

T.E. Lawrence,

Seven Pillars of Wisdom

(Excerpt)

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CHAPTER II

A first difficulty of the Arab movement was to say who the Arabs were. Being a manufactured people, their name had been changing in sense slowly year by year. Once it meant an Arabian. There was a country called Arabia; but this was nothing to the point. There was a language called Arabic; and in it lay the test. It was the current tongue of Syria and Palestine, of Mesopotamia, and of the great peninsula called Arabia on the map. Before the Moslem conquest, these areas were inhabited by diverse peoples, speaking languages of the Arabic family. We called them Semitic, but (as with most scientific terms) incorrectly. However, Arabic, Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac were related tongues; and indications of common

influences in the past, or even of a common origin, were strengthened by our knowledge that the appearances and customs of the present Arabic-speaking peoples of Asia, while as varied as a field--full of poppies, had an equal and essential likeness. We might with perfect propriety call them cousins--and cousins certainly, if sadly, aware of their own relationship.

The Arabic-speaking areas of Asia in this sense were a rough parallelogram. The northern side ran from Alexandretta, on the Mediterranean, across Mesopotamia eastward to the Tigris. The south side was the edge of the Indian Ocean, from Aden to Muscat. On the west it was bounded by the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea to Aden. On the east by the Tigris, and the Persian Gulf to Muscat. This square of land, as large as India, formed the homeland of our Semites, in which no foreign race had kept a permanent footing, though Egyptians, Hittites, Philistines, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Turks and Franks had variously tried. All had in the end been broken, and their scattered elements drowned in the strong characteristics of the Semitic race. Semites had sometimes pushed outside this area, and themselves been drowned in the outer world. Egypt, Algiers, Morocco, Malta, Sicily, Spain, Cilicia and France absorbed and obliterated Semitic colonies. Only in Tripoli of Africa, and in the everlasting miracle of Jewry, had distant Semites kept some of their identity and force.

The origin of these peoples was an academic question; but for the understanding of their revolt their present social and political differences were important, and could only be grasped by looking at their geography. This continent of theirs fell into certain great regions, whose gross physical diversities imposed varying habits on the dwellers in them. On the west the parallelogram was framed, from Alexandretta to Aden, by a mountain belt, called (in the north) Syria, and thence progressively southward called Palestine, Midian, Hejaz, and lastly Yemen. It had an average height of perhaps three thousand feet, with peaks of ten to twelve thousand feet. It faced west, was well watered with rain and cloud from the sea, and in general was fully peopled.

Another range of inhabited hills, facing the Indian Ocean, was the south edge of the parallelogram. The eastern frontier was at first an

alluvial plain called Mesopotamia, but south of Basra a level littoral, called Kuwait, and Hasa, to Gattar. Much of this plain was peopled. These inhabited hills and plains framed a gulf of thirsty desert, in whose heart was an archipelago of watered and populous oases called Kasim and Aridh. In this group of oases lay the true centre of Arabia, the preserve of its native spirit, and its most conscious individuality. The desert lapped it round and kept it pure of contact.

The desert which performed this great function around the oases, and so made the character of Arabia, varied in nature. South of the oases it appeared to be a pathless sea of sand, stretching nearly to the populous escarpment of the Indian Ocean shore, shutting it out from Arabian history, and from all influence on Arabian morals and politics. Hadhramaut, as they called this southern coast, formed part of the history of the Dutch Indies; and its thought swayed Java rather than Arabia. To the west of the oases, between them and the Hejaz hills, was the Nejd desert, an area of gravel and lava, with little sand in it. To the east of these oases, between them and Kuwait, spread a similar expanse of gravel, but with some great stretches of soft sand, making the road difficult. To the north of the oases lay a belt of sand, and then an immense gravel and lava plain, filling up everything between the eastern edge of Syria and the banks of the Euphrates where Mesopotamia began. The practicability of this northern desert for men and motor-cars enabled the Arab revolt to win its ready success.

The hills of the west and the plains of the east were the parts of Arabia always most populous and active. In particular on the west, the mountains of Syria and Palestine, of Hejaz and Yemen, entered time and again into the current of our European life. Ethically, these fertile healthy hills were in Europe, not in Asia, just as the Arabs looked always to the Mediterranean, not to the Indian Ocean, for their cultural sympathies, for their enterprises, and particularly for their expansions, since the migration problem was the greatest and most complex force in Arabia, and general to it, however it might vary in the different Arabic districts.

In the north (Syria) the birth rate was low in the cities and the death rate high, because of the insanitary conditions and the hectic life led by the majority. Consequently the surplus peasantry found openings in

the towns, and were there swallowed up. In the Lebanon, where sanitation had been improved, a greater exodus of youth took place to America each year, threatening (for the first time since Greek days) to change the outlook of an entire district.

In Yemen the solution was different. There was no foreign trade, and no massed industries to accumulate population in unhealthy places. The towns were just market towns, as clean and simple as ordinary villages. Therefore the population slowly increased; the scale of living was brought down very low; and a congestion of numbers was generally felt. They could not emigrate overseas; for the Sudan was even worse country than Arabia, and the few tribes which did venture across were compelled to modify their manner of life and their Semitic culture profoundly, in order to exist. They could not move northward along the hills; for these were barred by the holy town of Mecca and its port Jidda: an alien belt, continually reinforced by strangers from India and Java and Bokhara and Africa, very strong in vitality, violently hostile to the Semitic consciousness, and maintained despite economics and geography and climate by the artificial factor of a world-religion. The congestion of Yemen, therefore, becoming extreme, found its only relief in the east, by forcing the weaker aggregations of its border down and down the slopes of the hills along the Widian, the half-waste district of the great water-bearing valleys of Bisha, Dawasir, Ranya and Taraba, which ran out towards the deserts of Nejd. These weaker clans had continually to exchange good springs and fertile palms for poorer springs and scantier palms, till at last they reached an area where a proper agricultural life became impossible. They then began to eke out their precarious husbandry by breeding sheep and camels, and in time came to depend more and more on these herds for their living.

Finally, under a last impulse from the straining population behind them, the border people (now almost wholly pastoral), were flung out of the furthest crazy oasis into the untrodden wilderness as nomads. This process, to be watched to-day with individual families and tribes to whose marches an exact name and date might be put, must have been going on since the first day of full settlement of Yemen. The Widian below Mecca and Taif are crowded with the memories and place-names of half a hundred tribes which have gone from there, and may be found to-day in Nejd, in Jebel Sham-mar, in the Hamad, even on the frontiers of Syria

and Mesopotamia. There was the source of migration, the factory of nomads, the springing of the gulf-stream of desert wanderers.

For the people of the desert were as little static as the people of the hills. The economic life of the desert was based on the supply of camels, which were best bred on the rigorous upland pastures with their strong nutritive thorns. By this industry the Bedouins lived; and it in turn moulded their life, apportioned the tribal areas, and kept the clans revolving through their rote of spring, summer and winter pasturages, as the herds cropped the scanty growths of each in turn. The camel markets in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt determined the population which the deserts could support, and regulated strictly their standard of living. So the desert likewise overpeopled itself upon occasion; and then there were heavings and thrustings of the crowded tribes as they elbowed themselves by natural courses towards the light. They might not go south towards the inhospitable sand or sea. They could not turn west; for there the steep hills of Hejaz were thickly lined by mountain peoples taking full advantage of their defensiveness. Sometimes they went towards the central oases of Aridh and Kasim, and, if the tribes looking for new homes were strong and vigorous, might succeed in occupying parts of them. If, however, the desert had not this strength, its peoples were pushed gradually north, up between Medina of the Hejaz and Kasim of Nejd, till they found themselves at the fork of two roads. They could strike eastward, by Wadi Rumh or Jebel Sham-mar, to follow eventually the Batn to Shamiya, where they would become riverine Arabs of the Lower Euphrates; or they could climb, by slow degrees, the ladder of western oases--Henakiya, Kheibar, Teima, Jauf, and the Sirhan--till fate saw them nearing Jebel Druse, in Syria, or watering their herds about Tadmor of the northern desert, on their way to Aleppo or Assyria.

Nor then did the pressure cease: the inexorable trend northward continued. The tribes found themselves driven to the very edge of cultivation in Syria or Mesopotamia. Opportunity and their bellies persuaded them of the advantages of possessing goats, and then of possessing sheep; and lastly they began to sow, if only a little barley for their animals. They were now no longer Bedouin, and began to suffer like the villagers from the ravages of the nomads behind. Insensibly, they made common cause with the peasants already on the soil, and found

out that they, too, were peasantry. So we see clans, born in the highlands of Yemen, thrust by stronger clans into the desert, where, unwillingly, they became nomad to keep themselves alive. We see them wandering, every year moving a little further north or a little further east as chance has sent them down one or other of the well-roads of the wilderness, till finally this pressure drives them from the desert again into the sown, with the like unwillingness of their first shrinking experiment in nomad life. This was the circulation which kept vigour in the Semitic body. There were few, if indeed there was a single northern Semite, whose ancestors had not at some dark age passed through the desert. The mark of nomadism, that most deep and biting social discipline, was on each of them in his degree.

CHAPTER IV

The first great rush round the Mediterranean had shown the world the power of an excited Arab for a short spell of intense physical activity; but when the effort burned out the lack of endurance and routine in the Semitic mind became as evident. The provinces they had overrun they neglected, out of sheer distaste of system, and had to seek the help of their conquered subjects, or of more vigorous foreigners, to administer their ill-knit and inchoate empires. So, early in the Middle Ages, the Turks found a footing in the Arab States, first as servants, then as helpers, and then as a parasite growth which choked the life out of the old body politic. The last phase was of enmity, when the Hulagus or Timurs sated their blood lust, burning and destroying everything which irked them with a pretension of superiority.

Arab civilizations had been of an abstract nature, moral and intellectual rather than applied; and their lack of public spirit made their excellent private qualities futile. They were fortunate in their epoch: Europe had fallen barbarous; and the memory of Greek and Latin learning was fading from men's minds. By contrast the imitative exercise of the Arabs seemed cultured, their mental activity progressive, their state prosperous. They had performed real service in preserving something of a classical past for a mediaeval future.

With the coming of the Turks this happiness became a dream. By stages the Semites of Asia passed under their yoke, and found it a slow death.

Their goods were stripped from them; and their spirits shrivelled in the numbing breath of a military Government. Turkish rule was gendarme rule, and Turkish political theory as crude as its practice. The Turks taught the Arabs that the interests of a sect were higher than those of patriotism: that the petty concerns of the province were more than nationality. They led them by subtle dissensions to distrust one another. Even the Arabic language was banished from courts and offices, from the Government service, and from superior schools. Arabs might only serve the State by sacrifice of their racial characteristics. These measures were not accepted quietly. Semitic tenacity showed itself in the many rebellions of Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia against the grosser forms of Turkish penetration; and resistance was also made to the more insidious attempts at absorption. The Arabs would not give up their rich and flexible tongue for crude Turkish: instead, they filled Turkish with Arabic words, and held to the treasures of their own literature.

They lost their geographical sense, and their racial and political and historical memories; but they clung the more tightly to their language, and erected it almost into a fatherland of its own. The first duty of every Moslem was to study the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, and incidentally the greatest Arab literary monument. The knowledge that this religion was his own, and that only he was perfectly qualified to understand and practise it, gave every Arab a standard by which to judge the banal achievements of the Turk.

Then came the Turkish revolution, the fall of Abdul Hamid, and the supremacy of the Young Turks. The horizon momentarily broadened for the Arabs. The Young-Turk movement was a revolt against the hierarchic conception of Islam and the pan-Islamic theories of the old Sultan, who had aspired, by making himself spiritual director of the Moslem world, to be also (beyond appeal) its director in temporal affairs. These young politicians rebelled and threw him into prison, under the impulse of constitutional theories of a sovereign state. So, at a time when Western Europe was just beginning to climb out of nationality into internationality, and to rumble with wars far removed from problems of race, Western Asia began to climb out of Catholicism into nationalist politics, and to dream of wars for self-government and self-sovereignty, instead of for faith or dogma. This tendency had broken out first

and most strongly in the Near East, in the little Balkan States, and had sustained them through an almost unparalleled martyrdom to their goal of separation from Turkey. Later there had been nationalist movements in Egypt, in India, in Persia, and finally in Constantinople, where they were fortified and made pointed by the new American ideas in education: ideas which, when released in the old high Oriental atmosphere, made an explosive mixture. The American schools, teaching by the method of inquiry, encouraged scientific detachment and free exchange of views. Quite without intention they taught revolution, since it was impossible for an individual to be modern in Turkey and at the same time loyal, if he had been born of one of the subject races--Greeks, Arabs, Kurds, Armenians or Albanians--over whom the Turks were so long helped to keep dominion.

The Young Turks, in the confidence of their first success, were carried away by the logic of their principles, and as protest against Pan-Islam preached Ottoman brotherhood. The gullible subject races--far more numerous than the Turks themselves--believed that they were called upon to co-operate in building a new East. Rushing to the task (full of Herbert Spencer and Alexander Hamilton) they laid down platforms of sweeping ideas, and hailed the Turks as partners. The Turks, terrified at the forces they had let loose, drew the fires as suddenly as they had stoked them. Turkey made Turkish for the Turks--YENI-TURAN--became the cry. Later on, this policy would turn them towards the rescue of their irredenti--the Turkish populations subject to Russia in Central Asia; but, first of all, they must purge their Empire of such irritating subject races as resisted the ruling stamp. The Arabs, the largest alien component of Turkey, must first be dealt with. Accordingly the Arab deputies were scattered, the Arab societies forbidden, the Arab notables proscribed. Arabic manifestations and the Arabic language were suppressed by Enver Pasha more sternly than by Abdul Hamid before him.

However, the Arabs had tasted freedom: they could not change their ideas as quickly as their conduct; and the stiffer spirits among them were not easily to be put down. They read the Turkish papers, putting 'Arab' for 'Turk' in the patriotic exhortations. Suppression charged them with unhealthy violence. Deprived of constitutional outlets they became revolutionary. The Arab societies went underground, and changed

from liberal clubs into conspiracies. The Akhwa, the Arab mother society, was publicly dissolved. It was replaced in Mesopotamia by the dangerous Ahad, a very secret brotherhood, limited almost entirely to Arab officers in the Turkish Army, who swore to acquire the military knowledge of their masters, and to turn it against them, in the service of the Arab people, when the moment of rebellion came.

It was a large society, with a sure base in the wild part of Southern Irak, where Sayid Taleb, the young John Wilkes of the Arab movement, held the power in his unprincipled fingers. To it belonged seven out of every ten Mesopotamian-born officers; and their counsel was so well kept that members of it held high command in Turkey to the last. When the crash came, and Allenby rode across Armageddon and Turkey fell, one vice-president of the society was commanding the broken fragments of the Palestine armies on the retreat, and another was directing the Turkish forces across-Jordan in the Amman area. Yet later, after the armistice, great places in the Turkish service were still held by men ready to turn on their masters at a word from their Arab leaders. To most of them the word was never given; for those societies were pro-Arab only, willing to fight for nothing but Arab independence; and they could see no advantage in supporting the Allies rather than the Turks, since they did not believe our assurances that we would leave them free. Indeed, many of them preferred an Arabia united by Turkey in miserable subjection, to an Arabia divided up and slothful under the easier control of several European powers in spheres of influence.

Greater than the Ahad was the Fetah, the society of freedom in Syria. The landowners, the writers, the doctors, the great public servants linked themselves in this society with a common oath, passwords, signs, a press and a central treasury, to ruin the Turkish Empire. With the noisy facility of the Syrian--an ape-like people having much of the Japanese quickness, but shallow--they speedily built up a formidable organization. They looked outside for help, and expected freedom to come by entreaty, not by sacrifice. They corresponded with Egypt, with the Ahad (whose members, with true Mesopotamian dourness, rather despised them), with the Sherif of Mecca, and with Great Britain: everywhere seeking the ally to serve their turn. They also were deadly secret; and the Government, though it suspected their existence, could find no credible evidence of their leaders or membership. It had to

hold its hand until it could strike with evidence enough to satisfy the English and French diplomats who acted as modern public opinion in Turkey. The war in 1914 withdrew these agents, and left the Turkish Government free to strike.

Mobilization put all power into the hands of those members--Enver, Talaat and Jemal--who were at once the most ruthless, the most logical, and the most ambitious of the Young Turks. They set themselves to stamp out all non-Turkish currents in the State, especially Arab and Armenian nationalism. For the first step they found a specious and convenient weapon in the secret papers of a French Consul in Syria, who left behind him in his Consulate copies of correspondence (about Arab freedom) which had passed between him and an Arab club, not connected with the Fetah but made up of the more talkative and less formidable INTELLIGENZIA of the Syrian coast. The Turks, of course, were delighted; for 'colonial' aggression in North Africa had given the French a black reputation in the Arabic-speaking Moslem world; and it served Jemal well to show his co-religionists that these Arab nationalists were infidel enough to prefer France to Turkey.

In Syria, of course, his disclosures had little novelty; but the members of the society were known and respected, if somewhat academic, persons; and their arrest and condemnation, and the crop of deportations, exiles, and executions to which their trial led, moved the country to its depths, and taught the Arabs of the Fetah that if they did not profit by their lesson, the fate of the Armenians would be upon them. The Armenians had been well armed and organized; but their leaders had failed them. They had been disarmed and destroyed piecemeal, the men by massacre, the women and children by being driven and overdriven along the wintry roads into the desert, naked and hungry, the common prey of any passer-by, until death took them. The Young Turks had killed the Armenians, not because they were Christians, but because they were Armenians; and for the same reason they herded Arab Moslems and Arab Christians into the same prison, and hanged them together on the same scaffold. Jemal Pasha united all classes, conditions and creeds in Syria, under pressure of a common misery and peril, and so made a concerted revolt possible.

The Turks suspected the Arab officers and soldiers in the Army, and

hoped to use against them the scattering tactics which had served against the Armenians. At first transport difficulties stood in their way; and there came a dangerous concentration of Arab divisions (nearly one third of the original Turkish Army was Arabic speaking) in North Syria early in 1915. They broke these up when possible, marching them off to Europe, to the Dardanelles, to the Caucasus, or the Canal--anywhere, so long as they were put quickly into the firing-line, or withdrawn far from the sight and help of their compatriots. A Holy War was proclaimed to give the 'Union and Progress' banner something of the traditional sanctity of the Caliph's battle-order in the eyes of the old clerical elements; and the Sherif of Mecca was invited--or rather ordered--to echo the cry.

CHAPTER V

The position of the Sherif of Mecca had long been anomalous. The title of Sherif implied descent from the prophet Mohammed through his daughter Fatima, and Hassan, her elder son. Authentic Sherifs were inscribed on the family tree--an immense roll preserved at Mecca, in custody of the Emir of Mecca, the elected Sherif of Sherifs, supposed to be the senior and noblest of all. The prophet's family had held temporal rule in Mecca for the last nine hundred years, and counted some two thousand persons.

The old Ottoman Governments regarded this clan of manticratic peers with a mixture of reverence and distrust. Since they were too strong to be destroyed, the Sultan salved his dignity by solemnly confirming their Emir in place. This empty approval acquired dignity by lapse of time, until the new holder began to feel that it added a final seal to his election. At last the Turks found that they needed the Hejaz under their unquestioned sway as part of the stage furniture for their new pan-Islamic notion. The fortuitous opening of the Suez Canal enabled them to garrison the Holy Cities. They projected the Hejaz Railway, and increased Turkish influence among the tribes by money, intrigue, and armed expeditions.

As the Sultan grew stronger there he ventured to assert himself more and more alongside the Sherif, even in Mecca itself, and upon occasion ventured to depose a Sherif too magnificent for his views, and to

appoint a successor from a rival family of the clan in hopes of winning the usual advantages from dissension. Finally, Abdul Hamid took away some of the family to Constantinople into honourable captivity. Amongst these was Hussein ibn Ali, the future ruler, who was held a prisoner for nearly eighteen years. He took the opportunity to provide his sons-- Ali, Abdulla, Feisal, and Zeid--with the modern education and experience which afterwards enabled them to lead the Arab armies to success.

When Abdul Hamid fell, the less wily Young Turks reversed his policy and sent back Sherif Hussein to Mecca as Emir. He at once set to work unobtrusively to restore the power of the Emirate, and strengthened himself on the old basis, keeping the while close and friendly touch with Constantinople through his sons Abdulla, vice-chairman of the Turkish House, and Feisal, member for Jidda. They kept him informed of political opinion in the capital until war broke out, when they returned in haste to Mecca.

The outbreak of war made trouble in the Hejaz. The pilgrimage ceased, and with it the revenues and business of the Holy Cities. There was reason to fear that the Indian food-ships would cease to come (since the Sherif became technically an enemy subject); and as the province produced almost no food of its own, it would be precariously dependent on the goodwill of the Turks, who might starve it by closing the Hejaz Railway. Hussein had never been entirely at the Turks' mercy before; and at this unhappy moment they particularly needed his adherence to their 'Jihad', the Holy War of all Moslems against Christianity.

To become popularly effective this must be endorsed by Mecca; and if endorsed it might plunge the East in blood. Hussein was honourable, shrewd, obstinate and deeply pious. He felt that the Holy War was doctrinally incompatible with an aggressive war, and absurd with a Christian ally: Germany. So he refused the Turkish demand, and made at the same time a dignified appeal to the Allies not to starve his province for what was in no way his people's fault. The Turks in reply at once instituted a partial blockade of the Hejaz by controlling the traffic on the pilgrim railway. The British left his coast open to specially-regulated food vessels.

The Turkish demand was, however, not the only one which the Sherif

received. In January 1915, Yisin, head of the Mesopotamian officers, Ali Riza, head of the Damascus officers, and Abd el Ghani el Areisi, for the Syrian civilians, sent down to him a concrete proposal for a military mutiny in Syria against the Turks. The oppressed people of Mesopotamia and Syria, the committees of the Ahad and the Fetah, were calling out to him as the Father of the Arabs, the Moslem of Moslems, their greatest prince, their oldest notable, to save them from the sinister designs of Talaat and Jemal.

Hussein, as politician, as prince, as moslem, as modernist, and as nationalist, was forced to listen to their appeal. He sent Feisal, his third son, to Damascus, to discuss their projects as his representative, and to make a report. He sent Ali, his eldest son, to Medina, with orders to raise quietly, on any excuse he pleased, troops from villagers and tribesmen of the Hejaz, and to hold them ready for action if Feisal called. Abdulla, his politic second son, was to sound the British by letter, to learn what would be their attitude towards a possible Arab revolt against Turkey.

Feisal reported in January 1915, that local conditions were good, but that the general war was not going well for their hopes. In Damascus were three divisions of Arab troops ready for rebellion. In Aleppo two other divisions, riddled with Arab nationalism, were sure to join in if the others began. There was only one Turkish division this side of the Taurus, so that it was certain that the rebels would get possession of Syria at the first effort. On the other hand, public opinion was less ready for extreme measures, and the military class quite sure that Germany would win the war and win it soon. If, however, the Allies landed their Australian Expedition (preparing in Egypt) at Alexandretta, and so covered the Syrian flank, then it would be wise and safe to risk a final German victory and the need to make a previous separate peace with the Turks.

Delay followed, as the Allies went to the Dardanelles, and not to Alexandretta. Feisal went after them to get first-hand knowledge of Gallipoli conditions, since a breakdown of Turkey would be the Arab signal. Then followed stagnation through the months of the Dardanelles campaign. In that slaughter-house the remaining Ottoman first-line army was destroyed. The disaster to Turkey of the accumulated losses was so

great that Feisal came back to Syria, judging it a possible moment in which to strike, but found that meanwhile the local situation had become unfavourable.

His Syrian supporters were under arrest or in hiding, and their friends being hanged in scores on political charges. He found the well-disposed Arab divisions either exiled to distant fronts, or broken up in drafts and distributed among Turkish units. The Arab peasantry were in the grip of Turkish military service, and Syria prostrate before the merciless Jemal Pasha. His assets had disappeared. He wrote to his father counselling further delay, till England should be ready and Turkey in extremities. Unfortunately, England was in a deplorable condition. Her forces were falling back shattered from the Dardanelles. The slow-drawn agony of Kut was in its last stage; and the Senussi rising, coincident with the entry of Bulgaria, threatened her on new flanks.

Feisal's position was hazardous in the extreme. He was at the mercy of the members of the secret society, whose president he had been before the war. He had to live as the guest of Jemal Pasha, in Damascus, rubbing up his military knowledge; for his brother Ali was raising the troops in Hejaz on the pretext that he and Feisal would lead them against the Suez Canal to help the Turks. So Feisal, as a good Ottoman and officer in the Turkish service, had to live at headquarters, and endure acquiescingly the insults and indignities heaped upon his race by the bully Jemal in his cups.

Jemal would send for Feisal and take him to the hanging of his Syrian friends. These victims of justice dared not show that they knew Feisal's real hopes, any more than he dared show his mind by word or look, since disclosure would have condemned his family and perhaps their race to the same fate. Only once did he burst out that these executions would cost Jemal all that he was trying to avoid; and it took the intercessions of his Constantinople friends, chief men in Turkey, to save him from the price of these rash words.

Feisal's correspondence with his father was an adventure in itself. They communicated by means of old retainers of the family, men above suspicion, who went up and down the Hejaz Railway, carrying letters in

sword-hilts, in cakes, sewn between the soles of sandals, or in invisible writings on the wrappers of harmless packages. In all of them Feisal reported unfavourable things, and begged his father to postpone action till a wiser time.

Hussein, however, was not a whit cast down by Emir Feisal's discouragements. The Young Turks in his eyes were so many godless transgressors of their creed and their human duty--traitors to the spirit of the time, and to the higher interests of Islam. Though an old man of sixty-five, he was cheerfully determined to wage war against them, relying upon justice to cover the cost. Hussein trusted so much in God that he let his military sense lie fallow, and thought Hejaz able to fight it out with Turkey on a fair field. So he sent Abd el Kader el Abdu to Feisal with a letter that all was now ready for inspection by him in Medina before the troops started for the front. Feisal informed Jemal, and asked leave to go down, but, to his dismay, Jemal replied that Enver Pasha, the Generalissimo, was on his way to the province, and that they would visit Medina together and inspect them. Feisal had planned to raise his father's crimson banner as soon as he arrived in Medina, and so to take the Turks unawares; and here he was going to be saddled with two uninvited guests to whom, by the Arab law of hospitality, he could do no harm, and who would probably delay his action so long that the whole secret of the revolt would be in jeopardy!

In the end matters passed off well, though the irony of the review was terrible. Enver, Jemal and Feisal watched the troops wheeling and turning in the dusty plain outside the city gate, rushing up and down in mimic camel-battle, or spurring their horses in the javelin game after immemorial Arab fashion. 'And are all these volunteers for the Holy War?' asked Enver at last, turning to Feisal. 'Yes,' said Feisal. 'Willing to fight to the death against the enemies of the faithful?' 'Yes,' said Feisal again; and then the Arab chiefs came up to be presented, and Sherif Ali ibn el Hussein, of Modhig, drew him aside whispering, 'My Lord, shall we kill them now?' and Feisal said, 'No, they are our guests.'

The sheikhs protested further; for they believed that so they could finish off the war in two blows. They were determined to force Feisal's hand; and he had to go among them, just out of earshot but in full

view, and plead for the lives of the Turkish dictators, who had murdered his best friends on the scaffold. In the end he had to make excuses, take the party back quickly to Medina, picket the banqueting hall with his own slaves, and escort Enver and Jemal back to Damascus to save them from death on the way. He explained this laboured courtesy by the plea that it was the Arab manner to devote everything to guests; but Enver and Jemal being deeply suspicious of what they had seen, imposed a strict blockade of the Hejaz, and ordered large Turkish reinforcements thither. They wanted to detain Feisal in Damascus; but telegrams came from Medina claiming his immediate return to prevent disorder, and, reluctantly, Jemal let him go on condition that his suite remained behind as hostages.

Feisal found Medina full of Turkish troops, with the staff and headquarters of the Twelfth Army Corps under Fakhri Pasha, the courageous old butcher who had bloodily 'purified' Zeitun and Urfa of Armenians. Clearly the Turks had taken warning, and Feisal's hope of a surprise rush, winning success almost without a shot, had become impossible. However, it was too late for prudence. From Damascus four days later his suite took horse and rode out east into the desert to take refuge with Nuri Shaalan, the Beduin chieftain; and the same day Feisal showed his hand. When he raised the Arab flag, the pan-Islamic supra-national State, for which Abdul Hamid had massacred and worked and died, and the German hope of the co-operation of Islam in the world-plans of the Kaiser, passed into the realm of dreams. By the mere fact of his rebellion the Sherif had closed these two fantastic chapters of history.

Rebellion was the gravest step which political men could take, and the success or failure of the Arab revolt was a gamble too hazardous for prophecy. Yet, for once, fortune favoured the bold player, and the Arab epic tossed up its stormy road from birth through weakness, pain and doubt, to red victory. It was the just end to an adventure which had dared so much, but after the victory there came a slow time of disillusion, and then a night in which the fighting men found that all their hopes had failed them. Now, at last, may there have come to them the white peace of the end, in the knowledge that they achieved a deathless thing, a lucent inspiration to the children of their race.