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Johnston and Kenneth Darlaston Yearsley**

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Author: Maurice Andrew Brackenreed Johnston
Author: Kenneth Darlaston Yearsley

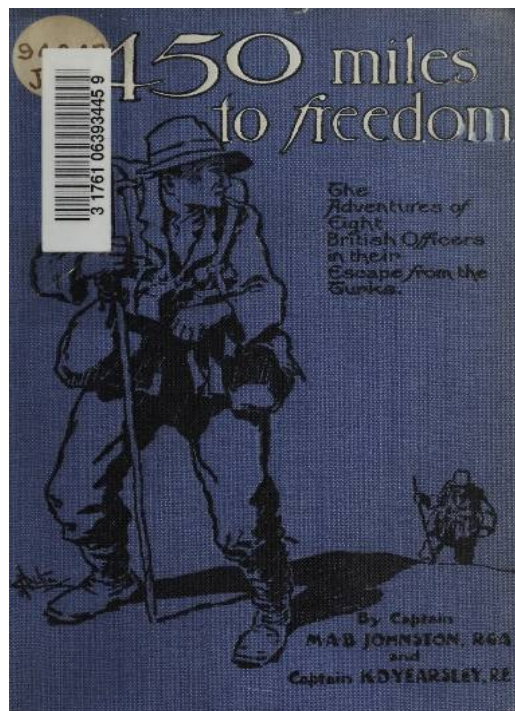
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FOUR-FIFTY MILES TO FREEDOM ***

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Four-Fifty Miles to Freedom



*From a photo taken at Famagusta, Cyprus, by Lieut. E. F. McAlpine, H.L.I.
(attached Royal Scots).*

THE SUCCESSFUL ESCAPE PARTY, WITH SOME CAPTURED TROPHIES.

**Left to right—standing: Captains J. H. HARRIS, F. R. ELLIS, A. B. HAIG, Commander A. D. COCHRANE, D.S.O., R.N., Captains V. S. CLARK
and M. A. B. JOHNSTON.
Seated: Captains R. A. P. GRANT, M.C., and K. D. YEARSLEY.**

Four-Fifty Miles to Freedom

BY
CAPTAIN M. A. B. JOHNSTON, R.G.A.
AND
CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY, R.E.

William Blackwood and Sons
Edinburgh and London
1919

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*TO THE
REVEREND **HAROLD SPOONER, C.F.**,
FELLOW-PRISONER OF WAR
IN TURKEY.*

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Four-Fifty Miles to Freedom.

[1]

PRISONER OF WAR.

When you've halted after marching till you feel you do not care
 What may happen, for you can't march any more,
 And the order comes to "Fall in" and to march you know not where,
 Then thank God you're not a prisoner of war.

When you're fighting in the trenches ankle-deep in mud and slush,
 With the north wind cutting through you keen and raw,
 While the second hand ticks slowly till it's time to make the rush,
 Then thank God you're not a prisoner of war.

[2]

When the order's "Up and at 'em" and the blood beats through your head,
 When the dead are falling round you by the score,
 And when all you think and all you feel and all you see is red,
 Then thank God you're not a prisoner of war.

When you're fighting in the desert where the heat waves never stop,
 And you've never known what thirst has been before,
 Though you'd sell your soul for water and you know there's not a drop,
 Then thank God you're not a prisoner of war.

We've been handed down a birthright which the bards of ages sing,
 From the days of Agincourt and long before,
 That a Briton owns no master save his God and save his king,
 But you find a third when prisoner of war.

It's a feeling right inside you, and it never lets you go,
 That you haven't been allowed to pay your score:
 You may still be hale and hearty, but you're missing all the show.
 What offers for the job? Prisoner of war.

M. A. B. J.
Written in KASTAMONI,
 1916.

CHAPTER I.

[3]

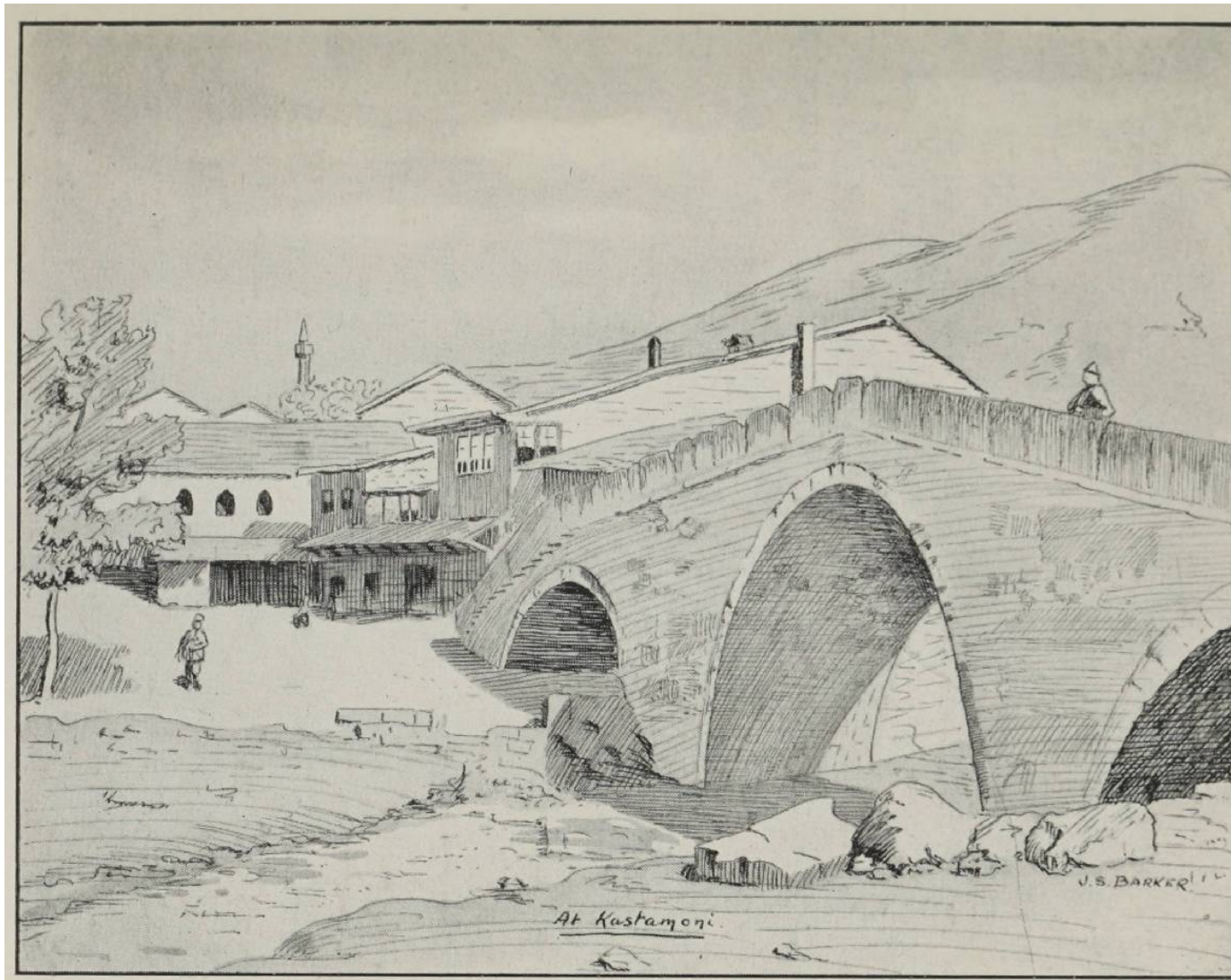
KASTAMONI AND CHANGRI.

"Il n'y a pas trois officiers." Such was the memorable epigram by which Sherif Bey, Turkish Captain of the Prisoners-of-War Guard at Kästamöni, and a man regardless of detail, announced to us that four officers, whose escape has been described in 'Blackwood's Magazine,'^[1] had got safely away from the camp. Those of us who knew that the attempt was being made were anxiously waiting for news. To others it came as a great surprise. Captain^[2] Keeling, in his story mentioned above, does not, for obvious reasons, name any one who helped them. Now it does not matter.

Officers sang loudly and long to prevent the nearest sentry from hearing the noise of rusty nails being pulled out of a door not many feet away from him, though hidden from view. More metaphorical dust was thrown in this wretched man's eyes and ears by the incorrigible James, who during these critical moments described to him, in very inadequate Turkish, but with a sense of humour equal to any occasion, the working parts of a petrol motor-engine. Another helper was an orderly, Gunner Prosser, R.F.A., a remarkable man with a passion for wandering about in the dark. The thought of spending a quiet night sleeping in his prisoners' quarters was repellent to him. As far as we could make out, he never missed a night's prowling. A fez, a false beard, and a civilian overcoat were the only "props" he used. This was undoubtedly the man to help Keeling's party out of the town, for the by-streets were better known to Prosser in the dark than they were to other prisoners by daylight. Accordingly, he led the four officers out of Kästamoni. Some one, however, must have seen and suspected them, for less than three-quarters of an hour after their start the alarm was given. Shots were fired and the camp suddenly bristled with sentries. Through this cordon Prosser had to get back to his quarters. A Turkish sergeant, into whom he ran full tilt, was knocked over backwards. Followed by revolver shots from the angry *chaouse*, Prosser darted up one side street, doubled on his tracks by another, and by his own private entrance reached his quarters in safety. Here he disposed of his beard and fez, shaved off his moustache in the dark,

[4]

and got into bed. When a few minutes later Captain Sherif Bey came round to feel the hearts of all the orderlies, Prosser could hardly be roused from an innocent sleep, and his steady heart-beats allayed all suspicion as to the part he had played.



From a sketch by Major F. S. Barker, R.E.
AN OLD BRIDGE AT KASTAMONI.

The effect of the escape of these four officers on our camp was considerable. We were confined to our houses without any exercise for ten days; sentries were more than trebled on the principle of locking the stable door. This, however, did not affect Prosser, who took his nightly walks as usual. Our commandant, Colonel Fettah Bey, was dismissed in disgrace and replaced by a Sami Bey, whose rank corresponded with that of a brigadier-general. Now came rumours of the closing down of the camp at Kastamoni and a move to Changri (pronounced Chüngri)—a mere village about eighty miles due south of us. [5]

Keeling's party escaped on August 8, 1917. Each day that followed, Sherif Bey brought official news of their capture in different parts of Asia Minor. One was reminded of Mark Twain's stolen white elephant. The marching powers of the four officers must have been phenomenal: sometimes they covered hundreds of miles in a few hours. Confined to our houses, we amused ourselves taking bets with the Turkish sentries, who were convinced that the fugitives would be brought back to Kastamoni within a week. In their opinion those who had escaped were madmen. What could be more delightful than the life they were running away from,—one could sit in a chair all day quietly smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, far away from the detested war—assuredly they were quite mad! Now it was unwise to bet, because when we lost we paid up, and when the Turks lost they did not feel in any way bound to do so. Our first commandant, Colonel Tewfik Bey, betted heavily on the war ending before Christmas 1916. He went on the doubling system. On losing his bet he deferred payment and doubled his bet for a later date, till by the time he lost his job as commandant he had mortgaged most of Turkey. [6]

One half of the prisoners at Kastamoni moved to Changri on September 27, 1917, the other half about ten days later. Three weeks before the departure of the first party we were told to be ready to move in a few days' time. Preparations were made, rooms dismantled, and home-made beds, tables, and chairs pulled to bits for convenience of transport; kit and crockery were packed, and all of us were living in a state of refined discomfort, when we were told that the move had been postponed, owing to lack of available mules and carts. Some of us set to work to rebuild beds and chairs, others resigned themselves to fate and were content to sleep on the floor and sit on boxes. If we remember aright, there were two postponements.

At last the day of leaving Kastamoni really did arrive. We had been promised so many carts and so many mules and had made our arrangements accordingly. At the last moment we were told that fewer carts and mules had rolled up. This meant leaving something behind, or marching the whole way—one decided for oneself. Many of us marched every step to Changri. Our departure took place at 1 P.M., and a weird procession we must have looked—carts and mules loaded high with all manner of furniture, stoves and stove-pipes sticking out in all directions. [7]

The poor Greeks of the town were very sad to see us go. The Rev. Harold Spooner, through the Greek priest, had been able from time to time to distribute to these destitute people fair sums of money supplied by voluntary subscription among the prisoners. In addition to this, families of little children used to be fed daily by some messes, and so we were able, in a small way, to relieve the want of a few unhappy Christians. Before we left Kastamoni, the Padre showed us a letter which he had received from the head Greek priest, thanking us for having helped the poor. We had, he said, kept families together, and young girls from going on the streets, and he assured us that it would be the privilege of the Greek community to look after the small graveyard we had made for the six officers and men who had died while we were there.

By 2 P.M. we were clear of Kastamoni. The change of camp would be a great break in the monotony of our existence, and for the time being we were happy. The journey was to take four days. At night we halted near water at a suitable camping-ground by the roadside, and in the early morning started off again. A healthy life and a great holiday for us. For the first two days the scenery was magnificent, as we crossed the forest-covered Hilgas range, but as we approached our destination the country became more and more barren. On the fourth day, coming over a crest, we saw the village of Changri built at the foot of a steep and bare hill. We went through the village, and a mile beyond us stood our future home. [8]

A dirty-looking, two-storied square building it was, surrounded on three sides by level fields edged with a few willows. On the west the ground rose a little to the main Angora road. Close to the barracks were sixty graves, which looked fairly new. This

gave a bad impression of the place at the start. On entering, we were too dumfounded to speak, and here it may be added that it took a lot to dumfound us. The square inside the buildings was full of sheep and goats, and the ground was consequently filthy. The lower-storey rooms, which were to be our mess-rooms, had been used for cattle, and the cellar pointed out to us as our kitchen was at least a foot deep in manure. Only one wing of the barracks had window panes, and these were composed of small bits of glass rudely fitted together. Truly a depressing place. [9]

Many of us elected to sleep that night in preference to the filthier barrack rooms. The sanitary arrangements were beyond words. The next morning we set to work cleaning up, but it was weeks before the place was habitable. Another great inconvenience was that for many days drinking-water had to be fetched in buckets from the village over a mile away; but for this the Turks finally provided a water-cart.

It was at Changri that most of the twenty-five officers who escaped from Yozgad on August 7, 1918, made up their parties. Our party, only six at that time, consisted of—

- Captain A. B. Haig, 24th Punjabis;
- Captain R. A. P. Grant, 112th Infantry;
- Captain V. S. Clarke, 2nd Batt. Royal West Kent Regiment;
- Captain J. H. Harris, 1/4 Hampshire Territorials;

and the two authors. Throughout the remainder of our narrative these six will be denoted by their respective nicknames: Old Man, Grunt, Nobby, Perce, Johnny, and Looney.

Roughly speaking, there were four alternative directions open to us.^[3] Northwards to the Black Sea, a distance of 100 miles; eastwards to the Russian front, 250 to 350 miles; to the Mediterranean, 300 miles southward, or 400 miles westward. Compared to the others the distance to the Black Sea was small, but outweighing this advantage was the fact that Keeling's party had got away in that direction, and the coast would be carefully guarded if another escape took place. The position of the Russian front, so far as we knew, was anything up to 350 miles away, and the country to the east of us was very mountainous. In addition, an escape in that direction would entail getting through the Turkish fighting lines, which we thought would prove very difficult. The Salt Desert, at least 150 miles across, frightened us off thinking of the southern route. The remaining one was westward: it was the longest distance to go, it is true, but for this very reason we hoped the Turks would not suspect us of trying it. The valleys ran in the direction we should be travelling, and if we did reach the coast, it was possible that we might get in touch with one of the islands in Allied hands.

Having made up our minds, we sent code messages home to find out which would be the best island to make for in the following early summer. We also asked for reduced maps to cover our route from Changri to the selected island, and requested that a look-out should be kept from it in case we signalled from the coast. [10]

Shortly after we had made our decision the question of giving parole cropped up. To any one who gave it the Turks offered a better camp and more liberty. It was a question for each to decide for himself, and we did so. On the 22nd November 1917, therefore, seventy-seven officers went off to Geddos. It was very sad parting from many good friends, and when the last cart disappeared round the spur of the hill, one turned away wondering if one would ever see them again. There were still forty-four officers and about twenty-eight orderlies in Changri. These officers were moved into the north wing of the barracks, and there they remained for the next four and a half months. At this period we had a great financial crisis—none of us had any money, prices were very high, and it came to tightening our belts a little. Our long and badly-built barrack rooms were very draughty, and as we had no money there was not much likelihood of getting firewood. Some cheerful Turk kindly told us that the winter at Changri was intensely cold, and that the temperature often fell below zero. Altogether the prospect for the next few months was anything but pleasant. [11]

During our most depressed moments, however, we could always raise a smile over the thought that we were "The honoured guests of Turkey." Enver Pasha himself had told us so at Mosul, where we halted on our four-hundred-mile march across the desert, after the fall of Kut-el-Amara.^[4] So it must have been true.

At the time we write this unscrupulous adventurer, Enver—a man of magnetic personality and untiring in his energy to further his personal schemes—has but lately fled to Caucasia. He is a young man, and having held a position of highest authority in Turkey for some years, presumably a rich one. Doubtless he will lead a happy and prosperous existence for many years to come. [12]

There are thousands of sad hearts in England and in the Indian Empire to-day, and hundreds of thousands in Turkey itself, as a result of the utter disregard for human life entertained by this man and a few of his colleagues. Of the massacre of Armenians we will not speak, although we have seen their dead bodies, and although we have met their little children dying of starvation on the roadsides, and have passed by their silent villages; but we should fail in our duty to the men of the British Empire who died in captivity in Turkey did we not appeal for a stern justice to be meted out to the men responsible for their dying.

It may perhaps be said with truth that it was no studied cruelty on the part of the Turkish authorities that caused the death of so many brave men who had given themselves to the work of their country: yet with equal truth it may be said, that it was the vilest form of apathy and of wanton neglect. Where the taking of a little trouble by the high officials at Constantinople would have saved the lives of thousands of British and Indian soldiers, that trouble was never taken. Weak with starvation, and sick with fever and dysentery (we speak of the men of Kut), they were made to march five hundred miles in the burning heat across waterless deserts, without regular or sufficient rations and without transport—in many cases without boots, which had been exchanged for a few mouthfuls of food or a drink of water. [13]

We officers, who had not such a long march as the men, and who were given a little money and some transport, thought ourselves in a bad way. But what of the men who had none? There were no medical arrangements, and those who could not march fell by the desert paths and died. The official White Book gives the number 65 as the percentage of deaths amongst British soldier prisoners taken at Kut, a figure which speaks for itself.

It is a law of the world's civilisation that if a man take the life of another, except in actual warfare, he must pay forfeit with his own life. Take away bribery and corruption and that law holds good in Turkey. Now when a soldier is taken prisoner he ceases to be an active enemy, and the country of his captors is as responsible for his welfare as for that of her own citizens. What if that country so fails to grasp the responsibility that its prisoners are allowed to die by neglect? Should not its rulers be taught such a lesson that it would be impossible for those of future generations to forget it? [14]

It is not enough to obtain evidence of a cruel corporal at that prisoners' camp, or of a bestial commandant at this, and to think that by punishing them we have avenged our dead. These men are underlings. The men we must punish first are those few in high authority, who, by an inattention to their obvious duty, have made it possible for their menials to be guilty of worse than murder.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we are citizens of the most just country of the world. Let us see to it that justice is not starved.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] "An Escape from Turkey in Asia," by Captain E. H. Keeling. 'Blackwood's Magazine,' May 1918.
- [2] Now Lieutenant-Colonel.
- [3] *Vide* map at end of volume.
- [4] "Kut," correctly pronounced, rhymes with "put."

CHAPTER II. FIRST PLANS FOR ESCAPE.

With the departure of the party for Geddos, the camp at Changri did what little they could to render the long bare barrack rooms somewhat more endurable as winter quarters. Each room was about 80 feet in length, and consisted of a central passage bordered on either side by a row of ugly timber posts supporting the roof. Between the passage and a row of lockers which ran along the walls were raised platforms, affording about six feet of useful width. Each platform was divided in two by a single partition half-way along the room. Viewed from one end the general effect resembled that of stables, to which use indeed all the lower rooms had been put previous to our arrival. Each length of platform was allotted to a group of three or four officers, who were then at liberty to beautify their new homes as ingenuity might suggest. Planks were hard to come by, so for the most part old valises, blankets, and curtains were strung from post to post to screen the "rooms" from the passage, and thereby gain for the occupants a little privacy. [16]

As the severity of the winter increased, caulking floor-boards became a profitable occupation, for an icy draught now swept up through the gaping cracks. By the time the financial difficulties to which we have referred were at an end, it was no longer possible to obtain in the bazaar a sufficient quantity of firewood for anything except our kitchen stoves. It was not, however, until snow was lying deep upon the ground that Sami Bey could be prevailed upon to let us cut down a few of the neighbouring willow-trees, for which it need hardly be said we had to pay heavily. Apart from the exercise thus obtained—and it was good exercise carrying the wood into the barracks—an odd visit or two to the bazaar, and a few hours' tobogganing as a concession on Christmas Day, were the only occasions on which we saw the outside of our dwelling-place for three long months. Nor was there anything in the way of comfort within. The number of trees allotted to us was small, and the daily wood ration we allowed ourselves only sufficed to keep the stoves going in our rooms for a few hours each day. The fuel, moreover, being green, was difficult to keep alight, so that we spent many hours that winter blowing at the doors of stoves; and the stoker on duty had to give the fire his undivided attention if he wished to avoid the sarcastic comments of his chilled companions. It was a special treat reserved for Sundays to have our stoves burning for an hour in the afternoon. For over a month the temperature remained night and day below freezing-point, and the thermometer on one occasion registered thirty-six degrees of frost. [17]

An officer who used to fill up an old beer-bottle with hot water to warm his feet when he got into bed, found one morning that it had slipped away from his feet and had already begun to freeze, although still under the clothes!

But enough of the miseries of that winter: in spite of such unfavourable conditions, the camp was a cheerful one. We were all good friends, and united in our determination not to knuckle under to the Turk. Our senior officer, Colonel A. Moore, of the 66th Punjabis, was largely instrumental in making our lot an easier one. This he did by fighting our many battles against an unreasonable and apathetic commandant, and in all our schemes for escape he gave us his sound advice and ready support.

Compared to his two predecessors, this commandant, Sami Bey, was a very difficult person from whom to "wangle" anything. Although he could lay claim to no greater efficiency for his task of commanding a prisoner-of-war camp than they, he made himself very obnoxious to us by his policy of pure obstruction. If we applied for any sort of concession, however reasonable, he safeguarded himself by saying he would have to wire to Constantinople for orders, and of course no orders ever came. With the two commandants we had had in Kastamoni, a threat by our own senior officer to report any matter under discussion to the Turkish Headquarters was enough to make him give in over any reasonable request without further ado. Sami, however, would look the question up in his Regulations. On one occasion we bombarded him from every quarter with demands to be allowed to go out tobogganing. Finally the answer came back: "The Regulations do not mention the word 'toboggan'; therefore, I cannot allow you to do so." Even the Turk, then, though he uses sand instead of blotting-paper, has his office "red tape"! [18]

The average Turkish officer is an ignoramus, and the following story of Sami Bey will serve to show that he was no exception to the rule. At the time that the German gun "Big Bertha" was bombarding Paris at long range, he was very proud to produce a picture of it in a German paper. It was one of those semi-bird's-eye views, showing Paris in the left-hand bottom corner, and along the top the Straits of Dover and the English Channel. The gun was about half-way down the right-hand edge, and the curved trajectory of the shell was shown by a dotted line from the moment it left the muzzle to the moment when it entered Paris. To a British officer to whom he was showing the picture, Sami explained at great length how the shell passed through St Quentin, Cambrai, Douai, up to one of the Channel ports, and then down again via Amiens, until it finally arrived at its destination in Paris and exploded! This Turkish brigadier-general believed this to be a solemn fact, and his "ignorant" British hearer was polite enough not to undeceive him. [19]

Ours claimed to have been the first party formed with a view to escape, but it was not long before there were several others, and it became evident that some plan would have to be devised by which a large number might hope to make their way out of the barracks fairly simultaneously. Since these had been designed for Turkish soldiers, every window was already barred. But we were in addition a camp of suspects, who had refused to give their parole; so at night, in addition to sentries being posted at every corner, visiting patrols went round the building at frequent intervals. Three or four fellows, of course, might cut the bars of a window and slip through, but hardly five or six parties.

At this moment an old magazine came into our hands containing an article which described how thirty or forty Federal officers had escaped from a Confederate prison by means of a tunnel. This was at once recognised as the ideal solution of our problem if only we could find a suitable outlet and the means of disposing of the earth. [20]

While the general plan was still under discussion, we were reinforced by the arrival of three officers from Geddos. They had refused to give their parole in spite of the Turks' threat that they would be moved to Changri if they did not change their minds. Here then they arrived one cold December morning, looking very racy in their check overcoats, supplied to them by the Dutch Legation. These coats were doubtless the last word in Constantinople fashions, and in the shop windows had probably been marked "Très civilisé," for it is the highest ambition of the Turk to be considered civilised.

Nothing hurts his feelings more than to be the object of ridicule on account of any lack of up-to-dateness, as the following story will serve to illustrate. While we were at Kastamoni, a chimney in one of the houses occupied by the prisoners of war caught fire, and, with a great flourish of trumpets, the town fire-brigade was called out to extinguish the conflagration. Let not the reader, however, picture to himself even the most obsolete of horsed fire-engines. In this town, with a pre-war population of something like 25,000 souls, and with houses almost entirely built of timber, dependence in the event of a fire was placed on what can best be described as a diminutive tank carried on a stretcher, and provided with a small pump worked by a lever, seesaw fashion. The tank was kept filled by buckets replenished at the nearest spring. The sight of two men in shabby uniform solemnly oscillating the lever by the handle at either end, and of the feeble trickle of water which resulted at the nozzle of the hose, was too much for the sense of humour of the British officers who happened to be present at the time. At this moment the commandant, then one Tewfik Bey, appeared on the scene. Horrified at such ill-timed levity on the part of the onlookers, he seized upon a major standing by and had him escorted to his room, there to be confined till Tewfik's anger should abate. To the Turk this tank was the latest thing in fire-engines. [21]

To carry the story to its happy ending, we may add that, after three days of confinement, the major addressed a letter to H.E. Enver Pasha through the commandant, which ran somewhat as follows:—

"SIR,—I have the honour to report that, owing to the close confinement in which I have been kept, my health has now entirely broken down. I therefore request that, with a view to providing some slight possibility of recovery, I may be allowed to go to England on one month's sick leave, and that as far as the port of embarkation I may be accompanied by *posta*^[5] 'Ginger,' as he alone in all Turkey really understands my temperament.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient prisoner of war,

X."

Whether this letter ever reached His Excellency we shall probably never know. From our knowledge of the Turk's total lack of humour, however, we should say that it is more than probable that Tewfik Bey solemnly forwarded it on through the proper channel. That no answer was received proves nothing; for it is a matter of years to get a reply to an application like this from the authorities at Constantinople, and the letter was only written three years ago. At least it had this good effect, that the major was released from confinement forthwith. [22]

But we must return to our real subject. Amongst the three officers from Geddos was one Tweedledum, so named from a certain roundity of figure, which even the scanty provisions said to be obtainable there had failed to reduce. From his lips we first heard of the wonderful capabilities of the Handley-Page passenger aeroplane. Such machines, he said, could carry fifteen to sixteen passengers, and three of them had recently flown from England to Mudros, with only one intermediate landing in Italy. A pilot of one of them had been a prisoner with him at Geddos. A few evenings later Nobby had a great brain-wave; fetching a

'Pears' Annual,' he turned up the maps of Europe and Asia Minor, and, after a few hurried measurements, unfolded to his stable companions, Perce and Looney, what was afterwards known as the "aeroplane scheme." These three had, with much expense and trouble, managed to collect enough planks for a real wooden partition to their "room," and it was behind this screen that this and many another devilish plot was hatched. [23]

Briefly, Nobby's idea was for a flight of five or six Handley-Pages to be sent from Cyprus, swoop down on Changri, and pick up the whole camp, both officers and men—and Sami too. We should, of course, have to take over the barracks from our guards, but this should be easily effected by a *coup de main*, and probably without having to resort to bloodshed. At first the idea appeared a trifle fantastic, for after being cut off from the outside world for two whole years it took time for us to assimilate the wonderful advance of aeronautical science which the scheme assumed; but given that Tweedledum's statement was correct, the scheme was feasible, and we soon took up the question seriously. Our representative of the R.F.C. pronounced the surrounding fields practicable landing grounds; a committee confirmed the possibility of taking over the barracks by surprise; and the whole scheme, illustrated by a small sketch of the vicinity, was soon on its way home.

We were fortunate in having a method of sending secret information without much risk of detection. The censorship of our letters, like most things in Turkey, was not very efficient. Looney's brother in England was the inventor of the secret means. [24] The first code which he devised consisted merely of diminutive gaps between pairs of letters in an apparently ordinary communication. That there was a message contained was indicated to the addressee by the writer adding after his signature his address as "Codin House, Thislet Terrace."^[6] The exact nature of the code then had to be discovered by guess-work. After two letters had been received, Nobby noticed the gaps, and the clue was discovered. By stringing together all the letters preceding the gaps, one obtained the concealed message.

The way thus opened, more effective means of communication could be developed. One of these was to send out messages written on a slip of paper, wrapped up in silver tissue and then inserted in a full tube of tooth-paste. As parcels, however, took anything from eight months to over a year to reach the camp, the value of the news contained was considerably diminished. Moreover, this method was not available for sending news from Turkey to England.

The final method was simple, yet perfectly effective for smuggling news into a country such as Turkey. It consisted of pasting together two thin post-cards, the gummed portion being confined to a border of about an inch in width round the edges. The central rectangle so left ungummed was available for the secret message, which was written very small on the two inner faces of the cards before they were stuck together. Further space for writing was obtainable by adding another slip of paper of the size of the rectangle, and including this within the cards when gumming them up. After being pressed, the final post-card was trimmed so as to leave no sign of the join. The position of the rectangle containing the message was indicated on the address side by at first two lines, and later by the smallest possible dots at the corners. Well over a score of such cards must have passed from England into Turkey, and more than half that number in the reverse direction, without discovery ever being made by our captors. In the camp, to avoid the risk of being overheard talking about "split post-cards" by one of the interpreters, these cards were known as "bananas"—an apt name, as you had to skin them to get at the real fruit inside! [25]

This explains the method by which it was possible to suggest the aeroplane scheme to the home authorities.

Unfortunately it used to take at least four months to receive a reply to a letter. For this reason we could not afford to wait until a definite date was communicated to us, so we ourselves named the first fifteen days of May as suitable for us, and agreed, from 6 to 8 A.M. on each of these days, to remain in a state of instant readiness to seize the barracks should an aeroplane appear. For the sake of secrecy, the details of the *coup de main* itself were left to be worked out by a small committee, and the report spread amongst the rest of the camp that the scheme had been dropped. The true state of affairs would not be divulged until a few days before the first of May. [26]

The committee's plan was this. There were at Changri 47 officers and 28 orderlies—a total force of 75 unarmed men with which to take over the barracks. Our guard, all told, numbered 70 men. At any one time during daylight there were seven Turkish sentries on duty: one outside each corner of the barracks, one inside the square which had an open staircase at each corner, one at the arched entrance in the centre of the north face, while the seventh stood guard over the commandant's office. This was a room in the upper storey over the archway and facing on to the square.

On each side of the commandant's office, therefore, were the barrack rooms inhabited by the British officers, and to go from one side to the other it was necessary to pass the sentry standing at his post on the landing in between. From here a flight of steps gave on to the road through the main archway; on the other side of this again, and facing the stairs, was the door of the ground-floor barrack room used by our guard. This room was similar to those in the upper storey already described, and we found out by looking through a hole made for the purpose in the floor of the room above, and by casual visits when we wanted an escort for the bazaar, that the rifles of the occupants were kept in a row of racks on either side of the central passage-way. [27]

By 6 A.M. on each morning of the first fifteen days of May every one was to be dressed, but those who had no specific job to do were to get back into bed again in case suspicion should be caused in the mind of any one who happened to come round. The aeroplanes, if they came, would arrive from the south. Two look-out parties of three, therefore, were to be at their posts by 6 A.M., one in the officers' mess in the S.E., and the other in the Padre's room next to the chapel in the S.W. corner of the barracks.

The staircases at these two corners of the square were to be watched by two officers told off for the purpose, one in each half of the north wing. When the look-outs in the south wing had either distinctly heard or seen an aeroplane, they were to come to their staircase and start walking down it into the square. Our look-outs in the north wing would warn the others in their rooms to get ready, and the officer who had the honour of doing *verger* to the Padre, and who used to ring a handbell before services, would run down the north-eastern staircase and walk diagonally across the square towards the chapel, ringing the bell for exactly thirty seconds.

The stopping of the bell was to be the signal for simultaneous action. The sentry on the landing could be easily disposed of by three officers; most of the rest were to run down certain staircases, cross the archway, dash into the barrack room and get hold of all the rifles, a small party at the same moment tackling the sentry at the main entrance. [28]

On seeing the rush through the archway the look-out parties from the south wing would overpower the sentry in the square. The arms belonging to the three sentries and one other rifle were to be immediately taken to the corners of the barracks and the outside sentries covered. The orderlies, under an officer, would meanwhile form up in the square as a reserve.

Surprise was to be our greatest ally, and we hoped that, within a minute of the bell stopping, the barracks would be in our hands.

Having herded our Turkish guard into a big cellar and locked them in, we would then signal to the aeroplanes that the barracks were in our possession by laying out sheets in the square; while small picquets, armed with Turkish rifles and ammunition, would see to it that the aeroplanes on landing would be unmolested from the village. We are still convinced that the plan would have succeeded.

Even those in the know, however, put little faith in the probability of the aeroplane scheme being carried out, realising that the machines necessary for such an enterprise were not likely to be available from the main battle-fronts. Preparations, therefore, continued for working out our own salvation, as though this plan for outside help had not entered our heads. With the first signs of spring the tunnel scheme began to take concrete form. [29]

As already mentioned in the description of the barracks, the ground to the west rose gently up to the Angora road. In this slope was a shallow, cup-like depression at a distance of forty yards from the building. If only a convenient point for starting a tunnel could be found in the nearest wall, the cup would form an ideal spot for breaking through to the surface. A night reconnaissance was made in the downstairs room on the western side of the barracks. As a result of this there seemed a likelihood that under the whole of the platform in this room we should find a hollow space varying from one to three feet in depth. If the surmise were correct and a tunnel could be run out from here, there would be no difficulty in getting rid of all the excavated earth into this hollow space. Unfortunately the lower room, though not in use, was kept locked.

It was discovered, however, that the walls of the barracks consisted of an outer and inner casing, each a foot thick, and built of large sun-dried bricks, the space between being filled up with a mixture of rubble, mortar, and earth, and a few larger stones. This was in the bottom storey. Above that the construction of the wall changed to two thicknesses of lath and plaster attached to either side of a timber framing, and the thickness of the wall diminished to only nine inches. The total width of the wall below was five feet; therefore the lockers in the upper room were immediately above the rubble core of the heavier wall. It [30]

would thus be possible to get down through the lockers and sink a shaft through the rubble to a trifle below the level of the ground, and from there to break through the inner casing and come into the empty space below the ground-floor.

Work was commenced in the middle of February 1918. For the next few weeks an officer was usually to be seen lolling about at either end of the first-floor rooms, and, on the approach of an interpreter or other intruder, would stroll leisurely down the passage, whistling the latest ragtime melody.

Within the room all would now be silent; but when the coast was again clear there could perhaps be seen in the barrack room a pair of weird figures, strangely garbed and white with dust. Somewhere in the line of lockers was the entrance to the shaft-head. The locker doors being only a foot square were too small to admit a man, and so the top planks at the place where we wished to work had been levered up and fitted with hinges to form a larger entrance. To give additional room inside, the partition between two consecutive lockers was also removed; the floor of one locker and the joists supporting the platform at this point were then cut away, and we were free to commence the shaft. [31]

For this job six officers were chosen, of whom three belonged to our escape party. The six were divided into three reliefs, and each worked for two hours at a time. The hole was of necessity only just large enough for one man to work there, so of the pair one did the digging, while his partner, when the shaft had progressed a little, sat inside the locker at the top of the hole. When actually at work, the time went quickly enough; but sitting in the locker was very wearisome, as one's only duties were to pass on the alarm when the ragtime was whistled, and from time to time to draw up by a rope the small sacks filled by the digger. When all the available sacks were full, work was stopped, and the two would emerge from the locker. The sacks of rubbish were then carried a few yards along the room and emptied into a space underneath some planks which had been loosened in the platform. At the end of their relief, the two would go off to change their clothes, leaving the work to be continued by the next pair.

During the time spent in the locker, one of the six learnt 'Omar Khayyám' by heart. Reading a book was almost impossible owing to the lack of light; even if it had been permissible, in view of the risk of the reader becoming so interested as to miss the signal of the alarm. 'Omar,' however, was a different thing. A verse could be read line by line at the streak of light entering by a chink in one of the ill-fitting locker doors, and then committed to memory—not a very engrossing task, but it helped to pass the time. [32]

The working kit was a light one: a shirt and "shorts," sand-shoes, and a Balaclava cap. Round his mouth the digger usually tied a handkerchief, so as not to swallow his peck of dust at one time, while the cap prevented his hair and ears getting quite full of rubbish.

Let us work for one relief. You are dressed for the occasion. The tools, consisting of two chisels, are at the bottom of the hole, which is, say, twelve feet deep. A couple of candles and a box of matches is all you need take with you. It is your turn to dig. You get into the locker and climb down the rope-ladder as quickly as possible, but you must take care not to touch the outer casing of the wall as you go, or you may find yourself staring at an astonished sentry outside: there are already a few holes in the wall through which daylight can be seen.

The candle lighted, you have a look round: but this is absurd! No one has done any work since you were down there yesterday morning. That beastly stone in the corner looks as tightly embedded in the mortar as it was then. You bend down to pick up a chisel and you bump your head against a projecting brick. You try to sit down, but there is not enough room to sit and work at the same time. You try kneeling, but it can't be done. After twisting your limbs in a hitherto undreamt-of fashion you begin to chip away at the mortar round your old friend. Nothing seems to happen; then suddenly your candle falls down and goes out, leaving your chamber of little ease in Stygian darkness. [33]

You think you hear your partner say "Stop!" and you look up just in time to get your eyes full of grit, for he has merely shifted his legs, which are dangling above you. After untying yourself you relight the candle and again get down to the stone. You pick and scrape and prise, and then as the chisel slips you bark your knuckles; and so you go on. All sense of time is lost, and your one thought is to get that stone out. Now it moves. You work with redoubled energy, with the result that you break into a profuse perspiration. How you hate that stone! Finally up it comes when you don't expect it, and the bruise at the back of your head is nothing compared to the joy of the victor, which is equally yours.

The rock is too big, however, to go into a sack, so you shut your eyes and whisper to your partner above you. He then lets down an old canvas bath kept in the locker for this purpose. The periphery of the bath is attached to a rope by several cords, the resulting appearance as it is lowered towards you being that of an inverted parachute. The stone is difficult to lift and your feet are very much in the way, but in the end the load is ready. There is not enough room in the shaft for the stone and the bath to be pulled up past your body, so you climb up the ladder and help your partner to haul. This done, work is resumed. A small sack is filled with bits of mortar picked away from round the stone, and this too is pulled up the shaft, but the sack being small you need not leave the hole. [34]

Now your partner tells you that it is time for the next shift. You leave the chisels in an obvious place, blow out the candle, and climb to the locker. Here your partner is tapping gently against the door. If your look-out says "All safe!" you push open the lid and emerge. The big stone is hastily carried to an empty locker and the rubbish from the sack disposed of as already described. The plank in the platform is replaced, the bath and sack returned to the locker, the lid closed, and the place once more assumes its normal aspect.

You then nip along to the nearest inhabited room, where you find your relief waiting for you. One of these two is almost certain to greet you with the words: "I suppose you got that stone in the corner out straight away. I practically finished it off last night. It only wanted a heave or two." It is useless to point out that, had it not been for the masterly manner in which you had worked, the stone would still be firmly embedded there. You merely bide your time, certain that within a few days you will be in a position to make a similar remark to him. [35]

Work was now being carried on continuously throughout the day. Besides the diggers, there were 24 officers who took their turn as look-outs. It was not possible to keep the work going at night, for from time to time the sentries outside would patrol this wing of the barracks. In the daytime, when they approached the point where we were at work, our look-outs could stop the diggers, but this would have been impossible after dark. Moreover, light from a candle would then have been visible from outside through the cracks in the outer casing.

At this stage our plans received a rude shock. We were suddenly informed that we were to be moved to the Prisoner-of-War Camp at Yozgad (pronounced Useguard), eighty miles south-east of us. We were to be ready, said Sami Bey, to start within a week. After our experience of the departure from Kastamonu, we came to the conclusion it might equally well be a month before the necessary transport was collected. We determined, therefore, to push on with the tunnel at high pressure, and if necessary to bring it out to the surface short of the spot originally intended, and then one dark night to make a bolt for it. So the work went on.

For the first three feet of the shaft we had found merely loose rubble and stones easily excavated, for the next thirteen we had had to dig out stones embedded in very hard mortar. Here we progressed only a few inches a day. Below this there was solid concrete. Every few feet we came to wooden ties holding the inner and outer casings together; but fortunately these were on one side of the hole, and we did not have to cut through them. [36]

At the time the move was announced we were at a depth of 16 feet, just entering the concrete. Here we were below the level of the lower storey, so we broke through the inner casing into the space beneath the platform. We now found, to our disgust, that the ground was on an average barely a foot below the joists, and the surface, being composed of dust which had been falling for eighty years between the boards of a Turkish barrack-room floor, was very unpleasant.

Our disappointment, however, was counteracted by a stroke of good luck. At each end of the barrack room above there was an alcove, and we found beneath the nearer of the two alcoves an empty space 8 feet by 6 by 5. In this we could dispose of a good deal of the spoil from the tunnel. To get rid of the rest we should have to make a main burrow below the floor, filling up the remaining space on either side between the ground and the floor, and eventually packing the burrow itself with earth excavated from the mine. Should this again not suffice, the surplus earth would have to be pulled up by way of the shaft, and distributed under the boards of the upper-room platform. All that now remained for us to do before actually starting on the tunnel itself was to sink a secondary shaft about 6 feet deep, so as to get below the level of the concrete foundations. After this we could strike horizontally towards the Angora road. [37]

The method of moving about in the confined space was that employed by the caterpillar that loops its back, draws its hind legs

under it, and then advances with its forefeet; and we found it a slow means of locomotion. The burrow to the hollow under the alcove was completed, and another in the opposite direction to the farther alcove was well on its way when we started to work on the second shaft. Three feet down we came to water. It was a great blow to us; and although with unlimited time at our disposal the difficulty might have been overcome, under present circumstances we had to consider ourselves defeated in that direction, especially as we heard, a few days later, that transport was already on its way from Angora.

The early move would also, of course, upset the aeroplane scheme, and we sincerely hoped that the authorities at home would hear that we had left Changri in time to prevent aeroplanes being sent. Although the scheme sent to them had provided somewhat for this contingency by arranging that the aeroplanes were not to land till they saw the special signal from us, it was not pleasant to think that we might be the cause of risk to valuable pilots and machines, and all to no purpose. Apart from the move, however, it eventually turned out that the scheme could not be entertained at home, as in April and May 1918 every available machine was being urgently required for making things unpleasant for the Germans behind the main battle-front.

[38]

FOOTNOTES:

[5] = soldier.

[6] = code in this letter.

CHAPTER III.

[39]

AN ATTEMPT THAT FAILED.

Thus disappointed of two of our schemes, we looked around for other ways and means of escape. Nobby had another of his brain-waves. In search of dry firewood he had made several tours inside the roof of the barracks: for the ceilings and tiled slopes were carried not by modern trusses, but by the primitive and wasteful means of trestles resting on enormous horizontal baulks, running across from wall to wall at close intervals. Having entered the roof space by a trap-door in the ceiling, it was possible to walk on these completely round the barracks, and eke out the miserably green firewood we collected ourselves by chips and odd ends of comparatively dry wood, left up there presumably several decades before, while the barracks were in building.

Why not, said Nobby, disappear up there one night and leave the Turks to infer that we had escaped, encouraging them in the belief by leaving the bars of some window cut and forced apart? We could then wait until the rest had left for Yozgad and slip out from the deserted barracks at our pleasure.

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There were, however, two obvious objections to this scheme. It was hardly feasible as a means of escape for more than one or at most two parties: the Turk might be deceived into thinking half a dozen fellows had slipped past his sentries, but hardly twenty or more. Secondly, it was quite conceivable that the escape of even a small party would lead to the move being cancelled altogether: it is true it would be possible for the stowaways to be fed in the roof by their companions below, but the prospect of spending "three years or the duration of the war" in that dark and musty garret took away from the otherwise considerable attractions of the scheme.

In the end a very much modified form of the roof scheme was permitted by a committee of senior officers, and our party of six, having been adjudged by this committee to have the best chances of success on account of our prearranged scheme when we reached the coast, was given the privilege of making the attempt. As will be seen, however, it was less an actual attempt than a waiting upon favourable circumstances which would arise should our captors make a certain mistake. In any country except Turkey the whole conception would have been absurd; but we had seen enough of Turkish methods to know that there anything is possible.

By good luck the party's preparations for escape were already far advanced, although, apart from the move, we had not proposed starting until June: the rains continue off and on till then, and the crops would be in too immature a state at an earlier date.

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At the cost of a good deal of time, temper, needles and thread, we had each succeeded in making ourselves a pack: to furnish the canvas we sacrificed our valises. Up till almost the last night, however, we were busy repeatedly cutting off straps and sewing them on again in a different place, in a wild endeavour to persuade our equipment to ride with a reasonable degree of comfort.

Food was an item of vital importance in any plan of escape, and we had decided to follow the example of Keeling's party and pin our faith mainly to a ration of biscuits. We had also for some months past been collecting from our parcels all tinned meat, condensed milk, and chocolate.

We brought our biscuit-making to a fine art. One of the ground-floor rooms had been set apart as the officers' shop for carpentry and bootmaking—for we had long taken to making our own furniture and repairing our own boots. Here then was started the "Bimbashi"^[7] Biscuit Department of Escapers, Limited. At one bench would be Grunt and Johnny busily engaged in the uncongenial task of taking the stalks off sultanas, and the pleasanter one of eating a few. At another stood Perce with his bared forearms buried deep in a mixture of flour, sugar, and sultanas, to which from time to time Nobby would add the requisite quantities of water and eggs. The Old Man presided at the scales and, weighing out the dough into lumps sufficient for twenty biscuits, passed them on to Looney. Armed with rolling-pin, carving-knife, and straight-edge, the latter would flatten out each lump until it filled up the inside of a square frame which projected slightly above the bench to which it was fixed. When a level slab had been obtained, the ruler would be placed against marks on the frame and the slab cut five times in one direction and four in the other. It then only remained to transfer the twenty little slabs to boards, prick them with any fancy pattern with a nail, and send them to be baked by one of our orderlies. The biscuits were each about the size of a quarter-plate and half an inch thick, and when cooked weighed five to the pound, and were as hard as rocks. Their best testimonial was that, without being kept in tins, they remained perfectly good for six months.

The biscuit-making concern was run regardless of expense. A pound of flour was costing at that time two shillings, sugar ten shillings, sultanas five; and eggs three pence apiece. (These, by the way, were only about half of what we soon after found ourselves paying at Yozgad.) The final cost was something like half-a-crown a biscuit.

[42]

For their escapes Keeling and his companions had decided, if questioned, to say that they were a German survey party, and for this purpose had forged a letter purporting to come from the commandant of the Angora Division, and ordering all whom it might concern to help them in every way. They had written to say this letter had been of the greatest assistance to them. As we were going in a different direction, we thought that the same story would serve again. Grunt, being the best Turkish scholar of the party, accordingly drafted a suitable legend in a crisp style such as might be expected to emanate from Enver Pasha's pen; while Johnny, aided by infinite patience and a bit of blue carbon paper, set to work and produced a faithful imitation of an office stamp found on a Turkish receipt. We hoped that the elaborated lettering of such a crest would be as little intelligible to the average Ottoman as it was to ourselves, but as a matter of interest decided to show the original to our Greek interpreter and casually ask its meaning. It was as well we did so, for it was the stamp of the Prisoners-of-War Camp, Changri.

[43]

After this unfortunate set-back, our pair put their heads together, and finally evolved a design of their own, bearing the inscription: "Office of the Ministry of War, Stamboul."

All this time, of course, we were subjecting ourselves to a course of rigorous training—football, running in the early mornings, Müller's exercises, and cold baths. We spent half the day walking round and round the exercise-field, wearing waistcoats weighing twenty pounds. These, if disclosed from under the coat, would have reminded any one but a Turkish observer of one of those advertisements of a well-known firm of tyre-makers; for each waistcoat was lined with a series of cloth tubes filled with sand.

[44]

Nobby, who detested sewing more than any of us, went to the trouble of making a practice rucksack holding sixty pounds of earth. The whole of our last few weeks at Changri, one may say, were spent by the party in preparing for the escape in one way

or another.

On the evening of the 10th April 1918 the cart transport for our journey drove into the barrack square and there parked for the night. Orders came from the commandant that we were to start next day, so we decided that before we went to bed our preparations should be completed.

A light ladder was made by which to climb up into the roof; drinking-water was taken up in buckets and hidden there; a window-frame in the east wing was prepared so that the iron bars could be withdrawn; and we made certain, by going through a list, that our packs contained all that we had decided to take. The latter were then unpacked and they and their contents placed in two boxes, each of which had a false bottom. Here were concealed our most incriminating and at the same time our most precious aids to escape: our maps, helio-mirrors, fezes, and compasses. The boxes were then locked, strongly bound with rope, and labelled very appropriately, "Trek Stores."

[45]

For the work on hand that night the occasion was an excellent one. Every one was busy packing, having left this unpleasant duty till the carts actually arrived. There was a lot of noise being made—to wit, a blend of singing and sawing; and when at 1 A.M. we could at last go to bed, there was still much activity around us.

Next morning we showed ourselves as much as possible, and took care to find an opportunity of talking to the two camp interpreters. It was conceivable that they might take our names in the barracks as usual each morning, and the commandant, being satisfied that every one was present, might omit to call roll when the move actually took place; or alternately, in the excitement of the moment, there might be no roll-call whatsoever.

On one or other of these possibilities depended the success of the modified scheme, which stipulated that until the carts were definitely on the move we were not to hide ourselves in the roof. Should the party go off without a roll-call, we were allowed to leave ourselves behind. If, on the other hand, roll was called, we had to turn up for it. This explains the necessity for the two boxes of "Trek Stores": if we were left behind, these could be quickly taken up into the roof; and if roll should be called, we could hastily, and without losing our valuable escape outfit, join the carts, carrying two boxes apparently containing food only.

[46]

After loading up our own carts with the rest of our kit in case the scheme miscarried, we took these boxes into the mess-room at the S.E. corner of the barracks; and as the time of departure drew near, went there ourselves and sat round a few bits of bread and an empty jam-pot. Our excellent friend H— promised to come and warn us should there be a call over.

From the windows facing south could be seen the Angora road, and this we watched eagerly. The barracks were quite quiet. After many minutes a loaded cart appeared on the road followed by another. Our hopes began to rise. The one-in-a-thousand chance might yet come off. There were more carts moving on the road now, but to our disappointment they suddenly stopped.

A few seconds later H— dashed in. They were calling the roll. We carried the boxes outside, there to be met by several officers who had come back, so they said, to collect some firewood for the journey, but really to make our late appearance as unsuspecting as possible. No wonder we were as happy at Changri as it was possible to be, having men like these for our companions.

[47]

You may think that it was not worth our while to have taken so much trouble for so small a chance, yet you probably take a ticket in the Derby Sweep. It was, we admit, a small chance, but the prize was a great one, so we were unwilling to let it slip by. Although a roll-call was held, we heard afterwards that it was only as an afterthought on the part of Sami Bey, and despite our disappointment after coming so near to success, we had at least the satisfaction of finding that our late arrival caused no suspicion in the minds of our captors. After a little difficulty in finding carts which were not too overloaded to take our two precious boxes, our party was soon marching southwards with the rest of the prisoners.

Although the direct distance from Changri to Yozgad, as the crow flies, is barely 80 miles, the only road open to our wheeled transport was that which runs by way of Angora: our march was then about 100 miles longer. For the first sixty, that is to say to Angora, the country was familiar to us, as we had marched along this route in the opposite direction on the way to our first camp, Kastamoni, nearly two years before. It was impossible, unfortunately, to induce our commandant to say beforehand each day where would be the halts for the midday meal and the next night; in fact, he did not know himself, as this was a matter to be fought out with his brother officer in charge of the transport. In other respects this march, like that from Kastamoni, was a pleasing innovation after the monotony of our long confinement. After the first few hours the escort wearied of their primary keenness, and allowed us to march pretty well at our own pace, except for occasional halts to allow the carts to come up. In fact, precautions against escaping *en route* were unexpectedly lax. On the very first day, for instance, it was not until after dark that we halted for the night, and a dozen officers might easily have slipped away from a party which went to the river a few hundred yards distant to fetch water: roll-call was not held until we marched off next morning. We had agreed amongst ourselves, however, that we would now wait until we reached Yozgad, and could contrive some plan by which all parties might once more have an equal chance of escaping. It was for this reason that the above and later opportunities to make off while on trek were allowed to slip by.

[48]

Half-way to Angora we came to the village of Kalijik, where we were offered billets in the local jail, already well peopled with Turkish criminals. On our refusing this offer, we were housed for the night in an empty building on the edge of the village.

We reached Angora four days after leaving Changri, and were accommodated in up-to-date buildings, designed by Germans as a hospital, but since used as Turkish barracks. Luckily the particular house in which we were billeted had not as yet been used by Turks. During our two days here, we were allowed very fair liberty in visiting the bazaars, the shops of which, after our six months at Changri, appeared almost magnificent in the profusion of their wares.

[49]

In one of these Nobby espied a pair of real Goerz field-glasses. Telling his companion to lure away the *posta* who escorted them, he entered the shop, and succeeded in purchasing the glasses, and a schoolboy's satchel in which to conceal them, for about £18—a tall price, and yet, if the prices of other things had been in no higher proportion to their real value, living in Turkey would have been comparatively cheap. In the end these glasses were of inestimable value to our party.

While we were in Angora some of us went to see Sherif Bey, whose propensity for epigram was touched upon in the opening words of our story. As second-in-command he had accompanied us in our move from Kastamoni to Changri. There he had been perpetually at loggerheads with our new, as indeed he had been with our two former, commandants. Having eventually relinquished his ambition of superseding Sami Bey, he had recently accepted the less remunerative post of commandant of the British rank-and-file prisoners in the Angora district. Some of the men whom we succeeded in meeting had certain complaints to make against their previous commandant. A deputation of officers, therefore, waited upon his successor, who received them with a show of great friendliness, and assured them that under his benevolent sway such things as the looting of parcels would be impossible. Whether he fulfilled his promises we are not yet in a position to say; the fact remains that he treated very badly the five officers who stayed behind a few extra days for dental and medical treatment, asserting that they had only stopped in Angora with a view to escape.

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Moreover, there were at this very time under Sherif Bey's orders two submarine officers who had been sent from the camp at Afion-Kara-Hissar, and were to join our convoy when it went on to Yozgad. Since their arrival in Angora a week before, they had been confined to the only hotel and had not once been allowed to visit the bazaar. One of the two was Lieut.-Commander A. D. Cochrane (now Commander Cochrane, D.S.O.), who was destined to play the leading rôle in the eventual escape of our particular party. The other was Lieut.-Commander S—. These two had, with one other naval officer, attempted to escape from the camp at Kara-Hissar, but had been recaptured when within sight of the sea; they had since spent ten months in a common Turkish jail.

Lieut.-Commander S— had also been sent to Constantinople under somewhat amusing circumstances. Whilst he was in the P.O.W. camp at Kara-Hissar an order arrived one day ordering that two officers of high birth and closely connected with the British aristocracy should be selected and sent to Constantinople. Thereupon a list was prepared of officers related to Labour Candidates, Dukes, Members of Parliament, &c. Thinking that this promised at least a jaunt in Constantinople, S— had claimed descent from the bluest blood of England. After consideration of the rival claims, he and one other were selected. Their self-congratulations, however, were a little premature, as the commandant now informed them that the Turkish Government, having heard that their own officer prisoners in India were being badly treated, proposed taking reprisals on these two until their powerful relations in England should think fit to remedy matters on both sides.

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In vain the unfortunate dupes protested that the report was obviously false, asking that further inquiries should be made before reprisals were carried into effect. The reply was that the order was Enver Pasha's and could not be questioned, but that if they agreed to go quietly to Constantinople, they would at once be led into the presence of the Generalissimo, where they

could forward their protest in person. To this they had perforce to agree, but on arrival in the capital were at once flung into prison, kept in solitary confinement, and fed on bread and water. In this state they remained for some three weeks, after which the Turkish authorities discovered, as was only natural, that there had not been an atom of truth in the report upon which they had acted. By way of redress they allowed the innocent sufferers six days' absolute freedom in Constantinople, after which they were taken back to their old camp.

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From Angora onwards we were escorted by parties of the local gendarmerie; of the Changri guard who had so far accompanied us only a few came on with us to Yozgad; and they, ill-trained, ill-fed, and ill-clad, were rather passengers who called for our pity than guards capable of preventing us from decamping.

The gendarmes were, for the most part, remarkably well mounted, and in charge of them was a benevolent old gentleman of the rank of *bash-chaouse*, or sergeant-major, who was for ever holding forth upon his friendship towards the English and his utter inability to understand why we were not fighting side by side in this war. The sergeant-major talked much to us, punctuating his remarks with "Jánom" (My dear). He was jovial, he was pleasing to look at, he was interesting. He had been through several Turkish wars, and he discussed the Great War with more intelligence than many of the Turkish officers we had met.

One day as two of us were marching beside the horse he was riding, the dear old man pointed out a deep ravine some few hundred yards to our right. His face lighted up with pride of achievement and pleasant recollection. "Do you see that ravine?" he said. "Well, there I helped to massacre 5000 Armenians. Allah be praised!"

[53]

The 120-mile march from Angora to Yozgad occupied eight days. As usual we bivouacked each night in the open, on one occasion coming in for a tremendous thunderstorm. Our best day's march was one of thirty miles, and brought us down to the Kizil Irmak, better known to Greek scholars as the ancient river Halys. We camped on the western bank opposite the village of Koprú-Keui (= Bridge-Village), so called from the picturesque old stone bridge which here spans the largest river in Asia Minor. We were all glad of a bathe, although this was only safe close to the bank, where the water was hardly deep enough to swim in. The main stream was a swirling torrent of brown and muddy water, dashing between enormous rocks, which protected the bridge from its fury. It passed under only two of the nine arches and so onwards through a narrow gorge between high precipitous cliffs. The bridge itself, with narrow and steeply cambered roadway, and pointed arches of varying height and span, seemed almost one with the rocky cleft it spanned.

The rest of our trek to Yozgad was uneventful except for the upsetting of two carts, owing to reckless driving on the part of the Turkish Jehus.

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Our last day's march began on the 24th April 1918, when we set out from a small village twelve miles from our destination. The way climbed gradually till we topped a high ridge. Over this we marched, swinging down the farther slope at a quicker step. The winding road curled round spurs and valleys, and from one such spur we obtained our first sight of the town of Yozgad.

Unprepossessing it looked lying in a valley surrounded by barren hills, a few poplars here and there, the usual timber-built houses, a few mosques.

Four months later we looked at it for the last time. We could only see a few twinkling lights to the east in a curtain of starlit darkness; but we were well content as we turned away, for we had shaken the dust of prison from our feet.

FOOTNOTE:

[7] A Turkish word meaning "Major."

CHAPTER IV. YOZGAD CAMP.

[55]

With our arrival at Yozgad was renewed many an old friendship, dating back to the earlier days of the campaign in Mesopotamia; for, like ourselves, the majority of the eighty officers whom we found there were victims of the siege of Kut-el-Amara. A few days later about twenty officers of the original camp were transferred to Afion-Kara-Hissar, leaving us now a combined total of roughly 100 officers and 60 orderlies.

The "camp" occupied six detached houses, divided into two groups of three houses each, the one on the western, the other near the south-western limits of the town. With a single exception each house stood in its own grounds, which comprised something under an acre of garden apiece. These were in most cases planted with fruit trees, and in all cases surrounded by high stone walls. The first comers had by April 1918 converted these previously unkempt areas into flourishing vegetable gardens. For our safe custody there were on the average two sentries over each house; these had their sentry-boxes in the garden or at the entrance to the enclosure wall. There was also a post on the four-hundred-yard length of road which connected the two groups of houses.

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As had been our impression on arrival, the town of Yozgad could by no manner of means be called picturesque. It is squalidly built on the steep slopes of a narrow valley, surrounded on all sides by bare and rugged hills. The larger houses, it is true, have a few fruit trees in their gardens, and tall poplars line the river bank; the country around, however, is destitute of trees except for a small pine wood on the high ridge south of the town. The camp was both higher and less accessible than any other in Turkey; for Yozgad stands some 4500 feet above sea-level, and in the heart of the rugged mountain system of Anatolia, seven days' march from the nearest railway station.

The town itself is said to have had a population before the war of some 20,000 souls. At the time of our arrival it could hardly have contained one-fifth of that number; for, shortly before the formation of the camp in July 1916, most of the Armenians had been massacred; and they had formed a large proportion of the inhabitants. Their shops had been pillaged, and whenever there was a shortage of firewood the Turks merely proceeded to pull down another of the Armenian houses, which, as usual throughout Anatolia, were largely constructed of wood. The crash of falling timber as a building was demolished was a sound so common as to pass almost unnoticed by the prisoners. Of Turkish brutality, however, we had an even more constant reminder than the sound and sight of ruined buildings; for every day there were to be seen numbers of Armenian children dying as they lay in the narrow streets, starved, emaciated, and clad in rags. For us to provide relief on the large scale required was impossible, owing both to the difficulties of obtaining money and the necessity of screening our philanthropy from the commandant and other Turkish authorities. To the credit of the Turkish soldier be it said, however, that he at any rate did not prevent us from helping these poor miserable creatures; and it was thanks to connivance on the part of our sentries and escorts that we were able towards the end of our time to give away money and bread daily in the streets.

[57]

The White Paper published in November 1918 on the subject of the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey describes the commandant of the camp at Yozgad as a "Turk of the old school—polite, honest, and silent." Silent, or, we would rather say, taciturn, Kiazim Bey undoubtedly was, for it needed many applications before an inquiry or request received an answer at all. Polite, too, for when he did vouchsafe to reply he would promise almost anything; but is it not known to those who have dealt with a Turk, albeit one of the old school, that in his estimation a promise costs nothing and involves no obligation of fulfilment? It is merely his method of temporarily soothing your feelings, and is not this of the essence of politeness? As to his honesty, if he did not loot our parcels or steal our money, he was not averse from accepting a regular commission from every shopkeeper who wished to supply his wares to the camp. Even our sentries had to bribe him before they were allowed on leave. Ten Turkish pounds, or an equivalent in kind, passed hands before a fortnight's leave was granted.

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The following story can be vouched for. One of our guard, when desiring a holiday, turned up at the commandant's office, but he was out. His son, however, a boy of fourteen, was there, and to him the simple soldier gave his money to be handed on to Kiazim Bey. Such an opportunity did not often occur; so the boy spent the rest of that day gorging costly sweetmeats in the bazaar. After several days the soldier made further inquiries about his leave, and the truth was out. The story ends with a good beating for the boy and no leave for the soldier. Another of our guards used to mend boots for us, but finally gave it up, declaring openly that the commission demanded by his commandant made it no longer worth his while.

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By the time of the arrival of the party from Changri, a number of so-called privileges had been granted by this polite, honest, and silent old Turk—although, it must be admitted, rather in the spirit of the unjust judge worried incessantly by the importunate widow. The most useful of these concessions was the permission to go out coursing on two days a week. The "Yozgad Hunt Club" boasted a pack of no less than three couple of "hounds." These were of a local breed, and had the shape of small and rather moth-eaten greyhounds, mostly, however, with black, or tan and white, markings. Nevertheless, they were clean and affectionate, and, thanks to the master and whips, became wonderfully good coursers. Seldom did they fail to account for at least one hare or fox between the hours of 4 and 9 A.M. each Monday and Thursday in the spring and summer of 1918.

One exception we remember was the day when the master appeared for the first time in a pink coat of local style and dye, and then we drew blank. The field themselves were dazed, so the hounds had to be excused. Some of the happiest recollections of our captivity are of those glorious early mornings in the country, far away from the ugly town which was our prison. Here for a few brief hours it was almost possible to forget that we were prisoners of war, until reminded that this was Turkey by the monotonous drawl of one of our greatest exponents of the Ottoman tongue. Wafted on the soft morning breeze as we wended our way back to bath and breakfast, would come at intervals of half a minute some such sounds as those which follow: Er ... er ... posta ... bou ... bou ... bourda ... er ... er ... aie ... der.... Such fluency almost suggested that Turkish was a simple language, instead of one of the most difficult in the world, second only, it is said, to Chinese.

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Although attempts were made to play football, no suitable ground existed in or near Yozgad, and four-a-side hockey became the form of recreation which for the majority in the camp provided the best means of combining pleasure and hard exercise. Hockey was available at any time of day, as the ground was within the precincts of the camp, being in fact the lowest of a series of terraces in one of the gardens belonging to our houses. It was a bare plot, with a hard but dusty surface, and surrounded on three sides by stone walls: the area available for play was, perhaps, the length of a cricket pitch and about ten yards across, so that there was not room for more than a total of eight players.



**From a sketch by Capt. E. B. Burns, E. Kent Regt.
COUNTRY KNOWN TO THE LOCAL HUNT CLUB AS "HADES."**

The equipment consisted of a soft leather ball, and for each combatant a stick made from selected pieces of firewood, shaped according to fancy, subject to the finished article being passed through a 1½-inch ring. The resultant game was always fast and often furious, its only drawback as a means of training for would-be escapers being the not inconsiderable risk of losing an eye, finger, or portions of an ankle or knee. The excitement created by such matches as the old camp, Yozgad, *versus* the newcomers from Changri, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th teams, reached at times a pitch rarely attained in the most hotly-contested house-match at an English public school.

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For those debarred for any reason from this strenuous form of exercise there were walks each evening, except on hunting days and Wednesdays. On the latter days there were, during the summer months, weekly picnics in the neighbouring pine woods, to which about 50 per cent of the camp would go.

During daylight intercommunication was allowed between the two groups of houses: nominally an escort was necessary to accompany such visitors along the intervening road, but in practice this rule was a dead letter.

So hard-won, however, had been these few privileges, that the prospect of any one attempting to escape and thereby causing their suspension was looked upon by the majority of the original camp almost with horror. And this was not altogether without reason, for some of them had gone seriously into the question of escape, and had come to the conclusion that, from so hopelessly inaccessible a spot, all attempts, at least without outside assistance, were doomed to failure. Those of us who had come from Changri, however, were not likely to give up our long-cherished hopes without a struggle, but in the meantime kept our nefarious intentions to ourselves, except for half a dozen Yozgad officers whom we knew for certain to be keen to escape. The arrival of Cochrane had more than countered the additional difficulties involved by our move from Changri to Yozgad. While at Kara-Hissar, he had arranged a scheme with the powers that be in England by which a friendly boat should remain off a certain point on the coast of the Mediterranean for a definite number of days at the end of August 1918.

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Cochrane now placed this scheme at the disposal of the Changri division. There was some reluctance to give up old plans, but in the end four parties decided to take advantage of "Rendezvous X," as Cochrane's meeting-place was called—suffice to say that it was on the Adalian coast nearly due south of Kara-Hissar. Of these four parties ours was one. Our route to the island of Samos—our original scheme—would now be some 450 miles. Actually this was only 50 miles farther than to Rendezvous X, for the only feasible route to the latter was *via* Kara-Hissar, owing to the desert and mountains which would have to be crossed on a more direct route. Cochrane's scheme, however, promised an almost certain ending to the march to any one who reached the coast; whereas, even if we reached the western shore of Asia Minor, we should still have the problem of getting across to the island, and that from a coast which must inevitably be very carefully guarded. [63]

Our six therefore decided to give up the old plan, and soon after were joined by Cochrane himself and Captain F. R. Ellis, D.C.L.I. This was a tremendous advantage to us, as Cochrane not only had the experience so hardly gained by his previous attempt, but had actually seen some of the country over which we should have to march if we succeeded in passing Kara-Hissar. It was of course impossible for him to do guide to all four parties, as large numbers marching together would be immediately tracked; so he gave what suggestions he could, and the other three parties were to make their way to the rendezvous independently.

Our party therefore numbered eight, all of whom have now been introduced to our readers. We were the largest, and may claim to have been the most representative party, including as we did one naval officer, one gunner, one sapper, one British Infantry, two Indian Army, and two Territorial officers. The other three parties making for Rendezvous X numbered in all nine officers and Gunner Prosser. Besides these there were two parties having other schemes. The first, consisting almost entirely of Yozgad officers, intended marching for the Black Sea and crossing to Russia, the full facts of whose chaotic state were not known to us at the time. There were six officers in this party. Lastly, a party of two more officers determined to set out eastward, and hoped to make their way into Persia.^[8] There had been three or four other officers beside these who had seriously contemplated escape while at Changri, but who were now forced to change their mind through sickness or temporary disablements, such as crooked knees, &c. [64]

The 26 starters—25 officers and 1 man—were scattered over five out of the six houses comprising the camp. It was necessary, therefore, for those in each house—in no case all of them members of the same party—to devise their own particular means of getting out of the camp precincts, and then for a committee composed of a representative from each party to co-ordinate their respective schemes as far as possible. [65]

The first thing was to settle on a definite date for the attempt. As the majority were to make for Rendezvous X, to fit in with Cochrane's prearranged scheme, the date had to be later in the year than had been our idea while at Changri. It was decided that the night chosen should be the one towards the end of July most suitable as regards the moon. To enable the members of the various parties to join up at some convenient local rendezvous, and then put as great a distance as possible between themselves and Yozgad before the following dawn, the ideal was for the moon to rise an hour or so after we had all left our houses. Great credit is due to Captain T. R. Wells for correctly computing the times of rising and setting of that irregular planet. The only material available was a Nautical Almanac some four years old.

From his predictions, the 30th July was eventually fixed upon as the best night. The moon would rise about 10.30 P.M., and 9.15 was fixed upon as a suitable time for all to leave their houses—if they could. This meant all would have been present at the evening roll-call, which took place during dinner at about 7.45 P.M.; and their absence, if no alarm occurred, would not be discovered until the check taken at dawn next day. [66]

The advent of Cochrane to our party led to a reconsideration of the whole question of the food and kit we should carry on our momentous journey. His previous experience and that of Keeling's party was that 35 lb. was about as much as one could expect to carry across country consistently with making reasonable progress. In the end, however, we found that there were so many essentials that we should have each to take about 43 lb., exclusive of the weight of packs, haversacks, &c., to carry them. The following list gives some idea of our final equipment. Each member of the party was to take the following:—

Food—

- Sixty-eight biscuits, made by "Escapers Ltd.," five to the lb.
- Six soft biscuits, four to the lb.
- Sultanas, 4 lb.
- Cheese, ½ lb.
- Fresh meat (for the first two days only), ½ lb.
- Rice, 2 lb.
- Cocoa *or* Ovaltine, 1 lb.
- Soup tablets (Oxo), 12 cubes.
- Chocolate, 1 lb.
- Tea, ¼ lb.
- Salt, about 1/8 lb.
- Emergency ration of chocolate, Horlick's malted milk tablets, *or* Brand's essence, about ½ lb.

Clothing—

- Spare pair of boots, or several pairs of native sandals.
- Spare shirt.
- Towel.
- Several pairs of socks.
- Felt mufti hat or service-dress cap.
- Vermin-proof belt.
- Spare bootlaces.
- Handkerchiefs (mostly in the form of bags round the food).

Miscellaneous—

- Share of medicines, mainly in tabloid form.
- One large and one small bandage.
- Matches, two or more boxes, one being in a water-tight case.
- Flint and slow-match cigarette lighter.
- Cigarettes or tobacco, according to taste.
- Soap, one piece.
- String.
- Mug and spoon.
- Wool for repairs to socks.
- Spare razor-blades.
- Compass.

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Clasp-knife.
Whistle.
Tooth-brush.
Comb.
Notebook and pencil.

In addition, the following were to be distributed in more or less equal weights among the party as a whole:—

1 pair of field-glasses.
6 skeins of ¾-inch rope.
2 boot-repair outfits.
1 housewife.
3 chargals (canvas bags for water).
Map, original and copies; and enlargements from a small map.
Cardboard protractors.
"Sun compass."
Book of star charts.
Extra tea in the form of tablets.
1 aluminium "degchie" or "dixie" (cooking-pot).
1 very small adze (a carpenter's tool used in the East).
2 pocket Gillette shaving sets.
4 candles, } for giving red-light signals at
red cloth } Rendezvous X.
2 pairs of scissors.
2 iron rings, for use in the event of having to tow our kit across an unfordable river.
1 sausage of solid meat extract.
Opium.
1 bottle of "Kola" compound.
1 lb. tapioca.
Small reel of fine steel wire.
One ½-pint bottle of brandy.
Fishing tackle.

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The actual clothes to be worn on starting were left to individual fancy. It was a question first of what one possessed; secondly, of what one anticipated would suit the temperatures we should meet, and best resist the wear and tear which our clothing would have to withstand. Some decided on Indian khaki drill, others on home service serge uniform; others again on a mixture of the two. One had a rainproof coat cut down and converted to a tunic, which in practice was found to answer well.

"Shorts," we knew, would be very comfortable, but unfortunately they are a peculiarly British style of garment; so they were vetoed, at any rate for wear by day. One or two, however, rendered their trousers convertible to "shorts," for use during darkness, by slitting each leg along one seam to a point above the knee, adding buttons and cutting button-holes at the correct places to enable them to be turned up and fastened, so as to leave the knees free. Most of us, however, preferred not to risk the loss of any protection against cold such as this plan involved, and eventually started off wearing trousers tied below the knee with a piece of cord, in true navy fashion.

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It was realised that we could not hope to pass for Turks by day, so no elaborate disguise was attempted. At night, however, a Turk's silhouette does not much differ, except for his headgear, from that of a European—for a Turk is not a European, even though he is allowed a bit of European soil. We accordingly decided to wear fezes, so that any one passing us at night would mistake us for Turks and ask no questions. For the daytime we would hold to our original Changri scheme of pretending to be a German survey party, and for this purpose would carry either Homburg hats or British field-service caps.

As to the best means of taking along all this kit, opinions were most diverse. The weary experiments which had been commenced whilst at Changri were continued with renewed zest at Yozgad, until by a system of trial and error each had worked his own particular idea into a more or less practical form. Our difficulties were enhanced by the necessity of concealing our experimental models from the eyes not only of brother Turk, but also of brother officers, so that all our tests were carried out in the somewhat confined space of the room cupboards. While so situated there was the risk of finding oneself shut in for half an hour if an officer not in the know came into the room to describe the events of the latest fox-hunt. Eventually the equipment of our party varied from a simple but enormous rucksack, with water-bottle slung separately, to a rather complicated arrangement by which the pack was balanced to some extent by biscuit-pouches, haversack, and water-bottle attached to the belt.

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In all cases the total load carried, with water-bottles filled but chargals empty, amounted to close upon 50 lb.; of this 25¼ lb. were food, 5 lb. water-bottle, and 12 lb. accessories and spare clothing; and the remainder the weight of the equipment itself—in one case as much as 8 lb.

A few notes as to the above food and equipment may be of interest. The soft biscuits were obtained at the last moment from an officer who had intended to decamp but was prevented from so doing by a game leg. They took the place of 1½ lb. of a kind of sun-dried meat known locally as "pastomar," similar to "biltong," but seasoned with garlic. This we had bought two or three weeks previous to the date of departure, for it was not always obtainable in the bazaar. Hence it was necessary to take it while the chance offered, in spite of the unpleasantness of having to keep such evil-smelling stuff in a living-room. Its taste to any one but the garlic-loving Oriental is as disagreeable as its scent, so that it was not altogether without relief that we found at the last moment that most of the pastomar was already breeding maggots, and we replaced it with the odd six biscuits apiece.

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Having read during our captivity a good deal about Arctic exploration, we had also experimented with the local pemmican, but found it would not withstand the heat. The cheeses were from home parcels, and to save weight were taken out of their tins on the last day. The same was also done with the cocoa and Ovaltine, which were then carried in bags made from handkerchiefs.

Two of the party also carried an extra pound of chocolate and some Oxo tablets, on the understanding that they were to be thrown away if the loads proved too heavy, for most of us felt that the last straw was already nearly reached.

Spare clothing was left for individuals to decide for themselves, and some carried a little thin underclothing and a "woolley" in addition to the spare shirt and socks.

The medicines comprised quinine, aspirin, cascara sagrada, Dover's powders, and iodine, these being supplied to us by our own doctors. Also some arrowroot and Ovaltine in case any one had to diet himself. We had in addition, while at Changri, managed to obtain from the local chemist about fifteen opium pills per head. Most of us further carried either boric powder or ointment for the feet. The vermin-proof belts were to be more useful as a safeguard against chill than against vermin, as in the end we on no occasion slept inside a Turkish dwelling.

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With one exception, all the compasses were of the poorest description, being of the more or less toy variety with a mirror on the back. Changri, however, produced one of superior pattern, which we purchased without arousing suspicion, and attempted to make more efficient with the luminous paint off the face of an old watch, but without very lasting success.

It is not easy to make a bag of canvas which will hold water, but by dint of fine stitching and a special kind of beeswax, our naval leader succeeded in producing three chargals which did yeoman service.

The map on which we were to rely was a French one, forty years old, and on a scale of about twenty-four miles to the inch. An officer had bought it for five pounds from a Greek dentist at Kastamoni. As it happened it was not bought primarily for escape purposes, but we persuaded him to sell it to us on his leaving Changri for Geddos. In this the hill features were very indistinctly shown by vague hachuring, and even a big river such as the Kizil Irmak was in several places shown dotted, signifying not that this dried up during parts of the year, but that no one had surveyed it. An up-to-date but very small map had been received from home by means of a series of six "bananas," each containing a tiny section; but, owing to our change of plan, this showed little of our proposed route.

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The "sun compass" needs some explanation. This was an invention of Captain A. B. Matthews, D.S.O., R.E., who had been a prisoner of war at Yozgad since the fall of Kut-el-Amara. Wishing to make a rough survey of the immediately surrounding country for the use of the Hunt Club, and finding that local magnetic attraction made a compass altogether unreliable, he bethought him of a simple means of utilising the sun, which in the wonderful climate of Asia Minor is rarely obscured throughout the spring, summer, or autumn. The "sun compass" consists merely of a thin wooden disc of say 5 inches diameter, with the outer edge divided into 360 degrees, and with a hole at the centre through which can be inserted a piece of stiff straight wire. A table of the sun's bearing at any hour on any day completes the instrument. In actual use the disc is held horizontally, with the graduations upwards, and the wire kept vertical and protruding above the disc. Then, by turning the latter till the shadow of the wire falls on the sun's bearing plus 180 degrees, you have the disc set to read off true bearings in any direction.

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Captain Matthews was also responsible for the star charts. By means of two maps of the heavens obtained from a book on travel, published by the Royal Geographical Society, he devised from first principles a "bus" consisting of three concentric cardboard discs. By means of these it was possible, almost mechanically, to read off the bearings of the brighter stars in the main constellations for any hour and any night of the year. It was thus possible to obtain a series of charts showing on which star one should march for any required bearing, and at any particular time. We prepared them for all hours of the nights from the 1st August to the 15th September 1918. This chart-book was of value as a check on a magnetic compass by night, but assumed an elementary knowledge of at least those constellations which would be of use for the particular purpose in view.

Although it was expected that if we wished to evade recapture we should have to avoid replenishing our supplies at any villages, it was necessary to take money in case we were compelled to do so as a last resource. For this purpose a certain amount of gold and silver was essential: otherwise it was quite possible that, in payment for anything in an out-of-the-way district, the paper money would be received at its true value, namely, nothing at all. A certain amount of paper money was, however, advisable in view of the conditions we might expect if we were recaptured, as paper money was less likely to be taken away from us than gold and silver. It was decided then to start if possible with at least £2 each in gold, £30 in paper, and two medjidies (worth four shillings each) in silver. This we succeeded in collecting, thanks to being able to cash a few cheques locally: for both the gold and the silver, however, it was necessary to pay five times their face value in paper. We bought silver coins, a few at a time, from various sentries. These men thoroughly understood our desire for them when we hinted at a pretty girl in England who would look very handsome with a necklace of medjidies round her neck.

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While at Changri our party had succeeded in obtaining from other officers two *pukka* helio-mirrors, which had escaped destruction on the fall of Kut-el-Amara. With these we had fitted up a duplex heliograph, complete with signalling key and adjusting screws. Whereas, however, for the Samos scheme it would have been invaluable, for Rendezvous X its use was more problematical; and in view of the way in which essentials had gradually mounted up, it was in the end rather reluctantly decided that the helio must go by the board, as it weighed about three pounds.

Another decision now made was that in our party we should not use violence in order to make our escape, unless it should be necessary on the coast itself to avoid throwing away a really good chance. It was recognised that if bloodshed occurred, the Turks would be quite capable of killing off the whole of our party, and possibly others, if recaptured. For this reason no attempt was made to procure firearms, though this would probably have been no more difficult than obtaining the fezes, compasses, and field-glasses.

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During the four months we were at Yozgad, Grunt, being one of the best Turkish scholars in the camp, started a class for any who chose to learn Turkish. About five times a week, therefore, all the original six of our escape-party and a few others used to meet in Grunt's room for an hour's instruction. In the case of would-be escapers, the main attraction of these lessons was this: if any of us were recaptured, as some were practically certain to be, it would be possible to make oneself understood to some slight extent, and thereby perhaps alleviate the unpleasantness of prison life by being able to let our jailers know our wants. Since, also, to judge by the experience of those who had been recaptured, we should, if equally unfortunate, spend several months in the close company of some of the worst criminals in Turkey, it would be a pity not to take the opportunity of picking up a really good conversational knowledge of the language under exceptionally favourable circumstances. For this a grounding in grammar would be invaluable. Nothing else but these considerations would have induced the majority of us to attempt so difficult a task as learning even the rudiments of the Ottoman tongue.

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As the time grew near for the great adventure, the last stage of our training was entered upon. Every opportunity was taken of going out hunting, although the field was limited to a total of thirty. Keeness in hockey died off, as many of us were afraid of sustaining some injury which might incapacitate us on the actual day. Running and hard walking round the garden became a regular institution in some houses; and several cupboards, if suddenly opened at almost any hour of the day and at many in the night, would have disclosed a member of an escape-party loaded up in the most extraordinary manner, and performing gymnastic exercises for the strengthening of leg and shoulder muscles. In view of the inevitable hard marching, towards the end several of the party even went so far as to soak the feet several times a day in a strong solution of alum, in the hope of hardening the feet and avoiding blisters.

At the same time efforts were made to build up the stamina necessary for a 400-mile march by eating the most nourishing foods obtainable, irrespective of the fact that the price of any food seemed to go up as the cube of its body-building value. To give one instance, sugar at this time cost a sovereign the pound.

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It was almost inevitable that, with so many preparations in progress, the secret of our intentions should leak out in the camp; and once suspicions were aroused many of our actions would go to confirm them. Thus it came about that a few days before the 30th July, the whole of the camp at Yozgad knew pretty well that attempts to escape were on foot; the shopping lists for the Changri division were alone enough to have set people talking. Everybody wanted bootlaces, straps, hobnails, rope, &c., in prodigious quantities. Unfortunately the Turks also appeared to have got wind of it. For the last week of July, sentries were visited and awakened with unheard-of frequency. Even the commandant himself occasionally visited the different houses after dark. In the case of one house, an extra sentry was suddenly posted in the garden.

However, our preparations went quietly on; our "hosts" might have nothing really definite to go upon, and the more keen the sentries were now, the more weary they would be by the time the real day arrived. We therefore continued to make holes in walls, loosen iron bars, dig unnecessary irrigation channels in the garden, &c., &c., all as aids to egress from one house or another on the final night.

In the particular house of our original six, (Cochrane and Ellis lived in another), we had come to the conclusion that our best chance was to prepare a hole through the outer wall of the kitchen belonging to our mess. This kitchen, it is necessary to explain, was built along the high enclosure wall of the garden, and was separated from the house itself by a narrow alley-way, over which one of the sentries stood guard. Next to the kitchen in the same outhouse was a little room with one small window opening on to the alley, the entrance being *via* the kitchen itself. This second room was used as a fowl-house, and it was here that we made up our minds to prepare a hole three-quarters of the way through the outer wall. How exactly those escaping from our house were to get across into the kitchen and finish off the hole on the final night was a problem of which the solution was only settled in detail at the last moment, and we will therefore leave our readers in a similar state of suspense. The essential was that all should be present at the evening roll-call, and yet the hole must be completed and everybody be across at precisely 9.15 P.M.

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So uncertain were we of the means of effecting this that we had a second alternative in case the first scheme could not be carried out. This involved getting over the wall by ladders.

A day or two before the 30th July, representatives of the various parties met once again in solemn conclave to ensure that the

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various plans should not clash, and a few general instructions were issued to parties with a view to obtaining as long a start as possible. Every one was to be represented in bed on the night by a dummy; boots were to be padded, likewise the ends of khud-sticks (these were a *sine qua non* of our equipment for night-marching); water-bottles were not to be filled because they gurgled; every man's equipment was to be finally tried on to make certain that it would not make any noise.

Lastly, a lamp-signal was arranged between houses in case any party should be caught just prior to leaving their house, for instance while completing a hole. If that signal were given, it would no longer be necessary for the other parties to wait until 9.15 before they started; on the contrary, they were advised to start away at once before the alarm reached the sentries in the other houses.

The 30th July arrived, but with it an unexpected complication. Vague news had just come through that an exchange ship was being sent out from England to fetch some of the worst cases of sick and wounded from among the British prisoners in Turkey. The boat, said the rumour, was due to arrive at some port at about the end of August, and the question therefore arose at the eleventh hour whether, if we set off now, it might not give the Turks the pretext that our Government had informed us of the visit of this vessel, and that we were making off in the hopes of getting aboard her secretly. The argument was of course, on the face of it, ridiculous, but then so is the Turk, and it would be a terrible responsibility for us if by our escape we destroyed the hopes of these poor sick and wounded men. A vote was therefore taken as to whether we would postpone the date, with the result that the motion was carried by a small majority. [81]

This was a terrible disappointment, for it meant, we thought, another month of indecision. Moreover, there would be no hope of finding a boat still awaiting us at Rendezvous X, and it would be too late in the year for much chance of our finding crops to eat or hide in. It was the moon, however, which in the end decided that the postponement could not be for so long. On working out its time of rising, it was found that if we waited till the end of August the moon would only rise late enough to let us leave our houses at 9.15, when within four days of its disappearance. In this way we should be handicapped by having the maximum of dark, or practically dark, nights for our journey. The whole question was therefore revised in this new light, and it was decided that we must either start before the new moon came or else give up all hope of leaving in this year at all. The night 7th-8th August was then chosen. This would be a Wednesday, and the following morning a hunt-day, when the check taken at dawn was confused by the movements of thirty officers dressing in haste for the day's sport. [82]

The week's grace was spent in perfecting all our arrangements. One refinement was to collect our own and other people's hair when cut by an officer barber, and paste it on to the outside of a cloth bag stuffed with rubbish or towels made up to about the size of a man's head. These were to be the heads of our dummies. Meanwhile we were more careful with our shopping orders, and were relieved to find suspicions in the camp dying down.

On the morning of the 31st July an officer, who was supposed to know nothing of the escape, had been called by his orderly and told, "They ain't gone after all, sir!"

FOOTNOTE:

- [8] The following is a list of the officers who attempted to escape, but were unhappily all recaptured, mostly within a few days of starting, but in the case of one party not until they had been at large for eighteen days and covered over 200 miles: Major C. H. Stockley, 66th Punjabis; Captains C. Manners, 104th Rifles; A. B. Matthews, D.S.O., R.E.; E. W. Burdett and C. A. Raynor, 48th Pioneers; T. R. Wells, R.A.F.; R. O. Chamier, 110th Mahrattas; H. H. Rich, 120th Infantry; E. T. M. Patmore, Hants Regiment, T.F.; Lieutenants Tudway, R.N.; J. H. Brabazon, Connaught Rangers; A. V. Barlow, R.A.F.; H. D. Stearns, I.A.R., 117th Mahrattas; A. Macfadyen, I.A.R., 110th Mahrattas; F. S. Sheridan, I.A.R., Gurkhas; J. Dooley, I.A.R., M.T.; M. L. C. Smith, I.A.R., 7th Rajputs.

CHAPTER V.

THE FLAG FALLS.

At last the long-deferred day had dawned—the cause rather of relief than excitement to our party, after their planning and scheming for eleven long months and active preparations for as many weeks. Our only prayer now was that we should at least have a run for our money, and be spared the ignominy of being led back into the camp at Yozgad without the taste of even a few days freedom.

The 7th August being a Wednesday, at 11 A.M. the usual picnic party set off for the pine woods. The majority never dreamt for a moment of the intention of twenty-five officers—a quarter of all the officers in the camp—to escape that night. Their departure was the signal for feverish activity in completing preparations which, by their nature, had to be left until the last day. Such, in the house then occupied by the present writers, called Hospital House, was the screwing together of the ladders required in case an alternative scheme for getting out of the camp should prove necessary. Then there were rucksacks and haversacks to be finally made up, and the whole "Christmas Tree" to be tried on to ensure that there was no rattling. For reasons which will appear, it was necessary too for the Old Man and Looney to convey their kits across the alley into the fowl-house and there leave them concealed, the one in a blanket and the other in a box. Meanwhile, Grunt and Perce put the finishing touches to the hole commenced, as previously described, in the fowl-house wall, until daylight could be seen through every joint in the outer skin of masonry, and until it was as certain as such things could be that the remaining stones would come away easily. Watches had to be synchronised to ensure that all six parties should start simultaneously; the fresh meat for the first two days to be issued, and so on almost *ad infinitum*. It was at this stage that we discovered the maggots in the "pastomar" or "biltong," to which reference has already been made. [84]

That evening, before the hour when intercommunication between houses was supposed to cease, there were many visits from well-wishers living in other houses who knew of our intentions, and last arrangements were made with our British orderlies to play their part. Doubtless they did it well. One can imagine the delight with which they would put some of our dummies to bed after our departure, and as we left we heard their efforts in the house to cover our exit with the noise of a sing-song. If no alarm occurred before daylight, they were to remove the dummies after these had served their purpose at the 4 A.M. "rounds." One orderly had also volunteered to build up the hole in the wall as soon as the house and kitchen doors were unlocked next morning. [85]

At last all was ready, and we sat down to what, we hoped, would be our last full meal for many a day. Twenty minutes to eight came and went, the time when the *onbashi*, or Turkish corporal, usually took roll-call; but it was not till eight o'clock that evening that the six of the party in our house, who, with a Major A— and the "King of Oireland," another escaper, formed the mess on the top floor, heard his footsteps on the stairs. We returned his good-night with rather more than usual gusto, and waited till he had disappeared, as his custom was, into the next room. Now was the moment. Old Man and Looney slipped out of the room and downstairs into the kitchen, the door of which, with the side-door of the house, was allowed to remain open every night until our orderlies had "washed up." These two were to go across in their shirt sleeves and carrying plates, so that, if he noticed them at all, the sentry posted over the alley separating the main building from the outhouse would naturally mistake them for orderlies. In the excitement of the moment, however, Old Man had forgotten to bring down his coat; and Looney, now safely ensconced in the fowl-house, wondered why he had not followed him across. Next minute there was a tremendous crash and a tinkle of broken crockery. The Old Man, discovering his loss, had turned back and slipped on the stairs. Nothing could have exceeded in realism this unintentional imitation of an orderly. As he picked himself up, he saw the feet of the *onbashi* descending the stairs above him, with the result that he lost no further time in crossing to the kitchen. Orderly M— was sent back to fetch the missing article, which arrived in due course. [86]

Now followed an anxious few minutes. Sometimes it happened that the *onbashi* would miscount an officer or man, or count one twice over, and the check would then be repeated throughout the house. We realised that if this occurred on the present night it would be necessary for Old Man and Looney to reappear from the kitchen, and for scheme No. 2 to come into operation. Incidentally their kits, then in the outhouse, would have to be brought back in the blanket and box by our orderlies. Scheme No. 2 was to leave the house, carrying ladders, through a window on the eastern side; after which would follow a ticklish crawl between two sentries forty yards apart to the garden wall nine feet in height. The bars of the window in question had been [87]

loosened and cracked by Looney, with Old Man watching the sentries' movements, during some amateur theatricals held in the house on the previous night. To our relief, however, this plan had not to be put into execution.

As was his custom, when the orderlies had finished their work, the *onbashi* locked the house and kitchen doors. No sooner had his footsteps died away than the advance-guard of our party set to work to complete the opening of the wall. It was now about 8.15 P.M. The work went on quickly but quietly. A few minutes only and the clear starlit sky was visible through the rapidly enlarging aperture.

Then came another anxious moment. As the two were relieving one another at the work, there suddenly appeared at the half-completed task the head of a mongrel dog. One growl or bark would suffice to draw the attention of the watchmen over the vegetable gardens outside, who did not hesitate to fire off their ancient rifles on the slightest alarm; but the dog after one look in at the hole strolled on, and the good work was resumed.

There was one large stone which seemed likely to give trouble; indeed it had almost been decided to let it remain, when it suddenly came away and crashed noisily to the ground. But the sound, if heard at all, fell on deaf ears—although it must have been at about this very time that some of the party, still in the house and overlooking the wall, saw a man standing within a score of yards from the hole. [88]

Their work completed, Old Man and Looney proceeded to screen it from any one passing casually along, by affixing a square of canvas over the outside with "blobs" of beeswax. It now only remained to arrange for the easy withdrawal of the staple of the kitchen door, so that the latter could be opened from the outside, although padlocked; then, having donned haversack, water-bottle, and pack, to await the arrival of the remaining six from this house, four of our own and two of another party.

When Old Man and Looney had stepped off to the kitchen the other six of the second-floor mess had remained at table, talking and smoking as usual. The Turkish corporal taking roll-call reappeared from the room beyond the dining-room, and was told not to forget the "yourt" for the next day. "Yourt," a kind of junket, is a staple diet of the Turk, and most of the prisoners became very partial to it. As it was hard to come by except through the medium of a sentry, it was their custom to remind him each evening, so that he might have some faint chance of remembering about it next morning.

A few minutes later they heard the kitchen door being locked, and heaved a sigh of relief. The advance-party had had enough time to get across to the kitchen, and roll had been correctly called the first time. Major A— in our mess, who was not escaping, had offered to watch the Upper House for the alarm-signal, and he was left sitting in the mess-room while the others set to work on various jobs. Grunt and Perce removed all obstructions to exit from the carpenter's shop door, while Nobby and Johnny took the four ladders from their hiding-place in a wood-store and tied bits of felt round the ends to deaden the sound when they should be placed against the wall. After this the ladders were taken into the cellar, whence scheme No. 2 might have to be worked. They then went upstairs to the bedroom, where their escape paraphernalia was stored. Here they hung towels and blankets over the windows, and started to dress by the light of a candle. It was a queer sight indeed. They were, at this point, joined by Sheridan, who belonged to a downstairs mess, and one Pat. The latter was dresser-in-chief, and helped them on with their equipment. He was very miserable that he was not going himself, but he had a crocked knee and it would have been madness for him to think of marching over broken country by night. [89]

He now employed spare moments repeating certain sentences that he had learnt in order to call away the sentry over the alley: on this depended the best scheme of getting out of the house. The bedroom was the one in which Old Man, Grunt, and Johnny slept, and those in the room now set to work to make up the dummies in the three beds. The heads had already been fashioned, and, with a few clothes stuffed under the blankets and the heads placed in position, the beds were soon occupied by three graceful figures in attitudes of deep repose. The small piece of towel forehead that could be seen over the edge of the blanket looked perhaps a trifle pale, but, apart from that, the beds seemed quite natural. They could not resist the temptation of calling the Major away from the mess window for a moment, just to have a look at the sleeping beauties, and he returned chuckling to his post. [90]

Water-bottles were then partially filled with a thick paste of cocoa. Although water was not to be carried at the start, on account of the impossibility of preventing a gurgle in the water-bottle, the cocoa paste was permissible, for, being only just liquid enough to pour, it made no noise. It had been decided that morning that it would be best to leave the bedroom before 9 P.M., at which time the sentries changed. A few minutes before this hour, therefore, the six officers gave their feet a gouty appearance by tying felt padding on to their boots, and then started down to the ground-floor. On the way, Johnny turned into the orderlies' room to say good-bye, thanking them hurriedly for their help, without which the preparations for the escape would have been almost impossible. A few days later he found in the pocket of his jersey, which had been mended by an orderly belonging to the Norfolk regiment, a small piece of paper on which was written, "Good-bye, and good luck, sir.—B.," and he still has it in his possession. Going downstairs they met an officer prisoner, who, not having been admitted to the secret, nearly had a fit at the sight of six such extraordinary objects. [91]

Grunt looked in at another orderlies' room above the exit, and asked them to blow out their lamp and make a noise. The six then crept quietly into the prearranged room, and waited breathlessly by the door.

Sentries were changed, and once again all became still. One lived every second of that waiting.

Their plan now depended on the aid of Pat. Although debarred from escaping himself, he was willing to help others to liberty at considerable risk to himself. Punctually at 9.15, the hour at which the parties in the different houses were allowed to start, Pat's clear tones could be heard calling to the sentry on the alley-way—

"Nebuchi, nebuchi, jigara dushdu." ("Sentry, sentry, I've dropped my cigarettes.")

And indeed he had: a hundred scattered about a cabbage-bed should keep the sentry busy for some time. But the wretched man nearly upset all calculations. Wearied with a quarter of an hour's duty, he was already almost asleep.

It was a moment of terrible suspense for the six officers waiting, ready loaded up with their kits, in the ground-floor room opposite to the kitchen. The door of this led on to the alley-way; normally it was disused and kept locked, but the lock had now been picked and the door could be opened in a moment. [92]

Would the sentry hear Pat calling? And would he desert his post even if he did hear?

They had heard Pat's first sentence. No reply.

It was repeated, then again and again.

After they had heard him shouting for many hours (perhaps thirty seconds, as time is reckoned by a watch), the sentry answered.

His form was just visible as he passed by a small iron-barred window, and now was the opportunity. They could cross unobserved to the kitchen. An open door, three steps across the alley-way, a fumble with the kitchen door staple; another open door, a turn to the left, bend down or you'll knock your head off getting into the fowl-house, starlight showing in a black wall, through head first and almost on your face into long grass, and there you are—a free man.

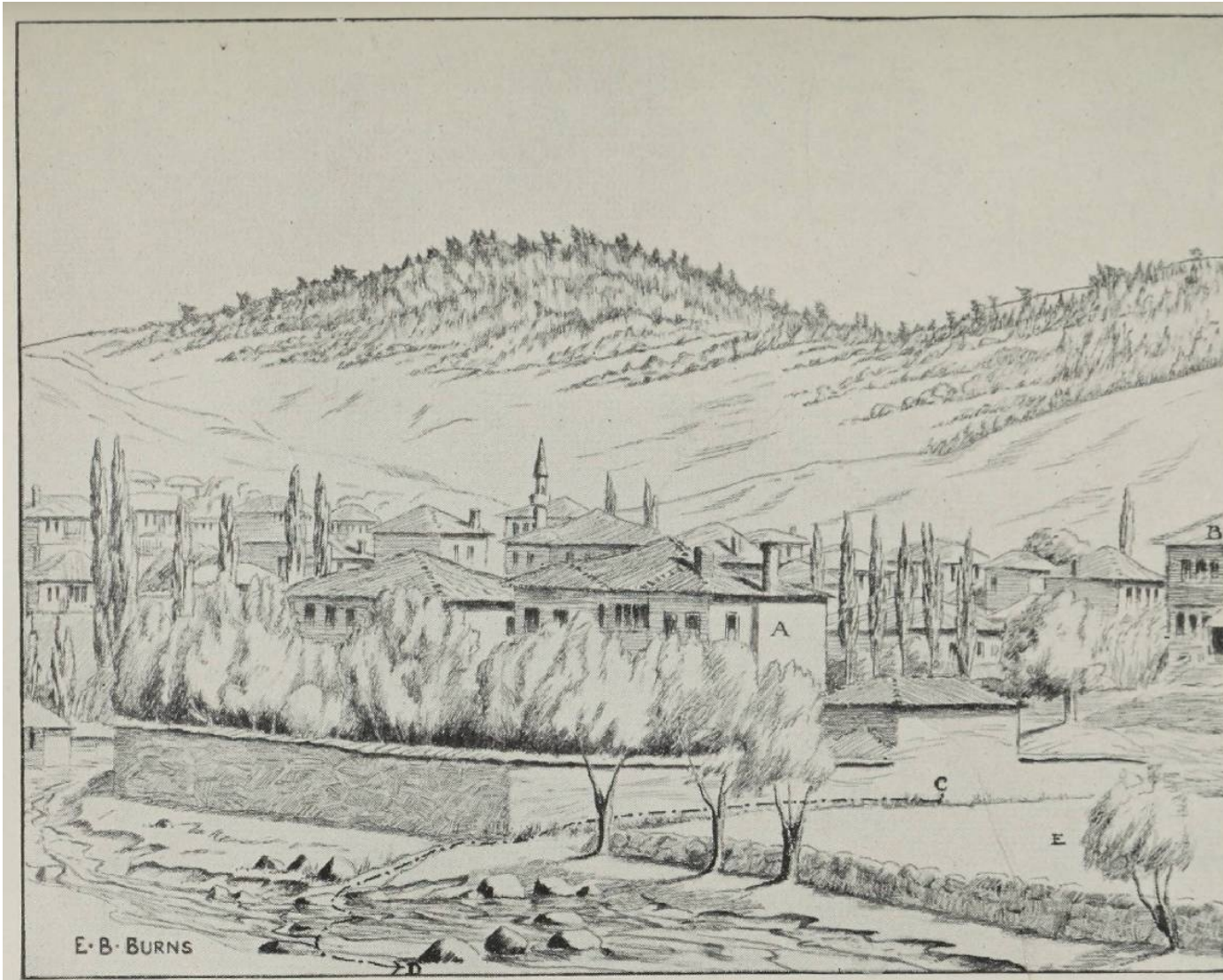
Meanwhile Pat was no doubt explaining to the delighted old sentry from the upper window how he could have a few cigarettes himself and return the remainder next morning. We sometimes wonder whether the sentry was foolish enough to mention to his relief about the cigarettes he had been given. At the time of writing we are still ignorant how long it was before our departure was discovered.^[9] [93]

Looney and Old Man, being already on the spot, had been granted the privilege of leading through the hole, the remainder following in an order arranged by lot, since ours was not the only party represented. It so happened that the two of the other party were sandwiched between the other four of ours. This caused a temporary separation; for at the best it took an appreciable time to crawl through the wall and pick oneself up on the other side, but these two were especially slow. Grunt too had lost time when it came to his turn. Impatiently waiting to see the starry sky once more when the then broad form of Johnny should have ceased to obscure the hole, he eventually discovered that the cause of the darkness was not that Johnny had jammed, but that the canvas flap had fallen, and was covering the hole all too effectively.

Our main object at this stage was to avoid disturbing the garden chowkidars, and therefore each as he emerged lost no time in creeping along the high garden wall, and dropping down into the friendly shelter of the river bed. For all its "hundred springs"—the meaning of the name "Yozgad"—the river for the greater part of the year consisted merely of a shallow and dirty stream, not more than ten feet broad, although its banks were as many yards apart, and from five to eight feet in height. It was [94]

along this that we all turned down-stream, Johnny now taking the lead. A few days previously he had suddenly developed a passionate interest in natural history. A polite letter, in which the word "ornithological" played a great part, was written to the commandant, and Johnny was permitted to join two real naturalists in an expedition starting at 4 A.M. on our last Sunday morning at Yozgad.

These two had been at Changri with us, and knew we had intentions of escaping, so Johnny told them in which direction his party wished to start off, and this direction was now taken. Johnny counted his steps, noted landmarks which would be visible by starlight, and was able to draw a rough map of the country. All three dug at intervals for imaginary field-mice, until the sentry with them thought they were more insane than even the average Englishman, and said so. In the end, however, the strain of this great thought overpowered him and he fell asleep, giving Johnny the opportunity he required. He climbed a hill, took bearings, and was able to see our future route to within half a mile of a rugged piece of country known to the local hunt club as "Hades." On the return journey the three came back along the edge of the stream which ran past the bottom of our garden wall, and in which we have just left the six of our party.



From a sketch by Capt. E. B. Burns, E. Kent Regt.
YOZGAD CAMP FROM N.W.

A = Hospital House.

B = Upper House.

C = Position of hole made in fowl-house wall.

C—D = Course followed to river bed.

E = Market gardens.

In accordance with the plan then settled we follow the river-bed until almost clear of the most westerly houses of the town, then turn right-handed up a stony track, passing between two high walls till the track ends. A few more paces to the west and we shall be safe in the open country. These few paces, however, will be along a main road directly in front of two or three houses on the outskirts of the town, but the alternative of following the river-bed farther and then turning up would necessitate passing through vegetable gardens, which, as already mentioned, are jealously guarded. [95]

In the event, the original plan was justified by success, although the six of us, at this time unintentionally split up into parties of four and two, passed fully in view of a man sitting on one of the verandahs overlooking the road. It was probably thanks to our fezes that we escaped detection, for other disguise we had none. It was lucky that we had taken the precaution to cover our boots with felt pads, for the ring of an Englishman's boots on a metalled road would, we know, have aroused the envy and suspicion of any Turk who heard it, accustomed as he is to the soft footfall of the country sandal or "chariq." [96]

Once comfortably clear of the town, the leading four could afford to wait for the other two to come up, and with their arrival we began to enjoy our first taste of freedom from Turkish toils. The only question to disturb us now was whether Cochrane and Ellis had got out safely from their house. So far, at any rate, there had been no sounds of an alarm. We therefore lost no time in setting off to the rendezvous, where we hoped to join up as a complete party of eight. This was to be at the bottom of the "Hades" ravine, at the point where it was crossed by the telegraph line to Angora. The distance from our houses, as the crow flies, was perhaps two miles. For this, taking into consideration the darkness of the night and the difficulty of the country, we had allowed two and a quarter hours. At 11.30 P.M., any one who had failed to appear was to be considered recaptured or lost, and those who had arrived were to go on. An absurdly liberal allowance of time you may say; but even the six whose movements we have followed, and who had the advantage of Johnny's guidance over a route reconnoitred by day, took till 11 P.M. to cover these two miles. We were experiencing, some of us for the first time, the difficulties of a night march. In addition, it was our first trial of carrying our loads, weighing nearly fifty pounds, anywhere outside a cupboard. No wonder then that our progress was slow, and at one time we began to think that we must have already crossed the line of telegraph which was to lead us down into "Hades" itself. But there it was at last, and we were soon slipping down—only too literally—into the ravine. [97]

Our first act, after quenching our thirst, was to fill up our water-bottles. As 11.30 approached, with still no sign of Cochrane and Ellis, we began to wonder whether, perhaps, they might not have gone on to another ravine in "Hades," and be awaiting the rest of us there; so some commenced scouting around, while others remained to show their position by periodical flashes

with a cigarette lighter. This was so desolate a bit of country that the flashes entailed no appreciable risk.

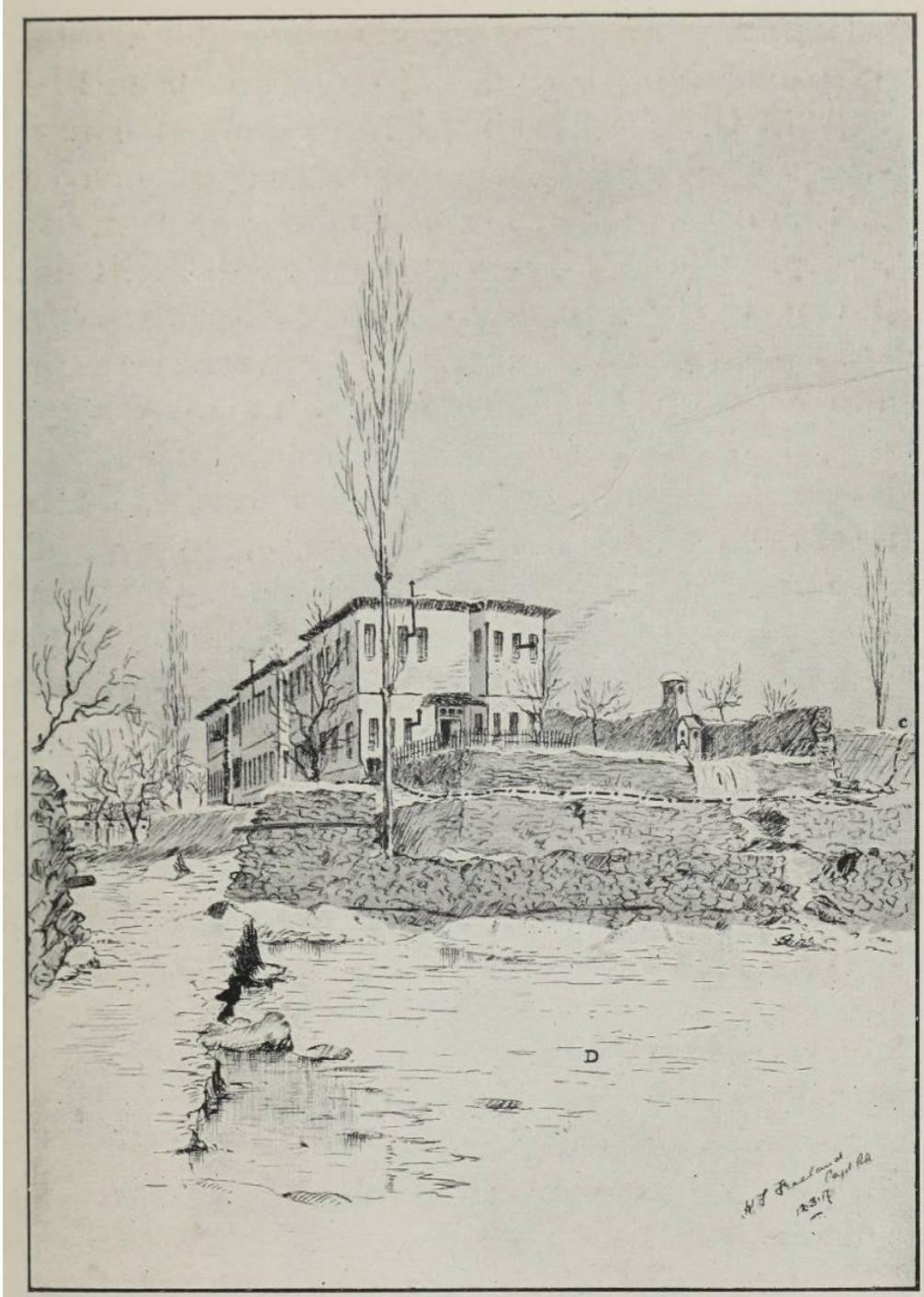
At 11.30 we decided to give them another quarter of an hour; to delay after that would be to jeopardise the remainder of the party, for it was already only four hours to dawn. Great, therefore, was our relief when, at the last moment of this time of grace, we saw two forms appear on the skyline, and presently heard the rattle of loose shale as they picked their way towards our flashes. So far so good; and we were soon exchanging mutual congratulations on joining up, and saying that even this one night's breath of freedom, after two and a half years' captivity, would be worth all the trouble of our preparations.

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But we must go back for a moment and narrate the experiences of the late-comers in leaving their house.

This was called the Upper House, and to the east overlooked the main street below, but was separated from it by three shallow terraces, which boasted some treasured vegetables and a few fruit trees. To the north the ground fell steeply by three higher terraces to a small patch of ground enclosed by walls. It was here that we used to play the four-a-side hockey. The upper terrace on this northern face was visible to a sentry at the main gate of the Hospital House, which was on the other side of a road running along the hockey ground wall. The two remaining sides of the house abutted on tumble-down cottages, from which they were separated by a narrow alley. At the north-western and south-western corners sentries were posted.

The number of officers escaping from this house was five. The bars of a window on the side facing the main street had been cut with the aid of a steel saw, and at 9.15 P.M. the five climbed down a rope-ladder to the ground. Skirting the edge of the house at intervals of two minutes they crept quietly through the garden and reached the second of the three terraces on the north side, keeping well under the high bank. Here they passed within three yards of the sentry's box, on the top of the bank above them. Absolute silence was necessary, and this was the reason that the two had been so late in arriving at the rendezvous, for each step had to be taken with extreme care.



From a sketch by Capt. K. F. Freeland, R.A.

UPPER HOUSE, YOZGAD, FROM N.N.E.

(WINTER TIME.)

A = Sentry's box.

B—C = Track followed by Cochrane and Ellis.

D = Hockey ground.

The terrace a few yards beyond the sentry's box sloped down into the large market-garden to the west of the Hospital House. On the south side of this was a wall, along which they picked their way. Here, too, great caution was required. Look-out huts had to be passed within a few yards, but finally they were across the garden. A high wall had now to be climbed, but fortunately it was in bad repair and afforded good footholds.

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Here Cochrane and Ellis heard voices. An old woman had seen Stockley and Rich and was wanting to know what they were doing. Our two did not wait to hear much more. Turning right, they were on the same stony track up which the first party had

turned from the river-bed, and now they followed Johnny's route till they finally struck the telegraph post and arrived at "Hades."

Ellis had arrived puffing and blowing, but there was no time to be lost if we were to be at anything like a safe distance from Yozgad before dawn broke.

Five minutes before midnight, then, we started off a complete party, and were soon scrambling up the northern side of "Hades" on to the plateau above. Having left the line of telegraph poles for the sake of an easier ascent, we were unable at once to find it again. Although it had been our original intention to follow the telegraph wires as likely to lead over a passable line of country, it was decided to waste no further time in a search for them. Instead we would set off by compass and stars in a due westerly direction, and hope to pick them up again later on. The ground proved favourable: our course took us over fairly level country, a considerable portion of which was under cultivation, and for some time we were walking over stubble. Although there was no moon, our eyes rapidly accustomed themselves to the bright starlight, and hopeful progress was made, but not without occasional alarms.

The first occurred within an hour of leaving "Hades." Looney was temporarily relieving Cochrane of his task of guiding the party, when the leading six suddenly found that the other two had disappeared, and inwardly cursed them for straggling. In reality, what had happened was this: the party, moving in no regular formation, had got a little separated, when suddenly the two in the rear had seen the glowing tip of a cigarette moving obliquely towards them, and immediately afterwards descried the shadowy forms of three mounted men. Quick as thought they lay down and waited till the horsemen had passed; the rest moved on in blissful ignorance of their danger, until, on turning for the others, they too saw the cigarette and realised what had happened. Those three men were almost certainly gendarmes. Apart from this, we occasionally found ourselves coming upon little groups of huts and villages, and these entailed wasteful detours. We had, in addition, an uncomfortable feeling that we were leaving behind us a rather obvious track through the crops where yet uncut.

About 2 A.M. we once more picked up the line of telegraph poles. We were all the more glad to follow them as we saw difficult country ahead, and they were likely to lie along a practicable route. Practicable it was, but then it is practicable to reach the bottom of most slopes if you are prepared to sit down and slide; for that is what we had to do for the latter part of the descent into the steep-sided ravine, across which our telegraph line now led us. At least, however, we had the satisfaction of a much-needed drink from the crystal-clear water of a mountain stream.

Here indeed would have been an ideal hiding-place for the coming day; we could have bathed and drunk to our hearts' content, shielded both from sun and view by enormous rocks which towered above us, almost on the water's edge. But we were only seven or eight miles from Yozgad, and an hour lost now meant one to be made up later on. After a drink, then, we clambered up the farther slope, to find as we struggled on that we were once more coming into open country, with less and less prospect of a suitable hiding-place. To turn back was out of the question. The first light of dawn caught us still moving forward, and within sight of a village. The sun had not risen before men and women were on every side of us, going out to work in their fields. We came to a stream running through a grove of trees, but it was too near the village to remain there. Our freedom was to be short-lived, we thought, as we took a hurried drink and proceeded across more open country. Eventually, at 4.50, we dropped down into a tiny nullah on the open hillside. The only merit of this spot was that it was not directly visible from the village.

It was obvious that we could not hope still further to escape observation from the fields if we continued to lie there all day, so Looney went off to scout around for something better. A more hopeful nullah, with banks in places five feet high, was reported half a mile beyond the next low crest. To that therefore we moved in broad daylight, glad to find that we should at least have some water, for a muddy trickle flowed down the nullah bed. Without this the heat would have been intolerable, for, until late in the day, the banks proved too shelving to provide shade from the sun. Even with water, Turkish-bath conditions are conducive neither to sleep nor appetite. Not one of us slept a wink that day. As to the day's ration, it was with difficulty that we forced ourselves to eat a quarter of a pound of salted meat and nine ounces of home-made biscuit—not an excessive amount, even when you add to it one and a half ounces a head of chocolate, which Grunt produced from the store of extras he was voluntarily carrying.

We reckoned that we were perhaps ten miles' distance from Yozgad. After the events of the morning we entertained little hope of our whereabouts not having been reported, but we were to learn that we flattered ourselves as to the interest we aroused among the country people. The fact at least remained, that we were left undisturbed in our somewhat obvious hiding-place: the only signs of life that we saw during the day were a shepherd with his flock of sheep grazing a quarter of a mile away, and a Turkish soldier who, in the early evening, came down to our nullah a little below us, and was probably himself a deserter and so a fugitive like ourselves. Towards dusk we stood up and watched a stream of men and carts returning to their villages after the day's work in the fields.

By 7.30 all was clear, and we lost no time in making our way to the line of telegraph poles which we could see disappearing over the crest of the next rise. Alongside we found a splendid track, which we were able to follow over undulating country for several miles. Nobby was in trouble with his "chariqs"; in spite of experiments carried out for weeks beforehand he had not succeeded in getting a pair which did not now gall him in one place or another. This was serious, as he was relying on these country sandals to carry him down to the coast; strong English boots were hard to come by. On this night, after several delays as one after another of his spares was tried and rejected, he was eventually able to wear a pair lent him by Cochrane.

Twilight had now faded, and we were dependent once more on the light of the stars. The track, easily distinguishable while it kept to the telegraph poles, had begun to wind about as the country became more undulating. In a little while it could no longer be followed with any certainty. We therefore ceased to worry about the track and trusted to the telegraph to lead us towards Angora, until this too failed us, for it went too much to the north of west. We thereupon proceeded on our proper course by compass.

We had started in the evening feeling unexpectedly fresh, and it says much for our training that the first night's march had left none of us in the least bit stiff. Nevertheless the day in the hot sun and the lack of all sleep had tried us more severely than we thought, and we were now beginning to feel the effects. The idea had been to have the regulation five minutes' halt at the end of every hour's marching, but we soon found that we were taking ten minutes' rest every half-hour. We were, moreover, consumed with an appalling thirst; even at night the heat off the ground in this arid track of land was stifling, while the parched and cracked surface held out little hope of there being water in the vicinity. At 11.30 we decided we must have a long halt, in the hopes of a little sleep; two volunteers shared the watch. Shortly after midnight we marched on again considerably refreshed, the main anxiety now being for water. Two hours later we saw looming ahead a low ridge of hills, and decided to go and wait there until dawn should reveal the most likely direction for a drink. A little searching round then showed us a fair-sized stream in the next valley to the south-west: in Asia Minor, however, where there is a perennial stream, there is fairly certain to be a village or two, and so it proved in this case; but water we must have; besides, on the hillside, where we had rested till daylight, there now appeared a shepherd with his flock. Hastily gathering up our kit, we dodged up dry and rocky nullahs and over the next ridge. Once more it was broad daylight before we settled down for the day in our hiding-place, in rocky ground intersected with crevices just wide enough for a man to lie in. On the way we had to descend a steep slope covered with loose shale, and this proved a sore test for important portions of our clothing, for it was impossible to keep to one's feet.

When four of the party went to the stream below us to fill up the water-bottles, they found they were within a few hundred yards of another village, so that one visit to water had to suffice for the rest of the day. They had been seen by at least one boy who was looking after a flock of sheep near the stream.

We were lucky, however, to discover, close above our hiding-place, a tiny spring. From this, thanks to a couple of water-holes dug with the adze by Perce, it was possible to collect about a mugful of water in an hour. Cochrane now told off the party into watches by pairs; but, on watch or off, there was little or no sleep to be had. During the morning we made a fire and "brewed" some arrowroot and cocoa, and had three ounces of chocolate apiece. All of these Grunt and Ellis had carried in addition to their ordinary share of rations, and, try as we would, we found that, owing to the heat, we could not eat more than one and a half out of the ration of three biscuits allowed for that day. Of course this saved food, but it also meant the gradual exhaustion of one's strength, and no reduction in the weight to be carried next day.

Our progress on the first two nights had not been up to expectation: we reckoned that we were still within eighteen miles of Yozgad, whereas we had hoped to cover something over twelve miles a day. If we were unable to maintain our average when we were fresh and not yet pinched for food, we could hardly hope to do better after days of marching and semi-starvation. Our

advance on the third night was to provide little encouragement, for we barely made good another eight miles.

Having waited until 8 P.M. before we dared to descend to the stream, we halted there in the dark for a deep drink and the refilling of our water-vessels. Half an hour later we left the valley and found ourselves in a network of hills. From these we only emerged into open country shortly before eleven o'clock, passing but one small channel of very bad water on the down-stream side of a village. Our course now lay across an arid plain, featureless except for a few village tracks and low cone-shaped hills; and we began to wonder whether dawn would not find us without water or cover, when at 2 A.M. we dropped into a patch of broken country, and decided we would rest there till daylight. As a look round then disclosed no better hiding-place, we settled down where we were for the day. The remains of an old spring were found, but it was dry. Thanks to the chargals, most of our water-bottles were still three-quarters full; but this was little enough with which to start a day in the almost tropical sun. Most of us rigged ourselves partial shelters with our towels and spare shirts, supported on khud-sticks. These, however, provided little protection against the fierce rays. But all things come to an end—even this seemingly interminable day; yet it was to be nothing compared to the night which followed.

FOOTNOTE:

- [9] Since writing the above, we have learnt that the officers escaping from one of the other houses were unable to leave it until after 11 P.M., and even then were at once seen, but took to their heels and got clear. For some unaccountable reason the Turks only proceeded to check the officers of that particular house. At dawn, the *chaouse* taking rounds in the Hospital House was completely deceived by the dummies; not so, however, an interpreter, who had seen the same game played when Keeling's party escaped. We thus enjoyed about 6½ hours' start.

The Turks were completely at a loss to know how the eight from Hospital House had got out of the garden. The only possible means seemed to them to be that we had got *over* the wall by means of nets flung out from a top window of the main building right over the outhouse. The hole in the wall they took to be merely a blind! The nets were simply goal nets made while at Changri, and of course used for none but their original purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PEACEFUL SHEPHERDS.

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There was not a drop of water in any of our bottles when, at 6.30 that evening, we emerged from our hiding-place and made our way down towards the open valley which had been running south of us and nearly parallel to our course of the preceding night; for this direction seemed to offer the best prospect of water. On the far side of the valley rose the wood-covered slopes of the Tchitchek Dagh, or Flower Mountain. Far away to the west we could see the purple ridges of the Denek Dagh, slightly to the north of which we hoped to cross the Kizil Irmak. Our hopes rose high as we saw beneath us a narrow streak of green which betokened the existence of the longed-for water; but if, in England, where there's a dog there's a man, in Turkey where there's a stream there are sheep. We soon found that all the flocks of the countryside were settling down for the night on the banks of our promised water supply, while farther to the north-west our way was barred by the inevitable village.

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There was nothing for it but to lie where we were till twilight had faded, and then to cut south-west with the idea of hitting the nullah at a point above the flocks. On doing so we were much dismayed to find that the nullah was dry. By this time we were all fairly "cooked"; Ellis, in addition, was suffering from a strained heart—for such it now turns out to have been. For half an hour we carried his kit and helped him along between us, but he still could not keep up.

At 9.30 we decided to leave him behind, in a dry nullah we were following at the time, with Grunt, who volunteered to stay with him while the rest went on to find water—if they could. The six plodded on with frequent halts, and resorted for the first time to the bottle of "Kola" tablets, which provided a much-needed stimulant. The country was still an arid waste with here and there a dry nullah, each one like the rest; and as time went on without a sign of water, those of us with Cochrane began to wonder how we should ever find the derelict pair again. A solitary light twinkled away to our left, another far ahead. Were these from villages, or were they shepherds' fires? On trudging the six on their western course towards a jagged ridge which now met their view. An hour and a half after leaving the pair they crossed a narrow embankment. This they recognised as that of a light railway, then under construction, between Angora and Sivas, for we had seen another bit of this on our way from Angora to Yozgad.^[10] At length they came to water—a stagnant lake it proved and brackish, but at least it was water. Curiously enough, they discovered they were not as thirsty as they had imagined, but a paddle was most refreshing.

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After forty minutes' halt, Cochrane, Johnny, and the Old Man loaded themselves up with the chargals and all except three of the water-bottles, and leaving their packs behind set forth on their urgent quest for Grunt and Ellis. The remaining three divided up the watches between them until dawn. Nobby and Looney had a midnight bathe, finding one place even deep enough to swim in; but it was chilly work drying on a couple of silk handkerchiefs sewn together which served as towel, scarf, or sunshade indiscriminately. Sleep was impossible, for the bank swarmed with mosquitoes and sand-flies, so after a while Nobby went a-fishing with a sultana for bait, but without result. At 2 A.M. the monotony was broken by the arrival of a dog. It stood a few yards away and proceeded to bark for about ten minutes. That light we had seen ahead, and which was now close by, was probably a village fire; so the three just lay low. At length, to their relief, the owner of the beast came and called it off, not worrying to find out at what it was barking.

In the meantime Cochrane and the two others had to get back to the nullah where Grunt and Ellis had been left. They recrossed the railway embankment and eventually struck a nullah. As they proceeded this petered out, and the three started wandering over the country, whistling now and again, but receiving no answer. At 2.45 A.M. they again struck the embankment and walked along it for an hour, but could not pick up their bearings. Accordingly they halted and waited for the light. After being heated by the strenuous marching, they soon began to shiver violently with the cold and dosed themselves with quinine.

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As prearranged in the event of the others not having returned, Nobby, Perce, and Looney at dawn moved off from the pool into hiding in the hills to the west. The packs of the search-party were left concealed under a ledge of the bank and covered with reeds and grass. From the top of the ridge they overlooked the desolate country traversed the night before. Close below them stood an Arab encampment with its black camel-hair tents, from which both the light and dog had doubtless proceeded. A few ponies grazed near the water, now seen to be one of a series of pools lying stagnant in an otherwise dry river bed. A man appeared leading a string of camels. The three were thinking that little prospect remained of joining up again that day, when suddenly they saw figures hurrying across the plain, and recognised with relief that they were Cochrane, the Old Man, and Johnny.

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At the first sign of dawn they had marched eastwards for a quarter of an hour, and then had to give it up as a bad job, having failed to pick up their bearings. Accordingly, they turned round and walked westwards along the embankment as fast as they could. An hour and twenty minutes later they reached the point at which they had crossed on the previous night, and made for the water where the packs had been left. Here they could see Nobby's party flashing a mirror: for it was now broad daylight. On their westward march they had passed a big railway working camp, and people were moving about.

It was no use for all three to risk being seen, so Johnny took a long drink, put on his pack (in case it should prove impossible to join up as a complete party again), loaded himself up with three additional water-bottles and the big chargal, and started off once more to find Grunt and Ellis. Cochrane and the Old Man went off to join up with Nobby's party, having arranged to come down to the water the same evening to show Johnny the way. The latter, looking like a pantehnicon, passed several people in the distance and one man on a donkey at a few yards. Finally he spotted the tracks of the previous night, and in time came upon the correct nullah. It could now be seen that there were three very similar shallow valleys running parallel to one another, and that is how the searchers must have lost their way the night before.

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At 6.45 A.M. Johnny saw Grunt's head showing above the edge of the nullah. Grunt was almost done to the world and looked ghastly. Except for a little brandy (the party's one flask), he and Ellis had had nothing to drink for twenty hours. They had each tried to take an opium pill during the night, but simply could not swallow it. The very brackish water Johnny had brought provided Grunt with what he considered the best drink of his life. Ellis's thirst was unquenchable. On the previous night they

had heard some one whistling in the distance, but had not dared to call out.

The three set about collecting sticks in the nullah and brewing some strong tea, which refreshed them immensely. Except for two halts for three-quarters of an hour, Johnny had been on the go for over twelve hours, loaded for the last hour and a quarter with a weight of about 67 lb., owing to the extra water he was carrying. The day was passed trying unsuccessfully to get some shade with coats placed over sticks. Johnny slept only twenty minutes that day,—it was a trying time. The party was split up, and Heaven alone knew when we should all be able to join up again. However, they had two more brews of strong tea—one at 2 P.M. and one at 5. The heat was too great for them to eat anything.

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Meanwhile the Old Man and Cochrane had rejoined the three on the hill, who prepared them a welcome mugful of tea. On the way up they had noticed a small cave. To this it was decided to move, in preference to the present exposed position. Eight o'clock accordingly found the five huddled up within the cave, thankful at least that they would be sheltered from the sun for the day, but miserable at the thought of what the other three must be going through.

An hour later a man appeared at the entrance. They at first understood him to be a shepherd. He said he had seen the three arriving at dawn, and watched the five move down to the cave, but that they had nothing to fear. At the same time he rather anxiously inquired whether they had firearms. Without Grunt to interpret, the five were somewhat at a loss to follow the conversation that ensued, but, in dealing with this unwelcome visitor, they at least had the benefit of Cochrane's former experience of the art of escaping.

The uninvited guest was welcomed in, and was soon afterwards squatting down and enjoying some of the party's precious 'baccy and biscuits. The ease with which he bit off pieces of the latter testified to the excellence of his teeth. When he was once more in a position to resume the conversation, he led his hearers to believe that he had already sent a message to the nearest gendarmes and was now awaiting their arrival.

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Possibly he was misunderstood, for cross-examination elicited the fact that as yet no one else knew of the fugitives' whereabouts, and it became evident that he would not be above accepting a bribe—a failing for which the Turk is perhaps more famed than for any other of his peculiarities. Casting longing eyes upon the clothing which protruded from an open pack, he asked to have a look at a shirt. This seemed to be to his taste, so it was thought expedient to offer it to him as a gift. It was not disdained. That "woolley," too, looked warm and useful. He might as well have that. A skein of rope now caught his eye, so that also changed hands.

"Have you any gold?" was his next demand.

One must cry a halt somewhere to such greed, so the five regretted they had not, but later had to compromise and give him paper money. With the addition of some more 'baccy and biscuits he appeared temporarily satisfied, and agreed to bring along some water and sour milk from the Arab encampment. Nobby requested him to conceal his gifts. This he did by the simple expedient of winding shirt, "woolley," and rope round his waist beneath his cummerbund.

True to his word, he soon reappeared with a skin of water and a copper bowl full of sour milk, promising to bring more in the evening. He insisted, however, that his protégés should not show themselves outside the cave. To this they agreed, although the latter was too cramped to be comfortable,—nowhere was it wide or level enough to permit of any real rest of body, and peace of mind was out of the question so long as the fate of the missing three remained uncertain. It was decided not to risk a "brew," although the "shepherd" had said they might safely do so, and fuel in the shape of dried camel-thorn lay ready to hand.

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As evening fell, the friend was back again, this time bringing water only. His appreciation of the biscuits and tobacco, however, remained unqualified.

Conversation was turning to lighter subjects, when it was interrupted by the entrance of another chance (?) comer, who made no bones as to the price of his silence, and proved a much more difficult customer to square. He eventually accepted five liras in gold—the party had discovered that they had some after all—together with some more paper notes. He also said he was badly in need of a watch, so Cochrane handed over his, omitting to mention, by the way, that it could only be coaxed to go for a few hours at a time! Even so, it was not until 7.15 that our cave-dwellers were able to get rid of this persistent stranger. The next step was to effect a reunion with the missing three.

By the light of the young moon they moved off clear of the cave, the track past which constituted a danger. No. 1 scallywag was then informed that the five were not the only members of the party, and that the other three must be collected before they themselves could go on. In case the others should have been recaptured, it was thought advisable not to send still another member of the party back to the pond, for fear the spot where they had been should now be watched. No. 1 was therefore impressed for the task, and provided with a note to show to the absentees, if they arrived. He was instructed to come back if they had not returned within three hours. At the best the Turk has a poor idea of time. Two hours later he was back without the missing three, but once more accompanied by No. 2. No explanation was either asked for or given as to the latter's reappearance: it was quite evident that the two had been in league from the beginning.

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They now put forward a proposition: the Turkish authorities, they said, were very much concerned about the escape of the twenty-five officers from Yozgad. All the roads and paths round about were being watched, and that very morning about sixty soldiers had been seen passing by the locality, presumably looking for them. They suggested the party should lie hidden in the cave for another three days, while things quietened down a bit. After this they would themselves come along with us and clear out of the country. Their story seemed likely enough; they had at least named the correct number of officers who had escaped. Moreover, it was impossible to think of going on without a final search for the others. The five therefore fell in with the proposal provisionally and returned to the cave. Looney then went down to the pool in the company of the two "guides," to look around for the missing three.

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These had started down their nullah at 6 P.M., taking things very slowly with long halts for Ellis. In any case, it would have been dangerous to cross the line again during daylight, so they stopped amongst some shrubs a quarter of a mile short of the embankment. Here they waited until 7.30 P.M. They then marched straight for the pool, which they reached in another half-hour. Cochrane was nowhere to be seen. All three now stripped, and had their first wash for five days. Where they were the pool was very shallow, and they discovered that the only way to wash the soap off was to lie first on the back and then on the face. Cleaning the teeth they found refreshed them greatly. Despite all the water and tea he had had during the day, Grunt drank twelve pint mugfuls of the brackish water straight off the reel. This may sound incredible, but the fact remains. After their bathe they dressed and felt very clean. To sit and wait for Cochrane was the next thing to do. The night was cool, and it was no use all keeping awake, so Johnny took the first watch, while the others tried to sleep; but the sand-flies and mosquitoes saw to it well that they did not get the chance.

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At 11 P.M. approaching steps could be heard. Grunt and Ellis crept down the bank into hiding, and Johnny waited on the top. As the shapes became visible, he was horrified to find that he did not recognise them, and thought he was in for it, till Looney spoke. The latter gave a hurried explanation of the presence of the two murderous-looking strangers with him.

The four officers and the two brigands reached the cave about 11.30 P.M. Here was quite the stage setting for villainy of the deepest dye. Two slopes meeting in a V stood out very clearly against the bright starlit night. In the V a small crater was filled with the most ruffianly-looking fellows in fezes, which English and Turks wore alike. The peaceful shepherds, as we sometimes called them, talked a lot and again agreed to come with us. They tried on our packs and strappings. Cut-throat No. 1 appeared to be keen on joining us; No. 2 we thoroughly distrusted. At one side of the crater was the entrance to the cave, at the end of which burned a candle, throwing flickering shadows into the crater outside, and lighting up first one unshaven and haggard face and then another. The peaceful shepherds took their departure exactly at midnight—another touch of true melodrama—each the richer by about thirty paper liras and some gold ones. The first shepherd promised to bring some more milk and water in the morning.

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It was too cramped in the cave, so we slept in the ravine outside—a long sleep of nearly four hours. This was as much as we had had in the previous five days. Grunt had slept least. The day Johnny took him the water Grunt took some opium and slept for half an hour in the afternoon, and this, with five minutes now and again at halts on the march and his longer sleeps during the daytime, made a total of under four and three-quarter hours out of one hundred and seventeen. Without sleep, days spent in the hot sun and nights in carrying fifty pounds over difficult country without any moon at all are apt to take it out of one, and this we found was the case. We were becoming visibly thinner.

Next morning the second peaceful shepherd told us that yet a third peaceful shepherd had discovered our whereabouts, and though he did not put in an appearance, his friend, kindly acting on his behalf, took another thirty liras from us. This decided

us to go off that very night, as our money affairs would not stand the constant drain. To be once more a complete party, however, was a great relief. Although cramped for room—for we crowded ourselves into the smallest possible space at the dark end of the cave—we were out of the burning sun. Our spirits went up and we were all cheery, quite a change from other days. By 11.30 A.M. three quite good jokes had already been made. We were able to eat more, most of us managing several biscuits and two ounces of cheese. This also could be accounted for by the shade. The cheese was excellent, and was called by the endearing cheesy diminutive of "Chedlet." It was eaten in the approved style, with a penknife and by cutting pieces off towards the thumb. At about noon we all momentarily held our breath, for we thought we heard footsteps. No one appeared, however, and after a while we discovered the noise came from a tortoise, which was scratching the ground at the entrance to the cave.

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During this day a decision was arrived at which affected the whole trend of events. As the two Turks were going with us, we determined to change our course and make almost due south, thereby reducing the length of our march to the coast by about a hundred miles. By taking this route we should, of course, have no boat to meet us, but we relied on our guides to get a dhow. We thereupon proceeded to cut down the food supply and kit which had been necessary for the longer journey, and rely on our delightful friends to purchase food for us from any convenient villages we might pass. Travelling lighter, we should be able to move more quickly. We knew that the Salt Desert had to be crossed on our newly-chosen route, but we were prepared to take the risk of having a few thirsty marches. The last sentence written in Johnny's diary that afternoon was, "Grunt, I am glad to say, is sleeping."

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At 8.15 P.M. a miniature avalanche of stones rattles over the cave, and thus heralded, the peaceful shepherds enter. They are late, but the slight delay does not matter, as in any case we cannot risk going down to the water near the tent encampment until it is quite dark. It is a spring of sweet water to which they are going to take us, and not to the brackish pool, so we follow them. About a hundred yards short of the water we are made to halt. Shepherd No. 1 then takes us in pairs to get a drink and fill our water-bottles: one pair has nearly got to the spring when the shepherd suddenly freezes and then squats down—actions which his companions hasten to imitate. Some one has arrived from the camp to draw water. Nothing happens, however, and when the footsteps have died away they go on to the spring, rejoining the party shortly afterwards.

We now retraced our steps up the ravine, and here once more our friends stopped us. Before going any farther, they wanted to know what they were going to receive for their trouble. We told them that when we got to the sea we would take them with us to Cyprus, and there give them each £200. The arrangement, however, was not at all to their liking. What they wanted was ready cash. They now demanded from each officer another fifteen liras down. To comply with this demand was of course impossible, as it would have run us out of nearly all our money, with most of our journey still to go—especially at the present rate of meeting peaceful shepherds. We therefore told them that all the money they were to expect was a lump sum when we were free men.

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At this the ruffians refused to come with us. Warning them that if we were caught by gendarmes we should know who had given us away, we promised to make known to the officers of the law how good our friends had been to us. After an hour's irksome haggling we decided to go on without them. We set off, and had not climbed one hundred yards up the hill when the kind shepherds changed their minds and offered to accompany us without thought of profit.

FOOTNOTE:

[10] Many of the British rank and file prisoners were employed on this nearer Angora.

CHAPTER VII. RECAPTURED?

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No. 2 was now allowed to lead the way. Of this he said he knew every foot; but we had only just started when the course he took veered almost to due north. Cochrane, who was next to him, caught hold of his arm and told him we were not imbeciles, and the man then led us along a fair line of country bearing between S.S.W. and S. He informed us that we would come to water on that night's march after four hours, and that we would then halt. It was decided to leave affairs in his hands: if his plans were successful, well and good; if not, we would go our own way.

Not more than two hours later we came to a small stream where the peaceful shepherds wanted to halt for the night, but we insisted on proceeding. Finally, we settled down to go to sleep on the side of a small valley at about 2.30 A.M. on August 13th. Nothing untoward happened till about 7 A.M. Then suddenly there was a shout, and shepherd No. 1 could be seen dashing down the hillside above us. He had been keeping watch, he said, but as events turned out it is more than likely that he had been signalling while we were asleep. As daylight appeared the eight of us had moved for better concealment to the bottom of what was seen to be a horseshoe valley, and when the shout was heard we were lying there in a small nullah which was narrow and steep-sided.

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On standing up, the first things we saw were two ragged-looking gendarmes, one of whom was dressed in a long tattered black coat, and had a black handkerchief tied pirate-wise round his head. Compared to the black-coated gentleman, the other was almost gaudily dressed in a very dirty old grey uniform and "Enveri" cap. What was more important than their dress, however, was the fact that we found ourselves looking down the muzzles of a rifle and revolver carried ready for trigger-pressing by Beau Brummell and his seedy-looking friend. These two gentlemen now came to the kneeling position for greater effect.

The shepherds were greatly agitated; but whether their excitement was due to fear or the anticipation of more loot we cannot say. They told us to close up towards the rifle muzzle, which was remarkably steady and enfiladed the length of the nullah; so we all bunched up. It is very hard to remember what one thinks about on these occasions: perhaps the reason is that one does not think of much. One wants something to happen and the suspense to end; the "Come on! get done with it quickly" sort of feeling.

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Our two old friends now tried to show that they were not really fond of us. They made threatening gestures, and when Grunt moved to pick up his hat, shepherd No. 1 hit him a terrific blow on the side of the head with a thick and heavy stick. Grunt was stunned, and had a bad gash on the right ear, but he soon came round or there would have been a free fight.

Fortunately the stick had been very dry and had snapped off at the force of the blow; otherwise without a doubt Grunt's skull would have been broken. We put iodine on the wound and bound it up with lint and bandages, and in a few minutes he was discussing matters with the new folk.

Beau Brummell said he was a sergeant of gendarmes; his companion had failed to reach the exalted rank of N.C.O. They now produced rope, and, to add insult to injury, they produced it out of our own packs. Two of us were bound together at the elbows, back to back; the rest round the wrists with their hands behind them.

The sergeant then started talking—we need not say lying. He was going to take us back to his regiment. He wanted to know where we were going, and we broadly mentioned the Mediterranean. He thought we were men who had escaped from some camp on the railway, and it took long to convince him that we were officers from Yozgad. How had we managed to escape? We pointed out to him that a Turkish sentry is so overworked that his only time for sleep is on sentry duty. At this he had enough sense of humour to smile. He was curious as to the route taken by the others who had escaped the same night as ourselves: had we told him he would no doubt have called on them too, so we merely said we had not seen any of them since we left Yozgad.

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Finally the whole point of the story was reached, and he started talking business. We had felt for some time that the conversation was veering in that direction, but these delicate situations have to be very carefully handled; so we left it to him to open the subject. He led up to his proposition by asking whether we would prefer to be recaptured or to go to our "memlikat" (home). We need hardly say what was our reply. He then wished to know what money we possessed, and with moderate truth we told him. As already mentioned, we had started each with at least thirty Turkish pounds in paper in addition to some gold; this, then, with the exception of the sums No. 1 and No. 2 had already received from us, and a little we had fortunately concealed in odd places in our clothing, he now took from our pockets.

He seemed quite pleased with his takings, as indeed he should have been with such a windfall, and was graciously pleased to signify that he would now let us go. As we were supposed to be penniless, we pointed out that we had yet many miles to the coast and would need to buy provisions on the way: unless, therefore, he left us with some money we should still have to give ourselves up. Upon this he magnanimously gave us back a bunch of small notes, to the value of about seven Turkish pounds.

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For the same reason he prevented our quondam guides from helping themselves to the essentials contained in our packs; for by this time they had opened them and were enviously fingering our spare boots and clothing. Instead of being allowed to make off with further loot, they were now ordered to undo our bonds; after this they went away under the escort of the black-coated gentleman. He being a representative of Turkish law, could make his own selection of a souvenir of this happy occasion, and his choice fell on Johnny's fez. This was to prove a great loss, and on future occasions when fezes were the order of the day, Johnny had to wear a khaki handkerchief tied round his head.

Beau Brummell himself remained behind for a friendly chat. He advised us to make as quickly as possible for the Tchitchek Dag to the south, lest the peaceful shepherds should again get on to our tracks and hand us over to further brigands. By this time he was quite frank. If we did this, he said, he would undertake to look after them for the next four hours. (No doubt he also took care of any money they still had on them.)

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As we prepared to take his advice he remarked that we were soldiers and he had been one too, and that we were therefore friends. He then went off, waving his hand and saying, instead of the usual Turkish valediction, "Adieu." That brigand had more of the sportsman in him than any Turk we had previously met.

The moment the brigands were out of sight we moved away over the head of the valley in the opposite direction, and keeping a little west of south, marched for an hour, taking it in turns to carry Grunt's pack. We saw a fairly good hiding-place in a small ravine. It was a question of halting and taking the risk of being caught again by the brigands, or moving on and being almost certainly seen by fresh people; so we decided to stop. The time was half-past ten.

Let us quote from a diary written that day. "It is now 1.30 P.M., and no one has asked for money for four hours, so things look brighter. The clouds are getting up, which is a godsend, as our last night's water-bottle will probably have to do us for many hours more. The position is this: we are bound to go by the southern route, as we have thrown away a lot of food. We have no guide, thank goodness. We have already had to bribe four people, and there is not much bribing power left. We are likely to be very thirsty in the near future. In fact, in appreciating the situation it cannot in any sense be called a hopeful one. Nevertheless, we are still free men!"

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During the day we made a chargal to replace one which leaked. For this purpose we had brought along the sleeves of a waterproof coat, the remainder of which had been left in the cave when we reduced loads. Boots, too, in some cases, already needed repairs.

Towards evening Grunt's ear was again bathed and dressed. As dusk came on Cochrane and Nobby went off to look for water near a small grove of trees a quarter of a mile away. Here they found a patch of cultivation, and there was probably water in the vicinity; but so many people were about that the two had to come back without having found any. There was no choice but to trust to finding water while on the march. We started at 8.30 P.M., when the moon was up, keeping in the shadow of the hills which ran along the edge of the valley containing the cultivated patch. After going a mile we saw some damp green grass, and a short way farther on we came to a four-feet square pool of an average depth of an inch. The water gave out a most horrible stench, and must have been the last summer resort of the cattle and buffaloes of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, we were very glad to drink it and fill our water-bottles, though a second mugful nearly made us sick, and we each had to eat a few sultanas to take away the taste. That drink is not a pleasant memory.

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Over the rise at the end of the valley we came to good going, and finally reached a road running in the right direction. Our luck, however, did not take us very far, as a short distance ahead was a village where we could hear men talking and dogs barking. To avoid the village we made a long detour to the east and soon found ourselves in the middle of numerous steep and rocky ravines. Unable to get back to the road owing to the nature of the country, we were forced to bear to the left or east, and spent the whole night going up and down the features of the mountain that had been pointed out to us that morning by Beau Brummell.

As already mentioned, this range is called Tchitchek Dag, or Flower Mountain, the oak-scrub with which it is covered being in Turkey a near enough approach to flowers to give it that name. On this night we made our first acquaintance with sheep-dogs. Shortly after midnight we heard one barking not far ahead of us, and the tinkle of bells, so we again sheered off a little. The dog, however, was not going to miss a really good opportunity of barking, and it came nearer and nearer in the darkness, making an almost deafening noise. The sheep-dogs are the only ones in Turkey that are well treated; some of them are magnificent animals and ugly customers to meet, especially at night. The brute finally stopped ten yards short of us, and as we moved hastily on he sped us on our way with a series of roars.

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Half an hour later, to counteract our general depression due to the events of the last few days and to the heart-breaking country we were traversing, Cochrane found a spring of good water. He had suddenly turned off to the right, saying he smelt it, and sure enough before we had gone fifty yards we came on a spring. Here we had a huge drink and got rid of the putrid water in our water-bottles.

On this march we found that if we drank enormous quantities of water—in fact, if we forced ourselves to drink more than we wanted—we could carry on like a camel for a long time without a drink when the need arose. It may here be said, though a digression, that the fact about camels going for many days without water only holds good if they are trained to it. A friend of ours—a colonel in a Gurkha regiment—had told us that in the attempt to reach Gordon at Khartoum the camels with the relieving force were marched for a few days along the Nile and were watered twice daily. They naturally became used to drinking only a little at a time, and when they were suddenly taken across the desert it needed but two or three days without water to kill most of them.

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We moved on from the spring in very much better spirits. At 2.30 A.M. we rested for an hour till daylight, for we were now at the summit of the range, and might only involve ourselves in unnecessary difficulties if we went on without being able to see the country. Sleep, however, was impossible. It was exasperating, indeed, to find that by night it was too cold to sleep, and too hot by day. It seemed there was some truth in the saying—

"As a rule a man's a fool:
When it's hot he wants it cool;
When it's cool he wants it hot,—
Always wanting what is not."

At daylight we marched on for another two and a half hours. The whole mountain range was covered with the oak-scrub, which practically hid us as we walked along the bed of a valley. At 6 A.M. we turned up a small ravine off the main valley we were in, and hid in pairs in the scrub. As we climbed to our hiding-places we disturbed a pair of huge eagle-owls. With these birds we were acquainted at Yozgad. "Patters," one of the naturalists with whom Johnny went out that Sunday morning, had kept a tame one. Whilst out hunting he had found a nest in a precipice, and, with the aid of a rope and two assistants, had managed to reach it. The nest contained two baby owls, one of which he brought back to the camp with him. It was at that time only a week old, and merely the size of a fowl, but in a few weeks it became a fine upstanding bird, guaranteed to implant terror within the most resolute breast. At the age of three weeks it would swallow with consummate skill any dead sparrow that might be thrown to it: nothing remained to tell the tale except a few straggling feathers attached to his majesty's beak and a satisfied leer in his eyes. Mice, of course, were as easy for him to gulp down as sugar-coated pills would be to a sword-swallower. One day the youngster and a full-grown gander were placed face to face a few feet apart. Panic-stricken, they eyed each other for a few breathless seconds, then both turned tail and fled.

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But to return to our story. While in hiding in the scrub we did not dare to move, though it was agony lying at a steep angle, one's hip on a pointed rock. We hardly spoke a word all day, which was very creditable; but none of us had any desire to be caught again by brigands. By reason of the cover it afforded the Flower Mountain was obviously very suitable for what the Turk calls a "Haidood." From this word, which means "outlaw," we coined an expressive adjective, and were wont to talk of a "haidoodish" bit of country. Towards sunset we felt justified in having been so cautious, for we saw five armed men driving half a dozen cows over the crest of an opposite ridge, and the haste with which they were moving made it seem very probable that they were cattle-lifting.

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We left our hiding-place about 7 P.M. and retraced our steps down the valley to a pool where we had seen a little water in the

morning. On reaching it we found that nothing remained except some moist earth trampled by cattle, a herd of which must have been there during our absence. An hour after sunset we were back again at the foot of the slope where we had hidden all day, and now commenced a long march. It took us two and a half hours to get clear of the Tchitchek Dag. It was very up and down, but fairly smooth going. After this the country opened up a little, but once again it became very difficult, with all the valleys running transversely to the southerly course we were steering. These valleys and two villages, to avoid which we had to make detours, cut down our speed in a useful direction to about one mile an hour. During the night we halted in order to get some sleep, but once more the cold was too great. Even during the five minutes' halts at the end of each hour we were chilled to the bone, and it was an effort to get moving again. On these short halts it was a waste of precious resting-time to remove our packs, though we had done this at the start. We now used to lie on our backs without taking anything off, and with our legs up a slight slope, so that the blood could run away from our feet. At 4 A.M. we resumed our march, meaning to go on for the first hour of daylight, then to find a hiding-place and stop there. Unfortunately an hour's marching found us stranded in unpleasantly open cornland and surrounded by villages and harvesters working in the fields.

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There was no hope of concealment, so we had to carry on. Coming over a rise, we found ourselves forced to march boldly through a village which, by the headgear of the women, we took to be Turcoman, though this part of Asia Minor is rather out of the Turcoman's beat. Along the road we passed scores of people, mostly women, riding on donkeys. Having once started, however, the only thing to do was to follow a track leading as much as possible in the desired direction, and to pretend to have some business there. Grunt, with his head bandaged, looked like a wounded soldier, and the rest of us might have looked soldiers of a sort.

On the far side of the village we marched across a broad valley, in which were more women working at the crops and some men tending cattle. After plodding on for four more hours, the last three in broad daylight, we at length reached a range of bare hills, at the foot of which we saw a dozen splendid wild geese, but these potential dinners flew leisurely away at our approach. Painfully climbing half-way up a rocky and winding ravine, we threw down our packs. We had started marching over thirteen hours before, and, except for one and a half hours rest, had been on the move all the time, so we were very weary. The daily ration had been about twelve ounces of food—not very much, when one was carrying a heavy load and marching many miles a day over mountainous country.

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Some cocoa was made; and when that was finished we boiled up a mixture of rice, Oxo cubes, and sultanas, which for lack of water was very uncooked. On arriving at the ravine we had found a small tortoise; but while every one was busy making the cocoa, Master Tortoise disappeared, and though we hunted for him, with a view to adding him to the rice, we never saw him again.

This day we worked out a new distribution list for the extra biscuits, rice, and sultanas, which we had made into two packages in the cave for our two guides to carry for themselves. When our two friends had threatened not to come with us, these had been taken away from them and hurriedly distributed amongst the party; even when they afterwards did accompany us we had providentially kept these supplies in our own packs. Counting everything, we found that we had nine days' supply of food, on the basis of about twelve ounces a day each.

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As there still remained some 200 miles to go before reaching the coast, we realised that we should have our work cut out to get through. So far we had obtained no food from the country, though when we started we had hoped to do so. By now we were beginning to feel really hungry. For the first few days of the march the heat had taken away our appetites, but we were getting acclimatised, and the exhaustion of our reserve of strength made us feel the full effects of a reduced diet. At intervals we regretted having left nearly half our food behind in the cave. At the time we did so, however, it was the wisest course, and had we not reduced our loads it is certain we should not have been able to make the same progress.

A mile north of the range of hills in which we were hiding we had passed a line of telegraph poles, and what we had supposed to be a main road running east and west. This was in a very bad state of repair, but was evidently the road which our forty-year-old map informed us was only six miles from the Kizil Irmak. More than once we discovered that the map was a mine of misinformation. It is only fair to say, however, that the river in this part was shown in a dotted line, an admission that it had not been surveyed.

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During the day one or two marmots came out of their holes to inspect us, standing up like picket pins the while, but without a trap they are very hard to catch. Looking up between the sides of the ravine, which were at least 300 feet high, we saw several vultures hovering over our heads. A few butterflies flitted about near us; and these were the only signs of life. Nevertheless it was not pleasant waiting there, as we had to do for nearly ten hours till darkness should come. We knew we had been seen by many people in the village and in the fields, and any gendarmes who might have been given news of our whereabouts would have ample time to catch us up.

CHAPTER VIII.

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THE ANCIENT HALYS.

Shortly before sunset on August 15th we started to climb the ravine. This was a mile and a half long, and by the time we reached the top night had fallen. On our way up we had seen a stone that looked very like a bird; as one of us stooped to pick it up, the stone, to our great surprise, turned itself into a night-jar and fluttered away. The hills we now crossed were very rough and steep. At the bottom of the first valley to which we came we found a stream, by which we halted in the bright moonlight for a few minutes' rest and a drink. It was fortunate we were amongst some rushes, for suddenly three or four men rode by on donkeys not ten yards from us. They did not see us. Later, on coming to a big nullah, we followed it, hoping that it would lead us eventually to the Kizil Irmak, but by 3 A.M. we had tired of its winding course and took a more direct line to the south.

The wind was bitterly cold, and the only comfortable few minutes' halt enjoyed that night was under the lee of a hayrick. At 5 A.M. we caught a glimpse of a big river six miles away; remembering, however, our enforced march of the previous morning, we decided to halt where we were without venturing farther. A shallow ditch, about two feet deep, was our hiding-place for the day. Here we found some straw, which proved a blessing. With it we obtained for our heads some sort of protection from the sun, but, despite the shelter, the heat entailed upon us a sleepless day. A bunch of straw, too, served as a cushion for our thinly-covered hip-bones. Later on in the day we used straws for drinking out of our water-bottles. It was a good scheme, for, by judiciously choosing a very thin stem, one had the satisfaction of drinking for minutes at a time without having expended more than a few drops of water.

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The cold wind of the night had died down at dawn, but towards sunset a light breeze again sprang up, and this refreshed us greatly. We had been so sure of reaching the Kizil Irmak on the previous night that we had made no provision for water. Consequently, by now, it was much needed, and we felt that when we did reach the river we would make a good effort to drink it dry. Some of us ate grasshoppers that day. The small nourishment they afforded did not make it worth our while to expend any energy in chasing them, but if one came to hand and allowed itself to be captured it was eaten. Opinions differed as to their succulence. Nobby stated they were like shrimps; Johnny noted in his diary that they were dry and rather bitter.

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To the general relief, Grunt's ear had begun to heal; we had by now used nearly all our supply of iodine and bandages on it, and had it become poisoned Grunt would have had a very bad time.

It was not till nearly 10 P.M. that we reached the Kizil Irmak, and then only with great difficulty. The country was well populated, and many shepherds' huts and sheep-dogs barred our path. At one point we actually passed by the front door of a small house, outside which two men and their families were lying. The men sprang up in alarm at seeing eight extraordinary figures walk by, but we did not wait on the order of our going. Before reaching the river we came to a small stream where we drank our fill: then making several detours and walking as noiselessly as possible, we finally reached the bank of the Kizil Irmak. It was difficult in the moonlight to judge how broad it was: probably 300 yards across. But at that time of year half the bed was merely sandbanks, with a few trickles running through them. Taking off our boots and socks we tied them round our necks; trousers were pulled up over our knees, and we started off, hoping that we should find the main stream fordable. At the point where we stood the river was on a curve, and it was clear that the deep water would be on the opposite side. Walking along in single file we crossed in a direction slanting up-stream, and to our delight reached the other bank with the water only

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just above our waists. This bank was covered with reeds and difficult to climb.

The river water had been much warmer than the small streams we had passed, but now as we sat wet to the waist in the wind we soon became very cold; for it was a lengthy process wringing out our clothes and dressing on the steep bank where we remained so as not to be seen in the bright moonlight. Here we also washed our faces and brushed our teeth. When we started from Yozgad we had thought of the Kizil Irmak as the first definite mark in our journey, and though we had not crossed it as soon or in the same place as we had intended, yet we were across it, and one stage was successfully accomplished after nine days' march. As soon as all were dressed and ready we again set off, and, passing a gigantic and solitary rock near the bank, here running almost due N. and S., we went up a steady incline over prairie land. At 2 A.M. we halted and slept for two hours under the shelter of some small rocks. At daylight we crossed a valley which had been converging on the left with our course, and drank at a little pool on the farther side. This would have been a pleasant resting-place for the day: we could have lain and slept under the shade of the trees which ran the length of the valley, and we even saw a few blackberry bushes to tempt us; but there were signs of human activity in vegetable gardens around, so we proceeded.

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Again it was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, as we soon came into open country that was cultivated and signally lacking in cover. Two men on a track we were about to cross stared very intently at us, but moved on. An old man on a donkey was ruder still; for not only did he stare at us, but he waited till we came up to him, and then without an introduction asked us where we were going and whence we had come. These questions were answered by Cochrane pointing vaguely to the south, and then to the north; and so we left him. At 6 A.M. we were momentarily out of sight of mankind in a shallow depression in the ground. It was overlooked by a hill to the north, but a glance over the next ridge showed us that we were half encircled by villages: we therefore stayed where we were. All day we must have been seen again and again by herd-boys and women on the hill, what time the sun beat down upon us from a cloudless sky. Cooking a meal or tea was out of the question, and our 11 oz. of food that day consisted of two biscuits, 1 oz. of chocolate, and 4 oz. of sultanas. The last named are not only of excellent food value, but last a long while when eaten one at a time.

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When we marched on at 7 P.M., thirst once again controlled our movements, and we spent over an hour in an anxious search for water. After visiting one clump of trees after another, we were at length rewarded by the discovery of a trickle feeding a small pool. The water moreover was sweet, and we felt that the refreshment of that drink was well worth the hour's search. Having filled chargals and water-bottles, we set off once more over easy rolling country, and within three hours were again drinking our fill at an unlooked-for spring. The moon set shortly after midnight, and coming soon afterwards to a deep reed-filled ditch, we thought it would best repay us to rest there till dawn should reveal what sort of country lay ahead. The icy wind which on the march had been a blessing, now threatened to be our bane. The nullah itself was sheltered, but it was marshy; so we lay down in a shallow but dry water-channel beyond, and obtained what sleep we could.

It was, however, with little regret that at dawn next day we restored our frozen circulations by a brisk walk, the improving light having revealed the existence of a village close at hand. Making off into some low hills to the S.W., we proceeded to pick our way up a small valley, until at 5.30 we reached the head of a dry water-course. Here we settled down for the day. It was not an ideal hiding-place, but by this time we had ceased to expect one. We soon discovered a village track led by our lair a few yards above our heads. Along this would pass from time to time a country bullock-cart. The creak of the primitive axle revolving wood against wood within its rude socket was a noisy reminder, which we little needed, of the backward state of Turkey's civilisation. In view of the persistence of such anachronisms even in India, perhaps we should say it was a symbol of the stupid conservatism of the East. In addition to the unfortunate proximity of the road, our valley had the disadvantage of being itself the frequented path of cattle, a small herd of which came leisurely by not long after our arrival and showed more surprise at the strangers than did the two boys who followed them. We had seen water a little farther down the valley—mere puddles, it is true, but sufficient to justify our using a chargalful for cooking. It was not long, therefore, before a welcome half-mug of cocoa was being measured out, to be followed later by the standard mixture of rice, Oxo, and a few raisins. During the day most of us got more than the usual quota of sleep, for the cool wind still held.

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At 5 P.M. our conversation, carried on now almost unconsciously in the low tones of the fugitive, suddenly broke forth into a more natural loudness; for two men had seen us from the road and were bearing down upon us. We had fortunately decided beforehand on a story containing a touch of local colour. Salutations over, the usual questions were asked as to where we had come from and what was our next objective. A Turk does not usually stop to inquire who you are; but this time we volunteered the information that we were German surveyors who had been engaged on fixing a site for a new bridge across the Kizil Irmak, and that we were now making our way to the railway at Ereğli.

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The pair appeared satisfied, but put the question why we did not shelter from the heat in one of the villages round about. To this came the ready reply that one day we had done so, but had not been politely treated, so now we only entered when in need of food. We took the opportunity of finding out from our two callers the names of the various villages visible from the road above; unfortunately, none were marked on our forty-year-old map, so that this means of settling our position failed. However, we at least had the satisfaction of learning that there was a spring only a couple of hundred yards farther up the hill; in fact, when standing up we could see its stone trough.

Despite their apparent friendliness and the absence of any sign of suspicion, we were relieved to see our visitors depart; and having filled ourselves and our water-vessels at the spring, lost no time in moving on. We soon found that we were on the top of a small plateau, which to the east rose gently towards a low range of hills; while to the S. and S.W. the country fell away in a steep scarp. Below this stretched the desert plain, in the midst of which could be seen in the failing light the shimmer of the great salt lake. Even when we expected to have the guidance of the peaceful shepherds, this desert had not been a pleasant prospect; still less did we relish the thought now, after the troubles we had experienced in comparatively well-watered country. It was, however, a matter either of going on or giving up, so we went on. We had now been free men for eleven days.

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The moon at this time served us for rather more than half of each night, so that even after sunset we could see the solitary peak of Hasan Dagh rising majestically over the plateau's edge to a height of several thousand feet above the plain. As we descended the scarp to our right we lost sight of this landmark; but our course was decided for us, since we soon found ourselves compelled to follow a gradually narrowing valley. For the next three and a half hours we were confined to a steep-sided gorge. A little before this a man mounted on a donkey, and accompanied by a boy, had seen us, and to our disagreeable surprise turned and followed. We had shaken them off, when in the shadow of the gorge we saw a group of several men. It is hard to say whether they were more likely to have been brigands or fugitives like ourselves: one thing seemed certain, they had no business there. At any rate, they let us pass undisturbed, but the impression was forced upon us that this ravine we had entered was a death-trap, and when it veered more and more to the west we decided to make an attempt to get out of it. A clamber up the rocky southern slope, however, only revealed ridge after ridge and valley after valley between us and the plain, so we had perforce to go back into the ravine. Our relief was great indeed when at 1 A.M. the valley opened out, and we debouched on to the desert past a village.

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Before we left Yozgad, Nobby had continually impressed upon the party the need of living as much as possible on the country. To aid us in this he had consulted with another naturalist, and prepared an elaborate list of somewhat uncommon but possible foods. Amongst them appeared tortoises, snails, frogs, snakes—these last were especially nutritious, stated this unique document—rodents, and grasshoppers. There were also notes regarding mushrooms, and how to distinguish them from poisonous toadstools. Tortoise we ate at Yozgad, not, we must hasten to add, because we were reduced to it by lack of better nourishment, but with a view to testing its edibility. It proved messy and uninteresting, but at least non-poisonous. We had, however, hardly come across any tortoises during our march, although we had seen many on the journey from Changri to Yozgad four months previously. In fact, the only item of the list we had sampled so far had been the grasshoppers. We had, of course, also placed considerable dependence on being able to eke out our meagre ration by plucking corn as we went along at night, intending either to boil or to parch it the next day. We had discovered that the Turkish soldiers did the latter very quickly and effectively by making a small fire of twigs, placing whole ears of corn on them, then adding more twigs on top. When the fire had died down they took out the corn and separated the grain by the simple process of rubbing it between the hands. Unfortunately for us, although we had passed a good deal of ready-cut crops, there never seemed to be enough grain inside to be worth the trouble of collecting.

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On this particular night, however, Nobby was able for once to satisfy his predatory instincts by looting a couple of water-melons, for there was a bed of these outside the village we were now passing. These were cut up and divided out among the party without further ado, and eaten as they continued on their way. As a matter of fact, the melons were far from ripe; but even the rind seemed too good to throw aside, for by this time we were ready to eat anything: but it did not tend to quench thirst, we found, so the rind was sacrificed.

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The going was easier, and with one long halt of an hour and a half we plodded on steadily until 5 A.M. It was then, of course, daylight; and as a mile to our west there was a large town, boasting a rather fine-looking white tower, we resolved to lie up in a dry but grassy irrigation channel. A light haze covered the country, but in the direction opposite to the town we could just recognise Akserai built near the foot of the Hasan Dagh peak. Before us stretched the desert plain, bare except for an occasional nomad encampment; there seemed little sign of movement, even around the town near by.

By 10 A.M. this 19th of August, we came to the conclusion that we might as well go on by day. We had practically no water, and if we were to be in the sun it was better to be on the march as well. The next water shown on our map was a river called the Beyaz Sou, or "White Stream," and thither we set forth, once more transformed into Germans by the simple expedient of replacing the fezes we had been wearing by Homburg hats or service dress caps, one or other of which each of the party carried for this very purpose.

In less than an hour we were glad to find ourselves nearing a stream, on the banks of which were a few reed huts and a vegetable patch with some more of those excellent water-melons. This time, however, there were not the same facilities for their removal, and, as we rather anticipated, their wild owners would not part with them, money or no. We therefore proceeded to the stream, which was perhaps a foot deep and twelve feet across. The paddle was refreshing to the feet; the water for drinking purposes less encouraging, for above us were cattle watering and the bottom was muddy. It belied its name of "White Stream," we thought, as we filled up our water-bottles. While doing this and wiping the mud off our feet, a villainous-looking cutthroat came out from a tent close by and drew near for a talk. We told the usual German story, and he asked for no details, but mentioned there was better water in a village farther on; we could see its grove of trees to our left front.

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On resuming our march we did not visit it, but kept due south over the scorched prairie land, varied here and there with a bit of plough. The heat was already terrific. At 1 P.M. we halted for an hour within a broken-down enclosure of large sun-dried blocks of mud. Two of these made an excellent fireplace for the dixie, while dry camel thorn and scrub provided fuel in abundance. Here we cooked some rice and cocoa, which, although amounting to only half a mugful apiece, took some time to demolish, for in that temperature the food was long in cooling.

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Here a dissertation upon mugs. If an aluminium mug saves an ounce of weight, it makes a ton of trouble: and Looney's was thoroughly unpopular on account of its unpleasant habit of burning the fingers of any one who handled it. Moreover, it shared the failing of instability with Perce's empty ovaline tin, which did duty for mug after his own had fallen out of his haversack on the very first night. Its small base was a source of anxiety both to its owner and the disher-out of brews. If you ever think of having all your food for a month or so out of a mug, let it be a squat enamelled one.

While we were eating our simple fare, a man passed ahead of us, but took no apparent notice of our little group.

We marched on at about 2 P.M., having as our next objective Mousa Kouyousou, *i.e.*, the Well of Moses: aptly named we thought, for the parched plain before us would need a Moses' wand to make it bring forth water. No treed oasis round this well was to help us in our quest; the map itself wrote the name vaguely across the desert without committing itself to any definite spot. All we could say from the map was that the well should be almost due west of Hasan Dagh. In that case we ought to find it within eighteen miles of the Beyaz Sou, and that as we imagined was now five or six miles behind us. An hour later we unexpectedly came upon a couple of small irrigation canals, at the first of which we halted a few minutes to bathe our scorched feet. The heat and glare of the desert were indeed overpowering; mirage seemed to raise the southern end of the Touz Cheul—the Salt Lake—above the level of the plain, and mocked us with the vision of an arm of water stretching out eastwards at right angles to our course, until we began to wonder where we could best cross it. As we proceeded, however, it became clear that this was in reality but the broad white bed of a dried-up river.

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A horrible suspicion entered our minds that here was the real Beyaz Sou, and that the muddy stream and two canals we had crossed were merely its diverted waters. The surmise was soon confirmed, for, as we drew near, we were able to see far away to the S.E. a humpbacked bridge of some antiquity, now standing high and dry. This meant that those eighteen miles to the Well of Moses were still before us. On the far bank of the old river-bed could be seen a few huts, apparently deserted, while a little farther on, and to the west, stood an old khan or inn which eventually turned out to be in ruins. It was possible, however, that a well might be found there, so we decided to go rather out of our way on the off-chance. We amused ourselves by estimating how long it would take to reach it. The most pessimistic view was twenty minutes, but from the time of the guess we were on the march for a full hour before we finally reached that khan: so much for distance-judging in the desert.

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At 5.30 P.M. haggard eyes were peering down into the depths of two wells, obviously long disused, but which might still perhaps contain a little water. As it happened one of them did, and Cochrane lowered a mug. All he succeeded in drawing up were a few putrid dregs, in which floated some decomposed cockroaches—to Nobby's disgust especially; for it was his mug. Prospects were not very bright: Moses' Well, if it existed at all, was still something over twelve miles distant, and if we marched on at night it would be the easiest thing in the world to miss it in the darkness.

At length the sun set, and as the air became cooler our spirits revived a little. We made up our minds that we would carry on for only part of the night, so as to be short of the well when daylight appeared. 7 o'clock accordingly saw us once more on the march; the going remained good, although the country was becoming rather more undulating. There were still the little fields of dusty plough in the midst of otherwise hopeless desolation. After a couple of hours we took our long halt on the edge of one of those ploughed patches. Nobby, wiser than the remainder of the party, dug himself a shallow trench in the loose soil, and so slept for five happy hours undisturbed by the cold which woke the rest; for we seemed to live in extremes of temperature.

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Dawn on the 20th August found us very anxious. Having marched for another two hours or more, we felt that the well must be somewhere near. As the light grew stronger, we crossed a couple of steep rocky nullahs, and looking back saw that we had passed not far from a village in a group of trees. A minute later two stunted trees ahead caught our eye. We thought there might be water here, but were disappointed. By six o'clock we were seriously thinking of going back to the village behind us, when another came into view on our left. This time, however, there were no trees, and the huts seemed entirely deserted; but next moment our steps quickened as we recognised the stone circle of a well.

As in other countries in the East, so in Turkey, water is often drawn up by bullocks: they are harnessed to a rope which, passing over a rude pulley supported directly over the mouth of the well, is attached to a large waterskin. The track beaten out by the patient beasts as they go to and from the well gives a measure of its depth. In the present instance, we could see by the length of the track that our well was a deep one; but it was comforting to find that the hoof-marks appeared fairly recent. So deep, indeed, was this well that no sound could be heard of the splash of a dropped pebble, but as the eyes became more accustomed to the dark depths, it was possible to recognise the sparkle of running water.

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Packs were off in a moment, and while Johnny and Grunt went on to see what they could find in the village, Cochrane joined up the heterogeneous collection of string and cord produced by the rest. There was still insufficient length, however, until we had added on a couple of strands unravelled from a skein of rope. Nobby's mug was then lowered, and we began filling our water-bottles and chargals. No drinks were to be allowed until this had been done—a wise precaution, for after a few mugfuls the string snapped, and poor old Nobby's mug was gone. It was not long before a new line was made, this time all of strands from the rope, and a water-bottle was lowered, suitably weighted to make it enter the water mouth upwards. As soon as the supply was ensured, Ellis and Looney started a fire in a high stone enclosure near the village huts; for here it was possible to obtain a little shade from the already burning sun.

Inside the enclosure there was a limitless supply of canes, placed there by some unwitting friend, and these, after weeks in the sun, were dry and burned admirably. Things were certainly beginning to look up, and we refreshed ourselves with a series of brews—cocoa, rice and Oxo, and tea—calculating with satisfaction that we had covered something over forty-four miles in the preceding thirty-five hours.

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Our contentment was but temporarily disturbed by the arrival of two men on donkeys—who with three or four boys now came into the village. They passed by the open side of our enclosure, so we thought it best to call out the usual greeting, as though pleased to see them. To this they responded, and a few minutes later, having dismounted in the village, the two men came up, borrowed a brand from our fire, lit their cigarettes, and chatted pleasantly enough. The conversation turned, as often, on the subject of firearms. We slapped our thighs in a knowing way, and left them to infer that we had revolvers. They seemed to take our presence as a matter of course, and asked no awkward questions as to what we were doing in such an out-of-the-way place. After a short rest they took their departure, and we thought no more about them.

A RETREAT UNDER FIRE.

An hour later, having refilled every water-carrying vessel, we too got under way. Scarcely had we gone three hundred yards from the well, however, when a rifle bullet whizzed over our heads and plunked into the higher ground some distance beyond. We stopped and turned, to find that we were followed by a party of five ruffians, two of whom we could see had rifles. Grunt shouted out to ask what they wanted, upon which they waved to us, as much as to imply that it was all a mistake and we could go on. It is difficult to know what leads one to do certain things on such occasions: whether we were not inclined to allow so risky a mistake to pass unnoticed, or whether it was that we did not like to leave such doubtful characters in our rear; something at any rate induced us to find out more about them, so we began to walk back towards the well. To our surprise they too then began retreating, so six of us halted while Cochrane and Grunt approached them alone. Still, however, our friends seemed far from keen to make our nearer acquaintance—or rather we should say, renew it, for it was now possible to recognise amongst them the two who had ridden in on donkeys an hour before. This helped to explain their caution, for perhaps seeing our bold front, they thought it better to keep out of range of those revolvers of ours; at any rate they kept moving off as fast as Cochrane and Grunt advanced towards them. Even the armed men would not remain within shouting range, so that pour-parlers were somewhat at a standstill.

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Others were by this time getting in amongst the village houses, where it was hard to see what they were up to. They might work round under cover, and so suddenly come in on the flank of our two envoys if they went back much farther towards the well. Cochrane wisely called a halt, and waited for the six behind to move up to some higher ground from which it would be easier to watch the opposing party. Some of these, however, even disappeared over the low ridge beyond the village, reappearing later reinforced by three more men. Meanwhile a period of stalemate ensued: our two envoys were not to be enticed into the village, still less would the enemy come any nearer. It must have been a full quarter of an hour that we stood there looking at one another.

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At length, in reply to Grunt's repeated inquiries as to what they wanted, the nearest man started taking off his clothes, and made signs for us to do the same. This, at least, was plain acting if not plain speaking.

Events now began to move much more rapidly. There was not much difficulty in deciding what to do, and in any case, on these occasions one acts almost intuitively. If we thought consciously at all, it was that though we were hardly in a position to dispute these men's demands, seeing that our revolvers were only imaginary, we could at any rate give them a run for their money—or, more accurately, for our clothes. To give them these without a struggle was tantamount to relinquishing once and for all what little hope remained of getting out of Turkey; it would further involve the very unpleasant, if not positively dangerous, experience of spending several days and nights in the friendless desert, with next to no clothes or food. Cochrane and Grunt, at any rate, did not hesitate for a moment, although for the last few minutes one of the armed men had been covering them at a range of little over a hundred yards, and was sure to fire when they turned. And so it happened; but a sustained aim does not make for good shooting, and the shot went wide. The remaining six waited for the two to rejoin them, and then all of us, extending into skirmishing order, began a hasty retreat.

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The chances were not very equal: even if both sides had been unarmed, we were severely handicapped by our packs and water-bottles. The two full chargals Johnny and Looney had to empty as they ran. Moreover, although by this time we were in hard enough training, we could scarcely expect to possess sufficient stamina for a protracted retirement; and if the ordinary villagers of this lawless countryside were in the habit of turning brigand on every favourable opportunity, we might have others joining in the chase when the first tired of it: a second village had already come into view.

But there was little time to be thinking of all these possibilities; we had the more immediate danger of being hit by one of our pursuers' bullets. As soon as they had seen us take to flight they had reopened fire. One of the rifles was obviously a Mauser, the other gave the impression of being rather an antiquated old blunderbuss; but it is not pleasant to stop even one of those comparatively slow-moving lumps of lead. Strangely enough, however, none of us felt afraid for his own safety: the chief fear of each was that some one else of the party might be hit, which would mean that all our plans of escape would have to go by the board, for we should naturally all have stayed with the wounded man. Providentially, the wild villagers' shooting was not very good, although one shot struck the ground between Nobby and Perce.



Sketched to Authors' description by Hal Kay.
THE FLIGHT FROM MOSES' WELL.

At this stage we seriously thought of dropping one of our packs, in the hope that the Turks might delay their pursuit to look at their loot, but the suggestion was not entertained for more than a moment. So we carried on, doubling for a hundred yards in every three. With these loads it was impossible to keep running continuously.

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The shots were now beginning to follow one another at longer intervals. Looking back, we found to our joy that we were actually outdistancing our pursuers. This seemed almost too good to be true. We began to look round anxiously in case they might perhaps have something else in store. One armed man sent round on a pony or donkey would be enough to cut us off; we accordingly kept a sharp look-out to right and left. No one, however, appeared, and after a precipitate flight of over two miles,

and the creation, if there had been some one to time us, of a world's record for speed under novel conditions, we found that our pursuers had abandoned the chase. Probably those imaginary revolvers of ours had still kept them in check, for we noticed that they followed us over each little rise with considerable circumspection, as though fearing we might be lying up for them.

We had come through with the loss of the water in the chargals and of Ellis's water-bottle. The later had jumped out of its sling at the hottest stage of the pursuit, and had to be left where it fell. May its new owner find it always as empty as it seemed to be with us!

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It was now about 12.20 P.M. and the heat at its worst. It was no time, however, to rest or even to slacken our pace more than we could help: and we did in fact carry on at well over four miles an hour until 2.30 P.M. Then seeing no further signs that we were followed we allowed ourselves a short halt.

By this time our throats were parched with thirst and our clothes saturated with perspiration; but worst discomfort of all was the pain of our feet. The violent running and marching, the fiery heat of the sun above, and the radiation from the glowing earth beneath, had combined to reduce them to bits of red-hot flesh, and we longed for water to cool them. But everywhere stretched the desert, dusty and bare, bordered by naked barren hills. To avoid approaching those immediately S. of us, we had latterly altered our course rather to the S.E.; for we were developing an unholy and not unnatural dread of brigands, and imagined that every hill was infested with them.

Not till 4.30 that evening did we dare to take more than a few minutes' rest. As we lay on the ground we scrutinised with deepest interest the Taurus Mountains, which, as the heat-haze lifted, stood out clearly ahead—the last great barrier to be overcome before we reached the sea. From a distance of about sixty miles it looked a level range, broken by no outstanding peak, pierced by no low-lying pass. Anywhere in the portion where we were likely to cross, however, the map indicated a height of not more than 5000 feet; so we turned our attention to nearer objects. In the next shallow valley we could see several flocks of sheep, or so we thought. These we watched eagerly through our glasses, for their presence denoted water. We fancied we could see a stream a little beyond them, but when we reached the spot after dark we found that mirage had once again deceived us. It was not until we had marched another sixteen weary miles that our needs were to be met.

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That night, the beginning of our third week of liberty, the strain of recent events and our anxiety for water were reflected in our tempers, and Cochrane had the thankless task of trying to keep the balance between those who demanded water on or off the nearest route, and those who howled for smooth-going for the sake of their agonised feet. A twentieth-century Solomon, he kept the balance well: for the sore-foot brigade he had two hours over an ideal marching surface; then, in deference to the all-for-water party, two hours over stone-strewn ground at the foot of some low hills. These held out the best prospect of finding the precious fluid. The search, however, was all in vain; for although we passed close above a village where there must have been water, we did not dare to seek the source of its supply. This night opium pills and "Kola" tablets were in great demand, but even those could not keep some of us going, and soon after midnight we took an hour's rest. A little before, we had passed by an enormous flock of sheep: so disheartened were some of us that we very nearly decided to go up and ask the shepherd to show us the nearest water. This, however, Cochrane wisely decided not to risk. Instead, while the remainder lay down and rested, he left his pack and went off with Old Man to search for it.

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Their self-sacrifice was without result. After an hour's absence they rejoined the party, and we marched on, determined to make a last desperate effort to reach the Ak Gueul (White Lake) near Eregli. This was still fifteen miles or more away, and would, we knew, be salt; but it was the next water marked on our map. Just before we halted we had crossed a track, and along this we started off at something over four miles an hour. Doubtless this pace could not have lasted, and providentially, an hour later, we were deterred from our purpose by the sound of more sheep bells. There must, therefore, be water somewhere in the neighbourhood. Though it was a pity to waste the moon, which was at its full and would only set an hour before dawn, we decided, after all, to wait the two hours which remained before daylight. We could then find out where the flocks were watered, and be fairly certain to find good concealment amongst the ridges of the Karadja Dag, which was visible to the S.W. At this time we had, on the average, less than a pint of water a head.

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Dawn on the 21st August found us huddled behind a couple of small rocks, seeking in vain for shelter from the cutting wind which was blowing harder every minute from the north. So chilled were we that another opium pill all round was voted a wise precaution. "Seeing red" is not an uncommon occurrence, but, owing to the opium, some of us that morning saw a green sunrise. In the valleys on either side were numerous flocks and herds; but no stream gladdened our straining eyes, nor could we recognise a well. There was no village in sight, so at six o'clock we determined to take the risk of passing the shepherds, whom we could see below, and to push on at all costs towards Eregli. We had moved down the S.W. slope of the hill for this purpose, and had gone a few hundred yards across the valley, when we hit upon another Moses' Well, this time no less than 200 feet deep. With joy did we draw water out of that well of salvation, for such in the light of later events it was.

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We were at the time within a few hundred yards of a large flock of sheep; but a rainstorm was brewing, and the shepherds were far too occupied with getting their sheep together to worry about our presence. We were thus able to fill up all water-vessels undisturbed. After this we went back to some broken-down stone enclosures which we had previously passed. One of these, about ten feet square, we reached at 8 A.M., having collected little twigs and dried weeds as we went. We now had concealment from view and a little shelter from the wind, but not from the rain, which soon began to fall and continued in heavy squalls until late in the afternoon. Every now and then the officer of the watch peeped over the wall to see that no one was approaching. That day, however, we saw nothing but the flocks and some men with camels, who came over the hills where we had been at dawn but did not come our way. At intervals we regaled ourselves with tea and brews of rice and cocoa, or rice and Oxo. Of rice we had almost a superfluity compared with other food, owing to the number of days on which we had been unable to cook. But the hot food and drink did not suffice to keep us warm: every shower left us shivering like aspen leaves.

Even opium proved no longer effectual, though probably to it and to liberal doses of quinine is attributable the fact that none of us suffered from chill or fever after our exposure on that day.

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Late that afternoon the sun appeared for a time, enabling most of us to snatch a little sleep. This was what was needed more than anything else. Much refreshed, we left our rude shelter at 6 P.M., and hurriedly refilling our water-bottles at the well, continued across the valley. Within an hour we were lying at the top of the low ridge on its southern side. From here we overlooked the bare plain stretching to the marshes near Eregli, and thought we saw the reflection of water in the Ak Gueul. When six hours later, and after covering seventeen or eighteen miles, we reached the lake, it was to find that it was dry, and that it had been only the white salt-encrusted basin that we had seen. There was nothing to do but carry on. Besides the need of water to keep us moving, an icy wind blew without respite upon our backs, making even the short hourly halts a misery. Secondly, we had on the previous day checked our food supply, and calculated we had only enough for another four days at the most. Meanwhile, there still remained the Taurus range to be crossed.

We therefore pushed ahead, and were soon fighting our way through thick reeds. The struggle continued for two hours, and so exhausted us that towards the end we had to halt for a few minutes and eat the biscuit which was part of the coming day's ration.

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When we renewed the battle, it was with the expectation of finding ourselves at any moment crossing the main line of railway between Karaman and Eregli. This, of course, had not been built when our map was made, but we judged it must be on our side of the foot-hills of the Taurus, to the nearest point of which we were now making in the hope of being hidden there by dawn. If the railway were guarded, as it had been at all bridges and culverts when we passed along it on our way to captivity more than two years before, our approach, we thought, would be well advertised by the crackling of the reeds. In many places these were as stiff as canes, and as much as eight feet in height. Our only hope was that the sentries would be octogenarians, and be stupefied into inaction by the apparent charging of a whole herd of wild elephants.

At 4 A.M. we emerged from the reeds to find that the railway was not on our side of the nearest ridge. Dawn found us safely hidden in a deep and rocky ravine, preparing to spend our first day in the Taurus. The merciless north wind still sought us out—so much so, indeed, that even in the sun it was impossible to keep warm until close on midday. We had about half a bottleful apiece of water, and under these chilly conditions it would have been ample for the day. Unfortunately it was again essential to cook rice, as we could afford no more biscuits; so all the water had to be expended on boiling. To be precise, our day's ration consisted of one pint mugful of rice and Oxo each: liquid refreshment there was none.

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Some of us felt half drunk for want of sleep, or perhaps as a reaction after the opium, when at dusk that evening we moved up to the top of the ravine; but our limbs were slightly rested. It was a relief too to find that at sunset the icy wind had dropped for a while, and that the country ahead of us was a plateau with only slight undulations and a splendid marching surface. A S.S.E.

direction was now taken, for we had decided to make our way across the Taurus by the most direct route to the sea. At 8 P.M. we were settling down to our second five minutes' halt, when Looney caught the glint of steel rails to our left front, and a look through the glasses established the fact that we had reached the railway. No sentries or patrols appeared to be in sight, so we completed the usual hourly rest and then cut boldly across the line and gained some slightly more hilly country to the S.E. From here we saw a hut some way down the line, which may have been built for the use of sentries; but whether this was so or not had ceased to be of vital interest, for we were now safely across.

After only another hour's march all of us were beginning to feel much more fatigued than we had expected on setting out that evening, the effects probably of lack of sleep and water. However it was, we now had another consultation as to the route we should attempt to follow to the coast. This time we came to the conclusion that it would be taking a very grave risk to go by the shortest way—for the following reason. In that direction the map showed difficult country and very little in the way of villages or likely places for water, so that, with the short rations now remaining, an accident, such as descending a ravine and finding no immediate way out again, or even a sprained ankle, might be disastrous to the whole party. It was decided then, if nothing else interfered, to go at first a little west of south, and later make our way across the Taurus where the mountains were lower, following the valley of the Sakara river down to the sea.

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At 9.30 P.M. a halt was called to give ourselves a long sleep till midnight. Before the end of it most of us were sorry we had settled upon such a lengthy one, so chilled were we by the cold. While we were resting, a train rumbled by in the valley below, showing that we were still not far from the railway. On resuming our journey, therefore, we kept among the low hills. An hour's fast marching brought us into sight of a village, round which we worked our way, and on the farther outskirts were overjoyed to find a well. The water was about sixty feet down, and so cold that for all our thirst we could hardly drink a mugful each. We remained at the well for nearly three-quarters of an hour, filling all our water-bottles and chargals. Now and again a dog barked, but no inhabitants put in an appearance. There was even leisure to inspect a bed of Indian corn near by. Unfortunately only a single cob could be found. It was very young and tender, and most refreshing, as far as it went when divided between eight.

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With our thirst quenched by the ice-cold water, we were able to maintain an average pace of three miles an hour until 4.30 next morning. The indefatigable Cochrane was even then for going on. Most of the party, however, were utterly exhausted: since leaving the well the surface had been passably good, but the country had been on a slight incline, and intersected by a series of irrigation channels and natural nullahs, which all added to our fatigue. In one of the latter, then, we removed our kits, and collected little bits of dried thorn and scrub in readiness to make a fire as soon as it should be light enough to do so without risk of detection.

We had marched sixteen or seventeen miles, though not all in the most useful direction, so there was gladness when the two cooks on duty announced that the first dixieful was ready. A mixture of rice and cocoa once more graced the menu. Cochrane, who had gone ahead to reconnoitre, had still not returned, and the rest began to be anxious lest he should have been seen, or have come to grief in some way. After a while three volunteers went out to look for him, and eventually saw his head peering cautiously over a rock. He had been cut off from the nullah by the chance arrival of a shepherd, and had been biding his time till the latter should think fit to move to pastures new.

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The sun was already hot, and its heat, although considerably relieved by the cool breeze, once more precluded the possibility of any real sleep. Nor could we forget our hunger. On this occasion we were rather extravagant with our water. We had two brews of rice and Oxo and one of tea; then we boiled our last two handfuls of rice with a little cocoa, and so had a rice mould to take along with us in the dixie and eat that evening. Unfortunately the cook, who shall be nameless, upset it, so that a fair proportion of grit became an unwelcome ingredient of the dish. Our lavishness in water knew no bounds when we proceeded to boil up half a mugful, in which we were all to shave. This was the first time we did so since leaving Yozgad sixteen days before, so that the two little safety-razor sets were given an arduous task that day: few of us succeeded in removing all the growth without the use of two of our spare blades. It was a long and painful performance, but most refreshing in its result, and, as it proved, a very timely return to comparative respectability.

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During the morning we went once again into the problem of food. At dawn we had most of us been in favour of going into the next suitable village, and there boldly replenishing our supplies as Germans; but as we recovered a little from our over-fatigue, we agreed with Cochrane that we might still reach the coast in three days. On tabulating our total supplies, we found we should in this case be able to allow ourselves the following daily rations: For the rest of the day already begun, the rice, cocoa, and grit mould. For the second day, remnants of tapioca, beef-tea, and Ovaltine, amounting in all to about 4¾ oz. per head; and chocolate, cocoa, and arrowroot, totalling perhaps 1¾ oz. per head. For the third day, there would remain for each member of the party one biscuit, 5 oz. of raisins, 1 oz. of chocolate; and, between the party as a whole, four tins of Horlick's malted milk tablets.

For emergencies after the third day nothing would be left, so that, if on reaching the sea we did not at once find a dhow or other boat, and that with provisions, we should still be lost. But man proposes, God disposes; and it is as well for man that it is so.

CHAPTER X.

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THE THREE HUNS.

As the country before us appeared to be quite deserted, we began to move off a little before 3 P.M. The going was much the same as in the early morning, but what had then been small nullahs became broader and deeper ravines, running across our path at intervals of seven to eight hundred yards. The north sides of the ravines were especially steep. An hour and a half after our start we saw ahead of us some men and a string of camels, possibly engaged in contraband affairs with Cyprus. Accordingly we halted under cover of some rocks until we could march again unseen. The rate of marching was slow, hardly two miles an hour, for we were all very exhausted, trudging along in the hot sun, and Grunt was almost fainting. After two hours he had to give up. The terrific blow on his head by the brigand must have been the start of his collapse, and now, after many days of sticking to it, he could go no farther. His head felt very dizzy and each foot weighed a ton. We knew there must be water in a valley a few hundred yards ahead, as we had seen some trees and a bit of a village. We therefore halted for food in a small nullah, meaning to get to the stream after dark.

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The dixie containing the cocoa, rice, and grit mould was produced, and we had our meal. The grit was a blessing in a way, as one had to eat slowly. Two ounces of rice, tinged with cocoa, does not go far with a ravenous craving for food. As dusk came on we walked slowly for the few hundred yards to the edge of the river valley, the sides of which were precipitous and impossible to manœuvre by moonlight. Cochrane and Nobby walked along the edge of the ravine to see if there was an easier descent, but found none. While they were away Grunt told us that he wished to be left behind, as he was afraid of keeping us back. He said that if we left a little food with him he could lie up for a couple of days till we were clear of the locality, and he would then go to the nearest village, buy food, and make for the coast later,—if he felt strong enough and was not captured.

When Cochrane returned we held a council of war and decided to halt for the whole night. Accordingly we returned to the rice-and-grit nullah, and worked down it towards the main valley until we found a good resting-place. Nobby found a spring of excellent water a short way farther on, and there our water-bottles were refilled. By way of medical comfort Grunt was given the small quantity of Ovaltine that remained and a piece of biscuit. The Ovaltine had been carried loose in a bag since we started, and was in consequence as hard as a brick. Johnny tried to cut bits off the brick, but the knife edge merely turned on its owner's thumb, so finally Grunt had to gnaw it.

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On these very cold nights we had a system of what we called snuggling, usually in pairs; in larger numbers if the ground permitted, but only once did the level of our sleeping-place permit of more than two. That was on the following night. This night Grunt's snuggling partner lit a pipe, the best pipe of his life, and listened to poor old Grunt gnawing Ovaltine. It was hard to bear. Fortunately the pipe and the Ovaltine lasted for the same time. Grunt was very depressed. He reminded his partner how at Yozgad one day he, being of massive build and great strength, had prophesied that he would stand the trek worse than any of us. Ellis, as usual, was very restless. He is a noisy sleeper. When he doesn't grunt he snores, and he is not still for a minute. We never heard him whistle in his sleep, but doubtless he does. When lying in hiding by day we had to wake him if any

one came at all close to us.

Before we went to sleep it was decided that the following morning three of us should go to the nearest village on the river in the guise of Germans, and buy enough food for the party to finish the journey to the coast, some fifty-five miles away. [179]

At daylight, about 4.30 A.M., a move was made farther down the nullah. Here was cooked a two-ounce porridge ration, and then began our preparations for entering the village. The three to go were Grunt, Nobby, and Johnny. Grunt had the best Turkish of our party, so he also had the undying disgrace of playing the rôle of Hun officer. Nobby and Johnny were the Boche rank and file. It was essential to the success of the scheme that we should make a good impression on the villagers. Smartness was our watchword. The theatrical party therefore were allowed to commandeer clothes. Grunt had Nobby's "Gor Blimy" (better known, perhaps, as cap, service dress, mark two, star); Ellis's uniform coat, his own trousers, the Old Man's wrist-watch, and Perce's boots—not a bad effort. Johnny had his own kit with the exception of his trousers, an important part of which had remained lazily behind on a rocky slope the second night of the escape, while Johnny energetically slid on. Nobby had Ellis's "Gor Blimy" and boots, the Old Man's coat, and Looney's trousers. The three actors then shaved, washed, put "Vermi-jelly" grease on their boots to give the latter a false air of respectability, and at 8.30 A.M. were ready for their performance. [180]

They thought they were playing a drama at the time: looking back it was true comedy. The three set off down the steep goat-track towards the village. It was a tense moment, and we all thought that the evening would most probably find us once more under the orders of some uncivilised Turkish *chaouse*; for we had decided that if the three were captured in the village the other five would give themselves up.

Poor old Cochrane looked very anxious, and it was not to be wondered at. On the seventeenth day of his former attempt to escape, some two years previously, he and the two other naval officers of his party of three were compelled by starvation to buy food from a shepherd's hut. This man informed on them, with the result that they were taken by gendarmes. Recaptured, they were kept for six months in a filthy prison in Constantinople, untried by any court-martial. When the latter was held, Cochrane and his friends were given a three weeks' sentence, but actually were imprisoned for yet another four months. This is an excellent instance of Turkish justice, and the kind we were to expect should any one make a false move in the village.

Grunt, the officer, walked on ahead. Nobby and Johnny, each carrying an empty pack and haversack, marched behind.

The first glimpse of the village with its two grey-domed mosques and a few hundred houses rather frightened them: it was a much bigger one than they had expected, and the larger the village the more likely they were to be discovered as impostors. It was, however, too late to turn back. There were men and women working in the fields who had seen them, though they caused no real interest except to small boys, who are inquisitive the world over; so they marched on, Nobby and Johnny keeping perfect step, with Grunt at a respectful two paces in the rear. When they entered the village they asked the way to the headman's house. [181]

Their story was to be a plausible one. Their German surveying party was composed of one officer and seven men. They had left the railway at Eregli, and, taking to cart transport, were making for Mersina. The carts had unfortunately broken down, and being pressed for time they had marched on. They now wanted a few days' supplies for the party. A hard story to disprove without taking a lot of trouble, and Turks usually avoid taking much. Also, they had that forged document in Turkish, with the office stamp of Enver Pasha's Ministry of War on it to prove their *bona fides*; but this was only to be shown as a last resource.

After being wrongly directed three times by people who, if questioned further, would probably have said they were strangers to the place, the party entered a shop, and Grunt requested the owner to allow his small boy to show them the way. They were taken to a two-storied timber-built house, against the door of which lolled a Turkish private soldier. The conventional greetings passed, and the man asked in Turkish if they were Germans. The reply was in the affirmative. To their immense surprise this "simple soldat" in an out-of-the-way village started talking a very fluent German. It was the limit. The rank and file now came to the fore, and one suggested that the man had misunderstood them. They were not Germans: they were Magyars (Hungarians), and did not understand a word of German. The last part of the statement was untrue by two words, for the three of them compared notes that evening and counted the German words they knew—"Verboten, Schweinfleisch, and Bier" were the sum total. [182]

Stepping by the soldier, Grunt led the way into a small hall furnished with some harness and a few carpet saddle-bags. On the left was an open door, which they entered. Here was a long narrow room with a low ceiling. On three sides of it carpets were spread, with a few cushions on the floor. Reclining against the cushions on one side were two grey-bearded Turks, and a young Greek in a straw hat, blue suit, and brown boots. As they came in, the Greek said in English, "Come on, come along,"—the limit was surpassed! Later it was found that the Greek knew only a few words of English, but it was very unpleasant at the time. Grunt gave the Turkish salutation and sat down. Nobby and Johnny stayed strictly at attention. Grunt motioned with his hand, and received a smart salute and heel-click from his two subordinates, who then dared to seat themselves. [183]

The old Turk, who received Grunt's salutation, was obviously the headman. His jacket was gaudy, his pantaloons were very voluminous, and many daggers graced his highly-coloured belt.

To our party's disgust the German scholar now appeared and sat down beside Johnny. People began to flock in, and the questioning started—thousands of questions. The three answered as best they could and gave their story. The soldier now explained that he had served many years in Austria and knew a great deal about it. The actors did not. Where had they come from in Austria? Oh, Pruth! This opened the flood-gates once more. Did they know such and such a place? At some names they nodded and looked intelligent: at others they shook their heads. Fortunately the headman here broke in. Had they rifles and revolvers? Revolvers, yes! but the rifles had been left in the carts. Would they show him the revolvers? Grunt refused, saying there was an army order against it. So it went on.

Then another unpleasant incident took place. Grunt was wearing Ellis's service dress jacket. Before we left Yozgad its brass buttons had been covered with cloth, so as not to flash in the sun or in the moonlight. One of the large front buttons, however, had during the days that followed escape become uncovered, and though we remarked upon the fact when Grunt put on the coat in the morning, it was not covered again. Now it caught the scholar's eye. He crawled along to Grunt and started fingering it. He knew something about buttons, he said, and that particular one was an English button. The scholar was no fool! Johnny was very contemptuous,—didn't the man know that it was a specially good Magyar button, and one of the latest pattern? The scholar certainly made for excitement. [184]

Now was committed a grave error that might have had disastrous results. A small bag containing ¼ lb. of tea had been brought along to the village, in order to propitiate the headman should need arise, and at this juncture Grunt thought fit to offer it to him, extolling its excellence as he did so. No sooner had the bag changed hands than to their horror the three saw that the word TEA was marked plainly on it in indelible pencil. Had the Greek seen it, he would almost certainly have been able to read a simple word like this, and the game would have been up. But once more the party's luck stood by them, and the incident closed with the headman putting the bag in his pocket. [185]

It was dangerous for our party to talk anything but Turkish, even amongst themselves. Hindustani might have been safe, but they did not think of it. Early in the morning we had decided what food should be demanded. The list was as follows:—

Five	okes of	meat (an oke equals 2¾ lbs.)
Eight	okes of	raisins.
Twenty	"	bread.
Ten	"	wheat.
Eight	"	cheese.
Half	an oke of	butter.
One	"	honey.
Half	"	tobacco.
150		eggs.

Of course we did not expect to be able to obtain all these, but they were now asked for. As each item was named, the price was discussed by all the occupants of the room except the wretched buyers. Usually the price first mentioned was fairly moderate, but in a short time they had run it up amongst themselves as if they were bidding at an auction. They then turned to the buyers and said "such a thing costs so much," and the buyers were hungry enough to swallow any price. It is a trait of Turkish

commerce that no article ever has a fixed value. Finally 23½ Turkish pounds were paid in advance for the stores.

It was here that the party obtained a little war news. Of this we had had none since leaving Yozgad, and at that time the Turkish papers would have had us believe that the Germans were even then knocking at the gates of Paris. In the headman's house the war was now discussed, and the fighting powers of the various nations criticised. As for the British, they were a very rich and powerful people, and yet just look how they had been driven into the sea at Gallipoli, and how the Turks had forced them to surrender at Kut-el-Amara. The French, of course, were not good fighters, and the Americans quite untrained to arms. The actors had perforce to agree to all these statements, but their joy was great, though well hidden under a disgusted mien, when they heard that the Germans were retiring.

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After this conversation came a welcome diversion. A round table like a dumb-waiter, about 9 inches in height, was brought in. With it came a large supply of chupatties, a flat plate of honey, one of cream, a bowl of sour milk, and a dish piled high with greasy wheat pilau; and following the food came the headman's son—a lad of nine. The headman beckoned our three to approach, and, sitting on their hunkers round the table, the breakfast party of seven began the meal.

The method of eating is simple, but one requires either genius or years of practice to be any good at it. Break off a piece of chupattie, quickly shape it into a shovel, scoop up as much honey or cream as possible, eat the shovel and its contents, and start again. Johnny is a novice at the game. Though ravenous for food he is an amateur: his miserable little shovels are merely damp with honey or cream when he eats them.

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Mark Twain is unfortunately dead. He alone could have described how the nine-year-old boy ate: his shovels were immense, and he always took a full scoop. He was swallowing continuously, and while his right hand was feeding his mouth, his left had already shaped a new shovel. He was an expert—a record-breaker. Grunt and Nobby fared little better than Johnny, for the three had to conceal the fact that they were starving. The meal lasted not more than six minutes. Johnny reckoned he had absorbed one chupattie with a negligible quantity of honey, cream, and pilau. The boy must have eaten eight, and the greater part of everything else, and thoroughly earned the undying admiration of three Englishmen. The meal over, Nobby and Johnny put on their packs and haversacks. For a change the German scholar said they were really good Austrian packs and haversacks: perhaps the button incident had affected him.

A guide was now produced, and the Magyar rank and file went a-shopping. The packs could not possibly carry the amount of food which it had been decided to buy, so quantities were cut down, and finally the two returned to the headman's house, each carrying a load of about 57 lbs. During their absence Grunt had to answer innumerable questions about his firearms.

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After a short delay the three took their departure, Nobby and Johnny again clicking heels and doing a pantomime chorus salute. The distance to the remainder of the party was one and a half miles, and the path climbed steeply the whole way. The Hun officer of course marched coolly ahead, while Nobby and Johnny plodded behind, anything but cool. After going a few hundred yards they glanced behind them. As was to be expected, they were being followed. First came the beastly German-speaking man, then the Greek, and after them the headman himself on a donkey. Johnny advised Grunt to go on ahead and warn the others that we were now Magyars, and that we each had a revolver. Nobby and Johnny walked as fast as they could, but the sun was very hot and the loads very heavy for them in their weak condition. The men who were following eventually caught up with them and together they came to where the remainder of the party were camped. This gave the headman a bit of a shock, as he thought we had lied about everything, and so did not expect to see five other Magyars.

As soon as the party could get their equipment on we formed up in two ranks. Grunt made some guttural sounds, at which we "left turned" and started to march off into the blue, leaving three very puzzled men behind us. After an hour's going we halted and, seeing no one following us, had a meal of two chupatties and six raw eggs each. For the two odd ones of the fifty that had been bought we had "fingers out."

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"Fingers out" was a procedure whereby all such debatable matters were decided during our escape. On the last sound of the words "Fingers up!" each member of the party held up any number of fingers he chose, subject to the maximum being four and the minimum one. Having decided beforehand at which person the counting would start, and which way round it was to go, the total number of fingers shown was added up and on whatever member of the party this number ended when counting round, that was the man. This was the sort of thing that happened: "Starting with Perce, going round right-handed, Fingers up!" Suppose the total was 19. That would mean, in our party of eight, that the man two after Perce would win the count. "Fingers out" was used only to settle who was to have the pleasant things, such as these odd eggs, or the scrapings of the cooking-pot; duties such as going on ahead to scout or going back to a spring to fetch water were undertaken by volunteers.

We were still on the wrong side of the ravine in which was the village, and inasmuch as it was dangerous to stay in a locality where we had aroused such suspicion, the ravine must be crossed. A mile farther on we discovered a possible line of descent to a ledge half-way down. The ravine was about four hundred feet deep and its sides almost precipitous.

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As we climbed slowly down, Perce, who was coming last, started three enormous boulders, which crashed below. As Johnny leapt aside one missed him by only a few inches. Half the descent was successfully accomplished, but the ground beneath fell sheer away; so we went a few hundred yards in an up-stream direction on our own level. Coming round a rocky spur a wonderful sight met our gaze. Beyond us the cliff curved round in a shallow crescent. It was of soft yellow sandstone, and contained two large uninhabited cave-villages, about two hundred yards apart. With the passing of centuries the cliff had worn away, revealing a honeycomb of square caves. The larger village must have had ten or twelve stories of rooms connected up by some form of staircases inside, but we did not see them. The smaller one had two stories laid bare, but it was not as well finished as the other. The entrances to the village were Roman arches: under these ran a short passage leading to the door itself, which was rectangular in shape. In some cases the one archway contained two doors. The finest arch was carved on both sides, with crude paintings on it. From the foot of the villages a very steep pathway ran down to the river-bed below. This we followed, and a quarter of an hour later arrived at the bottom. Here was the most delightful sight we had seen since our start from Yozgad: green and shady trees lining the grassy bank of a murmuring mountain stream. The water was ice-cold and as clear as crystal—a merit when we thought of the stagnant cattle-wallows from which we had had to drink. It was too tempting to leave at once. We found what we thought was a secluded spot, and here we first of all arranged our packs so that each of us had an equal weight to carry after the morning's purchases. Then we bathed. The joy of that bathe after seventeen days was indescribable, and worth many a hardship.

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A bridle-path ran along the edge of the stream, and unfortunately any one who happened to pass would be able to see us. As luck would have it, an old man rode by on a donkey while we were engaged in giving our socks a much-needed wash. When he had gone we looked at each other and heaved a sigh of relief, for he had not even glanced in our direction; but when he rode past us again twice in the next twenty minutes and still failed to look at us, we thought it was time to move. Hastily filling our water-bottles and chargals, we started to climb the other side of the ravine. The chargal, an extra weight of ten pounds and hard to carry, changed hands twice before we got to the top, from where the view of the cave-villages was very fine.

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For the next three hours we picked our way over dreadful going, amongst grey limestone rocks, cracked and pock-marked everywhere. Progress was very slow, as one had to watch one's feet the whole time for fear of breaking an ankle. It was here that we started a leveret, and made a vain attempt to kill a long snake which swished past Johnny's feet. We saw four snakes during our escape—one of which made Nobby leap violently into the air as he nearly trod on it. When there was a chance of resting, we were almost too tired to think at all, so the thought of snakes did not worry us.

At about 5 P.M. Cochrane betted Johnny half a sovereign that the sea would be visible from the next rise, provided there was no further mountain range within five miles. The bet was lost by nearly a week, for it was not till the twenty-third day out that seascapes became part of our scenery.

At 6 P.M. we halted in a rocky cup-shaped depression with some dried wood lying about. Here we set to work with the meat bought at the village. It was, or had been, a beautiful goat-kid, and from it we made a stew such as no multi-millionaire can buy. Certainly no "Cordon-bleu" has ever achieved such an appetising dish. The recipe will now be divulged: Take a joint of goat-kid, put it on a rock and saw pieces off it with a blunt clasp-knife. Place the bits in a dixie over a wood fire, add a little water, and wait impatiently till the meat is half cooked. Put your share into an enamel mug, and with the hunger of seventeen days' starvation as relish, and the thumb and forefinger of the right hand as a fork, eat, and thank your God.

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Our dinner this evening was one to be remembered: a mugful of meat, two chupatties, a table-spoonful of cheese, and a few spoonfuls of cooked wheat for each of us; and for the first time for many a day we lay down feeling well fed. That night we found a level bit of ground where five could sleep together. Of the rest, two slept practically in a bushy fir-tree, and Cochrane curled round the fire. All went well until some one of the five—Ellis for a sovereign—wanted to turn, and the chance of sleeping

was at an end. Fortunately, it was nearly time to move off, so we did not lose much rest. Just before daylight we started and did about two miles in two hours, the going being of the ankle-breaking variety. We were not many miles from a main road, so it was senseless to risk travelling much after dawn. Looney, too, with his iron-clad ammunition boots, was going very lame, with large blisters on his heels. We therefore hid for the day in another rocky cup similar to that of the previous evening. Shortly after dawn, Nobby, a keen shikari, slaughtered a hoopoe, which had the misfortune to have a fit in front of him. This made a welcome addition to our larder, and when, at our meal before starting that evening, we had "fingers out" for it, Nobby very appropriately won it. In this bivouac we had the misfortune to lose our second and last pair of scissors—they were a great loss, and we sadly needed them later on. The cracks in the rocks, where we spent the day, were several feet deep, and the scissors are no doubt lying at the bottom of one of these.

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There was some doubt who was guilty of the crime of losing them, but we bet another sovereign it was —.

CHAPTER XI.

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IN THE HEART OF THE TAURUS.

During this 25th August we had fixed our position so far as our obsolete map would permit. We had, we thought, just crossed the watershed of the Taurus, and if the day had only been clearer might perhaps have obtained our first view of the sea from our point of vantage that morning. This fact of being on the watershed, together with a compass-bearing on to a peak recognisable to the south, settled our position fairly definitely as a little to the west of the range marked Gueuk Tepe on the map. This was in agreement with a check by dead reckoning based on Looney's diary from the time we had passed the Ak Gueul, and meant that we had still forty-five miles between us and the sea, even as the crow flies; or, by the way we should take for the sake of better going, something well over fifty miles.

Soon after setting out on the following night's march, the accuracy of our estimate was confirmed, for the map showed a main road not far ahead from our supposed position, and this as a matter of fact we crossed within half an hour's trek. Just beyond the road and a little to the east of our course rose a cone-shaped hill, crowned by what at first looked like an old castle, but which, on a nearer view, resolved itself into a natural outcrop of white rock. It was then 7 o'clock. An hour later we were grateful for the find of a small stream of perfectly clear water. This was the first we had discovered since crossing the beautiful valley where we had enjoyed our much-needed bathe thirty odd hours before.

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By this time, however, we had become comparatively inured to a shortage of water. It was only a fortnight ago that one of the party had collapsed after a lesser privation. Now we did not even trouble to fill completely the larger of the two serviceable chargals, although it is true there were other reasons which encouraged us in this serenity. For one thing, now that we were on the southern slopes of the Taurus, we hoped that our water troubles were over. In point of fact, we were to find ourselves sadly disappointed. Then again, we were loth to put such a drag upon our speed as a full chargal certainly was, change hands though it might every half-hour. So far that night we had maintained a pace of four miles an hour. The meat eaten during the previous two days had undoubtedly met a very real need, and with the cheese and chupatties, and the longer periods for rest, had given us a sense of renewed vigour. Time, however, still passed with the same deadly slowness. On the first night that we had started taking the chargals turn and turn about at regular intervals, more than one of the party had imagined that he had been doing a spell of a full hour, and was horrified to hear that in reality it had been only half that length.

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On this night the moon rose at about 8.30; there was thus a short period of darkness between sunset and moonlight, and as we should have a three-quarter moon for the whole of the rest of the night, we could afford to rest for twenty minutes when the twilight had faded. This was the more desirable, as we were still in difficult country. The surface itself was not as bad as might have been expected, for, after all, we were in the Taurus; but our course was constantly being crossed by steep nullahs. The climb up their farther sides was very fatiguing.

To avoid some of these, we proceeded, wherever possible, to follow the crest-line, and as soon as the moon was up the field-glasses once more proved their value by enabling Cochrane to pick out the best route. As time went on, however, the country became more and more broken, until we found it necessary, if endless detours were to be avoided, to take the nullahs as they came. After a few more climbs, we almost gave up trying to keep on our proposed course, which was a little E. of S., and nearly decided instead to follow down a valley to the S.W., which promised better going. In the end, however, we contented ourselves with making a mile and a half an hour in our original direction, and were rewarded by finding in one of the nullahs a little spring of water.

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At 11 P.M., having found a fairly sheltered nook (for the wind at night was always cold at this altitude), we took the opportunity of snatching a little sleep. It has to be confessed that some of us also made a premature attack on the next day's ration of cheese and chupatties. To help level up our loads, these had been shared out already, and after our experience of the joys of a full meal—we allude again to the goat—we found having food in our packs a sore temptation. Without the safeguard of common ownership, it ceased to be inviolable. Yet perhaps after all it was best to eat at night, when we were doing all the hard work, and when, in addition, it was cold.

Shortly after midnight we moved on, and were soon cheered by the discovery of a narrow track leading in the right direction, and cleverly avoiding all the difficulties of the broken ground on either side. This we were able to follow at a hard 3½ miles an hour until a little before daybreak. Then seeing lights ahead, we left the main track, thinking it must be leading us on to a village. Immediately around us there was no cover from view, and as the first tinge of dawn lit up the countryside, we saw that our only hiding-place would be in the wooded hills on the farther side of the valley in which lay the supposed houses. Proceeding at our best speed, we began a race with the sun, punctuated only by halts of a few seconds now and then as Cochrane searched anxiously round through the field-glasses; for we could hear herds moving about, and other lights had come into view. The descent proved steeper and longer than had been anticipated, and it was not till after five o'clock, and just before sunrise, that we reached the foot of the valley. Here we found we had to cross a stream ten to twelve feet wide, and, on account of the marshy ground, at a point not 500 yards away from the lights. These came, as we now saw, from a small group of timber huts, and in our haste to reach cover we plunged straight through the stream, to find that only a few yards farther up we might have crossed by stepping-stones in a place where the stream was only a foot deep.

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This was no time for vain regrets, so we were soon clambering up the farther slope, which was covered with scattered pines. Under cover of these we gave ourselves a couple of minutes' breathing space, for the hill was steep, and then went on over the top of the first ridge, a thousand feet above the stream, and into a little dip beyond. Here we found a trickle of water, and settled down amongst some small trees and thorny scrub. The first thing to do was to take off our soaked boots and let them dry; after this a brew of cocoa was prepared—well earned by what we reckoned was a 27-mile march in the previous twelve hours. Most of our feet were terribly sore, and Looney spent an hour sewing on bandages before he struggled back into his boots that day.

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With the present satisfactory rate of progress we could afford to be rather more liberal with our food; and so the camp fire never died down, for we took it in turns to make "pilaus" all that day. These were made from crushed wheat, and differed from the porridge we had been accustomed to make from it while at Yozgad, in that before boiling it was mixed with a little melted dripping, a supply of which we had obtained from the village. The resulting pilau was a vast improvement on the plain porridge, besides being rather quicker to cook—a consideration in view of the smallness of our cooking-pot. Altogether we must have had five pilaus at this bivouac, but as each when distributed filled only a third of a pint mug, we cannot be accused of greed. To avoid all waste we had brought along even the bones of the goat; from these we now made a weak soup, after which the bones themselves were divided out for a last picking, some of us even eating their softer portions. We were out of sight of the huts in the valley which we had so hastily crossed, but could see the top of the hill on the farther side; here was a fairly large walled village, with houses built of stone and roofed with the usual flat mud roofs. Although we could see this with our glasses, we were too far to be observed ourselves, and moreover little sign of life appeared there. That afternoon, however, we had a few anxious moments, when two men came over the next ridge to the south of us: they passed within a hundred yards of where we lay, but appeared not to have seen us.

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In the evening, having moved a short distance up the same ridge, we were having a five minutes' halt when two more men, this time on donkeys, came over the crest and almost rode on top of us. They asked, "Who are you? Where are you going?" and

"Why hiding?" We did not answer, so they said, "Are you foreigners that you don't understand Turkish?" Then they went on, and so did we. Fortunately, even should they report any suspicions they had, we were in country that was much intersected and in which it would have been difficult for any one to trace us. So difficult, in fact, was the bit of ground which met our view on reaching the top of the range we were on, that it was some minutes before we could make up our minds which would be the best line to follow.

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Eventually we decided to make for a ridge which seemed negotiable, and on proceeding came very shortly afterwards to a spring and a goat-track. After drinking all the water we could, we followed the latter. It was as well we did so, for the track took us round the head of a precipitous ravine which might have taken a whole day to cross if we had attempted to pass over direct. On the far side, too, the track still kept the general direction we wanted, namely, some twenty degrees east of south, and so we clung to it steadily until 8.30 P.M. We had been marching for three hours, and now following our procedure of the previous night, slept till 9.45, by which time the moon had risen. Before halting, we had seen one or two shepherds' fires ahead, so took the precaution to move fifty yards or so off the track in case there should be any traffic. By this time we had given up keeping a watch on the night halts, though we still did so by day. The reason for this was that sleep was only obtainable during the nights, and we could not afford to let even one member of the party go without it. On this particular occasion it was comparatively warm, considering that we were on an open hillside in the Taurus, and we were much rested by the sleep we obtained.

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When we resumed our way we still kept to our friendly path, although it was becoming more and more stony. A little before midnight we found ourselves in a dilemma, for, after leading us to the edge of a deep valley which ran at right angles to our course, the track now branched right and left. The problem was which path to follow. If we had stopped to think we might have realised that, in mountainous country, even the most friendly road cannot always take you by a direct route, and that the longest way round is often the shortest way home. However, on this occasion we made an error of judgment and went straight ahead. The slope, at first comparatively grassy and gradual, became rapidly more rocky and precipitous, until at about 1.30 A.M., after descending close upon 1500 feet, we found ourselves on the edge of a yawning gorge, at the bottom of which foamed a raging mountain torrent. We were not as glad to see this water as usual, for we had crossed a rivulet on our way down: at this we had already quenched our thirst, although at the time dogs had been barking at us from some shepherds' huts on the valley slope. The difficulty now was to find a practicable path up the farther bank. The torrent itself was passable easily enough, for natural stepping-stones abounded in its rock-strewn bed; and in fact we did cross and re-cross it several times in a painful endeavour to make our way a little farther to the west.

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Everywhere, however, beyond a rough and narrow ledge of rock by the side of the stream, the far bank rose up sheer above us. In the moonlight the scene was wonderful, and we could not help thinking how perfect a place this would have been for a day's halt. But we could not afford to lose precious time, and for the present our whole aim was to leave it as soon as possible. At one spot, having seen a light burning not far from the water's edge, we proceeded very cautiously. It proved to proceed from the stump of a tree which some one had probably set on fire to warm himself and had left burning: happily no one was there now. After a two hours' struggle we had to own that we were defeated, and were compelled to climb back out of the gorge and still on the wrong side. Moving along its edge at a higher level, for another two hours we searched in vain for a more likely crossing-place, and were almost in despair when we suddenly heard the voices of men and women below us. Looking down, we saw in the moonlight a party of Turks or Armenians in the act of crossing a fine old bridge which spanned the gorge between two absolutely vertical banks in a single semicircular arch of stone. Even now it was some little time before we could pick up the path leading down to it, but when we did so we were agreeably surprised to find that the bridge was not guarded. In the last five hours we had progressed but one mile in the right direction.

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When at last we crossed the gorge it was barely an hour to dawn, and we had not followed the mountain road leading up the farther side for long before we had to be on the look-out for a hiding-place. There was little cover higher up the hill; so we turned right-handed and dropped down once more towards the gorge, hoping that after all it would do us the good turn of providing us with water and shade for the day. On the way down, however, we saw a cave hollowed out in the rocky hillside, and as the bank below was very steep, we decided we would not give ourselves a single foot of unnecessary climbing when we started off again next evening. We accordingly entered the cave; but Cochrane and Perce, after ridding themselves of their packs, valiantly climbed down again to the water and came back with the two chargals full. So much had all the fruitless clambering taken out of us that we were more tired on this day than after double the distance on the night previous, and, except for taking turns to cook, every one lay like a log in the cave. The latter faced west, and was roofed by two elliptical semi-domes side by side beneath a larger arch in the rock, but being shallow in width compared to the height of the roof, allowed the sun to stream in upon us in the latter part of the afternoon.

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On leaving the cave at about 7 P.M., as rugged country still lay ahead, we thought it best to work our way obliquely up the hill and regain the track which had led us up from the bridge over the ravine. To this we clung for the greater part of the night which followed, although it involved passing through several villages. We found ourselves in the first almost before we realised that a village existed there at all: it seemed, however, a city of the dead.

Not a dog barked at our approach, and the narrow crooked streets appeared deserted, until suddenly the white-clad figure of a woman flitted across our path. Fortunately she did not pause to find out who were these strange nocturnal visitors.

Not long afterwards we saw lights ahead, and as we drew nearer found that our road branched to right and left, the latter branch leading towards the lights which seemed to proceed from a village. After the previous night's experience we had no intention of attempting any cross-country going if we could possibly avoid it. Here, indeed, to go on direct would have necessitated crossing first a valley of unknown depth, and then an enormous ridge which reared up its black bulk against the clear starry sky. It was fairly obvious that the two roads went round either end of this ridge; after that it was a toss-up which was the more likely to lead us towards the sea. In view of the village and of the noisy clatter on the stony track of the booted members of the party, Cochrane elected to take the right-hand branch, and this we followed for over a mile. It was leading us due west, and seemed likely to continue to do so for several miles more before the ridge was rounded. The coast opposite our position ran, we knew, rather from N.E. to S.W., and so every mile we marched west added another to our distance from the coast. At the next halt we reconsidered the question of roads, and decided we must go back and risk the village. But it was essential to make less noise, and so, as we once more approached the cross-roads, those not wearing "chariqs" padded their boots with old socks, bits of shirt, and pieces of felt.

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It gives some idea of the absolute weariness of body which now was ours, when it is stated that it was only after much forcible persuasion from Nobby that those who would have the trouble of tying on the padding could be induced to take this precaution. But in the end wise counsels prevailed, and we succeeded in passing through the village—and it was a large one—without causing any apparent alarm. Looney, however, lost one of his mufti hats with which he had padded one of his boots.

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The track now increased in width to as much as ten feet, being roughly levelled out of the solid rock, and running along a ledge above a precipitous ravine. Below us we heard the roar of a mountain stream, and as at one point a rough path had been cut down to water-level, Cochrane descended it and fetched up a chargal full of water. It was to prove a serious mistake that we did not fill all our receptacles here. On resuming our way, we were taken by our road over another striking bridge which crossed the ravine a little higher up. This time the arch was a pointed one. Once more we found the defile unguarded. We were probably in magnificent mountain scenery, but could see little of it, as the moon had not yet risen. Even though after crossing the bridge we waited in the warmth of a little cave till after the time of moonrise, the moon itself did not become visible until two hours later, so steep were the slopes on every side of us. We could see, however, that we were going round the eastern shoulder of the ridge which had blocked our direct route, and this ridge rose sheer from the very edge of the ravine.

Without a road to follow, we should have fared badly indeed. Even with it, the climb from the bridge had been severe, but on proceeding we soon came to the top of the rise and found ourselves walking on a carpet of pine-needles through a beautiful open forest. This was a wonderful contrast to the arid wastes or rugged ridges across which had been so many of our long and weary marches. Even here, however, the country was soon to resume its more normal aspect. We found ourselves descending into an open valley with no signs of trees or vegetation. Our road, too, dwindled to the width and unevenness of an ordinary village track, and this it turned out to be, for it led past a few isolated huts, and finally at 1 A.M. took us into a village.

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A little before, during one of the hourly halts, we had seen in the moonlight a man approaching on a donkey; so we took to our feet and marched again in order to pass him the more quickly. This we did without a single word being exchanged.

In the village we could hear the sound of men talking and laughing together. This was rather disconcerting, as for one thing we had been hoping to find where they obtained their water. Far from finding either well or spring or stream, however, we even

had some difficulty in finding the path out of the village. We were about to cut across country, and had gone as far as to climb over a hedge into some vineyards, when we recognised the path to the west of us. It worked along the side of a hill apparently towards a saddle in the steep ridge which closed the valley ahead. While we were in the vineyard we felt around for grapes, but the vines were barren; in fact the whole valley seemed waterless. We now regained the track and had nearly reached the top of the ridge when our path suddenly took into its head to start descending the valley again. Though we were loth to leave any track so long as it made some pretence of going anywhere in our direction, this was too much for our patience, and Cochrane led us due east, so as to cross the bleak ridge which bordered the valley on that side and see what the next valley could do for us. But even here our difficulties were not to end: the farther hillside was rocky in the extreme and covered with scrub and stunted trees, amongst which we clambered for some two hours without finding any valley to promise easy progress in the direction of the sea. To "Kola" tablets we once more resorted. Finally, an hour before dawn, we lay down as we were, disheartened, without water, and without a road.

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CHAPTER XII. DOWN TO THE SEA.

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When daylight came, we found ourselves in a network of extraordinary valleys. Large trees grew on the rock-strewn slopes, while along the bottoms were little strips of bright red soil, sprinkled with stones, and yet suggestive of great fertility; and indeed in some parts it was clear that the ground had in a previous year been ploughed. Yet as far as human habitation was concerned the valley seemed entirely deserted; only here and there as we marched on we passed a few timbers of some ruined shelter, indicating its former occupation by shepherd inhabitants. The whole scene gave the impression that here had once been flourishing well-watered vales, which had then been blasted by some strange upheaval of nature, by which the whole water supply had suddenly been cut off and the former inhabitants compelled to quit.

To open our eyes on such a scene did not tend to revive our spirits. We had not a drop of water in our water-bottles, and although a valley was soon found leading in the right direction, we followed it without much hope of being able to quench our thirst. After an hour or so, however, at a place where the valley widened a little, we picked up in the soft red soil a number of goat-tracks, and noticed that several others joined them, all seeming to converge towards the same spot. These suggested water, but soon after they suddenly ceased.

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Fifty yards up the hill there was a stone enclosure, and just as Cochrane was leading on, Nobby thought it was advisable to make sure there was nothing there. This was most fortunate, for inside he found a well. Next moment we were all within the enclosure, and on lifting out the heavy timber bung which closed the hole in the stone-built cover, found water not twenty feet down. It tasted slightly stale, and no doubt the well had not been used for some time; but this did not affect our enjoyment of a couple of brews of "boulgar" (porridge made from crushed wheat), which were now prepared, and flavoured with a spoonful of our precious cocoa.

Still more refreshing to those who could summon up the necessary energy, was a wash and a shave. Even a wash-hand basin was provided in the shape of a little stone trough which was built into the enclosure wall, and was doubtless intended for use in watering the flocks of sheep and goats.

After nearly two hours' grateful rest and refreshment, we resumed our course, and soon after entered a broad ravine. Here grew enormous oak-trees, seeming to flourish amid the barest rock and boulders, although the bed of this quaint valley appeared to have had no water in it for ages. At one point, where we halted under the shelter of a rocky outcrop, some of the party filled a haversack with the tips of stinging-nettles. Gloves were not an item of our equipment, and our fingers were badly stung, but a little spinach would provide a pleasant variation in our next cooked meal.

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We went on till 11 A.M. without seeing a single sign of life. Then we came to a strong timber barrier across the narrow foot of the valley, and saw beyond it a man engaged in winnowing. We quickly drew back out of view, and decided we should have to make a detour. The country was not so desolate or uninhabited as we had thought. First, however, we would fortify ourselves with a little food. For this purpose we climbed a short way up the western side of the valley and settled down in the shelter of a big tree. While Cochrane and Perce cooked some "boulgar," the rest lay down and were soon fast asleep. It was a hard struggle indeed to rouse oneself from such delightful oblivion of all our cares, but our Mr Greatheart was not to be denied, and after our food we left the Enchanted Ground.

To avoid the risk of being seen by people in the valley, it was now necessary to climb up the steep rocky ridge ahead instead of circling round its foot as would otherwise have been possible. The surface was atrocious; jagged points of rock cut into our feet through the soles of our much-worn footgear. If one wished to avoid a sprained ankle, every step had to be taken with care, for the rock was cut up into innumerable crannies and honeycombed with holes. It took eight hundred feet of stiff climbing to reach the top of the first ridge. Beyond it we were not pleased to find a whole series of equally steep though smaller ridges and valleys, and all at right angles to our proper course. After a long struggle we had to give up the idea of going straight ahead, and instead began to follow down one of the valleys. This led us back into country very similar to that in which we had found ourselves early that morning: once more our path took us over the small boulders and down the line of red earth.

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There were no further signs of life until nearly four o'clock. Our sudden appearance then startled three or four small children who were tending some goats on the hillside. A moment later we came into view of a single black tent, set up at the junction of two branches into which the valley now divided.

Concealment was impossible; besides, we were in our usual trouble for water. The only inhabitant seemed to be an old woman, who came out of the tent to find out why the children had run back. To avoid frightening her, the party halted some distance off, while Cochrane and Grunt went forward alone to find out what sort of reception might be expected.

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For some minutes the Circassian (for we thought she must be one) stood talking to the two envoys at the door of her tent. Then she signalled us to approach, and invited the whole party inside her abode. Here she offered the equivalent in the East of a chair—namely, a seat on the mats which covered the earthen floor. The amiable old dame next produced a large circular tray, which she set in our midst, and on which she placed some wafer-like chupatties and a couple of bowls of the inevitable "yourt." Never did simple meal taste so sweet, but the amount provided served only to whet the appetite of the eight hungry travellers. It was gently suggested that we should like a little more; we told her we would pay for everything we had. At the same time we produced some of our mugs as likely to provide a method of eating the "yourt" more in keeping with our hunger. Lest the full number should alarm her, we tendered only four, and these she filled readily enough, and several times over, from an almost unlimited supply which she kept in a row of large copper vessels standing along one side of the tent. We noticed also several large sacks, which we thought must contain flour or wheat, and thought it would be advisable to lay in further supplies if we could. Not a thing, however, would our hostess sell: neither flour, wheat, cheese, goat, nor fowls. We asked her to make us some more chupatties, but without avail. No money would tempt her—she was evidently not a Turk,—even the offer of a little tea could not work the oracle. Her hospitality—and it was true hospitality that she had shown to us—was limited to what we might eat on the premises. From what we could gather from her rather peculiar Turkish, the old lady seemed afraid to sell us anything without her husband's consent. It was impossible not to admire her steadfastness, and as we left we presented her with three silver medjidies (worth altogether about twelve shillings). On this she relaxed to the extent of allowing us to take three eggs that she had.

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We tried to find out how far we were from the sea; but she seemed hardly to know of its existence, so cut off had she been all her life in her mountain fastness. She directed us, however, to some other tents farther down one of the valleys, and said we might be able to buy some food there; so thither we now wended our way. There was a well outside the tent, but it was dry at the time and was being deepened. A few drops of water which she had given us within had come from some distant stream, she said. "Yourt," however, is a wonderful thirst-quencher, so lack of water did not cause any worry for the time being.

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We agreed, as we went on, that if we found the tents which we were now seeking, only half the party should go to buy; partly because we thought in that way we should be less likely to frighten the occupants from selling us food, and partly to avoid letting people see the exact strength of our party, in case any one should take it into his head to report our presence. Accordingly, when three-quarters of an hour later we arrived at two more tents, Cochrane and Nobby approached one, and

Grunt and Looney the other. The first pair were not received with very open arms, and had to be satisfied with only a little "yourt" eaten on the spot, and a few coarse chupatties which they were able to take away with them. They came on to the second tent, to find that the other pair had fallen upon their feet. They had arrived at a very propitious moment. Just inside the doorway they had found a smiling old dame busily engaged in making the chupatties for the family's evening meal. With some of these she regaled her guests, and Grunt at once asked her if she would bake some more for companions of his who had gone on to prepare the camp for the night. With a good deal of coaxing, and influenced perhaps a little by the sight of silver coins, she finally made another dozen. Meanwhile another woman entered and ladled out some beautiful fresh milk which was boiling in a large cauldron in the tent. The four were able to enjoy two mugfuls of this between them, but could only induce the woman to give them one more mugful to take away for the others. After much haggling, however, and on receipt of two medjidies, she was persuaded to let them have six pounds of fresh cheese made from goats' milk.

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As prearranged, the rest of the party had gone a few hundred yards farther down the ravine in which stood the tents, and finding that no further purchases were to be made the four now rejoined them.

The camping-ground had been chosen some forty yards up the southern side of the ravine. The steep slope was covered with pine and oak trees, and at their feet we slept. It mattered little to us that our beds were uneven. We had before this slept soundly at all angles and on pointed rocks; and here we had a mattress of leaves and pine-needles on which to lay our weary bodies. The occasional bark of a dog or the soft hoot of an owl were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the night. Through the trees could be seen patches of the starlit heaven. We owed much to those wonderful stars. Big and bright in these latitudes, they had led us on our way for many a night, and when there was no moon to befriend us they had lighted our path so that we could still march slowly on.

It was after a sound and refreshing sleep, that shortly before 4 A.M. next day, while it was yet dark, we shouldered our packs and moved eastwards down the stony bed of the confined valley. This gave on to a broader one at right angles to it; crossing which we halted in a small wood for an hour to prepare our simple breakfast. Here Cochrane climbed an oak-tree hoping to obtain a glimpse of the sea, but it was not yet in sight.

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Hardly had we started off again when we suddenly saw a boy coming towards us through the wood. He was carrying a few chupatties and a bag of "yourt." We stopped the lad, and although at first he was unwilling to part with the food, which he intended to sell to some tent-dwellers, yet finally we persuaded him to humour us in exchange for two silver medjidies. While eating this unexpected addition to our breakfast, we questioned the boy as to our whereabouts. Though very uncertain about it, he thought the sea was three hours' journey away: the nearest big town was Selefké (the ancient Seleucia), but where it was he did not know; we should see a well near two tents in the next village.

Thus informed we left him, and on emerging from the wood saw the two tents about a mile distant and close to what must be the main road to Selefké; away to our left stood some very fine ruins. Through field-glasses they looked like some ancient Greek temple.

We decided to go to the tents for water, and in order to vary our story to suit our surroundings, for this occasion we would be German archæologists. Arriving at the encampment, we were received by an old Turk and his grown-up son, and taken into the bigger tent. Here we sat down on a carpet, and leant against what felt like sacks of grain. Having given our reason for being in the locality, we explained that we were willing to pay a good price for antiques.

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"I have none," replied the old fellow. "Of what value are such things to me? But you Germans are for ever searching after relics from ruins. Four years ago a party just like yours came here for the very same purpose, asking for ancient coins and pottery." So we had hit upon a most suitable story.

A little girl now appeared on the scene. To keep up the conversation we asked the old man her age.

"She's seven years old," he answered, "and my youngest grandchild. I have six sons, of whom five are at the war. One of them is a *chaouse* (sergeant) on the Palestine front; another an *onbashi* (corporal) near Bagdad. I had another son in Irak too, but he was taken prisoner by the English."

"Have you good news of him?" asked one of us.

"Yes, I had a letter from him a year ago, saying he was in good health and well treated."

What the other two in the Army were doing we do not remember, though doubtless we were told. The sixth son, perchance a conscientious objector, was in the tent with us. He joined in the conversation now and again, and finally produced a musical instrument like a deformed mandolin.

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"Can any of you play?" he asked.

"I don't think any of us can," replied our Turkish scholar. "But we should like to hear you play us something," he added politely. "First, however, could we have some water to drink? We are all very thirsty." This saved us the ordeal of listening to Oriental music, for the little child was sent round to each of us in turn with a shallow metal cup of water, and by the time we had had a drink the musician had put his instrument away. Encouraged by these beginnings of hospitality, we asked if they had any bread for sale. At this the old man shouted some questions to the other tent, at the door of which a woman soon appeared. She talked so fast that we could not understand what she said, but the expression on her face and all her gestures gave us clearly to understand that she had never heard such impudence. In the end, however, the old Turk gave us half a chupattie each. Meanwhile two of the party had gone off to the well to fill all our water-bottles, the rest remaining in the tent trying to persuade the man to give us more bread. Since no more was forthcoming, as soon as the two returned with water we moved on again.

Food-hunting was now becoming a vice, of which, in our hungry condition, we found it difficult to cure ourselves. Though we had still some of the food bought at the big village on August 24, we eased our consciences with the thought that we might have to spend some days on the coast before we found a boat. Moreover, in these isolated tents, dotted about in so unfrequented a district, we might with safety try to obtain additional supplies, for there was not much likelihood of meeting gendarmes, and there was no town very near where the tent-dwellers could give information about us. The next few hours, therefore, were spent in searching for these isolated dwellings. But our luck had changed, for at four tents we were received with a very bad grace. One old woman, in particular, who, without any make up, could have played with great success the part of one of the witches in "Macbeth," showed great animosity towards us, and ended her tirade by saying that nothing would induce her to give food to Christians.

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Thus rebuffed, we marched on. A mile to our left front were the ruins we had seen earlier in the day. Their fluted columns were immense, and the capitals richly carved; but a closer inspection would mean going out of our way, and a few minutes later they were lost to view.

Only two of us went to the fifth tent that we saw. The remainder walked on a few hundred yards, and waited hidden in a small valley, easily recognisable, because it led up to a conspicuous tree. Half an hour later the two rejoined the main body, having bought 1½ lb. of crushed wheat and the dixie half full of porridge made with plenty of sour milk. This was divided amongst the six, as the purchasers had had a few spoonfuls in the tent.

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Continuing, we came across some dry wells and also a few fruit trees. The fruit was unripe, unpleasant to taste, and unknown to any of us; but we ate it. The trees may have been plum-trees, which after many decades had reverted to the wild state. At 1 P.M. we found a well containing a little water, and not far from another tent. Once more only two went to buy supplies, while the others stayed at the well. Here, after much talk, the old woman in the tent let our agents have a dozen chupatties and some good cheese. The latter she took out of a goat-skin bag from under a millstone, where it was being pressed. Though rather strong, it was very good indeed, and tasted like gorgonzola. Near the tent was a bed of water-melons and a patch of Indian corn; but the good lady refused to sell any of these. Judging by the heap of melon-skins lying in a corner of the tent, she and her better-half were very partial to this fruit; hence, no doubt, her disinclination to part with any. We now decided that we were becoming demoralised by this "yourt-hunting," and that we would not visit any more tents; so when, half an hour after resuming our march, we passed close to one, we walked by it without taking any notice of the occupants.

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All this time the going was very bad. Countless small nullahs crossed our path. The ground was rocky and thickly covered with thorny bushes the height of a man, so that it was necessary to take a compass-bearing every few minutes. For a long time we had been steering a very zigzag course, when at 2.15 P.M. we arrived at the head of one of these many nullahs and saw beneath us a deep ravine running in a south-east direction.

Through the undergrowth at the bottom it was possible to recognise the dry stony bed of a river, and this we decided to follow. A little north of where we were the ravine made a right-angled turn, and at this bend we were able to find a track to the bottom. Elsewhere the sides were sheer precipice, impossible to descend. On our way down we passed a massive sarcophagus hewn out of the solid rock. The lid had been moved to one side, and the chamber was empty—a result, perhaps, of the visit of the German archaeologists of whom the old Turk had spoken that morning. An eerie place for a tomb it looked, perched on the side of a steep cliff. It was a relic of a former civilisation. That part of Asia Minor was once fertile and well populated, but some underground disturbance of nature had diverted or dried up the water without which the land could no longer live. Now it is a dead country. The terraced gardens near the coast still retain their step formation, but that is all. Only the wild locust-tree can find enough moisture to produce its fruit, and bird and animal life have almost ceased to exist.

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On reaching the bottom of the ravine in safety, we allowed ourselves nearly an hour's rest before we followed the slope of the stream. This in the main continued to take us in a south-easterly direction, though at times it ran due east. Along the bottom ran a rough and stony track, crossing frequently from one side of the river-bed to the other as the valley twisted and turned. At many points, too, it had been overgrown by the thick brushwood which had sprung up in the scanty soil at the foot of the ravine, and often we had to push our way through.

By this time, in fact, marching was altogether a most painful performance. Our footgear was at an end. Uppers had all but broken away from the soles, which were nearly worn through, so that walking over stones was a refined torture. After two hours' going in the ravine we saw a side valley running into the left bank. Here was a camel with two foals, which were picking up a scanty living in the main river-bed. We also heard the bells of goats and the voice of a small boy shouting to them somewhere on the top of the ravine. Assuming there was a tent village not far off, we made as little noise as possible. Nothing however appeared. Towards six o'clock we came to a very sharp bend, where the track we had been following climbed up the side of the ravine in a southerly direction. At the time we debated whether to follow the track or the river-bed, and finally decided on the latter course. As we proceeded, the bed became rougher and rougher and the track less and less defined, and just before dark we halted. We had walked for many hours that day, but could only credit ourselves with five miles in the right direction.

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Moonlight, for which we had decided to wait, did not reach us in our canyon till after 2 A.M. next morning, though the moon itself had risen some time before. In the meantime we had cooked a little porridge and obtained a few hours' sleep. Now we retraced our steps till we came to where the track had left the ravine, and up this we climbed into the open.

At the top we found ourselves in an old graveyard near a few deserted and ruined huts. Halting for five or six minutes, we ate a few mouthfuls of food and lightened our water-bottles. We then followed the track till 5 A.M., when we came to another deserted village. Near this was a well; so we replenished our stock, and halted in some thick scrub a few hundred yards farther on. Here Grunt, to his consternation, discovered that he had lost a small cloth bag containing one and a half chupatties and two sovereigns. The loss of the coins was nothing, but the bread was all-important. Grunt therefore decided to go back to the deserted village near the graveyard, where he had last eaten from the bag, and Nobby went with him. A couple of hours later the searchers returned with the coveted bag, and said they had seen the sea; the rest could raise no enthusiasm, and were very sceptical.

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At a quarter to eight we set forth from our hiding-place, and five minutes later the party as a whole had its first view of the sea. The morning sun was on it, making sky and sea one undivided sheen. It was difficult to realise that at last we were near the coast. From the point where we were to the shore could be barely six miles. Within forty miles of the coast we had been at a height of something approaching 5000 feet, but each ridge we had passed had in front of it another to hide the sea from us. Thus it was that not until we had marched for twenty-three nights and twenty-two days did we first look on it. As we scanned the water through the field-glasses, it looked as dead as the adjacent country. Not a sail was in sight anywhere, not a single ripple disturbed the shining sheet of glass in front of us. With heads uncovered, and with thankful hearts, we stood gazing, but without being in any way excited. Thus it was that no shout like the "Thalassa! Thalassa!" of Xenophon's Ten Thousand broke from the lips of our little band that still August morning; although here was the end of our land journey at last in sight after a march of some 330 miles. Had we seen a single boat it would have been different. There was nothing.

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Our great desire now was to get down to the coast itself. We thought that there must surely be a village somewhere down on the shore, where we should be able either to get hold of a boat at night or to bribe a crew with a promise of much money if they would land us at Cyprus. Before us, the intervening country was covered with bare rocks, stunted trees, and scrub, and fell away to the sea in a series of small ridges and terraces. Still following the track, our party, weary and hot, came to a halt at 11 A.M. on the 30th August, two miles from the shore, in the shade of a ruined stone tower. There were similar square towers dotted along the coast; perhaps their ancient use, like that of our own Martello towers, had been to ward off a foreign invasion should need arise; or, in less exciting times, to show lights towards the sea to guide at night the ships in those waters. We stopped at the tower, because we thought it was unsafe to go farther and risk being seen by any coastguard that might happen to be stationed there. It was well we did so. From here Cochrane went on alone, and while he was away we saw our first boat. Coming round a headland of the coast, a few miles east of us, a motor-boat passed across our front and disappeared into a narrow bay a mile and a half to our west. She towed a cutter full of men. Cochrane also had seen them, and came back to the tower to tell us the news; unfortunately, he had not found the hoped-for village.

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A few yards from the tower was a shallow stone-built well. Its water, though very dirty, being merely a puddle at the bottom, for us was drinkable. The day was very oppressive, with a damp heat, so we refreshed ourselves with a dixieful of tea. After this, Cochrane, taking Ellis with him, again went forward, this time to try to find the exact anchorage of the motor-boat. On their return they said there were tents on the shore. In one of them were horses, and in the neighbourhood several Turkish soldiers were moving about. Studying our map, we decided we were within three miles of Pershembé, a point for which we had headed for some days past. The coast-line before us ran N.E. and S.W. We were on a narrow plateau one and a half mile from the sea, and the high ground continued till within a few hundred yards of the water; in some places even to the edge of the coast itself, which was indented with small bays and creeks.

On the headland to the east, and gleaming white in the sunshine, stood a magnificent stone-built town, walled and turreted, but showing no signs of being inhabited. Nearer to us, on the foreshore, was a small lagoon, spanned at one corner by an old bridge: on the water's edge could be seen green reeds and half a dozen palm-trees, and here three or four camels were feeding. Opposite to the lagoon and some eight hundred yards off the shore was a small island fortress, its turreted and loopholed walls rising sheer from the sea. It boasted fine bastioned towers, and when the sun was willing to act as master showman this dazzling gem was framed in a fit setting of sapphire. This, though we did not know its name at the time, was Korghos Island.

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Here may be mentioned a very peculiar coincidence, although we only learnt of it after our return to England. This was, that Keeling, after his escape from Kastamoni, had spared himself no trouble in attempting to arrange schemes of escape for his former companions, and only a few weeks after our departure a number of his code messages reached the camp at Yozgad, amongst them one detailing our best route to this very island of Korghos. Here were to be waiting either agents with a supply of food or a boat, between three different pairs of dates: one of those periods coincided with part of this very time that we were on the coast. When we eventually reached Cyprus, we learnt also that two agents had been landed on Korghos Island, but that they had been seen and captured.

To continue the description of the coast at which we had arrived: immediately below us the ground fell away to a low-lying stretch of foreshore, which extended for nearly a mile between the end of our plateau and the sea. Half a mile west of us lay a deep ravine, which looked as if it would run into the creek entered by the motor-boat.

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Along the sea and lined by the telegraph poles the main coast road wound its way. In the early evening Nobby, Looney, and Johnny went off to reconnoitre, but it was impossible to approach the coast by daylight because of the men moving about, and they had to return to the tower with little additional information. There were five tents for men and a larger one for horses, and though no guns were visible it was very probable that here was a section of a battery for dealing with any boat that might attempt to spy out the nakedness of the land. Two years before that time, Lord Rosebery's yacht, the *Zaida*, had been mined a few miles along the coast at a place called Ayasch Bay, which she had entered for the purpose of landing spies. Four of her officers had come to the prisoners' camp at Kastamoni, and we heard from the three of them who survived that there had been some field-guns on the shore where they were captured.

Our resting-place near the tower was an unsatisfactory one. We were close to water, it is true, but we were also close to a track leading down to the coast, and though we were soon to change our minds, we thought at the time that no flies in the

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world could be as persistent and insatiable as those which all day attacked us. For these reasons, and the additional one of wishing to be nearer the creek which we thought the motor-boat had entered, we decided to move to the ravine half a mile west of our tower. We would visit the well early in the morning and late at night for replenishing our water supply.

Accordingly at dusk we again packed up. Our way led us through thick undergrowth along neglected terraces, and at about 6.30 P.M. we were on the edge of the steep-sided valley. By a stroke of luck we almost immediately found a way down to the bottom. Although we were to become all too well acquainted with that ravine, we only found one other possible line of ascent and descent on the tower side, and one path up the western edge. The river-bed, of course, was dry, and filled with huge boulders and thickly overgrown with bushes. Pushing our way through these, we had only gone a quarter of a mile down the ravine when we decided to halt for the night.

CHAPTER XIII. ON THE COAST.

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There was still, however, no time to be lost in discovering and obtaining the motor-tug or other boat, seeing that we had arrived on the coast with barely three days' supply of food. That same night, then, Cochrane and Nobby carried out a reconnaissance, continuing to follow our ravine down towards the sea, in the hope that they would come out opposite the bay into which the tug and her tow had disappeared that afternoon. The remainder settled down to sleep as best they could, without a dinner and on hard and stony beds, taking it in turns at half-hour intervals to keep watch. This was necessary to prevent the two scouts passing them unawares should they return in the dark.

The whole party had reached the coast on their last legs. In the case of Grunt especially, nothing short of the certainty of being able to walk on board a boat could have moved him that night. He had still not recovered from the effects of the blow on the head. As for Cochrane and Nobby, it must have been pure strength of will which enabled them to carry on, after the trying day in the damp heat. Cochrane, indeed, had undertaken what proved beyond his powers; upon him more than any had fallen the brunt of the work of guiding the little column night after night and day after day. It was not to be wondered at that on this occasion he had not proceeded a mile before his legs simply gave way beneath him, and he had to allow Nobby to proceed alone.

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Soon afterwards the ravine took an almost northerly direction. When it eventually petered out it was at some distance to the north of the probable position of the motor-boat. Nobby now found himself crossing the coast road; this we had assumed would be guarded. On the way out he saw no one; but on his return journey next morning he proved our assumption correct by almost stepping on the face of a man who lay sleeping on the road. He was presumably on duty. The propensity of the Turkish sentry for going to sleep at his post once more stood us in good stead. During the night it had been too dark to see much, and Nobby had had to return without having discovered a boat. After hunting round, he had settled down on the edge of a small creek running into the sea, where he remained till the first streak of dawn enabled him to pick his way back to the mouth of the ravine. His main difficulty that night had been to keep himself awake. All the time he was in deadly terror of falling asleep and awaking to find himself stranded on the coast in broad daylight.



Sketched to Authors' description by Hal Kay.
LIFE IN THE RAVINE.

He tried to occupy himself with fishing. He had taken with him the line and hooks which were an item of the party's equipment on leaving Yozgad; but no bites came to keep up his flagging interest. Before long he had a midnight bathe, to the great envy of the rest of the party when they heard of it next morning; but the water, he said, had been almost too warm to be really refreshing; the rocks, too, were unpleasantly sharp to stand on. He next picked at an exposed nerve in one of his teeth, and the acute pain thereby inflicted served to keep him awake for the rest of the night. At long length the sky began to lighten, and Nobby, after his narrow escape while re-crossing the road, once more entered the ravine and picked up Cochrane. The two then rejoined their anxious comrades.

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It was now 5 A.M. Dawn was slow to reach our hemmed-in hiding-place; but when it was light enough to see, we discovered that the sides of the ravine were covered with trees bearing what Ellis fortunately recognised as "carobs" or locust beans. We were soon doing what we could to stifle the gnawing pains of hunger by eating quantities of this wild fruit. Some people believe that this is what is meant by the "locusts" eaten by John the Baptist. To our taste they seemed wonderfully sweet and had something of the flavour of chocolate, so that throughout our stay on the coast they formed an unailing dessert after, and

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often before our meals. When we eventually reached Cyprus we found that there the tree is cultivated, and that thousands of tons of carobs are exported yearly for use in cattle foods. However humble their use, in our case at any rate they were not to be despised, and as a matter of fact the cultivated beans are used to some extent in the manufacture of certain chocolates.

The night reconnaissance having failed to solve the question of the motor-boat's anchorage, at 7 A.M. on this last day of August, Johnny and Looney set out on a search for the elusive bay by daylight. Climbing up the southern side of the ravine, they had to keep out of sight of the men who were known to be below them, so they at first remained at some distance from the coast, moving parallel to it for over a mile. They then turned towards the sea until they reached a terrace below which the ground fell away rather steeply to the shore. From this point of observation it was possible to see the greater part of the series of capes and bays into which the coast was divided. Still no sign of the tug gladdened their eyes. A closer approach by day would involve considerable risk. A couple of motor-lorries and a mounted patrol had already been observed moving along the road. The two scouts sat down awhile on some boulders behind a large bush, and while Johnny peered between the branches through the field-glasses, Looney drew a rough panorama so as to be able if necessary to indicate to the rest of the party any particular bay.

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It was about 10 A.M.: the two were about to seek some point of vantage from which it would be possible to see more of some of the bays, when suddenly they heard the hum of a motor. Next moment the tug shot into view from the hidden portion of one of the bays to the N.E. Once more she towed a cutter full of men and stores, and through the glasses it was possible to recognise the Turkish flag flying at her stern. The two remained where they were, watching her until she disappeared round a bend far up the coast towards Mersina.

Possibly she made daily trips, carrying working parties and material to some scene of activity, so the two decided to try to overlook the head of the bay in which she had appeared, in order to discover something definite about the anchorage. To reduce the risk of detection, they first withdrew out of sight of the road and worked their way more to the north before cutting down again towards the shore. On the way out from the ravine they had passed near some ruins, and these they now took in their course to see if there might be a well there with water in it. It was unfortunate that there was not, for in this dead city there was one enormous and very deep amphitheatre, into which it was possible to descend by a path cut in the rocky side. Here shade from the sun would have been obtainable at all hours of the day, and altogether it would have been a better hiding-place than the ravine, if only it had contained a water supply. But though they found the remains of one well, it was absolutely dry.

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The two now made their way cautiously towards the place whence the boats had been seen to emerge. The slope of the ground, however, became more and more pronounced as they approached the coast, so that they were able to see little more of the bay than had been visible from their earlier observation point; although by this time they were within sight of the tents seen on the previous day. These stood a little way out on a small cape. Dodging from cover to cover amongst the patches of scrub, sometimes on hands and knees, they finally found themselves close to the coast road itself.

Leaving Looney screened from view, Johnny now went on alone. He was not twenty yards from the road when a Turkish soldier passed along it. A moment later four or five others were seen skirting the seaward edge of a rocky headland to the south, apparently engaged in looking for mussels. It was now obvious that opposite the head of the bay which they sought, the coast rose so sheer, that to obtain a view of the whole would entail going forward across the road to the edge of the cliff beyond. With so many people moving about, this, by daylight, was out of the question, and after seven hours' reconnaissance in the hot sun the two had to be satisfied with bringing back the information that they knew which bay the boats had entered the day before, but that they were there no longer.

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Meanwhile another party of two—to wit, the Old Man and Perce—had gone forth from the ravine in a last search for food. Without a further supply of this we should be compelled to give ourselves up unless we at once discovered a boat. Of inhabited villages there appeared to be none, even should we have dared to attempt another entry after the experiences of "the three Huns." The Circassian encampments, too, had ceased.

It is a fairly well-known fact that in the East if villagers are driven away from their homes for any cause, such as a punitive expedition, they usually take steps to bury any valuables which they are unable to carry away, the most common of which is grain. We had bethought ourselves of the deserted village some miles back, near to which we had halted just before our first glimpse of the sea. It occurred to us that the occupants might have been compelled by the Turkish authorities to quit on the outbreak of war, as being within too short a distance of the coast. In this case, then, there might be food there, buried or otherwise concealed. In this, provisionally, we were to find ourselves not mistaken, although the search party set off with little hopes of success.

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It required a five-mile climb up the series of ridges to reach the village, and the track was very rough to the feet. On the previous day even the descent had been trying enough in the oppressive heat which seemed to prevail on the coast; so the ascent was doubly so. Moreover, the village itself did not come into view until one was within a mile of it, and as there were remains of other tracks branching off at frequent intervals, it was not easy for the Old Man and Perce to keep to the right one. Great was their relief when, after a good deal of wandering, they found themselves safely within the farm enclosure; for really the "village" comprised only one house with its outbuildings, all within a square walled enclosure.

There seemed to be no one about, so they set to work to force the rough country locks with which all the doors were fastened. They had brought the little adze with them, and for this work it was invaluable, although its steel edge was not thereby improved. One of the upstairs living-rooms was first invaded. On entering they found the floor bare, but cupboards and lockers in the wall stuffed full of a wonderful variety of things—rolls of cloth (obviously made on the spot, for there were remains of the looms), coarse cotton-wool, a few handkerchiefs, a cobbler's materials and tools, an old coffee-grinder in pieces, some hoop-iron, an enamelled mug, a dozen wooden spoons, and a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends such as seem to collect in all houses, English and Turkish alike. The only items of present value were the handkerchiefs, a little prepared leather, the mug, and some of the spoons. These they removed, and by dint of looking into many small cloth bags found something of greater value—namely, a couple of pounds of dry powdery cheese, and as much salt as we were likely to want if we stayed on the coast for a month.

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These alone, however, were not going to keep eight hungry mortals alive, so the joy of the two searchers was proportionately great when, on breaking into an outhouse and stumbling over a litter of wooden staves, they discovered in the next room something over 300 pounds of wheat lying in a heap on the floor. The grain was uncrushed and dirty, but that disadvantage could be overcome with a little trouble. Further search revealed nothing more in the way of food, but it was noted that in other rooms there were several cooking-pots which might be worth taking down on a future visit. For the present the two loaded up their packs with some grain, and hurriedly bundling back the things which they had turned out from the cupboards, set their faces once more towards the sea.

At 5.45 that evening two weary figures staggered into view, being met by Cochrane, Nobby, and Johnny, who had gone up to the well near the tower to draw water. They had reason to be happy, for this find of food postponed indefinitely our capitulation to hunger.

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All five remained at the well till after dark in order to grind enough grain for an evening meal, using a heavy stone to beat a little of it at a time inside a hollowed-out slab, intended for use in watering sheep. Nobby and Johnny, who stayed a few minutes after the other three, were accosted on their way back to the ravine by a couple of men riding away from the coast on donkeys. They asked our two whether they belonged to the camp below, and seemed quite satisfied when they said they did. This confirmed suspicions which some of us had had the previous day, that certain of the tents we had seen contained Germans; for the two men could certainly not have taken any of us for Turks.

Crushing grain by pounding it with a primitive stone pestle and mortar is at best a fatiguing process, nor are the results favourable to easy digestion. Not only did some of the grains escape being crushed, but chips of stone from the sides of the mortar became mixed with the food, which was none too clean in itself. Cochrane said he would make the most worn-out old coffee-grinder do better work with the expenditure of half the energy, so we decided to have another expedition to the village next day to fetch the one which had been noticed there. We could hardly hope to make a series of visits without eventual discovery; it was best therefore to fetch down at the same time as much more of the wheat as we were likely to want.

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Accordingly at 7 A.M. on the 1st September, four of the party started off carrying empty packs. These were Nobby, Johnny, and Ellis, and the Old Man, who went for the second time to show the others the way. On arrival they found distinct signs that the two men who had been met the previous evening had gone to the farmhouse and to the well just below it. Whether they had

noticed anything wrong, there was nothing to show. In any case, the four lost no time in loading up and returning to a safer spot, reaching the ravine at about 3.30 P.M.

The other half of the party had gone in turns to the well, to fetch water and do some more crude grinding for the day's food. It took an hour and a half to do a single trip for water alone. Each time nearly an hour was spent in drawing up water mugful by mugful till all available receptacles were full. So we were thankful when later on that day, Cochrane, scouting around, discovered another well. This was not only a little nearer to our lair, but also had one place deep enough to permit the use of a canvas bucket. This meant a great saving of time. The water, too, held in solution rather less mud, and none of the bits of mouldy wood which formed a fair proportion of the hauls from the well by the tower. Near the new well there were more ruins, in this case only a few low walls, and, standing apart, a semicircular arch of some twelve feet in diameter—just the bare ring of stones remained and nothing else. [244]

From now onwards, for the rest of our stay on the coast, we settled down to a new kind of existence—in fact we may be said to have *existed*, and nothing more. Life became a dreary grind, both literally and metaphorically. For the next few days, at any rate, we thought of nothing else but how to prepare and eat as much food as we could. This was not greed: it was the only thing to do. None of us wanted to lie a day longer than absolutely necessary in that awful ravine, but we were at present simply too weak to help ourselves. To carry out a search for another boat was beyond the powers of any one.

Cochrane rigged up the coffee-grinder on the same afternoon as it had arrived—lashing the little brass cylinder to the branch of a tree at a convenient height for a man to turn the handle. A rusty saw, cutting like all Oriental saws on the pull-stroke, had been discovered in the village and brought down by the last party, and this proved useful now and on subsequent occasions. [245]

Whilst one of the party worked at the mill, and another supervised the cooking of the next dixieful of porridge, the rest were busy picking over the grain in the hopes of removing at any rate some small proportion of the empty husks and the bits of earth with which it was mixed. Even so it was impossible to clean the dirt off the grains themselves.

Nothing, we thought, could be more wearisome than this never-ending task. Our misery was aggravated by the swarms of flies which incessantly harassed us as we worked. What right they had to be alive at all on such a deserted coast was never discovered. He whose turn it was to cook found in the smoke from the fire a temporary respite from their attentions; but they took care to make up for lost time afterwards. When the water was nearly boiled away, bits of porridge were wont to leap out of the pot and light on the cook's hands. The ensuing blister did not last long, for within twenty-four hours the flies had eaten it all away. We had no bandages left, and pieces of paper which we used to wet and stick on the blisters fell off as soon as they were dry. It was not many days before Old Man's and Johnny's hands became covered with septic sores. Unfortunately, too, most of us were out of 'baccy, as a means of keeping these pests away. Some took to smoking cigarettes made from the dried leaves which littered the stony bed of our unhappy home. Even the non-smoker of the party had to give way to the pernicious habit once, out of pure self-defence. [246]

Nor at night was it easy to obtain peace. The flies had no sooner gone to their well-earned rest than the mosquitoes took up the call with their high-pitched trumpet notes. But of course it was not the noise which mattered, but their bites; and in the end most of us used to sleep with a handkerchief or piece of cloth over our faces, and a pair of socks over our hands.

Ravine life was most relaxing—partly owing to the stuffiness of the air in so deep and narrow a cleft, overgrown as it was with trees and scrub; but perhaps still more to reaction, after more than three weeks of strenuous marching. So long as we had had the encouragement of being able to push on each day, and feel that we were getting nearer home, we had no time to think of bodily exhaustion: the excitement, mild though it was, kept us going. Now, unable to do anything towards making good our escape, it required a big effort to drag oneself to one's feet for the purpose of fetching a mugful of porridge. It required a still bigger one to go up in pairs to fetch water from the well, although it was essential for every one to do this at least once a day, merely to keep the pot a-boiling. This, too, was the only way of obtaining a deep drink; except for half a mug of tea made from several-times stewed leaves, all the water brought down to the nullah each day was utilised for cooking the wheat. Fortunately, to take us to the well there was the further inducement of a wash for both bodies and clothes. The latter by this time were in a very dirty and also worn-out condition; but thanks doubtless to our having spent no appreciable time inside villages actually occupied by Turks, they were not verminous. [247]

On account of the washing, visits to the well were apt at times to develop into lengthy affairs—anything up to five or six hours, which did not help towards getting through the daily tasks necessary to keep ourselves fed. Not only did this involve having reliefs at the mill for eight out of every twenty-four hours, but much work was necessary to keep up the supply of cleaned wheat to feed the machine. Necessity, however, is the mother of invention, and from the 5th September, acting on a suggestion made by Looney, we used to take the next day's wheat up to the well and wash it there in a couple of changes of water. There was a convenient stone trough on the spot. The chaff floated to the surface, while the earth, whether in loose particles or clinging to the grains themselves, was dissolved. After washing, the wheat was spread out in the sun on squares of cloth brought down from the village, and when dry was fetched back to the ravine by the next water-party. [248]

Like most schemes, this one had its weak points. It was very extravagant in water, and in a few days our well began to show distinct signs of being drained to emptiness; in fact, only a puddle could have existed to begin with, though a larger one than that in the well near the tower.

The second disadvantage was that the grain, while left out to dry, might be discovered and give away our presence; but, in any case, one pair or another of the party was so often up at the well that the risk was not greatly increased; besides, there was not much to induce a Turk from the camp below to visit the ruins.

In the end we were seen, the first occasion being on the 6th September. That evening, Cochrane, Old Man, and Looney were up at the well, when an old fellow with a dyed beard—a Turk, as far as they could say—suddenly appeared, and eyed their water-bottles very thirstily. He accepted with readiness the drink they offered to him, but appeared to be nothing of a conversationalist. He was indeed almost suspiciously indifferent who the three might be. There was a mystery about that man which we never entirely solved. From then onwards, almost to the end of our stay on the coast, not a day passed without his seeing one or other of the party. To explain *our* presence at the well, the water-parties pretended they were German observation posts sent up to watch the sea, over which, as a matter of fact, one could obtain a very fine view from that place. We usually carried up the field-glasses to have a look round, and these perhaps helped out our story. To live up further to our Hun disguise, we once told the man that really the place was "yessäk." This is the Turkish equivalent to "verboten," and, to judge from our experiences in the camps, is about as frequently used. [249]

On another occasion it was sunset when some of us saw him. After his usual drink he washed his hands and face and said his prayers Mohammedan-wise. After his prayers he said he had seen two boats go past coming from the east and disappearing to the west. Little remarks like this made us think at one time that he might possibly be a British agent, landed to get information, or possibly for the express purpose of helping escaped officers like ourselves: for there had been plenty of time for the news of our escape from Yozgad to reach the Intelligence Department in Cyprus.

One day Grunt and Nobby deliberately went up to try to get into conversation with the mysterious individual. In the end they came to the conclusion that he must be some kind of outlaw. He told them that a friend and he had come from a place far inland to sell something or other to a coastal village, and he himself was now awaiting the other's return. They were going to take back with them a load of carobs, of which he already had been making collections under various trees. The beans seemed to be his only food, and he was obviously half-starving. This, combined with the fact that he relied on us to draw up water for him when there must be good water near the Turkish tents below, showed that he was in hiding for some cause or other. This was as well for us, as, if he had thought at all, he could not for a moment have been deceived by our story. Even if we were on watch, we should hardly trouble to bring up not only our own, but a lot of other men's water-bottles to fill with muddy water at a disused well. Whatever the explanation, the great thing was that he did not interfere with us. Two evenings before our final departure from the ravine, he told us that his donkeys would be coming back next morning, and that was the last time that he was seen. [250]

A few extracts from diaries may serve to convey some idea of our feelings during these earlier days in the ravine:—

"2nd Sept.—Struggled up to well at 8 A.M. Had wash in mugful of water: temporarily refreshing, but exhausted for rest of day, and feeling weaker than ever before in spite of five brews of boulgar" (each brew was at this time about the half of a pint mug all round) "and one small chupattie each, made by Nobby. Flour for last made with much hard grinding after mill had been readjusted. Readjustment alone took two hours to do.... Flies awful all day...." [251]

"3rd Sept.—Locust beans quite good toasted over ashes, and make sweet syrup if first cut up and then boiled, but this entails a

lot of work. Every one cleaning and grinding wheat all day. As now set, grinder produces mixture of coarse flour and boulgar. Tried unsuccessfully to simmer this into a paste and then bake into thick chupatties." (All our efforts at this stage were directed towards producing something digestible with the minimum of work.) "Day passed very slowly, with occasional trips for water."

"4th Sept.—Most of us rather doubtful whether we shall be able to get back our strength on a boulgar diet, and flour takes more grinding than we have strength for at present—rather a vicious circle." Another diary for the same date says—"Feeling weaker now than I did when we first arrived; no energy for anything."

Next day the tide seems to have been on the turn.

"5th Sept.—Most of us slightly stronger, but held back by chronic lethargy. Continuous brewing all day. To save interruptions at the grinder we now feed in two parties of four, taking alternate brews: this means we get nearly a big mugful at a whack, at intervals of about three hours.... Most of us fill in gaps eating burnt beans. Charcoal said to be good for digestion!... One thing is, our feet are rested here, and blisters healed. We are also undoubtedly putting on flesh again, and if we can get rid of this hopeless slackness shall be all right.... Grunt, working from 1 P.M. onwards, made 1 large and 4 small chupatties each, so we are coming on." It was something to feel full again sometimes.

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"6th Sept.—My energy as well as my strength returning a bit now.... Mill hard at it all day.... 4½ mugfuls boulgar (1 pint each) and 6 chupatties (4½ inches diameter and fairly thick) the day's ration."

CHAPTER XIV.

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FAILURE AND SUCCESS.

Our experiments at chupattie-making had led us in the end to grind the wheat in two stages—first into coarse meal, and then, with a finer setting of the mill, into flour. This meant less strain both for us and for the machine: upon the safety of the latter practically depended our survival, and frequent were the exhortations to the miller on duty not to be too violent with the wretched little handle. Standing there in the sun—for though there were trees in the ravine, they were not high enough to shelter a man standing up—one was greatly tempted to hurry through the task of twenty hoppers full of grain, and so risk breaking the grinder. A quotation which Looney had learnt from a book read at Yozgad proved very apposite on these occasions. It was from a label pasted on to a French toy, and ran as follows: "Quoi qu'elle soit solidement montée, il ne faut pas brutaliser la machine!"

When enough flour was ready, some one would knead it into a lump of dough, which would then be divided up by the cook and flattened into little discs. These were baked several at a time on the metal cover of our dixie. When enough chupatties were ready, the cook would pick them up one by one, while some one else, not in sight of them, called out the names of the party at random. This was to get over the difficulty caused by the chupatties not being all of quite the same size. Similarly, after each brew of porridge had been distributed into the mugs by spoonfuls, we determined who was to have the scrapings of the pot by the method of "fingers-out." It was necessary to scrape the dixie each time to prevent the muddy paste which stuck to the bottom becoming burnt during the next brew; and the way to get this done thoroughly was to let some one have it to eat.

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On the 4th September, Nobby discovered a shorter way up to the well, by first going a little down instead of up the ravine we were in. From that date onwards, except for one night when it was necessary to be on the spot in case of eventualities, Looney and Perce, and on one occasion Johnny, went up at dusk to sleep near the well. Although the mosquitoes were almost as troublesome there, they found that the air was quite invigorating—a great contrast to that in the ravine, where no refreshing breeze ever found its way.

By this time hardly one of us had any footgear left worthy of the name, so we soaked an old *mashak* (skin water-bag) and a piece of raw hide, both of which had been brought down from the village on the second visit, with a view to using them for patch repairs. Both, however, proved too rotten to be of use, for they would not hold the stitches.

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We had been a week in the ravine before any of us felt capable of farther exploration. To save time in getting to work again, on the last two evenings Cochrane and Nobby had had a little extra ration of porridge. Now at length, on the 6th September, they felt that it was within their powers to make another reconnaissance. Nothing more had been seen of the motor-boat, but the bay in which had been its anchorage on our first night on the coast seemed to offer the best prospect of finding a boat of some sort. Accordingly at 5 P.M. the pair set off once again down the ravine, hoping to arrive near the end of it before dark. And so began another anxious time for all, as we wondered what the final night of our first month of freedom would bring forth. It had not been easy to keep a correct tally of the date during the march to the coast. More than once there had been no opportunity of writing a diary for three days at a time; whilst on the coast one day was so much like another that to lose count of a day would have been easy. One of us, however, had kept a complete diary, and so we knew that we had now been at large for a month.

To celebrate this we had decided, if all went well that night, to have something very good to eat on the morrow. Every one voted for a plum-duff. Johnny had cooked a date-duff one evening during the siege of Kut, when his Indian *khansama* (cook) found the shell-fire too trying for his nerves. To Johnny then was given the post of *chef*. During the day each of the party did an extra fatigue on the coffee-grinder, with the result that by dusk we were able to set aside about two pounds of flour for the pudding. Its other ingredients were a couple of small handfuls of raisins and a pinch of salt. When Cochrane and Nobby departed operations commenced. The ingredients were mixed; the dough was kneaded on a flat rock and the resulting mass divided into two, for our little dixie was incapable of holding all at once. Each pudding was then rolled into a ball, tied up in a handkerchief, and boiled for two and a half hours. Thus it was close upon midnight before our dainties were ready for the morrow. The stillness of the nights in the ravine had often been broken by the melancholy chorus of a pack of jackals, usually far away but sometimes close at hand. We decided to take no risks of loosing our duffs, and so slung them in the branches of a tree.

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Meanwhile Cochrane and Nobby proceeded on their reconnaissance. We had made plans before they started in case of certain eventualities. One was that if the two were recaptured they should lead the Turks to the rest of the party; it was realised that otherwise they might be very hard put to it to prove that they were escaped prisoners of war and not spies. A more cheerful eventuality was the possibility that the motor-boat might have returned unobserved. In that case if a favourable opportunity of capturing it occurred, Cochrane and Nobby were to seize the vessel, make their way to Cyprus, and send back help for the rest four nights later. The rendezvous from which they would be fetched was to be on the headland opposite the little island on which stood the ruined castle. We eventually learnt that at the proposed rendezvous was stationed a battery of guns, so that it was well for us that this plan had never to be executed.

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Our two scouts had many exciting moments in their reconnaissance that night. They went to within a few hundred yards of the mouth of the ravine, and then, turning to the right, made their way up to higher ground by a side ravine. They climbed hurriedly, for the light was rapidly failing. From the top it was still impossible to overlook the bay which they wanted. They were moving along parallel to the sea when suddenly they heard voices. They could pick out four figures a little more than a hundred yards away, silhouetted against the sea on their left. These were Turks; they seemed to be looking out to sea, and after a minute or two squatted down on what appeared to be the flat roof of a house. At this juncture Cochrane swallowed a mosquito. Nobby says that to see him trying not to choke or cough would have been laughable at any less anxious time.

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After this episode the two moved off with extra carefulness. It was now quite dark. They had not gone much farther when they again heard voices. This time the voices were quite close and coming towards them. Our pair took cover and waited: happily, at the last moment the owners of the voices turned off.

In view of the number of people who seemed to be about it was no good increasing the risk of detection by having two persons on the move; so, soon after, Cochrane left Nobby in a good place of concealment, and went on scouting around by himself.

Half an hour later he came back. He had been able to overlook the cove, and there were two boats there. It was too dark, however, to see of what sort they were, and as there was a shed with a sentry on duty close to the boats, the only thing to do was to wait for daylight. The two now slept and took watch in turn. At the first sign of dawn they moved down to a rock,

commanding a good view of the creek. One of the boats appeared to be a ship's cutter, some twenty-eight feet long, the other perhaps twenty feet in length. Having seen all they could hope for, they lost no time in moving off, as it was now quite obvious that the house on which they had seen the four men on the previous evening was a look-out post; and it was now becoming dangerously light.

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Instead of returning directly to the ravine, however, they made their way some distance down the coast to the S.W. They were able to see Selefké, and to recognise through the glasses a dhow in the river there, but it was some way inland. It was 11 A.M. before the reconnoitring party again reached the ravine. The news they brought gave us something definite to work for, and we decided that if we could finish our preparations in time we would make an attempt to seize one of the boats two nights later. That would be on the night of the 8th-9th September. But there was much to be done before then. Masts and spars, paddles and sails, and four days' supply of food for the sea journey had to be made ready. For the paddle heads Cochrane and Nobby had brought back some flat thin pieces of board which they had found near a broken-down hut; and also a bit of ancient baked pottery which would serve as a whetstone for our very blunt knives and the adze.

On the strength of the good news and to fortify ourselves for the work, we decided to wait no longer for our feast. The duffs were unslung from the tree, and each divided with as much accuracy as possible into eight pieces: in this way we should each have a slice from either pudding in case they varied in quantity or quality. Both were superb, and the finest duffs ever made. We commented on their amazing sweetness and excellent consistency. In reality a raisin was only to be found here and there, and the puddings were not cooked right through. When we had finished, Old Man asserted that he could then and there and with ease demolish six whole duffs by himself. This started an argument.

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"What!" cried one; "eat forty-eight pieces like the two you have just had. Impossible!"

"Granted; twenty pieces would go down easily enough," said another, "and the next ten with a fair appetite. But after that it wouldn't be so easy. You might manage another ten, but the last eight would certainly defeat you."

Old Man, however, stuck to his assertion and refused to come down by so much as a single slice. As it was impossible without the duffs under discussion to prove him right or merely greedy, the subject was allowed to drop.

By this date Perce was the only one of the party who still had some tobacco, English 'baccy too, for he smoked very little. To celebrate the discovery of the boats, he now broke into his reserve. A single cigarette was rolled and handed round from one to another of us. It only needed a couple of inhaled puffs to make each of us feel as if we were going off under an anæsthetic. After the two or three puffs one thought it would be nice to sit down, and in a few seconds one felt it would be pleasanter still to lie down full length. That is what we did. The effect only lasted a minute or two, but it showed in what a weak condition we were.

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On the evening trip to the nearer well it was found quite impossible to draw up any more water from it. It had been gradually drying up, and now the two on water fatigue could not scoop up even a spoonful of water when they let down a mug, so they had to go on to the well near the tower. This, too, was going dry, but still contained a little pool of very muddy water.

Shortly after four o'clock that afternoon Looney and Perce had started off on the third visit which was paid to the deserted village. They were armed with a long list of requisites: more cloth for sails; a big dixie for cooking large quantities of the reserve porridge at a time; some more grain; nails and any wood likely to be of use; cotton-wool for padding our feet when we went down to the shore; and many other things. They returned next morning at 9 A.M. with all the important articles, together with some hoop-iron and a few small poles. The latter were the very thing for the paddle-shafts. They also brought down some raw coffee-beans which they had found in a little leather bag; these we roasted and ground next day, and enjoyed the two finest drinks of coffee we remember having had in our lives.

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Meanwhile we had started cooking our food for the sea voyage. It was to consist of small chupatties and porridge, but the latter would not be cooked until the latest possible date for fear of its going bad. Forty reserve chupatties had been set aside before we retired to rest on the night after the feast-day. From that day onwards till we left the ravine the coffee-grinder was worked unceasingly from 5 A.M. till 7 or 8 P.M. There was no question of a six hours' day for us; for while we ground flour and porridge for the reserve, we had still to provide our own meals for the day. We realised then, if never before, the truth of the saying, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Little of the 8th September had passed before we realised that it was hopeless to think of being ready by the following night. We therefore postponed the attempt, and settled down to our preparations in more deadly earnest. Cochrane decided on the size and shape of the sails, which were to be three in number. The rolls of cloth obtained from the village were about fourteen inches in width, and the biggest of the three sails was made with seven strips of the cloth. It was a good thing that we had still two big reels nearly untouched of the thread with which we had started from Yozgad.

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When the strips had been sewn together, the edges of the sail were hemmed. Later, pieces of canvas from Ellis's pack, which was cut up for the purpose, were added at the corners for the sake of additional strength. No one had a moment to spare. Those who were not sail-making were doing something else,—either at the mill, at work on the paddles, cutting branches off trees for the spars, fetching water, or cooking.

September 9th was similarly spent, but again on this day it soon became obvious that we should not be ready by nightfall. By the time we retired to our sleeping-places, however, our preparations were well advanced. Two of the sails were finished, the spars were cut, some of the paddles were completed, and the larger part of the chupatties and porridge cooked. The porridge was put into one of our packs. It was not a very clean receptacle, but being fairly waterproof would, we hoped, help to keep the porridge moist; for our chief fear with regard to the coming sea voyage was shortage of water.

On the 10th we worked continuously from daylight till 3.30 P.M., by which time our preparations were complete. Before moving off we hid away all non-essentials, so as to reduce our loads. With the big cooking-pot half-full of water, and the spars, sails, and paddles, these were going to be both heavy and cumbersome. We also buried our fezes and the copies of the map, lest, if we were recaptured, they should encourage the Turks to think that we were spies. For the same reason, any allusions to what we had seen on the coast, and to our visits to the deserted village, were carefully erased from diaries. These precautions completed, we carried our unwieldy loads down the ravine to a point opposite the shorter path to the wells. Here we left our impedimenta, and taking only water-bottles, chargals, and the big cooking-pot, which had a cover and swing-handle, climbed up to the well near the tower and filled up. The water supply was almost exhausted, and it took an hour and a half to fill our receptacles and have a drink. It was impossible to practise the camel's plan, and drink more than we really needed at the time. It required a tremendous effort to force oneself to drink a mugful of these muddy dregs.

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While the rest were filling the water-bottles, &c., Old Man and Nobby went off to a suitable point for a final look at part of our proposed route to the shore. Then all returned to the kits in the ravine. We had decided that we would move down to the beach in stockinged feet, so as to make as little noise as possible. For most of us this was not only a precaution, but a necessity, since our party of eight now only possessed three pairs of wearable boots between us. We accordingly padded our feet as best we could, and proceeded once more towards the sea.

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The going was so difficult that we had several times to help one another over the enormous boulders which filled the bottom of the ravine, and down precipitous places where there had once been small waterfalls.

At 7 P.M. we were not far from the mouth of the ravine. Here, then, the party halted, while Nobby, who had been there on two previous occasions, scouted ahead. When he returned, reporting that all seemed to be clear, we crept on out of the ravine. It was now night. Walking very carefully, testing each footstep for fear of treading on a twig or loose stone and so making a noise, we came to a wall. This we crossed at a low place where it had been partially broken down, and a hundred yards beyond found ourselves approaching a line of telegraph poles and then the coast road. Up and down this we peered in the light of the young moon, and seeing no one went across. The ground here was level, but covered with big bushes and a few stunted firs, between which we made our way to the shore. It was grand to hear the lapping of the waves and smell the seaweed after nearly four years.

The creek, in which were the two rowing-boats, lay a mile to the west of us. We had intended to strike the shore where we were, for by walking to the creek along the edge of the sea the risk of stumbling against any tents or huts in the dark would be reduced; but it took us longer to reach our objective than we had expected. It was almost midnight when, a quarter of a mile from the creek, and near a place where a boat could be brought conveniently alongside, the party halted. Leaving the others here, Cochrane and Johnny were to try to seize one of the two boats marked down four nights previously, and Nobby was to accompany them in case they needed help.

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The shore line, which they now followed, rose rapidly to a steep cliff forty feet or more above the level of the sea. When within a hundred yards of the boat which they wanted, they found a way down to a narrow ledge two feet above the water. The moon had long set, but they could see the boat as a dark shadow against the water reflecting the starlight. Here, then, Cochrane and Johnny proceeded to strip. They continued, however, to wear a couple of pairs of socks in case the bottom should be covered with sharp spikes, as had been the rocky edge of the shore for the most part. They tied two pieces of thin rope round their waists with a clasp-knife attached to each. Thus equipped, they let themselves down off the ledge, and slipped quietly into the sea. Fortunately the water was warm; but it was phosphorescent too, so they had to swim very slowly to avoid making any unnecessary ripple.

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As they neared the boat, which now loomed big above them, some one in the shadow of the cliff a few yards away coughed. Next moment they heard the butt of a rifle hitting a rock as the sentry (for such he must have been) shifted his position. Hardly daring to breathe, they swam to the side of the boat farther from him and held on to it. Here the water was about six feet deep. After waiting a few minutes to let any suspicions on the part of the sentry subside, they moved along to the bow of the boat.

They had hoped to find it anchored by a rope, but to their great disappointment it was moored with a heavy iron chain. Speaking in very low whispers, they decided that one should go under the water and lift the anchor, while the other, with his piece of rope, tied one of the flukes to a link high up in the chain. When the anchor was thus raised clear of the bottom, they would swim quietly away, towing the boat. Accordingly, Cochrane dived and lifted the anchor, while Johnny tied his rope round a fluke and made it fast to a link as far up the chain as possible. They then let go.

With what seemed to them a terrific noise, the chain rattled over the gunwale till the anchor was once more on the bottom. Were they discovered? Another cough! They did not dare to move. Could the splash of the water lapping against the sides of the creek have muffled the sound of the rattling chain? If only the chain had been fixed! But perhaps a short length only had been loose.

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Another attempt was made. This time it was Johnny who lifted the anchor, while Cochrane tied his rope to it. Unfortunately he had the rope still round his waist, and when the anchor dropped he was carried down with it. How lucky that he had his clasp-knife! For though he was free in a few seconds, he came to the surface spluttering out the water he had swallowed. It was a near thing that he was not drowned. Where, meantime, was the anchor? Little did they realise that it was lying once more on the bottom and laughing at their efforts to carry off the quarry that night.

Some point of the chain, of course, must be attached to the boat, but it was risky to continue getting rid of the spare length by the present method. Besides, there was no more rope with which to tie up the anchor to the chain. As for getting into the boat and weighing anchor from there, it would be sheer madness. The sentry would be certain to see them, naked and wet as they were.

By this time they were both shivering violently with cold, though, as has been said, the water was quite warm. As a last attempt they tried to take the boat out to the end of the chain by swimming away with it farther from the sentry. Again the chain rattled over the gunwale, and there was nothing for it but to admit defeat.

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Slowly they swam back to the ledge where Nobby was awaiting them. He said they had been away for an hour and twenty minutes, so it was not surprising that they had felt cold. With numbed fingers they put on their clothes and climbed gloomily up the cliff. By this time the walking over sharp rocks had cut their socks and padding to pieces, so that they were marching almost barefoot, a very painful operation.

On their rejoining the party, the sad tale of failure was told. As the time was 3 A.M., the only thing to do was to get into the best cover we could find near the coast and sleep till dawn. About a hundred yards inland we lay down in some small bushes beneath stunted pine-trees. There we slept.

Our thirty-fifth morning found us in a state of great depression. There seemed no chance left of getting out of the country. Lying in our hiding-places we reviewed the situation in an almost apathetic mood.

We were on the eastern side of a W-shaped bay, a mile wide, and opening southwards. Its eastern arm was the creek, in which was the boat we had failed to capture. There was a similar western arm, the two creeks being separated by a narrow spit of land. From quite early in the morning motor-lorries could be seen and heard winding their way along the tortuous road. In several places this closely followed the coast line, and at one or two was carried on causeways across the sea itself. We lay on a headland on the seaward side of the Turkish encampment, and were overlooked by the look-out post on the cliff-side.

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At noon a council of war was held. As we were lying dotted about some distance from one another, for the time being we all crept into an old shelter made of branches, not many yards from us. There matters were discussed. Although several schemes were put forward, going back to the ravine in which we had spent so many wearisome days was not one of them. To return there would have made us into raving lunatics. The final decision was to make another attempt that night to seize the boat; this time there should be four of us in the water. If that failed, about the most attractive proposal was to go boldly on to the coast road and by bluff obtain a lift on a motor-lorry, demanding as Germans to be taken in a westerly direction to the nearest big town, Seleké: we might get a boat of some sort there. The chief lure of this scheme was that, should the lorry-driver believe our story, we should cover a few miles without walking on our flat feet. This was a fascinating thought indeed, for despite nearly a fortnight on the coast we had no wish to set out on the tramp again.

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Two or three of us, however, thought we might sum up the energy to march eastwards along the road in the hope of finding a boat in the bay of Ayasch. But even if we did this there was still the difficulty about food and drink. Unless we replenished our supply we should have to undertake a sea voyage of at least a hundred miles with only two days' rations and perhaps a water-bottle full of water apiece. The consensus of opinion was thus come to that if we failed again that night we might as well give ourselves up the next day. We then went back into our old and safer hiding-places.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon we heard the sound of a far-off motor. This was no lorry. It came from a different direction. In a few seconds we were all listening intently.

"It's only another lorry after all!"

"No, it can't be. It's on the sea side of us!"

As the minutes passed, the noise became more and more distinct. Then our hearts leapt within us, as there came into the bay, towing a lighter and a dinghy, the motor-tug which we had last seen the day after we had reached the coast. Skirting the shore not three hundred yards from where we lay, the boats disappeared into the eastern creek.

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Apathy and depression were gone in a second. Excitement and—this we like to remember—a deep sense of thankfulness for this answer to our prayers took their place.

The motor-boat was flying at her bows a Turkish and at her stern a German flag, but most of her crew of seven or eight looked to us like Greeks. In the lighter were over twenty Turks.

Another council of war took place, but of a very different type from the last. All were hopeful, and we made our plans in high spirits. Throughout our discussion, however, ran the assumption that some of the crew would be on board the motor-boat, and we should have to bribe them to take us across to Cyprus. It never entered our heads for a moment that any other scheme would be possible. In fact, when about an hour before sunset the dinghy with a few of the crew and some water-beakers on board was rowed across to a point opposite us on the western side of the bay (where there must have been a spring of fresh water), we determined to hail them on their return journey.

At one point they came within three hundred yards of us. In answer to our shouting and whistling, they stopped rowing and looked in our direction. They must have seen us, but they refused to take any further notice. Whom did they take us for? And why did they not report our presence when they went ashore? No one came to search for us; and as the mountain had not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would have to go to the mountain. Some one would have to swim out to the boat that night, and proffer bribes to the crew.

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As the dusk of our thirty-sixth night fell, a ration of chupatties and a couple of handfuls of raisins were issued. A move was then made to the nearest point on the shore at which there was a suitable place for a boat to come alongside. There we waited till the moon set at about 8.30. In the meantime we drank what water remained in the big dixie. This left us with only our water-bottles full.

At this time our best Turkish scholar was feeling very sick. The last scrapings from the pack containing the porridge had fallen

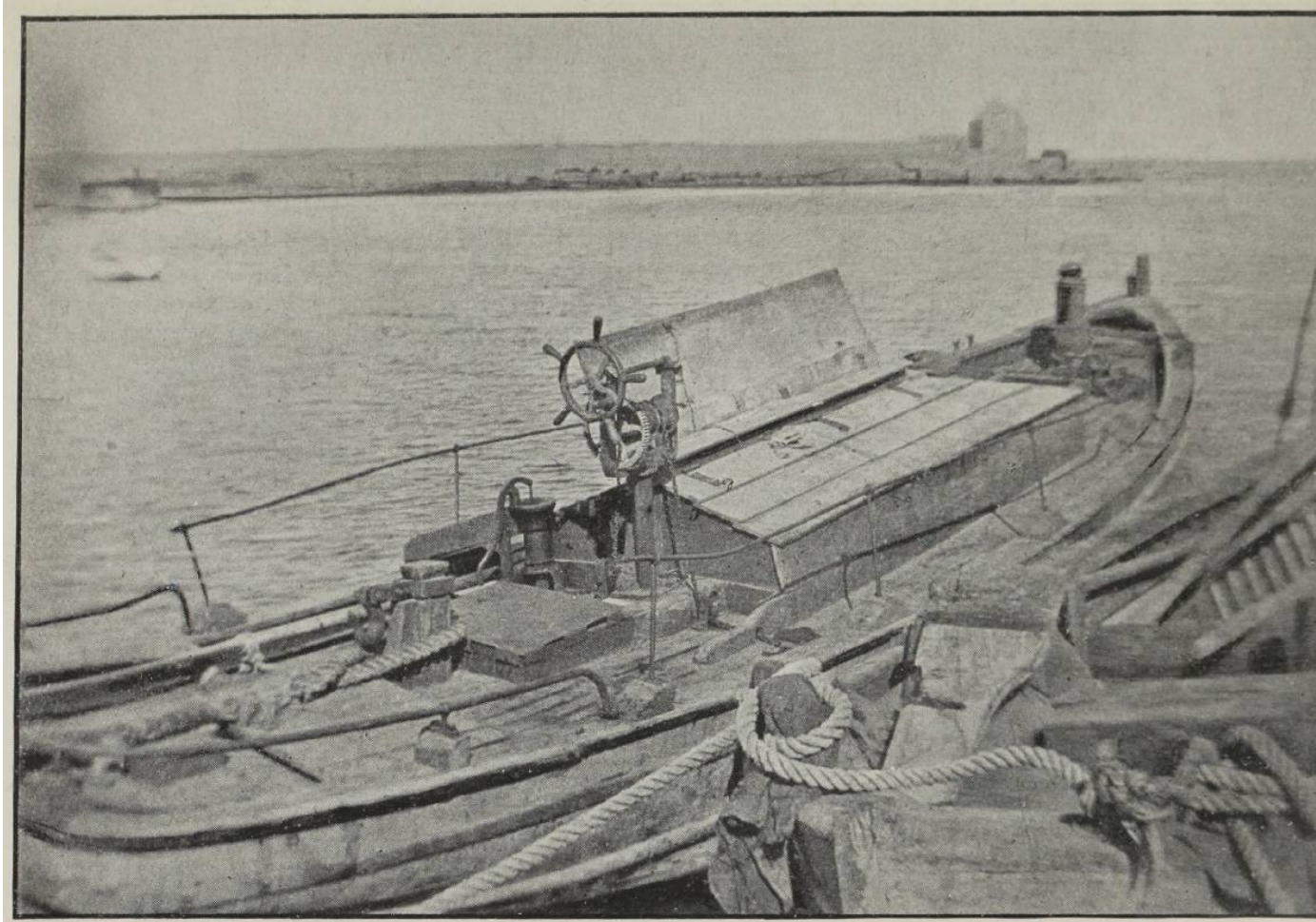
to him, and as all of it had turned sour during the previous night, Grunt's extra ration was proving a not unmixed blessing. This was a serious matter, as we relied on him to negotiate with the motor-boat's crew. However, at 9 P.M., he and Cochrane, the Old Man and Nobby, set forth on the last great venture. The others moved all the kit close down to the edge of the rock where a boat could come in.

An anxious wait ensued. The four had set out at 9 o'clock, but it was not till 11.30 that Looney, with his last reserve—half a biscuit—gone, saw a boat coming silently towards him. In a trice the other three were awakened. Was it friend or foe? She had four men on board: they were our four. The moment the boat touched at the rock the kit was thrown in. Cochrane had done magnificent work. He had swum round the creek, found out that there was no one in the motor-boat, cut away the dinghy belonging to the lighter, swum back with it, and fetched the other three.

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Eight hopeful fugitives were soon gently paddling the dinghy towards the creek, keeping, so far as might be, in the shadow of the cliffs; for though the moon was down, the stars seemed to make the open bay unpleasantly light. As noiselessly as possible the dinghy came alongside the motor-boat and made fast. The creek here was about sixty yards wide. The tug, moored by a heavy chain and anchor, was in the middle of it. Some fifteen yards away was the lighter; on this were several men, one of whom was coughing the whole time we were "cutting out" the motor-boat. This took us a full hour.

On trying the weight of the chain and anchor, Cochrane decided to loose the motor-boat from her anchorage by dropping the chain overboard. He did not think it would be possible to weigh the anchor. Odd lengths of cord were collected and joined up in readiness for lowering the end of the chain silently when the time came. But success was not to be attained so easily. Boarding the motor-boat, Nobby and Perce had, foot by foot, got rid of almost all the chain which lay in the bows, when another score of fathoms were discovered below deck. It would be quicker, after all, to weigh anchor, and by superhuman efforts this was at length achieved without attracting the attention of the enemy, our coats and shirts being used as padding over the gunwale.



From a photograph by Mrs Houstoun taken at Kyrenia, Cyprus.
THE MOTOR BOAT.

As soon as the anchor was weighed, we connected the motor-boat with the dinghy by a tow-rope found on the former; all got back into the dinghy, and in this we paddled quietly away. With our home-made paddles and heavy tow we were unable to make much headway. With six paddles in the water, we could credit ourselves with a speed of not so much as a single knot.

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Once clear of the bay, Cochrane again went aboard the motor-boat and this time had a look at the engine. We had remaining at this time about an inch of candle, but this served a very useful purpose. By its glimmer Cochrane was able to discover and light a hurricane-lamp. He told us the joyous news that there was a fair quantity of paraffin in the tank. Unfortunately no petrol was to be found, and it seemed unlikely that we should be able to start the engine from cold on paraffin alone. So weak indeed were we, that it was all we could do to turn over the engine at all. While frantic efforts were being made by Cochrane and Nobby to start her, those in the dinghy continued paddling. After three hours all were very tired of it, and very grateful for a slight off-shore breeze which gave us the chance of setting a sail. Cochrane rigged up our main-sail on the motor-boat; all then clambered aboard the latter.

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Our speed was now quite good and many times that of our most furious paddling. Suddenly looking back, we saw the dinghy adrift and disappearing in the darkness behind us. Whoever had been holding the rope at the dinghy end had omitted to make fast on coming on board the motor-boat. The dinghy still contained all our kit; so to recover this, including as it did what food and water remained to us, Cochrane and Johnny jumped overboard and swam back to it. The sail on the motor-boat had been furled, and in a few minutes the dinghy was again in tow.

After this slight misadventure the engine-room was once more invaded, and Looney and Cochrane experimented with the magneto. There was a loose wire and vacant terminal which they were uncertain whether to connect or not. Eventually, with Nobby turning over the engine, a shock was obtained with the two disconnected. Two were now put on to the starting-handle. But the cramped space produced several bruised heads and nothing else as pair after pair struggled on.

At length at 4.30 A.M., little more than an hour before dawn, the engine started up with a roar, in went the clutch, and off went the motor-boat at a good seven knots. At the time when the engine began firing, Nobby, who was feeling very much the worse for his exertions in weighing anchor followed by his efforts to start the motor, was lying on deck in the stern. Startled by the sudden series of explosions, he thought for a moment that a machine-gun had opened fire at short range, till he discovered that he was lying on the exhaust-pipe, the end of which was led up on deck!

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CHAPTER XV. FREEDOM.

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We reckoned that by this time we were some three miles from the creek, so we could hope that the roar of the engine would be inaudible to those on shore. On the other hand, sunrise on the 12th September was a little before 6 A.M., so that dawn should have found us still within view from the land. A kindly mist, however, came down and hid us till we were well out to sea. As soon as it was light enough we tried to declutch in order to transfer our kit from the dinghy to the tug. But the clutch was in bad order and would not come out. The alternative was to haul up the dinghy level with the tug, with the motor still running, and then to transfer all our goods and chattels on to the deck. It was a difficult task, but it was done. We then turned the dinghy adrift. This meant the gain of an additional two knots.

It now seemed as if our troubles really were nearing their end. The engine was running splendidly, the main tank was full to the brim; there was enough and to spare of lubricating oil, and in a barrel lashed to the deck in the stern was found some more paraffin. A beaker contained sufficient water to give us each a mugful. It was brackish, but nectar compared to the well-water which we had been drinking for the last fortnight. We also allowed ourselves some chupatties and a handful of raisins.

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Our principal fear now was of being chased by one of the seaplanes which we thought to be stationed at Mersina, not many miles away. We had seen one on two occasions during our stay in the ravine. Time went on, however, and nothing appeared. Instead of looking behind us for a seaplane we began to look ahead, hoping to come across one of our own patrol boats. It says much for the deserted condition of those waters that during our fortnight on the coast and our voyage of about 120 miles to Cyprus not a single boat was seen save those five that we had seen in the creek.

Discussing the matter of the discovery of the loss of the motor-boat and the subsequent action of the crew, we came to the cheerful conclusion that probably the loss would not be divulged to the authorities for a considerable period. The rightful crew would know what to expect as a punishment for their carelessness, and would either perjure themselves by swearing that the boats had sunk at their moorings, or thinking discretion even better than perjury, disappear into the deserted hinterland through which we had marched. Should these two guesses be wrong, there was yet another course which we thought possible, though not so probable, for the crew to take. Thinking that the motor-boat and dinghy had drifted away, they would not mention their disappearance till a thorough search had been made of all bays and creeks within a few miles of the locality.

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The cherry of this delightful cocktail of fancy was very palatable; whatever else happened, the occupants of the lighter, agitated to the extreme and dinghyless, would have to swim ashore, and this thought amused us greatly.^[11]

Now for a few words about the motor-boat. She was named the *Hertha*, and boasted both a Turkish and a German flag. In addition to her name she had the Turkish symbol for "2" painted large on either side of her bows. Broad in the beam for her 38 feet of length, she was decked in, and down below harboured a 50-h.p. motor. In the bows of the engine-room we found a couple of Mauser rifles dated 1915, with a few rounds of small-arm ammunition; some of the latter had the nickel nose filed off to make them "mushroom" on impact. We also discovered a Very's pistol, with a box of cartridges; trays of spanners and spare parts for the motor, and two lifebelts taken from English ships whose names we have forgotten. On deck, immediately abaft the engine-room hatchway, was the steering-wheel, while farther astern was the barrel containing the extra paraffin, a can of lubricating oil, and various empty canisters.

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Till noon the sea was sufficiently rough to be breaking continually over the bows, and three of the party were feeling the effect of the roll. To the rest, to be thus rocked in the cradle of the deep, borne ever nearer to freedom, was a sensation never to be forgotten. The motor was going splendidly, and we all took turns at the wheel, steering by the "sun-compass," and, with the exception of Cochrane, very badly.

By 1.30 P.M. we could recognise the dim outline of the high mountain-range of Cyprus: on the strength of this we each ate another two chupatties and a handful of raisins, finishing our meal with a quarter of a mugful of water.

But we were a trifle premature in our lavishness. Our troubles were not at an end, for half an hour later the engine began to fail, and, while Cochrane was below looking for the cause of the trouble, she petered out. The fault was subsequently traced to the over-heating of one of the main shaft bearings, the oil feed-pipe to which had been previously broken, and had vibrated from its place. Having satisfied himself that no serious damage was done, Cochrane decided to wait half an hour for the bearing to cool. During this time Old Man and Looney had a mid-sea bathe to refresh themselves, while Perce and Johnny tried to boil some water for tea. The fire was made on an iron sheet, on which some bights of chain were shaped into a cooking place for the big dixie. The roll of the boat, however, though very much less than in the morning, proved too great to allow the dixie to remain steady on the chain, so the idea of tea had to be abandoned. We now had leisure to observe the sea, and we decided that its colour was the most wonderful we had ever seen—a clear purple-blue.

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When the bearing had cooled, we tried to start the engine again. One pair followed another on the starting-handle, but all to no purpose. All four sparking-plugs were examined: the feed-pipe, separator, and carburetter were taken down. Except for a little water in the separator, all seemed correct. We refilled the tank with paraffin from the barrel on deck, but our renewed attempts still met with no success. Our efforts to turn the crank became more and more feeble, until, by 4.30 P.M., we lay down on deck utterly exhausted.

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Just before sunset we decided we would make a final attempt to start up. Should that be unsuccessful, we would set the sails; but to our great relief she fired at the second attempt. Our joy was somewhat tempered by her refusing to run for more than a few minutes at a time. It was found that this was caused by the feed-pipe from the tank repeatedly choking, owing, no doubt, to grit in the oil obtained from the barrel, which, as we had noticed when pouring it in, was very dirty.

After dark, Cochrane did all the steering; while down in the engine-room were Looney as mechanic, and Old Man and Johnny as starters. Meantime, Perce sat on deck with his feet through the hatchway against the clutch-lever below him. By jamming this hard down, and tapping the clutch with a hammer, it was possible to persuade the cones to separate when required. For over four hours we spent our time starting and stopping. Our two best runs lasted for thirty and thirty-five minutes. Usually a run lasted for five or less. We took it in turns to tap the feed-pipe with a piece of wood, in the hope of keeping it from clogging; but it was of little use. Each time the engines stopped, Looney took down the separator and feed-pipe and blew through them, getting a mouthful of paraffin for his pains. When all was ready again, the two starters, though almost dead-beat, managed somehow to turn the crank.

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By 10 P.M. we were becoming desperate. It was only Cochrane's cheering news that we were within two hours' run of the coast that kept the engine-room staff going. A run of five minutes meant a mile nearer home, so we carried on.

An hour later, Cochrane told us all to sit on the starboard side, for it was on this side that the feed-pipe left the tank. This was sheer genius on his part. From that very moment the wilful engine behaved herself, and ran obediently till we meant her to stop. As we neared the coast, at a distance, perhaps, of three miles from it, Nobby fired off a Very's light, in case there were any patrol boats in the neighbourhood; but no answering light appeared. Next day, in Cyprus, we asked the police if they had seen the light. They had not seen it, they said, but had heard it. This proves how wonderfully sound travels over water, for we would not for one second doubt a policeman's story. But, as is hardly necessary to point out, a Very's signal, like little children, should be seen and not heard.

Having had only our memories of the bearing and distance to Cyprus from Rendezvous X to guide us, we had worked out in the ravine that the bearing on which we had to steer would be S. 50° W. On sighting the island in the afternoon, we had found that this was too much to the west; so Cochrane had altered the course to make for the western end of the high range of mountains visible about due south of us. When about two miles from the shore we turned eastwards, and moved parallel to the coast, on the look-out for a good anchorage, if possible near a village. Finally, about a hundred yards from the shore, we dropped anchor in a wide bay.

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On leaving Yozgad each of the party had possessed a watch, but by this time only two were in working order, and these were Old Man's and Johnny's. As the chain rattled over the side, the latter looked at the time, to find that the hand once more pointed to the witching hour of midnight. This timepiece served its purpose well, for it was not till an hour later, when it had ceased to be so essential, that it shared the fate of most of its comrades and was broken. It was interesting to find later, on comparing the Old Man's watch with Cyprus time, that there was only two minutes' difference between them. We had checked our time occasionally by noticing when one of the "pointers" of the Great Bear was vertically beneath the Pole Star; the solar

time when this occurred on any night had been worked out before we left Yozgad. Fairly accurate time-keeping was of importance, for on this depended the successful use of both the "sun-compass" and the star-charts.

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And so we had reached Cyprus, but we were all in too dazed a condition to realise for the moment what it meant; in fact, it took many days to do so. On arrival in the bay, Cochrane, with his keen sense of smell, had declared that there were cows not far off, and at about 3 o'clock we heard a cock crow. We said we would eat our hats, or words to that effect, if we did not have that bird for breakfast. There was not a single light on shore, and we had no idea whereabouts in Cyprus we had dropped anchor. As the stars disappeared in the coming light of dawn, we saw the coast more clearly. Then by degrees what we thought were ruins on the coast, rocks a couple of hundred yards east of us took form; later these proved to be the still occupied Greek monastery of Acropedi. Then a house or two near by stood distinct; then trees; and finally our eyes beheld not a mile away a large village, boasting churches, mosques, and fine buildings set in trees, and beyond a mountain-range rising sheer from the very houses.

With the first light came a man to the beach opposite us. We shouted to him in English, French, and Turkish, but he appeared not to understand. Soon he was joined by two or three others. Then they started arriving in tens and twenties, men, women, and children. Mounted gendarmes galloped down. We shouted ourselves hoarse, but to no purpose. We tried several times to start up the motor, but we could not turn the handle. Finally Cochrane jumped overboard in a shirt borrowed for the occasion, as it was longer and less torn than his own. He must have felt still rather undressed for the ordeal, as when he reached the water he shouted for his hat, which was thrown to him. Clothed thus he swam towards the shore. In two feet of water his courage gave way, and his modesty made him sit down. So situated he harangued the crowd.

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Finally there appeared a gendarme who understood English. He said there was an English police officer in the village, which was named Lapethos; so borrowing a pencil and a piece of paper, Cochrane wrote a note to the Englishman reporting our arrival. He explained to the gendarme that we wanted to bring the boat ashore, but that we could not start the engine. When this was understood several men at once stripped and swam out to the rest of us. Cochrane came back smoking a cigarette, which he passed round when he got on board. The Cypriotes too brought cigarettes perched behind their ear like a clerk's pencil, and these we smoked with great appreciation. The scheme was for us to weigh the anchor, give the men towing-ropes, and they would then pull the boat inshore. The men, though small, were well built. As they had started swimming almost before they could walk, it was no hardship for them to tow our heavy vessel. Laughing and shouting, they pulled us along until they thought a rest would be pleasant, then they came on board again. They shouted now and then in sheer lightness of heart; they were very cheery fellows. We were not towed straight inshore, but to a small natural jetty a hundred and fifty yards west of us along the beach.

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Here we stepped on British soil, eight thin and weary ragamuffins. We know our hearts gave thanks to God, though our minds could not grasp that we were really free.

Our story is nearly at an end, though we have yet to bring our eight travellers to England. Should our already distressed readers hope against hope that the two authors will be torpedoed long before arriving there, we will put an end to any such fond anticipations by telling them truthfully that we were not. In order, however, to soothe in a small way their injured feelings, let us divulge the fact that we, with all but two of the party, spent several days ill in hospital before we reached home. One nearly died from malignant malaria, doubtless caused by the bites of the mosquitoes on the Turkish coast.

Having given the reader this sop we will continue. Surrounded by a large but kindly crowd, we sat down on the rocks above the natural jetty on which we had landed, and waited for an answer to Cochrane's note. In the meanwhile a gift arrived from the monastery: a basket containing bread, cheese, olives, and pomegranates. No larks' tongues, nor the sunny halves of peaches, have ever been so welcome, and we had a wonderful meal, finishing with clean sweet water and cigarettes.

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About half an hour later an officer, in what looked to us then extraordinarily smart uniform, came down to see why this crowd had collected, and on hearing our story conducted us to the village. The road led through orchards whose trees were heavy with pomegranates and figs; past vineyards and banana palms, tobacco plants and cotton. Everywhere we could see the signs of a fertile prosperous land, and it struck us forcibly how different it all was from the barren tracts through which we had toiled down to the coast of Asia Minor. No more vivid testimony could be borne to the contrast between British and Turkish sovereignty.

The officer with us did not belong to the police, but was on survey work in the island. We were taken, however, to the barracks of the Cyprus Mounted Police, and here, seated on chairs on the verandah, we were given coffee with sugar in it. Everything seemed wonderful. We could smoke as much as we wanted, and the barracks were scrupulously clean and tidy. One by one we went into the garden near a whitewashed well, and were shaved by one of the C.M.P. After a good wash we brushed our hair for the first time for five weeks. All that time we had had to be satisfied with a comb. As soon as Lieutenant S— of the Police arrived, we were taken upstairs to have breakfast, and right royally did we feast. The meal ended, we were given the 'Lapethos Echo,' which contained Haig's and Foch's communiqués of the 9th September. These too were wonderful, and we were greatly amazed by the change which had come over the main battle front since we saw the last paper at Yozgad before we left; then the Germans were, so we were told, about to enter Paris.

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After breakfast a hot bath and clean clothes were provided for each of us, our rags being collected in a corner with a view to their cremation. A Greek doctor anointed us with disinfectant and bandaged anything we had in the way of sores or cuts.

At about 3 P.M. two carriages arrived and our triumphal progress continued. We first paid a final visit to the motor-boat, collecting our few trophies in the way of rifles and flags. This done, we were driven to Kyrenia, a coast town eight or nine miles to the east of us: the police officer and Greek doctor stopping the carriages at every roadside inn to regale us with Turkish delight and iced water. At Kyrenia we were expected by the British residents, who accommodated us for the night and treated us with the truest British hospitality.

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Our sensations on finding ourselves once more between sheets in a spring-bed are more easily imagined than described. Late next morning, after a bathe in the sea and when many snapshots of the party had been taken, we were driven off in a motor-lorry, by Captain G— of the A.S.C., to Famagusta, the port of Cyprus on the eastern coast. It was an eighty-mile drive, and what with stopping at Nikosia for lunch and at Larnaka for tea, we did not reach Famagusta and the mess of the Royal Scots, who had kindly offered us a home, till 9 P.M.

All the recollections of our four-days' stay in Cyprus are of the pleasantest description, as were those also of our voyage to Egypt in two French trawlers. As much cannot be said of the fortnight we spent in Port Saïd, where we passed the first night sleeping on the sand in a transit camp and most of the rest in hospital: nor of our ten days in a troop-train crossing Italy and France. During this time we learnt—what perhaps we needed to be taught—that we were after all the least important people in the world. But to tell of these adventures in detail would be to fill another book. Suffice it to say that we were sustained by a few comic episodes. On one occasion, in Italy, we spent five minutes talking Italian, based on slender memories of school-day Latin, to men in another troop-train, before we discovered that they were Frenchmen. On another, in France, we remember opening a conversation in French with our engine-driver, who proved to be an American.

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At length, on the 16th October 1918, five of our party reached England together, preceded by Cochrane, who had managed to arrange for a seat in a "Rapide" across Europe, and followed by the Old Man and Nobby, who had had to remain in hospital in Egypt for another fortnight.

Soon after arrival in England, each of us had the very great honour of being individually received by His Majesty the King. His kindly welcome and sympathetic interest in what we had gone through will ever remain a most happy recollection.

Finally, we arranged a dinner for all our party, the date fixed being 11th November. This, as it turned out, was Armistice Night, and with that night of happy memories and a glimpse of the eight companions once again united, we will draw the tale of our adventures to a close.

FOOTNOTE:

[11] The following is an extract from a letter received from Lieut.-Colonel Keeling since we wrote the above: "At Adana I

met the Turkish Miralai (= Brigadier-General)—Beheddin Bey—who was in command on the coast. He was fully expecting the party [*i.e.*, our party], and put all the blame on the men in the boat [*i.e.*, the lighter] to which the motor-boat was tied. These men were all Turks, the Germans being on shore. The loss of the motor-boat was discovered before dawn, and at dawn a hydroplane was sent out to look for her; but she only spotted a small boat a few miles out, presumably the boat with which they had towed the motor-boat to a safe distance before starting the engine. Beheddin Bey drew me a plan showing exactly how everything had happened."

CHAPTER XVI. CONCLUSION.

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There is one note, however, which we feel we must add before laying down our pens. Many of our readers will have already realised that there was something more than mere luck about our escape. St Paul, alluding to his adventures in almost the very same region as that traversed by us, describes experiences very like our own. Like him, we were "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, ... in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, ... in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

To be at large for thirty-six days before escaping from the country, to have been so frequently seen, sometimes certainly to have aroused suspicion, and yet to have evaded recapture, might perhaps be attributed to Turkish lack of organisation. Our escape from armed villagers; our discovery of wells in the desert, of grain in an abandoned farmhouse, and of the water (which just lasted out our stay) in the ruined wells on the coast; and finally, the timely reappearance of the motor-tug with all essential supplies for the sea voyage—any one even of these facts, taken alone, might possibly be called "luck," or a happy coincidence; taken in conjunction with one another, however, they compel the admission that the escape of our party was due to a higher Power.

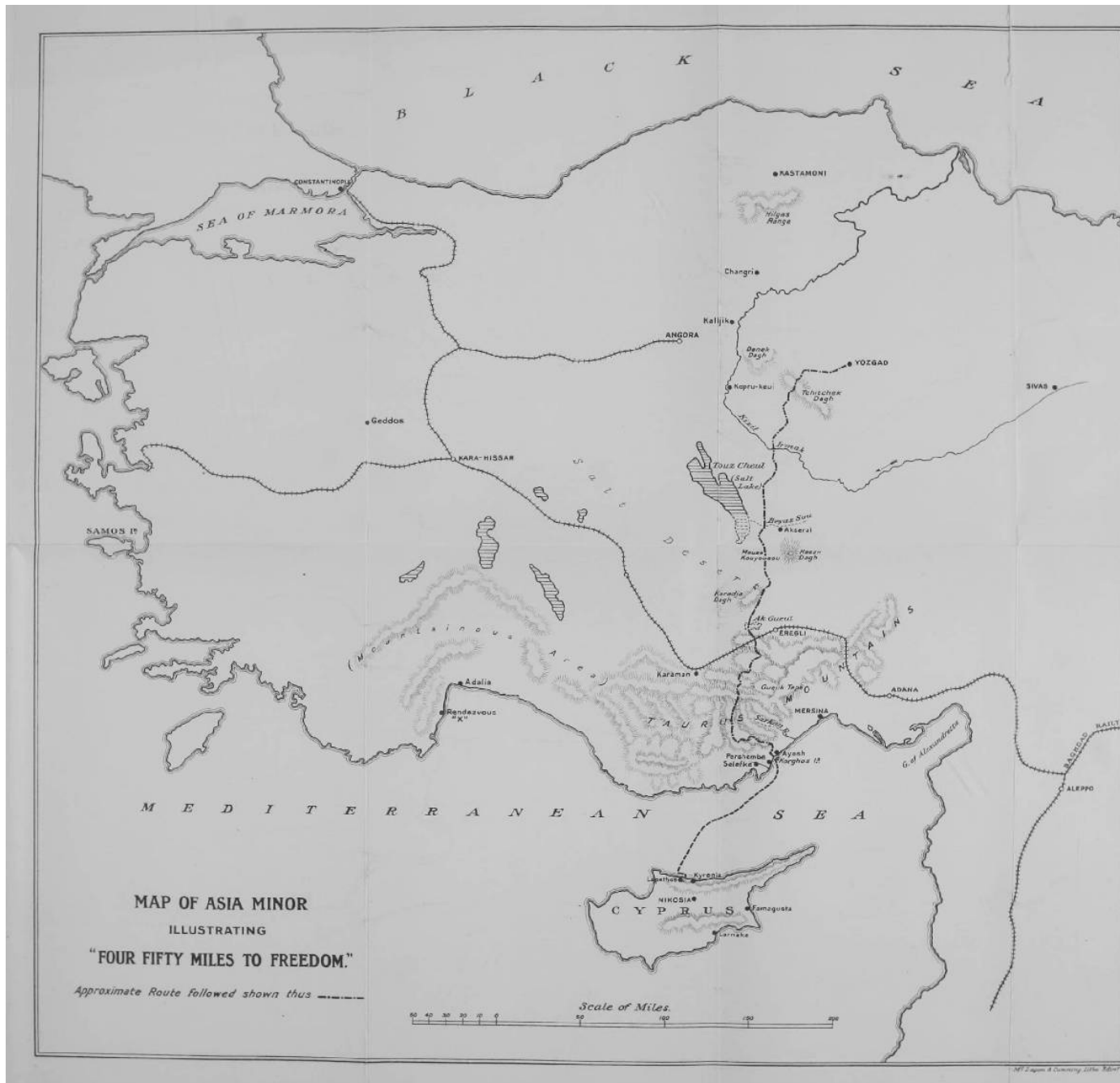
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It would seem as if it were to emphasise this that on at least three occasions, when everything seemed to be going wrong, in reality all was working out for our good. Our meeting with and betrayal by the two "shepherds" ought, humanly speaking, to have proved fatal to the success of our venture: we had thrown away valuable food, and were committed to crossing a desert which previously, without a guide, we had looked upon as an impassable obstacle. And yet we know now that it would have been entirely beyond us to have reached the coast by the route which we had mapped out to Rendezvous X, and that it was only the deflection from our proposed route caused by this rencontre which brought the land journey within our powers of endurance. It was the same when we were forced, against our will, to replenish supplies at a village; the breakdown of one of the party which compelled us to do so undoubtedly saved us from making an impossible attempt to reach the coast with the food which remained at the time. Still more remarkable was our failure to take the rowing-boat on the night of 10th/11th September, which resulted in the motor-tug falling into our hands and being the final means of our escape on the night following.

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We feel then that it was Divine intervention which brought us through. Throughout the preparations for escape every important step had been made a matter of prayer; and when the final scheme was settled, friends in England were asked, by means of a code message, to intercede for its success. That message, we now know, was received and very fully acted upon. We had also friends in Turkey who were interceding for us; and on the trek it was more than once felt that some one at home or in Turkey was remembering us at the time. To us then the hand of Providence was manifest in our escape, and we see in it an answer to prayer. Our way, of course, might have been made smoother, but perhaps in that case we should not have learnt the same lessons of dependence upon God. As it was, it was made manifest to us that, even in these materialistic days, to those who can have faith, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save."

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MAP OF ASIA MINOR
ILLUSTRATING
"FOUR FIFTY MILES TO FREEDOM."
Approximate Route followed shown thus ---
M^c. Lagan & Cumming, Litho Edin

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious punctuation errors were corrected.
- Hyphenation was made consistent.
- P. 90: was not to be carried -> was not to be carried.
- P. 196: an old castle -> an old castle.
- P. 254: in case of eventualities -> in case of eventualities.
- P. 263: helped to keep the porridge moist -> help to keep the porridge moist.
- P. 267: unnecessary ripple -> unnecessary ripple.

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