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Traveller, archaeologist, mountaineer and diplomat, Gertrude Bell (1868–1926) poured her extraordinary talents into a series of adventures through Europe and the Middle East. Addressing her experiences in Persia and Syria respectively, *Safar Nameh* (1894) and *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) are both reissued in this series. The present work, first published in 1911 and among Bell's most acclaimed, describes her recent expedition to Mesopotamia. She recounts her outward journey to the Abbasid palace of Ukhaidir and her return via Baghdad and Asia Minor. Notably discussing changes in the region after the rise of the Young Turks, including their easing of restrictions throughout the declining Ottoman Empire, Bell also saw this book as 'the attempt to record the daily life, the speech of those who had inherited the empty ground where empires had risen and expired.' Replete with photographs, it vividly opens up Middle Eastern history and archaeology.

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GERTRUDE BELL



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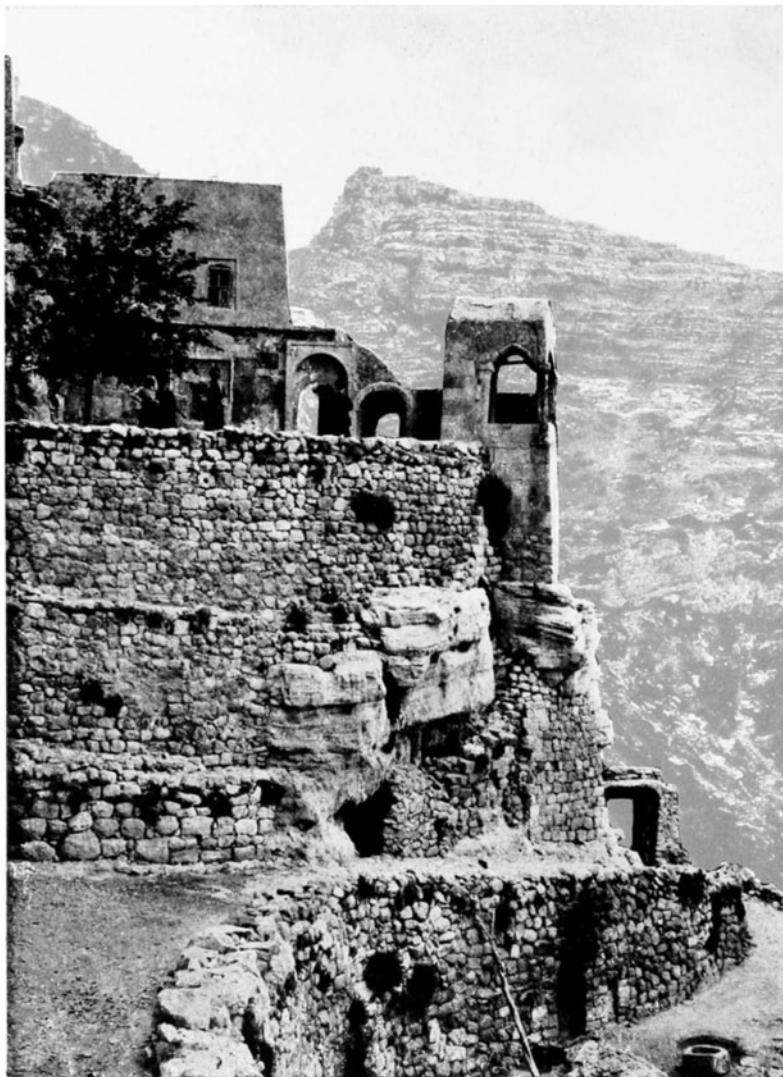
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THE MONASTERY OF RABBÂN HORMUZD.

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AMURATH TO AMURATH

BY
GERTRUDE LOWTHIAN BELL

Author of "The Desert and the Sown," &c.

ILLUSTRATED



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN
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قال لبيد بن ربيعة
 بَلِينَا وَمَا تَبَلَى النُّجُومُ الطَّوَالِعُ وَتَبَقَى الْجِبَالُ بَعْدَنَا وَالْمَصَانِعُ

We wither away but they wane not, the stars that above us rise ;
 The mountains remain after us, and the strong towers when we are gone.
 Labid ibn Rabi'ah.

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PREFACE

DEAR LORD CROMER,

When I was pursuing along the banks of the Euphrates the leisurely course of oriental travel, I would sometimes wonder, sitting at night before my tent door, whether it would be possible to cast into shape the experiences that assailed me. And in that spacious hour, when the silence of the embracing wilderness was enhanced rather than broken by the murmur of the river, and by the sounds, scarcely less primeval, that wavered round the camp fire of my nomad hosts, the task broadened out into a shape which was in keeping with the surroundings. Not only would I set myself to trace the story that was scored upon the face of the earth by mouldering wall or half-choked dyke, by the thousand vestiges of former culture which were scattered about my path, but I would attempt to record the daily life and speech of those who had inherited the empty ground whereon empires had risen and expired. Even there, where the mind ranged out unhindered over the whole wide desert, and thought flowed as smoothly as the flowing stream—even there I would realize the difficulty of such an undertaking, and it was there that I conceived the desire to invoke your aid by setting your name upon the first page of my book. To you, so I promised myself, I could make clear the intention when accomplishment lagged far behind it. To you the very landscape would be familiar, though you had never set eyes upon it: the river and the waste which determined, as in your country of the Nile, the direction of mortal energies. And you, with your profound experience of the East, have learnt to reckon with the unbroken continuity of its history. Conqueror follows upon the heels of conqueror, nations are overthrown and cities topple down into the dust, but the conditions of exist-

ence are unaltered and irresistibly they fashion the new age in the likeness of the old. "Amurath an Amurath succeeds" and the tale is told again.

Where past and present are woven so closely together, the habitual appreciation of the divisions of time slips insensibly away. Yesterday's raid and an expedition of Shalmaneser fall into the same plane; and indeed what essential difference lies between them? But the reverberation of ancient fame sounds more richly in the ears than the voice of modern achievement. The banks of the Euphrates echo with ghostly alarms; the Mesopotamian deserts are full of the rumour of phantom armies; you will not blame me if I passed among them "*trattando l'ombre come cosa salda.*"

And yet there was a new note. For the first time in all the turbulent centuries to which those desolate regions bear witness, a potent word had gone forth, and those who had caught it listened in amazement, asking one another for an explanation of its meaning. Liberty—what is liberty? I think the question that ran so perplexingly through the black tents would have received no better a solution in the royal pavilions which had once spread their glories over the plain. Idly though it fell from the lips of the Bedouin, it foretold change. That sense of change, uneasy and bewildered, hung over the whole of the Ottoman Empire. It was rarely unalloyed with anxiety; there was, it must be admitted, little to encourage an unqualified confidence in the immediate future. But one thing was certain: the moving Finger had inscribed a fresh title upon the page. I cannot pretend to a judicial indifference in this matter. I have drawn too heavily upon the good-will of the inhabitants of Asiatic Turkey to regard their fortunes with an impartial detachment. I am eager to seize upon promise and slow to be overmastered by disappointment. But I should be doing an equivocal service to a people who have given me so full a measure of hospitality and fellowship if I were to underestimate the problems that lie before them. The victories of peace are more laborious than those of war. They demand a higher integrity than that which has been practised hitherto in Turkey, and a finer conception of citizenship than any which

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has been current there. The old tyranny has lifted, but it has left its shadow over the land.

The five months of journeying which are recounted in this book were months of suspense and even of terror. Constitutional government trembled in the balance and was like to be outweighed by the forces of disorder, by fanaticism, massacre and civil strife. I saw the latest Amurath succeed to Amurath and rejoiced with all those who love justice and freedom to hear him proclaimed. For 'Abdu'l Ḥamīd, helpless as he may then have been in the hands of the weavers of intrigue, was the symbol for retrogression, and the triumph of his faction must have extinguished the faint light that had dawned upon his empire.

The confused beginnings which I witnessed were the translation of a generous ideal into the terms of human imperfection. Nowhere was the character of the Young Turkish movement recognized more fully than in England, and nowhere did it receive a more disinterested sympathy. Our approval was not confined to words. We have never been slow to welcome and to encourage the advancement of Turkey, and I am glad to remember that we were the first to hold out a helping hand when we saw her struggling to throw off long-established evils. If she can win a place, with a strong and orderly government, among civilized states, turning her face from martial adventure and striving after the reward that waits upon good administration and sober industry, the peace of the world will be set upon a surer basis, and therein lies our greatest advantage as well as her own. That day may yet be far off, but when it comes, as I hope it will, perhaps some one will take down this book from the shelf and look back, not without satisfaction, upon the months of revolution which it chronicles. And remembering that the return of prosperity to the peoples of the Near East began with your administration in Egypt, he will understand why I should have ventured to offer it, with respectful admiration, to you.

GERTRUDE LOWTHIAN BELL.

Rounton, Oct. 1910.

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NOTE

THE greater part of Chapter IV appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, and half of Chapter VIII in *Blackwood's Magazine*; I have to thank the editors of these journals for giving me permission to reprint my contributions to them. I am indebted also to the editor of the *Times* for allowing me to use, in describing the excavations at Babylon and at Asshur, two articles written by me which were published in the *Times*. The Geographical Society has printed in its journal a paper in which I have resumed the topographical results of my journey down the Euphrates. The map which accompanies this book is based upon the map of Asiatic Turkey, recently published by that society, and upon a map of the Euphrates from Tell Aḥmar to Hīt which was drafted to illustrate my paper.

Mr. David Hogarth, Mr. L. W. King, Mr. O. M. Dalton and Professor Max van Berchem have furnished me with valuable notes. To Sir Charles Lyall, who has been at the pains to help me with the correcting of the proofs, I tender here my grateful thanks for this and many another kindness.

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