

## THE JOINT EXPEDITION TO UR OF THE CHALDEES

By LEON LEGRAIN

AS I leave Marseille on the SS. Lotus on October 1, 1924, a sharp north wind, which they call "lou mistral," puts white crests on the blue waves. The parting view along the bay is lovely: Notre Dame de la Garde, the green pines of the Prado and Corniche, the grey rocky islands, If, Pomegue and Ratoneau. The passengers are a fine mixture of Egyptians, Jews, Levantines, three French officers and their wives, and a few lost British subjects. A crescent silver moon hangs over the dark blue sea.

The air is warmer near Corsica. How lonely seem the small villages in their green dales. Cretans, Phoenicians, Greeks settled here centuries ago. How many oriental types are on board: dark massy hair, curved noses, long eyelids, prominent cheekbones, round cheeks and fat necks, gazelle eyes glossy and disquieting, thin or full sensuous lips for love and lie. Many a silk scarf of bright color is tied about the dark hair like the ancient "Syriaca coppa."

There are distant lightnings over the Italian Coast, and the air is stifling in the straits of Messina but the stars have never been so bright over our heads. I break the ice and talk across the table to the dark French lady with the gold spider jewel from Madagascar. She is in business in Alexandria but she hails from Coutance in Normandy. There seems to be a colony of Normans—and many pilots—in Alexandria, Port Said and along the canal, and also in Algeria. The restless rovers who took Normandy, England and Sicily feel at home on the high seas. The lady's husband escaped shipwreck, but spent seven hours in the water, after his boat had been torpedoed during the war. Beyrout then was a base for German submarines. Many supposed neutrals used wireless in their favor and laid mines in the canal. Why they never blocked it is still a wonder. Alexandria was visited by enemy planes. Egyptians were at first friendly toward Germany.

Alexandria has a very flat shore and a poor line of white buildings about the harbour. The landing affords the first contact with the oriental life, color, smell and dirt. Long shirts and red tarbouches crowd the "sûqs" or markets of meat, fish, eggs and vegetables. An



A Street in Baghdad.

oily, greasy smell permeates the whole atmosphere. Past Mehemet-Ali place and Twefik Pasha street, the quays and walks along the northern shore are a great improvement. They are decorated with green Egyptian flags bearing a white crescent and three stars; there are lines of electric lights, two triumphal arches and one large tent carpeted and hung with glass lustres in the best oriental taste. Tomorrow is the anniversary of King Fuad's coronation. I hear some Missionaries pray: thank God for the British rule. The day they leave the place, we leave it too. A large immigration of Greeks and Armenians has increased the population and doubled the rents. Rules and restrictions have been passed. But the country does not suffer, for it is rich and has plenty of gold. King Fuad and his suite drive briskly past me on their way to the palace of Ras ed Din. He is well spoken of as peaceful, intelligent and interested in education.

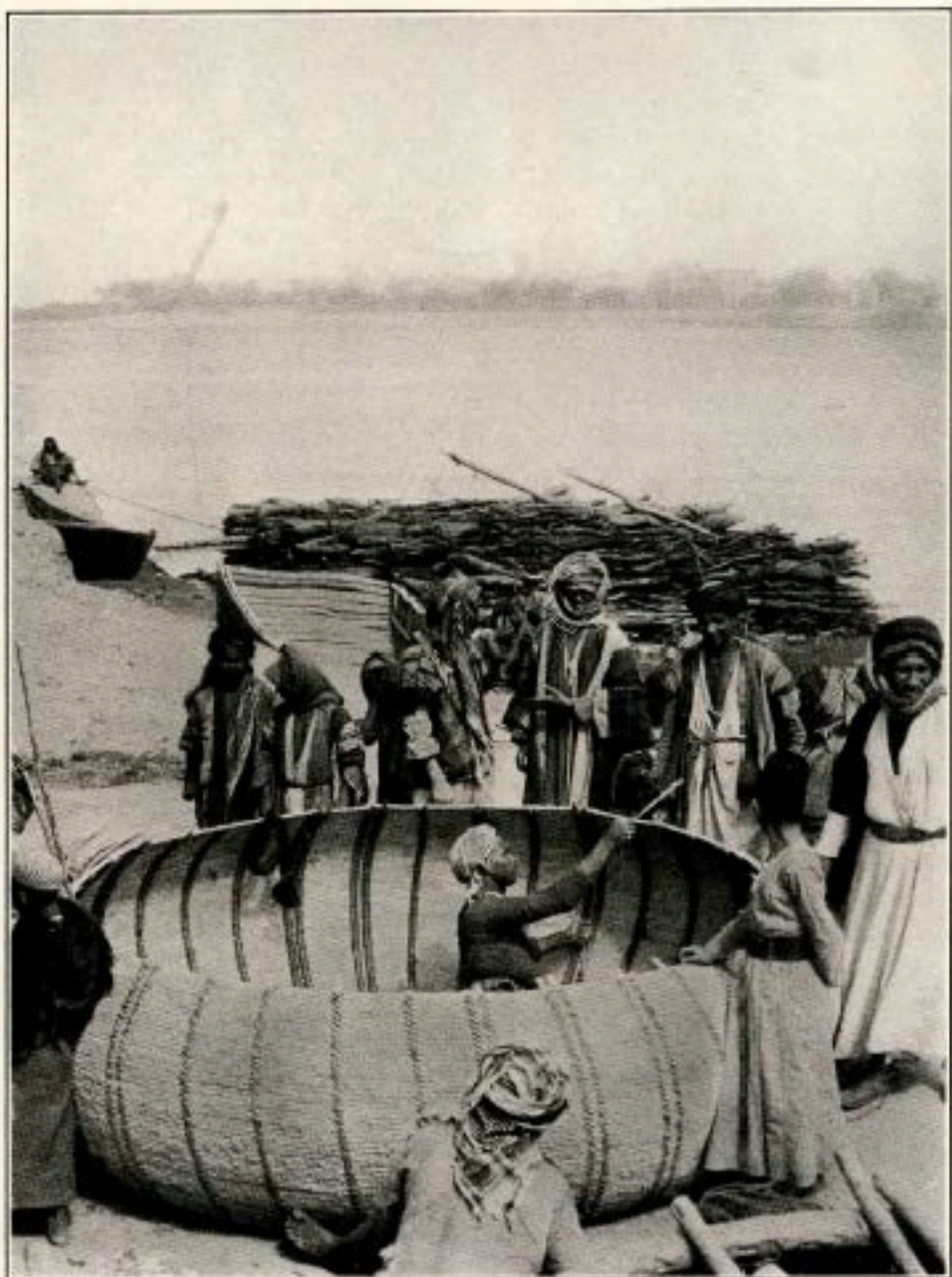
East of the city the gardens of Nusha with their purple flowers and their running water under lofty palm trees are a first unveiling of oriental beauty. Bunches of dates, still hanging on the trees, are wrapped in red bags to preserve them from birds and flies. Sharp pointed Egyptian barges glide on the low water of muddy canals. They are loaded with green and gold fruit, and pale yellow earthenware. Light dust rises like puffed incense under each step as I walk back to the ship. A Greek boat with a diver is fishing waste coal at the bottom of the harbour just alongside our liner. These scavengers reclaim over a ton a day.

Port Said at the entrance of the canal stretches in a glaring sun, a long front of houses. Most of them are built with porches in the Eastern style. Over ten thousand passengers leave in May and June every year in quest of the northern breezes of the Lebanon mountains and come back in October. The Syrian Mandate under French control is divided into four states, two on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and two inland, Damascus and Aleppo. The Pashas and local lords have lost a good deal of their absolute power and oppressive taxes. The great problem is the capture and distribution of water to irrigate the land and supply large cities. Tapping the main pipe for private use is a common form of abuse. Aleppo district has three crops a year, two of maize and one of barley. Wine and olive oil are abundant. A sheepskin sells for five Syrian franks. There are great opportunities and great gambling. They even play poker in Aleppo. Mounted meharis, planes and automobiles control effectively the desert by land and by air.

In Beyrout hotels have sprung up and the prices are real Syrian. The Paris décolleté mode prevails. Many automobiles are offered for sale. Fords are in great demand. The village grandees like to parade in a car before their admiring peasants. Even before reaching the Syrian capital all kinds of rumors are floating over the blue waves as I pass along the white coast of Palestine and the famous cities, Jaffa, Haifa, Tyre, Sidon. There is in Bagdad a well known lady, a great Arabic scholar, whose code address is Ancient Bagdad. The welfare of the Arabs is her consuming care. Basra is quite a new city since the war, with quays, large buildings and good roads. But the land from Bagdad to Mosul is still infested with brigands. Such is the daily gossip. The *Chatelaine du Liban*, the last book of P. Benoit, is another bone of contention. Everybody objects to the hero being an officer and a traitor. If the treason is not an actual fact in the book, it is owing to the intervention of General G. An officer sent to the north frontier near the Beilan pass tells me that he feels lonely and would much prefer Africa and the Tchad region where there is real life for a colonial with fifty porters and twenty-seven days track from Brazzaville. Recruiting men for the East is a hard problem. As soon as they have been there long enough and have adapted themselves to the Oriental life and manners they seem to be good for nothing else. A captain of tirailleurs says: "Know the human motor. Respect the Moslems who observe Hamadan. Do not force them to work on Beiram day. Be just to them and have an iron rule, attend to their physical needs and diseases. They will kiss your hand and tell you: 'You are my father.' Beware of the Marabu, the religious fanatic."

Palmyra in the desert already attracts many tourists. It lies in solitude within seven hours from Damascus by automobile. A new large hotel is contemplated. Next to the ruins, the great attraction is the famous sheikh, kidnapped in his younger days by a Parisian lady, but now restored to his desert and duties. On the south a good road connects Damascus with Baniyas at the springs of the Jordan river.

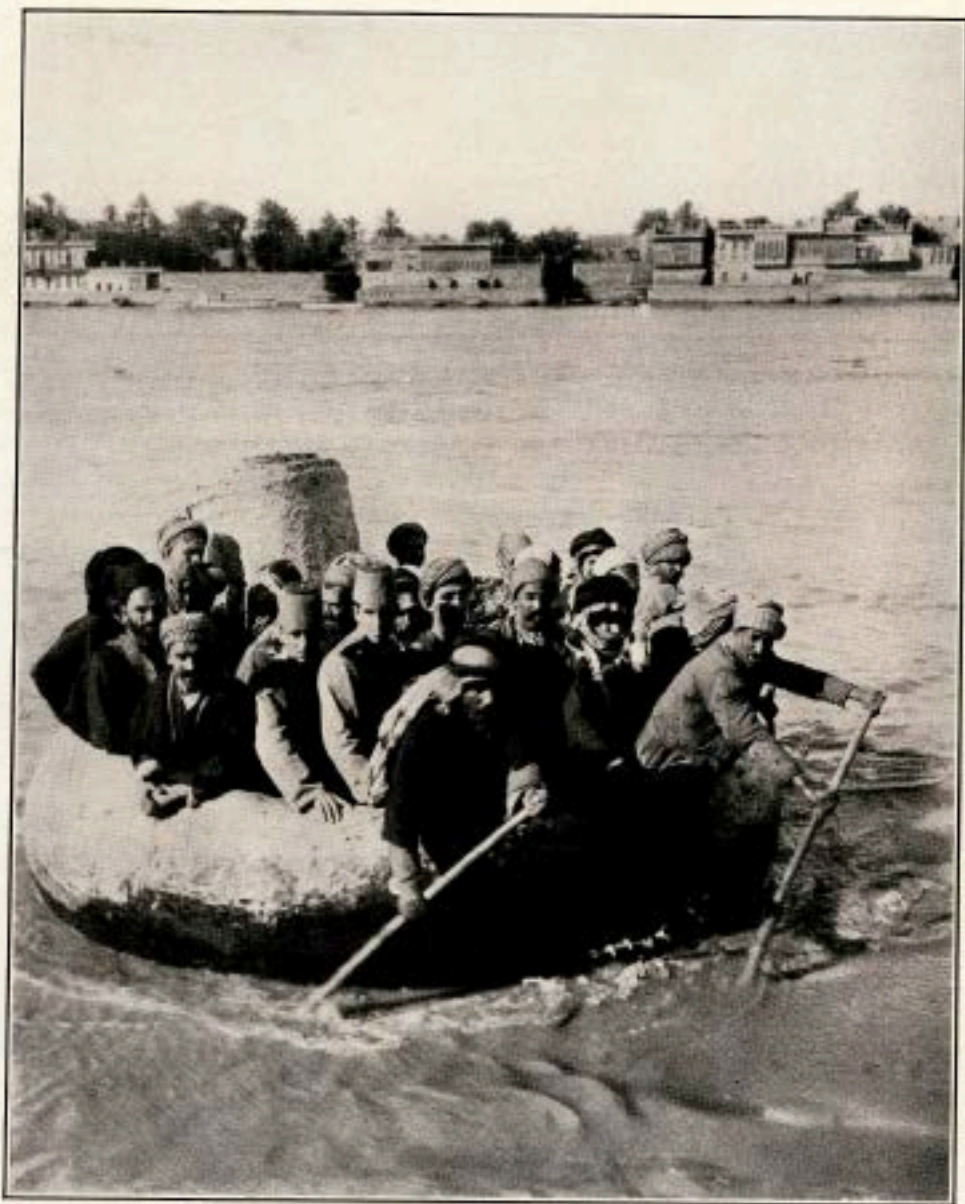
Beyrout is connected with Bagdad by several automobile lines. One of them leads you to Bagdad in thirty-six hours of continuous riding, by day and night, through Damascus and eight hundred miles of desert. It is run by Mr. N. Nairn, an enthusiastic and efficient New Zealander. We leave Beyrout and the blue shore and the West with some expectation of a new adventure. Five passen-



Building a Kuffa, the native boat built of wattle and daubed with pitch.

gers, we are in a good Cadillac, our full pack cases and trunks strapped on the sides. We carry a water tank filled for five days, and a pile of native flat bread in case of an emergency. Our driver is Mr. Reed, Scotch and wiry and a good shot. Full speed we go, over the Lebanon pass, in a clear fine morning. We pass barren mountains, whitish lime rocks, creeping vines, and barley fields, rich happy villages, the brown fertile Baalbek plain. The modern road recuts the older camel track, till, over the Anti-Lebanon, along rushing water and lines of green poplar trees, it reaches the fat and open oasis of Damascus. It is marvelous to see our automobile, bulging over with all kinds of boxes and bags, push its way through narrow crowded streets, amid loaded donkeys and camels, arabyas and veiled women, fat pashas and screaming boys, in an atmosphere of oily roasted things.

We leave the city, the orchards, the fields, even the road, and stop finally on the threshold of the desert. Two Michelin posts point solemnly toward Bagdad, eight hundred miles away. The silence is impressive. The desert has the beauty of the ocean, made of infinite lines with a wonderful display of colors, only broken by one distant line of camels and at night a few dangling lights of an Arab camp. The track is a good clay soil and stones, with perfectly smooth patches over which the car will run at a speed of sixty-five miles per hour. The mark of the wheels is distinct on the ground and will persist several years. Right and left empty petrol cans line the track and give a white glare in the night when hit by our lights. A few wrecked cars bespeak the dangers of the desert. We pass two stranded ones awaiting rescue, just like ships lost at sea. One of them has been five days waiting. We are glad to carry water and bread to help them and stop at intervals in the immensity for a short tea, lunch and dinner. It is good sport following game in a fast car. Our driver kills a bustard turkey and misses a pair of foxes and a desert hare. At three o'clock in the morning we try to capture two white gazelles. The graceful animals, from a safe distance turn toward us wondering eyes. Satisfied with the good sport we wish them good-bye and a free life. In the cold blue light, before sunrise, half an hour's rest stretched on the bare ground is a sheer necessity for cramped muscles. Before reaching the Euphrates we pass the camp of Sheikh Tagh Bey, a rich owner of over 30,000 camels which he sells from Egypt to Persia.



At Baghdad. Crossing the Tigris in a Kuffa.

How welcome the green lines of palm trees which mark the approach of the Euphrates. The stony desert changes to dust and mud cliffs, a natural shelter for wild pigeons and sand grouse. The first rains in Harrar have increased the volume of the water. The boat bridge at Feluja is the best suggestion for a reconstruction of the ark of Noah. The rough pieces of wood which outline the shape of each boat are protected by reed mattings thickly bedaubed with bitumen to prevent it from sinking at once. Why that wretched looking, badly patched bridge should resist the current is still unexplained. In fact it has been broken and mended many a time. Feluja is a poor looking mass of mud houses which we leave in a cloud of dust. Mud and dust eternal, mud seems to be the burden of the land, the Mesopotamia between the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris. The first brick tower of Tell Ibrahim rises over the broken high banks of ancient canals, over the smooth mud plain, till our eyes, weary of so much dust, rest with delight on the green palm gardens of Bagdad. The avenue leading to the Maude bridge has been freshly spread, Arabs with crossed legs are leisurely drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes, while looking with passive eyes on the modern caravan escaped from the desert.

Bagdad's best hotel is a very relative thing. I look around the room while an Armenian boy brings in the early cup of tea and hot water. Rug on mud floor, electrical fan, curtain in front of a badly closing window, a poor divan and a washstand.

Outside a couple of natives move solemnly up and down the wooden staircase carrying on their heads corbfuls of mud plaster to repair the roof. The hotel boasts a first class American bar and a band of Russian musicians. There is a pealing of bells from some Christian church.

A two horse arabana, or a good automobile, will take you over the bridges and the main roads well enough so long as the rain does not change the dust to mud. Or you may float down stream. A boat with two good rowers, good cushions and a light tent above your head is quite pleasant. Up stream the boatman pulls on the rope from the shore, his bare feet biting in the soft mud.

I am informed that The Hon. Miss Gertrude Bell will receive at tea time. A most original and great lady, a kind and passionate archaeologist, good judge of men and of some archaeologists. My way leads through the Arab garden with flower beds surrounded by mud drains for running water, to the quiet house of the famous lady.



I forget the long journey of the desert and bless the discrete charm of this beautiful garden in Old Bagdad.

The coppersmith's bazaar full of the noise of the hammers beating the red and yellow metal is a most enticing place. You need no magic carpet, no crystal eye, to be transported to the glorious home of Harun. Just step aside to let pass that donkey heavily loaded and the bare feet of the rider seated on the rear of his mount, try to discover a dry spot on the greasy floor and watch the six dark devils hammering in cadence a large disk of metal, red hot from the furnace.

The gilded copper tiles and the blue faience on the domes of the Khadhimin, the mosque of the two sufferers, attract the eyes of the traveller from afar. Most obliging and erudite Mr. R. S. Cooke of the Awqaf proves an ideal guide. We respectfully stand outside of the gates and of the bronze chains barring the entrance to all non Moslems. But even from a distance we can enjoy the perspective of the court, the colonnades copying the old Persian Apadana, and the gaudy colors of the tiles. The bazaars, hammam, opium den are more accessible. But, above all, a blessing on the head of the imam who entertained us at a wonderful Arab dinner of some fourteen courses: soup, chicken roasted and boiled, sausages of lamb, roasted lamb, potatoes, fried eggs, red and green stuffed peppers, creamed lupines, sweet dishes, rice, dates, sweet dates, melon, grapes, apples preserved in honey, pickles, soda water, buttermilk and coffee. A very full meal indeed.

We finish the day in a palm garden, a grove of date palms and orange trees and cabbages. The new bridge across the Tigris being unfinished, we float across in a guffa, the round basket boat of willow branches and bitumen. Two Arabs paddling right and left try to keep the silly whirling thing in an approximate straight course. The palms have reconciled me with the low muddy land.

Bagdad's shrines of fretted gold  
High walled gardens green and old.

A palm grove surrounds the new Arab University, a fine building of yellow bricks designed by Major J. Wilson. Plain round arches combine with decorative pointed arches below a long straight line of Cufic inscriptions. Only a wing is achieved, but its sober grace and sense of tradition are quite pleasant. The sun is low when we call at the Moslem College for a short visit, a quiet rest in the garden,



The Tigris at Baghdad.

a cigarette, a cup of coffee. The white headed wise man of the East who presides over its destinies, introduces us with a refined kindness to all the teachers of his staff, and sees us to the door thrusting into our hands little nosegays of sweet smelling flowers.

Passengers for Ur Junction leave Bagdad by the night train which has good sleepers and a dining car. The wind is sharp and two blankets are not too much to keep us warm on our leather couches. We pass in deep night the historic fields of Babylon and cross by day the Euphrates at Samâwa on a pile bridge. A new steel bridge is being built and the approaches show welcome signs of activity. A new junction leads toward the sacred city of Nejef and Kerbela, and being well patronized by the Persian and Indian pilgrims promises to pay for itself. We detrain at Ur Junction at 5.45 P. M. We spy from the station the low mound of Tell El Obeid and the venerable ziggurat of Ur, a great feature above the immense line of the desert. An Arab delegation of our guards, servants, foremen, Hummudi, Halil and the rest of them is waiting for us. Great kissing of hands, salaams and invocations of Allah. All baggage is taken down, counted, lifted on head and shoulders, and in great style we start on foot for the camp two miles away. The ziggurat is marking our direction toward the south. There we will spend the winter and try our luck at deciphering ancient history buried in dust and the oblivion of centuries.

Our camp is an eighteen room house built in twenty one days with old bricks of kings Nabonidus, Nebuchadnezzar and other worthies of Ur whose stamped bricks are scattered about the whole ruin. Barbed wires and a ditch surround it. There is an entrance, a court, two wings, a small porch, a central hall or dining room leading to bed rooms, office, drawing office, storage rooms, workshops, dark room, kitchen, servants' quarters. A ladder leads to the crenellated top of the guards' room. Everything is brick and mud. Brick walls, brick floor laid in mud mortar. The roof is mud with chopped straw, laid on reed matting supported by round rafters. Reed matting on the floor and one open fire place smoking either way: in or out. Mud plaster with yellow coating gives a warm aspect to the dining room. There is a book case with two rows of books, scientific research books and novels. Everything would be so cosy, except for the white ants, the mice, the mosquitoes, flies and sand flies. The white ants eat the books, the mice eat the cake and jam, the mosquitoes and sand flies eat us, and the flies are a common



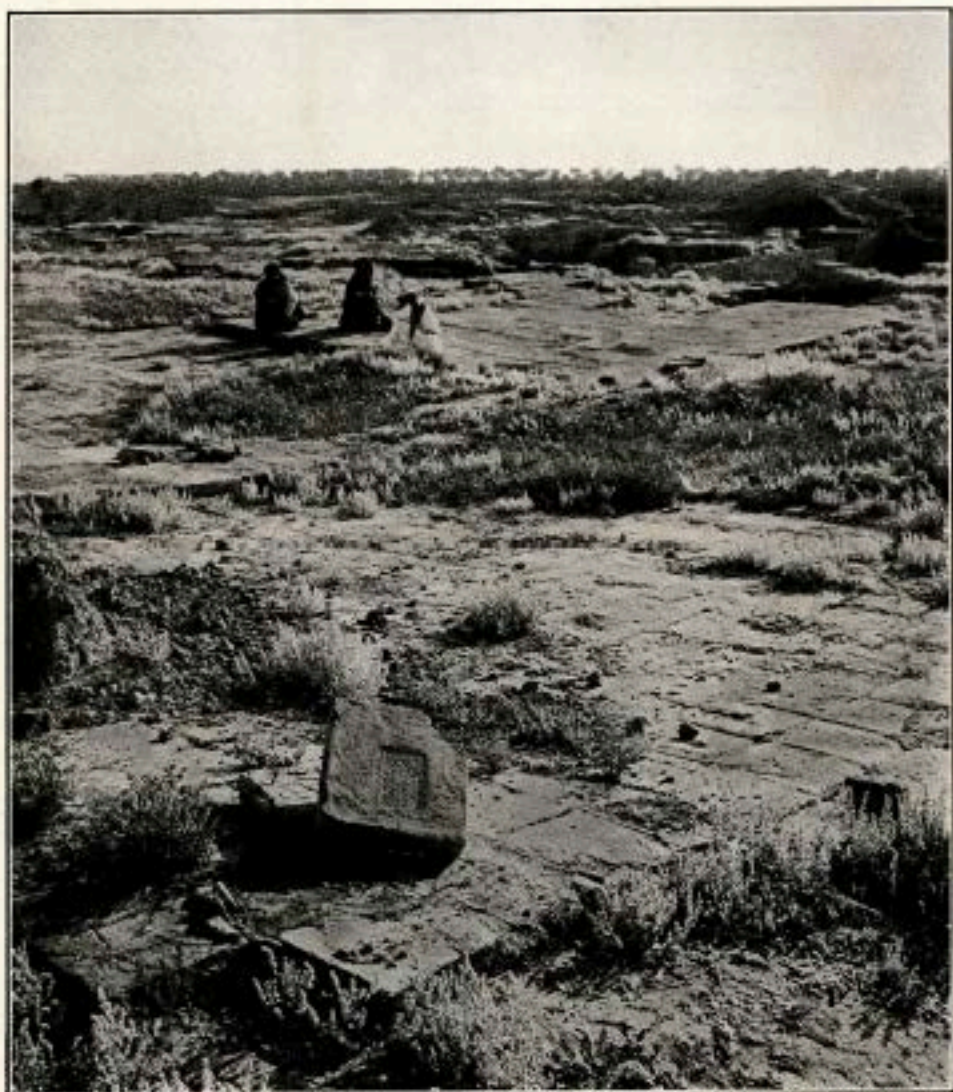
A Jewish Marketplace, Baghdad.

nuisance. Wire netting is still an undreamed of luxury and we eat armed each with a fly killer. There is absolutely no water in the place, no tree, no grass. Every day a transport corps of four donkeys carrying four cans of water each arrive from the station and refill iron water tanks; they will bring water to the porous open pointed jars from which the diggers will quench their thirst. Even the station has no water. Every day a water train brings the drinkable water with addition of chlorine from the next small town, Nasarih on the Euphrates some ten miles from the station.

We are lost deep in the desert, in the impressive silence of the immensity around us, over which an unrestrained wind sweeps at intervals like a strong ocean breeze. Are the omens favorable? The crescent moon and the evening star shine silver clear in a deep blue sky. The song of the old Sumerian worshipper comes back to our mind; "O Father Nannar, brilliant, young, Bull of Heaven, when thy horn shines over the horizon."

From five in the morning great lines of Arabs are seen marching with their long steps across the desert toward our camp. Noisily chattering they assemble and squat down outside the barbed wires. Today is the labor fair, when men will be enlisted for the dig and their names put down in the book. This is the great business of the day. How the news spreads, without wire or wireless, for miles and miles, is a mystery of the desert. But here they are, the huddled crowd, making passionate appeals toward the foremen to have their names written down in the famous book of the elect. Pickmen first, heads of the gangs, spademen and basket men, their aid will be listed in turn. Older workmen have a privilege, and their certificate from the last year sells like a bond on the market. Our chief of the expedition is standing in the middle of the magic circle out of which Hammudi, the foreman, is chasing the intruders with an expressive gesture and one energetic "barra," and forcing them to sit down again. When both are impossible we break up the meeting and walk majestically out. They will sit there and hang on like flies the whole day long and come again the next morning.

We begin to unpack. The old "tumbrel," an exservice Ford which has seen many campaigns and was discarded after the war as unfit, runs to the station to bring more goods and a visitor. How its parts hold together is a mystery. It has a nickname among the Arabs at the station like the "Ruin" or the "Calamity." With some repairs, a new chauffeur and a few artistic touches it will make good



The Pavements of Babylon.

to the end and deliver safely twenty four boxes of antiquities to their further destination.

Our camp is within the limits of the old city and we reach it from the plain through a gate of the ruined wall. That wall is only traced by a slow surging of the ground. But its different coloration and the numerous bricks and fragments scattered on the surface are enough to distinguish the oval of the city from the surrounding desert. Rain and ages have deeply ravined the different quarters inside. A main cut East West may have been a canal. I take a solitary walk over the whole field. Fine dust and broken pottery, pieces of bitumen and bricks, fragments of clay sarcophagi, a few bits of stone are the only things visible on the surface. How much is buried below?

Within the city, excavations have been limited to the sacred area, the temple of the Moon God. They may last ten years. A double wall pierced by six gates surrounds the temple. Within the large enclosure there are many houses, shrines, storehouses, a house of the Moon God, a house of his wife, a treasury, a palace of the high priestess, houses for the commandant of the guards, for the keeper of the archives, all kinds of depots of grain, oil, wool. The big brick tower resting on its own terrace in the N. W. corner of the sacred area is, since the tower of Babel, one of the most popular features of a Mesopotamian temple. With true archaeological feeling I climb the hoary pile on the hundred brick steps laid by king Nabonidus. He only repaired it and the core is much older, some 2400 B. C. The view from the top at sunset is a revelation. Over that immense flat country the huge brick construction is really a mountain, worthy of the temple of a capital city.

Far south another brick tower raises its dilapidated head above the gray sand of the desert. It marks the site of the sister city Eridu-Abusharein, the abode of Ea, God of Wisdom, ruler of the deep abyss. On the east a thin green line of palm trees traces the course of the Euphrates. Since the war, the black thread of the railway gives a sense and life to this dead land and connects it with two poles of civilization: Bagdad and Basra. What pain and labor will remove the veil of sand and dust which has crept over the ruined city and reveal its ancient features?

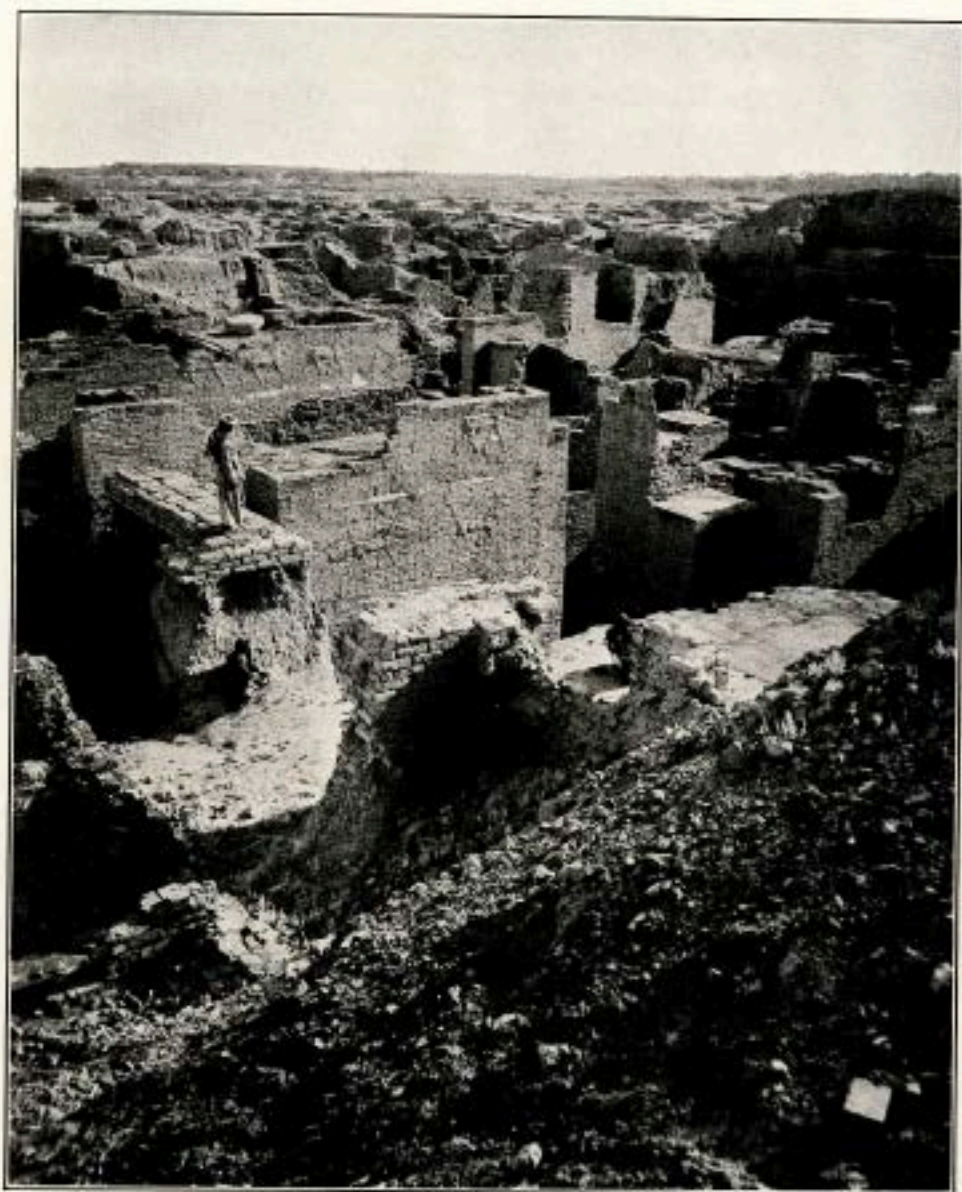
The sunset today is glorious. The sky is ablaze with liquid gold with touches of pink and pale green, below a long distant luminous line of grey and snow white clouds. The blackening face

of the earth and the slow undulating ground of the ruined city are stamped forever as Ur of the Chaldees by the dark purple silhouette of the Ziggurat. A fine collection of water colors would alone do justice to the desert.

Day by day and for months our life will be filled with the infinite drudgery of excavation; a section of the temenos wall, the first bricks with finger print or a stamp, a pavement broken in the middle by a big sewer composed of jars one on top of another, small rooms, round granaries, door sockets, stray clay cones with inscription, calcinated pieces of palm tree, small base or altar, blocks of limestone. The architect will survey the ground and draw the plan of all the remaining constructions. I will copy the inscriptions in the field or at home in camp, if only flies and mosquitoes will give me some rest. They bite fiercely. My hands are unshapely. That pest is satisfied during the week to feed on the Arabs working in the trenches, but Sunday, as the work stops, and for want of a better food, they all fly back to our camp and take possession of every room. We fight them in vain, only to add to our misery till night comes and sends them to rest. Our last resource is to sleep out of doors in the open air.

Saturday is pay day. The whole tribe of the Arab workmen seem possessed of a sudden frenzy, or are they on the war path for plunder and murder? They rush from the dig toward the camp shouting and dancing, brandishing their spades, a formidable looking troop. Their leader throws up a short burden which they all take up stamping their feet in cadence on the bare ground. Some have untie their headdresses for mere joy or excitement, unveiling long tresses or close shaven heads. Their eyes grow wild and perfectly hysterical. Near the camp they form in a wheel or circle and the dust flies beneath their pounding feet. A table and three seats have been laid on the open for the head of the expedition and the two native foremen. Nickel and silver coins and five rupees notes resting in soup plates are on the table. One armed guard, gun in hand, is squatting by. The tribe forms in a circle, sitting down with crossed legs. A relative silence is maintained and the famous book of names is brought forth as I presume it will be in the last judgment. One by one each man is called, coupled by the name of his father in the old Oriental way. Shalomo ibn Daud. One by one each man stands up, answering na'am, yes, present, and approaches to receive in his hand the price of his labour. Contestation or arguments are debated and settled in public assembly. One by one each man retires, or





Ruins of Babylon.

sits down again, carefully counting his gains, or paying off his debts in this Arab stock exchange.

We picnic today in a palm garden on the bank of the Euphrates. Our host is our agent in the market town of Nasariah. His brother is our servant, and his mother, a decent old lady, keeps a cow—our daily supply of fresh milk—in a tent outside the camp. This might be the Garden of Eden. Tall palms spread their shade over orange trees and creeping vines. The ground below is divided into squares by small mud canals, where the tepid, nourishing water spreads leisurely, flooding them one by one and bringing abundance. Lettuces, onions, beans, lentils, aromatic herbs grow luxuriant and rank. Batteries of shadufs, worked by bulls moving up and down an incline, or a water wheel worked by an old horse, raises the water from the river into the upper basin.

Brightly colored shawls hung between the rugged trunks of the palm trees afford the privacy of a closet. Rugs cover the mud ground. Thick blue cushions are spread on them for us to rest and smoke and enjoy a glass of soda before lunch. Queer Arab figures and little boys with untidy hair and dirty shirts pop around. Chairs and a table occupy the centre of the place and are more suitable for our Western dignity than the Arab custom of picking your food from a dish laid on the ground. We fare richly: fish, stuffed eggplant, boiled chicken and lady fingers, roasted mutton and rice, more chicken, mutton and rice, cucumber salad and sweet cookery. Coffee, soda and three stars cognac. It is a genuine hospitality in which our host takes a pride: "When my enemies hear that the English have lunched in my garden they will burst with jealousy."

A line of willows and a mud bank separate the garden from the river. We sit under the shade of the trees and contemplate in silence the ancient Euphrates, the river of Babylon. Two belams sail up stream with a good wind and glide swiftly past us. Across the water a battery of shadufs work with a long creaking whining complaint. The dull drumming and the plaintive melody of Arab song arises in the distance. Why not in a garden when the eve is cool? While we are returning to the camp the light has changed to a delicate violet and mauve. The old Ziggurat stands gloriously, a black shadow in an ideal pale greenish blue and vanishing emerald.

The morning brings good news. A torso, minus a head, of an old Semite, cut in a green stone has come out of the ground. His name is Dada-ilum, carefully engraved on his shoulder. He becomes at



A bit of the Walls of Babylon.

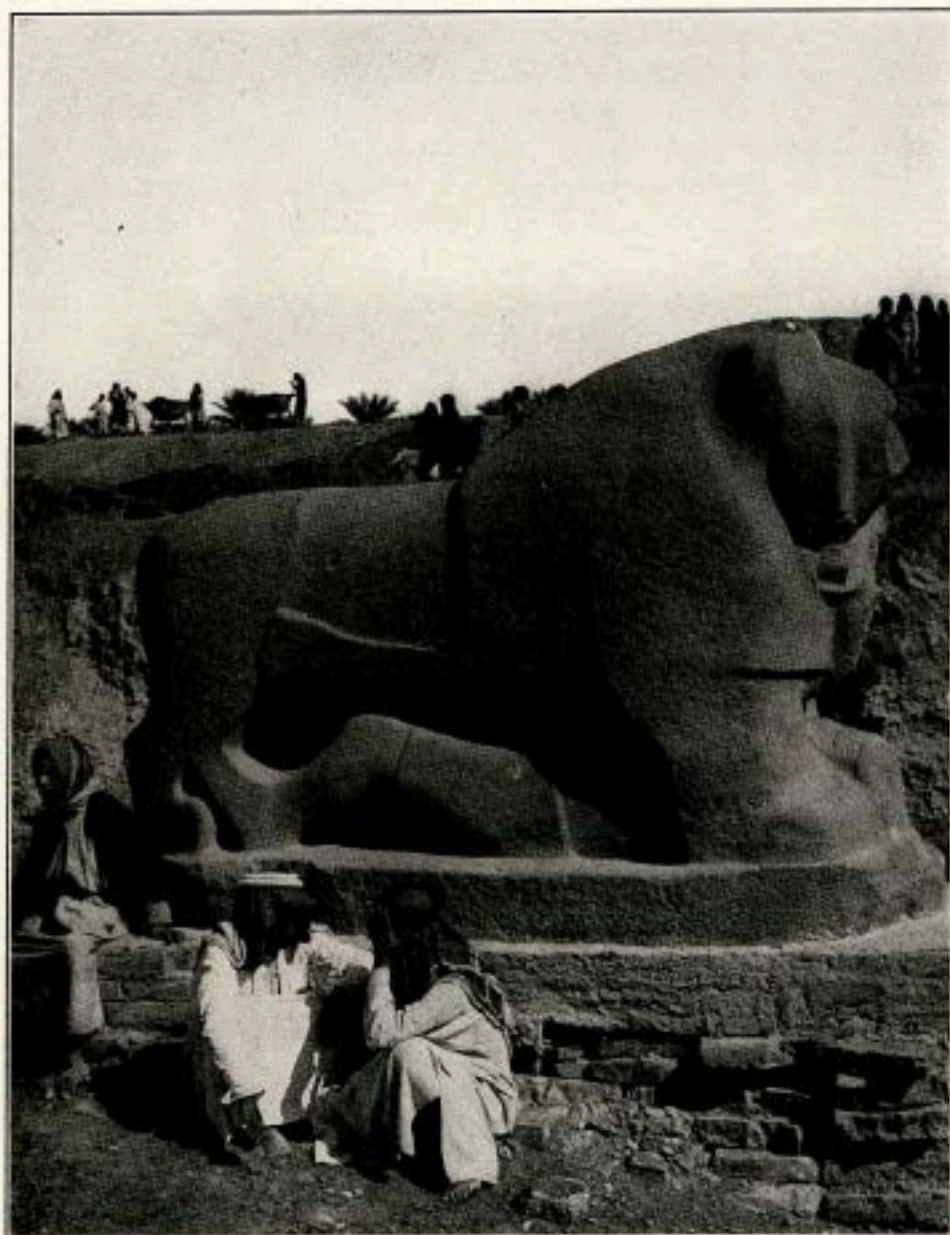
once popular among the workmen. Ducks and wild geese in V formation pass screaming over head bound for the South, foreboding the winter and the rainy season. Christmas is made merry by seven visitors from Bagdad, a cake and a bottle of champagne. The cold wind sets in and we cluster around a poor fire of wood, charcoal and bitumen. A party of our visitors prefers to climb the old tower, or to wander across the cuts and lanes of the old city, in quest of Abraham's house, the king's palace, the house of the priestess, trying to locate across the desert dust clouds, the dead and mysterious Eridu. The end of the year has come. How much still is buried underground? But hope immortal still remains and we look ahead for the coming year and the big discovery.

The joys of an assyriologist are pure. Running from trench to trench over the field, brushing an old stone, leaning down to decipher a brick of Nebuchadnezzar badly placed in the pavement and returning home to pile more bitumen on the fire, brush more tablets, and read an incantation against the evil eye newly recovered from the threshold of a shrine, who would not envy such a life?

Despite the January rain, work starts again with the whole crowd of shivering Arabs digging and carrying away the dirt in their small baskets. It means for the evenings a number of sore toes, cut fingers, sore throats and other minor ailments which must be attended to in the camp. Two white tablets to cut the fever, two black ones for the stomach. The confidence of our workmen is unlimited. They would gladly bring their whole family to the camp dispensary if they were allowed.

It has rained all the night, and the unwelcome rain has leaked through the mud roof, and spoiled several good plan sheets. Outside it has changed the desert into a liquid quagmire. But this is the last effort of the winter, and a few days later on a clear spring morning, we receive, not the first swallows, but a party of six visitors touring the world under the guidance of the missionary, Dr. Grenfell of Labrador.

This morning we open the furnace in which the inscribed mud tablets have been baked for twenty four hours into hard bricks. When discovered in the ruins of the priestesses house, the tablets were just soft mud. Worms had passed through them without any resistance. They crumbled in the hands that tried to lift them from the surrounding compact clay. One by one complete tablets or fragments had to be packed in dry sand in empty oil cans, and the



The Lion of Babylon.

cans placed in a larger Arab oven. The furnace is simply a mud tower, open above, with a brick grate and a vent below. Cans and fuel, wood and crude oil are disposed of by pouring inside, and fire set to the whole pile. When the flames are blazing clear an iron lid is clamped on, leaving only three holes for ventilation below the joint, and a heavy mud coating is spread on the top. The fire is left to smoulder and to give a moderate and continuous heat. Next will come the opening of the furnace, the extraction of the tablet from the hot sand, the brushing, mending, pasting together of all the complete tablets and fragments, and later the reading and copying of all good examples. They fill tray after tray and build on the ledge a respectable line. They are full of details about the temple slaves, the weavers, the bakers, the storing of cloth, copper, gold, silver, the housing of farm products, the unloading of pack animals and boats, the keeping of accounts. Dozens of officials are mentioned by name, the commandant, the messengers, the shepherds, the cowherds the keeper of the orchards, all attached to the temple. This must have been a lively place. The big long rooms were full of grains, barley and other cereals, oil, dates, milk, butter, wool, stored under the protection of the god. Round the brick tower, stronghold and last defense of the inhabitants, were accumulated all the requisites of life. A deep well was sunk in the court of the inner temple. A wall surrounding temple and tower ran at the level of the lower terrace.

Outside of the temple limits a deep depression almost level with the plain is perhaps a water basin connecting the temple, through canals, with the great river. Stone, timber, bitumen wanted for the construction, would float in this way, and the boats of Magan would in return export skins, wool, cloth, dates and barley. How many years will elapse before the buried history emerges completely through the thick cover of mud and bricks?

Sitting on a hill of mud and debris, I am looking north toward the newly excavated building, the Dublal shrine, court of justice and house of the priestess. Behind it, the central staircase of the old Ziggurat cuts a deep black shadow. The panelled walls of Dublal rise with austere lightness above the panelled terrace. With their poor materials the Sumerian builders constructed on large and powerful lines. Thick walls, well laid courts, buttresses and terraces, receding stages and gates guarded by towers, give an impression of force made more striking by the flatness of the country. The

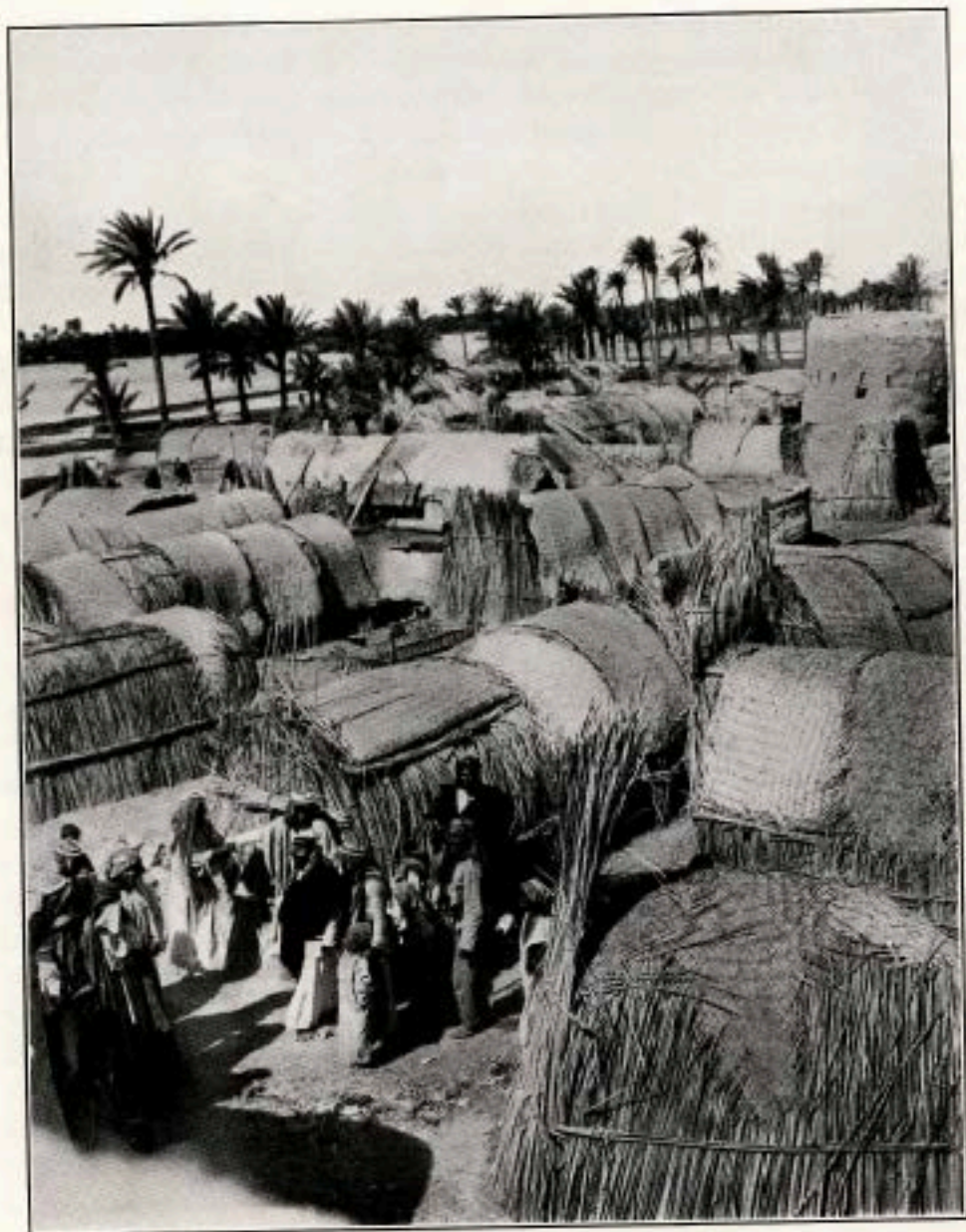
horizon today is a lovely clear golden line of desert. Who can tell the beauty of the desert at noon, its splendid and infinite lightness?

In the afternoon a strong wind begins to sweep the plain and to raise clouds of fine dust. Sun, ruins and tower disappear in a gray mist. The wind does not abate but keeps its masterly sweep like an ocean gale. Dust covers the paper on which I attempt to draw the central stairs of the Ziggurat, that ladder of Jacob reaching unto heaven. Better to give it up and to work in camp.

The wind is very cold. No coolies on the work today. The place is so dead without them. How calm is the whole field. Only two visitors are found wandering in the trenches. One of larger proportions is the president of a Manchester Cotton Manufacturers' Association. He is quite interested in the old ruin, but refuses to climb the crumbling steps of the tower. He shows the keenest interest in our collection of antiquities and promises to send from Basra a bale of cotton for packing. Our fire is kept alive with coal and gîr, the Arab name of the bitumen, which we extract from below the pavements, and between the layers of bricks, and which makes a passable fuel. Old King Ur-Nammu never dreamt that we should bless him for it some four thousand years later.

End of February. Our visitors from Nasariah, the political officer, the canal engineer, are surprised at the progress of the digging. The pile of débris next to the Ziggurat is gone for good. The view of the Ziggurat rising from a level platform is imposing, and most properly towering above the Dublal, the shrine of the Moon God. The best discovery of this year has been made in the court between. It is the broken fragments of the stela erected by Ur-Nammu, the founder of the Ziggurat as a memorial. The king himself is here represented as the first bricklayer of the land, carrying on his shoulders the instruments of the trade and led in state by his personal God to place the corner brick. The benediction of the God on his land for the good deed. Graceful girlish figures slide down from heaven carrying in their hands an overflowing ampulla, symbol of rain. Other registers show the building of the Ziggurat, the bull and lamb sacrifices, the big drum band playing its ritual tunes, herds of fat cattle passing in a landscape of rank growing reeds.

We take one day off to visit Eridu or Abu-Sharein in the desert. It is a cold, dreary day. The sand keeps flying in a sharp wind, blurring the whole landscape. Four mounted policemen have been dispatched ahead of our two Ford cars to prevent any surprise. The



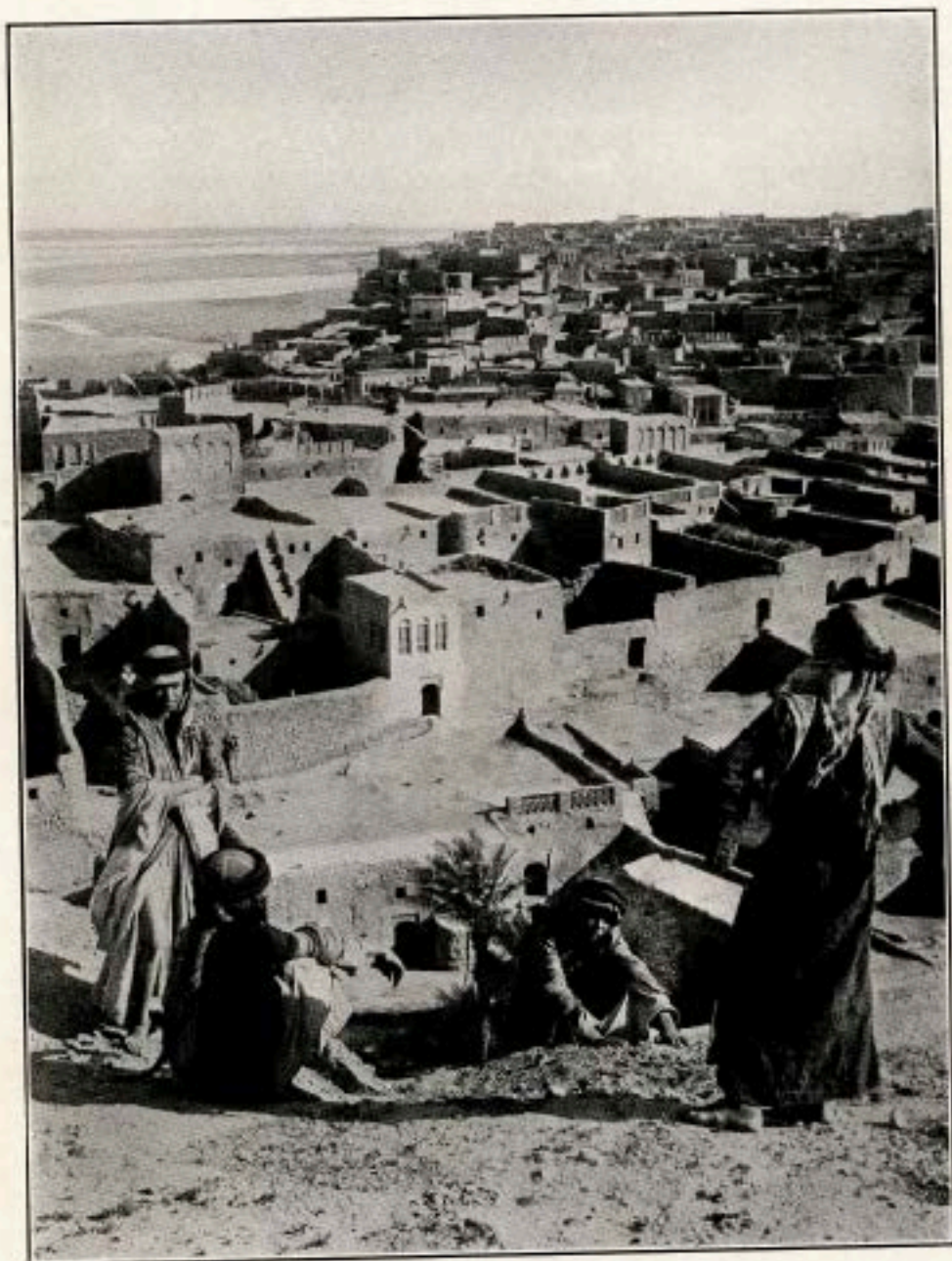
A Village on the Euphrates.



remains of the brick tower of Eridu seems higher than the Mugajjar Ziggurat. Stamps of king Bur-Sin are seen on every brick scattered around. The flight of stone steps leading to the top is nearly all gone. The deep hollow at the foot of the steps marks perhaps the location of the apsu, a sacred water basin. Prehistoric pottery and flints are found all over the place and also blocks of porphyry, basalt, bluish stone, green diorite and aragonite. The walls round the small city are comparatively well preserved. A few mud houses are still standing, their windows, door and even painting on the wall are still visible, and afford a welcome shelter. The whole place clustering round its high tower over five thousand years old has a strange air of an enclosed holy city, rich and narrow, old and dead.

The mayor of Nasariah, a picturesque Ras el Beled and his followers have come to see the ruins. Under their eyes the workmen uncover poor old dead bones in a tub shaped coffin. The body lies on one side with the knees tucked up. At the feet there are a graceful copper vase and a copper bowl turned green with oxyde. One slender arm has still its copper bracelet and rests between two small round enamelled vases. One finger has a copper ring with a gold plate. By the size of the bones this must have been the body of a young girl buried in the ruins of the Moon God one or two centuries before Christ. Round her neck they have placed a string of beads, gold and carnelian and chalcedony, lying now in the dust below. There she has slept over two thousand years, till her poor belongings should be collected to enrich a Museum.

The end of the season has come. Sheikh Monchey rides to our camp for a last visit and even a cup of tea. We part good friends. Our foremen are leaving ahead of us on their way back to their native Jerablus on the Euphrates in Syria, and we partake of a last cup of Arab coffee. Even the old Arab lady, the keeper of the cow, has tears in her eyes. The wild crowd of coolies has gone after a last dancing of thankfulness and joy on the last pay day. All our visitors have dispersed, on foot, in automobiles, even in an infamous two horse "Victoria" all patched with strings and wire. The last to go are four good Americans from New York and Ohio, following in Abraham's footsteps. They are shown the whole field starting at the top of the Ziggurat and finishing at the supposed Abraham's house. The old gentleman, who is nearing seventy-nine years of age, leads the train, passing trenches, climbing up and down, and taking pictures. I take a few pencil sketches of the Ziggurat, the great



Tikrit on the Tigris.

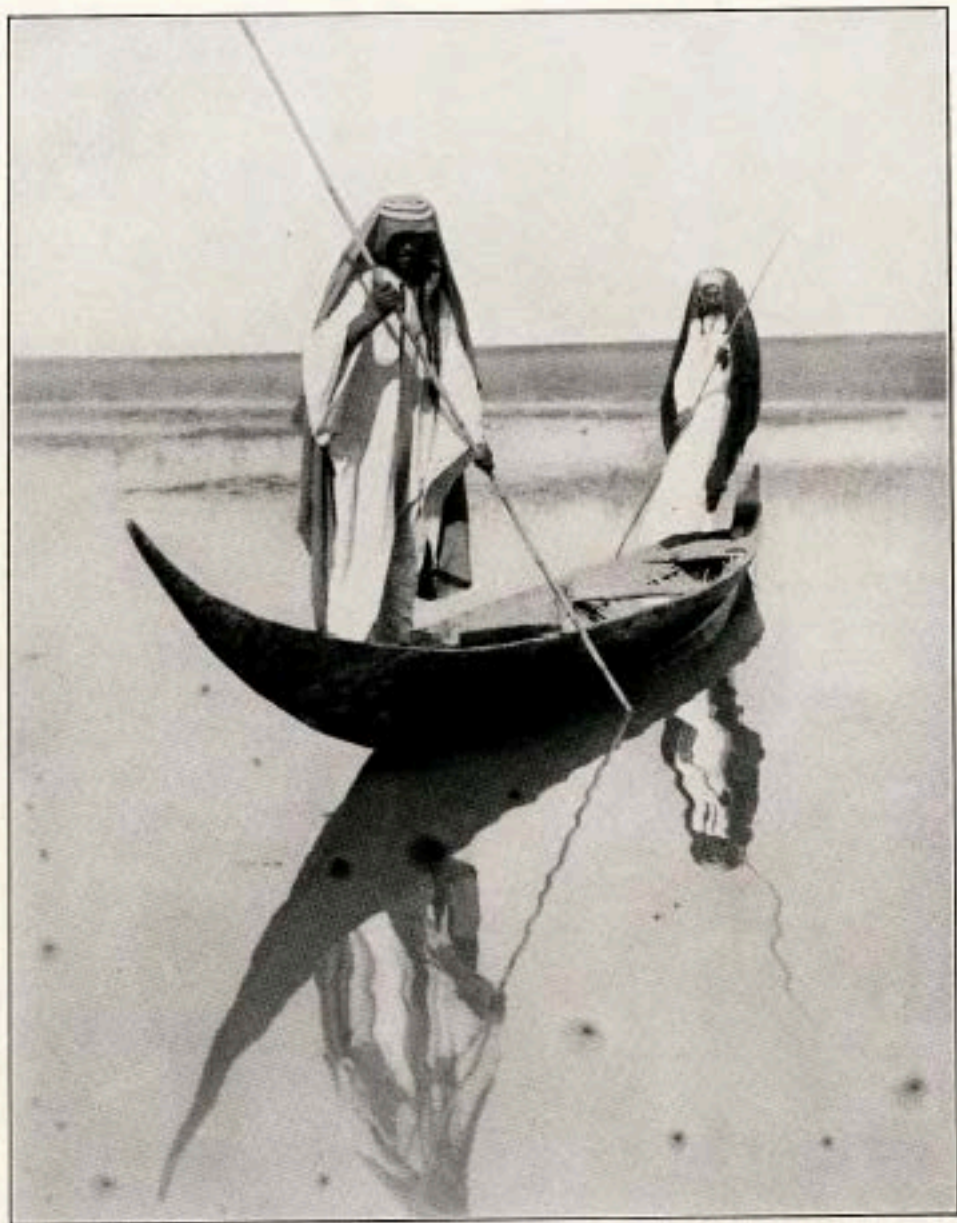
court, the Dublal, the newly uncovered building, as a means of good-bye. Shall we ever pass again the same track?

The great packing activity is over. All boxes are sent to the station. I take a quiet walk to the excavation field. All is silence. There is a purple violet line over the desert and dead Abusharein. One by one the memories of the past are being recalled. On this very pavement priests and priestesses and votaries used to walk going to the shrine to bring their morning and evening offerings, drawing water from the deep well, pouring the libation in front of the shrine of Nannar. The Elamites and the Babylonians in turn destroyed it, plundered its treasures of gold, silver and precious stones and left it a desolate place. The canal silted up and filled with sand. The desert slowly replaced life and reigned supreme.

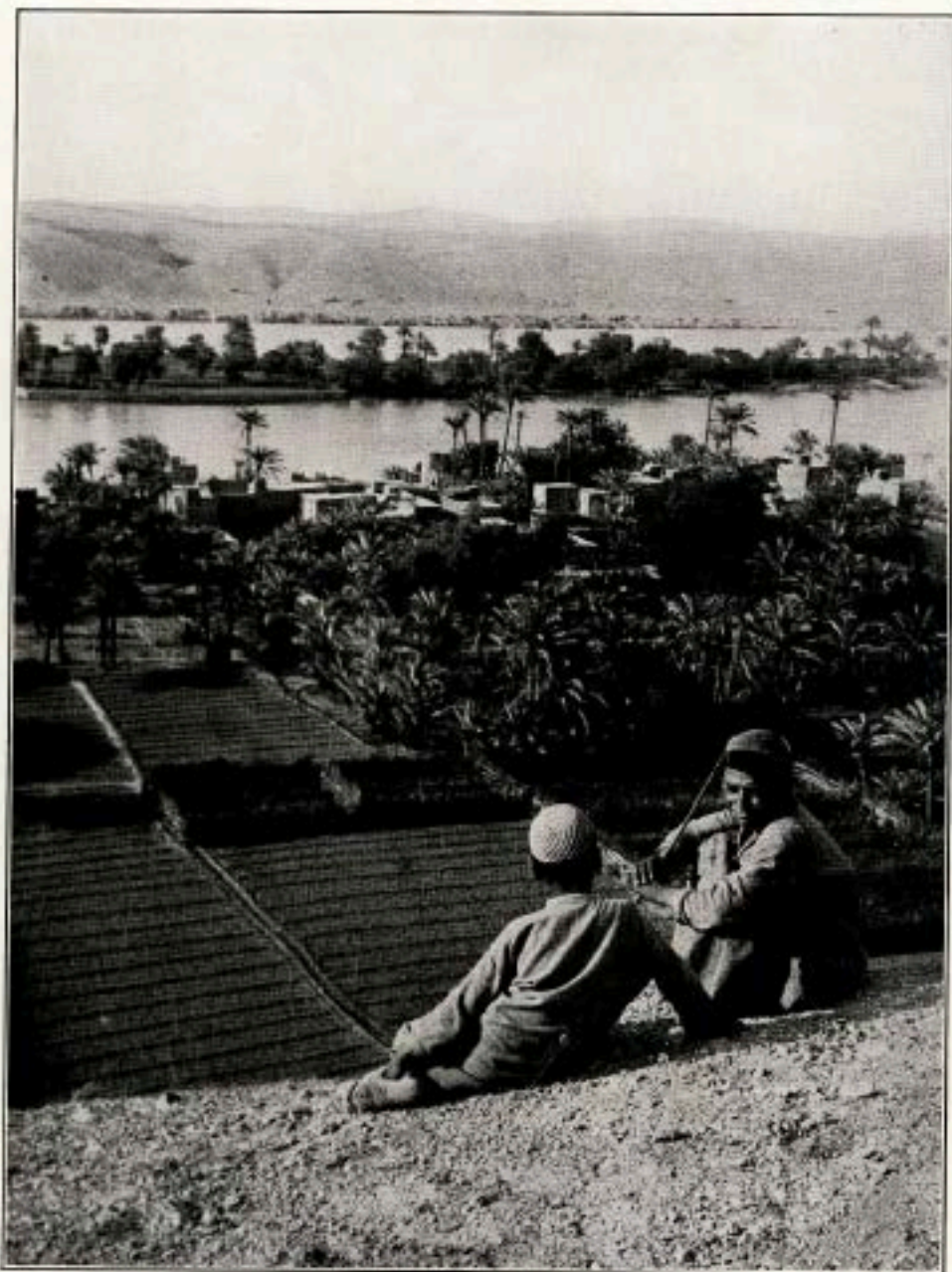
Our camp house is closed with two nails fixed in the door. All books are in a tin box on a table for fear of the white ants, all the bedding in another large box raised on four bricks off the floor. The luggage is already at the station. Guards and servants come to wish us goodbye and kiss our hands. The Ziggurat of Ur of the Chaldees is fading in a mirage over the horizon. Stormy clouds are slowly accumulating. We pass the first green fields, which are a real delight for eyes accustomed to the gray solitude of the desert. We have three berths and a dining car. We wish to stop that night at Hillah and visit Kish and Babylon. But the oncoming storm and the pouring rain make it a sheer impossibility. Sky and earth are confounded in a continuous dull line of yellow watery muddy mist and mire. How well do I understand the feeling of Noah in the ark when God came and closed the door behind him. Only the frogs are happy and keep singing. Wet black forms of Arabs pass rapidly, their abayehs dripping with rain, their brown legs deep in mud.

Bagdad is given to two sorts of passions, politics and archaeology. There were even some good dinners and dancing. A member of the Commission of the League of Nations actually operating in and round Mosul, has come down in a hurry and must fly back, because the Commission is short of cigars, which would prove fatal to the harmonious working of the Commission. The work itself is simple enough, each native being asked three questions: Did you like the Turks? Do you like the Turks? Will you like the Turks? But this is mere gossip.

The river is rising, and its turbid rushing waters are quite impressive. They strain to the utmost the resistance of the pontoon



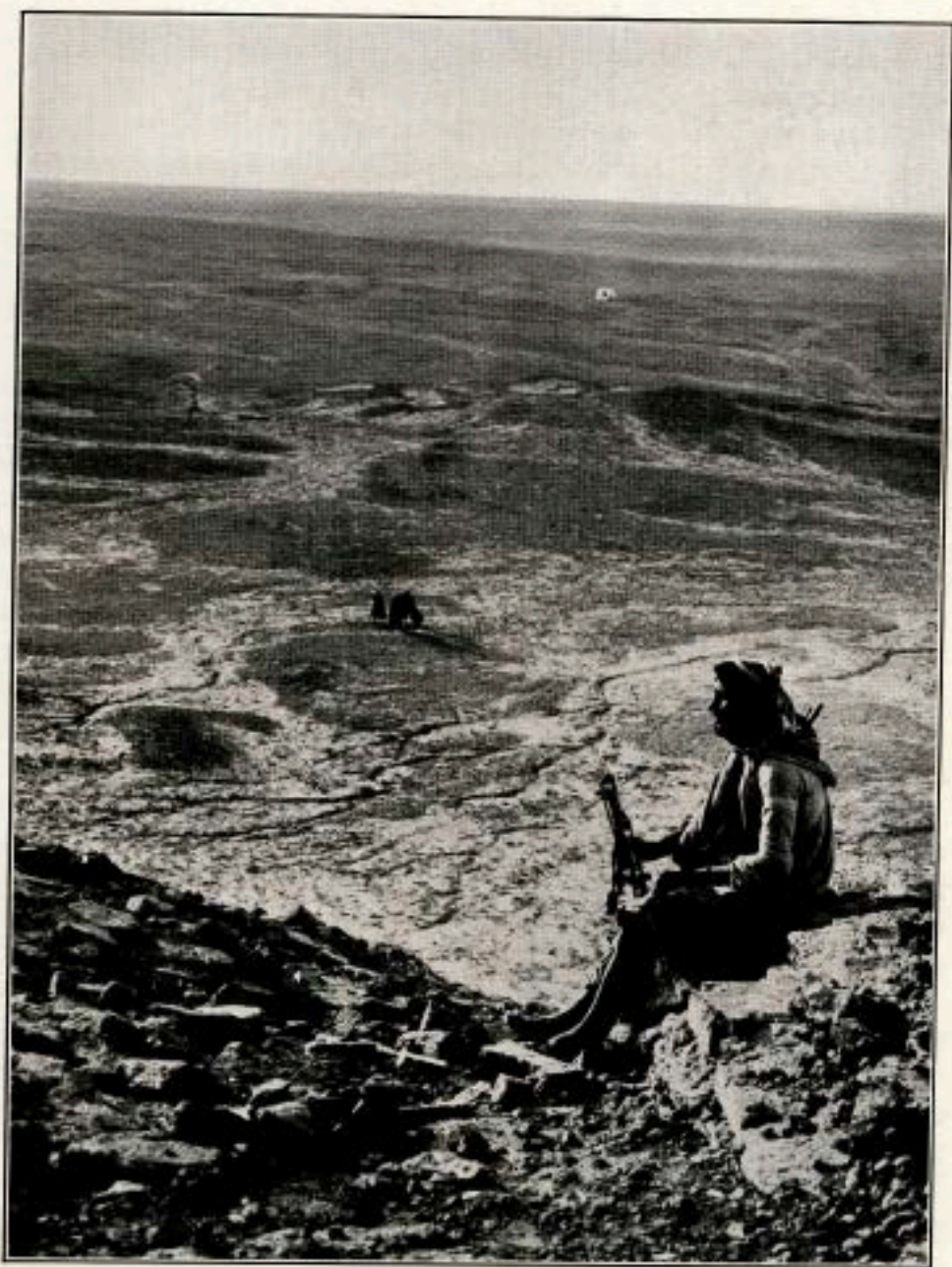
The Belam on the Euphrates. The Belam is built of many rough Pieces of Wood lashed together and Coated with Pitch.



A Garden on the Euphrates near Babylon.

bridges. No one is allowed to cross. All the guards are on watch. I have to trust a belam and two strong boatmen to carry me over the violent muddy current in order to reach the east bank. The old citadel is worth a visit, but unfortunately is in ruinous condition. It may become the possible site of the Archaeological Museum. What is left of the brick work cut and chiselled out of pale yellow brick is very remarkable. No architectural motive but the decorative effect of a huge carpet pattern worked into the brick arch. The becomb effect in the corners add their touch of airiness. There are scanty but precious examples of the bygone glory of Bagdad. Stained glass windows and painted ceilings in musty old houses encumbered and dishonored by pedlars, retail dealers and their goods may be seen. The Mustansir, the old city college, is now the custom house. We piously visit it inside and outside. Inside we have to climb piles of cotton bales to admire ancient vaults and ceilings, outside we rest awhile drinking coffee in front of a magnificent cufic inscription boldly cut in the stone walls of the college, and decorating the whole front. The coffee man has built his charcoal furnace against it and the smoke has blackened the inscription. The whole day he will boil the black mixture in his brass pots, while customers with crossed legs on high wooden divans inhale the smoke from their nargilehs, or keep humming to the music of a native guitar. One of the bazaars opens alongside the coffee house. It is occupied by the slippers merchants. Hundreds of red slippers hang gaily in the sun. Steamboats, barges, belams press against the quay, seeking refuge from the violent current. A motley crowd pass unceasingly: Arabs, Kurdes, Persians, Jews, Syrians, Armenians, English residents, Indians, the confusing mixing of languages, answering the long ringing murmurs of the frenzied waters.

Two secretaries of the League of Nations are back on the wing from Mosul and report some good news. Count T. was safely delivered with his cigar boxes, his energy triumphing over the inconveniences of an air transport. The day is hot, and we enjoy spending the afternoon in a sweet scented Arabian garden close to the Khadhimin. The alleys are made dark with palm and orange trees in blossom. Running waters add to the coolness. The old gentleman with the green turban is awaiting us in front of a small white pavilion not unlike a shrine. What a dream of Oriental life. A long table is overloaded with all sorts of fruit: oranges, apples, preserved apples and plums, sweets and cookeries, almonds, cigarettes. Soft drinks,



Ur of the Chaldees. Overlooking the desert from the top of the Ziggurat.

sodas and coffee are served abundantly. We will not touch the tenth part of those Oriental delights, expressing in their way the Oriental welcome: all that is mine is yours. Each guest is led by the hand to his place and promoted with honor when seeking to occupy the last.

We leave Bagdad and its ancient gardens, rolling over the mud track in a comfortable Studebaker with balloon tires, on our way to Mosul and Aleppo across the Syrian desert. The track follows the Bagdad railway on the west of the Tigris, passing the golden domes and the spiral tower of Samara, and shortly afterwards Tekrit. We wander across hills avoiding the flooded low ground. Chalk hills begin to rise and the soil is covered with stones and pebbles. Camels, sheep and goats are browsing the short grass of the pasture land. The Shammar Arabs come out of their black tents to wonder at our train. We give them the salaam and some cigarettes and are rewarded with the glorious remark that: "these must be kings." We climb the low range of the Assyrian hills, the Djebel Hamrin. The air is keener. Over the horizon looms the line of the Kurdish Mountains. Gypsum and melting clay cut deep gulleys, and muddy wadis afford anxious moments. The crossing of small rivers near the place where there was a bridge is a difficult problem with a driver desirous not to ruin a new car, and generally stopping in the middle of the stream to ascertain whether it is safe to proceed.

The black Ziggurat of Shergât, the old Assyrian capital, points toward our resting place, at the English camp where we receive a most kindly reception. By order of the C. O. a bridge of empty cans is built at early dawn over the river to facilitate our desert excursion to Hathra. A sheikh is our guide. We go merrily bumping over bridge, rail, green land, ford of gypsum blocks across the wadi, with a feeling of endless liberty. Not a single tree, but short grass over the billowy pasture land with a sporadic scattering of camels, sheep, goats and black tents. Far away in the misty distance, above the dark line of the Kurdish Mountains, snow capped peaks appear in the larger depressions. Blue flowers, anemonaë, narcissus, tulpis peep out of the grass. Lines of dead camels brown swollen or dry, remind us of the ever present danger. Our valiant captain shoots a great bustard turkey, and plucks the black and white feathers growing like a ruffle round the neck. They will make a valuable present.

Alas we shall never see Hathra. The mud of a small wadi is enough to stop the big car. Three hours work, piling of stones and

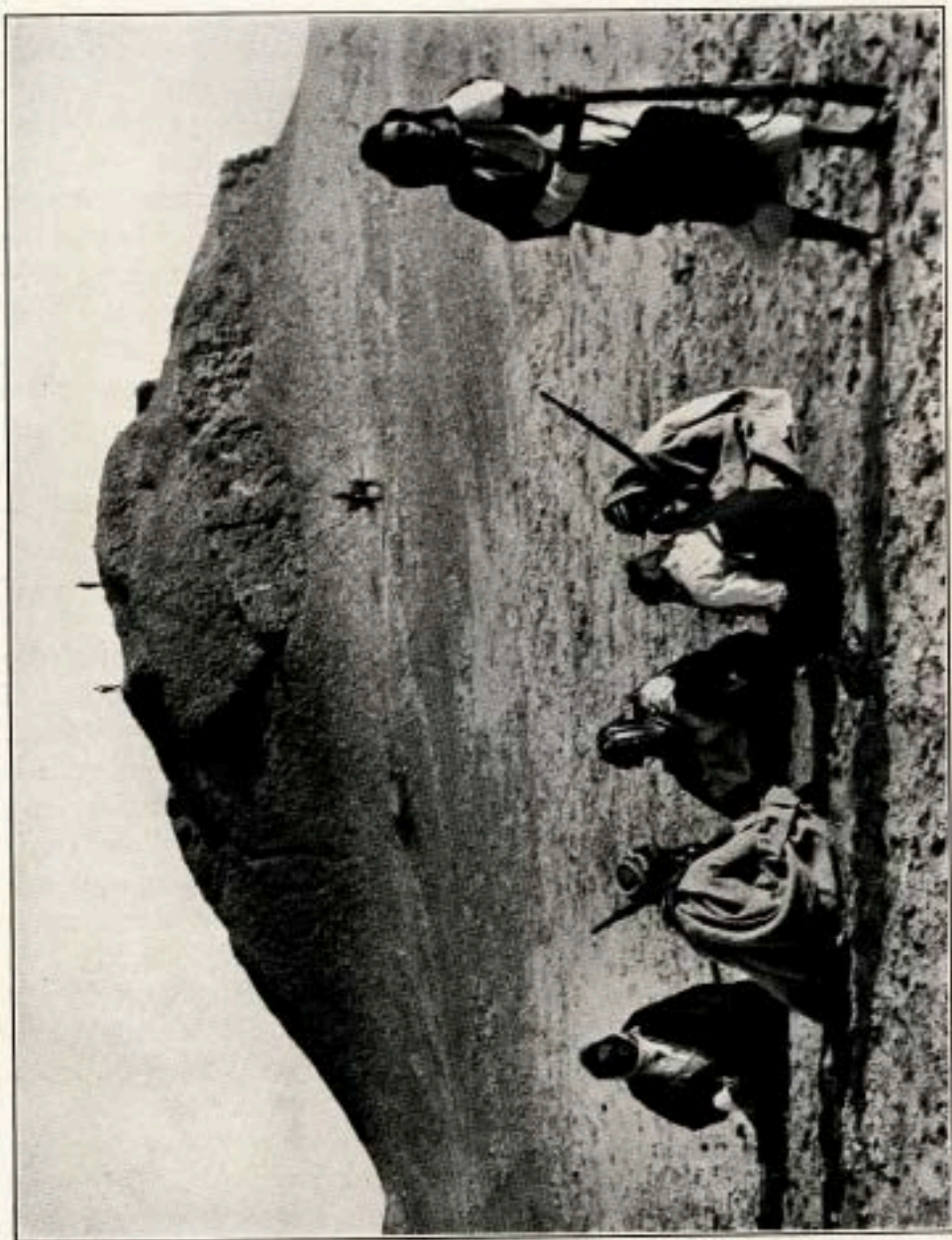


dry grass and the use of a powerful jack is just enough not to rescue the Studebaker. If only it had been the miserable Ford. Well, we will spend the night in the ruins of Ashur, the high built nest of robbers. We are far from the motherly Sumerian city, all open and spreading in the plain. A steep strong wall follows the sharp sandstone ridge. The base of the wall is formed of blocks of stone supporting layers of hard baked bricks, above which the red dark Ziggurat is towering high. It is not easy to climb the crumbling slopes. The old Turkish kaleh overhanging the river eastward terminates the ridge. Its roof affords a splendid view over the Shergat plain reclaimed in the last years from its wilderness, over the winding river, and the affluents cutting deep through the mud silting of the plain.

On the way to Mosul the late rains have carried away the bridge over a large wadi. We could ford it, but a road has to be cut in the steep bank on the other side. A division moving south on its way back to India, just arrives in time to repair the broken passage. But even then a careful driver has to take his chance. A full loaded wagon and four mules tumble over before our eyes, and land in the soft mud with small damage.

We are received in Mosul by Captain Sargon, the chief of the police, a great polo player and a most obliging host. The best of judges, while absent, has put his home and servants at our disposal. It is true Scotch and Oriental hospitality combined. The house is moreover one of the best Arab houses, built right on the river and looking from its loggia and upper terrace across the yellow Tigris toward the low mound of Nebi-Yunus. The tomb of the prophet is in the hands of Moslem worshipers, a trifle fanatical. For a small bakshish they will show it to us. The yellow and blue tiles are only a pleasing imitation of real tiles. The sword fish hanging on the wall is supposed to add to your conviction. Well informed people affirm that a Christian bishop by the name of Jonah was the origination of a well advertised pilgrimage which was turned into profit by the Moslems.

Mosul built in gray stone, the local soft alabaster, has a clean appearance, more pleasant than muddy Bagdad. There are still some good Arab houses, with paved courts, terraces, well built divans, porches, with famous grapes growing over spread osier frames, gazelles and red partridges running round ever bubbling fountains. But the comparatively modern city has little to show



Ur of the Chaldees. The Ziggurat before excavation.

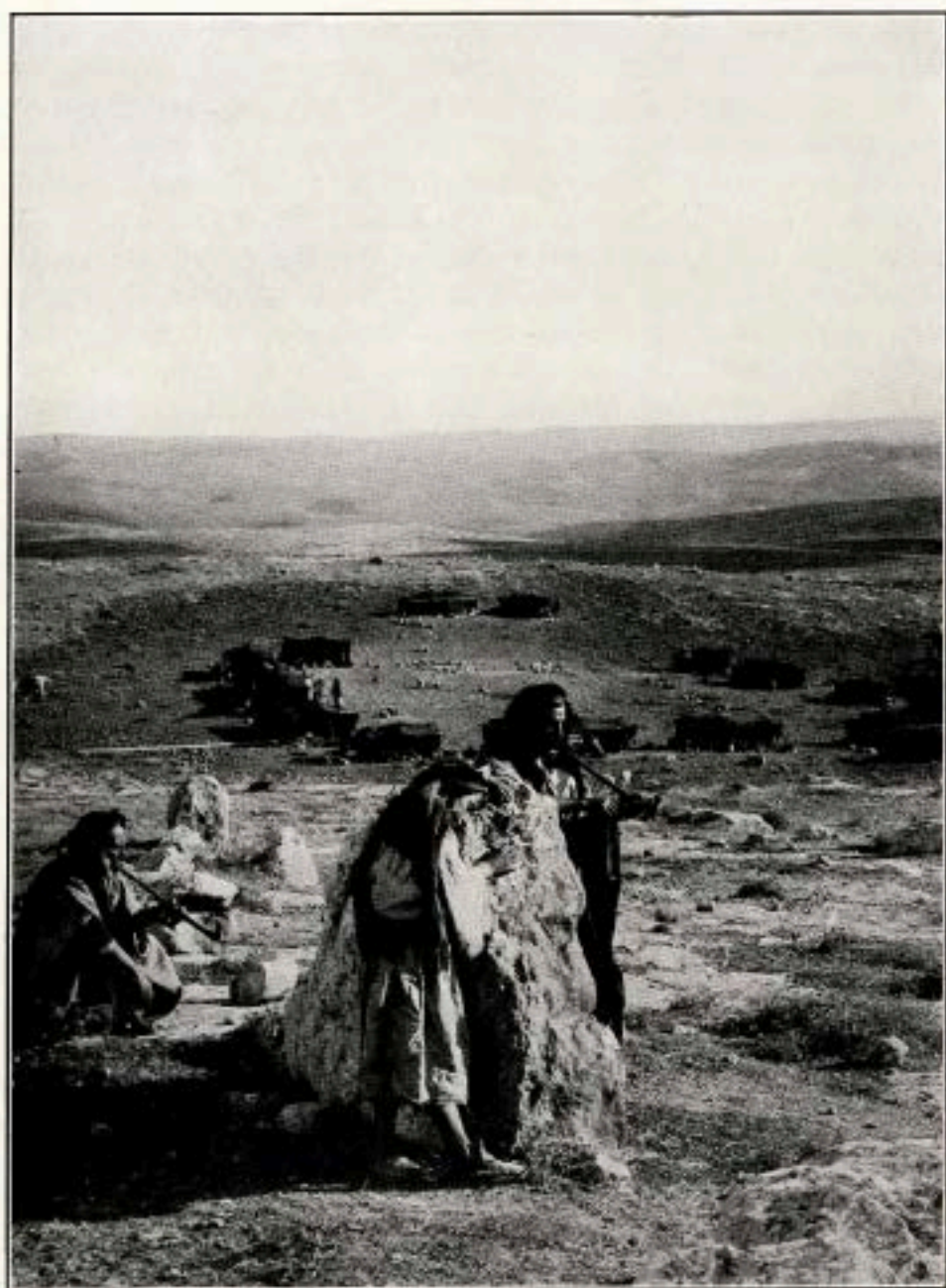
and its tradition cannot compare with the famous ruins of Nineveh, Nimrud, Khorsabad and Bavian.

I had a good ride with Captain G. of the Guides over the ruins of Nineveh. The old city is entirely underground. What shows above is only ploughed land, green grass and barley, with here and there a large sunken pit, the filling in of earlier trenches. Through fields, brush wood and shallow water we had quite an exciting time.

Nimrud is still the great field of Layard's excavation. Two swift cars bumping over the dry clay and gulleys of the road reach easily the green Ziggurat covered with grass and anemones, a classical landmark on the high terrace. Many reliefs of winged lions and human headed genii, carved in soft grayish alabaster, cut through the turf, and half emerging from the ground, keep their solemn watch at the gates of Ashurnasirpal's palace. A colossal statue of Nabû is still buried up to the waist. The upper part, especially the head, is a target for Arab boys. Face and nose are badly damaged and disfigured. That many museums would be proud to possess such a monument of Assyrian art is the opinion of the League of Nations as expressed by the Commissioners who between times show their interest in archaeology.

We will cross the desert in three days from Mosul to Aleppo by Deir es Zor and the Euphrates. A police car opens the march with a couple of large wooden boards to help in crossing the bad wadis. Bridges have been built, but the heavy storm rains have washed the approaches to the bridges and left the piles of stone standing piteously alone in the middle of the depression. The muddy bottom has been since paved with stones, mostly borrowed from the bridge, to manage a rough crossing. The black Sinjâr hills form the northern limit of the green pasture land teeming with the cattle of the Shammar. These independent sons of the desert, with their noble features and merry laugh, are a wonderful sight, as they walk like kings in their great abayehs, one stick across their shoulders, surveying their lambs and ewes, black goats and camels.

The Suwwah khan will be our shelter for the night, after we have crossed the Khabur on a rough pontoon bridge. The poor rooms along the crumbling mud wall are probably infested with vermin. We will sleep in the open on rugs and the cushions of the cars. Cats and dogs, ants and black beetles, attracted by the light and the food, crowd about like an army marching with banners. At two in the morning a party of mounted police dismount and picket their horses



The Bedouin at Home.

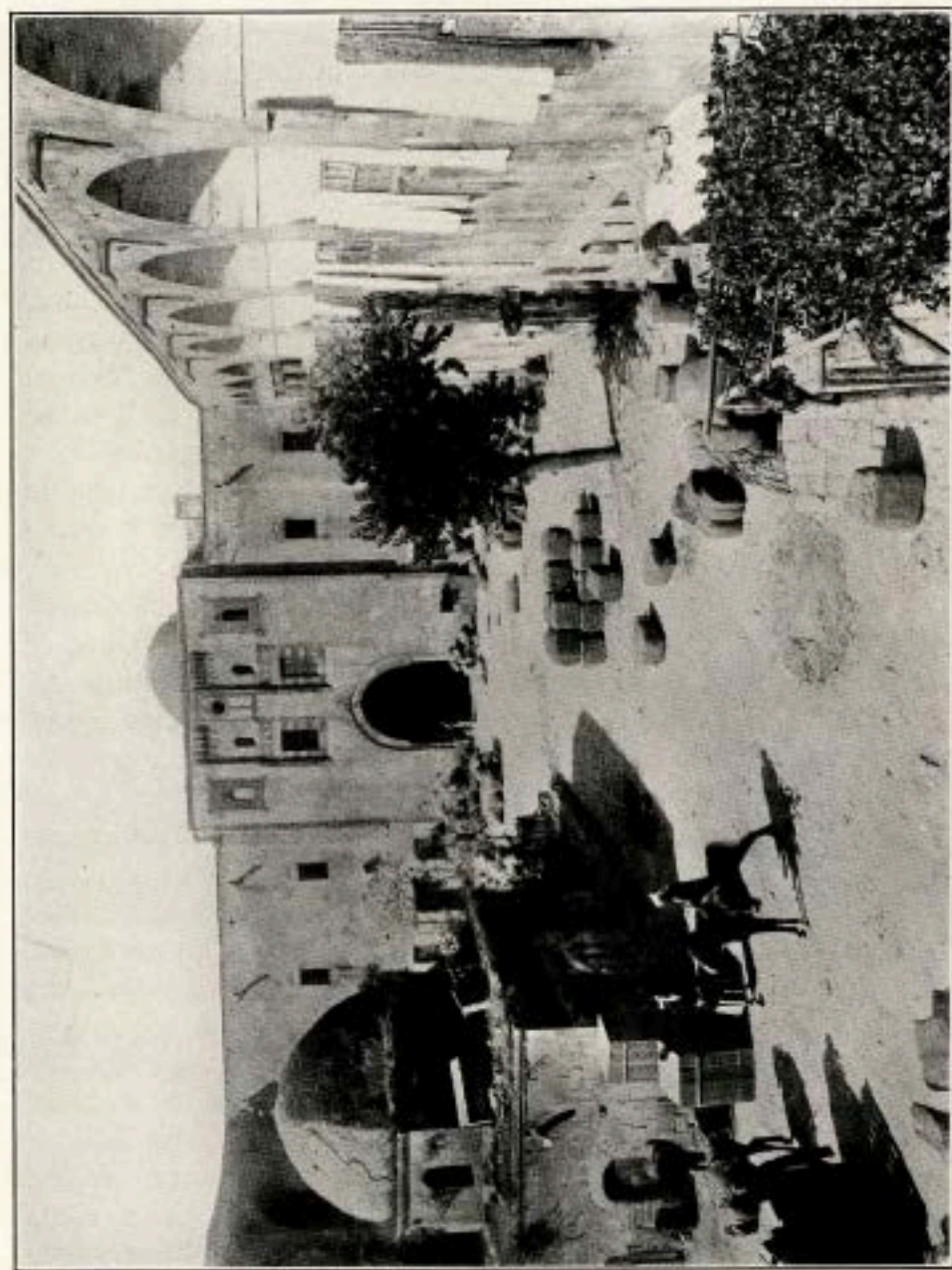
in the court. Some of them get loose and keep stamping and shuffling around. At four the rain sets in.

We leave at six to reach Deir es Zor on the Euphrates. The bridge is broken. A coarse jointed barge or tender will ferry the two cars across. The weight is too great and the barge sticks in the mud. A number of half naked Arabs wade in and with clamorous invocations to Allah try to push the ungainly thing into deeper water. They expect a free passage as their reward. We pivot on the spot a good long while without being able to leave. That crossing will cost two hours of precious time. What a motley crowd, going to market and patiently waiting on the bank a chance to ferry across. There are really clear features and skins, some mongoloid eyes, blue garments and blue tattoos. Women wear a profusion of beads, silver jewels and rings in their noses. All bundles are carried on the head. Sheepskins, and fleece are among the common staples.

Deir es Zor in the French Mandate has a clean and comfortable aspect. There is a good bazaar and an English doctor. The enterprising wife of an Algerian officer sells sparkling Vouvray and "choux à la crème." We hear that valuable antiquities, Sumerian statues from Tello, have just passed through Deir es Zor, smuggled out of Iraq and on their way to the European and American markets.

The khan of Sabkha on a large bend of the Euphrates is our last stop before Aleppo. The keeper has brought us coffee and water and left us to our devices and contemplations in the bare upper rooms. A black mound marking the site of an old city alone breaks the long line of the desert. There is coarse brushwood on the peninsula formed by the bend of the river, and an orchard with lemon and orange trees on this side at our feet. A flight of rooks plays over the waters in the evening, and cuts the air with rapid wings, with the sound of rustling silk.

Aleppo is certainly one of the gates of the East. Its citadel, old khans, silk factories and bazaars are unrivaled. The bazaars are a dream. We have lunch in the dirtiest little restaurant in true Syrian style. Pieces of mutton, roasted on charcoal, are served from the spit directly on a piece of hot native bread. The salt is passed round in the upturned bottom of a broken jar. Sweet cakes dipped in honey are scented with rose water. All houses are built of white and black stones. The big iron gate leading to the court of the khan has a smaller inner door cut in the large panel. Is this the needle's eye which the camel cannot pass? The inner courts

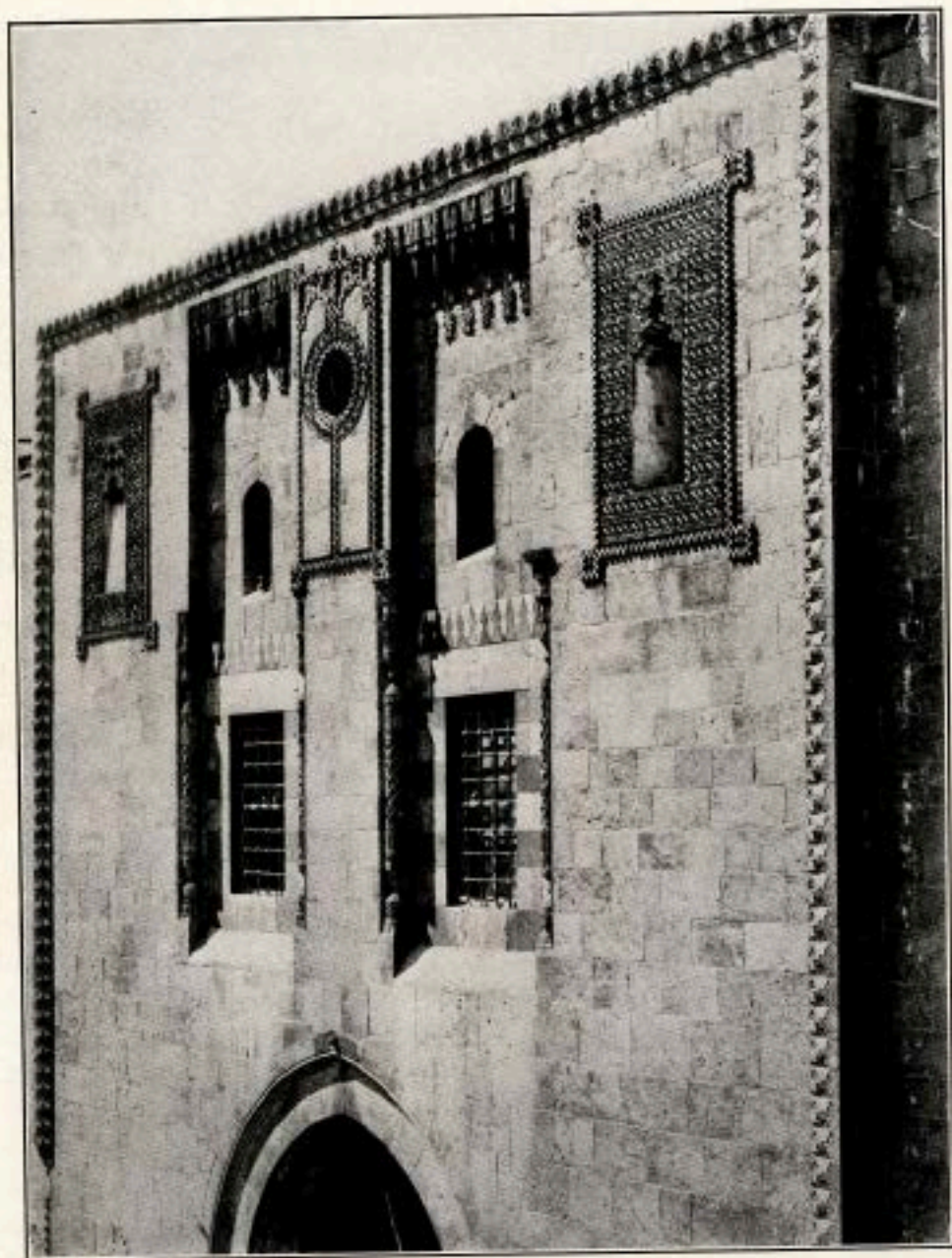


A Khan in Aleppo.

with their stone pavements, fountains, and basins, external staircases, open air *liwân* protected by overhanging roofs must be cool and comfortable in the hottest days. A few rose bushes, almond and orange trees, lilacs, vines and palms surround the fountains. But who can tell the beauty of the divans with their wood ceilings and wainscots, painted, gold decorated with fruits, flowers, and animals. Persian pilgrims in old time, on their way to Mecca would spend a winter in Aleppo and make a living by decorating the best native houses. A mysterious light filters through the stained glass of the Arab windows. Each little piece of glass is mounted in a cone of plaster. The room opens toward the north and the blue line of the Armenian mountains. In the golden angle of a ruined room a swallow has built her nest. Is this a symbol of perennial beauty and undying art? Aleppo is famous for its pistachios. They figured on the table of Roman Emperors. They grow nowhere so well as in the red soil around the city. There is a marvellous tale of the breaking open of the pistachios in the silence of a quiet and warm August night, when the moon is full and the air is balmy.

Silk, like rugs, is woven in Aleppo on the most primitive hand-loom. Silver and gold threads are mixed by hand with the white, purple, blue, black, yellow or brown silk. The weaver is deep in a pit in front of his loom, using rough stone weights and a miserable unhewn wood outfit to create gorgeous *abayehs*, real garments of glory.

Colonel M., the president of the commission in charge of fixing the border, is our guide to the citadel. He is very punctual, tall, gentle, bald headed, well informed, using clear and sober words. We pass the fortified gate, the arched bridge, the *chicane*, the two lions' heads, one smiling, the other crying, the tomb of Elijah, the mosque of Abraham, where he milked his cow. All the fine panelling and carved wood work has been removed by indelicate hands soon after the occupation. There is a second mosque near the barracks erected by Mehemet Ali. The windmill that the provident invader built for his garrison is still standing. The sixty meters deep well, cut through the hill has a stair running round the square shaft. Loaded donkeys were used to bring water from the deep level. The old arsenal of the Turks had a wonderful stock of ammunitions including flint arrow-heads and stone bullets. It might have been preserved as a museum, but unfortunately has been plundered by antiquarians. The old castle is under repair and will shortly be turned into a museum.



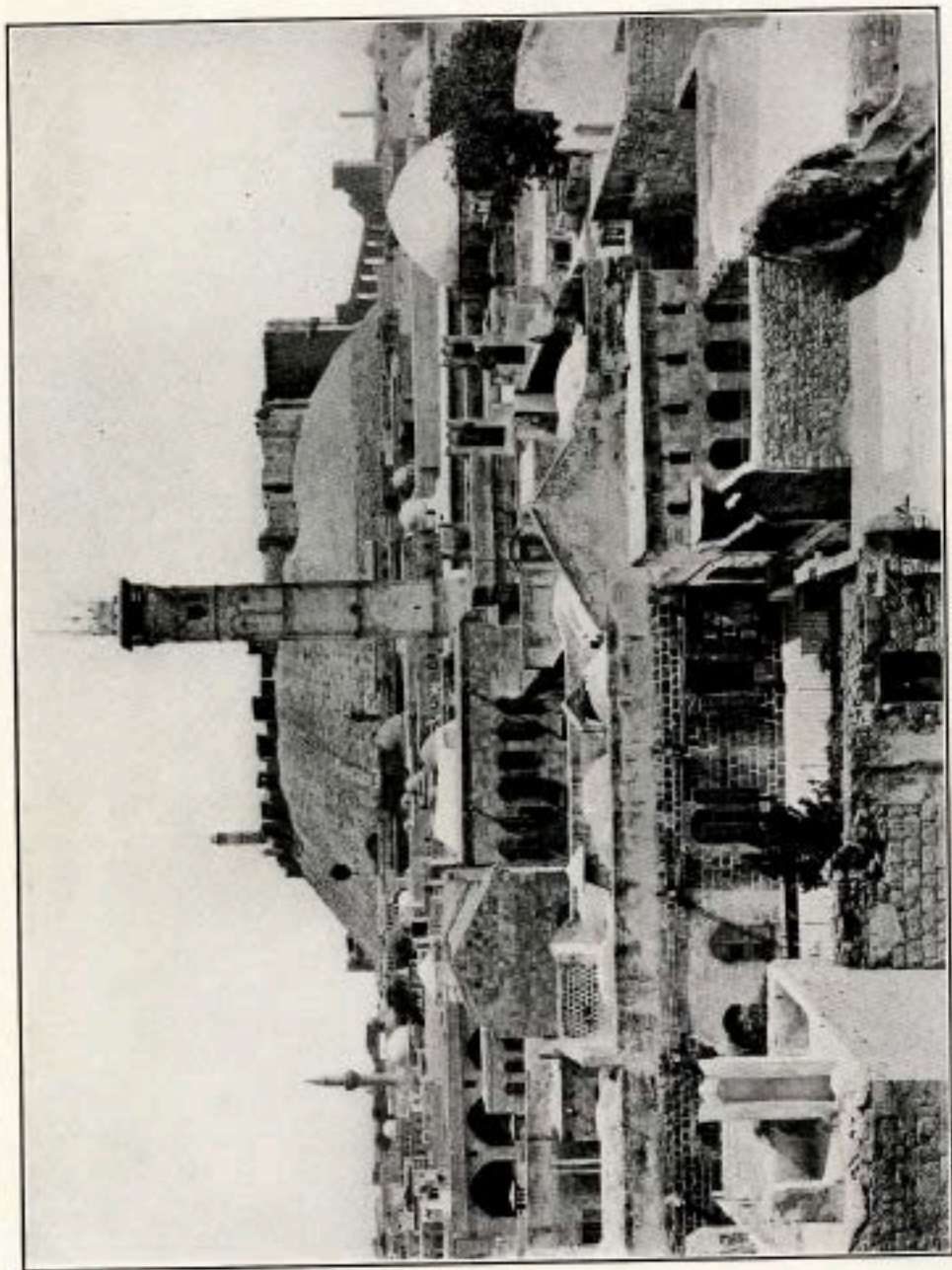
Gate of a Khan in Aleppo.



It is impossible to leave the country without attempting a short visit to Karkemish on the Euphrates. The old Hittite capital is one of the best fields of excavation of the British Museum. The work has been interrupted by the war and the carved reliefs badly broken, dispersed or sold by the Turks. The steel bridge of the Bagdad line destroyed during the war has been repaired. The station of Jerablus is in the hands of the Turks. The line as intended by the German engineers ought to cut across the old ruined city. An order of the German emperor alone prevented this archaeological sacrilege. Jerablus is the modern village south of the line in the French Mandate. It has grown prosperous through the immigration of refugees. It boasts a garage with several automobiles on hire.

The track from Aleppo to Jerablus crosses a rich and well cultivated plain. The road is generally good, with an excellent new section between Bap and the old Bambix. Bombazine, a silk and cotton fabric, named after the city, made it famous in Greek and Roman times. Nowadays it is occupied by Tcherkess immigrants who built their houses with the stones of the old ruins. The walls and the sacred pond of Atargatis, the Syrian deity, are still preserved. Two seated statues without heads, many columns and capitals are scattered about.

Wheat and barley are in grass. There is a little ploughing going on. Camels, cows and sheep and all the Arabs traveling on the road, give way gracefully to the rattling, onrushing Ford. Just the time to cross two or three rivulets and we reach Jerablus. Great excitement. Our host is Hammudi the foreman who served under Mr. Leonard Wooley through all his campaigns. He lives in the court and in the lower floor of his house, the upper being occupied by the French "officier de renseignements." Our room is hung with carpets and rugs. New mattresses and glorious new coverlets, woven in with silver threads have been spread on the floor. Coffee, leben, sour milk and sweets are the first signs of welcome. But the great dish is of course the roast lamb served entire with head and legs and carefully stuffed with rice. No fork or knife but the bare hand to help yourself to the rich food. You tear a piece of the front leg or of the rear, or dig between the ribs. You grab into the inside and draw a handful of rice. You form it into a ball and push it the best you can into your mouth. Some people after awhile become quite expert at it. After a thorough washing of hands and mouth, coffee and cigarettes achieve our perfect joy. The veiled ladies and some



The Citadel, Aleppo.

Armenian refugees are living in rooms about the court. They are not allowed in the dining room, but keep peeping from every doorstep.

Is Biredjik really in the hands of the Kurds? Are bazaars and houses destroyed? Are the Turks retiring burning ammunitions? Or is this one of those wild rumors, uncontrollable bazaar gossip? After two hours' interview with the Turkish authorities at the station we are refused authorization to visit the ruins of Karkemish. The actual captain has just been discharged and the new captain has not yet arrived. The mudir keeps phoning to Biredjik but receives no answer. He will wire. But the telegram must reach the Wali at Urfa and the line has just been cut. Why insist any more? Kismet. East is East. Let us go home.

West we drive leaving Aleppo with a light luggage for two days. The Syrian peasants are ploughing the rich red soil or cleaning the young wheat from yellow mustard weeds. No trees, but many flowers, purple anemones and small iris. The villages are all grey with red roofs. Camels in caravan and automobile trucks bring the goods of Europe, soap, sugar, manufactured articles over the classical road of Alexandretta and the high pass of Beilan. Steam rollers repair the sunken patches.

A Roman road crosses the marshes, its stone arches still strong after centuries. The lake of Antioch is a quiet sheet of water in the distance. We pass the hills, the plants of olive trees, the high defile, the dark Mediterranean pines. The sea which we missed for months opens under our eyes, and a sweet shore line. A fresh sea breeze blows in our faces. Alexandretta spreads friendly at our feet. Hospitable little city, not unlike the Riviera, all perfumed with roses and orange blossoms, nothing but water divides you from yonder giant cities of America. Powerful oil companies have already bought and marked the land for an eventual pipe line to be connected with the oil field of Mosul. A society is forming to drain the lake of Antioch, reclaim the soil, plant cotton, and build a modern city for Armenian and Greek refuges. A new spirit of enterprise stirs the old dead bones of the land. Will Antioch, once a capital of the East, and the first Christian city, ever arise from her deep slumber? Cyclamen grows under the shade of the broken walls, and the cool recesses of the Iron gates. Black goats and shepherd boys climb the precipitous slopes. From a ruined aqueduct water is slowly dropping, a symbol of the old glory that was Greece and Rome. Meanwhile, palms, vines, aloes, eucalyptus, mulberry trees, orange, lemon trees,

bananas and roses are growing rank in the red soil of the gardens by the river. The summits of Lebanon are snow white and cut a marvellous line against the blue sky. The air is fragrant with perfumes. A procession of Syrian peasants and three donkeys is led by a boy blowing the double flute to charm the long winding way. Is Pan himself or Puck announcing better times?

Within a week our boat greeted the shore of Greece, the temple of Poseidon, the desolated cliffs of Pireus and looming in the distance, the beautiful lines of the Acropolis, a rest for eyes and soul. We were on our way home.