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HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE.—No. 76

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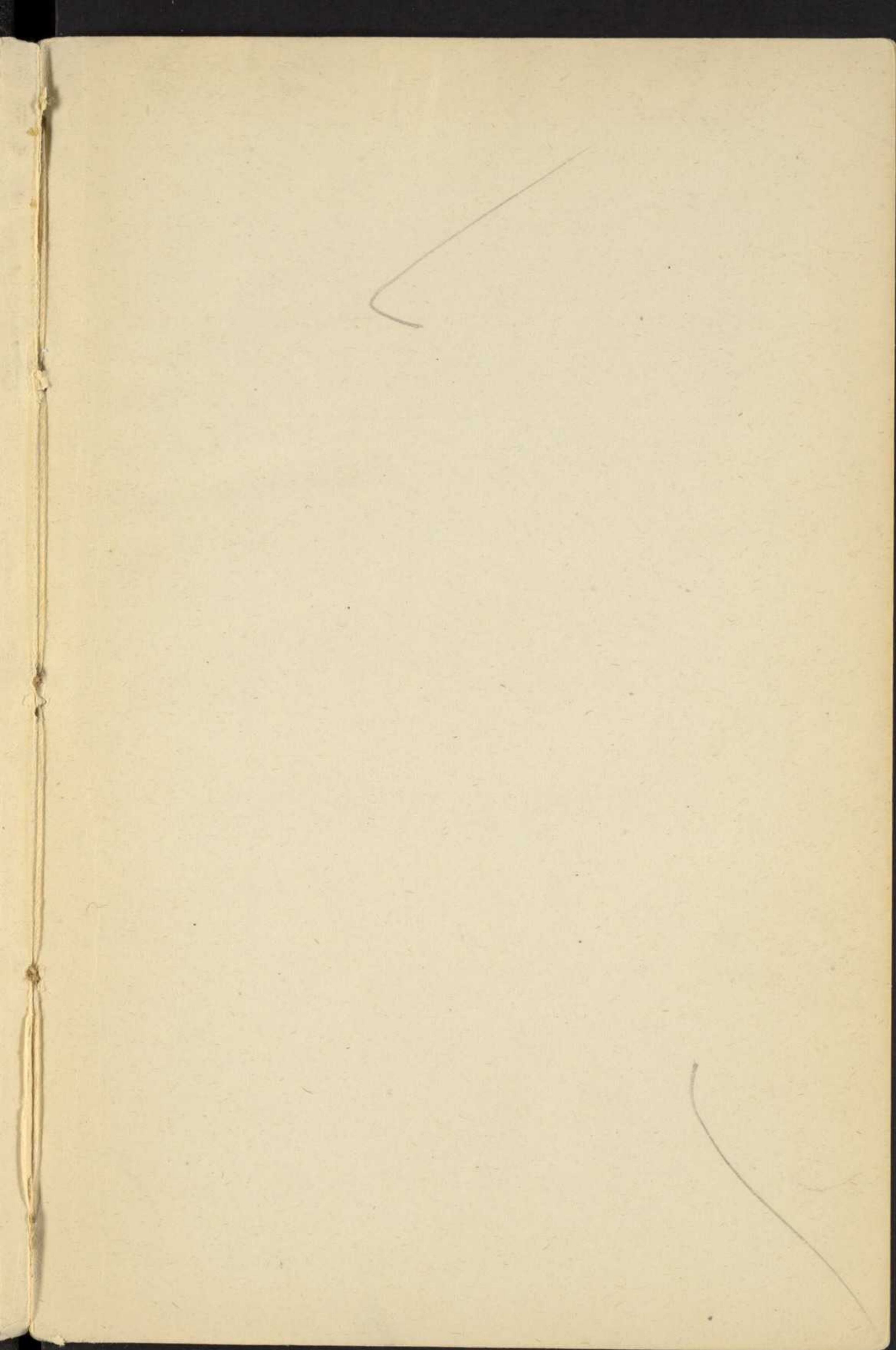
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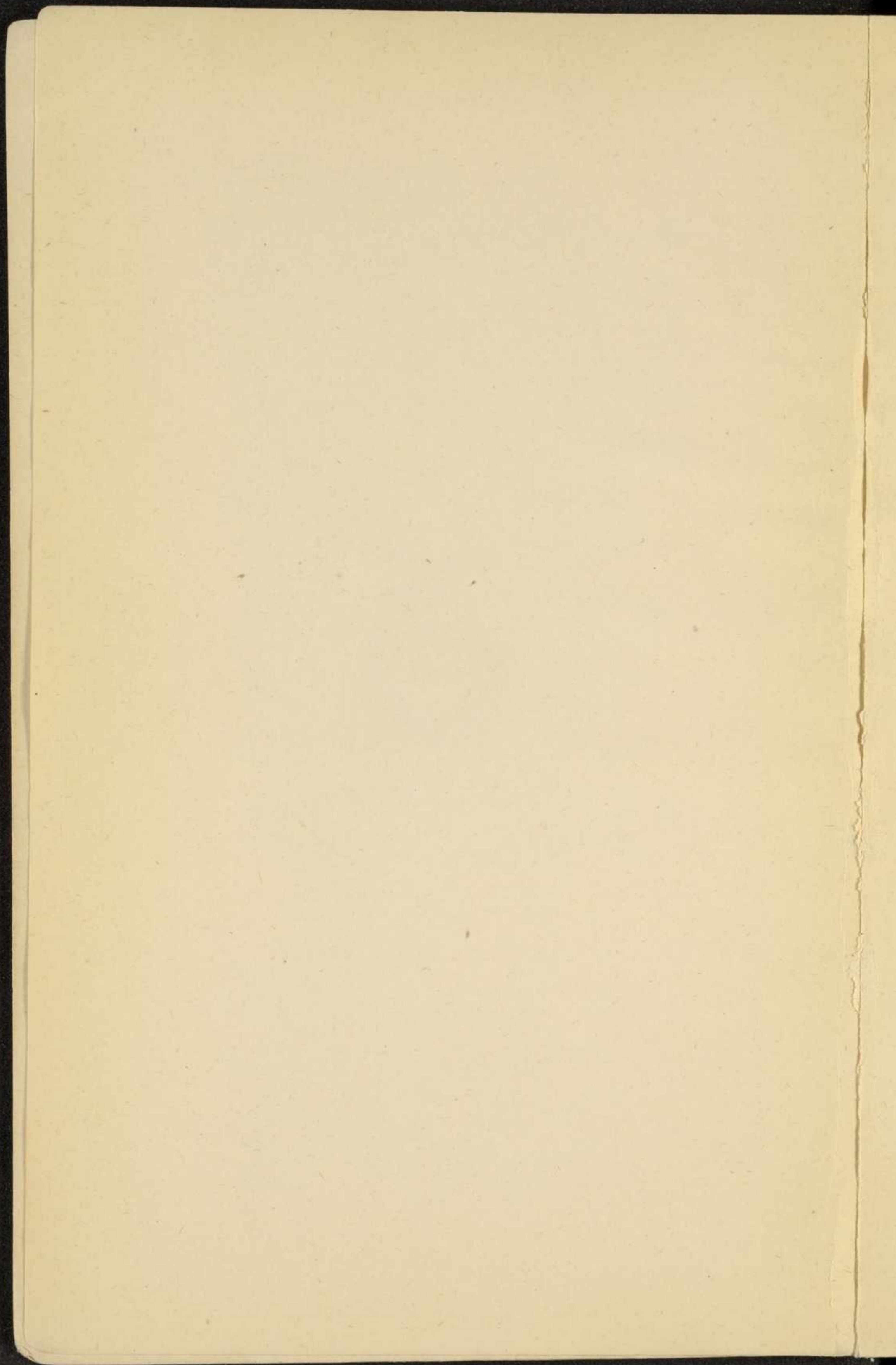


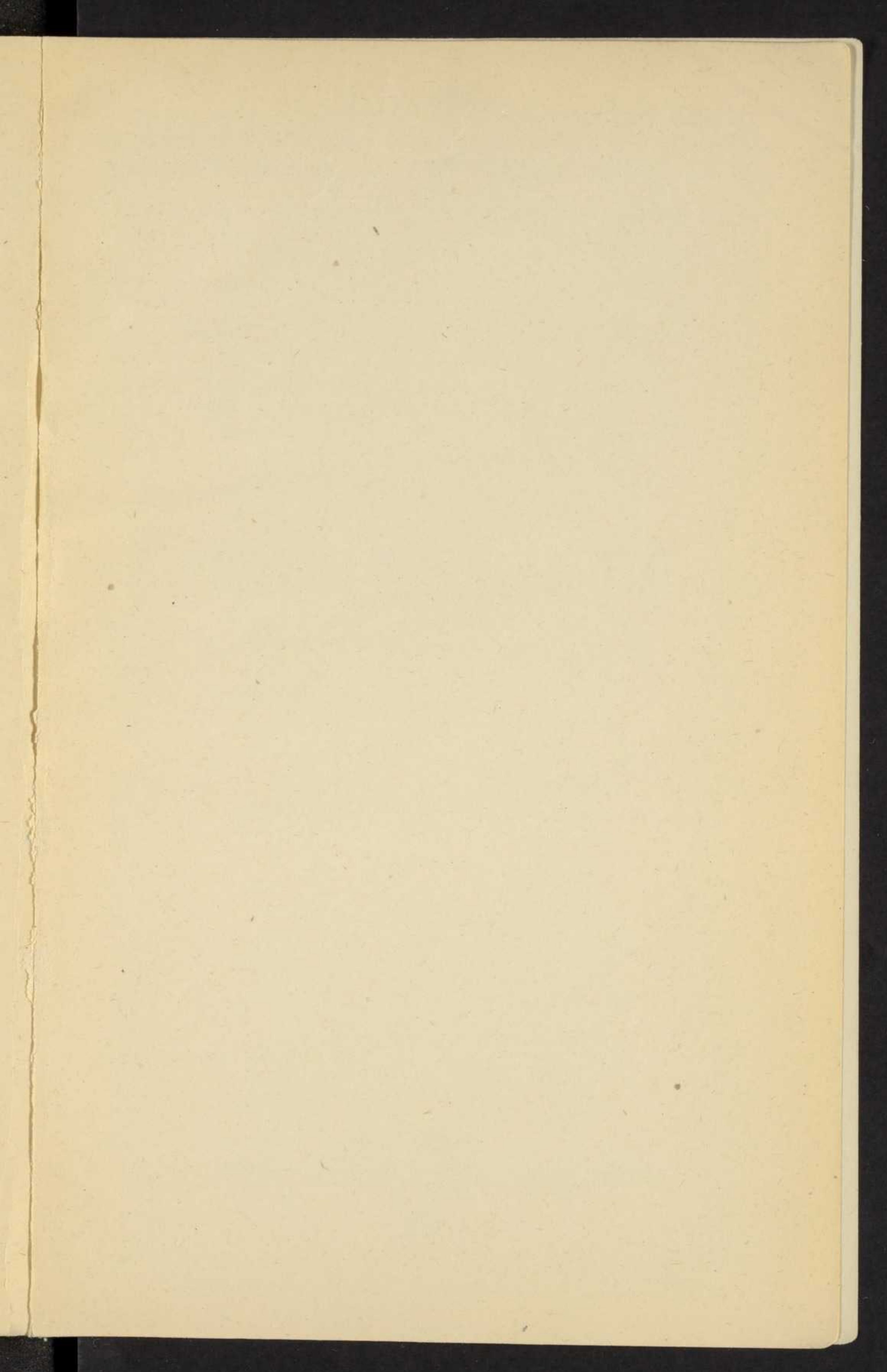


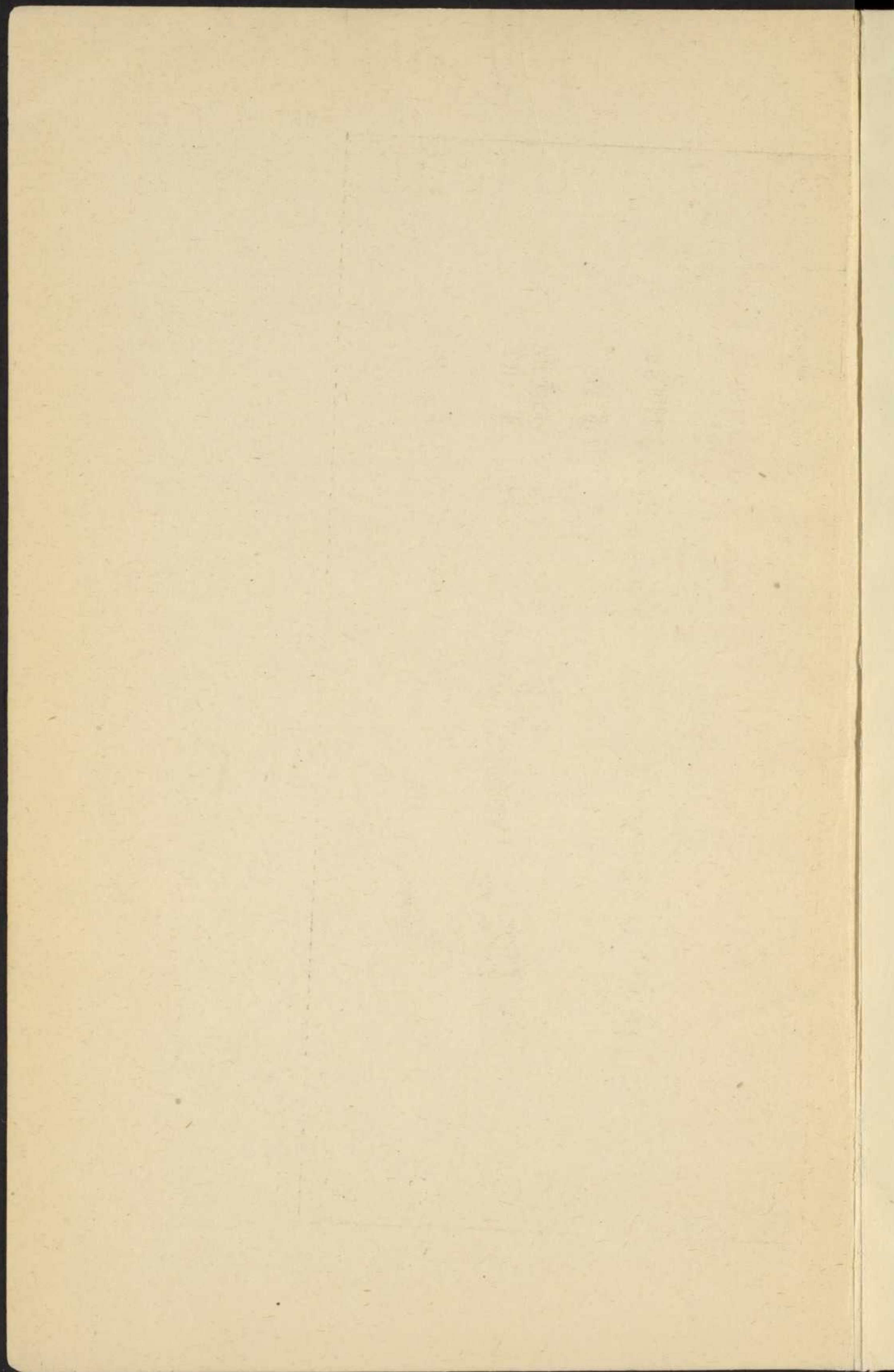
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# PERSIAN GULF



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### Editorial Note.

IN the spring of 1917 the Foreign Office, in connection with the preparation which they were making for the work of the Peace Conference, established a special section whose duty it should be to provide the British Delegates to the Peace Conference with information in the most convenient form—geographical, economic, historical, social, religious and political—respecting the different countries, districts, islands, &c., with which they might have to deal. In addition, volumes were prepared on certain general subjects, mostly of an historical nature, concerning which it appeared that a special study would be useful.

The historical information was compiled by trained writers on historical subjects, who (in most cases) gave their services without any remuneration. For the geographical sections valuable assistance was given by the Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty; and for the economic sections, by the War Trade Intelligence Department, which had been established by the Foreign Office. Of the maps accompanying the series, some were prepared by the above-mentioned department of the Admiralty, but the bulk of them were the work of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office.

Now that the Conference has nearly completed its task, the Foreign Office, in response to numerous enquiries and requests, has decided to issue the books for public use, believing that they will be useful to students of history, politics, economics and foreign affairs, to publicists generally and to business men and travellers. It is hardly necessary to say that some of the subjects dealt with in the series have not in fact come under discussion at the Peace Conference; but, as the books treating of them contain valuable information, it has been thought advisable to include them.

It must be understood that, although the series of volumes was prepared under the authority, and is now issued with the sanction, of the Foreign Office, that Office is not to be regarded as guaranteeing the accuracy of every statement which they contain or as identifying itself with all the opinions expressed in the several volumes; the books were not prepared in the Foreign Office itself, but are in the nature of information provided for the Foreign Office and the British Delegation.

The books are now published, with a few exceptions, substantially as they were issued for the use of the Delegates. No attempt has been made to bring them up to date, for, in the first place, such a process would have entailed a great loss of time and a prohibitive expense; and, in the second, the political and other conditions of a great part of Europe and of the Nearer and Middle East are still unsettled and in such a state of flux that any attempt to describe them would have been incorrect or misleading. The books are therefore to be taken as describing, in general, *ante-bellum* conditions, though in a few cases, where it seemed specially desirable, the account has been brought down to a later date.

G. W. PROTHERO,

*General Editor and formerly*

*January 1920.*

*Director of the Historical Section.*

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## I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

### (1) POSITION AND EXTENT

THE area here described includes the Persian Gulf proper together with the Gulf of Oman and the adjacent coastal regions.

The Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman lie between  $22^{\circ} 30'$  and  $30^{\circ} 30'$  north latitude and  $48^{\circ}$  and  $62^{\circ}$  east longitude, and are bounded on the south and south-west by the coastal districts of Arabia, at the head of the Gulf by those of Irak, and on the north-east by the coastal regions of south-west Persia.

The Persian Gulf proper extends in a south-easterly direction for 460 miles from the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab to the coast of the promontory of Oman.<sup>1</sup> Here a projection of the Arabian coast turns north-east as far as Ras Musandim, and narrows the entrance of the gulf through the Straits of Hormuz to a width of 29 miles. The Gulf itself has an average width of about 120 miles.

The Gulf of Oman is an arm of the Indian Ocean or Arabian Sea which forms the approach to the Persian Gulf proper. The outer limit may be taken as a line joining Gwattar in Persian Makran to Ras el-Hadd on the Arabian coast.

### (2) COASTS, ISLANDS, AND RIVER SYSTEMS

The Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman occupy the southern part of a great depression lying between the plateau of Arabia and the plateau of Iran, of which

<sup>1</sup> The term "promontory of Oman" is here used to describe that projection of the Arabian coast whose point nearly blocks the entrance of the Persian Gulf, and of which the base is a line running from the town of Abu Dhabi to the Baraimi oasis and thence to the town of Sohar.

Mesopotamia forms the northern part. The Euphrates and Tigris have, within historical times, silted up their mouths to an extent that has materially altered the coast-line of the Gulf, and these rivers seem destined in the future to unite Hasa to Fars, just as in the past they produced the fertile plain of Mesopotamia. The great depression is bounded for about two-thirds of its length, along the Persian littoral and the coast of Oman, by mountain ranges which have in places elevations of as much as 10,000 ft. These ranges run on the Persian side in an extraordinarily uniform direction from north-west to south-east as far as the Straits of Hormuz, where they bear eastwards, thence running along the coast of Baluchistan and Sind. The south-western side of the depression is similarly bounded by the mountains of Oman. In places the mountains run steeply down to the sea, but there is usually a narrow coastal plain or flat tract intervening.

The bottom of the Persian Gulf proper, outside the areas affected by recent coral reefs, is flat and gently undulating, and the depth exceeds 60 fathoms over only a small part of the area. On the Persian side, where the coast is mountainous, the water is naturally deeper than on the flatter Arabian side, where reefs and shoals extend into the Gulf for a distance of from 30 to 50 miles along almost its entire length. The sea-floor of the Gulf of Oman lies very much lower than that of the Persian Gulf proper, this being especially the case in the neighbourhood of the Musandim peninsula, where the depth of the water is about 60 fathoms. About 50 miles from Musandim the depth increases to 150 fathoms.

Of the numerous islands that dot the Gulf, many are partly at least of volcanic origin. The two largest of these are Kishm, which lies off the Persian coast just within the entrance to the Gulf, and Bahrein, off the Arabian coast.

The Persian Gulf is lacking in good harbours, the anchorages being for the most part shallow and exposed.

The coastal regions of the Gulf fall naturally into three groups.

The *Arabian Coastal Region*, which adjoins the south and south-west shores of the Persian Gulf proper, from the Khor Zobeir on the north as far as the entrance at Ras Musandim, and thence along the projecting butt of the Arabian continent as far as Ras el-Hadd, contains a group of sheikhdoms and emirates, the boundaries of which are not usually clearly defined, and includes Koweit, Hasa, El-Katr (Gattar), Trucial Oman, and a considerable part of the Sultanate of Oman, all of which maintain special relations with the British Government (see *Arabia*, No. 61 of this series, p. 22).

At the *Head of the Gulf* proper, the coast of the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia and Arabistan and a part of Behbahan, from the Khor Zobeir in the west to a point near Bandar Dilam in the east, including the districts inland as far as Basra and Ahwaz, comprises Turkish territory, now in British occupation, along the lower Shatt el-Arab, and the Persian province of South Arabistan, which is under the hereditary government of the Sheikh of Mohammera.

The *Persian Littoral*, the narrow coastal plain which lies between the shores of the Gulf and the main maritime range of the mountains, from Bandar Dilam on the north to the frontier of Baluchistan at Gwattar, together with the mountainous interior forming the southern side of the Iranian plateau, comprises the maritime districts of the Persian province of Fars and of Laristan, and includes the administrative districts which are under the governor of the Persian coast and islands, and the coastal district of the province of Persian Makran.

The importance of the Persian Gulf lies principally in its relation to international communications. The head of the Gulf affords the natural outlet to the shortest route from central and southern Europe to India, while at the same time the whole of the Gulf region lies adjacent to the flank of an advance through

Persia in a similar direction. Through the Persian Gulf lie the main trade routes to southern, central, and western Persia from India and from Great Britain, *via* the Gulf ports, Mohammera, Basra, and Baghdad, while with the development of Mesopotamia and the oilfields near the Gulf its importance will be still further increased.

#### ARABIAN COASTAL REGION

##### *Surface*

The Arabian coastal region occupies the lowest portion of the long and gradual decline between the central Arabian plateau and the shores of the Persian Gulf, the general slope being broken only by the mountainous district of Oman, which lies in the extreme south-east. The region is bordered on the east by the Dahana, a hard, gravelly plain, crossed at intervals by sand belts of varying width, which runs in a south-easterly direction in a continuous belt and joins east of Oman the enormous block of Arabian desert known as the Ruba el-Khali. For purposes of description the coastal region may be divided into two parts:—

(i) The district in the north-west which extends along the shores of the Gulf proper from Irak in the north to the foot of the promontory of Oman at Abu Dhabi.

(ii) The district in the south-east which includes the promontory of Oman and thence a part of the sultanate as far as the Ras el-Hadd.

(i) This region, which contains the Sultanate of Koweit, the province of Hasa, the promontory of El-Katr, and part of Trucial Oman, is composed of flat or slightly undulating plains, whose surface is broken only by low outcrops of sandstone or occasional isolated hills. In the interior, west of Hasa, there is a certain amount of continuous high ground, stony ridges running parallel to the coast here intervening between Hasa and the desert. With the exception of certain fertile tracts (see below, p. 6), the region consists for the most part of



steppe or desert land, parts of which support a scanty vegetation and yield a certain amount of grazing.

The *Sultanate of Koweit* extends along the coast for 190 miles from the frontier of Irak as far as the boundaries of the province of Hasa; its maximum breadth is about 160 miles, but the effective rule of the Sultan only extends for about a day's journey from the coast. The soil north of Koweit Bay is gravelly, but further south it is partly sand and partly clay, and there is only a small patch of fertile soil. There is no running water in the principality with the exception of one small stream.

Next to Koweit and adjoining its southern frontier, the *Province of Hasa* runs along the coast for 300 miles as far as the promontory of El-Katr, with an average breadth of about 50 miles. With the exception of the two fertile oases of Hasa and Katif, the province is a region of sandy or earthy steppe broken by many low white sandhills. It contains numerous shallow wells of drinkable water, and water is obtainable as a rule a few feet below the surface. There is a fair amount of grazing, and in places much scrub, with occasional depressions in which date palms and various bushes show the presence of water. In the north there are deposits of nitrate and common salt.

The *Promontory of El-Katr* is little known, but it is described as a rocky and pebbly desert, with a poor soil, consisting in the better districts of gravel and marl mixed with sand; the only vegetation is coarse grass mixed with a certain amount of low brushwood, although water is found below the surface without much difficulty.

*Trucial Oman* consists of a group of sultanates which extend along the coast for 300 miles from the foot of the promontory of El-Katr to the Ras el-Jebel district at the north of the Oman promontory. It is a low and sandy maritime plain, unsuited for tillage, but not without natural vegetation and even some wood; inland plains contain tracts with occasional cultivation. There are enough wells and water holes to support a

scanty Beduin population, and certain fertile districts are found in the neighbourhood of springs and wadi mouths.

The principal fertile districts in (i) are :—

(a) A small district of cultivated soil in the neighbourhood of Jahra, close to the foot of the Bay of Koweit and about 20 miles from Koweit town. This contains most of the cultivation in the sultanate.

(b) The two important oases of Hasa and Katif, which form the settled part of the province of Hasa.

The oasis of Hasa is a district which contains some cultivated areas of great fertility. It extends for about 30 miles north and south and 20 miles east and west, and is separated from the Gulf at Okwair by 16 miles of desolate sand ridges. There are extensive date groves in the fertile parts of the district; and in some parts a number of springs saturate the land and permit an elaborate system of irrigation for rice. The important town of Hofuf, capital of the province of Hasa, is situated in this district in the south-eastern corner of the cultivated area.

The Katif oasis is situated on the coast north-east of the oasis of Hasa. Its length from north to south is 18 miles, with an average breadth of 3 miles, the town of Katif lying in the middle. Most of the area consists of a sandy plain saturated by spring water. The cultivated tract ends 6 miles south of the town, but, as in Hasa, there are detached areas of cultivated ground.

(c) The Wadi el-Miya is a long valley or depression in the extreme north of the province of Hasa, containing numerous wells and springs. It has a dark brown cultivable soil, and in spring grass is abundant.

(d) Further south, in Trucial Oman, there are small spots of fertility at occasional wadi mouths.

(ii) The district in the south-east of the Arabian coastal region contains the most important part of the Sultanate of Oman, as well as a part of Trucial Oman,

with independent Oman in the interior. The most important physical feature is the hilly tract which, commencing at Ras Musandim (the entrance of the Persian Gulf proper), sweeps round in a curve parallel to the coast as far as Ras el-Hadd. The range whose northernmost part is the mountainous district of Ras el-Jebel is known as the Hajar of Oman. It is cut into two parts by the great cleft known as the Wadi Semail, and in the lofty Jebel Akhdar reaches heights approaching 10,000 ft. The rocks are mainly of limestone, but around Muscat there is an outcrop of volcanic serpentine which extends for about 10 miles along the coast. Igneous rocks are also found on the coast in the neighbourhood of Sur, and in a few places inland.

Along the Trucial coast of the promontory of Oman there is a wide and sandy maritime plain, but further north, in the Ras el-Jebel district, the mountains fall steeply into the sea. On the eastern side of the promontory the long and narrow coastal plain of Batina intervenes between the mountains and the coast for a distance of 150 miles, but in the neighbourhood of Muscat the coast is again mountainous and steep, and east of this the hilly district of east Hajar comes close to the sea. Inland the Dhahira district extends to the north-west for a distance of about 100 miles. It is a plain of uneven surface which slopes down from the foothills of Hajar to the Ruba el-Khali, in which its drainage is lost. South-east of this, Oman proper consists of a central plateau shut in on the north by Jebel Akhdar and on the south by the desert; its surface, outside the oasis, is rough and broken, and the central portion is a stony plain thickly dotted with small volcanic hills. The district in the south, however, has a wide and level surface sprinkled with dwarf mimosa and bunches of desert grass. Inland, in east Hajar, are sandy plains and a network of small valleys, with occasional patches of cultivation. Fertile districts in this south-eastern coastal region are:—

(a) Parts of the *Batina* coastal plain, which are

very fertile, with many date groves. The Batina plain is crossed by many watercourses, but irrigation is entirely from wells.

(b) South-west of Muscat in the *Wadi Semail* district, where there are a number of date groves.

(c) In addition to these there are many rich tracts in the inland districts which are situated under the main chain of Jebel Akhdar and its coastal continuation towards Ras el-Hadd, also in the Dhahira country.

### *Coast and Islands*

The Arabian coast, with which is included the Trucial and Pirate coasts, and in the Gulf of Oman the Batina coast, runs in a south-easterly direction from the Turkish frontier at the head of the Gulf as far as Ras el-Hadd. The general trend of the land is interrupted by the promontory of El-Katr, which projects northwards from the coast about midway between the head of the Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz, forming the eastern side of the Gulf of Bahrein; and also by the promontory of Oman, where the coast runs north-eastwards from Abu Dhabi to Ras Musandim before turning south-eastwards again to Ras el-Hadd.

(i) The coast-line of the Persian Gulf proper as far as the foot of the promontory of Oman is indented with a number of bays. This part of the coast is low, and reefs and shoals extend from 30 to 50 miles off it, making it difficult and dangerous of approach. Koweit and Bahrein are the only good harbours in this part. The shore is barren and desolate, and a great part of it has the appearance of a desert of white sand with occasional rocky hills of moderate height on which grow tufts of coarse grass. There are date trees near the few towns. The great reef, which commences about 70 miles south of Koweit, extends along the south-eastern and southern shore to the extreme south of the Gulf proper, and forms a labyrinth of reefs and shoals these being especially dangerous in the Gulf of

Bahrein, and between El-Katr and Abu Dhabi. The only island of importance is Bahrein, which forms the centre of the archipelago that constitutes the Principality of Bahrein. The island has an extreme length of 30 miles and a maximum breadth of 10 miles, and consists mainly of a stony plateau from 100 to 150 ft. high. Its coast is low; along the northern shore there is a belt of fertile land from two to three miles wide which is covered with date plantations; the remainder of the island is uncultivated owing to want of water.

*Ports.*—The bay of *Koweit* affords the only good anchorage for large vessels on this coast, with the exception of Bahrein. The bay itself is a large inlet leading out of the north-west corner of the Persian Gulf; it is 20 miles long from east to west, and 10 miles wide; in the greater part of the bay there is anchorage with good holding ground. The depths in the harbour are from 16 fathoms to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms, shoaling to 4 fathoms in the narrows at its head; vessels drawing over 20 ft. have to anchor two miles from the town. Although Koweit is connected by caravan routes with the interior of Arabia, the principal stream of trade in that direction passes through Manama, the port of Bahrein, whence it flows to minor ports of the Arabian coast, notably Okwair (Ojair) and Katif. From these ports there are caravan routes to Hofuf, the principal town of the Hasa oasis, and thence to Nejd.

*Manama* or *Bahrein* is situated at the extreme north of the island of Bahrein. The harbour is scarcely more than an open roadstead, but is sheltered by the island of Muharrak on the south and east respectively, and by the Fasht el-Yarim to the northward. The latter island does not prevent a considerable sea getting up in the outer harbour during a strong *shamal* (north-west wind), but vessels ride easily at anchor. The inner harbour, which is really a bight in the reefs, is about a square mile in extent; it is chiefly used by *bagala* (dhows), and vessels drawing more than 15 ft. should not enter it. Vessels drawing over 20 ft. lie just over 3 miles from the shore.

The port of *Okwair* (*Ojair*) is situated on the Arabian coast about 24 miles west-south-west of the southern extremity of Bahrein island. The harbour, which seems capable of improvement, has an entrance 200 to 300 yds. wide; the channel and a part of the bay has a depth of 3 to 4 fathoms; the sea without is shallower in places and dangerous for ships.

*El-Katif*, situated in the oasis of Katif, is an important coast town which is 36 miles north-west by west from the nearest part of Bahrein island, and 64 miles north-west of Okwair, and shares with Okwair a considerable part of the trade with the interior of Arabia. It has great defects as a port, and vessels of over 7 ft. draught cannot reach the town. Larger vessels anchor 10 miles north-east of El-Katif, just within Ras Tanura.

The port of *El-Bidaa* (*Bida*), sometimes known as *Doha*, is situated on the eastern side of the promontory of El-Katr, and is connected by caravan route with Hofuf and the interior. There is a natural harbour  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles long by 2 miles broad, whose approach is obstructed by reefs and shoals. The greater part of the harbour has a depth of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 fathoms, with anchorage in mud and clay.

(ii) With the exception of the Ras el-Jebel district (see below, p. 11), the coast of the promontory of Oman and of the sultanate as far as Ras el-Hadd has few bays or indentations; a great part of it is mountainous and bold. The coast round Muscat is rugged and steep in places, and east of this the foothills of the mountains run down to the coast. The coast to the south-west of the promontory of Oman, which forms part of Trucial Oman, is a low and sandy desert, while the coast of Batina is also sandy, and is fringed for many miles with date groves. On this part of the Trucial coast the water is shallow though free from reefs, but the coast is open and exposed to the *shamal*, while there is, as a rule, a heavy surf along the coast on both sides of the promontory. There is deep water along the shores of the Gulf of Oman, but

the coast is deficient in good harbours; there are anchorages in the bays of Muscat and Matra, but both are imperfectly sheltered, the former from the north-west, the latter from the north-east winds; there is, however, a good shelter in the Khor Fakan. The importance of Muscat as a distributing centre is affected by the development of Sur, which lies 94 miles south-east of it on the same coast, and of Dibai, on the coast of Trucial Oman. Sur is an important coastal town, second only to Matra on this part of the coast; it has an open anchorage in from 8 to 11 fathoms. Dibai is a small but growing port, which supplies goods to the interior of the Oman promontory and to the Baraimi oasis district; there is anchorage in 5 fathoms, but no shelter from the north-west wind.

The mountainous district of Ras el-Jebel is indented on both sides of the promontory with numerous deep inlets; of these, two, which are known as Malcolm and Elphinstone inlets, form fine natural harbours with 14 to 20 fathoms depth; the winds in these are baffling, and the heat in summer is almost intolerable.

### *River System*

There are no rivers in this or any region of Arabia which flow perennially from source to mouth. There are, however, in Hasa and Oman, as in other parts of the country, watercourses (*wadis*), which carry floods after rainstorms. Those which originate east of the western watershed of Arabia, many of which pass through the region under consideration, are mostly long and shallow, their beds being depressed very little below the general level. These wadis carry water beneath their beds, which can be reached by wells at varying depths; they also provide a possible means of communication, and, where the ground moisture rises near or into their surface, they create chains of oases.

The numerous streams, springs, and ponds which water the oases of Hasa and Katif are said to form a part of the drainage of central Arabia which has passed underneath the Dahana (see p. 4).

## HEAD OF THE GULF

*Surface*

The coastal region at the head of the Persian Gulf lies between the north-eastern corner of the Arabian desert and the south-western edge of the Persian plateau, and consists of the alluvial plains of Turkish Irak and of south Arabistan, although the coast of the former touches the sea on a narrow front only, between the mouth of the Khor Zobeir and the Shatt el-Arab. The district extends along the coast from the Khor Zobeir, which is the boundary between the sultanate of Koweit and Turkish Irak, to a point between the mouth of the Hindian river and Bandar Dilam, a distance of about 130 miles. The plains are featureless, and the surface is broken only in Arabistan, in the east and north of the Hindian district, where there is a considerable hilly tract, and in Ahwaz district, where a range of hills about 30 miles in length rises to a height of 200 ft.; this range is pierced at Ahwaz by the Karun river. With the exception of certain highly cultivated areas enumerated below, the plains are barren or thinly covered with desert scrub; in some parts there are saline tracts, but a considerable part of the plains is in spring covered with grass, and the soil is probably fertile when the water can be brought to it. Large areas of the country are completely covered with swamp, especially in the Felahieh and Hawiza districts of Arabistan and on the Turkish side of the Khor Zobeir.

Fertile areas are:--

(a) The *banks of the Shatt el-Arab*, where between Basra and Mohammera the date groves are practically continuous on both sides of the river, and have a depth inland of from  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to 2 miles. On the right bank below Mohammera there is generally a fine palm belt.

(b) Considerable tracts of irrigated land in the *Felahieh (Fellahia) and Hawiza districts*, which are watered by the lower courses of the Jarrahi and the Karka rivers.



(c) There is a certain amount of land irrigated by the Hindian river.

The Karun is at present used for irrigation purposes on only a very small scale; belts of tamarisk and willow and other bushes fringe the banks of the rivers, but, as a rule, there are no large trees.

### *Coast and Islands*

The coast of the alluvial plain at the head of the Gulf is low and marshy, liable to flood, and fringed with flat mudbanks, which have been formed by silt brought down by the Shatt el-Arab and other rivers. The head of the Gulf seems to be gradually silting up, and the delta is being extended into the sea more rapidly than any known delta; according to one authority it now advances a mile in seventy years. The shallows and mudflats make the coast difficult of approach. The two large banks, Marakat Abadan and Marakat Abdullah, between which passes the channel to the Shatt el-Arab, may be said to be underwater prolongations of the mainland. The most important indentation on the coast is the entrance to the Shatt el-Arab; but, besides the river mouth, there are numerous deep creeks, of which the most important are the Khor Musā, a large inlet of which the mouth is about 36 miles east of the Shatt el-Arab, and the Khor Zobeir. In the Khor Musā there is a good natural anchorage, but the bar would require dredging to admit vessels of a large size. The Khor Zobeir, which runs up into the desert towards Basra, has fairly deep water, but its approaches make it unsuitable for use as a harbour. With these exceptions there are no natural harbours in this district, although there is an anchorage for small vessels at Bandar Dilam.

Bubian is a large low island about 26 miles in length by 12 in breadth, situated at the north-western corner of the Persian Gulf, which is divided from the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab by the Khor Abdullah, and from the possessions of the Sheikh of Koweit by the Khor as-Sabiya. The island is barren, and is destitute

of fresh water; parts of it are at times submerged by the sea. The other islands at the head of the Gulf are little more than mudbanks, and the strip of land which lies between the Shatt el-Arab and the Haffar and Balmanshir channels of the Karun, which is sometimes called Abadan island, may be considered as part of the mainland.

*Ports.*—The two ports of the district, Basra and Mohammera, are both situated on the Shatt el-Arab.

*Basra* is situated on the right bank of the Shatt el-Arab, 70 miles from the outer bar at the river mouth, and 539 miles by river from Baghdad. It is the chief port of extensive districts of which Baghdad in Mesopotamia and Kirmanshah in Persia are the trade centres, and is also the port of shipment for the date and grain trades of Mesopotamia. There is anchorage in mid-channel in Basra reach for a considerable number of ships in from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 fathoms. At Margil, 5 miles above Basra, there is a long strip of foreshore with deep water close to the bank, and here some 2 miles of deep-water wharves have been constructed. If improvement to the navigation of the Shatt el-Arab were effected Basra would quickly take its place as a first-rate port, and as the terminus of the Baghdad railway it seems likely to play a most important part in the future economic development of the Persian Gulf region.

*Mohammera* is situated about 16 miles below Basra, close to the junction of the Karun river (through the Haffar channel) with the Shatt el-Arab. Large steamers which cannot swing in the Haffar channel anchor near the left bank of the Shatt el-Arab. The port of Mohammera owes its importance partly to its position at the mouth of the Karun, through which a considerable trade to Persia at present passes, and partly to the fact that the refineries of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company are situated close by. If land transit from Persia *via* Ahwaz to Basra should take the place of river transit, it seems unlikely that the port will develop further to any great extent.

*River System*

The most important feature of the district at the head of the Persian Gulf is the river *Shatt el-Arab*, which forms a main line of communication along which passes a large section of the trade of Mesopotamia and central and western Persia. The *Shatt el-Arab* is formed by the confluence of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, which unite at Kurna, about 125 miles from the bar at the mouth of the river; it is joined at Mohammera, 48 miles from the river mouth, by the greater part of the waters of the Karun. The width of the river at its mouth is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and the land is very low on both sides of the entrance. Below Mohammera the river is rich in silt contributed largely by the Karun. The waters of the river serve to irrigate through numerous channels and distributaries the extensive date groves which line its banks to a depth of from  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to 2 miles inland.

The chief obstacle to the navigation of the *Shatt el-Arab* is the outer bar at the mouth of the river, which is formed by flats composed of mud and silt of a width of nearly five miles; a smaller bar forms in the river at certain seasons in the neighbourhood of Mohammera. Above these two bars, however, the river can be ascended as far as Basra by any vessels able to cross the bar, which at spring tides admits ships up to 20 ft. draught, at other times those up to 17 to 18 ft. The *Shatt el-Arab* is wide, with a depth at low-water spring tides of 30 to 40 ft., and there are no very awkward bends in the river, which is navigable as far as Kurna by vessels of 15 ft. draught. In order to give satisfactory access to the port of Basra the bars at the mouth of the *Shatt el-Arab* and below Mohammera should be removed and the channel kept clear; it is said that this work would not present any great engineering difficulties.

The *Tigris* has so far deteriorated through systematic abstraction of its waters for canals and irrigation ditches that its usefulness for purposes of navigation has been seriously impaired; it forms, however, an

important avenue of commerce to Baghdad and thence to Persia. The river between Basra and Baghdad is practicable throughout the year for steamers drawing 4 ft., but there are numerous *bunds* and shoal patches which interfere seriously with navigation when the water is low. The volume of water in the Tigris varies considerably during the year; the low-water season lasts from July to November, the high-water from December to June.

The *Karun* is the largest and only navigable river in Persia; it rises in the mountains in the Bakhtiari country about 100 miles west of Isfahan. After winding through deep valleys and mountain gorges it emerges from the hills above Shustar and then flows south by west; it breaks through the line of sandstone hills at Ahwaz in a series of rapids, and from that point it winds through the alluvial flats of south Arabistan for a further distance of 115 miles. The main volume of the water of the Karun flows through the Haffiar channel into the Shatt el-Arab at Mohammera, the remainder through the Balmanshir channel, reaching the sea about 12 miles east of the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab. The river is navigable as far as Ahwaz by river steamers of 2 ft. draught at any time, and of 5 ft. draught when the river is high. The Karun, which when full carries a brown silt, is not at present much utilised for irrigation purposes. The seasonal variations in the volume of water follow the same general course as those of the Tigris, but the Karun is more subject than the Tigris to sudden irregular rises. The rapids near Ahwaz are practically unnavigable, but above them navigation is again possible to within a few miles of Shustar. The Balmanshir channel can be navigated by vessels of 7 ft. draught up to 30 miles from the sea. It is said that the Karun is not capable of material improvement for navigation purposes except at prohibitive cost.

There are other smaller rivers in this region, and of these the chief are the following;—

The *Jarrahi* rises in the Ramuz district of Arabistan; it flows into the Felahieh district, where it is mostly carried off by canals for irrigation purposes, the lands watered by the Jarrahi being among the most fertile and productive in Arabistan. The remnants of the stream become the Felahieh—Marid canal.

The *Hindian* is formed by the junction of the two streams which rise in the Persian hills between Behbahan and Shiraz. The river reaches the Gulf through mudflats about 30 miles east of the Khor Musa; there is a bar of soft clay at the river mouth. The Hindian in its upper reaches flows through several channels, and is made use of to a considerable extent for irrigation. The depth of water at the bar is not less than 3 ft., and above it 6 ft.; the river can be ascended by native craft as far as the town of Hindian, which is 16 miles north-west of the river mouth.

The *Karka* (Kharkah, Kharkeh) river, which rises in the district north-west of Dizful, enters the plains of Arabistan about 15 miles further west than the Diz river, and waters large areas here and in the Hawiza district. Its waters are dissipated in streams and marshes which have submerged and ruined the district, but a certain amount of the water eventually finds its way through the marshes to the Tigris and the Shatt el-Arab.

### PERSIAN LITTORAL

#### *Surface*

The narrow coastal plain of south-western and southern Persia consists of belts of low land of varying width, situated between the sea and a great maritime range of limestone, which forms the southern rim of the Persian plateau. The plain extends along the whole length of the coast from Bandar Dilam to the frontier of Baluchistan at Gwattar, with the exception of that part between Kangun and Asalu, where the maritime range may be said to fall directly into the sea. The

width of the plain varies as a rule from 15 to 30 miles, but in some places, e.g., at Bushire, and again between Bandar Abbas and Minab, the hills retreat, thus widening the maritime plain, which at Bushire attains a width of 45 miles, while further north it reaches a breadth of 60 miles. The surface of the plain is broken by a series of subsidiary coastal ridges and hills, which are from 1,000 to 3,000 ft. high; in places these skirt the coast and give the plain the character of a trough parallel to the sea; in other parts they divide the plain into three parts: inland valley, coastal ridge, and maritime strip; in such cases the inland valley is usually fertile. These coastal ridges contain large quantities of gypsum, and in places, as at Bustaneh and Khamir, there are deposits of sulphur. The soil of the plain is largely a light loam of great fertility, with specially fertile alluvial districts at the foot of the hills, in the deltas of the Rud-Hilleh and the Minab rivers, on which Bushire and Bandar Abbas are respectively situated, and of the Mund river, and also in the tracts along the course of the rivers. Large quantities of cereals are grown, and there is good natural grazing in the hills between May and October. Above the fore-shore there are numerous date groves. Along the coast there are extensive mudflats, and there is a certain amount of saline desert or swamp, bearing only coarse grass and tamarisk bushes. Mangroves are found in the swamps beyond Jask.

In *Persian Makran* the greater part of the coastal plain is a sandy waste impregnated with salt and seamed with lines of drainage, but in places there are patches of alluvial soil; the plain is here wider than on the coast of south-western Persia, and the formation of the coastal ridge and maritime plain less regular.

Adjoining the coastal plain and in places actually abutting on the coast is the south-western portion of the great Persian plateau, the ascent to which from sea-level is almost everywhere accomplished by a series of sudden steps indicated by rugged and precipitous mountain ranges. These ranges, which as a rule run

parallel to the coast, overlook the littoral district in its entire length; they increase in height as they recede inland. The general north-west to south-east trend of the ranges suggests easy communications between the Mesopotamian depression and the interior of the Iranian plateau, but this method of approaching the plateau is, as a matter of fact, extremely difficult. The part of the main range which adjoins the coastal plain rises in places to a height of 5,000 ft.; inside the range and co-extensive with it is a large trough divided into two parts by a watershed. Between the ranges are a series of alluvial plains, in places fertile, which vary in length from 15 to 150 miles and increase in altitude until the central plateau is reached. Further inland, more especially in the province of Fars, the southern slopes of the mountains are generally fertile; they provide very good grazing, or are terraced for vines or other cultivation. In some parts large trees and wild almonds grow above the 3,000 ft. line, and there are forests of dwarf oak. Elsewhere the mountain districts are bare and rocky.

### *Coast*

The coast of the Persian littoral from Bandar Dilam to Gwattar includes the Dashtistan, Tangistan, and Shibkuh coasts in the Gulf proper, the Biaban coast in the Straits of Hormuz, and the coast of Persian Makran. The general trend of the coast is in a southeasterly direction from the head of the Gulf to the Straits of Hormuz, and thence due east along the shore of Persian Makran. It is comparatively free from bays or indentations, and is generally deficient in good harbours, while the seaward face of the various sandstone ridges which occur in the coastal plain is rugged, precipitous, and absolutely barren. There is deep water as a rule fairly close to the shore, which is usually clear of outlying shoals, the only considerable one being the Ras ul-Mutaf, which lies off the Tangistan coast.

The coast-line is either low, rising about 15 ft. above sea-level, or else there are precipitous ranges rising about a mile inland, and occasionally there is much swampy ground.

*Ports.*—There are three principal ports on the Persian littoral from which the caravan routes ascend the plateau and penetrate into the interior, viz., Bushire (leading to Shiraz and Isfahan), Bandar Abbas (for Yezd and Kirman), and Lingeh.<sup>1</sup> All of these are more or less inadequate and ill-protected from prevailing winds. There are also a number of anchorages close in shore which afford shelter to small boats only.

*Bushire*, which may be called the principal seaport of Persia, is situated at the northern point of the Bushire peninsula, about 140 miles south-east of the mouth of the Shatt el-Arab. The peninsula projects from the south into a large bay, the greater part of which is very shallow. The outer anchorage (about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the shore) is from 4 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms deep, and is open and exposed. The inner anchorage, situated in what may be called the entrance of the bay, lies north-north-west of Bushire town, and has good holding ground; it can be entered at any time, except when a *shamal* is blowing, by vessels from 15 to 17 ft. draught. It is said by some that to deepen this approach would be a costly operation, but this is disputed. It is open to question, however, whether Bushire could be converted into a convenient port except at disproportionate cost, and should alternative routes to the interior be developed its importance would be likely to be diminished.

*Bandar Abbas* is situated on the bare and sandy plain which borders on the Straits of Hormuz; the town is fronted by a flat about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles broad with less than 3 fathoms of water. There is anchorage in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms about 3 miles off shore. The chief drawback to Bandar Abbas as a port is the slight slope of the shore, and there is also a lack of facilities for

<sup>1</sup> The natural port of entry for Isfahan is Ahwaz.



handling merchandise. The holding ground, however, is good, and the roadstead, which is well sheltered, except from the south-east, affords anchorage to a fair number of vessels. Bandar Abbas is the natural port of south-eastern Persia, and also provides the outlet for trade routes from the central tract between Herat and Yezd, Meshed, and Bampur, although the last two are also reached from Charbar and Gwattar. From it there are possible routes to the interior which may prove of considerable importance in the future. In the event of improved port facilities being required, it is open to question whether they can be provided at Bandar Abbas, but there are said to be possibilities of a good commercial port at Bustaneh, about 18 miles to the west. The Clarence Straits, which lie to the west of Bandar Abbas, narrow to a width of 3 miles, and contain good anchorage in deep water.

*Lingeh* is situated about 296 miles south-east of Bushire; there is good anchorage in 5 fathoms of water at three-quarters of a mile from the beach, with good holding on a clay bottom; it is exposed, however, to south and south-east winds, which sometimes make communication with the shore impossible. From *Lingeh* caravan routes run to Bastak, Lar, and Jahrum; but although the roadstead has some advantages over those of Bushire and Bandar Abbas its development is checked by the mountainous and arid nature of the interior. The trade formerly carried on from *Lingeh* with the Arabian coast, and especially with Trucial Oman, has now been largely diverted to Dibai.

Of the harbours in Persian Makran the most important is *Charbar* (*Chahbar*). The bay of *Charbar* is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide at the entrance and 10 miles in length. It has the makings of a deep-water port, but the anchorage is exposed to the monsoon and is dangerous during that season. There is a depth of 4 fathoms at a distance of 1 mile off shore at *Charbar* town; the 5-fathom line is 2 miles from the beach.

There is an important station of the Indo-European

Telegraph Department at *Jask*; it is situated on a promontory about 140 miles south-east of Bandar Abbas, and about 130 miles north-north-west of Muscat. There are anchorages suitable for steam vessels on both sides of the *Jask* promontory, in which shelter can be found from all but southerly winds. Ships generally anchor  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the shore in the west bay; there is usually a very heavy surf on the beach. The 5-fathom line is nearly 3 miles from the shore in the west bay, and two-thirds of a mile from the shore in the east bay.

*Gwattar* (*Guattar*) bay is a great indentation on the Makran coast, at the meeting-point of Persian and British territory; the width at the entrance is 19 miles, the depth about 11 miles. The whole of the bay is entirely open to the south; a considerable swell runs straight in during the monsoon, and the sea breaks in 6 fathoms, rendering it unsafe to enter. From *Gwattar* there is a caravan route to *Bampur*, which forms an easy line of approach to the plateau.

The relation between the ports on the Persian coast and their corresponding trade centres on the Persian plateau is closely concerned with the nature of the back-country through which the routes which connect them must pass. The general trend of the mountain chains, which from the Turkish frontier to the Straits of Hormuz run parallel to the coast, from north-west to south-east, makes a direct ascent to the plateau from any point between *Bushire* and *Lingeh* very difficult. Between *Bushire* and *Shiraz* are four ranges of mountains, and the post road between these points, which constitutes the shortest means of access to the plateau (to *Shiraz* and thence to *Isfahan*), is one of the steepest and most arduous routes in Persia. For the first 50 miles the route traverses a level plain which is liable to become heavy or impassable after rain. Between that and *Shiraz* four difficult passes have to be crossed through rough and rocky defiles; of these the highest is the *Kutal-i-pir Zan*, which is 7,400 ft. high. The principal alternative route, which is that *via* *Firuzabad*, crosses a series of passes, of which the

highest is the Muk (6,600 ft.); none of these are as formidable as those on the post road, although the Ahram and other rivers are difficult to cross in times of flood; these, however, occur but seldom. This approach to the plateau, which is to some extent in a transverse direction, is less difficult than the post road, and the same may be said of a possible line of communication between Bushire and Jahrum and thence to Shiraz. Between Shiraz and Isfahan the altitude of the central plateau varies only from 5,000 to 8,000 ft., and there are no difficult obstacles to be surmounted.

Towards Bandar Abbas the valleys between the ranges which form the outer rim of the plateau open out towards the coast, and there is a line of approach to the plateau towards the north-west in a direction parallel to the ranges, from Bandar Abbas to Shiraz *via* Lar and Jahrum. This route, which traverses a succession of fertile plains as well as mountain passes of no great difficulty, is usually made use of as a means of approach to Lar from the coast, in preference to that from Lingeh, which traverses country presenting numerous obstacles in the shape of passes and ravines, and is also deficient in water. The country to the north of Bandar Abbas, through which pass the caravan routes to Kirman and Yezd, comprises a considerable area of the central plateau as well as the ranges which form its outer boundary. The ascent is considerably less arduous than that between Bushire and Shiraz, although the routes are considerably longer. Most of the routes use either the Tang-i-Zagh or Tang-i-Zindan passes, which constitute fairly formidable obstacles, and are situated in the southern part of the routes at a distance of about 80 to 60 miles respectively from Bandar Abbas. Considerable areas of the country are sterile and stony desert, with desolate ranges of hills and numerous ravines; some of the valleys, however, contain fertile soil. There are numerous rivers and fords to be crossed, some of which are at times impassable. The high mountain passes are blocked with

snow in winter, but there is usually an alternative route available. North-east of Bandar Abbas there is a depression in the outer rim of the plateau where the boundary range begins to turn east instead of south-east; in this direction is easier country, through which passes the longer route to Kirman by way of Rigan. Only two passes present any difficulty on this route, which provides a fairly easy way for a cart road or railway to the Persian plateau.

The route from Gwattar to Bampur by way of Sarbaz is said by an authority to be the best one from the sea coast on to the plateau. There are no high passes with steep gradients; but, on the contrary, a considerable part of this road runs along stony river beds, and three times a year, when the Sarbaz river is in flood, would be impassable.

### *Islands*

There are several islands strewn along the Persian littoral, usually at a few miles' distance from the coast. Between Bandar Dilam and the outlet through the Straits of Hormuz are the islands of Kharak, Sheikh Shuaib, and Kais, which are all small, low, rocky, and fringed by reefs. Large quantities of valuable building stone are now being transported from Kharak to Basra. Kharak and Kais have both at different times been in British occupation.

The principal island on the Persian littoral, however, is Kishm; this is situated in the Straits of Hormuz, and stretches along the Persian coast from Lingeh almost to Bandar Abbas; it is separated from the mainland by a channel known as Clarence Straits. The island of Kishm is 60 miles long and 90 miles broad, and is nearly covered with precipitous table-topped hills; at one point a low plain extends for several miles across the island. The highest point reaches an elevation of 1,300 ft. The coast is generally rocky. There is an anchorage at the foot of Kishm in 5 fathoms about three-quarters of a mile from the shore; larger vessels anchor 2 miles off in 6 fathoms.

The islands of Henjam and Larak, to the south and east of Kishm, are barren and hilly; they may be regarded as being physically appendages of the larger island. On the island of Henjam there is a British coaling station and also a telegraph station. On the small island of Hormuz, which lies a few miles south-east of Bandar Abbas, was situated the once-celebrated city of Ormuz, which has now disappeared. The island is barren, and contains large quantities of rock-salt and red oxide of iron.

### *River System*

Although the coastal plain is seamed by numerous lines of drainage, rivers in this region are few and unimportant, dwindling at certain seasons of the year to a mere trickle; at other times, especially at the season of the melting of the snows, they increase considerably in volume, and at times become impassable. Many of the rivers and streams are brackish and of no use for irrigation purposes. The river systems which have their origin in the back-country of the Gulf proper run in a north-west and south-east direction, following the natural trend of the mountain districts, and find their way to the coast with difficulty; those of Persian Makran, where the mountain ranges are more interrupted, flow as a rule from north to south into the Arabian Sea.

The only rivers in the district worthy of mention are the Mund, the Rud-Hilleh, and the Minab.

The *Mund*, which rises in the neighbourhood of Shiraz, emerges from the hills in the Dashti district, about 60 miles south of Bushire; at times it is not more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deep, but after rain discharges a large volume of water into the sea; the water is brackish. The river is navigable for a short distance by small native craft. The *Rud-Hilleh*, which reaches the sea just north of Bushire, is formed by the junction of two other streams, one sweet and the other brackish, about 30 miles inland. The *Minab*, which enters the Straits of Hormuz a few miles east of Bandar Abbas, has at

Minab town a width of 400 to 600 yds.; it usually carries a fair volume of water. It is one of the few rivers of which the water can be used for irrigation, and in summer is drained almost dry by numerous channels taken off for this purpose.

In Persian Makran there is no river of importance.

### (3) CLIMATE

In the Persian Gulf region weather is a subject of great commercial importance, for, apart from the pearl fisheries, the prosperity of the country depends chiefly on agriculture, which in its turn is to a great extent dependent on rainfall.

The Persian Gulf lies almost outside the region of the south-west monsoon, and its effect on the climate is for the most part indirect. On the Arabian side, within Ras el-Hadd, the monsoon is not felt at all, while on the opposite or Makran coast the monsoon rains do not extend further than Ormara in Baluchistan. The monsoon reaches Jask only in the form of a light south-easterly breeze.

In the Persian Gulf region the summer is very hot and practically rainless; in the winter there is cold and stormy weather with a certain amount of rain. The hot season may be said to extend from the beginning of May to the end of October, and the cold from the middle of November to the middle of March, the remaining periods being transitional. From the middle of May till the middle of July the heat is intense, but is moderated at the upper end of the Gulf by a constantly-blowing *shamal* or north-west wind. From the middle of July to the middle of August the heat is very oppressive owing to the stillness of the atmosphere and the excessive moisture. Bad weather generally begins after the middle of December, and January and February are cold and boisterous.

*Winds.*—The prevailing north-west wind, known as the *shamal*, blows in the northern half of the Persian Gulf for about nine months in the year, being very strong in April and almost incessant in June. In

summer *shamals* are rarely more than moderate; in winter they are often fresh and hard gales. The next most prevalent and distinctive wind is the *kaus* or south-east wind, which in winter alternates with the *shamal*. Other winds are the *nashi*, or north-easter, which blows strongly in the Gulf of Oman, especially in winter; during this period the Batina coast is dangerous. The *suhaili*, or south-west wind, is much dreaded by native mariners, as it strikes nearly all the sheltered anchorages on the Persian coast.

*Temperature.*—The difference in temperature between the northern and southern ends of the Persian Gulf is considerable. At the southern end it never freezes, and snow is not seen except on distant mountains, but in Turkish Irak there are hard frosts at times, and snow has been known to fall at Bushire. The highest absolute temperatures are probably experienced in Irak, but the heat is most felt in the lower part of the Gulf, on account of the humidity; it is, perhaps, more unbearable at Bandar Abbas than elsewhere. Mean daily maximum temperatures in July and August average:—

—	July.	August.
Muscat .. ..	92° F. (33° C.)	88° F. (31° C.)
Bahrein .. ..	98° F. (36½° C.)	100° F. (37½° C.)
Bushire .. ..	95° F. (35° C.)	95° F. (35° C.)

Irak is the hottest of the districts and also the coldest; a reading of less than 19° F. (-7° C.) has been obtained at Baghdad.

*Rainfall.*—Rainfall in the Persian Gulf region is extremely light; the following table shows the annual average in inches at the places where observations have been recorded:—

Arabian side.	Head of Gulf.	Persian side.
Bahrein 3¼ in. (80 mm.)	Baghdad 9 in. (230 mm.)	Bushire 12 in. (300 mm.)
Muscat 3-6 in. (75-150 mm.)	Basra 6 in. (150 mm.)	Jask 4½ in. (110 mm.)
	Fao 2-4 in. (50-100 mm.)	Charbar 5-6 (130-150 mm.)

Rain is almost confined to the winter months, and hardly ever falls before the middle of October or after the end of May. The principal rainy months are December, January, and February.

The humidity is considerable. At Baghdad, which is a long distance from the Gulf, the average humidity is only 56 per cent., but in Bahrein it is over 79 per cent.

#### (4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

The climate of the Persian Gulf region is, during several months of the year, very trying to Europeans, but it is not altogether unhealthy. The cold weather, though less unpleasant, appears to be more unhealthy than the hot; sickness is most prevalent in the transitional seasons, spring and autumn. Malarial fever is the principal disease of the region, and prickly heat and boils are very prevalent. Plague has shown itself at intervals in the Persian Gulf since 1899, especially in the Gulf ports; but there is little plague in Mesopotamia. Epidemics of cholera are frequent, and at times severe, but they have almost entirely confined themselves to the river towns of the Shatt el-Arab. Small-pox is prevalent in the Persian Gulf region, and at times assumes an active epidemic form.

There was no general organization of quarantine before the war; local systems were under the management of Turkey and Great Britain. Turkish quarantine, which was prescribed by the Constantinople Board of Health, by excessive stringency and constant variation of rules proved a serious impediment to commerce in Irak, while its protective value was slight.

On the Persian coast arrangements as to sanitation were entrusted by the Persian Government to the British authorities in 1897. In 1903 an attempt was made to transfer the control from the British authorities to the Imperial Persian customs; in 1904 the Persian Sanitary Council was founded, but there has



not been much evidence of its activities in the Persian Gulf. The Government of India dispensary was opened at Bandar Abbas in 1906, and has been the means of relieving much suffering.

The chief quarantine officer in the Persian Gulf is the Residency Surgeon at Bushire, an officer of the Indian Medical Service, who represents the Persian Government.

#### ARABIAN COASTAL REGION

##### (5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

The population of the Arabian coastal region of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman is almost exclusively Arab, although alien elements occur in many of the coastal towns, especially in Oman.

A large number of the population of the oases of Hasa and Katif and the island of Bahrein belong to a race or class known as Baharina; these may number 100,000. Their origin is doubtful, and they are regarded either as an aboriginal tribe conquered and absorbed by the Arabs, or as a class formed by the conversion of certain Arab tribes to Shiism about 300 years ago. The term as now employed on the west coast of the Persian Gulf is practically a synonym for Arab-speaking Shiah Mohammedans.

The Arabs of Oman belong traditionally to two supposed racial groups: (1) Yamani, said to have been the first Arab settlers in Oman; (2) Nasiri (Nizari), less purely Arab, who were for the most part later immigrants. Each of these groups is divided into a large number of tribes, sections, and sub-sections.

The nomads are exclusively Arab or quasi-Arab. Among the non-Arab elements are included the following elements:—

(i) On the shores of the Gulf proper there are about 1,000 Persians in Koweit, and 2,500 in Abu Dhabi and Dibai. (ii) At Dibai there are about 1,400 Baluchis. (iii) Along the coast of Oman there are colonies of Persians, in part relics of Persian occupation.

(iv) In the neighbourhood of Sohar and elsewhere there are Baluchis and Jadgals, of whom the former, now very numerous, were originally introduced as mercenary troops. There are also considerable Indian communities in Muscat and Matra. (v) Negroes, both emancipated and slaves, are found in considerable numbers in the coastal towns of the Gulf proper, and along the coast of Oman, the outcome of several centuries of slave trade.

Arabic is spoken almost exclusively in this region; but Persian, Hindustani, and Baluchi are also spoken in certain of the coast towns.

## (6) POPULATION

### *Distribution*

Owing to the barren and waterless nature of the region the inhabitants are found mostly in the coastal towns; villages are numerous only where there are oases or springs and cultivation is possible. There are many villages in the oases of Hasa and Katif, in the island of Bahrein, along the Batina coast, in the Wadi Semail, and in the mountains of Oman.

In the larger towns, and especially in Hofuf, where contact with the outside world is maintained through Indian and other merchants, buildings and architecture are more elaborate, and a higher standard of life prevails. Village life is primitive, and the inhabitants of villages are engaged almost exclusively in agriculture.

(i) The total population, settled and nomadic, of the districts adjoining the Gulf proper is said to be in the neighbourhood of 300,000. This is made up as follows:—

	Settled.	Nomadic.
Koweit .. .. .	37,000	13,000
Hasa.. .. .	100,000	50,000
El-Katr .. .. .	25,000	Unknown
Trucial Oman .. .. .	72,000	8,000

The islands of Bahrein have about 100,000 inhabitants. The population of the district as a whole is extremely scanty, and vast tracts are either uninhabited or inhabited only at certain times of the year by a few nomads.

The chief centres of population are:—

(a) Certain *coastal towns and ports* connected with the interior by caravan routes. The great majority of the inhabitants of these towns take part in the pearl fisheries and in the small industries connected with them, such as boat-building, sail-making, &c. There are also considerable sea fisheries, in which some of the pearl fishers take part during the winter.

The numbers of the inhabitants of these towns are as follow:—

Koweit	...	...	...	...	35,000
El-Katif	...	...	...	...	5,000
Bida	...	...	...	...	12,000
Abu Dhabi	...	...	...	...	6,000
Dibai	...	...	...	...	20,000
Sharga	...	...	...	...	15,000
Manama, on the island of Bahrein	...	...	...	...	25,000
Muharrak, on the island of Bahrein	...	...	...	...	20,000

(b) The *oases of Hasa and Katif*; these include extensive districts of considerable fertility, and the inhabitants are mainly occupied in agriculture. Hasa oasis has a population of 67,000, of whom 25,000 are included in the capital, Hofuf. The population of Katif oasis is 26,000.

(ii) Of the districts which adjoin the Gulf of Oman, the Sultanate of Oman has about 500,000 inhabitants, of whom 30,000 are nomads, in the interior. Oman proper is said to have a population of 34,300. Beduins are numerous in Oman proper and on the verge of the desert generally, but their numbers cannot be estimated.

The most populous districts of Oman are:—

(a) The *coastal plain of Batina*, which has a settled

population of 105,000, engaged for the most part in agriculture and the cultivation of dates, and in the fisheries.

(b) The *Wadi Semail*, which is a most populous valley with a settled population of 2,800, engaged largely in date cultivation.

(c) The *coastal towns*, of which Muscat has a population of 10,000, and Matra one of 11,000. Matra is the starting-point of a caravan route to the interior, as are also Sur, with a population of 12,000, and Sohar, with 7,500. Kabura has 8,000 inhabitants.

The inhabitants of the coastal towns are engaged in the fisheries and local maritime trade, and also in trade with India and the east coast of Africa.

### *Movement*

Increase and decrease in population are due in the Arabian coastal region chiefly to local causes. In the months between May and September there is a considerable influx of population for the pearl diving, and boats come to this coast from the Persian shore and all parts of the Gulf. In autumn there are local movements of the population for the purposes of the date harvest.

The population also varies according to the movements of the Beduin. These are engaged in the rearing of flocks of sheep and in camel breeding. During the winter and spring they wander far and wide over the plains in search of pasture, but in the hot weather they come in to the wells and oases. They also visit the towns in order to make purchases and to sell live stock and *ghi*.

### HEAD OF THE GULF

#### (5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

The population at the head of the Persian Gulf is principally Arab. In the town of Basra there are, in addition, a few Europeans and Indians, together with about 3,000 Persians and 1,000 Jews.

In *south Arabistan* the population is mostly Arab, with probably in places an admixture of Persian blood. The following non-Arab elements, however, occur:—

(i) In the town of Mohammera there are, besides Arabs,<sup>1</sup> a considerable number of Persians and a few Jews, Sabians, and Oriental Christians. (ii) In Hindian and other districts there are some Persians. (iii) In the eastern part of the country there are a certain number of Lurs. (iv) In Mohammera district there are some negroes and a few Baluchis.

In the province of Behbahan Kuhgiluya the population is Lur; and in Behbahan town and plain there is a population of mixed Persian (or possibly Lur) descent, who are known as Behbahanis.

The language of the region at the head of the Gulf is Arabic, which is spoken in south Arabistan with an admixture of Persian words, while Lur dialects are used in the eastern districts.

#### (6) POPULATION

The population of the districts of Irak at the head of the Gulf probably approaches 120,000; of these about 40,000 inhabit the town of Basra, and most of the remainder are found in the numerous villages which are situated in the date groves that line the banks of the river. These are engaged in agriculture, principally date culture. The population in the interior is scanty.

The population of south Arabistan is probably rather over 200,000. The town of Mohammera has about 15,000 inhabitants, Hawiza has 5,000, Felahieh 2,000, and Hindian about 4,000. Large parts of the country are uninhabited or only sparsely populated. The numbers of settled inhabitants and nomads are probably about equal. The former, with the exception of the comparatively small numbers who live in towns,

<sup>1</sup> Arabs in Mohammera town are chiefly local Arabs with some descendants of Arab refugees from Bahrein.

are found in the villages which are numerous in certain parts of the country, e.g., on the left bank of the Shatt el-Arab, on the banks of the Karun in the Mohammera district, and on the Hindian. In the Felahieh district most of the villages are agricultural settlements, situated on canals taken from the Jarrahi river.

The great bulk of the nomads inhabit the districts of Ahwaz and Hawiza; in summer and autumn they camp in the marshes, in winter and spring they roam over the desert with their flocks and herds. A proportion migrate between the Persian and Irak sides of the frontier. The Muhaisin, who are looked upon as a settled tribe, leave Mohammera at certain times of the year in order to cultivate their grain lands on the Karun.

The population of the town of Behbahan is said to be from 12,000 to 15,000.

### *PERSIAN LITTORAL*

#### (5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

The population of the littoral of the Persian Gulf proper from Bandar Dilam to the Straits of Hormuz is composed of a medley of races and racial blends. Among the inhabitants of the coastal region of the Gulf proper the most important elements are Persians and Persian Arabs, the latter of whom may be described as Arabs under Persian rule who have become denationalised by settlement, subjection, or intermarriage; considerable numbers of them now adhere to the Shiah sect of Mohammedans, and they speak as a rule the Persian language. The settled population of the region probably consisted originally of Persians or Persian-speaking tribes, and the numerous Arab settlements seem to have come partly from the mainland, from south Arabistan and the Kaab tribe, partly from the opposite side of the Gulf, from among the Dawasir at Bahrein, and from the Ajman, Al Ali, and

Shammar tribes in the mainland of Arabia. In some parts the two races seem to have blended, in others they are more clearly differentiated, as in the case of Dashedistan, where there is an important group of Arab settlements, of which Chakuta is the largest. There are Arab tribes in the Lingeh district and a considerable semi-Arab population in the Shibkuh district.

Besides these races there is in the north a strong Lur element, while in the south-east, in the neighbourhood of Hormuz, a Baluchi strain appears, this being stronger further east, the inhabitants of Biaban being described as all Baluchi.

In Persian Makran there are a number of tribes, mostly claiming to be descended from Arabs, who either originally settled in Makran or moved there later from Sind or Kach. Some of the inhabitants are of Indian origin, and there are many Baluchis. There are also a number of negro slaves.

In the coastal towns the population is also very mixed. The inhabitants of Bushire are principally Persians, but include about 600 Jews and a few Armenians, Goanese, Baghdad Mohammedans, and Europeans. In Bandar Abbas most of the population belong to a hybrid race of mixed Persian, Baluchi, Arab, and negro descent, and are known as Abbasis. There are a number of immigrants, including Persians from Lar, Avaz, and Bastak, also Hindus, Khojahs, and Arabs. Lingeh also has a very composite population, of which the basis is Arab, chiefly immigrants from Trucial Oman and Bahrein. There are some negroes.

Behind the coastal belt the population is extremely scanty. It is composed of tribes of mixed origin, partly settled and partly nomadic, in which Irani, Turki, and, to a small extent, Arab strains are present. Among the chief tribes are the Kashkai, a nomad tribe of Turki origin, a large number of whom descend to the *garmsir*, or warm pastures, from the mountain districts of the Persian plateau for the winter and spring months, and the Mamassani, a group of five tribes of Lur descent.

The Persian language, or a dialect of it, is almost universally spoken in the districts of the Persian coast, both among Persians and Arabs, although a certain amount of Arabic is spoken in places, and in some parts Arabic, Lur, or Baluchi modifications are introduced into the Persian dialect. In Bandar Abbas a dialect known as Abbasi is spoken by a section of the population. In Persian Makran the language of the country is a dialect of Baluchi called Makrani, which contains a number of Persian and Arabic words.

#### (6) POPULATION

The number of inhabitants is probably over 300,000; this includes the population of coastal towns, of which Bushire has 12,000–20,000, Lingeh about 12,000, and Bandar Abbas about 8,000. The population of Persian Makran is estimated at about 114,000. Except in the towns mentioned above, the population is scattered in numerous small villages along the sea coast, or in the coastal plain at the foot of the mountains. The inhabitants are engaged principally in agriculture or in seafaring occupations, pearl-diving, sea-fishing, and the local carrying trade. There is a considerable amount of coastal trade between the seaports of the Persian littoral; also between these ports (notably Lingeh) and the Arabian coast, and especially Bahrein and Trucial Oman. Dwellings in the villages are for the most part primitive, and consist largely of huts made of date leaves plastered with mud; in the towns buildings are more substantial, and are made of stone and plaster of Paris, or sun-dried bricks and mud.



## II. POLITICAL HISTORY

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- c. 1602 Portuguese expelled from Bahrein.  
1622 Expulsion of Portuguese from Hormuz.  
1652 Expulsion of Portuguese from Muscat.  
1763 British Residency established at Bushire.  
1766 Utubi Arabs settled in El-Katr.  
1783 Conquest of Bahrein by the Utubis.  
1792 Guadar and Charbar annexed to Oman.  
1794 Sultan of Muscat obtained control of Bandar Abbas and its dependencies.  
1795 Wahabi conquest of Hasa.  
1798 Agreement between Great Britain and Sultan of Muscat.  
1805 First British expedition against Kawasim.  
1806 Agreement by Kawasim to respect the flag and property of the British.  
1809 Second British expedition against Kawasim.  
1812 Mohammera rebuilt by Muhaisin tribe.  
1814 Anglo-Persian Treaty.  
1818 First Egyptian occupation of Hasa.  
1819 Third British expedition against Kawasim.  
1820 General Treaty of Peace signed by Arab chiefs.  
1833 Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and Muscat.  
1835 First Maritime Truce.  
1837 Capture of Mohammera by the Turks.  
1838 Second Egyptian occupation of Hasa.  
1839 Treaty of Commerce between Great Britain and Muscat.  
1844 Treaty of Commerce between France and Muscat.  
1853 Perpetual Treaty of Peace signed by Arab chiefs.  
1854 Cession of Kuria Muria Islands to Great Britain by Sultan of Muscat.  
1856-57 Anglo-Persian war.  
1857 Treaty of Paris between Great Britain and Persia.  
1861 Convention between Sheikh of Bahrein and Great Britain.  
Award of Lord Canning separating Muscat and Zanzibar.  
1862 Declaration by Great Britain and France respecting the independence of Muscat and Zanzibar.  
1868 Agreement between Sheikh of El-Katr and Great Britain.  
Lease of Bandar Abbas to Oman cancelled.  
Anglo-Persian Telegraph Convention.  
1871 Turkish expedition to Hasa under Midhat Pasha.  
1872 Charbar captured by Persia.  
1880 Agreement by Sheikh of Bahrein with Great Britain.  
1888 Karun opened to foreign shipping and trade.  
1891 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between Great Britain and Muscat.

- 1891 Agreement with Great Britain regarding cession of territory by Sultan of Muscat.
- 1892 Exclusive Agreement between Great Britain and Sheikhs of Trucial Oman and Bahrein.
- 1898 Grant by Sultan of Muscat of lease of coaling station to the French.
- 1899 Agreement between Great Britain and Sheikh of Koweit.
- 1900 Question of French coaling station settled.
- 1901 D'Arcy concession for oil exploitation in Arabistan.
- 1903 Baghdad Railway Convention.
- 1905 Muscat Dhows Arbitration.
- 1907 Second Agreement between Great Britain and Sheikh of Koweit.
- 1913 Expulsion of Turks from Hasa by Ibn Saud.  
Convention between Great Britain and Turkey respecting the Persian Gulf and adjacent territories.
- 1914 Treaty between Ibn Saud and Turkish Government.  
Collective assurance from Great Britain to Gulf Chiefs.
- 1915 Treaty between Ibn Saud and Great Britain.
- 1916 Treaty between Sheikh of El-Katr and Great Britain.
- 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement.

### (1) INTRODUCTION

THE Persian Gulf is from its geographical position one of the highways of the world, an important link in a chain of communication between East and West. For some centuries the Powers that border the Gulf have been incapable of exercising control over its waters; and the region had become a backwater in the stream of civilisation when Great Britain set her hand to the task of establishing peace and security. That it is now possible for all nations to enjoy free access to peaceful markets in this region is due to Great Britain alone; and the *de facto* predominance of this Power in the Gulf has been achieved, as will be shown, by many years of unselfish toil. The historical position of Great Britain in the Gulf has been thus described:—<sup>1</sup>

“ If England has become, in any sense, the arbiter and guardian of the Gulf, it has not been through a

<sup>1</sup> T. J. Bennett, *The Past and Present Connection of England with the Persian Gulf* (Journal of the Society of Arts, June 13, 1902).

restless ambition urging her on to the control of the waste places of the earth, but in obedience to the calls that have been made upon her in the past to enforce peace between warring tribes, to give a free course to trade, to hold back the arm of the marauder and the oppressor, to stand between the slave-dealer and his victim . . . .

“ In the case of England and the Persian Gulf the position is unique; for, although England has at no time enjoyed or even asked for territorial acquisitions in those regions, she has for generations borne burdens there which no other nation has ever undertaken anywhere, except in the capacity of sovereign; she has had duty thrust upon her without dominion; she has kept the peace amongst people who are not her subjects; has patrolled, at intervals, waters over which she has enjoyed no formal lordship; has kept, in strange ports, an open door through which the traders of every nation might have as free access to distant markets as her own.”

## (2) HISTORY OF THE GULF STATES TO 1914

The southern and western littoral of the Persian Gulf is in the occupation of Arab tribes, while the northern and eastern shores are included in the dominions of Persia. To realise the nature of the *status quo*, the maintenance of which has been a cardinal feature of British policy, it is necessary to have an acquaintance with the history of each of the States bordering the Gulf.

*Muscat.*—The greater part of the Sultanate of Oman, the dominion of the Sultan of Muscat, lies to the south of the entrance to the Persian Gulf, but is included in the same political system. The boundaries of the State have never been precisely defined. Great Britain<sup>1</sup> has declared the southern limit on the coast of Arabia to be near Ras Sakar; from this point to Khor Kelbeh the coast-line is continuously under the

<sup>1</sup> British counter-case, presented to The Hague Tribunal in the Muscat Dhows Arbitration in 1905.

sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat, whose claim to the Musandim peninsula from Ras Dibba to Tibba was also recognised in 1905 by His Majesty's Government. The Sheikh of Sharga rules the coast from Khor Kelbeh to Ras Dibba.<sup>1</sup>

From 1784 to 1856 Muscat and Zanzibar were under the same ruler; after 1794 the Sultan of Muscat governed the islands of Kishm and Hormuz and territory on the Persian coast from Bandar Abbas to Lingeh, but in 1868 his lease was cancelled by the Shah. Guadar,<sup>2</sup> an enclave on the confines of Persia and Baluchistan, has since 1792 been a dependency of Oman, in spite of various attempts at seizure on the part of Persia. Charbar was annexed to Oman in 1792, but was captured by Persia eighty years later.

From A.D. 751 until 1783 Oman was governed by an elective Imam, possessing supreme religious, military, and political authority. After 1783 the ruler of Muscat ceased to be elected, and is styled Seyyid or Sultan more correctly than Imam. Muscat had become finally independent of the Baghdad Caliphate by the tenth century, and from the expulsion (1652) of the Portuguese, who for a short period held the coast, has maintained its position as an independent State, except for an interval of Persian sovereignty (1737-44). The Persians were driven out by Ahmed bin Said (otherwise Sultan bin Ahmed), the founder of the existing Al Bu Said dynasty.

British treaty relations with Muscat date from 1798, when a Deed of Agreement was executed between the East India Company and the Sultan for the exclusion from his territory of the French and Dutch so long as they should be at war with England. This agreement was confirmed in 1800 by a second, which in addition granted permission for an agent of the East India Company to reside permanently at Muscat. Under treaties concluded with Seyyid Said (Said bin Sultan) by France in 1807 and 1808 a French Consular Agent

<sup>1</sup> This was admitted by the French Government in 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with the port of Gwattar.

came to Muscat, until the capture of Mauritius by the British in 1810 destroyed for a time the power and prestige of the French in East African and Arabian waters.

A Treaty of Commerce was concluded between Great Britain and Muscat in 1839, on the model of a similar treaty signed in 1833 between the Sultan and the United States of America. The Sultan entered into various other engagements with the British for the suppression of the slave trade and for the regulation of customs duties; and in 1854 he ceded to the British Government the Kuria Muria Islands, which the French had previously made several efforts to obtain.

On the death of Seyyid Said in 1856 a dispute between two of his sons as to the division of his Arabian and African dominions was submitted to the arbitration of the Viceroy of India, Lord Canning. By his award in 1861 it was decided that Zanzibar should be independent, but should pay an annual subsidy to Muscat. In 1873, in return for agreements concerning the suppression of the slave trade, Great Britain undertook the payment of this subsidy to the Sultan of Muscat "so long as he continued faithfully to fulfil his treaty engagements and manifest his friendship towards the British Government." Payment has been made almost without intermission to the reigning Sultan by the Government of India, without whose recognition no Sultan has since been able effectively to establish his position.

The intervention of the Government of India in the dynastic disputes of the Muscat State, the deportation to India of claimants or pretenders, and the diplomatic and armed assistance lent to the Sultan in various crises, particularly against the Kawasim<sup>1</sup> (Joasmee) and the Wahabis, and for the suppression of piracy in the Gulfs of Oman and Persia, have resulted in the political predominance of Great Britain in the affairs of Muscat. By a Declaration signed at Paris on March 10, 1862, the British and French Governments

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 44.

bound themselves reciprocally to respect the independence of the Sultan of Muscat. This agreement precluded the establishment of a British protectorate over Oman. In 1891, however, after the signature of a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between Great Britain and Muscat, the Sultan voluntarily entered into an agreement binding "himself, his heirs and successors, never to cede, to sell, to mortgage or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, the dominions of Muscat and Oman or any of their dependencies." This agreement covers the Musandim peninsula, to which considerable importance is attached on account of its natural harbours and commanding position at the entrance of the Gulf.

In 1894 a French Vice-Consul was appointed at Muscat, and French influence succeeded in 1898 in obtaining from the Sultan a grant for the lease of a coaling station at Bandar Jissa, in his territory. In consequence of the presentation of a British ultimatum the Sultan cancelled this lease; and in 1900 the question of a French coaling station was settled by the French acceptance of the British offer of half of the site already occupied by British coal-sheds in the Makalla cove.<sup>1</sup>

The practice followed by French Consuls at Muscat and elsewhere of granting French ship's papers and flags to Muscat dhows has occasioned much difficulty in the past. Many of these flagholders engaged in the slave and arms traffic; and their claim that the Sultan was not entitled to board or search their vessels or to exercise any jurisdiction over them opposed serious obstacles to the maintenance of law and order. The Sultan appealed for assistance to His Majesty's Government, who on several occasions made representations on the matter to the French Government. A crisis arose in 1903, and the whole question was

<sup>1</sup> In 1916 the French Government agreed to lend these sheds to His Majesty's Government, and they were duly taken over at the beginning of 1917.

submitted in 1905 to the arbitration of The Hague Tribunal. By the award France was permitted to renew licences granted to owners of dhows before January 2, 1892; no licences given since that date were to be valid unless the grantee was a *bonâ fide* French *protégé* before 1863; licences were not to be transmitted or transferred to any other person or vessel. By these enactments the number of French flagholders was greatly reduced, and will soon reach vanishing point.<sup>1</sup>

The reigning Sultan of Oman, Seyyid Taimur bin Feisal, succeeded his father on October 4, 1913, and was recognised by the British and French Governments on November 15 of that year. He had to face a serious rebellion of the tribesmen of the southern interior, who formulated their independence under an elective Imam. Since July 1913 the rebels have been held back from Muscat by a contingent of the Indian Army. The forces of the Sultan are few in number and are not to be depended upon for aggressive action.

*Trucial Oman.*—The region known as Trucial Oman extends from Shuam (Sha'am), just within the entrance to the Persian Gulf, to El-Odeid, on the border of El-Katr; it also includes about 50 miles of territory from Ras Dibba to Kelbeh on the coast-line of the Gulf of Oman. The number of independent rulers within these limits has varied at different times; eight chiefs, excluding the Sheikhs of Bahrein, signed the General Treaty of Peace in 1820, but in 1914 the Sheikhs of Ajman, Abu Dhabi, Dibai, Umm al-Kawein, and Sharga alone were considered independent, although the Sheikh of Ras al-Kheima was only nominally subject to Sharga.

Until the signature by the Sheikhs of the Maritime Truce the region in question was commonly known as the Pirate Coast. The chief power was exercised by the Sheikh of the Kawasim, whose capital at this time was Ras al-Kheima. His subjects succeeded in the

<sup>1</sup> In 1917 only twelve Oman dhows were entitled to fly the French flag.

eighteenth century in establishing themselves on the Persian coast and islands, and his fleet scoured the seas, plundering indiscriminately. The Bombay Government joined the Sultan of Muscat in 1805 in a punitive expedition against the Kawasim, whose chief signed in 1806 an Agreement binding himself and his subjects to respect the flag and property of the British. This treaty appears to have been concluded without reference to the Wahabis, who at this time were said to dominate the eastern coast of Arabia, and to be responsible for the increase of piracy. From 1806-8 there was a temporary cessation of piracy, which may be attributed to the presence of a large British fleet in the Gulf. The spread of Wahabi domination led, however, to a revival of trouble, and strong measures were taken by the British authorities, who stated expressly in 1809 that the Kawasim were to be treated as an independent power.

Effective action was taken by the British against the pirates in 1819, which resulted, in 1820, in the signature of a General Treaty of Peace<sup>1</sup> by eight Sheikhs of the coast. This Treaty, which provided for the cessation of plunder and piracy by land and sea, proved insufficient, since regular maritime warfare was not prohibited, and normally degenerated among the Arabs into indiscriminate piracy. In 1835 the first Maritime Truce was signed; it was constantly renewed and extended until 1853, when it was succeeded by a Perpetual Treaty of Peace,<sup>2</sup> which still prevails. After 1835 the Pirate Coast came to be known as Trucial Oman. Treaties for the suppression of the slave trade were signed by the Maritime Chiefs in 1838, 1839, 1847, 1856, and 1873. In consequence of the Turkish expedition to Hasa under Midhat Pasha in 1871, and of Turkish and other foreign intrigues in Trucial Oman, an Exclusive Agreement was concluded separately by the British Government with each of the Trucial Sheikhs—at this time six in number—in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II, p. 80.



March 1892. By this treaty they bound themselves, their heirs and successors, (1) on no account to enter into any agreement or correspondence with any Power other than the British Government; (2) without the assent of the British Government not to consent to the residence within their territories of the agent of any other Government; (3) on no account to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation, any part of their territory, save to the British Government. In the following year the Porte was informed of this Agreement; and in 1903 it was made known to the French and Persian Governments. In that year the principle was affirmed that the representation of the Trucial Sheikhs in dealings with other Powers should be undertaken by Great Britain. In 1902 an Agreement was signed by all the Trucial Sheikhs for the suppression of the arms traffic in their territories. At the same time it was reported that new chiefs, on their accession, generally sought British official recognition, and that the advice of the British Resident in the Gulf was obeyed and even welcomed in internal affairs.

Since the suppression of piracy, pearl-diving has been the principal and almost the sole occupation of the maritime population. The increased security in the Gulf, achieved by British efforts, has resulted in a marked development of the pearl industry, and consequent prosperity for the Arabs of the coast.

*El-Katr.*—The El-Katr peninsula lies south of Okwair (Ojair) in the district of El-Katif, and north of El-Odeid, which forms the western limit of the territories of the Trucial Chiefs. It is believed that before A.D. 1766 the peninsula was included in the dominions of the Beni Khalid Sheikhs, whose headquarters were at that time at Hasa. In 1766 the Utubis from Koweit settled at Zabara, from which they conquered Bahrein in 1783. As a dependency of Bahrein, El-Katr became subject to the provisions of the General Treaty of Peace in 1820 and of the Maritime Truce of 1835. The prevalence of piracy, however, occasioned much anxiety to the British authorities in the Gulf, who adopted

strong measures for the maintenance of order and security. Serious disturbances in 1867, following an attack upon El-Katr by the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Abu Dhabi, necessitated British intervention, and on the restoration of peace in 1868 the British Resident concluded an Agreement with the Sheikh of El-Katr binding him never to put to sea with hostile intent, to refer all disputes to the British Resident, and to maintain the relations which had formerly existed with the Sheikhs of Bahrein. The claim of the Sheikh of Bahrein to sovereignty over El-Katr was, however, disallowed by the Government of India. Efforts were made by the Wahabis during the nineteenth century to bring El-Katr under their rule, and the tribute which they exacted from the Sheikh of Bahrein was probably contributed in part by the inhabitants of El-Katr as a security against aggression.

The Turkish expedition to Hasa under Midhat Pasha in 1871 considerably affected the situation in El-Katr. In spite of repeated assurances by the Porte that "not the slightest idea was entertained of making new conquests or subduing independent tribes," a Turkish garrison was established at Doha (El-Bidaa); and in 1874 the Ottoman Ambassador in London put forward a claim to Turkish sovereignty over the whole of Arabia as the inheritance of the Caliphate. The Turkish garrison remained at Doha until 1914, but the Porte was on several occasions informed that Great Britain would not admit Turkish claims to sovereignty over El-Katr.

The advent of the Turks enabled Sheikh Jasim to evade direct responsibility to the British Government for maritime disturbances, and there was a marked increase in piracy. In 1882 Sheikh Jasim declared that the agreement of 1868 with Great Britain was still valid; and more than once subsequently he expressed a desire to enter into the same relations with the British Government as were maintained by the Sheikhs of Trucial Oman. In consequence, however, of his anomalous position in regard to the Turkish Govern-

ment, no action was taken on his requests. In the Convention between Great Britain and Turkey, signed at London on July 29, 1913, the Ottoman Government renounced all their claims to the El-Katr peninsula, and His Majesty's Government declared that they would not permit its annexation or the infringement of its autonomy by the Sheikh of Bahrein (see below, p. 75).

*Bahrein.*—The original inhabitants of Bahrein are held by some authorities to be of Persian and by others of Arab descent. From the eleventh to the sixteenth century they appear to have been subject only to native chiefs. During the sixteenth century the island was held by the Portuguese, who were eventually expelled by the Persians about 1602. Persian domination was maintained, with interruptions, until 1783, when the Utubi Arabs from the mainland conquered the island. In 1800 and 1802 Bahrein was invaded and occupied for a short period by the Sultan of Muscat, by whose aid Wahabi garrisons were expelled in 1811. Since that date the Utubis have remained the chief power in the island, in spite of aggressions by Wahabis, Omanis, Egyptians, and Turks, who have at various times exacted tribute or attempted to assert authority over Bahrein.

The Bombay Government were unable to grant a request made by the Sheikh of Bahrein in 1805 to the British Resident in the Persian Gulf for the assistance of one or two vessels of war. The increase of piracy, however, made the establishment of treaty relations desirable; and in 1820 the Sheikh of Bahrein signed the General Treaty of Peace for the cessation of piracy by land and sea. From this time Great Britain has refused to tolerate the pretensions of other Powers to Bahrein.

British efforts for the establishment of security on the pearl banks have resulted in a series of treaties concluded with various Sheikhs of Bahrein in 1820, 1847, 1856, 1861, 1868, 1880, and 1890. By the Convention of 1861 the Sheikh of Bahrein bound himself to abstain from maritime aggressions of every description,

and from the prosecution of war, piracy, and the slave trade by sea so long as he received the support of the British Government in maintaining the security of his own possessions against similar aggressions. In consequence of Turkish schemes against Bahrein, and of rumours in 1879 that the Turks proposed to establish a coal depot to be converted gradually into a political agency, the British Government in 1880 executed an Agreement with the Sheikh binding him to abstain from entering into negotiations or making treaties with Governments other than the British, and to refuse permission to any other Government than the British to establish diplomatic or consular agencies or coaling depots in Bahrein territory, unless with the consent of the British Government. In 1892 the Sheikh signed a further Exclusive Agreement identical with that signed by the Trucial Chiefs in the same year.

The capture and destruction by British naval forces of a hostile fleet at Zabara in 1905 saved Bahrein from attack by Arab tribes under Turkish instigation. British influence became increasingly strong, and was directed towards the regulation of the succession to the sheikhship and the improvement of internal administration. In 1905 a British Political Agent was appointed at Bahrein, and has exercised wide judicial powers there. British consular protection has for over fifty years been habitually extended to Bahreinis in foreign countries. The protection of the British Government has converted the island from a scene of chronic external aggression and intestine feud into a relatively peaceful and flourishing centre of industry and commerce.

*Hasa.*—The Sheikhs of the Beni Khalid tribe ruled Hasa until about 1795, when their power was broken by the Wahabi Emir, who used Hasa as a base for the extension of his influence in Arabia. From this time until the arrival of the Turks in 1871 the Wahabis continued to dominate this region, except for two short intervals of Egyptian occupation.

Wahabism dates from about the year 1742, when

Abdul Wahab (or his son) founded the sect which was destined to become the chief power in Central Arabia. The movement was at first purely religious, and took the form of a puritanical Moslem revival. It later acquired a political and military significance not unlike that displayed in the early history of Mohammedan expansion. The first secular chief to adopt Wahabi principles was Mohammed Ibn Saud, Sheikh of Deraya, and ancestor of the present Emir of Nejd. The Wahabis reduced the province of Hasa for the first time in 1792, and conquered it finally in 1795. Five years later they took El-Katif by storm. Meanwhile Wahabi aggressions in Western Arabia and Mesopotamia had aroused considerable alarm, and involved the Emir in hostilities with the Ottoman Government. Hasa was occupied by the Egyptians, under Ibrahim Pasha, in 1818, but was evacuated in the following year. About 1824 the Wahabis again began to assert themselves in this district; and by 1833 the whole Arabian coast of the Gulf of Oman and that of the Persian Gulf, as far north as El-Katif, owned the sovereignty, or at least the suzerainty, of the Emir of Nejd.

The designs of Mehemet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, embraced Eastern Arabia; and in 1838 the Egyptians for the second time occupied Hasa, in violation of assurances given by Mehemet Ali in that year to the British political representative at Cairo. Egyptian encroachments met with consistent opposition on the part of the British Government, and early in 1840 the Egyptians found themselves obliged to withdraw from Hasa. A pro-Egyptian Emir, who had been appointed Turkish Vali of Central Arabia, was speedily overthrown, and Wahabi influence again predominated.

From the time of the arrival of the Wahabis upon the coast of Arabia their activities became a matter of concern to the British Government. Wahabi influence effected an increase of piracy and maritime disorders; but, by the instructions of the Government of India, the offending tribes were held directly responsible by

the naval authorities in the Gulf, and conflict between the British and the Wahabis was avoided. Friction between the Wahabis and the Sheikhs of Bahrein, and an attempted invasion of the island in 1859 from El-Katif and Damaun necessitated strong British counter-measures. These elicited a protest in the following year from the Turkish governor of Baghdad, on the ground that Damaun formed "part of the hereditary dominions of the Sultan." The British resident, in his reply, denied the claim of Turkey, and asserted the right of Great Britain to deal directly with the Wahabi Emir. After an open breach with the British authorities, a Wahabi envoy, authorised by the Emir, signed on April 21, 1866, a declaration binding the Emir not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in territories under his authority, and not to injure or attack the territories of the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government.

A conflict between rival candidates for the Emirate was the direct occasion of Midhat Pasha's expedition to Arabia in 1871 and of the Turkish occupation of Hasa. General disorder and piracy resulted, for the suppression of which British intervention was necessary. In consequence of the continued insecurity of the Gulf, the incapacity of the Turkish authorities, and the failure of all efforts to effect an arrangement with the Porte by conciliatory action, Her Majesty's Government decided in 1881 to authorise the commanders of British cruisers in the Gulf to act as might be necessary to prevent or punish disturbance of the peace of the seas.

From 1888 onwards there was intermittent warfare between Ibn Saud, Emir of Nejd, and the Emir of the Jebel Shammar, Ibn Rashid, who was favoured by the Turks. An alliance was formed between the Sheikh of Koweit and Ibn Saud, who in 1902 requested that "the eyes of the benevolent British Government might be fixed on him." His Majesty's Government were, however, reluctant to become involved in the quarrels of the Wahabi Emir, and contented themselves with remon-

strances at Constantinople against the despatch of Turkish assistance to Ibn Rashid. In 1906 peace was declared between the two Emirs, each of whom received at this time a monthly subsidy from the Turkish Government. Renewed overtures were made by Ibn Saud to the British Government, who, however, again declined to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabia.

Meanwhile the condition of Hasa under Turkish rule was one of chronic insecurity. In 1905-6 the Turkish authorities attempted to take a census of the population in the Hasa and Katif oases, apparently with a view to the imposition of a poll tax. Serious riots, however, resulted, and the proceedings were stopped. A recrudescence of piracy interfered seriously with the trade of the Gulf; Turkish co-operation for the punishment of offenders could not be obtained, and continual obstacles were placed in the way of the British authorities. On land robberies were frequent, and communications constantly interrupted. In 1913 Ibn Saud descended on Hasa and expelled the Turkish garrisons from the province. In the Convention signed at London in July of the same year His Majesty's Government recognised Hasa as part of the Ottoman Sanjak of Nejd. Subsequent negotiations between the Turks and Ibn Saud resulted in the signature of a treaty by Ibn Saud and the Vali of Basra, on May 15, 1914. By this treaty Ibn Saud was appointed Turkish Vali of Nejd, and the succession of his descendants was guaranteed on condition of their loyalty to the Ottoman Government; Turkish control over the internal affairs and foreign relations of the vilayet was established; and the Vali was pledged to provide assistance for Turkey in case of internal disturbance or war with a foreign Power. In spite of this treaty, however, Ibn Saud replied to a letter from the Sheikh of Koweit in October 1914, that "in the event of war with Turkey he would stand by the Sheikh and the British Government" (see below, p. 76).

*Koweit.*—The town of Koweit seems to have been founded about the beginning of the eighteenth century

by the Utubi tribe, originating from Central Arabia. It grew rapidly in wealth and importance, and when in 1776 Basra was captured by the Persians, the Indian trade with Baghdad, Aleppo, Smyrna, and Constantinople was diverted to Koweit. In consequence of difficulties with the Turkish officials in 1793, the staff of the British factory at Basra established themselves for over two years at Koweit. In 1805 the Sheikh suggested that the British Government should guarantee him protection against the Wahabis, but his proposals were not entertained. The British Residency at Basra was removed in 1821 to Failaka, in the jurisdiction of the Sheikh of Koweit, again on account of trouble with the Turkish authorities. These circumstances appear to indicate that Koweit was practically independent of Ottoman rule, although in 1829 the Sheikh was said to pay an annual tribute to the Turks. Colonel Pelly, in his report of 1863, stated that the suzerainty of the Porte was merely nominal; and at that time there was no mention of tribute paid to Turkey.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, increased interest was directed by the Porte to the political situation in the Gulf. Koweit assumed a new importance as a possible terminus for the Baghdad Railway, and various attempts were made by Turkey to establish some degree of control over the Sheikh. In 1897 Sheikh Mubarak requested British protection. His overtures were then declined, but subsequent designs on the part of Russia and Turkey made the exclusion of foreign influence from Koweit appear desirable. On January 23, 1899, the Sheikh signed an Agreement with the British Government, binding himself and his successors to cede no territory and to receive no foreign representative without the sanction of the British Government. In return the Sheikh was assured of the good offices of the British Government and received a sum of money. The political situation remained somewhat unsatisfactory until September 1901, when the Porte undertook to maintain the *status quo* at Koweit, and not to send troops



thither, on condition that His Majesty's Government would not occupy that place or establish a British protectorate. The Marquess of Lansdowne gave the required assurance to the Ottoman Ambassador.

On several subsequent occasions, however, British naval and diplomatic support was considered necessary to protect the Sheikh against Turkish designs. In 1902 the Turks established military posts at Umm Kasr and Safwan, and also upon Bubian Island, territories which the Sheikh claimed as lying within his jurisdiction. The Government of India took a serious view of these aggressions; and the importance of asserting the Sheikh's claim to Bubian was emphasised by an Inter-Departmental Committee in 1907. British influence at Koweit was strengthened by the visit of the Viceroy of India in 1903, and the establishment in 1914 of a British Political Agency.

In view of the conflicting territorial claims of the Sheikh and the Turkish Government, and of the prevailing uncertainty as to the exact definition of the *status quo*, it was decided in 1913 to regularise the position. Accordingly articles 1-10 of the Anglo-Turkish Convention of that year, respecting the Persian Gulf and adjacent territories, declared the territory of Koweit, as defined in articles 5 and 7,<sup>1</sup> to form an autonomous Kaza of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the Ottoman Government recognised the validity of existing agreements<sup>2</sup> between the British Government and the Sheikh.

*Irak.*—The influence of Turkey in the Persian Gulf did not last long, nor was it ever securely established. The situation in Hasa and Koweit has already been described. Irak for nearly three centuries formed part of the Ottoman Empire, from which it has now been separated; but before the middle of the nineteenth century the authority of the Porte in the Basra pashalik was seldom more than nominal. After the administrative reforms of Midhat Pasha in 1869,

<sup>1</sup> The islands of Bubian and Warba were included.

<sup>2</sup> Besides that of 1899, there was an Agreement in 1900 prohibiting traffic in arms, and a Postal Agreement in 1904.

the district from the Khor Zobeir to the Shatt el-Arab formed the Kaza of Fao in the Basra sanjak. The Sheikh of Koweit has for many years possessed large private estates in this region, and has been subjected to many annoyances on their account by the Turkish authorities. The Sheikh of Mohammera is also a wealthy landed proprietor; and many of his subjects reside permanently, or for part of the year, on the right bank of the Shatt el-Arab.

Considerable importance has been attached to Fao, both from its commanding position, and, since 1864, as the point of connection between the British submarine cables from India and the Turkish telegraph lines. The construction of fortifications, begun there by the Turks in 1886, was opposed by Her Majesty's Government and by Persia as contrary to the decision arrived at between Turkey and Persia, through the mediation of Great Britain and Russia, previous to the ratification in 1848 of the Treaty of Erzerum. In consequence of remonstrances, the fort was left for some years without artillery, although a Turkish garrison was maintained.

The Shatt el-Arab from the year 1640 marked the boundary between Turkey and Persia. The policing, surveying, charting and buoying of this waterway, as elsewhere in the Gulf, has been for generations performed by Great Britain solely. Basra, which is accessible to ocean-going steamers, is the chief port in the Persian Gulf, and has had for many generations an organic connection with India.

*South Arabistan.*—The whole of the north-eastern littoral of the Persian Gulf, from the Shatt el-Arab, is included in the Persian Empire, but the degree of control exercised by the Shah and his Ministers varies considerably in different districts. South Arabistan, of whose population at least 95 per cent. are Arabs, although nominally a division of the Persian province of Arabistan, is actually under Arab administration, which has consistently resisted attempts on the part of the Persian Central Government to exert control.

The Kaab tribe of Arabs seems to have entered Arabistan at some time in the seventeenth century. Their power increased rapidly, and their Sheikh maintained virtual independence in his relations with both Persians and Turks. The Kaab were notorious pirates, and made frequent depredations on shipping in the Shatt el-Arab and Persian Gulf. Several Anglo-Turkish expeditions were undertaken against them in the eighteenth century, but the results were on the whole unsatisfactory.

In 1812 the town of Mohammera, which appears to have been six centuries ago a port of some renown, was rebuilt by the Sheikh of the Muhaisin tribe, between whom and the Kaab, whose capital was at this time Felahieh, considerable rivalry existed for some years. The chief power in the province belonged at this period to the Sheikh of the Kaab, who shortly after 1832 declared Mohammera a free port. In 1837 the town was seized and plundered by the Turks. They withdrew in the following year, but the rival claims of Turkey and Persia continued to cause disturbances until, by the Treaty of Erzerum in 1847, Mohammera was declared to be within the Persian Empire.

With the possible exception of Russia, Great Britain was the only European Power which at this time exhibited any interest in Arabistan. In 1841-42 the principal rivers were navigated by British agency; and continuous efforts were made to develop British commercial interests in the province. In consequence of pressure from Great Britain, the Karun below Ahwaz was opened in 1889 to foreign shipping and trade; and a service of steamships was instituted and maintained by Messrs. Lynch, in spite of constant obstruction from the Persian authorities. Outbreaks of piracy on the part of the Kaab occurred from time to time, and British efforts to obtain the punishment of the guilty frequently occasioned friction with the Turkish and Persian officials. Vigorous British action succeeded, however, in establishing some measure of security.

During the British occupation of Mohammera (1856-7) the Sheikhs of the Muhaisin and Kaab tribes sought from the British authorities some guarantee of protection, which, however, could not be granted in view of the attitude of Her Majesty's Government towards Persian integrity. It was reported that under the Muhaisin Sheikh Mizal (1881-97) the resources of Mohammera were potentially under British control for the extension of commerce and other purposes. A British Vice-Consulate was established at Mohammera in 1890.

In 1897 Sheikh Mizal Khan was assassinated; he was succeeded by his brother, Sheikh Khazal. Shortly afterwards the Kaab Sheikhdом of Felahieh was abolished, and the tribe passed under the direct rule of the Muhaisin Sheikh of Mohammera. Many of the Kaab Arabs cultivated large territories west of the Shatt el-Arab, though continuing to own allegiance to the Sheikh of Mohammera. The latter thus acquired much influence and wide interests in Turkish Irak, which were frequently a cause of friction between him and the Turkish authorities. Considerable distrust existed between the Sheikh and the Persian Central Government, which made various efforts to undermine his autonomy and semi-independence. In 1898 the Sheikh asked to be taken under British protection. The request was refused, but he was assured of the constant support of the British Minister at Teheran.

Until 1902 the Sheikh of Mohammera had complete control over the customs of Arabistan, but in that year the management was transferred to the Imperial Persian Customs Department, under Belgian administration. The Sheikh evinced great hostility to the transfer, and again asked for British protection, expressing a desire to have his position assimilated to that of the Sheikh of Koweit. In view of Russian designs against Mohammera, His Majesty's Minister at Teheran was authorized to give the Sheikh certain

assurances of British support,<sup>1</sup> which were renewed in 1903. British influence was employed to induce the Sheikh to submit to the customs innovations, and to obtain for him in 1903 the grant from the Persian Government of certain districts "as perpetual property," thus securing his title to the greater part of Southern Arabistan.

Meanwhile commercial development had continued under British auspices. In 1901 a British capitalist, Mr. d'Arcy, obtained from the Persian Government an important concession for oil exploitation in Arabistan. This concession was taken up in 1909 by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, who made an agreement with the Sheikh in that year, and laid a pipe-line from the oilfields to Mohammera port. They also established a refinery on Abadan Island, in the territory of the Sheikh of Mohammera. Whatever progress was made in land communications in Arabistan was due entirely to British enterprise.

In 1908, and again in 1910, the general assurances already given by His Majesty's Government to the Sheikh of Mohammera were repeated and extended to his successors. The Persian Government were informed in 1910, in answer to an enquiry, that the Sheikh was not "protected" by Great Britain, but that His Majesty's Government had special relations with him, and would support him in the event of any encroachment on his rights. In May 1914 His Majesty's Government acquired a predominant interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Sheikh Khazal had in the previous December asked for further assurances from Great Britain for the strengthening of his position *vis-à-vis* the Persian Government and the Bakhtiari. The matter was still under discussion at the outbreak of the recent war.

<sup>1</sup> Sir A. Hardinge's letter to the Sheikh, December 7, 1902, contained this statement: "We shall protect Muhamrah against naval attack by a foreign Power, whatever pretext of intervention may be alleged; and also, so long as you remain faithful to the Shah and act in accordance with our advice, we will continue to give you our good offices and support."

*Persian Coast and Islands.*—The Persian littoral consists generally of a narrow strip of flat land, separated from the plateau of the interior by a maritime range running parallel to the coast. This region is ethnically as well as geographically distinct from the rest of Persia, for the coast strip is populated almost entirely by Arabs, and, with the exception of Bushire, there is not a single really Persian town or village from Mohammera to the border of Baluchistan. Maritime power is essential for the control of such a littoral; but the Persians have no liking for the sea, and the Shah has never possessed a navy worthy of the name.

With the aid of the fleet of the East India Company, whose position in Persia was established in 1617, Shah Abbas the Great expelled the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622, and brought under his rule the coast and islands on the northern side of the Gulf. More than a century later, Nadir Shah entertained the ambition of possessing a navy in the Gulf, but on his death in 1747 the project was abandoned. Karim Khan, however, continued attempting to bring into subjection the Arab sheikhs of the coast, who did not as yet pay tribute to the Persian Government. To this end he offered in 1764 to subsidise one or two British cruisers for permanent police duty in the Gulf. He succeeded in obtaining the assistance of the Sheikh of Bushire, who at this time possessed a considerable fleet.

On the death of Karim Khan in 1779, Persia at once ceased to be the predominant State in the Gulf. In 1794 the Sultan of Muscat obtained the lease of Bandar Abbas and its dependencies, including Shamil, Minab, and the islands of Kishm and Hormuz. Wars with Russia between 1804 and 1828 absorbed the energies of the Persian Government, and the Gulf districts escaped from all control beyond that of their local chiefs. In 1808 the hereditary Arab Sheikh of Bushire was supplanted by a Persian governor, who reported in the following year that, in the event of hostilities between Great Britain and Persia, all the

Arab tribes of the coast south of Kangun would join the British in the hope of shaking off the Persian yoke.

Representatives of the East India Company had settled at Bandar Abbas in 1623-24. A British Residency was established in 1763 at Bushire. The Portuguese finally disappeared from the Gulf about the year 1720, and the Dutch about 1766. Between 1796 and 1809 France despatched several missions to Persia with a view to the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance against Great Britain and Russia. A treaty, by which the island of Kharak was ceded to France, was negotiated in 1807, but apparently never ratified by the Shah. The situation had previously aroused the apprehension of the British Government, and treaties of friendship and alliance between Great Britain and Persia were concluded in 1801, 1809, 1812, and 1814. The treaty of 1814 bound the British sovereign not to interfere in any internal dispute in Persia, and to respect the integrity of the Persian kingdom. By the eleventh article the British Government undertook, "if convenient and practicable," to assist the Shah in the Persian Gulf with ships of war and troops.

The British expedition despatched against the Kawasim in 1809 found it necessary to extend operations to the Persian coast, as the pirates had many accomplices and settlements on that side of the Gulf. The Persian Government concurred in the measures adopted, and promised co-operation by land, which was not, however, forthcoming. The British destroyed the port of Lingeh, and visited and searched other places on the coast. On the occasion of Sir W. Grant Keir's expedition, a British garrison was in 1820 placed on the island of Kishm, under a grant from the Sultan of Muscat. The Persian Government protested against the British occupation and assumed full responsibility for the maintenance of order.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> A note addressed to the British Chargé d'Affaires in December 1820 contained this remark: "If any further steps are necessary to check piracy in the Persian Gulf, these can effectually be taken by the Prince of Fars, and no foreign aid is requisite."

Shah undertook to enforce on the Persian coast regulations similar to those imposed upon the Trucial Sheikhs by the treaty of 1820, but the engagement was never fulfilled. In 1822-23 the British garrison was withdrawn from Kishm, but a tract of land granted by the Sultan of Muscat to the British Government at Basidu has since remained a British station, and was until 1879 the headquarters of the Indian Marine in the Gulf.

In 1828 the Sheikh of Bushire secretly applied for British protection, and professed his willingness to enter into any engagements which the British Resident might consider expedient. His application was refused by the Bombay Government as inconsistent with the terms of the Anglo-Persian treaties. Constant friction between the Sheikh and the Persian Government resulted in disorder and unrest on the coast. Arab rule was finally overthrown at Bushire in 1850; and a Persian governor was installed, with the title of Lord High Admiral.

In consequence of Persian operations against Herat in 1837-38, a British expedition to the Persian Gulf was organised and a force maintained on the island of Kharak until the Persian Government had complied with the demands of Great Britain. In 1841 an Anglo-Persian commercial treaty was signed, which contained a most-favoured-nation clause and extended Persian recognition to the British Residency at Bushire. A treaty was concluded between Persia and Oman in 1856 with reference to Bandar Abbas and its dependencies, over which the Sultan of Muscat claimed independent sovereignty. It was now declared that the whole territory formed an integral part of the Persian province of Fars. A fresh lease was granted to Oman in 1868, but was terminated by the Shah in the same year; and the districts reverted to Persian rule.

When war broke out between Great Britain and Persia in 1856 Sir J. Outram was placed in command of the British expeditionary force, which, operating from the Gulf, captured Bushire in 1856 and



Mohammera in 1857. The British troops occupied Kharak from 1856 to 1858. The British Government had expressly stated that Persian subjects were not to be instigated to rebel against the Shah; and these instructions were most faithfully observed. A treaty was signed at Paris between Great Britain and Persia on March 4, 1857, establishing perpetual peace and friendship between the two nations. The British Government, its servants and subjects, were to receive most-favoured-nation treatment in Persia; and, on the ratification of the treaty, Great Britain undertook to withdraw her troops from all Persian territory. An Anglo-Persian Convention signed in 1851,<sup>1</sup> for the restraint of the slave trade, was the only previous agreement between Great Britain and Persia that was renewed by the Treaty of Paris (1857). The British Resident resumed his duties at Bushire on its evacuation by the troops in 1857. The prestige accruing to Great Britain from this campaign was further increased by the construction between 1868 and 1870 of telegraph lines in and across Persia.

After the lapse in 1868 of the lease of Bandar Abbas to the Sultan of Muscat, no Arab principality with any claim to independence existed on the Persian littoral. A degree of autonomy was for a time enjoyed by the Arab Sheikh of Lingeh, and by other petty sheikhs along the coast. The Persian Government, however, were quick to take advantage of local disturbances to secure the expulsion of the Arab rulers. In 1887 the seaboard towns, including Bushire, Lingeh, and Bandar Abbas, with their dependent districts and islands, were formed into a Gulf ports charge, independent of Fars. In the same year the Persian flag was hoisted on the island of Siri and maintained there in spite of a protest from the Sheikh of Sharga, who claimed the island as belonging to the Kawasim. The Persian occupation of Siri has never been recognised by His Majesty's Government.

<sup>1</sup> This treaty, which was for eleven years only, was replaced by a permanent convention in 1882.

The idea of a Persian navy in the Gulf, entertained by Nadir Shah in the eighteenth century, was revived by Nasir-ud-Din Shah. About the year 1865 he had proposed to acquire three or four armed steamers, to be commanded by British naval officers and manned by Arabs or Indians. The scheme was discountenanced by the British Government, who were aware that it concealed aggressive designs upon the islands and pearl fisheries of Bahrein. In 1883, however, the Persian Government gave a contract to a German firm for the construction of two steamers, the "Persepolis" and the "Susa," which arrived in the Gulf in 1885. Neither vessel proved satisfactory; and the policing of the Gulf continued as before to devolve upon Great Britain.

During the reign of Nasir-ud-Din Shah the Persian Government exercised on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf more authority than at any period since the time of Shah Abbas. On the death of Nasir-ud-Din Shah in 1896, however, Persian control of the coast at once declined. No fewer than nine Governors of the Gulf ports succeeded one another in the space of about fifteen months. Arab rule was re-established at Lingeh in 1898; and although the Persians returned in the following year, much unrest prevailed. The inclusion in 1900 of the Gulf districts in the sphere of operations of the Imperial Persian Customs Administration, under Belgian management, aroused much local opposition. The activity of the Belgian officials resulted in the establishment of many new customs posts in the Persian Gulf, and tended towards increased centralisation of authority in the hands of the Persian Government. In 1909 the Nationalists seized the customs and assumed the government at Bandar Abbas, Lingeh, and Bushire; and a British force had to be landed at Bushire to restore tranquillity. The Persian Governor, without troops to enable him to assert his authority or to collect revenue, and harassed by instructions from Ministers at Teheran with no appreciation of the local situa-

tion, was powerless to stem the tide of disorder; and conditions down to 1914 remained most unsatisfactory.

*Persian Makran.*—Persian Makran, although outside the limits of the Persian Gulf, is, like Muscat, within the same political system. It is inhabited chiefly by tribes of Arab or Baluchi descent. Nadir Shah in 1739 attempted to extend his authority to this region, but for a century afterwards no further efforts were made to enforce the Persian claim to sovereignty. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the whole country was divided among local chiefs, who were in every respect independent. With the exception of a short interval in 1804, Charbar remained in the possession of the Sultan of Muscat from 1792 until it was captured by Persia in 1872. The Sultan also held Jask, which was included in 1794 in the lease of Bandar Abbas and its dependencies.

Persian efforts to control Makran were renewed in 1844, when the Governor-General of Kirman occupied Bampur and endeavoured to assert Persian authority east of Jask. The proposal of the Indo-European Telegraph Department in 1861 to lay a line of telegraph from Karachi to Jask afforded the Persian Government an opportunity to advance extravagant claims. Five years later, however, the Persian Vazir of Kirman declared that Persian control on the Makran coast was too slight for him to undertake to protect telegraph construction east of Guadar. The Anglo-Persian Telegraph Convention of 1868 granted an annual subsidy to Persia for operations in places under her sovereignty, but made no territorial definition. The British Government undertook in 1869 to make yearly payments to the principal chiefs of Persian Makran, who pledged themselves to protect the telegraph line. The frontier between Persia and Kelat was fixed by a British Commission in 1872 at a point 8 miles east of Gwattar. A British garrison was maintained at Jask for the protection of the telegraph station from 1878-87, when the district was

included in the jurisdiction of the Governor of the Gulf ports.

On the death of Nasir-ud-Din Shah in 1896 anarchy in Persian Makran reached the pitch of open rebellion against the Persian Central Government. In consequence of the murder of a British telegraph official severe punitive measures were adopted by the Persian authorities, under pressure from Great Britain. Political unrest, however, continued; and in 1898 British garrisons were established at Jask and Charbar. It was reported in 1905 that the Jask district continued to enjoy exemption from payment of any ordinary revenue to the Persian Government. Throughout this period British political interests in Persian Makran were in charge of the Director of Persian Gulf Telegraphs, who was subordinate in political matters to the Resident at Bushire. A blockade of the coast for the suppression of the arms traffic was maintained by the ships of His Majesty's navy from 1910-14. It was reported about this time that the Persian Government had long ceased to exercise any authority in the coast districts of Persian Makran; and anarchy appears to have prevailed down to 1914.

### (3) EUROPEAN ACTIVITY IN THE GULF

*Portugal.*—The first European nation to establish a footing in the Persian Gulf was Portugal, whose influence was felt there for nearly two centuries after her initial occupation of Hormuz in 1508. Portuguese supremacy established by conquest on land and sea during the sixteenth century was challenged and finally overthrown in the seventeenth by the English and the Dutch. After the collapse of their naval power the Portuguese continued to maintain certain commercial interests in Persia and Irak, but their importance diminished, and about 1720 they finally disappeared from the Gulf.

*Holland.*—The Dutch, who co-operated with the English to secure the downfall of the Portuguese,

reaped much of the benefit of English achievements and pioneer work, and became dangerous rivals to the East India Company, both commercially and politically. For some years Dutch influence predominated in the Gulf, but towards the close of the seventeenth century English trade revived and the interests of the Dutch declined. The last of their factories, a fortified settlement on the island of Kharak, was captured by Arabs in 1766; and Dutch activity in this region was brought to an end.

*France.*—French enterprise in the Persian Gulf dates from the formation in 1664 of the French East India Company, which had for a time a factory at Bandar Abbas and later a small trade with Basra. The French position at Muscat rests upon the Franco-Muscat Commercial Treaty of 1844 and the joint Anglo-French Declaration of 1862. The former set up a "most-favoured-nation" relationship between the two States, and gave French subjects the right of complete freedom of trade at Muscat,<sup>1</sup> and permission to purchase, sell, or rent land, houses or warehouses in the dominions of the Sultan. By the Declaration of 1862 Great Britain and France jointly guaranteed the independence of Muscat. As interpreted in connection with the attempt of France to establish in 1898 a coaling station at Bandar Jissa,<sup>2</sup> this treaty precludes the acquisition or lease of territory belonging to Muscat.

From 1891 onwards close relations existed between France and Russia resulting in increased French activity in the Gulf. In 1895 French war vessels began to visit these waters; in the following year the Messageries Maritimes Company instituted a subsidized steamer service between Bombay and the Gulf ports, but the venture failed.

<sup>1</sup> Certain restrictions were placed on trading in ivory and gum copal. In 1914 the French Government renounced the right of invoking privileges conferred by this treaty where they conflicted with local regulations for the control of the arms traffic.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 42.

On the settlement in 1905 of the question of the grant of French flags to Muscat dhows Franco-British relations in the region of the Persian Gulf improved considerably. A certain amount of friction was engendered by the Muscat arms traffic, in which French merchants were actively engaged. The French interest was, however, finally bought out by the Indian Government in 1914 (*cf.* above, p. 42).

*Russia.*—Until comparatively recent years Russian influence and interests in Persia did not extend to the region of the Gulf. In 1881, however, Russia established a consulate at Baghdad, and for some years subsequently engaged in the prosecution of a policy hostile to British interests. Her influence was employed at Teheran to the same end. In 1888 Great Britain was assured of preferential rights in regard to railway construction in Southern Persia; but, by an Agreement with Russia in 1889, the Persian Government engaged that no railway should be constructed in Persia for ten years; the term was afterwards prolonged to 1910. Further evidence of Russian activity included a series of naval demonstrations in the Gulf, the despatch of plague missions to Southern Persia, and the foundation in 1900 of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company, subsidised by the Russian Government to run a steamer service between Odessa and the Persian Gulf, and to establish commercial interests in that region. Persistent endeavours on the part of Russia to obtain a naval base in the Gulf of Persia or Oman at length evoked from Lord Lansdowne in 1903 a statement of British policy, which was reaffirmed by Sir E. Grey in the course of negotiations respecting the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The aversion of the Nationalist party in Persia to foreign control manifested itself in strong public feeling against Russia in the Persian coast districts.

*Germany.*—German interest in the Middle East became prominent in connection with the Baghdad Railway scheme. The Convention of 1903 envisaged an

extension of the railway to a point on the Persian Gulf, where for a few years previously Germany had made organised efforts to achieve political ascendancy by commercial penetration. Her relations with Turkey enabled Germany to place many obstacles in the way of British interests in Mesopotamia and the northern end of the Gulf; her trade increased rapidly; and she made constant efforts to extend her influence in Persia. The visits of German warships to the Gulf began in 1899; and agents of the German firm of Messrs. Wönckhaus established themselves at various points about the same period. In 1906 the Hamburg-America line instituted a service of steamers between Europe and the Persian Gulf, and appointed as their agent the representative of Messrs. Wönckhaus at Bahrein. In the same year this firm entered into a contract with a native concessionnaire for a monopoly of the purchase of oxide of iron from the mines of Abu Musa. When the Sheikh of Sharga cancelled the concession, the German Government approached Great Britain on the matter. The question was still unsettled on the outbreak of war in 1914. German activity in the Persian Gulf, in conjunction with the policy, freely avowed in her press, of regarding the Middle East as a bridge to world-dominion, made of this region one of the principal theatres of British and German rivalry before the war. In 1913 and 1914 Germany made unprecedented efforts and spared no expense in importing arms and ammunition into the Persian Gulf area.

*Great Britain.*—The political relations of Great Britain with the Persian Gulf date from the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz in 1622, when, under an agreement with Shah Abbas, the Honourable East India Company undertook "to keep two men-of-war constantly to defend the Gulf." British commercial interests had been established in this region some years previously, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Great Britain extended and consolidated her influence in the face of keen competition from Portu-

guese, Dutch, and French in succession. In the second half of the eighteenth century the commercial ascendancy of Great Britain became unquestioned, and she exercised a widespread political influence in the Gulf. In the early nineteenth century three expeditions were despatched from Bombay for the suppression of piracy and lawlessness on the part of the Arab tribes; additional responsibility was assumed as the situation demanded, and as the inability of any local authority to exercise control became increasingly apparent. The treaty relations entered into by Great Britain with the Arab States of the littoral have been dealt with above. By these treaties the British Resident at Bushire became the arbiter of all disputes among the Sheikhs. An enormous advance in general security and prosperity has been effected in the Gulf by the *Pax Britannica*, maintained with rare exceptions from that time.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was no legal obstacle to the slave trade in any part of the Persian Gulf, and it was carried on extensively. In defiance of her commercial interests and her popularity with the Moslem population of the Gulf, Great Britain set herself to suppress the trade. Beginning with the General Treaty of 1820, and a treaty with the Sultan of Muscat two years later, a series of agreements was concluded with Muscat, Trucial Oman, Bahrein, El-Katr, Hasa, Koweit and the Turkish and Persian Governments in restraint of the traffic. The arduous task of enforcing the observance of these treaties fell upon the Indian Government, and involved great sacrifice of lives and money.

Great Britain alone has been responsible for the work of policing, surveying, charting, lighting, and buoying the Persian Gulf. Since at least 1864 she has undertaken sanitary control and quarantine administration in this area. Until the recent appearance of Russian and German vessels, she enjoyed a monopoly of the steam navigation; and her commercial interests have far exceeded those of any other nation. The maintenance by the Indian Government since 1864 of the sub-



marine cables from Fao to Jask, and of the lines from that place to Karachi and Muscat, has tended to increase an already preponderating influence. The protection of the pearl fisheries, on which the existence of the maritime Arabs depends, has also devolved upon Great Britain, who has, moreover, consistently warded off intruders, British subjects and foreigners alike, who sought to interfere with the time-honoured rights of the Arabs.

From 1900 onwards the traffic in arms assumed alarming proportions in the Gulf; it aroused all the piratical instincts latent in the character of the maritime inhabitants, and brought about a state of general demoralisation that constituted a serious menace to the maintenance of peace. Various efforts were made by the British Government to restrict the traffic; but French influence, based on the treaty of 1844 with Muscat, prevented effective action at that port, the chief emporium of the whole trade. In 1910 Great Britain established a naval blockade of the Makran coast. This measure was continued, at great expense, down to the outbreak of war, and achieved such a degree of success in the Gulf of Oman as to lead to a settlement with France (*cf.* above, pp. 42, 66). The traffic, checked in the southern, became, through German efforts, increasingly flourishing in the northern part of the Gulf, and during the first half of 1914 caused much anxiety to the British authorities.

The threatening activities and ambitions of other European Powers in the Gulf led Lord Lansdowne to declare, in the House of Lords in 1903, that "we should regard the establishment of a naval base or a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it by all the means at our disposal." This declaration was formally reaffirmed in 1907 by Sir E. Grey, in a despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, which further stated that "His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their

efforts to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade. In doing so they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power." These declarations have never been openly challenged; but in the years immediately preceding the war Turkey, under German instigation, adopted a policy of encroachment which seriously threatened the *status quo* at the head of the Gulf. In 1912-14 His Majesty's Government entered into far-reaching negotiations with the Turkish and German Governments, with the object of regularising the position. The resulting agreements had not, however, been ratified before the declaration of war.

### III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

#### (1) RELIGIOUS

THE Mohammedan religion in one form or another prevails, almost to the exclusion of other creeds, in all the countries bordering on the Persian Gulf. Jews are few, except in the towns of Irak, and members of the Oriental Christian congregations are hardly found outside that province. The chief Mohammedan sects in the Persian Gulf region are Shiah, Sunni, Ibadhi, and Wahabi. On the western coast of the Persian Gulf proper, Sunnis, including nominal Wahabis, predominate in every territorial division, although there are strong Shiah communities in Hasa and Bahrein. On the eastern coast Shiahs are in the majority in most districts. The population of Arabistan is almost exclusively Shiah, and that sect predominates also in Irak. In the Gulf of Oman Shiahs are few in number; Persian Makran is entirely Sunni; while the Sultanate of Oman is Ibadhi and Sunni, with a small proportion of Wahabis.

Roman Catholic Missions have had a footing in the Persian Gulf since the seventeenth century, but latterly they have had only three permanent stations in Irak. The American Arabian Mission is established at Basra, Bahrein, Muscat, and Koweit. Schools are maintained by the Christian Missions, but there is on the whole very scanty provision for education in the Gulf.

#### (2) POLITICAL

The districts which adjoin the western coast of the Persian Gulf proper comprise a group of sheikhdoms and emirates under Arab rulers. Of these the Sheikh of Koweit is a mediatised ruler under British protection, and Hasa is ruled by Ibn Saud, Emir of Nejd, who in June 1914 accepted the title of Vali of Nejd

and Hasa from the Turks, but has remained in close relation to the British and Indian Governments, and during the war threw in his lot with the British. The island of Bahrein is under the personal rule of Sheikh Isa, who has been supported by the British against other claimants of his family. El-Katr is now also under the control of Ibn Saud, Emir of Nejd. In Trucial Oman the position of the five ruling sheikhs, which include Sharga, Dibai, Abu Dhabi, and Ras al-Kheima, is governed by agreements with the British Government.

The Government of Oman is a sultanate or absolute monarchy, the present hereditary sultanate having arisen out of an ancient elective imamate. The populations of both west and north Oman do not acknowledge his sway, and live in practical independence of him under their own chiefs, the Sultan's authority being limited to his capital and the coast. A rival Imam has been set up in the interior by the principal Ibadhi Sheikh.

Of the Arabs of the coastal region the large majority are settled and live in towns, as the Beduin nomads who wander over the plains and interior, and reach even as far as Nejd or Jebel Shammar in the interior, form a proportion of the population which is small, and varies from time to time according to the location of the tribes. The population of the towns includes many Arabs recently nomadic who have now become settled. Among the settled Arabs of this region the main distinctions are either religious or political; tribal feeling is weak.

In Oman, political differences divide the population into two opposing factions known as Hinawie and Ghafiria, the result of a general civil war in the eighteenth century. The Hinawi faction consists mostly of Yamani tribes, while the Ghafiri are for the most part Nasiri. They live intermingled in groups and villages, and the factions are equally marked among settled and among Beduin tribes. The great majority of Hinawi tribes belong to the Ibadhi sect

of Islam; of Ghafiri tribes a considerable proportion are orthodox Sunnis, and a few are Wahabis of Oman.

Tribal organisation in Oman is loose; some tribes are scattered, others, though compact, are broken up into sections headed by sheikhs who acknowledge no common authority, and in only a few cases is the tribe governed by a Tamima, a chief whose power extends over all its branches. This office, which is nominally elective, is in practice hereditary.

Among the nomads of the Arabian coastal region tribal feeling is strong. Important tribes are: (a) the Ajman, of whom the greater number have their headquarters in Hasa; (b) the Awazim and Rashaida, who are found for the most part in Koweit territory.

The districts of Irak at the head of the Gulf formed, before the war, a part of the Turkish vilayet of Basra. On the right bank of the Shatt el-Arab are Arabs belonging chiefly to the tribe of Idan, with a few Muhaisin from across the river. Power is in the hands of the landowners and village sheikhs; there is very little tribal feeling, except among the Muhaisin and the Kaab, who look to the Sheikh of Mohammera as their chief.

The government of south Arabistan is administered by the Sheikh of Mohammera as Governor of Mohammera and its dependencies, nominally under the Persian Government; he is head of the Muhaisin tribe, and also exercises control over the powerful Kaab tribe. The Sheikh has been virtually independent, but his position was weakened when in 1902 the control of the customs of the port was transferred to the new Belgian Administration in exchange for a subsidy (*cf.* p. 56).

In Arabistan the tribal system is more highly developed; it does not rest, however, upon a rigid basis of race, and the strength of the tribe or section is liable to be increased by addition to its numbers from without, or diminished by desertion from within. Sheikhs or headmen of the tribes or sections are generally chosen from a family in which the office is hereditary. Some of the tribes are settled, others are nomadic,

while a considerable number are in a transitional stage between the two. The settled and semi-settled tribes are mainly agricultural, and the nomadic mainly pastoral, but even the latter cultivate a certain amount of grain in winter.

In south Arabistan the principal tribes are the Muhaisin and the Kaab; the former are politically, the latter numerically the stronger. The Muhaisin have their centre at Mohammera and are a settled tribe. The Kaab, whose focus is Felahieh, should probably be regarded as settled. The principal nomad tribes are the Beni Turuf, Beni Saleh, and Beni Tamim. Beh-behan, although geographically belonging to Fars, has a government and administration of its own. A large number of the inhabitants belong to the Kuhgilu, a division of the Lur tribe; each division of the tribe has its own chief.

Local districts of the Persian coast are for the most part under the government of a local hereditary chief, khan, or sheikh, who collects the land-tax in his own domain on behalf of the Persian Government. Certain districts are in a very disturbed state, others are remarkably orderly, but the coastal inhabitants are for the most part much more civilized than the tribesmen of the interior. Blood feuds are common, and cattle raids sometimes lead to encounters between the different tribes and factions. There are no criminal courts beyond the personal administration of the Governor or local khan; civil justice of a sort is dispensed, but it is extremely venal.

Persian Makran is nominally administered by a Governor, who has his seat at Bampur, subject to the authority of the Persian Governor-General of Kirman; as a matter of fact, however, this official is rarely appointed, and the country is in a condition of anarchy. Makran is divided into five districts, each of which is ruled by a chief who is supposed to pay tribute to the Governor, but in the administration of his district is free from interference by the Persian executive. The

chiefs of districts are assisted by the religious authorities or *mullahs*, and by headmen of the villages. There is no organized system of law and order, and serious disturbances have been common in recent years. The blood feud remains customary, and slavery prevails in most parts of the country.

During the course of the recent war, treaty relationships were established between Great Britain and all the rulers of the Arab littoral from Muscat to Mohammera. A collective assurance was issued to the Gulf Chiefs and their subjects on November 3, 1914, to the effect that Great Britain would do her utmost to preserve for them their liberty and religion. In consideration of professions of loyalty from the Sheikhs of Kuwait and Mohammera on the outbreak of war with Germany, the Government of India undertook that Basra should never again be subject to Turkish authority; that Kuwait should be recognised as an independent principality under British protection; that Great Britain would endeavour to maintain the Sheikh of Mohammera in his present state of local autonomy *vis-à-vis* the Persian Government, would support him against encroachment upon his rights or property by any Power, and would safeguard him to the best of her ability against any unprovoked attack by a foreign Power. The undertakings to the Sheikh of Mohammera also included a limited dynastic guarantee.

The expulsion of the Turks from the shores of the Gulf made it desirable for Great Britain to regularise the position of El-Katr. By a treaty signed on November 3, 1916, and ratified on March 23, 1918, Sheikh Abdullah of El-Katr assimilated his position to that of the Trucial Chiefs, and affixed his signature to all the treaties and engagements existing between them and Great Britain. The British Government, in addition, undertook to afford their good offices to the Sheikh in the event of unprovoked aggression by land. A proclamation prohibiting the arms traffic was issued by Sheikh Abdullah at the same time.

The friendly attitude of Ibn Saud on the outbreak

of war with Turkey made it imperative that His Majesty's Government should come to a definite understanding with him. As a result of negotiations a treaty was signed on December 26, 1915, and ratified on July 18, 1916, by which Great Britain recognised Ibn Saud as independent ruler of Nejd and Hasa (the boundaries to be determined hereafter), and gave him a limited dynastic guarantee. British arbitration and support were promised to Ibn Saud in the case of foreign aggression. Great Britain assumed control of the foreign relations of Ibn Saud, who, moreover, undertook not to alienate any territory to a foreign Power except with the consent of His Majesty's Government. Ibn Saud promised to refrain from aggression on Koweit, Bahrein, El-Katr, and Trucial Oman. Provision was made for the conclusion of a further detailed treaty between the two parties.

These agreements constitute no departure from the traditional policy of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf, but they strengthen her position for the continuance of her work of maintaining the *status quo* against internal disorder or foreign menace.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The situation in the Persian Gulf does not appear to offer any ground for disagreement between those nations who share in the benefits of British achievements in this region, and who are required only to acquiesce in established treaty relationships and in the principle of self-denial in regard to territorial acquisition to which Great Britain herself has adhered.

The peculiar interests—strategic, political, and commercial—of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf have never been denied; they are intimately connected with the welfare of India and the security of communication with the outposts of the Empire. For the safeguarding of these interests the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the absence of competing foreign influences in the interior of Arabia are



essential. The freedom of the Arabs from foreign domination has been promised, and should in some form be assured. It is imperative that their relations with the British Government should be maintained unimpaired, and that Great Britain should continue, as hitherto, to perform her especial duties and to retain complete ascendancy in the Persian Gulf.

## APPENDIX

### I.—GENERAL TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE ARAB TRIBES OF THE PERSIAN GULF, 1820.

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Praise be to God, who hath ordained peace to be a blessing to His creatures. There is established a lasting peace between the British Government and the Arab tribes, who are parties to this contract, on the following conditions:—

*Article 1.* There shall be a cessation of plunder and piracy by land and sea on the part of the Arabs, who are parties to this contract, for ever.

*Article 2.* If any individual of the people of the Arabs contracting shall attack any that pass by land or sea of any nation whatsoever, in the way of plunder and piracy and not of acknowledged war, he shall be accounted an enemy of all mankind, and shall be held to have forfeited both life and goods. An acknowledged war is that which is proclaimed, avowed, and ordered by Government against Government, and the killing of men and taking of goods without proclamation, avowal, and the order of a Government is plunder and piracy.

*Article 3.* The friendly (literally the pacificated) Arabs shall carry by land and sea a red flag, with or without letters in it, at their option, and this shall be in a border of white, the breadth of the white in the border being equal to the breadth of the red, as represented in the margin (the whole forming the flag known in the British Navy by the title of white pierced red); this shall be the flag of the friendly Arabs, and they shall use it and no other.

*Article 4.* The pacificated tribes shall all of them continue in their former relations, with the exception that they shall be at peace with the British Government, and shall not fight with each other, and the flag shall be a symbol of this only, and of nothing further.

*Article 5.* The vessels of the friendly Arabs shall all of them

have in their possession a paper (register) signed with the signature of their Chief, in which shall be the name of the vessel, its length, its breadth, and how many Karahs it holds. And they shall also have in their possession another writing (port clearance) signed with the signature of their Chief, in which shall be the name of the owner, the name of the nacodah, the number of men, the number of arms, from whence sailed, at what time, and to what port bound. And if a British or other vessel meet them they shall produce the register and the clearance.

*Article 6.* The friendly Arabs, if they choose, shall send an envoy to the British Residency in the Persian Gulf with the necessary accompaniments, and he shall remain there for the transaction of their business with the Residency; and the British Government, if it chooses, shall send an envoy also to them in like manner; and the envoy shall add his signature to the signature of the Chief in the paper (register) of their vessels, which contains the length of the vessel, its breadth, and tonnage; the signature of the envoy to be renewed every year. Also all such envoys shall be at the expense of their own party.

*Article 7.* If any tribe, or others, shall not desist from plunder and piracy, the friendly Arabs shall act against them according to their ability and circumstances, and an arrangement for this purpose shall take place between the friendly Arabs and the British at the time when such plunder and piracy shall occur.

*Article 8.* The putting men to death after they have given up their arms is an act of piracy, and not of acknowledged war; and if any tribe shall put to death any persons, either Muhammadans or others, after they have given up their arms, such tribe shall be held to have broken the peace; and the friendly Arabs shall act against them in conjunction with the British, and, God willing, the war against them shall not cease until the surrender of those who performed the act and of those who ordered it.

*Article 9.* The carrying-off of slaves, men, women, or children, from the coasts of Africa or elsewhere, and the transporting them in vessels, is plunder and piracy, and the friendly Arabs shall do nothing of this nature.

*Article 10.* The vessels of the friendly Arabs, bearing their flag above described, shall enter into all the British ports and into the ports of the allies of the British so far as they shall be able to effect it; and they shall buy and sell therein; and, if any shall attack them, the British Government shall take notice of it.

*Article 11.* These conditions aforesaid shall be common to all tribes and persons, who shall hereafter adhere thereto in the same

manner as to those who adhere to them at the time present. End of the Articles.

- (Sd.) W. GRANT KEIR,  
Major-General.
- „ HASSUN BIN RAHMAH,  
Sheikh of Hatt and Fahleia, formerly  
of Ras-ool-Kheimah.
- „ KAZIB BIN AHMED,  
Sheikh of Jourat al Kamra.
- „ SHAKBOUT,  
Sheikh of Aboo Dhebbec.
- „ HASSUN BIN ALI,  
Sheikh of Zyah.
- „ ZAID BIN SYF,  
Uncle of Sheikh Muhammad of Debay.
- „ SULTAN BIN SUGGUR,  
Chief of Shargah.
- „ SYUD ABDOOL JALIL BIN SYUD YAS,  
Vakeel of Sheikh Suleman bin Ahmed  
and Sheikh Abdoolla bin Ahmed, of  
the family of Khalifa, Sheikhs of  
Bahrein.
- „ SULEMAN BIN AHMED.
- „ ABDOOLLA BIN AHMED.
- „ RASHED BIN HAMID,  
Chief of Ejman.
- „ ABDOOLLA BIN RASHID,  
Chief of Umm-ool-Keiweyn.

II.—TREATY OF PEACE IN PERPETUITY AGREED UPON  
BY THE CHIEFS OF THE ARABIAN COAST IN  
BEHALF OF THEMSELVES, THEIR HEIRS AND  
SUCCESSORS, UNDER THE MEDIATION OF THE  
RESIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF, 1853.

*Article 1.* That from this date, *viz.*, 25th Rujjub 1269, 4th May, 1853, and hereafter there shall be a complete cessation of hostilities at sea between our respective subjects and dependants, and a perfect maritime truce shall endure between ourselves and between our successors respectively for evermore.

*Article 2.* That in the event—which God forbid!—of any of our subjects or dependants committing an act of aggression at sea upon the lives or property of those of any of the parties to this agreement, we will immediately punish the assailants and proceed to afford full redress upon the same being brought to our notice.

*Article 3.* That in the event of an act of aggression being committed at sea by any of those who are subscribers with us to this engagement upon any of our subjects or dependants, we will not proceed immediately to retaliate, but will inform the British Resident or the Commodore at Bassidore, who will forthwith take the necessary steps for obtaining reparation for the injury inflicted, provided that its occurrence can be satisfactorily proved.

We further agree that the maintenance of the peace now concluded amongst us shall be watched over by the British Government, who will take steps to ensure at all times the due observance of the above Articles, and God of this is the best witness and guarantee.

(Sd.) ABDOOLLA BIN RASHED,  
Chief of Ummool Keiwyn.  
,, HAMED BIN RASHED,  
Chief of Ejman.  
,, SAEED BIN BUTYE,  
Chief of Debay.  
,, SAEED BIN TAHNOON,  
Chief of the Beniyas.  
,, SULTAN BIN SUGGAR,  
Chief of the Joasmees.

Approved by the Governor-General in Council on August 24, 1853.

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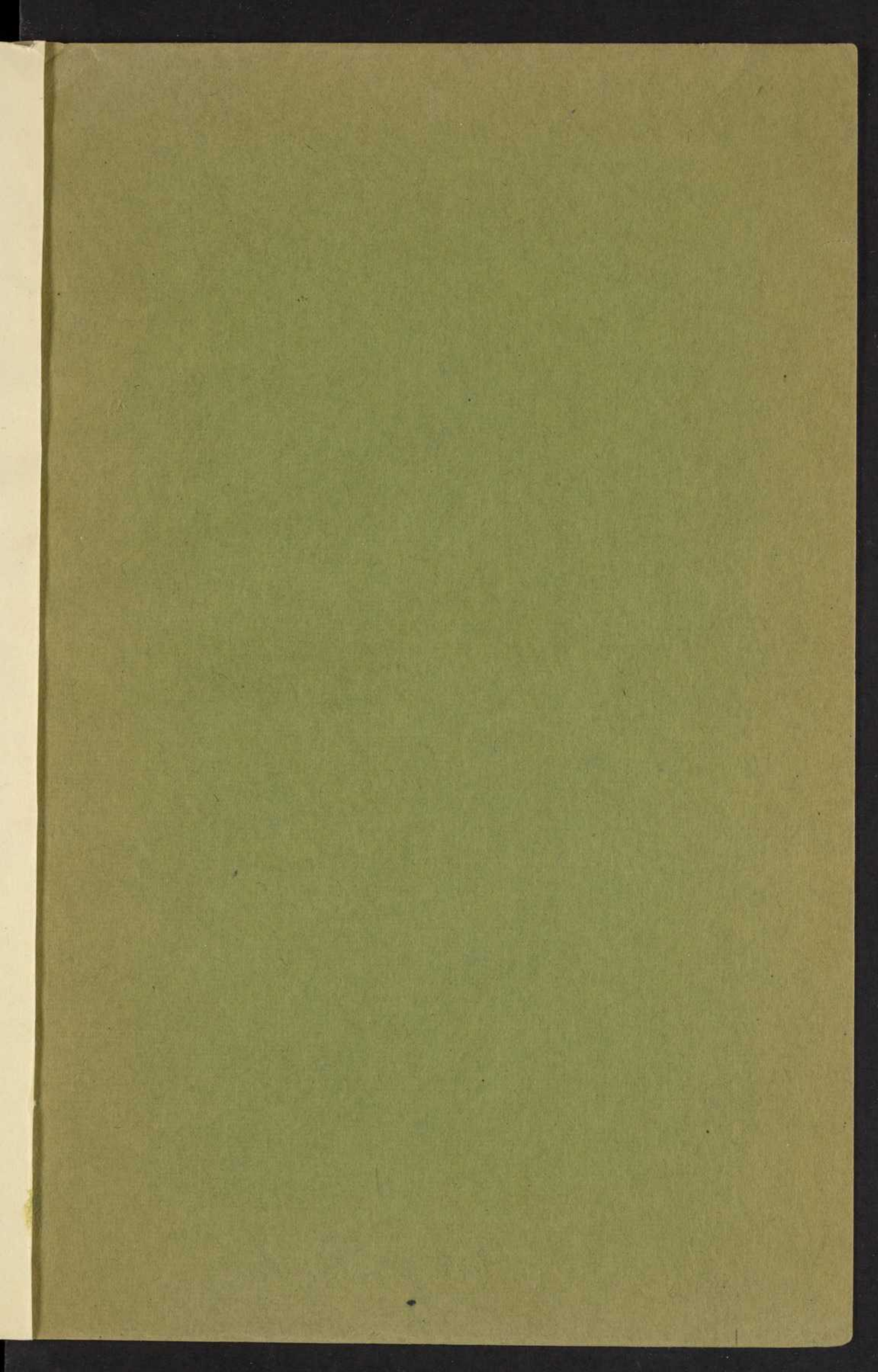
#### MAPS

The Persian Gulf and adjacent countries are shown on the War Office Map (G.S.G.S. 2385), scale 1:4,055,040 (1908, additions 1919). Lower Mesopotamia between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf is shown on another map (G.S.G.S. 2563), scale 1:1,000,000. Corrected to 1916. Railways revised, 1919.

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