THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW
EDITED BY
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OF THE SAGE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, CORNELL UNIVERSITY
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Frontispiece to The Open Court
AMONG THE BEDUINS OF NORTH ARABIA
BY HENRY FIELD
Assistant Curator, Field Museum of Natural History

Leader
First and Second Captain Marshall Field North Arabian
Desert Expeditions, 1927-1928

THE North Arabian Desert lies to the east of the valley of the
Jordan and extends as far east as the river Euphrates. The
western section is in Trans-Jordan and the eastern boundary adjoins
Iraq, or Mesopotamia, as it was formerly designated. Trans-Jordan
and Iraq are both British Mandated territories and law and order
are maintained by the British Royal Air Force. To the north lies
the French Mandate of Syria which extends eastward to the river
Euphrates. The juncture between Syria and Iraq is near Verdi
on the upper Euphrates River. The southern section is bounded by
the Hedjaz under the sovereignty of King Abdul Aziz ibn Sa'oud.
The North Arabian Desert lies approximately between latitudes 30°
and 33° south and longitudes 36° and 42° east of Greenwich.

The country between the Jordan Valley and the river Euphrates
is referred to on the maps as a desert. This area is by no means
a true desert, since the seasonal rainfall and the supply of wells
enable the nomadic Beduins to eke out a precarious existence. In
the spring following the winter rains the “desert” appears green
in color, although the quantity of grass is strictly limited. It would
be more accurate to define this region as “wilderness” or “steppe.”

During the month of December, 1925, Mr. L. H. Dudley Buxton
and I joined the Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition,
which has excavated at Kish in Mesopotamia during each winter
season since December, 1922. The ancient city of Kish, which ac-
cording to the texts was the first city founded after the Biblical Flood, lies sixty-five miles south of Baghdad and eight miles east of the ruins of Babylon. In the North Arabian or Syrian Desert between Amman and Rutbah Wells we collected flint implements, which had undoubtedly been chipped by the hand of man. This suggested the possibility that man in various prehistoric cultural phases inhabited this region many centuries ago. It also seemed plausible to suggest that in prehistoric times the desert was fertile and well watered and at that time might have been able to support a large semi-nomadic people.

During the next four years, with the generous cooperation of the British Royal Air Force and the Iraq (formerly Turkish) Petroleum Company, I was allowed to continue archaeological research work in this large and formerly unexplored area. Two expeditions were involved in this work and much valuable scientific information has been obtained. The accompanying map shows the places visited. It is hoped that the final reports dealing with the scientific results of the expeditions will be published during 1932.

The nomadic tribes who roam over this desert are called Beduins. They are an interesting group of tribes, who wander at definite seasons to new pasturage with their large flocks of camels and sheep. The Field Museum expedition went into the desert in search of traces of prehistoric man and to obtain photographs and data on the modern inhabitants—the Beduins.

The expedition was invited to accompany several armed British Military desert patrols. These convoys were protected by Rolls-Royce armored cars against raiding bands of Beduins who attack most frequently just before dawn. The armored cars are equipped with machine guns and are capable of a maximum speed of seventy miles an hour, despite their weight, which is about five tons. One convoy consisted of four armored cars, two Rolls-Royce ton trucks and two touring cars, a Rolls-Royce and the Cadillac belonging to the Field Museum Expedition.

The second convoy which the expedition accompanied left Amman (see map) in November, 1927, and proceeded in an easterly direction towards the Roman fortress of Qasr Azraq, some sixty miles into the desert. This former outpost of the Roman Empire which was built as a stronghold against the marauding Beduin tribes is today occupied by a band of Druze.
The Druze are a fierce warlike people who inhabit the mountains lying to the northwest of the Harrat ar Rajil. Their headquarters are in the Jebel Druze although they now occupy many stone fortresses scattered throughout this region. During the past few years the Druze have stubbornly resisted the French Mandate and have been extremely troublesome to the French troops. They make a livelihood by collecting and panning salt from the neighboring marshes. The Druze have many queer customs. They are strictly forbidden to have more than one wife at a time, but a man may say to his wife, "You had better go back to your father" or the woman may say to her husband, "I wish to go back to my father" and if the other party says "very well," the divorce holds good. Both parties are free to remarry. Childlessness is a common cause of divorce. The birth of a son is the occasion of great rejoicing and calls for the presentation of gifts to the fortunate family. However, the birth of a daughter is considered a misfortune and not the slightest notice is taken of so inauspicious an event. The people say the reason for their dislike of daughters is that while a son builds up the house, and brings in a wife from
without and perpetuates the family name, the daughter pulls down the house, loses her name and is lost to the family.

The Druze at Qasr Azraq were extremely friendly to the Expedition and allowed Mr. Eric Schroeder and myself to photograph, measure and plan the ruined buildings. We were often invited by the Sheikh to take tea and coffee with him. In this old Roman ruin it is incongruous to see the radio transmitter and receiver, which are operated by native Arabs and maintained by the British Government for use in case of emergency.

The fortress of Qasr Azraq guards a large marsh in which there are several water pools. The largest of these is called "Ain el Asad" or "The Lions' Pool." As we drove through the marshland numerous birds were disturbed by the unaccustomed sound of automobiles and the sky was filled with wheeling birds of many different genera. We followed the rough track which was made by the Air Force some years ago as a guide to the Cairo-Baghdad Air Mail Service. At a later date this was used for automobile mail convoys while the northern routes were closed owing to the political situation in Syria.

To the east of Qasr Azraq lies the great Harrat ar Rajil, a most forbidding and austere basalt region. Progress was very slow, and owing to tire trouble it was often difficult for the convoy to cover more than eight miles in one hour. At the point where the track meanders through the strewning of basalt boulders, the lava bed is approximately forty miles in extent. To the east of the Harrat there is open rolling country, whose surface is sometimes covered with black patinated flint. This region forms an abandoned, lifeless and desolate picture. The water-holes are widely separated and the Beduins wander at regular intervals from one group of wells to another.

One afternoon while the sun, a fiery red orb, began to sink behind the western horizon, the leader of the convoy observed a herd of camels browsing on a distant hillside. He decided to find the sheikh of the tribe which owned them, since in all probability he was not far distant. As we approached the camels they became startled by the roar of the motors and galloped clumsily away in every direction. A young Beduin, wrapped in his abbo or camel's hair cloak, guided his camel towards us by gently tapping the ungainly brute on the neck with a stick. In answer to our queries he informed us that the tents of his people lay about thirty
minutes ride on a camel, and he pointed to the southeast. We gave him some cigarettes and proceeded in the direction he had indicated.

After crossing a low range of hills, we entered a sheltered depression which was covered with black tents. We drove towards the largest tent which we knew must be that of the Sheikh. Among the Beduins the number of poles which support a tent indicate the power and wealth of its owner, and this one boasted nine. Inquiries revealed the fact that these Beduins belonged to the great R'walla tribe and the Sheikh owed his allegiance to the great and powerful Prince Nuri ibn Sha'alân. As we drove up to the tent, the Sheikh and the older men of the tribe were standing outside to greet the members of the convoy. After the customary Arabic greetings of "Sala'am alceikum" meaning "Peace be unto you," and the reply "Aleikum es Sala'am" or "And unto you peace," we were invited to enter the tent.

The Beduins are extremely polite, not only to visitors, but also among themselves. For example, when a tribal elder enters the tent with the customary words of greeting, each one in the tent replies, and placing the right hand over the heart as a mark of esteem, rises to his feet. After everyone has again taken his place beside the hearth and there has been uninterrupted silence for several
minutes, the newcomer wishes everyone "good evening" to which the assembly reply in good faith.

The tents are made of camel's hair woven by the Beduin women. They are supported by upright poles and both sides can be raised to allow a current of air to circulate during the heat of the day. In the evening the sides are lowered and pegged into the ground. In the middle of the floor beneath the shelter of the tent were the ashes of the fire, and around the hearth coffee pots of intriguing shapes were ranged. The Sheikh bade us be seated around the fire which was rebuilt and replenished from time to time with camel's-thorn and dried camel's dung. As we looked at the narrow keen faces of the Beduin men who formed the fireside group, we felt that these were the survivors and direct descendants of a magnificent race. Their faces, however, looked pinched and haggard and indicated the hardships of the open air life in the desert. We were watched by many pairs of eyes as curious and interested in their visitors as we were in them. These Beduins in their own tents are far from any call of western civilization.

From time to time children appeared in the doorway of the tent for a glimpse of the Christian foreigners but they were driven away with sticks and stones by the younger men of the Sheikh's tent. While we were engaged in studying our host and his tribesmen, the
Sheikh was preparing tea and coffee for us with his own hands. Coffee was taken from a leathern bag and ground in a brass mortar with regular rhythmic beats of the pestle. The coffee grounds were placed in a small spouted pot, blackened by much use, which was put on the edge of the fire after hot water had been added. The coffee pot is never washed out, so that the accumulated residue adds a distinctive flavor. When the coffee had boiled for some time the Sheikh called out "Kahwa hada" or "coffee ready" and one of his own personal bodyguard handed him a small handleless cup (fingan). The bodyguards of these desert sheikhs often consist of men with typical negroid characters who are the descendants of imported slaves. The first cup of coffee is poured on the ground as homage to Sheikh Shazil, who lived in the thirteenth century and founded the customs relating to coffee. The second cup is drunk by the sheikh himself as a proof of good faith. After these ceremonies are concluded, the coffee cup is handed to each guest in turn. Following the
ancient customs of the Beduins, we drank as noisily as possible to show true appreciation of the Sheikh's art as a coffee maker and more especially to conform to their regular rules of etiquette. Other rules are that the left hand must never be used to hold the cup; an empty cup must on no account be placed on the ground; the visitor must ask repeatedly for more sips of coffee and express great satisfaction again and again; great care must be taken that the soles of the feet do not point at anyone, as this is looked upon as a direct personal insult. This latter is often a difficult matter for those unaccustomed to squatting cross-legged on the ground for many hours at a time.

As night had already fallen we accepted the courteous invitation to spend the night as the guests of the Sheikh. He immediately gave orders for the preparation of the evening meal. There was a confused babel of voices beyond the camel's hair curtain which separated us from the women's section of the tent. The Europeans were seated with their backs to this curtain, and from time to time when the fire on the hearth burned brightly we glanced behind us. We could see the twinkle of several bright eyes peering at us through holes in the curtain.

While we were awaiting the evening meal we asked the Sheikh about his falcon, which we saw asleep on his wooden perch in the back part of the tent. He told us that he hunted gazelle with the falcon. The gazelle roam in herds over the desert and on one occasion about two hundred miles east of the Hedjaz railway we had observed more than one hundred and fifty head of gazelle grazing on the slopes of a low hillside. The Sheikh described the hunt as follows: "For several days before we go hunting the falcon is not fed and is continually kept blindfolded. We leave camp soon after dawn. The falcon, still hooded and by this time ravenously hungry, is chained to my wrist and sits on my forearm which is protected from his claws by a stout leather pad. The moment the gazelle are observed we follow them until they are within a few hundred yards. The hood is removed from the eyes of the bird and he is loosed. He immediately flies high into the air to locate his quarry. He follows the herd, flapping his hypnotic wings above them. Finally he decides on one individual member of the herd and hovers tantalisingly above him. The battle of hypnotism versus speed and agility has begun. The gazelle attempts to break away from the spell. The
hawk follows ruthlessly and relentlessly. Down lower he comes, still flapping his wings, then suddenly he swoops down with a movement faster than the eye can follow. There is a scuffling of feathers and claws around the gazelle's head. The gazelle runs frantically in any direction to escape from this devil. He shakes his proud little head, but in vain. Both eyes have been plucked out by the long, sharpened claws of the falcon. The gazelle will never again see the endless wilderness, the low rolling hills whose slopes bear the delicious grass after the winter rains.... Finally he stumbles and falls and the bird claws at his brain. We, who have witnessed the duel, come up to end the life of the gazelle by plunging a knife into its throat. The falcon is given some raw meat and the hood is replaced until another day."

Suddenly, as the Sheikh's story was ended, there was considerable noise and excitement in the women's section of the tent. The Sheikh and everyone arose and moved to the outer edge of the tent. A bronze pitcher containing water was produced, together with a well worn cake of soap and an extremely dirty towel, with which we might solemnly perform the Mohammedan custom of washing before each meal. At this point four young men entered the tent bearing a large copper dish with three cooked chickens lying on a mountain of rice. The dish was placed on the floor beside the hearth, and we, as the honored guests, were invited to squat around it while the Sheikh sat in the center of the group. He seated himself beside me and began to pull a chicken apart with his hands. The choice pieces of white meat were laid upon the pile of rice in front of us. There was a ring of anxious and hungry faces around us and while we were urged to eat by the Sheikh himself, we could imagine the feelings of those who were to follow as the tenderest morsels disappeared. We dipped our hands into the rice, which was seasoned with numerous sauces, and swallowed great mouthfuls in quick succession. Our greasy faces soon began to gleam under the light of the swinging lantern. We ate noisily and greedily until there was no room for more, and despite the frequent urging of our host, we at last decided that we had literally eaten our fill. We arose, washed our hands, and made room for the older men of the tribe, who wasted no time in attacking their evening meal. The younger men, and later the children, gobbled what was left on the dish, and the final remnants were thrown to the dogs.
A small copper bowl of water was then handed around the tent to every member in turn. It seemed advisable to take one good drink the first time it was handed around in order to lessen the risk of disease.

We invited the Sheikh to give us some music. He summoned a tall, thin-faced man to play on his single-stringed instrument, the rabeba. The music sounded strange to our western ears, but when the entire group joined in the singing of songs around the fire on the hearth, the scene created a beautiful and romantic picture. The songs dealt with the prowess and brave deeds of former members of the tribe, and Allah was often called upon to bear witness to the veracity of their tales.

At length it was decided to turn in for the night. We rolled ourselves in blankets and lay on quilts around the dying embers of the fire. The Sheikh alone remained after the older men had gone to their tents. We were not fearful because the hospitality of the Beduin sheikh is his reliable guarantee of safety and protection. We rolled over and went to sleep. However, during the night the barking of the dogs, the shadows on the desert cast by the brilliant rays of the moon, and the stirring of people and animals, prevented us from passing a completely restful night.

As the first streaks of dawn appeared in the east, the fire was replenished and tea was prepared. After several glasses of hot tea, we decided to continue on our way and, thanking our host profusely for his unbounded and generous hospitality, we proceeded eastwards in the direction of Baghdad.

From our visits to various Beduin tents and in conversing with the members of a number of tribes, the following information was obtained. The Beduins enjoy raiding their neighbors more than any other pastime. There is generally little bloodshed and the raids are regarded as sport, with an element of danger attached. However, since the British Mandates were formed, the Beduins are forbidden to raid each other, and every precaution is taken to eradicate inter-tribal bloodshed and maintain peace over the entire region.

The younger men look after the herds of camels and sheep, while the older men sit around the sheikh's tent and discuss tribal and religious matters.

The women commence manual work at an early age and are often married at the age of fifteen. The household duties combined
with the rearing of children aged the girls very rapidly and they are old and wrinkled at the age of thirty. The birth of a son is the cause of much rejoicing, while a daughter is looked upon almost as a disgrace. The Beduins are fond of their children—particularly their sons—and never beat or maltreat them. No father is prouder of his offspring than a powerful Beduin sheikh, as he watches his son move around his tent. There is his successor, who will rule his tribe, who will guide the flocks and herds to pasture, and who will lead his tribesmen in battle.

The Beduin women are often tattooed on the upper and lower lips and also on their bodies. The hair, the palms of the hands and the nails of the fingers are usually dyed with henna. Kohl is applied around the eyes to render them the more bewitching and also to act as a protection against the intense glare of the noonday sun. The women prize long hair as one of the greatest assets of beauty.
It is generally plaited into two pigtails and allowed to hang down the back. Earrings and nose-rings, bracelets of gold and silver are worn, as well as amulets and charms against the evil eye and disease. The women dress in long dark blue cotton garments and around the head is wrapped a blue cloth which hangs down over the shoulders.

We learn the following from Musil regarding marriage customs among the R'wala Beduins. Men marry for love as often as for family or political reasons, although among certain tribes there are definite limitations as to whom a man may choose for a wife. There are, of course, many marriages which are merely arranged between the families of the two people, and the man must always pay a sum of money, to be agreed upon, to the head of the woman’s family. The Beduins believe that noble qualities are inherited, and men take pride in marrying daughters of old and honorable families. When a young man is in love with a girl he may court her quite freely, visiting her in her tent and helping her with her work. There are no special wedding ceremonies, and a marriage is not looked upon as occasion for celebration. On the morning of the wedding a she-camel is killed before the tent of the bridegroom as a sacrifice, and in the evening part of the meat from this animal is distributed among the bride’s relatives and the rest is served for supper in the bridegroom’s tent.

Among the R’wallas at least, if a husband loves his wife he helps her with the heavy work of pitching tents and carrying water. On the other hand, if she is not in his good favor he allows her to perform these tasks unassisted. A Beduin often takes a second wife, particularly if his first wife has not provided him with a son after two or three years. The first wife usually resents the newcomer for a time, but peace is generally made between them, and the two women live together like sisters. Quarreling is seldom heard between man and wife, and if a man is seen to beat his wife it is a disgrace to himself and his family. For this reason, although wives are often thoroughly beaten, the punishment is always administered in the privacy of the tent, and the wife must stifle her cry so that she will not be overheard. Jessup, in his interesting account of the position of women among the Mohammedans, says that the scourging and beating of wives is one of the worst features of Moslem domestic life, and having the sanction of the Koran will be indulged in with-
out rebuke as long as Islamism as a system and a faith prevails in the world.

If a Beduin wishes to divorce his wife he may do so merely by telling her to go away, that she is divorced and altogether free to marry another man. He need not tell her his reason for divorc-
A woman in fear of a beating from her husband may go to any tent and receive protection. Doughty says that a fugitive wife has good leave to run whithersoever she will, she is free as the desert and there is none can detain her. Because of the simple methods of divorce, a woman’s position in the home of her husband is never very secure; but she may always return to the home of her father, or if he is dead, to the home of her eldest brother or other nearest male relative. If a woman has a grown son she may live in his home, even though she is divorced from her husband. In this connection Doughty tells us that the mother of a son is in honor, and that even among the rudest Arabs a grown son has a tender regard for his mother.

Beduin women wish their husbands to be brave and have little use for a coward. Girls sometimes accompany the men to battle and shout encouragement to them. If it seems that the enemy may win, the girls sometimes mount camels and ride where the danger is greatest. The people believe that the men will fight with greater courage if the maidens accompany them to battle, and a man will neglect the property of his own kin in order to protect his sweetheart.

After an attack, the raiders steal horses and camels and household goods from the tents, but the women and children generally suffer no harm. Furthermore each woman is given one camel so that she and her children may reach her relatives for protection. However, in some fierce raids the women and children are killed and the young girls are taken as wives by the victors.

Conquerors returning from battle are not welcomed by the women and girls. When the news is given out of those who have fallen, the women relatives of the slain walk away from the camp, out of hearing, and bewail their dead.

The late Auda abu Tayi of the Howeitat tribe marked a notch on the handle of his gold sword for those whom he had slain for disobedience. The enemies whom he killed in battle were never counted. Their deaths were a part of the great game of life—and raids. Colonel T. E. Lawrence referred to Auda as “the greatest fighting man in all North Arabia.” Upon one occasion during the World War the Howeitat hesitated to charge a strong Turkish position. Auda galloped forward on his horse, cursing his tribesmen, and charged the Turkish army alone. His horse was killed beneath him but he was unhurt. The Howeitat, impressed with the
personal bravery of their chieftain and their own cowardice, charged
and captured the position from the Turks.

Auda has passed to the land of his fathers, and his twenty-nine
year old son, Mohammed Abu Tayi, is sheikh in his stead. Dur-
ing a visit to the wells of El Jefer in November, 1927, I found Mo-
hammed encamped there. He was most courteous and hospitable
and even offered to present us with one of his three ostriches. These
birds were kept as valuable treasures by the Sheikh and he in-
formed us that in the olden days they were plentiful in the desert.
In 1925 the Air Force survey party reported ostriches between
Aman and Rutbah Wells.

The Beduin men wear a cotton garment which hangs down to
their knees. An outer cloak or abba of camel’s hair protects them
from the fierce and biting winds which sweep across the desert.
A white or speckled cloth (kefîyeh) rests on the head and hangs
below the shoulders. This cloth is held in place by a headdress of
camel’s hair (agal). A powerful sheikh wears a headdress made
from golden or silver thread. A belt woven by the women keeps a
large curved knife (hanjar) strapped to the right side. The feet
are often shod in native leather shoes purchased in the “suk” or
market in Damascus.

The sheikh of the tribe dispenses justice with the assistance of
the tribal elders who sit around the hearth smoking “hubble-bubble”
or nargileh pipes and listen to the evidence from both parties. The
older men spend much time in silent thought, squatting on the
ground. Inquiries revealed the interesting fact that they pass many
hours each day thinking about Allah and the future life. In one
tent the sheikh passed the night discussing Heaven and Paradise
with one of the holy men of the tribe who had recently returned
from a pilgrimage to Mecca. The next morning I was interested to
know the subject of the conversation which had occupied the at-
tention of these two patriarchs throughout the night until “rosy
fingered dawn, daughter of the mist” appeared. We learned that the
sheikh imagined Heaven to be a desert with many oases, much
game for hunting and no intruders or foreigners—such as we were! The old Haji argued that Heaven is a place with an infinitely large
mosque where Allah can be worshipped unrestrictedly forever and
ever.

As the expedition moved from place to place across the desert,
curious stone ruins were observed. These ruins took the form of cairns, graves, stone walls and circles of piled stones. The latter were in some instances sheepfolds where a Beduin shepherd watched his flock by night. Others were prayer places which faced towards Mecca, or circles which denoted ground not to be defiled. There were also remarkable buildings shaped like “kites” laid on the ground. The “tails” of these “kites” consisted of low walls of piled basalt boulders which extended sometimes for eighteen miles across the desert. It is probable that these “kites” were used for capturing gazelle, who will not jump even a low fence when pursued. The gazelle followed the boundary walls which became ever nearer together, until they were finally trapped in a polygonal walled enclosure.

The Beduin graves were clearly defined piles of stones with the tribal mark or wasm hammered on the surface of a limestone block. We copied over a thousand of these tribal marks and designs from the walls of ruined buildings, blocks of limestone lying near wells and from graves. We learnt that when a tribe passes a prominent landmark or group of wells, the tribal mark is hammered on a conspicuous stone to show that the tribe has passed that place. This is of value because two large tribes with their flocks of sheep and camels can never converge at the same watering place without serious bloodshed. As the tribe approaches the wells, scouts are sent forward to report on the situation. A recent Beni Sukhr wasm, together with the litter and refuse recently deposited by a herd of camels, would indicate that this tribe, having recently watered their camels at the wells, had moved to new pastures.

During the extensive archaeological survey of the North Arabian Desert we passed many Roman and Arab ruins and made observations, plans and notes, as well as photographs of the important buildings from various angles. We also recorded stone circles and ruins of piled boulders wherever they were observed. However, there was another important phase of our work which changed the theory denying the existence of early man in North Arabia. Flint implements, unquestionably chipped by man in various palaeolithic phases of culture, were collected in numbers from more than two hundred surface sites widely scattered over the surface of the existing wilderness or steppe. In the gravels near Bair Wells I found a
typical Upper Chellean hand-axe, which has attracted considerable scientific attention.

Geological evidence supports the theory that in prehistoric times this area was fertile and well watered by the wadis which are now dry stream beds. As the rainfall decreased, these streams grew more and more sluggish until finally they ceased to flow. The prehistoric peoples were forced to become true nomads and to spend their lives in search of water and pasturage. I suggest that some of these earliest wanderers may have settled in small numbers on the banks of the Nile or near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, bringing with them their late Neolithic culture. Archaeological evidence also supports this supposition, since the earliest flint implements from the excavations at Kish conducted by the Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition are similar in types to the latest cultures found on the surface of the North Arabian Desert.

The present political situation is extremely important, and unless the greatest diplomacy is observed throughout the Near East, there is the possibility of serious disorder and bloodshed. The Beduins for countless generations have led raids, not so much perhaps for the sake of killing each other, but for the pleasure and enjoyment of stealing horses and camels. All tribal matters were formerly decided by the powerful sheikh and his council of elders. The desert belonged to the Beduin and the Beduin to the desert. He could wander wheresoever he wanted, as free as the bird of the air. Today there is a new régime in the north of Arabia. This area is a British Mandated territory. Automobiles and airplanes carrying passengers and mail cross to and from Baghdad. Raids are forbidden and as far as possible law and order are maintained throughout the desert. When a raid or ghrazzu has taken place, British airplanes equipped with machine guns are sent out from Air Headquarters to search for the offenders, who are not allowed to retaliate in their own defence. Armored cars are also despatched to track the raiders and make them return the stolen animals. All this work is carried on generally without the firing of a single shot, since the Beduins have learnt their lesson. Machine guns hidden beneath armor plating carried by automobiles capable of seventy miles per hour in open country are too swift and powerful for the bravest Beduins on their fleetest riding camels. The raiders are forced to return the stolen property and the leader of the raid is
often imprisoned for several weeks. The British Royal Air Force controls the movements of tribes in the northern part of the desert, but on account of their remarkable faculties for obtaining the cooperation and good will of their subjects, the Beduins are always friendly to desert travellers. The British make every effort to become friends with the Beduins, at the same time having it clearly understood that law and order must be maintained in the desert. The Beduins in turn reciprocate this good feeling, but the airplanes and the automobiles tend to disturb the age-old peaceful silence of the great open desert.

The eastern side of the desert is patrolled by a native camel corps of police. Many of these men are Wahabis who have left the Hedjaz for various reasons. King Ibn Sa'oud is the ruler of Central Arabia today. He is an intelligent and cultured person who rules justly and wisely over his widely scattered nomadic peoples.

There are several interesting phases of the general situation in the Near East which bring some pertinent questions to mind. Will the great Beduin sheik be overwhelmed by European influence? Already several sheikhs drive over the desert by automobile instead of riding on their beautiful riding camels. Whence came their ancestors who dwelt in North Arabia when it was a pleasant land filled with watered streams? Scientific investigation may reveal the
answer to this and other questions regarding the earliest inhabitation of this area.

The European who visits a powerful desert sheikh will be impressed by the courtesy and hospitality received and the remarkably fine features and proud bearing of this people, who constantly struggle for food and water both for themselves and for their herds. The struggle for existence is at its maximum in North Arabia. Family honor of the highest traditions, and a firm and true belief in the Almighty have dominated their lives for generations. The shepherds live very close to nature. They know the stars by name. They love the unending expanse of the rolling desert. The wind and sandstorms are part of their very existence. They read the time by the sun during the day and by the moon at night. They know the animals, the birds; each little hill has a name and arouses a memory for them. Allah is omnipotent, and omniscient. He rules over the Beduins who never speak against Him. They are mere clay in the hands of the Potter.

I bring back pleasant memories of my life in the North Arabian Desert. My desert friends are often in my thoughts and I like to think that they are finding a good supply of clear water in the wells and plentiful pasturage for their flocks and herds.

In conclusion I must express my thanks to our Beduin hosts, to the various British authorities and to the Iraq Petroleum Company who made these scientific expeditions possible, and who assisted our work in every manner within their power.