

## SECTION III—VISIT TO MIĀNWĀLĪ AND START FOR PERSIAN MAKRĀN

On December 20th a motor drive of some 73 miles carried us first along the river to Khushāb and then along the northern edge of the Thal to Miānwālī, the head-quarters of the district of the same name that stretches from the western extremity of the Salt Range down the left bank of the Indus. The ground intervening between the latter and the lower course of the Jhēlum is extremely arid. The consequent difficulty about water, obtainable only at rare intervals from deep wells, must have at all times militated against the use of the route from here across the Thal, whether by armies or for purposes of trade. Otherwise the route leading down the valley of the Kurram to Īsa Khēl on the Indus and thence via Miānwālī to Khushāb would offer a convenient line of access for invasion from the Afghān uplands to the central portion of the northern Panjāb. This explains why all inroads from those uplands, since those of Maḥmūd of Ghazna down to the Durānī invasion, were made across the otherwise more difficult ground of the Salt Range.

I had wished to reach Miānwālī without more delay, partly in order to collect there information about sites in the now semi-desertic tracts of the Thal down the Indus, which might possibly offer traces of occupation in prehistoric times, and partly in order to be on a main line of railway communication to Karachi in case news were received permitting an early start on our expedition into Persian Makrān. The two days after our arrival at Miānwālī were busily occupied in gathering information about old mounds in the district. These inquiries were much facilitated by the kind help of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. J. Read, I.C.S. Their result clearly indicated that mounds of probable antiquity in this as yet archaeologically unsurveyed district were more numerous than the limited area of its present cultivable ground might have suggested.

Then on December 23rd I paid a visit to Rōkhrī, a village situated 6 miles to the north on a side bed of the Indus, which carries water at the time of the summer floods. Here an exceptionally heavy flood in the summer of 1928 had laid bare a structure built with cut stone and mortar about half a mile to the north-east of the village. Judging from the villagers' description, it appears to have been a small *stūpa* or rotunda. A flood in the following year had swept it away, and all I could find *in situ* were some large slabs of cut stone which seemed to have belonged to the foundation. In front of them a flight of steps was said to have been exposed. A seated figure of stucco found above this was stated to have been removed to the Lahore Museum. Close examination of the