

history and excavations, but they feel that all knowledge of the past is in no way comparable in importance with the building of railways and factories in the present. Given the present financial and cultural situation of modern Turkey the much needed improvement leading to general progress in the present has the call on history and archaeology. A similar attitude has been manifested by some well-informed leaders of American finance and industry but a higher level of culture when attained would in turn demand a better understanding of a past inextricably linked with the present, and a just appreciation of many otherwise puzzling factors in present day life.

#### THE HERITAGE OF NATURE

And now the writer is fain to make reference to an article developed in the most modern commerce and industry, one of the very latest sources of power—our reference is to oil. It is a thing of the immediate present. Never before was the earth's surface so traversed by pipe lines, or dotted by tanks, tanks in oil stations, tanks on wheels, tanks on boat bottoms. Hard-headed business and romantic adventures, and the struggle of great powers for pre-eminence and prestige in the world, all are floating today on a smooth, iridescent sea of oil. Books are written about it, such as the *World-Struggle for Oil* by Pierre Espagnol de la Tramerie. No book dealing with the modern world can pass it by entirely. Its mention here is particularly fitting, because for good or ill, it plays a large and important part in the heritage of Western Asia.

And whence does it come? A friend, one of the few people whom the writer has known who maintained that he liked the smell of oil, claims that to him it bears the scent of the bowels of good old Mother Earth, not unpleasant to us human animals who live upon her generous bosom. The modern producer, who sends out expeditions to discover its whereabouts, may personally know little of its origins, but if he wants his business and his industry to rest on a sound basis he must in some way acquire a working knowledge of the stupendous forces that created the earth as it is today, and of the tremendous drama which through untold eons these forces enacted in creating the things of the earth that are the necessities and luxuries of today. We need not all overburden our

memories with the details of the great prehuman drama of the earth or with the problems that perplex geologists whether oil is formed by the alteration of animal fats, or from metallic carbides, or from the remains of microscopic plant and animal life, deposited in an organic mud over a sea bottom, squeezed and broken by the weight and pressure of more mud and sands deposited on top of it, thrust up again by pressure of the earth's crust from below, to become the petroleum, shale and sandstone of today.

The presence of oil fields is today determining the fate of the Irak, Persia, the Caucasus, and portions of Arabia.

Having begun our survey of the treasures of Western Asia in its prehistoric depths with oil, it will be wise before ascending to the surface to spend at least a few moments in these underground regions. We have the false impression of limitless natural wealth in Western Asia, of profusion of gold and silver, or gems and precious stones. Many things have helped to build up this notion in our minds. Legends of the riches of ancient Babylon and Thebes have been confirmed in part or even surpassed by the finds of modern excavations; occasional displays of hoarded wealth in gold and jewels by Indian Maharajas—these have melted together in our minds with Arabian Night's tales of Oriental splendor at the courts of Caliphs and Sultans. Throughout the Middle Ages, Western Asia was the great passageway and storehouse through which our ancestors received the treasures of an unknown world; to their mind these came from the Orient, and the fact that they were ignorant that these things had come from farther East or from Africa is the source of this false impression. The fancied, huge natural wealth of Western Asia is largely fabled wealth. Our best informed handbooks indicate two things. As western Asiatic man rose from primitive beginnings he found on his own soil just sufficient precious or semi-precious metals and stones for the needs of his few, short periods of prosperity in a much smaller and less populous world than the present. The second fact that stands out is this, that at present a number of old mines in the center of western Asiatic lands are exhausted to a degree that makes it wholly unprofitable to work them even with present-day methods and machinery. For the rest we know that a moderate amount of less precious metals, minerals and stones are scattered throughout almost the entire extent of the territory in question. Modern ad-

venturers have not found much to attract them. There is nothing to indicate any hitherto unsuspected deposit that might create a Klondike gold rush or Rhodesian find of diamonds. As compared with lower Africa and the Americas, the wealth of Western Asia in ores and jewels is very modest indeed. What there is of it, however, awaits the acquisition of modern knowledge and capital for its development, also commerce and means of transportation to put it into useful circulation. Some of the most distinctive products of this region, meerschaum, pandermite and emery may yet serve to reawaken native inventiveness and enterprise which will find new forms and new uses for them.

But not merely in underground treasures did the giant forces of Nature in prehistoric times leave its heritage to Western Asia. Easier to see and, therefore, easier to overlook, but fully as important in determining its destinies are the factors which affected the character of the land. The stresses of great masses which press against each other and leave in their wake shuddering faults and fissures, the action of sea and river and rain—these have altered the conformation of the land. The disturbing forces which modified her surface have not yet come to rest; frequent severe, and widespread are the tremors and earthquakes under the feet of Western Asiatic man. But, despite their terrifying nature, the surface changes they have wrought have been of purely local detail.

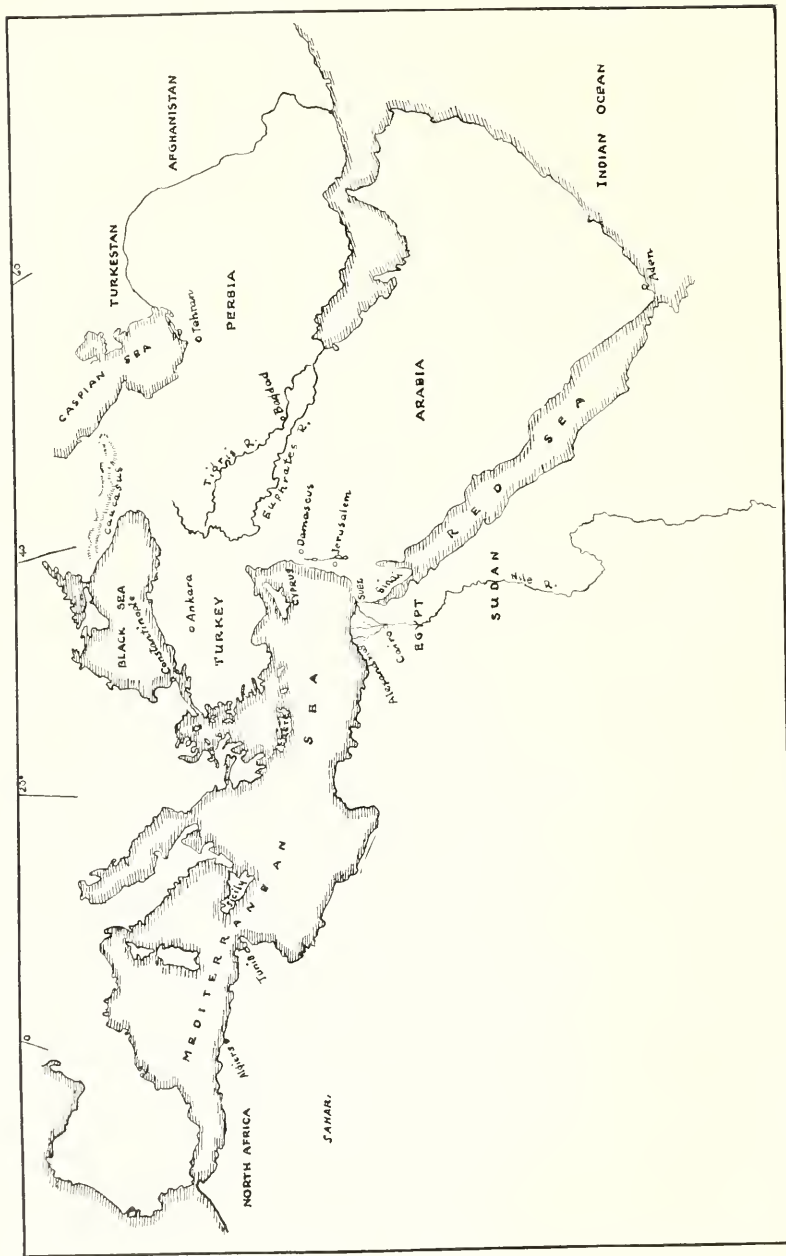
What we mean by the final conformation of surface, which Nature's upheavals left as a heritage, is the general configuration or the surface area in mountain or valley, in plain or plateau, which has remained practically unchanged within historic times. If we would understand man's fate upon it in the past, his destiny and outlook, we must look at the problem with the eyes of a geologist or geographer. It is unnecessary to follow all the contours of Western Asia in detail. Even the Heidelberg hand book of regional geology has not touched Persia and Afghanistan, and complains of lack of reliable information in many regions of our section. On the writer's desk now lies a request from the Leningrad Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, for literature on the natural history, and maps of Arabia. A Russian commission is compiling a soil map of Asia, "stressing landscape form, geological structure and vegetation." Russia is seriously interested in the soil of Western Asia where she knows there is a new nation-

alism and independence developing. She is at the same time developing new needs and demands. How many of them could be supplied from her neighbor, just across the way? The needs of modern Asia might in turn, be supplied by Russia. Without an insight into the nature of the soil neither we nor Russia can hope to understand the civilization produced by man on that soil, either in the past or in the present.

In the meantime we cannot wait for the completion of the promising Russian undertaking, nor for a possible inauguration of a similar task of our own. It may, however, stimulate and give direction to the initiation, or more comprehensive organization of such a work on our part, if with the imperfect means at hand, we try to give a suggestive, preliminary bird's-eye view. The small-scale outline maps presented with this number will serve only to fix in mind the general position of the sections as we speak of them. The impression left by such an outline tracing of Western Asia and its appendages must inevitably be that of a collection of shapeless, ragged, and heterogeneous fragments of land, loosely strung together over a considerable area of the earth's surface. What bond ties Morocco in the far West of Northern Africa to Afghanistan in the inmost heart of Asia, unless it be the accidental nexus of a passing world-empire flung together in haphazard fashion by war and conquest? What common interests have Meshhed and Mecca, and why should they for many centuries have had a fate not dissimilar from one another? The marginal outline reveals no reason. And yet there is a reason, a good geographic reason, written in the very surface of the earth if we but take a little trouble to read it.

In the first place this far-stretched, loose-jointed territory falls pretty clearly into two major sections.

The clearest picture probably is gained by starting at the very borderline of the Far East. There the Himalayas fling the Karakorums and the Pamir northward like a great natural wall to separate the compact bulk of China from the far-flung gangling West. Starting westward with a slight northwest jog, a chain of mountains run practically unbroken to the Bosphorus. On a fairly good map we ought to find the Hindukush joined by the Paropamisus to the Elburz range which runs without any real break, in part doubled by the Caucasus a few miles northward, over Ararat into the Pontic mountain wall against the Black Sea. To the south-



OUTLINE MAP OF WESTERN ASIA

southeast, then westward through Baluchistan and Southern Persia, following the shoreline of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf runs a similar range, clearly marked, though it remained throughout the centuries without a definite name. With a somewhat sharper break northwestward near the mouth of the Tigris, it joins what the ancients named the Zagros Mountains. Following the boundary between Irak and Persia northward, it turns with the Kurdish mountains west once more until it joins the Taurus with which it runs along the southern coast of Asia Minor to the Aegean. A series of mountains and valleys, like tremendous interlaced fingers runs up the full length of Anatolia's Aegean coast and at their western end joins the huge mountain arms we have just followed. Thus a great stretch of inland territory running from Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, far to the East, beyond Ankara, the capital of New Turkey, to the meridian of Istanbul in the west of Asia Minor, is enclosed by an astonishing rocky mountain frame.

For a correct understanding of what lies within this formidable frame, a brief glance at its outer margin is advisable. Eastward beyond the narrow neck of the Pamir and the Karakorums lies the Tarim basin, a westward extension of the Gobi desert. Northward where the Hindukush and Paropamisus lead to the Elburz and the Caspian Sea two things are important to observe. One is that passes and slightly lower levels on the Northern Persian frontier make the crossing of this boundary easier and less formidable. The other, as Lieutenant-General Strachey points out, is that "the area between the northern border of the Persian highlands and the Caspian and Aral Seas is a nearly-desert, low-lying plain, extending to the foot of the northwestern extremity of the great Tibeto-Himalayan mountains, and prolonged eastward up the valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes, and northward across the country of the Kirghiz and the Kassaks. In this tract the rainfall is nowhere sufficient for the purposes of agriculture, which is only possible by help of irrigation."

Immediately north of the Elburz lies the Caspian. It is noteworthy with what unanimity travelers describe the northern slope of this range and the narrow fringe of lowland between it and the sea, as blessed with sufficient rainfall and pleasant streams, green and lush with vegetation. With a slight variation, between

the Caucasus and what is sometimes called the Little Caucasus—what we have called the Ararat range,—not many miles to the south, is a narrow strip of land, “where a great amount of rain is combined with a warm temperature,—characterized by a luxuriance of vegetation to which there is no parallel in Europe. . . . Magnificent forests clothe the mountain sides and extend down to the sea, while the rich valley equals any part of Italy in fertility, and is capable of producing all kinds of crops that flourish in the Italian plains.” But, just north of this little garden of Eden, just across the Caucasus, lie the endless, monotonous, Scythian steppes and plains of European Russia. Again the Pontic mountain fringe that forms the north frontier of Turkey against the Black Sea shows all along the line a sharp descent to sea level with but a narrow fringe of lowland between it and sea. This northerly slope is not, of course, as warm as the Inter-Caucasian strip, nor quite so luxuriant as northern Persia, but it, too, has more rain than it needs, large strips are covered with dank, dense forests, and its vernal and summer color is green.

Along the south side of the great framed plateau, the mountain chain accompanies, first on a southwestward line, the rich Indus valley. Thence westward to the Straits of Hormuz and beyond it follows the coast of the Indian Ocean or Arabian Sea, and the northeastern coast of the Persian Gulf much of which has been known since dim antiquity as a dangerous and inhospitable shore. With monotonous regularity the line of hills parallel to the coast falls away over a narrow coastal strip into the sea. Except, perhaps, for the curious break at the Straits of Hormuz there are few or no deep-sea harbors, although within the Persian Gulf the island fringe does something toward alleviating this scarcity. Only as we approach the lowlands of the Tigris delta is the rainfall slightly better than the average for this region; for the rest the winds are wrong and the rains so scanty that the coastal flora is Saharan. As the Zagros range runs northwestward from the head of the Persian Gulf the mountainous border then is carried westward, by the Kurdish ranges which have, of course, immediately west or south of them the fertile, cultivated Tigris-Euphrates lowlands. These are but a narrow strip, a fertile crescent, and beyond them lies stark desert. As the Taurus swings free along the sea again, we have once more the steep descent and narrow coastal

strip, but this time on the Mediterranean, warm, smiling, and in its season well watered. Running up the Aegean coast, the land of the giant, interlaced fingers, there is a fairly wide band of pleasant land, varied with hills and dales and flowing streams, with fine fruits and wealth in the vegetation to which it is adapted.

This survey of the outer surface of our great mountain frame has been given at some length and with some emphasis on the similarity that prevails along the whole extended line. This has been emphasized because of its importance for the extended strip of inland highlands it encloses. In every case its effect upon them is the same; it acts everywhere as a block and barrier against the passage of moisture-laden atmosphere.

It is not, then, surprising that the inner surface of the frame displays in many respects, a great sameness. It is a place that has great beauty for the human eye; but for the human desire for a good life it has little attractiveness. If travelers have oft expressed their pleasure and surprise at the fertility of the coastal strip on which they landed, the same travelers have with similar unanimity registered their impression of the inlands' barren monotony. "This great plateau," says Lieutenant-General R. Strachey, "extending from the Mediterranean to the Indus, has a length of about 2,500 miles from east to west, and a breadth of upwards of 600 miles on the west, and nowhere of less than 250 miles. It lies generally at altitudes between 2,000 feet and 8,000 feet above the sea level. Viewed as a whole, the eastern half of this region, comprising Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, is poor and unproductive. The climate is very severe in the winter, and extremely hot in summer. The rainfall is very scanty, and running waters are hardly known, excepting among the mountains which form the scarps of the elevated country. The western part of the area falls within the Turkish empire. Its climate is less hot and arid, its natural productiveness much greater." But even this estimate of Turkey's portion of the great highland steppe is oversanguine, unless the Lieutenant-General means the extreme western end, which is not of the plateau, but the finest sector of its bounding frame. In inner Asia Minor there are areas, indeed, where, with the heavy snowfall of winter, grain-farming is possible; but through the summer it is essentially dry-farming. The landscape is dotted sparsely with farming villages. But as one



journeys through it, one rises to many a highland, where everything in sight is bleak, rocky, and unsown. The prevailing summer color is gray. Yet the winds in summer are not always hot, for the writer has lived there through more than one week of cold wind from the Black Sea region, which came to him over the mountain wall just as *dry* and dusty as any sirocco of the south. Improvement in this black soil's fertility may be possible with increase in population and increase in knowledge among the population; but there are no Dakotas there. Farming areas and garden-spots are not the rule; they are of the nature of oases in the general bleakness just as farther east in the fenced off highland region.

Even for Persia Strachey's mild description needs to be supplemented from Guy Le Strange's *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, who describes a tremendous amount of Persia's surface area, when he says: "The great desert region of Persia stretches right across the high plateau of Iran going from northwest to southeast, and dividing the fertile provinces of the land into two groups; for the desert is continuous from the southern base of the Elburz mountains, that to the north overlook the Caspian, to the arid ranges of Makran, which border the Persian Gulf. Thus it measures nearly 800 miles in length, but the breadth varies considerably; for in shape this immense area of drought is somewhat that of an hourglass with a narrow neck, measuring only some 100 miles across, dividing Kerman from Seistan, while both north and south of this the breadth expands and in places reaches to over 200 miles. At the present day the desert, as a whole, is known as the Lüt or Dasht-i-Lüt; the saline swamps and the dry salt area being more particularly known as the Dasht-i-Kavir, the name Kavir being also occasionally applied to the desert as a whole." Both names are significant. Kavir means the waterless and salty. Lüt means Abraham's cousin, Lot, with a distinct reference to Sodom and Gomorrah and to the Dead Sea and its surroundings. In short, aside from certain coastal strips and bands, this entire upper half of Western Asia is what our western mind would think of as something very near a desert, "sagebrush land," or, at best, a poor kind of pastureland.

Now what about the lower half, the great block that stretches from the Irak just below the Zagros on the East, to Morocco, the

Atlas mountains and the Atlantic Ocean on the west? On the outline map North Africa with Egypt appears as a solid block. In popular conception derived from seeing continents and countries on separate maps, Arabia, Syria, Palestine, and the Irak seem to have little to do with the African mainland and to be rather distinct from each other. And, of course, these and other portions of the lower half of the solid Moslem world exhibit aspects in which they differ and are distinct from each other. But viewed as a whole, even the Red Sea is merely an accidental crack, and the whole block constitutes the great Sahara table. Sahara means deserts, a plain of deserts strung one upon another: we would say a great desert plain. That is the outstanding character of its great inland section from near the Atlantic coast on the West to the neighborhood of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean on the east. Even though it be not as neatly marked off by a mountain frame as the upper part, it, too, is a solid, homogeneous whole. It is not farming country, to our fancy, nor garden-land, but is, in the main, for a brief season in the year, poor pastureland with an oasis here and there.

Now follow around the margin of this huge, desolate tableland. Note the forbidding, inhospitable coastline, with which the southeastern edge of Arabia faces the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean, just as did Baluchistan and the Makran coast of Southern Persia. Up the southwest shore of the Gulf of Oman rises a high, hot, exotic, humid block, said to contain the hottest spot on earth; rich in its own right, its high mountain crest hoards away its wealth of moisture from the thirsting hinterland, too torrid by many degrees to be an Eden like the southern slopes of the Caucasus. Through the Straits of Ormuz and up the west coast of the Persian Gulf a low, relatively moist shoreline with intermittent strips of palm-studded, fertile soil varies in length and depth. At the head of the Persian Gulf we start with the Tigris-Euphrates section of the fertile crescent and follow its broad sweep north and westward, between the Syrian desert and the northern mountain-fringe. Presently, we are halted by the great spur of the Amanus range, flung outward from the east-west Taurus band; it deflects the Euphrates north and east again, but it turns our fertile border south by southwest to follow the slant of the Syrian coast through the Lebanons and Palestine. Leaping over a desert corner of the Sinaitic triangle

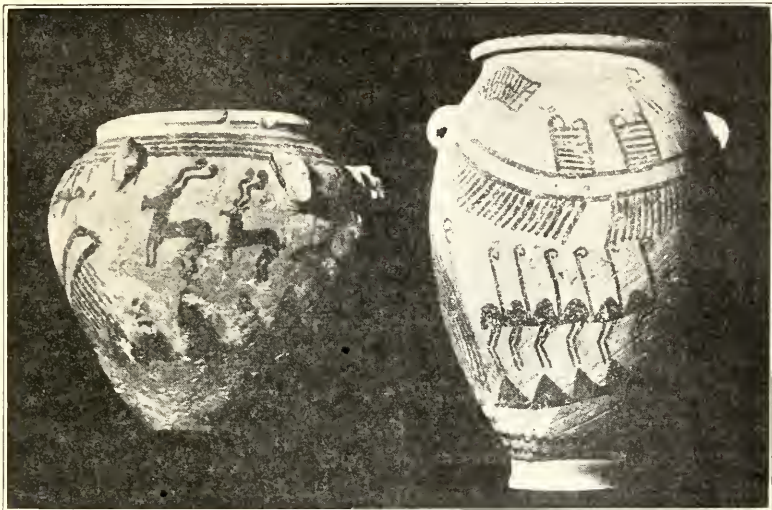
the fertile coast reappears again with full vigor through the delta of the Nile. Through low Libya, without a Nile of its own, it dwindles down in varying degrees to less significance. Presently it ends in the broad and heavy cap of French North Africa. From here we need not follow it in detail down the Atlantic Coast and along the southern border of the Sahara. This is the land of the Sudan, of the Blacks, until quite recently an essentially unknown continent, whence since time immemorial trickles of Negro and and Negroid men and their wares, exotic skins and ivory and gold, had a way of seeping northward by various routes. Viewed in the whole of this immense desolation, the thin band of the Nile's fertility, meandering northward to the sea, is but a curious incident. Through Abyssynia at the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb we turn northward along the east coast of the narrow Red Sea whose shores exhibit increasing desert quality as we proceed, until we reach the vicinity of Suez. Down the Arabic west coast a series of oases follows the coastline until below Mecca and thence as far as Aden they melt together into that band of moderately fertile tropical highland which some of us are wont to call *Arabia Felix*, Arabia the Fortunate.

Having thus swept over and around the two great divisions of the Western Orient one major characteristic common to the larger area of the surface soil of both stands out in bold relief. This land is not the smiling land we see for the most part when we wing our way from Boston to Seattle or from Savannah to San Francisco. This land surface on which men of the new Near East are living and struggling today is largely desert or near-desert steppe. And it has been thus since the dawn of history. It is important that we see this and see it clearly, if we would understand and appreciate fully, humanly, and sympathetically the entire sweep of the Near Orient's history leading to the state and situation in which it finds itself today.

Dazzled by the glories of ancient Egypt and Assyria, as our brilliant historians unfold them to us, we may be prone to overlook this vital fact, to fancy as the cradle of the civilization which we of the West call our own, an undisturbed Eden in a Golden Age. It was not so. In dimmest prehistoric times, as man was just taking his first faltering steps from animal to human stature, it may, indeed, be, that he found copious rain where now is drouth, broad

lakes where now are trickling rivulets, salt seas, or marshes, green land where now is desert. But when man in Egypt and in Babylonia took his first assured steps on the road to our great modern civilization his land was essentially the same as it is now.

For proof of this we may point with confidence to the conventionalized ornamentation of some very early, highly artistic pottery found in curiously similar forms and patterns in predynastic Egypt and in Susa near the mouth of the Tigris. We show here two examples of the Egyptian ware, displayed in the museum of



TWO EXAMPLES OF EGYPTIAN POTTERY

the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Other examples may be found in Professor James H. Breasted's *History of Egypt* or in books there referred to. For the early Susa ware, both of a highly artistic, conventionalized, and of a cruder, more naturalistic type, we may refer to the excellent handbook by Rene Grousset "The Civilizations of the East," Volume I, *The Near and Middle East* where, on the first fifteen pages of the English translation, excellent examples of the Susa ware with other illustrations from predynastic Egypt are shown. We let their artistic quality and value speak for themselves. Neither need we debate whether the curious, elongated, non-animal shapes on the Egyptian vases be stockades with towers, or, as my colleague Wm. F. Edgerton

contends, elaborate Nile boats. These vases and their makers are of the Nile valley. In the Nile valley they were creating art. That these men knew the Nile, its boats and its flora and fauna scarcely needs proof. But what we are interested in, is the other facet of their life. These men with keen endeavor, diligently and laboriously, creating for themselves a new settled, civilized life in the narrow confines of the Nile valley, knew the *desert*, knew it intimately, felt it close to themselves, pressing from both sides on their daily life. Look at the animals presented and conventionalized in profusion, the ostrich, and the gazelle or antelope, typical fauna of the desert steppe, walking on the regularly recurring sand waves. In Susa we find, indeed, the waterfowl, alone or in the well-known pattern of his flight in ordered flock. What seem to be dogs are there. They may be tamed dogs; but they may be jackals or hyenas. If they are wild dogs, the wild dog is essentially a creature of the desert steppe. And the unfailing antelope, the gazelle, perhaps the ibex are there. And marching round the rim in stately procession are long-legged, long-necked birds, probably ostriches as they plainly are in the Egyptian ware. Now this is highly significant evidence. The spots where the first major advance toward our civilization and its fine arts was made, were little areas of good soil with plenty of water in widely separated parts of the Near East. But even as these first sure steps in human culture were being taken their area was severely restricted, surrounded and hemmed in on all sides by land of quite another character, by land against which settled life can force out its boundaries only a very little way, against the encroachment of which upon the settled area of agriculture and its attendant arts, life within that restricted area must be always on its guard, must wage a constant, unrelenting warfare. In short, there, at the dawn of human civilization the prevailing character of Western Asia outside these little hearths, between them, all around them was then as now desert or semi-desert steppe. It was the land of the ostrich and the jackal, of the gazelle and the wild goat.

Curiously from these early animal figures one animal is missing, which every one who ever saw the Near East will surely expect to find. Its uncouth outline was perhaps not easy to fit on these settled culture forms, as it does not fit in the river bottom, in Alpine mountain lands, nor on a city's streets. But what desert trail

or landscape is complete without a camel? Exactly whence the camel comes, when its became domesticated in Arabia, when and how its use as a domesticated animal spread over what now is Arab territory and beyond, the writer cannot say in detail. It is curious how little attention even our very great Western historians have devoted to this important factor in the history of all of Western Asia. Perhaps restriction of their view to limited areas, to the areas belonging to the fertile spots and strips, and, further, their point of view, which emphasized only those products of the East as significant and important, which played a role in Europe's rise in the scale of human civilization—these may in part explain the oversight. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that here a careful comprehensive study is still wanting. The camel and its role in the rise and fall of Western Asia's empires deserves a keen, extended and penetrating piece of research work, a history of its own. For it is typical of the Near East, it belongs intimately and immediately with the surface heritage which nature left to Western Asiatic man. When this is said, we of the West will likely think of him as the faithful beast of burden. Pictures of camels turning waterwheels for irrigation, of camel and ox or ass plowing together, of caravans, heavy-laden, plodding their way from town to distant town or coming to rest in the wide courts of an Eastern city's caravanseries will rise before our eyes. And with these pictures romance creeps into our minds. There is a large amount of error in this pretty picture; it is a dream of distant things by a western fireside, not stark reality. In reality the camel is not a faithful beast of burden; he is a stubborn, ill-tamed beast, perhaps not fully domesticable at all. His mind is set against his master, and his master needs ever to be on his guard; to keep him useful and subservient takes clever, patient management and constant alertness against escape from bondage or even insidious attack. When he is thrust into the landscape of the sown land, he means an intrusion of the desert there. He may be cheap and easy to keep in the desert steepe or where this is in easy reach, but not so on intensely cultivated land. He may fit moderately well the constant plodding of the turning water-wheel; this itself means that desert drouth is not far distant. But he is ill adapted to draw the plow or threshing-sled. Much more at home are camels in the long lines of caravans, threading desert trails; their rest in city cara-

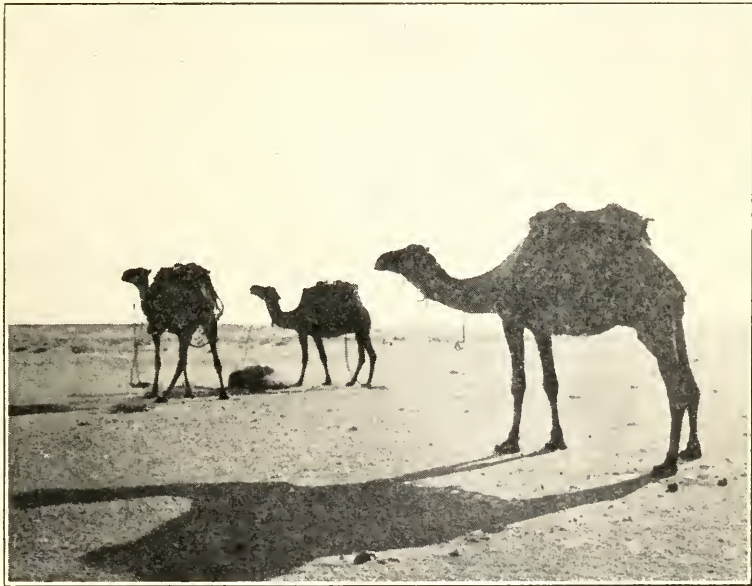
vanseries is ever but a passing incident. These serve indeed, the interest of merchants and craftsmen, artists and scholars, doctors and rulers of Oriental towns and cities; they enable the planter to dispose of and distribute profitably his products, his raisins and his olives, his wine and oil, his barley and his wheat. But in the very act of doing so they mark once more the nearness of the Orient dweller on the sown to the desolation of his deserts, the dependence of the Eastern city and its gardens and its fields on the



A CAMEL CARAVAN CROSSING THE DESERT

vast steppe that surrounds them. Perhaps, now, seeing the camel as the symbol of the Hither East, seeing him in his natural habitat, seeing once more marked out in him the prevalence of the desert steppe against a thin coastal margin and a sparse sprinkling of thin inland strips or isolated spots of fertile, often laboriously watered land, where there are towns and cities, we begin to sense something of the terrifying strength and pressure of the howling wilderness, something of the delicate balance of dominance between this thin line of settled culture and the tremendous expanse of waving sagebrush and rolling tumbleweed, that threatens always to engulf it.

With the camel—and this is a most important point—with the camel goes a man. Even though he bear the merchant's and the farmer's wares on fairly definite trails between well-known points, yet he does not, like Kipling's cat, walk by himself. He needs a man to guide and pilot him, to handle and keep safely both him and his load. And even though the camel may belong to the merchant or the farmer in herds of thousands, it is not the merchant nor the craftsman nor the farmer who guides him on his devious paths, who pastures him in desert lands as he rests from his strenuous toil, who rounds him up and brings him for new toil, when his hump is fat and his spirit frisky once again. Where camels are



THE SKYLINE IN THE DESERT

concerned the city man is but a helpless novice, the farmer a clumsy yokel. With the camel caravan, the traders and the merchant, all men from parts of settled culture, travel only as passengers, at most as supercargoes; with the camel belongs a very special, fixed and well-marked type of man. The camel is a desert beast, *the* desert beast, and his master is the desert man. That is exactly and literally what the Arabs' well-known, mellifluous name for him means—the bedouin. Bedou in Arab speech is both the



desert and the desert nomad; bedouin is simply his plural, and there are and always have been plenty of him on the steppes of Western Asia. This is the camel's man, and the camel is his. Not a beast of burden merely, not a dragger of the plow nor a drawer of water, is the camel to him. Far from it! These are not his concern, not his life. Only as he may desire something of the city's luxury or need something of the farmer's product in his barrenness, does he deign to hire himself and harness his beast for a space to such strange toiling—at a price. To him the camel is far more; to him the camel is life itself, scanty life, hard life, desert life, life always on the verge of penury, but that is his life. He prides himself on it. Half in the hardy cynicism of near-despair so characteristic of him, half in the ironic pride which is the reverse side of his nature, he describes himself, he sings of himself in his facile moods of song as the parasite of the camel. It is his daily bread; he drinks its milk or eats it in prepared forms. Sometimes he eats its meat. Its dung serves him for fuel. Its hair is the wool of his clothing, the fibre of his ropes, the fabric of his dwelling. Its hide furnishes him sandals for his walking on rough stone or burning sand, thongs for their tying, straps for his belt and for the wrapping of his scant belongings, buckets for his milk and water and containers for his solid food. Its bones make handles for his swords and daggers, amulets and ornaments for himself, his wife and children, and for the trappings of his living beasts. As the scant rainfall of his region comes or passes, he moves his camels to new pastures and they bear his belongings with him. When the tricky rainy season fails him, he must seize what he can to keep alive, and his camel bears him on his razzia. If his raid fails, or if the neighbor settled or roving, whom he has marked for prey, proves too strong and watchful, he still may barter with his camels' hides, their wool made into cloth or clothing, the curious product he calls butter, or, if he have no store at all of these, then he must toil for the farmer or travel for the merchant. This is the camel-nomad, the bedou of the great Saharan table. He loves to describe himself, his life and the life about him, in verse a bit uncouth and monotonous, but subtle and intricate like his desert haunts. In such a poem even a sensitive modern American reader may walk sympathetically with him. We offer one that has been described as "the pride of Arabia and the despair of translators."

It touches the very acme of the bedouin sense of honor. So fine and severe are the singer's demands for what he considers justice and honor, in so many blood-feuds is he involved, that he cannot abide even his own tribal group. He leaves them and so outlaws himself to walk alone the perilous paths of punitive vengeance. To this *beau idéal* of the bedouin the ode gives marvellous expression. It is, naturally, highly subjective and boastful, but the boasting is of Homeric quality, and through it, flashes a series of pictures of much beauty and grandeur, which all together make a fine dramatic whole. We see him leave his tribe to enter on his lonely outlaw life. We see him at dawn living with the desert beasts, and like them seeking his scanty food and drink. We feel him, in the stark, cold solitude of the desert night. We see him at high noon, engulfed in the terrific light and heat of the desert, when the sun is in the zenith. And we leave him in the cool, soft glow of the desert dusk.

The scene opens with the breakup of his tribesmen's camp for a move to new pastures. The camels are ready, loaded or mounted, and as they are made to rise, they get up, not like horses, forefeet first, but like cattle. The last movement before the actual start is the upheave of the camels' breasts. It is at this moment that he gives fair warning to his kinsmen, as he addresses them.

#### THE ARAB OUTLAW'S TRIUMPHAL ODE.

Raise up, oh my mother's sons, the breasts of your riding beasts

And I to a folk who are your betters will turn away.

To me shall familiars be the jackal, untiring, fleet;

The lithe, smooth-skinned leopard; and the hyena, bristly-  
maned.

A clan, these, who publish not a secret confided them;

They leave not unaided one whose rash act endangers them.

Forbidding, defiant, stands for himself each one of them.

Yet more dauntless still do I the foe's foremost ranks assault.

'Tis only when hands are stretched to foodward, then am I not

The swiftest, though greedy yokels just then more swiftly run.

To me shall replace the loss of him who requiteth not

A kindness, and him who makes, when near me, diversion  
dour,

Three friends who are tried and true: a heart that with courage  
flames;

A bright sword, whose edge is keen; a long bow of yellow  
 sheen,  
 Whose sound back is straight of grain and twangs clear. A  
 shoulder-strap  
 And tassels of plaited thongs complete its adornment fair.  
 When gliding the arrow's shaft slips from it, it echoes loud  
 The groan of the mother whom its dart's flash makes desolate.

For I'm not a thirsting summer shepherd, whose camels graze  
 The night long; yet ill fed are their young all, though free to  
 drink.

No knave I of fetid breath and red face, who idly squats  
 And tells in his spouse's ear long tales of what he will do;  
 No coward, who ducks his head, in whose heart the livelong day  
 Doth flutter a frightened lark, now rising, now falling low;

No dandy, who slinks about a-flirting; each morning he  
 And evening doth ply afresh the ointment—and powder box;  
 No tick I, whose wickedness is hid under virtue's cloak;  
 He stammers, but frighten him, defenseless and terrified.<sup>1</sup>

Nor am I confused with fright in darkness, when spreads before  
 The troubled, wild-running camel, fearsome, unknown, the  
 waste,  
 When hard, flinty pebbles meet the hoofs of my riding beast  
 And fly out from under it, a sharp shower, sparkling, bright.

I bide long in hunger's grip,—so long, that I deaden it;  
 With firm hand I beat away remembrance,—then I forget.  
 And fain would I force dry dust unmoistened down my throat,  
 Lest one who doth boast his wealth might think I were bound  
 to him.<sup>2</sup>

Though had honor not required stern vengeance, thou shouldst  
 not find  
 A fairer carousing feast than that which my board should bear.  
 But not doth for long abide, embittered, my soul in me,  
 Where insult is offered it; the outlaw's realm straight I seek,  
 And fast do I draw my belt upon my hungry bowels, as  
 A rope-weaver's strands are wound and twisted with might  
 and main.

<sup>1</sup>The tick, at any rate the common variety of woodtick, is probably well enough known to most American readers. The Arab bedouin is intimately acquainted with many varieties.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 14: 22, 23: "And Abram said to the king of Sodom....I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor ought that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich."

At dawn I go forth for meager fare, as the jackal goes,  
 The lean-flanked, with blue-gray fur, whom desert to desert  
 leads.

He goes forth ahungered, sniffs the wind, as he trips along,  
 And darts down the wooded ends of deep vales and loping runs.  
 And when food denies its debt, where he thought it due to him,  
 He calls, and there answer him companions, as lean as he,  
 Their bodies as crescents spare, of gray face; they flit about  
 Like arrows the gaming player tosses from hand to hand.<sup>3</sup>

Or like bees, when they take flight, as their nest has been stirred up  
 By rods, which the honey-hunter, climbing, has thrust therein;  
 Their great mouths agaping stand wide open, as if their jaws

Were clefts in a billet hewn, forbidding, of threatening mien.  
 Then he howls, and they howl in the great waste, as though they were  
 On high hills a wailing choir, lamenting their children's loss.<sup>4</sup>  
 His silence they copy, and his patience they imitate:

A starved wretch, he comforts them, and they him, as poor  
 as he.

Complains he, they too complain; refrains he, then they refrain.  
 And sooth, when complaint helps not, to bear is the fairest  
 thing.

He turns home, and they turn with him, racing,—each one of them  
 Concerned most, how he may put a fair face on hidden want.

What I leave the sand-grouse drink, the ash-gray, though ere the  
 dawn

They fly forth to seek the well, their curved breasts astir with  
 sound.

My fixed eye and theirs is set on one goal; we're off,—they lag  
 Behind me; I run at ease, my loins girt, their leading bird.  
 And only when I am gone, they fall tumbling on the pools,

Caressing the cool delight with crops and with feathered  
 throats.

Their tumult and din resounds on all sides, as if they were  
 The gatherings of caravans from far tribes here come to rest.  
 They meet here from everywhere; to itself there gathers them,

As it draws the straying groups of camels, the watering place.  
 With swift gulps they slake their thirst and haste on, as if they  
 were

At gray dawn Uḥādha's riders speeding their long way home.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Compare Ezechiel 21: 21: "The king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of two ways, to use divination: he shook the arrows to and fro."

<sup>4</sup>Micah 1:8: "I will make a wailing like the jackals."

<sup>5</sup>If the reader thinks Uḥādha simply as a far-off village, the simile will be clear enough to him.

I learn well, how I may use the hard earth for my lone spread,  
 My curved back in outline sketched by sharp-edged spinal  
 joints;

As pillow an elbow serves, a spare one, whose socket joints  
 Are like dice, that rigid stand, as cast by the player's hand.

And if now the goddess of the dust-cloud of battle grieves  
 At my lack, how oft content was she once with Shanfarā!<sup>6</sup>  
 Alas, now pursued is he by misdeeds that cast the lot

O'er his flesh, which one of them shall first seize his sacrifice;  
 They slumber,—while he sleeps fast,—with eyes open and alert,  
 And soon they again creep forth to his fate to pounce on him.

His friends are right many cares; they cease not to visit him  
 Right ofttimes, like four-day fever, only they burthen more;  
 When they come to drink with me, I breast them and drive them  
 off,

But like stubborn camels they return from all sides on me.

Yet, if, maid, thou see'st my head like ostrich's bare and singed,  
 As barefoot on thin, worn soles I trudge o'er the burning sands,  
 Know thou, I of fortitude am master; its coat of mail  
 A heart decks, the wild dog's peer; my shoes are a stern  
 resolve.

At times I am rich and then again poor, for only he  
 Can get and retain much gold, who shrewdly makes that life's  
 goal.

No weak bitterness by want is uncovered in my soul,  
 Nor e'er under wealth's sway doth it flaunt its insolence.  
 No passion's primeval force doth vanquish my self control;  
 No mean questions do I ask on slanderously devious trails.

In dire, death-cold nights, when bow and arrows the bowman risks,  
 His craft's precious instruments, for fire spark to warm him-  
 self,<sup>7</sup>

Then plunge I into the dark and drizzle; my fellows are  
 Hot hunger and ague's shudder, fear's ghost and terror's bane.  
 Then widow I women and make orphans their children's brood,—  
 And turn back, as I have come, while dark still the night hangs  
 o'er.

When dawn comes, a grave assembly sit at Ghumaisa's well.  
 In two parts, one questioned and the other the questioners,

<sup>6</sup>There is a note of what we moderns would call homesickness in this verse. The Arab bedouin felt really at home only in the midst of his tribe and kindred, most of all at home, when on a raid or in battle. Now, as an outcast, fighting and raiding alone or with men not his kin, he is missed by the goddess of battle in the ranks of his kinsfolk.

<sup>7</sup>Not by breaking them up for firewood; but by using them drill fashion to secure fire by friction and thereby spoiling their fine temper.

They say: Lo, our dogs did bay and growl in this dismal night,  
 And we said, a jackal prowling or an hyena's whelp.  
 It was but a short, faint bark, then straight did they nod again,  
 And we said, Some sand-grouse startled, or saker-falcon  
 roused.  
 But sooth, if a demon 'twas, then dire was his darkling deed:  
 And if 'twas a man,—but nay, a man does no deed like this!

And oft, when the dog-star's heat did fair melt the shimmering day,  
 In whose swelt'ring oven vipers rustling did writhe in sleep,  
 I set unto it my face, and no hood to cover it  
 Nor veil, save a striped mantle,—and that was worn to shreds,—  
 And long, flowing hair, whose tangled locks, when the desert wind<sup>8</sup>  
 Doth blow through them, flutter from the shoulders, for long  
 uncombed,  
 Remote from the touch of oil, no friend to the cleansing hand  
 A thick, matted mane, whose crust a full year had gone  
 unwashed.  
 And then, lo, I cross a highland, bleak as a buckler's back,  
 So wide-stretched, that human feet had ne'er toiled its weary  
 length:  
 In one view I sweep its two horizons, as I attain  
 A crag's boldest summit, squatted resting, or standing straight.  
 About me the dun tahr goats go munching, their shaggy manes  
 Like long, flowing robes of nuns, who pass gliding slowly,—  
 and  
 As dusk falls, they stand about me staring, as though I were  
 A white-spotted, long-horned ibex seeking his mountain home.

The poet, who thus describes himself is in his own land a man of parts, proud and self-contained, a hero with a code of honor and a culture, oftentimes, of no mean order. But he is a desert man, a nomad, a rover and a drifter, just as hard to pin down and to confine as the driving sand he and his camel move on. Constant is the impact of the three together on the border of the sown, imperceptibly encroaching, or, on occasion, with the massive fury of the sand-storm. The shock and friction of his pressure is borne most constantly, and his hand is felt most heavily by the border-dweller. This dweller on the border between the desert and the sown is the Nabal of David and Abigail (1. Samuel, chapter 25,) the Abel of

<sup>8</sup>This is characteristic of the Semitic devotee, the man who has taken a vow, the vow of pilgrimage to Mecca. Compare Samson's hair in the Old Testament and St. Paul and his companions, Acts 18: 18; 21: 24. Particularly in case of a vow of vengeance the devotee abstained from most of the pleasures and amenities of life, until it was fulfilled.



A NOMAD SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK

the Cain and Abel story (Genesis, chapter 4). He is a herder of small cattle, sheep and goats. To this man's feebler courage the desert bedou bears the mark of Cain on his brow. The bedou's greatest crime in the sight of the bedou's god is that he settles down to plow and reap for himself. Forever he envies and foully slays for envy the more favored shepherd. Thus is he condemned to roam and to wander through the world all the days of his life. And woe to the hapless goatherd who dare to harm the desertman! Be his name Cain or Lamech, his death or even his slightest scratch will be avenged seven, nay seven and seventy-fold. This is the border-shepherd's picture of the desert nomad. To the peasant and the man of cities just a little farther off, he is Ishmael, the pariah, a scourge and byword; Ishmael who lives by pillage; Ishmael, whose hand is against everyone and everyone's hand against him. Not only does he rob and slay the townsmen and the peasant, when he finds them straying on his desert preserves, which, after all, are his home and domain. Always on the verge of hunger on his desert pasture, and oftentimes beyond the verge, he comes in humble enough guise to the peasant's village, to the townsman's public market, ask-



AN ARAB ON HORSEBACK

ing for a bit of shelter, for a bit of food and water for himself and his camels in an evil season. But let him notice just a little fear or weakness in his host's manner or position, and he turns upon him with the insolence of David and his robber-band against the hapless Nabal, demands as privilege what he had asked as alms and threatens rapine, death and destruction, if he be denied. Or perhaps the bedou finds on the border of his desert a strong neighbor, a rich and well-ordered land, guided and protected by a wise ruler's hand. In such case the bedou soon learns that the better part of wisdom is to adapt himself, to seek profit in employment, to work his rich neighbor's mines (see the writer's *Alphabet*), to water his growing vineyards and fields, to herd his camels, to pilot and protect his caravans, perhaps even to police his borders and for pay to fight his battles. Employment means wages, and wages in the desert mean wives and increase and a growing taste for culture's luxuries. Now let depression come, the strong ruling hand vanish, the border watch be relaxed, profitable employment and wages disappear, and the thin strip of culture land is once again



covered with a desert layer. This is the story of the Bedouin, Berber or Negroid, Arab or Armenoid, as far back as we can see on the Saharan tableland. This is the meaning and the import of nature's surface heritage, prevailing desert soil with its concomitants, the camel and the camel-nomad, in the rise and fall of civilization in Western Asia.

Or rather, this is half the picture. For we have not yet looked in this new fashion at more than one-half of the Nearer East. There, indeed, along the Nile and Tigris, did the earliest development of what we know as civilization take place, there it first rose to culture, there it succumbed to desert pressure, and rose again to greater heights, more than once, before much else of the Mediterranean world joined. But presently in Asia Minor first one and then perhaps another Hittite empire rose beside those of Egypt and Babylon, then, as Egypt and Babylon waned, three empires of Persia succeed each other within a thousand years. Here again we have the rise and fall of empires and with them successive ascent and descent in the scale of civilization. Here also a major factor in the brief moments of prosperity followed by long periods of depression is the surface soil, the pastureland, poor or intermittent grazing land, nomad land. That this mountain ringed, far-stretched plateau is truly nomad country was graphically illustrated to the American people not so many years ago. This is the territory in which Captain Merian C. Cooper's motion picture of actual life, entitled "Grass," was taken. Mac Tince of the *Chicago Tribune* calls our attention to the fact that the information is contained and many of his pictures may still be had in Captain Cooper's book of the same title. It shows a vivid picture of nomad life, as it is an active factor in Persia today and in the long stretch from Western Turkey to Eastern Afghanistan. This factor has affected that region, as it has the southland, has affected its history ever since historic time began.

There is an important difference, however as well as similarity between this higher north and the low, flat south. Not only is the north higher, but its surface is of different general character. While the continuity of the southern plain is interrupted by breaks below sea-level, sometimes filled with sea water, the evenness of the long northern stretch is broken by rocky hill and mountain fragments far more than the south. Further, the climate of this

northland differs vitally from that of the Arab and Berber South. A large part of this northern highland knows a winter with ice and snow. Both factors, the rougher, rockier surface, and the colder winter make it less well adapted to support the animal of the Southern nomad, the camel. Add to this that the southern mountain wall has fewer and less easy openings than the northern rim. Through these the southern nomad has, indeed, more than once made his way northward, and his camels have met those of China on the east, yet the southern nomad never became truly at home on this rough northern highland, and the camel, however useful it may have been found at times, remained something of an exotic and a luxury.

From the time nomadic conquerors first appear in these northern highlands they evidently break through the more passable northern gaps. They come from the cold, bleak and monotonous steppes of Russia and Siberia. To them our strip is southland, with greater warmth and more variety than they knew in their earlier home. So they come seeping or sweeping through the easy openings in continuous succession from early Hittite to late Mongol and modern Persian times, and make themselves at home. And they bring with them their chief animal support, another truly nomad beast, the horse. We must not think here of the Arab's breed of horses which is famous and deserves its fame. However, the tamed horse is not at home in the Arabian and Berber deserts but is as much an exotic and a luxury there as is the camel in the north. He is an imported weapon, costly to get and keep, dependent on the camel like his master, carefully nurtured and nursed for an occasional quick final thrust. He is the prerogative of the chieftain and the man of wealth. In the northern steppe the Cossack nomad and Turkoman is as dependent on the horse as every Arabian bedouin is on the camel. All that we said before of the Arab's use of his camel, hide, hair, and bones, applies to this nomad and his horse, with but a few necessary variations. The use of mare's milk, sweet, soured, and even fermented as an intoxicant, is too well known to need more than passing mention. It is in hide and especially in hair that the chief difference from the camel lies. This northerner needs not sandals, but boots, and his horse's more pliable skin supplies them. His horse's hair could not be spun and woven, but he discovered that it could be matted and felted, and to



A BEDUIN  
(Photograph by Henry Field)

the present day his headgear, when it is not fur, is felt, as is his coat and blanket and his tent. When he needs serviceable rope, he plaits his horses' tail-hair. We need not carry detail further.

The first appearance of the horse in history is characteristic. We hear of him with the early Hittites in Asia Minor. He has appeared to stay and make himself at home. He is far better adapted to the hills and highlands than is the camel. Presently we find the Hittites breaking through the mountain wall into upper Syria. Then a few years later we find the horse with a people whom the Egyptians call Hyksos, within the boundaries of a weakened Egypt. A new speed record had been set in Hither Asia. The horse is faster than the camel, both in short attack and over long marches. And he breeds faster and runs in far more numerous herds. As he came with his master in compact masses southward this new barbarian danger must have appeared a howling, hailing hurricane.

Although this seems, both in the south and north, to have been Hither Asia's first experience of the horse-nomad of the northern steppes, it was far from being the last. At irregular intervals thereafter, until as late as the early fifteenth century of our era, this destructive drama recurs in a succession of depressingly similar scenes. We recall the Scythian, the Cimmerian, and the Mede, the Persian and the Parthian, whose fast-riding archers overwhelmed Roman legions, the Hun, whose hordes trampled even Europe's fertile fields; the Seljuk, Mameluke and Ottoman Turk; the Mongols of Genghis Khan and those of Timur the Lame. A series of incursions of often barbarous hordes of horsemen, rolls periodically over the heads of princes and paupers, peasants, and merchants, scholars and artists, who were trying desperately on the narrow strips of culture land to preserve the civilization they had built with such difficulty. None of these invasions was destructive on so vast and general a scale as has sometimes been reputed. With the disorganization of long and laboriously established order, which took decades to knit together again, the Hittite brought the horse, the Persian probably the vault and dome, and someone, we know not who, the rug mat on the floor and rug tapestry for the walls. And there are other things, grains and fruits, arts, crafts, and institutions, which came with the invaders and some of which still form prized possessions in the great store-

house of the human race. But the cumulative effect of so long a series of invasions, with their dangers, terrors, and general disorder, could not be other than fatalistic discouragement and depression.

Add this to the constant pressure of the camel nomad and you have a fair idea of what it means when we say that nature left as her chief heritage to Near Eastern man a surface area, the bulk of which is nomad land with mere strips and patches of cultivated land about its margins and scattered sparsely through it. It would probably overload the picture, if at this point, we added Western invasions and conquests, by such as the sea-peoples, Sardinians and Philistines, David's Crethi and Plethi, Galatian Gauls in Asia Minor and Vandals in North Africa, or better known ventures like Alexander's conquests, Roman domination, the Crusaders' Christian wars, and the adventures of modern Europe in Hither Asia.

It is a picture not often considered in our Western World. We are prone to see in Western Asia's past those things only which we received from there as the first elements upon which our forebears began to build, and on which we in this past century, with modern resources in our hands, are building our share in the great structure of culture. Our very speed and the new heights which we have attained are, perhaps, the causes which keep us from seeing the Moslem Orient fairly and without favor to ourselves. It was Ibn Khaldun, a North-African Arab, the world's first sociologist, sociological historian and philosopher of history, who, five hundred years ago, first saw this background of the Eastern picture. He has, in fact, been much studied of late years, by the great Arab scholar of modern Cairo, Taha Husain, in 1918; by the North-African Arab, Kamil Ayad, and the Frenchman, Gaston Bouthwoul; by Nathaniel Schmidt, in 1930. He was an active man, a politician as well as a thinker and man of letters. He wrote not merely theory but also experience. He was a modern man, a forerunner of modern thought and science, perhaps because he lived where he did at the end of the fourteenth century. He tried to help establish law and social order, just as the nomad pressure was gaining its greatest momentum and exercising its baneful power within the purlieus of his own endeavors. With discouraging regularity in the narrow band of cultured coastland of civilized North Africa one vigorous but barbarous nomad dynasty and clan was replacing an-

other that had just had time to lose its fresh-air, desert vigor in luxuriant surroundings of an easy life. When he came to Egypt, he found it ruled by Mameluke Turks, brought in as mercenary soldiery, bands of fierce, war-like horsemen, settled like swarms of lawless, terrorizing hornets on a fertile, but discouraged and defenseless land.

Scarce had he come there, when the last great raid of far north-eastern Mongol horse-nomads which came swooping down with Tamerlane, beat upon Egypt's gates, and lost its power there as it met the Mameluke Turks, but only after it had once more laid into ruins that ancient seat of learning and culture on the desert's border, Damascus. Thus it was that his keen mind came to see the efforts of men to save, time after time, and to build anew, again and again, civilized life with its orderly progress, with its arts and its sciences, on the narrow strip of Near Eastern sown land, encroached on everywhere by endless, hopeless desert life; and these efforts appeared to him a human ant-hill laboriously built up only to be trodden down, a human beehive, filled season after season, only to be robbed for others' profit, a treadmill whereon every apparent step upward sank inevitably back into loose desert sand.

This is the background of the story of civilization in the Near East; this is Western Asia's solid and permanent heritage of surface soil, left to her as nature's great creative drama came to rest and gave way to the human play, as for many years the Easterner has lived on it, trodden its narrow, unsafe border, felt its shifting scenery at his back. Against this background, the story of man in Hither Asia, his earliest ascent from primitive animal poverty to culture and wealth, the feverish activity of his early youth, the fine vigor of his mature manhood, the weary weakness of a premature old age, from which he now appears to be rousing himself to a new period of regained youth, all these must now appear to us in a new light. We must not lose sight of this background as we proceed in our tale of Western Asia's heritage to man's works upon the surface of her soil.