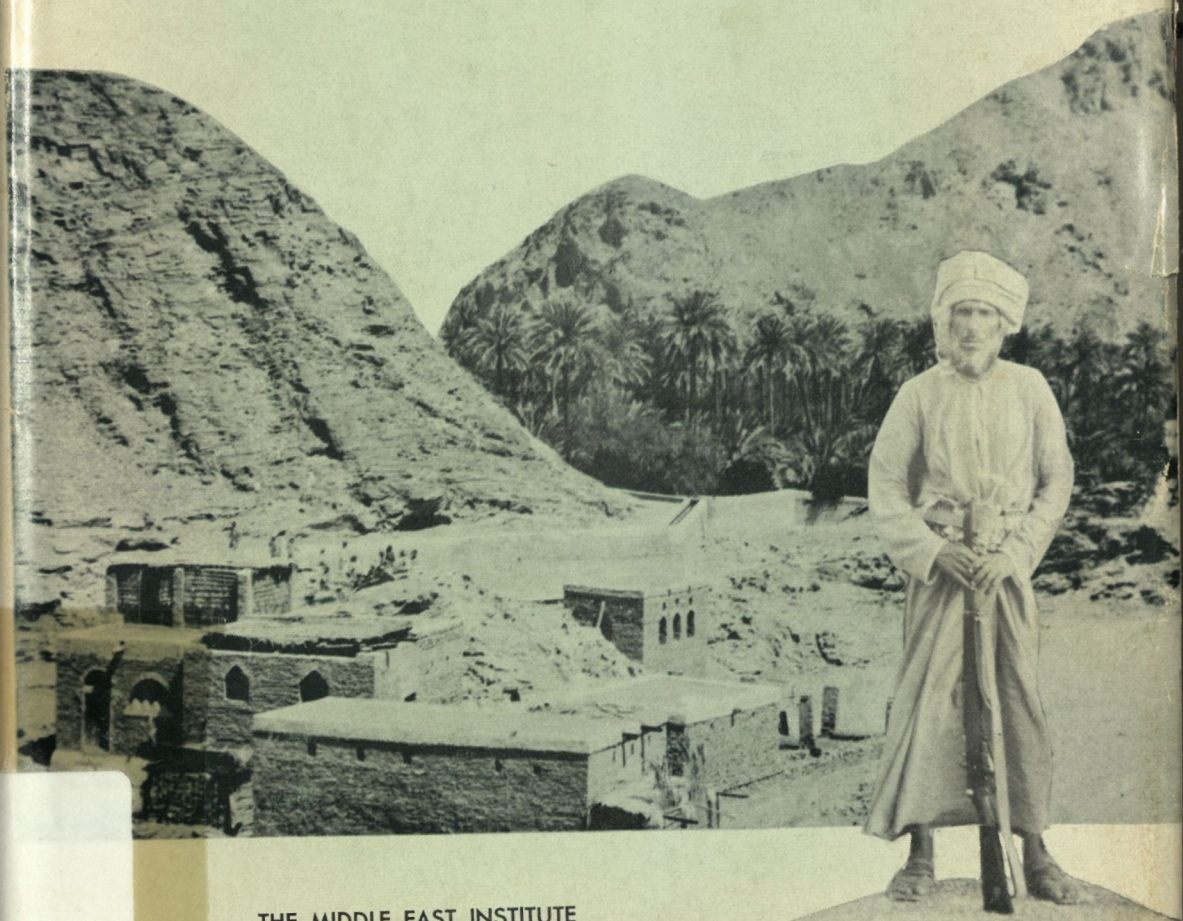
The Persian Gulf States

RUPERT HAY

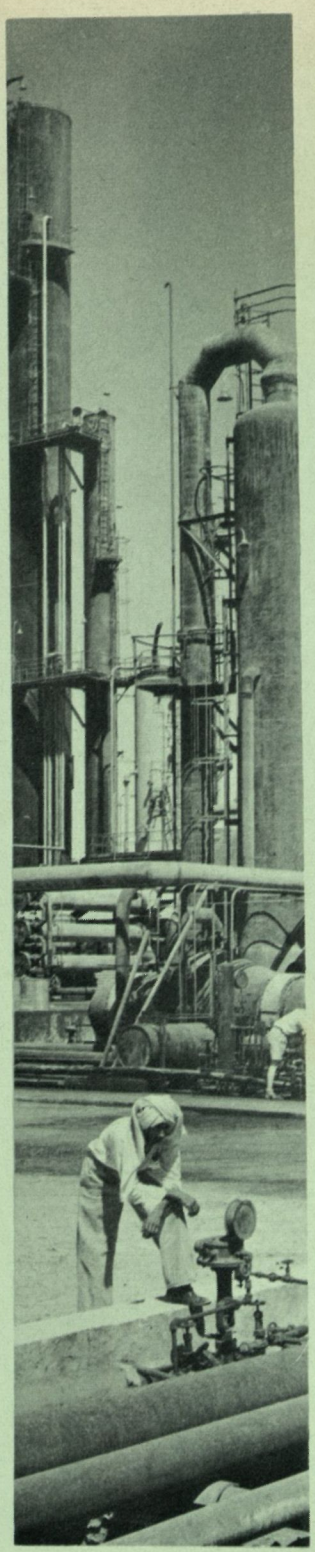


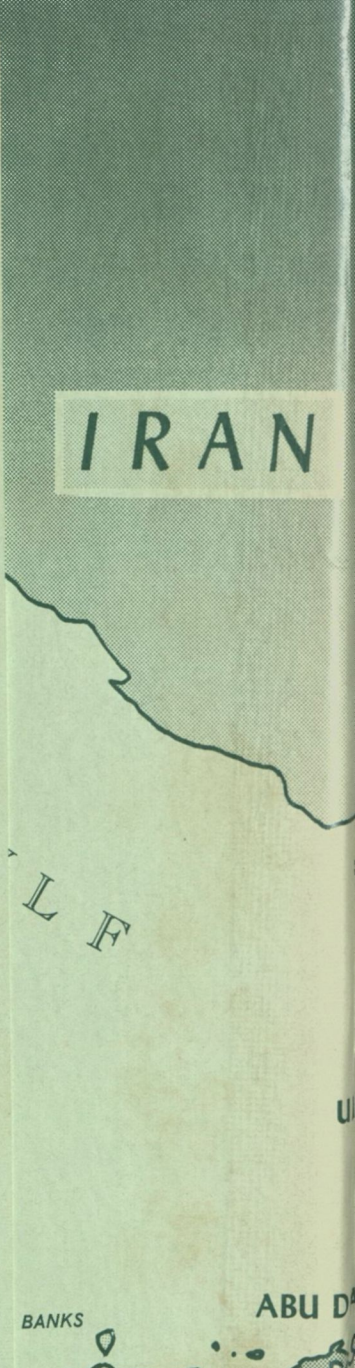
THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE

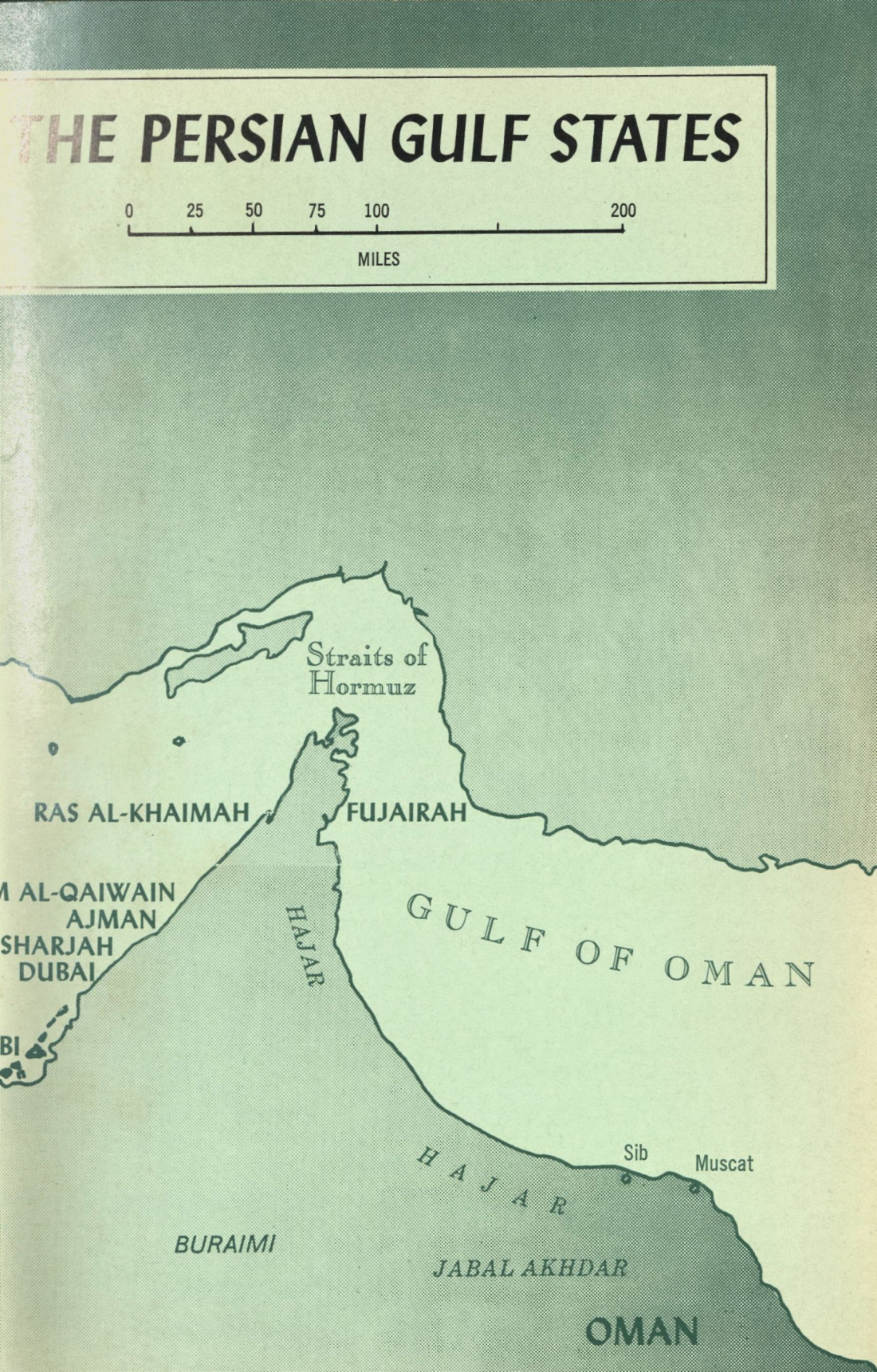
Sir Rupert Hay has written a general and current description of these States. From Kuwait, to which Kaiser Wilhelm II's ambitions extended and which now is the fourth oil-producing state of the world, down the Western Coast of the Gulf — through Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States to Muscat and Oman — each of these small countries is treated geographically, politically and socially. Their special relations to Britain and the unusual institution of the "Residency" are set forth in detail — from, naturally, the point of view of one who was himself the Resident.

The oil industry of the Gulf is described in a separate chapter. These pages underline how oil has brought change to the financial position and the social structure of the States where it has been found.

Sixteen photographs of persons and places little known to the Western world accompany the text. **$3.75**



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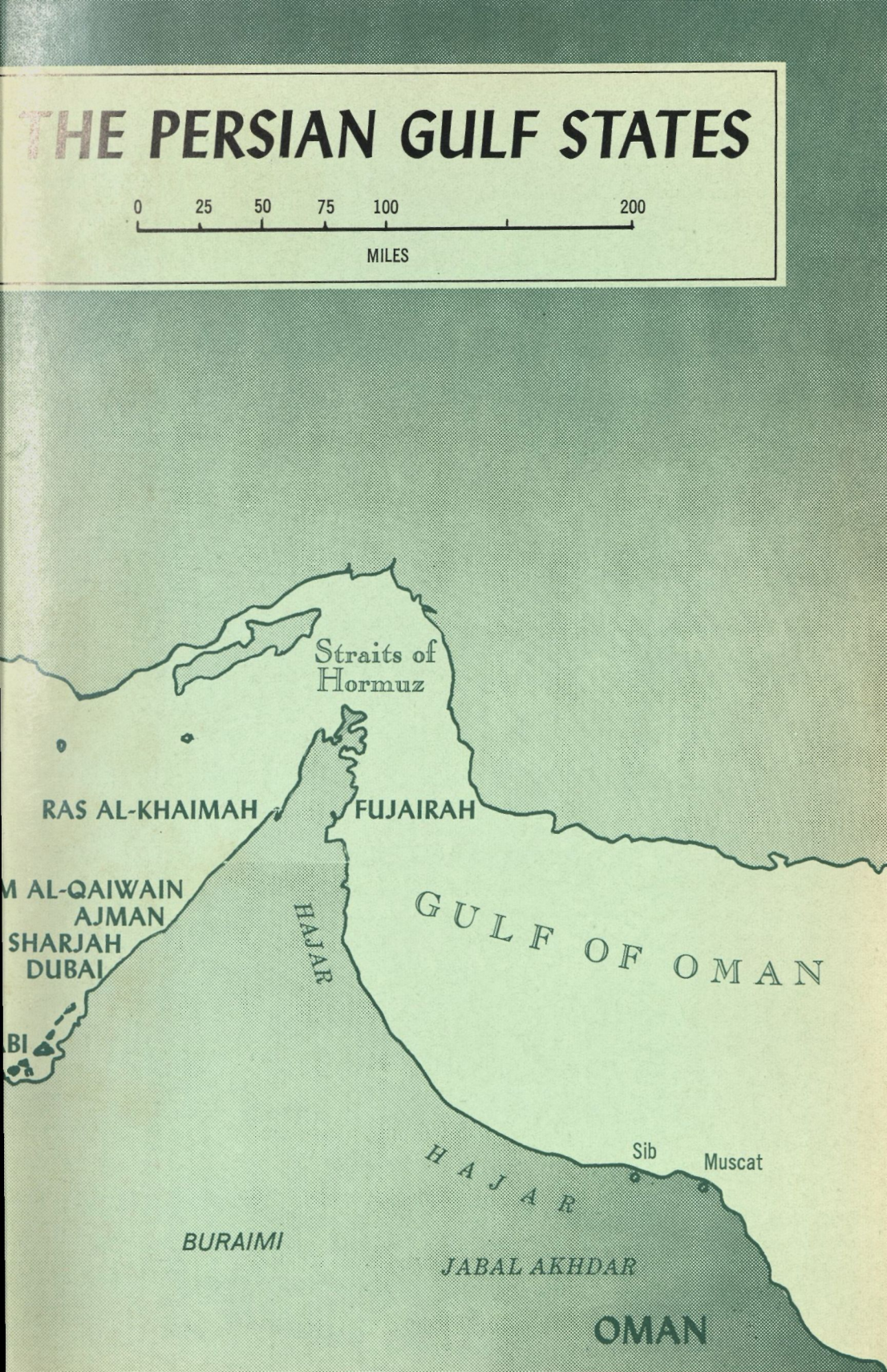
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The Persian Gulf States

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by

SIR RUPERT HAY, K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., C.S.I.

With a Foreword by

E. M. ELLER, Rear Admiral, USN

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FOREWORD

E. M. ELLER, REAR ADMIRAL, USN

SINCE THE DAWN of history the Middle East has played a large role in the unfolding of the destiny of man. For millenniums it was the center of civilization and produced some of the most impressive advances in history. For a time it seemed to sleep, dreaming of golden yesterdays under palms. Now it surges again with energy, potential power, great hopes and promises of great achievements — or disaster.

What happens there, five and six thousand sea miles from the United States' eastern seaboard, may seem of little consequence to Americans occupied by pressing problems at home or by the ominous loom of Communist imperialism. Yet events in the Middle East may ultimately decide the fate of the Free World. From ancient times the Middle East has been the crossroads of civilization, the highway of power, the bridge between continents — and in recent centuries the arteries of empire since the strength of nations moves more and more by sea. Today, with two-thirds to three-fourths of the world's petroleum, the Middle East has gained an added grave significance to the energy hungry Western World.

How the Middle East develops within this generation will affect how the Free World develops. The future of democracy may well be determined by the Middle East's disappearance behind the somber Iron Curtain or, protected by Western seapower, by its splendid growth into freedom amidst the transformation of the Industrial Revolution. Who imagines that the evolution, which has already brought so many benefits, could have occurred in the blessed aura of freedom if democratic nations did not control the seas.

We in the West, therefore, should seek to learn all we can about the Middle East, for the greater our sum total of understanding, the wiser are likely to be the decisions of our leaders in the Middle East

questions. We should especially seek to learn from profound and expert minds. One of the best of these is the author of the splendid pages that follow.

Sir Rupert Hay gained his expertness in knowledge of the ancient East as a faithful servant of Britain during the years that her tide of world empire, having imperceptibly turned, slowly ebbed. Through his early service the surface current seemed scarcely to move, but underneath, in the manner of many tides, the current built up speed so that in the last decade and a half vast segments of empire have fallen away suddenly like doom. In an era when the free world seeks and desperately needs unity against the most powerful despotism of history, the far flung empire of the sea, on whose flag the sun never set, collapsed. Division split a great experiment when events pleaded for unity.

Sir Rupert is of the breed of colonialists, damned today in the fashion of the times, who dedicated their lives to giving people of Asia and Africa sound and orderly government as they slowly evolved from the economic, political and social environment of another age into the Industrial Revolution. This miracle, in which the machine has become the slave to take up the weary burdens of man, has effected already incredible gains to free human beings' timeless chains; it promises vaster ones ahead. Like most change, however, it has been accompanied by problems of equal magnitude. When change surges too swiftly, control of direction may be lost; chaos instead of the Promised Land may result. The so-called "colonial" people of the British Empire needed the firm and honest government men like Sir Rupert provided.

Governing of people by people always has defects. Governing of one people by another may have more defects; certainly it has different ones. Even the most benign human institution contains error. Yet the long view of history may well be that English and other European colonial administrators in recent generations worked for the welfare of the peoples governed and that one of the important mistakes of the Twentieth Century was the precipitate abandonment of these trusteeships before the peoples were ready to assume full responsibility —

abandonment that must be shared by slowness to change of the rulers, impatience of the governed, and American pressure.

My own personal experience in the Middle East coincided with certain stages of this abandonment by the British. Many citizens in the colonies that had struggled for freedom were soon disillusioned. This was so because they came to realize that whatever they had gained in spirit through freedom, they had nevertheless lost a corps of dedicated and self-sacrificing public servants. It was difficult if not impossible to replace overnight these knowledgeable and wise men in the numbers required.

Early in my tour in the Middle East, I came to know and admire Lieutenant Colonel Sir Rupert Hay as an outstanding representative of the Foreign Office. He had given most of his life to the service of the Empire in the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent. At the time I knew him, his Headquarters were at Bahrain, the Island of tombs, in the Persian Gulf.

Sir Rupert began his career early in India and never ceased to study the East. Born at Bridport, Dorset, in 1893, not far from his present Causeway House, he was educated at Bradfield and University College, Oxford. This great educational institution opened his mind to the world but the chances of war led him to India and his life service. During his 21st year, in 1914, he sailed to India with the Fourth Dorset Regiment. The following year he transferred to the Indian Army and saw active service in the ancient sands of Mesopotamia where he was mentioned in dispatches.

In 1917, while still an officer, he was assigned to the Civil Administration in Mesopotamia and so served for three years. This seemed to fix his future for in 1920 he joined the Indian Political Service. For 12 busy years 1921–1933, he served on the wild Northwest frontier and for the next three years was Counselor of the British Legation at Kabul.

Relinquishing this distant post, he returned to Delhi to be Deputy Foreign Secretary to the Government of India from 1936 into the early dark days of World War II. In 1940 he left to be Resident in Waziristan and, in a political-military capacity, to take up active

military duties again. For his able service, he was again mentioned in dispatches. Then in 1941 he was appointed Political Resident of the vital Persian Gulf where the ambitions and influences of many people mingle in cross currents little understood by us in the West.

The following year he was needed in Baluchistan where he served first as Revenue and Judicial Commissioner until 1943 and then as Agent to the Governor General until after the end of the war. In 1946 he received his last appointment in this center of ceaseless conflict and empire, again taking up the responsibilities of Political Resident of the Persian Gulf with duties comprising an extensive area from Kuwait to Dhofar on the Arabian Sea bordering the Aden Protectorate.

When I first met Sir Rupert Hay, I saw at once that here was a man of wisdom, balance and depth of experience. He is one of the few living persons who know the Middle East and India through a mature lifetime of working there and thoughtfully serving the people of the area. He not only knows, but he profoundly understands. Many men might spend most of their years in a foreign land but few can develop to become both a part of the people they serve and at the same time maintain the clear concepts of their birth heritage. His undeviating integrity and high principles were in the best traditions of public administration that is England's gift to alien lands.

Throughout his eminent public service, Sir Rupert constantly studied to understand and often wrote what he learned lucidly and coherently. His common sense, sagacity and balance that must have appealed to the citizens of the land where he served show in the important manuscript that follows.

This small excellent book surveys swiftly the geography, history, the cyclonic impact for change of oil, the rivalries of nations, the characters of the people and the general nature of each of the Persian Gulf states and of Muscat–Oman. It takes me back vividly. For example, "the low-lying Shaikhdoms of the Persian Gulf have little to boast of in the way of scenery and are in places ugly and uninviting. They exert, however, a curious fascination. . . . I have little doubt that this is due to the ever changing colors of the shallow seas which surround them." Almost everywhere, men working in these dun alien

lands "have views of the shifting blues and greens and grays and yellows of a sea that is never the same and their weary eyes will often be refreshed by the sight of a dhow in full sail gliding across its shimmering surface."

So I saw the Trucial Coast often and especially at Sharjah transformed in the sea. I first approached it by small boat from the flagship as the moon rose in the dusk. It was a magic land of silvery waters, golden sands and palms silhouetted like velvet against the stars — proving that moonlight can perform miracles.

Sir Rupert touches upon all aspects of life, customs, and environment in this far-spreading and fascinating area. He describes education and the powerful influence of Egyptian and other imported teachers; the universal impact of radio propaganda; the finances, banqueting customs, pearling, taxing, fishing: "The fish are dried in the sun and in season the whole coast reeks of them."

In one passage he may describe the formalities of a visit with a Shaikh, including variations in the use of incense and rose-water: "On the Trucial Coast rose-water and incense are often produced on the arrival of a visitor and the rose-water is sometimes sprinkled over his head instead of his hands to his great embarrassment, if he happens to be bald."

In other passages he tells of commerce, conflict of political ambitions, Arab hospitality and democratic functioning of the tribal system: "The Arabs are democratic by nature so far as their relations with each other are concerned. All pure Arabs are equal and everybody else is very much their inferior, but they have not yet adapted themselves to democratic institutions on Western lines. . . . A tribal Shaikh is regarded as first among equals and tribal affairs are ordinarily discussed and settled at gatherings of tribesmen in his tent. . . . In the last resort the Ruler's word is law, but he is almost always guided by public opinion and it can be safely stated that most of the Rulers genuinely endeavor to do their best for their people and that tyranny is rare."

His description of the climate may be somewhat more tolerant than that of the usual European. For example he closes an absorbing chap-

PREFACE

HAVING SERVED for eight years as British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf I considered it desirable to put on record a description of the little known regions with which I had been associated. I sent my manuscript to a number of publishers in England, only to be told that the public wanted personal reminiscences and anecdotes about the Shaikhs, and not information. I am therefore deeply grateful to the Middle East Institute for arranging for my modest effort to see the light of day. Over five and a half years have now elapsed since I left Bahrain, and there have been many developments since. I accordingly wish to express my warmest thanks to old colleagues and other friends who have helped me to bring the book up to date, especially Sir Charles Belgrave, Neal Pelly, Leslie Chauncy, Ronald Cochrane and James Adams.

The States I am proposing to describe are those for the conduct of relations with which the British Government maintains a Persian Gulf Residency. On this account I have called them the Persian Gulf States, although they are not all situated in the Persian Gulf proper. They are eleven in number, ten Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. The ten Shaikhdoms — Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the seven Trucial States — are strung out along the western shore of the Persian Gulf, the Trucial States extending to the coast of the Gulf of Oman, while the Sultanate of Muscat occupies all except a small stretch of the western coast of the Gulf of Oman and a large portion of the southern coast of Arabia. My object is to give a detailed description of these States and their political and economic conditions at the present day for the information of those who may be temporarily residing in or visiting them or may be otherwise interested in them, but before doing this I have considered it desirable to say a few words about the geography and climate of the area as a whole and to trace briefly the sequence of events which has led up to the formation

of the States and the establishment of the British Government's present position with regard to them.

Rupert Hay

Causeway House
Radipole
Weymouth
Dorset
May, 1959

Note on Transliteration

In the transliteration of Arabic names and words I have generally followed the Hunterian system but have retained forms which have become familiar in English e.g. Muscat (for Masqat). The unpronounceable letter 'ain is indicated by the symbol (') except at the beginning of a name, where I have omitted it as being of interest only to the Arabist. The ordinary reader will be unable to distinguish between Ajman and 'Ajman. In the middle of a word the symbol does at least serve to separate syllables as in Sa'id.

The pronunciation of Arabic consonants, especially the gutturals, varies in different parts of the Arab world and a long treatise would be necessary to explain the variations in use in the Gulf States. Suffice it to say that the *q* (qaf) is usually, but by no means always, pronounced as a hard *g* at the beginning of a word or syllable e.g. Qatar is pronounced like "gutter," and that the *k* (kaf) is sometimes pronounced as a *ch* e.g. Failaka is pronounced Failacha. Very rarely the *q* is pronounced as a *j* and where this occurs I have transliterated it accordingly e.g. Sharjah (for Sharqah). Occasionally, macrons have been used where one name might be confused with another of the same spelling in this system.

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL

THE PERSIAN GULF is an inland sea about 500 miles long and, on the average, 100 miles wide. It lies roughly north-west and south-east between latitudes 30° and 24° North and longitudes 48° and 57° East. It is known locally as the Gulf of Fars, the province of Persia which forms its north-eastern shore, though some of the more progressive Arabs on the opposite coast are now beginning to refer to it as the Arabian Gulf. At its most northern point the Shatt al-Arab enters it and for a very short distance to the west of its mouth the sea-board belongs to Iraq. After that Kuwait extends along the south-western shore for about 90 miles and the Neutral Zone, which Kuwait shares with Saudi Arabia, for about 45 miles. Saudi Arabia owns the coast from here onwards for about 250 miles to the head of the Gulf of Salwa. From this point an ungainly peninsula runs northwards for about 90 miles to form the Shaikhdom of Qatar. The Shaikhdom of Bahrain consists of an archipelago between the tip of this peninsula and the mainland. From the eastern base of the peninsula the coast sweeps eastwards and then bends north in a great arc forming what is known as the Pirate or Trucial Coast. This terminates in the mountainous Musandam Peninsula, the point of which abuts on the Straits of Hormuz, the narrow passage linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. The Trucial Coast is parcelled out between the various Trucial Shaikhdoms, whose territory extends across the base of the Musandam Peninsula to the Gulf of Oman, while the northern end of the peninsula forms part of the Sultanate of Muscat.

The Persian Gulf is one of the shallowest of seas. Only in a few places does its depth exceed 50 fathoms. Its deepest channel lies close to the Persian shore and on its Arab side there are extensive coral shoals and many little islands. On a clear day when the sun is

shining it looks — from the air — like a patchwork quilt, the shoals showing yellow with a brightness varying according to their depth, and the deeper waters blue. Here and there an island appears as a black or sand-colored spot, according to the position of the sun. The pattern varies with the tides, which average six or seven feet at the springs. The Arab shore, until the Musandam peninsula is reached, is composed of low-lying, sandy beaches, alternating with stretches of coral and there are numerous inlets, some of them extending for many miles inland. The beaches are covered with shells, and inland there is usually gravelly desert alternating with *sabkhah,* flat stretches of soil heavily impregnated with salt, either bare or studded with ugly weeds. In some places the land rises, within a few miles from the shore, to a height of 100 or 200 feet and limestone ridges appear. Elsewhere the coastal plain gives way to interminable sand-dunes. With the exception of the main Bahrain island, none of the islands off the Arab coast exceeds a few square miles in area. Some are nothing more than sand banks or coral reefs, others have hills on them rising to several hundred feet, and almost all are waterless. Some of the larger islands off the Trucial Coast display a surprising variety of color, owing to the presence of red oxide.

When the coast turns north at Ras al-Khaimah at the eastern end of the Trucial Coast, its character entirely changes. Tall mountains run down in cliffs to the sea, broken here and there by valleys debouching into small plains, each with its village and palm gardens. Towards the tip of the Musandam peninsula the sea has carved out many rocky islets and, at one place, penetrated deep into the mountains forming a fjord which is known as the Elphinstone Inlet. This is separated only by a narrow ridge from a similar inlet, known as Malcolm's Inlet, in the Gulf of Oman on the eastern side of the mountains.

The Gulf of Oman is altogether different in character from the Persian Gulf. It is very deep and its waters in summer are much cooler than those of the latter. The land shelves steeply into the depths and there are no shoals. Only a few rocky islands lie close to the coast. Inland the country is mountainous, but from the base of

the Musandam peninsula up to a point a few miles north of Muscat a coastal plain varying in width from one to twenty miles sweeps round in a great arc with an almost continuous — though narrow — belt of palm gardens and many villages. This is known as the Batinah Coast. Muscat itself is cradled in hills of black igneous rock. Southwards, until the south-eastern tip of the Arabian peninsula is reached at Ras al-Hadd, the coast is bare and rough with limestone cliffs, which are in places bright yellow, and there are small shell-strewn beaches. Westwards of Ras al-Hadd the surf of the Indian Ocean rolls up a desolate and almost uninhabited shore for hundreds of miles until the province of Dhofar is reached. Here there is a sudden change as the coastal plain receives monsoon rains and the shore is fringed in places with graceful cocoanut plantations.

The whole of the south-eastern corner of Arabia bears the name of Oman and the Trucial Coast is known to the Arabs as the Oman Coast. The eastern half of the area is very mountainous, rising at the Jabal Akhdhar to about 10,000 feet. The valleys are fertile and support villages, gardens and crops but the mountains are bare and there is no timber. The western half rolls away in stony desert until the sands of the Rub' al-Khali are reached in the interior and — on the coast — the province of Dhofar. Here the Qarah mountains, which rise to a height of 3,000 or 4,000 feet between the coastal plain and the desert, are covered with trees, shrubs and grass and support large herds of cattle.

A notable feature of the Persian Gulf States is their lack of precise land boundaries. The boundaries of Kuwait and the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone have been defined but have not yet been demarcated. Bahrain, being an archipelago, has no land boundaries. The boundaries of the other States, with each other and with Saudi Arabia, or, in the case of Muscat with the Aden Protectorate, have, except for the inter-Shaikhdom boundaries on the Trucial Coast, never been finally settled. In some cases there is a measure of agreement about their position but elsewhere they are the subject of dispute. Before the advent of oil the desert was in many ways similar to the high seas. Nomads and their camels roamed across it at will and, though there were vague tribal limits, there

were few signs of the authority of any established government outside the ports and oases. Now every State concerned is anxious to claim as large a slice of the desert as possible in the hope that it may cover vast quantities of the precious liquid. Historical proof of the exercise of sovereignty in the past over an uninhabited waste is, however, difficult to produce.

* * * * *

The climate of the Persian Gulf has been much abused. It is certainly trying for several months in the year, but I suspect that in the past there has been a tendency on the part of those serving in it to exaggerate its terrors in order to obtain or retain compensatory allowances. It must, however, be remembered that recent developments, such as electric fans, air-conditioning and the manufacture of ice have greatly tempered its severity, and that anti-malarial work and other health measures have reduced the incidence of disease. For six months of the year, from November to April inclusive, the weather is quite pleasant, and January and February can be colder than an English summer, the lowest temperature recorded in Bahrain being 40° F. Frosts occur in Kuwait and once in January a little snow was seen to fall in Bahrain. On the same occasion the hills on some of the islands in the Gulf were reported to be snow-capped. From time to time during the colder months strong north winds blow, sometimes for several days on end. They often start suddenly and cause the loss of dhows which are unable to obtain shelter behind an island or headland. On one occasion when a cocktail party was in progress on board a British cruiser the velocity of the wind rose within a few seconds from five to 30 miles an hour. The band's music was blown into the sea, the awnings were ripped and the guests were hurried below. Most of them had to spend the night on board. May is hot but dry. From early June until the middle of July a north-west wind, known as the *barah,* usually blows for 40 days. When it is strong and continuous the weather during this period is tolerable as the wind is dry and comparatively cool. The really bad season lasts from the middle of July until the middle of October. Either there is no wind at all, or it blows from the south-east and

the humidity is intense. In the earlier part of the hot weather the temperature rarely rises much above 100° F. on the coast, though a few miles inland it can approach 120° F. and be burning hot, and fall again at night. In the bad months temperatures hover in the nineties day and night and the humidity often exceeds 90 per cent. This produces a stifling hothouse atmosphere which in the main centers of population at Bahrain is often permeated by fumes from the oil refinery. At the same time the temperature of the sea rises to that of a hot bath and bathing in it affords no relief. At all seasons of the year man's comfort and well-being depend greatly on the wind. The prevailing winds are the north-west, known as the *shimal,* and the south-east, known as the *kaus.* The former is comparatively bracing while the latter is always damp and enervating. When the wind is strong, especially from the north-west, it causes sand storms which can be unpleasant on the mainland. The Bahrain islands are sufficiently far from the mainland to escape these but are often enveloped in the resulting dust haze which reduces visibility to a few hundred yards and makes air navigation difficult. Fogs are rare and occur mostly in the early mornings during the cold weather.

The rainfall is minimal and for the most part no cultivation is directly dependent on it. The average at Bahrain is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. In Kuwait it is somewhat more, in Qatar less and on the Trucial Coast probably about the same. Its incidence is most irregular and rain can fall at any time from the end of October until early May. In some years not more than about an inch falls in Bahrain, in others there may be as much as seven or eight inches. Rain is especially welcome when it falls between late October and early December. This is known as *wasm* rain and ensures good spring grazing and a plentiful supply in the desert of the truffles which the Arabs love so dearly. One of the warmest welcomes a Gulf Arab can give is when he says that your coming is like that of the *wasm* rain. Your arrival as a guest will always be doubly welcome if it coincides with a fall of rain and your host will attribute to you a *qadm mubarak,* which is the reverse of the evil eye and can perhaps be translated very roughly as "lucky foot." It is difficult for those who live in less arid climates to realize how intensely rain is desired in desert countries in spite

of the temporary discomfort it causes to those who dwell in tents and palm-frond huts.

With the inadequate and irregular rainfall the natural water supply is everywhere precarious except in Bahrain, where there are many springs and wells, and in the sub-montane areas of the Trucial Coast. There are no rivers or streams — only water courses which flow for a few hours after the rare falls of heavy rain. In most places where distilled sea water is not available the people are dependent for their drinking water on a few wells, the majority of which are always brackish and become increasingly saline in years of little rain.

In the Gulf of Oman the climate is hotter and somewhat drier than in the Persian Gulf and the sea is always cool. In Muscat only the four months December to March inclusive can be described as pleasant. In the summer from time to time a west wind known as the *gharbi* sweeps down at night from the low rocky hills which have baked in the sun all day and causes the temperature to rise suddenly by many degrees — to 110° F. or more. Chairs and other articles of furniture become too hot to handle comfortably. The heat is often intense throughout the twenty-four hours and a missionary told me that once when a hen deserted her clutch of eggs in his garden they all hatched out a few days later without her assistance. The rainfall in the hills of the interior is higher than that of the coast or the low-lying Shaikhdoms further north and there are occasional monsoon storms in July, August and September. As a result there are springs in the valleys and a few running streams, though only spates reach the coast. On the Batinah Coast and at a few places elsewhere the water which has percolated from the hills is tapped by wells and underground channels of the type known as *falaj* in Arabia, *kanat* in Persia and *karez* in Pakistan. From Ras al-Hadd westwards until Dhofar is reached there is very little rainfall but the summer heat is tempered by monsoon winds. Dhofar receives the monsoon rains which clothe the hills with vegetation and enrich the coastal plain with gardens and crops. May is very hot but for most of the rest of the year the climate is tolerable, though humid during the monsoon.

The Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman are not as unhealthy as might be expected. Serious epidemics are rare and, though except in a few of the more progressive towns there is no attempt at sanitation, the sun and the sea are effective scavengers. Prickly heat is the chief enemy and often develops into boils, but can be kept at bay by frequent changes of clothes and by air-conditioning where it is available. Typhoid can be avoided by inoculation and dysentery by taking care in the preparation of food. Arab meals consist mostly of cooked fare which can be eaten with impunity by those whose digestion is sound. Fresh fruit is often included and this can usually be eaten with safety if it can be skinned. Most new arrivals suffer for a time from "bad tummy" but this disappears as they become acclimatized. Malaria has been practically stamped out at Bahrain and, owing to lack of water, is rare elsewhere except in cultivated areas in the eastern Trucial Coast States and Muscat territory. Mosquito nets are ordinarily not an essential part of a visitor's equipment. Cuts and abrasions must be treated with care, especially if caused by coral. Among local populations, tuberculosis, eye diseases and venereal disease are rife and the Shaikhs would appear to be particularly prone to diabetes.

Clothing of the English summer type is required for the three winter months in the Shaikhdoms with a heavy overcoat for the evenings. For the rest of the year tropical kit is worn. In the hot weather the usual attire for men, except on formal occasions, is an open neck shirt with light trousers or shorts. To avoid prickly heat, especially during the humid months, it is desirable to put on a clean shirt two or three times a day. From the middle of May until the end of October "Persian Gulf Kit" is usually worn by men at evening parties. This consists of a white shirt without a tie, white trousers and a black cummerbund. Hats are now rarely worn except on formal occasions, though, in my opinion, it is desirable to wear a felt hat if one is going out in the sun in the middle of the day in the summer — or even a démodé *topi,* if one expects to spend a whole summer's day in the open in the desert. In Muscat clothes of the English summer type can be worn with comfort only for a few days each year and can, if necessary, be dispensed with.

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The marine fauna of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman is extensive and varied. Some of the fish have been described by Dr. Blegvad,* a Dane who was employed by the Persian Government before the Second World War for the survey and exploitation of the Persian Gulf fisheries, but the subject is one which gives scope for further study. In the western half of the Persian Gulf the supply of fish is not adequate to meet local demands but further east and in the Gulf of Oman the sea teems with fish. Sharks abound but rarely appear to attack human beings and the pearl-divers go in much greater fear of sawfish. King-mackerel, various types of tunny, rock-cod and many other kinds of fish can be found in the right places at the right times of the year and fishing with a rod from a small motorboat is one of the most pleasurable amenities which the Gulf affords. Whales are occasionally seen and, once or twice during the last war, were, it is believed, mistaken for submarines. Porpoises or, perhaps more correctly, dolphins, are ubiquitous. The pearling industry is mentioned elsewhere. The pearl oyster is unfortunately not edible, nor is the much larger mother-of-pearl oyster, but a small edible oyster is found on the rocks of some of the Persian Gulf islands and off the coast of Oman and especially round the harbor at Muscat. There are a vast number of other kinds of shell-fish, the shells of which strew the beaches, including the delicate nautilus. Crayfish of the *langouste* variety are found at Muscat and of a smaller variety with a triangular head and no whiskers at Bahrain. Prawns are abundant almost everywhere. Yellow-banded sea-snakes bask on the surface of the water. According to the textbooks they are eight times more poisonous than any land snake but the fishermen appear to handle them with impunity when they get into their nets. It may be that they are slow to strike, but it is not wise to experiment with them. At certain times of the year the waters of the Gulf are covered with a yellow matter which gives off a most offensive odor. This is said to be spawn of some kind. The sea is often full

* *Fishes of the Iranian Gulf.* By H. Blegvad and B. Løppenthin. Danish Scientific Investigations in Iran, Part 3, pp. 1–247. Copenhagen, 1944.

of jelly fish and care has to be taken of them when bathing. A small one known as the Portuguese Man-of-War is particularly venomous.

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The land fauna is not extensive. Gazelle used to be abundant in the desert but are now hunted down in motorcars and are rapidly being exterminated. The Ruler of Bahrain preserves a herd, mixed with black buck, originally imported from India, in one of his islands. In the Oman hills a wild goat of the *thar* variety is found. It is identical, it is believed, with the species found elsewhere only in the Himalayas many hundreds of miles away. There are a few hare in the desert and coneys in the Oman hills. The date gardens at Bahrain are full of mongooses. Small rodents are common, including the jerboa. Lizards are frequently seen, the most remarkable of them being the large yellow monitor. Snakes are rare. I only saw two or three in seven years and they were not poisonous ones, but the island of Tamb in the Eastern end of the Gulf has a bad reputation for them. The species there has not been identified but it is said to be small and nocturnal in its habits.

Not many species of birds other than sea-birds are indigenous. In Bahrain there is little beyond sparrows, bulbuls and desert larks. In Oman many more species are found, especially in the gardens along the Batinah Coast. There are, however, many migrants including bustard, duck, geese, sand-grouse and snipe, but game is nowhere plentiful and the sportsman has usually to be content with a small bag. The Shaikhs often go to Saudi Arabia for sport and obtain enormous bags of bustard, mostly by hawking. Some of their hawks are snared on the Trucial Coast islands but most are imported from Persia. There are seabirds innumerable and cormorants may at times be seen in thousands flying in formation across the sky. Their eggs are found on some of the islands and are quite good eating, though the flesh of the birds is not palatable. Flocks of rosy-hued flamingoes frequent the uninhabited island and creeks. Most of the birds of the Gulf States have been described by Colonel R. C. Meinertzhagen in his book *Birds of Arabia.**

* *Birds of Arabia.* By R. Meinertzhagen. Oliver Boyd. 1954.

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For most of the year there is little to be seen in the way of flora outside the date-gardens beyond desert scrub. In the spring, however, when there has been good rain, all sorts of plants appear in the desert including many beautiful, though usually small, flowers. This is particularly true of Kuwait where in a year of good rain the desert is carpeted with flowers and vegetation generally. Scattered acacia trees are found in the submontane areas of Oman, but elsewhere, except in Dhofar, trees only grow where there is irrigation or in a few places along the coast where there is water near the surface of the ground. Stunted mangroves are found in some of the creeks. Mrs. Dickson of Kuwait, with the assistance of Professor Good of Hull University, has published a book describing the flora of Kuwait and Bahrain.*

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There is majesty in the mountains of Oman, but the low-lying Shaikhdoms of the Persian Gulf have little to boast of in the way of scenery and are in places ugly and uninviting. They exert, however, a curious fascination for most of those who know them — in spite of their heat and drabness. I have little doubt that this is due to the ever-changing colors of the shallow seas which surround them. Almost everywhere those working in offices or oilfields will, at some stage of the day, if not throughout it, have views of the shifting blues and greens and grays and yellows of a sea that is never the same and their weary eyes will often be refreshed by the sight of a dhow in full sail gliding across its shimmering surface.

* *The Wild Flowers of Kuwait and Bahrain.* By Violet Dickson. George Allen & Unwin. 1955.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE LATE SIR ARNOLD WILSON compiled "an historical sketch of the Persian Gulf from the earliest times to the beginning of the twentieth century," * but no one has yet attempted to bring this up to date. I am not setting out to fill the gap in the present book, but consider it desirable to explain briefly the genesis of the curious political patchwork that exists in the Gulf at the present day. Between Nearchus' voyage in 326–325 B.C. and the coming of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, the story is one of the rise and fall of principalities, of the growth and decay of ports and of alternating Arab and Persian predominance, and no power was ever master of the entire Gulf for any appreciable length of time. The Portuguese maintained a political and commercial supremacy for about a century and were driven out of Hormuz by the Persians, with British assistance, in 1622 and out of Muscat by the local Arabs in 1650. After that there was commercial rivalry between the British and the Dutch until the middle of the eighteenth century when the Dutch gradually faded out of the picture leaving the field to the British.

In 1763 the East India Company established a Residency at Bushire. It was entirely commercial at first but circumstances forced it to assume a political character. From time immemorial the inhabitants of the Arab shore of the Persian Gulf had derived their livelihood, to a very great extent, from piracy. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Wahhabis of Central Arabia extended their influence to the western coast of the Gulf. According to their tenets, as Sir Arnold Wilson has remarked, "the right of conquest over infidels,

* *The Persian Gulf.* By Sir Arnold Wilson. Oxford University Press, 1928. Reprinted by Allen & Unwin, 1954.

the promulgation of the faith by fire and sword, and the right to dispose of the lives and properties of prisoners" became "not merely admissible, but indispensible duties." * Piracy, having thus become obligatory as well as profitable, increased by leaps and bounds and so many attacks were made on the East India Company's merchantmen and men-of-war that action became imperative. In 1809 an expedition was sent against Ras al-Khaimah, the pirates' headquarters on what is now known as the Trucial Coast, and the town and all the vessels in port were burned. No agreement, however, was reached with the local Shaikhs and after a year or two they resumed their piratical practices. Consequently, at the end of 1819, a much stronger force was sent against Ras al-Khaimah. It was completely successful and did not withdraw until the Shaikhs of the Trucial Coast, as well as the Shaikhs of Bahrain, who had also indulged in piracy, signed, in January 1820, a general Treaty of Peace with the British Government. This contained an undertaking by the Shaikhs to abstain from plunder and piracy by land and sea except by way of acknowledged war. The Treaty did not prove altogether satisfactory, as acts of piracy were committed under the guise of war. Accordingly, in 1835, the Shaikhs of the Trucial Coast were induced to enter into a Maritime Truce not to engage in hostilities with each other by sea. It is from this truce that the coast derives its present name. The Truce, temporary at first, was renewed from time to time, but in 1853 a Perpetual Maritime Truce was signed by the Shaikhs. It contained a clause that the peace would be watched over by the British Government, who would take steps to ensure its observance. The British thus became formally responsible for policing the waters of the Gulf, a duty which they had in fact been performing since 1820.

Meanwhile, the duties of the Resident at Bushire had become political rather than commercial in nature. It appears that the term "Political" was first added to the title in 1862, but from early in the nineteenth century the Resident had ceased to be directly concerned with trade. So far as Persia was concerned he was Consul-

* *The Persian Gulf*, p. 197.

General for the Provinces of Fars, Khuzistan and Luristan, and for the coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf within the dominions of Persia; for the other parts of the Persian Gulf he was the Political Resident. For long he was referred to by both Persians and Arabs as the *Balyoz,* the term used by the Turks centuries ago for the representative of the Venetian Republic at the Sultan's Court and connected etymologically with the English word "Bailiff." It is rarely heard now. He received his orders from the Bombay Government until 1873 and after that from the Government of India. He was represented on the Trucial Coast from 1829 by an Arab Residency Agent and from 1861 the British representative at Muscat was subordinate to him. No British representative was appointed in any of the other Gulf States until early in the twentieth century.

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Muscat is the present capital of Oman, the name applied to the southeastern corner of the Arabian peninsula. Its inhabitants, the bulk of whom belong to a Muslim sect called the Ibadhis, have always maintained a sturdy independence and although their country has from time to time been invaded and partially occupied by foreigners, including the Portuguese, the Persians and the Wahhabis, they have all in turn been expelled. The present dynasty, the Al Bu Sa'id, dates from the expulsion of the Persians in 1744. About 1774 the family transferred its capital from the interior to Muscat on the coast. The reigning head has, since 1861, been styled officially as "Sultan" of Muscat, but the only title used by the local tribesmen is "Saiyid." In the first half of the nineteenth century the then reigning prince, Saiyid Sa'id, occupied Zanzibar on the East African coast. On his death in 1856 one of his sons succeeded at Muscat and another at Zanzibar. Separate branches of the same dynasty still rule in these two places. Great Britain first entered into treaty relations with Muscat in 1798 and appointed a representative there two years later. Muscat assisted the British in the wars against the pirates and has since cooperated with the British on many occasions but has always conducted her own foreign relations and — though often accepting the

advice of the British Government — has never been in any way subordinate to it.

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The small Shaikhdoms, or Principalities, on the Arab shore of the Persian Gulf were founded at different times by parties of tribesmen from Central Arabia who moved down to the coast and either built their own ports or occupied existing ones. Kuwait was founded by a party of Utbi Arabs in 1716. Fifty years later some of the descendants of these Arabs left Kuwait and established themselves in Qatar, from where, in 1783, they wrested Bahrain from the Persians and made it their headquarters. The Turks occupied Qatar in 1871 and soon after made the leading local Shaikh, whose chief interest up to then had been the pearl trade, their Qaimaqam, or Deputy Governor. The present Ruler is descended from this man. The ruling families on the Trucial Coast have been settled there for many generations, but before 1853 there were frequent wars between them and places from time to time changed hands. The establishment of the *Pax Britannica* had the effect of freezing the position as it then was and the descendants of the five Shaikhs who signed the Perpetual Maritime Truce are still independent Rulers of States, although two of them rule over little more than one village each. One of the larger Shaikhdoms has, however, since split into three, so that there are now seven Trucial States in all.

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After dealing with piracy the British Government turned its attention to the slave trade. From time immemorial the Arabs of the Persian Gulf littoral and Muscat had been in the habit of importing slaves by dhow from East Africa for sale in Arabia or elsewhere. Between 1822 and 1873 the Sultan of Muscat and the Shaikhs of the Trucial Coast and Bahrain were induced to enter into agreements prohibiting the import of slaves to their States and giving British men-of-war the right to search their ships and to confiscate any found to be carrying slaves intended for sale. British men-of-war were from time to time deputed on slave duty and a number of dhows engaged

in the traffic were captured and confiscated and the slaves they were carrying released.

The most important agreements with the States of the Persian Gulf and those on which the British position at present rests are what are known as the "exclusive" agreements. Great Britain having acquired, more or less fortuitously, a dominating influence in the Gulf, became anxious to retain it, primarily to safeguard her communications with India. At that time nothing was known of the great oil wealth underlying the barren sands of the States and the sole importance of the Gulf to Great Britain lay in its position on the flank of these communications. During the last decade of the nineteenth century she obtained agreements from Bahrain, Kuwait and the Trucial States whereby the Rulers undertook not to have direct relations with any other foreign power, and not to sell, lease or cede land to any such power. Great Britain thus became responsible for conducting the foreign relations of these States, and, incidentally, for their protection against foreign aggression. The Rulers entered readily into these agreements because they realized that their continued independence could only be ensured by British protection. The Sultan of Muscat, however, is bound by no such agreement and is responsible for the conduct of his own foreign relations.

During most of the nineteenth century a vague control was exercised over Kuwait by the Turkish authorities at Basrah. In 1898 Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait, anxious to avoid any extension of this control, turned to Great Britain and in 1899 signed a comprehensive treaty which contained most of the provisions included in the various agreements with Bahrain and the Trucial States. The Turks continued to exercise a nominal suzerainty over Kuwait until they entered the first World War on the side of the Germans in 1914.

When the Turks occupied the province of Hasa in 1871 they extended their control over the Qatar peninsula which they continued to occupy until 1914. On their withdrawal the British recognized the Shaikh who had been their local Deputy Governor as Ruler, and in 1916 they entered into a Treaty with him embodying the provisions of their agreements with the other Gulf States.

The discovery of oil in southwest Persia in the first decade of the twentieth century made it clear that oil might also be found in the Gulf States. Great Britain, in order to prevent the exploitation of the Rulers by adventurers and to ensure them a fair deal, persuaded them to enter agreements not to grant any concession for oil without her approval. The position thus acquired has not been used to prevent reputable companies other than British from competing for such concessions.

I have attempted briefly to describe how the Persian Gulf States came into being and how the present British position with regard to them came to be established. There are numerous other agreements relating to posts and telegraphs, civil aviation and other matters, to some of which reference will be made later. No protectorate has ever been declared but the ten Shaikhdoms are usually described as "Protected States." They remain internally independent but Great Britain has assumed responsibility for their external affairs and their protection. She brought them through the two World Wars unscathed, though there was an Italian air raid on the Bahrain refinery in the last war — which did no damage — and kept them supplied with the necessities of life. Until the end of the first World War no question of the protection of their landward boundaries arose, and the presence of a few men-of-war in the Gulf sufficed for the discharge of British responsibilities. In the twenties of this century, however, increasing interest in the oil potentials of the States changed the picture, and Great Britain found herself obliged to protect them from encroachment by land.

Before closing this chapter it is desirable to say a few words about the other limitrophe States of the Persian Gulf — Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Persia. The province of Hasa, which extends for about 250 miles along the Arab shore of the Gulf between Kuwait and Qatar, was occupied by the Turks from 1871 to 1913 when they were evicted by the late King Abd al-Aziz, known more familiarly as Ibn Sa'ud. His ancestors had been the leaders of the Wahhabis who, during much of the latter half of the eighteenth century and for the first half of the nineteenth, were masters of most of the Arabian peninsula. Subsequently, their fortunes changed and at the beginning of

the present century Ibn Sa'ud and his father were exiles in Kuwait. In 1902 Ibn Sa'ud succeeded in establishing himself in his ancestral capital of Riyadh. His power grew rapidly. In 1913, as mentioned above, he drove the Turks out of Hasa. After the first World War he eliminated his rival in the Arabian desert, Ibn Rashid, and in 1924–26 he annexed the Hijaz and founded what is now the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This embraces the whole of the Arabian peninsula except its southern end, which is held by the Yemen, the British colony and protectorate of Aden and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and the part of the Arab shore and hinterland of the Persian Gulf which is held by the Shaikhdoms under British protection. During — and for some time after — the first World War, Ibn Sa'ud was subsidized by the British, but this subsidy ceased in 1924. Since the thirties of this century, when an American company obtained an oil concession from him, the United States of America has been the preponderant "Western" influence in Saudi Arabia.

Before the first World War what is now Iraq was part of the Turkish Empire and the Turks claimed suzerainty over Kuwait. After the war the Kingdom (now the Republic) of Iraq was formed. It touches the Persian Gulf only at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab, but the port of Basrah, situated some miles up the river, has for centuries played an important part in the trade and economy of the Gulf as a whole. Iraq remained under British mandate until 1932 since when the country has been completely independent.

Persia holds the whole of the eastern side of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. In the eighteenth century she established herself for a time in Bahrain and Muscat and still claims the former place as an integral part of her territory. In the nineteenth century the power of Persia declined and she was able to exercise little authority even on her own shore of the Gulf. The Sultan of Muscat and Arabs from the Trucial Coast occupied, for a time, portions of her coast and islands. The influence of the British Resident at Bushire was as great if not greater than that of the Persian Governor there, and a British naval base was established on one of the Persian islands. The British Political Resident continued to have much say in local affairs until Riza Shah consolidated his authority after the first World

War. After this time his functions on Persian soil were purely consular. In 1935 the British naval base was moved to Bahrain.

As the Political Resident's authority in Persia declined the Gulf Shaikhdoms assumed increasing importance, owing to the discovery of oil and the establishment of airports in them. The Resident found practically the whole of his time occupied with their affairs and relations with the local Persian authorities were entrusted to a subordinate officer. In these circumstances it was not only inconvenient but also improper for him to continue to function on Persian soil. Accordingly, before the Second World War, it was decided to transfer the Residency to Bahrain, but owing to the war the transfer was delayed and did not take place until 1946. The old Residency at Bushire was handed over to the Persians for use as a sanatorium. Great Britain maintained a Vice-Consulate in the town for a few years but this office disappeared when the British were compelled to close all their consular operations in Persia in 1951. It has not since been reopened.

Although, in 1946, the Residency and its subordinate offices were still staffed and administered by the British Government of India, it had for many years received orders direct from the British Government in London in important matters of policy and it should be noted that all the treaties and engagements entered into by the various Rulers, including the Sultan of Muscat, were with the central British Government — though in some of them the Government of India is also mentioned. When the British decided to transfer power in India it would clearly have been inappropriate to hand over responsibility for dealing with the Gulf Arabs to Indians or Pakintanis. Accordingly, control of the Residency and its subordinate offices was taken over by the British Government in London on April 1, 1947.

CHAPTER III

THE RESIDENCY

THE POLITICAL RESIDENT, with his headquarters at Bahrain, is subordinate to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in London. He is graded as an Ambassador and enjoys a salute of 15 guns. He is assisted by a number of Diplomatic Secretaries and other officers and is responsible for the supervision of the Political Agencies at Bahrain, Kuwait, Dubai and Dohah and the Consulate General at Muscat. In what follows, when I refer to the Shaikhdoms' and not to the 'States,' my intention is to exclude Muscat.

The Resident conducts relations with the States on the basis of the treaties and agreements described in the last chapter. In addition, in all the States the British representatives, by informal agreement with the Rulers, exercise a measure of extraterritorial jurisdiction, which varies from place to place. In the Trucial Shaikhdoms this authority is exercised over all foreigners, in the other Shaikhdoms, generally speaking, over all foreigners other than subjects of Muslim states outside the British Commonwealth and in Muscat only over citizens of the United Kingdom and its Colonies, with limited jurisdiction over some other Commonwealth nationals in cases involving no Muscat subjects.

I describe in the next chapter the political organization of the Shaikhdoms but wish to emphasize here that so far as their purely internal affairs are concerned they are independent both of each other and of any outside power. The British Government ordinarily only exercises control in matters involving negotiations or the possibility of complications with other foreign powers, such as civil aviation and posts and telegraphs. Constant advice and encouragement are, however, offered to the various Rulers regarding the improvement of their administrations and the development of their resources,

mostly in an informal manner. This is normally done through the Political Agents subordinate to the Residency, who maintain close personal touch with the Rulers and the principal State officials in their Agencies. The Political Resident usually only intervenes in matters of importance, though when he is on tour he often discusses ordinary current business with a Ruler whom he is visiting. Even at Bahrain all business with the Ruler and his officials is ordinarily conducted by the local Political Agent.

The close personal contact maintained between the Political Agents and the Rulers is an outstanding feature of the British position in the Persian Gulf. They meet each other frequently, and more often socially than for official talks. Possibly the social meetings are more important than the official ones, as a hint dropped here and there in the course of casual conversation is often more effective than formal advice, and the Rulers, being Arabs, are quick to resent any attempt to teach them their business. Usually, the relations between a Ruler and his Political Agent are, outwardly in any case, those of personal friends and a Ruler is prone to dislike any similar association between his Political Agent and any of his subjects. I remember that the late Shaikh Ahmad of Kuwait once said to me that the best Political Agent he ever had was one who had no dealing with any Kuwaiti other than himself. Incidentally, he praised the same Political Agent for teaching him punctuality and related that when the officer in question arrived for an interview and found himself two minutes early he would wait until the time was up even though he saw the Ruler standing ready to receive him.

One of the most important of the Political Resident's functions is the administration of justice under the jurisdiction which has been ceded to the British Government by the various Rulers. This branch of his activities is governed by Orders in Council issued under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts for each Agency and for the Muscat Consulate General. These make provision for a Full Court, a Chief Court and a Court of first instance for each district and for such matters as inquests, probate, the registration of persons and companies subject to British jurisdiction and so on. The Political Resident is the Judge of the Chief Court, the Political Agents and the Consul

General at Muscat are Judges of the Court of first instance in their districts, and their principal assistants are usually granted similar powers. When the British Government of India was in control all the political officers had previous judicial experience. This is rarely the case with the Foreign Service Officers who are now being appointed to the Persian Gulf posts and to make up this deficiency they are being given a course of judicial training before they take over their duties. In Bahrain and Kuwait experienced lawyers have been appointed as Registrars and given the powers of a Judge of the first instance in order to relieve the Political Agents of much of their judicial work. They are available for consultation by the other Political Agents and are empowered to try cases in their Courts when required.

The law applied by the Orders in Council was formerly for the most part that of British India before the transfer of power. Recently a special Penal Code, based on the old British Code used in Palestine, and simpler rules of criminal procedure have been introduced, and the Indian Civil Procedure Code is shortly to be replaced by a code better suited to local conditions. Serious criminal offences are rare and civil litigation is not heavy. There are a few lawyers, all foreigners, practicing in Bahrain and Kuwait, and none elsewhere. The Political Resident is empowered to make regulations, known as Queen's Regulations, which have to be approved by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to cover a variety of matters which are not specifically provided for in the Orders in Council or in the legislation applied by them, and to repeal or amend such legislation. It is also used to enforce, against persons subject to British jurisdiction, local laws issued by the States regulating such matters as customs duties, imports and exports, the possession and consumption of alcoholic liquor, the drug traffic, air navigation, and the acquisition of land. Municipal bye-laws are similarly enforced. All such regulations are scrutinized by legal experts at the Foreign Office in London and, when possible, the States are persuaded to submit their own draft laws for similar scrutiny before issue so that they can be applied to persons subject to British jurisdiction without modifications. All this legal work takes up far more of the Political Resident's time than

case work. As the Judge of the Chief Court, he is ordinarily only concerned with appeals. These are not very numerous and are mostly heard by an experienced Judge from the United Kingdom, who pays three or four visits of a few weeks duration to the Persian Gulf annually. Both the Political Resident and this Judge are also Judges of the Full Court to which other judges or barristers from outside the Gulf can be appointed, as occasion arises. It deals only with appeals from the Chief Court. The final Court of appeal is the Privy Council. Death sentences are subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In civil cases every effort is made by the Courts to reconcile the parties and directions to this effect are included in the Orders in Council. In civil cases involving points of Muslim law or local custom, references are frequently made to a Qadhi or a local tribunal respectively.

The local Courts are of inferior quality and I shall have more to say about them in another chapter. Every effort is being made to persuade the Rulers to improve them so that they may be fitted in due course to take over some or all of the jurisdiction which is at present exercised by the British representatives, and some slight progress has been made in this direction. The Orders in Council, except those for Kuwait and Muscat, contain provisions for Joint Courts in which a local Judge and a Judge of the Court of the Political Agent sit together to try "mixed cases," i.e., cases in which the parties include both persons subject to British jurisdiction and persons subject to local jurisdiction. The Political Resident has power to decide in consultation with the local Ruler what classes of cases shall be so tried. As a general rule, only civil cases are tried by these Courts. Great importance is attached to them as a means of educating the local judges in the administration of justice according to modern standards. A British Judicial Adviser has been appointed by the Bahrain Government to give advice to the local Judges, but not to perform judicial work himself, and to assist in drafting legislation and advice on legal matters generally. The Kuwait authorities often seek the advice in such matters of the British Government's Registrar, who is a Palestinian Arab.

There are airfields at Bahrain, Kuwait, Dohah in Qatar, Sharjah on the Trucial Coast and in Muscat territory, as well as a number of airfields or air-strips constructed by the oil companies for their own purposes. The Political Resident is responsible for negotiating air agreements with the various Rulers and the amendments that become necessary from time to time owing to developments in civil aviation. He has to ensure that air navigation regulations are properly enforced and sometimes has difficulty in persuading the Rulers to conform with the obligations incurred on their behalf by Her Majesty's Government in international and bilateral agreements. Ministry of Civil Aviation officials stationed at Bahrain and Kuwait relieve him of responsibility in technical and routine matters. He has also an overall responsibility for the post offices which are administered by a British Postal Superintendent and for telegraphic communications which are conducted by Cable and Wireless Limited under agreements with the Rulers, except at Kuwait where the local government has taken over both the post and telegraph offices. He has to ensure to the best of his ability that the requirements of the various International Sanitary and Dangerous Drugs Conventions are observed by the Shaikhdoms.

As the Persian Gulf States are in the sterling area, the Political Resident has to safeguard the interests of sterling generally. He controls exchange transactions effected through the Banks, though no control is possible in the open markets, and does his best to persuade the Rulers of the oil-producing Shaikhdoms to dispose of their large incomes in a manner which will not be detrimental to the interests of sterling as a whole. He has also to encourage British trade without using his special position to exclude that of other countries. He is assisted in these matters by an Economic Counsellor, who is stationed at Kuwait, and by a Commercial First Secretary attached to his headquarters at Bahrain.

Another important function of the Political Resident is to encourage the development of education on the right lines. In this he is assisted by an officer of the British Council who has his headquarters in Kuwait and pays frequent visits to the other Gulf States. Education is, however, entirely the responsibility of the local Govern-

ments and the Political Resident can only offer advice, or render assistance in the finding of teachers and equipment. An Information Office at the Residency in Bahrain is responsible for the dissemination of information and culture in which the Arabic broadcasts of the British Broadcasting Corporation also play their part.

The oil companies naturally bulk largely in the Political Resident's portfolio. He has closely to watch all negotiations for new agreements or the amendment of existing agreements and to make sure that nothing is decided which will seriously affect the position of the Rulers or the British Government and, while he has little concern with the technical or commercial side of the operations, it is his duty to do all he can to promote good relations between the companies on the one hand and the Rulers and their people on the other. He is particularly interested in encouraging the companies to employ as many of the local people as possible, to give them reasonable pay, accommodation and general treatment, and, as many of them are almost or quite illiterate, to provide them with both academic and technical education. The general policy is directed towards making the local people fit to replace many of the foreign elements which are at present employed in the more responsible positions, and toward associating them more and more closely in the companies' enterprises.

Another British concern on which the Political Resident has to keep a fatherly eye is the Persian Gulf Lighting Service. Great Britain, having eliminated piracy from the Gulf, decided that it was her duty to protect shipping from other dangers. Actually, the service was started by the British India Steam Navigation Company in its own interests, but the Government of India took it over about 1910 and established a fund which was supported by dues collected from ocean-going steamers passing through the Gulf. Lighthouses were established on islands and headlands, and anchorages, shoals and channels were buoyed. For over thirty years in the first half of the present century the 'Nearchus,' a lighting tender of about 800 tons, carried out a monthly patrol in summer heat and winter storms to ensure the safety of navigation by the regular maintenance of lights and buoys. She was replaced in 1951 by a more up-to-date vessel called the 'Relume.' After the transfer of power in India, a non-profit

making company was formed in London to administer the service, and its local and executive headquarters were moved from Basrah to Bahrain and placed under a British superintendent there. The board of the company in London is assisted by a local advisory board which meets at Bahrain or elsewhere in the Gulf from time to time. Light dues are colleced as before from ocean going vessels visiting the Gulf ports, but local dhows receive the benefits of the service free of charge. A number of new projects are under way or contemplated. Although the Political Resident is no longer so closely associated with the Lighting Service as he was in the old days, he is represented on the local board and is consulted whenever political considerations are involved.

It will be seen from the above that the Political Resident's duties are multifarious. Further, as he has eleven States to deal with, there is nearly always a crisis somewhere, which, though usually unnoticed by the world at large, causes much anxiety locally and much telegraphic correspondence with the London Foreign Office. The brunt of these crises and of the ordinary daily work is borne in the first place by the officer on the spot. As I have already mentioned, there are Political Agencies at Bahrain, Kuwait and Dubai on the Trucial Coast and Dohah in Qatar and a Consulate General at Muscat. Most of the Political Agents have an Assistant Political Agent and at Muscat there is a Vice Consul. At Abu Dhabi on the Trucial Coast there is a Political Officer who is subordinate to the Political Agent at Dubai. To remove a misapprehension which I have heard expressed, it is perhaps desirable to explain that the term "Political Agent" does not connote any association with intelligence work or with a political party in the United Kingdom. It was the term used in India to denote an officer of the status of District Officer (i.e., Deputy Commissioner or Collector) serving in Indian or Persian Gulf States and in Tribal Areas on the Northwest Frontier. Generally speaking, the head of the office concentrates on the purely political work and his second in command deals with the consular and routine work which is very heavy in the States where the oil companies are in production. All the posts referred to in this paragraph are now held by members of the

British Foreign Service. The last member of the old Indian Political Service which for so long held charge in the Persian Gulf and, in its heat and dust, unrelieved by modern amenities, built up the British position as it stands today, retired in 1958.

I must not omit to mention the part played by the British Defense Services, especially the Royal Navy. For over a century the Royal Navy, with the assistance of the Royal Indian Marine or, as it later became, the Royal Indian Navy, was the sole instrument through which peace was maintained in the Gulf. In the suppression of piracy and the slave trade and the maintenance of law and order generally they carried out numerous small but hazardous operations on a dangerous coast and in the most trying climatic conditions. In these days, when anything savoring of imperialism is regarded as a mortal sin, force is less often used, nor indeed is its use so often necessary in modern conditions, but a ship of the Royal Navy is still called upon from time to time to stand by for the protection of lives and property or for mediation when a Ruler is having trouble with his subjects or neighboring tribesmen. There are usually three British frigates in the Gulf under the command of a Commodore who is entitled 'Commodore Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf.' He has his headquarters in the British Naval Base at Jufair on the main Bahrain island, immediately adjoining the Residency. This arrangement, whereby the political and naval authorities live next door to each other, ensures the closest cooperation and greatly benefits both. The development of the oil industry and civil aviation between the two World Wars involved Great Britain in commitments on land as well as at sea and rendered air support necessary. Small detachments of the Royal Air Force are now maintained at the airfields at Bahrain and Sharjah and, by agreement with the Sultan, in Muscat territory at Salalah in Dhofar and on Masirah Island. A Senior Royal Air Force Officer Persian Gulf resides at Bahrain. With the creation of a force of Levies on the Trucial Coast in 1951, of which more will be said in a later chapter, the Army came into the picture and a Senior Army Officer was appointed to Bahrain. A regiment of British infantry is now stationed at Bahrain with a detachment at Sharjah. A Defense Committee consisting of the Senior Officers of the three Services presided over by the Political Resident is

responsible for the conduct of operations in the Gulf States under the control of the recently established Headquarters British Forces Arabian Peninsula at Aden.

In the last chapter I explained how Great Britain's responsibilities towards the Shaikhdoms were incurred and in this chapter I have endeavored to show how they are exercised. No revenue of any kind is derived from any of the Shaikhdoms and no subsidy is paid to any of them apart from rent for airfields. The partnership which has for so long existed between them and the British has been a benefit to both, but particularly to the former, who have not only preserved their independence but acquired wealth through the development of their oil resources which the *Pax Britannica* has made possible. There are some who regard the survival of these little Shaikhdoms and the loose suzerainty exercised over them by Great Britain as an anachronism but, so far as I am aware, although there is a certain amount of anti-British and anti-Shaikh propaganda, there is no organized movement now on foot in any of the Shaikhdoms for any change in the present system. The mere fact that it has existed for over a century is in itself no good reason for abrogating it. It cannot, of course, last forever and British policy is directed to encouraging the States to improve their administration so that they may become increasingly capable of looking after their own affairs.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHAIKHS AND THEIR ADMINISTRATIONS

THE WORD 'SHAIKH'— which should be pronounced like the English word 'shake' with, if you wish to be precise, an aspirate at the end as in the Scottish pronunciation of the word 'loch'— denotes ordinarily an elder. It is, however, the term applied locally to the Rulers of all the Shaikhdoms, though in other parts of the Middle East they are often addressed and referred to as Amirs (Princes), and the designation used officially is Shaikh so and so, Ruler (*hākim*) of such and such a place. Where appropriate an honorific is prefixed. As there are so many others entitled to call themselves Shaikhs they are often referred to, both in writing and in speaking, as the Rulers. All the male members of the ruling families are called Shaikhs, and if in Bahrain and Kuwait, for instance, you talk about "the Shaikhs" you are usually understood to mean the leading members of the ruling family, excluding the Ruler. In addition, the heads of the nomad tribes and their male relations are called Shaikhs and there are a few families of the commercial class who are also entitled to the appellation.

The Rulers are all descended from nomad Arabs of the desert and though some of them are busy developing their States materially on modern lines, their method of ruling is still in its essence tribal. The Arabs are democratic by nature so far as their relations with each other are concerned. All pure Arabs are equal and everybody else is very much their inferior, but they have not yet adapted themselves to democratic institutions on Western lines, efforts to introduce which in the Gulf Shaikhdoms have not proved very successful. A tribal Shaikh is regarded as first among equals and tribal affairs are ordinarily discussed and settled at gatherings of tribesmen in his tent. A similar method is followed in the Gulf States. At Kuwait, for instance, the

Ruler holds public audience daily except on holidays and all and sundry can express their views to him. In the last resort the Ruler's word is law, but he is almost always guided by public opinion and it can be safely stated that most of the Rulers genuinely endeavor to do their best for their people and that tyranny is rare. Their rule is patriarchal and beneficient and, except in Bahrain, and to a lesser extent in Kuwait, there have been few signs as yet of an movement for a more democratic form of government. Municipal Committees have been established in some of the towns and larger villages. In the Bahrain Municipalities elections are held, but elsewhere the members are nominated. The Gulf Shaikhdoms are mostly city states with mixed populations. The Arabs rule them and own most of the land and the other races trade and labor. Except to a limited extent on the Trucial Coast there is no cohesion between the different States and for the most part they are intensely jealous of each other. Thus, although in the more progressive centers Arabs show a good deal of sympathy for their brethren in other parts of the Arab world and pictures of President Gamal Abd al-Nasir are displayed in some of the *suqs*, parochial usually outweighs national feeling. The prevailing prosperity derived from the activities of the oil companies also contributes greatly to the lack of agitation against the present form of Government. Generally speaking, the people are too busy and well-fed to trouble themselves greatly about politics.

In accordance with Arab tribal custom, succession to the rulership does not depend on primogeniture. Ordinarily, on the death of a Ruler the senior members of the ruling family meet in conclave and select a successor. This system has the merit of excluding minors and weaklings but has also in the past led to the elimination of possible candidates by assassination. There is now a growing tendency for the succession to pass from father to son, and a Ruler who reaches a ripe old age will often ensure this by handing over most of the power to the son whom he regards as his most suitable successor. The death of a Ruler is, however, still usually followed by a period of suspense, causing considerable anxiety to the Residency and possibly the standing-by of a warship, until a successor has assumed power with the support of the ruling family. When all doubt has been removed the Political

Resident usually conveys the British Government's recognition to the new Ruler at a formal ceremony held at his capital. There is no prolonged period of public mourning for a deceased Ruler. Business may be suspended for two or three days, but after that life reverts to normal.

Although a Ruler may have little trouble with his people, his relations are often a thorn in his flesh. There may be a few who are of real assistance to him, but the rest may be divided into two classes, those who want both power and money and those who want only money. The former can be compared to the barons of the Middle Ages and their activities are encouraged by the present system of succession. The latter class is far more numerous. There are a multitude of Shaikhs who refuse to do any work and some of them lead debauched lives. They clamor continuously for increased allowances and make a Ruler's life a burden to him. He finds it difficult to resist their appeals and when he gives way usually has to face a protest from the Political Resident on the squandering of State revenues in payments to useless drones. One of the causes of this trouble is the failure of many of the Shaikhs, including some of the Rulers themselves, to give their sons a proper education. The latter grow up as spoilt children without learning anything useful and batten upon the State until the end of their days. Unfortunately, these idle Shaikhs are usually only too successful in reproducing their species, so that their number is constantly on the increase and unless they mend their ways, their profligacy and waste of State revenues will inevitably become the subject of popular agitation.

The administration of the oil producing Shaikhdoms — Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar — is organized in departments. In Bahrain, there is an Administrative Council, and in Kuwait a Supreme Council of the leading Shaikhs. In some cases the departments are in charge of senior members of the ruling family, in others the services of British experts are utilized. A British Adviser is employed to supervise the administration generally in Qatar, and in Bahrain there is a British Secretary to the Government. In both these States, and in Kuwait, there are British experts in the Health and Public Works Departments. All these British employees are paid by the States and

hold their appointments under contract with the Rulers. They take their orders from the Rulers and not from the Political Resident. In Bahrain the services of a British teacher of English are loaned by the oil company to the Education Department, but apart from this no British experts are employed for educational purposes. The oil-producing Shaikhdoms keep a very jealous eye on their education departments and their aim is to employ their own nationals exclusively. As, however, there are at present not nearly enough of these sufficiently educated and willing to undertake employment in their schools they have imported a large number of teachers from Egypt, the Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East. The Rulers are well aware of the dangers of this policy and take prompt steps to deal with any of these teachers who encourages subversive activities. One of the chief objects of the Rulers is to ensure that the children of their people are given a background of Arab and Islamic, and not Western, culture. Once this background has been imparted a limited number of students are sent to the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the West for further studies. In the Trucial Shaikhdoms there is as yet little or nothing in the way of organized administration and the Shaikhs' rule is entirely personal.

The Rulers do most of their business in their palaces where they are ordinarily accessible during the morning and late afternoon. They none of them speak English but there is usually a Secretary in attendance who can interpret when required. In the larger Shaikhdoms the most important officials have separate offices. Friday is always observed as a holiday.

State laws are promulgated by decree of the Ruler. In Bahrain and Kuwait they are published in a gazette, but elsewhere they are posted up or made known to the general public by proclamation, and in some of the Trucial Shaikhdoms they are probably never reduced to writing at all. There is a tendency for laws to be made to meet an occasion without proper forethought or drafting, and in no State is it possible to obtain anything in the nature of a compendium of local laws. Except in Bahrain nothing is prescribed regarding the administration of justice. In most Shaikhdoms the *Shari'a,* or Muslim law, is followed, and in cases of doubt references are made to a Qadhi or

religious judge, but the more severe penalties provided for by the *Shari'a* in criminal cases, eg., the cutting off of a hand for theft, are now rarely awarded. Commercial cases are sometimes referred to a tribunal of leading merchants. In Bahrain a new Penal Code, recently introduced for the British Courts, has been adopted in part by the Government, but in general the Judges, who are usually the Rulers themselves or their relations, in cases which are not decided by a Qadhi, have no written code or rules of procedure to guide them and what is sometimes termed "palm tree justice" is administered. This sufficed for local needs a generation ago but is not suited to the changed conditions resulting from the operations of the oil companies. The Judges do their best, according to their lights, but neither the *Shari'a* nor tribal custom give them much help in dealing with such matters as motor traffic offences, and the rights and obligations of modern business concerns. The major Shaikhdoms have well conducted prisons. On the Trucial Coast, except at Dubai, where there is a good prison, offenders are usually incarcerated in dungeons in the Ruler's palaces.

Some of the Shaikhdoms have produced nationality laws and all except Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain issue passports in a form which is internationally recognized. The subjects of the Shaikhdoms are "British protected persons" and can obtain British passports if necessary or desirable. They are all entitled to the good offices of British representatives abroad. Some of the Rulers are taking steps to restrict the rights of foreigners in order to preserve those of their own subjects and have forbidden the acquisition of land by them. Foreign firms are also being refused permission to set up new businesses unless they are associated with local interests. Generally speaking, foreigners of all nationalities, except Jews, are allowed free access to the Shaikhdoms for visits of limited duration and are well-treated. Visas for such visits are granted by British authorities on behalf of the Rulers after consulting them when necessary. Subjects of one Shaikhdom visiting another Shaikhdom can usually obtain entry without visas, provided they possess travel documents, and in some of the Shaikhdoms visitors from other Middle East States, such as the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq are admitted without visas.

Before the discovery of oil the Shaikhdoms depended for their revenues on customs duties and taxes recovered on date gardens, fish and pearling vessels. The taxes on the gardens and fish are in the nature of a tithe. So far as I am aware, no Ruler exacts a tithe on pearls and the practice is to recover a fixed sum on each pearling vessel at the beginning of the annual season. The customs duties have always been low. In some cases the Ruler is debarred by treaty from recovering more than five per cent on imports but this stipulation has been waived where circumstances made this desirable. These revenues just enabled the Ruler to carry on before the oil companies arrived on the scene but left little margin for the improvement of their administrations and other forms of local development. The picture has now completely changed. The oil producing Shaikhdoms all have enough, or more than enough, revenue for their needs, while the Trucial Shaikhdoms, though still poor, are receiving substantial annual payments from companies who are searching for oil in their territories.

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE

AMONG THE ARABS there is a sharp distinction between the settled inhabitant of the towns and villages and the nomad, and this distinction prevails throughout the Gulf States. In the towns on the coast the population is mixed. Arabs predominate, both numerically and politically, but there are many Persians, Indians, Pakistanis and Baluchis permanently settled in them, together with a floating population of nationals of other Middle East countries, Europeans (mostly British) and Americans. Among the settled population there are many whose negroid features betray their slave descent. These have become assimilated to the Arabs. In Bahrain most of the villages are inhabited by a cultivating class called the Baharnah. The inhabitants of the towns may be divided into four classes: the Shaikhs, the merchants, the petty shop-keepers, and the laborers, in the last of which I include sailors, divers and fishermen. There is a small but growing professional class of clerks, school-teachers and the like but there are no indigenous lawyers and doctors, except for one doctor in Kuwait. The smallness of the "effendi," or "educated gentleman" class, which bulks so largely in the other towns of the Middle East, entails the employment of many foreigners by the local administrations but contributes substantially to political stability.

There are practically no nomads in the island State of Bahrain and they vary in numbers elsewhere. They belong to a great variety of tribes. Some of them have their headquarters within the limits of a State and are regarded as subjects of the Ruler; others only move in from neighboring countries, to whom they owe allegiance, when there is good grazing. Generally speaking, though they are not readily amenable to discipline, they give little trouble if they are not interfered with and they are not politically important.

The entire indigenous population of the Gulf States professes the Muslim faith and religious feeling is everywhere very strong. The Rulers rigidly enforce the tenets of Islam and tolerate nothing in the way of modernism. They are themselves most strict in the observance of their religious duties. They break off business for the five daily prayers and observe the fast from early dawn to sunset during the lunar month of Ramadhan. At this time little business of any kind can be done with them. All the local Muslims observe this fast, at any rate outwardly. Guns announce its beginning and ending and while it lasts no smoking is permitted in public in the large towns even by non-Muslims. A remarkable feature of the States is the lack of political influence of the religious leaders. There are no fire-brand mullahs such as those who used to stir up the tribes on the North West Frontier of the old British India. Qadhis assist in the settlement of disputes and law-suits, but, although much respected, they remain in the background. It is usually the Rulers who take the initiative in any religious matter. Although the bulk of the population of the Shaikhdoms as a whole is Sunni, about half that of Bahrain is Shi'a, and there are many Shi'as also in Kuwait and Dubai. None are to be found among the local nomad tribesmen. There is occasional friction between the Sunnis and Shi'as in Bahrain but none in other States where the Shi'as are not strong enough to dispute the Sunni predominance. The Sultan of Muscat and about half his subjects are Ibadhis.

In spite of the strength of Islamic feeling throughout the Gulf States, foreigners other than Jews are freely admitted and well treated except in some of the wilder parts of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. The Rulers of Bahrain and Kuwait have shown a remarkable degree of religious toleration and both have given land for Christian churches. There are Catholic and Church of England churches at Manamah, the capital of Bahrain, and at Ahmadi, the headquarters of the Kuwait Oil Company, and a Catholic Church is shortly to be built in Kuwait town. There are Hindu temples in some of the ports and a Jewish Synagogue in Bahrain. Kuwait has its own Catholic Bishop and the other States lie within the diocese of the Catholic Bishop of Aden. All the Anglican Churches are under the jurisdiction of the

Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem. There is a Catholic School in Bahrain in charge of the Missionary Sisters of Verona. The Dutch Reformed Church of America maintains missions at Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat, which have their own places of worship, hospitals and schools. They have done valuable medical work and their hospitals are very popular. They have been able to do little in the way of proselytizing and one of the missionaries told me that the number of converts made in forty years could be counted on the fingers of two hands. Had they been more successful in this respect it is unlikely that their presence would have been tolerated. A medical mission of the Presbyterian Church of America has recently been established at Sharjah on the Trucial Coast. The Christian community consists of Europeans, Americans, Anglo-Indians and Goanese with a few Iraqis and Lebanese. A small Jewish community has long been established in Bahrain. There were anti-Jewish riots there in 1946 when the Palestine question aroused such strong feeling throughout the Arab world and since then a number of families have emigrated. Those that remain are on the whole well treated, though subversive elements from time to time agitate against them.

The Arabic spoken in the Gulf States is akin to that of Saudi Arabia and Iraq and differs substantially both in pronunciation and the use of words from that of Egypt or the Levant. There are also many local variations, mostly of pronunciation, and some of the tribes in Muscat territory have separate dialects of their own. In Bahrain a few Persian and English words have been brought into the language, the latter being sometimes difficult to recognize when given Arabic inflections. The Persians, Baluchis, Indians and others who have settled in the States continue to use their own languages but most have some knowledge of Arabic which is the *lingua franca* of the Gulf. In the oil-producing States many of the younger generation have acquired a smattering of colloquial English including a good many Americanisms. My wife was once greeted by a small boy in a Bahrain village with the words "Hiya Baby," no disrespect being intended. The standard of literacy is low outside the towns, but many of those who can hardly sign their names in Arabic understand and appreciate broadcasts in the classical form of the language. Only a very few are

really literate in English. The language is taught in the schools, where they exist, but for the most part by Arab teachers. Though there are many schools now in Bahrain and Kuwait and there is a great demand for elementary education, the higher classes are poorly attended. Once a boy has acquired a rudimentary knowledge of English he leaves school to obtain lucrative employment with an oil company or to help his father in his office or shop in the town. There is no local university. A few boys are sent to the American University at Beirut or to the United Kingdom for higher education and some are also sent to other countries in the Middle East, or to the United Kingdom, for secondary education. There are technical schools at Bahrain and Kuwait but they are not well attended and until now technical education has been left for the most part to the oil companies. There is, however, a growing awareness of the necessity for providing technical and commercial, as well as purely academic, education. Needless to say, great stress is laid on religious education and in some parts of the Gulf States Quranic schools are the only ones which exist.

At present in the towns and villages few, if any, women of pure Arab blood appear in public unveiled. When they go abroad they wear a copious black mantle with a veil or a mask which conceals their features. There are many who rarely, if ever, leave their houses, which probably accounts for the prevalence of tuberculosis. Even when receiving a call from a European lady the wife of a Ruler will usually continue to wear her mask. Recently in Bahrain one or two ladies of good family — but not of local Arab descent — have been visiting the houses of Europeans and unveiled, and I have been told by some of the intelligentsia there that many of the Arab ladies would like to see the present system modified and that it is likely to begin to break down in a few years time. When my daughter first rode in the Bahrain races, the local womenfolk, who watch from a distance in a huddled black mass, were said to be much elated by this sign of female emancipation. I am doubtful myself whether any drastic change in the present system is likely for a long time to come. It should not be thought that because women are secluded they take no interest in affairs. Matriarchs exist as elsewhere in the world and there are tales of petticoat influence in more than one of the palaces. The women

behind the scenes are an incalculable factor with which it is impossible for a political officer to cope. There is extensive female education in Bahrain and Kuwait but the girls usually leave school when they reach a marriageable age. They are said to fetch a higher price in the marriage market than their uneducated sisters. I do not propose to deal at length with marriage customs, which the interested reader can find detailed in Dickson's book mentioned below. I would only note that girls are usually married soon after reaching the age of puberty and that a pure-bred Arab will not give his daughter to an Arab of mixed descent or a non-Arab.

In the towns the leading merchants rank next in the social scale after the Shaikhs. There are about a dozen important families in Bahrain, more in Kuwait, and a few elsewhere. Most of them are derived from Saudi Arabia or Persia. They are very wealthy and have business connections all over the world. They are generally trustworthy in their dealings with foreigners but are prone to speculate and prefer to invest their money in merchandise rather than in a bank. They are generally very shrewd but sometimes suffer heavy losses owing to accumulation of stocks. They are regularly consulted by the Rulers about commercial matters and in some of the smaller States have much political influence. There are also Indian merchants of standing but they confine themselves to their business and are not of political importance. The shop-keepers are drawn from many races but Persians predominate. They are usually to be found wherever there is any kind of *suq,* or market, except in Muscat territory. In Bahrain the gardens are tended by the Baharnah whom I have already mentioned, and elsewhere such cultivation as there is is usually in the hands of local tribesmen. The pearl-divers and fishermen are for the most part Arab tribesmen or ex-slaves. Most of the local labor, consisting of villagers, tribesmen and miscellaneous elements from the towns, is absorbed by the oil companies leaving only migrant Omanis, Persians, Baluchis and others to meet the demand for casual labor. There is also in all the States a substantial class of domestic servants or slaves.

The question of slavery is a difficult one as there are so many in the West to whom the institution is completely abhorrent. It is,

however, allowed, for under Muslim law, and so far as I am aware, is not expressly condemned in the Bible. It is only comparatively recently that strong feeling has developed against it in the Christian world. In its worst forms it cannot be defended but the mild domestic slavery which still exists in some of the Gulf States, although regrettable, has something to be said for it when the prevailing state of society is taken into account. By virtue of the undertakings given by the Rulers and the efforts of the British Navy the import of slaves from Africa ceased long ago. In recent years, however, there have been some cases of the forcible abduction, mostly of girls, from the Trucial Coast for sale into slavery in Saudi Arabia and it was largely to deal with this problem that a force of Levies was established on the Trucial Coast in 1951. The Ruler of Qatar has officially abolished slavery in his territory and paid compensation to the owners of slaves. In Bahrain slavery is not recognized as a legal institution and no case which is based on the ownership of a human being is admitted in the local courts. The position in Kuwait is similar, though less well-defined. Even in the primitive Trucial States the Rulers have declared that slavery no longer exists — though this statement must be accepted with some reserve — and that every servant is free to come and go as he pleases. No case of the buying or selling of a slave has been reported from them for some years. In all the Shaikhdoms a slave has only to apply to the local Political Agent to obtain a certificate of manumission, but few such applications are received. Most of the existing slaves, who are almost all of African origin, have become more or less members of the families to whom they belong. They and their forebears have lived with these families for several generations. They are housed, clothed and fed and their marriages are arranged for them. They sometimes rise to positions of authority — in one of the Trucial Shaikhdoms a slave was at one time the Ruler's chief factotum — and no particular stigma attaches to them. They are, in fact, old hereditary servants and are usually united by bonds of affection to the families whom they serve. It is true that they are paid in kind rather than in cash, but cases of ill-treatment are rare and in the current organization of society there are probably few of them who wish to change their lot. Slave women

are frequently taken into concubinage by their masters and any son born of such a union receives the same treatment as his half-brother born of a free woman, except that slave descent sometimes acts as a bar to succession as a Ruler.

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The possession and consumption of alcohol by State nationals is prohibited in all the States, though, so far as I am aware, no formal notifications have been issued to this effect by any of the Trucial Coast Rulers. The consumption of alcoholic liquor is forbidden by the Quran. The Rulers are strict teetotalers themselves and are unwilling to incur the accusation of being bad Muslims by permitting their subjects to drink. In spite of this many of the latter do so, and some of the less responsible Shaikhs are among the worst offenders. They obtain their liquor by devious means, including leakages from canteens and from foreigners who are authorized to possess it, a matter which often causes much embarrassment to the political authorities. In Bahrain any person subject to the Ruler's jurisdiction found in possession of liquor is liable to six month's imprisonment. In all States its import is prohibited except by special agents who can only distribute it on permits issued to foreigners by the Political Agents. Queen's Regulations have been issued controlling the import and possession of liquor by persons subject to the Orders-in-Council and penalizing its sale or gift, even by way of entertainment at a party, to any person subject to local jurisdiction. The price of liquor in the black market is, however, so high that leakages occur. A taxi-driver will, for instance, ask for a bottle of beer in lieu of a ten-rupee ($2.00) fare. Bahrain and Qatar charge their highest customs duty, 15 per cent, on liquor imported for the use of foreigners. In Kuwait no duty is charged at all to avoid the recognition of the legality of the import of liquor that a tariff on it would imply.

The bulk of the people of the Gulf States do not share the prejudice of the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia against smoking and there is nowhere any official ban on it except in public in Muscat town, and in some other places during the day in the month of Ramadhan. Some of the Rulers, especially the Sultan of Muscat, do not like it

and a visitor to a Ruler should refrain from smoking unless invited. The more religiously minded among the Ibadhi tribesmen of Oman are averse to smoking but other Omanis cultivate tobacco. Some of the Rulers smoke themselves, either cigarettes or, on the Trucial Coast, a small pipe which provides only one long whiff for each filling.

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Local customs are based on those of the Arab tribes, and I am only mentioning those which a Western visitor to the Gulf States is likely to encounter. Fuller information on the subject can be obtained from Colonel Dickson's book *The Arab of the Desert.* * The Muslim lunar year is observed throughout the States. It is roughly eleven days shorter than the solar year and its dates move backwards, accordingly, in relation to ours. For agricultural and similar purposes reckoning is based on the stars and the year is divided up into periods of thirteen or fourteen days named after the stars or constellations which rise at the beginning of them. In conversation an Arab will often say "This is the period of such and such a star and the weather will be so and so," and he is usually right. There are only two big religious festivals: the *Id* of the Breaking of the Fast at the end of Ramadhan, and the *Id* of Sacrifice, about two and a-half months later. The latter commemorates Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Ishmael (and not Isaac). About three days' holiday are observed on each occasion and there is much paying of calls. There are public prayers on the first morning of each *Id* and about mid-day every Friday. I have already said something about the fast of Ramadhan which causes great hardship when it occurs in hot weather. At the time of writing it falls in the spring and is gradually moving back into cooler weather. The Muslim year begins with the month of Muharram and the first day of the year, 1378 A.H., fell on the 18th July 1958 A.D. A Muslim month starts on the day on which a new moon is seen or would be seen except for cloud. It cannot be shorter than 29 days or longer than 30 days. This system leads to some inconvenience and it is often not known on which day the *Id* at the end of Ramadhan will be celebrated until

* *The Arab of the Desert,* by H. R. P. Dickson. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1949.

the night before. The day begins and ends with sunset and the length of each day thus varies by a few minutes. It is divided up into two periods of twelve hours night and twelve hours day. With sunset at 6 p.m. what we would call 8 p.m. on Thursday will, to Muslims, be two o'clock on Friday night. If a Ruler makes an appointment for, say, 10 o'clock on a certain day it will usually mean two hours before sunset. When making an appointment with any local it is always desirable to make sure whether Arabic or our time is being used. Some Arabs wear two watches, one for their time and one for ours. There is no celebration of the new year at the beginning of Muharram but the first ten days of the month are observed by the Shi'as as a period of intense mourning for the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Husain, at Kerbela. In Manamah, the capital of Bahrain, processions move through the streets with biers bearing young men or boys made up to represent bloody corpses. Some of the men in the processions are naked to the waist and either beat their breast with their hands or scourge their back with chains in time with mournful chants; others wear white garments which they bespatter with blood from self-inflicted sword slashes on their shaven heads. There is no doubting the sincerity of their emotion and the occasion from time to time leads to clashes between them and the local Sunnis. In other places where Shi'as are distinctly in a minority the celebrations are less public.

Calls are paid on the Rulers, senior Shaikhs and leading merchants on the *Ids,* on occasions of congratulation or condolence, and at other times for business or social purposes. The Ruler of Bahrain keeps a calling book in his town office but likes to see as many visitors as possible personally. Other Rulers can only be called on personally. The ordinary time for calling is before mid-day or during the last two hours before sunset in the afternoon. Calls are paid when necessary in Ramadhan, either after sunset or in the early morning but, if possible, should be avoided during this month except at Kuwait where it is customary to call on the Ruler and other leading personages after sunset soon after it begins. A caller will usually be received in a majlis, or guest-room, where there may be many other callers present. He greets his host with a *"Salam Alaikum"* — "Peace

be unto you" — which is in most cases returned, though many Muslims hold that this greeting should only be addressed to a true believer. He then asks his host, "How are you?" He replies, "God be praised," and the enquiries after health are usually repeated by each side two or three times in varying forms. He is then offered a seat and the host shouts "Coffee" to the servants outside. The caller is then given a small amount of bitter coffee without milk or sugar in a small cup without a handle. When this has been drunk the servant will go on filling the cup until it is shaken to indicate that no more is required. It is not considered polite to accept more than three cups at a time. If the call is a long one or if other callers arrive, coffee may be brought round more than once. Often tea is passed round with or without milk in it but always with sugar. Sometimes cups of hot milk or of concoctions of mint or dried limes are served, and in the hot weather fruit juice or some kind of soft drink. On the *Ids,* and sometimes on other occasions, sweets and fruit are placed on a small table in front of the caller. After he has partaken of them water is brought and poured over his hand into a bowl. A cup should be held in the right hand and food must only be handled in the same manner. Most Arabs are ready talkers and quickly put callers at their ease. When business is finished or conversation exhausted the caller asks for permission to depart. The host then shouts "Incense" and servants bring in a sprinkler containing rose-water and a censer full of live charcoal. The host produces a small bit of sandal-wood which he places on the charcoal, and a servant then sprinkles the rose-water over the caller's hands and holds the censer in front of his face. The latter with both hands wafts the smoke into his beard or where it should be if he does not possess one. He then gets up after again asking for permission to depart and shakes hands with his host saying *"Fi aman illah"* — "In the peace of God." The host usually replies in similar terms adding "God preserve you. I will see you again, if God wills," or something of the sort. The above is the general procedure, but there are many local variations. On the Trucial Coast rose-water and incense are often produced on the arrival of a visitor and the rose-water is sometimes sprinkled over his head instead of his hands to his great embarrassment, if he happens to be bald. In Muscat

no refreshments are offered until the end of a call when a local sweetmeat called *halwa* is passed round, either in small tins or in a great bowl suspended in a piece of cloth, and after the fingers have been washed coffee is served. Incense is only used there on the most formal occasions. Most guest-rooms in these days are provided with chairs, but if the caller has to sit on the floor he should keep his feet tucked in, in order to avoid pointing his soles at anybody as this gesture is considered improper. European ladies sometimes call on a Ruler's chief wife or other Arab ladies and the same ritual is observed in the women's quarters as in the men's guest-rooms.

The Arabs of the Gulf, like all their race, are extremely hospitable and delight in entertaining their friends and visitors at a meal. The first meal of the day is a breakfast consisting of various forms of bread, vermicelli, small cakes made with honey, a sort of solid flat omelette, fruit, nuts, sweets and sometimes a chicken or stuffed lamb. This is not considered a proper meal and is ordinarily given to a visitor who has spent the night or is paying a call on a Shaikh in the country and cannot wait for the mid-day meal. The two main meals are eaten in the middle of the day and about an hour after sunset and do not differ in form. Dishes containing enormous piles of rice, with pieces of mutton inside and often a whole stuffed sheep on top, form the main feature, while around them are scattered a multitude of bowls and plates containing stews, whole chickens, rissoles, kababs, custards, jellies and fresh and tinned fruits. The delicacies of the desert are bustard and truffles and these are pressed on you by your host when they are in season. The lavishness of the meal naturally varies with the wealth of the host but an Arab will ordinarily run into debt rather than be accused of meanness. The food is cooked in the women's quarters and produced steaming hot. If a guest arrives unexpectedly and accepts the offer of a meal he may have to wait three or four hours while a sheep is being killed and cooked. On ordinary occasions he will be invited for coffee and conversation about half an hour before the meal is ready, as eating is such a serious business that it leaves little time for talk. When everything is ready he will be taken to the room where the meal has been prepared. At the door a servant will be standing with a ewer and basin.

On this occasion it is only necessary to let a little water run over the right hand. The dishes of food will be on the floor, either on a great circular tray or spread out in an oblong form on a cloth. There will be no knives and forks but there may be a few spoons. The correct posture to adopt at a meal is to kneel on the left knee with the right knee up. This leaves the right hand, which is the only one that may be used, free to handle the food, while the left hand can be placed on the floor as a support. If he prefers it, a guest may sit cross-legged or lean on his left side with both legs bent up. The Arabs realize that a Westerner's limbs are not so supple as theirs and will often provide a cushion to support him. The reason for not handling food with the left hand is that it is used by Arabs and most other orientals for unclean purposes. It is permissible, however, to hold a glass of water in it when drinking and this is usually done at a meal as the right hand will be greasy. Fruit, the skin of which is not eaten, such as an orange or a banana, may also be held in the left hand while being peeled. When the guest has squatted down the host will say *"Bismillah"* — "In the name of God" — and he then lays to. If he is near his host the latter will usually dig a plate into a pile of rice and hand him an enormous helping. Then the host or one of the servants will tear off a large chunk of mutton and place it on top of the rice. After that the guest is left to take what he wants from the smaller dishes. The eyes of a sheep are accounted a delicacy but in the Gulf now they are not usually pressed on Westerners and I suspect that the local Arabs have become aware that the practice is regarded by them with mixed horror and amusement. Water, or sometimes buttermilk, will be handed to the guest in a glass by a servant during the course of a meal. According to the ordinary Arab practice, he can get up when he has had his fill without waiting for anyone else, mutter a prayer to God to increase his host's prosperity, wash his hands, over which a servant will pour water, providing also soap and a towel, and take his seat again in the guest-room. There is no need for him to finish everything on his plate, and it would usually be impossible to do so. If he did succeed in clearing it, his host would think that he had not had enough and would pile more provender on to it. The great quantity of food left over after all at the first sitting have

adjourned to the guest-room will quickly be consumed by the junior members of the host's household and a multitude of servants, including any guest's driver or escort and the guest will usually sit in the guest-room for about half an hour after the meal is over to allow for this. During this time coffee will be passed round. Eventually the host will call for incense, which is a sign for the party to break up, though he may wait for an important guest to ask for permission to depart. The Arabs have a jingly saying which may be translated "After the incense remove your presence." It is a pity that there is not a similar custom in the West. In Bahrain and Kuwait the Rulers and some of the senior Shaikhs and merchants now provide tables and chairs for meals to which Westerners are invited, and also knives and forks, which may be used or not, as desired, to say nothing of table napkins.

Conversation during calls and parties is usually of rather a banal type. The weather and sport are safe subjects and the host will be interested to hear what a guest's business is, what places he has visited and his local impressions, provided they are not too unfavorable. Certain subjects are taboo. No specific reference should be made by a man to an Arab's womenfolk though there is no harm in making a general inquiry after the health of his family. Pigs should not be mentioned and it is better not to say anything about dogs unless the host raises the subject. The aversion of Arabs to dogs is perhaps sometimes exaggerated. They often make pets of their greyhounds, which they regard as being in a class by themselves, and one of the Rulers once held a leg of mutton by the bone while my Labrador chewed off the meat. A dog, however, should not be taken on a visit to a Gulf Arab unless it is known that its presence will be welcome. If an Arab presents his small children to a visitor, the latter should be careful to avoid praising their beauty or cleverness, as if any mishap occurs to them afterwards he will be blamed for causing the evil eye to fall on them. He should also avoid praising any articles he sees or it will immediately be presented to him and he will then be obliged to present some article of equivalent value in return. The question of presents is a most embarrassing one. The wealthier Rulers may insist on a visitor's accepting a pearl necklace or some similar

article even without his having expressed any admiration for it and, unless he is a British Government servant and can plead subservience to rules of conduct, he will find it difficult to refuse it. Even a Government servant may be obliged to accept such a present and then find means of handing it back without causing offense. There is no necessity to give a present in return for one received in this manner. If a visitor enjoys an Arab's hospitality for any length of time he should make some small present in kind to him or one of his children on his departure, and should give cash gratuities to the servants who have looked after him. In some places on the Trucial Coast it is customary to give a small tip to the gate-keeper of the palace when leaving after paying a call. When a present is given to a Ruler or senior Shaikh no offense should be taken if he immediately gives it away to one of his entourage as this is a common practice. If a time of prayer occurs while a visitor is in a guest-room his host will go out to perform his devotions. Unless the visitor wishes to take the opportunity to depart he can remain seated and pass the time of day with any other infidels present until his host returns.

If a Gulf Arab returns a Western visitor's call, the latter should respond to his greetings and inquiries in the manner already described, and give him coffee in the Arab style if it can be arranged. Otherwise he can offer him ordinary coffee or tea with soft drinks, biscuits and sweets. Some of the younger Shaikhs or merchants may embarrass a Western host by blatantly asking for whisky but the latter will be well-advised to refuse this request as politely as possible, as if he complies with it he will be liable to prosecution. No dogs should be in evidence when an Arab calls. Most of the Shaikhs and merchants whom a Westerner is likely to meet socially can eat in the western style and will appreciate an invitation to a meal. On such an occasion all alcohol should be kept out of sight, and no kind of pig meat should be included in the fare. Otherwise, ordinary Western dishes can be produced, though it is advisable to include some kind of rice dish, e.g., pilau or curry, in the menu. The guest will probably ask for permission to depart about half an hour after the meal is over. Food should be sent out for any servants who accompany him. Westerners resident in the Gulf normally receive a number

of callers on Christmas Day, but official calls are paid by the Rulers and others on the British Political authorities on New Year's Day. Similar official calls are paid on the Queen's birthday which, in view of the climate, is celebrated on its real date in April instead of in June.

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The Arabs in the Shaikhdoms wear the usual kerchief on the head held in place by a fillet deriving its form and name from the head rope of a camel, which in the old days was actually used for this purpose. They are clothed in a long gown reaching to the feet with a mantle over it when they go out or are receiving guests. The material varies with the time of year. Some of the Rulers and Shaikhs are gorgeously clad in brocades and wear at the waists daggers sheathed in gold; others dress extremely simply. The short Arab dagger in a curved sheath, wholly or partly covered with silver, is worn by almost all Arabs of any standing in Qatar, the Trucial Shaikhdoms and Muscat. The Arab rarely removes his head-dress in the presence of strangers but if he is wearing sandals usually takes them off before entering a room. The Westerner in the Gulf States is never obliged to wear any form of Arab dress and should remove his hat when entering a house. He should not wear shorts when visiting respectable people. Although Arab fishermen along the shore may frequently be seen almost, or quite, naked, it is considered disgraceful to expose the knees in society. In Muscat the Sultan will only allow members of his family and his subjects generally to wear shorts when they are actually playing games and they have to cover their knees when they are passing through the streets on their way to and from the Club. Western ladies should be well covered when visiting Arabs and, indeed, on all occasions in public, but it is not essential for them to wear hats. European dress is worn by the younger generation of Persians in Bahrain, but the older ones and most of those in Dubai still wear the flowing robes and gold brocaded head-dress of the times before Riza Shah's dress reforms. In Kuwait the Persians have adopted the Arab style of dress. Nationals of other Middle East States, except Saudi Arabia, and of India and Pakistan, usually wear European dress,

sometimes with their own particular form of head-gear, such as a caracul cap.

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The favorite sport of the Gulf Arabs is the hawking of bustard and large parties of Shaikhs and their followers visit Saudi Arabia for this purpose during the season, which lasts from November to February inclusive. Only the lesser variety of the bird, known as "MacQueen's bustard," is found. It appears also in the Shaikhdoms in comparatively small numbers and is pursued by the Shaikhs as soon as its presence is notified. Hawks are to be seen sitting hooded on their perches in the court-yards of the Ruler's palaces and trained birds fetch a high price. With the advent of the motor-car, the Arab, at any rate in the Gulf States, has ceased to be a horseman and very few of the Shaikhs ever ride. They keep horses, however, and breed them, and if a guest is not careful he may find himself obliged to accept a present of a pregnant mare. Horses are expensive to keep in the Gulf States owing to the lack of locally grown fodder and very much more expensive to transport to the United Kingdom or the United States of America. Race meetings used to be held usually twice a year in Bahrain but the practice has recently ceased. The Arab is a born gambler but the Rulers do not approve of gambling in its cruder forms and quickly suppress it. The Shaikhs now, for the most part, take no form of physical exercise except for occasional participation in a tribal dance and tend to put on a great deal of weight. Among the younger generation of the people as a whole association football is now extremely popular at Bahrain and Kuwait and hockey at Muscat.

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The Gulf Arab has all the characteristics of his race. He is proud but volatile and does not take kindly to routine hard work, though he can usually rise to an emergency. He does not often lie deliberately and when he does so the lie can usually be detected, but he is prone to exaggeration. His manner is frank and open and he has a well-developed sense of humor. Although extremely hospitable, and generous to a degree in the treatment of a guest, in other matters it may be difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy his cupidity. So far as manners are concerned, he is a gentleman born and deliberate discourtesy

is rare. He tolerates sexual aberrations, other than adultery, provided too much publicity is not given to them. There are prostitutes in the towns and the Rulers from time to time try to turn them out, but they usually filter back again. Serious crime is rare, but pilfering is common. The poorer Arab is an expert picker-up of unconsidered trifles and anything belonging to such an impersonal body as an oil company is considered fair game. There are few burglaries of shops or private houses. With the large influx of Europeans and Americans, resulting from the exploitation of oil, there has been a certain amount of talk of "corrupting Western influences," but it is very doubtful whether the Gulf Arab is less religious or less moral than he was before. The only difference is that those who wish to break the Quranic injunction about liquor can now obtain whisky or beer instead of some local brew, and in the oil producing Shaikhdoms the luxurious and vicious are in a better position to indulge their proclivities.

The Arab rarely makes a good domestic servant and European and American residents who do not make special arrangements for obtaining servants from India or Pakistan usually employ local Persians. Provided the liquor is kept locked up, they will not help themselves to more than they consider their right in the way of cigarettes, tea, sugar, etc., and if constantly supervised are reasonably satisfactory.

So long as the veil system and the ban on the consumption of liquor by nationals of the States exist, real intimacy between East and West in the Gulf will be difficult, if not impossible. Mixed clubs do exist at Muscat, where there is only a handful of Westerners, but elsewhere the two barriers to which I have referred have prevented them from passing beyond the stage of discussion. It is probably better thus and it is fortunate that most of the oil companies have established their camps at a distance from the main centers of population. At present East and West visit each other's houses and treat each other with respect and often with genuine friendship. Closer intimacy might well lead to unfortunate incidents and a deterioration of relations.

Finally, I would emphasize the importance of treating a Gulf Arab as an equal. He thinks he is a better man than the Westerner, both by birth and religion, and greatly resents any attitude of superiority or any kind of rudeness.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL ECONOMY AND COMMUNICATIONS

THE WHOLE ECONOMY of the Gulf has been transformed by oil, to which I am devoting a separate chapter. Before its discovery pearl-fishing was the premier industry. At the beginning of the century about 4,500 boats and 74,000 men were employed and the value of a year's catch was estimated at nearly one and a half million pounds. It was then stated that if the supply of pearls were to fail the trade of Kuwait would be severely crippled, that of Bahrain would be reduced to one-fifth, and the ports of Qatar peninsula and the Trucial Coast would cease to exist. The supply has not yet failed, but the economic depression of the early thirties and the introduction of the Japanese cultured pearl hit the industry severely and had not oil come to the rescue the Shaikhdoms would have been faced with bankruptcy. Now most of the diving class prefer steady employment with the oil companies to the hardships and risks of their old profession and not more than a few hundred boats go out every year, and these mostly from the Trucial Coast where no oil company has yet gone into production. The main pearling banks lie along the Arabian side of the Gulf and stretch from opposite Dubai on the Trucial Coast to the vicinity of Abu Ali Island 100 miles north of Bahrain. They are open to all inhabitants of the Persian Gulf shores but others are excluded and, in particular, trawling and the use of modern diving appliances are not allowed. Diving takes place in depths up to ten fathoms and the divers usually remain under water for between one and two minutes. I timed one grey-haired but wiry diver who stayed under just over three minutes. The main season, when the whole diving fleet operates, lasts from June to September. A few privateers go out earlier and there is a short after-season of three weeks which ends in October. The divers cannot work on the

deep banks when the water is cold. A day's haul of oysters is kept till the morning when they are opened and the pearls collected. Merchants ply in small boats among the fleet and buy the catch, the proceeds being distributed between the owners and captains of the vessels, the divers and the men who pull them up, in accordance with fixed shares which are universally recognized. Before the last war buyers used to come to the Persian Gulf from Europe, and in recent years an American has been visiting the Gulf at the end of the pearling season to purchase a small type of pearl which is in demand for embroidery purposes, but the bulk of the catch is sent to Bombay for polishing and boring. Pearls of all kinds, both in the raw stage and in the form of necklaces and other ornaments, can be purchased in Bahrain and the Rulers keep stocks of necklaces for presentation to distinguished visitors. There are pearls of all shapes and colors. Many are irregular in form and therefore cheap and there is a button type which is suitable for earrings. The colors include white, rose, yellow, blue and a rather dingy hue that is not quite black. The Arabs have a pleasing tale about these colors. They say that the pearls are formed by rain-drops falling on the sea and that their color depends on the light when the rain falls. The best rose-colored ones are formed when it rains in bright moonlight.

Another industry which still flourishes, but is showing a decline, is boat-building. Craft of different shapes and sizes are constructed, each type having its own name, the Kuwaiti *boom* with a sharp-pointed prow and a sharp stern being perhaps the best known of all. Incidentally, the word 'dhow,' which we apply indiscriminately to all larger Arab craft, is never used by the Arabs and according to the Encyclopedia Britannica its origin is unknown. Another type which is very common at Bahrain is the *jalbot,* which has a square stern. Nobody quite knows whether the word is derived from our jollyboat or vice-versa. The larger craft are still used extensively for carrying goods from the big ports to the smaller ones and from one side of the Gulf to the other and every autumn a fleet, now steadily decreasing, leaves Kuwait, picking up other craft on its way down the Gulf, and sails for the East African coast with cargoes of Basra dates, returning in the spring with mangrove poles from the Rufiji

river.* There is no timber in the Gulf and these poles are used for the roofs of houses. The timber from which the boats themselves are made mostly comes from the Malabar coast of India. Chugging engines are now replacing the graceful sails, and modern launches and tugs are coming more and more into use for the local carrying trade. The fishermen, especially on the Muscat coast, use many types of small craft of strange and ancient design, one of them being constructed entirely of palm fronds in which the fisherman sits half submerged in water.

Fishing provides a livelihood for many. In the shallow waters all round Bahrain are hugh V-shaped traps in which the fish are stranded and collected at low tide. Large cage-like traps which are sunk in deeper water are also used, as well as umbrella nets. In the northern part of the Gulf, with the great increase of population, due to the presence of the oil companies, the demand for fish exceeds the supply. Further south, and especially in the Gulf of Oman, fish abound and there is a substantial export trade from Muscat of dried fish and fish-meal, the former going mostly to India and Ceylon and the latter to Europe. The fish-meal is made from the Kasha, a kind of sardine which is caught in enormous quantities with a net of the seine type. The fish are dried in the sun and in the season the whole coast reeks of them. There is a fish-meal factory in Muscat belonging to a local merchant but it has been out of production for some years owing to the lack of an engineer. Sharks are caught in large numbers. Their flesh is eaten by some of the Arabs, their oil used for the caulking of boats and their fins are exported to Ceylon. Fish-maws are sent to Europe for the making of isinglass. Schemes have been mooted for bringing fish from the Gulf of Oman in refrigerated vessels to meet the needs of the oil ports in the Persian Gulf but nothing has come of them as yet. There would appear to be scope for the development of the Muscat fisheries but the people are conservative and innovations are not popular.

Cultivation worthy of the name exists only in Bahrain, the more

* A fascinating description of one of these voyages will be found in Alan Villiers' *Sons of Sindbad,* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1940).

easterly Trucial States and Muscat territory. Except to a limited extent in Dhofar, the normal rainfall is nowhere adequate to produce crops and there are no rivers or streams. Water is obtained from natural springs, wells and under-ground channels. Except in the Bahrain Islands, all these sources of supply are only found inside or along the base of the mountains. Wherever there is sufficient water date gardens flourish. The date is one of the staple foodstuffs of the local population. There are a great many different varieties and most of them can be eaten in both the fresh and the dried form. The fresh date, or *ruth,* is delicious but is not suitable for export. The ordinary date of commerce is the dried date, or *tamr.* There is another form of date called *bishr* which is exported in large quantities from Muscat to India where it is eaten at weddings and on other ceremonial occasions. It is gathered before it is fully ripe, boiled and dried, and the finished product is hard and crinkly. Before the last war a variety of date called the *fard,* from the interior of Oman, used to be exported to the United States. Practically no other dates are exported as the amount produced is insufficient for local needs. To a layman it would appear that, by more careful cultivation and selection of varieties, both the quantity and quality of the dates might be improved but it would be difficult to make the local Arab change his ways and with his age-long experience it is possible that he knows best. Practically every part of the date palm has its use and many of the poorer class live in huts made from its fronds. Sour and sweet limes grow well in Muscat territory and in the hilly parts of the Trucial States, but only one village that I have ever heard of produces good oranges. Other fruits, such as bananas, mangoes, figs, peaches and apricots are mostly of poor quality. Tobacco is grown for local consumption in the submontane areas, and lucerne and vegetables in or around the date gardens in most places. A limited amount of wheat is cultivated in some parts of Muscat territory and on rare occasions, when there is early and ample rain, a few crops are sown in the desert at Kuwait and Bahrain. Practically all the States' requirements of wheat, and all their rice, which is the favorite diet of the local population, have to be imported. In fact, except for fish, and in some places dates, the States have to import most of the necessities of life. In the old

days they paid for them by the proceeds of piracy, the slave trade or pearling; now their economy is largely dependent on the oil industry.

Before the Second World War India supplied them with most of what they required in the way of cereals, tea, sugar, piece-goods and so on. During the war this source of supply failed and Great Britain had to come to the rescue. Imports from the West now substantially exceed those from India and merchants make their purchases in whatever markets suit them best. Exchange control limits their choice to some extent but dollars and other hard currencies are always available at a price and the shops in Bahrain and Kuwait are full of American goods, and American cars are much in evidence. In 1957, the United Kingdom was the chief source of imports followed closely by the United States, with India in the third place and Japan in the fourth. Goods arrive at the principal ports in foreign steamers and are distributed to the smaller ports in local country craft. British shipping carries the bulk of trade, but Dutch shipping is obtaining an increasing share of it and American, German and Japanese ships are also competing. Owing to the low customs and transit duties some of the ports enjoy a substantial entrepôt trade.

The camel still remains the principal means of transport in most of Muscat territory and the remoter parts of the Trucial States. Elsewhere it has been replaced by the motorcar and lorry and is rapidly dwindling in numbers. Its meat and milk figure in the local diet. A young camel is sometimes served whole at an Arab meal; its flesh is very tender and tastes not unlike mutton. The milk is light and has no cream. Cattle, mostly of the humped variety, are kept wherever there are date gardens, and bulls are used for lifting water from wells where there is no artesian flow, though diesel pumps are beginning to take their place. The cows are usually kept concealed in matting sheds in the gardens for fear that the evil eye may fall on them. Bull fights are popular in parts of Muscat territory. Beef of quite good quality is obtainable at Bahrain. It is eaten by the local population but I have never met it at an Arab meal, and it is probably considered unsuitable for a guest. Except in the Oman hills there is little natural grazing for sheep and goats and they are only found in small numbers. Mutton is the most popular form of meat and in places

distant from the hills has to be imported on the hoof from neighboring countries. At Bahrain it is brought over the sea in dhows and if there is a prolonged period of bad weather a serious shortage may arise. A cold storage plant has recently been installed to remedy this situation.

Horses I have already mentioned. In Bahrain, the Ruler and a few others keep and breed them in the Arab tradition and mounted police are maintained. A few are kept in Kuwait, and in the other States there are practically none. The donkey is everywhere used as a beast of burden. Bahrain is famous for a large white breed which before the days of the motor was the principal means of transport for the elderly rich. Chickens are undersized and ubiquitous. They feed on anything they can pick up and produce a small but expensive egg.

The introduction of air travel has made the Persian Gulf once more an important link between West and East as it was in the days before Portuguese ships rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Almost all air lines from Western Europe and the United States of America to South East Asia, the Far East and Australia pass over it landing at Basrah, Bahrain or Dhahran. Between the two world wars, a route for Imperial Airways was first established along the Persian coast, but this was abandoned in the early thirties, owing to difficulties with the Persian Government, and a new route was opened along the Arab coast, with landing grounds at Bahrain and Sharjah. For a few years after the last war, British Overseas Airways Corporation maintained a flying-boat service. It then took three days to reach Bahrain from London. Now there are land plane services almost daily through Bahrain which can be reached from London in a day. The British Overseas Airways Corporation also maintains a weekly service to Kuwait. The Gulf Aviation Company, with its headquarters at Bahrain, runs a number of local services to Dhahran in Saudi Arabia, Dohar in Qatar, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi on the Trucial Coast and Muscat, while Iraqi Airways aircraft ply between Iraq and Kuwait and Bahrain. Aden Airways maintain a weekly service from Aden to Sharjah and Bahrain. By those who can afford it, air travel is now the normal means used for journeys both inside the Gulf — wherever

there are landing grounds — and between the Gulf and the outside world.

Travel by sea is preferred by some, and is the ordinary method employed by the bulk of the population where road travel is impossible. In order to reach most of the islands and many of the smaller ports — in the absence of helicopters or flying boats — only this means is available. The mail steamers of the British India Steam Navigation Company maintain a regular service between Bombay and Basra which calls weekly at Muscat, Bahrain and Kuwait and less frequently at Gwadur, Sharjah and Dubai. This service is very popular for local travel and the decks are usually crowded with passengers. The only direct service by sea between the Persian Gulf and the United Kingdom is provided by Messrs. Strick Scott and Co. Their steamers sail irregularly and take only a limited number of passengers. As their main interest is freight, there may be delays at ports en route. For visitors from the West an alternative is to travel by one of the regular lines to Bombay or Karachi and catch the British India mail steamer there. Within the Gulf, launches, most of them dhows fitted with engines, ply from port to port, but there are no regular services and in most cases no special accommodation for passengers. For a distinguished traveler a carpet will be spread on the poop and a chair provided. This mode of travel is pleasant enough for a short time, especially in the spring and autumn when it is not too hot and bad storms are unlikely. Ordinarily, such a launch will be crammed full of people with their household goods, including perhaps goats and chickens, and loaded as well with all sorts of merchandise.

The Shaikhs own expensive American motor cars and the poorer people travel about in lorries. In Bahrain, village communities own their own buses. Bahrain has been provided with a number of metalled roads, and in Kuwait and Qatar there are good roads linking the oil companies' camps with each other and the capitals, and other roads are being constructed by the local Governments. Over much of the desert, where there is no heavy sand, motor vehicles can pass, road or no road. There are tracks leading from Kuwait to Iraq and Saudi Arabia and from Qatar to Saudi Arabia. The local people use them frequently, and foreigners would probably use them more

but for the difficulties created by passport and visa regulations. There are tracks along the Trucial Coast which are motorable except after heavy rain, and tracks leading from the Trucial Coast into Saudi Arabia. It is almost impossible to travel direct by car from the Trucial Coast to Qatar, and there is only one motorable track leading eastwards from the Trucial Coast through the hills into Muscat territory. This passes along or beside a water-course known as the Wadi al-Qaur. Beyond the hills a rough track leads all the way down the coast across water-courses and irrigation channels to Muscat and the Sultan has recently constructed a motorable track from Muscat to Dhofar. There are, practically speaking, no other motorable roads in Muscat except some that have recently been constructed by the Sultan in the remote Dhofar province, though motor vehicles occasionally make their way up the water-courses into the hills.

There are post offices maintained by the London General Post Office at Bahrain, Dohah, Dubai and Muscat and by the Kuwait Government in Kuwait. British stamps are used, surcharged with rupee values, and in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar only with the name of the local State. At Bahrain stamps bearing the Ruler's head are used for local purposes. In States possessing airports, airmail letters for the United Kingdom are usually received within three or four days of posting. Surface mail takes up to a month. Public telegraph offices are maintained by Cable and Wireless Limited at Bahrain, Dohah, Dubai and Muscat, by International Aeradio Ltd. at Sharjah, and by the Kuwait Government at Kuwait. It is possible to speak with London and New York from Bahrain, Kuwait, Dohah and Muscat by radio telephone.

The Eastern Bank has branches at Bahrain, Dohah and Sharjah, and the British Bank of the Middle East at Bahrain, Kuwait, Dohah, Dubai, Sharjah and Muscat. The latter Bank is likely shortly to open a branch at Abu Dhabi. Kuwait and Bahrain also have their own National Banks. As already mentioned, all the Gulf States are in the sterling area. There are no local laws regarding legal tender but the currency in general use and the one in which the banks keep their accounts is the Indian rupee. In most of Muscat territory the tribesmen

refuse to deal in anything except the Maria Theresa dollar. This is a silver coin, bearing the Empress' head and the date 1780, which is minted commercially as occasion arises. Its rate *vis-à-vis* the Indian rupee fluctuates but recently it has been worth about three and a-half rupees. There is also current in Muscat a nickel coin called the *baiza,* a number of which the Sultan had minted a few years ago. The rate of these also fluctuates but is nominally 200 to the Maria Theresa dollar. The Sultan is now reported to be introducing a new rial for use only in Dhofar.

CHAPTER VII

OIL

WITH THE FINDING of oil, the Persian Gulf has been converted from an interesting backwater into an area of great economic and strategic importance. Primitive ports on desert shores have, within the space of a few years, become modern towns with fine buildings and well-stocked shops. Motorcars have taken the place of camels. Shaikhs who hardly had the wherewithal to feed their guests are now the proud possessors of sumptuous palaces, and the humble pearl diver or fisherman who was always in debt now draws a regular wage and owns a bicycle and a wrist watch.

Oil was discovered in Southwest Persia before the first World War by the Burmah Oil Company and developed by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now the British Petroleum Company). This discovery naturally aroused interest in the oil potentialities of the Shaikhdoms. Some preliminary surveys were made but several years elapsed before any company considered that the prospects of finding oil justified their applying for a concession and spending money in searching for it. In 1925 Major Frank Holmes obtained an exploration permit from the Ruler of Bahrain, where he was convinced oil was to be found, and endeavored to persuade a British company to take it up. None thought the risk worth while. He therefore tried his luck in the United States of America and eventually the Standard Oil Company of California agreed to undertake the venture. Work started in 1931; oil was struck in 1932 and produced in 1934. The discovery of oil in Bahrain led to keen competition for prospecting and mining rights in the other States and by the outbreak of the second World War all the Rulers, including the Sultan of Muscat, had granted concessions. Oil was found in Kuwait and Qatar shortly before the war began but was not produced until after the war. No oil has been found in commercial quantities in the Trucial States, although some

wells have been drilled there. In Muscat territory drilling has taken place, so far without success, west of the Central Oman massif and in Dhofar, where a little oil of poor quality has been found. Except for one insignificant area in the Trucial States, the only territory for which a concession had not been granted before the Second World War was Kuwait's undivided share in the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone. The Ruler of Kuwait held an auction for this concession in 1948 and it went to the American Independent Oil Company, which was the highest bidder. The late King Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud subsequently granted a concession for his share of the Zone to another American company. Oil was found in 1953 and a substantial quantity is now being produced.

After this area was allotted there was little or nothing left to be competed for on land, but in 1949 a new field for concession-hunting was opened up. The Rulers of the States bordering the Persian Gulf proper (but not the Gulf of Oman) all followed the example set by President Truman in 1945 and issued proclamations declaring that the sea-bed and subsoil lying beneath the high seas of the Persian Gulf contiguous to the territorial waters of their States belonged to their States and were subject to their absolute authority and jurisdiction. Nothing was said about the boundaries of the areas so claimed. The Ruler of Bahrain and the King of Saudi Arabia reached an agreement about those between their States in 1958, but the others all remain to be fixed and will, no doubt, be a fruitful subject of dispute. As the Persian Gulf, especially on the Arab side, is shallow and full of shoals, these proclamations opened up a vast new field for the search for oil. It may be noted that the Gulf of Oman is deep and its shores shelve steeply so that drilling there outside the limits of territorial waters would be difficult if not impossible. Qatar and Abu Dhabi at once granted concessions for their "off shore" oil to an American company which had not previously been operating in the area. The companies already holding concessions in the States claimed that these concessions automatically covered the off shore area, or Continental Shelf, as it is sometimes called. The matter was referred to arbitration and in both cases it was decided that the previous concessions did not extend beyond the territorial waters and that the

Rulers were at liberty to grant separate concessions for the areas outside the territorial waters covered by their proclamations. This principle has now been generally accepted except at Bahrain, where the off shore area was regarded as being covered by an agreement between the Ruler and the Bahrain Petroleum Company entered into before the issue of the proclamations. Some of the Rulers find it difficult to understand that these proclamations do not give them rights over the high seas as well as over the underlying sea-bed. Except for Kuwait the off shore areas of all the Shaikhdoms on the Persian Gulf littoral, including the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone, are now covered by concessions. Some drilling has taken place and oil has been struck near Das Island in the Abu Dhabi off shore area.

Although we are not concerned here with Saudi Arabia, it is pertinent to mention that an oil concession for the greater part of the Kingdom is held by a consortium of four American companies known as the Arabian American Oil Company, or ARAMCO for short. They have discovered vast quantities of oil, mostly near the shores of the Gulf, and their production nearly equals that of the Kuwait Oil Company. They have their headquarters at Dhahran, only 20 miles by sea and land from Manamah in Bahrain. Ports developed by them, or by the Saudi Arabian Government with the wealth obtained for them, have deprived Bahrain of much of its entrepôt trade. Their concession covers off shore oil and they have actually discovered oil under the sea, but in territorial waters rather than in the off shore area.

All the concessions granted in the Gulf States before 1948 provided for an annual payment to the Ruler until oil was produced in commercial quantities and after that for the payment of a royalty of Rs.3. (4s. 6d.) per ton or in some cases of slightly more. At the end of 1950 ARAMCO entered into an agreement with the late King Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud whereby the latter received a half share of their profits. Shortly after that, in 1951, the Persian oil industry was nationalized and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company found itself compelled to abandon its oil fields and its refinery at Abadan. These events naturally encouraged the Gulf Rulers to ask for more, and at the same time made the oil companies see the wisdom of complying

with their demands. Accordingly, in 1951 and 1952, new profit-sharing agreements were signed with the Rulers of the oil-producing Shaikhdoms of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar on the same lines as the 1950 agreement between ARAMCO and Ibn Sa'ud. No change was made in any of the original concessions granted by the Rulers of Gulf States where oil had not yet been found in commercial quantities, but the concession granted by the Ruler of Kuwait in 1948 for his share of the Neutral Zone, and some of the concessions since granted for off shore oil, provide for the payment of royalty on a more generous scale than the older concessions. In 1957 Bahrain produced about one and a-half million tons of oil, Kuwait over 56 million tons, the Neutral Zone over three million tons and Qatar five and a-half million tons, the income from this oil received by the three Rulers of the three Shaikhdoms being roughly £2 per ton. The figures for Kuwait and Qatar may well increase, but for Bahrain they are likely to remain static or decline unless a fresh discovery is made. In 1957 over 65 per-cent of the oil used in the British Isles and Western Europe came from the Middle East, and of this probably more than half was derived from Kuwait. Large refineries were opened at Bahrain in 1937 and at Kuwait in 1958. From Qatar oil is exported only in its crude form. All the three producing companies have developed their own ports where the oil is pumped into tankers or loaded in drums. A constant stream of tankers passes through the Straits of Hormuz, standing high out of the water on their entry into the Gulf and heavily laden on their return, all of much the same shape but varying in size, color, cleanliness and the flags they fly. They spend a few hours at an oil port drinking in their precious cargo and as soon as they are full leave without delay for destinations in all parts of the world. Some of the tankers belong to companies associated with the oil companies and others are independent. The world is familiar with the names of Onassis and Niarchos, two of the greatest fleet owners among the independents.

The oil fields in the producing Shaikhdoms are all in the desert at a distance from the main centers of population. In Bahrain and Qatar the wells are situated among low lying hills and in Kuwait on an undulating plain. The fields are the dreariest places imaginable.

There is nothing to be seen of the wells except the concrete slabs over them and a few valves. Sinuous pipes with bends to allow for the expansion and retraction of the metal with the changes of temperature link them with the storage tanks. A rig or two where drilling is in progress breaks the monotony of the landscape but does not beautify it, and here and there are small pumping stations or sets of huge cylinders used for separating the gas from the oil. The refineries are ugly conglomerations of storage tanks, cylinders, pipes, chimneys and all sorts of plant, interesting only to those with some knowledge of their intricacies. The one thing a visitor never sees is the actual oil, though he may often smell it. Some of the gas, after it has been separated from the oil, is now being utilized at Bahrain for electricity production and at Kuwait to light the town. The rest is burnt off and the flares provide a fine spectacle, especially when seen from the air at night. In its natural state the gas is odorless and if there is an escape anywhere the area has to be cordoned off to prevent access by man or beast. Before it can be used for domestic or industrial purposes it has to be "sweetened," i.e., treated with some substance which will make it smell. A sight worth seeing, but of rare occurrence, is the firing of a new well. The first gush of oil, which may contain impurities from materials used in the drilling, is allowed to escape and then set on fire. Enormous waves of black smoke go billowing across the desert to rejoice the heart of the Ruler concerned. All the oil in the Gulf is under tremendous pressure and would spurt hundreds of feet into the air if not heavily clamped down. If a well catches fire, which fortunately very rarely happens, there is great excitement. In Qatar a few years ago, when this happened, an expert was hastily imported by air from America. He put on an asbestos suit and at great personal risk succeeded in blowing in the top of the well with a charge of dynamite, thereby effectually sealing it off. The oil in Bahrain is about 2000 feet under the surface, in Kuwait about 4000 feet and in Qatar about 6000 feet. The amount of oil available is to some extent a matter of conjecture but the experts believe that there are sufficient reserves in Kuwait to last for several generations at the present rate of production. There is always the possibility that new oil fields may be found on land or under the sea. Any reader

who is anxious to obtain more information about the oil in the Gulf States and in the Middle East generally is recommended to read Brigadier Longrigg's very lucid book on the subject.*

The producing companies have their residential and industrial areas situated in or alongside the oil-fields. To counteract the dreariness of the landscape and severity of the climate they have spared no effort to introduce amenities which will make life tolerable to their employees. Their residential areas are like small American or British towns dumped down in the desert. In fact, one new hand, whom the Bahrain Petroleum Company engaged from the United Kingdom, resigned on arrival because, he said, he had been told he was coming to a desert island and the place did not live up to his expectations. All the living quarters of the foreign staff are fully furnished and air-conditioned and provided with electric current and running water. The bachelors usually feed in a common mess and housewives can obtain all the provisions they require, and many other articles as well, from well stocked commissaries. There are cinemas, clubs where, among other things, regular dances are held; swimming baths, tennis courts, grounds for cricket, football and hockey, golf courses and so on. There are schools for the children of foreign employees and well-equipped hospitals are maintained for all classes of employees. The pay is high and liberal leave is granted. The only drawback to life in a Persian Gulf oil camp — apart from the climate — is that there is a certain amount of regimentation which is inevitable in such isolated and self-contained units. Almost all the senior staff are American or British. Indian and Pakistanis, and in Qatar some Palestinians and Lebanese, are employed as clerks and artisans. In the States where oil has not been found, temporary camps are established for drilling or survey purposes and these are made as comfortable as circumstances permit. The companies holding the off shore concessions for Qatar and Abu Dhabi have constructed camps at Dohah and Abu Dhabi respectively as bases for their operations, and the Abu Dhabi company has recently established a camp on Das Island.

* S. H. Longrigg. *Oil in the Middle East,* Oxford University Press, 1954.

The companies are all bound by their concessions to employ the subjects of the State in which they are operating to the greatest possible extent. At present, owing to the backwardness of education, the local population are, for the most part, only employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Pressure is, however, being brought to bear on the companies to reduce the number of Indians and other foreigners employed as clerks and artisans and to replace them by local Arabs, wherever there are any of the latter qualified for the jobs. The reduction and replacement are, very gradually, being accomplished. In due course the companies will no doubt have to go further and employ Arabs on the senior staff and associate them in the management if demands for nationalization are to be avoided. Meanwhile, they are doing their best to raise the standard of local education. They maintain schools in their camps for their local employees and also give them technical training. They provide scholarships to enable boys from the State schools to study abroad and in some cases have assisted the local educational authorities by building schools for them or lending them teachers. They treat their labor well and are careful to ensure that their wages are adjusted to any increase in the cost of living. In some cases motor transport is provided to take local employees to and from their homes; in others they live in or near the companies' camps. The accommodation provided was primitive at first but has rapidly been brought up to modern standards. Strikes are infrequent and there are as yet no trades unions, though this is a development that must be expected and a law to provide for their establishment has recently been promulgated in Bahrain. Meanwhile, the companies maintain special officers to look after the interests of their labor and all grievances are promptly investigated. There is also usually something in the nature of a Welfare Committee, on which the local labor is represented.

In addition to their concession agreements with the Rulers, the companies are all bound by "Political Agreements" with the British Government. One of the main objects of these is to ensure that their relations with the Rulers in all matters of importance are conducted through, or with, the knowledge of the British political officers. This

does not mean that these officers interfere in commercial negotiations. In fact, they always remain strictly neutral when any bargaining is in progress but it does enable them to put a word in when any matter of political importance crops up, e.g., if a Ruler or a company proposes that operations should be carried out in an area the ownership of which is doubtful. Under the Political Agreements, each company appoints a Chief Local Representative, usually the General Manager on the spot, who is officially responsible for dealings with the British political officer and, through him, with the Ruler. This does not prevent the senior officials of the companies from having direct access to the Rulers for business discussions provided they keep the political officer informed of any important developments and allow him to be present if he so desires. Relations between the companies' managements and the Rulers are generally good, though the latter from time to time complain that they are not getting enough in the way of remuneration. Liquor leakages are apt to be the cause of friction. Relations with the general public are also good and the companies' Western personnel meet the local Shaikhs and merchants fairly frequently at social gatherings. All the companies have on their senior staff employees with a good knowledge of Arabic. These officials keep them in touch with local events and public opinion, but are careful to refrain from any interference in local politics where their business is not concerned. The local press is confined to one daily newspaper at Bahrain and a few periodicals with a small circulation, so that little in the way of publicity is possible. Some of the companies do publish an annual illustrated brochure in English and Arabic setting out the achievements of the past year.

There is usually close cooperation between the companies and the Governments of the Shaikhdoms in security measures. Some of the companies employ their own locally recruited guards; others rely entirely on the protection of the local police. There is inevitably a certain amount of pilfering but offenders who are caught are dealt with satisfactorily by the State courts and serious breaches of law and order are rare.

The presence of the oil industry and the wealth created by it have

not yet had time to effect any radical changes in the morals, manners and customs of the people, but the economy of the oil producing States has been revolutionized. The Shaikhs have riches undreamed of a few years ago. The Rulers themselves refrain from much personal ostentation but are lavish with their gifts to visitors of both high and low degree — a matter of great pride with the Arabs. They are, however, never able to satisfy their relations. Some of the latter, as was only to be expected, indulge in much extravagance and endeavor to revive the splendors of the "Arabian Nights" in a modern setting. One story goes that in Kuwait the ash-trays in the huge American cars which are popular there are never emptied, and when the reason for this is asked the reply is when the ash-tray is full the car is consigned to the rubbish heap and another one purchased. All this wealth, combined with the presence of large numbers of Europeans and Americans, has brought great prosperity to the merchants and shop-keepers. In the main streets of the *suqs* there are fine shops with plate-glass windows where all the luxury goods of the West are on show, while in the lanes behind them a multitude of little booths continue to display the tinsel, bric-a-brac and spices of the East. The merchants, though living comfortably, avoid extravagance. They prefer to pile up their wealth or use it for mercantile ventures in which they sometimes burn their fingers. Both the Shaikhs and the merchants travel abroad much more than formerly. They seek relief from the summer heat in the mountains of Lebanon and visit Europe and America for business or pleasure. Up until now, this travel does not appear to have modified their parochialism. One Shaikh thought Paris much like his home town and the Eiffel Tower only served to remind him of an oil-rig in the desert. Another left a well known hotel in London because the management could not produce charcoal for his incense burner. For the man in the street there is over-employment, and wages have quadrupled since the war. He spends his earnings on much be-gadgetted bicycles, wrist watches, wireless sets and visits to the cinema. The oil companies base their minimum wage, in part, on the number of calories they consider a man and his family should consume but it is very doubtful whether there has been any substantial improvement

in the family diet. Among the people at large the womenfolk have probably benefited least from the prevailing prosperity. In the States where oil has not yet been found, conditions are very different. The annual payments received from the oil companies help the Rulers to defray their current expenses but leave no surplus for development purposes and the local population is only employed in limited numbers as labor or guards for such drilling or survey operations as may be in progress. Generally speaking, therefore, economic conditions in these States are bad and as a result there has been a large scale emigration to the oil producing Shaikhdoms and to Saudi Arabia, where employment and good wages can easily be obtained. Many of those who have migrated will probably return when they have earned sufficient money to support their families for the time being or to purchase a wife.

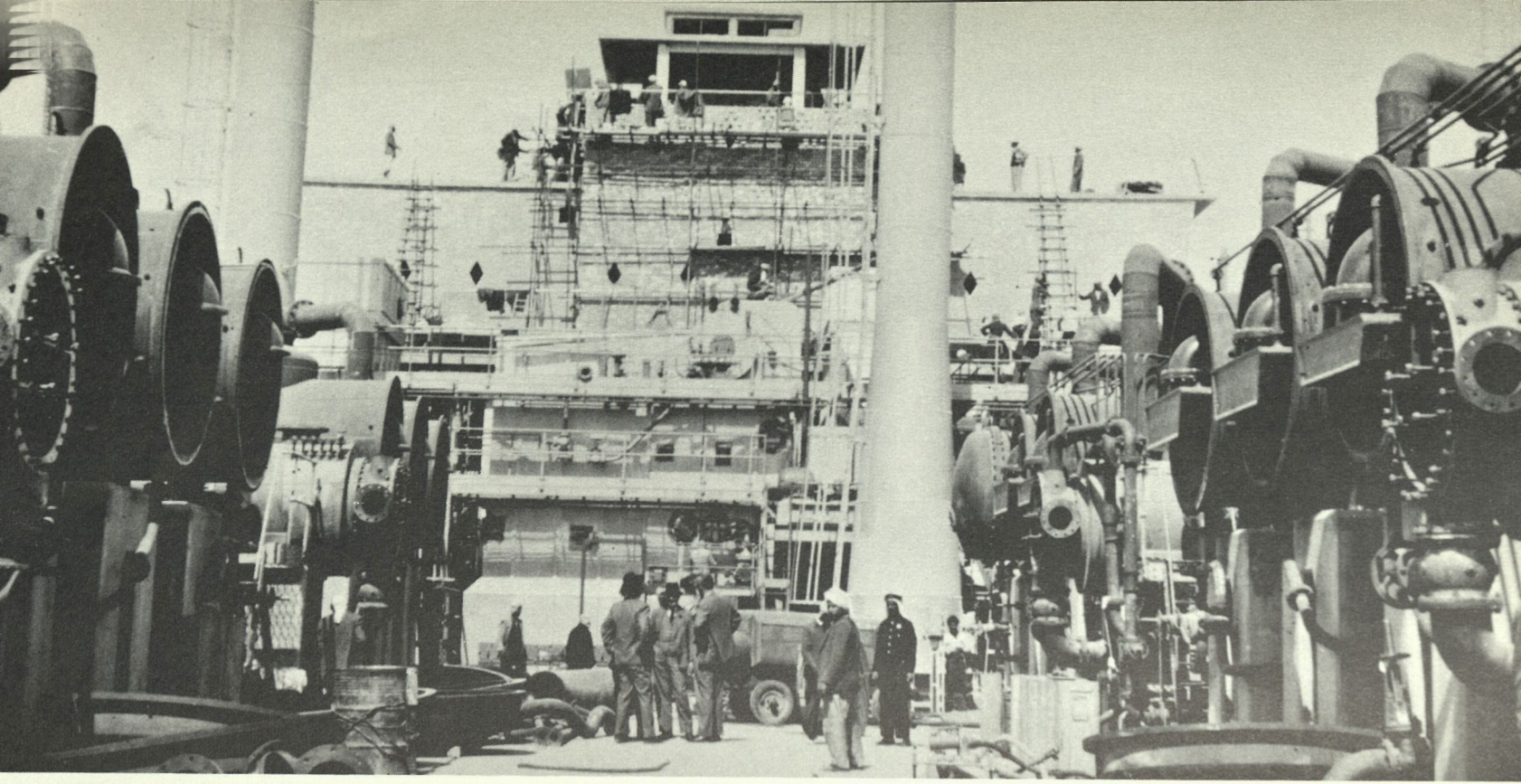
In these oil producing Shaikhdoms the political effects of the sudden influx of wealth and increased contact with the West and neighboring Middle Eastern countries have also been remarkably small. Except to some extent, recently, in Bahrain, there has been no important public demand for any change in the present patriarchal form of Government and in spite of the virulence of some of the broadcasts and newspapers received from other Middle Eastern countries there appears as yet to be no very marked increase in anti-Western feeling. This may be attributed partly to the backwardness of education and partly to the fact that there is ample, well-paid employment for all. Further, only twenty-five years have elapsed since oil was first exported from Bahrain and about half this since it was produced in Kuwait and Qatar, so that there has not been much time for political consciousness to mature. There can be little doubt that in due course pressure will be brought to bear upon the Rulers to reform their administrations and perhaps to make them more democratic. Both the Rulers and their people at present realize that they owe their independence to British protection, but for which they would by this time have been absorbed by their more powerful neighbors. They know as well that their wealth comes from British and American enterprise, and so long as the British, with American cooperation, show their

ability and willingness to protect the Shaikhdoms from external aggression, and the oil companies adopt a reasonably liberal policy in their relations with the Rulers and their local employees, there appears to be no good reason why an early demand should arise in any of the Shaikhdoms for a drastic change in the special position which Great Britain at present enjoys or in the conditions under which the companies are operating.

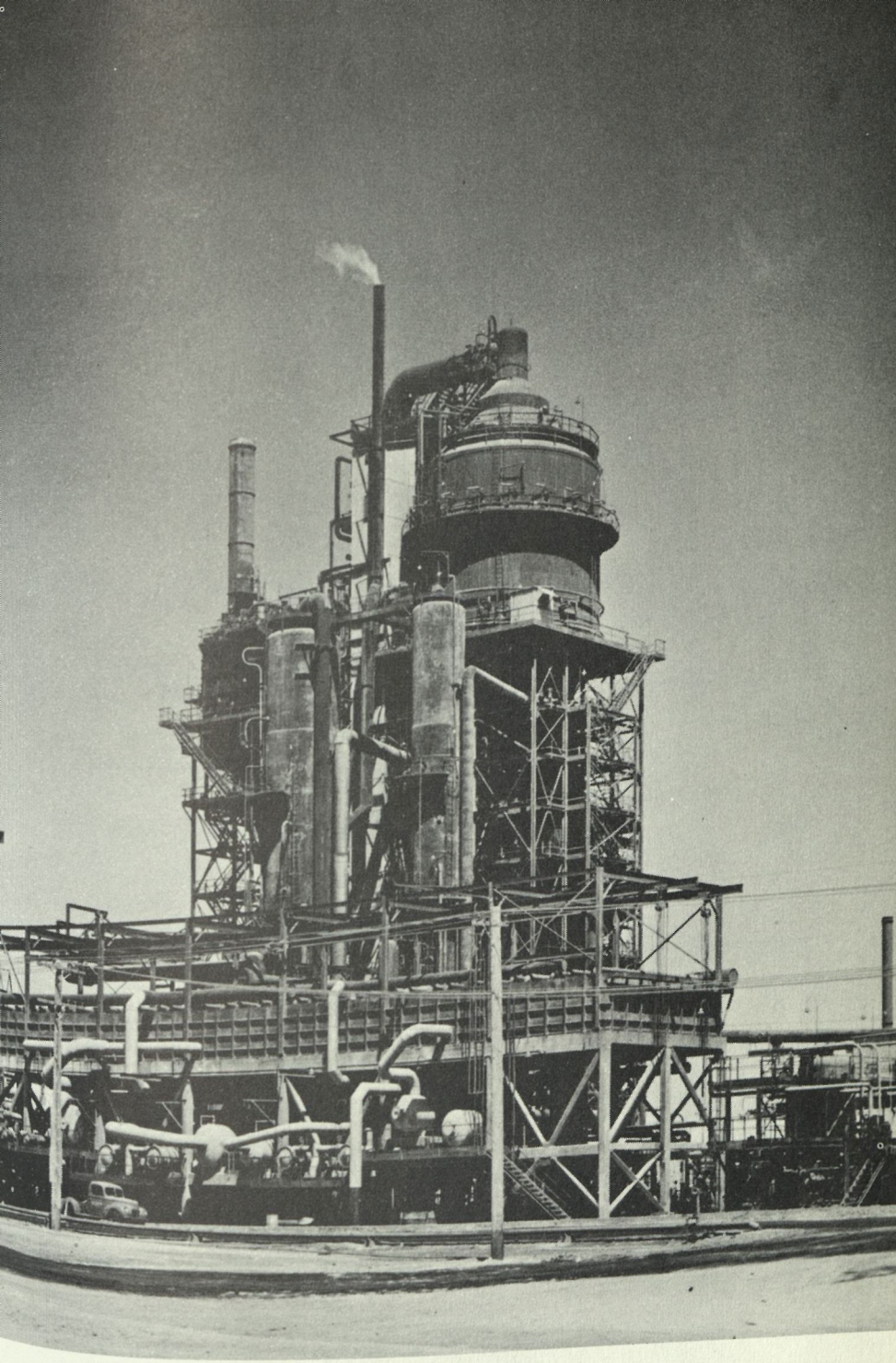
The Ruler of Kuwait at the Entrance to His Residence at Sha'b

The British Political Agency, Kuwait

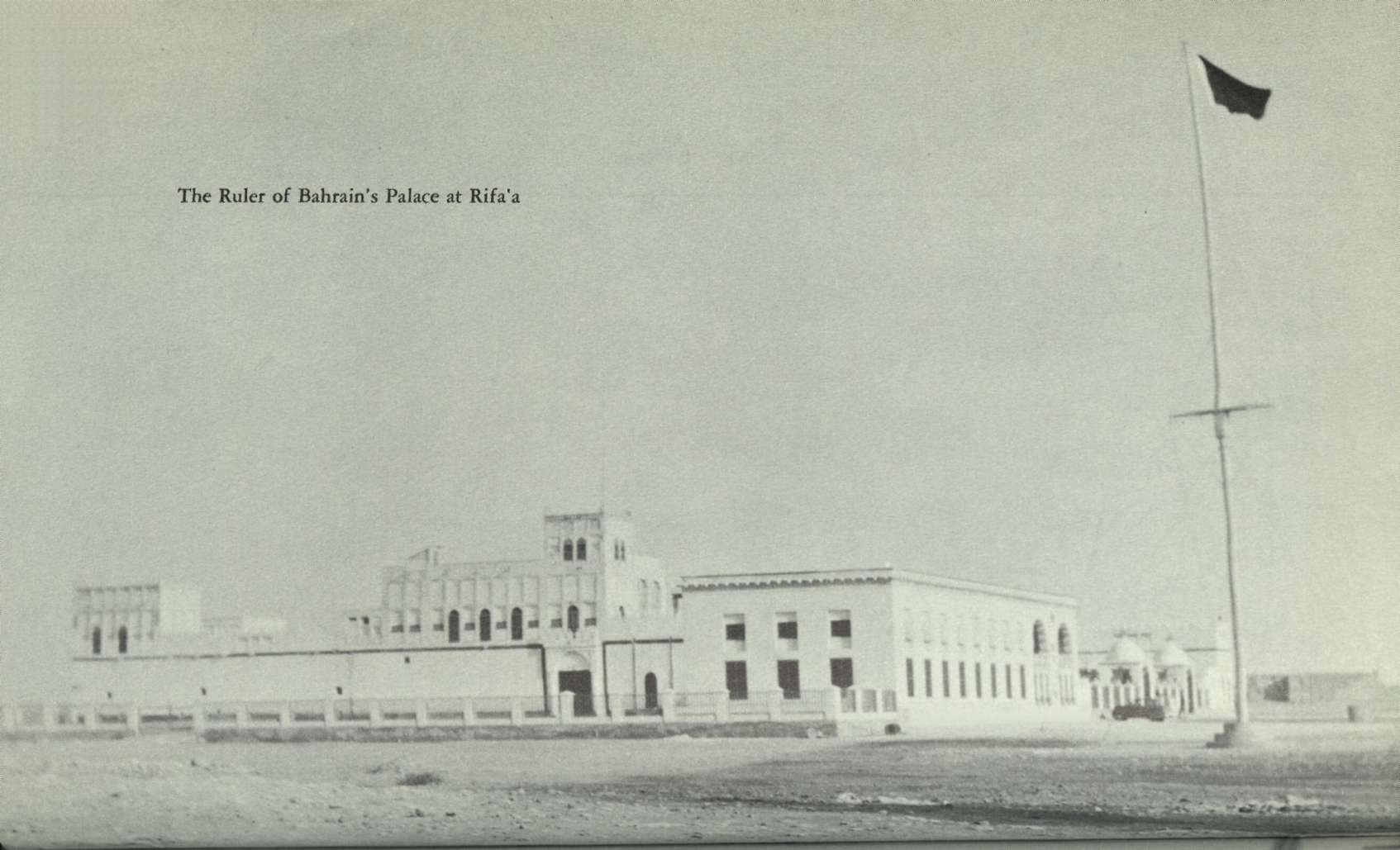
Kuwaiti Booms Laid up for the Hot Weather



The Water Distillation Plant, Kuwait



Fluid Catalytic Cracking Unit—Bahrain



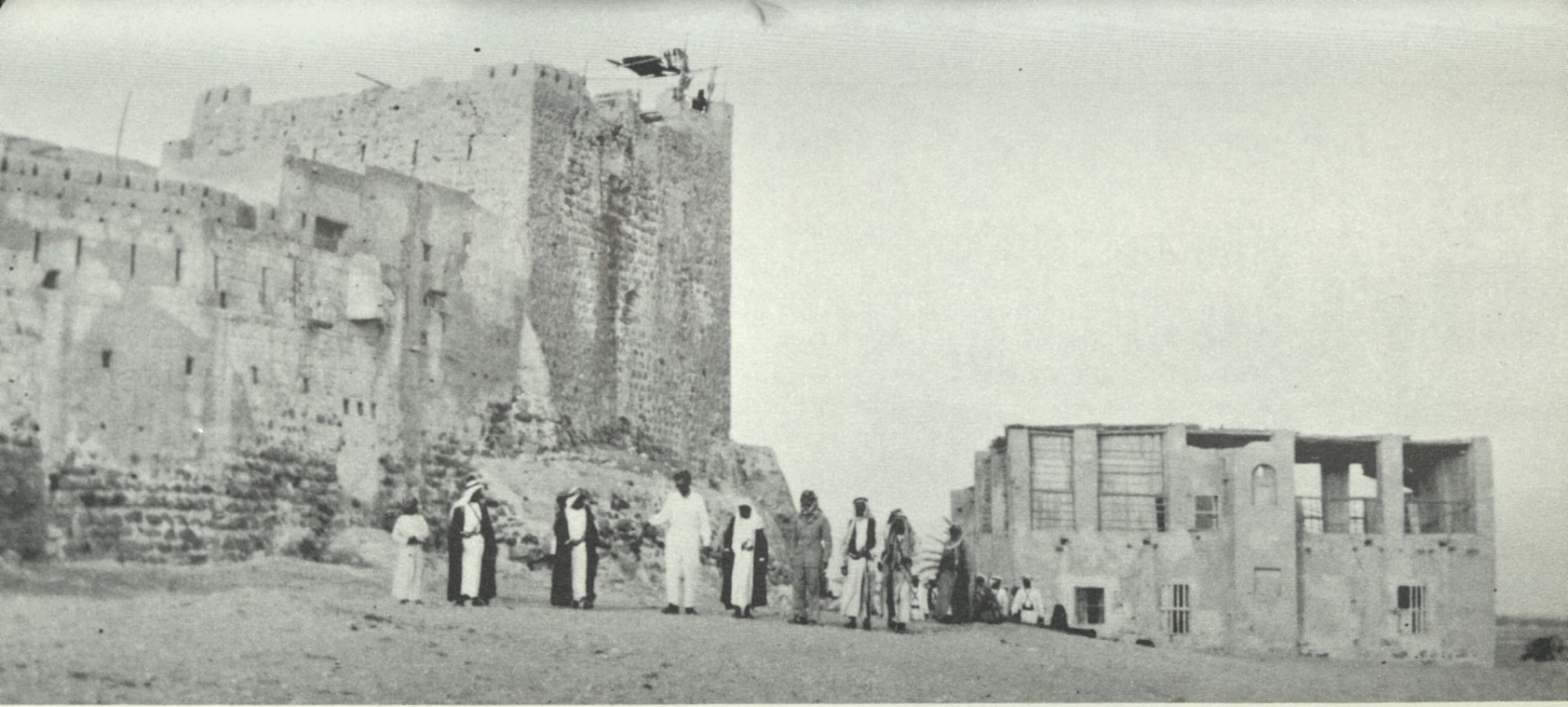
The Ruler of Bahrain's Palace at Rifa'a

The Suq at Manamah, Bahrain

Old Customs House at Dohah, Qatar

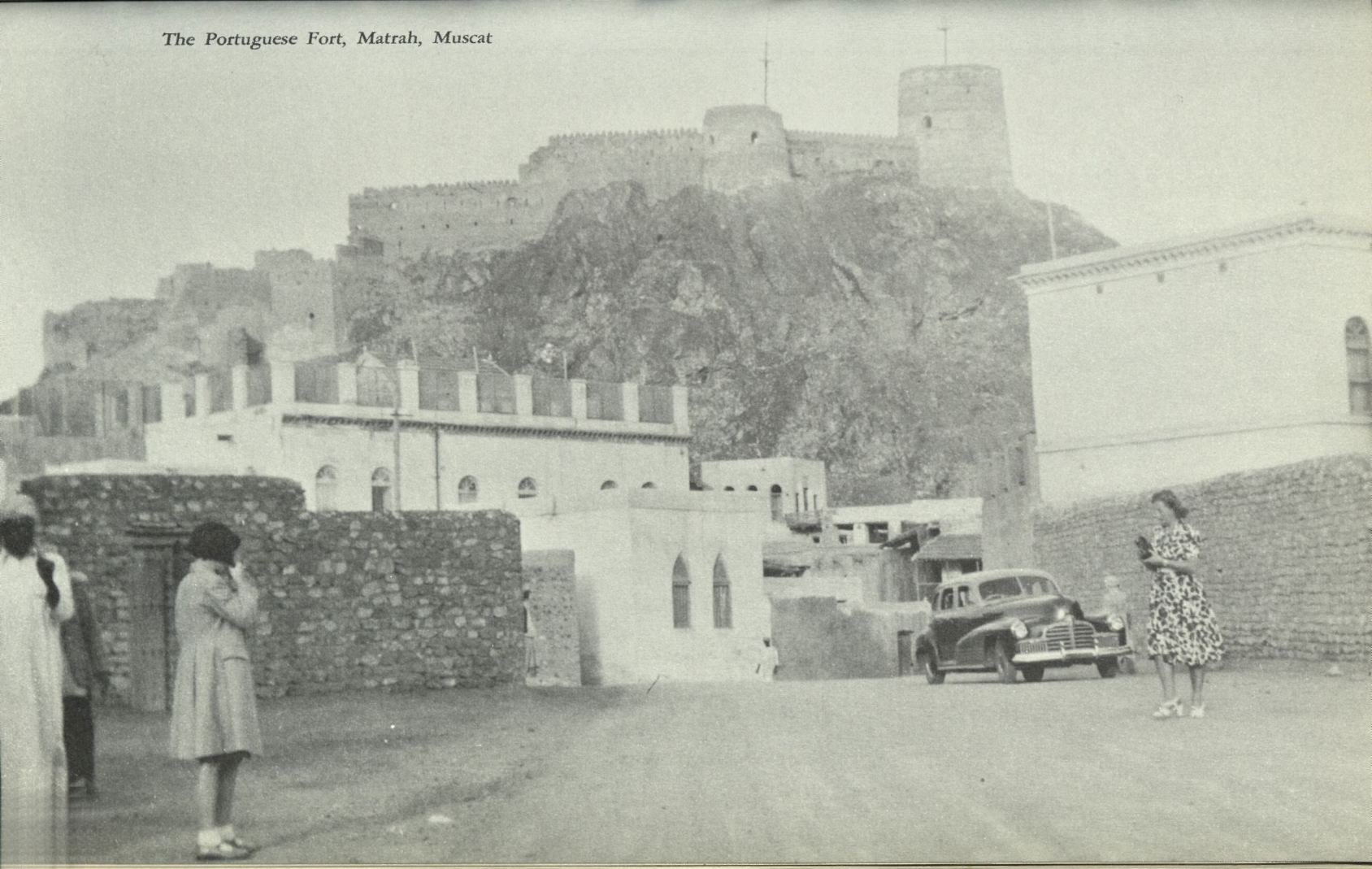
The Ruler of Fujairah

Digging for Red Oxide on Bu Musa Island, Sharjah State



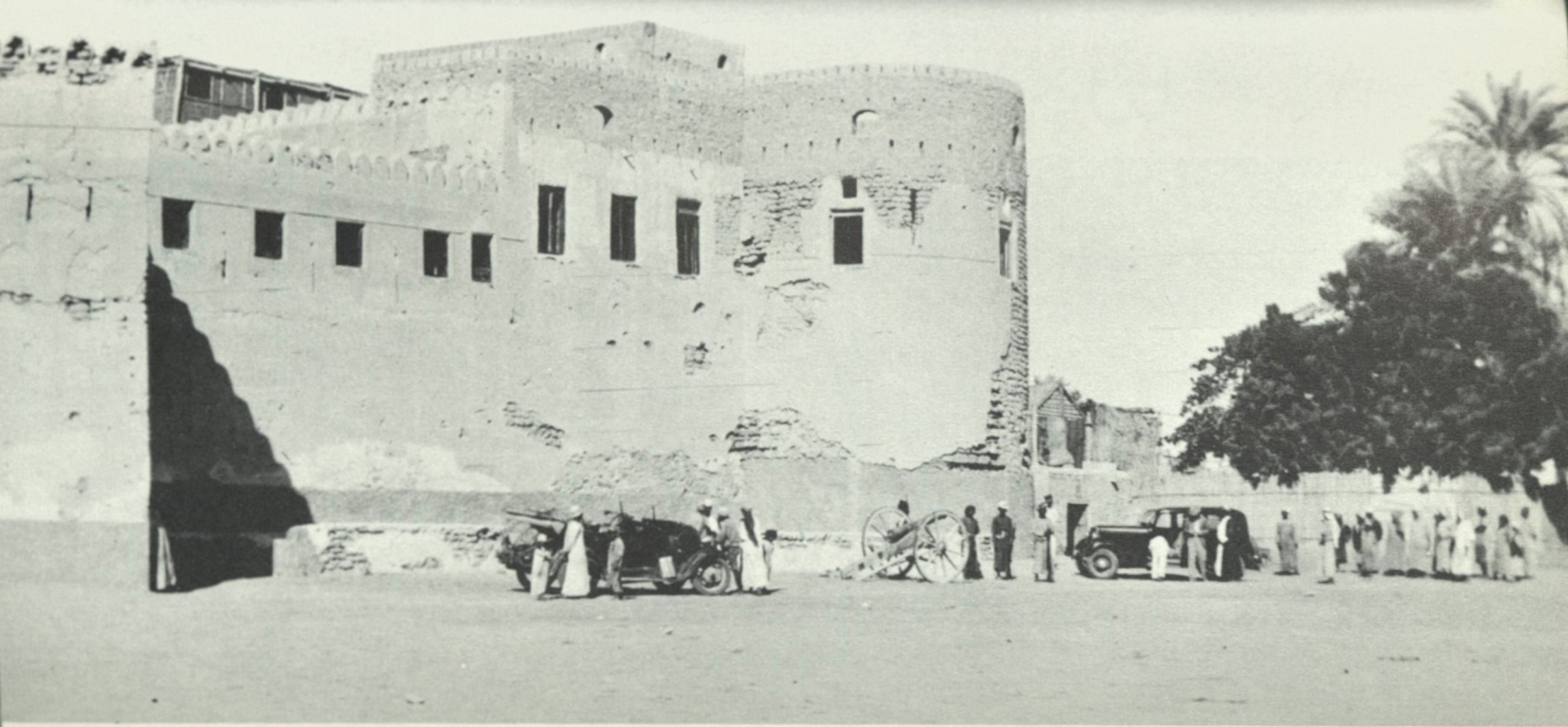
The Ruler's Palace, Ras al-Khaimah

Date Palm Garden in the Muscat Hills

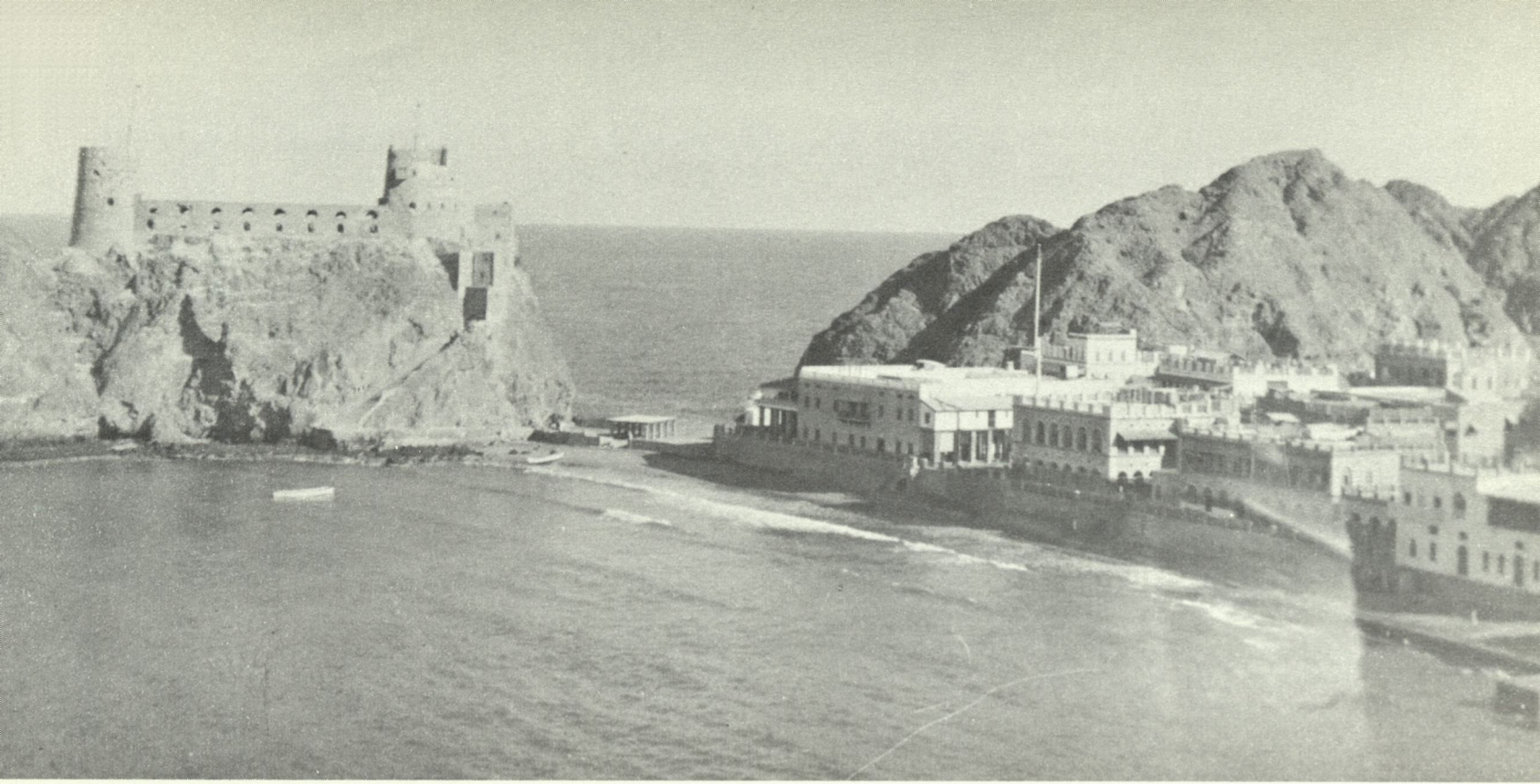


The Portuguese Fort, Matrah, Muscat

The Fort, Sohar, Muscat



The Fort, Sib, Batinah Coast, Muscat



The Harbor at Muscat, South Side

CHAPTER VIII

BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN IS an archipelago lying in the entrance to the Gulf of Salwa between the Hasa Province of Saudi Arabia and the Qatar peninsula and distant about 20 miles from the former and 18 from the latter. The main island is pear-shaped, running north and south with the broader end at the north. It is about 10 miles wide here, and its length is about 30 miles. Off its northeast corner, and joined to it by a causeway one and a-half miles long, lies the island of Muharraq. The latter is "E" shaped with a back of three and a-half miles and arms of two and a-half miles. Further south, on the east side, are the small circular islands of Nabi Salih, completely covered with date gardens, and the larger island of Sitra, separated from the main island by only a narrow channel which is bridged at one point. Off the northwest corner of the main island there are three islands deserving mention. Umm al-Sab'an, a small island of sand and coral, was given by Shaikh Hamad, father of the present Ruler, about twenty years ago to Mr. Max Thornburg, who was at that time a Vice President of the Bahrain Petroleum Company. Mr. Thornburg sank a well, planted a garden and built a house on the island and used to reside there with his wife for a few months each cold weather, as a result of which the island is known in English as "Thornburg's Island." He has now ceased to use the house and has handed the island back to the Ruler. Next to it lies Jiddah Island which is rocky and has low cliffs along the shore. Here the Bahrain Government keeps its prisoners. To the south of this is the much larger island of Umm al Na'san, which is the private property of the Ruler and is known in English as "Shaikh's Island." It is rectangular in shape and roughly four miles by two and a-half. There are a few date gardens at the southern end but otherwise it is flat sandy desert relieved only by two small but conspicuous hills. There are a number of other small islands in the archipelago, most of

them on the east side of the main island. Two or three of them are inhabited but the others are little more than rocks or sand banks. Even these are precious now as possible means of access to oil. I have mentioned elsewhere that Bahrain has no land boundaries to form the subject of dispute, but the deficiency is made up by a number of outlying islands and shoals which have been, or still are, bones of contention with Saudi Arabia or Qatar, although a generation ago no one attached any importance to them. A dispute with Qatar over the Hawar Islands which lie off the north western shore of the Qatar peninsula was settled by the British Government in favor of Bahrain in 1938, and the Ruler of Bahrain now maintains a small police post on one of them. No oil has, however, been found on them, and they are only noteworthy as a haunt of flamingoes.

The most notable feature of Bahrain is its water supply. In the northern half of the main island and in all the islands which have been named there are springs or artesian wells which irrigate the gardens and provide drinking water for the population. The water is slightly brackish and not very palatable to those who are not used to it, but can be drunk with impunity when it has not been polluted. There are also fresh water springs under the sea in the vicinity of the archipelago and to the north of it. Pearl divers out at sea fill their water skins from them and some of the inhabitants of Muharraq Island obtain their drinking water from a spring which is exposed at low tide. The source of all this water, which also appears at Qatif, Dammam and other places on the nearby coast of Saudi Arabia, is disputed. The orthodox geological opinion is that it is derived from the scanty rainfall received by the hills of central Arabia but there are a few who argue that it is siphoned under the Gulf from the Persian mountains. It is not liable to seasonal variations but is affected by the tides and, owing to the extent to which it has been tapped in recent years, its level is falling. Pumps now have to be used in some of the wells from which water previously flowed freely. The name Bahrain, which means "the two waters," is popularly ascribed to the presence of all this fresh water amid the surrounding sea. It originally applied also to parts of the mainland and to Qatar but for many centuries now its significance has been confined to the archipelago.

The water is used for the irrigation of date gardens which cover the northern end of the main island and all or part of most of the smaller islands and refresh the eyes of those who visit Bahrain from the other Shaikhdoms and Saudi Arabia. There are a number of natural springs welling up into beautiful pools fringed with palms and oleanders. The most famous of these, the Ain Adhari, or Virgins' Pool, is over thirty feet deep with crystal clear water over a bottom tinged with blue by its sulphur content. Its temperature is constant so that it is cool in summer and warm in winter. The Bahrain Government has constructed steps and pavilions round it and it is very popular as a bathing place in the summer and the local schools hold aquatic sports in it. Records show that at the beginning of the century sailors of the Royal Navy were taken for picnics there on the white donkeys for which Bahrain is famous. Another well-known pool on the main island is Ain Qasari, known in English as "Belgrave's Pool" from the fact that the Ruler's former British adviser built a summer-house beside it. There are also very beautiful natural pools on Sitrah and Nabi Salih islands. Round the date gardens lucerne is grown for the cattle and donkeys and also various kinds of vegetables. Most European vegetables can be grown in the winter except peas and beans. Rather surprisingly, in a place without frost, celery grows well and a wild variety of it is found in the gardens. In the hot weather there is little to be had beyond the inevitable eggplant, ladies' fingers and pumpkins. The dates grown belong to a number of varieties and are at their best for dessert purposes when they are in their *rutb* stage.* The first dates are usually picked early in July and the harvest is completed at the end of October. The only other locally grown fruit which is palatable is the papaya, which is available most of the year. Other fruits are grown but are of poor quality, probably due to the brackishness of the water. Some reasonably good watermelons are grown but the local muskmelon has no flavor.

The greater part of the main island is desert and at its southern end tails off into a spit of sand. All round the center of the island there is an escarpment, or rim, like a huge crater where there is a sudden drop,

* See p. 54.

in some places precipitous, of about a hundred feet. The ground then rises again in a sort of dome, reaching a height of 450 feet at the Jabal Dukhan in the very center of the island. It is in this area that the oil is found. The hills are arid and rugged but, though they appear bare from the distance, there is some scant vegetation on them which sustains a few gazelle. After rain a few flowers are to be found and colocynths grow in the depressions strewing the ground when they ripen with their bitter fruit which looks like yellow apples but has a violent purgative effect if eaten. Thousands of burial mounds are a remarkable feature of the landscape in the northern half of the island outside the date garden area. Most of these are quite small but near Awali there are some which reach a height of 50 or 60 ft. Between 1878 and 1940 they were examined from time to time by experts, who found human bones and a few articles of interest including ornaments made of ivory, but they had all long ago been rifled. A theory was formed that they dated from 1300 B.C. or earlier and that the island was at one time set apart as a burial place. To this, the name of the capital, Manamah, which means 'the place of sleep,' appeared to lend support. Between 1953 and 1957, however, a Danish expedition carried out more intensive research and discovered three temples, a large town and several villages, the earliest remains dating from the third millennium B.C. The conclusion was reached that about 5000 years ago Bahrain was a prosperous entrepôt between the civilizations of Ur and the Indus valley, and its identification with the legendary Dilmun is now regarded as almost certain.*

At a census, which was held in 1950, the population of the archipelago was found to be 109,650, of whom 91,179 were Bahrainis and the rest foreigners, including nearly 7,000 Persians, over 3,000 immigrants from the Indian sub-continent and over 2,000 Europeans and Americans. The bulk of the last group are British. The Bahrainis include a few thousand Persians who have become Bahrain subjects. The rest are made up of the ruling family and miscellaneous Sunni Arabs

* Articles on the mounds have been published by the Archaeological Survey of India (1900–1909), the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (1929) and in *Asia and the Americas* (1943), and on the Danish expeditions' researches in the *Illustrated London News* (January 4th and 11th 1958).

and freed slaves and the Shi'a Baharnah (singular Bahrani, to be distinguished from Bahraini). The latter are described as Arabs without a pedigree and speak Arabic. They were the indigenous inhabitants of the archipelago and are also found at Qatif on the mainland, in Qatar and elsewhere. In Bahrain they cultivate the date gardens as tenants of the Shaikhs and others — no local pure-bred Arab will ordinarily do this work there — and trade in Manamah, and their number includes a few wealthy merchants. They were the original owners of the soil but were dispossessed many generations ago. A scheme has, however, recently been introduced for selling some of the land back to them at a very low price and is said to be working well. They are a quiet and peaceful people and normally give little trouble, but with the number of Sunnis and Shi'as in the islands fairly evenly balanced there are occasional outbreaks of religious animosity leading to riots, and the period of mourning for the martyrdom of Husain, which takes place at the beginning of the Muhammadan month of Muharram, is a particularly dangerous time.*

The two main centers of population are the towns of Manamah (about 40,000) and Muharraq (about 20,000). Manamah is the business center. Most of the foreigners — Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, Saudi Arabians, as well as a few hundred Europeans and Americans — reside and do business there. The Bahrain Government's offices and the British Political Agency are situated in Manamah and the British Residency and Naval Base are three miles outside it at Jufair. It has a large *suq,* or shopping center, with many shops that cater to Europeans and Americans who can obtain all their ordinary requirements there at reasonable prices as the customs tariff is comparatively low. Off the main streets is a labyrinth of lanes lined with small open shops where a multitude of goods is displayed. In one lane will be found the cloth shops, in another the spice shops and so on, but there are many shops which sell almost anything and prices are sometimes a little lower here than in the main streets. Muharraq has a more purely Arab *suq,* somewhat drab and untidy compared with that of Manamah, but more likely to produce bar-

* See p. 35.

gains and curios. There are fewer foreigners to be found there and though the town is kept clean it retains its ancient form. There are numerous villages among the palm gardens, inhabited almost exclusively by Baharnah, and a few villages along the sea-shore where the Arab fishermen and pearl-divers live. The bulk of the Europeans and Americans reside in the oil company's camp at Awali near the center of the main island.

The ruling family is known as the Āl Khalifah and is related tribally to the ruling families of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The present Ruler, His Highness Shaikh Sir Salman bin Hamad, K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., was born in 1894 and succeeded his father in 1942. He resides in his palace at Rifa'a on the road from Manamah to Awali but has an office in Manamah where he keeps a calling book. He has three sons, of whom the eldest, Isa, was proclaimed Heir Apparent in 1958, and seven brothers. His two uncles, Shaikhs Muhammad and Abdullah, live in Muharraq, which used to be the headquarters of the family. There are numerous other members of the family, most of whom reside in Muharraq, Rifa'a or Manamah.

The form of government is autocratic and the Ruler's word is law. He and his father before him were assisted from 1926 to 1957 by a British Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave, K.B.E., with whose help a stable and orderly administration has been developed. A recently formed Administrative Council, composed largely of members of the ruling family, now has much say in the direction of affairs. There is a British Secretary to Government, whose duty is largely one of coordination and there are numerous Government Departments under Arab or British Directors or Superintendents. Customs, medicine, engineering, public works, transport and agriculture are under British heads. Law and order is maintained by a well-trained police force of about 300 men under British officers. Traffic control is in the charge of a British Police Officer from whom persons wishing to drive cars on the islands have to obtain licences. Justice is administered by Senior and Junior Courts presided over by members of the ruling family, and the Ruler himself sometimes participates in the hearing of appeals. A British Judicial Adviser assists in judicial matters and the drafting of legislation but does not himself function as a judge. Com-

mercial cases are usually referred to a Committee of merchants and cases involving points of religious law are dealt with by Courts presided over by Qadhis. Jurisdiction over Americans, Europeans and nationals of the British Commonwealth is exercised by the Political Agent's Court and civil cases involving both persons subject to Ruler's jurisdiction and those subject to the Political Agent are usually dealt with by a Joint Court presided over by the Ruler and the Political Agent or their representatives. The municipal affairs of Manamah, Muharraq and some of the larger villages are in charge of elected committees. The State has a revenue of about £4,750,000 a year, of which about £3,500,000 is derived from oil and most of the rest from customs. The customs duty is light — 15 per cent on alcoholic liquor and tobacco and 10 per cent on most other articles. The State is fully solvent and has a substantial reserve invested in the United Kingdom and India. An excellent Administration Report is issued annually in English. In spite of the high standard of the administration, in 1954 certain elements in the population, mostly of Persian origin, began to agitate for a more popular form of Government. Strikes and disorders were prompted, culminating in large-scale rioting at the time of the Suez crisis in 1956.* Five of the leading agitators were arrested and deported, since when there has been no further serious trouble.

The only oil company operating in Bahrain is the Bahrain Petroleum Company whose concession covers both the land and off-shore areas. It is owned in equal shares by the Standard Oil Company of California and the Texas Oil Company, but is registered in Canada and is designated a British Company. It employs about 1,200 Westerners, over 6,000 Bahrainis and about 700 Indians and Pakistanis. The most senior posts are held by Americans but the bulk of the "Western" staff is British. Oil was struck in 1932 and first shipped in 1934. The oil field is situated in the center of the main island and is a comparatively small one, producing about 30,000 barrels of crude oil a day. The Company's main residential area is at Awali at the northern end of the oil field. East of this, near the coast, the Company

* An interesting account of these troubles is contained in *The Golden Bubble* by Roderic Owen Collins, 1957.

constructed before the last war one of the largest refineries outside the United States of America. It is capable of dealing with about 200,000 barrels of crude oil a day. Less than a sixth of this comes from the local wells and the rest is brought by pipes under the sea from Saudi Arabia. The products from the refinery are piped to tanks on Sitrah Island, which is separated from the main island by a narrow creek, and from there along a causeway for nearly three miles to a wharf, from which they are loaded into tankers.

Bahrain started to develop gradually when oil revenue began to accrue and has made rapid progress since the last war. Many new buildings have been erected for both public and private purposes, the roads have been greatly improved and Manamah has been provided with a piped water supply. Electric power is generated by natural gas piped from the oil field to a recently built power house in Manamah and is distributed by high tension overhead cables to most of the larger villages. Education has made rapid strides. Manamah boasts a large new Secondary School with a hostel adjoining it and a technical school. There are primary schools in the towns and larger villages. The demand for primary education is great and existing schools are continually being expanded and new ones erected. The Director of Education is a Bahraini but sufficient local teachers are not available and a number of Egyptians, Lebanese and Palestinians are employed. The Bahrain Petroleum Company has made a British teacher available for the teaching of English. There are several girls schools and one of the events of the Bahrain year is an exhibition of the needlework which they produce. There is a fine Government Hospital and the Bahrain Government employs several British doctors, including a lady doctor, and nurses and also Indian doctors and nurses. Seven Bahrainis are now studying medicine abroad. Anti-malarial parties are constantly at work and one of the finest achievements of the Bahrain Government on the public health side is the virtual eradication of malaria in the more thickly populated areas. The parties destroy flies as well as mosquitoes and the municipalities keep the towns remarkably clean. As a result, Bahrain is generally a healthy place, though there is much tuberculosis among the local population. In addition to

the Government Hospital there is, in Manamah, a very popular Mission Hospital of the Dutch Reformed Church of America.

The Bahrain Government maintains an experimental farm at Budaiya on the west coast of the main island where various crops and fruit trees have been tried out without, as yet, any significant results. Dates remain the staple produce of the islands, but they are not exported and, in fact, the crop only suffices the local population for eight or nine months of the year and they have to import their requirements from Basrah for the remaining months. Suggestions have been made for obtaining water to extend the area under date gardens by pumping it up from the springs under the sea. Plenty of additional land is available but the manpower required is not, as so many of the cultivating class now prefer employment with the oil companies. The Bahrain Government is fully aware of the danger presented by the lowering of the watertable, to which reference has already been made. No new wells may now be sunk without their permission and the Government maintains a Water Board to advise on the subject.

The only foodstuff other than dates and vegetables which Bahrain produces is fish. One of the most striking features of the island, when seen from the air, is the array of hugh V-shaped fish traps round their shores. The mouths of these traps face the shore and the fish are caught in them when the tide goes out. In recent years the fish caught in this manner and by other methods close to the shore have been insufficient to meet the local demand and the deficiency is being made up by the use of large basket traps in deep water out at sea. The time may come when it will be found necessary to import fish in refrigerated vessels from the more productive waters of the Gulf of Oman. Many varieties of excellent fish for the table can be purchased in the markets and prawns are available throughout the year except during bad weather.

The islands support practically no sheep and goats, and meat has to be imported on the hoof by sea from other places in the Gulf. A few cattle are kept in the gardens, mainly for milk purposes. The Ruler, the Shaikhs and some of the wealthier merchants keep horses for racing and breeding. Few of them ride themselves. The Ruler has a herd of camels but they are not used for transport purposes. Don-

keys are ubiquitous and the large white breed for which Bahrain is famous has already been mentioned.

In the first decade of this century Bahrain, as a result of the security prevailing there and the low transit dues charged (two per cent in most cases), became an entrepôt for trade with the mainland of Arabia and to some extent with other countries bordering the Gulf. Owing to the development of new ports in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, it has recently lost some of this trade but it still remains an important commercial center and merchants use it as a depot for the storage of goods to be exported elsewhere as opportunity offers. A number of British and other foreign firms operate there, but the Ruler is naturally anxious to promote the interests of his own people and is unlikely to allow any more foreign firms to set up business unless they take Bahrainis into partnership. No local company law exists at present, but the Bahrain Government is busy with the preparation of one.

Manamah is the main port of Bahrain and it is here that the Customs House is situated. There is a jetty, but only small craft can come alongside it and ocean-going vessels have to anchor several miles out and unload into lighters. The British India Steam Navigation Company's mail steamers call here every week. Many freighters with cargo for Manamah use the Sitrah anchorage, where goods are unloaded into barges which are taken all the way round Muharraq Island to Manamah by tugs. The Bahrain Government is busy with a project for the construction of a wharf for ocean-going steamers off Jufair on the north-eastern corner of the main island. It is expected that this project will be completed by 1960 and if it proves successful it will greatly facilitate the landing of passengers and goods. At present, serious delays occur in bad weather and if a passenger is in a hurry he may either have to climb down the side by a rope ladder or be off loaded in a basket. My family and I were once "discharged" in the latter manner and it was not a pleasant experience. The present Ruler of Kuwait was on board at the time and thought it a great joke. Far and away the easiest way of reaching Bahrain is by air for those that can afford it or have passages provided for them. British Overseas Airways Corporation passenger planes, plying between the United Kingdom and the East, call several times a week. Iraqi Airways maintains fre-

quent services with Kuwait, Basrah and Baghdad, and there is a weekly service by Aden Airways from and to Aden. A local aviation company, known as Gulf Aviation Company, links Bahrain with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Trucial Coast and Muscat. This company owes its existence to the initiative of Mr. Frederick Bosworth, who was unfortunately killed in a flying accident in England just as his enterprise was getting under way. The British Overseas Airways Corporation subsequently took over his interests in it, the rest of the shares being held by the Bahrain Government and local merchants. Many imports now arrive by air, especially fresh fruit from the Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere. The air-field on Muharraq Island is a large one and is used both by the Royal Air Force, which maintains a detachment alongside it, and by civil aircraft. So far as the latter are concerned, by virtue of an agreement between the British Government and the Ruler, the airfield is controlled by an officer deputed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Transport in London, and International Aeradio Limited are responsible for communications from aircraft approaching, leaving and flying over it.

The Persians have a proverb that purgatory is hell to those in heaven and heaven to those in hell. Bahrain cannot compete with any of the famous beauty spots in Europe or Asia, but with its springs and gardens and orderly administration it is a garden of Eden compared to other places on the shores of the Persian Gulf. It is an excellent shopping center; there is good sea-bathing when it is not too hot; tennis and golf are to be had and there is a sailing club. The Bahrain Petroleum Company has a cinema which shows American and British films and there are a number of cinemas in Manamah showing, for the most part, Eastern films. The climate is only really trying for three or four months in the year and is tolerable then if air-conditioned accommodation is available. Bahrain is much frequented by oil company personnel from other parts of the Gulf for shopping and a change of air. Unfortunately there is no hotel run on Western lines. The British Overseas Airways Corporation maintains an air-conditioned rest-house where accommodation can sometimes be had for short periods and there is a hotel of an oriental type in Manamah where Westerners can and do stay.

CHAPTER IX

KUWAIT

KUWAIT, which means "little fort," was founded in 1716 by ancestors of the present ruling family who migrated there from central Arabia. For many years it was little more than a fishing village but it gradually developed as the capital of a small principality, a market for the surrounding tribes and a boat-building center. Only during the last decade has it been producing oil in vast quantities and become a boom town.

The Shaikhdom as it exists now is roughly lozenge-shaped with a large portion cut out of the middle of it by the Kuwait Bay. Each side is about 90 miles long. It is bounded on the east by the sea, on the north and west by Iraq and on the south by Saudi Arabia and the Neutral Zone. The boundaries with Iraq were defined in a Convention with Turkey in 1913 which was never ratified, but the definition was accepted by Iraq in 1932 when she became independent. The southern boundary was defined in the Treaty of Ojair which was negotiated by Sir Percy Cox with the late King Ibn Sa'ud in 1922. As it was found impossible to bring the parties to complete agreement, provision was made in this Treaty for a Neutral Zone which extends for about 45 miles along the coast south of Kuwait proper and for about the same distance inland. In this area the King of Saudi Arabia and the Ruler of Kuwait share equal rights. Although all the boundaries of Kuwait and the Neutral Zone have been formally defined, none of them have yet been demarcated. The Shaikhdom includes a number of islands, only one of which, Failaka, is inhabited. The others are mud-flats or little more than sand-banks. Kuwait's claim to a few small islands which are situated at a distance from the coast is disputed by other countries.

Kuwait and the Neutral Zone consist almost entirely of waterless desert. There is one small oasis at Jahrah at the western end of Kuwait

Bay and there are a few wells in the coastal villages in Kuwait proper. The desert is undulating and gravelly and there are a few low hills and ridges. Apart from the date gardens at Jahrah there are hardly any trees except for a few tamarisks in Kuwait town and some of the villages. The desert is, however, covered with low sparse vegetation and in the spring, when there has been good rain, is carpeted with grass and gay with little flowers of many colors. Whole stretches become mauve with a small iris. At this season many of the townfolk camp out in the desert to enjoy the change from the usual monotonous landscape and urged, perhaps, by an innate hankering for the nomadic life of their desert ancestors. With the May sun the grass and flowers wither and the June winds once again envelop everything in driving sand and grit.

The great problem of Kuwait is drinking water. The Kuwait Oil Company has searched the whole territory and a diviner has also tried his hand, but, except in a few small wells near the town, the only water found has been too brackish or sulphurous for any one other than the most hardened nomad to drink. For many generations Kuwait obtained its supply of drinking water from the Shatt al-Arab in Iraq, bringing it in wooden tanks carried by dhows. The water was sold to the populace at so much a gallon and the supply was a precarious one as, although the Iraqis rarely if ever interfered with the craft, bad weather at times delayed their arrival. With the wealth accruing from oil it has now been possible to build in Kuwait a distillation plant which is believed to be the biggest in the world. It is now producing over four million gallons of water a day, and is shortly to be expanded to produce six million. So there is now ample drinking water for all, and it is supplied free by the State. Before the plant was built there was some agitation against it as it was believed that distilled water was bad for the health. It is, however, mixed with a small proportion of the local brackish water to make it more suitable for human consumption. For some years there has been talk of bringing water from the Shatt al-Arab or elsewhere in southern Iraq by pipe or canal and a project of this nature was at one time under consideration, but appears to have been abandoned. Should it be revived and put into effect, Kuwait may one day be surrounded with gardens and crops.

The desert is fertile and I have seen wheat standing waist-high in it in a year of good rain.

The population of Kuwait is basically Arab but there are quite a large number of Persians in Kuwait town and some Indians and Pakistanis. In the last few years, with all the development work that has been in progress, there has been a great influx from other countries of the Middle East and in the *suq* the local population in their long Arab gowns sometimes appear to be outnumbered by Iraqis, Lebanese and the like wearing drab European dress. The total population is now estimated at 210,000 as against 100,000 in 1946. Europeans and Americans number about 3,000, the bulk of the former being British. They are roughly equally divided between the town and the Kuwait Oil Company's camps. The British Political Agency is situated in the town, with a sub-office at the Kuwait Oil Company's port Mina al-Ahmadi. Three-quarters or more of the indigenous population live in Kuwait town, a great rambling collection of unpretentious houses and shops now mixed with huge schools, offices and other buildings recently completed or under construction. It used to be enclosed with a long wall which was built as a defense against raiding tribesmen from Arabia shortly after the First World War, but this was demolished in 1957. Before the great rush of construction resulting from the oil boom, Kuwait presented a uniformly drab appearance, and such attractiveness as it had derived from the fact that it was an Arab desert town. This attractiveness has now been destroyed and its place taken by confusion and chaos, from which, it is hoped, one day a fine modern city will evolve. The population of the desert varies with the grazing. When the latter is good, many nomad tribesmen from Iraq and Saudi Arabia enter Kuwait territory with their sheep and camels. In the Neutral Zone there is no static population and even the personnel of the American oil company which is operating there live for the most part in a vessel anchored off the shore — an interesting attempt, and possibly the first of its kind, by the company to limit its commitments in bricks and mortar in the country of its concession to a minimum.

The ruling family, which is known as the Āl Subah, is related tribally to the ruling families of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The present

Ruler, His Highness Sir Abdullah al-Salim, K.C.M.G., C.I.E., was born about 1890 and succeeded on the death of his cousin Shaikh Ahmad al-Jabir in January 1950. He resides at Sha'b on the seashore a few miles east of Kuwait and does business in the Dasman Palace in the town. His uncle, his half-brothers and the sons of his predecessor are among the more prominent members of the ruling family. The system of Government is patriarchal and the high offices of State are held by members of the ruling family, each of whom conducts the affairs of the department entrusted to him with the minimum of financial or any other control by any central authority. In fact, each of these Shaikhs is a law unto himself, and there is much in the administration which depends on their relations with each other, their presence or absence from the State or the willingness of the Ruler to control their activities. A Supreme Council of these Shaikhs has, however, recently been formed, which shows signs of leading to more coordination. It is difficult for Westerners to realize the power which a few individuals in Kuwait have to interfere arbitrarily in the daily details of administration. The Ruler employs a number of British experts, such as doctors and engineers, but a proper administration is in process of formation only and there is no published Administration Report and budget as in Bahrain.

Law and order is efficiently maintained by a municipal police force about 1,000 strong, and by the Kuwait Army, about 2,500 strong, both under the Ruler's uncle, Abdullah Mubarak, who is also head of the Public Security Department. The Army possesses armored cars and 25-pounder guns and retains the services of two British instructors. The administration of justice by the local Courts is still on somewhat primitive lines and the principles of Muslim law are usually followed, although its more severe penalties are not now enforced. The Ruler occasionally issues decrees on special subjects, but there is still much to be done if the local administration is to escape criticism. For instance, there are as yet no generally recognized regulations for motor traffic. Foreigners, other than nationals of most Muslim states and the Lebanon, are subject to British jurisdiction.

Until the advent of oil the Kuwait revenues were very small and were derived mainly from customs duties. These were always kept

low and for many years Kuwait's prosperity depended to a substantial extent on the smuggling of imported goods to neighboring countries where the duties were high. The income from oil is now about $250-300 million a year, a staggering figure for such a small State, and is likely to increase. In Kuwait the Ruler is the State and it is for him to allocate this revenue as he thinks best. In practice, he devotes about a third of it to current expenditure, a third to development and a third to investment. With all this money Kuwait has become a super welfare state and there is free education, medical treatment and drinking water for all. There is no internal taxation and the customs duties have been reduced to four per cent. Huge schools have been built with dining halls, where the students are fed free, swimming pools and stadia. A hospital was built before the boom really started and is not so magnificent as some of the other buildings, but it has been provided with first-class doctors and equipment. Mention has already been made of the distillation plant. There is also a large powerhouse, and offices, accommodation and roads are under construction in all directions. A British engineer was responsible for the original planning of this work in accordance with Kuwait's requirements and a great part of it has been carried out by British firms in partnership with Kuwaiti merchants. On the first rush of wealth the Kuwaitis naturally had rather grandiose ideas and some of the schemes are probably on too ambitious a scale. There has been a slowing down of the tempo of development in recent years.

The merchants are a very important element in the Kuwait community. They are able businessmen and many of them are very wealthy. Some of them are past masters in the art of smuggling. They import goods not only for local consumption but for export to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Persia. Their activity is ceaseless. They never allow their money to remain idle but are always buying more and more goods in the pursuit of wealth. This sometimes results in over-stocking and heavy losses. In recent years they have naturally turned their attention more to obtaining as big a share as possible in the contracts for new construction work. Before the advent of oil, Kuwait's economy, apart from the entrepôt trade, depended largely on boat-building and the carrying trade, and the pearling industry, although it existed,

was never as important as it was in Bahrain. Now Kuwait has started its own tanker company and a large tanker is being built for it in Japan. It is to be managed by British officers and to fly the Kuwait flag.

An oil concession for Kuwait proper was obtained in 1934 by the Kuwait Oil Company. This is a British company registered in the United Kingdom and is owned in equal shares by the British Petroleum Company (late Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) and the Gulf Exploration Company of the United States of America. This concession covers the land and territorial waters of Kuwait proper and of most of the islands appertaining to it. Oil was struck before the last war but operations were suspended during the war and production did not start until 1946. The first shipment at the end of June in that year was made the occasion of public rejoicing. The late Ruler Shaikh Sir Ahmad al-Jabir unscrewed a valve and allowed the oil to flow into a waiting tanker and tribal dancing and much feasting followed. The company produced a grand display of fireworks, an innovation in this part of Arabia, which greatly impressed the populace. The main oil field is situated at Burgan, about 30 miles south of Kuwait. In 1957 it produced well over a million barrels a day and is believed to hold enormous reserves. Another field was discovered in 1952 at Magwa, about fifteen miles south of Kuwait and two more fields have since been discovered north of the Kuwait Bay. The company employs about 1,000 British and Americans, 2,000 Kuwaitis, 3,000 Indians and Pakistanis and 3,000 other foreigners, mostly Arabs and Persians. Its main residential area is at Ahmadi, named after the late Ruler, at the northern end of the Burgan oil field. About five miles east of this, on the seashore, is its port, Mina al-Ahmadi, where what is believed to be the largest oil wharf in the world was completed in 1950. It will accommodate eight tankers, but even this has been found to be insufficient and another pier to accommodate five additional tankers is under construction four miles away to the north. On the shore at Mina al-Ahmadi there is a smaller residential area, a refinery which has recently been enlarged and now has a refining capacity of 190,000 barrels per day, a power house, and a distillation plant which supplies all the drinking water required by the company.

In 1948 the late Ruler of Kuwait put his shares of the oil rights in the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone up to auction, and the American Independent Oil Company obtained the concession as the highest bidder. Shortly afterwards another American company, the Getty Oil Company, obtained the concession for the Saudi Arabian share of these rights. By an arrangement between the two companies the American Independent Oil Company is at present carrying out all the operations. They have their local headquarters in Kuwait and, as mentioned, their operators live in a ship moored off the coast of the Neutral Zone. Oil was discovered in 1953, and in 1957 the field produced nearly three and a-half million tons. The American Independent Oil Company also holds a concession for three islands belonging to Kuwait. Concessions have recently been granted by both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for the Neutral Zone off-shore oil to the Japanese Arabian Oil Company. No concession has yet been granted for the off-shore oil of Kuwait proper.

The economic life of Kuwait has been completely transformed by the oil industry, but the people still retain their Arab dress, their strict adherence to the tenets of Islam, and their unfailing courtesy and hospitality. There has naturally been a great rise in the standard of living, but the relations between the ruling family, the merchants and the people, have so far remained as they were before. Western influence has enhanced the material well-being of all but has as yet brought little change in their traditional manner of life. As in Bahrain, there is a great demand for the more elementary forms of education but little enthusiasm for higher studies. Only one Kuwaiti, a doctor, has qualified in a profession. Kuwait is a city state with a somewhat mixed population. Among the Arabs there is a natural sympathy with Arab nationalism elsewhere, and there is general determination to resist excessive domination or exploitation by the West. There was a certain amount of agitation during the Suez crisis in 1956, when an oil well was set on fire, but, generally speaking, the ruling family is in a strong enough position to suppress all dangerous subversive activities and to resist demands for effective local reforms. Such demands will no doubt become more insistent as time goes on, but for the present most of the population, including large elements

from other Middle East countries, are too busy making money to find much time for politics. The formation of the United Arab Republic was welcomed by some of the intelligentsia and Nasir is undoubtedly a popular hero. The previous regime in Iraq endeavored to persuade Kuwait to join the Arab Union of Iraq and Jordan and the new regime has so far been maintaining friendly relations with her, but at present it seems unlikely that the Kuwaitis as a whole would willingly agree to the sharing of their wealth which federation with any of the Arab states would entail.

Socially the boom has resulted in a dearth of domestic servants, leading to the break up of some of the big houses, and a demand by ladies of the wealthier households for more amenities, including travel to a cooler climate during the hot weather.

Ocean going steamers have to anchor in Kuwait Bay, a mile or two from the shore, and landing arrangements are somewhat primitive but are rapidly being improved. A channel is being dredged and an American firm has been given a contract for the development of a port on modern lines at Kuwait town. Meanwhile, there is much congestion and shipping is often seriously delayed. The British India Steam Navigation Company's mail steamers call regularly at Kuwait and Mina al-Ahmadi. There is an airfield just outside Kuwait town which is used regularly by the British Overseas Airways Corporation, Iraqi Airways and some other air-lines, but is not of international status. A representative of the British Ministry of Civil Aviation resides at Kuwait and the control tower at the airfield is operated by International Aeradio Limited. Some Kuwait merchants have recently formed a company called Kuwait National Airlines and its aircraft are operated on its behalf by the British Overseas Airways Corporation, regular services being maintained to Iraq, the Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East.

There are a few British, Indian and other foreign firms operating in Kuwait, but as a rule no foreign firms are now allowed to set up business there except in partnership with, or as agents of, Kuwaiti firms. Imports from the United Kingdom are considerable, but British trade at present enjoys no special privileges apart from the encouragement it receives from the fact that Kuwait is in the sterling

area. The Kuwait Public Security Department keeps a check on all foreigners arriving in the State and these have to register within a fixed period. The Kuwait Government has recently taken over control of the postal services from the London General Post Office and of the telegraph and telephone services from Cable and Wireless Limited. There is radio-telephonic communication with Bahrain, London and New York.

Kuwait is a dour place and there are few amenities. There is no greenery, the landscape is flat and drab and only the changing colors of the sea refresh the eye. The climate is somewhat less humid than at Bahrain, the winter is colder and there is slightly more rain, but these advantages are more than offset by the sandstorms resulting from the frequent high winds. A public cinema has only recently been opened and horse-racing is not permitted. There is, however, much social life and private entertainment. The Kuwait Oil Company provides recreational facilities for its staff and guests, but the ordinary visitor from the West can only amuse himself by exploring the *suq* and by sea-bathing. Almost everything the East and West produce can be found in the *suq,* but the only local product of interest is the Kuwaiti chest. This is made of teak and studded with brass and is used by Kuwaiti mariners for storing their belongings on their voyages to distant seas. A few years ago sand grouse could be found a few miles outside the town in their season, but recent activities have driven them far afield and shooting now involves something in the nature of an expedition. The Shaikhs frequently perform such expeditions in the winter months, usually in search of bustard, taking with them numerous retainers and much equipment, and camp for days in the desert. They sometimes ask Western friends to accompany them and those who are privileged to receive such an invitation can expect a most enjoyable and interesting experience. Although enthusiasts for the Arab and his way of life will find much to interest them in Kuwait, in spite of its embryonic modernization, especially if they have read Colonel Dickson's books on the subject,* there is little to attract the ordinary visitor unless he is engaged in some commercial enterprise.

* *The Arabs of the Desert,* by H. R. P. Dickson. Allen & Unwin, 1949. *Kuwait and her Neighbours,* by H. R. P. Dickson. Allen & Unwin, 1956.

Chapter X

QATAR

THE GREAT ungainly Qatar peninsula, about 90 miles long and 60 miles wide at its broadest point, protrudes in a northerly direction from the Arabian coast and towards its northern end is separated by about 18 miles of shallow sea from the main Bahrain island. The Arabic letter which is transliterated by 'q' is usually pronounced as a 'g' in the Persian Gulf, and the name Qatar is pronounced exactly like 'gutter' in English and not as if it had something to do with a cold in the head. The southern boundary of the Shaikhdom has not yet been finally fixed and is the subject of disputes with both Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, but the natural boundary of the peninsula is the Khor al-Odaid, a large creek which extends winding tentacles into the eastern side of its base. A narrow Gulf, known as the Gulf of Salwa, separates the peninsula on its western side from Saudi Arabia. The Hawar Islands, which lie close to its north-western shore, belong to Bahrain, and the comparatively large island of Halul, which lies about 60 miles off its eastern coast, is claimed by both Qatar and Abu Dhabi. An unmanned light-house has recently been erected on it, but it is waterless and uninhabited except by cormorants during the nesting season. The peninsula is incredibly ugly — undulating gravelly desert interspersed with low ridges of limestone devoid of vegetation. Whenever I visited it, Browning's lines "I never saw such starved ignoble nature. A burr had been a treasure trove" came to my mind. There is some sparse desert vegetation in the depressions and on the salt mudflats along the coast, but the rainfall is very scanty and the desert rarely blossoms as in Kuwait. At the southern extremity horse-shoe sand dunes add a little variety to the scenery but, as in many other places in the Persian Gulf, it is only the many-colored sea that delights the eye. The climate is somewhat less humid than in Bahrain and in the

earlier part of the hot weather it is extremely dry inland, temperatures rising to the vicinity of 120° F. Good drinking water is only found in a very few places and, apart from a few small unhappy-looking date gardens near the east coast, there is no cultivation. The only redeeming feature of this barren, uninviting country is the presence of substantial quantities of oil, which seems to favor the waste places of the earth.

The country is sparsely inhabited and the indigenous population probably does not exceed 20,000. In addition, there is a foreign population of between 25,000 and 30,000, including many Omanis and other Arabs who have immigrated in order to obtain employment with the oil companies. The bulk of the indigenous population lives in the capital, Dohah, on the east coast or in villages in its neighborhood. There are a few nomads in the interior, and when there is good grazing, which only occurs about once in seven years, nomads enter the peninsula from Saudi Arabia. The bulk of the static population is Arab, though there are some Persian shopkeepers in Dohah.

The ruling family of Qatar is known as the Āl-Thani. As already related, when the Turks evacuated the peninsula at the beginning of the First World War, the British recognized the leading member of the Āl-Thani, Shaikh Abdullah bin Jasim, as Ruler and entered into a Treaty with him. He abdicated on account of old age in 1949 in favor of his eldest son, the present Ruler, His Highness Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah, K.B.E., and died in 1957. Shaikh Ali resides at Shuqub, a few miles from the capital Dohah, where all the Qatar Government's offices and the British Political Agency are situated. Outside the ruling family, which is very numerous, the only people of importance in Qatar belong to two or three families of merchants.

The Qatar Petroleum Company, which used to be known as Petroleum Development Qatar Limited, has held a concession for the Qatar peninsula with its islands and territorial waters since 1935. It is an associate of the Iraq Petroleum Company and comprises, therefore, American, French and Dutch, as well as British interests. Other associates of the Iraq Petroleum Company hold concessions in the Trucial States and Muscat and an administrative office for the group is maintained at Bahrain under the name Petroleum Conces-

sions Limited. Oil was found in Qatar before the last war and the first shipment of oil was made at the end of 1949, although the formal opening of the oil terminal by the Ruler, Shaikh Ali, did not take place until February 1950. By 1957 the company was producing over six million tons of oil a year. The oil field lies along the western side of the peninsula and the oil, which is obtained at a depth of about 6,000 feet, is said to be the best in quality in the Gulf area. The company's General Manager resides at Dohah. Its administrative headquarters used to be at Dukhan in the center of the oil field, but have recently been moved to its port, 60 miles away on the other side of the peninsula, at Umm Sa'id. Here, in addition to a large residential area, there is a tank farm which receives oil by pipes from the fields and discharges it into tankers lying in a sheltered deep water anchorage close inshore. The Company has its own air fields at Dukhan and Umm Sa'id. Its senior staff is largely British and it employs a number of Lebanese and Palestinians, as well as Indians and Pakistanis, as clerks and artisans.

The off-shore concession is held by the Shell Overseas Exploration Company which operates locally under the name of the Shell Company of Qatar. Drilling started in 1955 but operations had to be abandoned owing to the destruction of the drilling rig by a sudden storm. Fresh equipment is being prepared and operations are likely to be resumed in 1959. The company has located its main residential area immediately north of Dohah and its industrial area south of the town.

Before 1949 there was, practically speaking, no administration and Shaikh Abdullah's rule was entirely patriarchal. Shaikh Ali, on his accession, appointed a British Adviser and a British Commandant of Police and has since engaged British doctors and engineers. A proper administration is now being rapidly evolved. The Adviser attends to its financial side and a regular budget is prepared. The income from oil is about £10 million a year, which is ample for all requirements and leaves a margin for investment. As a result, it has been found possible to reduce customs duties on all articles except alcoholic liquor and tobacco to a nominal two per cent. As elsewhere in the Gulf, the Ruler strongly disapproves of the use of alcoholic

liquor, which can only be obtained by non-Muslim foreigners on a permit from the Political Agent, and smoking, though not prohibited, is, possibly on account of Wahhabi tendencies, regarded as something of an unnecessary luxury, and the duties on liquor and tobacco accordingly remain at 15% and 10% respectively. There is an efficient and well-equipped Police Force of about 1000 men under British officers, which maintains law and order throughout the peninsula and among other things guards the oil companies camps and installations. Education before 1949 was practically non-existent but there are now several primary and secondary schools at Dohah and nearly every village has its own school. A fine new modern hospital was completed and opened at Dohah in 1957. A Law Court has been built where justice is administered by one of the Ruler's sons and the British Adviser. The principles of Muslim law are followed in most cases. The Ruler's Courts exercise jurisdiction over Qataris, and the nationals of Arab countries and of most Muslim States which are not members of the British Commonwealth. All others are subject to the British Political Agent's jurisdiction, and mixed cases of a civil nature are triable by a Joint Court presided over by the British Political Agent and a representative of the Ruler. A Municipal Committee has been nominated for Dohah and municipal bye-laws have been issued.

When Shaikh Ali succeeded in 1949, Dohah was little more than a miserable fishing village straggling along the coast for several miles and more than half in ruins. The *suq* consisted of mean fly-infested hovels, the roads were dusty tracks, there was no electricity, and the people had to fetch their water in skins and cans from wells two or three miles outside the town. The Ruler resided in a decrepit and rambling old fort with a minimum of antiquated furniture. With the wealth derived from oil the picture has now completely changed. Development has been carried out in a controlled and orderly manner and the haste which produced such chaotic conditions at Kuwait has been avoided. Many new houses have been built, and there are a number of streets composed entirely of new shops in which goods of every kind likely to be required by both the local population and the foreigner can be obtained. Many miles of

first-class roads have been constructed in and around the town, with a number of service stations. A large distillation plant, which is shortly to be extended, produces water which is piped to the new houses and to public water points in all districts of the town. Electricity is obtained from a power house which was completed in 1957 and is said to be one of the first of its kind in the world. The Ruler has built a large new palace for himself at Shuqub outside the town, and there are new administrative offices and a new Police Fort containing excellent accommodation for all ranks, and, where necessary, their families.

In the past the economy of the Qataris depended almost entirely on fishing and pearling and they obtained their simple requirements either from Bahrain or Dubai on the Trucial Coast, imports being liable to duty both at those places and on arrival at Qatar. There is no sheltered anchorage at or near Dohah for ocean-going vessels and the place had previously never been a market of any importance as it served only the sparse population of the peninsula and there was no tribal hinterland and no entrepôt trade. The Qatar Government, which had long been anxious to avoid the payment of transit dues at Bahrain and Dubai, has now arranged for imports to be unloaded into lighters at the Qatar Petroleum Company's port, Umm Sa'id, and brought round by tug to Dohah, and the jetty at the latter place has been extended to cope with the increased traffic, and new customs and immigration offices are to be built alongside it. With the wealth brought by oil, both the population and its requirements are rapidly increasing. There is no trade with Saudi Arabia by land but motor traffic can enter the country via Salwa at the head of the Gulf of that name.

Both the Post Office and Cable and Wireless Limited have, during the past few years, occupied new premises in Dohah, and it is now possible to communicate by radio telephone with Europe and America and other parts of the outside world. The Eastern Bank, the British Bank of the Middle East, the Ottoman Bank and the Arab Bank have branches in Dohah.

Qatar has few attractions for the visitor from the West other than the possibility of doing business. There is no scenery to admire,

nothing of architectural or archaeological interest, no hotel and no place of entertainment. The oil companies provide recreational facilities for their employees and guests but for others there is only sea-bathing when the water is not too hot, and sailing and excellent sea-fishing, if the wherewithal can be obtained. Bustard appear in the autumn and the Shaikhs, with their hawks, dash off into the desert in their large American cars in pursuit of them. Occasionally a few sand-grouse are to be found. But for the large quantities of valuable oil beneath its barren surface, the Qatar peninsula would be nothing more than an ugly excrescence on the Arabian Coast.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRUCIAL SHAIKHDOMS

THE COAST which extends from the base of the Qatar peninsula eastwards to the Musandam peninsula is usually known in English as the Trucial Coast, but by the Arabs it is called the Coast of Oman. The name Oman covers the whole southeastern corner of Arabia. The seven Shaikhdoms which occupy this coast, and indeed extend beyond it to the east as far as the Gulf of Oman, are known as the Trucial Shaikhdoms or the Trucial States and collectively as Trucial Oman. The names of these Shaikhdoms, running from west to east, are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah.

The coast, for 400 miles eastwards from the Khor al-Odaid, is flat and barren and is pierced by numerous creeks, and many islands and sand-banks lie off it, especially at its western end. For about 300 miles, from the Khor al-Odaid to the vicinity of Dubai, there is only one place which is permanently inhabited, viz., Abu Dhabi. Inland, the coastal plains give way to sand-dunes which roll away for hundreds of miles until they merge in the Rub' al-Khali. At its eastern end the coast reaches the foot of the Western Hajar range and bends sharply north. Here the scenery abruptly changes. The mountains rise in places to 7000 or 8000 feet and their spurs run down in steep cliffs to the shore. On their eastern side there is a coastal plain of only a few miles width between them and the Gulf of Oman. The climate is similar to that of Qatar except that there is somewhat more rain, especially near the mountains. In the early part of the summer the portion of Trucial Oman which lies to the east of the mountains does not receive the benefits of the north-west wind and is hotter than the Trucial Coast proper.

There is no water on the Trucial Coast, except for a few wells here and there, until the mountains are reached, and there is no cul-

tivation except for a few thinly scattered palms at Abu Dhabi and in places along the shore eastwards from Dubai, where they stand up like the few last hairs on a bald head. The possibility of increasing the water resources of this area has been investigated, but without success up to date. Close to the mountains on the western side there are some large oases and at the foot of the mountains on both sides, and in the ravines which pierce them, there are wells and springs which irrigate date gardens and tobacco crops. Limes, both sweet and sour, papayas, mangoes of a poor quality, and other fruits are grown, including, in one village in the Ras al-Khaimah Shaikhdom, a small sweet orange. Water is lifted from the wells by bulls, and cows are kept for milking, lucerne being grown for their fodder.

The total population of the Trucial States probably does not exceed 100,000. The only town of any size is Dubai, with about 35,000 inhabitants, among whom are included many Persians and some Indians and Baluchis. Elsewhere the population is Arab, except for a few Persian shopkeepers and Baluchis in the coastal towns. In the interior are nomad tribesmen who roam the country with their camels and owe allegiance to one or other of the Rulers, and other nomads owing allegiance to the King of Saudi Arabia enter the country from time to time in search of grazing. These nomads often change their allegiance as occasion arises, and this fact, together with the difficulty of determining a boundary in a featureless desert, lies at the root of the prolonged frontier dispute with Saudi Arabia to which reference will be made later. The settled inhabitants of the oases in the interior are also almost entirely Arab.

The Trucial States are all very primitive, their system of Government is patriarchal and, except in Dubai, there is practically no administrative machinery. The general backwardness of the people is incredible. On one occasion, when an honor was being formally presented to one of the Rulers and the officer in charge of a naval guard, which was assisting at the ceremony, drew his sword and waved it in salute, the bystanders thought their Shaikh was about to have his head cut off but were too terrified to interfere. The States have been dealt with collectively by the British Government ever since treaty relations with them were established. For many years

relations with them were conducted through an Arab Residency Agent with his headquarters at Sharjah. At the beginning of the Second World War a British Political Officer was appointed to Sharjah. In 1953 his status was raised to that of Political Agent and in 1954 his headquarters were transferred to Dubai, where a new Agency has been built for him. In 1951 a Council of Trucial States Rulers was formed with the object of inducing them to adopt a common policy in administrative matters, such as regulations for motor traffic, the suppression of traffic in slaves, the issue of nationality and passport laws and so on. The Council meets two or three times a year and Education and Health Committees have been established, but it has not been possible to set up anything in the nature of a central administrative office, as all the Shaikhdoms are very poor and until oil is found no contributions can be expected from them towards its cost. The Rulers issue travel documents to persons whom they claim as their subjects but no nationality laws have yet been enacted, partly owing to the uncertainty which exists regarding the allegiance of some of the nomads. Subjects of the other Gulf States can visit the Trucial States without visas provided they are in possession of valid travel documents. Others wishing to visit the States have to obtain visas from the appropriate British authorities.

Until the end of the Second World War, the British Government's policy on the Trucial Coast was to keep the peace at sea and not to interfere on land. The Shaikhdoms were permitted to fight each other by land — the last war between Dubai and Abu Dhabi ended in 1948 — and a de facto Ruler was recognized even if he had obtained power by assassination. Circumstances after the war necessitated a change in this policy. Not only did it become necessary to ensure reasonable safety for oil company personnel operating in the Shaikhdoms and for aircraft and passengers using the airfields at Sharjah, but also to put a stop to the abduction of women and children from the Trucial Coast towns for sale into slavery in Saudi Arabia. In 1951, with the co-operation of the Rulers, a force called the Trucial Oman Levies was raised for the suppression of the slave traffic, the general maintenance of law and order and the protection of the Shaikhdoms against external aggression. Its strength was orig-

inally about 500 men, but has since been increased to 1,000 and the force is now called the Trucial Oman Scouts. It is led by British officers and has its headquarters at Sharjah. Its presence has greatly increased the security of the Trucial Coast and, generally speaking, travel is safe anywhere within the recognized limits of the Shaikhdoms, except inside the hills. Local guards are employed on the airfield at Sharjah, and there are small municipal police forces in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, but in the other Shaikhdoms the Rulers rely on their armed retainers for the maintenance of law and order. The Rulers mostly administer "palm tree justice" personally in cases which are not referred to a Qadhi for settlement according to Muslim law, and exercise jurisdiction only over their own or each other's subjects. All foreigners, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are subject to the jurisdiction of the Political Agent. There is provision in the Order in Council for the settlement of mixed cases of a civil nature by a Joint Court presided over by the Political Agent and the Ruler concerned.

Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited, an associate of the Iraq Petroleum Company, holds concessions for the land, islands and territorial waters of all the Trucial States except Fujairah, where it holds an exploratory permit only. It also holds off-shore concessions for Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ras al-Khaimah. The off-shore concessions for Abu Dhabi and Dubai are held by the D'Arcy Exploration Company (a subsidiary of the British Petroleum Company) in partnership with French interests, and the company which has been formed for operational purposes is known as Dubai and Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Limited. Fujairah, which abuts on the Gulf of Oman, has made no declaration of rights over the sea bed. Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., has its operational headquarters at Dubai and its Local Representative also resides there. It has drilled wells in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah territory, but up to date no oil has been discovered in commercial quantities, and no permanent residential area has therefore been established. Dubai and Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Limited has established a base at Abu Dhabi and a camp on Das Island, and the first offshore drill hole was spudded in 1958. Oil has been struck in two places but the

field is still being proved and the company has not yet announced any decision to start commercial production. No oil having yet been produced, the Rulers' revenue from the companies is confined to the annual payments fixed in the concession agreements and only limited employment is available for their subjects. In the circumstances, the Rulers from time to time become restive and urge the companies on to further efforts. The latter find it difficult to prove that they are doing their best. On the whole, however, the companies' local relations are good and their personnel can wander about the countryside accompanied by a few local guards in perfect safety.

The economy of the Shaikhdoms is at a low ebb and, as already noted, there has been much emigration. Except at Dubai, where there is a considerable entrepôt trade, and in the most easterly of the Shaikhdoms, where there is cultivation, the people subsist largely on pearling and fishing, and many boats still visit the pearling banks every summer. Practical assistance is being rendered by the British Government to some of the States in such matters as education, medicine and the improvement of the water supply and of agriculture, where it exists, and dispensaries have been established in all the States. The Shaikhs of Kuwait and Qatar have also given funds to some of the States for the building of schools or the payment of teachers and the Sharjah school is partly staffed by the Egyptian Ministry of Education.

There are no metalled roads anywhere, but access can be had to most places on the coast by tracks which are motorable except after a rare occurrence of heavy rain. Motor vehicles should, however, be equipped with balloon tires and a four-wheel drive if breakdowns are to be avoided.

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The Shaikhdom of Abu Dhabi has usually been regarded as extending along the coast for about 250 miles from the Khor al-Odaid to Ras Hasian, some 40 miles west of Dubai, and from 100 to 200 miles inland. Saudi Arabia has, however, since 1949, claimed the western half of this coastline and much of the hinterland. Most of this area is a howling wilderness, sparsely and irregularly inhabited by nomads. The only permanent settlements are at Abu Dhabi itself

and in the Liwa and Buraimi oases. Numerous islands are claimed by Abu Dhabi. The most important is Dalmah, where there is water and a settled population. It is used as a base by the Abu Dhabi pearling fleet and a representative of the Ruler resides there. Mention has already been made of Halul, which in the past has usually been regarded as belonging to Abu Dhabi but is also claimed by Qatar.

Abu Dhabi is situated on an island separated from the mainland by a creek over which a causeway has recently been constructed by Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd. Before this it was only possible for a car to arrive at or leave Abu Dhabi at low tide. The Ruler, Shaikh Shakhbut bin Sultan, lives in a large and picturesque fort which he has built himself, leaving an older fort still standing in a corner of it. The village, with its small *suq* and a population of a few thousand, straggles along the shore. There is no harbor except for country craft. Ocean-going vessels have to anchor two or three miles out at sea, and it is difficult or impossible to land from them when there is a strong north-west wind blowing. Shakhbut was born about 1904 and succeeded as Ruler in 1928 on the assassination of his uncle. Three of his predecessors were murdered in the space of six years. Most of the population of the Shaikhdom are nomadic and depend for their existence on camels, date-cultivation, pearling and fishing. The Ruler derives his revenues from taxes on date gardens and pearling boats and annual payments made to him by the oil companies. There is little trade and the customs revenue is insignificant. A Police Force about 200 strong has recently been established. A school is under construction and is being paid for by the British Government.

Liwa, the proper name of which is Al-Jiwa, is a tract about 50 miles by 10 where there are numerous small date gardens in the depressions between high red sand dunes. It lies southwest of Abu Dhabi and about 100 miles inland and is not accessible by motor vehicles. There are villages alongside the gardens at the foot of the dunes. The settled population is small but members of the local nomad tribes camp in the area at the time of the date harvest. The Ruler maintains a representative here to collect the tax on the dates and administer justice. Buraimi is a large oasis lying due east of Abu

Dhabi and about 100 miles from the coast at the northern end of a long ridge known as the Jabal Hafit. It comprises eight villages, six of which are claimed by Abu Dhabi and two by Muscat. There are extensive date gardens watered by underground channels and wells. There are tracks leading to it from Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, which are motorable by vehicles equipped for crossing heavy sand, and there is an airfield which can be used by small aircraft. The Ruler is represented in the area by his brother Shaikh Zaid. The oasis came into the news at the end of August 1952 when Hamasah, one of the two villages claimed by Muscat, was occupied by a Saudi Governor with a small armed force. The Saudi claim was based on the occupation of the area by the Wahhabis for a time during the latter half of the last century and the recently declared allegiance of some of the local tribesmen. Muscat forces evicted the Wahhabis from Buraimi in 1869 but successive Sultans since then had rarely been able to exercise effective control of the area. An attempt was made to settle this and other outstanding boundary disputes with the Saudis by arbitration at Geneva in 1955 but the proceedings broke down and the Trucial Oman Scouts, with the close co-operation of the Sultan of Muscat and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, then drove the Saudis and their supporters out of the oasis. The Saudis broke off diplomatic relations with the British in consequence and still vigorously maintain their claim to Buraimi.

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The next Shaikhdom to the east, Dubai, occupies about 45 miles of the coast and runs about 40 miles inland. The Ruler also owns the village of Hatta, widely separated from the rest of his territory, in the Hajar mountains on the Muscat border. Except for Hatta and a few small settlements on the seashore, Dubai itself is the only inhabited place and there are no nomads in the interior who are regarded as permanently attached to the Shaikhdom. The ruling family is tribally related to that of Abu Dhabi and emigrated from that place and founded Dubai in 1838. The present Ruler, Rashid (Rāshid) bin Sa'id, was born about 1914 and succeeded in 1958. For some years before his accession he had been conducting most of the business

of the Shaikhdom on behalf of his father Shaikh Sa'id bin Maktum, who died at the age of eighty after ruling for forty-six years. Shaikh Rashid lives for most of the year in an unpretentious building approached by a narrow lane on the west side of the creek, and also has a summer residence about half a mile outside the town. There are a number of Indian shopkeepers in the town and about ten British residents. The British Political Agency of the Trucial States was transferred from Sharjah to Dubai in the spring of 1954 and is located in new buildings south of the town on the west side of the creek.

There is more in the way of administration than in the other Trucial States. Law and order is maintained by a Police Force, about 80 strong, under a British officer, and in 1957 a municipal committee was established for Dubai town. There is a reasonably well organized department for the collection of customs, from which the bulk of the State's revenues is derived. There are two State schools of a rather primitive character, which are about to be improved and expanded, and funds for a Persian School have recently been provided by the Shah. Since the last war a modern hospital, paid for by contributions collected by British political officers from all the Trucial States, has been opened at Dubai with a British doctor in charge. The Ruler makes a substantial annual payment towards its upkeep and it is called the Maktum Hospital after his grandfather.

Dubai itself is a fascinating place. It owes its prosperity partly to the silting up of the Sharjah creek and partly to a large influx of Persian merchants at the beginning of the century. Sharjah used to be the commercial center of the Trucial Coast but during the latter half of the last century it lost its trade to Dubai for the reason given above. In the first few years of the present century most of the merchants and shopkeepers of Lingeh on the Persian coast emigrated to Dubai and set up business there in order to avoid compliance with some new economic measures introduced by the Persian Government. The town is situated on both sides of a winding creek in which almost every variety of dhow can be seen, either at anchor or moving in or out. During business hours small boats ply constantly carrying passengers from one side of the creek to the other. Along the banks are rectangular two-storied buildings surmounted by square wind towers which are

open to all four quarters and conduct any breeze that may be blowing to small chambers on the ground floors, where the occupants obtain some respite from the summer heat. Behind these buildings on both banks run the intricate lanes of the *suq*. They are covered with palm matting, through which the sun filters, and lined with small open shops displaying every kind of ware. Fabrics of many colors hang gaily on the shutters and most of the shops sell almost anything, a vast amount of bric-a-brac of all descriptions being laid out for the customer's inspection. Persian merchants walk along the lanes with their flowing robes and gold-brocaded headdress and Omani Arabs, girt with silver-sheathed daggers, lounge round the shops, fiddling with their camel canes. Very few people are to be seen in European dress and Dubai shows less trace of western influence than any other commercial center in the Middle East, though horrible advertisements in English have begun to appear on some of the walls overlooking the creek. There are a few shops on the western side of the creek which cater for European tastes. The fish, meat, vegetable and other less decorative and often rather odorous shops are situated on the fringes of the *suq*. Wherever there is space people will be found squatting about selling fruit and vegetables or a variety of cheap ornaments and unconsidered trifles which they have picked up. In the lanes peddlers loudly proclaim their Arab mantles or Persian rugs.

Dubai serves as a market for the tribesmen not only of Trucial Oman but also of the northern part of Oman proper and thrives largely on trade with Persia. It exports to Persia piece goods, tea, sugar and other commodities obtained from Europe or India and imports livestock, nuts, fruit, both fresh and dried, and other Persian products. There is an all-round duty of four and one-half per cent on all goods, whether imported or in transit, and during and after the last war the entrepôt trade of the place was substantial and it prospered exceedingly; upon the withdrawal of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from Abadan in 1951 and the resulting economic depression in Persia its fortunes declined for a time, but in 1958 it was reported to be more prosperous than ever. This is due in large part to the opportunities it offers as a base from which goods can be smuggled into neighboring

countries with high tariffs. Many indigent Persians have recently settled there hoping to obtain better conditions than in their own country, and have taken the place of local Arabs who have emigrated to the oil fields. Ocean-going vessels are unable to enter the creek, and anchor at a distance of about a mile from its mouth. The British India Steam Navigation Company's mail-steamers plying between Bombay and Basrah make regular fortnightly calls in both directions and freighters visit the port as occasion demands. For a few years after the last war the British Overseas Airways Corporation maintained a marine base on the creek and flying boats paid regular calls at Dubai. The base has now been closed for some years but the Sharjah airfield is only ten miles away. A reasonably good desert track connects Dubai with Sharjah but motor vehicles have to make a long detour round the head of the creek to reach the western part of the town where both the Ruler and the Political Agent have their headquarters. Dubai is also connected with Abu Dhabi by a desert track which is almost always motorable. There is a Post Office in the town administered by the General Post Office in London, stamps surcharged with rupee values only being used, and Cable and Wireless Ltd. maintain a telegraph office. The British Bank of the Middle East have a branch in Dubai, at least two British firms have offices there and the Local Representative of the Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited for the whole of the Trucial Coast resides there.

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The next Shaikhdom is Sharjah. At the time of the Pirate Wars all the country now included in the Trucial States east of Dubai, with the exception of the two small Shaikhdoms of Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain, was ruled over by the famous Jasimi * Pirate Chief, Sultan bin Saqr. Before his death in 1866 he divided up his domains among his four sons. The senior branch of the family at Sharjah continued at first to rule in name over the whole area but the other branches at Ras al-Khaimah, Kalba and Dibah soon became virtually or practically independent. Ras al-Khaimah was recognized as an independent Shaikhdom for some years at the end of the last century. It was then

* A corruption of Qasimi. Plural Jawasim.

re-incorporated with Sharjah for a time but has been treated as independent since 1921. Kalba was recognized by the British Government as an independent Shaikhdom in 1936. Its Ruler was assassinated in 1951 by a member of the Ras al-Khaimah branch of the family who usurped the power there for a year until he found himself compelled to withdraw. As the Kalba branch of the family had become extinct in the male line, the Shaikhdom was then re-incorporated with Sharjah. The Shaikhs of Dibah have from time to time claimed to be independent but have never been recognized as such, and the place is now regarded as being included in the Shaikhdom of Sharjah. Villages of the Sharqi tribe east of the Hajar mountains were, during the last century, regarded as being under Jasimi rule but they have been, in fact, independent during most of the present century and their leading Shaikh, who has his headquarters at Fujairah, was recognized as their Ruler by the British Government in 1952.

The Shaikhdom extends for about ten miles along the coast between Dubai and Ajman and includes the coastal villages of Khan and Hirah. It also claims the coastal village of Hamriyah, north-east of Ajman. Inland it extends for some fifty miles to the foot of the mountains. It includes in this area the substantial oasis of Dhaid in the vicinity of which are the camps of the Bani Qitab, a nomad tribe owing allegiance to Sharjah. A wedge of territory belonging to Ras al-Khaimah lies between the Ruler of Sharjah's domains to the west of the mountains and the former Shaikhdom of Kalba to the east of the mountains, which has recently been brought under his rule. Here all the villages occupied by a tribe known as the Naqibiyin are included in his Shaikhdom. These are interspersed with Sharqi villages which, as already related, have been recognized as belonging to the Shaikhdom of Fujairah. Sharjah territory east of the mountains marches with Muscat territory on the north and south and with Ras al-Khaimah territory on the west, but its boundaries with Muscat are uncertain except on the coast where it extends from Dibah to Khor Kalba, excluding such villages as belong to Fujairah. This all sounds very confusing, but such is the patch-work pattern of the Trucial States. The islands of Bu Musa and Sir bu Na'ir, about 45 and 65

miles from Sharjah respectively, are included in the Shaikhdom. The former has wells of potable water and a small settled population, and a brother of the Ruler sometimes resides on it as Governor. Sir bu Na'ir is waterless and ordinarily uninhabited. Both islands contain deposits of red oxide. That on Bu Musa is being worked by a British company, the Golden Valley Colours Limited, under a concession from the Ruler. A few thousand tons of the ore are usually exported annually. Work on the Sir bu Na'ir deposit, which is believed to be of inferior quality, was abandoned by the same company a few years ago.

The Ruler, Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan, was born in 1920 and succeeded on the death of his father in 1951. His capital, which has a population of about 5000, presents rather an untidy and derelict appearance and shows obvious signs of the decay it has suffered from the silting up of its creek. The Ruler has recently redecorated his palace, which has quite an imposing front, but there are no other buildings of note. The old Political Agency, where the British representative on the Trucial Coast worked and resided until the spring of 1954, is on the bank of the creek.

The Desert Locust Survey has its local headquarters in the town where it is represented by a small Pakistani mission which has recently taken the place of a British party. Members of the mission tour the country far and wide looking for the locusts' breeding grounds. They usually get on well with the local Arabs although the latter are not enthusiastic supporters of their activities. In the first place, the locust not only does no harm in the desert but provides the Arab with a much appreciated change of diet. Then too, the Arab believes that the poisoned bait used to kill the locusts and their offspring contains the seeds of plants, which, when they come up, will poison his camels. On one occasion, when a British anti-locust party penetrated too far into the hills east of Ras al-Khaimah, they were deprived of all their belongings including their trousers. A Mission of the Presbyterian Church of America, run by two American ladies, carries on medical work in an old house in the town. The British Bank of the Middle East and the Eastern Bank have branches in the town. There is rather a dilapidated *suq* and the British Indian Steam Navigation Company's mail steamer calls once a month, but there is not much trade. Landing

and embarking are difficult or impossible when there is a strong wind off the sea. The airport is about a mile from the town. The Gulf Aviation Company maintains daily services to it from Bahrain, except on Fridays; the Aden Airways' ferries, between Aden and Bahrain, call once a fortnight, and it is used by the Royal Air Force and by miscellaneous aircraft on charter flights. It is not a recognized port of call for any international airline. There is a rest house beside the airfield where accommodation is usually available for visitors and where International Aeradio Limited maintains a public telegraph office. Adjoining the airfield are the camps of the Royal Air Force and the Trucial Oman Scouts.

There is not much in the way of administration. The Ruler has a small customs staff and collects taxes from the date gardens at Dhaid and in the Kalba area. He maintains an efficient primary school at Sharjah in a building provided by the British Government and has recently opened a girls' school and a trade school in the town. His revenues are small but he is assisted by annual payments from Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited and by the royalties he receives on the red oxide extracted from his islands. The gardens at Dhaid and in the Kalba area are in a flourishing condition and he takes a particular interest in improving them.

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The Shaikhdom of Ajman consists only of the coastal town of that name and a small strip of hinterland. The Ruler also owns a village called Masfut in the hills near the Muscat border. The town lies on a creek of its own about ten miles north-east of Sharjah between the Sharjah villages of Hirah and Hamriyah, and has a few scattered date-palms around it. It contains only a few thousand inhabitants. The Ruler, Shaikh Rashid (Rāshid) bin Humaid, belongs to the Na'im tribe. He was born in 1904 and succeeded on the death of his father in 1920.

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The next Shaikhdom, Umm al-Qaiwain, consists of the coastal town of that name and territory extending twenty miles or more inland and including a small oasis called Falaj Ali. The town, which is little

more than a village, lies about 25 miles north-east of Sharjah and is situated on a treeless sand spit between the open sea and a creek. Except after good rain, the local water is very brackish. The creek can be entered by country craft at high tide in fair weather. The Ruler, Shaikh Ahmad bin Rashid (Rāshid), M.B.E., was born about 1911 and succeeded on the murder of his uncle in 1929.

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The Jasimi Shaikhdom of Ras al-Khaimah is a comparatively large one. It extends along the coast for about 40 miles from Jazirat al-Hamrah to Sha'am, both inclusive, and southwards from Sha'am along the western side of the major mountains for eighty miles or more up to and including part of the Wadi al-Qaur. Its boundary with Muscat on the coast north of Sha'am is where the mountains first come right down to the sea. Elsewhere its boundaries with Muscat are uncertain. The capital, Ras al-Khaimah, is situated between a creek and the sea about 50 miles north-east of Sharjah. It consists of little more than a large village with a *suq* and a fort where the Ruler lives. There are extensive date gardens under the hills on the farther side of the creek and southeast of the town is a tract known as the Jiri where there are gardens and much natural vegetation. Grey partridge used to be found here but they have been practically exterminated by local sportsmen in recent years. Jazirat al-Hamrah, south-west of Ras al-Khaimah, is a typical Trucial Coast village dependent on fishing and pearling, but Rams and Sha'am lie in the coastal plain under high mountains and enjoy the produce of flourishing date gardens. At the village of Khatt at the southern end of Jiri there are also date-gardens and hot springs which are of some repute for their curative properties. There are other small villages inside the hills.

The islands of Tamb and Nabiyu, or Little Tamb, are under the rule of Ras al-Khaimah, from which they are about 60 miles distant. The main island contains a lighthouse manned by the Persian Gulf Lighting Service and a village where the representative of the Ruler resides. Drinking water is obtained from wells. As already mentioned, this island is famous for its poisonous snakes.

There is a road along the coast from Sharjah to Ras al-Khaimah

which is motorable in fair weather but the last few miles cross sand dunes and the going is difficult for cars which are not especially equipped. This road continues up the coast as far as Sha'am. A track takes off it near Ras al-Khaimah and passing south through the Jiri joins the road from Sharjah to Muscat via the Wadi al-Qaur, the only pass through the mountains which can ordinarily be traversed by motor vehicles. The Hajar range here drops to an altitude of a few hundred feet above sea-level, and in the tangled low ridges it is difficult to tell when the watershed has been passed. The road in many places runs along the Wadi or water-course which, as is often the case in Arabia, bears the same name on both sides of the watershed. The going is mostly very rough but there is no serious obstacle to be encountered and, though a little water is to be found here and there, it very rarely rains hard enough to fill the Wadi. At Huwailat, east of the watershed, there is a small village and a tea-shop at the head of the only defile through which the road passes. This is in Ras al-Khaimah territory and a local Shaikh used to collect tolls here to pay, he alleged, for the labor he employed to keep the road fit for traffic. Lorries carrying passengers and goods ply on this road between the Trucial Coast and Muscat, and a visitor from the West could travel in one of them provided he was willing to put up with much discomfort and obtained the Sultan of Muscat's permission to enter his territory by this route. The journey cannot ordinarily be accomplished in one day and it would be necessary to seek accommodation for the night from the Sultan's Governor at one of the larger villages on the Batinah Coast. Ras al-Khaimah can be visited by sea but ocean-going vessels have to use an unsheltered anchorage a mile or two from the shore and landing is difficult or impossible in bad weather. Dhows and launches can enter the creek under favorable conditions. The creek has, in the past, been used on occasions by flying boats for which moorings were once maintained. There is no recognized landing ground for land-planes.

The Ruler, Shaikh Saqr bin Muhammad, was born in 1920 and succeeded by ousting his uncle Shaikh Sultan bin Salim in 1948. His father, Shaikh Muhammad bin Salim, is still alive and exercises some influence but is content to leave the active control of affairs to his son.

The previous Ruler, Shaikh Sultan, now resides in Dubai. For some years he refused to acknowledge his nephew but in 1953 made his peace with him. The population consists almost entirely of mixed Arab elements and there are a few nomads, most of whom belong to a branch of the Na'im tribe. In Sha'am and elsewhere in the northern part of the Shaikhdom there are some Shihuh, a non-Arab tribe, the bulk of which resides in Muscat territory.

The Shaikhdom is undeveloped and there is very little in the way of organized administration. A school has recently been opened in Ras al-Khaimah. The Ruler obtains some revenue from the date gardens and pearling boats, but relies very largely on annual payments from Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited. Since he obtained power he has succeeded in bringing under his rule two villages, Jazirat al-Hamrah and Rams, which were previously more or less independent, and, with some help from the British, in repulsing incursions by Shihuh tribesmen from Muscat territory. By his own methods he maintains reasonable law and order throughout the Shaikhdom and it is ordinarily safe to travel by any of the recognized routes passing through it. The villages in the hills are not used to strangers, as the anti-locust people found to their cost, and a traveller from the West would be well advised to consult the Ruler or the Political Agent and to obtain an escort before attempting to explore country off the beaten track. An excellent sort of cream cheese is made locally and fresh fruit is usually available from the gardens, including oranges when they are in season. It is believed that the water resources of the Shaikhdom could be substantially increased and its horticulture and agriculture improved and extended, and the British Government has already given the Ruler some assistance in this direction.

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The Shaikhdom of Fujairah lies entirely to the east of the Hajar range and consists of a few villages belonging to the Sharqiyin in the coastal plain beside the Gulf of Oman and in the adjoining hills. As already related, it originally formed part of the Jasimi Shaikhdom and its independence was only recognized by the British Government in 1952. The Ruler, Shaikh Muhammad bin Hamad al-Sharqi, was

born in 1908 and lives at Fujairah, which is situated a mile or two from the coast and a few miles north of Kalba. It contains a picturesque old fort which has not been repaired since its bombardment by a British man-of-war in 1952 to obtain the release of some slaves held by the present Ruler's father. It is accessible by motor vehicle from Sharjah via the Wadi al-Qaur and Kalba. The inhabitants of the Shaikhdom depend for their livelihood on their gardens and tobacco crops and on fishing. Its revenues are derived from taxes on produce and from the annual payment received from Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Limited for its exploration permit. The Ruler has recently reached a friendly agreement with the Ruler of Sharjah whereby the administration of their interlocking territories east of the Hajar mountains is likely to be facilitated.

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The Trucial States, despite their lack of modern amenities, have many attractions for the traveller from the West who does not attach too much importance to his personal comfort. Their primitive character and the almost complete absence in most of them of any sign of Western influence make them of interest in themselves and there is more variety of scenery than in the Shaikhdoms farther north. The low creek-indented coast and the dreary wastes of Abu Dhabi and the western States, the rolling sand dunes, the unexpected oases, the bare rocky mountains with garden-encircled villages nestling at their base all have their fascination, and villages such as Khor Fakkan, encircling deep blue bays with green gardens behind them and gaunt grey mountains towering over them to a height of several thousand feet, are strikingly beautiful. The traveller can only obtain accommodation of a European type in the rest-house at Sharjah or with British or American friends in Sharjah, Dubai or the oil companies' camps. Elsewhere he must depend on his own resources or the unfailing hospitality of the Rulers or their subjects.

CHAPTER XII

MUSCAT

THE SULTANATE of Muscat and Oman and its Dependencies cover a major part of the horn of Eastern Arabia. Its coast-line measures about 1000 miles and inland the territory claimed by the Sultan extends in places to about 200 miles from the coast, but the exact square mileage would not be easy to estimate. Dhofar is a dependency which lies along the southern coast of Arabia between Oman and the Aden Protectorate. Gwadur, an enclave in Pakistan territory on the Mekran coast, was another, until September 8, 1958, when it was voluntarily ceded to Pakistan. Oman is the name given to the whole of the south-eastern corner of the Arabian peninsula and the Sultan claims sovereignty over all of it except Trucial Oman, i.e. the Trucial States, which were described in the previous chapter.

The ruling family, and a large proportion of the Arab tribesmen of Oman proper, belong to the Ibadhi sect of Muslims. This sect is said to be derived from the Kharijites who murdered the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, at Najaf in 661 A.D. They recognize only the first two of the prophet's successors and in principle are opposed to any hereditary form of government. They prefer to entrust the administration of their country to an elected Imam, a sort of religious head with temporal powers, though they have, in fact, often submitted to dynastic rule. The founder of the present Al Bu Sa'id dynasty, Saiyid Ahmad, was elected Imam after driving the Persians out of Oman in 1744. His descendants soon discarded the elective principle and ruled Oman for many generations, though the extent to which they were able to exercise control over the tribes of the interior varied greatly from time to time. In 1913 these tribes rebelled against the Sultan of Muscat and once again elected an Imam, who established his headquarters at Nizwa. This Imam was murdered in 1920. One

Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Khalili was elected in his place and held office until his death in 1954.

In 1920 the Sultan signed an agreement, usually known as the Treaty of Sib, with the Shaikhs of the tribes which had rebelled, whereby he agreed to refrain from interference with the internal affairs of these tribes and to allow them access to the coastal towns, and the Shaikhs undertook that the tribesmen would not raid into the areas which remained under the Sultan's control. The present Sultan has always maintained that this agreement involved no abrogation of his sovereignty over Oman as a whole, or of his responsibility for its external affairs, and this position appears to have been accepted by the Imam Khalili who never attempted to enter into direct communication with any foreign power and cooperated fully with him at the time of the Saudi incursion into Buraimi in 1952. In fact, the Imam wrote a letter to the Sultan asking him to lead the tribes against the "aggressor." On Khalili's death in 1954 a new Imam, called Ghalib bin Ali al-Hinawi, was elected and at once entered into direct relations with the Saudis. The Sultan considered this a breach of the agreement, which fully justified him in regarding it as no longer valid and in seeking to reestablish his authority over the interior. At the end of 1955 he succeeded in driving the Imam out of Nizwa and in bringing all or most of the country under his own control. In 1957 the Imam and some of his supporters, having obtained arms from foreign sources, endeavoured to restore the status quo. This rising, with some assistance from the British, was quickly suppressed. Some of the rebels fled the country and others, including the Imam and his brother, and Sulaiman bin Himyar, Shaikh of the Bani Riyam, took refuge in the Jabal Akhdhar, where for some time they defied the Sultan's authority. In February 1959 they were evicted and took refuge in Saudi Arabia. The Sultan is now busy with the rehabilitation of the villages in the area which suffered during the operations against the rebels.

The most northern province of Muscat is the Ru'us al-Jabal (Mountain Peaks), the great rocky peninsula, usually known as the Musandam Peninsula, which lies between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, south of the Straits of Hormuz. It consists entirely of

mountains rising to a height of several thousand feet and has a wasp-like waist where the Elphinstone and Malcolm inlets are separated by only a few hundred yards of land. The coast is grand but forbidding. The Elphinstone Inlet has been compared to a Norwegian fiord but the heat there in summer is intense. In 1864 the Indo-European cable was brought overland to it from the Malcolm Inlet and a telegraph station established on a small island in it. The station had to be abandoned after a few years, owing, it is related, to the number of suicides which occurred among the personnel employed in it, and the cable was then taken round the head of the peninsula. Close to the head of the peninsula and on the Persian Gulf side of it is a small island called Ghanam (Goat) Island. Here, with the Sultan's permission, the British Royal Navy used to maintain a small base, but the island has recently been handed back to the Sultan, who does, however, permit British ships to continue to use it for recreational purposes. The channel between the island and the mainland, known as Khor Quwai, provides a sheltered anchorage and excellent fishing. In the Straits of Hormuz, off the tip of the peninsula, lie the Quoin Islands, known in Arabic as Salamah and her Daughters. On one of them the Persian Gulf Lighting Service maintains a manned lighthouse. The Sultan's Wali resides at Khassab just south of the mouth of the Elphinstone Inlet. The population of the peninsula is composed almost entirely of a tribe known as the Shihuh. They speak a language of their own and are probably not of Arab origin. Some connect them with the Shuhites mentioned in the book of Job. They are wild and inhospitable and maintain a precarious existence by fishing and the cultivation of gardens and crops in the mountains. One village, Kumzar, between Khor Quwai and the Elphinstone Inlet, is inhabited by people who speak a dialect of Persian and probably came from Persia originally.

Ru'us al-Jabal extends southwards to Sha'am (exclusive) on the west side of the peninsula and includes part of Dibah on its east side. After this a belt of Trucial States territory intervenes and the Sultan's territory is entered again at Khatm al-Milaha, in the vicinity of Murair and the debouchure of the Wadi al-Qaur from the hills. From here to Sib, a distance of about 150 miles, runs the Batinah Coast with

a belt of gardens all along it close to the shore averaging about a mile in depth. These gardens are watered by wells and underground channels and produce dates, limes, mangoes and other fruits. Along the edge of the gardens wheat and other crops are grown in places in small quantities. On the landward side of the gardens there are scattered acacia trees beyond which a bare, gravelly plain slopes gradually up to the hills about ten miles away. There are numerous villages, most of them on the seashore, and in the more important of them there are picturesque old forts in or alongside which the local Wali resides. Some of these forts date from the Portuguese occupation of Muscat in the 16th century. Sohar, about 40 miles south of Murair and half way between Sharjah and Muscat, is usually regarded as the capital of the Batinah Coast. Here, in addition to a large and imposing fort, there is a customs house, which is also used as a rest house. A detachment of the Sultan's regular forces is stationed outside the town. The population of the Batinah, which is mixed Arab and Baluchi, the latter predominating, depends for its livelihood on the cultivation of the gardens and fishing. There are *suqs* in the larger villages, with a number of Hindu and Khojah shopkeepers in Sohar, and a few elsewhere. The gardens abound in bird life and the grey partridge is common. In the cold weather large flocks of sand grouse appear on the adjoining plains and duck are to be found in pools and creeks where the watercourses run into the sea. Across the hills from the Batinah lie the districts of Jau, a name found in the gazetteers but rarely used, and the Dhahirah. The former includes the Buraimi oasis, comprising eight villages, two of which, as already mentioned, are claimed by the Sultanate while the rest are under the rule of Abu Dhabi. The tribes of the two districts are almost entirely of the Sunni faith and are all Arab except for one, which calls itself Baluch, but has adopted the Arabic language and Arab customs. In addition to Buraimi there are a number of smaller oases along the foot-hills and the population is partly settled and partly nomadic. In former years the area was under the effective control of neither the Sultan nor the Imam and proved a fertile field for Saudi intrigue. The Sultan has now fully established his authority over his territory and maintains detachments of troops in it.

The coast for 110 miles from Sib exclusive to Ras al-Hadd, the extreme south-eastern point of the Arabian peninsula, is bare and bounded almost throughout its length by cliffs. It contains the towns of Matrah, Muscat and Sur and a few small fishing villages in places where the cliffs recede from the sea and potable water is to be found. Inland the country consists almost entirely of bare hills and stony plains. Matrah is the largest town in the Sultanate, containing about 8000 inhabitants, and the principal *suq*. Tribesmen from the interior frequent it in large numbers to sell their produce and purchase their requirements. It lies in an arc along the seashore and is full of narrow lanes which used to be very dirty but now, thanks to the exertions of the municipal authorities, are better kept. Among the inhabitants is a very large colony of Khojahs, a sect of Shi'a Muslims who have retained some Hindu customs. Their forefathers migrated from Cutch on the west coast of India a few generations ago and they are interested exclusively in trade. They have their own quarters in the town and their own school and are a very close-knit community. Most have adopted Muscati nationality since the transfer of power in India, but a few have retained British nationality without citizenship. Matrah means the place of anchorage and its harbor, which is sheltered from the northwest wind, is much frequented by country craft. Ocean-going vessels ordinarily only anchor there when they cannot make use of Muscat harbor which is exposed to the northwest wind. The distance between the two harbors is only three miles by road.

Muscat harbor must be one of the most picturesque places in the world. It is roughly circular in form and is enclosed by a ring of black igneous hills, all bare and jagged. On them are inscribed the names of ships which have visited Muscat during the last hundred years or so. The town faces the entrance of the harbor flanked on both sides by picturesque old Portuguese forts. The Sultan's palace and the British Consulate General gleam radiantly white in the foreground. When a man-of-war salutes the country on arrival the Sultan's battery replies from the top of one of the forts and the reverberations go rumbling round the hills. Small boys in canoes flock round the ship to dive for coins and sell fish and strange tropical shells. At times the bay teems with jellyfish to such an extent that ships have to leave

the harbor for fear of their intakes being choked by them. At night at certain seasons of the year anything that breaks the surface of the water creates a vivid phosphorescent glow. If a hand is dipped into the sea and withdrawn the water runs off it in glowing drops and the track of a fish jumping out of the way of an approaching boat is "a flash of golden fire." Away from the seafront Muscat has little to show. It is built in a confined space inside a protecting wall and is full of narrow lanes running between two-storied houses. The part of the town which lies outside the wall is more open. There are several small shops outside the wall, but the main *suq,* which is not a large one, is inside. The population, which numbers about 5000, is very mixed and includes Hindus, Baluchis and Pakistanis. The Baluchi women go about unveiled and gaily clothed. There are few resident Arabs other than members of the ruling family and their retainers. In spite of its climate Muscat is a place which exercises a strong fascination for those who know it.

Sur is about 85 miles south-east of Muscat and 10 miles west of Ras al-Hadd. It bears the same name in Arabic as the port on the Mediterranean Coast which is known to us as Tyre and is a very ancient settlement. It is untouched by western influences and its population, which, except for a few Hindu shopkeepers, is almost entirely Arab, lives by sea-faring and fishing. Suri dhows sail to and from India and join the Kuwait booms in their annual voyage to the East African Coast. The town is divided into two parts occupied by different tribes which in the past have frequently been at feud with each other. At Bilad al-Sur, two miles inland, there are extensive date gardens and an old fort where the Sultan's Wali resides. Between Sur and Ras al-Hadd there is a large creek called Khor Jaramah, deep enough to be used by ocean-going vessels if they can pass its narrow entrance. At Ras al-Hadd the Royal Air Force established an airfield during the last war, but it has seldom been used since.

West of the area described above lies Central Oman, with mountains rising to nearly 10,000 ft. at the Jabal Akhdar, and desert beyond the mountains extending to the sands of the Rub' al Khali. The mountains are bare but contain fertile valleys peopled by a number

of different Arab tribes, and the desert is sparsely inhabited by nomads. As the result of an age-long feud the tribes are divided into two factions, the Ghafiri and the Hinawi, similar to the White and Black factions found among the Pathan tribes of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The dividing line between the two factions is related in no way to religious or present political differences but is determined entirely by the part played by the various tribes in fighting which took place centuries ago. Even outside Oman Arab tribesmen will describe themselves as belonging to one faction or the other. Feeling based on these factions is weakening but still plays some part in local politics. From 1913 until the Sultan's occupation of Nizwa in 1955 most of this area was under the influence of the Imam who maintained a loose administrative system and intervened from time to time to settle feuds and maintain law and order. The Imam Khalili was bitterly opposed to any form of Western penetration and for a time would not allow one of his leading Shaikhs to bring a motor-car into the country. The only Christian permitted to wander about in the mountains was the doctor from the American Mission in Muscat. The people are dependent for their livelihood on the produce of their gardens and crops or of their flocks and herds which they have to market in the coastal towns under the Sultan's control. With the rise in prices of imported goods, which followed the last war, their economic position became grave and there has been much emigration to the oil-producing States. The deterioration in their condition also led to a weakening of their anti-Western prejudices and a desire on the part of many to see their country opened up for exploration by the oil companies. This may account in part for the lack of opposition encountered by the Sultan when he ousted the Imam in 1955. The Western desert of Oman was explored by Mr. Wilfrid Thesiger in 1946–47 and again in 1948–49 and his journeys are described in two most interesting articles in the Journal of the British Royal Geographical Society.*

The southern coast of Arabia for the 400 miles from Ras al-Hadd to Ras Sharbatat, which the Sultan regards as the boundary between

* *The Geographical Journal.* Vol. CXI Nos. 1–3 and Vol. CXVI Nos. 4–6.

Oman and Dhofar, is bare and inhospitable. It is backed for the most part by low hills or undulating waste. The population is extremely scanty and there are no recognized ports. About halfway along this length of coast, and separated from it by about 10 miles, lies the large island of Masirah. Here there is an airfield which is looked after by a detachment of the Royal Air Force and guarded by Aden Protectorate Levies. Royal Air Force aircraft from Aden call regularly, and other aircraft occasionally, after obtaining the permission of the Commander, British Forces, Arabian Peninsula, at Aden under authority granted by the Sultan. The island is bare and sparsely inhabited but, thanks to the monsoon winds, has a comparatively equable climate. The dependency of Dhofar extends from Ras Sharbatat on the east to its boundary with the Aden Protectorate at Ras Dharbat Ali on the west. It consists of a coastal plain which is nowhere more than about ten miles wide, a belt of mountains rising to 3000 or 4000 ft., and then desert. Its exact northern limit has never been defined but the territory claimed by the Sultan includes the Wadi Mughsin, about 150 miles inland. The western half of the coastal plain and the hills overlooking it receive the benefit of the monsoon rain between June and September and during this period the whole country is often shrouded in mist for days at a time. On the plain are extensive groves of slender cocoanut palms and gardens producing an abundance of fruit, especially bananas and papayas. The bananas are of excellent quality, unlike those produced elsewhere in the Gulf States, and when a British man-of-war visits the Sultan at Salalah it usually leaves festooned with great bunches which he has presented to the officers and men. Millet, sugar cane and other crops are cultivated. The hills are covered with trees, shrubs and grass, and it is here that the frankincense tree is found. It is a low squat tree and the incense is obtained by cutting the bark and collecting and drying the gum which exudes from the incision. It forms into amber-colored lumps. Dhofar is and always has been the main, if not the sole, source of supply for frankincense in the world. There are running streams and waterfalls in the valleys and an abundance of birds including the beautiful green pigeon which eats the little figs off the banyan trees. The whole country is a paradise to those

accustomed to the aridity of most of the rest of Arabia. The Sultan much prefers it to Muscat and spends a large part of his time at Salalah, its chief town, where he has a fine palace. Here also the Wali who administers the province resides and there are a number of Government buildings, including a school. Outside the town there is an airfield in charge of a detachment of the Royal Air Force which, like Masirah Airfield, is visited regularly by Royal Air Force planes from Aden and occasionally by other aircraft. The local Arabs are akin to the tribesmen of the Aden Protectorate and differ entirely from the Omanis. Ordinarily they wear only a loincloth, a belt, and a rag tied round their shaggy locks. Although most of them know Arabic, among themselves they speak a dialect called Shihri. They keep large herds of diminutive cattle of a humpless variety which form a sort of local currency for large-scale transactions such as the purchase of a bride. The Maria Theresa dollar is the currency in use for ordinary purposes. They subsist on the produce of their cattle, gardens and crops and also on the fish with which the sea abounds. They export frankincense and dried fish, especially the dried sardine. Their economic condition on the whole is good and provides them with a sufficiency for the simple life they lead. The Sultan has made a number of roads in the province and has recently linked it by a motorable track into Muscat. There is no harbor and landing from the sea is always difficult owing to the surf. During the monsoon it is impossible. Were the province more accessible, much could be made of its potentialities as a fruit and sugar producing area. No substantial mineral wealth has yet been discovered, except for some oil of rather poor quality.

Off the coast of the eastern end of the province lie the Kuria Muria islands, known locally as the islands of Ibn Ghulfan. They were presented by the Sultan of Muscat to Queen Victoria in 1854 and are nominally attached to the Aden Colony, but for administrative purposes are under the control of the Persian Gulf Residency. For a few years after their cession their guano deposits were exploited but since then they have had practically no history except that they were used for a time by hashish smugglers. Some of them consist of bare rock but two have hills rising to a few hundred feet with some vege-

tation and a little water. Only one of them — Hallaniyah — is inhabited. Here there are about fifty souls who live by fishing with traps and drying their catch. They have no boats of their own but are visited from time to time by boats from the village of Murbat on the neighboring coast which bring them their simple requirements in exchange for their fish. An occasional visit is paid by a British man-of-war, and flour, sugar and tea are then usually presented to the inhabitants. They are closely associated with Murbat, from which probably most of them are derived. They are very shy and when Europeans visit the island all the women take to the hills.

The present Sultan of Muscat and Oman, Sa'id bin Taimur, was born in 1910 and succeeded on the abdication of his father, Taimur bin Faisal in 1932. The latter is still alive and lives in Bombay. Sultan Sa'id resides sometimes in Muscat and sometimes at Salalah in Dhofar. He uses no honorific officially but in private correspondence and conversation in English is addressed as "Your Highness." He was educated in India and Iraq and speaks English well.

Muscat has for centuries been an independent State and the Sultan conducts his own foreign relations. Great Britain has in the past given him or his predecessors financial and military assistance and sometimes, at his special request, acts on his behalf in negotiations with foreign powers. In an exchange of letters which took place in 1958 she undertook to extend assistance toward the strengthening of the Sultan's army and the establishment of an Air Force and to assist in the carrying out of a civil development program, and the Sultan agreed to the extension of existing arrangements regarding civil aviation and the use by the British Royal Air Force of the airfields at Salalah and at Masirah. Great Britain has, however, no exclusive position in Muscat such as she enjoys in the Gulf Shaikhdoms and relations between the two countries are governed by Commercial Treaties, the last of which was executed in 1951. There are also older agreements relating to the traffic in slaves and arms similar to those by which the Shaikhdoms are bound. The British Government maintains a Consulate General in Muscat. The Consul General is assisted by a Vice Consul and is subordinate to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. By agreement with the Sultan he exer-

cises full jurisdiction over citizens of the United Kingdom and the Colonies and a limited jurisdiction over some other Commonwealth nationals. The Consulate General is situated at the southern corner of the harbor where there is a gap in the surrounding hills and is open to any cooling breezes that may be blowing. The Sultan has treaties with the United States of America, France and India and a Commercial Agreement with the Netherlands. A "Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights between the United States of America and Muscat and Oman" was signed at Salalah in December, 1958. It replaces the old Treaty of 1833 and provides, among other things, for the appointment of American consular representation in Muscat. No such representative has yet been appointed and for the time being American consular officers in Aden are in charge of their country's interests in Muscat. At present the only country other than Great Britain with a consular representative in Muscat is India. The Sultan has no representatives abroad. British representatives in foreign countries sometimes serve as a channel of communication for him but act on his behalf only when specifically requested by him to do so.

The Sultan's rule is entirely personal. His chief officers are an Arab Minister of the Interior, British Military and Development Secretaries, a Pakistani Finance and Foreign Affairs Secretary and an Egyptian Director General of Customs. His revenues are mainly derived from customs and a tax on dates, fish and other produce. No oil has yet been found in his territory but he receives annual payments from the companies which hold concessions from him. The revenues are small and afford little scope for development but the State is fully solvent. Local administration is entrusted to Walis or Governors at the main centers of population. They collect the tax on produce, settle minor disputes and are responsible to the Sultan through the Minister of the Interior for the peace and well-being of their districts generally, except in Dhofar, where the Wali is responsible to the Sultan direct. In most of the districts there is a Qadhi who tries the more serious cases. At Muscat there is a bench of Qadhis, and a Chief Court which settles appeals. There is also a separate Court for dealing with cases in which foreigners are con-

cerned. The municipal affairs of Muscat and Matrah are entrusted to a nominated Committee of which the Wali of Matrah is Chairman. The Sultan's brother, Tarik, is the Committee's executive Administrator. There is a State school at Muscat in a modern building but it caters for primary education only, and the standard of education at present is generally low. It is the lack of educated Muscatis which has compelled the Sultan to employ foreigners in his administration. There is no state hospital but the Sultan contributes toward the upkeep of a small charitable hospital at Muscat which is in charge of the British Consulate doctor. The Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church of America maintains a larger hospital at Matrah which is much patronized by Omani tribesmen. A small force of some fifty uniformed police is responsible for law and order in Muscat and Matrah. For the protection of Oman as a whole the Sultan has a well-equipped army of about 1200 men under British officers. Its headquarters is at Bait al-Falaj, about five miles west of Muscat, and detachments are stationed at Sohar on the Batinah coast, Buraimi, Ibri in the Dhahirah, and Nizwa in central Oman. A separate force of about 100 men, under a British officer, is maintained in Dhofar.

Oil concessions for Muscat and Oman and for Dhofar were granted to the Iraq Petroleum Company in 1937. The latter concession was abandoned a few years ago owing to the disappointing results of surveys. The company formed to operate the Muscat and Oman concession is known as Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited. It maintains a representative at Muscat. Drilling is in progress south of the Oman mountains but no oil has yet been discovered. In Dhofar, an American company called Cities Service of New York, now holds a concession. Some oil has been found but its quality so far is reported to be poor.

Outside the trading centers of Muscat and Matrah the bulk of the population of the Sultanate depend for their livelihood on the produce of the gardens and fishing.* There is probably much scope for the development of horticulture, agriculture and the fishing industry when the State's finances permit it. Experts believe that much more

* See page 53.

water could be made available for cultivation on the Batinah coast, and there would appear to be an opening for the export of fresh fish in refrigerated vessels to the oil-producing centers in the Persian Gulf where the supply is short.

The trade of the State is very largely in the hands of the Hindus of Muscat and the Khojahs of Matrah and the commercial link with India is much stronger than it is in the Shaikhdoms. Muscat used to enjoy a substantial entrepôt trade but now imports little more than local requirements. The British India Steam Navigation Company's mail steamers plying between Bombay and Basrah call weekly at Muscat in both directions and British and Dutch freighters pay occasional visits. A British shipping firm has an office at Muscat but the landing arrangements are in charge of a local Khojah firm. The General Post Office in London maintains a Post Office in the British Consulate General at Muscat. Under a concession granted by the Sultan, Cable and Wireless Limited maintain a telegraph office in Muscat and communicate with the outside world by both cable and wireless. They also operate a telephone exchange. The Royal Air Force wireless station at Salalah in Dhofar transmits messages to and from, or on behalf of, the Sultan, but is not available for use by the general public.

Access to Muscat can normally only be had by sea. It is possible to reach it by land from Sharjah but the journey is a difficult one.* There is an airfield at Bait al-Falaj near the Sultanate Army Headquarters, but as it is encircled by hills it can normally be used only by small aircraft. The Gulf Aviation Company maintains a regular weekly service to it from Bahrain *via* Sharjah. Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited has constructed another airfield, primarily for its own use, at Adhaibah about 25 miles north of Muscat. It is reported to be suitable for all types of aircraft. Mention has already been made of the Royal Air Force airfields at Salalah and Masirah.

The Sultan has enacted no nationality law, but he issues his own passports to those whom he acknowledges as subjects and possession of such a passport is usually regarded as proof of Muscati nationality.

* See page 127.

British passport issuing offices are authorized to grant visas for Muscat to British subjects and protected persons without reference to the Muscat Government. For all other foreigners a reference has to be made. Nationals of the Gulf Shaikhdoms other than the Trucial States are not permitted to visit Muscat without visas. Passengers in mail steamers calling at Muscat, who are not disembarking there, require the special permission of the Muscat Government to come ashore.

The 'Western' community in Muscat and Matrah is small and rarely exceeds thirty persons. Possibly as a result of this there is much more social intercourse between the various communities than in the Shaikhdoms and there are two or three clubs at which the Sultan's relations, the British residents, Indians and others meet to play outdoor and indoor games and pass the time of day. Hockey is the national sport and the local eleven can usually beat any team which British men-of-war can produce. In spite of its climate the place possesses a happy atmosphere. It is not unhealthy, though not yet free from malaria. The quality of the water varies with the amount of rainfall but it is always potable, and there is an adequate supply. There is no public supply of electricity but the leading residents obtain current from the State powerhouse.

There is no hotel or public rest house at Muscat and a visitor from the West will have to find somebody who is willing to accommodate him. He will be well-advised on arrival to find out what he may and what he may not do. Smoking in public is prohibited in the town and two or three hours after sunset a gun is fired, after which anybody found about the streets within the walled city without a lantern is liable to be arrested by the police. Alcoholic liquor can only be obtained under a special dispensation from the Sultan for the benefit of Christians, on a permit from the Consulate General. There are pleasant excursions to be made from Muscat, either to shell-strewn beaches, where there is good bathing, or to oases in the hills, but enquiries should be made in each case whether the permission of the local authorities is necessary. A few sand grouse and partridges can be found within fairly easy reach of Muscat during the season but the Sultan's permission has to be obtained before any shooting

expedition is undertaken. The reason for such restrictions is that the Sultan is most anxious to ensure that visitors to his State are properly looked after and that they do not run into any danger. Law and order prevail in the areas under his control but there is always a risk that a person ignorant of the local people and their customs may provoke an incident. Muscat is a most picturesque and friendly place and well worth a visit by those who have the opportunity, but it is as well to avoid the months of April to November, both inclusive, when the heat will be found very trying.

CHAPTER XIII

RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT is responsible for conducting the foreign relations of the Persian Gulf States, other than Muscat, at a diplomatic level, and I have already fully discussed its position in the Gulf. Here we deal with the ordinary relations of the Gulf States with their neighbors and with other countries which are interested in the area.

It must be remembered that the Gulf States are part of the Arab World. The more advanced Shaikhdoms are fully conscious of this fact and take a deep interest in all Arab movements. Egyptian and Iraqi newspapers are widely read, and broadcasts from Cairo, Baghdad and other Arab capitals are eagerly listened to. Those who do not have their own radio sets can hear them in the coffee shops. There are battery sets in some of the remoter villages where there is no supply of electricity, and tribesmen visiting the towns to obtain supplies spend much of their time in the coffee shops listening to the radio. In Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar practically all the inhabitants are now directly susceptible to radio propaganda. In the Trucial States and Muscat comparatively few have the opportunity of regularly listening to the broadcasts, but news and views received over the air in towns like Dubai and Matrah are quickly passed on by word of mouth to the remotest areas. None of the Gulf States are members of the Arab League but Bahrain and Kuwait sometimes send representatives to its cultural conferences and show a tendency to be influenced by its anti-Israel policy.

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The only immediate Arab neighbors of the Gulf States are Saudi Arabia and Iraq. With a few exceptions all the Gulf Rulers had a deep reverence for the late King Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud and regarded him more or less as their father. They undoubtedly respect his suc-

cessor. This does not mean that they will not put up a stiff resistance to any attempted Saudi encroachment, but apart from this they will do everything possible to avoid giving offence. There are unsettled disputes about land and sea-bed boundaries and about the ownership of certain islands, but for the most part friendly relations exist between the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. Some of the Rulers visit Riyadh or Mecca from time to time and during the winter months members of the Bahrain and Kuwait ruling families hawk bustard in the Saudi Arabian desert. So far as the indigenous population is concerned there are few restrictions on travel in either direction, but this does not apply to Europeans and Americans visiting Saudi Arabia from the Gulf States. They have to comply carefully with visa regulations and to pay rather heavy fees. The American personnel of the Arabian American Oil Company, with its headquarters at Dhahran on the mainland only about 20 miles from Manamah, used to visit Bahrain freely for shopping and recreation but few come now on account of the imposts which they have to pay to the Saudis on their return. In spite of the development of a modern port at Dammam, a few miles from Dhahran, many goods for eastern Saudi Arabia are still imported via Bahrain and Kuwait. There is no official Saudi Arabian representative in any of the Gulf States but a Saudi Minister without portfolio is the head of a firm doing business in Bahrain and can be consulted about visits to the mainland and trade matters and there is an unofficial Saudi Trade Agent in Kuwait. The Gulf Aviation Company at Bahrain maintains daily air services between that place and Dhahran.

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Iraq has a long open frontier with Kuwait which, though defined, has not yet been demarcated. There has been trouble about smuggling from Kuwait over this frontier in the past and Iraq has at times made claims to sovereignty over Kuwait, but during recent years relations between the two countries have been good. The *coup d'état* in Iraq of July 1958 does not appear to have affected the situation. The Ruler of Kuwait has visited Baghdad since the change of régime. He was well received and matters of common interest were amicably

discussed. Facilities for the grant of visas to visitors from the Gulf States on arrival at Basrah are, however, no longer available and they have to be obtained before entering the country. Only Kuwaitis are admitted without visas. There are no Iraqi representatives in any of the Gulf States but British political officers protect Iraqi interests when called upon to do so. The Shaikhdoms import dates, fruit and cereals from Iraq. Kuwait, and to a lesser extent Bahrain, are sometimes used as entrepôts for foreign goods en route to Iraq. Commercial relations between Basrah and the principal ports of the Shaikhdoms are close and some of the leading Gulf merchants maintain offices or agencies there. Kuwait is connected with Basrah by land by a motorable desert track, and mail-steamers, launches and dhows ply between the main Gulf ports and Basrah. Iraqi Airways provides a daily service between Kuwait and Basrah and this service is extended two or three times a week to Bahrain.

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The Lebanon is the summer resort of the wealthier residents of the oil-producing Shaikhdoms and there are a number of Bahraini and Kuwaiti boys studying at the American University of Beirut and other educational establishments there. Middle East Airlines, a Lebanese Company, maintains regular services from Beirut to Kuwait and, via Dhahran, to Bahrain, and Lebanese fruit is imported by air to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. Lebanese contractors do business in these Shaikhdoms and Lebanese teachers are employed in the schools. Relations with Syria are similar to those with the Lebanon, though not quite so close. Fruit, sweetmeats and brocades are imported from Damascus. Egypt is looked up to by the Shaikhdoms as the headquarters of Arab culture but few boys now go there for education, largely owing to the fear of the Rulers that they may be subjected to subversive influences. On the other hand, a large number of Egyptian teachers are employed in schools at Bahrain and Kuwait owing to the dearth of local material, and anti-Western propaganda communicated through these teachers, and still more over the air by Cairo radio, is a disturbing element.

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Persia does not recognize the independence of any of the Gulf States, including Muscat, and maintains a claim to sovereignty over Bahrain based on her occupation of the islands nearly two hundred years ago. She also claims sovereignty over Bu Musa Island and the Tamb Islands, which are administered by Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah respectively, and has recently occupied Farsi Island, which is situated in the center of the Persian Gulf at its northern end, and is claimed as well by both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Nationals of Gulf States visiting Persia are treated as Persian subjects and may be compelled to take out Persian identity certificates. Passports bearing British visas for any of the Gulf States are not recognized and a foreigner desirous of visiting Persia from them, if he is not already in possession of a separate passport with a visa for that country, will have to obtain a new passport and apply to the Persian Consul at Basrah for a visa, as there is no Persian representative in any of the States. Letters and parcels bearing Bahrain stamps are treated as unstamped, but the stamps of the other Gulf States are usually accepted. During the last few years, the Persian authorities appear to have been at pains to cultivate friendly relations with the Shaikhdoms, other than Bahrain, and several of the Rulers have paid visits to the Shah. The many Persian residents in the Shaikhdoms have been mentioned, some of whom have adopted local nationality. The largest colonies are at Bahrain and Dubai. At the former place, owing to the Persian claim, the Ruler is now averse to admitting any more permanent settlers, but it is difficult to control those who arrive at coastal villages in small vessels. Relations between the Arabs and the Persians living among them are universally good, except in so far as the Persians may become involved in the trouble between Sunnis and Shi'as in Bahrain. The Persians can, nearly all, speak Arabic fluently, but few Arabs will admit to a knowledge of Persian. The numerous Baluchis in the Trucial States and Muscat must have originated from Persia, and have retained their language, akin to Persian, but apart from this appear to have severed all connection with their country of origin. They work as fishermen, laborers and watchmen, and serve in the Muscat Infantry and Bahrain Police. There is much trade across the Gulf, for the most part by dhows and launches. Livestock, dried fruit

and nuts are imported to the Gulf States, and sugar, tea and similar commodities are exported to Persia. Communications between the two shores of the Gulf are almost entirely by sea and there is no regular air service. Iranian Airways aircraft sometimes carry passengers between Kuwait and Persia.

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For many generations British relations with the Gulf States were conducted through the Government of British India and until the second World War the States looked to India for most of their supplies. A strong connection with India and especially with Bombay still subsists. Nearly all the pearls from the Gulf are sent to that city for polishing and boring, and the Rulers and others often go there for medical treatment. Some of the leading Gulf firms have offices there. Dhows visit the Malabar coast taking dates and dried fish and returning with teak for boat building. As has already been stated, the Indian rupee is the currency ordinarily used for official and business purposes in all the Gulf States. There are many Indians doing business in Bahrain, Dubai, and Muscat and a few in Kuwait. Hindus are tolerated in all these places and allowed to practice their religion. Indians are also found in the service of the British and Local Governments as clerks, doctors, etc. The oil companies employ Indians and Anglo-Indians, mostly as clerks and artisans, and Goanese as domestic servants. Indians are freely admitted to the Gulf States for temporary visits or to fill specific appointments but not now to set up new businesses. British officers are in charge of Indian interests in all the States except Muscat but a representative from the Indian Embassy in Baghdad visits Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar from time to time to enquire into the welfare of Indian nationals. They are well treated and usually content with their lot, though some of them occasionally air grievances, real or imaginary, against the oil companies. India signed a treaty with Muscat in 1953 and under its terms has appointed a Consul there. This Consul pays visits to the Trucial States similar to those of the officials of the Indian Embassy at Baghdad to the other Shaikhdoms. The British India Steam Navigation Company's weekly mail steamers provide

regular communication by sea between the principal Gulf ports and Bombay, and India can also be reached by the British Overseas Airways Corporation's air services from Bahrain via Karachi.

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The Gulf States, though sympathizing with Pakistan as a fellow Muslim State, have perhaps not yet become used to her separate existence and are inclined not to attach to her the importance she deserves. They also have not the same commercial relations with her as they have with India and until a few years ago there was little trade in either direction. Recently the value of the trade with Pakistan has risen rapidly and in particular there have been substantial imports of Pakistan rice. Pakistanis are admitted to the States on the same terms as Indians. They are to be found in Bahrain, Kuwait and elsewhere, working as shopkeepers and artisans and a number are employed by the oil companies. The Qatar Government has taken some into its service, and a few are employed by other local Governments and in the offices of the British representatives. Relations between the Shaikhdoms and Pakistan are generally good. Gwadur was at one time the cause of friction between Pakistan and Muscat but since its cession relations between the two countries have improved. Pakistan provides some technicians for the Sultan's armed forces. Pakistan pilgrims, who arrive from time to time in launches or dhows on the Trucial Coast and in Qatar and try to make their way overland to Mecca without any means of subsistence, are a cause of embarrassment, as the Saudi authorities will not allow them to cross the frontier and they have to be fed and repatriated. On one occasion a number of them died in the desert. The British authorities are in charge of Pakistan interests and, except for a Pakistan Trade Agent in Kuwait, there is no Pakistan representative in any of the States. A member of the Pakistan Embassy at Baghdad pays occasional visits to the Shaikhdoms for the same purpose as the Indian representative.

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The only 'Western' countries other than Great Britain which take an open interest in the Gulf at present are the United States of America, France and Holland, and to a lesser extent West Germany

and Austria. There are signs that Russia is trying to get a trade footing in the Gulf and Kuwait has recently bought equipment from Czecho-Slovakia. The reception of Arabic broadcasts from Radio Moscow is very good. Japan has now acquired oil interests in the Gulf and her shipping and goods are becoming increasingly in evidence.

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The United States of America has now a great stake in the Gulf. The oil companies operating in Saudi Arabia, the Kuwait Neutral Zone, Bahrain and Dhofar are wholly American, the Kuwait Oil Company is half American, and the Americans hold nearly a quarter share in the associates of the Iraq Petroleum Company which are producing oil in Qatar and hold concessions for the Trucial States and Muscat. The United States has a Consul at Kuwait holding an exeqatur from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, as being responsible for Kuwait's foreign relations, with a Vice Consul to assist him. Their Consul General at Dhahran in Saudi Arabia pays regular visits to the other Gulf Shaikhdoms and to Muscat. They have a seaplane tender permanently in the Gulf, as the headquarters of a Rear Admiral who is designated Commander Middle East Force, and three destroyers. These ships are based largely on Bahrain and the American Naval personnel share the Royal Navy's facilities at Jufair. An American survey ship recently carried out a hydrographic survey of the northern waters of the Gulf while British ships surveyed the southern waters. All this has somewhat detracted from the exclusive position which the British previously held in the Gulf but American participation in the burden which it imposes has been welcomed, and the Americans have at all times co-operated with the British authorities and made no attempt to prejudice the special position which they occupy *vis-à-vis* the Rulers. There are about two or three hundred Americans in Kuwait and the Neutral Zone, less than a hundred in Bahrain and a few in Qatar and elsewhere. At Dhahran and other places in the Saudi Arabian province of Hasa, which borders the Gulf, the American colony numbers several thousand and is said to be the largest outside the United States. In Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat, Missions of the Dutch Reformed Church of America

have been working since the early years of the century and there is a recently established Mission of the Presbyterian Church of America at Sharjah. In spite of the great increase of American influence in recent years, and although there are a few who make up to the Americans and endeavor to set them off against the British, the Rulers and the people as a whole show no signs of deserting the British for the Americans and perhaps believe in the adage "better the devil you know than the devil you don't."

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France and Holland each have shares in the associates of the Iraq Petroleum Company, France has a share in the company holding the Abu Dhabi and Dubai offshore concessions, and Holland in the company holding the Qatar offshore concession. Dutch freighters participate substantially in the trade of the Gulf and pay frequent visits to its ports. Representatives of the two countries from Iraq or elsewhere occasionally visit the Gulf States, where they concern themselves principally with their countries commercial interests, as, except for a few oil company employees, there are no French or Dutch residents. West Germany and Austria have recently begun to take a commercial interest in the Gulf States.

EPILOGUE

IN SPITE OF upheavals elsewhere in the Arab world there has been little outward change in the Persian Gulf States since I left Bahrain in July 1953. The Rulers still rule more or less as patriarchs and Great Britain continues to exercise her protecting influence. Education, however, is spreading rapidly; members of the upper and middle classes are travelling widely; the ceaseless Arab nationalist propaganda over the air and in the newspapers cannot be without its effect and new political ideas are gaining ground. There have been some disturbances and there will probably be more. I doubt, however, whether the call of Arab nationalism is as potent as that of Islam, and I think that the majority of the people when they see the conditions prevailing in neighboring countries prefer to remain as they are. They would sacrifice their well-being at the bidding of an inspired Muslim zealot but pay lip service only to the behests of a military dictator. The real danger comes from without, not from Middle Eastern neighbors, but from doctrinaire politicians in the West. There are many who think that, because democracy suits the West, it is the panacea for all ills in the East, and that any remaining vestiges of past imperialism should, as such, be incontinently swept away. Such doctrines could lead to the premature abandonment by Great Britain of her position in the Gulf States with disastrous results both to the States themselves and to the oil companies whose operations have brought so much benefit both to these States and to the Western world.

I am very proud to have spent so many years in the Persian Gulf as the chief representative of the British Government. I grew very fond of the Rulers and their people and their, at first sight, uninviting territories. I have greatly enjoyed putting on record the situation as I knew it. I hope that no drastic change will take place for some years to come so that this book may be of some use to the

Americans and British who have to live and work in those strange but fascinating survivals from a bygone age. Should, however, the British aegis be withdrawn and the States be swallowed up by greedy neighbors and the oil companies be forced to abandon their beneficent enterprise, there may perhaps be some who will be interested to read of things as they were in the "good old days."

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With the exception of the oil installation at Bahrain, from the files of the Bahrain Petroleum Company, all the photographs are those of the author.

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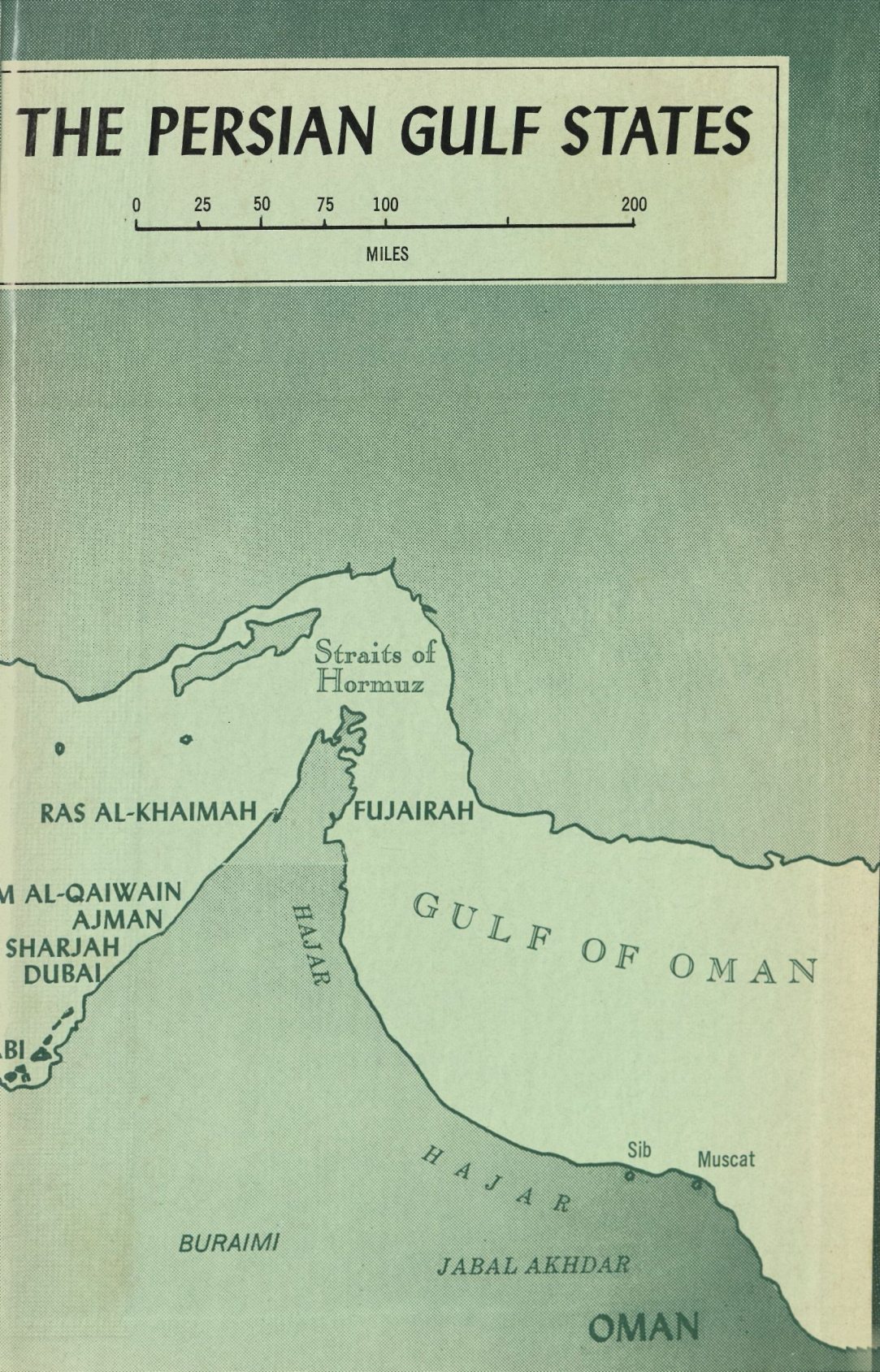


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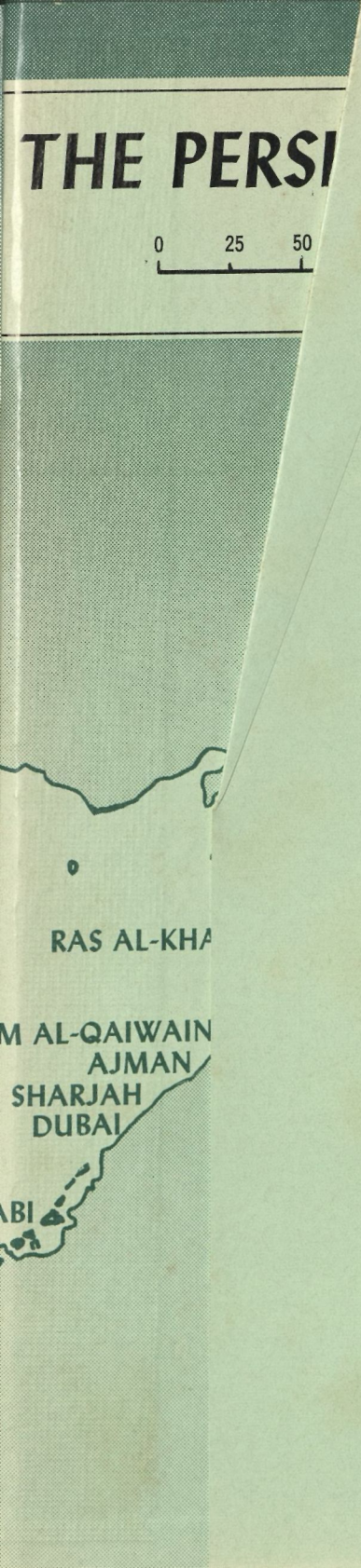

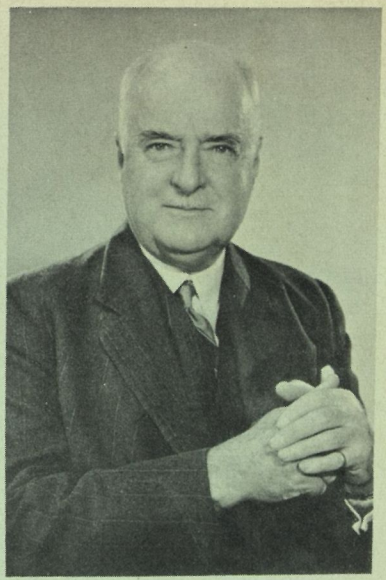

Sir Rupert Hay

SIR RUPERT HAY was born at Bridport, Dorset, not far from his present residence at Causeway House, Radipole. He was educated at Bradfield and at University College, Oxford. In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, he went to India with the Fourth Dorset Regiment. In 1915 he went to Mesopotamia — now Iraq — with the Indian Army and was mentioned in dispatches in the engagements there with the Turkish armies. From 1917 to 1920 he served in the Civil Administration there. He then joined the Indian Civil Service.

It was not until 1941 that he returned to the Arab countries, to be Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. He served in that capacity until 1943, when he returned to India. In 1946 he was again appointed Resident in the Persian Gulf and served as such until his retirement in 1955. Since then a considerable part of his time has been taken up in writing this book.