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REPORT

ON TWO EXPEDITIONS TO MIDIAN

BY

CAPTAIN R. F. BURTON.

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT.

The Alexandria Stationers' & Booksellers' Company Limited.

1886

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REPORT

ON TWO EXPEDITIONS TO MIDIAN

The following lines contain a concise account of the circumstances which, during the last three years, have connected me with the Egyptian province, El-Madyan.

H. H. Ismail I., honoured me, through Mr. Frederick Smart, with an invitation to visit Egypt, and to lay before him certain details which I had collected concerning mineral wealth in N. Western Arabia.

I left Trieste on March 3, 1877. A small expedition was at once prepared: it set out for El-Muwaylah on April 2; and returned to Suez on April 20. During those 18 days we found, by examining four sites, that the country had been extensively mined, while a larger area remained untouched. I brought home specimens of gold, silver, galena, zinc, copper, sulphur, iron and other metals. H. H. was much pleased and promised me, in presence of Mr. Smart and of other persons, either a concession or a royalty of 5 per cent, on gross produce.

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4 REPORT ON TWO EXPEDITIONS

Returning from the First Expedition I had the honour to recommend:

1. Mr. Charles Clarke (of Zagazig) for the rank of Bey.
2. Lt. Hasan Effendi Haris, and Lt. Amir Effendi Rushdi for a step in promotion.

I also solicited a small Life-pension for Haji Wali (El-Din) of Zagazig, who had drawn my attention to the mines of El-Madyan.

On October 9, 1877 I again left Trieste. After some delay at Cairo, the second Expedition set out from Suez on December 11; and returned on April 12th 1879. During this journey of 4 months, Mr. Marie, the Engineer sent by H. H., collected some 20 tons of specimens; and I was directed to have them assayed in London, while Mr. Smart was charged in my presence, with furnishing the necessary funds. The analysis was duly made and the printed report was forwarded to Egypt; but funds were not forthcoming, and the consequence was, that I was compelled to supply them.

Returning to Cairo I renewed my request touching the pension of Haji Wali: I again submitted for promotion the names of Mr Clarke and Lt. Amir Effendi Rushdi; and I added to them that of Ahmed Kaptan Musallam. Moreover for the better government of the province (El-Madyan) which is about to assume new relations with Egypt I had the honour to propose:

1. That Sayyid Abd el-Rahim, accountant of the Fort el-Muwaylah, be raised to the rank of Nâzir or Commandant.
2. That Mohammed Shahadeh, Ex-Wakil of El-Wijh be made Commandant of that Fort.
3. That some token of H. H.'s favour be conferred upon:

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TO MIDIAN

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Sheykh Alayan Bin Rabi of the Huwaytât tribe

- „ Furayj do:
„ Hasan ibn Salim El-Ukbi.

For the safety of Egypt and Europe I also recommended that the Quarantine Establishment be re-transferred from Tor harbour to El-Wijh.

Since leaving Cairo (May, 1878) I have repeatedly written concerning the administrative measures to be adopted before the country can be regularly exploited, but hitherto my representations have remained unnoticed.

I now return to the Mines.

The result of the assays made by three several establishments is so far encouraging that Dr. Percy, one of the highest authorities on metallurgy, declares: "These indications of the presence of the precious metals certainly justify further explorations."

Such exploration I am prepared to undertake.

I left Trieste on December 5, 1879 and came to Cairo ready for a Third Expedition. This time the conditions of exploitation are more favourable, as I have no longer to seek for the sites which are best fitted for beginning operations.

It is, however, evident that no Syndicate, no Company would risk capital upon a project, however promising, without the prospect of enjoying the fruits of success. Certain capitalists in London are willing to aid me, but it will be upon conditions that a formal contract or concession be granted to me.

The *Nouveau Règlement sur les mines de l'Empire Ottoman*, inserted into the Tanzimat (Constitution) and bearing date July 17, 1861, authorises this concession, and lays down all the legal conditions regarding royalty and other matters.

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An objection might be raised that the *Règlement* applies to subjects of the Porte. But, firstly there are precedents for extending the privilege to foreigners; for instance in the case of the minerals about Sidon. Secondly, this proviso, made for Turkey proper is not applicable to Egypt, where there are now International Tribunals. Disputed questions of royalty, jurisdiction &c. could be settled by arbitrators, the latter nominated in equal numbers by the Government and the Company.

The public will observe that I am not acting as one who seeks to receive favours from Egypt. On the contrary I propose to develop a province, which has been for centuries, and which still is, a howling wilderness, occupied by a few hundred Bedawin. I propose to benefit Suez and the adjacent parts of Egypt by creating an industry and a traffic where there is now nothing of the kind. Lastly, I propose adding to the resources of H. H.'s Government, by making over to it the legal share of whatever profits may accrue from the exploitation of El-Madyan.

Under these circumstances I have a claim to expect the realisation of a project whose views are of the most legitimate. And the first steps would be :

1st. A contract or concession drawn up in due form.

2nd. An authority to carry out the measures proposed for the Government of the Province; especially the rewards due to the military officers and the civilians who assisted in exploring El-Madyan.

Alexandria.

January 1, 1880.

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UPON

THE MINERALS OF MIDIAN,

BY

CAPTAIN RICHARD F. BURTON

ALEXANDRIA :

THE ALEXANDRIA STATIONERS' & BOOKSELLERS COY LD.

1880

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BY CAPT. RICHARD F. BURTON.

Second Edition. Demy 8vo, cloth, price 18s.

**THE GOLD-MINES OF MIDIAN
AND THE RUINED MIDIANITE CITIES.**

A FORTNIGHT'S TOUR IN NORTH-WESTERN ARABIA.

With Numerous Illustrations.

LONDON : C. KEGAN PAUL & Co., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

ALEXANDRIA. — FRENCH PRINTING-OFFICE A. MOUTÈS.

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THIS Report consists chiefly of the Preface to my second book, "The Land of Midian, Revisited". It is a plain unvarnished tale of the travel in North-Western Arabia, undertaken by the second Expedition, which, like the first (1877), owes all to the liberality and the foresight of his Highness Ismail I., Khediv of Egypt. During the four months between December 19, 1877, and April 20, 1878, the officers employed covered some 2500 miles by sea and land, of which 600, not including by-paths, were mapped and planned; and we brought back details of an old-new land which the civilized world had clean forgotten.

The public will now understand that one and the same subject has not given rise to two books. I have to acknowledge with gratitude the many able and kindly notices by the Press of my first volume ("The Gold-Mines of Midian," etc.) But some reviewers succeeded in completely misunderstanding

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the drift of that *avant courier*. It was an introduction intended to serve as a base for the present more extensive work; and,—foundations intended to bear weight must be solid. Its object was to place before the reader the broad outlines of a country whose name was known to "every schoolboy," whilst it was a *vox et præterea nihil*, even to the learned, before the spring of 1877.

The purpose of the last Expedition was to conclude the labours begun, during the spring of 1877, in a mining-country unknown, or rather, fallen into oblivion. Hence its primary "objective" was mineralogical. The twenty-five tons of specimens, brought back to Cairo, were inspected by good judges from South Africa, Australia, and California: all recognized familiar metalliferous rocks. The collection enabled me to distribute the mining industry into two great branches — (1) the rich silicates and carbonates of copper smelted by the Ancients in North Midian; and (2) the auriferous veins worked, but not worked out, by comparatively modern races in South Midian, the region lying below the parallel of El-Muwaylah. It is, indeed, still my conviction that "tailings" have been washed for gold, even by men still living. We also brought notices and specimens of three several deposits of sulphur; of a turquoise-mine behind Zibà; of salt and saltpetre, and of vast deposits of gypsum. These are sources

of wealth which the nineteenth century is not likely to leave wasted and unworked.

In geography the principal novelties are the identification of certain ruined cities mentioned by Ptolemy, and the "Harras" or plutonic centres scattered over the seaboard and the interior. There is little doubt that when properly examined they will prove metalliferous. The first Expedition brought back a lump of porous basalt threaded by a single vein of "electron" — gold and silver mixed.

Some of the principal sites were astronomically determined by Commanders Ahmed Musallam and Násir Ahmed, of the Egyptian navy. The task of mapping and planning was committed to the two young Staff-lieutenants sent for that purpose. With the able assistance of Mr. William J. Turner, of the Royal Geographical Society, who found the work harder than he expected, their sketches have been reduced to tolerable shape. Still, the map is purely provisional; and, when mining operations shall begin, a far more careful survey will be required.

As regards archæology, the second Expedition visited, described, and surveyed eighteen ruins of cities and towns, some of considerable extent, in North Midian, besides seeing or hearing of some twenty large *Mashghal*, apparently the *ateliers* of vagrant Gypsy-like gangs. This total of thirty-eight is not far short of the forty traditional Midianite

settlements preserved by the mediæval Arab geographers.

My private collection of mineralogical specimens was deposited with Professor M. H. N. Story-Maskelyne. The spirit-specimens of zoology filled three large canisters: and the British Museum also received a hare and five birds (Mr. R. B. Sharpe); four bats (*Rhinopoma*) and a mouse; six reptiles, five fishes, thirty-five crustaceans, and about the same number of insects; five scorpions, six leeches, sixty molluscs, four echinoderms, and three sponges. Dr. A. Günther determined and named two new species of reptiles. Mr. Frederick Smith took charge of the insects. Mr. Edward J. Miers, F.L.S., etc., described the small collection of crustaceæ (*Annals and Magazine of Natural History* for November, 1878). Finally, Mr. Edgar A. Smith examined and named the shells collected on the shores of the 'Akabah Gulf and the north-eastern recess of the Red Sea.

The main interest of the little *hortus siccus* was the Alpine Flora, gathered at an altitude of five thousand feet above sea-level. The plants were offered to Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, of Kew; and Professor D. Oliver, of the Herbarium, has kindly furnished me with a list of the names. Mr. William Carruthers and his staff also examined the spirit-specimens of fleshy plants.

Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole, Keeper of Coins and Medals, and Mr. Barclay V. Head were good enough to compare with their rich collections the coins of ancient Midian found, for the first time, at Maghàir Shu'ayb. My collection dates from between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D.; this can be gathered from comparison with the coins of Alexander Jannæus and his successor, Alexander II. The tetradrachm may belong to the reign of Alexander the Great, or the ages preceding it.

Finally, the skulls and fragments of skulls from Midian were submitted to Professor Richard Owen, the Superintendent of Natural History. The whole was carefully described by Dr. C. Carter Blake, Ph. D., before the *séance* of the Anthropological Institute of London, December 10, 1878.

The tons of specimens brought to Cairo were, I have said, publicly exhibited there, and created much interest. But the discovery of a mining-country, some three hundred miles long, once immensely wealthy, and ready to become wealthy once more, is not likely to be accepted by every one. Jealous and obstructive officials "did not think much of it." Rivals opposed it with even less ceremony. A mild "ring" in Egypt attempted in vain to run the Hâmâmât and Dâr-For mines against Midian. Consequently the local Press was dosed with rumours,

which, retailed by the home papers, made the latter rife in contradictory reports. To quote one case only. The turquoise-gangue from Zibà was pronounced, by the Citadel, Cairo, to be carbonate of copper, because rich silicates of that metal abounded. No one seemed to know that the fine turquoises of Midian have been sold for years at Suez, and even at Cairo.

There was, indeed, much to criticise in the collection, which had been made with a marvellous carelessness. But we must not be hard upon M. Marie. He is an engineer, ignorant of mineralogy and of assaying: he was told off to do the duty, and he did it as well as he could. He neglected to search for alluvial gold in the sands. Every Wady which cuts, at right angles, the metalliferous maritime chains, should have been carefully prospected; these sandy and quartzose beds are natural conduits and sluice-boxes. But the search for "tailings" is completely different from that of gold-veins, and requires especial practice. The process, indeed, may be called purely empirical; it is not taught in Jernyn Street, nor by the *École des Mines*. In this matter theory must bow to "rule of thumb:" the caprices of alluvium are various and curious enough to baffle every attempt at scientific induction. Thus the "habits" of the metal, so to speak, must be studied by experiment with patient labour;

the most accomplished mineralogist may pass over rich alluvium without recognizing its presence, where the rude prospector of California and Australia will find an abundance of stream-gold. Evidently the proportion of "tailings" must carefully be laid down before companies are justified in undertaking the expensive operation of quartz-crushing. Hence M. Tiburce Morisot, a practical digger from South Africa, found a fair opportunity of proposing to his Highness the Khediv (October, 1878) a third Expedition in search of sand-gold.

The samples brought to England, by order of his Highness the Khediv, were carefully assayed. The largest collection was submitted to Dr. John Percy, F. R. S. Smaller items were sent to the well-known houses, Messrs. Johnston and Matthey, of Hatton Garden, and Messrs. Edgar Jackson and Co., Associates of the Royal School of Mines (fourteen samples). Finally, special observations were made by Mr. John L. Jenken, of Carrington, through Mr. J. H. Murchison, of "British Lead Mines," etc., etc., etc., by Lieut.-Colonel Ross, the distinguished author of "Pyrology;" and by Lieut.-Colonel Bolton, who kindly compared the rocks with those in his cabinet.

The following is the text of Dr. Percy's report:—

Metallurgical Laboratory, Royal School of Mines,
Jernyn Street, London, Dec. 13, 1878.

DEAR SIR,

I now send the results of the analytical examination of the specimens which you submitted to me for that purpose. The examination has been conducted with the greatest care, in the metallurgical laboratory of the Royal School of Mines, by Mr. Richard Smith, who, for the last thirty years, has been constantly engaged in such work; and in whose accuracy I have absolute confidence. It is impossible that any one should have taken greater interest in, or have devoted himself with greater earnestness to, the investigation. I have almost entirely confined myself to a statement of facts, as I understand that was all you required for the guidance of his Highness the Khediv.

SECTION I.

Examination of the mineral specimens contained in the boxes marked as under.

(An average representative sample of each specimen, of about six pounds in weight, was prepared for examination from portions broken off, or other-wise taken, by Mr. Richard Smith at the Victoria Docks.)

No. 1. "Box 22," Quartz from *Mughnah* (Maknà). Quartz coloured black and red-brown with oxides of iron. These were of two varieties, marked 22a and 22b respectively.

No. 2. The magnetic ironstone (22a) was examined and found to contain of—

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) . . .	85.29
Protoxide " " . . .	9.83
Silica (quartz) " " . . .	3.28

The oxides of iron together contain of metallic iron 66.8 per cent.

No. 3. The micaceous ironstone (22b) was examined and found to contain of—

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) . . .	91.0
Silica	5.52

The peroxide of iron contains of metallic iron 63.7 per cent.

No. 4. "Box No. 14," Quartz from *Mughnah*, gave no results.

No. 5. "Box No. 27," Iron from *Mughnah*, proved to be hematite (which is magnetic), with some red-brown oxide of iron and quartz. It was found to contain of—

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) . . .	75.46
Protoxide " " . . .	4.69

The oxides of iron together contain of metallic iron 56.4 per cent.

No. 6. "Box No. 7," Conglomerate from *Mughnah*, yielded no results.

No. 7. "Box No. 25," Quartz from *Mughnah*. This quartz, veined and coloured black and red-brown with oxides of iron, was assayed with the following results:—

Gold and Silver	None.
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Messrs. Edgar Jackson found in the same box:—

Silver (per statute ton) . . .	2 oz. 17 dwts. 11 grs.
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Nos. 8. and 9. "Boxes Nos. 50 and 37," Quartz and red dust from *Mughnah*, yielded no results. "Box No. 37" yielded (Jackson) silver, 13 dwts. 1.6 grs.

No. 10. "Box No. 37a," Sulphur from *Mughnah*. Lumps of sulphur, crystallized and massive, irregularly distributed through a white, dull, porous rock. The latter was examined and found to be hydrated sulphate of lime (gypsum), with a small quantity of magnesia; some of the lumps of rock were coloured with oxides of iron, and others intermixed with sand.

Nos. 11. and 12. "Boxes Nos. 3 and 6," Black quartz and white quartz from the *Jebel el-Abyaz*, gave no results except a small portion of copper pyrites in a lump of quartz (Box No. 6).

No. 13. "Box No. 47," Quartz from *El-Wedge* (El-Wijh), gave only oxide of iron. "Box No. 47" yielded (Jackson) 12 dwts., 1.6 grs.

No. 14. "Box No. 5," Red quartz from *El-Wedge*, a quartz with red brown oxide of iron and earthy substances, was assayed with the following results:—

Gold (per statute ton = 3240 lbs. . .	2 dwts. 15 grs.
Silver	Traces.

No. 15. "Box No. 16," Mica schist from *El-Wedge*. This mica-schist undergoing decomposition from weathering action, mixed with small lumps of quartz, was assayed with the following results:—

Gold (per statute ton)	6 grains.
Silver	Traces.

No. 16. "Box No. 32," White quartz from *El-Wedge*. This

quartz coloured with red-brown oxide of iron, mixed with mica-schist, was assayed with the following results:—

Gold (per statute ton) 3 dwts. 22 grs.
Silver Traces.

No. 17. "Box No. 48," * *Red sulphur from Sharm Yaharr*, was found to have the following composition, while it was free from "native sulphur":—

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) 44.36
Sand, clay, carbonates and sulphates of lime
and magnesia 14.90
Salts soluble in water, chiefly alkaline
chlorides and chlorites, and sulphates of
lime and magnesia. 29.70
Water. 11.40

100.00

No. 18. "Box No. 48a," *Gypsum from Sharm Yaharr*. Partly semi-transparent and granular, and partly dull white and opaque. It was found to be hydrated sulphate of lime, or gypsum, with carbonate of lime, and some sand, magnesia, and chloride of sodium.

No. 19. "Box No. 35," *Dust and stones from Sharmâ*, yielded no results.

SECTION 2.

Examination of the mineral specimens contained in a box sent from Egypt. As the specimens were unlabelled, they were marked A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I, respectively.

No. 21. A. "Copper ore." A fair average specimen was prepared for examination from the several lumps of ore and marked a.

a. It was submitted to analysis, and found to contain carbonates of lime and magnesia; silica, alumina, and oxides of iron; and of—

Copper (metallic) 5.72 per cent.

b. A portion of the copper mineral, from which the rock or vein-stuff had been detached as far as practicable, was found to consist of impure hydrated silicate of copper (bluish-green chrysocolla) and carbonate of copper. It was assayed and found to contain of—

* In boxes Nos. 48 and 51 Mr. Jenken found silver 2 ozs 13 dwts. 8 grs.; and 4 oz. 5 dwts. 1½ grs.

Copper (metallic) 23.14 per cent.

No. 22. "B." A lump of soft, ochrey red-brown ironstone, coated with a thin layer of greyish white substance. A fair average sample, inclusive of this external layer, was prepared for examination, and was found to consist of—

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) 81.14
Water 11.50
Silica 3.07
Sulphuric acid, lime, magnesia, alumina. 4.29

100.00

The peroxide of iron contains 56.8 per cent. of metallic iron. The greyish white substance was found to consist of silica, alumina, sulphate of lime, and a little oxide of iron and magnesia

No. 23. "C." Lump of red ironstone associated with sand and earthy substances, containing

Peroxide of iron (per cent.) 68.00
Water " " 1.93
Silica and Sand 18.17
Lime, magnesia (in small quantity), alumina
carbonic acid, sulphuric acid (traces) 11.81

100.00

The peroxide of iron contains 47.66 of metallic iron.

No. 24. "D." Lump of white quartz said to contain visible gold. I did not observe any, but found a few minute specks of pyrites, and partially resembling mica.

No. 25. Lump of quartz associated with red-brown oxide of iron. It yielded no results.

No. 26. Lump of rock in which the "turquoise" occurs. There was a thin layer of greenish blue turquoise mineral on one surface, and minute seams of a similar substance throughout the specimen.

a. The layer of turquoise mineral, from which the rock or vein-stuff had been detached as far as practicable, was found to contain phosphoric acid, alumina, oxide of copper, oxide of iron, and water; which occur in turquoise.

b. After the layer a had been separated, a fair average sample of the rock was found to contain 1.69 per cent. of metallic copper. It was also assayed and found to be free from silver and gold. In a fragment of similar "turquoise rock," from the same site (*Zibâ*), Dr. L. Karl Moser, of Trieste, found silver.

No. 27. "G." A variety of jasper, having a somewhat polished, and irregular and deeply indented surface, the result of sand-action. The fractured surface was red, with patches of yellow. It was found to consist chiefly of silica, coloured with oxides of iron.

No. 28. "H." Lump of "sard," of a pale-red flesh colour. A variety of chalcedony. It was found to consist almost entirely of silica. In a fragment of similar chalcedony, from the same site (Abâ'I-Marû), Dr. Moser found specks of "free gold."

No. 29. "I." Lumps of pure ironstone

A small lump of metal, supposed to contain antimony and platinum, was brought for examination by Captain R. F. Burton. It was submitted to analysis, and found to be iron and combined carbon, or white cast-iron, containing small quantities of lead, copper, and silver, and free from antimony, platinum, and gold. It is evidently the product of a fusion operation. A few "shots" of lead were attached to the surface of the metal. In "box No. 4" Messrs. Jackson found rough crystals of corundum; and a qualitative analysis of this sample and "box No. 7" yielded quartz, carbonate of lime, alumina, and oxide of iron.

Dr. Percy concludes the assays in these words:—

Three of the specimens (Nos. 14, 15, and 16) from the same locality contain gold. The amount of gold, however, is small. I consider these indications of the presence of the precious metal not altogether unsatisfactory; and certainly to justify further exploration. My conviction is, that the ancients were adepts in the art of extracting gold, and that, owing to the small value of human labour, they could get out as much of the metal as could now be done. They knew perfectly what was worth working and what was not; and I think it likely that what you have brought home, had been rejected by the ancients as unworkable."

* The italics are mine. Mr. Mathey remarks of the specimen containing 48 grains of gold per ton, "It would be worthless in its present condition; if, however, it could be enriched by proper washing and

Further search may lead to the discovery of workable stuff; but would doubtless require a good deal of time, unless lucky accident should intervene.

The specimens Nos. 2, 3, 5, 22, and 23 contain sufficient iron to render them available as iron ores, provided they occur in large quantity. The copper present in No. 21a is too small in amount to render it available as a source of that metal. † If it is practicable on a large scale, by hand-labour or other means, to separate the "copper mineral" (as in b), it would be sufficiently rich in copper, provided the cost of the transit were not too great.

The specimen No. 17 is only of scientific interest, as it gives off an acid vapour when heated; and this substance may have been used by the ancients in the separation of silver from gold by the process termed "cementation".

I remain, dear Sir, yours very truly,

(Signed) JOHN PERCY, M.D., F.R.S.

Lecturer on Metallurgy at the Royal School of Mines, London.
Capt. R. F. Burton, etc.

Upon this cautious and conscientious report I would offer the following observations. We, who have travelled through a country like Midian, finding everywhere extensive works for metallurgy; barrages and aqueducts, cisterns and tanks; furnaces, fire-bricks, and scoræ; open mines, and huge scatters of spalled quartz, with the remains of some eighteen cities and towns which apparently fell to ruin with the industry that founded and fed them;

dressing, and the cost in labour, etc., be not too great, it might be made to give fair returns."

† Analyses of copper ore from Midian at the Citadel, Cairo, gave in certain cases forty per cent.

— we, I say, cannot but form a different and a far higher idea of its mineral capabilities than those who determine them by the simple inspection of a few specimens. The learned Dr. Percy at once hits the mark when he surmises that worthless samples were brought home; and this would necessarily occur when no metallurgist, no practical prospector, was present with the Expedition.

I therefore expect that future exploration will develop Midian as it has done India. The quartzose outcrop called the "Wynaad reef" (Madras Presidency) produced only a few poor pennyweights per ton, two and seven being the extremes, while much of it was practically unproductive. Presently, in February, 1878, the district was visited by Sir Andrew Clarke, of Australian experience, member of the Viceregal Council. He invited Mr. Brough Smyth, of Victoria, to explore and test the capabilities of the country; and that eminent practical engineer discovered, in an area of twenty-five by thirteen miles, ninety outcrops, some yielding they say, two hundred ounces per ton of gold, fine and coarse, "with jagged pieces as large as peas." And British India now hopes to draw her gold coinage from Wynaad.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

SHEPHEARD'S, CAIRO,

January 30, 1880.

W H O U

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CORRESPONDENCE

70974

WITH HIS EXCELLENCY RIAZ PASHA

UPON

THE MINES OF MIDIAN

(RICHARD F. BURTON).

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT.

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1880

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— 4 —

This letter produced the following reply : —

(Copy).
Présidence
du Conseil des Ministres.
No 54.

Le Caire, 13 Janvier 1880.

MONSIEUR,

J'ai soumis à l'appréciation du Conseil des Ministres la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date du 5 Janvier courant, et par laquelle vous me demandez : 1° L'autorisation de former un Syndicat ou une Compagnie pour exploiter à ses frais les mines du Midian : 2° un contrat ou une concession selon les Tanzimat.

Le Conseil n'a pas cru pouvoir se prononcer sur votre demande, sans avoir au préalable des données plus précises; il m'a chargé de vous demander de spécifier les mines à exploiter, de présenter une carte indiquant avec toute la précision voulue, les parties de la contrée de Midian qui feraient l'objet de la concession, et d'indiquer au sujet du mode (*sic*) d'exploitation tous les détails qu'il vous est possible de donner dès à présent.

Dès que vous m'aurez fourni les indications et la carte dont il s'agit, je m'empresserai de les soumettre à l'étude du Conseil.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

Signé: Le Président du Conseil des Ministres,

RIAZ.

Monsieur R. F. BURTON,
Hotel Sheppard, Caire.

The following was (N° 1), letter addressed to the President of the Conseil des Ministres, H. E. Riaz-Pasha.

Sheppard, ce 5 Janvier 1880.

EXCELLENCE,

J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser cette requête pour qu'elle soit présentée par l'entremise de V. E. à la haute appréciation de S. A. le Khédive.

Étant l'explorateur de certaines mines dans la Province « El-Madyan » ou Midian; c'est-à-dire le nord-ouest de l'Arabie appartenant à l'Égypte, et protégée par des garnisons Égyptiennes.

Je prie S. A. : 1° De m'accorder un firman autorisant l'installation d'un Syndicat ou d'une Compagnie anonyme (Code de commerce, art. 46.) pour exploiter le dit pays à ses propres dépenses, sans aucun aide de l'Égypte sauf l'appui moral du Gouvernement.

2° De m'accorder un contrat ou une concession selon les Tanzimat, chapitre Ma'adin (titre 1 à 14), où les conditions de l'exploitation sont définies par cette loi.

Le contrat se dresserait et la Compagnie relèverait selon les réglemens de la Réforme, c'est-à-dire les Tribunaux Égyptiens internationaux.

Je prie donc V. E. de vouloir bien activer cette affaire afin qu'un temps précieux ne soit pas perdu.

Veuillez agréer, Excellence, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

S. E. RIAZ-PACHA, etc. etc.

Thereupon I answered as follows (N° 2).

Shepherd, le 14 Janvier 1880.

EXCELLENCE,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre officielle, (N° 54) datée du 13 Janvier 1880.

Cette lettre me demande des données plus précises sur les lieux et les limites du pays, où j'ai l'intention de commencer l'exploitation des mines.

La carte ci-jointe démontre que la terre de Madyan, appartenant à l'Égypte, commence au nord à la forteresse d'Akabah (latitude 29° 30') et finit au Wady Hamz, au sud d'El-Wijh (latitude 25° 45').

Je compte commencer mes fouilles à Makna, petit port dans le golfe d'Akabah, où le minerai se montre principalement sous forme d'argent. La concession donnerait les terres incluses entre les parallèles de latitude 28° 10' et 28° 30'; c'est-à-dire vingt (20) milles géographiques du nord au sud. La largeur s'étendrait entre la gorge d'Akabah à l'Est, et la frontière turque à l'Ouest, celle-ci habitée par les Bedouins Beni-Maa'zet, et dépendant de la Vilayet de Sham (la Syrie).

Après cette reconnaissance je me transporterai à El-Wijh jadis centre de quarantaine. Ce sont les anciennes mines d'or, travaillées par des peuplades qui n'existent plus. La concession serait limitée au sud, par la parallèle de latitude 26°, et s'étendrait jusqu'à 26° 40', ou quarante (40) milles géographiques du Nord au Sud, à l'Ouest ayant pour limites des tribues de Bedouins dépendants de la Vilayet du Hedjaz.

J'ajoute une carte géographique dans laquelle les limites sont tracées avec l'encre rouge, une brochure sur les minerais du Madyan; et un compte-rendu des deux explora-

tions conduites par moi sous les auspices de S. A. le Khédive Ismail I^{er}.

J'ai l'honneur encore une fois de prier Votre Excellence de bien vouloir pousser cette affaire, afin qu'un temps précieux ne soit pas perdu; et de me signer

Votre très-obéissant,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

S. E. RIAZ-PACHA, etc. etc.

The following is the reply to my answer.

Le Caire, 1^{er} Février 1880.

MONSIEUR,

J'ai soumis au Conseil des Ministres la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date du 14 Janvier 1880, ainsi que les documents y annexés, relatifs à votre demande, tendant à obtenir une concession de la part du Gouvernement pour l'exploitation des mines du Midian.

J'ai le regret de vous informer, Monsieur, que le Conseil des Ministres, après avoir mûrement étudié la question, n'a pas cru pouvoir, pour des considérations d'ordre supérieur, vous accorder la concession demandée.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération bien distinguée.

Signé: Le Président du Conseil des Ministres.

RIAZ.

A Monsieur R. BURTON,

Hotel Shepherd, Caire

(N° 3.).

Receiving this request I addressed to the Conseil des Ministres an official letter (N° 3); and a demi-official (*officieuse*) to the President H. E. Riaz-Pasha.

Shepherd Caire, le 2 Février 1880.

EXCELLENCE,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre officielle du 1^{er} Février 1880. Cette dépêche m'annonce, sans aucune explication, que le Conseil des Ministres n'a pas cru pouvoir, pour des considérations d'ordre supérieur, m'accorder la concession demandée.

Permettez-moi d'exprimer mon regret sur ce que le Conseil des Ministres, avant de décider une affaire qui lèse gravement les intérêts d'un sujet d'une Puissance amie, n'ait pas jugé convenable de me consulter personnellement sur l'objet de mes études spéciales.

Je regrette aussi de n'avoir pas présenté la question avec plus de détails sur l'origine de ma demande.

Votre Excellence ne doit pas ignorer que j'avais avec S. A. le Khédive Ismail I^{er}, un engagement qui peut s'appeler un contrat. Envoyé par Son Altesse et avec permission de mon Gouvernement je fis deux voyages dans l'Arabie Égyptienne, sous la promesse formelle d'une concession ou de 5% sur les produits bruts. J'y ai travaillé pendant trois ans, et j'ai contribué pour une assez forte somme aux dépenses: même je dois encore payer pour les analyses commandées par Son Altesse.

Ces circonstances étant données, vous comprenez, Excellence, que je me trouve embarrassé par la réponse que je viens de recevoir. Je ne comprends pas quel peut être l'ordre supérieur ignoré par S. A. Ismail I^{er}. Si ces motifs avaient

existé du temps de ce Prince, il ne m'aurait pas confié une pareille mission.

En répétant ma demande, j'espère que mes efforts auront pour résultat le bien de l'Égypte; et je suis convaincu qu'ils ne peuvent en aucune manière lui faire du tort. Ma carrière de 38 ans au service de l'Angleterre, dont je n'ai pas quitté l'emploi, doit inspirer un peu de confiance, et doit prouver que mes vœux sont parfaitement légitimes. Enfin ma position d'officier anglais, et ma réputation en Europe, sont assez connues, pour ne pas souffrir, même quand j'aspire à une concession en Égypte.

J'espère donc, que Votre Excellence voudra bien examiner de nouveau la question, et que le Conseil des Ministres m'accordera ma juste demande.

Veillez agréer, Excellence, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

S. E. RIAZ-PACHA, etc. etc.

The following is the instance, a demi-official (*officieuse*) addressed to the President.

Shepherd, le 3 Février 1880.

MON CHER PACHA,

Sachant que vous n'avez guère le temps de recevoir des visites personnelles, j'ai cru pouvoir vous adresser cette lettre.

En réfléchissant sur les considérations d'ordre supérieur, il me paraît que ces considérations se rapporteraient ou à la nationalité du Madyan, ou à l'existence d'une frontière précise, ou peut-être à ma sécurité personnelle.

J'ai déjà prouvé en trois volumes: —

1° Que la Province maritime, proprement dite El-Madyan, appartient à l'Égypte, dont le Gouvernement paie le Mora-

tibat (salaire) à une demie douzaine de Sheiks, et possède cinq ports, à El-Akabah, El-Muahylat, Ziba et deux à El-Wijh. La dernière est occupée par 13 soldats commandés par un officier de la ligne. Comme preuve concluente de l'autorité du Gouvernement Égyptien sur ces contrées et ses habitants, j'appellerai à Son Excellence que Mohammed Afmân, Sheik des Baliyy, a été emprisonné dans la Citadelle du Caire, par ordre de S. A. l'ex-Khédive.

2° Que selon l'usage des Bédouins, la frontière entre l'Égypte et le Sham (Syrie), c'est-à-dire la Turquie, est tracée de la manière la plus exacte. Ceux qui en doutent, ignorent les mœurs de ces peuplades.

3° Que les mines où je me propose de commencer l'exploitation, sont distantes au moins de 4 heures de marche, ou 20 kilomètres, du grand chemin des pèlerins. Ces caravanes n'auraient pas même occasion de nous voir.

4° Que les Bédouins dépendants de l'Égypte, surtout les Baliyy occupant tous les alentours d'El-Wijh, sont doux et paisibles; qu'en payant les Sheiks et en louant leurs chameaux, les mineurs ne courraient aucun danger; et qu'une garde d'*Onbashi* (sergents), me serait suffisante comme appui moral.

Veillez, Excellence, me faire connaître la loi minière de l'Égypte. J'ai toujours pensé que les Tanzimats étaient promulgués pour toute l'étendue de l'Empire Ottoman.

Pourtant ma demande, faite selon cette constitution, qui me donne certains droits d'explorateur de mines, n'a pas été reçue, et par conséquent, ces Tanzimats paraissent ne pas être appliquées en Égypte.

Veillez agréer, Excellence, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

S. E. RIAZ-PACHA, etc. etc.

The following is the result.

*Présidence
du Conseil des Ministres.*
No 73.

Le Caire, 9 Février 1880.

MONSIEUR,

J'ai communiqué au Conseil des Ministres les deux lettres que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date des 2 et 3 Février courant, au sujet des mines de Midian.

Malgré les nouvelles explications contenues dans ces lettres, le Conseil a maintenu sa précédente décision.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

Signé : Le Président du Conseil des Ministres,
RIAZ.

Monsieur RICHARD BURTON,
Hotel Shephard, Caire.

Follows the reply (N° 4).

Shephard Caire 14 Février 1880.

EXCELLENCE.

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre officielle (N° 73) du 9 Février courant. Elle m'apprend que, malgré les nouvelles explications très-suffisantes contenues dans mes lettres du 2 et du 3 Février courant, le Conseil a cru maintenir sa précédente décision.

J'ai l'honneur de transmettre la copie d'une lettre de S. A. le Khédive Ismail I^{er}; et je prie Votre Excellence de vouloir bien me communiquer comment le Gouvernement actuel entend maintenir les engagements de ce Prince et de son Gouvernement.

Veillez agréer, Excellence, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

(Copy).

MON CHER MONSIEUR BURTON.

En réponse aux lettres que vous m'avez adressées, en date du 25 Avril et du 8 de ce mois, relativement aux analyses à faire en Égypte et en Europe, des minerais que vous avez apportés de la Province de Midian, je me fais un plaisir de vous informer que je donne mon approbation à vos propositions.

En conséquence, je donnerai les ordres nécessaires pour qu'une commission, présidée par Gastinel-Bey, procède aux analyses des spécimens que vous lui remettrez. Cette commission, selon votre désir, sera composée de M. M. GEORGE Marie, GARWOOD, et d'un officier qui sera désigné par le général STONE.

En ce qui concerne les analyses à faire en Europe, vous vous chargerez vous-même du soin de les faire en Angleterre, et vous prierez M. Ferdinand de LESSEPS d'y faire procéder en France. Dès que les analyses seront terminées, vous me transmettez le rapport officiel signé par vous et par les personnes qui auront fait les analyses.

Je vous autorise également à prendre M. CLARKE, en qualité de secrétaire, et chargé d'accompagner et signer l'embarquement et le débarquement des caisses renfermant les spécimens destinés aux analyses.

Je chargerai M. Frédéric SMART de payer à M. CLARKE, son passage pour l'Angleterre et le retour, et les appointements qu'il a comme employé du Gouvernement Égyptien, pendant son absence qui ne doit pas dépasser trois mois. M. SMART avancera également les sommes nécessaires, tant pour le transport des échantillons, que pour les frais des analyses.

Il est bien entendu, que si plus tard une Compagnie se constitue pour l'exploitation des gisements miniers, de la

Province de Midian, tous les frais dont il est question ci-dessous, ainsi que ceux des deux explorations faites par vous seront remboursés par cette Compagnie à mon Gouvernement.

Croyez, mon cher Monsieur BURTON, à l'expression de ma sincère amitié.

Signé : ISMAIL.

Palais d'Abdin le 9 Mai 1870.

This following answer was sent after considerable delay.

*Présidence
du Conseil des Ministres.*
No 83.

Le Caire, le 25 Février 1880.

MONSIEUR,

En réponse à la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date du 14 Février courant, et dans laquelle vous m'entretenez de nouveau des mines de Midian, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir qu'il me paraît inutile de continuer la correspondance, ou de saisir de nouveau le Conseil des Ministres d'une question qui a fait deux fois l'objet de ses discussions et de ses décisions, dans le sens que je vous ai communiqué par mes deux dernières lettres.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de ma considération très-distinguée.

Signé : Le Président du Conseil des Ministres,
RIAZ.

Monsieur RICHARD BURTON,
Hotel Shephard, Caire.

Not considering this communication a reply, because it does not attempt to answer my letter, I addressed H. E. as follows, and again put my question in the plainest possible form.

Shepherd Cairo, 27 Février 1880.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

A l'égard de la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser le 25 Février, j'ai l'honneur d'observer que :

1° Je n'ai rien à soumettre au Conseil des Ministres.

2° J'ai posé devant votre Excellence une question nette, c'est-à-dire comment le Gouvernement actuel entend maintenir les engagements formels pris par le Gouvernement précédent.

C'est à cette question, que je prie Votre Excellence de vouloir bien répondre.

Veuillez agréer, Excellence. l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

S. E. RIAZ-PACHA, etc. etc.

CONCLUSION

Comment upon this correspondence is unnecessary. No notice was taken of my last letter. The position in which the present Ministry stands towards myself and its obstinate rejection of every legal claim is made glaringly obvious, by the silence of H. E. Riaz-Pasha, to every honest mind.

This action of the Conseil des Ministres and its President shows the less wisdom as gold is being discovered in the Southern prolongation of the Midian Chain.

On the Jebel el-Zuhlah behind Yambo, the Port of Medinah a stone has been found yielding per 1000 ok (= 1.25 ton.) :—

Copper 1 lb. 2 oz. 12 dwts.

Silver 1 » 9 » 10 »

Gold (nearly) 5 »

Specimens have been brought from the hill country behind Jeddah, the port of Meccah, yielding gold. I am also informed that the quartz rock near Mocha has been pronounced auriferous.

Are Egypt and Turkey so affluent that they can afford to neglect these sources of income?

RICHARD F. BURTON.