

*Service des antiquités* with a view to facilitating our labours. But fortunately the officer in charge of the small escort, Naib Muṣṭafa Khān Rashīdī, showed ready comprehension of the harmless nature of our work, and proved in every way helpful in spite of the trying conditions of travel to be faced. A foretaste of these, as it were, was afforded by the serious attacks of fever to which every one of our Indians became subject from the time of our halt. Yet the village of Naiband, where the late Mr. Richardson, the retiring British Consul, had kindly secured us quarters, was believed to be less exposed to malarial infection than the rest of Bandar Abbās.

Towards the close of our stay at Naiband I was able to pay a day's visit to the island of Hormuz. It has often been visited and described, both during the times of its glory, while it was a great emporium of Eastern trade for three centuries, and since its decay with the fall of Portuguese maritime domination in the Gulf.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, I regret that the shortness of the time I was able to spend on the island, between the slow crossings of the sea to and fro, done in a small rowing-boat and without favourable winds, did not allow me to gather more than rapid impressions of its remains of past glory. An imposing monument of it is presented by the strong castle which was built by the Portuguese after the king of Hormuz had submitted to Albuquerque in 1507, and which remained the base of Portugal's supremacy until its capture in 1622. The position chosen for it at the end of a narrow spit projecting northward into the sea affords it protection on all but one side. At the same time, this position assures command of both the anchorages to the east and west of the spit where ships of some draught can find good shelter alternatively from either of the strongest winds prevailing near the mouth of the Gulf.

After three centuries of abandonment, during which the walls, particularly towards the north, have served as a convenient quarry for building material to be used on the mainland, the large portions of this ruined stronghold that still survive afford impressive evidence of the solidity of its construction. The defences are throughout built massively with rough blocks of stone set in very hard mortar, which takes its reddish colour from the red oxide extensively found on the island, and nowadays its sole export. The castle, which is approximately oblong in plan, has its land face protected by a large bastion at the south-western corner, while a massive kind of barbican guards the main gate towards the south-eastern portion of the same face. Through that gate and an adjoining vaulted

<sup>2</sup> A full account of the history of the island from the time when early in the fourteenth century the kings of Hormuz transferred their seat there from Old Hormuz, down to its capture from the Portuguese and its subsequent rapid decay, is given by

Sir Arnold Wilson, along with copious extracts concerning events in the Gulf region affecting the fortunes of Hormuz; cf. *Persian Gulf*, pp. 105-52; see also Stiffe, 'The island of Hormuz (Ormuz)', in *Geographical Magazine*, 1874, pp. 12 sqq.