

Colonel Pally's visit to Riad about the Wahhabee attack on Sohar.

and half on the other) towards Riad, and afterwards bends in an easterly direction.

In describing the character of the country as above between the Persian Gulf and Nejed, I have described it as it would be crossed, coming, for instance, from Koweit to Riad; and I have not taken into consideration the regions of Washem, Kaseem, and Jabbul Shammur, lying to the westward or northward of Al-Towaij, and which, either politically or geographically, appertain, at the present moment, to Nejed.

The hill district, generally, in which Dereyeeyah and Riad are situate, is known as Al-Aaredh; * and it is only the valley which cleaves the district which is known as Wady Hanifeh. It was this Wady, perhaps, or a branch from it, which, before it was conquered by the orthodox Mahomedans, was known as the Wady Aftan. Usually it is quite dry; after heavy rain it becomes a torrent, the bulk of the water losing itself in the sands to the southward and eastward. The general water-shed of the central highlands of Arabia seems, indeed, to be to the southward and eastward. † The water is lost in the sands ‡ to the southward, draining probably under the sands of Rob-al-khali; and that which passes to the eastward, draining under the sands of the Dehna, and re-appearing, firstly, in the lower level of Al-Ahsa, secondly, in the yet lower plain of the sea-board near Ras Tannara and Kateef, and, thirdly, in the sea itself, at a depth of four or five fathoms, near the island of Bahrein.

From Riad, two days' journey, in a south-westerly direction, is the Kharj District, sometimes known as Al-Yamameh. Tradition asserts that this region, now in part desolate, is the remnant of what was once the considerable State of Yemameh, destroyed partly by encroachment of the desert and partly by political convulsion. I infer that Al-Yamameh originally extended from the present Kharj or Yamameh in an easterly direction to the shores of the Persian Gulf, thus including the present district Al-Ahsa, then known as Hajr, and having its provincial chief town of Hajr, now in ruins, two or three days' journey south-west of the present provincial chief town Al-Hufuf.

The present town of Al-Yamameh is said to be on the site of the old capital; it is not in the valley, but in an open plain; it is six or seven days' journey from the present Al-Hufuf, and is four or five days' journey from the former chief town of Al-Ahsa Hajr. The town of Suleimeh is in Yamameh, that is, in Kharj.

There is running water and there are extensive date groves in Al-Yamameh; but this water is said in part to come from a source named Seh, a little to the southward, where the Ameer grazes and waters some of his horses, and in part to be derived from nearer springs and wells. There is no water flowing above ground from Bisha, or from the Dowasser valleys to Al-Yamameh; no water reaches the Persian Gulf, in the form of a river or perennial stream, at any point along its Arab shore, between Koweit, at the head of the Gulf, and Cape Mussendom, at the entrance of the Gulf.

The general law of the water-shed of the Peninsula of Arabia, from the eastern confines of Hejaz and from the central hills and plateaus, seems to be that of a southward and eastward direction, that is to say, in the same manner as the water-shed of Eastern Nejed percolates towards the lower levels of the great desert on the south, and of Al-Ahsa, Al-Kateef, and the Persian Gulf on the east; so does the water of the Southern Nejed find its way into

* This Al-Aaredh must not be confounded with Al-Ard, a range of hills stretching in a westerly direction near the road from Riad to Mecca.

† It is asserted further that this general direction of water-shed obtains from the confines of Yemen and Hejaz.

‡ I conjecture that there must be lakes, or that water must be findable below the sand in the direction of the Hadramaut and Eastern Yemen.

MEMORANDUM
 OF THE
 PROCEEDINGS
 OF THE
 COMMITTEE
 ON THE
 PROPOSED
 REVISION
 OF THE
 ACTS
 OF PARLIAMENT
 RELATIVE
 TO THE
 ADMINISTRATION
 OF THE
 INDIA OFFICE
 1854

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the lower levels of Al-Yamameh, Al-Howteh, Al-Harij, &c., with waste to the great desert; and so does the water from Al-Ard, and from Hazm-er-Rajec, and from the highlands on the eastern boundary of Southern Hejaz, find its way to the lower levels of the Bisha, the Wady Dowasser, and the Afladj-e-Dowasser,* with waste to the great desert after supplying the cultivation of the above districts.

Leaving Riad and returning to the Persian Gulf by way of Al-Ahsa, you cross the same sort of country which you crossed in going from Koweit to Riad, only in reversed order of course: in other words, leaving Koweit you have a march of 12 long caravan days in a general direction of south-west and by south, of which the first five days are in a diagonal direction across the rolling open ground loosely called Adan, then for two days across the stony tract of Summan, then for two days across the sand hills of the Dehna, then for two days across the rolling and plain ground intervening between the Dehna and the Nejed highlands called Aaredh, and then, finally, one long day through the Aaredh to Riad; while in returning from Riad to the Gulf by way of Al-Ahsa, you have first three days across the Aaredh and its adjacent ground, then two days across the Dehna (which seems to be more commonly called Nafid, as it falls away towards and merges itself in the great desert), and then two days across the open stony ground of Summan or Hajar, and then either two days (full) to the shore line at Okair (erroneously called Ojair), or four days (full) to the shore line at Kateef. In either case you pass through the chief town of Al-Ahsa District, Al-Hufuf. From Kateef to the boundary of Al-Ahsa District is two days' journey nearly, and thence to the chief town, Al-Hufuf, is two days' journey. Al-Hufuf is rapidly pronounced Al-Fuf. It is commonly known also as Khot-al-Hufuf, from the ancient citadel there, in part of which the Wahhabee Governor still resides.† Sometimes Al-Hufuf is called Al-Ahsa, after the name of its district.‡ The ancient name of the district was Hajr; its chief town bore the same name. It is said that the ruins of a large town of this name are still visible two or three days' journey distant in a south-west direction. Hajr is said to have been a province of ancient Al-Yamameh. It is added that the decisive battle which gave these regions to the Faithful was fought near Hajr.

Some confusion seems to have existed in regard to the three names—

Hajr, the ancient name for Al-Ahsa and its chief town.

Hajar, the name of stony belt, called also Summan.

And Okair, the name of the sea-port erroneously called Ojair.

These names are, however, of entirely distinct origin.

Okair means a small excavation, or something cut away, in allusion, apparently, to the small inlet or islet at the point on the coast where Okair is situate.

Kateef is the present port of the old district of Kateef, which was conterminous with the Hajr Province. Kateef was of greater extent than the present range of date groves and gardens round Kateef. But the district was encroached on by the sands of the desert from the landward. The word Kateef is said to mean plucking, in supposed allusion to its date harvest. Kateef is the passive, plucked, or something seized from another person, in allusion, it is asserted, to the Keramata sect, who seized on Al-Ahsa or Hajr and Kateef in

* The Afladj is not a province of itself, but, as its name denotes, is that portion of Dowasser which is watered by Kanaats, or underground water-ducts. Its full name is Afladj-al-belad-ad-Dowasser, or the Kanaats of the villages of the Dowasser.

† The town of Muburriz, being the next important town of this district, is distant only a couple of miles to the northward of Al-Hufuf.

‡ To the east of the town are some hills known as El-Gharra, containing large caverns, whither the people repair for coolness in the hot season.

संस्कृत विभाग, दिल्ली
राज्य विभाग, दिल्ली
कॉपी राइटिंग सेन्टर, दिल्ली
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the third or fourth century of the Hejra, and carried away the famous black stone from Mecca to Kateef, intending to make this latter place supersede Mecca as a place of pilgrimage.

It appears there are two Al-Ahsas: that above referred to and known as Al-Ahsa Al-Bahrein (from the adjacent island of Bahrein); and secondly, that near Medina on the road towards Mecca, held by the Beni-Saad of Al-Hareb.

The largest island of the Bahrein group was called Awal, after the name of the first Chief who settled there, in the same manner as the island on the opposite coast was called Kais.

I am told that the remains of a considerable town are buried under the sand on the sea-shore at a distance of one day's journey and one-half on the road from Kateef to Okair. Is this the ancient Hamas or Hams?

I cannot find that there is any record or sign of any settlement along the shore line from Kateef to Koweit. This shore line is never traversed.

There is a road of eight days' journey in length a little inland from Koweit to Al-Ahsa. To the right of this road, coming from Koweit, and at four days' journey distance from that place, are said to be the ruins of an enormous stone fort called Taj, traditioned to have been built in the time of Nimrod.

While referring to antiquities, I may mention that I am told there is a mound, about two hours' ride north-east of Jelajel in the Sedan, with an inscribed stone on its top. The mound is called Al-Grief. The character of the inscription is of very ancient date.

At Sedoos in Al-Aaredh is said to be a monolith of great altitude.

To return to the coast line at Koweit. The present town of Koweit is only from one to two hundred years of age; the name is a corruption or diminutive of Khot, or fort. The ancestors of its present Chief were the pirates of the mouths of the Shet-al-Arab; their original fort was at Omkuner, at the head of the Zobeir creek. I may mention that I have explored the Zobeir creek to its head, carrying four or five fathoms water up to its head within sight of the date trees of Busreh. I took my native craft up the creek between the island of Boobian and the main, carrying 4, 6, to 9 fathoms throughout: this latter creek would not, however, suit shipping, as there is only one fathom outside its entrance. The best approach to the Zobeir creek is up the Khor Abdullah.

The Bay of Koweit is also called Gurn, or horn, in allusion to the shape of the bay.

At the north-west angle of the bay is a fort called Jaharah; this is said to be on the site of the ancient Ghiranhensis. Be this as it may, bricks and other remains are found in digging near the fort; it is in this fort that the horse-dealers collect their horses from Nejed previous to embarkation for India. I subjoin a memorandum on the various breeds of Nejed horses, which are of all colours, and vary in height from 14-1 to 14-2 average. A horse of 14-3 is a large Nejed horse. Some of the very highest caste, of the finest form, and greatest endurance, are 14-1, or even under. Within the past few days I have myself seen or ridden a chesnut-coloured Saglawiyeh mare, a bay Hamdany mare, two grey Obeyahs, and a nutmeg-coloured Kohaileh mare. The commonest colour is grey, shading from dark nutmeg up to almost pure white.

The Arabs consider that a horse should be ridden young. The Anezeh commence to ride, they say, too young. But a colt of two years should always be ridden; it consolidates him and makes him lasting. Hence a colt brought up among the Bedouins is more valued than a colt of Bahrein, although the caste of horses on this island is pure, but the colts are pampered. A Bedouin considers that a colt requires desert air, desert exercise,

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camel's milk, and some dates. It is said that when pushed, a Bedouin will kill a sheep for his horse or mare, feed it on the ragmeat the first day and then on the soup. I observe that the Arabs about me rarely put a bit in the horse's mouth, only a slight halter over the nose. Yet the horse seems under absolute command, even at full speed. The docility of the animal is certainly very remarkable. Some of the horses to the southward among the sand hills are taught to lie down like a camel when their master scratches the ground with a stick, and then to turn over on their side and so elude the sight of an enemy in the distance.

The part that camel's milk and locusts play in the food of the Bedouins and other Arabs is very noticeable. During the spring, when the camels find grass, an Arab will live entirely on camel's milk; he considers it an alternative to his blood and as very fattening; it is said that living on this milk gives one a disgust for other food, especially for animal food. I have been assured from so many and so credible independent sources that numbers of Arabs and Arab horses do live and thrive without putting anything into their mouth, sunles scamel's milk, for months together, that I cannot doubt the fact: as to locusts, they eat and relish them in all classes; the Bedouins store them, and they may be said to form with dates a staple of food.

Memorandum on the various castes of Horses in Nejed.

There are five principal breeds of horses:—

- 1st.—Saglawayeh ben Jidran.
- 2nd.—Kohailet-al-Ajooz.
- 3rd.—Obayet-ash-Sherrak.
- 4th.—Dahmat-ash-Shehwan.
- 5th.—Waznat Khersan.

The first breed is not now procurable in Nejed, but a limited number of horses of this breed is still to be obtained among the Aneyzet tribe.

Horses of the Saglawiyeh (1st breed) on one side with dam or sire of one of the other breeds are procurable in Nejed.

From the second, Kohaileh breed, are derived the Shivaiman, Hamdaniyeh, Hudbeh, Rabdeh, Shohaib, Merady, Zohaiya, Maangieh, Towaysch, Atrafieh, Jarieh, Jazieh, Hargah, Jerrada, &c., &c.

This second breed is usually recognizable by the straight, free action of the fore legs.

The third, fourth, and fifth breeds do not change their names even when mixed with other breeds. An Arab often thinks little of the sort of horse that commands the highest price at Bombay; he seeks first, and doubly first, caste; afterwards he looks to form; he cares little or nothing for height, unless with a view to the export market: on that *cæteris paribus* he would prefer a roomy mare to a small one.

A few miscellaneous remarks on the Selabah tribe, based on information collected among themselves, may be interesting.

The caste is called Seleb, or Selaib, because on certain festivals, and particularly on occasions of marriage and circumcision, they fix a wooden cross, dressed in red cloth and adorned at the top with feathers, at the door of the person married or circumcised. At this signal the people collect and dance round the cross; they have a particular dance; the young men stand opposite their female partners, each advances, and the youth slightly kisses the shoulder of the maiden: anything like touch of the hand or waist is out of etiquette.

The word Seleeb means a cross; but some of the caste derive their name from As-Solb-Al-Arab, *i. e.*, from the back of the Arabs—meaning to assert

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that they are pure descendants of aboriginal Arabs. The Mahomedans, on the other hand, stigmatize them as outcasts. The tradition is that, when Nimrod was about to cast Abraham into the fire, some angels appeared and protected him. Eblis, or Satan, then made his appearance and pointed out to the bystanders that, if some one would only commit a shameful crime, the angels would be obliged to depart, and thus Abraham would be left unprotected. Upon this one of the Arabs lay with his own mother, and forthwith the angels fled. Upon this Angel Gabriel came to the rescue and changed the spot where the fire was enkindled into a garden. The descendants of the man who lay with his mother were thenceforward called As-Selaib.

The Selaib who have emigrated into Nejed and other Mahomedan settlements conform outwardly to the religious rites and ceremonies of the dominant creed; but in their own tents, or when alone, they do not so conform.

No intermarriage takes place between the Selaib and the Arabs. Even a Bedouin will not stop to plunder a Selaib, nor to revenge a blood feud against him. The Selaib are capital sportsmen; they live largely on deer's flesh, and wear a long shirt of deerskin coming down to the feet; their common diet is locusts, and dates when procurable; but they will eat anything. They tend their sheep and camels, wander for pasturage during eight months of the year, and for the remainder seek some town or village where to exchange their produce for necessaries of life. Their tents are black, of goat's hair, and are pitched separate from those of the Arabs. The Selaib are filthy in appearance, but the Arabs confess that in point of features the Selaib women are the most beautiful among them.

Forty days after birth a child must be washed, being dipped seven times in water.

Marriage is contracted by mutual consent of the parties; the assent of the father, or, failing him, of the nearest of kin, must also be obtained. The father of the girl receives some sort of payment according to the ability of the bridegroom. The parties go before a Mollah, or an elder of the tribe, who asks them three several times if they freely consent to the union. The parties replying in the affirmative, the Mollah takes his fee, and they cohabit. The neighbours then collect at the tent, sheep are killed for them, and they dance. The only invitation is the sign of the cross fixed outside the tent.

The Selaib wash their dead, cover the body with a white shroud, and inter it with a prayer; failing a white shroud, they use a new shirt of deerskin.

They profess to reverence Mecca, but state that their own proper place of pilgrimage is Haran in Irak or Mesopotamia; they say also that their principal people have some psalms and other books written in Chaldean or Assyrian: they respect the Polar star, which they call Jah, as the one immovable point which directs all travellers by sea and land; they reverence also a star in the constellation called Jeddy, corresponding with Aries. In adoring either of these heavenly bodies, the Selaib stands with his face towards it, and stretches out his arms so as to represent a cross with his own body; they believe in one God: some of them pretend to believe in Mahomed, others deny the Prophet, but trust in certain intermediate beings, who are called the confidants of God. They pray three times a day; first as the sun rises, so as to finish the prayer just when the entire disc is above the horizon; secondly, before the sun begins to decline from the meridian; and thirdly, so as to finish the prayer as the sun sets. It is asserted, however, that the Selaib of Haran have pure forms of prayer in the Assyrian or Chaldean. They fast three times a year: for 30 days in Ramathan, for four or seven days in Shaban, and for five or nine days in a summer month. They are peaceful, and are undisturbed by the Arabs, who hold them below injury; they are markedly hospitable, like all people who have nothing to give; they assert themselves to be a tribe of Sabians emigrated to Nejed: the Mahomedans deny this. The

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Selaibeat carrion, and profess themselves to be the chosen people of God, who pay no tribute or tax, since no one will deign to receive it from them.

I have not as yet come on any people practising sun or fire worship. It is vaguely asserted, however, that persons of these religions are to be found in the direction of Al-Yamameh. Some of the Arabs bear names obviously derived from the old astronomical religion, viz., *Budr* (Moon), *Shums* (Sun), *Zohra* (Venus), &c.

It appears that the family of the Imams of Muscat were originally Syuds of a village named Rowdeh in the Sedan immediately below the Toway Hills. The founder of the family was Saeed; his son's name was Ahmed; they came to Oman and took service under the dominant tribe called Yarebeh. Subsequently they obtained possession of the strong hill fort called Hazm, in the neighbourhood of Rostak. Eventually they became the Rulers of Oman, and changed their sect from that of Sunnee to Beyathee. Ahmed's son, Sultan, was styled Imam. Sultan, being killed, was succeeded by his son, Syud Saeed, who rendered his State a first-rate Asiatic maritime power, and took possession of the coast line of East Africa from Cape Delgado* to Bravn and Magadoxa, including the old Portuguese Settlement, or Mombassa, and the islands of Zanzibar, Pamba, Monfia, &c. He further developed his trade at the entrance of Persian Gulf from Bunder Abbas along the Mekran Coast. Syud Saeed dying, two of his sons disputed succession. The question was submitted to the arbitrament of the late Earl Canning, who divided the State of Muscat, giving the African possessions to one brother, Maujed, under the title of Sultan of Zanzibar, and giving the coast of Oman to the other brother, Thoweinee, the present Ruler, under the title of Sultan of Muscat. No one, unless ourselves, however, acknowledges the title Sultan. The title was Syud, and remains Syud. And when the people wish to speak with reverence of the late Syud Saeed or Syud Sultan, they remember him as Imam.

The mountain chain running along the coast line of Oman is said to be comparatively well watered on both its inland and seaward slopes: it has many spots where fruit and vegetables thrive. The range has been little explored by Europeans; but I doubt not that many interesting facts may be collected there.

In regard to the Wahhabee power, the principal facts of the case may be briefly summarized as follows:—There was a certain Mahomed, son of Saood, belonging to a tribe of the Aneyzeh called Mesalikh, and he was Rayes or Chief of a small family, who cultivated the suburbs of Dereyeeah, in the Wady Hanifeh. There was at the time also a man named Abd-al-Wahab of the tribe of Beni-Temem, born at Ayeneh, in the vicinity of Dereyeeah. He was a learned man, and had sought out the true knowledge of God at Busreh, Bagdad, and Damascus. Afterwards, that is to say, in the year of the Prophet Mahomed, 1160, he came to Dereyeeah and reproved the people in that they were ignorant of the true law and prophet. Mahomed, son of Saood, and his followers, accepted his teaching, and agreed to kill every body who did not do the like. So Mahomed, son of Saood, went down to Riad and attacked the place, and continued fighting there for about 30 years; and he slew Deham, son of Dawass, of the tribe of Douneser, Chief of Riad, and took possession of his city; slaying also many others who would not believe. Those who escaped fled the country, and Mahomed, son of Saood, then went down upon Al-Ahsa, slaying a great number of the tribe of the Arayer, who inhabited that region. Mahomed, son of Saood, had two sons, Abdullah and Abdoolazeez. And Abdoolah begot Torky, and Torky begot Feysul, the present Ruler of Nejed, and sometimes styled Ameer, but more

* Or rather the line of the River Sindee, a little to the southward.