

BULLETIN
MENSUEL DU
CENTRE D'ÉTUDES KURDES



— 9 —

PARIS

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1949

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Le but des bulletins du Centre d'Études Kurdes est de faire connaître au monde le peuple kurde, le Kurdistan et tout ce qui les concerne.

Le dernier document politique de portée internationale concernant les Kurdes, est le Traité de Sèvres, du 10 août 1920.

Dans sa Section III, articles 62, 63, 64, les Grandes Puissances reconnaissent aux Kurdes le droit à l'unité et à l'indépendance.

Cependant, encore aujourd'hui, le peuple kurde, dont le nombre dépasse 9.000.000, et qui occupe un territoire historique de 500.000 km², allant de la mer Noire jusqu'au golfe Persique, et de la Méditerranée au Caucase, se trouve être partagé entre la Turquie, l'Iran et l'Irak.

En Turquie et en Iran, le Kurde est privé des droits humains les plus élémentaires; tels que de se dire Kurde, parler librement, lire et écrire ouvertement sa langue, et d'être gouverné par des gens de sa race et parlant le kurde.

En Irak, si certains droits élémentaires leur furent concédés, ces droits ne reçoivent qu'une application mitigée et, il n'en est pas moins vrai, qu'en fait, la liberté politique est inexistante.

Fort des droits naturels des peuples à la vie, la liberté et la justice; de la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen; des lois internationales et des stipulations des traités existants; des quatorze points wilsoniens; de la Charte de l'Atlantique; des principes reconnus et établis par l'O.N.U. et ses institutions; et en faisant appel à la bonne volonté des peuples du Monde, le Centre d'Études Kurdes se propose de travailler en vue de faire reconnaître effectivement, à la Nation Kurde, la plénitude de ses droits.

Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du citoyen (août 1789) :

Art. 1er. — Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits.

Art. 2. — Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme. Ces droits sont : la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté et la résistance à l'oppression.

Bulletin du Centre d'Etudes Kurdes

The Editor is pleased to present extracts from a book written by J. BAILLIE FRASER, entitled TRAVELS TO KOORDISTAN MESOPOTAMIE ETC..., from the impressions of a journey in the year 1834, published in London by Richard Bentley.

« AMADIA lies to the north west of Rewandooz and to the north of Mosoul. This state or rather Pashalic, for its chief was a Pashah, is spoken of by all in the highest terms of commendation, for its productiveness, beauty and density of population. Several persons of high respectability agreed in declaring to me that it contained twelve thousand villages, not petty hamlets, but consisting of from two to three hundred families (or homes) each. A statement which must be enormously beyond the truth, as, taking each village at only one hundred and fifty houses, and giving but five persons to each house, the aggregate would be nine millions — a population greatly exceeding that of the whole of Persia : it must therefore be taken only to mean that Amadia is very populous ».

COMPARISON BETWEEN TURKISH AND KOORDISH TERRITORIES

(A passage taken from the journal of Dr. Ross — the British Medical Officer in Baghdad in 1833).

« It was towards the middle of May 1833, when Dr. Ross left Baghdad : and among the first remarks he made, was the great contrast which was observable in point of cultivation and population, between the Turkish and Koordish territories. In the former, all the villages were deserted, the inhabitants having taken flight to avoid the governments imposts. Every creature that remained was openmouthed in complaint against Allee Pashah of Baghdad, an the moment a man belonging to the government appeared, away they ran to

hide themselves. On the other hand, no sooner did the party reach Altoun-Kupree, than all the people flocked out to meet Bayazeed Beg, wearing flowers on their heads as on holidays, and pressed forward to kiss his hand, and shouted and cheered as he passed along ».

« From Altoun-Kupree to Erbile the plain was covered with flowers intersperced among the richest verdure, and the country was very populous. The reception of Bayazeed Beg, at the latter place, is described by Dr. Ross as being in the highest degree picturesque and beautiful, both from the rich costumes and from the affectionate animation that gave spirit to the scene ».

THE KOORDICH DRESS

« The poorer wear a short jacket, with wide camlet trousers, and a felt jerkin without sleeves, cotton shoes and woollen stockings ; and on their heads, the peculiar Koordish turban. The women wear a blue skirt with wide trousers, tied at the ankles, and a square mantle fastened by two corners hanging down the back. On their heads they wear a round plate of silver, from which hang down large drops with a coin fastened to each, round the head and neck or the whole affair is made of silver coins. The mode of salutation is curious ; each takes the other by the right wrist, and kisses the forearm. »

KOORDISH DISPOSITION

« At Erbile Dr. Ross saw much of Koords and Koordish manners, and speaks strongly of their fierce and turbulent dispositions. « The element of the Koord, says he, » is war. He is trained to it from his cradle, and is never happy but in skirmishes and battles ; I have seen boys of twelve and fifteen suffering under the most severe wounds, received in recent fights. I understand their battles are very sanguinary. They begin with their rifles but soon come to use the dagger all in earnest. No Arab blustering — all right hard fighting ; and the return of killed and wounded is generally very great. »

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE KOORDS

« The Koords are well made and active ; differing perhaps little from their neighbours the Persians. But the national features are strikingly peculiar. The cast of countenance is sharp, the form of the face oval, the profile remarkable from the prominence of the bones of the nose, and the comparative

retrocession of the mouth and chin, which communicate to its outline a semicircular form. The eyes are deep set, dark, quick and intelligent ; the brow ample and clear, but somewhat retreating, completing the shape assigned to the profile ; and the general mould of the features by far more delicate than those of the Persians, which usually are somewhat too strong. In Koordistan you would look in vain for a snub nose. « The petit nez retroussé » is unknown among them. The mouth is almost always well-formed and the teeth fine. The hands and fingers small and slender. In short, there is something of elegance about the Koordish form, which would mark them as a handsome nation in any part of the world. »

« The same remarks apply to the women, so far as I have had opportunities of observation. When young they are exceedingly pretty. I had sufficient opportunities for observing these particulars, as they do not wear the veils like the Persian women. »

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE PASHAH AND DR. ROSS

« He entered into long conversation, more than once with Dr. Ross, and chiefly on general subjects ; inquired regarding the mode of education in England ; the religion of India and China — the latter country he thought was ours, as well as the former. He also desired to know what terms we were on with Persia, and with Russia. On another occasion, he made many enquiries as to the uses and effects of medicine ; the state of the pulse in illness ; of the plague, cholera, etc ; then he would pass to more warlike subjects, and speak of guns and pistols, producing an old English double-barrelled gun and a rifle, which, with a sword, a telescope and an umbrella, a wooden bed, and a few carpets, composed the greater part of his tent furniture. Close to his tent, there was a large double-poled one, in which he holds DURBAR in the forenoon, and at night. He never went to bed till after dawn, and slept till nine or ten in the forenoon. A quarter of an hour before the last prayer, a noisy band struck up ; and at prayer-time, a gun was fired ! »

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PASHAH'S CAMP

« The force in camp, Dr. Ross understood to be only about ten thousand men, not half the original army, the rest having been sent home for the harvest. The camp itself had no

pretensions to military order ; the only thing regular was a ring of small tents round that of the Pashah, containing his own guard, in number three thousand. These also act as his servants. The infantry have rifles and daggers ; the cavalry, lances and daggers. Every chief of an ASHAYER, or clan, had his own tribe encamped about him, separate from the rest, which spoiled the look of the camp, so that it was spread out to an extent which, according to the rules of European castrametation, would contain fifty thousand men ; yet, notwithstanding all this want of discipline, or order, not a sound was heard, and every man could be in one spot in five minutes. The men were of their own accord constantly firing at marks ; and every evening from one to two hundred of the soldiers dined in the Pashah's tent, coming by turns from the different tribes ».

DEPARTURE FROM THE PASHAH'S CAMP

« On the 8th of July, Dr. Ross left the Pashah's camp and took the road to Mosul. On the other side of the Zab he found one hundred Arabs of the Boo-Selman tribe, ready mounted to escort him through the remainder of the Rewandooz chieftain's territory. He remonstrated against the attendance of such a host ; but the leader of the band informed him that his orders were precise, and that he could not abate him one man ; and the Doctor takes occasion here to point out the contrast between the customs of officials in the Pashah's and in the Turkish territory. The moment he entered the latter, he was stunned by demands for BUKSHEESH (presents), and after fleecing him of what he might have about him, the sturdy beggars followed to his home for more. In the territories of Rewandooz the word was never mentioned. In all parts comparisons were drawn between the government of Allee Pashah of Baghdad and of the Meer, to the greatest possible disadvantage of the former, against whom treason was openly spoken, while the Meer of Rewandooz was as openly extolled ».

A JOURNEY INTO THE VERY HEART OF KOORDISTAN

« Ooshnoo, 21st October 1834... If you seek, dear... to find the place of my present abode in any map you are likely to have within reach, you will seek it in vain. But if this finds you in London, and you should have the means of getting sight of Monteith's map of Azerbijan, etc, you may

see it laid down about thirty-five miles S.W. of Ooroomia, and to the west of Lake Shahee, that is in the very heart of Koordistan.

« On the 19th I took leave of Ooroomia and its very interesting neighbourhood, as well as of its kind and polite chief ; but that day we only marched twelve miles, taking up our abode at a small village of the Khan's, where we were still entertained as his guests. We were lodged in a large building of mud, used as a mosque, and were well entertained by the chief people of the village, so far as eatables were concerned ; but I never passed a more sleepless night. Some how or other I awoke after a couple of hours' nap, and got into a train of thought that kept me wakeful. Then came a concert of dogs, baying the moon, which lasted two full hours. Then the labourers of the village, who attended to the irrigation of the rice grounds « assembled behind the mosque just at my head; and struck up a clattering and laughing that might have wakened the seven sleepers. By the time they went off, it was about time to think of going too ; but I fell into that sort of doze in which our dreams are the most vivid, and I had a dream — a dream of home. I had returned — I saw you all, and fain would have mingled with you : but there was an obstacle — I could not tell what — and there were... remonstrating with me, and I was still striving to approach with a force and vividness of feeling, that was little short of reality, when in came the people to tell me they were loading, and all vanished, leaving me in the cold dim mosque, to rise for a cold ride, for the wind blew fiercely from some hills on the right, which still were flecked with large patches of snow ».

DRESS OF THE MOUNTAINOUS KOORDS

« Our path, this day, led up a narrow but cultivated country, plunging into the very heart of the Koordish mountains, amongst which we soon found ourselves, and every moment were met and passed by parties of wild-looking Koords, with their fine flowing garments and long slender spears. The dress of these people is by far the most picturesque I have seen, with the exception of some few among the Turkish costumes : indeed the word « picturesque » applies better to it than to any Turkish dress I know. On their head they wear a large shawl of striped silk, red, white and blue, with fringed ends, which is wound in the most

graceful manner round their skull caps. Its ample folds are confined with some sort of band, and the long fringes hang down with a rich fantastic wildness ; their true Saracenic features, and bright black eyes, gleam with peculiar lustre from under this head-dress. Their body garments consist of a sort of ample vest and gown, with magnificent wide Turkish sleeves, over which is worn a jacket, often richly embroidered and furred, according to the owner's rank. Their lower man is enveloped in ample SHALWARS, not unlike those of the Mamlucs, into which, in riding, they stuff the skirts of their more flowing garments. Around their waist, instead of a shawl, they wear a girdle fastened with monstrous silver clasps, which may be ornamented according to the owner's taste with jewels, and in which they stick, not only their Koordish dagger, but a pair of great brass or silver-knobbed pistols. From this, too, hang sundry powder-horns and shot-cases, cartridge-boxes, etc., and over all they cast a sort of cloak, or abba, of camel's hair, white, or black, or striped, white, brown and black, clasped on the breast, and floating picturesquely behind. When riding they carry a small round shield depending from the left shoulder, and grasp in their hand a long slender spear. If in war-time, and they are going on an expedition, in addition to these arms they carry a gun, and occasionally three slender javelins in a case, which they can throw with great precision to the distance of thirty yards. They case themselves in armour like knights of old, either in a skirt of linked mail, such as those in the hall at... with helmets and armllets, or with a suit of plate-armour, called CHAR-Einch, consisting of four plates of inlaid and Damasked steel, made to fit back, breast, and sides, and which are a defence against anything but a ball striking them directly from this sketch of Koordish costume, you will comprehend that it is worth seeing, and that the groups that passed us, ever and anon, were in good harmony with the scenery, and well calculated to awaken interest and fix attention : but as for the costume, I hope you will be enabled to judge for yourself, as I mean to procure a complete dress, which may serve some day for a fancy dress ball at home. »

✓ DUSHT — e — BEEL

« After breakfasting beside the stream, which we were following up to its head, we continued on till we reached a

wide level, or table-land called the DUSHT-e-BEEL, where the waters separated and ran to either side the ridge ; and, leaving the regular road, we struck over this high flat, which was inhabited, we understood, by Ecliaut Koords. The pathve followed, it seems was both shorter and better than the regular one we had quitted. On we fared : and, descending a very rugged and steep ravine, in which ran a fine clear stream, we saw beneath us the fine valley or basin of OOSHNOO, stretching from fourteen to fifteen miles or more each way, in length and breath, studded with villages and backed by the magnificent chain of Mount Zagros, the backbone of KOORDISTAN, and indeed of this part of Asia, which stretches from the knot of mountains in Armenia where the Tigris and Euphrates take their rise, to the Bukhtiaree mountains that run past Ispahan, and passing through Fars, unite with those of Kermân and Mekrân.

OOSHNOO

COMPARAISON BETWEEN KOORDS & HIGHLAND SCOTS

« OOSHNOO, the first truly Koordish abode, I have been domiciled in, differed not externally from other Persian villages ; but the costume of its inhabitants imparted to its interior character which no Persian village could present. The Khan, himself, was habited in the common Persian garb, which, I observe, is adopted by all men of rank, whatever their tribe or country, who have seen something of the world, in the same manner as our Highland Lairds now-a-days, leave the kilt and the tartan to their followers or clan, and seldom affect the singularity of wearing it, unless upon some particular occasion. The whole of his household and all the other inhabitants, however, retained the Koordish costume, with all their native wildness, and stood gazing at the stranger as if he were a man of other mould than they — « other » I say, not « better » ; for no Celtish Laird or loon can think more highly of himself, his family, or his clan, than did these Koords of their blood and tribe ; and certainly, so far as antiquity has claims to regard, they have good title to consideration ; for they are probably the descendants of those who flourished in the days of Cyrus and Xenophon, of Julian and Heraclius, and just as proud, independent as they. In fact, the similarity between these Koords, as they are, and the highland clans as they were, not many centuries ago, is wonderfully strong. They are as devotedly attached to their

mountains as any Scotch or Swiss highlanders for their lives can be. »

THE KHAN'S ARRIVAL — HIS LINEAGE CONDITION OF THE KOORDS — OVER TAXATION

« October 26th — Yesterday, after a world of waiting, the Khan came in. It was, on the whole, an interesting sight, though not so as I had anticipated. About a thousand horsemen entered with the Khan, accompanying him from a distance of several miles. As the cavalcade approached the city, the horsemen began to show off their horses and skill, and you constantly saw cavaliers issuing forth full tilt « like lightning from the thunder-cloud » from the veil of dust which wrapped the main body, shaking their spears, and wheeling and turning with a rapidity which was imposing at least if not absolutely astonishing. It was when the wind occasionally blew aside the cloud of dust, that you could distinguish the gallant appointments of the cavalcade. The Khan himself, clothed in the dress of honor bestowed on him by the Prince, and which formed his investiture of the government of SOUJE BULAGH, sat erect upon a fine Arab charger. This dress of honor, a shawl-cloak embroidered with silver, cost the chief, some say three, others six thousand tomans, or half as many pounds sterling ; from whence it may be inferred that to be governor of such a province is no bad thing. On the whole, it was a sight worth seeing, and assuredly superior to anything seen at the inferior or provincial courts, more glittering perhaps than the cortege of the Shah himself, on any but great occasions ; for he it remembered that the whole male population of Souje Bulagh went forth, clad in their best, to meet this cortège, and the women mustered in force, upon the house-tops, to see it pass by.

« Abdoolla Khan, present governor of SOUJE Bulagh, is the head of the Koordish Tribe of Mookree, one of the most powerful as well as ancient of that aboriginal people. He is the son to the well-known Boodha Khan, who was treacherously blinded by Mahomed Koolce Khan of Ooroomia, as you may read in one of the volumes of Blackwood, (for the year 25 or. 26), I think in our friend... 's « Visits to the Harem ». Boodha Khan used, when need was, to ride to the « tristing-place », with his thousand horse « armed in proof ». But these days are passed ; the Koordish tribes nearest the seat of government, have by force, or treachery, or domestic disputes, been constrained to yield an unwilling obedience to

the ruling power, and the Mookrees now pay tax and tribute for the lands where their fathers roamed free, unheeding of Shah or Shahzadeh. This change of condition sits ill on all of them; and many and bitter were the complaints which I heard of the misery to which the present heavy taxation has reduced the people. « In the days of Aga Mahomed Khan » said Baba Khan Beg to me, « Souje Bulâgh was assessed at 1,000 tomâns. Now, with the district of Seradusht, it pays 25,000 to the King, and we (meaning the chief and his family) are forced to extract 10,000 more for ourselves, in order to keep up the necessary appearances ; no wonder the people are poor and discontented. The plague has swept away more than half, and the remaining half are forced to do the work of all, and pay the whole assessment. Nay, since this coming and going of the army to and from Suleimania we pay 10,000 more in SOURSAUT and MEHMANDAREE; (supplies of provisions and maintenance of guests) how are we stand it ».

THE ABBA OR ARAB CLOAK

« I happened to commend the abba, or Arab cloak, commonly worn here, as a dress conveniently suited either to warm or cool weathers. » Ay ! replied Azeez Khan : « but the abba is not our regular dress, it is an adoption of recent days. We get them from Baghdad, or make them here now. They are cheap, and we are poor. Formely no one ever dared to appear in the presence of a great man without a handsome cloak of broad cloth ; but now, go to the Khan's DEWAN-KHANEH, and nothing but abbas will you see ».

There is no doubt that much of this grumbling proceeds from the discontented feelings natural to men who, once free of master and of impost, have been, by force, saddled with both ; but I do believe that the people are by far too heavily taxed, and still more, that the demands of the government are collected in a very oppressive manner : and I am convinced that it would not only be just, but polite, to lighten their burdens. — They are a people accustomed to little beyond necessities, so that the difference to them of a very small increase or decrease of taxation is that of mere suffering, or actual starvation ; and it is painful to see a race, who have many qualities to recommend them, ground to the dust by exaction, or forced to emigrate in order to preserve their miserable lives ».

DOMMESTIC MANNERS OF THE KOORDS

« When a friend or relative arrived from the country, the head of the family went to the door, or beyond it, to embrace him — the sons or nephews had probably given the first welcome when he dismounted : if not, they came in and saluted him each in turn ; and there was in the welcome an empressement, a sort of pleasing eagerness, which put me quite in mind of old high-land times ; and really, the more I saw of the Koords, the more did the resemblance they bore to the old highlanders strike me. The respect of the young for the old was particularly remarkable : the son never sat down in the father's presence, nor the nephew in that of an uncle, except by special desire, and then in a distant part of the room. Yet there appeared no want of tenderness on the part of the elders nor of willing and ready obedience, or filial affection, on the part of the young. At meals, though trays of victuals were brought in by servants who performed the more menial offices, the sons of the host waited on the guests and attended to their wants ; handed water to drink, assisted them to such things as were out of their reach, trimmed the lights and exerted themselves to increase the comfort of all. The servants, too, were treated with great consideration and even familiarity, insomuch that it was some time before I could distinguish between the relations of the family and its upper domestics. »

« The great, it is true, (that is the higher chiefs) affect more state. The Khans have their « lords in waiting », their nazirs, or stewards, their head Peishkhednuts, head Furoshes, etc, etc, like the higher Persian nobless ; but I am now speaking of domestic manners, and these were marked by kindness and good feeling. There was an openness and simplicity about many of these Koords that was very refreshing and which often showed itself in their questions in a manner that amused while it pleased me. Among these Azeez Beg was remarkable ; not that his simplicity was at all indicative of weakness ; it was rather the overflow of a guileless, or, as we would say in Scotland, of an aefhauld heart, which neither suspected others of deceit, nor desired to conceal a thought of its own. His wonder never ended at hearing that my country was more than twelve hundred hours distant, and he very naturally asked me if I did not feel as if I could never get all that way back, and if I did not weary to see my home and friends again. Neither he nor others could comprehend

that any one should come so long a way merely for the sake of seeing the world ; and they gave me credit, I am persuaded for more motives to the journey than I chose to avow, in spite of my cross-questionings on the subject of trade and commerce. Such conversations usually terminated in a very minute inquiry into our habits and customs ; particularly in regard to such matters as interested them most. A strong expression of admiration at our NIZAM and ZABITCH, as they call our military, fiscal and general legislative arrangements, and of a wish that they could go to us or we should come to them and take their country in charge, was generally the result.

I used occasionally to amuse them by telling them that I was myself a native of a country not unlike Koordistan ; mountainous and divided into tribes, often at war and feud with one another in times of old, and as fond as Koords could be of a CHUPPOW upon their lowland neighbours ; and they listened with interest and pleasure to my descriptions of the attachment of the clansmen to their chief, and the habits of the highlanders of old ; and the comparisons I drew, or tried to draw, between the highlanders and Koords gave me the means of eliciting more from them than I could otherwise have managed to draw without offensive inquisitiveness, and brought to light some traits of manners that might otherwise have escaped me. »

SOUJE BULACH — STATE AUDIENCES — MUJELISES

« In the course of my stay at Souje Bulâgh. I saw the Khan in the state of his audience-hall surrounded by his turbaned clan, dealing out law, if not justice, to those who came for it, and served with a state which princes only assume. I visited and was visited by Moossa Khan his uncle, the ex-governor, and became convinced that in Koordistan, as elsewhere, there is a vast deal of difference between the INS and OUTS of place. Twice, in particular, we had grand MUJELISES, or assemblies of the tribe, at my lodgings, and very mortifying it was to me that I did not understand the conversation which was carried on entirely in Koordish. I could sometimes just trace the subjects, for there is much Persian in Koordish, but it was only enough to tantalize without satisfying or instructing me. »

AUTUMNAL TINTS

(Although the season of Autumn always saddened the author, he nevertheless was deeply sensitive of its beauties).

« ... Here, however, autumn glowed lord of the ascendant in his most brilliant garb, and again I long for a poetic fit to describe his splendours ; but as I should certainly break down in the attempt, I must go on in unadorned prose, to declare to you that the lemon and scarlet of the numerous pear trees ; the vivid green and gold and crimson of the beautiful sumach bushes, which have been planted like vineyards ; the bright pink, the pale amber, and blood-red purple of the grape vines, which grow wild in abundance, as well as in cultivated patches, and which clothed the lips of the ravines, and in many places the whole mountain sides, showing « where once a garden smiled, » — these, I say, formed an Iris of brilliant colours which I have seldom seen equalled, and never surpassed ; and which embroidered, as it were, with inimitable magnificence the less gorgeous, but scarcely less rich clothing of oak that covered the hills as with a robe of brown and yellow, mingled with deep green. »

BURYING — GROUNDS

« Another feature in the landscape of yesterday and today, which peculiarly attracted my attention, was the number of ancient burying-grounds which occurred in the course of our march, far from any present habitation of man, but pointing out, doubtless, the sites of villages whose people had long since ceased to be. We had remarked them, indeed, ever since quitting OOROOMIA ; but here these monuments of forgotten generations are far more strikingly distinguished by the groves of oak trees with which they are surrounded, and often closely covered. The Koords, fierce and rude as they are, appear to have paid a singular and affecting attention to these receptacles of the dust of their kindred : even the situation appears to have been the object of careful selection ; for they are generally pleasantly placed on little heights or knolls, overlooking the fields and plains in which the deceased may have delighted : as if the spirits could be soothed with the objects thus loved while animating their fleshy tabernacles. These groves are still evidently the objects of regard if not of veneration, for you never see them touched. I observed a party of men engaged in one of these cemeteries in digging a grave — it was that of a child which had died in a

neighbouring village ; this, they said, was the place where its fathers had been interred, and it was meet that its little dust should moulder with theirs. I remarked, too, in these buryinggrounds, vestiges of peculiar care. Graves surrounded by little walls of stone, as if they were the property of some particular family, or perhaps the tomb of some elder of high estimation and sanctity. Some were grey and moss-grown, and told of long lapse of years. »

... « From hence we ascended by a zigzag path to another valley, where were the ruins of several large villages, and whole sheets of vines and sumach bushes left to utter neglect. It was truly a beautiful spot : but after passing through it, we descended once more into the bed of the river, the water of which was as clear as crystal, and fuller of fish than any stream I ever saw before. The shallows were absolutely covered with great monsters basking, many of them at least thirty to thirty-six inches long, and they swarmed also in the streams. I was so excited at seeing them, that about ten o'clock, when we came to a halt for breakfast, I put up my rod to try if they would rise to the fly, the only bait at hand : but they would not look at it — at least the big ones would not stir, so that they certainly were not trout. I think they were of the same sort that I had seen also in shoals at Souje Bulâgh, and of which I caught a few very handsome fish, but full of bones of the species of which I am ignorant.

« A long winding ravine full of abandoned villages, which terminated in a hollow and stony ascent among the mountains, brought us to the geddok or pass of Kawâin, from whence we overlooked the plain, or rather broad valley of Suleimaniah ; for it is anything but a plain, being exceedingly furrowed by ravines and hillocks of earth. On the right hand we looked up a long hollow to a very wild mass of mountains which were in the Rewandooz Pashah's country. In front we overlooked a ridge of low hills, beyond which were Erbile and Kerkook, and many other celebrated places of ancient Assyria. Further to the left lay our route to Baghdad ; and under us, at the distance of about ten miles, lay the town of Suleimaniah, scarcely visible from its situation in a hollow. »

DESOLATION

« It was painful to see that all was silent and desolate, and more so to see that it was from no natural decay ; it was like gazing on the face of the dead, who have been wasted by

suffering and disease. Nothing was there of the mingled tenderness and melancholy with which we look on the placid features of those whose ends has been peaceful.

« Before decay's effacing fingers

Have swept the lines where beauty lingers »

« Here, there is no « rapture of repose » : — it is verily the « abomination of desolation » ; and though permitted by the Almighty for his own wise purpose, his agents have been chiefly the violence and rapacity of man. To all my inquiries as to how this universal depopulation arose, the same answer was always returned : — « The plague came three years ago and swept the country, and it was followed by the Persian army, which has consumed what the plague had left, and has ravaged every village on the road, so that none now remain ». — « Farewell, for the present : my next shall tell what remains to be said of Suleimaniah ».

JOURNEY FROM SULSIMANIAH TO KARADAH

November 3. — « Under the guidance of Ul-Khider Aga, we quitted Suleimaniah ; and, crossing the plain, ascended the western hills which inclose the long valley of its own name, and which including the plain of the Shererazoor, may be seventy to eighty miles in length. Across this rugged and difficult country we made our way to a village, Karadah, which was to be our lodging-place for the night ; and the dwellings of which were as regularly scattered among cliffs of sand-stone and gravel, and clefts and ridges as any human abodes I ever saw. This village had one other peculiarity — out of one hundred and fifty to two hundred houses of which it consists, no less than two-thirds are Jews. I find the Koords and Jews coalesce together wonderfully well. »

LACK OF SUPERSTITION AS COMPARED WITH OTHER NATIONS

I have already told you of my desire to rescue my friends the Koords from the imputation of deficiency in the imaginative faculties, and in those mental vagaries which give so much interest to the superstitions of other highlanders ; and I never omitted any fair opportunity of making myself acquainted with their notions regarding ghosts, elves and witches ; but I have in all cases been wofully disappointed, in fact, were I to give implicit credit to those whom I have questioned on

the subject, I should have to report the Koords as utterly void of anything in the shape of faerie, or even goblinerie — a sad blot in their national character ! »

FAREWELL CONVERSATION WITH ROSTUM BEG ON MY DEPARTURE FOR KUFRI

... « He joined with others in lamenting the evil days on which the present race of Koords had fallen. « The golden time of Koordistan are gone » he said ; « ride over the country, and what brilliance, what spirit will you find ? all good horsemen and stout soldiers are dead, or have fled the land, or have taken to the plough per force, to make as much money as will pay the Pashad and feed their wives and children ; and what is a soldier good for when he has touched a plough ? » I agree with him in thinking that the country had lost all appearances of prosperity, and the people all spirit and brilliancy ! »

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There are many other extracts in this wonderful book which are exceedingly interesting, but I we trust those which have been chosen will give an insight to the prevailing conditions in Koordistan over a hundred years ago.

KAMURAN AALI BEDIR-KHAN.

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Numéro 9 - Deuxième Année - Novembre 1949

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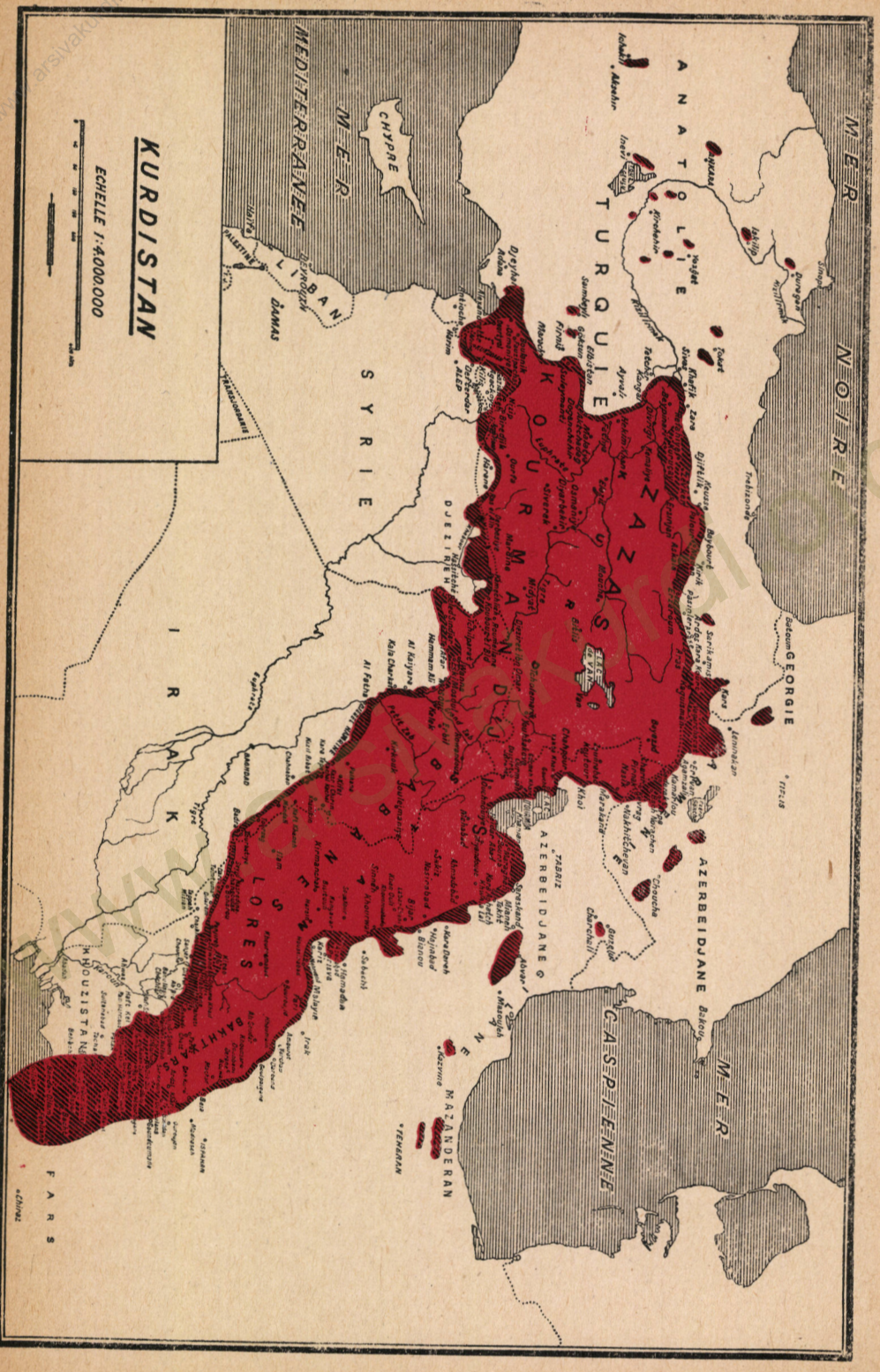
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KURDISTAN

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