XIII

W. K. LOFTUS: AN ARCHAEOLOGIST FROM NEWCASTLE

Stephen Harbottle

WILLIAM KENNETT LOFTUS was born on 30th November, 1820, possibly at Rye, Sussex, but more probably at Linton, near Maidstone.[1] His father, William, was a Newcastle man. I have not been able to discover the maiden name of his mother, Ann, though I think it a reasonable assumption that it was Kennett. There are a number of Kennetts recorded in the Land Tax Assessment for Rye in 1820, Ann was to be buried there, and two of William Kennett's sons carried the name.

Loftus came on the male side from a line of innkeepers. His great-grandfather William had the White Hart Inn in the Fleshmarket, Newcastle. His grandfather, the younger son, was born about 1760 and became a well-known and highly successful coach owner as well as hotel owner. He was also Clerk of the Newcastle Racecourse for many years. In 1801 he was running three coaches (to York, Leeds and Edinburgh) from the Shakespeare Tavern, Mosley Street. From here he moved via the Turks Head to the Turf Hotel, Collingwood Street, on the site of which Lloyds Bank now stands. In 1825 he had nine coach services from here, adding to the earlier routes two to London, a second to Edinburgh and local services to Lancaster, Carlisle and Sunderland. He was admitted as a Merchant Adventurer in 1786.

I have gone into this detail about Loftus's grandfather because in the event it was to be he and not Loftus's father who was to exercise the decisive influence on Loftus's upbringing. Loftus's father had joined the Durham Militia some time before 1809, which might I suppose have been regarded as not wholly inconsistent with an intention to carry on the family business. In April 1809, however, he volunteered for the 68th Regiment (the Durham Light Infantry) and transferred to them with the rank of ensign.[2] This was a decided blow for freedom. The regiment went abroad in July 1809 on the ill-fated expedition to Walcheren, where they saw little fighting but contracted malaria on a large scale. In January 1810, they returned to Kent and were stationed there until June 1811.[3] It is to me an irresistible inference that Loftus's father and mother first met in this period. Whether they then married I do not know. I can only observe that William went out with the regiment to the Peninsular, still as an ensign, in June, 1811, and then, before the regiment

[1] Venn.
[2] Army List.
[3] Ward.

had been in contact with the French, resigned his commission on 29th August.[2] Welford described William as having "served with his regiment in some of the stirring scenes of the Peninsular War". This seems rather to dignify what was a very temporary visit.

When and where Loftus's parents married I have not been able to discover. When he was five years old his mother died, aged 39, and was buried at Rye. A fortnight later, on 23rd March, 1826 he was baptised, also at Rye.[4] His first known school was the Grammar School at Newcastle, of which Dr. Mortimer was then headmaster. It seems reasonable to suppose that his mother's death broke up his father's household and that he must from this time have begun to live with his grandfather in Newcastle, either at the Grandstand, where his grandfather had a house, or at the Turf Hotel. Some time later his father remarried. I would suppose from the terms of the grandfather's will that the remarriage probably took place before 1830, and since the will throws some light on the family attitudes, I turn to it now.

The will was made on 10th June 1830. It is what I would describe as a strong document, which showed very definite views about both son and grandson. The grandfather appointed John Brandling, his solicitor William Carr, and his nephew James Radford as his trustees and gave them all his property on trust, first to pay an annuity of £60 to William Loftus the son for life and subject to that to hold the whole estate on trust for his grandson, on attaining twenty-one absolutely. If his grandson did not reach twenty-one the property went (subject to some legacies) to James Radford. He committed "the care instruction and bringing up" of his grandson to his trustees and so far as he had power (which he probably had not) appointed them as guardians. Finally, to make matters clear, he directed that if William Loftus in any way interfered with the trustees' care or bringing up of his grandson the annuity was to cease. One is left in no doubt that William Loftus was regarded as an undesirable influence.

His grandfather confirmed the will in February 1833. Later that year he gave half the coach business to Radford, and in February 1834, he died.[5]

Loftus was now 13. After the Grammar School he went to an establishment known as Old Park, Durham, under a Mr. Gillespie, and later to the Twickenham Academy under Rev. Dr. Nicholson. In April 1840, he was admitted as a pensioner at Caius College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in October of that year.[6]

Loftus's University career is not easy to follow. He was obviously a highly intelligent undergraduate with a gift for making friends which was to serve him well later. He was elected a Scholar of Caius in March, 1841. His interest in geology attracted the attention of Professor Adam Sedgwick (the Woodwardian Professor of that time) who secured his election to the Geological Society of London in January 1842.[7] This was a considerable achievement for

[4] Registers at St. Mary the Virgin, Rye.
[5] York Probate Court.
[6] Venn.
[7] Welford.

an undergraduate without influential connections. I do however find it inconsistent that he went down in 1843 without taking a degree.

Welford says that on his permanent return to Newcastle he took up residence at his grandfather's old house at the Grandstand. The Grandstand itself was burnt down in 1844 but the house called Stand House was evidently not destroyed as his paper for the Tyneside Field Club on "Evidences of Diluvial Action at Belsay" is dated from there in 1848.

He lived in Newcastle for nearly six years. After that period he came back only on visits, and I think it clear that he had no business ties with the town. He had of course inherited from his grandfather the half of the coach business which his grandfather had retained, but what had been a flourishing enterprise in 1825 must have looked very different twenty years later. The railway from London reached Gateshead in 1844 and that must have finally destroyed the old coaching days. No doubt the Turf Hotel was still open, and perhaps a true Loftus could have managed it with care and built it into a triumphant success, but his tastes did not lie that way. This period in Newcastle was only preparatory to the real career that he had yet to find.

In the meantime he joined local societies and read papers to them, and he got married. The first activity is well enough recorded; the second is ignored by both the D.N.B. and Welford. To deal first with the societies, there was the Natural History Society, to which he was elected when still an undergraduate. He delivered a number of papers to them such as, in October, 1847, "An Account of the Occurrence of the Glowworm near Gibside". He was soon on their committee, coping with the awkward question of the Curator, Mr. King, who had been detected in dealing in objects of natural history, and sitting on a sub-committee to enquire what the Curator's duties "*should* be". This unfortunate incident terminated in the dismissal of Mr. King, who then refused to deliver up the keys of the collection and for some months set the Committee at defiance. Loftus was a founder of the Field Club, to whom he gave other papers, and his name appears regularly in their accessions book. The tertiary fossils from the Isle of Wight and Belgium recorded for 1844 and 1845, and the Devonian fossils from the Eisel which he and an old Cambridge friend, Glossop, presented in 1846 hint at summer geological expeditions.[8]

He joined the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1845, and its Committee in 1848, so establishing a connection which was to have an unexpected sequel.

There is no reference to Loftus's marriage in the printed accounts of his life, for reasons which its circumstances probably explain. The facts are simply that on 7th July 1846 he married Charlotte Thulbourne at St. Pancras, Middlesex. The marriage took place by licence and the witnesses do not seem to have been related to either family. Loftus was described as resident in St. Pancras and Charlotte in All Saints, Newcastle. On 21st September 1846

[8] NHS Minutes and Accession Book.

a son, Frederick, was born at Richmond Street, Newcastle (though Loftus was living at Stand House). In later documents Frederick appears as the second son, and Alfred Kennett as the eldest. All in all the affair seems to have been too much for the writer of Loftus's obituary on which later biographers relied, and though Charlotte was to bear him five children, and live with him until his death, neither she nor they are mentioned in the D.N.B. or Welford.

While Loftus was then engaged in or about Newcastle some extremely protracted negotiations between Turkey and Persia, which had arisen out of actual hostilities in 1839-40 were in progress. The conference had the benevolent assistance of Russia and England, who were no doubt in this way demonstrating that they were Great Powers. Out of the eventual treaty there emerged a requirement for a commission to arbitrate on the rival frontier claims to which one Colonel W. F. Williams, Royal Artillery, was appointed in 1843 as the English commissioner. From arbitration the commission moved with deliberation to contemplating an actual survey of the frontier.[9] By the early summer of 1848 Col. Williams was in consultation with the Foreign Office on tents and surveying equipment and the actual composition of his party.[10]

An obvious companion for him was Henry Layard, who had just returned to England after some sensational discoveries during excavations at Nineveh, and who was qualified by first hand knowledge of the frontier with Sir Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Layard, three years older than Loftus, was at this age at any rate an ambitious and hasty man. Equality with Col. Williams at least was his private requirement if he was to join the commission. At first things went smoothly. At his request Williams asked Palmerston to be allowed to employ a naturalist to accompany the commission to the "interesting and unexplored regions" of the frontier, as well as a naval officer to carry out the necessary survey. Palmerston approved of the plan (though wishing "first to be informed what amount of remuneration this person would expect") and it was left to Layard to find the man. Williams had left for Constantinople before Palmerston wrote that, on Layard's recommendation, he had consented to the attachment of one G. F. Angus, who possessed according to Layard not only experience of South Africa, New Zealand and New South Wales and a knowledge of natural history, but also great taste and skill as a draughtsman. Angus lasted only two months in Constantinople, and had barely time to account for an advance of salary to cover his expenses of travel before he had resigned through ill health. Layard too had fallen by the wayside. After innumerable extensions of leave due to ill health, his forthcoming book and his desire to help in arranging the Nineveh exhibits, he had finally asked to be attached to the Embassy at Constantinople and to be relieved, because of illness, of his obligation to join Williams on the frontier. Palmerston agreed. Williams reported Angus's resignation in November and his letter carried a faint suggestion that Angus's

[9] Waterfield.

[10] FO Corr 78:762.

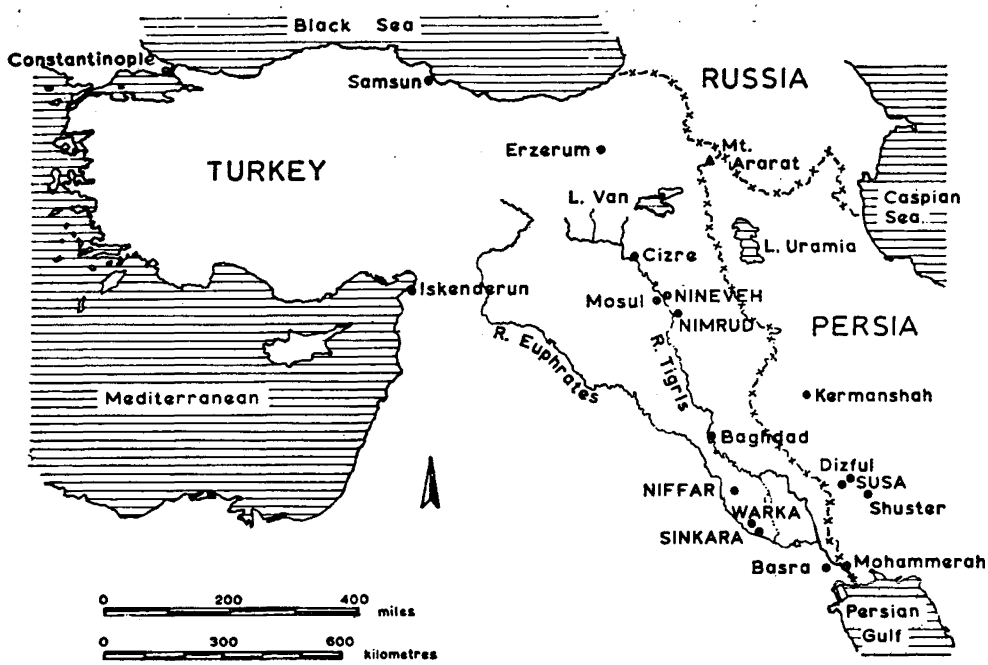
departure was not unwelcome. "As the recurrence of fever on the march," wrote Williams, "seemed to weigh so heavily on his mind I do not regret his determination to abandon the expedition".[11]

Layard's withdrawal also permitted Williams more freedom on the subject of naturalists. "Mr. Angus," he went on, "at once confessed to me his slender knowledge of geology which is a very severe deficiency as our route lies through little known mountains. I therefore hope that any future appointment may be made on reference to the Geological Society ... I cannot doubt that young men of high talent will present themselves". Loftus's opportunity had arrived.[12]

Palmerston had little time in which to act, for the Commission were due to set out in January 1849. He applied to Sir Henry de la Beche, then head of the Geological Survey, for advice offering a salary of £100 a year, which was what Angus had received for the post. Sir Henry replied promptly that Loftus would be suitable, but that his salary ought to be £200. The Foreign Office agreed with equal promptness. It was desirable, Addington wrote on 3rd January, that Loftus should set out as soon as possible and, he added, "although Lord Palmerston has no desire inconveniently to hurry him, His Lordship thinks it as well that he should be apprised that a Steam Vessel will leave Southampton direct for Constantinople on 29th of this month". By 5th January Loftus was writing from Stand House to accept the job. By 23rd he had got an advance of half a year's salary for his outfit and passage. Sir Henry made an attempt to secure the delivery of geological specimens obtained by Loftus direct to himself, but was firmly repulsed by Palmerston. By 29th Loftus had conferred with officials of the British Museum and set sail. The most remarkable feature of the whole affair is the confidence with which Sir Henry turned to Loftus. Not only his ability, but also his availability were well known. The geological holidays and the membership of the Geological Society of London seem the likely reason.[13]

We hear of him next at Constantinople, where he found that Colonel Williams and his party had already left on Christmas Day 1848. Angus had deposited here for his use various articles provided by the British Museum Trustees, and he carried a letter from the Foreign Office authorising their collection. Sir Stratford Canning detained him here until the roads through the Turkish mountains, which had been blocked by heavy snow, had improved. On 7th March he set out again, first by steamer along the Black Sea coast and thence over the mountainous interior to Mosul where he joined the British party on 5th April. They did not neglect the opportunity to visit the mounds made famous by Layard of Kuyunjik, Khorsabad, Karamles and Nimrud. Five years were to elapse before Loftus himself did any excavations here, but it is fair to suppose that the three days' journey round the sites of Nineveh inspired him with the wish to find for himself an untouched site in this antique

[11] FO Corr 78:762.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] FO Corr 78:811; IGS Corr.



The Near East *c.* 1850

land where for all that was known discoveries of a brilliance equal to those of Layard were waiting to be made.[14]

He was not however forgetting his appointed duties. It is evident from his book that as the party made their way south he cast a keen and appreciative eye on the flowers, the insects and the birds which flourished in profusion on the banks of the Tigris. The rendezvous with the other parties to the Commission was at Baghdad, which was reached on 5th May. However, for one reason and another the Commission remained there, doing very little but having an agreeable time, until December 1849. They stirred out only once, in September, for a jaunt to Babylon, again a site to which Layard had been. Loftus clearly enjoyed himself. His book offers historical commentary mixed with a dispassionate but not unkindly view of the present primitive inhabitants and their corrupt rulers which seems well suited to contemporary English views.[15]

The Commission were to start work at Mohammerah, that is at the South end of the disputed frontier, and the main party were to travel there from Baghdad by a river steamer provided by the East India Company. The servants and animals were however to go overland by the Jezireh, and Loftus eagerly seized on the chance of traversing an area largely unvisited up to that date by any European. Official interests were to be served by an examination of

[14] *Travels* pp. 2-5.

[15] *Ibid* pp. 9-71.

W. K. Loftus – from a photograph in the possession of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne

the geology of the Chaldean marshes; he also wanted to see Warka, which he believed to be the birthplace of Abraham. Col. Williams consented, and on 27th December Loftus set out with H. A. Churchill, the assistant surveyor of the British party and a competent Oriental linguist, with whom he had evidently struck up a close friendship. It was a considerable caravan. There were not only the Commission's servants and animals, but an escort of four light guns and a hundred Turkish cavalry, as the ruling Turks regarded the native Arabs to the South with justified distrust.[16]

This arrangement did not last long. After three days the escort received orders to take the caravan down the West bank of the Euphrates and not across the Jezireh. To follow this route would have deprived Loftus of his chance to enter the unknown area and he was not to be put off. He and Churchill therefore engaged an escort of eight Bashi Bazuks, irregular horsemen, and taking a few of the servants split off from the main party at Hillah and entered the desert on 30th December. After three days spent in crossing some featureless sands and marshes and making an unsatisfactory visit to a local Sheikh, the party reached the mound and ruins of Niffar, where again Layard had been previously. They returned from there to the left bank of the Euphrates to find the Pasha of Baghdad engaged in dam building. Elaborate negotiations were necessary before permission could be obtained to proceed to Warka, but eventually, by a display of "European obstinacy" success, and a new escort, were obtained. On the morning of the fourth day's ride the great mound of Hamman, enlarged by the intervening mist and the shimmer of the air, came romantically into view. The battered remains of a statue were found nearby, and its pieces were promptly packed up by Loftus, to be subsequently brought on the backs of the party's mules to Basrah, and later to be shipped to England. It was his first find.[17]

Some hasty measurements were taken of the ruins, and Churchill did a water colour sketch but there was no time for more. Loftus never returned to Hamman, for Warka (now known as Uruk or Erech) which he reached the next day, and where nearly two days were spent, clearly gripped his imagination. While no more could be done on this occasion than to make a map and some drawings he left, certain that a thorough exploration was required, and determined to return. A visit to the site at Mugeyer (that is Ur) which they again sketched and surveyed and a long ride across more desert were the only memorable events of the next week, at the end of which on 18th January Loftus and Churchill rejoined the Commission at Mohammerah.[18]

He was quickly able to persuade Col. Williams that he should be allowed to return to Warka to conduct some excavations, particularly with a view to obtaining specimens of the coffins there (Loftus's obsession with the Warka coffins led in the end to a remarkable misapprehension as to the nature of the

[16] *Travels* pp. 72-76.
[17] *Travels* pp. 78-116.
[18] *Travels* pp. 116-138.

Warka site). The Commission were locked in local political disputes which made the ascertainment of the boundary at this point unusually difficult, and we may suppose that since there was no surveying to be done Loftus could be more easily spared.[19]

He was back at Warka within two or three weeks, with some servants but without an escort of troops, having deliberately decided to rely on direct approaches to the Arabs. A visit to the Sheikh of the Muntefik obtained him a letter of protection and in bitter winter weather he set to work. The camp was first six miles from the site, where there was no water, and later nine, to be near the tent of the local Sheikh. The workmen came from the local tribe of the Tuweyba, some of whom were already practised ransackers of the site in search of gold. The dig lasted a month, but what precisely was done on this occasion is obscure in Loftus's book, as he runs the account of his discoveries into one with those made on his return four years later.[20]

From Warka he seems to have moved to the mound at Sinkara (better known as Sankara, its ancient name being Larsa) some fifteen miles to the South, where proceedings were enlivened by the discovery of a lioness and two cubs among the ruins who demoralised his workers. How long he was there, and what was done, is not clear from his book. Probably the results he describes were mostly obtained in 1854, though he seems to have brought away some inscribed tablets and cylinders. Very soon the annual flooding of the delta commenced, and stowing his horses, mules, grooms and finds aboard two native vessels, he set sail for Mohammerah and the Commission.[21]

The first steps had been taken in his archaeological career. It was now necessary to record them. The finds were packed up and despatched to the British Museum in the "Apprentice" from Basrah at the end of April. There were ten packages in all, nine containing articles from Warka and Sinkara, including the inevitable coffins, and one holding natural history specimens. There was also a report to write on the overland journey from Baghdad, complete with compass bearings and estimated distances, and illustrated with water colours by Churchill, but this did not reach the British Museum until June of the following year (a delay not uncommon in excavation reports).[22] Finally for the Natural History Society of Northumberland and Durham there was a miscellaneous collection of curiosities, ranging from three bats and five desert mice to a brick with a cuneiform inscription.[23]

When the finds had been despatched Col. Williams asked him to go to Susa, an ancient site inside Persia, to try to make some excavations, and Churchill was given permission to go with him. They went via Shuster and Dizful, with Loftus taking specimens of the changing vegetation for his herbarium, noting the lizards and birds, discussing enthusiastically the geological characteristics of the mountains of Luristan and accompanying Churchill on an obligatory

[19] *Travels* p. 139.
[20] *Travels* pp. 140-154.
[21] *Travels* pp. 240-278.
[22] BM Corr.
[23] NHS Accession Book.

diplomatic visit to the Governor of the province at Shuster. However, after about a week, the party reached Susa and set up its tents on the mound. Trouble immediately arose with the local Muslims, as the mound adjoined the Tomb of the prophet Daniel, and the presence of Christians near the tomb was unwelcome. Loftus's reasonable argument that Daniel was esteemed as a prophet by the Christians also was of no avail. As a result no workmen could be obtained, and no trench was opened, though he and Churchill produced a plan of the mound. One evening out riding they met a herd of wild pig, and in the course of an over enthusiastic chase Loftus fell from his horse, severely injuring himself. They were forced to withdraw from the mound, and Loftus spent a month's frustrating convalescence at Dizful, apparently fighting a continuing fever. About June 1850, they were joined here by Col. Williams and the rest of his party, seeking some respite from the heat of the plains, and all went up to Mungerrah, in the mountains.[24]

The summer of 1850 was spent here, and Loftus took the chance of making some geological observations. The party then set out on a journey north to Kermanshah and from there in a wide circle through the Persian highlands to the East and South as far as Shiraz. The days were rainless and Loftus and Lt. Glascott were able to fix the true position of each night's camp, evidently by sights of the sun or stars, as there is later a reference to a chronometer being delivered in the diplomatic bag. In the meantime Col. Williams had with the help of the British Ambassador obtained permission from Tehran to excavate at Susa, and the whole English party arrived there, to camp on the mounds, in January 1851.[25]

Excavations were at once begun, using the under-servants of the Commission, who on the very first day opened a trench forty feet long and nine feet deep directed to "the very heart of the mound". The few Arabs who watched were much astounded at the audacity of the Firenghi, and well they might have been. Later some workmen were obtained but after a few days during which thieving broke out at night they departed. The party, thrown back on their own resources, luckily stumbled on a series of column bases, though their exact layout eluded discovery. A month was all that could be spared, and in February the Commission regathered at Mohammerah to spend the whole of the rest of the year in painful delimitation of the frontier.[26]

The dullness of this occupation which even Loftus, a congenital optimist, undoubtedly felt, must have been slightly relieved for him by the prospects of a possible return to archaeology. Col. Rawlinson, who as the British Consul in Baghdad controlled the British excavations in the area, wrote to him in March to ask whether, as Layard was leaving the country, Loftus would be disposed to carry on the general excavations in "Assyria, Babylonia, Chaldea and Susiana". Loftus did not get the letter until May. His reply was clear.

[24] *Travels* pp. 287-332.
[25] *Travels* pp. 333-4. FO Corr 248: 139. GS Proc p. 272.
[26] *Travels* pp. 349-55.

He concluded from Rawlinson's letter, he said, that "Layard has finally abandoned the work, and has no intention of resuming it. Under such circumstances", he went on, "I should be happy to undertake the task but if it is required of me merely to act in Layard's absence I should of course decline altogether having anything to do with it." Col. Williams, he added, was willing to release him, and to put servants and mules at his disposal as he could still continue his geological investigations. The double duties which would result entitled him, he hinted broadly, to some addition to his salary of £200.[27]

Rawlinson took this reply back to England in July, and, against a background of new excavations being started by the French, produced it to a sub-committee of the Trustees of the British Museum at a meeting with Layard and himself. By the beginning of August their report was ready. They thought it desirable to undertake experimental excavations at new sites in Babylon, and that the task might be properly confided to Loftus under the superintendence of Rawlinson. They estimated that, including the cost of an artist to draw the finds and of the transport of the finds to England, the expense would be £1500 a year for two years. Rawlinson had got his way and was soon back at Baghdad.[28]

The machinery to give effect to the decision—the initial grant from the Treasury of £500 for a dig at Susa and the formal approach to Lord Palmerston to authorise Col. Williams to release Loftus—moved slowly throughout the autumn, but by early January 1852, when Stratford Canning in Constantinople was beginning to grapple with the problem, Rawlinson had already extracted Loftus from the Commission and set him to work. Rawlinson required a practice dig to begin with, at an unidentified palace of Nebuchadnezzar about 10 miles from Baghdad. The intention was that, unless the results were very promising, Loftus was to leave after about 10 days for Susa and work there during the Spring. Rawlinson's plans extended on into the autumn, when he wanted Loftus to be ready "to break ground at Senkerah or Niffer" or anywhere that the French were not.[29]

Loftus did his ten days near Baghdad, and was then despatched to Susa, with Rawlinson reporting to the Trustees that he trusted that before April Loftus would have laid the great mound of Susa completely bare. That Rawlinson, an able Assyrian scholar, seriously contemplated that one man could excavate a mound containing thousands of years of history in two months is a striking commentary on what archaeology was then expected to achieve.[30]

Loftus reached Susa in the middle of February, having circumvented with some adroitness the rapacious attentions of an Arab tribe on the way. He carried the firman of the Shah authorising the excavation and was this time able to hire seventy labourers. He viewed the vast area of mounds almost with the feeling that his enterprise was a hopeless one (thereby incidentally showing more

[27] BM Corr.
[28] BM Min.
[29] BM Corr.
[30] BM Corr.

sense than Col. Rawlinson) but decided to start operations beside the site of the columns found by Col. Williams. Aided by good fortune, an intelligent calculation of distance between column bases, and some knowledge of the Great Hall at Persepolis, he verified the lay-out of an area some 250 feet by 350 feet either by direct excavation or by inference.[31]

On two of the column pedestals appeared trilingual cuneiform inscriptions regarding the completion of the building by Artaxerxes. There were numerous finds—terra-cotta figures of Venus, enamelled bricks, coins from the seventh century A.D., alabaster vases but all of Greek or Persian times and therefore of a comparatively late date. All this was done despite interference from aggrieved Arab tribes, the general disorder created by the workmen themselves who were increased in the end to 350 and quarrelled incessantly, and a visit by Col. Williams and his party when they had two horses stolen.[32]

Loftus stopped work about the middle of April, having added to his archaeological discoveries a plausible identification of the rivers now existing with those described by the Greeks. He then set out to rejoin the Commission now in the Northern section of the frontier.[33]

He had reported on his results to Rawlinson who wrote to Layard in July that Loftus had "turned the mound of Susa topsy-turvey without finding much", a comment which was, I suppose, consistent with his original intention to have the mound laid bare in no time at all, but showed no other appreciation of the problems involved. On the same day he wrote to the Museum Trustees advising in view of the financial position against the employment of Rassam, a former assistant of Layard, as an additional excavator. Loftus, he said, was "active, intelligent, and thoroughly in earnest, and will do all in his power to compensate for not being gifted with ubiquity".[34]

In London, however, matters were proceeding on different lines. On 26th June the Trustees had already agreed to engage Hormuzd Rassam to work under Rawlinson and Rawlinson was to be asked "to communicate to Mr. Loftus that that gentleman's further assistance beyond what he may be at present engaged upon, will not be required".[35]

While Loftus had never been promised permanent employment, this strikes one as a pretty cool performance. Rawlinson's reaction was cooler still. If, he wrote to the Trustees, on hearing of the change, Loftus did not get Rawlinson's letter he would try to employ Loftus in South Babylonia for the winter. "Loftus being of independent means will not raise money difficulties but will see that Rassam's engagement entails the use of economy". Loftus got no chance to comment. The news in fact did not reach him as he was by now far to the North and got none of Rawlinson's letters.[36]

He had been noting carefully the geological features of the frontier, discussing with Mr. Perkins of the American Mission the saltiness of Lake

[31] *Travels* pp. 357-368.
[32] *Travels* pp. 374-405.
[33] *Travels* pp. 423-433.
[34] BM Corr.
[35] BM Min.
[36] BM Corr.

Urumia and investigating with Lt. Glascott the fluctuations in level of Lake Van. It seems however that he had a severe illness about this time so that his exploration of Mount Ararat itself was never finished. It was some time during this summer, too, that the work of the Commission was completed.[37]

Early in October 1852 he came down from the hills to Cizre, some 90 miles North of Mosul. He pitched his tent near the bridge of boats over the Tigris there, and was unexpectedly joined by Rassam on his way to Mosul from Iskenderun and carrying with him the instructions of the Museum Trustees. It was the first information that Loftus had had of the change of plan, and he was according to Rassam not a little surprised at the news. They travelled down the river together to Mosul, and Loftus visited the site at Kuyunjik in Rassam's company.[38] After that he went on to Baghdad to see Rawlinson and evidently to refuse to do any further work on Rawlinson's terms. The Colonel reported grumpily to London that Loftus could not work in South Babylonia because of the disturbed state of the country and also that the funds would not permit it, so that Loftus had better return to England.[39] Little time was lost because he was evidently back in London by the middle of December. He had been absent for very nearly four years.[40]

He must early have decided to abandon Newcastle and set up his household in London because by April 1853 he was writing letters from Clifton Road, St. John's Wood, and this remained his address during the year. After he left again for Babylonia his wife moved to Moreland Cottage, Norwood and this became his permanent residence for the rest of his time in London.[41]

It was of course in London that his future most obviously lay. To begin with, there were the various botanical and zoological specimens he had collected to deliver to the British Museum (though the birds in one of the boxes had been entirely destroyed by water). Then there was a report to be made to the Trustees on the excavations at Susa. After a couple of requests for an extension of time he delivered his report at the beginning of April 1853 with some drawings and "photographic representations" of some inscriptions. (Incidentally this must be one of the earliest records of the use of the camera in archaeology). On 9th April the Trustees conferred with him upon the subject of his discoveries and conveyed to him their "especial thanks". I confess to great pleasure at the discovery that among the many eminent personages present there was the Rt. Hon. T. B. Macaulay.[42]

There was no security however in relying on the British Museum and he was soon casting around for other support. Ten days later he was writing to Sir William Hooker at Kew Gardens enclosing seeds of plants collected by him in Persia in 1851. It is the letter of a man who despite no previous acquaintance with the addressee is confident that what he has to offer is of interest. "As [the plants] may assist in throwing light on the gum-resins of

[37] GS Proc.
[38] Rassam pp. 3-4.
[39] BM Corr.
[40] BM Min.
[41] Kew Corr.
[42] BM Min and Corr.

the East they may prove an interesting addition to the Royal Gardens." Sir William's reply is not known but by September Loftus is promising to deliver personally some dried plant specimens and the correspondence develops a warmer note and becomes a regular feature of the next three or four years.[43]

However for Loftus the really important event of the year was the founding of the Assyrian Excavation Fund about July or August, 1853. The real promoters of the Fund, or "Society for Exploring the Ruins of Assyria and Babylonia with especial reference to Biblical Illustration" have not been identified, though Dr. Gadd surmises that certain London publishers were concerned.[44] The Prince Consort headed the subscription list. Layard became a member and was on the Committee. So also was Col. Rawlinson, which is hardly consistent with his later behaviour.[45]

The purpose of the Fund was to make good "the limited means hitherto at the command of the British Explorers in Assyria which have prevented their carrying on their researches in a systematic manner and on an adequate scale". The Society aimed to obtain material for completing the history of Assyria and Babylonia rather than bulky sculptures, and for this they wanted £10,000 to spend over three years.[46] In the meantime they had to engage an excavator. The choice in a sense was obvious. Layard had now turned to politics and in particular to encouraging the defence of the Turks against the Russians. Rassam was already in Assyria for the British Museum. Whether the Fund invited Loftus, or he came to them I do not know, but by August he had accepted the appointment.[47] The salary was £500 a year, which was by no means ungenerous, and in fact beyond the Fund's resources.

Before he set out he made a will. He signed it in London but it shows his strong attachment to Newcastle and his family. His executors were Edward Mather (a founder of the modern firm of Ingledew Mark Pybus) and John Gray, an innkeeper of Rosemary Lane. He appointed them, with his wife, as guardians of his three sons, Alfred Kennett, Frederick and William Kennett. He left his wife an insurance policy of four hundred pounds, and legacies of ten pounds to buy mourning rings to James Radford (who had been his own guardian), to Benjamin Green, the architect (who designed the Theatre Royal) and to Glossop, his friend of Cambridge days, who had gone on geological expeditions with him and now lived in Middlesex. He then directed the provision of two annuities, one of £300 for Charlotte for so long as she remained his widow and the other, to begin after his father's death, of £60 to his step-mother Elizabeth. This was evidently intended as a continuation of the £60 annuity which his grandfather had directed to be paid to his father for keeping away, but whether his grandfather would have approved of it is another matter. Finally the residue of the estate was left to Charlotte for her life, and after her death, by an arrangement much beloved

[43] Kew Corr.
[44] Gadd p. 95.
[45] Fund I.
[46] Fund I.
[47] BM Corr.

of the draftsmen of wills, equally between such of his children as should attain the age of 21 or, being female, marry under that age. It was an excellent and comprehensive document, but it could only work if the necessary funds were available.[48]

On 5th October he left for the East via Marseilles. Three weeks later he was writing from Constantinople to Kew, this time on the subject of gum-resins, while at the same time retailing political gossip about the Turko-Russian dispute and speculating on the cold ride ahead over the Taurus. Early in November he left by boat for Samsun on the Turkish Black Sea coast and from there must have ridden south over the mountains to Baghdad, meeting Rassam on the way.[49]

He had as companion William Boutcher, an artist engaged by the Fund to draw and photograph any finds, so that he was better equipped than on his previous excavations. On the other hand he could expect no encouragement from his former director, Col. Rawlinson, who thoroughly disapproved of the establishment of the Fund. Loftus might have been appointed to go when the Museum Trustees' work had stopped, said Rawlinson, but "that he should appear as a competitor is objectionable". Rawlinson promised the Trustees to check any attempt by Loftus to excavate in Assyria. The inconsistency of this attitude in one who was a Committee Member of the Fund is indeed so great that one suspects that Rawlinson's name had appeared as a Committee Member without his authority. However, the Fund was tactful enough to ask Rawlinson's help for Loftus, and the Colonel accordingly offered a choice of sites South of Baghdad where no conflict of interest could arise. Loftus's earlier experience had been in this area and he may not have been dissatisfied with the result.[50]

He was in Baghdad by the 6th December and had travelled South and established a camp some three miles from Warka, and near wells dug for the occasion, by the middle of January 1854. His account of this and of the start of his excavations is contained in two letters written by him to the Fund in January and February which were published with an appeal for financial support as their first report.[51] It is hopeless to attempt any coherent description of the excavations from these sources, which were undoubtedly written with one eye on the public. His discovery of a wall decorated with terra cotta cones, which from later discussion by the Germans who now excavate at Warka seems to have been a significant find, evidently occurred in February 1854.[52] He also recovered numerous clay tablets for decipherment by Rawlinson. At the same time Boutcher was busily drawing both plans and elevations of walls, but not plans or sections of trenches. Loftus also had time to write to Kew and to head the letter "Ruins of Warka (Ur of the Chaldees)". "From the date of this note" he goes on, "you will observe that

[48] Principal Probate Registry.
[49] Kew Corr.
[50] BM Corr.
[51] Fund I.
[52] North p. 214.

I have reached my destination and that I am once more on classic ground—at the birthplace of Abraham."[53] He was of course wrong about Ur (though to be fair not by more than twenty five miles) but evidently in high spirits.

He continued at Warka until April 1854 by which time the position in the North had completely altered. While Rassam had made a remarkable new discovery at the turn of the year, of the North-West Palace of Ashur-Bani-Pal at Kuyunjik, this had coincided with the crippling illness of his artist, Hodder. By the middle of January Hodder was being removed in a litter and Rawlinson was already trying to persuade Loftus to send Boutcher up to Mosul. The problem was that there were immense numbers of slabs being unearthed but no-one to draw them. Rassam could draw plans of the site, but very wisely no-one was prepared to entrust the finds to the uncertain waters of the Euphrates for transmission to Basrah without some previous record of what was being sent. A further trouble was that the Museum's funds were running out, so that late in March 1854, Rawlinson had to order Rassam to cease work by the end of the month as he was overspent.[54]

The opening for Loftus and Boutcher was obvious and the Fund Trustees were naturally keen to seize it. The characteristic of Assyrian excavation was large and spectacular finds. For all the Fund's announced devotion to the task of collecting historical material, the clay tablets of Warka were not to be compared as money-raisers with the winged lions and hunting scenes of Nineveh.

So Boutcher was sent on ahead to Kuyunjik in early April to draw the uncovered sculptures while Loftus delayed at Akher Koof near Baghdad waiting for confirmation that the Museum Trustees had finally abandoned Assyria. Rawlinson disapproved of this dilatoriness but as had happened three years before when he was asked to take over from Layard, Loftus liked to be certain who was in charge.[55] While he waited through May 1854, he wrote again to Hooker saying that he proposed to collect some plants and drugs by purchase in the bazaar and discussing how to obtain other specimens. He considered that his "First Campaign against the Mounds in Chaldea" had been tolerably successful because of the tablets he had discovered which had provided much information for Rawlinson. The hot weather was starting. "I do not relish" he said, "the summer's prospect before me".[56] At the beginning of June he received formal authorization from Rawlinson to excavate Kuyunjik and Nimrud at the expense of the Fund, and went up there.

He had hardly begun before receiving a severe letter from Rawlinson pointing out that his work did not confer any title to the property in the antiquities discovered by him. They belonged to the Museum Trustees who alone had been granted rights by the Turkish Court. At the same time Rawlinson wrote to the Trustees to report that Loftus seemed to think he had

[53] Kew Corr.
[54] BM Corr.
[55] BM Corr.
[56] Kew Corr.

acquired the right to the sculptures already found for the benefit of the Fund; but that Rawlinson would not hesitate to reoccupy from Loftus any sites wanted by the Museum. Loftus, he said, "will find the old cock sparrow a troublesome customer".[57]

Silence fell after this, so perhaps the quarrel was largely a product of the hot weather. It is equally reasonable to suppose, though, that it was a symptom of the growing financial difficulties of the Fund. That body had entered into some highly obscure negotiations with the King of Prussia which appear to have contemplated a donation by him of a sum (varying according to the account) of something between £500 and £2,000 in exchange for a satisfactory collection of Assyrian sculptures. It is a fair guess that Loftus knew his own income depended upon the successful acquisition of some finds for the King. Boutcher's salary was already in arrear.[58]

During the summer the Treasury suddenly relented and put a further grant of £1,500 at the disposal of the Museum Trustees. With a significant eagerness the Fund hastened to suggest that Loftus and Boutcher be transferred to Rawlinson's orders, on the footing that the Trustees should pay one half of their salaries. The Trustees were also to get the balance of the donations to the Fund (which turned out in practice to be negligible). After some bickering about who was to be entitled to surplus sculptures, which the Fund seems to have won, the transfer was agreed to for the period up to the end of March, 1855. The news reached Rawlinson in the middle of September, 1854.[59]

By this time Rawlinson and Loftus had made it up again. The provision of the new grant by the Treasury had enabled Rawlinson about July to send Christian Rassam to excavate on the same mound as Loftus, a certain recipe one would suppose for a lively dispute. It certainly produced one, which charmingly illustrates the random qualities of Victorian archaeology. On 31st August Rassam wrote to Rawlinson and after uttering some general complaints about Loftus reported that he had put six gangs along the walls of the North Palace to prevent Loftus digging under it, for Loftus had found a sculptured wall outside the Palace, about 15 feet below it. This villainy on the part of Loftus turned out, however, to have arisen merely from the fact that he was digging on the ground floor while Rassam was still on the first floor. Rassam was told to dig deeper.[60]

One may suspect that the news of Loftus's transfer to his command must have come as a relief to Rawlinson, for he could now dispense with Christian Rassam. Rawlinson opened the subject to Loftus with much tact. If Loftus were prepared to agree to the proposal, he said, the workmen at Mosul would be put under Loftus's orders from the 1st October and Loftus was to account to him from that date. He would lay down a general plan of operation "leaving all detail of execution to your own judgment and convenience" and was desirous that his general direction "be as little irksome as possible to those

[57] BM Corr.
[58] BM Corr and Gadd p. 110.
[59] BM Corr.
[60] BM Corr.

employed under my orders". If Loftus agreed, he and Boutcher were to continue at the North Palace at Kuyunjik and to dig also at the South East Palace at Nimrud during the winter. Loftus's acceptance was prompt. He intended, he said, to use twelve gangs and to put the excavated slabs in a hut. This method was desirable as "Mr. Boutcher will thus be able to apply the Photograph which is impossible to use in the trenches"—such were the technical difficulties then to be overcome.[61]

So from October 1854 to March 1855 Loftus and Boutcher laboured at Kuyunjik and Nimrud, partly in excavation, partly in packing the slabs and other finds, including an important collection of ivories, to go down river to Basrah.

It is not my purpose to describe Loftus's results in detail. Gadd's *Stones of Assyria* and Dr. Barnett's *Catalogue of the Nimrud Ivories in the British Museum* do this as completely as the records permit and it is an expert's task. There are two things which can be said, though. The first is that what was found represented a very substantial contribution to available Assyrian sculpture. (It was during this period that the four bas-reliefs which for about 100 years decorated (or overhung, depending on one's point of view) the stairs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne were extracted and packed.) The second is that Loftus used his customary ingenuity and energy in the course of the excavations. Some of the slabs had been split by fire so he had them coated with bitumen to hold the pieces together.[62] The ivories, discovered early in February 1855, also presented problems. They lay, blackened by fire, among wood ash at the bottom of a chamber. Many had been broken up, probably to secure inlaid jewels or gold. "I have got up a horseload of objects, and am fitting them together as fast as possible, preparatory to boiling them in Gelatine," he reported to the Fund's Treasurer, "The whole room is not yet explored, as the earth must first be removed from above. I propose going down tomorrow."[63]

And while I say that Loftus laboured, suggesting a rather unremitting and dreary task, there was some variety. A correspondent from *The Daily News* paid a visit about November. Later on Loftus despatched some acorns to Kew and reported that but for a severe sun-stroke he had, thanks to a good constitution, got well through the summer.[64] He never mentions the Crimean War, which had begun before he left Baghdad for Mosul in the previous May, but not far to the North the Russians and the Turks were preparing for battle around Erzerum, and Col. Williams and Churchill, once of the Boundary Commission, were trying to organize the Turkish resistance.

Rawlinson formally terminated Loftus's engagement at the end of March 1855. During April Loftus was collecting flowers in the desert between Mosul and Iskenderun which rather suggests that he took ship from there to start

[61] BM Corr.
[62] Athenaeum No. 1455 p. 791.
[63] Athenaeum No. 1430 p. 351.
[64] Kew Corr.

home.[65] When he reached England I do not know, but he was certainly back by July.

The Assyrian Excavation Fund was by then no more. Its second and final Report had appeared in February and consisted of complaints that its finances were exhausted, extracts from a number of letters from Loftus, some reproductions of Boutcher's drawings, and the admission, made as something of an afterthought but with considerable polish, that at some unstated date the services of their men in Assyria had been transferred to the British Museum.[66] Loftus was therefore without employment but with his usual thoroughness set to work to make as much use as possible of the materials to hand. He revised a report on the geology of the Turko-Persian frontier, which had already been read to the Geological Society, for publication in its Journal.[67] He wrote in September to the Literary and Philosophical Society, offering bas-reliefs from Nimrud on payment by the Society of the cost of carriage. He prepared a paper on the Susa excavations for the Royal Society of Literature, which was read to them in November. He got permission from the Museum Trustees to communicate to the Royal Geographical Society the Report written six years before on his journey from Baghdad to Basrah. (The Society enquired of Col. Rawlinson whether it was worthy of publication and that gentleman, being then in a good temper, declared that it was.[68]) In March, 1856 he read another paper to the Royal Society of Literature, this time on Warka.

In this description I have passed by the furious quarrel with Rawlinson, which occupied the pages of *The Athenaeum* during February 1856. It began with a lecture given by Rawlinson to the Royal Asiatic Society where he discussed an inscription from Nimrud which "he had recently met with". A fortnight later *The Athenaeum* carried a letter from James Radford (ably performing his duties as guardian, though I suspect that Loftus was the true author) pointing out that in the report of the lecture, "Mr. Loftus's name is, I observe omitted as the discoverer of the interesting inscription therein alluded to. This gentleman is well known to the readers of your columns as an indefatigable explorer ..." There was more of the same, and, immediately below, a violent reply by Rawlinson from which it is difficult to select the most offensive passages. Loftus, he said, was not an independent explorer. "When this inscription was found Mr. Loftus was *in my employ* (for the Museum) as a subordinate agent, paid by me, receiving all his instructions from me ..." Loftus should have sent him the inscription at Baghdad. "Considering the inscription, however, to be of no use (at least, I presume such to have been the reason, for otherwise the concealment was dishonest) he kept it to himself for a whole year". Again there was more, a great deal more, of the same.[69]

As on the occasion of their earlier dispute, however, the disagreement was soon over. The next week Rawlinson was writing, praising Loftus's work, and

[65] Kew Corr.
[66] Fund II.
[67] GS Proc.
[68] RGS Corr.
[69] Athenaeum No. 1478.

saying that his previous letter "contained expressions, which, since receiving Mr. Loftus's explanations, I feel to have been undeserved, and which I regret, therefore, to have made use of".[70] His retreat however was observed elsewhere. Hormuzd Rassam evidently felt that this was the moment when his work too should be recognized, and by April the Colonel had to write again to enlarge on the help that he had also had from Rassam.[71]

In June 1856 the sculptures which Loftus had packed over a year previously arrived at Havre in the *Manuel* after a circuitous voyage via Bombay and the Cape. The British Museum cases were not easily identifiable so on Rawlinson's advice Loftus was called in to help. He replied grandly "I shall be happy to run over to Havre and point out the sculptures", and was there two days later. His journey through Paris enabled him to visit Major-General Williams, the newly-promoted Hero of Kars, who had been captured by the Russians in the previous November and had just been repatriated. Three days later Loftus reported the completion of the discharge of the cases and the drowning of a docker submerged beneath a barrow. (The Trustees very properly made a donation to the widow.)[72] He came back to report to the Lit and Phil that their slabs had been left behind at Basrah and then to await the birth of his fifth child in September, which, he complained, prevented his going to a meeting of the British Association.[73]

It is impossible to imagine him really idle. No doubt the summer was spent at work on his book, *Travels in Chaldaea and Susiana*, but as the year went on it must have become imperative that he should take up some employment. He cannot have been receiving any regular salary for over twelve months. The possibility of any other learned society accepting a paper from him was remote. His book was in proof by November. It is fairly evident that the inheritance from his grandfather was no longer producing much income, certainly not enough to support a learned gentleman of leisure with a wife and a family of five. At this rather awkward moment there appeared a chance of exercising his ability as a geologist in the sort of out-of-the-way area which undoubtedly attracted him.

In July 1856, Professor Oldham, the Superintendent of the Geological Survey in India, had been authorized to extend the scope of the Survey and to engage three or four assistants at a monthly salary of Rs. 200.[74] He seems to have asked Trenham Reeks, of the School of Mines, to recruit for him, and Reeks approached Loftus at the beginning of September. Loftus accepted promptly, claiming that he was "not entirely a novus homo in Oriental campaigning" and expressed the intention of taking his wife with him and leaving his children behind.[75]

Some frantic activity followed. He had some troublesome negotiations with the Royal Botanic Gardens with a view to selling them the specimens he

[70] Athenaeum No. 1479 p. 265.
[71] Athenaeum No. 1485 p. 461.
[72] BM Corr and Min.
[73] Kew Corr.
[74] IPP.
[75] IGS Corr.

had brought back from Assyria. He pointed out that as "I take part of my family with me I am obliged to husband my resources" so that he could not present the specimens to Kew. They were apparently "stowed away in a huge chest" in Newcastle but he was anxious that Kew should have them. Too much of his collection was at the British Museum and "you know the difficulty of recovering anything that falls into those voracious jaws". Despite these considerations Dr. Hooker does not seem to have viewed Loftus's price of 10/- a hundred (for 1,700 specimens) with great enthusiasm though he did in the end acquire them at an unstated price apparently for the Calcutta Museum.[76]

At the same time Loftus was in brisk correspondence with the Royal Geographical Society about the printing of the maps to go with a paper on the River Eulaeus, and was writing the introduction to his book. He left England for the last time about 12th December, 1856.[77]

He seems to have been told that the Survey was at work in the foothills of the Himalayas but he was never to work there. The date on which he took up his appointment at Calcutta, 3rd February, 1857 was only three weeks before the mutiny of the 19th Native Infantry at Berhampur, the forerunner of the Mutiny itself. Three months later, after the outbreak at Meerut, the British lost control of events in Northern India for the rest of 1857.

Loftus was in Calcutta in June. Writing to Dr. Shaw of the Royal Geographical Society on the 20th of the month he reported that he had joined the Volunteer Defence Corps, which (in his view) the civilians had forced on the Government, a week previously, and had been on patrol duty from 1 a.m. to 4 a.m. "Things" he said, "are settling down", a remark which would have been ill received by the Europeans of Cawnpore who were massacred a week after the date of his letter. Loftus went on, "I much regret having joined this Survey. I find myself associated with boys who have just left apron strings! Is there any expedition afloat where I can be of use?"[78] There was evidently no answer to this *cri de coeur* and he was to spend most of his time in India either in the Raj Mahal hills some 200 miles North West of Calcutta or else in charge of the offices of the Survey at Calcutta itself.

One reason for his limited movement apart from the effects of the Mutiny was that he was a sick man. His obituary refers to sunstroke (or a *coup de soleil*, as it is there more elegantly expressed) but his illness was more deep-seated. The cause of his death was given as an abscess of the liver which is, I believe, consistent with his having suffered from amoebic dysentery. In October 1858 he was given leave to proceed to Port Blair in the Andaman Islands by the Company's steamer *Sydney*, in the vain hope one supposes that he might recuperate there. In November he obtained a medical certificate recommending that he be given leave of absence for eighteen months. Government granted leave for twelve months on 24th November and he sailed two days later from Calcutta for England on the S.S. *Tyburnia*.[79] He died at sea

[76] Kew Corr.
[77] RGS Corr.
[78] RGS Corr.
[79] IPP.

on the following day, 27th November, three days before his thirty-eighth birthday.

There is not much more to record. The news reached Newcastle only in March of the following year. Its arrival, ironically enough, coincided with the last stages of the erection of the Assyrian slabs on the Lit and Phil staircase.[80] In the same month Charlotte applied to the East India Company for a pension and was refused.[81] By 1st April the executors appointed by Loftus had renounced probate of his will and Charlotte, now living in Hoxton, herself took out letters of administration. The causes are obscure, but I would suppose that the estate, which was sworn as less than £5,000, was insufficient to support the rather ambitious designs of the will. A little later General Williams wrote a memorial letter of praise. After that there is nothing, save for the sad record in the Probate Registry for 1865 of the death of Charlotte and the appointments as administrators, and guardians of the infant children, of Edward Mather and John Gray, the original executors. In the result the vigorous inquisitive life of the man ceased with such abruptness as wrenched it out of general memory. Loftus will never be one of the heroes of Newcastle, but he deserves more recognition than he has had.

One reason for this lack is undoubtedly the inadequacy of the record he left behind him. While we have both his book, *Travels in Chaldaea and Susiana*, and a long paper on the geology of the Turco-Persian frontier, neither document is very satisfactory. Of the paper it is sufficient to note that it was rightly admitted by the editor of the Journal of the Geological Society of London to require a revision which it never got. The book covers a limited period only, primarily from 1849 to 1852 with some information on the early part of 1854, and does not for instance give any account of what was done at Kuyunjik. The narrative is somewhat confused, and though its plans and drawings demonstrate a due care for fact, it bears no resemblance at all to a modern excavation report. While his descriptions of the Arabs and their eccentricities throw some light on the attitude of the Englishman of that day towards the inferior Oriental there is nothing in them of any great distinction. One has the irritating feeling that there was in him a book of more lasting value, but that, due to inability to handle his materials effectively, it was never written.

He was also guilty of some quaint notions. A good example is his theory that outside the three principal ruins at Warka that whole enormous site was "filled with the bones and sepulchres of the dead" and that for 2,500 years Warka had been a sacred burial place to which the ancient people of Babylonia had transported their dead.[82] This theory was based on his observation of contemporary burial custom, coupled with his discovery of a large number of Parthian glazed sarcophagi, which must in fact have come from a very limited area as later excavators have found no such abundance of

[80] *Newcastle Courant* 11th March 1859. The reliefs remained in position until 1960 when they were sold. They are thought now (1971) to be in Los Angeles.

[81] IPP.

[82] *Travels* p. 199.

them.[83] The removal of one to the river forms the subject of the dramatic frontispiece to his book, where the workmen are depicted carrying a coffin on their shoulders, encouraged from behind by what is evidently Loftus himself on a horse, and thrusting their way through a band of apparently hostile natives, brandishing spears. These last were in fact the off-duty members of the work force engaged in jollifications. One suspects that this was intended to rival the equally dramatic representation of Layard moving the great winged bull from Nimrud, which appeared as the frontispiece to *Nineveh and Babylon*. The comparison is on the whole slightly ridiculous and I have half wondered whether it was intended as an elaborate joke.

But that said, one is bound to admire the breadth of his interest and the uninhibited confidence with which he would move from collecting plants to digging up ivories, from drawing geological sections to administering rough justice among his Arab workers. No doubt the specialist of today would find the results below standard, but how many results were obtained! For instance, Julius Jordan, the first director of the German excavation at Warka wrote in 1928, "in ... Loftus we possess already an outstanding presentation of the first ample excavation in Warka ... the observations gathered by Sir William (sic) are of such versatility and so brilliantly presented that we felt solid ground under our feet from the very beginning of our work."[84] It is necessary to recollect the difficulties of transport, of health and of food and the danger of attack by local tribesmen which were the lot of anyone working in the disordered Iraq of that day to see what Loftus achieved in its proper perspective.

Of course the full promise of his life was unfulfilled. The Crimean War and then his breakdown in health occurred just when the extent of his talents had become apparent. He was, I think, in the true tradition of Victorian explorers and the essence of his spirit resides in that appeal from Calcutta—"Is there any expedition afloat where I can be of use?" Let us remember him by that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Dr. Richard Barnett, Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities in the British Museum, for access to extracts made by him and the late Dr. Gadd from the records of the British Museum Trustees. Without this help I could not have written this memoir.

I have also to thank for their patience, and help in providing me with information, the Librarians of the India Office Library, of the Institute of Geological Sciences, of the Royal Botanic Gardens and of the Royal Geographical Society; the late George Fearon of Rye; Dr. N. McCord and Miss R. B. Harbottle.

[83] North p. 241.

[84] North p. 190. The presence of solid ground beneath Dr. Jordan's feet is an interesting phenomenon in itself, but arises I suspect from the extraordinarily stilted English of Mr. North.

REFERENCES

BM Corr	Original Papers of the British Museum Trustees.
BM Min	Minutes of Standing Committee Meetings of the British Museum Trustees.
FO Corr	Foreign Office Records at Public Record Office. FO 78: 762 and 811. FO 248: 139.
Fund I, Fund II	Reports of the Assyrian Excavation Fund dated respectively 28th April 1854 and 20th February 1855.
Gadd	C. J. Gadd *The Stones of Assyria* London 1937.
GS Proc	Geological Society of London Quarterly Journal 1854 Vol. XI.
IGS Corr	Correspondence of the Institute of Geological Sciences.
IPP	Indian Public Proceedings.
Kew Corr	Correspondence of the Royal Botanic Gardens: English Letters—Vols. xxxiii and xxxvi. E. Indian Letters Vol. iv.
NHS Min	Northumberland Durham and Newcastle Natural History Society Minutes.
North	Robert North *Status of the Warka Excavation* Orientalia Vol. 26 New Series pp. 185 ff.
Rassam	Hormuzd Rassam *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod* New York 1897.
RGS Corr	Correspondence of the Royal Geographical Society.
Travels	W. K. Loftus *Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana* London 1857.
Venn	John Venn *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* Vol. II 1898.
Ward	S. G. P. Ward *Faithful, the Story of the DLI* London 1963.
Waterfield	Gordon Waterfield *Layard of Nineveh* London 1963.
Welford	Richard Welford *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed* 1895.