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ART. I.—*Avesta die heiligen Schriften der Parsen. Aus dem grundtext übersetzt, mit steter rücksicht auf die tradition.* Von Dr. FRIEDRICH SPIEGEL. Leipzig, 1852, 1859, 1863.

*Die altpersischen Keilenschriften, im grundtexte, mit übersetzung, grammatik und glossar.* Von FR. SPIEGEL. Leipzig, 1862.

*A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, so far as it illustrates the primitive religion of the Brahmans.* By MAX MÜLLER, M. A., Taylorian Professor in the University of Oxford. London, 1859.

*The Religions before Christ: being an Introduction to the first three Centuries of the Church.* By EDMOND DE PRESSENSÉ. Translated by L. Corkran. Edinburgh, 1862.

ON the religion of pre-Hellenic antiquity the materials are copious; and if not satisfactory on all points, are decisive as to the great features of the subject. They consist of Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, the Hebrew Scriptures, and the ancient books of the Parsees and Hindoos, with incidental help from other quarters.

The primitive elements of religion, as well as its subsequent history, appear to have been very similar in the different nations thus represented. The progressive changes, as exhibited in the books now mentioned, when the older are compared with the later, are found to be of the same general tenor in all.

ART. II.—*Les Mystères du Desert, Souvenirs de Voyages en Asie, &c.* Par HADJI-ABD-EL HAMID BEY (Col. L. DU COURET), Membre de la Societé Orientale, &c. 2 Tomes. Paris: Dentu.

*Life in the Desert, or Recollections of Travel in Asia, &c.* By Col. L. DU COURET. Translated from the French. New York: Mason Brothers.

GEOGRAPHY, like most other sciences, has its as yet unsolved problems, and some of the most important as well as curious of them are connected with the Arabian peninsula. On one side it touches the region which is generally regarded as the cradle of the human race, as well as the Holy Land given to God's covenant people. Within its limits some of the grandest events recorded in the Bible occurred; its peoples and productions were described ages ago by Herodotus, and with surprising accuracy, if we except the tough stories told him by Phœnician sailors, for their own selfish ends; and most of the ancient geographers seem to have been familiar with all parts of the country. But for centuries past Arabia has been, and is at this present moment, in regard to its physical features, its antiquities, its dialects, and its commercial capabilities, almost as complete a *terra incognita* as central Africa. The traveller, the savant, the merchant, and the Christian missionary, have been as effectually shut out from it as if the whole peninsula had been girdled by a brazen wall.

Of late years, however, various attempts have been made, with more or less success, to surmount this barrier, and to penetrate into the interior of Arabia. The growing importance of the so-called "Eastern Question," which from time to time so largely occupies the cabinets of Europe, will no doubt give a fresh stimulus to these efforts, and will supply new facilities for the solution of problems profoundly interesting to the geographer, the antiquary, and the Christian. In any view of "the east," of course Arabia must be included; and it is a very noticeable fact, that within a few years the attention of various classes in Europe and America has been more and more drawn to that wonderful region, where some of the grandest scenes of

human history were enacted. Statesmen are pondering the effect which any material change in the status of the Turkish empire will have on the so-called "balance of power;" the merchant is investigating the ancient avenues of commerce, in order to find by which one of them, with the help of the steamer and the iron horse, he can get cheapest and speediest across to India and China; while to the British and American Christians, the questions that come closest home to their hearts is, how can the lands of the Crescent and the Koran be most effectually reached and subjugated by the Gospel.

The volumes whose title is given at the head of this article, are among the most interesting and valuable of those relating to Arabia which have been recently published. Their author, Col. Du Couret, is a Frenchman, whose religious faith, like that of his English brother traveller, Mr. Burton, we are sorry to say, is of an extremely easy sort. So bent was he to reach the interior of Arabia, that, as a means of gaining his object, he avowed himself to be a believer in the Koran. He went to Mecca to see the place, and to gain the prestige of a Hadji, and while there he won the confidence and warm regard of the Imaum of Sana, a large city southeast of Mecca. Through his powerful influence, fortified by his own character of a Moslem, and his thorough knowledge of the Arabic, gained during a long residence in Algeria and Egypt, he succeeded in exploring regions into which few Europeans have ever ventured to go, even in disguise. As, however, we do not propose to follow the Hadji through his periphrasies, we shall simply say here in regard to the volumes before us, that the English edition, though in some parts rather a compend than a version, is a much more readable book than the original, the extremely short paragraphs of which—many of them filling only half a line—give its pages the look of blank verse rather than of prose.

The physical structure and features of Arabia are such as render it a fitting home for a nomad and independent race, although many portions of the country are well adapted to agriculture, and have been long occupied by a fixed population. Its proper northern boundary is a point on which geographers are not agreed, nor is it one of easy adjustment, inasmuch as

the regions frequented by the Bedouin Arabs include the ancient Bashan up to the latitude of Damascus, and some of the provinces nominally belonging to Persia, around the head of the Persian Gulf. On the west, the south, and the east, Arabia is bounded by water, thus forming one of the largest peninsulas on the globe. The ordinary maps give one a very imperfect idea of its size. For example, its length, from the Syrian frontier to the Indian ocean, is about fifteen hundred miles; the breadth of the neck of the peninsula, from the head of the gulf of Suez to Bassorah, near the mouth of the Euphrates, is nine hundred miles; while in the latitude of Djiddah, near the middle of the peninsula, its breadth is set down by one of the latest authorities at twenty-two hundred and fifty miles. Unless all the maps are wrong, this last figure, however, must be an exaggeration. Murray puts it at twelve hundred miles, which, though perhaps under the truth, comes nearer to it.\* This vast peninsula, from its diversified surface, contains within its bounds the climates and the vegetable productions of various and widely separated regions. The highland provinces yield wheat, barley, and other grains in abundance; the fruits of Europe, such as the apricot, peach, apple, fig, grape, &c., are raised in great perfection; and in these districts there are extensive forests, including many trees little known, or differing widely from the same genera in northern latitudes. The provinces nearer the seacoast abound in the sweet-scented shrubs for which Arabia has been celebrated during many ages. The gardens of Tayef, seventy-two miles east of Mecca, are renowned for roses of such exquisite beauty and fragrance, that they are sent to all parts of the land. Burckhardt mentions, that one morning at sunrise, when on

\* "The vast country of Arabia has a superficies of above a million square miles, and is thus more than equal to one-fourth of Europe."—*Richardson's Herodotus*, I. 469. He adds, in regard to its northern boundary: "Some writers consider that a line drawn from the northeastern corner of the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea at Suez, which would pass almost exactly along the thirtieth parallel, is the proper northern boundary. Others extend Arabia northwards to the thirty-seventh parallel, and make the Euphrates and the narrow isthmus between it and the gulf of Iskenderun inclose the Arabian territory on its fourth side." The last-named line was regarded by Xenophon as the northern boundary.—See *Anabasis*, B. I. c. 5.

the road from Tayef to Mecca, every tree and shrub exhaled the most delicious aroma. Even the desert is not so barren as it seems, but yields various products on which the camel and other animals love to feed; and, what is remarkable, each district has a plant of its own, which will grow nowhere else.

The threefold division of the country into Arabia the Stony, the Desert, and the Happy, though one of long standing, having been used by some of the ancient geographers, is unknown among the Arabs. While there is some ground for this description, the terms applied to the three sections must be taken with limitation. For example, in the Stony and the Desert portions there are numerous localities as beautiful and fertile as any of those which have suggested the phrase of "Araby the blessed;" and on the other hand, Arabia Felix contains not a few ranges of rocky hills, and plains as arid as any of those in the Desert. Stony Arabia or Petraea is the smallest of the three divisions, and includes a narrow strip of coast on the Red Sea, from Mecca northward to the peninsula of Sinai, and the region once known as Idumæa. Arabia Deserta includes the northern half (or perhaps a larger share) of the remainder of the great peninsula; while Arabia Felix is the name applied to the southern portion of it.

The oriental geographers make quite a different division of the country. Some speak of only two sections, viz., Hedjaz and Yemen. Others, as Abulfeda, name five provinces, Tehama, Nedjed, Hedjaz, Yemen, and Amdh or Ared. The Baron Von Hammer, who has collected and compared a vast mass of geographical evidence from oriental sources, insists that the grand divisions of Arabia properly are: 1. *El Hadjr*, or the Stony, with natural boundaries to the east. 2. *El Hadjaz*, along the Red Sea as far south as north latitude nineteen, and having natural boundaries on the east and south. 3. *El Yemen*, the southern portion of the coast along the Red Sea, and extending east to 4. *El Nedjed*, the upland or high plateau in the centre of the peninsula, bordered on the south by the great desert *El Ahkaf*. 5. *Hadramaut*, which extends along the Indian ocean, between Yemen and 6. *Es Shehr*, a dreary desert, converted from a fertile land into a wilderness, by the curse of Nebhi Hud, the ante-Mahometan prophet of this part of Arabia. 7. *El Oman*,

at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, bordered on the west by the great desert. 8. *El Hedjer* or *El Bahrein*, extending along the Persian Gulf to its head, bordered on the west by the high central plateau. 9. *El Yemanah*, southeast of El Nedjed, and bordering on Hedjer, Oman, and the desert Ahkaf.

Since the visit of our countryman, Stevens, to the ancient capital of Edom, some thirty years ago, many Americans and Englishmen have made the tour of Arabia Petræa, and the works of Robinson, Wilson, and others, have made us tolerably familiar with the topography of the region. Of the two larger divisions of the country, Arabia Felix and Arabia Deserta, our knowledge is extremely limited, the few modern travellers who have attempted to penetrate the interior having been compelled to confine themselves to the caravan routes, and to assume a disguise of some sort. Burton succeeded in this way in reaching Medina and Meeea. Du Couret, as has been already mentioned, was an avowed Moslem. Dr. Wallin, Professor of Arabic in the University of Finland, starting from Akaba, was able to reach the foot of the Shammar range of mountains, and to examine some portions of the Nedjed; and the Baron Von Wude was fortunate enough to make the journey from Mokallah, on the Indian ocean, to the borders of the great wilderness of El Akhar. But the sharp and suspicious eyes of the Arabs were continually upon them, and their lives were in perpetual peril. Hence the field of observation open to each of these travellers, although many hundred miles in length, was necessarily a very narrow one, as any divergence from the beaten track of the caravan, or from the camp of the tribe under whose protection they chanced to be, was full of risk.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that these latest travellers are not agreed in regard to the physical structure of the Arabian peninsula. For example, Burton, in a communication to the Royal Geographical Society, on this subject, maintains that its most elevated portion is in the north, on the borders of Syria, and that there is a gradual and easy slope down to the Indian ocean. His theory, however, is proved to be wholly groundless by the discoveries of Wallin, Von Wude, and Du Couret, whose statements, as far as they go, confirm those of the ancient and Arab geographers. According to the latter, the central portion

of the peninsula is a vast highland plateau, across which run ranges of mountains, many of whose peaks equal and perhaps exceed the loftiest points of Lebanon. The descent from this Alpine region eastward to the shores of the Persian Gulf, and northward towards Syria is gradual, but towards the south and west it is quite abrupt, the plateau being on these two sides flanked by the mountain ranges which skirt the Red Sea and the Indian ocean, at a distance of sixty or seventy miles from the coast.

Du Couret thus describes the interior of Hadramaut, at a point twenty-one days' journey east of Sana: "The road led us through a narrow, silent valley between two abrupt mountains, where we halted for a short time to rest our animals. What a sight then met our gaze! Vast deserts to the south-west, the vision intercepted only by great rugged mountain peaks capped with heavy clouds, and washed at their base by rivers which, according to Strabo, once rolled over sands of gold. Upon the wide land stretching away from us, the eye can discern neither earth nor turf—nothing but shrubs and flowers (this was on the 9th of September) of the most gorgeous beauty. The air is loaded with the perfume of blossoms innumerable." Two days after he was "in the forests of Hadramaut. All around us stood trees of immense size. The luxuriant foliage with which the trees are crowned, is so brilliant in its varied hues as to resemble a great basket of flowers, in which gold, purple, orange, and bronze are mingled in wild confusion. . . . Our route now led us through mountains apparently without end. Near their tops heavy vapours rolled; below, nature was one ruin. Nothing met the eye but tumbled rocks covered with the shattered debris of others that had fallen on them; tremendous precipices of confused and ghastly forms. Here was to be seen a peak whose summit was lost in the clouds; there a chain of mountains, the rugged line of which loomed against the sky, their abrupt slopes bristling with masses of granite that seemed to have been hurled down by some Titan's gigantic arm. Such are the mountains of Hadramaut."

The account of the Baron Von Wude's journey through the same region, though on a different line of travel, is even more

interesting than that just given, and fully confirms the above statements respecting the physical geography of Arabia. The Baron, disguised as an Arab, and under the protection of a sheik, started from the seaport town of Mokallah, and in eight days reached the famous Wady Doan. The heat upon the coast, especially in the valleys, was fearfully intense, (in June); but the end of the first day's journey brought him to ground about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and where the temperature had sensibly abated. Though the lower grounds in the valleys and on the plains seemed barren, the hills gave evidence of great fertility in the trees and shrubs with which they were covered. On the fourth day he reached a mountain four thousand feet high, which was also clothed with aromatic shrubs. His advance into the interior was over a succession of terrace-like ridges, until on the eighth day he gained an elevation of eight thousand feet, from whence the Indian ocean could be seen in the hazy distance. Here he entered upon a vast plain, broken here and there by wadis or narrow valleys. The thermometer at this point never rose above eighty, while the nights were intensely cold. He came so suddenly upon the Wady Doan, one of the chief objects of his journey, that he was completely taken by surprise, and was lost in wonder at the scene which it presented to his view. This wady is about five hundred feet wide, and the bottom of it six hundred feet below the general level of the plain; in a word, it is a narrow ravine extending hundreds of miles in length, bearing various names in different sections of it, and finally debouching on the seacoast. On the sloping sides of the ravine, which reached nearly half way to the level of the plain, there was a long succession of towns and villages, presenting the appearance of an amphitheatre, while the grounds below them were covered with date trees. As the Baron had succeeded so well in his endeavour to unfold the "mysteries of the desert" so far, he resolved to go still farther into them; and he accordingly set out for the Wady Haggarin, distant five days from Doan, where he found immense forests of date trees, watered by a continually running stream, which was said to take its rise amid the mountains northwest of Hota, and four days distant from it.

A two days' journey brought him to Wady Amt, which, says



he, "equals Doan in extent, and is like it in form and the proximity of its towns. From Hota, where it joins Wady Haggarin, I again ascended the high table-land, and going westward, in four days I reached Sava, a town in the Wady Rachin. It is not so populous as the others. It runs eight days to Wady Kasr, which I was told was only one day's journey from the desert of El Akhaf, and that the part which extends eight days' journey along the borders of the desert is inaccessible, the whole space being full of 'snow spots,' into which if any one fell, he would certainly perish." Having got so near to that mysterious region, which no European had ever seen, and which even the Arab dreaded to approach, the Baron determined to push on towards it, in spite of the earnest remonstrances of his Arab friends. Six hours' travel in a northwest course brought him to the confines of the desert, which is about one thousand feet below the level of the plateau. "A melancholy scene," he says, "presented itself to my astonished sight. Conceive an immense sandy plain strewed with numberless undulating hills, which gave it the appearance of a moving sea. Not a single trace of vegetation animated the vast expanse. Not a solitary bird interrupted with its notes the silence of death. In the far distance I distinctly saw three spots of dazzling whiteness. My guide said, 'That is Bahr el Saffi. Ghosts inhabit those precipices, and have covered with treacherous sand the treasures buried beneath them.' On approaching cautiously to the edge of the desert, I found that the sand was an almost impalpable powder, into which a plummet sank nearly as readily as in water. I will not hazard an opinion of my own, but refer the phenomenon to the learned." Unfortunately for himself and for science, the Baron, not long after his great success, fell into the hands of a crowd of fanatical Arabs, from whom he barely escaped with his life; but with the loss of all his valuables, of most of his papers, and on the express condition of his immediate return to Mokallah. He arrived there safely, having been twelve days on the journey from the point at which he was obliged to turn back.

These accounts of Du Couret and Von Wude, in our judgment, give some help towards the solution of one of the most interesting problems belonging to the physical geography of

Arabia, namely, the question as to the existence of the river Aftan. If there is in the centre of the peninsula an Alpine region, more or less covered with perpetual snow, there must be a great flow of water in some direction, and it is reasonable to suppose that it would be eastward, down the gradual slope towards the Persian Gulf. Some scientific friends, who have travelled in Arabia Petræa, expressed to us their strong conviction, founded on the statements of Arabs from the interior, and their own personal observations, that such a snowy region does exist there. On the other hand, Edrisi and other Arab geographers positively affirm that the large river El Aftan, the course of which is laid down in some American and English maps of Arabia, rises in the central, highland region, and flowing eastward empties into the gulf or bay of Bahrein.

Captain Sadlier, an officer in the service of the East India Company, who was sent on a mission to Ibrahim Pasha, during his expedition against the Wahabees, in 1819, is indeed said to have crossed and recrossed the supposed line of the Aftan, without finding traces of any considerable river; and after the publication of his "Notes of a Journey across Arabia," the existence of the Aftan, which many had previously deemed exceedingly improbable, was pronounced by them an absolute fable. But Sadlier's journey was performed entirely by night, his opportunity to observe the country was imperfect, and limited to his line of march, over which he was forced to pass with the utmost haste and caution, and it may have been, in the main, parallel to the course of the river, and even at no great distance from the stream. This, to say the least, is possible; and hence we cannot attach much importance to his negative testimony on the subject, especially when viewed in connection with the fact that certain parts of the coast of Bahrein are remarkable for the powerful springs of fresh water, which are easily accessible at low tide. When the tide is high, they are sometimes covered with twelve feet of sea-water; but so great is their volume and power, that the water is sweet at several feet from the bottom. Indeed, the whole province of Bahrein abounds with fresh water, which, though often prevented by the fierce heats from collecting on the surface and forming permanent streams, is obtained even on sandy plains,

by digging a few feet. It also contains numerous fresh-water lakes. These facts are deemed, as we think, by some eminent physical geographers, as confirmatory of the statements of the Arabs in regard to the rivers flowing from the Alpine region of the interior towards the sea, and whose volume must be large, if, as is supposed, at the distance of hundreds of miles from their source, they continue their course beneath the sand, on a substratum of marly clay, and give rise to vast bodies of subterranean water.

But there are other "mysteries" in that hitherto inaccessible land, not less interesting than these problems of physical geography, that await solution. We have reason to believe that there are in the depths of Arabia, monuments of ancient art, and memorials of remote ages, not less important for the light they would cast on the history of the past, sacred and profane, than those which have been unearthed by Layard and Loftus on the plains of Babylonia and Persia, and whose legends have been decyphered with such marvellous skill by Rawlinson and others. An old tradition, supported by the testimonies of the Greek and Arab geographers, and the statements of intelligent natives of the present day, identifies Mareb, the chief town of the district of the same name, with the ancient Saba or Sheba. It stands on the edge of the high table-land on which the city of Sana lies. All the Arab historians agree that Mareb, though an inconsiderable town at the various periods in which they wrote, was surrounded by vast ruins, the remnants of its earlier grandeur. With the view of procuring an unfailing supply of water for the irrigation of their wady or valley, it is said that the inhabitants, in time immemorial, had constructed an immense stone wall or dam across the valley, and that the waters flowing down from the mountains in the west were collected, so as to form a large and deep lake. After a time, but at what date is uncertain, the dyke gave way, and the resistless flood destroyed not only the town below it, but also the cultivated fields of the valley; and as the inhabitants were unable or unwilling to rebuild the dam, a once fertile district was converted into a desert.

When Niebuhr was at Sana, he gathered much valuable information respecting these ancient water-works, and the

venerable metropolis of the old Himyaritic kingdom; but neither he nor any other European succeeded in penetrating to that classic spot until 1843, when Joseph Arnaud, an enterprising young Frenchman, accomplished the feat, though at the imminent risk of his life. His description of the place agrees with and confirms the accounts of Niebuhr and others. Mareb, the once splendid *Mairaba Metropolis* of Ptolemy, is now a miserable village, surrounded by a brick wall; but the extensive ruins which cover its environs mark the site of the ancient city, and attest its primeval grandeur. The royal palace, or perhaps the central portion of it, which formed the city proper, appears to have been of a circular shape, about a mile in diameter, and inclosed by a massive wall of freestone. Within and without its ruined precincts there lie scattered about numerous fragments of large buildings, huge square stones, friezes and other house ornaments, and even entire columns hewn out of the hardest limestone. West of the ancient city are found extensive remains of the outer wall of a palace which the inhabitants call Haram Bilkis, or "Palace of Bilkis," in memory of the Sabæan or Himyaritic queen, Bilkis, who is said to have founded that royal residence, and who is also believed to have been the Queen of Sheba, or "the Queen of the South, who came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." Matt. xii. 42. About one-fourth of the wall is still standing, and is covered with Himyaritic inscriptions, as are also many of the large blocks of stone. The ruins of the famous dyke are on the east of the town. The portions that lean against the projecting foot of the mountains are sufficiently well preserved to indicate their original destination. In these two sections of the wall there are numerous gates or openings still in excellent preservation, constructed at different levels, and evidently designed to regulate the supply of water to the lower grounds.

The destruction of this dyke, says Sale, the translator of the Koran, "is famous in Arabian history, as the inundation of Arem, and was the first great calamity that befell the tribes settled in Yemen, soon after the time of Alexander the Great." The fact is mentioned in the Koran, chap. xxxiv: "Saba (Mareb) had heretofore a sign in their dwelling-place, viz., two gardens on

the right hand and on the left. . . . But they turned aside; wherefore we sent against them the inundation of Al Arem, and changed their two gardens into gardens yielding bitter fruit." Sale, in his note on this passage, says that "Arem is used for that stupendous mound which formed the vast reservoir above the city of Saba, and which was broken down in the night by a mighty flood. Al Beidawi supposes this mound was the work of Queen Balkis, and that the catastrophe happened after the time of Christ."

On his journey from Sana to Mareb, and at a short distance from the last-named town, Du Couret found a small village occupied, as he thinks, by descendants of the ancient Sabæans. They were evidently of a race different from the Arabs of the vicinity, who would neither eat nor drink with them, regarding them as impure. While they spoke Arabic in dealing with strangers, they used among themselves a dialect of their own, between which and the Arabic there was some such relation as that between the modern Romaic and ancient Greek. Around the village, in all directions, he observed numerous ruins, many of which were covered with Himyaritic inscriptions. But the brevity of his stay here and at Mareb, and the fear of arousing the suspicions of the Arabs, whose sharp eyes were constantly on the watch, compelled him to be content with a cursory examination. His account of the environs of Mareb, so far as it goes, confirms the narrative of Arnaud. The governments of Europe, he adds, have been at great pains to gather the debris of ancient civilization at Meroe, Babylon, Nineveh, Palmyra, and Baalbec. Here are ruins which might be exhumed at vastly less expense and trouble, and a lost page be thus restored to the history of humanity.

If the modern Mareb is, what Arabian tradition and history assert it to be, the site of the ancient Sheba, and if the accounts which the few modern travellers who have visited the spot, give respecting the extent, condition, and character of the ruins near it are trustworthy, it offers, to the Christian antiquary in particular, a field of research as full of interest and promise as any other in the east. Beneath those mighty mounds, which for ages past have been among the most notable landmarks on the plains of Babylonia and Persia, and which cover

the once splendid capitals of the oldest empires of history, Layard, Loftus, and others, have found, in perfect preservation, monuments of ancient art, and records of ancient kingdoms, which are now the glory and the wonder of the British Museum. These archives of Babylon, Nineveh, and Shushan, have been deciphered by Rawlinson, and other eminent scholars of France and Germany, for whose toilsome but successful study of the exhumed Assyrian and Persian sculptures, every lover of the Bible may well give many thanksgivings to God. So far as Scripture professes to give the history of these great monarchies, the exact truthfulness of its narrative, often in seemingly insignificant details, is confirmed by the discoveries just noticed. Why may we not hope to find in the depths of the Arabian peninsula, other monuments of the distant past, which shall bear equally explicit testimony to the truth of Old Testament history? Whether Mareb or Saba be or be not the ancient Sheba, the home of the queen who visited Solomon must have been in some part of southern Arabia, as our Lord expressly calls her "the Queen of the South;" and as the presents which she gave to the Jewish king, "the gold, the precious stones," and especially the rare "spices,"\* were among the peculiar and well-known productions of that country. During the reign of Solomon, there was, as we know from the scriptural references to it, an extensive trade carried on by himself and the merchant princes of Tyre, with the southern provinces of Arabia. Nor can there be any doubt as to the position of the chief centres of this commerce, as they have retained their ancient names to this day. The Haran, Canneh, and Eden, mentioned by Ezekiel (chap. xxvii.), in a passage of priceless value to the ethnographer, and the historian of ancient commerce, may have lost the importance which once belonged to them; but there can be little if any doubt that the localities thus designated are the same as those now bearing these names, on or near the Indian ocean. A traffic such as that described by the prophet, must have immensely enriched the country whose resources it developed, and for whose rare products it found a ready market; and it thus supplied the means of

\* "Neither was there any such spice as the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon."—2 Chron. ix. 9.

erecting monuments which, if not as magnificent as those of Egypt, were at least as capable of resisting the ravages of time.

There are, however, other parts of the Arabian peninsula which we have reason to believe would open fields of research profoundly interesting to the antiquarian and the historian, if they could be safely visited and carefully examined. A friend, who has made several journeys to the east, informed us that some Bedouins whom he met at Petra, told him, that at the distance of a few days' journey eastward, there were ruins even grander than those of the ancient capital of Edom. They asserted that there were monuments in that region, which, from their account, must be similar to the most remarkable of those on the banks of the Nile. For example, they described a double colonnade of sphinxes leading to a grand temple; yet these men had never been in Egypt, and their statements were not made with a view of inducing our friend and his party to go into the desert. Whether this story be true or false, the existence of ruined cities, as extensive and magnificent as those of Petra, between that place and the Persian Gulf, has been proved by the explorations of Dr. Wallin. Again, in the central part of the peninsula, in the region where the sect of the Wahabees had its origin, and which was long the seat of their power, there are numerous ruined cities. The fact is attested by the French officers who accompanied the army sent by Mohamet Ali against the Wahabees, in 1817, and also by Captain Sadlier, whose journey across the peninsula has been already noticed. On some of the most recent maps of Arabia, these ruins are marked on a line extending through several degrees of longitude. The district in which they occur is within the limits of the Nedjed, one of the largest of the central provinces of Arabia, and which Dr. Wallin, who traversed it in several directions, describes as exceedingly variegated in its physical character, and occupied by a permanent as well as nomad population; and where, too, he found a mixture of races evidently of Syrian and Jewish origin. Between this part of the peninsula and the chief marts of Phœnician, Egyptian, and Hebrew commerce, there must have been a constant intercourse in ancient times; and if the ruins be half as numer-

ous as they are said to be, it is by no means improbable that there may yet be discovered among them some important illustrative monuments of the past.

The glimpses which the recent travellers in Arabia enable us to get of the country and its resources, imperfect as they are, warrant the belief that if it was once more made accessible to commerce, there would be a large accession to the wealth of the world. How important a place it held among the commercial nations of antiquity is abundantly evident from the numerous references to its productions and its trade, by sacred and profane writers. The province now known as Yemen, forming part of the ancient Sheba, was famous for its spices, its precious stones, and its gold. Petra, though in the midst of barren hills, and with no natural advantages whatever, except the ease with which its rocky ravine could be defended, grew into a splendid city, simply from being one of the entrepôts of traffic. According to Heeren, (*Historical Researches*, i.) who has discussed the subject very fully, Petra was the terminus of two grand commercial routes, one of which ran nearly eastward, across the Syrian desert, to Gena on the Persian Gulf, while the other ran southward, along the shore of the Red Sea to Sheba or Yemen. Intercourse was thus maintained between the capital of Idumæa and India and southern Arabia. We think it more than probable that there was also an intermediate route, travelled by a constant "stream of the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, by the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth," (Isa. lx.)—a route which gave access to the western and central portions of what is now known as the Nedjed.

"Gold mines," says Heeren, "are no longer to be found there, but the assurances of antiquity respecting them are so general and explicit, that it is impossible reasonably to doubt that *Yemen once abounded in gold*. Why, indeed," he adds, "should not the mountains of Arabia yield this metal, which was so plentiful in those just opposite, in Ethiopia?" If these statements are true, is it reasonable to suppose that these mountain treasures have been completely exhausted? The fact that these mines have not been worked for a long period, in our judgment, is no proof of their exhaustion, as it is sufficiently explained by the political circumstances of the country, the



want of a supreme, intelligent, and enterprising government, and the semi-barbarous condition of its numerous tribes. In a word, the causes which render access to the interior so difficult and dangerous now, causes which in a greater or less degree have existed for centuries, would necessarily prevent the gold and precious stones of Sheba from reaching, in any considerable quantity, the marts of commerce. But there can be no doubt that Arabia still yields in rich abundance other valuable commodities, for which she was celebrated in ancient times. And if the science and enterprise of Christian nations had free scope in the development of her resources, there can be little doubt that vast mines of wealth would be open both in her fragrant forests and beneath her soil.

These suggestions are fully confirmed by the testimony of the latest traveller into the interior of Arabia—Mr. E. G. Palgrave. The volumes giving a detailed account of his journey are now in the press, and the interest with which their publication is looked for by all who take any concern in oriental matters, has been much increased by an address delivered by their author at a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London, in which he gives a summary account of his travels and discoveries.\* He was led to engage in the hazardous scheme of penetrating the central portions of Arabia, not so much by love of adventure, as from an earnest desire to obtain accurate information regarding the physical condition, the government, tribal divisions, religion and manners of that region. During a ten years residence in Syria he had acquired a thorough knowledge of Arabic, and various circumstances which fell under his observation had led him to suspect that the political and social institutions of Central Arabia were materially different from what was generally supposed. How to get there was the question. To be known as a European among the fanatical Wahabees would probably be fatal. To go as a Turk would be hardly less dangerous. A dervish would be safe if making a pilgrimage to Mecca, but if travelling elsewhere, his appearance would excite suspicion. He

\* The address of Mr. Palgrave is published in the last number, for 1864, of the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society."

finally concluded to assume the character of a physician, and as he spoke Arabic with perfect fluency and purity, he thought that he might pass for an Arab *de pur sang*, from Bagdad or Damascus. In all the central parts of Arabia, happily for him, physicians, though as well appreciated as in any other land, are wholly unknown, and the consequence was that our traveller found ready access to the places and the peoples that he desired to see. It is to be borne in mind that his knowledge of the healing art was very slight, yet the fame of his medicines went far in advance of his own movements, and often brought him patients from quarters, ten and twelve days distant from his temporary resting places.

Mr. Palgrave started from Jaffa on the 4th of May, 1862, and from that time until his arrival at Bagdad in the summer of the year following, all trace of him was lost. His first course was nearly southward until he was within two days of Akaba, at the head of the eastern tongue of the Red Sea. He then turned in a northeastern direction to the town of Maan, where he stayed twelve days. From this point his route was in a southeastern direction, until he reached the centre of the peninsula, and the modern capital of the Wahabee kingdom. Between Maan and El Jaaf, a province of the upper Nedjd, is a waterless desert, inhabited by the most desperate sort of Bedouins, while in many and vast portions of it, not a living thing was to be seen except a few serpents and lizards. After a terrible journey of seven days, during which Mr. Palgrave and his company nearly perished in a samûm, they reached El Jaaf. His account of the town and of the adjacent region agrees with that of Dr. Wallin, whose travels we have already noticed. Mr. Palgrave says he here found groups of lovely villages, nestling under magnificent palm trees, and that the chief city of the province, in which he remained nineteen days in incessant medical intercourse with chiefs and people, is the main commercial centre for the Bedouins of northern Arabia. His next point was Hail, the capital of the independent kingdom of Jebel Shamar, distant ten days from El Jaaf. Here he stayed six weeks busily occupied as a physician, and treated in the kindest manner by King Jabel and his people. On the 13th of October, he reached Riadh the capital of the

Wahabee kingdom, and the extreme point of his journey southward. His medical fame had preceded him, and prepared the way for his kindly reception by the king, who assigned him very handsome lodgings, and almost immediately upon his entering them a crowd of patients of all classes, high and low, eagerly demanded his professional assistance. The cases which he had to deal with must have been of a very simple sort, or else he was marvellously adroit in his management of them, for in all the towns in which he "practised," his career appears to have been one of uninterrupted success. Riadh is a large and well built city; the houses are solid structures of stone, many of them being three stories high; the masses are so fanatical that the life of a foreigner would not usually be safe, and they are made to appear at least excessively strict in their religious observances, as they are all compelled "by the fear of the Lord and the broomstick," to attend prayers five times daily, the neglect of the duty subjecting persons of all ranks to a very unpleasant discipline. Mr. Palgrave was supposed to be an Arab of Damascus, but the fact of his being a Christian, was perfectly well known, his assumed medical character being his sole safeguard. He remained here until the 25th of November, winning fame, friends, and money by his "practice," and on the best of terms with the king, although a certain set of bigoted ultraists were all the while plotting his ruin. But his potent pills and powders rendered their hatred of no account, until in an evil hour he refused to give one of his medicines (an active poison) to the king, who wished by means of it to physic some of his personal enemies unto death. From this moment Mr. Palgrave knew that his position was full of peril, and he and his two companions resolved to beat an immediate retreat from the dangerous ground. This they were enabled successfully to do. Starting from Riadh they pursued a course a little north of east, avoided the large towns within the Wahabee territories, and near the close of the year, they reached El Khatif on the Persian Gulf. The remainder of the winter and the ensuing spring were spent in various voyages on the Gulf, in the course of which Mr. Palgrave examined the parts of the provinces of Oman and Muscat lying on the coast. By the Sultan of Muscat he was affably received, though his appearance and

his doctoral pretensions must have seemed very suspicious, for when he reached the country palace of the sultan near his capital Nczweh, about a day's journey in the interior from Muscat, he was shoeless, hatless, and with little else to cover his nakedness, besides a torn and dirty shirt. From Muscat he went to Bagdad, and from thence to Beirut, where he arrived on the 11th of July, 1863, to the delighted astonishment of his friends, who had given up all hope of ever seeing him again.

The intense suspicion with which the Arab looks upon strangers, especially when making notes or observations the object of which he does not comprehend, rendered it impossible for Mr. Palgrave to take any instruments with him, and dangerous even to appear over-curious in his inquiries. "I was obliged," he says, "to look as great a simpleton as I possibly could, and not to seem to care about anything but to get my fees, which was not always easy, as the Arab only pays the doctor when he has cured the patient." Hence the account of his travels is not so full, nor for scientific purposes so accurate, as could be wished, yet he has added largely to our knowledge of Arabia, and on sundry points he has corrected errors of long standing. For example,

1. *The Bedouins.* "The prevalent idea of Arabia," he observes, "is that it is a kind of home of this people, an enormous plateau of bad pasturage, over which an uncertain number of Bedouins, with their camels and other flocks, are continually roving." Mr. Palgrave discovered, on the contrary, that the mass of the Bedouin population is concentrated on the northern frontier, within the limits of the desert dividing Arabia and Syria, while in the regions south of El Jaaf the fixed population is vastly the most numerous and important,—and that this proportion increases as you advance southward. In the central Wahabee provinces, hardly a single Bedouin proper can be found.

2. *The Governments* of Central Arabia, we are told, are regularly established and well-organized monarchies with fixed laws. The Syrian companions of Mr. Palgrave, who had been all their days familiar only with the lawless rule of the Turk, exclaimed with amazement, as they well might, that they had never before known what *government* was. *Hail*, the

capital of one of these kingdoms, extending over some ten degrees of latitude and seven of longitude, is a well-built and fortified city of twenty-nine thousand inhabitants, having numerous shops, good markets, and a grand palace. Of *Riadh*, the capital of the still larger Wahabee kingdom, Mr. Palgrave says: "Except Damascus, I have never seen a town so beautifully situated as this; the word means 'gardens,' and the town is completely encircled by gardens of the most exquisite kind."

3. *The Wahabees.* The information regarding the religion and the political condition of this people given by Mr. Palgrave, is very interesting and novel, his account of them differing in some respects from those which have hitherto obtained.

The rise of the Wahabees, the rapid spread of their dogmas and dominion, and the changes wrought by them, form one of the most notable epochs in the modern history of Arabia. Nearly a century and a half ago, both government and religion, in all parts of the peninsula, had fallen into extreme confusion and laxity. A young man, named Ebn Abd el Wahab, (born in 1691,) who had been himself trained in the strictest Moslem principles, resolved to give himself to the task of reforming the religion and morals of his countrymen. For a time his experience was like that of most reformers; the governor of his native town having no relish for the rigid morality preached by the young apostle, drove him from the place. However, he found a refuge in Deraiyeh, the capital of the Nedjed, which ultimately became the chief seat of the Wahabee power, and so continued until its capture by Ibrahim Pasha, in 1818. The governor of Deraiyeh not only gave a home to the persecuted reformer, but he became a hearty and powerful agent in propagating the new faith, which claimed to be pure and primitive Mahometanism, and like a true Mahometan, he did it by fire and sword. The sect grew with immense rapidity, and with its growth the political power of Deraiyeh was proportionately advanced, so that in the course of little more than half a century, the sultan of Deraiyeh was the recognised sovereign of nearly the whole of Arabia. The original relations established between the Governor and the Reformer, the one exercising civil and the other religious functions, have been all along maintained by their descendants, and are in force at the

present time. In 1803-4, the holy cities Mecca and Medina fell into their hands, and continued in their possession until the war waged against them by Mahomet Ali of Egypt, 1817-19. His army, under his son Ibrahim, penetrated into the Nedjed, captured Deraiych, and gave a severe blow to the Wahabee power. But their strength, though weakened, was by no means destroyed, as they proved by the recapture and temporary occupancy of Mecca in 1850. While the Wahabee chief held sway over the peninsula, the country was admirably governed, the laws were administered in the spirit of even-handed justice, and life, limb, and property were as safe as they had been in the days of the best of the Caliphs.

The Wahabees are the Puritans of Mahometanism. They denounce all other classes of Moslem for their departures from the simplicity of the faith, for their idolatry in worshipping at the tombs of saints, their remissness in attending public prayer, their luxurious style of living, and especially for their use of tobacco and of intoxicating drinks.

In the lapse of a century even Wahabeeism had lost somewhat of its primitive purity, at least so far as regarded the rigid enforcement of various prohibitory laws. But about six years ago, strange to say, the cholera, for the first time in the history of that terrible disease, and after repeatedly travelling round the globe, visited the lofty plateaus of central Arabia, and made great havoc among all classes of the population. It was pronounced to be a divine judgment sent upon the land for its religious declension; it was so deemed by the rulers and the masses, and the old party of fiery fanatics was for a while so much strengthened, that the severest laws were enacted against the use of silk and tobacco, and such like articles. In their intense hatred of tobacco they even go beyond the Rev. Mr. Trask of Massachusetts. "I once asked," says Mr. Palgrave, during his stay at Riadh, "a patient who had become friendly, about great and little sins. Syrians, I said, were much divided on the point. My friend looked very grave, as those people usually do. So, putting on an exceedingly serious look, (Mr. P. it was not known used the weed himself,) graver, indeed, than usual, he said: 'The greatest and first sin is polytheism, or worshipping anything else than God.' I said, we

all knew that was the *greatest* sin, but after that, what was the next? Upon which my friend without hesitation answered, that the second irremissible sin was that of '*drinking the shameful,*' i. e., smoking tobacco. I then suggested murder, theft, perjury, &c. 'O!' said he, 'God is merciful—*these are all little sins.*'"

Our limits forbid our dwelling at any length on Mr. Palgrave's account of the physical features and capabilities of the regions through which he passed. The simple fact that they are occupied not by the wandering Bedouin, but by a fixed population, rural and urban, of itself alone speaks volumes as to their fertility and wealth. As might be inferred from the structure of the great central plateau, with its plains, its deep valleys, and its girdling mountains, the climates and the products of the tropics and temperate zone are found, as we may say, side by side.

How long shall this vast and ancient peninsula be allowed to remain almost as completely shut out from the goodly fellowship of nations as if it belonged to another planet? The barriers which once encircled China and Japan, enabling them to maintain for ages a proud isolation from the outside world, are being broken down. Is there no way of removing those which surround Arabia, except by letting loose the dogs of war? These, and kindred questions deserve, and we believe will, more and more, engage the most serious consideration of the merchant and the missionary. The difficulties which the latter everywhere encounters, when attempting to approach the followers of the False Prophet, are, of course, an hundred-fold greater in the land which gave birth to the author of the Koran and its religion. Yet there must be a method of meeting and removing them. However it may be elsewhere, we are inclined to think that, in many parts of the East, and especially in Arabia, commerce and Christianity must become allied and coöperating agencies. If, for example, the caravan route suggested by Lieut. Lynch, on what he says is the shortest line between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, and "the true complement of the Isthmus of Suez canal," viz., from Joppa to Graen, were established under European and American auspices, the various depots upon it might soon be made

the radiating centres of moral and religious influences. From the experience of Mr. Palgrave, we are sure that the Christian physician would quickly have abundant work on his hands, and through his patients he might reach even the remote interior.

Such a route is deemed by those competent to judge, as perfectly feasible for a railroad. Indeed while we write, the news have reached us that arrangements have been made by an enterprising Christian German, for the construction of the first link; from Joppa to Jerusalem. From this point eastward, so far as explorations have gone, there would appear to be no serious difficulty to be overcome, the vast plain of El Hamad, over which the road would pass, having neither hill nor valley of any account. The lack of fountains, if it should be found to exist, might be more than made up by Artesian wells, affording, as they would, an ample supply of water for irrigation, as well as domestic use, and thus in many a district "the desert may be made to blossom as the rose." The importance of the stations which would gradually be built up on such a route, in a commercial point of view is too obvious to need remark. To the Christian missionary they are essential, especially in such a country as Arabia, where for centuries death has been the certain penalty of apostasy, and among such a people as the Arabs. Until that law was abrogated by the sultan of Turkey, not a single effort was made by any missionary within the limits of the Turkish empire for the conversion of Mahometans. We remember to have asked one of the secretaries of the American Board, some years ago, why this policy was pursued; he at once referred to the death penalty of apostasy as the thing which rendered it not only advisable, but absolutely necessary. In one sense, the law is now annulled, but in another, it is as much the law as ever. Away from the cities where consuls reside, in a purely Mahometan district or town, no man's life would be safe for an hour, if he went professedly and only to preach Christ, and convert Moslem.

In Arabia, more than in almost any other portion of the globe, the Christian evangelist needs to have the protecting shield of his own land or some other Christian nation extended over him, while occupied with that preliminary work, which may demand two, three, or more years, and which must pre-



cede a formally aggressive effort. If he could secure such a vantage ground, and thus be in a position to try to win confidence, to abate prejudice, and to disarm bigotry by daily acts of kindness, we are disposed to believe that he would find that even Arab Moslem were, in the main, very much like all other races of mankind. Mr. Loftus, who resided for several months among the Bedouins of the Euphrates, whose reputation has been as bad as bad could be, while prosecuting his Chaldean researches, has the following remarkable language:—"A great change had taken place in the behaviour of the Arabs. The intercourse established between us had had the effect of uprooting many fixed prejudices. The more I saw of the Arabs, the more convinced was I that, however wild or bigoted they may be, they possess at heart a disposition capable of love and respect towards the Firengi." As one of them said to me—"We have discovered that the Firengis have one and the same God with ourselves, and that they are just and honourable in all their dealings, a fact which they could not say for Arab or Persian."\* Mr. Palgrave states another and no less remarkable fact, that, while Mahometanism is the national religion in all parts of Arabia, yet in the villages and rural districts, and generally, outside of such large towns as Hail and Riadh, the Moslem faith and Moslem observances were very little regarded.

We rejoice to believe that the new routes in the orient, which England and France are striving to create for their expanding commerce, and that the ancient ones which promise ere long to be reöpened, after having been shut for ages, will prepare the way of the Lord. "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." Isa. lxi. 4. Our own country has an interest in all that concerns the development of commerce, and the spread of Christianity in the East, and but for the terrible struggle with rebellion, which has been tasking our energies, we have reason to think that the work of oriental exploration so auspiciously begun some years ago, by Lieut. Lynch, would have been followed up. Meanwhile we are gratified to learn that

\* Travels in Chaldæa, p. 433.

an association has been formed in New York, akin to the Asiatic societies of Europe, whose object is to stimulate exploratory research, and to gather information in regard to all Asiatic matters that may be of interest to the merchant, the missionary, and the Biblical student. We have no doubt that if once fairly and energetically entered upon its work, the society will have the hearty sympathy and coöperation of intelligent men in all parts of the land.

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ART. III.—*An American Dictionary of the English Language.*  
By NOAH WEBSTER, LL.D. Thoroughly Revised and greatly enlarged and improved, by CHAUNCEY A. GOODRICH, D. D., LL.D., and NOAH PORTER, D. D. Springfield Mass.: G. & C. Merriam. 1864.

THE Dictionary of a language is a growth, rather than a work. It is not a thing which can be produced by any one man, or by any one set of men working together for a limited time, but it must grow up gradually towards completeness and perfection by the work of successive builders through a series of generations. The mere names of the men who have contributed to build up our English Dictionary would fill many pages. The massive, well-proportioned work now lying upon our table, no matter by whose name it is called, is not properly Webster's, or Worcester's, or Richardson's, or Johnson's, or Walker's Johnson's, or Todd's Walker's Johnson's, or even old Bailey's, or Phillips's, older still, but is the result of the accumulated labours of more than ten generations of builders. Tracing the English Dictionary from the old black-letter volume of Friar Fraunces, 1499, or the puny 18mo of Dr. John Bullokar, 1616, through its successive transformations and developments, down to this New Illustrated Unabridged Webster of 1864, is not unlike following an acorn, from the first putting forth of its shoots above ground, on through years, decades, generations and centuries, and through all the successive stages of its