



An Arab of the Plains between Bagdad and Babylon

“Most of us who have had opportunity to become familiar with some site that has once been the theatre of a vanished civilization have passed through hours of vain imaginings during which the thoughts labour to recapture the aspect of street and market, church or temple enclosure, of which the evidences lie strewn over the surface of the earth. And ever as a thousand unanswerable problems surge up against the realization of that empty hope, I have found myself longing for an hour out of a remote century wherein I might look my fill upon the walls that have fallen and stamp the image of a dead world indelibly upon my mind.”—(Amurath to Amurath P. 143).

But to pass from these reflections to a more or less detailed account of the site of Babylon as it looks to-day. A general impression as I have al-

ready indicated is that of a confusion of mounds, ruins, dried canals and irrigation ditches spread over an area of about four miles in length and one and a half miles in breadth on the left bank of the Euphrates some four miles north of the modern Hilleh. If you look for a city such as Herodotus described, in magnitude some sixty miles in circumference, and in grandeur—with bronze gates and hanging gardens—one of the wonders of the world, you will be greatly disappointed, as there is little evidence to prove that the city was as large as Herodotus claims, and as to its glory and magnificence, all traces of these have long since been obliterated. But on