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5. Itinerary of the Mission.

Leaving Baghdad on the afternoon of the 29th October, 1917, the Mission proceeded by lunch to Basrah where it arrived at midnight of the 2nd November, 1917. Eight days were spent at Basrah collecting supplies and equipment and during this period I took advantage of the presence at Zubair of a number of chiefs of the neighbouring desert tribes to make myself acquainted with their affairs in a series of personal interviews with them.

By the morning of the 11 November, all was ready for a start and the Mission embarked on H. M.S. Lawrence, which had been placed at its disposal by the courtesy of Rear Admiral C. St. Wake. C.B., commanding the Naval Forces in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia.

On the 13th November, we arrived at Bahrain, where we found that the Political Agent, Captain P.G. Loch., I.A., had kindly made arrangements for the further progress of the Mission to Uqair by dhow.

At 9 a.m. on the following morning the Mission embarked on a dhow flying the flag of Ibn Saud and

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Captain Crozier of H.M.S. Lawrence having very kindly placed his steam cutter at our disposal to tow us some part of the way as there was no wind, we made good progress to the mouth of the Straits of Bahrain.

The journey from Bahrain to Uqair normally take seven or eight hours by dhow but, after parting company with the steam cutter, we drifted becalmed for the rest of that day and the next day's sun was setting as we eventually drew alongside the pier at Uqair on the 15th November, 1917.

From Uqair, where we were received on behalf of Ibn Saud by the local Amir, Abdul Rahman ibn Khairulla, we proceeded to Hasa, reaching Hufuf on the 19th November. Hospitably entertained here on behalf of Ibn Saud by Abdulla ibn Tilawi, the Governor of Hasa, we left Hufuf on the 22nd November, for the interior and arrived at Riyadh about midday on the 30th November.

At Riyadh as already noted we were met by Lieut-Colonel R.E.A. Hamilton, Political Agent at Kuwait, and most cordially received by His Excellency, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, and his father, the Imam

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Abdul Rahman ibn Faisal.

During the following days the Mission was very fully occupied in discussing with Ibn Saud the object of its visit. In him I found an indefatigable worker and, in spite of a tendency to be carried away from the point of his argument by the waves of his Qur'anic eloquence, a man of good business capacity moderately well versed in the affairs of the intricacies, of Arab politics and above all genuinely convinced of the necessity of the British alliance as the only secure safeguard of the interests of his country and people both now and hereafter.

By midnight of the 5th December having spent no less than 34 out of 132 hours since my arrival in interviews with Ibn Saud, to say nothing of subsidiary interviews with his cousin Ahmad ibn Thunaiyan, who appeared to be in his full confidence and was often sent to prepare the way for delicate subjects likely to arise in the course of subsequent interviews, - I felt that I was sufficiently cognizant of the main facts of the main facts of the situation to formulate definite proposals for the consideration of Government.

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In the meantime it was becoming increasingly evident that the king of the Hijaz was doing his utmost to thwart the consummation of the Mission's work by obstructing the Mission of an envoy from the High Commissioner for Egypt to Nejd. Ibn Saud and I were fully agreed that the presence of such an envoy to see the conditions of this country for himself was essential in the interest of all concerned and, accordingly when I received the news that the King had definitely refused a safe conduct to Mr. Storrs on the ground that the roads from the Haijaz to Hail-perhaps he meant Buraida-were unsafe, I decided with Ibn Saud's ready approval to secure a reconsideration of the verdict by proving that the alleged danger existed only in the imagination of the King.

Accordingly on the 9th December, leaving Lieut-Colonel Cunliffe Owen in charge of the current business of the Mission, and confident that no definite orders could be passed on my main proposals and communicate to Riyadh much before my return, I set out for Tâil.

Arriving at my destination late in the afternoon of Christmas Day, I was somewhat dismayed to find not only that Mr. Storrs was not

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there to meet me, but that no warning of my expected arrival had been communicated to the King. This was certainly extremely disconcerting. That the King assumed my unannounced arrival to be the result of a plot to break down his opposition to our negotiations with Ibn Saud I have no doubt whatever; whether he has since been persuaded that the unfortunate omission to inform him was a pure accident I do not know. I do not know myself whether it was an accident.

However that may be, I was hospitably entertained by Sharif Humad, the acting Amir of Taif, until the 28th December, when in answer to a courteous invitation from the Shaifff I set out for Jiddah taking however the precaution to leave half my caravan and all my heavy luggage behind at Taif.

On the last day of the year I rode into Jidda, where Lieut-Colonel Basset and the officers of the British Military Mission very kindly accommodated and entertained me during the following fortnight. A few days later, Commander D.G. Hogarth, C.M.G., R.N.V.R. arrived at Jidda to preside as the special representative of the High Commissioner at certain conference with the King which Colonel Basset was endeavouring to arrange. The king after leaving it long in doubt whether he would come down or not, eventually arrived

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at Judda about two days after Commander Hogarth, and during the following days I was present at a series of conversations, in which the relations of Ibn Saud and the King were the main theme of discussion. Suffice it here to say that as soon as it became apparent that no useful purpose would be served by further discussion of this subject, in view of the King's unrelenting attitude of hostility, I decided, with the approval of Commander Hogarth and Colonel Basset, to take my leave of His Highness. Certain indications had already prepared me for what followed namely the point blank refusal of the king to allow me to return overland. Such pressure as Commander Hogarth and Colonel Basset were able to bring to bear on the King was exerted in vain and nothing remained but for me to return to my work by sea.

With Sir P. Cox' approval I availed myself of the High Commissioner's kind invitation to visit Cairo en route and accordingly accompanied Commander Hogarth on his return in H.M.S. Hardinge, which left Jidda on the 14th January 1918, and visiting Yanba, Wajh and Aqaba on the way arrived at Suez

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on 20th January. The same evening I arrived at Cairo where with a brief interlude, during which I accompanied Commander Hogarth on a visit to Palestine and Jerusalem, I remained till the 16th February discussing Arab affairs in relation to the work of the Mission with the High Commissioner and the officers in charge of the Arab Bureau.

On the 16th February, matters being in a fair way towards final settlement, I left Cairo on my return journey to Basrah via Suez, Karachi and Bombay and on the 24th March, 1918, arrived at my destination.

By this time Sir P. Cox had departed on his way to Egypt and England and I decided to remain at Basrah until the orders of His Majesty's Government on the final proposals made in his telegram, No- B-29, dated the 9th March, 1918 from Maskat, was received.

On the 26th March, I received a telegram from you informing me that Sir P. Cox' proposals had received the proposals had received the sanction of His Majesty's Government and I was thus free to return

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to Ibn Saud to communicate the result of my negotiations.

My Original plan was return to Ibn Saud, who was then said to be in Hasa vi Kuwait, but the arrival of messengers from Dhari Ibn Tawala, then residing at Hafar in accordance with my previous instructions decided me to travel up the Batin to Dhari's camp and thence down to Ibn Saud.

According on the 28th March, 1918, I travelled by rail to Zubair, and on the following morning struck into the interior. Arriving at Dhari's camp near Hafar on the 2nd April I rested there the two following days discussing the affairs of the desert and on the 5th April, accompanied by Dhari himself, I resumed my march southward to Ibn Saud.

Arriving at Shaib Shauki on the Arma plateau on the 11th April, I found that Ibn Saud had arrived there the same day from Hasa. Here I accordingly remained till the 16th April discussing matters with Ibn Saud and then accompanied him to Riyadh which we reached on the 19th April.

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The result of my discussions with Ibn Saud had been an undertaking on his part to mobilize for action against Ibn Rashid in the coming Ram dhan (June-July) and to spend the intervening period in laying in necessary provisions and make other preparations for his operations.

The prospect of sitting idle at Riyadh till the middle of July was far from attractive, and I was fortunate enough to obtain Ibn Saud's somewhat half-hearted consent to my spending at least some part of this interval in a tour to the southern limits of Najd. Accordingly on May 6th I set out from Riyadh via Hair, Kharj, Aflaj and Sulaiyyil to Wadi Dawasir, whence, travelling via the plateau of Tuwaiq and visiting Haddar, Hamar, Sitara, Ghail and Hauta, I returned to Riyadh on the 24th June after absence of exactly 500 days.

On the 5th August, 1918 (Ibn Saud's eldest son, Turki having already made an unsuccessful attempt to open the offensive against the Shammar) all was ready for the beginning of the main campaign and I accompanied Ibn Saud from Riyadh, via wadi

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Hanifa, Washm, Sirr, Mudhuib and Anaiza, to Buraida, where we arrived on the 25th August, 1918.

Here some further delay ensued while the various contingents of Ibn Saud's striking force collected, and it was not till the 8th September, 1918, that Ibn Saud himself, refusing for reasons to be explained later to allow me to accompany him, launched out against Hail. I spent the period of his absence at Anaiza and rejoined him at Qusaiba after his return from Hail on the 28th September 1918.

An immediate repetition of his attack on Hail not being practicable, we returned with the whole force of some 5,000 men to Tarafiya and thence to Buraida, where on the 4th October I received the somewhat disconcerting instructions of H.M.'s Government to close down operations, and in this connection decided to go down to the coast, which I reached at Kuwait, via Shamasiya, Zilfi, Dijani and Qaraa on the 16th October.

In all I spent some nine months of the period under actually on Arabian soil and during that time

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covered some 2,600 miles\* in travel. The greater part of my journey from Riyadh to Tail and the whole @ of my Journey from Riyadh to Wadi Dawasir and back was through a country hither to I believe, never visited by Europeans, while the circumstances of my travel enabled me, even in better known tracts such as Washm, Sirr and the Qasim itself, to visit villages lying off the beaten track of previous travellers. My map sketches have been in part compiled by Lieut- Colonel C. Ryder, C.I.E., D.S.O., Director of Surveys, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

6. Shaikhs of the Zubair Hinterland.

On the arrival of the Mission at Basrah, where a short delay was necessary for the purpose of collecting stores and equipment, I found that invitations,

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\*According to my dead reckoning calculations which were for the most part at 3 miles per hour over good ground and 2½ to 2¾ miles per hour over rough or heavy going.

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① Excepting the District of Kharj which was visited by Lieut-Colonel Cunliffe Owen in January 1918, during my absence from Riyadh.

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had been issued to the friendly Shaikhs of the Zubair hinterland to attend a raze-meeting, arranged to take place at Basrah, during the first week of November.

The occasion seemed suitable for discussing with them the affairs of the nearer desert and its tribes as a preliminary to such operations as the Mission might be called upon to undertake in the interior, more especially as for some time past correspondence between Basrah and Baghdad had indicated the necessity of the Shemar and Dhafir who had long enjoyed our bounty and made no adequate return in the direction of action against our common enemies.

The Chief of the Shaikhs in question was Saud ibn Salih al Subhani who some twelve months previously had deserted Ibn Rashid and come in to us, being cordially welcomed as an ally and provided

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with a substantial subsidy of Rs. 5,000 per mensem, together with arms, ammunition and supplies in the hope that he would prove actively useful in cutting off caravans bound for Hail and other enemy destinations. For some time it had been whispered that he was playing us false and it was beyond question and that he had so far done nothing to deserve his subsidy which was reduced to Rs. 3,000 p.m. shortly before the Mission left Baghdad.

Next to Sa'ud al Salih in order of importance stood Dhari ibn Tawala of the Aslam Shamran, whose subsidy was Rs. 1,000 p.m. He had rapidly been displacing Sa'ud in the estimation of those officers who had dealings with the Desert, and it had only recently been reported that his generosity towards his followers had resulted in his having at his call a far larger and more reliable following than his rival.

The third of the trio of local Shaikhs was Hamud ibn Suwayt of the Dhi'fir, who was also in receipt of a Government allowance and to whom was assigned the task of watching the Basrah-Nasiriyah railway from the Desert side and of preventing

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gress therefrom by smugglers and access thereto by enemies.

On the 5th November, I accompanied a party organised by Mr. (now Lt.Col.) E.B. Hoell, C.I.E. Deputy Civil Commissioner, Basrah, to Zubair where we were entertained by Shaikh Ibrahim and I was introduced to Dhari Ibn Tawala, Hamud ibn Suwait and Muhammad ibn Subhan, the younger brother of Saud al Salih, who perhaps conscious of his past shortcomings, had sent to excuse himself from personal attendance at the race on the score of illness. With these Shaikhs I had some preliminary conversation on topics of mutual interest and arranged that they should come into Basrah for a more prolonged discussion some day in the near future: at the same time I begged Muhammad to send a special messenger to his brother to impress upon him the advisability of his appearing in person.

On November 7th, Dhari Hamud and Muhammad arrived at Basrah in company with Shaikh Ibrahim and I had prolonged interviews with each of them in turn except Muhammad, whom I informed that I would reserve all discussion of his brother's

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affairs until he appeared in person. As a matter of fact Saud al Salih never appeared.

Shikh Ibrahim was most useful to me in discussing confidentially the merits of the various personalities I had to deal with. He was enthusiastic as regards Dhari and the prospects of his being usefully employed to further the interests of the British Government ; he was no less adverse to Saud al Salih, whom he described as an impostor with no desire to serve anyone honestly but himself while as regards Hamud he maintained an attitude of indifference, the present head of the Dhafir being personally insignificant and an indifferent successor to a line of Chiefs, who had made the name of Ibn Sawait respected and feared in the past.

After full and free discussion with Ibrahim, Dhari and Hamud and in consultation with Mr. Howell, I came to the following conclusions namely:-

- (1) that Saud al Salih was unlikely to be of any practical service to us and that the allowance, which we were wasting on him should be discontinued or reduced to a small personal allowance

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payable on the conditions of his residence at some place in the sphere of our effective control:

(2) that the Dhafir, being fixed by immemorial tradition to the desert tract now traversed by the railway. Hamud ibn Suwait and his tribesmen would be most profitably employed in their home range and could not with advantage be brought into any operations in the interior; and

(3) that Dhari, of whom on my short acquaintance with him I had formed a high opinion, might profitably be employed in connection with the activities of the Nejd Mission.

I accordingly telegraphed on November 8th, in the sense of the above conclusion proposing:-

(1) that Saud's allowance should be reduced to Rs. 500 per mensem, the arms formerly given to him be withdrawn and he himself directed to reside at Zubair, Basrah or Muammara:

(2) that Hamud should be left undisturbed at the task on which he was then employed; and

(3) that Dhari's allowance should be increased from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000 p.m. and that his services henceforth should be placed at the disposal of the Nejd Mission- the rifles withdrawn from Saud being

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handed over to him.

In view of the possibility of hostile action by Ajaimi against the Samawa- Khamisiya line and of the fact that Saud al Salih was still regarded by the enemy as a considerable asset on our side, Sir P. Cox, was unable to accept my recommendations regarding him and decided to defer consideration of the matter to a more convenient season.

My other proposals were however approved and, before the Mission left Basrah, I had several long interviews with Dhari ibn Tawala, with whom I finally arranged that he should move down with his following in about a month's time to the neighbourhood of Hafar al~~l~~ Batin, whence he should send a messenger to me either at Riyadh or Buraida, to get further orders. In issuing these instructions I was actuated by the desire that Dhari and his tribesmen should be within easy reach of my headquarters in case it proved feasible after full discussion with Ibn Saud to bring them into any general scheme of action, which might be decided on. In the meantime he was to cut off all communication between Hail and the East and to raid any

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caravan that might try to slip through.

The subsequent course of events prevented my keeping touch with Dhari during the winter months but on reaching Basrah again in March 1918, I found two messengers from him arrived in search of me and the arrears of Dhari's monthly allowance. Accompanying them back to Dhari's camp I found that the latter had duly carried out my orders in so far that he and, so far as I could see, a very considerable following of the Shammar had for some months past been encamped in the neighbourhood of the wells of Hafar. It was unable to judge whether his blank record in the matter of captured or raided caravans was due to want of reasonable opportunity or want of will. I fear the latter, though up to this date (the beginning of April) he is entitled to receive the benefit of any doubt there may be in the absence of evidence of any treachery on his part.

Indeed the favourable opinion I had already formed of him on first acquaintance was enhanced by my short stay in his camp and during the subsequent journey to Shaib Shauki, on which he accompanied me and during which I had every opportunity of intimacy with him. I was a trifle disappointed to find that

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he was not less avaricious than others of his kind, but I thought to turn this failing to advantage,

Having paid him the arrears of some five months allowances due to him I consented to pay him in advance for the following three months on his undertaking to remain at Hafar and to institute a vigorous campaign against blockade running. In addition to this I distributed liberal presents to Dhari himself, the various Chiefs of sections resident in his camp and to all members of the unnecessarily large escort, with which he thought necessary to accompany me.

Arrived at Shaib Shauki I consulted Ibn Saud regarding the employment of Dhari to further the common cause and, though somewhat sceptical of his good faith, he agreed that the experiment was worth a trial and that Hafar would be the most favourable base of operations for him to work from. During the few days that Dhari remained at Ibn Saud's camp I took every opportunity to impress upon him that the continuance of Government's generous treatment of him depended entirely on his own efforts to further our common cause and Ibn Saud himself confided to

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him something of his plans for descending upon the hostile Shammar in Ramdhan, in which case Dhari would be expected to cut off the retreat of the enemy. Thus generously treated and carefully instructed in the role he was to play, Dhari returned to Hafar loudly protesting his gratitude and his intention of abiding loyally by the arrangement arrived at.

Within a month of his arriving at Hafar he abandoned his post and moved down to Safwan, where he was apparently received with open arms and without question. Shortly afterwards on a report by the Political Agent at Kuwait that I was out of touch with him, he was removed from my jurisdiction without reference to me and, in due course, some 500 camels, loaded with goods from Zubair or Kuwait and franked through by Dhari, arrived at Hail - of this the evidence in my possession leaves no room for doubt.

Nor was this all for when Ibn Saud's son, Turki descended on the Shammar in the neighbourhood of the wells of Ajibba according to the prearranged programme, the enemy withdrew unmolested to wells further afield, the wells of Hafar being at the time occupied ostensibly

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ostensibly on behalf of Dhari, by the Wahab sub-section of the Shammar, who were at enmity with Ibn Saud and offered no opposition to their retreating brethren.

It is perfectly clear that Dhari, now knowing that a conflict with his Shammar brethren would be forced upon him by Ibn Saud's contemplated offensive, decided to remove himself from the danger zone without delay. His offence is unpardonable and exemplifies the futility of putting any trust in the Shammar, whose tribal solidarity is notorious everywhere in Arabia.

On what grounds the Political Agent at Kuwait reported that I was out of touch with Dhari I do not know and why, coming as he did without anything to shew that he came by my permission, he was permitted to settle at Safwan and admitted to the markets of Lubair and Kuwait I cannot understand. Be that as it may, having forfeited my confidence by an act of treachery he found no difficulty in establishing himself in the confidence of the authorities at Basrah and from that time onwards, safely based on Safwan, he proceeded in conjunction with the Ajman, similarly based at Kuwait under British protection and thus immune to direct attack by Ibn Saud, to make himself a nuisance to the people of Najd, his brother, Satam ibn Tawala, becoming prominent as the leader of several Shammar-Ajman raids into Ibn Saud's territories during

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My representations in the matter failed to effect any reconsideration of the orders passed but resulted in the reduction of Dhari's salary from Rs.3,000 to Rs.1,000 per mensem; some months later he had the impudence to write to me protesting against the reduction of his allowance and requesting me to intervene. He received no reply. This matter like many others is now of academic importance, but I have considered it necessary to deal with it in some detail in view of the very unfavourable effect it had on public opinion in Najd at a time when false rumours, sedulously fabricated at Kuwait, were creating doubts as to the ultimate issue of the war. It was freely said that we were afraid of taking strong action against potential enemies and ready to placate them at all costs. The moral was obvious Ibn Saud's policy of patient endurance of affronts and even assaults was freely criticised and disapproved.

Our dealings with the Shammar have certainly not raised us in the estimation of the people. They may have been necessitated by circumstances, but that in itself was dangerous to make before an ignorant and hostile people.

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"The British Government", said the Imaum Abdul Rahman himself - and his words were endorsed by the Wahhabi HighPriest - "either can and want help us or else they would but cannot - in either case we should be prepared to help ourselves."

7. Other Shammar Elements.

In the last section I have dealt in detail with Dhari Ibn Tawala, who, with Saud al Salib al Subhan, had collected a considerable gathering of Shammar elements in the neighbourhood of Zubair and Safwan, where they constituted a standing menace to Ibn Saud and in all probability, a source of precarious supply to their fellow tribesmen at and around Hail. Nevertheless, from the point of view of Ibn Saud's contemplated offensive against Hail, they neutralised a considerable number of possible adherents to the cause of Ibn Rashid.

Other Shammar elements, e.g., the Abda and Tuman sections, with whom I had no direct dealings, occupied a similar position in the Euphratean marches further north, where they came under the control of Bt. Lt.Col.G.E. Leachman, C.I.E., Political Officer of the Desert.

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Ibn Saud from time to time expressed the fear that these elements, while profiting by admission to the markets of Iraq, were in reality only biding their time to join Ibn Rashid as soon as his own offensive developed, and I found it somewhat difficult to justify our policy in the matter to him. While, therefore, explaining to him the immediate and obvious advantages of neutralising Ibn Ajil and his Abda following by allowing them access to our markets on a strictly limited scale, I urged him to strike while they were far away hoping that Colonel Leachman would be able to restrict their activities in the event of the opening of the offensive.

In the meantime Ibn Saud himself was conquering with the Sinjara section under Adwan and Ghadhban Ibn Rimal, who shewed tentative signs of accepting his offer of an asylum in the desert between Kuwait and the Dahana.

Altogether during the last few months of the period under report the Shammar situated remained obscure and complicated, and it was never possible to form an estimate of the numbers of tribesmen likely to flock to the defence of Hail in the event of Ibn Saud's offensive being opened and maintained.



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In the altered circumstances it is idle now to speculate as to what might have happened - all we can say for certain is that, when Ibn Saud eventually did strike his first blow against Ibn Rashid, he found the field empty of hostile elements and that the further prosecution of the campaign had become unnecessary before it could be known what reply the Shammar elements on the borders of Iraq would make to Ibn Rashid's general call to arms for the defence of the tribal stronghold.

8. Relations between Najd and Kuwait.

As I have already remarked Lieut.Col.R.E.A. Hamilton, Political Agent at Kuwait, had been at Riyadh for some three weeks prior to the arrival of the Mission. He had left Kuwait about the beginning of October in pursuit of a large Shammar caravan, which had obtained supplies and set out for Hail during his temporary absence at Baghdad. The caravan escaped and Colonel Hamilton passed on into the Qasim, where Ibn Saud's eldest son, Turki a lad of about 19, was commanding the Najd forces, threatening Jabal Shammar and thence travelled to Riyadh.

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On the arrival of the Mission at Riyadh, Colonel Hamilton and I had many opportunities of discussing all questions, which formed a bone of contention between Ibn Saud and Shaikh Salim of Kuwait, and, at my request, he remained at Riyadh to give the Mission the benefit of his experience and advance until a definite settlement of the outstanding difficulties between the two rulers was arrived, at namely, till December 5th, when he returned to Kuwait.

It was indeed clear from the first that one of these questions - the Ajman problem - was of primary importance and that, both on military and on political grounds, the Mission could scarcely hope for success in its main task of inducing Ibn Saud to undertake serious military operations against Ibn Rashid and Jabal Shammar, unless and until this problem was satisfactorily disposed of. At the same time it was satisfactory to note in the course of our constant and lengthy interviews with Ibn Saud that he was disposed to come more, than half way to meet us in the settlement of the minor questions, - namely the establishment of an effectual blockade of Hail and the right of taxing the Awazim tribe, - if we could settle the major problems to his satisfaction. This was the easier for us inasmuch as - assuming the hostility of the Ajman tribe

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tribe towards Ibn Saud to be as virulent and uncompromising as his towards them - Military considerations alone rendered it imperative to remove the tribe from which they might be able to threaten his flank or communications in the event of his mobilising for hostilities against Hail.

Before proceeding to a discussion of these various problems it will not be out of place to attempt a brief sketch of the relations existing between the houses of Ibn Saud and Ibn Subah up to this point.

During the last two decades of the 19th Century when the Wahhabi dominions bowed to the rule of Ibn Rashid, the scattered remnants of the Saud dynasty sojourned in exile in the various ports of the Persian Gulf Coast. Abdul Rahman, the youngest son of the great Faisal Ibn Saud, after an abortive attempt to re-establish himself in the land of his fathers, sought and was readily granted refuge and hospitality in the town of Kuwait, where he and his family of growing sons lived under the protection, first of Muhammad and then of Mubarak Ibn Subah, awaiting the turn of fortune, which would surely come. Mubarak, ascending the throne of Kuwait by the murder of his brother, soon

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soon came to be recognised as a power to be reckoned with in Arabia. An astute politician and diplomat he was, the equal of the great Sadun and less powerful only than Muhammad Ibn Rashid, then ruler of the whole of Central Arabia. The rivalry of these three resulted naturally in constant fighting, and Mubarak's wise statesmanship saw in the exiled family of Saud a prospective source of strength in his contests with his rivals and especially with Ibn Rashid.

At the beginning of the present Century, i.e., in the Spring of 1901, Mubarak, having entered into alliance with Sadun and accompanied by a Bajdi force under the Imam Abdul Rahman Ibn Saud, went forth to fight out the issue with Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid, who had but recently ascended the throne left vacant by the death of the great Muhammad. Simultaneously Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the present ruler of Najd, marched with a force of 1,500 men to lay siege to Riyadh.

Mubarak and his allies encamped at Tarafiya, while the Shammar lay at Sarif. The battle of Sarif, so-called though fought at Tarafiya, was one of the decisive battles of Badawin history. Mubarak, defeated

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defeated after a bloody struggle, fled with the remnants of his force and Abdul Aziz, hastily raising the siege of Riyadh, hastened back to Kuwait, but Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid sealed his own fate by the use he made of his victory, which he followed up by ferocious visitations on the towns and villages of Sudair and other parts of Najd.

The following year Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, with a following of only 15 men, recovered Riyadh by a characteristically daring coup de main and, in a few years, the old frontiers of the Wahabi dominions in Central Arabia were restored. Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid met his end in battle with Ibn Saud at Raudhat at Muhanna in 1908 and the positions of Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud in Central Arabia were reversed.

This sudden reversal of fortune and the vigorous and rapid establishment of a stable government in Najd by its young ruler could not have been altogether palatable to Mubarak, who doubtless hoped to increase his own power by breaking that of Ibn Rashid, whereas, in effect, a fourth factor was added to the former Arabians trio and the fourth member soon shewed that he was as strong and as firmly established as any of his rivals.

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Nevertheless the outward semblance of friendship between Najd and Kuwait appears to have been preserved well enough during Mubarak's lifetime, while Ibn Saud has told me of more than one occasion, on which he sought the benefit of Mubarak's ripe experience and advice, particularly in reference to the line he should adopt towards the British and Turkish governments, and has related, only as of historical interest and with no feeling of hostility, the attempts occasionally made by Mubarak to draw away to himself the allegiance of Najd tribes by the practice of political intrigue, in which he was a past master.

When Jabir succeeded Mubarak, the relations to Najd and Kuwait bade fair to follow in the channel marked out in the past. Both rulers were firm in their friendship to the British Government - an additional inducement to them to maintain cordial relations with each other - but it was well known that Jabir's brother, Salim, heir-presumptive to the Shaikhship, was not only inimical towards the new ruler of Kuwait but strong leanings towards the Turks, while his tendency to orthodox bigotry marked out Ibn Saud and the Wahhabis as his particular enemies.

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It was therefore an evil moment for all concerned when Jabir died suddenly and was succeeded at Kuwait by Salim. The latter, indeed, made public profession of his loyalty to the British and of his firm intention to work for the common cause, but his conduct from the beginning has been at variance with his professions.

Kuwait, which had always - to a certain extent unavoidably - been an outlet for smuggling of goods to enemy destinations, rapidly became notorious as the enemy's main source of supply, and it must be admitted that, in all probability, much of the stuff so exported passed through the Qasim to Hail to the profit of the merchants of the former district. Remonstrances by the British authorities to Shaikh Salim were met by the ready reply that Ibn Saud and not he was responsible for the regrettable state of affairs, while representations to Ibn Saud provoked the answer that the evil should be stopped at its source, namely Kuwait.

Thus the clashing of political - not to say financial - interests lighted the train prepared by religious antipathy, and the traditional friendship of the houses of Saud and Subah gave place to enmity, none the less real for being veiled in deference to the dictates of a power greater than

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Mutual recriminations over the blockade soon gave way to acts of covert political hostility. The Ajman tribe, fleeing from Ibn Saud's vengeance, had sought and obtained refuge in Kuwait territory before Salim's accession to the Shaikhship by an arrangement of the British Government, to which Ibn Saud and Jabir were parties, and of which an essential condition was that the tribe should behave itself and that those of its leaders, who had sought refuge at Hail or with Ajaimi Ibn Saudun, should not be allowed into Kuwait territory. Nevertheless Salim, seeing in this problem a means of plaguing Ibn Saud, made unnecessarily ostentatious parade of his protection of the tribe and welcomed back the proscribed leaders. Ibn Saud retaliated by taxing the Awazim, tribe, over which Ibn Subah claims sole jurisdiction, when it crossed his frontiers in search of grazing.

In short, when the Mission arrived at Riyadh, the relations of our two allies were about as strained as they well could be - Salim being in somewhat the stronger position for the time being owing to the natural reluctance of the British authorities to increase the number of their enemies by insisting on the expulsion of the Ajman from Kuwait territory to their only possible resort - the enemy territory of Hail and the desert between it and the Euphrates.

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9. The Ajman Problem.

To understand properly the attitude of Ibn Saud to the Ajman tribe and the bearing of the problems or the politics of Najd, it is necessary to go back to the sixties and seventies of last century, when the death of Faisal Ibn Saud was followed by a prolonged and sanguinary struggle for the throne between his two eldest sons, Abdulla and Saud, which ended disastrously not only for Saud, who fell in battle, but also for the Saud dynasty itself, whose surviving remnants passed into exile on the usurpation of their dominions by Muhammad Ibn Rashid, the nominal protector and actual master of Abdulla.

Pelgrave has left on record the impression made on him, during his visit to Riyadh in 1862, by the undisguised antipathy existing between the two brothers, while Faisal was still alive to keep them apart. Abdulla, as the eldest son, succeeded his father, but Saud did not delay long to raise the standard of revolt, while his personality, more pleasing than that of his brother, soon attracted a large following, the nucleus and most important part of which was supplied by his mother's tribe, the Ajman.

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It is unnecessary here to follow the varying fortunes of the struggle, which ended as already indicated, though not before Saud had succeeded in wresting the crown from Abdulla to enjoy it for a brief space—a circumstance of capital importance in the politics of Nejd, in that on this temporary occupation of the throne by their ancestor not less than on the fact that the line of Saud is the senior surviving branch of the dynasty—Abdulla having died childless—the descendants of Saud have a claim to the the rightful rulers of Nejd, a claim, which has been actually asserted by open but unsuccessful rebellion against the present ruler on more than one occasion.

The pretenders have invariably been those members of the Saud branch, who boast unbroken Ajman descent on the mother's side,—a fact, which enables them to count on the loyal support of this vigorous and warlike tribe in every venture upon which they embark against the present ruling branch, whose title to rule rests on the merit of having recovered its ancestral dominions from the foreign usurper rather than on seniority of descent, Abdul Wahman, the father of the present ruler, being the fourth of Faisal's sons.

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The most serious attempt of the pretending line of recover the throne occurred about the year 1910, when Ibn Saud, surrounded by enemies, dealt with a delicate situation in masterly style. He was, needless to say, engaged at the time in war with Ibn Rashid who successfully, invited the co-operation of the Sharif of Mecca. The latter advanced into the hills round Qadai and, supressing a small Wahhabi force under Saud, brother of Ibn Saud, had him a prisoner before the latter could come to the rescue. Ibn Rashid simultaneously threatened the Qasim on the north and news soon arrived that the southern districts had declared for the Araif\* pretenders, who had thought the moment oportune for a bold stroke.

At a disadvantage with the Sharif owing to the fact that the latter held his favourite brother, Saud, a prisoner, Ibn Saud consented to the unfavourable terms and obtaining the release of his brother, marched off to meet Ibn Rashid. Here again negotiations, resulting in a truce, relieved Ibn Saud of all immediate danger and set him free for a brief campaign in the southern districts, in the course of which he defeated the pretenders and wreaked a terrible vengeance

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on the towns, which had helped them.

Again at the beginning of 1915, when Ibn Saud, accompanied by Captain Shakespeare and acting as our ally, met Ibn Rashid at the battle of Jarrah, it was according to his account, entirely or largely due to the treacherous desertion of the Ajman contingent at a moment, when their continued support would in all probability have given him a decisive victory, that he had to be content with a drawn battle, in which the honours undoubtedly rested with Ibn Rashid, though he was unable to take any practical advantage of them.

This brings us to the final act in the Ajman tragedy, which was played in 1916, in the Hasa, whether Ibn Saud led his forces to avenge himself on the tribe for its perfidious desertion of him at Jarrah and other hostile acts. The Ajman, finding themselves outnumbered, sued for an armistice, to which Ibn Saud, generously enough, agreed on the condition that the contending parties should meet on the morrow to consider arrangements for a permanent peace. Ibn Saud's brother, Saad, was absent when the armistice was agreed to and on his return the same evening, found to his

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mortification that hostilities had been suspended. Furious at the lenience of his brother he propounded a scheme for a sudden attack on the unsuspecting tribesmen and Ibn Saud in a weak moment yielded to his vehement pressure.

The Ajman, suprised and outnumbered, fought like wild beast at bay and not only were Ibn Saud's best troops worsted in the encounter but Saad was counted among the dead and Ibn Saud himself was wounded, while the victorious tribesmen lost no time in seeking refuge within the borders of Kuwait territory from the vengeance, which was sure to pursue them.

Hinc illae lachrymae ! but there can be no doubt that the Ajman, who had appeared up to the last act as the villain of the play, had right on their side in the final denouement and that Saad, by his advocacy of a shameless act of treachery, richly deserved the fate which overtook him.

Nevertheless Ibn Saud can scarcely be expected to accept the last arbitrament of

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fortune as final not has he any intention of doing so, if one may judge from the way in which on anything like a public occasion, he parades the orphaned children of his favourite brother before the public gaze and delivers himself of stirring homilies of the necessity of avenging the wrong done not only to them and himself, but to the honour of his house,-- ignoring, with that feminine want of logic so characteristic of the Badawin Arab, the cardinal consideration that the whole responsibility for the tragedy rests on nobody but himself.

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\* The descendants of Saud Ibn Faisal are known by this nickname owing to the fact that after the battle of Raudhat al Muhanna (1908) in which Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid was defeated and killed by Ibn Saud, the exiled seions of that line were found among the booty captured in the abandoned camp. The term Arifa or Arafa is commonly used to designate livestock, especially camels, lost to and recaptured from an enemy.

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However that may be, the arrival of the Ajman as refugees from the warth of Ibn Saud within the limits of Kuwait territory was a serious matter which the British authorities could not afford to ignore. The unconditional admission of the rebels- for such they were- to the benefit of British protection could not fail to affect our relations with an important Arab ally, while the dictates both ~~of~~ common justice and indeed of Arab custom demanded that the suppliants should be admitted to sanctuary, at any rate temporarily, pending fuller consideration of the merits of the case and of the interests involved.

The question was accordingly discussed by Sir P. Cox with the Ibn Saud and the Shaikh of Kuwait on the occasion of the Kuwait Durbar of November 1916, and, in view of the greater interests involved in the newly retified alliance of the Arab rulers with the British Government for the vigorous prosecution of the war against the common enemy, a compromise was framed and agreed to be all concerned,

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whereby Ibn Saud undertook not to molest the Ajman in their new quarters provided that they in their turn refrained from molesting the tribes of Najd and declined any intercourse with such sections as had betaken themselves to enemy protection.

This agreement was intended to remain in force until the end of the war, and it was hoped that the Ajman would be content with the security thus obtained under the protection of the British Government and would on their part faithfully observe the conditions imposed on them.

This innate instability of the Arab Character, however, soon rendered the hopes entertained of this agreement vain and Ibn Saud declares with what degree of truth it is impossible to estimate - that a projected forward movement on his part against the Shammar forces during the summer of 1917 had to be abandoned owing to a sudden movement of the Ajman, which threatened his flank. There is no doubt that the Ajman did move in the direction indicated by Ibn Saud, though there is no

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reason to suppose that their action was caused by any other motive than the necessity of finding new pastures for their flocks and herds. Nevertheless the move constituted a breach of the agreement of November, 1916, and if Ibn Saud did at the time contemplate an attack on the Shammar, the action of the Ajman was sufficient, on military grounds alone, to give him pause, while finally, Shaikh Salim's failure to insist on the observance of the agreement by his guests involved the British Government in a charge of breach of faith.

Ibn Saud did not miss the opportunity of lodging a complaint regarding the manner in which the agreement had been observed by other signatories than himself, and another opportunity soon presented itself, on the eve of the departure of the Mission from Iraq, in the arrival at Kuwait of Dhaidan ibn Hiltlain, one of the Shaikhs of the Ajman proscribed by the terms of the agreement.

It is true that his petition for sanctuary had been answered by Sir P. Cox to the effect

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that sanctuary could only be granted on the production of a letter of recommendation from Ibn Saud. Nevertheless Dhaidan and his following took up their residence in Kuwait territory without any such letter and with the consent of the Shaikh of Kuwait, and it was left to the Mission to see what arrangement could be arrived at in consultation with Ibn Saud.

Thus when the Mission arrived at Riyadh, it found that, on moral grounds alone, Ibn Saud had an unassailable case, as he could point to two distinct breaches of an agreement, which British Government had ratified but had made no effort to enforce, while he himself had scrupulously observed both its spirit and letter. Moreover the Mission, having as its main object to induce Ibn Saud to active aggression against the enemy, could not leave out of consideration the possible effect of the active or passive presence of a large and hostile force on the flank or rear of Ibn Saud's army and we decided that, on military grounds alone, Ibn Saud could not move while the Ajman remained

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in Kuwait territory. Thirdly, on the less plausible ground of political expediency, we thought it advisable to placate Ibn Saud at the expense of a tribe, which after all, had and has no claim whatever on our friendly consideration, when such placation promised substantial result in other directions. Nevertheless, having thus decided on moral military and political grounds that the Ajman must leave Kuwait territory, we used our best endeavours with Ibn Saud to obtain for them as favourable terms as possible; to this end we pointed out to him that on military grounds alone it would be unwise to increase the numbers of our active enemies, if this could possibly be avoided by securing the neutrality of those, who could not be our friends and had no desire to be our enemies.

To this Ibn Saud consented after much argument, and it was finally decided that the Ajman should be left to choose one of the following alternatives, all of which had the double merit of removing them from Kuwait

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territory and leasing by one the number of possible source of friction between Ibn Saud and Ibn Subah, namely:-

(1) that the tribes should move on masse northwards and join Fahed Ibn Hadhdhal, our Anaza (Amarat) ally, thereafter showing their goodwill to Hadhdhal our Anaza (Amarat) ally thereafter showing their good will to the allied cause by acting with him or remaining benevolently neutral; or

(2) that the leading Shaikhs of the tribe comes in and make formal submission to Ibn Saud, who undertook to pardon ~~their~~ pardon their past offenses on condition of their settling peacefully in such locality as he might appoint; or

(3) that, in the event of their declining both of the above alternatives, they must remove themselves forthwith from any British or Kuwait territory, in which they might be, thereafter to be treated as enemies wherever found.

This arrangement I communicated in my telegram No. M-4, dated the 2nd December, 1917, infro

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making Sir P. Cox at the same time that, subject to his approval, Colonel Hamilton on his return to Kuwait, would announce the terms imposed on it to the tribe.

I am not quite clear as to the subsequent course of Colonel Hamilton's dealings with the tribal leaders, but from a note on the tribe written in September, 1918, by Captain P.S. Loch, then Political Agent in Kuwait, it is clear that his negotiations broke down and that another attempt to find a solution of the difficulty was made in February, 1918, when an agreement was signed by Colonel Hamilton, Shaikh Salim and Ubaidan ibn Mithalin, the leading (hitherto proscribed) Ajman chief already referred to, whereby the tribe was given an asylum in the neighbourhood of Zubair on the following conditions, namely:-

(1) That the whole tribe should take up its residence within the Occupied Territories, i.e. at Zubair or elsewhere as appointed; and

(2) that the tribe should on no account re-enter the limits of Kuwait territory. Moreover, though it was not expressly so stipulated in the agreement, it was clear that an obligation to

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refrain from all molestation of Ibn Saud's territory or tribes was imposed upon the Ajman by these terms--indeed they could not sail into Hajj without passing through Kuwait territory and thus transgressing the bounds of the above mentioned conditions.

Thus once more the British Government entered into a pact with the Ajman tribe and from the beginning the arrangements seemed doomed to failure.

In the first place, after the signature of the agreement, the Ajman showed themselves to be in no hurry to comply with the conditions of taking up their residence at Zubair, and Shaikh Salim made no heroic efforts to enforce or hasten their departure from Kuwait territory; Ibn Saud made constant complaints regarding their continued presence in Kuwait and I made corresponding representations to the Political Agent.

In due course some show of evacuation of Kuwait territory was made by the tribe, which however, had no sooner taken up its residence in its new quarters near Zubair, than it proceeded to make Kuwait territory its leaping-off ground for

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a series of raids into Najd, which took place at frequent intervals throughout the summer months. The first raids were against the Fuhai encampments in Hasa, the Mutair camps were also visited and, towards the end of the period under report, the raiders began to go as far afield as Hafir al Atah, Mubayidh and other places not far distant from Ibn Saud's own capital.

It is unnecessary to deal in detail with these raids which met with but a modicum of substantial success and in due course provoked counter-raids by the Mutair, Fuhai and other elements until towards the end of the period under report, the whole of the Surman area was in a ferment of unrest through which I passed on my return to the coast, when I had a good opportunity of contrasting the security obtaining almost everywhere in Ibn Saud's own territories with the danger and excitement prevalent on the borderlands of Kuwait jurisdiction.

During the whole of these months Ibn Saud, who by his agreement with us, was debarred from taking steps to deal with the Ajman nuisance,

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while I was pressing him to disregard all tribal matters in favour of the vigorous prosecution of the offences against Hail, maintained an attitude of constant and not altogether unjustified querulousness, on which I reported with faithful regularity but without success.

It was clear that the Deputy Civil Commissioner at Basrah, who was ultimately responsible for the enforcement of the solemn pact of the Ajman was neither disposed to treat the matter (which he regarded as part of the regular game of tribal raid and counter-raid), seriously nor in a position to enforce such parts of the agreement as proved distasteful to the Ajman. In these circumstances matters rapidly reached an impasse, for which there seemed to be no reasonable solution.

Meanwhile Ibn Saud was preparing to open his offensive against Hail and I pressed that hostages should be taken from the Ajman to prevent any possible hostile movement on their part, but even this proved impracticable, and finally it was recognised that nothing could be done to enforce the observance by the Ajman of the condi-

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Firstly, that the Ajman should be warned that, in the event of the continuance of raids, their subsidies would be stopped and their access to the local markets barred; and

Secondly, that Ibn Saud should be given a free hand to deal with the tribe provided that the safety of the railway wasnot thereby endangered.

It was with a feeling of considerably relief that I communicated these orders to Ibn Saud. I was aware that he would not immediately be in a position to take advantage of his newly won liberty inthe matter, while the removal of a substantial grievance was to be welcomed at a time when the Sharifiân situation threatened at any moment to become exceedingly delicate.

The Ajman problemhas caused Government a deal of unnecessary difficulty and anxiety, due to a perhaps mistaken desire to be lenient to a potentially hostile element; but it is, in the light of experie- nce, difficult to resist theconclusion that much time, trouble and irritation might have been saved by the

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acceptance without further ado of the ultimatum pronounced by the Mission so long ago as last December and its communication to the tribe. To that ultimatum Government had to return after ten months of futile search for a better alternative, during which its desire to serve the interests of an undeserving tribe resulted in the loss of much prestige in Central Arabia and in increasing quite unnecessarily the number of counts, on which Ibn Saud could indulge his querulousness with a fair show of reason.

#### 10. The Awazim Problem.

Unlike the Ajman problem the affair of the Awazim was of transitory interest and presented no serious difficulty. The Awazim had long been recognised as one of the home tribes of the Kuwait jurisdiction and, in the old days when the friendship of Mubarak and Ibn Saud rendered the delimitation of the frontiers of Kuwait and Najd unnecessary, they were free to roam indifferently over the pastures on either side of the frontier while paying taxes to Kuwait alone.

The unfortunate differences between Shaikh Salim and Ibn Saud, however, and especially the protection accorded by the former to the rebel Ajman

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put an end to the old order of things, and Ibn Saud by way of retaliation on the Shikh of Kuwait for provocation offered, renewed and asserted in practice his long dormant claim to tax the Awazim graziers, whenever and wherever they entered his territory in search of pastures or, in other words, annually, because the narrow limits of Kuwait jurisdiction can never afford grazing sufficient for the needs of a badawin tribe all the year through.

In enforcing this claim Ibn Saud was acting well within the rights conferred by sovereignty. At the same time he had no grudge against or desire to press unduly on the Awazim tribe, which was placed for no fault of its own in the unfortunate position of having to pay double taxes, and was perfectly ready to consent to any reasonable arrangement or indeed to forego altogether his right to tax the tribe - but on terms.

The settlement of the Ajman question by the effectual exclusion of the tribe from Kuwait territory was an essential preliminary to any such arrangement, while, for the rest, Ibn Saud, after a discussion with the Mission, undertook that, if Shaikh

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Salim wrote to him in suitable terms recalling the friendly arrangement, by which, in former times, the Awazim were exempted from the payment of taxes to the Najd treasury and requesting a reversion to the old policy, he would reciprocate by relying in similar terms and formally abjuring his claim to tax the tribe covered the movements of Ajman and Shammari raiders on their excursions onto Hasa. Nevertheless the Awazim problem did solve itself-ambulando- and it is to Ibn Saud's credit that he discontinued taxing the tribal flocks and herds without obtaining anything in the nature of a quid pro quo.

11. The Blockade.

Though our enemies in this War have undoubtedly enjoyed certain tactical advantage over our allies by reason of their geographical cohesion, the fact that they are situated within a ring fence almost completely surrounded by enemies has, in another direction, proved a serious disability, in that they have been cut

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off from the markets of the world and have had to rely on the goodwill of neutrals and the avarice of others to provide them with an always precarious supply of necessary commodities, which they are unable to produce in sufficient quantities in their own territories.

To make that supply more and more precarious and indeed to cut it off altogether has therefore naturally been one of the most important military objects of the allies, and the instrument used for the accomplishment of this end was the Blockade.

In Mesopotamia the Blockade problem presented peculiar difficulties, in that it was always an important part of our policy to enlist the sympathy of the Arabs in our cause. It was therefore always considered important to extend to them all reasonable facilities for providing themselves with the necessaries of life, while ensuring that those necessaries should not reach the enemy but the Arabs them

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selves, by failing to reciprocate in the spirit in which we met them, rendered it incumbent on the British authorities to devise measure for the strict enforcement of the blockade.

The difficulties experienced in the Occupied Territories of Iraq need not be considered here. Suffice it to say that in the light of experience a fairly effective scheme of blockade was evolved the effect of which on the enemy became daily more apparent.

For the complete success of the Iraq scheme however-involving, as it did, a rigorous blockade of the northern part of the Arabian peninsula by the establishment of a cordon along the Euphrates line- it was essential that no leakage of supplies should occur through neighbouring neutral or friendly countries not under our control, and in this connection Eastern and Central Arabia with its inlets on the Persian Gulf coast had long been an object of anxious consideration.

It was obviously absurd to expect uncontrolled Arabs- whether Badawin or Hadhr-not to take advantage

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of the enormous profits to be made by meeting the enemy's demands for supplies. At the same time it was out of the question to adopt the simple expedient of blockading the Persian Gulf ports, as such a course would have involved our friends in the same fate as our enemies. The course adopted was to enlist the active co-operation of the Arab rulers allied to us, namely Ibn Saud and the Shaikh of Kuwait, the one to prevent leakage of supplies across his frontier to the enemy and the other to refuse access to the Kuwaiti market to enemy purchasing agents. The arrangements by which these objects were to be achieved were left entirely to the discretion of the two rulers themselves in the internal arrangements of native states except when circumstances make it absolutely necessary to do so.

The experiment was, unfortunately, doomed to failure from the beginning and it failed - its only substantial result being to enhance the bitterness and antipathy already existing

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between Ibn Saud and Ibn Subah.

Indeed, some time before the departure of the Mission from Baghdad, information from prejudiced and unprejudiced sources made it abundantly clear that Kuwait had, in consequence of the tightening of the Iraq blockade, begun to enjoy a profiting by the enjoyment of corresponding advantages as a distributing centre. The climax was reached towards the end of September, 1917, when a caravan of 3,000 enemy camels came down to Kuwait through the Qasim with a passport signed by Ibn Saud's eldest son, Turki, who was at the time in command of the forces nominally engaged in preventing the leakage of supplies to the enemy. The debacle was completed by the clearance of the same caravan, loaded with supplies from Kuwait with the sanction or connivance of the Shaikh himself in spite of specific orders telegraphed from Baghdad that it should be detained pending further consideration.

Colonel Hamilton pursued the caravan with out result and the enemy, doubtless, duly received

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a welcome addition to their stores, but matters were now seen to be really serious and our allies had shown themselves to be broken reeds. The Mission was accordingly directed to discuss the question of the blockade with Ibn Saud and to submit proposals for its stricter enforcement, which the question of the feasibility of establishing a proper blockade post on Iraq lines at Kuwait began to engage attention.

The incident of the Shammar caravan above referred to proved to be a blessing in disguise in that it provided me with a solid and notorious fact, on which to base both a complaint as regards the past and an ultimatum in respect of the future. To do him justice, Ibn Saud made little serious attempt to defend his untenable position. As regards Turki's action he explained that the passport given to the caravan was in no sense intended to give the Shammar export facilities from Kuwait - it was indeed merely a safe conduct through the Najd subjects of even such a concession

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as this. Doubtless Sheikh Salim's explanation of the clearance of the enemy caravan was equally convincing.

AS regards the Caravan itself, Ibn Saud admitted that it could only have gone to the enemy and, as regards trade in general, he inveighed strongly against the Shaikh of Kuwait as being personally and deeply implicated in contraband business, out of which he made large profits. He asserted that the bulk of the traffic went direct from Kuwait to Hail or Damascus giving his own frontiers a wide berth, but he admitted that the merchants of the Qasim were also to a certain extent involved. On my pointing out, however, that this was scarcely consistent with his own solemn undertakings he admitted the impeachment and merely pleaded that, so long as smuggling on a large scale was practised in Kuwait to the profit of the local merchants it was scarcely reasonable to expect him to penalise the merchants of his own territories- indeed he could not do so without serious

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risk of alienating the Qasim.

Colonel Hamilton and I eventually proposed that a system of passes should be introduced, whereby facilities for export from Kuwait would be granted only to persons certified by the possession of such passes, signed by Ibn Saud or his local Amirs, to be Ibn Saud's subjects and reliable individuals, and on the condition that Ibn Saud himself should accept personal responsibility that goods, so exported, should not pass his frontier.

He demurred slightly at an arrangement so novel to Arab ideas and offered us an alternative to undertake the policing of the Kuwait frontier. Such an arrangement, however amounting as it did to a request for free permission to vex and harass the Shaikh of Kuwait and his people, could not for a moment be entertained; and for want of any other suitable alternative we pressed for the acceptance of our original proposals, to which Ibn Saud - by this time assured of a satisfactory settlement of the Ajman question - eventually assented on the understanding that the British Government would take serious steps to prevent all direct smuggling

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from Kuwait itself to the enemy.

It was accordingly arranged as follows:-namely,

- (1) that Ibn Saud should undertake the vigorous blockade of enemy territory, accepting full personal responsibility that no supplies, which entered his territories, should leave them for an enemy destination;
- (2) that the British Government should arrange for an effective blockade system at Kuwait;
- (3) that permission to export from Kuwait would not be conceded to anyone not provided with a pass signed by the Amir of his place of residence;
- (4) that such permission would on no account be granted even to friendly Shammar elements unless they were accompanied by a responsible representative of Ibn Saud himself; and
- (5) that a form of pass, evolved in the course of our discussions, should be introduced without delay and distributed to the local Amirs for use - the bearer

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of the pass would be required to present it to the British Authorities at Kuwait to be endorsed by them with the quantity of each article to be exported and, on his arrival at his destination, he would appear before the local Amir, who would endorse on the pass the quantities of each article duly brought to the intended destination, the document being eventually returned, so endorsed and signed, to the British authorities at Kuwait for record.

Not content with the consummation of this agreement, we lost no opportunity of impressing on Ibn Saud that his interests, no less than those of the British Government, were at stake and that the importance of preventing supplies reaching the enemy could not be exaggerated. He accordingly despatched letters to his Amirs, and particularly to those of the Qasim, explaining the urgent necessity of implicit obedience to and strict enforcement of his orders- adding incidentally that he had entered into a solemn undertaking with the British Government in this respect, the advantages of which to his own subjects would become apparent in due course.

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Colonel Hamilton returned to Kuwait to make arrangements to give effect to the policy thus agreed on and some little delay occurred in working out the necessary details and removing the difficulties incidental to the establishment of a blockade post at Kuwait; but in due course a blockade Officer was appointed to that post and everything was ready for the inception of a scheme, destined, it was hoped, to complete the cordon shutting out the enemy from all access to the market of the outer world.

This was the position when I returned to Ibn Saud in April. 1918. According to custom large caravans from the interior had taken advantage of the spring season to go down to the coast to bring up supplies for the summer. Towards the end of the month, disturbing reports began to come through to the effect that all the caravans had been turned away empty in circumstances calculated to cause alarm. It is not too much to say that the whole of Najd, suddenly faced with the prospect of spending the summer without supplies, was in a ferment. The military

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Precautions, including the placing of machine guns on the roof of the Political Agent's residence at Shuwaikh and the landing of a detachment of troops, taken to obviate the occurrence of trouble in connection with the turning away of the caravans, were commonly interpreted as an act of hostility towards the people of Maid, and Ibn Saud's policy of friendship with the British Government came in for a good deal of unfavourable criticism.

The authorities at Kuwait had failed to realise this aspect of the matter or the necessity of keeping me informed of their action, with the result that while complaints poured in to Ibn Saud and were duly passed on to me, I was not in a position to afford an explanation of the action taken or of the reasons therefor.

It was clear to me, however, that some mistake had occurred and, in view of the risk of disturbance inherent in delay, I felt that no course was open to me but to give certain guarantees regarding the future on behalf of the Kuwait authorities.

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I accordingly arranged with Ibn Saud that all Najd caravans should be accompanied by special envoys on his behalf, that his Kuwait Agent, Abdulla al Wafisi, should be appointed his special representative in respect of tribal parties, who were not in a position to come into procure special envoys, e.g. the eastern tribes such as Muteir and Subai and finally that all regular town caravans could carry passes signed by the local Amirs. These arrangement I at once communicated to the Political Agent at Kuwait, assuring Ibn Saud, at the same time, that the caravans already turned away could no return to bring up supplies which would not be refused provided the arrangement as regards passes and envoys would not be refused provided the arrangements as regards passes and envoys were duly observed. At the same time, I pointed out to the Political Agent, firstly that it was not altogether reasonable to restrict exports into the interior from Kuwait on the basis of pre-war trade, because in those days, the interior used to draw supplies from

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from Mecca, Damascus and Basrah among other places, whereas under existing conditions and with the restrictions of shipping to the Hasa ports, Kuwait had come to be the sole source of supply to Najd and, secondly, that, in view of the arrangements made by the Mission with Ibn Saud in consultation with Colonel Hamilton, the responsibility of the Kuwait authorities was restricted to the prevention of illicit and unauthorised export only, while Ibn Saud was responsible that no goods, exported to Najd under proper authority, should leave his territories for an enemy destination.

Suffice it here to say that the arrangements now proposed by me were promptly accepted, and the due clearance of the Najd caravans previously turned away created a satisfactory revulsion of feeling throughout Ibn Saud's territories and an episode, which had caused so much ill feeling, served very well to remind the people of Najd of what the British Government could and would do, in the event of their abusing the privileges extended to them.

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While on this subject, I should mention that the Kuwait debacle was universally attributed in Najd to the machinations of Shaikh Salim, who was, at the time, undoubtedly piqued by the establishment of effective British control of the blockade and could not have found a better weapon, wherewith to oppose it, than to make the arrangements weigh heavily on the people of Najd, who could be trusted not to remain silent under such provocation. The proclamation issued by him - apparently at the request of the British authorities - and the unsympathetic manner, in which it was enforced, lent colour to the accusations made by the Najdis.

Be that as it may, the acceptance of my proposals restored confidence in Najd, Ibn Saud promptly set to work to ensure the effective stoppage of smuggling from the Qasim - one of his first acts was the summary dismissal of the Amir of Zilfi, who was notorious for complicity in the smuggling business and by a strange coincidence, of which Shaikh Salim was not unaware, had been the only person privileged to export supplies from Kuwait, when the rest of the Najd caravans were turned away - and everything bade fair at last for the establishment of an effective blockade all round.

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The only person, who was not satisfied with the arrangements made by Shaikh Salim, regarding whose machinations for the reversal of the arrangements above described I was not the place to speak. On the 28th June I was asked to report that Ibn Saud was completely satisfied with the interests of his people in the matter and that the blockade were being duly safeguarded and maintained at the same time. I expressed the hope that the financial blockade would be maintained as afford the only hope of cutting off supplies from enemy. In short, everything seemed to be in a fair and sufficiently satisfactory solution of the blockade problem when, about the middle of July, I received the news that Government had decided once more to place their trust in Shaikh Salim and to leave the prosecution of the blockade entirely in his hands on the condition of his accepting the services of a British Officer to assist his own blockade operations. At the same time it was decided that imports to Kuwait from India and elsewhere should be restricted on the basis of the reasonable monthly requirements of Kuwait and its dependent tribes. The Resident Agent at Kuwait had, on July 4th, addressed a letter to Shaikh Salim on behalf of H.M.'s Government communicating the sanction of the Government to the

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The news of this development of the situation was naturally extremely unpalatable to Ibn Saud, who saw Shaikh Salim once more, given a free hand to promote smuggling to the enemy and to make the blockade such as it remained, irksome to the people of Nejd. I reported that at the very moment, when these arrangements were being made, certain enemy caravans were actually present in Kuwait and, at the same time, in view of Ibn Saud's disclaimer of responsibility for the leakage of supplies, I foresaw the recommencement of friction between the two rulers, as the first persons to take advantage of the new regime would be people of Nejd, the enforcement against whom of the new restrictions could not fail to give rise to endless complaint and correspondence. I criticised the scheme in detail and suggested that, if the importance of maintaining good relations with the Shaikh of Kuwait rendered persistence in the scheme inevitable, the markets of Kuwait should be definitely closed to all Nejdis and arrangements for the supply of the needs of the interior made through the Hasa ports, over which Ibn Saud had firm and undivided control.

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In making these proposals, I was under the misapprehension that the pass system had been suspended, which was not the case. Nevertheless the objections remained that Najd caravans would have to apply for passes, not as heretofore to the British Officer in charge of the Blockade, but to Shaikh Salim's representative. It seemed to me obvious that endless possibilities of friction remained and, in view of all the growing delicacy of the harifian situation, I was anxious to remove all possible minor sources of dissatisfaction in order to have a free hand to deal with bigger issues, when they arose.

It must be remembered that at this time, while the Khurma affair was seriously threatening the peace of Arabia and I was endeavouring to divert Ibn Saud's attention from it to the campaign against Hail, I was faced on all sides by a series of petty difficulties of an exceedingly irksome nature, which were making Ibn Saud and his people querulous against the general policy of the <sup>British</sup> Government towards Najdean susceptibilities. Our policy towards the Shammar was causing much dissatisfaction and laying us open to the charge, that we were not serious in our desire for their elimination: our undertakings in regard to the Ajman were rapidly breaking down with the inevitable result of

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of unrest and nervousness in Najd and now, once more, the commercial interests of Najd were placed at the mercy of Shaikh Salim, while evidence was rapidly accumulating that the Shammar smugglers were enjoying a new lease of life.

The force of my general contention was recognized, firstly, by the Political Agent himself, who, however, urged that, the new arrangements with the Shaikh being based, on a policy of trust, he should be given another chance of shewing his loyal adherence to British policy and that, if that failed, resort might be had to the diversion of Najd commerce to the hasa ports as proposed by me; and, secondly, by Sir P.Cox, who on his arrival at Kuwait in August, 1918, on his return from England, arranged, in consultation with the local authorities and Shaikh Salim, that passes for Najd should, as before, be issued by the Blockade Officer and that the Shaikh's blockade operations should be confined to other elements only.

This last arrangement was in fact a reversion to the arrangement evolved on the basis of my representations in the previous May and, on the 4th September 1918, I was able to report that Ibn Saud had expressed himself once more completely satisfied with the revised scheme.

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From this point to the end of the period under report, when, in consequence of the Commander-in-Chief's peace proclamation at Baghdad, the blockade was for all practical purposes suspended, the blockade problem remained quiescent, though I was able to report a number of cases of smuggling from Kuwait which took place in September after the acceptance of responsibility for the new arrangements by Shaikh Salim, who, to the end, kept up the double game of pretending to enforce the blockade and actually assisting the enemy smugglers.

Summing up the results of the year, I find it difficult to resist the conclusion that, on the whole, Ibn Saud exerted himself honestly and energetically to close his territories to the operations of enemy purchasing agents with the result, that except for one petty case of smuggling reported by me in July, no definite case came to my notice. On the other hand numerous instances of the passage of caravans from Kuwait to Hail were reported from time to time, evidence was forthcoming of the accumulation of stocks at the latter place and their eventual clearance by a caravan of 1,000 camels to Damascus, while, finally, there seemed to be good ground to suppose that Nuri Ibn Shalan, who had access to Arabia, was making use of his position to...

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If, as regards Kuwait, it is possible to suggest what would have been an effective remedy for an intolerable situation, I venture to think it would have been found in the diversion of Najd commerce to the Hasa ports as I proposed; but, doubtless, the scarcity of shipping militated against the acceptance of the proposal at the time when it was made. This matter has, however, another and more permanent aspect which merits a few words of explanation before I pass from this subject.

It must be remembered that, since Ibn Saud re-established himself in his ancestral territories in 1902, he has been so busily engaged in the task of political consolidation, culminating in the capture of Hasa from the Turks in the spring of 1914, that he has had little leisure to consider the question of the commercial development of his country. When at last, in 1914, he found himself in a position to turn his attention to this subject and his financial needs, it imperative for him to cast about for ways and means of improving his revenues, his eyes turned to the Hasa ports, the development of which, as the normal avenues of Najdean commerce, became his immediate ambition.

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At this point, the outbreak of the war and the consequent restriction of shipping dashed his hopes to the ground and, with a good enough grace, he has recognized that the British Government was unable for the time being, to forward his plans by the provisions of shipping.

Nevertheless, he has never lost sight of the matter and, when blockade difficulties arose at Kuwait, he saw in them a good reason for pressing his claims for the recognition of his own ports. Meanwhile he was suffering a loss of customs revenue, which he could ill afford. Goods, arriving at Bahrain for through export to Najd, are liable to customs duty at that port without rebate or refund on proof of re-export and, though Ibn Saud collects customs duty at 8 per cent on goods landed at the Hasa ports, the double tax constitutes a serious deterrent against the use of the Bahrain route. At Kuwait matters are still worse, so far as Ibn Saud, is concerned, in that, while all goods landed at that port, whether for transit to the interior or not, pay customs dues to the Shaikh of Kuwait, it is impossible under present conditions or indeed under any conditions for Ibn Saud to arrange a customs cordon on the land side for the collection of dues - he thus collects nothing on goods imported into his territories via Kuwait and, such

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of Kuwait enjoys extraordinary advantages over the Hasa ports in respect of inland trade.

It is obvious that, after the war, Ibn Saud who has now firmly established his rule through the length and breadth of Najd, including the Qasim, will not continue to suffer the loss of so much revenue with equanimity; and the alternatives open to him will be either to offer lower rates and other facilities in respect of imports direct to the Hasa ports, whose revenues would flow entirely into his coffers, or to enter into mutually satisfactory tariff arrangements with the Shaikhs of Bahrain and Kuwait, whereby a reasonable percentage of the customs revenue of those ports would be paid to himself.

In view of the very rapid growth of the standard of living in Central Arabia in recent years, during which money has poured into the country, more particularly from the west, and of the heavy demands for piece-goods, foodstuffs, and other commodities likely to ensue during the coming era of peace, this question of the trade of Najd and the reasonable division of profits arising therefrom is one, which deserves the serious attention of H.M.'s Government. In this place it is not possible to do more than to state the problem in its simplest aspect.

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12. Ibn Saud's Operations against Hail.

At the end of October, 1917, the military situation in Central Arabia was extremely obscure. Since the death of Captain Shakespear at the battle of Jarrab in January, 1915, Ibn Saud, left to his own resources, had failed to continue the campaign then interrupted at its inception. The impetus given to his flagging zeal by the conversion of 1916, backed by the grant of a regular subsidy and a substantial addition to his armament, was spent without any substantial result. Ibn Rashid was known to have left his capital and to be with the Turks at al Hajar, near Madain Salih, on the Hijaz railway, while his confidential agent, Ibn Laila, had gone to Damascus presumably to consult the Turkish High Command regarding his master's affairs. Hail was left to the care of its garrison under the command of a trusted slave. Finally, Ibn Saud, according to his own account, had been maintaining pressure on Jabal Shammar, watching for an opportunity to strike, until the beginning of Ramdhan, when he resigned the command of the forces in the Qasim to his son, Turki, and returned to his capital. Turki had effected nothing and

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was not likely to do so.

Meanwhile the Sharrif's denunciations of Ibn Saud's lukewarmness in the allied cause were becoming more frequent and uncompromising, as well as more difficult to refute on behalf of our ally and the High Commissioner for Egypt voiced the opinion of all authorised concerned, when he expressed the hope that "time and the successful completion of the Mission, resulting, it is hoped in active aggression against the Turks on the part of Ibn Saud would proved to the King the folly of his present policy of suspicion and the wisdom of effecting a reconciliation with his nearest powerful neighbour".

The principal object of the Najd Mission was therefore, to lurch Ibn Saud into a campaign of active aggression against the Turks, which I interpreted, for all practical purpose, as meaning a campaign against Ibn Rabhid with the capture of Hail as its chief objective, and it may be assumed that Government neither intended nor desired that Ibn Saud should be committed to such a venture with inadequate resources at his disposal. It was indeed to obviate such a contingency,

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that a responsible military officer was attached to the Mission, to enable it to speak with authority on military matters and, if necessary, to estimate the amount of assistance required to make the resources of Ibn Saud adequate to the task in the view.

It was consequently not a little disappointing to find that, when at last the train was laid and ready to fire, not only was the charge proposed considered excessive, but doubts had arisen regarding the value of the objective itself. It was, indeed perfectly clear that the achievement of the proposed object by Ibn Saud would but confirm the King in his folly and make a reconciliation between him and his nearest powerful neighbour impossible and, that being so, the purely military advantages likely to accrue from the capture of Hail were not such as to warrant any serious effort on our part.

However that may be, the first efforts of the Mission were directed to the task of

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forming an estimate of the relative strength of the two Central Arabian chiefs in men and armament. As regards Ibn Saud, we knew, at the outset, that he had, some twelve months before, received from us four Turkish mountain guns, four Maxims and 3,000 rifles with corresponding quantities of ammunition, and that four of his men had been instructed at Basrah in the handling of machine guns.

At the very outset of our journey, namely at Uqair, we were not a little surprised to find the whole of the local garrison - some 50 men - armed with modern rifles, and we were informed that the garrison at Qatif had also been armed out of the gift intended for another purpose; but a worse shock awaited us at Hufuf, where after considerable reluctance on the part of the local governor, Abdulla ibn Juluwi, we were permitted to inspect the military equipment stored in the fort. Here we found all the four maxims still in the cases in which they had arrived a year before, two of the mountain guns and a considerable stock of rifles\* and ammunition. To add to our disappointment, we were informed that

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