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Travels in North-Western Arabia and Nejd

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Travels in North-Western Arabia and Nejd.

By CHARLES M. DOUGHTY.

(Abstract of a Paper read at the Evening Meeting, November 26th, 1883.)

Map, p. 428.

I.—DAMASCUS TO MEDYIN SALIH.

MR. DOUGHTY'S travels in Arabia began in the winter of 1876, and lasted till the autumn of 1878. In previous years he had wandered widely over Palestine, Sinai, and the lands beyond the Jordan, and the idea of extending his travels farther into Arabia was suggested to him on the occasion of a visit to Petra. The remains still visible at the place are believed by Mr. Doughty to be those of a few hewn public halls or temples, together with sepulchres, not dwelling-houses, cut out in the rocks. The city itself he believes to have been built of clay, and hence to have been washed away. While viewing these remains Mr. Doughty was asked by the villagers, who had seen him arrive from the south, whether he had not seen the similar monuments at Medyin Salih, which is ten journeys distant by the Haj or pilgrimage road from Maan, a station a little to the east of Petra. Subsequent inquiries not only confirmed the information of the villagers that the monuments of Medyin Salih were similar to those of Petra, but also enabled him to learn that some of the former monuments bore inscriptions in strange characters very often accompanied by the figure of a bird with wings expanded.

Mr. Doughty would have set out for Medyin Salih immediately on learning this, but was thwarted by the pasha, who was afraid lest any misadventure should happen to a European travelling in the wild Beduin country. The lieutenant, however, told him that if he must needs go to Medyin, he might go with the pilgrimage.

This was in the spring of 1875, and the rest of that year and the greater part of the next were spent by Mr. Doughty in riding through Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Hauran, to Damascus,* and in making various efforts to enter Arabia with the view of reaching Medyin Salih from that centre.

At Damascus the advice to accompany the pilgrimage to Medyin Salih was repeated to him by some Mahomedan friends in the autumn of 1876, and Mr. Doughty then resolved to act on this suggestion. He disguised himself as an Arab, bought a sack of Haj biscuits, and procured a camel for the journey. Before he was ready the pilgrims had already departed from Damascus, but they lay encamped in the desert at

* For information regarding the towers of Shebīb ibn Tubbāi, Lejūn, Dātras, Mehai, Medabia, Burma, Jardīnīeh, and the topography of these marches, Mr. Doughty refers to his article in Dr. Kiepert's 'Globus,' vol. xxxix. p. 8.

Muzzarib, at the distance of two camel ounneys, awaiting the signal to set out. There Mr. Doughty joined them the day before the final departure. The number belonging to this caravan, according to their own computation (seldom very trustworthy, says Mr. Doughty) was about 6000 souls, together with 10,000 beasts of burden, chiefly camels, but also dromedaries, mules, and horses. The caravan guard numbered about 300 soldiers: about 100 *Azeyl* or dromedary riders, natives of Nejd, clad and armed as the Beduins and well fitted to deal with the nomads, who march in the rear of the caravan; while on the flanks and in the van were nearly 200 horse-soldiers, *Sayal*, with two field-pieces and their carriages carried upon mules.

The whole march was conducted without confusion. The length of the caravan, marching with some four camels abreast, was nearly two miles. The servants of the Haj are every year upon the road, and by them each man has his place assigned to him. The encampments are always made exactly alike, every tent being set up in the same position at each halting-place. The tents are pitched by a party which rides half-an-hour in advance of the main body of the caravan, and has the canvas city already erected by the time the latter arrives. Every *menzil* is circular in shape. The small tents of the Haj soldiery are pitched at distances of 60 paces, and in each of them there are accommodated as many men as are necessary to keep the night-watches. But the safety of the caravan is rather due to the *suna* or road-toll paid to the roadside Beduins—a black-mail which may amount to as much as 25*l.* per mile.

In ten marches the caravan arrived at the village of Maan, where the pasha who had previously given Mr. Doughty the hint to join the Haj tried to find him out, probably with the intention of stopping him, but failed to find him, disguised as he was in the Arab costume. In the second march from Maan the caravan came to Akaba on the confines of Arabia Deserta, where, according to the early Mahomedan geographers, the true Arab country begins.

Up to this point the marches had been comparatively easy, but henceforward they were carried on day and night, trying the endurance of men and beasts to the utmost. The whole aim of the caravan is to reach water, since loaded and sweating camels, even in the winter season, cannot hold out above three days without drinking. To provide this necessary, *kellas* or fortified water stations, have been constructed at a remote period at every journey's end, or every second or third journey's end, on the Haj road. A *kella* is a tower built upon a well, and kept by a small garrison. The water, commonly drawn by a very laborious process, is poured into a *birket* or cistern made outside the walls. Throughout the route the water is very foul and unwholesome, which is accounted by the Haj pilgrims their second great suffering—a suffering all the more keenly felt since the Syrians, dwelling in a

limestone country, are accustomed to sweet spring water. These filthy waters are doubtless the cause of some grave diseases of the bladder and intestines.

In the last march before reaching Tebûk the caravan was on the route for 24 hours out of 26. It is amazing to see how the Haj servants, camel-drivers, carriers, tent-pitchers, and the like, making up about half the caravan, all of whom travel on foot, are able to endure such long journeys. That day they must have walked more than 60 miles, and during the whole pilgrimage from Aleppo and Damascus to Mecca and Jebel Mûsa they must march some 2000 miles in four months.

Tebûk, the second village on the road, and the last till Medina is reached, is a small palm settlement in the desert. On the left stands Jebel Sherrâra, called by the Hajis, from its shape, el Munhir, "the pulpit," upon the flat summit of which, they say, Mahomet once stood to preach to the unbelieving Arabs. On the right stands el-Harra, the upper part of which with three tooth-like peaks rising above it (afterwards ascertained by Mr. Doughty to be the remains of extinct volcanoes) is of a pitchy black colour. The Harra extends southwards for a hundred miles, but beyond Tebûk it lies at such a distance from the Haj route that it is for a long time out of sight.

In the second march from Tebûk the kella of el-Akhdar was reached, and from this point on to Medyin Salih, three marches off, there is no water to be depended on. The only hope is at Birket Moaddam, where there is a good cistern, but one which cannot be filled in rainless years. In such a case a dromedary messenger is despatched from Medyin Salih to Damascus a month before the pilgrimage, and a supply of water-skins is procured by the managers of the Haj to be filled at el-Akhdar, whence they are carried by hired Beduins at the expense of the public treasury.

At Medyin Salih, which is a level plain, 16 miles long, and as many broad, encompassed by sandstone precipices, the perils of Mr. Doughty's adventurous journey were increased by the fact that he was now left alone, the rest of the pilgrims pursuing their way to Medina and Mecca. Fortunately for him, the surveyor of the kella, whom he had met at Damascus, and who had there promised to receive him and accord him his protection, kept his word. Some of the members of the garrison were far from being well disposed, and there was further danger to any one wandering beyond the precincts of the kella from the hordes of plundering Arabs who make forays in the neighbourhood. But, notwithstanding these dangers, Mr. Doughty managed in the ten weeks that elapsed between the departure and return of the Haj to see all that he had come to see of the antiquities of Medyin Salih, which lie at a distance of a mile from the kella.

Medyin Salih signifies cities of Salih, and Salih, according to the old Arab fable, was a prophet who preached to the unbelieving people of

el-Hejr until a judgment fell upon them, an event which is referred to in every five or six chapters of the Koran, so that el-Hejr is a site of some renown in the Mohammedan world. Hejr, *Ἑγρα* in Ptolemy, Hejra in Pliny, was formerly an emporium on the old gold and frankincense road of the Sabæans. The site was easily found by Mr. Doughty, but the ruins have disappeared. No doubt the houses, as at Petra, were of clay, and the only remains that now mark their site are bits of broken glass and potsherds.

The monuments, "the houses of the unjust," as they are called, are hewn out in the crags close to the sites so indicated. They are all finished in the same style. On the top of each is to be seen the stepped ornament so common at Petra. Entering the first of these, Mr. Doughty saw that they were sepulchral chambers. Graves are sunk in the floors, and in the walls are shelves of the size of the human body, from that of a child to that of a man, but so shallow that it was impossible to see how a natural corpse could have been laid in them. Human bones were found in the graves and on the floors of the chambers, and along with these were found various remains, mummy clouts of finer or coarser fabric, pieces of thick leather, possibly camel's hide, sewed together and having the welts smeared with bitumen, and a substance called by the Arabs *vakhour*, "incense," all indicating how the bodies were embalmed and preserved.

The façades are sculptured in the same soft sandstone as that of Petra, and are full of cornices and pilasters, showing a strange barbaric imitation of Egyptian and Greek temple architecture. The ornaments of the pediment are singular. Those upon the side are commonly shaped apparently to resemble urns; other side ornaments resemble griffins. Such ornaments are seen upon a fourth part of the monuments, which number in all nearly a hundred. In certain cases there is to be seen upon the tympan the strange ornament of a man's head with the braided side-locks now called "horns" by the Arabians. The most quaint is that of a face round as the sun shooting out the tongue. At a gorge in the adjoining mountains of Ethlib, which resembles the *sik* at Petra (a gorge in which is a hall, the only excavated chamber at Medyin Salih not a sepulchre), there are a number of engraved tablets on the rocks, and on these the figures are sometimes like pillars, standing singly or two and three together, the isolated pillars sometimes forked or horned at the top. Above is an engraved inscription.

As for the inscriptions generally, Mr. Doughty at once perceived that they were in a Nabathean-like character, and as it was these for which he had braved so many hardships and dangers, he immediately began to make preparations for copying them. To effect this was a work of great difficulty, and of the most irksome nature. At the time of his visit the plague of flies made long-continued working in the open air almost unendurable; the inscriptions were difficult to reach; and on certain

days he and his attendants were absolutely confined to the kella by the fact of the plundering Beduins being in the neighbourhood. But, notwithstanding these inconveniences and dangers, he was able to take copies of more than 200 inscriptions, or about half the whole number, which were as many as he could reach by the means at his disposal. To get even at those which he did manage to copy he was obliged to use a rudely extemporised ladder. The copies or impressions were made by means of bibulous paper which he laid over the inscriptions and then swept with a wet brush.* The inscriptions are mostly short, about a line or two in length, but a few extend to many lines.

Having made as many copies as he could at Medyin Salih, Mr. Doughty proceeded southwards to the village of el-Ally, about 11 miles off in the desert, in quest of the site of another old town which was said to lie near. This he discovered in the Wady-el-Kurra beside el-Ally, and on the cliffs behind it he found a number of other inscriptions, but these he was astonished to observe were not in a Nabathean-like character, like those of Medyin Salih, but in a character resembling the Himyaric. In the same cliffs he discovered sepulchres in the form of holes or loculi cut back from the face of the rock and surmounted by very extraordinary ornaments.

Mr. Doughty heard at el-Ally that the name of Baith Naam is handed down by tradition as an old name of the village, and he raises the question whether we have here the long sought-for Badanatha of Pliny.

By the time all these labours were accomplished it was February 1877. The Haj returned, and Mr. Doughty took the opportunity of sending his collections by a sure hand to Damascus, but he himself remained at el-Hejr.

II.—WANDERINGS IN NEJD AND RETURN TO JIDDA.

After his successful visit to Medyin Salih, Mr. Doughty originally intended to visit Khaybar, but he now determined first of all to devote a year or two to observing the Semitic life and studying the geological structure of the country. Fanatical, ignorant, and often ill-disposed as he found the Beduins of the old Wahabi borders to be, he managed to make the friendship of a few of the sheikhs, and wandered in spring eastwards to Nejd, returning again to el-Hejr. During the hot summer he explored the lofty and cool Harra, which he now found to be a platform of sandstone overflowed to a great depth by stream after stream of basaltic lava. In some of the side valleys the lava attains a depth of more than a hundred fathoms. Standing upon one of the heights of this lava platform, which was full of stones having a metallic ring like iron, he could see that it was studded with

* For further information on this subject Mr. Doughty refers to a notice by Professor A. Sprenger in 'Globus,' 1880, p. 201, and to a notice by himself in the Journ. R. A. S., Bombay Branch, 1878.

numerous extinct volcanoes and *volcanelli*. From a single encampment as many as thirty craters could sometimes be descried at once, mostly from 200 or 300 to 600 or 700 feet in height. The highest, Jebel Anâz, was estimated by Mr. Doughty at 1000 feet or more. The mode in which the lava covered the sandstone cliff to the very edge, seemed to the traveller to afford a striking illustration of the way in which the basaltic covering protected this portion of the original sandstone plain from denudation.

The hot summer over, Mr. Doughty went in the autumn to Teyma, a place of which mention is made in the Hebrew prophets. The remains of the ancient Teyma are now a strange sight in the desert. The town itself was probably of clay and has disappeared, but the old city wall, three miles in circumference, still stands, along with some great old columns of barbaric workmanship, possibly the relics of some temple. Both the Teyma and el-Ally of the present day are resettlements. The Teyàmane are a colony of Shummar founded some 200 years ago. There Mr. Doughty found a few inscriptions in a character not observed by him elsewhere, but of which Sir Henry Rawlinson afterwards expressed the opinion that they were very ancient and allied to the Phœnician. At Teyma Mr. Doughty remained about a month, namely, till the date harvest, when he took the opportunity of joining a market party on their return to their encampment in Nejd, and from that encampment he rode over the desert with another market party to Hayil.

From Hayil, after a stay of more than a month in the winter of 1877, Mr. Doughty went to Khaybar, the goal which he had kept in view more or less during all the previous nine months. From el-Ally, Khaybar is only 66 miles, or hardly two dromedary marches distant; but it was only after travelling nearly 600 miles, and after a journey of no little danger, that Mr. Doughty finally reached the spot. The peril in Mr. Doughty's case was increased by the fact that he never attempted to conceal his nationality and his faith. He was known everywhere as *Engleysy* and *Nasarany*—an Englishman and a Christian; and though he does not think that all travellers are called upon to follow the same course, he yet claims to have by so doing made the name of Christian respectable, instead of abhorred, as it was before, in a vast stretch of country, and hence to have made the country easier to traverse for subsequent travellers.

Mr. Doughty left Hayil on his way to Khaybar with another market party, but on the third day the party was obliged to follow another route and left him in a solitary tent, the owner of which was absent at the time. Fortunately the latter received him hospitably, and handed him over next day to the care of the sheikh. Here he was only 100 miles from Khaybar, but the way was through a rugged country infested by camel robbers. For three long journeys he rode with one attendant over

black craggy lava fields with extinct volcanoes, called by the people *hilly hillian*. It is in fact another Harra, and is known as the Harrat Khaybar. Near the middle of the region Mr. Doughty found the altitude to be nearly 6000 feet, and he afterwards ascertained that this is the water-parting between east and west in Northern Arabia, the waters running down eastwards into the great trough known as Wady e'-Rumma, and westwards into the Wady el-Humth. The former has long been known, and Mr. Doughty found its head near the villages of Hayat and Howeyat on the eastern border of this volcanic region, and ascertained that its mouth was at Sheyer near Bosra, so that if it were a perennial stream, instead of a dry trough hardly flushed once in a generation, it would be an affluent of the Euphrates. Mr. Doughty partly traced the course. The other Wady was unknown to European geographers till Mr. Doughty's visit. Mr. Doughty learned by inquiry from trustworthy sources that its head is in the steppes beside Tàyif somewhat inland from Kurn el-Menázil, and its mouth on the Red Sea between el-Wejh and Yanba. It receives not only the western waters of the Harrat Khaybar, but afterwards those of the Harrat el-Aneyrid.

At Khaybar Mr. Doughty hoped to find himself among friends, and to be able to rest and recover from the fatigue and privations of his journey. But he found it quite different. Khaybar, formerly subject to Ibn Rashid, had lately been taken over by the Turkish Government of Medina, but though he had with him a Turkish circular passport, that proved to be of no avail with the aga or commander of the black troops, mostly freed slaves, occupying the place. At the time of his arrival, the winter of 1877, the war was going on between the Sultan of Islam and a Christian State, and he was taken for a Muscovite spy. He was arrested, and placed under guard, and his money taken from him. For ten weeks he expected daily to be led out for execution, and he owed his life chiefly to the protection of the solitary white inhabitant of the place, a man of great force of character. At last an order came from the Pasha of Medina for his immediate release.*

The spring of 1878 had now arrived, and Mr. Doughty found himself compelled to return to Hayil, whither he was conducted by Beduins in fifteen days.†

On his arrival, he found the emir absent and his deputy hostile, and his Beduin conductors were commanded to take him back again to Khaybar. On the third day they treacherously forsook him, and on more than one occasion he found difficulty in getting himself hospitably received by the nomads of the desert, though as a rule he managed ultimately to secure their friendship. Arriving one evening at Boreyda, his faith was discovered by his not betaking himself to prayer at the cry of the Muettthin, and the populace at once set upon him and stript him of

* For the topography of Khaybar see 'Globus,' 1881, p. 39.

† For the topography see 'Globus,' 1881, p. 214.

all that he had. Though the emir interfered and insisted on everything being restored, the populace still continued to cry out for his death. In the end, however, the emir managed to appease the uproar, and promised to send him on the next morning to Aneyssa.

Boreyda and Aneyssa are the two largest towns in Nejd, and are built in the Nefûd on either side of the Wady e'-Rumma at the distance of not more than eleven miles from each other. They have existed for only about 300 years, and the former numbers about 5000, the latter about 7000 souls.

On the morning after the disturbance at Boreyda, Mr. Doughty rode out towards Aneyssa accompanied by a camel-driver, but acting on the secret commands of the treacherous emir of Boreyda, the latter deserted him about a mile from the walls of Aneyssa. Here, nevertheless, Mr. Doughty was received in secret with great kindness by the "philosophical" emir and certain rich merchants who have traded of late years to Jidda, Bosra, and Bagdad. Though themselves well disposed towards him, they regarded it almost as the act of a madman that he should frankly confess himself in every place a Nasarany, and still more an Englishman, in a country in which they themselves were full of apprehensions when travelling through it.

At Aneyssa Mr. Doughty was able to remain in peace for several days under the protection of these influential friends, but at last the populace began to murmur here also against the Nasarany, and finally to stone him in the streets. Thereupon the emir thought it best to send him away, and without the cognisance of his merchant friends he was despatched southwards over the Nefûd of el-Kasim to the town of Khubbira.

Mr. Doughty was now in great straits. His money was nearly all spent, and though he had some medicines with him, these were a poor resource among the Arabs, who never pay for medicines, only for cures. But while thinking rather drearily of his situation, he got word from Aneyssa through the camel-driver who had brought him thence and had since returned to the town, that at the intercession of his merchant friends, the emir had recalled him. Riding back in the night to escape the notice of the predatory Beduins, Mr. Doughty re-entered Aneyssa, but was at once sent by the emir to live amidst an outlying clump of palms till the caravan should be ready to set out, so that he might be able to accomplish his journey to the coast in safety. In these quarters he lived for two months.

The caravans being at last ready to set out, Mr. Doughty's friends offered to send him in whatever direction he pleased, whether eastwards to e'-Riath, northwards to Bosra, or southwards to Jidda. Choosing the last route, he would be compelled to accomplish the last stage of the journey to the coast as best he could, for the caravan that set out in that direction proceeded not to Jidda itself but to Mecca. That increased

the hazard of that course, but nevertheless Mr. Doughty was induced to select it in the hope of finding on the way other great Harras, and thus obtaining further material for solving the riddle of the great volcanic countries in Arabia.

The midsummer of 1878 was now past when the yearly caravan carrying *samma* or clarified butter to Mecca was ready to set out. This *samma* is what is called *ghi* in India, and in Arabia it is an important article of commerce among the nomads, who derive it from the milk of their ewes and goats. The caravan which Mr. Doughty accompanied went down with 170 camel loads or nearly 60 tons, the value of which was many hundreds of pounds sterling.

The caravan ascended the Nefûd of el-Kasim and the Wady e'-Rumma to e'-Russ, where it came to a high steppe on a basis of granite and studded with granite and basaltic mountains and knolls. The journey across this region lasts fourteen days, till the brow of the Mecca country is reached. On this elevated steppe Mr. Doughty saw the best natural pasture that he came across anywhere in Arabia, and yet the country is quite unsettled. The only way in which this could be accounted for is by the fact that the ground water is bitter and unwholesome. Sweet water is found only in one or two places in the whole journey. This region is the wandering ground of the great Beduin nation, Ateyba. The presence of the pastures is due to yearly rains. These uplands seem to be "under the tail of the monsoon." At Tâyif the people look for the tropical rains to fall for five or six weeks together, commencing at the end of August or the beginning of September. That rain falls in abundance, so that there is much mountain land in Yemen adjoining e'-Tâyif, which is *aard baal*, that is, on which corn can be sown and reaped without irrigation.

In the last days of the journey the caravan passed alongside of the great southern Harras, where the lava has been poured out upon a granite basis. The border of the Harra is from a few feet in height to 100 or 200 feet, and upon the top are to be seen high *hillian*, or extinct volcanoes. The lava flows are very massy and dark coloured. The surface was in many places crusted with salt, which is also met with upon the Harrat Khaybar, and may, Mr. Doughty thinks, be a volcanic product.

The caravan now descended to the ancient station Kurn el-Menâzil, where those about to enter Mecca put off their secular clothing, wash themselves, and gird their bodies with the *ihram*, or loin-cloth, no doubt an ancient garment of the Arabs. In this guise all the pilgrims must enter the city bareheaded, and continue so, not even covering themselves by night, until all their religious duties are fulfilled.

The next morning the caravan arrived at Ayn e'-Zeyma, where Mr. Doughty would have to leave it and proceed on his journey alone. As he was about to do so he was again put in danger of losing his life

through the fanaticism and cupidity of a nomad sherif or descendant of Mahomet. The rumour had preceded him that a Nasarany was in the caravan, and as he alighted this sherif rushed out, crying that he must turn Muslim, or he would kill him, and that Allah had sent him his dromedary as booty. The other Arabs in the caravan stood aside inactive, but an old negro, umbrella-bearer to the Sherif of Mecca, had just arrived from Mecca, and, hastening up, managed partly by force and partly by threats to prevent the nomad from effecting his purpose, and ultimately persuaded him to accuse the Nasarany before the great sherif their master, who was now holding his summer court at Tâyif.

As it was now evening, and the Mecca caravan travelling by night was about to move onwards to e'-Tâyif, they took Mr. Doughty along with them, to be hanged, as they said, the day after by the commandment of the great sherif. When morning arrived, the caravan was again at Kurn el-Menâzil, and here Mr. Doughty's assailant of the previous evening again drew his knife upon him, and was now joined in his attack by others, who stript him of all he had and ill-used him in various ways. The adventurous traveller's hardships were over, however, when the caravan arrived the next morning at Tâyif. Mr. Doughty was indeed brought before the great sherif and accused by his assailants, but the sherif behaved with the utmost kindness, directing him to be entertained at the house of his aide-de-camp, who showed him every possible consideration. The great sherif himself spent hours in conversing with him about his travels in the land of the Arabs, and offered of his own accord to provide him with a safe-conduct to visit Wady Beeshy (the Pish-on of the Bible, according to Sprenger) and the old incense valley, Wady Danâsir. These offers Mr. Doughty in his exhausted condition was obliged to decline, but the sherif determined that he should at least see all that was attractive, strange, or beautiful in Tâyif itself, and after enabling himself and his dromedary to rest for a few days, sent him on with a sufficient escort to ride by easy journeys to Jidda.

III.—CONCLUSION.

The Semitic East, the settled Arabian borderlands more commonly visited by Europeans, are lands of sepulchres and ruins; and desert Arabia, farther inland, likewise has the aspect of a decayed country. The sun has set upon the ancient mercantile Arabia of the caravans, and the better spirits even among the Arabians themselves acknowledge the decline that has taken place. The ancient Arabians bored deep wells in the earth and rock, and secured them with good dry stone masonry; they built houses commonly of stone, whereas the supine Musslemin are clay builders, and in favourable spots they constructed dams for irrigation works. Now all these are lost arts in Arabia, or survive only

amongst the Beni Temmîm, an ancient tribe in el-Kasîm. The Beduins do not bore, they only dig with their hands and a stick shallow pits which they call *themyel*, when the ground water is near the surface, or not at a greater depth than two fathoms. The great deserts are full of wells, but they all belong originally to a remote period.

Among the most ancient Arabian remains are huge erect stones of the kind that would be called in Britain Druidical, and buildings composed of huge blocks such as those to which the epithet Pelasgic or Cyclopean would be applied in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. As for the inscriptions, those from Teyma are shown by the character in which they are written to be of a high Biblical antiquity. With regard to the monuments of Medyin Salih, nothing can be determined until the inscriptions are deciphered. All those copied by Mr. Doughty will be published, with the interpretations by the Academy of Paris, within the next two or three years. The façades at el-Hejr Mr. Doughty conjectures to date from the earlier centuries of the Christian era.

That a Himyaric town existed at el-Ally there can, Mr. Doughty thinks, be no doubt. The character of the inscriptions, though not, according to M. Halévy, exactly like the Himyaric of el-Yemen, proves this, and there is indeed nothing extraordinary in the fact of a Himyaric colony existing in that situation when we consider that even in Syria, hundreds of miles farther north, certain towns, such as Hums (Emisa) and Baalbek (?) were in later times reckoned to be Himyaric.

The later historical remains of Arabia date at the earliest from little before the time of Mahomet, that is, from about the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. It is unlikely that there are any remains of a lettered antiquity in Arabia at all comparable in point of age to the monuments of Egypt. But what is the antiquity of even these monuments in comparison with that of the poor flint implements which Mr. Doughty found in the gravels of Arabia Petraea?

Prehistoric monuments, or at least monuments of old uncertain age, are the structures known as *rījūm*, built of unhewn stone, seen by Mr. Doughty in the valleys and on the surface of the great Harrat el-Aneyrid, beside Medyin Salih. At one place Mr. Doughty came upon a cluster of 150 of them standing together. They are shaped like beehives, about 25 feet in diameter, and 12 feet high, and are each built over a sepulchral cell, or perhaps two, access to which can be obtained through a hole in the top, down which the dead body was no doubt shot—a mode of burial still in use among the Latin nuns in the time of Sandys' travels to Jerusalem. Upon the *figgera*, or lava coast above Khaybar, such barrows had the form of simple domes, built of unhewn stone, without mortar, of about the height of a man, sometimes surrounded by a ring of stones.

These latter are, according to Mr. Doughty, not unlike the *namous* (pl. *nawamîs*) of Sinai, which are believed by him to have served the same

purpose. A few miles north of the monastery Mr. Doughty found one to be still used by the Beduins for a charnel-house.

Diagrams representing these monuments were shown by Mr. Doughty, and another was exhibited representing three renowned idol-stones, or blocks which were objects of worship among the ancient Arabians. The stones are of grey granite, and lie at Tâyif, and are from 12 to 26 feet long. The principal of these is *Hubbal*, the god of divination; a second is *Uzza*, a word which also means a palm or an acacia tree; and the third is *el-Late* (Allât), which we have the testimony of Herodotus for regarding as the Venus of the Arabians.

Such stones are conjectured by Mr. Doughty to be not so much divinities as *menâhil*, that is, spots at which the *mebuk*, or powers of the air descended to the earth. Among the Beduins such *menâhil* are usually trees, it may be an acacia, an evergreen oak, or a group of wild figs, and various examples of the superstitious ideas held by the Arabs in relation to these supernatural descents, were given by Mr. Doughty. Some of these ideas were not unlike our own popular superstitions regarding fairies.

Mr. Doughty also exhibited the horn of an animal not known to European naturalists before his travels as an inhabitant of Arabia. It is called in the border-lands Bakr-el-Wahesh, or wild cow, but by the true Arabs Athyafri. It is an antelope like the *beatrix*, and lives in the sandy deserts of Sherrarat and in the sandy tracts of the Kahtan and Muna in the country inhabited by nomads in el-Yemen. Mr. Doughty first saw the white skins of the animal at Maan in 1875, and afterwards he saw two tame specimens in the orchard of Ibn Rashîd at Hayil.

The map prepared by Mr. Doughty is the result of two years' incessant labour, during which he always carried about with him an aneroid barometer, but no other instrument. The situations of (Petra), Tebûk, Teyma, Hayil, (Aneysa), and Medina, are adopted by him from Dr. Kiepert's map.*

The geology of the Arabian Peninsula is of truly Arabian simplicity. A central core of Plutonic rocks is overlaid by sandstones, and these again by limestones, sometimes with flints. The latter rocks appear again between the Dead Sea and Jerusalem, and, Mr. Doughty apprehends, underlie all Palestine, and encompass the greater part of the Mediterranean Sea. They are probably of nearly the same age as our chalk (which may be tested by the fossil fish from Moab), while the underlying sandstones would correspond to the "greensand." The Nefûds or deep sandy deserts are composed of material derived from these sandstones. Signs of volcanic activity can still be seen on the Harras. Certain crevices in the Harrat Khaybar are sometimes

* The map we publish with the present memoir is a reproduction of Mr. Doughty's map. We have not ventured to alter the positions or the orthography.—[Ed.]

seen smoking in the cold winter mornings, and steam may in certain weathers be observed issuing from the summit of Jebel Ethnan. Outbursts of volcanoes in the neighbourhood of Medina and Khaybar have taken place within Mahommedan times.*

Being asked by Sir H. Rawlinson to give his opinion of the political condition of Nejd Arabia, Mr. Doughty replied that till recently Nejd was made up of three states, that of the Wahabis in the east, Boreyda in the middle, and that ruled over by Ibn Rashid in the west. This conditions of things has, however, been altered by the fall of the Wahabi dominion,† the territory formerly belonging to which is now mostly in a state of anarchy, while Aneysa has acquired its independence. The principality of Boreyda is small, and is governed by a tyrannical usurper, who has under his sway some score of Kasim towns and villages, but no Beduins. Ibn Rashid has his capital at Hayil, a place with about 3000 inhabitants. The other villages and hamlets subject to him amount to about two score and their aggregate population may reach 12,000 or 13,000; the total settled population under his rule is estimated by Mr. Doughty at hardly 20,000. But there are besides a number of Beduin tribes tributary to him both on the south and the north, where all those as far as the Syrian border acknowledge his sway. His public revenue may be estimated as equal to about 40,000*l.*, and his fighting power at about 2000 men, drawn from the settled population, and about 1300 more from the Beduin tribes. The warlike qualities of the Arabs generally are held by Mr. Doughty in very slight esteem, and he ridicules the idea that Ibn Rashid threatens Medina. Medina is defended by more than a clay wall, which is enough to frighten an Arab army, and is besides held by a strong Turkish garrison with which the Arab soldiery are utterly unable to cope. The Arabs themselves do not think that the dominion of Ibn Rashid will last long. He waded to power through the blood of his kinsmen; he is childless, and is generally detested by the Beduins as a tyrant.

The following discussion ensued:—

Captain CONDER said he had spent a considerable time in Moab, Ammon, and the country north of that which Mr. Doughty had described, and that gentleman's explorations had thrown considerable light on the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Those employed in that work owed a good deal to the Royal Geographical Society, who had provided them with the instruments necessary for carrying it out. They had not as yet, however, had occasion to give an account of it before the Society. The most interesting part to him of Mr. Doughty's address related to the tombs, the inscriptions, and the diagrams of the rude stone monuments. The upper diagrams exhibited appeared to represent monuments of the kind already known at Petra. The lower diagrams represented square chambers in the rock, of a rougher

* See Carl Ritter's 'Erdkunde,' Arabien, ii. p. 165 *et seq.*

† See articles in 'Globe.'

kind. Those were also found in Moab, in the neighbourhood of Heshbon, and other places, where they were generally called Rûâk, or porches. They were understood to be sepulchral chambers, and were connected in that district with Himyaritic traditions. With regard to the inscriptions, it was particularly fortunate that Mr. Doughty had secured so many squeezes, because it was an extremely difficult thing to copy an ancient inscription. Even men who had given the whole of their lives to the subject had sometimes made apparently slight but very important mistakes. One of the great problems remaining to be settled with regard to the Semitic alphabet was the connection between the North Semitic alphabet and the South Semitic alphabet, and that connection was expected to be found in the very district in which Mr. Doughty had been travelling and in the parts rather further north. In the southern parts of Moab four or five inscriptions had been discovered, which Professor Isaac Taylor, the greatest living authority on the subject in England, had pronounced to be very likely a new alphabet. The rude stone monuments were of extreme importance. The upper ones resembled buildings found by Sir Charles Wilson and the Sinai party in the Sinaitic Peninsula, but their exact meaning and origin had not yet been fully worked out. The lower ones were marked with the names of three principal Arab deities. The one marked Allât particularly interested him, because it showed a distinctly marked cup hollow in the upper surface. Those hollows had been traced very carefully throughout Moab. They had been found on the tops of dolmens and on their floor-stones, on flat rocks, and on menhirs. The deduction that he drew from them was the same as that previously arrived at by Mr. James Fergusson, namely, that they were intended to hold some kind of liquid, and were connected with sacrifice. As aids in the study of Semitic epigraphy and Semitic archaeology, too high a value could hardly be set on what Mr. Doughty had brought home.

Mr. W. MARTIN WOOD said that in connection with the Asiatic Society of Bombay he had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Doughty in his Arab costume when he first emerged from his hardships and travels, and listening to a short paper referring to one part of his journey. He congratulated him on the wider stage which the Royal Geographical Society had afforded him for giving a description of his discoveries.

Mr. W. T. BLANFORD said the information about the occurrence of volcanic rocks upon plateaus in this portion of Arabia was entirely new; but volcanic rocks had been found in so many surrounding countries, that it was very difficult to say to which series those just discovered could be referred. Such rocks were noticed by Bauermann in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai; by Tristram and others in the country between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba; they occurred all along the southern portion of both coasts of the Red Sea, and were enormously developed in Abyssinia. Judging by Mr. Doughty's sketch of those he had visited they must be of considerable antiquity. They were at a very great distance from those comparatively modern volcanic cones that were seen in the neighbourhood of Aden, and they appeared to be rather a form of interstratified or overlying lava—typical trap, in fact; it was impossible to say what their exact age was. He believed Mr. Doughty looked upon the sandstone as probably cretaceous.

Mr. DOUGHTY: Greensand.

Mr. BLANFORD said if that was correct it was rather an interesting circumstance, because the sandstone of the Sahara Desert was cretaceous. A very valuable and most important work had just appeared upon the Libyan Desert by Prof. Zittel, in which an admirable account was given of the surface characteristics. He divided the surface first into plateau-desert, nearly flat country, very stony, without sand. This occupied a very large portion of the desert, and consisted chiefly of sandstone, forming

enormous flats for very wide distances, but passing here and there into mountainous desert. In this great plateau there were also immense depressions formed by the action of water, probably similar to what occurred more or less in all deserts, and to some of the wadies of Arabia. Another division was the sandy desert, occupying a comparatively small part of the surface. If the sandstone in Arabia were the Nubian sandstone, it was very possible that its disintegration gave rise to much of the desert sand, as in the Sahara. Then the question arose, What is the connection between the lava flows of the "Harrats" and the volcanic cones on their surface? Was Mr. Doughty quite certain that there were volcanic cones on the top? Did he see any craters?

Mr. DOUGHTY answered that he knew the appearance of active volcanoes very well. He was on Vesuvius at the last great eruption of 1872.

Mr. BLANFORD said he should very much doubt whether the cones could be connected with ancient lava. The plateau appeared to be about 5000 or 6000 feet in height, and 20 or 30 miles across in places, while the cones at the top were of no very great height.

Mr. DOUGHTY: They are commonly from 200 to 700 feet; the highest is about 1000 feet.

Mr. BLANFORD said it must have taken a long time for the lava and sandstone to be worn away from the sides, and the action of denudation could hardly have carried away such a mass of lava without destroying the cones, if both were of contemporaneous origin. If the different plateaus resembled one another, it was probable that they were once united. There were two sets of basaltic traps in the peninsula of Sinai, and it was not at all impossible that there should be a continuation of one of these series of lava-flows throughout the whole of that part of Arabia. Sandstones were rather deceptive, rocks of various ages resembling each other in mineral character, but as cretaceous rocks were enormously developed in Arabia, precisely of the age of the upper greensand, it was far from improbable that Mr. Doughty's opinion of the age of the sandstone might be correct.

Mr. BLANFORD further said that he thought the animal whose horn Mr. Doughty had exhibited was the *Oryx beatrix*, which was also found in the neighbourhood of Muscat. Not long ago there was in the Zoological Gardens a living animal of this species.

Mr. TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS said with reference to the volcanic formations noticed by Mr. Doughty in Hejaz and Nejd, that similar formations were found further north in the classic region of Trachonitis, the Biblical Argob, on the south and east of Damascus. These include the separate lava masses of the Leja and the Safa, which have been described by Mr. Cyril Graham, Dr. Porter, Captain Richard Burton, and Dr. Wetzstein. Among the remarkable features of the Trachonitis, immense hollow hemispherical blisters occurred on the surface, produced by gases in the cooling of the lava. It would be interesting to know if similar features were noticed by Mr. Doughty.

The CHAIRMAN (Sir HENRY RAWLINSON) said the paper had dealt with so many subjects, that it was difficult to bring on an exhaustive discussion upon any one of them. The branch of inquiry in which he himself took most interest was the antiquarian. It might be remembered that when first the Sinaitic inscriptions were brought to light they created a strong sensation all over Europe. Mr. Forster, who first brought them to notice, convinced himself that they were records left by Moses on his return from Egypt, and he translated them accordingly in reference to the feeding of camels or the loading of caravans! It took a long time to disabuse him of his error, but the final blow was given to his theories when it was shown that he had read the inscriptions from right to left instead of from left to right. Since

then the subject had been very thoroughly examined by German *savants*, especially by Rödiger, and it was now perfectly well known that the legends in question were mere memorials of pilgrims passing along the routes to the ancient place of pilgrimage at Sinai. No doubt the inscriptions that Mr. Doughty had discovered were of the same class—probably not older than the first or second century of the Christian era—and the tombs and sepulchral monuments he should assign to about the same time. He had been looking over Mr. Doughty's book of inscriptions, and he found that a considerable number of the legends were in good Himyaritic writing. They could all be read with a little trouble, but still he could not believe that the Himyaritic character was in use so far north as Medyin. They were more probably inscriptions left by Himyaritic visitors, as from the south as well as from the north of Arabia, pilgrims were in the habit of passing through the country, and the Himyarites would of course write in their own language, just as the northern Arabs wrote in their language—Nabathæan. The Himyaritic was probably an older form of writing than the so-called Nabathæan, for there was a Babylonian cylinder in the British Museum dating from perhaps 1000 B.C., on which there was a Himyaritic legend. It was, however, quite a novelty in the science of palæography to find Himyaritic writing so near the north of Arabia. He might further observe, in reference to this subject, that there was apparently no great antiquity in Arabia; at any rate, there were no antiquarian monuments to compare in age with those of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria. As far as he knew, only one object of real antiquity had ever been found in Arabia, and that was discovered a few years ago by Captain Durand in the island of Bahrein, which seemed from very early times to have been in possession of the Arab tribe of Ogeir. This relic was the foot of a statue, on which was an inscription in ancient cuneiform, stating that it was the memorial of "Kimgas, the chief of Ogeir, and the servant of Inzag (or Mercury.)" The great value of the inscription was that it was not in a Semitic language at all: Inzag being pure Turanian. One of the inferences which he drew from this discovery was that there were originally two distinct lines of colonisation into Arabia: one Semitic, along the western coast from Syria, known in the Bible as the colonisation of Joktan; and the other Kushite, which was Turanian, and followed down the east side of the Gulf of Persia from the Euphrates, being figured in Genesis by the seven sons of Kush. Kush, he believed, merely represented a dark-coloured people, the word having that meaning; and this dark race would seem to have colonised the east of Arabia as the red race of the Semitic family colonised the west. They may have afterwards crossed the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and have settled on the Persian side, forming what Herodotus called the Asiatic Ethiopians. They perhaps existed even at the present day in the Belooch tribes, some of whom dwelt along the coast from the mouth of the Gulf to the Indus, and spoke a Turanian dialect called Brahúí, which they might have inherited from their Kushite ancestors, but which was entirely unconnected with the Aryan dialects spoken for thousands of miles on all sides of them. He mentioned this curious circumstance in reference to the general question of the colonisation of Arabia; but he would not dwell on it as there was a long interval of time between the date of the Bahrein inscription and the date of those which Mr. Doughty had discovered—an interval of perhaps 4000 years. Fortunately, a date could be approximately given to the Bahrein monument, because the great Assyrian king who conquered the island under its Turanian rulers, and recorded his conquests, was called Sargon I., and a monument of his had been lately found, giving his date as about 3800 B.C. In the case of the Bahrein stone it was thus possible to give a certain approximate date; but in the Semitic antiquities that could not be done. There was nothing to show that there was any greater antiquity at Medyin Salih or Teyma than in the Wady Negub or on the other lines of route in Northern Arabia. He did not

apprehend that any historical discoveries would result from the inscriptions which Mr. Doughty had obtained, though they were very curious and interesting, as showing that the inhabitants of Arabia, both from the north and south, about the time of the Christian era travelled along that line.* They may have gone to Mecca, because the black stone there had always been an object of worship, or Medyin itself might have been a place of pilgrimage, in consequence of which the Arabs might have invented the story of the prophet Salih, who preached to the tribes. In the Assyrian inscriptions, Arabia was frequently mentioned, but the Assyrians never seemed to have penetrated very far into the country, and its name did not occur in the oldest inscriptions, the earliest notice of it in any detail being in the annals of Sargon II., about 720 B.C. That king made an expedition into the country, and attacked, amongst others, the tribe of Themood, whose name was well known in history. He, however, went no further than a district which he called Barandi and which, he said, was the remotest point with which they were acquainted. Subsequent Assyrian kings were brought more immediately in contact with the Arabians, and reduced the frontier districts, but never penetrated far into the interior. At that time, however, as at present, the Arabian tribes had spread beyond the confines of Arabia Proper and all the Mesopotamian desert was covered with them. Probably forty different Arab tribes were named who dwelt about the Tigris, or between the Tigris and the Persian mountains, but only a few of those names were to be recognised to the present day.—With regard to the name of *namous* which Mr. Doughty gave to the tombs, of course, as the *m* and the *v* were undistinguishable, the true form should be *navûs*, which was a word known wherever Arabic was known. *Navûs* was originally Persian, but was adopted in Arabic and applied to any old cemetery. It had always been supposed to be a corruption of, or a cognate word with, the Greek *vâos*, and there were hundreds of *navûses* about Mesopotamia, mentioned in the old authors.—One other point which he wished to refer to was the political question. Mr. Palgrave very much regretted not being able to be present, and had written a note in which he said he should have liked to learn from Mr. Doughty what the general state of the country was at present; whether the inhabitants were favourably disposed towards the Turks and Egyptians; how the English name was regarded by them; and what chance there was of the famous false prophet (the Mahdi) obtaining a footing among them. He (Sir Henry Rawlinson) considered that Arabia in its present state was by far the most dangerous ground in Asia in reference to this Mahommedan revival. If the false prophet indeed really intended to run the career which was threatening, his great success and great field of action would be in Arabia. Probably Mr. Doughty was there too long ago to be able to give any information on that point. Still, it would be curious to know if he ever heard any anticipations of a coming Mahommedan revival in Arabia, and if he considered that the Mahdi, appearing there as the last of the Imauns, would be received with favour. Ibn Rashid, who was so kind to Palgrave and to the Blunts, was at present the supreme authority in Arabia. He had entirely superseded the old chiefs of Riad and Dereyeh, and was regarded with great apprehension and jealousy by the Turkish authorities. If he and the Mahdi came together it was to be hoped that they would not coalesce. They were probably too much bent on the same object, and too much in the nature of competitors ever to be friends; but if they were to coalesce, the

* M. Renan, who has recently examined the Doughty inscriptions and is now lecturing upon them at the Collège de France, asserts that they throw much light on the early mythology of Arabia, and are thus of considerable interest.—H. R., June 25, 1884.

Turkish authority in Arabia would not be worth a day's purchase. In conclusion, he asked the Meeting to return their thanks to Mr. Doughty for the account of his adventurous and perilous journey. Henceforth his name would be inscribed in the front ranks of Asiatic travellers, and he would be regarded as a worthy companion to Wallin, Palgrave, Blunt, Burton, and the other great travellers who had journeyed in the interior of Arabia.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Success of Mr. Joseph Thomson's Expedition.—The Society received a telegram from Zanzibar on the 11th June, announcing the safe return of the expedition under Mr. Joseph Thomson, and giving a brief summary of his route. The route showed that he had accomplished all that he had been directed by his instructions to attempt, and this without any hostile collision with the natives or the loss of a single life, except through illness. Thus, in one successful journey the dreaded Masai country has at length been successfully traversed, the snow-clad Kenia reached and its position fixed, the mystery of Lake Bahringo solved, and the East African range from Kenia to Kilimanjaro, with its extinct volcanoes, crossed and recrossed in various directions. The warm congratulations of the Society were immediately telegraphed to Mr. Thomson with a request for further details. The reply to this was the following lengthy telegram from Sir John Kirk, dated June 14th, for transmitting which we are indebted to the great liberality of the Eastern Telegraph Company:—"Thomson left Taveta last July, in company with a Pangani caravan; travelling northerly and passing Rombo, he reached the Masai country and crossed the head-waters of the Tzavo. Thence his route was more west; across the great sandy plain, the bed of a dried-up lake, of which Ngiri is a remnant. He reached Doenyo Erok on 19th August, and there met the Masai in numbers, but the caravan being so large they gave no trouble. Here he left the sandy, sterile plain, and entered the Kaptei district, a more broken country, rising in elevation to a plateau; this is a volcanic region with extinct cones, lying along a fault. September 5th he reached Ngougoabag, and the head-waters of the Athi (Adhi) in lat. $1^{\circ} 22' S.$, long. $36^{\circ} 32' E.$, altitude 5500, which forms the southern boundary of Kikuyu. Here he left the Kaptei plateau, and reached next the northern end of Lake Naivasha in lat. $0^{\circ} 43' 30'' S.$, long. $36^{\circ} 4' E.$ Lake Naivasha lies in a trough-like valley which extends to one degree N. lat., and divides the plateau. Lakes Nakolo, Bahringo, and numerous hot springs lie in the trough. He visited South Naivasha, Doenyo Susiva (Sus), 8000 feet high, a wonderful volcanic crater, and Buri (D. Mburo) [passage here unintelligible]. The Masai here were numerous, harassing, but there was no fighting. He sent Martin (his

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NORTH WESTER

BY CHARL

Scale : 32 E

A horizontal number line with tick marks at 0, 10, 20, and 30.

C. M. Doughty



