

رحلة الكابتن شكسبير الأخيرة

Captain Shakespear's Last Journey

بقلم دوغلاس كاروذرز
Douglas Carruthers

المجلة الجغرافية — المجلد ٥٩، العدد ٥، مايو ١٩٢٢م، الصفحات ٣٢١-٣٣٤

★ الكويت في هذه المقالة ★

سيرة ورحلات الكابتن ويليام شكسبير (W.H.I. Shakespear)، الوكيل السياسي البريطاني في الكويت (١٩٠٩-١٩١٥). من الكويت انطلق في رحلاته الاستكشافية السنوية إلى داخل الجزيرة: الحفر في الباطن (١٩٠٦)، وجنوباً نحو نجد. أول أوروبٍ يعبر الجزيرة من الكويت إلى مصر. كان صديقاً للملك عبد العزيز بن سعود ومهندس العلاقة البريطانية-السعودية المبكرة. قُتل في معركة جراب على حدود نجد ١٩١٥ وهو مع قوات ابن سعود. المقالة توثق الكويت مركزاً بريطانياً استراتيجياً ونقطة انطلاق لاستكشاف قلب الجزيرة.

النص الأصلي الكامل بالإنجليزية مع الخريطة (٢٥ صفحة مصورة)

محلّ الشاهد: archive.org — sim_geographical-journal_1922-05_59_5

الحقوق: نطاق عام (Public Domain)

The Geographical Journal

Vol. LIX No. 5

May 1922

CAPTAIN SHAKESPEAR'S LAST JOURNEY

Douglas Carruthers

Map following p. 400.

THE full story of the part Arabia played in the war remains to be written. It will be a stirring tale, full of romance and of all the glamour of guerrilla warfare; it will also contain episodes of individual enterprise and resource on the part of a few Englishmen which will compare favourably with any in the long story of British achievement in Asia. The success attained is due largely to men who, of their own initiative, had prepared themselves beforehand, and who, when the time came, were able to take their places in what must surely be one of the most extraordinary epics, not only in the Great War, but in the whole intercourse between Europe and Asia.

Long before the Hejaz revolted against the Turks, and Arabia was still practically an unknown quantity (although full laden with German and Turkish intrigue), Captain William Henry Irvine Shakespear, C.I.E.,* was killed in a "tribal skirmish" on the borders of Nejd. An explanation of the circumstances does not concern us here, but the fact is significant. He was the first Britisher to sacrifice his life in a country which was destined to play a large part in the cause of the Allies, eventuating in the final overthrow of Turkey. As will be seen from the following brief summary of his life's work, his presence in Arabia at that moment was the result of long years of work. For six years he had occupied the post of British Agent at Koweit on the Persian Gulf, during which period he had, of his own initiative, gradually extended his influence into the interior, and by several excursions into the desert had filled up large blanks on the map. The record of these years' work remains unknown, outside official archives, and has not been published.

In 1909 Shakespear, who had previously been in the Consular Service at Bandar Abbas and Muscat, was appointed Political Agent at Koweit. For the next six years he held this post, making annual excursions into the comparatively unknown hinterland. He had as his forerunners,

* Shakespear never knew that he had been rewarded with the C.I.E., the news of which missed him by a few days.

Pelly, who rode to Riyadh in 1865, and Knox, who made two excursions from Koweit, in 1906 to Hafar in the Batin, and in 1908 southwards to Nta. For the rest of our knowledge of the Koweit hinterland, right up to the settled lands of Sudair (except for the hurried journey of Barclay Raunkiaer to Zilfi and beyond in 1912), we were indebted to Shakespear up till the year of his death. Since then the great work carried on by Mr. H. St. John B. Philby, C.I.E., I.C.S., over north-eastern, and central Arabia has added enormously to our geographical knowledge, and indeed has supplemented Shakespear over very wide areas.* But as most of these notes were put together before Philby set foot in Arabia, I have tried to keep them intact, and they must be read as descriptive of the position of Arabian exploration at the time of Shakespear's death.†

The first year (1909) Shakespear reconnoitred the country for 75 miles to the south of Koweit, passing over the rolling country between the coastal plain and the Shakk depression. Knox had been over the same ground in 1908, but Shakespear extended our knowledge of the curious Shakk valley. The following year (1910) he made a much more extensive journey to Es Safa, halfway to Zilfi, and thence to Hafar, one of the principal waterings in the Batin, or lower Wadi er Rumma. This he followed down to the point where it debouches into the Zobair plain, thus for the first time giving us a true idea of the lower course of this great drainage which extends across 800-900 miles of the Arabian peninsula. On these excursions Shakespear travelled in full accord with Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit. He took a considerable following, including greyhounds and falcons. This last trip extended over thirty days, over which period a careful route traverse was kept up, covering about 450 miles. In 1911 Shakespear made an extended tour to the south. Passing over Knox's route to the settlement of Nta, he then crossed new country to the south-east, and circled back over a region already traversed in 1865 by Colonel Lewis Pelly. On this occasion Shakespear took his first astronomical positions, consisting of sixteen latitudes by a sextant and artificial horizon.

His principal find was some inscribed stones at the wells of Hinna and the ruined site of Thaj, the value of which he suspected—for he photographed one and sketched the others with great care—but never proved. The interest attached to them has only now come to be known, and as Prof. D. S. Margoliouth says, "Their publication will greatly excite Sabæists." These inscriptions are, in fact, the first known monuments of the Sabæans in north-east Arabia. We are indebted to Prof. Margoliouth for the decipherments given below; he adds, "I am not aware of any Sabæan inscription or the like having been found in the neighbourhood of Koweit. The forms of the letters would be classed

* See *Geogr. Journ.*, March and December 1920.

† All Shakespear's material, route-books, diaries, maps, and photographs, have been deposited at the Royal Geographical Society.

as ancient by the experts. The three which are taken as characteristic of the highest antiquity all occur. I think that the epitaph is at least earlier than our era. . . . The find is therefore interesting on a variety of grounds." Dr. D. G. Hogarth, to whom I first sent the inscriptions, and who kindly passed them on to Dr. Margoliouth, says the discovery "may have a bearing on the much-disputed origin of the Sabæans. It has often been suggested that they were established in north-east Arabia before they appeared in the south-west, but this is the first monument of them in the north-east. It is very important that all these should have turned up in the Kuwait district."

Decipherment of Epitaph No. I. : "Cave and tomb of Shibām daughter of Luḥay son of W[ahb] whose wife [was] daughter of . . ." The proper names Shibām and Luḥay are familiar; the former is found in South Arabian as well as in Arabic. The word for *cave* is North Arabian, and is, I fancy, new in inscriptions; the word for *wife* is not new, but seems to occur elsewhere as a collective (*women or wives*).

Epitaph No. II. : "Cave and Tomb of Karrilāh daughter of Jārat daughter . . . ghṣ whose wife . . . ut." The name Karrilāh seems to be new; though the forms of the letters K and H suggest erroneous copying: this name, which should mean *Turning of God*, seems to me quite a possible one, like the *Shubael* of the Old Testament. The name Jārat means in Arabic "wife." The first two letters of her father's name are lost; perhaps the name was *Munaghghaṣ*. The word for "wife" in line four is incorrectly spelt, but the parallel in the first epitaph seems to certify the rendering.

In 1912 a short tour was made to the south-west, evidently undertaken in order to decide the lower course of the Shakk depression. But the following year Shakespear went further afield than he had ever been. Following a course more or less parallel to Raunkiaer's route, he made the passage of the Dahana at a new crossing and penetrated as far as Majma'a, first settlement in and chief town of Sudair, on the flanks of Jebel Tuwaik. Raunkiaer had preceded him by a year, and Palgrave had already seen Majma'a in 1862, but Shakespear's survey was the first of any quality. From M ajma'a he moved east-south-east along the foothills of Tuwaik to Khafs and thence to the wells of Rumaihiya. He then found Hafar el Ats, the end of the important Tuwaik drainage—Shaib el Ats, recrossed the Dahana—here eight distinct sand ridges—and returned to Koweit by a route parallel to, but to the east of, Pelly's. This journey took forty-four days, and resulted in 600 miles of new survey.

All these excursions were preliminaries to his great ambition, namely to penetrate the heart of the desert peninsula, to visit the Emir Abdul Aziz ibn Saud at his capital Riyadh, and in fact to cross Arabia from the Gulf to Egypt. It was a bold project. Nearly a century before, Arabia had been crossed by Sadlier from Katif to Yambo, and it was half a century since Palgrave had passed from Gaza to Katif, and Wallin had ridden from Muweila to Nejef. No others had succeeded in the venture. But the

years 1912-1914 witnessed some determined attempts to explore the unknown. Leachman (then Captain, Royal Sussex Regiment, now of tragic memory, having been murdered by tribesmen in 1920 near Baghdad) had come down into Nejd from the Syrian desert, and had passed out at Ojair, opposite Bahrein. In the same year Raunkiaer, the Dane, made a new line from Koweit to Buraida, then followed Palgrave's route through Sudair to Riyadh, and went out by (practically) Pelly's route to Hofuf and Ojair. In 1914, whilst Shakespear was crossing the peninsula from east to west, Miss Gertrude Bell was passing over much unknown country to the west and south of the Great Nafud, visiting Jebel Shammar and its capital Hail, and making a new route thence to Nejef, and yet another between Ramadi and Tudmur. I calculate roughly that in 1912 Leachman covered 1300 miles and Raunkiaer 700-800 miles; whilst in 1914 Miss Bell and Shakespear each added roughly 1500 miles of survey, the two latter explorers supplementing their work by many valuable astronomically fixed positions,—not a bad record of individual enterprise and initiative. It is true that "neither nations nor syndicates perform these things, for Providence does not send its subtle ray of imagination and faith to governments or limited liability companies, but to the individual spirit, and this it is which is spurred on to action and accomplishment." But it is strange that Arabia, the link between Egypt and India, should have been neglected and left to chance. Within a few months Arabia was in the war, and in her deserts was formed the nucleus which played such a big part in the final overthrow of Turkey!

Shakespear's trans-Arabian journey covered about 1200 miles of unknown country. Only for one-third of the whole traverse between Koweit on the Persian Gulf and Kuntilla, the first Egyptian outpost in Sinai, was he on ground already covered by Europeans. For the whole distance, 1810 miles, Shakespear kept up a continuous route-traverse, checked at intervals by observations for latitude.* He also took, as on his previous journey, hypsometric readings for altitude, which give a most useful string of heights between the Gulf and the Hejaz railway. The initial results of Shakespear's last journey may be summed up as follows: The first complete traverse of the Wadi er Rumma in its lower course—as the Batin—between Hafar and Ajibba, where the great fiumara is blocked by the Dahana sand-bed, and also of the region southwards to Zilfi; the first reliable map of the Tuwaik settlements between Zilfi and Audal, and of a new route onwards to Riyadh; a great deal of new detail between Riyadh and Buraida; a completely new route from Buraida to Jauf, and also between Jauf and the Wadi Araba on the frontiers of southern

* These comprised twenty-nine meridian altitudes of the sun, taken with a sextant and artificial horizon; with one or two exceptions they are good observations, and probably not much in error. A full table of all astronomical observations taken by Shakespear is incorporated in a pamphlet, 'A List of Astronomically Determined Positions in Northern and Western Arabia,' compiled for the Geographical Section of the General Staff by Mr. E. A. Reeves and the author of this paper, 1918.



THE LATE CAPTAIN WILLIAM HENRY IRVINE SHAKESPEAR, C.I.E.



I.



II.

SABÆAN INSCRIBED STONES FROM THAJ AND HINNA,
 COPIED BY SHAKESPEAR ON HIS 1911 JOURNEY

Palestine. For the eastern limits of the Great Nafud sand-bed we are indebted to him; also for the true trend of Jebel Tubaik, and for much information on the various sand-belts which seam Kasim and Sudair. But even where he was on old ground his surveys were of much value. He crossed at various times the traverses of Sadlier, Pelly, Palgrave, Knox, Wallin, Guarmani, Blunt, Huber, Nolde, Butler, Aylmer, Leachman, Raunkiaer, Bell, and my own, and by doing so helped to pull these, in many cases, rough traverses into shape. Routes which had hitherto been mere conjecture could now be drawn more or less correctly, many errors put right, and many a problem solved.

This last journey occupied only three and a half months. Shakespear returned to England in the summer of 1914, and on the outbreak of war was sent back to Koweit, being entrusted with a mission to the Emir Ibn Saud.* On 24 January 1915 he was killed in the neighbourhood of Majma'a, in a skirmish between the forces of the Ibn Saud and his rival Ibn Rashid, Emir of Hail. Thus his achievements have never been made known, and though every possible use has been made of the invaluable material he collected, circumstances have not permitted the publication of any suitable record of his labours. This I have undertaken to do, thereby hoping to render a tribute to their author, and also to bring to notice the credit due to him.

Shakespear set out on his last journey with the full intention of gathering as much geographical knowledge as possible. He was better equipped than he had been on any of his previous journeys. On 3 February 1914 he left the Agency at Koweit with a *hamla* (caravan) of 10 men, 7 *thelul* (riding-camels), 11 baggage camels, and 4 sheep. The party included two personal servants—a Punjabi and an Arab boy, the Agency camel jemidar as caravan-bashi, with two Nejada under him, and *rafiks* (friend and guide) of the Sbia, Umtair (Jiblan section) and Ajman (Hadi and Suliman sections) tribes, as well as a *rafik* and herdsman of the Sabha section of the Umtair. Passing without incident over the Jadat el Batin, as the track is called which leads from Koweit to Buraida, *viâ* Rigai, Hafar, and Ajibba, he arrived on the sixth day at Rigai in the Batin. This was the route followed by Knox in 1906, and, with the exception of the Shakk depression, the stage is featureless, waterless, and devoid of any special interest.† “We found the Rigai wells occupied by the Umtair, Ibn Majid's people, who threatened us with rifles—practically no water left.” During these days much heavy rain was experienced, and often delayed the caravan and made progress slow. Travelling along the same track was a large caravan bound for Buraida.

After halting for a couple of days at Rigai, Shakespear marched south-west up the bed of the lower Wadi er Rumma or Batin. For the next

* He was actually “British Agent” at the Emir's Court.

† At Umm-el-Amara, the doubtful watering at halfway, Shakespear confirmed Knox's report of traces of ancient wells.

few days he was on old ground, traversed by Knox in 1906 and by himself in 1910. The Batin was here a 2-mile wide depression, dropping to 200 feet below the level of the surrounding country. There was some scrub in the dry watercourse, which, on one occasion after twenty minutes' heavy rain, became a rushing torrent 3 feet deep and 50 feet across. At Kasr Ballal he found the remains of a square-walled enclosure, about 90 feet each way, alongside of which were the remains of an old well or reservoir. Ballal is supposed to have been the favourite slave of a Sheikh of the Beni Hallal. Both Knox and Shakespear repeat stories about the origin of this building, which seem to turn on the question as to where the water came from to enable any one to build mud walls. The next halt was at Hafar, where he refilled his waterskins. This is a famous watering, a group of about forty wells scattered over a wide circular plain.* It is, doubtless, the site of the "Battle of the Chains," in which the Persians under Hormuz, "Satrap of the Delta," met the Arabs in battle and were defeated. *Al-Hafir*, or *Al-Hufeir*, was then a desert frontier station of the Persian Empire. "He (Hormuz) marched in haste, thinking to have an easy victory over the untrained desert tribes; and being the first to reach the water-bed of Al-Hafir, took possession of its springs. Khalid, coming up, bade his force alight and at once unload their burdens. "Then," said he, "let us fight for the water forthwith; by my life! The springs shall be for the braver of the two." Thereupon Hormuz challenged Khalid to single combat, and though he treacherously posted an ambuscade, was in the encounter slain. The Muslims then rushed forward and with great slaughter put the enemy to flight, pursuing them to the banks of the Euphrates."† On to Hafar converge several routes. There is the direct track from Koweit called *Jadat el Fukamiya*, followed by Knox. From the south-east is the *Jadat el Hibara*, by which Shakespear had come up in 1910 from Bir es Safa; from the west are reported tracks from Leina and Khadra; while a little to the south of Hafar the *Jadat el Hababiya* branches off to *Majma'a* and *Zilfi* ‡ Leaving Hafar after a day's rest, Shakespear continued his march up the bed of the Batin, which still holds its direct course without the slightest deviation from south-west to north-east. The valley now widened out. In spite of the heavy rain he had experienced to date, the depression here was as dry as a bone, so there was no fodder for the camels, which shows how local the storms must be. He was now on new ground. The next day he found traces of old wells and buildings, and on February 17 he notes, "The Batin gets narrower

* Knox says the Batin here must be quite 8 miles across. Shakespear has a note to the effect that the water is 50 fathoms below the surface (Doughty had already recorded the depth of *el-Hafir*, 35 fathoms). Knox says 150 feet, and that the water is tepid, the well pits being lined with masonry and about 6 feet across.

† Sir William Muir in 'The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall,' p. 51. Revised edit., 1915.

‡ Hafar, according to Raunkiaer, is "the official meeting-point of the spheres of influence of the Sheikh of Koweit, the Emir of Hail, and the Imam of Riadh."

and deeper as we go along, with obvious signs of a river-bed everywhere, shoals at convex bends, or deep places at concave ones, rounded pebble gravel, etc. A good deal more of the red sand of the Nafud apparent to-day, and most piled up against the south-east bank. . . . Herbage began to improve considerably, and consisted to-day of *hamth* and *roatha*, a new one to me. Heavy clouds about since early morning, and rain began to spatter with S.S.E. wind from about 10.30 a.m. onwards. . . . Camped at Gulban ibn Towala. Measured one of these wells and found it to be 238 feet from bottom to lip; the hurricane lantern burnt steadily the whole way down. This is obviously a caravan station, for the few buildings look like military posts. Here there are nine wells, all in good order, splendidly built, but no water. The buildings were all circular, and traces of fallen-in dome roofs are apparent. Evidently built of big limestone blocks, dressed with mud mortar, . . . presumably these wells are the work of the Caliphs. The stones used in the buildings are of two kinds, all limestone, big blocks roughly oblong or square, 2 feet by 1½ feet by 2 feet for the walls, and flat slabs, 3 feet by 2 feet by 3 inches for roofing. The wells also have watering cisterns—five at each. The story of the Ibn Towala well is that he selected one which still showed rope marks at the top, and tried to clear it or deepen it for water, but he was unsuccessful. This was twenty-five years ago when the Sheikh of the Ibn Towala section of the Shammar* tried to make a new summer quarters for his tribe." The following day Shakespear again came across "old wells and traces of buildings. These latter showed the beehive type of building much plainer, with doorways, etc. . . . The Nafud sand is much more apparent to-day, and in one place showed distinct signs of filling up the valley. After getting my noon observation, we passed the remains of a *birka*, a huge circular tank, at least 70 or 80 feet in diameter, at present filled with sand and earth, but a lot of the lime-concrete plaster showing. The walls of the main tank were quite 8 feet thick, and it does not seem to have been covered with a dome like the Persian ones. . . . The Batin opens out into a big valley from here onwards, with the stream, so to speak, running along its eastern side. The *birka*, by the way, was placed athwart the debouchure of another small valley coming in from the north-west. Some big bluffs occurred along the western side. . . . We camped within a mile of the first Dahana ridge, in heavy red sand." The next day (February 19) he crossed the sand-belt at the point where it overruns and blocks the great dry watercourse. Although the Dahana belt had been crossed at many points by European travellers and we had a very fair idea of its character over its whole course of about 600 miles from where it originates in the Nafud to where it fades away in the southern deserts, yet this was the first description we had of the sand-barrage of the Wadi er Rumma. Shakespear found that it presented an easier crossing here than it did at a point 95 miles to the south-east where he had crossed it in 1913, on the

* Aslam tribe of Nejd Shammar.

so-called Darb Bahais between Majma'a and Bir es Safa. Here it was one continuous sand-belt, not separate ridges and valleys. "It was curious to see how the Batin was shut off with the bank of sand almost as if the latter was raised artificially." He crossed it in three hours and forty minutes. According to his altitudes the sand-dunes rise 120 feet above the wadi bed.* Then crossing the plain of Taisiya he arrived the following day at Ajibba, or Jibba, where he rested. Ajibba held fairly good water, at no great depth. Shakespear attempted to develop his films, with disastrous results to some; for this reason we have no pictures of the ruined sites of the Batin. The wonder is that any films developed in a hurry with brackish or sandy water were successful; but we are lucky to have a fairly representative set of pictures. Ajibba is situated close under another sand-belt, the Araj el Asiya (Asiah?), which also lies across and dams the Wadi er Rumma. The direct track to Buraida continues to the south-west across this belt, but no European has yet followed it. Huber came up to within a day's march of the sands in 1880, and Doughty records most correctly from native information that the "Wadi" (er Rumma) is "dammed in a place called eth-Thueyrât; that is a thelul journey or perhaps 50 miles distant from Aneyza, by great dunes of sand which are grown up, they say, in this age." †

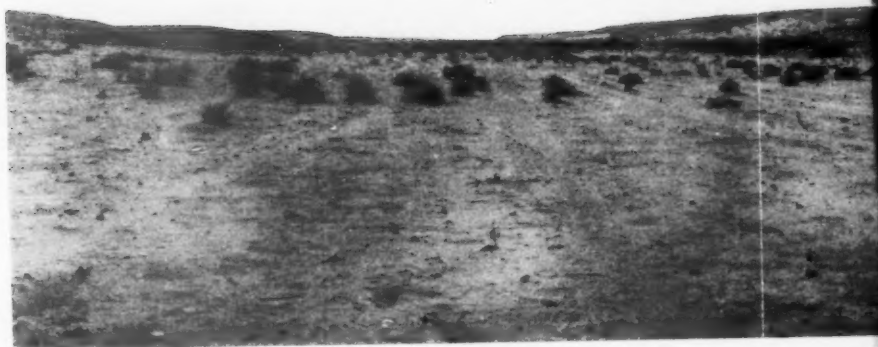
The Araj el Asiya appears to be a continuation of Leachman's *El Bittar*, which starts to the east of Bir Zerud (but is not connected with the Nafud). It is there composed of seven distinct strips of sand, each about a mile broad and rising 150 feet above the plain, being separated by mile-wide gravelly depressions. On the Buraida track the same character seems to hold. Native report has it that it is about 15 miles across, there being seven named belts: *Madhur*, ‡ *Buwaitir*, § *Amar*, *Baidha*, *Baisiyah*, § *Batrah*, and *Arq el Bilad*. This sand-bed continues its way southwards through Sudair and Washm, Shakespear crossing it again in the neighbourhood of Shakra. Leaving Jibba, and bidding farewell to the Buraida caravan, which continued its course across the sand towards the south-west, Shakespear turned south-east and followed along under the wall-like edge of the dunes.

* The Dahana sand-belt is one of the leading features of Arabian topography. On old maps it assumed exaggerated proportions, and it is only recently that we have come to know the exact extent of its very complicated nature. It is, in reality, a belt or belts of high sand-dunes which form a barrier between the Gulf districts of Hasa and Koweit and Nejd proper. The Dahana breaks away from the Great Nafud on the north and stretches for 600 miles before merging in the great unknown sand-beds to south-east of Riyadh.

† 'Arabia Deserta,' vol. 2, pp. 392-3.

‡ Madhua, or *Ardh el Madhur* (Leachman), we know of as a distinct sand-belt lying to the north of El Bittar. According to native report (see Leachman, *Geo. Journ.*, May 1914, pp. 507-8) it runs down to the Wadi er Rumma, and there ceases. Huber also describes Madhua (see *Journal*, p. 563).

§ In Buwaitir we may recognize Leachman's *Nuwathir*, which is a tongue of the El Bittar, while Baisiyah is evidently Shakespear's Aisiya.



THE TROUGH OF THE BATIN, OR LOWER WADI ER RUM



JALAJIL, AND SHAIB JAL



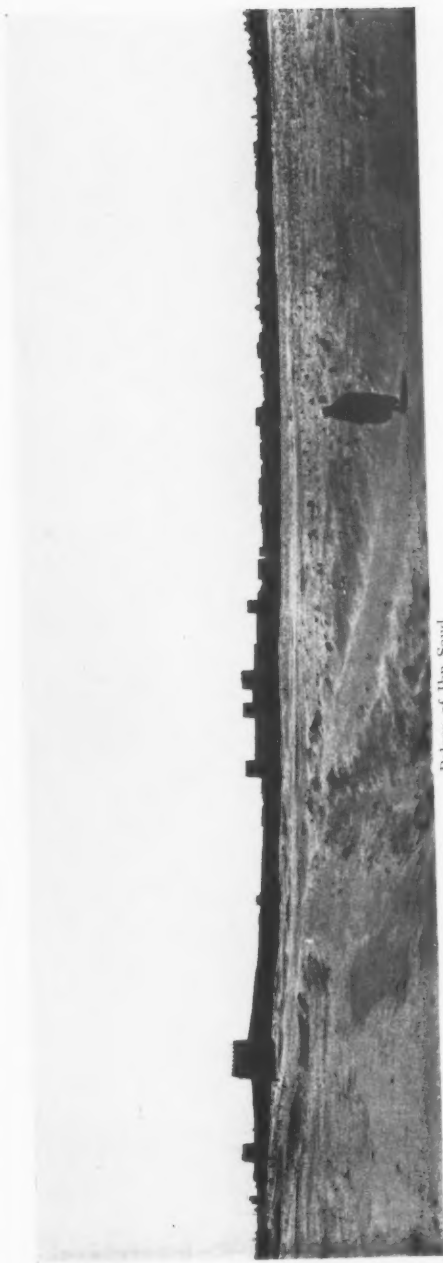
DI ER RUMMA, ABOVE HAFAR, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST



SHAIB JALAJIL, SUDAIR







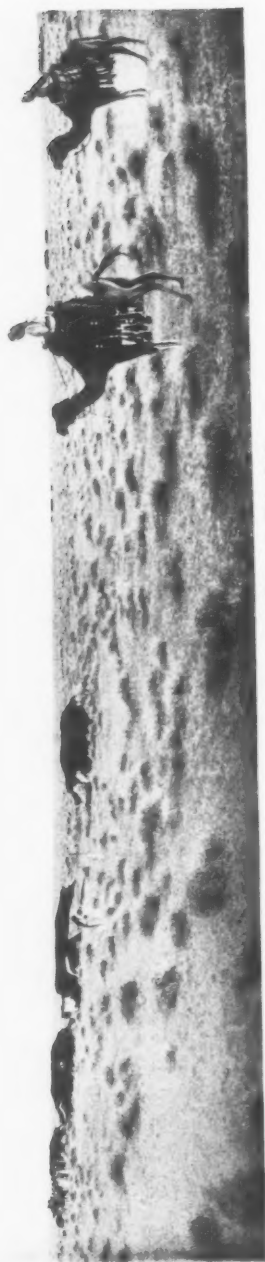
Palace of Ibn Saud.

THE WALLS OF RIYADH

N.E. angle.



RIYADH THE GREAT STREET, LOOKING WEST FROM EAST GATE



DIBDIBDA FLAINS, SOUTH OF KOWEIT



MANFAIKH PASS, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST TOWARDS KHAFS

The first day's journey from Ajibba was easy enough. The Nafud ended abruptly in a 100-foot wall, and the caravan passed along on firm ground beneath it. But further on tongues and drifts of high dunes lay across the track, and the next three marches Shakespear spent in clambering up and down over the sand-belts, and edging along between the sands and the rugged country which now rose on his other hand, which was, in fact, the first indication of the Tuwaik plateau. On the fifth day he cleared the last and worst sand barrier, Nafud Dhuwaihi, and passed over the northernmost end of the Tuwaik escarpment, "the precipitous though low fortress ledge" of Tuwaik. Coming suddenly to its lip, he looked down on to Zilfi: "the whole valley spread out below, green patches of date plantations and wheatfields in a grey-brown setting of desert, a dark brown plot for the towns—the whole walled in on the north by the Tuwaik, and on the south by peaks (high dunes) of red Nafud. The descent into the valley was a fearfully steep zigzag slide and scramble of 185 feet."

The last five days' journey had led through unknown country. Shakespear's route gave us the configuration and character of the Asiya sand-bed on its eastern side over a distance of 100 miles, and also the northern limits and of the Tuwaik uplift—a land feature of first importance in Middle Arabia.

Shakespear halted a couple of days at Zilfi, and saw the two separate walled towns of Shamaliya and Jumbra,* lying a mile apart from each other. "The older town, Shamaliya, is in the open, without a tree near it, for purposes of defence against enemies; the newer town, Jumbra, has date gardens close up to its walls on the south and west sides, while the northern walls are being silted up with sand from the Nafud." The gardens are extensive, being irrigated by water drawn from wells of no great depth. In the immediate neighbourhood are several other patches of cultivation. These little oases are situated in impressive surroundings—even for Arabia. The high white limestone wall of the Tuwaik rises immediately above it on one side, while on the other the red dunes of the Nafud threaten the cultivated area. Zilfi has been described as a military position of some importance, as the key to Nejd from north-east, and as a trade centre for traffic over a wide area. It has been the debatable possession of Kasim and Sudair, and has ever stood alone. At the time of Shakespear's visit Zilfi paid tribute to the Emir of Riyadh.

From Zilfi Shakespear could have passed westwards into Kasim and made an easy short-cut across Arabia; but he was determined to visit Riyadh and meet Ibn Saud. So he continued his way into the heart of the land, and made a circuit of some 900 miles before reaching Anaiza, which lay only a couple of days' journey to the west of Zilfi. By doing so he saw practically the whole length of the Tuwaik with its

* In Palgrave's day the two were joined together and formed a much larger town. But even in tiny Zilfi factions arose, and the township split into two.

numerous valleys. He saw Riyadh itself, and made the journey back to Kasim, if not on an altogether new track, on one which varied considerably from his forerunners Sadlier and Leachman, and which gave us a much wider knowledge of Washm.

On February 28 Shakespear set out for Riyadh. A few hours' journey south of Zilfi he was again faced by the wall-like Tuwaik escarpment, up which he had to climb in order to reach the Sudair settlements which lie on the farther side, where the plateaux dip to the north-east. "Tuwaik," says Palgrave, "is the middle knot of Arabia, its Caucasus, so to say; and is still, as it has often been in former times, the turning-point of the whole, or about the whole, Peninsula in a political and national bearing." Palgrave exaggerates its influence, but still the northern Tuwaik is a prominent feature in the Arabian landscape, and Shakespear enabled us for the first time to piece together the work of previous explorers and to give a very fair representation of this section of Arabia. Here for the first time he saw Nejd proper, and for the next ten days he wandered over the plateau country and enjoyed its settled life and pleasant villages, a contrast indeed to the barren nomad's land to which he had grown accustomed. Turning up a gorge in the Tuwaik, he was received at the gate of the first village, Ghat, by the local Emir, "who was most friendly and hospitable. Letting the baggage-camels keep on, we stopped to tea and coffee. He had no less than fourteen coffee-pots on his hearth. All the town came in to have a look, and were all very friendly. . . . We had some of the local dates and very good butter and milk, product of cows in this case, as these people go in for cattle more than sheep and camels. The cattle are very small, tiny, like the men, and equally wizened and dried-up looking." He ridicules Palgrave's account of pomegranates and fig-trees. Ghat, he says, only produces dates, and crops dependent entirely upon the rainfall. The fact that his caravan took a wrong turn forced him to go the longer of the two tracks to Majma'a, but allowed him to see the villages of El Khis and Ruwaidha. The morning's ride led him to the crest of the escarpment, a rough pass with overhanging ledges; with exhausted camels he dropped down into Majma'a after sunset. He was here at home again, and the local Emir—for Majma'a is autonomous—received him as an old friend. It shows how he was accepted by this exclusive Arabian society; yet it was near Majma'a, by strange irony of fate, that he was killed in the following year. Although Palgrave had a splendid reception, his account is sixty years old, while Raunkiaer stopped but a night and tells us nothing. Evidently Sudair lives up to its reputation for a hospitality both "elegant and copious." As Hogarth described it, so it still seems to be—"village succeeds to village in these vales, where Palgrave found civility, hospitality, and settled order, the roads free of landlopers, and everywhere a healthy, industrious population of farmers, grazers, and gardeners, living in the fear of Faysal."

Passing on Raunkiaer's track through the village of Ijwai ("not more than 50 households") Shakespear came to Jalajil, first of the string of villages which compose the heart of Sudair. Jalajil and its twin oasis Tuwaim are important centres. He estimated the population of the former at about 4000 souls, while Palgrave (who passed it without entering) put the population of Tuwaim at 12,000 to 15,000 inhabitants: a notable example of Palgrave's astounding power of exaggeration, the whole population of the eighteen villages of Sudair being now estimated at 20,000.

Shakespear enumerates the eighteen settlements of Sudair,* of which eight lie in the wadi of the Sudair, five in adjoining Shaib Jalajil, while the others are scattered from Ghat in the north to Tamair in the east. In these two wadi beds of Jalajil and Sudair reside the nucleus of the population, and it is to Shakespear alone that we are indebted for our knowledge of these two tributaries of the remarkable Wadi el Ats and all they contain. On his 1913 journey he had already become acquainted with the lower portion of this great drainage, which does not, as before pictured, rise on Jebel Tuwaik, but has its origin far beyond the escarpment on the borders of Aridh and Washm, and cuts right through the mountains, flowing northwards until its course, so Shakespear discovered, is blocked by the Dahana sands,† at the watering-place of Hafar el Ats, a total distance of 100 miles. Later, on the same journey, Shakespear crossed the wadi in its middle portion, and was the first to tell us of the lower course of its tributary—Shaib Jalajil—with the outlying villages, Ashairah and Tamair.‡ Now, in 1914, he was able to complete the topography of these valleys, also to cross the defile which the main wadi cuts through the plateau; and later, on his itinerary from Riyadh to Kasim, to visit some of the oases situated on its upper reaches in Mahmal and Washm. Perhaps the best bit of work Shakespear has left us is the map of Sudair which we have been enabled to complete from his surveys.

To return to the villages of Sudair: Shakespear found the date gardens of Jalajil to be as large as, if not larger than, those of Majma'a; Tuwaim was "a large village renowned as having withstood the onslaughts of Abdul Aziz ibn Meta'ab ibn Rashid for two whole days." §

* The Sudair villages, according to Shakespear's informant, the Emir of Jalajil, which march under the Majma'a banner are as follows: Majma'a, Ghat, Ruwaidha (presumably with El Khis), Ijwai, Jalajil, Tuwaim, Dakhila, Hassun, Raudah, Hauta, Janubiya, Mughila, Attar, El Audah, El Haraj, Ma'ashaiba, Tamair, Ashairah.

† Doubtless its ancient course beyond the sand-bed will some day be traced.

‡ Tamair must be Palgrave's Thomeyr, but Palgrave certainly never passed this way. This is not the only discrepancy between Palgrave's and Shakespear's itinerary through Sudair. As far as Tuwaim he can be easily followed. Beyond that he makes no mention of the continuous string of villages. Even if he did not pass through them, he should have seen them, or at least heard their names,—Dakhila, Raudah, Hassun, Hauta, Janubiya, Mughila, Attar, El Audah. He only notes *Hafar* and *Thomeyr*, then crosses the highest shelf of Central Tuwaik and descends to *Sadiik* (Thadiq). Pelly, three years later, gives, from Arab information, a much more complete and correct list.

§ Abdul Aziz, son of Mitab, brother of Talal.

"To the south-east and quite close was Tuwaim el Aud, a much older village in ruins, with some remains of a big and strong surrounding wall, said to have been built by Ibrahim Pasha the Egyptian.* It is said to have been at one time bigger than Jalajil, but the date groves are not more than two-thirds those of Jalajil, with a population, at a guess, of 600 houses or 3000 people. The Jalajil shaib after watering Tuwaim goes north-east to Ashaira, a small village, and is then lost in the Ibbah-es-Sudair.† Keeping more to the right we suddenly sighted Dakhila, a small place of about 200 houses, and a little further on Hassun, of much the same size. The shaib for these villages begins with Dakhila, feeds Raudah—only date trees visible ‡—and then passes to Hassun. Just after leaving Hassun we passed the remains of what must have been a sort of guard-house or fort on the roadside; the walls were at least 30 feet high, only one of which, built of mud and stone, now remains standing.§ Almost immediately afterwards we passed under the east walls of Hauta, a large place of say 400 to 600 houses. After Hauta, with their date trees almost joining, comes Janubiya; while opposite it on the other side of the Shaib is Mughila. The former may have 300 to 400 houses, the latter not more than 50. Soon after comes Attar, lying on both sides of the Shaib, perhaps 500 houses all told. Just after Attar we passed a most modern kind of barrage, not very high, in reality a weir, built of squared stone, and extending right across the valley.

"After a long interval and crossing a spur instead of going round it like the Shaib, we came to Audah, a large village of at least 700 to 800 houses, with any amount of ruined wells all round about, doubtless more of Ibrahim Pasha's work. This is the last of the Sudair villages." Audah also marks the dividing of the ways. Palgrave and Raunkiaer had here both turned south, crossed the Tuwaik escarpment, and passed by the easier and more frequented route through the Mahmal subdistrict of Aridh to Riyadh. It is the best track, passing as it does through a populated region containing such large centres as Thadik, Haraimalah, Sadus, etc. Shakespear, however, continued his line of march to the south-east, and by doing so followed the entirely unknown, although more uninteresting and difficult, track which leads on through the Aridh section of the Tuwaik plateau. On March 3rd he camped in the Shaib Sudair to the

* Ibrahim Pasha, who completed, in 1816-1817, his father's unsuccessful campaign against the Wahabis, captured Abdulla ibn Saud, and (more or less) occupied Nejd.

† Ibbah es Sudair (or Abu es Sudair) applies to the valley bottom where the Saib el Ais, Shaib es Sudair, and Shaib Jalajil all meet. A parallel instance is Doughty's *Ybba Sleyman* as applied to the low-ground watering where the Shaib Sbatar from the Kheiba Harra and the Shaib Abu Suleiman join and disappear.

‡ Raudah lies in a bend of the wadi, off the direct track between Dakhila and Hassun; thus Raunkiaer also missed it, only recording "the broken-down wells and ruins of the oasis of Rodah, which was very large of old, but is now quite inconsiderable."

§ This might be Palgrave's "square castle, looking very mediæval," which lay opposite a large village with battlemented walls, a short distance from Tuwaim, and which he calls Hafir.



PRIMITIVE AQUEDUCT OF PALM TRUNKS AND MUD, AT MALHAM



STONE BUTTRESSES AT HASSUN



THE WELL-HEAD AT SHAMSIYA

east of Audah. Here not much water remained, and the wadi had lost its defined bed. The next day he did a good day's work, for not only did he map new country, but he sighted familiar landmarks, already fixed on his 1913 journey.* He crossed the Shaib el Ats, and eventually camped close to the wells of Hasi in the hill country beyond. Hasi also boasts a village and an Emir, "a ragamuffin-looking Bedouin with barely sufficient clothing, Emir of some 30 houses, who said the place was the property and sort of refuge of the Ibn Saud, and that no dates were allowed to be planted, as likely to give cover to an enemy"—a good example of the eternal unrest of Arabia, and the insecurity of her rulers!

After Hasi the route "led along the top of a plateau, from which the cliffs of Urmah † were visible to the left, and the walls of Tuwaik on the right." Here Shakespear had his "first real scare." "After dinner, as I was doing my map, I was startled by the patter of feet past my tent, and the clicking of Martinis. Roused camp and grabbed my rifle, only to find the men all sprinting out to the back, and a dozen or more camels on the skyline. Then shouts of 'What are you?'—very fiercely by Sair, and eventually much whacking of camel necks, and a plaintive voice crying, 'We have only been to buy dates at Malham, and seeing white tents came to them.'" They proved to be Sbia Bedouin—acquaintances of Mathi—his rafik; so the whole party camped together and drank coffee! A long stretch of featureless country, with little fodder for his jaded camels, now lay before him. On the south were the Aridh hills, as this section of the Tuwaik is sometimes called, hidden in which are several settled areas such as Suffurah, Daghlah, Mahagah—reported but not actually visited by Shakespear. He gave us, however, a true indication of the waterflow northwards. Many wadis come down from the Aridh hills and flow northwards to the Khafs depression. Here too he was able to decide the ultimate issue of the greater wadis, which support in their upper courses the oases of Haraimalah, Jarina, Malham, Salbukh, Sadus, and Hizwa—all of which end in the same Khafs basin, close under the walls of Arma. No less than nine dry river-beds were crossed after Hasi had been left, the most important of which is the Shaib Witar (*Wuttur*, Pelly). This also marks the point where Shakespear crossed the outgoing route of Pelly, who, in 1865, passed up this wadi on his way from the wells of Rumaihiya (Pelly's *Ormahiah*) to Sadus. The next stage led Shakespear over a low watershed to the sources of Sulaiy wadi, tributary of Wadi Hanifa—"that great artery of Southern Nejd" ‡—about which, although

* These were the hilltops of Khazu and Bilabil, which lay 6 or 7 miles away to his north; he was actually within 8 miles of his track in March 1913.

† Urmah, or Arma, the northern and outermost shelf of the Tuwaik system, sometimes appearing as Thamama (on Pelly's evidence), from a single buttress Khashm Thamama, close under which Pelly passed.

‡ The actual head of the Wadi Sulaiy is a point of interest. Our information prior to Shakespear led one to suppose it had the importance which Palgrave attached to it. Philby has since found two other sources a little to the north of Shakespear's, which may

little is known, there has been much speculation.* On the first wadi over the pass Shakespear found Banban, which consisted of a Kasr, six houses, and a few cornfields. The next day he came to within sight of the oasis of Riyadh, camping at Shamsiya, an outlying date grove. Later in the evening he rode on by moonlight to pay a call on Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud who had sent a message and an escort to invite him. "I was greeted as warmly as possible in the hall by Abdul Aziz, and then was taken into the library or office. We had tea, coffee, sweets, and gossip until evening prayer, and then again until 9.30, when I rode back, escorted as before, to camp."

(To be continued.)

Note on the Map.

During the course of the war the information derived from the diaries and observations of the late Captain Shakespear—placed at the disposal of the R.G.S.—was worked into the Arabian sheets of the 1/M map compiled by Mr. Douglas Carruthers in the Society's house. The map published herewith has been prepared by the Geographical Section, General Staff, by photographing down the 1/M sheets to 1/1.5 M and joining them together; and by the courtesy of the chief of that section, the edition required for the *Journal* has been printed from the War Office plates; especial thanks are due to Captain D. A. Hutchison for the personal trouble he has taken in the production of the map. Captain Shakespear's journeys were so extensive that they could not, within the limits of a *Journal* map, be shown on a larger scale; and it was not possible to undertake at this time the considerable task of re-drawing the whole map on the new scale. The names, as reduced, are inconveniently small, but they may be read with a glass: and we hope that the convenience of having on one sheet the whole map of northern Arabia, including all the most recent work, will outweigh this defect.

The names on the earlier Arabian sheets were spelled in conformity with the conclusion reached after careful consideration in 1917 (see *Geog. Journ.*, 49, 141). The later sheets have followed rather the rules of the P.C.G.N. or the practice of the Administration of 'Iraq. There is therefore some discontinuity of spelling in this paper and on the map, which cannot be removed until all the 1/M sheets are revised for a second edition.

ED. G. J.

justly claim to be the real heads of the wadi, the most northerly of the whole system. As to the other innumerable and far-reaching tributaries of the Hanifa we knew little or nothing until Philby returned in 1918, and showed that its drainage area is even larger than anticipated; in fact, it taps a region which extends more than halfway across the peninsula to the Red Sea.

* The destination of the Wadi Hanifa is one of the important problems in Arabian hydrography. The question of the mysterious Wadi Yabrin, and the problematic Wadi Aftan of early Moslem geographers, are both closely bound up with the ultimate destination of this great drainage. It seems that above ground, or below it, the Hanifa and its tributaries do drain across an intervening 250 miles of unexplored waste to the Persian Gulf. Shakespear's information has been proved to be correct. He was told that "the Hanifa flows south-east past Hair, Sulaimiya, and Yamama, then goes almost due east in a well-defined bed, similar to the Batin, until it is lost in and blocked up by the Dahana sand-bed in Sahaba. A continuation of it is said to be visible beyond the sand, and to fall into the sea, leaving Katar to the left hand. This wadi receives the drainage of all the Shaibs from Harik and Hauta."

