

5 Cadwill Road. Ap: 5. 1933

My dearest Juliet; Will you do me the pleasure of accepting this collection of letters written by Ralph describing an expedition he made in Baloochistan on the escort of Sir R. Sandeman in an almost unknown land. I am now pretty well settled down and occupy a part of my leisure in going through boxes, drawers and packages, and making considerable rearrangement. In due course I came upon this book of copies, kept all these years and re-read by me with amusement and interest\_ Though I never saw the places nor even knew how to pronounce the names of them\_ They will not be of interest to anyone else so I give them to you - to do what you like with them\_ It is nice to hear about your garden; my tiny bit gets along it has a bed of yellow tulips now, to be followed later by gladiolus, all brought from Roscrea\_ I walked down to the sea today for the first time - though Polly drove me there on the Sunday she was here after Church. My love dear, please accept this book for the sake of him that is gone,

Yours M.

*The above is written on a post card enclosed in the book mentioned. The book, about A5 size has a hard blue cover with the word Stamps in gold on it. The pages are ruled in faint squares, presumably to mount stamps in, and some at the back have been cut out.*

Giving an account of a journey in Southern Baloochistan made by -----, Sir R. Sandeman in the winter of 1883, with an escort of cavalry and infantry in which R. W. S. was included.

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N<sup>o</sup> 1. Sibi. Nov<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1883.

My dear Mother, you see by my address that I have started on my travels. I started from Quetta on Nov<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> by myself, as some of the men I am taking with me, were to come from some of our outposts near here so I started early, so that I could properly equip them here without any hurry. I got in two days ago, and have today got all my men together. The Infantry and guns started on the fifth, and will, I expect arrive here on the 15<sup>th</sup>; and then, I think we shall start off together into the wilds, on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The two sappers who were to accompany the party and survey the country started on their own hook from Quetta, and will not join us for a long time.

Duke, the Doctor-Political is here now, waiting like me for the rest to come. He tells me that the Government are making a fuss about the expense of conveying me and my men by ship from Guarda to Karachi; so that most likely I and my troop will stop at Kej, and while the infantry and guns go round by Karachi, I shall come back through the Mekran country again by myself. This will be rather lively, as by the beginning of March I expect I shall have had about enough of the business. However, as my old Native Officer, Mir Kadam Ali says, "The Sind Horse never complain like the Bombay Cavalry, when there is hard work to be done, and I can console myself when I am alone, and not hampered by infantry, by suddenly appearing in Quetta about two months before I am expected, and showing the world, the way the Sind Horse can slip over the ground when they try. Anyhow, if you do not get any letters from me after I leave here till next June, please do not excite yourself; as our men are about the best foragers in the world; and I am never really in good health except when I am on the march, when I have to take a lot of exercise, and have not the little luxuries of cantonements.

Maitland who was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup> with me, is coming with us, he is in the intelligence department at Simla, and is coming to explore country, and do intelligence work generally. \_\_\_ Sibi is now an enormous place though with a very small garrison of 50 sabres of ours and 1000 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> native infantry under an English officer. It is very hot after Quetta and there is at present a furious sand storm going on, which has lasted pretty well since I arrived, and I feel like a damp piece of sand paper.

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N<sup>o</sup> 2. Sibi. November 17<sup>th</sup> /83.

We start tomorrow, and I am awfully busy, and have hardly a moment in which to write. We shall receive a post regularly, as Sandeman has made arrangements with the Khan of Kelat for having one, so we shall not be unheard off as I thought, but will receive letters regularly. But please do not send the photo you promised, till I come back as I think it highly probable that now and then mailbags will get dropped into streams, if not lost altogether.

N<sup>o</sup> 3. Bagh. Nov<sup>r</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 1883.

We started from Sibi on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and up to date have done three marches, and we halt here again tomorrow. Elliot of the mountain battery says it is like a nightmare in which you are trying to walk up a hill, and walk up two steps and then slip down three. That describes our march up to the present splendidly. Every day we expect to go on in the morning, and then in the evening Sandy sends to say that he has work, and must halt another day. We were five days at a place called Kadja - Ka - Shahar, a dreadful hole, with no game to shoot, or anything to do. Here for about an hour in the morning there is good sand-grouse shooting, when they come down to the water to drink; and after that they fly away again, miles away and lie up all through the day, and are not to be found. This is the biggest place in Balooch Kutchee. That is, the part of the plain of Kutchee which is in Kelat territory and not in British, and at best is a filthy little hole. They have got a rusty little old gun here, which was blown off into a royal salute when Sandeman arrived, and I confess I should not care to have been near the old gun while the operation was going on. I find that the Sind Horse are very differently treated in these parts to what the Bombay Sepoys are. They know us of old so well. I was much surprised on going into the Bazaar here to find my men swaggering about as if the whole place belonged to them; being salaamed by the people and buying things pretty well at their own price; while the Bombay Sepoy had to haggle for everything, and if he said much was laughed at, or jostled out of the way if any of our fellows were not near. I happened to go into the Bazaar in uniform, & was being shown the place by one of our men, and nearly died with laughter at the way in which everyone made way for me, and salaamed to the ground, when they would hardly get out of the way of other fellows who went in to see the place. Please address all my letters, Escort to the A. G. G. (i.e. Agent to the Governor Gen<sup>l</sup>) Baloochistan, on tour, via Karachi and Guardar.

N<sup>o</sup> 4. Kôzdar. Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> 1883.


I think I have not written since we left Bagh, so I might as well tell you what we have been doing since. Well, on the 29<sup>th</sup> Nov. every one, except my troop marched to a village called Gul Mahomed. But as there is very little water there, I had to stay at Bagh till the next day, and make a double march to Shoran, where I again met the other fellows. Shoran is just at the bottom of the hills, the Hala Raoze which rise abruptly from the plain, and look like a huge wall. There are very few practical passes through them, and the Mulla is the only fair one. Shoran is not at all a bad place, with lots of water. The next day we went to Kotela, which English people will insist on calling Kotri. I forgot - we went to Gajan first, 14 miles, and the next day to Kotela, This is close to the entrance of the Mulla Pass. This is a lovely little place for this part of the world. The village belongs to the Khan's sister, and her son is the Sirdar of it. There are a lot of jolly groves and gardens of fruit trees. It is six miles from Grendava where the Khan has a winter house and gardens, and generally lives during the winter. I was going to ride over to Grendava, which is within sight of Kotela, but the natives say that the gardens at Kotela are just as good as those at Grendava. In all these villages in the plain of Kutchee, it is quite worth while going into the villages just to see the women, who are some of them simply beautiful, and are not a bit ashamed of letting their faces be seen. All the people about there are Rind Baloochees. The men are not much to look at, and look very Jewish, but the women all have the most wonderful features I have ever seen. Of course from the climate they are very dark, but at the same time, they have a rosy tint in their complexions, like Europeans their features are very aristocratic, and their eyes, no Indian girl could beat. The next day we entered the pass & got to Pir Chuttar, ten miles. This is a holy spot, with a saint. Here there rises a wonderfully strong spring of rather warm water which forms within ten yards of its source a stream about two yards broad and two feet deep. At the spring itself is a pool about four feet deep in which are thousands of sacred fish, which are fed by the saint. The fish are of course Makseer. The next day we marched to Nanlung, and had to cross the river about ten times. Here we had some capital fishing. Makseer give very good play. They are of all

sizes, from that of a trout upwards. I believe a Makseer has been caught over 150 lbs in weight. The largest we caught during the time we were by the Mulla river was a five pound fish. I caught one over three lbs. The size of the fish varies with the size of the river as they do every where else.

From there we went to Pániwunt: that day I hooked a very big fish, but he went off with a rush, which snapped a gimp cast I was fishing with, though the line was not hitched or fastened in any way. I just caught sight of him, and think he must have been four feet long. From thence we went to Kotajee; here the pass widens a little, and the river separates into little streams, so instead of fishing, I went for a walk with O'Donnell, who is here on intelligence work, to look at a tributary of the river and see if it could be utilized as a road. We were repaid by seeing about the grandest scenery of the rocky sort that I have ever seen, but I wanted if possible to be back in time for stables, we thought we saw a little pass through some perpendicular rocks, which would be a short cut back to camp. The end of the short cut was that we climbed & climbed and got back at 9 at night. It was very fortunate for us that we had moon to see by. That morning we had a heavy shower of rain, and were much afraid we should be kept where we were for an indefinite period, but it passed off, and we saw no more of it. The next day we went to Pir Laka, a holy man's tomb. We saw some grand scenery on the way; though as a matter of fact, all these hills look very dreary. Here we halted a day. On the tenth we reached Nurr; here the Mulla river turns round and comes from a northerly direction from the Kelat way, so here we left the pass. Of course I did not see the upper part of the Mulla pass; but as far as Nurr, though the river is considerably larger than the Bolan, I think the Mulla pass is decidedly easier than the Bolan, that is, before we made the road in it. The Mulla is of course in its native simplicity, with regard to a track; whereas, when I saw the Bolan in 1880 there had been an enormous deal of work spent upon it. In the Mulla the scenery is much finer than in the Bolan, and I am quite sure that no wheeled carriage of any description could get through it; and I can now quite imagine that it is quite true that in 1839, they could only get field guns through the Bolan by blasting a way for them. A field gun might get through the Mulla with a little blasting, but nothing less substantial than a gun carriage could.

From Narr we marched to Guru up a water course that runs into the Mulla, and from there to Zidi, which is a very pretty little place. Here is another Gíarat with more holy fish, but the fish here are much larger than at Pir Chattar: the big ones are quite 20 lbs each, and if you throw food in, the fish simply jostle each other out of the water, I threw a cigarette end in and as it touched the water it was snapped up and gone. I do not think the water had had time to put the fire out; it seemed to drop straight into a great mouth. I hope that fish was not seriously ill after his breakfast. Zidi is a little off the track, and a lot of my Kit went straight on to Kôzdar; and when he got in, my orderly was foolish enough to come all the way back again 14 miles to Zidi, though he knew we should come on to Kôzdar the next day. Which we did. That was yesterday. Here is a good sized fort in very good preservation, with one little brass gun, which was fired off when Sandy came in. It is pretty cold here now. We are about 4000 feet above the sea. From this we strike northwards to Sohrâb, where I believe it will be very cold. From Sohrâb we shall come one march south again to Gidar, from whence we shall start off west into country unknown to Europeans, and we expect to get to the celebrated Khairan on Christmas day. Almost every traveller has tried to get there, but failed. The Sirdar there Azath Khan has given more trouble to all his neighbours impartially than one can readily believe. He has always gone on the good old plan of making friendly treaties all round, and then looting all his friends in turn; and when one got savage and tried to smash him, he has managed somehow either to threaten, or to get help from all the rest. It will be Christmas before this will reach you so I will wish you a merry Christmas now.

N<sup>o</sup> 5. Khárán. Dec<sup>r</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> 1883.

Here we are at the famous Khárán, the place where every traveller has tried to get and failed, and after all is said, I think we agree that there is nothing to be seen or done when you do get there. Only two men has described Baloochistan in general accurately. One was old Charlie Napier, who said "When God made the world, He shot all the rubbish here". And the other was private Thomas Atkins, of some regt., who described it as, "The most particularly \_\_\_\_\_ country. We marched in on Christmas eve, and as the last march was 22 miles, we started in the middle of the night, & halted four miles off for a couple of hours, and took off our dusty Khâkee and turned out in full tog, and then marched in and formed up in grand array outside the Durbar tent, and received Sandeman and his fifty thousand stinking Balooch Sirdars with salutes and all sorts of funny things, and then we had to go and sit in solemn Durbar, for a couple of hours, after which I went out to my tent and caught a b. flat trying to get through my waist cloth. I was sitting quite close to Gour Khan, the Jalawan Sirdar who is about the most powerful man in the country, with an income of £10.000 a year, so I have no doubt I got my friend from him. Yesterday, Christmas day, Sandy invited us all to dinner, and his cook turned out as good a dinner as I have ever eaten, with lots of champagne to wash it down. Just as we were going to dinner, the english mail came in and I got your Christmas card, for which I thank you very much. We have all been very much struck of old Azad Khan, the Sirdar of Khárán. He is a very old man indeed. Baloochees all declare that he is 115 years old. Any way he must be very old, as Englishmen have heard of him for the last 60 or 70 years as leading his men in raids on the neighbouring countries. But he rode out three or four miles to meet Sandeman; when he was a young man, I think he must have stood quite six feet three inches, and has now got an arm like an ordinary mans leg. But the thing about him was that he had such a good honest face, and spoke up so well in Durbar. He seems so entirely superior to other Baloochees; all his life he has been surrounded by deadly enemies, who have all conspired to suppress him, but he has always held his own, and not only always beaten his enemies off, but has lived by plundering all his enemies in turn. It seems very hard that we should come and meddle in other peoples affairs and force old Azad Khan to humble himself to the Khan, when he has always proved himself strong enough to be independent. But it is necessary as a matter of policy. Why we cannot treat with him as a man independent of any one clan, I cannot see; as he has said all along, that if we will recognize his independence, he will go hand and glove with us. But the government seem to think it necessary to uphold the Khan's suzerainty over Azad Khan's territory, which I should think would be the very thing to bring about what we are here to prevent - that is - Persia or Russia having any thing to say to Azad Khan's territory. All the maps as yet published about this part are perfectly incorrect. We have two sappers with us to survey the country, I have not yet asked either of them what the exact spot is, but I think it must be somewhere about the 29<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude, and the 65<sup>th</sup> of longitude. We are a long way north of where the maps show Khárán to be. There is nothing to be seen here, but a large plain extending south-west as far as one can see and shut in by mountains on all other sides. The fort is 120 by 80 yards, and is the best and strongest both in design and material that I have seen in this country. There is a collection of huts around the fort. The whole of the plain for miles is covered with black sulphuretted stones; But marching in, we crossed miles of clay, cultivable land. The old Khan has a regiment of regular infantry in uniform, whom we call the Christy Minstrels, as they are clothed in blue and white striped ticking, with panther skin caps. As you may imagine, a Balooch in such a dress looks rather ridiculous. They are armed with Sniders nearly captured at Maiwand. Azad Khan's territory from the Helmund and Sistan to within a short distance of Kôzdar; and in the south to the mountains dividing the Kharan and Prenjgar plain. The roads we have come over have been very bad. That is to say, there are no roads at all. For three days we were in a narrow water course with almost perpendicular sides, and as a rule about 30 yards wide which without exaggeration went like this, 

Then we came to a little plain, and then another water course, and went up that, and then crossed a very stiff Kotal where we all had to dismount and had our horses over, and then we got into another one which for a mile was only just wide enough for a baggage animal to pass; and so on. It is most dreary work, going on day after day, and seeing the same old dreary rocks. What a nuisance those Russians are that they should make us fag about all over such a worthless hole as this. I should think I am well within the mark in saying that not one out of say 150 acres of the whole country could possibly be cultivated. In one part of the country we saw a lot of Ghor-bunds or Ghor-bustas, which means dykes, or works of Infidels. They are great solid dykes rivetted with large stones, and in some places where the rush of water is great, with buttresses; of course they are all broken now, but no one knows who they were made by. This work is greatly superior in execution to anything the Baloochees or Brahoois are capable of, and show that whoever made them had a very clear idea of what he was about, and a very good eye for ground and its features. The natives do not know who made them, they only know by tradition that they were made (as they say) thousands of years ago by infidels, who were in the country before its present owners. I have seen it in books that they are works of defence; but to my mind, and to all of us they seem undoubtedly for irrigation purposes. But I confess that I think the men who could expend so much labour in trying to fertilize such an utterly impossible soil, must have been rather weak in their heads, unless, as I have several times thought, that some volcanic or other phenomenon has changed the whole face of nature since they were made. Every where nothing can be seen but signs of the working both of fire and water; and though I am no geologist, I think that both look very recent. Another idea which has also struck me is, that this country was once a plain and fertile and with lots of rain; and that suddenly the whole country was shot up by volcanic action into its present form of mountains. That after that these bunds were made for irrigating, afterwards, in the course of time the whole soil got washed away from the steep hillsides, and down the rivers and left the rocks bare; and all the small fragments of volcanic stones which had been thrown up in the irruption have got washed down into every thing there is in the shape of a plain. Then, of course, as the country became desert, the rain ceased to be abundant. That would account for the apparently absurd strength with which some of the Ghor-bunds are built, compared with the amount of water which falls here now. And yet nearly all of them have great gaps burst in them, and stones of enormous weight washed some distance; also the river beds through the velleys are quite disproportionate to the streams in them; and the only places where you find soil which is not covered with a layer of stones is in the middle of a valley some miles from the hills, where the ground is quite flat. Wherever there is the slightest slope from the hill the ground is sure to be covered with stones. The water here is not nice, decidedly brackish and very little of it. It comes down from the hills in a Karez. I have been told by my men this morning, that they think, from what they can get out of the natives, that there is really lots of water, but that Azad Khan has had it nearly all cut off to try and get rid of us. I should think this very likely. Of course Sandy says it is impossible, but I am going to ride out myself to see this afternoon if there are lots of water. I do not see why our horses should not get it. As yet no one has been allowed into the fort. The politicals say that the fort is Azad Khan's private dwelling, and that the tribesmen themselves cannot go into it. Not even the Christy minstrels. That I doubt. And I feel pretty sure that there must be something about or in the fort that we are not wanted to see, I should not be at all surprised if there was a whole camp full of Persians inside with perhaps a Russian. The Naoshirwanis (natives) are an awfully surly lot; the other day, I and another fellow saw a group of men, among whom was a Christy minstrel, so we went up and began to talk, one of them could talk a little hindustani, so we got on fairly but they were very suspicious, they would answer questions as to whether there was any game in the country & &<sup>c</sup>, but we could not get out anything about the roads through the mountains, the fort, the number of minstrels, or anything else; and finally a man who we found out was a captain in the Cavalry came out and drove the men away from us, and as far as we could understand, slanged them for talking to us. One thing I will say for them, their cavalry is good. By that I mean the horses are by far the best I have ever seen in any native princes levies, and they are very fairly kept. So, when we came here, I had it circulated in the Bazaar that I would be glad

to look at horses, with a view to purchase. That from the Officer commanding a body of English Cavalry would in any other part of Baloochistan have brought out every decent horse within 50 miles. But here not a horse has been brought, though I am assured that there are hundreds of horses, and good ones too, in the country. As a matter of fact, I wanted to get horses brought up for one or two of the English Officers who say they want beasts, but the natives would not know that, and it would make no difference if they did. My Arabs are as fit as they can be. I forgot to thank you for your Christmas card which I got about a week ago, it is a very pretty one.

N<sup>o</sup> 6. Wáshuk. Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>. 1884.

Here we are on the move again in the direction of Punjgur. We left Khárán on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. On the 1<sup>st</sup> there was another big durbar and firing off of guns, and the settlement of the whole business was signed; after which we had some races, for the Baloochees' and mens' horses, and a rifle match, and in the evening Sandy gave us another dinner. Since then we have had some stiff marches. The first 16 miles, the next day 22, the next 14, the next 20 and the next 16; mostly over desert with nothing to be seen but big rolling sand hills, one exactly like the other. Of course a 20 mile march ought to be nothing to Cavalry, but our chief has ordered us to march with the infantry, and as ----- are particularly bad marchers, it is most wearisome going along at about 2 or 2½ miles an hour. Here is an enormous wood of Date Palms, the first thing in the way of trees that we have seen, I think, since we left Kutchee. There are also a few huts of the rudest description, and, what is of much more importance, a big spring of beautiful water, warm, but that does not matter much, this is the first decent water that we have had since the 23<sup>rd</sup> of last month. The water at Khárán was salt, and since leaving that place, we have had to drink water from fetid puddles. We were never able to get into the fort at Khárán, and for the last three or four days we were forbidden to go near it. I think it was weak of Sandeman to issue these orders whenever the Khan chose to ask for them. Azad said that the fort was merely his private residence, and that his women kind would not like strangers to come in. That, of course, is absurd on the face of it. Then the same excuse was made for preventing the men going near the Bazaar & talking to his men - that the women were afraid of being carried off. But I am quite sure there was some person or thing inside that fort, that we were not wanted to see. All the Naoshirwanis seemed very disinclined if not afraid to talk about the fort. One thing we did find out; that the fort is simply filled with loot from Maiwand, and that there is inside a powder and cartridge factory; and some of the natives told us that the colours of the 1<sup>st</sup> Grenadiers, lost at Maiwand are there. Things were made much easier than was expected for the politicals by the fact that Azad Khan has just had a quarrel with the Persians, and is now at deadly enmity with them. This was entirely unexpected. Some of our men swore that they managed to pump some of the Christy Minstrels, and got the news out of them, that there are some prisoners in the fort. This may be true, or may not. Of course Sandy ridicules the idea. I do not think it unlikely, for one reason, that the minstrels work by English words of command and will not say where they learnt them. The second march this side of Khárán, we saw a couple of men being buried who had been murdered the day before by ruffians, this shows what a jolly lot they must be among themselves, when we are not by. Old Azad Khan is coming along with us to Punjgur. He must be a wonderful old man to be able to travel on horseback at all, much less do 20 mile marches. Two days ago, when we came into camp, which was only a place where a little puddle of water had collected, we found the air darkened by millions of little ortolans that were drinking. We had some shots at them and got many at each shot, and very shortly had enough to fill a good sized hamper; and we have been revelling ever since in ortolan pie.

Nº 7 Shák bán. Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 1884

We stayed at Wâshuk three days and then went on to Punjgur. It would be no use my telling you all the crackjaw names of the places we went to on the way, as the names themselves do not represent anything in the shape of a village, but merely where you may, or may not as the case may be, get a little puddle of water by digging, or sometimes, Oh joy!, without digging. This is indeed a most desolate region\_ We did not see a living thing of any kind between Wâshuk and Punjgur\_ I do not think I am exaggerating in saying that you could not find an area of five square miles in England out of which you could not get more water than there is in the whole of this country from Nooshki in the north, down to the sea. The first day out of Wâshuk we marched fourteen miles and then found only a little drop of water. I wished to march my troop on at once to a place 9 miles further on where there was reported to be water, but our Chief said no. He said, the natives say there is lots of water here for digging and it is not politic to show the natives that it is difficult for us to march through their country whenever we wanted to. Well we dug and dug all day and did not get enough for the men, much less the horses, so at 8 at night, at my urgent request I was permitted to go on. So I went and came to where there was water, watered my animals, and then went on another 16 miles to the next place, where there was a good deal more water and got in about four in the morning doing about forty miles in twenty four hours. Of course this sort of work is very trying for the horses, especially as we sometimes get very cold nights. Indeed, with a keen north wind blowing a young dust storm all night, and the grain we get is scanty and bad, likewise the grass, which is nothing more than sticks cut from a sort of shrub which manages to grow on the hills. When one does reach the water, the chances are that it is full of nitre, salt, soda and other horrors, that nothing but a raging thirst will persuade a civilised horse to drink it; and as often as not there are the remains of a dead camel in it. At Punjgur, there was fortunately lots of good water. Punjgur is the name of the whole valley, a big flat valley into which runs a stream, and at the upper end are a succession of enormous date groves. Of course they take up the whole of the available water, so the stream is perfectly dry below them. A good many people live here, but there is hardly a permanent building of any sort. The people are quite content to live in the most primitive palm leaf huts. The actual village, where we are encamped, is called Miri Isai, and has an old dilapidated fort. At Punjgur we were met by one of the sons of the Khan of Kilat with a body of the Khans troops, and a band, I have heard some dreadful noises, but never anything to equal the Khan's band. The unfortunate bandsmen had to work pretty hard, as they have to play a tune every day at reveillé at dawn, then play for about half an hour at about 9. a.m. again in the evening and again at Tattoo: and whenever the young Khan leaves or enters his tent all the bandsmen rush out and play God save the Queen, or something which I am informed is meant for it. We stayed a good time at Punjgur, and left it yesterday, and halted for the night at a place called Shahbaz, where there is a well, and a tolerably strong fort, but with no one in it. I tell you the name, as perhaps it may be marked in a map, It is a most extraordinary thing that in this country, you often find two wells within ten yards of each other, one of them quite sweet, and the other as salt as you could make it. And in the water courses in the hills, one little pool will be salt, and another just below it quite sweet. I always fight shy of well water if I can, even if it is sweet; as in all likelihood the well was dug 100 years ago, and has never been cleaned out since, and there is seldom more than two feet of water on the top of the mud. Punjgur is a great place for dates which would be nice if they were properly dried, and for grey hounds which latter are very small, I got a puppy, but up to the present he has done nothing but bite me. We have eight more marches to Kej, and from there we go to Mumb on the Persian frontier, and from there to Gardar.

Tungsh, Jan. 30. I found that a post did not leave at all at Shahbaz, so continue my letter now, though I have little to tell, except that the roads seem to get more and more impracticable; and that we are beginning to run short of stores. We have come to the end of all things like butter and jam, but the things that are scarcest of all are matches. Duke, the political, has taken a lot of trouble to find out



what old Azad Khan of Kháráns age is, and he says that he must be 98 or thereabouts. That is a good age, is it not? And yet the old man came as far as Punjgur with us, and rode his horse the whole way, and always had his matchlock slung on his back. On the march, he caused about as much excitement in Punjgur as we did: it was quite a new thing for him to come to Punjgur disguised as a friend. The last time he raided that place was in 1877, and he has been playing the same old game for 70 years

N<sup>o</sup> 8\_ The Residency, Guardar, Feb<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 1884.

I forget where I was when I last wrote, I think it was at Kej well, from there we moved due west to Túmp, a large place where we halted two days, and then still went west till we got to the village of Mund; and then we turned South-east and came straight here. From Kej to Mund we were in a broad valley the whole time, the valley of the river Nehung, and without doubt, it is a long way the best bit of country we have passed through. There we quantities of small date groves, and plenty of jungle, just like India. We went within about seven miles of the Persian frontier, and I went up a high hill, and saw a good way into Persian Baloochistan. We had a great deal of difficulty in crossing the Dusht river about half way from Mund to Guardar. Of course just when we did not want it, the rain came down in torrents. We had to make a long march over "put"; that is, flat silt or clay, which is splendid stuff to walk on as a rule, but when rain comes, it gets like glass, and of course every one was slipping about in a frightful way. The camels fared worst, as their feet seem to be made for sliding. I had a very narrow squeak. My horse slipped, and before one could say Knife, down he came with a plump on his side, and my leg got crumpled up in a very peculiar way under him. In a hunting saddle, I think my leg must have been broken, but my wallet saved my leg. The wallet was smashed up and my leg went about three inches into the soft clay, and so I got off with only a stiff leg for a day or so. As it was, I fancy a clumsy horse would have broken my leg in struggling up again, But M<sup>r</sup> Aristocrat seemed to understand the situation entirely, and he lay perfectly quiet like a gentleman till a couple of men had shifted him over enough for me to get my leg from under him, and then, the moment I was clear of him, he was up upon his legs again. We were just in time to get across the river before the flood came down, as it was we had only about four feet of water to cross. I am the only one of the brave army left here. The other fellows went off some days ago, and I should have gone too, but Sandy had told the naval authorities that thirty chiefs &c were going with him, and at the last moment, the unfortunate captain found his ship invaded by 150 stinking Baloochees and about 100 horses. Sandeman would not have them turned out, so when 25 of my horses including my own had been embarked, I was ordered to remain with the rest, which I did not at all like you may be sure. I am living in the residency with Major Mockler, at present there is no resident, but Mockler was resident here for eight years, and it seems queer to him to be staying temporarily in his own old house. He knows more about the people and languages and customs of this part of the world than any other man, and as there was some very ticklish work to be done he was sent from Busrali, where he is at present the resident to meet Sandeman at Kej and advise him. He is an awfully good fellow, and a much cleverer and better man than Sandy.

N<sup>o</sup> 9. Jacobabad. April 14<sup>th</sup>

I am sorry not to have written sooner. After I wrote from Guardar I had a lot of trouble in embarking the horses from the beach in a very heavy surf, but accomplished it safely, and landed again at Karachi. After I reached this place I was very busy for some time, and then just as I began to get a little leisure, I got a touch of fever; but am all right again now, and as busy as ever, for Domville, our adjutant is away on leave and I have his duty to do in addition to my own.

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This completes the series of letters. M. E. S.

A series of letters from Lieutenant Ralph W. Sherard, 1<sup>st</sup> Sind Horse.