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THE
KING OF HEDJAZ
AND
ARAB INDEPENDENCE

WITH A FACSIMILE OF THE
PROCLAMATION OF JUNE 27, 1916.

Together with the Proclamation issued at
Baghdad by Lieut.-General Sir Stanley
Maude, after the occupation of that city by
the British Forces



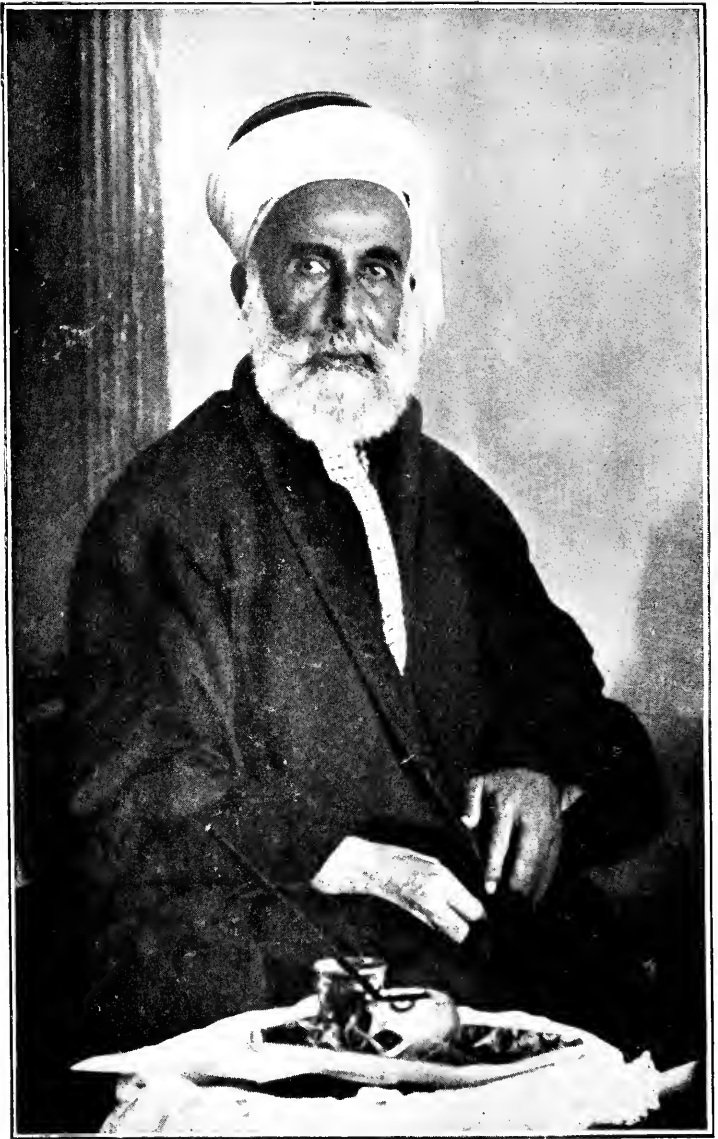
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1917

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Hussain the First, King of Hedjaz, and Hereditary Custodian of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. Formerly known as the Grand Sherif of Mecca.

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In their reply to President Wilson's Note of 20th December, 1916, the Allied Powers stated the general nature of their war-aims, and included among them "the setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turk." And Mr. Balfour, in his despatch of 16th January, 1917, in which he explained these aims from the point of view of Great Britain, observed that "the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races should, if possible, be brought to an end." It was in the same spirit that President Wilson himself, in his speech to the United States Senate on 23rd January, 1917, said: "I am proposing, as it were, that the nation should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world; that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own policy, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful."

Thus the effort of the Arabs of Hedjaz to free themselves from the oppressive rule of the Turks has received the sanction of all the Powers which, in the great world-struggle that is now proceeding,

have stood forth as the champions of national and individual liberty.

The province of Western Arabia to which the name of Hedjaz has been given extends along the Red Sea Coast from the Gulf of Akaba to the south of Taif. It is bounded on the north by Syria, on the east by the Nafud Desert, and by Nejd, and on the south by Asir. In length it is about 750 miles, and its greatest breadth from the Harra, east of Khaibar, to the coast is 200 miles. Barren and uninviting mostly in its northern part, yet with many very fertile and well-cultivated portions in the southern portion, sustaining a brave, hardy, and fearless population, the chief claim of Hedjaz to fame is that it contains the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, to which Moslem pilgrims come yearly from all parts of the world.

Although it was once nominally under Turkish rule, the real power in Hedjaz was always vested in the Amir (or, as he is better known to us, the Grand Sherif) of Mecca, who is an Arab of the true race, descended from a princely family, which is held in high veneration by the Arabs, owing to its descent in the line of Hasan, son of the fourth Caliph, Ali, and who, also, is Hereditary Custodian of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. After the construction of the Hedjaz railway, however, Turkish influence in Hedjaz increased to the extent that the Turks were able to inflict many hardships on the Arab population, and from the time of the outbreak of the present war there had been a great deal of very arbitrary inter-

ference on their part in affairs purely Arabian, combined with acts of actual oppression and cruelty. This foreign and unlawful invasion of their rights and privileges, the impiety of the Young Turks, and their inhuman treatment of the Arabs of Syria and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, decided the Grand Sherif, after many indignant protests, to reassert the independence of the Arabs of Hedjaz, and with such success, that after a substantial victory had been gained by his troops in action with the Turkish forces, some few months back, he issued a proclamation to the world asserting the independence of Hedjaz and its inhabitants—their freedom from Turkish invasion and foreign control of any kind—and announcing that the assembled notables, princes, and representatives of the people had unanimously acclaimed him King of Hedjaz.

Herewith a translation is given of the actual proclamation, in order that, from the pen of the King of Hedjaz himself, the condition of affairs in Hedjaz under Turkish rule may be realised, and the causes understood which obliged the Arabian peoples to reassert their ancient and inviolable religious, territorial, and national rights against impious foreign aggression.

PROCLAMATION OF THE SHERIF
OF MECCA.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the
Compassionate.*

*This is our general circular to all our Brother
Moslems.*

*("O Lord, do thou judge between us and our nation
with truth; for Thou art the best Judge.")*

It is well known that of all the Moslem Rulers and Emirs, the Emirs of Mecca, the Favoured City, were the first to recognise the Turkish Government. This they did in order to unite Moslem opinion and firmly establish their community, knowing that the great Ottoman Sultans (may the dust of their tombs be blessed and may Paradise be their abode) were acting in accordance with the Book of God and the Sunna of his Prophet (prayers be unto him) and were zealous to enforce the ordinances of both these authorities. With this noble end in view the Emirs before mentioned observe those ordinances unceasingly. I myself, protecting the honour of the State, caused Arabs to rise against their fellow Arabs

تقل هؤلاء الافاضل مما الموسوع لتقى حائلاتهم البديسة البريئة من كل ذنب وفيها
المذاب فوق ما قد اجرعوه من سم المصيبة بأتلاف عميدهم الذي خربت بفق
يسوع لهم مصادرة املاكهم واموالهم التي يأوون اليها ويستعشرون بها بعد ان
اليه فكيف يمكن ان تتصل مسوغا لجرائمهم على قبر الابرار والجاهدين
هذا ما بدوه من الاعمال انينا به مخمرا مارين الحكيم فيه لعالم الانساني عم
الاعراضا فتهمة الاحدية لذاتها السبعانية في قوله كمالى وطوبى لى لاطاف

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in the year 1327 in order to raise the siege of Abha, and in the following year a similar movement was carried out under the leadership of one of my sons, as is well known. The Emirs continued to support the Ottoman State until the Society of Union and Progress appeared in the State and proceeded to take over the administration thereof and all its affairs, with the result that the State suffered a loss of territory which quite destroyed its prestige, as the whole world knows, was plunged into the horrors of war and brought to its present perilous position, as is patent to all. This was all done for certain well-known ends, which our feelings forbid to dilate upon. They caused Moslem hearts to ache with grief for the Empire of Islam, for the destruction of the remaining inhabitants of her provinces—Moslem as well as non-Moslem—some of them hanged or otherwise done to death, others driven into exile. Add to this the losses they have sustained through the war in their persons and property, the latter especially in the Holy Land as is briefly demonstrated by the fact that in that quarter the general stress compelled even the middle classes to sell the doors of their houses, their cupboards and the wood from their ceilings, after selling all their belongings to keep life in their bodies. All this evidently did not fulfil the designs of the Society of Union and Progress. They proceeded next to sever the essential bond between the Ottoman Sultanate and the whole Moslem community, to wit, adherence to the Koran and the Sunna. One of the Constantinople newspapers, called “Al-Ijtihad,” actually pub-

lished an article maligning (God forgive us) the life of the Prophet (on whom be the prayer and peace of God), and this under the eye of the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire and its Sheikh of Islam, and all the Ulema, ministers and nobles. It adds to this impiety by denying the word of God, "The male shall receive two portions," and decides that they shall share equally under the law of inheritance. Then it proceeds to the crowning atrocity of destroying one of the five vital precepts of Islam, the Fast of Ramadan, ordering that the troops stationed at Medina, Mecca or Damascus may break the fast in the same way as troops fighting on the Russian frontier, thereby falsifying the clear Koranic injunction, "Those of you who are sick or on a journey." It has put forth other innovations touching the fundamental laws of Islam (of which the penalties for infringement are well known) after destroying the Sultan's power, robbing him even of the right to choose the chief of his Imperial Cabinet or the private minister of his august person, and breaking the constitution of the Caliphate of which Moslems demand the observance.

In spite of all, we have accepted these innovations in order to give no cause for dissension and schism. But at last the veil was removed and it became apparent that the Empire was in the hands of Enver Pasha, Jemal Pasha and Talaat Bey, who were administering it just as they liked and treating it according to their own sweet will. The most striking proof of this is the notice lately sent to the Kadi of the Tribunal at Mecca, to the effect that he

must deliver judgment solely on evidence written down in his presence in court and must not consider any evidence written down by Moslems among themselves, thus ignoring the verse in the Surat-al-Baqara. Another proof is that they caused to be hanged at one time 21 eminent and cultured Moslems and Arabs of distinction, in addition to those they had previously put to death—the Emir Omar el-Jazairi, the Emir Arif esh-Shihabi, Shefik Bey el-Moayyad, Shukri Bey el-Asali, Abd el-Wahab, Taufik Bey el-Baset, Abd el-Hamid el-Zahrawi, Abd el-Ghani el-Arisi, and their companions, who are well-known men. Cruel-hearted men could not easily bring themselves to destroy so many lives at one blow, even if they were as beasts of the field. We might hear their excuse and grant them pardon for killing those worthy men, but how can we excuse them for banishing under such pitiful and heart-breaking circumstances the innocent families of their victims—infants, delicate women and aged men—and inflicting on them other forms of suffering in addition to the agonies they had already endured in the death of those who were the support of their homes?

God says, “No burdened soul shall bear the burden of another.” Even if we could let all this pass, how is it possible we can forgive them confiscating the property and money of those people after bereaving them of their dear ones? Try to suppose we closed our eyes to this, also feeling that they might have some excuse on their side; could we ever forgive them desecrating the grave of that

pious, zealous and godly man the Sherif Abd el-Kadir el-Jazairi el-Hasani? The above is a brief account of their doings, and we leave humanity at large and Moslems in particular to give their verdict. We have sufficient proof of how they regard the religion and the Arab people in the fact that they shelled the Ancient House, the Temple of the Divine Unity, of which it is said in the word of God, "Purify my House for those that pass round it," the Kibla of Mohammedans, the Kaaba of believers in the Unity, firing two shells at it from their big guns when the country rose to demand its independence. One fell about a yard and a half above the Black Stone and the other three yards from it. The covering of the Kaaba was set in a blaze. Thousands of Moslems rushed up with shouts of alarm and despair to extinguish the flames. To reach the fire they were compelled to open the door of the building and climb on to the roof. The enemy fired a third shell at the Makam Ibrahim in addition to the projectiles and bullets aimed at the rest of the building. Every day three or four people in the building itself were killed, and at last it became difficult for the Moslems to approach the Kaaba at all. We leave the whole Mohammedan world from East to West to pass judgment on this contempt and profanation of the Sacred House. But we are determined not to leave our religious and national rights as a plaything in the hands of the Union and Progress Party. God (blessed and exalted be He) has vouchsafed the land an opportunity to rise in revolt, has enabled her by His power and might to

seize her independence and crown her efforts with prosperity and victory, even after she was crushed by the maladministration of the Turkish civil and military officials. She stands quite apart and distinct from countries that still groan under the yoke of the Union and Progress Government. She is independent in the fullest sense of the word, freed from the rule of strangers and purged of every foreign influence. Her principles are to defend the faith of Islam, to elevate the Moslem people, to found their conduct on Holy Law, to build up the code of justice on the same foundation in harmony with the principles of religion, to practise its ceremonies in accordance with modern progress, and make a genuine revolution by sparing no pains in spreading education among all classes according to their station and their needs.

This is the policy we have undertaken in order to fulfil our religious duty, trusting that all our brother Moslems in the East and West will pursue the same in fulfilment of their duty to us, and so strengthen the bands of the Islamic brotherhood.

We raise our hands humbly to the Lord of Lords for the sake of the Prophet of the All-Bountiful King that we may be granted success and guidance in whatsoever is for the good of Islam and the Moslems. We rely upon Almighty God, who is our Sufficiency and the best Defender.

The Sherif and Emir of Mecca,
El Hussein ibn Ali.

25 Sha'ban 1334.
(27th June, 1916.)

THE
PROCLAMATION OF
BAGHDAD.

Since the Proclamation of the Independence of Hedjaz, the great British advance in Mesopotamia has taken place, involving the re-capture of Kut-el-Amara and the capture of Baghdad. After the occupation of this city, the capital of Mesopotamia, by British and Indian troops, Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude issued a proclamation to the inhabitants, the text whereof, which makes reference to the King of Hedjaz and other Arab rulers, is printed below :—

“To the People of Baghdad Vilayet.

1. In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows :—

2. Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate ; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.

3. Since the days of Halaka your city and your

lands have been subject to the tyranny of strangers, your palaces have fallen into ruins, your gardens have sunk in desolation, and your forefathers and yourselves have groaned in bondage. Your sons have been carried off to wars not of your seeking, your wealth has been stripped from you by unjust men and squandered in distant places.

4. Since the days of Midhat, the Turks have talked of reforms, yet do not the ruins and wastes of to-day testify the vanity of those promises?

5. It is the wish not only of my King and his peoples, but it is also the wish of the great nations with whom he is in alliance, that you should prosper even as in the past, when your lands were fertile, when your ancestors gave to the world literature, science, and art, and when Baghdad city was one of the wonders of the world.

6. Between your people and the dominions of my King there has been a close bond of interest. For 200 years have the merchants of Baghdad and Great Britain traded together in mutual profit and friendship. On the other hand, the Germans and Turks, who have despoiled you and yours, have for 20 years made Baghdad a centre of power from which to assail the power of the British and the Allies of the British in Persia and Arabia. Therefore the British Government cannot remain indifferent as to what takes place in your country now or in the future, for in duty to the interests of the British people and their Allies, the British Government cannot risk that being done in Baghdad again which has been done by the Turks and Germans during the war.

7. But you people of Baghdad, whose commercial prosperity and whose safety from oppression and invasion must ever be a matter of the closest concern to the British Government, are not to understand that it is the wish of the British Government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British Government that the aspirations of your philosophers and writers shall be realised and that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws and their racial ideals. In Hedjaz the Arabs have expelled the Turks and Germans who oppressed them and proclaimed the Sherif Hussein as their King, and his Lordship rules in independence and freedom, and is the ally of the nations who are fighting against the power of Turkey and Germany; so, indeed, are the noble Arabs, the Lords of Koweyt, Nejd, and Asir.

8. Many noble Arabs have perished in the cause of Arab freedom, at the hands of those alien rulers, the Turks, who oppressed them. It is the determination of the Government of Great Britain and the great Powers allied to Great Britain that these noble Arabs shall not have suffered in vain. It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth, and that it shall bind itself together to this end in unity and concord.

9. O people of Baghdad remember that for 26 generations you have suffered under strange tyrants

who have ever endeavoured to set one Arab house against another in order that they might profit by your dissensions. This policy is abhorrent to Great Britain and her Allies, for there can be neither peace nor prosperity where there is enmity and misgovernment. Therefore I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South, and West in realising the aspirations of your race.”

19th March, 1917.

