

V.—*Journey to Medina, with Route from Yambu.* By Lieutenant  
R. BURTON.

To the Secretary to the Royal Geographical Society.

Read June 12, 1854.

[SIR,—I WELL recollect one of the last sentences addressed to me by the Committee of your learned Society on my departure—"We should wish to hear from you as soon as possible." And I am also aware that not having received a single notice from me since my departure, you have had ample reason to hold me "nidering." The reasons for my "fainéance" appear to me—as usual in case of self-excuse—sufficient: I have been a sufferer from climate, and too dull to put pen to paper, leading the most unsettled life, when writing becomes wearisome to the writer and consequently to the reader: and, finally, I have been busily employed in proposing an Expedition to *Eastern Africa*. Assisted by the enlightened nobleman now at the head of the Bombay Government and by other influential persons, my exertions have every prospect of success: I need scarcely say, that if appointed to direct the course of discovery, I shall never forget that to the liberal patronage of the Royal Geographical Society I owe the opportunity lately afforded to me of proving, "par voie de faits," my fitness for so responsible a charge.

You may remember, Sir, that I started with the intention of crossing the breadth of Arabia from El Medina to Muscat, or of travelling south-eastwards in a diagonal line from Mecca to Maculla, on the Indian Ocean. Arrived at the Prophet's burial-place, I found the Badawin fighting in all directions: even Khaybar\* was inaccessible, and the robber chiefs emphatically expressed their determination to "cut the throat of every man" found in their passes. Disguised as a mendicant I might have penetrated eastwards, but no guide would have accompanied me before the end of the pilgrimage-season—October or early November—and the limits of my leave did peremptorily forbid this delay. At Mecca also I was doomed to be disappointed. Some dispute between the Arab Sherif and the Turkish Pacha, and the excitement of a Holy War in prospect, had afforded the amiable Badawin of El Hejaz a reasonable excuse for recurring to their pet pastime—that of every man shooting his Moslem neighbour. Thus the roads swarmed with obstacles, all superable, but superable only to those who have at command unlimited time. I need not enlarge upon my disappointment at this failure in sight of success.

The secondary objects of my tour, I may remind you, were to find out if a market could be established for horses; to obtain information concerning the Great Eastern Desert; to inquire into the hydrography of El Hyar, its water-parting, the existence of perennial streams and the disputed slope of the country; and finally to try by the test of inspection the theory proposed by a distinguished member of your Society, Lieut.-Col. Sykes; namely, that in the population of the vast Peninsula there exist physiological differences sufficient to warrant our questioning the common origin of the Arabian family.

I satisfied myself that the Hejaz cannot supply India with horses. These animals, though high-bred in the "Holy Land," are "rats," as slender stunted bloods are generally called, of fabulous price, and to be bought only when necessity compels the owners to part with them.†

Of the Great Eastern Desert (the white blot in our maps marked Ruba el

\* The position of this place is variably laid down in our maps. My Medina friends fixed it N.E. of, and distant 3 days' journey (with laden camels, say about 70 miles) from, El Medina.

† See preceding paper by Dr. Wallin.—Ed.

Khali, or the uninhabited region), I have heard from credible relators, that its horrid depths swarm with a large and half-starved population, amongst whom the hardy and daring explorer will find it possible to travel, and that it is a system of rocky hills, semi-fertile ravines, and valleys, sand-deserts, and plains of hard clay, covered with their vegetation by a scanty winter rain. At El Medina I heard a tradition that in days of yore a high road ran from the city, passing through this wild region to Hadramaut. It had, however, been deserted for ages, and my informants considered me demented when I talked of travelling by it.

I am satisfied that, despite all geography, between Ptolemy and Jomard, Arabia, so rich in fumaras\* and mountain rills, contains nothing that can properly be called a river, and I have reasons to believe that, contrary to Ritter and others, the general declivity of Arabia is from N. to S.—from Baghdad to Mecca.

My ethnographic researches, which I propose to detail at some future time, induce me to believe in three distinct races, viz. :—

1. The Aborigines of the country, now driven, like the Bheels and other autochthonic Indians, into the eastern wilds bordering upon the ocean. These are the people derived by a multitude of authors originally from India, a theory which, destitute of historic proof, relies upon strong and salient points of physical similarity between the aborigines of the two peninsulas.

2. The advenæ, a Syrian or Mesopotamian race (typified by Shem and Joktan †), that seized the finest tracts of country and now represents the great Arabian people, and

3. An impure Egypto-Arab clan, personified by Ishmael, his son Nebajoth and Edom (Esau) the son of Isaac, that populated and still holds the Sinaitic Peninsula and the lands immediately E. of it.

The outline of my journey is this. Early in April 1853 I left Southampton disguised in Persian dress, and landed at Alexandria regretting that I had not at once assumed an Afghan costume. A friend, John Larking, gave me a room in his garden, and there I lived about 5 weeks, collecting information about El Hejaz, and refreshing my remembrance of things oriental. When duly prepared, a small Fakih or hedge-priest started by the Cairo steamer. My stay at the capital of Egypt lasted 6 weeks, during which time I became an Indian doctor, and supplied myself with the preposterous outfit with which Eastern travellers to El Hejaz are wont, about as sensibly as our East India cadets, to encumber themselves. In July, after some difficulty about passports at Cairo, I went to Suez, fell in with a Mecca boy and a party of respectable Medinites, who, believing me to be a Sulaymani or Afghan pilgrim, offered to take me to their native city. I should have been detained at Suez had it not been for the stout aid of Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul,

\* The English language contains, I believe, no single word to express a "hill-water course, which rolls a torrent after rain, and is either partially or wholly dry in the drought season;" in fact, what the Arabs denote by "misyal, masyal, masil, or masilah" (the place of flowing), and the Indians by "nullah." No reader of Niebuhr translated can fail to remark the ambiguity and inefficacy of the term "river" in such passages as these:—"We crossed several times over the Wadi Suradsji, a considerably large and rapid river, even at that time, although no rain had fallen for a long while." And,—"We passed without wetting our feet over the river Suradsji, which we had lately seen so large among the hills." Though unwilling to naturalise a word unnecessarily, I propose to adopt "fumara," from a land in which the feature abounds.

† Typified, because the names of the descendants of Joktan (Gen. x. 26-29) are those of cities and regions, not of individuals. For instance, Hazar-maveth, the "home of death," would never be applied by Orientals to a person; whereas for centuries it has denoted, and still denotes, a place.

Mr. West, who persuaded the Bey to overlook the informality of my passport and to allow me to embark on board a pilgrim ship. On the 12th day we landed at Yambu, and immediately started for El Medina, where I went to the house of a friend. This road is not unknown to Europe, but the Swiss traveller Burckhardt was so ill when he observed it, that his pages as well as his map cannot every where be trusted. At the Prophet's burial-place I found means to plot the Mosque—a desideratum—to sketch the town, of which our popular prints are absurdly incorrect, and to visit all the consecrated environs, except Khaybar, where the Badawin were "out." On the 31st of August I started with the Damascus Cafile by the "Darb el Sharki,"\* or Eastern Road, through the great Nejd Desert, deeply grateful to the Schinderhannes who shut up the well-known Coast-Road described by my predecessor. Our 12 days' journey was through an unknown country, and though I could use nothing but watch and pocket-compass—the sight of my sextant at Suez having aroused such suspicions in the Arab mind, that I was compelled to leave it behind—my field-book will, it is hoped, supply a modicum of interesting matter. Arrived at Mecca on the 10th September, I went to the house of the boy Mohammed who had accompanied me from Suez, was most hospitably received by the old widow his mother, and had an opportunity of seeing all the ceremonies of the Haj; I entered the Kaabah and made a plan whilst apparently praying, visited the environs of the city, and became a Haji Baba, which revered title may be really useful to me when wandering among Moslem races. Early in October I returned to Egypt with the intention of starting once more to Arabia, when Fate again interposed an obstacle in the shape of dysentery, and time creeping on made my return to India imperative.]

To begin my narrative—We embarked on board the 'Golden Wire,' a pilgrim ship belonging to a Suez merchant. Her rig and build, like that of all the Red Sea craft, have a general resemblance to the Indian pattimar,† which I believe to be the most ancient shape in the Eastern world, after catamaran and the "toni," or hollowed mango trunk. The Western Arabs still know only two kinds of vessels, the "Sambuk" ‡ and the "Baghlah,"§ differing in tonnage, not in shape; whereas the Eastern Arabs have almost as many varieties of craft as we have. This arises from the circumstance that timber for ship-building is not to be found on the shores of the Red Sea, for which reason the people never were and are not a nation of mariners; whereas the inhabitants of Oman, Hadramaut, and Yemen easily supplied their want of wood by trading for teak with Malabar. This traffic, which began, doubtless, in early ages, gave the Eastern Arabs a spirit of adventure, familiarized them with navigation, afforded them an opportunity of colonising—their descendants the Moplabs are a standing proof of extensive immi-

\* There are four high roads between Mecca and Medina:—1, The Sharki or Desert Road; 2, the Sultani or Royal Way, along the coast and between them; 3, the Wady el Fara Road; and, 4, the Tarik el Ghair.

† A model of the pattimar was shown at the Great Exhibition; any description of it is therefore unnecessary.

‡ This name is the more remarkable, as Athenæus describes the musical instrument called "sambuca" as "resembling a ship with a ladder placed over it."—G. W.

§ A mule.—G. W.

gration—and opened India, that mine of wealth, to their energy and industry.\* Europe still preserves traces of their naval architecture in the felucca, the barge, and the ancient "dromound"—words obviously derived from the Arabs.

The owner of the 'Golden Wire' had agreed to take 60 passengers—a cargo quite sufficient, with their mountainous heap of baggage, for an open-decked vessel of about 75 tons. Favoured by fortune, he filled it with 130 human beings, mostly Badawin, from El Maghrab, perhaps the greatest ruffians in Islam. I will not describe the daily fights we witnessed and had sometimes to join in; two men were stabbed in the port of Suez, and before we were half way between Egypt and Yambu, the "second class" generally made an energetic attempt to share with the "first" the lofty poop of the 'Golden Wire:† but we received them with our quarter-staves, and after an elegant little defence of our vantage ground we forced them to beat a retreat, their whity-brown burnooses bearing large stains of a certain "curious juice." Presently, in token of repentance, they kissed our heads, shoulders, and knees; they promised not to offend again, and during the rest of the voyage contented themselves with cursing us.

We crept slowly down the coast of the Red Sea, a locality whose principal point of interest is perhaps its name. There are seven different derivations *sub judice*, by which circumstance I am encouraged to propose an eighth. The Greek *Ερυθρη θαλασσα* applied to that portion of the Indian Ocean which washes the southern and the south-eastern, as well as the western margin of Arabia, was derived from Erythras, a son of Perseus and Andromeda, drowned, we are told by Lempriere, in these dangerous waters. But from whom did the Greeks derive their early knowledge of "Araby the Blest?"‡ Most probably from the Phenicians, aborigines of Yemen, who would call the sea, as is still customary in the East,§ after the race inhabiting its shores, the

\* The Periplus specifies three lines from Arabia to India:—1. Down the Red Sea to Aden, up the coast of Eastern Arabia, and along the shores of Persia and Sindh to Cambay (This was probably the eastern voyage in Solomon's time.) 2. Down the Red Sea to Cape Guardafui in Africa, and thence direct with the monsoon to India. 3. From Ras Fartak to India. The difficulty and danger of the two first routes are but little diminished to Arab sailing-vessels even in our day.

† On the poop we paid from seven to nine Spanish dollars, according to our means; the second class from four to five; and the women in the cabin six or seven.

‡ Even the classical "Arabia Felix" is palpably derived from the vernacular name "Yemen," whose root implies prosperity or felicity.

§ The Arabic language is as poor in general names for grand geographical features as it is rich in special and distinctive terms. Modern Arab pilots have a particular name for each part of the Red Sea: here it is the "Sea of Suez;" here the "Sea of Tur;" there the "Sea of Yambu;" and so on. I have had occasion to make the same remark about the great range of mountains between El Medina and the coast.

Himyar or Red Arabs. This "Erythras" would be a Hellenization of the barbaric name, and the myth might be borrowed from a tradition of some ancient Himyarite hero perishing in the sea that has destroyed so many of his race.

On the third day after departure we made Tur after a severe tossing by the wild waves in the "Birket Faraun,"—Pharaoh's Gulf.\* Here it is, not at Suez, that modern Arabic tradition places the passage of the Israelites, these supernaturalists preferring the spot, probably because of all the localities hitherto proposed this is the most impossible—but the traveller must beware how he trusts to Arab tradition or to Frank translation. Jebel Atákah, the Mountain of Deliverance (*quippe* of the Israelites from Pharaoh), is a hill near Suez, which gives glad tidings to the timid pilgrim that he has been delivered from the perils of El Hejaz; and "El Tih," which M. de Laborde translates "Vallée de l'Egarement," means a "desert where you may lose yourself,"—a shade of difference from a "desert where the children of Israel did lose themselves." †

This mean village of Tur, one of Pliny's "portus multi," boasts a noble origin. Your learned member, Sir G. Wilkinson, is, I humbly opine, hasty in deriving its name "from the mother city Tyre, Toor, or Tzur." If there be any truth in history and Herodotus, the Phenicians anciently inhabited the coasts of the Erythrean Sea, ‡ whence, migrating northwards, they settled on the Syrian shore. If this be true, Tur is more ancient than Tyre, and its name would be derived from the Tur § (in Arabic, a high mountain), ¶ which forms its sublime back ground. The Greeks called the place *φοινικων*, ¶¶ a literal translation, *more Hellenico*, of the

\* I heard nothing of the legend recorded by Niebuhr: "The Arabs imagine that Pharaoh is doing penance at the bottom of a hot spring called 'Hamman Faraun,' and vomits up the sulphureous vapour with which the water is impregnated." But the country is a hot-bed of traditional faith; and what was current in Niebuhr's day may have been forgotten now.

† M. Linant de Bellefond, whose name is a guarantee of accuracy, informed me, with permission to publish, that of all the stations in the Mosaic Exodus, so accurately and circumstantially laid down in our maps, he considered only three to have been successfully pointed out:—1. Rameses, in Eastern Egypt. M. Linant, some years ago, heard the name applied by certain Badawin to some ruins. 2. Succoth, Sokot, translated by the Arabs into Umm Khayam—the "mother of tents." 3. Etham, still the proper name of a Badawi clan.

‡ That was the Persian Gulf.—G. W.

§ This town is, perhaps, from Tur, "the mountain," for Tyre is a different name, and properly Tzur, whence Sür.—G. W.

¶ So the Syrian Arabs still call Mount Tabor, "Gebel Tur." There is another Tur near Mecca.

¶¶ In Ptolemy's catalogue of stations on the eastern side of the Erythrean Sea, the eighth—meant by Gosselin and D'Anville to correspond with the modern Muwaylah—is called "Phœnicon." This word I have shown to be a general name; and almost every place on the coast where ships anchor has its "nakhil," or date-ground.

Arabic Nakhil (palmetum);\* and to this day the most remarkable feature of the country, after "grey-topped Sinai," are the palm-groves, which, laden with delicious fruit, fringe the low and sandy shore.

On the fifth day we slanted across the gulf of Akabah; but, anxious as I was to learn something about the coral reef said to be slowly transforming it into another inland sea, I could get no information from my companions. In course of confabulation, one of them mentioned a hill, N.E. of Muwaylah (the Leuke Kome of Gosselin), called Jebel Rómán—the Mountain of the Romans—and answered me that it is covered with remains of Kafir or infidel architecture. † Your Society might, perhaps, induce some traveller to explore this part of the country, where, with letters from the Pacha of Egypt, he would be safe enough: ill health prevented my seizing the opportunity when at Cairo. Since the Swiss Burckhardt's glorious restoration of Petra to the world, there has been no discovery in this region more interesting than would be the remains of Roman civilization in the wilds of Arabia.

Near Muwaylah gold is still found. A Haji at Cairo extracted with quicksilver no less than 6 drms. of dust out of 52 drms. of sand, collected in a fumara. According to the testimony of the ancients, the precious metal was at one time plentiful in Arabia, as we might expect it to be in a land so rich in primitive and quartzose formations; and to quote the opinion of a friend—Dr. Carter of Bombay—the present absence of gold is no argument against its presence in past times. ‡ The crop may have been gathered, the fields stripped, and ancient Arabia may have been a California, even as California will become an Arabia to some future generation.

Marsa-Damghats, Wih Harbour, Hasan el Marabit, Sharm-Antar, Jebel-Hasan, and other places of interest on the coast, I pass by without description; for though the winds and currents of this fickle sea may have so altered the submarine parts as to render a fresh edition of Moorsby's survey necessary, that noble work still gives ample information concerning the objects on shore. We

\* Very probable.—G. W.

† I afterwards heard of it from M. Linant, at Cairo. Amongst other interesting subjects, that gentleman assured me that the Dead Sea was separated from the Gulf of Akabah by a continuous transverse ridge of rock. The testimony of such an eyewitness authorises us to reject the theory which makes the Asphaltus lake the ancient head of the Akabah Gulf, unless we feel disposed to throw up a mountain as well as to sink a sea.

‡ Michaelis (Quest. 39) recommends inquiry for gold in Arabia. Vincent's theory (Periplus, book iii.) is supported by the popular belief that the precious metal is still found on Tebel Shora, near Mecca, and other parts of El Hejaz. Gosselin and D'Anville are thus confirmed in deriving the "Dedebæ" of Agatharcides and the "Debæ" of Diodorus from "Dahab," and in placing this city somewhere in the vicinity of Mecca.

made Yambu\* on the twelfth day after our departure from Suez, and tottered on shore with cramped legs, some feverish, others covered with boils, and all with brains adust by reason of the sun. Shaykh Hamid, one of our party, complained that the heat had made his hair turn grey, and appeared to anticipate troubles therefrom during the approaching meeting with the "daughter of his uncle."

I might have saved myself all the hardships of this voyage by hiring a private boat; but two reasons prevented my doing this. In the first place it would have occasioned delay and expense; the smallest vessel would have cost me 50*l.* or 60*l.*, and such a luxury would have argued great wealth, rendering proportionate expenditure everywhere necessary. Secondly, I had an unlimited confidence in the efficacy of a rice and water diet against the fury of the sun. Abstemiousness was my safeguard during this voyage, my two subsequent journeys, and the pilgrimage time when my bare head and almost naked body were exposed to the fires of an Arabian September. As precautions I avoided washing, because warm water debilitates and cold gives fever; a little oil or melted butter, and occasionally a bath of lukewarm water and henna paste to cool the skin, were found amply sufficient. Against thirst I neither chewed bullets, nor washed hands, face, and feet, nor anointed my jaws with clarified butter, nor drank great quantities of liquid: the only remedy is patience, and after suffering for an hour or two the task is an easy one. When the skin is burned by the sun, white of egg cures the sore, which, if not attended to in these regions, may become an "Aden ulcer;" and as in hot climates cold kills, it is as well not to be underdressed by day, and at night to sleep with a sheet drawn over the head as well as the body. Meals should be thus distributed: a very light breakfast on first awaking from sleep, a second light breakfast before noon, and after sunset a substantial supper of rice and dates, bread and garlic. In spite of Waterton, I assert that the traveller's best friends are pipes and tea; nothing more refreshing than the latter—nothing more soothing to mind and body, no more rational, thoughtful, and memorial occupation, than the former.

I have nothing new to say of Yambu,† except that its population is considered the most bigoted and the best mariners in Western Arabia. The Custom-house officers, Turks—for here the Sultan reigns—have imitated the simple Arab method of charging 3 piastres per box, without even asking what its contents might be. This, however, is in the case of private travellers, as we were; merchants are heavily and arbitrarily taxed. The custom dues

\* In Ptolemy the "Cambia village," clearly Yambu, is made the 11th stage from Ilysmā.

† Or Emba.—G. W.

are the only cess drawn by Constantinople from the Northern Hejaz, and even this is said to be grossly peculated. After clearing our luggage we entered an upper room to escape the flies, Yambu's plague, and inquired for a Mukharrij, or Arab agent, to supply us with camels. The man came and informed us that the Hazimi clan was "out," and displaying signs of mischief by not replying to travellers' salams, which caused my companions to chew the cud of tough thought, for some had a single box, and others two, full of heterogeneous articles collected during their last begging trip. He added, however, that a grain-caravan would start early the next day for El Medina; so after great exertion of lungs, we hired beasts, paying 3 riyals (pillar-dollars) for each, half in ready money, the other half to be given on arrival at the capital. We "cleaned" ourselves, fed, looked to our weapons, boasted of our prowess, repacked our boxes, purchased provisions, and prepared for the journey.

On the 18th July, about 7 P.M. we passed through the gate of Yambu, and followed a directly eastward path along the plain between the Radwah Hills\* and the sea shore. There was no regular road; a trodden line traversed hard and level ground, strewn with lumps of granite and greenstone schist rounded by the action of water, with here and there a little stunted vegetation in the shape of acacias and tufts of grass, coarse enough for brooms. After 2 hours' slow march, we turned towards the N.E., and the ground began to undulate, a steady rise being perceptible; and at 3 A.M. we came to the halting-place, after a short march of 8 hours. I have throughout my journey estimated the pace of the Hejazi camel in caravan at the rate of 2 miles an hour, when travelling over a plain; and my distances have been corrected by a comparison with the camelmen's estimates.‡ Halting, we found a grain-cafila of about 200 heads, with its armed drivers, and for escort seven irregular Turkish horsemen, tolerably mounted, and each supplied with an armoury in epitome. Our camels were "nakh'd;"‡ the boxes were taken off and piled together, a pre-

\* Moresby calls the whole range behind Yambu the Ridwah Hills. Radwah, as it is properly spelt, is the name of a single hill accounted sacred, and supposed, like Tur, Nun, Kobays, Ohod, and others, to be "of the mountains of Paradise." European geographers are, perhaps, justified in giving the name to this part of the Arabian "ghauts," as the natives of the country have no general term for it.

† The Badawin can always tell you the number of hours between two given places; but there is no other popular measure of length. The farsakh (parasang) and mil (mile) are words derived from Persia and Rome, and confined to geographical and theological writings. But the Badawi system is better than that of Egypt, where they estimate by "malakah," the distance between two villages, varying from 4 to 12 miles. The Sindhis have as ridiculous a standard "sadd-pandh," i. e. the distance of a voice, sometimes 100 yards, sometimes 3 miles; and the people of the Concan call it a "hank" or shout.

‡ To nakh a camel is to make him kneel, by crying "ikh-ikh" from the bottom of the throat. The word is classical and popular.



caution against thieves; my little bell-tent, the only one we had, was pitched, and we all, spreading our carpets upon the ground, fell into the slumber of the desert.

19th July.—At 9 P.M. we arose, said our prayers and smoked our pipes, congratulating ourselves upon our escape from the towns. I must observe that my companions were strictly devout whenever we met strangers, whereas, at all other times, one only—a grandson of the mufti of El-Medina—ever dreamed of preferring a prayer to a pipe. This is natural to the “sons” of a “holy city.” About a mile westwards of our camp lay the little village of Musahhal, a straggling line of miserable clay hovels. On the S. was a bright blue strip of Red Sea, and all around stretched an iron plain, where pebbles and gravel, scorpions and cicadæ, grow like grass, bounded northwards by a grisly wall of blackish rock. Here and there a shrub, fit only for fuel, or a tuft of herbage crisp with heat, met the eye; the furious sun, as the reeking atmosphere showed, was drying up the juice and sap of the land, and the very pebbles were blackened as if fire had passed over them, for the heavy dews, joining in large drops, here concentrate the morning rays, like a system of burning glasses. At 3 P.M. we were ready to start, and with joy we saw a huge black nimbus rise behind the shoulders of Radwah, and array itself, like a good genius, between us and our fierce enemy. All hoped that it contained rain; but it was only a “dry storm”—blasts of wind, hot as from a volcano, and fine sand—a phenomenon here common at this time of the year, and supposed to precede the autumnal rains.\* For 3 hours we travelled in a S.E. direction upon a hard clayey plain and a sandy flat, over which several waters from the highlands have traced courses tending westward to the sea. Gradually siding towards the mountains, at sunset, we had sensibly neared them. As evening came on, we emerged from a scrub of tamarisk and an acacia-“barren,” whose long sharp thorns are most troublesome to camel riders, and turned our heads due E., traversing an open country with a perceptible rise. After a false alarm of thieves, we journeyed 9 hours in a brilliant moonlight, and as the eastern sky whitened, we entered a sandy fumara, strewed with stones and pebbles, about half a mile in breadth, and flanked by abrupt hills of primitive formation. I began by asking the names of peaks and dales, flats, hollows, and water-courses. A folio volume would not contain a three months’ collection, so I desisted admiring the ingenuity of the Badawin in distinguishing between localities the most similar—the result of perceptive faculties highly developed by the

\* There are sometimes a few drops of rain at the tail of a dry storm. I heard this from my companions, but did not observe it till when we neared Mecca, about the beginning of September. The Arabs of El Hejaz divide rains into three kinds: 1, Sariyat, the night rain-cloud, peculiar to winter; 2, ghad, the morning rain-cloud, common in spring; and, 3, ashiyat, the autumnal evening rain-cloud.

practice which a recurrence of landscape features, varying little and few in number, affords. After 2 hours up this torrent bed, winding in an easterly direction, we turned towards the S., and crossing sundry “harrah,”\* or rocky ridges, and descending certain steep and difficult ria (declivities)† we found ourselves at 8 A.M., after a 34 mile march, at our destination, Bir-Said,‡ The well was a deep hole, with brackish water at the bottom, dug in a kind of punch-bowl, whose sole was tamped earth and whose walls were granite hills; upon their grim surface a few thorns of passing hardness looked like vegetable ghosts; not a house was to be seen, not a sign of man. Our feet were scorched as we planted the tent-pole, and, after drinking our breakfasts, we spent the day in perspiration and semi-lethargy.

20th July.—As the sun began to decline westward we roused ourselves for the journey. Shortly after 3 P.M. the camels were laden and we started, with water jars in our hands, through a storm of samum.§ The people assured me that this wind never kills a man in their Allah-favoured land. I “doubt the fact.” At Bir-Abbas the body of an Arnaut was brought in swollen and decomposing rapidly—the true diagnostic of death by the poison-wind.|| However, as these men drink hard, the case is scarcely a fair one: the samum may have done half the work, arrack the rest. And during my journey through El Hejaz I never found myself obliged by it to tie my kufiyah, or kerchief, Badawi-fashion, across my mouth.

We travelled for 5 hours in a N.E. direction up a diagonal valley,¶ through a country fantastic in its desolation; like the astronomer’s moon, a world of naked hills, desert valleys, and

\* Harrah (from harr, heat) is the generic name for lava scorix, and other rocks supposed to be of igneous origin, and therefore called also “Hajar-Jehannum,” hell-stones. It also denotes a ridge composed of such material, and therefore may be the origin of “Ararene,” the stony tract over which Ælius Gallus marched his legions.

† Ria is a classical Arabic word, still used in El Hejaz to denote a steep descent; a path between hills or a mountain road. “Akabah” is sometimes, especially in the Egyptian dialect, made to signify the same, though properly it means a precipice or abrupt declivity.

‡ “Bir,” a well, like ayn, a source (or water found in clefts of rock), prefixed to the name of the excavator, forms as common a name for desert-stations in Arabia as it is in Syria.

§ Samum (from samm, poison), the poison-wind. The word “simoon” is a vulgar error, which deserves the fate of “Mahound” and “Termagaunt.”

|| Ibn Batuta is the first traveller that observed this peculiar symptom. I have seen it in Sindh, and frequently heard of it from Afghans and Persians.

¶ I venture to remark that Col. Jackson’s division of valleys into longitudinal, transversal, and lateral, is both imperfect and confused. That learned geographer is a “stickler for propriety of terms;” he will therefore enter into the spirit of my observation. I would distribute them as follows:—1, Longitudinal, *i.e.* parallel to their ridges; 2, transversal or perpendicular to the axis of their main chain; and, 3, diagonal, forming an acute or obtuse angle with the principal line of mountains.

barren plains: even the sturdy acacias failed, and camel-grass could find no place for its hardy root. The road wound amongst mountains, rocks and ridges of granite, with here and there huge blocks, piled up as if man's art had aided nature to look hideous. Vast clefts seamed as scars the haggard face of earth; here they widened into black ravines; there they narrowed to mere lines white with glistening drift-sand. A sky like polished blue steel rested upon one horizon; on the other, a tremendous blaze of yellow light, untempered by the thinnest thread of mist. All was still as the grave: not a bird or a beast was to be seen or heard; their presence would have argued the vicinity of water, and although my companions detected Badawin lurking among the rocks, I decided these Badawin to be phantoms, fear-begotten. "What could have tied the leg of Allah's prophet to this bit of Jehannum?" I inquired of my companions. "Wallah!" replied one of these Voltairians, "because he could not afford a trip to Stambul."

Between 10 and 11 P.M. we sighted human habitations for the first time since leaving Musahhal, a long straggling village called El Hamra ("the Red"), from the colour of the fumara upon which it is built; and El Wasitah, the "Half-way," because it is the middle station between Yambu and El Medina.\* We wandered in search of an encamping-ground nearly an hour, for the hospitable villagers contented themselves with ordering us off every flatter patch of ground where we proposed to pitch our tents. I was warned by my companions to speak Arabic only, otherwise that the gentry of El Hamra would claim black-mail † for permitting me to pass through their streets. After much wrangling we found the encamping place; our jaded beasts were unloaded, the boxes and baggage were disposed in defence, and my friends spreading their rugs upon their valuables, prepared to sleep. I was invited to join them, but firmly declined the vicinity of so many steaming and snoring fellow-creatures. Some wonder was elicited by the Afghan Haji's obstinate recklessness; but a man from Cabul is allowed to do strange things.

21st July.—Rising at dawn, I visited the village. It is built upon a narrow shelf, between a high steep hill and a sandy fumara about half a mile broad, with a winding bed. On all sides are rocks; so here, too, you find yourself in one of those punch-bowls which the Arabs seem to prefer to plains. This fumara threads

\* It is therefore considerably out of place in Burckhardt's map and those copied from it.

† Which they insolently call "tiziyat," a word properly applied to the capita-tion-tax, levied upon infidels—Jews, Christians, and others—in contradistinction to el fard, the Moslem poll-tax. But in El Hejaz, as elsewhere, men have the amiable habit of treating as "infidels" all whose tenets, practices, ideas, manners, dress, and conduct in general depart in any way from the standard of perfection—their own.

the heights all the way from the Medina plateau, and during the rainy season it becomes a raging torrent, carrying westward to the Red Sea the drainage of a hundred hills. Good water is found in it by digging a few feet below the surface at the re-entering angles: and El Hamra is further supplied by a fine spring which bubbles from the base of the southern hills.

The village is a collection of stunted houses, or rather hovels, made of unbaked brick and mud, roofed over with date-leaves, —rarely boasting a bit of plank for a shutter—thickly populated where the walls are standing, but, like all settlements in El Hejaz, half in ruins. It contains a few shops disposed in a long lane; and this bazar, like the other streets, is full of glare and dust. Palm-orchards of considerable extent supply it with dates, and my companions found grain so cheap that they laid in a store for their families at El Medina. Ready-made bread, horse-plantains, rice, butter, and similar edibles, are plentiful. Flocks of sheep and goats were driven in by surly shepherds, who would give no milk even in exchange for bread and meat. I bought a large lamb for a pillar-dollar, and we breakfasted merrily.

Near our encamping-ground was a fort, held by a troop of Arnauts, posted to defend the village and to escort merchant-travellers. It consists of a wall loopholed for musketry, and crenellated with "remparts coquets," trefoil-shaped, and about as business-like as the raised rim of a twelfth-cake. As usual, there is not, I believe, a well in the fort. Around it are clusters of palm-leaf huts, where the soldiery lounge and smoke, and near it a coffee-house—a shed, kept by an Albanian. It is wonderful that the Badawin cannot take these buildings: a false attack, firing the huts, would engross the attention of the defenders; whilst a rope-ladder, or a bag full of powder, would admit the assailants on the other side.

At El Hamra we received the pleasing intelligence that Shaykh Saad was definitely "out." This influential person, a beggarly little old Badawi, brown, toothless, and very thin, is the chief of the Sumaydat and the Mahamid, two influential sub-families of the Ham'dah, the principal family of the Beni Harb clan of Badawin. He aspired to rule all the Ham'dah, and, through them, the Beni Harb, in which case he would have been, despite Pasha and Sherif, *de facto* tyrant of El Hejaz. Therefore the two dignitaries *in esse*, after vainly attempting to poison and to shoot him with a pistol fixed in a Rob-Roy purse (made by the Frank and sent by the Sultan), raised up against him a worthy rival in the person of Shaykh Fahd, chief of the Beni Amr, the third sub-family of the Ham'dah family. Hence confusion worse confounded. Every one robbed every one he could. Saad's people, who were numerous, beat Fahd's; Fahd, supported by the autho-

rities, cut off Saad's supplies. Saad robbed travellers, and had the insolence to turn back the Sultan's mahmal, the ensign of imperial dignity, and to shut the road against the Damascus caravan. Fahd applied to the Sherif of Mecca, and when I left El Hejaz, it was reported that Abd-el Muttalab proposed to take the field in person against the arch robber, whose nephew he had slain some years ago. I did not believe the rumour, because probably the Sherif was at the bottom of the affair: he rules the Arabs, whilst the Pasha rules the Turks; the inevitable consequence of which is anarchy. Possibly Abd-el Majid has never heard a word of truth concerning El Hejaz, and conceives, with Sultanic *naïveté*, that there, as elsewhere, men tremble at his august name. But the fact is, the "lord Turk" holds a contemptible position there. The Sultan pays pensions in corn and cloth to the very Shaykhs, who arm their varlets against him; and the Pasha, after purloining all he can, hands over to his foes the means of subsistence. When the officials catch an Arab thief they dare not hang him. Caravans must pay black-mail and yet be shot at in every pass. This was not the case in Mohammed Ali's day. These, in El Hejaz, are the effects of those "liberal institutions," the charter of Gulhani and the new civil code, the silliest imitation of Europe's folly—bureaucracy and centralization—that the hand of bungling statecraft ever traced.\* Such are the results of the novel penal code—a panacea, like Holloway's pills, for all the varied evils to which Turks, Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians, Persians, Armenians, Kurds, Albanians, Greeks, and a variety of European tribes are subject, and a system of Treasury paper, which even the public offices take at a discount. With a stern-souled and strong-handed despotism, like Mohammed Ali's, El Hejaz in one generation might be purged of its pests. By a periodical razzia and a proper use of the blood-feud, by vigorously supporting the weaker against the stronger clans, and by regularly deporting every Badawi of renown, the few thousand of half-naked bandits who now make the land a fighting-field, would soon sink into utter insignificance. But to effect this end the Turk requires his old "Stratocracy," which, bloody as it was, worked; whereas the Khate Sherif and the Tanzimat do not.

"The solid rule of civil government"

has done wonders for the Anglo-Saxon race; but we have yet to learn that the admirable exotic will thrive amongst the country gentlemen of Kafir-land or the ragged nobility of El Hejaz.

\* This assertion may not be popular in England at the present time: nevertheless I am convinced that it is true. The incredulous reader may consult 'A Year with the Turks,' lately published, by Mr. Warrington W. Smyth, a traveller who does ample justice to the Osmanli, and no more.

El Hamra is the 3rd station from El Medina, in the Darb Sultani (Sultan's road), the westerly highway along the seashore to Mecca. When robbers permit them, pilgrims prefer this route to all others, on account of the facility of procuring supplies, and passing through the holy place "Bedr." After midday on the 21st, a caravan *en route* from Mecca to El Medina entered El Hamra, and the new travellers had interest enough to procure an escort, and permission to proceed without delay. A little after 4 P.M. we urged our camels over the fiery sands to join these Meccans, who were standing ready for the march on the other side of the fumara; and at 5 we started in an easterly direction up the bed. My companions had found relations and friends in the caravan, so they piously dismounted from their dromedaries during the sunset halt, and prayed with unction. I seldom joined in their devotions, because, in the first place, a sore foot excused me; and secondly, because the character, though highly respectable, is a very inconvenient one in these regions. Shortly after the night set in we came to a dead stop: a dozen different reports arose to account for this circumstance, which was occasioned by a band of Badawin having manned a pass, and positively objected to admit our escort of 200 irregulars. So the horsemen galloped home, and we resumed our journey. This night brought forth no other adventure: we traversed rising ground eastwards, and about midnight passed through another long straggling line of village, called Jadaydah,\* or El Khayf.† The body of the place lies on the left of the road leading to El Medina: like El Hamra it has a fort, springs of tolerably sweet water, and a date ground. A celebrated saint, Abd-el Rahim el Barai, has left his holy bones here. A little beyond it is the Bughaz,‡ or defile, where the Egyptians under Tussum Bey were totally defeated by the Harbi Badawin and the Wahhabis, in A.D. 1811. At 4 A.M., having travelled about 24 miles due E., we encamped at Bir Abbas.

22nd.—The position of Bir Abbas resembles that of El Hamra, a bulge in the hill-girt fumara, about 2 miles wide. There is the usual stone fort, where troops are stationed to protect travellers, hovels, and a coffee-house of date-leaves, and a hut or two, called a bazar, but no village. We encamped in loose sand, with which the samum filled the air; not a tree nor a bush was in sight, and the animal creation was represented by hardy locusts and swarms of flies. Before noon a caravan brought in two dead

\* Gadaydah.

† Khayf, a "declivity," or a "place built upon a declivity," is a common name in this part of Arabia.

‡ Vincent (Periplus) derives this word from the It. bocca, a mouth. It is Turkish, and literally means a throat or gorge. The pure Arabic is nakb, still used by the Badawin.

bodies, a horseman shot by the Badawin, and an Albanian killed by sunstroke, or the poison-wind. Shortly after mid-day we saw a caravan travelling Mecca-wards: it was composed chiefly of Indian pilgrims in "ihram,"\* who had been allowed to pass, because a pound sterling could not have been collected by spilling the life-blood of a hundred of them, and Saad the Robber sometimes does a cheap good deed. In the evening, when strolling about, we met some shaykhs entering Bir Abbas to receive their pensions. They were men of Harb, dignified ancients, habited in the picturesque Badawi costume, with erect forms, fierce, thin features, and white beards, well armed, and mounted on high-bred and handsomely-equipped dromedaries. Preceded by half-naked clansmen, carrying spears 12 or 13 feet long, garnished with single or double tufts of black ostrich feathers, and ponderous matchlocks, which they discharged on approaching the fort, these shaykhs were a perfect picture. Evening was ushered in by the dropping of distant shots, a sign that the troops and hillmen were at work. My companions pointed with a fearful meaning to the far blue peak where terrible Saad holds his court, and we slept upon our boxes in "doleful dumps," for none could say how long we might be confined in our dreary dungeon.

23rd.—After a day of heat, sand, samum, wrangling, and general discomfort, we were revived by a report that Arnaut troops would be in the saddle that night. No one believed in such good luck; before sleeping, however, we made preparations for starting at a moment's notice. About 11 P.M., as the moon passed over the eastern wall of rock, we heard the glad sound of the little kettle-drum beating the "General." Within 10 minutes we had loaded the camels, and hurriedly crossing the sandy flat, we found ourselves in company with three or four small caravans, forming one large body for better defence. By dint of elbowing, arms in hand, we, though the last comers, secured a place in the middle of the line. On such occasions all push for the van, none aspiring to occupy that dangerous seat of honour, the rear.

24th.—We threaded the fumara eastwards, and at dawn entered an ill-famed gorge, Shuab el Haj, the Pilgrim's Pass. As we neared it, loud talkers became silent, and in their faces fear was written in a fine clear hand. Presently, from the cliff on the left a thin curl of blue smoke rose in the morning air, prelude to the matchlock's loud ring. A number of Badawin, boys and men, were swarming like hornets over the crest, and clambering with admirable agility up the precipices, till comfortably seated behind a breastwork of stones, piled up as a defence and a rifle-rest, they fired down upon us with perfect convenience to themselves. It

\* The pilgrim's costume.

was useless to invite them to fight us upon the plain like men; on the eastern coast the robbers will sometimes do this, but not in El Hejaz, and it was equally unprofitable to shoot at stones. Moreover, had a Badawi been killed, the country would have risen *en masse*: 3000 or 4000 robbers might have the courage to overpower a caravan, in which case there would have been a general cutting of throats. Their fire was directed principally against the Arnauts, who called for assistance from the party of shaykhs that had accompanied us from Bir Abbas. But those dignified ancients, dismounting and squatting round their pipes in council, came to the conclusion, that as the Badawin would probably turn a deaf ear to their words, they had better spare themselves the trouble of speaking; so we blazed away as much powder, and veiled ourselves in as thick a veil as possible. We lost twelve men, besides camels and other beasts of burden.

After an hour of hurrying on we passed Shuhada, an unremarkable spot, with a few ruined walls, and a cluster of graves, each an oval of rough stones, containing the "martyrs" crowned with glory in one of the Prophet's plundering expeditions. In 30 minutes we reached Bir el Hindi, a favourite halting-place, where some forgotten Indian had dug a well: we jogged on, being scarcely out of the cut-throat gorge and the nests of the Ham'dah. Then leaving the fumara, we struck off northwards into a well-trodden road running over stony rising ground. The heat became sickening: at no time is the sun in these regions more dangerous than between 8 and 10 A.M., and it was 11 o'clock before we encamped. The station, Suwaykah, is a rugged plain covered with stones, coarse gravel, and thorn trees, and surrounded by inhospitable rocks, pinnacle-shaped, and calcareous, on a granite base. The well was at least 2 miles distant, not a hovel was in sight, or sign of life, save a few Badawi children feeding their starveling flocks; but my companions looked lovingly upon the hideous spot—their boxes were now safe. That night we travelled about 22 miles due E. up a steady rise.

We pitched the tent under a villainous mimosa, the tree whose shade is compared by these poetical thieves to the false one that deserts you when most needed; and I enlivened a long, hot, dull day by the excitement of recovering certain small sums lent to divers friends, the "almighty dollar" having been the talisman with which I opened their hearts. At 4 P.M. we mounted, all of us in the crosser of moods, and travelled towards the N.E., up rocky hill and down stony vale, which made the camels stumble and tumble regularly once per mile.

25th.—Day dawned before I had shaken off the lethargic effects of such a night. All my companions were hurrying on with reckless haste. "More robbers?" I inquired of a neighbour; "No,



we are walking upon our eyes—in a minute we shall sight El-Medina." Rapidly we crossed the muse-loved fiumara, El Akik; it was dry as summer's dust, and its "beautiful trees" were stunted fire-wood.\* Presently we came to a mudarra, a broad flight of steps cut in the rock: † arrived at the summit, we passed through a lane of lava with steep banks, and suddenly saw the holy city lying upon the plain before us.

We halted our beasts as if by word of command; and all of us, tired and hungry as we were, dismounted, and sat down to enjoy the view. "O Allah! this is the sanctuary of the Prophet; make it to us a protection from hell-fire, and a place of refuge from eternal punishment! O open the gates of thy mercy, and let us pass through them to the land of joy!" And again—"Live for ever, O best of Prophets! Live in the shadow of happiness, whilst the bird of the tamarisk (the dove) moaneth like a childless mother—whilst the west wind bloweth gently over the highland of Nejd—whilst the lightning flasheth bright in the firmament of El Hejaz!" Such were the poetical exclamations around me, whilst features were working with excitement, and eyes swam with tears. I now fully understood the meaning of a dark phrase in the Moslem ritual: "And when his (the pilgrim's) sight falls upon *the trees of El Medina*, let him raise voice and bless the Prophet with the choicest of blessings." In all the fair view before us, no feature more striking, after the desolation of the journey, than the gardens and orchards of the town.

The distance traversed that night was about 20 miles, in a direction varying from E. to N.E. We reached El Medina on the 25th July, thus taking nearly eight days to travel about 130 miles.

I subjoin my computation of the stages:—

From Yambu . . . to . . . Musahhal	16 miles.	
Musahhal . . . . . Bir Said	34	"
Bir Said . . . . . El Hamra	14	" = 64, half way.
El Hamra . . . . . Bir Abbas	24	"
Bir Abbas . . . . . Suwaykah	22	"
Suwaykah . . . . . El Medina	20	" = 66.

Total . . 130 miles.

My camel-men were of the Harb tribe, corrupted by Turkish

\* El Akik, said the Badawin, is a branch of the fiumara of El Hamra.

† This is one of the Harratain or Two Ridges of which the Prophet said, "Verily there is healing to the sight, if it fall upon Mount Ohod, and the Two Ridges near." The other lies N. of the city, on the road to Hamzah's tomb, which lies at the foot of Ohod. El Harratain is the popular form of E Harratáni, the oblique case usurping the place of the dual-nominative in the colloquial dialect of El Hejaz, as in Syria, Egypt, and the Maghrab. Both these harras are long, broad ridges of the black scoriated lava, of which buildings in this part of El Hejaz are composed.

example and the profession of taking in pilgrims. They made no difficulty in answering my questions about the country. To obviate curiosity or suspicion, I had an abstract of Arab genealogies, and always began my questionings with, "You men of Harb, on what lineage do ye pride yourselves?" Notes must be kept private, and sketches must never be seen; but these people do not object to a learned man writing in a MS., as if commenting upon it, and for other purposes he may retire into solitude and pray. The best pretext for avoiding company is "sauda"—a melancholic temperament—all Orientals, especially the Arabs, being subject to fits of nervous depression, when they fly to solitude as to a friend. Without some such excuse a traveller would be overwhelmed with society: his hosts will eat with him, drink, smoke, talk, pray, and rather than leave him alone, sleep with him. My next communication, if you desire it, will be my Itinerary from El Medina to Mecca.\* Once more offering my best excuses for the delay in forwarding this paper,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

RICHARD F. BURTON,

Lieut. Bombay Army.

Dr. Norton Shaw, Sec. R. G. S.

#### VI.—*Notice on the Variation of the Magnetic Needle at Aden.*

By Capt. S. B. HAINES, I.N.

Communicated by the EAST INDIA COMPANY.

Read April 10, 1854.

IN my letter of January 8, 1852, relative to the probability of a change in the magnetic variation, I then gave proof that, between the year 1800 and my observations in 1834, a change of 3° 47' 30" had taken place; and that experiments might prove a still further change, rendering it necessary that it should be ascertained, so that due allowance might be made for it by navigators.

I have now the honour to report that, having had a very superior 10-inch theodolite lent to me, in addition to my own, I have taken, during September and October, many observations in order to ascertain the change of variation at Aden since I surveyed it in 1834; and beg to submit the results to Government, as they prove that my opinion last year was correct, and that since 1834 the variation has diminished westerly 2° 12' 40", being in

\* Since received.—Ed.