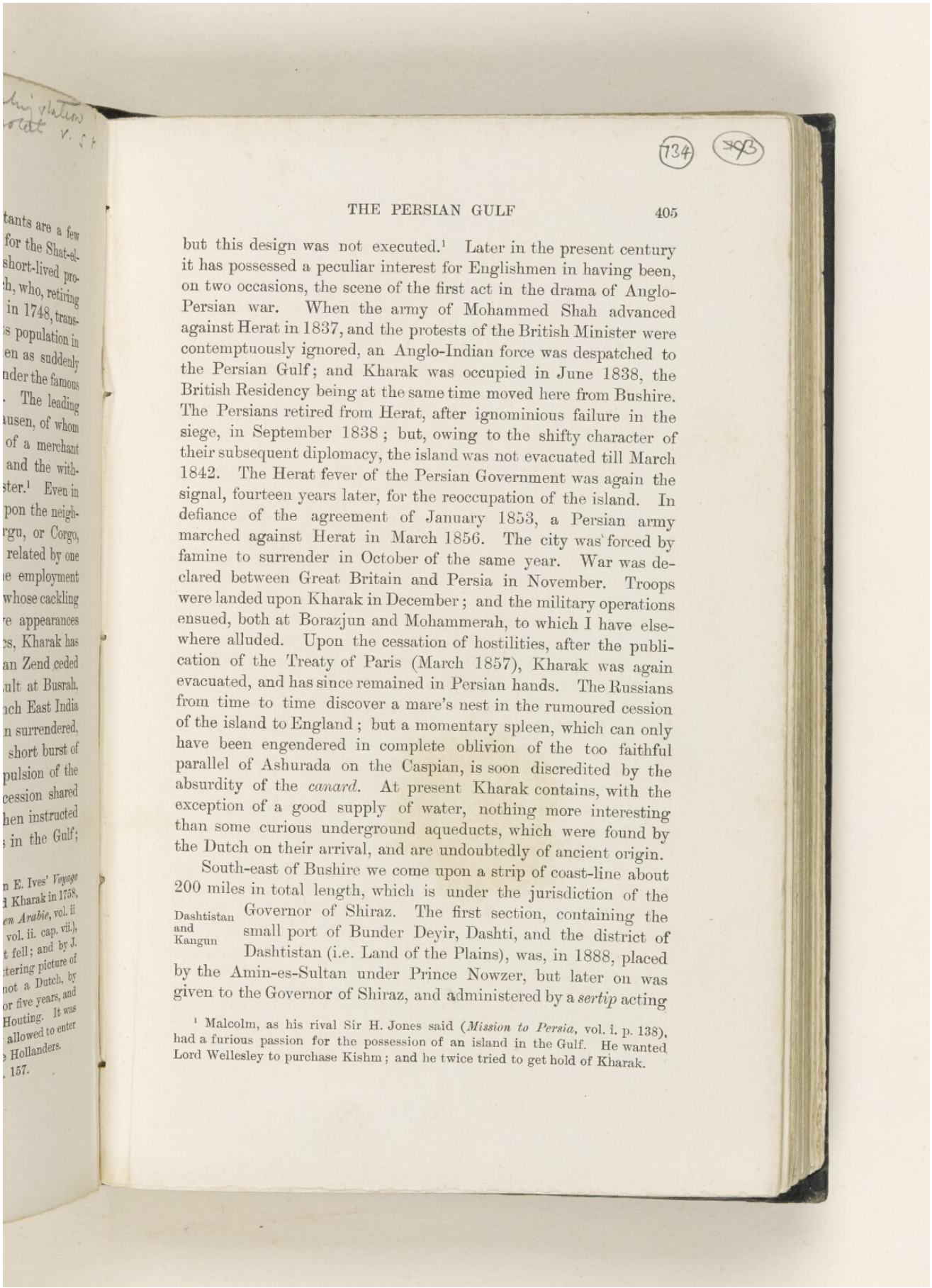



but this design was not executed.[1] Later in the present century it has possessed a peculiar interest for Englishmen in having been, on two occasions, the scene of the first act in the drama of Anglo-Persian war. When the army of Mohammed Shah advanced against Herat in 1837, and the protests of the British Minister were contemptuously ignored, an Anglo-Indian force was despatched to the Persian Gulf; and Kharak was occupied in June 1838, the British Residency being at the same time moved here from Bushire. The Persians retired from Herat, after ignominious failure in the siege, in September 1838; but, owing to the shifty character of their subsequent diplomacy, the island was not evacuated till March 1842. The Herat fever of the Persian Government was again the signal, fourteen years later, for the reoccupation of the island. In defiance of the agreement of January 1853, a Persian army marched against Herat in March 1856. The city was forced by famine to surrender in October of the same year. War was declared between Great Britain and Persia in November. Troops were landed upon Kharak in December; and the military operations ensued, both at Borazjun and Mohammerah, to which I have elsewhere alluded. Upon the cessation of hostilities, after the publication of the Treaty of Paris (March 1857), Kharak was again evacuated, and has since remained in Persian hands. The Russians from time to time discover a mare's nest in the rumoured cession of the island to England; but a momentary spleen, which can only have been engendered in complete oblivion of the too faithful parallel of Ashurada on the Caspian, is soon discredited by the absurdity of the *canard*. At present Kharak contains, with the exception of a good supply of water, nothing more interesting than some curious underground aqueducts, which were found by the Dutch on their arrival, and are undoubtedly of ancient origin.

South-east of Bushire we come upon a strip of coast-line about 200 miles in total length, which is under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Shiraz. The first section, containing the small port of Bunder Deyir, Dashti, and the district of Dashtistan (i.e. Land of the Plains), was, in 1888, placed by the Amin-es-Sultan under Prince Nowzer, but later on was given to the Governor of Shiraz, and administered by a *sertip* acting

Dashtistan and Kangun

[1] Malcolm, as his rival Sir H. Jones said (*Mission to Persia*, vol. i. p. 138), had a furious passion for the possession of an island in the Gulf. He wanted Lord Wellesley to purchase Kishm; and he twice tried to get hold of Kharak.

as his deputy. The second section, starting from Deyir, and containing the petty ports or, rather, maritime villages, of Kangun (Congoon), Tahiri, Shivu, Chiru, and Charak, and the islands of Sheikh Shuaib, Hindarabi, and Kenn or Keis, is administered on behalf of the Governor of Shiraz by his chief minister, the Kawam-el-Mulk. Of the above-mentioned places Kangun was once a trading port of renown, having been a Portuguese settlement, and still containing the ruins of the factory built by that people. In the first half of this century the Arab sheikh of Kangun was a chief of some authority, and ruled over a considerable tract; but the last occupant of the post, having quarrelled with the Persian government, was seized and strangled in 1880, and his district passed under the central control. Kangun justifies its ancient pre-eminence by the possession of an excellent roadstead, with good anchorage. Tahiri is interesting as being the site of the ruins of the once famous emporium of Siraf, which shared with Ormuz the mercantile supremacy of the Gulf. The island of Kenn or Keis was for a time, under Arab rule, after the destruction of Siraf, the centre of Gulf trade and shipping,[1] and the ruins of a large Arab city called Harira are still visible on its northern side. This, too, was one of the places where the English established a military station (afterwards abandoned) in their warfare with the pirates in the early part of the present century. Arab authority throughout this region has been successfully disintegrated by the Government, and has yielded to centralisation supported by guns.

Region of historic interest

Approaching the more important ports of the Gulf in its eastern portion, we now again touch the jurisdiction of the Saad-el-Mulk, which extends over towns and islands, from which is extracted a considerable annual revenue. The former include the ports of Lingah, Khamir, Bunder Abbas, Minau (Sif), and Jask; the latter the well-known names of Kishm and Ormuz, and the less known Larak, Henjam, and Sirri. Here we are brought into contact with a region that can boast historic memories, and has experienced many shocks of fortune. Situated

[1] It is the Kisi of Marco Polo and the Kis or Kish (not to be confused with Kishm) of Benjamin of Tudela (1160–1173 A.D.), who described it as the great emporium 'to which Indian merchants bring their commodities, and the traders of Mesopotamia, Yemen and Persia all sorts of silk and purple cloths, flax, cotton, hemp, mash, wheat, barley, millet, rye, and all sorts of comestibles and pulse, which articles form objects of exchange. Those from India export great quantities of spices.' *Vide* a note by Yule in his *Marco Polo*, vol. i. p. 66.

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on the threshold of the Gulf, to which it commands the entry from the east, and opening up long-sanctified routes of communication into the interior of Asia as far as the yellow Oxus and the snowy Hindu Kush, its harbours have for centuries been battled for by European nations; have flown in turn the flags of Portugal, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Arabia, and Persia; have teemed with argosies of wealth, upon which historians love to linger; and now, in their last state, though shorn of all splendour, and protesting against their degradation with the mute appeal of ruined fortress and battered tower, still pour for the most part into foreign garners the wealth which their native peoples have never had the spirit or the capacity to retain for themselves. At Lingah and Bunder Abbas the chief traders are Hindu Buniahs from Shikarpur and the Sind province; the customs are commonly farmed by them; and the vessels that all but monopolise the carrying trade are those of the British India line. In this interesting quarter I am tempted to halt a little longer upon sites that have been celebrated by the travellers and historians of more than ten centuries, even though their glory be chiefly centered in the past.

Lingah

Lingah is the first of these ports that is visited from the west, 309 miles distant by sea from Bushire. It is the prettiest and most attractive of the Gulf ports, if prettiness can, indeed, be predicated of any of these maritime towns. A long line of yellow houses, glittering in the recess of a wide bay; a fringe of tufted palms behind it; a stretch of desert; and then the mountains, rising first in strange, twisted contortions, in whose folds and hollows a violet mist seems perpetually to tremble, and further away, in a long rugged wall against the sky, a pale pink, and sometimes a silver grey in hue—this is the agreeable panorama that is visible from the sea. The mountain scarp behind rises in its highest points to 2,900 and 3,900 feet, one of these being marked on the nautical chart, presumably by some old sea-captain, as Grubb's Notch. The anchorage is in three fathoms of water, at a distance of about a mile from the land. Alone among the Gulf ports, Lingah possesses a small wet dock, defended by a wall from the sea, and filled or emptied by the tide. A couple of dozen vessels, ranging from buggalows down to small craft, were lying in it at the time of my visit. The sloping beach of sand is also utilised for shipbuilding purposes. Three or four of the largest buggalows, ranging up to 300 tons burden, are built here

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in the year; and I inspected one still on the stocks, which was to carry over 250 tons, and to cost, all complete, between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* The workmen were employed in smearing shark's oil over the outer timbers, a local recipe for seaworthiness. The town possesses some forty boats of large size, engaged in the coasting trade both with the Persian and with the opposite Arabian shore; and at the time of the pearl fisheries about the same number of craft put out from its harbour to try their fortune on the banks.

The smaller craft for shore use are simple dug-outs, and, there being no timber in the country, are imported from the African coast. I observed here a method of rowing the larger boats that I have not seen elsewhere. There are no seats in the boat; but four or five men sit facing each other upon the gunwale on either side in the fore part, and pull large oars respectively over their right and left shoulders. There is no rudder or coxswain, but the stern oar steers. I am generally disposed to think that each place has found out by experience the method of progression, the vehicle, or the craft, that is best adapted to the local conditions; though I confess to having been shaken in my hypothesis by the Russian tarantass and the catamaran of Ceylon; but I cannot help thinking that an elementary knowledge of dynamics would acquaint the simple boatman of Lingah with the fact that their method involves a quite unpardonable waste of force.

Native craft

Lingah is the chief port for the Persian province of Laristan, and has long plied a thriving trade with Bahrein and the Arab coast. Its foreign trade is of more recent origin (the village of Kong, ~~seven~~ miles down the coast, having been the site of the Dutch establishment), but has had a very rapid growth. About 100,000*l.* worth of cotton goods is imported in the year; but on an average nearly one half of the total imports (in value) is in pearls, between 300,000*l.* and 400,000*l.* worth of which enter the port annually. That the bulk of these goods merely pass through Lingah in transit elsewhere is shown by the table of exports, in which the quantity and value of the same articles stand at almost the same figure. Persian tobacco is among the chief articles of export, and is destined for the Turkish market. On the other hand, a stronger quality is imported from Oman for local consumption. The manner in which the British Consular tables relating to this port have been compiled, the same items

Trade

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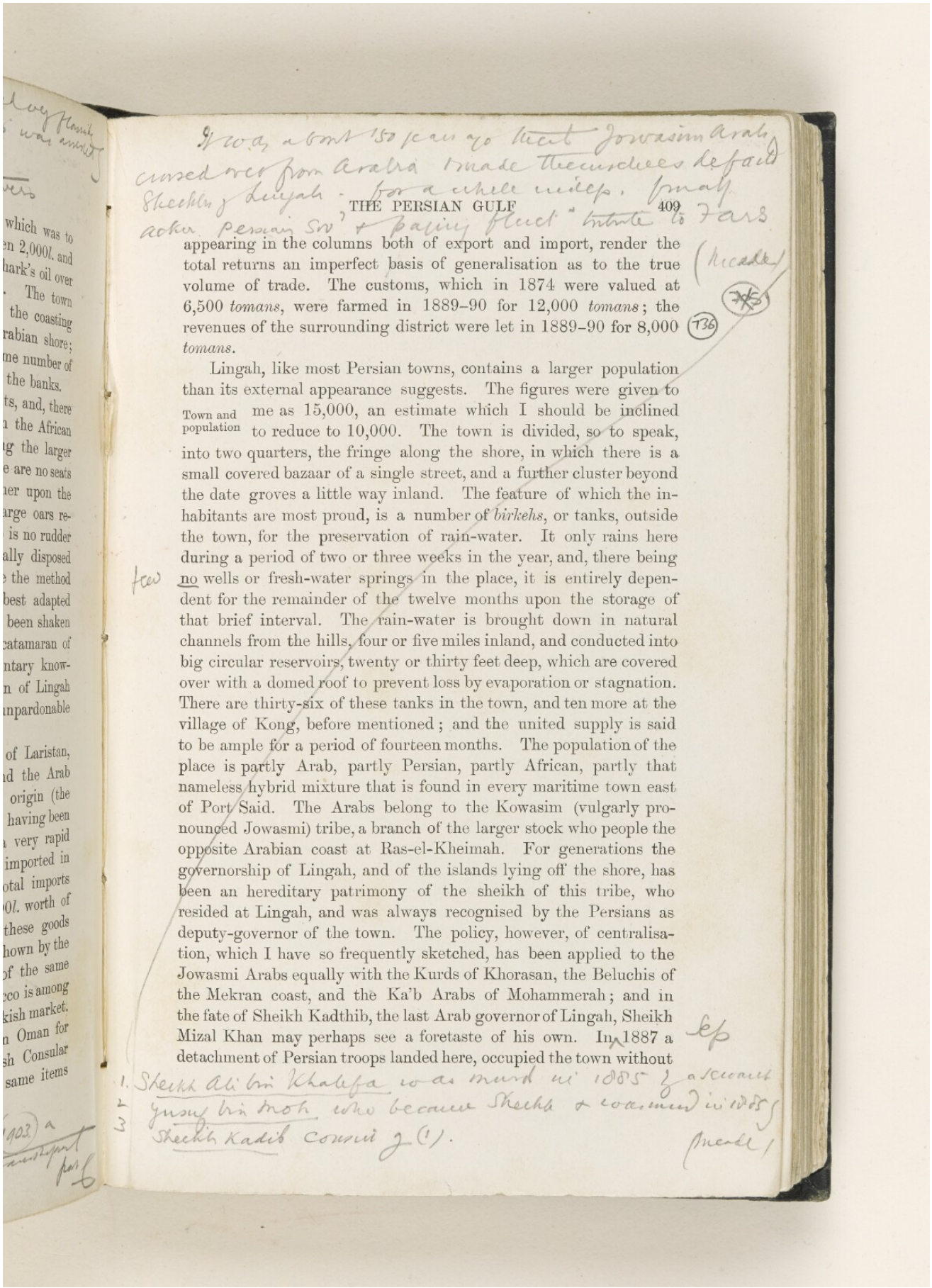



appearing in the columns both of export and import, render the total returns an imperfect basis of generalisation as to the true volume of trade. The customs, which in 1874 were valued at 6,500 *tomans*, were farmed in 1889–90 for 12,000 *tomans*; the revenues of the surrounding district were let in 1889–90 for 8,000 *tomans*.

Lingah, like most Persian towns, contains a larger population than its external appearance suggests. The figures were given to me as 15,000, an estimate which I should be inclined to reduce to 10,000. The town is divided, so to speak, into two quarters, the fringe along the shore, in which there is a small covered bazaar of a single street, and a further cluster beyond the date groves a little way inland. The feature of which the inhabitants are most proud, is a number of *birkehs*, or tanks, outside the town, for the preservation of rain-water. It only rains here during a period of two or three weeks in the year, and, there being no wells or fresh-water springs in the place, it is entirely dependent for the remainder of the twelve months upon the storage of that brief interval. The rain-water is brought down in natural channels from the hills, four or five miles inland, and conducted into big circular reservoirs, twenty or thirty feet deep, which are covered over with a domed roof to prevent loss by evaporation or stagnation. There are thirty-six of these tanks in the town, and ten more at the village of Kong, before mentioned; and the united supply is said to be ample for a period of fourteen months. The population of the place is partly Arab, partly Persian, partly African, partly that nameless hybrid mixture that is found in every maritime town east of Port Said. The Arabs belong to the Kowasim (vulgarly pronounced Jowasmi) tribe, a branch of the larger stock who people the opposite Arabian coast at Ras-el-Kheimah. For generations the governorship of Lingah, and of the islands lying off the shore, has been an hereditary patrimony of the sheikh of this tribe, who resided at Lingah, and was always recognised by the Persians as deputy-governor of the town. The policy, however, of centralisation, which I have so frequently sketched, has been applied to the Jowasmi Arabs equally with the Kurds of Khorasan, the Beluchis of the Mekran coast, and the Ka'b Arabs of Mohammerah; and in the fate of Sheikh Kadthib, the last Arab governor of Lingah, Sheikh Mizal Khan may perhaps see a foretaste of his own. In 1887 a detachment of Persian troops landed here, occupied the town without

Town and population

resistance, seized the Sheikh, and deported him to Teheran, where, in 1889, he was still a prisoner. A barrack was then built at Lingah, and a detachment of 200 Persian regulars was quartered in the place. Simultaneously a Persian garrison was planted in the island of Sirri, which had been for generations an hereditary possession of the Jowasmi. Both proceedings excited a good deal of local antipathy at the time. But the inhabitants of these coast towns are very poor and have no means of organised resistance, besides being sad cowards into the bargain, and having a mortal fear of a soldier, even of a Persian soldier, at the butt-end of a muzzle-loading gun. Accordingly they soon settled down to the new order of things, and the Persian garrison of Lingah had now been reduced to twenty men. At the time of my visit the Saad-el-Mulk was staying here, and the 'Persepolis,' which had brought him, was lying at anchor in the roadstead. In an interview, I found him to be a man of pleasing appearance and courtly address; he professed the most friendly sentiments, and gave me a letter to his deputy at Bunder Abbas. He was reported to be fairly popular with the people, having quiet manners, and being perhaps less roguishly disposed than the majority of Persian officials.

Great Britain is represented at Lingah by a native agent, a jolly old Arab, who came rowing out in a boat flying the Union Jack, and whose sons, from frequent contact with English vessels and officers, could speak a little of our tongue.

Leaving Lingah, the boat skirts the southern shore of the large island of Kishm,[1] or Jazirat-el-Towilah (i.e. long island), which seems at one time to have formed part of the mainland, but is now separated therefrom by a channel sixty miles long, and from three to thirteen in width. The island is fifty-four miles in length, and varies from nine to thirty-two in breadth. In its centre is the village of Brukth or Urukth, the Oaracta of Nearchus and Arrian, who says that at the time of the Greek admiral's visit the island produced corn, vines, and fruit of all description. At the period of the greatness of Ormuz it supplied the latter with fruit, vegetables, and water; and the aid of water still renders a large portion of its soil amenable to the cultivation of grain, melons, grapes, etc., while large date groves are to be found in the interior. Fraser says that it once contained 360 villages, in the sixteenth century. A more moderate calculation fixes the number as seventy,

Island of Kishm

[1] The Quesomo of Thévenot and Kichmichs of Chardin.

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(737) (946)

Notes of For Dept
March. 1. 99

Viceregal Lodge
Simla

Bassidore. formerly a
Coaling depot & rendezvous for our
Ships in P waters
Det of troops withdrawn in 83 ;
extremely unhealthy. Nat attache
who had been there for 14 years
withdrawn at same time. The
det was a havildar's party of
12 men. But in 81 a full co of
Brit inf. (no Off) was sent there
for a year. no barracks -
but build^s connected with coal
depot - In 1820 - 22 or 23 we
had a cantonment near Kishm
town (as we occupied in 1820 of authority
of the Sultan Sayid Saeed to whom Island
~~had been leased by Persia~~ then belonged.
Vide Aitchison X. 100 (XI. 75) ≠ This
was confirmed by agreement with his son
& successor, Sultan Showlynee in 1864
in spite of fact that K had been
taken in 52 by P. & leased in 55 to
M. (Ait X. 100 & app 45) In 68
P forcibly terminated lease of M but
made no objection to our occup)
But we hold B. on ~~delft~~ special terms

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& "given us by Sh. before Persia took the island."

In 1860 sanction was accorded to a Nat agent at B. on Rs 30 a month to superintend depot estab. in island for protection of liberated slaves

When Nat Inf withdrawn in 83 buildings were left in charge of a man who is called Coal Contractor or agent

He gets 30 Rs a month
1 Puttawala 12 "
1 Fire Engineman 12 "

Vide Wigham Description p 53

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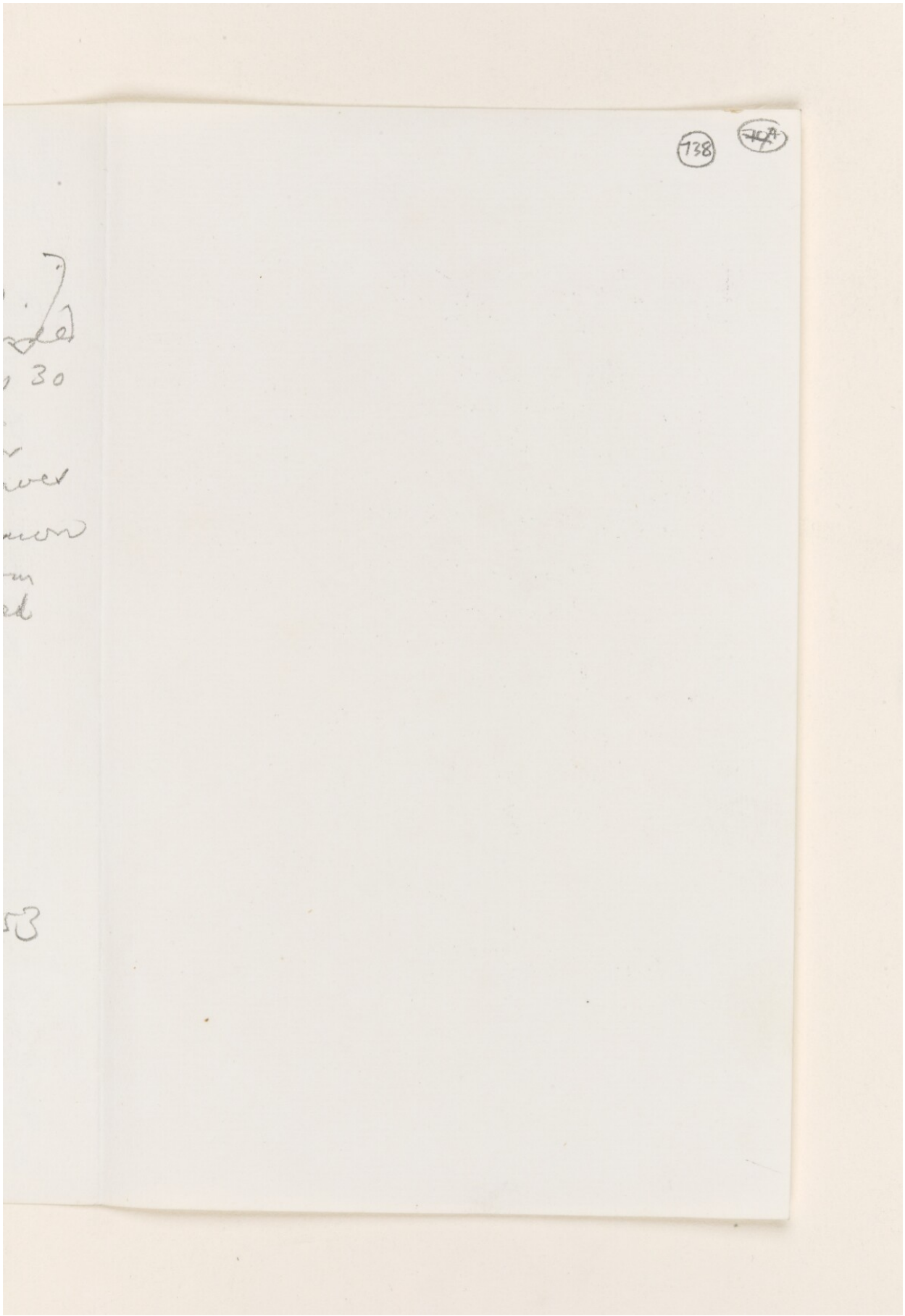


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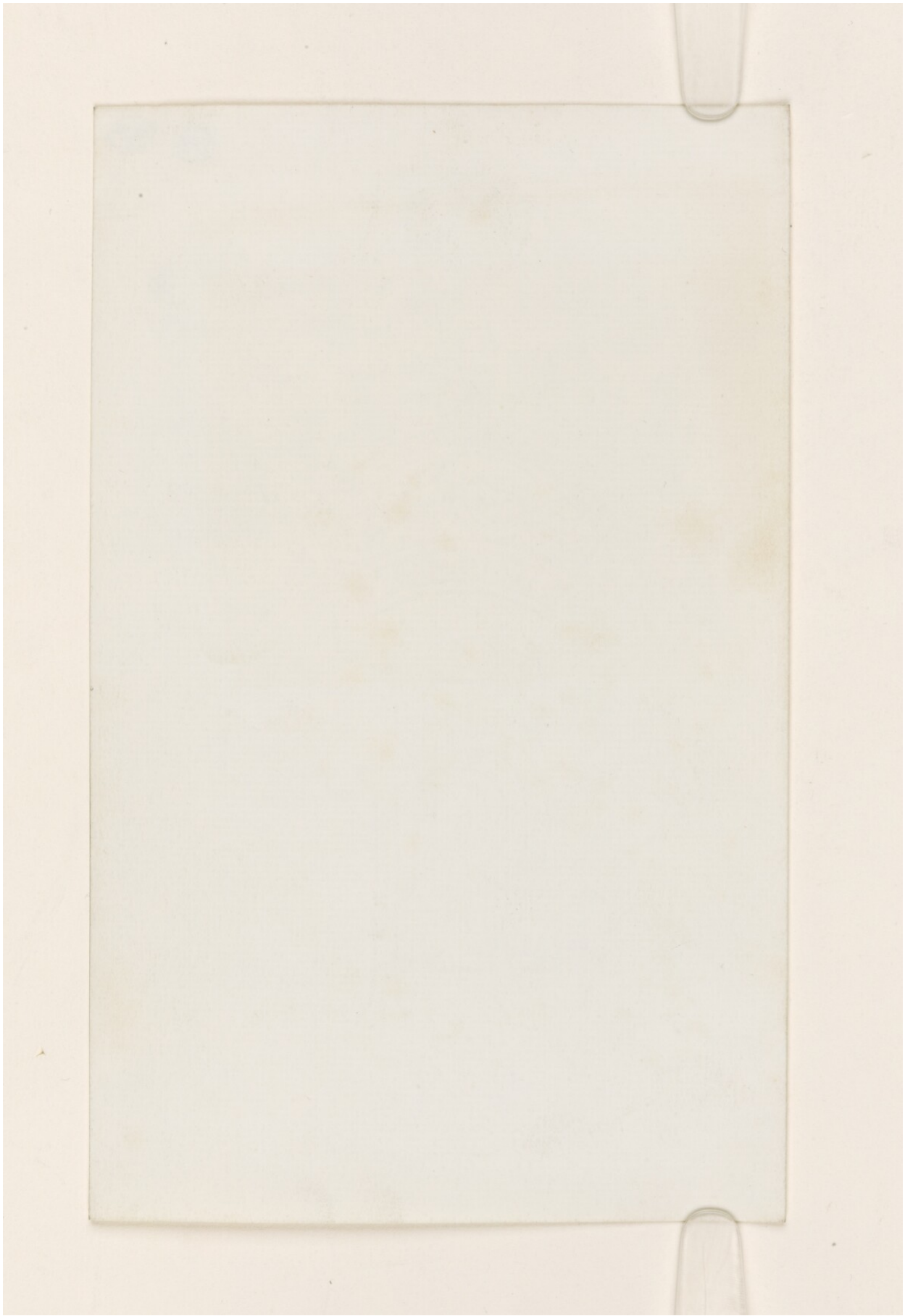

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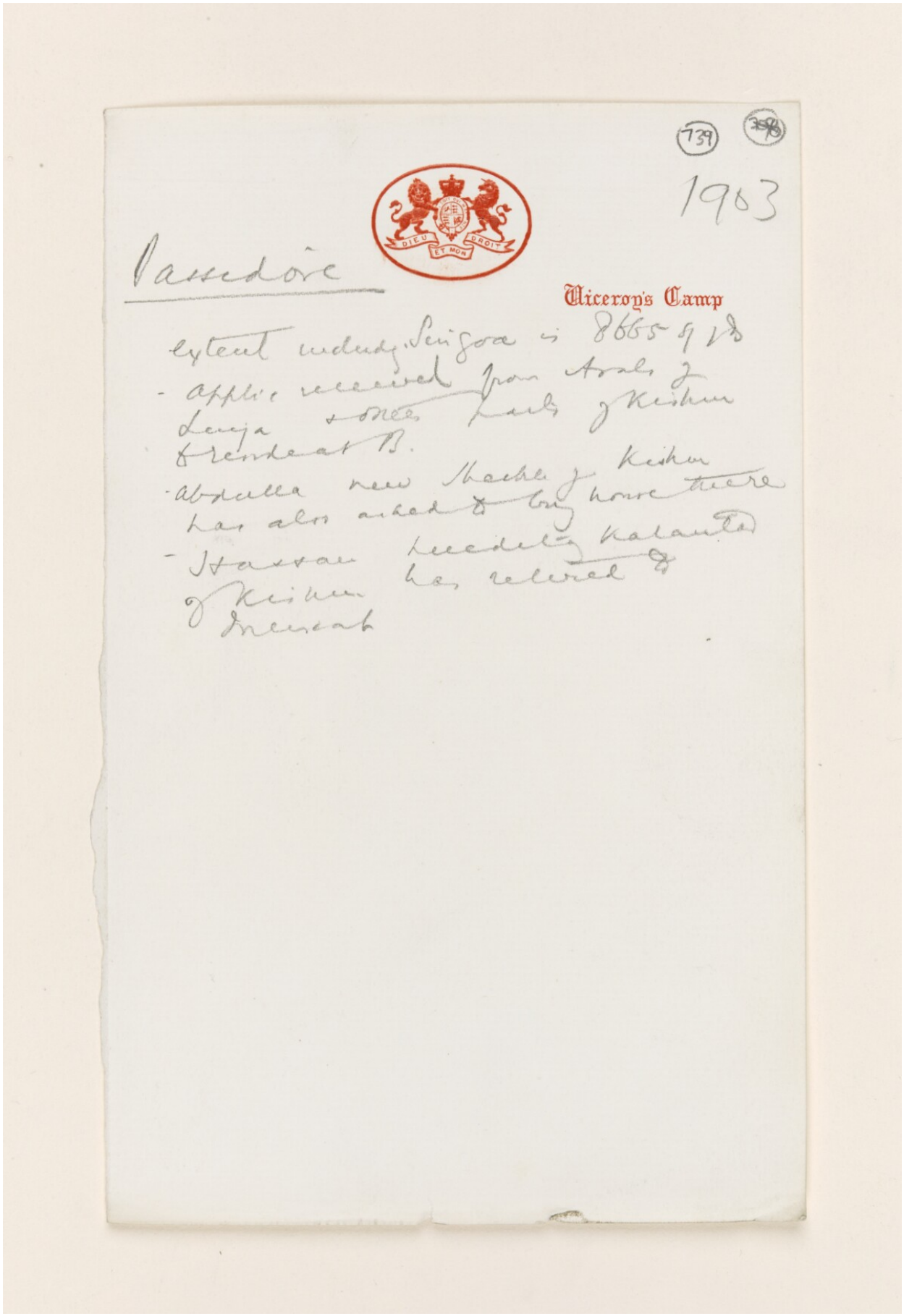

(739) (398)

1903

Passedore

Viceroy's Camp

extent including Singoa is 8665 sq yds
- applic received from Arabs of Lenja & other parts of Kishm to reside at B.
- Abdulla new Shaikh of Kishm has also asked to buy house there
- Hassan hereditary Kalantar of Kishm has retired to Jeruzab

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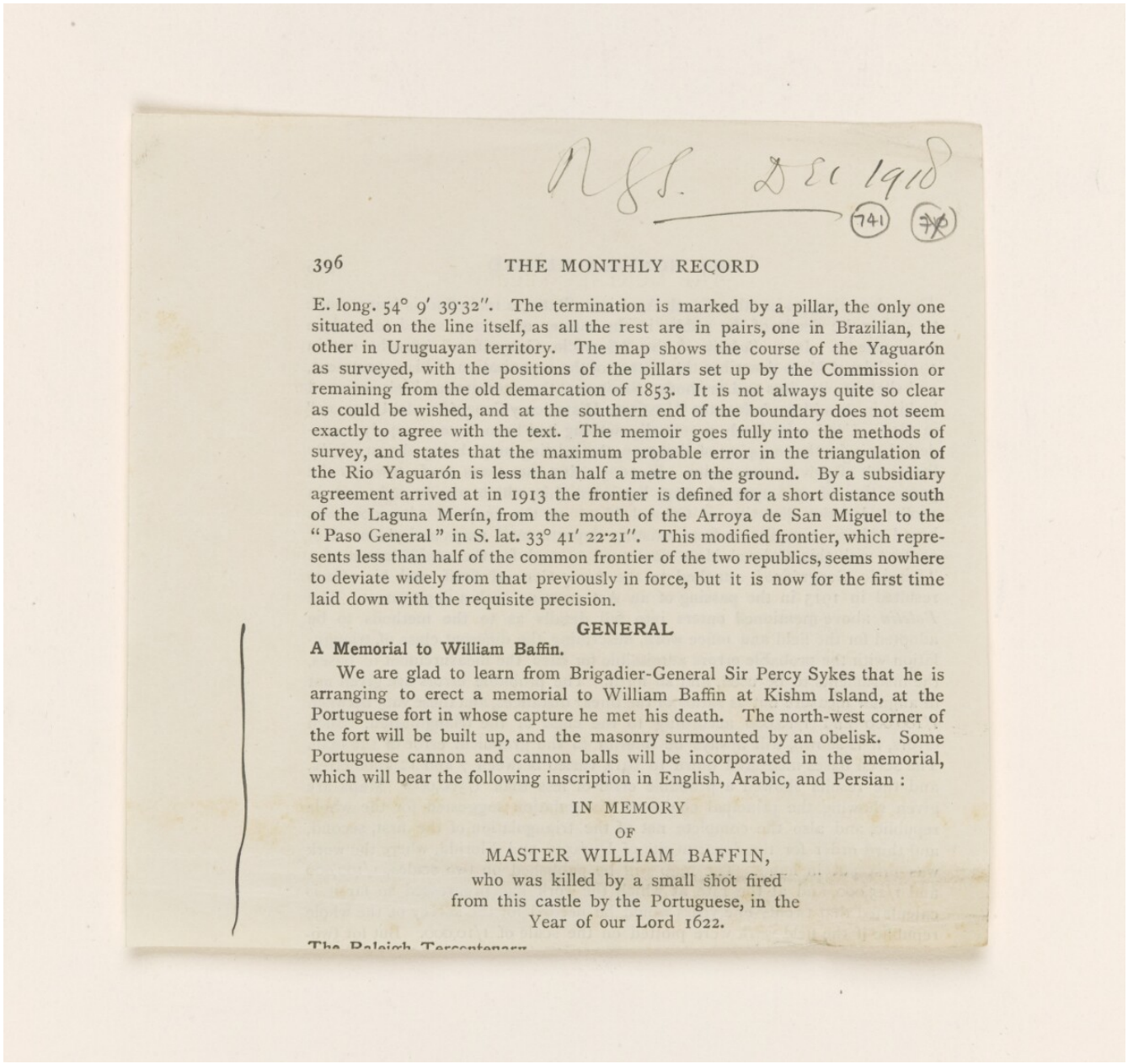


Mss. Dec 1918
741



E. long. 54° 9′ 39·32″. The termination is marked by a pillar, the only one situated on the line itself, as all the rest are in pairs, one in Brazilian, the other in Uruguayan territory. The map shows the course of the Yaguarón as surveyed, with the positions of the pillars set up by the Commission or remaining from the old demarcation of 1853. It is not always quite so clear as could be wished, and at the southern end of the boundary does not seem exactly to agree with the text. The memoir goes fully into the methods of survey, and states that the maximum probable error in the triangulation of the Rio Yaguarón is less than half a metre on the ground. By a subsidiary agreement arrived at in 1913 the frontier is defined for a short distance south of the Laguna Merín, from the mouth of the Arroya de San Miguel to the "Paso General" in S. lat. 33° 41′ 22·21″. This modified frontier, which represents less than half of the common frontier of the two republics, seems nowhere to deviate widely from that previously in force, but it is now for the first time laid down with the requisite precision.

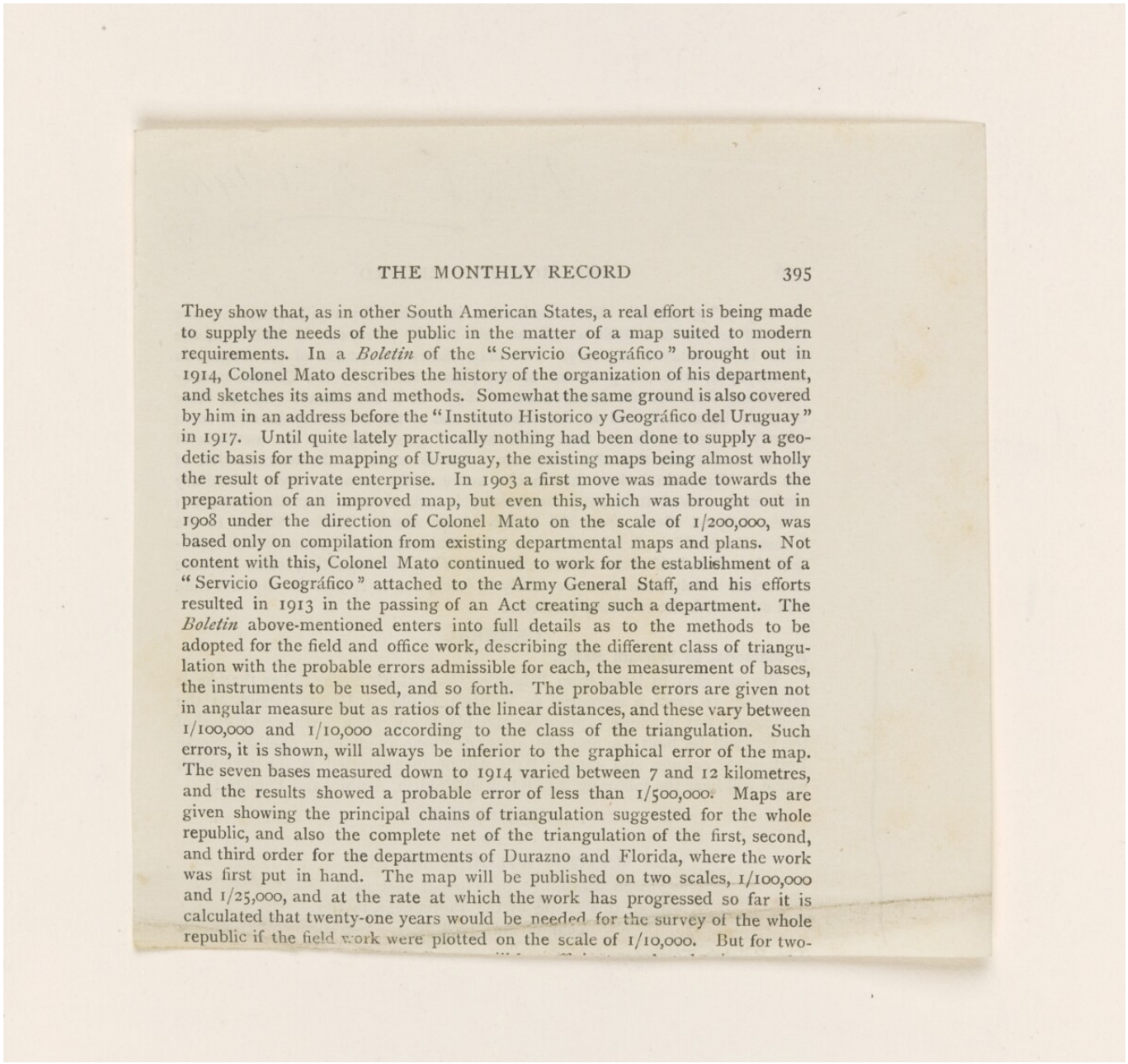
## GENERAL

**A Memorial to William Baffin.**

We are glad to learn from Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes that he is arranging to erect a memorial to William Baffin at Kishm Island, at the Portuguese fort in whose capture he met his death. The north-west corner of the fort will be built up, and the masonry surmounted by an obelisk. Some Portuguese cannon and cannon balls will be incorporated in the memorial, which will bear the following inscription in English, Arabic, and Persian :

IN MEMORY
OF
MASTER WILLIAM BAFFIN,
who was killed by a small shot fired
from this castle by the Portuguese, in the
Year of our Lord 1622.

The Raleigh Tercentenary





They show that, as in other South American States, a real effort is being made to supply the needs of the public in the matter of a map suited to modern requirements. In a *Boletin* of the "Servicio Geográfico" brought out in 1914, Colonel Mato describes the history of the organization of his department, and sketches its aims and methods. Somewhat the same ground is also covered by him in an address before the "Instituto Historico y Geográfico del Uruguay" in 1917. Until quite lately practically nothing had been done to supply a geodetic basis for the mapping of Uruguay, the existing maps being almost wholly the result of private enterprise. In 1903 a first move was made towards the preparation of an improved map, but even this, which was brought out in 1908 under the direction of Colonel Mato on the scale of 1/200,000, was based only on compilation from existing departmental maps and plans. Not content with this, Colonel Mato continued to work for the establishment of a "Servicio Geográfico" attached to the Army General Staff, and his efforts resulted in 1913 in the passing of an Act creating such a department. The *Boletin* above-mentioned enters into full details as to the methods to be adopted for the field and office work, describing the different class of triangulation with the probable errors admissible for each, the measurement of bases, the instruments to be used, and so forth. The probable errors are given not in angular measure but as ratios of the linear distances, and these vary between 1/100,000 and 1/10,000 according to the class of the triangulation. Such errors, it is shown, will always be inferior to the graphical error of the map. The seven bases measured down to 1914 varied between 7 and 12 kilometres, and the results showed a probable error of less than 1/500,000. Maps are given showing the principal chains of triangulation suggested for the whole republic, and also the complete net of the triangulation of the first, second, and third order for the departments of Durazno and Florida, where the work was first put in hand. The map will be published on two scales, 1/100,000 and 1/25,000, and at the rate at which the work has progressed so far it is calculated that twenty-one years would be needed for the survey of the whole republic if the field work were plotted on the scale of 1/10,000. But for two-

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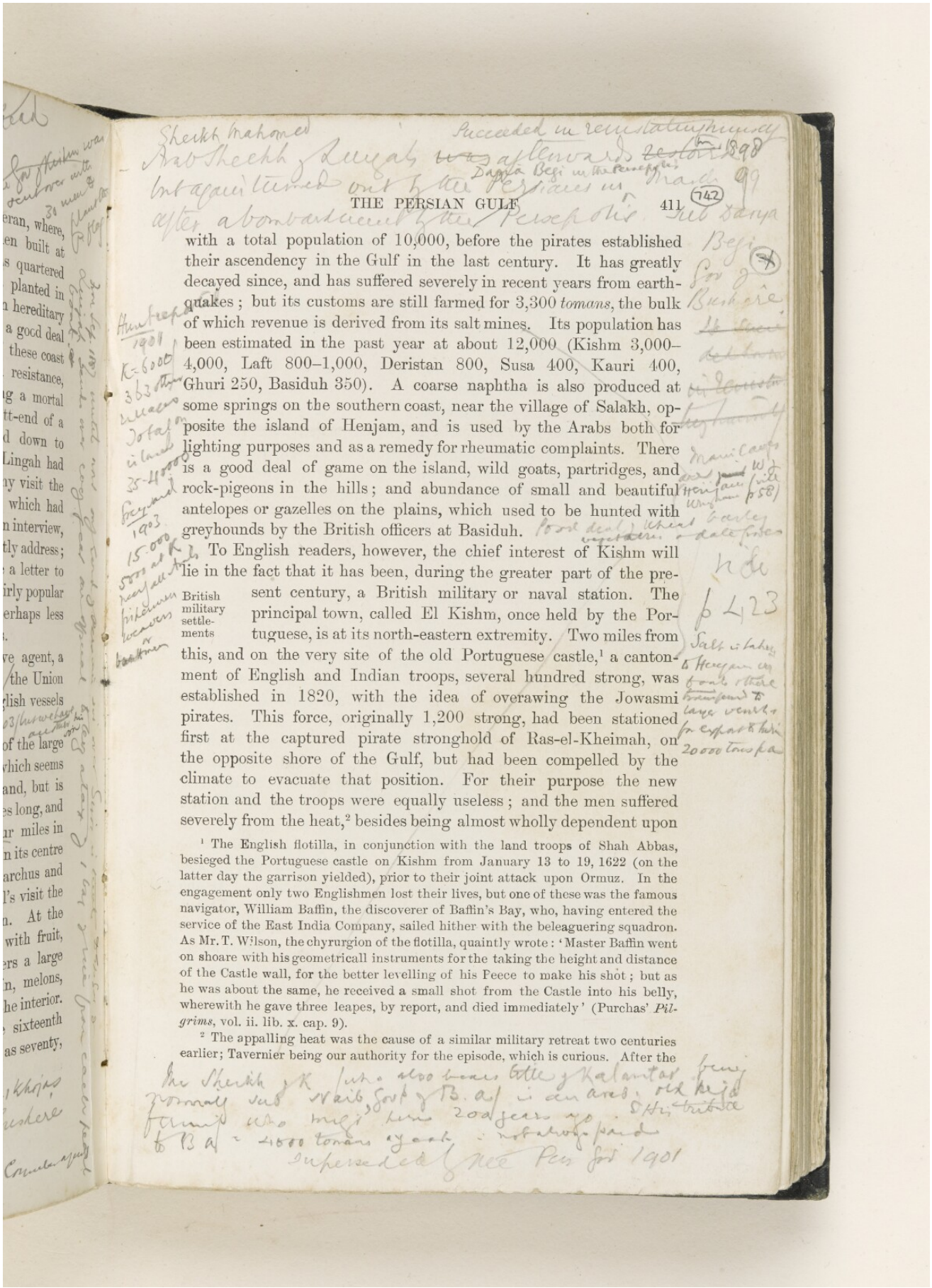




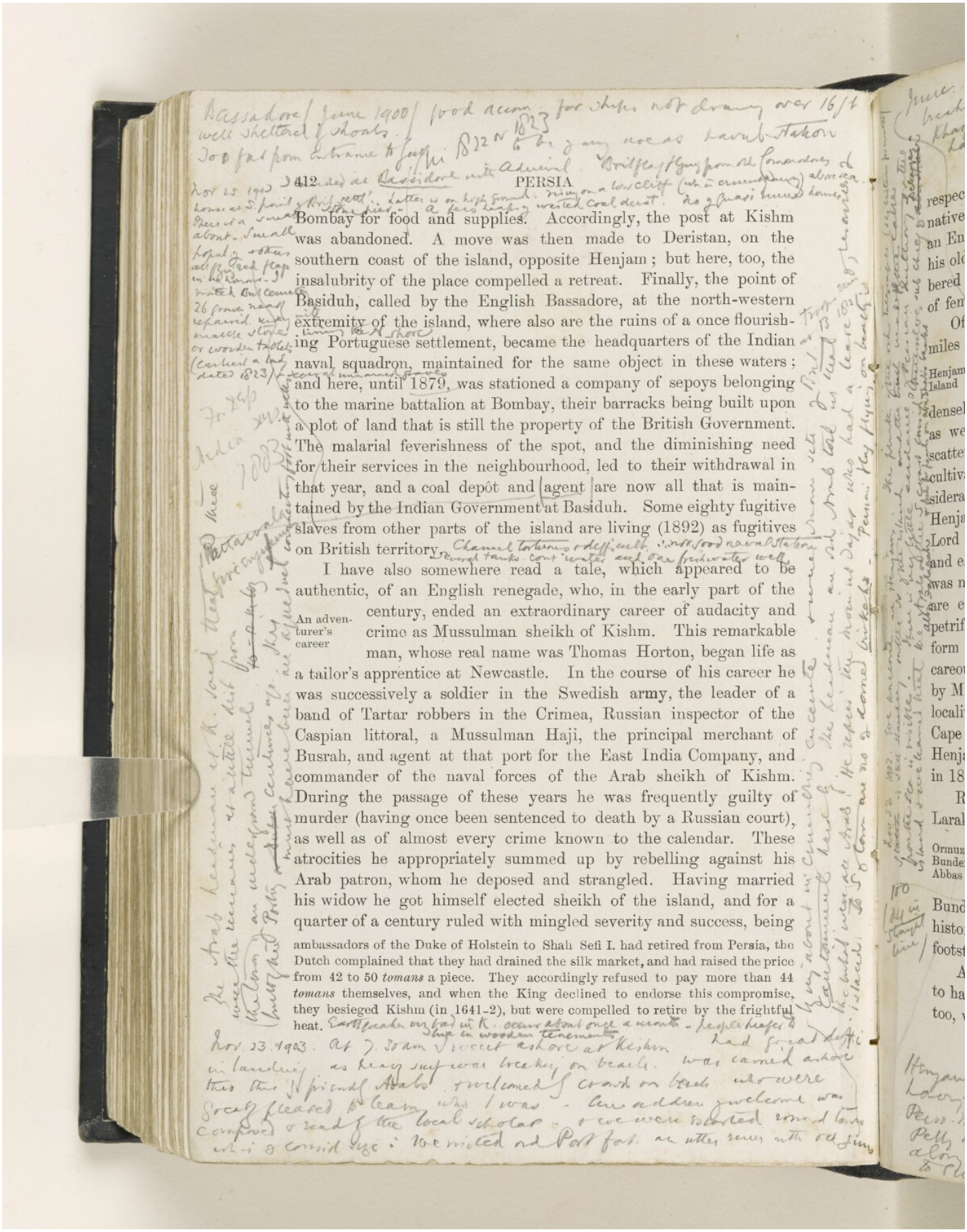
with a total population of 10,000, before the pirates established their ascendency in the Gulf in the last century. It has greatly decayed since, and has suffered severely in recent years from earthquakes; but its customs are still farmed for 3,300 *tomans*, the bulk of which revenue is derived from its salt mines. Its population has been estimated in the past year at about 12,000 (Kishm 3,000–4,000, Laft 800–1,000, Deristan 800, Susa 400, Kauri 400, Ghuri 250, Basiduh 350). A coarse naphtha is also produced at some springs on the southern coast, near the village of Salakh, opposite the island of Henjam, and is used by the Arabs both for lighting purposes and as a remedy for rheumatic complaints. There is a good deal of game on the island, wild goats, partridges, and rock-pigeons in the hills; and abundance of small and beautiful antelopes or gazelles on the plains, which used to be hunted with greyhounds by the British officers at Basiduh.

British military settlements

To English readers, however, the chief interest of Kishm will lie in the fact that it has been, during the greater part of the present century, a British military or naval station. The principal town, called El Kishm, once held by the Portuguese, is at its north-eastern extremity. Two miles from this, and on the very site of the old Portuguese castle,[1] a cantonment of English and Indian troops, several hundred strong, was established in 1820, with the idea of overawing the Jowasmi pirates. This force, originally 1,200 strong, had been stationed first at the captured pirate stronghold of Ras-el-Kheimah, on the opposite shore of the Gulf, but had been compelled by the climate to evacuate that position. For their purpose the new station and the troops were equally useless; and the men suffered severely from the heat,[2] besides being almost wholly dependent upon

[1] The English flotilla, in conjunction with the land troops of Shah Abbas, besieged the Portuguese castle on Kishm from January 13 to 19, 1622 (on the latter day the garrison yielded), prior to their joint attack upon Ormuz. In the engagement only two Englishmen lost their lives, but one of these was the famous navigator, William Baffin, the discoverer of Baffin's Bay, who, having entered the service of the East India Company, sailed hither with the beleaguering squadron. As Mr. T. Wilson, the chyrurgion of the flotilla, quaintly wrote: 'Master Baffin went on shoare with his geometricall instruments for the taking the height and distance of the Castle wall, for the better levelling of his Peece to make his shot; but as he was about the same, he received a small shot from the Castle into his belly, wherewith he gave three leapes, by report, and died immediately' (Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. x. cap. 9).

[2] The appalling heat was the cause of a similar military retreat two centuries earlier; Tavernier being our authority for the episode, which is curious. After the



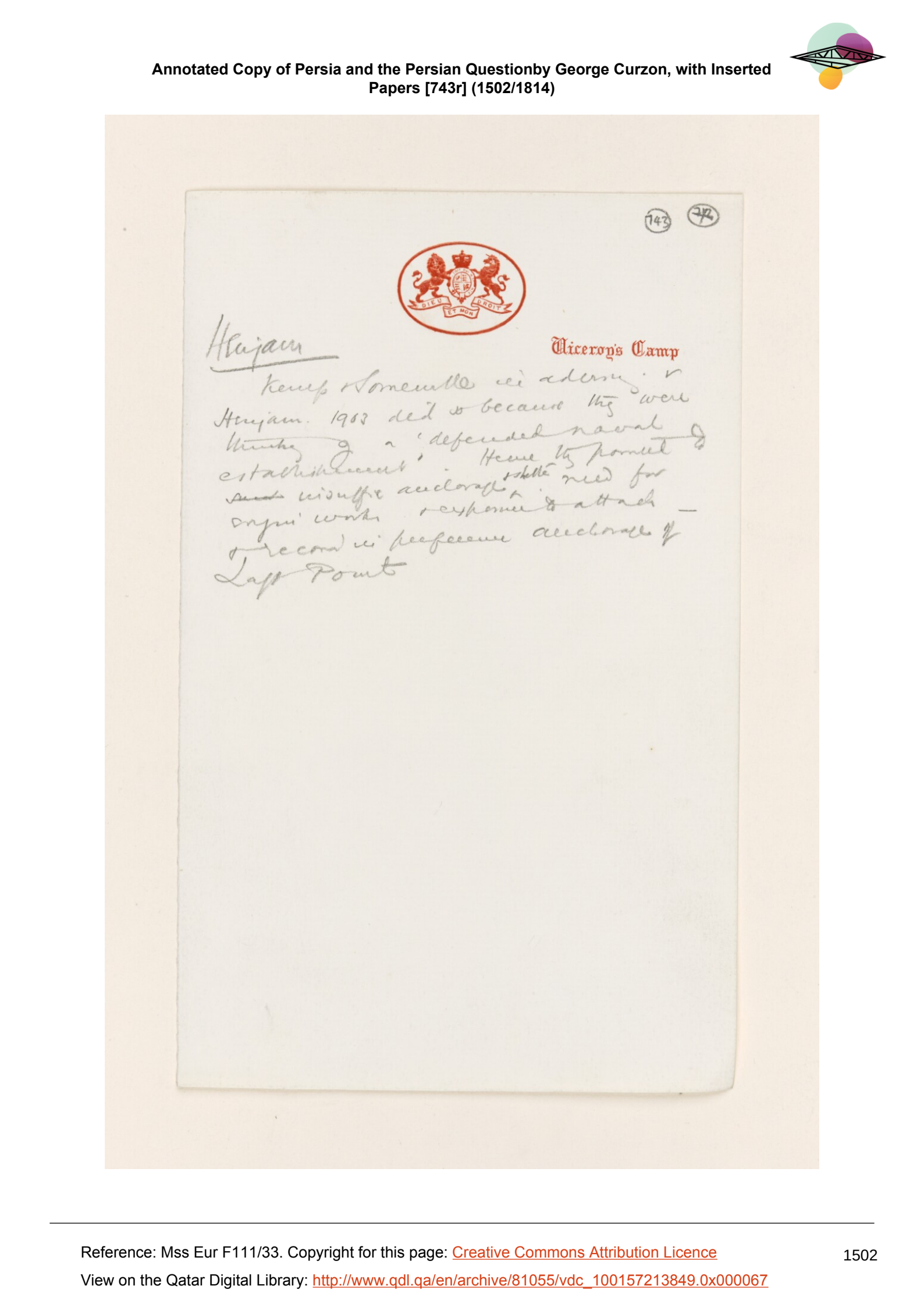


Bombay for food and supplies. Accordingly, the post at Kishm was abandoned. A move was then made to Deristan, on the southern coast of the island, opposite Henjam; but here, too, the insalubrity of the place compelled a retreat. Finally, the point of Basiduh, called by the English Bassadore, at the north-western extremity of the island, where also are the ruins of a once flourishing Portuguese settlement, became the headquarters of the Indian naval squadron, maintained for the same object in these waters; and here, until 1879, was stationed a company of sepoys belonging to the marine battalion at Bombay, their barracks being built upon a plot of land that is still the property of the British Government. The malarial feverishness of the spot, and the diminishing need for their services in the neighbourhood, led to their withdrawal in that year, and a coal depôt and agent are now all that is maintained by the Indian Government at Basiduh. Some eighty fugitive slaves from other parts of the island are living (1892) as fugitives on British territory.

I have also somewhere read a tale, which appeared to be authentic, of an English renegade, who, in the early part of the century, ended an extraordinary career of audacity and crime as Mussulman sheikh of Kishm. This remarkable man, whose real name was Thomas Horton, began life as a tailor's apprentice at Newcastle. In the course of his career he was successively a soldier in the Swedish army, the leader of a band of Tartar robbers in the Crimea, Russian inspector of the Caspian littoral, a Mussulman Haji, the principal merchant of Busrah, and agent at that port for the East India Company, and commander of the naval forces of the Arab sheikh of Kishm. During the passage of these years he was frequently guilty of murder (having once been sentenced to death by a Russian court), as well as of almost every crime known to the calendar. These atrocities he appropriately summed up by rebelling against his Arab patron, whom he deposed and strangled. Having married his widow he got himself elected sheikh of the island, and for a quarter of a century ruled with mingled severity and success, being

An adventurer's career

ambassadors of the Duke of Holstein to Shah Sefi I. had retired from Persia, the Dutch complained that they had drained the silk market, and had raised the price from 42 to 50 *tomans* a piece. They accordingly refused to pay more than 44 *tomans* themselves, and when the King declined to endorse this compromise, they besieged Kishm (in 1641-2), but were compelled to retire by the frightful heat.



743 742

DIEU ET MON DROIT

Viceroy's Camp

Henjam

Kemp & Somerville in advising. v Henjam. 1903 did so because they were thinking of a 'defended naval establishment'. Hence they pointed to ~~[illegible]~~ insuffic anchorage & shelter need for engin' works & expense to attach — & record in preference anchorage of Last Point

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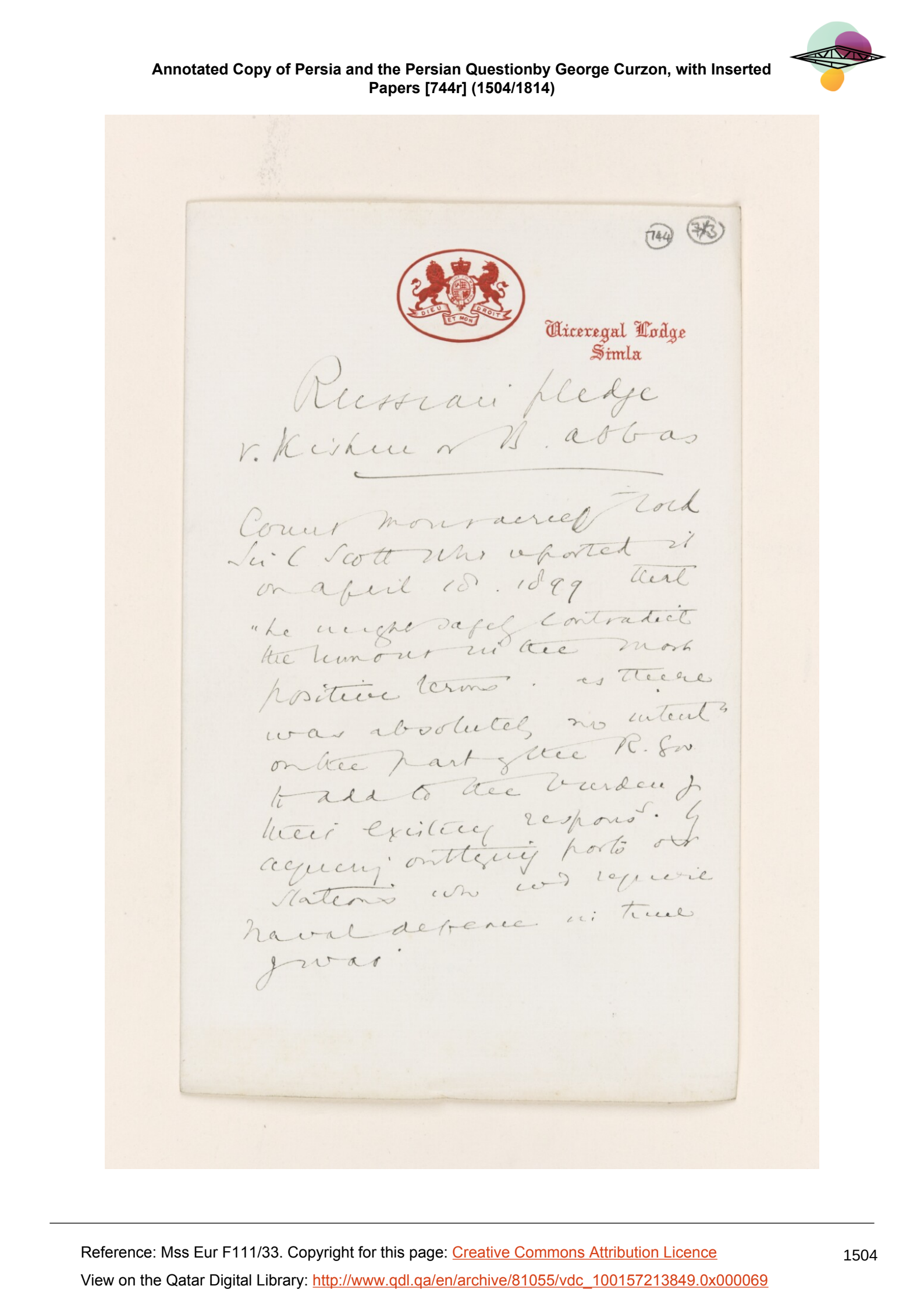

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Viceregal Lodge
Simla

Russian pledge
v. Kishen or B. abbas

Count Mouravieff told
Sir C Scott who reported it
on April 18. 1899 that
"he might safely contradict
the humour in the most
positive terms. as there
was absolutely no intent"
on the part of the R. Gov
to add to the burden of
their existing responsn. by
acquiring outlying ports or
stations who wd require
naval defence in time
of war.

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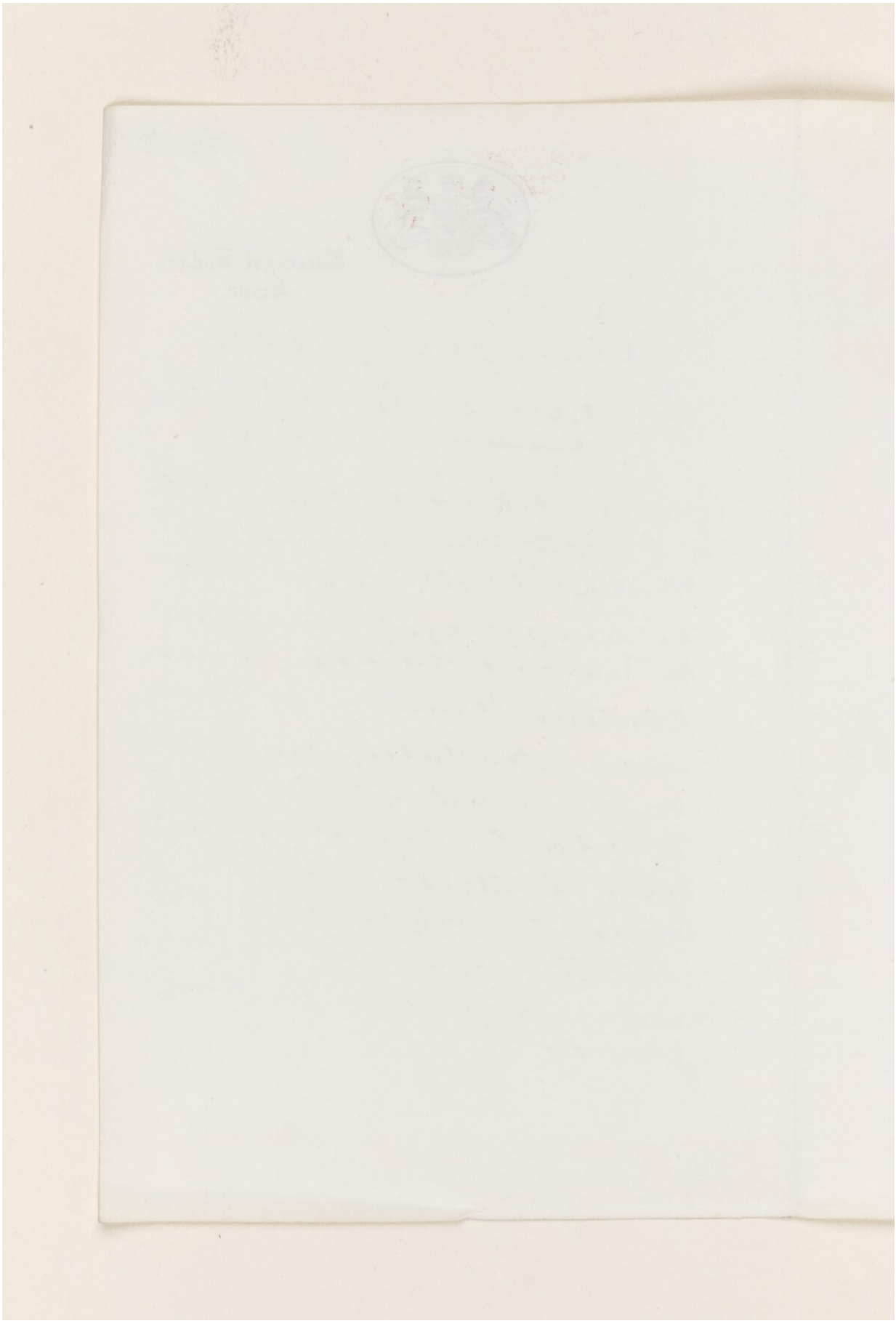

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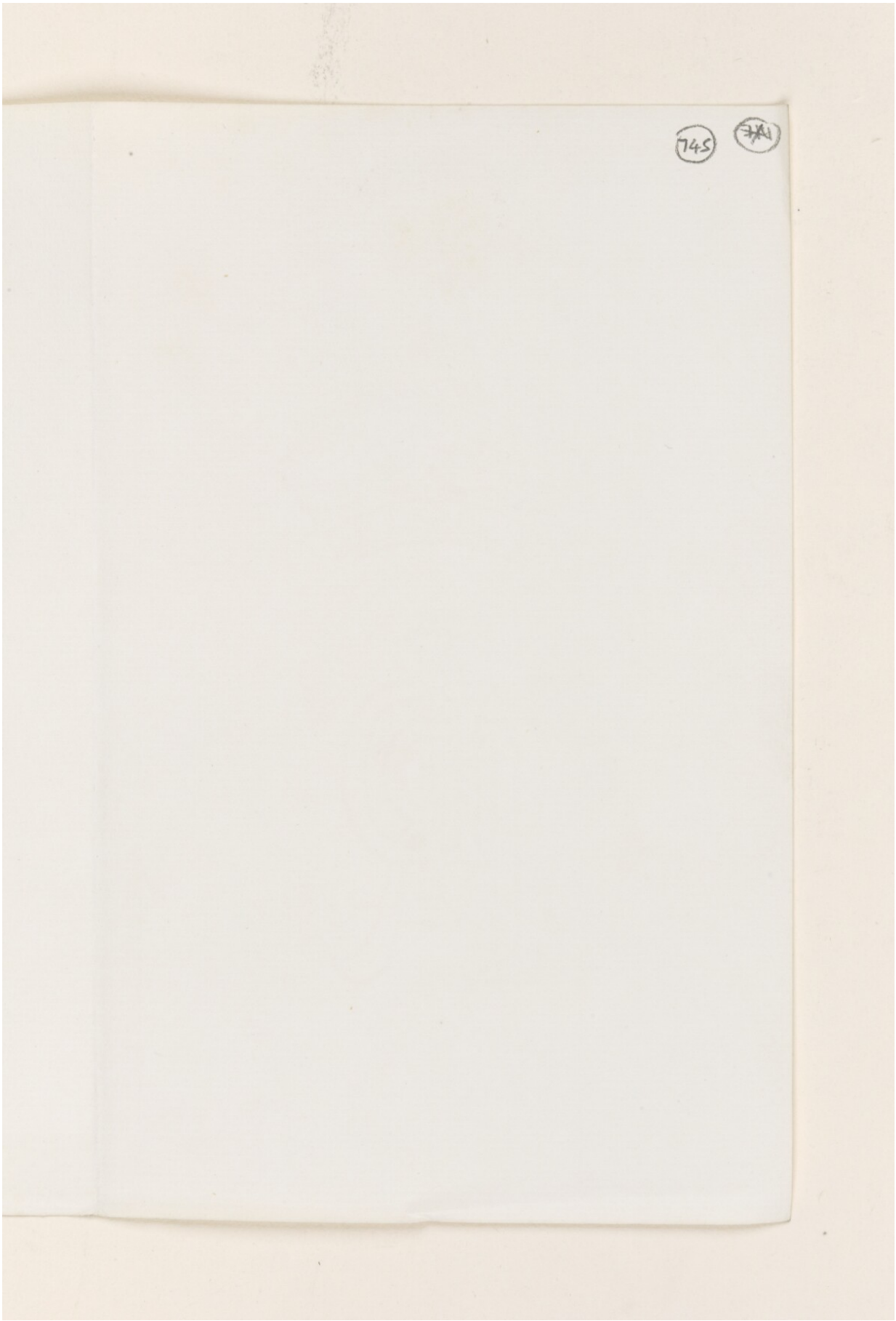


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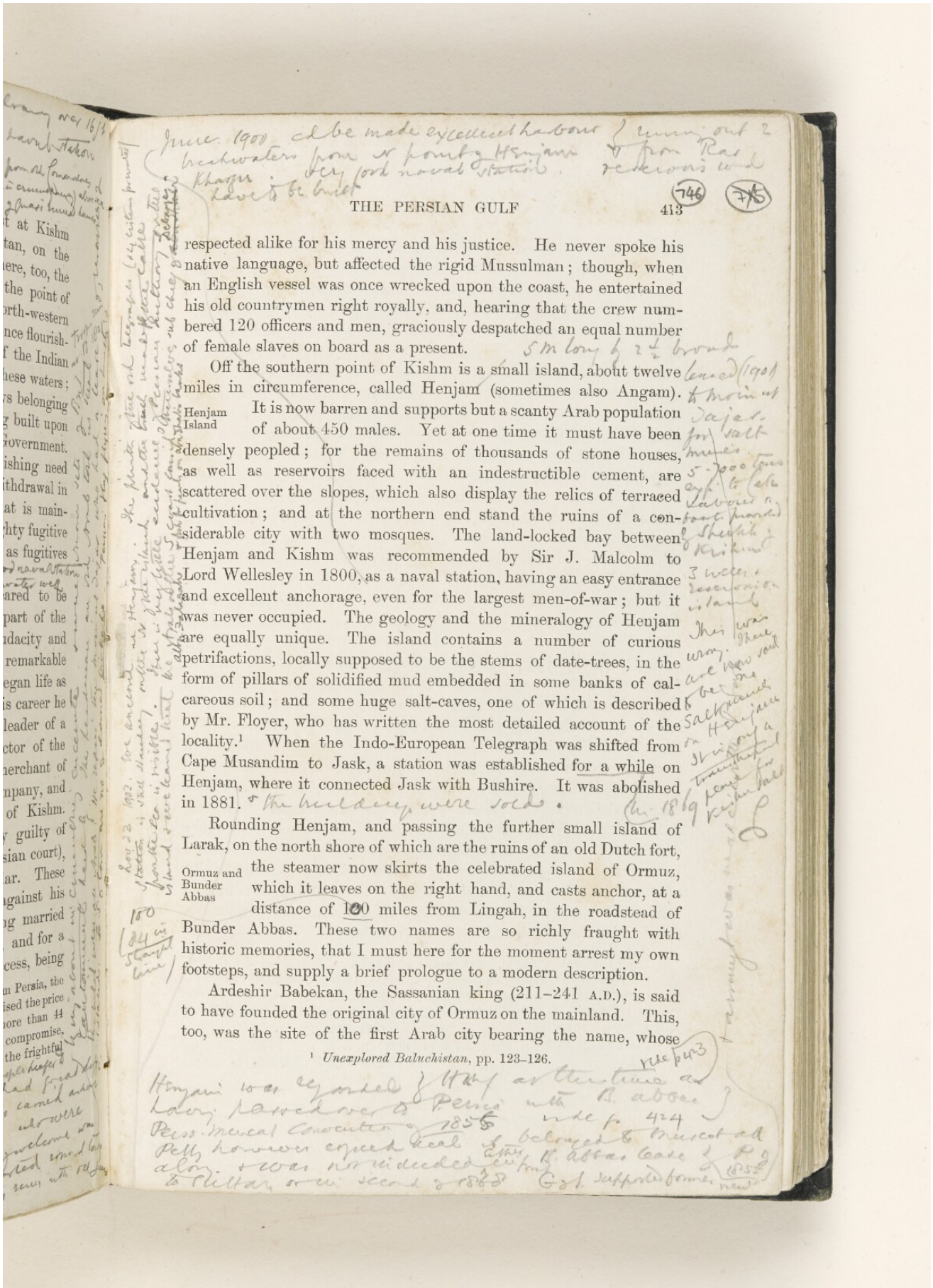



respected alike for his mercy and his justice. He never spoke his native language, but affected the rigid Mussulman; though, when an English vessel was once wrecked upon the coast, he entertained his old countrymen right royally, and, hearing that the crew numbered 120 officers and men, graciously despatched an equal number of female slaves on board as a present.

Henjam Island

Off the southern point of Kishm is a small island, about twelve miles in circumference, called Henjam (sometimes also Angam). It is now barren and supports but a scanty Arab population of about 450 males. Yet at one time it must have been densely peopled; for the remains of thousands of stone houses, as well as reservoirs faced with an indestructible cement, are scattered over the slopes, which also display the relics of terraced cultivation; and at the northern end stand the ruins of a considerable city with two mosques. The land-locked bay between Henjam and Kishm was recommended by Sir J. Malcolm to Lord Wellesley in 1800, as a naval station, having an easy entrance and excellent anchorage, even for the largest men-of-war; but it was never occupied. The geology and the mineralogy of Henjam are equally unique. The island contains a number of curious petrifactions, locally supposed to be the stems of date-trees, in the form of pillars of solidified mud embedded in some banks of calcareous soil; and some huge salt-caves, one of which is described by Mr. Floyer, who has written the most detailed account of the locality.[1] When the Indo-European Telegraph was shifted from Cape Musandim to Jask, a station was established for a while on Henjam, where it connected Jask with Bushire. It was abolished in 1881.

Ormuz and Bunder Abbas

Rounding Henjam, and passing the further small island of Larak, on the north shore of which are the ruins of an old Dutch fort, the steamer now skirts the celebrated island of Ormuz, which it leaves on the right hand, and casts anchor, at a distance of 100 miles from Lingah, in the roadstead of Bunder Abbas. These two names are so richly fraught with historic memories, that I must here for the moment arrest my own footsteps, and supply a brief prologue to a modern description.

Ardeshir Babekan, the Sassanian king (211–241 A.D.), is said to have founded the original city of Ormuz on the mainland. This, too, was the site of the first Arab city bearing the name, whose

[1] *Unexplored Baluchistan*, pp. 123–126.

History of Ormuz

ruins have been discovered on the banks of the Minau creek (to the east of Bunder Abbas) some six miles south-west of the Minau fort. Towards the end of the thirteenth century Marco Polo twice (in 1272 and in 1293 A.D.) visited the city of Hormos, Hormes, or Curmosa, which was already the centre of a vast trade with every part of the East, receiving, especially from India, rich cargoes of spices, precious stones, pearls, ivory, silks, and cloth of gold. It was ruled by a line of independent Arab chiefs or kings,[1] the fifteenth in descent of whom, named Kutb-ed-Din, being pressed by a Mongolian invasion from the north, and finding that the exposed situation of his capital rendered it an easy prey to rapine, took the decisive step, in 1300 A.D., of abandoning the mainland, and founding a new Ormuz on a small island, distant at the nearest point about four miles from the coast, which has ever since borne the name. For 200 years the new city retained, in Arab hands, the fame and prosperity of its predecessor, and wielded a sovereignty that extended to Bahrein and Busrah. Ibn Batutah, the Moor, came hither in 1331 A.D., and reported the new Ormuz as being a large and beautiful city, containing the residence of the king.[2] A little later the reigning sovereign escaped the hostility, by becoming the tributary, of Timur. In 1442, Abdur Rezak, the reluctant seafarer and envoy from Shah Rukh, whom I have before quoted, starting for India from Ormuz, left on record that that place 'had not its equal on the surface of the globe,' that it contained 'merchants of seven climates and travellers from all countries,' and that 'the inhabitants united the flattering character of the people of Irak with the profound cunning of the Indians.'[3] Thirty years later the Russian merchant, Athanasius Nikitin, paid a similar tribute to the commercial glory of Ormuz.[4] Ludovico di Varthema, in 1504, three years before the Portuguese appeared upon the scene, described it as 'the noble city of Ormuz, which is extremely beautiful.'[5] The Latin tongue was even invoked by some scholarly eulogist, who thus rendered a couplet that had also an English version :—

[1] For a list of the Arab kings of Ormuz, *vide* Teixeira, *Relaciones del Origen, etc., de los Reyes de Persia y de Harmuz*, Coimbre, 1610; Traduction Française, 2 vols, Paris, 1681; also Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. x.; Herbert, *Some Yeares' Travels*, pp. 108–9; De Guignes' *Histoire des Huns*, vol. i. p. 345; and Yule's *Marco Polo*, vol. i. pp. 124–6.

[2] *Travels* (edit. 1829), p. 63.

[3] *India in the 15th Century* (Hakluyt Society), p. 7.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Travels* (Hakluyt Society), p. 94.

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Si terrarum orbis, quaqua patet, annulus esset,
Illius Ormusium gemma decusque foret.

It was at this period, namely, the opening of the sixteenth century, that the Portuguese, profiting by the recent discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route by Vasco da Gama, appeared in the eastern seas and, under the famous Albuquerque, laid the foundations of their short-lived but showy empire. In 1507, with a small armament, after sacking and destroying Muscat, he attacked Ormuz, and won a partial success, forcing the king to acknowledge himself a vassal of Portugal and to pay an annual tribute. Failing to receive the latter he reappeared upon the scene in 1514 with a much larger force, being now Governor-General of the Portuguese dominions in the East, captured the place, reduced the king (Seif-ed-Din) to complete subjection, and compelled him to admit a Portuguese garrison, but left him on the throne as a Portuguese *titulado*, or vassal, in receipt of an annual pension. Fresh treaties were made with his successors, regulating and raising the tribute exacted by the conquerors, which advanced from 15,000 to 100,000 seraphims, until, in the middle of the century, the Portuguese compulsorily appropriated the entire customs and became the *de facto* proprietors of Ormuz.

Portuguese ascendency

There was not anything in the locality itself, beyond its situation at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and its possession of two good harbours, to recommend it as the site of a great city. The island, which is twelve miles in circuit, contains no natural products but salt, iron, and red ochre and sulphur. The hills are covered with a thick saline incrustation, under which they glisten white in the sun. There is not a well or water spring in the entire extent; and the rain of the short winter-falls was collected in artificial reservoirs or tanks, the ruins of which are still visible in the mountains. As Master Ralph Fitch, the English merchant, said, 'it is the dryest island in the world, for there is nothing growing in it but only salt.' All supplies, even the daily provisions of life, were imported from the outside; and anyone who visits the modern site, strewn though it be with ruins, will find it difficult to believe that it was once occupied by an urban population of 40,000 souls.[1]

Natural disadvantages

[1] The remains on the island of Ormuz now consist of parts of the Portuguese fort or castle, a lighthouse, a number of tanks in good repair, and the ruins of several hundreds. The modern town of Ormuz contains a population of 340. *Vide* a paper by Lieut. A. W. Stiffe in the *Geographical Magazine* of April 1874.

Nevertheless there is such an absolute consensus of testimony on the part of independent travellers of many nationalities that we Splendour of city are fain to believe that the city of Ormuz must have fully merited its world-wide renown. By the joint energy of Arabs and Portuguese this barren rock was converted into a rich and crowded mart, where the commerce of the two ends of the world changed hands, and in whose bazaars might be encountered all the hues of the Orient, from the tawny Arab of Oman to the darker native of Coromandel or Malacca, and the sable negro of Zanzibar. The Abbé Raynal, in his 'History of the East Indies' (translated by Justamond) delivers this glowing panegyric of Ormuz at the height of its fame:—

At the time of the arrival of foreign merchants Ormuz afforded a more splendid and agreeable scene than any city in the East. Persons from all parts of the globe exchanged their commodities and transacted their business with an air of politeness and attention which are seldom seen in other places of trade. These manners were introduced by the merchants belonging to the ports, who induced foreigners to imitate their affability. Their address, the regularity of their police, and the variety of entertainments which their city afforded, joined to the interests of commerce, invited merchants to make it a place of resort. The pavement of the streets was covered with mats, and in some places with carpets; and the linen awnings which were suspended from the tops of the houses prevented any inconvenience from the heat of the sun. Indian cabinets, ornamented with gilded vases or china, filled with flowering shrubs or aromatic plants, adorned their apartments: camels, laden with water, were stationed in the public squares; Persian wines, perfumes, and all the delicacies of the table, were furnished in the greatest abundance; they had the music of the East in its highest perfection. In short, universal opulence and extensive commerce, a refined luxury, politeness in the men, and gallantry in the women, united all their attractions to make their city the seat of pleasure.

In 1583, four brave English merchants, John Newberry, Ralph Fitch, William Leedes, and James Story (the first named of whom English merchants had already in 1581 made the overland journey by Aleppo and Busrah to Ormuz and had stayed there six weeks),[1] their imaginations stirred by the great tales that were wafted westwards of the wealth and profits of the East, started for India on their own private venture. At Ormuz they were seized and thrown

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, vol. ii. lib. ix. cap. 3.

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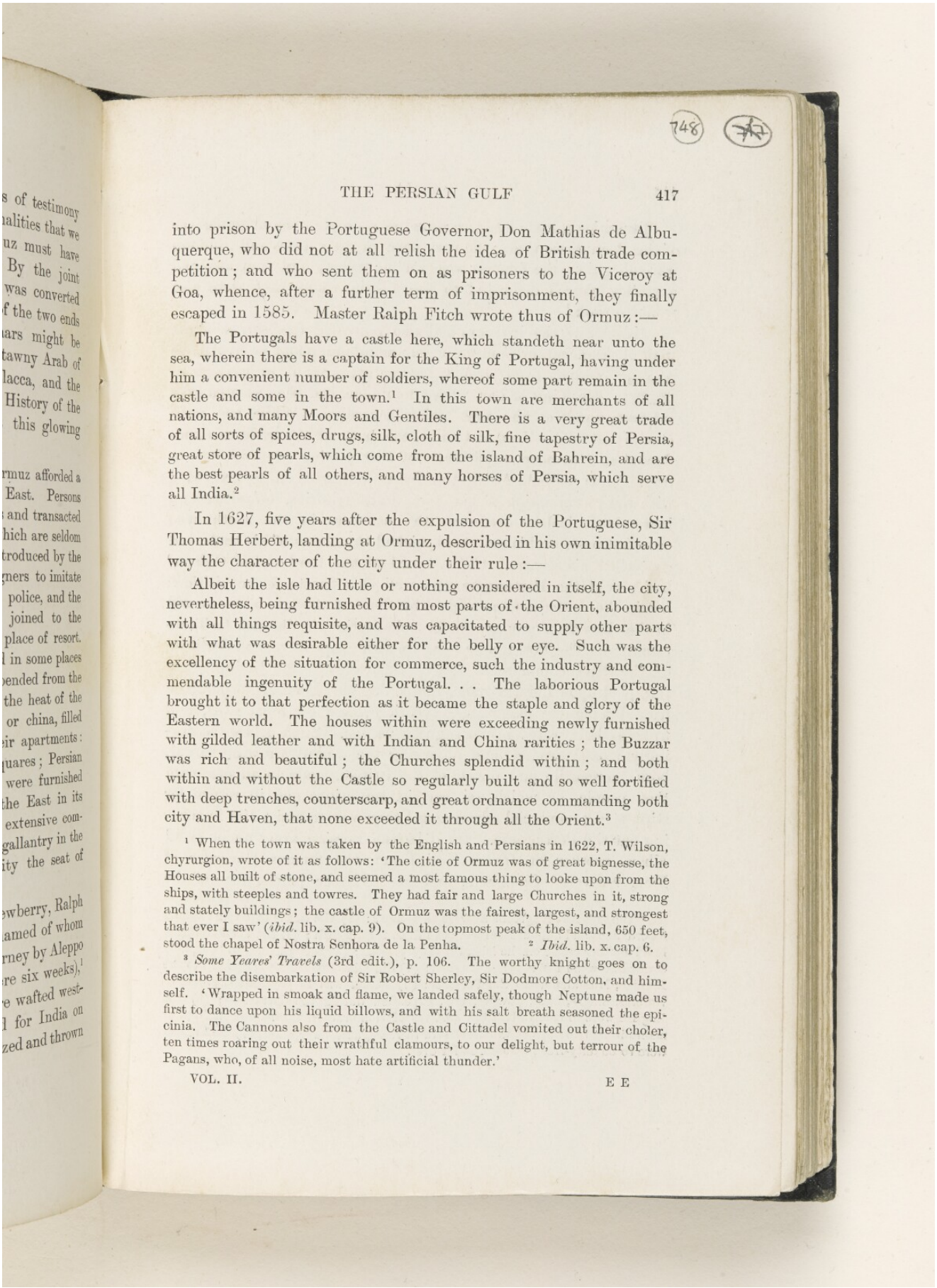



into prison by the Portuguese Governor, Don Mathias de Albuquerque, who did not at all relish the idea of British trade competition; and who sent them on as prisoners to the Viceroy at Goa, whence, after a further term of imprisonment, they finally escaped in 1585. Master Ralph Fitch wrote thus of Ormuz:—

The Portugals have a castle here, which standeth near unto the sea, wherein there is a captain for the King of Portugal, having under him a convenient number of soldiers, whereof some part remain in the castle and some in the town.[1] In this town are merchants of all nations, and many Moors and Gentiles. There is a very great trade of all sorts of spices, drugs, silk, cloth of silk, fine tapestry of Persia, great store of pearls, which come from the island of Bahrein, and are the best pearls of all others, and many horses of Persia, which serve all India.[2]

In 1627, five years after the expulsion of the Portuguese, Sir Thomas Herbert, landing at Ormuz, described in his own inimitable way the character of the city under their rule:—

Albeit the isle had little or nothing considered in itself, the city, nevertheless, being furnished from most parts of the Orient, abounded with all things requisite, and was capacitated to supply other parts with what was desirable either for the belly or eye. Such was the excellency of the situation for commerce, such the industry and commendable ingenuity of the Portugal. . . The laborious Portugal brought it to that perfection as it became the staple and glory of the Eastern world. The houses within were exceeding newly furnished with gilded leather and with Indian and China rarities; the Buzzar was rich and beautiful; the Churches splendid within; and both within and without the Castle so regularly built and so well fortified with deep trenches, counterscarp, and great ordnance commanding both city and Haven, that none exceeded it through all the Orient.[3]

[1] When the town was taken by the English and Persians in 1622, T. Wilson, chyrurgion, wrote of it as follows: 'The citie of Ormuz was of great bignesse, the Houses all built of stone, and seemed a most famous thing to looke upon from the ships, with steeples and towres. They had fair and large Churches in it, strong and stately buildings; the castle of Ormuz was the fairest, largest, and strongest that ever I saw' (*ibid.* lib. x. cap. 9). On the topmost peak of the island, 650 feet, stood the chapel of Nostra Senhora de la Penha. [2] *Ibid.* lib. x. cap. 6.

[3] *Some Yeares' Travels* (3rd edit.), p. 106. The worthy knight goes on to describe the disembarkation of Sir Robert Sherley, Sir Dodmore Cotton, and himself. 'Wrapped in smoak and flame, we landed safely, though Neptune made us first to dance upon his liquid billows, and with his salt breath seasoned the epicinia. The Cannons also from the Castle and Cittadel vomited out their choler, ten times roaring out their wrathful clamours, to our delight, but terrour of the Pagans, who, of all noise, most hate artificial thunder.'



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Tavernier, a little later, recorded as a proof of the magnificence of the Portuguese that, 'the very barrs of their doors and windows were all guilt; the fortress was a noble thing; and they also had a stately church dedicated to the Virgin, where they were also wont to walk.'

Meanwhile the invaders had also possessed themselves of the port of Gombrun or Comron on the mainland, about twelve miles distant from Ormuz, having captured it in 1512 from the King of Lar, whose dominions had been severed from those of the first Sefavi sovereign. While the merchants and nobles lived at Ormuz, the bulk of the trade was conducted at Gombrun, particularly of that passing overland into or from Persia. Shah Abbas the Great, however, as he proceeded with the consolidation of his power and territories, looked with an increasingly jealous eye upon the usurpers in the south, who occupied posts on his mainland, picked the plums of his trade, and controlled his waters. 'The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon' had served the Portuguese very well as a motto for acquisition; but in the contemptuous neglect by them of the arts of peace, and in the absence of any genius for colonisation, it did not facilitate retention. The Portuguese were fanatical, oppressive, and destitute of the true commercial spirit. Instead of conciliating, they trampled upon Persian trade, compelling the Persians to purchase from Portuguese magazines, at prices fixed by themselves, and to ship their wares in Portuguese vessels. Shah Abbas accordingly looked around, and observing the rapidly growing power, both mercantile and naval, of the British, made an alliance with that people, by which, on certain conditions and in return for stipulated commercial advantages,[1] they were to assist him in turning out the Portuguese. In 1614 the Persian army under Daud Khan, brother of Imam Kuli Khan, the famous Governor of Fars, recovered Gombrun; and in 1622 the joint forces of the

Rupture between Portugal and Persia

[1] The articles of agreement were as follows: (1) the castle of Ormuz and all its ordnance and ammunition were to fall to the English; (2) the Persians might build another castle on the island if they pleased; (3) the spoil was to be equally divided between Persians and English; (4) Christian prisoners were to fall to the English, Mussulmans to the Persians; (5) Persia was to pay half the cost of victuals, wages, shot, powder, etc., expended during the operations; (6) the English were to receive half the customs of Gombrun in future, on condition of maintaining two ships of war in the Gulf to safeguard navigation; (7) the English were to be duty-free in Gombrun for ever.

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British[1] and Persians, after capturing the Portuguese castle on Kishm, moved in conjunction against Ormuz. On February 9, the Persians attacked and gained possession of the city, the Portuguese retiring to the castle; a regular siege followed and breaching works were pushed forward until, on April 22, the garrison surrendered. The number of pieces of ordnance found in the castle was variously returned as from 200 to 600. The Portuguese, expelled from Ormuz, Kishm, and Gombrun, fell back upon Muscat, and in 1625 concluded a treaty with Shah Abbas by which they restored to him all his coast possessions, retaining only the pearl banks at Bahrein, and a moiety of the customs of Kong, of their factory at which place I have previously spoken.[2]

The alliance between Persia and the East India Company had no sooner succeeded in its object than the Persians began conveniently to forget the terms of their bargain, which were never carried out, and which were the cause of disputes that were protracted for many years.[3] The English did not get the castle; they only got half the ordnance; of the spoil their share did not amount to more than 20,000*l.*, of which 10,000*l.* went to the purse of James I., and 10,000*l.* to the Duke of Buckingham,[4] whilst their moiety of the customs of Gombrun was never fairly paid,[5] and dwindled in a few years from 40,000 to 1,000 *tomans*. As the factors plaintively remarked, 'Now we have

Persian *mala fides*

[1] The British force consisted of five vessels (the 'London,' 'Jonas,' 'Whale,' 'Dolphin,' and 'Lion') and four pinnaces (the 'Shilling,' 'Rose,' 'Robert,' and 'Richard'), under Captain Richard Blithe and Captain John Weddall. The Portuguese fleet consisted of 5 galleons and 15 or 20 frigates; their admiral, Don Ruy Frera d'Andrada, was taken prisoner at Kishm.

[2] The privileged position of the Portuguese at Kong only continued as long as they had a fleet in the Gulf strong enough to compel vessels to frequent that port. As their power declined, merchant vessels went elsewhere, and the Kong governor refused to pay the stipulated share of the customs. The Portuguese sent a fleet, and for a while the payment was compounded for 15,000 crowns a year. In 1711 it was stopped altogether.

[3] *State Papers*, vol. iii. Nos. 330, 388, 687. As early as August 1623 the factors presented a letter to Shah Abbas from James I., complaining of the *mala fides*.

[4] Assuming 100,000*l.* as the value of the various prizes taken by the forces of the Company in the Indian waters, the King and Buckingham, as Lord High Admiral, demanded one-tenth each (*State Papers*, East Indies, vol. iii. No. 303).

[5] Mandelslo, who was at Bunder Abbas in 1638, says: 'The English should by right receive one half of the customs, but they have hardly the tenth part allowed them, nay, they are obliged to take that little which they have in commodities' (*Travels into the Indies*, pp. 11–12).



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broke the ice, the Dutch find good fishing.' Malcolm speaks of the *dénouement* in terms of unaccustomed warmth :—

The English had, it is true, revenged themselves on an enemy they hated, destroyed a flourishing settlement, and brought ruin and misery upon thousands, to gratify the avarice and ambition of a despot, on his promising to enrich them by a favour, which they should have known was not likely to protect them, even during his life, from the violence and injustice of his officers, much less during that of his successors. The history of the English factory at Gombroon, from this date until it was finally abandoned, is one series of disgraces, of losses, of dangers, as that of every such establishment in a country like Persia must be. Had that nation either taken Ormuz for itself, or made a settlement on a more eligible island in the Gulf, it would have carried on its commerce to much greater advantage ; and its political influence, both in Persia and Arabia, would have remained unrivalled.[1]

Move to Bunder Abbas

The only immediate and practical result of the conquest, apart from the disappearance of the Portuguese, was that Gombrun received the name of Bunder Abbas, in honour of the victorious monarch, and that it became the headquarters, for a century from this date, of the foreign trade with the Persian Gulf. The English, French, and Dutch possessed factories there ;[2] two forts protected the town on the east and west, and, about the year 1650, it was surrounded by a wall on the land side. Chardin says that in his day the place contained 1,400 or 1,500 houses, a mixed population of Persians, Jews (50), and Indians, and that it was fronted by a quay more than a mile long. The English and Dutch factories were in the centre of the town as it then existed, which was a good deal to the west of the modern site ; but in 1698 the Dutch erected a new house on the eastern outskirts, which is the centre of the modern Bunder Abbas.

Nevertheless, small as had been the intrinsic recommendations of Ormuz as the site of a great city, and torrid as had been

[1] *History of Persia*, vol. i. cap. xii. Sir C. MacGregor (*Journey through Khorasan*, vol. i. p. 8) recommended a return from the mainland to Ormuz. But, seeing that the trade of Bunder Abbas is now a purely overland trade to the cities of central, southern, and north-eastern Persia, and that the mediæval trade route to Europe *viâ* Busrah, Baghdad, and Aleppo has ceased to exist, I can see no wisdom in a recommendation which would necessitate a double, instead of a single, shipment, and which would benefit nobody.

[2] The English alone possessed the privilege, in memory of their services against Ormuz, of flying their own flag on their agent's house.

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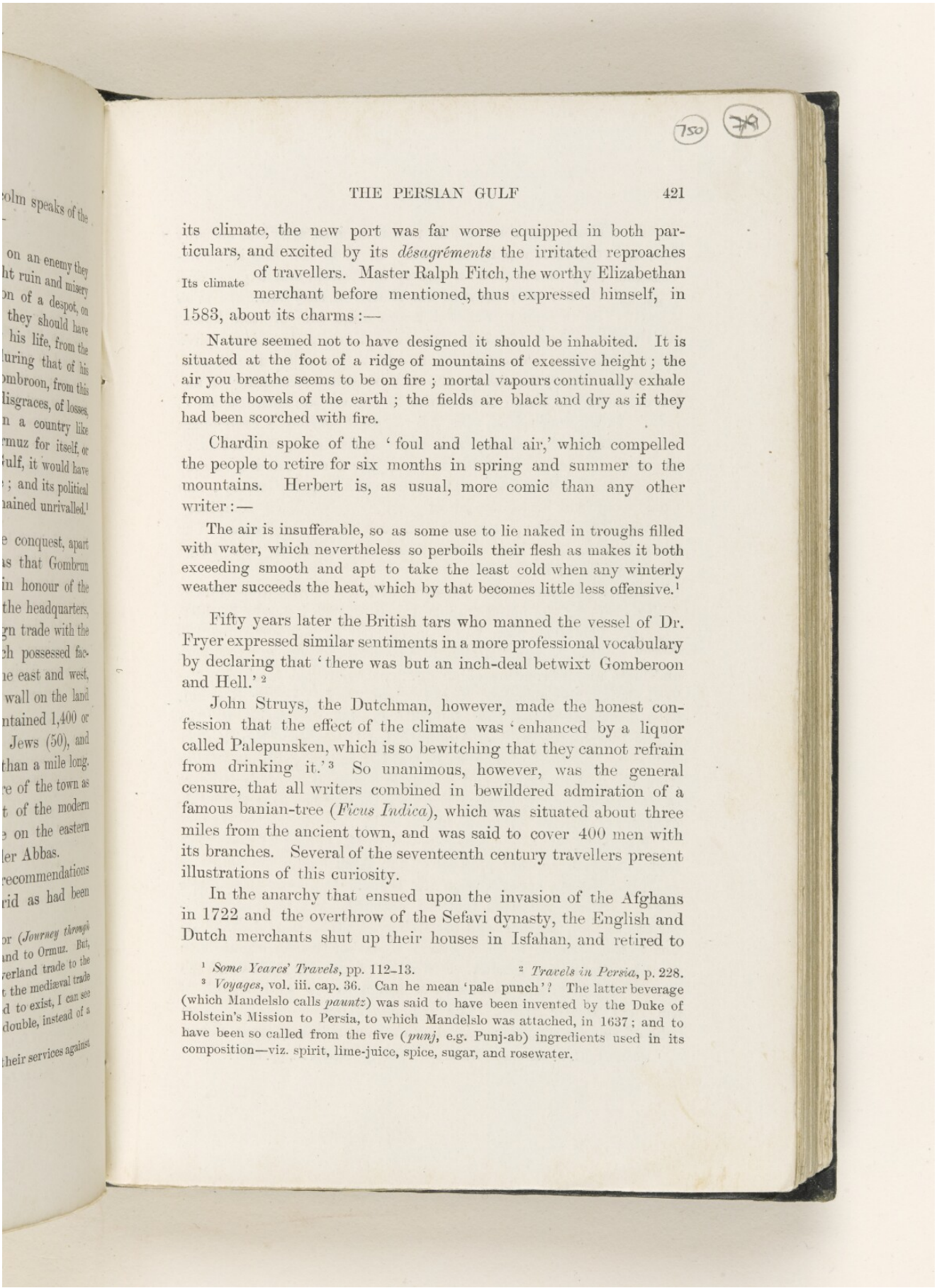



its climate, the new port was far worse equipped in both particulars, and excited by its *désagréments* the irritated reproaches of travellers. Master Ralph Fitch, the worthy Elizabethan merchant before mentioned, thus expressed himself, in 1583, about its charms :—

Its climate

Nature seemed not to have designed it should be inhabited. It is situated at the foot of a ridge of mountains of excessive height ; the air you breathe seems to be on fire ; mortal vapours continually exhale from the bowels of the earth ; the fields are black and dry as if they had been scorched with fire.

Chardin spoke of the 'foul and lethal air,' which compelled the people to retire for six months in spring and summer to the mountains. Herbert is, as usual, more comic than any other writer :—

The air is insufferable, so as some use to lie naked in troughs filled with water, which nevertheless so perboils their flesh as makes it both exceeding smooth and apt to take the least cold when any winterly weather succeeds the heat, which by that becomes little less offensive.[1]

Fifty years later the British tars who manned the vessel of Dr. Fryer expressed similar sentiments in a more professional vocabulary by declaring that 'there was but an inch-deal betwixt Gomberoon and Hell.'[2]

John Struys, the Dutchman, however, made the honest confession that the effect of the climate was 'enhanced by a liquor called Palepunsken, which is so bewitching that they cannot refrain from drinking it.'[3] So unanimous, however, was the general censure, that all writers combined in bewildered admiration of a famous banian-tree (*Ficus Indica*), which was situated about three miles from the ancient town, and was said to cover 400 men with its branches. Several of the seventeenth century travellers present illustrations of this curiosity.

In the anarchy that ensued upon the invasion of the Afghans in 1722 and the overthrow of the Sefavi dynasty, the English and Dutch merchants shut up their houses in Isfahan, and retired to

[1] *Some Yeares' Travels*, pp. 112–13. [2] *Travels in Persia*, p. 228.

[3] *Voyages*, vol. iii. cap. 36. Can he mean 'pale punch'? The latter beverage (which Mandelslo calls *pauntz*) was said to have been invented by the Duke of Holstein's Mission to Persia, to which Mandelslo was attached, in 1637 ; and to have been so called from the five (*punj*, e.g. Punj-ab) ingredients used in its composition—viz. spirit, lime-juice, spice, sugar, and rosewater.

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Bunder Abbas. But here, too, the prevailing insecurity was speedily felt, and commerce rapidly declined. In 1738 the English Com-

Collapse of the factory at Bunder Abbas

pany established an agency at Busrah, and a good deal of their Gulf business was shifted to that port. In 1750 Bartholomew Plaisted found nine out of ten houses at Bunder Abbas deserted. In 1758 Edward Ives still found there an English agent with five assistants, but said, 'The English and Dutch factory-houses are the only buildings remaining of any importance; the whole city besides is almost one entire scene of ruin.' In the succeeding year, the Comte d'Estaing, a Frenchman who had been released on *parole* from imprisonment at Madras, at the head of a fleet of four vessels flying the Dutch colours, entered the roadstead and attacked and captured the English factory; and from about this time, accordingly, may be dated the temporary cessation of the Company's establishment at Bunder Abbas. The latest records that have been preserved relating to this period bear the date 1763.

Almost simultaneously, however, with the retreat from Bunder Abbas occurred the foundation of a new English depôt at Bushire.

Removal to Bushire

The latter place had been selected by Nadir Shah as the site of a naval station, because of its proximity to Shiraz; and here, in confirmation of an agreement entered into with the local sheikh, the excellent Kerim Khan Zend (Vekil or Regent), by a document dated July 2, 1763,[1] granted permission to 'the Right Worshipful William Andrew Price, Governor of the English nation in the Gulf of Persia,' to build a factory, with exemption from all custom-duties, and a complete monopoly of the import of woollen cloths. Ever since that date Bushire has been the head-quarters of British commerce in the Gulf.

We next come to a curious episode in the history of these Gulf ports, in which another proprietor, the Arab Sultan or Imam of

Claims of Muscat

Muscat, appears upon the scene. It seems that Nadir Shah, conscious that his authority was somewhat precarious in these regions, and preferring a certain annual contribution to the revenue to an assertion of authority that might have provoked resistance, granted the district of Bunder Abbas and the islands of Kishm and Ormuz by a firman to the Arab sheikh of the Beni Maaini tribe. The subjects of one of his successors suffered so severely from misrule that in the last quarter of the

[1] Quoted by C. R. Markham, *History of Persia*, Appendix A., pp. 530-1.

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century they appealed for assistance to Sultan bin Ahmed, the powerful ruler of Muscat. Nothing loth, the Sultan appeared upon the scene, made himself master of the triple possession, and received a firman from the Persian Government, transferring to him in leasehold the port and dependencies of Bunder Abbas, i.e. a coast-strip nearly a hundred miles in length from Minau on the east to Khamir on the west. At the same time he remained in possession of Kishm and Ormuz,[1] which his successors always declared he had won by right of conquest from the Arabs, who had won them by a similar title from the Persians, whose suzerain claims accordingly were disputed by Muscat. The friendly terms which were consistently observed between the East India Company and the rulers of Oman enabled the former to negotiate a re-appearance at Bunder Abbas; and in 1798 a treaty was concluded between the two parties, Mahdi Ali Khan being the English signatory, which contained these words:—

In the port of Abassy (Gombroon) whenever the English shall be disposed to establish a factory, I have no objection to their fortifying the same, and mounting guns thereon as many as they list, and to 40 or 50 English gentlemen residing there with 700 or 800 English sepoys; and for the rest the rate of duties on goods on buying and selling will be on the same footing as at Bussora and Abushahr.[2]

I presume that the two smooth-bore brass guns, stamped with the royal crown of England, and the initials G. R. (Georgius Rex) surrounded by the motto, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense,' which I saw lying upon the pier at Bunder Abbas, were either presents to this faithful ally of the British Crown, or are reminiscences of the affirmative reply made by the Company to the above invitation.

From time to time the Persian Government, in moments of aggressiveness or elation, laid claim to the resumption of its possessions; but it was not till 1852 that, in the absence of Seyid Said of Muscat in his southern dominions at Zanzibar, they succeeded in ousting his deputy. The Sultan, returning in high dudgeon, despatched an expedition for the forcible recovery of the ports; but, meeting with little success, was obliged to conclude a new agreement upon much less favour-

Re-assertion of Persian authority

[1] In 1815 Morier found a garrison of 120 Nubian slaves and 80 Arabs, maintained by the Sultan of Muscat, at Ormuz, as a guard against the Jowasmi pirates.

[2] C. O. Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sunnuds relating to India and neighbouring Countries*, vol. vii. No. xxxii.

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able terms in 1855, his term of occupation being restricted to twenty years; the rent being raised from 6,000 to 16,000 *tomans* (7,600*l.*); and Persia plucking up courage to assert in the most emphatic terms her ownership of Kishm and Ormuz, as well as of the neighbouring land districts, 'that are all the very territories of the exalted government of Persia.'[1] The new arrangement continued in force until 1866, when, upon the assassination of Seyid Thoweyni of Muscat, the Persian Government seized the opportunity to instal as a Persian dependent the Arab governor under the late Sultan, who engaged to pay 20,000 *tomans* per annum. Presently, however, he declined to pay the increment; and the new Sultan, Seyid Selim, at the same time threatening to blockade Bunder Abbas unless the contract was at once rescinded, the Persians solicited the interference of the British Government, by whose offices the lease was renewed for another eight years from 1868, upon payment of 30,000 *tomans* a year, the progressive rise in rent indicating approximately the increasing prosperity of the revived Bunder Abbas. In the same year, however, the Sultan was expelled from Muscat by a successful revolt, and the Persian Government, taking advantage of a clause in the lease, allowing them to cancel the contract if a conqueror obtained possession of Muscat,[2] installed their own governor at Bunder Abbas, and have retained possession of the place ever since. In pursuance of the fussy policy which I have before described, Persian soldiers were stationed here in some numbers in 1888, where their presence was extremely distasteful to the Arab population. But the Government having recognised both its own mistake and the superfluity of the precaution, orders were issued in 1889 for their withdrawal.

The anchorage at Bunder Abbas is in four fathoms of water at a distance of at least two miles from the land.[3] There is a very

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii. Appendix III. Article ii. of this treaty contains an admission, quite engaging in its candour, of the sanctity of that method of procedure which I have previously described as so dear to the Persians. The distribution of the 16,000 *tomans* annual rent is there openly stated as follows: revenues, 12,500; *pishkesh* (i.e. present) for Prime Minister, 2,000; *pishkesh* for Governor-General of Fars, 1,000; present for Shuja-el-Mulk, 500.

[2] Aitchison, Appendix III., clause xii.

[3] Here, in full view of the shore—where, 'during two days' fight, Mr. Barker (the Factor) and the Sultan of Gombroon, sitting upon the houses, counted 16,000 shot, but in the greatest brunt the ordnance went off so fast that they could not tell them'—was fought a famous sea-fight on February 1, 3, and 14, 1624–5, between an English fleet of four vessels (the 'Royal James,' 'Jonas,' 'Star,' and 'Eagle'),

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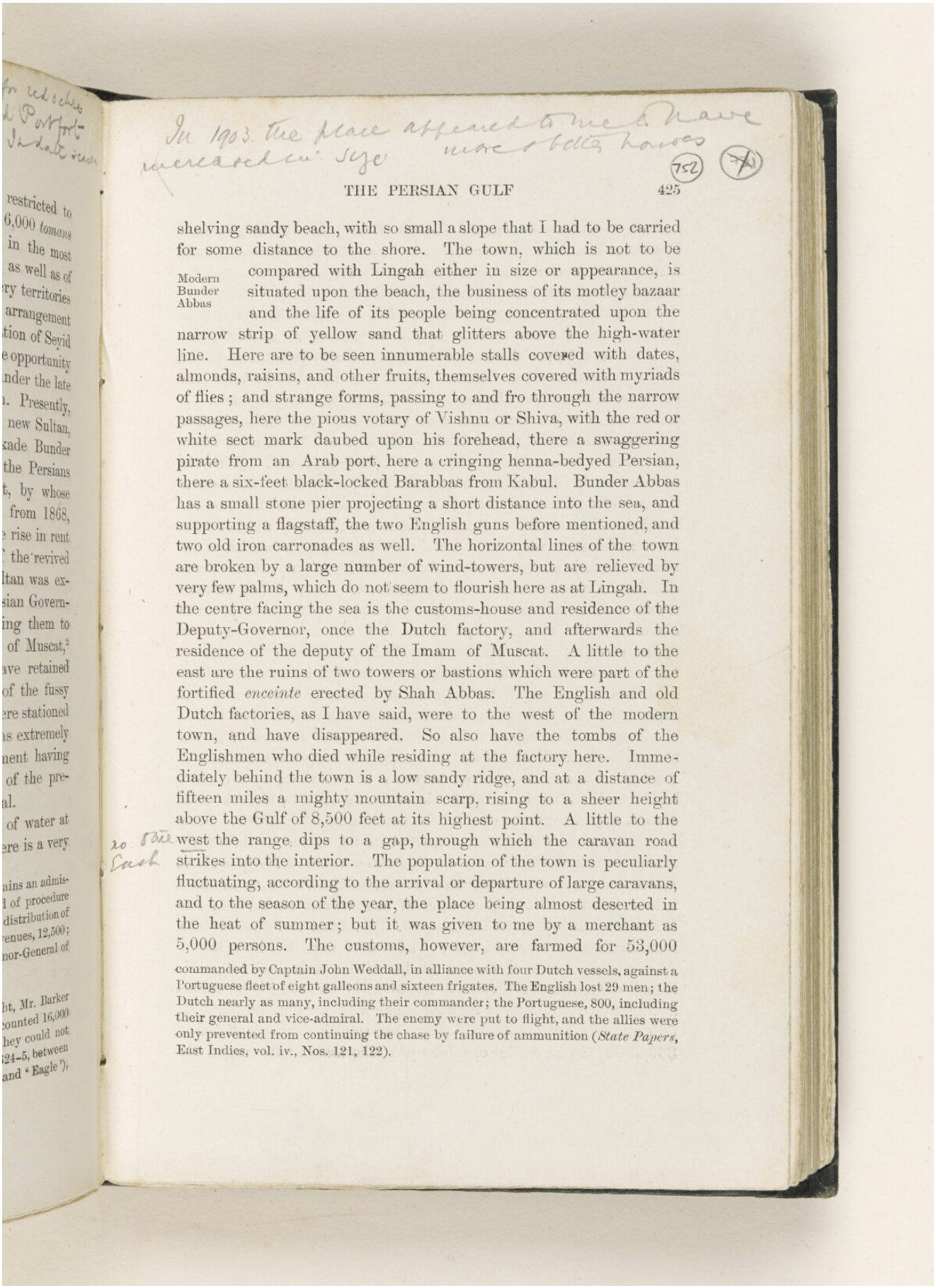



shelving sandy beach, with so small a slope that I had to be carried for some distance to the shore. The town, which is not to be compared with Lingah either in size or appearance, is situated upon the beach, the business of its motley bazaar and the life of its people being concentrated upon the narrow strip of yellow sand that glitters above the high-water line. Here are to be seen innumerable stalls covered with dates, almonds, raisins, and other fruits, themselves covered with myriads of flies; and strange forms, passing to and fro through the narrow passages, here the pious votary of Vishnu or Shiva, with the red or white sect mark daubed upon his forehead, there a swaggering pirate from an Arab port, here a cringing henna-bedyed Persian, there a six-feet black-locked Barabbas from Kabul. Bunder Abbas has a small stone pier projecting a short distance into the sea, and supporting a flagstaff, the two English guns before mentioned, and two old iron carronades as well. The horizontal lines of the town are broken by a large number of wind-towers, but are relieved by very few palms, which do not seem to flourish here as at Lingah. In the centre facing the sea is the customs-house and residence of the Deputy-Governor, once the Dutch factory, and afterwards the residence of the deputy of the Imam of Muscat. A little to the east are the ruins of two towers or bastions which were part of the fortified *enceinte* erected by Shah Abbas. The English and old Dutch factories, as I have said, were to the west of the modern town, and have disappeared. So also have the tombs of the Englishmen who died while residing at the factory here. Immediately behind the town is a low sandy ridge, and at a distance of fifteen miles a mighty mountain scarp, rising to a sheer height above the Gulf of 8,500 feet at its highest point. A little to the west the range dips to a gap, through which the caravan road strikes into the interior. The population of the town is peculiarly fluctuating, according to the arrival or departure of large caravans, and to the season of the year, the place being almost deserted in the heat of summer; but it was given to me by a merchant as 5,000 persons. The customs, however, are farmed for 53,000

Modern Bunder Abbas

commanded by Captain John Weddall, in alliance with four Dutch vessels, against a Portuguese fleet of eight galleons and sixteen frigates. The English lost 29 men; the Dutch nearly as many, including their commander; the Portuguese, 800, including their general and vice-admiral. The enemy were put to flight, and the allies were only prevented from continuing the chase by failure of ammunition (*State Papers*, East Indies, vol. iv., Nos. 121, 122).

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*tomans*, as compared with the 12,000 of Lingah, a difference that illustrates the relative part played by the two places in the import and export trade with the interior. The revenues of the Bunder Abbas district are 30,000 *tomans*.

In the days of the Sefavi kings, when the northern avenues of access to Persia were barred by hostile nations or robber tribes, and before the Bushire-Shiraz line of communication had been opened, Bunder Abbas was the main, almost the sole port of Iran, and absorbed the bulk of its foreign trade. A well-worn caravan track led from thence, *viâ* Lar and Shiraz, to Isfahan, and has been described by Tavernier, Chardin, Le Brun, and other seventeenth or eighteenth century writers. With the opening of the Bushire route from the Gulf, of the Baghdad route to the western provinces, and of the Tabriz and Enzeli routes on the north, the importance of Bunder Abbas has naturally much diminished; and its trade is now restricted to the eastern portion of the Shah's dominions, and in some slight measure to the neighbouring districts of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Three main caravan tracks now strike into the interior from this port, single as far as Kerman, but trifurcating from there (1) to the important manufacturing centre of Yezd, and thence to Kashan, and finally Teheran—a total distance of 920 miles from the Gulf; (2) *viâ* Birjand and Turbat-i-Haideri to Meshed; (3) *viâ* Birjand and Yezdun to Herat and Kabul. Upon the first of these routes is conveyed the export and import trade of Kerman and Yezd, which I have elsewhere discussed; by the second are carried the tea and indigo which supply the bazaars of Meshed, and are re-exported to those of Bokhara; by the third had travelled the long-haired, loose-trousered desperadoes from Kabul, whom I encountered on the beach at Bunder Abbas. From Bunder Abbas in 1889 were exported 1,800 chests of opium for Hong Kong and China, with an estimated value of 70*l.* per chest, 1,300 tons of raw cotton valued at 33,000*l.*, 6,700 tons of dates valued at 20,000*l.*, 16,000 tons of salt valued at 2,700*l.*, and 1,000 tons of wool valued at 27,000*l.* The total value of exports, including specie, was 344,000*l.* There were imported into Bunder Abbas 9,000 bales of cotton goods, with a value of 156,000*l.*, thread and twist to the value of 24,000*l.*, 175 tons of indigo valued at 23,000*l.*, 1,400 tons of crushed sugar with a value of 25,000*l.*, 600 tons of tea valued at 69,000*l.* The total imports amounted to 360,000*l.* In an earlier chapter upon Khorasan I have urged the

Trade

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adoption of measures for the greater security and convenience of this most important trade avenue into Persia.

Minau

Some fifty miles to the east of Bunder Abbas the river Minau (*lit.* muddy water) flows into the sea, past a town and fort of that name, containing some old Portuguese guns, situated on a hill about fifteen miles inland. Native craft run up and down a creek communicating with the sea, and do a trade in grain and dried fruits, the customs of the port, called Sif, being farmed for the comparatively large figure of 3,500 *tomans*. Minau, with its shady palm-groves, is the summer retreat of the parboiled citizens of Ormuz and Bunder Abbas, and has elicited by its picturesque and reposeful scenery the encomiums of such travellers as have passed over the fiery surrounding deserts. The river on which it stands is identified with the Anamis of Arrian, where Nearchus put in on the eighteenth day after leaving the Indus, and hauled up his ships on shore for repair, while he marched inland himself and visited the camp of Alexander. Here we take leave of the Persian Gulf, and passing through the straits of Ormuz, round the gloomy basaltic peaks of Cape Musandim, emerge into the Indian Ocean.

Jask

The next calling-point of the steamer is the promontory of Jask (Ras Jashak, sometimes written Jasques), 130 miles from Bunder Abbas. So far as I can ascertain, Jask is the site of the first mercantile settlement made by the East India Company on Persian soil. In 1616, in pursuit of the advice of Mr. Richard Steele, who in 1615 had journeyed through Persia, the directors sent a ship from Surat to Jask 'to make the first offer of a residence, and to get a kind of a possession.'[1] This vessel, the 'James,' commanded by Alexander Childe, took out Edward Connock, the first agent of the company in Persia, who, in his reports to the board of directors, spoke favourably of his reception by the local governor, living at Mogustan, and of the prospects of trade.[2] Childe wrote of Jask: 'It is the worthiest place for fish in all the Indies,'[3] a reputation, I may add, which it still retains. On December 17, 1620, occurred an indecisive

[1] *Vide* letter from Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from James I. to Jehangir, the Great Mogul. Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. iv. cap. 17. Sir T. Roe himself earnestly dissuaded the venture (*Calendar of State Papers*, East Indies, vol. i., No. 1176).

[2] *State Papers*, vol. i., Nos. 1179, 1181, 1182, 1186, 1188.

[3] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. v. Ap. II.

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conflict between a Portuguese fleet, that was blockading Jask, and four English vessels[1] off Cape Jask, which on being renewed on December 28, resulted in the defeat of the Portuguese, but also in the death of the English commander, Andrew Shilling, who, being slain in the engagement, was buried at Jask. After the battle the English ships 'despatched their businesse at Jasques.'[2] The result of this successful engagement, and of the growing friendly relations between the English and Persian courts, was that in 1619 the East India Company founded their first Persian factory and erected a fort at Jask. I incline to the opinion that when, three years later, they obtained so much better a position at Bunder Abbas, they must have vacated this station.

Jask possesses a very different modern interest, as the point of convergence of the land and marine wires of the Indo-European Telegraph Department between India and the Gulf. Here the duplicate indiarubber and gutta-percha cable from Bushire, a distance of 499 miles, comes up from the sea; and its place is henceforward taken by a double overland wire to Kurrachi, a distance of 684 miles. A single submarine gutta-percha cable is, however, also continued to Kurrachi, and forms a section of the through cable line from Kurrachi to Fao. Originally the cable was laid from Gwadur to Cape Musandim, but in consequence of the abominable climate there encountered and of other reasons, it was shifted in 1869 to Jask and Henjam. The telegraph station and a few buildings surrounding it are situated at the extremity of a low spit of land or cape projecting into the sea; the native village and fort of Jask, now in ruins, being ~~ten~~ miles to the north, at a distance of one mile and a half from the shore.

Indo-European Telegraph

When the Indian naval station was withdrawn in 1879 from Basiduh (Bassadore) on Kishm Island, the company of sepoys, 100 strong, who had been posted there, was moved to Jask, and barracks were erected by the Indian Government for their accommodation. At that time the promontory of Jask was unoccupied, save by the English telegraph station, and its ownership was not strictly determined, the tribes along the coast and in the interior being Beluchis, who claimed independence, and the Persian authority being as yet precariously

Indian military station

[1] They were the 'London,' 'Hart,' 'Roebuck,' and 'Eagle.' W. Baffin, who was killed at Kishm a little more than a year later, sailed in this fleet, which left Gravesend in February 1619.

[2] *Ibid.*, lib. v. cap. 16.

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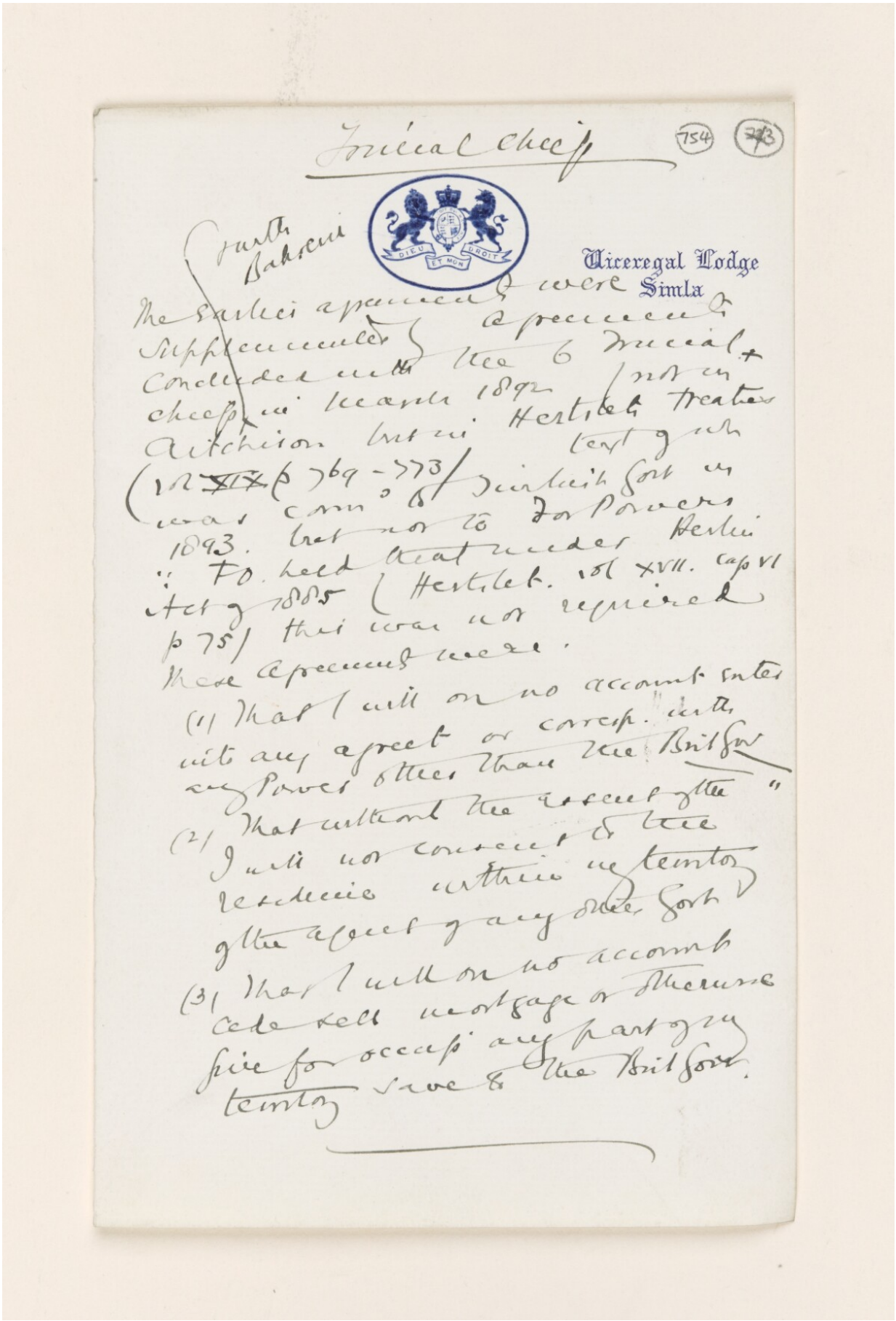

Trucial chiefs (754) (773)

Gulf Bahrein

Viceregal Lodge
Simla

The earlier agreements were supplemented by agreements concluded with the 6 Trucial chiefs in March 1892 (not in Aitchison but in Hertslet Treaties (vol ~~XIX~~ p 769-773) text of which was comm° to Turkish Govt in 1893. but not to Foreign Powers. F.O. held that under Hertslet Act of 1885 (Hertslet. vol XVII. cap VI p 75) this was not required. These agreements were.

(1) That I will on no account enter into any agreet or corresp. with any Power other than the Brit Govt

(2) That without the assent of the I will not consent to the residence within my territory of the agent of any other Govt

(3) That I will on no account cede sell mortgage or otherwise give for occup any part of my territory save to the Brit Govt.

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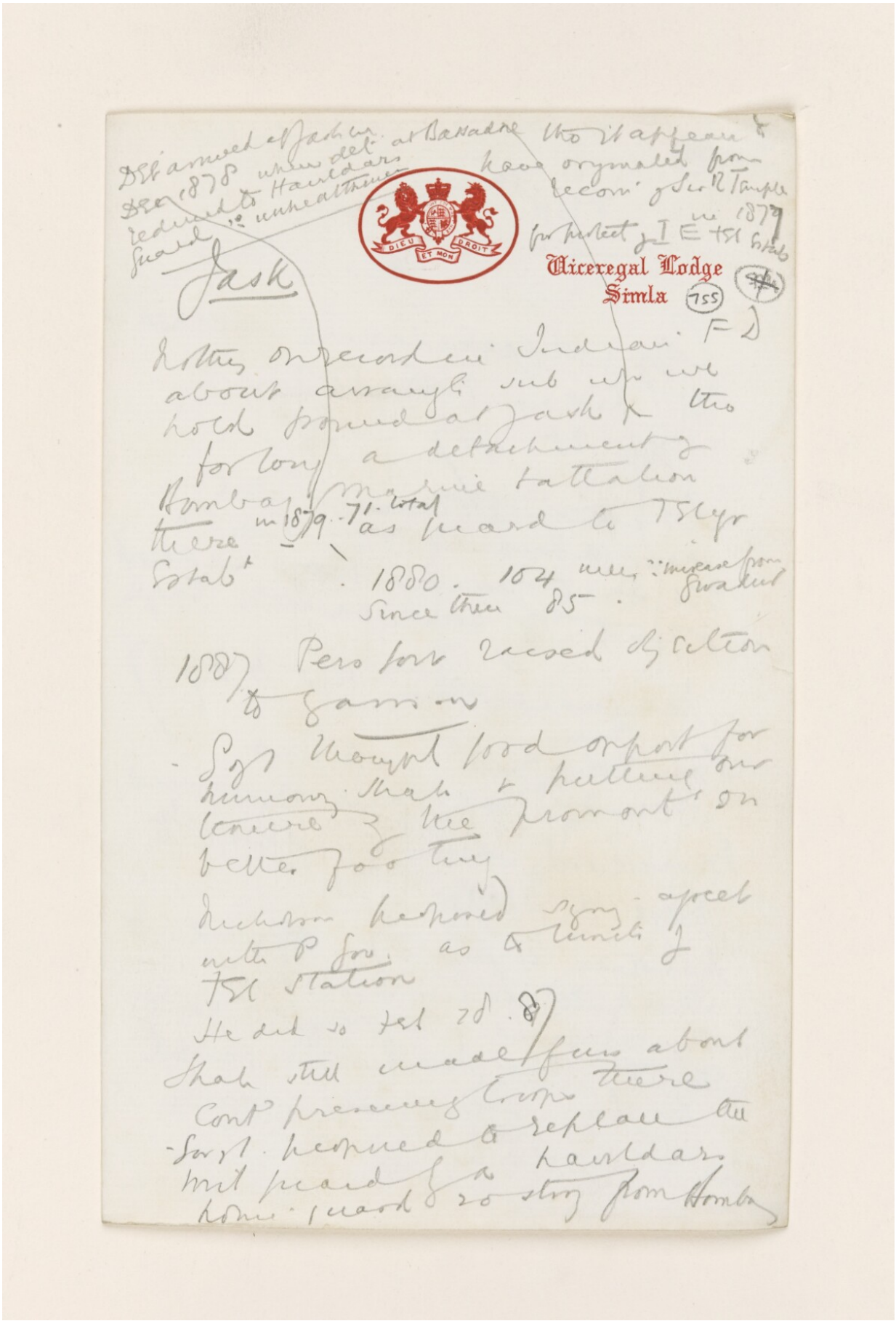


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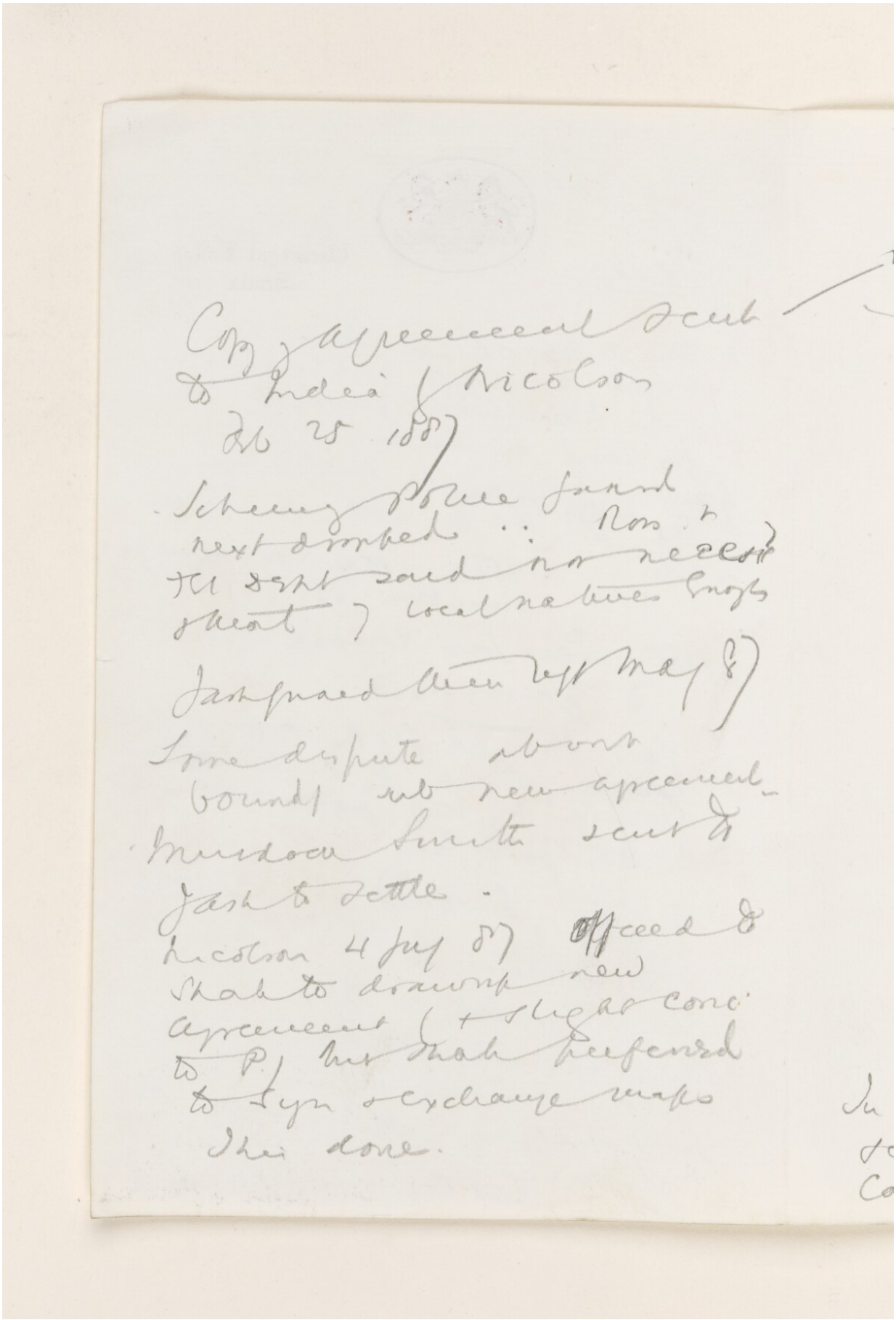

Copy of agreement sent
to India by Nicolson
Feb 25 1887

Scheme Police found
next dropped ∴ Ross &
Tel Dept said not necessary
& that 7 local natives enough

Jask guard then left May 87

Some dispute about
bounds into new agreement.
Murdoch Smith sent to
Jask to settle.
Nicolson 4 July 87 offered to
Shah to draw up new
agreement (+ slight conc
to P.) but Shah preferred
to syn & exchange maps
This done.

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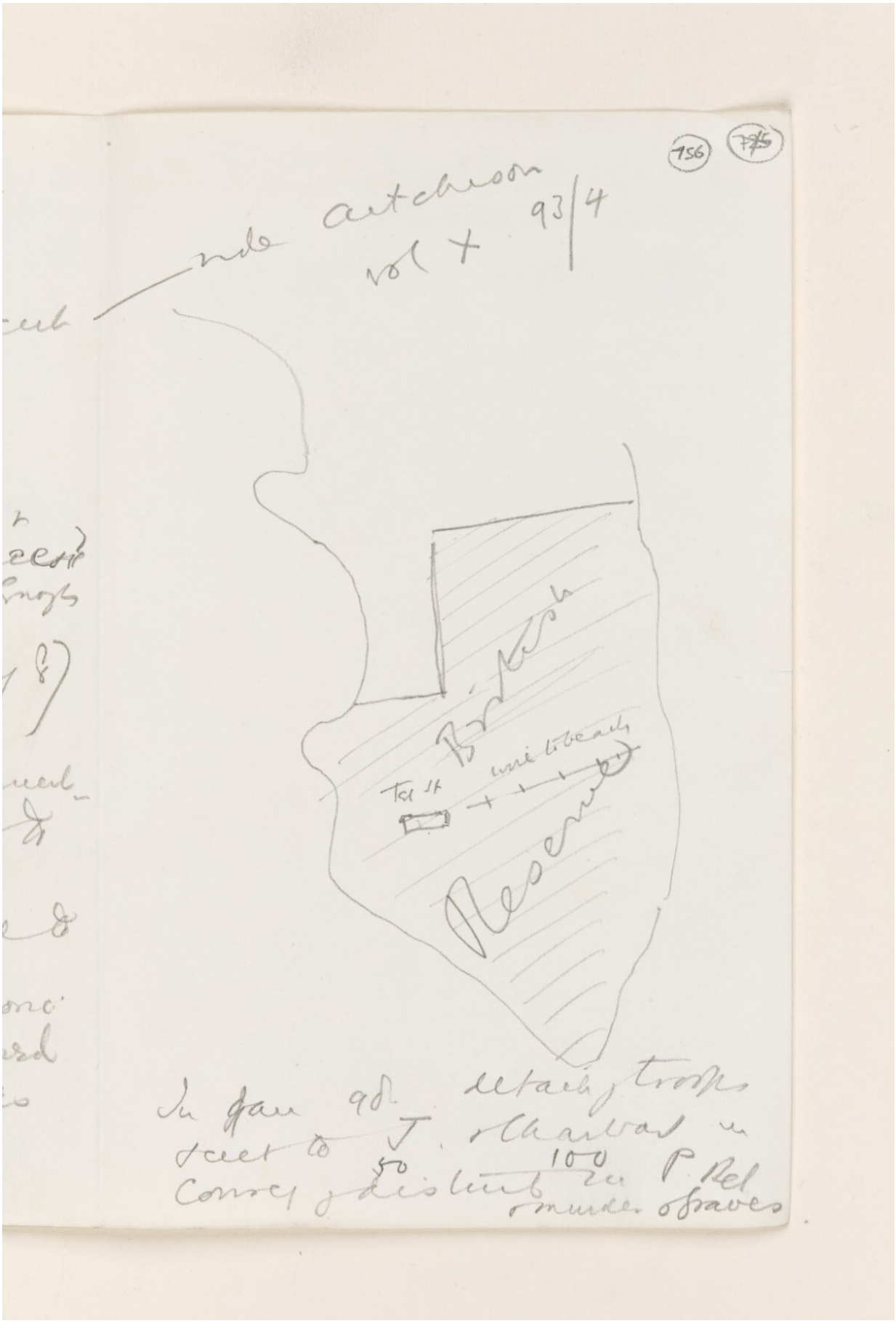

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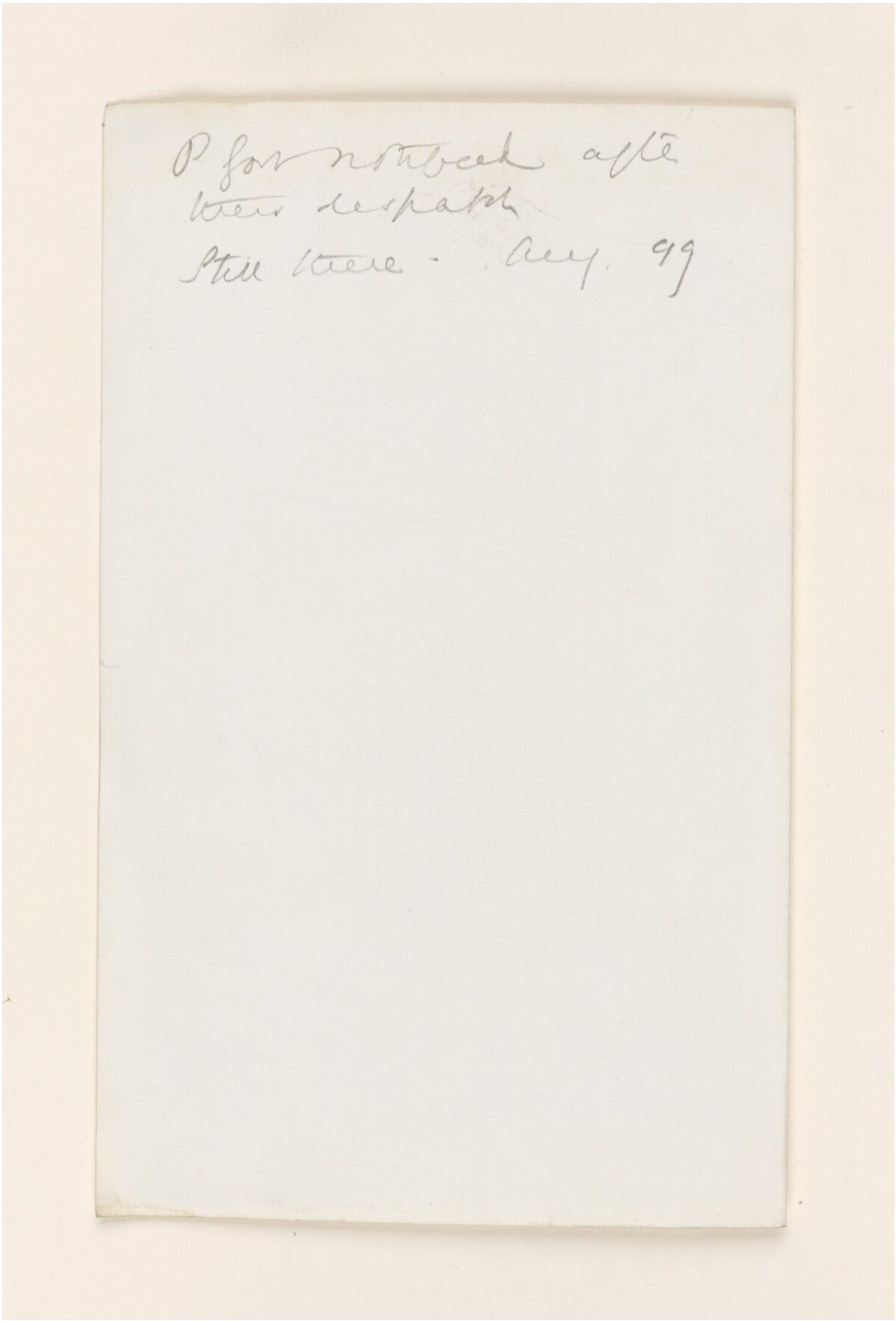


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established in those parts. When the telegraph station had been first opened at Jask in 1869, the cape was a barren piece of sand to which no claimant turned a thought. This tiny military settlement remained unnoticed and unobjected to until 1886, when the Persian Government, hearing that a small trade had sprung up since the arrival of the English, sent an agent to establish a custom-house. This individual detected an opportunity of personal distinction which was not to be missed. In a highly-coloured report, he represented the English as exercising sovereign rights upon Persian territory, and acquiring undue political influence over the Beluchi tribes (the village sheikh received a few rupees a year for the preservation of the wire running through the district); and himself as having by valiant measures restored seventeen townships to the Persian allegiance. He received his decoration, and subsided into satisfied obscurity. The two local sheikhs, however, who were quite innocent of anything in the nature of a conspiracy, were carried off in chains, and were only released after a long imprisonment. Meanwhile the Shah appealed to the Indian Government to withdraw the sepoys. Under similar conditions Russia would doubtless have replied, *J'y suis, j'y reste*. The Viceroy, however, respecting the susceptibilities of the Shah, and having no further need for the service of land-troops since the police of the Gulf is now so well assured, withdrew the detachment, and the quarters which they occupied at Jask are now empty.

Modern Jask

In their place has been built a square fort, which I found tenanted by a Persian deputy-governor, subordinate to the Saad-el-Mulk, with a guard of forty soldiers commanded by a corporal. He has no *raison d'être* except to assert Persian sovereignty over the strip of soil on which he is located, and to overawe the tribes in the interior by the display of his dingy bodyguard. The Persian authority here, as elsewhere along this coast, is cordially detested by the local tribes, who have been accustomed to a life of independence, and who resent the appearance of the tax-collector and the *serbaz*, as the death-warrant of their old freedom. On shore, the British telegraph station and its surroundings, where there is a staff of six English officials, and in front of which the British ensign floats from a flagstaff, betray that neat and orderly appearance which may everywhere be associated with an English habitation, from Plymouth to Yokohama. Some trees have been planted, a fresh-water tank has been constructed, a little garden laid

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out, and a lawn-tennis court marked on the level clay. The British India Company's flag flies above the hut occupied by its agent; and a double row of huts accommodate the native *employés* of the various establishments. Such, and no more, is Jask: almost the only trade being in fish, of which an immense number—somewhat like whitebait—are caught at certain seasons of the year, and are shipped across to the Arab coast, where they are utilised sometimes as food, more commonly as manure for the date-palms. The customs are farmed for the modest sum of 500 *tomans*. At a distance of ~~twenty~~ eleven miles inland, a remarkable conical hill, called by the natives Jebel Bahmedi, rises to a height of 3,100 feet above the sea.

From Jask the steamer, as a rule, crosses to Muscat on the opposite coast of Oman, a distance of 133 miles. But before passing from Persia proper to a discussion of its *vis-à-vis* neighbours on the other side of the Gulf, let me complete my survey of the Persian littoral as far as the eastern frontier. From Jask, eastwards, the coast line is of a sullen mountainous character, and would seem to be wholly deserted by human habitation. We approach here the district commonly designated as the Mekran coast, though since Sir F. Goldsmid's able determination of the boundaries in 1871, it has been divided into the territories of Persian Beluchistan, terminating at Gwetter, and further east of Independent Beluchistan. In my chapter upon the South-eastern Provinces of Persia, I have described the state of affairs in Persian Beluchistan, and have shown how reluctantly there, as elsewhere, the indigenous population have submitted to Persian bayonets; although such are their weakness and destitution, that resistance becomes hopeless, and the mere appearance of the 'Persepolis' with its four Krupp guns off the coast throws its scanty inhabitants into paroxysms of dread.

Mekran coast

Immediately beyond Gwetter is a strip of seaboard, about fifty miles in length, belonging to the Khan of Kelat, but separated from the remainder of the Beluch territory by a further and smaller strip, which has for 100 years been in the undisputed possession of the Sultan of Muscat. The latter consists merely of a few miles of coast, dependent upon the town of Gwadur,[1]

Gwadur

[1] The Beluchi Gwadur is the same name as Badara or Vadara, which occurs in the Ptolemaic Pinax, in Orthagoras, and in Arrian, and is either a Dravidian name, or of Aryan origin, in which case it might be derived from the Sanskrit *vadara* the cotton-plant, or *badara* the *Zizyphus* or jujube-tree.

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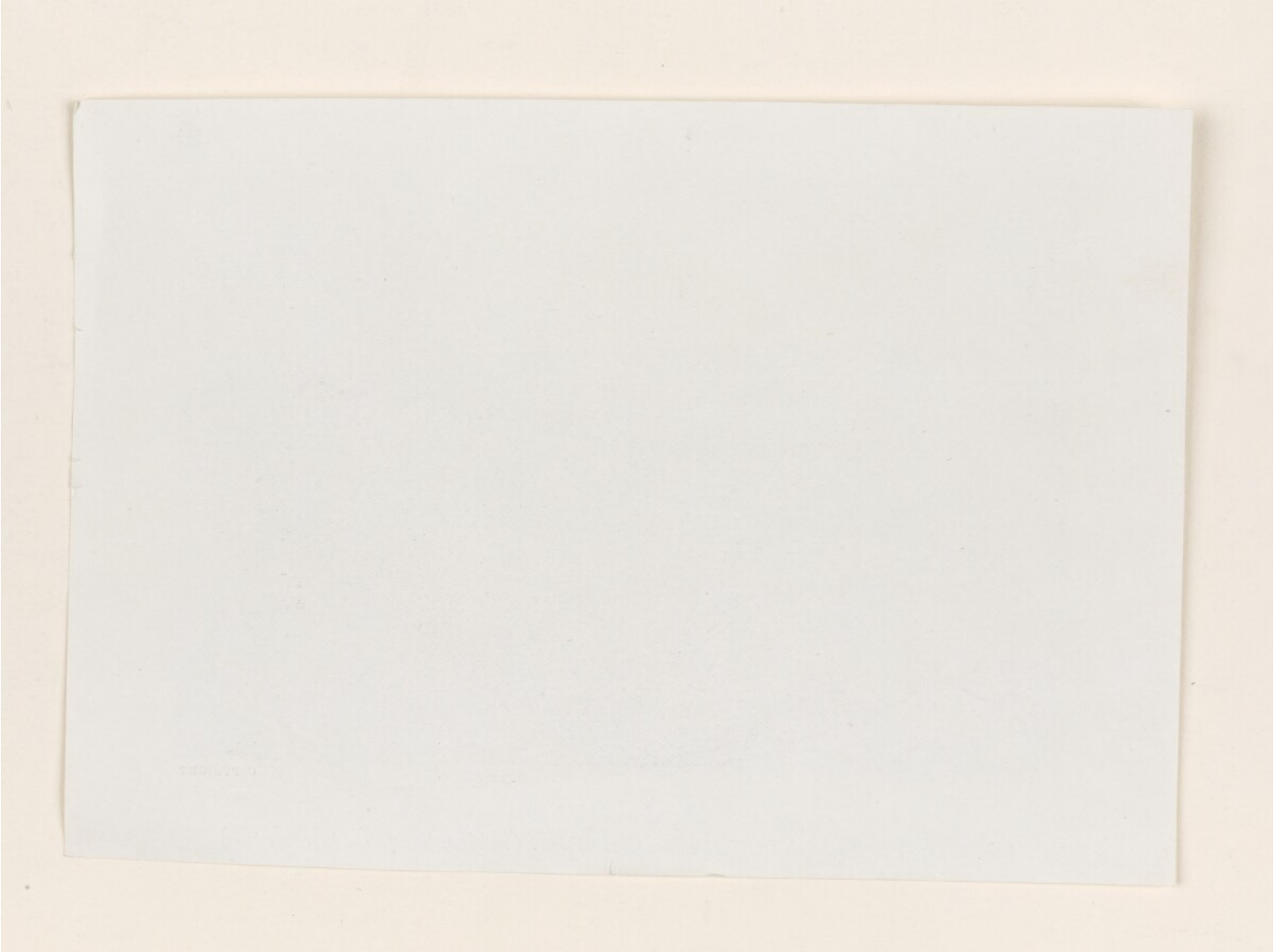
*Gwādar Station.*

*(From a Photograph in the possession of H. Gabler, Esq. I. E. T. D.)*



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the Muscat frontier being at the tiny village or fort of Pishkan, a few miles to the west of that port. Gwadur is also a station of the Indo-European Telegraph, and is sometimes spoken of as the possible maritime terminus of a railway line from Seistan, or British Beluchistan. The town is quaintly and even picturesquely situated on a long and low spit of sand, projecting into the sea, and narrowing to an apex, not more than half a mile in width, between two bays. Upon this low neck of land is built the port of Gwadur, with a population of about 4,000, and a trade in wool and cotton from the interior, and in fish from the coast. On the southern side, and immediately below the town, which is not at first visible from the sea, the narrow spit suddenly bulges into a rocky promontory, from 100 to 300 feet in height, the latitudinal section of which is perhaps six miles in length, and which, presenting its broad face to the sea, is exactly like the head of a hammer into which the haft is fitted at the point where is built the town. The anchorage is in 3½ fathoms of water, at about three miles from the shore, along which a nasty surf is heard booming. Gwadur was once one of the most popular stations of the Telegraph Line, and was regarded as the *sanitarium* of the Gulf ports, the temperature being very equable, and existence quite endurable even in the summer months. From some unknown cause, however, attributed by some to the sea-water, which is here so strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen that the fish are often killed in great numbers—a malarial fever has developed itself, which attacks every new-comer; and the place is now as much shunned as it was once sought. Till a few years ago, Gwadur was also the residence of a British political agent. But the increasing unhealthiness of the spot has led to the abandonment of the agent's bungalow as a permanent residence, and the political work along the Mekran coast is now discharged by an officer who pays an occasional visit in the course of a tour of inspection. It is highly probable that the climatic conditions may also lead to the abandonment of the telegraph station, which appears not to be essential to the efficient working of the line.

Upon the eastern side of the Gwadur Bay, where the spit joins the mainland, a stately cliff, called Jebel Mahdi, rises sheer from the sea to a height of 1,360 feet, its cloven summit being shaped at one point into two projections, that have procured for it from the compilers of the old charts the expressive title of the Asses' Ears. A neighbouring rock is known as the

Coast scenery

Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [759v] (1535/1814)



Cathedral Rock, from its fantastic natural outline of pinnacles and spires; and the entire coast line is here so strangely fretted and moulded by nature, that we are reminded of Scott's description in the 'Lady of the Lake':—

> Their rocky summits split and rent
> Form'd turret, dome, and battlement,
> Or seem'd fantastically set
> With cupola or minaret,
> Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
> Or mosque of Eastern architect.

History

Traces either of Portuguese or of some foreign occupation are visible at Gwadur, in the ruins of a vast reservoir on the flank of the hill overlooking the town; while a rude archaic rampart dominates the same elevation. Nor is it altogether unknown in English history. For here it was that, in 1613, Sir Robert Sherley, returning from his embassy on behalf of the King of Persia to the Christian powers of Europe, in the good ship 'Expedition' (Captain Christopher Newport), and proposing to march overland to Isfahan, narrowly escaped a plot to murder both himself and the whole ship's crew, that had been formed by the 'Viceroy of Guader or Godel,' who is elsewhere described as 'a revolted duke from the Persians.'[1] The port and district are now governed by a Vali, or deputy of the Sultan of Muscat. The circumstances under which the latter potentate became possessed of the place occurred at the end of the last century, when a free gift of Gwadur and its surroundings, as well as of Chahbar, was made by Nasir Khan, the ruler of Kelat, to Seyid Sultan bin Ahmed, of Oman, who had retired from Muscat to the Beluch coast, after an unsuccessful attempt to oust his elder brother, Seyid Said. From that period the place was ruled by deputies of the reigning Sultan, until in 1871 Abdul Aziz, the younger brother of the late Sultan, with whom he was perpetually at war, on the occasion of one of his numerous exiles, installed himself at Gwadur and seized Chahbar, which had lately been occupied by local chieftains. The Persians, delighted at an opportunity of asserting their authority over Chahbar, expelled Abdul Aziz, who was also turned out of Gwadur by his brother; and the latter port has since remained in possession of the reigning

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. iv. cap. 10.

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Sultan. From the small Gwadur district he derives an annual revenue of about 2,000*l.*

I have now completed the survey of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf, and have exhibited the Persian Government as exercising along its shores and over its islands a more extended and emphatic authority than at almost any previous epoch during the last 300 years. This authority is only enforced at the cost of a good deal of discontent, the result of corruption, misgovernment, and oppression; but it is not likely to be seriously disputed in the future, owing to the want of cohesion among the subject races, and to their inability to make any stand even against Persian regulars. The Oriental, moreover, is familiar from long experience with old orders yielding place to new, while his creed disposes him to a placid acceptance of the doctrine that God fulfils himself in many ways. He shrugs his shoulders and submits; it is only in cases of outrageous provocation that he actually rebels. Though it is upon the opposite coast of the Gulf that the responsibility of the British Government as guardian of the peace is chiefly called into action, yet disputes seldom occur, even on the northern side, in which the friendly offices of the British Resident at Bushire are not appealed to on one side or the other; and he is thereby enabled to exercise an influence which is both honourable to the nation that he represents and useful to the power to whom he is accredited.

Survey

In crossing to the Arab coast of Muscat, the mention of the internal politics and domestic broils of the reigning family of Oman, which the description of Gwadur has elicited, leads me to preface my account of that coast and its capital by a brief *résumé* of the recent history of this still independent Arab kingdom.[1] The Portuguese, in the eastward

History of Oman

[1] I have compiled the following brief bibliography of Oman: C. Dellon, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, 2 vols., 1685; E. C. Ross, 'Annals of Oman,' *Journ. of As. Soc. of Bengal*, vol. xliii.; C. Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 1784; *Travels through Arabia*, 2 vols., 1792; Vicenzo, *History of Seyd Said of Muscat*, &c., translated by Sheikh Mansur, 1819; Major D. Price, *History of Arabia*, 1824; A. Crichton, *History of Arabia*, 2 vols., 1830; Lieutenant J. R. Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, 2 vols., 1838; A. Cole, *Journal of Bombay Geog. Soc.*, 1847; Rev. C. Forster, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 2 vols., 1844; A. Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'Histoire des Arabes*, 3 vols., 1847–8; *Selection from Records of Bombay Government*, No. 24, 1856; Salil ibn Razik, *History of the Imams and Seyids of Oman*, A.D. 661–1856, translated by Rev. G. P. Badger (Hakluyt Society), 1870; A.

outflow of their mercantile enterprise towards the Persian Gulf, did not confine their attention to its northern shore. On its way to Ormuz, in 1506, a naval squadron, under the redoubtable Albuquerque, appeared off the Arab shores of Oman, bombarded or demanded immediate submission from every port encountered, and presently anchored off the capital town Muscat, situated in a land-locked cove, at a distance of about 300 miles down the coast from Cape Musandim, and at less than half that distance from the opposite Persian shore.[1] The inhabitants of Muscat, who professed themselves subjects of the King of Ormuz, at first temporised, but, thinking that the quality of the great admiral's soldiers was probably not better than that of his guns, which were far from first rate, then ventured upon an ill-judged resistance. Albuquerque had no mercy. He landed his troops; the miserable defences were carried by storm; and the town, as a punishment for its contumacy, was given to the flames. From that time till 1650, the Portuguese remained in constant, though not undisputed possession of Muscat.[2] In the latter year the Arabs, recovering their strength, succeeded in ousting the intruder, whose prestige was now universally on the decline; after which they overran the shores of the Persian Gulf, scoured the seas with their buccaneering craft, established a foothold as far south as Zanzibar, and so terrified the King of Persia, that he made an offer to the English East India Company to give them the same privileges at Muscat as at Bunder Abbas, if they would co-operate with him in the reduction of the pirate stronghold. The Company, having at that time neither troops nor ships to spare for the operation, returned an indecisive answer. The Arabs now became very powerful; but in the second quarter of the eighteenth century were cowed into temporary submission by the iron hand of Nadir

Sprenger, *Die alte Geographie Arabiens*, 1875; Major Mockler and Colonel S. B. Miles, *Administration Report of Persian Gulf*, 1882, 1883.

[1] Prior to the appearance of the Portuguese, Oman had been governed for a period of nearly 900 years by a succession of independent rulers, entitled Imam, who owed their elevation to the popular choice, irrespective of family descent. This system continued down to the time of Nasir bin Murshid (1618–1644 A.D.), after whom the succession was vested in a single ruling family.

[2] In 1546 Muscat was bombarded by the Turks. In 1552 a powerful Turkish fleet under Piri Pasha anchored in the bay, and, after a protracted siege, took the town. In 1580 Muscat was taken and sacked by an Arab expedition from Aden under Mir Ali Beg. But after each of these vicissitudes the Portuguese either remained or returned.

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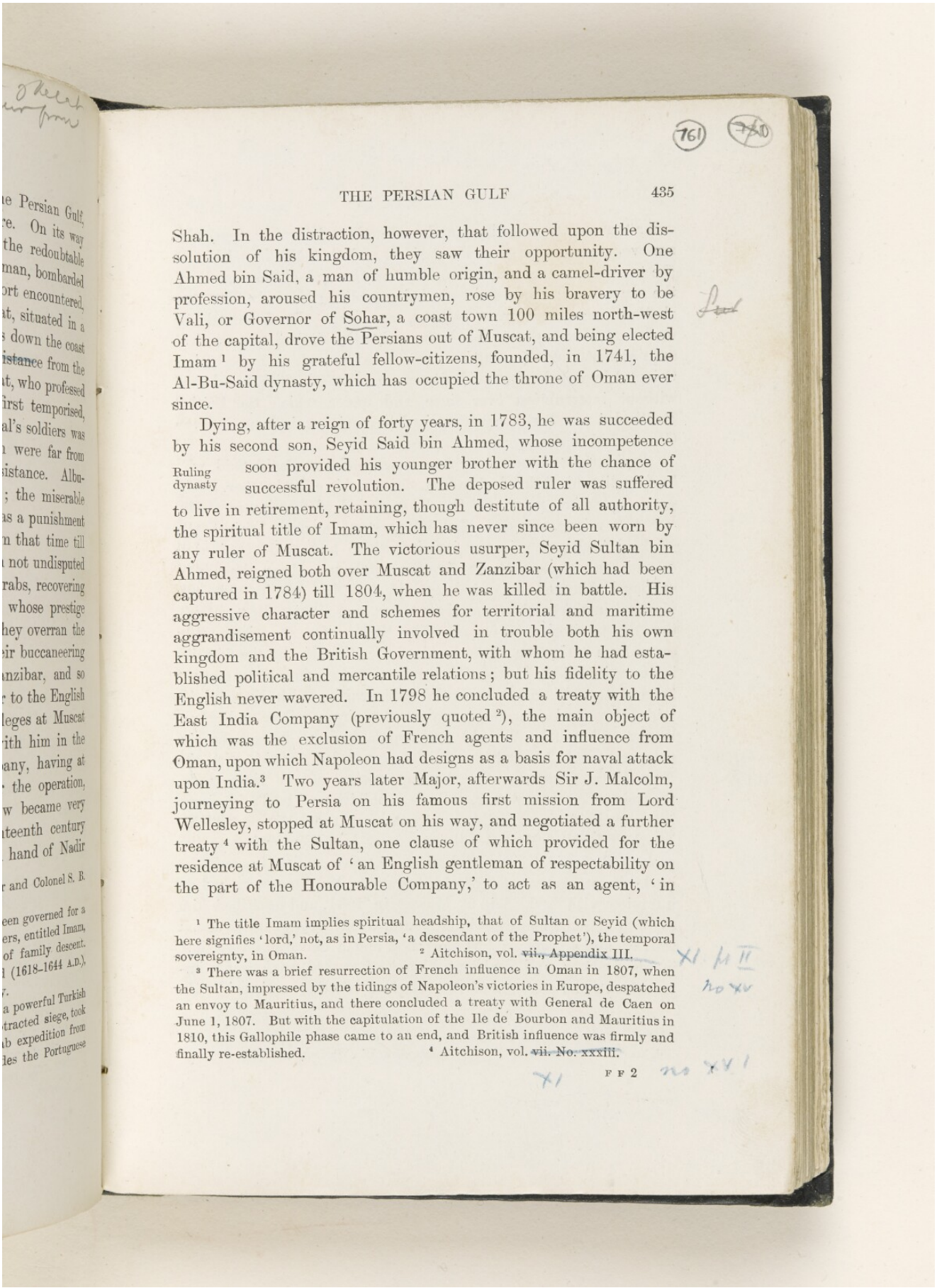



Shah. In the distraction, however, that followed upon the dissolution of his kingdom, they saw their opportunity. One Ahmed bin Said, a man of humble origin, and a camel-driver by profession, aroused his countrymen, rose by his bravery to be Vali, or Governor of Sohar, a coast town 100 miles north-west of the capital, drove the Persians out of Muscat, and being elected Imam [1] by his grateful fellow-citizens, founded, in 1741, the Al-Bu-Said dynasty, which has occupied the throne of Oman ever since.

Ruling dynasty

Dying, after a reign of forty years, in 1783, he was succeeded by his second son, Seyid Said bin Ahmed, whose incompetence soon provided his younger brother with the chance of successful revolution. The deposed ruler was suffered to live in retirement, retaining, though destitute of all authority, the spiritual title of Imam, which has never since been worn by any ruler of Muscat. The victorious usurper, Seyid Sultan bin Ahmed, reigned both over Muscat and Zanzibar (which had been captured in 1784) till 1804, when he was killed in battle. His aggressive character and schemes for territorial and maritime aggrandisement continually involved in trouble both his own kingdom and the British Government, with whom he had established political and mercantile relations; but his fidelity to the English never wavered. In 1798 he concluded a treaty with the East India Company (previously quoted [2]), the main object of which was the exclusion of French agents and influence from Oman, upon which Napoleon had designs as a basis for naval attack upon India.[3] Two years later Major, afterwards Sir J. Malcolm, journeying to Persia on his famous first mission from Lord Wellesley, stopped at Muscat on his way, and negotiated a further treaty [4] with the Sultan, one clause of which provided for the residence at Muscat of 'an English gentleman of respectability on the part of the Honourable Company,' to act as an agent, 'in

[1] The title Imam implies spiritual headship, that of Sultan or Seyid (which here signifies 'lord,' not, as in Persia, 'a descendant of the Prophet'), the temporal sovereignty, in Oman.

[2] Aitchison, vol. ~~vii., Appendix III.~~

[3] There was a brief resurrection of French influence in Oman in 1807, when the Sultan, impressed by the tidings of Napoleon's victories in Europe, despatched an envoy to Mauritius, and there concluded a treaty with General de Caen on June 1, 1807. But with the capitulation of the Ile de Bourbon and Mauritius in 1810, this Gallophile phase came to an end, and British influence was firmly and finally re-established.

[4] Aitchison, vol. ~~vii. No. xxxiii.~~



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order that no opportunity may be offered to designing men, who are ever eager to promote dissensions, and that the friendship of the two States may remain unshook to the end of time, and till the sun and moon have finished their revolving career.' The concluding paragraph was, perhaps, somewhat too rhetorical for modern tastes, and probably transcended the limited astronomical acquirements of the Sultan; but it expressed with becoming Oriental hyperbole the solidarity of an alliance which has lasted without interruption ever since, and under which the British Political Agent has always exercised a dominant influence at the Court of Muscat.

Seyid Sultan's successor was his second son, Seyid Said, who having, like his father before him, deposed his elder brother, Seyid Salim, ruled for the long period of fifty years. His reign was disturbed by constant warfare against the Wahabi Arab power in the interior, which had, at the beginning of the century, spread its ferocious influence along the entire southern shore of the Persian Gulf, enlisting on its side the piratical instincts of the maritime tribes, and continually threatening the territories of Oman. The Sultan was sometimes only saved from extinction at the hand of the Wahabis by the friendly intervention of the British Government, under whose arrangement he paid a yearly tribute to the Wahabi Amir. With England he joined in naval operations against the pirate tribes and slave-hunters, whom the Wahabi propaganda had let loose upon the seas, and in 1822, 1840, and 1845, concluded treaties with the East India Company, for the suppression of the slave trade, the seizure of slave-dhows, and the prohibition of traffic in slaves between the African and Asian coasts. In the latter part of his life the affairs of Muscat fell into great confusion owing to the prolonged absence of the Sultan at Zanzibar, which in 1840 he made the permanent seat of Government. Mr. Stocqueler had an interview with Seyid Said at Muscat in 1831, and described him as 'a mild gentlemanly-looking man of about forty years of age, a warrior and a trader, a just governor, and a chivalric lover,[1] just in his dealings and decisions, liberal of reward, anxious for improvement, and tolerant of the religions of other nations.'[2] He

Seyid Said, 1804–1856

[1] I do not know if Mr. Stocqueler here alludes to the fact that he left 34 children, with a fortune of 60,000 crowns to every son, and 29,000 to every daughter.

[2] *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. i. p. 3.

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H.H. SEYYID HAMID BIN THWAIN.

# THE NEW SULTAN OF ZANZIBAR.

## HIS FIRST PHOTO.

A correspondent sends us a photograph of the new Sultan of Zanzibar, Seyyid Hamid bin Thwaini, which, he informs us, is the first likeness of his Highness produced by the camera. The new Sultan was proclaimed just a month ago, on the death of his cousin and predecessor, Seyyid Ali. He is a grandson of an elder brother of the late Sultan. The dominions of his Sultanate were gradually acquired by the Imams of Muscat between the years 1698 and 1807, partly by conquest from the Portuguese and partly by native chiefs. They were held as dependencies of Muscat until the death of Seyyid Said, when on a dispute as to the succession arising between Seyyid Thwaini of Muscat and Seyyid Majid of Zanzibar—both sons of Said—the dominions in Africa were made independent of Muscat and confirmed under Majid by an arbitration of Lord Canning, then Governor-General of India. Since then the succession to the throne has devolved, according to Mohammedan usage, on the eldest surviving males of the family, and consequently, although none of the Sultans since Majid have been without sons, these sons have not reigned. Majid, who died in 1870, was followed by his brother, Barghash. He died in 1888, and was succeeded, in order, by two further brothers, Khalifa and Ali. This exhausted the family of the old Sultan Said. The next in succession was then found to be the present Sultan, who is a grandson of Said's eldest son, Thwaini of Muscat. His accession was, however, not undisputed. As soon as the Sultan Ali died, on the 6th of last month, Kalid Barghash, one of his sons, made an ineffectual attempt to seize the throne. This demonstration only lasted an hour or two, and the prince surrendered to the British Consul-General without effusion of blood. So far Seyyid Hamid has given every promise of proving a ductile instrument in the hands of his British protectors, and has manifested an intelligent appreciation of their civilising influence.



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s, Deputy-Surveyor of the

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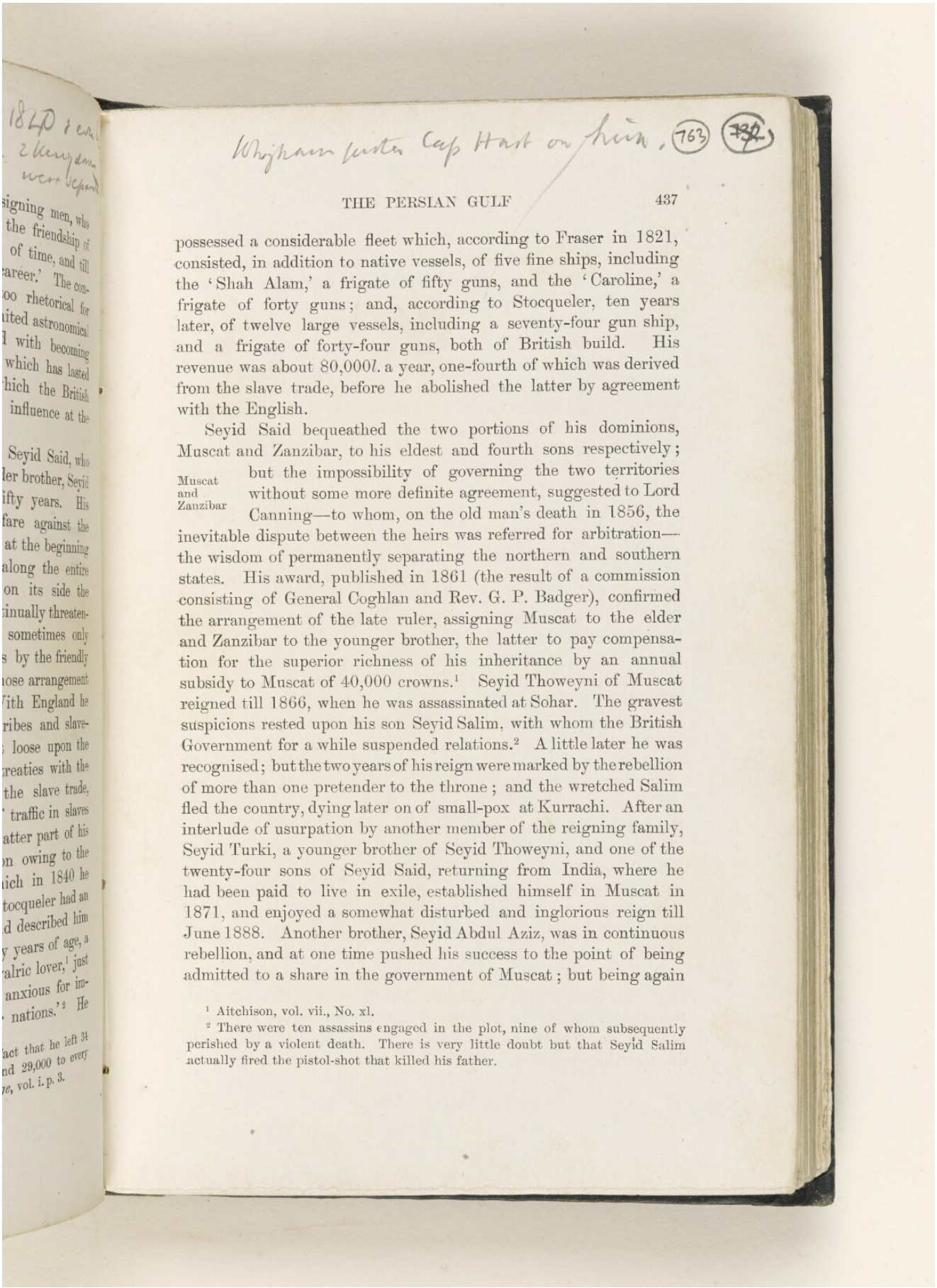



possessed a considerable fleet which, according to Fraser in 1821, consisted, in addition to native vessels, of five fine ships, including the 'Shah Alam,' a frigate of fifty guns, and the 'Caroline,' a frigate of forty guns; and, according to Stocqueler, ten years later, of twelve large vessels, including a seventy-four gun ship, and a frigate of forty-four guns, both of British build. His revenue was about 80,000*l.* a year, one-fourth of which was derived from the slave trade, before he abolished the latter by agreement with the English.

Seyid Said bequeathed the two portions of his dominions, Muscat and Zanzibar, to his eldest and fourth sons respectively; but the impossibility of governing the two territories without some more definite agreement, suggested to Lord Canning—to whom, on the old man's death in 1856, the inevitable dispute between the heirs was referred for arbitration—the wisdom of permanently separating the northern and southern states. His award, published in 1861 (the result of a commission consisting of General Coghlan and Rev. G. P. Badger), confirmed the arrangement of the late ruler, assigning Muscat to the elder and Zanzibar to the younger brother, the latter to pay compensation for the superior richness of his inheritance by an annual subsidy to Muscat of 40,000 crowns.[1] Seyid Thoweyni of Muscat reigned till 1866, when he was assassinated at Sohar. The gravest suspicions rested upon his son Seyid Salim, with whom the British Government for a while suspended relations.[2] A little later he was recognised; but the two years of his reign were marked by the rebellion of more than one pretender to the throne; and the wretched Salim fled the country, dying later on of small-pox at Kurrachi. After an interlude of usurpation by another member of the reigning family, Seyid Turki, a younger brother of Seyid Thoweyni, and one of the twenty-four sons of Seyid Said, returning from India, where he had been paid to live in exile, established himself in Muscat in 1871, and enjoyed a somewhat disturbed and inglorious reign till June 1888. Another brother, Seyid Abdul Aziz, was in continuous rebellion, and at one time pushed his success to the point of being admitted to a share in the government of Muscat; but being again

Muscat and Zanzibar

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii., No. xl.

[2] There were ten assassins engaged in the plot, nine of whom subsequently perished by a violent death. There is very little doubt but that Seyid Salim actually fired the pistol-shot that killed his father.

ejected, retired to the interior, whence sputterings of revolt were occasionally heard till Seyid Turki's death, and again broke into flame after his son's accession. Seyid Turki, though not a vigorous was a mild and liberal-minded ruler; he understood how to manage the Arab tribes under his control; and he remained consistently loyal to the British Government, by whom he was made a G.C.S.I. in 1886, and confirmed in his tenure of a throne which he had, on the whole, deserved, by an assurance of active support against unprovoked aggression. In 1873 Sir Bartle Frere concluded a treaty with him, consolidating the previous engagements for the suppression of the slave-trade, abolishing all public slave-markets in his dominions, and emancipating all slaves who entered his territories. At the same time his brother of Zanzibar having taken advantage of the disturbances in Oman to decline any longer to pay his annual tribute, the British Government, in return for the abolition of the free traffic in slaves between the African coast and the island of Zanzibar, charged itself with the payment of the annual subsidy to Muscat, and to this day hands over to the Sultan the sum of 7,200 rupees a month, or a little over 6,000*l.* a year. When Seyid Turki died in 1888, his second son, Seyid Feysul bin Turki, though the son of an African slave, and as black as a Nubian in colour, succeeded without opposition to the throne. Among Arab tribes there is no law or custom of primogeniture, and no prescription in favour of the eldest son. Within the limits of the reigning family might is right; the strongest hand seizes the sceptre and wields it. There being considerable doubt, however, as to the ability of Seyid Feysul to hold his own, he had not at the time of my visit been formally recognised by the British Government. In October 1888 he conducted an unsuccessful expedition against an old pretender to the throne, Ibrahim bin Kais, who still plays the game of rebellion from time to time; while his uncle, the veteran Abdul Aziz, after a long repose in the interior, suddenly resumed activity in 1889. The latter's rebellion was still undecided while I was at Muscat, but afterwards ended in the withdrawal of the pretender from the country. Seyid Feysul had the double advantage of youth and possession on his side. He is now (1892) only twenty-eight years of age; and if he exhibits sufficient tenacity to justify the support of the British Government, may possibly develop the ruling qualities in which some of his predecessors have excelled. The Wahabi power in the interior is a

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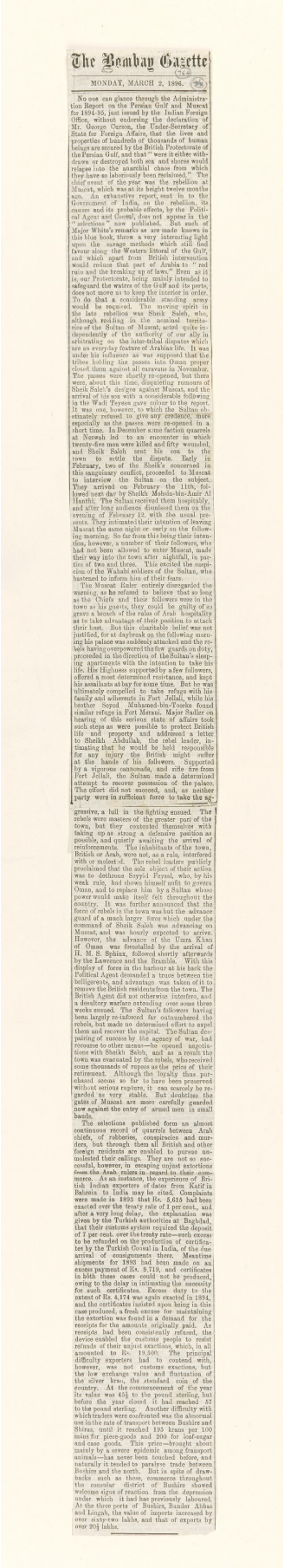


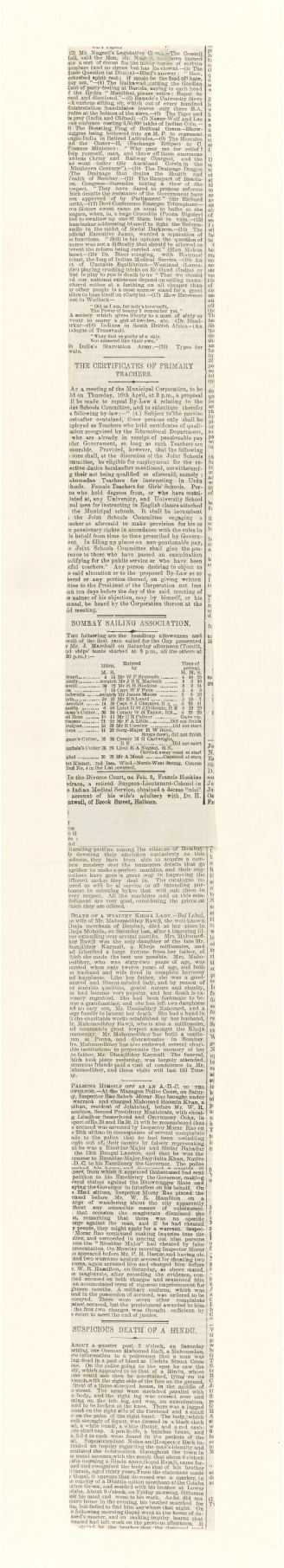
The Bombay Gazette

MONDAY, MARCH 2, 1896.

No one can glance through the Administration Report on the Persian Gulf and Muscat for 1894-95, just issued by the Indian Foreign Office, without endorsing the declaration of Mr. George Curzon, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the lives and properties of hundreds of thousands of human beings are secured by the British Protectorate of the Persian Gulf, and that "were it either withdrawn or destroyed both sea and shores would relapse into the anarchial chaos from which they have so laboriously been reclaimed." The chief event of the year was the rebellion at Muscat, which was at its height twelve months ago. An exhaustive report, sent in to the Government of India, on the rebellion, its causes and its probable effects, by the Political Agent and Consul, does not appear in the "selections" now published. But such of Major White's remarks as are made known in this blue book, throw a very interesting light upon the savage methods which still find favour along the Western littoral of the Gulf, and which apart from British intervention would reduce that part of Arabia to "red ruin and the breaking up of laws." Even as it is, our Protectorate, being mainly intended to safeguard the waters of the Gulf and its ports, does not move as to keep the interior in order. To do that a considerable standing army would be required. The moving spirit in the late rebellion was Shaik Saleh, who, although residing in the nominal territories of the Sultan of Muscat, acted quite independently of the authority of our ally in arbitrating on the inter-tribal disputes which are an every-day feature of Arabian life. It was under his influence as was supposed that the tribes holding the passes into Oman proper closed them against all caravans in November. The passes were shortly re-opened, but there were, about this time, disquieting rumours of Sheik Saleh's designs against Muscat, and the arrival of his son with a considerable following in the Wadi Teyeen gave colour to the report. It was one, however, to which the Sultan obstinately refused to give any credence, more especially as the passes were re-opened in a short time. In December some factious quarrels at Nezwah led to an encounter in which twenty-five men were killed and fifty wounded, and Sheik Saleh sent his son to the town to settle the dispute. Early in February, two of the Sheik's concerned in this sanguinary conflict, proceeded to Muscat to interview the Sultan on the subject. They arrived on February the 11th, followed next day by Sheikh Mohsin-bin-Amir Al Hanthi. The Sultan received them hospitably, and after long audience dismissed them on the evening of February 12, with the usual presents. They intimated their intention of leaving Muscat the same night or early on the following morning. So far from this being their intention, however, a number of their followers, who had not been allowed to enter Muscat, made their way into the town after nightfall, in parties of two and three. This excited the suspicions of the Wahabi soldiers of the Sultan, who hastened to inform him of their fears.

The Muscat Ruler entirely disregarded the warning, as he refused to believe that so long as the Chiefs and their followers were in the town as his guests, they could be guilty of so grave a breach of the rules of Arab hospitality as to take advantage of their position to attack their host. But this charitable belief was not justified, for at daybreak on the following morning his palace was suddenly attacked and the rebels having overpowered the few guards on duty, proceeded in the direction of the Sultan's sleeping apartments with the intention to take his life. His Highness supported by a few followers, offered a most determined resistance, and kept his assailants at bay for some time. But he was ultimately compelled to take refuge with his family and adherents in Fort Jellali, while his brother Seyed Mahamed-bin-Tooeks found similar refuge in Fort Merani. Major Sadler on hearing of this serious state of affairs took such steps as were possible to protect British life and property and addressed a letter to Sheikh Abdullah, the rebel leader, intimating that he would be held responsible for any injury the British might suffer at the hands of his followers. Supported by a vigorous cannonade, and rifle fire from Fort Jellali, the Sultan made a determined attempt to recover possession of the palace. The effort did not succeed, and, as neither party were in sufficient force to take the aggressive, a lull in the fighting ensued. The rebels were masters of the greater part of the town, but they contented themselves with taking up as strong a defensive position as possible, and quietly awaiting the arrival of reinforcements. The inhabitants of the town, British or Arab, were not, as a rule, interfered with or molested. The rebel leaders publicly proclaimed that the sole object of their action was to dethrone Seyyid Feysal, who, by his weak rule, had shown himself unfit to govern Oman, and to replace him by a Sultan whose power would make itself felt throughout the country. It was further announced that the force of rebels in the town was but the advance guard of a much larger force which under the command of Sheik Saleh was advancing on Muscat, and was hourly expected to arrive. However, the advance of the Umra Khan of Oman was forestalled by the arrival of H. M. S. Sphinx, followed shortly afterwards by the Lawrence and the Bramble. With this display of force in the harbour at his back the Political Agent demanded a truce between the belligerents, and advantage was taken of it to remove the British residents from the town. The British Agent did not otherwise interfere, and a desultory warfare extending over some three weeks ensued. The Sultan's followers having been largely re-inforced far outnumbered the rebels, but made no determined effort to expel them and recover the capital. The Sultan despairing of success by the agency of war, had recourse to other means—he opened negotiations with Sheikh Saleh, and as a result the town was evacuated by the rebels, who received some thousands of rupees as the price of their retirement. Although the loyalty thus purchased seems so far to have been preserved without serious rupture, it can scarcely be regarded as very stable. But doubtless the gates of Muscat are more carefully guarded now against the entry of armed men in small bands.

The selections published form an almost continuous record of quarrels between Arab chiefs, of robberies, conspiracies and murders, but through them all British and other foreign residents are enabled to pursue unmolested their callings. They are not so successful, however, in escaping unjust extortions from the Arab rulers in regard to their commerce. As an instance, the experience of British Indian exporters of dates from Katif in Bahrein to India may be cited. Complaints were made in 1893 that Rs. 5,615 had been exacted over the treaty rate of 1 per cent., and after a very long delay, the explanation was given by the Turkish authorities at Baghdad, that their customs system required the deposit of 2 per cent. over the treaty rate—such excess to be refunded on the production of certificates by the Turkish Consul in India, of the due arrival of consignments there. Meantime shipments for 1893 had been made on an excess payment of Rs. 3,719, and certificates in both these cases could not be produced, owing to the delay in intimating the necessity for such certificates. Excess duty to the extent of Rs. 4,174 was again exacted in 1894, and the certificates insisted upon being in this case produced, a fresh excuse for maintaining the extortion was found in a demand for the receipts for the amounts originally paid. As receipts had been consistently refused, the device enabled the customs people to resist refunds of their unjust exactions, which, in all amounted to Rs. 19,500. The principal difficulty exporters had to contend with, however, was not customs exactions, but the low exchange value and fluctuation of the silver kran, the standard coin of the country. At the commencement of the year its value was 45½ to the pound sterling, but before the year closed it had reached 57 to the pound sterling. Another difficulty with which traders were confronted was the abnormal use in the rate of transport between Bushire and Shiraz, until it reached 125 krans per 100 mans for piece-goods and 200 for loaf-sugar and case goods. This price—brought about mainly by a severe epidemic among transport animals—has never been touched before, and naturally it tended to paralyse trade between Bushire and the north. But in spite of drawbacks such as these, commerce throughout the consular district of Bushire showed welcome signs of reaction from the depression under which it had previously laboured. At the three ports of Bushire, Bunder Abbas and Lingah, the value of imports increased by over sixty-two lakhs, and that of exports by over 20½ lakhs.



THE CERTIFICATES OF PRIMARY TEACHERS.

BOMBAY SAILING ASSOCIATION.

SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A HINDU.

danger with which Oman is constantly threatened; but it may be that now, as heretofore, other and more pressing engagements will distract the attention of the Amir of Nejd.

City of Muscat

Muscat, the capital of Oman, is probably one of the most picturesque places in the world. From a distance immense granitic masses of rock, with jagged outline of cliff and crag, are seen ascending in gloomy abruptness from the sea. Far inland ridge rises upon ridge, splintered edge above and savage fissures between, the impression being that of a country upheaved from nature's primæval cauldron, and still scarred and blackened by those terrific fires. In this sea-wall of sheer rock a gap is suddenly disclosed, opening into a little cove, landlocked on three of its sides by these stupendous natural ramparts. In the furthermost recess of the bight, which is about one mile deep by half a mile in width, upon a narrow space of flat ground, left by some freak of nature between the mountains and the sea, is built the Arab capital, its plastered houses glittering against the sombre background like a seagull's wing against an angry sky. The town and bay face to the north. On the western side the rocks fall precipitously into the water, and not even a pathway can be carried round their base. Opposite, the eastern wall of the bay, no less lofty or steep, is actually an island, as its name El Jazirah shows, and, as is seen when we anchor off the town, a gap of 100 yards or more in width severing it from the mainland. To the English visitor this great metamorphic mass, whose slaty buttresses support not a grain of soil, much less a blade of vegetation,[1] appeals with a novel interest; for its rocks are seen to be freely bedecked at every elevation from the water's edge with the names of the British men-of-war who have, at different times, visited the station, painted in huge white characters upon any smooth surface that could be found. H.M.S. 'Osprey,' H.M.S. 'Kingfisher,' H.M.S. 'Woodlark,' H.M.S. 'Sphinx,' and many another goodly vessel, including even an American frigate, have thus left to later ages the proud record of their sojurn at Muscat. These decorations, however, appear to be an evidence less of the æsthetic than of the too convivial instincts of the British mariner; for, upon inquiry, I learnt that the ship's crews of men-of-war are never allowed to land in the town of Muscat, for fear of the possible consequences of their hilarity; and

[1] Aucher Eloy, the botanist, said that, compared with the Muscat hills, those of Sinai itself are a garden.

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that, accordingly, their only playground is this gloomy cone of rock, which admits of positively no other diversion than that supplied by the paint-pot.

Towards the inner hollow of the bay, which is here about a quarter of a mile in width, the town is commanded on either side by ancient Portuguese fortresses, perched on the summits of two craggy peaks.[1] These forts are not the only relics of the century and a half of Portuguese dominion at Muscat; a dilapidated building, now used as the Sultan's stables, being the remains of the old Catholic cathedral. The situation of the forts and town awakens sharp recollections of the entry to the harbour at Corfu. Indeed, Muscat might perhaps be brought before a reader's eye by describing it as a mixture of Corfu and Aden, combining the romantic outline of the one with the forbidding desolation of the other. I ascended to the eastern castle, and was shown over its defences by the commandant, a handsome bearded Beluchi. They consisted of a small detachment of Arab warriors, of venerable and tattered appearance, and of a battery of ancient iron guns, some lying on the ground, some on broken carriages half-tilted in the air. A few poked their rusty nozzles through embrasures in the wall, and were pointed at every conceivable angle to command the harbour and opposite rocks; but the majority were lying stranded on the ground; while one or two had tumbled down the cliff and were being playfully washed by the waves 200 feet below. One of the iron guns had stamped upon it the word Hollandia—eloquent witness to a vanished day—and a bronze gun bore the blazonry of the royal arms of Portugal.

Castles

From either of the forts a striking panorama can be obtained of the town. Occupying the small intervening space between the harbour and the mountains, it is defended on the sea front by the castles, and on the land side by a stone wall half a mile long with solid towers, and a fosse in fair repair

Panorama

[1] The westernmost of these, now called Merani (Fraser calls it Kumalli, Rev. G. Badger, in his map, Kaleh-el-Gharbieh), is a little the senior in origin. It was begun about 1550 by Dom Joao da Lisboa, and finished in 1588, when it received the title of Fort Capitan. The second, or eastern fort, originally called Sam Jao, but now known as Jelali (the 'Glorious'; Rev. G. Badger, Kaleh-es-Sharkieh) was completed about the same time—viz. in 1587, during the viceroyalty of Manuel de Souza Continho. How these big names and proud deeds of the old Portuguese conquerors contrast with the shrivelled possessions and the dissipated physique of their present descendants, the dingy domestic-servant population of Goa!

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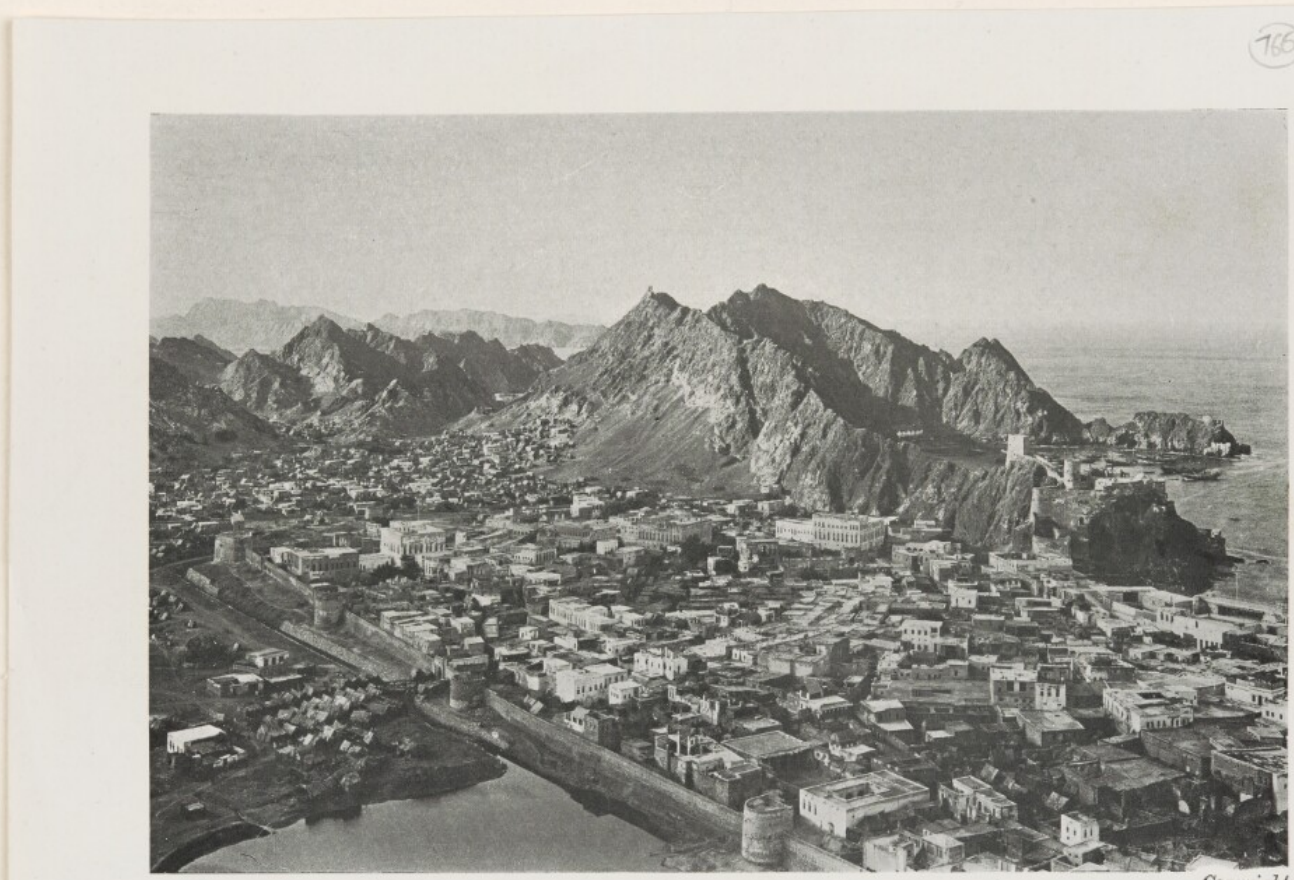

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*Centre & Western end of Masqat Town with part of the Harbour.*
*(Maj: P. Z. Cox.)*

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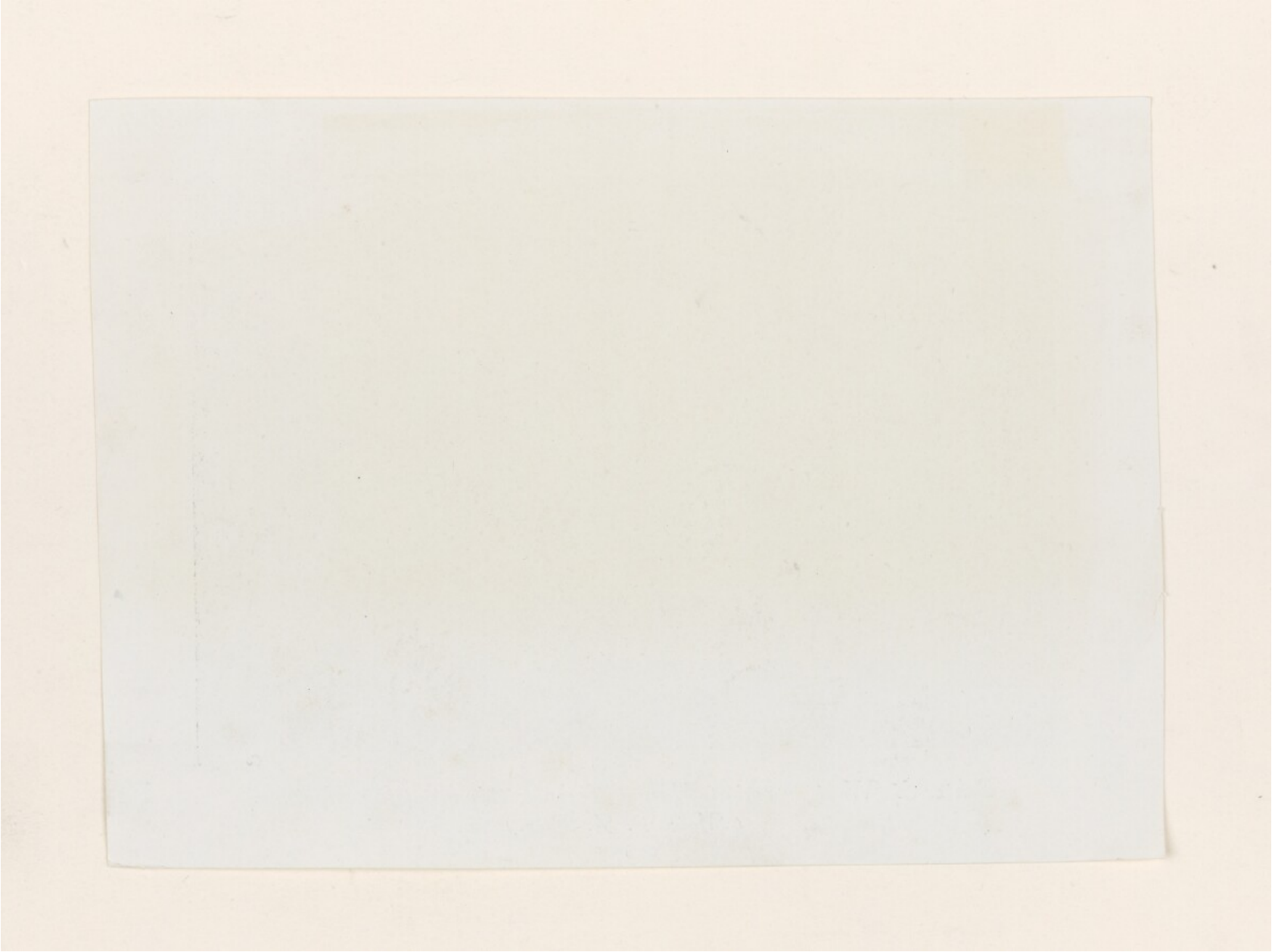
'Centre & Western end of Masqat Town with part of the Harbour.' [766v] (2/2)



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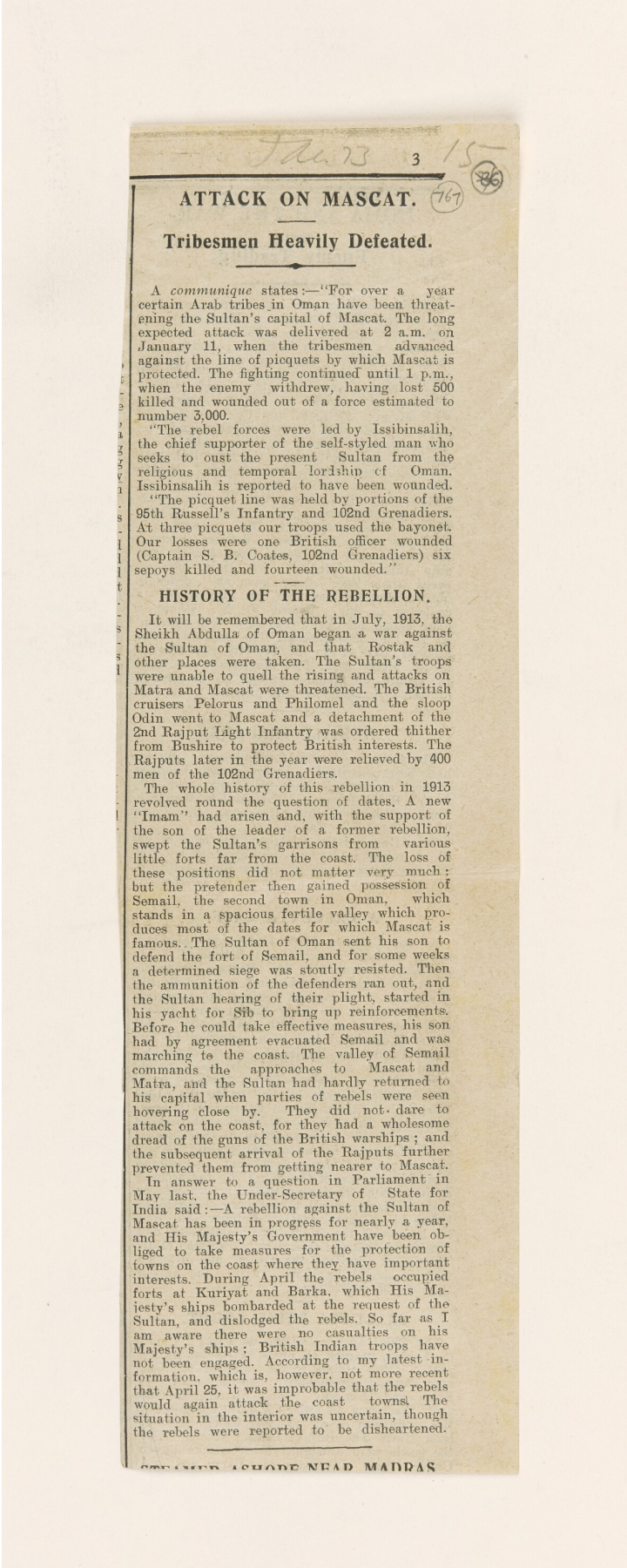

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## ATTACK ON MASCAT.

### Tribesmen Heavily Defeated.

A *communique* states:—"For over a year certain Arab tribes in Oman have been threatening the Sultan's capital of Mascat. The long expected attack was delivered at 2 a.m. on January 11, when the tribesmen advanced against the line of picquets by which Mascat is protected. The fighting continued until 1 p.m., when the enemy withdrew, having lost 500 killed and wounded out of a force estimated to number 3,000.

"The rebel forces were led by Issibinsalih, the chief supporter of the self-styled man who seeks to oust the present Sultan from the religious and temporal lordship of Oman. Issibinsalih is reported to have been wounded.

"The picquet line was held by portions of the 95th Russell's Infantry and 102nd Grenadiers. At three picquets our troops used the bayonet. Our losses were one British officer wounded (Captain S. B. Coates, 102nd Grenadiers) six sepoys killed and fourteen wounded."

### HISTORY OF THE REBELLION.

It will be remembered that in July, 1913, the Sheikh Abdulla of Oman began a war against the Sultan of Oman, and that Rostak and other places were taken. The Sultan's troops were unable to quell the rising and attacks on Matra and Mascat were threatened. The British cruisers Pelorus and Philomel and the sloop Odin went to Mascat and a detachment of the 2nd Rajput Light Infantry was ordered thither from Bushire to protect British interests. The Rajputs later in the year were relieved by 400 men of the 102nd Grenadiers.

The whole history of this rebellion in 1913 revolved round the question of dates. A new "Imam" had arisen and, with the support of the son of the leader of a former rebellion, swept the Sultan's garrisons from various little forts far from the coast. The loss of these positions did not matter very much: but the pretender then gained possession of Semail, the second town in Oman, which stands in a spacious fertile valley which produces most of the dates for which Mascat is famous. The Sultan of Oman sent his son to defend the fort of Semail, and for some weeks a determined siege was stoutly resisted. Then the ammunition of the defenders ran out, and the Sultan hearing of their plight, started in his yacht for Sîb to bring up reinforcements. Before he could take effective measures, his son had by agreement evacuated Semail and was marching to the coast. The valley of Semail commands the approaches to Mascat and Matra, and the Sultan had hardly returned to his capital when parties of rebels were seen hovering close by. They did not dare to attack on the coast, for they had a wholesome dread of the guns of the British warships; and the subsequent arrival of the Rajputs further prevented them from getting nearer to Mascat.

In answer to a question in Parliament in May last, the Under-Secretary of State for India said:—A rebellion against the Sultan of Mascat has been in progress for nearly a year, and His Majesty's Government have been obliged to take measures for the protection of towns on the coast where they have important interests. During April the rebels occupied forts at Kuriyat and Barka, which His Majesty's ships bombarded at the request of the Sultan, and dislodged the rebels. So far as I am aware there were no casualties on his Majesty's ships; British Indian troops have not been engaged. According to my latest information, which is, however, not more recent that April 25, it was improbable that the rebels would again attack the coast towns. The situation in the interior was uncertain, though the rebels were reported to be disheartened.

STEAMER ASHORE NEAR MADRAS

# INDIA AND THE WAR.

## Enemy Trading.

Another trading with the enemy case came before the Chief Presidency Magistrate in which the accused, one Bhusan Chunder Chunder, carrying on business under the name of Messrs. Bannerjee and Company, was charged with carrying on business with Messrs Urabin and Co., glass bangle manufacturers of Austria, also with conspiring with Messrs. Belliser and Co., of Switzerland to trade with Messrs. Urabin and Co., The prosecution stated that the accused as agent of the dealers in Calcutta had been ordering glass bangles from Messrs. Urabin and Co, after the declaration of the war. Anticipating that there might be some difficulty in obtaining goods from Austria, Messrs. Urabin wrote to the accused to send the orders to Messrs. Belliser and Co., who would get the goods from Austria and ship them to Calcutta, via Italy. The accused some time later, gave an order to Messrs. Belliser and Co., on behalf of a customer of his named J. N. Ghose, a glass bangle merchant. The case was adjourned to the 25th instant. The accused was allowed bail of Rs. 20,000 with two sureties of Rs. 10,000 each. The Magistrate declined to reduce the amount of bail on the ground of the seriousness of the offence.

## HOSTILE TRADERS.

The following hostile foreigners in Burma have been permitted to carry on their business without any restrictions:—M. Tepic, manager, Strand Hotel, Rangoon; Mrs. Muller, manager, Amalia Rubber Estate, Rangoon, and Bormfuel, Contractor, Namtu.

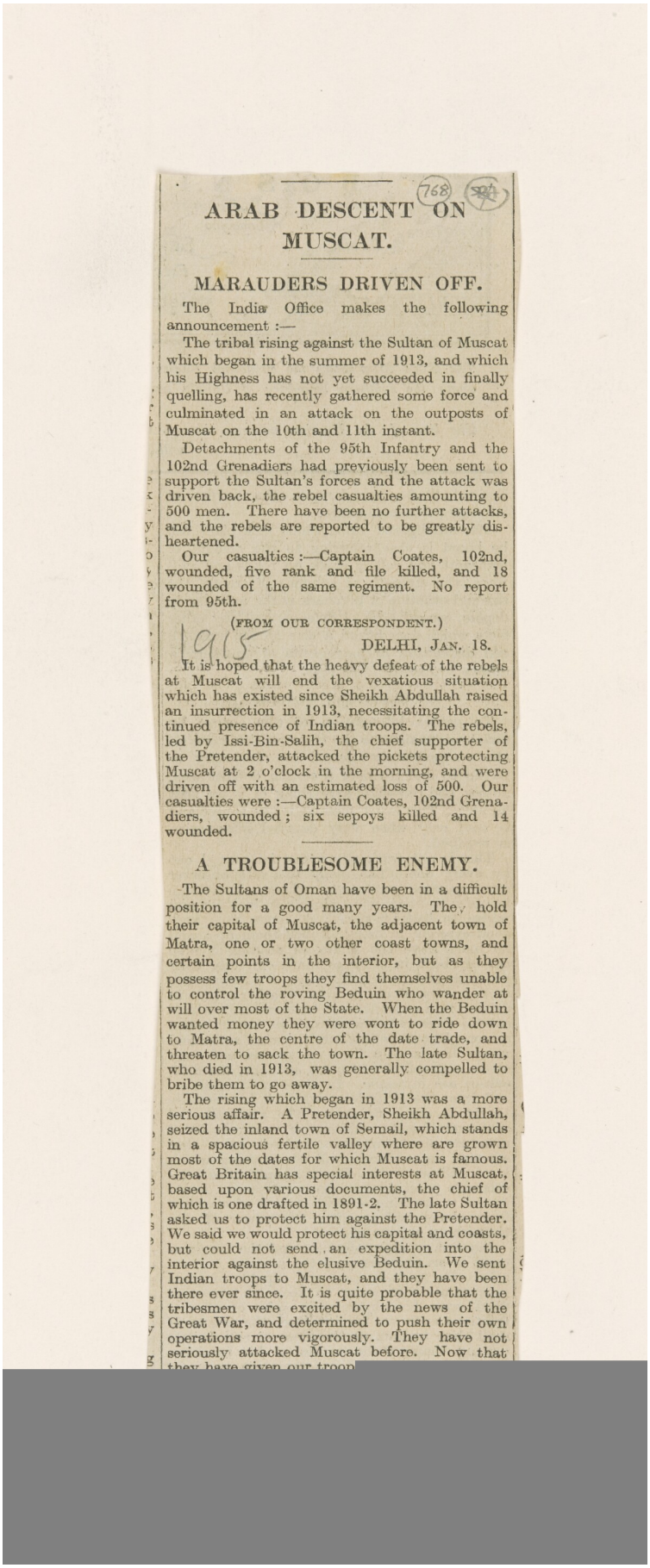
Mrs. Hagemeister, Rangoon, has been allowed to reside in Burma and lease her rice mill at Syriam and to collect rents and profits and appoint attorney to act on her behalf.

## A CALCUTTA CASE.

At the Calcutta High Court, on Monday, before Justices Fletcher and Beachcroft, the Advocate-General with Mr. Pearson, instructed by the Legal Remembrancer, applied for the admission of an appeal against the acquittal in the case of the King Emperor vs. Indrachand in the trading with the enemy trial, where Indrachand had been convicted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate on the first and third counts and acquitted on the second count (that of entering into a contract with, and for the benefit of, an enemy, viz., the Rheinische, Glimmerwaren Fabrite of Cologne, Germany). The Advocate-General said that he had just received the sanction of the Government of Bengal for an appeal against the acquittal on this charge, it being considered desirable in view of the appeal by the accused against his conviction on the other two charges that the facts on all three charges should be before the Court. Justice Fletcher said that he had read the Magistrate's judgment and considered that the second charge seemed clear. The Court admitted the appeal and directed that it should be heard with the appeal against the conviction.

## CALCUTTA PRIZE COURT.

The Chief Justice, sitting as Prize Court, on Friday, granted an order of release in respect of three claims to the cargo of the German steamer Rappenfels. In the case of Barry and Company, the Advocate-General said, there was an order for release subject to the production of an affidavit which had now been filed. The Bill of Lading showed that the goods were consigned to a German buyer. Under those circumstances Barry and Co.



# ARAB DESCENT ON MUSCAT.

## MARAUDERS DRIVEN OFF.

The India Office makes the following announcement :—

The tribal rising against the Sultan of Muscat which began in the summer of 1913, and which his Highness has not yet succeeded in finally quelling, has recently gathered some force and culminated in an attack on the outposts of Muscat on the 10th and 11th instant.

Detachments of the 95th Infantry and the 102nd Grenadiers had previously been sent to support the Sultan's forces and the attack was driven back, the rebel casualties amounting to 500 men. There have been no further attacks, and the rebels are reported to be greatly disheartened.

Our casualties :—Captain Coates, 102nd, wounded, five rank and file killed, and 18 wounded of the same regiment. No report from 95th.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

1915 DELHI, JAN. 18.

It is hoped that the heavy defeat of the rebels at Muscat will end the vexatious situation which has existed since Sheikh Abdullah raised an insurrection in 1913, necessitating the continued presence of Indian troops. The rebels, led by Issi-Bin-Salih, the chief supporter of the Pretender, attacked the pickets protecting Muscat at 2 o'clock in the morning, and were driven off with an estimated loss of 500. Our casualties were :—Captain Coates, 102nd Grenadiers, wounded; six sepoys killed and 14 wounded.

## A TROUBLESOME ENEMY.

The Sultans of Oman have been in a difficult position for a good many years. They hold their capital of Muscat, the adjacent town of Matra, one or two other coast towns, and certain points in the interior, but as they possess few troops they find themselves unable to control the roving Beduin who wander at will over most of the State. When the Beduin wanted money they were wont to ride down to Matra, the centre of the date trade, and threaten to sack the town. The late Sultan, who died in 1913, was generally compelled to bribe them to go away.

The rising which began in 1913 was a more serious affair. A Pretender, Sheikh Abdullah, seized the inland town of Semail, which stands in a spacious fertile valley where are grown most of the dates for which Muscat is famous. Great Britain has special interests at Muscat, based upon various documents, the chief of which is one drafted in 1891-2. The late Sultan asked us to protect him against the Pretender. We said we would protect his capital and coasts, but could not send an expedition into the interior against the elusive Beduin. We sent Indian troops to Muscat, and they have been there ever since. It is quite probable that the tribesmen were excited by the news of the Great War, and determined to push their own operations more vigorously. They have not seriously attacked Muscat before. Now that they have given our troops




*The above Map shows the principal Passes along the southern boundary of Galicia an*

*The line of the Russian advance through with*

General Staff—depend upon the results of strategical reconnaissance.

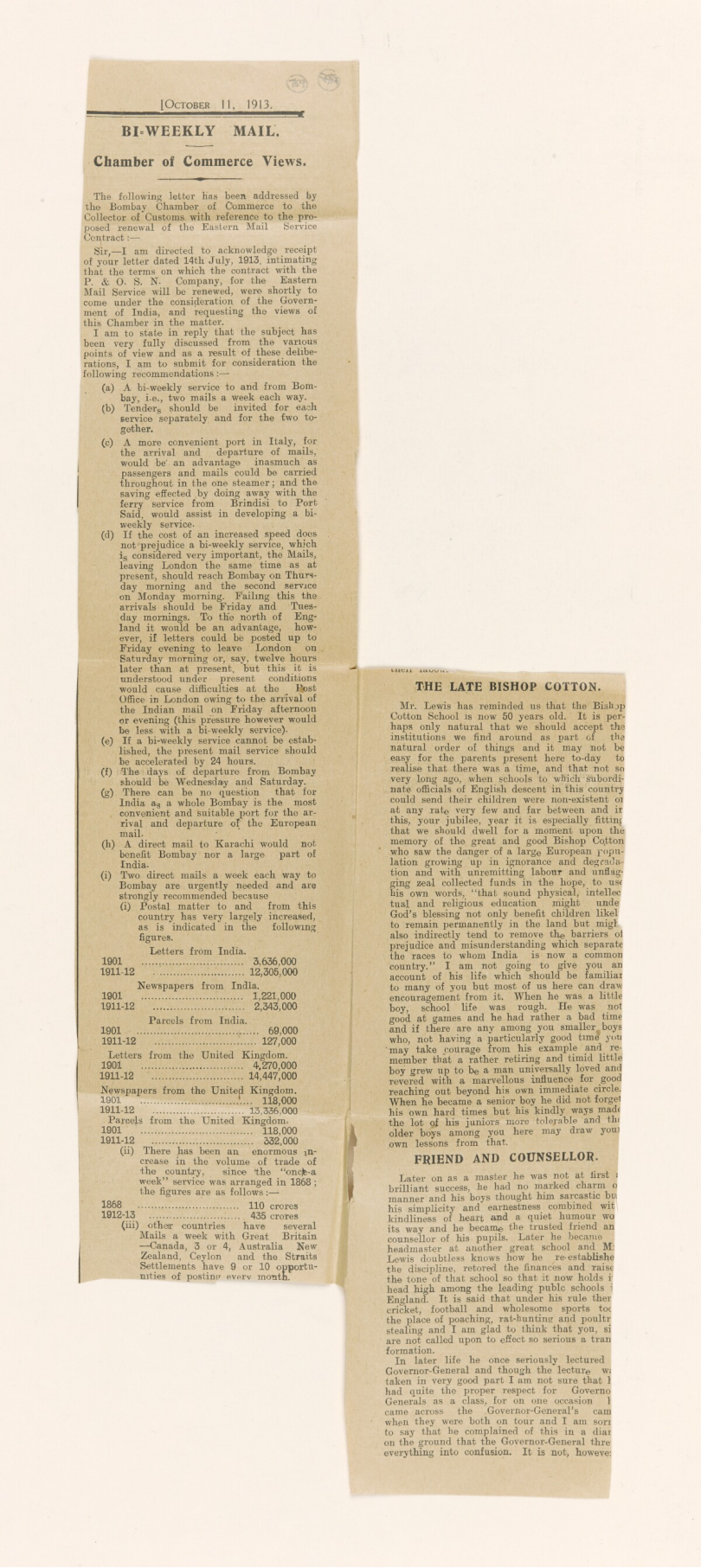
The intelligence upon which such plans will be based is that referring to the amount of transport and rolling stock on roads and railways, the strength of columns of troops, the size and situation of bivouacs, parks, and supply depôts, second lines of defence, and any other facts which may afford a clue to the strength and disposition or movements of an enemy's masses and to his intentions.

### An Observer's Qualities.

To gather information of this nature by aerial reconnaissance the observer either travels above a previously selected line of country or passes to and fro over a certain definite area, noting and recording everything of value that he sees. This latter method is the slower and is used only when very detailed information is required.

This is not work which can be carried out by every one. The really first-rate observer must possess extensive military knowledge in order to know what objects to look for and where to look for them; he must have very good eyesight in order to pick them up; and he must have the knack of reading a map quickly, both in order to mark correctly their positions and to find his way. To reconnoitre is not easy even in fine weather; but in driving rain or snow, in a temperature perhaps several degrees below zero, or in a gale, when an aeroplane travelling with the wind rocks and sways like a ship in a heavy sea and may attain a speed of 150 miles an hour, the difficulties are immense. In these circumstances, and from the altitude at which it is necessary to fly in order to escape the projectiles of anti-aircraft guns, columns of transport or of men are easily missed. Indeed, at a first attempt an observer will see nothing which is of military value, for it is only after considerable practice that the eye becomes accustomed to scouring a great stretch of country from above and acquires the power of distinguishing objects upon it.

Psychology also comes in, and the temperament of an observer is of the greatest importance. He must be cool and capable of great concentration in order to keep his attention fixed upon his objective in spite of all distractions such as, for instance, the bursts of shell close to him, or the noise of rifle bullets passing through the planes of his machine. He must withstand the temptation to make conjectures or to think that he has seen something when he is not absolutely certain of the fact, since an error in observing or an in-



[OCTOBER 11, 1913.

## BI-WEEKLY MAIL.

### Chamber of Commerce Views.

The following letter has been addressed by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to the Collector of Customs with reference to the proposed renewal of the Eastern Mail Service Contract:—

Sir,—I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 14th July, 1913, intimating that the terms on which the contract with the P. & O. S. N. Company, for the Eastern Mail Service will be renewed, were shortly to come under the consideration of the Government of India, and requesting the views of this Chamber in the matter.

I am to state in reply that the subject has been very fully discussed from the various points of view and as a result of these deliberations, I am to submit for consideration the following recommendations:—

(a) A bi-weekly service to and from Bombay, i.e., two mails a week each way.

(b) Tenders should be invited for each service separately and for the two together.

(c) A more convenient port in Italy, for the arrival and departure of mails, would be an advantage inasmuch as passengers and mails could be carried throughout in the one steamer; and the saving effected by doing away with the ferry service from Brindisi to Port Said, would assist in developing a bi-weekly service.

(d) If the cost of an increased speed does not prejudice a bi-weekly service, which is considered very important, the Mails, leaving London the same time as at present, should reach Bombay on Thursday morning and the second service on Monday morning. Failing this the arrivals should be Friday and Tuesday mornings. To the north of England it would be an advantage, however, if letters could be posted up to Friday evening to leave London on Saturday morning or, say, twelve hours later than at present, but this it is understood under present conditions would cause difficulties at the Post Office in London owing to the arrival of the Indian mail on Friday afternoon or evening (this pressure however would be less with a bi-weekly service).

(e) If a bi-weekly service cannot be established, the present mail service should be accelerated by 24 hours.

(f) The days of departure from Bombay should be Wednesday and Saturday.

(g) There can be no question that for India as a whole Bombay is the most convenient and suitable port for the arrival and departure of the European mail.

(h) A direct mail to Karachi would not benefit Bombay nor a large part of India.

(i) Two direct mails a week each way to Bombay are urgently needed and are strongly recommended because

(i) Postal matter to and from this country has very largely increased, as is indicated in the following figures.

Letters from India.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 3,636,000 |
| 1911-12 | 12,305,000 |

Newspapers from India.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 1,221,000 |
| 1911-12 | 2,343,000 |

Parcels from India.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 69,000 |
| 1911-12 | 127,000 |

Letters from the United Kingdom.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 4,270,000 |
| 1911-12 | 14,447,000 |

Newspapers from the United Kingdom.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 118,000 |
| 1911-12 | 13,336,000 |

Parcels from the United Kingdom.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1901 | 118,000 |
| 1911-12 | 332,000 |

(ii) There has been an enormous increase in the volume of trade of the country, since the "once-a week" service was arranged in 1868; the figures are as follows:—

| | |
|---|---|
| 1868 | 110 crores |
| 1912-13 | 435 crores |

(iii) other countries have several Mails a week with Great Britain —Canada, 3 or 4, Australia New Zealand, Ceylon and the Straits Settlements have 9 or 10 opportunities of posting every month.

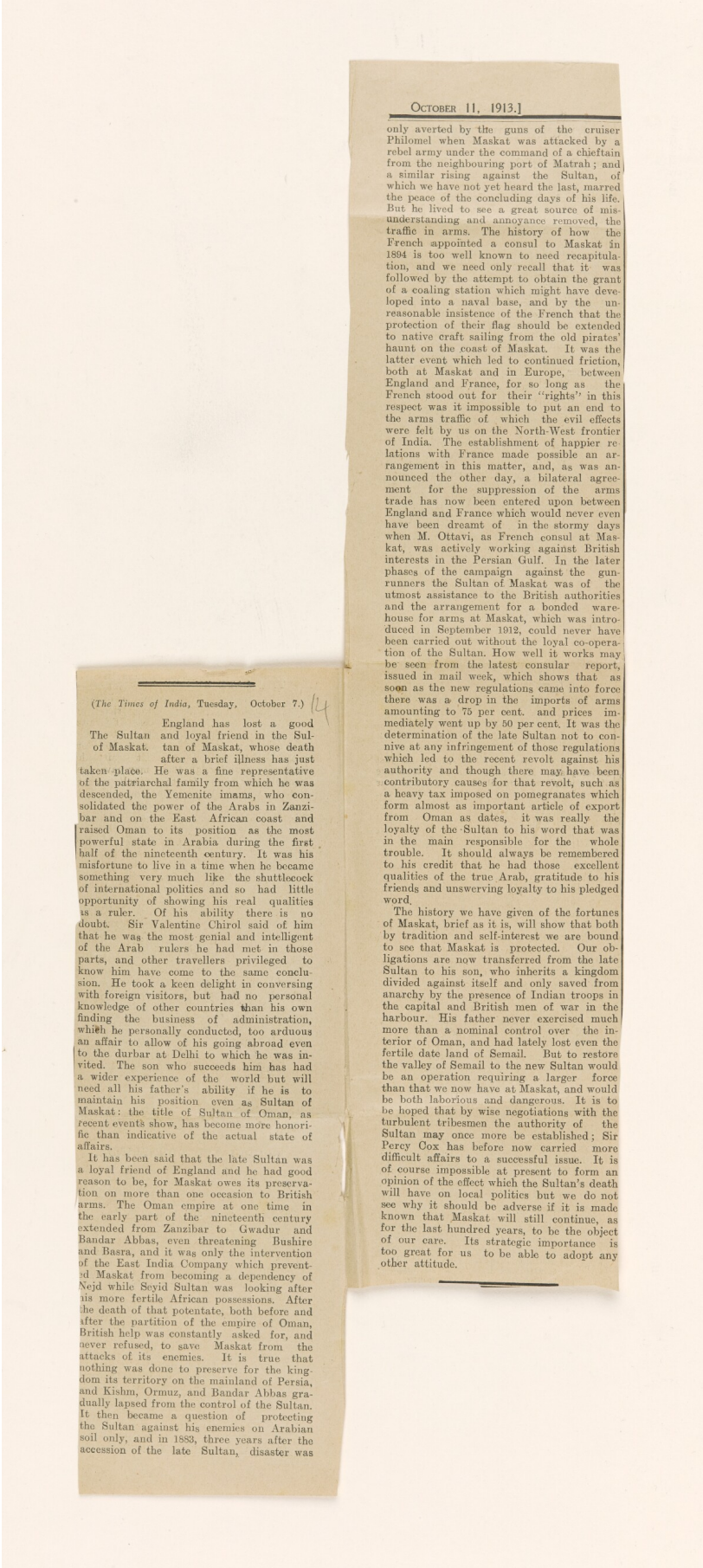
### THE LATE BISHOP COTTON.

Mr. Lewis has reminded us that the Bishop Cotton School is now 50 years old. It is perhaps only natural that we should accept the institutions we find around as part of the natural order of things and it may not be easy for the parents present here to-day to realise that there was a time, and that not so very long ago, when schools to which subordinate officials of English descent in this country could send their children were non-existent or at any rate very few and far between and if this, your jubilee, year it is especially fitting that we should dwell for a moment upon the memory of the great and good Bishop Cotton who saw the danger of a large European population growing up in ignorance and degradation and with unremitting labour and unflagging zeal collected funds in the hope, to use his own words, "that sound physical, intellectual and religious education might under God's blessing not only benefit children likely to remain permanently in the land but might also indirectly tend to remove the barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding which separate the races to whom India is now a common country." I am not going to give you an account of his life which should be familiar to many of you but most of us here can draw encouragement from it. When he was a little boy, school life was rough. He was not good at games and he had rather a bad time and if there are any among you smaller boys who, not having a particularly good time you may take courage from his example and remember that a rather retiring and timid little boy grew up to be a man universally loved and revered with a marvellous influence for good reaching out beyond his own immediate circle. When he became a senior boy he did not forget his own hard times but his kindly ways made the lot of his juniors more tolerable and the older boys among you here may draw your own lessons from that.

### FRIEND AND COUNSELLOR.

Later on as a master he was not at first a brilliant success, he had no marked charm of manner and his boys thought him sarcastic but his simplicity and earnestness combined with kindliness of heart and a quiet humour won its way and he became the trusted friend and counsellor of his pupils. Later he became headmaster at another great school and Mr. Lewis doubtless knows how he re-established the discipline, retored the finances and raised the tone of that school so that it now holds its head high among the leading public schools in England. It is said that under his rule there cricket, football and wholesome sports took the place of poaching, rat-hunting and poultry stealing and I am glad to think that you, sir, are not called upon to effect so serious a transformation.

In later life he once seriously lectured Governor-General and though the lecture was taken in very good part I am not sure that I had quite the proper respect for Governor Generals as a class, for on one occasion I came across the Governor-General's camp when they were both on tour and I am sorry to say that he complained of this in a diary on the ground that the Governor-General threw everything into confusion. It is not, however



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only averted by the guns of the cruiser Philomel when Maskat was attacked by a rebel army under the command of a chieftain from the neighbouring port of Matrah; and a similar rising against the Sultan, of which we have not yet heard the last, marred the peace of the concluding days of his life. But he lived to see a great source of misunderstanding and annoyance removed, the traffic in arms. The history of how the French appointed a consul to Maskat in 1894 is too well known to need recapitulation, and we need only recall that it was followed by the attempt to obtain the grant of a coaling station which might have developed into a naval base, and by the unreasonable insistence of the French that the protection of their flag should be extended to native craft sailing from the old pirates' haunt on the coast of Maskat. It was the latter event which led to continued friction, both at Maskat and in Europe, between England and France, for so long as the French stood out for their "rights" in this respect was it impossible to put an end to the arms traffic of which the evil effects were felt by us on the North-West frontier of India. The establishment of happier relations with France made possible an arrangement in this matter, and, as was announced the other day, a bilateral agreement for the suppression of the arms trade has now been entered upon between England and France which would never even have been dreamt of in the stormy days when M. Ottavi, as French consul at Maskat, was actively working against British interests in the Persian Gulf. In the later phases of the campaign against the gun-runners the Sultan of Maskat was of the utmost assistance to the British authorities and the arrangement for a bonded warehouse for arms at Maskat, which was introduced in September 1912, could never have been carried out without the loyal co-operation of the Sultan. How well it works may be seen from the latest consular report, issued in mail week, which shows that as soon as the new regulations came into force there was a drop in the imports of arms amounting to 75 per cent. and prices immediately went up by 50 per cent. It was the determination of the late Sultan not to connive at any infringement of those regulations which led to the recent revolt against his authority and though there may have been contributory causes for that revolt, such as a heavy tax imposed on pomegranates which form almost as important article of export from Oman as dates, it was really the loyalty of the Sultan to his word that was in the main responsible for the whole trouble. It should always be remembered to his credit that he had those excellent qualities of the true Arab, gratitude to his friends and unswerving loyalty to his pledged word.

The history we have given of the fortunes of Maskat, brief as it is, will show that both by tradition and self-interest we are bound to see that Maskat is protected. Our obligations are now transferred from the late Sultan to his son, who inherits a kingdom divided against itself and only saved from anarchy by the presence of Indian troops in the capital and British men of war in the harbour. His father never exercised much more than a nominal control over the interior of Oman, and had lately lost even the fertile date land of Semail. But to restore the valley of Semail to the new Sultan would be an operation requiring a larger force than that we now have at Maskat, and would be both laborious and dangerous. It is to be hoped that by wise negotiations with the turbulent tribesmen the authority of the Sultan may once more be established; Sir Percy Cox has before now carried more difficult affairs to a successful issue. It is of course impossible at present to form an opinion of the effect which the Sultan's death will have on local politics but we do not see why it should be adverse if it is made known that Maskat will still continue, as for the last hundred years, to be the object of our care. Its strategic importance is too great for us to be able to adopt any other attitude.

(*The Times of India*, Tuesday, October 7.)

## The Sultan of Maskat.

England has lost a good and loyal friend in the Sultan of Maskat, whose death after a brief illness has just taken place. He was a fine representative of the patriarchal family from which he was descended, the Yemenite imams, who consolidated the power of the Arabs in Zanzibar and on the East African coast and raised Oman to its position as the most powerful state in Arabia during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was his misfortune to live in a time when he became something very much like the shuttlecock of international politics and so had little opportunity of showing his real qualities as a ruler. Of his ability there is no doubt. Sir Valentine Chirol said of him that he was the most genial and intelligent of the Arab rulers he had met in those parts, and other travellers privileged to know him have come to the same conclusion. He took a keen delight in conversing with foreign visitors, but had no personal knowledge of other countries than his own finding the business of administration, which he personally conducted, too arduous an affair to allow of his going abroad even to the durbar at Delhi to which he was invited. The son who succeeds him has had a wider experience of the world but will need all his father's ability if he is to maintain his position even as Sultan of Maskat: the title of Sultan of Oman, as recent events show, has become more honorific than indicative of the actual state of affairs.

It has been said that the late Sultan was a loyal friend of England and he had good reason to be, for Maskat owes its preservation on more than one occasion to British arms. The Oman empire at one time in the early part of the nineteenth century extended from Zanzibar to Gwadur and Bandar Abbas, even threatening Bushire and Basra, and it was only the intervention of the East India Company which prevented Maskat from becoming a dependency of Nejd while Seyid Sultan was looking after his more fertile African possessions. After the death of that potentate, both before and after the partition of the empire of Oman, British help was constantly asked for, and never refused, to save Maskat from the attacks of its enemies. It is true that nothing was done to preserve for the kingdom its territory on the mainland of Persia, and Kishm, Ormuz, and Bandar Abbas gradually lapsed from the control of the Sultan. It then became a question of protecting the Sultan against his enemies on Arabian soil only, and in 1883, three years after the accession of the late Sultan, disaster was

deficiency, at least to the extent of showing that, agreement or no agreement, there certainly exists no "*treaty* obligation with the Sheykh of Koweit" such as Sir Edward Grey, who was probably speaking at second-hand without having personally examined the case, at first referred to. The *status quo* in the Gulf, briefly stated, is this :—

A hundred years ago the technical sovereignty of the Gulf was vested on its two shores in the Ottoman Sultan and the Persian Shah respectively. This had been the case as regards Northern Arabia since the seventeenth century. But both Empires had become so feeble that the practical power of the Gulf had been usurped by the Wahhabi monarchy which held the Arabian sea coast in subjection and terrorised the Persian littoral. It was a state of things not very different from that of the Egyptian Soudan and the Red Sea coast in the time of the Mahdi's rebellion, only that, steam navigation being yet unknown, foreign trade in those waters was at the mercy of the Wahhabi sea-raiders, as were the desert frontiers of Syria and Mesopotamia to their raiders by land. As far north as Palmyra the villages outside the line of cultivation, without troops to defend them and abandoned administratively, had to make their terms as they best could with the marauding emirs and, though still nominally Ottoman, reverted to the sole rule of their local Sheykhs. Among these was Koweit, or as it was then generally called Grain, an insignificant village or small town at the head of the Gulf forming part of the Pashalik of Bagdad. It may be found included in the lists of towns of the Pashalik of that date, including a French list in my possession dated 1809.

A little later, the Wahhabi power having been broken by Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, acting in the Sultan's name, the Gulf became, if possible, still more disturbed, each sea port carrying on its own piratical raids against its neighbours and to such an extent that in 1820 the British Government in conjunction with the East India Company resolved to police its waters, and partly by force, partly by persuasion, the Sheykhs of the south-eastern half of the Gulf were brought into what was called the "Truce of the Gulf." England did not assume sovereignty or formal protection over any part of the coast, but exercised coercive authority for the keeping of the peace by sea. I cannot find that the Sheykh of Koweit was ever included among the Trucial Chiefs, or that Koweit was ever subject to Wahhabi rule. Its inhabitants were a valiant people and managed to maintain themselves behind their walls and they were also strong at sea. Their position had remained under the old feudal system of the Ottoman Empire one of semi-independence, just as had the towns occupied by the Montefik Arabs on the right bank of the Euphrates. They were neither taxed nor conscripted but acted as guardians of the river mouth for the Government. Midhat Pasha gives an interesting account of them and their earlier status in his memoirs. Their Sheykhs of the Ibn Sebah family claimed descent from the Muteyr tribe of Nejd but had migrated north many generations before and had settled first, according to Pelly, who visited Koweit in 1864, at Om-Kamr, at the head of the Zobeir creek in the network of the Euphrates river system, and had built the fort of Koweit ("Koweit" means a little fort) a few miles further south on the Arabian shore. Sometimes pirates, according to Pelly, and always keen traders they had been latterly active in putting down piracy. Midhat's account of them and of how he "regularised" their position in 1871, and reincorporated them formally, with their Sheykh's and their own consent, as part of the Ottoman Empire, their administrative independence being left untouched, is thus described :

"Sixty miles from Bussora, and on the coast of Nedjed, is situated the little town of Koweit, of six thousand houses, the inhabitants of which are all Mussulmans. Midhat Pasha's predecessor, Namik Pasha, had endeavoured to bring this population within the influence of his jurisdiction, but they successfully resisted all attempts at imposing taxation upon them, and had maintained their quasi-independence under their own chiefs, the descendants of one Sabah, who had come with this tribe of "Moutayer" from Nedjed five hundred years before, and had maintained ever since with practical independence a republican form of government, choosing by election their own judges (cadis) and the professors of their religious schools (medresses). Owing to the restricted extent of their territory, the inhabitants, like those of Venice, took chiefly to maritime pursuits, and upwards of two hundred small vessels of various tonnage traversed in every direction the Indian Ocean, as far as the coasts of Zanzibar, and practically monopolised the pearl fisheries of the Persian Gulf. Although they had adopted a special flag of their own, they occasionally hoisted a Dutch or English flag, to secure certain privileges accorded to these flags by the capitulations. It seemed highly desirable to Midhat Pasha to put an end to this equivocal status of the inhabitants of Koweit, and to regularise their position. He accordingly entered into negotiations with them, and offered the full enjoyment of their autonomy and privileges under the government of their own Sheikh Sabah, provided they recognised themselves as forming part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire, and adopted the Ottoman flag as their national ensign. These conditions were accepted by the people of Koweit, and their territory became a sandjak of the vilayet of Bagdad. A formal treaty to that effect was drawn up and signed and confirmed by berats (writs of investiture) from Constantinople, and new schools and mosques arose in Koweit."

I do not know that there is any reason for doubting the accuracy of this account. It is certainly confirmed by that very careful writer on Arabian affairs, Mr. Hogarth, in his recent book, "The Penetration of Arabia," who says of the transaction, "When the Sheykh of Koweit declared for Midhat in 1871 he received a pledge that his town should enjoy administrative autonomy, but as an Ottoman kaza, in which he accepted for himself and his heirs the position of hereditary kaimmakam (lieutenant-governor). Turkey therefore is not without such rights to Koweit as in the comity of nations are usually allowed to be paramount and exclusive."

What, then, is our English Foreign Office case? Are its claims of such validity that Sir Edward Grey should be able to come forward and declare that England is under "treaty obligations" towards the Sheykh of Koweit, obligations which she is bound to maintain? Looked at from a professional point of view, it would seem absurd that the kaimmakam, or lieutenant-governor of an Ottoman kaza, or district, should have contracted any "treaty" with a foreign Power implying "protective rights" over his district or towards himself recognisable by any interpretation of international law. Whatever may have been his predecessor's once independent status, it is quite clear that, forty years after its formal surrender to the Sultan, Mubarak Ibn Sabah cannot pretend to any right of sovereignty now. Nor is it possible that, bereft of sovereignty and holding his place under an acknowledged sovereign overlord, he can any longer possess a treaty-making power of the smallest legal validity. Treaties are between Sovereigns and Sovereign States alone, and cannot be contracted by lieutenant-governors on their own responsibility. Sir Edward Grey seems to have discovered this legal flaw since he made his first speech, and so now calls it an "agreement," while he also abandons the "protective" right, at first assumed, in his answer to Mr. Dillon. As well might the Emperor of Germany have claimed to have "treaty obligations" with the Sultan of Johore, with Rajah Brooke of Borneo, or under a Home Rule *régime* with an hereditary Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Secret "agreements" between a foreign Sovereign and the vassals of other Sovereigns are of course not unknown to diplomatic history, but they have usually been called not "treaties" but "intrigues."

Of such kind, it is quite clear, has been the unpublished agreement made with the Sheykh of Koweit. We know enough about it to be sure of its date—January 23, 1899—and that it was entered into by Colonel Meade, acting on instructions from Lord Curzon — Lord Curzon himself has acknowledged that; and we know that the document promised the Sheykh English protection against his Sovereign Lord the Sultan, and that his consent to it was gained by a "consideration"—that is to say,

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by money. And lastly we know that since then the commanders of British gunboats, acting on Lord Curzon's instructions, have more than once intervened in the affairs of Koweit, and on one occasion landed troops to help Mubarak against the attack of a hostile force sent against him by the Emir of Haïl. This is what we know, but what has never been explained has been the underlying motive of action so irregular on the part of the Viceroy of India in concert with the London Foreign Office. I will endeavour to supply the deficiency of official information, which it is quite certain Sir Edward Grey will continue his refusal of, by relating what I know, not of the text of the so-called treaty, but of the part it was intended to play in the Imperial programme of the time, and of the uses to which it has since been put.

To understand the full import of Colonel Meade's mission it is necessary to recall to memory the ideas and plans and aspirations current at the time among the young Tory fire-eaters of the day on foreign affairs, the men in Parliament whom Lord Curzon had been leading for several years as Under Secretary at the Foreign Office. The autumn of 1898, which is the date of Lord Curzon's assumption of the Viceregal dignity at Calcutta, may be reckoned as marking the extreme high-water level of English aggressive imperialism.

The battle of Omdurman had not long been fought, and it had been followed by the French capitulation in respect to the Marchand mission at Fashoda. We were all dancing on the corpse of France, and prepared to dance upon as many other corpses as we might get under our heels. As Gordon had been avenged at Khartoum, so Majuba, the young Tories said, was to be avenged in South Africa. Egypt had been jockeyed out of her rights at the recapture of the Soudan. All the Nile now was to be British from the Equatorial Lakes to the Mediterranean. Promises of evacuation and pledges did not count. The only test of legality was possession, of wisdom success, of morality in a nation imperial power.

The ideas of these young men were grandiose. Lord Salisbury had partitioned out North Africa. They who were of the rising generation would partition out what remained of the world in Asia. Nay, they would grab it all. The world was for the strong, for the unscrupulous; and who so strong, so unscrupulous, as they? It was the Welt-politik Anglicised. France was out of the running, as were the rest of the Latin nations. The race for the world's hegemony lay between the Anglo-Saxon, the Teuton, and the Slav. They were determined the Anglo-Saxon should be the winner. The immediate prospect before them, when they should have settled the little matter with Kruger, would be to take advantage of the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, which they calculated would be at the death of Abdul Hamid, then believed to be not far off, to grab the larger portion of the inheritance, Arabia, the Lower Euphrates, Syria, while, further East, the glory of the Moghul Empire was to be revived in the person of the Queen-Empress, and with it the hegemony of Islam, perhaps the Caliphate.

These, I say, were the dreams of the young men who looked on Lord Curzon as their most ambitious representative; nor can we doubt that they were also present in his own mind as a thing possible of achievement. His appointment to India seemed the opening scene of the new policy, and what more natural than that the first move in the game should be in the direction of Arabia and the Persian Gulf, so as to forestall the possible competition of Germany and Russia? Lord Curzon was already well acquainted with Persia; he had travelled there; he had written a book about it; and he understood Gulf politics and the value of the ports on the Arabian Coast as gates to the interior of the Peninsula. It was a sore point at the India Office that Midhat had been allowed to recapture all these in the northern portion of the Gulf for the Sultan. The Sheykh of the island of Bahreyn had appealed to England in 1871, and had received naval protection, but as an island it was of insufficient value for the present purpose. Koweit alone was without a Turkish garrison on that side of the Gulf, and might with prompt measures be secured in English interests. It was the port used by the tribes of Nejd for their export trade in horses with Bombay. It was the only practical entrance left for communication with inner Arabia. Moreover, it was possessed of a good roadstead, and would be the natural terminus of any railway which might be run from the Mediterranean to the Gulf. There was talk already of a German line through Asia Minor to Bagdad. There had been an old scheme of an English one from Alexandretta, and enthusiastic imperialists had begun to think of yet one more imperially important line which should unite Egypt, now held to be part of the British Empire, through the northern Arabian desert to the head of the Gulf and eventually through Southern Persia and Beluchistan to India, an all-British route for the future.

These were the objects which cannot but have been in Lord Curzon's mind when, as almost his first act as Viceroy, he sent Colonel Meade to Koweit to repeat with Mubarak Ibn Sebah the same agreement of practical if informal protectorate of his territory as that with Bahreyn, one which should ensure to England control over the head of the Gulf, the terminus of any possible railway, a future naval station, and a gate of communication with the interior of Arabia. These were certainly the objects of the mission. The uses made of the position thus obtained are less well known. Apart from the leverage furnished by the assertion of treaty rights at Koweit against the German railway company's proposal to Mubarak of making its terminus there in 1900, and its re-assertion from time to time with the same object since, it is not, I think, within general knowledge, though it is nevertheless a fact, that Mubarak was made to serve the Indian Government as a medium of communication with the tribes of Nejd in the intrigues carried on with them in Lord Curzon's time, when English influence was sought to be exerted in Nejd politics during the wars which broke out among them consequent on the death of the Emir Mohammed Ibn Rashid of Hail. Mubarak's tribal sympathies were with the revolt against Mohammed's successors, and as these successors were supported by the Ottoman Government, he was made the means of communicating the assurance of English sympathy to the revolting tribes, and, what is more, of providing them with arms. I make this statement with the assurance of what I may call personal knowledge, having received my information of the fact from more than one Arabian source at the time alluded to. It is not a little amusing, recollecting what I then learned as to the rifles supplied through Koweit, not ten years ago, to the tribes of Arabia, to listen now to Lord Curzon declaiming in the House of Lords against the nefarious traffic in arms carried on by French firms through Muscat with the Persian and Baluchi coast for use in Afghanistan.

As far as I know, these intrigues ceased with Lord Curzon's retirement from India and the change of Government at home in 1905, while the glorious plan of partitioning the Ottoman Empire to England's profit has vanished from the Foreign Office's imperial programme. The "Outlook" and the "Pall Mall Gazette," representing the cruder aspirations of the Tory party, still talk from time to time of these things and of the all-British railway from the Suez Canal through Northern Arabia and Persia to the Indus. But it is with diminished faith; and Sir Edward Grey's latest pronouncements seem to indicate that they are no longer seriously entertained in Downing Street. Sir Edward is silent about it all, but he would do better, I think, to make a clean breast of the whole of the Koweit intrigue, which, after all, was none of his, for, if accompanied with an act of contrition for the past and a sincere purpose of amendment, it would do more than anything else to restore Ottoman confidence in British good faith. But this, I suppose, we can hardly expect. I offer the idea to him nevertheless as a valuable suggestion, and one which may save him and his successors at the Foreign Office much trouble in a not very remote future.

Province of Dakahlieh: 97 Moslems, £E900; 350 Copts, £E1,330.
Province of Charkieh: 123 Moslems, £E1,076; 233 Copts, £E1,220.
Province of Galioubieh: 50 Moslems, £E587; 117 Copts, £E652.
Province of Ghizeh: 72 Moslems and 182 Copts.
Province of Fayoum: 68 Moslems, £E587; 168 Copts, £E879.
Province of Beni-Souef: 63 Moslems, £E540; 146 Copts, £E771.
Province of Minieh: 98 Moslems, £E926; 242 Copts, £E1,150.
Province of Assiout: 82 Moslems, £920; 395 Copts, £E1,870.
Province of Ghirgeh: 38 Moslems, £E470; 309 Copts, £E1,530.
Province of Keneh: 60 Moslems, £E660; 264 Copts, £E1,400.
Province of Assouan: 42 Moslems, £E430; 102 Copts, £E550.

## THE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK IN EGYPT.

THE reports from Egypt on the economic situation are couched in highly optimistic terms. It would seem as if the country were really at last passing out of the crisis into which it was thrown in 1907. The process of recuperation has been rather slow—indeed, slower than anywhere else in the world; but the bottom of the downward movement was reached, it would seem, in 1909, and now there is jubilation once more in the columns of the Government Press. The cotton crop of 1910-11 has been an excellent one, the cotton prices are ruling higher than ever, and the fellah (so says the "Egyptian Gazette") is hoarding up gold to an unprecedented extent. This means that the Government revenue will also rise. The fellah cannot eat the cotton which he grows on his field. He has to sell it, and by selling it he puts into motion the entire commercial machinery of the country, which yields as a by-product grist to the Government mill. The railways are working, and the receipts of the railway department grow. Ships bring foreign produce, including food, which the fellah has to buy, and the customs department makes a roaring trade by charging every article eight per cent. *ad valorem*, with the exception of coal and a few other commodities which pay only four per cent. At the same time, hoarding or no hoarding, the fellah has to meet the demands of the tax-gatherer, who is also the collector of interest for Sir Ernest Cassel's Agricultural Bank, and is carefully watching the moment when the fellah gets his cash. Thus the Government will greatly benefit by the economic recuperation of the country. But a short time ago its financial position was so bad that it was ready to barter away a considerable portion of the national revenue from the Suez Canal for the sake of a paltry advance of £4,000,000; and when the scheme lamentably broke down, the Financial Adviser, in his Budget Note, submitted just before Christmas, could not refrain from expressing his despair at the fact that "the rejection of the Suez Canal scheme had thrown the Government back on its own resources." Now these resources will improve, and the Government will have no need to revert to the Moukábala methods of Ismail Pasha's finance.

Yet consider how insecure all this prosperity and improvement is. It is all based on one factor—the cotton crop. Few people realise what this means. Out of a total export of £E28,944,000 in 1910 no less than 91.2 per cent. (£E26.4 millions) were made up of cotton, including seed. Comparing this with the figures for previous years we find the following movement in Egyptian total and cotton exports:—

| Years. | Total Export. £E | Export of Cotton. £E | Per cent. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1888-90 ... | 13,507,000 ... | 9,063,000 ... | 67.1 |
| 1891-93 ... | 15,707,000 ... | 10,102,000 ... | 61.1 |
| 1894-96 ... | 14,875,000 ... | 10,592,000 ... | 71.2 |
| 1897-99 ... | 15,706,000 ... | 11,102,000 ... | 70.6 |
| 1900-02 ... | 19,959,000 ... | 14,857,000 ... | 74.8 |
| 1903-05 ... | 23,905,000 ... | 18,472,000 ... | 76.7 |
| 1906-08 ... | 28,929,000 ... | 23,466,000 ... | 81.1 |
| 1909 ... | 26,076,000 ... | 21,478,000 ... | 82.3 |

The table shows in the clearest manner possible to what an extent cotton has encroached, during the last twenty-three years, upon all other articles of export. Moreover, the figures for cotton in the above do not include those for cotton seed, the exported value of which amounted in 1908 to £E2,471,000, and in 1909 to £E2,433,000. Adding these values to the cotton exports as quoted above, we find the per cent. share of the latter in the total exports to be 91.7 in 1909, and 91.2 in 1910. What should we think of the "prosperity" of England if over 90 per cent. of the value of her exports were composed, say, of coal?

The unreal value of such a prosperity is obvious à priori, and it has been made manifest recently on several occasions. In 1909 something like thirty per cent. of the crop was destroyed, it is said, by the worm, and as a result we know that the Agricultural Bank had to proceed against no fewer than 40,000 defaulters, of whom the great majority owed sums amounting to less than £50. The shortage in 1908 for the same or similar reasons amounted to 100,000,000 pounds, and according to the estimates of Ismail Abaza Pasha the country must have lost in that and the following year no less than £8,000,000. A similar affliction befell the country in 1904, and the peasant and farmer class lost quite £2,000,000 on the Government's own showing. These are quite elementary facts, but their significance is enhanced by the circumstance that Egypt, having all its domestic industries crushed by direct and indirect legislative and administrative action, is more than any other country in the world dependent for its existence upon its export trade. It produces none of the innumerable manufactured and semi-manufactured articles which are required for the common use of the people, and even the bulk of its food-stuffs is imported from abroad. The loss of its cotton crop is, therefore, a loss of everything by which the masses of the people live, and leads to wholesale starvation and heavy indebtedness at the hands of village usurers. If, then, for a year or two no further accident happens, and the cotton crop is good, the peasant at best can only retrieve but in no wise improve his former position, and he remains as poor as he ever was before.

Again, it is necessary to note that though the value of the cotton exports is constantly increasing, the production of cotton does not by any means keep pace with it, or, we should rather say, is not responsible for it. It is now an established fact, however much official optimists may try to confuse it, that the yield of cotton per acre is steadily decreasing and has, even on such rationally-managed estates as those of the State Domains, fallen by 50 per cent. since the middle of the 'nineties. If, nevertheless, the aggregate production of cotton keeps on steadily expanding, it is solely due to the activity of the Irrigation Department, which brings every year fresh areas under cultivation. This explains the frantic efforts of the Egyptian Government in extending the net of irrigation works, for if no fresh lands could be reclaimed from the desert, the diminishing returns per acre would have long ago revealed themselves in the shrinkage of the aggregate cotton production. But even as it is, the quantity of cotton exported since the three years 1888-1890 has only increased from 3.0 million to 6.9 million kantars, that is, by a little over 100 per cent., whereas its value has increased from £E9.0 million to £E26.0 million, that is, by nearly 200 per cent. It is clear that the prosperous condition of the cotton trade is largely due to the rise of prices. Indeed, we know that between the triennial period just mentioned and the present day the price of cotton per kantar has increased from £E2.95 to something like £E4.00. But are these inflated prices stable, and are they good in themselves? People are still at a loss to account for the causes of the grave crisis which broke out in Egypt in 1907; yet they are lying, so to say, on the surface: between July, 1907, and January, 1908, the average price of cotton fell by 25 per cent., and the cotton grower lost heavily. Moreover, as the price and rent of the land (the former being but the capitalised value of the latter) are determined by the value of its product, the fall in the value of cotton led to a collapse of prices on the land market, and a general financial collapse set in. In fact, as a writer in the "Siècle" recently pointed out, the high prices of cotton are leading everywhere to a rise of rents, which tells disastrously on the small peasant, and by enhancing the speculative value of the land itself, prevents its subdivision and encourages its concentration. And the writer draws attention to the fact that whereas in France and in the United States the number of people living directly by agriculture forms 47.4 and 35.7 per cent. respectively of the total population, yet in Egypt, that classical land of agriculture, it does not exceed 20 per cent. These facts may perhaps temper the joy of the favourite Occupation organ, the "Egyptian Gazette," which has discovered a great consolation in the fact that in the course of the last ten years the price of agricultural land in Egypt has increased from £50 to £110 per acre, and that in the three last months of 1910 no fewer than 11,000 acres exchanged hands.

On the whole, and speaking without bias, we are unable to share the optimism with which the economic prospects of the new year are viewed in Egypt. No doubt the Stock Exchange will do well by speculations in cotton and in land; the large proprietor, the banks, and the revenue departments of the Government will also have cause to rub their hands with satisfaction. The country as a whole, however, will be as sick as ever, and the peasant as poor and wretched as we have known him for years.

DELTA.

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH.

The most notable event of the month is, without doubt, Sir Edward Grey's pronouncement about an Arbitration Treaty of Alliance with America. We should be glad to look at this idea with the enthusiasm displayed by those who listened to his words, an enthusiasm repeated by the press and in the pulpit as an earnest of universal peace and the general brotherhood of man. But how can we believe it to be even a first step to such an ideal?

To us it seems far more probable that such an alliance, if it was seriously proposed, between the two great sections of the English speaking world, however desirable in itself the thing might seem here, would have the effect of bringing Europe together against us in jealousy of what would be regarded as a bid by the Anglo-Saxon race for the hegemony of the world. England and America between them already dominate half the globe, and their alliance would make it a necessity with Europe to unite against them, and to see to it that the British Isles, which are an integral part of Europe, should not be usable as a foothold at their doors for the countless trans-Atlantic millions of the near future to their hurt.

This is one thing to be considered. Another is the ruin to their independence which would certainly await the weaker races of mankind were the strong to combine against them in separate leagues of peace. There is a good old proverb which says, "When thieves fall out honest men come by their own," and the converse is as strictly true. We agree with Mr. John Dillon in all he said on this head in the Navy debate, and we reprint his words below.

A third point is Sir Edward Grey's record as a champion arbitrator. We would ask some questions about this. When President Kruger proposed to submit the Transvaal quarrel to arbitration, was Sir Edward among those who urged such a settlement? No. He was, on the contrary, one of the strongest Liberals for war. Sir Edward has been five years in office; has he ever proposed to submit the case of England's position in Egypt to a Court of Law? Did he so submit the case of Akaba in his quarrel with the Sultan? No. He mobilised the British fleet. Did he ever say a word suggesting his readiness to refer his quarrel with the Egyptian nation to European decision at a Conference or at the Hague? No. He has declared the continuance of the Occupation of Egypt to be a British necessity, a duty of honour, and has proposed to increase the English garrison at Cairo and rule, if necessary, by martial law. Did he settle his difficulties with Russia in the East by arbitration? No. He concluded a secret treaty with her for the partition of Persia, of a most war-inviting kind.

Here is from Mr. Dillon's speech, given in Hansard, the passage that most concerns us. It is eloquent of the underlying wrong certain to be done to weak nations by these imperial peace combinations of the strong:—

"This (arbitration) proposal, as I heard the Foreign Secretary lay it before the House, had reference only to mighty Empires, whose position in the world has been established and secured. They were invited by the Foreign Secretary to enter into treaties offensive and defensive to coerce other countries who would not submit to arbitration. But what about the struggling nationalities who are now crushed under the hoof and in the power of these great Empires? Are they to be admitted to arbitration? What if Egypt asks for arbitration against the British occupation? What if Persia asks for arbitration against the Anglo-Russian agreement which has condemned her to partition? Does the right honourable gentleman propose that these should be allowed to ask for arbitration? I should like to hear that side of the question, belonging as I do to a conquered nation. I should like to hear that side of the proposal worked out before I could give my adhesion to it, or before I looked upon it with any hope and enthusiasm, with regard to its effect on the future of mankind."

In connection with this important question we are glad to see that the Universal Races Congress is announced to be held at the London University, July 26 to 29 next, under the presidency of Lord Weardale, an excellent man for the position, as his sympathies with the weaker races is of life-long standing, and we may be sure that their interests will have fair play under his chairmanship. There are good names, too, on the Executive Committee—notably those of Mr. Swinny and Mr. Ratcliffe, of the Sociological Society—who have proved themselves to be good friends to Nationalism.

We are glad that the Congress has dropped the word "*Subject* Races" from its title, which would have made it difficult to include the Egyptian question in its programme, as Egypt is hardly yet a subject nation, though suffering wrong at foreign hands. Papers are to be read, the object of which, it is announced, will be "to discuss in the light of modern knowledge and modern science the general relations subsisting between the peoples of the West and those of the East, between so-called white and so-called coloured people, with a view to encouraging between them a fuller understanding, the most friendly feelings and a heartier co-operation." It is added that "Political issues of the hour will be subordinated to this comprehensive end"; but it is difficult to see how these can in some cases be avoided. We notice that Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., will read a paper on the opening day on "National Autonomy and Civic Responsibility." We shall be curious to hear how he treats in it the autonomy of Egypt.

## KOWEIT.

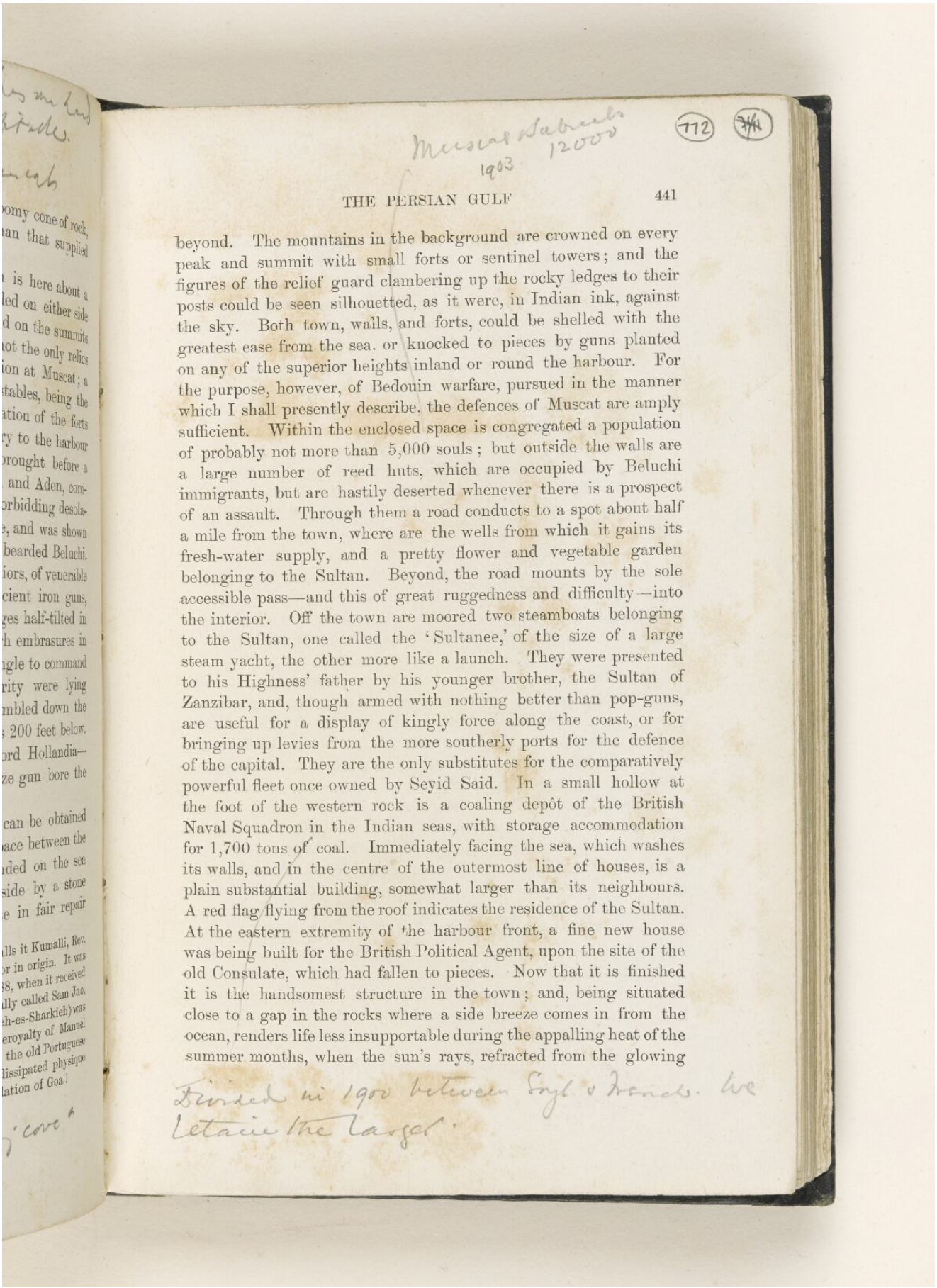
BY EX-DIPLOMATICUS.

*(Specially written for "Egypt.")*

Sir Edward Grey's concession of what is practically the whole Bagdad Railway case to Germany, in the recent debate, was as dignified a performance as such feats of climbing down are capable of being made. The position he and his predecessor Mr. Balfour had taken up was an untenable one, and he abandoned it with such honours of war as a frank avowal of impotence can give. Sir Edward's is an impressive personality, and his attitude in the debate seemed to realise Mr. Wells's ideal of British statesmanship, ready when confronted with something beyond its strength "proudly and very firmly to take a second place."

As such it has been joyously received at Constantinople and Berlin, and there is good prospect now of an amicable settlement on reasonable terms; nor, while negotiation is proceeding, would I say a word more than I ventured last month, were it not for the flourish about the "*status quo* in the Persian Gulf" and England's "treaty obligations to the Skeykh of Koweit" with which Sir Edward consoled the disappointment of his Tory friends at the end of his speech. His words in the debate need emphasizing, because, since they were uttered, he has climbed yet a little lower with regard to them in an answer given to Mr. Dillon. His original words were these: "We are not anxious to have a forward policy in the Persian Gulf to acquire new territory or disturb the *status quo*, but if the *status quo* is going to be disturbed by others then we must undoubtedly use our resources to maintain the position we have in the Persian Gulf. Part of the *status quo* is that we have entered into treaty obligations with the Sheykh of Koweit, and in any negotiations which there may be or in any changes which may take place it is an obligation upon us to see our treaty obligations towards the Sheykh of Koweit in maintaining his position are fulfilled." Mr. Dillon very legitimately asked what these "treaty obligations" were, whereupon, in refusing information, Sir Edward Grey quietly shifted the word "treaty" into "agreement," a change worthy of attention, as it indicates to the Diplomatic eye a new abandonment of yet another impossible position.

What the *status quo* in the Gulf in its connection with Koweit really is is worth examining, for it is abundantly evident from the subsequent debate in the Lords that the Foreign Office has no intention of giving us the text of any authoritative document which could make it clear, and I will endeavour to supply the



Muscat Subjects 12000 1903

772



beyond. The mountains in the background are crowned on every peak and summit with small forts or sentinel towers; and the figures of the relief guard clambering up the rocky ledges to their posts could be seen silhouetted, as it were, in Indian ink, against the sky. Both town, walls, and forts, could be shelled with the greatest ease from the sea. or knocked to pieces by guns planted on any of the superior heights inland or round the harbour. For the purpose, however, of Bedouin warfare, pursued in the manner which I shall presently describe, the defences of Muscat are amply sufficient. Within the enclosed space is congregated a population of probably not more than 5,000 souls; but outside the walls are a large number of reed huts, which are occupied by Beluchi immigrants, but are hastily deserted whenever there is a prospect of an assault. Through them a road conducts to a spot about half a mile from the town, where are the wells from which it gains its fresh-water supply, and a pretty flower and vegetable garden belonging to the Sultan. Beyond, the road mounts by the sole accessible pass—and this of great ruggedness and difficulty—into the interior. Off the town are moored two steamboats belonging to the Sultan, one called the 'Sultanee,' of the size of a large steam yacht, the other more like a launch. They were presented to his Highness' father by his younger brother, the Sultan of Zanzibar, and, though armed with nothing better than pop-guns, are useful for a display of kingly force along the coast, or for bringing up levies from the more southerly ports for the defence of the capital. They are the only substitutes for the comparatively powerful fleet once owned by Seyid Said. In a small hollow at the foot of the western rock is a coaling depôt of the British Naval Squadron in the Indian seas, with storage accommodation for 1,700 tons of coal. Immediately facing the sea, which washes its walls, and in the centre of the outermost line of houses, is a plain substantial building, somewhat larger than its neighbours. A red flag flying from the roof indicates the residence of the Sultan. At the eastern extremity of the harbour front, a fine new house was being built for the British Political Agent, upon the site of the old Consulate, which had fallen to pieces. Now that it is finished it is the handsomest structure in the town; and, being situated close to a gap in the rocks where a side breeze comes in from the ocean, renders life less insupportable during the appalling heat of the summer months, when the sun's rays, refracted from the glowing

Divided in 1900 between Engl. & French. We retain the larger.

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rocks, seem literally to scorch, and the rocks themselves are like the walls of a brazen oven.

Climate

The climate of Muscat in summer is, indeed, an exceptional horror, and has tested alike the vocabulary and the imagination of the most fanciful writers. John Struys, the Dutchman, who was here in 1672, said that it was 'so incredible hot and scorching that strangers are as if they were in boiling cauldrons or in sweating-tubs.' But his description pales before the rhetorical flights of the worthy Abdur Rezak, before quoted, who in May 1442 had left on record that

> The heat was so intense that it burned the marrow in the bones; the sword in its scabbard melted like wax, and the gems which adorned the handle of the dagger were reduced to coal. In the plains the chase became a matter of perfect ease, for the desert was filled with roasted gazelles.[1]

Of more practical value as evidence will be the statement that in the heats between June and August, the ordinary thermometer bursts, and that those graded high enough have placed the solar radiation at 189° Fahr. The rainfall is only three and a half inches in the year, and the whole of this falls within a period of two or three weeks.

City and people

The town itself is one of no size or pretentiousness. The Sultan's house can scarcely be designated a palace. Inside the gateway a fine lion is kept in a cage on the one side. A miserable woman was immured in a similar den upon the other, and was said to have committed a murder. I asked whether this ominous juxtaposition portended the approaching doom of the culprit; but was relieved to hear that murder was by no means regarded in Oman as an offence deserving so bloody a retribution. The bazaar at Muscat is small and very narrow, there being barely room to pass in the alleys. Hindus monopolise the more respectable shops. Natives were busily engaged in cooking *hulwah*, a glutinous compound of clarified butter (*ghi*), flour, sugar, and water, flavoured with grated almonds or pistachios, which resembles half-melted butter-scotch, and is greedily consumed by the Arab stomach. Every man carried in his belt a small dagger with curving blade and scabbard richly ornamented with silver, and most were armed in addition with immensely long single-barrelled matchlock guns, also silver-plated, and with deer's hide bound round their stocks.

[1] *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society), p. 9.

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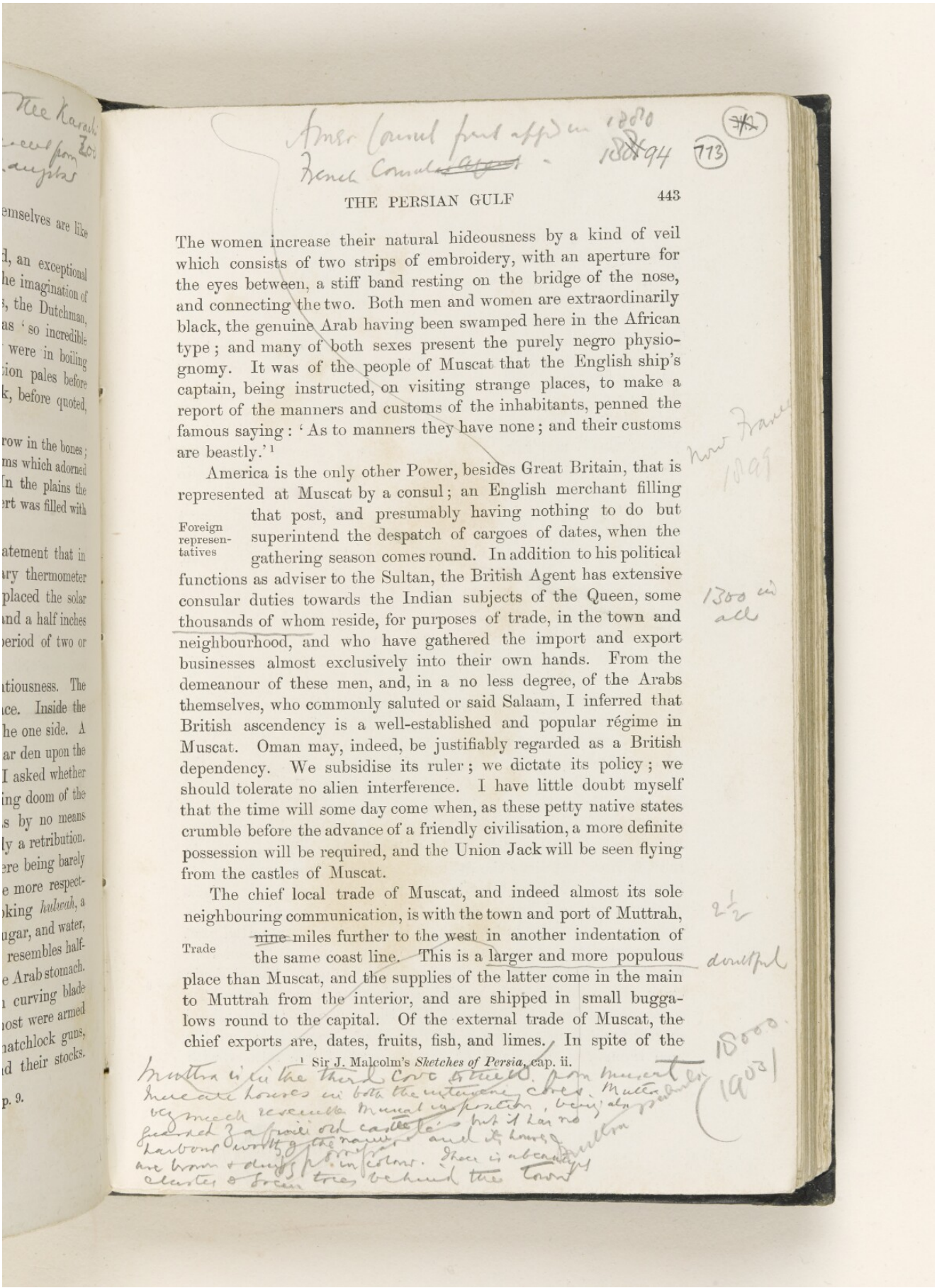



The women increase their natural hideousness by a kind of veil which consists of two strips of embroidery, with an aperture for the eyes between, a stiff band resting on the bridge of the nose, and connecting the two. Both men and women are extraordinarily black, the genuine Arab having been swamped here in the African type; and many of both sexes present the purely negro physiognomy. It was of the people of Muscat that the English ship's captain, being instructed, on visiting strange places, to make a report of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, penned the famous saying: 'As to manners they have none; and their customs are beastly.'[1]

America is the only other Power, besides Great Britain, that is represented at Muscat by a consul; an English merchant filling that post, and presumably having nothing to do but superintend the despatch of cargoes of dates, when the gathering season comes round. In addition to his political functions as adviser to the Sultan, the British Agent has extensive consular duties towards the Indian subjects of the Queen, some thousands of whom reside, for purposes of trade, in the town and neighbourhood, and who have gathered the import and export businesses almost exclusively into their own hands. From the demeanour of these men, and, in a no less degree, of the Arabs themselves, who commonly saluted or said Salaam, I inferred that British ascendency is a well-established and popular régime in Muscat. Oman may, indeed, be justifiably regarded as a British dependency. We subsidise its ruler; we dictate its policy; we should tolerate no alien interference. I have little doubt myself that the time will some day come when, as these petty native states crumble before the advance of a friendly civilisation, a more definite possession will be required, and the Union Jack will be seen flying from the castles of Muscat.

Foreign representatives

The chief local trade of Muscat, and indeed almost its sole neighbouring communication, is with the town and port of Muttrah, ~~nine~~ miles further to the west in another indentation of the same coast line. This is a larger and more populous place than Muscat, and the supplies of the latter come in the main to Muttrah from the interior, and are shipped in small buggalows round to the capital. Of the external trade of Muscat, the chief exports are, dates, fruits, fish, and limes. In spite of the

Trade

[1] Sir J. Malcolm's *Sketches of Persia*, cap. ii.

unpromising appearance of the coast, a profusion of excellent fruits is grown in gardens and orchards lying some miles inland. Grapes, mangoes, peaches, plantains, figs, pomegranates, melons, oranges, lemons, walnuts, as well as dates, and sour and sweet limes, are there produced; and vegetables and flowers are grown with equal ease. For their fish the waters of Oman are famous; the harbour is sometimes alive with them; and immense numbers are captured without difficulty, and utilised as food both for cattle and men. The chief imports are, Bengal rice, sugar, coffee, cotton fabrics (Manchester and Bombay), twist and yarn, silks, and oil, opium, pearls, wheat, and salt. The total value of exports for 1888–9 was returned as 210,000*l.*, of imports 280,000*l.*; but, owing to the unscientific manner in which these statistics are calculated, the same item, if re-exported, appearing both in the import and export columns furnished by the Custom-house, they do not give an accurate idea of the total volume of trade. The customs, however, are farmed by a Bhatia merchant for 115,000 reals, or, approximately, 17,000*l.*; a sum which indicates a total not far inferior to that above stated, a five per cent. *ad valorem* duty being charged upon all merchandise, imported or exported.

As I have before mentioned, Seyid Feysul had for some time in 1889 been expecting a hostile movement on the part of his uncle Abdul Aziz. It was in October 1883 that the latter, who had now been in fitful rebellion against the reigning Sultan for a period of twenty years, but who never seemed to tire of the amusement, had made his last serious attempt upon the city. His followers, dressed in black so as to escape detection, assaulted the walls at midnight, but were repelled with a loss of 250 killed and wounded by the heavy fire and subsequent sally of the defenders. From that time forward Abdul Aziz had lain low in the interior; but since the death of Seyid Turki he was known to be meditating renewed mischief. A few weeks before my visit he finally began to advance, and a fortnight before had reached a position some twenty miles inland; whence it was reported that he was marching to the assault of the town. Sultan Feysul took immense precautions against the impending danger. The Bedouin clans were called upon to furnish contingents from far down the seaboard and from the interior. The Sheikhs, only too delighted to give their fighting men a holiday, gladly responded; and the men themselves, overjoyed at the prospect of free rations with

An old Pretender

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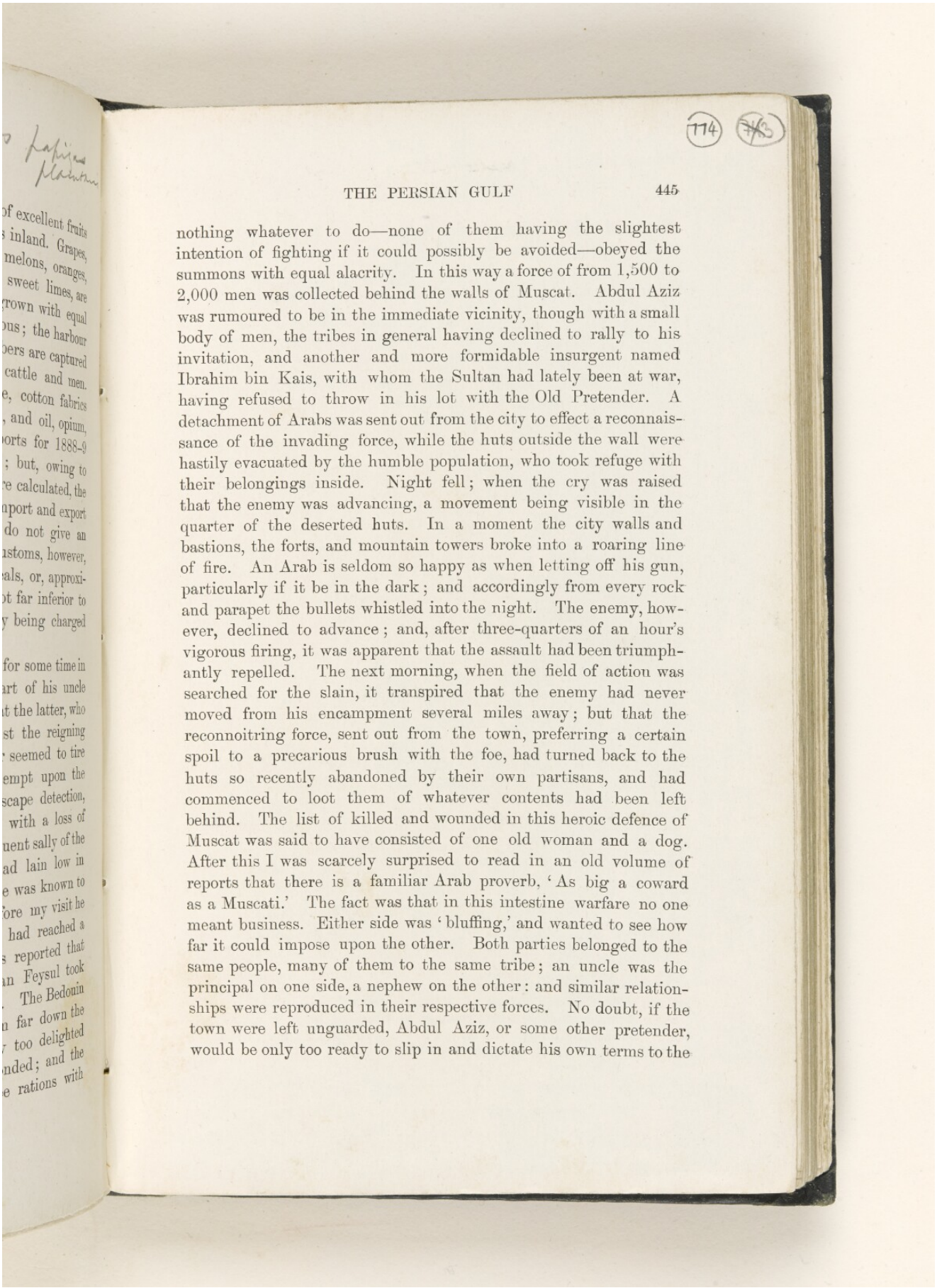



nothing whatever to do—none of them having the slightest intention of fighting if it could possibly be avoided—obeyed the summons with equal alacrity. In this way a force of from 1,500 to 2,000 men was collected behind the walls of Muscat. Abdul Aziz was rumoured to be in the immediate vicinity, though with a small body of men, the tribes in general having declined to rally to his invitation, and another and more formidable insurgent named Ibrahim bin Kais, with whom the Sultan had lately been at war, having refused to throw in his lot with the Old Pretender. A detachment of Arabs was sent out from the city to effect a reconnaissance of the invading force, while the huts outside the wall were hastily evacuated by the humble population, who took refuge with their belongings inside. Night fell; when the cry was raised that the enemy was advancing, a movement being visible in the quarter of the deserted huts. In a moment the city walls and bastions, the forts, and mountain towers broke into a roaring line of fire. An Arab is seldom so happy as when letting off his gun, particularly if it be in the dark; and accordingly from every rock and parapet the bullets whistled into the night. The enemy, however, declined to advance; and, after three-quarters of an hour's vigorous firing, it was apparent that the assault had been triumphantly repelled. The next morning, when the field of action was searched for the slain, it transpired that the enemy had never moved from his encampment several miles away; but that the reconnoitring force, sent out from the town, preferring a certain spoil to a precarious brush with the foe, had turned back to the huts so recently abandoned by their own partisans, and had commenced to loot them of whatever contents had been left behind. The list of killed and wounded in this heroic defence of Muscat was said to have consisted of one old woman and a dog. After this I was scarcely surprised to read in an old volume of reports that there is a familiar Arab proverb, 'As big a coward as a Muscati.' The fact was that in this intestine warfare no one meant business. Either side was 'bluffing,' and wanted to see how far it could impose upon the other. Both parties belonged to the same people, many of them to the same tribe; an uncle was the principal on one side, a nephew on the other: and similar relationships were reproduced in their respective forces. No doubt, if the town were left unguarded, Abdul Aziz, or some other pretender, would be only too ready to slip in and dictate his own terms to the

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conquered. But as long as the Sultan kept a reasonable lookout, such a contingency was impossible; and the conflict was certain ultimately to resolve itself into a dispute as to the sum for which the invader should be bought off or persuaded to take himself out of the country.

Muscat was crowded with the doughty warriors who had taken part in this memorable conflict. They swarmed in the bazaar and crowded the streets, armed for the most part with long two-edged swords, like a claymore, and a small circular buckler or target on the left hand.[1] Everyone carried a venerable matchlock over his shoulder, and a powder-belt round his waist; while a few were equipped with double-barrelled percussion muskets. Having nothing better to do, they spent the time in executing a species of war-dance before an admiring crowd: making terrific slashes with their big swords, bounding like bucks off the ground, and discharging their crazy pieces either into the air or at the earth just in front of their own toes. All this took place to the accompaniment of a species of chant, and of two drums furiously beaten by a colossal negro. The firing went on the whole day; and, as everyone seemed much pleased, and in the best of humours, it was perhaps as innocent an expenditure of surplus energy and gunpowder as could be devised. On leaving Muscat, with its sable sultan, its lusty defenders, and its civil warfare, I could not suppress the reflection that 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.'

Arab warriors

Proceeding northwards from Muscat, we again enter the Persian Gulf, on our return voyage along its southern shore, by rounding the stormy cliffs of Cape Musandim. At the end of a long and rugged promontory, whose black basaltic cliffs rise sheer from the water's edge, and are framed in a weird and solemn background of igneous heights, rising at their loftiest point to 6,750 feet, an isolated needle of rock is severed from the mainland by a gloomy channel only a few stones' throws in width,[2] winding between walls of basalt 800 feet high. This island is Ras or Cape Musandim, the 'Selama's sainted cape' of Moore, the

Cape Musandim

[1] These targets, which are as hard as wood, and appear to be of that material, are said to be made of hippopotamus hide, and to come from Zanzibar.

[2] Sir Ephraim Stannus, British Resident at Bushire in the early part of the century, once sailed through this channel in the East India Company's sloop of war 'Clive,' and it was thought a great performance.

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Arabs, it is said, calling it by that name, or Mama Selemeh, in memory of a holy lady there interred. It has been written that

> The most advanced cliff is the 'Rock of Salvation' or of 'Welcome,' above which hover the protecting spirits of sea and air. When he launches on the boundless deep, the Arab navigator offers a sacrifice to this rock, and on his return presents it his thank-offering. The Hindu also strews the waves with flowers and cocoa-nuts in honour of the local deities, or else sends adrift a model of his vessel with its variegated sails and little cargo of rice. The omen is favourable if the tiny craft reaches the shore in safety; otherwise dangers of all kinds are imminent, and prudence enjoins a return to port.[1]

But, so far as I could ascertain, these pious superstitions, for an account of which I must refer my readers to the pages of Morier, have since succumbed to the iconoclastic influences of time. In the deep coves which ramify inland between the cliffs, projecting like the points of a stag's antlers, the waters boom against the rocks, and roar in hidden caves. On the peaks and crags of this mysterious promontory, fit denizens of so weird an abode, are found the fragments of an aboriginal race, driven forward till they have reached this final resting-place, where none can pursue them, above the sea. There are a few thousands of this people, known as Shihiyins, like the Arabs in feature, but darker; speaking a language unknown to the Arabs, but Arab also; and living on the capture of fish and preparation of sharks' fins, which are exported for soup to China. They dwell in caves on the cliff-side with a wattled thorn-fence in front, to save the inmates from falling into the sea, the children being usually tethered by the leg to this primitive domestic hearth.

English occupation.

Fifteen miles from the extreme point of Ras Musandim the promontory again narrows to an isthmus, named Maklab (place of turning), not more than half a mile in width, by which it is united to the mainland. On the eastern side of this isthmus a splendid bay, called by the natives Ghubbeh Ghazireh, but christened by the English Malcolm's Inlet, sweeps in from the sea. On the western side is an even finer natural harbour, more completely land-locked, and providing anchorage for the largest vessels, known as Elphinstone's Inlet. The station of Khasab, at the entrance to this wonderful cove, has before now

[1] Elisée Reclus, *Universal Geography*, vol. ix. p. 443.

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been recommended for permanent occupation by the British, as a naval base in the Persian Gulf. Here the entire British fleet might safely ride at anchor. Curiously enough, this remarkable spot has once been occupied by the English under peculiar circumstances. When the telegraph cable was first being laid from Kurrachi to the Persian Gulf in 1864, it was taken by what was then thought the shortest and best line from Gwadur to Cape Musandim. Entering Malcolm's Inlet, the wires were stretched across the isthmus of Maklab, and re-entered the sea in Elphinstone's Inlet on the other side. But the drawbacks of the site, arising from the hot and horrid climate, the sterile neighbourhood, and the suspicions of the native tribes—all of which have been well described by Sir F. Goldsmid in his interesting 'Telegraph and Travel,'—compelled a retreat from a course which should never have been adopted; and in 1869, the cable was diverted to Cape Jask and Henjam. In the entrance to the Gulf, not far from Cape Musandim, lie ~~five~~ three small rocky islands, which have been named the Quoins by English mariners, from their supposed resemblance to the quoin of a gun. Further in the Gulf, and about ~~twenty-five~~ 15 miles from the western extremity of the island of Kishm, are two larger islands, known as the Great and Little Tomb,[1] the former of which abounds with antelopes, that were often coursed with greyhounds by the British officers from Basiduh.

Pirate tribes

Skirting the southern littoral of the Persian Gulf, we are now brought into contact with a number of Arab tribes of maritime residence and occupation, inhabiting a lengthy stretch of coast line from Ras-el-Kheimah on the east, to the promontory of El Katr on the west. These tribes have been addicted from time immemorial to piratical escapades, and to the simultaneous gratification and exhaustion of their energies in internecine warfare. Towards the latter end of the eighteenth century they were fused into an aggressive force of formidable character by the proselytising influence of the Wahabi movement, which, extending its activity from the interior of Arabia to the shores of the Gulf, invited the coast tribes, under the guise of piracy, to attain a secure salvation. So tempting a propaganda was sure of many converts; and within a few years' time the seas were scoured by hundreds of audacious buccaneers, who destroyed villages, carried off and sold their inhabitants, and faithfully plundered their way to heaven. These tribes

[1] Persian, *Gumbaz*; but Badger writes the names Tanb.

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have ever since paid an intermittent tribute to the chief of Nejd; but, in the intervals of Wahabi aggressiveness, have enjoyed a practical independence. The events that first brought them under Wahabi domination also brought them into sharp collision with the British Government, which, in the interests of commerce and peace, and for the security of the large capital invested by British subjects in the Gulf trade, was compelled to charge itself with the repression of piracy in the Indian Seas. A period of hostility and conflict was followed by treaty engagements, and finally by a perpetual truce, under which the maritime security of the Gulf is now assured, and the signatory parties are entitled in diplomatic parlance the Trucial Chiefs of Oman.

The history of these relations, interesting alike in its stormy prologue and in its felicitous sequel, may be briefly summarised.[1]

[1] I will consign to a footnote the details that might be held unduly to encumber the text, and which I have culled from a variety of official and other sources :—

1805. The Jowasmi pirates captured two vessels, the 'Shannon' and 'Trimmer,' belonging to Mr. Manesty, British Resident at Busrah, and treated their commanders with great cruelty. A fleet of 40 sail also surrounded the 'Mornington' cruiser, and fired into her, but were compelled by her superior armament to sheer off. A British punitive expedition, in conjunction with the forces of Oman, was sent against the pirates.

1806, February. The first treaty was concluded with the Jowasmi pirates, binding them to respect the flag and property of the East India Company and its subjects.

1807. Piracy renewed. The Jowasmis seized Bahrein, and drove out the Oman garrison. They attacked H.M.S. 'Lion,' but were beaten off.

1808. Three pirate boats attacked H.M.S. 'Nereid.' Two were sunk, the third run down.

1809. H.M.S. 'Minerva' was attacked by a pirate fleet of 55 ships and 5,000 men, and, after two days' fighting, was boarded, and every man put to the sword. The chief of Ras-el-Kheimah demanded tribute of the British Government as the price of security for their vessels.

1809–10. Colonel (Sir L.) Smith, in command of a land force of 1,623 men, and the 'Chifonne' frigate (Captain Wainwright), assisted by a large body of Persian horse, were despatched against the pirates. They destroyed Ras-el-Kheimah, burnt 50 large ships, and, in conjunction with an Oman force, attacked and took the fort of Shinaz in the Indian Ocean.

1810–19. Piracies renewed.

1819, November. An expedition sailed from Bombay, consisting of a naval squadron under Captain Collier, and 3,547 men under Sir W. Keir Grant, which besieged and captured Ras-el-Kheimah (after a most gallant resistance) and the fort of Zyah, burnt 202 pirate vessels, released many Hindu prisoners, and returned, leaving a garrison of 1,200 sepoys at Ras-el-Kheimah.

1820. First general treaty with the pirate tribes. The British, in alliance with Oman, attacked the Beni-bu-Ali tribe near Ras-el-Hadd. Captain Thomson



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Conflicts and treaties

It was in 1805 that the plunder of British vessels by the Jowasmi tribe provoked the first British naval expedition for their punishment. A treaty was concluded in 1806; but was so scantily observed that in 1809 a second expedition was necessitated, which took several ports and destroyed a large number of boats. Piracy, however, continued, not merely with unabated but with augmented virulence, the traffic in slaves being the main source of livelihood to these irrepressible buccaneers. Stronger measures were clearly required, and in 1819 a third expedition under Sir W. Keir Grant was fitted out, with instructions to crush the pirate power altogether. Ras-el-Kheimah was bombarded and taken; and in 1820 the first General Treaty was concluded between the British Government and the combined Arab chieftains of the coast.[1] Though a decisive check was placed upon kidnapping by this agreement, it did not prevent the traffic in slaves; and accordingly in 1838, 1839, 1847, and 1856, it required to be supplemented by further treaties, giving the right of search and confiscation to British vessels, and prohibiting the export of slaves from Arab ports. These engagements, however, which were mainly restricted to the slave-trade, were not found to have any effect in checking the combative instincts of the tribes among themselves, the loss of an outside field of activity encouraging them to turn their martial energies upon each other, in which occupation a little sly piracy was often possible under the guise of tribal warfare. In 1835 the British Government, visited with a happy inspiration, induced the combatant Sheikhs to sign a maritime truce by which they pledged themselves not to engage in hostilities by sea for six months, provided the British Government did not interfere with them by land. So successful was this engagement found to be by all parties that it was renewed in 1836, 1837, and annually till

led an expedition against Sur, but his entire force was annihilated, consisting of 7 officers and 303 men.

1821, January. A retaliatory expedition of 1,282 European and 1,718 Indian troops, under Sir L. Smith, sailed against Sur, and fought a battle with the Arabs, who, after a courageous resistance, surrendered.

1835, 1838, 1839, 1847, 1853, 1856. Further treaties.

In 1809, at the height of their power and depredations, the Jowasmi pirate fleet consisted of 63 large vessels (some with 40 to 50 guns and 300 men) and 810 smaller craft, manned by 19,000 bloodthirsty ruffians. For incidents of the anti-pirate campaigns, *vide* J. S. Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria*, vol. ii. caps. vi.–viii; Captain Mignan, *Winter's Journey*, vol. ii. caps. vii.–x.

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii. No. xxi.

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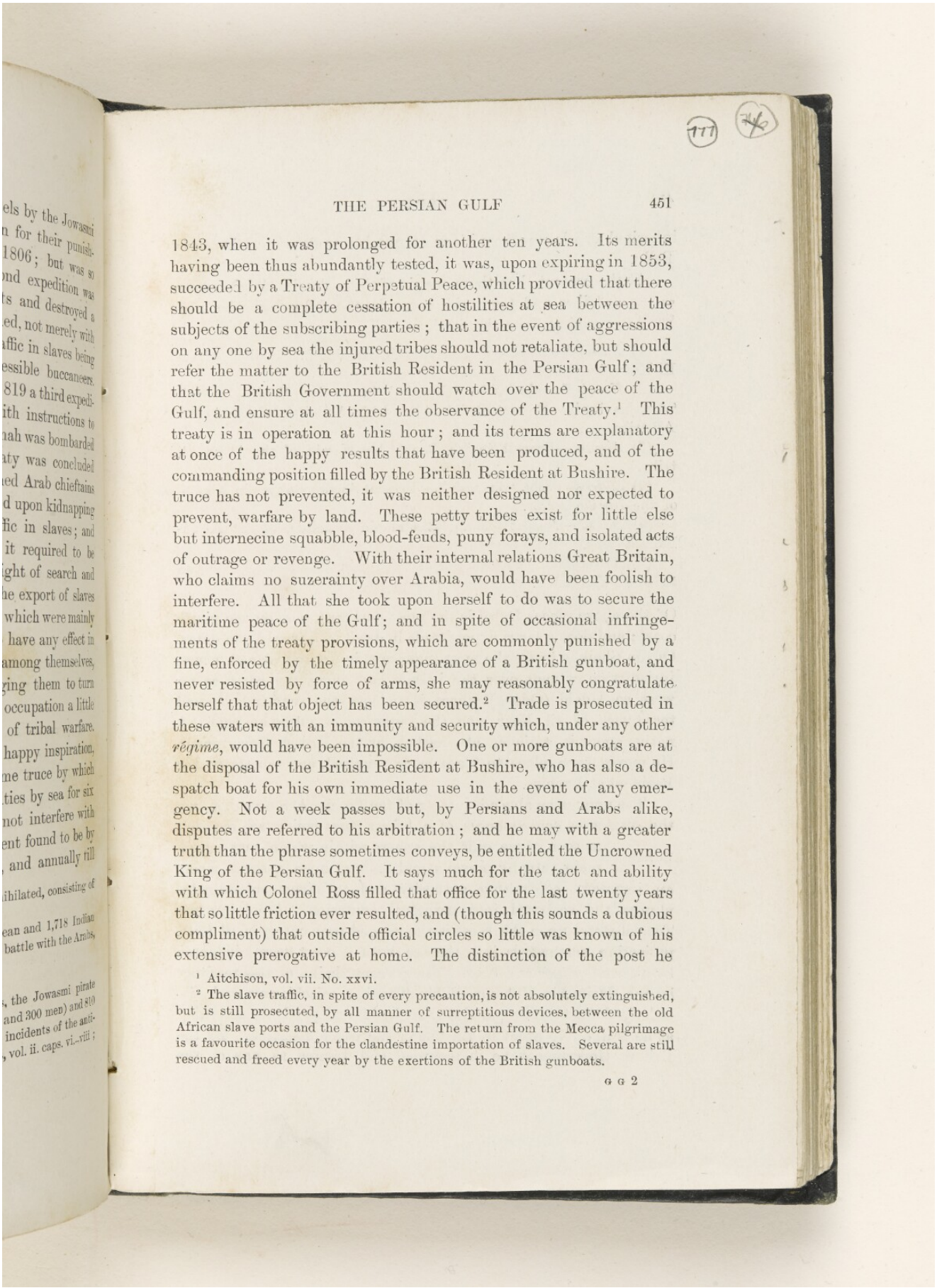



1843, when it was prolonged for another ten years. Its merits having been thus abundantly tested, it was, upon expiring in 1853, succeeded by a Treaty of Perpetual Peace, which provided that there should be a complete cessation of hostilities at sea between the subjects of the subscribing parties; that in the event of aggressions on any one by sea the injured tribes should not retaliate, but should refer the matter to the British Resident in the Persian Gulf; and that the British Government should watch over the peace of the Gulf, and ensure at all times the observance of the Treaty.[1] This treaty is in operation at this hour; and its terms are explanatory at once of the happy results that have been produced, and of the commanding position filled by the British Resident at Bushire. The truce has not prevented, it was neither designed nor expected to prevent, warfare by land. These petty tribes exist for little else but internecine squabble, blood-feuds, puny forays, and isolated acts of outrage or revenge. With their internal relations Great Britain, who claims no suzerainty over Arabia, would have been foolish to interfere. All that she took upon herself to do was to secure the maritime peace of the Gulf; and in spite of occasional infringements of the treaty provisions, which are commonly punished by a fine, enforced by the timely appearance of a British gunboat, and never resisted by force of arms, she may reasonably congratulate herself that that object has been secured.[2] Trade is prosecuted in these waters with an immunity and security which, under any other *régime*, would have been impossible. One or more gunboats are at the disposal of the British Resident at Bushire, who has also a despatch boat for his own immediate use in the event of any emergency. Not a week passes but, by Persians and Arabs alike, disputes are referred to his arbitration; and he may with a greater truth than the phrase sometimes conveys, be entitled the Uncrowned King of the Persian Gulf. It says much for the tact and ability with which Colonel Ross filled that office for the last twenty years that so little friction ever resulted, and (though this sounds a dubious compliment) that outside official circles so little was known of his extensive prerogative at home. The distinction of the post he

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii. No. xxvi.

[2] The slave traffic, in spite of every precaution, is not absolutely extinguished, but is still prosecuted, by all manner of surreptitious devices, between the old African slave ports and the Persian Gulf. The return from the Mecca pilgrimage is a favourite occasion for the clandestine importation of slaves. Several are still rescued and freed every year by the exertions of the British gunboats.



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inherited as a legacy from his most capable predecessor, Sir Lewis Pelly.

At the present time there are six of these Trucial Chiefs, whose tribes and territories occur in the following order, proceeding from the north :— The Trucial Chiefs

(1) *Ras-el-Kheimah.*—Present Sheikh, Hamid bin Abdullah, of the El Kowasim (Jowasmi) tribe.

(2) *Um-el-Kawain* (vulg. 'Gawain,' in earlier English records 'Amulgavine').—Present Sheikh, Ahmed bin Abdullah, of the Al-bu-Ali tribe.

(3) *Ajman.*—Present Sheikh, Rashid bin Hamid, of the Al-bu-Ali tribe.

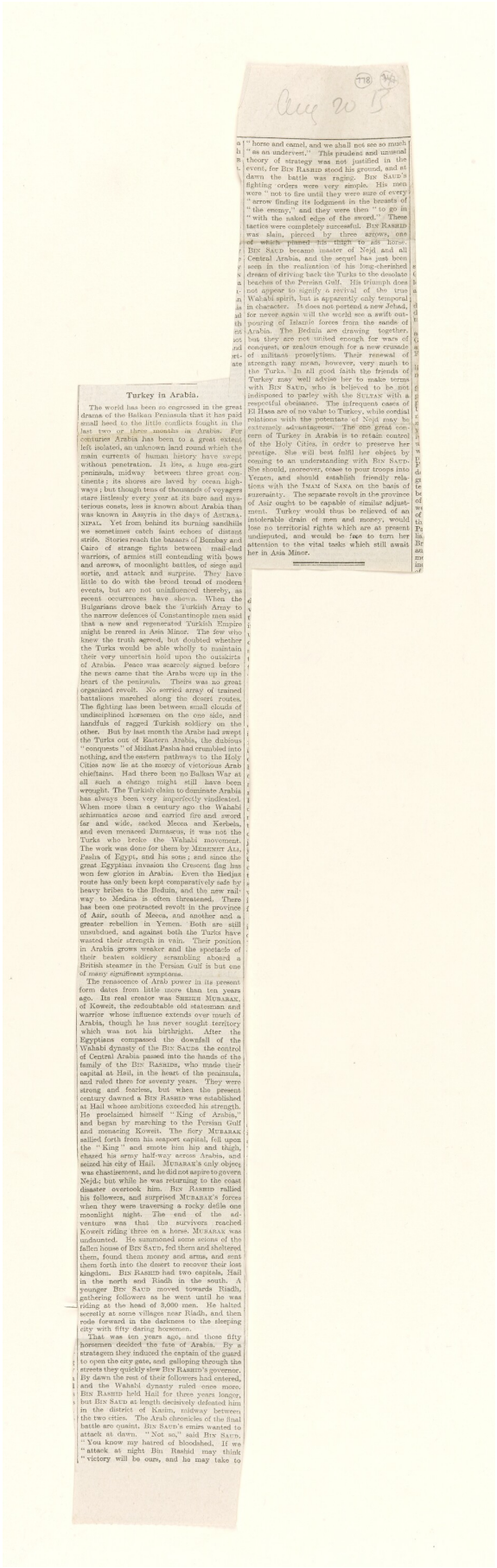
(4) *Sharkah* (vulg. 'Shargah').—Present Sheikh, Sakar bin Khalid, of the Jowasmi tribe.

(5) *Debai.*—Present Sheikh, Rashid bin Makdum, of the Al-bu-Falasal tribe.

(6) *Abu Dhabi.*—Present Sheikh, Zaid bin Khalifah, chief of all the Beni Yas tribes.

Of the above places Debai is the most populous port on the pirate coast; and does a large export trade in dried fish, pearls, and dates. Of the Sheikhs by far the most important is the last-named, whose jurisdiction extends over the islands and along the coast as far west as Udaid (Odeyd) where it touches the semi-independent territories of El Katr, and the outskirts of Ottoman rule. A native agent is stationed at Sharkah by the British Government. He moves from place to place as is required, and reports to the Resident at Bushire.

The unquestionable advantages of the Trucial Arrangement, and the disastrous consequences of a *laissez faire* policy, are manifest as soon as we quit the sphere within which that agreement actually prevails, and emerge upon a scene where an impotent controlling authority and turbulent subordinates plunge the seaboard into perpetual confusion. Adjoining the Trucial states upon the West is the rugged promontory of El Katr, projecting northwards into the sea, with a coast deeply indented by alternate capes and bays. The present Sheikh of this territory is one Jasim bin Mohammed bin Thani, a mischievous and disorderly character, who parades or denies his independence according as he is likely to profit by the one or the other assertion. By the British Government he is regarded and treated as one of the El Katr



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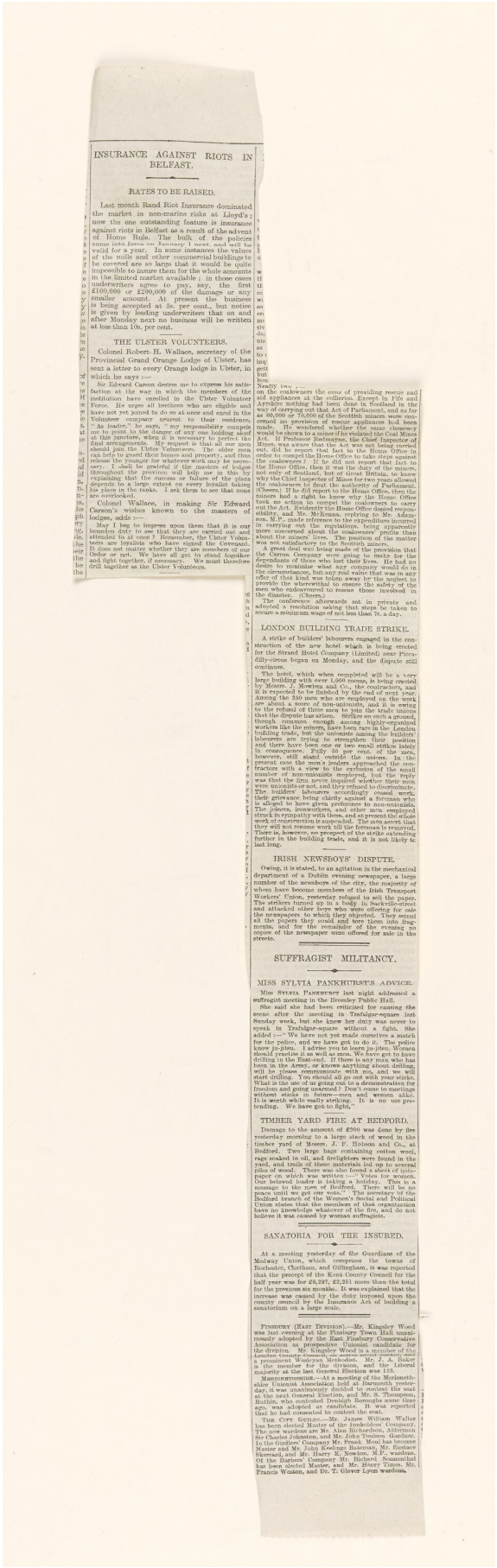
" horse and camel, and we shall not see so much
" as an undervest." This prudent and unusual
theory of strategy was not justified in the
event, for BIN RASHID stood his ground, and at
dawn the battle was raging. BIN SAUD's
fighting orders were very simple. His men
were " not to fire until they were sure of every
" arrow finding its lodgment in the breasts of
" the enemy," and they were then " to go in
" with the naked edge of the sword." These
tactics were completely successful. BIN RASHID
was slain, pierced by three arrows, one
of which pinned his thigh to his horse.
BIN SAUD became master of Nejd and all
Central Arabia, and the sequel has just been
seen in the realization of his long-cherished
dream of driving back the Turks to the desolate
beaches of the Persian Gulf. His triumph does
not appear to signify a revival of the true
Wahabi spirit, but is apparently only temporal
in character. It does not portend a new Jehad,
for never again will the world see a swift out-
pouring of Islamic forces from the sands of
Arabia. The Beduin are drawing together,
but they are not united enough for wars of
conquest, or zealous enough for a new crusade
of militant proselytism. Their renewal of
strength may mean, however, very much to
the Turks. In all good faith the friends of
Turkey may well advise her to make terms
with BIN SAUD, who is believed to be not
indisposed to parley with the SULTAN with a
respectful obeisance. The infrequent cases of
El Hasa are of no value to Turkey, while cordial
relations with the potentate of Nejd may be
extremely advantageous. The one great con-
cern of Turkey in Arabia is to retain control
of the Holy Cities. In order to preserve her
prestige. She will best fulfil her object by
coming to an understanding with BIN SAUD.
She should, moreover, cease to pour troops into
Yemen, and should establish friendly rela-
tions with the IMAM of SANA on the basis of
suzerainty. The separate revolt in the province
of Asir ought to be capable of similar adjust-
ment. Turkey would thus be relieved of an
intolerable drain of men and money, would
lose no territorial rights which are at present
undisputed, and would be free to turn her
attention to the vital tasks which still await
her in Asia Minor.

## Turkey in Arabia.

The world has been so engrossed in the great drama of the Balkan Peninsula that it has paid small heed to the little conflicts fought in the last two or three months in Arabia. For centuries Arabia has been to a great extent left isolated, an unknown land round which the main currents of human history have swept without penetration. It lies, a huge sea-girt peninsula, midway between three great continents; its shores are laved by ocean highways; but though tens of thousands of voyagers stare listlessly every year at its bare and mysterious coasts, less is known about Arabia than was known in Assyria in the days of ASSURBANIPAL. Yet from behind its burning sandhills we sometimes catch faint echoes of distant strife. Stories reach the bazaars of Bombay and Cairo of strange fights between mail-clad warriors, of armies still contending with bows and arrows, of moonlight battles, of siege and sortie, and attack and surprise. They have little to do with the broad trend of modern events, but are not uninfluenced thereby, as recent occurrences have shown. When the Bulgarians drove back the Turkish Army to the narrow defences of Constantinople men said that a new and regenerated Turkish Empire might be reared in Asia Minor. The few who knew the truth agreed, but doubted whether the Turks would be able wholly to maintain their very uncertain hold upon the outskirts of Arabia. Peace was scarcely signed before the news came that the Arabs were up in the heart of the peninsula. Theirs was no great organized revolt. No serried array of trained battalions marched along the desert routes. The fighting has been between small clouds of undisciplined horsemen on the one side, and handfuls of ragged Turkish soldiery on the other. But by last month the Arabs had swept the Turks out of Eastern Arabia, the dubious "conquests" of Midhat Pasha had crumbled into nothing, and the eastern pathways to the Holy Cities now lie at the mercy of victorious Arab chieftains. Had there been no Balkan War at all such a change might still have been wrought. The Turkish claim to dominate Arabia has always been very imperfectly vindicated. When more than a century ago the Wahabi schismatics arose and carried fire and sword far and wide, sacked Mecca and Kerbela, and even menaced Damascus, it was not the Turks who broke the Wahabi movement. The work was done for them by MEHEMET ALI, Pasha of Egypt, and his sons; and since the great Egyptian invasion the Crescent flag has won few glories in Arabia. Even the Hedjaz route has only been kept comparatively safe by heavy bribes to the Beduin, and the new railway to Medina is often threatened. There has been one protracted revolt in the province of Asir, south of Mecca, and another and a greater rebellion in Yemen. Both are still unsubdued, and against both the Turks have wasted their strength in vain. Their position in Arabia grows weaker and the spectacle of their beaten soldiery scrambling aboard a British steamer in the Persian Gulf is but one of many significant symptoms.

The renascence of Arab power in its present form dates from little more than ten years ago. Its real creator was SHEIKH MUBARAK, of Koweit, the redoubtable old statesman and warrior whose influence extends over much of Arabia, though he has never sought territory which was not his birthright. After the Egyptians compassed the downfall of the Wahabi dynasty of the BIN SAUDS the control of Central Arabia passed into the hands of the family of the BIN RASHIDS, who made their capital at Hail, in the heart of the peninsula, and ruled there for seventy years. They were strong and fearless, but when the present century dawned a BIN RASHID was established at Hail whose ambitions exceeded his strength. He proclaimed himself "King of Arabia," and began by marching to the Persian Gulf and menacing Koweit. The fiery MUBARAK sallied forth from his seaport capital, fell upon the "King" and smote him hip and thigh, chased his army half-way across Arabia, and seized his city of Hail. MUBARAK's only object was chastisement, and he did not aspire to govern Nejd; but while he was returning to the coast disaster overtook him. BIN RASHID rallied his followers, and surprised MUBARAK's forces when they were traversing a rocky defile one moonlight night. The end of the adventure was that the survivors reached Koweit riding three on a horse. MUBARAK was undaunted. He summoned some scions of the fallen house of BIN SAUD, fed them and sheltered them, found them money and arms, and sent them forth into the desert to recover their lost kingdom. BIN RASHID had two capitals, Hail in the north and Riadh in the south. A younger BIN SAUD moved towards Riadh, gathering followers as he went until he was riding at the head of 3,000 men. He halted secretly at some villages near Riadh, and then rode forward in the darkness to the sleeping city with fifty daring horsemen.

That was ten years ago, and those fifty horsemen decided the fate of Arabia. By a stratagem they induced the captain of the guard to open the city gate, and galloping through the streets they quickly slew BIN RASHID's governor. By dawn the rest of their followers had entered, and the Wahabi dynasty ruled once more. BIN RASHID held Hail for three years longer, but BIN SAUD at length decisively defeated him in the district of Kasim, midway between the two cities. The Arab chronicles of the final battle are quaint. BIN SAUD's emirs wanted to attack at dawn. "Not so," said BIN SAUD. "You know my hatred of bloodshed. If we "attack at night Bin Rashid may think "victory will be ours, and he may take to



INSURANCE AGAINST RIOTS IN BELFAST.

RATES TO BE RAISED.

Last month Rand Riot Insurance dominated the market in non-marine risks at Lloyd's; now the one outstanding feature is insurance against riots in Belfast as a result of the advent of Home Rule. The bulk of the policies come into force on January 1 next, and will be valid for a year. In some instances the values of the mills and other commercial buildings to be covered are so large that it would be quite impossible to insure them for the whole amounts in the limited market available; in those cases underwriters agree to pay, say, the first £100,000 or £200,000 of the damage or any smaller amount. At present the business is being accepted at 5s. per cent., but notice is given by leading underwriters that on and after Monday next no business will be written at less than 10s. per cent.

THE ULSTER VOLUNTEERS.

Colonel Robert H. Wallace, secretary of the Provincial Grand Orange Lodge of Ulster, has sent a letter to every Orange lodge in Ulster, in which he says:—

Sir Edward Carson desires me to express his satisfaction at the way in which the members of the institution have enrolled in the Ulster Volunteer Force. He urges all brethren who are eligible and have not yet joined to do so at once and enrol in the Volunteer company nearest to their residence. "As leader," he says, "my responsibility compels me to point to the danger of any one holding aloof at this juncture, when it is necessary to perfect the final arrangements. My request is that all our men should join the Ulster Volunteers. The older men can help to guard their homes and property, and thus release the younger for whatever work may be necessary. I shall be grateful if the masters of lodges throughout the province will help me in this by organising. The success or failure of the plans depends in a large extent on every loyalist taking his place in the rank. I ask them to see that none are overlooked."

Colonel Wallace, in making Sir Edward Carson's wishes known to the masters of lodges, adds:—

May I beg to impress upon them that it is our bounden duty to see that they are carried out and attended to at once? Remember, the Ulster Volunteers are loyalists who have signed the Covenant. It does not matter whether they are members of our Order or not. We have all got to stand together and fight together, if necessary. We must therefore drill together as the Ulster Volunteers.

on the coalowners the onus of providing rescue and aid appliances at the collieries. Except in Fife and Ayrshire nothing had been done in Scotland in the way of carrying out that Act of Parliament, and so far as 60,000 or 70,000 of the Scottish miners were concerned no provision of rescue appliances had been made. He wondered whether the same clemency would be shown to a miner if he violated the Coal Mines Act. If Professor Redmayne, the Chief Inspector of Mines, was aware that the Act was not being carried out, did he report that fact to the Home Office in order to compel the Home Office to take steps against the coalowners? If he did not report that fact to the Home Office, then it was the duty of the miners, not only of Scotland, but of Great Britain, to know why the Chief Inspector of Mines for two years allowed the coalowners to flout the authority of Parliament. If he did report to the Home Office, then the miners had a right to know why the Home Office took no action to compel the coalowners to carry out the Act. Evidently the Home Office denied responsibility, and Mr. McKenna—now Sir Joseph McKenna, M.P., made reference to the expenditure incurred in carrying out the regulations, "perhaps rather more concerned about the coalowners' profits than about the miners' lives. The position of the matter was not satisfactory to the Scottish miners.

A great deal was being made of the provision that the Cairnes Company were going to make for the dependants of those who lost their lives. He had no desire to minimise what any company would do in the circumstances, but any real value that was in any offer of that kind was taken away by the neglect to provide the wherewithal to ensure the safety of the men who endeavoured to rescue those involved in the disaster. (Cheers.)

The conference afterwards sat in private and adopted a resolution asking that steps be taken to secure a minimum wage of not less than 7s. a day.

LONDON BUILDING TRADE STRIKE.

A strike of builders' labourers engaged in the construction of the new hotel which is being erected for the Strand Hotel Company (Limited) near Piccadilly-circus began on Monday, and the dispute still continues.

The hotel, which when completed will be a very large building with over 1,000 rooms, is being erected by Messrs. J. Mowlem and Co., the contractors, and it is expected to be finished by the end of next year. Among the 350 men who are employed on the work are about a score of non-unionists, and it is owing to the refusal of these men to join the trade unions that the dispute has arisen. Strikes on such a ground, though common enough among highly-organised workers like the miners, have been rare in the London building trade, but the unionists among the builders' labourers are trying to strengthen their position and there have been one or two small strikes lately in consequence. Fully 50 per cent. of the men, however, still stand outside the unions. In the present case the men's leaders approached the contractors with a view to the exclusion of the small number of non-unionists employed, but the reply was that the firm made no inquiries whether their men were unionists or not, and they refused to discriminate. The builders' labourers accordingly struck work, their grievance being chiefly against a foreman who is alleged to have given preference to non-unionists. The joiners, ironworkers, and other men employed struck in sympathy with them, and at present the whole work of construction is suspended. The men assert that they will not resume work till the foreman is removed. There is, however, no prospect of the strike extending further in the building trade, and it is not likely to last long.

IRISH NEWSBOYS' DISPUTE.

Owing, it is stated, to an agitation in the mechanical department of a Dublin evening newspaper, a large number of the newsboys of the city, the majority of whom have become members of the Irish Transport Workers' Union, yesterday refused to sell the paper. The strikers turned up in a body in Sackville-street and attacked other boys who were offering for sale the newspapers to which they objected. They seized all the papers they could and tore them into fragments, and for the remainder of the evening no copies of the newspaper were offered for sale in the streets.

SUFFRAGIST MILITANCY.

MISS SYLVIA PANKHURST'S ADVICE.

Miss Sylvia Pankhurst last night addressed a suffragist meeting in the Bromley Public Hall.

She said she had been criticized for causing the scene after the meeting in Trafalgar-square last Sunday week, but she knew her duty was never to speak in Trafalgar-square without a fight. She added:—"We have not yet made ourselves a match for the police, and we have got to do it. The police know jiu-jitsu. I advise you to learn jiu-jitsu. Women should practise it as well as men. We have got to have drilling in the East-end. If there is any man who has been in the Army, or knows anything about drilling, will he please communicate with me, and we will start drilling. You should all go out with your sticks, and make the thing of going to a demonstration for freedom and going unarmed? I don't come to meetings without sticks—no more should men and women alike. It is worth while really sticking. It is no use pretending. We have got to fight."

TIMBER YARD FIRE AT BEDFORD.

Damage to the amount of £200 was done by fire yesterday morning to a large stack of wood in the timber yard of Messrs. J. F. Hobson and Co., at Bedford. Two large bags containing cotton wool, rags soaked in oil, and firelighters were found in the yard, and trails of these materials led up to several piles of wood. There was also found a sheet of notice-paper on which was written:—"Votes for women. Our beloved leader is taking a holiday. This is a message to the men of Bedford. There will be no peace until we get our vote." The secretary of the Bedford branch of the Women's Social and Political Union states that the members of that organization have no knowledge whatever of the fire, and do not believe it was caused by woman suffragists.

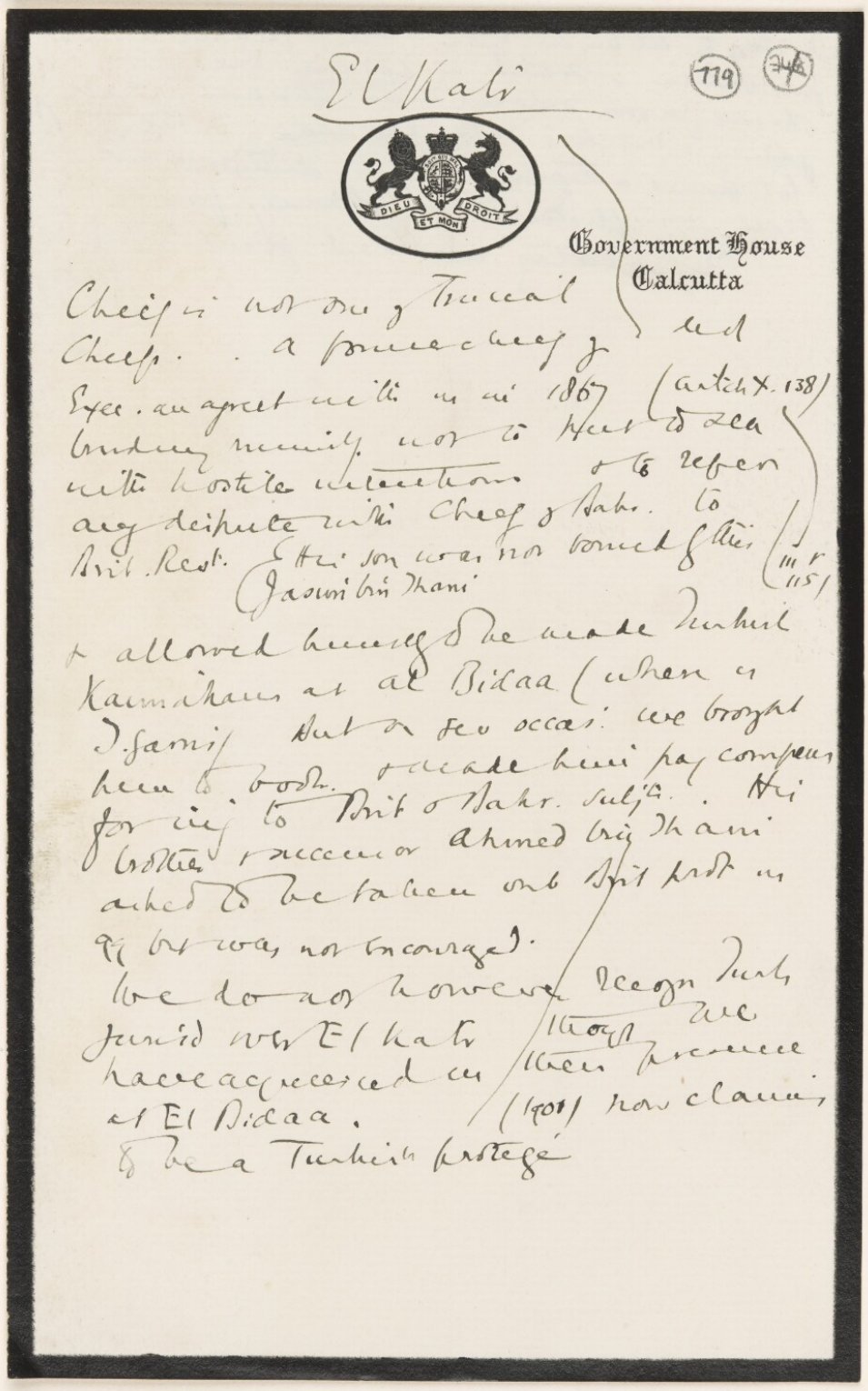
SANATORIA FOR THE INSURED.

At a meeting yesterday of the Guardians of the Medway Union, which comprises the towns of Rochester, Chatham, and Gillingham, it was reported that the precept of the Kent County Council for the half year was for £8,297, £2,291 more than the total for the previous six months. It was explained that the increase was caused by the duty imposed upon the county council by the Insurance Act of building a sanatorium on a large scale.

Finsbury (East Division).—Mr. Kingsley Wood was last evening at the Finsbury Town Hall unanimously adopted by the East Finsbury Conservative Association as prospective Unionist candidate for the division. Mr. Kingsley Wood is a member of the London Municipal Society, and is a local preacher in the Nonconformist Wesleyan Methodist. Mr. J. A. Baker is the member for the division, and the Liberal majority at the last General Election was 123.

Monmouthshire.—At a meeting of the Monmouthshire Unionist Association held at Raemouth yesterday, it was unanimously decided to contest the seat at the next General Election, and Mr. S. Thompson, Ruthin, who contested Denbigh Boroughs some time ago, was adopted as candidate. It was reported that he had consented to contest the seat.

The City Guilds.—Mr. James William Waller has been elected Master of the Ironsellers' Company. The new wardens are Mr. Alan Richardson, Alderman Sir Charles Johnston, and Mr. John Trotwen Gardner. In the Girdlers' Company Mr. Frank Moul has become Master and Mr. John Rawlings Bateman, Mr. Eustace Sherrard, and Mr. Harry K. Newton, M.P., wardens. Of the Barbers' Company Mr. Richard Somerhill has been elected Master, and Mr. Henry Times, Mr. Francis Weaken, and Dr. T. Glover Lyon wardens.



El Katr

779 746

DIEU ET MON DROIT

Government House
Calcutta

Chief is not one of Trucial Chiefs. A former chief of Exec. an agreet with us in 1867 (Aitch X. 138) binding mainly not to put to sea with hostile intentions & to refer any dispute with Chief of Bahr. to Brit. Rest. His son was not bound by this (Jasim bin Thani) (III r 115) & allowed himself to be made Turkish Kaimakam at Al Bidaa (where is I. Garris) But on sev occas. we brought him to book & made him pay compens for inj to Brit & Bahr. subjts. His brother & successor Ahmed bin Thani asked to be taken onto Brit prot in 99 but was not encouraged.

We do not however recogn Turk jurisd over El Katr though we have acquiesced in their presence at El Bidaa. (1901) now claims to be a Turkish protegé

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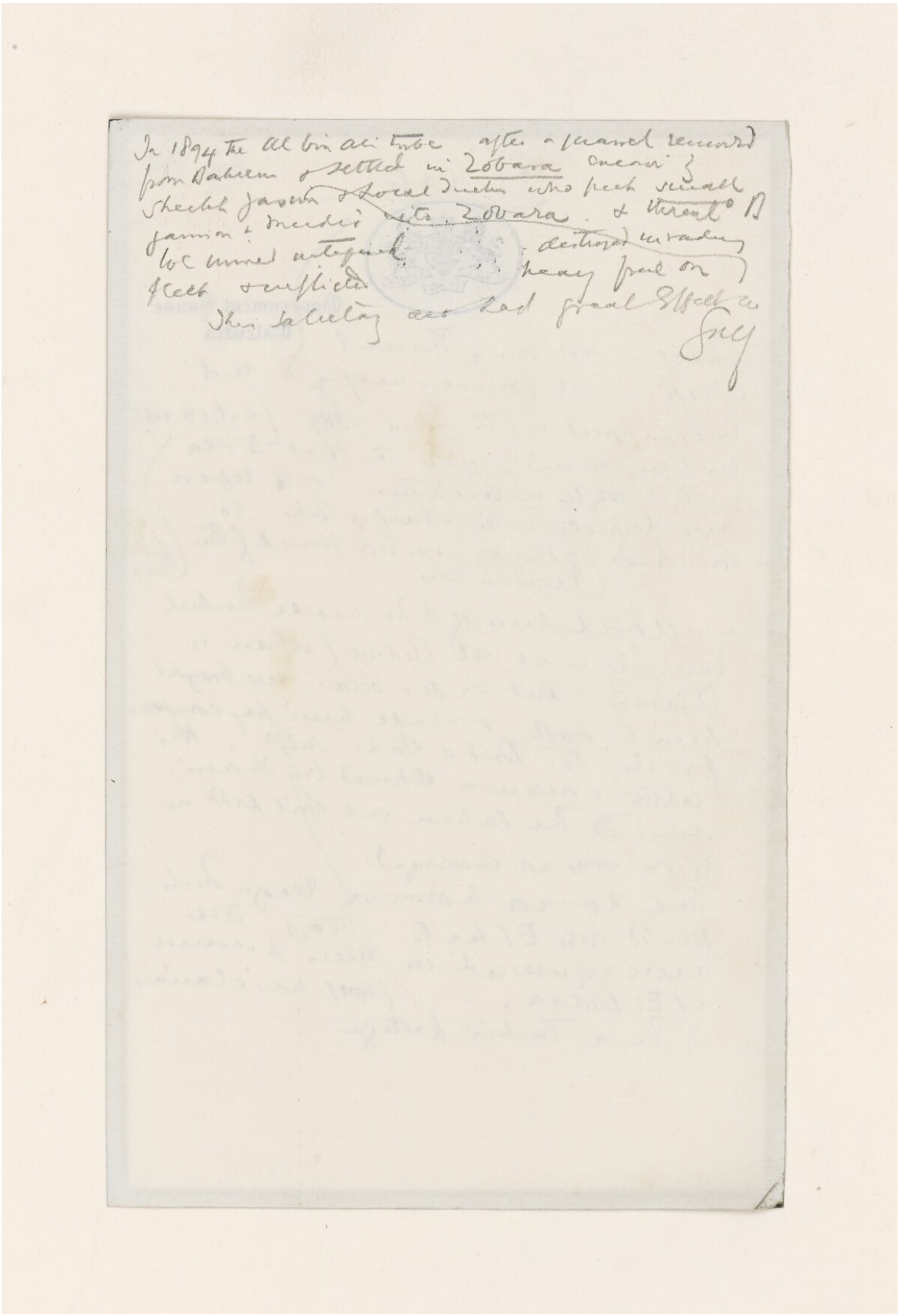

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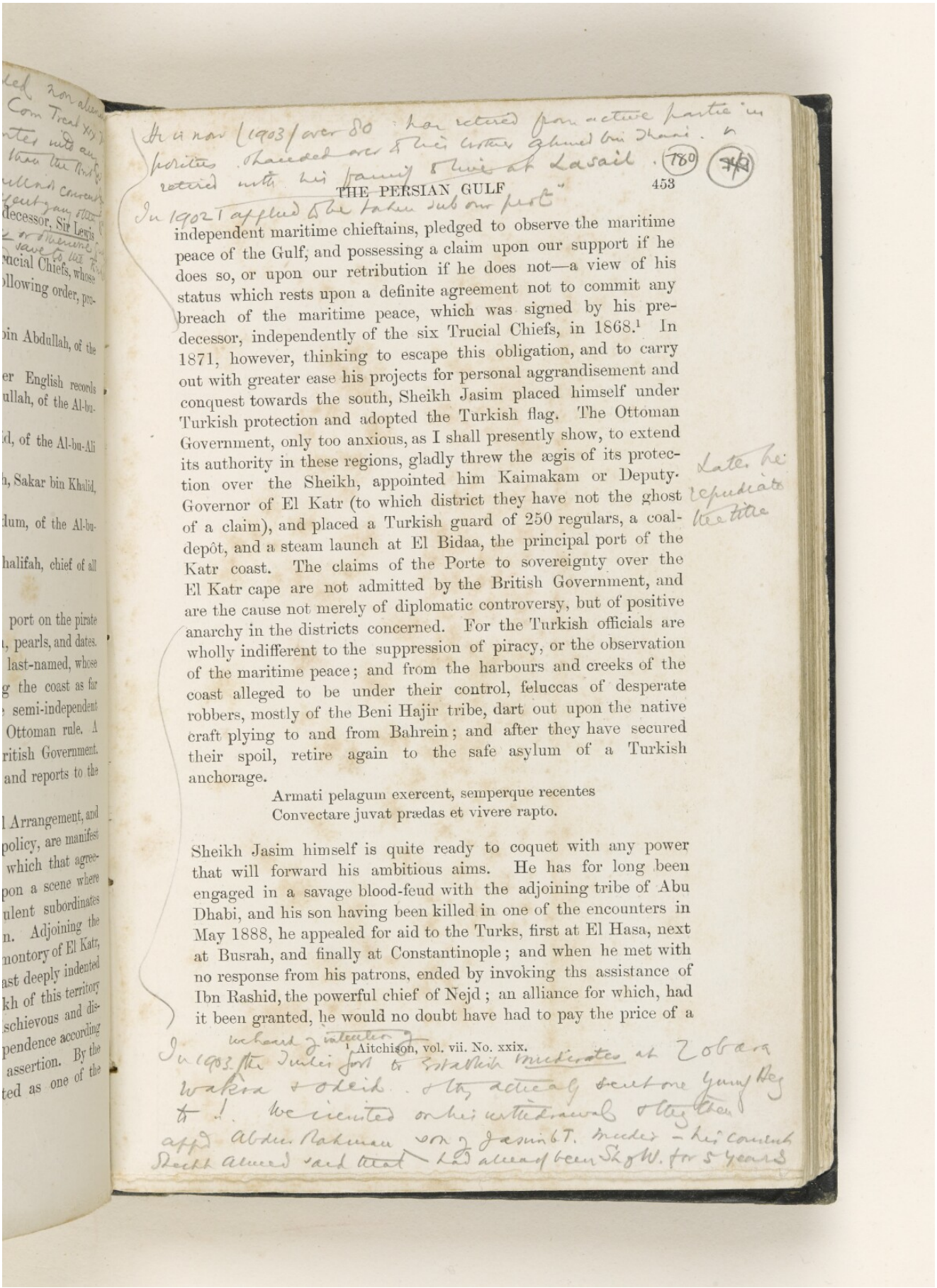



independent maritime chieftains, pledged to observe the maritime peace of the Gulf, and possessing a claim upon our support if he does so, or upon our retribution if he does not—a view of his status which rests upon a definite agreement not to commit any breach of the maritime peace, which was signed by his predecessor, independently of the six Trucial Chiefs, in 1868.[1] In 1871, however, thinking to escape this obligation, and to carry out with greater ease his projects for personal aggrandisement and conquest towards the south, Sheikh Jasim placed himself under Turkish protection and adopted the Turkish flag. The Ottoman Government, only too anxious, as I shall presently show, to extend its authority in these regions, gladly threw the ægis of its protection over the Sheikh, appointed him Kaimakam or Deputy-Governor of El Katr (to which district they have not the ghost of a claim), and placed a Turkish guard of 250 regulars, a coal-depôt, and a steam launch at El Bidaa, the principal port of the Katr coast. The claims of the Porte to sovereignty over the El Katr cape are not admitted by the British Government, and are the cause not merely of diplomatic controversy, but of positive anarchy in the districts concerned. For the Turkish officials are wholly indifferent to the suppression of piracy, or the observation of the maritime peace; and from the harbours and creeks of the coast alleged to be under their control, feluccas of desperate robbers, mostly of the Beni Hajir tribe, dart out upon the native craft plying to and from Bahrein; and after they have secured their spoil, retire again to the safe asylum of a Turkish anchorage.

Armati pelagum exercent, semperque recentes
Convectare juvat prædas et vivere rapto.

Sheikh Jasim himself is quite ready to coquet with any power that will forward his ambitious aims. He has for long been engaged in a savage blood-feud with the adjoining tribe of Abu Dhabi, and his son having been killed in one of the encounters in May 1888, he appealed for aid to the Turks, first at El Hasa, next at Busrah, and finally at Constantinople; and when he met with no response from his patrons, ended by invoking ths assistance of Ibn Rashid, the powerful chief of Nejd; an alliance for which, had it been granted, he would no doubt have had to pay the price of a

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii. No. xxix.

future tribute. The disturbances arising from these designs are not merely detrimental to the order of the Gulf; but they impose a special responsibility upon the British Government, inasmuch as the trade of the seaports is here, as elsewhere, mainly in the hands of Hindu merchants, who are British subjects, and whose lives and property are imperilled by the chronic outbreaks. Even Persia, whose aggressive mood is fired by the pettiest spoil, has been tempted to interfere by the prevailing disorder; and Persian agents have been heard of intriguing with the chieftains of El Katr and Bahrein with a view to their acceptance of Persian sovereignty.

Ottoman pretensions

Having been led to mention the pretensions of the Ottoman Government in this part of the Arabian peninsula, I will briefly indicate the steps by which the Turks have established themselves in this neighbourhood, and which will sufficiently demonstrate the justice or the reverse of their claims. In 1871, Abdullah bin Feysul, of the Wahabi reigning family, being engaged in a conflict for the throne of Nejd with his brother Saud, applied to Midhat Pasha, then Turkish Vali of Baghdad, to co-operate in his restoration to power. The latter was nothing loth. He cared little for Abdullah, and less for Saud; but the opportunity of extending Ottoman sway was too good to be missed. The Turks never went near to Nejd; but a Turkish army occupied the maritime district of El Katif, and the inland oasis of El Hasa,[1] which are the adjoining regions on the west to the promontory of El Katr. At the same time, in reply to the natural queries of the British Government, an explicit assurance was given that the Porte had no intention of seeking supremacy over Bahrein, Muscat, or the maritime tribes, or of undertaking naval operations. They have continued, however, ever since to keep possession of El Hasa and Katif (to which their ownership is not now contested), and are represented by an official, subordinate to the Vali of Busrah, who resides at Hufhuf in El Hasa, and bears the absurd title of Mutaserrif of Nejd, although a mountain range and the famous Nefud desert of shifting sand intervene between them and Nejd, to which the Turks have never attempted to penetrate. From the base of El Hasa the afore-mentioned claims to El Katr are put forward, in

[1] Hasa (pl. Ahsa) means literally soft or plain or sandy ground which retains rain-water below the surface.

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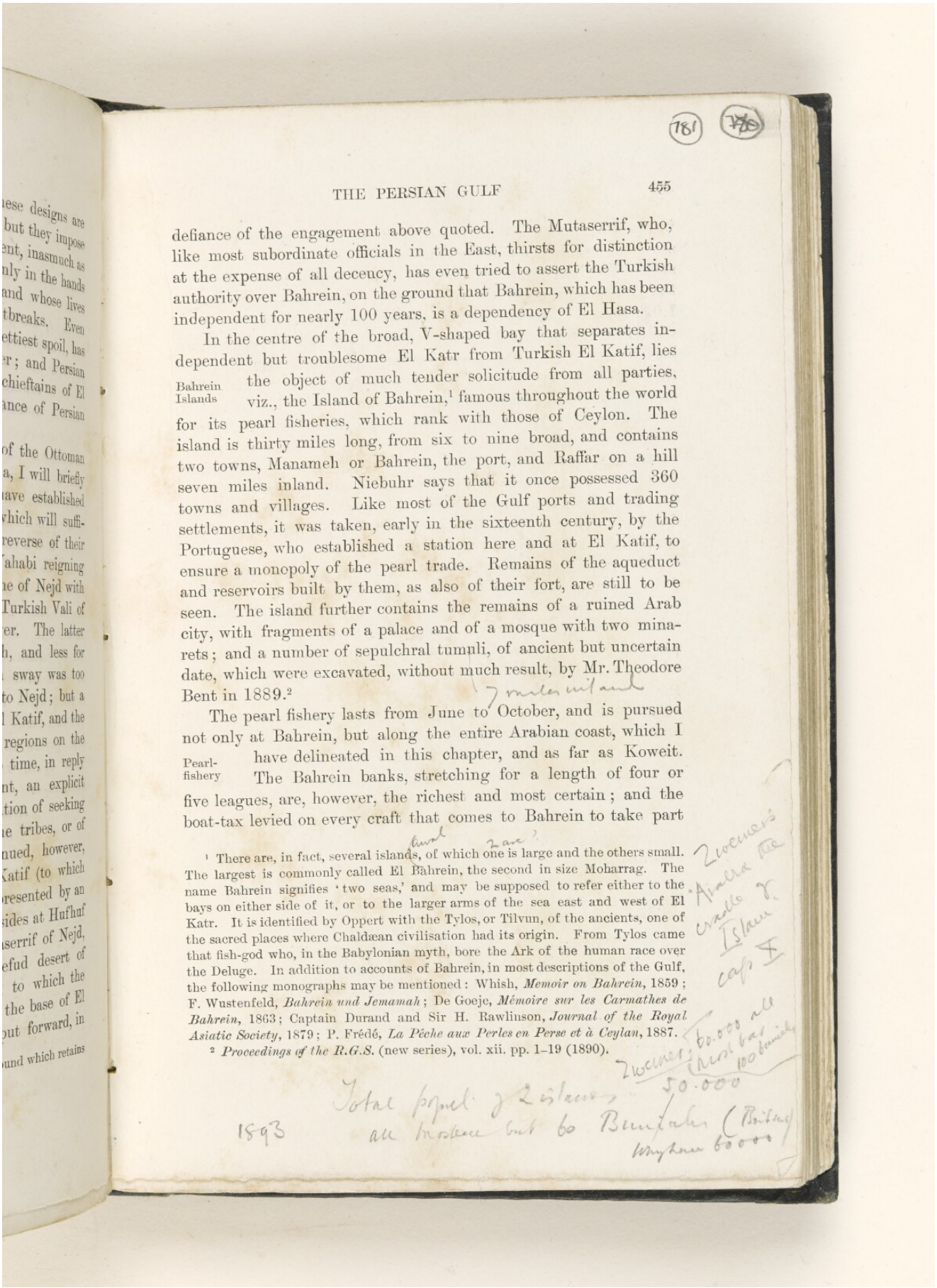



defiance of the engagement above quoted. The Mutaserrif, who, like most subordinate officials in the East, thirsts for distinction at the expense of all decency, has even tried to assert the Turkish authority over Bahrein, on the ground that Bahrein, which has been independent for nearly 100 years, is a dependency of El Hasa.

Bahrein Islands

In the centre of the broad, V-shaped bay that separates independent but troublesome El Katr from Turkish El Katif, lies the object of much tender solicitude from all parties, viz., the Island of Bahrein,[1] famous throughout the world for its pearl fisheries, which rank with those of Ceylon. The island is thirty miles long, from six to nine broad, and contains two towns, Manameh or Bahrein, the port, and Raffar on a hill seven miles inland. Niebuhr says that it once possessed 360 towns and villages. Like most of the Gulf ports and trading settlements, it was taken, early in the sixteenth century, by the Portuguese, who established a station here and at El Katif, to ensure a monopoly of the pearl trade. Remains of the aqueduct and reservoirs built by them, as also of their fort, are still to be seen. The island further contains the remains of a ruined Arab city, with fragments of a palace and of a mosque with two minarets; and a number of sepulchral tumuli, of ancient but uncertain date, which were excavated, without much result, by Mr. Theodore Bent in 1889.[2]

Pearl-fishery

The pearl fishery lasts from June to October, and is pursued not only at Bahrein, but along the entire Arabian coast, which I have delineated in this chapter, and as far as Koweit. The Bahrein banks, stretching for a length of four or five leagues, are, however, the richest and most certain; and the boat-tax levied on every craft that comes to Bahrein to take part

[1] There are, in fact, several islands, of which one is large and the others small. The largest is commonly called El Bahrein, the second in size Moharrag. The name Bahrein signifies 'two seas,' and may be supposed to refer either to the bays on either side of it, or to the larger arms of the sea east and west of El Katr. It is identified by Oppert with the Tylos, or Tilvun, of the ancients, one of the sacred places where Chaldæan civilisation had its origin. From Tylos came that fish-god who, in the Babylonian myth, bore the Ark of the human race over the Deluge. In addition to accounts of Bahrein, in most descriptions of the Gulf, the following monographs may be mentioned: Whish, *Memoir on Bahrein*, 1859; F. Wustenfeld, *Bahrein und Jemamah*; De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes de Bahrein*, 1863; Captain Durand and Sir H. Rawlinson, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1879; P. Frédé, *La Pêche aux Perles en Perse et à Ceylan*, 1887.

[2] *Proceedings of the R.G.S.* (new series), vol. xii. pp. 1–19 (1890).

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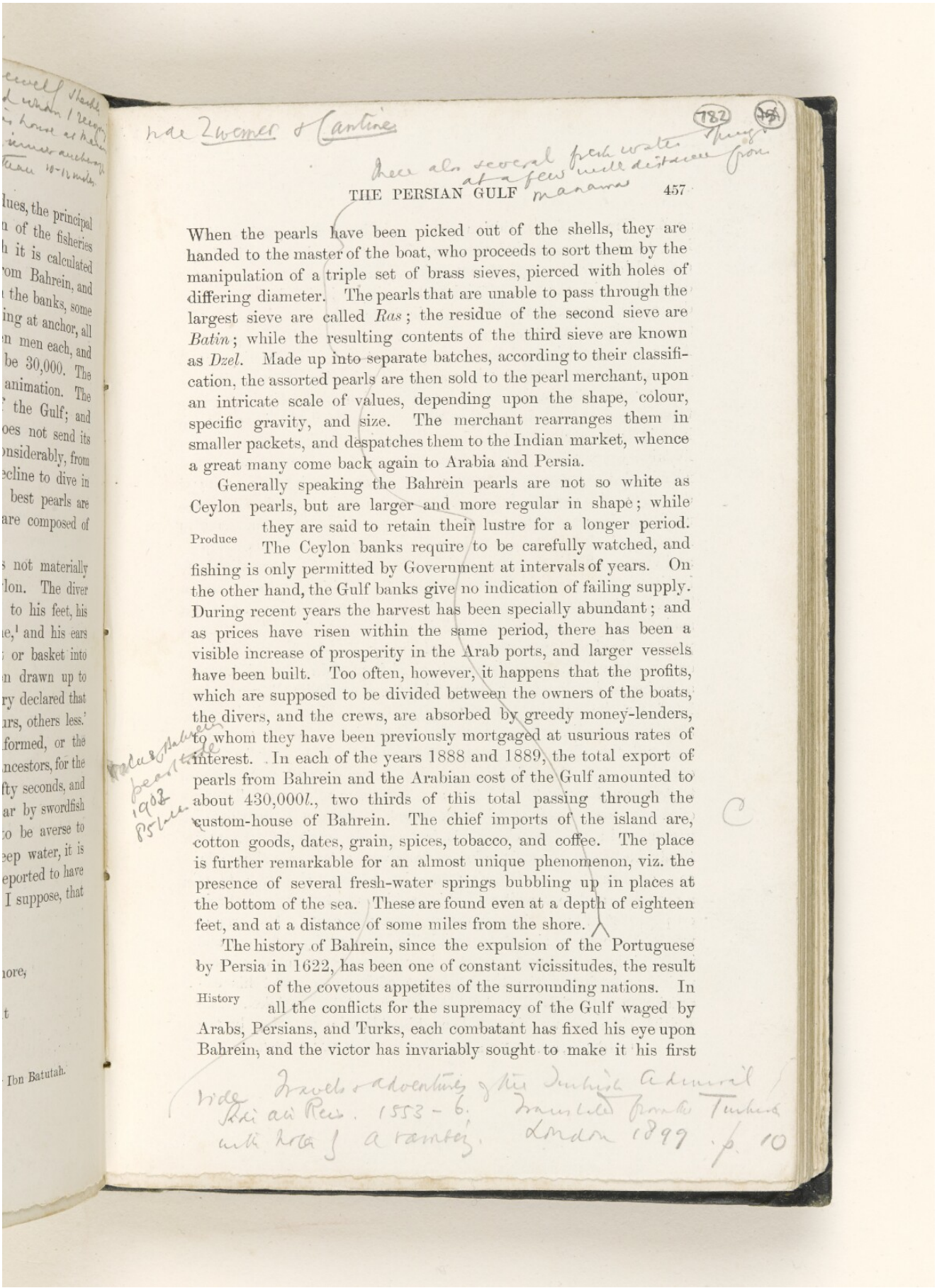
in the fishing constitutes, along with the custom dues, the principal source of revenue of the Sheikh. At the season of the fisheries some 4,500 boats of every size and rig (of which it is calculated that 2,000 come from the pirate coast, 1,500 from Bahrein, and 1,000 from El Katr to Koweit) may be seen upon the banks, some with their sails bellied by the wind, others riding at anchor, all busily employed. They carry from five to fourteen men each, and the total number of hands engaged is said to be 30,000. The scene is one of the greatest picturesqueness and animation. The banks are open to all the maritime peoples of the Gulf; and there is scarcely a petty fishing village that does not send its contingent to the quest. The soundings vary considerably, from four to twenty fathoms; but the men as a rule decline to dive in deeper water than seven fathoms, although the best pearls are found at greater depths. The banks themselves are composed of corally rock and sand.

The method of working is primitive and does not materially differ from that employed on the banks of Ceylon. The diver descends weighted by a stone attached to his feet, his nostrils closed by a pincer of horn or bone,[1] and his ears plugged with beeswax. Round his waist is a net or basket into which he hurriedly gathers the oysters, and is then drawn up to the surface. Ibn Batutah in the fourteenth century declared that 'some remain under water an hour, others two hours, others less.' But either the worthy Moor was grossly misinformed, or the modern Arab is a very different creature from his ancestors, for the period spent under water is seldom more than fifty seconds, and often much less. Several men are killed every year by swordfish or sharks, though the latter are popularly said to be averse to coloured skins. When the diving is pursued in deep water, it is also apt to be fatal to life; and 250 men were reported to have died from this cause in 1885. It was these perils, I suppose, that inspired the affecting simile of Matthew Arnold:—

Methods employed

> And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
> Of his pale wife, who waits and weeps on shore,
> By sands of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf,
> Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night
> Having made up his tale of precious pearls
> Rejoins her in their hut upon the shore.

[1] This presumably is the 'tortoise-shell mask' mentioned by Ibn Batutah.





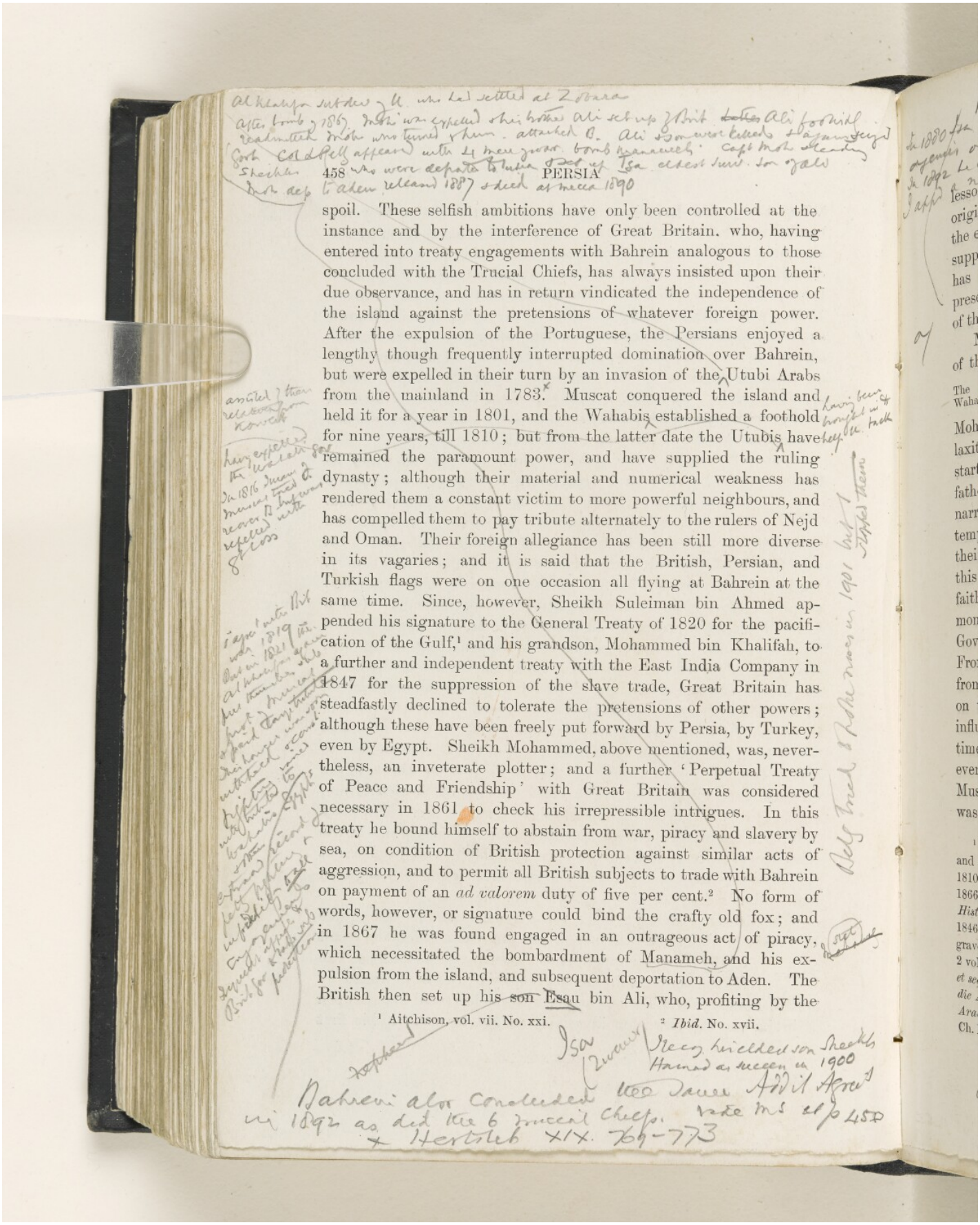
When the pearls have been picked out of the shells, they are handed to the master of the boat, who proceeds to sort them by the manipulation of a triple set of brass sieves, pierced with holes of differing diameter. The pearls that are unable to pass through the largest sieve are called *Ras*; the residue of the second sieve are *Batin*; while the resulting contents of the third sieve are known as *Dzel*. Made up into separate batches, according to their classification, the assorted pearls are then sold to the pearl merchant, upon an intricate scale of values, depending upon the shape, colour, specific gravity, and size. The merchant rearranges them in smaller packets, and despatches them to the Indian market, whence a great many come back again to Arabia and Persia.

Produce

Generally speaking the Bahrein pearls are not so white as Ceylon pearls, but are larger and more regular in shape; while they are said to retain their lustre for a longer period. The Ceylon banks require to be carefully watched, and fishing is only permitted by Government at intervals of years. On the other hand, the Gulf banks give no indication of failing supply. During recent years the harvest has been specially abundant; and as prices have risen within the same period, there has been a visible increase of prosperity in the Arab ports, and larger vessels have been built. Too often, however, it happens that the profits, which are supposed to be divided between the owners of the boats, the divers, and the crews, are absorbed by greedy money-lenders, to whom they have been previously mortgaged at usurious rates of interest. In each of the years 1888 and 1889, the total export of pearls from Bahrein and the Arabian cost of the Gulf amounted to about 430,000*l*., two thirds of this total passing through the custom-house of Bahrein. The chief imports of the island are, cotton goods, dates, grain, spices, tobacco, and coffee. The place is further remarkable for an almost unique phenomenon, viz. the presence of several fresh-water springs bubbling up in places at the bottom of the sea. These are found even at a depth of eighteen feet, and at a distance of some miles from the shore.

History

The history of Bahrein, since the expulsion of the Portuguese by Persia in 1622, has been one of constant vicissitudes, the result of the covetous appetites of the surrounding nations. In all the conflicts for the supremacy of the Gulf waged by Arabs, Persians, and Turks, each combatant has fixed his eye upon Bahrein, and the victor has invariably sought to make it his first





spoil. These selfish ambitions have only been controlled at the instance and by the interference of Great Britain, who, having entered into treaty engagements with Bahrein analogous to those concluded with the Trucial Chiefs, has always insisted upon their due observance, and has in return vindicated the independence of the island against the pretensions of whatever foreign power. After the expulsion of the Portuguese, the Persians enjoyed a lengthy though frequently interrupted domination over Bahrein, but were expelled in their turn by an invasion of the Utubi Arabs from the mainland in 1783.[x] Muscat conquered the island and held it for a year in 1801, and the Wahabis established a foothold for nine years, till 1810; but from the latter date the Utubis have remained the paramount power, and have supplied the ruling dynasty; although their material and numerical weakness has rendered them a constant victim to more powerful neighbours, and has compelled them to pay tribute alternately to the rulers of Nejd and Oman. Their foreign allegiance has been still more diverse in its vagaries; and it is said that the British, Persian, and Turkish flags were on one occasion all flying at Bahrein at the same time. Since, however, Sheikh Suleiman bin Ahmed appended his signature to the General Treaty of 1820 for the pacification of the Gulf,[1] and his grandson, Mohammed bin Khalifah, to a further and independent treaty with the East India Company in 1847 for the suppression of the slave trade, Great Britain has steadfastly declined to tolerate the pretensions of other powers; although these have been freely put forward by Persia, by Turkey, even by Egypt. Sheikh Mohammed, above mentioned, was, nevertheless, an inveterate plotter; and a further 'Perpetual Treaty of Peace and Friendship' with Great Britain was considered necessary in 1861 to check his irrepressible intrigues. In this treaty he bound himself to abstain from war, piracy and slavery by sea, on condition of British protection against similar acts of aggression, and to permit all British subjects to trade with Bahrein on payment of an *ad valorem* duty of five per cent.[2] No form of words, however, or signature could bind the crafty old fox; and in 1867 he was found engaged in an outrageous act of piracy, which necessitated the bombardment of Manameh, and his expulsion from the island, and subsequent deportation to Aden. The British then set up his son Esau bin Ali, who, profiting by the

[1] Aitchison, vol. vii. No. xxi.

[2] *Ibid.* No. xvii.

name Grave from Kurein island in Harbour

(782)

(783)

Kowlet

Nov 28. 29. 1903

Viceroy's Camp

I arrived with squadron on morning of Nov 29 anchored off town in sandy beach above edge of bay. Sheikh's house with 2 stories & pillared & arcade in centre. Sheikh came off (at 60-70) to pay visit with elderly son Sheikh Jabir (at 35). Tall each man with strong feature expression of mingled strength & cunning. powerful bried upright carriage. His sixteen sons were off and he showed much less reserve than most Arab chiefs. When I gave him the sword he cooped that I had not given him a belt with which to put it on. as he was now a "Mil" officer of the Brit Gov. Next morning I landed at 9 am at a point where we could beach boat on sand about 3 m to W of town. Here Sheikh had ridden out & met me with camel corps of 12-20 men and 200-250 horsemen - & somewhat rickety victoria. His own flag with inscription of drunt in fold in white on scarlet background was carried with him. We entered carriage & drove to town. Camel men behind us & crowd of soldiers on foot. Cavalry cascering about open desert & firing guns. Hardinge took a toss as we neared town

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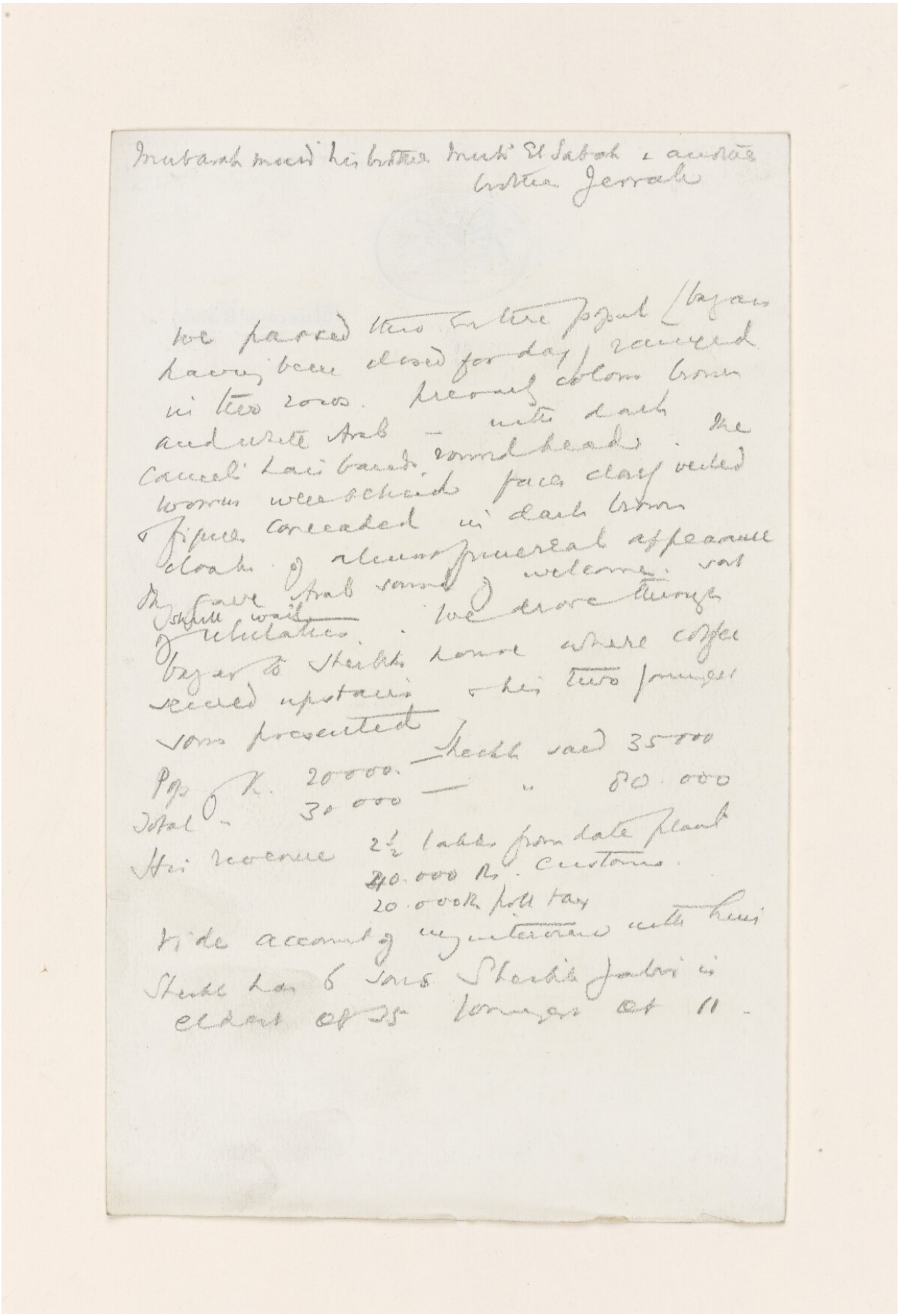

Mubarak mud his brother Muti El Sabah & another brother Jerrah

We passed thro' entire popul [bazars having been closed for day] ranged in two rows. Prevailing colour brown and white Arab — with dark camel's hair bands round head. The women were behind faces clearly veiled & figures concealed in dark brown cloaks of almost funereal appearance. They gave Arab sound of welcome sort of skull wail ululates. We drove through bazar to Sheikh's house where coffee secured upstairs & his two youngest sons presented.

Pop of K. 20000. — Sheikh said 35000
Total " 30000 — " 80.000

His revenue 2½ lakhs from date plant
40.000 Rs. customs.
20.000 Rs poll tax

Vide account of my interview with him

Sheikh has 6 sons. Sheikh Jabir is eldest of 35 youngest of 11.

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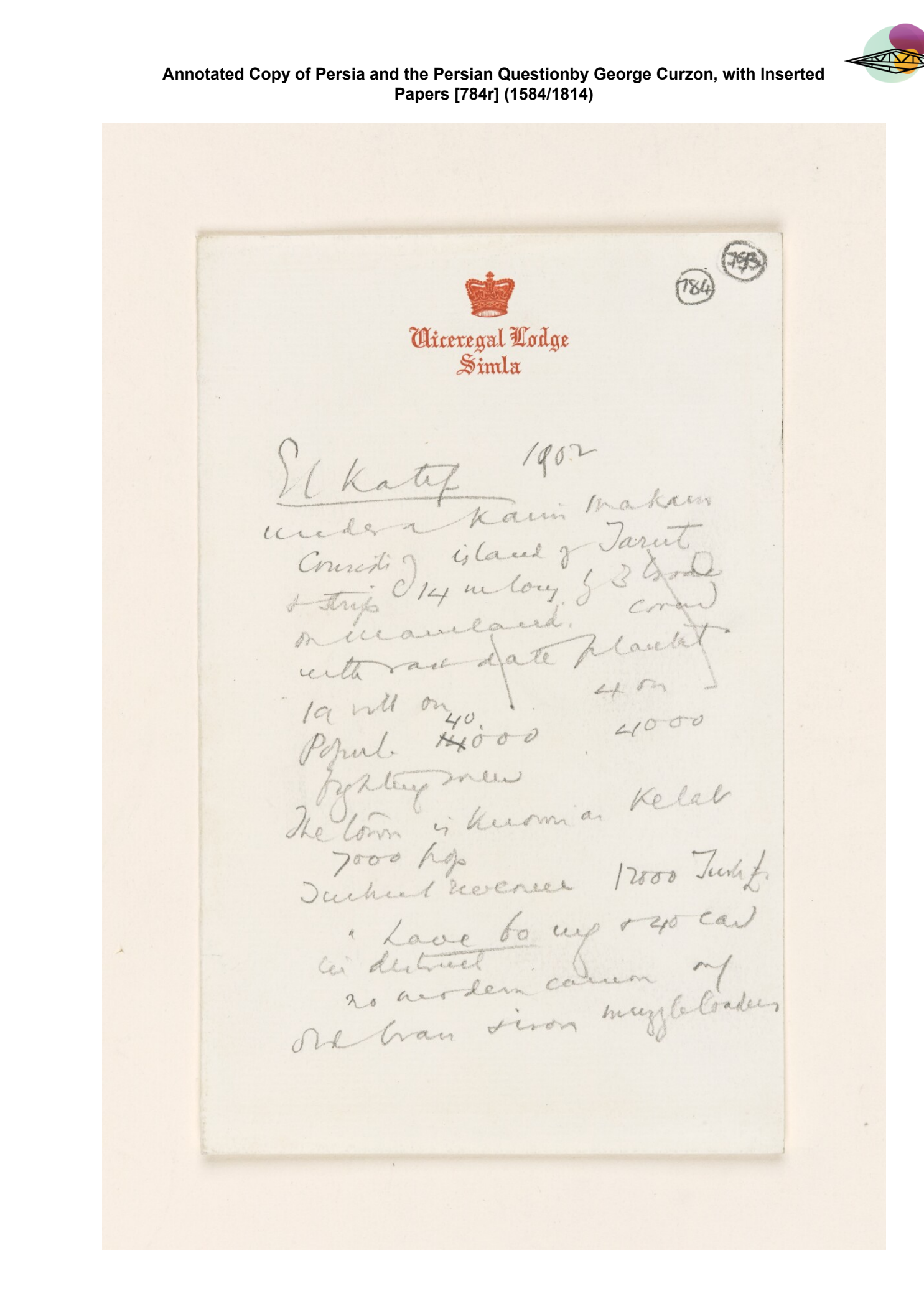
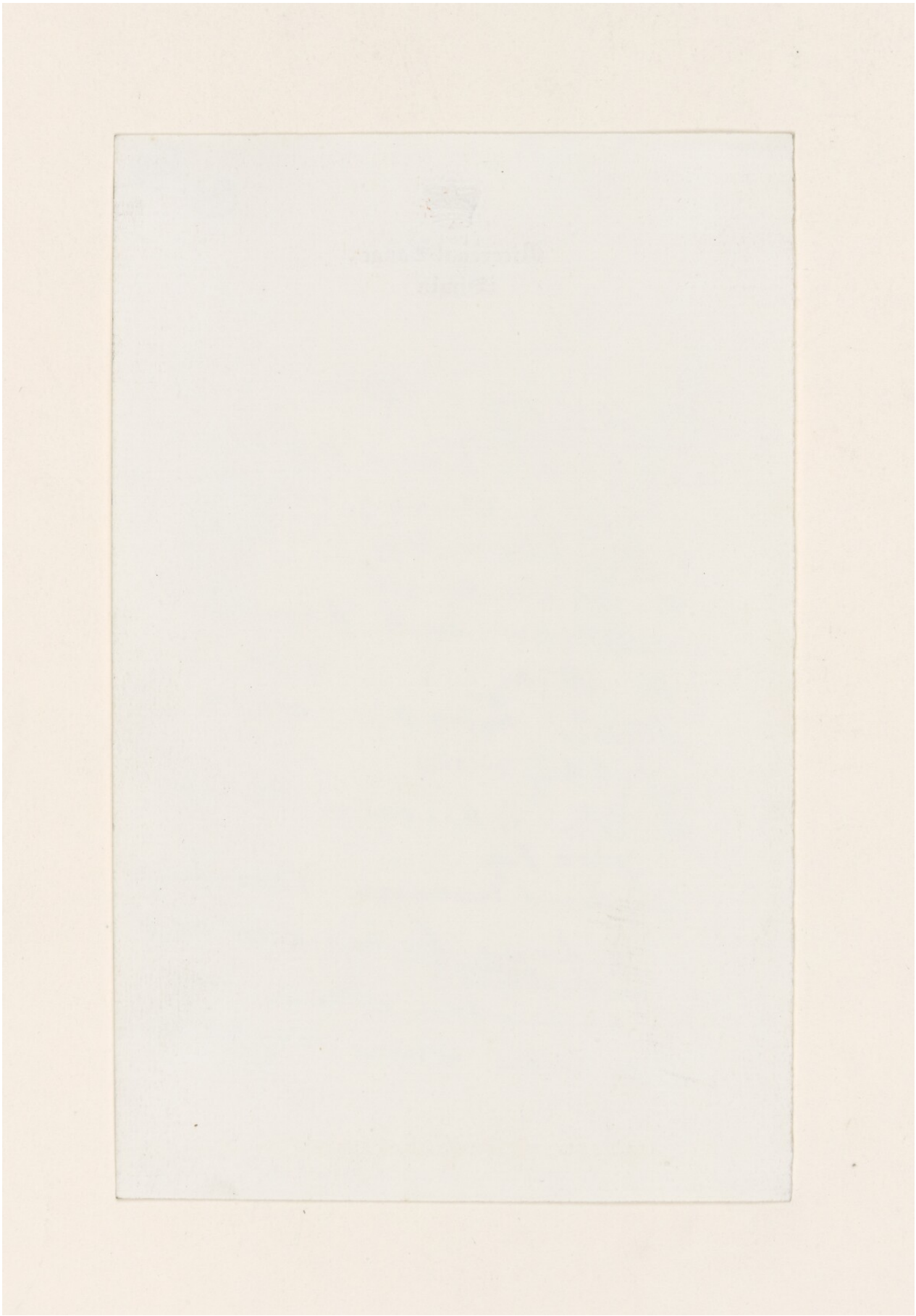


(784) (793)

Viceregal Lodge
Simla

El Katif 1902

under a Kaim Makam
Consists of island of Tarut
& strip 14 m long by 3 broad
on mainland. covered
with rare date plantation
19 villages 4 on
Popul. ~~14~~ 40000 4000
fighting men
The town is known as Kelab
7000 pop
Turkish revenue 12000 Turk £
" Have 60 mg & 40 cav
in district
no modern cannon only
old brass & iron muzzle loaders



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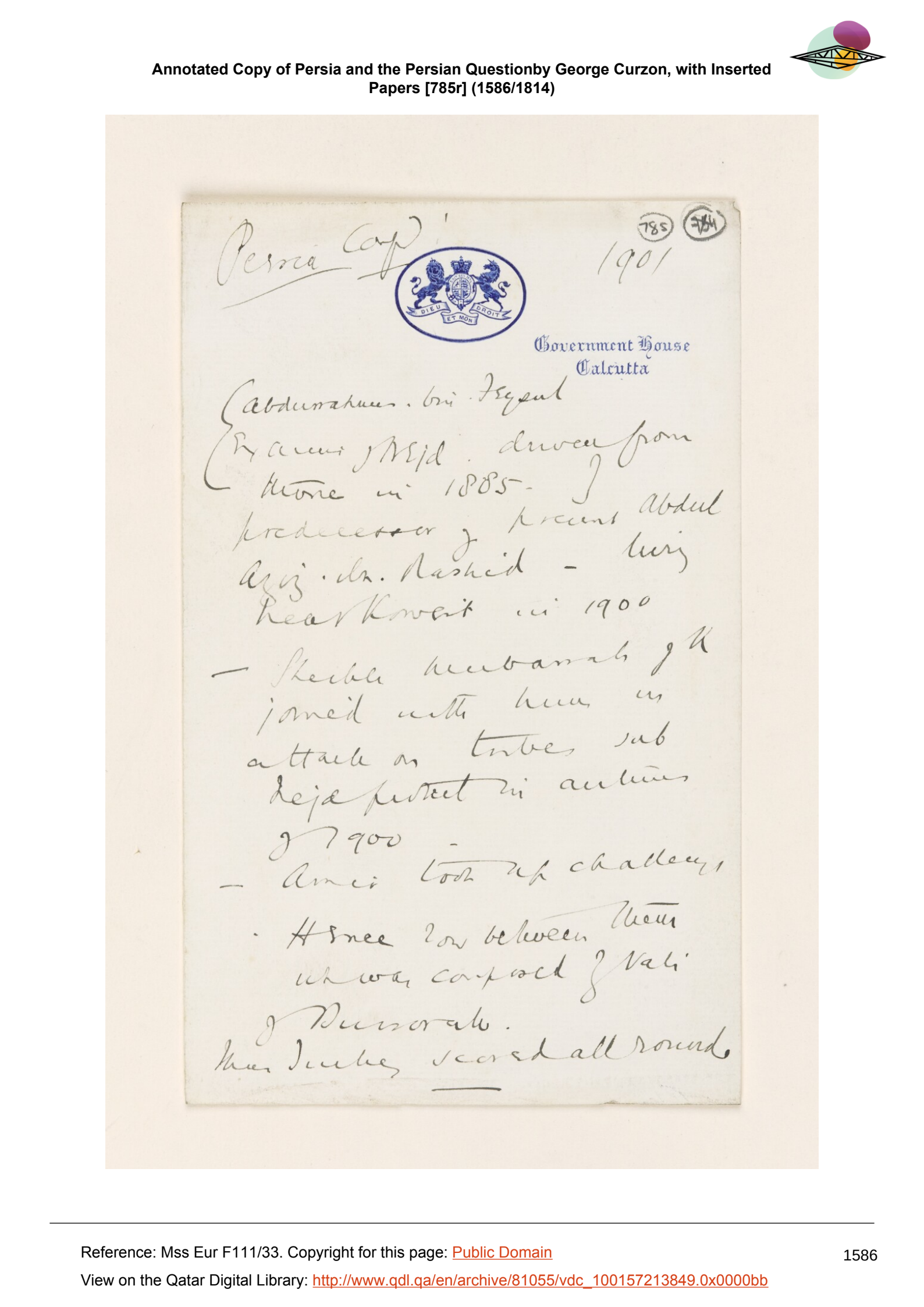


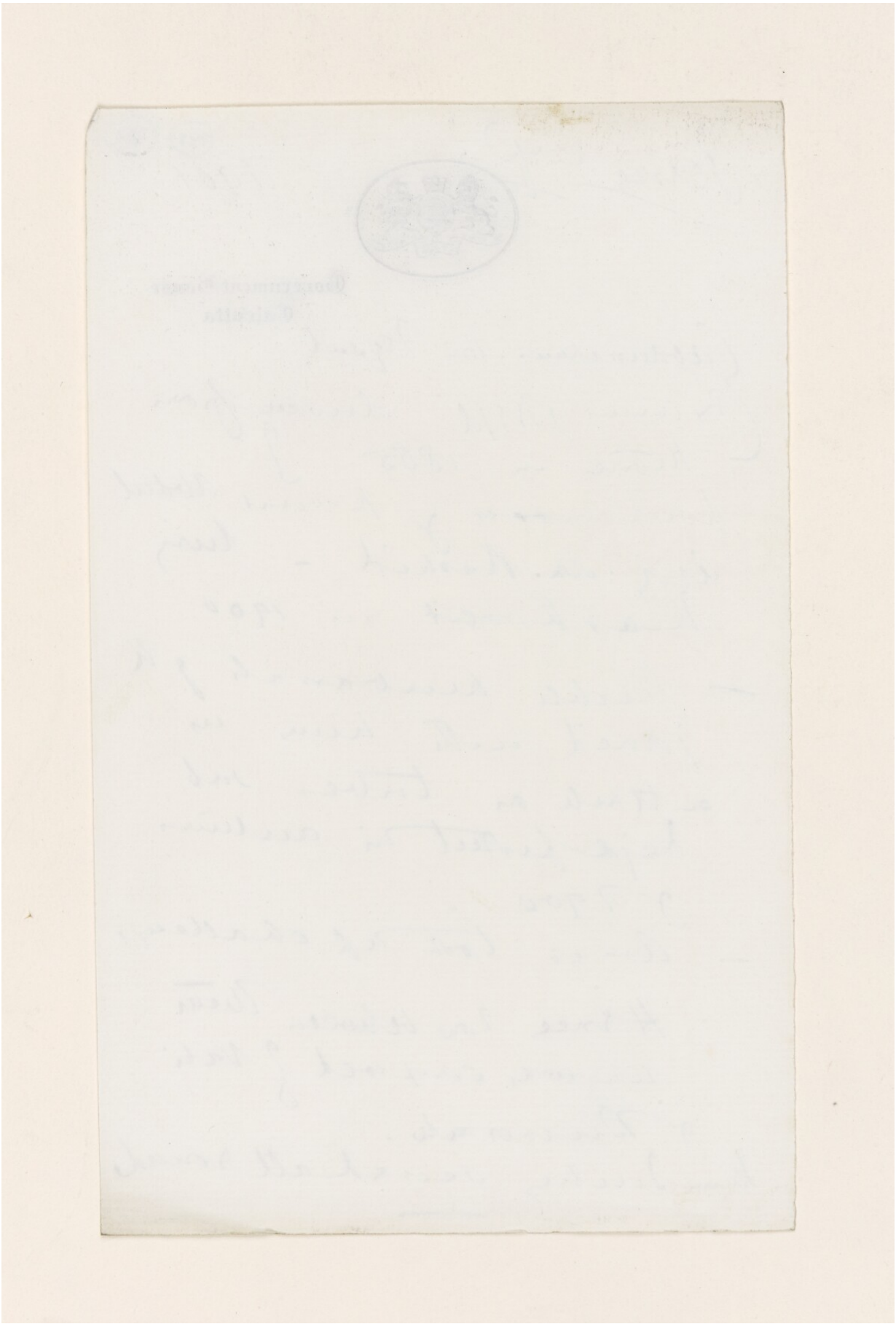
Persia Corp.

785 784

1901

Government House
Calcutta

Abdurrahman. bin. Feysal
Ex Amir of Nejd. driven from
throne in 1885.
predecessor of present Abdul
Aziz. Ibn. Rashid – living
near Koweit in 1900
– Sheikh Mubarrah of K
joined with him in
attack on tribes sub
Nejd protect in autumn
of 1900.
– Amir took up challenge
. Hence row between them
which was composed of Vali
of Bussorah.
Thus Turkey scored all round.



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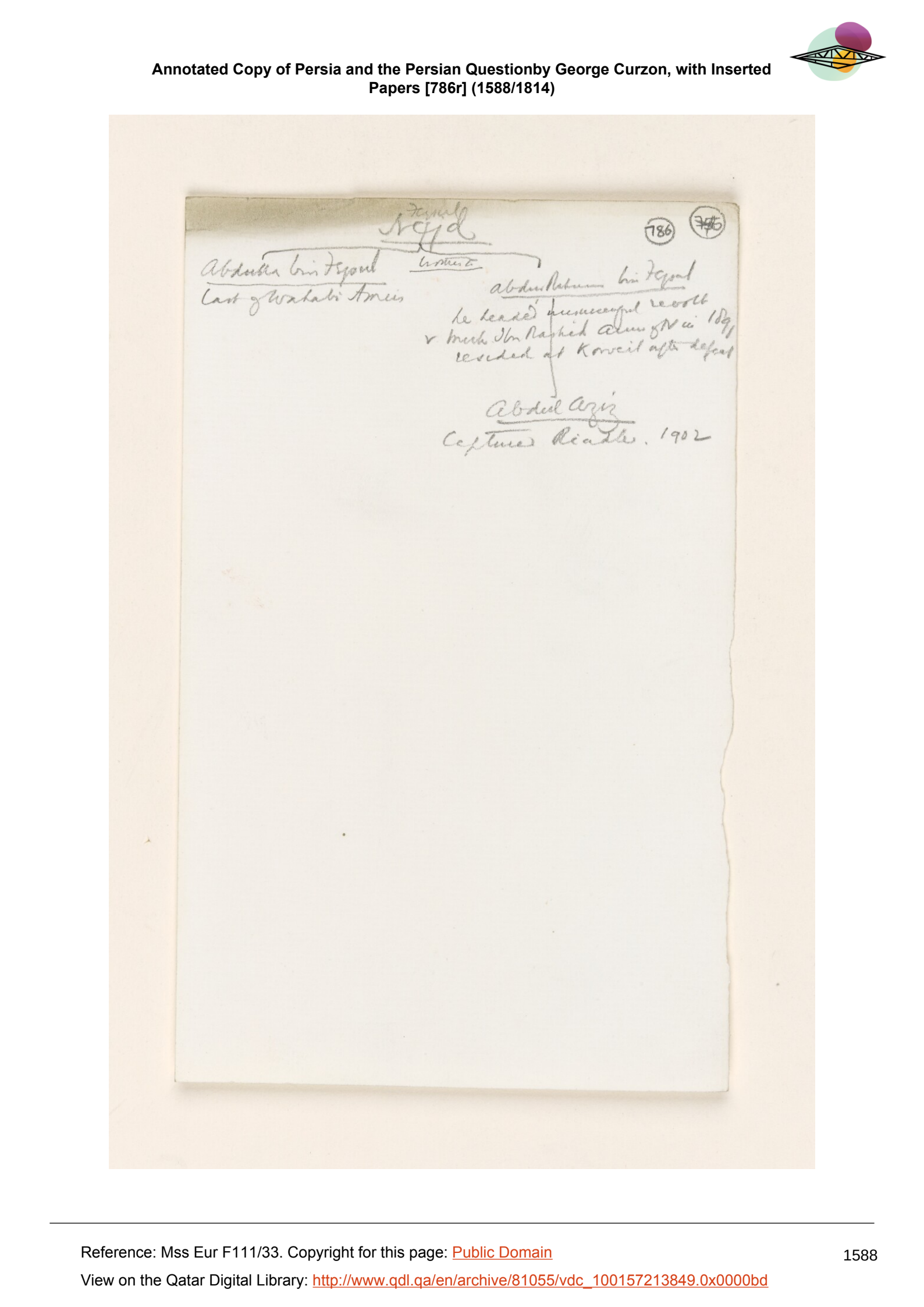


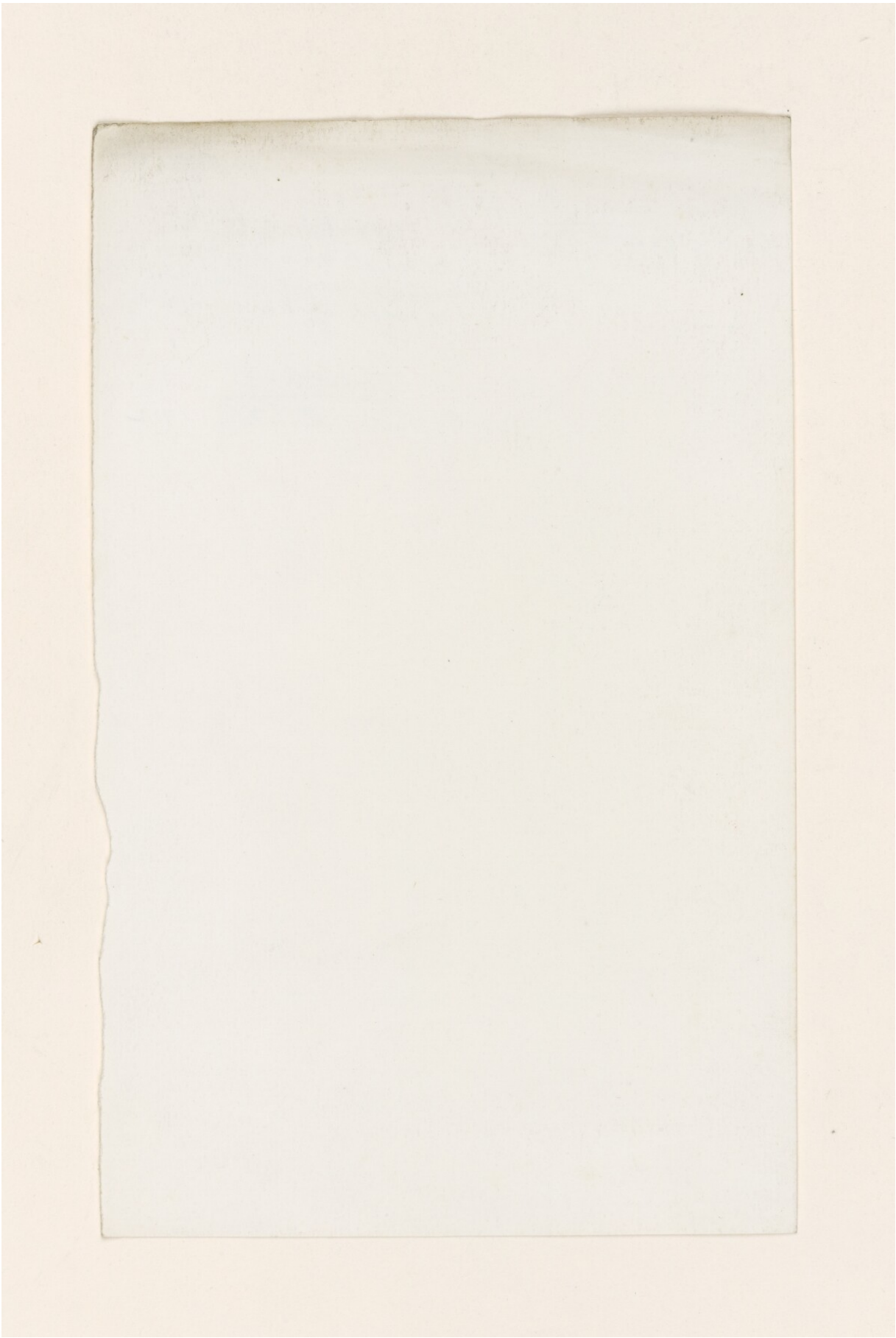
Feysal
Nejd

786 ~~785~~

Abdulla bin Feysal
Last of Wahabi Amirs

Abdur Rahman bin Feysal
he headed unsuccessful revolt
v. Mukh Ibn Rashid Amir of N in 1891
resided at Korveil after defeat

Abdul Aziz
Captured Riadh. 1902



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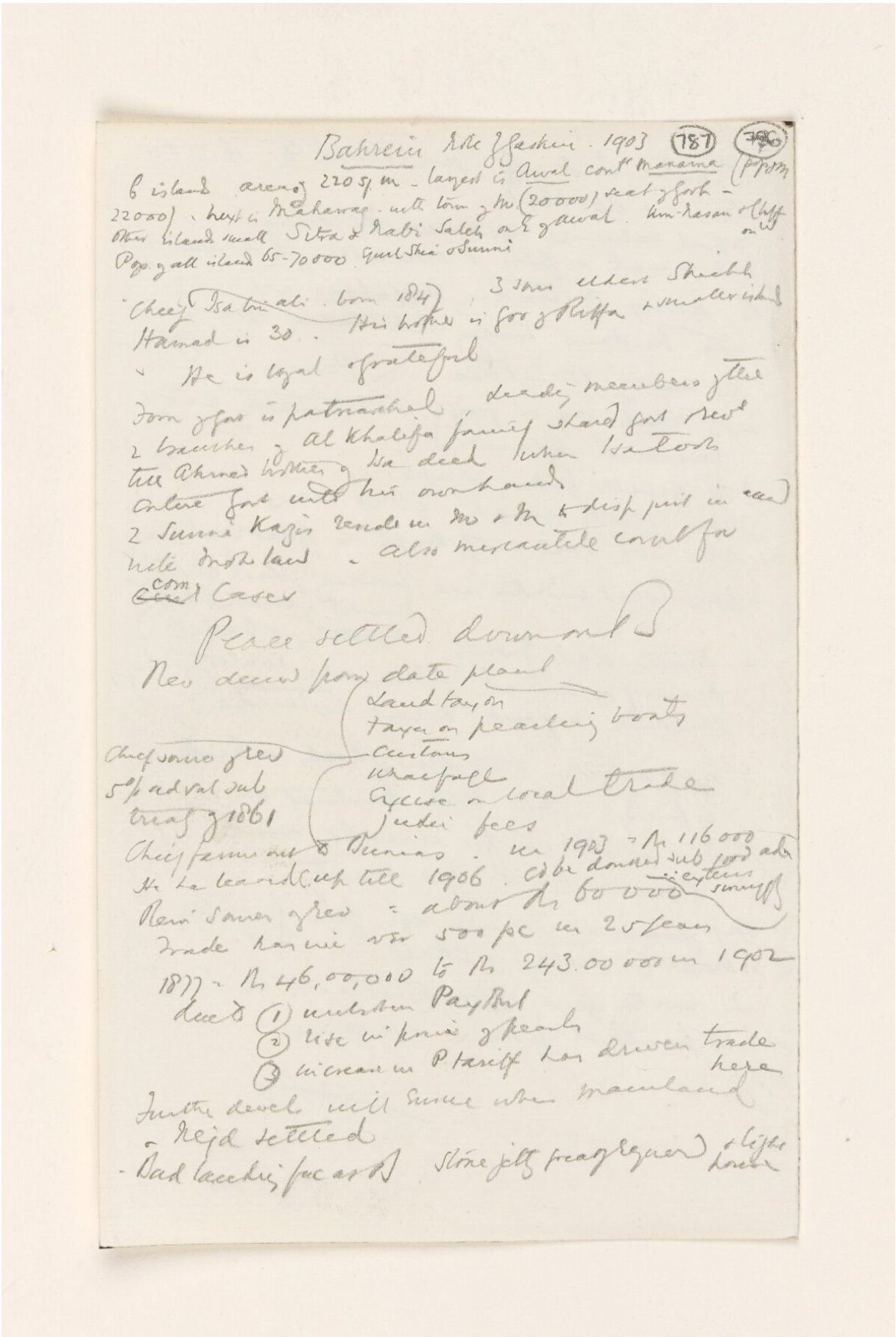

Bahrein Note of Gaskin. 1903 (787) (786)

6 islands area of 220 sq m - largest is Awal cont Manama (Pop 22000) - next is Maharraq - with town of M (20000) seat of Govt - Other islands small Sitra & Nabi Saleh on E of Awal. Um-Nasan & Cliff on W. Pop of all islands 65-70000 Gulf Shia & Sunni

Chief Isa bin ali. born 1847, 3 sons eldest Sheikh Hamad is 30. His brother is Gov of Riffa & smaller islands

He is loyal & grateful

Form of Govt is patriarchal. Leading members of the 2 branches of Al Khalifa family shared Govt & revd till Ahmed brother of Isa died when Isa took entire Govt into his own hands

2 Sunni Kazis reside in M & M to disp just in accord with Moh law - also mercantile court for com Cases

Peace settled down on B

Rev derived from date plant

Land tax on
Taxes on pearling boats
Customs
Wharfage
Excise on local trade
Judicial fees

Chief source of rev 5% ad val sub treaty of 1861

Chief farmer out to Dunias. in 1903 = Rs 116000 He has leased up till 1906. Cd be doubled sub good adm

Rev source of rev = about Rs 60000 extent sincerely

Trade has inc vsr 500 pc in 25 years

1877 = Rs 46,00,000 to Rs 243.00000 in 1902

due to (1) unbroken Pax Brit
(2) rise in price of pearls
(3) increase in P tariff has driven trade here

Further devel will ensue when mainland - Nejd settled

- Bad landing fac at B. Stone jetty great requirement & light house

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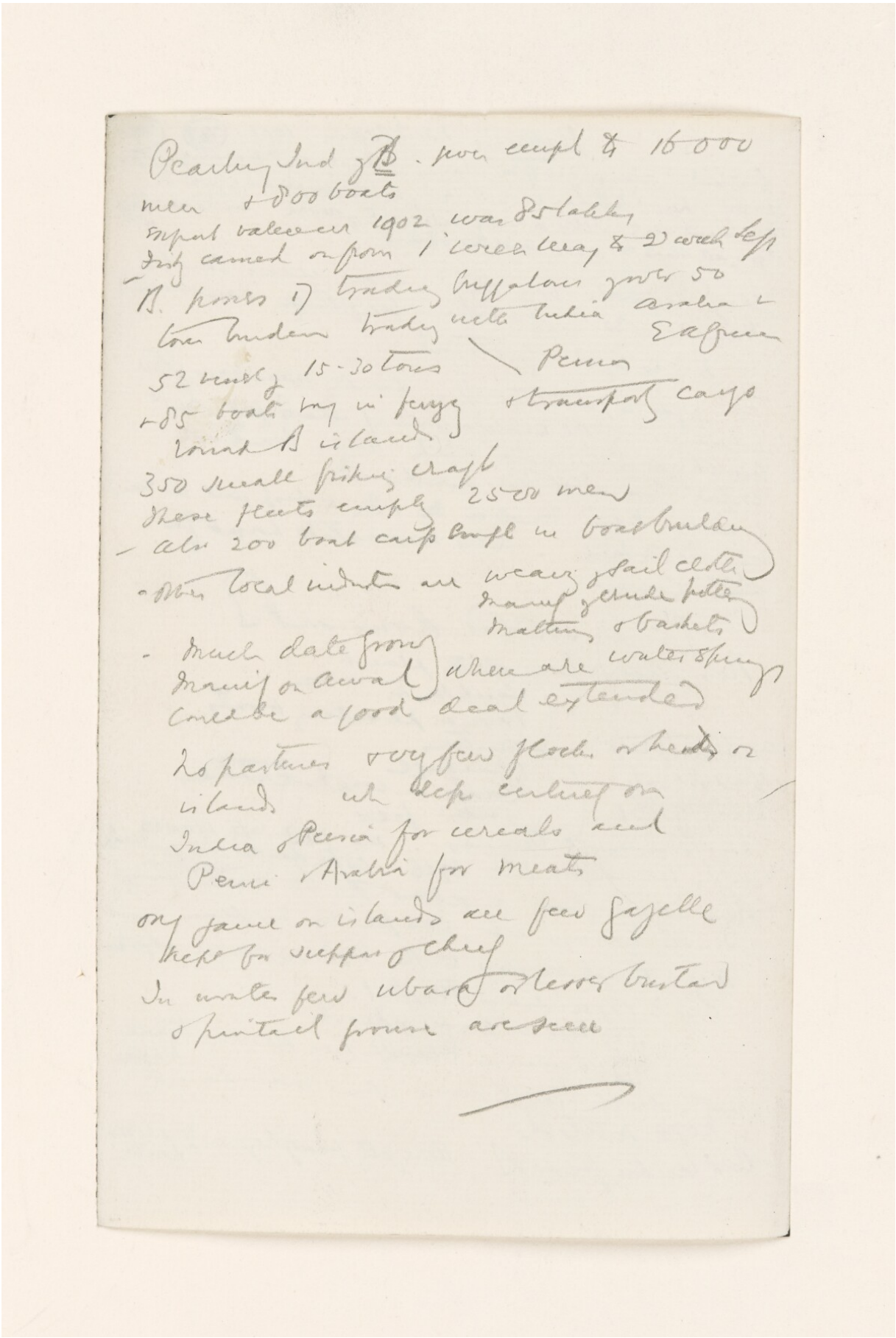

Pearling Ind of B. gives empl to 16 000
men & 800 boats
Export value in 1902 was 85 lakhs
Fishing carried on from 1 week May to 2 week Sept
B. possess 17 trading buggalows over 50
tons burden trading with India Arabia &
E Africa
52 vessels 15-30 tons \ Persia
& 85 boats long in ferrying & transporting cargo
round B islands
350 small fishing craft
These fleets employ 2500 men
also 200 boat carps empl in boat building
Other local industries are weaving of sail cloth
manuf of crude pottery
matting & baskets
Much date growing
manuf on awal where are water springs
could be a good deal extended
No pastures & very few flocks or herds on
islands wh dep entirely on
India & Persia for cereals and
Persia & Arabia for meats
only game on islands are few gazelle
kept for supper of chief
In winter few ubara or lesser bustard
& pintail grouse are seen

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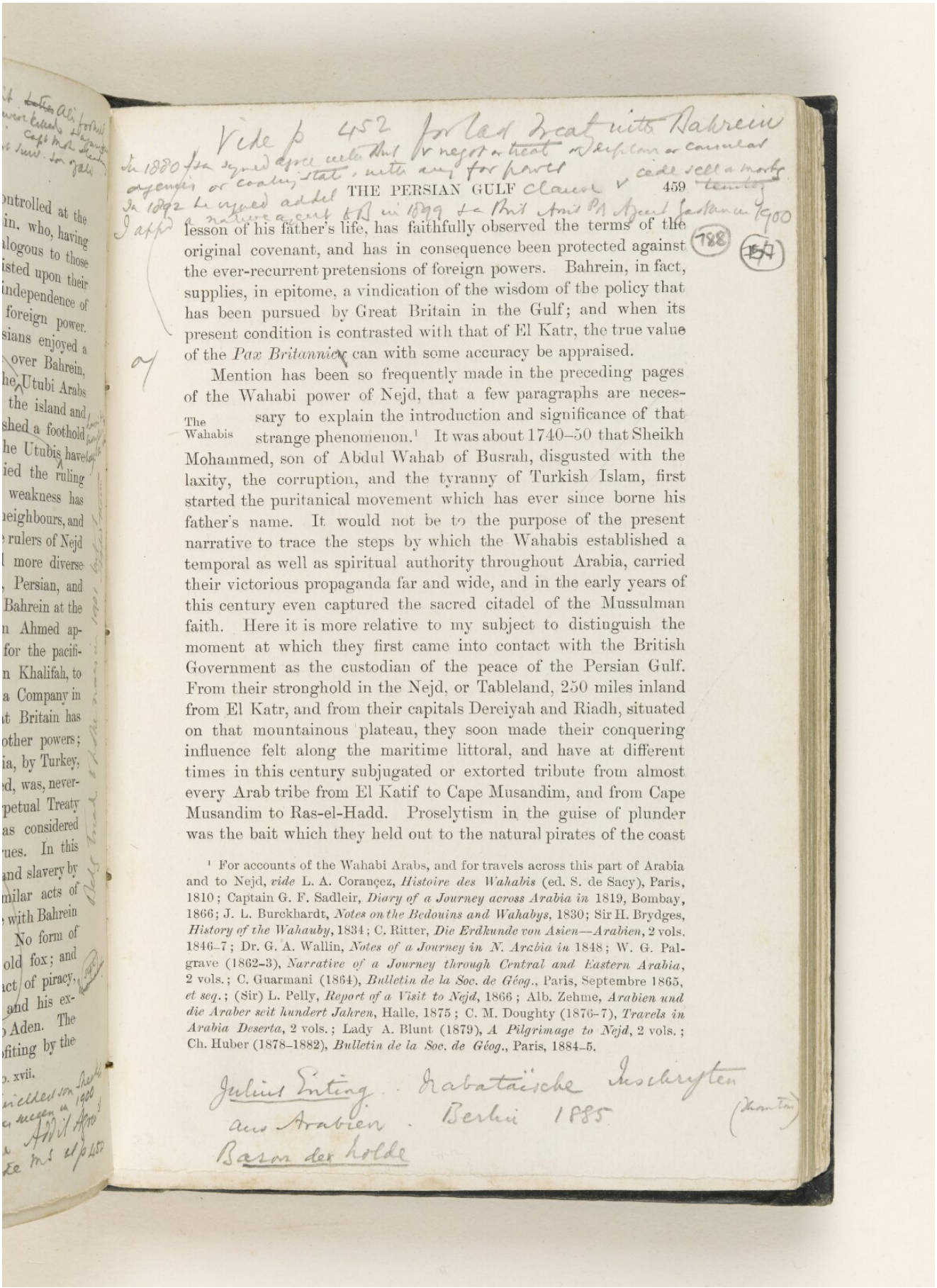



lesson of his father's life, has faithfully observed the terms of the original covenant, and has in consequence been protected against the ever-recurrent pretensions of foreign powers. Bahrein, in fact, supplies, in epitome, a vindication of the wisdom of the policy that has been pursued by Great Britain in the Gulf; and when its present condition is contrasted with that of El Katr, the true value of the *Pax Britannica* can with some accuracy be appraised.

The Wahabis

Mention has been so frequently made in the preceding pages of the Wahabi power of Nejd, that a few paragraphs are necessary to explain the introduction and significance of that strange phenomenon.[1] It was about 1740–50 that Sheikh Mohammed, son of Abdul Wahab of Busrah, disgusted with the laxity, the corruption, and the tyranny of Turkish Islam, first started the puritanical movement which has ever since borne his father's name. It would not be to the purpose of the present narrative to trace the steps by which the Wahabis established a temporal as well as spiritual authority throughout Arabia, carried their victorious propaganda far and wide, and in the early years of this century even captured the sacred citadel of the Mussulman faith. Here it is more relative to my subject to distinguish the moment at which 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, or Tableland, 250 miles inland from El Katr, and from their capitals Dereiyah and Riadh, situated on that mountainous plateau, they soon made their conquering influence felt along the maritime littoral, and have at different times in this century subjugated or extorted tribute from almost every Arab tribe from El Katif to Cape Musandim, and from Cape Musandim to Ras-el-Hadd. Proselytism in the guise of plunder was the bait which they held out to the natural pirates of the coast

[1] For accounts of the Wahabi Arabs, and for travels across this part of Arabia and to Nejd, *vide* L. A. Corançez, *Histoire des Wahabis* (ed. S. de Sacy), Paris, 1810; Captain G. F. Sadleir, *Diary of a Journey across Arabia in* 1819, Bombay, 1866; J. L. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys*, 1830; Sir H. Brydges, *History of the Wahauby*, 1834; C. Ritter, *Die Erdkunde von Asien—Arabien*, 2 vols. 1846–7; Dr. G. A. Wallin, *Notes of a Journey in N. Arabia in* 1848; W. G. Palgrave (1862–3), *Narrative of a Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, 2 vols.; C. Guarmani (1864), *Bulletin de la Soc. de Géog.*, Paris, Septembre 1865, *et seq.*; (Sir) L. Pelly, *Report of a Visit to Nejd*, 1866; Alb. Zehme, *Arabien und die Araber seit hundert Jahren*, Halle, 1875; C. M. Doughty (1876–7), *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, 2 vols.; Lady A. Blunt (1879), *A Pilgrimage to Nejd*, 2 vols.; Ch. Huber (1878–1882), *Bulletin de la Soc. de Géog.*, Paris, 1884–5.

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ports. As has been well but cynically said, 'The leading tenets of Wahab's faith seem to have been those common to prophets, namely, to proclaim himself and the Unity of the Creator, and to kill or plunder his fellow creatures.' It was in 1787 that the first mention of the Wahabis is found in the Bombay Records; but the British Government, though taking strong measures against the piratical tribes whom their preaching had incited to plunder, was careful not to involve itself in hostile proceedings against the Wahabi Amir himself. Other nations, more intimately involved, undertook the task of crushing the schismatic upstart; and 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 the heretical authority out of existence. Such, however, was the vitality either of the creed or of the dominion, that within a few years Turki, the son of the deceased Amir, had expelled the Egyptian governor, was proclaimed Sultan of Nejd, recovered all and more than his father's territories, and, by the judicious payment of a small tribute to the Egyptian Khedive, retained the throne till he was murdered in 1831. His son and successor, Feysul, upon succeeding to the throne, 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 again to return, and from then till his death in 1865 continued to rule in Nejd, and to push his sovereignty and claims to tribute far and wide among the surrounding tribes. Four times in this period the vigorous remonstrances of Great Britain, and the apparition of a naval armament off the threatened ports, whether of Bahrein or Muscat, were required to compel the retirement of the aggressive Sultan, not, however, without the extortion of a tribute in the case of Muscat, though not in that of Bahrein.

His son, Abdullah bin Feysul, who had long acted as Regent, succeeded him in 1865, and entered into an engagement with Great Britain not to molest the Arab tribes under British protection, particularly those of Muscat, but to rest content with the receipt of tribute from the latter. A prolonged fight ensued between Abdullah and his brother Saud, in which the latter was at first successful, but in which Abdullah, flying to Turkey, invoked that

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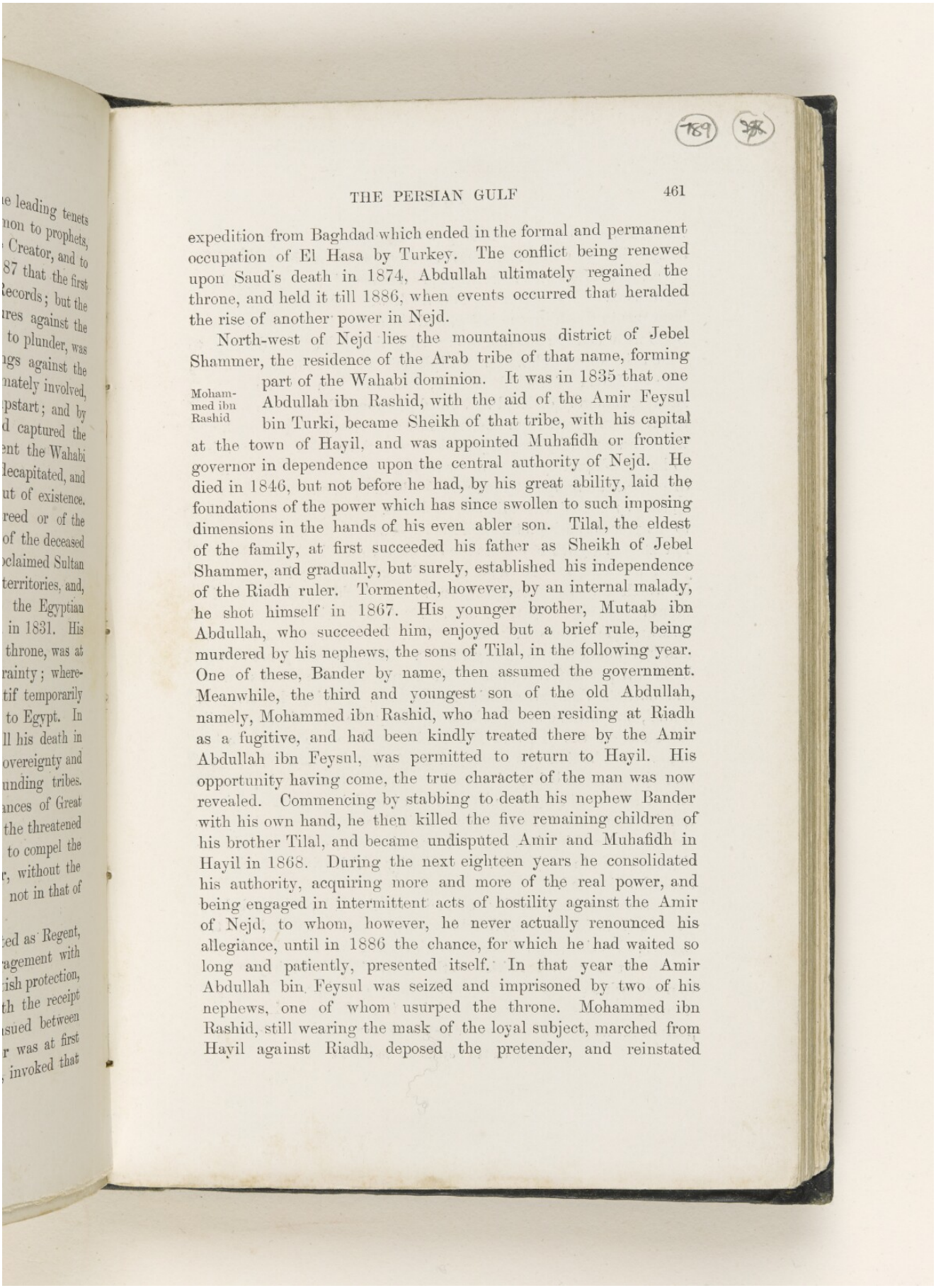



expedition from Baghdad which ended in the formal and permanent occupation of El Hasa by Turkey. The conflict being renewed upon Saud's death in 1874, Abdullah ultimately regained the throne, and held it till 1886, when events occurred that heralded the rise of another power in Nejd.

North-west of Nejd lies the mountainous district of Jebel Shammer, the 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 that tribe, with his capital at the town of Hayil, and was appointed Muhafidh or frontier governor in dependence upon the central authority of Nejd. He died in 1846, but not before he had, by his great ability, laid the foundations of the 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. His opportunity having come, the true character of the man was now revealed. 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, and being engaged in intermittent acts of hostility against the Amir of Nejd, to whom, however, he never actually renounced his allegiance, until in 1886 the chance, for which he had waited so long and patiently, presented itself. In that year 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

Mohammed ibn Rashid

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 the superintendence of an agent appointed by himself. The three rebellious nephews of Abdullah have since been put to death by the latter, and the fourth is detained at Hayil by Mohammed ibn Rashid, along with his uncle, the old Amir, to whom the successful pretender diplomatically concedes the spiritual title of Imam of Nejd.[1] He is, however, himself the *de facto* ruler, not merely of Nejd and Jebel Shammer, but of the whole of the Arabian desert from the confines of Syria to the Nefud, and wields an authority precisely analogous to that which was exercised so long in Japan by the dynasty of the Shoguns or Tycoons, who dispensed the temporal power at Yeddo in the name of an impotent spiritual *fainéant*, the Mikado, at Kioto. Though he has waded to his present position through the blood of his own kin, Mohammed ibn Rashid's government is understood to be both popular and just; while he has shown supreme diplomatic ability in the manner in which he has humoured the vanity of Turkey by professing himself the vassal of the Porte. By this purely nominal act of obeisance he secures an immunity from interference from El Hasa, and has practically no enemy to fear. Only fifty-six years of age, he is still in the full vigour of his manhood, and presents one of the most striking personalities in the East. During the past year a final, but futile, effort has been made by the old reigning family to shake off the yoke of Ibn Rashid and to recover their lost sway. A rebellion was organised by Abdur Rahman ibn Feysul and his son, and being vigorously supported by several powerful tribes, resulted in the expulsion of Ibn Rashid's agent from Riadh, and in temporary success. Ibn Rashid, however, marched against the hostile combination, inflicted upon it a severe defeat, and continues to rule in Nejd with an authority which will probably not again be disputed.

Returning from the digression into which I have been led by the consideration of the Wahabi power, I resume the tale of the Persian Gulf littoral, at the point where I left it, viz. the Turkish position on the coast of El Katif, the southern limit of which may be fixed at the port of Ujair. Northwards from that place the Ottoman dominion is established without dispute as far as Fao, where we strike the estuary of the Shat-el-Arab

Koweit or Grane

[1] Abdullah bin Feysul has since died.

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11

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Famous for over a Century
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READY-TO-WEAR
FROCKS

We have now in stock a very large variety of fashionable Ready-to-Wear Frocks, of which the two garments illustrated below are examples. These Frocks are beautifully made from fashionable materials, and are adapted from the latest designs or the best known Paris Couturiers.



and complete the circumnavigation of the Gulf. The sole place of any interest on the coast-line between El Katif and Fao is the excellent and flourishing harbour of Grane, or Koweit.[1] Here an Arab tribe, expelled from Busrah in the seventeenth century, came and settled, and by dint of sagacious policy and commercial aptitudes raised the population of the town to a total of 20,000 souls, and converted the harbour into one of the most prosperous and best managed ports of the Gulf. The stability of Koweit has also been greatly assisted by the phenomenal longevity of its chieftains, five only having ruled in the course of two and a half centuries. The best Arab horses are commonly brought down hither from the interior for shipment to India. In 1821–2 it was for a short time the headquarters of the British Resident at Busrah, who moved here in consequence of the insolent attitude of the Pasha of Baghdad. Koweit now nominally forms part of the vilayet of Busrah, to which it pays tribute; but it is not greatly interfered with by the central power, who have never attempted to place a garrison here. To English readers the name, in its alternative rendering of Grane, is more familiar as the suggested maritime terminus of the Euphrates Valley Railway, projected by General Chesney and advocated by Sir W. P. Andrew, the Duke of Sutherland, and others. If such a railway, as to the wisdom and chances of which I have spoken elsewhere, were to terminate in the Persian Gulf, Koweit would probably afford the best available harbour in the neighbourhood of the Tigris and Euphrates delta. On the other hand, were it to be continued by a line running, in whatever direction, through Persian territory, it would be absurd to locate the maritime terminus at a point so far to the west.

Fao

Fao is a quarantine and telegraph station of the Turkish Government, situated at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab. The Indo-European Telegraph Department maintain a staff and occupy a building within the same precincts, Fao being the terminus of the submarine cable from Kurrachi *viâ* Jask and Bushire, and the point of junction with the overland wires from Baghdad. The place, which is otherwise insignificant, has lately developed a sudden, if somewhat spurious, importance from the steps that have been taken by the Turkish Government

[1] Grane is a corruption of the Arabic *ghern* or *kirn* = 'horn,' from the curving outline of the bay. Koweit, pronounced Quoit, is an Arab diminutive of *kot*, or *kut*, a fort.

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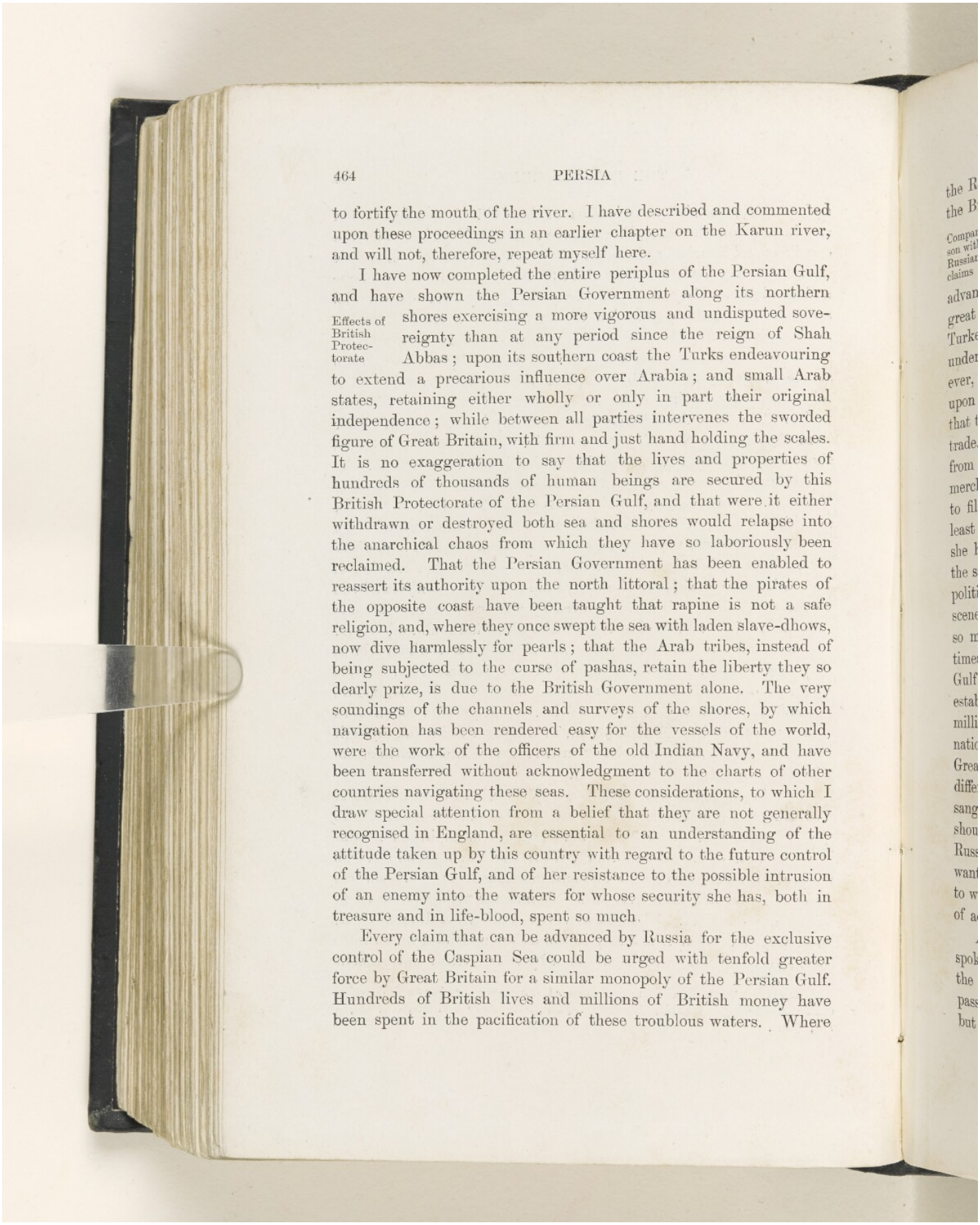



to fortify the mouth of the river. I have described and commented upon these proceedings in an earlier chapter on the Karun river, and will not, therefore, repeat myself here.

I have now completed the entire periplus of the Persian Gulf, and have shown the Persian Government along its northern shores exercising a more vigorous and undisputed sovereignty than at any period since the reign of Shah Abbas; upon its southern coast the Turks endeavouring to extend a precarious influence over Arabia; and small Arab states, retaining either wholly or only in part their original independence; while between all parties intervenes the sworded figure of Great Britain, with firm and just hand holding the scales. It is no exaggeration to say that the lives and properties of hundreds of thousands of human beings are secured by this British Protectorate of the Persian Gulf, and that were it either withdrawn or destroyed both sea and shores would relapse into the anarchical chaos from which they have so laboriously been reclaimed. That the Persian Government has been enabled to reassert its authority upon the north littoral; that the pirates of the opposite coast have been taught that rapine is not a safe religion, and, where they once swept the sea with laden slave-dhows, now dive harmlessly for pearls; that the Arab tribes, instead of being subjected to the curse of pashas, retain the liberty they so dearly prize, is due to the British Government alone. The very soundings of the channels and surveys of the shores, by which navigation has been rendered easy for the vessels of the world, were the work of the officers of the old Indian Navy, and have been transferred without acknowledgment to the charts of other countries navigating these seas. These considerations, to which I draw special attention from a belief that they are not generally recognised in England, are essential to an understanding of the attitude taken up by this country with regard to the future control of the Persian Gulf, and of her resistance to the possible intrusion of an enemy into the waters for whose security she has, both in treasure and in life-blood, spent so much.

Effects of British Protectorate

Every claim that can be advanced by Russia for the exclusive control of the Caspian Sea could be urged with tenfold greater force by Great Britain for a similar monopoly of the Persian Gulf. Hundreds of British lives and millions of British money have been spent in the pacification of these troublous waters. Where

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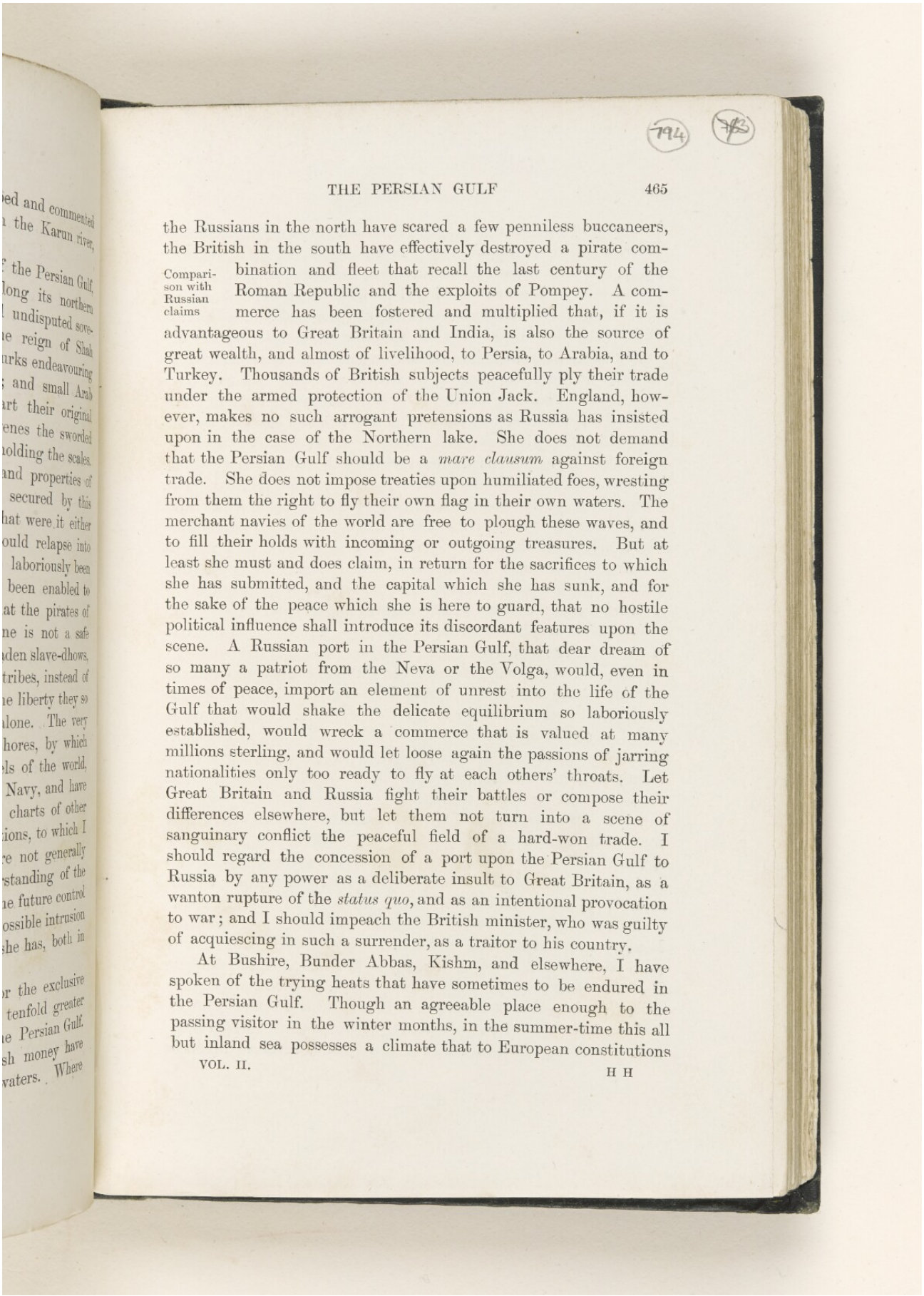



the Russians in the north have scared a few penniless buccaneers, the British in the south have effectively destroyed a pirate combination and fleet that recall the last century of the Roman Republic and the exploits of Pompey. A commerce has been fostered and multiplied that, if it is advantageous to Great Britain and India, is also the source of great wealth, and almost of livelihood, to Persia, to Arabia, and to Turkey. Thousands of British subjects peacefully ply their trade under the armed protection of the Union Jack. England, however, makes no such arrogant pretensions as Russia has insisted upon in the case of the Northern lake. She does not demand that the Persian Gulf should be a *mare clausum* against foreign trade. She does not impose treaties upon humiliated foes, wresting from them the right to fly their own flag in their own waters. The merchant navies of the world are free to plough these waves, and to fill their holds with incoming or outgoing treasures. But at least she must and does claim, in return for the sacrifices to which she has submitted, and the capital which she has sunk, and for the sake of the peace which she is here to guard, that no hostile political influence shall introduce its discordant features upon the scene. A Russian port in the Persian Gulf, that dear dream of so many a patriot from the Neva or the Volga, would, even in times of peace, import an element of unrest into the life of the Gulf that would shake the delicate equilibrium so laboriously established, would wreck a commerce that is valued at many millions sterling, and would let loose again the passions of jarring nationalities only too ready to fly at each others' throats. Let Great Britain and Russia fight their battles or compose their differences elsewhere, but let them not turn into a scene of sanguinary conflict the peaceful field of a hard-won trade. I should regard the concession of a port upon the Persian Gulf to Russia by any power as a deliberate insult to Great Britain, as a wanton rupture of the *status quo*, and as an intentional provocation to war; and I should impeach the British minister, who was guilty of acquiescing in such a surrender, as a traitor to his country.

Comparison with Russian claims

At Bushire, Bunder Abbas, Kishm, and elsewhere, I have spoken of the trying heats that have sometimes to be endured in the Persian Gulf. Though an agreeable place enough to the passing visitor in the winter months, in the summer-time this all but inland sea possesses a climate that to European constitutions



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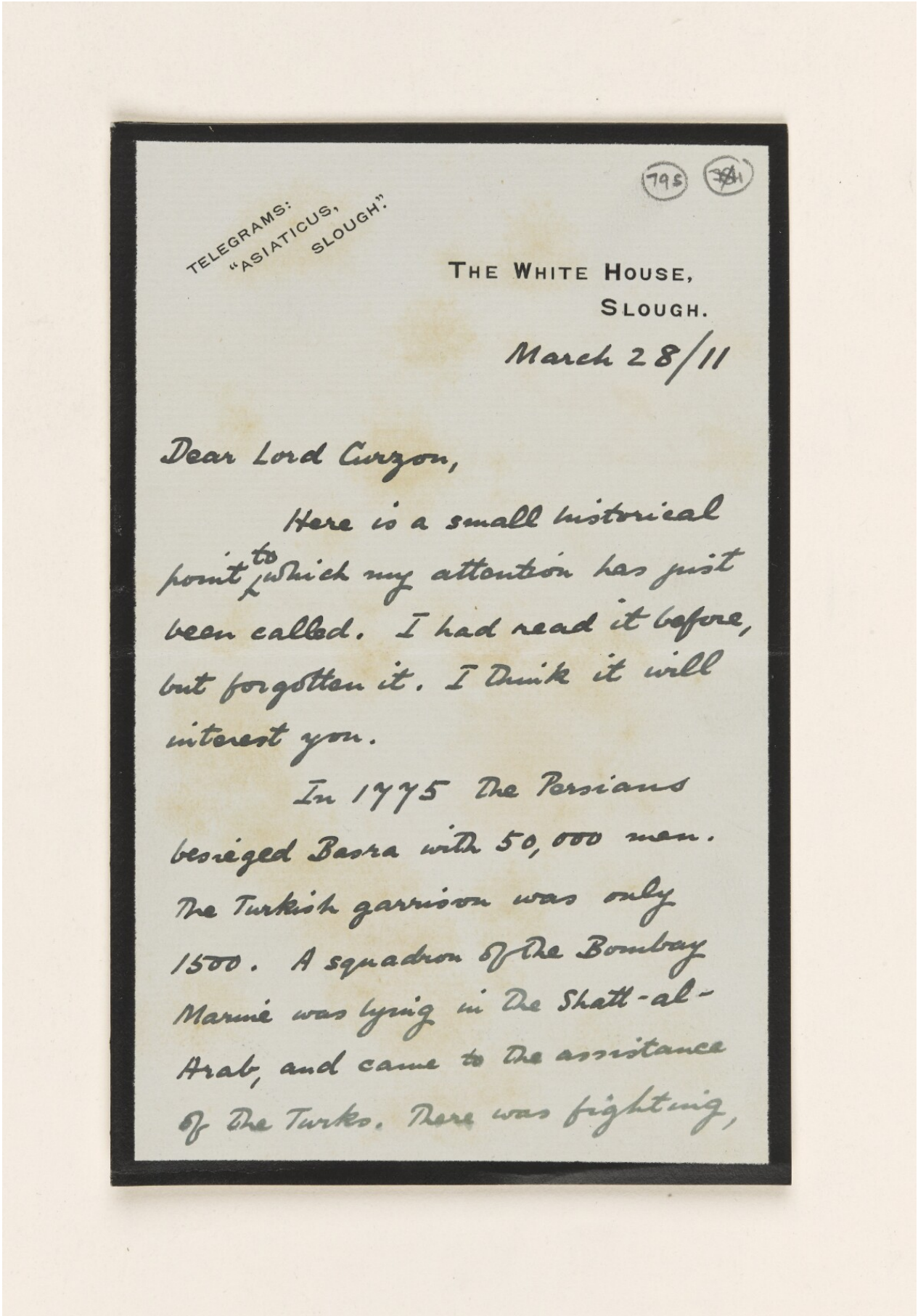
is most trying; and political officers on the list of the Indian Foreign Office, or ships' officers in the service of the companies that navigate the Indian seas, hear with horror that they have been commissioned to what is spoken of, with a sort of grim personification, as 'the Gulf.' I have been told that under the awning on the deck of a Gulf steamer the thermometer has stood in the morning at 120° Fahrenheit, while on shore at Muscat a black-bulb solar thermometer has registered 187° in the sun. The intense heat is aggravated rather than relieved by the extreme humidity of the atmosphere and by the dust which the slightest wind raises in clouds from the Arabian desert, and blows in an opaque yellow pall across sea and land. The hot weather causes the skin irritation known as prickly heat, from which every one suffers; nor is the torment of the day redeemed, as it is further north at Baghdad, by the coolness of the night, although an abundant dew sometimes falls and renders sleeping in the open air a questionable relief. The prevailing wind is the *shamal*, or north-west, which blows down the Gulf from its western extremity, alternating in the winter months with the *sharki*, or south-east wind, which is cold and biting at sea, and is apt to bring short-lived storms of rain.

Climate of the Gulf

The mercantile navigation of the Gulf, as it now exists, is the creation of the last thirty years, and is largely to be attributed to the statesmanship of Sir Bartle Frere. In 1862 not a single mercantile steamer ploughed these waters. A six-weekly service was then started, followed by a monthly, a fortnightly, and, finally, by a weekly steamer. The opening of the Suez Canal gave an impetus to steam-borne traffic with the Persian Gulf which was further increased during the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, and has attained even more satisfactory proportions since. The principal trade, apart from the coasting traffic, which is in the hands of native buggalows, is now conducted by the steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company, six of whose vessels, detached for this service, carry the mails, and leave Bombay and Busrah once a week, touching at the intermediate ports of Kurrachi, Gwadur, Muscat, Jask, Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Bahrein, Bushire, Fao, and Mohammerah; and occupying, with stoppages, a period of exactly a fortnight for a distance of about 1,970 miles. This is, of course, very slow progress; and except to those who are interested in the history, commerce, and politics

Mercantile navigation



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TELEGRAMS:
"ASIATICUS,
SLOUGH."

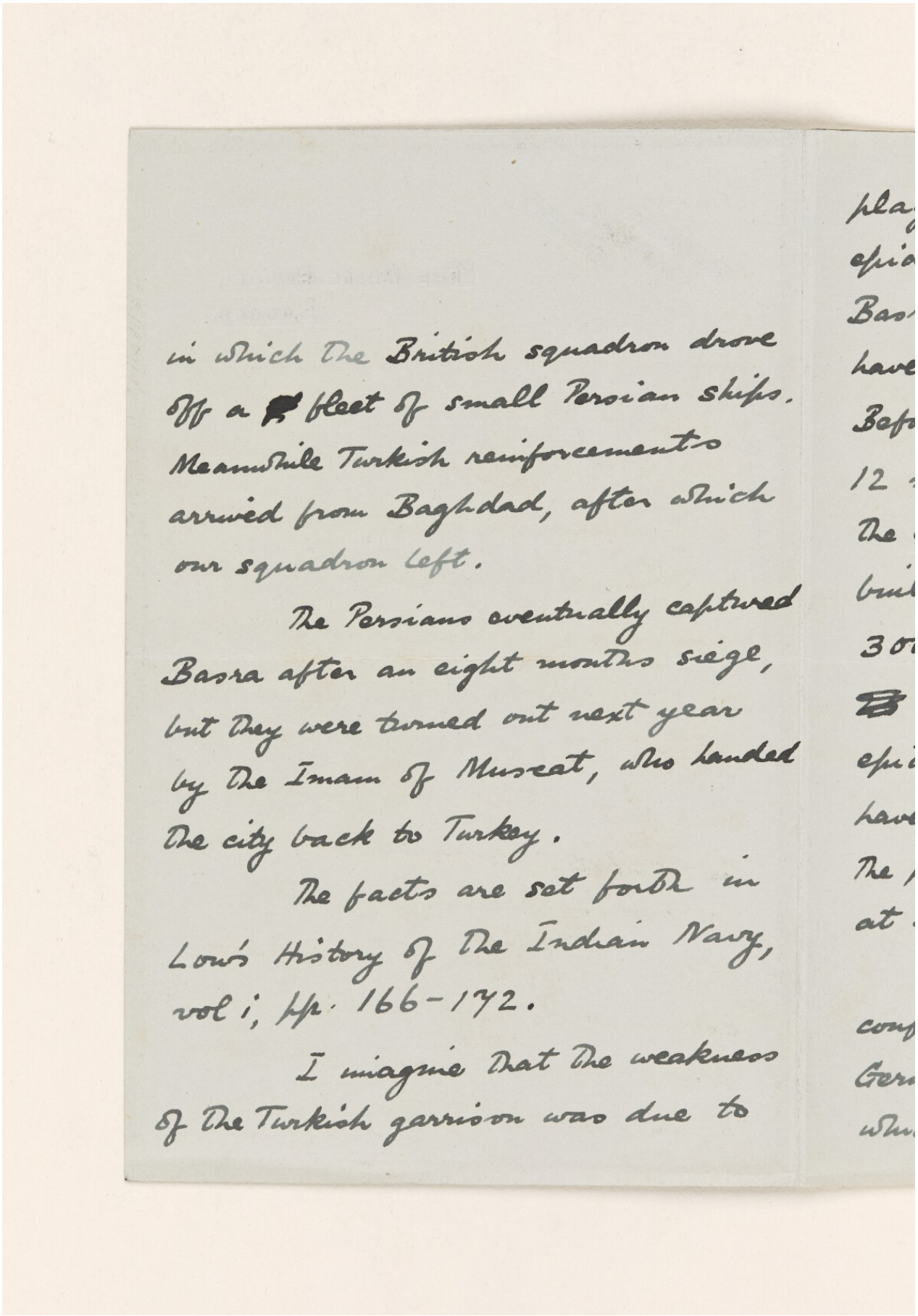
THE WHITE HOUSE,
SLOUGH.

March 28/11

Dear Lord Curzon,

Here is a small historical point to which my attention has just been called. I had read it before, but forgotten it. I think it will interest you.

In 1775 the Persians besieged Basra with 50,000 men. The Turkish garrison was only 1500. A squadron of the Bombay Marine was lying in the Shatt-al-Arab, and came to the assistance of the Turks. There was fighting,

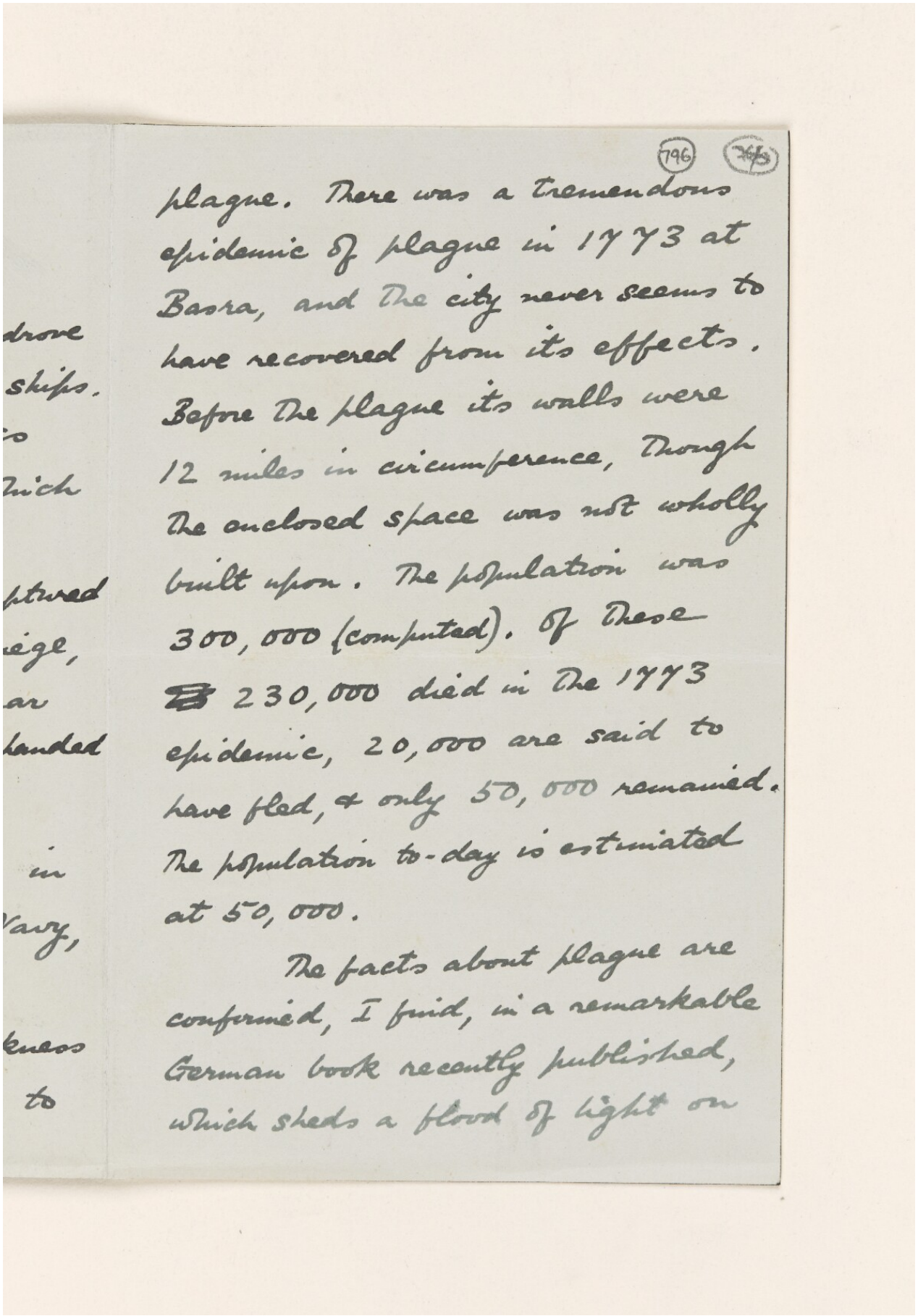


in which the British squadron drove off a fleet of small Persian ships. Meanwhile Turkish reinforcements arrived from Baghdad, after which our squadron left.

The Persians eventually captured Basra after an eight months siege, but they were turned out next year by the Imam of Muscat, who handed the city back to Turkey.

The facts are set forth in Low's History of the Indian Navy, vol i; pp. 166-172.

I imagine that the weakness of the Turkish garrison was due to



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plague. There was a tremendous epidemic of plague in 1773 at Basra, and the city never seems to have recovered from its effects. Before the plague its walls were 12 miles in circumference, though the enclosed space was not wholly built upon. The population was 300,000 (computed). Of these 230,000 died in the 1773 epidemic, 20,000 are said to have fled, & only 50,000 remained. The population to-day is estimated at 50,000.

The facts about plague are confirmed, I find, in a remarkable German book recently published, which sheds a flood of light on

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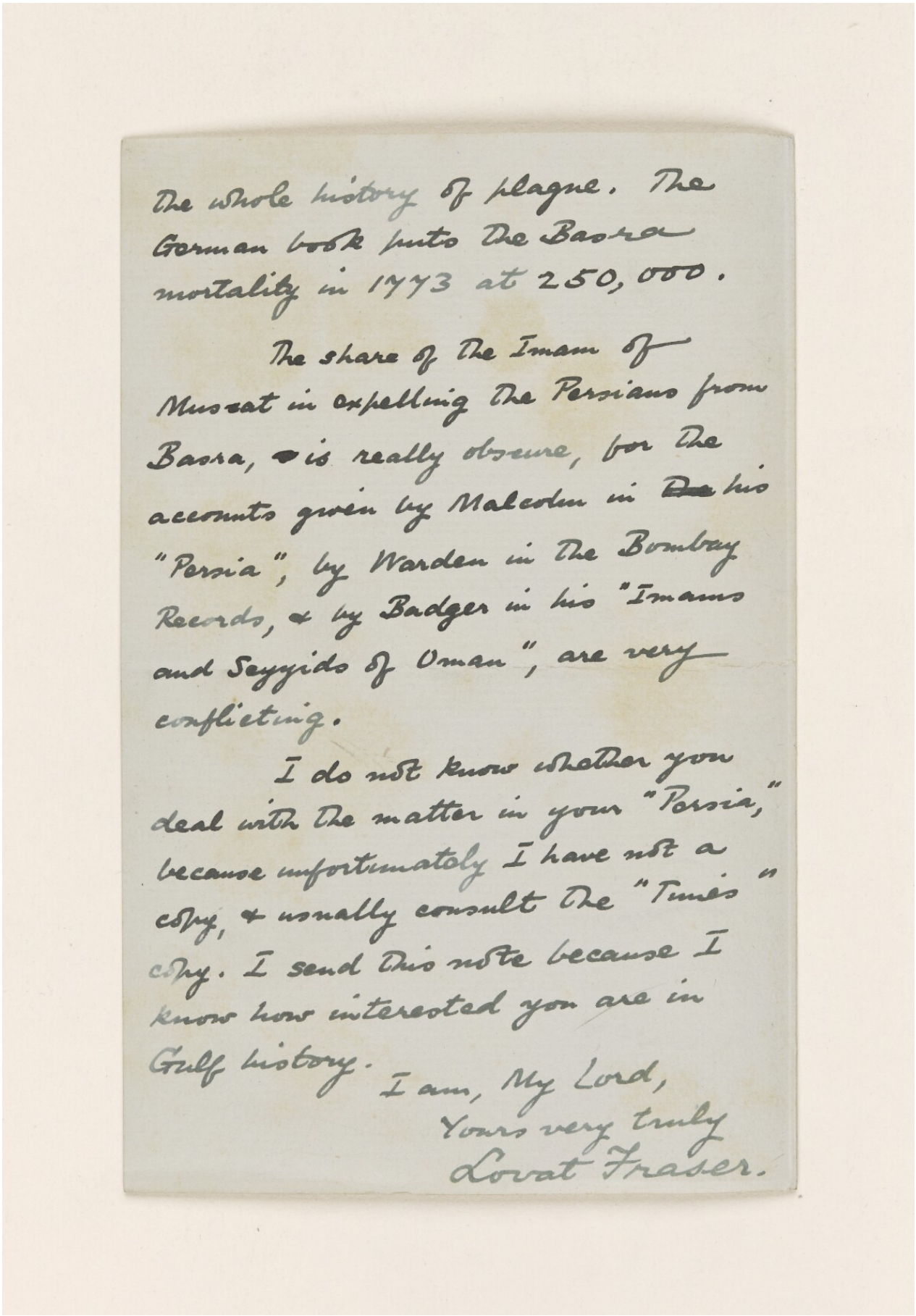
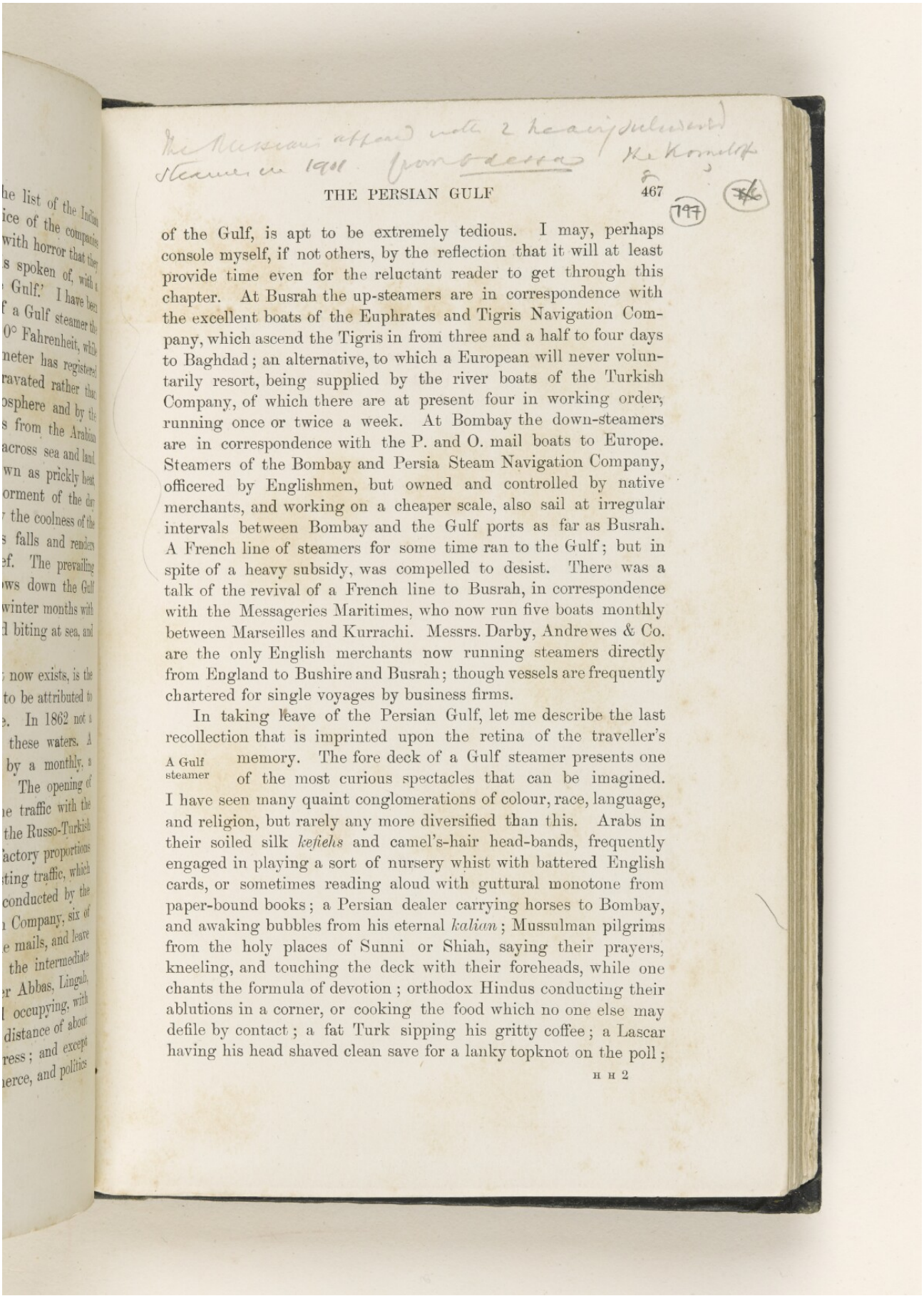


The whole history of plague. The German book puts the Basra mortality in 1773 at 250,000.

The share of the Imam of Muscat in expelling the Persians from Basra, is really obscure, for the accounts given by Malcolm in his "Persia", by Warden in the Bombay Records, & by Badger in his "Imams and Seyyids of Oman", are very conflicting.

I do not know whether you deal with the matter in your "Persia," because unfortunately I have not a copy, & usually consult the "Times" copy. I send this note because I know how interested you are in Gulf history.

I am, My Lord,
Yours very truly
Lovat Fraser.





of the Gulf, is apt to be extremely tedious. I may, perhaps console myself, if not others, by the reflection that it will at least provide time even for the reluctant reader to get through this chapter. At Busrah the up-steamers are in correspondence with the excellent boats of the Euphrates and Tigris Navigation Company, which ascend the Tigris in from three and a half to four days to Baghdad; an alternative, to which a European will never voluntarily resort, being supplied by the river boats of the Turkish Company, of which there are at present four in working order, running once or twice a week. At Bombay the down-steamers are in correspondence with the P. and O. mail boats to Europe. Steamers of the Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company, officered by Englishmen, but owned and controlled by native merchants, and working on a cheaper scale, also sail at irregular intervals between Bombay and the Gulf ports as far as Busrah. A French line of steamers for some time ran to the Gulf; but in spite of a heavy subsidy, was compelled to desist. There was a talk of the revival of a French line to Busrah, in correspondence with the Messageries Maritimes, who now run five boats monthly between Marseilles and Kurrachi. Messrs. Darby, Andrewes & Co. are the only English merchants now running steamers directly from England to Bushire and Busrah; though vessels are frequently chartered for single voyages by business firms.

A Gulf steamer

In taking leave of the Persian Gulf, let me describe the last recollection that is imprinted upon the retina of the traveller's memory. The fore deck of a Gulf steamer presents one of the most curious spectacles that can be imagined. I have seen many quaint conglomerations of colour, race, language, and religion, but rarely any more diversified than this. Arabs in their soiled silk *kefiehs* and camel's-hair head-bands, frequently engaged in playing a sort of nursery whist with battered English cards, or sometimes reading aloud with guttural monotone from paper-bound books; a Persian dealer carrying horses to Bombay, and awaking bubbles from his eternal *kalian*; Mussulman pilgrims from the holy places of Sunni or Shiah, saying their prayers, kneeling, and touching the deck with their foreheads, while one chants the formula of devotion; orthodox Hindus conducting their ablutions in a corner, or cooking the food which no one else may defile by contact; a fat Turk sipping his gritty coffee; a Lascar having his head shaved clean save for a lanky topknot on the poll;



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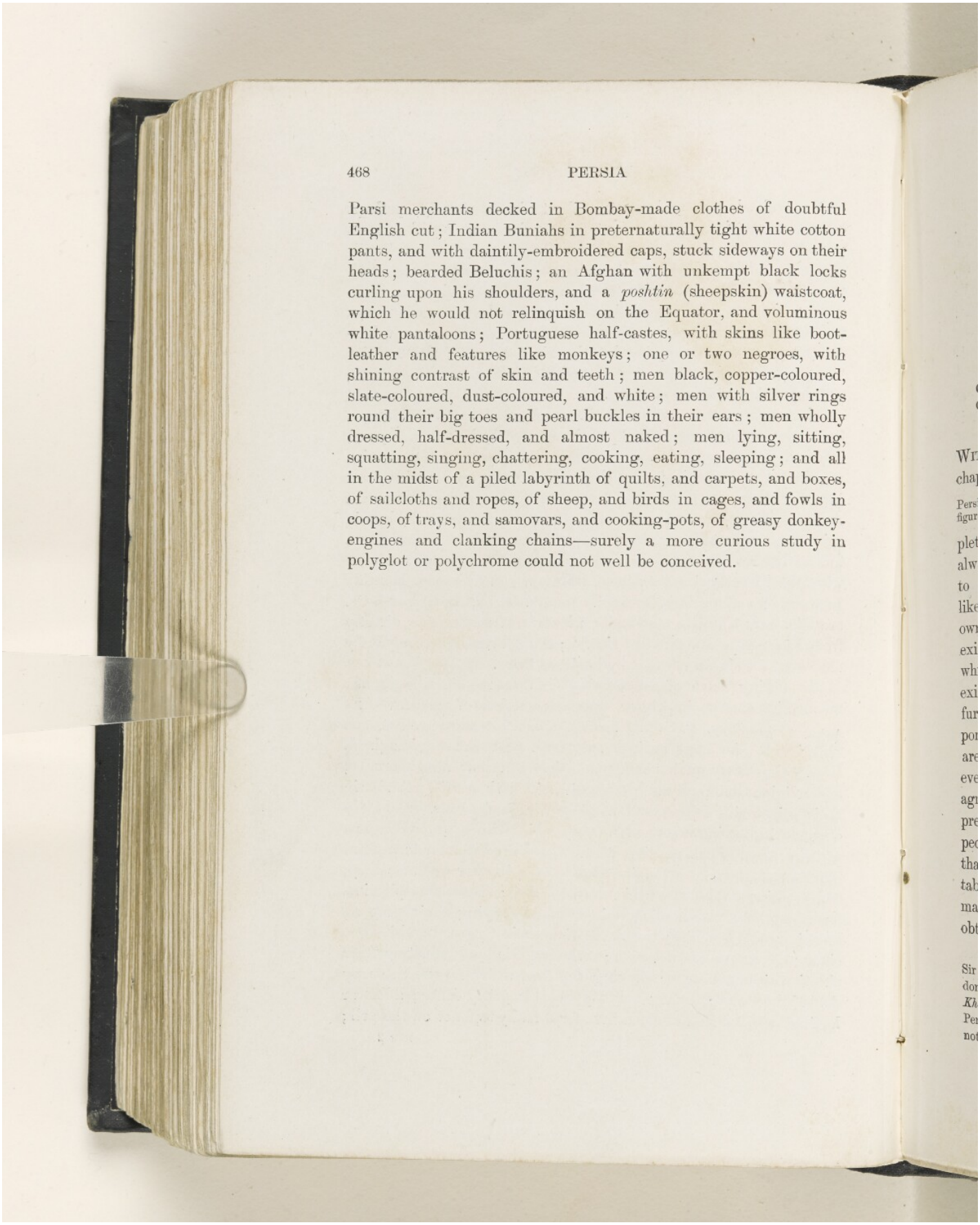



Parsi merchants decked in Bombay-made clothes of doubtful English cut; Indian Buniahs in preternaturally tight white cotton pants, and with daintily-embroidered caps, stuck sideways on their heads; bearded Beluchis; an Afghan with unkempt black locks curling upon his shoulders, and a *poshtin* (sheepskin) waistcoat, which he would not relinquish on the Equator, and voluminous white pantaloons; Portuguese half-castes, with skins like boot-leather and features like monkeys; one or two negroes, with shining contrast of skin and teeth; men black, copper-coloured, slate-coloured, dust-coloured, and white; men with silver rings round their big toes and pearl buckles in their ears; men wholly dressed, half-dressed, and almost naked; men lying, sitting, squatting, singing, chattering, cooking, eating, sleeping; and all in the midst of a piled labyrinth of quilts, and carpets, and boxes, of sailcloths and ropes, of sheep, and birds in cages, and fowls in coops, of trays, and samovars, and cooking-pots, of greasy donkey-engines and clanking chains—surely a more curious study in polyglot or polychrome could not well be conceived.

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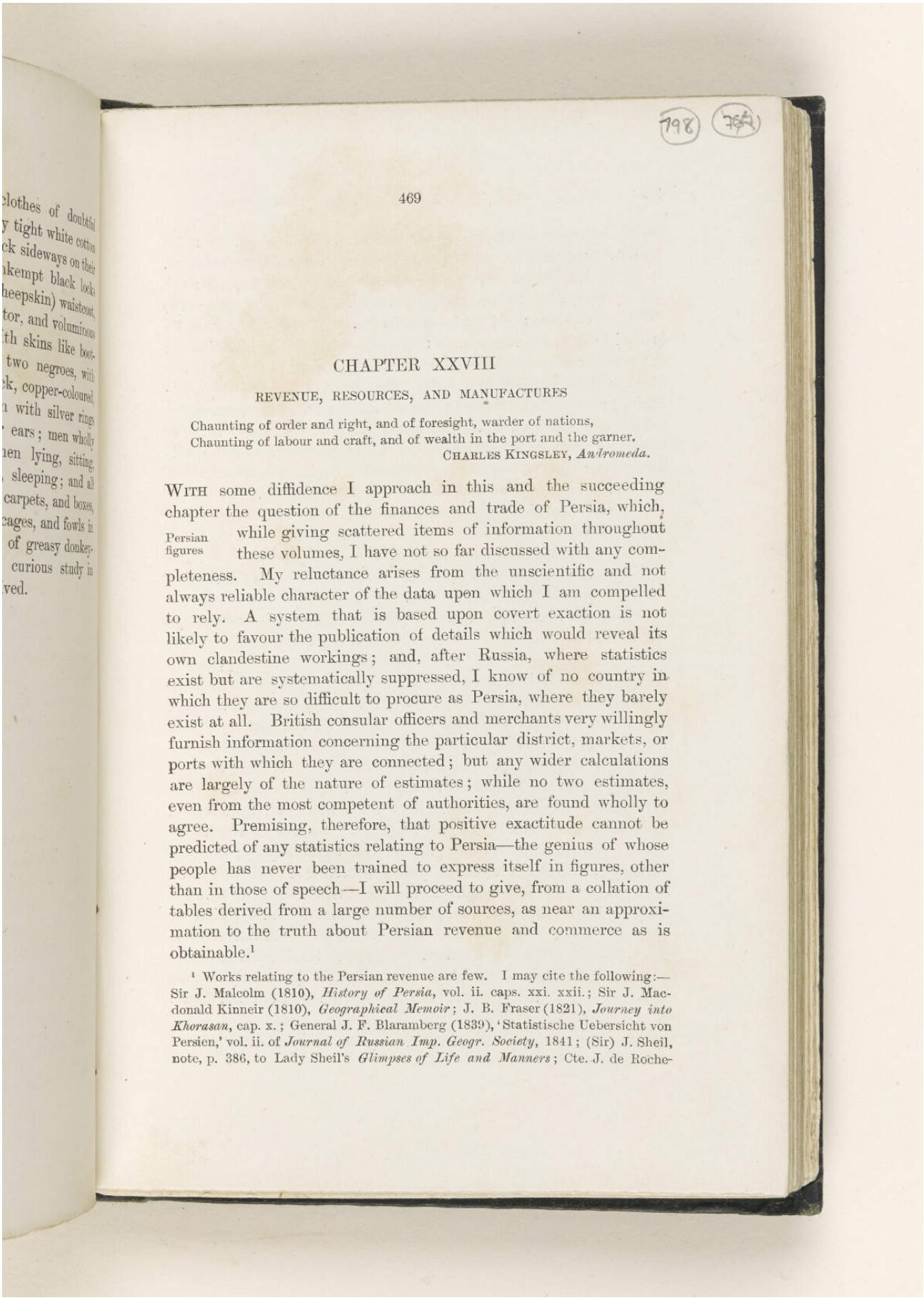



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### REVENUE, RESOURCES, AND MANUFACTURES

Chaunting of order and right, and of foresight, warder of nations,
Chaunting of labour and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner.
CHARLES KINGSLEY, *Andromeda.*

WITH some diffidence I approach in this and the succeeding chapter the question of the finances and trade of Persia, which, while giving scattered items of information throughout these volumes, I have not so far discussed with any completeness. My reluctance arises from the unscientific and not always reliable character of the data upon which I am compelled to rely. A system that is based upon covert exaction is not likely to favour the publication of details which would reveal its own clandestine workings; and, after Russia, where statistics exist but are systematically suppressed, I know of no country in which they are so difficult to procure as Persia, where they barely exist at all. British consular officers and merchants very willingly furnish information concerning the particular district, markets, or ports with which they are connected; but any wider calculations are largely of the nature of estimates; while no two estimates, even from the most competent of authorities, are found wholly to agree. Premising, therefore, that positive exactitude cannot be predicted of any statistics relating to Persia—the genius of whose people has never been trained to express itself in figures, other than in those of speech—I will proceed to give, from a collation of tables derived from a large number of sources, as near an approximation to the truth about Persian revenue and commerce as is obtainable.[1]

Persian figures

[1] Works relating to the Persian revenue are few. I may cite the following:—Sir J. Malcolm (1810), *History of Persia*, vol. ii. caps. xxi. xxii.; Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir (1810), *Geographical Memoir*; J. B. Fraser (1821), *Journey into Khorasan*, cap. x.; General J. F. Blaramberg (1839), 'Statistische Uebersicht von Persien,' vol. ii. of *Journal of Russian Imp. Geogr. Society*, 1841; (Sir) J. Sheil, note, p. 386, to Lady Sheil's *Glimpses of Life and Manners*; Cte. J. de Roche-

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The revenue of Persia may be divided into two headings: the Maliat, or fixed revenue, and the Sursat, or irregular revenue.

Classification of revenue

The fixed revenue is derived from four sources: (1) regular taxation; (2) revenues of Crown lands; (3) customs; (4) rents and leases. The irregular revenue is derived from three sources: (1) *sadir* or public requisitions; (2) presents (*pishkesh*) on the festival of No Ruz (March 21, the Persian New Year's Day), and on the Prophet's birthday (Aid-i-Molud); (3) extraordinary *pishkesh*, arising from presents, fines, bribes, confiscations, &c. I will explain and deal with each of these in turn, foreshadowing that anything like precision, uniformity, or method cannot be expected of Persian finance, and that the theory is often widely divergent from the practice.

Regular taxation is nominally threefold in character, consisting of the land-tax, taxes on animals, flocks and herds, and taxes on

I. Maliat or fixed revenue. 1. Taxation

shopkeepers, artisans, and trade. These various taxes are levied according to the differing nature of localities, peoples, and occupations.

The main and staple source of revenue in Persia is, and always has been, the land-tax. Postponing for a few moments the larger

Land-tax

question of land-tenure throughout the country, I will merely here deal with the subject as regards its assessment by the Government tax-collector. Religious endowments, and lands held upon the basis of feudal service, are exempt from the land-tax; but it is levied on all other landed property throughout the kingdom, upon rice, cotton, corn, tobacco, and opium-growing fields, upon gardens, vineyards, and orchards, and upon date plantations in the south. In a land where all agricultural wealth is the result of irrigation, the assessment is commonly based upon the nature or amount of the water supply; and according to the character of the local produce, or to ancient custom, it is paid in cash or in kind. About one-fifth of the entire revenue is paid in the latter fashion, usually in wheat, barley, rice, or chopped straw. The principle upon which the land-tax rests is that one-fifth or twenty per cent. of the agricultural or horticultural produce is the right of the king. Formerly the Crown only claimed one-tenth; but this proportion was doubled by Fath Ali Shah.

chouart (1865), *Souvenirs*, caps. iii. xv. xix.; E. Stack (1881), *Six Months in Persia*, vol. ii. cap. xi. (on the Land Revenue). My own information is almost entirely first-hand.

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In practice it is found that the assessment frequently amounts to thirty per cent., and twenty-five per cent. may perhaps be taken as a fair average. The system, however, varies absolutely in different parts of the country, and even in different parts of the same province; and in the course of a single journey, the inquiring traveller will perhaps encounter wholly divergent and inconsistent methods of application. Thus, in Azerbaijan, the chief agricultural province of Persia, the bulk of taxation is levied on the land and its produce, but in some cases it is levied on the number of oxen used in the plough, and in others on the land and oxen combined; while elsewhere, again, a poll-tax is imposed, *plus* a tax on horses, cows, asses, and sheep. In that province the revenue exacted is commonly as follows:—

If from the land alone, one-tenth of the produce.
If by a poll-tax, 3*s.* per adult male: 1*s.* 6*d.* from women and youths.
If upon oxen, 1*l*s. 9*d.* per yoke of oxen.
If upon cattle, $8\frac{3}{4}d.$ per horse, ass, or cow; $1\frac{3}{4}d.$ per sheep.

A further anomaly arises from the fact that the taxes are levied sometimes from the proprietor, sometimes from the cultivator, local custom again being the determining cause.

Here, however, we are brought face to face with a truly Persian phenomenon. The system which I have sketched, though anomalous and intricate, yet rests upon a simple and intelligible principle, namely, a fixed contribution to the revenue, based upon the wealth-producing capacity of the soil, and levied upon those whose business it is to pay it. In practice, however, this system is wholly abandoned; it would not dovetail with the larger system of organised peculation upon which Persian government and society alike subsist, and would not provide those opportunities for extensive *mudakhil* which are so dear to the official mind. Accordingly, so far from the taxes being levied from the individual taxpayer by the revenue officers, we find that they are raised in lump sums from villages, towns, or districts, the taxes being, in fact, farmed out by the Government for a fixed money payment, and the allocation in subordinate areas being left to the arbitrary decision of local governors, chiefs, or headmen. Frequently the owner of a property farms his own taxes from the Government, so as to escape the visits of the official assessor; i.e. he compounds by an annual cash payment for the stricter obligation that would accrue from an official assessment if conducted.

Method of payment

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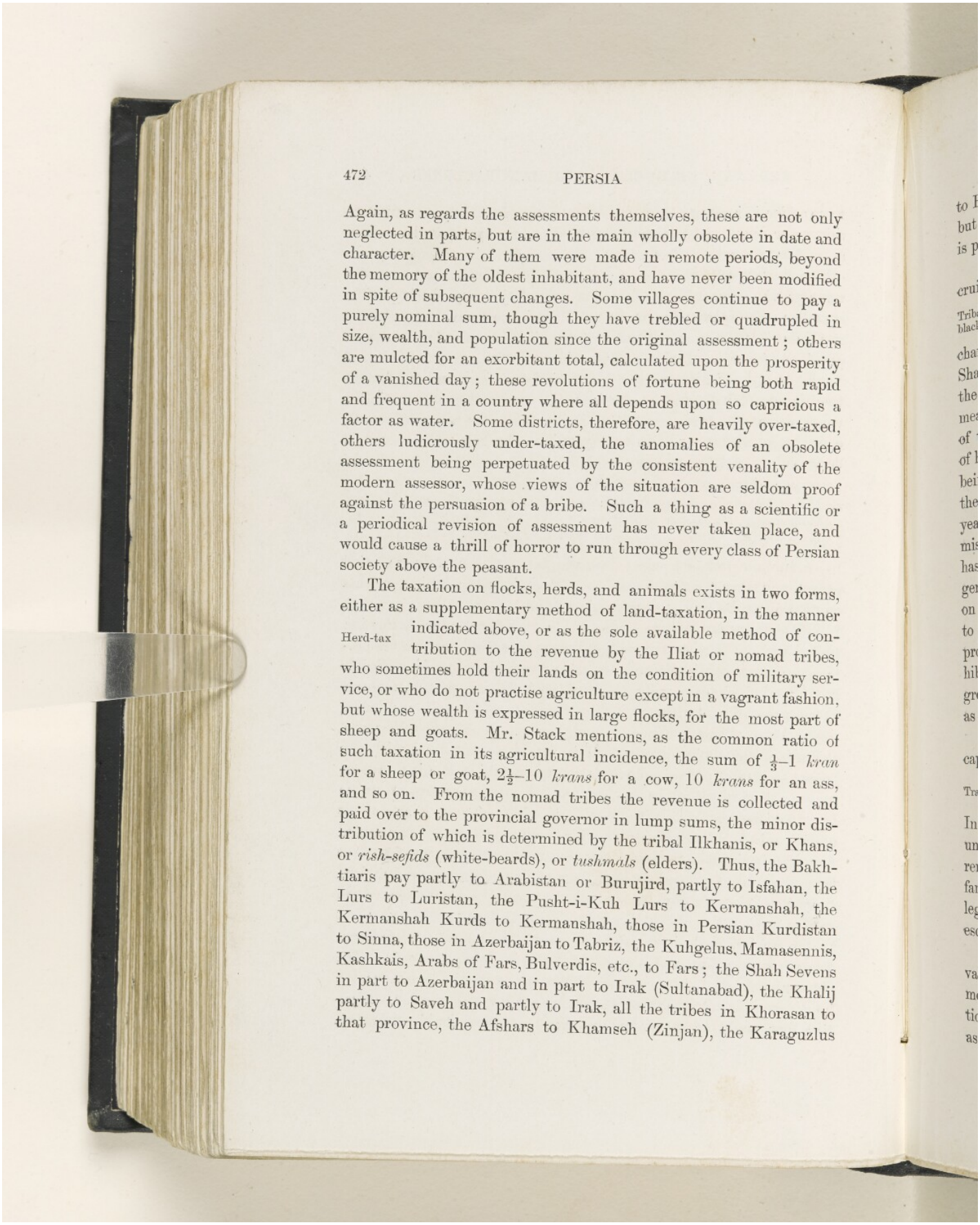



Again, as regards the assessments themselves, these are not only neglected in parts, but are in the main wholly obsolete in date and character. Many of them were made in remote periods, beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and have never been modified in spite of subsequent changes. Some villages continue to pay a purely nominal sum, though they have trebled or quadrupled in size, wealth, and population since the original assessment; others are mulcted for an exorbitant total, calculated upon the prosperity of a vanished day; these revolutions of fortune being both rapid and frequent in a country where all depends upon so capricious a factor as water. Some districts, therefore, are heavily over-taxed, others ludicrously under-taxed, the anomalies of an obsolete assessment being perpetuated by the consistent venality of the modern assessor, whose views of the situation are seldom proof against the persuasion of a bribe. Such a thing as a scientific or a periodical revision of assessment has never taken place, and would cause a thrill of horror to run through every class of Persian society above the peasant.

Herd-tax

The taxation on flocks, herds, and animals exists in two forms, either as a supplementary method of land-taxation, in the manner indicated above, or as the sole available method of contribution to the revenue by the Iliat or nomad tribes, who sometimes hold their lands on the condition of military service, or who do not practise agriculture except in a vagrant fashion, but whose wealth is expressed in large flocks, for the most part of sheep and goats. Mr. Stack mentions, as the common ratio of such taxation in its agricultural incidence, the sum of $\frac{1}{3}$–1 *kran* for a sheep or goat, $2\frac{1}{2}$–10 *krans* for a cow, 10 *krans* for an ass, and so on. From the nomad tribes the revenue is collected and paid over to the provincial governor in lump sums, the minor distribution of which is determined by the tribal Ilkhanis, or Khans, or *rish-sefids* (white-beards), or *tushmals* (elders). Thus, the Bakhtiaris pay partly to Arabistan or Burujird, partly to Isfahan, the Lurs to Luristan, the Pusht-i-Kuh Lurs to Kermanshah, the Kermanshah Kurds to Kermanshah, those in Persian Kurdistan to Sinna, those in Azerbaijan to Tabriz, the Kuhgelus, Mamasennis, Kashkais, Arabs of Fars, Bulverdis, etc., to Fars; the Shah Sevens in part to Azerbaijan and in part to Irak (Sultanabad), the Khalij partly to Saveh and partly to Irak, all the tribes in Khorasan to that province, the Afshars to Khamseh (Zinjan), the Karaguzlus

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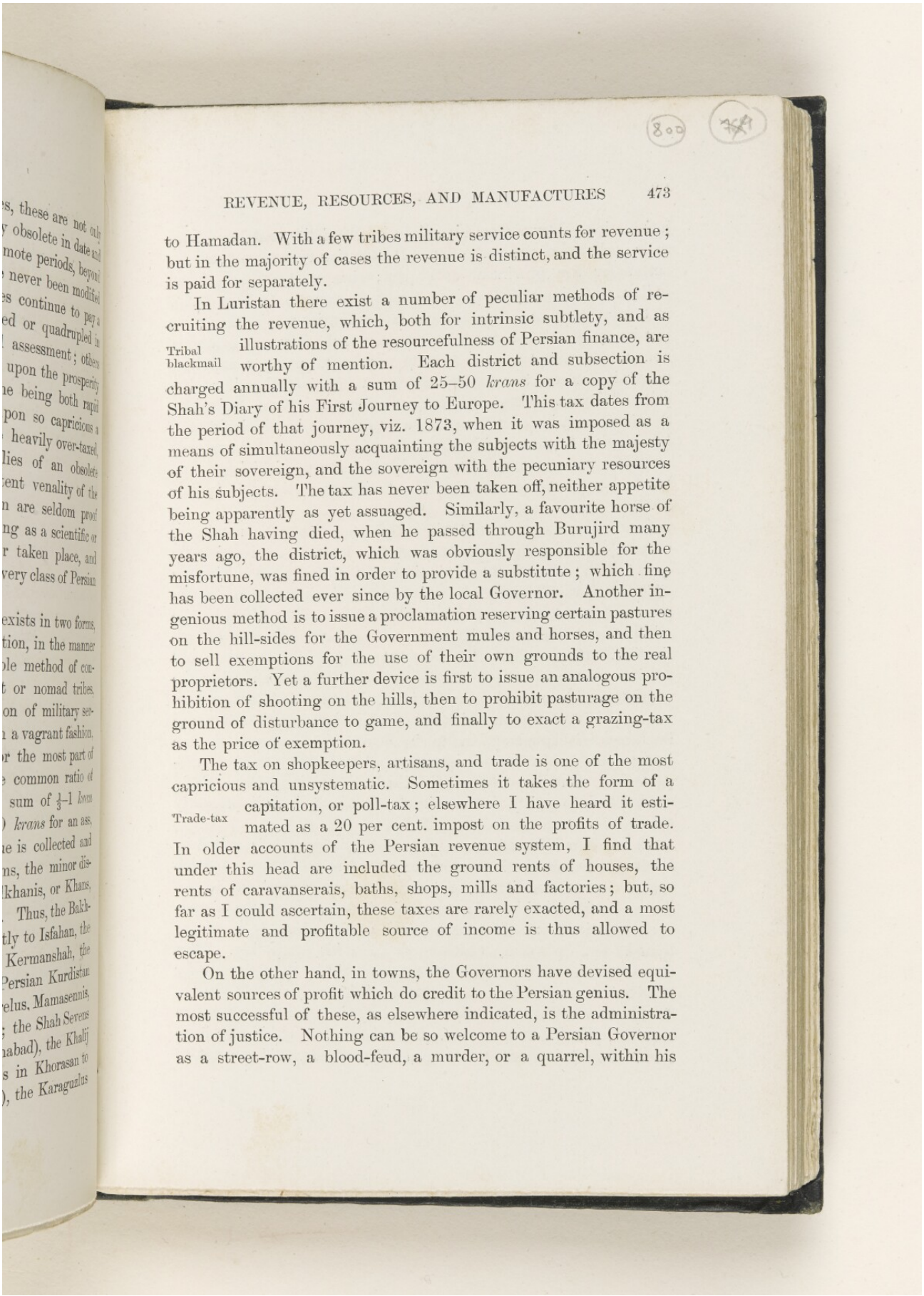



to Hamadan. With a few tribes military service counts for revenue; but in the majority of cases the revenue is distinct, and the service is paid for separately.

In Luristan there exist a number of peculiar methods of recruiting the revenue, which, both for intrinsic subtlety, and as illustrations of the resourcefulness of Persian finance, are worthy of mention. Each district and subsection is charged annually with a sum of 25–50 *krans* for a copy of the Shah's Diary of his First Journey to Europe. This tax dates from the period of that journey, viz. 1873, when it was imposed as a means of simultaneously acquainting the subjects with the majesty of their sovereign, and the sovereign with the pecuniary resources of his subjects. The tax has never been taken off, neither appetite being apparently as yet assuaged. Similarly, a favourite horse of the Shah having died, when he passed through Burujird many years ago, the district, which was obviously responsible for the misfortune, was fined in order to provide a substitute; which fine has been collected ever since by the local Governor. Another ingenious method is to issue a proclamation reserving certain pastures on the hill-sides for the Government mules and horses, and then to sell exemptions for the use of their own grounds to the real proprietors. Yet a further device is first to issue an analogous prohibition of shooting on the hills, then to prohibit pasturage on the ground of disturbance to game, and finally to exact a grazing-tax as the price of exemption.

Tribal blackmail

The tax on shopkeepers, artisans, and trade is one of the most capricious and unsystematic. Sometimes it takes the form of a capitation, or poll-tax; elsewhere I have heard it estimated as a 20 per cent. impost on the profits of trade. In older accounts of the Persian revenue system, I find that under this head are included the ground rents of houses, the rents of caravanserais, baths, shops, mills and factories; but, so far as I could ascertain, these taxes are rarely exacted, and a most legitimate and profitable source of income is thus allowed to escape.

Trade-tax

On the other hand, in towns, the Governors have devised equivalent sources of profit which do credit to the Persian genius. The most successful of these, as elsewhere indicated, is the administration of justice. Nothing can be so welcome to a Persian Governor as a street-row, a blood-feud, a murder, or a quarrel, within his

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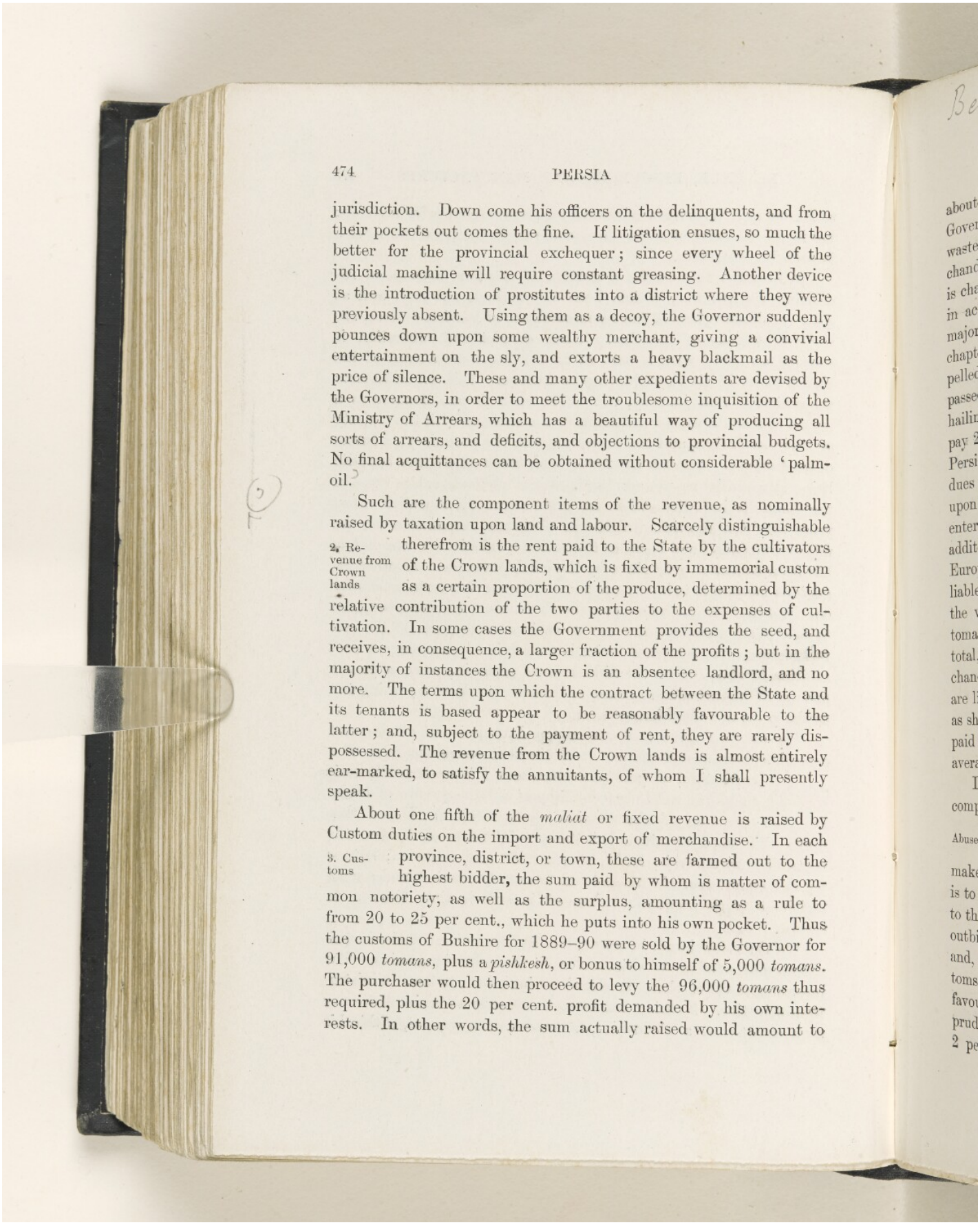



jurisdiction. Down come his officers on the delinquents, and from their pockets out comes the fine. If litigation ensues, so much the better for the provincial exchequer; since every wheel of the judicial machine will require constant greasing. Another device is the introduction of prostitutes into a district where they were previously absent. Using them as a decoy, the Governor suddenly pounces down upon some wealthy merchant, giving a convivial entertainment on the sly, and extorts a heavy blackmail as the price of silence. These and many other expedients are devised by the Governors, in order to meet the troublesome inquisition of the Ministry of Arrears, which has a beautiful way of producing all sorts of arrears, and deficits, and objections to provincial budgets. No final acquittances can be obtained without considerable 'palm-oil.'

2. Revenue from Crown lands

Such are the component items of the revenue, as nominally raised by taxation upon land and labour. Scarcely distinguishable therefrom is the rent paid to the State by the cultivators of the Crown lands, which is fixed by immemorial custom as a certain proportion of the produce, determined by the relative contribution of the two parties to the expenses of cultivation. In some cases the Government provides the seed, and receives, in consequence, a larger fraction of the profits; but in the majority of instances the Crown is an absentee landlord, and no more. The terms upon which the contract between the State and its tenants is based appear to be reasonably favourable to the latter; and, subject to the payment of rent, they are rarely dispossessed. The revenue from the Crown lands is almost entirely ear-marked, to satisfy the annuitants, of whom I shall presently speak.

3. Customs

About one fifth of the *maliat* or fixed revenue is raised by Custom duties on the import and export of merchandise. In each province, district, or town, these are farmed out to the highest bidder, the sum paid by whom is matter of common notoriety, as well as the surplus, amounting as a rule to from 20 to 25 per cent., which he puts into his own pocket. Thus the customs of Bushire for 1889–90 were sold by the Governor for 91,000 *tomans*, plus a *pishkesh*, or bonus to himself of 5,000 *tomans*. The purchaser would then proceed to levy the 96,000 *tomans* thus required, plus the 20 per cent. profit demanded by his own interests. In other words, the sum actually raised would amount to

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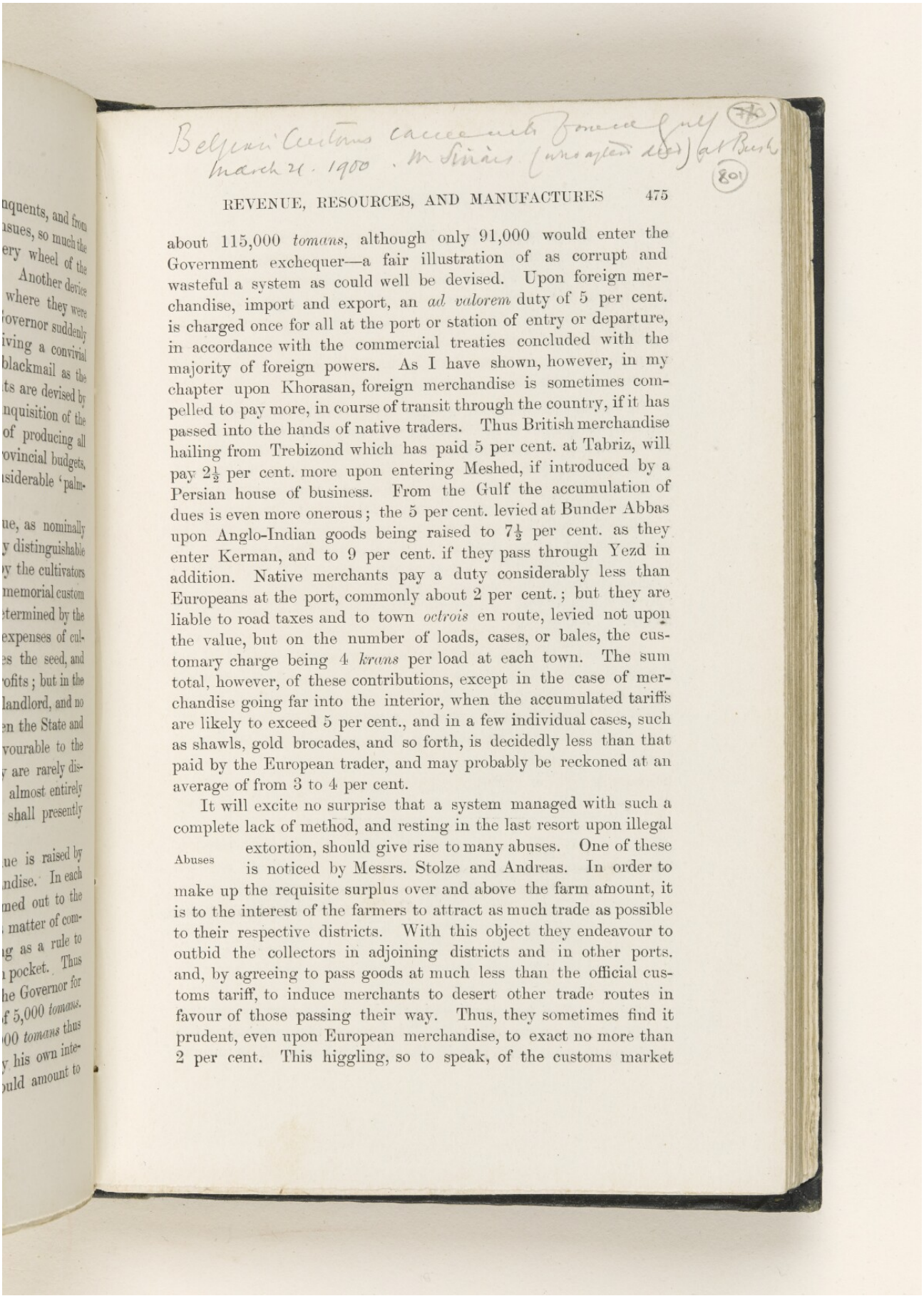



about 115,000 *tomans*, although only 91,000 would enter the Government exchequer—a fair illustration of as corrupt and wasteful a system as could well be devised. Upon foreign merchandise, import and export, an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. is charged once for all at the port or station of entry or departure, in accordance with the commercial treaties concluded with the majority of foreign powers. As I have shown, however, in my chapter upon Khorasan, foreign merchandise is sometimes compelled to pay more, in course of transit through the country, if it has passed into the hands of native traders. Thus British merchandise hailing from Trebizond which has paid 5 per cent. at Tabriz, will pay 2½ per cent. more upon entering Meshed, if introduced by a Persian house of business. From the Gulf the accumulation of dues is even more onerous; the 5 per cent. levied at Bunder Abbas upon Anglo-Indian goods being raised to 7½ per cent. as they enter Kerman, and to 9 per cent. if they pass through Yezd in addition. Native merchants pay a duty considerably less than Europeans at the port, commonly about 2 per cent.; but they are liable to road taxes and to town *octrois* en route, levied not upon the value, but on the number of loads, cases, or bales, the customary charge being 4 *krans* per load at each town. The sum total, however, of these contributions, except in the case of merchandise going far into the interior, when the accumulated tariffs are likely to exceed 5 per cent., and in a few individual cases, such as shawls, gold brocades, and so forth, is decidedly less than that paid by the European trader, and may probably be reckoned at an average of from 3 to 4 per cent.

It will excite no surprise that a system managed with such a complete lack of method, and resting in the last resort upon illegal extortion, should give rise to many abuses. One of these is noticed by Messrs. Stolze and Andreas. In order to make up the requisite surplus over and above the farm amount, it is to the interest of the farmers to attract as much trade as possible to their respective districts. With this object they endeavour to outbid the collectors in adjoining districts and in other ports, and, by agreeing to pass goods at much less than the official customs tariff, to induce merchants to desert other trade routes in favour of those passing their way. Thus, they sometimes find it prudent, even upon European merchandise, to exact no more than 2 per cent. This higgling, so to speak, of the customs market

Abuses

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calls for corresponding calculation on the part of the merchants, and brings about frequent changes in the routes preferred.

A similar illicit sort of compact is entered into between the farmers and the merchants as the vernal equinox approaches. On that date (March 21, No Ruz) there is, as I have previously shown, a general shuffle of officials in Persia, from Governors of provinces down to petty collectors of customs. A Consular Report from Astrabad in 1882 thus stated what then occurs :—

Incumbents are uncertain whether they are to continue in office or not, and are anxious to realise as much as they can. Consequently at this period the Customs officials are willing to reduce the dues leviable, and to take less than the legal tax. There takes place, therefore, at all ports where goods are exported, a regular bargain between the merchants and the Customs farmers. The former threaten, unless considerable reductions are made, not to export their goods until the new incumbent is nominated, and the latter endeavour to reduce the dues as little as possible. Importers also bargain with the farmers as to what abatement on the legal import duty the officials at the ports may be willing to make, before deciding where their imports shall be landed.

I append a table of the farm money, or sums received by the Government for the customs during the last decade, and of their equivalent, according to the prevalent rate of exchange, in pounds sterling. In each case it must be remembered that quite 20 per cent must be added, to make up the totals actually levied upon trade.

| Year | Government receipts | Rate of exchange | Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *tomans* | *krans* = £1 | £ |
| 1879–1880 | 606,400 | $27\frac{5}{8}$ | 236,400 |
| 1880–1881 | 708,629 | $27\frac{1}{2}$ | 257,700 |
| 1881–1882 | 785,290 | $27\frac{7}{8}$ | 281,600 |
| 1882–1883 | 807,770 | $28\frac{5}{8}$ | 281,400 |
| 1883–1884 | 814,000 | 29 | 280,700 |
| 1884–1885 | 806,000 | $30\frac{1}{2}$ | 264,262 |
| 1885–1886 | 838,000 | $33\frac{1}{2}$ | 250,150 |
| 1886–1887 | 850,000 | $33\frac{1}{2}$ | 253,730 |
| 1887–1888 | 820,000 | 34 | 241,176 |
| 1888–1889 | 800,000 | 34 | 235,294 |

Of the 800,000 *tomans* raised in the last named year by customs, 294,000 *tomans* were collected at Teheran, and the remainder at the Gulf and Caspian ports and in the frontier towns. The revenue

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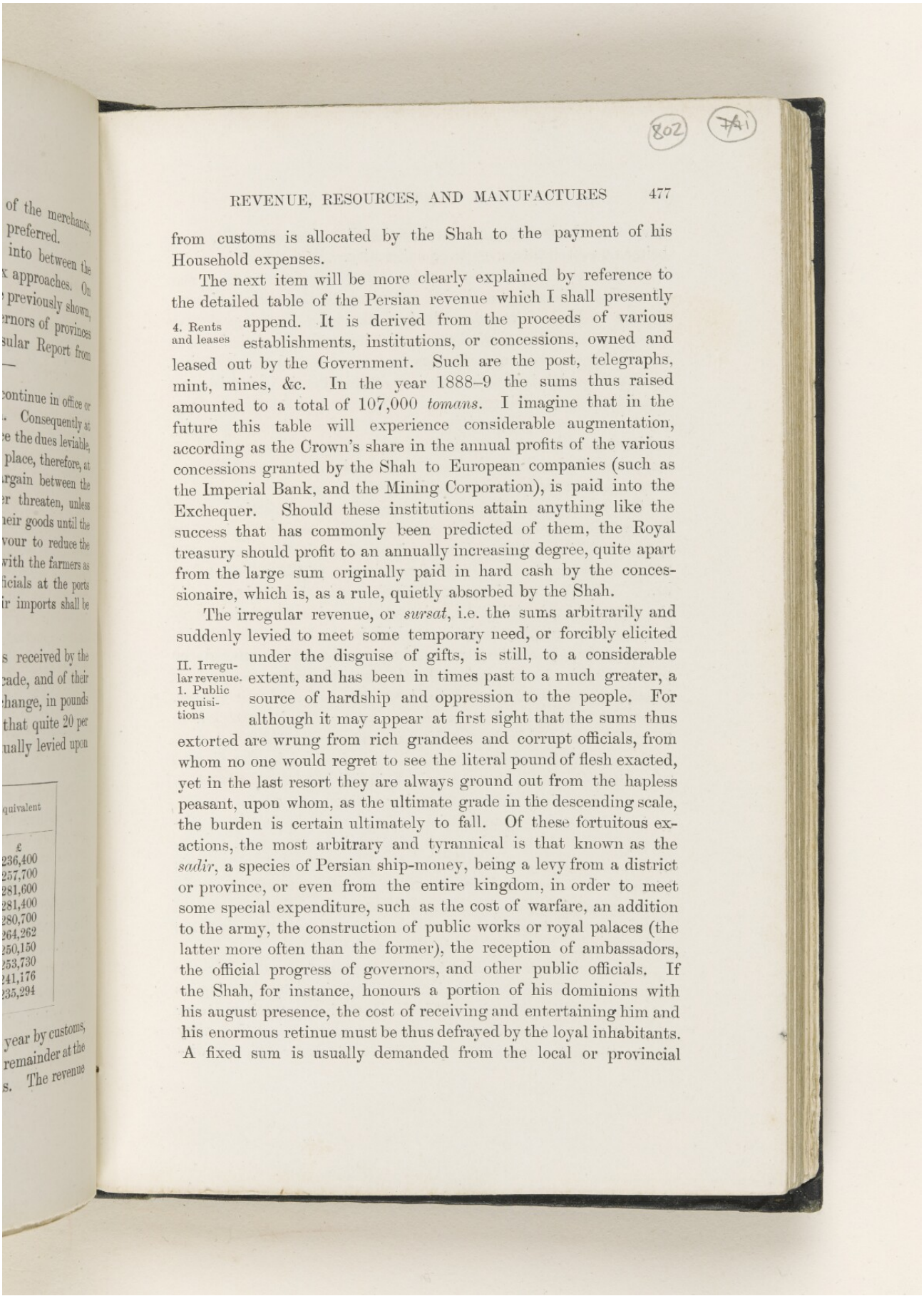



from customs is allocated by the Shah to the payment of his Household expenses.

4. Rents and leases

The next item will be more clearly explained by reference to the detailed table of the Persian revenue which I shall presently append. It is derived from the proceeds of various establishments, institutions, or concessions, owned and leased out by the Government. Such are the post, telegraphs, mint, mines, &c. In the year 1888–9 the sums thus raised amounted to a total of 107,000 *tomans*. I imagine that in the future this table will experience considerable augmentation, according as the Crown's share in the annual profits of the various concessions granted by the Shah to European companies (such as the Imperial Bank, and the Mining Corporation), is paid into the Exchequer. Should these institutions attain anything like the success that has commonly been predicted of them, the Royal treasury should profit to an annually increasing degree, quite apart from the large sum originally paid in hard cash by the concessionaire, which is, as a rule, quietly absorbed by the Shah.

II. Irregular revenue. 1. Public requisitions

The irregular revenue, or *sursat*, i.e. the sums arbitrarily and suddenly levied to meet some temporary need, or forcibly elicited under the disguise of gifts, is still, to a considerable extent, and has been in times past to a much greater, a source of hardship and oppression to the people. For although it may appear at first sight that the sums thus extorted are wrung from rich grandees and corrupt officials, from whom no one would regret to see the literal pound of flesh exacted, yet in the last resort they are always ground out from the hapless peasant, upon whom, as the ultimate grade in the descending scale, the burden is certain ultimately to fall. Of these fortuitous exactions, the most arbitrary and tyrannical is that known as the *sadir*, a species of Persian ship-money, being a levy from a district or province, or even from the entire kingdom, in order to meet some special expenditure, such as the cost of warfare, an addition to the army, the construction of public works or royal palaces (the latter more often than the former), the reception of ambassadors, the official progress of governors, and other public officials. If the Shah, for instance, honours a portion of his dominions with his august presence, the cost of receiving and entertaining him and his enormous retinue must be thus defrayed by the loyal inhabitants. A fixed sum is usually demanded from the local or provincial

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governor, who is free to manipulate the allocation as he will, there being no pretence to system or uniformity. In the form in which it reaches the taxpayer, it may be usually represented as a sort of graduated income-tax, levied according to the worldly circumstances of those from whom it is demanded. In the past year (1891) such a tax was levied on the district south of Tabriz in order to meet the expenses of the troops despatched to Suj Bulak against the Kurds. An interesting variety of this tax is levied in some districts when the Governor makes his tour of inspection. Supplies, in excess of all possible needs, are first exacted from the inhabitants; and the surplus is then resold to the villagers, who are compelled to buy back the very grain which, a few weeks before, they had been compelled to provide gratis.

2. Presents at No Ruz, &c.

The sums received by the Shah at the annual festival of No Ruz, which afford as graphic an illustration as the cynic could desire of the cynic's definition of gratitude as a sense of favours to come, were formerly one of the main sources of the royal income. Malcolm estimated their value in the time of Fath Ali Shah, who was notoriously avaricious, as 1,200,000*l.*; but his calculations, which in the case of the Persian revenue seem to have been uniformly pitched too high, are reduced to more probable proportions by the contemporary statements of Fraser, that they amounted to 1,000,000 to 1,200,000 *tomans*, or, at the then rate of exchange (1 *toman* = 12*s.*), 600,000*l.* to 720,000*l.*; and of Macdonald Kinneir, who named 943,000 *tomans* as the total of the whole annual *pishkesh* received by the Crown. These imposing totals have greatly dwindled in recent years, other and more ingenious means of levying a tax upon official wealth, or in other words upon official embezzlement, having been discovered; and the united values of the *pishkesh* received by the Shah on the two occasions of the No Ruz and of the Prophet's Birthday in the year 1888–9 amounted only, according to the figures presented to me, to 120,000 *tomans*, or, at the then rate of exchange, to 35,800*l.* I cannot be certain, however, that the correct amount would appear in these tables.

Malcolm estimated the value of the presents received in the shape of fines, bribes, confiscations, and gratuities, by the king as half of the regular Birthday *pishkesh*. There is no means whatever of ascertaining what is their modern amount, seeing that they are in the nature of private presents to the sovereign, and dis-

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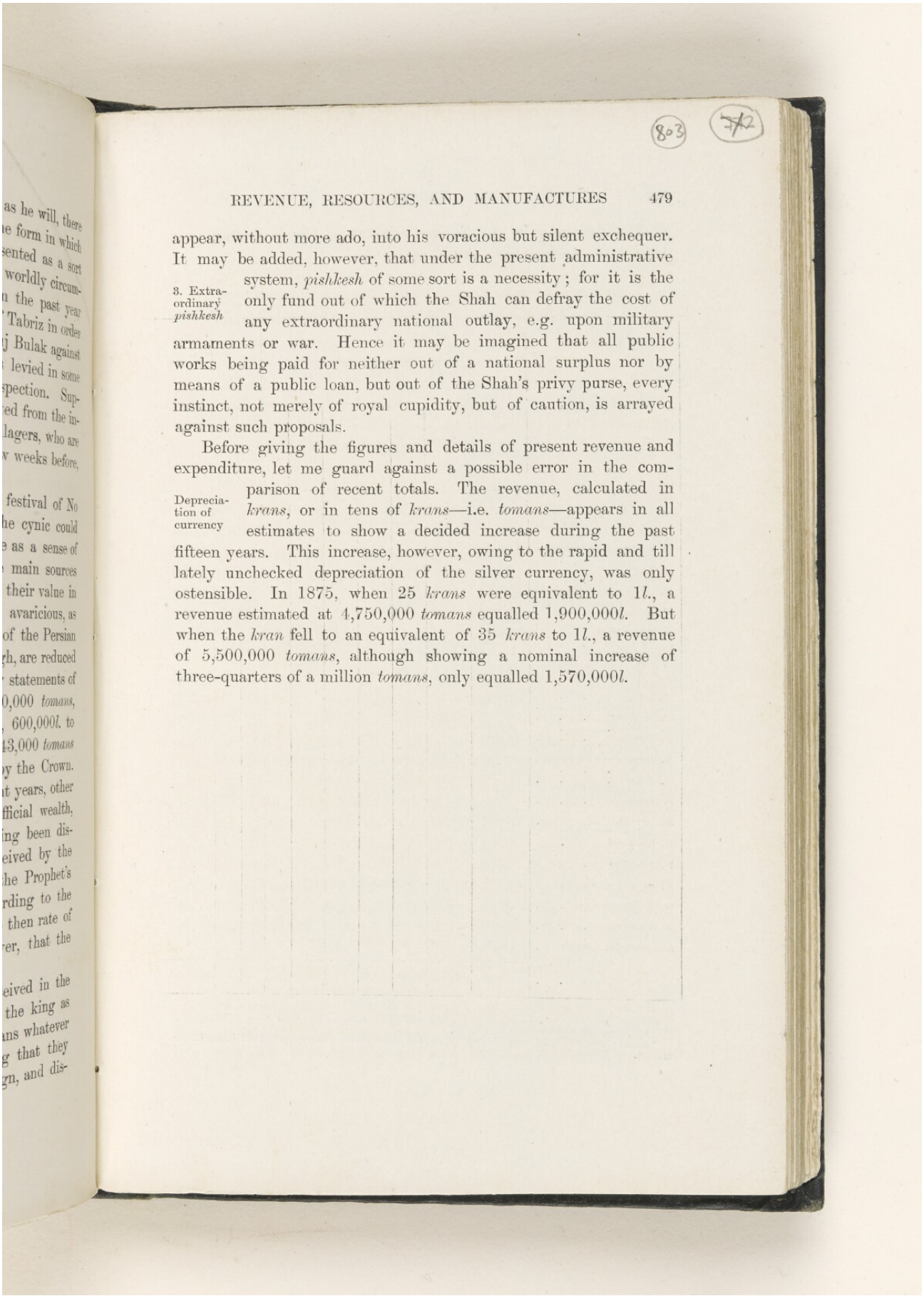



appear, without more ado, into his voracious but silent exchequer. It may be added, however, that under the present administrative system, *pishkesh* of some sort is a necessity; for it is the only fund out of which the Shah can defray the cost of any extraordinary national outlay, e.g. upon military armaments or war. Hence it may be imagined that all public works being paid for neither out of a national surplus nor by means of a public loan, but out of the Shah's privy purse, every instinct, not merely of royal cupidity, but of caution, is arrayed against such proposals.

3. Extraordinary *pishkesh*

Before giving the figures and details of present revenue and expenditure, let me guard against a possible error in the comparison of recent totals. The revenue, calculated in *krans*, or in tens of *krans*—i.e. *tomans*—appears in all estimates to show a decided increase during the past fifteen years. This increase, however, owing to the rapid and till lately unchecked depreciation of the silver currency, was only ostensible. In 1875, when 25 *krans* were equivalent to 1*l.*, a revenue estimated at 4,750,000 *tomans* equalled 1,900,000*l.* But when the *kran* fell to an equivalent of 35 *krans* to 1*l.*, a revenue of 5,500,000 *tomans*, although showing a nominal increase of three-quarters of a million *tomans*, only equalled 1,570,000*l.*

Depreciation of currency

The following is the Budget account of Persia for the year 1888–9, as derived from official sources:—

I. Revenue derived from Taxes and Customs combined.

| Name of Province or District | Payments in Cash | Payments in Kind | | | | | | Prices at which Government compounds payments in grain for cash | | Total revenue of the Province or District. Payments in kind calculated at Government rates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Grain, wheat and barley | Straw | Rice | Gram | Grass | Silk | Wheat | Barley | |
| | *krans* | *kharvars* of 649 lbs. | *kharvars* | *kharvars*[1] | *kharvars* | *kharvars* | *mans* of 13 lbs. | *krans*[3] | | *krans* |
| 1. Teheran & dependencies | 4,238,720 | 293 | 91 | 2,250 | 75 | 1,500 | — | 30 | 25 | 4,306,391 |
| 2. Azerbaijan | 7,861,420 | 54,873[2] | 4,960 | 229 | — | — | — | 26⅔ | 16⅔ | 9,666,665 |
| 3. Khorasan | 5,082,686 | 60,123 | 11,699 | 725 | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 6,586,932 |
| 4. Fars | 6,420,402 | 7,700 | — | — | — | — | — | 40 | 30 | 6,689,902 |
| 5. Isfahan & dependencies | 3,791,202 | 8,855 | 6,000 | — | — | — | — | 35 | 15 | 4,036,577 |
| 6. Kerman and Beluchistan | 2,215,343 | 19,703 | 18,558 | — | — | — | — | 40 | 30 | 2,904,948 |
| 7. Arabistan | 1,427,359 | 1,600 | 800 | — | — | — | — | 30 | 15 | 1,466,538 |
| 8. Gilan | 3,450,000 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3,450,000 |
| 9. Mazanderan | 1,393,470 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1,393,470 |
| 10. Kurdistan | 673,457 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 673,457 |
| 11. Luristan | 594,253 | 5,268 | 1,956 | — | — | — | — | 20 | 15 | 694,267 |
| 12. Irak, Kezzaz, Ferahan, Mahallat, Saveh | 727,357 | 17,405 | 2,228 | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 1,200,079 |
| 13. Burujird | 609,573 | 4,867 | 1,040 | — | — | — | — | 22 | 13 | 698,905 |
| 14. Yezd | 1,794,920 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 50 | 40 | 1,728,023 |
| 15. Kermanshah | 936,935 | 10,170 | 3,800 | — | — | — | — | 20 | 10 | 1,104,685 |
| 16. Khamseh | 819,888 | 10,540 | 9,000 | — | — | — | — | 15 | 10 | 978,638 |
| 17. Kazvin | 953,018 | 11,972 | 6,800 | — | — | — | — | 20 | 10 | 1,159,798 |
| 18. Astrabad | 171,899 | — | — | 8,984 | — | — | 1 | — | — | 351,779 |
| 19. Bostam and Shahrud | 93,366 | 3,542 | 3,827 | — | — | — | — | 25 | 20 | 188,369 |
| 20. Semnan and Damghan | 280,728 | 2,592 | 1,093 | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 336,940 |
| 21. Kum | 293,620 | 3,754 | — | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 368,700 |
| 22. Kashan | 712,006 | 1,052 | 921 | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 736,736 |
| 23. Gulpaigan and Khonsar | 225,811 | 1,767 | 216 | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 269,986 |
| 24. Kamareh | 91,041 | 1,839 | — | — | — | — | — | 20 | 15 | 127,821 |
| 25. Gerrus | 129,965 | 1,982 | — | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 169,605 |
| 26. Hamadan | 673,635 | 9,306 | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 906,285 |
| 27. Malayer and Tusirkan | 504,709 | 6,371 | 870 | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 635,599 |
| 28. Nihavend | 280,303 | 7,317 | 4,941 | — | — | — | — | 25 | 15 | 446,407 |
| 29. Natanz | 211,589 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 211,589 |
| 30. Asadabad | 23,435 | 2,572 | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 87,735 |
| 31. Joshekan | 73,302 | 96 | — | — | — | — | — | 20 | — | 76,182 |
| 32. Khar | 94,704 | 6,064 | 4,684 | 477 | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 265,994 |
| 33. Kharakan | 51,102 | 1,467 | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | — | 95,112 |
| 34. Demavend | 22,910 | 1,447 | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 59,085 |
| 35. Talikan | 48,350 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 48,350 |
| 36. Kangavar | 17,671 | 527 | 159 | — | — | — | — | 20 | 10 | 24,942 |
| 37. Firuzkuh | 15,716 | 197 | — | — | — | — | — | 30 | 20 | 18,163 |
| 38. Chehardeh Kelateh | 10,892 | 48 | — | — | — | — | — | 25 | — | 12,092 |
| Totals | 44,076,757 | 265,309 | 83,643 | 12,665 | 75 | 1,500 | 1 | — | — | 54,177,740 |

[1] The Government price of rice in the husks, called *shaltuk*, is 20 *krans* per *kharvar* of 649 lbs.
[2] The Azerbaijan *kharvar* weighs 974 lbs.
[3] These prices are, as a rule, from 15 to 25 per cent. lower than the current prices obtainable in the market.

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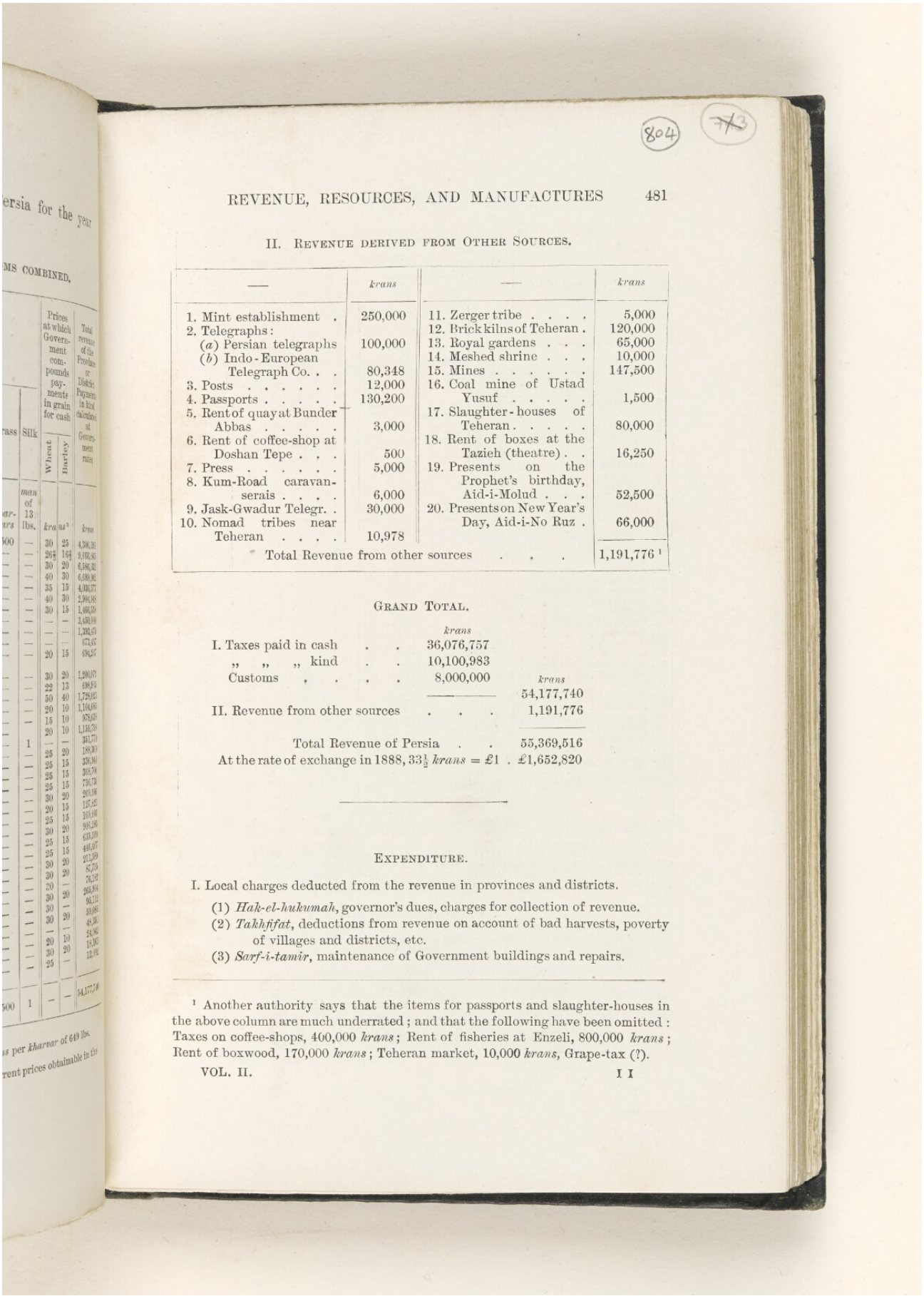

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II. Revenue derived from Other Sources.

| — | *krans* | — | *krans* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Mint establishment . | 250,000 | 11. Zerger tribe . . . . | 5,000 |
| 2. Telegraphs: | | 12. Brick kilns of Teheran . | 120,000 |
| (*a*) Persian telegraphs | 100,000 | 13. Royal gardens . . . | 65,000 |
| (*b*) Indo-European Telegraph Co. . . | 80,348 | 14. Meshed shrine . . . | 10,000 |
| 3. Posts . . . . . | 12,000 | 15. Mines . . . . . | 147,500 |
| 4. Passports . . . . . | 130,200 | 16. Coal mine of Ustad Yusuf . . . . . | 1,500 |
| 5. Rent of quay at Bunder Abbas . . . . . | 3,000 | 17. Slaughter-houses of Teheran . . . . . | 80,000 |
| 6. Rent of coffee-shop at Doshan Tepe . . . | 500 | 18. Rent of boxes at the Tazieh (theatre) . . | 16,250 |
| 7. Press . . . . . | 5,000 | 19. Presents on the Prophet's birthday, Aid-i-Molud . . . | 52,500 |
| 8. Kum-Road caravan-serais . . . . | 6,000 | 20. Presents on New Year's Day, Aid-i-No Ruz . | 66,000 |
| 9. Jask-Gwadur Telegr. . | 30,000 | | |
| 10. Nomad tribes near Teheran . . . . | 10,978 | | |
| Total Revenue from other sources . . . | | | 1,191,776 [1] |

Grand Total.

| | *krans* | *krans* |
|---|---|---|
| I. Taxes paid in cash . . | 36,076,757 | |
| „ „ „ kind . . | 10,100,983 | |
| Customs . . . . | 8,000,000 | |
| | | 54,177,740 |
| II. Revenue from other sources . . . | | 1,191,776 |
| Total Revenue of Persia . . | | 55,369,516 |
| At the rate of exchange in 1888, 33½ *krans* = £1 . | | £1,652,820 |

Expenditure.

I. Local charges deducted from the revenue in provinces and districts.

(1) *Hak-el-hukumah*, governor's dues, charges for collection of revenue.
(2) *Takhfifat*, deductions from revenue on account of bad harvests, poverty of villages and districts, etc.
(3) *Sarf-i-tamir*, maintenance of Government buildings and repairs.

[1] Another authority says that the items for passports and slaughter-houses in the above column are much underrated; and that the following have been omitted: Taxes on coffee-shops, 400,000 *krans*; Rent of fisheries at Enzeli, 800,000 *krans*; Rent of boxwood, 170,000 *krans*; Teheran market, 10,000 *krans*, Grape-tax (?).



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| Name of Province or District | *Hak-el-hukumah* | | *Taktfifat* | | | *Sarf-i-Tamir* | | | Total amount deducted from the revenueof province or district for local charges |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cash | Grain | Cash | Grain | Straw | Cash | Grain | Straw | |
| | *krans* | *khavs.* | *krans* | *khar* | *vars* | *krans* | *khar* | *vars* | *krans* |
| 1. Teheran and dependencies | 32,133 | — | 33,976 | 700 | 1,740 | 2,000 | — | — | } 174,510 |
| ,, crown domains | — | — | 11,387 | 478 | 1,750[1] | — | 155 | 155 | |
| 2. Azerbaijan | 143,600[2] | — | 129,808 | 1,928 | 52 | 81,606 | 162 | 162 | 408,647 |
| 3. Khorasan | 45,000 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 45,000 |
| 4. Fars | 89,260 | 200 | 636,568 | 178 | — | 2,460 | 80 | — | 744,318 |
| 5. Isfahan | — | — | 89,450 | — | — | 32,470 | 48 | 89 | 123,476 |
| 6. Kerman and Beluchistan | 12,000 | 297 | 13,200 | 25 | — | 19,200 | 65 | — | 57,945 |
| 7. Arabistan | 18,500 | — | — | — | — | 2,780 | 19 | 19 | 21,763 |
| 8. Gilan | 30,000 | — | 204,000 | — | — | 10,290 | — | — | 244,290 |
| 9. Mazanderan | 24,500 | — | 1,322 | — | — | 20,070 | — | — | 45,892 |
| 10. Kurdistan | 29,650 | — | — | — | — | 7,650 | — | — | 37,300 |
| 11. Luristan | 10,935 | — | 145,240 | — | — | 6,800 | 29 | — | 163,482 |
| 12. Irak, Kezzaz, Ferahan, Mahallat, Saveh | 18,400 | 134 | 27,180 | 125 | — | 5,200 | 78 | — | 57,450 |
| 13. Burujird | 10,400 | — | 47,540 | 380 | — | 400 | 14 | — | 65,235 |
| 14. Yezd | 25,333 | — | 27,987 | — | — | 10,000 | 73 | 73 | 66,897 |
| 15. Kermanshah | 9,870 | — | 32,083 | 67 | 400 | 8,104 | 73 | 73 | 54,049 |
| 16. Khamseh | 8,060 | — | 9,430 | 256 | 293 | 5,400 | — | — | 27,262 |
| 17. Kazvin | — | — | 12,820 | 87 | — | 4,700 | 16 | 16 | 19,129 |
| 18. Astrabad | — | — | 12,606 | 1,512 | — | 1,644 | 16 | — | 44,810 |
| 19. Bostam and Shahrud | 3,044 | — | 708 | 130 | 890 | 1,000 | 48 | 48 | 12,509 |
| 20. Semnan and Damghan | 5,200 | — | 1,474 | 114 | — | 1,926 | 88 | 48 | 12,832 |
| 21. Kum | 10,000 | — | 435 | 2 | — | 2,200 | 40 | 40 | 13,635 |
| 22. Kashan | 6,000 | — | 24,650 | 113 | 207 | 1,610 | 25 | 25 | 35,948 |
| 23. Gulpaigan and Khonsar | 4,600 | — | 17,880 | 533 | — | 1,000 | — | — | 24,812 |
| 24. Kamareh | 3,200 | — | 240 | 6 | — | — | — | — | 3,560 |
| 25. Gerrus | 2,670 | — | 3,840 | 17 | — | 400 | 10 | 10 | 7,490 |
| 26. Hamadan | 7,960 | — | 17,730 | 154 | — | 1,090 | 58 | — | 31,080 |
| 27. Malayer and Tusirkan | 7,730 | — | 2,150 | 14 | — | 1,400 | 14 | 14 | 11,896 |
| 28. Nihavend | 6,430 | — | 37,040 | 438 | — | 2,000 | — | — | 54,200 |
| 29. Natanz | 3,000 | — | 4,106 | — | — | 1,340 | — | — | 8,446 |
| 30. Asadabad | 750 | — | 400 | — | — | 260 | — | — | 1,410 |
| 31. Joshekan | — | — | 120 | — | — | — | — | — | 120 |
| 32. Khar | 1,350 | — | 16,610 | 206 | 166 | 450 | 19 | 19 | 22,775 |
| 33. Kharakan | 1,680 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1,680 |
| 34. Demavend | 800 | — | 2,760 | 83 | — | 200 | 8 | — | 6,035 |
| 35. Talikan | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 36. Kangavar | 500 | — | 136 | 8 | — | 250 | 7 | — | 1,111 |
| 37. Firuzkuh | 1,450 | 25 | — | — | — | 200 | 7 | 7 | 2,478 |
| 38. Chehardeh Kelateh | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Local Charges | | | | | | | | | 2,633,472 |

[1] Also 2,111 *kharvars* of rice.

[2] The 143,600 *krans* for *Hak-el-hukumah* include 50,000 annual pay of the Vizier of Azerbaijan, and 20,000 *krans* subsidy for post-houses. The 81,600 *krans Sarf-i-tamir* include 20,000 *krans* for fire-works on festivals. The Crown Prince's allowance figures in the sum set apart for members of the Royal Family; it is 400,000 *krans* per annum.

## II. Other Expenditure.

| | *krans* |
|---|---|
| Army, including rations in kind and pensions to officers | 18,000,000 |
| Navy | 100,000 |
| Foreign Office: Ambassador at Constantinople, Ministers at London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg; consuls-general, consuls, and vice-consuls at various places, Foreign Office agents at various towns in Persia, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a large staff at Teheran | 1,000,000 |

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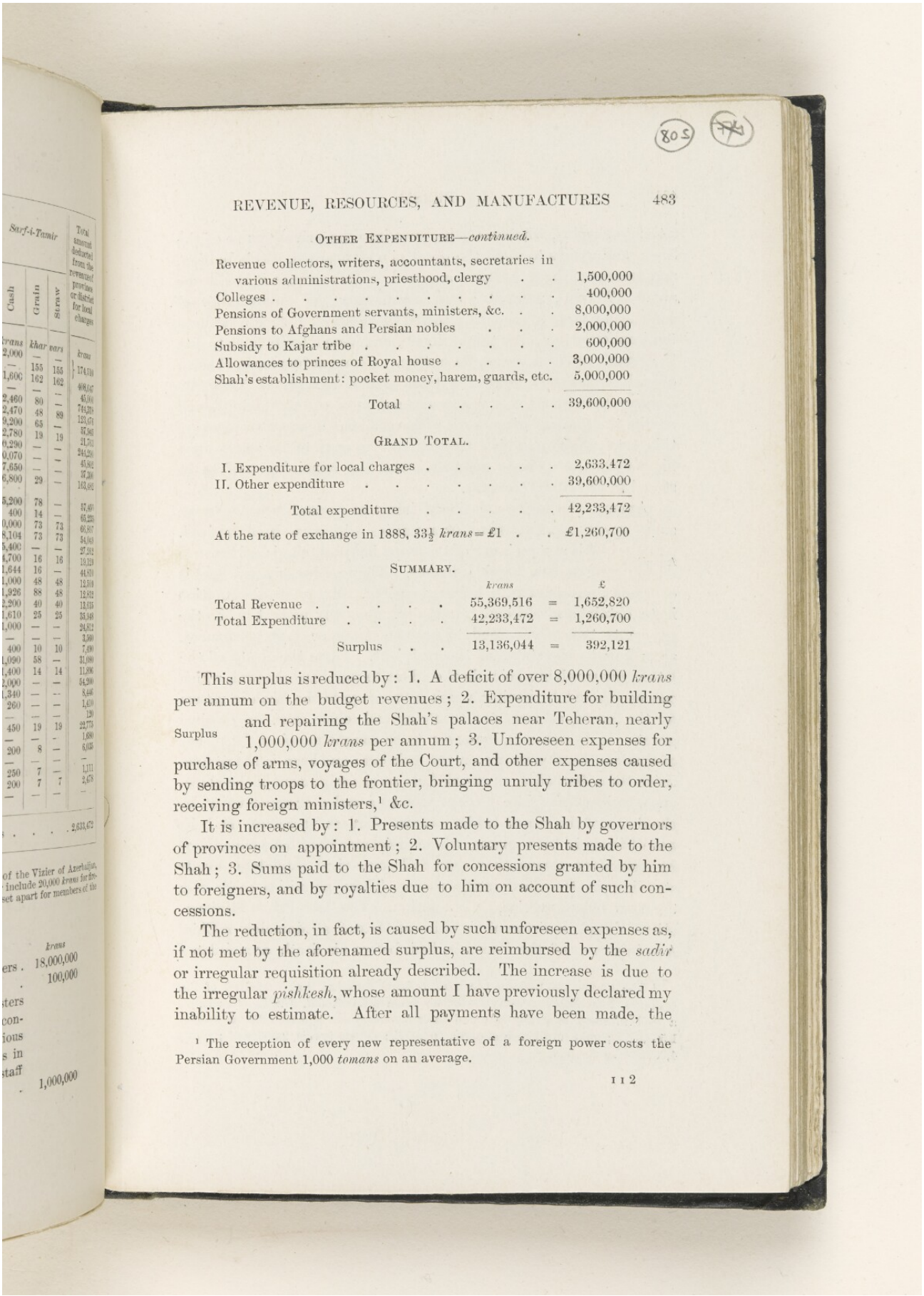



OTHER EXPENDITURE—*continued.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Revenue collectors, writers, accountants, secretaries in various administrations, priesthood, clergy | 1,500,000 |
| Colleges | 400,000 |
| Pensions of Government servants, ministers, &c. | 8,000,000 |
| Pensions to Afghans and Persian nobles | 2,000,000 |
| Subsidy to Kajar tribe | 600,000 |
| Allowances to princes of Royal house | 3,000,000 |
| Shah's establishment: pocket money, harem, guards, etc. | 5,000,000 |
| Total | 39,600,000 |

GRAND TOTAL.

| | |
|---|---|
| I. Expenditure for local charges | 2,633,472 |
| II. Other expenditure | 39,600,000 |
| Total expenditure | 42,233,472 |
| At the rate of exchange in 1888, 33½ *krans* = £1 | £1,260,700 |

SUMMARY.

| | *krans* | | £ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Revenue | 55,369,516 | = | 1,652,820 |
| Total Expenditure | 42,233,472 | = | 1,260,700 |
| Surplus | 13,136,044 | = | 392,121 |

Surplus

This surplus is reduced by: 1. A deficit of over 8,000,000 *krans* per annum on the budget revenues; 2. Expenditure for building and repairing the Shah's palaces near Teheran, nearly 1,000,000 *krans* per annum; 3. Unforeseen expenses for purchase of arms, voyages of the Court, and other expenses caused by sending troops to the frontier, bringing unruly tribes to order, receiving foreign ministers,[1] &c.

It is increased by: 1. Presents made to the Shah by governors of provinces on appointment; 2. Voluntary presents made to the Shah; 3. Sums paid to the Shah for concessions granted by him to foreigners, and by royalties due to him on account of such concessions.

The reduction, in fact, is caused by such unforeseen expenses as, if not met by the aforenamed surplus, are reimbursed by the *sadir* or irregular requisition already described. The increase is due to the irregular *pishkesh*, whose amount I have previously declared my inability to estimate. After all payments have been made, the

[1] The reception of every new representative of a foreign power costs the Persian Government 1,000 *tomans* on an average.



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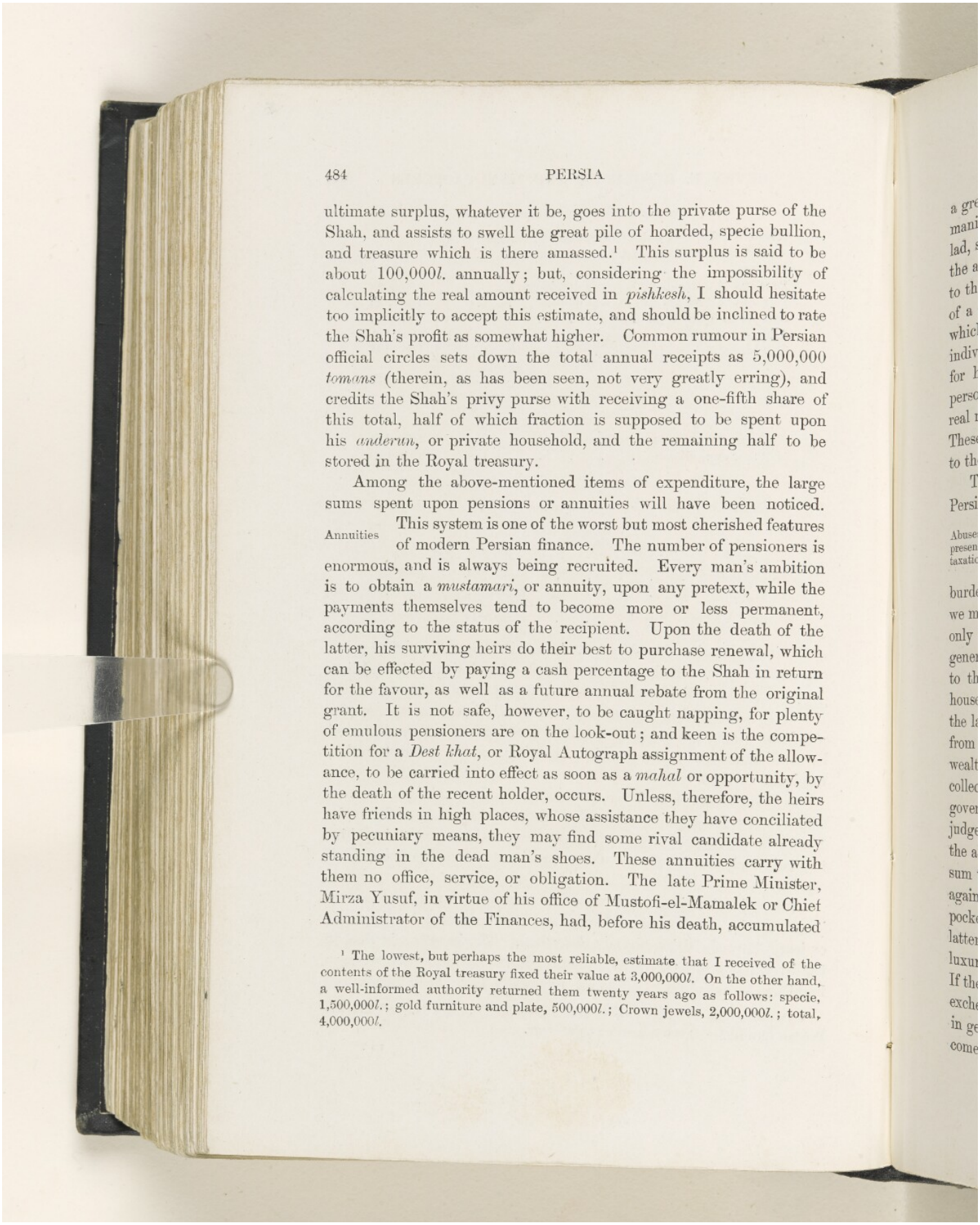



ultimate surplus, whatever it be, goes into the private purse of the Shah, and assists to swell the great pile of hoarded, specie bullion, and treasure which is there amassed.[1] This surplus is said to be about 100,000*l.* annually; but, considering the impossibility of calculating the real amount received in *pishkesh*, I should hesitate too implicitly to accept this estimate, and should be inclined to rate the Shah's profit as somewhat higher. Common rumour in Persian official circles sets down the total annual receipts as 5,000,000 *tomans* (therein, as has been seen, not very greatly erring), and credits the Shah's privy purse with receiving a one-fifth share of this total, half of which fraction is supposed to be spent upon his *anderun*, or private household, and the remaining half to be stored in the Royal treasury.

Among the above-mentioned items of expenditure, the large sums spent upon pensions or annuities will have been noticed.

Annuities

This system is one of the worst but most cherished features of modern Persian finance. The number of pensioners is enormous, and is always being recruited. Every man's ambition is to obtain a *mustamari*, or annuity, upon any pretext, while the payments themselves tend to become more or less permanent, according to the status of the recipient. Upon the death of the latter, his surviving heirs do their best to purchase renewal, which can be effected by paying a cash percentage to the Shah in return for the favour, as well as a future annual rebate from the original grant. It is not safe, however, to be caught napping, for plenty of emulous pensioners are on the look-out; and keen is the competition for a *Dest khat*, or Royal Autograph assignment of the allowance, to be carried into effect as soon as a *mahal* or opportunity, by the death of the recent holder, occurs. Unless, therefore, the heirs have friends in high places, whose assistance they have conciliated by pecuniary means, they may find some rival candidate already standing in the dead man's shoes. These annuities carry with them no office, service, or obligation. The late Prime Minister, Mirza Yusuf, in virtue of his office of Mustofi-el-Mamalek or Chief Administrator of the Finances, had, before his death, accumulated

[1] The lowest, but perhaps the most reliable, estimate that I received of the contents of the Royal treasury fixed their value at 3,000,000*l.* On the other hand, a well-informed authority returned them twenty years ago as follows: specie, 1,500,000*l.*; gold furniture and plate, 500,000*l.*; Crown jewels, 2,000,000*l.*; total, 4,000,000*l.*

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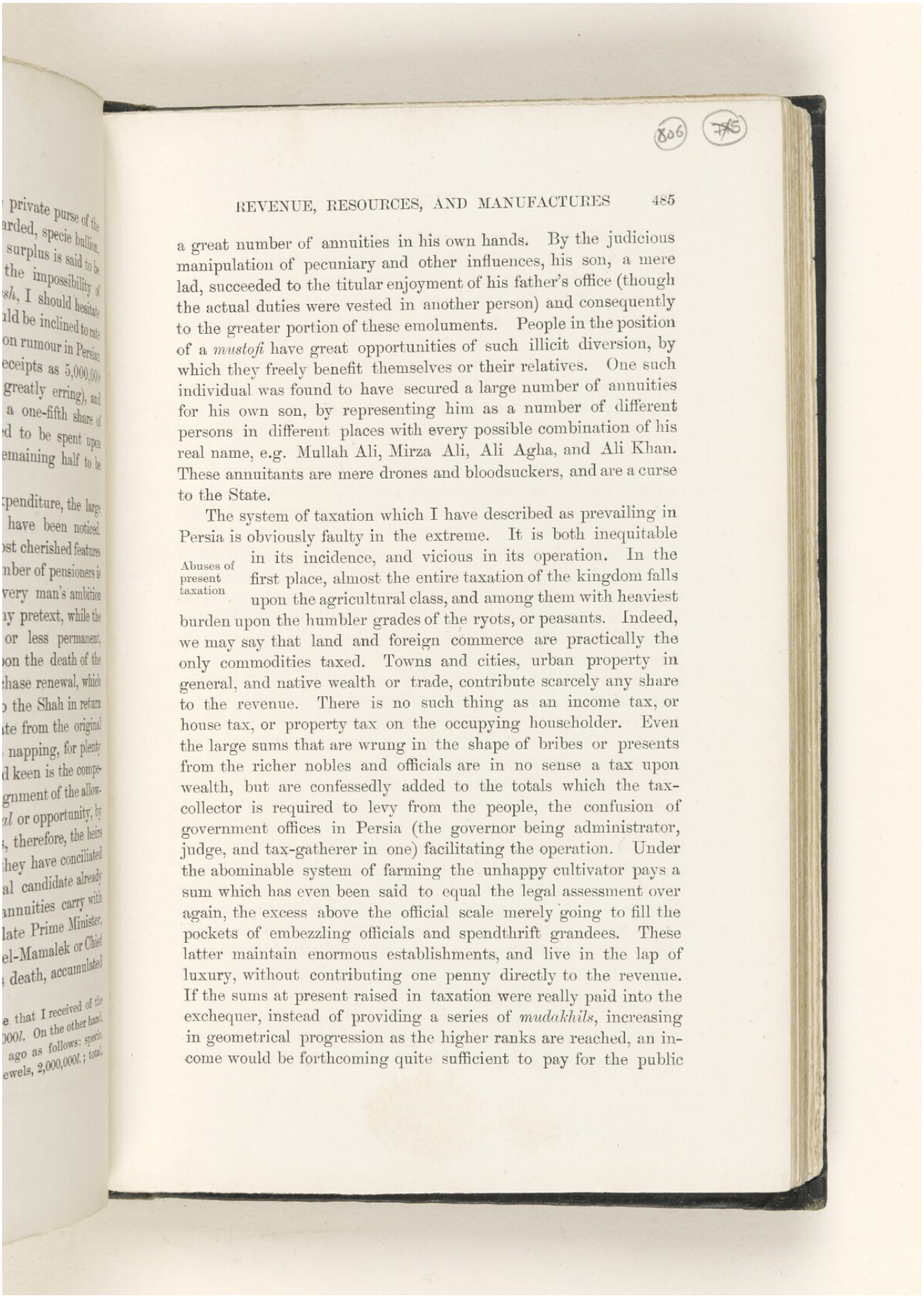



a great number of annuities in his own hands. By the judicious manipulation of pecuniary and other influences, his son, a mere lad, succeeded to the titular enjoyment of his father's office (though the actual duties were vested in another person) and consequently to the greater portion of these emoluments. People in the position of a *mustofi* have great opportunities of such illicit diversion, by which they freely benefit themselves or their relatives. One such individual was found to have secured a large number of annuities for his own son, by representing him as a number of different persons in different places with every possible combination of his real name, e.g. Mullah Ali, Mirza Ali, Ali Agha, and Ali Khan. These annuitants are mere drones and bloodsuckers, and are a curse to the State.

Abuses of present taxation

The system of taxation which I have described as prevailing in Persia is obviously faulty in the extreme. It is both inequitable in its incidence, and vicious in its operation. In the first place, almost the entire taxation of the kingdom falls upon the agricultural class, and among them with heaviest burden upon the humbler grades of the ryots, or peasants. Indeed, we may say that land and foreign commerce are practically the only commodities taxed. Towns and cities, urban property in general, and native wealth or trade, contribute scarcely any share to the revenue. There is no such thing as an income tax, or house tax, or property tax on the occupying householder. Even the large sums that are wrung in the shape of bribes or presents from the richer nobles and officials are in no sense a tax upon wealth, but are confessedly added to the totals which the tax-collector is required to levy from the people, the confusion of government offices in Persia (the governor being administrator, judge, and tax-gatherer in one) facilitating the operation. Under the abominable system of farming the unhappy cultivator pays a sum which has even been said to equal the legal assessment over again, the excess above the official scale merely going to fill the pockets of embezzling officials and spendthrift grandees. These latter maintain enormous establishments, and live in the lap of luxury, without contributing one penny directly to the revenue. If the sums at present raised in taxation were really paid into the exchequer, instead of providing a series of *mudakhils*, increasing in geometrical progression as the higher ranks are reached, an income would be forthcoming quite sufficient to pay for the public

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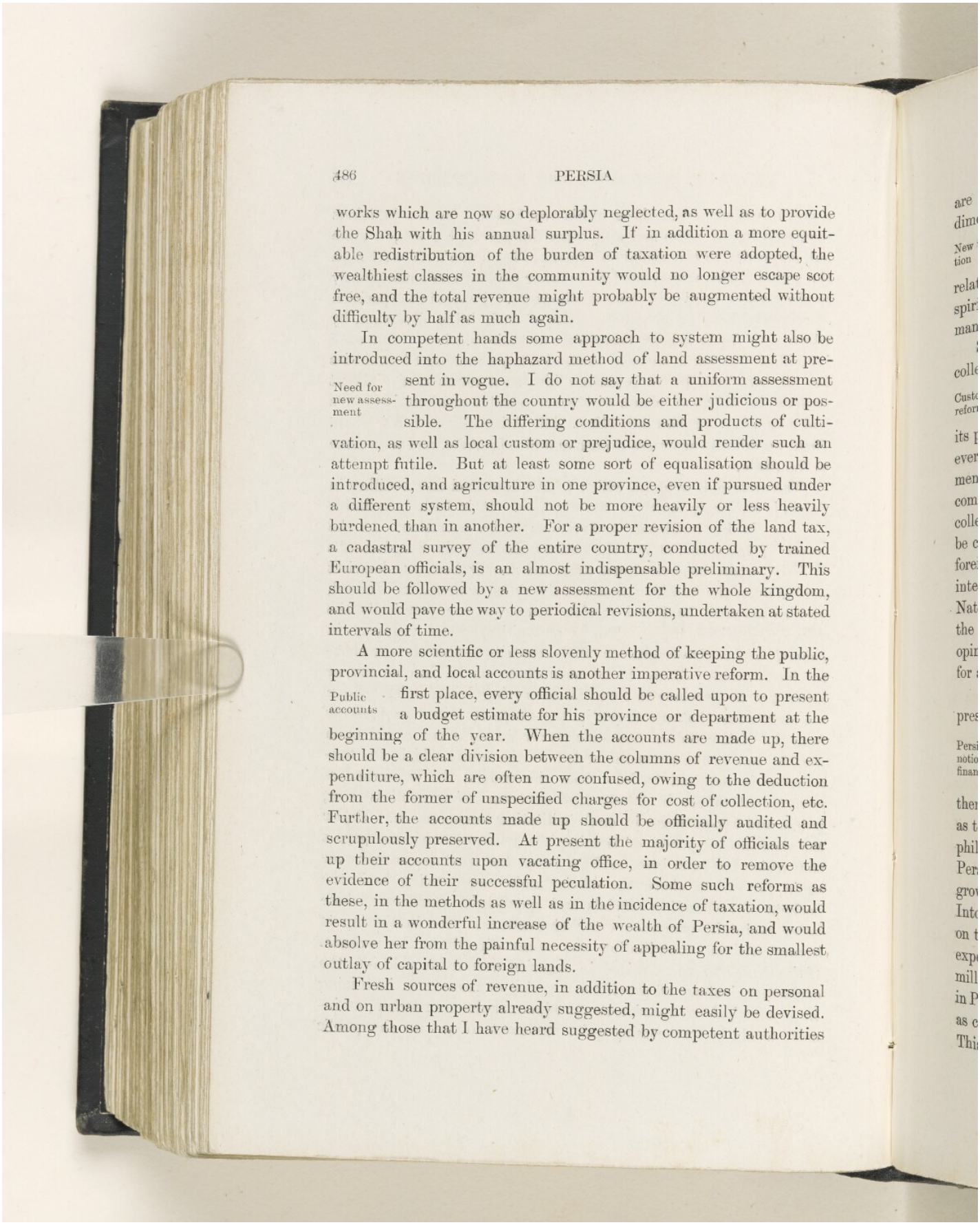



works which are now so deplorably neglected, as well as to provide the Shah with his annual surplus. If in addition a more equitable redistribution of the burden of taxation were adopted, the wealthiest classes in the community would no longer escape scot free, and the total revenue might probably be augmented without difficulty by half as much again.

Need for new assessment

In competent hands some approach to system might also be introduced into the haphazard method of land assessment at present in vogue. I do not say that a uniform assessment throughout the country would be either judicious or possible. The differing conditions and products of cultivation, as well as local custom or prejudice, would render such an attempt futile. But at least some sort of equalisation should be introduced, and agriculture in one province, even if pursued under a different system, should not be more heavily or less heavily burdened than in another. For a proper revision of the land tax, a cadastral survey of the entire country, conducted by trained European officials, is an almost indispensable preliminary. This should be followed by a new assessment for the whole kingdom, and would pave the way to periodical revisions, undertaken at stated intervals of time.

Public accounts

A more scientific or less slovenly method of keeping the public, provincial, and local accounts is another imperative reform. In the first place, every official should be called upon to present a budget estimate for his province or department at the beginning of the year. When the accounts are made up, there should be a clear division between the columns of revenue and expenditure, which are often now confused, owing to the deduction from the former of unspecified charges for cost of collection, etc. Further, the accounts made up should be officially audited and scrupulously preserved. At present the majority of officials tear up their accounts upon vacating office, in order to remove the evidence of their successful peculation. Some such reforms as these, in the methods as well as in the incidence of taxation, would result in a wonderful increase of the wealth of Persia, and would absolve her from the painful necessity of appealing for the smallest outlay of capital to foreign lands.

Fresh sources of revenue, in addition to the taxes on personal and on urban property already suggested, might easily be devised. Among those that I have heard suggested by competent authorities

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are the sale of Crown lands, which are constantly increasing in dimensions, with no corresponding gain to the State, the imposition of stamp duties upon all receipts, bonds, promissory notes, etc., a legacy duty regulated by the degrees of relationship, and excise duties upon the manufacture of wines and spirituous liquors. A clever financier would, no doubt, detect many other equally promising sources of wealth.

New taxation

Similarly with regard to the Customs, the present method of collecting which is equally unsystematic and venal, there is urgent necessity for reform. The farming system, as a fruitful parent of evil, should be destroyed root and branch. In its place, the collection of revenue should be conducted, as it is in every civilised country, by the salaried officials of a State department. Finally, much greater simplicity would be introduced, commerce would be both encouraged and expedited, the cost of collection would be lessened, and the openings for dishonesty would be curtailed, by an assimilation of the Custom dues imposed upon foreign and native merchandise, and by the abolition of the various internal road taxes and town *octrois* that are levied upon the latter. Native merchandise can scarcely be said to be protected against the foreigner by the present system. Indeed, I incline to the opinion that the European, paying his 5 per cent. *ad valorem* once for all, is in the better position.

Customs reform

I confess that, from what I have both heard and read of the present financial development of the Persian intellect, I see no immediate prospect of these or analogous reforms being carried out. In the 'Echo de Perse' for August 15, 1885, a Teheran newspaper which I have before mentioned, there appeared an article on Persian finance, which is so remarkable as to deserve a passing extract. 'There is nothing,' observed the philosophic writer, 'more curious than the financial condition of Persia. It is a virgin forest, where trees with strong branches grow close to trees not less strong, but rotting through age.' Intoxicated by this astonishing metaphor, the writer then went on to boast of a country without a national debt, a country whose expenditure was always less than its revenue, frequently by several millions, which forthwith passed into the Royal treasury. 'Here in Persia,' he sagaciously remarked, 'we undertake only such works as can be paid for out of the excess of receipts over expenditure. This is more modest, but it is also more sure. And if we have

Persian notions of finance

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remained a little behind as regards public works, at least our minds are at ease, and debts do not haunt us.' And finally came this burst of patriotic exultation: 'What other country in the world finds itself in such an exceptional position? No national debt, no paper money, none of the nation's riches encroached upon, none of its revenues mortgaged for the future. The financial stability of Persia is still virgin and inviolate, in spite of the numerous temptations that have assailed it. May it never be prostituted in time to come!' I should scarcely have been tempted to quote this glowing eulogium of the Persian virgin, had I not observed, even in the pages of European writers, an unaccountable tendency to extol her charms. I have seen the absence of a national debt in Persia, the annual excess of revenue over expenditure, and her independence of foreign loans, paraded as evidences of a sound financial position and of administrative ability. The expenditure falls below the receipts, for the simple reason that the most necessary objects of outlay are scandalously neglected, stinted, or ignored, in order that the Treasury may receive its annual surplus. There is no national debt, because the country undertakes no expense, but is content with scrambling along as best it can from year to year. No foreign loans have been applied for, partly for the same reason, partly because the conditions under which alone they could have been granted would have involved that very mortgage of some of the country's resources to the immunity from which the Persian editor pointed with such innocent pride.

Persian land tenure

A discussion of the land tax and of land assessment leads me to say a few words upon the cognate subject of land tenure in Persia, with which it is inseparably connected. Owing to the wide expanses of sand, salt, and stones, that cover so much of the territorial superficies of Persia, the extent of soil under cultivation is said to be less than one fifth of the area of the whole kingdom. On the other hand, agriculture is believed to occupy the industry of nearly two-thirds of the entire population. Landed property in Persia is of four kinds: (1) Crown lands, known as *khalisah*, or *diwani*; (2) Lands held upon feudal tenure; (3) *Vakfs*, or religious endowments; (4) Private property, or *arbabi*.

The Crown lands of Persia are very extensive, but are chiefly, in their present ownership, the creation of the civil wars of the last century. Nadir Shah, and still more Agha Mohammed Khan

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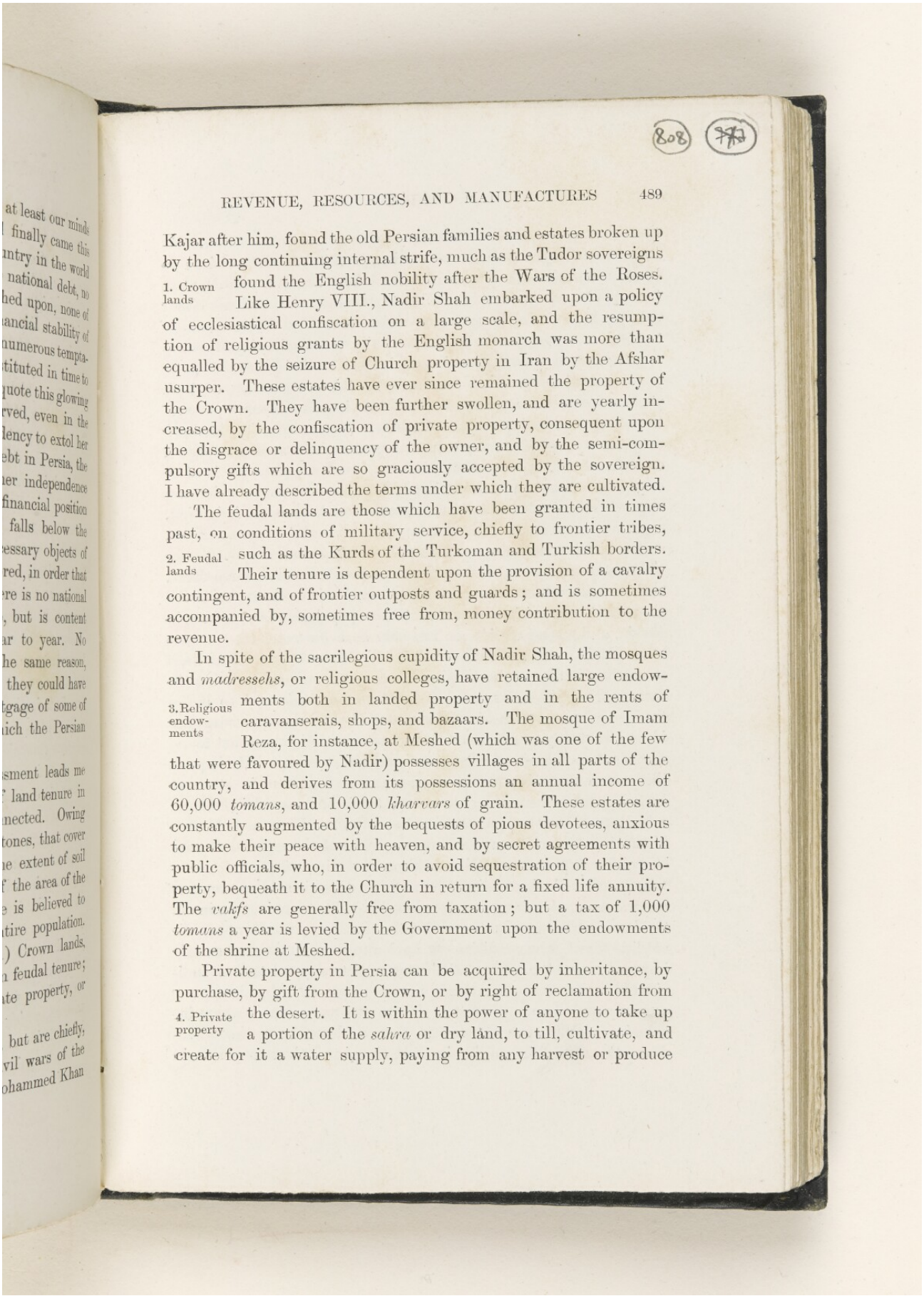



Kajar after him, found the old Persian families and estates broken up by the long continuing internal strife, much as the Tudor sovereigns found the English nobility after the Wars of the Roses. Like Henry VIII., Nadir Shah embarked upon a policy of ecclesiastical confiscation on a large scale, and the resumption of religious grants by the English monarch was more than equalled by the seizure of Church property in Iran by the Afshar usurper. These estates have ever since remained the property of the Crown. They have been further swollen, and are yearly increased, by the confiscation of private property, consequent upon the disgrace or delinquency of the owner, and by the semi-compulsory gifts which are so graciously accepted by the sovereign. I have already described the terms under which they are cultivated.

1. Crown lands

The feudal lands are those which have been granted in times past, on conditions of military service, chiefly to frontier tribes, such as the Kurds of the Turkoman and Turkish borders. Their tenure is dependent upon the provision of a cavalry contingent, and of frontier outposts and guards; and is sometimes accompanied by, sometimes free from, money contribution to the revenue.

2. Feudal lands

In spite of the sacrilegious cupidity of Nadir Shah, the mosques and *madressehs*, or religious colleges, have retained large endowments both in landed property and in the rents of caravanserais, shops, and bazaars. The mosque of Imam Reza, for instance, at Meshed (which was one of the few that were favoured by Nadir) possesses villages in all parts of the country, and derives from its possessions an annual income of 60,000 *tomans*, and 10,000 *kharvars* of grain. These estates are constantly augmented by the bequests of pious devotees, anxious to make their peace with heaven, and by secret agreements with public officials, who, in order to avoid sequestration of their property, bequeath it to the Church in return for a fixed life annuity. The *vakfs* are generally free from taxation; but a tax of 1,000 *tomans* a year is levied by the Government upon the endowments of the shrine at Meshed.

3. Religious endowments

Private property in Persia can be acquired by inheritance, by purchase, by gift from the Crown, or by right of reclamation from the desert. It is within the power of anyone to take up a portion of the *sahra* or dry land, to till, cultivate, and create for it a water supply, paying from any harvest or produce

4. Private property

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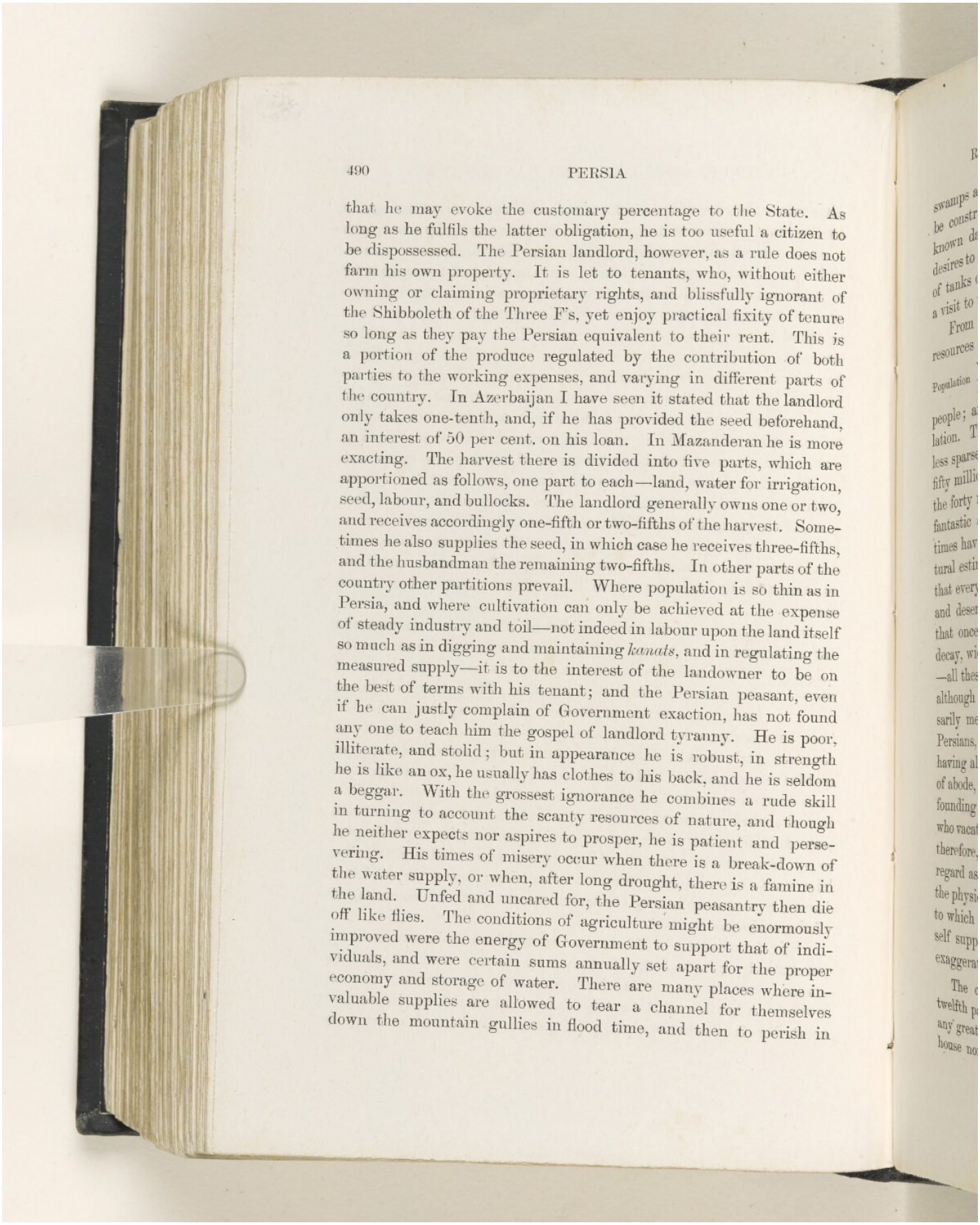



that he may evoke the customary percentage to the State. As long as he fulfils the latter obligation, he is too useful a citizen to be dispossessed. The Persian landlord, however, as a rule does not farm his own property. It is let to tenants, who, without either owning or claiming proprietary rights, and blissfully ignorant of the Shibboleth of the Three F's, yet enjoy practical fixity of tenure so long as they pay the Persian equivalent to their rent. This is a portion of the produce regulated by the contribution of both parties to the working expenses, and varying in different parts of the country. In Azerbaijan I have seen it stated that the landlord only takes one-tenth, and, if he has provided the seed beforehand, an interest of 50 per cent. on his loan. In Mazanderan he is more exacting. The harvest there is divided into five parts, which are apportioned as follows, one part to each—land, water for irrigation, seed, labour, and bullocks. The landlord generally owns one or two, and receives accordingly one-fifth or two-fifths of the harvest. Sometimes he also supplies the seed, in which case he receives three-fifths, and the husbandman the remaining two-fifths. In other parts of the country other partitions prevail. Where population is so thin as in Persia, and where cultivation can only be achieved at the expense of steady industry and toil—not indeed in labour upon the land itself so much as in digging and maintaining *kanats*, and in regulating the measured supply—it is to the interest of the landowner to be on the best of terms with his tenant; and the Persian peasant, even if he can justly complain of Government exaction, has not found any one to teach him the gospel of landlord tyranny. He is poor, illiterate, and stolid; but in appearance he is robust, in strength he is like an ox, he usually has clothes to his back, and he is seldom a beggar. With the grossest ignorance he combines a rude skill in turning to account the scanty resources of nature, and though he neither expects nor aspires to prosper, he is patient and persevering. His times of misery occur when there is a break-down of the water supply, or when, after long drought, there is a famine in the land. Unfed and uncared for, the Persian peasantry then die off like flies. The conditions of agriculture might be enormously improved were the energy of Government to support that of individuals, and were certain sums annually set apart for the proper economy and storage of water. There are many places where invaluable supplies are allowed to tear a channel for themselves down the mountain gullies in flood time, and then to perish in

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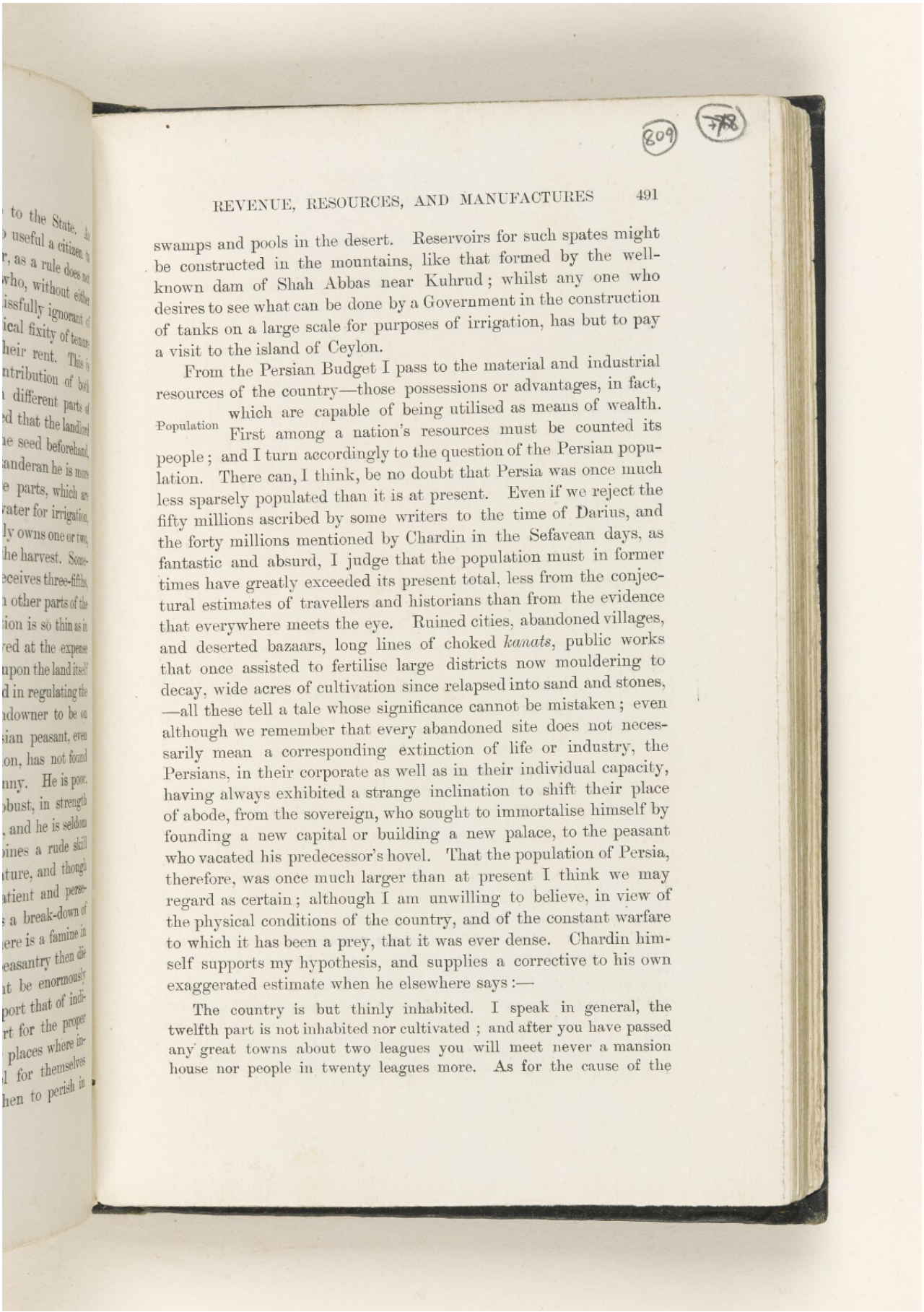



swamps and pools in the desert. Reservoirs for such spates might be constructed in the mountains, like that formed by the well-known dam of Shah Abbas near Kuhrud; whilst any one who desires to see what can be done by a Government in the construction of tanks on a large scale for purposes of irrigation, has but to pay a visit to the island of Ceylon.

From the Persian Budget I pass to the material and industrial resources of the country—those possessions or advantages, in fact, which are capable of being utilised as means of wealth.

Population

First among a nation's resources must be counted its people; and I turn accordingly to the question of the Persian population. There can, I think, be no doubt that Persia was once much less sparsely populated than it is at present. Even if we reject the fifty millions ascribed by some writers to the time of Darius, and the forty millions mentioned by Chardin in the Sefavean days, as fantastic and absurd, I judge that the population must in former times have greatly exceeded its present total, less from the conjectural estimates of travellers and historians than from the evidence that everywhere meets the eye. Ruined cities, abandoned villages, and deserted bazaars, long lines of choked *kanats*, public works that once assisted to fertilise large districts now mouldering to decay, wide acres of cultivation since relapsed into sand and stones, —all these tell a tale whose significance cannot be mistaken; even although we remember that every abandoned site does not necessarily mean a corresponding extinction of life or industry, the Persians, in their corporate as well as in their individual capacity, having always exhibited a strange inclination to shift their place of abode, from the sovereign, who sought to immortalise himself by founding a new capital or building a new palace, to the peasant who vacated his predecessor's hovel. That the population of Persia, therefore, was once much larger than at present I think we may regard as certain; although I am unwilling to believe, in view of the physical conditions of the country, and of the constant warfare to which it has been a prey, that it was ever dense. Chardin himself supports my hypothesis, and supplies a corrective to his own exaggerated estimate when he elsewhere says:—

> The country is but thinly inhabited. I speak in general, the twelfth part is not inhabited nor cultivated; and after you have passed any great towns about two leagues you will meet never a mansion house nor people in twenty leagues more. As for the cause of the

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want of people it is very easy to comprehend. It proceeds on the one hand from the immeasurable extent of these monarchies, and on the other from the arbitrary government that is exercised there.[1]

Chardin further attributed the dearth of people to four subsidiary causes, namely, unnatural vice, immoderate luxury, early marriages, and constant migration to the Indies. Malcolm, in the early part of the present century, estimated the population as about 6,000,000, balancing against the checks upon its growth, which were identical with those named by Chardin,[2] the following advantages, viz., 'the salubrity of the climate, the cheapness of provisions, the rare occurrence of famine,[3] the bloodless character of their civil wars, their obligation to marry, and the comparatively small number of prostitutes.' Rawlinson in 1850 estimated the population as 10,000,000; but in 1873, after two desolating visitations of cholera and famine, as 6,000,000. The figures given by other writers during the last twenty years vary between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000. Nor, indeed, is any estimate based upon data that are either scientific or reliable. No census is taken in Persia, the machinery or means for doing so in at all an adequate fashion not being in existence, and the idea being repugnant to the religious orders. Neither the assessment for taxation which I have described, nor the military conscription list, affords a basis of calculation, which must therefore be in every case more or less a matter of guesswork. The two most recent estimates that I have seen differ as widely in

[1] *Voyages* (ed. Langlès), vol. iii. pp. 270–1.

[2] Dr. J. E. Polak, who was a physician, in his Report on Persia in 1873, gave the following as the main causes of the decline of population: (1) The unfavourable position of women, including the facility of divorce, early marriage and premature age, the length of the suckling period, and the thereby impaired fertility of the sex; (2) decay of sanitary police, and consequent greater ravages by typhus, dysentery, cholera, plague, and, more particularly, owing to the inadequacy of inoculation, by small-pox—the mortality of children in the second year of their age being very striking; (3) the exterminating wars of the Tartars, Mongols, and Afghans, the raids of the Turkomans in the eastern provinces, and sale of the inhabitants in the slave markets of Khiva and Bokhara, civil wars, and the mortality among soldiers enlisted for life, but swept away in masses before properly acclimatised to the different garrison stations; (4) emigration of non-Mussulman elements, such as Guebres, Christians, and Jews, to India, the Caucasus, and Turkey; (5) oft-recurring famine, caused by dearth of rain and snow, but intensified to the highest degree by want of means of communication, prejudice against the corn trade, bad condition of water channels, and misgovernment.

[3] This cannot, I think, be said with truth. In the second half of this century famines of greater or less severity have occurred at intervals of about ten years.

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their totals as do any of their predecessors. One of these was drawn up by General Schindler—than whom no man is better qualified to pronounce, from his wide acquaintance with the whole country—in 1884. It was as follows:—

GENERAL SCHINDLER'S FIGURES.

Area of Persia about 628,000 square miles.[1]

| | Families | Souls |
|---|---|---|
| 99 towns containing | 363,630 | or 1,963,800 |
| Villages and districts without towns | | 3,780,000 |
| Nomads:— | | |
| Arabs | 52,020 | |
| Turks | 144,000 | |
| Kurds and Leks | 135,000 | |
| Beluchis and gipsies | 4,140 | |
| Bakhtiaris and Lurs | 46,800 | |
| | 381,960 | 1,909,800 |
| Total population of Persia | | 7,653,600 |

This total he again subdivided, according to creeds:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Shiahs | 6,860,600 |
| Sunnis and other Mohammedan sects | 700,000 |
| Parsis | 8,000 |
| Jews | 19,000 |
| Armenians | 43,000 |
| Nestorians and Chaldæans | 23,000 |
| Total | 7,653,600 |

The above figures are clearly conjectural in many respects, my own experience having convinced me that the populations of several of the towns, in General Schindler's table,[2] are as much in excess of the real totals as some of the items in the second of the above tables, e.g. the figures of Jews, Nestorians, and Chaldæans, are below. If, however, we accept his grand total as the most available approximation to the truth, and add thereto a $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. annual increase for each of the succeeding years, which have been free both from war and famine, we shall arrive at the following, as the total of population in 1891, viz., 8,055,500.

Russian estimate

On the other hand, M. Zolotaref published a much lower estimate in the Proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society in 1888.[3] He calculated the whole population as follows:—

[1] By others reported as 610,000, 636,000, and 660,000 square miles.

[2] Quoted in *Commercial Reports of the F.O.*, No. 7, 1885. [3] No. ii. p. 120.

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Persians | 3,000,000 | Arabs | 300,000 |
| Turks and Tartars | 1,000,000 | Turkomans, Jamshidis, etc. | 320,000 |
| Lurs | 780,000 | | |
| Kurds | 600,000 | Total | 6,000,000 |

These figures differ so widely from General Schindler's, both in total and in composition, as to give some idea of the precarious character of the data upon which any computation reposes. My own impression, which I hazard diffidently, not having visited some of the most populous quarters of the country, is that General Schindler's estimate errs modestly, and M. Zolotaref's ludicrously, on the side of depreciation. The recognised highways, which are traversed by the ordinary traveller, connect the principal cities, but they do not lead through the most fertile districts; and, owing to the terror inspired by the passage of armies, and even by the pacific progress of the monarch, or of provincial governors going to and from their posts, have repelled rather than attracted population.[1] In civilised countries the reverse is the case, and the main thoroughfares lead through the most populous districts. Herein we have one more witness to the backwardness of Persia. On the other hand, I have seen the reports and itineraries of many private travellers in out-of-the-way parts of the country, where strangers do not journey, where officials are rarely seen, and where the tax-collector seldom penetrates; and from the concurrent testimony which they afford to numbers of smiling villages, succeeding each other at the distance of a few miles over spaces marked by a blank in the maps, I am led to the opinion that estimates formed from journeys through the better-known parts of the country are likely to underrate rather than to exaggerate the totals. I should be disposed, therefore, myself to set down the present population of Persia as at least 9,000,000. When we remember that Persia is three times as large as France, while the above estimate leaves her nearly five times less populous, we can form some idea both of the gap that separates her in external appearance from a European country, as well as of the scope that exists for material and physical regeneration.[2]

From the population of Persia I turn to her indigenous products

[1] For an analogous condition of affairs, as the result of insecurity, compare Judges v. 6, 'In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.'

[2] Touching the ethnology of the Persians, I will refer my readers to Elisée Reclus, *Universal Geography*, vol. ix. pp. 107–8.

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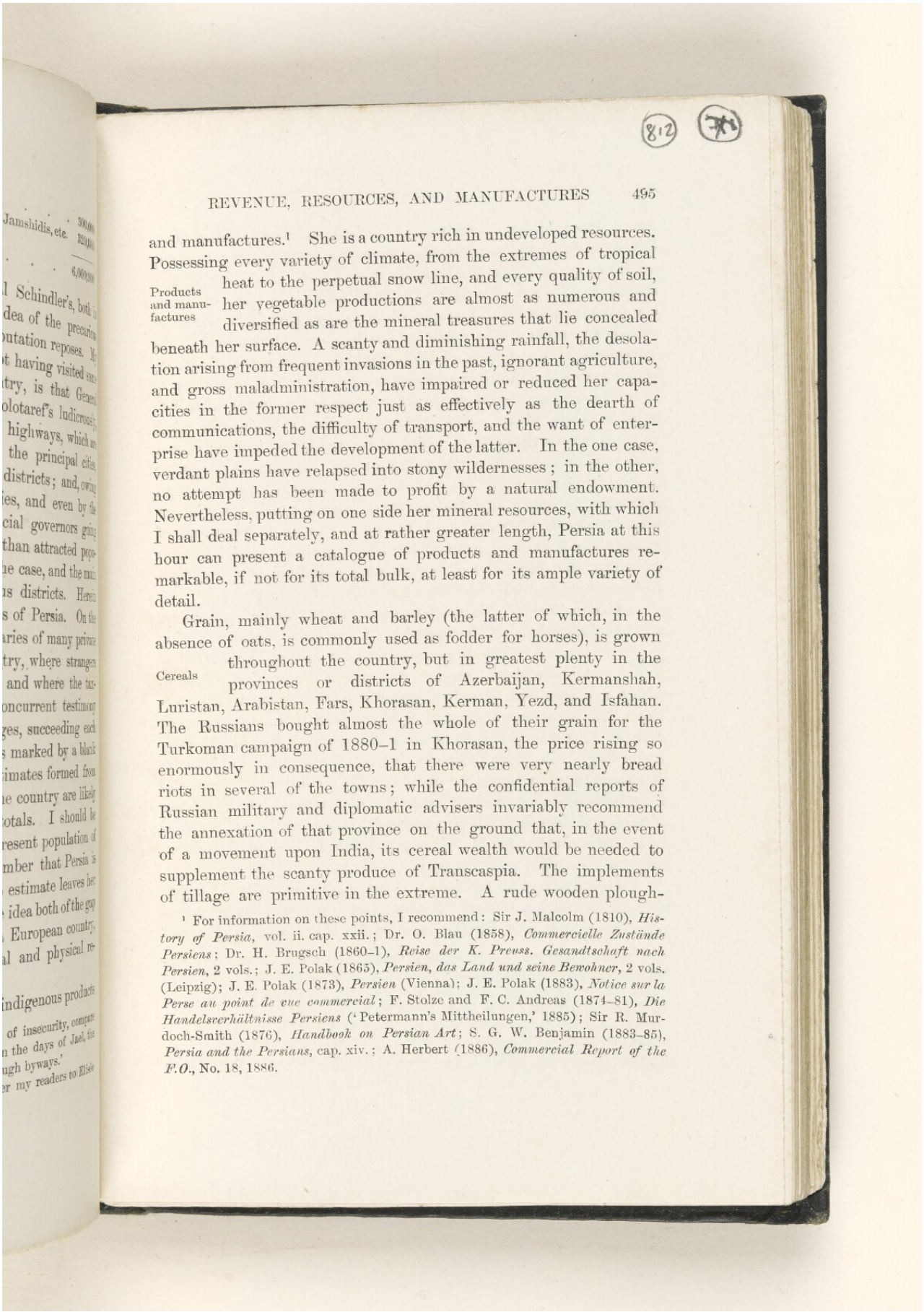



and manufactures.[1] She is a country rich in undeveloped resources. Possessing every variety of climate, from the extremes of tropical heat to the perpetual snow line, and every quality of soil, her vegetable productions are almost as numerous and diversified as are the mineral treasures that lie concealed beneath her surface. A scanty and diminishing rainfall, the desolation arising from frequent invasions in the past, ignorant agriculture, and gross maladministration, have impaired or reduced her capacities in the former respect just as effectively as the dearth of communications, the difficulty of transport, and the want of enterprise have impeded the development of the latter. In the one case, verdant plains have relapsed into stony wildernesses; in the other, no attempt has been made to profit by a natural endowment. Nevertheless, putting on one side her mineral resources, with which I shall deal separately, and at rather greater length, Persia at this hour can present a catalogue of products and manufactures remarkable, if not for its total bulk, at least for its ample variety of detail.

Products and manufactures

Grain, mainly wheat and barley (the latter of which, in the absence of oats, is commonly used as fodder for horses), is grown throughout the country, but in greatest plenty in the provinces or districts of Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, Luristan, Arabistan, Fars, Khorasan, Kerman, Yezd, and Isfahan. The Russians bought almost the whole of their grain for the Turkoman campaign of 1880–1 in Khorasan, the price rising so enormously in consequence, that there were very nearly bread riots in several of the towns; while the confidential reports of Russian military and diplomatic advisers invariably recommend the annexation of that province on the ground that, in the event of a movement upon India, its cereal wealth would be needed to supplement the scanty produce of Transcaspia. The implements of tillage are primitive in the extreme. A rude wooden plough-

Cereals

[1] For information on these points, I recommend: Sir J. Malcolm (1810), *History of Persia*, vol. ii. cap. xxii.; Dr. O. Blau (1858), *Commercielle Zustände Persiens*; Dr. H. Brugsch (1860–1), *Reise der K. Preuss. Gesandtschaft nach Persien*, 2 vols.; J. E. Polak (1865), *Persien, das Land und seine Bewohner*, 2 vols. (Leipzig); J. E. Polak (1873), *Persien* (Vienna); J. E. Polak (1883), *Notice sur la Perse au point de vue commercial*; F. Stolze and F. C. Andreas (1874–81), *Die Handelsverhältnisse Persiens* ('Petermann's Mittheilungen,' 1885); Sir R. Murdoch-Smith (1876), *Handbook on Persian Art*; S. G. W. Benjamin (1883–85), *Persia and the Persians*, cap. xiv.; A. Herbert (1886), *Commercial Report of the F.O.*, No. 18, 1886.

share, drawn by an ox or oxen, sometimes only by a donkey, has but to scratch the surface, on which the seed, lightly thrown, produces an abundant and unsolicited harvest. In spite of the thousands of acres of agricultural land lying idle, particularly in the western and south-western districts, the growth of wheat is already in excess of the needs of the home population, and grain is exported in some quantity to Turkey, the Caucasus, India (from Bunder Abbas) and even to England (from Bushire). Oats, as I have said, and rye are not grown; there is not much maize; but millet is produced in parts. Rice is largely cultivated in the low-lying and saturated strip of the Caspian littoral, whence it is exported to the Caucasus and to northern Russia, *viâ* Astrakhan.[1] A better quality is grown in a few places in the interior, where enough water can be spared for the necessary swamp, particularly in the neighbourhoods of Shiraz and Isfahan. The bulk, however, of Persian rice is locally consumed, the boiled grain constituting, next to wheat, the staple diet of the peasantry, and being a universal feature in every meal, whether of the high or low.

In olden times Persia was famous as a sugar-producing country, and the plantations of Ahwaz and the Karun basin enjoyed a wide renown. The sugar-cane is now sparsely cultivated in Gilan and Mazanderan, and also in the province of Yezd, where a coarse and ill-refined sugar is made for local consumption. The processes employed are very primitive and backward, and the area of cultivation appears to be diminishing rather than increasing. Beetroot, however, is very abundant, especially in Khorasan, and, in any other country than Persia, would long ago have been utilised to reduce the tremendous annual import of the French and Russian article. Formerly sugar used to be imported from India, Java, and Mauritius; but Marseilles and Astrakhan are now the chief ports of supply.

Sugar

Cotton grows with facility in Persia to an elevation of 5,000 feet above the sea. Over 100,000 bales leave the country annually, the greater part for the mills of Bombay,[2] some for those of

[1] The export of rice from Mazanderan and Gilan to Russia was given to me as 3,600,000 *pouds*, or 58,064 tons per annum; value from 1,000,000 to 1,100,000 *tomans*, or £285,700 to £314,000. For rice and sugar in Persia, *vide* a paper by A. H. Schindler in the *United States Consular Reports*, 1888.

[2] The Bombay Trade Returns show that the export to India began in the year 1884; the subsequent figures being 1884, 20,000 bales (3½ cwt. each); 1885, 23,000; 1886, 15,000; 1887, 15,000; 1888, 17,000; 1889, first six months, 17,000.

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Moscow, the remainder being spun in the hand-looms of Yezd and Kerman. Persian cotton is, however, very short in the staple.

Cotton

Mazanderan, Khorasan, Semnan, Kum, Kashan, Isfahan, and the districts of Azerbaijan lying around Khoi and Urumiah, are the chief centres of cultivation; but I constantly came upon patches so planted in my rides through the country. The industry first received a forward impetus at the time of the American Civil War, when Persian cotton began to be seen in foreign markets; but it has never been properly developed, and is capable of much greater expansion. Jute is indigenous in Mazanderan, and is used for making sacks; but the amount raised is insufficient for the needs of the country, and there is a steady annual import by the Persian Gulf.

Of the silk industry, which first brought Persia within the ken of modern Europe, which was formerly so rich, but for long after the appearance of disease in 1864 remained on the downward incline, I have spoken at length in an earlier chapter on the Northern Provinces. Latterly, however, there has been a revival; and the figures for 1889, though furnishing a melancholy contrast to the brave totals before cited for bygone years, were given to me as follows:—

Silk

TOTAL PRODUCTION.

| | Tabriz *mans* |
|---|---|
| Gilan and Resht | 30,000 |
| Mazanderan | 15,000 |
| Khorasan, Sebzewar, and Turbat | 20,000 |
| | 65,000 *mans*, or 422,500 lbs. |

In 1890 I hear that the value of exported silk waste alone exceeded 30,000*l.*

The bulk of the Khorasan crop is sent to Yezd, Kashan, and Isfahan—the Persian centres of the manufacturing trade—in whose looms about 15,000 *mans* are annually employed. Of the Mazanderan and Gilan crops, some 10,000 *mans* are either exported to Baghdad or are consumed at Kashan and Isfahan. The total remainder, i.e. 40,000 *mans*, are exported to Europe, the greater quantity to Marseilles, *viâ* Russia, a small quantity being shipped by Bombay.

The tobacco of Persia is known in every town and village in the western half of the Asiatic continent; and greatly to be com-



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Tobacco

miserated is the European traveller or resident who, when either passing through or sojourning in that land, is guilty of indifference to the exquisite solace of the Persian water-pipe, or *kalian*. Though I am no smoker, and derive little pleasure from the European modes of enjoying the weed, yet I never failed to succumb to the subtle influence of the Shiraz *tumbaku*, a few perfumed inhalations of which are sufficient to fill the remotest cells of the brain with an Olympian contentment. This superb tobacco, whose agreeable qualities are in part due to the quantity of nicotine which it contains, in part to the manner in which it is prepared, being soaked, squeezed dry, and then placed at the top of the pipe under lighted charcoal, whence its fumes are drawn through water to the smoker's lips, is grown chiefly in the districts of Shiraz, Kashan, and Tabbas, slightly inferior qualities being produced at Isfahan, Kum, Nihavend, Veramin, Semnan and Shahrud. On the ground it is purchased according to its quality at from 1–3 *krans* per *batman* (6½ lbs.), a price which, owing to the action of middlemen, is swollen by the time it reaches the city bazaars to 3–12 *krans*. The amount annually consumed in Persia alone has been estimated by M. Kitabji, Director-General of Persian Customs, as 18,000,000 *batmans*, or 52,230 tons.[1] Scarcely less popular is the Persian leaf in the neighbouring countries of the East, and an export, estimated at 1,500,000 *batmans*, or 4,350 tons, is conducted to Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Arabia, India, and Afghanistan. A second and different variety of tobacco, similar to that produced in Turkey, and used for smoking in pipes and cigarettes, is grown in Kurdistan, near Urumiah, and on the Caspian littoral, and, if developed, might prove a formidable rival to the Ottoman product. I have elsewhere mentioned that in the autumn of 1890 a concession was granted by the Shah for a tobacco régie in Persia, i.e. a complete monopoly of the purchase, sale, and manufacture of native-grown tobacco for a period of fifty years, and that a company entitled the Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia, with a capital of 650,000*l*., was formed to work

[1] I cannot help regarding this as a most unscientific calculation; for it is simply based on the hypothesis that, given 10,000,000 as the total population of Persia (in my judgment an exaggerated estimate), one person in every five, without regard to sex or age, smokes 9 *batmans*, or 58½ lbs. per annum. The figures supplied to me represent the total production as only one half. For an account of the methods adopted in growth and preparation, *vide* a paper in the *Kew Bulletin*, April 1891.

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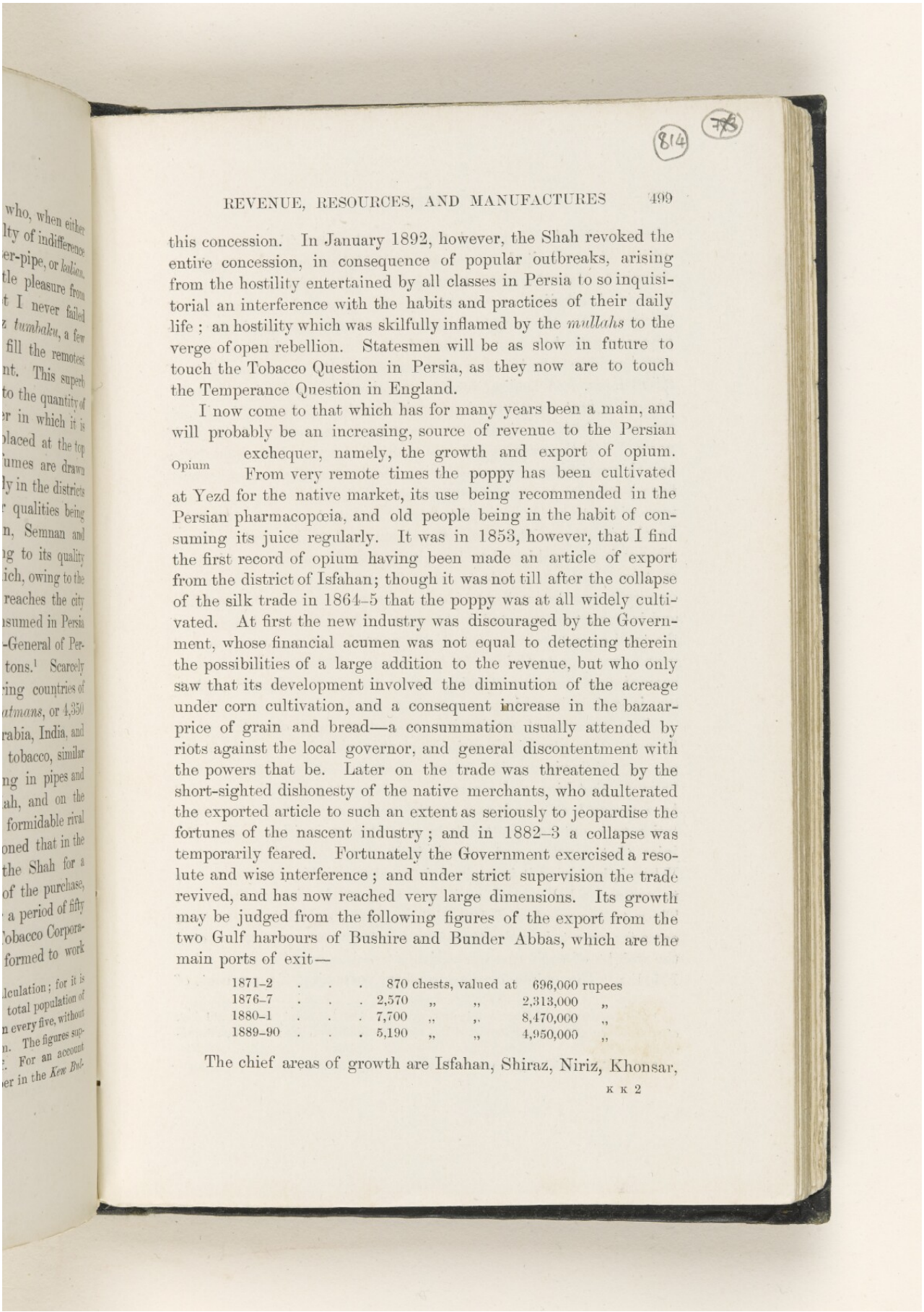



this concession. In January 1892, however, the Shah revoked the entire concession, in consequence of popular outbreaks, arising from the hostility entertained by all classes in Persia to so inquisitorial an interference with the habits and practices of their daily life; an hostility which was skilfully inflamed by the *mullahs* to the verge of open rebellion. Statesmen will be as slow in future to touch the Tobacco Question in Persia, as they now are to touch the Temperance Question in England.

Opium

I now come to that which has for many years been a main, and will probably be an increasing, source of revenue to the Persian exchequer, namely, the growth and export of opium. From very remote times the poppy has been cultivated at Yezd for the native market, its use being recommended in the Persian pharmacopœia, and old people being in the habit of consuming its juice regularly. It was in 1853, however, that I find the first record of opium having been made an article of export from the district of Isfahan; though it was not till after the collapse of the silk trade in 1864–5 that the poppy was at all widely cultivated. At first the new industry was discouraged by the Government, whose financial acumen was not equal to detecting therein the possibilities of a large addition to the revenue, but who only saw that its development involved the diminution of the acreage under corn cultivation, and a consequent increase in the bazaar-price of grain and bread—a consummation usually attended by riots against the local governor, and general discontentment with the powers that be. Later on the trade was threatened by the short-sighted dishonesty of the native merchants, who adulterated the exported article to such an extent as seriously to jeopardise the fortunes of the nascent industry; and in 1882–3 a collapse was temporarily feared. Fortunately the Government exercised a resolute and wise interference; and under strict supervision the trade revived, and has now reached very large dimensions. Its growth may be judged from the following figures of the export from the two Gulf harbours of Bushire and Bunder Abbas, which are the main ports of exit—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1871–2 | 870 chests, | valued at | 696,000 rupees |
| 1876–7 | 2,570 „ | „ | 2,313,000 „ |
| 1880–1 | 7,700 „ | „ | 8,470,000 „ |
| 1889–90 | 5,190 „ | „ | 4,950,000 „ |

The chief areas of growth are Isfahan, Shiraz, Niriz, Khonsar,



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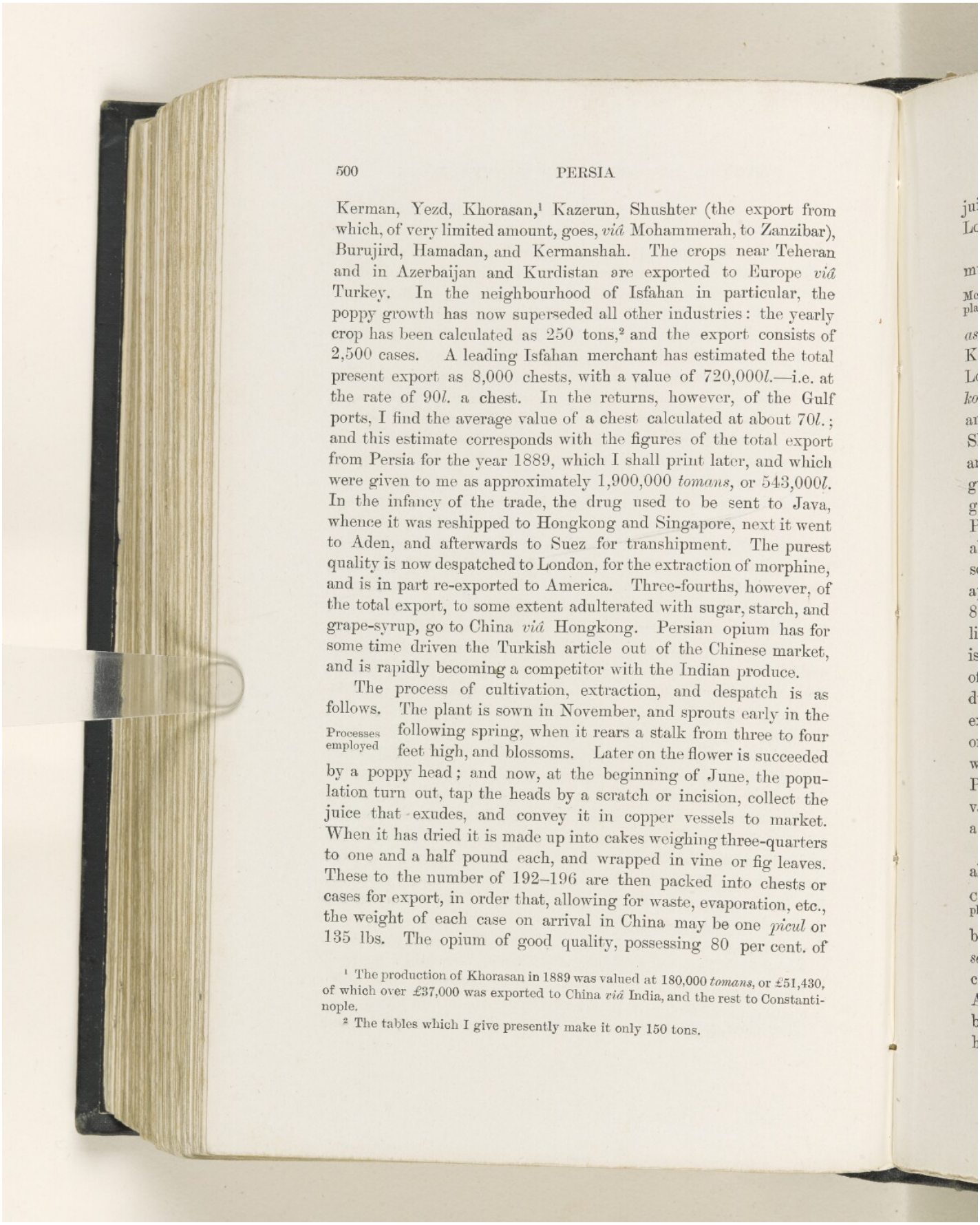



Kerman, Yezd, Khorasan,[1] Kazerun, Shushter (the export from which, of very limited amount, goes, *viâ* Mohammerah, to Zanzibar), Burujird, Hamadan, and Kermanshah. The crops near Teheran and in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan are exported to Europe *viâ* Turkey. In the neighbourhood of Isfahan in particular, the poppy growth has now superseded all other industries: the yearly crop has been calculated as 250 tons,[2] and the export consists of 2,500 cases. A leading Isfahan merchant has estimated the total present export as 8,000 chests, with a value of 720,000*l.*—i.e. at the rate of 90*l.* a chest. In the returns, however, of the Gulf ports, I find the average value of a chest calculated at about 70*l.*; and this estimate corresponds with the figures of the total export from Persia for the year 1889, which I shall print later, and which were given to me as approximately 1,900,000 *tomans*, or 543,000*l.* In the infancy of the trade, the drug used to be sent to Java, whence it was reshipped to Hongkong and Singapore, next it went to Aden, and afterwards to Suez for transhipment. The purest quality is now despatched to London, for the extraction of morphine, and is in part re-exported to America. Three-fourths, however, of the total export, to some extent adulterated with sugar, starch, and grape-syrup, go to China *viâ* Hongkong. Persian opium has for some time driven the Turkish article out of the Chinese market, and is rapidly becoming a competitor with the Indian produce.

Processes employed

The process of cultivation, extraction, and despatch is as follows. The plant is sown in November, and sprouts early in the following spring, when it rears a stalk from three to four feet high, and blossoms. Later on the flower is succeeded by a poppy head; and now, at the beginning of June, the population turn out, tap the heads by a scratch or incision, collect the juice that exudes, and convey it in copper vessels to market. When it has dried it is made up into cakes weighing three-quarters to one and a half pound each, and wrapped in vine or fig leaves. These to the number of 192–196 are then packed into chests or cases for export, in order that, allowing for waste, evaporation, etc., the weight of each case on arrival in China may be one *picul* or 135 lbs. The opium of good quality, possessing 80 per cent. of

[1] The production of Khorasan in 1889 was valued at 180,000 *tomans*, or £51,430, of which over £37,000 was exported to China *viâ* India, and the rest to Constantinople.

[2] The tables which I give presently make it only 150 tons.

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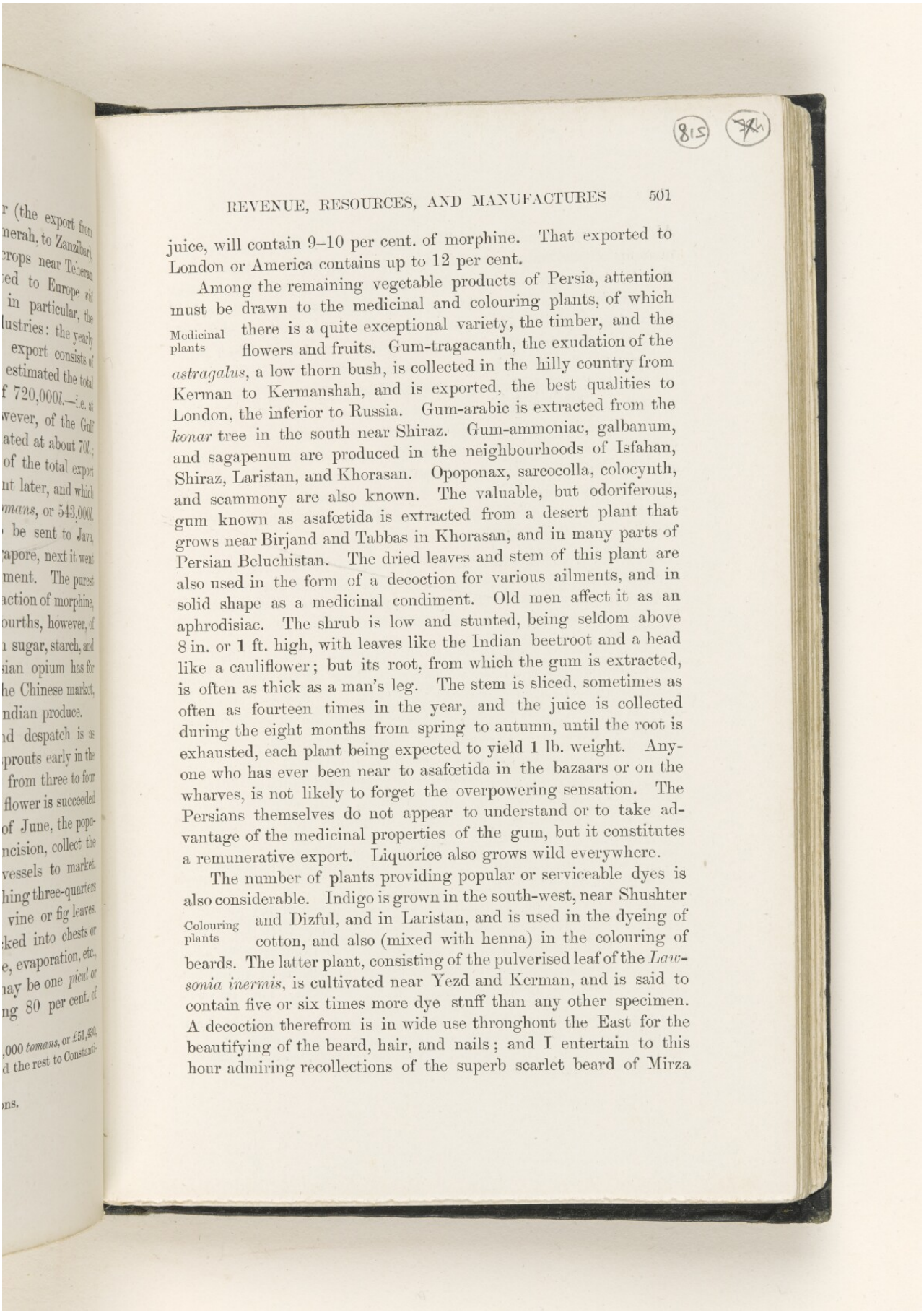



juice, will contain 9–10 per cent. of morphine. That exported to London or America contains up to 12 per cent.

Among the remaining vegetable products of Persia, attention must be drawn to the medicinal and colouring plants, of which there is a quite exceptional variety, the timber, and the flowers and fruits. Gum-tragacanth, the exudation of the *astragalus*, a low thorn bush, is collected in the hilly country from Kerman to Kermanshah, and is exported, the best qualities to London, the inferior to Russia. Gum-arabic is extracted from the *konar* tree in the south near Shiraz. Gum-ammoniac, galbanum, and sagapenum are produced in the neighbourhoods of Isfahan, Shiraz, Laristan, and Khorasan. Opoponax, sarcocolla, colocynth, and scammony are also known. The valuable, but odoriferous, gum known as asafœtida is extracted from a desert plant that grows near Birjand and Tabbas in Khorasan, and in many parts of Persian Beluchistan. The dried leaves and stem of this plant are also used in the form of a decoction for various ailments, and in solid shape as a medicinal condiment. Old men affect it as an aphrodisiac. The shrub is low and stunted, being seldom above 8 in. or 1 ft. high, with leaves like the Indian beetroot and a head like a cauliflower; but its root, from which the gum is extracted, is often as thick as a man's leg. The stem is sliced, sometimes as often as fourteen times in the year, and the juice is collected during the eight months from spring to autumn, until the root is exhausted, each plant being expected to yield 1 lb. weight. Anyone who has ever been near to asafœtida in the bazaars or on the wharves, is not likely to forget the overpowering sensation. The Persians themselves do not appear to understand or to take advantage of the medicinal properties of the gum, but it constitutes a remunerative export. Liquorice also grows wild everywhere.

Medicinal plants

The number of plants providing popular or serviceable dyes is also considerable. Indigo is grown in the south-west, near Shushter and Dizful, and in Laristan, and is used in the dyeing of cotton, and also (mixed with henna) in the colouring of beards. The latter plant, consisting of the pulverised leaf of the *Lawsonia inermis*, is cultivated near Yezd and Kerman, and is said to contain five or six times more dye stuff than any other specimen. A decoction therefrom is in wide use throughout the East for the beautifying of the beard, hair, and nails; and I entertain to this hour admiring recollections of the superb scarlet beard of Mirza

Colouring plants

Abbas Khan, formerly British Agent at Meshed. Nor has the memory of the Shah's red-tailed chargers, paraded during his first visit to England in 1873, yet faded from the public mind. Madder-roots, saffron from Yezd and Bujnurd, and gall nuts from the oak of Kurdistan, must be included among the valuable products, although the lamentable introduction of aniline dyes has diminished alike the growth of and the demand for native colouring materials.

In cataloguing the vegetable products of Iran, I must not omit the curious substance known as *gez*, and popularly identified with the manna of Holy Writ, which, although alleged to be the deposit of an insect, is yet found upon the branches and leaves of trees, particularly of the *gez* or tamarisk, flourishing chiefly in the neighbourhood of Isfahan. Chardin was evidently somewhat dubious as to the origin and character of this production, of which he spoke as follows:—

Gez, or Manna

> The leaves of this tree about Isfahan do in summer drop this liquid Manna, which they pretend is not Dew but the Sweat of the Tree congealed upon the Leaf. In the morning you may see the ground that lies under it perfectly flat and greasy with it.

As a matter of fact, *gez* is a white, glutinous substance, not unlike honey, and is said to be deposited in flakes on the leaves of the tamarisk bush by a small, pale-green insect.[1] It is gathered in the early morning by the natives, who go out with broad earthenware vessels or baskets, and shake the boughs over them. Carefully scraped off the leaves, it takes the form of a white paste. It is more commonly, however, made into a sweetmeat called *gezangebin*, with the addition of almonds and pistachios, being sometimes boiled along with the leaves, and allowed to harden into a species of greenish cake. I frequently tasted it, and, although clogging to the palate, found it decidedly agreeable, resembling a superior and less sticky form of *nougat*.

In the interior of the country the descriptions of my journeys will have acquainted my readers with the fact that, with the exception of an occasional straggling row of Lombardy poplars, and, in ancient towns or places of resort, of venerable *chenars* or planes, but little timber is to be seen. The patches

Timber

[1] This is denied by some authorities, who maintain that the substance is not an animal but a vegetable secretion, and that it exudes from the plant. *A priori* this is more probable. It is found not only on the tamarisk, but also in different places on the *bid* (willow), *khar* (thorn), and *belut* (oak).

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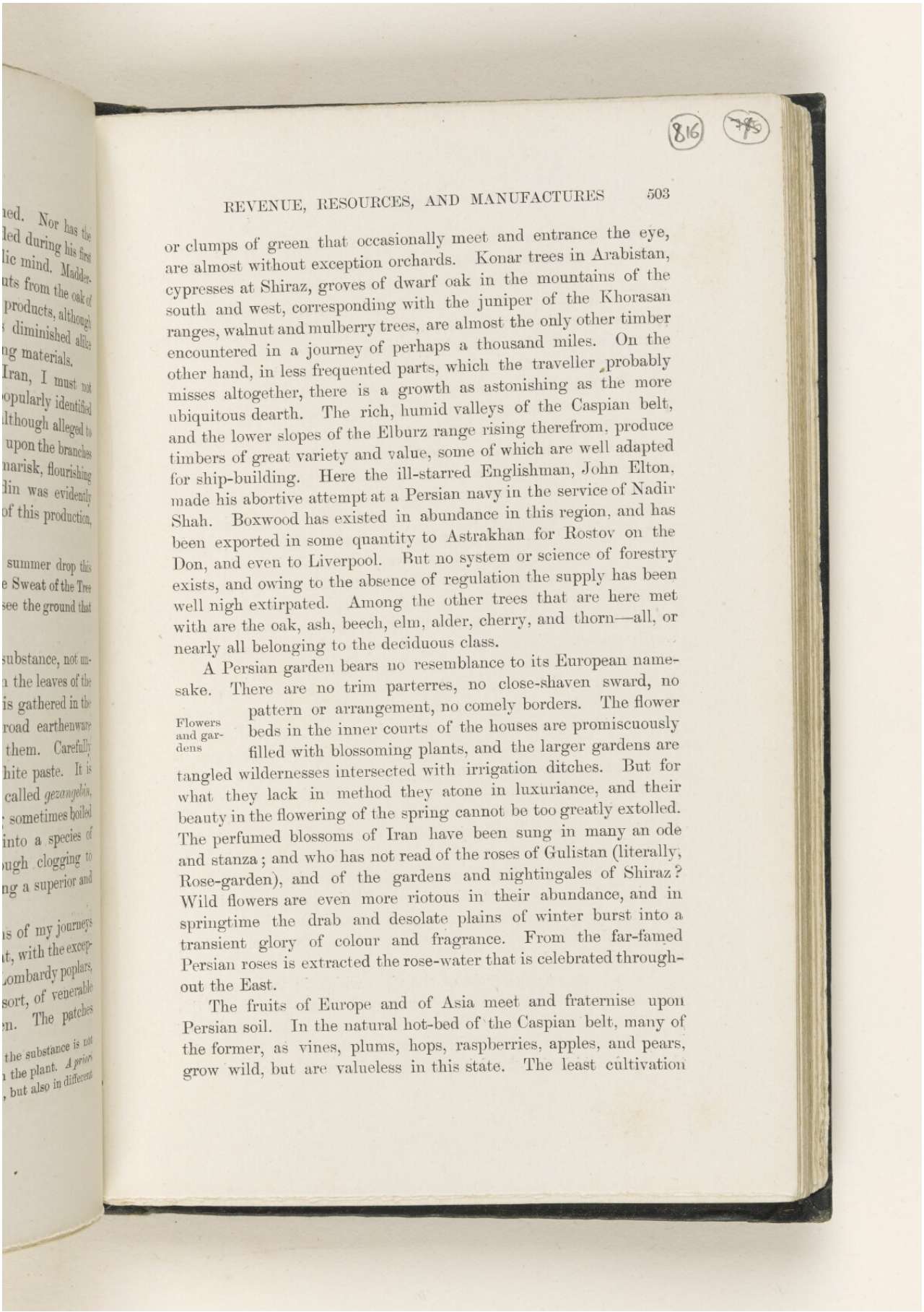



or clumps of green that occasionally meet and entrance the eye, are almost without exception orchards. Konar trees in Arabistan, cypresses at Shiraz, groves of dwarf oak in the mountains of the south and west, corresponding with the juniper of the Khorasan ranges, walnut and mulberry trees, are almost the only other timber encountered in a journey of perhaps a thousand miles. On the other hand, in less frequented parts, which the traveller probably misses altogether, there is a growth as astonishing as the more ubiquitous dearth. The rich, humid valleys of the Caspian belt, and the lower slopes of the Elburz range rising therefrom, produce timbers of great variety and value, some of which are well adapted for ship-building. Here the ill-starred Englishman, John Elton, made his abortive attempt at a Persian navy in the service of Nadir Shah. Boxwood has existed in abundance in this region, and has been exported in some quantity to Astrakhan for Rostov on the Don, and even to Liverpool. But no system or science of forestry exists, and owing to the absence of regulation the supply has been well nigh extirpated. Among the other trees that are here met with are the oak, ash, beech, elm, alder, cherry, and thorn—all, or nearly all belonging to the deciduous class.

Flowers and gardens

A Persian garden bears no resemblance to its European namesake. There are no trim parterres, no close-shaven sward, no pattern or arrangement, no comely borders. The flower beds in the inner courts of the houses are promiscuously filled with blossoming plants, and the larger gardens are tangled wildernesses intersected with irrigation ditches. But for what they lack in method they atone in luxuriance, and their beauty in the flowering of the spring cannot be too greatly extolled. The perfumed blossoms of Iran have been sung in many an ode and stanza; and who has not read of the roses of Gulistan (literally, Rose-garden), and of the gardens and nightingales of Shiraz? Wild flowers are even more riotous in their abundance, and in springtime the drab and desolate plains of winter burst into a transient glory of colour and fragrance. From the far-famed Persian roses is extracted the rose-water that is celebrated throughout the East.

The fruits of Europe and of Asia meet and fraternise upon Persian soil. In the natural hot-bed of the Caspian belt, many of the former, as vines, plums, hops, raspberries, apples, and pears, grow wild, but are valueless in this state. The least cultivation

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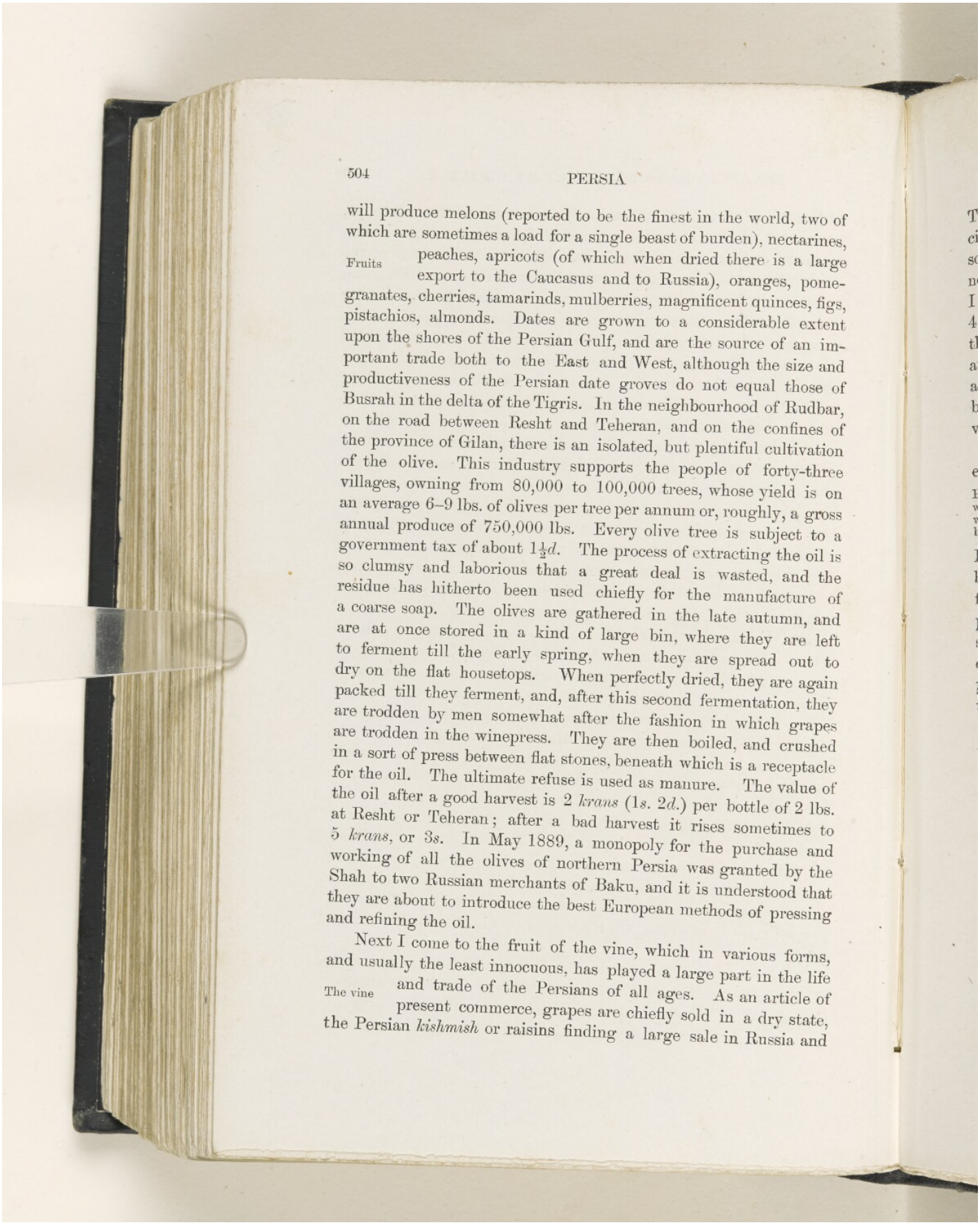



will produce melons (reported to be the finest in the world, two of which are sometimes a load for a single beast of burden), nectarines,

Fruits

peaches, apricots (of which when dried there is a large export to the Caucasus and to Russia), oranges, pomegranates, cherries, tamarinds, mulberries, magnificent quinces, figs, pistachios, almonds. Dates are grown to a considerable extent upon the shores of the Persian Gulf, and are the source of an important trade both to the East and West, although the size and productiveness of the Persian date groves do not equal those of Busrah in the delta of the Tigris. In the neighbourhood of Rudbar, on the road between Resht and Teheran, and on the confines of the province of Gilan, there is an isolated, but plentiful cultivation of the olive. This industry supports the people of forty-three villages, owning from 80,000 to 100,000 trees, whose yield is on an average 6–9 lbs. of olives per tree per annum or, roughly, a gross annual produce of 750,000 lbs. Every olive tree is subject to a government tax of about 1½*d*. The process of extracting the oil is so clumsy and laborious that a great deal is wasted, and the residue has hitherto been used chiefly for the manufacture of a coarse soap. The olives are gathered in the late autumn, and are at once stored in a kind of large bin, where they are left to ferment till the early spring, when they are spread out to dry on the flat housetops. When perfectly dried, they are again packed till they ferment, and, after this second fermentation, they are trodden by men somewhat after the fashion in which grapes are trodden in the winepress. They are then boiled, and crushed in a sort of press between flat stones, beneath which is a receptacle for the oil. The ultimate refuse is used as manure. The value of the oil after a good harvest is 2 *krans* (1*s*. 2*d*.) per bottle of 2 lbs. at Resht or Teheran; after a bad harvest it rises sometimes to 5 *krans*, or 3*s*. In May 1889, a monopoly for the purchase and working of all the olives of northern Persia was granted by the Shah to two Russian merchants of Baku, and it is understood that they are about to introduce the best European methods of pressing and refining the oil.

Next I come to the fruit of the vine, which in various forms, and usually the least innocuous, has played a large part in the life

The vine

and trade of the Persians of all ages. As an article of present commerce, grapes are chiefly sold in a dry state, the Persian *kishmish* or raisins finding a large sale in Russia and

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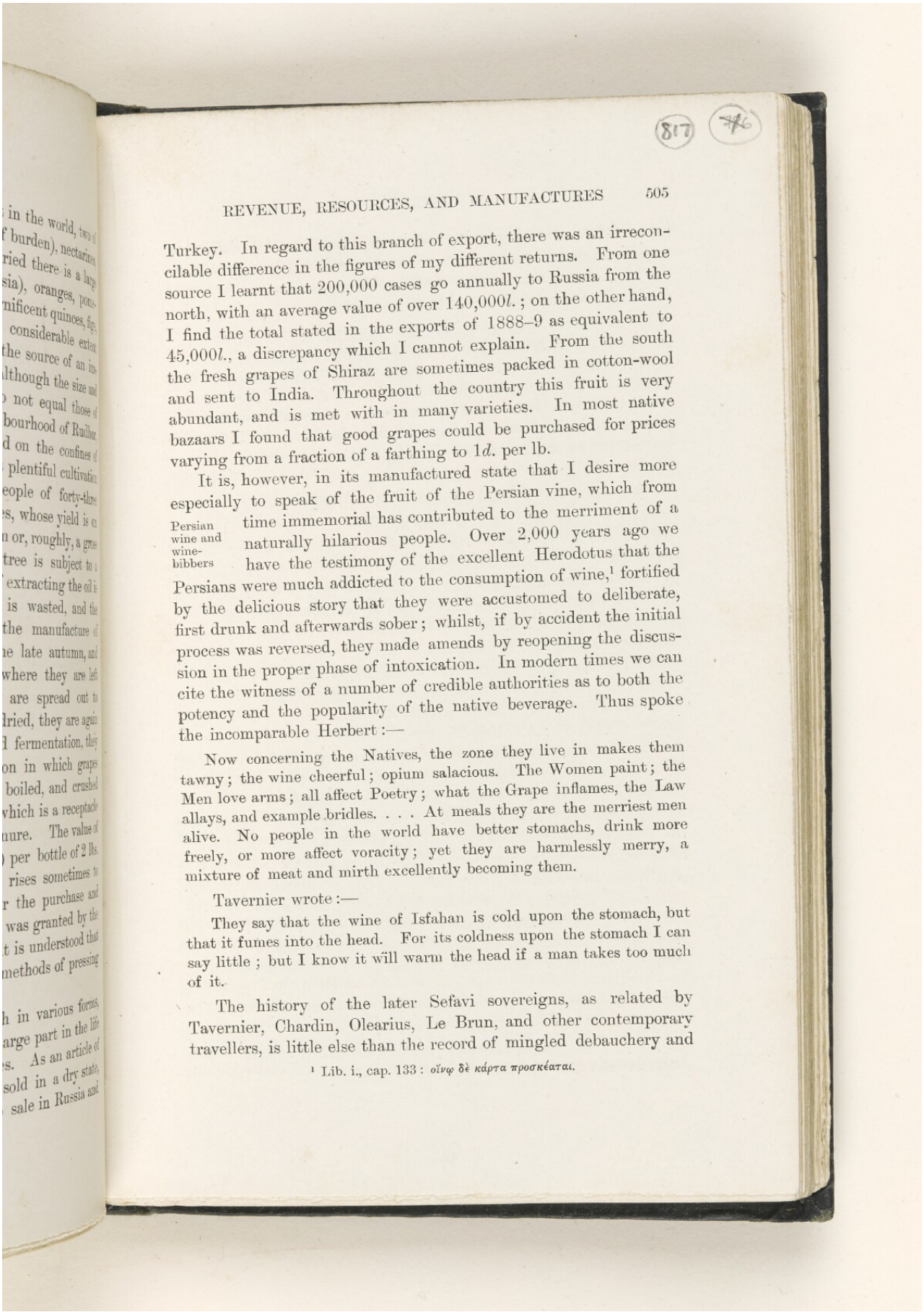



Turkey. In regard to this branch of export, there was an irreconcilable difference in the figures of my different returns. From one source I learnt that 200,000 cases go annually to Russia from the north, with an average value of over 140,000*l.*; on the other hand, I find the total stated in the exports of 1888–9 as equivalent to 45,000*l.*, a discrepancy which I cannot explain. From the south the fresh grapes of Shiraz are sometimes packed in cotton-wool and sent to India. Throughout the country this fruit is very abundant, and is met with in many varieties. In most native bazaars I found that good grapes could be purchased for prices varying from a fraction of a farthing to 1*d.* per lb.

Persian wine and wine-bibbers

It is, however, in its manufactured state that I desire more especially to speak of the fruit of the Persian vine, which from time immemorial has contributed to the merriment of a naturally hilarious people. Over 2,000 years ago we have the testimony of the excellent Herodotus that the Persians were much addicted to the consumption of wine,[1] fortified by the delicious story that they were accustomed to deliberate, first drunk and afterwards sober; whilst, if by accident the initial process was reversed, they made amends by reopening the discussion in the proper phase of intoxication. In modern times we can cite the witness of a number of credible authorities as to both the potency and the popularity of the native beverage. Thus spoke the incomparable Herbert:—

> Now concerning the Natives, the zone they live in makes them tawny; the wine cheerful; opium salacious. The Women paint; the Men love arms; all affect Poetry; what the Grape inflames, the Law allays, and example bridles. . . . At meals they are the merriest men alive. No people in the world have better stomachs, drink more freely, or more affect voracity; yet they are harmlessly merry, a mixture of meat and mirth excellently becoming them.

Tavernier wrote:—

> They say that the wine of Isfahan is cold upon the stomach, but that it fumes into the head. For its coldness upon the stomach I can say little; but I know it will warm the head if a man takes too much of it.

The history of the later Sefavi sovereigns, as related by Tavernier, Chardin, Olearius, Le Brun, and other contemporary travellers, is little else than the record of mingled debauchery and

[1] Lib. i., cap. 133: *οἴνῳ δὲ κάρτα προσκέαται.*

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intoxication, the king being habitually drunk, and insisting on making his guests and courtiers share his orgies. Chardin, who reported that Persian wine was made in his day in Georgia, Armenia, Media, Hyrcania, Shiraz, and Yezd, remarked :—

> Wine and intoxicating Liquors are forbidden the Mohammedans; yet there is scarce any one that does not drink of some sort of strong liquor. The Courtiers, Gentlemen, and Rakes drink wine; and as they all use it as a remedy against sorrow, and that one Part drink it to put them to sleep, and the other to warm and make them merry; they generally drink the strongest and most heady, and if it does not make them presently drunk, they say : What wine is this? It does not cause mirth.

The last-named idiosyncrasy remains a characteristic of the Persian to this day. He is not a tippler, but a toper; not a drinker, but a drunkard. He sees no virtue in the mean, and no degradation in excess. That if a man drinks at all, he may as well get drunk, is his argument, the sole pleasure in drinking consisting in intoxication. There is an old Persian saying that There is as much sin in a glass as in a flagon; and certainly such Persians as I met, who were content to be regarded as transgressors in this respect, profited by the agreeable latitude of this convivial canon.

Present manufacture

Persia possesses at present several vintages of good, and one or two of very superior, repute. The three principal zones of the vine are : Azerbaijan in the north-west, Shiraz in the south, and Khorasan in the north-east; and the chief centres of manufacture are : Shiraz, Isfahan, Kazvin, Hamadan, Kerman, and Yezd.[1] I also tasted local vintages at Kuchan, Meshed, Shahrud, and Teheran. The wine of Shiraz has by far the greatest foreign as well as native celebrity, being of the quality of an old sherry, and, particularly after being kept for a few years, constitutes an excellent beverage.[2] Its price is ridiculously cheap. In ordinary seasons it costs about 4*d*. a bottle, and is sold in the country at 8*d*. to 10*d*. a bottle within the year. The wine of Hamadan resembles a hock, and costs only 2*d*. a bottle to produce, although, owing to the expense of transport and middlemen, it is

[1] Gmélin, in 1771 (*Histoire des Découvertes*, vol. ii., pp. 44–8), spoke of wine as being manufactured in Gilan and Mazanderan from the wild grape.

[2] For the method of manufacture, *vide* Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and the Sun*, cap. xxi. Tavernier, in 1666, gave the annual manufacture of Shiraz wine as 200,025 *mans*, or 4,125 tuns of 300 pints each.

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sold for ten times that amount in Teheran. Isfahan manufactures two moderate varieties, a white wine with a Muscat flavour, and a strong red wine of the nature of port. The Yezd wine is said to be of very delicate flavour, the Kerman wine to be strong and rough. Teheran produces a nasty wine, somewhat resembling Burgundy; but the entire vintage is fortunately absorbed in local consumption. The Persians themselves are prohibited by the law from making either wine or spirits, although the right of private manufacture appears to be conceded to a few great families. The industry is almost entirely in the hands of Europeans, Armenians, Parsis, and Jews; but the appliances employed are of the rudest description, and adulteration is resorted to on a very large scale. The export of Persian wine is at present very trifling; but, looking to the facilities and cheapness of manufacture, as well as to the neighbourhood of suitable markets, the industry appears to be one that is both capable of extension and deserving of encouragement, even if we do not contemplate ever sitting down over a London table-cloth to the discussion of 'the yellow weeping of the Shiraz vine.' The Shah seems to be of the same opinion, though perhaps for more selfish reasons, having granted a concession to some Europeans for the sole manufacture of wines and alcohols throughout the Persian dominions in 1889, from which he was to receive an annual revenue of 7,000*l.*, and which has since been brought out by a company at Brussels entitled Société Générale du Commerce et Industrie de la Perse.

Spirituous liquors

Although the Persians are sternly interdicted by the Koran from the consumption of alcoholic liquors, yet in pursuit of their maxim that if drink is indulged in at all, it had better be hard drink, they consume large quantities of abominable spirits, which, indeed, they prefer in the 'neat' state to the choicest of wines. It is a mistake ever to hand to a Persian a brandy flask, at least if you expect to see any portion of its contents again. *Raki*, or arrack, a spirituous product of the grape with aromatic flavouring, is very popular; but the estimate of the annual consumption of wines and arrack in Persia as 8,000,000 gallons, and of the duties on wine and spirits brought into Teheran as 25,000*l.* per annum, which was given in the prospectus of the Concession, was purely chimerical. Another favourite intoxicant is *bang*, a preparation from hempseed, which is used both for smoking and drinking. Although I do not desire to advocate the

extended production of these odious concoctions, yet I imagine that the manufacture of such spirituous liquors as are consumed in neighbouring countries, particularly Russia, and in the last resort of spirits of wine, might also become a profitable item of commerce.

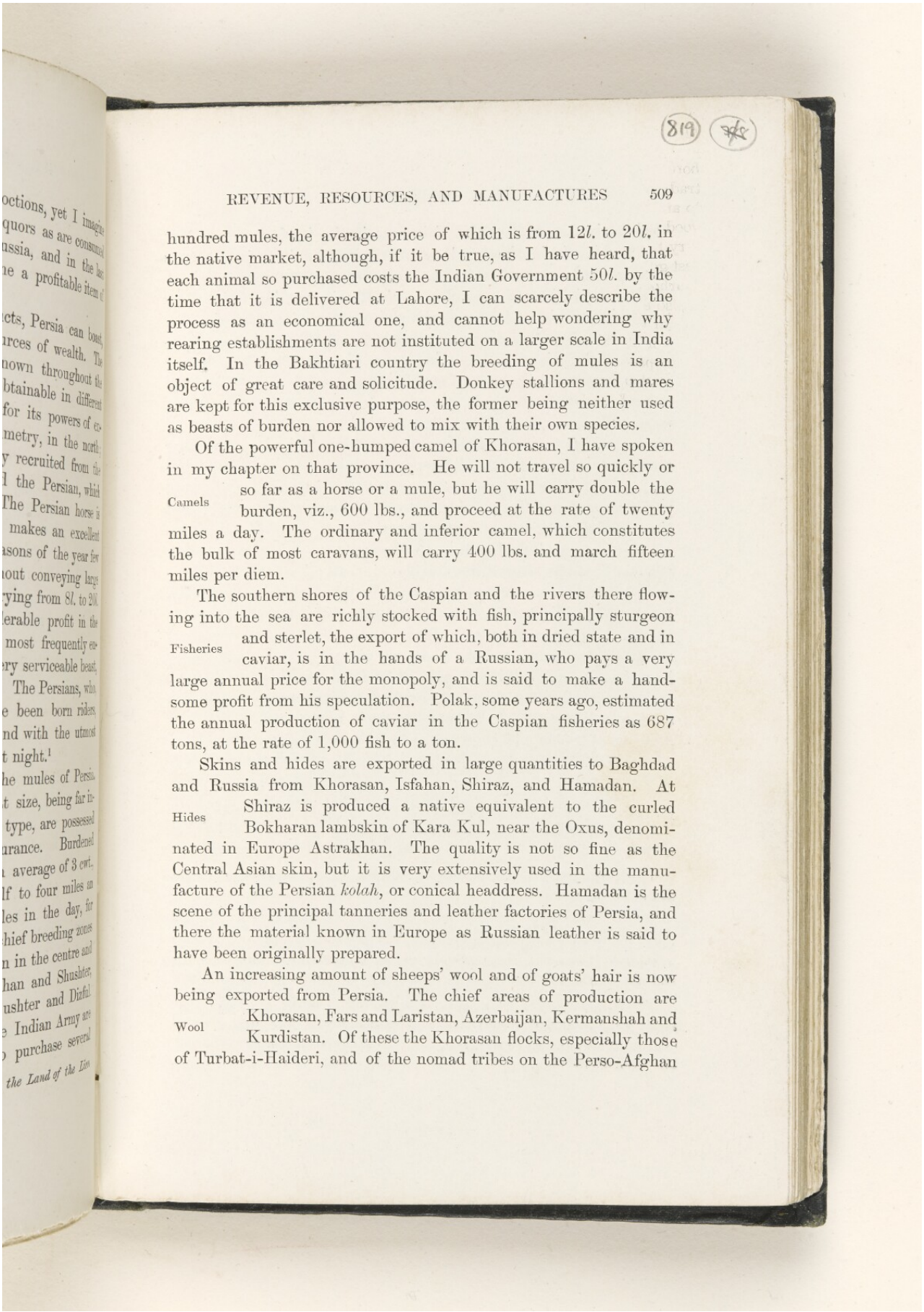
In the animal world and in animal products, Persia can boast, if not of many, at least of exceptional, sources of wealth. The native breed of horses is widely known throughout the East. Three types are, indeed, obtainable in different parts of the country: the Turkoman, famed for its powers of endurance, although not perhaps for its symmetry, in the north; the Arab, originally imported and constantly recruited from the opposite coast of the Gulf, in the south; and the Persian, which is originally a cross between other strains. The Persian horse is thicker and sturdier than the Turkoman, and makes an excellent cavalry horse or rough hack. At certain seasons of the year few steamers sail from Busrah to Bombay without conveying large equine cargoes, which, having cost sums varying from 8*l.* to 20*l.* apiece in the country, realise a very considerable profit in the Indian market. In Persia itself the animal most frequently encountered is that denominated the *yabu*, a very serviceable beast, which can be procured for insignificant prices. The Persians, who, from the days of Herodotus downwards, have been born riders, take great pride in their horses, which they tend with the utmost care, and diligently swathe in felt wrappings at night.[1]

Animals: Horses

Better known even than the horses, are the mules of Persia. These excellent animals, although of no great size, being far inferior in this respect to the Spanish type, are possessed of extraordinary strength and endurance. Burdened with a load of from 250 to 350 lbs., or with an average of 3 cwt., they will march at the rate of three and a half to four miles an hour for distances of twenty-five to thirty miles in the day, for days, and almost for weeks at a time. The chief breeding zones are the districts of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Kazerun in the centre and south, the Bakhtiari country lying between Isfahan and Shushter, and the mountainous tract to the north of Shushter and Dizful. Scarcely a year passes in which officers of the Indian Army are not despatched to Persia with a commission to purchase several

Mules

[1] On the subject of Persian horses, *vide* C. J. Wills, *In the Land of the Lion and the Sun*, pp. 104–6; *Persia as it is*, cap. xxix.





hundred mules, the average price of which is from 12*l.* to 20*l.* in the native market, although, if it be true, as I have heard, that each animal so purchased costs the Indian Government 50*l.* by the time that it is delivered at Lahore, I can scarcely describe the process as an economical one, and cannot help wondering why rearing establishments are not instituted on a larger scale in India itself. In the Bakhtiari country the breeding of mules is an object of great care and solicitude. Donkey stallions and mares are kept for this exclusive purpose, the former being neither used as beasts of burden nor allowed to mix with their own species.

Of the powerful one-humped camel of Khorasan, I have spoken in my chapter on that province. He will not travel so quickly or so far as a horse or a mule, but he will carry double the burden, viz., 600 lbs., and proceed at the rate of twenty miles a day. The ordinary and inferior camel, which constitutes the bulk of most caravans, will carry 400 lbs. and march fifteen miles per diem.

Camels

The southern shores of the Caspian and the rivers there flowing into the sea are richly stocked with fish, principally sturgeon and sterlet, the export of which, both in dried state and in caviar, is in the hands of a Russian, who pays a very large annual price for the monopoly, and is said to make a handsome profit from his speculation. Polak, some years ago, estimated the annual production of caviar in the Caspian fisheries as 687 tons, at the rate of 1,000 fish to a ton.

Fisheries

Skins and hides are exported in large quantities to Baghdad and Russia from Khorasan, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Hamadan. At Shiraz is produced a native equivalent to the curled Bokharan lambskin of Kara Kul, near the Oxus, denominated in Europe Astrakhan. The quality is not so fine as the Central Asian skin, but it is very extensively used in the manufacture of the Persian *kolah*, or conical headdress. Hamadan is the scene of the principal tanneries and leather factories of Persia, and there the material known in Europe as Russian leather is said to have been originally prepared.

Hides

An increasing amount of sheeps' wool and of goats' hair is now being exported from Persia. The chief areas of production are Khorasan, Fars and Laristan, Azerbaijan, Kermanshah and Kurdistan. Of these the Khorasan flocks, especially those of Turbat-i-Haideri, and of the nomad tribes on the Perso-Afghan

Wool

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border, give the best wool. Sebzewar is the local centre of this trade, which is in the hands of Armenians, and which amounts to an annual export of 10,000 to 12,000 bales of 190 lbs. each.[1] A good deal of this wool now comes, *viâ* Russia, to England. It is very thick and long, but as exported is coarse and uncleaned. The best goats' hair is that produced by a species of Angora, in the neighbourhood of Birjand. It is used for the manufacture of shawls, and is also exported, *viâ* the Gulf and Bombay, to England. The total annual wool-crop of Persia was given to me as 1,750,000 Tabriz *mans* or *batmans*, i.e. 5,078 tons.

Mineral resources

In passing to the mineral resources of Persia, I am approaching a subject upon which has hitherto been expended a good deal both of loose statement and of vague conjecture, but an authoritative opinion as to which is only now for the first time coming within the range of possibility.[2] In the early years of the century Malcolm flew to one extreme when he wrote: 'Persia does not abound in valuable minerals; iron and lead however, are found in many parts'; a verdict the depreciatory character of which is falsified even by the pages of Chardin 150 years before. Half a century later, Polak, at the other extreme, writes: 'Scarcely any country of the earth can vie with Persia as to riches in metals, especially copper. Its unbounded wealth in coal, iron, and copper deposits only awaits exploration in order to set on foot a mighty industry.' It is between these two extremes that the historian of to-day will be disposed to seek, and will find, the truth.

History

Traces of mining operations have been discovered in many parts of Persia, that can only be referred to a period anterior to the Arab conquest, even if we hesitate to what preceding epoch to assign them. In post-mediæval times, it was to Shah Abbas the Great that Persia owed the first serious attempt to

[1] *Vide* Miscellaneous Series of F. O. Reports, No. 114, 1888; and Annual Series, No. 96, 1892.

[2] The bibliography of Persian mineralogy is as small as the subject itself is large. I can only mention: G. Melgunoff, *Das südliche Ufer des Kaspischen Meeres*, 1868; J. E. Polak (1865), *Persien, das Land und seine Bewohner*, vol. ii. pp. 174–8; A. Herbert, *Commercial Reports of the F. O.*, No. 18, 1886; Dr. E. Tietze, 'On the Soil and Geological Constitution of Persia,' *Mittheil. der k. und k. Geograph. Gesellschaft in Wien*, 1886, pp. 515–23, 561–75; Dr. E. Tietze, 'Mineralreichthümer Persiens,' *Year Book of Imp. Geological Institute*, Vienna, 1889; A. H. Schindler, 'Neue Angaben über d. Mineralreichthümer Persiens,' *Year Book*, Vienna, 1881; 'Aus d. Nordwestlichen Persien,' *ibid*, 1882; 'Die Gegend zwischen Sabzvar und Mesched,' *ibid*, 1886.

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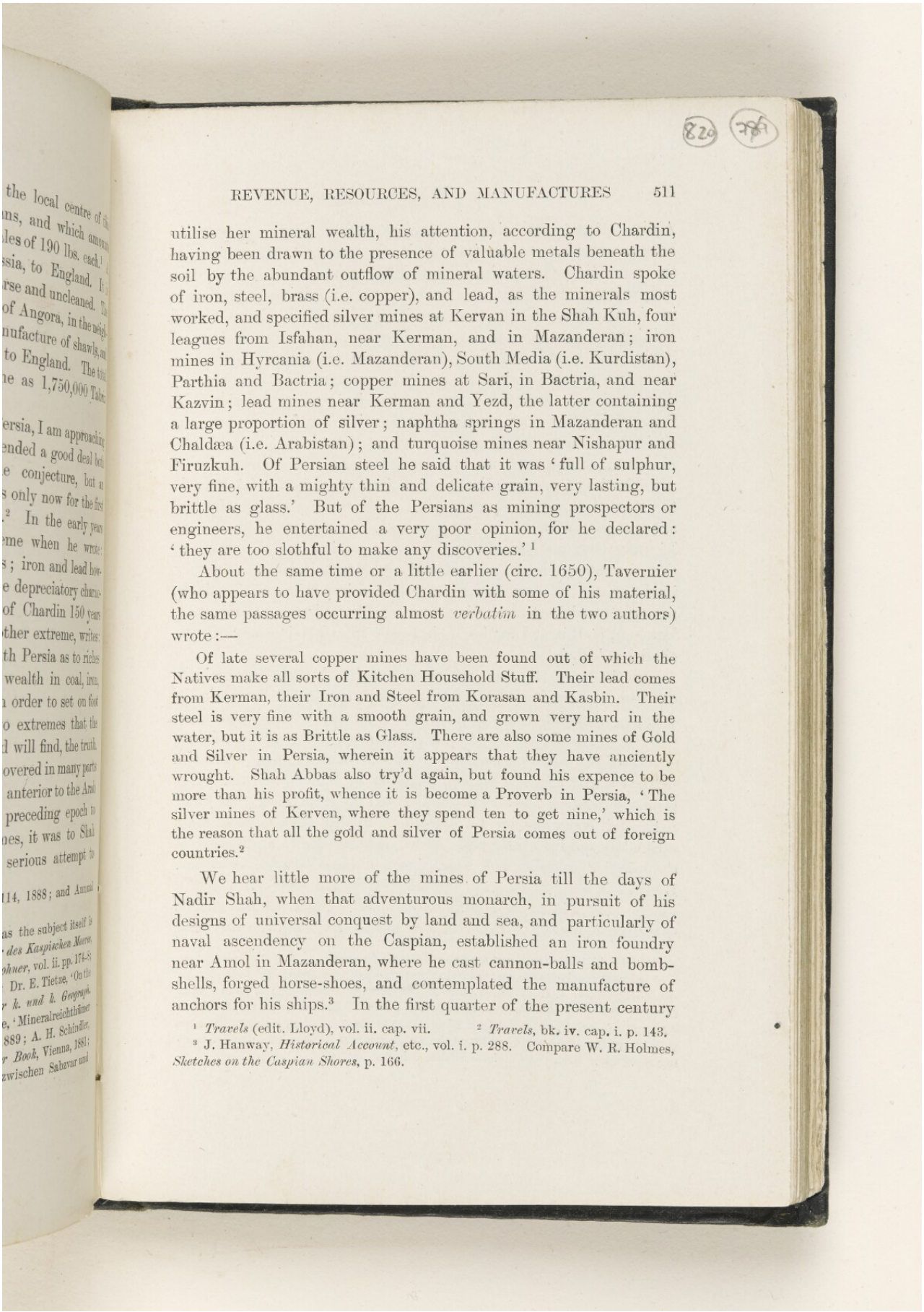



utilise her mineral wealth, his attention, according to Chardin, having been drawn to the presence of valuable metals beneath the soil by the abundant outflow of mineral waters. Chardin spoke of iron, steel, brass (i.e. copper), and lead, as the minerals most worked, and specified silver mines at Kervan in the Shah Kuh, four leagues from Isfahan, near Kerman, and in Mazanderan; iron mines in Hyrcania (i.e. Mazanderan), South Media (i.e. Kurdistan), Parthia and Bactria; copper mines at Sari, in Bactria, and near Kazvin; lead mines near Kerman and Yezd, the latter containing a large proportion of silver; naphtha springs in Mazanderan and Chaldæa (i.e. Arabistan); and turquoise mines near Nishapur and Firuzkuh. Of Persian steel he said that it was 'full of sulphur, very fine, with a mighty thin and delicate grain, very lasting, but brittle as glass.' But of the Persians as mining prospectors or engineers, he entertained a very poor opinion, for he declared: 'they are too slothful to make any discoveries.' [1]

About the same time or a little earlier (circ. 1650), Tavernier (who appears to have provided Chardin with some of his material, the same passages occurring almost *verbatim* in the two authors) wrote:—

Of late several copper mines have been found out of which the Natives make all sorts of Kitchen Household Stuff. Their lead comes from Kerman, their Iron and Steel from Korasan and Kasbin. Their steel is very fine with a smooth grain, and grown very hard in the water, but it is as Brittle as Glass. There are also some mines of Gold and Silver in Persia, wherein it appears that they have anciently wrought. Shah Abbas also try'd again, but found his expence to be more than his profit, whence it is become a Proverb in Persia, 'The silver mines of Kerven, where they spend ten to get nine,' which is the reason that all the gold and silver of Persia comes out of foreign countries.[2]

We hear little more of the mines of Persia till the days of Nadir Shah, when that adventurous monarch, in pursuit of his designs of universal conquest by land and sea, and particularly of naval ascendency on the Caspian, established an iron foundry near Amol in Mazanderan, where he cast cannon-balls and bomb-shells, forged horse-shoes, and contemplated the manufacture of anchors for his ships.[3] In the first quarter of the present century

[1] *Travels* (edit. Lloyd), vol. ii. cap. vii. [2] *Travels*, bk. iv. cap. i. p. 143.
[3] J. Hanway, *Historical Account*, etc., vol. i. p. 288. Compare W. R. Holmes, *Sketches on the Caspian Shores*, p. 166.

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Abbas Mirza, who with a somewhat flighty temper appears to have combined a genuine interest in his country's regeneration, at the same time that he introduced English uniforms, officers, drill and weapons at Tabriz, encouraged English mining experiments in Azerbaijan. About the year 1810, an Englishman named Williamson opened some extensive copper mines in the district of Sheikh der Aband near Turkomanchai, but was obliged to abandon them as a failure; owing, as one writer alleges, to the jealousy of Abbas Mirza.[1] In 1815, Captain Monteith was commissioned by the Prince to report on the best locality for iron works, and decided in favour of Dombre, south of the Aras (Araxes), and Masarud, saying, 'In no part of the world did we conceive it possible that a greater abundance of iron ore should exist than in the Karadagh range of mountains. For many *farsakhs* the soil appears to consist of no other stone.' Finally, in 1836, Sir H. Lindsay-Bethune brought out a steam engine and a number of skilled workmen from England, and sank a very large sum of money in the attempt to work both the copper and iron mines of Karadagh, apparently without any satisfactory results.[2] Brass cannon were, however, at this and earlier periods cast from Persian metal in the citadel at Tabriz.

Modern exploitation

In the present reign, as knowledge has become more widely diffused, and as European methods and appliances have slowly percolated to Persia, more numerous though deplorably imperfect attempts have been made to exploit the mineral wealth of the country, particularly in coal and copper; while the natural vanity of the Persians, inflamed by the inquiries or eulogiums of passing travellers, has disposed them to think that their native soil concealed an El Dorado of wealth whose spoils must ultimately fall into their lap. Most amusing stories are related of the mingled credulity and enthusiasm of these deluded Orientals. In 1877 it was reported to the Shah that an old man of Kavend, a village near Zinjan, had found some gold. Some Court officials were thereupon sent to Kavend to examine the man, who persisted

[1] Lieut. T. Lumsden, *Journey from India to London*.

[2] He had received the concession in the lifetime of the preceding Shah. Copies of the Firmans: 1. from Fath Ali to Abbas Mirza and Bethune; 2. from Abbas Mirza to Bethune; and 3. from Mohammed Mirza to Bethune, are printed in an Appendix to vol. ii. of G. Fowler's *Three Years in Persia*. W. R. Holmes (*Sketches*, p. 13) says that Bethune abandoned the works because of the difficulty of obtaining repayment from the Persians for the original outlay.

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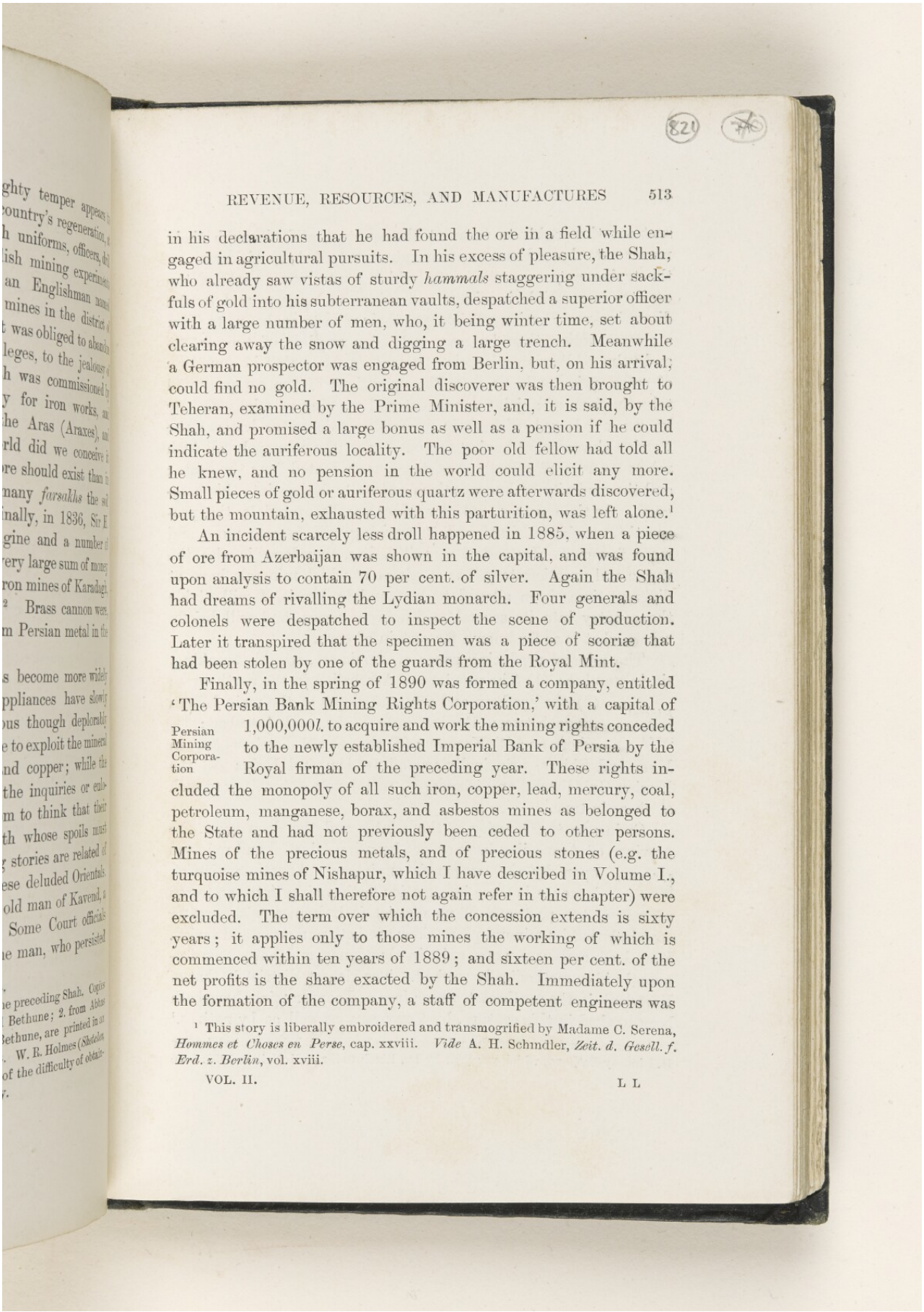



in his declarations that he had found the ore in a field while engaged in agricultural pursuits. In his excess of pleasure, the Shah, who already saw vistas of sturdy *hammals* staggering under sackfuls of gold into his subterranean vaults, despatched a superior officer with a large number of men, who, it being winter time, set about clearing away the snow and digging a large trench. Meanwhile a German prospector was engaged from Berlin, but, on his arrival, could find no gold. The original discoverer was then brought to Teheran, examined by the Prime Minister, and, it is said, by the Shah, and promised a large bonus as well as a pension if he could indicate the auriferous locality. The poor old fellow had told all he knew, and no pension in the world could elicit any more. Small pieces of gold or auriferous quartz were afterwards discovered, but the mountain, exhausted with this parturition, was left alone.[1]

An incident scarcely less droll happened in 1885, when a piece of ore from Azerbaijan was shown in the capital, and was found upon analysis to contain 70 per cent. of silver. Again the Shah had dreams of rivalling the Lydian monarch. Four generals and colonels were despatched to inspect the scene of production. Later it transpired that the specimen was a piece of scoriæ that had been stolen by one of the guards from the Royal Mint.

Finally, in the spring of 1890 was formed a company, entitled 'The Persian Bank Mining Rights Corporation,' with a capital of 1,000,000*l.* to acquire and work the mining rights conceded to the newly established Imperial Bank of Persia by the Royal firman of the preceding year. These rights included the monopoly of all such iron, copper, lead, mercury, coal, petroleum, manganese, borax, and asbestos mines as belonged to the State and had not previously been ceded to other persons. Mines of the precious metals, and of precious stones (e.g. the turquoise mines of Nishapur, which I have described in Volume I., and to which I shall therefore not again refer in this chapter) were excluded. The term over which the concession extends is sixty years; it applies only to those mines the working of which is commenced within ten years of 1889; and sixteen per cent. of the net profits is the share exacted by the Shah. Immediately upon the formation of the company, a staff of competent engineers was

Persian Mining Corporation

[1] This story is liberally embroidered and transmogrified by Madame C. Serena, *Hommes et Choses en Perse*, cap. xxviii. *Vide* A. H. Schindler, *Zeit. d. Gesell. f. Erd. z. Berlin*, vol. xviii.



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sent out thoroughly to prospect the country; and although their movements have been to some extent retarded by sickness, by the trying extremes of climate, which render some parts of the country inaccessible in winter and others in summer, and by the dilatoriness of Persian officials, yet their reports enable us to form a clearer notion than has ever yet been possible of the extent and value of Persian minerals. It may be found that in a number of cases, principally at first, the operations of the company will take the form of a joint agreement and working of mines already known and leased with their present proprietors or lessees; the Persian Government having excluded from the monopoly all such mines as were of private property, or were rented from the State; and the majority of known mines naturally falling into this category. As time passes, and new mines are discovered by the prospecting engineers, independent working will become more and more frequent. Instead of recapitulating, encyclopædia-wise, the vague and unsatisfactory lists of places at which minerals have at different times been alleged to be found in Persia, I will divide the country into its several metalliferous zones, and will briefly report what is so far known for certain of each.

The mineral-producing zones of Persia are, roughly speaking, six in number: (1) The province of Azerbaijan in the north-west; (2) the northern and southern slopes of the main Elburz range between Rudbar near Resht, and Astrabad; (3) Khorasan; (4) Kerman; (5) the central districts between Kum and Shiraz, principally around Isfahan and Nain; (6) the Persian Gulf littoral and islands. I will devote a few lines to each of these in turn.

Mineral-producing zones

Owing to the severity of the winter and the deep snow, the province of Azerbaijan has not yet been investigated and reported upon by the company's engineers. About no district, however, is more information forthcoming in the scattered records of the past, and of no district is it known with greater certainty that its mineral possessions are both numerous and varied. Iron, lead, and copper ores exist in abundance, and have been frequently if unmethodically worked. The richest district is that of Karadagh in the north-east, where iron and copper mines have both been worked in this century, by Europeans as well as by natives.[1]

1. Azerbaijan

[1] I have seen a report on the mines of Karadagh, then being worked by Sir H. Lindsay-Bethune, which was sent by Dr. Riach to Sir J. McNeill in 1837. He

JOSIAH EDWARD SPURR
EDITOR

ENGINEERING & MINING
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Please address reply to this letter to
883 Mission Street
San Francisco, California

January 31, 1924.

The Right Honorable the
Marquess Curzon, of Kedleston,
House of Lords,
Westminster,
London, S.W., England.

Dear Sir:

Please forgive me for trespassing on your valuable time; my excuse is that I am keenly interested in a historical question upon which probably only you can throw light. It is the origin of the first tin that was used in the ancient world, in Egypt and Assyria. The earliest bronzes found in those regions go back to 2000 B.C., at which time neither the tin of Spain and Britain nor that of China or Malaya was available. Whence then did it come? Such meagre evidence as is available points at Persia. You, Sir, are known to be the authority on the history of that country, so I venture to ask you if by any chance you have any information concerning the ancient mining of tin in Persia. If you will be good enough to assist me in my inquiry, I shall be deeply grateful.

Yours sincerely,

T. A. Rickard

TAR/G.

Contributing Editor

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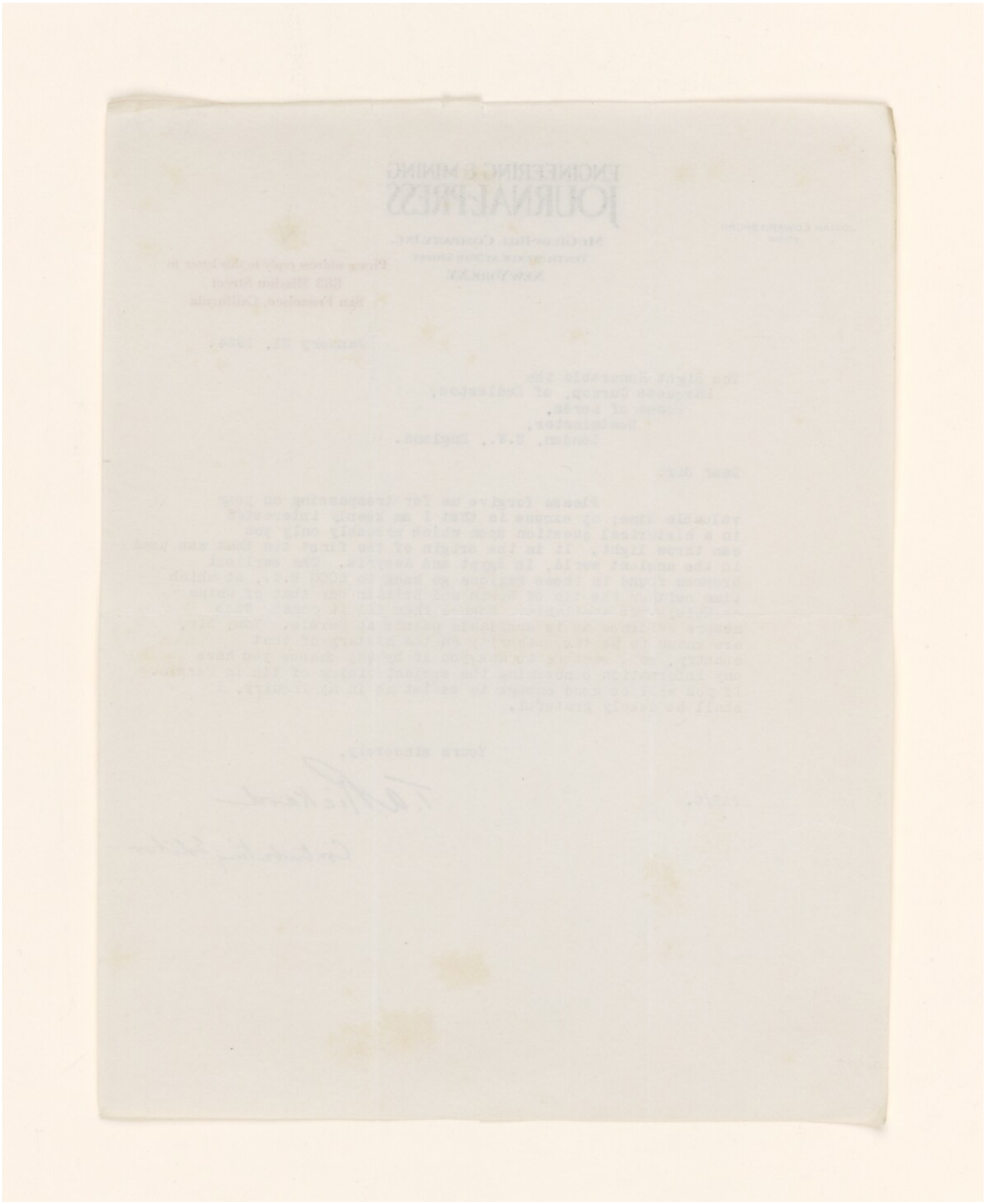

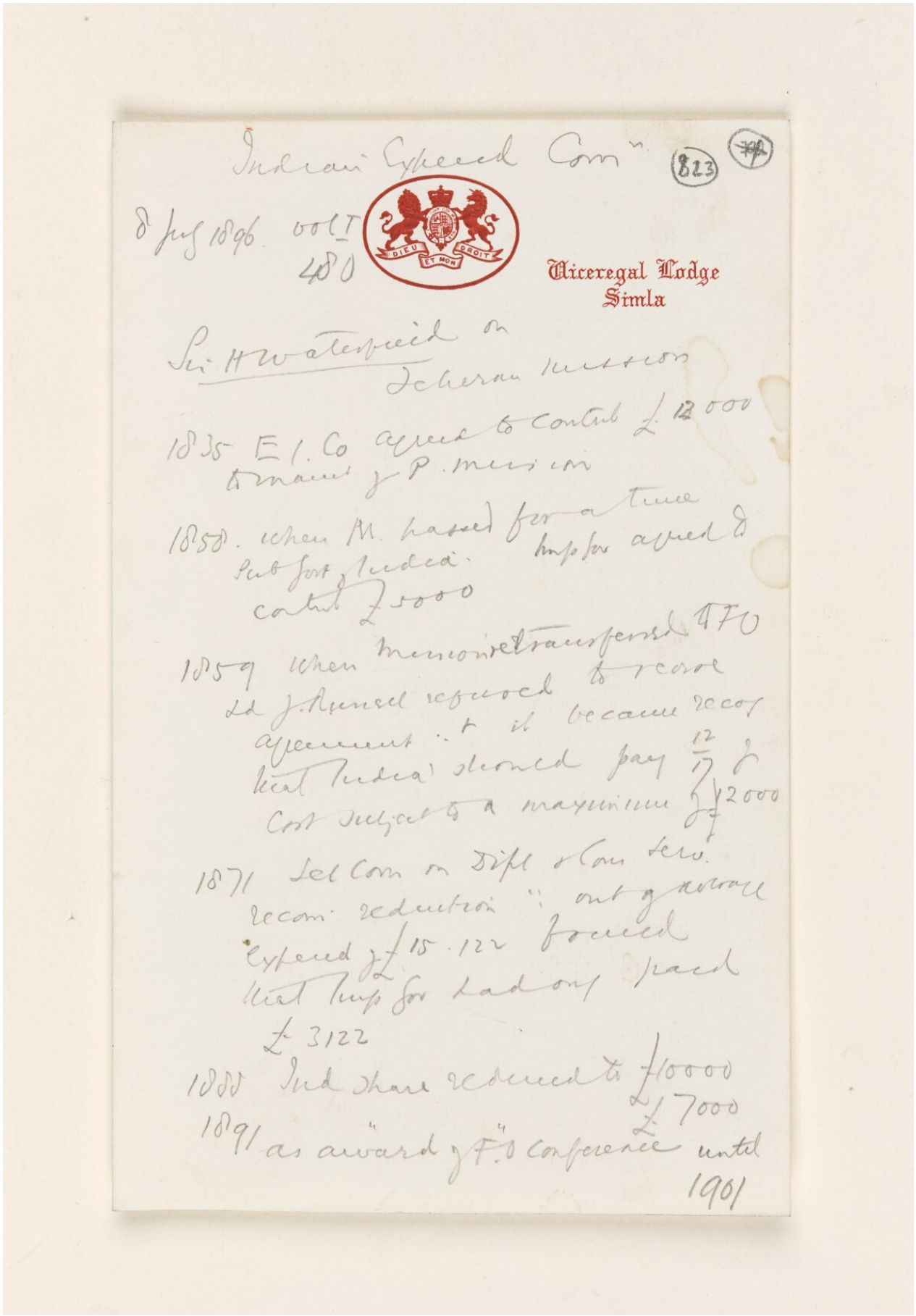


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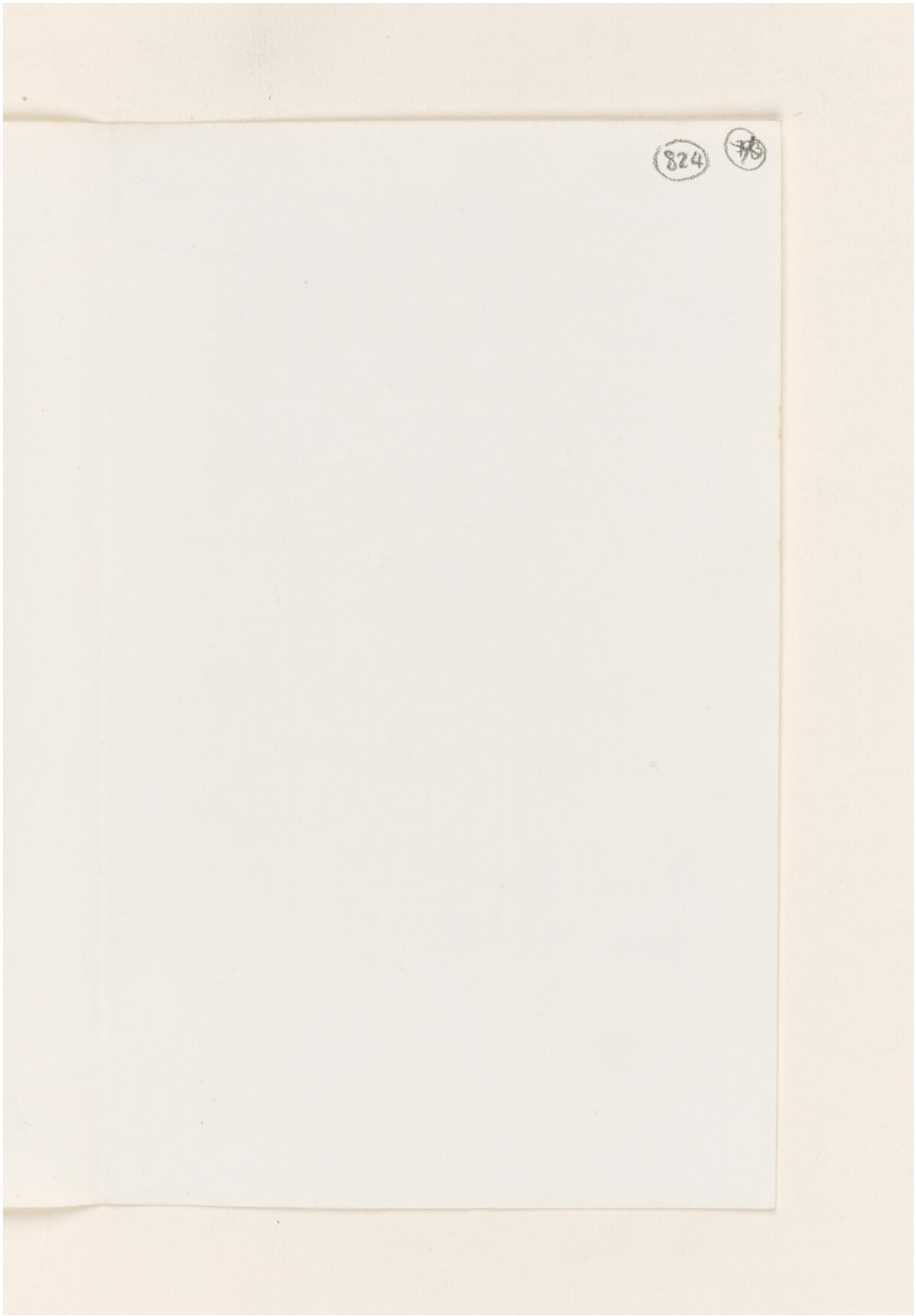


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Ratio of 12 to 5 adopted in 1859
exists over since
app 65 of vol II of Report of Royal Commission

| | | £ | s. | d. |
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| 1895-6 | Dep | 12.633 | 19 | 6 |
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Gross Indian £ 32.480
or ratio of 41.7 to 58.3

These figures are taken
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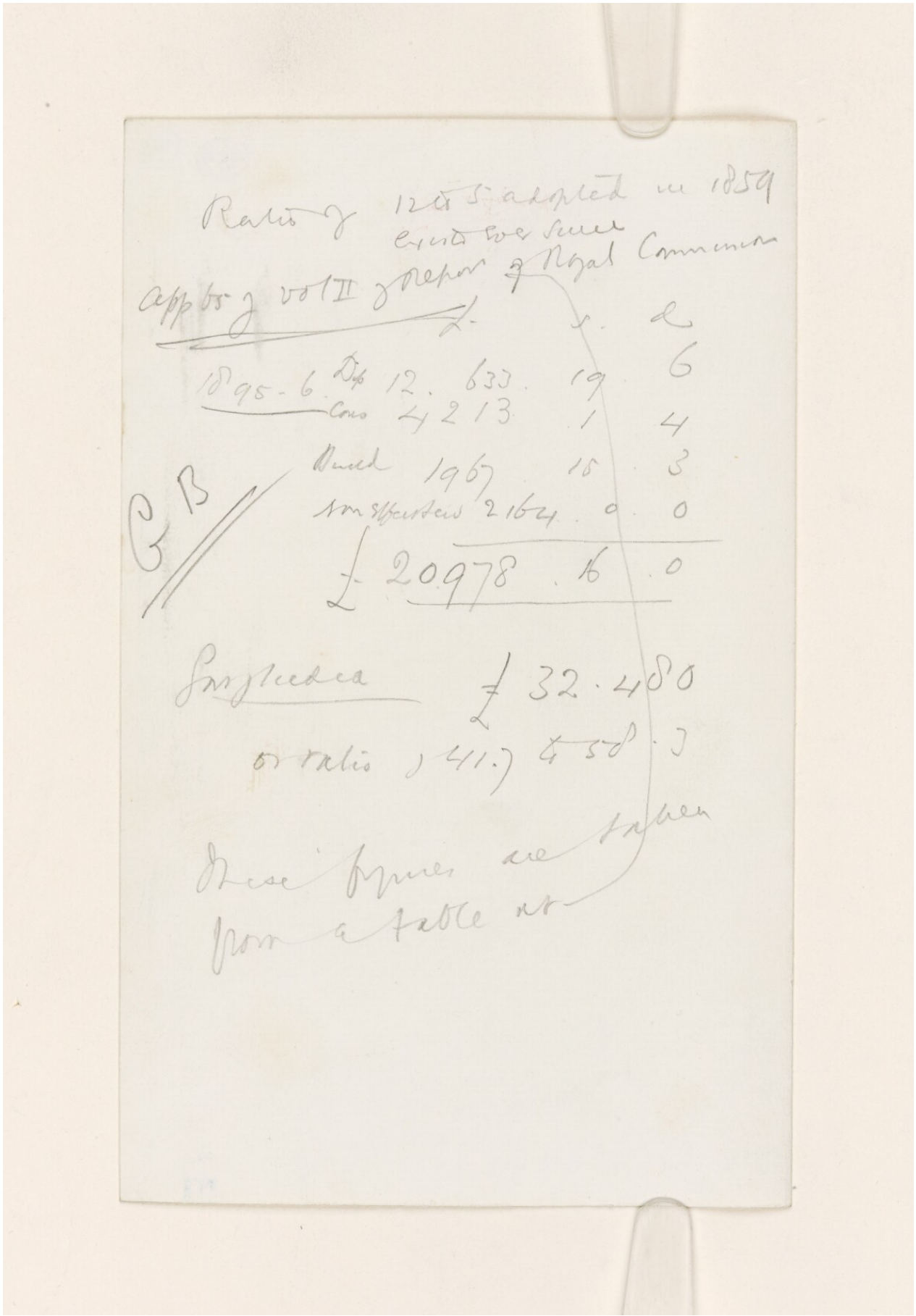

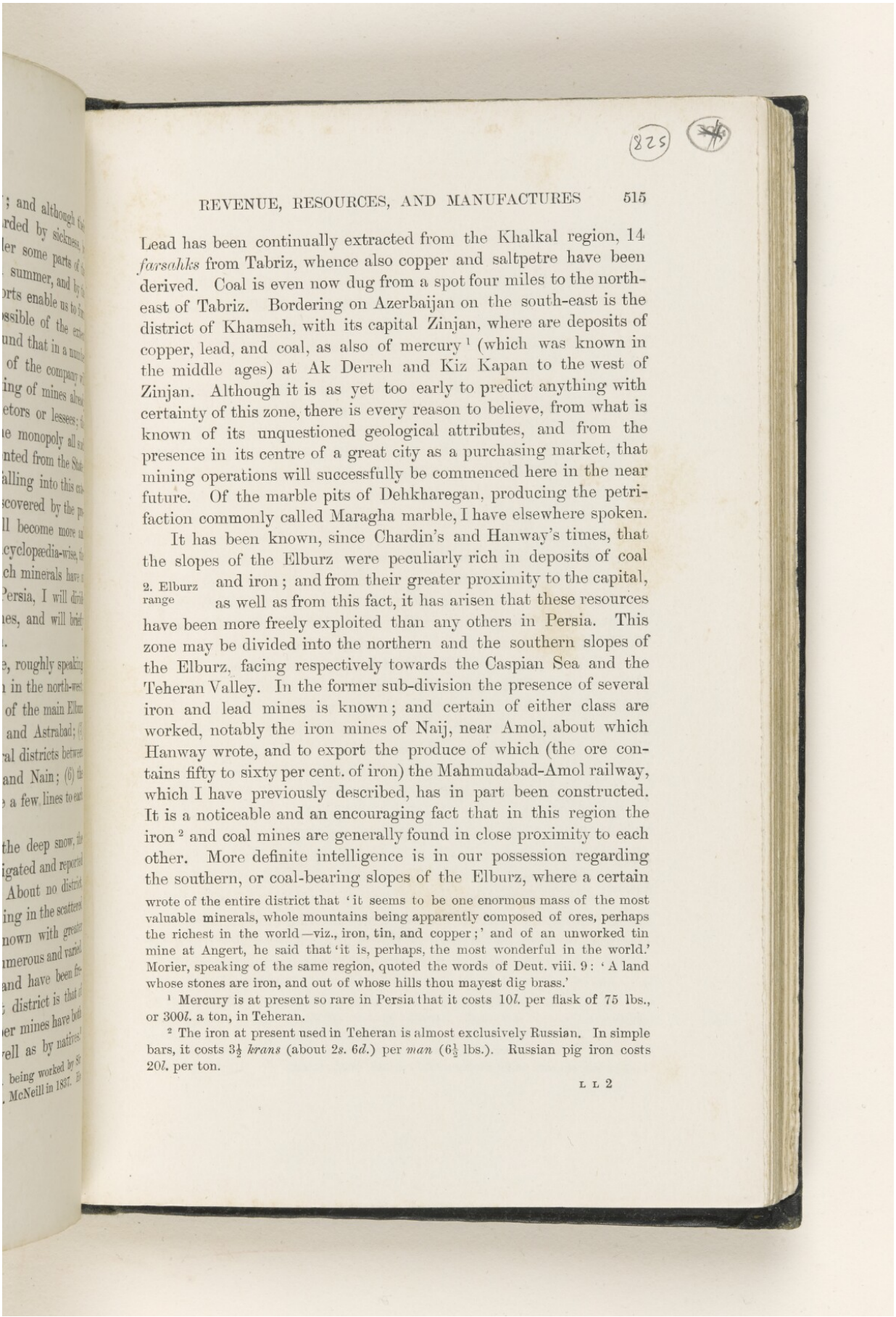



Lead has been continually extracted from the Khalkal region, 14 *farsahks* from Tabriz, whence also copper and saltpetre have been derived. Coal is even now dug from a spot four miles to the north-east of Tabriz. Bordering on Azerbaijan on the south-east is the district of Khamseh, with its capital Zinjan, where are deposits of copper, lead, and coal, as also of mercury [1] (which was known in the middle ages) at Ak Derreh and Kiz Kapan to the west of Zinjan. Although it is as yet too early to predict anything with certainty of this zone, there is every reason to believe, from what is known of its unquestioned geological attributes, and from the presence in its centre of a great city as a purchasing market, that mining operations will successfully be commenced here in the near future. Of the marble pits of Dehkharegan, producing the petrifaction commonly called Maragha marble, I have elsewhere spoken.

2. Elburz range

It has been known, since Chardin's and Hanway's times, that the slopes of the Elburz were peculiarly rich in deposits of coal and iron; and from their greater proximity to the capital, as well as from this fact, it has arisen that these resources have been more freely exploited than any others in Persia. This zone may be divided into the northern and the southern slopes of the Elburz, facing respectively towards the Caspian Sea and the Teheran Valley. In the former sub-division the presence of several iron and lead mines is known; and certain of either class are worked, notably the iron mines of Naij, near Amol, about which Hanway wrote, and to export the produce of which (the ore contains fifty to sixty per cent. of iron) the Mahmudabad-Amol railway, which I have previously described, has in part been constructed. It is a noticeable and an encouraging fact that in this region the iron [2] and coal mines are generally found in close proximity to each other. More definite intelligence is in our possession regarding the southern, or coal-bearing slopes of the Elburz, where a certain

wrote of the entire district that 'it seems to be one enormous mass of the most valuable minerals, whole mountains being apparently composed of ores, perhaps the richest in the world—viz., iron, tin, and copper;' and of an unworked tin mine at Angert, he said that 'it is, perhaps, the most wonderful in the world.' Morier, speaking of the same region, quoted the words of Deut. viii. 9: 'A land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.'

[1] Mercury is at present so rare in Persia that it costs 10*l.* per flask of 75 lbs., or 300*l.* a ton, in Teheran.

[2] The iron at present used in Teheran is almost exclusively Russian. In simple bars, it costs 3½ *krans* (about 2*s.* 6*d.*) per *man* (6½ lbs.). Russian pig iron costs 20*l.* per ton.



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amount of ill-regulated activity has for some time prevailed, and whose coal pits supply the present demands of Teheran. Mineral deposits occur at many places along this range from beyond Kazvin on the west to Tash, between Shahrud and Astrabad, on the east; but the most productive areas lie to the north-west of Teheran, between the capital and Kazvin, and to the north-east in the direction of Demavend, and further east.

North-western district

The North-western District contains a number of coal mines, situated on the slopes about half-way between Teheran and Kazvin, at the distance of a few miles to the north of the postal road. Of these the best known are those of Abiek, Hiv, and Feshend, extending along a strip of country thirteen miles in length, and about 5,000 feet above the sea. All of these mines have been, or are being, tentatively and clumsily worked by native proprietors or by foreign lessees. The output of the Abiek mines in 1888 was 2,000 tons, of the Hiv mines 9,000 tons. The mine of Feshend has been leased by its native owners to a small syndicate of foreigners, entitled La Société de Charbonnage, of whom the moving spirit is that Jack-of-all-Trades of Teheran, M. Fabius Boital, and who have recently procured a concession for a small narrow-gauge railway to transport their produce from the pit's mouth to Teheran.[1] The work that has hitherto taken place in these mines has been abominably and wastefully conducted, the modern Persians not having the dimmest notion of mining science. They contain, however, useful seams of coal, easily accessible; and if properly worked with scientific implements and appliances, should yield a largely increased production.

North-eastern district

In the North-eastern District, the annual output of which has hitherto been 4,000 tons, the best-known coal pits are those of Lar, about forty miles from Teheran, where a number of shafts have been clumsily worked for some time, averaging six cwt. of coal per miner per day. It is understood that the mines of Hiv and of Shemsek, in the Lar district, have been acquired in part ownership by the Mining Corporation; and far better results, as well as a larger native consumption, which is

7500

[1] The present annual consumption of coal in Teheran is about 15,000 tons. At the mouth of the pit it costs 4 to 7 *krans* a *kharvar* (649 lbs.), or 14 to 24 *krans* a ton. Thence it is conveyed on donkeys, mules, or camels to the city (the cost of transport being 30 to 32 *krans* a ton), where it pays 2 *krans* octroi at the town gate, and is sold in the bazaars at an average of 70 *krans*, or 2*l*., a ton.

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certain to follow upon reduction in price, may soon be anticipated.

3. Khorasan

The Governor-General of Khorasan boasted to me of the mineral wealth of his province; and the Khorasanis themselves say that it contains, in addition to the turquoise mines of Nishapur, twelve copper, seven lead, four coal, two salt, and even a gold mine, of which only three copper, one coal, and one salt mine have been worked, and that in a very perfunctory fashion. The well-known copper mines of Gurkhani, between Maomai and Abbasabad, on the high road between Shahrud and Meshed, which Fraser speaks of as having been worked up to Nadir Shah's day, but abandoned because of Turkoman depredations, are now full of water. A copper mine was seen, five miles from Meshed, by Colonel Val. Baker, who found the workings ancient and extensive, but not very rich. Good coal is said to be procured from Firizi and Ab-i-Kat, eight miles south of Chinaran. Some lead mines at Damghan and Sebzewar are leased to private individuals, and copper, coal, and iron are also found in the neighbourhood of the former place. Next to Gurkhani, the principal copper mines of Khorasan, many of them containing the remains of ancient working, but now under water, may be classified as follows: 1. Chund, Homai, and Nehru in the hills south of Sebzewar; 2. Batau and Dahaneh Siah further to the south, the latter being the most productive copper-mine in Persia; 3. several mines in the neighbourhood of Turshiz; 4. ditto in the Turbat-i-Haideri district; 5. Paghaleh, etc., in the Jagatai hills north of Sebzewar; 6. the Biarjumand district on the caravan route between Shahrud and Turshiz. One or other of these localities is likely to be taken in hand by the Mining Corporation. It must be remembered that though Polak declared that every district in Persia had its own copper mines, and that though there is not a village in the country where copper vessels and utensils are not a *sine quâ non* of domestic existence, even among the peasants, yet the local manufacture of the metal is insignificant in the extreme, the output of the Persian mines now worked hardly exceeding 3,000*l.* yearly in value, and almost the whole amount consumed in Persia being imported in sheets, principally by the Gulf from England.[1] Consequently there is a most favourable opening for an industry

[1] Copper sheets, rolled and finished, cost between 90*l.* and 100*l.* per ton, in the Persian market. Chili bars cost 60*l.* per ton.

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that will find an eager market at the very threshold of production.

4. Kerman

The next district, that of Kerman, is one of whose mineral wealth glowing accounts have always existed, although, owing to its great distance from the sea, and the enormous cost of transport, the export of its varied productions has never been, and probably never will be, profitably conducted, except in a few cases of especially valuable minerals. On the other hand, the market provided by the two great manufacturing cities of Kerman and Yezd must always create a considerable local demand. Chardin spoke of lead from Kerman as being used for many utensils; and it is still extracted in the districts of Kuhbenan, Jevarun, and Mahun.[1] At Kaleh Ziri, between Birjand and Neh, Khanikoff in 1859 inspected the extensive remains of ancient galleries, whence copper, lead, manganese, and turquoises had at one time been extracted, but which had apparently not been worked since the Arab conquest.[2] Stack, in 1881, was shown rich specimens of lead and copper ore from Tang-i-Mo-i-Aspan, four *farsakhs* from Pariz and two from God-i-Ahmer.[3] Coal exists at Bazergun thirteen miles north of Kerman city, at Deh Taki in the Hizumi Pass, to the north-east on the road to Rahwar, and throughout the Kuhberan district. Between Kerman and Shiraz at Parpa, near Niriz, are the iron mines of which Marco Polo, Tavernier, and Chardin spoke as steel mines, and which were extensively worked in ancient times. Very rich manganese ore is found at Heruzeh, sixty miles from Kerman on the road to Rahwar. Good borax comes from the Shehr-i-Babek district, to the north-west of Kerman on the northern edge of the Sirjan salt-desert. Asbestos was discovered only five years ago near the village of Gujar, in the Kuhbenan district, twenty *farsakhs* north of Kerman, where it is known as *sang-i-kakhur*, or 'wound stone,' being locally applied to stop bleeding. An excellent yellow, semi-transparent marble is quarried in the mountains near Yezd, the actual spot being Turun Pusht, forty miles from Taft, and fifty-six miles from Yezd. From it were made the superb marble throne, and the twisted marble pillars that now adorn the throne room, or Talar, in the Royal Palace at Teheran.

[1] Almost the only use now made of lead in Persia is that of casting bullets and shot, and about 1,000 tons of the metal suffice for the needs of the whole country. [2] *Mémoire*, etc., p. 169. [3] *Six Months in Persia*, vol. i. p. 211.

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Recent explorations have proved the entire strip of country between Kum and Isfahan to contain mineral ores of considerable richness and variety. A vein of iron ore, containing 60 per cent. of metal, and copper pyrites in addition, has been discovered at Kamsar, where it is reported that at least 100,000 tons of ore are lying on the slope of the hills. Lodes of good copper and iron ore have been exposed in the neighbourhood of Kuhrud. The fastidious folk of Kum are said to object to the use of coal in their sacred city, on the ground that it pollutes the air round the shrine of the holy Fatima; but it may be conjectured that future generations of worshippers will be less sensitive. A splendid iron ore, containing 59 per cent. of metal, is obtained in the Feridan district, north-west of Isfahan. Mercury exists in the Zardeh Kuh range, to the north-west of the city. Antimony and nickel and cobalt ores have been discovered within the last year near Anarek, in the district of Nain, between Isfahan and Yezd. The former, when powdered, produces the ingredient known to science as collyrium, to the Persians as *surmeh*, and to the Arabs as *kohl*, that is so widely used by the female sex in the East for beautifying the eyes. The nickel and cobalt ores have been found in old copper mines that have evidently been worked for centuries. Copper, lead, sulphur, asbestos, and manganese have also been discovered in large quantities in the Anarek district, which appears to be one of unusual richness.

5. Central districts

In the southern region we come upon a different mineral-bearing zone, and are confronted with a fresh variety of products. Rumours have for some time prevailed of the existence of good coal in the Dashti district, and in the Gisakun hills, to the north-east of Bushire; and it has been greatly hoped that these reports would prove to be true, owing to the near vicinity of so excellent a market as Bushire, where the steamers navigating the Gulf would be only too happy to buy fuel at a reasonable price.[1] The explorations so far conducted at Narestun, thirty-five miles south-east from Borazjun, in the region indicated, have not justified these anticipations, the alleged coal turning out to be only limestone strongly impregnated with bitumen. There is indeed a very marked bituminous vein running through these hills; and in probable connection therewith are the

6. Persian Gulf littoral

[1] Cardiff coal at present sells in Bushire for prices ranging from 33*s.* to 53*s.* a ton, the average price being about 2*l.*

naphtha wells of Daliki, which have long been cited among the unexplored Persian sources of mineral wealth. Two springs of greenish-coloured water here well up, with a temperature of 95° Fahr., strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, which exudes a nasty smell, and flecked with drops of naphtha on the surface. A concession for the working of these wells was granted a few years ago to Messrs. Hotz, of Bushire, but after sinking an experimental shaft in an unsuitable spot, they desisted from further operations. The concession has since been transferred to the Mining Corporation, whose engineers have during the past year been engaged in sinking a bore to a considerable depth, and who are still at work. The naphtha-bearing zone apparently extends from here in a north-westerly direction, the next spot where the oil comes to the surface being in the district of Ram Hormuz, and in the vicinity of the River Karun. Here, according to the most recent surveys, there are three oil-bearing localities. The first is near the village of Shardin, about fourteen miles east of Ram Hormuz, where there are more than ten springs, yielding a dark and heavy oil, the three principal of which produce at present a daily average of only twenty-five gallons, but one of which gives pure oil. They are claimed by local *seyids*. The second site is about equidistant (twenty-four miles) from Weiss on the Karun, and Beni Daud, and is forty-five miles south-east of Shushter. Here there are six shallow pits in the bed of a brook, only one of which is at present productive, yielding thirty-four gallons of white oil per diem, which is used in lamps unrefined, being sold in the bazaars of Shushter,[1] Isfahan, and Teheran.[2] They are leased to a leading citizen of Shushter. The third group of wells is situated at Haft Sheid, eighteen *farsakhs* in a northerly direction from Shushter, beyond the Akili valley of the Karun. Owned by the Shushter *seyids*, these wells yield thirty gallons daily of a dark green oil, which is sold to the Arabs for rubbing on camels, and as a cure for itch. In each of these cases the conditions of locality are perhaps less favourable than at Daliki, the cost of transporting machinery being very large, and the tribes being superstitious and ignorant. Naphtha is also re-

[1] Ram Hormuz naphtha is sold at Shushter for 1 to 1¼ *krans* per *man*.

[2] In the bazaars of Teheran and Isfahan it fetches 50 per cent. more than Baku oil, and is used by painters and polishers. In the south it is employed to adulterate American oil.

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ported to exist near Dizful, and near Kasr-i-Shirin and Kalhur, in the Kermanshah district of Persian Kurdistan. Outputs have further been observed at Ahmedi and Rudun, north of Bunder Abbas, and in the neighbourhood of Semnan. The only other place, however, where it is extracted for use, appears to be at Salakh, in the island of Kishm, where a coarse but promising oil is employed by the natives, both as an illuminant and for rheumatic complaints.

While speaking of naphtha I must not omit to mention a variety of bitumen known as *mumiai*, which is collected by exudation from rocks near Behbehan, and at Darab. It has long enjoyed a great celebrity in Persia, being credited with wonderful therapeutic properties, particularly when applied to broken limbs. Chardin,[1] Kaempfer,[2] Le Brun,[3] and the old travellers in general, give long descriptions of its character and efficacy, usually denoting it a precious drug or gum, and being apparently very much puzzled as to its origin. After being collected, it is made up into hard, cylindrical rolls, and is packed for transmission in gold or silver paper.

*Mumiai*

The islands of the Persian Gulf, though famous in past times as emporia of commerce, have now little claim to notice, except as the source from which is derived a large amount of rock salt. Ormuz and Kishm, whose harbours have sheltered the argosies of Portugal and Spain, now export in native sailing craft the salt and iron ochre which are their sole marketable commodities. The salt used to be collected from salt-pans by evaporation; but it is now quarried from the rock with crowbars or blasted with gunpowder, and is carried on camelback to the beach, where its price is 13 rupees a ton. The annual export of these islands is said to be 25,000 to 30,000 tons a year, the best salt coming from Nemekdan on Kishm, where there is a perpendicular cliff of pure rock salt, 200 to 300 feet high; and the markets to which it is despatched are Muscat, Zanzibar, Bombay, Mauritius, and Java. The salt is almost everywhere found in combination with iron ochre, locally known as *gilek* or *gilu*, the trade in which has lately been farmed for 650 *tomans* by a Persian. The annual export has hitherto amounted only to 1,500 tons; but it is probable that this could be largely increased. There are

Rock salt and iron ochre

[1] *Voyages* (edit. Langlès), vol. iii. pp. 311–12.
[2] *Amœnitates Exoticæ*, pp. 516–24.
[3] *Travels*, cap. xlv.; *vide* also Sir W. Ouseley, *Travels*, vol. ii. Appendix v.

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many other parts of Persia where salt exists, and is quarried in great abundance, far exceeding the needs of the country itself. Among these may be mentioned Masreh, Aiwan-i-Kaif, Deh Nemek, Lasgird, Kafir Kaleh near Nishapur,[1] Kamarij, and two salt lakes between Kerman and Bunder Abbas.

Among the minerals which I have not yet mentioned, but which are found scattered through different parts of the country, are large supplies of gypsum, nitrates of soda and potash, alum (principally extracted from a number of mines near Kazvin, and also at Tash), sulphur, the chief mines of which at Khamir, on the mainland opposite the island of Kishm, used to be farmed by the Sultan of Muscat, but are now in Persian hands, saltpetre near Zinjan and Kum, zinc near Yezd, and tin (it is said) between Astrabad and Shahrud.

Remaining minerals

It is as yet too early in the day to venture upon any confident prediction as to the future of mining operations in Persia. The information which I have given, and which a later edition, if ever demanded, may enable me very greatly to amplify, will at least have shown that the arena of activity is various, well-stocked and large. I entertain no doubt that time will reveal other and equally remarkable sources of mineral wealth at present unknown or untested. The intrinsic value of the Persian minerals cannot be disputed. Their worth as articles of commerce is almost wholly dependent upon the locality in which they are situated, and upon the cost of mule or camel transport either to the coast or to the nearest town market. These difficulties, and others, arising from the severity of the Persian climate, the enormous cost of conveyance of machinery, and the humours of Persian officialdom, constitute an array of obstacles which only those who have practical experience can credit. If coal and copper can be produced in large quantities so as both to meet and to augment the native demand, and if the more valuable minerals of which mention has been made can be conveyed to a port at a cost which will render export either to Europe or to other Asiatic countries profitable, I believe that the future may be prosperous.

Future of mining in Persia

From the natural I pass to the manufactured products of Persia, which may be divided into two separate but not mutually exclusive

[1] The salt mines of Kafir Kaleh (i.e. Hill of the Infidel) produce 680 tons a year, and supply the needs of Khorasan and Meshed.

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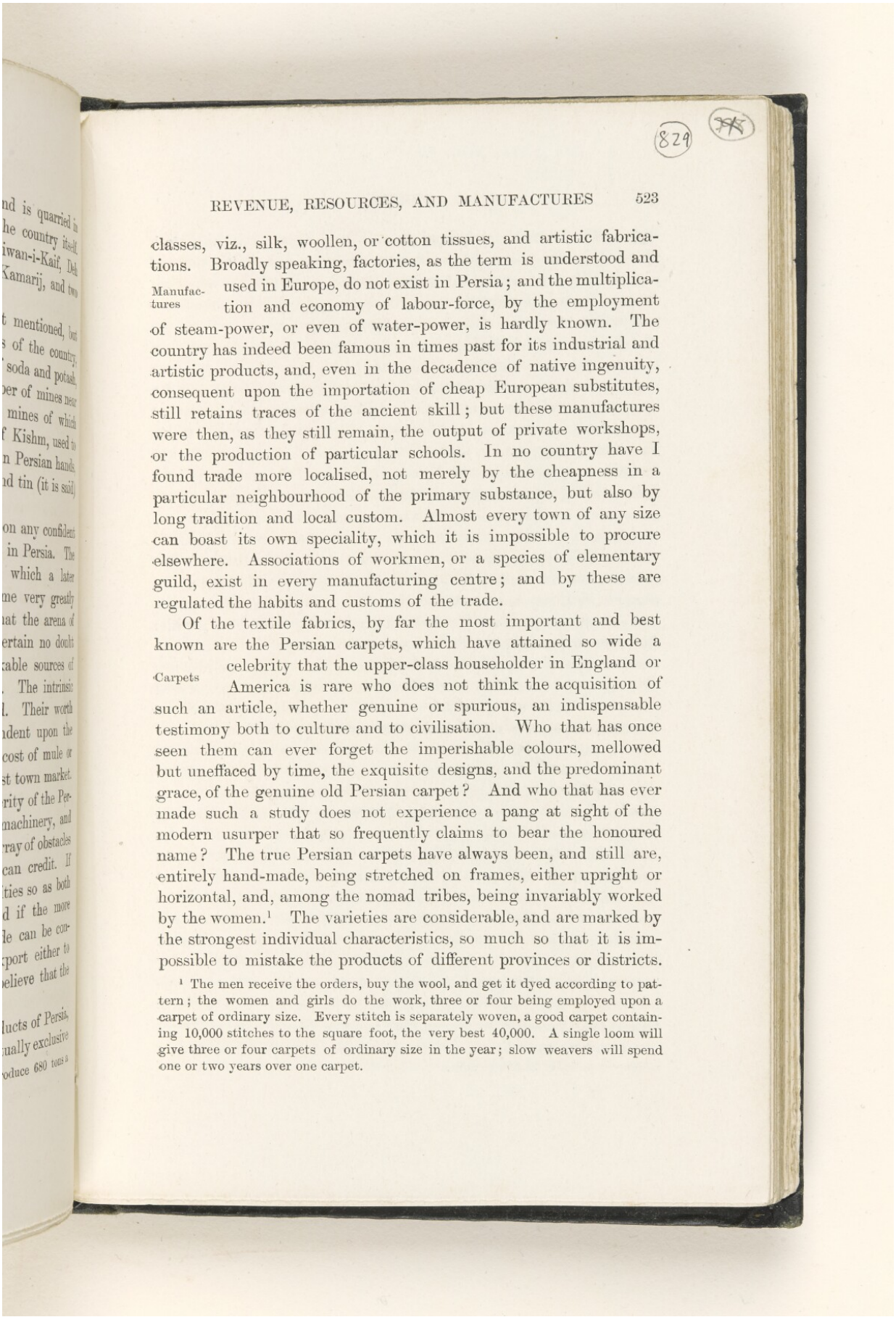



classes, viz., silk, woollen, or cotton tissues, and artistic fabrications. Broadly speaking, factories, as the term is understood and used in Europe, do not exist in Persia; and the multiplication and economy of labour-force, by the employment of steam-power, or even of water-power, is hardly known. The country has indeed been famous in times past for its industrial and artistic products, and, even in the decadence of native ingenuity, consequent upon the importation of cheap European substitutes, still retains traces of the ancient skill; but these manufactures were then, as they still remain, the output of private workshops, or the production of particular schools. In no country have I found trade more localised, not merely by the cheapness in a particular neighbourhood of the primary substance, but also by long tradition and local custom. Almost every town of any size can boast its own speciality, which it is impossible to procure elsewhere. Associations of workmen, or a species of elementary guild, exist in every manufacturing centre; and by these are regulated the habits and customs of the trade.

Manufactures

Of the textile fabrics, by far the most important and best known are the Persian carpets, which have attained so wide a celebrity that the upper-class householder in England or America is rare who does not think the acquisition of such an article, whether genuine or spurious, an indispensable testimony both to culture and to civilisation. Who that has once seen them can ever forget the imperishable colours, mellowed but uneffaced by time, the exquisite designs, and the predominant grace, of the genuine old Persian carpet? And who that has ever made such a study does not experience a pang at sight of the modern usurper that so frequently claims to bear the honoured name? The true Persian carpets have always been, and still are, entirely hand-made, being stretched on frames, either upright or horizontal, and, among the nomad tribes, being invariably worked by the women.[1] The varieties are considerable, and are marked by the strongest individual characteristics, so much so that it is impossible to mistake the products of different provinces or districts.

Carpets

[1] The men receive the orders, buy the wool, and get it dyed according to pattern; the women and girls do the work, three or four being employed upon a carpet of ordinary size. Every stitch is separately woven, a good carpet containing 10,000 stitches to the square foot, the very best 40,000. A single loom will give three or four carpets of ordinary size in the year; slow weavers will spend one or two years over one carpet.

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Among the latter the principal are: (1) the districts of Kain and Birjand, in Khorasan, whose fabrics are very close in texture, of high quality, and command good prices; (2) Sarakhs, where the famous Turkoman carpets, of dull crimson and brick-coloured hues and velvety surface, can be procured; (3) Kerman, where an extraordinarily soft and well-wearing carpet is made, wholly of cotton; (4) the district of Karadagh, in Azerbaijan; (5) the district of Ferahan, whose capital Sultanabad is the centre of the carpet trade of Western Persia[1]; (6) Kurdistan, the fabrics of which are known throughout Europe; (7) Fars and Shiraz, among the best fabrics being those of Murghab; (8) the glossy, long-haired carpets made by the nomad Kashkais of the same province. Messrs. Ziegler and Co. and Messrs. Hotz keep European representatives at Sultanabad, to superintend the local production, which has in this locality been systematised and regulated, very much at the expense alike of originality and excellence. The introduction of aniline dyes, though strictly prohibited by the Government, has had a lamentable effect in causing the neglect, and in some cases even the loss, of native vegetable hues; while the necessity of rapid production, and of competition with the cheaper fabrics of European looms, has all but killed individuality of design, and has led to the monotonous reproduction of prescribed patterns. It is a sad reflection that, on purchasing a modern Persian carpet, the most elementary caution prescribes that one should rub with a wet cloth to see whether the colour be fast; and that one never feels safe unless the purchase be unmistakably old. In some places, particularly at Kerman, the manufacture is pursued under very unhealthy conditions, the artisans being obliged to work underground in order to escape the dryness of the outer air, while the elasticity of the threads is preserved by moisture from vessels filled with water. Most beautiful among the ancient Persian carpets of the Sefavean and even of later days were those manufactured of silk, than which I do not think that a more exquisite fabric has ever been woven by human hands. Silk carpets can still be procured to order, according to any pattern, size, or design; but the prices are so high as to be prohibitive to any but wealthy purchasers (ranging from forty to hundreds of pounds); and even here the application of a moistened

[1] In this district there are 150 villages, and some 5,000 looms, occupying, if all engaged, about 10,000 persons.

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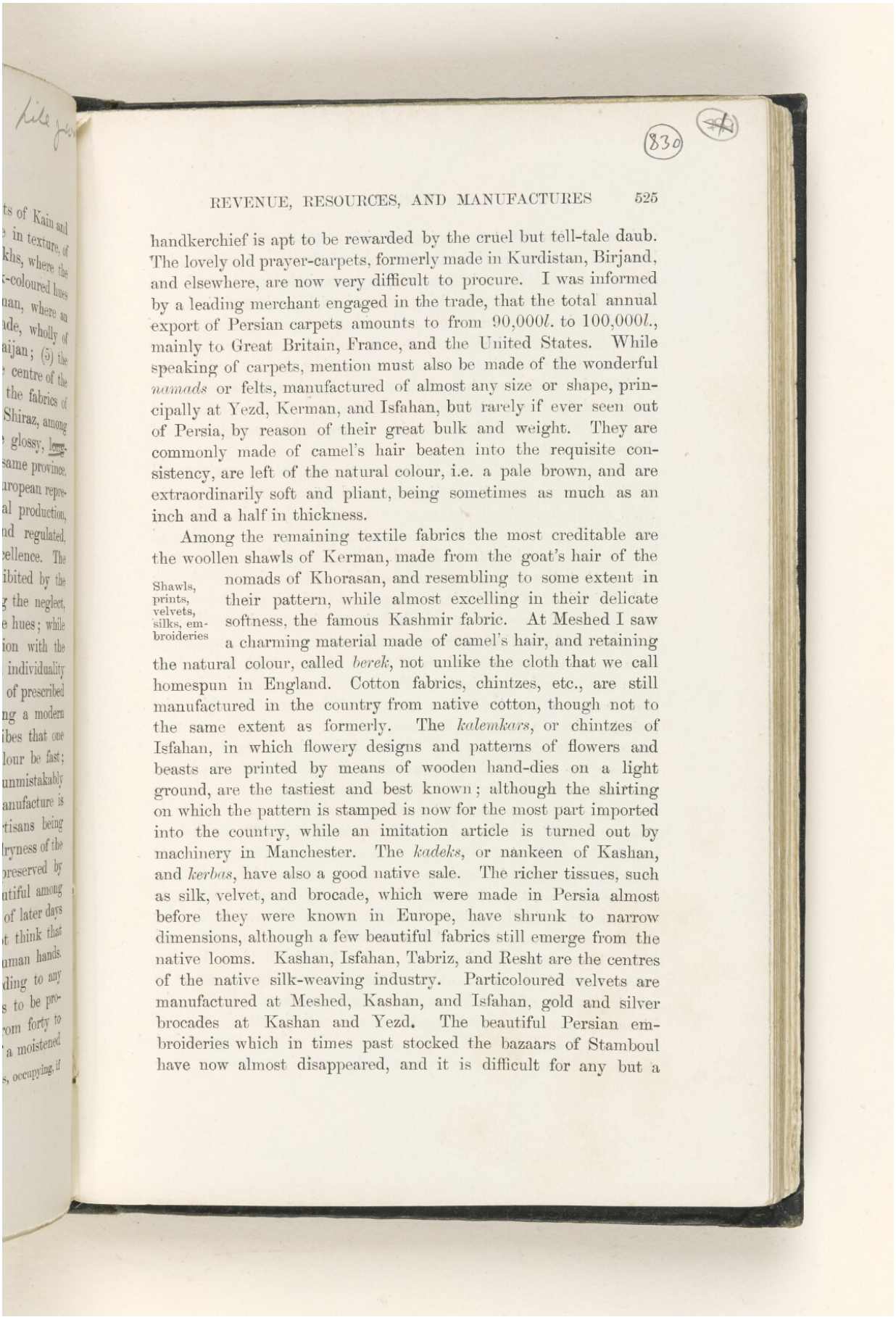



handkerchief is apt to be rewarded by the cruel but tell-tale daub. The lovely old prayer-carpets, formerly made in Kurdistan, Birjand, and elsewhere, are now very difficult to procure. I was informed by a leading merchant engaged in the trade, that the total annual export of Persian carpets amounts to from 90,000*l.* to 100,000*l.*, mainly to Great Britain, France, and the United States. While speaking of carpets, mention must also be made of the wonderful *namads* or felts, manufactured of almost any size or shape, principally at Yezd, Kerman, and Isfahan, but rarely if ever seen out of Persia, by reason of their great bulk and weight. They are commonly made of camel's hair beaten into the requisite consistency, are left of the natural colour, i.e. a pale brown, and are extraordinarily soft and pliant, being sometimes as much as an inch and a half in thickness.

Shawls, prints, velvets, silks, embroideries

Among the remaining textile fabrics the most creditable are the woollen shawls of Kerman, made from the goat's hair of the nomads of Khorasan, and resembling to some extent in their pattern, while almost excelling in their delicate softness, the famous Kashmir fabric. At Meshed I saw a charming material made of camel's hair, and retaining the natural colour, called *berek*, not unlike the cloth that we call homespun in England. Cotton fabrics, chintzes, etc., are still manufactured in the country from native cotton, though not to the same extent as formerly. The *kalemkars*, or chintzes of Isfahan, in which flowery designs and patterns of flowers and beasts are printed by means of wooden hand-dies on a light ground, are the tastiest and best known; although the shirting on which the pattern is stamped is now for the most part imported into the country, while an imitation article is turned out by machinery in Manchester. The *kadeks*, or nankeen of Kashan, and *kerbas*, have also a good native sale. The richer tissues, such as silk, velvet, and brocade, which were made in Persia almost before they were known in Europe, have shrunk to narrow dimensions, although a few beautiful fabrics still emerge from the native looms. Kashan, Isfahan, Tabriz, and Resht are the centres of the native silk-weaving industry. Particoloured velvets are manufactured at Meshed, Kashan, and Isfahan, gold and silver brocades at Kashan and Yezd. The beautiful Persian embroideries which in times past stocked the bazaars of Stamboul have now almost disappeared, and it is difficult for any but a

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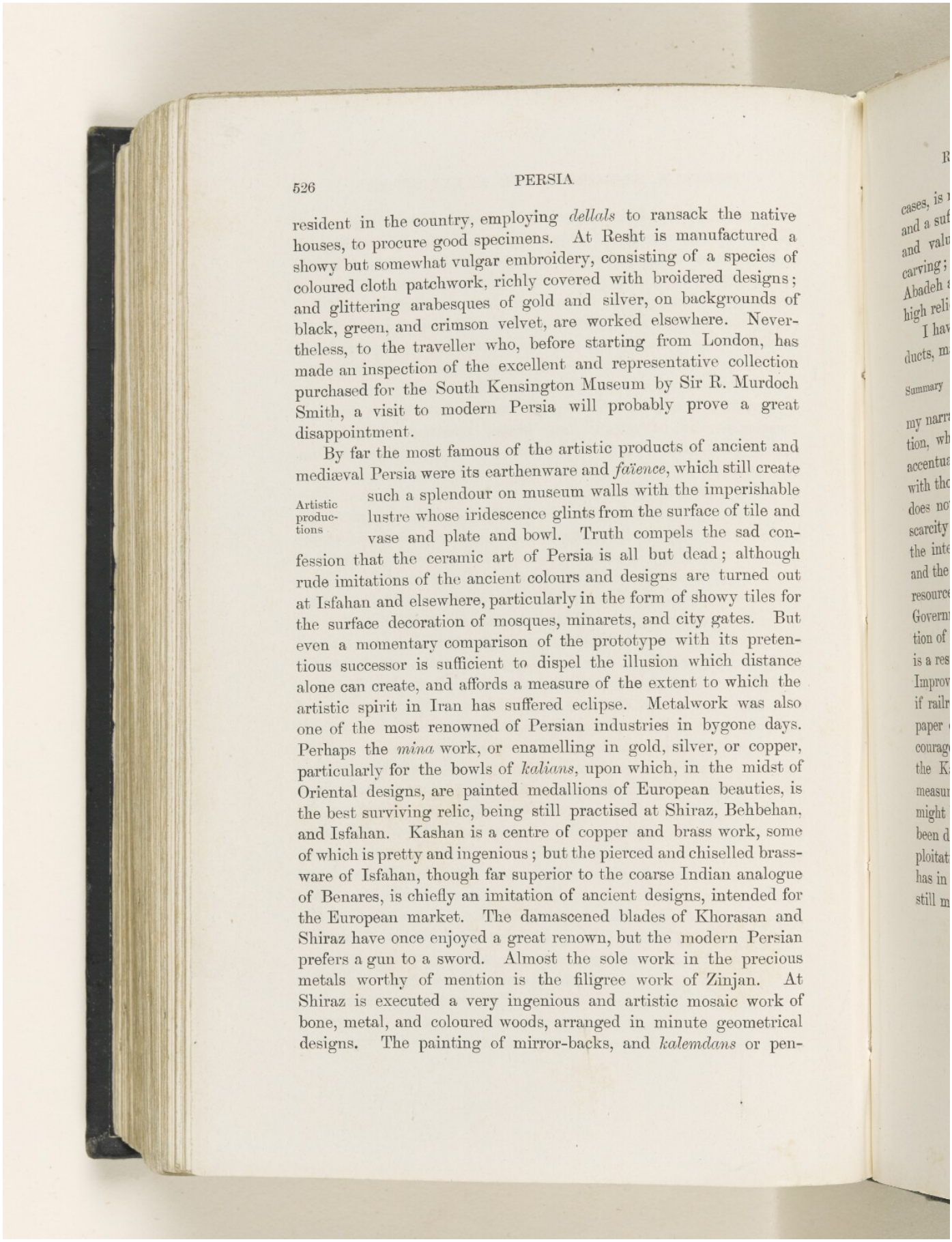



resident in the country, employing *dellals* to ransack the native houses, to procure good specimens. At Resht is manufactured a showy but somewhat vulgar embroidery, consisting of a species of coloured cloth patchwork, richly covered with broidered designs; and glittering arabesques of gold and silver, on backgrounds of black, green, and crimson velvet, are worked elsewhere. Nevertheless, to the traveller who, before starting from London, has made an inspection of the excellent and representative collection purchased for the South Kensington Museum by Sir R. Murdoch Smith, a visit to modern Persia will probably prove a great disappointment.

Artistic productions

By far the most famous of the artistic products of ancient and mediæval Persia were its earthenware and *faïence*, which still create such a splendour on museum walls with the imperishable lustre whose iridescence glints from the surface of tile and vase and plate and bowl. Truth compels the sad confession that the ceramic art of Persia is all but dead; although rude imitations of the ancient colours and designs are turned out at Isfahan and elsewhere, particularly in the form of showy tiles for the surface decoration of mosques, minarets, and city gates. But even a momentary comparison of the prototype with its pretentious successor is sufficient to dispel the illusion which distance alone can create, and affords a measure of the extent to which the artistic spirit in Iran has suffered eclipse. Metalwork was also one of the most renowned of Persian industries in bygone days. Perhaps the *mina* work, or enamelling in gold, silver, or copper, particularly for the bowls of *kalians*, upon which, in the midst of Oriental designs, are painted medallions of European beauties, is the best surviving relic, being still practised at Shiraz, Behbehan, and Isfahan. Kashan is a centre of copper and brass work, some of which is pretty and ingenious; but the pierced and chiselled brassware of Isfahan, though far superior to the coarse Indian analogue of Benares, is chiefly an imitation of ancient designs, intended for the European market. The damascened blades of Khorasan and Shiraz have once enjoyed a great renown, but the modern Persian prefers a gun to a sword. Almost the sole work in the precious metals worthy of mention is the filigree work of Zinjan. At Shiraz is executed a very ingenious and artistic mosaic work of bone, metal, and coloured woods, arranged in minute geometrical designs. The painting of mirror-backs, and *kalemdans* or pen-

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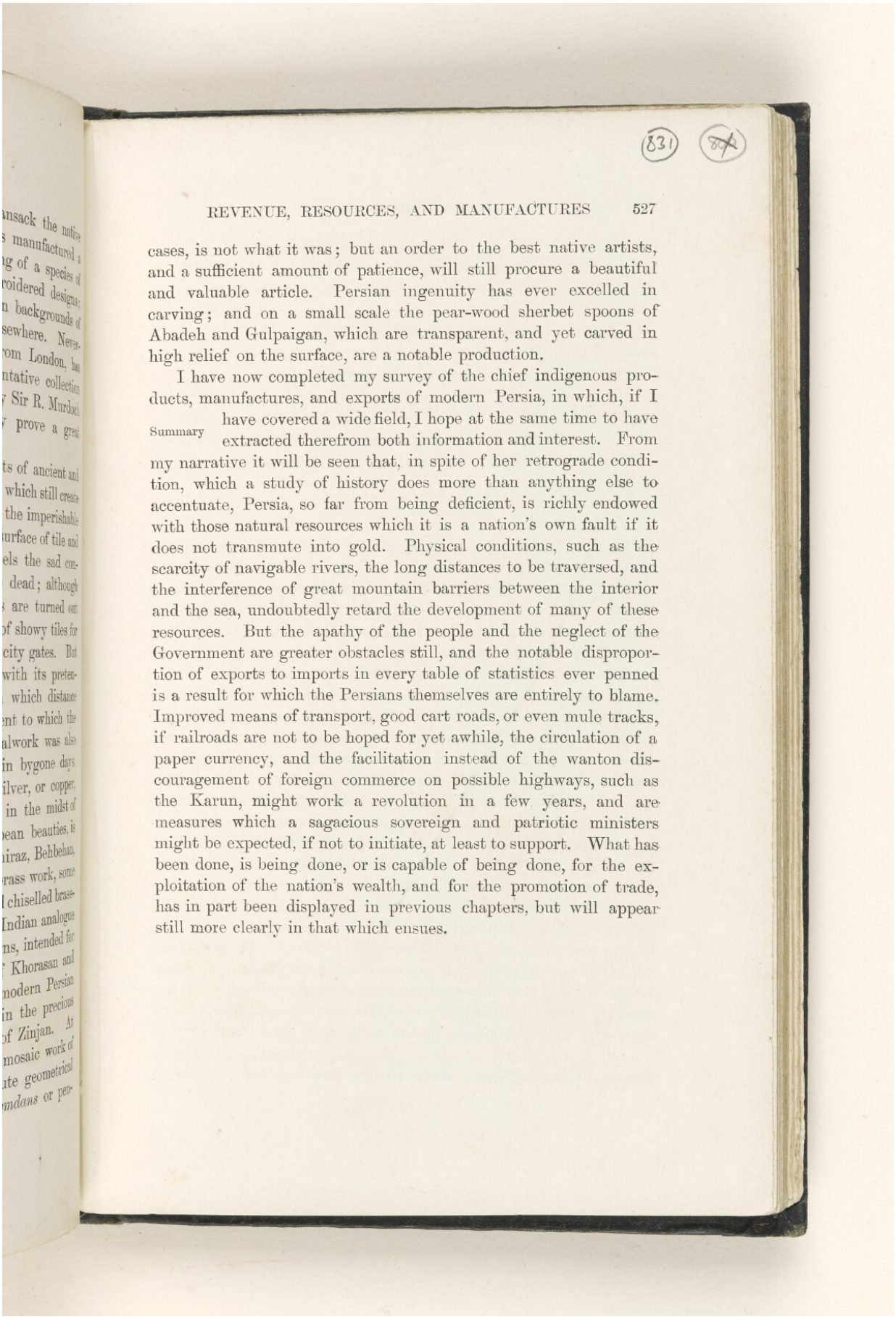



cases, is not what it was; but an order to the best native artists, and a sufficient amount of patience, will still procure a beautiful and valuable article. Persian ingenuity has ever excelled in carving; and on a small scale the pear-wood sherbet spoons of Abadeh and Gulpaigan, which are transparent, and yet carved in high relief on the surface, are a notable production.

Summary

I have now completed my survey of the chief indigenous products, manufactures, and exports of modern Persia, in which, if I have covered a wide field, I hope at the same time to have extracted therefrom both information and interest. From my narrative it will be seen that, in spite of her retrograde condition, which a study of history does more than anything else to accentuate, Persia, so far from being deficient, is richly endowed with those natural resources which it is a nation's own fault if it does not transmute into gold. Physical conditions, such as the scarcity of navigable rivers, the long distances to be traversed, and the interference of great mountain barriers between the interior and the sea, undoubtedly retard the development of many of these resources. But the apathy of the people and the neglect of the Government are greater obstacles still, and the notable disproportion of exports to imports in every table of statistics ever penned is a result for which the Persians themselves are entirely to blame. Improved means of transport, good cart roads, or even mule tracks, if railroads are not to be hoped for yet awhile, the circulation of a paper currency, and the facilitation instead of the wanton discouragement of foreign commerce on possible highways, such as the Karun, might work a revolution in a few years, and are measures which a sagacious sovereign and patriotic ministers might be expected, if not to initiate, at least to support. What has been done, is being done, or is capable of being done, for the exploitation of the nation's wealth, and for the promotion of trade, has in part been displayed in previous chapters, but will appear still more clearly in that which ensues.

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# CHAPTER XXIX

## COMMERCE AND TRADE

PART I.—*History of Perso-European Trade*

PART II.—*The Modern Trade of Persia*

When Greek joined Greek, then was the tug of war.
NATHANIEL LEE, *Alexander the Great*, act iv., sc. ii.

The thread of history

IN pursuance of a claim which I have more than once made for this book—namely, that it aspires to fill up some of the unconsidered *lacunæ* of history, as well as to supply a picture of existing conditions—I propose to preface my account of the present commerce of Persia, and of the acute competition that there prevails in the field of trade between Great Britain and Russia, by a brief retrospect of the earlier stages of that competition, and of the events that, first bringing Persia into mercantile relations with European powers whose sun has long set, gradually opened her ports and markets to the all but exclusive control of two powers whose star had not then risen, and have ended by making them the regular and voluntary customers of Moscow, of Manchester, and of Bombay. I know of no work in which any consecutive attempt has been made to trace the history of the commercial relations that have now prevailed for three and a half centuries between this country and Persia, although for two and a half centuries of that time they superseded and filled the place of diplomatic communications, factors and agents acting the part of envoys and plenipotentiaries, and firmans and charters being substituted for treaties and alliances; and although the records of this period are full of episodes abounding in romance, and worthy of remembrance for the lustre which they shed upon the English name. In piecing together these scattered annals of the past, collected from many sources,[1] I hope, therefore, at the same time to fill a somewhat

[1] The chief of these, in addition to those mentioned in the text are Purchas' *Pilgrims*; Hakluyt's *Voyages*; *Early Russian Travellers* (Hakluyt Society);

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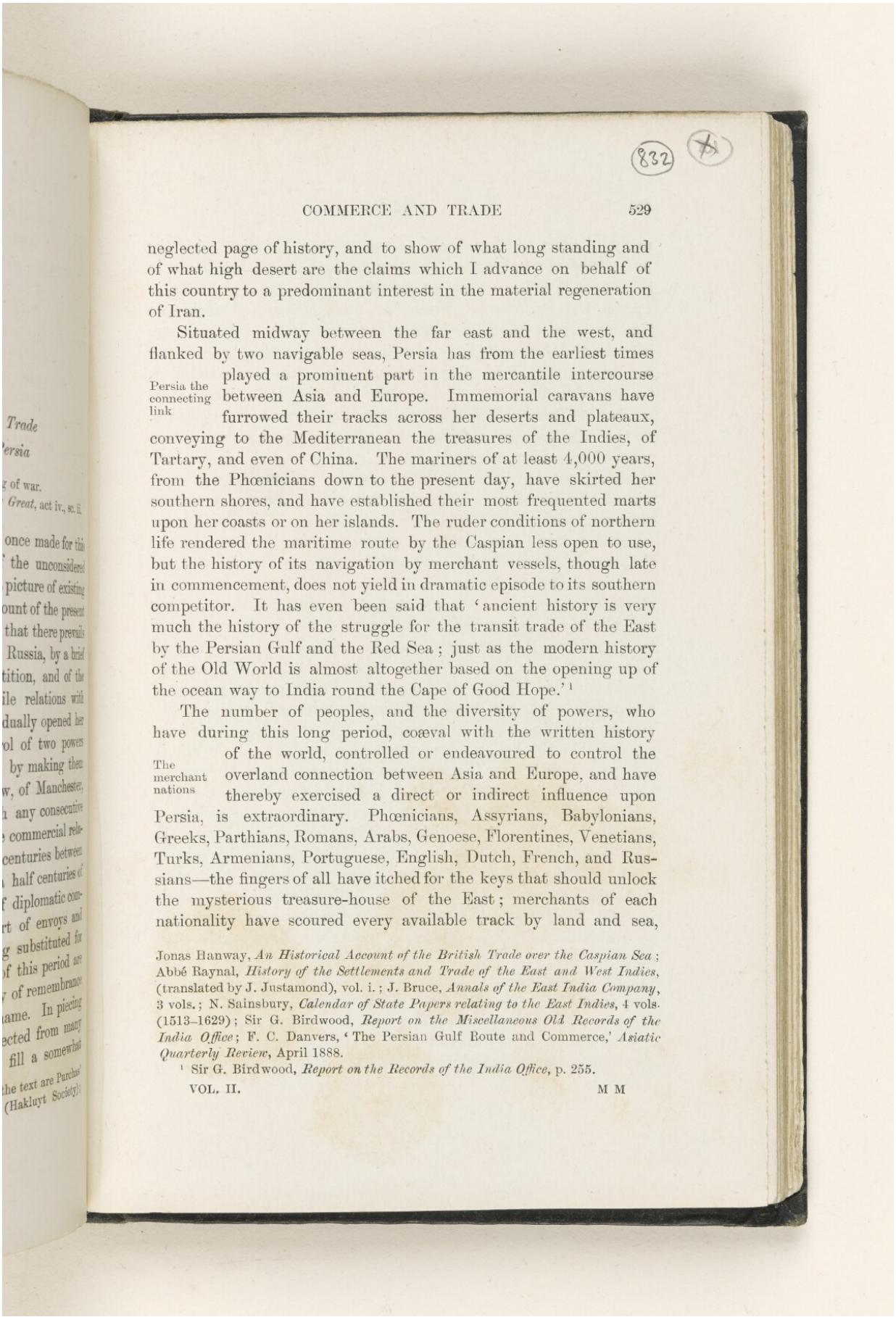



neglected page of history, and to show of what long standing and of what high desert are the claims which I advance on behalf of this country to a predominant interest in the material regeneration of Iran.

Situated midway between the far east and the west, and flanked by two navigable seas, Persia has from the earliest times played a prominent part in the mercantile intercourse between Asia and Europe. Immemorial caravans have furrowed their tracks across her deserts and plateaux, conveying to the Mediterranean the treasures of the Indies, of Tartary, and even of China. The mariners of at least 4,000 years, from the Phœnicians down to the present day, have skirted her southern shores, and have established their most frequented marts upon her coasts or on her islands. The ruder conditions of northern life rendered the maritime route by the Caspian less open to use, but the history of its navigation by merchant vessels, though late in commencement, does not yield in dramatic episode to its southern competitor. It has even been said that 'ancient history is very much the history of the struggle for the transit trade of the East by the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea; just as the modern history of the Old World is almost altogether based on the opening up of the ocean way to India round the Cape of Good Hope.'[1]

Persia the connecting link

The number of peoples, and the diversity of powers, who have during this long period, coæval with the written history of the world, controlled or endeavoured to control the overland connection between Asia and Europe, and have thereby exercised a direct or indirect influence upon Persia, is extraordinary. Phœnicians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Parthians, Romans, Arabs, Genoese, Florentines, Venetians, Turks, Armenians, Portuguese, English, Dutch, French, and Russians—the fingers of all have itched for the keys that should unlock the mysterious treasure-house of the East; merchants of each nationality have scoured every available track by land and sea,

The merchant nations

Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*; Abbé Raynal, *History of the Settlements and Trade of the East and West Indies*, (translated by J. Justamond), vol. i.; J. Bruce, *Annals of the East India Company*, 3 vols.; N. Sainsbury, *Calendar of State Papers relating to the East Indies*, 4 vols. (1513–1629); Sir G. Birdwood, *Report on the Miscellaneous Old Records of the India Office*; F. C. Danvers, 'The Persian Gulf Route and Commerce,' *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April 1888.

[1] Sir G. Birdwood, *Report on the Records of the India Office*, p. 255.



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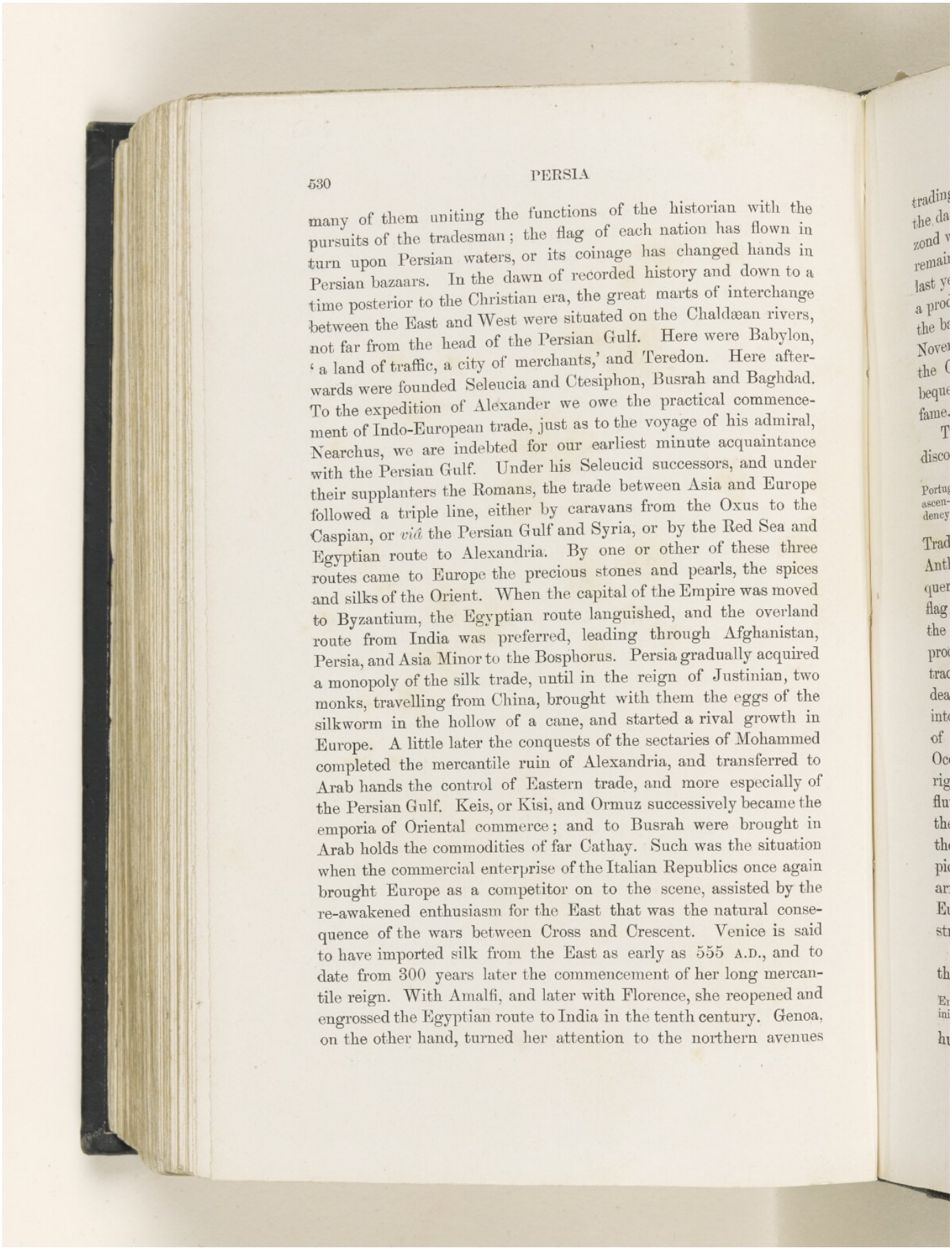



many of them uniting the functions of the historian with the pursuits of the tradesman; the flag of each nation has flown in turn upon Persian waters, or its coinage has changed hands in Persian bazaars. In the dawn of recorded history and down to a time posterior to the Christian era, the great marts of interchange between the East and West were situated on the Chaldæan rivers, not far from the head of the Persian Gulf. Here were Babylon, 'a land of traffic, a city of merchants,' and Teredon. Here afterwards were founded Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Busrah and Baghdad. To the expedition of Alexander we owe the practical commencement of Indo-European trade, just as to the voyage of his admiral, Nearchus, we are indebted for our earliest minute acquaintance with the Persian Gulf. Under his Seleucid successors, and under their supplanters the Romans, the trade between Asia and Europe followed a triple line, either by caravans from the Oxus to the Caspian, or *viâ* the Persian Gulf and Syria, or by the Red Sea and Egyptian route to Alexandria. By one or other of these three routes came to Europe the precious stones and pearls, the spices and silks of the Orient. When the capital of the Empire was moved to Byzantium, the Egyptian route languished, and the overland route from India was preferred, leading through Afghanistan, Persia, and Asia Minor to the Bosphorus. Persia gradually acquired a monopoly of the silk trade, until in the reign of Justinian, two monks, travelling from China, brought with them the eggs of the silkworm in the hollow of a cane, and started a rival growth in Europe. A little later the conquests of the sectaries of Mohammed completed the mercantile ruin of Alexandria, and transferred to Arab hands the control of Eastern trade, and more especially of the Persian Gulf. Keis, or Kisi, and Ormuz successively became the emporia of Oriental commerce; and to Busrah were brought in Arab holds the commodities of far Cathay. Such was the situation when the commercial enterprise of the Italian Republics once again brought Europe as a competitor on to the scene, assisted by the re-awakened enthusiasm for the East that was the natural consequence of the wars between Cross and Crescent. Venice is said to have imported silk from the East as early as 555 A.D., and to date from 300 years later the commencement of her long mercantile reign. With Amalfi, and later with Florence, she reopened and engrossed the Egyptian route to India in the tenth century. Genoa, on the other hand, turned her attention to the northern avenues

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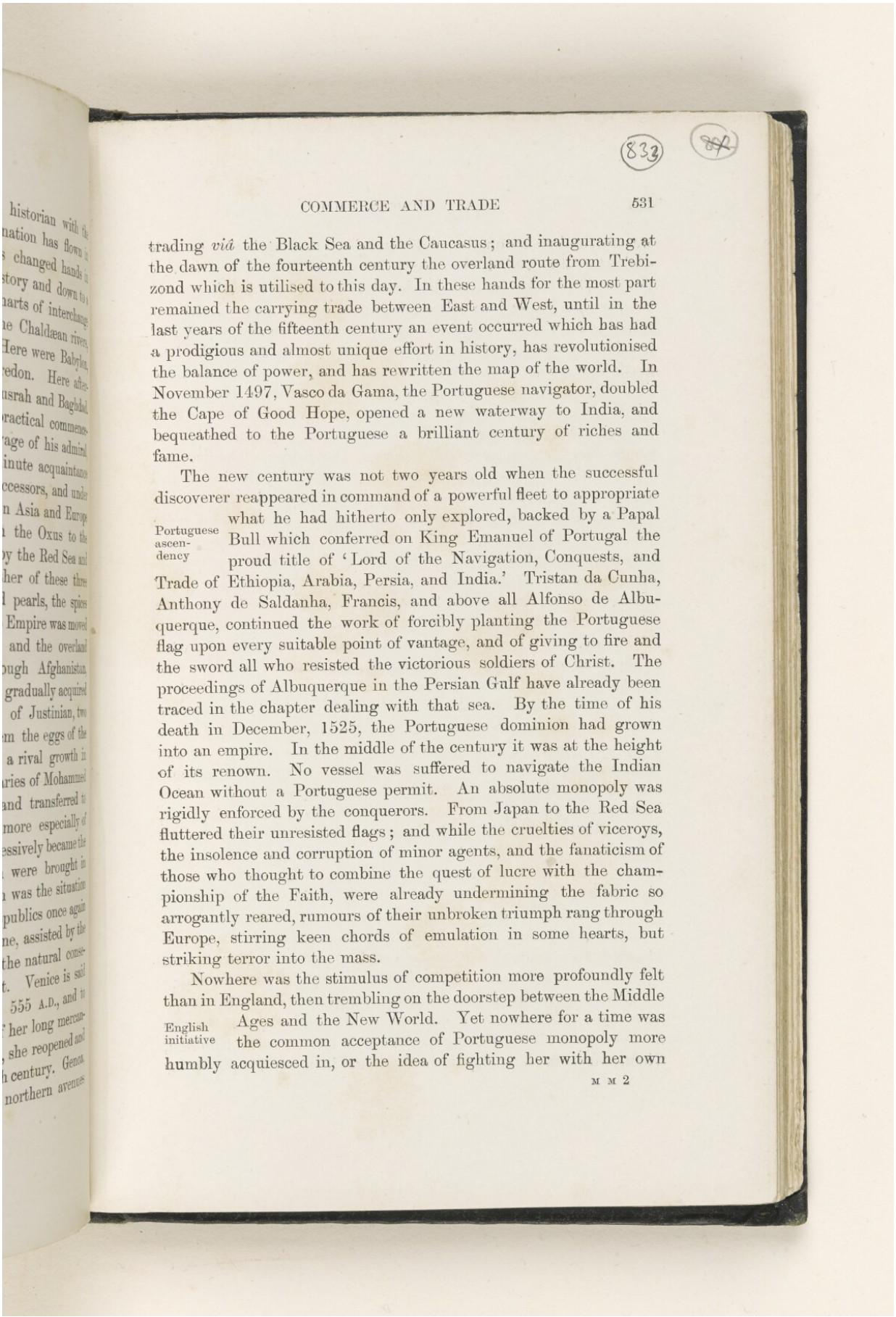



trading *viâ* the Black Sea and the Caucasus; and inaugurating at the dawn of the fourteenth century the overland route from Trebizond which is utilised to this day. In these hands for the most part remained the carrying trade between East and West, until in the last years of the fifteenth century an event occurred which has had a prodigious and almost unique effort in history, has revolutionised the balance of power, and has rewritten the map of the world. In November 1497, Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese navigator, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, opened a new waterway to India, and bequeathed to the Portuguese a brilliant century of riches and fame.

Portuguese ascendency

The new century was not two years old when the successful discoverer reappeared in command of a powerful fleet to appropriate what he had hitherto only explored, backed by a Papal Bull which conferred on King Emanuel of Portugal the proud title of 'Lord of the Navigation, Conquests, and Trade of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India.' Tristan da Cunha, Anthony de Saldanha, Francis, and above all Alfonso de Albuquerque, continued the work of forcibly planting the Portuguese flag upon every suitable point of vantage, and of giving to fire and the sword all who resisted the victorious soldiers of Christ. The proceedings of Albuquerque in the Persian Gulf have already been traced in the chapter dealing with that sea. By the time of his death in December, 1525, the Portuguese dominion had grown into an empire. In the middle of the century it was at the height of its renown. No vessel was suffered to navigate the Indian Ocean without a Portuguese permit. An absolute monopoly was rigidly enforced by the conquerors. From Japan to the Red Sea fluttered their unresisted flags; and while the cruelties of viceroys, the insolence and corruption of minor agents, and the fanaticism of those who thought to combine the quest of lucre with the championship of the Faith, were already undermining the fabric so arrogantly reared, rumours of their unbroken triumph rang through Europe, stirring keen chords of emulation in some hearts, but striking terror into the mass.

English initiative

Nowhere was the stimulus of competition more profoundly felt than in England, then trembling on the doorstep between the Middle Ages and the New World. Yet nowhere for a time was the common acceptance of Portuguese monopoly more humbly acquiesced in, or the idea of fighting her with her own



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weapons and on her own ground less seriously entertained. In their desire to get to India and to dip their hands in the fabled garners of the East, the explorers and merchants under the early Tudors could compass no better idea than to discover a new route for themselves which should escape Portuguese competition altogether, and provide a private maritime highway to the enchanted goal. The north-western and the north-eastern passages were each thought likely to supply this alternative channel, and were successively tried. In 1553 Sebastian Cabot obtained from Edward VI. a preliminary charter for the 'Company of the Merchants Adventurers for the Discovery of Regions, Dominions, Islands, and Places unknown,' a nomenclature that sufficiently indicated the haphazard character of the undertaking, and testified to the admitted dearth of geographical knowledge. In the same year Sir Hugh Willoughby, starting with two ships on the north-eastern quest which was to end in the recovery of this new Golden Fleece, was frozen to death off the coast of Lapland. A third vessel, however, commanded by Stephen Burrough, and piloted by Richard Chancellor, sailed into the White Sea, and discovered Archangel. This accidental and unforeseen event was fraught with momentous consequences. Chancellor, travelling inland to the court of the Grand Duke of Moscovy, the famous Ivan Vassilievitch the Terrible, was favourably received by him, and laid the foundations of the British 'Russian or Moscovy Company' (whose chequered career I shall briefly relate), for the conduct of the overland trade through Russia with the lands lying to the east and south of the Caspian. In 1557, a formal charter of incorporation having been granted to the company by Philip and Mary in 1555, Master Anthony Jenkinson, in company with Richard and Robert Johnson, were despatched by the directors to explore and to open the projected trade routes with Central Asia. They journeyed *viâ* Moscow to Astrakhan; they flew for the first time the British flag (the red cross of St. George) upon the Caspian; they reached and returned safely from Bokhara, the first Englishmen, so far as my knowledge extends, that ever set foot in the Tartar capital; and they furnished the desired incentive for a more extended venture.

It was now contemplated by the company in include Persia within the sphere of its operations, for a twofold object. In the first place, the silk-producing provinces of that country, Shirwan, Gilan, and Mazanderan, lay in the north and in immediate proximity

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to the Caspian Sea, a fact which seemed to suggest an easy triumph over 'the Portugals,' who could only purchase and export this valuable commodity from the southern havens, at a distance of several hundred miles from the area of production. And secondly, through Persia it might be possible to tap the mysterious resources of Hindustan by overland caravan routes, which should divert to camelback and muleback the wealth that was now poured into Portuguese carracks and galleons. Accordingly the travelled Jenkinson was again sent out in company with one Edward Clarke to make the initial experiment, bearing with them 'cloth of golde, plate, pearles, saphyres and other jewels, as well as woollen cloths (karsies or kerseys),' and a letter from Queen Elizabeth to the 'Great Sophie, Emperour of the Persians, Medes, Parthians, Hyrcanes, Carmanarians, Margians, of the people on this side and beyond the river of Tygris, and of all men and nations betweene the Caspian Sea and the Gulph of Persia'—a compendium of his titles which could not fail to be gratifying to the Sefavi monarch, but which affords an amusing test of the knowledge of Persia possessed by the best informed English intellects of the Tudor time. The narratives of this and of the subsequent expeditions organised by the Moscovy Company, contained in a number of letters written by the principal actors, have been ably edited and republished, and constitute one of the most interesting volumes of travel ever penned.[1]

The Moscovy Company and Persia

During the twenty years from 1561 to 1581, six trading expeditions to Persia were despatched by the Moscovy Company, and assuredly commercial enterprise has rarely been prosecuted with greater gallantry or under more serious discouragement. Jenkinson himself received a rebuff at the start that would have deterred any less resolute pioneer. Having landed at Derbend, then a Persian town, in August 1562, and having proceeded to Kazvin, at that time the Persian capital, he was received in audience by Shah Tahmasp, to whom he presented the Queen of England's letter, but who returned to him this ungracious reply: '"Oh, thou unbeliever," sayd he, "we have no neede to have friendship with the unbelievers," and so willed mee to depart'; the reason of the Shah's reluctance to enter into commercial relations with Englishmen being that he had just composed his differences with Turkey, whose

Trading expeditions

[1] *Early Voyages in Russia and Persia* (Hakluyt Society), edited by E. D. Morgan and C. H. Coote. 2 vols. 1886.

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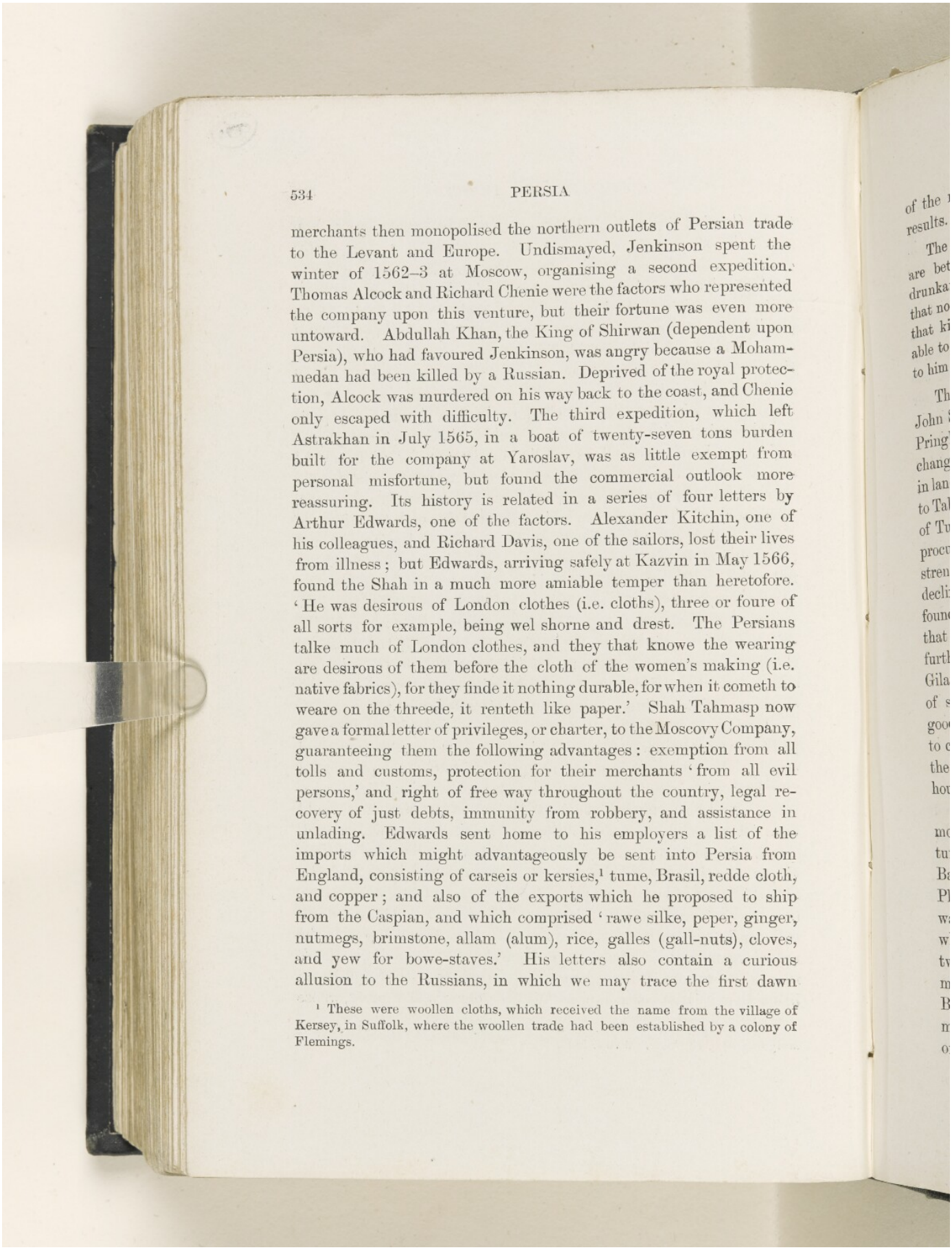



merchants then monopolised the northern outlets of Persian trade to the Levant and Europe. Undismayed, Jenkinson spent the winter of 1562–3 at Moscow, organising a second expedition. Thomas Alcock and Richard Chenie were the factors who represented the company upon this venture, but their fortune was even more untoward. Abdullah Khan, the King of Shirwan (dependent upon Persia), who had favoured Jenkinson, was angry because a Mohammedan had been killed by a Russian. Deprived of the royal protection, Alcock was murdered on his way back to the coast, and Chenie only escaped with difficulty. The third expedition, which left Astrakhan in July 1565, in a boat of twenty-seven tons burden built for the company at Yaroslav, was as little exempt from personal misfortune, but found the commercial outlook more reassuring. Its history is related in a series of four letters by Arthur Edwards, one of the factors. Alexander Kitchin, one of his colleagues, and Richard Davis, one of the sailors, lost their lives from illness; but Edwards, arriving safely at Kazvin in May 1566, found the Shah in a much more amiable temper than heretofore. 'He was desirous of London clothes (i.e. cloths), three or foure of all sorts for example, being wel shorne and drest. The Persians talke much of London clothes, and they that knowe the wearing are desirous of them before the cloth of the women's making (i.e. native fabrics), for they finde it nothing durable, for when it cometh to weare on the threede, it renteth like paper.' Shah Tahmasp now gave a formal letter of privileges, or charter, to the Moscovy Company, guaranteeing them the following advantages: exemption from all tolls and customs, protection for their merchants 'from all evil persons,' and right of free way throughout the country, legal recovery of just debts, immunity from robbery, and assistance in unlading. Edwards sent home to his employers a list of the imports which might advantageously be sent into Persia from England, consisting of carseis or kersies,[1] tume, Brasil, redde cloth, and copper; and also of the exports which he proposed to ship from the Caspian, and which comprised 'rawe silke, peper, ginger, nutmegs, brimstone, allam (alum), rice, galles (gall-nuts), cloves, and yew for bowe-staves.' His letters also contain a curious allusion to the Russians, in which we may trace the first dawn

[1] These were woollen cloths, which received the name from the village of Kersey, in Suffolk, where the woollen trade had been established by a colony of Flemings.

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of the mercantile jealousy that afterwards had such momentous results.

The Russes are sorie that we doe trade into these parts. For wee are better beloved than they are; because they are given to be drunkards, they are much hated by the people. It is to be wished that none should serve your worships in theese parts that be given to that kinde of vice; and that your chiefe agent and factor should be able to rule and governe himselfe that no dishonestie should be imputed to him and us.

The fourth expedition consisted of Arthur Edwards, chief agent, John Sparke, Lawrence Chapman, Christopher Fawcet, and Richard Pringle. Arriving in Persia in August 1568, they found that a change had come over the spirit of the scene. They received no help in landing, in spite of the Shah's former decree; Chapman, journeying to Tabriz, found the market already overstocked by the competition of Turks, Armenians, and Venetians; in Kazvin no sale could be procured; the king, notwithstanding his former affability, on the strength of which 2,000 kersies had been ordered from England, declined to take any cloth; and the factors travelling in Gilan found Turkish agents everywhere. It was but a poor consolation that Chapman succeeded in extracting from Shah Tahmasp a further decree which granted the English free passage through Gilan and all parts of Persia, ordered native assistance in the event of shipwreck on the coast, and the safe custody and delivery of goods in the event of the agent's death, and conferred the right to camel hire at the ordinary rate, to the protection of roadguards, the supply of quarters and victuals, and the purchase or erection of houses.

The fifth voyage was fraught with even greater perils, and was more fatal to life than its predecessors. In the 'Thomas Bonaventure,' of seventy tons, there left Yaroslav, in July 1568, Thomas Bannister, Lawrence Chapman, Geoffrey Ducket, Captain Lionel Plumtree (the chronicler of the expedition), and others. On their way down the Volga they were attacked by the Nagay Tartars, who were only repulsed after a fierce fight, in which Bannister was twice wounded. When at length they reached Persia, Ducket made his way to Tabriz, where he stayed for two and a half years. Bannister went up to Kazvin, where, finding the Shah in a most benign mood, he succeeded in effecting a good sale and in securing most of his requests, though he was unsuccessful in the attempt to

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inaugurate a through trade with India, which project appears to have been broached upon this occasion for the first time. Disasters now fell fast and thick on the devoted band. Bannister died in Ganjeh in July 1571; Chapman died also. Five of the company died and two were robbed or murdered within the space of five weeks. The survivors, under Ducket, weighed anchor in May 1573, but the tale of their calamity was not yet complete. On the Caspian they were attacked by Cossack pirates, and after a valiant resistance, in which fourteen of the enemy were killed and every Englishman was wounded, were compelled to surrender the vessel in return for their lives. The corsairs turned them adrift in an open boat, in which they eventually reached Astrakhan. A further accident befell them on the return journey up the Volga, but in October 1574, Ducket, Plumtree, and Amos Riall again reached England, after as perilous a venture as ever befell English hearts of oak, even in those days of fearless enterprise and strenuous deed.

It was not till five years later, in June 1579, that the sixth and last expedition left Gravesend, the chief of the four factors deputed by the company being the same Arthur Edwards who had already shared and survived the perils of two of the previous undertakings. He was less fortunate on this occasion, for he died at Astrakhan in the following year. The same Nemesis that had dogged the footsteps of the preceding ventures now attended his companions. Shah Tahmasp had died in 1576, and his old enemies the Turks had seized the opportunity to invade the outlying portions of the Persian dominions. Sailing from Astrakhan in the spring of 1580, the English factors heard at Baku that Shirwan was in possession of Ottoman troops, and that Shemakha (Shumakhi) had been destroyed. Accordingly they landed and marched by the coast to Derbend, where they effected no great sale. Their own vessel being leaky, they bought another, which was immediately driven ashore in a storm, and, when finally they succeeded in starting upon their return voyage, they were caught in the ice at the mouth of the Volga. After many hardships the survivors reached London in September 1581, and the company, whose speculation had been attended with as small pecuniary success as it had been pursued with dauntless courage, very wisely decided to abandon so hazardous a field of adventure.

In contrast with later experiences, it is with surprise that we read of a British mercantile undertaking, conducted by Russian

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invitation, with Russian countenance, and very largely on Russian rivers and soil. The reason of this strange phenomenon was the following: The Russians were at that time in far too backward a condition to embark upon any trading venture, or even upon any maritime expedition, themselves; and were content, therefore, to profit by the superior skill and industry of others. Moreover, Ivan the Terrible stood greatly in need of supplies, and particularly of warlike stores and ordnance, which could only be procured from the foreigner, and which the English merchants brought out to him from London in return for the exemptions granted to them in Russian territory. The failure of the British experiment was attributable to several reasons: imperfect acquaintance with the country, which had led the first voyagers to underrate the competition of the Turks, Armenians, and Venetians, whose long-established control of the Persian market was not easily to be shaken; bad management;[1] the risks arising partly from the navigation of the Caspian, partly from the Persian climate, and partly from the insecurity inseparable from barbarous manners and troubled times; but, above all, the exorbitant length and complexity of the sea, river, and land route employed, which rendered it impossible for merchandise so conveyed to compete with the more direct overland and maritime routes by which Persia was approached on the south and west. Nevertheless, history does not record a finer example of British daring; and the names of these forgotten factors are as worthy of remembrance as those of illustrious mariners who have bequeathed new titles to the shores and islands of the western main.

Causes of failure

For some time after this the northern route to Persia, *viâ* Russia and the Caspian, was abandoned by English merchants, the close of the century having witnessed the inauguration of a fresh undertaking, to which I shall presently turn. In 1600, however, Sir Anthony Sherley, an English gentleman and soldier of fortune, appeared in Persia, acting upon the suggestion of his friend the Earl of Essex, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, with the double object of persuading the Shah to join in an alliance against the Turks, and of re-establishing commercial intercourse between Persia and England. At Venice he had

Grant to Sir Anthony Sherley

[1] A writer in Purchas' *Pilgrims* says that the 'evill success was owing to the forwardnesse of some few and evill doing of some unjust factors,' no doubt an allusion to Johnson.

encountered some Persian merchants, who had greatly flattered the last named desire. This self-accredited but gallant emissary was received with the utmost distinction by Shah Abbas, who formed for him a strong personal attachment, and who, besides sending him as his own plenipotentiary to the powers of Christendom, granted him a firman, 'which shall be of full effect and force for ever, without renuing, for me and my successors, not to be changed,' conferring freedom from all customs and tolls, legal recovery of debts, protection of person and property, religious liberty, and the right 'to repaire and trafique in and through our dominions without disturbances or molestations,' upon all Christian merchants.[1] It does not appear, however, that any immediate advantage was taken of this concession by English traders, although it doubtless encouraged them in their forthcoming essay in the south.

Early in the new century a fresh endeavour was made, by negotiation with the Czar of Russia, to reopen the overland route through his dominions, between England and the East.

Sir John Merrick

In 1646 Sir John Merrick arrived at Moscow on a mission with this object from James I. to the Czar Michael Feodorovitch, the first of the Romanoffs. The conservatism of the Boyars, however, would not admit of the concession; and, upon the plea that nothing could be done till the war with Poland was over, the request was refused.[2] In 1618 the Moscovy and East India Companies agreed to amalgamate their fortunes, and it was proposed to advance a loan of 100,000 marks to the Czar, in order to secure his support for the revival of the transit trade through his dominions.[3] Sir Dudley Digge was sent out as ambassador in the same year to negotiate a formal agreement; but again the mission failed.[4] Thirty years afterwards, when the English monarchy was overthrown and the Commonwealth established, the Czar revoked all privileges enjoyed by foreigners, and expelled all British traders from Muscovy, except from Archangel. It was not till a century later that, under a more liberal monarch, and in the hands of the Russia Company, the project again achieved a short-lived realisation.

[1] For a copy of this grant, *vide Report of Sir Anthony Sherley's Journey*, 1600, quoted by Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 353.

[2] *Calendar of State Papers* (East Indies Series), vol. ii. (1617–1621). Nos. 307, 308, 309, 310, 312, 313.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 306.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 467.

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In 1619 we hear of one Giles Hobbs, an agent of the English East India Company, who was deputed by his employers to travel to Persia by the deserted route of Jenkinson from Moscow and Astrakhan, and who, after a hazardous journey of seventeen months, in which he suffered arrest and imprisonment, arrived at Isfahan, and suggested a reopening of this northern channel.[1] At that time the Portuguese enjoyed an absolute mercantile predominance in Persia, and the spleen of the worthy Englishman vented itself in the following paragraph:—

Giles Hobbs

> Gentlemen, this your Persian trade, as it is in her infancy, hath many enemies: the Turks, Arabians, Armenians, and the proud Portugall, whose lying tongue ceaseth not to dishonour our kingdome and nation; but the Lord, I hope, will turne the dishonour upon his owne pate.[2]

Hanway says that, early in the seventeenth century, the French formed a design of opening trade with the Caspian and Persia, by way of Archangel and Moscow. This project, of which I have found no other confirmation, and which differs from the other French schemes to which allusion will presently be made, came to nothing.

French ambition

The next attempt to revive the northern trade route was made in a novel quarter. Early in the seventeenth century the silk manufactories of Holstein had attained some eminence in Europe; and it occurred to a Hamburg merchant, named Brucman, that a profitable speculation might accrue from the import of the raw material direct from Persia, and that the wealth which flowed into the coffers of the Portuguese and Dutch by their maritime advantages on the South, might be diverted into equally remunerative channels on the North. Not being strong enough, even in conjunction with his fellow merchants, to act alone, Brucman appealed to the Duke of Holstein, who at once entered into the spirit of the enterprise, and in 1637 deputed Brucman with others on a special embassy to the Court of Persia. On their way they made ruinous terms with the Grand Duke of Moscovy, for the right of free transit through Russia; and, upon arriving in Persia, soon found that customs and freight charges would leave no margin of profit. Brucman accordingly changed his tone and posed as a diplomatic envoy, courting an alliance against Turkey.

Holstein embassy

[1] *Calendar of State Papers* (East Indies), vol. ii. No. 753.
[2] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. v. cap. xvi.

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The record of the embassy, of its stormy fortunes and its abortive issue, has been vividly narrated by its secretary, Adam Olearius, who cherished a bitter dislike against Brueman.[1] The Shah, Sefi I., could not understand the confused and blundering accounts of the chief ambassador; and the latter was so universally admitted to have failed that, upon his return, he paid the penalty with his head.

Peter the Great and the Russia Company

Passing for the moment over the intervening and successful movements of British trade upon the south—a subject to which I shall presently revert—we arrive, after the lapse of a century, at an epoch when a second attempt, in no way less adventurous, and, alas! not less ill-starred, than its predecessor, was made by the British Russia Company, which had, in the meantime, shifted its headquarters to St. Petersburg, to reopen the Moscow-Astrakhan-Caspian route to northern Persia. In the interval since the last venture the Russians had begun to trade themselves, and had established their commercial base at Shemakha. There, however, they were seriously harassed by the inroads of the Lesghians, by one of which, in 1712, Yevreinoff, a Russian merchant, was despoiled of mercantile property worth 200,000 crowns. Peter the Great was now upon the throne, and among the far-sighted ambitions cherished by this remarkable man was the aim of attracting to Russia, by new as well as by recognised avenues, the transit trade of the East. In 1717 he sent the ill-fated Beckovitz to explore the old and new channels of the Oxus. In 1718 he issued a decree throwing open trade within his dominions to all foreigners. In 1722, taking advantage of the disorder in Persia consequent upon the Afghan invasion, and of the weakness of Shah Tahmasp, he made that armed descent upon the northern provinces of Persia which I have previously described. The silk trade of Gilan was one of the chief temptations that drew him thither, while, at the same time, he took steps to improve the Caspian navigation by engaging an Englishman, Captain P. H. Bruce, to make a survey of its shores.[2] Peter did not live long enough himself to witness the realisation of his schemes, but a few months before he died (January 1725) he made overtures through an English merchant named Richard Mainwaring to the merchants of London with a view to reinstituting the trans-Russian trade

[1] Adam Olearius, *Relation du Voyage*, Paris, 2 vols. 1639. Translated into English by John Davies. London, 1662. [2] *Vide* Bruce's *Memoirs*.

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between England and Persia which had been dropped 150 years before. His death put an end to the scheme; but in December 1734 the Empress Anne, in faithful execution of his ideas, signed a concession granting to British subjects the right of carrying merchandise through Russia to and from Persia on payment of a 3 per cent. *ad valorem* duty. A little later, in 1738, John Elton, an Englishman of rare, but impetuous, genius, and the real father of the revived scheme, having acquired some experience of Central Asia in the Russian service, and having formed the idea that the resources of the Khanates might be tapped by a new route proceeding from Astrabad to Bokhara, proposed to some of the factors of the British Russia Company in St. Petersburg to open this new artery of trade. With one Mungo Graham he left Moscow in 1739, sailed from Astrakhan, landed at Pir-i-Bazaar, and having addressed a formal petition to Reza Kuli Mirza, son of Nadir Shah, then ruling as regent at Meshed in the absence of his father in India, received a decree from the prince authorising him to land goods and trade everywhere in the Persian dominions from the Caspian to Attock on the Indus—an interesting corollary to Nadir's conquests six months before—to hire or to build houses at Resht or at any other place, and to pay custom dues only upon landing. Elated by this advantage, Elton appears to have formed an altogether exaggerated notion of the prospects of future trade. Returning to St. Petersburg, he wrote a magniloquent letter to the British minister, from which I have previously quoted, and so inflamed the imagination of the London merchants that, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the Turkey and Levant Company, and of the East India Company, who were alarmed at competition from so novel a quarter, a powerful movement was organised by the Russia Company, the Government was won over, several members of the company were called to the bar of the House of Commons to give explanations, and finally an Act of Parliament was passed authorising and regulating the trade. The record of these and of the subsequent proceedings has been handed down to us by the graphic pen of Jonas Hanway, himself one of the leading spirits in the sequel, and a London citizen and philanthropist of high repute and intelligence.[1]

[1] *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, &c.* (4 vols. 1753; 2 vols. 1754, 1762). Jonas Hanway, though Dr. Johnson said of him that 'he acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home,' was eminent both as merchant, voyager, public official, philanthropist, and

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John Elton and Jonas Hanway

The British Government having received permission from the Russians to build two ships at Kazan on the Volga, these vessels were launched in June 1742. Elton, being placed in charge of the expedition, sailed in the 'Empress of Russia,' Captain Woodruffe. In the second vessel, the 'Elizabeth,' Captain Gilbert Blaire, sailed James Brown, Martin van Mierop, and Richard Wilder, the remaining factors. Jealousy soon broke out between the two parties, largely owing to the wayward and imperious temper of Elton, who, in January 1743, without any application to, or permission from, the Company, entered the service of Nadir Shah as naval constructor on the Caspian, under circumstances which I have narrated in an earlier chapter on the Persian Navy. Taking the 'Empress of Russia,' which had already prosecuted some trading voyages between Resht, Baku, and Derbend, he proceeded on a survey of the eastern coast of the Caspian as far north as Balkan Bay. Rumours of his action were transmitted to St. Petersburg, and excited the liveliest suspicions of the Russian Government. Jonas Hanway, at that time a partner in a mercantile house in the capital, was accordingly sent out by his employers to report on the situation. Upon his arrival in Persia at the close of 1743, he very speedily took stock of the situation. The amenities of courts were no guarantee for amity of commerce. He found Russian officials and traders everywhere jealous and hostile. Intent upon an independent venture, Hanway at once started off to carry out Elton's original project, and to open the route from Astrabad to Meshed. At Astrabad he came in for a local rebellion, his caravan, when about to start, was seized and the bulk of his property confiscated, and he himself narrowly escaped being handed over as a slave to the Turkomans. Having at length escaped, he returned through Mazanderan and Gilan to Kazvin, and proceeded from thence to Hamadan, where, finding Nadir Shah in camp, he procured from him an order for the restitution of his stolen goods.

author. Born in 1712, he became a partner in the house of Dingley, in St. Petersburg, in 1743, and in that interest travelled in Persia and Russia until 1750, when he returned to London. There he led a life of public activity, founding many excellent institutions, and particularly interesting himself in the welfare of the young. When he died, in 1786, a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey. *Vide* John Pugh, *Remarkable Occurrences in the Life of Jonas Hanway*, 1787, 1798. A contemporaneous account of the same Anglo-Persian venture is to be found in the *Voyages and Travels* by Dr. J. Cook, who accompanied Prince Galitzin, Russian Envoy to Nadir Shah in 1747. He disagrees in some respects with Hanway. *Vide* vol. ii. cap. xxxiii.

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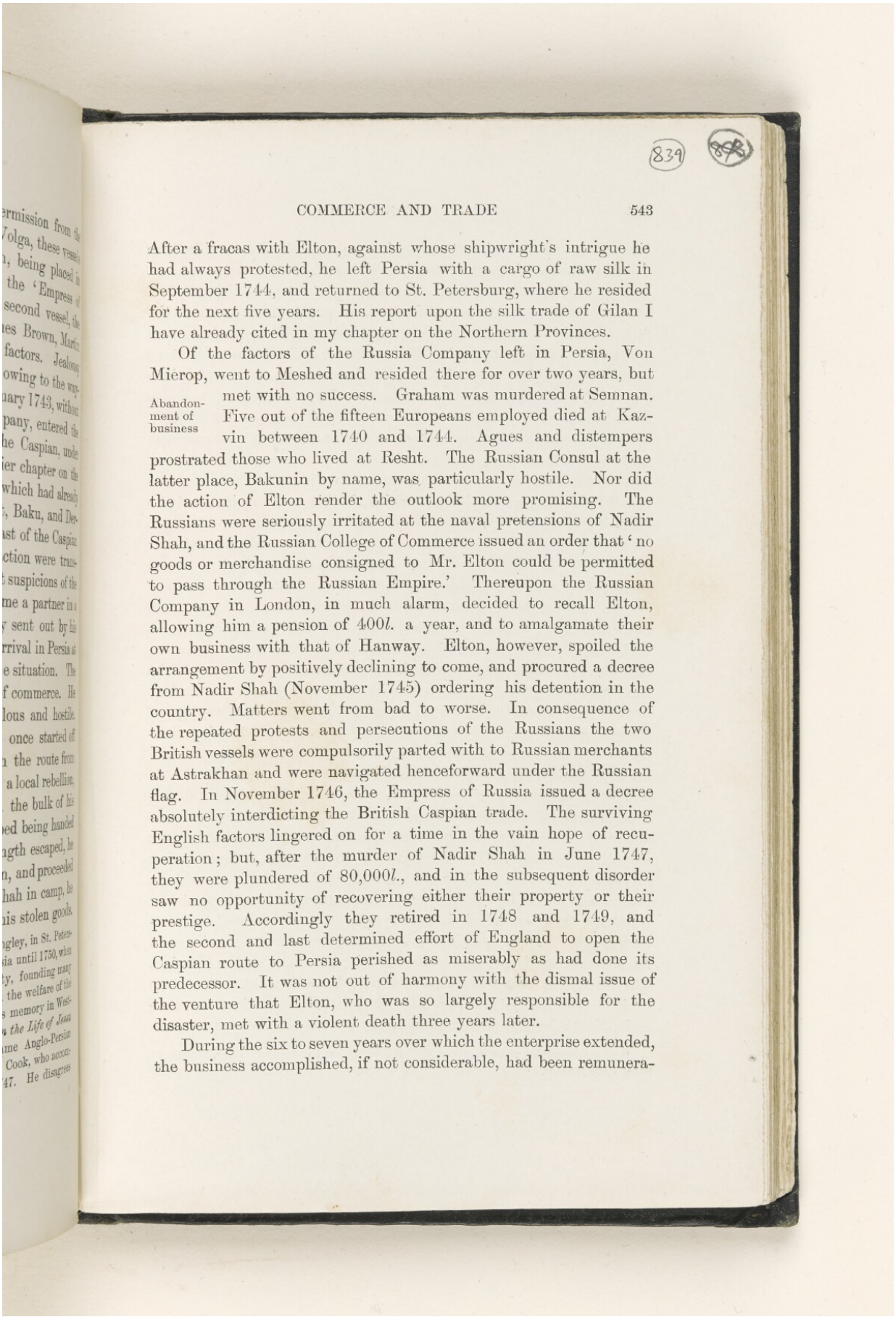



After a fracas with Elton, against whose shipwright's intrigue he had always protested, he left Persia with a cargo of raw silk in September 1744, and returned to St. Petersburg, where he resided for the next five years. His report upon the silk trade of Gilan I have already cited in my chapter on the Northern Provinces.

Of the factors of the Russia Company left in Persia, Von Mierop, went to Meshed and resided there for over two years, but met with no success. Graham was murdered at Semnan. Five out of the fifteen Europeans employed died at Kazvin between 1740 and 1744. Agues and distempers prostrated those who lived at Resht. The Russian Consul at the latter place, Bakunin by name, was particularly hostile. Nor did the action of Elton render the outlook more promising. The Russians were seriously irritated at the naval pretensions of Nadir Shah, and the Russian College of Commerce issued an order that 'no goods or merchandise consigned to Mr. Elton could be permitted to pass through the Russian Empire.' Thereupon the Russian Company in London, in much alarm, decided to recall Elton, allowing him a pension of 400*l.* a year, and to amalgamate their own business with that of Hanway. Elton, however, spoiled the arrangement by positively declining to come, and procured a decree from Nadir Shah (November 1745) ordering his detention in the country. Matters went from bad to worse. In consequence of the repeated protests and persecutions of the Russians the two British vessels were compulsorily parted with to Russian merchants at Astrakhan and were navigated henceforward under the Russian flag. In November 1746, the Empress of Russia issued a decree absolutely interdicting the British Caspian trade. The surviving English factors lingered on for a time in the vain hope of recuperation; but, after the murder of Nadir Shah in June 1747, they were plundered of 80,000*l.*, and in the subsequent disorder saw no opportunity of recovering either their property or their prestige. Accordingly they retired in 1748 and 1749, and the second and last determined effort of England to open the Caspian route to Persia perished as miserably as had done its predecessor. It was not out of harmony with the dismal issue of the venture that Elton, who was so largely responsible for the disaster, met with a violent death three years later.

Abandonment of business

During the six to seven years over which the enterprise extended, the business accomplished, if not considerable, had been remunera-

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tive. It consisted almost solely in the export of raw silk from Persia and in the import of English cloth and other European goods into that country. The attempt to trade with Meshed was, according to Hanway, a great mistake, and the factors would have done better to have stayed quietly at Resht and waited for, instead of running after, custom. The balance-sheet, as published by him, showed the following figures:—Imports into Persia 1743–6, 690,492 crowns, or 174,398*l.*; exports of raw silk from Persia 1743–9, value in Persia, 373,500 crowns, or 93,375*l.* Hanway mentions that the cost price of silk was about 10*s.* per lb., and that, deducting all expenses, it was commonly sold for 15*s.* 6*d.* —a profit of over 50 per cent.; and sometimes for 28*s.*—a profit of 180 per cent.; calculations which, in his opinion, justified the risks incurred, however great they might appear.

Balance-sheet

The reasons of failure were both commercial and political, but chiefly the latter. So brisk a competition prevailed between Russians, English, and Armenians, that the markets of Gilan were glutted with European wares, which could not be sold at a profit.[1] The British wasted their strength by dividing their business and by the jealousy that raged between the rival firms. Persia was in so miserable a plight at the time that the natives had not the wherewithal to buy. But beyond all other impediments must be counted the hostility of Russia, set in motion by the self-seeking though heroic obstinacy of Elton, and the appalling condition of Persia, of which, under the declining years of Nadir's reign, Hanway has drawn a picture of such terrible fidelity. In a society at once so degraded and so unruly there was small scope for the pacific operations of trade; and the moment for renewing the attempt was signally ill-chosen. The hostility of Russia was a sequel that might with equal certainty have been predicted, as soon as to a commerce which her people must have regarded with jealousy from the start, and which imperial policy was powerless to recommend to local agents, was joined an attempt to convert Persia into a naval power and to dispute the Russian mastery of the Caspian. The wonder is, that the Russians should have thought the revenue derived from transit-dues paid by the British a sufficient compensation for their admission to a field of whose spoils they themselves,

Reasons of failure

[1] The Armenians were even compelled to abandon the trade in 1745, four years before the British.

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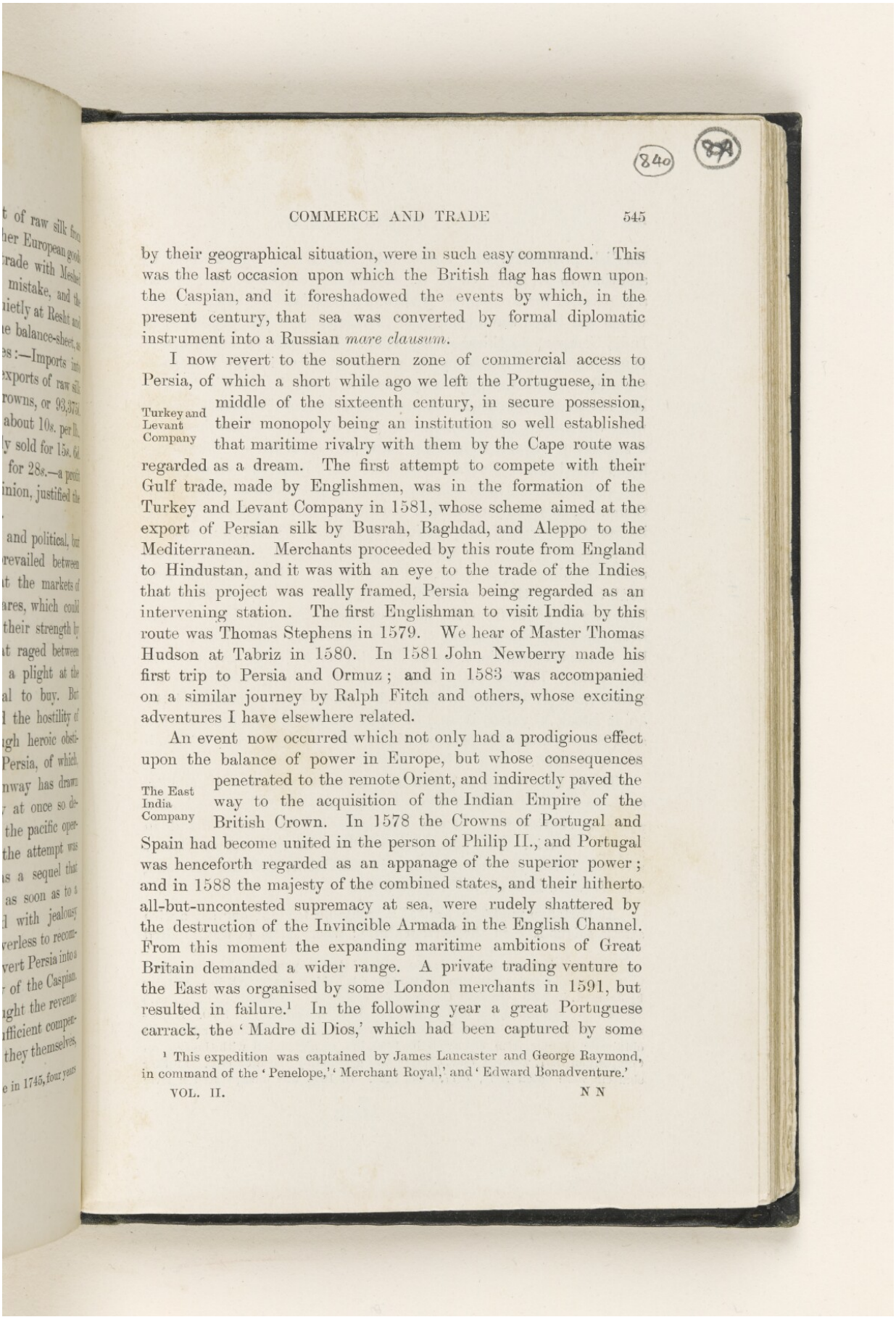



by their geographical situation, were in such easy command. This was the last occasion upon which the British flag has flown upon the Caspian, and it foreshadowed the events by which, in the present century, that sea was converted by formal diplomatic instrument into a Russian *mare clausum*.

Turkey and Levant Company

I now revert to the southern zone of commercial access to Persia, of which a short while ago we left the Portuguese, in the middle of the sixteenth century, in secure possession, their monopoly being an institution so well established that maritime rivalry with them by the Cape route was regarded as a dream. The first attempt to compete with their Gulf trade, made by Englishmen, was in the formation of the Turkey and Levant Company in 1581, whose scheme aimed at the export of Persian silk by Busrah, Baghdad, and Aleppo to the Mediterranean. Merchants proceeded by this route from England to Hindustan, and it was with an eye to the trade of the Indies that this project was really framed, Persia being regarded as an intervening station. The first Englishman to visit India by this route was Thomas Stephens in 1579. We hear of Master Thomas Hudson at Tabriz in 1580. In 1581 John Newberry made his first trip to Persia and Ormuz; and in 1583 was accompanied on a similar journey by Ralph Fitch and others, whose exciting adventures I have elsewhere related.

The East India Company

An event now occurred which not only had a prodigious effect upon the balance of power in Europe, but whose consequences penetrated to the remote Orient, and indirectly paved the way to the acquisition of the Indian Empire of the British Crown. In 1578 the Crowns of Portugal and Spain had become united in the person of Philip II., and Portugal was henceforth regarded as an appanage of the superior power; and in 1588 the majesty of the combined states, and their hitherto all-but-uncontested supremacy at sea, were rudely shattered by the destruction of the Invincible Armada in the English Channel. From this moment the expanding maritime ambitions of Great Britain demanded a wider range. A private trading venture to the East was organised by some London merchants in 1591, but resulted in failure.[1] In the following year a great Portuguese carrack, the 'Madre di Dios,' which had been captured by some

[1] This expedition was captained by James Lancaster and George Raymond, in command of the 'Penelope,' 'Merchant Royal,' and 'Edward Bonadventure.'



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English privateers, was towed into Dartmouth, and in her, in addition to a great cargo of eastern merchandise, was found a register of the Portuguese trade and possessions in the East, upon which was based the memorial of the founders of the London East India Company to Elizabeth in 1599. In 1598 the ambitions of Englishmen were roused by the news that Cornelius van Houtman, a Dutch merchant, who, having been arrested for debt in Lisbon, had mastered while there all the particulars of Portuguese trade with the Indies, had broken the long monopoly of the latter by a successful voyage round the Cape of Good Hope. The time had arrived when England, although late upon the scene, must also follow suit. On December 31, 1600, the London East India Company, commonly called the London or Old Company, received its first Charter of Incorporation from Queen Elizabeth;[1] and in the succeeding year, the first expedition, consisting of four vessels under Sir James Lancaster, left Gravesend. Between 1600 and 1612 twelve of these expeditions were made, and were called the Separate Voyages from the fact that their cost was defrayed, not from the Joint Stock account, but by individual subscribers. The last of these expeditions, under Christopher Newport, was the first that visited Persian soil, taking out Sir Robert Sherley on his return from an embassy to England. From 1613 commenced the Joint Stock Voyages, in one of which sailed Sir Dodmore Cotton and Sir Thomas Herbert on their way to the Court of Shah Abbas in 1626.

The Company had not been long in existence before its agents, or those of the Turkey or Levant Company, which had received a charter from Queen Elizabeth in 1581, were found in Persia. In 1609, Joseph Salbancke and Robert Covert journeyed from India, *viâ* Kandahar, Seistan, Kerman, and Yezd, to Isfahan, and reported that—

First dealings with the Persian Gulf

At Hisfahan might be planted a profitable trade if our ships with safetie might lade in the Persian Gulfe; where fiftie in the hundred

[1] The principal events in the development of the Company may be summarised thus. Its first charter was from 1600 to 1615; but this was renewed in perpetuity by James I. in 1609. In 1635 Courten's Association of the Assada (Madagascar) Merchants was formed, but united with the London Company in 1650. A remnant of the former, called the Merchant Adventurers, remained independent, and obtained a charter from Cromwell in 1655, but amalgamated with the London Company in 1657, when a new charter was granted by the Protector. Further charters were dated 1661, 1677, 1683, 1693. In 1698 was incorporated a rival

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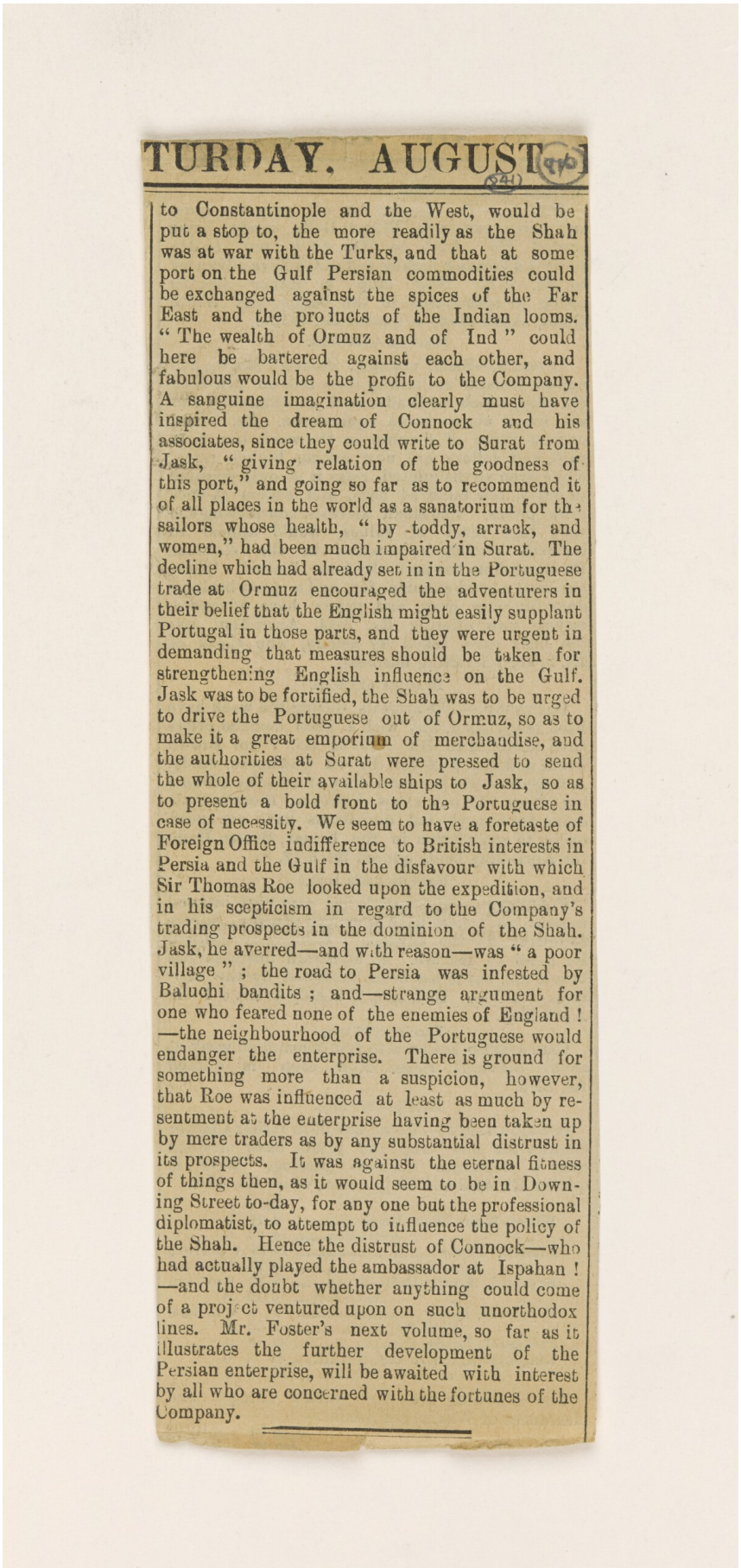


TURDAY, AUGUST

to Constantinople and the West, would be put a stop to, the more readily as the Shah was at war with the Turks, and that at some port on the Gulf Persian commodities could be exchanged against the spices of the Far East and the products of the Indian looms. "The wealth of Ormuz and of Ind" could here be bartered against each other, and fabulous would be the profit to the Company. A sanguine imagination clearly must have inspired the dream of Connock and his associates, since they could write to Surat from Jask, "giving relation of the goodness of this port," and going so far as to recommend it of all places in the world as a sanatorium for the sailors whose health, "by toddy, arrack, and women," had been much impaired in Surat. The decline which had already set in in the Portuguese trade at Ormuz encouraged the adventurers in their belief that the English might easily supplant Portugal in those parts, and they were urgent in demanding that measures should be taken for strengthening English influence on the Gulf. Jask was to be fortified, the Shah was to be urged to drive the Portuguese out of Ormuz, so as to make it a great emporium of merchandise, and the authorities at Surat were pressed to send the whole of their available ships to Jask, so as to present a bold front to the Portuguese in case of necessity. We seem to have a foretaste of Foreign Office indifference to British interests in Persia and the Gulf in the disfavour with which Sir Thomas Roe looked upon the expedition, and in his scepticism in regard to the Company's trading prospects in the dominion of the Shah. Jask, he averred—and with reason—was "a poor village"; the road to Persia was infested by Baluchi bandits; and—strange argument for one who feared none of the enemies of England!—the neighbourhood of the Portuguese would endanger the enterprise. There is ground for something more than a suspicion, however, that Roe was influenced at least as much by resentment at the enterprise having been taken up by mere traders as by any substantial distrust in its prospects. It was against the eternal fitness of things then, as it would seem to be in Downing Street to-day, for any one but the professional diplomatist, to attempt to influence the policy of the Shah. Hence the distrust of Connock—who had actually played the ambassador at Ispahan!—and the doubt whether anything could come of a project ventured upon on such unorthodox lines. Mr. Foster's next volume, so far as it illustrates the further development of the Persian enterprise, will be awaited with interest by all who are concerned with the fortunes of the Company.

WHEAT AND SEEDS—

WHEAT.—The market for old crop was quiet and prices gave way, White Delhi, ready, being quoted Rs. 4-9-6 to Rs. 4-9-0; but to-day there is a steadier feeling and rates have advanced to Rs. 4-12. New crop is rather steadier owing to speculation in the bazaar, and White Delhi, April-May, is quoted Rs. 4-13-6.

Receipts 4,190 tons.

LINSEED.—Small receipts, depleted stocks, and a good demand are telling their tale on prices of old crop, which have advanced considerably and are much above home equivalents. Rs. 10-14, or an advance of 6 annas in the week, has been paid, and sellers are now asking higher rates, while even at the quoted rates it is only possible to buy a few hundred bags, and sellers at once raise prices. The small arrivals, considering the very high level of values, would appear to indicate coming exhaustion in the districts. Business done has naturally been limited. There has been a good enquiry for, and a good business done in, new crop, and prices have advanced, buyers now offering Rs. 8-14, April-May, but the high rates asked by sellers, who speak of Rs. 9, are restricting business.

Receipts 619 tons.

RAPESEED.—The arrivals during the week have been fairly good, but with a good demand prices have advanced to Rs. 6-15 to Rs. 7 for Brown Delhi and Rs. 6-14 for Brown Cawnpore, ready. A large business has been done at steadily advancing prices. In new crops, however, there is little doing for export, but quotations have advanced owing to speculation in the bazaar, Brown Delhi for April-May being quoted Rs. 6-12.

Receipts 2,325 tons.

POPPYSEED.—This article has also been in good request, and prices have advanced sharply, buyers following up the advance. Ready is quoted Rs. 9-4-6 to Rs. 9-5. A moderate business has been done, but it has been restricted by the attitude of sellers. New crop is steady at Rs. 8-4 for April-May.

Receipts 622 tons.

CASTORSEED has been in fair demand all week at about previous rates. New crop is quoted Rs. 31-4.

Receipts 640 tons.

GINGELLYSEED.—There has been rather a better enquiry for new crop and prices have steadied with a moderate business passing. Havri is quoted Rs. 44-8 and 85 per cent. white Rs. 43-8.

| | Rs. | a. | p. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat, White Delhi, Ready..... | 4 | 12 | 0 | |
| " " April-May..... | 4 | 13 | 6 | |
| Linseed, Ready ..... | 10 | 15 | 0 | to 11-0-0 |
| " April-May ..... | 8 | 15 | 0 | to 9-0-0 |
| Rapeseed, Brown, Delhi, Ready . ... | 6 | 15 | 0 | to 7-0-0 |
| " " April-May... | 6 | 12 | 0 | |
| Poppyseed, Ready ..... | 9 | 4 | 6 | to 9-5-0 |
| " April-May ..... | 8 | 4 | 0 | |
| Castorseed, Ready ..... | 34 | 0 | 0 | |
| Gingellyseed, Havri, Oct.-Nov..... | 44 | 8 | 0 | |
| " 85 p. c., Dec.-Jan .... | 43 | 8 | 0 | |

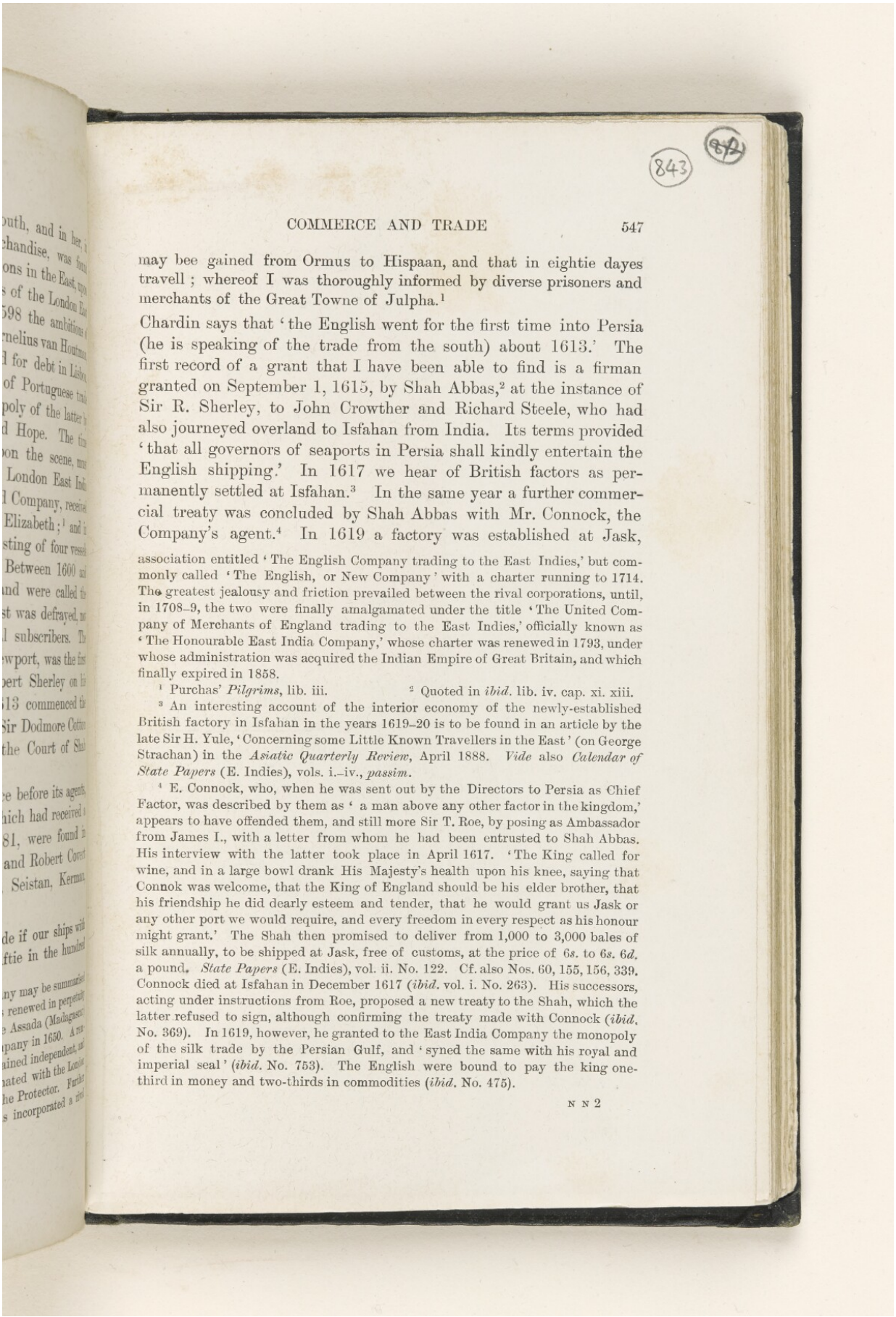
The following are the week's receipts and clearances of Wheat and Seeds :—

From 1st Jan. to | From 1st Jan

We have not yet referred to the chief topic of interest in these letters—namely, the early endeavour of the Company's agents at Surat to establish commercial relations on a large scale with Persia. Commercial and political rivalries —actual and threatened—in the Gulf in our own days give a special interest to the policy of the Company, who had to encounter in the antagonism of the Portuguese at least as great an obstacle as any which confront England in that region to-day. Nearly half the letters in the volume relate to this deeply interesting topic. The Persian venture was conceived by the authorities at Surat, who, without waiting for instructions from home, despatched the "James" to Jask at the end of 1616, with presents for Shah Abbas, and with a stock of merchandise sufficient to commence operations with. Connock, the factor sent in charge of the expedition, had glowing anticipations of the prosperity which was to attend upon it. "If my counsel be followed," he wrote, "our business and trade in Persia will prove more glorious and beneficial to our masters, the undertakers, than all their other trade into the Indies." It was not with mere hope, but with assurance, that he wrote from Jask of the exceeding richness of the inland towns, of the great concourse of people from all lands who resorted thither for trade, of the greatness and populousness of the Shah's dominions. The idea was that the overland trade, through Persia *via* Aleppo

hdl "Letters received by the E.I.Co from its servants in the East" Edited by W Foster 1901 (842)

pened steady at 97 3-8, improved to 97½, eclined to 97¼, and recovered to 97⅜, uyers. To-day a good many transactions or account were booked in the morning t 97½ and later on at 97 7-16. Small clean ieces of 3½ per cent. were sold at about ¼ o 3-8 per cent. over the current quotaions for large amounts, the prices in most ases depending on the need of buyers nd sellers. Money has remained cheap at previous quotations, and there is practically no lemand for it, nor is there likely to be any for some time to come. The principal topic of he week was the new loan, the result of which vas announced on Wednesday last, and was a reat success. Tenderers at 97¼ received a portion, nd above that in full. Rumours were in ciulation that the new loan would all be taken up y some of the Rajahs and wealthy native shroffs. As it happens, the Rajahs turn out to be the ccupants of the Dalal Street. Some of the ealers and speculators are reported to have pplied for it through the medium of he Banks and Banking firms here. As as expected, tenders at high prices were ubmitted from this side. The Bazaar ere, as is well known, is full of paper. To a ig surplus already hanging over the market ill now be added a large portion of the new oan. Fresh "bulling" operations have been ntered into, and the excitement that preceded he announcement of the result has not et subsided. The Banks, it may be remembered, have sold heavily on account of London nd Calcutta, as it suited their exchange operaons, and the Bazaar has mostly bought it. All





may bee gained from Ormus to Hispaan, and that in eightie dayes travell ; whereof I was thoroughly informed by diverse prisoners and merchants of the Great Towne of Julpha.[1]

Chardin says that 'the English went for the first time into Persia (he is speaking of the trade from the south) about 1613.' The first record of a grant that I have been able to find is a firman granted on September 1, 1615, by Shah Abbas,[2] at the instance of Sir R. Sherley, to John Crowther and Richard Steele, who had also journeyed overland to Isfahan from India. Its terms provided 'that all governors of seaports in Persia shall kindly entertain the English shipping.' In 1617 we hear of British factors as permanently settled at Isfahan.[3] In the same year a further commercial treaty was concluded by Shah Abbas with Mr. Connock, the Company's agent.[4] In 1619 a factory was established at Jask,

association entitled 'The English Company trading to the East Indies,' but commonly called 'The English, or New Company' with a charter running to 1714. The greatest jealousy and friction prevailed between the rival corporations, until, in 1708–9, the two were finally amalgamated under the title 'The United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies,' officially known as 'The Honourable East India Company,' whose charter was renewed in 1793, under whose administration was acquired the Indian Empire of Great Britain, and which finally expired in 1858.

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. iii. [2] Quoted in *ibid.* lib. iv. cap. xi. xiii.

[3] An interesting account of the interior economy of the newly-established British factory in Isfahan in the years 1619–20 is to be found in an article by the late Sir H. Yule, 'Concerning some Little Known Travellers in the East' (on George Strachan) in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April 1888. *Vide* also *Calendar of State Papers* (E. Indies), vols. i.–iv., *passim*.

[4] E. Connock, who, when he was sent out by the Directors to Persia as Chief Factor, was described by them as 'a man above any other factor in the kingdom,' appears to have offended them, and still more Sir T. Roe, by posing as Ambassador from James I., with a letter from whom he had been entrusted to Shah Abbas. His interview with the latter took place in April 1617. 'The King called for wine, and in a large bowl drank His Majesty's health upon his knee, saying that Connok was welcome, that the King of England should be his elder brother, that his friendship he did dearly esteem and tender, that he would grant us Jask or any other port we would require, and every freedom in every respect as his honour might grant.' The Shah then promised to deliver from 1,000 to 3,000 bales of silk annually, to be shipped at Jask, free of customs, at the price of 6*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.* a pound. *State Papers* (E. Indies), vol. ii. No. 122. Cf. also Nos. 60, 155, 156, 339. Connock died at Isfahan in December 1617 (*ibid.* vol. i. No. 263). His successors, acting under instructions from Roe, proposed a new treaty to the Shah, which the latter refused to sign, although confirming the treaty made with Connock (*ibid.* No. 369). In 1619, however, he granted to the East India Company the monopoly of the silk trade by the Persian Gulf, and 'syned the same with his royal and imperial seal' (*ibid.* No. 753). The English were bound to pay the king one-third in money and two-thirds in commodities (*ibid.* No. 475).



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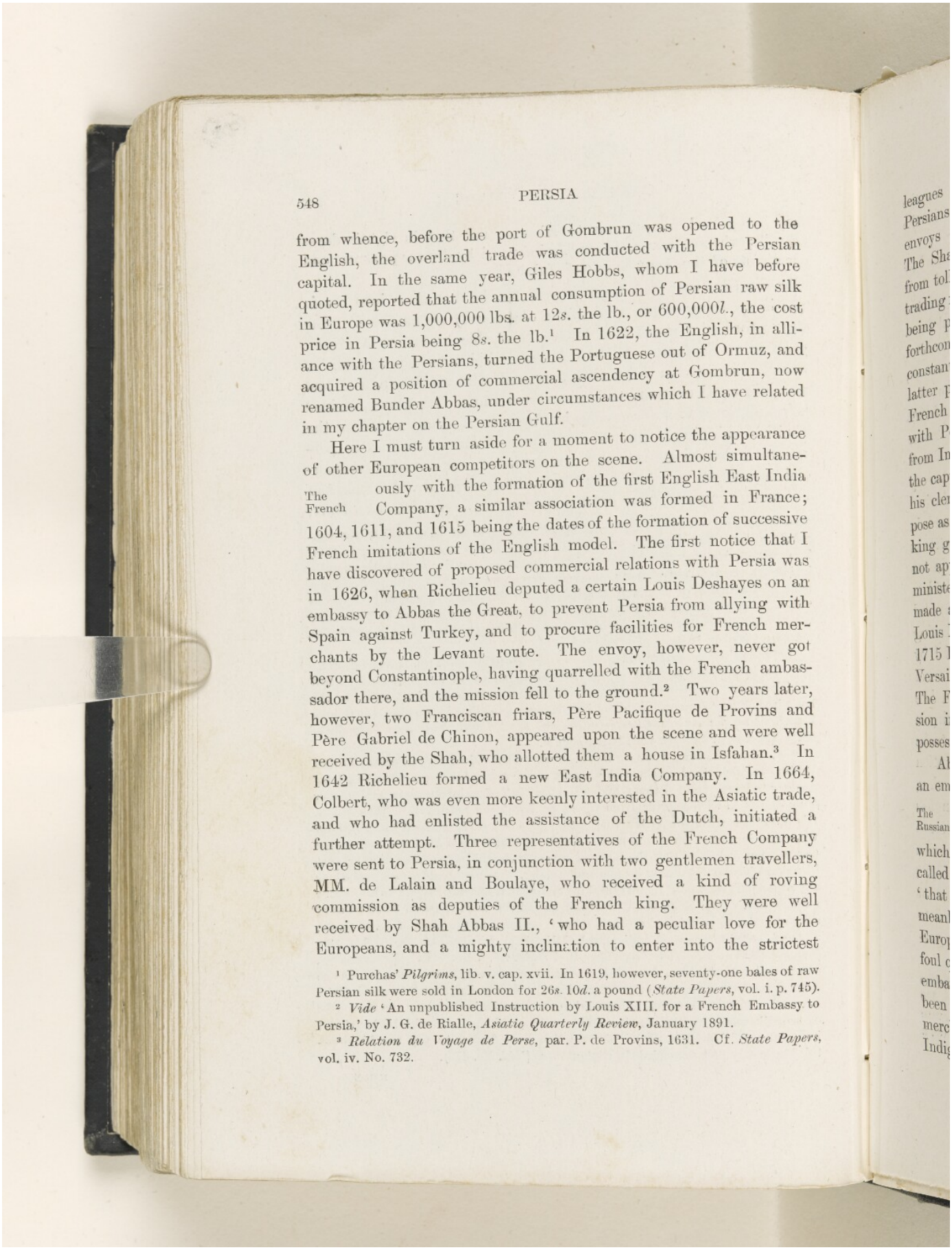



from whence, before the port of Gombrun was opened to the English, the overland trade was conducted with the Persian capital. In the same year, Giles Hobbs, whom I have before quoted, reported that the annual consumption of Persian raw silk in Europe was 1,000,000 lbs. at 12*s.* the lb., or 600,000*l.*, the cost price in Persia being 8*s.* the lb.[1] In 1622, the English, in alliance with the Persians, turned the Portuguese out of Ormuz, and acquired a position of commercial ascendency at Gombrun, now renamed Bunder Abbas, under circumstances which I have related in my chapter on the Persian Gulf.

Here I must turn aside for a moment to notice the appearance of other European competitors on the scene. Almost simultaneously with the formation of the first English East India Company, a similar association was formed in France; 1604, 1611, and 1615 being the dates of the formation of successive French imitations of the English model. The first notice that I have discovered of proposed commercial relations with Persia was in 1626, when Richelieu deputed a certain Louis Deshayes on an embassy to Abbas the Great, to prevent Persia from allying with Spain against Turkey, and to procure facilities for French merchants by the Levant route. The envoy, however, never got beyond Constantinople, having quarrelled with the French ambassador there, and the mission fell to the ground.[2] Two years later, however, two Franciscan friars, Père Pacifique de Provins and Père Gabriel de Chinon, appeared upon the scene and were well received by the Shah, who allotted them a house in Isfahan.[3] In 1642 Richelieu formed a new East India Company. In 1664, Colbert, who was even more keenly interested in the Asiatic trade, and who had enlisted the assistance of the Dutch, initiated a further attempt. Three representatives of the French Company were sent to Persia, in conjunction with two gentlemen travellers, MM. de Lalain and Boulaye, who received a kind of roving commission as deputies of the French king. They were well received by Shah Abbas II., 'who had a peculiar love for the Europeans, and a mighty inclination to enter into the strictest

The French

[1] Purchas' *Pilgrims*, lib. v. cap. xvii. In 1619, however, seventy-one bales of raw Persian silk were sold in London for 26*s.* 10*d.* a pound (*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 745).

[2] *Vide* 'An unpublished Instruction by Louis XIII. for a French Embassy to Persia,' by J. G. de Rialle, *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, January 1891.

[3] *Relation du Voyage de Perse*, par. P. de Provins, 1631. Cf. *State Papers*, vol. iv. No. 732.

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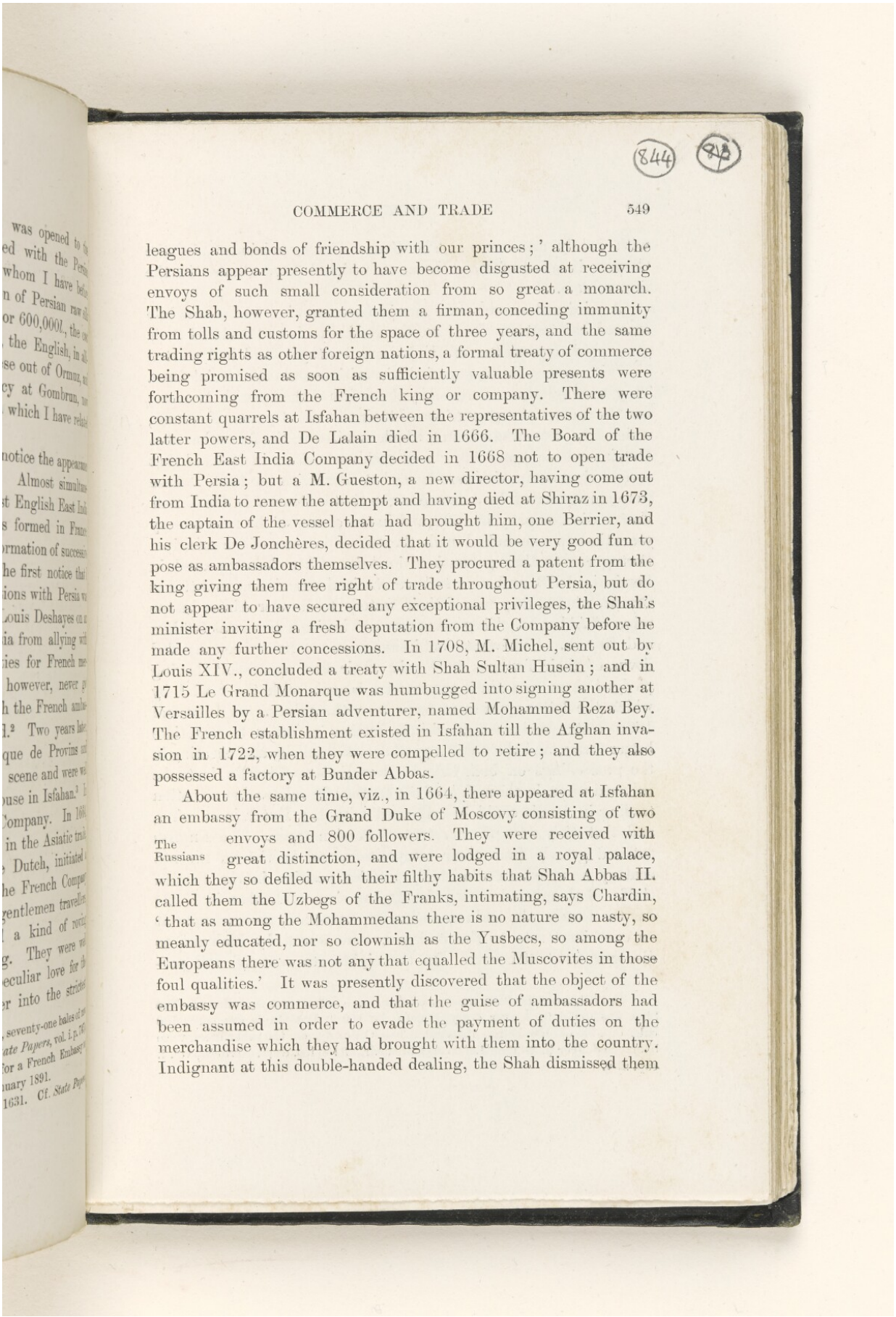



leagues and bonds of friendship with our princes;' although the Persians appear presently to have become disgusted at receiving envoys of such small consideration from so great a monarch. The Shah, however, granted them a firman, conceding immunity from tolls and customs for the space of three years, and the same trading rights as other foreign nations, a formal treaty of commerce being promised as soon as sufficiently valuable presents were forthcoming from the French king or company. There were constant quarrels at Isfahan between the representatives of the two latter powers, and De Lalain died in 1666. The Board of the French East India Company decided in 1668 not to open trade with Persia; but a M. Gueston, a new director, having come out from India to renew the attempt and having died at Shiraz in 1673, the captain of the vessel that had brought him, one Berrier, and his clerk De Jonchères, decided that it would be very good fun to pose as ambassadors themselves. They procured a patent from the king giving them free right of trade throughout Persia, but do not appear to have secured any exceptional privileges, the Shah's minister inviting a fresh deputation from the Company before he made any further concessions. In 1708, M. Michel, sent out by Louis XIV., concluded a treaty with Shah Sultan Husein; and in 1715 Le Grand Monarque was humbugged into signing another at Versailles by a Persian adventurer, named Mohammed Reza Bey. The French establishment existed in Isfahan till the Afghan invasion in 1722, when they were compelled to retire; and they also possessed a factory at Bunder Abbas.

The Russians

About the same time, viz., in 1664, there appeared at Isfahan an embassy from the Grand Duke of Moscovy consisting of two envoys and 800 followers. They were received with great distinction, and were lodged in a royal palace, which they so defiled with their filthy habits that Shah Abbas II. called them the Uzbegs of the Franks, intimating, says Chardin, 'that as among the Mohammedans there is no nature so nasty, so meanly educated, nor so clownish as the Yusbecs, so among the Europeans there was not any that equalled the Muscovites in those foul qualities.' It was presently discovered that the object of the embassy was commerce, and that the guise of ambassadors had been assumed in order to evade the payment of duties on the merchandise which they had brought with them into the country. Indignant at this double-handed dealing, the Shah dismissed them

with barely an answer. The Grand Duke's rejoinder was the Cossack invasion of Mazanderan to which I have alluded in the first volume.

A third and a much more formidable competitor had meanwhile entered the contest. In 1580 the Netherlands had declared their independence of Spain and Portugal, and had started upon a brilliant period of maritime and commercial fame. They were greatly encouraged by the defeat of the Spanish Armada; and the successful voyage of one of their own countrymen, Houtman, which I have mentioned, and which resulted in the formation of a Dutch settlement at Java, roused such enthusiasm in Holland that several rival companies were formed to trade with the East. These were amalgamated by a decree of the States General in the Dutch East India Company in 1602, and in the course of the next twenty years the new comers had made themselves masters of the principal Portuguese trading possessions in Asia. They first appeared in Persia in 1623, and seem to have received permission to settle at Ormuz, whence they moved their factory to Bunder Abbas in the reign of Abbas II. They also possessed business houses at Isfahan and Busrah. Somewhat conflicting accounts have been handed down of their fortunes in Persia, their first agreement having pledged them to a direct commercial bargain with the Shah,[1] by which the latter appears to have been the gainer. In 1652 and 1666 Dutch ambassadors visited Isfahan in order to negotiate better terms, and there was a good deal of duplicity and cheating in the proceedings on both sides. Nevertheless, Chardin is to be believed when, in the middle of the century, he relates that no nation trading in Persia could be compared with the Dutch in cunning, and that they were the masters of Persian trade. The English suffered greatly from their competition, and in the seventeenth century occupied an admittedly inferior position in the Persian Gulf. Both suffered during the Afghan siege of Isfahan in 1722; but the Dutch, who had amassed a large profit by selling sugar at an exorbitant rate to the besieged, were forced by Mahmud to disgorge 400,000 crowns. In the eighteenth century, and par-

The Dutch

[1] In 1704, when Le Brun was at Isfahan, the contract was as follows:—The Shah was bound to deliver every year to the Dutch East India Company, 100 bales of silk of 408 Dutch lbs. each. The Company, on the other hand, were bound to deliver in Isfahan 1,200 cases of sugar, of 150 lbs. each. *Travels*, vol. i. cap. xliv.

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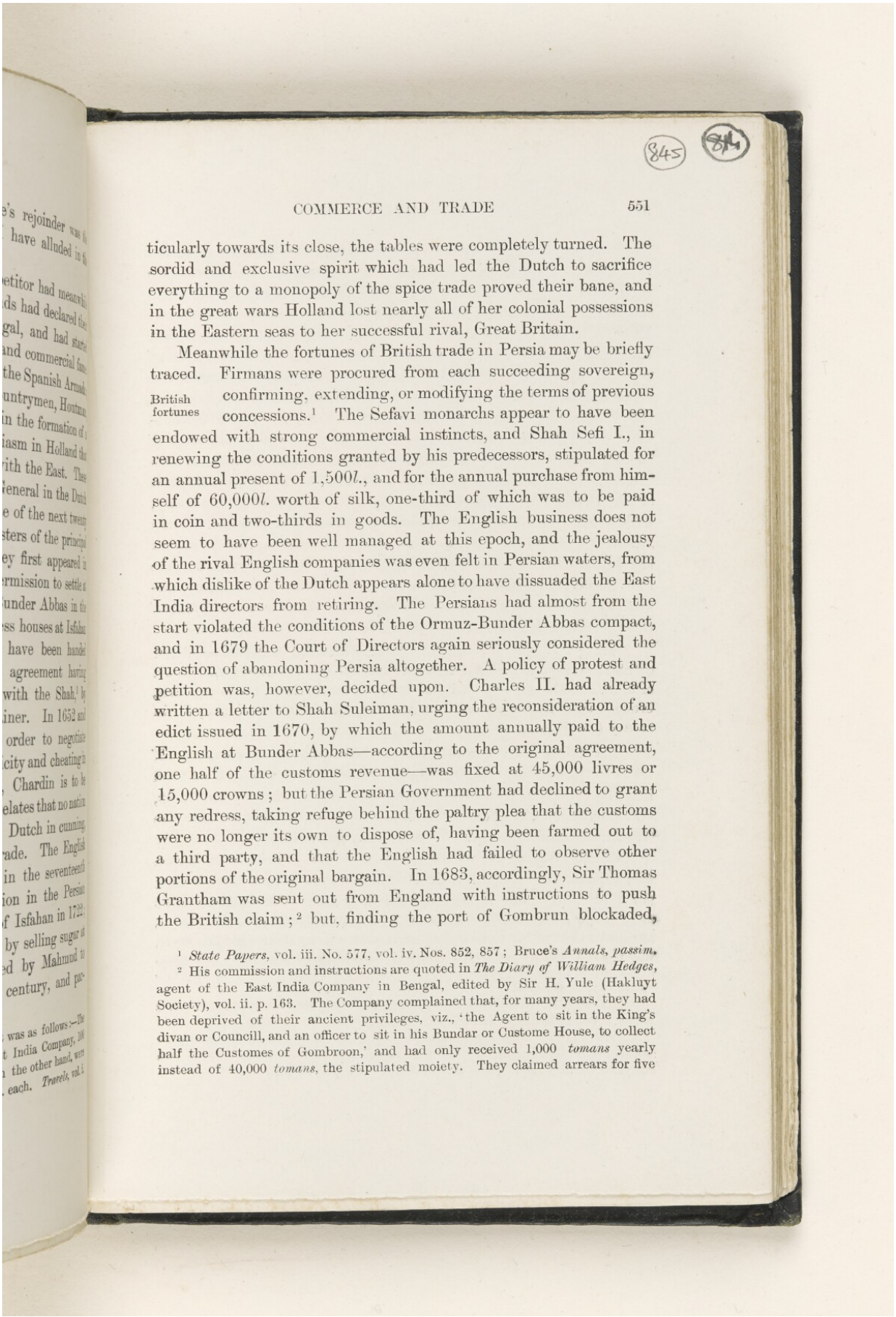



ticularly towards its close, the tables were completely turned. The sordid and exclusive spirit which had led the Dutch to sacrifice everything to a monopoly of the spice trade proved their bane, and in the great wars Holland lost nearly all of her colonial possessions in the Eastern seas to her successful rival, Great Britain.

British fortunes

Meanwhile the fortunes of British trade in Persia may be briefly traced. Firmans were procured from each succeeding sovereign, confirming, extending, or modifying the terms of previous concessions.[1] The Sefavi monarchs appear to have been endowed with strong commercial instincts, and Shah Sefi I., in renewing the conditions granted by his predecessors, stipulated for an annual present of 1,500*l.*, and for the annual purchase from himself of 60,000*l.* worth of silk, one-third of which was to be paid in coin and two-thirds in goods. The English business does not seem to have been well managed at this epoch, and the jealousy of the rival English companies was even felt in Persian waters, from which dislike of the Dutch appears alone to have dissuaded the East India directors from retiring. The Persians had almost from the start violated the conditions of the Ormuz-Bunder Abbas compact, and in 1679 the Court of Directors again seriously considered the question of abandoning Persia altogether. A policy of protest and petition was, however, decided upon. Charles II. had already written a letter to Shah Suleiman, urging the reconsideration of an edict issued in 1670, by which the amount annually paid to the English at Bunder Abbas—according to the original agreement, one half of the customs revenue—was fixed at 45,000 livres or 15,000 crowns; but the Persian Government had declined to grant any redress, taking refuge behind the paltry plea that the customs were no longer its own to dispose of, having been farmed out to a third party, and that the English had failed to observe other portions of the original bargain. In 1683, accordingly, Sir Thomas Grantham was sent out from England with instructions to push the British claim;[2] but, finding the port of Gombrun blockaded,

[1] *State Papers*, vol. iii. No. 577, vol. iv. Nos. 852, 857; Bruce's *Annals, passim*.

[2] His commission and instructions are quoted in *The Diary of William Hedges*, agent of the East India Company in Bengal, edited by Sir H. Yule (Hakluyt Society), vol. ii. p. 163. The Company complained that, for many years, they had been deprived of their ancient privileges, viz., 'the Agent to sit in the King's divan or Councill, and an officer to sit in his Bundar or Custome House, to collect half the Customes of Gombroon,' and had only received 1,000 *tomans* yearly instead of 40,000 *tomans*, the stipulated moiety. They claimed arrears for five

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and war proceeding between the Dutch and Persians, he returned *re infecta*. Soon after, however, the English agents in Persia were fortunate, in spite of Dutch opposition, in securing new and more favourable firmans, and in 1697 a payment of some portion of the Bunder Abbas arrears was made in silk. Throughout this period the chief British agent appears to have occupied a position of especial distinction at Isfahan, being regarded as an accredited representative of the Crown; and in 1699 the Shah conferred upon the English factory the peculiar honour of a visit, which compliment cost them the modest sum of 1,200*l*. The amalgamation of the old and new companies in 1708 put an end to an unfortunate interlude of bickering and rivalry, and was followed by the despatch of Mr. Prescott to Isfahan as chief agent of the United Company, with a letter from Queen Anne to Shah Sultan Husein. Then followed a period of general dislocation and anarchy, arising from the Afghan and Turkish invasions, and from the internal warfare that succeeded. The English were compelled to shut their establishment at Isfahan, and a little later at Bunder Abbas; and of their fortunes in this stormy period the Abbé Raynal writes:—

> During this general confusion the English sales in Persia consisted of no more than a hundred bales of woollen manufactures, 2,000 cwt. of iron, and the same quantity of lead. These articles, taken together, brought them no more than from 1,200,000 to 1,300,000 livres paid in money (=554,687*l*. 10*s*.).[1]

In 1763 Bushire was selected as the headquarters of the Gulf trade of the company, and, although it was temporarily relinquished in 1770 in favour of Busrah, it was reoccupied three years later, and commercial residents were retained at both places under the Government of Bombay. At first only one vessel was annually despatched to Bushire, with a cargo of 60 to 100 bales of cotton fabrics, iron, sugar, and muslins.[2] But from 1790 the trade between the Gulf and India rapidly increased, and in 1809 had risen at

years, or 150,000 *tomans*, but offered to take 50,000 *tomans* in composition, and to be content with 10,000 *tomans* yearly in future. On the other hand, Dr. Fryer, who was in Persia a little earlier (1676–7) as doctor to the East India Company, says that the latter had failed in their part of the bargain by not keeping two men-of-war in the Gulf. (*Travels in Persia*, pp. 222, 353.)

[1] *History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*. Translated by J. Justamond, vol. i. p. 362.

[2] From 1780–90 the establishment at Bushire was only maintained at a total annual loss of 1,800*l*. In no year did the aggregate of sales exceed 7,000*l*.; in one year it sank to 93*l*. (Milburn's *Oriental Commerce*, cap. x.)

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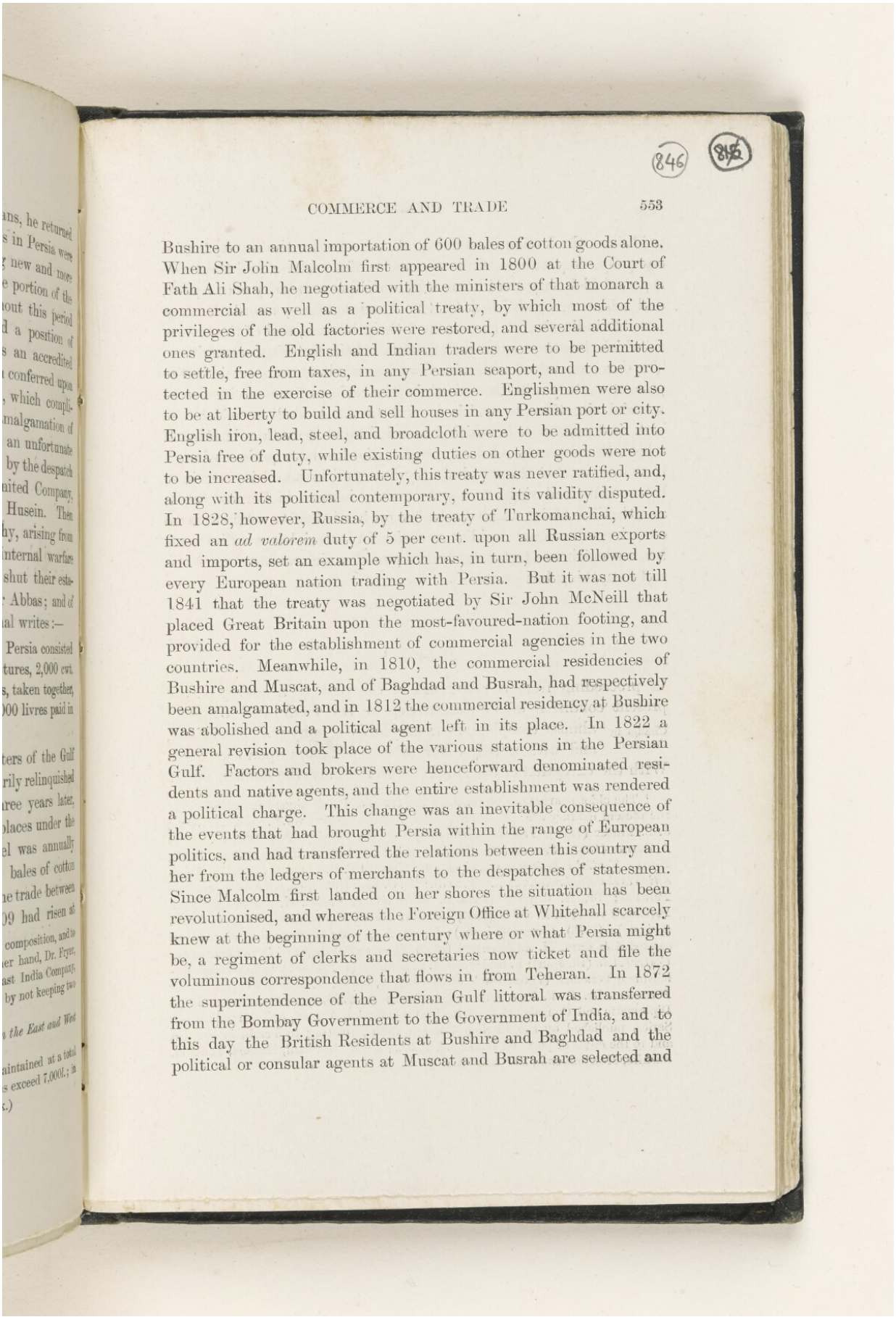



Bushire to an annual importation of 600 bales of cotton goods alone. When Sir John Malcolm first appeared in 1800 at the Court of Fath Ali Shah, he negotiated with the ministers of that monarch a commercial as well as a political treaty, by which most of the privileges of the old factories were restored, and several additional ones granted. English and Indian traders were to be permitted to settle, free from taxes, in any Persian seaport, and to be protected in the exercise of their commerce. Englishmen were also to be at liberty to build and sell houses in any Persian port or city. English iron, lead, steel, and broadcloth were to be admitted into Persia free of duty, while existing duties on other goods were not to be increased. Unfortunately, this treaty was never ratified, and, along with its political contemporary, found its validity disputed. In 1828, however, Russia, by the treaty of Turkomanchai, which fixed an *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. upon all Russian exports and imports, set an example which has, in turn, been followed by every European nation trading with Persia. But it was not till 1841 that the treaty was negotiated by Sir John McNeill that placed Great Britain upon the most-favoured-nation footing, and provided for the establishment of commercial agencies in the two countries. Meanwhile, in 1810, the commercial residencies of Bushire and Muscat, and of Baghdad and Busrah, had respectively been amalgamated, and in 1812 the commercial residency at Bushire was abolished and a political agent left in its place. In 1822 a general revision took place of the various stations in the Persian Gulf. Factors and brokers were henceforward denominated residents and native agents, and the entire establishment was rendered a political charge. This change was an inevitable consequence of the events that had brought Persia within the range of European politics, and had transferred the relations between this country and her from the ledgers of merchants to the despatches of statesmen. Since Malcolm first landed on her shores the situation has been revolutionised, and whereas the Foreign Office at Whitehall scarcely knew at the beginning of the century where or what Persia might be, a regiment of clerks and secretaries now ticket and file the voluminous correspondence that flows in from Teheran. In 1872 the superintendence of the Persian Gulf littoral was transferred from the Bombay Government to the Government of India, and to this day the British Residents at Bushire and Baghdad and the political or consular agents at Muscat and Busrah are selected and

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paid from the Indian establishment. No longer the *employés* of a company, they safeguard the commerce of a nation; and the trade reports which they send home with unfailing regularity once a year, and which are published by the Foreign Office, afford the best possible indication of the value of their labours, and of the extent to which business has swollen under their fostering supervision. The development of particular branches or channels of trade in the present century will be noticed in the review of the modern commercial situation, to which I next turn. I shall consider the historical retrospect in which I have indulged more than justified if I have thereby persuaded any reader who has been patient enough to follow me that Great Britain, by her traditions and her services, has an inherited right to a commanding interest in Persian trade, and that the claim which I advance on her behalf to retain it is no offspring of national cupidity or desire for material aggrandisement, but is a legitimate testament from a past of which we have no reason to be anything but proud.

## Part II[1]

Change in the scene

In proceeding from a retrospect of the past to a survey of the present condition of Persian trade, we are confronted with an almost complete metamorphosis of physical conditions, and with a very different cast of actors upon the scene. With the exception of the single, or at the most the double, outlet

[1] The chief sources of reference on the trade of Persia since the beginning of the present century are: A. Dupré (1808), *Voyage en Perse*, vol. ii. caps. lviii., lix.; J. B. Fraser (1822), *Travels on the Shores of the Caspian*, Appendix II.; (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. iii. p. 356; J. H. Stocqueler (1832), *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. ii. cap. i.; General F. R. Chesney (1835–7), *Expedition to the Euphrates*, vol. ii. cap. xviii.; Dr. O. Blau (1858), *Commercielle Zustände Persiens*; Dr. H. Brugsch (1860–1), *Reise der k. Preuss. Gesandtschaft nach Persien*, 2 vols.; J. E. Polak (1865), *Persien, das Land und seine Bewohner*, 2 vols. (Leipzig); (1873), *Persien* (Vienna); (1883), *Notice sur la Perse au point de vue commercial*; Capt. M. A. Terentieff (1875), *Russia and England in the Markets of Central Asia* (Russian); F. Stolze and F. C. Andreas (1874–1881), 'Die Handelsverhältnisse Persiens' (Petermann's *Mittheilungen*, 1885); A. Kitabji (1889), *Etudes Persanes*; Dr. P. F. Traubenberg (1890), *Hauptverkehrswege Persiens*; and the Diplomatic and Consular Reports in the Commercial, Annual, and Miscellaneous Series, published by the English Foreign Office, relating to Persia in general and to the cities or ports of Trebizond, Tabriz, Resht, Astrabad, Meshed, Teheran, Bushire, Mohammerah, and Bussorah.

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on the Persian Gulf, where the traffic was in alien hands, the trade of Persia in the former period was a land-borne trade. Occupying the neck between two seas, Persia was traversed by caravan routes that had been trodden from remote antiquity by the interchanging *kafilahs* of the East and West. But those lateral routes are now, for the most part, deserted; the age of caravans is fading from view; the advances in navigation and the invention of steam have driven commerce to the maritime highways; and the seas on the north and south, which were once the main protection of Iran, are now a means of aggression and a source of weakness. On the Caspian the Moscovite, in the Gulf the Briton, knocks at her gates, and the exports and imports, whose freight has allured or enriched half the nations of Europe, are conveyed in Russian or English holds. The pride of Portugal is dead; and her name is unknown in Persia, save for a few rust-eaten guns and crumbling towers. The Dutch, who formerly swept the Gulf and dictated terms to the Persian kings, support a vice-consul only at Bushire. Venice and Genoa have long ago disappeared from the category of independent states. Armenians still traffic and barter in Persian bazaars, and flourish by the profits of retail trade, as they will do till the crack of doom; but Armenia is not a nation, and her wealth is only that of households. The mastery of the seas has decided the long-drawn conflict. Pompey's aphorism has been proved true. The struggle has resolved itself into a duel between the maritime power of the north and the maritime power of the south. Germany, Austria, and France claim a portion of the import trade, but cannot be regarded as serious competitors. It is to a contemplation of the duel thus in progress, and to a balance of the position and prospects of the two combatants, that I now turn.

Russian ascendency in the North

Though the appearance of Russia as a formidable influence upon the scene was foreshadowed from the days of Peter the Great, and was facilitated by the collapse in the middle of the same century of the last attempted revival of the British Caspian trade, it was not till after the Russo-Persian wars in the first quarter of the present century, and more especially not till after the treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828, that Russian mercantile ascendency in the north could be said to have at all a stable foundation. By the earlier treaty of Gulistan in 1813, the Caspian had already become a Russian *mare clausum*; but in 1817 Yermoloff, the Russian ambassador, had pressed in vain for the

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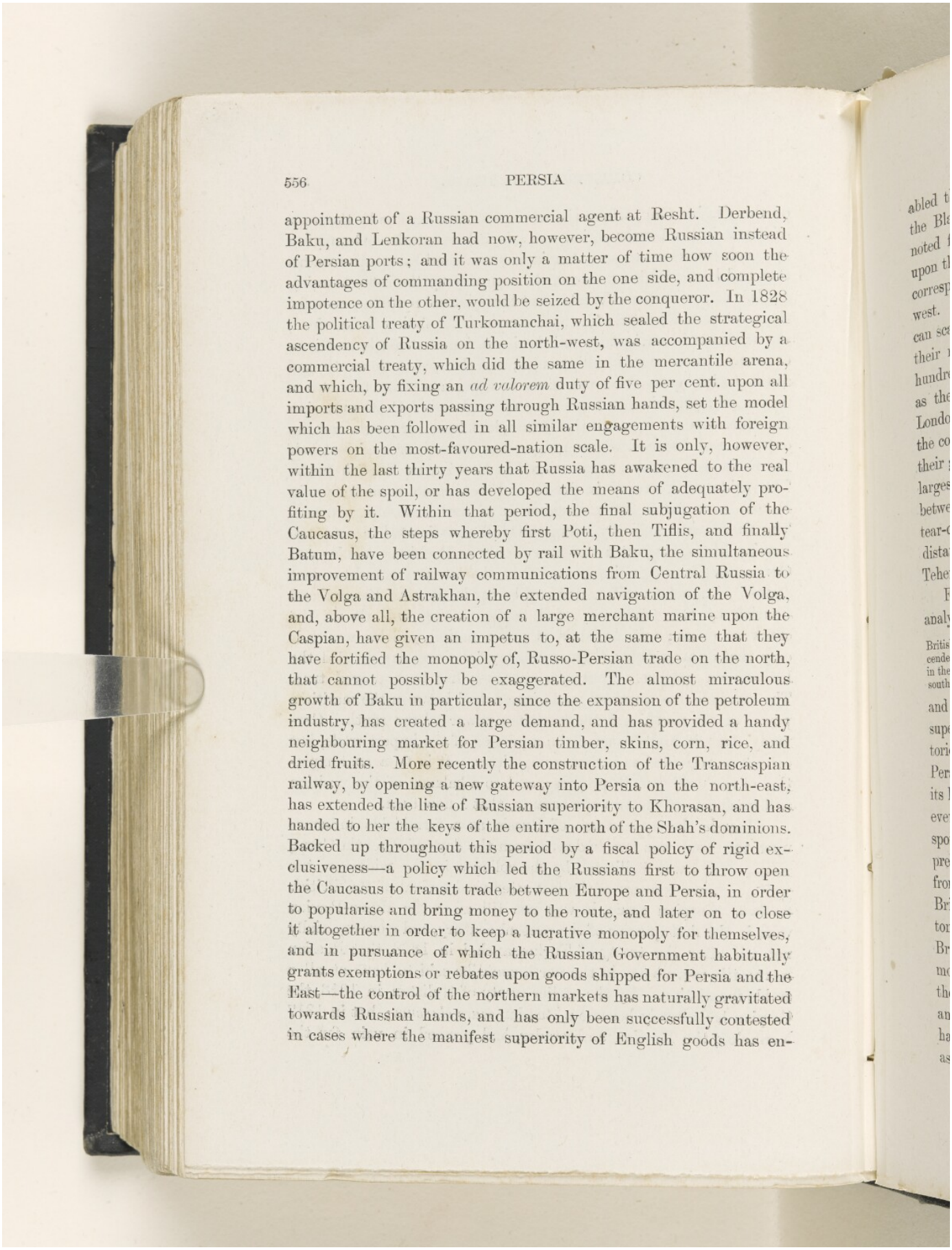



appointment of a Russian commercial agent at Resht. Derbend, Baku, and Lenkoran had now, however, become Russian instead of Persian ports; and it was only a matter of time how soon the advantages of commanding position on the one side, and complete impotence on the other, would be seized by the conqueror. In 1828 the political treaty of Turkomanchai, which sealed the strategical ascendency of Russia on the north-west, was accompanied by a commercial treaty, which did the same in the mercantile arena, and which, by fixing an *ad valorem* duty of five per cent. upon all imports and exports passing through Russian hands, set the model which has been followed in all similar engagements with foreign powers on the most-favoured-nation scale. It is only, however, within the last thirty years that Russia has awakened to the real value of the spoil, or has developed the means of adequately profiting by it. Within that period, the final subjugation of the Caucasus, the steps whereby first Poti, then Tiflis, and finally Batum, have been connected by rail with Baku, the simultaneous improvement of railway communications from Central Russia to the Volga and Astrakhan, the extended navigation of the Volga, and, above all, the creation of a large merchant marine upon the Caspian, have given an impetus to, at the same time that they have fortified the monopoly of, Russo-Persian trade on the north, that cannot possibly be exaggerated. The almost miraculous growth of Baku in particular, since the expansion of the petroleum industry, has created a large demand, and has provided a handy neighbouring market for Persian timber, skins, corn, rice, and dried fruits. More recently the construction of the Transcaspian railway, by opening a new gateway into Persia on the north-east, has extended the line of Russian superiority to Khorasan, and has handed to her the keys of the entire north of the Shah's dominions. Backed up throughout this period by a fiscal policy of rigid exclusiveness—a policy which led the Russians first to throw open the Caucasus to transit trade between Europe and Persia, in order to popularise and bring money to the route, and later on to close it altogether in order to keep a lucrative monopoly for themselves, and in pursuance of which the Russian Government habitually grants exemptions or rebates upon goods shipped for Persia and the East—the control of the northern markets has naturally gravitated towards Russian hands, and has only been successfully contested in cases where the manifest superiority of English goods has en-

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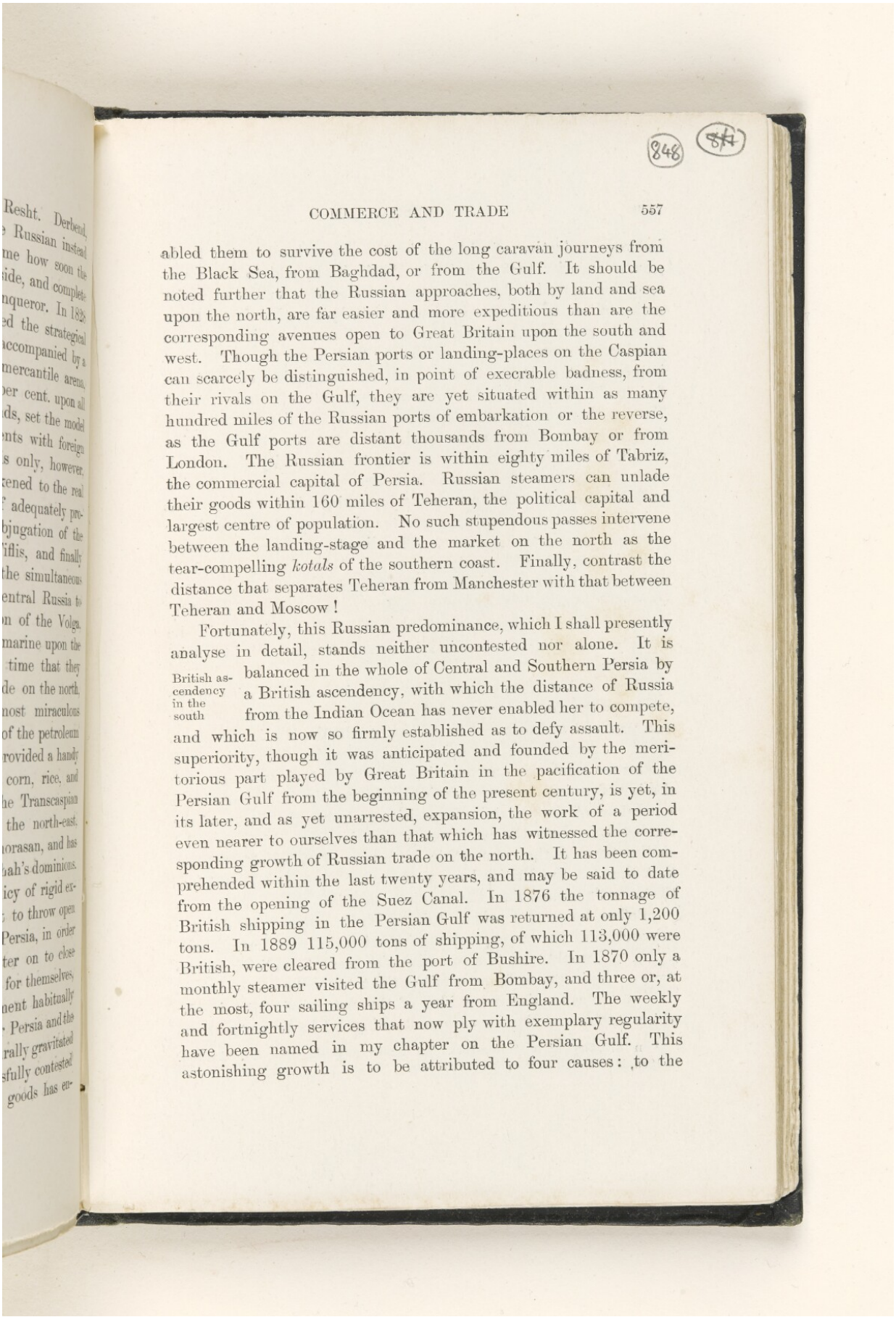



abled them to survive the cost of the long caravan journeys from the Black Sea, from Baghdad, or from the Gulf. It should be noted further that the Russian approaches, both by land and sea upon the north, are far easier and more expeditious than are the corresponding avenues open to Great Britain upon the south and west. Though the Persian ports or landing-places on the Caspian can scarcely be distinguished, in point of execrable badness, from their rivals on the Gulf, they are yet situated within as many hundred miles of the Russian ports of embarkation or the reverse, as the Gulf ports are distant thousands from Bombay or from London. The Russian frontier is within eighty miles of Tabriz, the commercial capital of Persia. Russian steamers can unlade their goods within 160 miles of Teheran, the political capital and largest centre of population. No such stupendous passes intervene between the landing-stage and the market on the north as the tear-compelling *kotals* of the southern coast. Finally, contrast the distance that separates Teheran from Manchester with that between Teheran and Moscow!

British ascendency in the south

Fortunately, this Russian predominance, which I shall presently analyse in detail, stands neither uncontested nor alone. It is balanced in the whole of Central and Southern Persia by a British ascendency, with which the distance of Russia from the Indian Ocean has never enabled her to compete, and which is now so firmly established as to defy assault. This superiority, though it was anticipated and founded by the meritorious part played by Great Britain in the pacification of the Persian Gulf from the beginning of the present century, is yet, in its later, and as yet unarrested, expansion, the work of a period even nearer to ourselves than that which has witnessed the corresponding growth of Russian trade on the north. It has been comprehended within the last twenty years, and may be said to date from the opening of the Suez Canal. In 1876 the tonnage of British shipping in the Persian Gulf was returned at only 1,200 tons. In 1889 115,000 tons of shipping, of which 113,000 were British, were cleared from the port of Bushire. In 1870 only a monthly steamer visited the Gulf from Bombay, and three or, at the most, four sailing ships a year from England. The weekly and fortnightly services that now ply with exemplary regularity have been named in my chapter on the Persian Gulf. This astonishing growth is to be attributed to four causes: to the

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immense reduction of distance by the Suez Canal route; to the greater security that prevails in Persia itself, and to the corresponding spread of knowledge as to its needs; to the exclusive policy of the Russian Government, which, by shutting the northern gates to every other power, has driven England to improve and develop her southern means of access; and, above all, to the vast improvement in steam service and the cheapening of maritime freights.[1] Where Manchester goods once entered Persia through Turkey, they now are shipped direct from England or are reshipped from Bombay. On the other hand, this traffic—the still improving condition of which is demonstrated by the prosperity of the Gulf ports, by the large profits made by mercantile houses, both Persian and European, and by the annually increasing yield from customs—is hampered by drawbacks greater than any that attend the northern avenues of commerce. The climate of the southern seaboard is fearfully and wonderfully made. The distances between port and market are enormous. The intervening passes are a byword and a horror. That Anglo-Indian trade should successfully vanquish these several obstacles, and should, in their despite, be steadily extending its borders, is no mean proof of industrial enterprise.

Such and so firmly rooted are the rival ascendencies on the north and the south, Russian predominance in the one quarter being met and balanced by British predominance in the other. Between the two exists a middle region over which both parties are emulously endeavouring to extend their sway, and the destiny of which, as yet undecided, will supply, in a manner, a touchstone of the respective capacities and probable future of the combatants. Into the controversy that is there being waged I shall enter with the comfortable advantage of being able to show that, thus far, the British have made more extensive inroads into the enemy's ground than the Russians have into ours.

The middle ground

Before, however, I pass to this, which is, properly speaking, a sub-section of the larger subject of Persian Commerce as a whole, I would wish to summarise the present condition and to estimate, so far as possible, the total value of the latter, so as to give some idea of the nature of that prize for which British and Russians are contending. I have, in a previous

Total of Persian exports

[1] In 1870, the freight on iron-bars from London to Bushire was 69*s.* 6*d.* a ton. In 1883, if had sunk to 30*s.*, and is now less.

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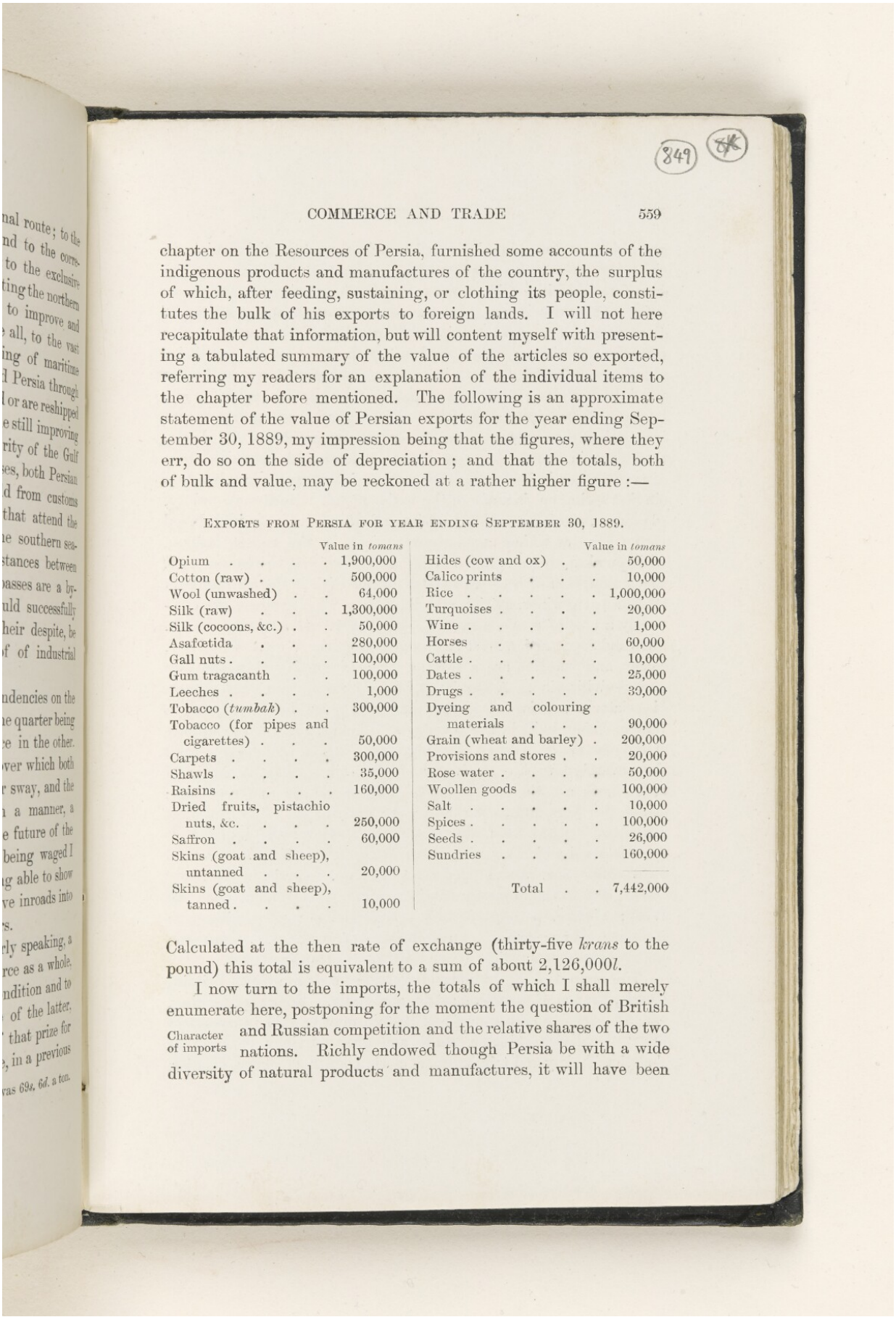




chapter on the Resources of Persia, furnished some accounts of the indigenous products and manufactures of the country, the surplus of which, after feeding, sustaining, or clothing its people, constitutes the bulk of his exports to foreign lands. I will not here recapitulate that information, but will content myself with presenting a tabulated summary of the value of the articles so exported, referring my readers for an explanation of the individual items to the chapter before mentioned. The following is an approximate statement of the value of Persian exports for the year ending September 30, 1889, my impression being that the figures, where they err, do so on the side of depreciation; and that the totals, both of bulk and value, may be reckoned at a rather higher figure :—

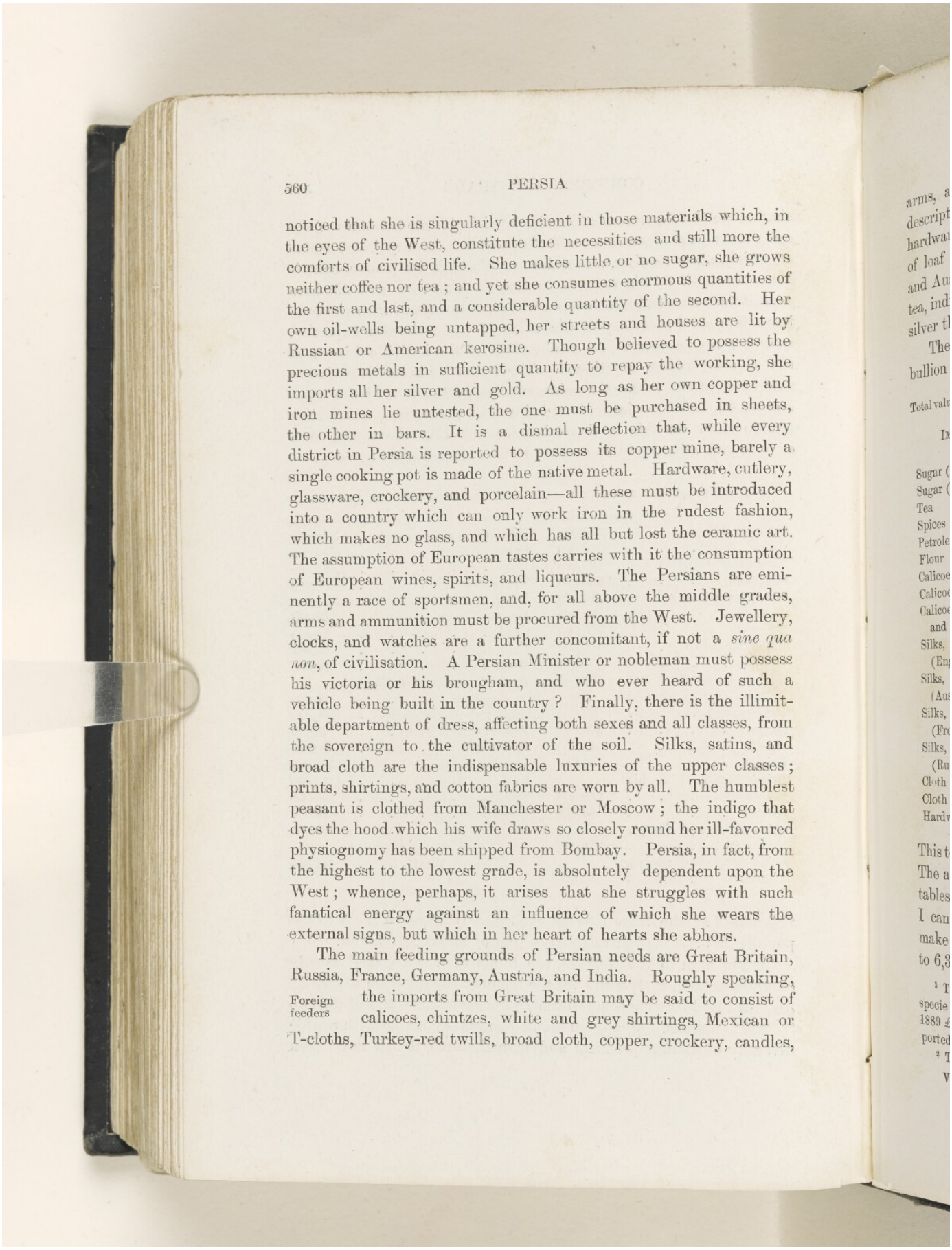
EXPORTS FROM PERSIA FOR YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1889.

| | Value in *tomans* | | Value in *tomans* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Opium | 1,900,000 | Hides (cow and ox) | 50,000 |
| Cotton (raw) | 500,000 | Calico prints | 10,000 |
| Wool (unwashed) | 64,000 | Rice | 1,000,000 |
| Silk (raw) | 1,300,000 | Turquoises | 20,000 |
| Silk (cocoons, &c.) | 50,000 | Wine | 1,000 |
| Asafœtida | 280,000 | Horses | 60,000 |
| Gall nuts | 100,000 | Cattle | 10,000 |
| Gum tragacanth | 100,000 | Dates | 25,000 |
| Leeches | 1,000 | Drugs | 30,000 |
| Tobacco (*tumbak*) | 300,000 | Dyeing and colouring materials | 90,000 |
| Tobacco (for pipes and cigarettes) | 50,000 | Grain (wheat and barley) | 200,000 |
| Carpets | 300,000 | Provisions and stores | 20,000 |
| Shawls | 35,000 | Rose water | 50,000 |
| Raisins | 160,000 | Woollen goods | 100,000 |
| Dried fruits, pistachio nuts, &c. | 250,000 | Salt | 10,000 |
| Saffron | 60,000 | Spices | 100,000 |
| Skins (goat and sheep), untanned | 20,000 | Seeds | 26,000 |
| Skins (goat and sheep), tanned | 10,000 | Sundries | 160,000 |
| | | Total | 7,442,000 |

Calculated at the then rate of exchange (thirty-five *krans* to the pound) this total is equivalent to a sum of about 2,126,000*l*.

Character of imports

I now turn to the imports, the totals of which I shall merely enumerate here, postponing for the moment the question of British and Russian competition and the relative shares of the two nations. Richly endowed though Persia be with a wide diversity of natural products and manufactures, it will have been





noticed that she is singularly deficient in those materials which, in the eyes of the West, constitute the necessities and still more the comforts of civilised life. She makes little or no sugar, she grows neither coffee nor tea; and yet she consumes enormous quantities of the first and last, and a considerable quantity of the second. Her own oil-wells being untapped, her streets and houses are lit by Russian or American kerosine. Though believed to possess the precious metals in sufficient quantity to repay the working, she imports all her silver and gold. As long as her own copper and iron mines lie untested, the one must be purchased in sheets, the other in bars. It is a dismal reflection that, while every district in Persia is reported to possess its copper mine, barely a single cooking pot is made of the native metal. Hardware, cutlery, glassware, crockery, and porcelain—all these must be introduced into a country which can only work iron in the rudest fashion, which makes no glass, and which has all but lost the ceramic art. The assumption of European tastes carries with it the consumption of European wines, spirits, and liqueurs. The Persians are eminently a race of sportsmen, and, for all above the middle grades, arms and ammunition must be procured from the West. Jewellery, clocks, and watches are a further concomitant, if not a *sine qua non*, of civilisation. A Persian Minister or nobleman must possess his victoria or his brougham, and who ever heard of such a vehicle being built in the country? Finally, there is the illimitable department of dress, affecting both sexes and all classes, from the sovereign to the cultivator of the soil. Silks, satins, and broad cloth are the indispensable luxuries of the upper classes; prints, shirtings, and cotton fabrics are worn by all. The humblest peasant is clothed from Manchester or Moscow; the indigo that dyes the hood which his wife draws so closely round her ill-favoured physiognomy has been shipped from Bombay. Persia, in fact, from the highest to the lowest grade, is absolutely dependent upon the West; whence, perhaps, it arises that she struggles with such fanatical energy against an influence of which she wears the external signs, but which in her heart of hearts she abhors.

Foreign feeders

The main feeding grounds of Persian needs are Great Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria, and India. Roughly speaking, the imports from Great Britain may be said to consist of calicoes, chintzes, white and grey shirtings, Mexican or T-cloths, Turkey-red twills, broad cloth, copper, crockery, candles,

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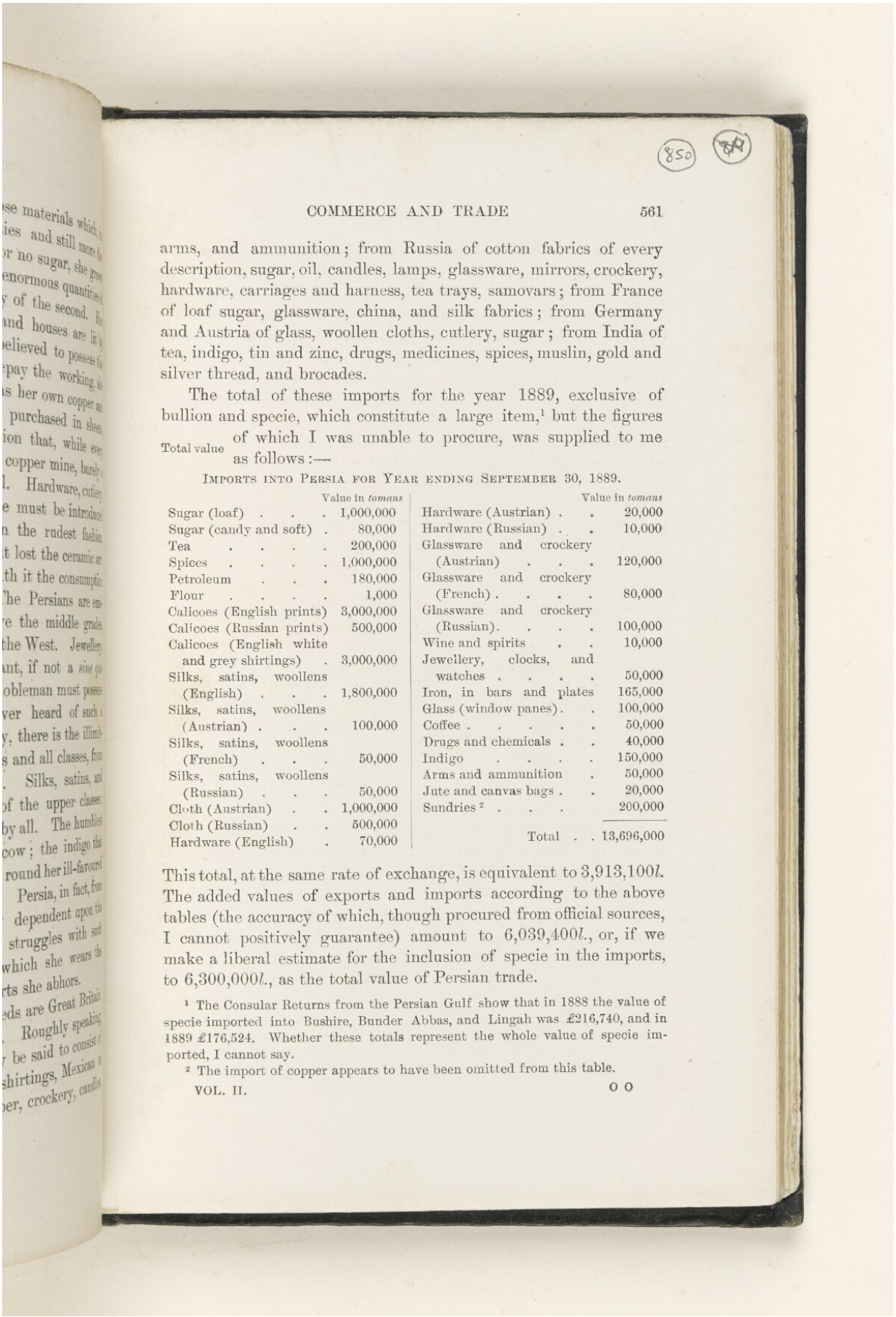



arms, and ammunition; from Russia of cotton fabrics of every description, sugar, oil, candles, lamps, glassware, mirrors, crockery, hardware, carriages and harness, tea trays, samovars; from France of loaf sugar, glassware, china, and silk fabrics; from Germany and Austria of glass, woollen cloths, cutlery, sugar; from India of tea, indigo, tin and zinc, drugs, medicines, spices, muslin, gold and silver thread, and brocades.

The total of these imports for the year 1889, exclusive of bullion and specie, which constitute a large item,[1] but the figures of which I was unable to procure, was supplied to me as follows:— Total value

IMPORTS INTO PERSIA FOR YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1889.

| | Value in *tomans* | | Value in *tomans* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sugar (loaf) | 1,000,000 | Hardware (Austrian) | 20,000 |
| Sugar (candy and soft) | 80,000 | Hardware (Russian) | 10,000 |
| Tea | 200,000 | Glassware and crockery (Austrian) | 120,000 |
| Spices | 1,000,000 | Glassware and crockery (French) | 80,000 |
| Petroleum | 180,000 | Glassware and crockery (Russian) | 100,000 |
| Flour | 1,000 | Wine and spirits | 10,000 |
| Calicoes (English prints) | 3,000,000 | Jewellery, clocks, and watches | 50,000 |
| Calicoes (Russian prints) | 500,000 | Iron, in bars and plates | 165,000 |
| Calicoes (English white and grey shirtings) | 3,000,000 | Glass (window panes) | 100,000 |
| Silks, satins, woollens (English) | 1,800,000 | Coffee | 50,000 |
| Silks, satins, woollens (Austrian) | 100,000 | Drugs and chemicals | 40,000 |
| Silks, satins, woollens (French) | 50,000 | Indigo | 150,000 |
| Silks, satins, woollens (Russian) | 50,000 | Arms and ammunition | 50,000 |
| Cloth (Austrian) | 1,000,000 | Jute and canvas bags | 20,000 |
| Cloth (Russian) | 500,000 | Sundries[2] | 200,000 |
| Hardware (English) | 70,000 | Total | 13,696,000 |

This total, at the same rate of exchange, is equivalent to 3,913,100*l.* The added values of exports and imports according to the above tables (the accuracy of which, though procured from official sources, I cannot positively guarantee) amount to 6,039,400*l.*, or, if we make a liberal estimate for the inclusion of specie in the imports, to 6,300,000*l.*, as the total value of Persian trade.

[1] The Consular Returns from the Persian Gulf show that in 1888 the value of specie imported into Bushire, Bunder Abbas, and Lingah was £216,740, and in 1889 £176,524. Whether these totals represent the whole value of specie imported, I cannot say.

[2] The import of copper appears to have been omitted from this table.



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Estimate from custom-house returns

There is a further, though less strictly scientific, means of estimating the total value of Persian trade, viz., from the Custom-house returns. In the previous chapter I have explained the system on which the customs are collected, and have shown that, whilst on European traders the duty levied, both for imports and exports, is five per cent. *ad valorem*, on Persian traders it varies between three and eight per cent., or even more. I have also shown that, under the farming system which is universal in Persia, the farmer, besides paying in the stipulated sum to the governor or the Shah, makes a handsome profit for himself, which sum may be estimated as at least twenty per cent. in excess of the official return. Taking four per cent. *ad valorem*, therefore, as the mean of customs paid by all merchants, foreign and native, and adding twenty per cent. to the value of the farm-money actually paid, we arrive at the following rough estimate of the total value of Persian trade for the nine years from 1880 to 1889.

| Year | Government Receipts | | Rate of Exchange | Farm Money + 20 per cent. | Estimated value of Trade |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Tomans* | £ | *Krans* = £1 | £ | £ |
| 1880–81 | 708,629 | 257,700 | 27½ | 309,240 | 7,731,000 |
| 1881–82 | 785,290 | 281,600 | 27⅞ | 337,920 | 8,448,000 |
| 1882–83 | 807,770 | 281,400 | 28⅝ | 337,680 | 8,442,000 |
| 1883–84 | 814,000 | 280,700 | 29 | 336,840 | 8,421,000 |
| 1884–85 | 806,000 | 264,262 | 30½ | 317,114 | 7,928,000 |
| 1885–86 | 838,000 | 250,150 | 33½ | 300,180 | 7,504,000 |
| 1886–87 | 850,000 | 253,730 | 33½ | 304,476 | 7,612,000 |
| 1887–88 | 820,000 | 241,176 | 34 | 289,411 | 7,235,000 |
| 1888–89 | 800,000 | 235,294 | 34 | 282,352 | 7,057,000 |

It will be observed that the last-named total exceeds by no less than 700,000*l.*, that derived from the elaborate table before quoted, but which I have already stated that I regard as an under-estimate. My own impression, derived from a calculation of the volume of trade at the several ports or points of entry—a subject to which I shall next turn—is that the total commerce of Persia at the present time may be set down as from 7,000,000*l.* to 7,500,000*l.* —a rough estimate that was also given to me by two independent authorities—of which the imports constitute about two-thirds, and the exports the remainder.[1]

[1] Elisée Reclus gives the total volume of trade as £6,000,000. Whitaker's Almanack gives: exports, £2,260,000; imports, £3,850,000; total £6,110,000. The Almanac de Gotha gives: exports, £3,120,000; imports, £5,280,000; total £8,400,000. Mr. Herbert, Secretary of Legation at Teheran, in a F. O. Report of 1886 (Com-

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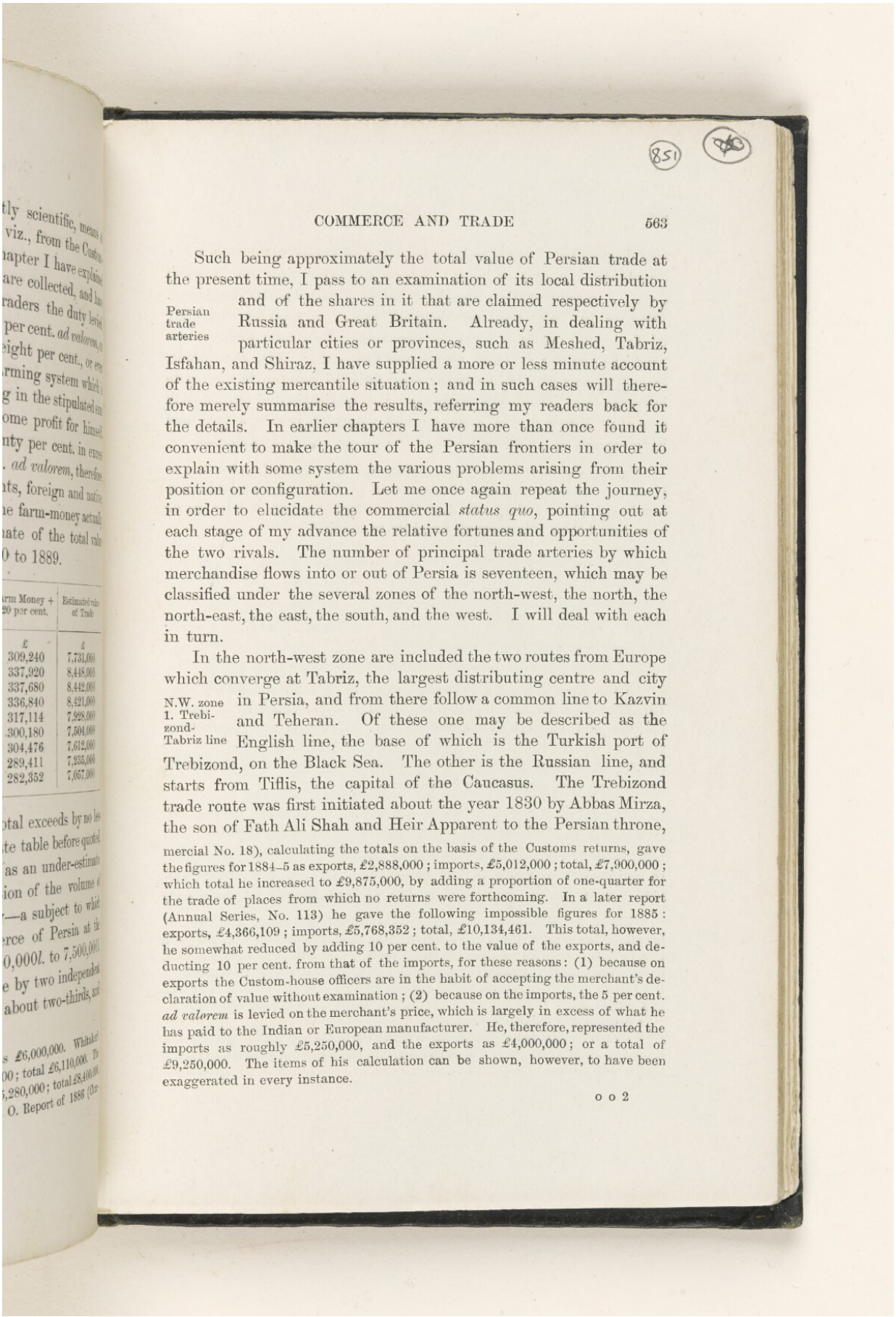



Such being approximately the total value of Persian trade at the present time, I pass to an examination of its local distribution and of the shares in it that are claimed respectively by Russia and Great Britain. Already, in dealing with particular cities or provinces, such as Meshed, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz, I have supplied a more or less minute account of the existing mercantile situation; and in such cases will therefore merely summarise the results, referring my readers back for the details. In earlier chapters I have more than once found it convenient to make the tour of the Persian frontiers in order to explain with some system the various problems arising from their position or configuration. Let me once again repeat the journey, in order to elucidate the commercial *status quo*, pointing out at each stage of my advance the relative fortunes and opportunities of the two rivals. The number of principal trade arteries by which merchandise flows into or out of Persia is seventeen, which may be classified under the several zones of the north-west, the north, the north-east, the east, the south, and the west. I will deal with each in turn.

Persian trade arteries

In the north-west zone are included the two routes from Europe which converge at Tabriz, the largest distributing centre and city in Persia, and from there follow a common line to Kazvin and Teheran. Of these one may be described as the English line, the base of which is the Turkish port of Trebizond, on the Black Sea. The other is the Russian line, and starts from Tiflis, the capital of the Caucasus. The Trebizond trade route was first initiated about the year 1830 by Abbas Mirza, the son of Fath Ali Shah and Heir Apparent to the Persian throne,

N.W. zone 1. Trebizond-Tabriz line

mercial No. 18), calculating the totals on the basis of the Customs returns, gave the figures for 1884–5 as exports, £2,888,000; imports, £5,012,000; total, £7,900,000; which total he increased to £9,875,000, by adding a proportion of one-quarter for the trade of places from which no returns were forthcoming. In a later report (Annual Series, No. 113) he gave the following impossible figures for 1885: exports, £4,366,109; imports, £5,768,352; total, £10,134,461. This total, however, he somewhat reduced by adding 10 per cent. to the value of the exports, and deducting 10 per cent. from that of the imports, for these reasons: (1) because on exports the Custom-house officers are in the habit of accepting the merchant's declaration of value without examination; (2) because on the imports, the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* is levied on the merchant's price, which is largely in excess of what he has paid to the Indian or European manufacturer. He, therefore, represented the imports as roughly £5,250,000, and the exports as £4,000,000; or a total of £9,250,000. The items of his calculation can be shown, however, to have been exaggerated in every instance.



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who despatched a vessel laden with English goods for Persia from Constantinople to that port. About the same time an English consul was first appointed by Lord Aberdeen at Trebizond.

2. Tiflis-Tabriz line

In 1830 only one English vessel entered the harbour of Trebizond out of a total of twenty-six European (other than Turkish) vessels; in 1832, two out of forty-two.[1] Mr. Stocqueler, travelling this way in the latter year, pointed out the future trade importance of Trebizond, suggested the institution of an English consul at Tabriz and of a commercial agent at Erzerum [we now have consuls at both], and said of the newly-founded trade:—

> During the past two years a little has been carried on by two or three adventurous persons, who report that British manufactures are purchased with avidity. No less than 750,000*l.* worth of such goods have found their way through Erzerum to Persia.[2]

Encouraged by Abbas Mirza, a Mr. Burgess soon after opened trade *viâ* Trebizond with Tabriz and Teheran; and in 1836 Colonel Stuart reported that: 'Such is the rage for English goods that three princes went by night, not long ago, to make purchases at Mr. Burgess' warehouse [in the capital], though expressly forbidden by the King.'[3] The same writer observed:—

> Of the exports, the Russians export nearly two-thirds more than the English. Our merchants, however, though unprotected by a treaty, daily acquire a superiority in the market. Their yearly exports from England by Trebizond, the greater part of which are destined for Persia, amount to 900,000*l.*, being about seven-eighths of the whole amount of goods brought into the county.[4]

The Trebizond-Tabriz route continued to flourish and to be patronised by British trade until the Russians opened the Trans-Caucasian railway from Poti, and, for prudential reasons, continued to maintain free trade in the Caucasus. In 1877, however, deciding that foreign competition was an impediment to their own

[1] British navigation with the Black Sea is still so scandalously ill-developed, in spite of the certain profits to be derived from direct connection with England, that in 1889 only twenty-six British steam vessels, with a tonnage of 26,425 tons, entered the port of Trebizond out of a total of 554, with a tonnage of 528,943 tons, the French in the same period being responsible for 110 steamers with a tonnage of 159,588 tons.

[2] *Fifteen Months' Pilgrimage*, vol. ii. p. 3.

[3] *Journal of a Residence*, p. 225.

[4] This is an interesting statement, as fixing the total amount of imports at the time, viz., about £1,030,000; and as showing how small was the proportion claimed by the Gulf trade.

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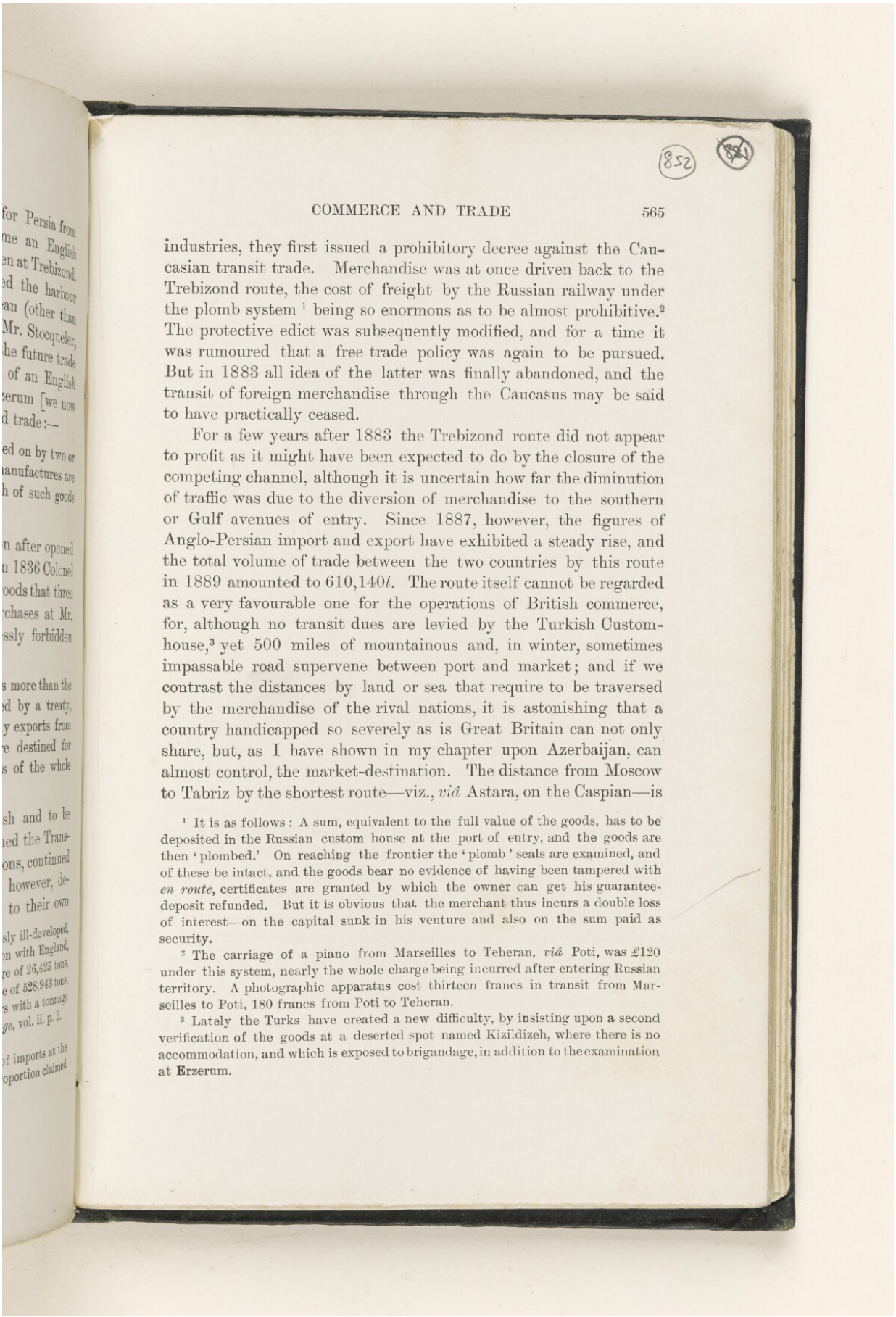



industries, they first issued a prohibitory decree against the Caucasian transit trade. Merchandise was at once driven back to the Trebizond route, the cost of freight by the Russian railway under the plomb system [1] being so enormous as to be almost prohibitive.[2] The protective edict was subsequently modified, and for a time it was rumoured that a free trade policy was again to be pursued. But in 1883 all idea of the latter was finally abandoned, and the transit of foreign merchandise through the Caucasus may be said to have practically ceased.

For a few years after 1883 the Trebizond route did not appear to profit as it might have been expected to do by the closure of the competing channel, although it is uncertain how far the diminution of traffic was due to the diversion of merchandise to the southern or Gulf avenues of entry. Since 1887, however, the figures of Anglo-Persian import and export have exhibited a steady rise, and the total volume of trade between the two countries by this route in 1889 amounted to 610,140*l*. The route itself cannot be regarded as a very favourable one for the operations of British commerce, for, although no transit dues are levied by the Turkish Custom-house,[3] yet 500 miles of mountainous and, in winter, sometimes impassable road supervene between port and market; and if we contrast the distances by land or sea that require to be traversed by the merchandise of the rival nations, it is astonishing that a country handicapped so severely as is Great Britain can not only share, but, as I have shown in my chapter upon Azerbaijan, can almost control, the market-destination. The distance from Moscow to Tabriz by the shortest route—viz., *viâ* Astara, on the Caspian—is

[1] It is as follows: A sum, equivalent to the full value of the goods, has to be deposited in the Russian custom house at the port of entry, and the goods are then 'plombed.' On reaching the frontier the 'plomb' seals are examined, and of these be intact, and the goods bear no evidence of having been tampered with *en route*, certificates are granted by which the owner can get his guarantee-deposit refunded. But it is obvious that the merchant thus incurs a double loss of interest—on the capital sunk in his venture and also on the sum paid as security.

[2] The carriage of a piano from Marseilles to Teheran, *viâ* Poti, was £120 under this system, nearly the whole charge being incurred after entering Russian territory. A photographic apparatus cost thirteen francs in transit from Marseilles to Poti, 180 francs from Poti to Teheran.

[3] Lately the Turks have created a new difficulty, by insisting upon a second verification of the goods at a deserted spot named Kizildizeh, where there is no accommodation, and which is exposed to brigandage, in addition to the examination at Erzerum.

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1,582 miles, of which 214 are by caravan. The distance from London to Tabriz, *viâ* Trebizond, is 5,176 miles, of which 520 are by caravan. If we compare the Tabriz figures with the Trebizond figures for 1889, as follows—

| Tabriz. | £ |
|---|---|
| Total Imports | 853,891 |
| „ Exports | 389,456 |
| Total Trade | £1,243,347 |

| Trebizond Transit Trade to and from Persia. | £ |
|---|---|
| Imports from England | 574,040 |
| Exports to England | 36,100 |
| Total Trade | £610,140 |

we see that nearly 70 per cent. of the Tabriz imports, and 11 per cent. of the exports, or half of the entire trade, is in British hands, a result which appears even more satisfactory when it is seen, as demonstrated in the chapter before referred to, that, in the only fields where she seriously competes, Great Britain is practically master of the field.

In the same period the figures of the Russian trade with Tabriz, *viâ* Julfa, were returned as follows by the official 'Review of the External Trade of Russia on her European and Asiatic Frontiers,' published at St. Petersburg: imports from Russia, 22,220*l.*; exports to Russia, 120,035*l.*

Two subordinate trade routes also find their objective in Tabriz. One of these is the purely Russian line from the port of Astara, on the Caspian, which is hardly as much used as its physical advantages would lead us to infer that it might be. The Russian figures of trade by this route in 1889 were as follows: imports from Russia, 52,404*l.*; exports to Russia, 198,716*l.*

3. Astara-Tabriz line

The other is the Levant route, *viâ* Aleppo and Mosul, from Alexandretta on the Syrian coast, which is still followed by a few caravans. I have been unable to procure the figures relating to the latter route, and they are probably not in existence. They would not, however, be at all considerable. A small traffic also exists between Baghdad and Tabriz *viâ* Suleimanieh, but this line scarcely deserves to be included among Persian trade routes.

4. Alexandretta-Tabriz line

The second, or northern zone, has for its objective the capital Teheran and the supply of the provinces which are fed from that centre. Here the Russian monopoly of the Caspian and the prohibitory tariffs charged upon Russian railroads before reaching the

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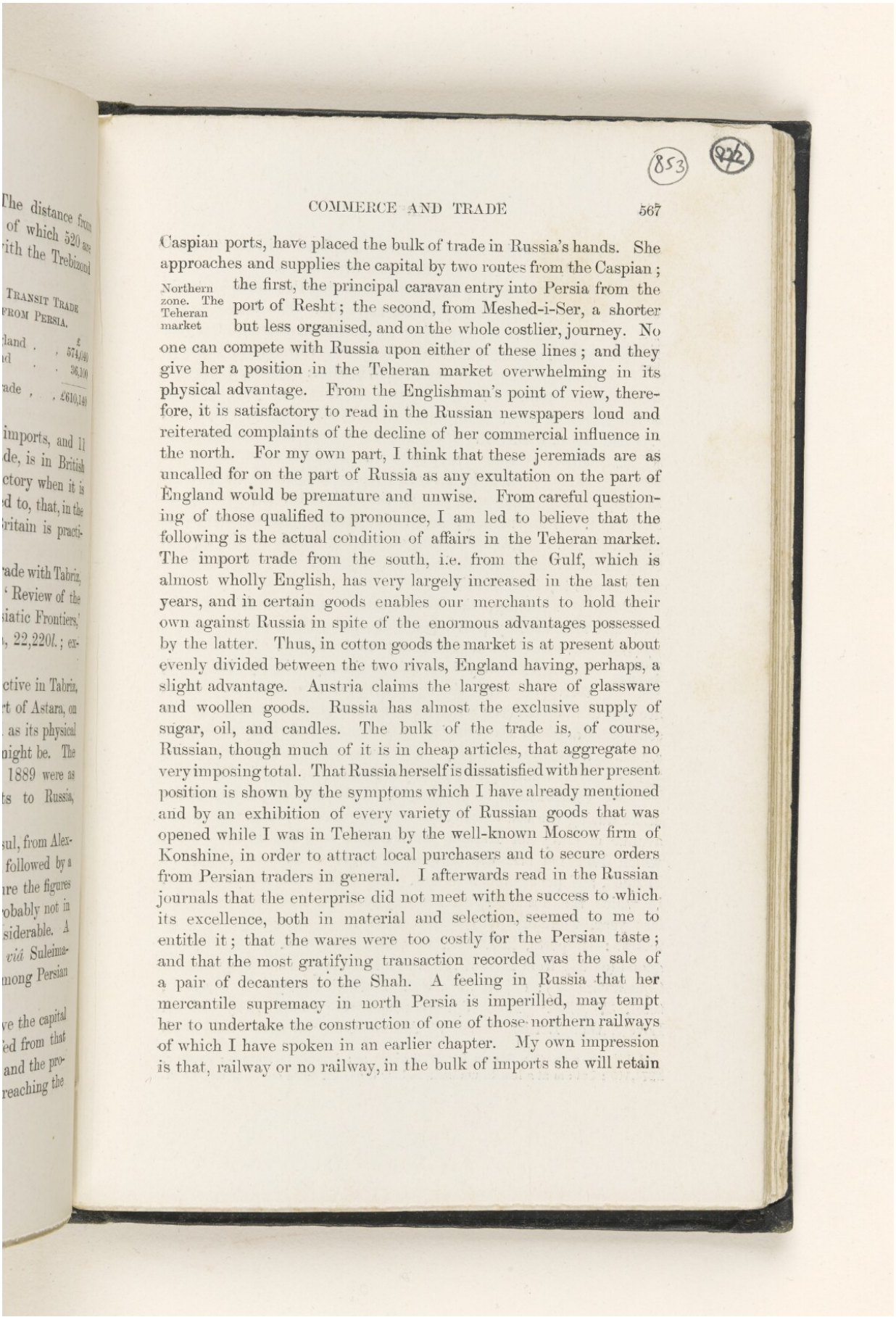



Caspian ports, have placed the bulk of trade in Russia's hands. She approaches and supplies the capital by two routes from the Caspian; the first, the principal caravan entry into Persia from the port of Resht; the second, from Meshed-i-Ser, a shorter but less organised, and on the whole costlier, journey. No one can compete with Russia upon either of these lines; and they give her a position in the Teheran market overwhelming in its physical advantage. From the Englishman's point of view, therefore, it is satisfactory to read in the Russian newspapers loud and reiterated complaints of the decline of her commercial influence in the north. For my own part, I think that these jeremiads are as uncalled for on the part of Russia as any exultation on the part of England would be premature and unwise. From careful questioning of those qualified to pronounce, I am led to believe that the following is the actual condition of affairs in the Teheran market. The import trade from the south, i.e. from the Gulf, which is almost wholly English, has very largely increased in the last ten years, and in certain goods enables our merchants to hold their own against Russia in spite of the enormous advantages possessed by the latter. Thus, in cotton goods the market is at present about evenly divided between the two rivals, England having, perhaps, a slight advantage. Austria claims the largest share of glassware and woollen goods. Russia has almost the exclusive supply of sugar, oil, and candles. The bulk of the trade is, of course, Russian, though much of it is in cheap articles, that aggregate no very imposing total. That Russia herself is dissatisfied with her present position is shown by the symptoms which I have already mentioned and by an exhibition of every variety of Russian goods that was opened while I was in Teheran by the well-known Moscow firm of Konshine, in order to attract local purchasers and to secure orders from Persian traders in general. I afterwards read in the Russian journals that the enterprise did not meet with the success to which its excellence, both in material and selection, seemed to me to entitle it; that the wares were too costly for the Persian taste; and that the most gratifying transaction recorded was the sale of a pair of decanters to the Shah. A feeling in Russia that her mercantile supremacy in north Persia is imperilled, may tempt her to undertake the construction of one of those northern railways of which I have spoken in an earlier chapter. My own impression is that, railway or no railway, in the bulk of imports she will retain

Northern zone. The Teheran market

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the advantage, while in piece goods England will continue to compete with her on rather better than even terms.

It is difficult to analyse the items composing this northern trade, owing to the absence of any recent statistics. The latest figures

5. Resht-Teheran line

that I have seen relating to Resht are those of the year 1883, which return the trade passing through the Custom-house of Enzeli as: imports, 376,443*l.*; exports, 259,250*l.*; total volume, 635,693*l.* The figures for the same year relating to Meshed-i-Ser give the imports as 179,746*l.*; exports, 135,710*l.*;

6. Meshed-i-Ser-Teheran line

total, 315,456*l.* I cannot feel certain of the accuracy of either of these computations. In both cases the entire carrying trade by sea is in Russian hands, and the bulk of the imports will come from, just as the bulk of the exports will go to, Russia. Unfortunately, the Russian trade reports do not distinguish between the goods entering or leaving Persia at the several Caspian ports, but lump their figures together with those of the trade across the land frontiers.

Roughly speaking, the north-eastern zone consists of the extensive and wealthy province of Khorasan, upon whose trade I

N.E. zone

7. Gez-Astrabad line

have dwelt at length in my first volume. The lines of strategical entry into this region, previously indicated, correspond with the main avenues of commerce. These are two in number: the route for sea-borne goods from Gez, in the south-east angle of the Caspian, to Astrabad and Shahrud—again

8. Ashk-abad-Meshed line

a Russian monopoly—and the new line in connection with the Transcaspian Railway at Ashkabad, of which the same control must be predicated. Prior to the opening of the latter during the last decade, the Gez-Astrabad route was the main avenue of entry for Russian merchandise into north-east Persia, which from that base was diffused throughout Khorasan, supplied Meshed, and penetrated to Herat. The returns for the year 1881, in which the Transcaspian Railway reached Ashkabad, and the last year, therefore of the Gez trade route monopoly, were as follows:—imports, 287,640*l.*, of which 256,000*l.* were in piece goods (chiefly from Moscow, although some came from England *viâ* Constantinople); exports, 86,280*l.*, of which nearly half was silk; total, 373,920*l.*[1] These figures, which were compiled by Colonel Lovett, then British Consul at Astrabad, do not correspond with

[1] I have seen the figures for 1883 given as: imports, £209,448; exports, £274,515; but am at a loss to understand how the latter total could be explained.

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the valiant totals published at St. Petersburg, but they are confirmed by local authority. Since the opening of the Transcaspian Railway, however, this route has lost much of its importance, eastern Khorasan, Meshed, and north-west Afghanistan being now almost entirely fed by the aid of General Annenkoff's line. Accordingly, the Gez returns show a marked decline, and the British native agent at Astrabad gave the figures of total native and Russian imports as 51,900*l.*, of which 19,090*l.* were Russian, and of total exports as 20,000*l.*, or a total trade of 71,900*l.* As regards the Meshed trade, I have shown in a previous chapter that the value of British goods imported into Meshed by the long overland route *viâ* Trebizond, Tabriz, and Teheran was in 1889 23,429*l.*; and of Anglo-Indian goods imported *viâ* Bunder Abbas, 60,871*l.*; while the value of Russian imports in the same period, mainly *viâ* Ashkabad and Kuchan, was 110,408*l.* I showed further that, in view of the marked advantages enjoyed by Russia over England in this quarter, her superiority may be expected to increase rapidly, the better quality and greater favour of English goods being unable to compete with a cheaper article imported from only a quarter of the distance.[1] The general commercial ascendency of Russia in Khorasan is, indeed, a fact which no one with a knowledge of the country and its markets can dispute, and which an inspection of the map at once explains. The utmost, as I have argued, that British commerce can there do is to concentrate its attention upon the southern or Anglo-Indian avenues of ingress, and to urge the improvement and greater security of the roads from the Gulf, at present in parts in an abominable condition, and the appointment of British Consular officers at Bunder Abbas, Kerman, and Yezd, so as to facilitate and extend the ingress of Bombay trade.

Transit route. 9. Meshed to Khiva and Bokhara

From Meshed a transit trade in Anglo-Indian wares, but more especially in tea, is conducted to Khiva and Bokhara. Out of 123,714*l.* worth of Chinese green tea imported into Meshed from Bunder Abbas in 1889, 122,857*l.* was in transit to the Khanates. It is scarcely credible, but it is true, that, owing to the exorbitant dues charged by the Amir of

[1] Before going to press I am afforded the opportunity (Jan. 1892) of confirming my own prediction by the figures of General Maclean's second Khorasan report (F. O. Annual Series, No. 976) for 1890–1. He shows that while Anglo-Indian imports into Khorasan have increased £71,500 in the year, Russian imports have increased £97,190; and that Russian piece goods are rapidly ousting British chintzes.

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Afghanistan, this circuitous route to Bokhara is actually cheaper for Indian tea than the direct route from Peshawur *viâ* Kabul. A pound of tea costing 12 annas in India will cost 16 annas by the time it has reached Meshed, and 18 annas at Bokhara. If conveyed *viâ* Kabul it will cost 21 annas at its destination, the Amir of Afghanistan levying 80 rupees (5*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*) on every camel-load of goods passing through Kabul to Bokhara, and the Amir of Bokhara levying 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* on the frontier.

A transit trade of no very great volume or importance prevails between Meshed and north-west Afghanistan. In 1889 the imports by this route into Khorasan were 17,272*l.*, consisting chiefly of *poshtins*, pistachio nuts, manna, and opium; the exports were 18,299*l.*, consisting of piece goods, sugar, iron, and steel.

10. Meshed to Afghanistan

In former days an alternative and a far more direct trade channel existed between India and North-east Persia by way of the Bolan Pass, Kandahar, Farrah, and Herat. The distance by this route from Chaman, the advanced point of the British railway in Beluchistan, to Meshed is only 680 miles, or less than 30 stages; but the Amir's paralysing exactions—amounting to no less than 2*l.* 2*s.* per cwt.—have caused its entire abandonment. In the winter of 1890–91, the late Sir R. Sandeman, the able British Commissioner in Beluchistan, surveyed and traversed the old *kafilah* route through Southern Beluchistan to Persia, *viâ* Las Bela and Pangjur, long deserted owing to the unsettled state of the country. As Beluchistan passes more directly under British influence, it is possible that this trade route may be reopened, and may supply an alternative line of entry from British India into Southern Persia. Meanwhile, it is gratifying to learn that another such route from the British outposts at Chaman in Pishin, through Seistan to Meshed itself has recently been opened and is now being tentatively pursued. Whereas the camel-caravans occupy seventy-five to ninety days between Bunder Abbas and Meshed, this route is only forty days in duration, and rests not upon a long sea-voyage but on a railway. We may hope and expect, therefore, to see it largely developed in the future.

11. Afghan transit route from India

I now pass from the northern zones, which fall naturally under the influence of Russia, in which that influence is, as might be expected, in the ascendent, but in which, in certain departments, it is being energetically contested by English or Indian competition,

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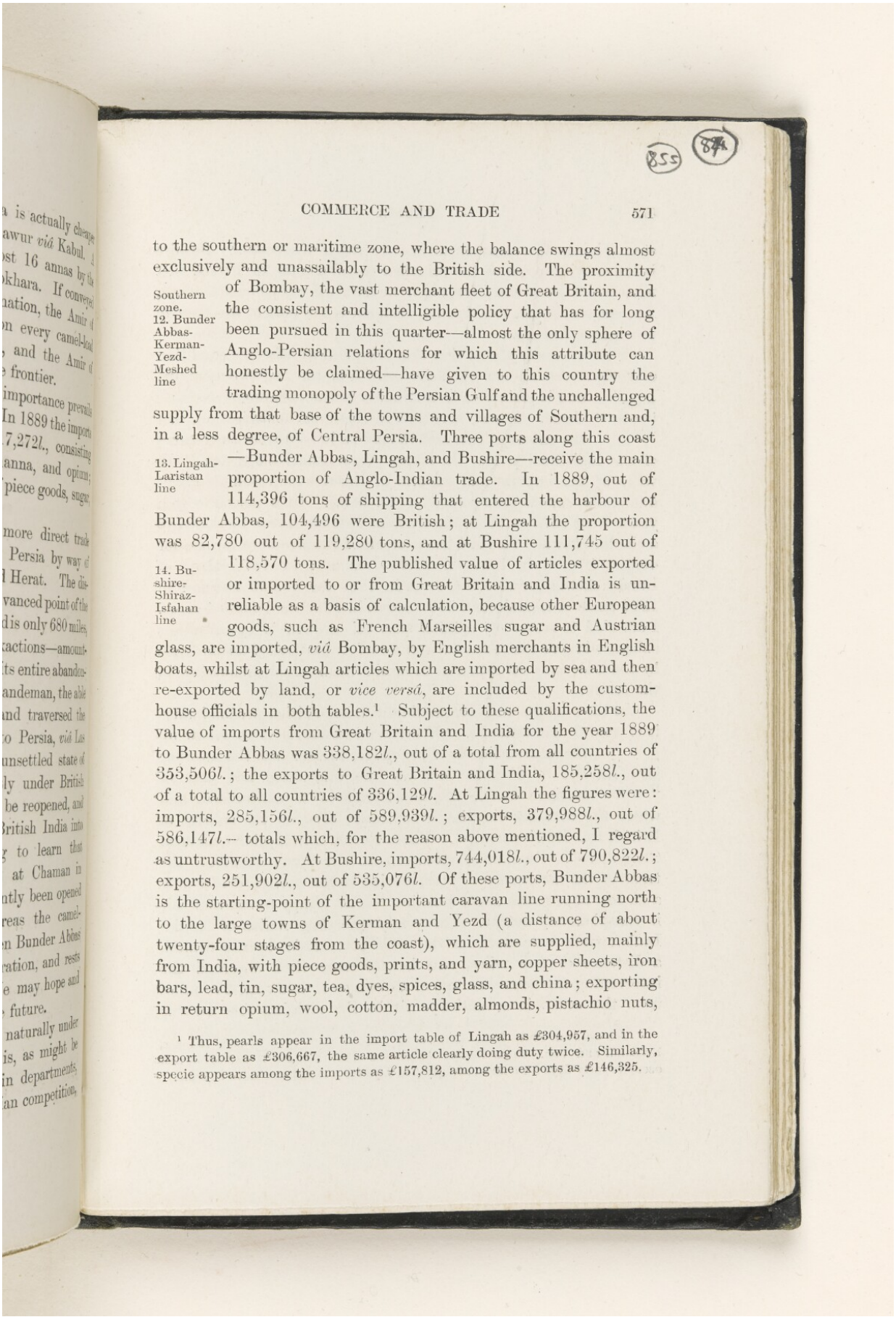



to the southern or maritime zone, where the balance swings almost exclusively and unassailably to the British side. The proximity of Bombay, the vast merchant fleet of Great Britain, and the consistent and intelligible policy that has for long been pursued in this quarter—almost the only sphere of Anglo-Persian relations for which this attribute can honestly be claimed—have given to this country the trading monopoly of the Persian Gulf and the unchallenged supply from that base of the towns and villages of Southern and, in a less degree, of Central Persia. Three ports along this coast —Bunder Abbas, Lingah, and Bushire—receive the main proportion of Anglo-Indian trade. In 1889, out of 114,396 tons of shipping that entered the harbour of Bunder Abbas, 104,496 were British; at Lingah the proportion was 82,780 out of 119,280 tons, and at Bushire 111,745 out of 118,570 tons. The published value of articles exported or imported to or from Great Britain and India is unreliable as a basis of calculation, because other European goods, such as French Marseilles sugar and Austrian glass, are imported, *viâ* Bombay, by English merchants in English boats, whilst at Lingah articles which are imported by sea and then re-exported by land, or *vice versâ*, are included by the custom-house officials in both tables.[1] Subject to these qualifications, the value of imports from Great Britain and India for the year 1889 to Bunder Abbas was 338,182*l.*, out of a total from all countries of 353,506*l.*; the exports to Great Britain and India, 185,258*l.*, out of a total to all countries of 336,129*l.* At Lingah the figures were: imports, 285,156*l.*, out of 589,939*l.*; exports, 379,988*l.*, out of 586,147*l.*— totals which, for the reason above mentioned, I regard as untrustworthy. At Bushire, imports, 744,018*l.*, out of 790,822*l.*; exports, 251,902*l.*, out of 535,076*l.* Of these ports, Bunder Abbas is the starting-point of the important caravan line running north to the large towns of Kerman and Yezd (a distance of about twenty-four stages from the coast), which are supplied, mainly from India, with piece goods, prints, and yarn, copper sheets, iron bars, lead, tin, sugar, tea, dyes, spices, glass, and china; exporting in return opium, wool, cotton, madder, almonds, pistachio nuts,

Southern zone.

12. Bunder Abbas-Kerman-Yezd-Meshed line

13. Lingah-Laristan line

14. Bushire-Shiraz-Isfahan line

[1] Thus, pearls appear in the import table of Lingah as £304,957, and in the export table as £306,667, the same article clearly doing duty twice. Similarly, specie appears among the imports as £157,812, among the exports as £146,325.

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etc. Thence the caravans ultimately reach Khorasan.[1] Bushire is the starting-point of the principal caravan route in Persia, that upon which I travelled, leading from the Gulf, *viâ* Shiraz, Isfahan, Kashan, and Kum, to Teheran. Lingah is the port of the Persian province of Laristan.

I have already stated that this brisk and satisfactory condition of trade is the all but exclusive growth of the last twenty years, and is mainly to be attributed to the opening of the Suez Canal. I may here add, in closer particularisation, that the extent of this growth may be judged from the returns of the individual ports. In fifteen years, from 1873 to 1888, the value of the imports and exports of Bushire increased by about 5,000,000 rupees (one rupee = 1*s.* 5½*d.*). In a period of ten years, from 1878 to 1888, the trade of Bunder Abbas increased to a similar extent. In 1874 the customs of Bushire were farmed for 40,000 *tomans*, in 1889 for 99,000 *tomans*; in 1874 those of Bunder Abbas for 30,000 *tomans*, in 1889 for 53,000 *tomans*; in 1874 those of Lingah for 6,500 *tomans*, in 1889 for 12,000 *tomans*. I am glad to record my opinion that this growth is by no means exhausted; but that the total volume of Anglo-Indo-Persian trade by the Gulf may be expected to attain much larger dimensions in the future.

Rapid increase of trade

In the seaports and surrounding districts British predominance is of course unquestioned. Of greater interest is it to follow up the caravan line as it penetrates further into the interior, and to discover how far the difficulties and cost of carriage enable the superiority to be maintained, and where the dividing line is to be traced between the spheres of British and Russian control. Elisée Reclus says in his 'Universal Geography': 'Russian competition has already monopolised the trade of the northern provinces, leaving to the British dealer only a narrow zone round about Bushire.' I am happy to say that this is conspicuously untrue. The yearly spreading radius of Anglo-Indian trade extends from the Gulf ports even to the capital, a distance of 800 miles, and has for some time absorbed the intervening markets. Shiraz, at a distance of less than 200 miles from the coast, is so entirely within the dividing line on the

Trade of Shiraz and Isfahan

[1] The caravan route from Kerman to Meshed runs by Ab-i-bed, Rahwar, Naiband, and Tun. From Bunder Abbas the total distance is 940 miles, and occupies forty days for a mule, seventy-five days for a camel, exclusive of halts.

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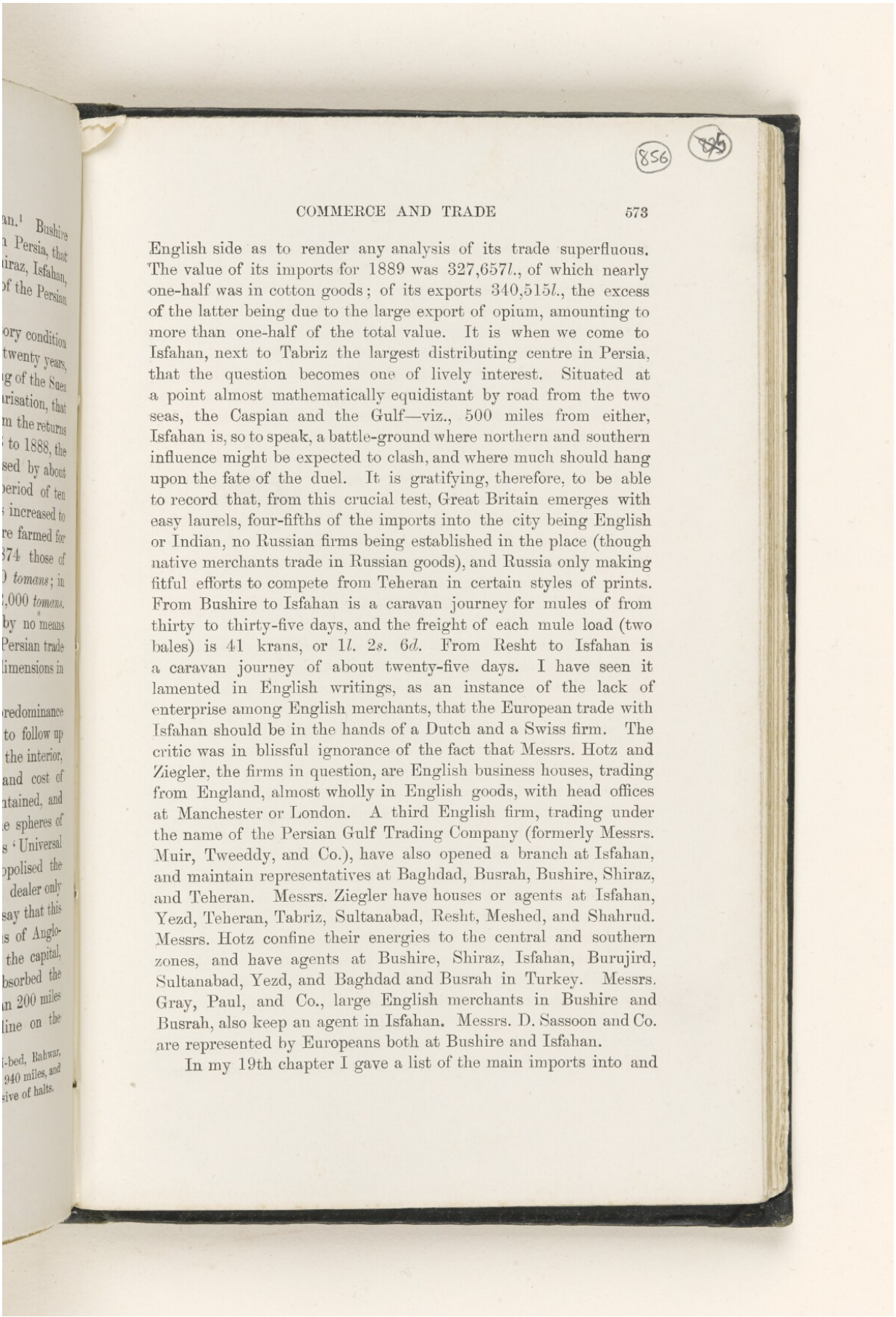



English side as to render any analysis of its trade superfluous. The value of its imports for 1889 was 327,657*l.*, of which nearly one-half was in cotton goods; of its exports 340,515*l.*, the excess of the latter being due to the large export of opium, amounting to more than one-half of the total value. It is when we come to Isfahan, next to Tabriz the largest distributing centre in Persia, that the question becomes one of lively interest. Situated at a point almost mathematically equidistant by road from the two seas, the Caspian and the Gulf—viz., 500 miles from either, Isfahan is, so to speak, a battle-ground where northern and southern influence might be expected to clash, and where much should hang upon the fate of the duel. It is gratifying, therefore, to be able to record that, from this crucial test, Great Britain emerges with easy laurels, four-fifths of the imports into the city being English or Indian, no Russian firms being established in the place (though native merchants trade in Russian goods), and Russia only making fitful efforts to compete from Teheran in certain styles of prints. From Bushire to Isfahan is a caravan journey for mules of from thirty to thirty-five days, and the freight of each mule load (two bales) is 41 krans, or 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* From Resht to Isfahan is a caravan journey of about twenty-five days. I have seen it lamented in English writings, as an instance of the lack of enterprise among English merchants, that the European trade with Isfahan should be in the hands of a Dutch and a Swiss firm. The critic was in blissful ignorance of the fact that Messrs. Hotz and Ziegler, the firms in question, are English business houses, trading from England, almost wholly in English goods, with head offices at Manchester or London. A third English firm, trading under the name of the Persian Gulf Trading Company (formerly Messrs. Muir, Tweeddy, and Co.), have also opened a branch at Isfahan, and maintain representatives at Baghdad, Busrah, Bushire, Shiraz, and Teheran. Messrs. Ziegler have houses or agents at Isfahan, Yezd, Teheran, Tabriz, Sultanabad, Resht, Meshed, and Shahrud. Messrs. Hotz confine their energies to the central and southern zones, and have agents at Bushire, Shiraz, Isfahan, Burujird, Sultanabad, Yezd, and Baghdad and Busrah in Turkey. Messrs. Gray, Paul, and Co., large English merchants in Bushire and Busrah, also keep an agent in Isfahan. Messrs. D. Sassoon and Co. are represented by Europeans both at Bushire and Isfahan.

In my 19th chapter I gave a list of the main imports into and

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exports from the bazaars of Isfahan, with the countries from or to which they severally come and go. The upshot of the information there collected was that Isfahan may be regarded as the northern outpost of the zone of undoubted British influence, whence reconnaissances are being energetically pushed forward in the direction of Teheran and the populous cities of the west provinces. A few years ago it was quite anticipated that the trade of Isfahan would slip from English fingers, and dirges were chanted upon the impending doom. But a recrudescence of commercial activity in the south, attended by other circumstances which contributed to the same result, has led to a remarkable reassertion of British supremacy. Among the subsidiary causes must be counted the increasing luxury of the Persian upper and middle classes, and the unbusinesslike methods and long credits in which the Russian merchants, particularly at Tabriz, have indulged in their efforts to take the northern markets by storm. As a consequence, there has been a contraction of the total volume of trade in the north, and the corresponding expansion in the south which I have already sketched.

Finally, I come to the western zone, which possesses one developed and one undeveloped avenue of commercial entry into Persia, the former at present absorbing a great deal of the trade which the latter will eventually attract. I allude to the Baghdad and the Mohammerah routes. To the latter, which can scarcely claim, as yet, to be included among the recognised channels of commerce, I have before made allusion in discussing the question of Persian roads and the navigation of the Karun River. From Shushter a caravan track, that has been explored and described by Mr. Mackenzie, Major Wells, General Schindler, and Mr. Lynch, leads by Mal Amir through the Bakhtiari country, a total distance of 260 miles, to Isfahan. But the rugged and perilous character of this route, and the absence of bridges or caravanserais, have prevented its adoption by the Isfahan merchants, and there appears to be no immediate chance, in spite of the Karun Concession, of its being at all widely utilised. The road scheme, of which I have spoken as now in course of execution, contemplates a branch road from Burujird to Isfahan, a distance of 210 miles; and I hear that the merchants of the latter place are looking forward with sanguine anticipations to its completion. As regards distance, it will not

Western zone 15. Mohammerah-Shushter-Burujird line

help them much for merchandise coming from the sea, as the distance from Ahwaz by road to Burujird and thence to Isfahan will be about the same as, if not a little more than, the present distance *viâ* Shiraz from Bushire, viz., 500 miles; but, being a wheeled track and equipped with a wagon service, it will provide both a speedier and a safer transit than do the horrible rock-ladders of the southern coast range. The great merit of the new route, when opened and organised, from a British point of view, will be that the cities and villages of Western and South-western Persia —Dizful, a more northern counterpart of Shushter, Khorremabad, Burujird, with 17,000 inhabitants and with a surrounding plain of great productiveness; Sultanabad, the centre of the carpet industry, and their dependent districts, which are among the richest corn-growing lands in Persia—will be brought within easy access of the Gulf, whilst their inhabitants will thereby be drawn into the mesh of the Lancashire cotton spinner and the Hindu artisan. Kermanshah with its 60,000 people, and Hamadan with 15,000, at present only served by the Turkish route from Baghdad, will also be brought within the southern zone of influence, and will swell the profits of Manchester and Bombay. A British Vice-Consul was appointed to Mohammerah in the autumn of 1890, and has since presented the first trade report ever issued from that town.[1] He estimates the total value of imports for the year 1890 (all but 1,500*l.* of which came from India) as 146,140*l.*, and of exports as 53,100*l.*, of which 49,540*l.* went to India. The imports, however, do not include those that are brought down stream in row-boats from Busrah. Nor must it be assumed that they are entirely destined for Persian consumption, there being a considerable traffic between Mohammerah, by way of the Bahmeshir, with Koweit on the opposite or Turkish side of the Persian Gulf, which imports its Indian merchandise in this fashion. The river steamers on the Karun are not as yet much utilised for traffic with the interior beyond Shushter, owing to the dilatoriness of the Persian Government in carrying out their promises for the simplification of customs.

Next comes the transit route from the Gulf to Western Persia by way of the Tigris and Baghdad. In this case, steamers of the British India Company and the Bombay and Persia Company trade from Bombay, carrying cargoes from India to the Turkish port of Busrah.

[1] Diplomatic and Consular Reports (Annual Series), No. 826, 1891.

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Two business houses—Messrs. Darby, Andrewes, and Co., of Baghdad, and a native merchant of Busrah named Asfar, who charters vessels on a large scale—also run steamers direct from London to Busrah. There the goods are transhipped into the capacious river boats of the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company (Messrs. Lynch Brothers) or into those of a Turkish Company, running on the Tigris between Busrah and Baghdad. There are at present two English and four Turkish boats engaged in this service. On these boats the goods are conveyed to Baghdad, where, after passing through the Custom-house, merchandise in transit for Persia proceeds by the caravan route which crosses the Turco-Persian frontier at Khanikin, and continues by way of Kermanshah and Hamadan to Teheran, a distance of 500 miles, and a caravan journey of twenty-eight days. Kermanshah and Hamadan are both the capitals of populous districts and the distributing centres of a wide area. For articles from Europe of uncommon bulk or value, such as carriages, pianos, and the like, whose destination is Teheran, this is the favourite road entry into Persia, owing to its shorter duration and to its immunity from the perilous *kotals* of the Bushire-Shiraz line. Merchandise travelling by this route has to pass two Custom-houses, Turkish and Persian, though the former is more to be feared for the artificial delays which it delights to enforce, than for the severity of its tariffs, 7 per cent. of the 8 per cent. *ad valorem* import duty exacted at Baghdad being returned when the frontier is crossed at Khanikin. The break of bulk at Busrah is one shortcoming from which this route suffers. But the Turkish quarantine regulations, which are skilfully devised so as to irritate and offend, are a worse. One day's quarantine is regularly imposed upon all vessels coming from Bombay, even when cholera is rampant in Turkey and extinct in India, the only motive that anyone has been able to suggest being the vulgar cupidity that is gratified by the extortion of quarantine fees. As I was descending the river from Baghdad an even more unwarrantable act of malice was perpetrated by the Turkish officials at Busrah. Five days' quarantine was imposed upon all vessels hailing from Persia, or that had touched at a Persian port, not because any epidemic could be alleged to prevail in Persia, but owing, it was said, to the British India boat by which I had come up from Bushire having stopped to put me down at Mohammerah—which it was entirely within its right of doing, the Turks having no control either over

16. Baghdad-Kermanshah line

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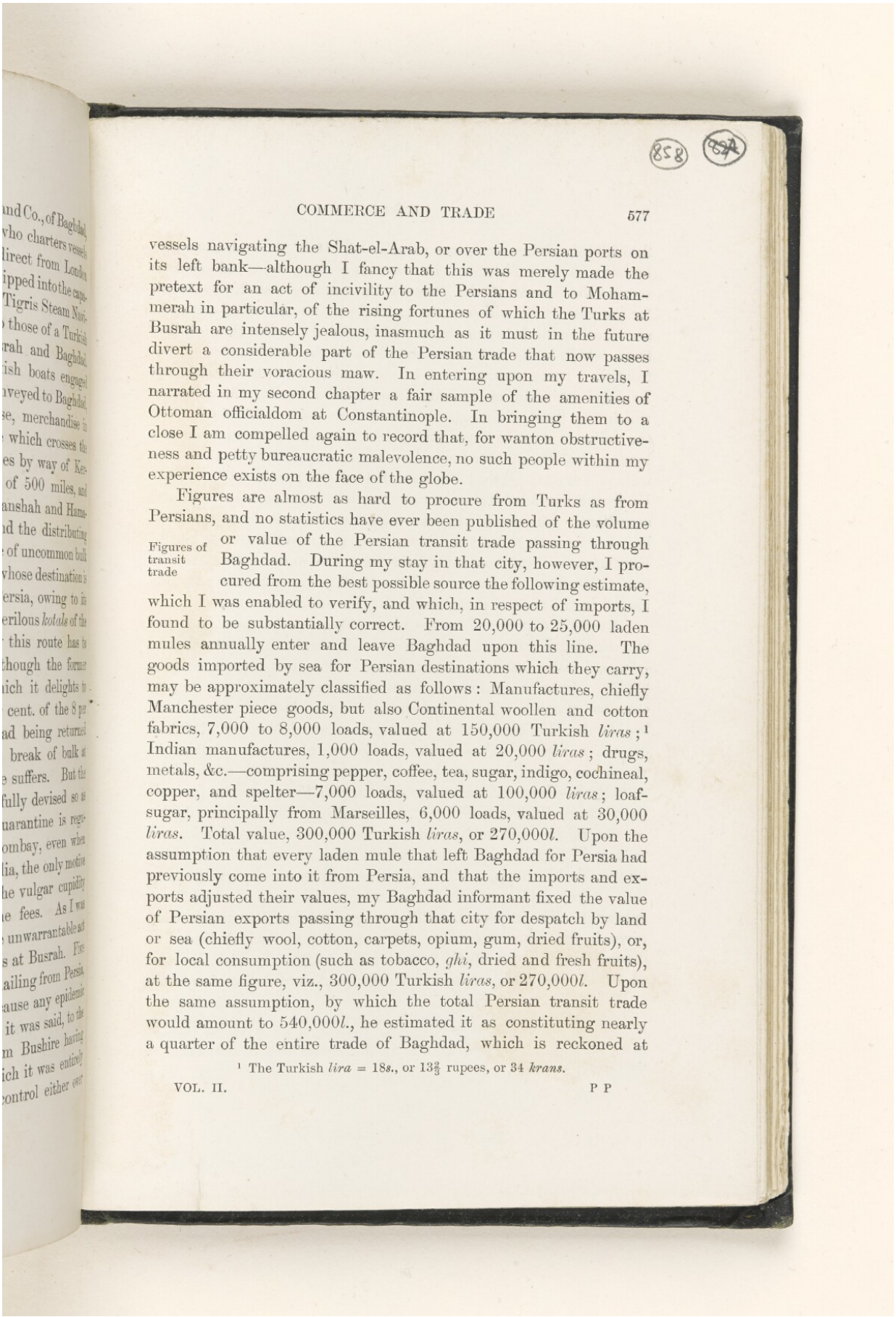



vessels navigating the Shat-el-Arab, or over the Persian ports on its left bank—although I fancy that this was merely made the pretext for an act of incivility to the Persians and to Mohammerah in particular, of the rising fortunes of which the Turks at Busrah are intensely jealous, inasmuch as it must in the future divert a considerable part of the Persian trade that now passes through their voracious maw. In entering upon my travels, I narrated in my second chapter a fair sample of the amenities of Ottoman officialdom at Constantinople. In bringing them to a close I am compelled again to record that, for wanton obstructiveness and petty bureaucratic malevolence, no such people within my experience exists on the face of the globe.

Figures of transit trade

Figures are almost as hard to procure from Turks as from Persians, and no statistics have ever been published of the volume or value of the Persian transit trade passing through Baghdad. During my stay in that city, however, I procured from the best possible source the following estimate, which I was enabled to verify, and which, in respect of imports, I found to be substantially correct. From 20,000 to 25,000 laden mules annually enter and leave Baghdad upon this line. The goods imported by sea for Persian destinations which they carry, may be approximately classified as follows: Manufactures, chiefly Manchester piece goods, but also Continental woollen and cotton fabrics, 7,000 to 8,000 loads, valued at 150,000 Turkish *liras*;[1] Indian manufactures, 1,000 loads, valued at 20,000 *liras*; drugs, metals, &c.—comprising pepper, coffee, tea, sugar, indigo, cochineal, copper, and spelter—7,000 loads, valued at 100,000 *liras*; loaf-sugar, principally from Marseilles, 6,000 loads, valued at 30,000 *liras*. Total value, 300,000 Turkish *liras*, or 270,000*l*. Upon the assumption that every laden mule that left Baghdad for Persia had previously come into it from Persia, and that the imports and exports adjusted their values, my Baghdad informant fixed the value of Persian exports passing through that city for despatch by land or sea (chiefly wool, cotton, carpets, opium, gum, dried fruits), or, for local consumption (such as tobacco, *ghi*, dried and fresh fruits), at the same figure, viz., 300,000 Turkish *liras*, or 270,000*l*. Upon the same assumption, by which the total Persian transit trade would amount to 540,000*l*., he estimated it as constituting nearly a quarter of the entire trade of Baghdad, which is reckoned at

[1] The Turkish *lira* = 18*s*., or $13\frac{2}{3}$ rupees, or 34 *krans*.



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2,475,000*l.*, giving a customs revenue of 115,000*l.* Subsequently, however, I was fortunate in procuring from two independent sources the figures of the Persian Custom-house at Kermanshah for the year 1889, which ought to be practically identical with the above, all traffic between Persia and Baghdad passing through that town, which is the first important place on the Persian side of the frontier. These figures were in substantial accordance with the Baghdad estimate as regards imports into Persia, the value of which they fixed, giving the details in each case, at 232,530*l.* But the value of exports from Persia was reduced by them from the hypothetical 270,000*l.* to the more modest total of 95,266*l.*, the entire volume of the transit trade *viâ* Baghdad being accordingly 327,796*l.*[1] Upon the Baghdad-Teheran line English trade is largely in the ascendant. The same reasons which keep Russia from the Gulf keep her from Baghdad; and in so far as she supplies Hamadan and Kermanshah, it will be *viâ* Tabriz from the north. Baghdad, in fine, falls under the category of the Gulf ports, and must be included in the zone of indisputable British supremacy.

17 Baghdad-Persian Kurdistan line

A certain export and import trade also exists between Baghdad and Persian Kurdistan, particularly with Sinna, the capital of the latter district; although, as it does not always cross a customs cordon, statistics of its volume are not easy to procure. There appeared, however, in the 'Journal de la Chambre de Commerce de Constantinople' of May 17, 1890, a copy of a report to the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which the trade figures of Persian Kurdistan for 1889 were given as follows—Exports: carpets 4,000 Turkish *liras*, animals (principally sheep) 10,000, wool 2,000, dressed skins 2,000, butter 10,000, cereals, raisins, gall nuts, gum tragacanth, almonds, mastic, and tobacco 77,000; total 105,000 Turkish *liras*, or 94,500*l.*, of which 39,000 Turkish *liras*, or 35,100*l.*, were said to be exports passing into Turkey, and appertain, I conclude, to the route of which I am speaking. The imports from Turkey into Persian Kurdistan were given in the same report as: gall nuts 10,000 Turkish *liras*, undressed hides 5,000, stuffs 2,000; total, 17,000 Turkish *liras*, or 15,300*l.* The entire volume of Turco-Kurdish trade in this quarter

[1] The credibility of these figures is incidentally but strongly confirmed by those quoted by Mr. Herbert (F. O. Reports, Annual Series, No. 113) for the year 1885. The imports into Kermanshah from Baghdad were there valued at £218,700, the exports at £89,780.

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was, therefore, only 50,400*l.*, and would appear to consist of local products or manufactures, and not, therefore, to fall within the sphere either of British or of Russian influence.

Summary

I have now again completed my tour of the Persian frontier and have discussed, point by point, the operations, actual or possible, of foreign commerce, just as I formerly did the chances of lines of rail. My survey may be summed up as follows: In the north-west, north, and north-east zones of influence a decided Russian superiority is met, and in parts disputed by vigorous British or Indian competition. In the south zone British ascendency is firmly established, and is yearly increasing. In the west zone it already exists, and is likely to be strongly fortified in the near future. In the middle ground, the British have gained a solid *pied à terre*, and are gradually but surely extending their borders. The total value of English trade with Persia is given in the latest Board of Trade Returns as: exports to Persia, 363,000*l.*, imports from Persia, 104,000*l.*; total, 467,000*l.*; but I am quite unable to reconcile these figures with those that I have before quoted or referred to in dealing with the several ports. The Consular returns from these show that, in 1889, the exports from Great Britain to Persia were as follows: Trebizond, 574,040*l.*, Bushire, 415,452*l.*, Lingah, 821*l.*, Bunder Abbas, 7,505*l.*, or a total of 997,818*l.*, nearly three times the Board of Trade figures. On the other hand, there is less discrepancy in the figures of imports into Great Britain from Persia, which appear in the same consular reports as follows: Trebizond, 36,100*l.*, Bushire, 83,990*l.*, Lingah, 9,915*l.*, Bunder Abbas, 137*l.*; total, 120,142*l.* In both cases it must be remembered that the totals which I have named and added up relate to four ports alone, although these are the chief of the many points of mercantile entry into Persia; and consequently that, if similar figures were forthcoming in the case, for instance, of Baghdad, the result would be even more imposing, and the Board of Trade Returns even more fallacious.

Volume of Anglo-Indo-Persian trade

For my own part I think that the fairest calculations are those which reckon the Persian trade with Great Britain and India combined, the manufactures of products of Hindustan being the result of the industry of British subjects, and being conveyed in British bottoms. Here we are assisted by the figures compiled in the Indian ports, and published in the annual statement of the Trade



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of British India.[1] For the year 1889 the returns were as follows:—

IMPORTS INTO PERSIA FROM INDIA.

| | Rupees |
|---|---|
| (1) Indian Products and Manufactures | 4,971,020 [2] |
| (2) British, Colonial, and foreign Manufactures | 12,256,030 [3] |
| Total | 17,227,050 |

In the same period specie to the value of 1,048,890 rupees was imported from India into Persia.

EXPORTS FROM PERSIA TO INDIA.

| | Rupees | | Rupees |
|---|---|---|---|
| Merchandise | 8,039,160 [4] | Specie | 1,309,580 |

Total of Indo-Persian trade, including merchandise only, 25,266,210 rupees, or 1,842,327*l.*; including specie also, 27,624,680 rupees, or 2,014,299*l.* Adding these to the figures of Anglo-Persian trade, *viâ* Trebizond, I am disposed to calculate the total annual value of Anglo-Indo-Persian trade as about 3,000,000*l.*, of which over 2,000,000*l.* will be in imports into Persia from Great Britain and India, and the remainder in exports in the inverse direction.[5]

Volume of Russo-Persian trade

No statistics of Russo-Persian trade, however loosely compiled, can show results even remotely comparable with these. From the Russian official publication before quoted, and issued by the Customs Department in St. Petersburg, I derive the following figures for the year 1889:—

IMPORTS INTO PERSIA FROM RUSSIA.

(1) Across the Caucasian frontier, and from Baku and Astara.

| Food products | Raw and half-worked materials | Animals | Manufactured goods | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| £496,241 | 58,760 | 5,189 | 144,718 | 704,908 |

(2) From Astrakhan.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| £56,136 | 8,825 | 640 | 111,411 | 177,012 |
| | | | Total | £881,920 |

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, C. 6341, London, 1891.

[2] The principal items were: indigo 1,725,430 rupees, and tea 802,020 rupees.

[3] The principal items were: piece goods 7,322,830 rupees, sugar 1,135,490 rupees, tea 1,540,540 rupees, and copper, 516,120 rupees.

[4] The principal items were: raw cotton 2,441,780 rupees, wool 1,037,220 rupees, horses 179,260 rupees, fruits 1,261,080 rupees.

[5] Mr. Herbert, in his report, estimated the total value of this trade as £5,000,000 yearly, a calculation which was a mere rough shot, and, as I think, greatly exaggerated.

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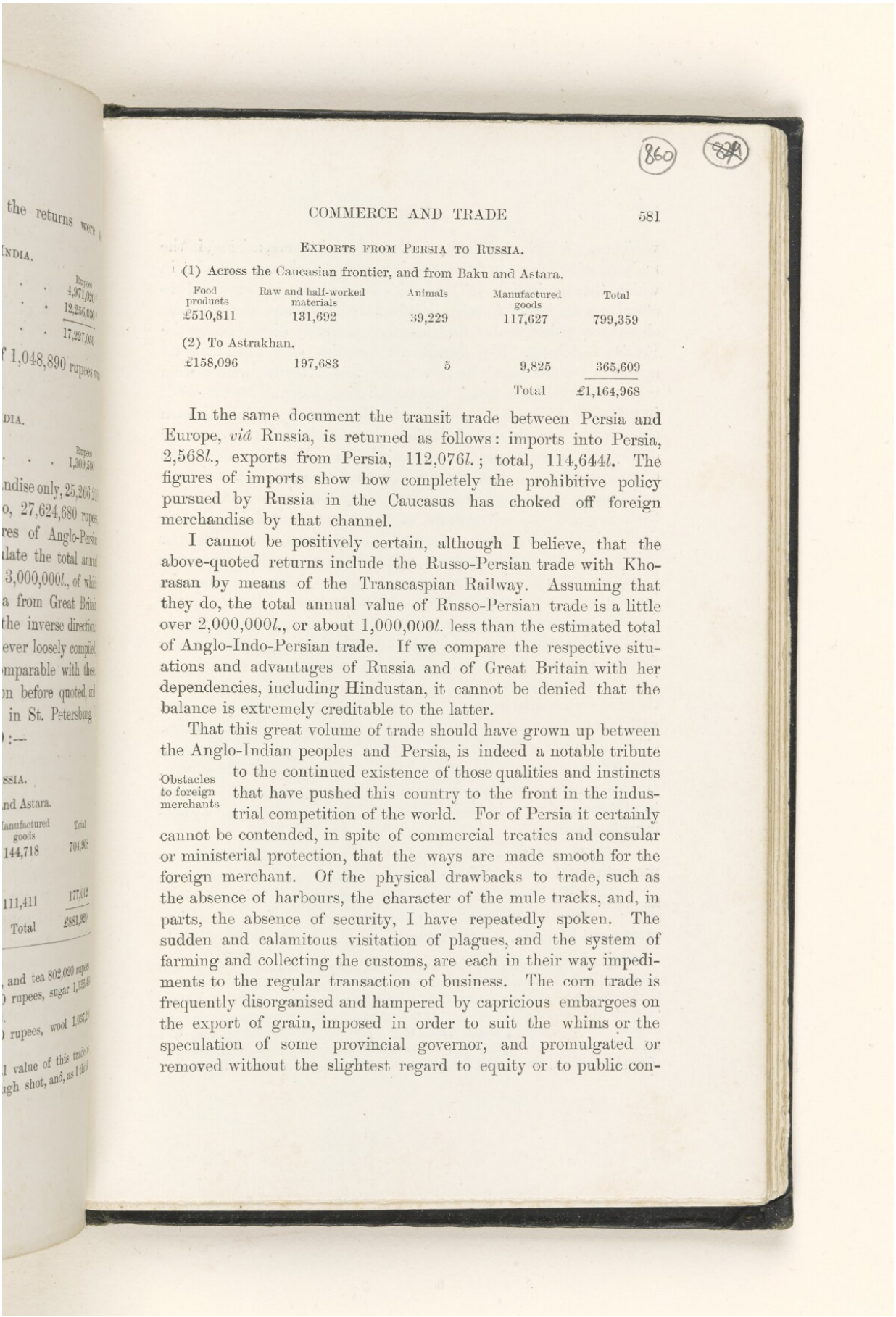



EXPORTS FROM PERSIA TO RUSSIA.

(1) Across the Caucasian frontier, and from Baku and Astara.

| Food products | Raw and half-worked materials | Animals | Manufactured goods | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| £510,811 | 131,692 | 39,229 | 117,627 | 799,359 |

(2) To Astrakhan.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| £158,096 | 197,683 | 5 | 9,825 | 365,609 |
| | | | Total | £1,164,968 |

In the same document the transit trade between Persia and Europe, *viâ* Russia, is returned as follows: imports into Persia, 2,568*l.*, exports from Persia, 112,076*l.*; total, 114,644*l.* The figures of imports show how completely the prohibitive policy pursued by Russia in the Caucasus has choked off foreign merchandise by that channel.

I cannot be positively certain, although I believe, that the above-quoted returns include the Russo-Persian trade with Khorasan by means of the Transcaspian Railway. Assuming that they do, the total annual value of Russo-Persian trade is a little over 2,000,000*l.*, or about 1,000,000*l.* less than the estimated total of Anglo-Indo-Persian trade. If we compare the respective situations and advantages of Russia and of Great Britain with her dependencies, including Hindustan, it cannot be denied that the balance is extremely creditable to the latter.

Obstacles to foreign merchants

That this great volume of trade should have grown up between the Anglo-Indian peoples and Persia, is indeed a notable tribute to the continued existence of those qualities and instincts that have pushed this country to the front in the industrial competition of the world. For of Persia it certainly cannot be contended, in spite of commercial treaties and consular or ministerial protection, that the ways are made smooth for the foreign merchant. Of the physical drawbacks to trade, such as the absence of harbours, the character of the mule tracks, and, in parts, the absence of security, I have repeatedly spoken. The sudden and calamitous visitation of plagues, and the system of farming and collecting the customs, are each in their way impediments to the regular transaction of business. The corn trade is frequently disorganised and hampered by capricious embargoes on the export of grain, imposed in order to suit the whims or the speculation of some provincial governor, and promulgated or removed without the slightest regard to equity or to public con-

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venience. A further difficulty is that of remittances, arising, in the main, from the constantly fluctuating rate of exchange—a point in which the institution of banks in Persia may be expected to afford some relief. Another is the utter contempt for the most elementary principles of contract that is freely displayed by the Persian merchant. The Persian's conception of a contract is an agreement which is only to be adhered to if attended with certain profit to himself, but which may be hilariously repudiated if a fall in prices or some other oscillation in the market renders his own share in the bargain one of dubious issue. He will call upon the other party to the contract, and coolly inform him over several cups of coffee and amid repeated *kalians*, that he declines to take the articles agreed upon, which have very likely been ordered all the way from England, and are perhaps on the verge of arriving at their destination.[1] No scruples of morality, no stings of remorse, not even any fear of the consequences, affect the complacent egoism of the Persian trader; and in the absence either of any code of commercial honour or of any tribunals for enforcing legal obligations, the deluded merchant must grin and bear it. Sometimes no excuse whatever is forthcoming. I bought some articles myself of a dealer for the sum of 200 *krans*. Upon my sending the next day to inquire why they had not been delivered, the reply was returned that the owner had repented of the bargain and refused to part with them for less than 400 *krans*. Fraudulent bankruptcies, effected under the sanction of a *mujtahed* who has been bribed, are another favourite device of the Persian who is reluctant to pay. In fact, a commercial law, however rudimentary, is greatly needed to protect foreigners in their dealings with this amiable but hyper-ingenious people.

Such, so far as I have been able to appraise them, are the present aspect and partition of Persian commerce. If we turn to the future, the outlook, from an English point of view, may be regarded as eminently encouraging. The improvement of ports, if ever undertaken, the construction of roads

The future

[1] That the Persians change not in this respect may be illustrated by a passage from the letter of Lawrence Chapman, one of the factors of the Russia Company in their fourth venture upon the revived British Caspian trade in 1568. He wrote: 'Such is the constancie of all men in this countrey, with whomsoever you shall bargen. If the ware be bought, and they doe mislike it afterwardes, they will bring it againe, and compell you to deliver the money for it againe, regarding the Shawgh's (Shah's) letter, which manifesteth the contrary, as a straw in the winde.'

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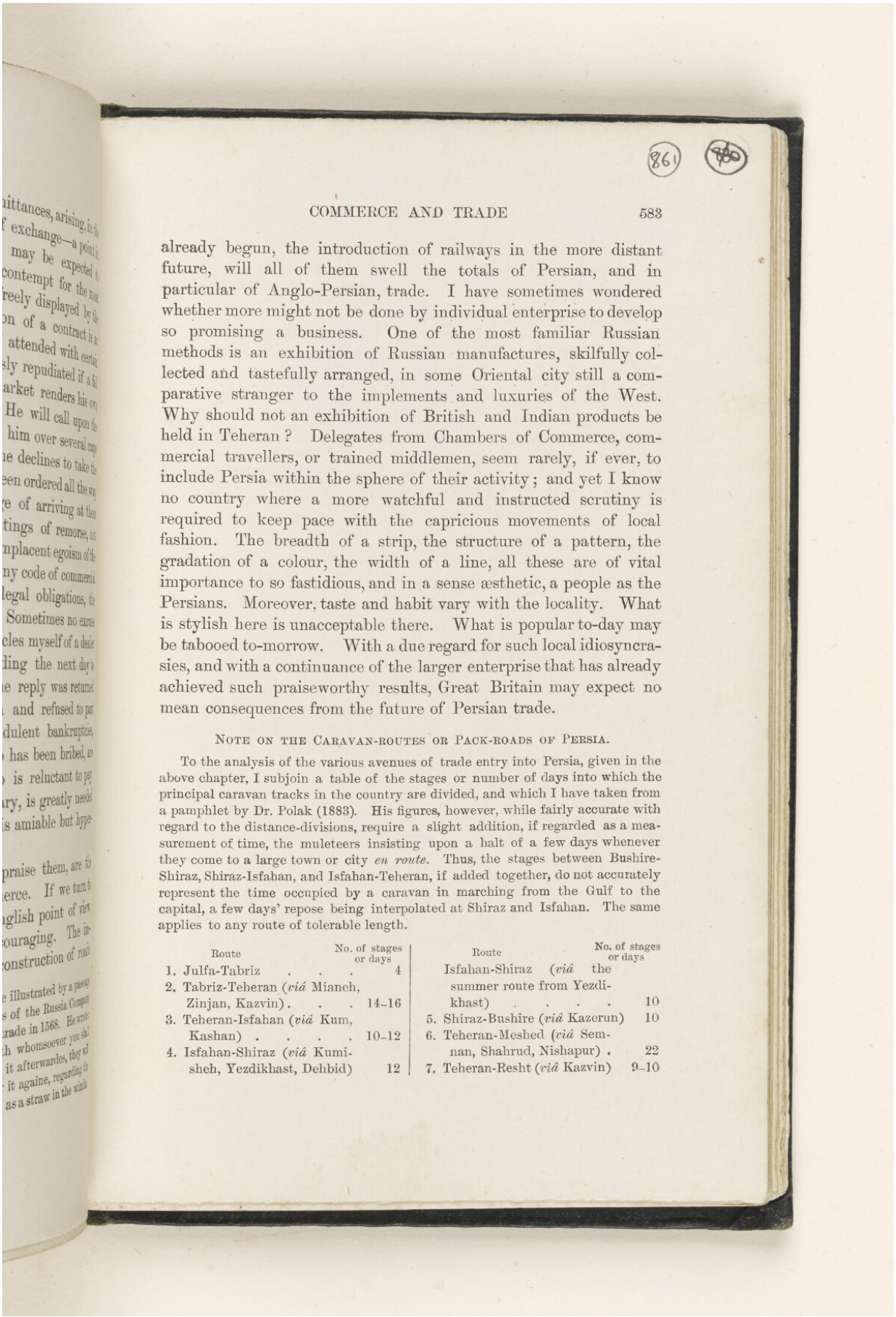



already begun, the introduction of railways in the more distant future, will all of them swell the totals of Persian, and in particular of Anglo-Persian, trade. I have sometimes wondered whether more might not be done by individual enterprise to develop so promising a business. One of the most familiar Russian methods is an exhibition of Russian manufactures, skilfully collected and tastefully arranged, in some Oriental city still a comparative stranger to the implements and luxuries of the West. Why should not an exhibition of British and Indian products be held in Teheran? Delegates from Chambers of Commerce, commercial travellers, or trained middlemen, seem rarely, if ever, to include Persia within the sphere of their activity; and yet I know no country where a more watchful and instructed scrutiny is required to keep pace with the capricious movements of local fashion. The breadth of a strip, the structure of a pattern, the gradation of a colour, the width of a line, all these are of vital importance to so fastidious, and in a sense æsthetic, a people as the Persians. Moreover, taste and habit vary with the locality. What is stylish here is unacceptable there. What is popular to-day may be tabooed to-morrow. With a due regard for such local idiosyncrasies, and with a continuance of the larger enterprise that has already achieved such praiseworthy results, Great Britain may expect no mean consequences from the future of Persian trade.

### Note on the Caravan-routes or Pack-roads of Persia.

To the analysis of the various avenues of trade entry into Persia, given in the above chapter, I subjoin a table of the stages or number of days into which the principal caravan tracks in the country are divided, and which I have taken from a pamphlet by Dr. Polak (1883). His figures, however, while fairly accurate with regard to the distance-divisions, require a slight addition, if regarded as a measurement of time, the muleteers insisting upon a halt of a few days whenever they come to a large town or city *en route*. Thus, the stages between Bushire-Shiraz, Shiraz-Isfahan, and Isfahan-Teheran, if added together, do not accurately represent the time occupied by a caravan in marching from the Gulf to the capital, a few days' repose being interpolated at Shiraz and Isfahan. The same applies to any route of tolerable length.

| Route | No. of stages or days |
|---|---|
| 1. Julfa-Tabriz . . . | 4 |
| 2. Tabriz-Teheran (*viâ* Mianeh, Zinjan, Kazvin) . . . | 14–16 |
| 3. Teheran-Isfahan (*viâ* Kum, Kashan) . . . . | 10–12 |
| 4. Isfahan-Shiraz (*viâ* Kumisheh, Yezdikhast, Dehbid) | 12 |
| Isfahan-Shiraz (*viâ* the summer route from Yezdikhast) . . . . | 10 |
| 5. Shiraz-Bushire (*viâ* Kazerun) | 10 |
| 6. Teheran-Meshed (*viâ* Semnan, Shahrud, Nishapur) . | 22 |
| 7. Teheran-Resht (*viâ* Kazvin) | 9–10 |

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| Route | No. of stages or days |
|---|---|
| 8. Teheran-Baghdad (*viâ* Hamadan, Kermanshah, Khanikin) | 24 |
| 9. Teheran-Meshed-i-Ser | 6 |
| 10. Teheran-Astrabad (*viâ* Sari) | 14 |
| 11. Isfahan-Yezd | 10 |
| 12. Kashan-Kerman | 25 |
| 13. Yezd-Kerman | 12 |
| 14. Kerman-Bam | 11 |
| 15. Kerman-Bunder Abbas | 20 |
| 16. Tabriz-Astara (*viâ* Ardebil) | 7 |
| 17. Tabriz-Resht (summer route *viâ* Masullah and Fumen) | 12 |
| 18. Tabriz-Baghdad (*viâ* Sulei-manieh) | 20 |
| 19. Hamadan-Sinna | 4 |
| 20. Hamadan-Shushter | 15 |
| 21. Resht-Astrabad | 14 |

I may add that the contract mule-load is 350 lbs., but that the normal burden is 250–300 lbs. In 1889, the charge for mules on the principal pack-roads was as follows: Bushire-Shiraz, 30 *krans* per mule for 43 *farsakhs*; Shiraz-Isfahan, 40 *krans* for 70 *farsakhs*; Isfahan to Teheran, 45 *krans* for 81 *farsakhs*; Teheran to Baghdad, 81 *krans* for 143 *farsakhs*.

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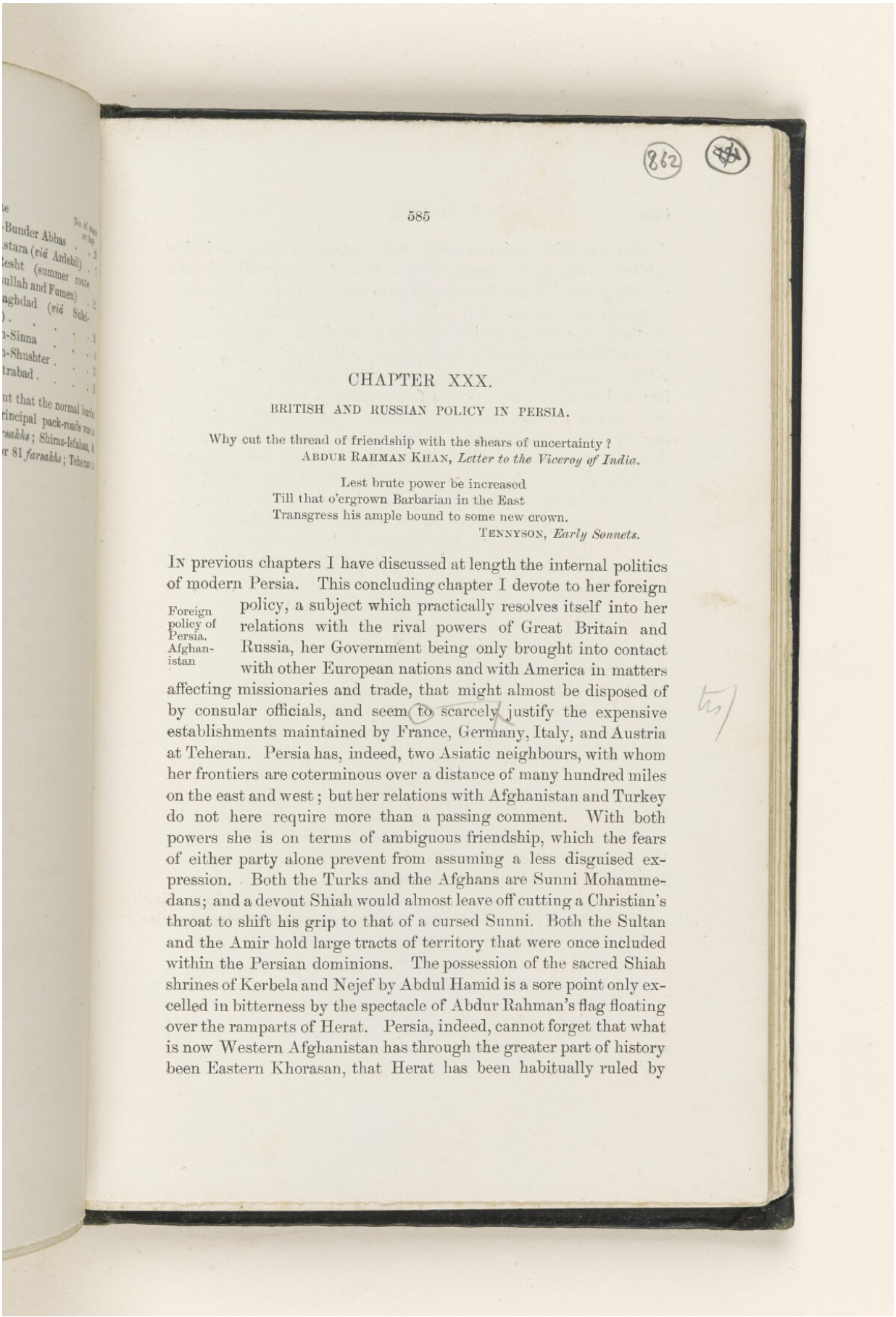



## CHAPTER XXX.

### BRITISH AND RUSSIAN POLICY IN PERSIA.

Why cut the thread of friendship with the shears of uncertainty?
ABDUR RAHMAN KHAN, *Letter to the Viceroy of India.*

Lest brute power be increased
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown.
TENNYSON, *Early Sonnets.*

IN previous chapters I have discussed at length the internal politics of modern Persia. This concluding chapter I devote to her foreign policy, a subject which practically resolves itself into her relations with the rival powers of Great Britain and Russia, her Government being only brought into contact with other European nations and with America in matters affecting missionaries and trade, that might almost be disposed of by consular officials, and seem to scarcely justify the expensive establishments maintained by France, Germany, Italy, and Austria at Teheran. Persia has, indeed, two Asiatic neighbours, with whom her frontiers are coterminous over a distance of many hundred miles on the east and west; but her relations with Afghanistan and Turkey do not here require more than a passing comment. With both powers she is on terms of ambiguous friendship, which the fears of either party alone prevent from assuming a less disguised expression. Both the Turks and the Afghans are Sunni Mohammedans; and a devout Shiah would almost leave off cutting a Christian's throat to shift his grip to that of a cursed Sunni. Both the Sultan and the Amir hold large tracts of territory that were once included within the Persian dominions. The possession of the sacred Shiah shrines of Kerbela and Nejef by Abdul Hamid is a sore point only excelled in bitterness by the spectacle of Abdur Rahman's flag floating over the ramparts of Herat. Persia, indeed, cannot forget that what is now Western Afghanistan has through the greater part of history been Eastern Khorasan, that Herat has been habitually ruled by

Foreign policy of Persia. Afghanistan

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Persian sovereigns, viceroys, governors, or vassals, that it is inhabited by a people of Persian rather than Afghan traditions and sympathies, and that it is severed by no physical or ethnographical barrier from Meshed. Twice in this century has the cupidity of Persia for her old possession brought a Persian army to the walls of the Afghan fortress, entailing on each occasion diplomatic rupture, and on the second open war with Great Britain. Behind her weak barriers she now sits frightened and sullen, hating but powerless to prevent the reproach of an Afghan garrison in the ancient capital of Khorasan. It was to this sense of baffled cupidity that Lord Beaconsfield appealed when, in his contemplated partition of Afghanistan after the war of 1878, he committed the inexplicable error of proposing once again to hand over Herat to Persia, thereby giving the lie to one of the few uniform precepts that have been observed by Great Britain in her Central Asian policy of this century, and forgetting that, in surrendering Herat to the Shah, he was in reality vicariously abandoning the so-called 'Key of India' to the tender mercies of the Czar.[1]

The ill-feeling between Persian and Afghan was not mended by the result of the Seistan arbitration, which angered both parties, and particularly the Amir Shir Ali; nor was it improved after the last Anglo-Afghan war by the refuge, given under the form of a veiled incarceration, to Ayub Khan at Teheran. If it has since slumbered, it is only because Abdur Rahman Khan is too formidable a neighbour to admit of any tricks being played on the frontier, and because, weak and vacillating as the Asiatic policy of Great Britain has been in many respects, it has at least, with the single exception of Lord Beaconsfield's blunder, retained consistency in this—that it has always cried, and would still cry 'Hands off' to any attempt made by the Shah to regain an Afghan dominion that perished with Nadir Shah and can never be recovered. It may

[1] Lord Beaconsfield's plan of handing over Herat to Persia was explained by Sir H. Rawlinson in the *Nineteenth Century* of February 1880. General Grodekoff, in his Russian book, *The War in Turkomania*, vol. ii. p. 296, quotes the text of the proposed agreement (as to the accuracy or authenticity of which I am not able to speak). According to him, Herat was to be surrendered to Persia, an English resident was to be stationed there, English officers were to be admitted in order to fortify the city and drill the Persian garrison, no foreign agents were to be tolerated, and England was to have the right to introduce troops if any danger threatened the Persian domination. This was an attempt to shift the responsibility of holding Herat on to the shoulders of Persia, and could only have resulted in failure.

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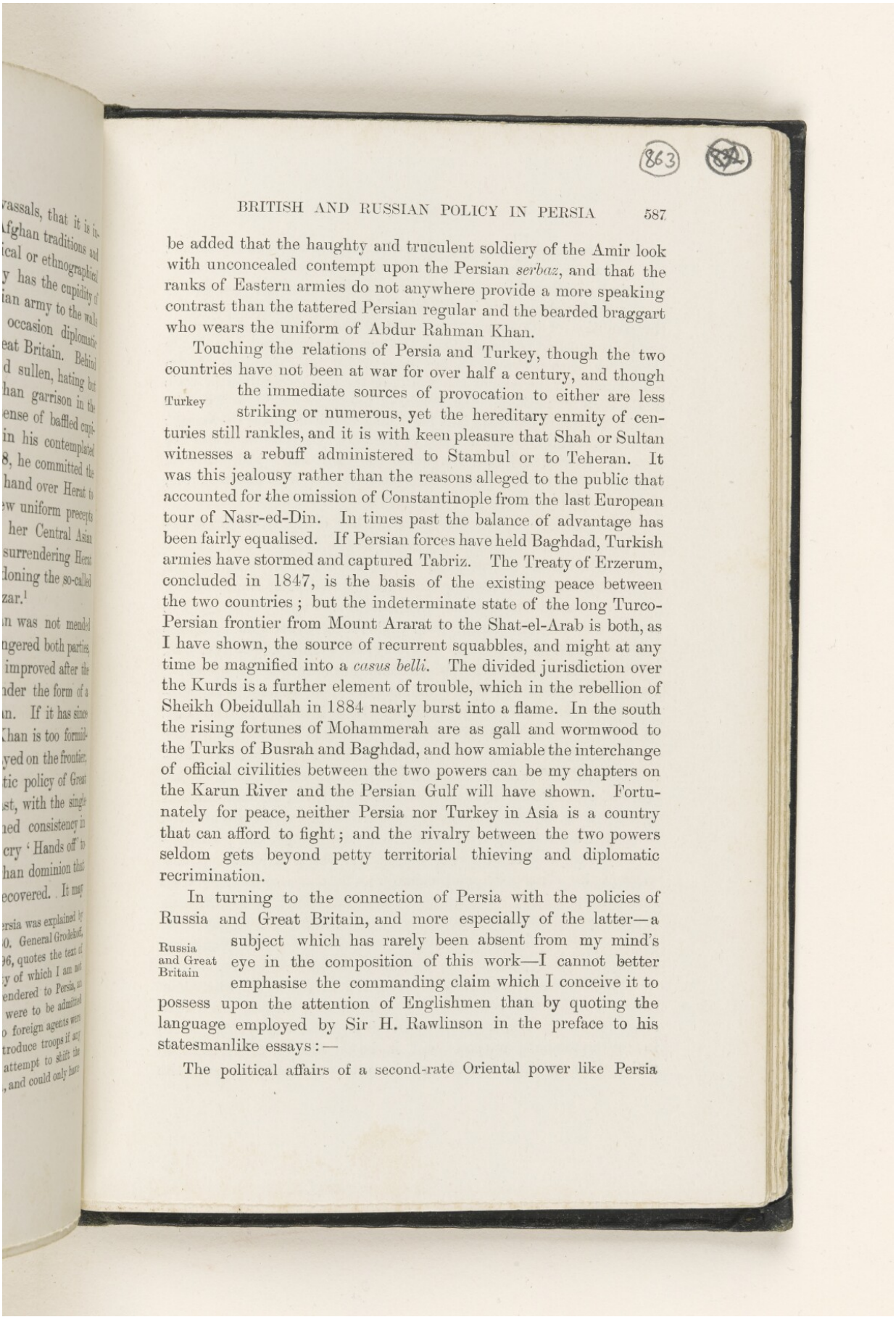



be added that the haughty and truculent soldiery of the Amir look with unconcealed contempt upon the Persian *serbaz*, and that the ranks of Eastern armies do not anywhere provide a more speaking contrast than the tattered Persian regular and the bearded braggart who wears the uniform of Abdur Rahman Khan.

Turkey

Touching the relations of Persia and Turkey, though the two countries have not been at war for over half a century, and though the immediate sources of provocation to either are less striking or numerous, yet the hereditary enmity of centuries still rankles, and it is with keen pleasure that Shah or Sultan witnesses a rebuff administered to Stambul or to Teheran. It was this jealousy rather than the reasons alleged to the public that accounted for the omission of Constantinople from the last European tour of Nasr-ed-Din. In times past the balance of advantage has been fairly equalised. If Persian forces have held Baghdad, Turkish armies have stormed and captured Tabriz. The Treaty of Erzerum, concluded in 1847, is the basis of the existing peace between the two countries; but the indeterminate state of the long Turco-Persian frontier from Mount Ararat to the Shat-el-Arab is both, as I have shown, the source of recurrent squabbles, and might at any time be magnified into a *casus belli*. The divided jurisdiction over the Kurds is a further element of trouble, which in the rebellion of Sheikh Obeidullah in 1884 nearly burst into a flame. In the south the rising fortunes of Mohammerah are as gall and wormwood to the Turks of Busrah and Baghdad, and how amiable the interchange of official civilities between the two powers can be my chapters on the Karun River and the Persian Gulf will have shown. Fortunately for peace, neither Persia nor Turkey in Asia is a country that can afford to fight; and the rivalry between the two powers seldom gets beyond petty territorial thieving and diplomatic recrimination.

Russia and Great Britain

In turning to the connection of Persia with the policies of Russia and Great Britain, and more especially of the latter—a subject which has rarely been absent from my mind's eye in the composition of this work—I cannot better emphasise the commanding claim which I conceive it to possess upon the attention of Englishmen than by quoting the language employed by Sir H. Rawlinson in the preface to his statesmanlike essays:—

The political affairs of a second-rate Oriental power like Persia

cannot be expected to prove of engrossing interest to English readers; but it may be well to remember that the country is so placed geographically midway between Europe and India, that it can hardly fail to play an important part in the future history of the East; and that the condition of its people, therefore, and the temper of its Government, are entitled to the attention of thoughtful inquirers in a degree altogether disproportioned to the space which the dominions of the Shah occupy on the map of the world, or the rank which Persia holds in the scale of nations. The Persia of to-day is not, it is true, the Persia of Darius, nor even is it the Persia of Shah Abbas the Great; but it is a country which, for good or for ill, may powerfully affect the fortunes of Great Britain's Empire in the East, and which requires, therefore, to be studied by our statesmen with care, with patience, and, above all, with indulgent consideration.

This language is the utterance neither of apology nor of exaggeration. It is a faithful statement of the truth.

Preface to discussion of rival policies

In discussing the respective policies of the two Powers in Persia, I know that I am approaching an international question of some delicacy which, in the case of a writer belonging to either nationality, it is difficult to treat with complete freedom from bias. My previous writings, however, will, I hope, have absolved me from the charge of Russophobia; and in this case it will equally be my endeavour to handle the subject fairly and with justice to those whose interests in the East undoubtedly clash with our own. I shall put out of recollection the fact that Russia has to a considerable extent usurped the position, power, and prestige at the Persian Court which in the earlier years of this century were exclusively in British hands, because I conceive that the transformation, upon which our rivals are entitled to congratulate themselves, so far from being a ground for legitimate offence, is a condition of affairs for which our own policy, weak in its conception and calamitous in its results, has been mainly responsible; and that to cry over spilt milk is as futile an expedient in politics as it is in any other walk of life. It is sufficient to admit that the successive conquests of Russia, and her subsequent policy, pursued in Persia with much industry, if with no superabundant scruple, have placed her in a position where she exercises a powerful control over Persian affairs, and requires to be consulted in any readjustment of Persia's political relations. More to my immediate purpose will it be to discuss the extent to which that control actually or in prospect amounts, and the

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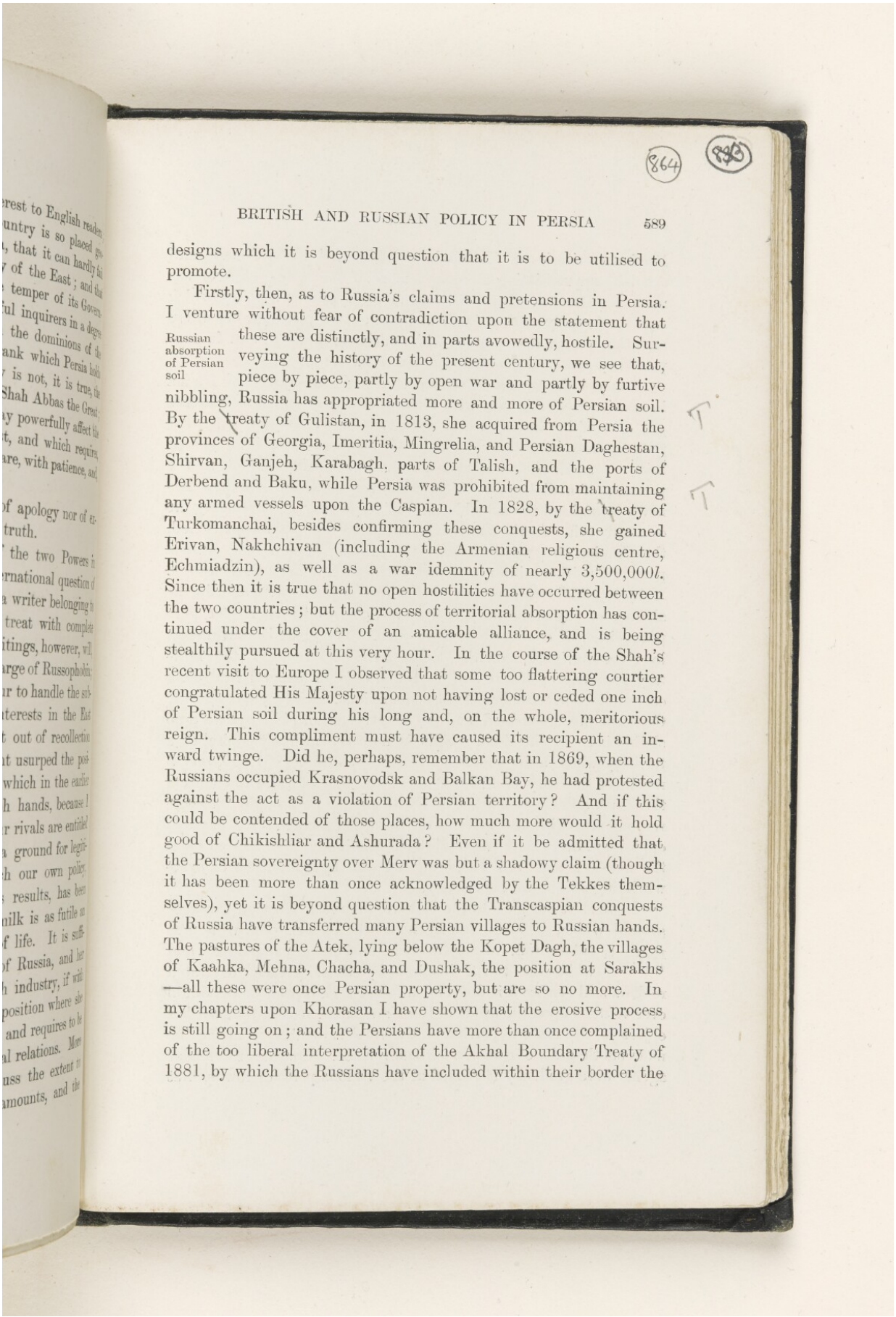



designs which it is beyond question that it is to be utilised to promote.

Firstly, then, as to Russia's claims and pretensions in Persia. I venture without fear of contradiction upon the statement that these are distinctly, and in parts avowedly, hostile. Surveying the history of the present century, we see that, piece by piece, partly by open war and partly by furtive nibbling, Russia has appropriated more and more of Persian soil. By the treaty of Gulistan, in 1813, she acquired from Persia the provinces of Georgia, Imeritia, Mingrelia, and Persian Daghestan, Shirvan, Ganjeh, Karabagh, parts of Talish, and the ports of Derbend and Baku, while Persia was prohibited from maintaining any armed vessels upon the Caspian. In 1828, by the treaty of Turkomanchai, besides confirming these conquests, she gained Erivan, Nakhchivan (including the Armenian religious centre, Echmiadzin), as well as a war idemnity of nearly 3,500,000*l*. Since then it is true that no open hostilities have occurred between the two countries; but the process of territorial absorption has continued under the cover of an amicable alliance, and is being stealthily pursued at this very hour. In the course of the Shah's recent visit to Europe I observed that some too flattering courtier congratulated His Majesty upon not having lost or ceded one inch of Persian soil during his long and, on the whole, meritorious reign. This compliment must have caused its recipient an inward twinge. Did he, perhaps, remember that in 1869, when the Russians occupied Krasnovodsk and Balkan Bay, he had protested against the act as a violation of Persian territory? And if this could be contended of those places, how much more would it hold good of Chikishliar and Ashurada? Even if it be admitted that the Persian sovereignty over Merv was but a shadowy claim (though it has been more than once acknowledged by the Tekkes themselves), yet it is beyond question that the Transcaspian conquests of Russia have transferred many Persian villages to Russian hands. The pastures of the Atek, lying below the Kopet Dagh, the villages of Kaahka, Mehna, Chacha, and Dushak, the position at Sarakhs —all these were once Persian property, but are so no more. In my chapters upon Khorasan I have shown that the erosive process is still going on; and the Persians have more than once complained of the too liberal interpretation of the Akhal Boundary Treaty of 1881, by which the Russians have included within their border the

Russian absorption of Persian soil

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Persian territories of Kulkulab, Germab, and Kelta Chenar, and are daily appropriating more and more of the head-waters of the mountain streams. These movements are typical of a policy which may temporarily content itself with such small pickings, but whose ambition ranges over a much wider ultimate horizon, and is supported by powerful guarantees of success.

Ascendency on the N. and N.W.

Let us indeed pause to contrast the position enjoyed by Russia in relation to Persia now with that which she occupied at the close of her last war, over sixty years ago; remembering that any advantages subsequently acquired have been gained under shelter of peace, and without firing a shot, by the pressure of a diplomacy which, whatever its moral standard, has never committed the culpable error of forgetting or concealing its own strength. At the time when, by the treaties above mentioned, the Caspian Sea was first converted into a Russian lake, Russia possessed neither military nor mercantile marine upon those waters. Many hundred steamers now plough the Caspian waves and, in the absence of any other navy whatsoever, control its shores for purposes either of commerce or aggression. The great improvements in river navigation on the Volga have also brought the military resources of Kazan and Central Russia in general into close communication with her Asiatic dominions. Sixty years ago the Caucasus was unsubdued, and the countrymen of Schamyl were no slight thorn in the flesh. Tiflis is now the military capital of a territory whose army contains a peace strength of 101,500, and a mobilised capacity of 270,000 men. A line of railway connects the Black and Caspian Seas, and will shortly be brought into correspondence with the systems of European Russia. All possible opposition, every conceivable obstacle, has in fact disappeared upon the northern side, and has been replaced by conditions of overwhelming strategical superiority.

Position in the N.E.

If we shift our gaze to the east we observe a Russian vantage-ground which, if more tardily acquired, is not one whit less substantial. Prior to her Turkoman campaigns, and while the terror inspired by those greatly overrated robbers still rendered it doubtful whether a European power would ever venture upon the sands of the Kara Kum, Russia pursued her object in the eastern portion of the Shah's dominions under the more subtle guise of commercial benevolence. Consuls or Consular agents were gradually stationed at the various ports or towns, first

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at Resht, in the reign of Mohammed Shah, then at Astrabad, Gez, Meshed-i-Ser, Shahrud, and thence eastwards, culminating in the already chronicled appointment in 1889 of a Consul-General at Meshed. Where it was impossible or unwise to station an official representative, emissaries in mufti, usually Russian-born Armenians, and persons engaged in trade, were employed to conduct the same process; and thus gradually was spread a network of intrigue throughout Khorasan disseminating far and wide a sense of the tremendous power of the Northern Colossus, and a skilfully exaggerated notion of the benefits to be derived from Russian rule. The impression so created was fortified by the *éclat* arising from the fall of Samarkand, the capture of Khiva, and the subjugation of Bokhara, names that were typical to the Eastern mind of the power and traditions of the hitherto unhumbled Orient. Each of these triumphs was further regarded as a blow to the prestige of Great Britain, whose name had not stood high in Central Asia ever since the Kabul disaster and Jugdulluk massacre of 1842; the rivalry between the two Powers being a subject of daily discussion in the bazaars and coffee-shops of the East, where a sounder grasp of the situation is, on the whole, more likely to be met with than on the benches of the House of Commons. Next in order came the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8, the result of which was again a triumph for Russia, all the more notable in its effect upon Asiatic peoples that the vanquished combatant was Turkey, the traditional enemy of Persia, and the greatest Mohammedan power in Asia.

Finally, upon the top of these successes came the Turkoman campaign of 1880–1, in which Skobeleff, in order to magnify his victory, contrived a massacre of those dreaded, but not really formidable, Borderers, that echoed like a thunder clap through the surrounding nations. In addition to the prestige acquired by this conquest, troops of released Persian prisoners, returning to their homes, confirmed the sentimental *kudos* already accruing from the captives of Khiva and Bokhara; and, while they showed the gall marks of Tekke chains, extolled the clemency of the conqueror to whom they owed their freedom. The practical advantages resulting from the annexation of Turkomania have since been both consolidated and infinitely multiplied by the construction of the Transcaspian Railway, to the effect of which upon Persia and the Persian Question I must devote a passing paragraph.

Conquest of Turkomania

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Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [865v] (1747/1814)



Effect of the Trans-caspian Railway

The commercial influence of General Annenkoff's line upon Khorasan has already been traced. I have shown that by its means Russia is acquiring a hold upon the trade of that northern province which, unless counterbalanced by some corresponding British advance from the south, cannot possibly be contested. I have also shown that in the panorama of Russian advance the pedlar precedes the *tchinovnik*, and that the process, whose first stage is the advent of bales bearing a Moscow label on the backs of camels or mules, is apt to find its last in the introduction of a permanent garrison. Politically the neighbourhood of the Transcaspian Railway and of a great Russian administrative centre at Ashkabad, whence perpetual communications and a steady flow of presents can be maintained across the border, is gradually converting into Russian vassals or agents the khans and chieftains of the contiguous Persian districts; the fond hope of Russia being that, either upon the death of the Shah, or when some other opportunity of disorder presents itself, a movement in this quarter may justify their advance, or an appeal for protection from the conspiring chieftains may suggest a suzerainty that shall afterwards take a more substantial form. But it is in their strategical aspect that her new position and railway communication with the Caspian have done most to strengthen the control of Russia over Khorasan. The old Gez-Astrabad-Shahrud route of invasion, hampered by the terrific obstacle of the Kuzluk Pass; the Atrek valley route from Chikishliar, which was adopted by Lomakin and Tergukasoff in their first Turkoman campaign, but abandoned by Skobeleff in 1880; the Teheran-Meshed postal route —all these methods of entering Khorasan, which alone were accessible to a Russian army up to 1881, may now be set on one side. Their place has been taken by the new military *chaussée* from Ashkabad to Kuchan and Meshed, by which a column could march from the Russian to the Persian capital city in less than ten days; by the Dushak-Meshed route; and by the Sarakhs-Meshed route, both of which are sometimes spoken of as lines of future railway advance. The Transcaspian Railway can bring to the point of detrainment the forces alike of Transcaspia and of Turkestan; the battalions of Samarkand can unite with those of Merv, Kizil Arvat, and Ashkabad; and admitting a caution that would in reality be superfluous, I can see no reason why a Russian army of 10,000 men should not be in bloodless occupation

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of Meshed within three weeks of the commencement of hostilities.

It cannot be denied, therefore, that the military position of Russia along the entire northern frontier of Persia from the Aras to the Tejend is one of overwhelming superiority; she overlaps 1,000 miles of border, at every point of which she is in a condition to threaten and to sustain her threats by armed force. From her military stations at Tiflis and Erivan she can easily overrun Azerbaijan. Her command of the Caspian enables her to dictate to the capital. Her new railway in Transcaspia, which, to a weaker power than herself would be a source of danger from a stronger power than Persia, enables her to do exactly what she pleases with Khorasan. The only Persian troops of any value in the capital are the so-called Cossack regiments, under Russian officers; and in the event of political convulsion it is doubtful whether they would not prefer the country of their uniform to the country of their birth. Whenever Russia desires to enforce with peculiar emphasis some diplomatic demand at Teheran, a mere enumeration of the Russian garrisons within a few hundred miles of the Persian capital is enough to set the Council of Ministers quaking, and to make the sovereign himself think twice. When the Shah came to Europe in 1889 a similar policy was pursued. I asked a Persian Minister what had struck him most in England, and what most in Europe. 'The number of the industrial population in the great towns of the interior,' was his reply to the first question; and 'the number of soldiers in Russia,' to the second. Soldiers were displayed everywhere—along the railway, at the stations, and in the streets—and the Persians came away with the idea that along with the country of Medea the Czar has inherited her secret of the dragon's teeth, and can sow inexhaustible crops of armed men.

Synopsis of Russian position

What, then, are the designs which this commanding position, and the power of bullying that it confers, are being utilised to promote? There is no concealment either as to their character or their scope. Russia regards Persia as a power that may temporarily be tolerated, that may even require sometimes to be humoured or caressed, but that in the long run is irretrievably doomed. She regards the future partition of Persia as a prospect scarcely less certain of fulfilment than the achieved partition of Poland; and she has already clearly made up her own

Aggressive designs



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mind as to the share which she will require in the division of the spoils. It would be safe to assert that no Russian statesman or officer of the General Staff would pen a report upon Russian policy towards Persia and the future of that country that did not involve as a major premise the Russian annexation of the provinces of Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan, and Khorasan—in other words, of the whole of North Persia, from west to east. I do not doubt that the steps to be taken, in the event of war, disorder, or some equally favourable chance, for the realisation of these ambitions have been authoritatively discussed and approved. Russia covets the splendid province of Azerbaijan for its 40,000 square miles of rich and varied country, its stalwart Turkish peasantry, the military aptitudes of its population, and its great commercial capital of Tabriz. Contiguous over a long stretch of frontier with her Transcaucasian dominions and within easy reach of her military capital, Tiflis, it could be invaded with ease and annexed without difficulty. Next adjoining is the maritime province of Gilan, with its capital, Resht, the main port of Teheran, and its unexplored wealth in timber, in rice, sugar, cotton, and silk. Somewhat similar in character, but richer in natural resources, both vegetable and mineral, is the adjoining province of Mazanderan, which is said to contain the most industrious population in Persia, and to be a mine of unprobed riches. For reasons that I have previously given, and which result from the physical peculiarities of these provinces, their malarial climate, their impregnability if properly defended against attack, and the difficulty of holding them, even if acquired, I have elsewhere argued that the Russians would probably be guilty of an error in judgment did they contemplate, at least as an early step in their forward movement, an occupation in force of the South Caspian seaboard. But whether my judgment be sound or false, there is no question that the absorption of these provinces figures largely in the programmes that emanate from the *bureaux* on the Neva. Their seizure would bring Russia to Astrabad, and would dovetail agreeably with the probably already effected annexation of Khorasan ; so that, were this scheme to be realised in its entirety as I have sketched it, the entire north of Persia would thereby pass from Persian into Russian hands.[1]

[1] Such a scheme was contemplated by Russia as long as sixty years ago. Captain Mignan, travelling in 1830, said (*Winter's Journey*, vol. i. p. 161): 'At a *levée* in Tiflis, Count Paskievitch declared in my hearing that he only awaited

Evidence of the 'Novoe Vremya'

It may, however, be thought that I am doing the Russians an injustice by attributing to them designs which they would repudiate themselves, and which may be only the figments of a disordered imagination. Lest I should be suspected of such an offence against honesty and truth, let me give a definition of Russia's attitude towards Khorasan as enunciated by her own spokesmen. On December 1, 1888, the following passage appeared in the 'Novoe Vremya':—

> Our attention has been the more concentrated upon the necessity of subordinating Khorasan—which is closely connected with Transcaspia, and should be economically and industrially dependent upon it—to the exclusive influence of Russia, as through Khorasan lies a convenient road in the direction of Herat, and in the event of military operations against India, Khorasan will form the victualling base for our operations further on. It is also of great importance, because within its limits rise the streams that irrigate the cultivated belts of the Akhal and Atek territories, the control of the distribution of whose waters is accordingly a necessary condition to the prosperity and success of our new Transcaspian province.[1]

When the cat is to be let out of the bag, commend me to a Russian newspaper for the uncompromising manner in which the operation is performed! Here we have definitely recommended (1) a suzerainty, or exclusive political control over Khorasan; (2) the actual appropriation of its soil; and (3) its ultimate utilisation as a base of military operations against the Indian Empire of Great Britain. The 'Novoe Vremya' might have added, what every soldier knows, that one of the reasons for which Russia looks with such feverish anxiety upon the future of Khorasan, is because the Transcaspian Railway, invaluable as a military weapon though it be, is threatened along a flank 300 miles in length by the mountain

the commands of the Emperor to annihilate the kingdom of Persia, and to render her a province of the Russian Empire.'

[1] The only prominent Russian spokesman who, so far as I know, has ever directly denied the covetous intentions of Russia with regard to Khorasan was General Skobeleff, who said, in an interview with the late Mr. Marvin: 'Why should we occupy Khorasan? We should only get provisions from the province, and we could get them as it is. We derive a revenue from Khorasan now by its trade with Nijni Novgorod; but we should lose this if we occupied it. I do not believe Russia will ever occupy Khorasan. I think the new frontier will be permanent.' This was only a piece of *blague* on the part of Skobeleff. We remember that he was equally confident that the Transcaspian Railway would not go beyond Ashkabad, and that Merv would never be annexed by Russia!



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border of this Persian province, and because she knows that it could be wrecked at a score of places by a hostile power in possession of those heights. That Russia should have laid her railway over a line thus exposed is in itself an evidence of the security of her supremacy and of the contempt with which she quite justifiably regards any hostile movement on the part of Persia. To the latter her designs are presumably as well known as to herself, and have, indeed, been officially condoned in advance. For is it not one of the open secrets of diplomacy that in 1883 or thereabouts, in one of the chronic intervals of Russian menace and Persian humiliation, a secret treaty (never yet revealed) was concluded between Russia and Persia, by which, under certain conditions, Russian forces are allowed to occupy Khorasan?[1] He who thinks, be he Shah or private individual, that the Cossacks, when once they have marched down the Khiaban of Meshed, are likely ever again to evacuate it, must be but a blind student of the way in which Russia makes history in Central Asia. It will matter little that her Government may have given the most solemn assurances of the integrity of the Persian dominions to England, or to any other power. When Khiva was taken and Merv annexed, what became of the paper guarantees of their freedom?

Russian services to Persia

Let me, in justice to Russia, explain that not without reason she boasts of having rendered genuine service to Persia in the direction more particularly of Khorasan—service for which she may not unreasonably look for some return. She liberated, as I have mentioned, several thousand Persian captives at Khiva, at Geok Tepe, and at Merv, and returned them, without demanding ransom, to their homes. By her subjugation of the Turkoman tribes she has relieved the whole of northern Khorasan from the scourge of perpetual devastation, has rendered life secure and agriculture possible. By her annexation and firm administration of the Transcaspian province she has

[1] Mr. Benjamin, who was Minister in Teheran at the time, says in his book (*Persia and the Persians*, p. 481): 'It was also stated at the time (1883) that Russia goaded the Shah into secretly signing an offensive and defensive treaty with Russia, in which he agreed to side with that power and against England in the event of war. When this transaction came to light, England at once declared that it was impossible for such a treaty to be in existence; and Russia dissembled, as the time had not yet come for full revelation of her purposes. But I have every reason to believe that a treaty of such nature was drawn up; whether it was signed is more doubtful.' Mr. Benjamin need not have doubted. The signatures were there.

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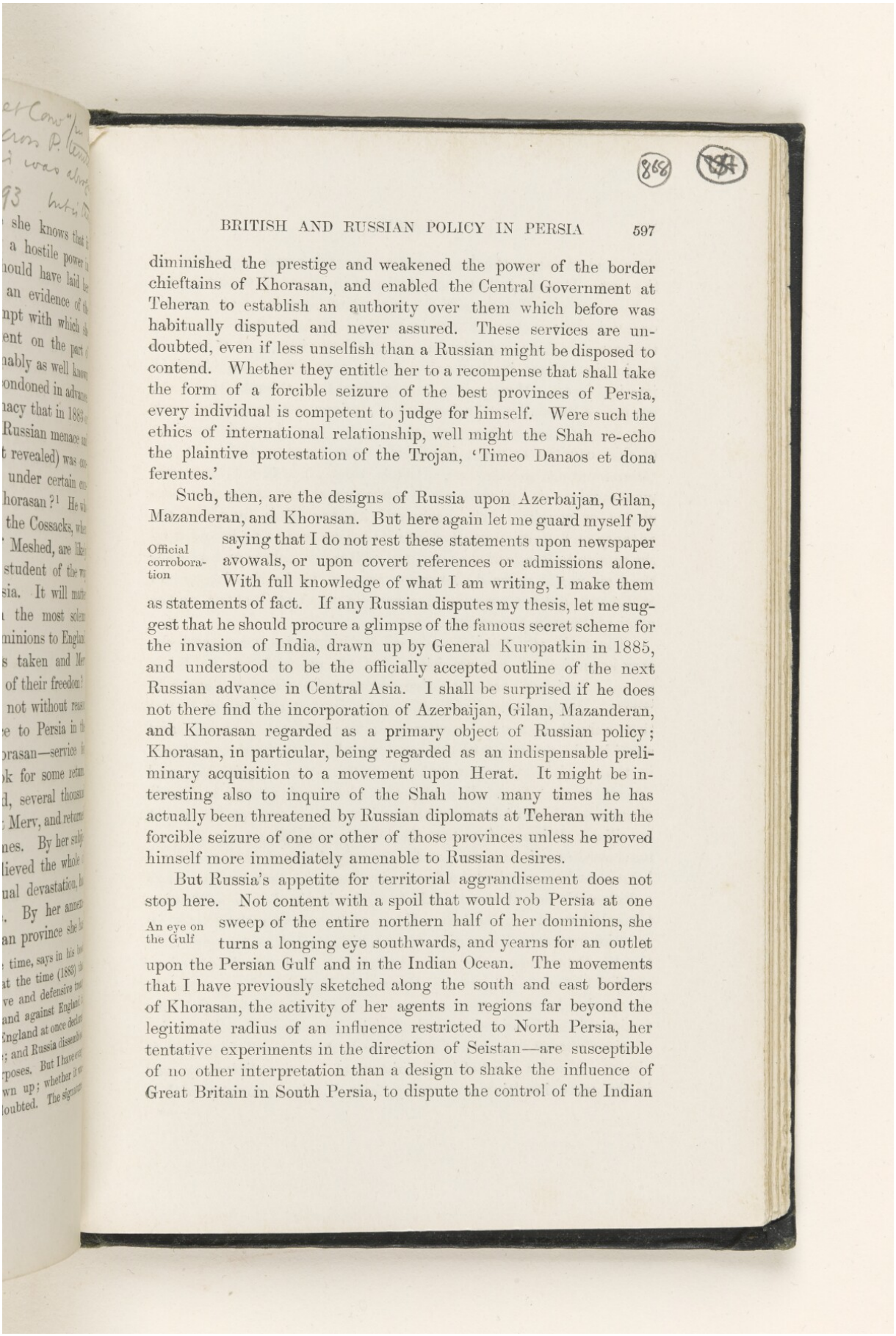



diminished the prestige and weakened the power of the border chieftains of Khorasan, and enabled the Central Government at Teheran to establish an authority over them which before was habitually disputed and never assured. These services are undoubted, even if less unselfish than a Russian might be disposed to contend. Whether they entitle her to a recompense that shall take the form of a forcible seizure of the best provinces of Persia, every individual is competent to judge for himself. Were such the ethics of international relationship, well might the Shah re-echo the plaintive protestation of the Trojan, 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.'

Official corroboration

Such, then, are the designs of Russia upon Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan, and Khorasan. But here again let me guard myself by saying that I do not rest these statements upon newspaper avowals, or upon covert references or admissions alone. With full knowledge of what I am writing, I make them as statements of fact. If any Russian disputes my thesis, let me suggest that he should procure a glimpse of the famous secret scheme for the invasion of India, drawn up by General Kuropatkin in 1885, and understood to be the officially accepted outline of the next Russian advance in Central Asia. I shall be surprised if he does not there find the incorporation of Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan, and Khorasan regarded as a primary object of Russian policy; Khorasan, in particular, being regarded as an indispensable preliminary acquisition to a movement upon Herat. It might be interesting also to inquire of the Shah how many times he has actually been threatened by Russian diplomats at Teheran with the forcible seizure of one or other of those provinces unless he proved himself more immediately amenable to Russian desires.

An eye on the Gulf

But Russia's appetite for territorial aggrandisement does not stop here. Not content with a spoil that would rob Persia at one sweep of the entire northern half of her dominions, she turns a longing eye southwards, and yearns for an outlet upon the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. The movements that I have previously sketched along the south and east borders of Khorasan, the activity of her agents in regions far beyond the legitimate radius of an influence restricted to North Persia, her tentative experiments in the direction of Seistan—are susceptible of no other interpretation than a design to shake the influence of Great Britain in South Persia, to dispute the control of the Indian

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Seas, and to secure the long-sought base for naval operations in the east. This can only be accomplished in either of two directions —by a war with Turkey and the capture of Baghdad, or by a semi-peaceful advance through Persia to the Gulf. Of these processes the second is the more hopeful and the less risky, and there is a fascination about its beckoning finger that draws the Russians irresistibly on. Here, again, lest it should be thought that I am wronging Russia by an insinuation of designs so incompatible with her general assurances, let me invite any injured partisan of that country to make inquiries in the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg as to whether, at the time that the Kuropatkin memorandum was penned, a secret agreement was not either concluded or sought to be concluded with the Shah, by which the advance of a Russian column into Khorasan was to be followed by the cession to Russia of the Gulf port of Bunder Abbas; and whether the most recent railroad concession pressed for by Russian agents at Teheran did not postulate a maritime outlet at Chahbar, on the coast of Persian Beluchistan.

Russian tactics

The solid advantages possessed by Russia in Persia, and the easy execution of her ambitious, but (if probabilities be fairly weighed) not altogether extravagant schemes, appear to be quite needlessly discounted in that country by tactics that exhibit a marked contrast to her general *bonhomie* and affability in dealing with Oriental peoples. Perhaps the theory is that amiability ought only to follow upon acquisition, and severity to go before. Her representatives and agents in Persia assume so dictatorial a tone, that, while it may impress, it cannot conciliate. It is notorious that the late Russian Minister at Teheran on several occasions gave great offence by his curt demeanour. I have elsewhere recalled the fact that rather more than two years ago a diplomatic squall was raised about the institution of a Russian Consul-General at Meshed. Upon that occasion the officer in question was actually nominated and his appointment gazetted in the St. Petersburg newspapers before the Shah was informed or applied to for an *exsequatur*. Upon his declining for a while to grant the latter—a very natural and dignified step—the real feeling of the Russians towards Persia glimmered out in an incautious note of fury from the 'Novoe Vremya':—'This refusal is almost without a parallel in the history of Russian diplomacy, and is the more insulting as coming from Persia, a country with a

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barefoot army, a population half composed of beggars, and crumbling political institutions.' Shortly before my arrival in Meshed a *seyid* had been banished from the city by the Prince-Governor, in obedience to the imperious requisition of the Russian Consul, but no sooner had the letter of the demand been complied with and the exile left the walls, than the *mujtaheds* persuaded the Governor to issue private orders for his recall. Nor can I think that Russian interests are materially forwarded by the intrigues in which Russian emissaries are constantly engaged, and not infrequently caught—e.g. the employment of Russian agents to stir up the Yomut Turkomans against Persian rule—a curious service to render to an ally—and the secret transactions with Ayub Khan in 1885, when the latter was a so-called prisoner at Teheran, and was urged by the Russians to escape, and was provided with funds for that purpose, so as to embroil England and Persia. Again, the Russians may have their own opinion about the venality of the Persians, and they may or may not be right therein, but their convictions in this respect are somewhat incautiously revealed when, with a reckless manipulation of numerals which only a Russian journal can successfully accomplish, the 'Novoe Vremya' exclaimed:—'The Queen of England lately raised the budget of her representative in Persia to 250,000*l.*' (it is really 5,000*l.*). 'If with 100,000*l.* Sir D. Wolff acquired the Karun, what will not his victories be when millions are at his command?'

It is amusing to contrast the present position of Russia in Persia, and the political vantage-ground that enables her to pursue these tactics with impunity, with the estimation in which she was held when first she 'broke ground' in Persia more than 200 years ago. I have already narrated the story of the Muscovite ambassadors in the reign of Shah Abbas II., and of the unfavourable impression produced by their coarse and unmannerly habits upon the scrupulous and critical Persians. Chardin, in his description of the coronation of Shah Suleiman, in 1677, says:—

Former Persian opinion

> The Persians looked upon the Moscovites as the most paltry, narrow-souled, and infamous among all the Christians, and in derision call 'em the Yusbeks of Europe, thereby expressing the small esteem they have of 'em, for the Yusbeks are the most abject people of all the East.

The Uzbegs now own as lords and masters these very Muscovites,

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with whom they were then compared; but for abjectness I am not sure that the modern Persians, though still independent, are not more deserving of the charge than the Uzbegs, who at least fought for their freedom sooner than be unmurmuringly absorbed.

For my own part, while I hesitate to pronounce a decided opinion upon a foreign policy which may perhaps find recommendations or excuses that I have overlooked, and while I admit that Russia is free to play her own game in the manner that she thinks best, I yet hold that her attitude with reference to the internal politics of Persia can be seriously arraigned, and that she can in nowise escape condemnation for the resistance that she consistently offers to any proposal that has for its object the genuine requirements of a distressed and backward country. It may safely be averred, not merely that the opening of Persia to Western influence, the extension of roads and railroads, and the breaking-down of the barriers of obsolete tradition, might have been hastened by years had Russia chosen to lend her powerful influence to the effort; but—and this is a much graver charge—that no scheme for the strengthening of Persia and the unselfish expansion of her resources can be proposed that is not certain to meet with the most strenuous opposition that Russia can exert. It is notorious that the first Reuter Concession in 1872 was revoked because of the menacing tone adopted by the Russian Government when the Shah visited St. Petersburg in the following year. When a batch of Austrian officials came out to organise a postal service in Persia, in 1874, Russia threw every conceivable obstacle in their way; and when, in spite of her efforts, the present system of internal post had been established, she did all in her power to prevent Persia from being admitted into the International Postal Union. The navigation of the Karun river, having been all but conceded by the Shah on more than one occasion, was again and again postponed owing to the obstructive tactics of Russian Ministers. As soon as it was finally granted, an indignant shriek was raised in Russia, the favourite French doctrine of compensation was invoked, and the outcry was not allayed till counter-concessions on a large scale had been made to gratify her wounded pride,[1] the real interests or benefit of Persia never entering for one

Russian attitude towards internal reform

[1] The terms of this secret convention, concluded in the spring of 1889, have never been revealed, but they are said to have included the following concessions

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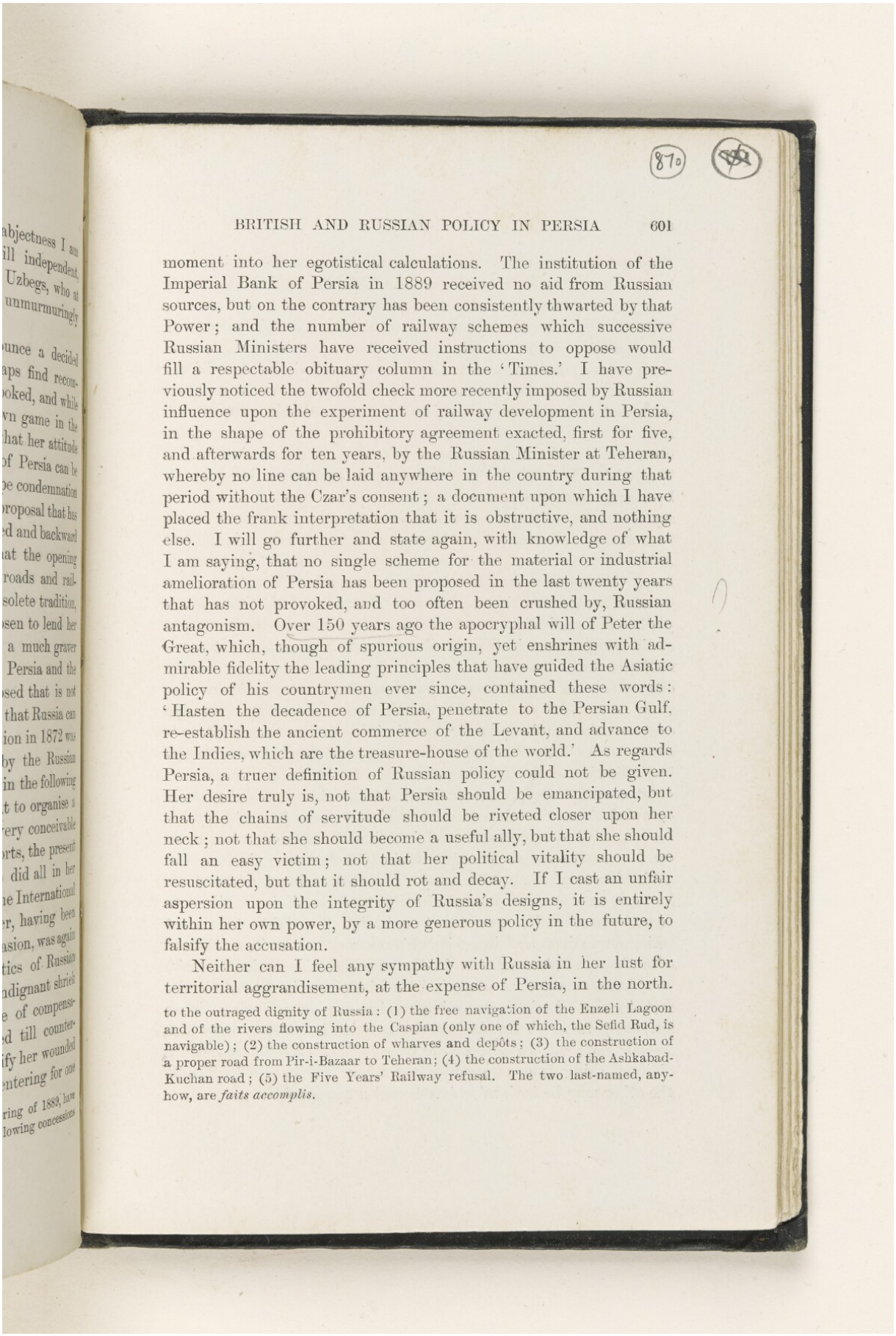



moment into her egotistical calculations. The institution of the Imperial Bank of Persia in 1889 received no aid from Russian sources, but on the contrary has been consistently thwarted by that Power; and the number of railway schemes which successive Russian Ministers have received instructions to oppose would fill a respectable obituary column in the 'Times.' I have previously noticed the twofold check more recently imposed by Russian influence upon the experiment of railway development in Persia, in the shape of the prohibitory agreement exacted, first for five, and afterwards for ten years, by the Russian Minister at Teheran, whereby no line can be laid anywhere in the country during that period without the Czar's consent; a document upon which I have placed the frank interpretation that it is obstructive, and nothing else. I will go further and state again, with knowledge of what I am saying, that no single scheme for the material or industrial amelioration of Persia has been proposed in the last twenty years that has not provoked, and too often been crushed by, Russian antagonism. Over 150 years ago the apocryphal will of Peter the Great, which, though of spurious origin, yet enshrines with admirable fidelity the leading principles that have guided the Asiatic policy of his countrymen ever since, contained these words: 'Hasten the decadence of Persia, penetrate to the Persian Gulf, re-establish the ancient commerce of the Levant, and advance to the Indies, which are the treasure-house of the world.' As regards Persia, a truer definition of Russian policy could not be given. Her desire truly is, not that Persia should be emancipated, but that the chains of servitude should be riveted closer upon her neck; not that she should become a useful ally, but that she should fall an easy victim; not that her political vitality should be resuscitated, but that it should rot and decay. If I cast an unfair aspersion upon the integrity of Russia's designs, it is entirely within her own power, by a more generous policy in the future, to falsify the accusation.

Neither can I feel any sympathy with Russia in her lust for territorial aggrandisement, at the expense of Persia, in the north.

to the outraged dignity of Russia: (1) the free navigation of the Enzeli Lagoon and of the rivers flowing into the Caspian (only one of which, the Sefid Rud, is navigable); (2) the construction of wharves and depôts; (3) the construction of a proper road from Pir-i-Bazaar to Teheran; (4) the construction of the Ashkabad-Kuchan road; (5) the Five Years' Railway refusal. The two last-named, anyhow, are *faits accomplis*.

Herein I am actuated by no narrow prejudice or national jealousy, inasmuch as I am profoundly convinced that England neither wants to possess, nor ought to possess, nor ever will possess, those territories herself. Nor am I a tainted witness as regards Russia in the East; for in my previous work I have admitted, and I here repeat the admission, that in her career of Central Asian conquest she has, though by devious and often dishonourable means, achieved a successful and salutary end; and that she deserves the praise due to those who substitute order for anarchy, and are the pioneers even of a crude civilisation. I have wished her well in Transcaspia and Turkestan, and I would be a party to no movement for disturbing her rule. But I do not say the same of Persia. On the contrary, the very pleas which have extenuated and justified Russian advance elsewhere in Central Asia, and which she is always quoting in self-defence, are wanting here. No one can contend that the Persians of Khorasan are a gang of lawless freebooters like the Turkomans; that they are a peril to their neighbours and a scourge to society. No insecurity of life or property in Khorasan or Azerbaijan demands the installation of a military despotism for the coercion of unruly elements. No sluggish pools of superstition or prejudice require to be stirred by the wand of a European magician. On the contrary, the Persians are far too timid a people to constitute a danger to anybody else, and are in many respects quite as advanced in civilisation as the Russians themselves. Regarding them as a distinct nationality, resident in the territories which they have occupied from time immemorial, under a sovereign and with a language, religion, customs, and individuality of their own, I can see no reason for suppressing their independent existence and subjecting them to an alien sway. The Government of Persia is in many respects bad enough, but that of Russia is not likely to be so immeasurably superior as to outweigh the claims to respect which an ancient and illustrious history and the main conditions of national existence (even in the absence of a national spirit) combine to create. A superiority of influence in North Persia, and in the districts coterminous with her own borders, is an advantage to which Russia from her position is entitled, and which no fair man will be disposed to grudge her. But influence is a different thing from ownership, and where the one is legitimate the other may be both mischievous and unpardonable.

No justification for territorial aggression

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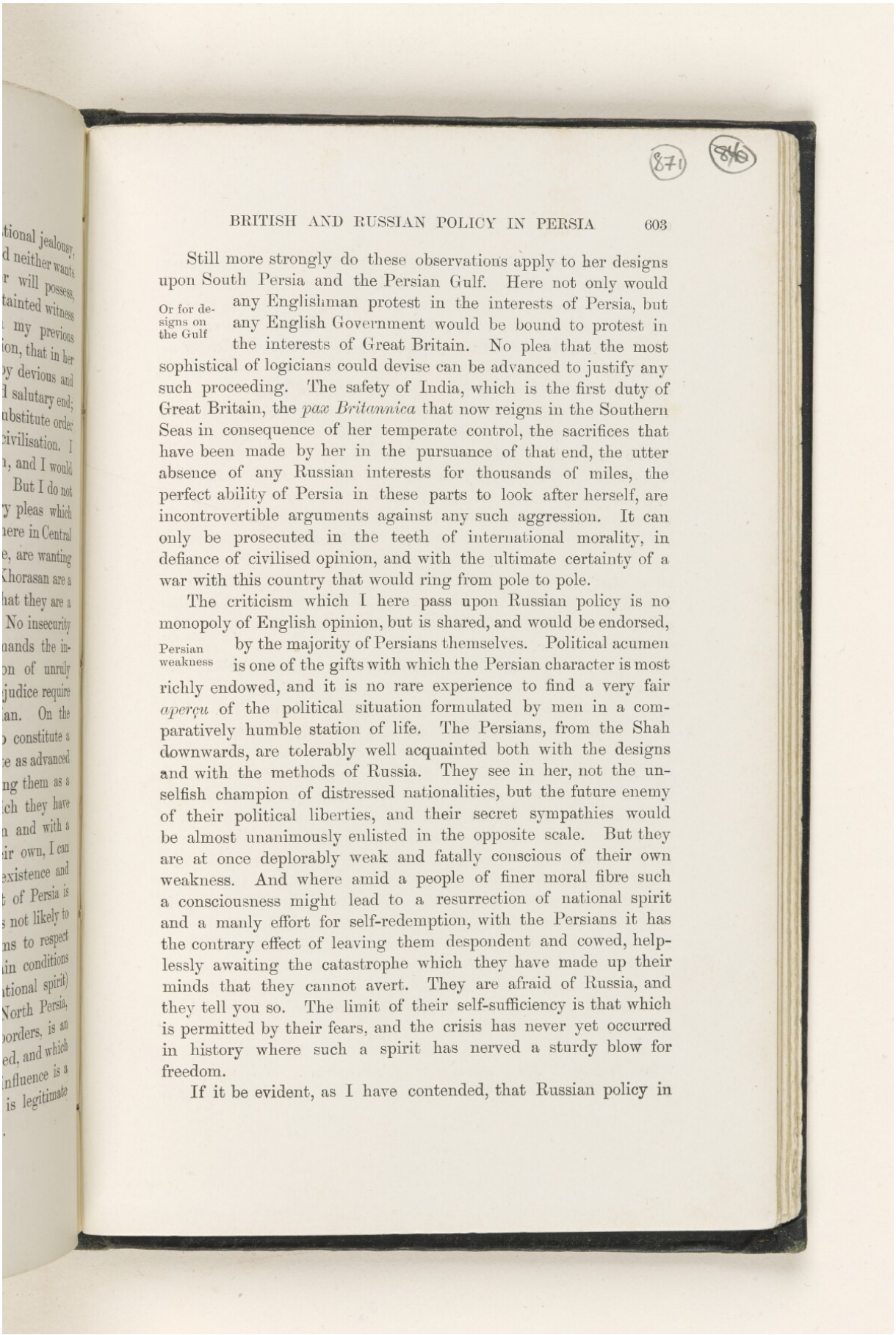



Still more strongly do these observations apply to her designs upon South Persia and the Persian Gulf. Here not only would any Englishman protest in the interests of Persia, but any English Government would be bound to protest in the interests of Great Britain. No plea that the most sophistical of logicians could devise can be advanced to justify any such proceeding. The safety of India, which is the first duty of Great Britain, the *pax Britannica* that now reigns in the Southern Seas in consequence of her temperate control, the sacrifices that have been made by her in the pursuance of that end, the utter absence of any Russian interests for thousands of miles, the perfect ability of Persia in these parts to look after herself, are incontrovertible arguments against any such aggression. It can only be prosecuted in the teeth of international morality, in defiance of civilised opinion, and with the ultimate certainty of a war with this country that would ring from pole to pole.

Or for designs on the Gulf

The criticism which I here pass upon Russian policy is no monopoly of English opinion, but is shared, and would be endorsed, by the majority of Persians themselves. Political acumen is one of the gifts with which the Persian character is most richly endowed, and it is no rare experience to find a very fair *aperçu* of the political situation formulated by men in a comparatively humble station of life. The Persians, from the Shah downwards, are tolerably well acquainted both with the designs and with the methods of Russia. They see in her, not the unselfish champion of distressed nationalities, but the future enemy of their political liberties, and their secret sympathies would be almost unanimously enlisted in the opposite scale. But they are at once deplorably weak and fatally conscious of their own weakness. And where amid a people of finer moral fibre such a consciousness might lead to a resurrection of national spirit and a manly effort for self-redemption, with the Persians it has the contrary effect of leaving them despondent and cowed, helplessly awaiting the catastrophe which they have made up their minds that they cannot avert. They are afraid of Russia, and they tell you so. The limit of their self-sufficiency is that which is permitted by their fears, and the crisis has never yet occurred in history where such a spirit has nerved a sturdy blow for freedom.

Persian weakness

If it be evident, as I have contended, that Russian policy in

Persia has a hostile object and aggressive intent, it is, I shall now hope to show, not less evident that British policy neither has, nor is again likely to have, any but the most opposite characteristics. It is only thirty-five years since this country was at war with the reigning Shah—an episode already so buried in oblivion that nine Englishmen out of ten are probably unaware that it ever occurred, while the tenth will not be able to say what it was about. The reception twice given to the Persian monarch in England, the large space that is now occupied in the public press by Persia, the vigilant interest with which our diplomacy in that country is watched at home, the increasing movement of Englishmen and English capital towards its shores, are evidences of a new-born, or at least re-aroused, concern in its welfare, and of a consciousness that its existence is in a measure bound up with our own. No more convincing illustration could be afforded of the impossibility of regarding British interests from an insular standpoint—that scatter-brained fallacy of a moribund school—than the contemplation of this distant country and its interesting people.

English interest in Persia

I trust that, from the information and reasoning that have been supplied in these volumes, the importance of Persia to England will have been made sufficiently manifest. The figures and calculations which I have given relating to trade, and more particularly Anglo-Persian trade, the analysis of the indigenous resources of Persia, the character and chances of the still undeveloped schemes for internal amelioration, the field thus opened for the judicious employment of capital, are all of them appeals to the practical and business-like instincts of Englishmen. In the furious commercial competition that now rages like a hurricane through the world, the loss of a market is a retrograde step that cannot be recovered; the gain of a market is a positive addition to the national strength. Indifference to Persia might mean the sacrifice of a trade that already feeds hundreds of thousands of our citizens in this country and in India. A friendly attention to Persia will mean so much more employment for British ships, for British labour, and for British spindles.

Mercantile

But I should be sorry to rest a demonstration of the importance of Persia upon mercenary grounds alone. If the physical position of that country, coterminous with Afghanistan along a

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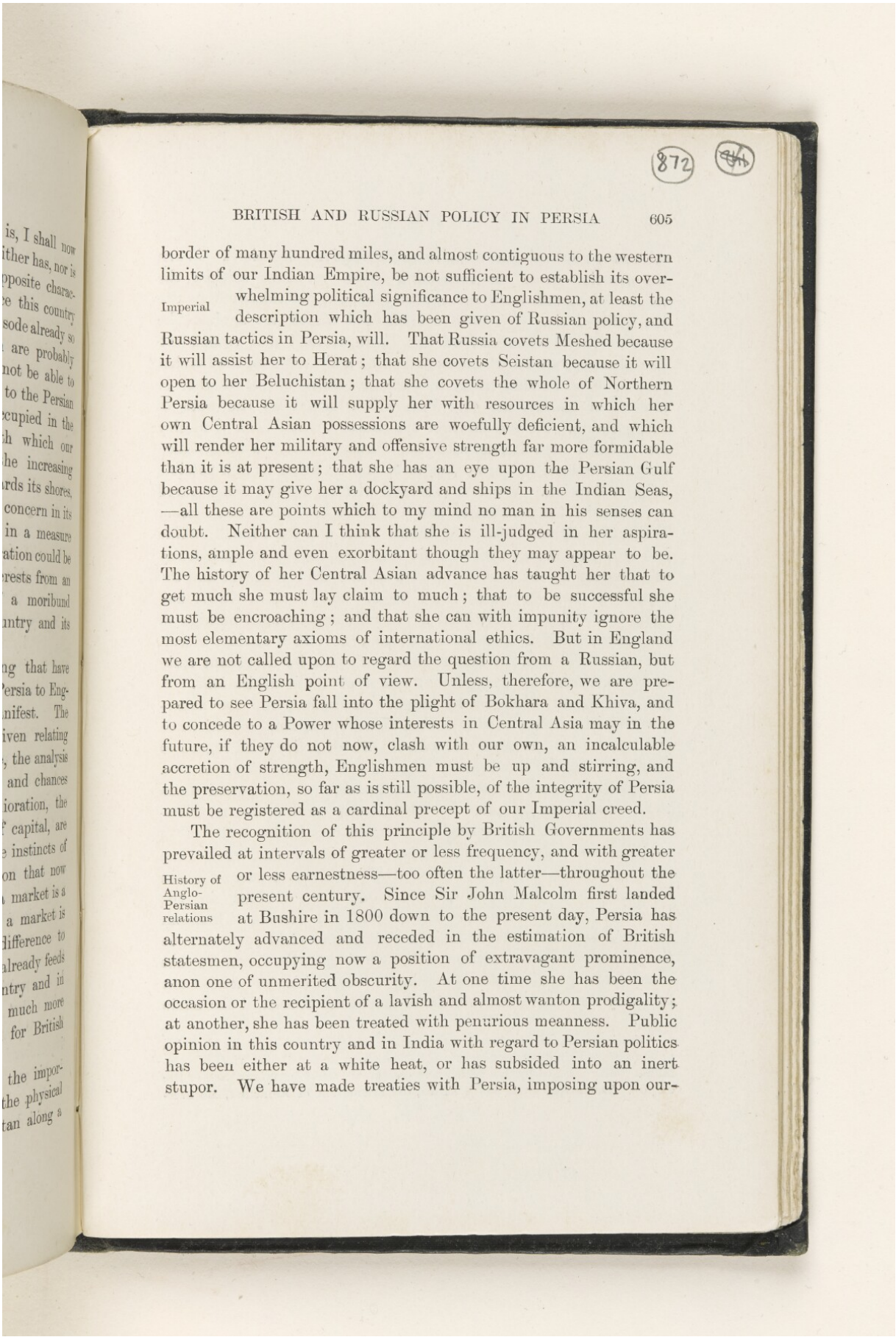



border of many hundred miles, and almost contiguous to the western limits of our Indian Empire, be not sufficient to establish its overwhelming political significance to Englishmen, at least the description which has been given of Russian policy, and Russian tactics in Persia, will. That Russia covets Meshed because it will assist her to Herat; that she covets Seistan because it will open to her Beluchistan; that she covets the whole of Northern Persia because it will supply her with resources in which her own Central Asian possessions are woefully deficient, and which will render her military and offensive strength far more formidable than it is at present; that she has an eye upon the Persian Gulf because it may give her a dockyard and ships in the Indian Seas, —all these are points which to my mind no man in his senses can doubt. Neither can I think that she is ill-judged in her aspirations, ample and even exorbitant though they may appear to be. The history of her Central Asian advance has taught her that to get much she must lay claim to much; that to be successful she must be encroaching; and that she can with impunity ignore the most elementary axioms of international ethics. But in England we are not called upon to regard the question from a Russian, but from an English point of view. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to see Persia fall into the plight of Bokhara and Khiva, and to concede to a Power whose interests in Central Asia may in the future, if they do not now, clash with our own, an incalculable accretion of strength, Englishmen must be up and stirring, and the preservation, so far as is still possible, of the integrity of Persia must be registered as a cardinal precept of our Imperial creed.

Imperial

The recognition of this principle by British Governments has prevailed at intervals of greater or less frequency, and with greater or less earnestness—too often the latter—throughout the present century. Since Sir John Malcolm first landed at Bushire in 1800 down to the present day, Persia has alternately advanced and receded in the estimation of British statesmen, occupying now a position of extravagant prominence, anon one of unmerited obscurity. At one time she has been the occasion or the recipient of a lavish and almost wanton prodigality; at another, she has been treated with penurious meanness. Public opinion in this country and in India with regard to Persian politics has been either at a white heat, or has subsided into an inert stupor. We have made treaties with Persia, imposing upon our-

History of Anglo-Persian relations

selves the most solemn offensive and defensive obligations. When the occasion arose for redeeming them, we have shirked the responsibility and have subsequently bought our release from the self-inflicted tie. We have courted and waged war against the same Persian sovereigns; we have both trained and routed the Persian army; we have at once pampered and neglected the Persian people. Our Persian policy in each successive stage, whether of interest or apathy, has ever been characterised by the note of exaggeration. At the dawn of the century, when Lord Wellesley first opened negotiations with the Persian Court, we entertained exaggerated notions of the danger to India arising from a possible Afghan invasion. We next regarded with an equally exaggerated apprehension the installation and designs of the French at Teheran. When the Afghan cloud had blown over, and the French bubble had burst, we thought that Persia could be propped up against any other enemy by the double buttress of the drill sergeant and the rupee. It was an exaggerated hope. In 1833, in 1837, and again in 1856, we entertained a probably exaggerated opinion of the danger likely to arise from a Persian movement against Herat. We embarked upon the first Afghan war, with its attendant train of horrors, from an exaggerated alarm at these aspirations. A phase of equally exaggerated languor succeeded, and the subsequent epoch has not been free from analogous spasms of solicitude and torpor. It has been well said of British policy with regard to Persia throughout this century that *Nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi*. The political record of the first three quarters of this period down to 1875 has been compiled by the masterly hand of Sir H. Rawlinson, and to his pages may be referred any reader who desires to trace the balancing vicissitudes of lethargy and zeal. The ensuing decade was not less fruitful than its predecessors in illustration of the same phenomenon; for whereas in the hands of the brothers Sir Taylor and Sir Ronald Thomson, both of whom had lived so long in Persia as to yield somewhat to the pressure of their environment, and to lack the initiative that comes from change of atmosphere and scene, British influence sank to a very low ebb in the councils of the Shah,[1] Russia in the same

[1] Justice compels me to state that this decline was quickened by events for which neither of the Ministers named shared the smallest responsibility, viz. the calamitous policy pursued by the British Government of 1880–5 in various parts of the empire. The retreat from South Africa, the evacuation of Kandahar, the ever-

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period making a corresponding advance; yet, first under Sir A. Nicolson, who from 1885 to 1888 acted as *chargé d'affaires*, and still more under his accomplished and capable successors, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Sir Frank Lascelles, there has during the past six years been a striking recrudescence of British activity and power, which has placed this country in a position of greater authority at Teheran than its representatives have exercised at any time since the death of Fath Ali Shah. Of the consequences of this recovered influence I shall presently speak.

Fourfold division

The history of Anglo-Persian relations in this century falls, so to speak, into four parallel columns, according as it is concerned with the departments of diplomacy, military administration, commerce, and the electric telegraph. I have summarised the contents of the first-named category above, and will not presume to repeat at greater length what has been said with the fullest knowledge and authority by Rawlinson. The history of British connection with the Persian army has been related in the chapter upon the latter institution. The history of Anglo-Persian trade has similarly been treated in my discussion of Persian commerce. There remains for me only, in order to complete the picture, to say something of the steps by which the electric telegraph was introduced by Englishmen into Persia, and of the effect which that agency has had both upon the country itself and upon international relations. The main interest of such an inquiry will be found to be, not scientific, but political; nor, had the consequences that have ensued partaken only or principally of the former character, should I have judged them worthy of extended notice in this place.

Indo-European Telegraphic schemes. 1. Turkish line

It was from no special desire to bring Persia into telegraphic connection with Europe, nor with any direct intention of conferring upon her the enormous benefits that have resulted from the introduction of that system into the country, that sprang the first proposals for so startling an innovation as a through wire from the western frontier of the Shah's dominions to the Persian Gulf. It was her geographical position that made Persia the fortunate recipient of this not wholly disinterested boon. Had her territories not lain upon the high

lasting disgrace of Khartum, the 'bolt' from the Murghab—all these incidents rang like a trumpet blast through the whispering-galleries of the East, and were interpreted as presages of an impending ruin.

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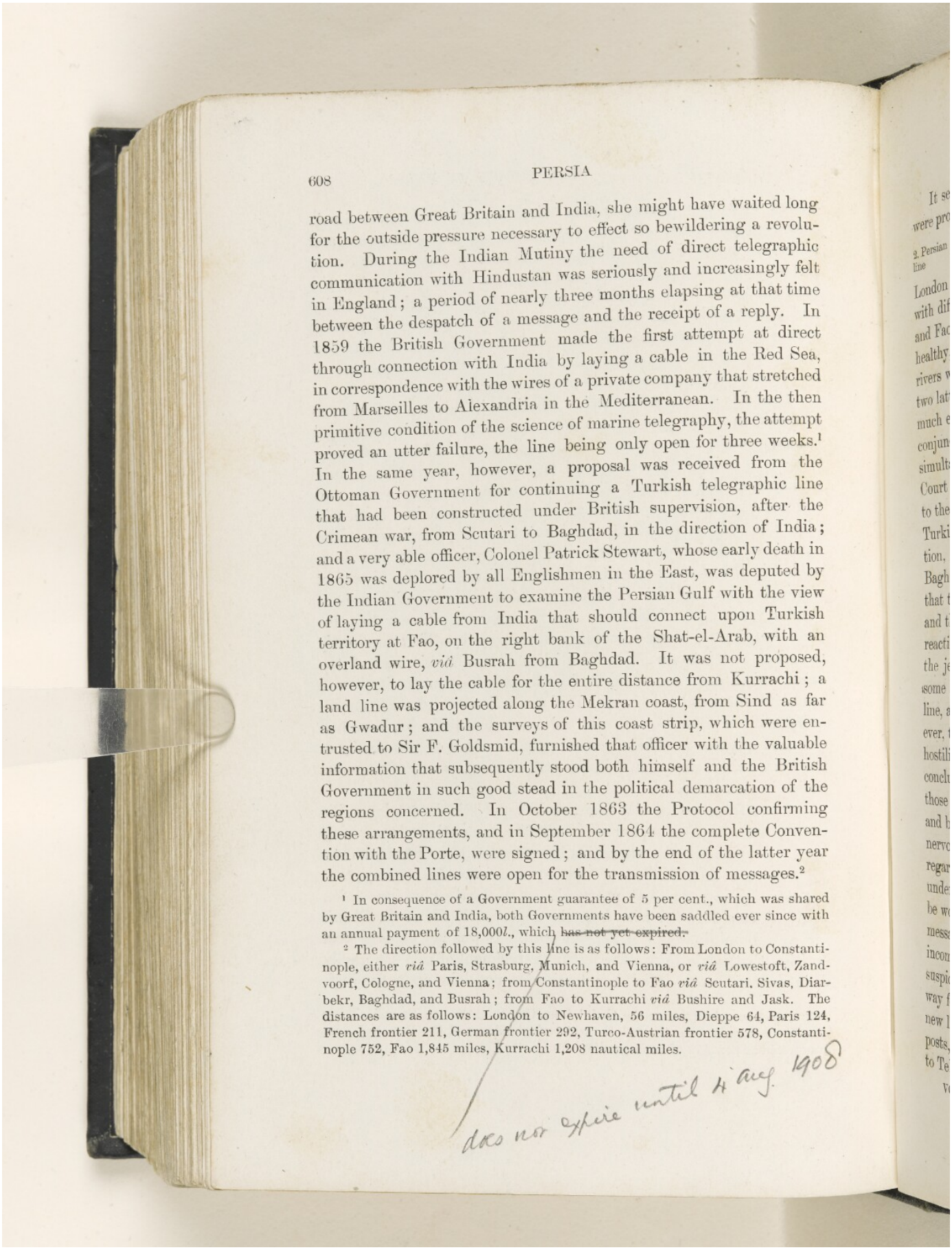
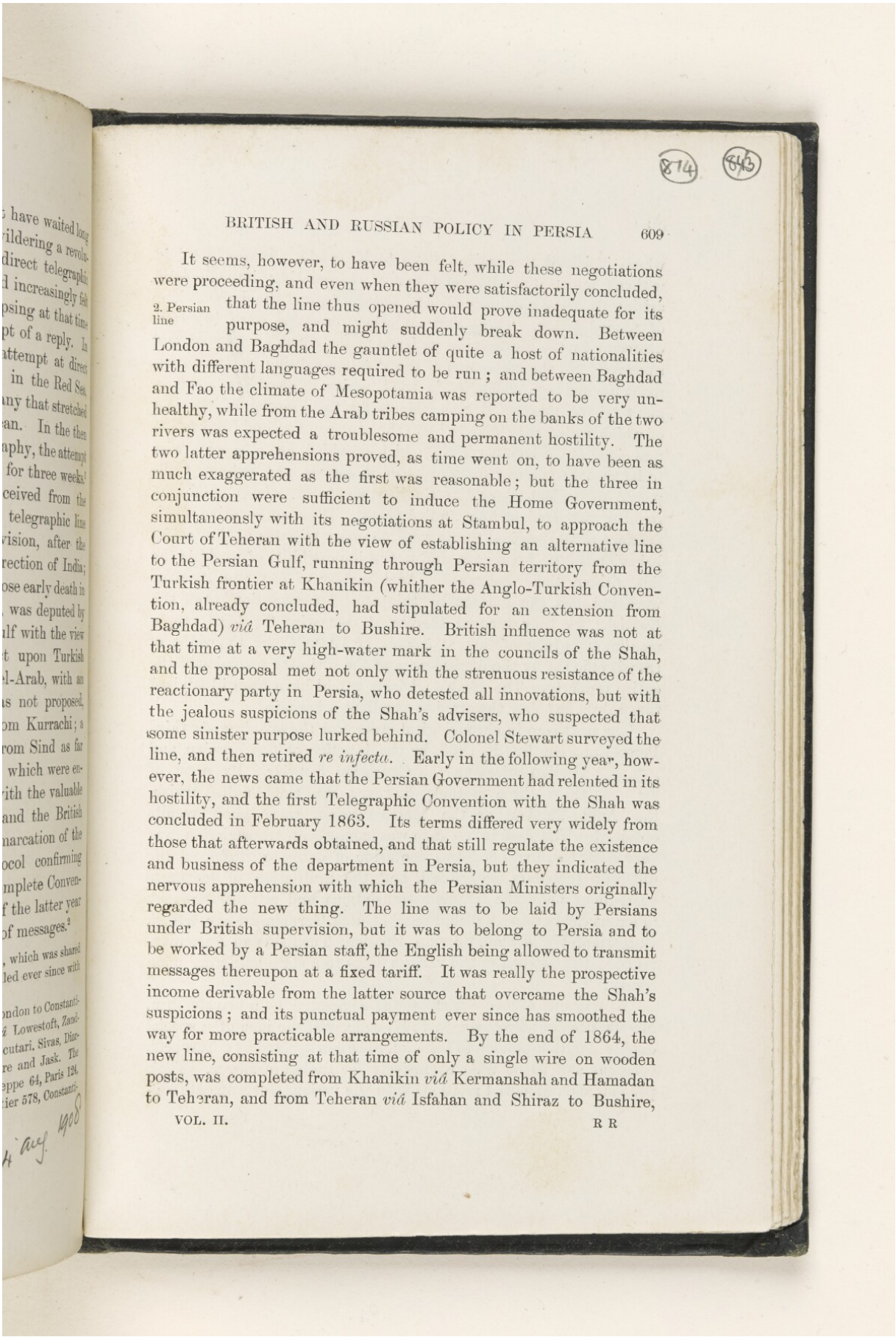




road between Great Britain and India, she might have waited long for the outside pressure necessary to effect so bewildering a revolution. During the Indian Mutiny the need of direct telegraphic communication with Hindustan was seriously and increasingly felt in England; a period of nearly three months elapsing at that time between the despatch of a message and the receipt of a reply. In 1859 the British Government made the first attempt at direct through connection with India by laying a cable in the Red Sea, in correspondence with the wires of a private company that stretched from Marseilles to Alexandria in the Mediterranean. In the then primitive condition of the science of marine telegraphy, the attempt proved an utter failure, the line being only open for three weeks.[1] In the same year, however, a proposal was received from the Ottoman Government for continuing a Turkish telegraphic line that had been constructed under British supervision, after the Crimean war, from Scutari to Baghdad, in the direction of India; and a very able officer, Colonel Patrick Stewart, whose early death in 1865 was deplored by all Englishmen in the East, was deputed by the Indian Government to examine the Persian Gulf with the view of laying a cable from India that should connect upon Turkish territory at Fao, on the right bank of the Shat-el-Arab, with an overland wire, *viâ* Busrah from Baghdad. It was not proposed, however, to lay the cable for the entire distance from Kurrachi; a land line was projected along the Mekran coast, from Sind as far as Gwadur; and the surveys of this coast strip, which were entrusted to Sir F. Goldsmid, furnished that officer with the valuable information that subsequently stood both himself and the British Government in such good stead in the political demarcation of the regions concerned. In October 1863 the Protocol confirming these arrangements, and in September 1864 the complete Convention with the Porte, were signed; and by the end of the latter year the combined lines were open for the transmission of messages.[2]

[1] In consequence of a Government guarantee of 5 per cent., which was shared by Great Britain and India, both Governments have been saddled ever since with an annual payment of 18,000*l*., which ~~has not yet expired.~~ does not expire until 4 Aug. 1908

[2] The direction followed by this line is as follows: From London to Constantinople, either *viâ* Paris, Strasburg, Munich, and Vienna, or *viâ* Lowestoft, Zandvoorf, Cologne, and Vienna; from Constantinople to Fao *viâ* Scutari, Sivas, Diarbekr, Baghdad, and Busrah; from Fao to Kurrachi *viâ* Bushire and Jask. The distances are as follows: London to Newhaven, 56 miles, Dieppe 64, Paris 124, French frontier 211, German frontier 292, Turco-Austrian frontier 578, Constantinople 752, Fao 1,845 miles, Kurrachi 1,208 nautical miles.





2. Persian line

It seems, however, to have been felt, while these negotiations were proceeding, and even when they were satisfactorily concluded, that the line thus opened would prove inadequate for its purpose, and might suddenly break down. Between London and Baghdad the gauntlet of quite a host of nationalities with different languages required to be run; and between Baghdad and Fao the climate of Mesopotamia was reported to be very unhealthy, while from the Arab tribes camping on the banks of the two rivers was expected a troublesome and permanent hostility. The two latter apprehensions proved, as time went on, to have been as much exaggerated as the first was reasonable; but the three in conjunction were sufficient to induce the Home Government, simultaneously with its negotiations at Stambul, to approach the Court of Teheran with the view of establishing an alternative line to the Persian Gulf, running through Persian territory from the Turkish frontier at Khanikin (whither the Anglo-Turkish Convention, already concluded, had stipulated for an extension from Baghdad) *viâ* Teheran to Bushire. British influence was not at that time at a very high-water mark in the councils of the Shah, and the proposal met not only with the strenuous resistance of the reactionary party in Persia, who detested all innovations, but with the jealous suspicions of the Shah's advisers, who suspected that some sinister purpose lurked behind. Colonel Stewart surveyed the line, and then retired *re infecta*. Early in the following year, however, the news came that the Persian Government had relented in its hostility, and the first Telegraphic Convention with the Shah was concluded in February 1863. Its terms differed very widely from those that afterwards obtained, and that still regulate the existence and business of the department in Persia, but they indicated the nervous apprehension with which the Persian Ministers originally regarded the new thing. The line was to be laid by Persians under British supervision, but it was to belong to Persia and to be worked by a Persian staff, the English being allowed to transmit messages thereupon at a fixed tariff. It was really the prospective income derivable from the latter source that overcame the Shah's suspicions; and its punctual payment ever since has smoothed the way for more practicable arrangements. By the end of 1864, the new line, consisting at that time of only a single wire on wooden posts, was completed from Khanikin *viâ* Kermanshah and Hamadan to Teheran, and from Teheran *viâ* Isfahan and Shiraz to Bushire,



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where it joined the marine cable to Kurrachi. It was not laid without much difficulty, and many exasperating impediments, arising from the obstinacy of local governors, and the depredations of nomad tribes. These and all other obstacles were, however, overcome by the unwearying patience of the officers employed, and so rapidly did the opposition of the Persians subside, that an agreement having been concluded in 1864, which allowed for management of the line by British officers for five months, at the end of which period they were to leave the country, a second Convention was signed in November 1865, which provided for a second wire to be used exclusively for European messages, and extended the period of residence for the English *employés*, whose maximum number was fixed at fifty, to five years. These consecutive modifications of the original terms were so many tributes to the tactful behaviour of the foreigners, and to the impossibility of working the line without their assistance. As a matter of fact, the Persians were not less the gainers by this second Convention than the English; for they secured thereby a free wire for local use, a maximum royalty of 30,000 *tomans*, or 12,000*l*., for the right of transit enjoyed by the foreigners, and the ultimate reversion of the entire property. The Shah's advisers would have been ill-advised themselves had they thwarted so excellent a bargain.

The next step in chronological order was the opening of a third Perso-European line in 1866, by the junction of the Russian and Persian wires on the Caucasian frontier. By none of these three systems, however, viz. the Anglo-Turkish, the Anglo-Persian, or the Russo-Persian, were good results obtained. The staff in no case was competent, transmission was very slow, there was hopeless confusion of dates arising from the different calendars recognised, and the mutilation of messages consequent upon the frequent translations and retranslations by ignorant clerks into English, French, Dutch, German, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, Wallachian, Servian, Russian, Turkish and Armenian, reduced the patrons of the various lines to a state bordering upon frenzy.

3. Russian line

A way out of the difficulty was suggested by a private firm. Messrs. Siemens Brothers, in 1867, conceived the idea of a special double line from London to Teheran, to be constructed by a European company and to be used exclusively for Indian messages. Their peculiar and influential relations with the various Governments con-

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cerned enabled them in the course of the same year to secure the requisite concessions from Germany, Russia, and Persia, the unique advantage of the projected line being that between Lowestoft and Kurrachi the wires only passed through the territories of those three powers; the concession was then disposed of to the Indo-European Telegraph Company; and finally, on January 31, 1870, the new line was opened between London and Teheran, where it joined the already existing wires to Bushire and Kurrachi.[1]

4. New Indo-European line

Almost simultaneously the confusion existing upon the land lines had caused the revival in another quarter of the abandoned scheme for a submarine cable between England and India; and in the same year, 1867, the Eastern Company was formed for the construction of such a line by the Mediterranean and Red Seas to Bombay. Two cables were laid from Falmouth, *viâ* Gibraltar, Malta, Suez, and Aden, and in 1870 the marine route was opened at about the same time as its overland rival. The Indian Government has entered into a joint-purse agreement with both companies, and the division of the traffic between the three existing lines from England to India is now as follows: The Eastern Company gets 64 per cent., the Indo-European Company 34½ per cent., and the Turkish Government 1½ per cent. Meanwhile the tariff between England and India, which in 1865–8 stood at 5*l.* for a message of 20 words, has, owing to the healthy competition thus engendered, and to the subsequent improvements in telegraphy, fallen by successive stages, until by either of the companies' wires it now stands at 5 francs a word, and by the Turkish lines, which are much slower, at 4½ francs a word. Simultaneously there has been a proportionate improvement in the speed of transmission. In 1867 a message was considered fortunate if it reached India within three days of being despatched from London. When the companies opened their lines in 1870, this was reduced successively to one day, eight hours, and six hours, and at the present time there is an average interval of only one and a half hour between despatch and delivery.

5. Submarine cable

[1] The line followed by the wires of the combined management, Indo-European Company and Indian Government, is as follows: London to Lowestoft 117 miles, Emden 274 knots, Thorn (i.e. through Germany) 720 miles, Julfa (i.e. through Russia *viâ* Warsaw, Odessa, Kertch, and Tiflis) 2,600 miles, Teheran 456 miles, Bushire 810 miles (i.e. through Persia 1,266 miles), Kurrachi 1,065 knots.



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Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [875v] (1767/1814)



Indo-Persian section

Confining our attention to the Indo-Persian section of this great international scheme, we find that the present state of communications is as follows:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Kurrachi to Jask, (*a*) Mekran coast line,[1] 2 wires | 683½ | miles |
| „ „ (*b*) submarine gutta-percha cable | 540 | knots |
| 2. Jask to Bushire, 1 gutta-percha and 1 indiarubber cable | 519 | „ |
| 3. Bushire to Teheran, 3 wires (2 international, 1 Persian) | 810 | miles |
| 4. Teheran to Julfa „ „ „ „ „ | 456 | „ |
| 5. Bushire to Fao,[2] submarine gutta-percha cable | 152 | knots |

As regards the diplomatic agreements upon which the working of this section depends, the second Convention of 1865 was succeeded by a third in December 1872, which provided for three wires, one for local and two for international traffic, and which reduced the annual royalty paid to the Persian Government to 12,000 *tomans*, or 5,000*l*. This convention extended to 1895, a term that has since been protracted to 1905; at which period, unless new arrangements are made to the contrary, the entire plant will fall in to the Persian Government.[3] The utter inability of the latter to work a system of such magnitude by itself, and the immense advantages which Persia derives from the present system, constitute a sufficient guarantee for its continuance; and the future may be anticipated without alarm.

Staff and business

The management of the Persian section was originally committed to a separate department, the successive Directors-in-Chief of which were, Sir F. Goldsmid 1865 to 1870, Sir J. B Champain 1870 to 1887, Sir R. M. Smith 1887 to 1888. In the latter year the Persian Telegraphs were transferred to the Indian Government, and placed under the Director-General of Telegraphs in Calcutta, the command in Persia being given to an officiating Director, Colonel H. L. Wells, R.E., who in 1891 has

[1] The intervening stations on this line are Ormara, Gwadur, and Chahbar. Sonmeani and Pusni were also used at first, but were abandoned in 1871. The line from Kurrachi to Bushire was first laid by the Musandim Promontory in 1864, but was diverted to Jask in 1869.

[2] To superintend the marine section of the lines from Kurrachi to Fao, a cable-steamer is maintained by the Indian Government. The first ship so employed was the 'Amberwitch' from 1861 to 1879. She was replaced by the 'Patrick Stewart,' a screw steamer of 500 tons, making seven knots when clean.

[3] The Indo-European Telegraph Company have, in 1891, procured an extension from 1905 to 1925, in consideration of an advance to the Shah of the royalty for ten years. Their example has since been followed by the Indian Government.

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been appointed Director-in-Chief, the importance of the Persian department thoroughly justifying this step. When a British staff first came to Persia, nearly thirty years ago, to construct and to work the line, non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers were chiefly selected, owing to their peculiar qualifications for the task. A few only of these now remain, and the line, though under military direction, is almost entirely civilian in its *personnel*. The present staff, comprising directors, superintendents, medical officers, line inspectors, and signallers of four grades, consisted in 1890 of forty-four persons; and it is among the most agreeable incidents of Persian travel to come, at intervals of sixty or more miles along the principal routes, upon a telegraph station occupied by an English official, who dispenses a generous hospitality, and as a rule is excellently informed about the country in which he has lived and worked so long. I entertain the most friendly recollections of evenings, lightened by the intercourse and rendered comfortable by the attentions of these gentlemen, upon whose amiability travellers, it is to be feared, have sometimes been disposed to presume. The extent of the business passing through their hands may be estimated from the fact that an average of 320 messages a day to and from India are transmitted along the wires; a total which, during a temporary derangement of the Red Sea Cable line in 1888, was swollen to 1,200. The following figures are interesting:—

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1887–8 | Govt. messages, | 3,615 | Paid messages, | 71,894 | Paid words, | 1,184,799 |
| 1888–9 | „ | „ | 5,722 | „ | „ | 102,707 | „ | „ | 1,565,481 |

And yet, in spite of this great concentration of business, most of which is embodied in code or in cypher, in an average of only one word in 200 is there the most trivial error in transmission. When the line was first made in Persia, wooden poles were employed, but it was found that these were constantly upset by the camels, who could not resist the opportunity of a good rub, or shattered by mischievous natives who regarded them as a capital mark for rifle practice. Accordingly iron poles were universally substituted; and, while cases of wilful violence are much less frequent than they used to be (the local governors being held responsible for any such damage), there remain, as causes of occasional interruption, atmospheric phenomena, gales, snow, and the humours of camels and birds. As soon as interruption occurs, the signallers from both stations between which the break-down is chronicled ride out along

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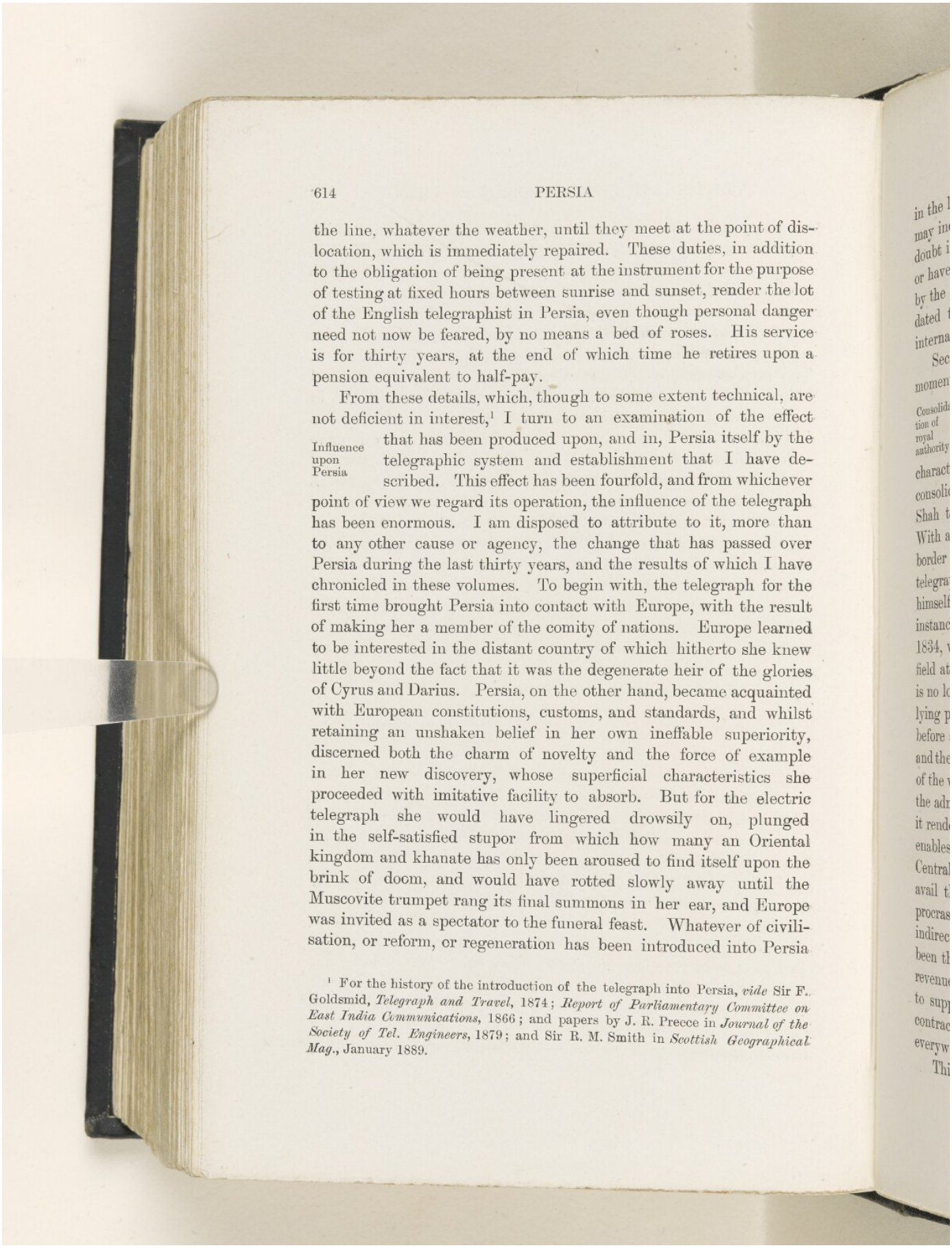



the line, whatever the weather, until they meet at the point of dislocation, which is immediately repaired. These duties, in addition to the obligation of being present at the instrument for the purpose of testing at fixed hours between sunrise and sunset, render the lot of the English telegraphist in Persia, even though personal danger need not now be feared, by no means a bed of roses. His service is for thirty years, at the end of which time he retires upon a pension equivalent to half-pay.

From these details, which, though to some extent technical, are not deficient in interest,[1] I turn to an examination of the effect that has been produced upon, and in, Persia itself by the telegraphic system and establishment that I have described. This effect has been fourfold, and from whichever point of view we regard its operation, the influence of the telegraph has been enormous. I am disposed to attribute to it, more than to any other cause or agency, the change that has passed over Persia during the last thirty years, and the results of which I have chronicled in these volumes. To begin with, the telegraph for the first time brought Persia into contact with Europe, with the result of making her a member of the comity of nations. Europe learned to be interested in the distant country of which hitherto she knew little beyond the fact that it was the degenerate heir of the glories of Cyrus and Darius. Persia, on the other hand, became acquainted with European constitutions, customs, and standards, and whilst retaining an unshaken belief in her own ineffable superiority, discerned both the charm of novelty and the force of example in her new discovery, whose superficial characteristics she proceeded with imitative facility to absorb. But for the electric telegraph she would have lingered drowsily on, plunged in the self-satisfied stupor from which how many an Oriental kingdom and khanate has only been aroused to find itself upon the brink of doom, and would have rotted slowly away until the Muscovite trumpet rang its final summons in her ear, and Europe was invited as a spectator to the funeral feast. Whatever of civilisation, or reform, or regeneration has been introduced into Persia

Influence upon Persia

[1] For the history of the introduction of the telegraph into Persia, *vide* Sir F. Goldsmid, *Telegraph and Travel*, 1874; *Report of Parliamentary Committee on East India Communications*, 1866; and papers by J. R. Preece in *Journal of the Society of Tel. Engineers*, 1879; and Sir R. M. Smith in *Scottish Geographical Mag.*, January 1889.

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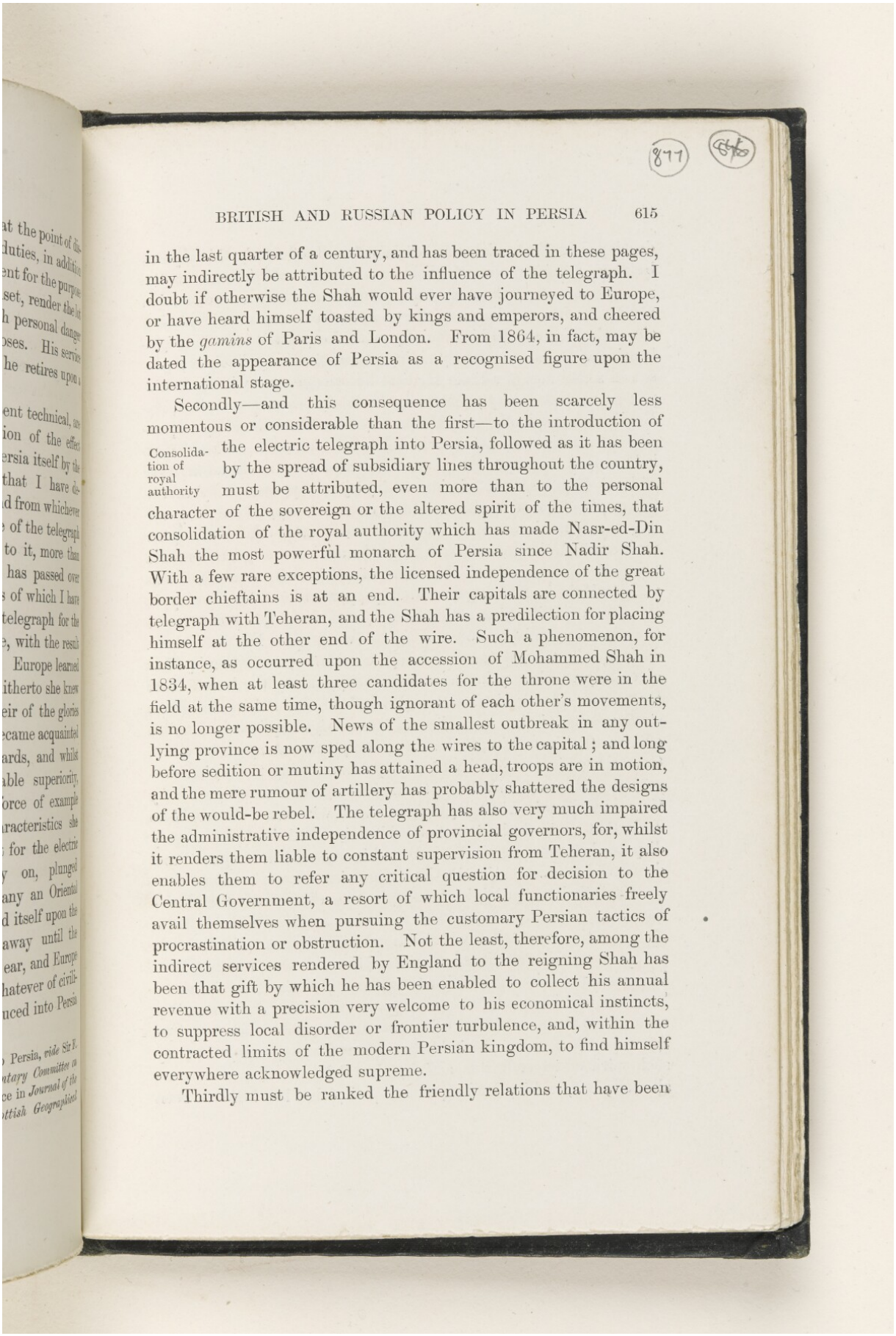



in the last quarter of a century, and has been traced in these pages, may indirectly be attributed to the influence of the telegraph. I doubt if otherwise the Shah would ever have journeyed to Europe, or have heard himself toasted by kings and emperors, and cheered by the *gamins* of Paris and London. From 1864, in fact, may be dated the appearance of Persia as a recognised figure upon the international stage.

Consolidation of royal authority

Secondly—and this consequence has been scarcely less momentous or considerable than the first—to the introduction of the electric telegraph into Persia, followed as it has been by the spread of subsidiary lines throughout the country, must be attributed, even more than to the personal character of the sovereign or the altered spirit of the times, that consolidation of the royal authority which has made Nasr-ed-Din Shah the most powerful monarch of Persia since Nadir Shah. With a few rare exceptions, the licensed independence of the great border chieftains is at an end. Their capitals are connected by telegraph with Teheran, and the Shah has a predilection for placing himself at the other end of the wire. Such a phenomenon, for instance, as occurred upon the accession of Mohammed Shah in 1834, when at least three candidates for the throne were in the field at the same time, though ignorant of each other's movements, is no longer possible. News of the smallest outbreak in any outlying province is now sped along the wires to the capital; and long before sedition or mutiny has attained a head, troops are in motion, and the mere rumour of artillery has probably shattered the designs of the would-be rebel. The telegraph has also very much impaired the administrative independence of provincial governors, for, whilst it renders them liable to constant supervision from Teheran, it also enables them to refer any critical question for decision to the Central Government, a resort of which local functionaries freely avail themselves when pursuing the customary Persian tactics of procrastination or obstruction. Not the least, therefore, among the indirect services rendered by England to the reigning Shah has been that gift by which he has been enabled to collect his annual revenue with a precision very welcome to his economical instincts, to suppress local disorder or frontier turbulence, and, within the contracted limits of the modern Persian kingdom, to find himself everywhere acknowledged supreme.

Thirdly must be ranked the friendly relations that have been

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developed by the social and official contact of nearly thirty years between Persians and Englishmen. Scattered throughout the country, where they are brought into frequent connection with all classes of the people, from a governor passing along the highway to his official post to the peasants of the neighbouring villages; constantly riding to and fro along the lines; possessed sometimes of a little medical knowledge, and willing to dispense a modest charity; above all, absolutely superior to bribes, the English telegraph officers in Persia may be considered mainly responsible for the high estimate in which English character and honour are held in that country. They are often made the unofficial arbiters of local disputes; the victims of injury or oppression fly to the telegraph office as a sort of *bast*, or sanctuary, where they are free from pursuit; and in the great towns the officers of higher rank are the friends, and sometimes the advisers, of governors and princes. If we contrast this state of affairs with the conditions under which the first engineers and sappers entered the country, in the face of daily obstruction, insult, and danger, we can arrive at some appreciation of the good work that has been done. Jealousy has been succeeded by confidence, and enmity has given way to friendly intercourse. Lastly, among the benefits that have accrued to Persia from the presence of the British telegraph staff upon its soil, has been the local knowledge acquired by English officers in this service, and subsequently utilised by the Persian Government in the settlement of disputes affecting the region concerned. It was, for instance, the knowledge of Mekran gained by General Goldsmid while laying the land wire from Kurrachi to Jask, that enabled him to act as arbiter in 1871 in the boundary dispute between Persia and Beluchistan, and to suggest and demarcate a new frontier for those countries.

Friendly relations

Nevertheless, prodigious though the effects of the Indo-European Telegraph have been in Persia, and honourable as is the reputation which its officers have acquired, I am myself astonished that a more ample use has not been made by the British Government of the local influence and knowledge of these men. Had they been Russians each one of them would have been an unaccredited but industrious agent for the country of his birth. I am not suggesting that any such spirit of irresponsible activity should be encouraged or even allowed; but, looking back upon the policy that has hitherto been

Suggested employment of telegraph officials

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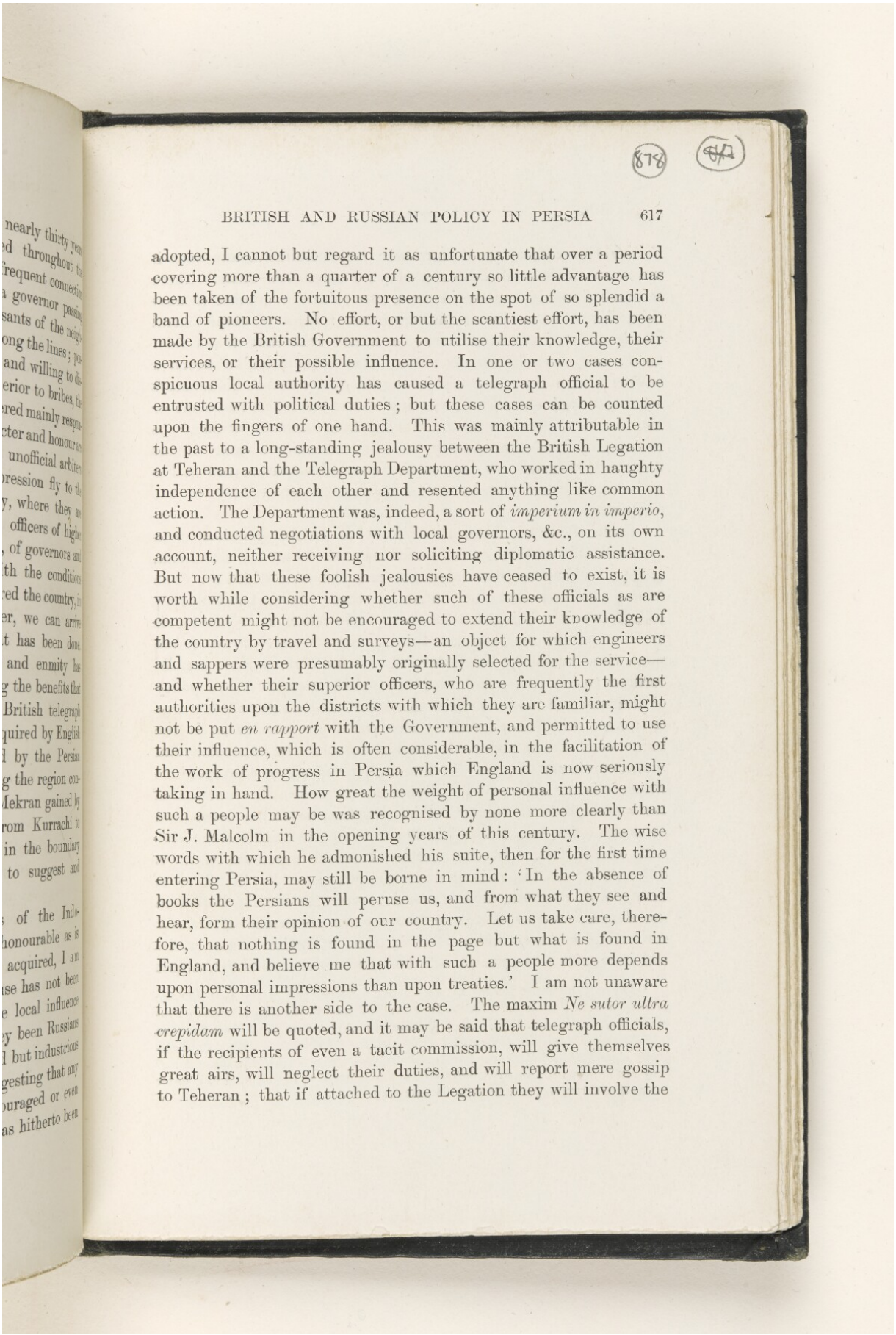



adopted, I cannot but regard it as unfortunate that over a period covering more than a quarter of a century so little advantage has been taken of the fortuitous presence on the spot of so splendid a band of pioneers. No effort, or but the scantiest effort, has been made by the British Government to utilise their knowledge, their services, or their possible influence. In one or two cases conspicuous local authority has caused a telegraph official to be entrusted with political duties; but these cases can be counted upon the fingers of one hand. This was mainly attributable in the past to a long-standing jealousy between the British Legation at Teheran and the Telegraph Department, who worked in haughty independence of each other and resented anything like common action. The Department was, indeed, a sort of *imperium in imperio*, and conducted negotiations with local governors, &c., on its own account, neither receiving nor soliciting diplomatic assistance. But now that these foolish jealousies have ceased to exist, it is worth while considering whether such of these officials as are competent might not be encouraged to extend their knowledge of the country by travel and surveys—an object for which engineers and sappers were presumably originally selected for the service—and whether their superior officers, who are frequently the first authorities upon the districts with which they are familiar, might not be put *en rapport* with the Government, and permitted to use their influence, which is often considerable, in the facilitation of the work of progress in Persia which England is now seriously taking in hand. How great the weight of personal influence with such a people may be was recognised by none more clearly than Sir J. Malcolm in the opening years of this century. The wise words with which he admonished his suite, then for the first time entering Persia, may still be borne in mind: 'In the absence of books the Persians will peruse us, and from what they see and hear, form their opinion of our country. Let us take care, therefore, that nothing is found in the page but what is found in England, and believe me that with such a people more depends upon personal impressions than upon treaties.' I am not unaware that there is another side to the case. The maxim *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* will be quoted, and it may be said that telegraph officials, if the recipients of even a tacit commission, will give themselves great airs, will neglect their duties, and will report mere gossip to Teheran; that if attached to the Legation they will involve the

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British Government in disagreeable responsibilities, and that if not attached they will decline to obey the Minister's orders. There is much force in these objections, particularly if applied to anything like a wholesale or indiscriminate scheme of employment. But in cases of approved merit, I conceive that they do not hold good; nor should they discourage that exploration to which I believe that many a telegraphist would gladly devote his holidays were there any chance of receiving either the encouragement or the thanks of Government.[1] Within a few miles of some of the telegraph lines the country is still unexplored and almost unknown, although colonies of the most adventurous race in the globe have been planted for a quarter of a century in the neighbourhood.

Work for the statesman and the merchant

Such, then, has been the history of British relations with Persia in this century, as conducted respectively by the statesman, the soldier, the merchant, and the civil engineer. The second and the fourth of these have, for the time being, finished their work. The future is in the hands of the first and the third. The statesman must at the same time avoid the shameful folly of indifference, and yet, according to my judgment, must hold aloof from the rupee policy of Malcolm and his immediate successors, who, where they thought to attach, did but degrade. His policy in the future is the guidance of Persia along the pathway of material expansion and internal reform. Backed by him, and profiting by the openings which it is the object of his diplomacy to secure, the function of the merchant is to supply Persia with that which she needs, and by commercial channels to win her to sympathy with Europe and with civilisation. In the matter of moral regeneration, it is difficult, if not impossible, for foreigners, save by the force of example, to interfere; and if Persia prefers to remain buried in moral and intellectual torpor, there exist no means of directly combating her resolution. But in the enterprise of mercantile and industrial development is to be found a vast and, as yet, almost

[1] The only instances known to me of such performance in the past are the journey of J. R. Preece from Shiraz to Jask, published in the *Supplementary Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, 1886, and E. A. Floyer's exploration of Beluchistan, the tale of which is told in *Unexplored Beluchistan*. At the present time the Telegraph signallers and clerks are barely able to leave their offices at all, inasmuch as they are required to test five times a day, at the hours of 6, 10, 2, 5, and 9, in order to see that through communication is unbroken.

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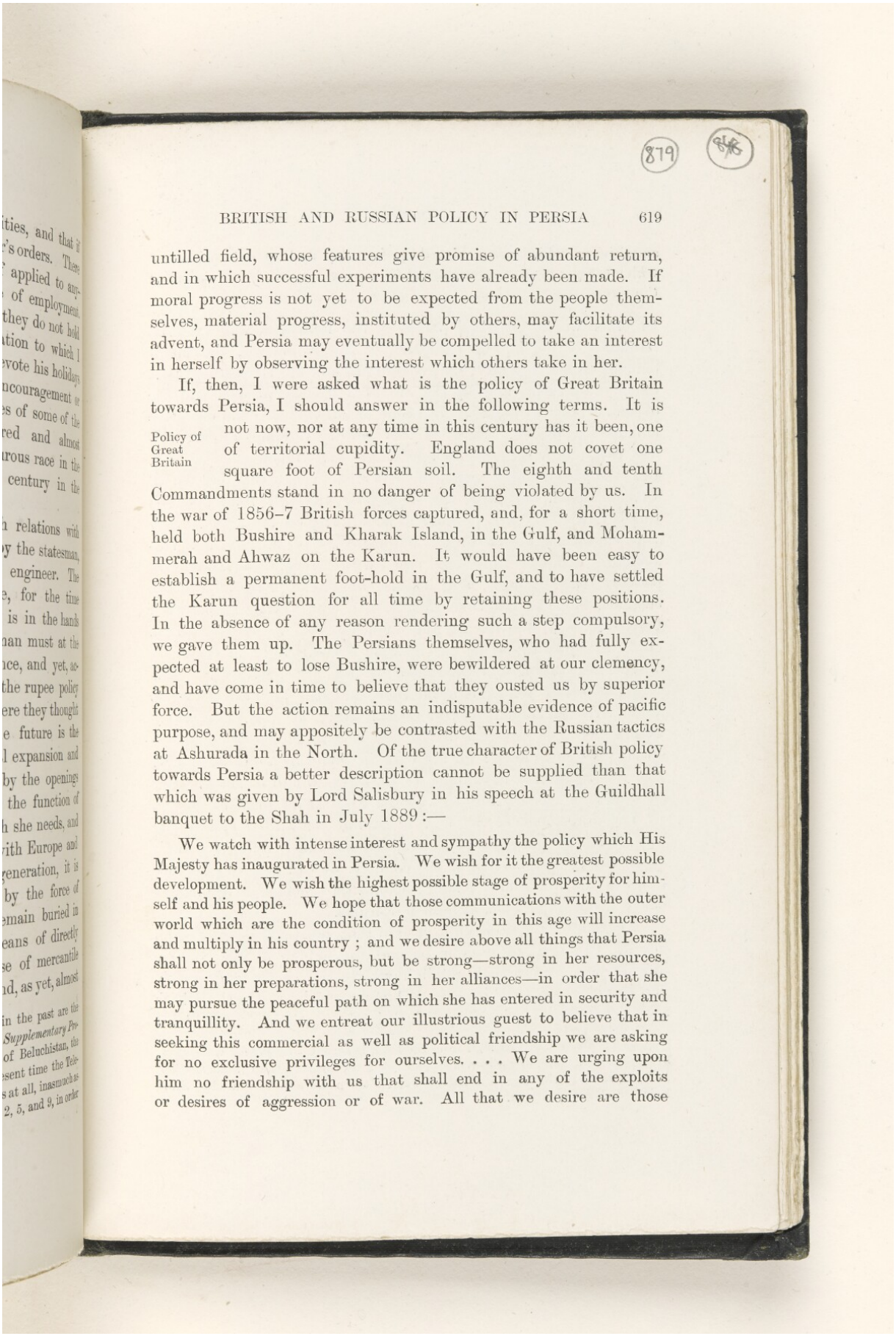



untilled field, whose features give promise of abundant return, and in which successful experiments have already been made. If moral progress is not yet to be expected from the people themselves, material progress, instituted by others, may facilitate its advent, and Persia may eventually be compelled to take an interest in herself by observing the interest which others take in her.

If, then, I were asked what is the policy of Great Britain towards Persia, I should answer in the following terms. It is not now, nor at any time in this century has it been, one of territorial cupidity. England does not covet one square foot of Persian soil. The eighth and tenth Commandments stand in no danger of being violated by us. In the war of 1856–7 British forces captured, and, for a short time, held both Bushire and Kharak Island, in the Gulf, and Mohammerah and Ahwaz on the Karun. It would have been easy to establish a permanent foot-hold in the Gulf, and to have settled the Karun question for all time by retaining these positions. In the absence of any reason rendering such a step compulsory, we gave them up. The Persians themselves, who had fully expected at least to lose Bushire, were bewildered at our clemency, and have come in time to believe that they ousted us by superior force. But the action remains an indisputable evidence of pacific purpose, and may appositely be contrasted with the Russian tactics at Ashurada in the North. Of the true character of British policy towards Persia a better description cannot be supplied than that which was given by Lord Salisbury in his speech at the Guildhall banquet to the Shah in July 1889:—

Policy of Great Britain

> We watch with intense interest and sympathy the policy which His Majesty has inaugurated in Persia. We wish for it the greatest possible development. We wish the highest possible stage of prosperity for himself and his people. We hope that those communications with the outer world which are the condition of prosperity in this age will increase and multiply in his country; and we desire above all things that Persia shall not only be prosperous, but be strong—strong in her resources, strong in her preparations, strong in her alliances—in order that she may pursue the peaceful path on which she has entered in security and tranquillity. And we entreat our illustrious guest to believe that in seeking this commercial as well as political friendship we are asking for no exclusive privileges for ourselves. . . . We are urging upon him no friendship with us that shall end in any of the exploits or desires of aggression or of war. All that we desire are those

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acquisitions which are achieved by industry and by enterprise, and which carry a common reward, not to one nation, but to all nations of the world.

In other words, the development of the industrial and material resources of Persia, the extension of her commerce, the maintenance of her integrity, the rehabilitation of her strength—these, under the pressure and by the aid of a friendly alliance, are the objects of British policy. The time for an offensive and defensive alliance has passed. Early in this century England might, with less risk and with possible advantage, have taken such a step. But the opportunity vanished with the events that led up to Turkomanchai, and with the drying of the ink that installed Russia in a position of permanent superiority on the north. Any such engagement now might implicate us in warfare at a tremendous distance from our base, with every disadvantage of position and resource, and against an enemy long and firmly entrenched. The last time that such a contingency might have been discussed was during the Crimean war, when Persia was quite willing to throw in her lot with Great Britain on condition of the restitution and guarantee of her lost provinces.[1] But *le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle* then, and still less can it do so now. We can undertake no responsibility for provinces which Persia has been so weak as to lose, and which she is no longer strong enough to keep; for the bargain would be a one-sided one, and the reciprocal advantage to ourselves would be small. But by dint of a friendly alliance, by the exercise of prudent advice, by encouragement of the flow of capital eastwards, and by its application to purposes of ascertained stability, having for their object the re-invigoration of the country, we can help to place her in a position which may render the hostile schemes of her neighbours, if not impossible, at least precarious.

Above all we may make it certain that, whatever destiny befall her in the north, in regions beyond the sphere of our possible interference, Persia shall retain inviolate the centre and south, and be able to say to an invader, 'Thus far and no further.' British ascendency, commercial and political, in the southern zone, which I

[1] In the absence of any sign from England, it is said that Persia was bribed by Russia during the Crimean War to place an army-corps on the Turkish frontier. In 1877, again at the request of Russia, Persian troops were concentrated at Khoi, Zohab, and Mohammerah.

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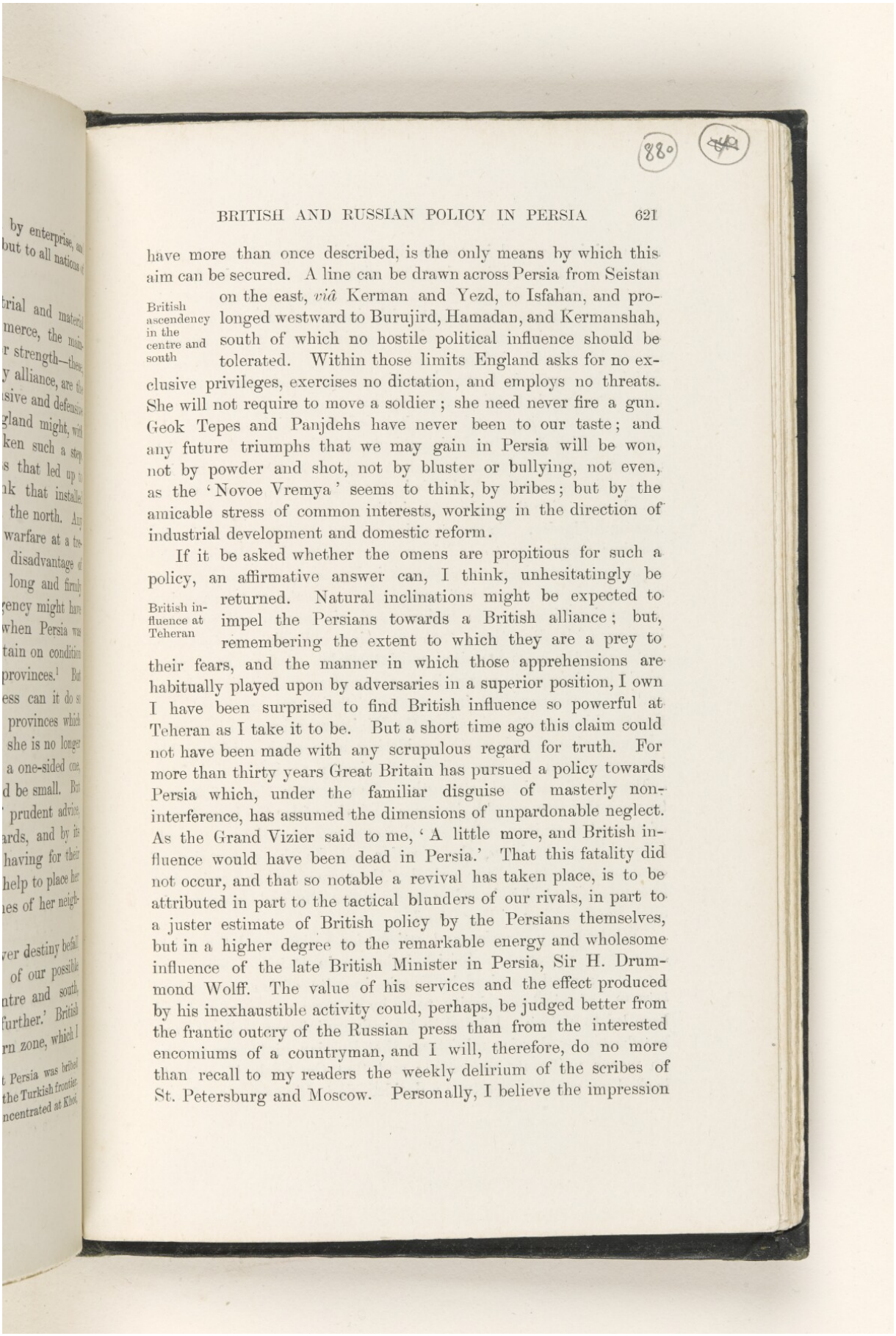



have more than once described, is the only means by which this aim can be secured. A line can be drawn across Persia from Seistan on the east, *viâ* Kerman and Yezd, to Isfahan, and prolonged westward to Burujird, Hamadan, and Kermanshah, south of which no hostile political influence should be tolerated. Within those limits England asks for no exclusive privileges, exercises no dictation, and employs no threats. She will not require to move a soldier; she need never fire a gun. Geok Tepes and Panjdehs have never been to our taste; and any future triumphs that we may gain in Persia will be won, not by powder and shot, not by bluster or bullying, not even, as the 'Novoe Vremya' seems to think, by bribes; but by the amicable stress of common interests, working in the direction of industrial development and domestic reform.

British ascendency in the centre and south

If it be asked whether the omens are propitious for such a policy, an affirmative answer can, I think, unhesitatingly be returned. Natural inclinations might be expected to impel the Persians towards a British alliance; but, remembering the extent to which they are a prey to their fears, and the manner in which those apprehensions are habitually played upon by adversaries in a superior position, I own I have been surprised to find British influence so powerful at Teheran as I take it to be. But a short time ago this claim could not have been made with any scrupulous regard for truth. For more than thirty years Great Britain has pursued a policy towards Persia which, under the familiar disguise of masterly non-interference, has assumed the dimensions of unpardonable neglect. As the Grand Vizier said to me, 'A little more, and British influence would have been dead in Persia.' That this fatality did not occur, and that so notable a revival has taken place, is to be attributed in part to the tactical blunders of our rivals, in part to a juster estimate of British policy by the Persians themselves, but in a higher degree to the remarkable energy and wholesome influence of the late British Minister in Persia, Sir H. Drummond Wolff. The value of his services and the effect produced by his inexhaustible activity could, perhaps, be judged better from the frantic outcry of the Russian press than from the interested encomiums of a countryman, and I will, therefore, do no more than recall to my readers the weekly delirium of the scribes of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Personally, I believe the impression

British influence at Teheran

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to be gaining ground in Persia that British counsels are framed, not with a purely selfish object, but with an honest desire for the country's gain. The Shah has given practical evidence of his sympathies in the concessions with regard to the Karun river, and the Imperial Bank. His recognition of the commercial aspect of English influence was shown by the interest with which he scrutinised the operations and productions of our manufacturing industries when on his tour in the summer of 1889 through the smoky capitals of the Midlands and the North. With the bulk of his subjects I believe that the English are personally popular, except when they adopt the brow-beating tone, a line of conduct which is in the last degree abhorrent to a people who pride themselves on civility of deportment, and possess a natural dignity. To the question propounded by myself in my opening chapter as to the impression produced in Persia by the great reception given to the Shah in England, the reply may be made that in the absence of newspapers or means of transmitting foreign intelligence, the majority of his people are probably ignorant of it altogether; that the minor officials, who in Persia are among the most conceited and intolerable of the human race, would be disposed to regard it as a symptom of British weakness and of the transcendant importance of their own sovereign; but that the higher ranks of society, the Ministers and men of influence, whose opinion alone is worth considering, were much and favourably impressed both by the tokens of friendly feeling and by the evidences of national strength. The greater the intercourse between the two peoples becomes and the wider the interchange of mutual amenities, whether of commerce or society, of good-fellowship or business, the speedier will be the recognition of common interests, and the arrival of the moment when Persia shall look upon Great Britain as her most natural ally, and Great Britain upon Persia as her willing friend.

Whilst to my surprise and satisfaction I discovered the existence of so powerful a British influence in Persia, I found the

Russian influence

control exercised by Russia, in spite of her tremendous physical superiority, to be by no means so great as I had been led to believe. I found that Persian ministers declined to be browbeaten by Russian ministers; that Russian diplomacy was by no means uniformly successful; and that the Shah, if properly backed up, could even return a decided No to his very good friend

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the Czar. I am quite unable, therefore, to agree either with the estimate of the Frenchman, M. Orsolle, when he said that

> The Shah is only the viceroy of a Russian Province. The real sovereign is not he who lives in the Ark, but the diplomatist in the mean palace in the corner of the Ark near the bazaar (i.e. the Russian Minister).[1]

Or with the remark of my own countryman, Dr. Wills, that

> Our influence in Persia, thanks to ourselves, is next to nothing. There are few resident British subjects who are really Englishmen. England to the Persian is a mere phrase, Russia a power—a power to bow down to and to fear. Russian subjects are protected. English ones take their chance as a rule. . . . The Russian drill-sergeant and Russian influence are paramount; while England, her influence gone and her trade a shadow, has fallen into contempt.[2]

I do not know at what precise epoch these words were penned; but I cannot conceive a more misleading description of the present situation.

Apart from the actual estimation in which England and Englishmen are held in Persia, and which dates from the days of Fath Ali Shah, and has been fortified by many friendly acts, as, for instance, the large British contribution towards the Persian famine fund in 1871–2, the position occupied by Great Britain in the south is such as to enable her to pursue the above indicated policy of ascendency in the centre and southern regions of Persia with every hope of permanent success. Her naval power in the Mediterranean, her hold of a possible base in Cyprus, her practical command of the Suez Canal, her possession of Bombay and Kurrachi, and her undisputed supremacy in the Persian Gulf, are conditions of preliminary advantage. Her control of the markets of the entire Persian littoral from Gwetter to Mohammerah, and of the inland towns and cities as far north as Isfahan, is a second and not less valuable guarantee. But more potent than either is the feeling that prevails throughout Southern Persia, from the Persian Beluchis on the east to the Bakhtiari Lurs on the west, that the power to which they must look alike for the vindication of their manhood and the maintenance of their freedom is Great Britain. I could give many instances of this phenomenon that have come under my own notice. While Persia

British hold over Southern Persia

[1] *Le Caucase et la Perse*, p. 333.

[2] *In the Land of the Lion and the Sun*, pp. 175, 182.

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has been extending a forcible and unwelcome sway over the Beluchi tribesmen on her eastern border, many are the petitions for protection that have poured in upon the British Resident at Bushire. There is not a traveller in the intervening regions of Kerman, Laristan, and Fars who has not recorded similar and unsolicited appeals; whilst in the west there is no prospect to which Bakhtiari chieftains, bullied and maltreated by the Persian Government, and Arab sheikhs, who have never professed more than a lip loyalty to the Shah, look forward more keenly than that of at once retaining and vindicating their independent nationality under the ægis of Great Britain. If Russian advance has sometimes been solicited by the craven populations of Khorasan, a not less genuine and a more creditable 'Come over and help us' has sounded in the ears of England from the warlike tribes of Southern Iran. And yet, well assured as is the British position in Southern Persia, and essential though it be that it should never be disputed, I have positively encountered the argument that Russia should be suffered to come down to the Gulf, in order to provide ourselves with a point of attack. Never previously had I heard of the generalship which could admit the enemy to a secure lodgment on the glacis of a fort, in order to have the luxury of marching out to attack him.

Question of the Legation establishment

There is one condition intimately connected with the maintenance of British prestige in Persia, about which a marked difference of opinion prevails even among those who know, viz. the *personnel* and affiliation of the British Legation at Teheran. There are some who support the present system, under which, although a large part of the expenses of the establishment are borne by India, both the Minister and his staff are appointed by, and are subordinate to, the Foreign Office in London. There are others who contend that Persia, falling within the category of Oriental nations, and her politics standing in a particular relationship to those of India, the entire charge should be cast upon the Indian Exchequer, with the corollary of making the *personnel* and establishment entirely or mainly Indian in composition and qualification. History affords illustrations of either status from the time when, at the beginning of this century, the East India Company and the Home Government quarrelled so seriously about Persia, that their rival ambassadors, Sir. J. Malcolm and Sir Harford Jones, were both on Persian soil at the same



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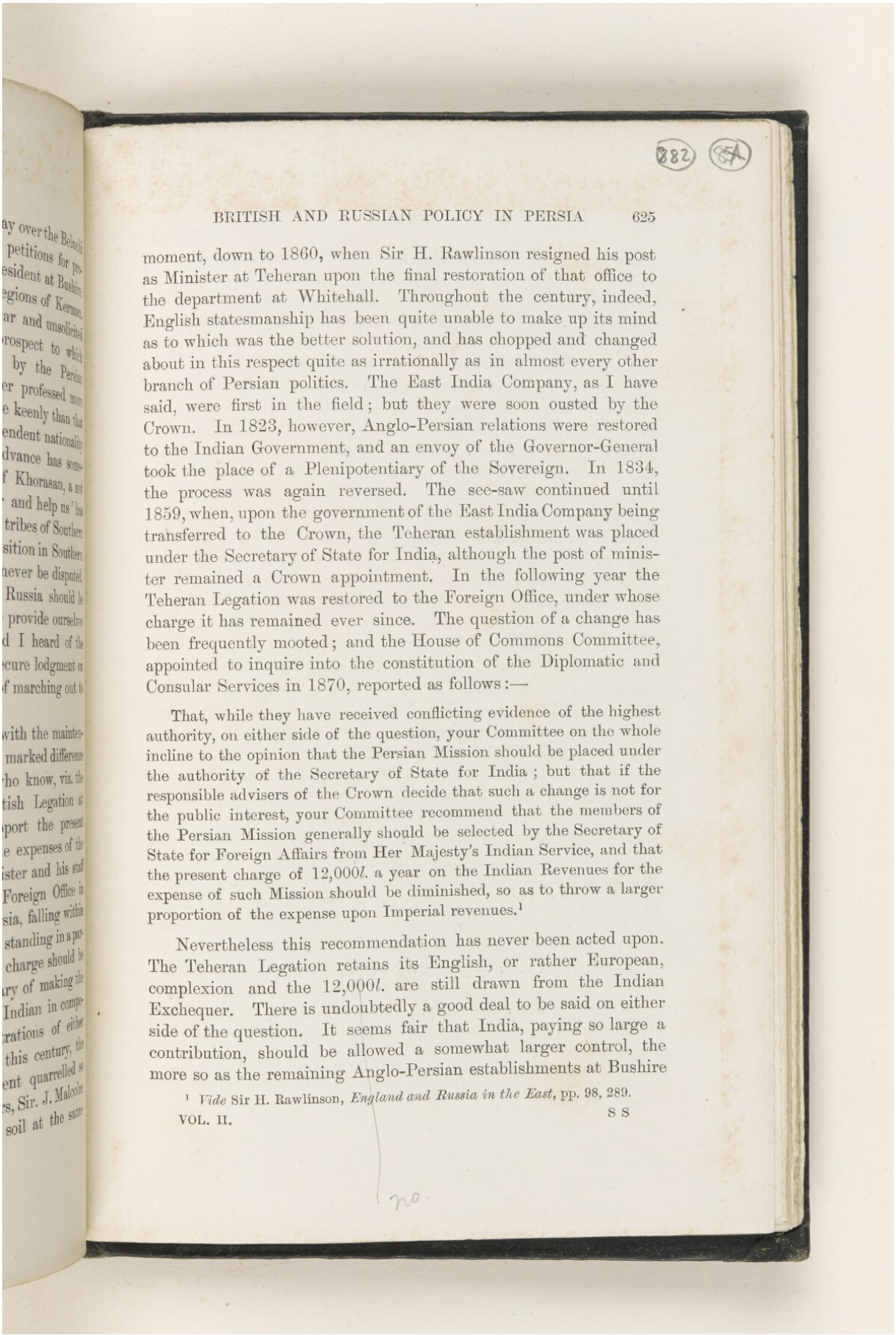



moment, down to 1860, when Sir H. Rawlinson resigned his post as Minister at Teheran upon the final restoration of that office to the department at Whitehall. Throughout the century, indeed, English statesmanship has been quite unable to make up its mind as to which was the better solution, and has chopped and changed about in this respect quite as irrationally as in almost every other branch of Persian politics. The East India Company, as I have said, were first in the field; but they were soon ousted by the Crown. In 1823, however, Anglo-Persian relations were restored to the Indian Government, and an envoy of the Governor-General took the place of a Plenipotentiary of the Sovereign. In 1834, the process was again reversed. The see-saw continued until 1859, when, upon the government of the East India Company being transferred to the Crown, the Teheran establishment was placed under the Secretary of State for India, although the post of minister remained a Crown appointment. In the following year the Teheran Legation was restored to the Foreign Office, under whose charge it has remained ever since. The question of a change has been frequently mooted; and the House of Commons Committee, appointed to inquire into the constitution of the Diplomatic and Consular Services in 1870, reported as follows:—

> That, while they have received conflicting evidence of the highest authority, on either side of the question, your Committee on the whole incline to the opinion that the Persian Mission should be placed under the authority of the Secretary of State for India; but that if the responsible advisers of the Crown decide that such a change is not for the public interest, your Committee recommend that the members of the Persian Mission generally should be selected by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from Her Majesty's Indian Service, and that the present charge of 12,000*l.* a year on the Indian Revenues for the expense of such Mission should be diminished, so as to throw a larger proportion of the expense upon Imperial revenues.[1]

Nevertheless this recommendation has never been acted upon. The Teheran Legation retains its English, or rather European, complexion and the 12,000*l.* are still drawn from the Indian Exchequer. There is undoubtedly a good deal to be said on either side of the question. It seems fair that India, paying so large a contribution, should be allowed a somewhat larger control, the more so as the remaining Anglo-Persian establishments at Bushire

[1] *Vide* Sir H. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, pp. 98, 289.



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and Meshed and the adjoining Residency at Baghdad are Indian, both in appointment and pay;[1] as the Telegraph Department in Persia is subordinate to the Indian, and not to the Home Government; and as, in the event of British troops being required for the defence of Persia, Bombay, and not Portsmouth, would be the port of embarkation. It is also true that the conditions of service and life in Persia are more analogous to those of Hindustan than to the customs of European courts or cities, that the Persian language is more likely to be known by members of the Indian Civil or Military Services than by Foreign Office *attachés*, and that the latter are sometimes disposed to regard Teheran as a penal settlement, to be tolerated only with sullen mortification. It is, I think, less true than may formerly have been the case, that Indian interests in Persia are shelved or postponed in deference to the needs of European diplomacy. On the other hand, while the above considerations suggest a larger infusion of the Indian element than at present prevails, I am strongly of opinion that the broad question of control must be decided in favour of Downing Street rather than of Calcutta. The introduction into Persia of the electric telegraph, the visits of the Shah to Europe, and above all the menacing attitude of Russia on the north, have brought Persia distinctly within the purview of European politics, and render it impossible for British diplomacy in that country to be regulated upon strictly Indian lines. The Persian Question has become a branch of the great Eastern Question, that simultaneously agitates the cabinets of London, St. Petersburg, and Constantinople. The British Minister at Teheran must be in constant correspondence with the British Ambassadors at the two latter capitals. The presence of accredited representatives of the principal European Powers at the court of the Shah is a further evidence of the extent to which Persia has been lifted out of a purely Asiatic environment and is now regarded as a piece upon the international chess-board. I do not doubt that the Shah himself would regard it as an affront to his dignity were any proposal now made to restore the Teheran

[1] The appointments at Bushire, Meshed, and Baghdad are the result of a curious sort of compromise between the contending parties. The nominations are made by the Indian Government, but the appointments hail from the Foreign Office. To exemplify the twofold arrangement the occupants of all three posts are designated Residents or Political Agents in their relations with India, but Consuls-General in their relations with Whitehall. This peculiar system works well.

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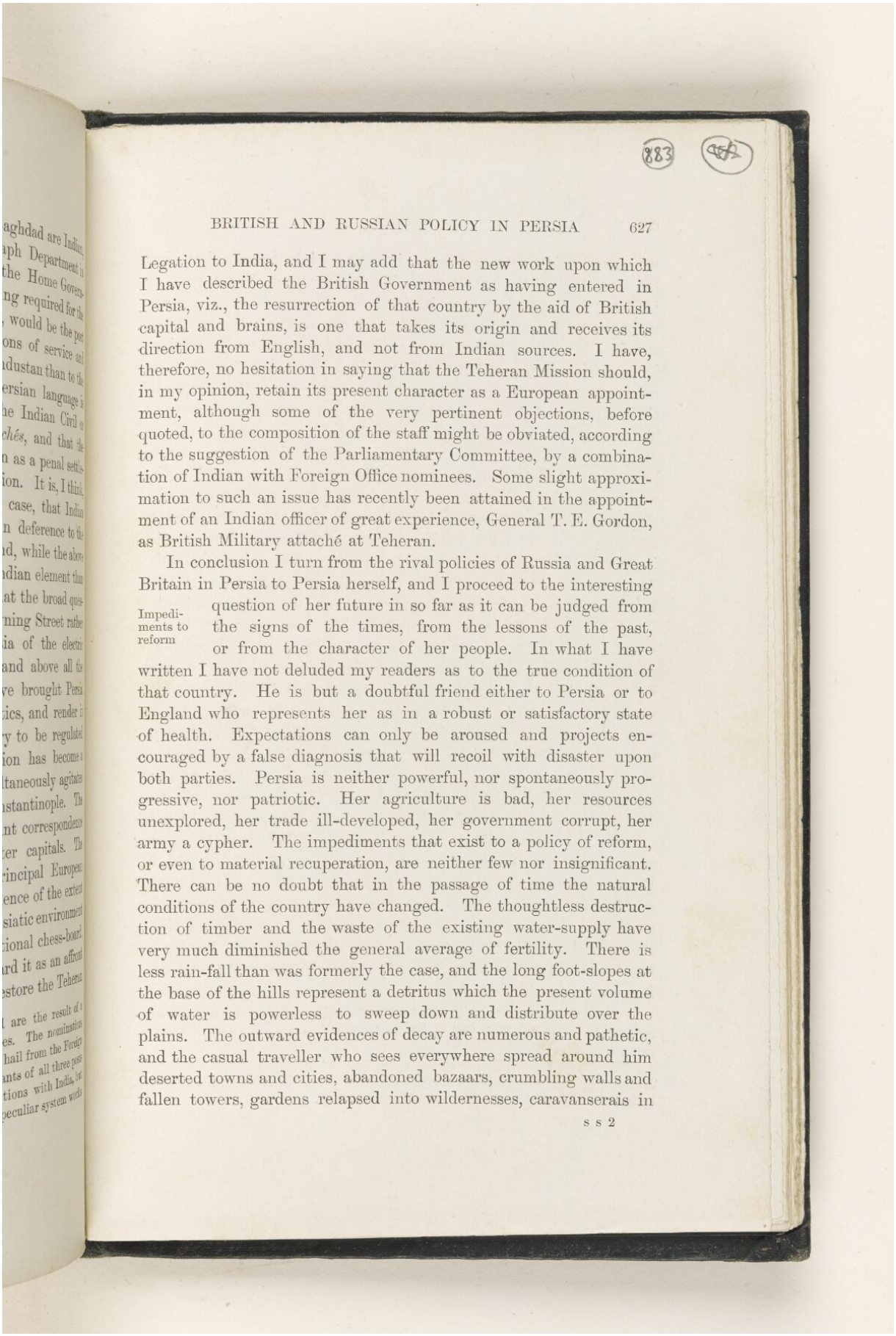



Legation to India, and I may add that the new work upon which I have described the British Government as having entered in Persia, viz., the resurrection of that country by the aid of British capital and brains, is one that takes its origin and receives its direction from English, and not from Indian sources. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the Teheran Mission should, in my opinion, retain its present character as a European appointment, although some of the very pertinent objections, before quoted, to the composition of the staff might be obviated, according to the suggestion of the Parliamentary Committee, by a combination of Indian with Foreign Office nominees. Some slight approximation to such an issue has recently been attained in the appointment of an Indian officer of great experience, General T. E. Gordon, as British Military attaché at Teheran.

In conclusion I turn from the rival policies of Russia and Great Britain in Persia to Persia herself, and I proceed to the interesting question of her future in so far as it can be judged from the signs of the times, from the lessons of the past, or from the character of her people. In what I have written I have not deluded my readers as to the true condition of that country. He is but a doubtful friend either to Persia or to England who represents her as in a robust or satisfactory state of health. Expectations can only be aroused and projects encouraged by a false diagnosis that will recoil with disaster upon both parties. Persia is neither powerful, nor spontaneously progressive, nor patriotic. Her agriculture is bad, her resources unexplored, her trade ill-developed, her government corrupt, her army a cypher. The impediments that exist to a policy of reform, or even to material recuperation, are neither few nor insignificant. There can be no doubt that in the passage of time the natural conditions of the country have changed. The thoughtless destruction of timber and the waste of the existing water-supply have very much diminished the general average of fertility. There is less rain-fall than was formerly the case, and the long foot-slopes at the base of the hills represent a detritus which the present volume of water is powerless to sweep down and distribute over the plains. The outward evidences of decay are numerous and pathetic, and the casual traveller who sees everywhere spread around him deserted towns and cities, abandoned bazaars, crumbling walls and fallen towers, gardens relapsed into wildernesses, caravanserais in

Impediments to reform



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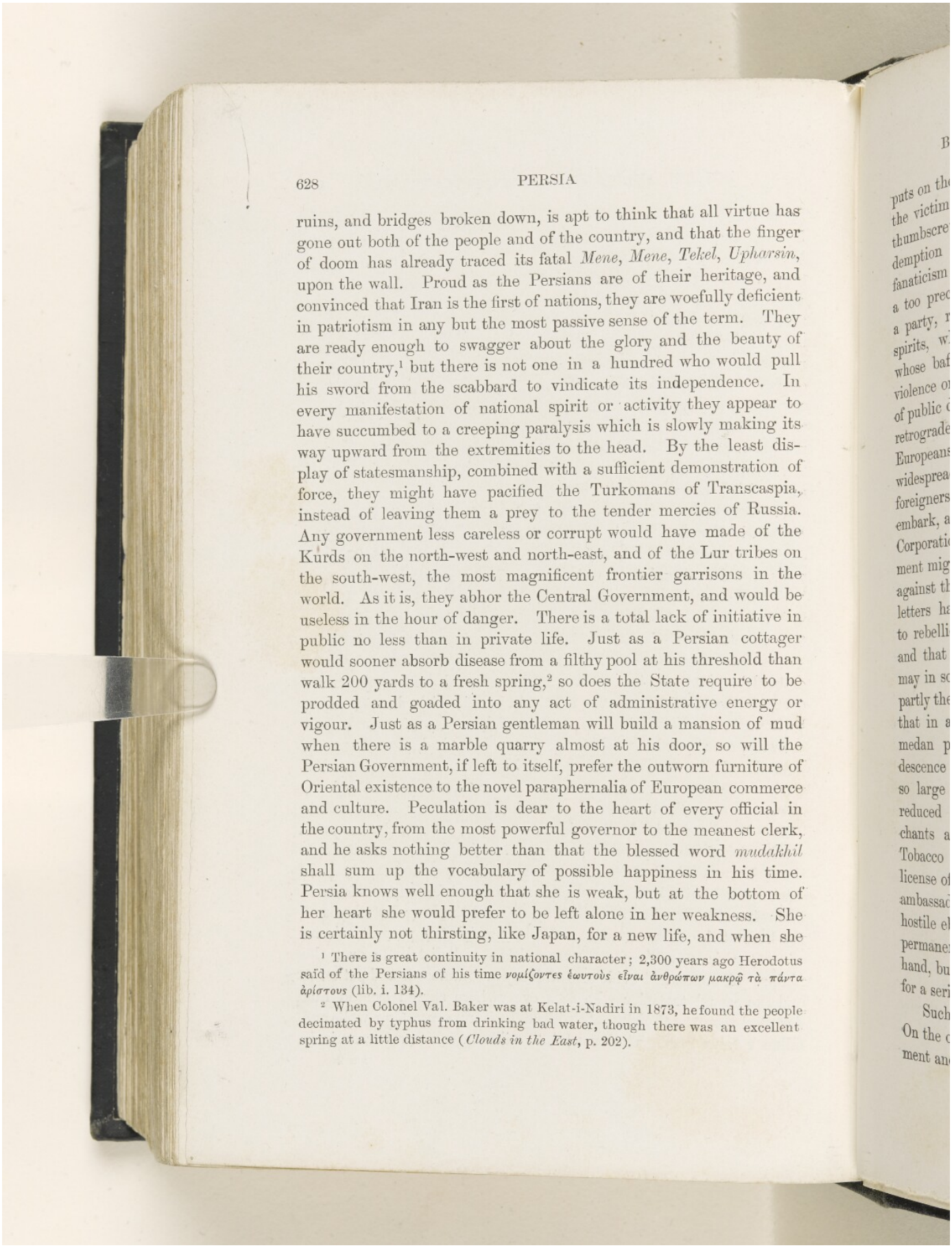



ruins, and bridges broken down, is apt to think that all virtue has gone out both of the people and of the country, and that the finger of doom has already traced its fatal *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, upon the wall. Proud as the Persians are of their heritage, and convinced that Iran is the first of nations, they are woefully deficient in patriotism in any but the most passive sense of the term. They are ready enough to swagger about the glory and the beauty of their country,[1] but there is not one in a hundred who would pull his sword from the scabbard to vindicate its independence. In every manifestation of national spirit or activity they appear to have succumbed to a creeping paralysis which is slowly making its way upward from the extremities to the head. By the least display of statesmanship, combined with a sufficient demonstration of force, they might have pacified the Turkomans of Transcaspia, instead of leaving them a prey to the tender mercies of Russia. Any government less careless or corrupt would have made of the Kurds on the north-west and north-east, and of the Lur tribes on the south-west, the most magnificent frontier garrisons in the world. As it is, they abhor the Central Government, and would be useless in the hour of danger. There is a total lack of initiative in public no less than in private life. Just as a Persian cottager would sooner absorb disease from a filthy pool at his threshold than walk 200 yards to a fresh spring,[2] so does the State require to be prodded and goaded into any act of administrative energy or vigour. Just as a Persian gentleman will build a mansion of mud when there is a marble quarry almost at his door, so will the Persian Government, if left to itself, prefer the outworn furniture of Oriental existence to the novel paraphernalia of European commerce and culture. Peculation is dear to the heart of every official in the country, from the most powerful governor to the meanest clerk, and he asks nothing better than that the blessed word *mudakhil* shall sum up the vocabulary of possible happiness in his time. Persia knows well enough that she is weak, but at the bottom of her heart she would prefer to be left alone in her weakness. She is certainly not thirsting, like Japan, for a new life, and when she

[1] There is great continuity in national character; 2,300 years ago Herodotus said of the Persians of his time *νομίζοντες ἑωυτοὺς εἶναι ἀνθρώπων μακρῷ τὰ πάντα ἀρίστους* (lib. i. 134).

[2] When Colonel Val. Baker was at Kelat-i-Nadiri in 1873, he found the people decimated by typhus from drinking bad water, though there was an excellent spring at a little distance (*Clouds in the East*, p. 202).

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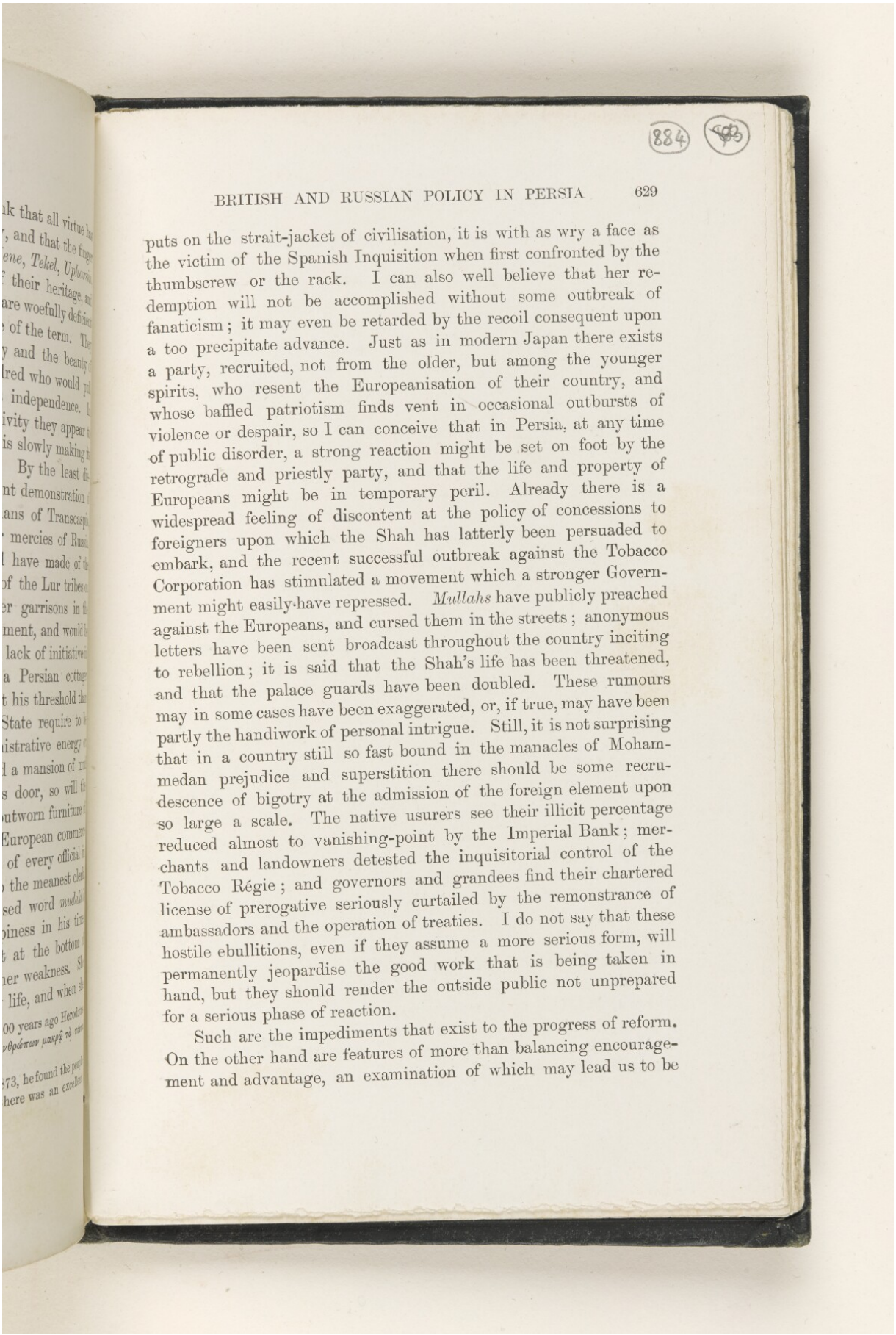



puts on the strait-jacket of civilisation, it is with as wry a face as the victim of the Spanish Inquisition when first confronted by the thumbscrew or the rack. I can also well believe that her redemption will not be accomplished without some outbreak of fanaticism; it may even be retarded by the recoil consequent upon a too precipitate advance. Just as in modern Japan there exists a party, recruited, not from the older, but among the younger spirits, who resent the Europeanisation of their country, and whose baffled patriotism finds vent in occasional outbursts of violence or despair, so I can conceive that in Persia, at any time of public disorder, a strong reaction might be set on foot by the retrograde and priestly party, and that the life and property of Europeans might be in temporary peril. Already there is a widespread feeling of discontent at the policy of concessions to foreigners upon which the Shah has latterly been persuaded to embark, and the recent successful outbreak against the Tobacco Corporation has stimulated a movement which a stronger Government might easily have repressed. *Mullahs* have publicly preached against the Europeans, and cursed them in the streets; anonymous letters have been sent broadcast throughout the country inciting to rebellion; it is said that the Shah's life has been threatened, and that the palace guards have been doubled. These rumours may in some cases have been exaggerated, or, if true, may have been partly the handiwork of personal intrigue. Still, it is not surprising that in a country still so fast bound in the manacles of Mohammedan prejudice and superstition there should be some recrudescence of bigotry at the admission of the foreign element upon so large a scale. The native usurers see their illicit percentage reduced almost to vanishing-point by the Imperial Bank; merchants and landowners detested the inquisitorial control of the Tobacco Régie; and governors and grandees find their chartered license of prerogative seriously curtailed by the remonstrance of ambassadors and the operation of treaties. I do not say that these hostile ebullitions, even if they assume a more serious form, will permanently jeopardise the good work that is being taken in hand, but they should render the outside public not unprepared for a serious phase of reaction.

Such are the impediments that exist to the progress of reform. On the other hand are features of more than balancing encouragement and advantage, an examination of which may lead us to be

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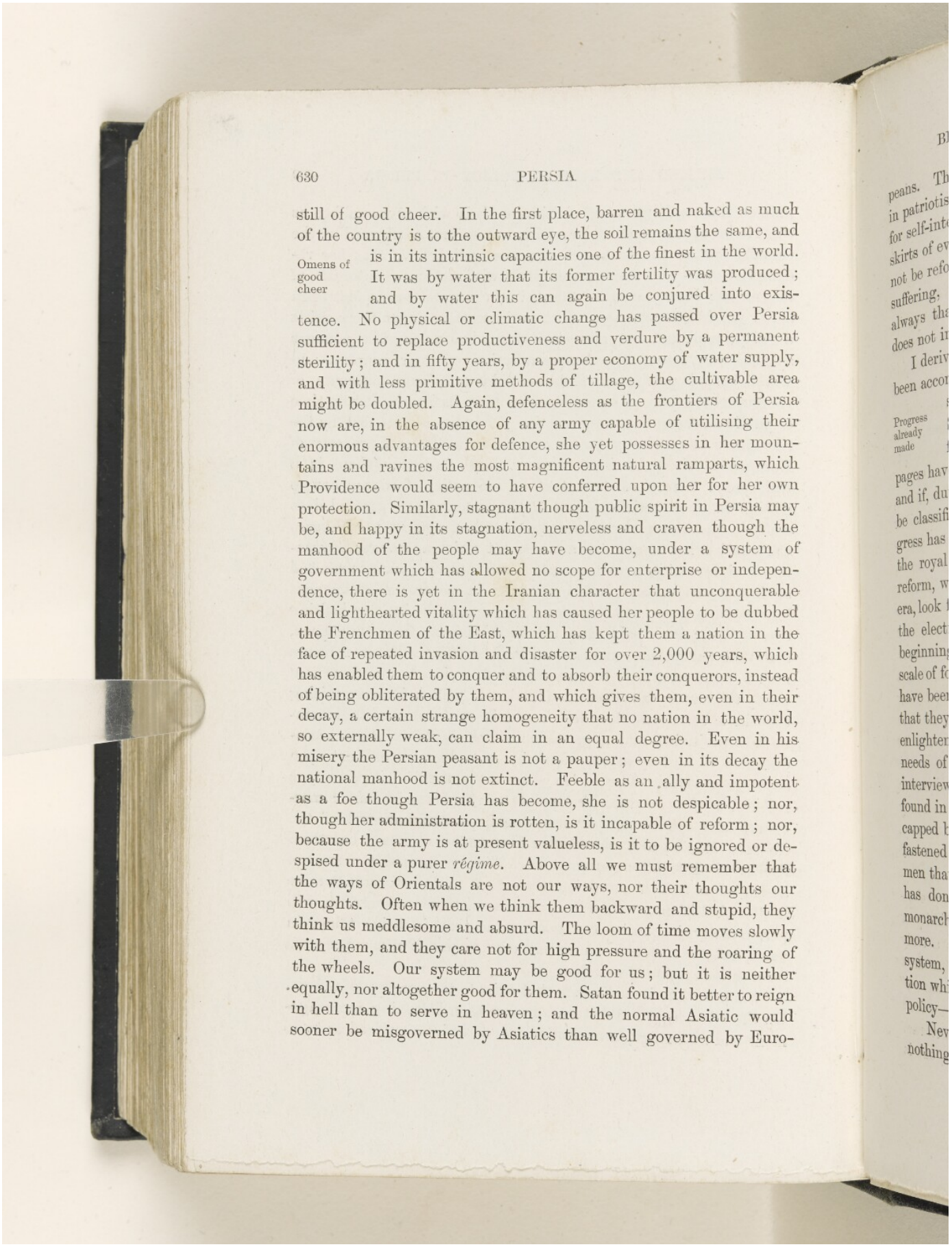



still of good cheer. In the first place, barren and naked as much of the country is to the outward eye, the soil remains the same, and is in its intrinsic capacities one of the finest in the world. It was by water that its former fertility was produced; and by water this can again be conjured into existence. No physical or climatic change has passed over Persia sufficient to replace productiveness and verdure by a permanent sterility; and in fifty years, by a proper economy of water supply, and with less primitive methods of tillage, the cultivable area might be doubled. Again, defenceless as the frontiers of Persia now are, in the absence of any army capable of utilising their enormous advantages for defence, she yet possesses in her mountains and ravines the most magnificent natural ramparts, which Providence would seem to have conferred upon her for her own protection. Similarly, stagnant though public spirit in Persia may be, and happy in its stagnation, nerveless and craven though the manhood of the people may have become, under a system of government which has allowed no scope for enterprise or independence, there is yet in the Iranian character that unconquerable and lighthearted vitality which has caused her people to be dubbed the Frenchmen of the East, which has kept them a nation in the face of repeated invasion and disaster for over 2,000 years, which has enabled them to conquer and to absorb their conquerors, instead of being obliterated by them, and which gives them, even in their decay, a certain strange homogeneity that no nation in the world, so externally weak, can claim in an equal degree. Even in his misery the Persian peasant is not a pauper; even in its decay the national manhood is not extinct. Feeble as an ally and impotent as a foe though Persia has become, she is not despicable; nor, though her administration is rotten, is it incapable of reform; nor, because the army is at present valueless, is it to be ignored or despised under a purer *régime*. Above all we must remember that the ways of Orientals are not our ways, nor their thoughts our thoughts. Often when we think them backward and stupid, they think us meddlesome and absurd. The loom of time moves slowly with them, and they care not for high pressure and the roaring of the wheels. Our system may be good for us; but it is neither equally, nor altogether good for them. Satan found it better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven; and the normal Asiatic would sooner be misgoverned by Asiatics than well governed by Euro-

Omens of good cheer

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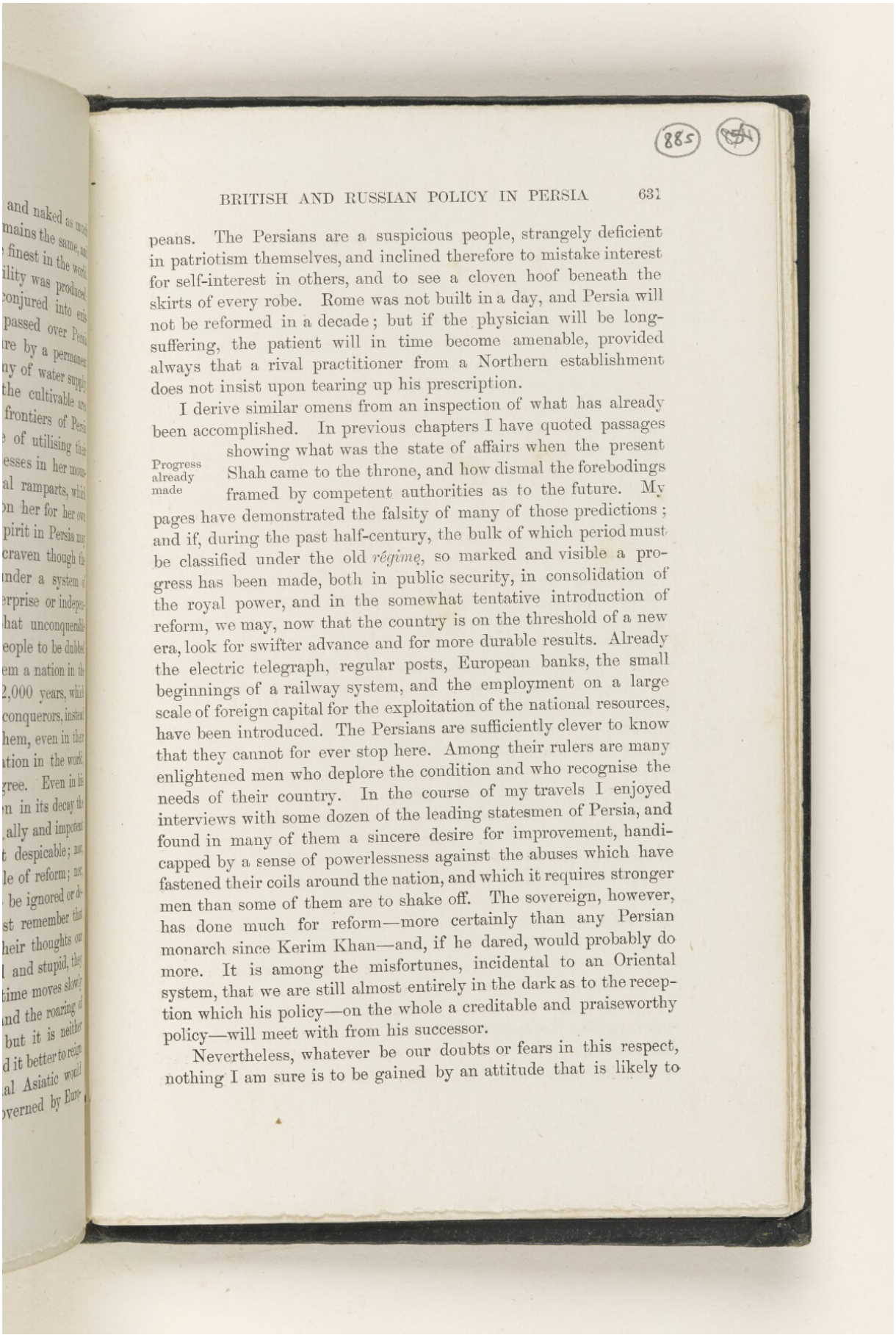



peans. The Persians are a suspicious people, strangely deficient in patriotism themselves, and inclined therefore to mistake interest for self-interest in others, and to see a cloven hoof beneath the skirts of every robe. Rome was not built in a day, and Persia will not be reformed in a decade; but if the physician will be long-suffering, the patient will in time become amenable, provided always that a rival practitioner from a Northern establishment does not insist upon tearing up his prescription.

Progress already made

I derive similar omens from an inspection of what has already been accomplished. In previous chapters I have quoted passages showing what was the state of affairs when the present Shah came to the throne, and how dismal the forebodings framed by competent authorities as to the future. My pages have demonstrated the falsity of many of those predictions; and if, during the past half-century, the bulk of which period must be classified under the old *régime*, so marked and visible a progress has been made, both in public security, in consolidation of the royal power, and in the somewhat tentative introduction of reform, we may, now that the country is on the threshold of a new era, look for swifter advance and for more durable results. Already the electric telegraph, regular posts, European banks, the small beginnings of a railway system, and the employment on a large scale of foreign capital for the exploitation of the national resources, have been introduced. The Persians are sufficiently clever to know that they cannot for ever stop here. Among their rulers are many enlightened men who deplore the condition and who recognise the needs of their country. In the course of my travels I enjoyed interviews with some dozen of the leading statesmen of Persia, and found in many of them a sincere desire for improvement, handicapped by a sense of powerlessness against the abuses which have fastened their coils around the nation, and which it requires stronger men than some of them are to shake off. The sovereign, however, has done much for reform—more certainly than any Persian monarch since Kerim Khan—and, if he dared, would probably do more. It is among the misfortunes, incidental to an Oriental system, that we are still almost entirely in the dark as to the reception which his policy—on the whole a creditable and praiseworthy policy—will meet with from his successor.

Nevertheless, whatever be our doubts or fears in this respect, nothing I am sure is to be gained by an attitude that is likely to

Annotated Copy of Persia and the Persian Questionby George Curzon, with Inserted Papers [885v] (1787/1814)



encourage political unrest or to facilitate intrigue. Most writers appear to take it for granted that upon the death of the Shah a general convulsion will ensue, and in all probability a contest for the vacant throne. It is even discussed which candidate is to receive the suffrages of this or that party, which to be the Russian and which the British nominee. Any disposition to encourage false pretensions or to depart from the recognised canons of inheritance is very much to be deprecated, as likely to plunge the country into disorder and to give opportunities for aggression to those who are so minded. If it were known that England and Russia, the two strongest external powers, were resolutely united in their support of the legitimate heir to the throne, though the Shah were to die to-morrow, the security both of the Crown and of the country would, I believe, be absolutely assured.

The succession

If I turn from the public to the private character of the people, and proceed to draw any inference from their manners or behaviour as evinced in their every-day existence, I arrive at a conclusion which, after a balance of contradictory items, still leaves us just on the right side. The Persian character presents many complex features, elsewhere rarely united in the same individual. They are an amiable and a polished race, and have the manners of gentlemen. They are vivacious in temperament, intelligent in conversation, and acute in conduct. If their hearts are soft, which is, I believe, undeniable, there is no corresponding weakness of the head. On the other hand, they are consummate hypocrites, very corrupt, and lamentably deficient in stability or courage. They stand in the sharpest contrast to the peoples who surround them, the truculent Kurd, the haughty Afghan, the sullen Turk, the listless Hindu. With none of these do they share many common characteristics. The physical conditions of their country, and the possession of a separate faith, have accentuated a racial difference that must always have been extremely marked. Whilst, as individuals, they present many attractive features, as a community they are wholly wanting in elements of real nobility or grandeur. With one gift only can they be credited on a truly heroic scale; and this, though it may endear them to the student of human nature as a fine art, will excite the stern repugnance of the moralist. I allude to their faculty for what a Puritan might call mendacious, but what I prefer to style imaginative, utterance. This is inconceivable and enormous. After being in Persia, one is

Persian character

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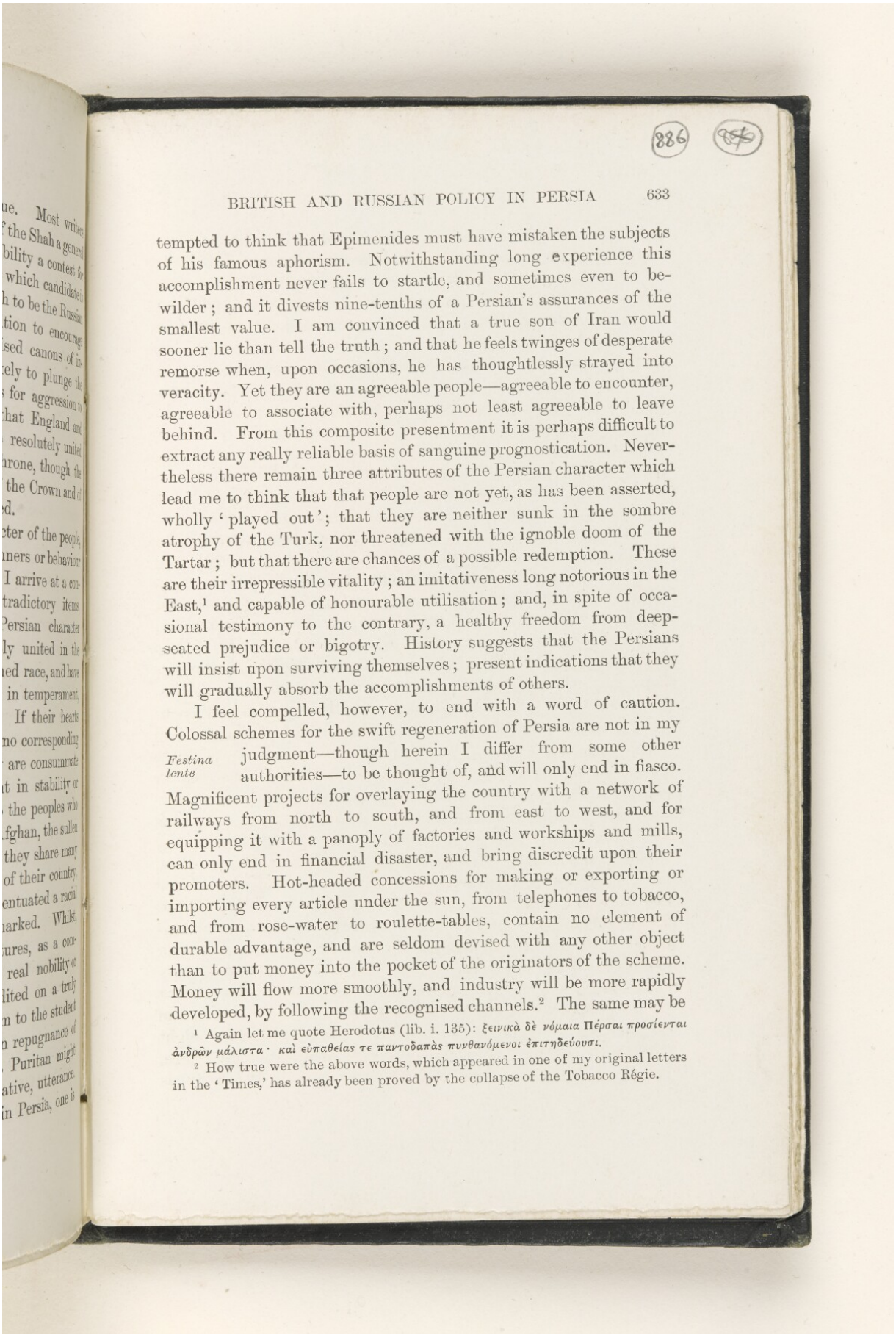



tempted to think that Epimenides must have mistaken the subjects of his famous aphorism. Notwithstanding long experience this accomplishment never fails to startle, and sometimes even to bewilder; and it divests nine-tenths of a Persian's assurances of the smallest value. I am convinced that a true son of Iran would sooner lie than tell the truth; and that he feels twinges of desperate remorse when, upon occasions, he has thoughtlessly strayed into veracity. Yet they are an agreeable people—agreeable to encounter, agreeable to associate with, perhaps not least agreeable to leave behind. From this composite presentment it is perhaps difficult to extract any really reliable basis of sanguine prognostication. Nevertheless there remain three attributes of the Persian character which lead me to think that that people are not yet, as has been asserted, wholly 'played out'; that they are neither sunk in the sombre atrophy of the Turk, nor threatened with the ignoble doom of the Tartar; but that there are chances of a possible redemption. These are their irrepressible vitality; an imitativeness long notorious in the East,[1] and capable of honourable utilisation; and, in spite of occasional testimony to the contrary, a healthy freedom from deep-seated prejudice or bigotry. History suggests that the Persians will insist upon surviving themselves; present indications that they will gradually absorb the accomplishments of others.

I feel compelled, however, to end with a word of caution. Colossal schemes for the swift regeneration of Persia are not in my judgment—though herein I differ from some other authorities—to be thought of, and will only end in fiasco. Magnificent projects for overlaying the country with a network of railways from north to south, and from east to west, and for equipping it with a panoply of factories and workships and mills, can only end in financial disaster, and bring discredit upon their promoters. Hot-headed concessions for making or exporting or importing every article under the sun, from telephones to tobacco, and from rose-water to roulette-tables, contain no element of durable advantage, and are seldom devised with any other object than to put money into the pocket of the originators of the scheme. Money will flow more smoothly, and industry will be more rapidly developed, by following the recognised channels.[2] The same may be

*Festina lente*

[1] Again let me quote Herodotus (lib. i. 135): ξεινικὰ δὲ νόμαια Πέρσαι προσίενται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα· καὶ εὐπαθείας τε παντοδαπὰς πυνθανόμενοι ἐπιτηδεύουσι.

[2] How true were the above words, which appeared in one of my original letters in the 'Times,' has already been proved by the collapse of the Tobacco Régie.

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said of internal communications. Mule tracks will in many cases require to precede roads, and roads to precede railroads. Hundreds of pounds had better be devoted to a certain benefit here than thousands staked upon a venture there. Persian capital must be interested in the exploitation of Persian resources, for a monopoly of the finance by foreigners excites jealousy, and suggests the idea of usurpation. Nor must it be forgotten, while agitating for this or that practical benefit, that the foundations of the system, which shall render the comprehension of its advantages simple and their appreciation universal, have in many cases yet to be laid. I have said that the people are shamefully ill-educated. I have shown that they live in an atmosphere of corruption. Civilisation will not be popular until it is taught in the schools. Respect for law, regard for contract, or faith in honesty will not be generated until the institutions by which they can be safeguarded have been called into being. This will be a work of time; but in due time it will come. Remote and backward and infirm Persia at present is; but, for all its remoteness and backwardness and present debility, I hope I have shown it to be a country that should excite the liveliest sympathies of Englishmen; with whose Government our own Government should be upon terms of intimate alliance; and in the shaping for which of a future that shall be not unworthy of its splendid past the British nation have it in their power to take a highly honourable lead.

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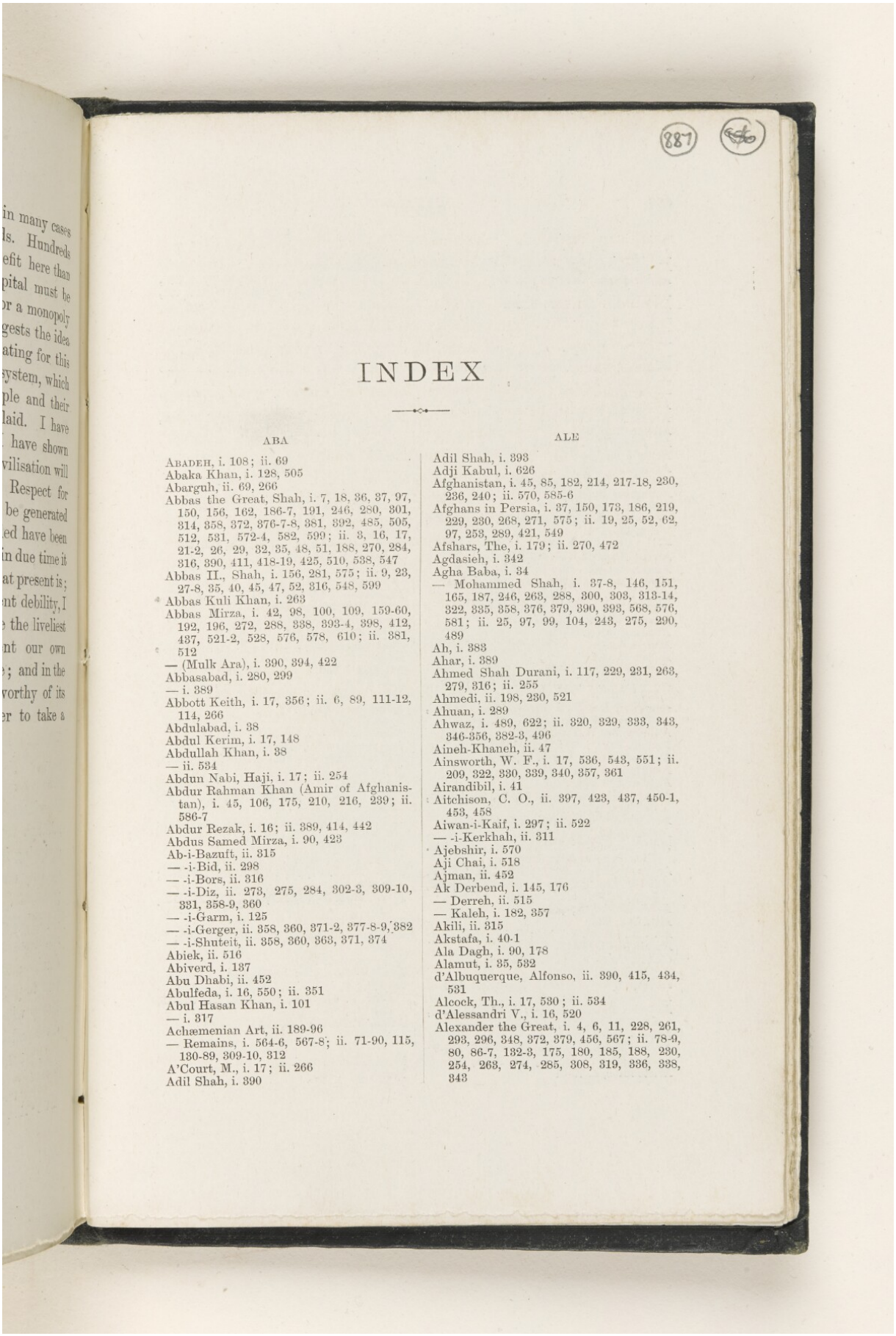

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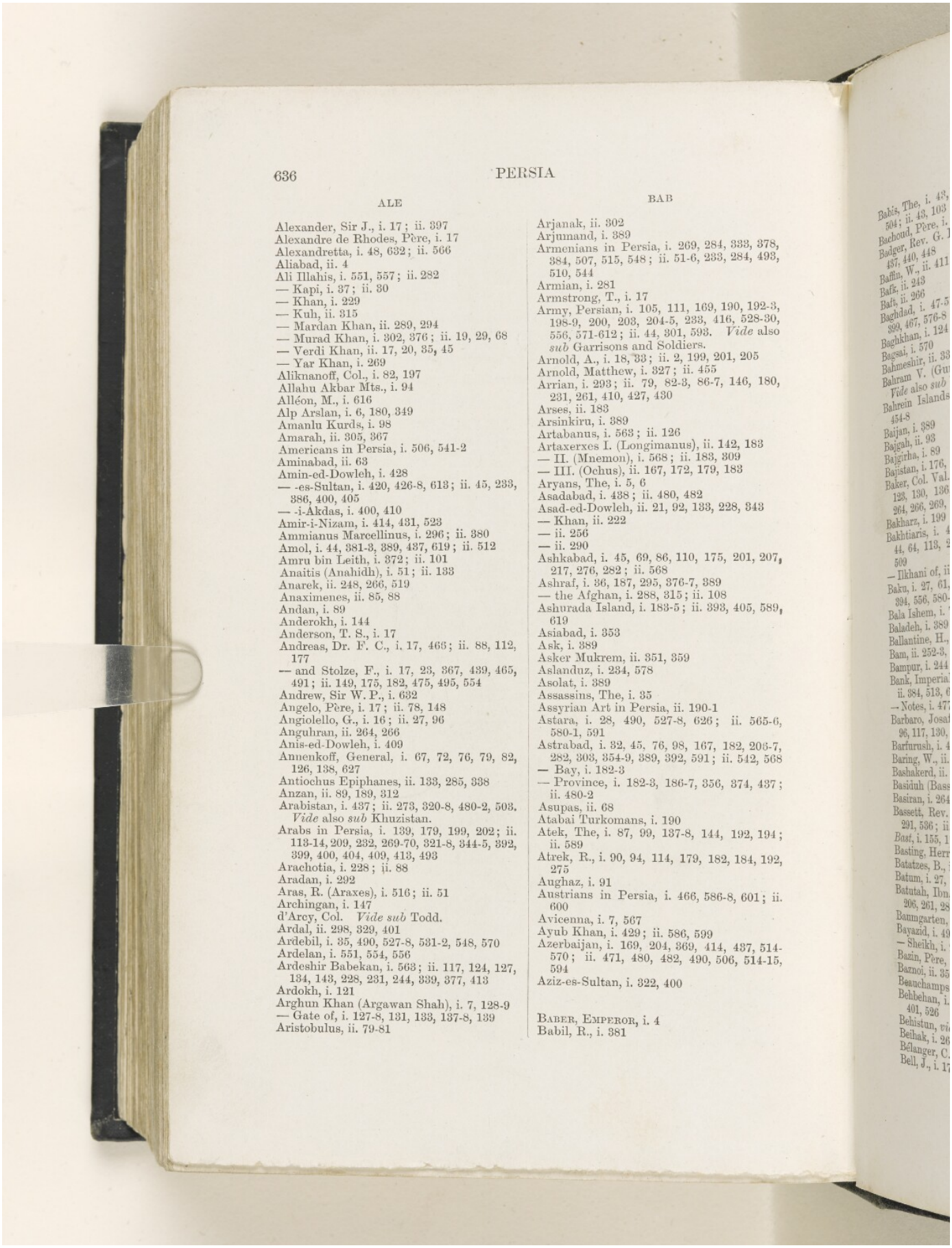





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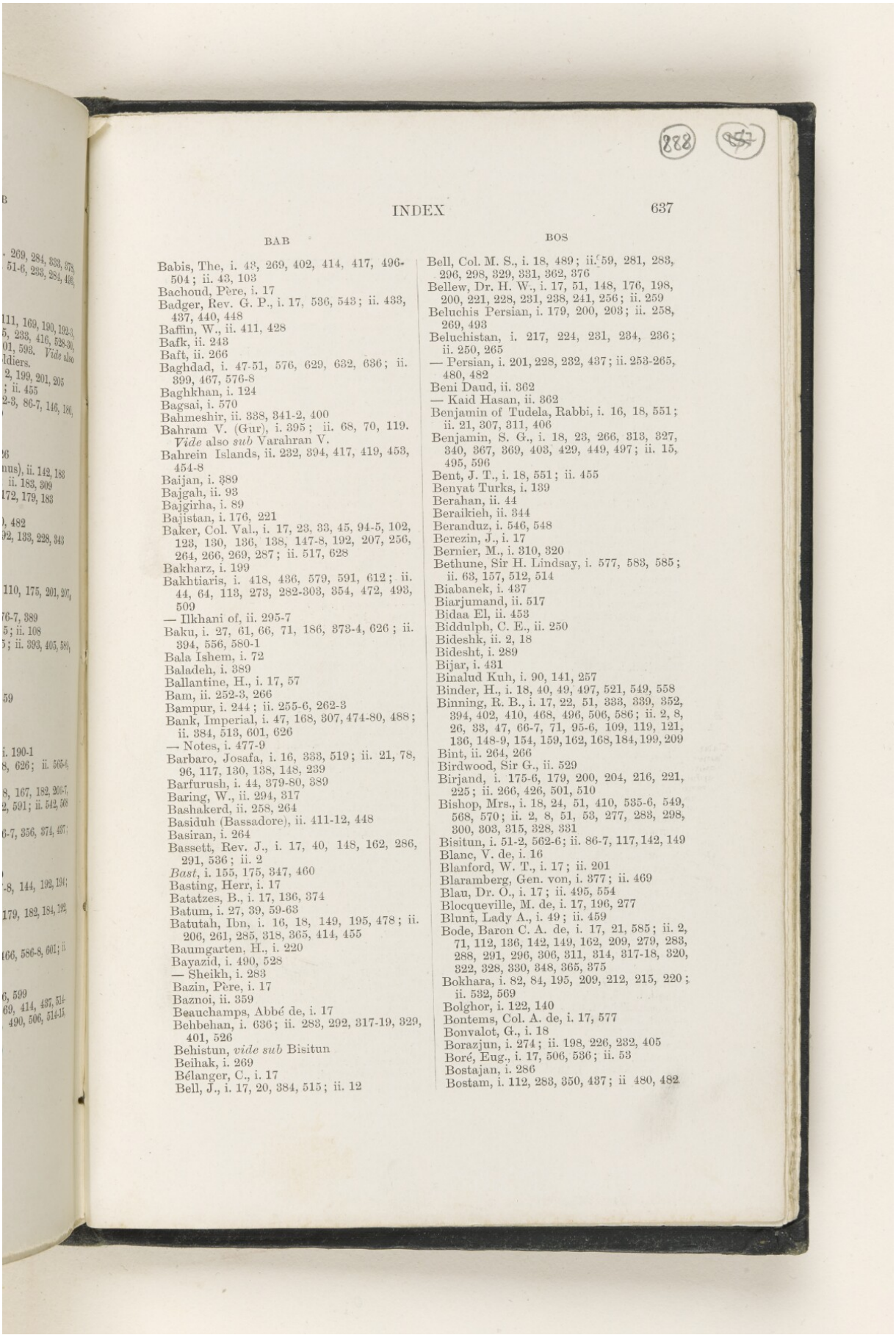



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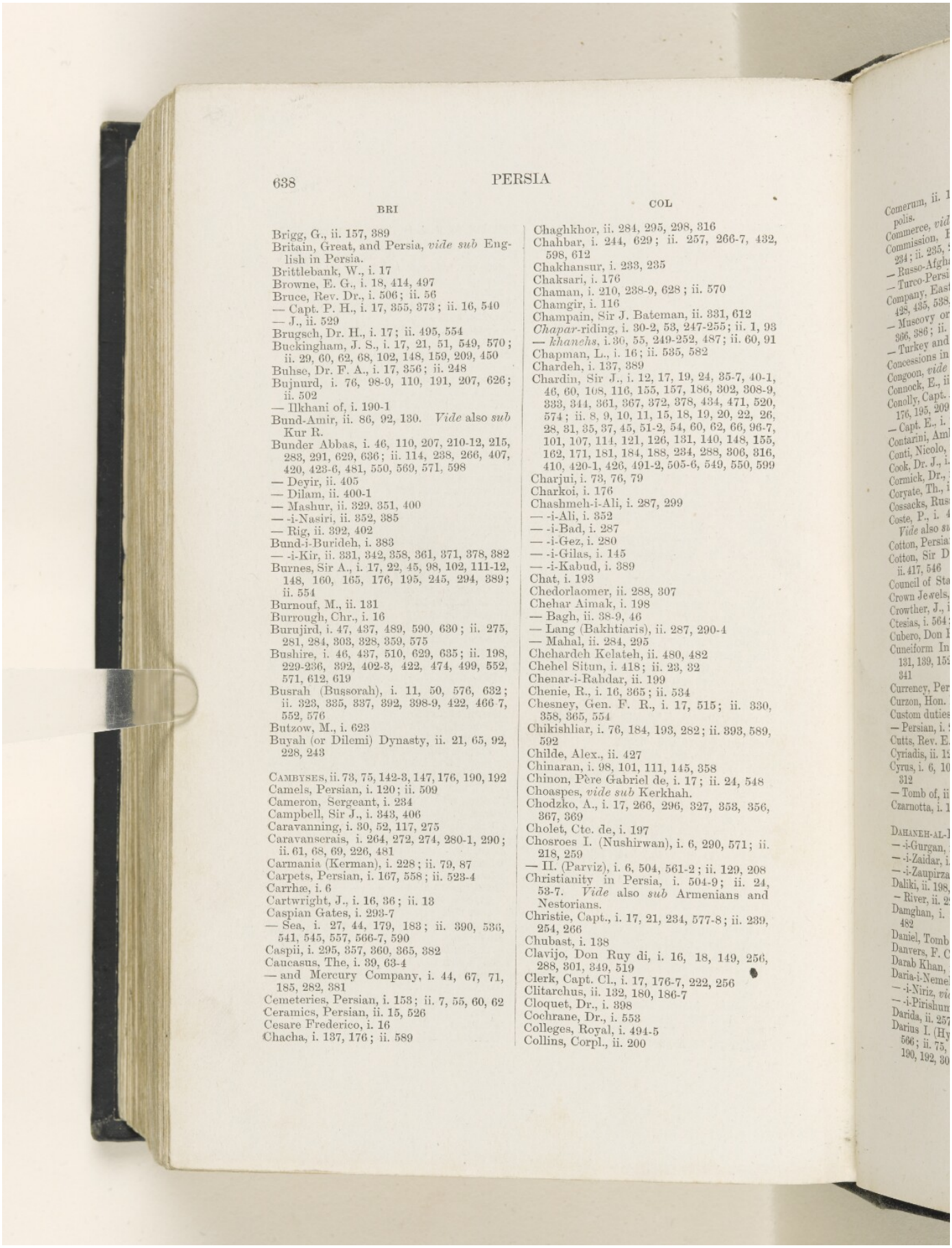



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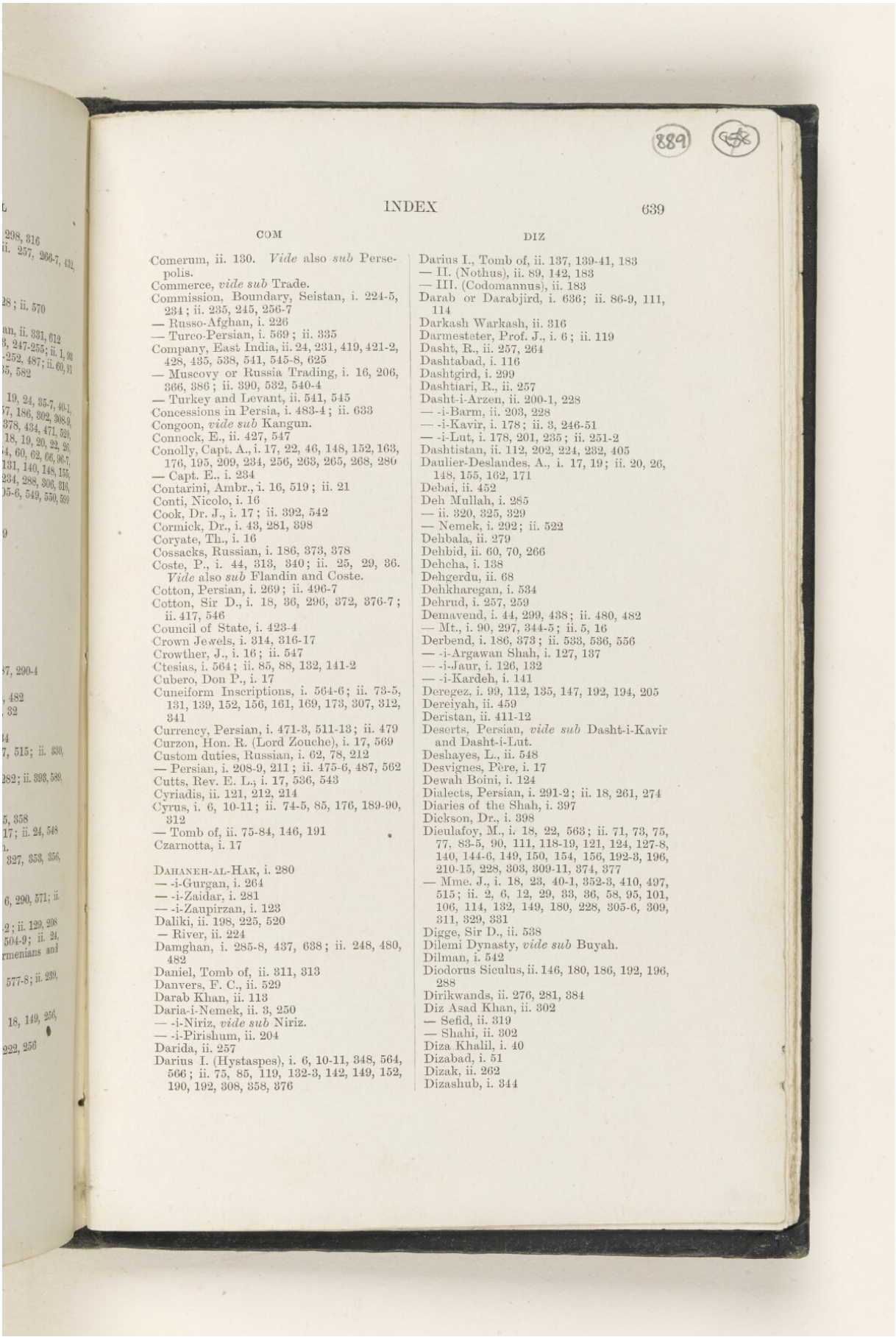

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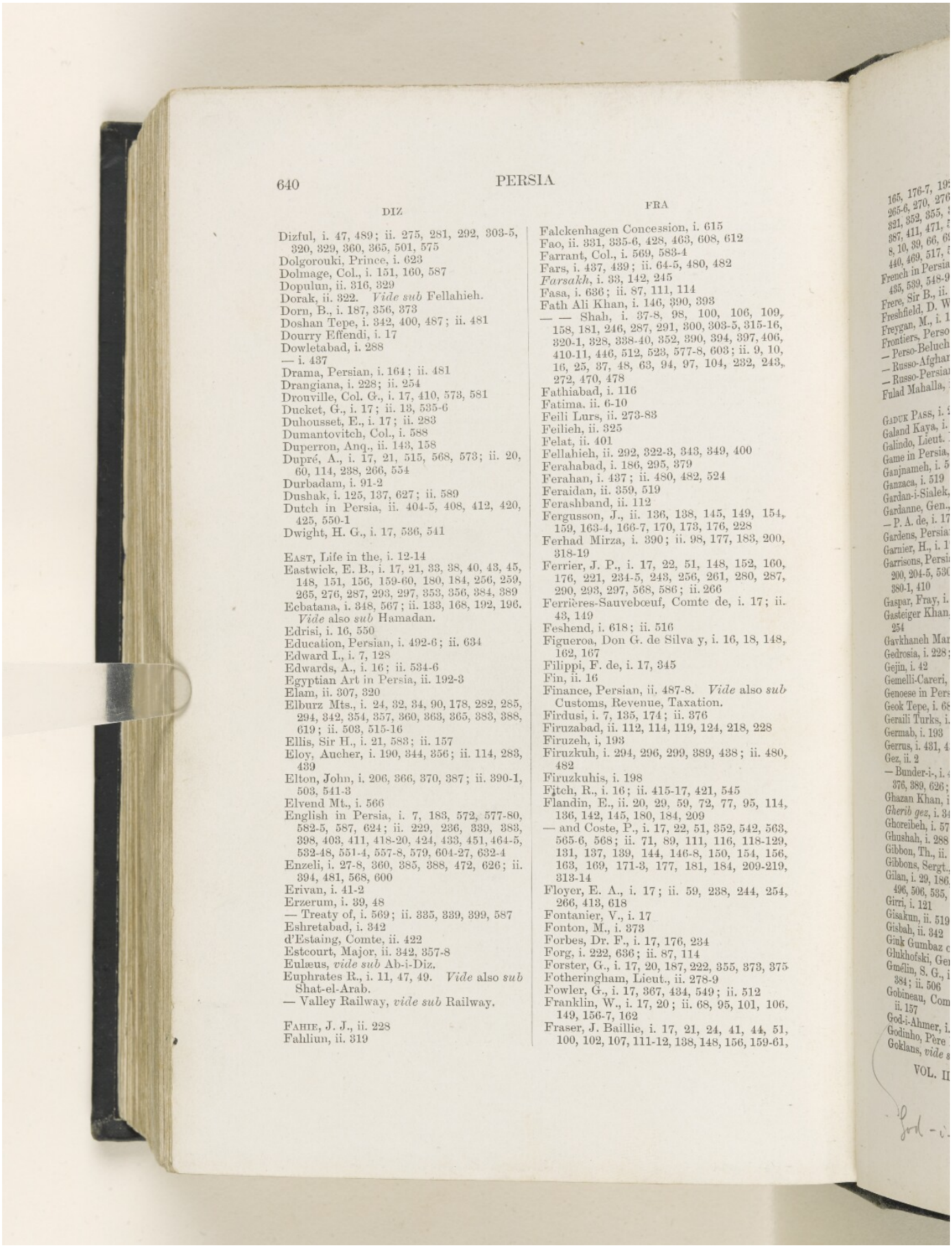



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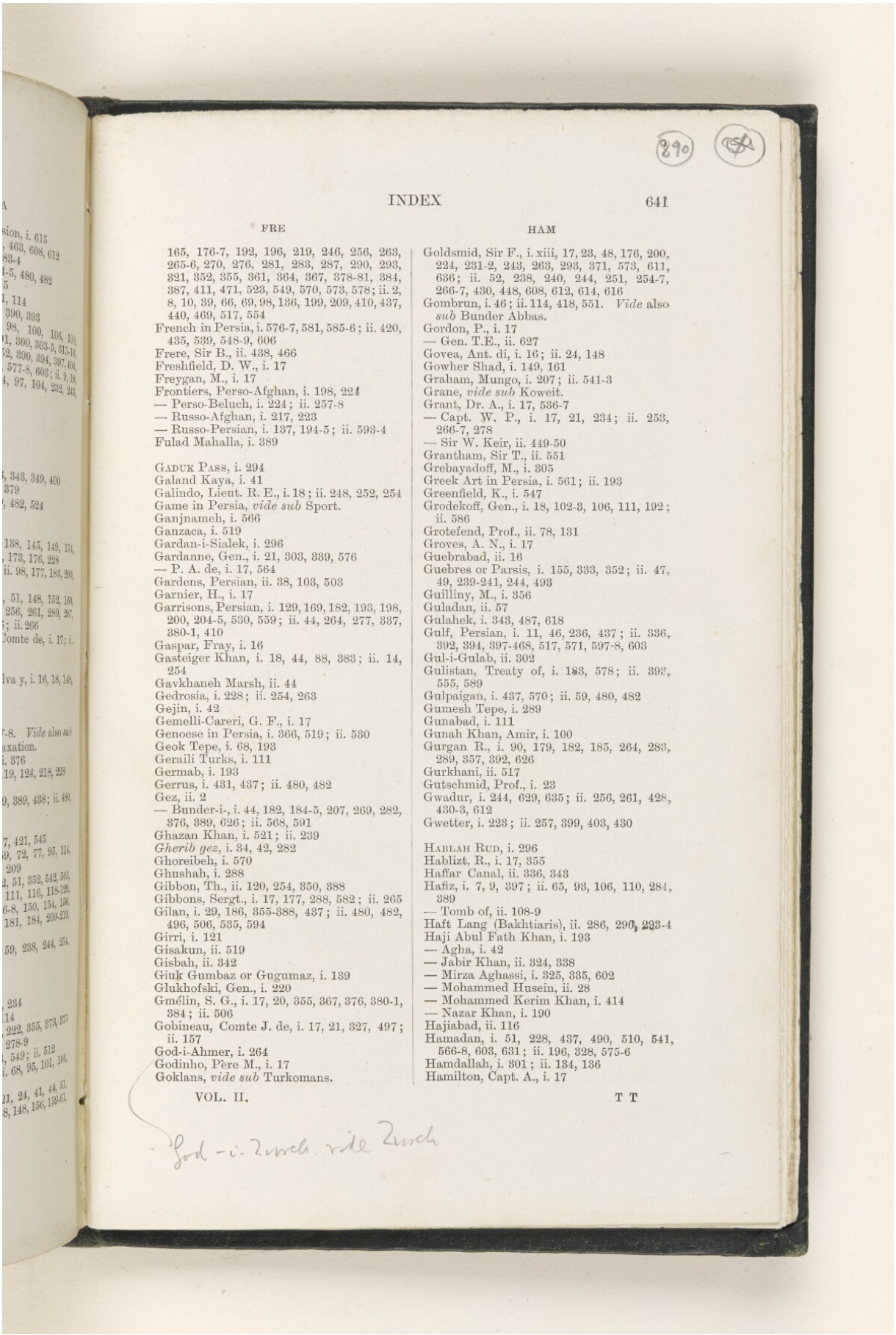



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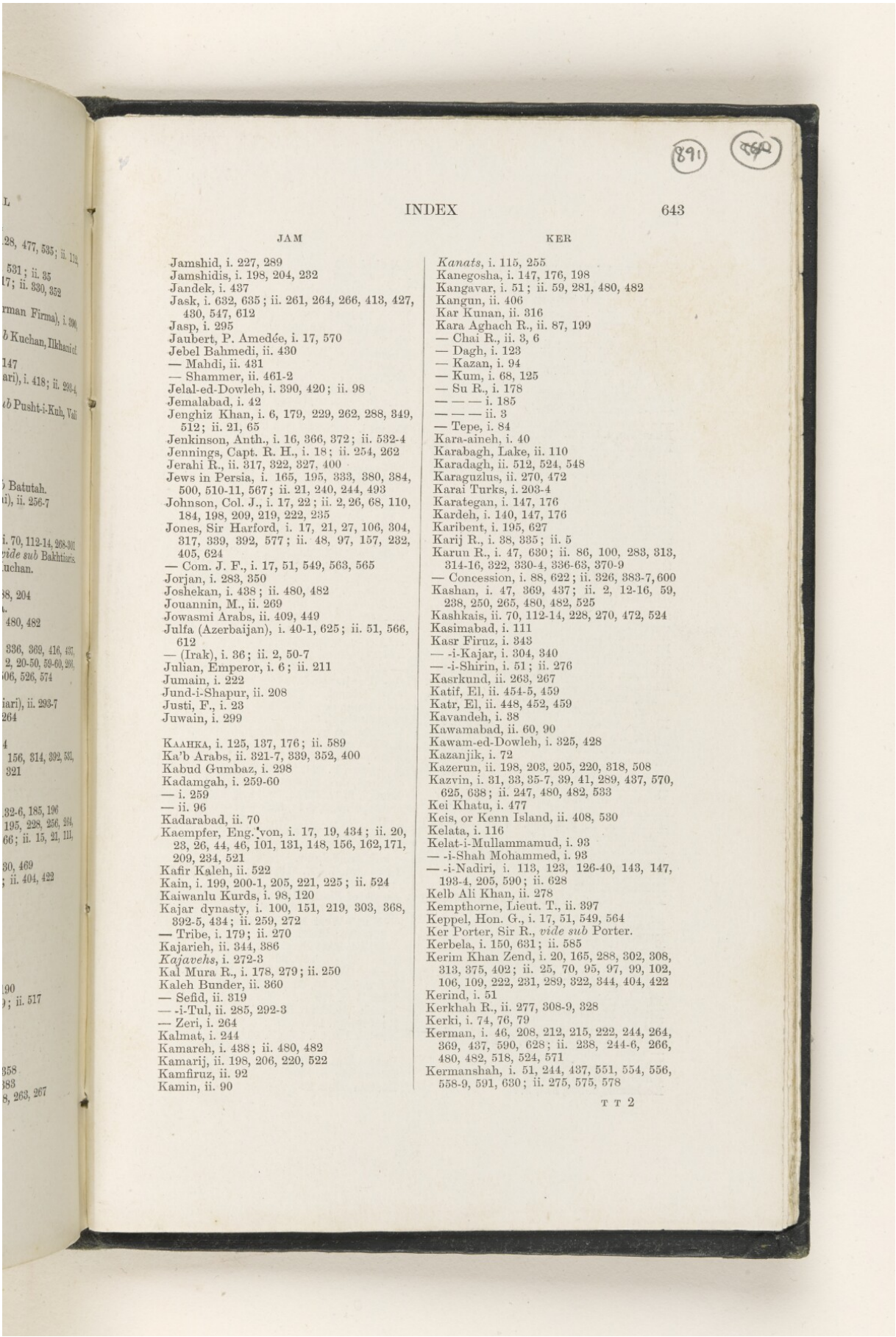



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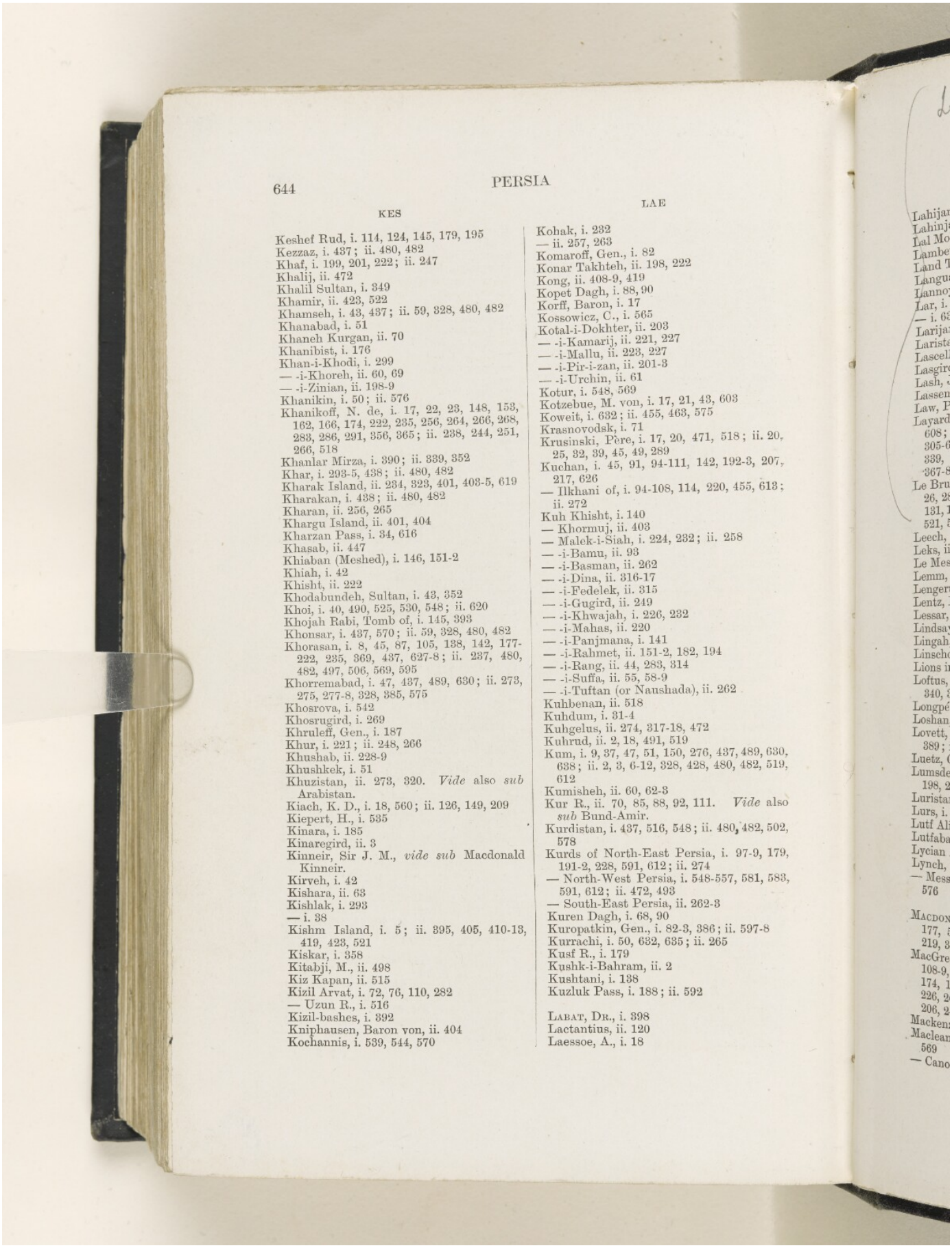



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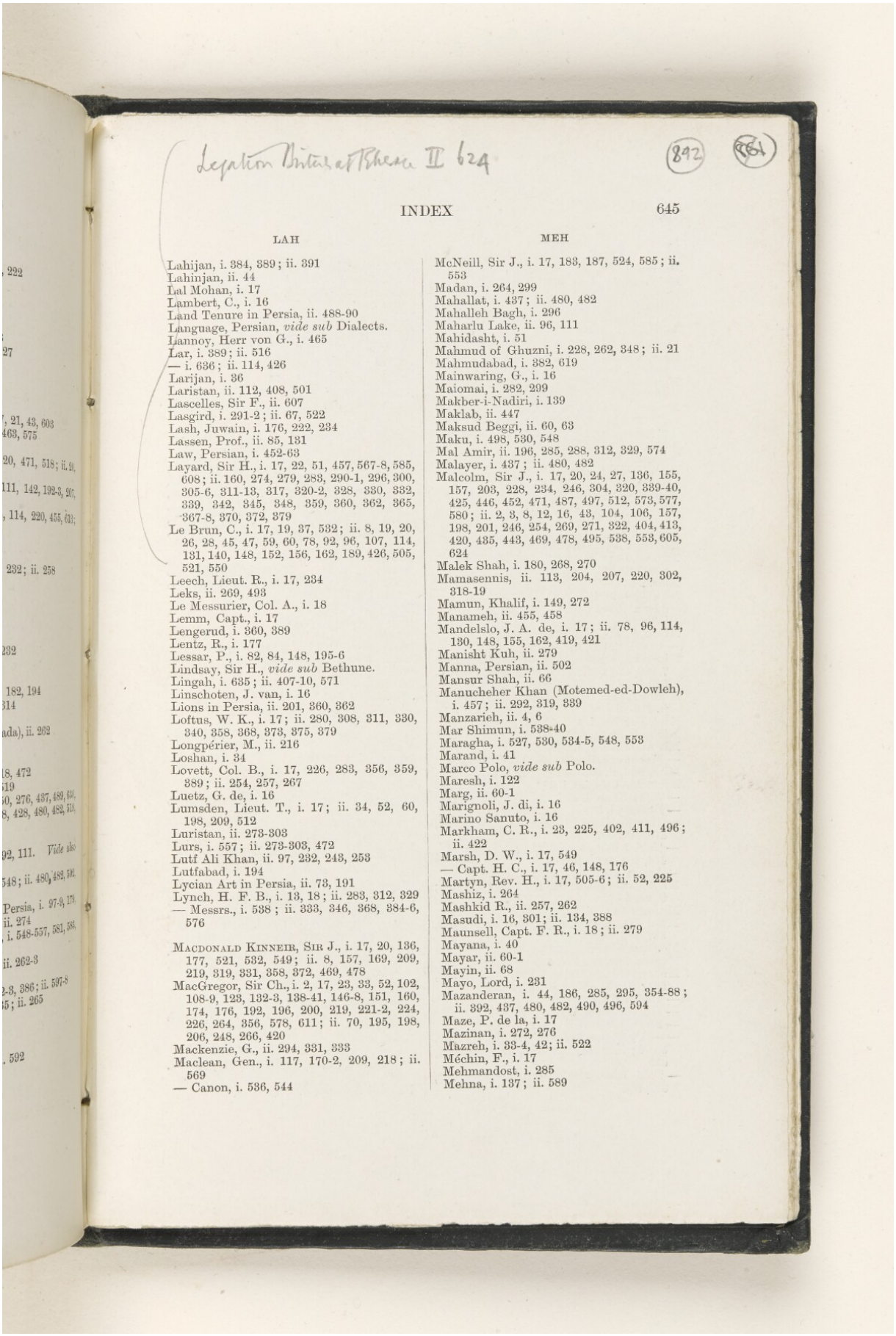

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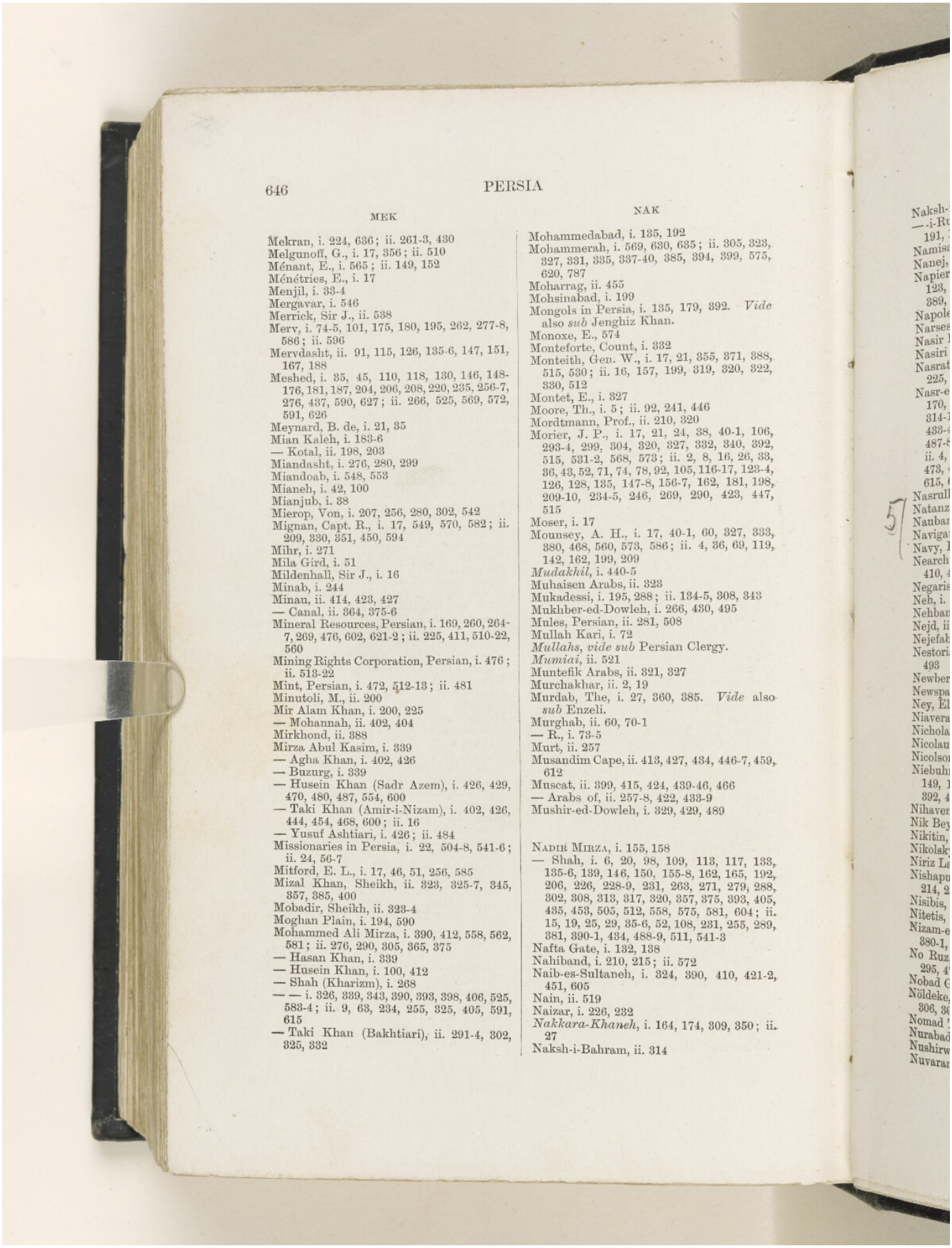





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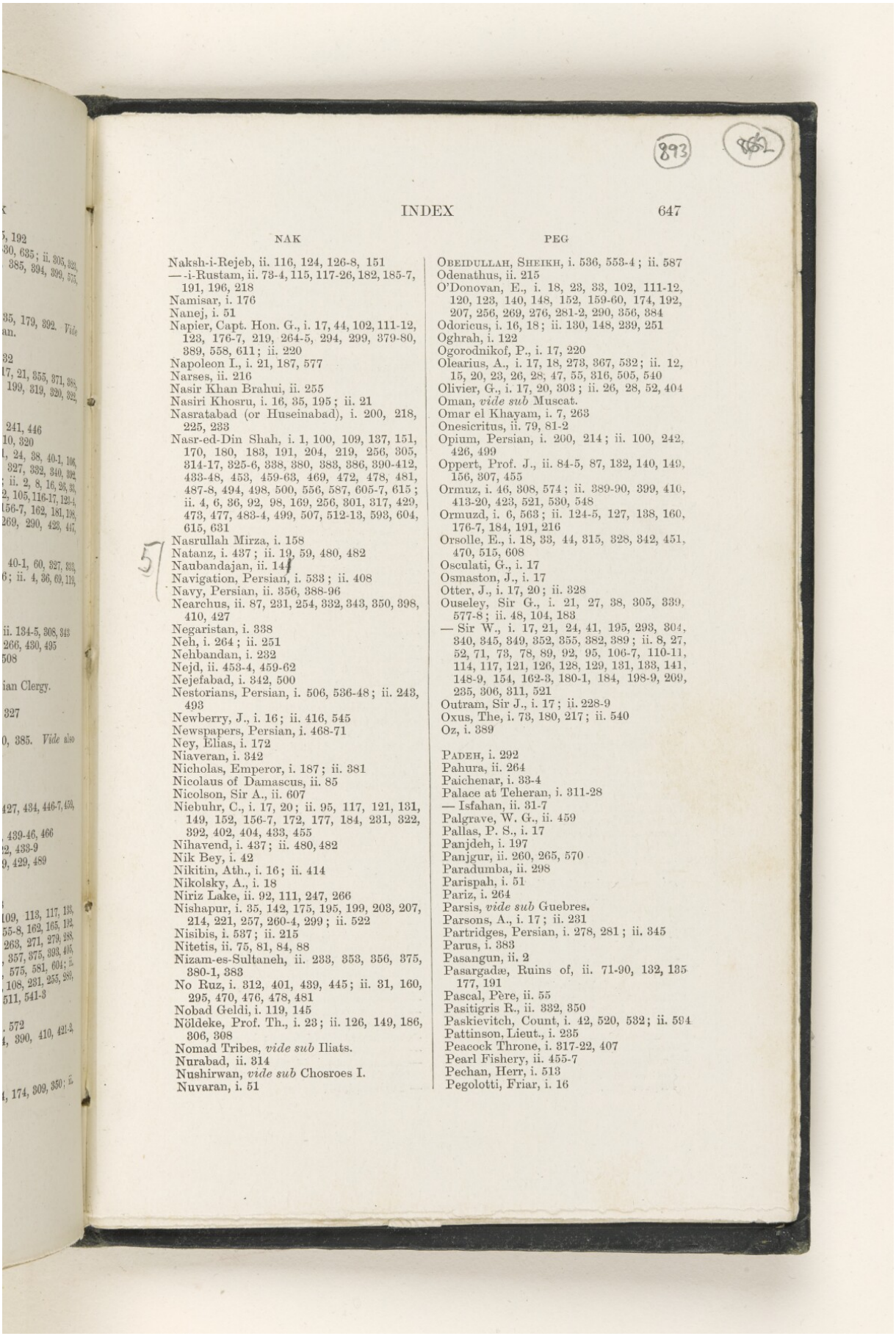



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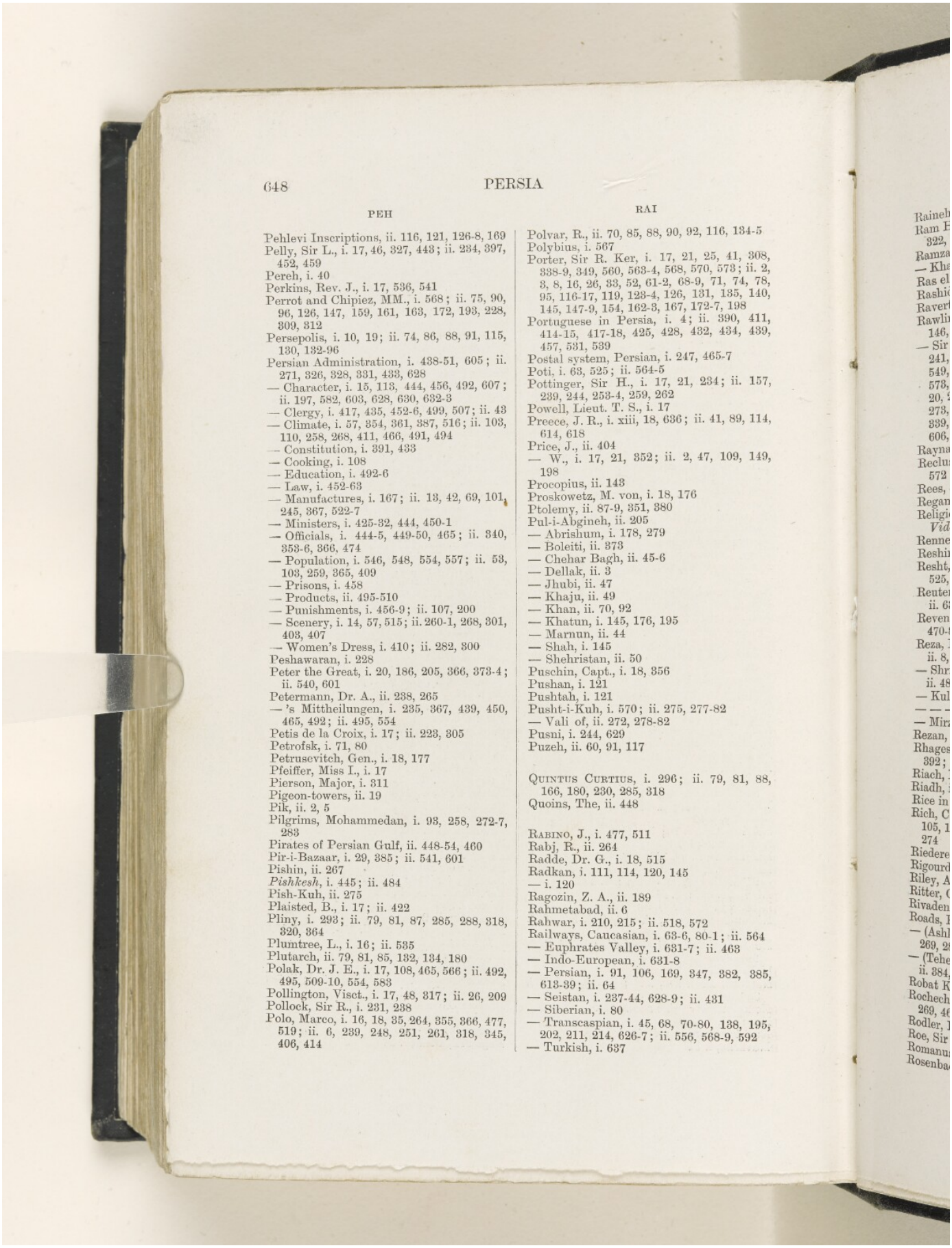



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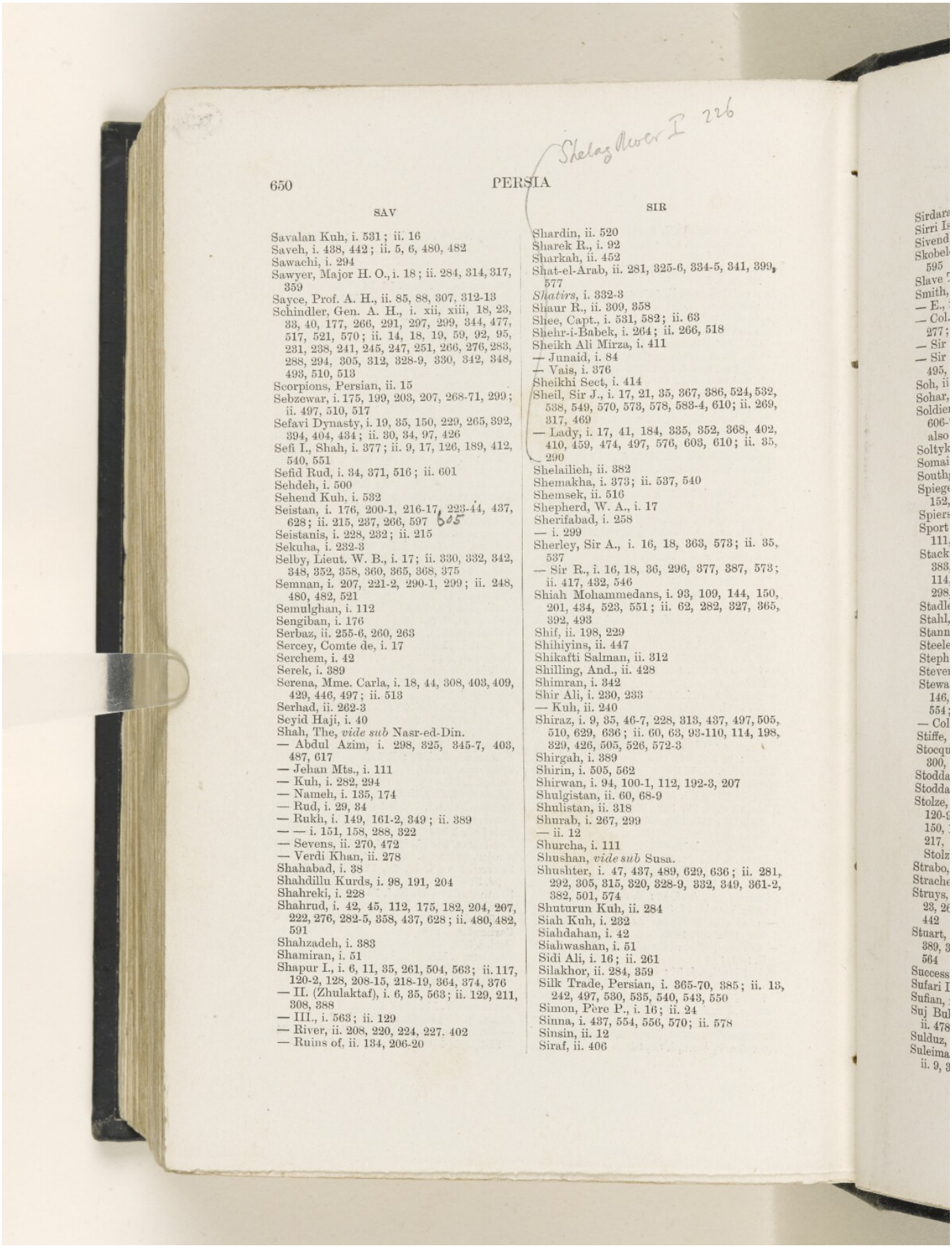



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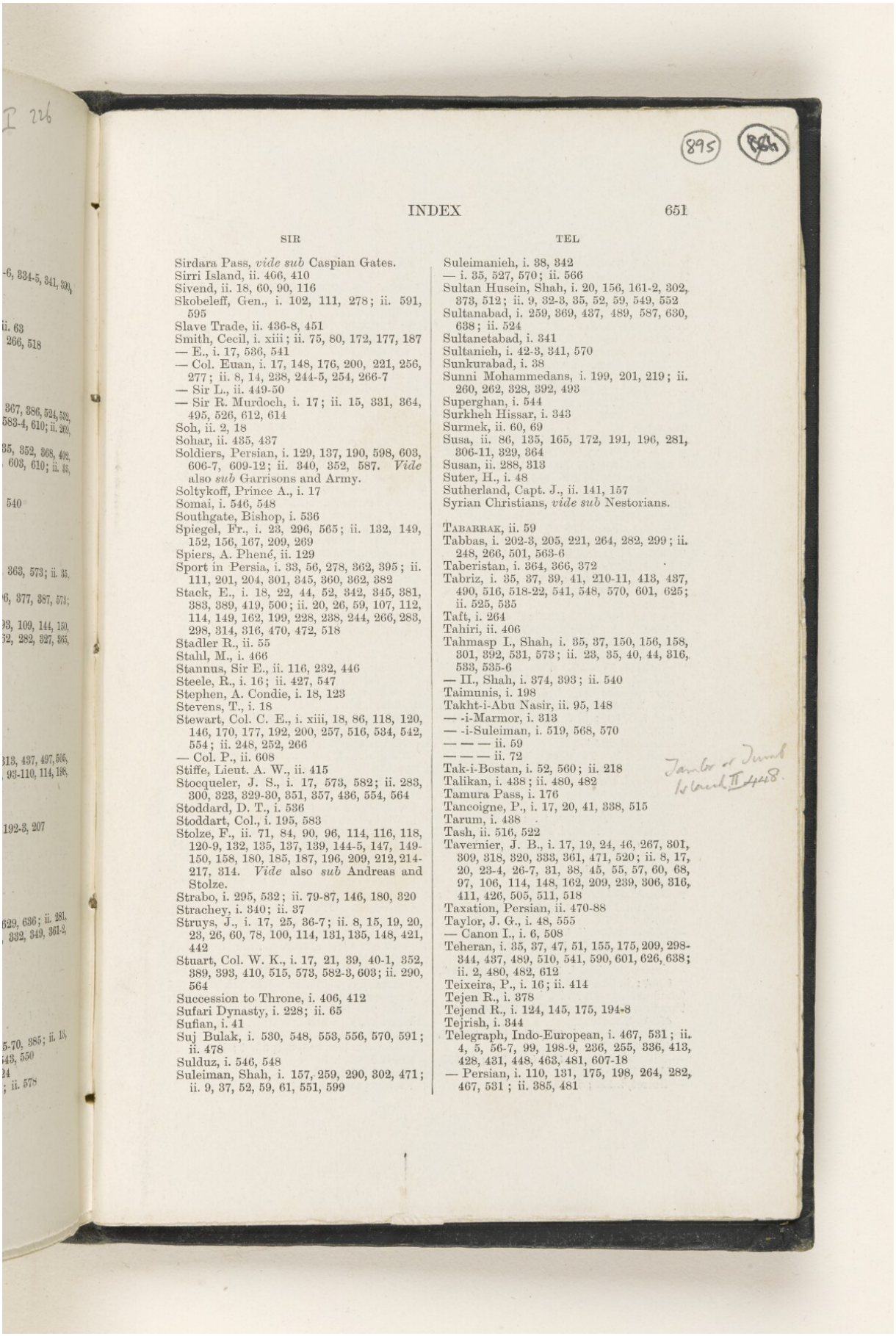



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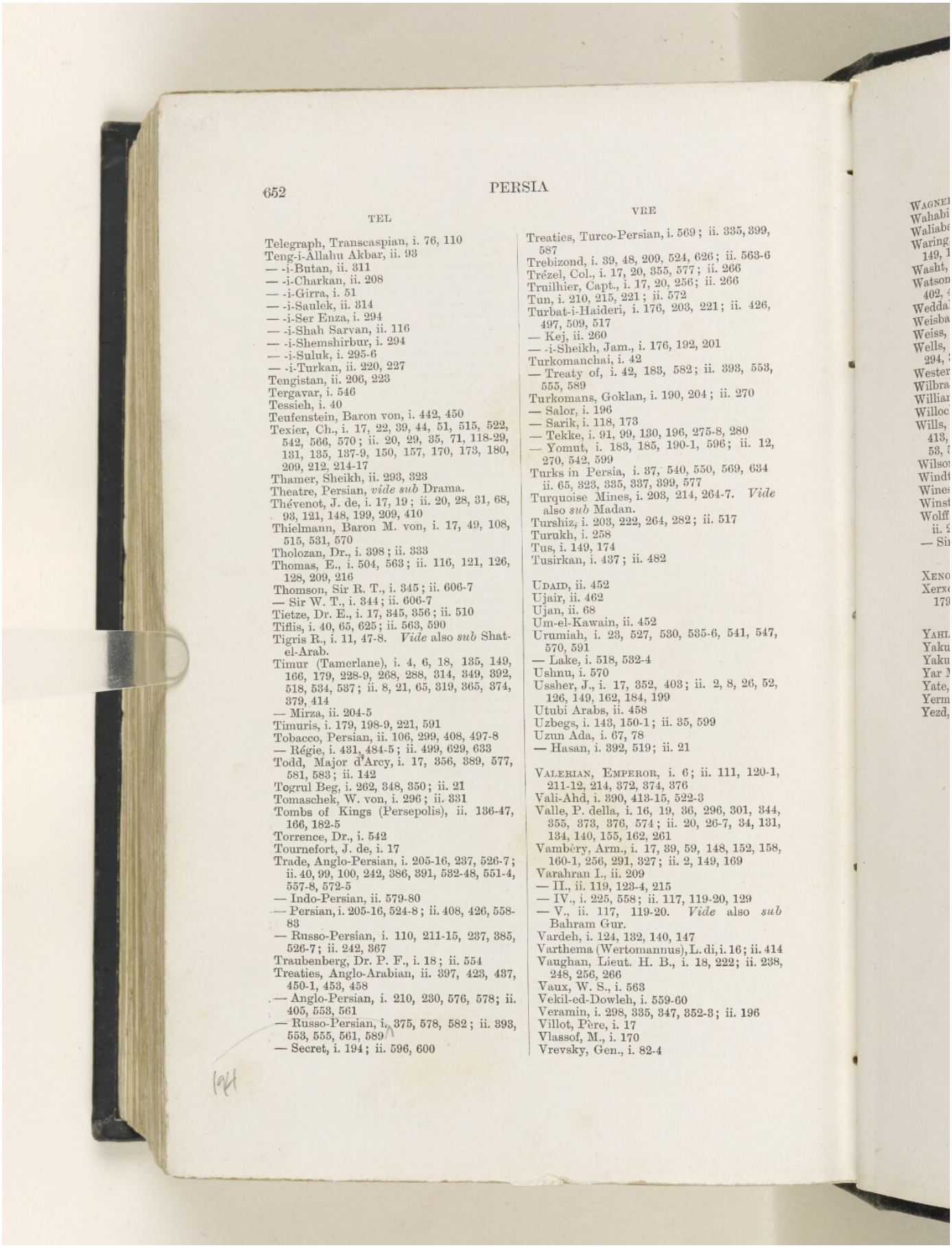



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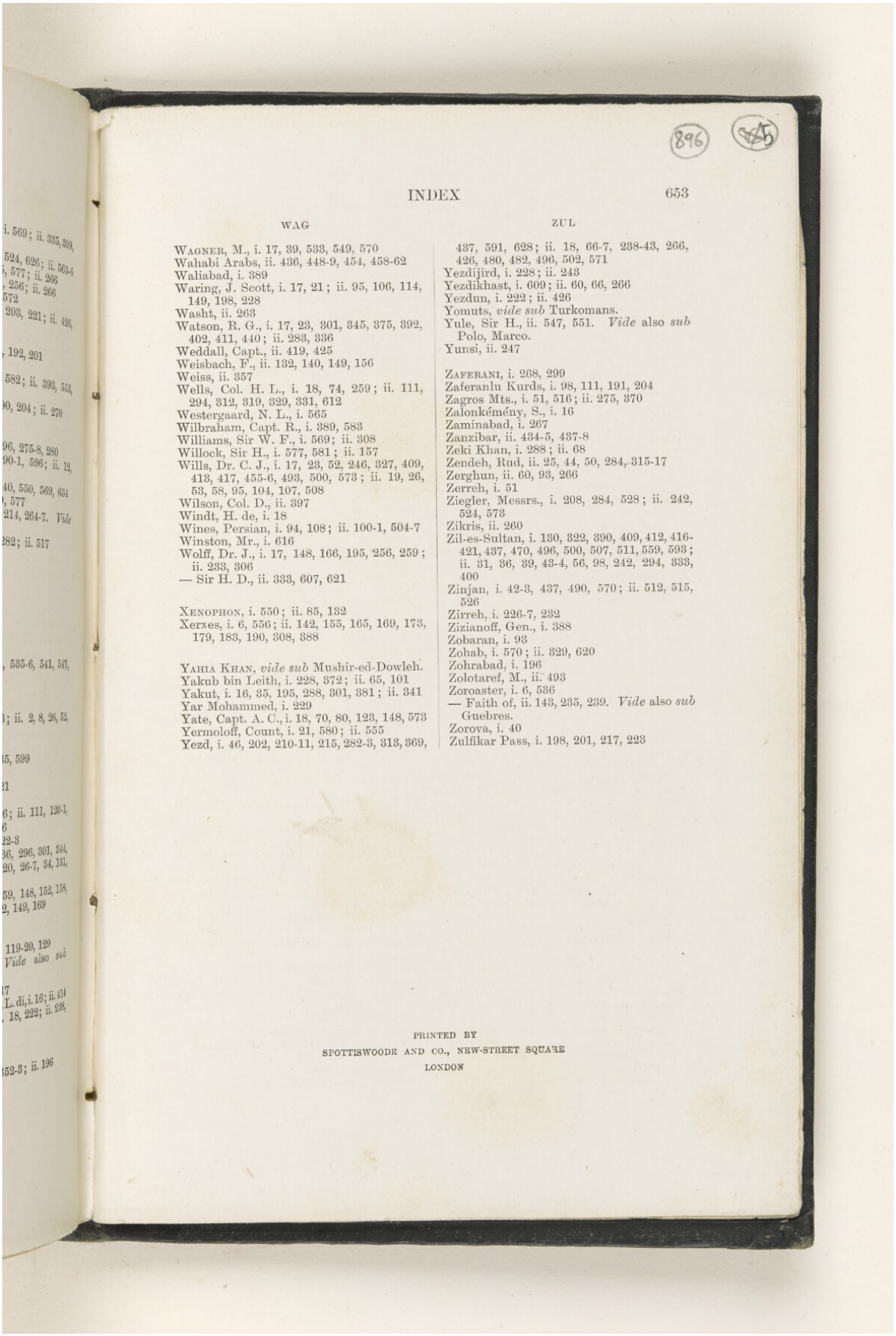



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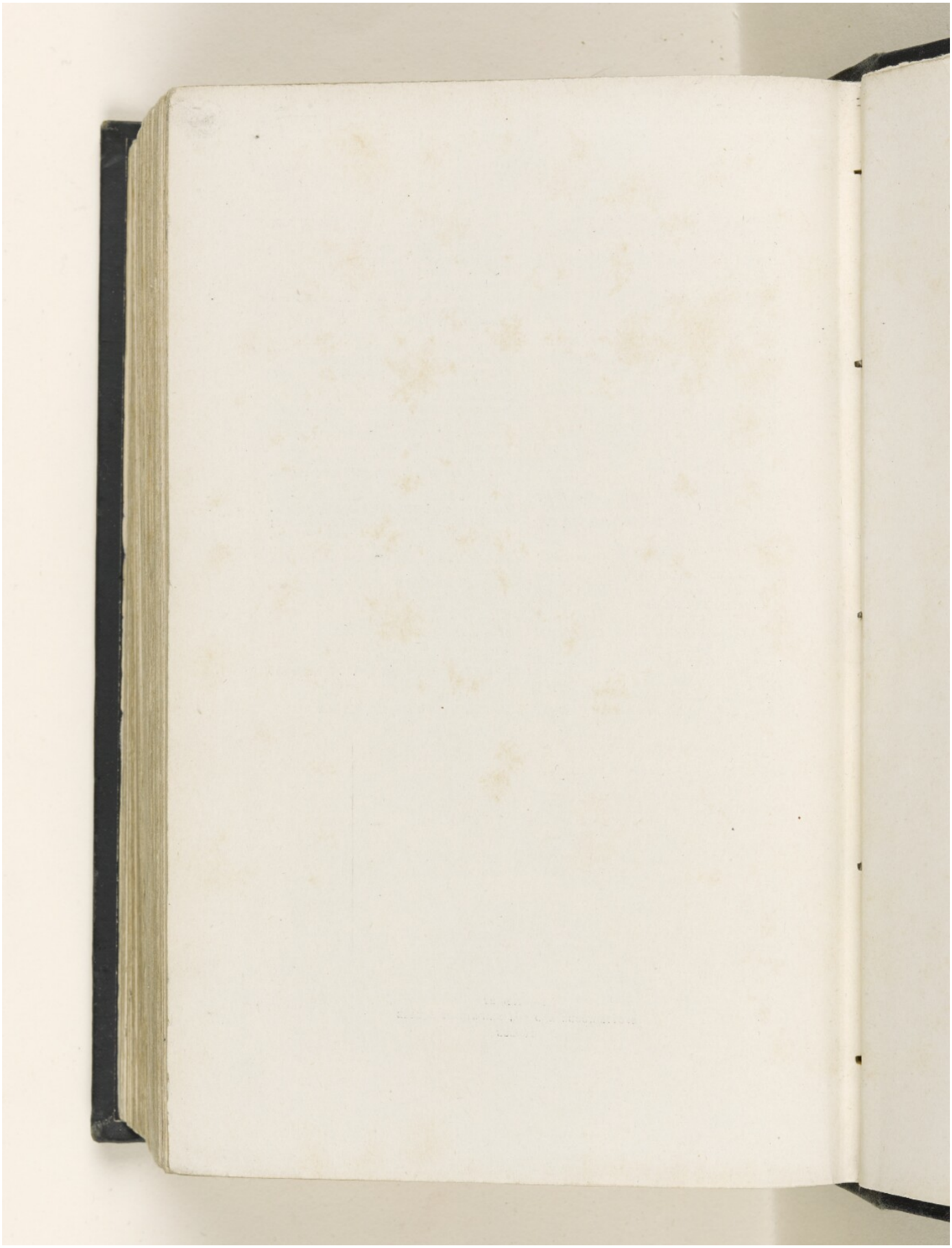

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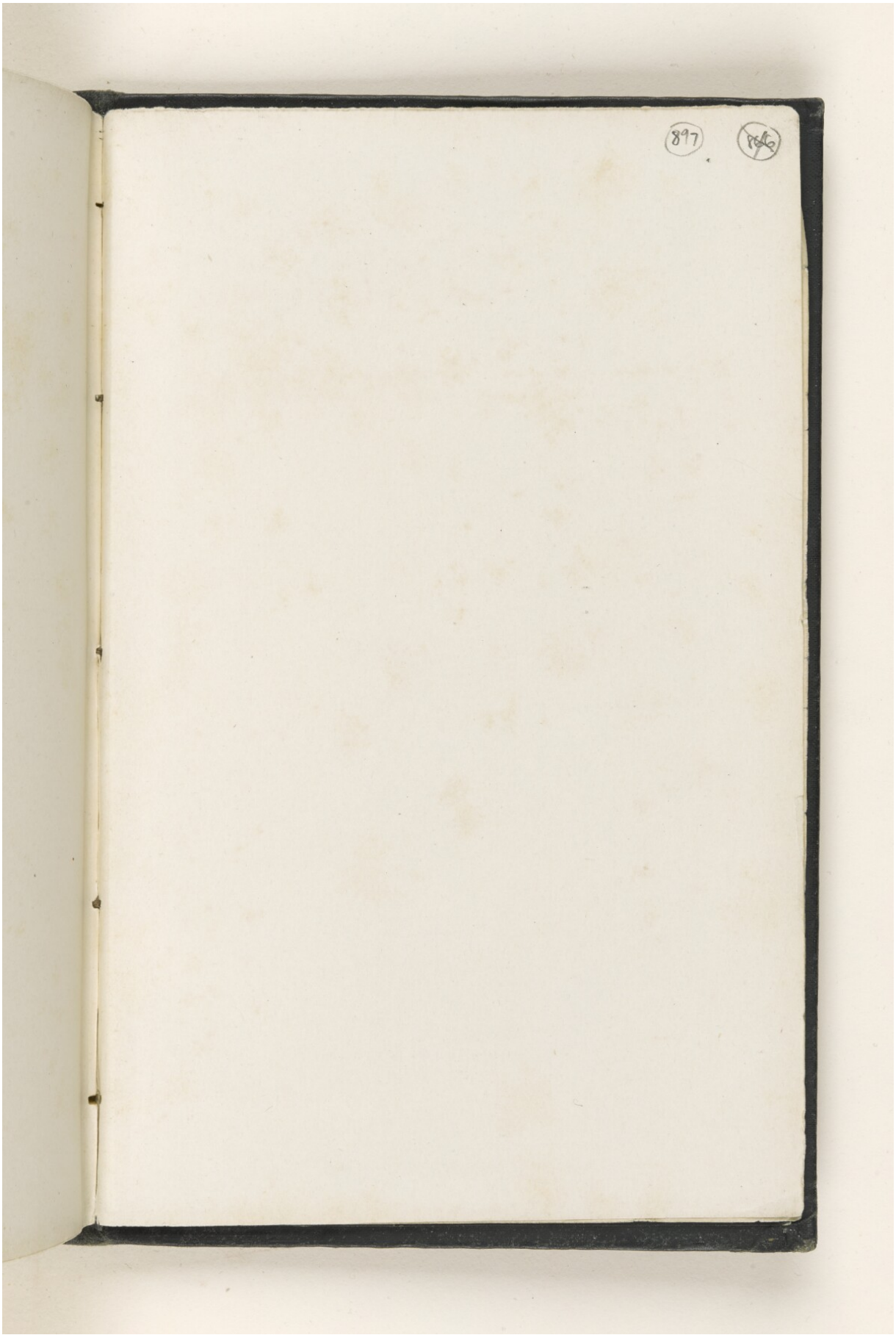


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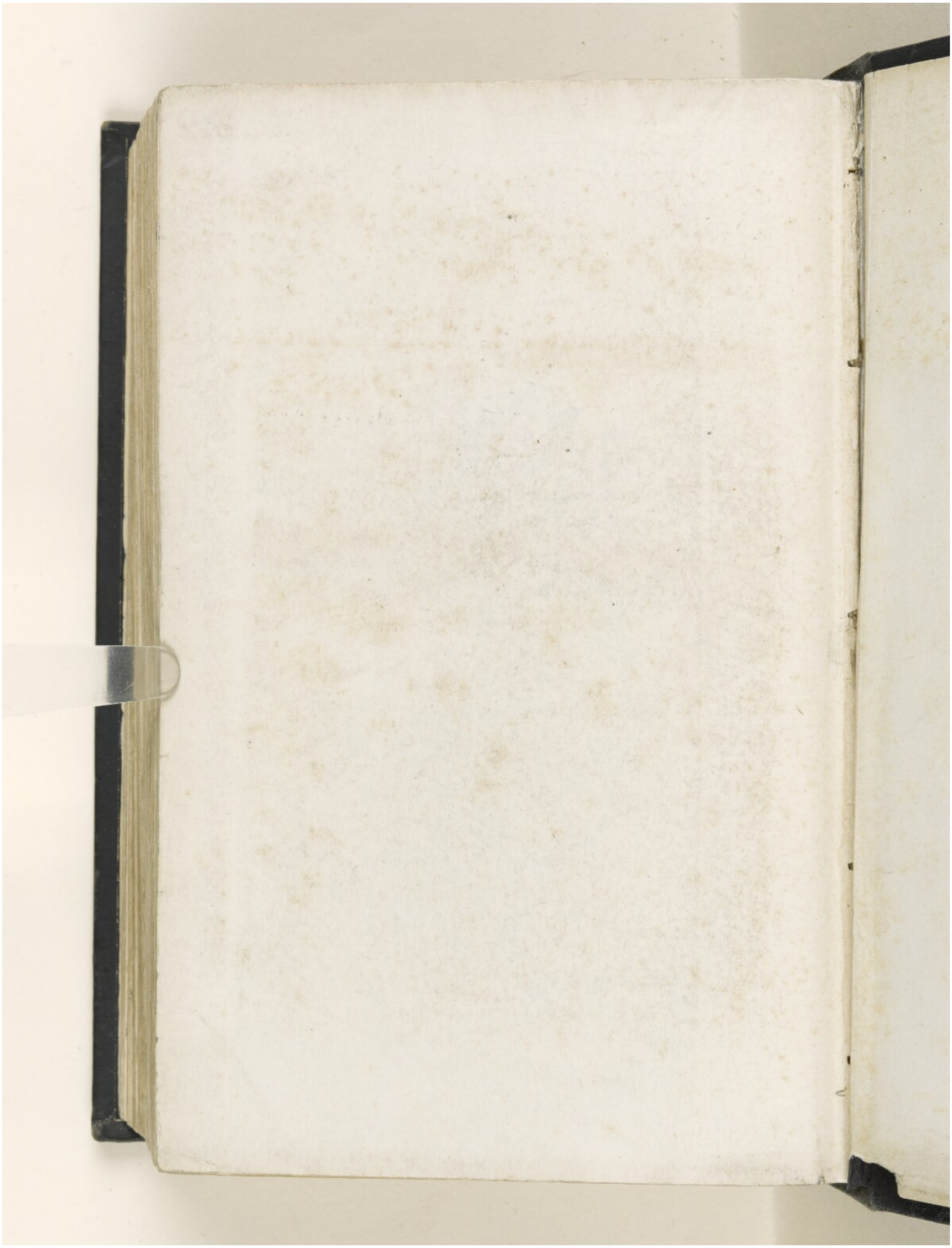

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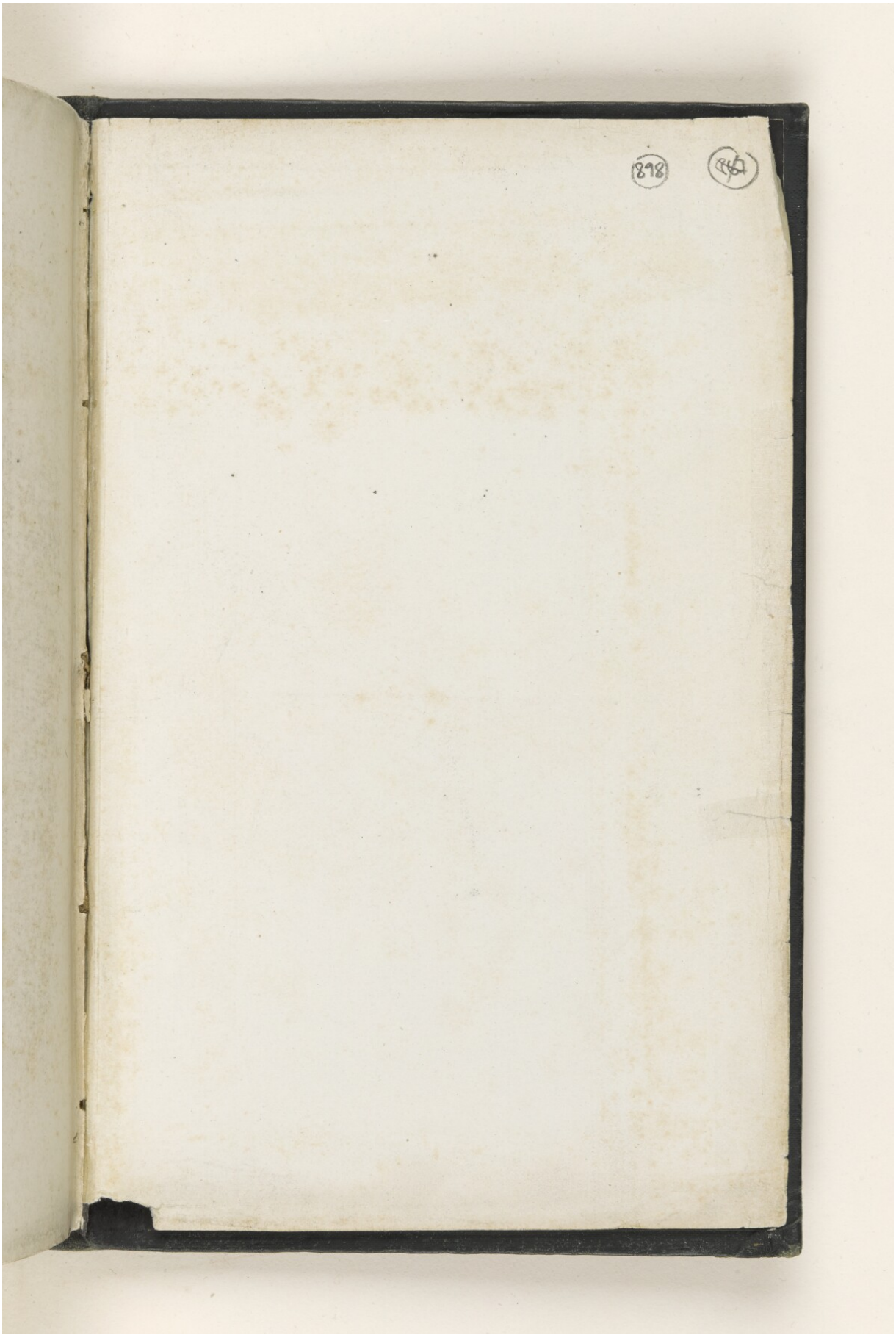


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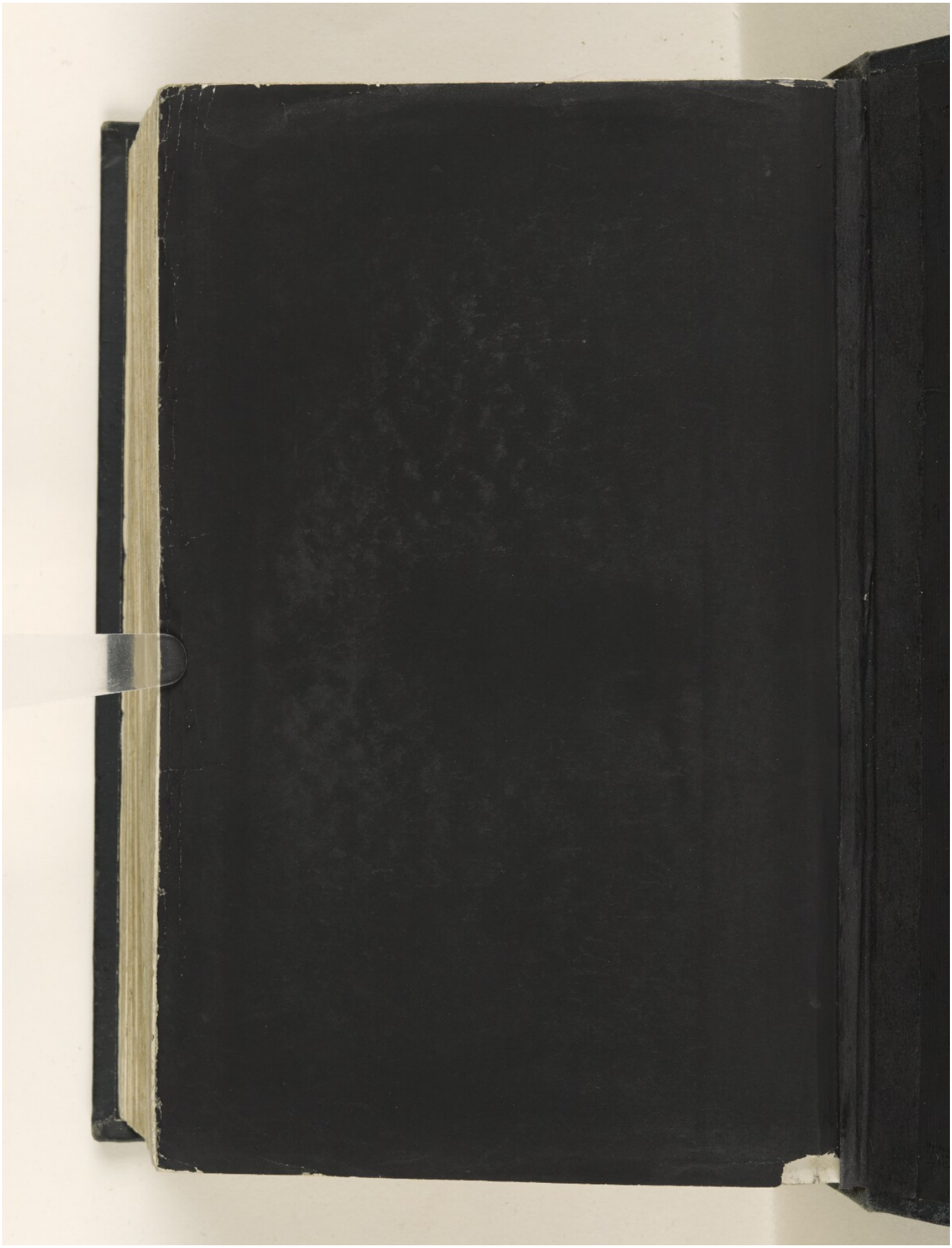

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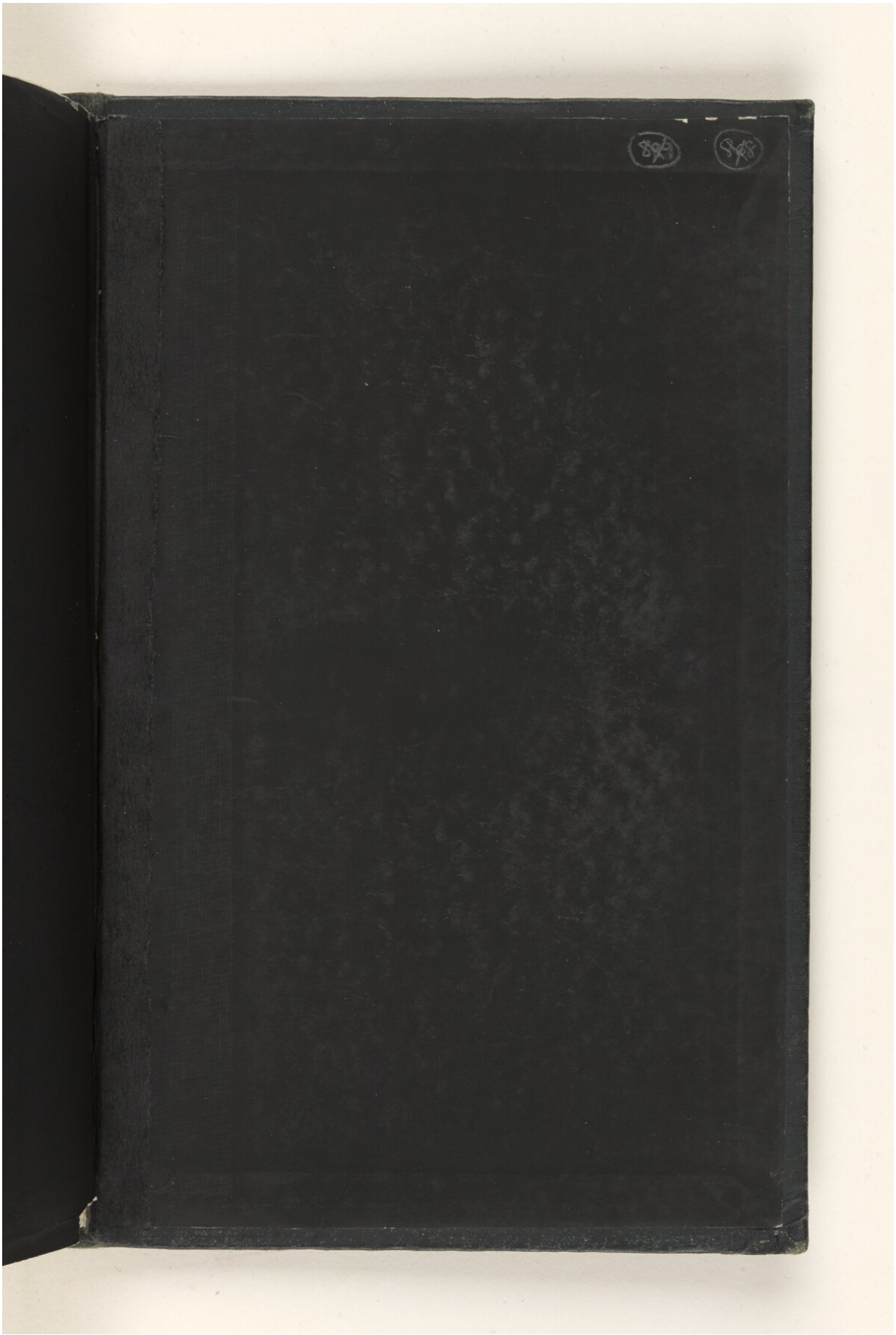

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