

CHAPTER VIII

FROM GALEHDĀR TO BUSHIRE

SECTION I—REMAINS OF GALEHDĀR

FROM the first it had been my intention to turn from Tāhirī eastwards and to make my way into Lāristān across the succession of hill ranges running parallel to the coast-line. There seemed hope that on that higher ground, archaeologically as yet unsurveyed and also otherwise little known, it would be possible to continue exploratory field work longer into the spring than climatic conditions would permit by the hot and steamy Gulf coast. Some doubts as to the execution of this programme had first been raised by the report received at Gābandī about unrest among the large Qāshqai tribe whose extensive winter grazing-grounds adjoin that area. The rumours heard at Tāhirī did not help to reduce these misgivings. But during our prolonged stay there even more immediate cause for concern revealed itself through the difficulties we had to face about transport. The small fishing hamlet of Tāhirī could not have supplied more than half a dozen half-starved donkeys for the move across the rugged hill range which rises steeply above the narrow coastal strip and divides it from the Galehdār valley through which the approach to Lār lay. Even if the old Shaikh of Tāhirī, who lay dying in his castle-like mansion below which our camp stood, had been able and willing to assert what little authority was left to him, it would have been impossible to collect adequate transport along this stretch of coast, where the loss of animals due to starvation consequent on two years of drought appeared to have been even greater than elsewhere.

So it was with no small relief that by January 19th I welcomed the arrival of about a score of donkeys which 'Abbās Khān, 'Shaikh' of Galehdār, in response to urgent appeals, had sent down to help us onwards. The desire to reach Lār was shared by the commander of our escort, who hoped that the small garrison to be found there would allow him to be relieved of further responsibilities. For a similar reason he felt also much reassured by the arrival with the Galehdār transport of a small band of 'Abbās Khān's armed retainers, who were to protect us on the way through the hills.

On January 20th a short march of 10 miles down the coast to the south-east took us to the spot known as Pūzeh, where some decayed homesteads marked cultivation which the oppression exercised by the Shaikh of Tāhirī had caused to