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The Overland Route.

(Chambers' Magazine.)

Until the opening of the Suez Canal, when people spoke of wrote of the Overland Route it was always understood to refer to the British Isles at any rate, to that small section of land which separates the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and which obliged any one wishing to go to India by sea to take the long route via the Cape of Good Hope. There was no steam navigation in the eighteenth century, and a voyage to India usually occupied six or seven months. Some adventurous people tried to escape the monotony of the long sea voyage round the Cape by an overland route across during the eighteenth century. To most a good deal, and though they possibly evaded some monotony, they had to encounter hardships, dangers, and disadvantages which must have made some of them regret their choice. They by no means escaped the sea, and were often delayed at ports on their journey for want of vessels in which to continue it. No considerable part of the route was through inhospitable Turkish territory.

One of the East India Company's Civil Servants, George Forster by name, went from Bengal to St. Petersburg through Afghanistan and Persia, and across the Caspian Sea, and wrote a book recording his experiences; but the majority of the overland travellers seem to have chosen the route via Constantinople or Aleppo. Major Taylor, who was accompanied by his wife and a Mr. Blackader, wrote a detailed account of the experience of his party. They had two servants, and left London on the 21st of August, 1789, proceeding to Dover in their coach. There they paid twelve guineas for a packet to carry them and their belongings to Ostend. From Ostend they proceeded in their coach to Venice, which they reached on 8th September. Their expenses between Ostend and Venice amounted to about £100. They were three days at Venice where they chartered a vessel to take them to Zante, at a cost of £71. They were detained twenty-four days at Zante, and did not reach Zante until November 1st. At Zante they chartered an English brig to take them to Alexandretta, or Scanderon, as it was then called, which they reached after a fifteen days' voyage.

On the 28th November. They left again on the 30th November, mounted on small wretched horses of Turkish breed, with uncomfortable Turkish saddles. After ascending high and rugged hills, they reached Ballan at dusk, and Antioch on the following day. The people of Antioch were notorious for their discourtesy to Christians, and acted in accordance with their reputation. They assailed Major Taylor's party in the most vile terms of reproach. They laid hold of Mrs. Taylor by the arm and tried to pull her from her horse. Reaching Aleppo on the 4th December, the travellers found the inhabitants more civil to strangers. At Aleppo they remained until the 15th December, this being the place where arrangements had to be made for crossing the desert. People who wished to study economy usually remained at Aleppo until a caravan set out. These sometimes composed of more than a thousand souls. Each caravan was licensed by the Turkish Government, the license specifying the number of men and animals composing it. As there was a lady in Taylor's party, it was not thought desirable for them

to attach themselves to a public caravan, they therefore formed a private one. It consisted of forty men, armed with matchlocks and scimitars. Each member was provided with a riding camel and a horse, and there were sixteen camels to carry the baggage, tents and water. For meat they depended on what they could obtain on the way—horses in the desert, and sheep, goats, and fowls in the villages. The guard and transport across the desert cost about £280. In addition to this they had to pay £120 for Turkish clothes, provisions and ammunition. Leaving Aleppo on the 16th December, they reached Basra on the 17th January, and were entertained by the British Resident, Mr. Mainsby. They found the nights very cold. On the third day from Aleppo ice three inches thick was found in a pool, which had to be broken with hammers to enable the party to replenish their water-bottles. The desert was reached on the sixth day out, when they encountered a good deal of rain. There was no scarcity of water, which was obtained from pools in the cavities of rocks. There being no vegetation, the camels had to be fed on barley cakes. On the 2nd January a naked Arab informed the sheik in charge of the escort that a large band of robbers was in the vicinity. In order to avoid them a detour was made; but subsequently it was found that the supposed robbers were a large body of merchants with 300 camels laden with dates on their way to Aleppo.

Major Taylor left Basra on the 24th January, having secured passages to Bombay for his party at a charge of £135. They did not reach Bombay until the 23rd February, having been detained six days at the Basra bar owing to the vessel losing her rudder, and four days at Bushire waiting for the Resident's despatches. Major Taylor's party thus spent 185 days on the journey from London to Bombay, but of these no fewer than eighty were lost in unnecessary delays. He estimates his expenses at £1425, 3s. 4d. Had they not been the guests of the British Resident at Basra and Bushire the total would have been higher. One party had to undergo thirty-five days' quarantine at Trieste. Many of these early overland travellers wrote books recording their experiences, and perhaps the sale of these may have helped to recoup the cost of the journeys. They were hardly such as to tempt others to try new ways to escape the monotony of the sea journey round the Cape. Only in very rare instances was any time saved. Every one seems to have experienced vexatious delays. Colonel Capper of the Madras service appears to have made the most speedy journey in the eighteenth century. It occupied four months and ten days from Loughora to Bombay, and he complained that forty days of this time were wasted on account of transport difficulties. The present generation, which grows in the comfortable mail-steamer, are an hour or two beyond their schedule time in reaching Bombay, knows nothing of the difficulties of travel experienced little over a century ago between England and India.

A Pastor's Tribute.

On the night of the 28th of March the writer was preaching in Pouch Cove Church. Just as he was closing his sermon he was moved to remind his audience of the uncertainty of life and of the fact that any day may be our last. The closing words of the discourse were "for anything we know this may be the last hour for some one of us, and he may be now drawing his last breath." Just then, all unknown to the speaker and his audience a young man of eighteen years belonging to the congregation was "drawing his last breath" on board the S.S. Terra Nova at the Seal-Behery. It was Levi Nopeworth's first voyage. Ardent and greatly desirous of helping his parents in supplying the needs of home he had begged permission to go and earn what he could. They had reluctantly consented, and the high-spirited boy had gone forth telling his friends that his father would have all the flags flying for him when he came home. And so they were indeed! All the flags in Pouch Cove were flying half mast when the precious remains were brought home to his broken hearted parents who had to wait four long weeks for them. The consolations of religion were brought very comfortingly to the heart of the young man by Bro. Levi Butt of Western Bay, who in a letter, written under the shadow of a personal bereavement, says: "I visited him in his sickness, sang and prayed with him until he could sing no more. He was so happy when we sang together 'Oh think of the home over there.' His last song was: 'I will love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death, And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath!'" "His last words, as, in response to his wish, I kissed him, were 'I am satisfied!'" The congregation at the funeral service was the largest ever seen in the Pouch Cove Church. Deep and widespread sympathy with the bereaved parents was very touchingly revealed by all classes. Sorrow that one so young should die, and die under such circumstances was universal. And yet as the scholars of the Sunday School, of which he was a most regular attendant, sang the hymn which he had sung with his dying breath—"My Jesus I love Thee I know Thou art mine," a solemn gladness mingled with our sorrow; for we realized that though he has gone, he has gone where the lovers of Jesus go, and therefore for him "to die is gain."

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July 19, 21, ch

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