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THE NOMADIC TRIBES OF PERSIA TO-DAY

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Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, May 23rd, 1945, Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G., in the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the lecturer, said: Captain Garrod is a doctor. His duties in the Royal Army Medical Corps took him, four years ago, to Iraq and Persia. Like his cousin, the well-known archæologist, Professor Dorothy Garrod of Cambridge, Dr. Garrod is greatly interested in ethnology and the way of life of primitive peoples. When therefore it was decided by the authorities that it was desirable to provide some medical facilities for the outlying districts of South-West Persia, Dr. Garrod was seconded for this work. For twenty months he was travelling almost continuously in Kurdistan, Luristan, Bakhtiari and the tribal districts of Fars. Of the large amount of material he has collected he proposes to select for the lecture information in particular on the Qashqais, the Khamsch, the Boir Ahmedi and the Mamassani tribes. This is the first lecture we have ever had on the tribes of Persia and I believe it will prove to be of great importance.

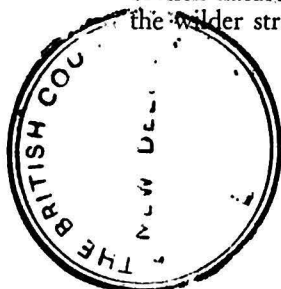
I FEEL very honoured to have been invited by the Royal Central Asian Society to speak to you this afternoon: It has been necessary for reasons of time to confine the subject of this talk to the tribes of Fars. The tribes of Persia are so numerous and varied that to describe them adequately would take many hours. Those of Fars are perhaps the most interesting because so little has been written about them and because of the variety of races which they represent. For the benefit of those who have not had the good fortune to travel in these parts I will first outline the main features of the country and describe its settled inhabitants, whose lives are so closely interwoven with those of the nomads.

The province of Fars is bounded to the west by the Behbahan district of Khuzistan; to the north by the Cheharmahal, Qumisheh and Nain districts of Isfahan province; to the east by the Yezd district of Isfahan and the province of Kerman; to the south-east by the Bandar Abbas district, whilst to the south-west the boundary marches with the shores of the Persian Gulf.

The course of nomadic life is so closely regulated by the climate that, for our present purpose, the province of Fars may best be described under three main climatological headings. First there is the "garmsir," or hot district, which, starting with the narrow coastal plain along the shores of the Persian Gulf, rises up into tangled hills of gach and sandstone. These are deeply dissected by storm-water channels and small streams which dry up or pool in the summer. Here and there a meagre spring pours forth a trickle, usually brackish, occasionally sulphurous. The climate is unbearably hot in summer, and tolerably cool with slight frost and occasional light snowfall on the hilltops in the winter months. Travel, mostly by horse or mule, is difficult and fatiguing owing to the broken nature of the country and the very few roads. The vegetation in the wilder stretches consists principally of a thorny tree, the "kunar" or

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jujube, which provides small edible berries with a flavour akin to that of crab apple; these are much eaten by the tribes in March and April. Its dried and powdered leaves, called "sedr," make an ideal hair shampoo, and on the few occasions when washing is resorted to it is usually this that is used as soap; indeed, in many districts the word for soap is the same as that of the kunar tree. Its thorny branches serve as food for camels and goats, fuel, and material for the fencing of corals. Along the river beds grow oleander shrubs, which are poison to horses and donkeys; also willow, myrtle, reeds and tamarisk.

The end of November or early December sees the beginning of the winter rains, and the land, hitherto yellow and parched, takes on a carpet of green grass which, in a good year, towards the end of March, rises to the height of a horse's girth. In the winter and spring the "garmsir" is overrun by nomadic tribes. Starting about October, when they first come down, the sheep and the more hardy and versatile goat are reduced to withered grasses for nourishment, and present a lean and scraggy sight. Towards the end of January, with the advent of spring, they soon fatten, finding almost the peak of their form about April, when, the sheep being of the fat-tailed sort, these appendages often reach the massive weight of twenty pounds or more.

The fierce, contorted nature of the land, the few broad valleys and the paucity of water lead to a wide dispersion of tents. However, in spring-time in a good year when the grass is long, a greater density is possible, prior to the upward migration. The more industrious families sow small plots of barley and wheat in December, scratching the earth with simple ploughs drawn by oxen or mules. These they harvest about the middle of April, before their upward migration. A few, with rice-fields to tend, stay down and brave the malaria during the hot summer months.

Wild animals abound in the mountains and valleys. The cultivated plains, riverine areas and swamps bristle with pig, which do a lot of damage to the crops. Leopard and ibex haunt the jungles and mountains, while gazelle are plentiful in the plains and lower slopes; but it is doubtful how long they will survive at the present inordinate rate of their destruction by nomadic hunters who, once more, own large numbers of rifles and find antelope flesh a thrifty alternative to the killing of their sheep. The latter fetch from £3 to £4 a head, and represent, with their horses, camels and cattle, their only capital.

The three principal rivers are the Zuhreh which, rising as the Shishpir in the high mountains of Ardekan, north-west of Shiraz, flows westwards along the southern slopes of Kuhgalu to find an outlet eventually in the Persian Gulf about a hundred miles north-west of Bushire. The second, the Shahpur, rises north of Kazerun, and, carving a tortuous channel through the foothills of the "garmsir," enters the gulf about twenty miles north-west of Bushire. The third, the Mand or Qara Agach, collects the drainage of the Kuhmarreh mountains south-west of Shiraz. After flowing a hundred miles south-eastwards, along the grain, it turns upon itself to enter the Gulf about sixty miles south-east of Bushire. It is almost wholly in the long, silted valleys which open out alternately between the gorges and steep valleys formed by these rivers and their

principal tributaries that the settled population is now gathered. Their villages, accentuated by groves of date palm and castellated mounds, rise like islands above a sea of corn and rice.

In the course of our journeys through the wilder and less well-watered parts of the country which are now given over almost in their entirety to the nomads, we saw time and again the battered imprints of an ancient civilization: vast networks of long-silted "qanats," or underground water channels, ruined cities and caravanserais, immense tumuli and fire temples. Throughout there was evidence that in Sassanian and early Arab times the province of Fars must have supported a far larger population than it does to-day. Centuries of anarchy, war, disease and tribal depredations have caused a progressive depopulation, whilst the increasing cost of digging and clearing out the underground "qanats" has led to their neglect and collapse and ultimately to the abandonment of the settlements they once supported, and to a reluctance, moreover, to dig new ones. Therefore we now find the population clinging to the well-watered riverine plains where, with a minimum of labour, surface water can be run in simple "jubes" or channels to the fields. Such conditions lead to an extensive cultivation of rice, with the result that in summer and autumn malaria is hyperendemic. Almost everyone is riddled with the disease, the children tending to become mere appendages to their own spleens, which often reach down to their hips. All this makes them susceptible in winter to pneumonia and in summer to disastrous epidemics of typhoid and dysentery. Trachoma of the eyes is universal in many villages, also most horrible skin diseases. Opium smoking is indulged in by a large percentage of the population; and venereal disease is spreading farther afield, partly owing to the two years' conscription introduced by Reza Shah, which brings simple recruits from out-of-the-way villages into contact with the vice and corruption of the towns, and also to the increase in motor-lorry traffic to outlying centres of government and wheat collection. Thus, on the whole, it may be said that the settled population—I exclude the coastal Arabs and the inhabitants of Tangistan, Dashtish-tan and Dashti, solely because I have no personal experience of them, from these remarks—which is fundamentally of Persian or Farsi-speaking stock, with an addition of Arabs, Turks and Lurs from the tribes, is dirty, diseased and ignorant, rather bigoted, apathetic and very superstitious. Often they are at the mercy of Saiyyids, Dervishes and Mullahs, whose reactionary and once dwindling power has begun to reassert itself since the abdication of Reza Shah. Apart from the larger centres and towns with more than eight thousand inhabitants there are virtually no doctors and hardly any schools.

I have dwelt at some length on these conditions because they are those into which many thousands of nomadic tribesmen were forcibly introduced after their disarmament in the 'thirties by Reza Shah. It will be evident that in the course of half a dozen years or more many hundreds of them died from the effects of disease or famine, and that their health and morale, especially of the younger generation, were radically impaired. After the fall of Reza Shah, with the disturbed conditions which supervened in the outlying provinces of Persia, the tribes took matters very

much into their own hands and were quick to return to a nomadic life. About 90 per cent. of those who were settled are now living in tents and migrating again and beginning to recover from the effects of their past oppression. Others were settled in dry or barren lands where they were unable to cultivate sufficient to earn an honest living, many seeking work in Khuzistan with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The flocks of those who remained perished on the dried summer grasses, their owners being obliged to pay exorbitant bribes in the form of sheep, horses or cattle in order to be allowed to migrate. Sooner or later this led to their impoverishment. The pendulum, however, has swung back again and it is the turn once more of the already miserable villagers to suffer the depredations and trappings down that accompany the bi-annual migrations of thousands of undisciplined tribesmen. Insecurity and lack of confidence were at their worst in 1942, and, by causing a restriction of sowing to the immediate vicinity of the villages, led to a minor famine in the winter of 1942-43.

The true "garmsir" country ends at about 3,500 feet. The next region has a climate which the Persians call "mu'tavil," which is intermediate between the "garmsir" and the high "sarhad," whither they migrate in summer, to an altitude of over 6,000 feet. The "mu'tavil" climate embraces such important centres as Shiraz, Firuzabad, Niris and the fertile Mervdasht plain stretching from the foot of Persepolis. Its north-western regions pass into the great belt of scrub oak, separated by steep and lofty ranges of limestone, running in a series of parallel waves from the Turkish frontier in the north-west to the Kuhmarreh mountains south of Shiraz. There are several species of oak, both deciduous and evergreen, some of which rise to a height of 30 to 40 feet if undisturbed. Here and there the scenery is quite park-like. Near all the inhabited localities rapid deforestation is, and has for centuries been, taking place, due largely to the slovenly methods of the charcoal burners, who persist in lighting their fires at the foot of the trees, and when they have charred the base of one pass on to another without cutting it down; whilst the saplings fall victim to the voracity of the goat. The oaks provide acorns about two inches long. These are gathered by the poorer nomads, who pulverize them with stones, wash them for about a week in running water to remove the bitterness, and then use them as flour. Much of their bread contains 50 per cent. or more of this acorn flour mixed with that obtained from barley or wheat. It is said to be nourishing. I have tasted it on and off. If well washed its flavour is not unpleasant and reminds one of bran or all-bran. If eaten for any length of time it is, unlike its counterpart, highly constipating and leads to indigestion.

Besides the oak, many fruit trees grow wild in the forests. Of these the apple, pear, pomegranate, quince, cherry, fig, almond, pistachio, vine and even an occasional olive tree have their place. Their fruits mostly are inedible, excepting the nuts and the pomegranate, which is smaller and rather sweeter than the cultivated sort, and has a yellowish-black skin. The large pyramidal seeds of the wild pear, which is called "anchuchak," make excellent nuts when roasted and salted. The rivers are fringed with thickets of willow, and up to about 4,000 feet the oleander grows. The

villages in the forest belt are few, small, primitive and far between, and inhabited mostly by settled offshoots from the nomadic tribes. Their chief occupations, besides husbandry, are sheep rearing and charcoal burning. South-east of Shiraz the rainfall lessens as one approaches the salt lakes and inhospitable regions of the great central desert. The landscape assumes an inhospitable air of desolation and the valleys become less confined. This is the country the deserts of which harbour the elusive wild ass and in the oases of which the pistachio tree flourishes. The tribal population is small, seasonal and widely dispersed.

The third climatic region is the "sarhad," or cold country, which marks the edge of the great central plateau and is seen at its most typical in the regions between Isfahan and Shiraz, where the Qashqai and Khamseh tribes pass the summer months. It lies at a height of over 6,000 feet. Many of the valleys, including some of the settled ones, are 7,000 or 8,000 feet above sea-level. The latter level marks the limit of permanent occupation. On the whole the valleys are broad, gently undulating, rather bare of trees, and fertile, or potentially so, if properly irrigated. The mountains attain a height of from 10,000 to 12,000 feet, and are either bare or covered with thin scrub in which juniper and cranberry are found. There is evidence that in not so distant times the oak belt spread into much of this "sarhad" country, but that it has been systematically denuded, probably owing to causes which I have already mentioned. Communications are fairly easy. There is the main road from Isfahan to Shiraz, from which a number of motorable tracks, starting from Shahriz, Abadeh and Dehbid, take one with some difficulty into the heart of the country. As one moves west or south-west the valleys become much narrower and steeper and, finally, one is confronted with the massive Kuh-i-Dina range, which, stretching for forty miles and rising to a height of nearly 15,000 feet, forms, with its southern prolongations, a great natural barrier between the Qashqai and Boir Ahmedi tribes. The broad valleys of the "sarhad" provide ideal summer pastures. At this season the climate is cool and invigorating, the thermometer seldom rising above 85° F., and this a dry heat; but in winter the higher valleys at about 7,000 or 8,000 feet are for many weeks under 2 or 3 feet of snow. For nomadic people living in tents, the weather is fit only from about the middle of May until September. Because of the scarcity of timber little fuel is available, which is one of the reasons why they cannot prolong their stay in this region. In the early summer the grass grows several feet long, and far greater crowding is possible than in the winter quarters. It is not uncommon to find several thousand tents spread over one plain about twenty by ten miles during the first month of the summer season. The sheep, the horses and the nomads themselves are now at the peak of their form, and great gatherings of mounted tribesmen are possible because there is grass and water everywhere. Big hunting parties are assembled by the Khans, and large-scale expeditions become a practical proposition.

Two crops are sown by the more industrious or landowning tribesmen, the first in the autumn just before they move down. This lies fallow under the winter snow, sprouts early in the spring and is harvested at the

end of June or early July. The second is sown shortly after their arrival at about the beginning or middle of May. As there is no summer rainfall, it must be irrigated by simple channels run from the streams, and is ready for harvesting in the autumn, about the end of August or September, before they move down again. Maize is grown and because of its manifold return is becoming increasingly popular. It is hardy and less liable than wheat or barley to insect pests, and, water being abundant, three crops a year can sometimes be raised.

In the hills of the "sarhad" the thorny gum tragacanth bush is to be found at close intervals, and the liquorice plant grows unexploited. The collection of the gum, which exudes from incisions made into the excavated root, forms a large part of the summer industry of the tribes. The Darrashuri of Qashqai alone market about thirty tons of this gum every year. Also there are various thistles, such as kangar, and wild celeries and bulbs, such as "Musir," which are pickled in sour milk and form very good dishes. The villages are few and far between, some single, others, where water is more plentiful, in small clusters. They are mostly owned by the tribal Khans. Those who remain in them all the year round take refuge from the harsh winter in the hearts of their dwellings round the bread oven, whilst their animals are pushed underground into tunnels or caves.

As one nears the western marches of the Qashqai "sarhad" and the wild mountains that harbour the formidable tribe of Boir Ahmedi, the proportion of villages occupied by "Saiyyids" rapidly increases. These descendants of the Prophet are vested with a more than due meed of sanctity, and are feared, respected and left to live in peace by the wilder tribes; we find them flourishing in the most dangerous situations. It is fairly clear that in some cases their ancestors have assumed this hereditary title for the obvious advantages which it confers. The Boir Ahmedi are in the habit of distributing any spoils which cannot be fairly divided between themselves among the "Saiyyids" in order to acquire merit in the eyes of God. There is a small group of Circassians at Diz-i-Kurd in the heart of the Qashqai country, and at Asupas there was once a colony of Georgians, both transplanted by Shah Abbas. Otherwise the population is Persian, with a sprinkling of Qashqai Turks and an increasing element of Lurs towards the west. The villages are planted with walnut trees, small orchards of apricot and apple, and orderly groves of poplars, which provide the sole source of roofing material. Fuel is prepared from the dung of cattle and beasts of burden, laboriously caked by the women-folk.

The principal rivers of the "sarhad" are the Kur or Bandamir, which drains the southern heights of the Qashqai country, and, after feeding the rice-fields of Kamfiruz, unites with the Pulvar stream at Mervdasht and peters out eventually in the salt lakes north-west of Niris. There is the Shishpir river from Ardakan, which becomes the Zuhreh of the "garm-sir," and the Marbora, from the melting snows of the Kuh-i-Dina, which flows north-westwards along the north-eastern foot of the range, through which it finally cuts in a mighty gorge to end up in the Karun river. Among the wild beasts of the "sarhad" are brown bear, leopard,

moufflon, ibex and gazelle; in the Kuh-i-Dina the rare snow leopard; and in the plains and marshes the ubiquitous wild boar.

Now let us turn to the tribes themselves. It was the policy of Reza Shah, having disarmed them, to settle them under harsh military governorships and make sure that they were unable to return to their old predatory ways. The conditions under which this was effected in the "garmsir" I have already mentioned. Those settled in the "sarhad," also met with many difficulties; fuel was scarce and, from lack of practice and materials, they were unable to build adequate houses. The pastures were under snow for several months each winter; and it takes a long time to change from a purely pastoral to an agricultural economy. When Reza Shah fell, the tribes were quick to break the shackles of their confinement and return to a nomadic life, and within a few months they had driven out the army, gendarmes and officials from many of their old haunts and had turned to robbing and looting the highways and villages which stood in their path. They stole many rifles from the gendarmes, bought others from deserters, and succeeded, one way or another, in building up a part of their old strength. In a few months many of their chiefs, or Khans, who had survived long exile in Tehran or Khorasan; broke loose and slunk back to their tribes, where, on the whole, they found a warm welcome as fellow-sufferers from oppression. Within six months to a year they had mostly been successful in re-establishing their authority. There was a good deal of skirmishing in the south between Government forces and the Qashqai and Boir Ahmedi tribes. But the excitement of rearmament and regained freedom is in many quarters playing itself out and many families are anxious to return to a more settled mode of life. However, there are many difficulties in the way. Once settled, they are vulnerable to interference and humiliation by the Government, and being great lovers of freedom, they prefer the hard life of the hills to loss of this and their self-respect. This applies particularly to the Khans, who are very powerful and exact a feudal respect from their following. To settle they need assistance, because often the land can be made fertile only by irrigation. Education and health services are essential, and the settlement areas require careful selection from the point of view of health if a rapid degeneration is to be avoided. At present there are no signs that anything is being done to meet the situation, though a Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been set up in Tehran, with representatives from some of the larger tribes.

The most important tribes of Fars are (1) the Qashqai, predominantly Turks, with about thirty thousand nomadic families; (2) the Boir Ahmedi, who are Kuhgalu Lurs from the very mountainous district between Behbahan and the Kuh-i-Dina, numbering about ten thousand families; (3) the Khamseh, a motley of Arab, Turk and Lur, moving between the pastures to the north-east and south-east of Shiraz and numbering over fifteen thousand families, of which about five thousand are permanently settled; (4) the Mamassani Lurs, mostly settled in the fertile valleys of Shulistan about sixty miles north-west of Shiraz; (5) the Doshmanziari, settled between Ardakan and Kazerun, closely related to the Mamassani, but now treated as a separate tribe. The Qashqai and Boir Ahmedi, the

only ones with which I shall have time to deal adequately this afternoon, are to-day the most important tribal elements in Fars.

The origin of the Qashqai is somewhat obscure. They are Turks who are believed to have been driven south by the Mongol invasion of Persia in the thirteenth century and to have taken refuge in Fars. They speak a Turki dialect which is similar to that of Northern Azerbaijan, and which is being studied at the moment by Dr. Gunner Jarring, the Swedish orientalist. Though Mongol features are more common in the Qashqai than in the other tribes of South-west Persia, yet, contrary to popular belief, few marked Mongoloid types are seen. Indeed, many of them are of distinctly Aryan caste. During past centuries tribal sections of Lur or Bakhtiari origin have taken refuge with the Qashqai and have assimilated their customs and language.

The tribes found solidarity in the time of Kerim Khan Zend about the middle of the eighteenth century. It seems that until then they were an odd collection of Turkish tribes, lacking cohesion. Kerim Khan appointed their first paramount chief, or Ilkhani, from their noble clan of Shahilu, whose Khans claim a common ancestry with the Safavi dynasty. To assist him the Ilkhani had an Ilbegi, whose chief duty was to collect taxes, of which the Government took a share. He came from the same family and was often a younger brother of the Ilkhani. This system of rule lasted until well into the reign of Reza Shah, the chieftainship passing from father to brother or son or nephew, and the appointment always being made or confirmed by the Governor-General of Fars. With the Qashqai revolt in the middle of the '30's, and their disarmament and attempted settlement by Reza Shah, their tribal organization was temporarily broken. With the return from exile in 1942 of Nasir Khan, whose father, the late Saulat-ud-Dauleh, fought the South Persia Rifles in the last war, he soon assumed the rôle of Ilkhani, assisted by one of his brothers, although as such he has never been officially recognized by the Government.

The average Qashqai nomad is a healthy fellow, of strong, wiry physique, rarely addicted to opium and free from venereal disease. His courage is variable, but is undisputed in many sections; whilst his loyalties, though mainly confined to clan or tribe, are undoubtedly strong. Co-operation of a marked degree is often found between the various tribal sections. They have a strong family sense, which is, I believe, common to Turks as a race. They are strictly monogamous, and I have seen among them many instances of what I consider to be real family love, a quality which is often marked by its absence among Lurs. This family co-operation is apt to extend itself between members of sections of a hundred families or more. Thus at times they are able to achieve a solidarity which may amount to nearly thirty thousand families owing allegiance to one paramount chief.

The women, as is usual with nomads, bear the brunt of the work: they are up from an hour before dawn until about nine o'clock at night; they milk the flocks, prepare the various milk products, put up and dismantle the tents, sow and weave, bake the bread, cook the meals and rear the children; whilst the men mostly sit around talking or smoking the communal water-pipe. The inactivity of the latter is punctuated every

few days by violent outbursts of activity, which may take the form of hunting or robbing or pursuing others similarly engaged. This idleness of the men, which often leads to mischief, is one of the great weaknesses of a pastoral as compared with an agricultural community. In religion they are orthodox Shiah Mohammedans, as are all the tribes of Fars.

The Qashqai are divided into about thirty sections or "taifeh," of which the most important to-day are the Amaleh, Kashkuli, Darrashuri, Shishbuluki, Farsimadan and Gallehzan. The Amaleh are the personal following of the Ilkhani and number about three thousand families. With the growing power and fortune of the tribe since the abdication of Reza Shah, many hitherto separate sections have tacked themselves on to the Amaleh as servants and followers of the now extremely wealthy ruling Khans and their relations.

The Kashkuli are much respected because their Khans, of Zend origin, are closely related to the family of the Ilkhani. Their ancestor, Qasim Khan Zend, displaced the Mamassani from their summer quarters north of Ardakan and from their "garmsir" district of Mahū-i-Mehlatun. In many ways, with the Darrashuri, they are the most civilized of them all. Family life especially flourishes at a high and dignified level in the tents of their numerous Khans; and their women, with those of the small Bullu section, are the finest weavers of Qashqai. They are especially noted for their "jajims," or tartan woollen blankets, and for the fine quality of their rugs and trappings. They own few horses but numerous camels, and their sheep are of fine quality and famous for the softness of their wool.

The Darrashuri, about five thousand families, are celebrated as horsemen. In the early days, before Reza Shah, each family possessed an average of three or four mounts, of which one or two were well bred. When one winter they were forced by the army to remain in the mountains, they lost 80 to 90 per cent. of their stock. They are now building it up again. Their speciality is shooting from the saddle. Their Khans, of the Khikha family, claim descent from one Haidar Ming Bashi, who was a subordinate of Sir Robert Shirley in the seventeenth century.

The Shishbuluki are tall, handsome and well built, and make brave foot warriors. They are also the richest tribe in flocks, and their wealth is more evenly distributed than in other sections. They still weave carpets of good quality.

The Farsimadan are a wilder section, living in summer under the cool slopes of Kuh-i-Dina; they are neighbours of the Boir Ahmedi, to the Khans of which their own are related by marriage.

The wilder half of Gallehzan is broken up into small bands under rival "kakhudas," or headmen, and have an evil reputation as robbers.

Each section has its ruling family of Khans, from whom one or two chiefs, called "Kalantars," are appointed, usually by agreement among themselves and the "rish-safids," or elders, and with the added approval of the Ilkhani. Their migration is the longest of all the Persian tribes. Some sections of the Amaleh move from as far as Afsar and Kunj on the borders of Laristan to within 80 miles of Isfahan each year—a distance of over 350 miles. The migration routes converge at Guyum, 20 miles north-

west of Shiraz, where they are most vulnerable, and then spread out along the northern valleys. They spend from four to six weeks on the trail, both in the spring and autumn moves. The women, children and beasts of burden tend to follow the valleys, whilst the flocks spread out along the hillsides and the horsemen take up position on the flanks, playing at various games or indulging in hunting for the evening meal. Dried milk balls, called "khushki," prepared from sour buttermilk (dhû), form an important item of their diet whilst on the move.

The Ilkhani, in theory, is responsible for laying down the migration routes and allocating the main grazing lands, should there be any dispute, to the various sections of the tribe. These, however, usually follow traditional lines, and any attempt, these days, by the Ilkhani to interfere may lead to trouble. The Kalantars, or chiefs of sections, allot grazing land to their "Kadkhudas," or headmen of about one to three hundred families. As a rule, the tribal organization works smoothly in Qashqai; there are few feuds between one tribe and another, and from my experience of them they live nomadic life at almost its highest level—in Persia at any rate.

The next important tribe, the Boir Ahmedi, inhabit the savage mountain chains to the south-west of the Kuh-i-Dina range, which separates them from Qashqai. They are one of the most interesting and least-known tribes in the whole of Persia. It would appear from tribal tradition that they have always occupied their present tracts, and that all the great invasions and civilizations of the past have tended to skirt them by, thanks to their extreme inaccessibility. I believe Drs. Harrison and Falcon and, in the last century, Stocqueler and Bell, are amongst the few Europeans who have ever passed through the heart of their country.

Boir Ahmedi history is one of endless strife and bloodshed among themselves. Out of a family tree of their ruling Khans, going back a hundred years or so and including some enormous families, I doubt whether more than six have died a natural death. They even resort to poison to remove their rivals, using a preparation of finely ground leopards' whiskers which they conceal in the food. The result is a lingering death from ulceration of the gut. The symptoms are slow in onset, suspicion being thereby averted from the murderer. Poisons of a more drastic nature are reported, among them the well-known mandragora root and cantharides, extracted from a local beetle. Early in the nineteenth century the tribe split into two main divisions, the Garmsiri and the Sarhaddi, of which the latter has remained nomadic. During the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the present century the Boir Ahmedi Sarhaddi were fairly well united under Karim Khan, their powerful kalantar, who co-operated now and then with the local Governor-General of Fars. His murder by Mullah Kobad, Kadkhuda of the Sisakhti section of the tribe, released powerful antagonistic forces within the tribe and led to increased rivalry between Karim's son, Sartip, and Shukrullah his nephew. Internal raids and skirmishing flourished for several years and led to the intervention of the Bakhtiari Khans, then at the height of their power, having recently assisted in the formation of the constitutional government in Teheran. Sardar Jang, the Bakhtiari

Governor of Behbahan, settled the dispute by dividing the Sarhaddi into two sections, upper and lower ("Olia" and "Sufla"), under Sartip and Shukrullah respectively. This division remains to-day and is the basis of many a bloody feud. During the last war they made a nuisance of themselves by raiding eastwards, across the Kuh-i-Dina, on to the Shiraz-Isfahan road and even to the outskirts of Yezd and Nain; whilst in the south-west their excursions took them recently to the shores of the Persian Gulf. They only raid eastwards when the Qashqai, who intervene in summer, have moved down to their winter quarters. Conversely, it is only when the Qashqai are in the "sarhad" that they raid south-eastwards, through the Kashkuli and Darrashuri "garmsir" district of Mahur-i-Mehlatun.

In 1923, when Reza Shah became War Minister, the district of Kuhgalu, having hitherto formed a part of the province of Fars, was incorporated into the province of Khuzistan; and with the provision of a Military Governor of Behbahan, Bakhtiari power began to wane. The weaker and more accessible tribes of Kuhgalu were in turn broken and disarmed, and their lands occupied by the forces of military government. Meanwhile, the Boir Ahmedi retained their power and grew even stronger relatively than before. Matters came to a head in 1930 when Sartip Khan, Kalantar of the Upper Sarhaddi division, murdered Assad Khan, Kalantar of the neighbouring Bavi tribe. The Government was obliged to intervene, sending a brigade to Ardakan, north-west of Shiraz, and another force into Southern Kuhgalu. They were a long time gaining contact with their enemies. Advancing westwards, the brigade from Ardakan, supported by Qashqai levies, eventually entered the steep wooded valley of Tang-i-Tamuradi, where they were ambushed by the whole force of the elusive Boir Ahmedi. Over 1,000 casualties were suffered by Reza Shah's troops, it being the biggest defeat they had ever sustained. The trouble was eventually ended by the personal intervention of the Sardar Asad, Reza Shah's powerful Bakhtiari Minister of War, who came accompanied by a force of soldiers and a large following of his own Bakhtiari horsemen, inured to this type of warfare. Through his great influence with the tribes, he was able to persuade the principal Boir Ahmedi chiefs to follow him to Tehran, where he promised them security and a life of pleasant exile. First, Shukrullah agreed, and, finally, after a small battle at Naugak, Sartip saw that opposition was of little avail and he, too, followed suit. A year or two later, Sardar Asad fell foul of Reza Shah. Though he, more than any other person, had been responsible for the settlement of tribal affairs with the minimum of bloodshed, he was imprisoned and died from an injection of air into his veins. Shortly afterwards his protégés were also murdered.

Things remained fairly quiet after this. The Government was able to occupy the fringes of the Boir Ahmedi country and build a road to Tul-i-Khosrovi, at the south-eastern foot of the Kuh-i-Dina, which became the centre of a military governor. However, the tribe was never completely disarmed, for such powerful "kadhudas" as Ali and Vali Izad Panah remained at large. Thus matters stood until the Anglo-Russian entry in 1941. The sudden withdrawal of the tyrant's hand led, as I have already

indicated, to a state bordering on anarchy in the tribal districts of Fars. A rearmament race began, and at the beginning of 1942 the two principal Boir Ahmedi Khans, Abdullah Zarghampur, son of Shukrullah, and Mohd. Husain Tahiri, son of Sartip, escaped from Teheran and re-established their authority within their respective lower and upper sections of the tribe. In the summer of 1943, aided by Qashqai, they attacked, defeated and disarmed a full battalion of the Persian Army at Semirun in the Qashqai summer quarters, capturing what to them was a vast amount of arms, ammunition and other booty. Since then they have been quarrelling principally amongst themselves.

Individually, the Boir Ahmedi are still living in the Heroic Age, and have become an interesting though highly dangerous anachronism, menacing the security and peaceful development of Western Fars. They are acknowledged, alike by friend and foe, to be the bravest, toughest and most ruthless fighters in Southern Persia. These qualities, added to their untrustworthiness and inaccessibility, have made them the terror of their neighbours. Their mobility on foot rivals that of the mounted Turko-mans of old. As with all tribes in which the predatory instincts are highly developed, their energies are often dissipated in feuds among themselves; these, however, are generally submerged when the tribe as a whole is threatened from outside. They raid in bands of up to several hundred strong, covering about forty miles a day over rough mountain trails. If they return empty-handed they are received with a bad grace by their wives, who are frequently the aiders and abettors of the raids and who whisper into the ears of their infant sons that they are born to die in battle.

They breed at a prolific rate, it being not uncommon for one man to have twelve or more sons, of whom each may be armed with a rifle. Their polygamy leads to bitter feuds between half-brothers, who think nothing of killing one another in a quarrel over a rifle or a handful of rounds. In appearance they are superior to the average Lur, with magnificent physique, broad shouldered and of wonderful muscular development. Some are fair with blue eyes, a pronounced Aryan type that is represented among all the Lurs. In dress the Boir Ahmedi is similar to the other tribes of Fars. He wears the long robe with divided sleeves, a large silk kummerbund and a brown felt "kula" or hat. He seldom lets his rifle out of his sight for fear a brother or rival may steal it; and when he dances the usual tribal dance, in which a large circle is formed round a cairn of stones, he performs with his rifle resting on his kummerbund, a precaution I have observed in no other tribe. The country inhabited by the Boir Ahmedi is steep and uncultivated save in the valleys occupied by the villagers, who are mostly Saiyyids; the nomads suffer little from sickness, malaria or any other disease, though wounds, mostly gunshot, are common; however, in the lower-lying villages of the Tul-i-Khosrovi district, the well-watered maize-fields give rise to a lot of malaria.

I fear I have almost reached the limit of the time allotted to me. However, I have managed to deal, somewhat inadequately, with the two most important of the main tribes. For the remainder I will only have time

for a few words. The Khamseh Confederation of five tribes—namely, the Arabs, the Baseri, the Ainalu, the Baharlu and the Naffar—formed, until the time of Reza Shah's operations, a loosely-knitted bloc under the leadership of the Qawam-ul-Mulk. This hereditary title was bestowed early in the last century upon a prominent Persian to whom the tribes were given over in fief. The Turkish Ainalu and Baharlu sections are now entirely settled in the "garmsir" districts of Fasa and Darab, where they have intermarried to some extent with their Persian neighbours. They are fast losing their tribal organization and characteristics, and the Baharlu, once the foremost horsemen and most feared warriors and bandits of Eastern Fars, have sadly degenerated from the effects of malaria and the diseases bred in the cumulative filth of their settlements.

The Naffar, a mixture of Turk and Lur, have sunk into a lawless rabble of a few hundred families, camped in the rocky wastes to the south of Lar, where they prey upon the few settled inhabitants who remain in this inhospitable region.

The Arabs, whose ancestors migrated to Fars on the wave of the seventh-century invasion, and who still speak a language which is a hybrid of Arabic, Persian and Luri, are split into two main divisions, the Jabbareh and Shaibani, whose respective summer quarters lie to the east and west of the main Shiraz-Isfahan road, in the neighbourhood of Dehbid. Most sections have now returned to a nomadic life, under the control of a military governor. However, in the absence of powerful leaders, they lack cohesion and have been unable to regain their old status and prosperity. Indeed, many sections are in a miserable plight, having been reduced to a state of beggary and petty robbery. They suffered, perhaps more than any other tribe in Fars, from the oppression and enforced settlement of the past ten years, the misery of many sections having been accentuated by the somewhat arid and barren nature of their lands compared with those of the Qashqai.

The Baseri, of mixed Arab and Turkish descent, are the most virile, prosperous and well behaved of the Khamseh nomads, and camp both in their summer and winter quarters in close proximity to the Qashqai. Like the Mazidi Arabs, they once held a high reputation for their rugs, but this art has now degenerated.

The interesting tribe of Mamassani has for several generations been three-parts settled in the rich valleys of Shulistan, at the fertile junction of the "garmsir" with the "mu'tavil" zone about 60 miles north-west of Shiraz. This district is renowned alike for its fertility, beauty of scene and strategic importance, and was traversed by the army of Alexander the Great in his classic march from Susa to Persepolis. The tribe took possession of their lands, which technically belonged to the Crown and which, with the barren hills of Mahur-i-Mehlatun to the south-west, served originally as their winter quarters, by a process of infiltration conducted during the reign of anarchy which followed upon the Afghan invasion. The invading armies had previously ravaged the countryside in returning from an unsuccessful assault upon Behbahan. Until about eighty years ago they bore very much the same reputation as the Boir Ahmedi does to-day, having been famed for their bravery in battle and for the daring scope of

their raids. Their summer quarters then extended as far as Diz-i-Kurd, in the heart of what is now the southern part of the Qashqai "sarhad." The small population of the few villages between here and Ardakan is still of predominantly Mamassani origin, left stranded by the tide of their withdrawal, though now controlled by the Kashkuli. To-day only one of the four sections is nomadic, the rest having settled spontaneously and by degrees during the past century. The nomadic section, the Javidi, have their "sarhad" in the forest belt to the west of Ardakan, contiguous with their winter quarters at the foot of the Qaleh Safid, a notorious natural stronghold which was stormed by the Mongols. The settled Rustami, Bakesh and Fehliani sections dwell in primitive reed and mud huts, clustered around mounds which bear the fortified dwellings of the Khans and Kadkhodas, the villages lying in the midst of the fertile rice-fields which are the main source of their livelihood. Only a few families move up in summer to the neighbouring hills with their flocks. Though pitifully riddled with malaria, they are still the most handsome of the Lurs, with fine features of the ancient Iranian type, and they can still turn out brave warriors capable of holding their own, assisted by the intrigues of their ambitious Khans, with their more powerfully-armed Qashgai and Boir Ahmedi neighbours, some of whose migration routes actually traverse or skirt the Mamassani lands. Moreover, they have retained to a remarkable degree their tribal organization, individuality and respect for their Khans, considering that they have been settled for several generations. Their kalantars and khans, who maintain separate establishments for their several wives, are closely related by marriage to those of the neighbouring Bavi tribe of Kuhgalu and of Doshman Ziari, mutual interests of a security nature having tended to bind them together.

The Doshman Ziari, who until the beginning of this century were counted a section of Mamassani, came originally from Kuhgalu, where there still dwells a small remnant—the Doshman Ziari Kuchek. They are settled in a fertile and healthy part of the "sarhad" south-west of Ardakan, along the upper reaches of the Shishpir river, at the edge of the forest belt. A description of the Mamassani also applies, in general, to the Doshman Ziari, any differences being due to the effects of the respective climates they dwell in, and to the fact that the Doshman Ziari have retained, perhaps, a firmer link with their past nomadic life. Hence sheep rearing is still one of the principal pegs in their economy, several hundred families moving each autumn, with their flocks, down to the Chenar Shah-i-Jan plain near the source of the Shahpur river, whilst in summer they shift from their hovels into nearby tents.

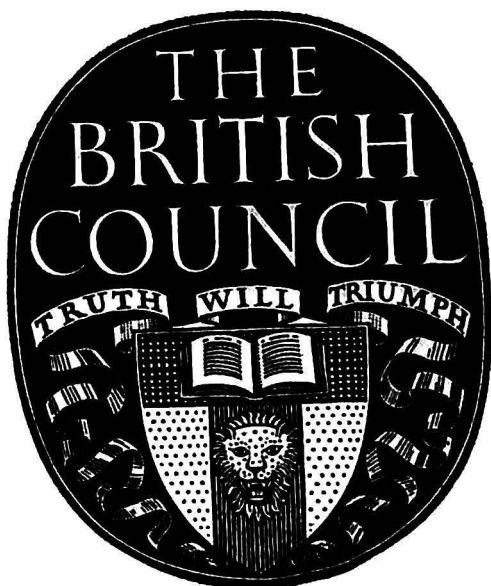
Asked if he thought that the tribes which were entirely settled lost their physical and moral qualities, Captain GARROD replied: It is unfortunate that as soon as nomadic tribes settle down in Persia they begin to degenerate, both physically and morally. So long as they have their tribal organization with its strict code and customs they retain their virile qualities. As soon as they are settled they begin to lose their tribal traditions and organization, with the self-respect these foster, and become influenced by the other settled peoples they see about them, who are

corrupted and spiritless from long oppression. They also fall victims to malaria, trachoma, dysentery and the diseases which arise from the stagnating water and the refuse about the villages. When they are moving they are always in a suitable climate, are avoiding the malaria season of the "garmsir," and are of course moving away from their refuse, which has insufficient time to accumulate about their camps. Added to this are the obvious advantages of an open-air life and a nourishing diet, which contains a high proportion of meat and dairy produce.

The CHAIRMAN: We have listened to an extraordinarily interesting lecture. The Qashqai friends of mine, with whom we had a good deal of fighting in the last war, bore us no ill-will, which is a very fine trait in their character. One of my sons stayed with the sons of an important Qashqai chief, and he could not have been more kindly treated. They are most virile and manly people. The treatment they received from Reza Shah did a great deal of harm. His idea was to settle the tribes down, and then they would not be able to rob and move up and down the country. The result was that they were kept in their huts in summer, and I understand that the insect life there was so plentiful that the people fell victims to various diseases. If that had gone on for a generation or so the tribes would more or less have died out.

We have all enjoyed a most wonderful lecture, and I think we would like to express the hope that we shall see a book containing the valuable information which has been gathered at first-hand by one who is not only an ordinary traveller but a medical man who gets to the hearts of the people. We are very grateful to you, Dr. Garrod.





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