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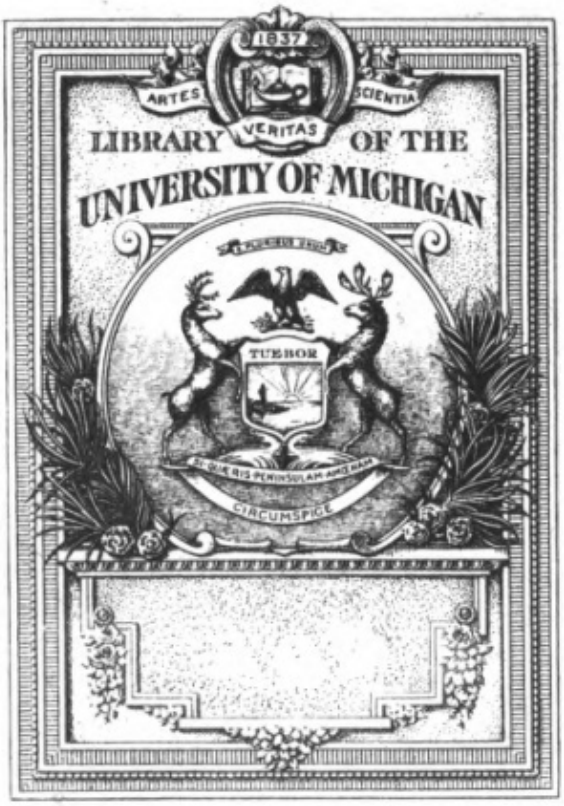

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ANTIQUE GEM FOUND AT BABYLON.

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TRAVELS

IN

CHALDÆA,

INCLUDING

A JOURNEY FROM BUSSORAH TO BAGDAD, HILLAH, AND BABYLON,

PERFORMED ON FOOT IN 1827.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SITES AND REMAINS OF

BABEL, SELEUCIA, AND CTESIPHON.

BY CAPT. ROBERT MIGNAN,

OF THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE;

Lately in command of the Escort attached to the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, and Member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

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TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SOMERSET,

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS, BY PERMISSION,

INSCRIBED,

WITH PROFOUND RESPECT, AND

SINCERE GRATITUDE,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON,
October, 1829.

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PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING much has already been written regarding the ruins of the once mighty Babylon, it must be acknowledged that all our information on this interesting subject, is far from sufficient to make the curious investigator thoroughly acquainted with even the mere remains of this formerly renowned capital.

Though I flatter myself that my narrative will add considerably to the knowledge which the public already possess, and though many abler investigators than myself may hereafter prosecute their researches on the same ground, still the tale of Babylon, even in her desolation,

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will probably long remain untold, and the features that distinguished her days of prosperity never be perfectly traced.

Among those who have recently written of Chaldæa, Rich has confined himself to Babel; and to the information which he has furnished, Keppel has added some slight notices of remarkable vestiges on either bank of the Tigris; both, at the same time, conceding what was due to the critical observations and acute inferences of Major Rennell.

I have endeavoured to extend the researches of the two former, and to verify their conclusions; and I trust that my labours will throw additional light upon the descriptions of the ancients, as well as confirm the hypothesis adopted by Buckingham, whose observations on the ruins appear to me to be more critical, correct, and comprehensive, and more fully to accord with the earliest accounts, than those of any other modern traveller.

Of the ancients, Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus are the most valuable guides; then

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Arrian and Strabo, and some of the earlier historians of the Roman Empire; next to these, much important information regarding Babel and Chaldæa may be obtained from the Talmud of the Jews, and from the Biblical writings of many learned Christians of those countries, which might be explained by the priests still versed in the Syriac and Chaldaic dialects. From the Chaldaic books of the Sabæans too, some interesting facts might be derived; as also from a close examination of the earlier Mohammedan historians, such as Tebari and Masudi; from the geography of Abulfeda, and of Yacuti; and from biographical writings such as Semaani's Kitab ul Ansâb. With these, and the aid of modern geography, many valuable details in illustration of the early state and history of Chaldæa might still be elicited.

To that eminent and accurate geographer, Major Rennell, I am greatly indebted. This gentleman has been pleased to express his approbation of my labours; and I feel pecu-

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liar satisfaction in thus publicly acknowledging the many acts of kindness which I have experienced from him.

I am also under obligations for assistance and counsel to Major Taylor, the Honourable East India Company's Political Resident at Bussorah, whose attainments in Oriental literature are too well known to require mention. To him I am indebted for all the translations of Arabic inscriptions given in this Volume, and also for many of the valuable notes which I have annexed. I sincerely trust that he will one day present the world with an account of this most interesting land, as few have enjoyed better opportunities of doing justice to the subject.

A map of my route is prefixed, together with a plan of the ruins, to the distance of about eight miles on either side of the principal mounds. Drawings of some remarkable buildings, costumes, &c. are given, which it is hoped will not prove unacceptable.

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Whatever merit may be attached to these illustrations, is, in strict justice, due to the correct and masterly pencil of Mr. Richard Craggs, who has produced them from my own rude sketches.

My aim, throughout this work, has been rather to delineate the various remarkable objects that presented themselves to my attention, than to enter deeply into useless theory and vain speculation;—in short, to furnish an accurate account of the existing remains of ancient grandeur, to describe their present desolation, and to trace something like a correct outline of the once renowned Metropolis of Chaldæa.

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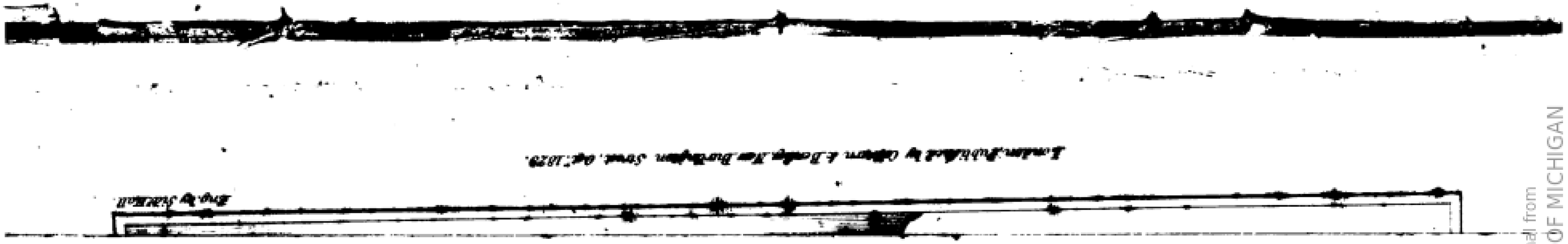

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TRAVELS

IN

BABYLONIA, CHALDÆA,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

The Author determines to visit Babylonia.—Departure from Bussorah.—Hamlet of Nohar Omer.—Situation of Suaeb.—Supposed site of the Garden of Eden.—Village of Zetchiah.—Controversy with Arabs.—Tomb of Ozair.—Jewish Pilgrimage.—Character of the Arabs.—Camp of the Beni Lam.—Appearance of the tribe.—Their occupation, &c.—The River Al Hud, or Hid.—Curious culinary operations.—Filthy state of the Arabs, dress, &c.—The Hamrine Mountains.—The Tigris.—Inland navigation.—Monotonous aspect of the country.—Mountains of Lauristan.—Course of the Tigris.—Trade between Bussorah and Bagdad.—Arab encampment.

HAVING determined on a journey into the heart of Babylonia, to visit the remains of ancient cities hitherto but little explored and less perfectly described, and fearing lest some

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revolution in the Turkish government might suddenly render the country totally impassable, as is not unfrequently the case, I quitted Bussorah, on the 22nd of October, 1827, and proceeded along the banks of the Shut-ul-Arab, or the river of the Arabs, in a northerly direction, purposing to note minutely every thing worthy the investigation of the antiquary, or interesting to the general observer.

I was accompanied by six Arabs, completely armed and equipped after the fashion of the country, having taken with me a small boat, tracked by eight sturdy natives, in order to facilitate my researches on either bank of the stream. A compact canteen, a few changes of linen, two blankets, and a carpet about the size of a hearth-rug, formed an ample and comfortable travelling apparatus.

At sunset we reached a small hamlet, called Nohar Omer, on the western bank, where we found Ajeel, at the head of the powerful tribe of Montefik Arabs, occupying an extensive

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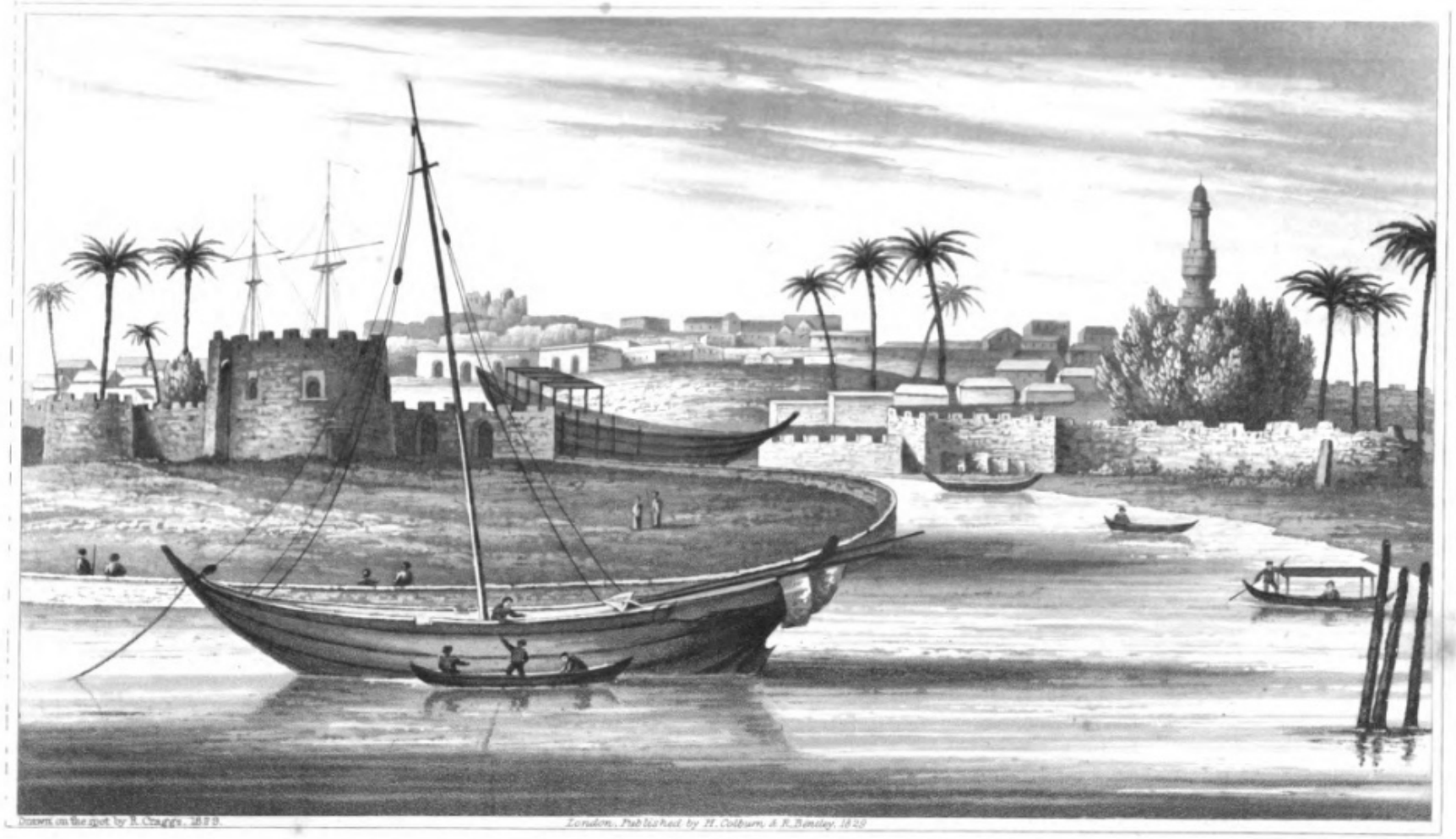

BASSORAH FROM THE EUPHRATES.

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encampment of reed huts and tents, some composed of goats' hair, and some of cotton cloth. A little beyond this, at the village of Dair, stands a minaret, which, according to many Mohammedan writers, has some claims to antiquity: I am informed that the natives all concur in attributing its existence to the Genii, which circumstance renders it an object of much veneration among them. Barren women suppose that a visit to the sacred spot will render them prolific; which, no doubt, tends to increase the number of its votaries. *

At eight o'clock the next morning we crossed the mouth of the Kerkha, or Howizah river, at Suaeb; † a station so called from a small collection of huts, situated about a mile up the stream, which is here fifty yards broad, and extremely tortuous. One hour more brought

* See Appendix, note A.

† It is absolutely necessary here to remark, that Kinneir has made the mouth of this river twenty miles below Koorna, whereas it is barely three.—Vide Kinneir's "Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire," p. 92.

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us to Koorna, the Apamea of the ancients, from Apama, the wife of Seleucus Nicator, in whose honour he founded the town.* It stands on the most southern extremity of Mesopotamia, at the conflux of two of the finest rivers in the East, the Euphrates and Tigris; and though now an insignificant place, the existing extensive ruins attest its former importance.†

Continuing along the banks of the Tigris, in a direction north, ten degrees west, (the

* Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-five cities in greater and lesser Asia; sixteen of which he named Antioch, from Antiochus, his father; nine Seleucia, from his own name; six Laodicea, from Laodice, his mother; three Apamea, from Apama, his first wife, (of which this city was the chief;(and one Stratonicea, from Stratonice, his last wife. According to Dean Prideaux, he was a great protector of the Jews, and the first that gave them settlements in those provinces of Asia, which lie on this side of the river Euphrates. As they had been faithful and serviceable to him in his wars, and in many other respects, he granted them great privileges in all the cities which he built.—Vide Prideaux's "Connection of the Old and New Testament."

† See Appendix, B.

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Euphrates branching off due W.S.W. by compass,) we almost immediately had on either bank the untrodden Desert.* This is conjectured to have been the site of the Garden of Eden; consequently there appeared, as the prophet Joel says, chap. ii. ver. 3, "The land of Eden before us, and behind us a desolate wilderness." The absence, alas! of all cultivation, the noisy rippling of the rapid stream, the sterile, arid, and wild character of the whole scene, formed a contrast to the rich and delightful accounts delineated in Scripture.†

In the afternoon we reached Zetchiah. My Arab guards were afraid to proceed without the

* The natives, in travelling over these pathless deserts, are compelled to explore their way by the stars, in the same manner as Diodorus Siculus (lib. 1, p. 156, edit. Rhodoman,) expressly states that travellers in the southern part of Arabia directed their course *by the bears*, *ἀπὸ τῶν Ἄρκτων*.

† It should seem that Paradise lay on the confluent stream of the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, but principally on the eastern bank, which divided into two branches above the garden, and two more below it. From the description of these rivers by ancient historians and geographers, Major

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permission of the chief, or head of the village. After waiting a few minutes, three wild-looking fellows came to us from the opposite bank, each armed with a brace of pistols, sabre, and a dagger in the girdle. I produced a letter from the Montefik Sheikh, to whom they *profess* allegiance; but, without noticing it, they said, if I did not instantly pay the customary tax, they would prevent my proceeding on my journey.

After allowing the guards to tire themselves with wrangling, without any effect, I paid the *goomruck*, or tribute. They then asked if I had any dates, coffee, tobacco, and powder, adding,

Rennell infers, that in ancient times they preserved distinct courses to the sea, until the reign of Alexander; although at no great distance of time afterwards they became united, and joined the sea in a collective stream. The Cyrus and Araxes also kept distinct courses in ancient times. This, however, does not invalidate a primæval junction of these rivers, before the Deluge, which certainly produced a prodigious alteration in the face of the primitive globe. Besides, the changes in the beds of other great rivers, such as the Nile, the Ganges, and Barampooter, even in modern times are known to be very great.—Dr. Hales's "New Analysis of Chronology."

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at the same time, that, as I was an Englishman, I could procure as much of those articles as I desired for nothing. Perceiving now that they wished to detain me, I frankly told them, that if they would allow me to pursue my journey, I would give them some dates and coffee; but on the contrary, if I returned, they would not only lose these things, but incur the displeasure, perhaps the punishment, of the Montefik Sheikh. This had the desired effect; they immediately accepted some coffee, made the usual salutation,* and returned to their homes.†

Half a mile beyond Zetchiah is a ruined mosque, around which are a few solitary date-

* The Bedoweens retain a great many of the customs and manners we read of in sacred as well as profane history; being, except in their religion, the same people they were two or three thousand years ago. Upon meeting one another they still use the primitive salutation, "Peace be unto you;" though they have made it a religious compliment, as if they said, "*Be in a state of salvation.*"—Shaw's "Travels in Barbary."

† The Sheikh of this village pays 50,000 piastres, (eyne) or 4500*l.* yearly to the Montefiks. This sum is collected

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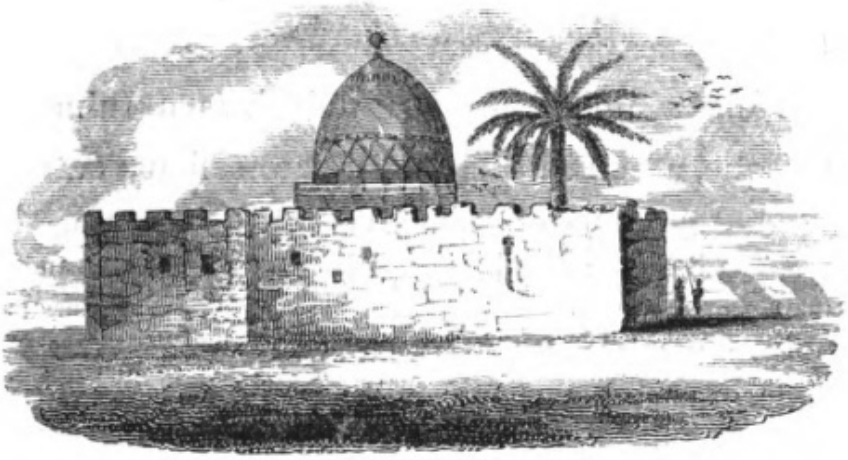
trees; and nearly opposite is a canal, which is navigable as far as the city of Howizah; it runs E. N. E. and contains a large body of water.

On the following day, shortly after sunrise, we arrived at a tomb, which is called by the Arabs Ozair: I could collect nothing concerning its history from my rude attendants. A good burnt-brick wall surrounds it, on passing which I found a spacious domed cloister inclosing a square sepulchre, containing



Tomb of Ozair, a Jewish Saint.

from the Bagdad trading boats and the cultivation of an extensive tract on either side of the Tigris. They also plunder all those who are so unfortunate as to fall into their power.

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the ashes of Ezra, a Jewish saint. The interior is paved with the same sky-blue tile as adorns the dome, which affords a very brilliant appearance, particularly when the sun shines upon it. Over the doorway, are two tablets of black marble, filled up with Hebrew writing. The appellative Ozair has, I suspect, been assigned to it by the Jews, who erroneously suppose the spot to contain the bones of the prophet Ezra. Hither they perform a yearly pilgrimage from Bussorah, when the natives of the country waylay, rob, and strip them, and in this state the pilgrims invariably return to their homes. Were any resistance offered, three or four Arabs would think no more of depriving a dozen Jews of their lives, than of eating so many *onions*.* In fact, the Arab is here absolute master—no law (human or divine) restrains him; if he has not what he wants, he takes it, whenever and wherever he can find

* It is a vulgar and common saying in the country, that when you are in the company of Arabs, much less at their mercy, your life is not worth an *onion*.

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it; if refused, he uses force; if resisted, the opponent is murdered: thus lives the independent, restless freebooter of the Desert.*

This day, October 25th, a prickly shrub, called in the country the *Camel's thorn*,† was so thick, I could scarcely continue my route along the banks of the river. In the short space of eighteen hours we travelled successively towards every point of the compass, proving how

* Ishmael lived by prey and rapine in the wilderness; and his posterity have all along infested Arabia and the neighbouring countries with their robberies and incursions. They live in a state of continual war with the rest of the world, and are both robbers by land, and pirates by sea. As they have been such enemies to mankind, it is no wonder that mankind have been enemies to them again; that several attempts have been made to extirpate them; and even now, as well as formerly, travellers are forced to go with arms, and in caravans or large companies, and to march and keep watch and guard like a little army, to defend themselves from the assaults of these freebooters.—Bishop Newton's "Dissertation on the Prophecies."

† See Appendix, C.—Camels browse upon it in preference to any other herb. The mastication of it produces a frothy salivation at the mouth, which appears to give great pleasure to the animal.—Vide Morier's "Travels," vol. ii. chap. vii. page 115.

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tedious and prolonged is an advance into Babylonia, when following the course of this serpentine stream. Still continuing along the banks, I met with buffaloes plunging into the water, and saw large flocks of the pelican * spreading their silvery wings, and perching on the backs of these animals, which easily accommodated themselves to the incumbrance.

At three, p. m. we saw an encampment of Arabs crossing the river on inflated sheep-skins. An hour after, I passed through the camp of the Beni Lam Arabs, extending eight miles along the eastern bank: from them I met with no disrespect; curiosity was their predominant feeling, to gratify which they impeded my progress by pressing forward with unhesitating freedom. The men and women appeared extremely poor, and with their children, horses, mules, dogs, and asses, huddled together beneath their long goat-hair tents, formed a motley group of objects, of the true *Syntactical*

* The Pelecanus fuscus of Linnæus.

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Picturesque, not often seen in such striking associations: the whole would have been a capital scene for the potent pencil of a Wilkie, or the graver of a Cruikshank. The tents of these "wanderers of the Desert" formed no regular street, but were spread over the plain in the greatest disorder.* Having passed through this (to all appearance) *friendly* tribe, and looking back, the Desert, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with flocks of sheep, belonging to this great and powerful tribe. No tents whatever occupied the western bank of the river. A large troop of horsemen were exercising on a part of the plain, that made an excellent parade-ground, which displayed to advantage the regularity of their movements.

Hanway, in his account of Persia, when speaking of the Arabs, says: "Their expert-

* They had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds, Genesis xxvi. v. 14. The habits of each assimilated with those of Jacob, a plain man dwelling in tents.—Id. xxv. v. 27.

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ness in the use of the lance and sabre, renders them fierce and intrepid. Their skill in horsemanship, and their capacity of bearing the heat of their burning plains, give them also a superiority over their enemies. Hence every petty chief in his own district considers himself as a sovereign prince, and as such exacts customs from all passengers. When they plunder caravans travelling through their territories, they consider it as reprisals on the Turks and Persians, who often make inroads into their country, and carry away their corn and their flocks. They generally marry within themselves."

The only occupation of this tribe is to stop the Bagdad boats, to drain the purses of their owners, and to oppress the poor villages around them with taxes. Benevolence is as foreign to them as gratitude; their hearts are as impenetrable as their distant mountains. All around seems convulsed and fallen; nature appears to languish, and to inform the traveller how wretched is the state of the people. The river meanders most capriciously, our bearings for the last two

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hours having been N. ½ E.; N. E.; E.; E.S.E.; S.; S.W.; W.; N.W.; and N. At nine, p. m. I forded a river, called Al Hud, or Hid;* the Beni Lam inhabit its banks; it appeared to contain a considerable body of water, capable of admitting the largest boats, particularly when full; at this time, however, the water had fallen fifteen feet. The natives of the country assert that boats may even reach Howizah by it; and the direction it takes, appears to justify their assertion. They call the Tigris *Hud*, hence to Koorna.

Having bought a couple of sheep for my people, I was witness to some curious culinary operations. The entrails were ripped open; pieces of which, with the hoofs, dipped once or twice into the water, were eaten by them *raw;* the rest of the animal, unflayed and unshorn, was put into a vessel and half boiled, when they drank the *soup*, and voraciously devoured the scarcely-warmed carcase. They are a very filthy set of people, particularly

* See Appendix, D.

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in their food: had their Prophet enjoined impurity, instead of cleanliness, his commandment could not have been more vigilantly regarded to the letter, for their nature is brutal and obscene; their morals are in a more vitiated and depraved state than Europeans can possibly imagine.*

Shortly after daybreak we came up with a

* The fine, honourable, hospitable character generally attributed to the Desert Arabs is at present a fiction; it once may have been their just right; but alas! is now "Hyperion to a Satyr." For this change many reasons might be given; one will suffice—the great intercourse they are at present constantly enjoying with towns and cities. Dr. Shaw, in his Travels in Barbary, says: "The Arabs are naturally thievish and treacherous; and it sometimes happens that those very persons are overtaken and pillaged in the morning, who were entertained the night before with all the instances of friendship and hospitality. Neither are they to be accused for plundering strangers only, and attacking almost every person whom they find unarmed and defenceless, but for those many implacable and hereditary animosities which continually subsist among them; literally fulfilling to this day the prophecy of Hagar, that "Ishmael should be a wild man; his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him." The Doctor was himself plundered by a party of Arabs, in his journey from Ramah to Jerusalem, although he was escorted by a strong party of Turkish soldiers, and at the same time paid a large

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small encampment of huts, constructed with mats, made of the date-leaf. Women covered with rags, men in old tattered cloaks, and children in a state of nudity, flying at my approach, were the objects that attracted my attention. One poor woman, bolder than her companions, ventured forward, and exclaimed to my guards, "Why, why! have you brought a wild man amongst us?" As far as the appearance of a beard, not lately trimmed, justified her inference, the woman's question was, perhaps, not ill-founded; I was wild as wandering palmer. On taking leave of these poor people, we threw dates among them, which, although it created a temporary confusion, gave them, ultimately, the usual delight of a successful scramble.* At noon,

sum to the Arabs, in order to secure a safe passage across their desert. This is a proof, not only of their independence and enjoyment of their liberty, but of their utter abuse of it.

* The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks and Persians about their women; and though they have the harem, or women's part of the tent, yet such as they are acquainted with come into it.

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we saw, for the first time, the Hamrine mountains; the view of them gave me renewed life and energy. Those only who have resided for years or even months in a flat country, can appreciate the nature of my sensations.

OCTOBER 27.—We reached Ali Ghurbee, on the north, and Ali Shurgee, on the south bank, points at which the Imâm Ali is said to have encamped, when on a pilgrimage to Persia. Near this the river has fallen thirty feet, by actual measurement: as the banks are not once in fifty miles half this height, it is evident that in the month of June, when the Tigris is at its fullest height, the whole country must be overflowed, and the innumerable canals branching off in every direction, (at present dry,) become perfectly navigable. It is impossible to reflect, without admiration, on the inland navigation of which this country is capable, or to consider without deep sorrow into what barbarous hands it has fallen. There is not the most distant prospect of improvement. If there

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were any hope of a revolution bringing improvement, it would here be virtue to wish for one.

For the last three days, there had been such a provoking sameness in the appearance of the country, that had my weary limbs not convinced me I was moving onward, I could almost have supposed myself within the influence of the magnetised mountain of the Arabian Nights. The river still pursued a winding course, concealing itself behind continued headlands, covered with fresh brushwood. On the right side the mountains of Lauristan, of a bare and bluish appearance, form a marked contrast with the freshness of the river's channel. It is singular, that although these banks are proverbial for being the resort of lions and other wild animals, and travellers tell us of having seen them by day, and their repose at night having been disturbed by their roar, I have as yet been gratified neither by the pleasure of the first, nor agitated by the alarm of the second predicament.

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It is hardly necessary to add, that the same waters subserve to the wants of Persia and Mesopotamia, waft the modern Baghalah of the merchant of Bagdad, and the old air-supported rafts and asphaltic coracles of Mosul, the ancient Nineveh.*

The commercial intercourse between Bussorah and Bagdad consists of Indian manufactures, brought chiefly from Calcutta and the Malabar coast, by ships of five hundred tons burthen; of which, about eight trade up the Persian Gulf annually, under the English flag, and several under Arab and Persian colours. The following passage, extracted from Rauwolff's Travels, will prove the trade between these two places to have been very considerable in his day.

"In this town there is a great deposition of merchandizes, by reason of its commodious situation, which are brought hither by sea as well as by land from several parts,

* See Appendix, E.

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chiefly from Natolia, Syria, Armenia, Constantinople, Aleppo, Damascus, &c. to carry them farther into the Indies, Persia, &c. So it happened, that during the time I was there, on the 2nd day of December, in 1574, there arrived twenty-five ships, with spice and other precious drugs, here, which came over sea from the Indies, by the way of Ormutz, to Balsora, a town belonging to the Grand Turk, situated on the frontiers, the farthest that he hath south-eastwards, within six days' journey from hence, where they load their goods into small vessels, and so bring them to Bagdat, which journey, as some say, taketh them up forty days. Seeing that the passage, both by water and land, belongeth both to the King of Arabia and the Sophi of Persia, which also have their towns and forts on their confines, which might easily be stopped up by them; yet, notwithstanding all this, they may keep good correspondence with one another; they keep pigeons, chiefly at Balsora, which, in case

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of necessity, might be soon sent back again with letters to Bagdat. When loaden ships arrive at Bagdat, the merchants, chiefly those that bring spice to carry through the deserts into Turkey, have their peculiar places in the open fields without the town of Ctesiphon, where each of them fixeth his tents, to put his spices underneath, in sacks, to keep them there safe, until they have a mind to break up in whole caravans; so that at a distance one would rather believe that soldiers were lodged in them, than merchants; and rather look for arms than merchandizes; and I thought myself, before I came so near, that I could smell them." *

Towards the afternoon a southerly wind sprang up, and rather than my boat should lose the advantage of it, (the current being very strong against us,) I embarked for three hours; when I again pursued my tour on foot.

* Pp. 145, 146.

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The wild brushwood, in which it was not very difficult to be lost, was inhabited by great numbers of the feathered tribe. I observed small birds of several different kinds, but saw none with rich plumage. The river here has fallen so considerably, that one-half of its bed is quite dry, composed of sand and clay banks.

At sunset I passed through an extensive camp of Arabs: they were as civil and as respectful as those I had hitherto met with, and appeared to be living in the most primitive state, chiefly employed in making a cloth from the wool of their sheep. They first spin it into yarn, winding the threads round small stones; these they hang on a stick, fixed in a horizontal position, between some shrubs or trees, to form a woof; then passing other threads alternately between these, they thus weave the cloth with which they clothe themselves. None of these encampments afforded a drop of milk, or a single egg. Towards night, parties of both sexes were crossing the stream in

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a state of nudity, upon a stratum of rush, which is evidently of the same kind as the "vessels of bulrushes upon the waters," alluded to by Isaiah, in chap. xviii. ver. 2.

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CHAPTER II.

Village of Koote.—Its situation.—The Camel and the Dromedary.—The Canal of Hye.—Singular amusement.—Ruins of a bridge.—Supposition respecting them.—General aspect of the Desert.—Approach to the cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.—No swans to be seen.—Extensive sand-banks.—Navigation of the Tigris.—Weapons of the Arabs.—The lion.—The Eelauts, a wandering tribe.—Their behaviour.—The Author's progress impeded.—Remarkable ruins.—Extensive wall.—Mumlihah.—Unsuccessful researches.

OCTOBER 29th.—This day brought me to Koote, a wretched village composed of a collection of cottages constructed with mud, and surrounded by a wall of the same material. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris, and is erroneously reckoned half-way between Bussorah and Bagdad, since it is more by a journey of two days. Its position also is incorrectly laid down on the map of Colonel Macdonald Kinneir; for during the last eight-and-

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forty hours, our course has varied from E. S. E. to S. S. W. and W. S. W., making almost nothing to the North. Large herds of camels were grazing in every direction, left without men or dogs: some allowed the stranger to approach, and betrayed no alarm; whilst others appeared much frightened, and were extremely wild. They were all of a white colour, and belonged to a powerful Arab chief, who resided in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Buckingham, whose extensive travels in the East were attended by circumstances which gave him every facility of correct observation, has, in his work on Mesopotamia, rendered a faithful description of this valuable inhabitant of the Desert. He remarks, that "the prevailing opinion in Europe is, that of the two kinds of this animal, the single-humped is the camel, and the double-humped the dromedary. The fact, however, is nearer the reverse. The double-humped camel is found only in Bactria, and the countries to the north and east of Persia; and these, being natives of a colder climate, and living in more fertile countries than the other

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species, are shorter, thicker, more muscular, covered with a dark-brown shaggy hair, and heavier and stronger by far than any other camels. From this race of the double-humped animal, I am not aware of dromedaries being ever produced. The only camel seen in Arabia, Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia, is the single-humped. This, inhabiting a hot climate, and having always a scanty supply of food and water, is taller, more slender, of a paler colour, and altogether lighter in form and flesh, than the Bactrian camel. Its hair is as short, and its skin as sleek, as that of the horses or bullocks of England. It is from this race only that dromedaries are produced; these are merely single-humped camels of good blood and breed, which, instead of being used for burthen, are appropriated only to carrying riders and performing journeys of speed. They bear indeed the same relation to other single-humped camels, that race-horses do to other horses: care being taken, by preserving the purity of their descent, and improving their blood, to keep them always fit for and appropriated to

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this particular purpose. They are trained, in Egypt, into dromedary corps for the supply of lancers and couriers, and perform wonderful journeys, both as to speed and distance. They are called, by the Arabs, *Hedjeen;* while the camel is called *Gemel*, or *Jemel*, according to the district in which the hard or soft pronunciation of the *g* prevails." *

Immediately opposite the village is a canal called the Hye, which runs into the Euphrates to the north of Soogishiookh: † its banks are a noted haunt for lions, and other ferocious animals. At this time its bed is perfectly dry, though it is navigable for eight months in the year. Hence to the mouth of the river Al Hud, the Arabs call this beautiful stream *Amarah*.

During the whole of the day it rained so hard, that my progress was not so great as I wished and expected; at night, however, the cold was piercing; and my followers, who were

* See Buckingham's Travels in Mesopotamia, vol. ii. p. 207.

† Literally the Sheikh's bazaar, or mart. This town is the head-quarters of the Montefik Arabs, who occupy both banks of the river, north and south, to a great distance.

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in high spirits at having advanced so far, as well as from the pleasure they felt in breathing their native air, (many of whom were from the country near Bagdad,) collected themselves round a fire, formed a circle, and exhibited their native dance till midnight. For music, they were contented with a kettle covered with a round empty sheep-skin bag, which in general is used for holding oil, but on the present occasion served to form a drum. The harmony of the instrument was heightened by the clapping of hands, and a loud chorus of so peculiar a strain, that I am incapable of describing it, and such as I never heard before. One person at a time came forward and danced, keeping up a constant wriggling motion with his feet, hands, breast, and shoulders, until his gestures became too fatiguing to be continued.

The deportment of these people in towns bears a striking contrast to the insolent independence they assume in the Desert. They are a merry race, with a keen relish for drollery, endued with a power over their features, that is

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shown off in the richest exhibitions of grimace. I gave them a sheep, which they roasted whole, and devoured in a few minutes; they were shortly afterwards in a profound sleep.*

At sunrise on the following morning, after making a present to the Sheikh † of the village, I departed; and four hours' march over a barren plain brought me near the ruins of a bridge, which evidently has spanned the river; for, from the disturbed rippling of the water, I could distinctly observe where the fragments lay beneath. By this time the rain had ceased; the rising sun, gleaming upon the river, threw a beautiful radiance over the brushwood in the direction of the mountains: I embarked as soon as my boat came up, and had the satisfaction of examining these remains. The bed of the river here is considerably enlarged; the bridge occupies a central position, and consists of three equal piers, of the finest kiln-burnt bricks, which exhibit a great resemblance to the Babylonian

* See Appendix, F.

† Presents are considered in Eastern countries essential to kind and civil intercourse.

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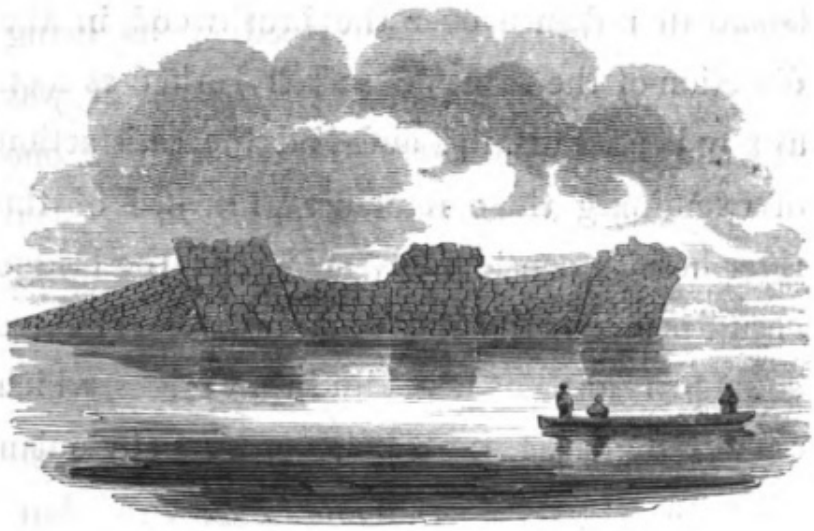
material in dimension and composition, and are as hard as stone. This is a singular circumstance, when we consider that they are, for the greater part of the year, beneath the surface of the stream. The extent of the ruins, at present above water, is sixty feet in length, and seventeen in breadth; and the height of the most perfect pier, eight. This was the first time I had met with any remains of antiquity: none of my people had ever seen these before, having always passed the spot when the river was at the full.



Remains of an ancient Bridge.

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Colonel Macdonald Kinneir, on his journey from Constantinople to Bussorah, in the year 1813, mentions the circumstance of his boat being stranded on one of the piers of an ancient *stone* bridge, and that it was so old, no one could tell by whom, or in what age, it was erected.* As the position of this bridge agrees within a few miles to the one he alludes to, I apprehend it must be the same; but Kinneir is mistaken when he says it is of stone. My boatmen were at first afraid to approach it, as the "stones," they said, might materially injure their boat; it was only on extracting the bricks that they were convinced of its being of this material. The face of the country was still open and flat, presenting to the eye one vast level plain, where nothing is to be seen but here and there a herd of half-wild camels, whose flesh is thought by the Arabs to be superior to venison.

This immense tract is very rarely diversified with any trees of moderate growth; but

* Vide Kinneir's "Travels in Asia Minor, Armenia, and Kurdistan," page 501.

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abounds in brushwood and short-lived herbage, occupied by numbers of partridges, hares, and gazelles, which reign supreme lords of an immeasurable wild, bounded only by the horizon. When the orb of day rises, he appears emerging from the earth, without rays, until considerably above the horizon; and on sinking into the golden chambers of the west, his beams disappear long before the body of the orb is covered.

The soil of this Desert consists of a hard clay mixed with sand, which, at noon, becomes so heated by the sun's rays, (although the nights are cold,*) that I find it too hot

* *Thus* I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from my eyes.—(Genesis xxxi. 40.)

"In Europe the days and nights resemble each other, with respect to the qualities of heat and cold: but it is quite otherwise in the East. In the lower Asia, in particular, the day is always hot: on the contrary, in the height of summer the nights are as cold as at Paris in the month of March. I have travelled in Arabia and in Mesopotamia, the theatre of the adventures of Jacob, both in winter and in summer, and have found the truth of what the Patriarch said, 'That he was scorched with heat in the day, and stiffened with cold in the night.' This contrariety in the qualities of the air in twenty-four hours is extremely great in some places, and not

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to walk over it with any degree of comfort. It is not, however, my intention to de-

conceivable by those that have not felt it: one would imagine he had passed in a moment from the violent heats of summer to the depth of winter. The heat of the sun is tempered by the coolness of the nights, without which the greatest part of the East would be barren and a desert: the earth could not produce any thing."—*Sir J. Chardin.*

The hot pestilential south wind, which blows from these deserts, commences from the 20th of June, and continues for about seven weeks. It is thus described by Mr. Bruce:—"This hot wind is called by the Arabs *Samum*, or *Simoom*. It is generally preceded by an extreme redness in the air, and usually blows from the south-east, or from the south, a little to the east. It appeared in the form of a haze, in colour like the purple part of a rainbow, but not so compressed, or thick: it was a kind of *blush upon the air*. The guide warned the company, upon its approach, to fall upon their faces, with their mouths close to the ground, and to hold their breath as long as they could, to avoid inhaling the outward air. It moved very rapidly, about twenty yards in breadth, and about twelve feet high from the ground; so that," says Bruce, "I had scarcely time to turn about and fall upon the earth, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all fell upon our faces until the Simoom passed on, with a gentle ruffling wind. When the meteor, or purple haze, had passed, it was succeeded by a light air, which still blew so hot as to threaten suffocation, which sometimes lasted three hours, and left the company totally enervated and exhausted, labouring under asthmatic sensations, weakness of stomach, and violent head-aches, from imbibing the poisonous vapour."—*Bruce's Travels.*

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tain the reader by an enumeration of my sufferings from bodily fatigue; those who have crossed these desert wilds are already acquainted with their dreary tediousness, even on horseback; what it is on foot they can easily imagine. The thought, however, that I was gradually approaching the sites of the once magnificent and renowned cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, with the Tigris still flowing beneath the solitary remains of ancient splendour, amply compensated me for all my troubles, and animated me with renewed strength and vigour.

I perceived no swans upon the surface of the stream: hoping to meet with some of these birds, I had traced its current for miles, but was still disappointed. In vain, too, I looked for the smallest stones; there is not one in the district; nor are there any fragments of ruined edifices, to tell of "long forgotten ages."

At four, p. m. I saw a very extensive sand-bank, that stretched more than half over the bed of the river: it was studded throughout with innumerable small cupolas of

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clay; and as the eye glanced quickly over the whole, it reminded one exactly of the domes which cover the bazaars at Ispahan, Shiraz, and other Persian cities.

The root, from which is procured what in England is called *liquorice*,* is so abundant throughout the country, that it is burnt as fire-wood.

Some modern travellers have remarked that this river is totally unnavigable in the dry season, which is incorrect. The Tigris, during the whole year, contains a sufficient body of water for moderate-sized boats, and these heavily laden. Several, requiring a great draught of water, quitted Bussorah a few days before me, and, although the river had been remarkably low all the season, their progress was not interrupted by a want of water. The great and only difficulty they had to contend with, was the savage inhabitants of these banks; not the lion, but a fiercer animal—the Desert

* The Glycyrrhiza, with both smooth and scabrous pericarps. The Arabs call it *soos*. The Glycyrrhiza echinata is the most abundant.

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Arab, who never goes in search of his wild neighbour; but, should he chance to meet the king of the forest, he slays him in self-defence. The Arab's chief weapons being the sword and spear, he is not always certain of conquering his foe. For this reason all the people hereabouts are much alarmed by the circumstance of the lion making this part his favourite haunt.

At sunset we saw some fires at a short distance. On going to the spot, we found a camp of one of the wandering tribes, known by the name of Eelauts*,—as usual, poor—but happy, contented, and civil. A few sheep and goats appeared to be their only property. The left nostril of most of the women of this tribe was perforated, to admit a gold or silver ring, from which hung a pearl or turquoise.

How widely different is the behaviour of these poor people from that of the roving Arab,

* Wandering pastors of Persian or Coordish origin. Pococke describes all their riches to consist in goats and sheep, and says that they live in great poverty, having nothing except a few dates and goats' milk.

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who accosts the traveller in an overbearing, insolent tone, and haughty manner; who is only deterred from attacking and robbing the stranger through *fear*—the sole reason which compels him to restrain his lawless wishes whenever he may chance to meet an European!

Richards, in his Lectures on Prophecy, remarks, that "the region inhabited by the Arabs is situated in that portion of the globe in which society originated and the first kingdoms were formed. The greatest empires of the world arose and fell around them. They have not been secluded from correspondence with foreign nations, and are thus attached through ignorance and prejudice to simple and primitive manners. In the early periods of history they were united, as allies, to the most powerful monarchs of the East, under their victorious Prophet. They once carried their arms over the most considerable kingdoms of the earth; through many succeeding ages the caravans of the merchant, and the companies of Mahometan pilgrims, passed regularly over their deserts: even

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their religion has undergone a total change. Yet all these circumstances, which, it might be supposed, would have subdued the most stubborn prejudices, and altered the most inveterate habits, have produced no effect upon the Arabs; and they still preserve, unimpaired, a most exact resemblance to the first descendants of Ishmael."

OCTOBER 31st.—I was detained a great part of this day, from my boat having grounded. As my guards were required to assist in floating her off, they would not allow of my proceeding until they could rejoin me, the road being (in their opinion) unsafe for any person to travel unattended, much less an Englishman. I was reluctantly obliged to yield to their wishes, and seating myself on the margin of the stream, remained for some hours contemplating with delight the unruffled course of the waters gliding beneath me.

While reflecting on the various remains of antiquity connected with the history of this beautiful river, an Arab tapped me on the

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shoulder, and said, if I accompanied him, he would show me the ruins of a wall at no great distance, and on the water's edge. I instantly followed him, and had the company of my guards likewise, who were determined not to lose sight of me.

Continuing in a northerly direction for two hours, we came to a round pillar, filled up with earth and broken tile, built of furnace-burnt bricks, placed together alternately in a horizontal and vertical position, situated within twelve feet of the water's edge. After digging ten feet perpendicularly, and clearing away the rubbish from within, I did not arrive at its foundation; the diameter was five feet and a half. It is very evident that the river has here considerably encroached, for its bed is covered with broken bricks and fragments of building. The bank is thirty-five feet in height; and from the pillar I distinctly traced a wall built into the bank (which extends due north) for three hundred and seventy-two feet, of the

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same material as the pillar, but much smaller than such portions as I extracted from the bridge yesterday, and more nearly resembling those made use of at the present day in the cities of Bagdad and Bussorah. There are several hollows and mounds all over the plain, extending from the summit or margin of the bank in an easterly direction.

The whole surface of this tract was strewed with bricks and broken pottery, of various kinds and colours; but I could trace no remains of building, nor any thing embedded within the mounds, although I dug into all of them. From their soft state it appears that they have been robbed of all their valuable burnt material, which bids defiance to the hand of time. A few more years will, I fear, remove every vestige of this extensive wall, a great portion of which has been washed into the river, as is evident from the vast quantity of bricks lying beneath the water. This place is on the eastern bank, and is called by the

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natives Mumlah; they can give the traveller no information whatever concerning it.

In Keppel's Narrative of a journey overland from India, viâ Bussorah and Bagdad, a place called Mumlihah is mentioned, and this spot coincides with it in every respect, with the exception of its being placed on the opposite side of the river, whither I went with his book in my hand, and made a diligent search to discover the ruins spoken of, but was unsuccessful *.

* The author of the Personal Narrative appears to have derived much of his information on this part of the country from the ignorant Arabs who were with him. These people never agree in regard to traditionary tales, and the names of places. It is only upon the authority of well-informed respectable men, who have resided all their lives in the country, that we can depend for any authentic details: and even their accounts border upon the marvellous. In the Personal Narrative is the following passage in speaking of this spot:—

"We came upon some extensive ruins on the *left bank* of the river, which our guides called *Mumliheh*; instead of showing fragments of pillars, or any marks by which we might conjecture the order of architecture, they exhibit an accumulation of mounds, which, on a dead flat, soon attract the

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The square masses of brick (mentioned in the note) must have been washed away, if ever any existed; for no traces of such buildings remain. As it is some years since Keppel visited this spot, and the river is still advancing with great force and rapidity, I have little doubt that a few more yearly freshes will sweep away even the present remains, "and leave not a wreck behind."

The smell of wild animals was extremely offensive at this place; and, as a heavy shower of rain had fallen during the night, rendering the soil moist, we traced the footsteps of a lion to an extensive patch of brushwood, where, very probably, he was concealed. Not one of my guards would approach or attempt to disturb the bushes, pretending not to see the

eye of a traveller, and have, at first sight, the appearance of sandy hillocks. On a nearer inspection they prove to be square masses of brick, facing the cardinal points, and though sometimes much worn by the weather, are built with much regularity: the neighbourhood of these large mounds is strewed with fragments of tile, broken pottery, and manufactured vitreous substances."

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thicket which was before them; nevertheless they are very near-sighted. I have seldom met with a man that can distinguish with accuracy an object at the distance of half a mile; and many of them cannot fix their eyes on any given spot without causing much annoyance to their organs of vision.

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CHAPTER III.

Water-courses.—Remarkable mounds.—Blocks of black stone.—Fruitless excavation.—Earthen vase.—Party of horsemen.—Insulated pile, called Shejur.—Curious column.—Remains of a wall.—Earthen vases.—Ruins, called Hoomania.—Discovery of Athenian coins.—Fleet of boats.—Their singular construction.—The Kooffah, a wicker-basket.—Ruins of a Fort.—Armed horseman.—Appearance of the river.—View of Tauk Kesra.—History of the Arabs.

NOVEMBER 1st.—During the course of to-day I crossed no less than forty water-courses, all running in an easterly direction, dug for the purpose of facilitating the irrigation of the interior part of the country, and carrying off the exuberant waters.* I occasionally saw the ske-

* "Towards Babylon and Seleucia, where the rivers Tigris and Euphrates swell over their banks and water the country, the same kind of husbandry is practised as in Egypt, but to

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letons of cattle, probably destroyed by the wild beasts; on this account, the flocks of every encampment are always driven at sunset into a thorny inclosure within the tents. At three in the afternoon I crossed the stream, and proceeded four miles from the left bank, in a westerly direction, to some mounds, which I reached at four. They stretched for nearly a mile north and south, and were composed of soft clay, externally covered with broken pieces of pottery, fragments of tile, flint glass, and shells. The highest mound, which occupied a central position, I estimated at five and twenty feet, surrounded by minor ridges of hillock; which are invariably the proofs of ruined buildings. On the top of the largest, to my great surprise, I stumbled upon some blocks of black stone, measuring four or five feet square, and completely honeycombed from exposure. Hitherto I felt convinced that no stone was to be found in the

better effect and greater profit. The people here let in the water by sluices and flood-gates as they require it."—*Plin. Nat. Hist.* book 18, c. 18.

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country ; and the prevailing opinion of all those who have examined the remains of antiquity in these parts, has been, that burnt and unburnt bricks were the chief, I may add, only materials used for building in past times, as well as at the present day.

Concluding, then, that these stones must have been extracted from beneath the tumulus, I commenced clearing away at the base; and as far as I dug, I found that the mound rested on layers of stone, each measuring about five feet square, so firmly joined together, that my digging implements broke to pieces, and obliged me to discontinue any farther attempt at excavation. There was no appearance of erect building whatever, nor any burnt or unburnt bricks, except on the summit, where I saw some fragments of brickwork perfectly black, petrified, and molten. I found a large portion of an earthen vase, (similar to some I have dug up near a village called Reschire, five miles to the south of Bushire in the Persian Gulph,) and human bones lying by it. This vessel was

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made of baked clay, and appeared painted over: we had to delve with our hands for two feet deep, previous to extracting it. That there were several more I am convinced, as they are never found singly, but in long rows nearly touching each other, and fronting east and west. By this time the sun had gone down, and having to walk the same distance back to regain the bank of the river, we reluctantly left the spot.

Returning, I saw a great number of gazelles and several hares started from the brushwood. On reaching the river and looking towards the place we had recently quitted, I descried a party of horsemen crossing the plain, and felt extremely happy at having escaped their notice; otherwise we might have been subjected to considerable annoyance by the meeting.* I

* "The manner in which the Arabs make war and pillage the caravans, is by keeping at the side of them, or following them in the rear, at a greater or smaller distance, according to their forces, which may be easily done in Arabia, on account of its being one great plain; and in the night they fall silently upon the camp, and carry off one part before the rest are under arms."—*Sir John Chardin.*

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should not omit to mention here, that the above noticed mounds are among the few for which the Arabs have no name; nor is any ridiculous tale attached to the spot.

NOVEMBER 2nd.—As the sun rose above the distant mountains, I pursued my route in a westerly direction along the right bank, with four of my escort armed with swords and matchlocks. Towards noon we arrived at a solitary insulated pile, to which my Arabs gave the appellation of Shejur: it was a heap of argillaceous earth extending one hundred yards north and south, its elevation varying from ten to fifteen feet; it was bounded on all sides by the same barren desert, without a tree or any sign of cultivation. The surface of this mound was strewed with tile, kiln-burnt brick, a few small stones, glass, and several blocks of grey marble, thickly coated on one side with bitumen, as hard as the stone to which it was attached, and requiring our united strength to break off the smallest portion, so tenaciously did it adhere to the marble. This heap ap-

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peared to have lost all its perfect bricks, being particularly soft and unpleasant to walk over. After digging round its base for two hours, without perceiving any remains of building, we crossed over to the left bank, and proceeded on a bearing of west for five-and-twenty minutes, when we reached a column situated on a gentle declivity, constructed of the finest kiln-burnt material, fastened together horizontally and perpendicularly by thin layers of cement, joining the whole together with great delicacy. The hand of Time had corroded it to such a degree, that the periphery of its base, which is only sixteen feet, supports the upper portion, the circumference of which is sixty-two feet, and its height is twenty; its vertex was terribly shattered, and irregularly torn by the elements.

Hence extensive ridges of mounds, varying in height and extent, are seen branching in every direction. At a hundred yards to the right of the column, I dug into a heap of ruins, (evidently the largest on the plain,) and

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discovered the remains of a wall, (the bricks of which measured a square of nine inches,) likewise steps and the subverted portion of another column, corresponding, in dimensions and the materials of its composition, with the standing one already mentioned. This pile was extremely solid, and would have taken a considerable number of men to lay it open, by clearing away the accumulated earth and rubbish.

On a mound at some distance to the north-east, I observed the bases of walls that have been razed to the ground. The bricks of which they were composed must have been removed, or thrown down and buried beneath the shapeless and dilapidated ruin; for I could not discover any traces of them. The surface of all the hillocks was covered with broken bricks, varnished tile, pottery, shells, and vitrified stones and glass. I computed their circumference at eight miles, as I was two hours and a half walking round them.

Three hours after the sun went down, by

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the light of the lovely moon and starry sky, I was hurried from this interesting spot; my Arabs would remain no longer in the desert, wondering what there possibly could be in a heap of confused rubbish to engross so much of my time and attention.

Proceeding W. N. W. we almost immediately reached the river's bank, where some elevated hillocks attracted my curiosity, exhibiting fragments of brickwork and pottery. The river appears to have encroached; I met with several earthenware vases,* containing human

Ancient vase found near Hormania.

* See Appendix, G.

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bones, which *had* undergone the action of fire. These urns measured three feet in length, by one and a half in depth and width, though some appeared to be of greater dimensions. They were terminated at one extremity by a cover without bottom, and at the other by a pointed handle. I could only find the smallest possible fragments of bone with the ashes, and these became dust on being touched; even simple exposure to the atmosphere produced nearly a similar effect.

The Tigris is here nearly as broad as the Shut-ul-Arab at Basrah; two thirds of its bed being completely dry, and composed of a mixture of sand and clay, which fatigued us greatly by walking over it. This heavy soil was nearly the means of my missing the boat altogether; as the crew had proceeded, regardless of my orders to remain at anchor until my return. These remains are called, by the natives of the country, Hoomania. At this place, on the 5th of March, 1812,

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on the bank of the stream, the crew of a boat, who were cutting wood for sale at Bagdad, discovered pieces of silver, edging out of the margin of the bank, which was thus exposed, from its having been washed down by the action of the current.

On dividing their newly-acquired treasure, they quarrelled among themselves; when one of the party hastened to Bagdad, and informed the Pasha's officers of the circumstance, who instantly despatched people to the spot, and on examination found, and brought away, between six and seven hundred ingots of silver, each measuring from one to one and a-half feet in length; and an earthen jar, containing upwards of two thousand Athenian coins, all of silver. Many were purchased at the time by the late Mr. Rich, formerly the East India Company's Resident at Bagdad, and are now in his valuable collection, since bought by Government, and deposited in the British Museum. No coins were found of gold, or copper; and the

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whole were lodged in the treasury of Abdalla Pasha.

NOVEMBER 3.—I cannot say whether we missed any antiquities on our road this day or not, as our path lay through an almost impenetrable forest of brushwood, which extended into the Desert as far as the eye could reach. We passed a fleet of boats laden with wood, for use at Bagdad. They load half-mast high, so that if a fresh breeze were blowing, they would be obliged to lay-to until it subsided.

These vessels are of a most singular construction, being put together with reeds and willow, thickly coated with bitumen: the prow is the broadest part of the boat, being extremely bluff, and the whole as clumsy and unwieldy as possible.

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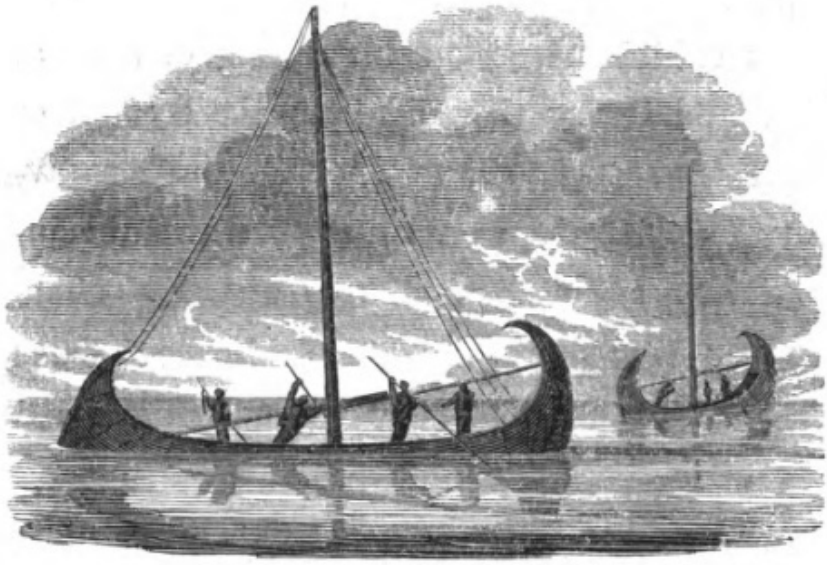

Bagdad Wood-boats.

A round wicker-basket, called in Arabic *Kooffah*, is towed astern of each boat for the purpose of communicating with the shore; these are also covered with naptha, and are in use on the Euphrates, and likewise on the Diala. Their shape and construction belong to the most remote ages, being mentioned by Herodotus;* and it is worthy of remark, that they have un-

* See the description of these round wicker-baskets, in the account given by Herodotus of Babylon.

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dergone little or no change since he visited this country; though, by the by, they at present exhibit no external covering of skin, as it would appear they did from the account of that famous historian. The following engraving exhibits the peculiar structure of the interior floor and upper margin of the Kooffah, as seen from above.

The interior floor, and upper margin of the Kooffah.

NOVEMBER 4.—At ten this morning I visited the ruins of a fort on the left bank of the river.

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My Arabs said it was extremely ancient, but its appearance ill accorded with their opinion. Hence an unbroken range of mounds are discernible on the horizon, in a south-westerly direction. They appeared at a considerable distance, and were perhaps some of the dark heaps of fallen Babylon.

Every man we meet in the Desert is looked upon as an enemy. At noon we discovered an armed horseman pacing across the plain. The moment my escort saw him, they were off like lightning to demand his business, whence he came, and whither he was going? at the same time brandishing their swords, and turning their matchlocks over their heads. The armed Arab struck his stirrups into his horse's sides, and was off in a second. Had there been three or four, my people would have pretended they could not see them, or probably have begged me to retreat beneath the bank to escape observation, as they would never hazard the conflict, without being fully convinced of its

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terminating successfully. They are very cowardly, and when in their power, will tyrannize over a weaker party to the utmost; they well know, therefore, the consequences of capture.

The river has suddenly appeared very discoloured, and were it not for the current, I should scarcely have been able to distinguish its bed from the sands on its shore; it is considerably more rapid, owing to the falls of snow and rain in the upper country. At Bagdad the stream is proverbial for its clearness. If this is a specimen, (as I am told it is,) I had certainly formed a very erroneous idea of its transparent properties.

Shortly after sunset we had an imperfect view of Tauk Kesra,* a ruined arch on the site of Ctesiphon, bearing due North across the Desert, about fourteen miles distant in a direct line, but nearly forty when following

* The Arch of Kesra. Kesra is a name proper to the two last races of Persian monarchs.

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the course of the stream, so great is its sinuosity.

Previous to entering upon a description of the remains of those cities we are approaching, I shall, on the authority of that learned divine, Newton, trace the history of the Arabs, from the time of their ancestor, Ishmael, who, we learn from sacred history, was born in the year 1910 before Christ, and died in 1773, after having attained the age of one hundred and thirty seven years.

"It is said of Ishmael that he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer: such were the Itureans, whose bows and arrows are famous in all authors; such were the mighty men of Kedar, in Isaiah's time; and such the Arabs have been from the beginning, and are at this time.

"It was late before they admitted the use of fire-arms among them; the greater part of them are still strangers to them, and still continue skilful archers. In the time of Moses they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is, before

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Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria: but yet we do not find that they were ever subject to either of their powerful neighbours, the Egyptians or Assyrians. The conquests of Sesostris, the great king of Egypt, are much magnified by Diodorus Siculus; and probably he might subdue some of the southern provinces of Arabia bordering upon Egypt; but he was obliged, as Diodorus informs us, to draw a line from Heliopolis to Pelusium, to secure Egypt from the incursions of the Arabs. They were therefore not subjects, but enemies to the Egyptians; as they were likewise to the Assyrians, for they assisted Belesis and Arbaces in overturning that empire,—assisted them, not as fellow rebels, but as an independent state, with their auxiliary forces.

"The next great conquerors of the East, were Cyrus and the Persians; but neither he nor any of his successors ever reduced the whole body of the Arabs to subjection. They might conquer some of the exterior, but never reached the interior parts of the country: and

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Herodotus, the historian, who lived nearest to those times, expressly says,* that the Arabs were never reduced by the Persians to the condition of subjects, but were considered by them as friends, and opened to them a passage into Egypt, which, without the assistance and permission of the Arabs, would have been utterly impracticable: and, in another place, he says, that while Phœnicia, Palestine, Syria, and the neighbouring countries were taxed, the Arabian territories continued free from paying any tribute. They were then regarded as friends, but afterwards they assisted with their forces, Amyrtœus, king of Egypt, against Darius Nothus, and Euagoras, king of Cyprus, against Artaxerxes Mnemon; so that they acted as friends or enemies to the Persians, just as they thought proper, and as it suited their humour or their interest.

* "Arabes nunquam à Persis in servitutem redacti sunt, sed hospites extiterunt; quum Cambysi aditum in Ægyptum permisissent: quibus invitis haudquaquam fuissent ingressi Persæ Ægyptum."—*Herod.* lib. iii. sec. 88, p. 198, Edit. Gale.

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"Alexander the Great then overturned the Persian empire, and conquered Asia. The neighbouring princes sent their ambassadors to make their submissions. The Arabs alone disdained to acknowledge the conqueror, and scorned to send any embassy, or to take any notice of him. This slight provoked him to such a degree, that he meditated an expedition against them; and the great preparations which he made for it, showed that he thought them a very formidable enemy: but death intervened, and put an end to all that his ambition or resentment had formed against them.

"Thus they happily escaped the fury of his arms, and were never subdued by any of his successors. Antigonus, one of the greatest of his successors, made two attempts upon them, one by his general Athenæus, and the other by his own son, Demetrius, but both without success. The former was defeated, and the latter was glad to make peace with them, and leave them at their liberty. Neither would they suffer the people employed by Antigonus,

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to gather the bitumen on the lake Asphaltites, whereby he hoped greatly to increase his revenue. The Arabs fiercely attacked the workmen and the guards, and forced them to desist from their undertaking. So true is the assertion of Diodorus, that 'neither the Assyrians formerly, nor the kings of the Medes and Persians, nor yet of the Macedonians, were able to subdue them; nay, though they led many, and great forces, against them, yet they could not accomplish their attempts.' We find them afterwards sometimes at peace, and sometimes at war with the neighbouring states; sometimes joining the Syrians, and sometimes the Egyptians; sometimes assisting the Jews, and sometimes plundering them; and in all respects acting like a free people, who neither feared nor courted any foreign power whatever.

"The Romans then invaded the East, and subdued the countries adjoining, but were never able to reduce Arabia into the form of a Roman province. It is too common with historians to say that such or such a country was

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conquered, when, perhaps, only part of it was so. It is thus that Plutarch asserts, that the Arabs submitted to Lucullus;* whereas the most that we can believe is, that he might subdue some particular tribes; but he was recalled, and the command of the Roman army in Asia was given to Pompey. Pompey, though he triumphed over the three parts of the world, could not yet conquer Arabia. He carried his arms into the country, obtained some victories, and compelled Aretas to submit;† but other affairs soon obliged him to retire, and, by retiring, he lost all the advantages which he had gained.

"His forces were no sooner withdrawn, than the Arabs made their incursions again into the Roman provinces. Ælius Gallus,‡ in the reign of Augustus, penetrated far into the country, but a strange distemper made terrible havock in his army; and, after two years spent in this

* Plutarch, in Lucullo, passim.

† Plutarch, in Pompeio, p. 640. Edit. Paris, 1624.

‡ Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1126. Edit. Amstel. 1707.

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unfortunate expedition, he was glad to escape with the small remainder of his forces.

"The Emperor Trajan reduced some parts of Arabia, but he could never subdue it entirely; and, when he besieged the city of the Hagarenes, as Dio says,* his soldiers were repelled by whirlwinds. About eighty years after, the Emperor Severus twice besieged the same city with a numerous army, and a formidable train of military engines; but he had no better success than Trajan. He made some assaults, but was baffled and defeated, and returned with precipitation as great as his vexation for his disappointment. And if such great emperors and able warriors as Trajan and Severus could not succeed in their attempts, it is no wonder that the following emperors could prevail nothing. The Arabs continued their incursions and depredations, in Syria and other Roman provinces, with equal licence and impunity.

"Such was the state and condition of the

* Dionis Hist. lib. 68. p. 785. Edit. Leunclav. Hanov.

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Arabs, to the time of their famous prophet Mohammed, who laid the foundations of a mighty empire: and then, for several centuries, they were better known among the European nations by the name of the *Sarraceni*, or Saracens, the *Arraceni* of Pliny,* and the *Hagarenes* of Holy Scripture.† Their conquests were, indeed, amazingly rapid; they can be compared to nothing more properly than to a sudden flood, or inundation. In a few years the Saracens overran more countries, and subdued more people than the Romans did in centuries; and they were then not only free and independent of the rest of the world, but were themselves masters of the most considerable parts of the earth. And so they continued for above three centuries; and after their empire was dissolved, and they were reduced within the limits of their native country, they still maintained their liberty against the Tartars,

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 32.

† *Hagarenes*, the descendants of Ishmael. They are called also Ishmaelites and Saracens. Calmet's Dict.

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Mamalukes, Turks, and all foreign enemies whatever.*

"Whoever were the conquerors of Asia, they were still unconquered, still continued their incursions, and preyed upon all alike. The Turks have now for several centuries been lords of the adjacent countries; but they have been so little able to restrain the depredations of the Arabs, that they have been obliged to pay them a sort of annual tribute for the safe passage and security of the pilgrims, who usually go in great companies to Mecca; so that the Turks have rather been dependent upon them, than they upon the Turks. And they still continue the same practices, and preserve the same superiority, if we may believe the concurrent testimony of modern travellers of all nations."†

* The Saracens began their conquests A.D. 622. Their empire was broken and divided A.D. 936. See Blair's Chronol. Tables, 33—39.

† Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. pp. 46—54.

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CHAPTER IV.

City of Ctesiphon.—Extensive mound.—High wall.—Supposed canal.—Ancient remains.—Description of Tauk Kesra.—Search made for coins, &c.—Sack of the palace of Tauk Kesra by the Saracens.—Valuable spoils.—Rich carpet.—Decay of Ctesiphon.—Tomb of Selman Pauk.—Annual pilgrimage to it.—Mosque, tombs, &c.—Seleucia.—Ruins of the city.—Fragments of a bridge.—Sites of the two cities.—Impediments in the way of research.—Calamities of Seleucia.—Bridge of boats over the Diala.—Arrival at Bagdad.

NOVEMBER 5th.—From daylight until noon, I have passed a succession of broken vases, made of baked clay; the inner portion of each was highly polished, of various colours, and some had human bones sticking to them. They were all close upon the left bank of the Tigris; and

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it is to be remarked, that whenever a running stream is in the vicinity of an ancient site, these earthen coffins are sure to be found on its bank.

Half an hour after, I crossed over to the right, or eastern bank, when I was on the site of Ctesiphon;* and immediately observed mounds, superficially covered with the same fragments and materials as I have already mentioned in describing those hillocks I had hitherto met with. This spot is called by the natives the "Garden of Kisra." The first mound, which was composed of furnace-burnt bricks as a foundation, and sun-dried, mixed up with chopped straw, for the superstructure, one course separated from another by irregular layers of reeds, extended from the bank of the river, in a northerly direction, for seven hun-

* "The Parthians, in order to do by Seleucia as the Greeks, who built that place, had done by Babylon, built the city of Ctesiphon, within three miles of it, in the track called Chalonitis, in order to dispeople and impoverish it, though it is now the head city of the kingdom."- *Plin. Nat. Hist.* b. vi. c. 26.

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dred and fifty feet; its height and thickness varied from thirty to thirty-six feet.

The elevation of the wall that edged from out this mound, on the margin of the bank, was forty feet. It then formed an angle, and stretched away North-west for eight hundred yards, when there was a breach, or gap, one hundred and thirty-five feet wide, probably once occupied by some grand gate of entrance. The wall, or rampart line, then re-commences, and runs on the same bearings for seven hundred and fifty yards more, when we came to another break, which appeared to be the bed of a canal, as the stratum, or channel, varied from fifteen to twenty feet deep; the breadth being one hundred and fifty yards, and therefore capable of admitting a very large body of water. The direction of the dry bed of this channel was North-east, and appeared to extend to an unbroken ridge of mounds running North-west and South-east at the distance of eight or nine miles.

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The high wall, already followed, embraces an extensive area, where no vestiges of former buildings exist, and runs to the verge of the river. Its summit and sides are covered with the remains of ancient building; and it is astonishing, that, after the lapse of so many centuries, these walls appear to have lost nothing of their regular construction.

From the bed of the canal, and a quarter of a mile to the North-west, over a space marked by memorials of the past, interspersed with patches of the camel thorn, stands the Tauk Kesra, a magnificent monument of antiquity,* surprising the spectator with the perfect state of its preservation, after having braved the warring elements for so many ages; without an emblem to throw any light upon its history; without proof, or character to be traced on any brick or wall.

This stupendous, stately fragment of ages

* See Appendix, H.

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long since forgot, is built of fine furnace-burnt bricks, each measuring twelve inches square by two and three quarters thick, and coated with cement. The full extent of the front, or eastern face, is three hundred feet. It is divided by a high semicircular arch, supported by walls sixteen feet thick; the arch itself making a span of eighty-six feet, and rising to the height of one hundred and three feet. The front of the building is ornamented and surmounted by four rows of small arched recesses, resembling in form the large one. The style and execution of these are most delicate, evincing a fertile invention and great experience in the architectural art.

From the vestibule a hall extends to the depth of one hundred and fifty-six feet East and West, where a wall forms the back of the building, a great portion of which, together with part of the roof, is broken down. In the centre of the wall, or western face of the structure, a doorway, measuring twenty-four

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feet high by twelve wide, leads to a contiguous heap of mounds, extending to the bank of the river, about a quarter of a mile distant. The general shape of these hillocks is elliptical, and their circumference two miles.

To the right are fragments of walls, and broken masses of brickwork; to the left, and therefore to the south of the arch, are the remains of vast structures, which, though encumbered with heaps of earth, are yet sufficiently visible to fill the mind of the spectator with astonishment, at the thought that the destroying hand of Time could have failed in entirely concealing, from the inquiring eye, these wrecks of remote antiquity.*

* The natives of this country assert, that the ruins are of the age of Nimrod, of whom, in Scripture, it is said, "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."—Gen. chap. x. ver. 10.

A celebrated antiquary, M. de Broses, one of the Presidents of the Royal Academy in Paris, supposes that Calneh stood on the site of Ctesiphon.—*Memoires de l'Academie Royale*, tome xxvii. p. 31.

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I dug into the sides and bases of many of these mounds. Their foundations were invariably composed of the fire-burnt brick, while the sun-burnt formed the exterior or higher mass of each heap. I had the satisfaction of discovering a silver coin of one of the Parthian kings, a brass coin of Seleucus Nicator, and three talismanic perforated cylinders, which differ in no respect from the Babylonian. All are in an equally perfect state. There is no doubt that the natives often pick up coins of gold, silver, and copper; for which they always find a ready sale in Bagdad. Indeed, some of the wealthy Turks and Armenians, who are collecting for several French and German Consuls, hire people to go in search of coins, medals, and antique gems: and I am assured they never return to their employers empty-handed.

The riches contained within the venerable pile I have just described appear to have been immense. The sack of the palace by the Saracens, as related by Gibbon, took place in

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the A. D. 637. "The capital was taken by assault, and the tumultuous resistance of the people gave a keener edge to the sabres of the Moslems, who shouted with religious transport, 'This is the white Palace of Chosroes! this is the promise of the Apostle of God!' The poor robbers of the Desert were suddenly enriched beyond the measure of their hope or knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new treasure, secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed. The gold and silver, the various wardrobes and costly furniture, surpassed (says Abulfeda,) the estimate of fancy or numbers. One of the apartments of the palace was decorated with a carpet of silk, sixty cubits in length, and as many in breadth; a paradise, or garden, was depictured on the ground; the flowers, fruits, and shrubs, were imitated by the figures of the gold embroidery, and the colours of the precious stones; and the ample square was encircled by a variegated and verdant border.

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"The Arabian General persuaded his soldiers to relinquish their claim, in the reasonable hope that the eyes of the Caliph would be delighted with the splendour of the workmanship. Regardless of the merit of art and the pomp of royalty, the rigid Omar divided the prize among his brethren of Medina: the picture was destroyed; but such was the intrinsic value of the materials, that the share of Ali alone was sold for twenty thousand drams.

"A mule that carried away the tiara and cuirass, the belt and bracelets of Chosroes, was overtaken by the pursuers. The gorgeous trophy was presented to the commander of the faithful, and the gravest of the companions condescended to smile when they beheld the white beard, the hairy arms, and uncouth figure of the veteran, who was invested with the spoils of the great king. The sack of Ctesiphon was followed by its desertion and gradual decay. The Saracens disliked the air and

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situation of the place; and Omar was advised by his General to remove the seat of government to the western side of the Euphrates.*

At a distance of five hundred yards North, ten degrees West of Tauk Kesra, is the tomb of Selman Pauk, otherwise Selman the Pure, or Pious,† who, the Turks affirm, was once a Christian, but eventually became a follower of the prophet Mohammed, who appointed him his barber; which situation he filled for many years. Hence, all the professors and operators of chirurgery, phlebotomy, chiropody, "*et hoc genus omne*," perform a yearly pilgrimage from Bagdad to his tomb; which is surrounded by a brick wall, encompassing a good court, and having commodious accommodation, answering every purpose of a caravansary.

To the South-west, and consequently in an oblique direction between the Tauk and the river, stand the ruins of a mosque, and two

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ix. cap. 51.

† See Appendix, I.

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mouldering tombs, forming an affecting contrast to its contemporary. These relics contain the ashes of *Hadhaifah*, the secretary of the prophet, and the Caliph Moostasem Billah, who was killed by Hulakoo,* the Mogul conqueror of Persia, and grandson of the famous Zengis, or Ghengis Khan.

Among the scattered fragments of brick-work and loose pieces of tile and stones within the ruined quadrangular wall, enclosing the tombs, I found the exuviæ of snakes in abundance; and from its vicinity to the Tigris, it must, severely suffer by the regular overflowings of its waters.

Having examined the remains of Ctesiphon, I crossed over to the site of the once magnificent and populous Greek city,† and at every

* This Prince established the Mogul dynasty.

† "Seleucia was built by Seleucus Nicator, forty miles from Babylon, *at a point of the confluence of the Euphrates with the Tigris, by a canal.* There were six hundred thousand citizens here at one time, and all the commerce and wealth of Babylon had flowed into it. The territory on which it stood was called Babylonia; but it was itself a free state,

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step had new occasion to muse upon the scene of desolation which presented itself, as far as the eye could reach. Time, violence, and repeated inundations have levelled every thing. I looked in vain for monuments, pillars, aqueducts, and buildings. Bricks of every kind, mixed up with layers of straw; varnished tiles, and pottery of every colour, (the predominant one being blue); stones calcareous, sandy, and granite; flint-glass, shells, and a variety of vitreous and nitrous substances; these, and these alone, compose what remains of the once magnificent Seleucia.

There is not a single entire building; nothing but a small remnant of a wall and a few portions of decayed brickwork, is left to mark the foot of the spoiler, and bid us mourn in silence and solitude over fallen and departed grandeur. The traveller ought to

and the people lived after the laws and manners of the Macedonians. The form of the walls was said to resemble an eagle spreading her wings, and the soil around it was thought the most fertile in the East."—*Plin. Nat. Hist.* b. vi. c. 26.

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visit Seleucia, previous to passing over to Ctesiphon; by so doing, he will not expect to meet with any thing half so grand as the arch which rivets him to the spot, which, in this part of the world, in point of architectural beauty, is perfectly unique.

This structure I surveyed first, so ardent was my solicitude to reach the porch of the building, after having caught a glimpse of it the evening before. With a mind full of its beauties, I passed on to Seleucia; and there being no building, not even the fragment of one visible, I experienced, I must confess, great grief and disappointment. It is, however, surprising, that so much is still left to mark the sites of these once great cities, situated as they are in a country that is inundated for so many months in the season. Even at this moment, which is the driest time of the whole year, there are pools of water inhabited by large flocks of bitterns;* and herbage is scattered over the

* The Ardea stellaris of Linnæus.

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plain; but on the site of Ctesiphon, the smallest insect under heaven would not find a single blade of grass wherein to hide itself, nor one drop of water to allay its thirst.

Although former travellers who have visited this spot, do not speak of any remains on the river, I have no hesitation in pointing to the fragments of a bridge, which appears once to have connected the two cities, from the vast quantity of ruined materials lying in heaps on either bank, composed of fire-burnt bricks made of argillaceous earth, and a great quantity of detached brickwork beneath the water. The shallowness of the river afforded me an opportunity of observing this very particularly, and induced me to procure the aid of divers, who invariably brought up bricks broken and unbroken, remarkable for their hardness and solidity. Hence I would infer, that these fragments now resting on the river's bed, could only have been appropriated to the purpose already mentioned.

The reader will be better able to judge of

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the extent of the irregular mounds and hillocks that overspread the sites of these renowned cities, when I tell him, that it would occupy some months to take the bearings and dimensions of each with accuracy. In this undertaking, great interruption and much molestation would be offered by the Arabs who tend their cattle, sheep, and camels on the spot, and who are so very suspicious, that no excavation can be made without their supposing some hidden treasure has been discovered. Consequently, these people would do all in their power to prevent the antiquary from continuing his researches, or even remaining here for any length of time. At this period it would be impossible to make the attempt, both from the disturbed and unsettled state of the country, which, I lament to add, is scarcely ever in a state of tranquillity, and from the spirit of rebellion and tyranny innate in the heart of all Moslemites from Constantinople to the Erythrean Sea. I do not apply this remark to Greece, as I am in hopes we have driven them from that sacred soil.

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The prevailing report and opinion among the Turks at the time I am writing is, that the combined powers of Europe have accomplished this much-wished-for event. I have now only to add, that the greater part of the remains of Ctesiphon extend in a northerly direction; whilst the masses of ruin on the site of Seleucia stretch away to the southward, and are altogether at a greater distance from the bank of the river than Ctesiphon. The Greek city appears to occupy a more considerable tract of country, although its remains are, to all appearance, of lesser magnitude than its Parthian neighbour.*

I shall briefly notice, in this part of my journal, on the authority of Gibbon, the repeated calamities and ultimate ruin of the chief of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia. For many ages, Seleucia retained the

* The site of Seleucia is in the neighbourhood of a very ancient place, called Coche, "in confluente Euphratis, fossa perducta atque Tigris," says Pliny: this canal bears the appellative, Nahar Malka, "quod significat fluvius regum."

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genuine character of a Grecian colony, renowned for arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of six hundred thousand citizens. The walls of the city were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, the inhabitants viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian: but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony.

The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors; and the Imperial camp was pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia. The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly grew into a great city.

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Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia, A. D. 165. They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings; yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tarnished the glory of the Roman triumph. Both cities lie about nineteen miles to the South of Bagdad.

November 7th.—It was past midnight before I persuaded myself to quit the moldering walls of this ancient city. The cloudless sky was studded with stars, and the air so beautifully soft and pure, that I could not be unmindful of being in the land of Chaldea, where the shepherds lay gazing on the same constellations, and from them derived the first lessons of astronomy.

For two hours I had been seated beneath a ruined rampart of the city, which appeared to be the most perfect mass on the desert plain.

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It extended five hundred yards North, and rose from beneath the mounds for twenty-five feet. From this spot, by the light of the moon, I beheld, for the last time, the crumbling and solitary ruins. The deep repose of the scene was scarcely disturbed; for the breeze that wafted the sound of the browsing camel's tinkling bell, was all that broke the calm silence that prevailed around me, and

——" Mid Heaven's blue arch serene,
Th' unclouded moon smiled down upon the scene."

While contemplating these scattered fragments by the light of the moon, the solemnity and stillness of the scene, and the memorials of departed grandeur on all sides, powerfully affected my imagination!

Leaving Seleucia, I proceeded North-west till noon, when I crossed the Diala, over a bridge of boats. Its mouth is sixty yards broad, and at this time the stream was running with rapidity, a proof that the rains had already fallen on the mountains. When this

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river is low, the natives are unable to drink of its waters, their qualities being so very saline. The people of the country only know this classical river by the appellation of Diala; its apparent course from this place is N. N. W.*

At five in the afternoon, I reached the suburbs of the celebrated residence of the Caliphs; when, to escape observation, I embarked on the Tigris, and had a fine view of Bagdad. The lofty pointed minarets, and swelling domes of the beautifully-shaped mosques reflecting the rays of the sun, gave them a white appearance, and exhibited a very striking effect, which disappeared on my entering the walls of the city; where I was met by two Noubechi's †, who conducted me to Aga Minas, the British Agent, who kindly received and hospitably entertained me. This Armenian is an intelligent and active servant of the Indian

* Hence to Koote, the Tigris is called Diglah, from a town of that name about fifty miles to the North of Bagdad.

† Armed footmen of the British residency in the Pashalic.

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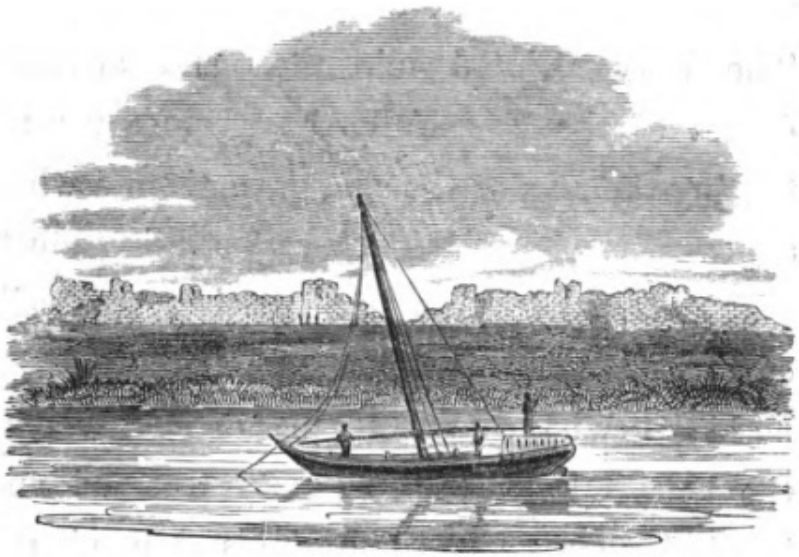
government; having held the situation of Dragoman to the East India Company's late residents in this city for thirty years. His father was also an effective servant in the time of Sir Harford Jones.



Remains of a Wall on the Site of Seleucia.

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CHAPTER V.

Mr. Rich.—His character.—The Pasha Daoud.—Risafah, a lofty minaret.—Village of Kauzumeen.—Mosque.—Tomb of Zobeide.—The Talism Gate.—Inscription.—Monastery of Dervishes.—The Madraset.—Caravansary and mosque founded by Mirjan.—Number of vagrants.—Their extreme wretchedness.—The Author assumes the Turkish dress.—Tull Akerkouf.—Canal.—Bronze figure.—Extensive ruins.—Robberies of the Arabs.—Circular pillars.—Azad Khaun.—Sheikh Shoubar.—Iskanderia.—Hadjee Suleiman.—Hillah.—Entrance to Babylon.

THE English traveller arriving in this city, will not fail to meet with the greatest attention from all classes of people, on account of the high veneration and respect they bear to the memory of the lamented Mr. Rich, the late British Resident; who upheld the honour of the nation he represented, and at the same time gained the greatest reputation himself,

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during an administration of fourteen years.* The Turks and Christians fondly cherish the recollection of his many amiable qualities, and his name is imprinted on their hearts—too deeply, ever to be forgotten. I need hardly add, what heart-felt satisfaction this gave me; and, on walking through the streets, I could not but contrast the deportment of the Moslems with their Persian neighbours, particularly at the city of Shirauz, where the English traveller cannot with any degree of personal safety traverse the town without an attendant of the British Agent, and even then he is often stoned, and always abused and ridiculed.

Bagdad† is well known, from having been

* Mr. Rich was appointed the East India Company's resident at Bagdad, in 1806. In the year 1821, he quitted that city on a visit to Shirauz, (viâ Basra, and Bushire,) whence he was destined never to return, being carried off by an attack of *Cholera Morbus*, after an illness of eight hours. His remains were interred without the city walls; but the heartless Persians could not allow them to repose undisturbed, to the eternal disgrace of the Prince Houssain Ali Mirza; and in 1826, the Envoy to the Persian court removed his remains to the Armenian burying-ground at Ispahan.

† See Appendix, K. This city is called by Marco Polo, *Baldachi*.

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the residence of the Caliphs; and, according to the observations made by several British officers, is in latitude 33° 19′ 40″ N. Colonel Macdonald Kinneir makes its longitude 44° 24″ E. That accomplished writer, in his admirable Memoir of the Persian Empire, has given such a correct account of this city, (as also of the town of Hillah, on the Euphrates,) that it would be presumption in me, and only engrossing the time and exhausting the patience of the reader, were I to offer any detailed description; though I trust for forgiveness in submitting a few notices here, on the principal buildings and monuments still standing to perpetuate the memory of many of the earlier commanders of the faithful.

According to the best-informed Mahomedan writers, the city was commenced by the Caliph Mansoor il Dewaniky, in the year 139, and completed in 146.* This Caliph erected a mosque without the walls, called Imaum Athum, and a college, both which buildings

* It is to be remarked that all these dates are of the Hegira.

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are still to be seen; though on a part of the site of the latter, Daoud Pasha has erected a superb mosque, and two stately minarets.

This man arrrived at Bagdad at the beginning of Suleiman Pasha's government, and was brought up like the other slaves in the palace. From the post of *Mohrdar*, or keeper of the seals, he was elevated to that of *Dufterdar*, or keeper of the records, when Suleiman Pasha gave him one of his daughters in marriage. Being on bad terms with his brother-in-law, he was neglected and slighted.

During this period he gave himself up to the study of divinity and Turkish law, until Abdalla's elevation to the Musnud. This Pasha appointed Daoud likewise to the situation of Dufterdar, in which capacity he displayed both wisdom and courage. He also held a similar office under Saaeed Pasha, who wished to make him his *Kehyah*, or lieutenant; but, being suspected of intrigue, he was superseded, and fearing lest he might lose his head, fled to Sulimaniah, where, with the assistance of Mahommed Ali

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Mirza, he in a short time succeeded to the Pashalick; in which elevated situation he has ever since remained.*

Mansoor's eldest son, Mahommed il Mahdee, built a lofty minaret, in the year 168, called Risafah, and situated in a bazaar now termed the Thread-market. It is the highest and oldest in the city, and stands near the centre; it is encircled with a Cufic inscription, beautifully executed in brickwork, but nearly defaced. Its spire, whence you may obtain a beautiful view of the river and its environs, still adds grace and dignity to the city. On a clear day the Tauk Kesra at Ctesiphon is plainly discernible.

The celebrated Haroun al Raschid erected a tomb to the memory of his lamented judge, Abu Yusuf, at Kauzumeen, a village about one hour's ride from the walls of Bagdad. That place is much visited by the Moslems,

* Keppel is decidedly wrong, when he asserts that this Pasha was a beggar at the palace gate. I have heard that Daoud was for some time in the service of Sir John Malcolm.

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from the circumstance of two descendants of the Prophet being interred there.

The largest mosque in Kauzumeen was built by Shah Ismael, in the year 914; it has since been beautifully adorned by Aga Mahomed Khan, uncle to the present Shah, and the first Persian sovereign that made Tehraun a royal residence.

In the year 198, Haroun's eldest son, Mahomed Ameen, built a mosque, situated within the walls; near which stand the tomb and shrine of the beautiful Zobeide,* the wife and favourite of Al Raschid. This was erected by his second son, Abdalla al Mamoon, in 212. It is, however, a mean and inferior memorial for so celebrated a woman, and, consequently, cannot fail to create disappointment. The building is octangular, capped with a cone, exactly resembling a *pine-apple*, a form never

* "Nom d'une fille de Giâfer Ben Mansour, que le Khalife Haroun al Raschid épousa solennellement, et qui fut mère du Khalife Amin. Le Pélerinage qu'elle fit à la Mecque s'est rendu celèbre, à cause des grandes aumônes qu'elle fit sur sa route."—*D'Herbelôt*.

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adopted at the present day: though there is a structure within the city which bears some resemblance to that mode of building; it was erected in the year 622, and is called Sheikh Shahaub-ul Deen.

The Talism gate is well worthy of observation, being the finest and largest in Bagdad, measuring fifty-six feet in height by fifty-one in diameter. It is walled up, in honour of Sultan Murad IV. who quitted the city by it, on his return to Constantinople, after having recovered Bagdad from the Persians. Some writers erroneously suppose, that the gate was built on occasion of the Sultan's triumphal entry; but this custom is only observed at the departure of royalty, from which time the gate is held sacred.

There is now within the walls a caravansary, built by a Pasha in 999; one of its gates is closed up in a like manner, and for a similar reason. The following is a literal translation of the Arabic inscription, written round the outer face of the Talism:

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"In the name of the merciful and beneficent.—'*And if Abraham and Ismâael take the laws from the temple, our Lord will accept at our hands that thou art the hearer, the wise.*'*—This is what *he* commanded should be built; our Prince and Lord, the Imaum (obedience to whom is binding on all mankind); *Abu'l abbas Ahmed Al nasir li din Illah*, chief of the true believers; the successor appointed by the Lord of all worlds; the evidence of God, (on whom be glory and exaltation,) to all his creatures: —the peace and mercy of God be upon his spotless ancestors; may his true call on mankind to submission, aid, and guidance, continue to be the bounden duty of the faithful, *in listening and attention.* The completion was vouchsafed in the year 618. The mercy of God be on our master Mohammed, and his pious and immaculate house." †

In 590, the Caliph built a banquetting-house, on the left bank of the Tigris, within the city

* A verse of the Koran, usually introduced in such dedicatory lines. † See Appendix, L.

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walls, which, since the time of Sultan Murad, has been a monastery of dervishes, of the Bektash order, so named from their founder, Hadjee Bektash; and, in 625, Moostanser Billah founded a school, which is now a khaun; and the old kitchen is the present Custom-house.

The annexed inscription is to be traced on the walls of the Madraset, ul Mustansariah, situated at the head of the bridge in Bagdad:

"In the name of the merciful and beneficent God.—'*And there is a sect amongst you who invite to holiness, command piety, and forbid vice; and these are the saved.*'* The servant of God, and his Khalif, Abu Jaafer al Mansoor al Mustanser Billah, chief of the faithful, with whose dominion may God exalt the Moslems, commanded the commencement of this propitious college; looking to the favour of that being who destroyeth not the reward of the pious, and desiring the acceptance of the Lord of worlds, and the chief of prophets;

* A verse of the Koran, as above.

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whose excellent commands and dominion may God assist, by the power of whose resplendent kingdom may he exalt the cause of Islam, and by its comeliness bless mankind with the resplendent truth.

"This glorious college was completed with the aid of the all-powerful, and of the uncontaminate scripture, and with supplications to the strong pillar of support, and this in the year 630. Peace to our master Mohammed the prophet, and to his house." *

In the year 758, Mirjan, minister to the Sultan, came from Persia, whence he solicited permission to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca; but his subsequent conduct in seizing on the government of Bagdad, proved that this holy project was but a mere pretence. He founded a khaun, or caravansary, which is in good repair to this day; and a mosque, called after him, Merjaniah, upon the walls of which this inscription is to be seen:

* See Appendix, M.

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"In the name of God, the merciful and the beneficent.—'*As to temples, God hath permitted that they should be raised, and that, in them, men should remember his name and should glorify him therein, in the morning and in the evening; men whom neither traffic nor sale beguileth from the remembrance of God.*'* The dependent on the compassion of the most merciful king, Mirjan, son of Abdallah, son of Abdurrahman, the Sultani, the Oolkhani, commenced this: may his devotion find acceptance with God in both worlds; and the peace of God be on our master Mohammed and his family, and his companions, pious and uncontaminate, A. H. 758." †

The pleasure I derived from making these short excursions in and around the city, was greatly diminished at beholding the numbers of vagrants who were seen lying about the streets; victims of poverty, sickness, and famine. The women and children were truly piteous objects, and in a state of nudity. I never saw such mi-

* From the Koran. † See Appendix, N.

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serable examples of human wretchedness. These poor creatures, I was informed, had migrated from Mosul in hopes of finding employment, and escaping that fatal scourge the *cholera morbus*, which raged to such a degree this summer, that there were not people to gather in the harvest. Those who found purchasers, sold their children to the highest bidder: while the remaining inhabitants who were less fortunate, were said to have been seen sacrificing their offspring to their own *uncontrollable hunger*. For the sake of human nature, I sincerely trust this is an exaggeration; I received it from scarcely dubitable authority, as a true, and faithful picture of the suffering people of Mosul.

Those children who were old enough fled from their parents, and one poor boy is now with me, (an only son,) who left his aged and forlorn mother, from the horrible apprehension of sharing a similar fate. In fact, two months ago, young and beautiful girls were publicly

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sold in this city for a sum equivalent to ten pounds sterling! and many of these hapless creatures were Christians!! Let us hasten from the contemplation of this mournful picture!

NOVEMBER 20th.—I proposed visiting an old ruin, about nine miles from the city; but as the Arabs had been committing some depredations in the neighbourhood, it was deemed advisable by my kind host, Aga Minas, that I should assume the dress of the country, which I strongly recommend to every traveller whose object is a laudable curiosity, and a wish to gain some insight into the manners, habits, and customs of the inhabitants. After equipping myself in a new Turkish dress, I issued from the Agent's house, and crossed the Tigris by a floating bridge of thirty-two boats.* On clearing the walls I was joined by a guard, consisting of five Arabs armed with swords and spears.

* The river opposite the *Babil-Jisser* is two hundred yards in breadth.

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After a walk of three hours, on a bearing due W. N. W., we gained the summit of an elevated mound, supporting a ponderous mass of ruin, which is called by the Arabs Tull Akerkouf, vulgarly *Agergoaf*, and by the Turks Nemroud Tepessy, both which appellations signify the Mound of Nemroud, or Nimrod, not the *Tower* of Nemroud, as it has been translated. Our path was partially strewed with loose pieces of burnt and unburnt brick and tile. At times we saw a dead camel, from which we scared several hungry hawks, that were feasting on the offensive carcase.

At the seventh mile we crossed the dry bed of a canal of great magnitude, supposed by some to be the river Narraga of Pliny, near which, he says, was a city called Hipparenum.* This canal is said to be the remains of the canal of Isa, and is supposed to connect the Tigris

* "Sunt etiamnum in Mesopotamiâ oppida: Hipparenum, Chaldœorum doctrinâ clarum, et hoc, sicut Babylonia, juxta fluvium Narragam, qui dedit civitati nomen. Muros Hipparenorum Persæ diruêre."—*Plin.* lib. vi. cap. 26.

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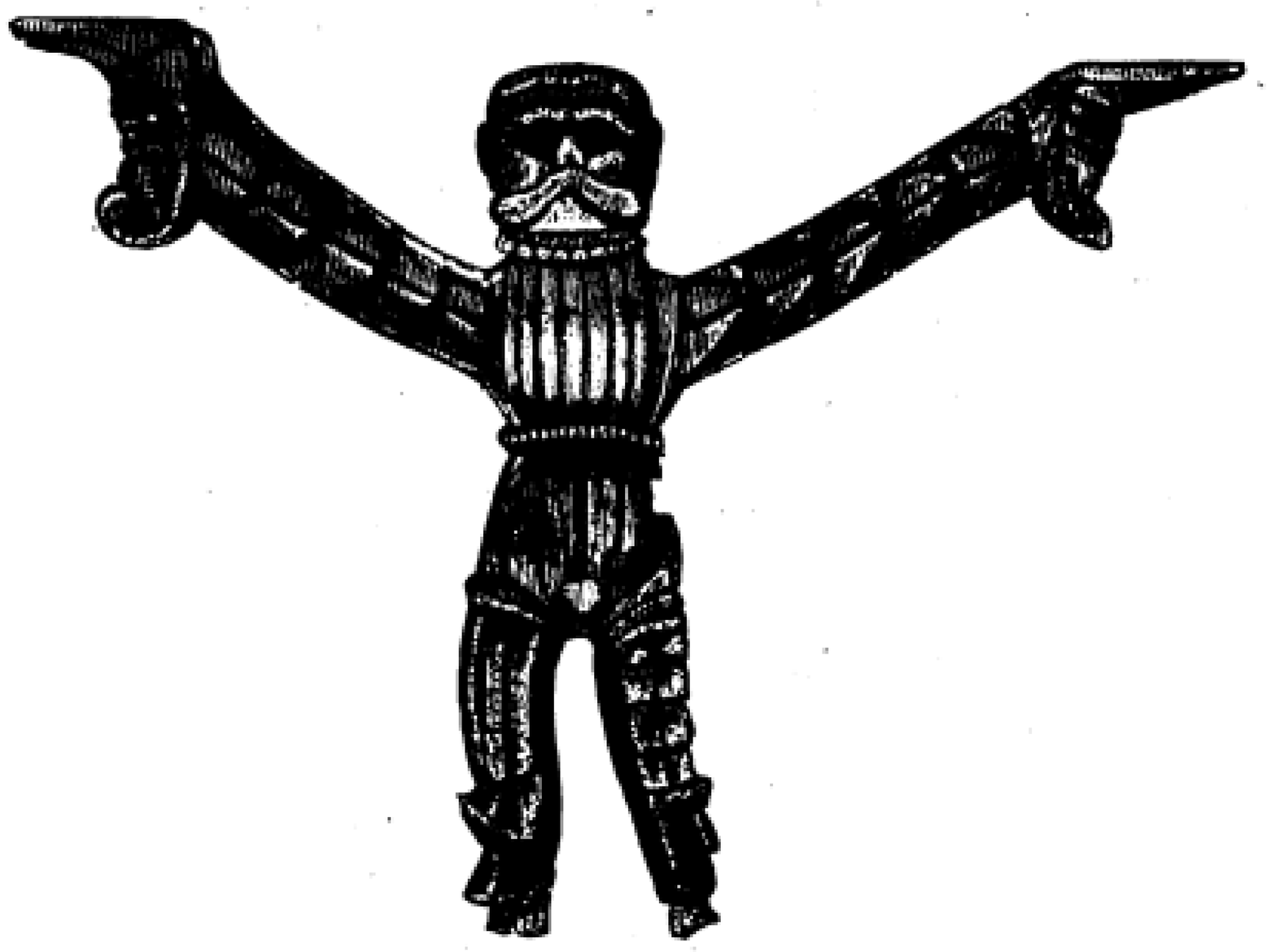
with the river Euphrates, at a point where these rivers approach each other; but in following its course I found that it discharges itself into the Tigris four miles *below* Bagdad: a circumstance that refutes its identity with the canal of Isa. This channel ran North and South. Hence, until we arrived in the vicinity of the ruins, we passed small parties of Arabs, who were employed in tending their flocks and herds. Not far from one of these encampments I found a bronze figure, apparently of an European, in the costume of the middle ages.



Bronze figure found near Akerkouf.

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The ruins of a city are here very apparent, extensive undulating mounds stretching towards the South and East; while to the North and West they are comparatively small, and extend only a short distance from their giant-like neighbours. This ruin sweeps irregularly upwards, and its form appears to have been originally square, for the bricks are placed so as to favour this opinion; it does not, however, exactly face the cardinal points, as some former travellers assert. It is entirely composed of sun-dried bricks, made of clay mixed with chopped straw, each measuring a square of nine inches by four in thickness. At every *seventh* * course of bricks, a layer of reeds is placed between the horizontal courses of the brickwork, without any apparent cement. These layers are very regular from top to bottom; but

* Mr. Rich is mistaken, when he says that the layers of reed are between every fifth or sixth layer of bricks, and that the number is not regulated. He has likewise made the circumference of the ruin one hundred feet less than it really is.—*Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*, p. 41.

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the bricks composing this colossal mass are of uncommon beauty, when we consider the material of which they are composed. This structure certainly has been the habitation of some important personage; nay, I almost fancy I beheld the residence of a rich and powerful sovereign.*

The ruin is, without doubt, solid, and is pierced with small holes, which appear to have been designed for the purpose of admitting a free current of air; but some imagine they held the scaffolding when the workmen were employed in its erection. Large wooden beams are passed through, apparently to strengthen the huge fabric of brickwork. On the North-eastern face, nearly in the centre, is an aperture, somewhat resembling a Gothic window; for what purpose it was intended, it is now impos-

* "Cependant on ne peut pas bien decider aujourd'hui à quel dessein cet edifice a été élevé. Peut-être étoit-ce le terrein sur lequel un des premières Califes de Bagdad, ou même un des Rois de Perse qui residoit à al Modaien, avoit une maison de campagne, pour prendre un air fraix et froid, sur la hauteur."—*M. Niebuhr, Voyage en Arabie,* ii.tome p. 248. 4to.

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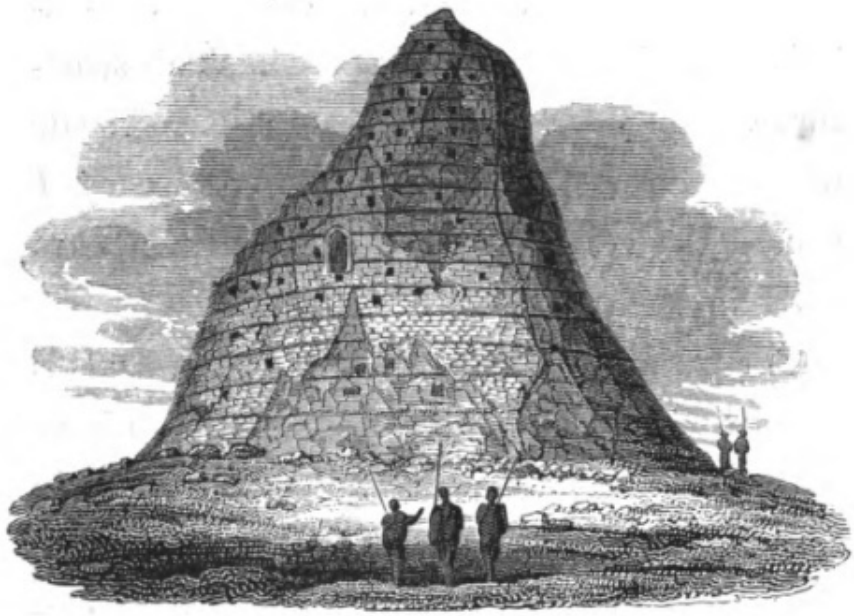

Remarkable ruin, called Tull Akerkouf.

sible to determine. Tavernier relates, that "a little way from Bagdad, there is the foundation of a city, which may seem to have been a large league in compass. There are some of the walls yet standing, made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three thick."* Tavernier, no doubt, alludes to these ruins; he conceived it to be the remains of some tower, built by one

* Tavernier, vol. ii. c. v.

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of the Arab princes, for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war: this, in all probability, was near the truth. From the summit to the base of the brickwork, it is one hundred and twenty-five feet,* the circumference is four hundred feet, and from the brickwork to the foundation of the rubbish, which now forms its pedestal, it is twenty feet. A vast number of dried bats are to be seen in the small cavities of the structure. I do not think this ruin ever exhibited the written character, or the bitumen which is used throughout the Babylonian remains; nor in searching among the surrounding mounds, could I trace vestiges of building in any mass resembling the remnants of a regular architectural structure; though the surface of these mounds was strewed with broken bricks, earthenware vessels, vitrified pieces of clay, many perfectly black; and small stones, once forming a portion of, but now surviving the clay that formed

* Niebuhr states the height of this ruined monument at seventy Danish feet.

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the principal ingredient of every brick. As the rain fell in torrents, I only remained at Akerkouf for two hours: I came prepared to attempt some excavations on its site, but the weather precluded the practicability of it, and compelled us to retrace our steps to Bagdad, where we arrived at nightfall.

My attention now became devoted to the ruins of BABYLON, the parent city of the world, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, the audacious assailant of the empyrean,—now a heap and a wilderness, a dwelling-place for dragons, and bereaved of man; still lowering o'er the Desert, still frowning defiance and disdain of time and the warring elements, though spurned alike by the heel of the Ottoman, the Israelite, and the sons of Ishmael.

With an imagination loaded and oppressed by the recollection of its splendour and its vicissitudes, I hastily concluded a few necessary preparations, and retaining the Turkish dress, started on the morning of the 28th, and crossed the bridge of boats already noticed,

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with a small cavalcade consisting of a Chocadar* from the Pasha, who acted as Tissaphernes, one Chaóosh, (a herald, or running footman,) in the service of Aga Minas, and an armed Desert Arab, who considered that his presence would be of more utility in case of any attack on the road, than the united force of a whole caravan.

The Arabs are certainly retrogressive, in point of improvement and civilization. Seven years ago, a robbery on the Hillah road was unheard of; now, it occurs weekly: large caravans are stopped and plundered, and no inquiry or search is made after the audacious perpetrators. In fact, the other day, a rich caravan had scarcely quitted the gates of this city, on its route to Aleppo, before the people of the Desert attacked it, and carried off property to a very considerable amount.

But to return:—Clearing the walls, I dismounted, and proceeded on foot, over an excel-

* Chokhadar, or Ich Agâsi of the Pashalic of Bagdad; one of the pages of the Pasha's presence.

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lent road running S. 10° W., while my horsemen went before, and amused themselves by throwing the jereed, an amusement too often described to need any description from me.

The first objects that attract the eye on leaving the city, are two low circular pillars on each side of the road, built chiefly of brick, *inlaid* with the heads of two hundred of the Khezail Arabs, taken by the Pasha's army in their last engagement with this tribe.* A little before nine we passed a khaun, or caravansary, which must once have been a handsome building; but is now forsaken, and falling fast into ruins. It is called Keyah Khaun, from its founder Ahmed, the Kehyah, lieutenant or minister, of Suleiman Pasha;† it is about seven miles and a half from Bagdad.

* The Zobeide Arabs inhabit the whole of this district.

† Rather more than fifty years ago, this three-tailed Bashaw was the Mutessellim (governor) of Bussorah. On the surrender of that city to the Persians, he was taken prisoner, and conveyed to Shirauz, where he remained until the death of Kerim Khan in 1779, at which period he effected his escape, and successfully sued the Porte for the pashalic of Bagdad.

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At a distance of five miles from it, is Azad Khaun, a miserable dirty halting-place, built by Omar Pasha in the year of the Hegira 1092. Continuing, as usual, S. 10° W. we passed another caravansary, called by the Arabs Bir-en-neuss, or el-Neuss, its true appellative being Bur-il-nusf, meaning a well half dug out, or the half-way well. There is a Turkish tomb here, but whether of saint or of sinner I could not learn.

From Azad Khaun to this last station, we crossed the remains of several dry water-channels and canals, of great depth and width, some of which are attributed to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.* Of these the famed *fluvius regum* of that monarch is not the least important, though at present dry and neglected.

On an elevated and conspicuous mound, within six hundred yards of the road, is a quadrangular ruin, composed of reeds and sun-

* See Appendix, O.

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dried bricks, thirty feet high, and two hundred and fifty in circumference. The ground about it was covered with the usual vestiges of former buildings. The spot is called by the natives Sheikh Shoubar, and is visible at a considerable distance. About half-way between the two last stages, and over a small canal, is an old ruinous bridge, of one arch, of the best fire-burnt material.

Next to Mushhed Ali,* the finest hawks in the country for hunting the antelope are taken here. Antelopes are found in the neighbourhood in great numbers; for during the whole of the day, we saw these beautiful quadrupeds feeding among the thistles and short herbage, occasionally bounding before us as we disturbed them by our presence. They are frequently shot by the Arabs, who are too lazy to take them in the chase. From Khaun Azad to this

* This city, according to Kinneir, was founded by Alexander the Great, and was, for a considerable time, called Alexandria. It is thirty miles from Hillah, and four from Kufa, a town founded by Omar.

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place I made the distance seven miles and a half.

One hour before sunset brought us to a very spacious caravansary, the customary halting place. It is called Iskanderia, from the ruins of a village, and the bed of a canal in the neighbourhood. A ruinous khaun of the same name is still standing, though now deserted. The present inhabited building was erected during the last century, at the expense of the late Mohammed Hussein Khan, formerly Nizam-ad-Dowlah, or Home Minister of Futteh Ali Shah, for the convenience of Persian pilgrims, when on their road to Messhed Ali, the most distinguished place of pilgrimage which they possess. From several ridges of earth covered with vestiges of building, lying in every direction, I should imagine this spot to be the site of some considerable town; and the bricks are so plentiful, that the material of which the menzil is constructed, was gathered upon the spot. Iskanderia is two hours journey from Bir-el-Nusf, and lies in latitude 32° 56′ 18″, longitude 4°

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west of Bagdad. The water is very noxious here, as well as at all the caravanserais between Bagdad and Hillah.

NOVEMBER 29th.—We advanced at daylight, in the usual direction south, varying at intervals a little to the eastward, when two hours and three-quarters brought us to a mean building, called Hadjee Suleiman. It was founded by an Arab, upon whose family the Sultan Murad conferred the title of *Beg*, answering to our *Baronet*, as it is hereditary—with this difference, that on the father's death, should there be one or more sons, they all enjoy the title at the same time.

At this caravansary a deep canal crosses the road, cut from the Euphrates, near the village of Naseriat, which bears north twenty-five degrees west. Journeying for two hours more we reached Muhawwil, where there is a village of Fellahs, and consequently some cultivation is visible, for the first time since we quitted Bagdad. In fact, the whole country is an unin-

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