SAID BIN SULTAN

Portrait of Said bin Sultan

Said bin Sultan

(1791—1856)

Ruler of Oman and Zanzibar

His Place in the History of Arabia and East Africa

by

Rudolph Said-Ruete

With a Foreword by
Major-Gen. Sir Percy Cox,
G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.

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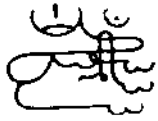

To the Memory

of my Mother

the

SEYYIDAH SALME

(*Emily Ruete*)

Daughter of SAID BIN SULTAN

who

born at Zanzibar on August 30th, 1844,

and having fulfilled a great mission by a

life that proved to the West the noble

qualities of the Womanhood of the East,

died at Jena on February 29th, 1924.

S'il est un orgueil pardonnable
après celui qui se tire du mérite personnel
c'est celui de la naissance.

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

PREFACE

ARABIA has produced through all ages a considerable number of prominent men.

One of the most impressive, powerful and respected personalities since the time of MOHAMMED to the present day was SAID BIN SULTAN.

This book is written with the intention of recording impartially the great achievements of a great man.

London, May, 1929.

FOREWORD

HAVING spent five interesting and happy years in Oman and been honoured by the friendship of two distinguished scions of the House of the "Al bu Said," T. H. Saiyid Faisal bin Turki (bin Said), of revered memory, and his son, Saiyid Taimur bin Faisal, the present Sultan of Muscat, who paid us a visit last summer, I gladly responded to the author's invitation to contribute a short Foreword to his present volume.

The events of the Great War and the part played in its middle-eastern theatres by our Arab friends and Allies gave a considerable stimulus to the interest taken by western countries in the affairs of the Arabian Peninsula in general. Unfortunately, one prominent symptom of this increased interest has been some appetite for a form of romance which a contemporary has aptly described as "shaikh-stuff"; but it is not only, or, indeed, mainly, in the field of romance that activity has been apparent; it has ensued alike in the spheres of history, geography and travel, and it is as an important contribution to the first of these categories that Mr. Said-Ruete's work deserves a cordial welcome from the serious reader.

The subject of his monograph, Saiyid Said bin Sultan, Imam of Muscat and Sultan of Zanzibar (the author's grandfather on the spindle side), though not

the founder of the " Âl bu Said " dynasty, was, and remains, undoubtedly its most outstanding figure.

It is true that the Arabs of the southern principalities of Arabia had from time immemorial been a maritime people. Every year with the advent of the north-east breeze their fleets of trading craft would speed southwards across the Indian Ocean, to return in the spring before the burst of the south-west monsoon. For centuries they enjoyed a practical monopoly of the carrying trade of the East, and, in fact, played in Indian seas the same rôle that the Phœnicians were playing in the Mediterranean. But it was left to the constructive ambition of Saiyid Said bin Sultan, as Ruler of Oman, to establish an Arab " Dominion Overseas " with its capital at Zanzibar, of which he became first Sultan, and which has often been called the Mecca of the African native. On this ground alone Saiyid Said is deserving of a niche in the portrait gallery of world history; while as regards this country the events of his long reign (1804–1856) give us particular reasons for holding his name in fragrant memory. His stalwart and fearless personality prompted him, at great moral and practical inconvenience, and even danger, to himself, to identify himself openly with Great Britain (who enjoyed no co-operation in the matter from other western powers at that time) in her determined efforts for the suppression of the African slave trade and the sinister activities of the famous Jowasmi pirates of the Upper Gulf; while the truly Oriental generosity which distinguished all his dealings with the Government and subjects of Great Britain was a household word in that generation.

A special, if incidental, interest attaches to the

appearance of a work dealing with the life and times of Saiyid Said at this particular juncture, in that they were synchronous with a period of lively activity on the part of the Wahhâbi volcano in Central Arabia. In fact, almost throughout his reign Saiyid Said was liable at any moment to be called upon to defend his territories at one point or another against the sinister aggression of those militant puritans.

Quiescent for half a century after his death, the Wahhâbi element entered on a new period of activity at the beginning of the present century, activity of which we have not yet seen the end, but which, fortunately, under the changed world conditions of to-day and the wiser direction of Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd, has passed into cooler channels than of old. I need not do more than point to this added interest ; let me but say in conclusion that my personal sentiments being almost Confucian in the matter of reverence for one's ancestry, I appreciate the more the industry and devotion which Mr. Said-Ruete has brought to bear on his researches in the by-paths of history for material for this study of one of the most remarkable and distinguished actors who have crossed the stage of Arab history.

P. Z. COX.

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INTRODUCTION

OF comparatively unknown Arabia, the country of Oman, cut off from the rest of the land by large tracts of desert and from the sea to a great extent by impenetrable mountains, is least of all familiar to the world outside. For this reason no excuse will be necessary in presenting a book which, dealing with the greatest ruler of Oman, if not of Arabia itself, is the forerunner of a larger and more extensive history, already in preparation, of the Al bu Said dynasty in Oman and Zanzibar. It will be seen from the ample Bibliography that no pains have been spared to found this narrative on a firm basis of historical fact ; but since documentary evidence is comparatively sparse, in many cases contradictory, and to a large extent founded on unreliable active tradition, the task was not easy—for which reason indulgence is claimed for inaccuracies that may unavoidably have occurred.

In view of the great number of references to other works which had to be made throughout the text it seemed wise to do so in the shortest possible way, thus giving only the author's name or abbreviated title, but if the reader consults the Bibliography he will find fuller details of the books in question.

It will be necessary to explain that, after studying the various and divergent opinions as to the spelling of Arabic words in English, I have decided to follow

my own judgment in the matter. The difficulty of this question will be appreciated if the reader considers that of the capital of Oman alone, several recognised authorities[1] give five different spellings—Muskat, Masqat, Maskat, Muscat and Mascat. The question is further complicated by the fact that even in Arabic the name is spelled in at least six different ways. In the circumstances I hope my arbitrary decision will be accepted with forbearance.

I should like to make public the thanks that I owe to Mr. Eric Bower-Alcock, of Gray's Inn, and to Mr. Anthony Thorne, B.A., for their valuable assistance in the preparation of this book.

To Sir Claud Hollis, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., the British Resident at Zanzibar, and Mr. Bertram S. Thomas, O.B.E., Financial Adviser to H.H. the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, I also express my gratitude for their interest and encouragement.

R. S.-R.

[1] Cf. The Bombay Government Records; the Official Map of Arabia, compiled by the Survey of India and revised in 1916; Hogarth; the Admiralty Handbook of Arabia, and Rihani, together with the *Geographical Journal*.

SAID BIN SULTAN

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF OMAN

THE rule of the Al bu Said previous to the time of SAID BIN SULTAN had not been of long standing in Oman. It replaced in fact the old Yaareba dynasty[1] under circumstances precisely similar to those under which the earlier one had established itself. In the seventeenth century it was the occupation by the Portuguese[2] which had given the Yaarebas their opportunity; in the eighteenth it was the presence of the invading Persians, called in by Seif bin Sultan II. (1741)[3] to help him against his deposer, Sultan bin Murshid,[4] which had aroused the patriotism of the Omanis and made them demand a strong central government. Sultan bin Murshid was not the man to grasp that opportunity and the Persians, called in

[1] Concerning the dynasty of the Yaareba (1624–1724, 1728–1741), cf. MILES, chap. IV., and BADGER, who deals with the subject in his book; also BURTON, I., p. 285. Himyar bin Suliman E. Yaaraby in alliance with Mohammed Nasir el Jabri had risen against SAID BIN SULTAN and seized the fort of Nakhl in about 1815. Successful in the field, he was by treachery enticed into the reach of SAID and put to death: cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25. Some of the few surviving members of the dynastic family were living in 1885 in retirement at Seyjeh in the Semail Valley, whither they had taken refuge from the persecutions of their successors, the Al Bu Said: cf. REP., 1885–86, p. 22. The tribe of the Yaareba numbers at present about 800, and is settled at Nakhl, Tuweyyah, Tikkah and Hazam: cf. HANDBOOK, p. 600.

[2] Concerning the Portuguese in Eastern Arabia, cf. MILES, chap. III., REP., 1884–85, p. 24; BURTON, I., p. 278.

[3] Cf. BADGER, pp. 132, 141, 147.

[4] Installed as Imam in the mosque of Nakhl, 1738: cf. BADGER, pp. xli., 145.

as auxiliaries, remained as masters of the situation. They captured Muscat and from that rocky citadel, admirably protected from land attack by the encircling hills, proceeded to over-run the entire country and reduce it to the Persian yoke. The situation of Sultan, who was able to seize the power but not to hold it, and of Seif, who did not scruple to call in the traditional enemy whom he had not the capacity to control, is not unique in the history of this country ; nor is this the only period at which the fortress of Sohar proved the rallying ground for the patriots of Oman. Upon this occasion there was centred in Sohar a small group of sturdy defenders under the command of one Ahmed bin Said, a man who while of unblemished though humble descent [1] was only a confidential partisan of the ruling house.[2] Under his command Sohar held out against the Persians and the embittered Seif, and continued to hold out even though the attempts of Sultan bin Murshid to relieve it were beaten off. It is not the least pre-eminent characteristic of the Arab race that they rally to an heroic figure and, while investing their rulers with the Imamate, yet pay so little respect to the divinity which they attribute to him that they are able to transfer their allegiance without a qualm to whatever figure best promises to protect their national interests. It was not therefore so unnatural a thing as would appear to Western eyes that Ahmed bin Said, pent up in his fastness, should straightway be regarded as the chief of Oman. He was helped by two timely deaths, that of Sultan bin Murshid, who

[1] A merchant: cf. BADGER, pp. xxxvii., xlv.; OPPENHEIM, II., p. 340; HUART, II., p. 268. A camel driver: cf. REP., 1880–81, p. 32; CURZON, II., p. 435.

[2] Cf. BADGER, pp. xxxvii., 133.

was killed[1] shortly after his unsuccessful attempt at relief, and that of the deposed Seif who died at the same time in El Hazm.[2]

Forthwith Ahmed showed that vigorous decision which characterised his family. By 1744 he had recaptured Muscat, expelled the Persians from Oman and established the dynasty of the Al bu Said, an offshoot of which rules also in Zanzibar to this day. His reign in Oman calls for little comment. It was one in which such semblance of central government was established as may be expected in a country broken by lonely ranges of mountains and inhabited by many[3] tribes, each accustomed to preserve its own position. Ahmed combined policy with energy. On the one hand he married the daughter of the house which he had displaced,[4] on the other he consolidated his position by leading punitive expeditions against the tribes which had supported the Persians. There is even evidence that he established his influence so far afield as Mombasa and Zanzibar.[5]

The influence of Oman in Zanzibar is of long standing. It dates back at any rate to 1689, when Seif bin Sultan I.

[1] Cf. HUART, II., p. 269. Or committed suicide: cf. BURTON, I., p. 287; MILES, p. 259.

[2] Cf. BADGER, pp. xlii., 150.

[3] HANDBOOK, pp. 546–602, gives 220 tribes: cf. REP., 1880–81, p. 19; MILES, chap. VIII., Memorandum on tribal divisions in the principality of Oman to accompany tables of tribes, by E. C. ROSS, 1872. *Transactions of the Bombay Geogr. Society*, Vol. XIX., Part III. (1874): Names of the Tribes of Oman and Map showing the General Distribution of the Tribes of Oman, by E. C. Ross.

[4] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 288; OPPENHEIM, II., p. 341; BOMB. SEL., p. 7; MILES, p. 266; BADGER, p. xlvi.; PALGRAVE, II., p. 256; WELLSTED, I., p. 397; NIEBUHR, p. 305; KERSTEN, p. 18. SPENGLER, II., p. 407, points out that in the Arabian world a dynasty sometimes tried to strengthen their position by intermarriage with the dethroned one.

[5] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 289. It appears likely however that Burton refers to Hamed bin Said bin Ahmed's expedition in 1784 (cf. REP., 1883–84, pp. 20, 28).

of Oman was invited to expel the Portuguese.[1] From that date onwards the external influence of Oman waxed and waned according to the strength or weakness of its rulers, and although Colonel Miles reports (p. 266) that in 1750 Ahmed bin Said sent governors out to the ports of Mombasa, Kilwa and Zanzibar, it is obvious that his control over the East-coast of Africa cannot have been other than weak.

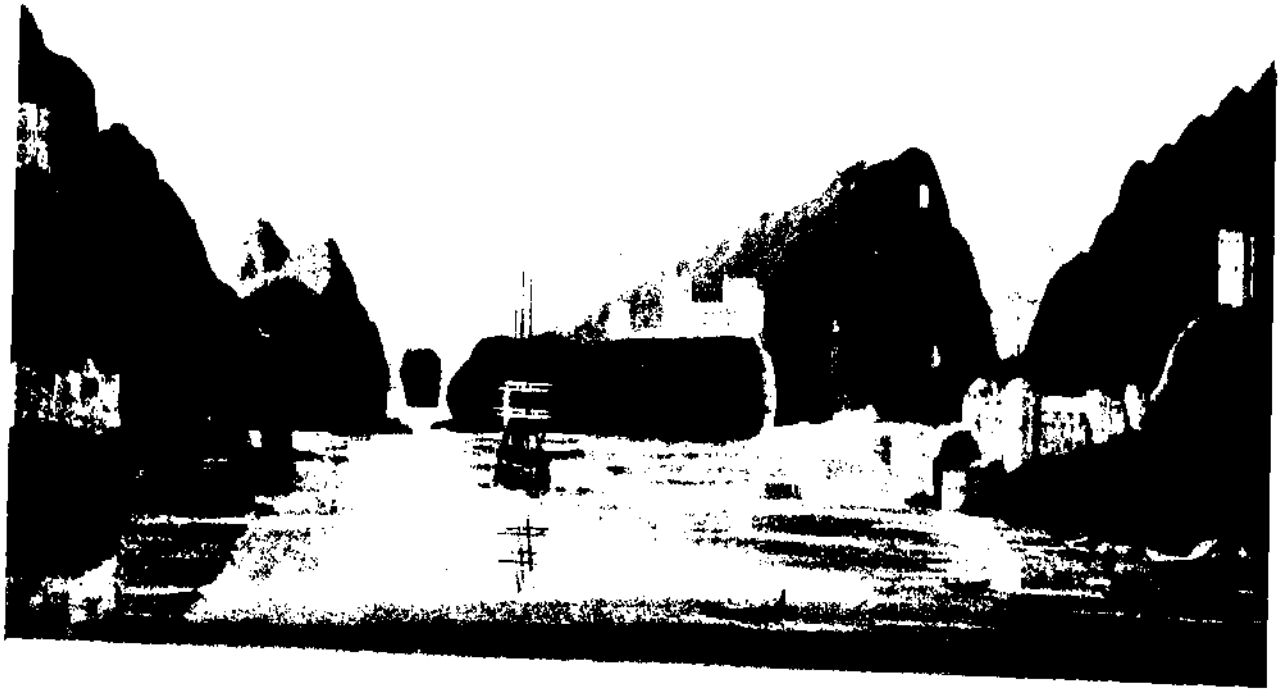
Ahmed died in 1783. This date has been variously reported as 1775, 1783 or 1785, but the question appears to be settled by the inscription on his tomb at Rostak, which gives it as the 19th Moharram, 1198 A.H., *i.e.*, 15th December, 1783.[2] The death of an Arab ruler is the signal for prompt anarchy, particularly in Oman, where there is at any rate a feeling among the tribes that the conferring of the Imamate is in their power, the rule of primogeniture[3] being held of no account. Upon this occasion the choice fell upon Ahmed's son Said—unfortunately, as it happened. Said bin Ahmed was a weak, insignificant man,[4] who would have ceased to rule but for the strong regency

[1] Concerning the first expedition sent by an Oman ruler to East Africa, cf. MILES, p. 220; BADGER, p. 92; ROSS, p. 56; REP., 1883–84, p. 27; STRANDES, p. 231; GRANDIDIER, p. 34.

[2] Cf. MILES, p. 280; REP., 1887–88, p. 23.

[3] Cf. SCHMIDT, p. 98; NEWMAN, p. 55; LYNE, p. 11. When, after the death of SAID BIN SULTAN, Lord Canning appointed a commission to investigate the claims to the succession to the sovereignty over Muscat and Zanzibar, Dr. Badger, entrusted to report, wrote: "Among all the sovereigns . . . not one occurs who is recorded to have assumed or exercised the right of nominating a successor, or of disposing of his territories by will or otherwise. On the death of a ruler the member of his family who happened to exercise the greatest influence at the time either put himself forward, or was put forward by the people, to succeed to the sovereignty. The claim was frequently disputed by other relations of the deceased, and intestine family wars followed, the strongest ultimately gaining the ascendency; but even in such cases the right to the sovereignty does not appear to have been regarded as valid without the concurrence of the principal tribes." Cf. LYNE, p. 57.

[4] Cf. MILES, p. 281.



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Muscat from the Harbour (1809)

of his son Hamed from 1785 to 1792.[1] There were, however, two capable men in the family, for Said bin Ahmed's brother Sultan, foiled of his desire for the Imamate and unable to gain possession of Rostak (then the capital city), seized possession of Muscat. His eye was sure, in that the town lying on the sea is a good and safe harbour, being protected from landward interference by impassable mountains. So impregnable a defence has Nature provided that no roads radiate from this city: they start from the little sea-port of Matrah to the North. Seif bin Ahmed, the fourth son of Ahmed bin Said, finding his pretensions to the Imamate also passed over, set forth by sea to East Africa in 1784 [2] and laid siege to Mombasa. Upon hearing of this siege,[3] Said bin Ahmed despatched his son Hamed to the relief, and the nephew, at the moment when the town was about to fall, drove off his uncle. Seif bin Ahmed, disappointed for the second time, retired to Lamu in East Africa, where he died, leaving a son, Bedr.[4] The scene in Oman therefore now provides but two central characters, the sons of Ahmed, Sultan bin Ahmed, and Said bin Ahmed, who even after the death of Hamed in 1792 contrived to maintain himself in the north country. His position, however, was one of no great strength. It is true that he was Imam [5] and possessed therefore of such control over the minds and spirits of his countrymen as is indicated by the possession of that spiritual dignity. It is also certain that his power over Rostak

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 23.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 20.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, pp. 20, 28.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, pp. 21, 22.
[5] Cf. Appendix B.

helped his Imamate, for there is situated the great mosque of Oman and the town was hence the religious centre of the country; but the supreme power of the Omanis was tending to lose spiritual and gain temporal aspects. There had been a time undoubtedly when the sway over Rostak and its mosque had at any rate some figurative significance, as implying the control of Oman. This was ceasing to be so, and after the death of Sultan the drift towards the division of spiritual and temporal power is clearly seen. The later Al bu Said in fact assumed the title of Seyyid,[1] and with a few exceptions were not elected to the Imamate.

The weakness of Said bin Ahmed was also increased by the very inaccessibility of his position at Rostak, which proved his prison no less than his protection. The expulsion of the Portuguese had left Oman comparatively free from outside interference, at any rate from other than that of the Wahhabis and the Cowasim. From time to time the former descended upon them from the inland country, harried their towns, levied tribute and departed. Equally from time to time the latter came upon them from seaward, burned their shipping, took toll of their commerce and withdrew. These were the more or less continual plagues from which the Omanis rarely expected to be entirely free. But complete absence of contact with the outside and mainly European world was not to be

[1] Cf. INGRAMS, p. 73; BADGER, pp. 377, 379; HUART, II., p. 276; PEARCE, p. 110; HANDBOOK, p. 37; MANSUR, p. 49; MASSIGNON, p. 50. INGRAMS, p. 73: "Henceforth all the princes of the royal Family prefixed the word 'Seyyid' to their names, and the princesses the word 'Seyyida.' This use of the word 'Seyyid' must not be confused with its religious meaning in other parts of Arabia and in the Moslem world generally, where it denoted a descendant of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima."

expected. The litoral of Oman, facing Sind, and the good position of Muscat as a port of call on the sea route from India would of themselves secure that. It was the French who were the first to build up any approach to systematic trading relations; but it is recorded that on the 12th October, 1798, a treaty [1] was drawn up, by which the British were allowed to establish a factory and protect it by a garrison at Bundar Abbas. The same authority also states that a supplementary treaty was drawn up in 1800 [2] and signed by Colonel, afterwards Sir John Malcolm, who was passing at the time on an important mission to Persia. As this treaty provides for the establishment of a "resident British agent at Maskat" it will be seen a definite trade had sprung up, probably before 1798, certainly not later than 1800. It is not to be thought that this was in any way systematic. The relative positions of the French and the British in their struggle on the sea and for India ensured this, and we shall find that the French made bold use of Muscat as a base from which to prey upon English sea trade. The point of these two present treaties for our immediate purpose lies, however, in the fact that they were made not with Said, but with his brother Sultan, who, though he may not have been ruler *de jure*, he was obviously ruler *de facto*.

This anomalous situation was brought to an end in 1803 by the death of Said bin Ahmed.[3] From now on until the latter's untimely death in the following year,

[1] "First English Treaty in Arabia," cf. MILES, p. 291; REP., 1887–88, p. 25. Full text of the treaty in TREATIES, p. 207; BOMB. SEL., p. 248.
[2] Full text of the treaty in TREATIES, p. 208; BOMB. SEL., p. 249.
[3] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 31; BADGER, pp. lxxx., 380; HUART, II., p. 276.

Sultan was the sole ruler in Oman, and he felt himself sufficiently secure to set forth on his way to Mecca,[1] leaving behind him his two young sons, Salim and SAID, under the regency of a remote relative Mohammed bin Nasir al Jabry,[2] and Mohammed bin Khalfan.[3] The pilgrimage however was not solely dictated by piety, for the increasing turbulence of the Wahhabis had caused alarm as deeply in the Hedjaz as in Oman, and in the course of this year the Holy Cities were calling the faithful to arms wherewith to ward off that fate which befell them in 1808. Obedient to the call, Sultan set sail in a frigate loaded with arms and ammunition.[4] Although therefore this voyage was dictated as much by political necessity as by personal inclination, it indicates a considerable amount of confidence on the part of Sultan that he should thus risk the perils of absence in the year of his rival's death. It argues the measures of that rival's weakness. As it transpired, the dangers were very considerable; for, hearing of his uncle's absence, Bedr, son of that Seif bin Ahmed who, as we have seen, died in exile at Lamu after being compelled to raise the seige of Mombasa, descended suddenly upon Muscat from the sea, placed his two cousins and their regent in custody and reduced all except the eastern fortress of the town. There can be little doubt but that Bedr would have usurped the supreme power had not Sultan returned

[1] Cf. BADGER, pp. lix., 232; MILES, p. 296; REP., 1887–88, p. 27; HUART, II., p. 274.

[2] The connection with Mohammed bin Nasir was through Sultan bin Ahmed's mother; cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 23; REP., 1883–84, p. 20. Sultan's wife was the daughter of Khalfan bin Mohammed El Wahuli Al bu Said: cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 22.

[3] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 27.

[4] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 27.

in time to relieve the besieged fort and drive Bedr once more into exile. It was but natural that Bedr should retire to seek the aid of the Wahhabis, and whether now for the first time or not it is impossible to say; for it is a curious fact that at precisely the same moment that Bedr had fallen by sea upon Muscat, the Wahhabis had fallen by land upon Suwaiq,[1] a northern village reduced in the previous year by SAID, Sultan's second son. The operation therefore has the appearance of being a concerted one, in which the drive from the north forms a balance to the landing in the south.[2] This is conjectural. What is certain is that after his expulsion from Muscat, Bedr definitely and openly took refuge with the Wahhabis and, not contented with half-measures, embraced their peculiar religious tenets.[3] It is unfortunate that Sultan should have chosen the following year, 1804, for his journey to Basra to receive the yearly gratuity awarded by the Ottoman Sultan Mustapha III. in 1756 to his father Ahmed for assistance rendered against the Persians.[4] On the return voyage, being one day off Bundar Abbas, he determined to put into that town, with which Oman had close connections. Accordingly he transhipped himself from one of the three frigates, the *Jinjawar*, in which his voyage had been made, into his yacht *el Badry*, and towards evening found himself challenged near Linjah to fight outside the port by three bands of Cowasim pirates. The rendezvous was ceremonially fixed for the following morning, and, though the fight

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 28.
[2] Cf. HUART, p. 274.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 21; REP., 1887–88, p. 27; MILES, p. 297; BADGER, pp. lxi., 233.
[4] Cf. BADGER, pp. lx., 238; REP., 1887–88, p. 30; HUART, II., p. 290.

went against the Cowasim, the earliest shots were fatal to the life of Sultan.[1]

The scene was now laid for yet another dynastic struggle. Mohammed bin Nasir was at Muscat with his two wards, Salim, aged fifteen, and SAID, aged thirteen,[2] when he heard that a formidable candidate was in the field in the shape of Kais bin Ahmed, brother of Sultan. From his centre on the coast Kais began a hasty descent southwards. Mahommed bin Nasir quickly improvised defences for Matrah and Muscat, and called in the aid of the Shafiri, a friendly tribe.[3] These preparations, however, were completely insufficient to prevent Kais from capturing Matrah, and, elated with this success, he waved aside the attempt of Mohammed bin Nasir to buy him off with a bribe of 2000 dollars monthly.[4] Upon this Bibi Mouza, sister of Sultan bin Ahmed and aunt of the two youths, suggested to the regent that he should call in the aid of Bedr and his Wahhabis. Bedr responded to the appeal, reached Muscat, and embarked upon a series of tortuous actions which, although designed to secure the power for himself, succeeded ultimately in effecting his own death. His first action was to urge the Wahhabis to threaten Kais' base by descending upon Sohar. The design was successful, and Kais forthwith came to terms. He gave up all claims to the sultanate, but was allowed power over Sohar, and took in addition the district of Khaburah and part of Batinah.

[1] Cf. BADGER, pp. lx., 238; BURTON, I., p. 290; REP., 1887–88, p. 30; MILES, p. 303; LOW, I., p. 316; FRASER, p. 13; CORANCEZ, p. 59; MANSUR, p. 2; RAYMOND, p. 29.
[2] Born at Semail, 1791. Cf. BADGER, p. 259.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 21.
[4] Cf. BADGER, pp. lxvi., 262.

The retirement of the Wahhabis however synchronised with the return of his courage, and within a month of his arrival Kais was back and captured Muscat by a sudden attack. He did not, however, garrison the hills overlooking it, and the Shafiri coming up strongly to the rescue, he was forced to retire to Matrah. Here a second arrangement was drawn up, by which he added this place to his former possessions and received a tribute of 1000 dollars a month.[1] Not displeased with this cloak to his own designs Bedr began to show his hand a little more freely. He appointed his two cousins, Salim and SAID,[2] to official positions in the country, the former as Wali of Masnah, the latter to Barkah. Having thus removed the brothers from the scene of affairs he felt himself sufficiently secure to undertake more pressing matters.[3]

The Cowasim, upon the death of Sultan, had set forth from their hiding places in and around the island of Kishm and captured Bundar Abbas. With this as base they had extended their piratical activities and preyed upon commerce with a disinterested impartiality, the burden of which fell no less heavily upon the British than upon the Omanis. Bedr managed to persuade Captain Seton, the then British Resident

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. lxviii.

[2] INGRAMS CHRO. (p. 5) states that SAID'S mother was Thneif bint Seif. As GUILLAIN (II., p. 154) and BURTON (I., p. 290) say that Bedr bin Seif was the maternal uncle as well as the cousin of SAID, this name meets the statement. But REP., 1883–84, pp. 22 and 36, also MILES (p. 309), calls her Ghanee, daughter of Khalfan bin Mohammed el Wahull Abu Saeedi. (Cf. MANSUR, p. 15, who denotes Maamet iben Calfan—probably the brother of Ghanee—as the uncle of SAID.) On the other hand, REP., 1880–81, gives a table of Seif bin Mohammed bin Saeed bin Mohammed bin Abdulla al Boo Saidi—he is mentioned by MILES (p. 293) as Governor of Muscat in 1800—and here shows Ghanneyeh as his daughter and the mother of SAID. She is left out however in the following table of Khalfan bin Mohammed bin Abdulla el Wakeel Ab Boo Saidi.

[3] RAYMOND, p. 30.

in the Persian Gulf, to support [1] him in the recovery of the town. He had the less difficulty in so doing because, with unusual audacity, the Cowasim had lately captured two English boats, the *Shannon* and the *Trimmer*. The combined forces drove the pirates out of Bundar Abbas, and though it does not appear that the English did more in the operations than stand off the shore and lend moral support, Captain Seton took the opportunity to extract some additional trade concessions.[2]

The Cowasim, however, had provided a little diversion on their own account, and had joined Kais in yet a third descent upon Muscat, so that when Bedr returned he found the town occupied. Bedr resorted to his usual tactics and induced the Wahhabis once more to threaten Sohar. The dull similarity of these proceedings was, however, relieved by a flash of military genius on the part of the youthful SAID, who slipped out from Barkah and captured the village of Bidbid, thereby threatening Kais' lines of communication. This combination of misfortune was too much for Kais, who surrendered Matrah and his tribute, and retired once more to Sohar on board an English ship.[3]

Bedr was therefore left in absolute control of the country, for the pretensions of Kais had received a check from which there could be, and was, no recovery. On the other hand, SAID and Salim, separated from each other and from the capital, could scarcely expect to have much influence upon the course of events, a

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 21; BOMB. SEL., p. 304; CORANCEZ, p. 125.
[2] Cf. MILES, p. 306.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. 282.

position with which Salim, who had courage enough but little energy, appears to have been content. Not so SAID. He could not forget that his claims to power rested as well upon the high birth of his mother as upon the position of his father. And even had he been able to forget these things, the pressure of events throughout the country must inevitably have forced a youth of his commanding temper into a foremost place.

It has been stated that Bedr, during his sojourn among the Wahhabis, had embraced their tenets. The Wahhabis had all the fervour of reforming Puritans and it was their one object to replace the prevailing doctrines of the Ibadhiyah by their own peculiar ideas. In a contemporary document concerning this race written by one Jean Raymond in 1806,[1] will be found this graphic note: "The other day a Wahhabi said in prophetic tones, 'The time is drawing near when we shall see an Arab seated on the throne of the Caliphs. We have languished long enough under the yoke of a usurper.'" The tone was indeed prophetic, for by 1808, in the face of opposition from Turkey, Persia, Egypt and the whole conforming Moslem world, and in spite of internal dissensions and the sufferings consequent on a prolonged drought,[2] the Wahhabis had possessed themselves of the Holy City, and in possession they remained till Mohammed Ali in 1810, gathering the forces of Egypt against them, hurled them forth. The character of their rule may be gauged by another illuminating extract from the same author. An inhabitant of Muscat once asked the

[1] Cf. RAYMOND, p. 34.
[2] Cf. CORANCEZ, p. 140.

Amir Saoud what he intended to do with the Christians and Jews. "They have their books," [1] he replied, "and must live by them; the Mohammedans alone are guilty and must choose between Wahhabism and death." Such was the rule which Bedr had introduced into a high-spirited and religious people. And yet, such had been the power of these schismatics, that it is credibly reported that by 1806 the greater part of the inhabitants of Muscat had changed their religion.[2] Perhaps, had this been all, they would have been willing to endure their discomfort, but the sight of a Wahhabi agent in Muscat [3] superintending the collection of the annual tribute of 12,000 dollars for the invader,[4] the consciousness that his presence was not a necessary evil but a mere weapon of Bedr's personal aggrandisement, the knowledge that a force of 400 mounted Wahhabis lay at Barkah threatening the countryside [5] —these things, not singly but in their cumulative effect, roused the tirbes to an overwhelming sense of resentment.

It could not stir them to action. The country was so closely beleaguered and the enemy so superior in strength that there would have been no sense in immediate attack. In the circumstances it was to SAID at Barkah that the patriotic party turned. The youth remained there under the influence of his aunt Bibi Mouza and under the tutelage of Mohammed bin Nasir, and it is somewhere amongst these three

[1] The same statement was made more than a century later by Ibn Saoud, King of the Nejd, in a conversation with Mr. Philby. Cf. PHILBY, p. 23.
[2] Cf. CORANZES, p. 121; MILES, p. 307.
[3] Cf. MILES, p. 307.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 21; REP., 1887–88, p. 28; MILES, p. 298. MANSUR (p. 5) gives 50,000 dollars.
[5] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 21.

that lies the blame for an act more repulsive to Western than to Arab minds. It was towards the middle of summer of the year 1806—not March, 1807, as Miles has it [1]—that Bedr received an invitation from his nephew to a conference at Barkah. At a small village called Naaman,[2] a few miles away, he was met by SAID and his companions. There in the old fort, in the midst of a friendly conversation, he was set upon and despatched by the dagger of SAID. This deed excited the liveliest condemnation from such Europeans as were in or around the country, to so great extent that for some time SAID was unable to procure English assistance against the Wahhabis and the Cowasim.[3] But amongst the Omanis such was the outbreak of patriotic fervour that SAID was able to return forthwith to his capital, the terrified Wahhabis retiring in a body to the border town of Bireimi. At Muscat SAID was joined by his brother Salim, to whom he generously assigned an equal share in the government.

Ruschenberger (I., 138) says that SAID was informed by his friends that Bedr intended to cause his death and that he merely acted as he did to frustrate this ambitious design.[4] And Miles (II., 309) states that

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 309; REP., 1883–84, p. 22. GUILLAIN (II., p. 158) states that SAID was proclaimed Sultan 44 days after the assassination of Bedr. As BURTON (I., p. 292) gives as the date of the acclamation September 14th, 1806, the date of Bedr assassination would appear to be July 31st, 1806, which is confirmed by BURTON (I., p. 290) and KERSTEN (p. 119).

[2] Jemma: cf. *GEOGR. JOUR.*, October, 1910, p. 425. Huaman: cf. LYNE, p. 11.

[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 22.

[4] It might be noticed that the same motive is given by BRODE (12) for the assassination of Thuwainy in 1866 by his son Salim, who was subsequently recognised as Sultan by the Government of India. Cf. CURZON, II., p. 437. "There were four or five versions of this transaction and no two Arabs agree in the details." Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 22.

" The deed, so far from being reckoned a crime and reprobated, was applauded throughout Oman ; SAID was recognised and acknowledged on all sides as gifted with true Arab courage and instincts, and as one well fitted to hold the reins of power. He was hailed as the deliverer of his country from the hand of one who had turned renegade and had been in league with their invaders. Among the first to approve the deed and acknowledge SAID'S fitness to govern was his his uncle Kais, who henceforward admitted his supremacy." [1]

Events of a similar nature are recounted by Rihani (p. 166) with reference to the House of the Rashids in Central Arabia during recent times. The number of assassinations is great. Here is one instance. Three brothers of the Ubaid branch invited three of their cousins of the Abdullah branch for a hunting excursion . . . " and when behind a rib in the open field the city was lost to view, each of the Ubaids leaped from his saddle to that of one of his cousins and slew him outright as planned. Not one of the accompanying escort said a word or lifted a hand, except in the praise of Allah."

[1] For assassination as political weapon among the Omanis cf. the following instances :—

Mohammed bin Othman el Mazrui, Wali of Mombasa, was murdered at the instigation of Ahmed bin Said in 1745 : cf. REP., 83–84, p. 28.

Bedr bin Seif, supposed to be responsible for the assassination of Muhenna bin Suleiman : cf. BADGER, p. 270.

Saoud bin Ali killed by Sultan bin Ahmed, 1832 : cf. BADGER, pp. lxxxvii., 355 ; REP., 83–84, p. 31.

Seif bin Hamud killed at the instigation of his father, Hamud bin Azzan, 1849 ; cf. BADGER, pp. lxxxix., 362 ; BOMB. SEL., p. 228 ; REP., 83–84, p. 35 ; OPPENHEIM, II., p. 354 ; HUART, II., p. 277.

Hamud bin Azzan put to death by Thuwainy bin SAID, 1850 : cf. REP., 83–84, p. 35 ; BOMB. SEL., p. 230 ; BADGER, p. 362 ; LOW, II., p. 331.

Kais bin Azzan killed by Hilal bin Mohammed, who died himself from wound received in the struggle, 1864 ; cf. *GEORG. JOUR.*, November, 1901 p. 489.

The country was delivered at one blow from internal strife and foreign domination. Such was the consequence of an act which whatever its moral aspects, was attended by the most fortunate results.

CHAPTER II

SAID'S RISE TO POWER

THE rulers of Oman during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were faced by two urgent problems, pressure from without and lack of cohesion within. An Imam in the earlier period and a Seyyid in the later appears to have all the powers of a central government; he is supreme ruler of a family of Arabs, all of whom have the same descent. In effect, however, he is merely a figurehead, presiding over a series of scattered tribes who pay more attention to the smaller unit of which they are members than to the central government to which they have submitted. The power of an Imam or Seyyid, therefore, is not that which is handed down to him, but that which he carves out for himself. Even so it is not static, not exercised for instance over a limited territory, but over a certain number of tribes, and a ruler might conceivably wake up one morning to find that a tribe had gone on a journey to some distant quarter or had, under pressure, joined the traditional enemy; or, again, he might find that from a tribe had arisen some man of character to whom it looked for rule and command. Within those bounds the Seyyid's writ ceased to have influence unless he cared to exercise it forcibly. The boundaries of his kingdom, there-

fore, are elastic and may contract or expand without any act on his part.

This would scarcely form an effective system against an external foe. Indeed, even under the strongest rulers hardly a decade passed without the Wahhabis or the Cowasim assimilating some portion, large or small, of Oman territory, burning villages, pillaging the trading dhows and holding the community to ransom. Under a strong ruler such depredations might well be confined to the outer limits of the kingdom, but a weak one was lucky if he escaped with his life, some portion of his kingdom, and the imposition of a heavy tribute. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the power of the Wahhabis entered upon one of those flourishing periods to which it has always been, and still is, periodically subject. So that even Sultan bin Ahmed, though a strong ruler, was content to maintain his independence at the price of annual tribute, an army of occupation and the presence of a Wahhabi Agent-General at Muscat.[1] He obviously found the foe rather difficult to deal with, for he was tied down to towns, villages and fixed habitations. He had, moreover, his shipping to think of, and his commerce to protect. The Wahhabis, on the other hand, were merely an efficient band of desert marauders; defeat meant little to them; they retired into the desert, safe from all pursuit, and after a period of recuperation came again with strength repaired.

Consideration of facts such as these will make it clear that the problems of Oman were of no small dimensions for a fifteen-year-old ruler. In spite of

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 28.

the fact that the assassination of Bedr had taken place under the very eyes of an organised occupation force of 400 Wahhabis, SAID'S position was sufficiently strong to drive them back to the northern confines of Oman; he was well aware that to the Wahhabis Oman represented a rich prize, an easy source of revenue, that to the Omanis the Wahhabis represented a recurring pestilence to be fought if possible, to be endured if necessary, and to be forgotten if absent. But let the Wahhabis retire from the country for a few months and local insurrections would take the place of the fight for national existence. To imagine that SAID was ignorant of these facts is to suggest that he was no Arab. The matter required no thought; the consciousness of it was in his blood. It was on these grounds that shortly after reaching Muscat SAID addressed to the Amir Saoud, head of the Wahhabis, a letter the tenor of which consorts ill with his action.[1] The letter announced that the assassination of Bedr was the work of Mohammed bin Nasir and that SAID intended to drive him into exile for the crime. It concluded with promises to pay the usual tribute and to receive back the army of occupation at Barkah. This letter was better understood by Saoud than by certain Europeans who have had to consider it since his time. Looked at correctly it is not an offer of submission at all; it is a mere attempt to delay certain issues which SAID has not yet the power to meet, and as such the Amir Saoud prized it at its proper valuation. He merely returned a pacific answer and deprecated any action against Mohammed bin Nasir. It is of course a matter of wonder why he

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 159.

did not at once descend upon Oman, instead of giving SAID time to concentrate his forces and establish his personal ascendancy. But considerations of strategy play little part in the Arab mind. There were certainly dissensions amongst the Wahhabis themselves at this period; also, indeed, they were beginning to look westward towards the Holy Cities and their divine mission of purification, rather than eastward to Oman and the time-honoured pursuit of self-expansion. But it is just as likely that stronger considerations such as the presence of richer prey closer to hand may have been of equal influence in the matter.

Whatever the cause, SAID did not let the opportunity slip. He could not appeal to the Indian Government—then represented, of course, by the East India Company—nor point out to them that the commercial depredations of the Cowasim were of as much concern to them as to him. For the tender consciences of the Bombay Government were affronted by the nature of occurrences in Oman, and SAID had to wait until the dividends forcibly exacted by the Cowasim at source roused the Directors to "plug the leak." Foiled, therefore, in his expectations, SAID sought help where he could, and turned by instinct to the French. On the 16th June, 1807, he made a treaty with General Decaen, the French representative at Mauritius.[1] By this treaty, as re-made in 1808, it was proposed to establish a French Consular Agent at Muscat, and close commercial relations were anticipated. It would, however, be too much to say that anything of importance was effected, for such French shipping as there was, owing to the expulsion from

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 22.

India had been forced to concentrate on the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon. Tenuous as this commerce was, its hunted and precarious existence lasted until, with the surrender of the islands in 1810, French influence disappeared completely from the scene. This, however, was not the disaster to SAID that it might have been, for by 1808 events had caused the English to modify their attitude of aloofness.[1]

The piratical Cowasim, who maintained themselves at their neighbours' expense by sea no less than the Wahhabis by land, seized the opportunity afforded by the withdrawal of English support and influence in the southern half of the Persian Gulf to extend the scope and intensity of their activities. To some degree they acted at the instigation of the Wahhabis, and though it was to the interest of the English, Persians, Turks and Omanis to keep them in subjection, it was left to the least powerful of the four to take the initial step. By 1808 the Cowasim had ceased to confine themselves to their base on the island of Kishm and had distributed smaller communities up and down the south shore of the Gulf. Of these the chief were Khor Fakkan in the district of Shamailiyah to the north of Sohar and Ras el Khaimah on the northern shore of the Ruus el Jibal. The last point was the most troublesome; it was stronger, more sheltered, and more remote. But even Khor Fakkan was no easy problem, for it was impossible to attack by land, the ranges of mountains behind rendering the operation

[1] Cf. TREATIES, p. 188.

lengthy and hazardous. Not less dangerous, however, is the disembarkation of troops in the face of the enemy, but having no other alternative SAID chose an attack upon Khor Fakkan by sea. In May, 1808, he collected levies from the friendly tribes throughout Oman and proceeded to the offensive. The majority of his forces marched by land, collecting on their way reinforcements under Kais bin Ahmed from Sohar. SAID himself, however, manned his frigates and approached by sea. The initial attack was completely successful; the town was razed, its inhabitants put to the sword, and a strong position taken up by the Omanis on the impending heights.[1] It was at this point that there occurred a disaster inexplicable to the Western mind. The ruler of the Cowasim, Sultan bin Sakar, receiving news of the attack, promptly set forth by sea from Kishm with such forces as he could rally at short notice. He effected a landing on the coast, but discovered that, in view of the strong position taken up by the Omanis, his own was impossible. All that Kais had to do was to take advantage of his elevated situation and fling himself upon the enemy. This, however, was contrary to the ethics of Arab warfare; to do such a thing was no less mean than to decline an engagement altogether. Kais therefore descended from the heights to offer battle in the open, where he was beaten, slain, and his force dispersed. The expedition having been brought to an unexpectedly bad conclusion, SAID returned to Muscat and the depredations of the Cowasim continued unchecked. There is no doubt that this was a disaster which casts grave reflections upon the fighting qualities of the

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. 293; REP., 1883–84, p. 23; MILES, p. 311.

Omanis. The native account[1] suggests that the Cowasim outnumbered the invaders by at least two to one, but Mansur, who was on the spot, denies this, and is followed in his account by Colonel Miles.[2] It, is, however, a matter of general observation that the Omanis had to pay for their lack of success in warfare by the toll which the Cowasim proceeded to take of their commerce—but not of theirs alone. The Cowasim were seeking the quickest and richest prizes ; they were perfectly well aware that the British had ceased to support SAID, and they interpreted this act, as indeed many other British acts, as a sign of weakness. In this year they captured the *Minerva*, a large trading vessel belonging to Mr. Manisty, on voyage from Bombay to Barkah with a cargo worth more than 100,000 rupees.[3] Such was the boldness and strength of the pirates that later a corvette of 16 guns, sent to patrol the traffic routes of the Gulf, was attacked with such tenacity that, rather than risk capture, the commander burnt it to the water's edge.[4] And even where pirates were captured and sent as prisoners to Bombay, their immediate release struck dismay into the hearts of the traders and joy into those of their foes. It is small wonder that in such circumstances the pirates of Ras el Khaimah actually demanded annual tribute

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. 293.

[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 13.

[3] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 449 ; MILES, p. 313 ; LOW, I., p. 320 ; GUILLAIN, II., p. 162 ; BRYDGES, II., p. 37 ; MANSUR, p. 51 ; *GEO. GES. HAMB.*, p. 53.

[4] Cf. CORANCEZ, p. 144. The Cowasim could fit out at that time nearly 100 boats, many from 300 to 400 tons. Thus they had easy control of the entrance to the Gulf, only 36 miles wide between the islands of Larack and Quoins. The deep inlets about Ras Masandum, at that time totally unknown to others, providing good shelter for their fleet. Cf. *TRANSACTIONS BOMBAY GEOGR. SOC.*, 1836–38, p. 34.

from the Indian Government as the price of the immunity of English shipping.[1] The situation was rapidly becoming unbearable. In spite of his isolation and recent defeat SAID was compelled to risk an attack upon the stronghold at Ras el Khaimah.[2] In April, 1809, therefore, having obtained an offer of assistance from the Resident at Bushire, he led an expedition by sea, but was beaten off with heavy loss.[3] He received in this action the assistance of English frigates, one being the *Cornwallis*, which swept the southern part of the Gulf and conveyed its prisoners to Bombay; but as they were subsequently set free the effect upon the Cowasim was nullified.[4]

Disappointed in the results of his military campaign SAID turned to diplomacy. He appears to have arranged an interview with Sultan bin Sakar, and to have pointed out to him the impossibility of maintaining himself against the English maritime power. With the ruler he gained his way; the Cowasim subjects, however, were of another mind. To their eyes the prey was rich and easy of obtaining. They therefore appealed to the Amir Saoud of the Wahhabis, who, finding Sultan engaged in doubtful communications with the enemy, at once had him carried by force to Nejd and held prisoner.[5] Nor did Saoud confine his energies to this alone. He foresaw that co-operation between the Omanis and the British would add to his difficulties, and therefore planned an incursion

[1] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 449.
[2] CORANCEZ' account (p. 142) of the activities against Ras el Khaimah is incomplete. He makes no mention of the successful attack in August, 1809.
[3] Cf. MANSUR, p. 51.
[4] REP., 1883–84, p. 23; MILES, p. 314.
[5] Cf. MILES, p. 314.

into Oman under his personal leadership. The northern territory he had already overawed by increasing his standing army at Bireimi. He also restored his Agent to Muscat, and he now had an excuse for attack presented to him; for SAID, finding that his former Regent, Mohammed bin Nasir, had set up pretensions to independent power over Semail and Bidbid, was guilty of a typical piece of Arab diplomacy. He enticed the man into his power at Muscat, subjected him to rigorous imprisonment, and would not release him till he had given up the two towns. This treatment made a deep impression upon the victim, who, once free from captivity, made his way to Nejd and joining the Wahhabis, was henceforth found amongst SAID'S most relentless foes. Saoud's preparations, however, were prevented by the first really concerted action against the Cowasim on the part of SAID and the English.[1]

After the failure of the first attack upon Ras el Khaimah in 1809, SAID had once more made representations to the Bombay Government that nothing save a united effort stood any chance of success, in which suggestions he received the valuable support of such men as Captain Seton, the English Agent at Muscat, and Major-General John Malcolm, who both urged that, in British interest, active support should be given to Oman.[2] The experience of the last two years had confirmed this view; a compact expeditionary force consisting of the frigates *Chifonne* (Captain Wainwright), and *Caroline,* nine of the Company's cruisers with several transports carrying

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 23.
[2] Cf. MILES, p. 315.

about 1600 men and a thousand native troops, under the command of Colonel Smith, was despatched from Bombay. This expedition joined with the Omanis to destroy Ras el Khaimah and to burn 50 large ships in August, 1809, and the allied forces then proceeded to raze Khor Fakkan once more and occupy Shinas. The Wahhabis had been sent out under Mutlak el Mutary to bring aid to Ras el Khaimah, but, arriving on the scene too late, marched northward to the relief of Shinas. The attack was delayed by the presence of the English, the guns of whose ships had wrought dreadful destruction amongst the pirates. The Wahhabis, unwilling to run the gauntlet of such opposition, loitered in the vicinity for three days, and then, finding that the English squadron had returned to Bombay, fell upon the Omanis, routed them with ease, and compelled the retreat of SAID to Muscat.[1] The retirement of the British upon this occasion would appear to be due to no other cause than that, the pirates having been exterminated, the object of the expedition seemed to have been accomplished, but Mansur (p. 67) who was at Shinas holding command under SAID, advances the view that Colonel Smith had entered into an understanding with the Wahhabis behind SAID'S back, promising them neutrality in return for immunity from piratical

[1] For detailed account of the undertaking against Ras el Khaimah cf. BADGER, pp. lxxv., 321; REP., 1883–84, p. 23; MILES, p. 316; BOMB. SEL., pp. 305, 433; LOW, I., p. 325; GUILLAIN, II., p. 163; MANSUR, p. 53; HUART, II., p. 275; CURZON, II., p. 449; CRICHTON, p. 486; BRYDGES, II., p. 37; BUCKINGHAM, II., p. 233; CORANCEZ, p. 143. The chief episodes of this expedition are reproduced in coloured plates in a volume, "Sixteen Views of Places in the Persian Gulf," by R. Temple, Bombay, 1811 (mentioned in "Aquatint Engraving," by S. T. Prideaux, London, 1909, and in "Gulf Memories"—*The Times of India Annual*, 1928—by Sir Percy Cox). Sketch of Ras el Khaimah and description of the place, cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 15. See also LOW, I., p. 311, and BUCKINGHAM, II., p. 351.

attacks. It suffices merely to mention this account, for the statements of Mansur are often unsupported. Indeed, Huart [1] says the British advised the Omanis to retire, and it may well be that he here records the contemporary view of the matter, as it is certain that, deprived of British help, SAID once more met with the most complete disaster. For, although when Mutlak laid siege to Sohar in January, 1810, he was able to advance and drive him off, he was quite unable to do more. Mutlak merely collected his forces, divided them into three columns under himself, his son and Mohammed bin Nasir, and drove down the country, laying it waste and slaughtering the inhabitants.[2] On his way he invested SAID with authority at Muscat, and returning from the south, pressed the siege with greater vigour. Such, however, was the strength of the position that SAID was able to drive him off—only to receive, during April, 1811, a decisive check in his turn by rashly exposing himself in the Maawal Valley.[3]

The position was now so hopeless that SAID, despairing of further assistance from India, decided to send his brother Salim to Fars to beg assistance from the Persians. He, in the first instance, had recourse to Bombay, representing that his alliance with the British in the last campaign had incensed the Wahhabis against him and had made them implacable in their enmity. But all assistance was refused to him on the grounds that the Government did not

[1] Cf. HUART, II., p. 275.
[2] Cf. MANSUR, p. 72.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883-84, p. 24. BURTON, II., p. 492, mentions that in the spring, 1811, a ship sent by SAID arrived at Zanzibar from Muscat and demanded 25,000 crowns from the Governor to assist him in opposing the Wahhabis, and that for the raising of this sum a kind of land tax was imposed.

wish to irritate the Wahhabis further.[1] It was in vain for SAID to point out the connection between the Wahhabis and the Cowasim, a consideration which did not appeal to the Indian Government at the moment. The situation of England to India and in Europe was now so ambiguous that they were content to pay tribute commercially so long as they were free from expensive military undertakings; later, when the danger from France was passed and the strength of the Wahhabis was being drained by operations under Mohammed Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha, less reluctance to protect commerce and widen its possibilities was shown. But with the situation as it stood in 1810, SAID determined to employ his second line of defence, and Salim therefore set out for Fars.

It was hoped that the Persians would have sufficient excuse for interference in that they, on their side, suffered constantly from the incursions of the Cowasim upon the rich island of Bahrein.[2] It was felt also that as a power whose communications were chiefly by land and whose trade chiefly by caravan, the Persians would not be averse from anything which gave them an opportunity to reduce the powers of the Wahhabis and prevent them from interrupting the due flow of trade. These hopes and calculations were not ill-founded. On arriving at Shiraz he held parley with the local Governor, a characteristic description of which has come down to us in the native account.[3] The result of this negotiation was

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 24.
[2] Cf. WATSON, p. 163; PALGRAVE, II., p. 212.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. 306.

that a considerable Persian force under the command of one Saadi Khan was placed at Salim's disposal.[1] The exact numbers of this force it is impossible to determine. According to Colonel Miles it was 1500, but the Arabic record followed in this instance by Huart [2] gives double this number. The point is a small one, but as native tradition usually tends to exaggerate or understate numbers according as the situation demands, it is perhaps as well not to attach too much authority to it. Mansur,[3] an eye-witness, who gives what is perhaps the true account, says that the force consisted of 1500 men and certain light artillery. Some support within these limits, however, Salim did obtain, and with them set forth on his return in the spring of 1812.[4] Arrived at Bundar Abbas he put them on ship,[5] landed at Barkah and forthwith occupied Nakhl and Semail.[6] Upon hearing of this the implacable Mohammed bin Nasir summoned Mutlak, then on his way to Nejd. He, collecting the hill tribes on his route, fell upon Salim, who appears to have advanced somewhat incautiously to Zikki,[7] routed him and dispersed his forces. Content with this success Mutlak thereupon retired to Bireimi, there to discover the presence of Amir Saoud's two sons, Turky and Feisal. To them he handed over the command, wishing on his own account to proceed with the journey to Nejd. His desire, however, was not to be fulfilled, for the two young men, not realising

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 24; MANSUR, p. 80.
[2] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxiii.; HUART, II., p. 274.
[3] Cf. MANSUR, p. 80.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 24.
[5] Cf. MANSUR, p. 80.
[6] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxiii.
[7] Cf. REP., 83–84, p. 24.

that Salim had reformed his scattered forces, made an ill-advised attack upon Khadra. Upon news of their repulse Mutlak turned about once more, and, summoning Mohammed bin Nasir to his side, set forth upon an expedition down the coast. At Barkah he found Salim with a large force in a sound position. The battle raged for three days and the issue was indecisive, but without further interference from Salim, Mutlak marched south, captured Matrah, left a protective force round Muscat and indulged in those incidents of warfare to which the Omanis had by now grown accustomed. Sated at last, he returned to Bireimi.[1]

In the meanwhile Mohammed Ali was advancing to the relief of the Holy City, and to his camp had escaped Sultan bin Sakar, that Cowasim who, as we saw before, was imprisoned by the Amir Saoud lest he should make peace with the English. Mohammed Ali hit upon this man as the bearer of a message to SAID requesting an alliance against the Wahhabis.[2] The time was as opportune for his plans as for the plots of Sultan, and hence it comes that SAID was not content with sending an ammunition ship to augment the supplies of Mohammed Ali at Jedda,[3] but decided also on another operation for the restoration of Sultan to Ras el Khaimah. He collected a fleet and took with him the purely moral support of Mr. Bruce, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, who happened at that time, 1813, to be at Muscat arranging the appointment of a native Agent there. Mr. Bruce was not the less pleased to go

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxiv.
[2] Cf. MILES, p. 314.
[3] Cf. MANSUR, p. 89.

because Sultan had promised not to countenance piracy.[1] It was in fact part of his mission to convey to all chiefs the determination of the Indian Government to stamp out piracy, and he had personal instructions to destroy pirate vessels at sight. The expedition, however, was entirely unsuccessful,[2] and SAID, failing in his original design, crossed over and settled Sultan on the opposite shore of the Gulf.[3]

But the mere collapse of the expedition was not its most annoying feature, for the news of it once more aroused Mutlak, who marched down the coast as far as Masnah. Such was the apparent strength of the invaders upon this occasion that not only did Azzan bin Kais surrender his stronghold at Sohar but even SAID, unable to strike a blow, sought a personal interview and brought about the retirement of the Wahhabis by a payment of 40,000 dollars. What exactly this 40,000 dollars represented is doubtful. Badger says it was "Zakah," or an obligatory alms for religious purposes,[4] and in this he is followed by Huart,[5] who adds the detail that it was to be annual; but, whatever its nature, not even its amount was sufficient to assuage the wrath of the Amir Saoud. The material losses he was suffering in the West before the onset of the Egyptians were not to be counterbalanced by the mere payment of tribute in the East. Accordingly Mutlak was superseded and El Azdakah was sent out in his place to prosecute the war with greater vigour. This latter having been

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxvi.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 24; MILES, p. 314.
[3] Cf. MANSUR, p. 89.
[4] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxvii.
[5] Cf. HUART, II., p. 275.

murdered on the way, Mutlak was reinstated, but suffered no kinder fate, for on the march through Dhahireh to Sharkiyeh he was killed in a desultory engagement, and his force retired once more to Bireimi.[1]

During this year, 1814, the end of SAID'S misfortunes came in sight. Deaths, as usual, played their part. The death of Azzan bin Kais gave SAID the opportunity of consolidating his power by extending it to Sohar,[2] but the death of the Amir Saoud was of even greater consequence. The power of the Wahhabis was on the wane ; but two years more and their last grip would be loosened from the west coast of Arabia. Another two years and they themselves knew in turn the terrors of invasion. It was in fact the turning of the wheel, and SAID celebrated the event by yet another unsuccessful attempt to restore Sultan bin Sakar to Ras el Khaimah. This was a particularly unfortunate undertaking, for the Amir Abdullah, successor to Saoud, had actually sent an Agent to Muscat to come to some arrangement for permanent peace. Annoyed by SAID'S attack upon his friends and allies, Abdullah withdrew his emissary, and the state of war continued. Nor was this the only unfortunate effect of his action, for the Cowasim, emboldened by success, extended their ravages so far afield that SAID was compelled to go out and meet them at sea. The result was again deplorable. The Cowasim had invented a special kind of vessel with a lofty superstructure from which, when two ships became locked together, boarding was an easy matter. It nearly

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 320.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25.

proved so in the case of SAID'S own ship, the *Caroline*, and he sheered off from the action, wounded and with difficulty.[1] The problem of the Cowasim remained unsolved.

The next year, 1815, saw an internal rising led by Mohammed bin Nasir and one Himyar bin Suliman, the latter a member of the old ruling dynasty of the Yaarebas. These two laid siege to Nakhl and withstood all SAID'S attempts to relieve it. They fell, however, to his guile; for in the end, despairing of assault, SAID laid hands on Himyar and straightway had him executed. Feeling safer as the result of this, he started the following year with yet a fourth unsuccessful attempt upon Ras el Khaimah, which he besieged for four months, and was ultimately compelled to retire without having effected anything.

Not content with this, SAID in the same year planned an attack upon the rich island of Bahrein, being joined therein by a small force of three Persian vessels from Bushire. The expedition started under the worst omens, for the two allies were not by any means of one mind. The Persians had always had pretensions to the island,[2] and, while they could not contemplate with satisfaction the supremacy of the Cowasim, they would be still less likely to regard with favour the accession of the Omanis. To SAID, on the other hand, the expedition was merely one of re-annexation,[3] for although Sultan bin Ahmed,

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25.
[2] Cf. WATSON, p. 163; PALGRAVE, II., p. 212; REP., 1883–84, p. 25.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxix.

who had conquered it and Kishm more than thirty years earlier,[1] had speedily been expelled, his followers had returned to the attack more than once, and it was only in 1807 that they were finally dispossessed by the Cowasim.[2] At the same time the latter were strongly entrenched in the island, and the expedition was sure to be one of considerable difficulty—in fact the British Resident at Bushire had strongly advised SAID against it.[3] However, the forces set sail in June, and immediately after landing at Arad met such a severe defeat[4] that they were compelled to re-embark. The completeness of the failure seems to have been due to the treachery of the Persians, and SAID had suffered, among other losses, the death of his younger brother Hamed. The Persians, after the withdrawal, promised to give SAID stronger help if he would sail over to Bundar Abbas to convey them, but SAID, hearing that this was a mere trick and that the Persians really designed to carry him prisoner to Shiraz, put about to Muscat.[5]

There, feeling the need of more trustworthy allies, he turned to the French Government and renewed trade relations with them. A brisk trade sprang up and the convention signed on the 30th March, 1817,[6] remained in force till the signing of the French Commercial Treaty of 1844.

There occurred also in this year certain internal disputes of which no details remain, but undoubtedly what chiefly engrossed SAID'S attention was the

[1] Cf. HUART, II., p. 273.
[2] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 449.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25
[4] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 141; LOW, I., p. 349.
[5] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25.
[6] Cf. MILES, p. 323.

necessity of destroying the power of the Cowasim and taking advantage of the weakness of the Wahhabis. At this time Mohammed Ali was advancing across Arabia against them, and we find that the Ghafiri, a tribe which had been consistently faithful to SAID, sent contingents to aid their erstwhile oppressors against the Egyptians.[1] This will be found on consideration not so surprising a step as at first sight it appears. It was an action dictated merely by the preponderance of hatred, and provides a good clue to SAID'S own attitude towards the English proposals of this and the following year. Notwithstanding this Omani aid, the Wahhabis suffered severely at the hands of the Egyptians. Their capital, Dariyah, fell in 1818, and in the following year the Amir Abdullah was captured, conveyed to Constantinople and beheaded.[2] Thus deprived of his strongest supporters, Mohammed bin Nasir found his position too ambiguous to be supportable, and accordingly changed sides once more, effecting a reconciliation with SAID.[3] Congenial occupation was soon found for him, for it happened that one of his former associates, Battal el Mutairy, broke away from the main Wahhabi tribe and occupied Bireimi with the intention of making it his own. Against him was sent Mohammed bin Nasir, who compelled Battal to raze the fort and take service with SAID,[4] upon which Sultan bin Sakar proposed that Bireimi should be handed over to his control, but on English advice this was refused.[5]

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25.
[2] Cf. BRYDGES, II., p. 104.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxviii.
[4] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxix.
[5] Cf. SADLIER, p. 140.

It was by now high time for everybody interested to pay serious attention to the Cowasim. They had, in 1817, reoccupied Khor Fakkan, and used it as a suitable base whence to redouble their attentions to commerce. Their insolence was such that they had penetrated to within seventy miles of Bombay. Their force was estimated at 64 war dhows and 7000 men,[1] but the British Government, finding that the extinction of the Cowasim would no longer involve an expensive war with the Wahhabis, set about raising allies for an attack. To this end they sent out a Lieutenant Sadlier with definite instructions to sound SAID and Ibrahim Pasha concerning a concerted attack. This officer was given official letters both to SAID and to Ibrahim inviting their co-operation against the common enemy.[2] He landed first at Muscat and was received with perfect courtesy by the inhabitants and their ruler, but his audiences with SAID were an absolute failure, as he was quite unwilling to co-operate with the Turks and Egyptians. He had nothing in common with them and everything to fear at their hands. He had even received an offer from the Cowasim on the fall of Dariyah, the Wahhabi capital, for an alliance against the Egyptians, but this he had also refused.[3] It is not surprising therefore to find Sadlier's official report of his conversations with SAID[4] full of complaint of the dilatoriness and vagueness which he met with. SAID was unable to fall in with the desire of the British, and unwilling to forfeit their good-will. Sadlier's failure, therefore,

[1] Cf. LOW, I., p. 352.
[2] Cf. SADLIER, pp. 133, 136.
[3] Cf. REP., 1879–80, p. 45; REP., 1883–84, p. 26.
[4] Cf. SADLIER, p. 138.

was complete, and turning to the other half of his mission he attempted to get in touch with Ibrahim Pasha. The Turks, however, were just as unwilling to co-operate as SAID had been, and paid considerably less attention to British susceptibilities. They had accomplished their mission in the East, destroyed the power of the Wahhabis, and restored stability in Arabia. From the British in this quarter they required nothing and feared nothing. Accordingly Ibrahim, though conscious that an envoy was being sent to him, began to march homeward without awaiting his arrival. He did not take into account, however, the persistence of the man. Steadily, in the face of difficulties and disappointments, hostilities from the Arabs and hardships of climate, Sadlier chased the Turks across Arabia, and, coming up with them at Medina, was the first European to have crossed Arabia from east to west. It was a feat which caused him no pride and brought him no fame, for, in fact, thirty years were to elapse before the feat was recognised at all. But the main object of the expedition was as much a failure at Medina as at Muscat. Doubtless, Sadlier was able to fulfil that part of his instructions [1] which related to the ascertaining of " the extent and description of the force under His Excellency's (*i.e.*, Ibrahim Pasha) command." But when it came to discovering " the nature and extent of the assistance he may be able to afford in the reduction of the piratical ports " the problem was too difficult. In spite of the fact that Sadlier was authorised to assure Ibrahim Pasha of adequate military and naval support after the termination of the monsoon, he would not move.

[1] Cf. SADLIER, p. 129.

Twenty years later, when the Egyptians formed the design of annexing Arabia and Syria, they would have leapt at such an opportunity. But in 1819 it was too early, and accordingly the Indian Government set about its task supported only by SAID.

In November, 1819,[1] a well-equipped expeditionary force arrived at Muscat under the command of Sir W. Grant Keir. Of the ships there were the *Liverpool* of 50 guns, the *Eden* of 26, the *Curlew* of 18, and six smaller cruisers; of men there were 1600 Europeans and 1400 native troops. To this armament SAID contributed his quota of 3 ships and 4000 men,[2] and the whole set forth for Ras el Khaimah.[3] Such was the force required to crush a power which had thrived on the supineness of its opponents. Nor was the attack itself, though completely successful, an easy matter. The bombardment lasted for several days, and an eye-witness,[4] who has left a graphic account of the siege, pays tribute also to the courage and pertinacity of the Cowasim. Much was effected by a clever operation on the part of SAID, who despatched 2000 troops by land, for these had "forced the passes in the hills deemed impregnable, and brought in some prisoners." The havoc wrought by the guns was immeasurable, but great credit must be given to the Cowasim for their cleverness in withdrawing from the town. "Such was the result," says a contemporary, "of the expedition which has inflicted on the power of

[1] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 449; CORANCEZ, p. 145.

[2] For detailed accounts of the undertaking cf. REP., 1879–80, p. 45; REP., 1883–84, p. 26; MILES, p. 324; BADGER, p. lxxix.; LOW, I., p. 351; BOMB. SEL., p. 188; CRICHTON, p. 487.

[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxix.

[4] Cf. MIGNAN, II., pp. 220, 275 (Despatch received in India from the Major-General commanding the expedition to Ras el Khaimah).

the Cowasim a check from which it seems difficult that they should ever be able to recover." The prophecy was a just one. The trouble with the Cowasim ceased almost entirely from this moment, and after 1819 outrages on shipping in the Persian Gulf are extremely rare. A treaty was drawn up with Hassan bin Rahmah and Sultan bin Sakar which established and guaranteed future order and tranquillity in the Gulf.[1] To bind them more strictly, and to try the effect of moral influence, a treaty was concluded which guaranteed the cessation of plunder and piracy by sea and land. This treaty was signed on the 8th January, 1820,[2] and was enforced by leaving a garrison of 1200 sepoys to occupy Ras el Khaimah till July.[3] In March Sir W. Grant Keir returned in the *Liverpool* to Bombay, and SAID had earned, by his strong and effective support, complete immunity from further attacks from the north. The jumping-off ground of Cowasim and Wahhabis had been destroyed. The cessation of plunder and piracy by sea and land was in fact ensured and the moral ascendancy of Oman was patent.

It remained to carry further the task of consolidation by securing the country to the south. Under the name Beni bu Ali[4] were combined two separate tribes who had rendered themselves obnoxious to both British and Omanis; to the British because quite recently they had plundered a wreck at Laschkharah and murdered the interpreter of H.M.S. *Mercury*[5]; to the

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 325.
[2] Cf. HUART, p. 275.
[3] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 449; CORANCEZ, p. 146; MILES, p. 325.
[4] Cf. WELLSTED, I., p. 54.
[5] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 26; MILES, p. 326.

Omanis for the fact that they had adopted Wahhabi tenets, as well as for their plundering habits. A joint expedition was therefore fitted out against them. Six companies of sepoys and eight guns, accompanied by 2000 Omanis under SAID'S personal command, landed at Sur in Jaalan in November, 1820. The majority of the Sepoys had been gathered from the garrison left behind at Kishm after the fall of Ras el Khaimah earlier in the previous year under Captain Thompson, the British Political Resident at Muscat.[1] The expedition was unfortunate; the power and bravery of the enemy had been underestimated and the defence proved altogether too strong for the attackers. The assault upon the town was beaten off with very heavy losses and a night attack on the allied camp led to the flight of the majority of the Omanis. SAID personally, however, displayed great bravery; in the course of the unsuccessful assault he had gallantly rescued a wounded British soldier, 'and after the disaster by night he led back the remainder of the combined force in safety to Muscat. For these conspicuous services he subsequently received from the Bombay Government a sword of honour.[2] It was impossible, however, that things should be left as they were. The British force had been practically extinguished —a blow to prestige which required immediate repair.

In the following year, therefore, Sir Lionel Smith was sent out from Bombay with a properly equipped force, which was joined by SAID in person. We are fortunate here also in having an eye-witness's graphic

[1] Cf. WELLSTED, I., p. 55.
[2] Cf. LOW, I., p. 373; BURTON, I., p. 292.

account of the fighting.[1] It was severe, but the issue was a happy one. The town was captured at no great loss and the inhabitants carried off into captivity. Some who fell into SAID'S hands appear to have received harsh treatment,[2] for the injuries that they had done were too fresh in his mind to allow of magnanimity. But the greater part, who were removed to Bombay, were subsequently repatriated and were even afforded grants of money from the Indian Exchequer wherewith to rebuild their villages and aqueducts.[3]

SAID had now reached the maturity of his powers, mental as well as physical. He was the undisputed master of his country; the Wahhabis had fallen, the Cowasim had been reduced, the Beni bu Ali extinguished. At home there were no opponents to his rule, and with his recovery of Sohar on the death of Azzan bin Kais in 1814,[4] he extended over Oman a unified and undisputed power such as it had not hitherto known. The pilgrimage which he undertook to Mecca in the year 1824, as his father had done in 1803,[5] is an indication of his prestige and personal popularity. He sailed in March in the *Liverpool*, which had been specially fitted up for him, leaving behind his brother's son, Mohamed bin Salim, as Regent in his absence. His reception in the Holy Cities was a triumph. Mohamed Ali sent a body of officers to greet him as he landed; the Turkish Governor accorded him an official welcome at Jedda;

[1] Cf. MIGNAN, II., pp. 248, 282. (Despatch received in India from the Major-General commanding the expedition against the Beni bu Ali).
[2] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxx.
[3] Cf. MILES, p. 327.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25; BADGER, pp. lxxvii., 328.
[5] Cf. p. 8.

although a dissenter, he was given a personal audience by the Caliph. Everywhere the sumptuousness of his retinue and the graciousness of his appearance excited the liveliest approbation, and on his return to Muscat he was received by his subjects with great warmth.[1] The history of Oman affords few instances of the ruler returning from a journey without having to crush insurgents.

In July, 1826, SAID despatched a fleet to blockade Bushire, but at the request of the British Resident did not attack the town. The Persian Governor, who was absent at this time, was captured at sea when on his way home and detained a prisoner for several months. In November of the same year SAID sent several ships to Basra to enforce the payment of the yearly gratuity,[2] the arrears of which amounted to 104,000 dollars. In the engagement the Turks were defeated and the Pasha carried prisoner to Muscat.[3]

In November, 1828, SAID arrived with his fleet once more at Bahrein intending to take the island by surprise, after having had secured by purchase the aid of Tanoun, the chief of Abu Dhabi and head of the Beni Yas tribe, who could command about 400 well appointed soldiers. But as Tanoun's men deserted in so shameless a manner that it was believed they were in pay from both sides, the attack failed, and having been slightly wounded and discouraged in his enterprise SAID returned to Muscat.[4]

When the chief of Dhofar, Mohammed Akil, was

[1] Cf. PALGRAVE, II., p. 277; GUILLAIN, II., p. 186.
[2] Cf. p. 9.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27; BADGER, p. xlvi.; MANSUR, p. 3.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27; BADGER, p. 347; *Transactions Bombay Geog. Soc.*, 1836–38, p. 33.

murdered at Morbah in 1839, SAID had a force despatched to take possession of that district. Being in need of his troops for his East African enterprise, he had to withdraw the garrison after a short time, but the district remained ever since part of the Sultans' dominions.[1]

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27; REP., 1884–85, p. 22; MILES, p. 513.

CHAPTER III

OMAN AND EAST AFRICA

THE East-coast of Africa presents an interesting example of a wide stretch of country harbouring a limitless variety of diverse and sometimes vagrant peoples. Some, particularly the Bantu races, had been driven there by pressure from the north. Several had taken refuge from the fierce quarrels of religious schism. Others again, having touched the coast in the course of trading voyages, had settled there small colonies of merchants who imposed their authority upon a basic stock too unintelligent to provide an adequate resistance or too diverse in type to form an effective combination. Onwards from the end of the seventh century of the Christian era the Arabs had provided specimens of each of the last two classes, and among the Arabs pre-eminently the Omanis.[1] An historical biography provides no scope for the exposition of legend or the analysis of myth, and the most that can be attempted is to set forth certain salient features in the interference of Oman on the East-coast of Africa from the period when the data assume the form of historical facts.

The part taken by the Yaareba dynasty in casting forth the Portuguese from Oman itself has already

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. 5; KRAPF, p. 521; ZANZIBAR, p. 43; INGRAMS, p. 19.

been mentioned. A deputation from the East African coast appealed in 1652 to the founder of that dynasty, Sultan bin Seif, to perform a like service for Mombasa, Zanzibar and Pemba.[1] It was from him that such a help could most reasonably be demanded, not only because he stood forth as the vindicator of Eastern and native rights against a Western and alien oppressor, but also, since the most influential section of the East African community was composed of Arab traders, who, whatever their descent, looked towards the Imam of Oman as the unified power most likely to work out for them their freedom. In the course of the centuries the south-western kingdoms of Arabia, to which perhaps the majority of the East African emigrants had belonged, had crumbled and disappeared; but, in the consciousness of their common Arabian descent it was to an Arab, even though of a different nation and perhaps of a different religious sect, that they appealed. It was a call to which interest as well as sentiment demanded immediate response, for no dynasty of Oman ever lost sight of the fact that trade is followed by the flag. Insecure, therefore, as the internal position of Sultan bin Seif still was, a fleet was yet sent forth from Muscat to expel the Portuguese from Mombasa. It will, however, be safe to infer from oral tradition that the expulsion of the Portuguese was no easy matter, for, though driven out, within a few years they returned and maintained possession until 1696 or 1698.[2] About this period another expedition was sent from Oman,[3] and its arrival was the signal for a general rising right

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27; BADGER, p. 92; STRANDES, p. 229; INGRAMS, p. 58.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27; BADGER, p. 92; INGRAMS, p. 59.
[3] Cf. STRANDES, p. 246; GRANDIDIER, p. 34.

down the coast. The massacre of Portuguese was universal, and the resulting position presented a good opportunity for the rulers of Oman to establish that overseas empire which was never far from their thoughts. There is evidence that Sultan bin Seif realised the possibilities and was not unwilling to take advantage of them, but the weakness of his position at home delayed the realisation of these dreams for more than a century. So complete, however, had been the extermination of the Portuguese that although the Omani garrison was withdrawn the district remained free from European interference till 1728. In that year the Portuguese Admiral, Luis de Sampaio, once more reduced Mombasa, and again the inhabitants called for assistance to Oman. As before, a small fleet was despatched, only to find on its arrival that a native rising had proved sufficient to wipe out the invader. Mohammed bin Said el Maamire, deputed by the Imam Seif bin Sultan to assist in expelling the Portuguese, was quick to grasp his chance. He established himself as Wali of Mombasa, sent a small occupation force to Zanzibar, and remitted periodic tribute to Oman.

But at home the internal dissensions were such that it was found impossible to maintain uninterrupted communication with so distant a dependency. It is not, therefore, surprising to find a native dynasty established. Eleven years after Mohammed bin Said's *coup d'etat* one Mohammed bin Othman el Mazrui arrogated to himself the office of Wali of Mombasa and established that Mazeri dynasty which has never disappeared from the East coast, and to this day still maintains some of its pretensions. Its founder

lost no time, when Oman was submerged in quarrels attendant upon the rise of the Al bu Said, in cutting adrift and declaring himself independent. Trade between the two countries, however, did not cease, and the first care of Ahmed bin Said, when he felt himself secure in power, was to restore the vanished suzerainty. Accordingly, in 1745 he sent out Seif bin Khalaf with instructions to assassinate Mohammed bin Othman and reduce Mombasa. Seif fulfilled his orders faithfully. He cut down the tree, but neglected to dig up the roots. Mohammed was duly killed, but his brother Ali, allying himself with the natives and an English merchant, Mr. Cook, who could find no help under Arab rule, seized the fort of the town, slew Seif and took over the government. Ali remained independent till his death, but the neighbouring towns, Kilwa, Marka and Zanzibar submitted and received, in the person of Abdullah bin Jaad, their first Al bu Said governor.[1]

That, however, was the limit of Ahmed bin Said's achievement, and till the accession of the Seyyid SAID only one further Omani operation is worthy of notice. It will be remembered that the Imam Ahmed was unfortunately succeeded by his weak son, Said, and that another of his sons, Seif, despairing of power at home, turned his eyes in the customary direction and set out to carve a kingdom for himself in East Africa in 1784. To prevent this Said sent out his son Hamed with a small force to relieve Zanzibar, besieged by Seif. He then went to Mombasa, where he obtained a written acknowledgment of the suzerainty of Oman,

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27.

and for the next thirty years resistance to the Wahhabis monopolised attention.[1]

The Seyyid SAID, however, even in the midst of his most strenuous and unsuccessful campaigns against the marauders, found time to think of his western legacy. In 1812 he sent out Khalaf bin Nasir as Wali of Mombasa and made him build a fort at Lamu. The then representative of the Mazeri dynasty, Abdullah bin Ahmed, being of no mind to put up with this intrusion, refused to recognise the rights of Oman either to suzerainty or to tribute. This meant war, and realising the position Abdullah surveyed the horizon for help, but perceiving none close at hand undertook a vain personal mission to Bombay. Meanwhile, SAID'S own situation was so insecure that the most he could do was to despatch small forces in 1817 and 1822 to reduce Patte, Brawa and Siu. The Omanis on the coast, however, undertook operations on their own account, and the Wali of Zanzibar set upon Pemba and expelled the Mombasa garrison. Abdullah died in 1823 and Suliman bin Ali, the former Wali of Pemba, was elected Regent in his place. His position was by no means strong, for in Pemba he had lost his richest possession, and an edict of SAID'S forbidding all trade with Mombasa impoverished him still further. Renewed appeals to Bombay were in vain, and in December, 1823, when H.M.S. *Barracouta* touched at Mombasa in the course of survey work upon the coast, Captain Vidal was asked to take Mombasa under British protection. The request was transmitted to Bombay for further instructions, but before a reply

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, pp. 20 and 28; GUILLAIN, I., p. 556.

could be received a stronger force arrived from Oman under Abdullah bin Suleyyim. The Regent, hoping to compromise the invaders, ran up the British flag, and when, on the 7th February, 1824, another British ship, the *Leven*, arrived, a similar appeal for protection was made to its Captain Owen. This gentleman forthwith accepted the suzerainty from Malindi to Pangani on condition that slavery was abolished throughout the district, and Lieutenant Reitz remained behind as Governor. He then sailed to Pemba, hoping to take over that island also, but in this he was disappointed. In January, 1825, Brawa was annexed and an agreement reached with the Wali of Zanzibar that things should remain *in statu* until orders arrived from Bombay. When, however, instructions were received in the following year, it was discovered that the zeal on the spot was to be tempered by discretion at headquarters. The doings of Captain Owen were disavowed.[1] Mombasa was evacuated and SAID was left to settle the matter as he would. This result was fatal to the Regent, who was deposed by Salim bin Ahmed, brother of the late Wali. To him SAID addressed a demand for surrender, and on his offering nominal suzerainty and a payment of tribute, but refusing the fortress of the town, SAID set about that personal expedition which led to the founding of his African empire.[2]

The preparations made by SAID for the first visit to what he regarded as his East African dominions were

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29; GRANDIDIER, p. 35.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 28; MILES, p. 329; BADGER, p. 349; GUILLAIN, I., p. 577; GRANDIDIER, p. 35.

of an extensive nature. They were, however, by no means adequate for the task in hand, for not only by Nature, but owing to his recent successes and the ill-advice of his counsellors, SAID had been prepared to underestimate the quality of the task which he was about to perform. However, he assembled a large fleet, including the *Liverpool*, and embarked 1200 fighting men.[1]

In spite of the fact that Colonel Miles and others are so certain in their chronology that they can assign a specific date, December 15th, 1829, to the embarkation,[2] the subject is open to question, and many authorities disagree even concerning the year. There is, however, a measure of agreement that the embarkation took place in December of some year, and that SAID was before Mombasa in the early days of January of the following year. Until recently the question seemed insoluble, but now the evidence shows almost conclusively that Colonel Miles was correct in his month, approximately correct in his day and completely at sea in his year. The available documentary evidence has hitherto ranged itself for or against two years, 1827 or 1829. On the one hand Guillain[3] says that the fleet arrived before the port (*i.e.*, Mombasa) in the first days of January, 1828. The crossing from Muscat to Mombasa during the monsoon period takes approximately three weeks for a sailing boat. To arrive, therefore, at Mombasa in the first days of January, 1828, SAID must have set sail towards the end of the second week of December, 1827. In other words,

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.
[2] Cf. MILES, p. 329; BOMB. SEL., p. 200; LYNE, p. 28.
[3] Cf. GUILLAIN, I., p. 586.

Miles and Guillain are in close agreement concerning the day of the month, but not concerning the year. If the choice were left between Miles and Guillain, the preference would fall on the side of the latter, who was on the spot thirty years nearer the events than Miles and who prepared his work more as an authoritative document than as a mere Government record. It is fortunate, therefore, that there exists in Zanzibar a letter written by SAID to certain neighbouring chiefs, dated the 19th Jamad el Akher, 1243, (that is to say, the 7th January, 1828) and running as follows :—

From SAID BIN SULTAN to Sheikhs Ishak bin Bwana Miya, Abubakar bin Mohammed bin Sheikh and Yusuf bin Sheikh, dated 17th Jamad el Akher, 1243 (7th January, 1828).

(*After Compliments.*)

We beg to inform you that we arrived at Mombasa on the 14th and on the 16th we entered the creek and on that day there was very hard fighting. On the 17th Salim, Mubarak and their brothers, the children of the Liwali, came to us and surrendered and requested us to cease from the war. They submitted to surrender the fort and on the 18th we flew our flag on it and our garrison occupied it. Please announce this good news to all our friends. I gratefully return thanks to God for having made easy our affairs. As regards the people of Siu, if they have fulfilled their promise then please hasten and build the fort, but if you think that they are not going to fulfil their word, then please let me know of all the affairs that we might send them soldiers. Please send me reply as soon as possible.

Written by His Highness' order by his slave Ali bin Hashim with his own hand. Convey my salaams to the Kathis and the other elders.

As there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the document there can be no question that Guillian

is right in his year, and Miles more or less in the day of his month.

It would be as well if one could afford to dismiss this matter of dates and authorities, but, unfortunately, one cannot. All the authorities agree that this first expedition did take place, and that is approximately the only point upon which they assent. It is stated [1] that SAID, expecting an easy victory, did not make an immediate attack, but attempted to overawe Salim by the elaborate nature of his preparations. He goes on to say that Salim, remaining unmoved, refused all offers of pourparlers, beat off repeated assaults and compelled SAID to retire to Zanzibar with his ambitions unfulfilled.[2] Also, the History of the Indian Navy says, "The Imam returned to Maskat on the 8th May, 1830, all his plans for the reduction of Mombasa having failed," and adding that Mombasa was not reduced till 1837.

Guillain, on the other hand, offers a completely different account of the expedition in 1828, saying that an initial attempt was made by SAID to point out to Salim the futility of resistance, and that Salim, remaining unimpressed, the town was fiercely shelled from the harbour. Parleys followed and a treaty [3] was signed in these terms: First, the citadel was to be handed over to SAID, who would be allowed to place therein a garrison of fifty men but of a tribe friendly to the Mazeri; in the second place, however, Salim and the members of his family were to be authorised

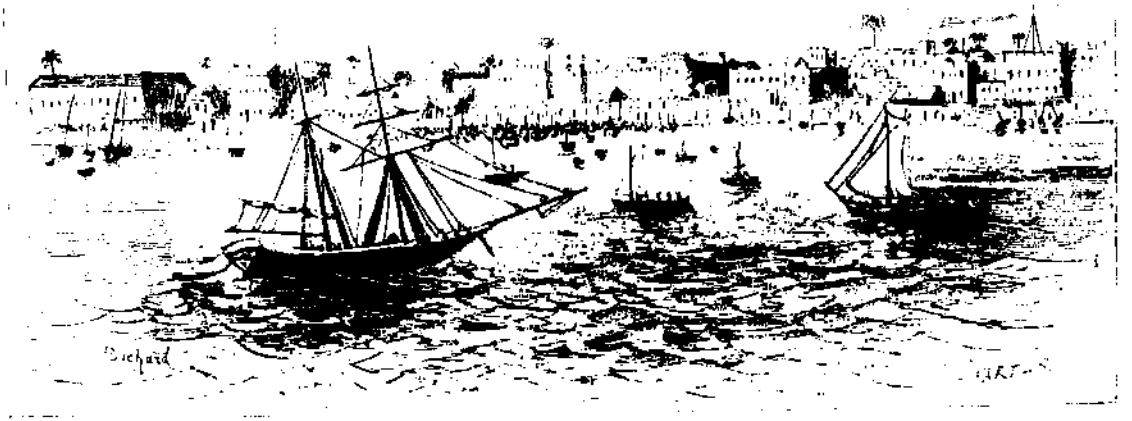
[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.

[2] GUILLAIN, I., p. 594, mentions that SAID undertook another expedition to Mombasa in December, 1829, without being able to submit the place to his power.

[3] Cf. LOW, II., p. 330.

to continue their residence there; the third clause recognised SAID'S sovereign rights; but this was limited by the fact that Salim and his descendants were to preserve the government in their own hands; finally, the Customs revenue was to be divided equally between both parties, the nomination of the chief Customs Officer being left to Salim.[1] SAID entered the Citadel on January 11th. The whole story is given by Miles in almost identical terms as an account of the proceedings in the subsequent expedition of 1832.[2] Recognising SAID'S letter to the chiefs as an *ex parte* statement, we may yet build up from it a fairly accurate view of the actual position. SAID obviously found affairs at Mombasa more difficult than he had contemplated, and not wishing to risk all on one throw he preferred to accept this shadow of a treaty rather than to sacrifice the substance by an assault. This he quite naturally represented as a glorious victory, and as such it was accepted at Zanzibar on his initial arrival there during the first half of February, 1828, when he was received with great pomp.[3] The treaty, therefore, may be accepted as having been made on that occasion, and not four years later, and it will be found to be the object round which the subsequent struggle rages. Indeed, it was broken as soon as made, for SAID interpreted the first clause by introducing fifty fresh men into the citadel every day without any withdrawals. When the garrison reached the number of two hundred he ejected Salim and forced him to reside in the town.[4]

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, I., p. 587.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.
[3] Cf. KRAPF, p. 534; GUILLAIN, I., p. 589.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29; GUILLAIN, I., p. 588.



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Zanzibar from the Sea (about 1857)

SAID was not destined, however, to spend any length of time in Zanzibar on this occasion. The provisions which he had made in Oman on his departure had been sufficiently ineffective to secure that at least. He had appointed his nephew, one Mohammed bin Salim—who appears to have been a weak man of no particular importance—as Regent, and having done so he was compelled to imprison the strong man of the family, his cousin Hilal bin Mohammed, to keep him out of mischief.[1] The latter was popular and influential throughout the northern districts, and especially round Suwaiq, and although he was himself unable to take action there were members of his family who were not likely to brook such an insult. It is, perhaps, a little difficult to explain why so astute a diplomat as SAID should commit so elementary a mistake, but it is probable that he regarded it as less of a risk to keep Hilal under lock and key than to put him in a position to extend his influence and raise his pretensions to power. If such were SAID'S calculations they were possibly correct, but only by a small margin. It was as though he had found his kingdom seized in his absence, and himself compelled to reclaim it.

SAID had not been long absent when Jokha, sister of Hilal, seized Suwaiq, raised the Batinah and sent messengers to stir up Hamud bin Azzan. Hamud was son of that Azzan upon whose death, as we have seen,[2] Sohar had descended to SAID. It is likely that this was the wish of Azzan himself, but it certainly did not coincide with the aspirations of his son nor with the feelings of the people. Hamud therefore was by

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 27.
[2] Cf. p. 33.

no means unwilling to ally himself with the malcontents and grasp the opportunity afforded by SAID'S absence. Not content with Sohar, he seized also Khaburah and Shinas and prepared for a descent upon Muscat itself.[1] The situation was critical and, as on previous occasions, only relieved by prompt action on the part of Mohammed bin Nasir and the British. Nowhere more clearly than at this juncture is seen the influence of women in the Arab world. On the one hand the rebellion was instigated by Jokha, sister of Hilal; on the other hand it was resisted by the Bibi Mouza, aunt of SAID. This dauntless lady, who was usually to be found in the thick of the fray as well as in the heart of the council-chamber,[2] exercised her influence with Mohammed bin Nasir precisely as nearly thirty years earlier in the case of Bedr bin Seif, and it was on her instigation that Mohammed bin Nasir threw into Muscat 1500 men from Semail, and persuaded the faithful tribes to create a diversion by attacking Sohar from the north.[3] At the same moment the British received an appeal from Mohammed bin Salim, the Regent. Accordingly two cruisers were sent out from Bombay to patrol the Batinah coast and frustrate any attempt round Muscat. The British Resident in the Persian Gulf kept other vessels in readiness at Muscat and sent personal remonstrances to Hamud, warning

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.

[2] The history of Arabia has known a great number of prominent women. Only a few shall be cited here: the Queen of Sheba and "the four wise women of Arabia" (PERRON, p. 10, 40); Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet (IRVING, p. 113); Zobeidah, the wife of Haroun el Rashid (ZEHME, p. 27); Nailah, the wife of the Caliph Othman (CRICHTON, p. 303); Zenobia, the Queen of Palmyra (OPPENHEIM, I., p. 293), also her sisters, Zabba and Rebbeiah (PRICE, p. 124); Ghaliya, the "Jean of Arc of the desert" (BURCKHARDT, p. 371; DIDIER, p. 196; HUART, II., p. 294).

[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxxiv.

him that further advances would be regarded by the British as an unfriendly act.[1] The immediate peril therefore was avoided and in the meantime SAID returned from Zanzibar in May, 1830. He at once commenced to belittle the commotion, said that it had been much exaggerated, and took particular exception to the large part played by the British in the matter. He forthwith dismissed the cruiser (or cruisers, for authorities differ as to whether there was one or more) sent from Bombay, and alleged that he could cope with the situation alone. We may ascribe this move to the prudent calculations of an independent monarch who had no desire to see his country under a foreign suzerainty and who had too much experience of the price demanded for foreign assistance.

The evil, however, was in fact rather beyond his repairing. In February, 1831, he made an attack upon Sohar for which undertaking his preparations were of the most elaborate nature. He united to himself the Cowasim by bribing Sultan bin Sakar to join him, and placated the Wahhabis with gifts.[2] He is even alleged to have hired large numbers of Bedouin mercenaries, but to have been so overawed by their numbers as to be willing to disburse large sums to secure their departure.[3] Even so, however, the attack upon Sohar was a fiasco, for Hamud's allies in the north prevented Sultan's co-operation by penning him in his own dominions, and the position of Sohar was too strong for SAID'S unaided efforts.[4]

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 202.
[3] Cf. HUART, II., p. 276.
[4] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 202.

He had to be content, therefore, with the recapture of Shinas and the restoration of Hilal to Suwaiq. Shortly afterwards a pact was made between Hamud and SAID by which the former retained Sohar and Khaburah, while recognising SAID'S superiority, and agreeing to take no military action without his consent.[1] He also undertook to pay for the towns an annual tribute of 8000 German crowns.[2]

It is apparent that the fruits of SAID'S first East African expedition were very meagre in East Africa and negligible at home. It is therefore more to be marvelled at that in 1832 he underwent the double hazard once again.

The preparations of this second expedition against Mombasa were of no less extent than those of the former. 1400 men went out with the *Liverpool*, four cruisers and six bughlos.[3] More than one account discovers the necessity for the expedition in the action of Nasir bin Suliman, the Wali of Pemba. This man appeared before Mombasa not long after SAID left for Zanzibar in 1828, alleging that he had been appointed Governor of the town by SAID. With these pretensions he occupied the fort which had been seized by SAID'S troops contrary to the treaty with Salim. He found, however, that the strength of the position benefited the foe as much as himself. There he was indeed unassailable, but from it he could not escape. Hunger little by little had its effect, and after a siege of many months Nasir bin Suliman surrendered at discretion and succumbed not long afterwards to

[1] Cf. BADGER, pp. lxxxiv., 352.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 201.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29; BOMB. SEL., p. 203.

the rigours of his confinement.[1] It is alleged that SAID found it necessary to avenge the failure of his subordinate, but while these events may have provided an excuse, it is unlikely that they were the sole cause of the present operations. The retirement of SAID to Oman would lessen the bonds of suzerainty and enable Salim to act once more as an independent monarch. In any case, even the treaty as it stood gave SAID a position by no means suited to his views. The town of Mombasa at this period was the key to the whole position in East Africa. It was the oldest port of its size, and the biggest. SAID, it is true, was beginning to raise against it a rival destined within a very few years far to outstrip it, but in 1832 Mombasa was a port while Zanzibar was a mud-flat, and we must therefore look rather to general strategic reasons for this second attack of SAID'S than to petty disputes.

Of the nature of the attack we know little, but luckily the results which are of greater importance are clearer. Our ignorance is not helped by the contradiction of two schools of authorities. We have already seen that what may be styled the British school denies that SAID ever captured Mombasa in 1828 at all, and affirms that he sailed away with empty hands. This school assigns to 1832 the treaty with Salim which, we have shown good reason for supposing, was made as recorded by Guillain and his followers in 1828. In agreement therefore with this conclusion we are forced once again to follow Guillain's lead, and we find that there is a strong similarity between the proceedings of 1832 and those of 1828. There

[1] Cf. KRAPF, p. 535; GUILLAIN, I., p. 591.

are the preliminary fruitless overtures, the equally ineffective bombardment, and finally, further negotiations undertaken probably in a more practical spirit and leading to a definite result. SAID found that, failing help from Mombasa or its vicinity, he could not hope to bring up by sea a force sufficient to reduce the town. He had therefore to be content once more with the position as it was, and the treaty of 1828 was re-enacted, but this time apparently without the treacherous epilogue.[1]

SAID'S sojourn at Zanzibar on this occasion lasted only for three months. He had not only left Oman in a parlous condition, but he had taken steps calculated to rouse rather than allay barely concealed passions.

On returning from Mombasa he had appointed Hilal bin Mohammed as Wali with extended authority, but had ordered him to act only on the advice of Mohammed bin Salim; and not content with this dangerous division of power, he had handed over Barkah to Saoud bin Ali, a great-grandson of the original Ahmed bin Said and therefore also a relative. It would have required men of considerable tact and fellow-feeling to work smoothly in triple harness of this kind.[2] But when it is discovered that, apart altogether from the delicacy of the situation, these three were, and had been for some time, at loggerheads, the dangerous nature of SAID'S actions will be realized.

The first movement came from Saoud at Barkah, who, being annoyed with Hilal and Mohammed not only for private reasons, but also because they wielded

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29; GUILLAIN, I., p. 588 KRAPF, p. 534.
[2] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxxv.

too much influence with the public, both by reason of their close personal relations with SAID and also on account of their position at Muscat,[1] attacked them as they were on their way to take over Rostak. Forthwith the country was up in arms. Saoud himself besieged Masnah, while Sultan bin Sakar and the Cowasim showed a natural preference for Khor Fakkan and Dibai, and Hamud bin Azzan decided to add Rostak to his possessions round Sohar. As usual, therefore, we find comparative tranquillity round Muscat and complete chaos in the north. Equally as before we find the Bibi Mouza and Mohammed bin Nasir showing the only cool heads in the country. These two garrisoned Muscat with 1500 Ghafiris,[2] threw reinforcements into Rostak so that Hamud bin Azzan was baulked of his prey,[3] and persuaded the Beni Naeem tribe to make a diversion against Sohar. Even so it is doubtful whether their prompt action could have saved the situation without the strong interference of Bombay. The Resident at Bushire sent written warnings to the insurgents representing to them the light in which their actions would be viewed by the British, and despatched a naval force to patrol the coast.[4] A cruiser was also stationed at Muscat to maintain the situation there till SAID should arrive from Zanzibar. Actually, however, it appears that the situation was so well in hand that the presence of the boat was unnecessary and she therefore left before SAID arrived on the 10th September, 1832. For the fact that he had anything remaining, SAID

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 204.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.
[3] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 204.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 29.

was chiefly indebted to the gallantry of the Bibi Mouza, who "personally saw to the defence of the place (*i.e.*, Muscat) and addressed letters to the British authorities at Bombay and Bushire." [1]

In the meanwhile Saoud had decided that it was beyond his capacity to cope with the combination of forces against him. He therefore released his two captives in return for a ransom of 8000 dollars and spread the rumour about that his action had merely been taken in self-defence.[2] Although, however, Saoud did not feel inclined to maintain his intransigent attitude, SAID also felt too insecure to take revenge upon him, and the result was another of those compromises at which SAID had shown such conspicuous ability. Barkah was of great use to him as being a port, but to Saoud it was of little interest, as affording small opportunity for defence. It was therefore arranged by the good offices of Mohammed bin Nasir [3] that Saoud should give up Barkah and receive Rostak in its place.

This, however, was the extent of SAID'S success. When he applied to the British for help in recovering Khor Fakkan and Dibai he was met with the reply that no assistance would be forthcoming, and that, for his own part, he would for the future be better advised to stay at home and take care of his Arab dominions.[4] Even so he might have risked an independent operation had it not been for the fact that

[1] Cf. LOW, II., p. 330.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 30.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxxvi.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 30. "A reciprocal treaty of mutual alliance, defensive and offensive, was entered into with him (*i.e.*, SAID), in which it was stipulated in Eastern phraseology that 'his enemies should be our enemies, and his friends our friends'; and up to this feeling we have, until very lately,

the new Amir of the Wahhabis, Turki bin Saoud, had recovered the Nejd and was beginning to reassert himself in the surrounding districts. Turki reopened all the traditional claims and patched up some kind of alliance with those of his own religion in the northern quarter of Oman. Under pressure of the customary threats SAID, on British advice, bought off his enemies with the promise of a *zakah*[1] of 5000 dollars a year, as stated in a letter written by himself to the Resident in the Persian Gulf, dated 23rd May, 1833. In return he received the assurance that the integrity of his kingdom would be protected. The agreement also contained a further clause providing for reciprocal help in the case of rebellions in Oman and the Nejd. This clause had to be dropped, for the British, fearing complications with Mohammed Ali, brought pressure to bear upon SAID, and persuaded him to omit it.[2]

It was not at all in accordance with the position which SAID was gaining for himself in East Africa that Mombasa should remain independent. Accordingly, taking advantage of the north-eastern monsoon in November, 1833,[3] he fitted out another strong expedition. Having learned a lesson from his previous failures, he took, in addition to the *Rahmanee*, the

acted. But when the probability of our aid being solicited by this prince came a short time ago before the Supreme Government of India, the passage of the treaty which I have given being considered by them only in the light of an Eastern compliment, it was directed that no assistance should be afforded him, and the Bombay Government have not therefore the authority to send a single vessel to the aid of one of their oldest and most faithful of allies" (WELLSTED, I., p. 402).

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. lxxxvi.; BOMB. SEL., p. 206; REP., 1883–84, p. 30.

[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 206.

[3] GUILLAIN (I., p. 599) gives February and March, 1833, but the season of the year is sufficient evidence against this date. It is also proved by ROBERTS that in October, 1833, SAID was still in Muscat.

Liverpool, two corvettes and 1400 men,[1] a large supply of small boats suitable for manœuvring in the confined spaces around Mombasa. The first step was a double bombardment, and a battery having been landed on the north side of Mombasa, the town was subjected to incessant fire by sea and land for eight days.[2] The bombardment was, however, quite ineffective, and SAID might have received a severe check had not the Mombasians suffered acute discouragement from the failure of a night attack upon the land battery. The negotiations which followed were of the customary kind, and merely restored the original treaty once again. Salim, however, had no intention of suffering further treachery, and therefore stipulated that his citadel was not to be occupied. In return for this concession he handed over two of his relatives to accompany SAID to Zanzibar as hostages for good behaviour.[3]

However SAID might succeed in making little of the checks which he received before Mombasa he could not put any good face upon the completely unsuccessful expedition, accompanied by heavy loss, which he, under Hamed, the son of his cousin Ahmed, sent out in 1834 to recover Siu and Patte. These two towns habitually revolted whenever opportunity offered. On this occasion they obtained the help of the Mazeri, and though SAID appeared before Siu in person he once again underestimated the strength of the opposition and was beaten away. He did not even attempt to punish Salim for what was a very obvious breach

[1] ROBERTS, who was at Muscat during the preparation of the expedition states that about 2000 Bedouins were embarked for East Africa (p. 357).
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 31.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 31; GUILLAIN, I., p. 597.

of the oft-repeated undertaking. All he could do was to leave behind a small force to waylay Salim as he returned to Mombasa, and then, since he escaped from this ambush, nothing was done.[1]

Scarcely were these unsuccessful operations at an end when a fresh outbreak of unrest in Oman necessitated a further visit. In an attempt to settle the usual squabbles which arose when he left the country in the hands of others SAID had given it on this occasion to the Regency of his third son Thuwainy, but the innovation was not a success. The murder of Saoud bin Ali, Wali of Barkah, by his cousin, Sultan bin Ahmed, was the signal of unrest, and Hamud bin Azzan took advantage of the general excitement to add Rostak to Sohar. He even made preparations for attacking Semail, but fearing lest this should put him in a position to overawe Muscat, the British Government interfered. In July, 1834, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf moved across from Bushire, and warned Hamud that further persistence in rebellion would bring down upon him the wrath of the British. The few months respite which this warning secured was rudely broken when Hamud seized Suwaiq. It is true that he was immediately ejected by a force sent from Muscat, but Thuwainy committed a tactical error of the gravest kind by soliciting the help of the Cowasim. This brought discredit on himself and increased Hamud's popularity amongst his own people,[2] and it was to

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, I., p. 599; BADGER, p. 355. Two other expeditions against Siu and Patte were undertaken by SAID in 1844 and 1845 with no better success. Hamed bin Ahmed was killed on this occasion. Cf. GUILLAIN, III., p. 101; BOMB. SEL., p. 217; REP., 1883–84, p. 33.

[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 31.

meet these circumstances that SAID rushed back to Muscat.

His initial proceeding was to attack Sohar, and although this was unsuccessful his very prestige was sufficient to put an end to Hamud's activities. But more than this, SAID wanted to return to Zanzibar, though with Hamud unsubdued this was impossible. He therefore came to an agreement with the Wahhabis, and in 1836 a Wahhabi force under Said bin Mutlak besieged the fortress by land while SAID blockaded it by sea.[1] Nevertheless, no definite conclusion was reached, for Hamud resorted to the old trick of convincing SAID that the Wahhabis had designs upon Oman. The joint expedition therefore broke up, and SAID left Muscat once more in November, 1836, arriving at Mombasa at the end of the year.[2]

The whole situation down the west coast of the Persian Gulf was left very insecure, and to none did it cause more alarm than to the British. SAID might make these temporary alliances with the Wahhabis from time to time, but they remained none the less his traditional enemies, and it is quite obvious that the mutual suspicions which were aroused by a failure such as this before Sohar could not fail to increase the natural hostility between the two Arab factions, which was never for long in the background. Further, the failure considerably weakened SAID'S power over Oman and caused the British to reflect that unless prompt steps were taken to repair his prestige there would be no one upon whom they could rely to maintain the *status quo* in the Gulf. The Bombay Govern-

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 208.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 32.

ment could not possibly envisage similar relations either with the Wahhabis or with the northern tribes of Oman. What they required was a static power endowed with a sense of responsibility whose policy marched with their own, whose interests were identical with theirs, and upon whose loyalty they could depend. They therefore decided upon a specific course of direct intervention. To promote a reconciliation between SAID and Hamud a vessel had been sent to Sohar before SAID embarked for Zanzibar, and in her Hamud was conveyed to Muscat, where he was persuaded to undertake by British pressure that to which no action of SAID'S could have induced him. He engaged, in writing, never to rebel anew against SAID, nor to attack Hilal bin Mohammed at Suwaiq.[1]

These promises Hamud observed—perhaps more from necessity than from choice. For shortly after these events, perceiving a new opportunity provided by the death of Mohammed bin Nasir, he went to Bombay and demanded release from his bond. Mohammed bin Nasir, the Wali of Semail, had for years been a solid bulwark preserving the dominion of the Al bu Said at moments of grave crisis, and to a man of ambition such as Hamud his death was a signal for a new trial of strength. Very naturally the decision of the Bombay Government was otherwise. He was held to the strict letter of his engagement, and perceiving that there was now no room in Oman for his political designs he decided to abandon himself even more to religious asceticism and gave up Sohar

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 31; BADGER, p. 360; LOW, II., p. 331. Text of Treaty of Peace concluded between SAID and Hamud, dated 23rd December, 1839. Cf. TREATIES, p. 242.

to his son Seif.[1] This act finally allayed all dangers of rebellion in Oman, for Seif was not only not inimical to the ruling house, but actually a personal friend of SAID'S son Thuwainy. It was once more the prudence of the Bibi Mouza coming into play, for it was she who had induced Hamud to effect this transference of power.[2]

It was fortunate that SAID was thus released to turn his attention once more to East Africa, for while he had been occupied in Oman Salim had died at Mombasa in March, 1835. The usual consequences had, of course, followed. His brothers Khamis and Nasir at once took the field to secure the succession for themselves, but were forestalled by his son Rashid. The parties being no less equal in power than in pretensions, appeals for intervention soon began to reach SAID in Zanzibar. He, having waited till the winter monsoon of 1836, afforded a suitable opportunity for embarkation, set sail with his usual force, to find that Rashid held the stronger position and would brook no outside interference, but even so Khamis and Nasir were unwilling to have anything to do with him. SAID therefore landed his batteries on the north side of the fort and set about the customary bombardment, but mindful of his previous failures and quick to take advantage of the dissensions between the two warlike parties, he spent more effort in bribing the weaker to his side. It was therefore rather the internal dissensions than SAID'S military activities which compelled Rashid in February, 1837, to sign a treaty less advantageous than that secured by his

[1] Cf. HUART, II., p. 277; BADGER, p. 361.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33.

father. The fort was given over to Ali bin Mansur and 500 of SAID'S men, while Rashid was compelled to take up his residence in the town.[1] This was not a durable arrangement and it is not surprising to find Rashid shortly afterwards visiting Zanzibar in the hopes of securing better terms.[2] The sole proposal made to him was that he should give up Mombasa completely and retire with a considerable pension as Wali of Pemba. It was a proposal which he indignantly refused, and SAID, finding his enemy perhaps overawed, but certainly embittered and completely unsubdued, decided that the Mazeri must disappear from the scene. Within two months, therefore, he sent out his second son, Khalid, with certain secret instructions, the purport of which may be guessed from the sequel. When he arrived at Mombasa Khalid assumed a most pacific mien and held a ceremonial Durbar at the city gates at which the Mazeri were well received and invited up into the fort to discuss matters of business. There Khamis, Nasir, Rashid and about thirty others of the more important members of the Mazeri party were seized, conveyed on board ship and deported to Zanzibar. Thence they were sent in exile to Bundar Abbas ; but whether they were jettisoned on the voyage or starved to death on arrival, they certainly ceased to trouble SAID or history.[3]

Thus after ten years fell by intrigue the town which SAID had four times been unable to capture by direct attack. There is a great deal open to criticism in

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34.
[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, I., p. 605.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 32.

SAID'S dealings with the Mazeri. He had broken the first treaty made with Salim in 1828 by introducing four times the stipulated number of men into the fort and attempting to seize it in this fashion. It can hardly be doubted that it was he who had instigated the treacherous attack of Nasir bin Suliman which necessitated the expedition of 1832. And this final coup in 1837 is merely in character with the earlier events.

There remains, however, this to be said in his defence. SAID was not a general nor the leader of a military people. His interests lay in commercial development, and if the question be raised as to whether the overthrow of the Mazeri was ultimately beneficial to Mombasa there can be but one reply. In such a position they were a menace to the development of the surrounding country, a warlike people retarding the opening up of a rich hinterland. The verdict of the inhabitants of Mombasa as a whole may easily be gauged when it is realised that from the moment when the Mazeri fell SAID had no more trouble with the town, not because he kept it under with the stern iron of military discipline, but because he afforded it the opportunity of unrestricted commercial activity for which it was fitted. We may criticise the means, but not the ends of Fate.

CHAPTER IV

ZANZIBAR[1]

THE fall of Mombasa did not make any difference in SAID'S determination to establish the centre of his rule at Zanzibar. For it was undoubtedly of a widespread empire, knit closely together by the ties of commercial intercourse, that SAID was dreaming at this time. Again and again, when his thoughts demanded that he should remain in Oman, and when the machinations of small pretenders, the disquiets of petty chiefs, and the threats of the Wahhabis and the Cowasim, had rendered his absence dangerous, he had run the gauntlet and spent protracted periods in building up the district round Zanzibar. It was the apple of his eye and he was even prepared to run risks for its sake. After his first landing in 1828 he at once set about the building of his well-known country house outside what is now the city of Zanzibar.[2] And at the Bet el Mtoni he established his household in a building which was large, rambling, and of some discordance of style. It is not to be thought that

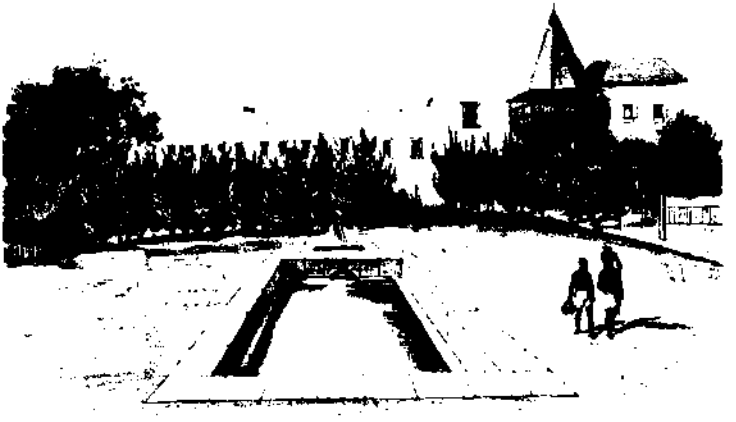
[1] "There is probably no part of the world where the English Government has so long had a Resident, where there are always some half-a-dozen merchants and planters, and of which we know so little as of the capital and part of the kingdom of one of the most faithful of our allies, with whom we have for half a century (since 1804) been on terms of intimacy." *TRANSACTIONS BOMBAY GEOG. SOC.*, 1856, p. lxxxv.

[2] Cf. KRAPF, p. 535. The palace was finished when Ruschenberger (I., p. 36) visited Zanzibar in September, 1835.

the effect it produced was one of ugliness, but it is commonly reported that the pleasure given to the eye arose more from its situation than its nature. Burton (I., p. 31), indeed, who is from time to time gifted with a flow of piquant invective all too uncommon among travellers, describes it as "pauperish and mouldy, like the Schloss of some duodecimo Teutonic prince." Guillain (II., p. 31) adds that "a nest of luxuriant verdure disguises its heavy and ungraceful style." But even those who speak slightingly of its architecture agree most heartily in the beauty of its situation, a beauty which has been marred in later years by the encroachment of the sea that was covering the wide-spread gardens with a thick film of sand.[1] Another palace was also built in the town itself, but it was at Bet el Mtoni that the household, numbering upwards of one thousand, most frequently resided.

SAID'S taste in architecture may not have satisfied Western standards (whether he was building a place or an empire), but he was well aware of his objective, had a keen sense of the best means of furthering his projects, and an undivided mind in carrying them out. A penetrating eye, which, overlooking the surface disadvantages, probes deep into reality, enabled him to ascertain at a glance the advantages of the position upon which he wished to base the fabric of his empire. Nor is it an exaggeration to suggest that he understood the situation at a glance. On the first occasion of his repulse from Mombasa he turned to Zanzibar, and never again deserted it. From it radiated throughout the islands and over the whole hinterland of the main

[1] Cf. PEARCE, p. 121.



Facing p. 72. **Beit El Mtom**

continent, his merchants and his trading until upon it depended the whole network of commercial activity which to-day covers the entire east coast of Africa.

This however was not the limit of his achievements. It was he who was personally responsible for the introduction of what is now the staple product of the island—the clove. The seeds of this plant had been carefully introduced into Mauritius by the French in 1770, through M. Sausse, a Creole from Bourbon or the Isle de France.[1] It is a capricious plant demanding a rich red loamy soil, and even then resolutely refusing to thrive in certain districts for no ascertainable reasons. To this day in Zanzibar it flourishes well in certain regions and refuses absolutely to be established in places similar and of like soil in the neighbourhood. For which reasons the first year of its introduction into Mauritius nearly saw its extinction. The trade had been a practical monopoly of the Dutch Indies, and the French, in their desire to break this monopoly, had distributed such seed as they had obtained to all the landholders of the island. At the end of the first year their distribution was lost. The only seeds which had taken root had been those retained by the French Scientific Research Station. From this beginning, however, it spread by leaps and bounds, and SAID no sooner landed in Zanzibar than he realised the potentialities of clove culture in the island.[2] We have here again clear evidence of his initiative and tenacity. Tradition has it that an Arab, the owner of an estate called Kisimbani, having been exiled by SAID for

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 49.

[2] Cf. PEARCE, p. 291; GUILLAIN, II., pp. 49 and 145; RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 72; LYNE, p. 245; BAUMANN, p. 27; ZANZIBAR, p. 30; BURTON, I., p. 360.

slave-trading, attempted to reinstate himself in the royal favour by returning with some clove seeds, and that SAID was so pleased that he forthwith granted him pardon. However that may be, it is certain that as early as 1828 SAID experimented on this very estate with the cultivation of the clove, and finding that it took kindly to the local soil encouraged its cultivation with the utmost energy. There are, of course, other accounts concerning the introduction of the plant. Burton records—and his account is verified by the independent evidence of Ruschenberger—that an attempt had been made to transport the clove from Mauritius as early as 1818, and that the enterprising man who made the attempt beggared himself in the process. SAID was more fortunate, and soon began to pass penal regulations enjoining upon landholders the necessity of putting a fixed proportion of their land under cloves. Time has proved the wisdom of his views, but the innovation was, however, very far from establishing an immediate success or recommending itself at once to the planters, and it needed tenacity as well as wisdom on SAID'S part to put the industry upon a steady and lucrative footing. Burton (I., p. 362) himself regarded the introduction as a mistake, and recommended that sugar should be cultivated instead. In fact, however, SAID was experimenting with sugar also, at one period obtaining the assistance of two experts for the erection of a factory[1]; and later, when the severity of the competition had led to a serious fall in the price of cloves, he turned his attention to the manufacture of indigo. This was no

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 93.

novelty, for even a century earlier it had been so common in Oman that Said bin Ahmed had attempted to raise revenue by establishing a monopoly of it.[1]

At Zanzibar SAID was less successful. He fell into the hands of a French mining engineer whose character provided his compatriot, M. Guillain (II., p. 147), with an opportunity for many sad reflections as to how one man can besmirch the reputation of a whole nation. This individual appears to have known little about engineering and less about indigo, but it is not to be expected that districts undergoing such swift development as this should escape altogether from the presence of needy adventurers of whom no nation has the monopoly. If the British Captain, Robert Cogan, who was sent out to Zanzibar in 1839 to affect a commercial treaty,[2] reconciled it with his official mission to obtain, after conclusion of the negotiations, a personal concession for the working of the guano[3] on the island of Latham (Zanzibar), an explanation might be found in the fact that he was a partner of the firm of Messrs. Cogan at Zanzibar.[4] It does not appear, however, that SAID suffered immoderately from such treatment, and his general astuteness would probably protect him.

It is, however, in the development of commerce that SAID'S claim to fame chiefly lies. Not without cause had he chosen Zanzibar as the centre of his empire. There he could rely upon the soil and the climate to work in harmony, and as in course of time

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. 189; GUILLAIN, II., p. 146; WELLSTED, I., p. 224.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 32. Full text of the Treaty (ratified at Muscat, July 22nd, 1840) in BOMB. SEL., p. 250.
[3] Washed away (1847) by a "Ras de Marée." Cf. BURTON, I., p. 144; GUILLAIN, II., p. 4.
[4] Cf. LYNE, p. 34.

he became a great agriculturalist, importing and exporting far and wide, he began to set up, not diplomatic missions, but commercial agencies. He had them in Calcutta, Bombay, the Dutch Indies, in Persia and in China. In 1856 he even meditated the establishment of direct trade relations with France, but death cut short his project. In Central Africa, also, his traders were established, and Livingstone on his journeys met them at the Great Lakes. Thus were they spread on the boundaries of the then known world, his commercial agents, envoys of peace—his ambassadors in moments of crisis.[1]

In 1839 SAID was recalled from Zanzibar to Oman by the activities of Mohammed Ali, who had conceived the plan of annexing Arabia and Syria. The accounts of the reactions between Mohammed Ali and SAID are conflicting, but that is probably due as much to the fault of those who record the events as to the tortuous proceedings of those engaged in them. There is, for instance, more than a suspicion that SAID was intriguing with Mohammed Ali for a joint expedition against Bahrein. SAID'S idea was that when the island had been conquered it should be handed over to him in return for an annual tribute paid to Egypt. It is probable that Mohammed Ali shared part of this idea, but had envisaged a different sequel.[2] It is quite certain, for instance, that he was intriguing with the Wahhabis

[1] Cf. GOBINEAU, p. 91.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 32; BOMB. SEL., p. 208.

and had induced their chief, Khalid bin Saoud, to form a coalition with the Cowasim and threaten Bireimi, where by order of the Egyptian General, Khoorshid Pasha, a considerable force with two guns under Said bin Mutlak had arrived in December, 1839. It was fortunate for SAID that this triple alliance of Egyptians, Wahhabis and Cowasim was weakened by internal dissension, for he had to strain every nerve in exhorting the local chiefs to keep the Bireimi forts out of the enemies' hands.[1] On the other hand the British heard rumours that SAID had designs for a *rapprochement* with the Egyptians with a view to action against Bahrein, and representations were therefore made at Muscat that British policy could not view without alarm such Egyptian encroachments. Weight was added to the protest by the arrival shortly afterwards of a letter from Mohammed Ali bluntly requesting that SAID should send immediate assistance, with the alternative of being treated as an enemy.[2] This request SAID ignored, but turning to the British suggested that as they objected not to his recovery of Bahrein, but to the nature of his assistance, they should thus take over the island and allow him to run it on terms similar to those which had been proposed to Mohammed Ali.[3] This, however, did not suit British policy, which preferred to avert the danger by diplomacy rather than to challenge it in the field. It is, of course, well known

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 209.

[2] BOMB. SEL., p. 208. BURCKHARDT mentions (p. 261) that during his stay at Jedda, Mohammed Ali received two swift riding camels which were sent by sea as a present from SAID. He also states (p. 361) that Mohammed Ali had contracted with SAID for the hire of twenty ships during one year.

[3] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 209.

that a diplomatic battle was being fought as much in Paris and Cairo as on the scene of operations, and it was Palmerston's celebrated despatch to the British Ambassador in Paris which administered the *coup de grâce* to Mohammed Ali's pretensions. This, however, was only the end of a long series of exceedingly difficult manœuvres, in the course of which a breach more than once appeared inevitable. On one occasion at least preparations were made for the blockading of such portions of the coast of the Persian Gulf as were in Egyptian hands, and SAID promptly placed his whole fleet at the disposal of the British. It is evident that SAID enjoyed playing with fire, but at least he was guilty of no breach of trust towards the British; and this was as well, for in fact the British were the only defence he had against the annexation of his country. In April, 1840, Mohammed Ali declared openly in conversation with Colonel Hodges, the British Consul-General at Cairo, that it was his intention to take possession of Oman. Having confessed it after many evasions, veiling the facts in diplomatic language, he received warning, characterised by that abruptness which seems to have spread from Palmerston throughout the Service that he controlled, of the inevitable consequences of any such attempt. But the storm died down, for in November, 1840, Mohammed Ali made his submission to the Porte.[1]

The interplay of these tortuous intrigues convinced the Government of India that closer connection was

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33. That SAID entertained friendly relations with the rulers of Egypt also later on is told by DIDIER (p. 138). SAID sent as presents several valuable horses to the grandson of Mohammed Ali, Abbas Pasha, who in return despatched two female slaves, afterwards captured by a French or British man-of-war in the Straits of Bab el Mandeb.

necessary between Oman and Bombay. From this SAID himself was by no means averse; it was, in fact, an act for which he had constantly appealed, and he did not hesitate to assure the British Government that in order to obtain unity of purpose the whole, or any part of his fleet was at their service whenever required. He therefore greeted the proposal of sending out an Agent with considerable joy, feeling that it increased his security without diminishing his sovereignty. Accordingly in 1840 Captain Hamerton was appointed British Consul, and as Zanzibar had now clearly become the seat of government, it was to that town that he proceeded.[1] He there perceived SAID watching the encroachments of the French in Madagascar and on the coast generally with a jealous and watchful eye. SAID entertained considerable fears that their concealed but definite purpose was to oust him from his East African dominion, but, becoming gradually convinced that relations with them were possible on a more pacific basis, he concluded with them in 1844 a commercial treaty, of which a fuller treatment will be found in a later chapter.

In September, 1845, there came to a head the quarrels he had been having for a long time with his eldest son, Hilal. It has been suggested that SAID'S treatment of him was not perhaps the fairest, and, as it is certain that SAID did everything in his power to exclude Hilal from the succession, it is perhaps necessary to go somewhat precisely into the cause of this family feud. It must always be remembered that in Arabia, even more commonly than in Europe,

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 211.

eldest sons are usually suspect to their fathers. They are naturally the potential heads of an unofficial opposition, and, as an established monarchy is not the rule, a father looks upon his son, especially if that son be of a strong or warlike character, as destined to be his premature successor. In the case particularly under our notice more private reasons were advanced. It is certain that the succession was the object of a good deal of harem intrigue; the mother of Khalid, Hilal's younger brother, was a great favourite with SAID, and she undoubtedly used what influence she had to advance the cause of her own son. On the other hand, with the people at large, Khalid was extremely unpopular. He was interested only in trade, from which he had derived a huge fortune, while his brother was a born fighter and therefore appealed more to the popular taste. Now SAID was not always fortunate in war and his chief interest and claim to fame lay in commercial development. This therefore inclined him rather to his younger son, and, in turn, tended to drive Hilal to opposition. It is further stated by Hilal's sister that he had taken to insobriety, a habit which he had acquired from the French Consul at Zanzibar.[1] The probability is that the French found in Hilal a very useful tool for their private purposes, and that SAID, being conscious of this connection, feared his eldest son the more. That he understood the trend of French policy around him cannot be doubted. As early as 1840 he wrote to Lord Palmerston from Zanzibar expressing his fears of French designs and pointing out that the French

[1] Cf. RUETE, p. 138.

brig *De Messager* had been sent to him three times in one year to demand trade concessions.[1] In such circumstances it would not add to his affection for Hilal to find him in relation with the French.

In 1844 he determined upon a decisive step, and wrote to Lord Aberdeen expressing the wish to be succeeded in Oman by Thuwainy and in East Africa by Khalid, also inquiring whether, if he disinherited Hilal, his action would be upheld. The English Government expressed the view that it was not for them to interfere with SAID'S private affairs, and they accordingly refused to take a definite line.[2] They did, however, impress upon him the advisability of a reconciliation. This was rendered impossible by the fact that in September, 1845, Hilal paid a secret visit to London, without informing his father of his intentions. This was an extremely unfortunate action. As the visit was paid without SAID'S knowledge Hilal could not be received in official circles in London, and SAID, when the news reached his ears, was naturally exasperated.[3] He was merely confirmed in his intention to make Thuwainy Regent at Muscat and Khalid at Zanzibar. Hilal returned to Zanzibar on board a British ship in February, 1846, but was exiled from Zanzibar for ever in 1849, taking refuge in Lamu, and later, when on the pilgrimage to Mecca, he died in Aden on September 28th, 1851.[4] His sister states[5] that in spite of all that had occurred SAID'S grief for his son was unspeakable. He often locked himself

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34; LYNE, p. 49.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34; GUILLAIN, II., p. 226.
[4] Cf. MILES, p. 346; LYNE, p. 49; GUILLAIN, III., p.
[5] Cf. RUETE, p. 140.

up in his chamber, and the traces of tears could be seen afterwards in the place where he had knelt down to pray. Something which had never happened before; he gave vent to his grief even in words like these: "How great is my despair and my grief for thee, oh, Hilal!" The youngest of his three sons, Mohammed, was adopted by SAID'S legitimate wife, Azza bint Seif.

It is impossible to avoid feeling a certain compassion for Hilal, but one must equally recognise the motives which actuated SAID.

SAID'S protracted stay in East Africa was not conducive to peace and quiet in Oman. In 1845 it was the Wahhabis who again took up their primary rôle. After their original defeat at the hands of Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim Pasha in the years 1815 to 1818, they had managed to restore themselves to power with their customary dramatic effect as a result of the intrigues surrounding Mohammed Ali's attempt in 1845 to conquer Syria and the Nejd. So it was that in 1845, a large force of Wahhabis under the command of Said bin Mutlak suddenly swooped down upon Bireimi, seized the town, and demanded a tribute of 25,000 dollars from Thuwainy, the Regent at Muscat. He at once had recourse for advice to the British Resident at Bushire, who counselled him to maintain such friendly relations as were possible with the Wahhabis, and to do anything that was compatible with SAID'S dignity. All that Thuwainy could do, however, was to play for time, and to this end he asked

for a truce until he should be able to gain instructions from SAID at Zanzibar. This Said bin Mutlak granted, but subsequently broke his word without notice and advanced down the Batinah plundering and pillaging on his way. It was probably a step to which he was forced by circumstances, for he had of course been very popular initially with the northern tribes of Oman, who were always ready to acclaim a relief from the accepted domination, but he had speedily sacrificed that popularity by his arrogant behaviour. Accordingly the need for action arose.[1] Equally, some move was necessary to Thuwainy, who, cordially supported by Hamud bin Azzan, could not sit tamely by and watch the threat to Sohar without stirring a finger. The British also were alarmed, and in addition to the usual personal warnings from the Resident a naval force was sent to make a demonstration off the Batinah coast. In face of the doubly unusual spectacle of British action and Omani co-operation Said bin Mutlak mitigated his demands considerably and had to be satisfied with a mere 5,000 dollars a year,[2] which SAID authorised.

Four years later, in 1849, the squabbles round Sohar broke out once more. Seif, who had taken over the fortress when his father, Hamud, retired from worldly cares, had taken advantage of SAID'S absence from Zanzibar to establish a position for himself. He had seen to it that he was as independent of Hamud as of SAID, and had of course incidentally roused the anger of his fellow-tribesmen against him by his high-handed actions. He was therefore faced by a hostile

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 456.

coalition of Batinah tribes who overcame him and imprisoned him along with his uncle Kais. Shortly afterwards he escaped and recovered his old position, but his troubles were not over, for he now incurred the anger of his father on the grounds that he was not a supporter of his extremely ascetic views, being also a friend of his particular enemy, Thuwainy.[1] Hamud accordingly caused his son to be assassinated,[2] and took the reins of power into his own hands once more. Thuwainy saw that under the circumstances action was necessary, but was unwilling to undertake it personally. Accordingly he clamoured once more for British interference, but this was naturally enough refused. The engagement which Hamud had entered into with the British Government in 1839 was to the effect that he would not undertake or foster rebellion against SAID. Thuwainy therefore had recourse to his father, who tersely ordered him to seize Hamud.[3] In such circumstances Thuwainy was forced into action, and the result was typical. He set sail up the Batinah in the *Feiz Allum* frigate, treacherously lured Hamud to Shinas on the pretext of a colloquy, seized him, and conveyed him to Muscat, where he died on April 23rd, 1850, probably by poison.[4]

Kais, who had no particular reason to be in favour of his brother Hamud, placed himself at the head of

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 35; BADGER, pp. lxxxix., 362.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 228.
[3] When SAID received news of Hamud's behaviour, thus violating the treaty concluded with him through the medium of the British, he submitted the case to the Bombay authorities, who replied: "He has no longer any claim upon us, for we are convinced that he has broken his engagements; do with him whatever you please." Cf. BADGER, p. 362; HUART, II., p. 277.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 35; BADGER, pp. xc., 362; BOMB. SEL., p. 228; LOW, II., p. 331.

his people, raised the standard of revolt, and occupied Sohar. Thus finding himself involved, Thuwainy in an extended and strenuous campaign was compelled to raise an army, and advanced north upon Sohar, but he was no match for Kais, who in the course of a few short months called in the Cowasim, repulsed Thuwainy, murdered a sheikh who had taken part in the capture of Hamud, and took control of Khor Fakkan and Shinas. The Cowasim, apparently, with their usual insistence upon the traditional harbours, had exacted these last two towns as the price of their assistance. It was obviously necessary that SAID should return. The Wahhabis, who were sure of their strength, were hovering in expectation of an opportunity; the Cowasim were recovering the ground so often lost; the north of Oman was suffering from another periodical convulsion, and the British Government was turning its face. Bombay had never looked with complete approval upon SAID'S long sojourn at Zanzibar. The Indian Government had on two occasions warned him that it was his duty to take more care of his Arabian dominions, and that only his presence there could guarantee their security. Upon this occasion it was urgent that he should return forthwith, and on the 16th May, 1851, he disembarked at Muscat.[1]

His stay was brief. Whatever his military prowess may have been in his early days, SAID acquired such prestige in middle life that military campaigns in Oman became almost unnecessary to him. Where his mere presence failed to subdue the foe, his diplo-

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 35; BOMB. SEL., p. 230.

macy turned their flank without a fight. So on this occasion he merely relied upon his old friendship with Sultan bin Sakar to secure the withdrawal of the Cowasim. Khaburah was seized and Khor Fakkan fell without resistance. Later in the year Shinas also was reduced, and Kais forced to surrender. The situation being once more stable, all that remained was to make a few provisions for future security. Accordingly Kais was banished to Rostak with the solace of 200 dollars a month, and Sohar, being once more under SAID'S control, was given to his third son, Turky.[1] The swiftness and success of these operations forms a striking contrast to the limp and feeble efforts which the same districts had seen thirty years earlier. SAID made up for his defects as a general by his force of personality, the subtlety of his diplomacy and the prestige ensured by his commercial expansion of East Africa.[2] These were worth more to him than many army corps and cost him considerably less—a point which military writers have a tendency to overlook.

By November, 1852, SAID sailed for Zanzibar once more. This stay, however, was not destined to be a long one, for in making his arrangements for the security of Oman he had overlooked the possible interference of the Wahhabis. Early in 1854 a force under Abdullah bin Feisal seized Bireimi and gathered together the northern malcontents. Their demands, however, were so impossibly high once again that even Thuwainy had to make a show of fight. The British

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 35; BADGER, p. 365; BOMB. SEL., p. 231.
[2] "Je ne suis qu'un négociant, aimait-il à dire de lui même, avec un sourire dont la modestie ressemblait à la fierté du succès." Cf. GOBINEAU, p. 92.

Resident also interfered, and the effect was, as before, to reduce materially the Wahhabi terms. They were satisfied on this occasion with 12,000 dollars per annum.[1] But although this dangerous corner was successfully turned the threat of the Persians to Bundar Abbas compelled SAID, who had left Oman in 1852, to cross over from Zanzibar again. He found the time extremely inconvenient for such a journey, being by no means sure of the designs of the French, who were constantly demanding new concessions, spreading their influence over Madagascar and looking out for new harbours suitable for naval concentration. Under the force of circumstances he did set out once more in 1854, but left his son Khalid under the particular care of the British Consul, Colonel Hamerton, to whom he pointed out that the utmost vigilance against French designs was necessary because any increase of their influence in Zanzibar would render it impossible for the Arabs to remain.[2]

When he arrived in Oman he found the conditions there extremely critical. Bundar Abbas had been taken over from the Persians in 1798 on a long lease for the sum of 6000 tomans per year. The lessees had become so used to trading with this port and to developing it that they had gradually come to think of themselves not as leaseholders but as freeholders, an occurrence which is not unknown in later times and in more Western countries. It will be remembered that they had even sub-allotted certain rights to the British in the town, giving them, for instance, the power of maintaining a factory there and troops for its protec-

[1] *Cf.* REP., 1883–84, p. 35; BADGER, p. 368; BOMB. SEL., p. 132.
[2] *Cf.* REP., 1882–83, p. 27; REP., 1883–84, p. 36.

tion. The Persians, on the other hand, had had less reason to forget the true state of the case and accordingly their first act at a time when relations with Great Britain were very strained and a breach was imminent, was to expel SAID'S representative and his troops from Bundar Abbas and raze the British factory there. SAID immediately retorted by pouring troops into the town under Thuwainy, and himself blockading it by sea. Once more, however, his military operations proved a failure. Thuwainy was thrown out of the town by a Persian force from Shiraz, the blockade was broken, and appeals for British help were in vain.[1] In fact relations between Persia and Great Britain rested so upon the razor's edge that the British Government had even forbidden the smaller chiefs to undertake warlike operations for SAID, who as a consequence lost Kishm and Hormuz to the Persians. Under the circumstances, although he knew that the Persians held the better position and would drive a humiliating bargain, he came to the conclusion that the commercial advantages consequent upon the possession of Bundar Abbas outweighed the loss of prestige which the terms of its recovery would entail. The conditions indeed were sufficiently humiliating. The lease was renewed only for twenty years, the rent was raised to 16,000 tomans, the protective ditch round the town was to be filled in, and the Wali appointed by SAID was to be a vassal of the Persians, removable at their will, and bound to supply expeditions to governors of Fars and Kerman, and to protect the Persian coast from naval descent. Derogatory

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 36; GOBINEAU, p. 93.

as were the terms of this contract, signed in April, 1856, SAID thought it worth while to re-appoint a Wali and a Customs Officer, which gives some idea of the volume of trade which must have passed through this port between Oman and Persia.[1]

SAID furthered these negotiations with what speed he might, being anxious to return once more to Zanzibar. On the 15th September, 1856, he set sail in the *Victoria* frigate.

He seems to have had presentiments of the end, for on taking affectionate leave of his aged mother, Ghanee, he told her he felt that he would never see her again. He had also ordered some planks, with which a coffin might be made in case of necessity, to be taken on board the *Victoria*, under Captain Hilal bin Abdulla. The decree of Fate was at hand. After touching at Sur to transact business SAID continued his journey, but on September 18th was taken ill with swelling of the legs ; he became gradually worse until October 13th, when dysentery set in. Not the least of his anxieties upon his death-bed was to reach Zanzibar alive, and even when half unconscious he continually called for Colonel Hamerton, the British Consul at Zanzibar, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy for many years. It is suspected that he wished to communicate the place of his concealed treasures, which, despite of the most careful search, was never found. On Sunday, October 19th, 1856 (15th of Sofar, A.H. 1273), at 8.30 a.m., he passed quietly away when sailing by Coctivi Island in the sea

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 36 ; HUART, II., p. 278. Full text of the Treaty in BADGER, p. xciv.

of the Seychelles.[1] With him on board was his son Barghash,[2] who, contrary to Mohammedan custom, which ordains that the bodies of those who die at sea shall be committed to the deep, had his father's body embalmed, and the coffin was placed in one of the boats swung out on the davits. Seven days after the *Victoria* arrived off Chumbe Island in Zanzibar harbour. At midnight the boat containing the body of the deceased monarch was lowered, and with two other boats proceeded to the town, where the corpse was landed and interned (near the palace) in the little cemetery known as Bundar Abbas.[3]

The general mourning on his death proved how sincerely he had been loved by all. Black flags hung from every house in Zanzibar, and even the smallest hut fastened up a piece of black stuff. When the sad news was proclaimed in Muscat it caused "such a wailing throughout the town that the hills were almost shaken by it."[4]

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It would not be amiss to give here a few details regarding SAID'S domestic life. Mansur (p. 111) who resided at Muscat at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that he had two wives; the same number being given by Ruschenberger (I., p. 140), when he was in Oman in the autumn of 1835. As far as can be ascertained, he was married three times, his first wife being Azza bint Seif,[5] the grand-daughter

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 36; MILES, p. 352; KRAPF, p. 539; LYNE p. 47; BURTON, I., p. 315.

[2] When Barghash died in Zanzibar on March 27th, 1888, he had only returned from Muscat six hours before, seriously ill.

[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 36; LYNE, p. 47.

[4] Cf. RUETE, p. 107; BADGER, p. xcvii.; LYNE, p. 48.

[5] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33; INGRAMS CHRO. (p. 5) says that her father was from the Bu Khariban tribe (cf. HANDBOOK, p. 582); GUILLAIN (II., p. 224) states that her mother, Mouza, was the daughter of Ahmed, the first Imam of the Al bu Said.

of the founder of the dynasty, and thus SAID'S cousin. She was feared rather than loved by the large family of her husband, whom she survived.[1] When, in 1825, Mrs. Mignan came to Muscat, and in 1836, Frau Dr. Helfer, it was probably she who received them.[2]

SAID'S two other wives were Persian. One, whom he married in July, 1827, sister of Reza Kolee Mirza and grand-daughter of Fath Ali Shah,[3] left Muscat for Shiraz in 1833, never to return.[4] The second daughter of Irich Mirza, a suppositious son of Mohammed Shah, he married in 1847,[5] but she was a lady of such extravagance and made herself so disagreeable in Zanzibar that a divorce followed, and she returned to her own country.[6]

It has to be mentioned that in 1833 SAID sent an envoy in the frigate *Piemontese* to the widowed Queen of Madagascar, Ranavolana Manjaka, requesting her hand in marriage and help in his Mombasa campaign to the extent of 2000 troops. On the envoy's return in December from the court of Antananarivo he delivered the refusal to his master, who was at that time at Lamu.[7]

Of SAID'S children, independent testimonies agree that there were thirty-six, all of concubines, twenty-four being sons and half as many daughters, the number of twenty-four sons being confirmed by

[1] Cf. RUETE, p. 8.
[2] Cf. APPENDIX A. As a matter of mere curiosity rather than of historical interest, it may be mentioned that a drawing of the Sultana appears as a frontispiece to Volume II. of MIGNAN'S book.
[3] Cf. MILES, p. 328.
[4] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 195; BURTON, I., p. 300.
[5] Cf. GUILLAIN, III., p. 97; BURTON, I., p. 302, gives 1849.
[6] Cf. RUETE, p. 46; BURTON, I., p. 303.
[7] Cf. MILES, p. 337; LYNE, p. 29; GUILLAIN, II., p. 36; BURTON I., p. 301; BOMB. SEL., p. 277.

Ingrams' Genealogical Table. His first wife, Azza bint Seif, had only one child, who died young.[1] To Curzon's statement (II., p. 436) that SAID left thirty-four children, the information is added that to each son he left 60,000 crowns, and 29,000 to every daughter. Regarding the sons who survived him, the number is given both by Low (II., p. 332), and by Badger (p. xcvi.) as fifteen.[2]

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 37; RUETE, p. 8.
[2] Cf. also LYNE, p. 46; BOMB. SEL., pp. 237 and 287.

CHAPTER V

RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

1. *France*

IT would be difficult to trace the origin of French relations with Oman, and therefore it will perhaps be sufficient to give a brief idea of the nature of their dealings with the earlier Al bu Said.

The foundation of that intercourse was naturally the trade with the island of Mauritius, and Ahmed bin Said, the earliest of the Al bu Said rulers, found this French friendship of great use to him when M. Malartic, Governor of the Mauritius, in exchange for suitable gifts, presented him with certain cannons and gunpowder.[1] Relations, however, were considerably disturbed under Said bin Ahmed when, on June 15th, 1781,[2] a French privateer seized off Sohar the *Salih*, an Oman frigate of 50 guns laden with goods from British India, which it was taking to Basra.[3] M. Rousseau, the celebrated French Consul

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 24; MILES, p. 270.

[2] MILES (p. 268) mentions that in February, 1749, three French privateers from Mauritius, the largest of them being the *Conde*, entered the port of Muscat with the object of intercepting English merchant ships, although it was well known that France and England were then at peace. Also cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 202. MILES (p. 269) refers to another privateering expedition from Port Louis to Muscat by the *Boulogne* in 1761. Cf. also GUILLAIN, II., p. 204. A third breach of neutrality occurred in May, 1778. Cf. MILES, p. 274; GUILLAIN, II., p. 204.

[3] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 24; MILES, p. 277; GUILLAIN, II., p. 205.

at Baghdad, intervened to patch matters up, and persuaded the home government to acknowledge that the *Salih* had been wrongly seized. In the end a new vessel was sent to Said in lieu of the one he had lost, but its arrival was a matter of years and some of the correspondence which passed on the subject itself is of great interest, as well as shedding light on the Arab point of view.

" Nous avons parfaitement compris," writes Said bin Ahmed to M. Rousseau, " tout ce que vous nous marquez, en particulier le compte que vous nous rendez de ce qui s'est passé lorsque vous étiez auprès de sa majesté, le très grand empereur, et à sa cour, et que la nouvelle vous est parvenue du traitement fais à notre bâtiment, chose qui n'a nullement été approuvée par ce prince. Nous sommes convaincus qu'il ne peut ni approuver ni autoriser par son assentiment des choses contraires à l'équité.

" S'il plaît à Dieu quand les bâtiments de votre cour viendront relâcher dans notre port, nous enjoindrons à notre lieutenant Khalfan, fils de Mohammed, de leur fournir tout ce dont ils pourront avoir besoin, de quelque valeur que cela puisse être. . . ." [1]

The point is made even clearer when Khalfan, the Governor of Muscat, heard from M. Rousseau the news that the seizure had been disavowed. " Nous avons avec les François," he writes, " des liaisons plus étroites qu'avec aucune autre nation ; nos biens et les vôtres ne sont qu'un ; nos ports sont communs et nous partageons toutes les pertes et tous les avantages ; il n'est pas besoin d'entrer là-dessus dans aucun detail,

[1] Cf. SACY, III., p. 290 ; GUILLAIN, II., p. 206.

puisque nos coeurs en sont les garans." [1] The cordiality of these relations culminated in the proposal to establish a French Agent at Muscat, on whose behalf Said made this promise: "il sera traité avec toute sorte d'égards, et avec la prevenance la plus obligeante; il aura un logement commode, il y jouira de la liberté la plus entière. . . ." [2]

When, however, the promised vessel arrived, the Imam expressed his opinion of the gift in the following terms: "Vos paroles ont eu leur effet; le don de votre générosité nous est parvenu; et quoique le vaisseau que l'on nous a envoyé soit très petit et ne vaille pas le quart de celui que nous avons perdu, il est à nos yeux beaucoup plus grand, il nous est infiniment plus agréable, et sa possession nous fait plus de plaisir: car tout est commun entre nous, ce qui n'en servit pas moins, quand même nous n'aurions pas reçu ce présent." [3]

The project to send a French representative to Muscat does not, however, appear to have been carried out. This is surprising; for it is certain that Sultan bin Ahmed came no less under many influences, and he is even said to have had a French physician by whose advice he was guided in his diplomatic relations.[4] The French Revolution, however, brought about, naturally, an obvious depreciation of French influence in the Near East. It is almost unnecessary to elaborate the reasons for that decline. Prominent amongst them was the lack of a stable government at home, and scarcely less important was the drainage of

[1] Cf. SACY, III., p. 293.
[2] Cf. SACY, III., p. 301.
[3] Cf. SACY, III., p. 304.
[4] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 24.

Frenchmen required to protect France against the enemies on her frontiers. Simultaneously we have the rising ambitions of the English in India. The French strained every nerve, and in vain, to check the spread of this influence. It was not to be expected that Oman should be free from the current of the times. As has already been pointed out, it was an important matter not only for ships proceeding up the Persian Gulf, but also for all shipping between India and Europe. Quite apart from its commercial advantages it had a very fine harbour, and was much in use in those days for taking on board fresh water and supplies. In the first place the English did not see it in that light. Fears of French action and influence in the Gulf did, it is true, induce the Marquis of Wellesley in 1798 to send the Resident of Bushire (then one Mirza Mehdi Ali Khan) to Muscat to draw up a treaty designed to exclude the French and to protect English interests higher up the Gulf.[1] The provisions stipulated that the French should not be admitted to Oman nor their ships to the harbour of Muscat, and they further secured that the English should have power to erect a factory at Bundar Abbas and install a protective garrison of from seven to eight hundred men. But it will be seen that the purport of the treaty was rather to weaken French influence [2] and to secure an English footing higher up the Gulf, than to find an opening

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 25; CURZON, II., p. 435; GERMAIN, p. 361; BRUNET-MILON, p. 69; ASIE FRANCAISE, p. 417.

[2] MILES (p. 282) mentions that on September 1st, 1785, three men-of-war arrived at Muscat from Mauritius, the largest of those being the *Venus*. The Commander, Count de Roselio, was entrusted with a mission to obtain the Imam's sanction to the building of a factory at Muscat by the French East India Company; this request was met by a courteous but positive refusal. FIROUZ (p. 75) gives another version.

for English political or commercial expansion in Oman itself. And, in fact, it was Sultan who suggested that, as he was thereby deprived of outside assistance and counsel, the English should themselves establish at Muscat a Consul or Agent. It was, however, forty years before this was done, and by then the seat of government had been removed to Zanzibar. The French may have been discouraged by the above-mentioned treaty with the English, but they did not give up hope.

This the events of 1799 clearly proved. It will be remembered that in that year Napoleon, having landed in Egypt, formed the alternative design of either advancing up Syria to Constantinople and then smashing Austria from the East, or following in the footsteps of Alexander and turning into a reality that dream which has been the downfall of more than one military megalomaniac. Even on leaving Cairo Napoleon was undecided which plan he was going to follow, and twelve days before setting out for Syria he wrote a letter to Sultan, enclosing another to be forwarded to Tippoo Sahib, from whom he expected much assistance on the spot. Unfortunately for him these despatches were intercepted by Captain S. Wilson, the British Agent at Mocha, who transmitted them to India,[1] and as in any case Tippoo had already been destroyed, there was no question of forwarding the enclosure. The text of Napoleon's letter to Sultan is as follows :

CAIRO.
25th January, 1799.

TO THE IMAM OF MUSCAT,

I write you this letter to inform you of the arrival of the French army in Egypt. As you have always been

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 290.

friendly, you must be convinced of our desire to protect all the merchant vessels you may send to Suez. I also beg you will forward the enclosed letter to Tippoo Sahib by the first opportunity.

(*Signed*) BONAPARTE.[1]

Sultan was now in a position of grave difficulty. He had bound himself by treaty to have nothing more to do with the French and to exclude them from his country and its harbours. At the same time he may well have believed, and probably did believe, that he was running grave risks by rejecting the overtures which were coming to him. In fact, whether rightly or wrongly, the English came to the conclusion that Sultan was intriguing with the French, and it was for that reason that, when, two years later, Captain (later Sir John) Malcolm, was on his way up to Persia, he called at Muscat and took great pains to explain to Sultan the consequences of his policy with regard to the French. He pointed out to him that the mere suspicion of a French alliance would close to him all Indian ports in English hands.[2] This alone was quite enough for Sultan, who knew well what would be the political outcome of closing up one of his main avenues of commercial activity. Accordingly the treaty of 1798 was embodied in and re-enacted by a new treaty signed on the 18th January, 1800, whereby Sultan's

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 25. The letter addressed to Tippoo Sahib runs as follows: "You have already been informed of my arrival on the shores of the Red Sea, with a numerous and invincible army, animated with the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England. I hasten to inform you of my desire to receive news with regard to the political position in which you find yourself placed. I even desire you will send to Suez some competent person who enjoys your confidence, and with whom I can confer." Cf. MILES, p. 290.

[2] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 26; MILES, p. 292.

suggestion of the establishment of an official English Residence at Muscat was duly adopted. Nevertheless, this design was not for some time carried into effect, and relations with the English for the next ten years were exceedingly slight.

Meanwhile, though the Napoleonic projects in Egypt had met with a disastrous fate, French interests in and around Arabia, recently so flourishing, were not to be given up without a struggle; nor were events there unconnected with the general plan of campaign, covering a wide stretch of country from Egypt to India. The original plan had certainly been that a joint Russo-French expedition should fall upon India from the north, and, had it not been for the withdrawal of the Emperor Paul I. from co-operation with the French, such an expedition would probably have started. Failing this, however, an attempt had to be made to form a preliminary inspection of the ground. For this purpose a force was sent to Egypt under General Sebastiani, and simultaneously in 1803 General Decaen was sent on a like errand to the Middle East. After touching at Pondicherry and spending a not unadventurous period amongst the remaining French possessions in India, he finally established his headquarters at Mauritius. The objective is clearly revealed by the last section of the voluminous instructions given by Napoleon. "The mission of the Captain General is in the first instance a mission of observation political and military, etc., but the First Consul, well informed by the Captain General, upon whom he relies for the punctual execution of these instructions, may perhaps place it in his power to acquire a great glory which prolongs the memory of man beyond the duration of

the ages. . . ." [1] It was not long before Napoleon decided to appoint an Agent and Consul for France at Muscat, and to that end sent out a M. de Cavaignac in the frigate *Atalanta*. On his arrival in October, 1803, de Cavaignac found Sultan away fighting against the Wahhabis, while the English Resident in the Persian Gulf, Captain Seton, was also occupied further north. M. de Cavaignac therefore had a very good opportunity of pleading his case to not unwilling, though entirely unofficial, ears. He found in the town a strong pro-French party, consisting of traders whose interests lay chiefly with the French islands. The two parties deluded each other with false hopes; for when Sultan returned he stood by his word, refused to receive the French Consul, and only agreed to allow French ships to enter his harbours in order to speed an unwelcome visitor. This complete change of mind had probably been effected by the sweeping successes of General Lake in India.[2]

Although French diplomacy met with a severe reverse in this direction, yet the French islands not only proved exceptionally prosperous under the regime of General Decaen but also formed an excellent base from which their frigates could prey upon English commerce.[3] The English, too, were so preoccupied with their severe struggle at home and with the work of building up an administration in India that they had little energy to spare elsewhere. The consequence was that in time the French came to use Muscat as "a rendezvous and base for their operations," and in

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 28.
[2] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 29; MILES, p. 299; GUILLAIN, II., p. 209; BRUNET-MILLON, p. 70.
[3] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 210.

ten years caused losses approximating to £3,000,000 sterling.[1] On the other hand they sedulously fostered their trade with the Arabs, particularly with the Omanis, and found in them ready purchasers of any English prizes put up for sale.[2]

With the English keeping so aloof and the French providing such happy commercial opportunities it is not surprising that one of SAID'S earliest acts was to send a representative, one Majid bin Khalfan, to Mauritius to negotiate a commercial treaty with General Decaen. This treaty—un traité de paix perpétuelle et inviolable—was first signed on the 15th June,[3] 1807. The terms of this treaty provided for the neutrality of Arab ships in the case of an Anglo-French conflict, defined the articles to be considered as contraband of war, authorised the Arabs to enter enemy ports without being subject to seizure and provided for the appointment of a French Agent at Muscat. In pursuance of this last clause M. Dallons was forthwith sent to Muscat.[4] Having been remade so as to remove certain unworkable clauses, and perhaps also to tone down certain clauses which were the subject of representations from Bombay, it was re-signed on the 17th June, 1808. It is possible that SAID was the keener to bind himself to the French by treaty in view of the fact that Mauritius had by this time become a veritable pirates' nest. Moreover, in July, 1806, an English frigate, the *Concord*, had captured a French frigate, the *Vigilant*, right in the

[1] Cf. REP., 1887–88, p. 29.
[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 210.
[3] FIROUZ, p. 86, and BRUNET-MILLON, p. 71, give the 16th June as the date.
[4] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 211.

harbour of Muscat, and SAID may well have feared that with this renewed boldness on the part of the British he was laying himself open to severe reprisals.

A noteworthy instance of SAID'S readiness to meet the wishes of the French, even under no small material sacrifices, is also proved by his consent to stabilise at a fixed rate of exchange the value of the French five-franc piece. The agio hitherto prevailing in favour of the Maria Theresia crown and the Spanish dollar, both being the coin then current in his dominions, were thus considerably reduced.[1]

With the French defeat at Trafalgar the whole of this carefully erected fabric fell into immediate ruin. Bourbon capitulated on the 9th July and Mauritius on the 3rd December, 1810. From that moment until 1815 the Indian Ocean was shut to the French, and even when they recovered Bourbon and the smaller islands on the conclusion of the war, they found themselves in a position very dissimilar from that which they had occupied before. Their influence had in the short space of five years disappeared completely, and all efforts to recover it had to be tempered for fear the English should take umbrage. In fact the most the French could do was to wait in the hope of receiving overtures from the native chiefs.[2] These difficulties were enhanced by the fact that the English had taken care to establish themselves in all strategically important positions. A glance at the map shows them situated in India, on the Persian Gulf, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in the islands such as the Seychelles

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., pp. 21, 43; III., p. 94; BURTON, *J. R. G. S.*, p. 422.

[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 212; FIROUZ, p. 87.

and Ceylon. This left little scope for reconstructive work, and in fact more was gained by the penetration of Madagascar from 1820 onwards and the alliance with and support of Mohammed Ali than by the many and strenuous efforts made by French officials on the spot.[1] This extraordinary collapse of French power is the more remarkable in that Decaen knew perfectly well the importance of Muscat's position as regards the invasion of India and was willing to give away advantages in order to obtain allies to that end. There was also something in the meteoric rise and strong personality of Napoleon which exercised a great attraction over Arab minds. SAID, in fact, admired him greatly, and in his first message to Decaen said, " We are anxious to cultivate the ancient friendship which has always existed between our fathers and the French nation and we hope that Your Excellency will be so good as to consider our country as belonging to him and as always ready to obey him, whenever he is so good as to honour us with his orders."[2] It may justly be said upon this occasion, as it was later, that the French did not use their position to good advantage. The explanation seems to have been that the policy of the men on the spot was not understood or supported in Paris. There was, in fact, a lack of co-ordination between the headquarters and the outposts. Nothing shows this more clearly than the fact that the treaty of 1807 was never officially ratified in Paris.[3]

It was not until September, 1817, that the Governor

[1] Cf. BRUNET-MILLON, p. 75.
[2] Cf. BRUNET-MILLON, p. 71.
[3] Cf. FIROUZ, p. 87.

of Bourbon managed to get into touch with Oman again, and even then five years were still to elapse before a commercial treaty was signed on his proposal lasting from March 30th, 1822, till 1844.[1] From that moment the bonds between the two countries increased in strength as fast as the trade expanded in volume. To some extent the English had only themselves to blame. On the one hand they were much preoccupied with their private affairs in India and with precautions against Russia and against Mohammed Ali. On the other hand, the right to search, which they had arrogated to themselves by the Slave Treaty made with SAID in 1822,[2] drove the bulk of the Arab dhows into sailing under the French flag; in fact, this treaty had the inevitable effect of providing the French with a numerous band of ready-made allies.[3] Perhaps the French had therefore much for which to be grateful to the English. It is on that account strange to discover so fair-minded a writer as M. Guillain expressing the view that "Our relations with this prince were maintained with the greater ease and friendliness because they never ceased to be on our side completely disinterested from a political point of view."[4] When the support accorded by the French to Mohammed Ali and his avowed design to annex Oman is called to mind, the nature of the purity of French political motives is more easily seen. What perhaps M. Guillain means, but does not care to say, is that with a central government so weak and unstable as that then existing in France, political motives had a small chance of

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 25; MILES, p. 323; GUILLAIN, II., p. 212.
[2] Full text of the Treaty in TREATIES, p. 209.
[3] Cf. FIROUZ, p. 97.
[4] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 212.

fruition and were therefore the more easily concealed.

It must, however, be said that though a certain section of the Omanis was delivered into the hands of the French, SAID appears to have changed his views completely. He had owed a great deal to English military help, as we have seen, and it was quite easy to perceive that, with the English strongly established in India, there could be no question on which side lay the balance of interest. He therefore seems to have pursued the policy of obtaining what he could from the French while giving away as little as possible, but at the same time of not losing touch with the English.[1] A typical instance of this occurred in 1839, when a French Consulate was established at Zanzibar. The Consul was to follow in 1840, but SAID refused him admittance until 1844. The reason for this action lay partly in the fact that a rupture seemed to be imminent between the English and the French over the question of Egypt and Mohammed Ali, and partly also in the fact that SAID was determined to have his relations with the French officially regulated by treaty, as were his relations with the English and Americans.[2]

Another typical instance occurred in 1840, when SAID became greatly alarmed about the activity of the French in East Africa, and wrote to this effect to Lord Palmerston from Zanzibar.[3] It was not only

[1] How eagerly SAID watched the political situation of Europe is related by STOCQUELER (I., p. 4): "He had heard of the French Revolution in 1830 and was anxious to know if the King of England had consented to recognise Louis-Phillipe and whether the revolution had spread itself into neighbouring countries."

[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 213; MILES, p. 341.

[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33.

that the French had three times within one year approached him with demands for new concessions; it was also that French penetration of Madagascar by no means coincided with SAID'S ambitions for an East African empire. Perhaps he did not make the best of his case. When the French occupied Nosse Be he raised the objection that the Sakalava queen had placed herself under his protection. What in fact lay behind this representation was the design of SAID himself to take over the island.[1] A consideration of the divergent interests of the Omanis and the French in and around East Africa shows clearly the necessity of a treaty to bridge over a widening gap.

An attempt has been made to show the need for a new treaty with the French. The necessity lay not so much in any growing differences with the people, but rather in SAID'S growing conviction that the English had a heavy preponderance of power and could therefore offer him greater advantages. Besides, the identity of interests leading to their military co-operation against the Cowasim and other pirate tribes had aroused feelings of gratitude and affection in his mind, which inclined him rather to the English than to the French. Such reasoning as this is *a fortiori*, and is certainly completely opposed to all the arguments of French writers, some of whom go so far as to assert that it was in order to escape English domination in Oman that SAID ever went to Zanzibar at all. Unfortunately the generality of their statements, which would be otherwise difficult to refute, is betrayed by the particularity of their dates. Both Brunet-Millon (p. 77) and Firouz (p. 97) state that SAID went

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 33.

to Zanzibar permanently on the advice of French Agents in order to escape the encroachments of the English in the year 1840. It would be difficult to confute such a statement were it not for the date. SAID began to build both his country and his town residence at Zanzibar, certainly not later than 1832, and probably in 1828. Further, his seizure of estates for the purpose of experimenting with clove-growing began almost as soon as he set foot on the island, and finally, between 1838 and 1840 he spent more of his time in Zanzibar than he did in Oman. There is no evidence at all that the decision to make Zanzibar his centre was reached after 1840, or on French advice. On the other hand, such circumstantial evidence as exists very clearly indicates that the decision was taken earlier, and might not have been taken had the French encouraged it. For so far as SAID'S personal relations with the French are concerned the year 1840 is particularly unfortunate. It is the year when the French doubtless thought that they were making greatest progress with him; but on SAID'S part it was the year when he was expressing the gravest fear of their designs. When M. Brunet-Millon goes on to add that SAID "had remained faithful to France in spite of her reverses,"[1] one is unwilling to agree with him unreservedly. It is only possible to say that SAID showed that faithfulness in a very halting and equivocal manner—a failing which does not otherwise seem to have been his.

A treaty[2] was signed on November 17th, 1844, and secured for the French the following conditions:

[1] Cf. BRUNET-MILLON, p. 74.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34; MILES, p. 345; GUILLAIN, II., p. 213; BOMB., SEL. p. 215; BURTON, I., p. 295.

1. There was to be complete liberty of trading, and the French were to be allowed to come and go without let or hindrance throughout SAID'S dominions.
2. Both parties were to secure for each other the treatment accorded to most favoured nations.
3. All French properties within SAID'S dominions were to be inviolable, and free from native seizure.
4. The French were to have the right to establish trading depots of whatever kind in whatever part of SAID'S dominions they wished.
5. Frenchmen and those serving them, although within SAID'S jurisdiction, were not liable to arrest by natives or trial before native courts.

This treaty[1] is described by Firouz as constituting "a veritable success for French policy," and this statement as it stands is neither false nor exaggerated. Such clauses as those conferring inviolability on French goods, or the right to build factories anywhere in SAID'S dominions, constituted great concessions such as were enjoyed by no other nation. The clause which operated the setting up of a special tribunal for the trying of Frenchmen and their servants is even more striking. It is one of the earlier instances of the establishment of that Capitulations system which has proved so acceptable to Western European nations. Naturally, later French writers have been elated with its consequences. The greatest point in English policy at this time was the destruction of the slave trade, and

[1] For the full text of the treaty cf. TREATIES, p. clxiii.; BOMB. SEL., p. 266; GUILLAIN, III., p. 459; FIROUZ, p. 98.

later the traffic in arms. By this clause the French secured that all the native traders obtained immunity by hoisting the French flag and representing themselves as French servants. The French probably expected and certainly suffered from a good deal of trouble with the English in this matter, but they obtained the advantage of a lucrative trade, and one which has apparently paid them well until comparatively recent times.

This is not, however, what made the French so particularly proud of the treaty. What all French writers from Guillain to Brunet-Millon have stressed is that this was the first treaty of its kind, and must have raised severe chagrin and alarm in English minds. Guillain himself was too closely in touch with contemporary events to exaggerate this, but his successors have slightly overestimated the case. Allowing themselves to be carried off by their enthusiasm, they have suggested that England awoke one morning to find herself tricked. The facts, however, are completely otherwise. The contemporary entry in the records of the Bombay Government reads as follows: "The latter (*i.e.*, SAID) had already communicated with the British Ministry in order to obtain their sentiments on the proposed measure; and an intimation having reached him through Captain Hamerton that no objections existed to his entering into relations with the French, the treaty with that nation was at once concluded." [1] It is fair, therefore, to say that those later French accounts, in order to add to the glory and prestige of their own country, disparaged SAID'S

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34; MILES, p. 345.

position in the matter. The English were in touch with the situation throughout, and the French obtained just so much or so little as the English allowed to them.

At the same time no useful purpose is served by belittling the achievement. The French had regularised their position, and they proceeded to look over the land and see whether they could find suitable naval bases. It was for this purpose that Guillain was sent out in 1846. His expedition served a very useful purpose, and executed the earliest scientific survey of Zanzibar and the surrounding country; but on the other hand, it was thought fit to attempt to combine exploration work with politics, and SAID speedily became aware that Guillain was negotiating with the local chiefs for the purchase of Lamu and Brawa with the purpose of constructing naval bases there to rival Aden.[1] SAID at once stepped in and forbade the sale.

So much for his "faithfulness to the French in spite of their reverses." Guillain has, in fact, placed his finger on the spot when he says that there was a complete lack of co-ordination, and that Paris knew little of Zanzibar beyond the name. This was only to be expected when a country was suffering from such unstable and inefficient government as afflicted France at this period. But the contrast between reality and the dreams of modern theorists is too pointed to be omitted. "What I have written," writes Guillain, "will suffice, I hope, to dissipate the profound ignorance existing in France on everything which concerns him" (*i.e.*, SAID).[2] In proof of this assertion he cites an

[1] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 34; MILES, p. 345.
[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 252.

incident of 1849 when SAID despatched an envoy with a gift of six Arab horses to the President of the French Republic. Upon this occasion *L'Assemblée Nationale* of August 30th, 1849, began a special article with the remark, "The Imam's envoy has just left Paris after having been received in mediocre fashion by the Government, which does not appear to know who the Imam of Maskat is." [1] We may therefore leave the activities of French diplomacy in this sphere with the concluding judgment that the difficulties were many and that much was actually achieved, but that with a stronger central government and more efficient co-operation the results might have come much nearer to what M. Brunet-Millon imagines them actually to have been.

2. *Great Britain*

It will be unnecessary to deal in great detail with SAID'S relations with the English, partly because much may have been gathered concerning them from the preceding pages and partly because he acted so completely in accordance with English interests and wishes that there is little to detail and less to explain.

It will of course be realised that the original dealings of SAID with the English arose out of the occupation of India, for it has already been explained that the

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 253.

original treaties in 1798 [1] and 1800 [2] were intended to harass the French and establish English interests in Persia, rather than to set up any *rapprochement* with Oman itself. In fact it is not unfair to suggest that a critical inspection of English and Omani relations up till 1816 will reveal a distinct diffidence on the part of the English to interfere. It is not perhaps so much that the English disliked interference as such, but rather that they saw no immediate scope for their activities and no advantage to be gained. We must start with the fact, not infrequent in English history and rarely comprehended by foreigners, that SAID was not looked upon with favour at the time of his accession. It is necessary to appreciate the fact that the English were at first disinclined to assist him against the Wahhabis and the pirates partly because their own possessions in India were so insecure that they were unwilling to take on a war of whose difficulties and dimensions they were not unaware. Again, it may be wondered at that such weakness should have

[1] Sultan bin Ahmed was by this treaty the first prince of Arabia to enter into political relations with England. Cf. MILES, p. 291. For the full text of the treaty, cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 248. Sultan's father, Ahmed bin Said, had declined to enter into obligations with the English. Soon after his accession to the Imamate (1741) he made known his intention to follow the policy of his predecessors, in refusing to allow the English to build a factory at Muscat. Towards this end negotiations had been carried on intermittently for nearly a century between the English in Western India and successive Imams, but to no purpose, as the Arabs remained firm on this point. Cf. MILES, p. 268. It occurred under the reign of Ahmed bin Said that one of the first English men-of-war to call at Muscat (in July, 1775) was H.M. frigate *Seahorse*, and it is interesting to remark that Horatio Nelson was as a midshipman on board of her. Cf. MILES, p. 274; WILSON, p. 185. The great-great-great-grandson of Ahmed bin Said, Taimur bin Faisal, Sultan of Muscat and Oman, while Great Britain's guest of honour, visited the *Victory*, Nelson's flagship, at Portsmouth Dockyard on September 21st, 1928.

[2] Cf. MILES, p. 292. For the full text of the treaty, cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 249; BADGER, p. xciv. About this period, moreover, permission was accorded by the Seyyid Sultan for the establishment of a British naval station at Basidu (Bassadore) on the island of el-Kishm, which has existed there, with the sanction of the rulers of Oman, ever since.

been shown in tackling the problem of the Cowasim and their fellows. The regulations affecting treatment of these people were indeed ineffective, in themselves as well as in their results. It was forbidden for an English ship to fire first upon them, and the result of this order was merely that the pirates captured many a fine ship of far superior tonnage by the simple device of boarding. They went so far even as to build high-decked dhows to render the operation the easier. It is impossible to estimate the loss to British commerce at their hands, but the climax was reached when pirates actually captured and sent to Zanzibar in chains were within a few months returned to their fellows after suffering nothing more drastic than an official admonition. Of course the result of such a policy was merely to render necessary more energetic action. Sooner or later the very force of circumstances compelled the English to assist SAID; it is true that they waited until Mohammed Ali had settled the Wahhabi problem for them, but once they saw their way clear they were not unwilling to abandon their former unprofitable lines of conduct. The original attack on Khor Fakkan, for instance, was completely devoid of result because the commander of the English forces interpreted his orders literally and did not see that, once he had ejected the pirates, it was part of his duty to prevent their return. The outcome was not a permanent blow to English arms; it was merely that a more comprehensive expedition had to be sent, and that English interests became more widespread than had originally been contemplated. Again, the failure of the first attack upon the Beni bu Ali was due to lack of preliminary preparation. The damage to

English prestige was repaired, and once again the English had advanced rather further than they had originally contemplated or desired.

One may therefore justly say that they undertook the matter without sufficient preparations, and also advance the view that their lack of foresight proved expensive to them. Once they were involved in these affairs there was no retreat open to them, and, to be fair, they do not appear to have attempted to retreat. The support accorded to SAID about the year 1839 against Mohammed Ali may have appeared to him inadequate, but he was only one and at that a very inferior pawn in the game. Behind the scenes it was the whole peace of Europe that was at stake, and men were living too close to the Napoleonic era to contemplate the recrudescence of war without a qualm. Or, again, SAID may well have thought that, considering his own warm feelings towards England, he received but scant support in his claim to Bahrein. But similar considerations operate here also. The English had constantly to secure their northern boundary in India and they discovered that Persia was a common stalking ground for themselves and for the Russians. Throughout this period they were so conscious of the necessity of friendly relations with Persia that even when that country seized Bundar Abbas in 1854 they registered no effective protest. In the matter of an island, therefore, to which the Persians had put forward strong pretensions, they were even less likely to intervene. But so far as military relations go SAID had little cause for complaint. In fact, he was helped to build up his East African empire by English support in Arabia. There is not one, but three separate

occasions upon which he might have returned to find Muscat in enemy hands but for the prompt action of the British Resident at Bushire and the English naval forces from Bombay.

It is of course only natural to expect that there should have been a *quid pro quo* in these matters, and it is to be set to the credit of the English that the first concession they sought was not to their own selfish advantage, but to the good of humanity at large. The provisions of the Slave Treaty of 1822 have already been dealt with in a previous chapter, but what has to be recognised, and what has never been sufficiently emphasised hitherto, is that although the English had no egotistic ends in view, the position of SAID must be viewed from a different angle. The trade was an ample source of revenue to him. " His income," says Curzon, " was about £80,000 per annum, one fourth of which was derived from the slave trade, before he abolished the latter by agreement with the English." [1] And it did not end with a mere loss of revenue ; it was not completed when he had written off a quarter of his income ; when SAID signed the treaty of 1822 he consented to lose far more than a substantial part of the goodwill which he enjoyed from that large proportion of Oman's trading population to whom slaves were the sole article of commerce. It is almost impossible to over-emphasise how widespread and lucrative this trade was.[2] In 1811 the India Company sent out one Captain Thomas Smee on a voyage of exploration. This gentleman reported that at that period the annual exportation of slaves

[1] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 437.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., pp. 635-87 : Slave Trade.

from Zanzibar to Muscat, India and Mauritius varied from six to ten thousand, and computed that free men comprised only about one quarter of the population, and that it was nothing strange for a rich man to have from eight to nine hundred slaves.[1] Naturally, the commercial population was much upset at such a drastic and radical change in their mode of existence. When people wake up suddenly to the fact that they have been deprived of their most profitable means of income it can scarcely be wondered at if they accuse their ruler of sacrificing his subjects' interests to the religious scruples and egotistic demands of a foreign nation whose views they were unlikely to appreciate. Actually, of course, the situation was even more complicated, for the religious fanatics of Oman regarded the abolition of slavery as a veritable impiety. Slavery had been expressly sanctioned and consecrated by the Koran, and there were not wanting politicians on the spot who said that the matter would end in rebellion and the irretrievable ruin of SAID. That their prognostications were not verified was perhaps due as much to the fact that the trade could not be completely stamped out by a mere treaty as to the personal prestige and popularity of the ruler.[2]

It cannot be doubted that the trade still continued. One may safely say that a law which has constantly to be re-enacted is a law which is consistently being evaded. These slave treaties were re-enacted in some form or another in 1839, 1844 and 1873. The treaty of 1839 was not concerned solely or even primarily with this question. On the coronation of Queen Victoria

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 51.
[2] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 255.

SAID had sent to London a mission of congratulation bearing presents of considerable value,[1] and the opportunity of their return became of practical effect in the sending out of Captain Cogan to negotiate a commercial treaty, which was signed on May 31st, 1839, and ratified on July 20th of the following year.[2] The fifteenth article of this treaty re-enacted *in toto* the anti-slave treaty of 1822; but the other articles are of such importance as to warrant rather fuller treatment on their own. Amongst the provisions of the treaty were these:

1. British and Arab merchants, in the countries of the respective contracting powers, were to enjoy most-favoured-nation treatment.
2. It was to be open to each side to appoint consuls. (Under this provision Captain Hamerton was sent to Zanzibar in 1841, and became, as we have seen, SAID'S close confidential adviser.)
3. British subjects were to have the right of holding land or houses in SAID'S dominions, and such houses and the houses of their servants were not to be searched without the permission of the Consul.
4. The servants of British subjects within SAID'S dominions were to enjoy like immunity from arrest with their masters, but if they rendered themselves amenable to Arab law they were to be discharged by their masters and tried before an Arab court.

[1] Concerning presents received by the Queen in 1842, cf. QUEEN VICTORIA, I., p. 406. In reply Lord Aberdeen expressed to SAID the anxious desire of Her Majesty's Government that no slaves should be taken from Africa to Arabia or the Red Sea. Cf. LYNE, p. 40.

[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 32; GUILLAIN, II., p. 201; For the full text of the treaty cf. TREATIES, p. 213; BOMB. SEL., p. 250.

5. The duty on goods imported into SAID'S dominions was not to exceed 5 per cent., and provision was made for goods returned, re-exported or returned unsold.
6. Where trade disputes arose between British and Omanis the case was to be tried before SAID'S courts if the complainant was British, and before the British courts if the complainant was Arab.
7. Where a British subject died within SAID'S dominions his property was to be handed over to the British Consul.
8. The property of a bankrupt British subject was to be divided amongst his creditors by the British Consul.
9. Where debts were owing to or due from a British subject, SAID or the British Consul was to give every facility for their recovery.

It has been thought fit to set forth the provisions of this treaty in some detail, in order that it may be clearly seen how wide were the commercial relations in existence and envisaged between the two nations. The mere appointment of a Consul was sufficient to promote the springing up of a brisk trade. It ensured the status of traders in a foreign land, and made it possible for them to obtain justice. The Indians therefore poured into Zanzibar, and "where Indians go trade follows." [1]

Six years later there was signed a further anti-slave treaty which marks the culminating point of SAID'S broadmindedness and self-sacrifice. The treaty of

[1] Cf. LYNE, p. 34.

1822 had caused a great deal of political annoyance, but comparatively slight financial loss, at any rate in reference with what was to follow. It had left East Africa completely untouched, and this was the great centre of the trade. The 1839 treaty had tightened the screw a little more, but that of 1845 completed the whole process and was intended to shut down the trade completely.[1] It was, of course, in the nature of a political necessity. So soon as the French by their treaty of 1844 had covered, with the mantle of political immunity, their servants as well as themselves, the trade became their monopoly whether they wished it or not. It is not suggested that every French flag covered a slave trader, but it is patent that every slave trader would have been a fool not to carry the French flag ; so the trade flourished, and even the stringency of 1845 was insufficient to check it. By this treaty SAID bound himself under the severest penalties to prohibit the exportation of slaves from his African possessions. He undertook also to prohibit the importation of slaves of African origin into his Asiatic possessions, and to use his influence to the same end among all the chiefs of Arabia. He further accorded to British warships the right to inspect and confiscate all boats, whether the property of himself or of his subjects, which were employed in the slave trade, with the sole exception of those engaged in transporting slaves between his different African possessions—*i.e.*, between latitudes 1° 57′ and 9° 2′. This treaty was signed on October 2nd, 1845, and came into operation on January 1st, 1847.[2] How-

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 54.
[2] Cf. FIROUZ, p. 108. For the full text of the treaty cf. TREATIES, p. 221 ; BOMB. SEL., p. 660.

ever, it does not represent quite the end of the story; by a British statute of August 18th, 1848,[1] the following further results were obtained:

1. All ships so seized were to be sold, and the proceeds were to go to the captor, to whom the British Government would also pay £5 per slave released and 30*s*. per ton of ship destroyed.
2. Where a seized ship had no slaves on board but was none the less condemned by a prize court the British Government would pay £4 per ton.
3. Where, on the other hand, a seized ship with no slaves on board was acquitted by the prize court, the British Government was to pay agreed damages to the owner, and reserved to itself the right to sue the officers of the British ship for reimbursement.

It is unnecessary to labour the effects of the treaty and statute taken together. There can be nothing but admiration for a people so wholehearted in their religious scruples as to be willing to pay for them, and so level-headed in their enthusiasms as to reserve to themselves the right to penalise the excessive zeal of their servants. But for SAID, who paid the piper without calling for the tune, and who very naturally, after sacrificing an annual income of many thousands of pounds, waived aside such paltry compensations as £2000 a year for three years,[2] an offer made in 1822, all that can be said is that he shares the credit with

[1] Cf. FIROUZ, p. 109.
[2] Cf. BURTON, II., p. 293.

the British taxpayer. The former appreciated the whole position, took his risks and kept his word; the latter had very little comprehension of the matter as a whole, understood a human gesture, and from their own pockets financed a measure which brought them no return in money and little gain in credit.

That SAID was a close and staunch friend of the English must by now have made itself abundantly clear. It was in fact a thing upon which he greatly and openly prided himself. No English traveller, however insignificant, could pass through his dominions without receiving the benefit of his kindly feelings towards them.[1] Captain Hart, who was sent out to SAID at a time when his negotiations with the Americans suggested the possibility of his cementing an alliance with them, records that "he always considered the English as his best friends and was happy to see them at all times and whenever in his power to show them every possible attention."[2] So Keppel writes as early as 1827 that "he repeated several times that the English and himself were as one, and that his house, his ships, and all that he possessed, were ours."[3]

In many acts also he proved himself extremely generous. In 1833 he offered his ship, the *Liverpool*, of 74 guns, to the English Government as a gift, alleging that she was in very good condition but too large for the service of Muscat.[4] In 1835 Captain Cogan took her across as a personal gift to William IV., together with some horses of purest Arab breed.[5]

[1] Cf. Appendix A.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 275.
[3] Cf. KEPPEL, p. 13.
[4] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 276.
[5] Cf. LOW, II., p. 15.

In England her name was changed to the *Imam* out of compliment to her donor.[1] In exchange there was sent to him the royal yacht *Prince Regent*, which Burton regarded as no equivalent for the *Liverpool*, in spite of the fact that it was held to be one of the finest of the Royal Squadron. Perhaps in this matter SAID was not unfairly treated, but on general grounds it is just to say that he obtained by no means more than he gave. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion of Burton that "his friendship with us indeed cost him dear,"[2] and in illustration of this point it is worth notice that when in 1854 the English approached SAID with a view to acquiring the Kooria-Mooria islands (off the south coast of Oman) on which there were valuable guano deposits, he refused all idea of purchase, but insisted on transferring them by deed of gift.[3]

3. *United States of America*

The official visit to Muscat during the autumn of 1833 of the United States sloop of war *Peacock*, bearing Mr. Edmund Roberts as plenipotentiary for the purpose of negotiations to increase facilities for trade between the United States and SAID'S Arabian and East African dominions, was a notable event in the life of

[1] Cf. RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 140; BOMB. SEL., p. 276.
[2] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 293.
[3] For the full text of the deed (July 14th, 1854) cf. TREATIES, p. 224; BADGER, p. xvi. The negotiations with SAID were conducted by Captain Freemantle, R.N., and Mr. John Ord, of the firm Messrs. Ord, Hindson and Hayes, of Liverpool The estimated quantity of guano, in beds varying from one to six feet in thickness, was estimated at 200,000 tons. The guano was composed of about 70 per cent. of phosphates and only one of ammonia, the residue consisting of silica and moisture. Cf. *TRANSACTIONS BOMBAY GEOG. SOC.*, 1858–60, p. xiii.

SAID, as it proved to him that the growing importance of Muscat and Zanzibar as centres of commerce had not remained unnoticed in the New World.[1]

As a rule the Customs depots were in the hands of Indians, and this, while affording no grounds of complaint to the English, tended to put other nations in an inferior position.[2] The Americans found SAID perfectly willing to fall in with their wishes. It was not only that his pride was touched at this sign that he could enter into agreements with civilised nations, but also that his commercial designs were now bearing very obvious fruits. A treaty of Amity and Commerce was signed at Muscat on September 21st, 1833, ratified by the President and Senate of the United States on June 30th, 1834, and the ratification exchanged during a second mission of Mr. Roberts in October, 1835. It formed the prototype of the treaties with England and France which were subsequently drafted.[3] The chief terms of the treaty were that the Americans should have liberty to sell without interference as to price, that they should pay a duty of 5 per cent. on cargo landed, but not on goods unsold and re-exported, that Omani vessels going to United States ports should receive most-favoured-nation treatment, and that the United States should have the power to appoint consuls in East Africa.[4] A further clause had been inserted in the draft of the treaty by which a rebate was made on the costs of maintaining and repatriating shipwrecked American

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 334; GUILLAIN, II., p. 197.
[2] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 30.
[3] Cf. RUSCHENBERGER, I., pp. viii., 146, 155.
[4] For the full text of the treaty cf. TREATIES, p. clx.; BOMB. SEL., p. 262; RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 151; *JOURNAL A. O. S.*, p. 353 (Arabian text, p. 349).

sailors. As a result, this clause became unnecessary, for SAID, whether from natural generosity or from a desire to display the boundlessness of his resources, insisted on a change of Article V., by which he defrayed the whole of these costs himself.[1]

This is merely in keeping with the manner in which he habitually treated his American visitors. A contemporary account is loud in the praises of his hospitality. The *Peacock* had difficulty in making Muscat harbour and was forced to jettison a good deal of its cargo and some of its guns. SAID promptly had these salvaged and returned. In addition he set aside a special house for the reception of the mission and did everything in his power to impress them with a due sense of his friendliness and importance.[2] He went so far as to offer to allow the Americans to build factories wherever they liked on condition that in return they rendered him armed assistance in East Africa. It does not appear that the United States mission ever entertained this proposal, but the mere breath of it was sufficient to alarm Bombay, and early in 1834 Captain Hart was sent out to Zanzibar in H.M.S. *Imogene*. This gentleman gained his object; SAID'S latest overtures to the Americans were dropped and SAID consented to the negotiations of a similar treaty with England.[3]

It appears that the relations between East Africa and the United States had not begun prior to 1830.[4] But an American merchantman, the *Essex*, under

[1] Cf. ROBERTS, p. 360.
[2] Cf. RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 99.
[3] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 30.
[4] Cf. GRANDIDIER (p. 33) states that the first ship from the United States arrived at Zanzibar in 1830.

Captain Orme, had appeared in the Red Sea off the island of Kamaran as early as 1805.[1] She was captured by the celebrated piratical chieftain and wealthy trader, Seyyid Mohammed Akil of Mocha, a descendant of the Prophet. The whole of the crew was massacred with the exception of the cabin boy, then ten years of age. Mohammed Akil took possession of the district of Dhofar in 1806 and Cruttenden, who travelled there about thirty years later (*Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society* from 1836 to 1838, p. 184), states that this American had embraced the Mohammedan religion and was residing with wife and family at the village of Sollalla.

By the time that Captain Hart reached Zanzibar the Americans had already set up a practical monopoly, and were extremely jealous of their position. Hart records that between January, 1833, and January, 1834, thirteen foreign ships touched at Zanzibar, of which no less than nine were American.[2] There were also present at the time two whaling brigs, one from Old Salem and the other from New York. At that period whaling was a very lucrative trade between Zanzibar and Pemba, the former of which two towns proved a convenient station for obtaining refreshments. The remaining staple of trade was chiefly copal gum and ivory, but it may be conjectured without any straining of the facts that there was also a blacker trade which had no small attractions for the inhabitants of a continent as man-hungry as America then was.[3]

[1] Pirate ships fitted out at New York had appeared in the eastern seas already during the eighteenth century. Cf. WILSON, p. 194.

[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 280. RUSCHENBERGER (I., p. 66) asserts that between the 16th of September, 1832, until the 26th of May, 1834, 41 foreign vessels visited Zanzibar, of which 32 were American (20 from Salem).

[3] Cf. GRANDIDIER, p. 33.

Even in America only one or two houses were in the secret of the trade with East Africa, and of those the majority were situated in Old Salem, Mass. It is characteristic that, when SAID sent through the captain of one of these Old Salem brigs a general invitation to the traders of America, the owners set their faces against it with the remark, " If we allow this to be published everybody will hear of the place and we shall lose our trade." [1] And it was indeed a monopoly which the merchants of Old Salem were in danger of losing. No less than six of the American consuls in Zanzibar had come from Salem; Salem trade with Zanzibar began in 1826, and the last Salem man left there in 1891. It is not surprising to find that the only portrait [2] of SAID is owned by the Peabody Museum in Salem, and even this must very probably have been made *sub rosa*, for SAID had all the Moslem's horror of portraiture, holding that some of the essential spirit of the man was transferred to the reproduction.[3]

In return for the ivory, copal and hides, which they carried away, the Americans spread their cotton goods over the whole continent.[4] In cotton fabrics they established a virtual monopoly. Their stuffs appear to have been more durable, and it was with unconcealed anger that they realised that the English were attempting to filch away their trade by counterfeiting the

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 281; LYNE, p. 33.

[2] The painting of which the frontispiece of this book is a reproduction was probably done between May, 1830 and beginning of 1832, when SAID was in residence in Oman, by Lieut. Henry Blosse Lynch (of Euphrates Expedition fame) who, in December, 1829, was appointed Arabic and Persian Interpreter to the Commodore of the Persian Gulf Squadron. Cf. LOW, II., p. 33.

[3] GUILLAIN, III., p. 107; BURTON, I., p. 306; PEARCE, p. 129.

[4] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 295.

American stamp on an inferior article.[1] The evidence of a contemporary traveller on this point is not unenlightening. "But our most formidable rivals," he says, "are the Americans, who have only lately entered on this trade. At present they land most of their cargoes on the east coast of Africa, from whence they find their way to Maskat and Persia. Hitherto they have only sent white goods, and with them they have spread an opinion, which was repeated to me by the Armenian merchants of Ispahan, that their cloths are superior to the British because the cotton is produced in their own country and not injured from pressing. It is said to wash and wear well, and if this cloth were introduced more extensively the merchants assure me it would have a good sale." Burton, when travelling in the years 1857–59, found American cotton goods, the "domestics" from the mills near Salem, largely distributed in Central Africa.[2]

There appears, however, to have been trade in another commodity almost inseparable from such relations, for when Colonel Miles visited Bireimi in 1875 he found the fort there protected by guns forming part of a batch of twenty purchased by SAID from the United States for his corvette the *Sultan*.[3]

* * * * *

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN[4]

To the most high and mighty Andrew Jackson, President of the United States of America, whose name shines with so much splendour throughout the world. I pray most sincerely that on the receipt of this letter

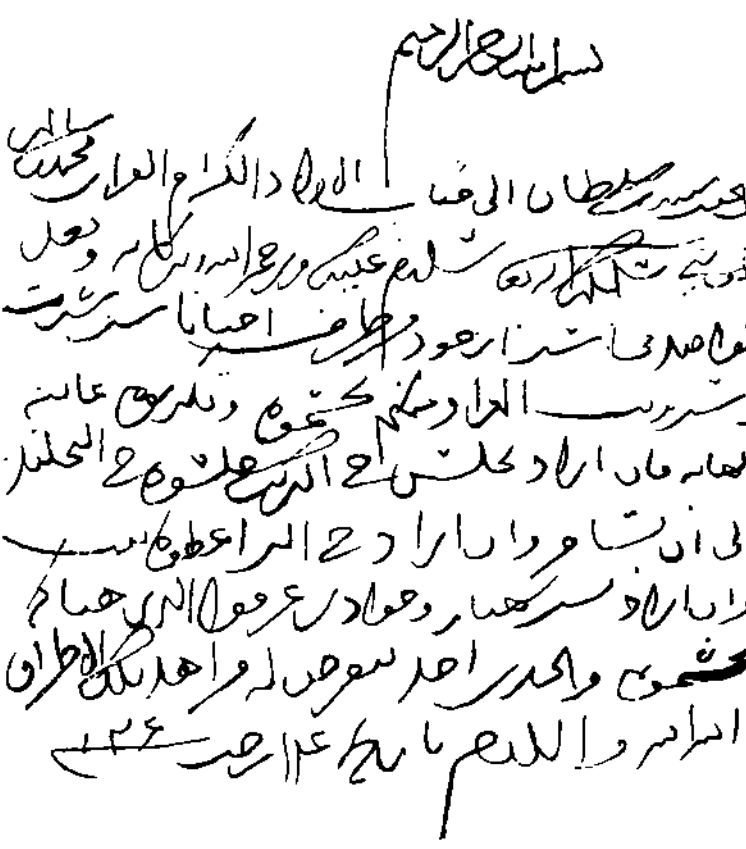
[1] Cf. RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 65.
[2] Cf. BURTON, *J. R. G. S.*, p. 422.
[3] Cf. MILES-SOHAR, p. 55.
[4] Translation of a letter from the Sultan of Muscat to the President of the United States. Cf. ROBERTS, p. 430.

it might find his Highness, the President of the United States, in high health, and that his happiness may be constantly on the increase. On a most fortunate day and at a happy hour, I had the honour to receive your Highness's letter, every word of which is clear and distinct as the sun at noonday, and every letter shone forth as brilliantly as the stars in the heavens. Your Highness' letter was received by your faithful and highly honourable representative and ambassador Edmund Roberts, who made me supremely happy in explaining the object of his mission, and I have complied in every respect with the wishes of your honourable ambassador, in concluding a treaty of friendship and commerce between our respective countries, which shall be faithfully observed by myself and my successors as long as the world endures. And his Highness may depend that all American vessels resorting to the ports within my dominions shall know no difference, in point of good treatment, between my country and that of his own most happy and fortunate country, where felicity ever dwells. I most fervently hope that his Highness the President may ever consider me as his firm and true friend, and that I will ever hold the President of the United States very near and dear to my heart, and my friendship shall never know any diminution, but shall continue to increase till time is no more. I offer, most sincerely and truly, to his Highness the President, my entire and devoted services, to execute any wishes the President may have within my dominions, or within any ports or places wherein I possess the slightest influence.

This is from your most beloved friend,

SYEED BIN SULTAN.

Written on the twenty-second day of the Moon, Jamada Alawel, in the year Alhajira, 1249 (corresponding to 7th of October, 1833), at the Royal Palace in the city of Muscat.



Reproduction of Letter in Said bin Sultan's handwriting

Facing p. 128

This letter is to have the address of being presented to the most high and mighty Andrew Jackson, President of the United States of America, whose name shines with so much brilliancy throughout the world.[1]

[1] SAID was very desirous of sending on this occasion to the President of the United States several of his horses, but they were declined because the ship was not of suffiicent size to carry them. Cf. ROBERTS, p. 359.

CHAPTER VI

SAID'S PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

THE difficulty of judging one generation by the standards of another, still more of judging East by the standards of West, have been too commonly realised and emphasised to need further elaboration. In any case it would be doing but small service to our subject to suggest that it is necessary to make excuses for SAID'S personality or life. It is submitted that, judged by the standards of any nation, epoch or religion, SAID stands forth, if not as the type of *preux chevalier*, at any rate as the type of astute financier [1] and honest politician—a lover of his country. It may be thought that to confine his qualities to these categories is to pass some kind of aspersion upon his character as implying that they represent his limitations, which indeed by no means is the case.

No one nowadays would deny the proposition that in order to appreciate the character of an individual one must analyse the nature as well of his heredity as of his surroundings.

First, then, of SAID'S parentage. It has been stated that the Al bu Said were an upstart power in Oman. An ordinary dynasty is by no means secure among the Arabs, for the rule of accession is usually

[1] Cf. GOBINEAU, p. 91; "*Négociant Royal.*"

founded on the consideration that he shall succeed who can best maintain his position.[1] Where, then, there are many families with almost equal pretensions to power, where the old dynasty, overthrown, still flourishes far and wide in the country, and where the new one throws up a succession of weak men or even of rival aspirants of almost equal potentialities, there it may be clearly seen that great strength or unscrupulousness in excess will be essential for the maintenance of stability. SAID belonged to a royal race, it is true, but to a race whose humble origins were well within the memory of man. The founder of that race, Ahmed bin Said, had been a man of exceptional strength of character and will. So much is evident; he would not otherwise have been the founder of the dynasty. But he had the misfortune to leave behind a weak son, Said, who possessed such semblance of power as was conferred upon him by the Imamate, and a strong son, who achieved such reality of power as his sword could carve out for him. Sultan bin Ahmed was never proclaimed Imam, and though he maintained himself by the strength of his hand there is no doubt that his position caused considerable misgivings to those of his subjects who were religiously minded. In addition, he had only been in undisputed power for four years, and left behind him two extremely youthful sons and a grasping nephew. No defence is needed for the action of SAID in effecting the removal of Bedr. He merely struck the blow first. Of Bedr's designs there can be no doubt, but SAID and his

[1] Cf. NEWMAN, p. 56: "The law of the keenest edge." REP., 1883–84, p. 20: "The longest sword elects the prince." BURTON, I., p. 310: "Fath Ali Shah of Persia, when asked upon his death-bed to name a successor, drew a sword and showed what made and unmade monarchs."

brother Salim stood in the way. Salim perhaps might have been allowed to survive; he was an easy-going man and would have been the cause of no trouble; but no one could have had any illusions about the firmness of SAID'S character even at so early an age. It would have been impossible for an usurper to allow such a rival to live. History offered to SAID a choice between the rôles of " First Slayer " or " First Victim." It would be hard to blame him for making a decision which under the pressure of circumstances was practically inevitable.

But SAID'S troubles were not at an end when he had secured the succession. It was not only the refractory tribes of his own nation with which he had to deal—and these were by no means few. He had simultaneously to ward off the invasions of the most powerful and persistent religious fanatics with whom the Moslem world has ever had to deal, and to cut out the plague spots established in his dominions by the pirates who preyed upon his commerce. Failure in either of these enterprises would have been fatal to him, and yet it is difficult to see what force he had which was adequate enough to cope with them. The people over whom he ruled were essentially men of commerce, and not soldiers at all; the enemies with whom he had to deal were soldiers by profession and descent. There has never been a more pathetic example of a boy with a leaden sword attempting to stem the tide of invasion. He was handicapped on every side; the whole thing was a vicious circle. You cannot fight trained battalions with mere levies—and at the same time, if you do not, you speedily lose even them. SAID was forced into the attempt to

purge the country of the Cowasim, since to refrain from such an attempt was political suicide. And yet, although he himself and his own tribe were brave enough, the general reputation of the Omani fighting man was not to be coveted. Of his personal courage there can be no doubt. Even if we had no other instances than his action in saving a wounded British soldier [1] from the attentions of the Beni bu Ali, or that curious unaccompanied visit of his to Mutlak el Mutary,[2] through a country invested with Wahhabis, to interview an implacable foe, it would still be possible to maintain the view without much risk of contradiction that all his political proceedings evidence a man of decision who knew his own mind and was prepared to take risks in order to obtain the objects which he had envisaged.

It has been alleged that SAID was much helped by chance. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that he rarely, if ever, won a complete military victory. It may be suggested that military victories are not an end but a means, and that if SAID be judged on that basis it will be found that he lost fewer campaigns and won fewer battles than any other leader on record. It cannot be denied that he rarely gained a military success, but if we add the sum of his achievements we find them to have been not inconsiderable.

When he took over the country it had been shaken by insurrection. His uncle had held Sohar, his father Muscat; the northern territory had maintained a practical independence under local leaders. Each of

[1] Cf. LOW, I., p. 373; BADGER, p. 341; REP., 1883–84, p. 26; CRICHTON, p. 476.
[2] Cf. BADGER, p. 325.

these factions agreed but in one thing—the paying of tribute to the Wahhabis. When SAID died he left a homogeneous kingdom in Oman, rich in commerce and with a feeling for unity. Many successful generals have done less, none have done more.

When SAID succeeded to power he found that his ancestors had exercised a vague suzerainty over the coast of East Africa. It was a thing more easily boasted of than defined, and those who were most proud of it probably enjoyed it least. At any rate for two generations before SAID it had been almost a thing of the imagination. In SAID'S time it became a reality, and the original idea of suzerainty was skilfully expanded until SAID became what was rare among the Arabs, a coloniser and a founder of a maritime empire. There are great military leaders who would prefer to have done this rather than ever to have fought a battle at all.

In fact there is an ineradicable tendency to criticise SAID from the wrong point of view; the verdict has been passed upon him mostly by soldiers and sailors, who at that time were practically the only people with the opportunity of coming in contact with him. These men make this criticism that it was only after several fruitless attempts to reduce Mombasa that he succeeded; but they must admit that once the town was within his grasp it never slipped away again.

One would therefore suggest that SAID should not be regarded from any conventional point of view. Of course, if it be insisted that he must be measured solely by standards of honour, benevolence and morality, there will be ample material wherefrom to prepare an adequate reply. No one who has any

knowledge of the reactions of the Boers to the abolition of slavery can be ignorant of their resentment, calculated opposition and persistent attempts to secure compensation to which they had no moral claim. From such a comparison SAID will emerge with flying colours—and that without our taking into consideration the difference of race or religion. Or again, no one who has any experience of the difficulties and bargainings which surround commercial transactions or concession contracts with the governments of European nations can fail to be struck by the simple generosity with which an Arabian ruler arranged these matters. It will be retorted that it was in his own interests. That was true, of course. In the actions of SAID, however, we find what is so often lacking in the history of human life—consistency of motives, plan and execution. One might rightly say that SAID found a weak and disunited Arab kingdom and left behind him an empire, prosperous, cohesive and a match for many states outside the Moslem world. That is his justification and the monument of his genius.

History—more truly than fiction—has made us all too well acquainted with the type of autocratic Arab potentate. And when we consider the question as to what manner of man SAID was, we shall perhaps do well to bear in mind that his autocracy was potential rather than real. The power of being absolute in his judgments and cruel in his verdicts were certainly his, had he chosen to exercise them, and it was to their exercise that he had been brought up and grown accustomed. Many contemporary accounts, deceived perhaps by a feeling that an Arab ruler must neces-

sarily possess such characteristics, could not but testify that he kept them well beneath the surface, they do no more than make an innuendo and fail to add any basis of fact. The Italian physician, Vincenzo, who attended him in his earlier and more unfortunate years, describes him as "a good-looking man of moderate stature and florid complexion. His manners are lively and agreeable, and he possesses a sound understanding."[1] His daughter also comments upon his fascinating and engaging expression, while adding that his whole appearance commanded respect.[2] And a similar effect was made by him upon all with whom he came into contact. Naturally, their methods of expression differ. Sometimes he is described as having mild and gentlemanly manners, or again, as being a handsome person, noble-looking with a benevolent countenance. But perhaps the best portrait of him is given by Shepherd, who describes him as having a "fine, manly, open face, with broad brow, large grey eyes, tight close mouth, hedged round with silvery moustache and beard, which terminates in a sharp point about six inches below the chin. In all this there is so much of firmness, honesty of purpose, kind feeling and decision of character, combined with his genuine welcome and warm grasp, that your esteem is won at once."[3]

We have again the accounts of those who attended his court at Zanzibar and Muscat upon missions military, diplomatic or commercial.[4] It is not that

[1] Cf. MANSUR, p. 18.
[2] Cf. RUETE, p. 5.
[3] Cf. SHEPHERD, p. 52.
[4] Cf. Appendix A: Personal testimonies about SAID by contemporaries from first-hand evidence.

they were received with mere courtesy ; it is that they were received with abundant consideration and overflowing kindness. Captain Roberts, for instance, who introduced the American mission to him in 1833, lost a good many of the effects of his ship in getting into harbour ; SAID, on receiving him, allotted a house for his residence on land, sent an abundance of choice delicacies for his table, informed him that if his ship could not be got into a seaworthy state he should have one of SAID'S own in which to return, and finally, after his departure, salvaged certain jettisoned cannon and sent them on after him to Bombay, as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter. When, shortly afterwards, Captain Hart was sent out by the British to counteract any evil effects that might have accrued from the conversation with Roberts, he had the same enthusiastic tale of kindness to tell. Also the French, of whose designs SAID was at some time afraid, could not do other than admit that they had been received with strong courtesy. Of his generosity more will be said hereafter.

If, as has been alleged in a few quarters, that SAID'S courtesy allowed of a typically Eastern love of display, it can be claimed in reply that this forms a most singular exception to his ordinary habits, for nothing could have been more simple than his personal tastes. He was regarded by his people rather as a father than as a ruler. As soon as the day's work was over the palace gates were opened so that all who would might enter ; and there were many indeed who took advantage of the offered hospitality. Crowds of his subjects consistently sought his presence, when he talked to them with the same affability as he habitually used

with his equals.[1] He was dressed with the utmost simplicity, so that it was impossible to distinguish him from the inhabitants of Muscat or of the coast of the Persian Gulf. He wore a long cotton dress and a fine black woollen coat, and his turban was of the type commonly found as far east as Afghanistan.[2] Of him his daughter says, " He humbled himself before God, nor was he self-conceited or proud like so many highly-born people." It is she who adds, by way of example, that it was his custom to go on personal visits to the humblest of his slaves and to congratulate them in person when they married.[3] It is not suggested of course that he lived up to some abstract ideal. He was a child of his century and of his country, superstitious like his fellows, and perhaps, as it is usual, subject to some extent to harem influence. Yet it is true to say that " Lui, en prenant une voie toute nouvelle, réussit à se faire estimer de très puissants voisins," and we may well agree with the terse verdict of Burton that " Seyyid Said was probably as shrewd, liberal and enlightened a prince as Arabia ever produced." [4]

It is of course possible to attach undue importance to the praise which is showered upon princes during their lifetime and immediately after their death, but where such evidence is practically the only kind available it is usually possible to test its value not only by abstract principles of reasonable likelihood, but also by the more concrete criterion of the prince's personal

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 222.
[2] Cf. GOBINEAU, p. 88. RUSCHENBERGER (I., p. 137) says: " The material of which the turban is made distinguishes the tribes, but none except those of a royal lineage may wear it above a prescribed height."
[3] Cf. RUETE, p. 5.
[4] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 304.

reputation among his countrymen and of his recorded actions. In the case of SAID almost all the available concrete evidence goes to show that he possessed a number of qualities which are seldom found irreconciliable in the character of an Eastern autocrat. Prominent amongst them was his love of justice and moral dealing. The following anecdote may serve as an illustration of the point. When he was still struggling unsuccessfully against invasion he turned on one occasion in despair to his Italian physician, Vincenzo. "I took the liberty," the latter records, "to suggest some steps which, though not quite consonant to the political morality of Europe except as taught by Machiavelli, would have been rejected by very few Oriental despots on that account. SAID instantly observed that they were contrary to the precepts of the Koran and the law of God."[1] It matters little whether the aspersion cast upon Oriental despots is true or not. Their general character has no bearing upon the case, but if the aspersion is false SAID stands out as a man of honour; or, if it is true, his position is infinitely higher.

His love of justice appears to have extended also to the more practical applications of that time. There is a constant repetition of the statement that his dealings and decisions were always fair and equitable, and there is also a similarity about the illustrations of that statement which lends great weight to it. So Mansur speaks of "his constant love of justice and distinguished clemency, the effects of which are felt not only by his own subjects, but even by his domestic

[1] Cf. MANSUR, p. 73.

slaves." [1] And there is remarkable likeness here with the words of SAID'S own daughter when she says, "Justice he valued as the highest of all things, and in this respect he knew no difference of person, not even between his own sons and the lowest slave." [2] It is therefore not remarkable that he should have been held in such affection by the people of Muscat. For this quality alone was sufficient to counterbalance all the financial losses which his broadmindedness in other respects had caused them.

Not less remarkable, however, are the respect and admiration which he aroused among those Europeans who had dealings with him. Such tributes were nearly always founded on his wealth of sympathy and tolerance. He was a strict Mohammedan; yet he never allowed his own religious views to blind him to the qualities of others who professed different faiths. He had all the instinctive exclusiveness of an Arab; yet foreigners met a ready reception at his court and were welcomed with a warmth which left a deep impression on their minds. He was himself a great trader; yet not so narrow-minded as to be oblivious of the fact that he would gain rather than lose by the admission of the Hindu. The results of this attribute of mind are extraordinary. The first Christian missionary to enter SAID'S East African dominions was Krapf, a German, and he affirms that without SAID'S sympathetic assistance at every point the mission could not even have been undertaken. In commerce also he reaped the full fruits of his liberal policy. He started, of course, with the very necessary equipment of his

[1] Cf. MANSUR, p. 18.
[2] Cf. RUETE, p. 5.

own commercial acumen. A man who was so quick to seize the possibilities of Zanzibar and so persistent in pushing forward the cultivation of the clove deserved such reward as he gained. In his eagerness to encourage clove growing he resorted sometimes to the method of sequestering the estates of those landowners who refused to fall in with his wishes,[1] but of such fashion, however, are the methods of business men of all nations and ages.

The extent of his success, we shall find, is difficult to gauge. SAID completed in Oman a process which had been going on for two or three generations—he definitely severed the civil from the religious functions in the state. He never succeeded nor sought to succeed to the Imamate. Probably he saw that the restrictions which surrounded the tenure of that office far outweighed the advantages of its religious supremacy.[2] For from early days his heart was in commerce. It has often been marvelled that a man of such prestige and influence, the founder of an empire so widespread and prosperous, should have derived so small a revenue from his dominions. Curzon estimated his revenues in early years at £80,000, and other estimates for later periods do not far exceed that figure. When Captain Hart visited him in 1834 he assessed them at a quarter of a million dollars, of which 150,000 were derived from Zanzibar and 100,000 from Muscat.[3] A later record gives them as 610,000 German crowns.[4] This of course represents a beggarly

[1] Cf. GUILLAIN, II., p. 50.
[2] Cf. APPENDIX B: The Imamate in Oman.
[3] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 279.
[4] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 633; MANSUR, p. 29; BUCKINGHAM, II., p. 399; GUILLAIN, II., p. 251, gives a detailed list of revenue; the total being about two and a half million francs.

exchequer and arouses wonder that an empire so rich in commerce was so lightly taxed. In considering this question it has to be remembered that SAID never ruled over a people; he was the leader of a number of tribes. They were tribes, too, which had less sense of common descent than of tribal rights. There is indeed a by no means obscure resemblance between them and the city states of Greece. Combination was an idea alien to the minds of each. With such a spirit abroad heavy taxation was of course unthinkable, and SAID has, in fact, been praised for his astuteness in knowing when to inflict new or remove old taxes. More particular cleverness was required in East Africa, where he not only ruled over a number of alien races, but even the men of his own race belonged to a different generation and would tolerate no interference which did not give them full opportunity to pursue commerce with a minimum of molestation. Nor had SAID the power to impose his will by force. Military power or genius was not his; he must maintain himself with the acquiescence of his subjects—not against their will.

Not less difficult is it to understand how he maintained himself on so small an income. The explanation, of course, lies in his private trading profits. The general trade of the country improved greatly during his reign. As early as 1827 a Banian paid a lakh of rupees and 80,000 German crowns for the privilege of farming the taxes at Muscat, but between the years 1840 and 1856 the trading community was constantly expanding and heaping up its profits. Towards the end of SAID'S reign the Banian merchants in his dominions numbered over 2000 and were

the most influential section of the community. SAID, being quite devoid of narrow racial prejudice, realised that their interests were identical with his own, and that where one trader penetrated ten might follow. He therefore afforded them every encouragement, and was rewarded by finding that his own subjects were by no means outstripped in the race. Not only so, but he himself traded widely on his own account. It was usual at this period to find ten or a dozen brigs of more than a thousand tons burden in Muscat harbour at one time, and it is calculated that the total number of ships sailing yearly from the port was about two hundred. Trade was developed in all the four quarters of the compass. From the Mangalore coast and from Malabar half a million morahs of rice came to Oman yearly in addition to such other commodities as timber, pepper and cardamums. Dates were, of course, the principal article of export, but the shipping was not less occupied in the carrying trade, being found not only high up the neighbouring Persian Gulf but also eastward to Bengal and westward on the shores of the Red Sea. SAID'S part was not confined to encouraging this enterprise; he bore no small personal share in it. "The Imam himself is one of the principal merchants of the place; a very great portion of the trade is in his hands and also much to Bourbon and the Isle de France."[1] But a true estimate cannot be formed unless it be remembered that the East African trade far exceeded that from Oman and grew at a far swifter rate.

SAID'S interest in the sea, however, was not con-

[1] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 362.

fined to commerce. In the beginning of his reign he had suffered far too heavily from the piracy of the Cowasim to be able to contemplate with ease the insecurity of unprotected trading vessels. As early as 1820 Fraser noted that he had five fine ships, and in 1831 Stocqueler gave the number as twelve.[1] In 1834 Captain Hart gave an exhaustive list of the ships and their condition. In addition to twenty merchant vessels which were his own private property, he had one man-of-war, three frigates, two corvettes and a brig; besides war bughlos and bateels mounted with from four to ten guns apiece.[2] It is not possible perhaps to take this fleet altogether seriously. No one ever saw all the ships in commission at the same time, and it has been suggested that he never kept crews for more than one at a time but sent over to Oman for extra men whenever the need arose.[3] Moreover, the ships themselves were usually dismantled and would have needed considerable preparation before reaching a seagoing condition. And yet a British naval observer of the time anxiously records that if it should ever occur to SAID to contest naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean the British would find him a very difficult foe with whom to deal.

The comparative ineffectiveness of this display, however, is well illustrated by the case of his ship *Liverpool*. This man-of-war of seventy-four guns had been built for him at Bombay about 1826.[4] It was

[1] Cf. CURZON, II., p. 437.
[2] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 279; GUILLAIN, II., p. 241; BURTON, I., p. 267; ROBERTS, p. 363. For full list of the Navy, cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 282.
[3] Cf. BOMB. SEL., p. 283.
[4] Cf. REP., 1883–84, p. 37; BOMB. SEL., p. 282; GUILLAIN, II, p. 242.

speedily discovered that zeal had outrun discretion, for she was too big for the narrow waters of Zanzibar, and it was not even with the most careful handling that she could be managed. She was therefore presented, ten years later, to William IV., as has been mentioned before. He received in return the yacht *Prince Regent,* which may have been, as it has been described, the finest of the Royal Squadron,[1] but which, in that case, did not do full credit to the general character of that squadron. Burton (I., p. 268) describes her as "useless and tawdry, and after a few years she was passed on as a present to the Governor-General of India. In India she was used as a transport, and as such became, for her unseaworthy properties, ' the terror of the Eastern soldier.' "[2]

By nature SAID was both publicly and privately a liberal and a generous man. Where a question of policy was involved he would deliberately forgo his due in order to lay the other party under a sense of obligation. Of this we find good examples in his insistence on taking upon himself the full cost of maintaining and repatriating shipwrecked American sailors, or in his free gift to the English of the Kooria Mooria islands with valuable guano deposits in July, 1854.[3] His presents to foreign courts were also indicative rather of his nature than of his position. But in the gifts which he received in return he was not always fortunate. Queen Victoria's attempt to present something appropriate led her to send him a bronze

[1] Cf. LOW, II., p. 15; REP., 1883–84, p. 37.

[2] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 268. In fairness it must be stated that the wife of SAID, when visited by Frau Dr. Helfer in 1836, spoke of this royal gift as "a beautiful fire-ship." Cf. APPENDIX A, NOSTIZ, II., p. 8. According to GOBINEAU (p. 90) the ship was wrecked at Bahrein.

[3] Cf. p. 122.

bedstead, which was carefully preserved as a curio in his harem of Muscat and later met the startled eyes of the first Englishwoman on record who was permitted to go over the women's quarters.[1] The next incongruous thing which he received was a state coach. It was only after procuring at considerable expense a Hindu carpenter from India that SAID realised that to use it he would require to build roads in his dominions. Reluctantly abandoning so expensive a dream he, in turn, handed on the coach to the Imam of Hyderabad. Not less useless was the silver-gilt tea service which came last and was returned at dead of night to the British Consulate for safe keeping.[2]

His relations with the English, however, procured him one honour of which he was rightly proud. On May 6th, 1837, he was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society. An extract from the speech of the President describes the occasion. "On the arrival in this country of Captain Cogan, of the Indian Navy, in command of the *Liverpool* man-of-war, a present from the Imam of Muscat to the King of England, the Council took occasion to recommend to the Society to elect His Highness an Honorary Member in token of its approbation of the encouragement given by His Highness to the Arts and Sciences among his people, particularly to those of Ship-building and Navigation; and as manifesting its high sense of his desire to open direct intercourse between his country and Great Britain; and of the friendly feelings he has on all occasions exhibited towards the subjects, Asiatic as well as European, of

[1] Cf. APPENDIX A, MIGNAN, I., p. 67; NOSTIZ, II., p. 11.
[2] Cf. PEARCE, p. 124.

the British Empire . . ." [1] It has been alleged that SAID was willing to become a member of any society which would bring him prominently before the public eye in Europe and that it was for this reason that he became a member of the Société Générale des Naufrages. It is of course true that he had the characteristics of an ambitious man, but it must also be allowed that those characteristics never over-rode his honesty and common sense, and in the case of the aforesaid Société he was certainly entitled to his membership, considering his generous offer regarding the stipulations of the Treaty concluded with the United States of America, as well as his assistance rendered when the United States ship of war *Peacock* ran aground.[2] A droll instance of this is seen when he was elected a member of the Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord. He declined, with the remark that " he would not belong to a body of grave robbers and corpse snatchers." [3]

Here, as elsewhere, it is of no avail to attempt to explain away his qualities as defects. SAID had his limitations ; they were those of his period and station not less than those of his personality. But as a just, honourable and scrupulous man, as a successful diplomat, merchant and ruler, as a devoted father

[1] Cf. *Proceedings of the Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society* held on the 6th of May, 1837 (pp. 3 and 12). LOW (II., p. 15) says wrongly that SAID become a Honorary Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. It was his son Barghash on whom was conferred this distinction on May 10th, 1872. BURTON, *J. R. G. S.* (p. 4) states that SAID frequently entertained the thought of applying to the Imperial Government for officers selected to map the caravan route of East Africa, and that he professed himself willing to assist them with money, and the weight of his widely-extended influence. And BURTON goes on to say that SAID'S death was indeed a severe blow to the cause of discovery where his name only could command respect.

[2] Cf. RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 98.

[3] Cf. BURTON, I., p. 306.

and an enlightened philanthropist, he does not render ridiculous the titles which have been applied to him—a second Omar, the Haroun al Raschid of his time, Mohammed Ali of the further East.[1]

[1] Cf. WELLSTED, I., pp. 8 and 381; RUSCHENBERGER, I., p. 139; BURTON, I., p. 307. "*Le Jupiter de cet Olympe Africain.*" Cf. GUILLAIN, III., p. 107. "The greatest *lion* in the East." Cf. MIGNAN, II., p. 236.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT SAID BIN SULTAN BY CONTEMPORARIES WHO MET HIM[1]

(1) MANSUR. A physician and native of Rome, Vincenzo Maurizi, who became Commander of the forces of SAID BIN SULTAN under the name of Shaik Mansur, at Muscat from 1809 till 1814.

(P. 18.) Seyid Said is a good-looking young man, of moderate stature and florid complexion; his manners are lively and agreeable, and he possesses a sound understanding, which always makes him eager to acquire information from the Europeans who arrive at Muscat, concerning those arts which his own countrymen cannot teach him. His constant love of justice and distinguished clemency, the effects of which are felt, not only by his own subjects, but even by his domestic slaves. . . .

(P. 73.) At the last named place (Burca), I had an interview with this unfortunate prince, whose situation was indeed deplorable; and he asked my advice with much earnestness upon the measures best calculated to extricate him from ruin. I took the liberty to suggest some steps which, though not quite consonant to the political morality of Europe, except as taught by Machiavelli, would have been rejected by very few Oriental despots on that account. Seyid Said instantly observed that they were contrary to the precepts of the Koran and the law of God. In order to try how far his acute feeling of moral obligation would carry him, I replied that when the immediate interest of kings and nations

[1] A few of these testimonies are mentioned in INGRAMS' APPR.

was concerned it was sometimes necessary to put the divine commands on one side and the absolute necessity of the case on the other. I had scarcely finished the sentence when, frightened at opinions so detestable, he exclaimed with energy that he would sooner lose both kingdom and life than thus break through the commands of God and the dictates of his conscience.

(2) HEUDE, Lieutenant. Visited Muscat, 1816.

(P. 26.) A middle-aged man, of a personal appearance and plain unaffected manners.

(3) SADLIER. Captain, British Army. Arrived at Muscat May 7th, 1819.

(P. 7.) We were received on landing by the Minister, who conducted us to the Imam's palace, where His Highness and his brother were seated in a verandah at the end of the terrace. The room was neatly carpeted, and furnished with chairs. Our reception was courteous. His Highness's inquiries after the health of each gentleman were expressed with much affability; after which he introduced his brother, Seyud Salem, and the Minister, Sheikh Alee bin Fazil. His Excellency expressed the high sense he entertained of the friendly alliance and good understanding which has uniformly existed between the Honourable Company's Government and his family, and from which he has derived such constant support.

(P. 16.) On the afternoon of the 14th His Highness intimated to me his intention of honouring me with a visit of ceremony, and although my smoky habitation was ill adapted for the reception of His Highness, I was obliged to receive this mark of condescension in the best apartment which the sooty and tottering fabric afforded. The Imam's manner is plain and his deportment courteous. He appears to be blessed with a good temper and disposition, and seldom displays peevishness, except under the vulgar irritation of business, to which he is not unfrequently exposed as he

generally transacts even trifling affairs himself. During this visit he appeared perfectly at his ease, which I was cautious not to interrupt by the intrusion of business or even by expressing my anxiety at the delay which I was obliged to endure. On departing His Highness apologised for the badness of the accommodation which Muscat afforded.

(4) FRASER. Visited Muscat 1821.

(P. 20.) The Imam's dress was the plain Arab costume: a white cotton gown opening down the breast, but buttoned to the throat, and reaching down to the ankles, with wide Arab sleeves; a scarf of blue checked cotton round his waist, in which was stuck a silver-hilted dagger of the peculiar Arab form, crooked and broad; and round his head a blue checked cotton handkerchief with ends bordered red, green and yellow, loosely wound as a turban. His sword of the Persian form, in a plain black scabbard, stood near him in the corner. The countenance of the Imam is of mild and pleasing expression. He assumed a gravity of deportment, which did not seem to be altogether habitual, and was far from bordering on austerity. His complexion, like that of most Arabs, is of a light yellow; his eyes are dark and expressive, though rendered almost sleepy at times by their heavy lids and long dark eyelashes, unlike the Arab eye in general, which is oftener remarkable for the fiery quickness of its bright black orb. His beard is full and black, without the assistance of dye, the moustachios and parts about the mouth being clipt rather short, allowing something of the cheeks to be seen, a custom, I was informed, peculiar to certain tribes. His age, I think, could not have exceeded thirty-five.

The envoy (Dr. Andrew Jukes, Envoy to Persia) had in his charge to present to the Imaum on the part of the Governor-General, for the Company, a sword elegantly mounted, in token of the sense entertained of his gallant bearing in the affair of Captain Thompson's detachment; and the readiness with which he assisted our troops in the expedition under General Smith.

In a few days the Imaum returned the envoy's visit; a piece of attention not quite expected. He came without any parade, in a single ten-oared boat belonging to one of his frigates and attended only by the minister and his nephew, a boy. Apologies being made for our inability to receive him in a manner befitting his rank, he replied that he came not to see a fine ship, or fine accommodations, or to receive fine compliments, but to see the envoy of a friend, and it was the same thing to him whether he were in a palace or in a corner (pointing to one as he spoke).

(5) OWEN, Captain, Royal Navy. Visited Muscat 1822.

(P. 341.) At the time of our visit to Muscat the Sultan was about 40 years of age, with mild and gentlemanly manners; he was very communicative and forced on the Captain some trifling presents which the latter could not decline without giving offence. Captain Owen upon this gave him an Arabic copy of the Scriptures, with which he appeared much gratified, not of any thoughts of conversion, but because they are declared by the Koran to be holy books containing God's Word. The Sultan, in return, presented the Captain with an emblematic offering of his own creed—a superb sword, the blade of Damascus steel and the handle richly mounted with gold.

Before our departure he came on board in state, when we received him with our yards manned and the ship (H.M.S. *Leven*) dressed with flags, but did not salute on account of our chronometers; the preparation for the ceremonious visit was rather ludicrous, for as we had many pigs on board they were ordered to be put into the boats that they might not offend the Sultan by their profane appearance.

(6) KEPPEL, Captain. Visited Muscat 1824.

(P. 14.) He repeated several times that the English and himself were as one and that his house, his ships and all he possessed was ours. We were much struck with the Imaum's handsome person, and pleased at his polite and unaffected

address. He is much beloved by his subjects, who speak in high terms of his justice and moderation. As to the mere fact of murdering his relative, it is seen in the light of a "family difference," and is no bar to his standing well in public estimation as a prince of mild and peaceable demeanour. By the kindness of the Imaum all Englishmen visiting Muscat are furnished with horses from his stable.[1]

(7) MIGNAN, Captain, Bombay Army. Visited Muscat in 1825.

(Vol. I., p. 63.) In 1825, when *en route* for Turkish Arabia, we visited Muscat on board his highness's brig of war, *Psyche*, and Mrs. Mignan was invited to pay a visit to his harem. At this time he had but one married wife, although allowed four, and was in treaty for a princess of Shirauz. Mrs. Mignan, her female servant and I, went to the palace, where his highness was in waiting to receive us. At the conclusion of the usual ceremonies of coffee-sipping and sherbet-drinking his highness most politely took Mrs. Mignan by the hand (the native servant following) and led her through several parts of the palace until they came to a door to which was attached a padlock of at least a foot in length. They entered, and ascended by a staircase at the top of which was a trap-door with two more of these enormous padlocks, where two handsome young eunuchs awaited their approach. These were the only individuals wearing men's clothing who ever obtained the "open sesame," and are admitted within the sacred precincts of the harem. Here commenced the carpeting, of most splendid and laborious workmanship, with raised flowers of every hue embossed upon the finest quality of kerseymere. A table covered with every Arabian delicacy

[1] BURTON, I., p. 347: The favourite charger [of Oman blood, at Zanzibar] of the late Sayyid [*i.e.*, SAID BIN SULTAN] is a little bay with black points, standing about 14 hands 2 inches: its straight fetlocks are well fitted for stony ground, it wears the mane almost upon the withers, and the shoulder is well thrown back, barely leaving room for the saddle. The hindquarter, that weak point in the Arab, is firmly and strongly made, and the tail is thin, switch-like, carried nearly straight, as usual with the best blood, and remarkably high.

was laid out at a latticed window overlooking the sea of Oman, before which was placed three English-shaped chairs. Mrs. Mignan was requested to be seated on one, the Imaum took the second, and in unceremoniously glided "Oman's Queen," who seated herself on the vacant one. His mother sat at her feet, and our Hindoostanee ayah (nurse) in the same position, by her own mistress.

"I could not then," to use Mrs. Mignan's own words, "speak a word of Arabic, so that Hindoostanee was the medium of our conversation. All the other females, and a vast number of children of both sexes, stood gazing at me in wonderment from a little distance, as I was the first European lady who had visited their harem. They were richly apparelled, and in a variety of costumes, but none pretty; too many appeared to be corpulent, and those were beautifully fair. 'Son altesse' was *not* good looking; decidedly the plainest I could see. But who on such an occasion could do more than take a very hasty glance in search of personal beauty when there was so great a feast for the eyes in the magnificent ornaments of her person? Laks of rupees would not have purchased half that she wore. One emerald, forming the centre of a necklace composed of emeralds, rubies and diamonds, was larger than a pigeon's egg. Her feet and ankles were so completely obscured by massive jewelled ornaments that they needed no other covering. Her arms also, to above the elbow, where a tight sleeve met a tighter body, were encased within a richly embroidered gold kinkob, while a train of dark crimson satin, likewise embroidered in gold, reposed upon the ground. She wore a petticoat of purple satin, in the same style of rich embroidery, and, to complete the *tout ensemble*, a valuable Cachmere shawl crossed her shoulders and rested on her lap. Over her eyes (all the females present had it also) she wore a frightful thing which resembled a pair of broad-rimmed spectacles, but made of some kind of stiff cloth richly worked and spangled with gold. These extraordinary lunettes are always worn by the women whilst in the presence of the Imaum, and thrown off when they are alone. It partly

covers the nose, and is tied on behind the head like our own masks.

One of the rooms into which I was taken struck me much from its extremely rich appearance, having several handsome chandeliers and, alternately, windows of stained and pier glass from the ceiling to the floor, no wainscot being seen except in one corner of the apartment where stood a bed. The divan around the room was raised about three inches, covered with the finest Persian carpeting which closely resembled, both in texture and pattern, the stuff of which the Cachmere shawl is made. A double row of cushions stood there ; those next the wall being of the Indian kinkob whilst the front row were composed of white satin embroidered in gold, with fringes and tassels of the same."

(Vol. II., p. 234.) Although the disposition of his highness is mild and amiable he is not wanting in firmness should circumstances imperatively demand it.

(P. 235.) Syyud Saiad possessed the *suaviter in modo* in a superlative degree, and is a rigid observer of the forms of the Mohammedan religion : all his adherents speak of him with the affection of children to parent. He dispenses justice in person, and takes special care that the laws shall be impartially administered. When any deserving subject is in distressed circumstances the Sultan will lend him a sum of money without exacting any interest whatever. In short, he presents in every way such a contrast to all Asiatic rulers that he is decidedly the greatest " lion " in the east.

(P. 239.) Although Syyud Saiad, the present sultaun, has done all in his power to suppress slavery, a great traffic is still carried on between the eastern coast of Africa and Oman, and every family retains two or more slaves of both sexes. The consideration with which the slaves in this and other parts of Arabia are treated is quite proverbial, and speaks much in favour of the character of the Arabians, who are the kindest and most considerate of masters. Indeed, slaves are very often advanced to posts of great trust and responsibility ; and some of the most valuable ships trading between

this coast and India are commanded by slaves, who have always rendered a better account to their masters as regards their mercantile speculations, cargoes, freightage, etc., than many English commanders that I could name who have been employed by Arab shipowners. My residence in Arabia has convinced me that a slave may be perfectly happy; and I feel persuaded that his condition, when compared with most of the peasantry of Europe, is in every respect the more fortunate of the two.

(8) STOCQUELER. Visited Muscat 1831.

(P. 4.) He had heard of the French revolution in 1830, and was anxious to know if the king of England had consented to recognise Louis-Phillipe and whether the revolution had spread itself into neighbouring countries.

(P. 5.) He is a mild gentlemanly looking man of about 40 years of age—a just governor and a chivalric lover. The people of Muscat hold the Imaum in great esteem. They affirm that he is just in his dealings and decisions, liberal of reward, anxious for improvement and tolerant of the religion of other nations.

(P. 256.) The government of the Imaum is of the mildest character of which despotism is susceptible; and the people who acknowledge his sway appear to be exceedingly happy.

(9) ROBERTS. In charge of a mission sent by the Government of the United States of America to Muscat. Visited Muscat September, 1833.

(P. 358.) All religions within the sultan's dominions are not merely tolerated, but they are protected by his highness, and there is no obstacle whatever to prevent the Christians, the Jews, or the Gentiles, from preaching their peculiar doctrines or erecting temples.

(P. 360.) The sole object of our visit to Muscat was to effect a commercial treaty with his highness, Syed Syeed

bin Sultan, and to obtain a reduction of the duties and port charges heretofore paid on our commerce, so as to place it upon a footing with the most favoured nations. The sultan appointed an audience in the afternoon of the day subsequent to our arrival. I landed, in company with Captain Geisinger and Lieutenant-Commandant Sheilds, of the *Boxer*. We found the sultan, with his eldest son, the governor of Burha, and ten gentlemen, composing his divan or council, sitting in the veranda facing the harbour. The governor and the counsellors were sitting on chairs facing each other, and the sultan was seated about ten or twelve feet from them in a corner. He immediately arose on our entrance and walked to the edge of the raised floor, between the courtiers, and received us very graciously, shaking us by the hand. Here was to be seen no abasing crawling and couching, and " knocking head " like a parcel of slaves ; but all was manly and every one stood on his feet The usual congratulatory compliments and inquiries were made ; and coffee and sherbet were introduced. I was seated near to, and on the right hand of his highness, and we entered into a private conversation, through the interpreter, Captain Calfaun, relative to the object of the mission (after having presented my credentials). The sultan at once acceded to my wishes by admitting our commerce into his ports upon the same terms as his most favoured friends, the British, to wit : by paying a duty of five per cent. on the cargo landed, and free from every other charge whatever, either on imports or exports, or even the charge of pilotage. When the fifth article of the proposed treaty was read, which related to shipwrecked seamen, he at once objected to that part of it relating to a remuneration for expenses, which would be necessarily incurred in supporting and forwarding them to the United States, and said the article he wished so altered as to make it incumbent upon him to protect, maintain, and return them to their own country free of every charge. He remarked that it would be contrary to the usage of Arabs, and the rights of hospitality which have ever been practised among them ; and this clause was also inserted, at his request. The sultan is of mild and

peaceable demeanour, of unquestionable bravery, as was evinced during the Wahabee war, where he was severely wounded in endeavouring to save an English artilleryman. He is a strict lover of justice, possessing a humane disposition, and greatly beloved by his subjects. He possesses just and liberal views in regard to commerce, not only throwing no obstacles in the way to impede its advancement, but encouraging foreigners as well as his own subjects.

(10) HART. Captain, Royal Navy (BOMB. SEL., p. 274). Arrived at Zanzibar January 30th, 1834.

(P. 275.) His Highness, with his officers, received me at the steps of the veranda in the most courteous and kind manner, coming up to shake hands and, pointing out the way I was to go, followed me to a long room, at the head of which he placed me on his right. . . . After many enquiries after my health, and hopes that I had not suffered by the voyage, he commenced by saying how pleased he was to see an English ship, and when he heard her fire a gun he was delighted, as he was sure she must be a man-of-war. He always considers the English as his best friends, and was happy to see them at all times, and, whenever in his power, to show them every possible attention.

(P. 276.) The *Imogene*, in compliment to His Highness, had been dressed in colour since eight in the morning; and at the appointed time all the boats attended to escort His Highness on board, he coming off in the barge, which hoisted his red flag, the other boats attending, and forming in two lines. He was received with a royal salute, and the officers in full uniform, and was attended on board by two of his sons, the governor (who is his uncle), and several officers. From the quarter deck we went to the cabin, where they all took seats, and sat for some time. Refreshments were offered, but it being their great fast of Ramzan, none were accepted. His Highness began by thanking me for my great kindness and attention—that he could not sufficiently express all he

felt, but that it came from his " inside and from the bottom of his heart."

(P. 277.) The Imaum is said by his interpreter to be at the present period (February, 1834) forty-four years of age, but he appears to be more. He is a tall, stout, and noble-looking man, with a benevolent countenance, clear, intelligent, sharp-eyed, and remarkably pleasant and agreeable in conversation. He is greatly attached to the English, and everything that is English, and appeared to have a pride in telling me " all his saddles were made in England." He was wounded some years since when in a joint expedition with the English ; and appears to wish to be considered as an Englishman in everything. The English, he says, he looks upon as his brothers, and will willingly give them his country.

(11) RUSCHENBERGER. Surgeon to the Expedition of the United States of America round the world. Visited Muscat 1835.

On the same afternoon Mr. Roberts had an audience with the Sultan. " His Highness " received him in the divan, which fronts the harbour, in a most cordial and friendly manner, and evinced much sympathy in our misfortune and sufferings. Every sort of aid which could be devised was proffered and insisted upon ; not only by " His Highness," but also by his two sons ; by the Ouali, or Governor of Muscat, and by the whole divan or council, which was present ; to the members of which Mr. Roberts had been personally known on his former visit. The Sultan then pointed out, from his chair, a sloop of war, which he said, in case of the total loss of the *Peacock*, should carry her officers and crew to the United States ; and, in order that the business of the embassy might not be delayed, another sloop of war or frigate was offered, to carry the envoy wherever it were necessary, and, after the conclusion of his mission, to convey him to the United States. A house with every necessary appliance was ordered to be prepared for the accommodation of Mr. Roberts ; or the cabin of a frigate in the harbour, as

he might prefer it, in consequence of the very oppressive heat of the city, both of which were respectfully declined until the fate of the *Peacock* should be ascertained.

On the 28th " His Highness " visited Mr. Roberts at the house of Captain Calfaun, which was considered by the Arabs the highest honour the Sultan could confer on any individual. As another mark of " His Highness's " favour, the table of Mr. Roberts was supplied from the palace with the best the city offered. Though not in chronological order, I will state at this time another instance of the munificent kindness of the Arab prince. When the guns were thrown overboard a buoy was attached to each, with a view to recovering them ; but when we anchored in six fathoms water the guns were at least ten miles from us ; and our boats were not sufficient to weigh them very readily, particularly in the face of a swarm of pirates, from whom we could expect little forbearance, and therefore they were abandoned. The Sultan, however, had decided that we should not lose them. He had them weighed, and sent them to us at Bombay, where they were received, with the following letter, brought by a captain in the Navy, after we had obtained others from the stores of the Honourable East India Company.

" MUSCAT,"
" *November 6th*, 1835.

" From Syed Syeed bin Sultan,
" To Commodore E. P. Kennedy.

" SIR,

" My much esteemed friend—I hope the Almighty God will preserve you, and keep you in good health and prosperity. I send you this letter to inquire after your health, prosperity and so forth.

" The vessel which we sent to the spot where the United States' ship *Peacock* grounded has returned this day and brought eleven guns and ten broken spars. The anchors and chain cables, as soon as we can get them, we shall send. We have shipped, on board of the grab called the *Lord Castlereagh*, eleven guns to be delivered to you ; the freight has

been paid here by me ; please to receive them. We deem it unnecessary to send the spars as they are of no use.

" Written by me, His Gracious Highness's most loyal subject,

" SEID BIN CALFAUN.

" By order of His Highness

" SYED SYEED BIN SULTAN."

(12) NOSTIZ. Formerly Frau Dr. Helfer, who accompanied her husband on his journey in the East. Visited Muscat in 1836.

(Vol. II., p. 6.) The Imam of Muscat was spoken of as one of the most remarkable rulers in the East, an ideal of an Oriental prince, combining justice, bravery and courage with patriarchical simplicity, and he was said to be liberal and generous to Europeans.

No one on his extensive dominions was prosecuted on account of his religion ; he was very tolerant of other faiths, although, as the holy head of his sect, the Imam has to set an example to the people by strict observance of their religious usages. . . . Simple in his manners, he permitted every one free access to him ; even a beggar might approach him and sit down in his presence.

(P. 9.) [1] After a short ride we reached the palace, where our visit had been announced. A wooden staircase, rather dark and not over clean, led to the upper floor of the ancient building, the lower apartments of which were wide open. We passed through several empty rooms before we reached a spacious apartment in which there was quite an assemblage of women. There was a great variety in their age, appearance and costume, as there was also among the children with them ; I reckoned that altogether there were over a hundred persons ; they were the Imam's concubines and attendants of his legitimate wife and the princesses. On our entrance they all rose and ranged themselves on one side to allow us to pass. Our rapid passage through the room allowed me no time to

[1] Also published in MILES, II., p. 464.

observe them. At the further end a large door was opened by one of the women, which led into the interior of the harem, the apartment of the Imam's lawful wife. Here there were four ladies, his mother, wife, daughter, and one of his sisters. The former was in the dark, unadorned dress appropriate to a widow ; she had thrown aside her veil, and sat erect upon raised cushions a little apart from the other ladies, whom she appeared to rule.

The Imam's wife, on the contrary, glittered in all the usual Oriental splendour. Dressed in the most costly silks, richly embroidered in gold and silver, with ornaments in emeralds, pearls and rubies, she was seated upon bright coloured-cushions, interwoven with silver thread, spread upon handsome carpets. Her daughter, a girl of from twelve to fifteen, lay by her side, her delicate limbs only covered by a transparent crape-like material of reddish-purple colour, permitting one to admire the proportions of her slender form ; but her face, as well as those of the others, was concealed by a wire mask, like the stonebreaker's spectacles, with oval openings for the eyes, the black edges of which enhanced the effect of their dark colour. These masks, ornamented with jewels of every hue, seemed to be not only intended to conceal the features, but to be articles of the toilet considered to increase the beauty of the wearers, as the glittering gems formed an excellent foil to their black hair and dark complexions.

There was a large bronze, four-post bedstead in the room, with crimson velvet hangings, and the posts were specimens of artistic work. The Imam's wife said, pointing to it with evident pride, " It is a present from Queen Victoria, ruler of England, my dear sister." So the royal fellowship among sovereigns extends even to this remote corner of the world. The lady spoke further of the friendly relations between her husband and Her Britannic Majesty, and said that she had presented him with a beautiful fireship. The Queen-mother was hemming a pocket handkerchief, and seeing me looking at it she showed it to me, and asked if she was doing it properly ; she said that she had learnt to sew from European ladies, and was very fond of it ; this was the first and only

time that I ever saw an Asiatic lady employing herself in needlework. A eunuch came in before long and respectfully laid a letter at her feet; she hastily opened it, and told me it was from the Imam, who, being absent in the wars, had sent her an account of his achievements. It seemed to please her very much to have this opportunity of displaying her superior talents. Costly fruits and preserves were afterwards served for us on crystal plates. The ladies then all withdrew into an adjoining department. I thought this very strange, but was told that it was the custom in order that the visitor may eat as much as he likes. This is certainly a delicate trait of hospitality in countries where the stranger may travel all day through burning deserts, hungry and thirsty, and must eat prospectively. . . . I had observed that the ladies often regarded me with abashed looked, and after looking me in the face, cast down their eyes. On enquiry I learned that my uncovered face was as repulsive to them as the sight of a naked person would be to us. They begged to put me on a mask, and after an attendant had tried on a very ornamental one they all exclaimed, *Tahib, Tahib!* (beautiful, beautiful!).

. . . After many questions and reciprocal communications, in which the princesses showed more intelligence and cultivation than any Mussulman woman I had met with, or even the Asiatic Christians, I took leave of them, giving them back the beautiful mask with regret, for I should have liked to have retained it as a keepsake."

(13) WELLSTED, Lieutenant, Indian Navy. Arrived at Muscat November 21st, 1835.

(Vol. I., p. 4.) Prepared as I was by my previous knowledge of Sayyid Said's characteristic liberality to meet with no favourable exception to these (objects of proposed journey), I was surprised out of all former conception by the eagerness he displayed to further my views. "It is occasions like these," he said, "which afford me real pleasure, since they enable me, by meeting the wishes of your government, to

evince the strength of my attachment to them"; and he added, in a tone the sincerity of which there was no mistaking, "these are not the words of the tongue, but of the heart."

(P. 5.) From His Highness this morning I received a fine Nejd horse for my journey, a brace of greyhounds, and a gold-mounted sword, together with an intimation that so long as I remained in Oman the best the country afforded should be mine; that all expenses of camels, guides, etc., would be defrayed by him, and that letters were being prepared, under his own directions, to the chiefs of the different districts through which I had to pass, requiring them to receive me with all possible attention. Placing on one side every consideration which had actuated this prince in furthering what he supposed the views of my government to serve me, there was, on this occasion, in the style and mode in which he exhibited it, a spirit in full accordance with the truly noble character which he bears.

Sayyid Said is fifty-two years of age, and has reigned twenty-seven years. He possesses a tall and commanding figure, a mild yet striking countenance; and an address and manner courtly, affable and dignified. In his personal habits the Imam has preserved the simplicity of his Bedowin origin; he is frugal almost to abstemiousness; he never wears jewels; his dress, excepting in the fineness of the materials, is not superior to that of the principal inhabitants; and he is attended, on all occasions, without pomp or ostentation. It is noticed by the Arabs, as an instance of the warmth of his affections, that he daily visits his mother, who is still alive, and pays, in all matters, implicit obedience to her wishes. In his intercourse with Europeans he has ever displayed the warmest attention and kindness; probably, if any native prince can with truth be called a friend of the English, it is the Imam of Muscat; and even on our side, the political connection with him appears to have in it more sincerity than is generally supposed to exist.

The government of this prince is principally marked by the absence of all oppressive imposts, all arbitrary punish-

ments, by his affording marked attention to the merchants of any nation who come to reside at Muskat, and by the general toleration which is extended to all persuasions: while, on the other hand, his probity, the impartiality and leniency of his punishments, together with the strict regard he pays to the general welfare of his subjects, have rendered him as much respected and admired by the town Arabs as his liberality and personal courage have endeared him to the Bedowins. These splendid qualities have obtained for him throughout the East the designation of the Second Omar.

(P. 48.) During my stay here (Sur) I received the following friendly and characteristic epistle from His Highness the Imam:

"In the name of God, most merciful, from Sayyid the Sooltan to his Excellency, the esteemed, respected, beloved, the perfect Captain Wellsted, from the eastern government, peace be with you from the Most High God; and, after that your letter reached us, which was a proof of your love in remembering us, we greatly rejoiced at your arriving at Sur, and your departure for Jailan, which is as we directed it, and from thence to Semmed, and which was gratifying to you, and, therefore, pleasing to us; and, furthermore, anything which you require from us, whether little or much, it is only for you to request it, and it is on our part to grant it. Peace be to you, and farewell.

"True

"SAYYID SOOLTAN."

(P. 179.) Hitherto too little has been known in Europe respecting this enlightened Prince. His recent appropriate present to our Sailor King of a large vessel of war completely equipped, and his desire to form a more intimate alliance with Great Britain, has brought him into some political notice, while his munificent encouragement of science and the arts has attracted the attention of an influential learned society,[1] which lately nominated him one of its honorary members.

[1] Royal Asiatic Society.

These occurrences are but trifling, and I must solicit some indulgence for their insertion. Indeed, were I to record every act of consideration and kindness which we received from the Prince during our stay in Oman there are few of the pages of this journal in which they might not be made to appear. To say that they were accepted with different and higher feelings than those with which we are usually disposed to view the favours of the great, expresses faintly my sense and recollection of them ; but that they should have awakened a feeling of this nature may convey an idea to others of the mode and spirit in which they were bestowed.

(P. 387.) Muskat is a great mart for slaves : nearly all those required for the supply of the shores of the Persian Gulf, Baghdad and Basrah are purchased here. The Imams formerly engaged in this traffic, and realised thereby an annual revenue of sixty thousand dollars, or about thirteen thousand pounds ; but Sayyid Said, in order to gratify our Government, who were then earnest in their endeavours to suppress the trade, with unprecedented liberality gratuitously abandoned the whole. For this he has received no equivalent. Is this generous ? Is it just ? To Spain, a Christian Government, we gave two hundred thousand pounds for a similar abandonment, and remitted some millions of their debt ; yet to a Mohammedan prince, professing a faith which openly sanctions, if it does not actually enjoin, slavery, we have given—our acknowledgments ! At least, I hope we have, though I have never heard of any. *Pro pudor !* Let not England, who has hitherto stood forward in a cause which may be said to have elevated beyond all others the age in which we live, and to have stamped it with a die inscriptive of the purest practical essence of Christianity, be outrivalled in generosity by the ruler of a remote part of Arabia !

(14) KRAPF. German Missionary. Arrived at Zanzibar January 7th, 1844.

(P. 123.) The Sultan bade us be seated, and I described

to him in Arabic, his native language, my Abessinian adventures, and plans for converting the Gallas. He listened with attention and promised every assistance, at the same time pointing out the dangers to which I might be exposed. Although advanced in years he looked very well, and was most friendly and communicative.

(P. 127.) I took with me a letter of recommendation from Sultan Said-Said addressed to the governors of the coast, and couched in the following terms: "This comes from Said-Said Sultan; greetings all our subjects, friends and governors. This letter is written on behalf of Dr. Krapf, the German, a good man who wishes to convert the world to God. Behave well to him, and be everywhere serviceable to him."

(P. 538.) How little could I suppose when beginning my journey that in the distant south of Africa an Arabian prince was preparing for me a way to the heathen! Yet, so it was; for without the conquest of Mombaz by a prince as well inclined as the Imam of Muscat to Europeans, and especially to the English, the establishment of a missionary station in the Wanika-land could never have been effected.

(15) GUILLAIN, Captain, French Navy. Visited Zanzibar 1846.

(Vol. II., p. 9.) A peine avions-nous débarqué, que le Sultan parut sur le seuil du Palais (Mtoni), suivi de plusieurs de ses fils et de ses principaux officiers. A notre approche, il déscendit les quelques degrés qui séparent la porte du sol, et nous fit un accueil tout à la fois cordial et digne: il est rare de réunir à un si haut degré que le sultan Said la majesté de la taille, la noblesse de la physionomie et la grâce parfaite du geste.

(P. 220.) Ce n'était pas sans intérêt que je contemplais cette belle figure de vieillard où se peignent à la fois la noblesse de la race et les ravages causés par les passions ou les agitations de la vie politique. Sa taille est élevée et majestueuse,

et l'on devine aisément que sa constitution a dû être robuste ; ses traits sont beaux ; sa physionomie intelligente respire le calme et ne trahit que bien rarement les émotions qu'il veut cacher. Il fut, sans doute, dans sa jeunesse, vif et emporté ; mais il a appris de bonne heure l'art de dissimuler ses impressions et sa pensée ; seulement, s'il est blessé ou contredit fortement, une rougeur fugitive court sur son visage impassible sans que l'harmonie des traits et l'immobilité des muscules en soit dérangées. J'ai dit qu'il possède à un grand degré marqué la noblesse et la dignité du geste, et qu'il a pour les étrangers une grande affabilité ; devant eux, il met une certaine coquetterie dans ses manières, et l'on voit qu'il attache du prix à leur approbation ou à leur estime.

(16) SHEPHERD. Visited Muscat 1856.

(P. 46.) The present Imaum is an exception to the general rule of despotic tyrants, being a venerable old man and much beloved by his subjects.

(P. 51.) You are met by a benign-looking old gentleman, with silvery-grey beard, who gives you a John Bull grasp of the hand ; an example that is followed by three handsome middle-aged men, his sons, and two youths, his grandsons.

(P. 52.) His fine manly open face, with broad brow, large grey eyes, tight close mouth, hedged round with silvery moustache and beard, which terminates in a sharp point about six inches below the chin. In all this there is so much of firmness, honesty of purpose, kind feeling and decision of character, combined with his genuine welcome and warm grasp, that your esteem is won at once. Tall, about six feet, broad in proportion, with a firm elastic step, he moves upright as a dart, and safe for the mellowness of his face, and the greyness of his beard, he might pass as one in manhood's prime.

(P. 54.) One of the noblest-looking men I have seen in the East. There is not a feature on his face that would

indicate the possibility of his being guilty of a tithe of the deeds that report lays at his door, excepting perhaps the firm tight mouth and large grey eyes; but there is much that is mild and kind, gentle and loving, that you endeavour to excuse and shield him under the plea of necessity.

(17) GOBINEAU. French Diplomatist and Writer. Visited Muscat in 1856, the year of Seyyid Said's death.

(P. 88.) Seyd Sayd, ou le Seigneur Sayd, était vêtu avec une extrême simplicité et absolument comme tous les autres habitants de Mascate et des côtes du golfe Persique. Il portait une robe de coton et un manteau noir de laine très fine et il avait sur la tête un turban d'étoffe en soie tramée de fil à petites raies blanches, bleues et rouges. Ce turban est fort répandu dans toute l'Asie centrale, et mêmes les Afghans le choisissent de préférence. Seyd Sayd tenait à la main un long bâton sur lequel il s'appuyait en marchant avec beaucoup de noblesse et dignité. Il paraissait vieux et sa barbe était très blanche. Il avait les yeux noirs et doux, l'expression du visage très calme et un sourire particulièrement fin et spirituel. Dans toute sa personne respirait cette sorte d'équilibre entre les sentiments divers qui, par tous les pays, est le cachet et le privilège de l'homme de bonne compagnie. L'existence de Seyd Sayd indique non pas un grand homme, mais un homme de belles et rares facultés.

(P. 102.) L'Imam ayant fait annoncer au ministre qu'il allait lui rendre sa visite, nous restâmes chez nous et nous vîmes bientôt de loin Seyd Sayd sortir de sa maison. Il était à pied, appuyé sur son bâton, suivi, pour toute escorte, de ses sept fils et de son vizir. C'était véritablement Melchisédech. Nous nous retrouvâmes comme de vieux amis . . . un prince remarquable dans l'espèce des petits souverains, condamnés par leur faibles ressources à n'être d'ordinaire que des gouvernants peu aperçus. Lui, en prenant une voie toute nouvelle, réussit à se faire estimer de très puissants voisins. Quand l'Imam nous quitta les adieux furent tendres.

(18) RUETE. Daughter of SAID BIN SULTAN.

(Vol. I., p. 5.) Being one of his younger children I only remember my father with his venerable, snow-white beard. He was above middle height, his features had a very fascinating and engaging expression, and his whole appearance commanded respect. In spite of his warlike propensities and his delight in conquest, he was a model father and sovereign. Justice he valued as the highest of all things, and in this respect he knew no difference of person, not even between one of his own sons and the lowest slave. He humbled himself before God; nor was he self-conceited and proud like so many high-born people. It happened, and not rarely either, that he would ride over by himself to the wedding of a simple slave who had gained his regard by many years of loyal service, to offer his congratulations to the young couple in person.

(P. 107.) He had not only been the most loving and devoted head of his own family, but also a most conscientious king, and a true father to his people. The general mourning on his death proved how sincerely he had been loved by all. Black flags hung from every house, and even the smallest hut fastened up a piece of black stuff.

APPENDIX B

THE IMAMATE IN OMAN

SAID BIN SULTAN has been habitually referred to under three titles—Sultan,[1] Imam and Seyyid. To the latter of these alone had he any just claim.[2] The question of his right to the title Imam is not so simple.

From the foundation of the kingdom for many centuries his forefathers and predecessors had been Imams,[3] had used the title, and had been justified in so doing. SAID, himself, was not an Imam and never pretended to be one. The representatives of foreign powers with whom he came into contact, however, had been accustomed to regard the rulers of Oman as being *ipso facto* Imams and continued to style him as such. We find him therefore frequently referred to as Imam of Muscat or Imam of Oman.[4] It is therefore proper to raise three issues: what the name Imam connotes; till what period the rulers of Oman were Imams; and why they ceased to be so.

By reference to the Arabic root[5] we find that the word imports the sense of aiming or striving after. And Imam is therefore a pattern or example set up for the imitation of others. It is not necessarily a personal title; so, for instance,

[1] MANSUR (p. 1) says: "I have always styled the Sovereign of Muscat, Sultan, as his subjects universally give him that title." Cf. PALGRAVE, II. p. 285.

[2] Cf. BADGER, pp. 377, 379; HANDBOOK, p. 37; INGRAMS, p. 73; MASSIGNON, p. 59; MANSUR, p. 49.

[3] A full list of the Imams from 751 to 1868 A.D. is given by BADGER, p. cxxv.

[4] RUSCHENBERGER (I., p. 137) says that soon after the accession of SAID the people were desirous of creating him Imam, but that he was too wise to acceed to the wishes of his subjects because it would have obliged him, according to the usage of the country, to lead a life of piety and poverty, without the power of openly enjoying his wealth.

[5] Cf. BADGER, pp. 8, 373; HUART, I., p. 189.

it is used in the Koran to indicate the Scripture. But it is true that it is more commonly used to indicate a person such as a religious teacher.[1] In fact, of course, in historical times it refers to the functionary who leads the prayers in the Mosque. Mohammed himself, whether he ever assumed the title or not, has been referred to as such simply because he performed these functions and his successors in the Khalifate certainly received the title. It is plain therefore that in its origin, at any rate, the word has a purely religious connotation.[2]

In Oman, however, this is not entirely the case, and the reasons for its peculiar use demand some slight historical treatment. After the death of Mohammed the Muslim world, as is well known, split into two main factions, the Sunnis and the Shiahs. Of these the former recognised four successors to Mohammed—Abu Bekr, Omar, Othman, Ali; the latter, all except Ali. In 657 A.D. a number of Ali's followers revolted from him and became Khawarij or heretics.[3] From this fact they acquired their distinctive name of Kharijites. In the space of a year their numbers had increased to 400 and it is related that Ali, fearing further accessions, set upon them and practically blotted them out. It is said that only nine escaped; of these nine, two went to Oman and there established their sectarian doctrines. Not long afterwards the character of this peculiar religion was finally recast by one Abdullah bin Ibadh, who probably came from Baghdad. Thus was established that Ibadiyah doctrine which became the national religion.[4]

The Ibadhis differ from the Sunnis and the Shiahs in that they recognise only Abu Bekr and Omar, as also in the fact that with them the office of Imam is elective. This latter doctrine presents two peculiar features which became of some importance in later history. In the first place, as there

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. 373.

[2] Cf. BADGER, p. 374. PALGRAVE, in a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society on February 22nd, 1864 (cf. *Proceedings*, 1863–64, p. 69) made the erroneous statement that the name of Imam was given by the Portuguese in the time of Albuquerque.

[3] Cf. BADGER, p. 375; REP., 1880–81, p. 35.

[4] Cf. REP., 1880–81, p. 35; ROSS, p. 80.

was no question of divine sanction about the appointment of an Imam, there could be no objection to those who had appointed him also disposing him. Even in Oman, of course, the prime qualification for the Imamate was piety and, failing this—and for other transgressions also—Imams could be, and were, disposed. In the second place there was no absolute necessity for an Imam at all; the religion would not fail without one. In effect, however, it would have been highly inconvenient that this should have happened, for the greatest peculiarity of all in Oman was that the Imams represented not only spiritual but temporal power.

This was perhaps the result of the political situation. The first Ibadhiyah Imam of Oman was Julanda bin Masad in 751 A.D.[1] He had to strive against persistent attempts on the part of the orthodox party to destroy his fellow schismatics and ultimately fell in battle. His followers, however, maintained their independence and continued to appoint Imams, who were not less occupied in resisting religious invasions than in performing their own religious functions.[2] It was probably for this reason that there sprang up in Oman the custom of leaving the spiritual and temporal power in the hands of one man.

It must not be supposed that this led to the establishment of a dynasty. So far was this from being the case that on the death of each Imam his successor was always elected, not perhaps popularly, but by means of a Council of Chiefs, each acting as representative of his own tribe. This Council assembled under the presidency of one of the chiefs who was pre-eminent in character or ability, usually in the principal town of the country. There was no restriction concerning which tribes were entitled to be represented and probably much was left for the tribes themselves to decide. Once the election was made the successful candidate was proclaimed Imam by the President of the Council before the

[1] The third Imam was el Warith bin Kaab (801–807). The story of his becoming Imam is told by REINHARDT, p. 382. MILES (p. 77) states that in 996 there were sixteen different Imams. A full list of the Imams from 751 till 1779 A.D. is given by BADGER, p. cxxv., and HUART, II., p. 281.

[2] Cf. BADGER, pp. xiii., 7, 376; MILES, p. 61.

people as a whole, who probably rendered him homage by approbation.[1]

This, however, is likely rather to have been the theory of the matter than the invariable practice, for we find that there was, as we should have expected, a constant tendency for the office to fall into the hands of a family. Oman had been originally peopled from the Yemen and the primary tendency was for the Imamate to be monopolised by the Yemenite tribe el-Azd.[2] In the course of time there seems to have been a general levelling up amongst the tribes and families, and until the accession of the Yaaribah it was undoubtedly the common practice to choose the best candidate for the office irrespective of his family. The occasion of the breaking of this rule was the expulsion of the Portuguese. It was felt that in order that Oman should maintain its independence it was necessary to have a stable dynasty in power. As will be realised by all who are acquainted with constitutional history the initial change was not a violent one. The formality of election was not abolished, but at the election itself there was a marked preference in favour of a member of the ruling family, and a less strong preference for some son—not necessarily the eldest—of the last Imam. This system seems to have broken down somewhat in face of the Wahhabis invasions. The old dynasty was not able to maintain itself and the accession of Ahmed bin Said, of the family of the Al bu Said, marks a return to the former system of free election from whatever source.[3] It marks also, however, the death-blow of that unrestricted election, for after Ahmed the Imamate was once more confined to a family and there was imported in addition a trace—though the very faintest suspicion—of the doctrine of primogeniture.[4] From this innovation sprang a peculiar, but most important result.

As it gradually came to be established with increasing

[1] Cf. BADGER, pp. 31, 382.
[2] BENT, p. 49; LILIENSTERN, p. 209; ROSS, p. 3.
[3] Cf. BADGER, p. lxcvii.; INGRAMS, p. 54.
[4] LYNE (p. 142) traces this doctrine back to 1624, but history does not support his view.

certainty that the eldest son should succeed to the Imamate it also came to be accepted *pari passu* that provision should be made for the other sons. Accordingly it was a custom, at first tentative and later fixed, to confer upon them specific towns as their appanage, and to give them the title of Seyyid.[1] Once more a comparison with other constitutional growths will make clear what happened in Oman. At first the Imam might make this provision; in the end, he must. The Seyyids were supposed to render homage for their towns and to be under the control of the Imam. This, of course, was a question of fact rather than of theory; given a strong Imam such was probably the case, given a weak one the Seyyids probably asserted their independence equally.

The last of the old line of Imams was Said bin Ahmed,[2] and it is possible that he provided in his own person the chief reason why the office was discontinued. It can easily be traced, however, that there was a growing feeling in the country that the combination of spiritual and temporal powers in the hands of one man was of no great advantage, and this for a number of good reasons. In the days when Oman was not so much a nation as a congeries of tribes who moved about from place to place and were not bound down to any one locality, a vague mastership with wide but undefined powers was perhaps not unbeneficial; it combined the advantages of providing a rallying ground in periods of necessity while interfering as little as possible at other times. Spiritual powers were not in issue. As has already been explained religion did not depend upon the Imam.

By the close of the eighteenth century, however, the whole balance was altered. The tribes had acquired a common bond in the fact that they were mostly engaged in commerce, and it was found by experience that an Imam who might even be devoted enough to die for his belief in fighting against religious invaders, and who was certainly restricted

[1] Cf. BADGER, p. li. Cf. p. 8, note 1 (this book).

[2] The chiefs and the people of Oman had wished to confer the Imamate on Ahmed's eldest and most intelligent son, Hilal (instead of Said), but they were unable to do so because he was blind. Cf. BADGER, p. 188; HUART, II., p. 272.

by the limitations of his appointment from taking too large a share in the commercial development of the regions over which he held power, was not the most advantageous type of ruler.[1] He was either too worldly for the religious-minded or too spiritual for the worldly-minded.

The effect of this was increased by the personal weakness of Said bin Ahmed and by the temporal regency of his son Hamed. It does not matter whether Hamed was an opportunist who seized such power as he could gain, as some writers represent; or whether he was a strong man who bolstered up his father's incompetence at considerable self-sacrifice, as is the account of others. What is of importance is that it was now shown for the first time that there could be a split between the temporal and the spiritual powers, and that such a split so far from being a loss to the country was an actual gain. Men may have thought so before; now they knew it. And those who realised it best were the men who had to succeed Said, his brother Sultan bin Ahmed and his nephew, SAID BIN SULTAN.

Said bin Ahmed died about 1803,[2] but neither during his life nor at his death did Sultan or his son make any attempt to acquire the Imamate. As Guillain puts it: "Sultan had all the powers of the Imamate without being clothed with dignity, and even after the death of the holder he seemed to disdain to have it conferred upon him, either because election to the rank of Imam entailed certain restrictions regarding the conduct of the dignitary to which he was unwilling to submit, or because he appreciated all the vanity of a title which had not been necessary to him heretofore for the exercise of sovereign authority in all its plenitude."[3]

It may be added that this period saw also a widespread revival of Sunni and Wahhabi doctrines in Oman.[4] As we have already seen these two sects not only regarded an Imam as having no temporal powers, but also dissented from the

[1] Cf. BENT, p. 53.
[2] Cf. BADGER, pp. lxxx., 380; GUILLAIN, I., p. 560, gives 1802–3; REP., 1887–88 gives 1803.
[3] Cf. GUILLAIN, I., p. 560; BADGER, p. lvi.
[4] Cf. REP., 1880–81, p. 35.

idea that an Imam was elective. With them the only people entitled to be Imams were descendants of the four prophets who succeeded Mohammed. It may therefore be suggested that although SAID, like his father, had no desire for the title, he might have found considerable difficulty in obtaining it had he wished to. However this may be, it is certain that, in whatever way we look at the facts, SAID is not entitled to be regarded as an Imam. To the spiritual power he had no claims, and was never elected. The temporal power he did indeed hold, but the title of Imam can only be applied to him as holder of such power; if the view obtains that by an automatic process it was transferred to the head of the state, whether spiritual, temporal, or both. This latter supposition, however, is completely untenable, as a glance at subsequent history will show.

The situation in Said bin Ahmed's reign had reconciled the nation to a purely temporal leader. Hamed, of course, predeceased his father, but that had very little effect, for his position was practically usurped by Sultan. There is no doubt that the latter might have been Imam had he wished. There is no lack of support for the view that Imams could be, and were, deposed. In fact an attempt was made in 1785 to replace Said by his brother Kais, but the move was purely a political one; and, lacking both military and religious support, Kais was unable to maintain his position.[1] Sultan, on the other hand, had no wish for the office, and Said, therefore, being already possessed of one great advantage in his position at Rostak, was deprived of his office only by death.

He had no immediate successor. In the middle of the nineteenth century Hamud bin Azzan, who was paramount chief in the neighbourhood of Sohar, fell under the influence of Said bin Khalfan, Governor of Rostak—better known as el Khalelee. Under his tutelage he became an extreme ascetic, and, giving up all worldly pursuits, handed over Sohar to his son, Seif bin Hamud. A project was formed to elect Hamud Imam. There is no doubt that his later piety

[1] Cf. MILES, p. 282.

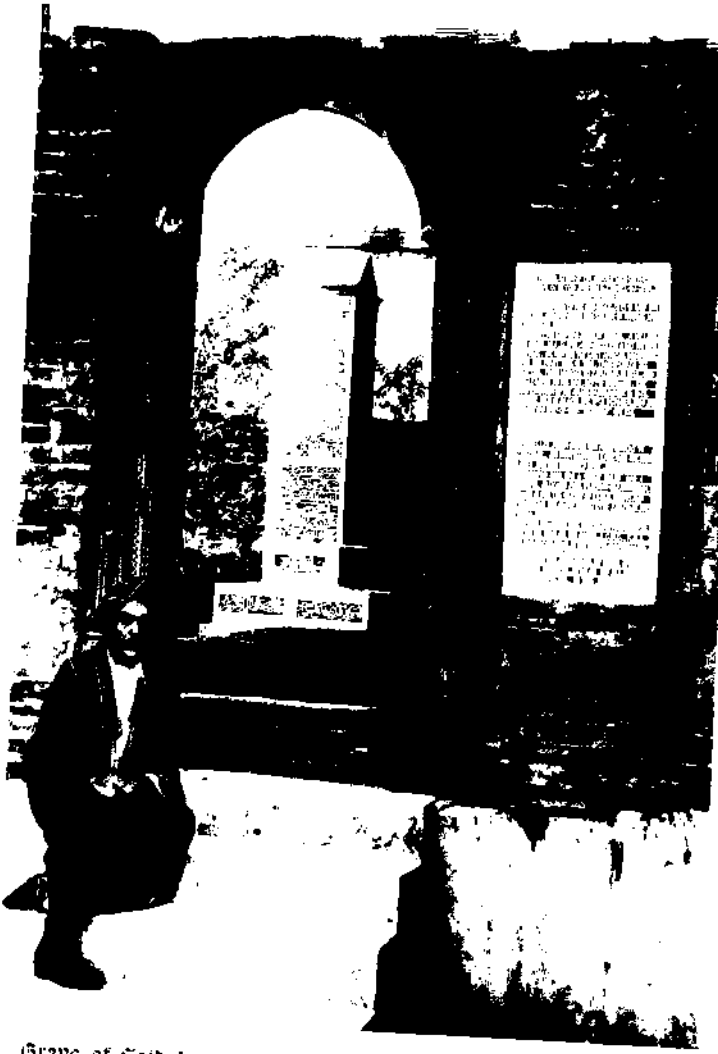
formed his chief qualification for the office, but there is also a suspicion that an attempt was being made to restore the old state of affairs and raise once more in Oman a spiritual leader with double function. Hopes such as these were doomed to disappointment, for, after toying with the idea for a while, Hamud eventually rejected the proffered dignity.[1]

A later attempt to revive the office was made in October, 1868. At this period the Wahhabis were once more proving particularly troublesome. They found their match, however, in el Khalelee, under whose influence it was that Azzan bin Kais drove them out of Oman and established himself at Muscat. The prestige afforded by this deed, no less than the absence of the Wahhabis, induced the priesthood to proclaim him Imam. There are, however, two considerations which render this incident less important than it appears. In the first place it is quite isolated. Azzan bin Kais had no immediate successors, as he had had no immediate predecessors. In the second place he was never elected Imam. Proclamation by the priesthood points to a partisan intrigue [2] rather than to a national movement.

It was not, in fact, until quite recent times that the office has been really revived. Lately the pure Ibadiyah sect, suspecting the ruler of Muscat for his relations with the English, has elected as Imam one Salim bin Rashid, a Ghafiri of the el Khalelee persuasion.[3]

A consideration of these facts leaves no room for doubt. The word " Imam " during the nineteenth century retained the religious flavour which it had always had. SAID was no counterpart of the mediæval " Prince-Archbishops " of Western Europe. Having no ambitions for the Imamate he confined his pretensions to the civil title of " Seyyid." [4] But it is especially noteworthy that, though he could not

[1] Cf. BADGER, pp. lxxxix., 361 ; REP., 1883–84, p. 33.
[2] Cf. REP., 1882–83, pp. 24 and 28 ; OPPENHEIM, II., pp. 242 and 360.
[3] Cf. MASSIGNON, p. 59 ; ECCLES, p. 23 ; HANDBOOK, pp. 37 and 246.
[4] GUILLAIN (II., p. 105) states that SAID while residing at Zanzibar made use of the title of Imam following a gift to the Imam of the mosque there. HARDINGE (p. 86) seems to be mistaken when saying that Barghash bin Said was still styled " Imam " in Zanzibar and that this title ceased to be applied to him after his visit to England in 1873.



Grave of Said bin Sultan at Zanzibar, with Memorial Tablet erected in 1923

Facing p. 181

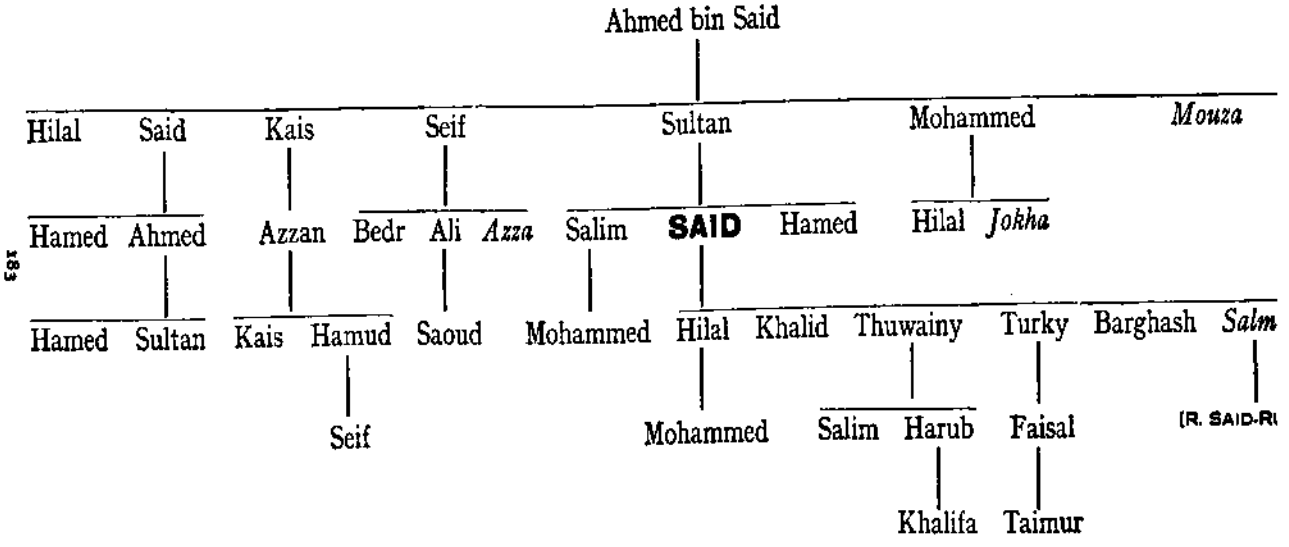
claim to be Imam,[1] nor wished to do so, yet in practically all official documents, in treaties and diplomatic reports, he is honoured with that nomenclature which appears even upon his tombstone at Zanzibar, erected in 1925 by his great-grandson the Sultan Khalifa bin Harub, in an inscription which runs:

"IN MEMORY OF HIS HIGHNESS SEYYID SAID BIN SULTAN, IMAM OF OMAN AND SULTAN OF MUSCAT AND ZANZIBAR."

[1] Cf. TREATIES, p. 188.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF MEMBERS OF THE AL BU SAID DYNASTY

Mentioned in this Biography *



* Italics denote names of women.
For references from which this table is formed see over.

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G.T. = Genealogical Table.
M. = Map.