

The Mecca Pilgrimage : appointment by the Government of India of Thos. Cook and Son as agents for the control of ... pilgrims.

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INDIA

c. 1876

THE
MECCA PILGRIMAGE.



THE MECCA PILGRIMAGE.

APPOINTMENT

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

OF

THOS. COOK & SON

AS

*Agents for the Control of the movements of Mahomedan
Pilgrims from all parts of India to Jeddah for
Mecca, Medina, &c., and Back.*

London :

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95400

THE MECCA PILGRIMAGE.

MAHOMEDAN PILGRIMS FROM ALL PARTS OF INDIA TO JEDDAH, FOR MECCA, MEDINA, &c.

THE public press having reported the fact that during my recent visit to India the Government of India entered into arrangements with me, through which Thos. Cook and Son have undertaken to act as Government agents for the control of the movements of Pilgrims from all parts of India to Jeddah and back, I am constantly receiving inquiries from personal friends, railway managers and others, who are interested in our peculiar business, all of whom wish to have further information upon the important work I have undertaken, and as I am desirous that all our agents and assistants, as well as my own personal friends, should be in possession of all the information I can give them upon this subject, I have thought it advisable to give as briefly as possible an epitome of the difficulties connected with the movements of Pilgrims, and an outline of the circumstances which have led me to take up the question, and which has culminated in an appointment from the Government of India, which is worded in such terms as can only be construed into a most flattering recognition of the manner in which Thos. Cook and Son have conducted their business in all parts of the Globe.

The appointment in question has called forth a large number, not only of ordinary newspaper notices, but leading articles in the chief papers of India and England, and it is probable that through the publicity thus given to the question a considerable number of even well informed Englishmen have been made acquainted for the first time with the fact that the Mahomedan considers a pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina one of the duties that he *must* perform, if possible, to ensure an entrance into Paradise, and that if he cannot possibly perform the pilgrimage himself, his next duty is to assist his poorer brethren in doing so, therefore pilgrims visiting Mecca are of two classes—the very poorest, whose expenses are being paid by the wealthy or well conditioned Mahomedans, and those who pay their own expenses.

A very large percentage of the so-called Indian Pilgrims to Mecca are really inhabitants of Central Asia and Afghanistan, who have to pass through India *en route* to Mecca, and out of the 8,000 to 12,000 leaving Indian ports every year it is calculated that about half of them travel some thousands of miles overland before they go on board ship at Bombay or Calcutta. It will therefore be understood that before they commence the voyage a large percentage of them have had to undertake long journeys under considerable hardships. The troubles after arriving in Bombay have recently been most graphically depicted in a communication to the *Times of India*, dated November 9th, 1885, which appears on pages 13-19 of this pamphlet, and a perusal of which will give some idea of the peculiar difficulties I have undertaken to do my best to remove or alleviate. The newspapers of India have for years contained similar statements, and some of these have been translated and copied into the newspapers published in Constantinople and other Mahomedan centres, and great complaints have been made from time to time of the apparent indifference of the English or Indian Governments to the question, but an examination of the Resolution of the Government of India will show that the Government has not been indifferent, and that during a number of years many Resolutions and Acts have been passed with the view of assisting the Pilgrims.

When in India in 1881, I was first spoken to by Government officials upon this subject, and was requested to consider whether we were not in a position to take up this Pilgrimage question and protect the Pilgrims from crimps, low lodging house keepers, and sharpers, who were not only living upon the Pilgrims, but overcharging and defrauding them at all ends. I then said that as soon as I had inaugurated our legitimate business in India I would be prepared to give attention to the movements of Pilgrims.

In 1883 I was again reminded of the question, but the important matters I had in hand in Egypt prevented my going to India until November, 1885. Spending one week in Cairo *en route*, I was invited by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff to see him, and naturally supposed that he wished to talk to me upon Egyptian matters, but to my surprise he disclosed to me his views respecting the protection of the Mahomedan Pilgrims from India to Mecca, and in doing so explained to me what had led him to give special attention to this question during his recent stay in Constantinople, and placed before me for my perusal a batch of correspondence and telegrams which had been passing between himself and Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Dufferin. The last telegram upon the subject from Lord Dufferin dated from Simla, in which the Viceroy was good enough to say that although the Government of India as a Government could not carry out Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's ideas, still they were prepared to make some arrangements to meet his views, and that if they could only arrange with Thos. Cook and Son to take up the matter, they could give them the support necessary to enable them to put into operation a system that would doubtless remove most of the difficulties complained of, and Lord Dufferin was good enough to conclude his telegram by saying that

he happened to know me personally, and that he had no doubt if we could meet he could induce me to take up the matter. After a perusal of these papers, I explained to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff that the matter had been in negotiation between the Government of India and myself ever since 1881, and that I was going to India almost for the express purpose of completing the arrangements. Before leaving Cairo I received a communication from the Secretary of the Government of India, assuring me that the Government was desirous of completing arrangements with me; and after my arrival in India, I received from London a personal autograph letter from Lord Dufferin, which had been addressed to London and arrived after my departure, urging me to come out and settle the business, if possible; therefore all I had to do was to prepare the conditions under which I was willing to undertake this troublesome and important business.

I am bound to place on record the fact that the Government of India at once accepted every condition I placed before them, and therefore if I am not sufficiently supported legally, morally, and financially, it is my own fault.

What I have undertaken to do will be gathered from the following conditions. (I need scarcely say I have left out the final condition as to the mode of remuneration):—

Proposed Conditions under which THOS. COOK & SON would be prepared to undertake the Agency and Control of the Movements of Pilgrims from India to Jeddah and back.

1st.—The Government of India to appoint Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son as agents for the control of the movements of Mahomedan Pilgrims from all parts of India to Jeddah and back.

2nd.—The Government of India to instruct their representatives in all parts of India to do all they can to assist the agents of Thos. Cook and Son.

3rd.—The Government officers, who now issue passports, to issue Thos. Cook & Son's tickets in every case where possible with the passport.

4th.—The Pilgrimage office at Bombay and, if possible, the actual issue of the passports to be in the control of Thos. Cook & Son, the passports having been previously signed by the usual Government official. Thos. Cook & Son to be responsible to the Government for the proper use of the same, and to keep a record of the name, &c., of every recipient.

5th.—Thos. Cook & Son to arrange with the Railway Administrations, Steamship proprietors, &c., &c., for the conveyance of the Pilgrims, quoting through fares from all chief stations in India to Jeddah and return; to do everything they can to secure the proper transit in satisfactory ships, with proper accommodation in accordance with the regulations laid down in the Manual issued by the Government, and to do their utmost to meet all the present objectionable features in precisely the same manner as they conduct the other parts of their business.

6th.—Thos. Cook & Son to appoint all the necessary assistants to carry out the work ; in all cases where necessary to appoint Mahomedans ; to establish a special Pilgrimage Office in the most convenient position in Bombay and, if found necessary, at Jeddah ; and to prepare all the necessary announcements, forms of tickets, &c.

7th.—Thos. Cook & Son, or their representatives, to comply with the requirements and regulations laid down from time to time by the Government of India, precisely the same as though they were in the service of the Government.

To show the spirit in which the Government of India responded to my proposals, I will here give the text of the Resolutions adopted by the Governor-General (Lord Dufferin), in Council.

Extract from the proceedings of the Government of India in the Home Department (Sanitary), under date 4th January, 1886 :—

(1) For several years past the attention of the Government of India has from time to time been directed to the desirability of alleviating, so far as is possible, the discomforts and sufferings experienced by Mahomedan pilgrims during the journey from India to the Hedjaz. The existence of these sufferings, more especially in the case of those of the poorer class of Mahomedans who undertake the pilgrimage, is an admitted fact, but the action taken with a view to afford relief has been necessarily of a restricted nature owing to the unwillingness felt by the Government to undertake any direct interference with what is considered to be a religious obligation by a large section of the Mahomedan community in India. In 1880 intimation was received from her Majesty's Secretary of State that the Turkish Government had issued orders requiring passports from all passengers and pilgrims arriving in Jeddah, whether Turkish or foreign subjects, and announcing that those who came unprovided with such documents would be liable to be expelled from the ports of the Hedjaz. In order to render these Turkish regulations as little irksome as possible to natives of India proceeding to the Hedjaz on pilgrimage, the Government of India, after consulting Local Governments and Administrations, resolved [Home Department resolution No. 4—198-214, dated 12th July, 1882] to establish a system under which passports should be unconditionally given to every intending pilgrim, not only at the Indian ports of embarkation, but also at the central stations of every district in British India and at the headquarters of all political agencies in Native States. Arrangements were also made to grant informal passes to the subjects of other Governments, e.g., natives of Kashgar, Russian Turkistan, Afghanistan, &c., who embark for Mecca from Indian ports, it being explained that these passes impose no responsibility on the Government of India in regard to the holders, and that the Governor-General in Council could not in any way guarantee their recognition by the officials of the Turkish or any other foreign Government. Further, in consideration of the very large number of pilgrims who annually embark at and return to Bombay, and to the necessity of making some special arrangements to meet their requirements, a Mahomedan Protector of Pilgrims was appointed at that port and instructed to supply intending pilgrims with all the information and assistance within his power in respect of every matter connected with the pilgrimage.

(2) Since the above measures were undertaken, further efforts have been made by the Government of India towards the proper regulation of the Indian pilgrim traffic by amending the provisions of the Native Passenger Ships Act (No. VIII. of 1876) in certain important respects, and by revising the rules issued under that Act with reference to the fitting, provisioning, sanitary

arrangements, &c., of pilgrim ships. These rules have been assimilated, as far as possible, with those in force for regulating the transport of emigrants to the French and British Colonies, and have been widely circulated in the form of a "Manual for the Guidance of Officers and others concerned in the Red Sea Pilgrim Traffic." It has been made obligatory on ships conveying more than 100 pilgrims to carry a qualified medical officer, and in order to promote the welfare of Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Hedjaz, an Indian Vice-Consul has been appointed at Jeddah, whose special duty it is to attend to the interests and well-being of the pilgrims. In order further to afford protection and assistance to the pilgrims, especially in connection with their detention in quarantine under the orders of the Turkish Government, a Mahomedan Vice-Consul has been temporarily appointed for Hodeida and Camaran. A dispensary has also been established at Jeddah for affording relief to Indian pilgrims in the Hedjaz. Lastly, in order to regulate and bring under proper control the transactions of pilgrim-brokers in the city of Bombay, it is proposed to introduce a Bill into the Local Legislative Council, under which the business will in future be restricted to licensed persons; and certain penalties will be imposed for any breach of the terms of the licence. The action hitherto taken cannot fail to have effected a substantial improvement in the position of pilgrims during the voyage to Jeddah and while staying in the Hedjaz. In the course of the correspondence which has taken place with her Majesty's Secretary of State on the subject, it was considered whether intending pilgrims should be required before proceeding on the voyage to deposit a sum of money sufficient to cover the cost of their return journey. The Government of India admitted that such a regulation would prevent much misery and suffering, but the opinion of the local authorities was opposed to interference of this nature on the ground that it might be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and the Governor-General in Council accordingly decided that action of the kind was unadvisable. At the same time a public notice was issued in the English, Hindustani, and Persian languages, warning persons who propose to undertake the pilgrimage of the difficulties to which they would be exposed, owing to the imposition by the Turkish Government of quarantine for at least ten days at the Island of Camaran (during which period pilgrims are required to pay certain fees besides arranging for their own provisions), and impressing upon intending pilgrims the desirability of not starting unless provided with sufficient funds (at least Rs. 300) in order to meet the expenses of quarantine, of the journey from Jeddah to Mecca and back, and of the return journey to India.

(3) In October, 1884, a communication was received from Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, expressing the readiness of that firm to undertake the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Mecca. The extensive experience gained by Messrs. Cook & Son in connection with the requirements of schemes of a similar character, and the considerable degree of success which has attended their operations, clearly pointed to that firm as peculiarly qualified to assist the Government in still further regulating the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Arabia, and in placing the arrangements on a footing more satisfactory to the Government and more convenient to the pilgrims themselves than has hitherto been found possible. Messrs. Cook & Son were accordingly informed that if they were able to make the necessary arrangements, the Governor-General in Council would be prepared to give them such assistance as might be within his power. Messrs. Cook & Son have now informed the Government of India of the conditions upon which they are prepared to undertake the agency and control of the conveyance of pilgrims to and from Jeddah, and the Governor-General in Council, after careful consideration and personal communication with Mr. J. M. Cook, is of opinion that those conditions are such as may be accepted. The conditions contemplate the appointment of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son to be pilgrim agents for the whole of India, local officers and officers in charge of treasuries being instructed to assist that firm in making known the terms of conveyance to Jeddah and back and in disposing

of through tickets. The Bombay Government will be requested to make over to the representatives of the firm the issue of passports in Bombay after these have been signed by the proper authorities, and to instruct the Protector of Pilgrims to work in harmony with the firm and to render it every possible assistance. On the other hand, Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son agree to arrange with the railway administrations, steamship proprietors, and others concerned, for the conveyance of the pilgrims, at through fares, from all the chief stations in India to Jeddah and back, and to do all in their power to secure the transit of the pilgrims in satisfactory ships supplied with proper accommodation in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Government. They are prepared to provide the requisite agency for the work, Mahomedans being appointed for this purpose in all cases where necessary to establish a special pilgrimage office in the most convenient position at Bombay, and possibly also at Jeddah, and to make all detailed arrangements in connection with the issue of the necessary announcements, forms of tickets, &c. Lastly, the firm has expressed its readiness to comply with the requirements and regulations which may be laid down from time to time by the Government of India precisely in the same manner as though they were in the service of the Government.

(4) The Governor-General in Council feels convinced that a scheme of the nature above described cannot fail, if successfully carried out, to be productive of much benefit to Indian pilgrims to the Hedjaz; but if success is to be ensured, it is essential that every assistance should be afforded to Messrs. Cook & Son, not only by local Governments and Administrations, but also by district and other officers upon whom it will devolve to give effect the detailed arrangements. His Excellency in Council accordingly trusts that local Governments and Administrations will see that this is done, and will direct local officers to co-operate in every possible manner with the representatives of the firm in carrying on their operations.

ORDER.—Ordered, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to all local Governments and Administrations for information and guidance, and to the Foreign and Financial Departments for the issue of any further orders required. Also, that it be published in the *Gazette of India* and in all local *Gazettes* for general information. Local Governments are requested to arrange for its translation and publication in all vernacular *Gazettes*.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. MACKENZIE,
Secretary to the Government of India.

In forwarding this Resolution to the Government of Bombay, the Supreme Government write :—

The details of the arrangements made with Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son are fully set forth in Home Department Resolution of this date, and the Governor-General in Council trusts that the Bombay Government will see fit to give every possible assistance to the firm in order to ensure the adequate carrying on of the operations with which it is proposed to entrust them. It is essential that the issue of passports in Bombay (after they have been signed by the proper authorities) should be made over to the local representatives of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, and that the Protector of Pilgrims should be instructed to work in harmony with the firm, and His Excellency in Council has no doubt that the Bombay Government will issue such orders as may be necessary to effect these objects.

The Bombay Government will have learnt from the correspondence forwarded with my endorsement of the 10th December, 1884, that the Government of India contemplated making arrangements of this nature with Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, and it only remains to explain that as it was necessary to conclude the arrangements with as little delay as possible, owing to the short stay in

Calcutta of Mr. J. M. Cook, the representative of the firm, the Government of India has anticipated the concurrence of the Bombay Government in the course which it is proposed to adopt. The Governor-General in Council feels sure that he may rely upon the cordial co-operation of the Government of Bombay in giving effect to this scheme, which, if successfully carried out, cannot fail to be highly beneficial to Indian pilgrims, by placing their conveyance between India and Arabia on a more satisfactory footing than has hitherto been found possible. I am to add that Mr. J. M. Cook has been instructed to confer personally with the Bombay Government regarding such further detailed arrangements as may be necessary.

On receipt of the above I at once commenced operations, and in a very few days was enabled to forward to the Secretary of the Government of India the following communication or report, which will give some idea of the steps taken before I left Bombay :—

A. MACKENZIE, Esq., C.S.,

Secretary to the Government of India, Calcutta.

SIR,—I duly received your letter, No 19, dated the 20th inst., and feeling the almost impossibility of bringing the arrangements into satisfactory operation for the ensuing season, as suggested in the last sentence of your above mentioned letter, I at once telegraphed you as follows: "Still feel cannot complete arrangements for season 1886, better policy to perfect for 1887, in which Viceroy acquiesced at Delhi, please wire your final views," and not having yet been favoured with your reply, I presume that His Excellency the Viceroy has confirmed my views, and that I am left to perfect my ideas and system rather than make a partial commencement.

My views have been strongly confirmed by the interviews I have had here with influential Mahomedans and others, who agree with me, that to ensure the general adoption of my plans, the most important thing I have to do is to explain thoroughly to the Mahomedan leaders and sheiks in the distant districts of India from whence the bulk of the pilgrims come, the advantages of the new arrangements, and to point out clearly to them that the Government of India has authorised me to make these arrangements to ensure better facilities and greater comforts and economies for the pilgrims. This can only be done by judicious conversation with these gentlemen, which will take some months of travel by very competent and qualified representatives, one of whom must be an intelligent Mahomedan. I am therefore arranging to appoint such an one to accompany my eldest son, Mr. F. H. Cook, which journeys cannot be commenced until all the details are completed.

For your information, I herewith enclose copy of the communications I am addressing to the agents and managers of Railways chiefly concerned, and have pleasure in reporting that the agents I have been able to see personally assure me they are quite prepared to meet my requirements. I have also pleasure in reporting that several of the leading shippers have waited upon me and declared their pleasure in working with me rather than with the class of people who have been evidently fleecing the pilgrims in their charges, &c. The important and well-established steamship companies have offered to put on some of their steamers for the traffic at fixed and reasonable rates, although prior to this they could not see their way to do anything in connection with the people hitherto in the business.

I have already received the cordial support and assistance of the Acting Commissioner of Police, who at once instructed the head of the Detective Department and the Protector of Pilgrims to meet me and give me all the information they possessed and every possible assistance, which they have willingly done.

I have also had interviews with several members of the Bombay Government, including the Chief Mahomedan one, and several other leading Mahomedans, who not only promise me every assistance, but assure me that they will repre-

sent the Resolution of the Government of India to all the Mahomedan associations in such a manner as they are sure will secure the approbation and feelings of gratitude from all Mahomedans, not only in India but in Central Asia, from whence many of the pilgrims come.

I find that one wealthy and influential Mahomedan, Cumod Suliman, is now building a rest-house chiefly for Mahomedan women on pilgrimage, which when completed he will hand over free to the Government of Bombay, and he authorises me to inform the Government of India that if they will grant to him a plot of building land near to the Byculla Station of the B. B. and C. I. Railway, at which the bulk of the poor pilgrims arrive, he will, at his own expense, construct a rest-house for 2,000 pilgrims, and hand the same over to the Bombay Government, and I have to respectfully urge that this offer receive the early and careful consideration of the Government of India.

In prosecuting my inquiries the following points seem to me to be of importance, and to necessitate the early consideration of the Government, and I have to respectfully urge the consideration of the Government to them.

1st. As the bulk of the poorer pilgrims leave Bombay during the Monsoons, they suffer very severely through having to go out into the "Roads" in small boats and embark in such a state that they can scarcely recover, even when the weather moderates; and, in addition, it is not possible for medical officers to make anything approaching a satisfactory examination of the pilgrims, or the officers of the ships to control them or allot them even such space and accommodation as has been provided; in addition, the pilgrims have to bear the expense of such embarkation, and are liable to extortion and robbery. All this would be avoided if the Government could enforce a regulation to the effect that no pilgrim should be allowed to embark in the "Roads" during the monsoons, and that all ships carrying pilgrims must go into the docks to receive the pilgrims. The responsible and respectable shippers inform me this would be no hardship; and, on inquiry of the superintendent of the Prince's Dock, I find that on May 6th, 1884, by minute No. 268, the Port Trustees decided that any ship entering the dock for pilgrims should be allowed to do so on payment of the nominal sum of 50 Rs., and be allowed twenty-four hours to embark the pilgrims, and I would respectfully urge that this be enforced if possible.

2nd. I find that the shippers consider it an useless expense and hardship to be compelled to call at Aden when the vessels contain passengers only for Jeddah, as per clause 26, chap. 4 of the Native Passenger Ships Act, on page 8 of the appendix to the Manual. I am assured, both by captains and owners in the trade, that, as far as they can see, it is perfectly useless, and entails a waste of at least one day each voyage, and an extra charge in the calculation of the fare of the pilgrims. The captains say that if they have a clean bill of health it is a farce calling at Aden, and that if they have not a clean bill of health the Health Officer at Aden will not inspect them, and as every ship is bound to do five or ten days' quarantine at Camaran, it is, according to their knowledge and experience, a clear waste of time and expense.

I have not been able to find anybody who can inform me why the clause in question was inserted, but I suppose some good reason existed at the time. I have promised the shippers to represent this point for the consideration of the Government of India, and if the clause can be rescinded I am sure it will meet with the appreciation of all concerned.

3rd. Everybody I have talked to in the shipping trade and the head of the Detective Department and Protector of Pilgrims urge the passing of the proposed bill empowering the licensing of the so-called pilgrim brokers, as the only means of protecting the pilgrims from the dishonest members of that class, which I am told are numerous.

From my inquiries, I find that the pilgrims have very little to complain of as to the charges during the time they are in quarantine at Camaran, but the complaints as to the want of system and extortion practised during landing

and embarkation at Jeddah are very numerous, and I shall at once turn my attention to that question with the view of ascertaining whether I cannot put an end to the practices there, as I have been able to do at other Turkish ports, especially Jaffa. I am contemplating sending during the ensuing season an intelligent and enlightened Mahomedan with one of the most crowded and worst of the pilgrim ships, with permission for him to perform his Hedjaz, and at the same time to take copious notes, and report to me every cause of discomfort and dissatisfaction he comes in contact with, and to enable me to know as nearly as possible all the difficulties I have to try to remove.

Hoping the steps I have taken will meet with the approbation of the Government of India,

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

(Signed) JOHN M. COOK.

In due course I was favoured with an acknowledgment and an assurance that the steps I had taken met with the hearty approval of the Government of India ; but before leaving Bombay I had a considerable number of interviews, including one with Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, various members of the Government of Bombay, several wealthy Mahomedans, and a considerable number of shippers, who had at various times conveyed the pilgrims between Bombay and Jeddah. Lord Reay, and the members of the Bombay Government, assured me that they would render every possible assistance. The Commissioner of Police placed his staff and their books at my disposal, the shippers all expressed their gratification that at last the arrangements for the pilgrimages were to be controlled by some responsible firm, and a number of the agents of wealthy and well-known companies assured me that they would be prepared to advise their directors to place certain steamers in the pilgrimage business to supersede the unsatisfactory vessels that have been constantly employed in it. Mahomedan gentlemen authorised me to express their thanks to the Government of India for the arrangement made, and assured me that they would undertake to make the arrangement known to all the Mahomedan societies through the various Mahomedan publications in the different languages necessary ; and, as stated in my report to the Government, one of the wealthy Mahomedans authorised me to inform the Government that he would, at his own expense, build a rest-house to accommodate 2,000 pilgrims, and so do away with the necessity of their having to resort to lodging houses in objectionable quarters of the city.

I need scarcely say that the carrying out of these conditions will necessitate an immense amount of detail and negotiation, and that the success will depend to a very great extent upon the assistance given by the Government officials in all parts of India ; and, secondly, upon the spirit thrown into the matter by our own representatives and assistants.

One of my objects in publishing fully the arrangements is to elicit from our own agents, correspondents, and friends any hints or suggestions that may be of service to me and which I may be able to work upon.

I propose sending my eldest son, Mr. F. H. Cook, to India, in October next, armed with all the necessary instructions from myself, and he will be accompanied by a well-known ex-Anglo Indian official and a well-known Mahomedan. Their first work will be to travel to the Afghan frontier

and to all the important centres of Mahomedanism to explain to the chief Mahomedans and sheiks of the Mosques that the object of the Government in appointing Thos. Cook and Son to this business is to ensure the safety, comfort, and economy of the Pilgrimage, and that the Government are paying all the expenses incurred, and that the arrangement is not for the profit of any firm or private individuals. After they have visited all these gentlemen and the Government officials in every district, they will then be preparing and putting into operation the details ready for the booking of the passengers for the Pilgrimage of 1887. This will necessitate a journey of at least 20,000 miles, and negotiations and arrangements not only with Railway Administrations, Steamship Companies and others actually in the business, but also explanations to a large number of Government officials, who are authorised by the Resolution of the Government of India to do everything they possibly can to assist us in ensuring the success of the arrangements.

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Since dictating the above, I have received further communications from the Government of India, showing that the Government is taking every possible step to support me in the changes I wish to be effected, and is giving such recommendations and instructions to the local Governments and officials as should ensure the hearty co-operation and assistance of all concerned; but I need scarcely say that it will be impossible for me to effect the reforms I wish without the able assistance and co-operation of the representatives I may appoint to work out and put into operation the complicated arrangements necessary to accomplish my object, and that I rely upon every one of our agents and assistants giving this business their special attention, and reporting to me personally anything they may read or hear likely to be of service to me, or affect in any way the Pilgrims and our arrangements in their behalf. I know that this business is surrounded with more difficulties and prejudices than anything I have hitherto undertaken (the Nile Expedition not excepted). It has already been intimated to me by more than one Government official that they are convinced that, although I may have the best of intentions, I am powerless, and shall not be able to effect any important improvement to the benefit of the Pilgrims. I have been reminded that Government officials have spent many years in watching and trying to control this particular business, but they have been to a great extent powerless. I need scarcely tell those who know me best that those statements will simply be incentives to me to do everything I possibly can to prove that the Government of India is justified in honouring me with the appointment, and with all due deference to the opinions of those who have expressed their doubts. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the very fact of the appointment being made will cause material improvements to be put into operation by the shippers and others during the ensuing pilgrimage, and that, if I am supported in the way I wish, a very large percentage of the difficulties complained of will be removed.

LUDGATE CIRCUS, LONDON,
May 1st, 1886.

JOHN M. COOK.

APPENDIX.

A gentleman who has for several years been engaged in the Pilgrim trade as commander of a steamer plying between Bombay and Jeddah during the Pilgrim season, furnishes the *Times of India*, of November 9th, 1885, with the following account of his experiences of the trade :—

Having been asked several times to give a description of the pilgrim trade or of an ordinary voyage, I now make an attempt to do so to the best of my ability, which I know is only poor, and I am sure I shall not be able to do justice to the subject. I may say in commencing that pilgrims generally make up their mind to go the *Haj* some time previous to starting, and their time in starting from home depends upon the distance they are from the seaport from which they intend to embark. (Bombay is the general port for India, but a few go from Kurrachee and Calcutta direct.) Some pilgrims, such as those from Cabul, Bokhara, and from the North-West Provinces, start a considerable time before the period of embarkation, and a great many tramp the best part of the way, and by the time they arrive at a seaport they are in a poor, miserable condition, and no doubt may die during the journey. However, on arriving at the port, some by rail, some by local steamer, and others by foot, they are all more or less waylaid by what sailors call crimps, but who term themselves *Haj* brokers or runners, &c., and any person who knows the ins and outs of Bombay, or any large seaport town, will understand that these individuals make all kinds of fair promises, &c., to entice the pilgrims to their master's house, and once there, with their luggage of course, they cannot very well leave without buying a passage ticket from the master of the house. Of course some pilgrims are more fortunate. They have relations to meet them at the seaport, and they fare better; but still they get fleeced by the *Haj* brokers, to a very large extent. They are told they will get this and that when they get on board, and they are taken to look at the noble ship as she lays in the roads in smooth water with everything nice and clean. But a ship in harbour and a ship at sea with pilgrims is quite a different thing. And a ship with pilgrims, say her full complement, which the Government unfortunately allows her to carry, in the S.W. monsoon is a sight which is certainly a disgrace to any civilized Government. However, we will suppose now that the pilgrims have bought their tickets and all goes well till the day of embarkation (which is generally a wet one, for it is the wet season). Then the trouble begins. Some fight for places, and others complain that they paid for this and were promised that. But here I must explain that the ship is generally let out or hired for so much per head by a big *Haj* broker, and the owner or captain only guarantees to carry a complement that the Government will allow, and supply them with food and water. Therefore, when the pilgrims come on board it is the first time that the captain has seen them, but, nevertheless, they come complaining, and after a great deal of trouble and bother we get them to understand they have been taken in by the broker or charterer, and the only remedy they have is to vow vengeance against those gentlemen, for it is seldom they come on board at the time of sailing. The next performance is the examination by the doctor and the counting by the inspector of the Preventive Service. Now this is a most difficult job, as the ship is so crammed with people and luggage that there is hardly room to move. The Government, I think, ought to compel all *Haj* ships to take their pilgrims on board in dock or at a wharf. If this was done the people could be examined on shore and counted into the ship, the same as is done in the case of coolie

immigrants. The present system of the ship laying in the roads and the pilgrims going off in canoes, &c., is dangerous and objectionable, and ought to be abolished. For instance, the ship gets a lot of stowaways who are the lowest of the low, and by the canoe system old men and women who were never afloat before get knocked about, and the lame must do the best they can in getting up the ladders. Under the present system a certain day is announced for embarkation, and everybody is told when buying his ticket to go on board early to secure a good place. Therefore, they all rush on board at once, and the strongest people get the best places. Last year I had one crushed to death during the rush, and nobody took the least notice of the incident. Well, after a great deal of trouble we have counted and examined the people after a fashion, and we have found a few of the stowaways. Those who go out of the ship without much trouble we get clear of, but if some are troublesome and there is likely to be a row the police conclude that we had better let them stop. I declare I believe the police are afraid of them; in fact, there is not enough force on board to keep order. And another good reason why this method of embarkation should be condemned is, that if there is any contagious disease amongst the pilgrims the people have now an opportunity of staying sometimes a whole night in the holds before they are examined, and they contaminate the hold and those lying alongside of them before they are found out.

We will now say the pilgrims are all counted and examined. After a little trouble we manage to get the people clear of the anchor working forward (for all pilgrim-ships carry themselves chockful to the disgrace of the British Government). Finally we get the anchors up and the ship under weigh, and we steam out amid a half gale of wind and encounter a high sea. I will leave you to imagine the state of affairs and the suffering there is the first night out. People will not go below as the hold is already full and hot; and as everybody is sick the smell coming up from below is anything but agreeable. Men, women, and children, are all packed like sardines in a box. When the ship commences to roll both the pilgrims and their luggage go flying from side to side. Men shout Allah (God), women scream, and children and babes cry, and the condition of affairs is such as to make the hardest-hearted man conclude that the pilgrim traffic is a disgrace to any civilized nation. The crew and the officers do all they can to assist and make matters better; but it is of no use offering to put their luggage down in the lower hold, for they will not part from it. They have been taken in so often that they have made up their minds not to trust anybody again. Poor creatures! they won't trust almost the only honest people they are likely to meet with on their pilgrimage. However, sooner or later their luggage and traps will dwindle down to nothing, and when we are bringing them back, a stocking will nearly hold each man's traps.

In the Government pilgrim rules it is recommended that no pilgrim should go on the *Haj* without Rs. 300, and all people of authority write and advise the British Government to this effect. Our noble Government, however, say they do not like to interfere with people's liberties, but they recommend that pilgrims *should have that sum*. Now this is not freedom, as Government terms it, but it is indifference to her subjects. Many people leave India with a passage ticket (obtained by begging), a few dirty rags, and perhaps two days' food. What becomes of these people? may be asked. Why, they starve to death. That many pilgrims die every year through starvation is a well-known fact. And, again, there are amongst the pilgrims the very old and weak—people who are hardly able to come on board. Why should these people be allowed to undertake a voyage they are totally unfit for? All this is against the Koran. Generally the latter end of these old people is a sickening sight and not fit to be described in print.

We are now supposed to be started on the voyage, and if we only get a moderate monsoon, we may get across without battening down the hatches, but if it comes on to blow hard, and the sea rises, the hatches must be put on, and then the pilgrims deserve pity. But when proper bad weather sets in, the state of affairs down below is something awful, and when we are able to let the

people up again, the sight will not bear description and the smell is unbearable. How so many pilgrims live through it all puzzles a great many experienced people. There is no doubt that during the voyage we have a great many deaths. The noble doctors we carry are generally of as much use as the fifth wheel of a coach, and in many cases they are totally useless at sea. (I call them doctors because they are shipped as such, but they are not proper doctors.) I should have mentioned that before we finally get the hatches on, we have a hard drive to get the pilgrims below, and in some cases we are obliged to be rough. But still many prefer to stay on deck and be washed about, or cling to something in a corner and hold on like grim death and allow the water to wash about them. Of course they must look out for themselves, but several get more or less hurt. During the whole time the hatches are battened down the shouting, screaming and groaning are sickening. Of course the ships are ventilated to a certain extent, and in a moderate cool climate with a clean class of strong healthy people things would be better. But even then ships would carry too many under the present rules. All pilgrim ships should be made to carry one-quarter less passengers than what they now carry. This is not only my opinion, but the opinion of every experienced man in the trade. It was only this morning that a leading medical man of four years' experience of the trade expressed himself to that effect without the question being put to him. In fact, he said that vessels ought to carry one-third less.

Well, we are now supposed to be getting well on the voyage. After a good deal of trouble, and after committing a few to the sea, we arrive at Aden. Here the vessel is obliged to call, as a rule, and we generally coal at the port. Now this is a thing that ought not to be allowed, for coaling a ship with Welsh coal, and from a barge, means making everybody and everything belonging to the vessel as black as the coal itself; and goodness knows the people are dirty enough without heaping dirt on top of them. Another great evil at Aden is the fishing boats. These should be prohibited from going alongside of pilgrim ships, because the pilgrims buy the fish, carry it down below, and even clean it there, and wherever they clean the fish there they leave the head and entrails, and when the heat of the day sets in, about 98° in the shade, there is a disgusting smell. But we have now been a day at Aden, and we must proceed to Kamaran, an island in the Red Sea, about 275 miles from Aden. Here the people must go on shore and do quarantine for ten days, and this is a good thing for the ship, for the holds are in a beastly state, and so are the pilgrims' clothes after being on board 14 or 15 days. By getting the pilgrims out of the ship we are able to do a thorough cleaning, for, to speak plain, both the pilgrims and the ships are beginning to smell so bad, it is almost unbearable. The pilgrims are now on shore at Kamaran, and all I can say about this place is, that the general opinion of doctors and captains is that five days on the island is quite sufficient, and does the pilgrims more good than the ten days which they generally get. One reason of this is that the water is not good. They have three qualities (as my friend the doctor of one camp expresses it), Nos. 1, 2 and 3. No. 3, he declares, is not used for pilgrim drinking water (which we doubt when the place is full). No. 2 is what they call a little brackish, and No. 1 is what I call very bad, but what they call good. The cleaning process on the ship has now begun, and of all the strange plans of stowing away filth in corners and out of sight, none comes up to that of a pilgrim ship. To those in the trade, it is a matter of surprise that half the pilgrims do not die of cholera. Some might ask why don't you clean up at sea? Well, we would if we had more room, but the holds are just a mass of boxes, bags, and pieces of humanity, all stowed higgledy-piggledy. The ages of the pilgrims range from three months to eighty years. With regard to race, some are Malays, some Bengalees, some Cabulees, some Bokhariots. All are mixed together, and one is growling at the other in his own language. In fact, I don't know which is the worst time; whether fine weather, when they are all fighting among themselves, or bad weather, when they are all shouting and groaning. Of course, the first is the healthiest time. Well, while we are cleaning the ship the doctor is busy, overhauling and fumigating the pilgrims

on shore. Of course, a great deal depends upon the pilgrims themselves as to whether they are comfortable and contented. Supposing that no contagious complaint has broken out among the people, we are allowed to depart at the expiration of the ten days. But if any contagious disease breaks out, then there is no saying when the ship will get away. Before leaving, each pilgrim must pay his reckoning. This amounts to nearly one rupee per day. Then they are allowed to re-embark. This is a much milder transaction than the first embarkation. In fact, they all go to the old spots they like, and of course a lot leave their luggage in their old places. And, again, when we leave Kamaran we are some 22 or 24 days from Bombay, and their food, which on their first embarkation takes up a considerable amount of room and causes a deal of anxiety to the owner, has diminished considerably. We are now leaving Kamaran, and they are all anxiously inquiring when they will pass a certain mountain called Lum Lum, because before passing this they must all take off their usual wearing apparel, shave four parts of the body, bathe and clothe themselves in unbleached calico, unsewn. I can assure you there is quite a busy time on board then. Hair and water seem to be knocking about freely until we pass Lum Lum.

Our next point of note is Jeddah. We arrive at this place about two days after we leave Kamaran, and if we have had no deaths between Kamaran and Jeddah, and the health of the ship is satisfactory, the pilgrims are allowed to land, but, if otherwise, then we must land them on an island called Ed Abassaad, to do a little more quarantine, and of course pay for it. But in a ship that carries say 1,200, the chances are you will very likely have a death, for a lot of these very old creatures are wearing out fast in the bustle and worry and excessive heat. I declare a number of these very old people are only skin and bone, weighing from 40 to 70 lbs. each, but they all have one consolation if they die going to the *Haj*, their reward is equal to that they should receive had they lived to make the *Haj*, or in other words the will is as good as the deed. However, we will suppose that we have had a death, but owing to a letter I received at Kamaran, saying so and so or so and so might die before reaching Jeddah, I am let off quarantine, and my pilgrims are allowed to land and enter one of the holy cities, which I think is one of the most dirty and foul smelling places that I have ever met with during my 20 years travelling over this globe. The pilgrims are very desirous of debarking. A boat rushes alongside directly the quarantine flag is down, and up comes the boatman. He never stops to ask, "Do you want a boat"? or, "Whose things are these"? He simply takes hold of the first luggage he meets and throws it down into his boat. He knows the pilgrim will follow, and when he gets on shore at the landing he will tell the pilgrims how much he is going to charge them. The boats in due course arrive at the shore from the ship, and there is great bustle both now on board and on shore. Porters are running around picking up anybody's gear. The porters know the pilgrim or owner will follow and they do not stop to make a bargain. The porter is not a kind-hearted fellow, like his cousins over the way at Suakin. He will tell what he charges when he finishes with you. Of course, the pilgrim cannot stop wrangling with the boatman about his fare, because a fellow has picked up his luggage and is walking away with it, so he pays the boatman what he demands (for the boatman is bound to hold on to him till he does). The porter serves him the same way, and here I lose sight of him for a while, for he has gone into a boarding-house.

I forgot to mention that there are three classes of pilgrims who make the *Haj* every year, viz., professional beggars, who do quite a good business, because those who make the *Haj*, and have means, are supposed to be very charitable to the poor. Then come the business men—individuals who are called box-wallahs in India, and whom at home we would call stall or stand-keepers in a market-place. Some of these men will place a mat on the ground and display their goods; and others, again, act like hawkers and carry their goods about in a box-like tray, and temptingly show the goods to the ignorant pilgrims and

explain that they are of real Mecca production, although he has brought them from Bombay. The third-class pilgrims are the real *Hajees* who are going to Mecca for the love of Mahomet. As I said before, to go to Mecca only is not a proper *Haj*, but the poor people cannot afford to go any further, so they trust to the goodness of Mahomet for the rest. But those who can afford it go on to Medina and see Mahomet's tomb.

But I am forgetting the pilgrims whom we left in the boarding-house just after landing from the ship. In a day or two after landing most of the passengers you have brought may be seen at their calling, some selling their goods, others begging, and the proper pilgrims, who of course form the majority, are making preparations to visit Eve's tomb, which is just outside the walls of the city. Eve's tomb is in a cemetery belonging to the city, and is a masonry structure built a few feet above the earth. It is, I think, about 100 feet long, and about the centre of it there is a raised dome. Having seen Eve's tomb, the next thing for the pilgrim to do is to work a passage to Mecca by camel. There is a good story told about this, but I cannot say whether it is true. I am inclined to believe it myself. You can either book by what we would call a safe carrying company, or with people who will not guarantee your safety or that of your family. Of course, the Safe Carrying Company charges considerably more than other people. They say that the Safe Carrying Company have an arrangement with the Bedouin highwaymen that are likely to be met on the way. In fact, to put it plain, they pay the robbers so much a year to allow all their passengers to pass on unmolested; and those who cannot afford to travel by this Safe Carrying Company must travel the best way they can and run the risk of losing what little they have. Finally, they all get to the great holy city of Mecca, and although the sun shines there the same as in any other place, they say they don't feel any heat; and although the birds, vultures, &c., are continually flying over and above the temples and places of worship, they say there is not the slightest sign of dirt. There is, however, no doubt but that all these pilgrims find things far different from what they anticipated. In fact, we know they are all disappointed with Jeddah to begin with. No Christians are allowed in Mecca, which is no doubt a good policy for Mussulmans. I find that pilgrims are all very reluctant to say anything about Mecca on their return, but it is evident from their manner in returning that they have been greatly disappointed. Well, it is usual on the day of the big *Haj* for all to make a sacrifice of something according to their means. Some kill camels, some oxen, and some a sheep or goat or kid, and they are all killed on the day and about the same places, and there they leave the remains for the vultures. The smell from all these decaying animals must be something awful.

We will now say that the *Haj* is over, and those who are not going to Medina make the best of their way to the port (Jeddah), to book for home. Some walk down to the port and some ride according to their means; but in general everybody's means are getting low, and so is the condition of the poor pilgrims. Ships waiting for return pilgrims take them back at a very cheap rate, and many poor creatures just manage to buy a ticket at the very lowest rate and go on board without either food or clothes, and the ship must dole out a little rice daily just to keep body and soul together. It is a common sight after the *Haj* to see people lying about the beach under the shade of the rocks, without money, without clothes, and without food or water, dying of disease and starvation. I have asked many people (who were likely to know) how many they thought died of starvation during each year, but the fact is they don't care about expressing themselves plainly, and the only reply is, "Oh, I suppose, a good many." Any persons who are earning their living in the business do not care about exposing it for fear they would be found out and lose their situations, but they all hope something will soon be done; and they consider the British Consul at Jeddah ought to bring these things to light plainly. I am afraid, however, if they wait for him to do anything they will wait a long time. The pilgrims are daily flocking into the town, and the place is beginning to smell

worse than ever, and small-pox is getting common, so the sooner we leave the better. The next thing is to keep a good look-out as the pilgrims come on board, so that no person suffering from small-pox gets on board; but, as a friend of mine, with ten years' experience, says, "you may keep a good look-out and you will get it on board for all that." The ladies are coming up with veiled faces, but it is no use, they must show their faces. "It is our religion to be covered, they reply." They are told "yes, no doubt it is, and it may be all very good in its place, but you cannot pass this gangway until I or the doctor have seen your face." Of course, they finally show their faces, and I suppose we return one per cent. It is amusing how they try to smuggle children on board with the disease. In spite of our precautions, as my friend says, we do get it. Last year, in the case of my vessel, the disease broke out, about 3 per cent. of the pilgrims being affected; I almost kept the ship covered with disinfectants. When I arrived at Aden I had six cases. My noble doctor would insist upon telling me it was not small-pox, but the port doctor at Aden soon decided the matter, and would have had my doctor's diploma taken from him, only he had none. He was at one time an apothecary, and was a good Mussulman; but he got helplessly drunk at every opportunity. However, the Indian Government thought him fit to take charge of 1,200 pilgrims, and that decided the matter. Why should we question the wisdom of the Indian Government? It is not supposed that the Government is going to condescend to consult experienced people in the trade before they make the rules, &c., concerning it. This reminds me of a new law just published, which makes ships carry rum and essence of beef for the pilgrims, and most of the pilgrims would sooner commit suicide than take either. A gentleman in Government service, and of years' experience among pilgrims, was about right I think when he exclaimed by way of apology, "You see, sir, the worst of it is the people who make these laws and rules don't understand anything whatever about the pilgrim trade."

But now we have started from Jeddah, and glad everybody seems; even the pilgrims have seen enough of the holy cities. Every now and again a new case of small-pox crops up. Some are bad cases, and others are light. Those who die of course go the way of all flesh, without any funeral expense beyond the cost of an old fire bar to sink them below the surface out of the sun. But there is one strange thing I see about some of the returning pilgrims. Men whom we brought out with wives are returning without them, and women without their husbands. Of course, this may be accounted for in many ways, but there is no use troubling about it. Every day we find there are more and more whose food is finished, and so we continue to dole out rice twice a day.

In the pilgrim rules we are told to use the disinfectant freely, which no doubt is very necessary, but I fancy the powder is the best for down below, and the carbolic acid for the latrines. All pilgrim ships should have a constant stream of water through the latrines, for a ship with 1,200 people cannot be kept any way decent without it. The rule goes on to say that the people ought to be driven on deck with their clothes and bedding for airing. Now this is not an easy matter, for the simple reason that the ship is over-crammed. Before a ship is allowed to carry pilgrims from India, she has some very expensive rules to conform to, in the shape of making provision for ventilation, fittings and outfit; and after the ship has satisfied the surveyors that all the necessary and unnecessary rules have been carried out, we get a certificate allowing us to carry so many. But any ship may bring pilgrims back to India without this certificate. Now it is plain that this arrangement is not right or just either to the proper pilgrim ships or to the pilgrims. I admit that the doctor at Jeddah gives those return ships a certificate for a ship, but that does not make the ships fit to carry pilgrims. For instance, there are twenty-five steamers waiting at Jeddah for return pilgrims to India: some have gone to the expense of getting a Government certificate in India, others have none. In fact, they are cargo boats; probably they have discharged coals, and as they are going to India seeking for freight they call for pilgrims, and get the same rates as a

proper pilgrim ship. They have no proper latrines, or cooking and wash places, and last year, to my knowledge, one ship left Jeddah with 650 people on board, and only one-half a gallon of carbolic acid! Is it any wonder that sickness spread rapidly on board?

Regarding a doctor for pilgrim ships, Government ought to compel ships to carry a proper medical man. We are informed by the rules that we are to make an application to the Surgeon-General of the port in a certain form when we require a doctor, and as this gentleman considers that his office ought to have a fortnight's notice, then this ought to be published also; in fact, there has already been some correspondence with the Government on this matter. A still better plan would be to allow ships to engage their own doctors; and the diploma showing that a man is a medical graduate and is entitled to practice should be shown to the Surgeon-General, or some other qualified person in his absence. Finally, it would be a blessing to pilgrims if the Government would take into consideration that a great many of the people who go to the *Haj* are a particularly dirty lot, and that a great many are old and sickly, and covered with skin disease. Again, due allowance ought to be made for their luggage, rice, cooking utensils, and water cans, &c. All these take up room. Lastly, the French and Dutch Governments do not allow any of their subjects to go—that is, they don't issue passports to them—unless they have a certain sum of money which is considered enough to bring them back. The Dutch also secured their homeward tickets for their people when they arrive, and hold the same till they are ready to return, and why cannot our Government do the same? It seems to me, and many are of the same opinion, that our Government are afraid that if they do not allow our poor old natives of India to go to the *Haj*, they will keep them out of Heaven.

I feel bound to say that, after careful inquiries, I am convinced that the above is a very highly-coloured statement of facts and incidents, and that many of the most objectionable circumstances have only occurred on exceptionally badly managed ships, and the inference is that the above article emanates from some one connected with a ship which has been condemned by the Government; still, a considerable number of the evils complained of are known to exist, and it has fallen to my lot to try my best to obviate or remove them.

JOHN M. COOK.



