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Referring again to the Chilian rivers, Prof. Elliot has told us that in former times they were very much larger than they are to-day; that the present ones have cut their beds through the centre of the ancient beds of former streams, as he has shown on the screen. With reference to that, when the Pampean sea existed, one may imagine that the cold polar currents swept northward over it, that the Andes acted as a great condenser, and that the enormous area of water, two-thirds the size of the Mediterranean sea, must have given great evaporation. The Andes being lower than they are to-day, an abundant rainfall must have been carried across them and have made the rivers much larger than now, and I believe that in those times Chile was a beautiful forested, garden-like country, much of which, since the drying-up of the Pampean sea and the inability of the winds to carry the rains westward across the Andes, has been desiccated. I, for one, thank the lecturer most heartily for his very interesting paper.

Dr. EVANS: I cordially endorse what the lecturer has said on the importance of vegetation in determining the character of river-banks. No one, who has travelled on the great rivers of the South American plains, can fail to have been struck by the natural embankments which follow the river margins, and are caused by the filtering action of the vegetation. With regard to the part played by willows, I may mention that when ascending the Tuiche, among the north-eastern foothills of the Bolivian Andes, I noticed that the Indians pulled the raft up against a strong current with the help of the branches of the willows, that maintained their position on a submerged bank in spite of the force of the water, which must be far greater in time of flood.

It is possible that the Pacific rivers may have cut their way back in some cases in the regions referred to by Prof. Scott Elliot, but it is not necessary to invoke a change of watershed to explain the desiccation of the western Argentine plains. The retreat of the Atlantic and the elevation of the western Andes, which is believed to have continued into comparatively recent times, must have diminished the rainfall on the eastern range and the volume of the streams that flow from it. The disappearance, however, of the great mammals of South America may have been due, not to want of nourishment, but to the activity of early man, who discovered that they were good to eat.

The PRESIDENT then proposed a vote of thanks to Prof. Scott Elliot for his paper, which was unanimously carried.

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## GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING POPULATION IN THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN LANDS.\*

By D. G. HOGARTH, M.A.

It is an axiom, which no one would care now to dispute, that the geographical conditions amid which a human group resides have effects upon its character, both moral and physical, which can be recognized *à posteriori*, and even presumed; and the truth of the axiom can be, and in certain cases has been, put to the proof by variation, *i.e.* either through a particular group being transferred to new conditions, or

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\* Lecture delivered at the Cambridge School of Geography, February 20, 1906.

through modification of the old conditions themselves. In the region, which is to be my peculiar theme to-day, results of both these tests are to be seen. The Kurds of Mount Amânus (Giaur Dagħ) have been compelled during the past three generations to abandon the mountains for the plains, and from being feudal marauders, the terror of Cilicia and Commagene up to the early years of the nineteenth century, have become peaceful agriculturalists. Similarly, a part of the Anazeh Bedawis of the North Syrian desert, through having been enticed or forced to become *fellahin* (cultivators) in the Euphrates valley, have lost already much of their distinctive desert character. The second test, the modification of actual geographical conditions by human agency, can be applied, of course, only on a comparatively small scale; but the effects which it exerts, nevertheless, on population may be observed in the Egyptian delta, where the reclamation of vast tracts on the western flank and along the seaboard is quickly converting the Walad Ali Bedawis and the formerly amphibious and secretive marsh folk into a slow and sturdy type of *fellah*, such as has long been characteristic of the Deltaic apex, the Fayum, and the broader parts of the middle Nile valley.

For my present purpose I propose to interpret the phrase "geographical conditions" very literally, as the *conditions of the Earth's superficies itself*, excluding influences both of what lies beneath and of what is above, *i.e.* excluding geological and meteorological conditions. The inquiry will then be concerned with the influence exerted on the population of the East Mediterranean lands by the character of the terrestrial surface, highland or lowland, plain or rugged, whether arable, overgrown, grass-bearing, or sterile; by the relation of the different superficial regions to one another; and, lastly, by their relation to the world outside the Mediterranean area. In short, in any such inquiry we must consider the characteristics of the different individual parts of a region, their facilities for intercommunication, and their general setting in the continental scheme of the globe. At the same time, far be it from me to maintain that geographical conditions are the sole, or even the main, determinant of popular characteristics. They are a factor in that determination, a factor of definite and ascertained value, which always tells. That is all that may safely be said. Many other factors go to make up that mysterious result, race-differentiation, and at some of these, perhaps the most important, we can only guess. I listened the other day to a great botanical authority speaking on the vegetation of India. He told his audience that the character of that vegetation was in certain cases sharply divided by a narrow line, although soil, humidity, weather, and climate were the same on both hands; and he added that the main factor in the differentiation remained still to be discovered. If in the world of plants there is an unknown  $x$ , how much more likely there should be one in the world of humanity! And yet

there are sane persons who will read you, to their own plenary satisfaction, all the riddles of race.

The region which I take to-day has this advantage over others in such an inquiry—that the ancient as well as the modern history of its inhabitants has been made the subject of the minutest study back to a very early period. The effect of geographical conditions can therefore be observed over an immense length of time. I mean by the East Mediterranean lands those coasts which lie round the Ægean and Levantine basins, from the Hellenic peninsula to that great projection of Africa lying over against the Morea and Crete, which was called in antiquity Cyrenaica, and is still known, with a conservatism unusual in Ottoman official nomenclature, as the province of Barca. But I shall consider the *hinterlands* of those coasts only as far back as the first strong natural boundaries, which separate them from continental masses. While, therefore, all peninsular Greece falls within our area, only that part of the Balkan peninsula is included which lies south of the line of the Balkans themselves, *i.e.* the districts of ancient Macedonia and Thrace. Asia Minor must be taken in up to Euphrates, and Syria as far east as the edge of the desert, which, when the river itself begins to bear away to the east of south, continues the boundary-line southward in a vertical direction. As for Africa, the northern edge of the desert must again be our limit, that edge running in a roughly horizontal direction from the middle of the Suez isthmus to the bay of the Syrtis, and being continuous except for the narrow pass at the apex of the Nile delta through which the great continental river issues.

This region has been characterized throughout history by a certain persistent homogeneity of population and social life, despite many obvious differences and varieties. It is not only that the inhabitants proper to certain parts of it have been found for many ages in force in all other parts as well, as, for instance, the Greeks and the Jews, and only less conspicuously the inhabitants proper to Macedonia, Thrace, Western Asia Minor, and Northern Syria; but also that most of them have had, and still keep, a curious fundamental identity of physical and moral character, that identity to which we bear witness at this day when we relegate them all vaguely to one category as “Levantine,” with a common implication. It is remarkable how much similarity underlies distinctions in the facial types of the Greeks, the Armenians, the so-called Turks of Anatolia, and the Syrians. The same low-browed, slightly aquiline physiognomy is largely prevalent among all; the same dark colouring of eyes and hair; the same whitey-brown tint of skin. The prevailing type of intelligence and of temperament is also curiously identical throughout the area, the former singularly alert, versatile, and quick of apprehension; the latter sanguine, impulsive, and unstable. These things being so, it is not surprising that

the part played by all the races of this area in the history of civilization has been broadly one in kind, though differing in importance. It has been an intellectual rather than a moral part. They have contributed ideas rather than systems. What they conceived others have put into practice. They originated Christianity; but the organization of the social system and political force of Christendom was not their work. They originated Islam; but Islam again, as a social system and a permanent political force, is owed to a people of North Central Asia. They taught the arts of colonization and assimilation of alien peoples by superior races, but their own colonies did not become nations, and their empires were dissolved almost as soon as formed. We look to them for the spring of our ideas in philosophy, religion, and almost all the arts and the sciences, but not for instruction in the practical organization of society, either in its domestic conduct or its imperial expansion.

This region of the East Mediterranean coasts may be regarded, then, as a unit by no means arbitrarily presumed, and its populations as essentially, and not merely accidentally, forming one social group. And that it should be so possible to regard them is due in no small measure to geographical facts. First, of course, to the characteristics of their peculiar sea. No other in the world has so long and so uniformly united, rather than divided, the inhabitants about it, as that which is loosely termed the Levant. If I may bring archæology into court for a moment, the most recent investigations into the pre-historic period of the *Ægean* open up an ever receding vista of intercommunication between the distant coasts. The old-fashioned idea that the Nile valley was a land closed to Mediterranean intercourse and influences until, at earliest, the time of the Saitic Pharaohs, has not stood the test of *Ægean* excavation. When Egyptian objects had been found at Mycenæ, it remained still possible to ascribe them to Phœnician carriers. But Crete showed us not only actual Egyptian objects, but an Egyptian influence upon the later Minoan art of so strong and general a kind that it cannot be explained by anything less than direct, long-continued, and constant intercourse with Egypt itself in the period of the eighteenth dynasty, and earlier. Nor is it a case only of Egyptian influence in the *Ægean*; we have to note also *Ægean* influence in Egypt. Pottery of the late Minoan or Mycenæan Age has been found in large quantities as high up the Nile as Tell el-Amarna; and evidence has accumulated in recent years to show that there was a fabric of native imitation of *Ægean* vases—note the importance of counterfeit fabrics as evidence of strong alien influence—in all parts of Egypt, from the Delta up to Thebes, in and after the thirteenth century B.C. Not that it should be supposed for one moment that this mutual intercourse between the Mediterranean and the Nile valley began only then. The discoveries of Cretan vases in Egypt go back through the twelfth

to the earliest dynasties, and the Egyptian fabrics found in Crete suggest an even earlier age of intercourse, possibly prior even to the dynastic period on the Nile.

A close connection between Crete and the Philistine shore, already attested by Greek traditions of Minos, and the cult of Zeus Cretagenes at Gaza, is beginning to be illustrated by the results of excavation on South Palestinian sites. Mr. McAlister, the explorer of Gezer, has found fragments of painted ware which are pure Cretan of the later Minoan fabric, and also native imitations of the later Ægean forms. On the opposite side of the area, we find evidence in Sikel tombs of long intercourse between the Ægean and Sicily, this again supported by Greek traditions of the Cretan Minos. While, as for the Ægean area in and by itself, nothing is better established and more remarkable about the remains of the *later* prehistoric period, wherever found, whether in the Argolid, in Thessaly, in North-West Asia Minor, in Rhodes, or in Crete, than their identity in form and fabric. There must have been at the least free and constant commercial communication between all the mainland coasts and islands, even if the whole area had not come under one political government at the latest period of Minoan art.

The characteristics of the Levant sea, which favour commerce, have often been insisted upon. The chains of insular refuges which stud the northern part of it, and are due to the fact that the bed of the Ægean sea proper is a comparatively recently and slightly submerged continental shelf, are familiar to any one who has ever seen the map. The abundance of natural harbours, especially on the coast of the Hellenic peninsula, the Ægean isles, and western and south-western Asia Minor, needs no more than to be recalled to the memory of an academic audience. But I may point out, in addition to these well-known facts, that the tideless nature of this sea, taken in combination with certain other circumstances, has greatly conduced to its facile use by man. It is far less affected by currents than the oceanic seas; and, since it acts much less erosively on its coasts than most others, comparatively deep water can be counted upon at almost any point desired, except at a river mouth. Although the East Mediterranean is stormy enough at a certain season of the year, there is a long period, covering late spring, all the summer, and almost all the autumn, during which the direction and strength of the daily winds can be foreseen with certainty, and the nights offer recurring intervals of calm. In consequence, ships, even modern steamers of considerable tonnage, by choosing their season, can and do dispense with harbour shelter on the Levant coasts to an astonishing degree. All who have been in Greek seas must be familiar with the spectacle of large craft riding at anchor in the open close in shore, or tied up astern to the rocks themselves; and I can quote a very actual illustration of the influence which this peculiarity of the tideless Levant exerts. It appears that the

expenditure which we have incurred on the construction of a harbour for Cyprus, and a railway to feed it, promises to be exceedingly unremunerative. Captains find it unnecessary to spend money and time on obtaining berths within the Famagusta breakwater; tramps anchor outside, and in nine days out of ten can take their cargo and passengers aboard; while other steamers, specially chartered to ship the products of the island, choose their season and tie up to the open shore at the spot most convenient to the place of production.

One coast of the Levant sea must, however, be excepted at the present day from this generalization, viz. the African. As things are now, the greater part of it is as inhospitable as the other coasts are accessible. If it were not for the artificial harbours made in recent times at Port Said and Alexandria, large modern ships would have to avoid this coast altogether, and small craft could only venture to run to a few points upon it at certain seasons. The two Nile mouths have become very difficult of entry, and except the small, remote, and desert-ringed harbours of Tobruk and Bomba, in ancient Marmarica, there is not a port or a roadstead of even moderate security between Alexandria and Sfax, in Tunisia, a stretch of over 1000 miles of iron-bound coast. This has not, however, been always so, nor has the character of the African shore always exercised its present influence. There has been a serious land-subsidence, probably along the whole coast, since antiquity. The fact is fully established in the Nile delta and in the Cyrenaica, and may be assumed on the intervening almost unexplored stretch. The Ptolemaic strata of ancient Alexandria are now well below sea-level in all the lower lying districts of the city, and Prof. Petrie, when he tried, in the dry season of spring two years ago, to explore the mounds of Buto, found that the water stopped him at the level of the Roman imperial age. The culture of the olive and vine, once prevalent all over the lower delta, and attested by deserted presses and rotting roots, is now impossible; for so little do the lands rise above sea-level, that adequate natural drainage cannot be obtained. On the Cyrenaic coast, on a calm day, you may see at Marsa Susa, the ancient Apollonia and chief port of Cyrene, the foundations of half the city running out under water. Tombs sunk above the tops of their doors have become sea-caves, and the waves wash into the orchestra of the theatre. Thus the bays which once enabled Cyrene to be a commercial city of the first rank have wholly disappeared; and this geographical change has resulted in the lapse of all Cyrenaica to barbarism. Nomadized by the influence of its desert *hinterland*, it has been for a thousand years, and is still, almost the least-known and most anti-European bit of the whole African coast, although it faces the southern cape of Greece at a distance of not 300 miles, and seems placed by Nature to be a focus of Mediterranean trade.

The lands about the Levant sea, with the sole exception of Egypt,

have this also in common, that no river, navigable from the mouth upwards, acts as a natural link between the littoral plains and the inner country. Indeed, from one cause or another, there is no stream falling into the eastern Mediterranean, except the Nile, which can be ascended for as much as 25 miles from its mouth. Moreover, the littoral plains are backed in almost every case, at a very short distance, by the steep faces of high plateaux, fenced from the coast by rims of greater elevation and more rugged character than their own surfaces. This is the case, for example, in the Peloponnesus, where the Arcadian plain is completely ringed, and itself greatly elevated; and so too in Boeotia and in Thessaly, though the central plains are much lower. In Macedonia the littoral plain of the lower Vardar closes in at the Iron Gates; and the northern part of the great central Macedonian basin both lies at a much higher elevation and is effectually cut off from the southern. The same is the case with the Struma valley above Seres; while the third of the great river valleys which make up Macedonia, that of the Nesta, is shut in by high mountains till within a short distance of the sea, and only opens out near the headwaters. That Asia Minor follows the same rule is notorious. The whole heart of the peninsula is a cup-like plateau, fenced on all sides by high rims, through which the waters from its uttermost fringes, which alone drain to the sea, find their way by gorges that sometimes, as in the case of the chief Cilician streams, the Seihun and Jihan (Sarus and Pyramus), are impassable by man. So again with Syria. Two-thirds of it is a plateau cut off from the sea by high ranges. That part of the inner drainage which finds its way to the coast, does so only through the tremendous gorge of the Asi (Orontes) below Antioch, which the natives in ancient times compared to Tempe, and the gorge of the Litani (Leontes) near Beirut. The rest, unable to reach the sea at all, is consumed internally in the great salt marshes below Aleppo, and the deeply depressed evaporation-pan of the Dead sea. The exception offered by southern Palestine, where there is no distinct coastal range, is only apparent, for the plateaux of Samaria and Judea are a continuation of the highlands of Lebanon and Galilee, and so greatly elevated as to differentiate the interior from the littoral hardly less effectually.

The effect of this disposition of the land-relief round three sides of the area has always been to deter the inhabitants of the littorals from spreading on to the interior districts, and to force their surplus energies on to the sea, whose influence would obviously tend to give them a common character, while the internal peoples retained their distinct individualities. And the exception of North Africa has been of very little moment except to itself; for the portions of it habitable by any but a very thin population, necessarily dependent on the sea, are limited to two small patches, the Nile delta and the Cyrenaic highlands.



As a whole, the East Mediterranean lands may be said to have always been peopled by two distinct circles of inhabitants, an inner ring living under easy climatic and agricultural conditions and in constant intercommunication, characterized by that mobility and alert intellectualism, which comes from continual racial fusion and the habit of seafaring; and an outer ring, living under the sterner conditions of high altitudes in a temperate clime, of slower intelligence, but stronger physique and more serious and consistent habit. At the same time, while the natural distinctions of relief have been everywhere potent to deter the inhabitants of the warm lowlands from climbing up to the cold highlands and assimilating their folk—a potency well illustrated by the failure of the Arabs to make any permanent impression on the plateau of Asia Minor, despite many attempts,—they have not been strong enough to prevent the highland folk from following their natural instinct to go downhill to the warmer, kinder littorals. There has accordingly been a continual infusion of fresh and vigorous blood into the coastal populations, and a continual pressure upon these which has increased their natural tendency towards movement and change. I take it, this has had no small share in producing that singularly mobile and alert intellectual character which we associate with both the Caucasians and the Semites of the nearer East.

It might be objected here, that such a continual drain from the highlands of the interior without compensating reflux from the littorals would tend to depopulate the former districts. Well, that has to some extent been the actual result. It is obvious to the most rapid observer that the inland parts of Asia Minor, for example, had a far denser population once than they have now. Great towns which have diminished to small ones, and small towns which have shrunk to villages, or become wholly desolate, are the most frequent and familiar sights which the traveller has to observe in that country. And, more than that, a great part of such population as actually exists in inland Anatolia is of recent importation, being composed of, or derived from, Turcoman semi-nomadic races, which we know to have come into the peninsula since the Christian era. But there are many other causes contributing to this state of things—long ages of predatory warfare, native neglect to maintain vegetation, bad economic government from without, and so forth—causes so many and so dynamic that the wonder is rather that the country should be so well inhabited as in fact it is. Nor would it indeed be so if it were not for another geographical influence, to which I will now call attention, because it not only goes far to explain the persistence of population in the highlands, but also supplies another cause for the distinctive vigour and nimbleness of the intelligence of certain East Mediterranean littoral races—I mean the influence of the great steppes and deserts which form the *hinterland* of about half the area under discussion.

The effect which the vast dry and elevated tracts of central and south-western Asia and northern Africa have had on the history of the Mediterranean lands, and on that of all central and southern Europe, can hardly be exaggerated, and might well have been made the sole subject of this lecture. For it is to their existence and to their characteristics that is due that continual movement of peoples which we can dimly descry in full action at the dawn of history, and can follow in more and more detail as the centuries advance down to almost modern times. An incursion of tribes of unknown origin into the Hellenic peninsula about 1000 B.C. is the earliest of such movements of which history can take account with certainty, though it is undoubtedly very far from the earliest that occurred. The invasion of the Iberian peninsula by the Moors, and, later still, of what is now European Russia by Mongolian races, are the latest which took place on any considerable scale; while in the interval occurred the Arabization of Syria and North Africa, the Turcoman assimilation of Asia Minor and south-western Europe, and the partial Slavonic settlement of the central Balkan peninsula and Greece. Since the fourteenth century the *vacua* in Europe have been sufficiently filled up to check the indraught, according to a law which acts as naturally and inevitably as the laws governing the movement of the atmosphere and of fluids.

On natural and inevitable laws the whole question indeed depends. These great steppe and desert areas favour the growth of populations of high natality and great physical vigour, but are wholly unable to support their normal increase. The area of both pasture and cultivation is immutably fixed in a country like Arabia. It cannot be extended by any amount of human effort, and, such as it is, it but sparsely nourishes a restricted and sparse body of inhabitants, which is obliged, in great part, to move from place to place to find, the year round, the bare necessities of life. The additions continually made to the population by vigorous parents, who live in a state of society which has always allowed the male to exercise his full powers of begetting, unrestricted by monogamy, have no choice but to pass beyond the areas of their origin in a continuous stream; and, as a matter of fact, they have been so passing since the dawn of time, and are so passing still, though no longer into Europe. The Arabs have found in recent centuries their outlet in Africa; the Turcomans and Tartars, in Persia and the Far East. These movements have not always taken the same direction. India and China, and even the East Indian islands, have induced the tide of migration, as well as "the march of empire," to take its way to some extent eastward; but two facts have caused the *main* movement to tend westward. First, the existence of greater *vacua* in those western lands, whose climates, while fit for, nay, favourable to, human life, are more rigorous than the climates of the great valleys of South and East Asia, and therefore have not so quickly conduced to the growth

of population in the earliest and most feeble days of nascent mankind. Second, the downward inclination of the general Asian relief from the steppe and desert areas towards the west. In Europe, West Asia, and Africa easy natural conditions of life have always been more readily accessible to the surplus of the nomad peoples than in East Asia.

The result is sufficiently obvious. There has been a constant thrust from eastwards into the Mediterranean lands, slow, irresistible, except at moments of very strong civilized administration, such as Rome exercised for a time—and, moreover, dynamic, *i.e.* productive of secondary movements among the peoples of the invaded territories themselves. The moments of reaction have been very short, and their speedy ebb has only served to prove the rule. Consider, for instance, the great reaction of the fourth century B.C., which found leaders in the Macedonians and a hero in Alexander. It reconquered about a quarter of Asia and a corner of Africa; and how long did it hold either the greater or the lesser of its conquests? The Greeks settled in the eastern provinces of the Macedonian empire, were practising, it appears, a native religion, and speaking native tongues in less than a century. As for the territories lying immediately west of these, the Parthians had recovered them in two centuries. Even the Seleucid kingdom steadily lost Hellenism from the first century of its institution. The Aramaic element triumphed in Syria, and in inland Asia Minor we can find only the smallest traces of Greek spirit and practice before the era of Rome. Buddhism crushed the Hellenic divinities in the Far East, and Nature-worship prevailed over them in the Middle East. A creed of Semitic origin triumphed over all westernmost Asia, and passed thence to the conquest of Europe. Another creed, six centuries later, recalled most of that Græco-Semitic religious area to a purer Semitism, in which it has remained ever since. All subsequent reactions have, on the whole, failed, from Julian's attempt to Hellenise Christianity out and out, down to the efforts of modern missionary societies, which confess in candid moments that they make no impression on Islam.

The history of Syria and Egypt illustrates admirably this inexorable westward thrust of the desert populations. We read one long record of Arabization, interrupted, but never ended, by successive Western dominations. Palestine, in particular, has been continually overrun by tribes from the East, from the days when the great Mesopotamian sheikh, Abraham, made good his footing at Hebron, to the earlier part of the nineteenth century, when Ibrahim Pasha had to wage continual war with invading tribes in the district of the Dead sea, during the eight years of Egyptian occupation, from 1832 to 1840. The two greatest examples in history of such movements into Arabia are that of the Beni Israel from the southern and south-western deserts into Judea in the second millennium B.C., and that of the half-tribe of the Shammar in the seventeenth century of our era, from Nejd into the

Hamad, which, after a long conflict with the Anazeh Bedawis, already in possession, ended in the Shammar being driven across Euphrates and occupying permanently the central part of Mesopotamia, where they now are. In each case you have an example, on a large scale, of the desert surplus pressing, at a definite moment, towards a land of plenty. But even on a smaller scale the pressure is always active; and it is to stay the unrest which it occasions, that the Ottoman Government has planted a chain of Circassian colonies all down the east of Jordan, and has been labouring for the past fifty years to create an alternative place of settlement for the Bedawi surplus in the Euphrates valley, where, between desert and desert, it cannot so greatly disturb the established order of things. These alternations of Orientalism and Occidentalism in Syria, as a whole, may be detected by the repeated change of its capital. When the East has prevailed, it has been the oasis of Sham or Damascus; when the West or North, the district of the northern fertile plateau, with Antioch or Aleppo for centre.

In Egypt, our record begins with the Hyksos invasion and ends with that of the half-tribe of the Walad Ali, formerly of Nejd, concerning whom Mehemet Ali had to take measures much less than a century ago, by providing them with lands on the western fringe of the delta, after they had overrun all the north of the fertile triangle. I need not dwell on the degree to which all the population of the Nile valley below the cataracts has been Arabized since antiquity. The fact is familiar to every one in the least familiar with Egypt. But in view of an interesting book recently published in Cambridge, I may be allowed to call attention to the uniformity with which popular movement into the Nile valley from desert areas has proceeded, so far as the facts are known, from the East and not from the West, the obvious reason being the frightfully forbidding character of the Libyan waste, across which it is hardly possible to transport any live stock except the camel. Under the impulse of the first Islamic movement this difficulty was overcome by small bands, who, pressing westward, penetrated out of Egypt to furthest North Africa. But there is no recorded instance of a reflex movement. If Prof. Ridgeway wishes to derive the horses of the Pharaohs from Barbary and the horses of Arabia from Egypt, he has to get over certain very awkward geographical and historical facts.

I venture to find, in this continual permeation of desert elements into the East Mediterranean lands, some explanation of those characteristics of restlessness, superficiality, and individualism which mark the Near Eastern nature. The effect of steppes and deserts on the character of their own populations is most uniform and unmistakable, and, owing to the changelessness of the conditions throughout countless ages, supplies the best illustration of the social influence of geographical

environment which is open to our observation. The highly rarefied air, possessing apparently certain electric qualities from the friction of sand-particles; the difficulty with which mere existence is maintained; the absence of all superfluity of desirable possessions; the necessity for intense selfishness in regard to the means of life, such as patches of vegetation and hidden water-holes; the isolation of habitable spots; the isolation even of every stalk of vegetation from every other—these necessary features of desert life instil the habit of restless movement, and speedy satisfaction with the surface of things; the habit of individual action and pure self-regard; and the habit of introspection, but disconnected and illogical thought.

Finally, and very briefly—for time is getting short—I must remark upon the geographical position which this whole area of the “Near East” occupies in relation to the land-masses of the eastern hemisphere—its setting, in short, in the scheme of the globe. A glance at the map is enough to convince any one that this position is of singular importance. The East Mediterranean lands constitute nothing less than the one and only link and bridge between the three main continents of the old world. Great influence of unity though the sea may be for nations already fixed in their domiciles and advanced a certain distance along the path of progress, it is by land bridges that peoples must move in the beginning of things. By the trough of the Nile valley and the isthmus of Suez; by the main Syrian highway through Philistia to the Lebanon depression, the Orontes basin, and the fords of Euphrates; by the Cilician Gates and the Anatolian plateau, to the valleys of Mæander, Hermus, or Sangarius, and ultimately to the sea or that marine river the Bosphorus; by the great north road, which comes down the upper valley of the western Euphrates, skirts the central Anatolian steppe, and debouches by the Sangarius valley; by the routes which continue into Europe either through the Hebrus plain, or along the Thracian and the Macedonian coasts;—by these ways the populations of three continents have passed and repassed to take up their present positions—always passed and repassed! The powerful people has never remained and fixed its capital in the Near Eastern region till turned back from an attempt to push further; and, once settled, it has soon lost its power, simply because, in this thoroughfare of a world, it has never had peace to consolidate itself, never been long enough let alone. An aged Russian diplomatist once said to me that the wisest heads among his friends greatly feared that establishment of Russian empire in Constantinople to which, as he then thought, popular opinion would force the emperor; and they feared it because the Golden Horn, which would inevitably become the centre of empire, had always been fatal to the power that fixed itself there. I have since realized what he meant. The crossing of four roads is the place, not for a palace, but for an inn.

Note how the great trunk routes of the old world continued to

converge on the Near East long after the movements of whole peoples had ceased, and how they converge still. In the Middle Ages almost all the commerce between West and East passed through the Levant waters, to continue overland through Erzerum or Aleppo to Persia and China, to Bagdad and India. The discovery of the Cape route robbed those roads of their traffic, but the new highway had not been in general use two centuries before trade harked back towards the old, with the establishment of the overland route to the Red sea. Within a generation from that time the Suez canal was being cut; and now three-fourths of the commerce between West and East knows no other eastward sea road than the Levant, and, it is safe to say, will never know another. Can one wonder that commercial spirit, versatility of character, and cosmopolitan habits have been displayed more conspicuously by the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean than by any others? By the Semites of the East Levant coast, for example, first the Phœnicians, and thereafter, when Alexander had crushed these and opened a way eastward from the south-eastern angle of the area, by their neighbours, the Aramæans and the Jews? The simple geographical fact that this last people was originally located where it was, and the historical fact that it was attracted to Antioch on the one side and Alexandria on the other, will explain its wonderful subsequent history without much help from miracle. Similar qualities have been displayed by the North Syrians, the Armenians, and the Greeks, and, in a later age, by the urban populations of the Italian coasts. To be the innkeepers and hucksters of the world for many centuries is to receive enough intellectual and physical stimulus to account for even such great achievements as we connect with Palestine, Greece, and Italy; but, at the same time, it is to undergo enough exhaustion, intellectual and physical, to justify despair that the future of peoples, which have had such a history, will ever rival their past.

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### ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON RUWENZORI.

THE following correspondence has been kindly placed at the disposal of the Society by the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

“Entebbe, Uganda, February 19, 1906.

“MY LORD,

“I have the honour to transmit for Your Lordship’s consideration a copy of a letter addressed to me by Mr. Rudolf Grauer, who, together with the Rev. H. W. Tegart and Mr. H. E. Maddox, both members of the Church Missionary Society, have attempted to climb the Ruwenzori mountain, with some degree of success.

“Mr. Grauer gives the details of his ascent.

“2. I would venture to draw Your Lordship’s attention to the No. V.—MAY, 1906.]

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