



# The Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan

Edgar Thomas Ainger Wigram & Wigram, W. A.

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The Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan Edgar Thomas Ainger Wigram & Wigram, W. A. THE belated Jinn who emerged out of Suleiman's Brass Bottle into twentieth-century London found there, amid much that was strange to him, some beings of his own kin. These were the railway locomotives, obviously Jann like himself, but yet more oppressively treated; bound by spells of appalling potency to labours more arduous and wearisome than Suleiman had ever conceived. And truly his blunder was plausible: for if Jann be extinct nowadays (which one doubts after visiting Asia), then assuredly cylinders and boilers are charged with the might of the Jann. They are set to work regularly now instead of rarely and spasmodically; and though they raise less dust and clamour their net output is considerably more. The slaves of the Lamp and the Ring developed intense explosive energy, but their effective radius was limited. They could rear Aladdin's palace in a night, or transport him to Africa in a twinkling; but these more domesticated Titans are capable of transmogrifying whole communities, and advancing the clock of progress five hundred years at a span. And now the modern Magrabis, the busy Western magicians, have let slip these formidable Efrits against the City of Al Raschid himself: and one fine morning his descendants will awake from the slumber of centuries to find themselves environed by a new heaven and a new earth. The Baghdad railway has started. It has penetrated inland to Aleppo. "That great river, the river Euphrates," is bitted with its girders and caissons. One more stride will carry it to Mosul across a country so open and even that it needs but the bedding of the sleepers; and a journey which now takes a fortnight will be accomplished in a ten-hour run. What is now a mere stagnant backwater will thus be suddenly scoured out by one of the main channels of the world's commerce; and who can venture to calculate the changes which will follow? Western reform will not convert the East any more than Alexander's conquests converted it; but it may evolve unintentionally some new sort of Frankenstein's Man.



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