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Reviews of

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About this record

Three published reviews of Palgrave's *Arabia* , one from a journal and two from newspapers:

- Pages 182-215 from the *Quarterly Review* which contained a review of Palgrave's *Arabia* (ff. 2v-19). The review is undated but is believed to be c.1865.
- Press cutting from the *Friend of India* of their review of 'Mr Palgrave's journey through Arabia'. The Press Cutting is undated but is believed to be c.1865.
- Press cutting from the *Times of India* , 4 November 1865 of an article entitled 'Central and Eastern Arabia' which reviews Palgrave's book.

The publication which the reviews relate to:

William Gifford Palgrave, *A Narrative of a year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia 1862-1863* (London, 1865)

Reviews of A Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia,
1862-63 by William Gifford Palgrave, Published 1865 [1r] (1/42)

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bears to 'playing cards,' and which presupposes, not previous study, but the long and due preparation of the imagination and the intellect.

It follows that with us the conversationist is rather looked upon with curiosity and interest as a man endowed with a special gift, than accepted as an acquisition to the social commerce of life. In listening to the philosophical monologues of Coleridge, the illustrated anecdotes and fanciful sallies of Sydney Smith, the rich outpourings of Lord Macaulay's infinite knowledge, or the picturesque and prophetic utterances of Mr. Carlyle, we have been conscious that we were rather enjoying a substitute for good conversation than additions to the common stock. The monopoly of attention which was required was, in most cases, willingly conceded; but even the wonderful intellectual exhibition did not make up for the deficiency in that sympathy between the speaker and the hearers which gives a relish to very ordinary parlance and very inferior wit, and which heightens tenfold the enjoyment of the communication of brighter and loftier ideas.

It is noticeable that certain English persons, notwithstanding the impediments of the language, produce more effect in conversation with foreigners than with their own countrymen. We suspect this must, to some extent, have been the case with Miss Berry, to have elicited such warm expressions of admiration from Madame de Staël, who attached special importance to that faculty. All visitors from the Continent were thoroughly at home in Miss Berry's *salon*. Good nature and good sense were really all that could be predicated of the substance of her usual talk, but in the manner of it there was a cheerful appreciation of all that was said or done, which gave encouragement to the shiest,—an appeal to any wit or wisdom the room might hold to come out and show itself, which was rarely unheard,—and a simplicity which dispersed by its contact all insolence or assumption. Add to this the knowledge and the interest acquired by an acute observation and a retentive memory through this unusually long and varied life, and you have a combination all the more agreeable from its absence of the marvellous or the sublime. The greater part of the frequenters of Miss Berry's society might think themselves at least as clever and well-read as she was; and, though they were probably mistaken, they did not go away with less self-satisfaction. The conversation at Lydia White's might have been more literary, and at Lady Davy's more scientific, but the Miss Berrys' had a flavour of fashion about it, which is not distasteful even to the most philosophic or matter-of-fact Englishman, and kept itself totally free from any speciality which could be made an

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object of ridicule or ground of offence. By its very familiarity and kindness, this society was liable to the invasion of the garrulous and the tiresome; but even the specimens of that inevitable species which were found there, were more tolerable than in houses of greater pretence, and became inspired by the genius of the place with some sense of mercy or of shame.

From the multitudinous shape which London society is now assuming, two consequences are imminent; the rarity of these huge reunions from the unfitness or inability of our houses to contain them, and the retirement within a very limited circle of relatives and private friends of those persons who would have been willing, in the old time, to have contributed a proper share to the social enjoyment of others. With the excuse of real discomfort abroad, joined to an Englishman's natural inclinations to stay at home; with the difficulty of meeting the few he likes, added to the certainty of encountering a crowd he abhors; with the increasing severity of the duties and responsibilities of public life, and the diminution of the external respect and importance it imparts, there is every inducement to our wealthier, and nobler, and more fastidious countrymen to retain an exclusiveness of habits and an isolation of life, which can be indulged in with impunity by Legitimists in Paris or Men of Letters in Boston, but which, if systematically persisted in, will seriously impair the relations of classes, and the political structure of our civil existence. The great can no longer remain in an empyrean of their own, even if that atmosphere be purer, wiser, and better than the world below; but, as unfortunately it is the tendency of all exclusiveness of this kind to generate a very different kind of atmosphere, there is the double peril of the injury to the order and the damage to the individuals. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say, that such a society as the Misses Berry established and maintained for nearly half a century—bringing together on a common ground of friendly intercourse, not only men illustrious in different walks of life, but what might aptly be called the men of the day—men who had won and men who were winning, men who wished to learn and men ready to teach, restrained and softened by a womanly influence that never degenerated into that social police which a less skilful hostess often finds necessary to impose—had its moral and political bearings, besides its personal and superficial influences.

This then is the real meaning and right of such persons to respect and remembrance. The inexplicable Sympathies underlie all human association and are the foundation of the civil order of the world. That men should care for one another at all, thought Mohammed, is always a mystery; and it is just in proportion that

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that they care for one another, so as to take an interest in one another's daily life, that society is harmonised, and, beyond Mohammed, christianised. Honour, then, to the good old ladies who helped on this good work. They will soon be only personally remembered by those to whom the streets of London have become a range of inhabited tombs; yet the day may be distant before social tradition forgets the modest house in Curzon-street, where dwelt the Berrys.

In these pages we have spoken almost indifferently of these sisters in the singular and the plural. And this is, in truth, a fair representation of their relation to one another. It was said that after Mary's unhappy engagement their friendship was lessened; but there is no sign of it in these volumes. They appear on the scene sometimes single, sometimes double, owing to the sororal condition perhaps more than the elder and the abler would willingly have accepted. Agnes, it is clear, would have been nothing above an amiable, cheery, pretty woman, but for Mary's superiority; yet it is undeniable that her liveliness was a most necessary complement to Miss Berry's graver disposition, and it is hard to say which was the greater gainer by the faculties of the other. During an illness, in which Mary was supposed to be seriously attacked, Mr. Rogers came to see her, not having visited the house for many years previous. She received him with great kindness, but, after some strong expressions of sympathy and interest on his part, Agnes, bearing no longer what she, we think wrongly, believed to be a false and barren exhibition of feeling, burst out, 'You might have been, and you were not, anything to us when we were living, and you now come and insult us with your civilities when we are nigh dead.' This was a specimen of the more passionate, and, it may be, one-sided nature, which Agnes never concealed, and which time did not subdue.

Mary Berry went on for a short time bravely enduring life. Within the year the sisters lay together in the pleasant grave-yard of Petersham, close to the scenes which they had inspired with so many happy associations. To few it is given, as to these, to retain in extreme old age not only the clearness of the head but the brightness of the heart—to leave in those about them no sense of relief from the wayward second-childishness which so sadly rounds the life of man, but a pure regret that these almost patriarchal lives could not have lasted still longer.

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ART. VII.—1. *A Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, 1862-3. By William Gifford Palgrave, late of the 8th Regiment Bombay N. I. London, 1865.

2. *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le Gouvernement de Mohammed Aly ; ou, Récit des Evénements Politiques et Militaires qui ont eu lieu depuis le départ des Français jusqu'en 1823*. Par M. Félix Mengin. Ouvrage enrichi de Notes par MM. Langlés et Jomard, et précédé d'une Introduction Historique par M. Agoub. Paris, 1823.

ARABIA and the Arabs have been subjects of some interest or curiosity to us all from our childhood. The story of Hagar and her son Ishmael moved our pity and excited our sympathy; and the remarkable manner in which the Arabs have fulfilled the destiny assigned to Ishmael and his descendants, before he was born—'He will be a wild man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him'—could not fail to take hold of the imagination. We have all enjoyed the tales of the thousand and one nights—'The Arabian Nights' Entertainments'—and have roamed through Bagdad with the magnificent and humorous Kalif Haroon el Resheed, in quest of adventures. One of our earliest voyages was probably to Seran-deeb and the islands of the Eastern seas, with Sinbad the Sailor. We learned arithmetic by means of the signs still called the Arabic numerals; and Algebra (Al-gebr) we also derive, as its name intimates, from the Arabs. It would be difficult to estimate how much science and the everyday business of the world owe to these two gifts. The Arabs were the pioneers of Oriental commerce, the navigators and merchants who first made Western Asia and Europe acquainted with the products of India and of the Eastern Archipelago; and they were, and down to our own time have continued to be, the commercial carriers between the ports of Arabia and the shores of the Mediterranean. It was with a view to participate in this lucrative Eastern commerce that Solomon entered into a trading partnership with Hiram of Tyre, and built 'Tadmor in the wilderness,' on an oasis which still retains that name, to facilitate the passage of caravans. The discoveries of Vasco de Gama diverted the greater part of that commerce into another channel; but it has begun to revert to its original course; and the time is probably not distant when the more precious commodities imported from the East will all be brought to us by the ancient routes; but when that time arrives, the Arab and his camel will no longer be the carriers.

If the descendants of Ishmael, or, as the Arabs call him, Ismael, inherited from their Father Abraham his belief in the one God, they

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they must, after a time, have lapsed into the idolatry of the elder branch of the Arab family, inhabiting the southern part of the peninsula, who, according to their own account, are not Ismaelites, but descendants of Kahtan—the Joktan of the Hebrews—for at the commencement of the Christian era all the Arabs seem to have worshipped idols. Yet this was probably about the period of their greatest commercial prosperity and highest literary development. At some time or times, not well ascertained, during the first centuries of our era, certain tribes embraced the Christian faith, and retained it until the swords of Mahomed's disciples forced them to change the Bible for the Koran; but ultimately all became Mahomedans.

When the Arabs, not without resistance, had been constrained or induced to accept as a new revelation the religion of the pseudo Prophet of Mekka, they became united by that bond under his authority; but the whole population of Arabia could hardly have amounted to ten millions, scattered over an area of nearly a million square miles, and divided into numerous tribes, which for ages had been at almost perpetual feud one with another. Mahomed, however, lived long enough to consolidate his power in Arabia, though not long enough to effect any conquests beyond it. That task he bequeathed to his successors. He died A.D. 632, and before the close of 638 the Arabs, after gaining sanguinary victories over the Roman and Persian armies, had subdued the whole of Syria, Egypt, and Persia. The inhabitants of those subjugated countries were almost everywhere compelled to renounce their ancient faith, and to accept that of their conquerors. This was not merely the nominal acceptance of a new creed; the change involved a complete social revolution; for not only the pre-existing civil and criminal laws, but what concerned the domestic relations of these unwilling converts, was subverted and replaced by the laws and injunctions contained in the Koran. Yet it is strange that wherever Islam was then and thus planted, it has taken root and flourished.

As the power of the Kalifs, Mahomed's successors, became consolidated, and the tribute of the subject nations poured into their treasury, their courts became centres of civilisation, and their munificence attracted the learned of other countries. The Philosophy of ancient Greece was taught on the banks of the Tigris, at a time when it was still unknown in Western Europe; and under the liberal patronage of the Kalifs the works of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, and other Greek authors, were translated into Arabic, with ample commentaries.* The lieu-

* They were translated, not direct from the Greek, but from Syriac versions already existing.

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tenants of the Kalifs who governed the subject kingdoms were men of cultivated minds and polished manners, who maintained the state and exercised the munificence of princes; and numberless Arabs, of all grades, employed in the public service, and in the conquered countries, partook of the cultivation, the refinement, and the wealth which that service imparted, and shared the dignity of the dominant race.

Meanwhile, the Mahomedan religion had spread far beyond the limits of the Arab conquests in Asia. The tribes of Toorkistan had accepted the new creed, and carried it to the confines of China, to Afghanistan, and to Northern India. From Egypt the Arabs themselves pushed their conquests in Africa to the shores of the Atlantic, and, crossing into Spain, subdued and colonised the richest portions of that country: they even penetrated to the heart of France, and were with difficulty driven back by Charles Martel. Sicily became an Arab possession, and Malta was permanently occupied. The commerce which for ages the Arabs had maintained with the islands in the eastern seas had led to the establishment of agencies in those countries; and it is probable that long before the rise of Mahomedanism, perhaps in remote ages, there had been a considerable migration of Arabs to the principal islands. The written character of the dominant Malay race is Arabic; their language contains a large proportion of Arabic; and their physical and moral characteristics favour the belief that they are allied to the Arabs in blood; but however this may be, they readily became converts to Islam. The Arabs who had settled along the eastern coast of Africa to the Mozambique Channel also conformed to the new faith of the parent stock.

But although the religion of the Arab extended, his political and military power decayed, and ultimately collapsed. Central Asia sent forth from its numerous nomade and scanty urban population, as Arabia had done, successive armies of merciless conquerors, who wrested from the Kalifs the greater part of their dominions, finally overthrew the Kalifat, and in Asia pressed the Arab back almost within the limits of his native peninsula. After having exercised dominion for several centuries, enjoying the luxury of splendid courts and great cities, amidst the highest cultivation of those times, he retired to his mountain-home or his tent—his dates and his dourra—his camels, sheep, and horses—to resume his pristine life and occupations, his clan-feuds, and predatory habits.

Neither the new religion and laws which he had adopted, nor four centuries of dominion, luxury, and refinement in cities, nor foreign intercourse, had changed the character of the Arab. Such

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as he had been before his conquests such he became again, and such he is now, 'a wild man, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him.'

While the Kalifs still reigned in Bagdad there appeared occasionally in Eastern Arabia men actuated by religious enthusiasm, or ambition, or by both—no unusual combination—who for a season were successful in exciting a popular reaction against Mahomedanism, and in propagating new doctrines. Of these the most successful was Karmat, or Karmath, who about A.D. 900 had gathered around him, in his native district of Koofa, a large body of devoted disciples. Amongst other innovations he permitted the use of wine, and dispensed with ablutions, two changes which must have been almost equally acceptable to his followers. This sect waged war for several years with the Kalifs; sacked Bussora; took Koofa; threatened Damascus, which escaped capture by paying a ransom; ravaged Balbek, putting to death most of the inhabitants; seized Hajar (El Haza), which they made their capital; and plundered the caravans of pilgrims to Mekka. Having been joined by the inhabitants of Bahrein and Haza, who had adopted the tenets of Karmat, they marched in force against Mekka, which they took. There they slaughtered thirty thousand persons; pillaged the city; sacked the Kaaba; filled the holy well of Zemzem with dead bodies; defiled the most revered of Mahomedan temples, by interring in it a thousand corpses; carried off the sacred black stone, which every devout Mahomedan pilgrim desires to kiss, and converted it to an obscene use; but a few years after the death of their most successful military leader, Abou Taher, they restored the stone; and according to the Mahomedan tradition, a single camel, which was lean when it left Koofa, and got fat on the journey, sufficed to carry it back to Mekka; whereas forty strong camels had hardly been able to carry it away, and had all been reduced to skin and bone by the effort, before they conveyed it to Koofa. Having endured for about sixty years, from the date of its first rise, the Karmathite 'heresy' declined and ceased to excite much attention, though it still survived in obscurity at Aleppo, Kateef, and some other places. It appears to have been a sect of mystics, such as are common in the East, under the generic designation of Soofees, and in which the leader and his followers stand in the relations of *Morsheed* and *Moreed*. The *Morsheed* is supposed by his devoted disciples, or *Moreeds*, to be the vicegerent of God on earth, whose mandates they are bound blindly to obey. The Ismaelees of Alamoot in Persia—the disciples or *Moreeds* of Hassan Subbah, 'the old man of the mountain' (from whose name our term 'assassin' is derived), were a sect of this class; and the stories related

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related of the self-immolation of the disciples of Hassan and Kar-math, at the command of their *Morsheeds*, are identical.

We shall have occasion to say something further on of a more recent sect of religious militants (all sects are militant in Arabia), which, however, has for its object, not the overthrow of the Mahomedan faith, but its restoration to its original purity.

Geographically the term Arabia has not unusually been applied exclusively to the peninsula, of which three sides are bounded by the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, and of which the isthmus would be cut across near its narrowest part by a line of about 800 miles drawn from Yembo on the Red Sea to Grane (also called Koweit) at the N.W. angle of the Persian Gulf. But those limits would exclude a considerable proportion of historical Arabia, which extends far beyond the peninsula and its isthmus, but of which the limits are not accurately defined. Our present business, however, is with the Arabs of the Peninsula.

Beginning at the north-eastern shore of the Red Sea, we find on the whole coasts of the peninsula, and extending inland to varying and imperfectly defined distances, the following provinces or principalities, each of which consists of a certain extent of low land of varying breadth along the coast, which is called Tehama, and behind which rises a mountain range of considerable altitude, and consisting in some parts, more especially in Yemen and Omān, of successive ridges or groups of mountain country extending into the interior. Of the provinces, the first, in the order in which we propose to take them, is Hejaz, in which are the cities of Mekka, Jeddah, and Medina—Yembo, Tayf, and other towns and villages. Proceeding southward, we next come to Yemen, which extends to the Straits of Babel-mandeb and a short distance beyond them to the east. It contains the cities of Sana or Saana and Mokha, besides many other towns and villages, both on the coast and in the interior. To the east of Yemen, on the coast of the Indian Ocean, is Hadramaut, near the western limit of which is the peninsula and fortress of Aden, now a British possession. The principality of Omān extends from the eastern limit of Hadramaut to Cape Massendom and the Persian Gulf; and besides the capital, Muscat, contains several considerable towns on the coast and many villages both on the coast and in the interior. On the southern and western shores of the Persian Gulf, beyond the limits of Omān, are Bahrein, Haza, and Grane or Koweit, all of which contain considerable towns and villages. This completes the circuit of the peninsula from one shore of the isthmus to the other.

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All of these provinces or principalities—they have sometimes been the one and sometimes the other—have been visited and described by men specially qualified to give an account of them, and who have left for their successors but little important information to glean on their tracks. Earliest in date was Niebuhr, who, besides a great amount of general information regarding Arabia and the Arabs, has also given us a full and accurate account of Yemen, the Arabia Felix of the ancients. His work bears everywhere the impress of superior intellect, careful observation and inquiry, calm judgment, and good faith. Of the Hejaz and its cities we have from Burckhardt a description such as Gibbon desiderated, and no other European had been able to give. It leaves little that is new to be told by any traveller who may follow him in the Hejaz. But his inquiries were not confined to that province; he collected detailed information regarding the routes from Mekka and Medina to different parts, indeed to almost all parts, of Arabia. Of the pestilential Hadramaut, which, being interpreted, is the region of death, we know little, and probably there is not much to be known, beyond the harbours and villages on the coast described by Wellsted, whose modest narrative, distinguished by its scrupulous accuracy and fidelity, has hardly secured to him the position to which, amongst recent travellers, he is entitled. It is true that in his travels in Omān he had advantages such as no other traveller in the interior of Arabia has enjoyed, for he travelled with the concurrence and under the protection of the Imām of Muscat, the sovereign of the country. Probably that is one of the reasons why his account of the interior of Omān is still the most accurate that we possess of the topography and condition of any inland portion of Arabia of similar extent. With the districts on the shores of the Persian Gulf, from Cape Massendom to the mouths of the Euphrates, the surveys of the Indian navy, the intercourse of their chiefs and merchants with the British Residency at Bussora, which was for some time established at Grane, as well as with the Residency at Bushire, and the military expeditions which had been sent from India to chastise the pirates of that coast, and destroy their vessels and strongholds, had made us well acquainted.

There remained in the central part of the peninsula, or rather of its isthmus, the great province of Nejd,* or the Highlands, which was known to be populous and productive, but which no European had yet examined. In a note appended to his pub-

* Mr. Palgrave writes Nejed; Burckhardt, Nedjed; in Eastern Arabia we believe the word is never pronounced as if it consisted of two syllables.

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lished Travels, Burckhardt had directed special attention to Nejd ; and as the Egyptian army under Toussoun Pasha had previously penetrated to Kaseem, one of its districts, he was able to lay down with considerable accuracy the stages and distances from Medina to the principal towns of the province. This information was obtained in 1814, and was all that was then attainable. In 1817 and 1818, however, when the Egyptian army, under Ibrahim Pasha, accompanied by several European officers of intelligence, had overrun Nejd, taken and destroyed its capital Dereeyah, and occupied the country to the shores of the Persian Gulf, Nejd ceased to be an unexplored or unknown country.

In 1819 Captain Sadlier of the British army, who had previously been employed in Persia, was sent on a mission to Ibrahim Pasha, in order to prevent any misapprehension as to the objects of the expedition which in that year was sent from India against the Wahabee pirates in the Persian Gulf. Landing at Kateef Sadlier crossed the peninsula to Yembo, being the first European who had succeeded in making his way from sea to sea. He passed through Nejd by Dereeyah, Shakra, Aneyzah, El Rass and Hanekayeh, in fact, traversed from east to west nearly the same parts of that province, with the exception of Jebel Shammar and Jowf, that Mr. Palgrave passed through from west to east, besides a portion which that gentleman did not see. The value of the information obtained by Captain Sadlier was highly appreciated in France as well as in this country.

M. Mengin published, in 1823, his elaborate 'History of Egypt under Mahomed Allee,' of which Mr. Palgrave, from his residence in Egypt, and his Egyptian predilections, might have been expected to know something. M. Mengin's work, which is carefully, and, on the whole, honestly prepared, contains a detailed account, derived from the European officers who accompanied the Egyptian army, of Ibrahim Pasha's military operations in Nejd. M. Mengin, however, does not confine himself to a narrative of those operations. Knowing that Central Arabia had not till then been explored by Europeans, he gives much curious and interesting information, obtained chiefly from official sources, regarding the country and its inhabitants. He enumerates the districts and considerable towns inhabited by the settled population, gives the number of men capable of bearing arms at which each of these is rated, and thence deduces the total amount of the settled population of Nejd. He also gives a list of the Bedouin tribes subject to the Wahabee ruler, with the number of men capable of bearing arms in each. The history of the Wahabee sect,—its rise, its peculiar tenets, its conquests, its plunders, and massacres had already been fully discussed in
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numerous publications both in England and in France. But M. Mengin had much that was new to tell of the laws and customs of Nejd; of its productions, animal and vegetable; of its trade; of its agriculture, and the manner of conducting it; of the taxation, and the total amount of each description of produce on which a tax is levied by the Government; and his history is accompanied by maps, in which the topography of Nejd is illustrated with great care and considerable accuracy. It was, no doubt, with the aid of those materials that Dr. Plate constructed the map of Arabia which accompanied Colonel Chesney's account of the Euphrates expedition; and which, with the exception of the valley of the Jowf, which Dr. Wallin was the first European to visit, contains all that was known of the topography of Nejd, till Colonel Pelly, in 1865, was able by correct astronomical observations to determine the latitude and longitude of Riad and some other places.

Dr. Wallin, a native of Finland, who travelled in Northern Arabia in 1845-48, visited both Jowf and Jebel Shammar. The notes of his journey, with a sketch map showing most of the towns and villages of those two districts of Nejd, were published in 1851 in the 'Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society,' vol. xx. He encountered the Beni Shammar, as far to the west as Teima, which belongs to them, and states that their different clans or tribes extend eastward into Irak, which is their favourite haunt. 'But towards the close of spring, when water and pasture are scarce in the Nefood, every tribe draws nearer to its own town or village, and in the time of the date-harvest they generally pitch their tents close to the walls of their respective towns.' He observes, that according to their own tradition they were one of the tribes who emigrated latest from Yemen, and that 'they retain the Yemeny features of their ancestors in a greater degree perhaps than any other tribe from that country.'

'The Beni Shammar,' he says, 'are under the authority of Ibn al Rashid, the chief Sheikh of all the Shammar in Nejd.'

Mr. Layard, in his 'Nineveh and Babylon,' a book which most educated persons have read, gives an account of Gebel Shammar, which contains the substance of nearly all that Mr. Palgrave has told us of that district and its chief, Ibn Rashid. Mr. Layard tells us that:—

'Of late years Ibn Rashid, a chief of the Gebel Shammar, has by his courage and abilities acquired the whole of that district; and has rendered himself sufficiently powerful to hold in check the various tribes which surround it. Pilgrims under his protection could therefore again venture to take the shortest road to Mecca. . . . The chief punctually fulfilled his engagements, and the caravan I have described was the first that had crossed the desert for many years without

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without accident or molestation. It was under the charge of Abd-ur-Rahman, a relation of Ibn Rashid; I frequently saw him during his short residence at Hillah, and he urged me to return with him to Jebel Shammar. . . .

'Sheikh Abd-ur-Rahman described Gebel Shammar as abounding in fertile valleys, where the Arabs had villages and cultivated lands. The inhabitants are of the same great tribe of Shammar who wander over the plains of Mesopotamia.

'Ibn Reshid was described to me as a powerful and, for an Arab, an enlightened chief, who had restored security to the country, and who desired to encourage trade and the passage of caravans through his territory.'

Such were the accounts of Nejd which had been laid before the European public previous to 1860, and although much attention had not been recently directed to the affairs of a region so remote, yet the truth is, that, of all the provinces of Arabia, Nejd,—instead of being, as Mr. Palgrave represents it, and as it was at first taken (by ourselves among others) upon his authority to be, a blank to be filled up in the map of Asia, an unknown and virgin soil,—was undoubtedly the province regarding which there existed, previous to his journey, the most extensive, various, and minute information in relation both to the country and its inhabitants. But no one from reading Mr. Palgrave's book could discover that the country had ever been explored before he penetrated into it.

'Once for all,' he says, 'let us attempt to acquire a fairly correct and comprehensive knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula. With its coasts we are already in great measure acquainted; several of its maritime provinces have been, if not thoroughly, at least sufficiently, explored; Yemen and Hejāz, Mecca and Medinah, are no longer mysteries to us nor are we wholly without information on the districts of Hadramaut and 'Omān. But of the interior of the vast region, of its plains and mountains, its tribes and cities, of its governments and institutions, of its inhabitants, their ways and customs, of their social condition, how far advanced in civilisation or sunk in barbarism, what do we as yet really know, save from accounts necessarily wanting in fulness and precision? It is time to fill up this blank in the map of Asia, and this, at whatever risks, we will now endeavour; either the land before us shall be our tomb, or we will traverse it in its fullest breadth, and know what it contains from shore to shore. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*.'

Was he really ignorant, when he set out on his journey to Nejd, that it was a country comparatively well known and described, years before he resolved to visit it? Was the unavowed purpose of his journey the real motive for undertaking it, and the ostensible object only a pretext? In whatever manner we attempt to account for it, such a view of his undertaking as
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is given in the preceding extract seems to imply either a strange delusion or a deliberate mystification. But let us pass on—

'The men of the land,' he tells us, 'rather than the land of the men, were my main object of research and principal study. My attention was directed to the moral, intellectual, and political conditions of living Arabia rather than to the physical phenomena of the country—of great indeed, but to me of inferior interest. Meanwhile, whatever observations on antiquity and science, on plants and stones, geography and meteorology, I was able to make, I shall give, regretting only their inevitable imperfection.'*

Of the special objects and determining circumstances of his journey, which was undertaken in connexion with the Order of the Jesuits, and for which the necessary funds were furnished by the Emperor of the French, Mr. Palgrave only tells us of 'the hope of doing something towards the permanent social good of those wide regions; the desire of bringing the stagnant waters of Eastern life into contact with the quickening stream of European progress; perhaps a natural curiosity to know the yet unknown, and the restlessness of enterprise not rare in Englishmen.' By what special means he hoped to bring the stagnant waters into contact with the quickening stream, he probably did not feel at liberty to inform us—at all events, we may safely infer that the quickening stream was not to be supplied by this country. Mr. Palgrave is no doubt too much of a cosmopolite to care by what nation it may be supplied, and too little of a politician to consider what political inconvenience might result from an attempt to carry out the views which it was his hope to promote.

Whatever his unavowed objects may have been, he was, as he informs us, in many respects well prepared for the enterprise. Familiarity with the Arabic language till it became to him almost a mother-tongue, experience in the ways and manners of 'Semitic' nations, and a careful study of the best Arabic authorities on the history and *gesta* of Arabia—we may add, more than ordinary capacity, presence of mind, and address. On the other hand, it appears to us that there are, in his very clever and agreeable account of his journey, indications of his having imbibed many of the views and prejudices of his Eastern friends and associates, and of his remarkable inaptitude to understand or appreciate any other mode of life than that of cities or towns; but on the whole, Mr. Palgrave's '*Arabia*' is a pleasant and amusing book of travel; and if we cannot help thinking that the colouring is sometimes a little too artistic, we do not doubt that the outlines of the scenes and the figures he depicts from personal observation

* Preface, p. vi.

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are generally faithful. Of his disquisitions on theological subjects we shall only say that to us the effect of those elaborate digressions, which interrupt the narrative, is unpleasant, and their value doubtful.

Having resolved to go to Nejd, Mr. Palgrave selected a route which is difficult and therefore not much frequented, but which was the most direct from Gaza, whence he set out. Crossing the caravan road from Damascus to Medina, at Ma'an, he there remained some days to complete his preparations and obtain guides and camels. From thence they struck at once into the desert, on the route to Jowf. He was to travel in the disguise of a Syrian physician, and had supplied himself with the requisite drugs and Arabic medical books; but, fearing that his services in this capacity might not always be in request, he had also laid in a small stock of such articles of merchandise as were likely to find a ready sale—a combination of scientific and commercial pursuits which is by no means considered anomalous in the East. On this he remarks that,

‘ Could we have foreknown the real nature of the countries before us, we might have very well dispensed with a good part of our mercantile provisions, designed mainly for Bedouin purchasers, and augmented on the other hand our medical supplies, more adapted to townsmen and villagers. But supposing, like most people, that Arabia was almost exclusively the territory of nomades, and that the fixed population must be proportionally small [and unimportant, we deemed the former class of articles at least as available as the latter; a grievous mistake, and of which we soon became aware. For after once traversing this first stage of our journey, the rest of our way across the inner provinces, and up to the very shores of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, lay, with very little exception, through countries where Bedouins stand for little or nothing, whereas, on the contrary, the settled inhabitants of the soil, with their towns, tillage, and governments, are everything. But all this we had yet to learn.’

Now had Mr. Palgrave taken as much care to make himself acquainted with the information relating to Nejd which had been collected by Europeans and which was accessible to every one, as he had taken to read up the Arabic writings of which he gives a catalogue—had he even consulted Burckhardt alone, he would have known that Arabia, and especially Nejd, was far from being exclusively the territory of nomades. Burckhardt says (p. 459):—

‘ Kasym, which is the most fertile district in the province of Nedjed, begins at Dât. The name of Nedjed, signifying high or elevated ground, is given to the country in opposition to Tehama or “ low lands ” applied to the sea-coast. It seems to be an oblong tract, extending between three and four days’ journey from west to east, and two journeys in breadth from south to north. Within this space are
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above twenty-six small towns and villages, well peopled, in a cultivated territory irrigated by water from numerous wells. The chief town is Bereyda, where resides the Sheikh of Kasym, an old man, El Hedjeilan, once an enemy to the Wahabys, now a convert to their doctrine. The neighbourhood of Rass produces most corn, and that part of Kasym about Dát and Rass lies nearest to Medina. In time of peace regular caravans (of corn) arrive every month at Medina from Rass. Toussoun Pasha's army found plenty of provisions in the few villages of Kasym which they occupied.

'The most considerable place in Kasym is Aneyzy (Oneyza of Mr. Palgrave), said to be equal in size to Siout in Upper Egypt, which contained according to the French computation three thousand houses. Aneyzy has bazars, and is inhabited by respectable Arab merchants. Of the other towns and villages the following are most noted.' (Here follows a list of ten of them.)

Again,—

'Nedjed near Derayeh assumes the name of El Aredh, a district once separate from Nedjed, but now considered belonging to it. El Aredh is less fertile than Kasym, from which in fact it is partly supplied with provisions. Its principal town, Derayeh, has always been a place of note, but much increased since it has become the capital of the Wahaby power and sect. . . .

'There are not any khans or public inns (in Derayeh), so that every stranger quarters himself upon some inhabitant, and the people of Derayeh are proverbially hospitable. The immediate neighbourhood is barren, yielding only date-trees. Derayeh is supplied with provisions chiefly from Dhoroma, a large and populous village, one day's journey towards the east or north-east, which has gardens and orchards well watered from numerous wells.'

Elsewhere (p. 461) he tells us that—

'In general there is a spirit of commerce very prevalent in Nedjed, where the merchants are wealthy and of better repute for honesty than most of the Eastern traders. The settlers here are armed with matchlocks, and constitute the best portion of the Wahaby infantry: they are generally successful against the Bedouins, who invade their crops and pastures; and as saltpetre is found in Nedjed, every family makes its own yearly provision of gunpowder.'

Burckhardt's *Travels in Arabia* were published in 1829; his name and his works were well and extensively known, and no one who had read his account, even if he had known nothing of the information obtained by Ibrahim Pasha's army in 1817-18, or by Sadlier in 1819, or by Dr. Wallin in 1848, or by Mr. Layard at a later date, could entertain the delusion that Nejd was almost exclusively the territory of nomades.

From the same excellent authority we knew that the Hejaz, besides Jedda, Mekka, Medina, Tayf, and Yembo, contains in its mountainous districts valleys of great beauty, industriously cultivated.

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cultivated. One of these, Rass el Kora, Burckhardt describes as 'more picturesque and delightful than any place I had seen since my departure from Lebanon in Syria.' He adds—

'Many of the fruit-trees of Europe are found here—figs, apricots, peaches, apples, the Egyptian sycamore, almonds, pomegranates, but particularly vines, the produce of which is of the best quality. . . . The fields produce wheat, barley, and onions. . . . Every *beled*, as they here call their fields, is enclosed by a low wall, and is the property of a Hodheyl Bedouin.'

He tells us also that—

'According to the statements of the Arabs, many spots towards the south where Bedouin tribes like the Hodheyl cultivate the soil in detached parts of the mountain, are equally fertile and beautiful as that which we saw in the chain above mentioned.'

These same Hodheyl Bedouins,

'Famous in the ancient history of Arabia, were nominally subject to the Sherif of Mekka, in whose territory they live; but they were in fact quite independent and often at war with him.'

Such, indeed, is life in Arabia, even in its most attractive forms—in the town or the tent, the mountains, or the desert—constantly recurring strife, wherever the stifling grasp of power is relaxed or can be eluded.

Yemen is generally known to have been and to be a comparatively populous and well-cultivated part of Arabia, whence its designation of *Felix*.

From Wellsted's account of the interior of Oman, we know that it contains many picturesque and cultivated mountain valleys watered by copious streams, and that on the plains to the north of the range there are towns and villages whose inhabitants have with great labour reclaimed considerable tracts from the desert, creating, as it were, artificial oases which are highly cultivated and productive.

A very little knowledge of what his predecessors in the same field of inquiry had done would have saved Mr. Palgrave from the misapprehension under which he commenced his journey, and which he seems to imagine that he has been the first to dispel. It would be unjust to the men who really did dispel it not to warn the numerous readers of Mr. Palgrave's attractive book against falling into a similar error.

But let us resume the journey. After several days, in the course of which the travellers narrowly escaped destruction by the simoom, the poison-breath of the desert, they arrived at the district of Wadi Sirhan, in which they found water and encampments of the Sherarat Arabs, described by Wallin as one of the poorest, and, though numerous, one of the most despised of the tribes of Arabia. The travellers, however, were hospitably

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hospitably received by these wild men, who killed a sheep to regale their guests.

At length they approached Jowf, and in a narrow pass were challenged by several horsemen, who, after some consultation, desired them to go on and fear nothing. Of one of these, Sulman-ebn-Dāhir, a handsome youth, Mr. Palgrave, who subsequently made his acquaintance, relates the following anecdote:—

‘One day, while we were engaged in friendly conversation, he said, half laughing, “Do you know what we were consulting about while you were in the pass below on the morning of your arrival? It was whether we should make you a good reception, and thus procure ourselves the advantage of having you residents amongst us, or whether we should not do better to kill you all three, and take our gain from the booty to be found in your baggage.” I replied with equal coolness, “It might have proved an awkward affair for yourself and your friends, since Hamood your governor could hardly have failed to get wind of the matter, and would have taken it out of you.” “Pooh!” replied our friend, “never a bit; as if a present out of the plunder would not have tied Hamood’s tongue.” “Bedouins that you are,” said I, laughing. “Of course we are,” answered Sulman, “for such we all were till quite lately, and the present system is too recent to have much changed us.”’

Sulman was a true Arab, and a long disquisition would fail to give as accurate a notion of Arab character as is conveyed by that anecdote. An Arab engages in robbery, with or without murder as it may happen, in much the same spirit in which a schoolboy might set about robbing an orchard.

The isolated valley of Jowf, about sixty or seventy miles long and twelve broad, with an estimated population of above thirty thousand, is well watered and productive; but we must give our traveller’s own account of his arrival there:—

‘A broad deep valley, descending ledge after ledge till its innermost depths are hidden from sight amid far-reaching shelves of reddish rock, below everywhere studded with tufts of palm-groves and clustering fruit-trees in dark green patches down to the furthest end of its windings; a large brown mass of irregular masonry crowning a central hill; beyond a tall and solitary tower overlooking the opposite bank of the hollow, and further down small round turrets and flat house-tops half buried amid the garden foliage, the whole plunged in a perpendicular flood of light and heat; such was the first aspect of the Djowf as we now approached it from the west. It was a lovely scene, and seemed yet more so to our eyes weary of the long desolation through which we had with hardly an exception journeyed day after day since our last farewell glimpse of Gaza and Palestine up to the first entrance on inhabited Arabia. “Like the Paradise of eternity, none can enter it till after having previously passed over hell-bridge,” says an Arab poet, describing some similar locality in Algerian lands.

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Reanimated

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'Reanimated by the view, we pushed on our jaded beasts, and were already descending the first craggy slope of the valley, when two horsemen, well dressed and fully armed after the fashion of these parts, came up toward us from the town, and at once saluted us with a loud and hearty "Marhaba," or "welcome;" and without further preface they added, "Alight and eat," giving themselves the example of the former by descending briskly from their light-limbed horses, and untying a large leather bag full of excellent dates, and a water-skin, filled from the running spring; then spreading out these most opportune refreshments on the rock, and adding, "We were sure that you must be hungry and thirsty, so we have come ready provided," they invited us once more to sit down and begin.

'Hungry and thirsty we indeed were; the dates were those of Djowf, the choicest in their kind to be met with in northern Arabia; the water was freshly drawn, cool and clear, no slight recommendations after the ammoniacal wells of Magowa' and Oweysit; so that altogether we thought it unnecessary to make our new friends repeat their invitation, and without delay set ourselves to enjoy the present good, leaving the future with all its cares to Providence and the course of events. Meanwhile I took the occasion of studying more minutely the outward man of our benefactors.

'The elder of the cavaliers was a man apparently of about forty years of age, tall, well-made, dark-complexioned, and with a look that inspired some mistrust, while it denoted much intelligence and more habitual haughtiness. He was handsomely dressed for an Arab, wearing a red cloth vest with large hanging sleeves over his long white shirt, with a silk handkerchief, striped red and yellow, on his head, and a silver-hilted sword at his side. In short, all about him denoted a person of some wealth and importance. This was Ghāfil-el-Haboob, the chief of the most important and the most turbulent family of the Djowf, Beyt-Haboob, who were not long since the rulers of the town, but are now, like all the rest of their countrymen, humble subjects to Hamood, vicegerent of Telāl, the prince of Djebel Shomer.

'His companion, Dāfee by name, seemed younger in years and slenderer of make; he was less richly dressed, though carrying, like Ghāfil, the silver-hilted sword common in Arabia to all men of good birth and circumstances; his family name was also Haboob, but his features bespoke a much milder and opener character than that of the chief, his cousin at the fourth or fifth remove.'

The travellers became the guests of Ghāfil,—not, however, without some remonstrance on the part of Dāfee, who was ambitious of the honour of entertaining them; but, finding that residence in the house of this chief of the Haboob was not conducive either to the extension of medical practice or the acquisition of information, and having reason to suspect that his hospitality was not quite disinterested—that, in fact, he had set his heart on getting possession of a bag of coffee which was part of their mercantile stock—they insisted on removing to other quarters.

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After a time they paid a visit to the Governor, Hamood, and there encountered some of the more polished inhabitants of Jebel Shammar, or, as Mr. Palgrave has it, Shomer,—in fact, members of the Privy Council of Telal, Ebn Resheed, the ruler of that part of the country, who had annexed Jowf to his possessions. 'With much ease and off-handedness they drew us into talk, showed great interest in our well-doing, and united in encouraging us to lose no time in making our way to Ha'yel, where they assured us of an excellent welcome from Telal' (p. 78). Thus encouraged, after remaining eighteen days in Jowf, where they were hospitably treated and practised physic with success, they set out for the capital of Telal, who, though he governs ostensibly on behalf of Feyzul, the chief or sovereign of the Wahabees, appears to exercise an almost independent authority. He seems to be a remarkable man in his country and generation: prudent, but full of courage, farseeing in his policy, and formidable in war.

The tribe of Shammar is numerous and powerful. Besides that portion of it which is settled in the towns and villages of Jebel Shammar, a large, perhaps the larger, part of the tribe is still nomade. Of the nomade portion one division occupies chiefly the country between Jebel Shammar and the Euphrates, while another division pitches its tents on the eastern bank of the Tigris, or at least did so thirty years ago, when an English traveller was indebted to their Sheikh for a night's shelter; and we believe they do so still. Mr. Palgrave's dislike of Bedouins, however, leads him to regard them as of no consideration, and therefore he makes no inquiry about them. He must, no doubt, have good grounds for using *Shomer*, instead of the usual orthography, Shammar, which more accurately represents the sound of the word as it is pronounced by the Arabs of both Eastern and Western Arabia, as well as by the nomade portion of the tribe to which we have specially referred; but at Ha'yel the pronunciation may be that which Mr. Palgrave has adopted.*

At that city the travellers remained for some time, objects of suspicion to some, and of curiosity to all, but on the whole treated with courtesy and hospitality. They appear to have had with Telal communings of a secret and perilous character, at least so he regarded them, but of what nature we are not informed. We are sometimes tempted to suspect that the mystery in which

* The name Shammar, or Shamar, is not in favour with Mahomedans. When Hossein, the son of Alee, lay wounded and bleeding at the entrance of his tent, with his children clinging about him, his enemies, struck with awe and pity (so history tells), recoiled; but a ruthless man named Shammar, or Shamar, dashed forward, and with his followers despatched the grandson of 'the Prophet.' The name is therefore in bad odour with the Soonnees, and an abomination to the Sheeahs—'Shomer' somewhat disguises it—at least beyond the limits of Arabia.

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the unavowed objects of the enterprise are shrouded was unnecessary, and that it is introduced and maintained rather to enhance the interest of the story and the dignity of the author than from its intrinsic importance; at all events, it appears to have been only a reconnoissance, the result of which we presume could not have been very encouraging. The author's account, however, of his residence at Ha'yel is interesting and curious. In order to arrive at that city he had to pass over a portion of the Nefood, or sand desert, and considering that he set out from Ma'an a few weeks before with the notion that the peninsula of Arabia was almost exclusively a territory of nomades, the following truthful passage will show how his knowledge of that country had improved in a few weeks:—

'The general type of Arabia is that of a central table-land, surrounded by a desert ring, sandy to the south, west, and east, and stony to the north. This outlying circle is in its turn girt by a line of mountains, low and sterile for the most, but attaining in Yemen and 'Omān considerable height, breadth, and fertility, while beyond these a narrow rim of coast is bordered by the sea. The surface of the midmost table-land equals somewhat less than one-half of the entire Peninsula, and its special demarcations are much affected, nay, often absolutely fixed, by the windings and in-runings of the Nefood. If to these central high-lands, or Nejed, taking that word in its wider sense, we add the Djowf, the Tā'yif, Djebel 'Aaseer, Yemen, 'Omān, and Hasa,—in short, whatever spots of fertility belong to the outer circles,—we shall find that Arabia contains about two-thirds of cultivated, or at least of cultivable land, with a remaining third of irreclaimable desert, chiefly to the south. In most other directions the great blank spaces often left in maps of this country are quite as frequently indications of non-information as of real non-inhabitation. However, we have just now a strip, though fortunately only a strip, of pure unmitigated desert before us, after which better lands await us; and in this hope let us take courage with the old poet, who has kindly furnished me with a very appropriate heading to this chapter, and boldly enter the Nefood.'

The fidelity of his description of the sand desert will be recognised by every one who has traversed it; but as on the watery ocean the uninitiated estimate the height of the waves at much more than their real altitude, so we suspect it may have happened to Mr. Palgrave in the sandy ocean:—

'We were now traversing an immense ocean of loose reddish sand, unlimited to the eye, and heaped up in enormous ridges running parallel to each other from north to south, undulation after undulation, each swell two or three hundred feet in average height, with slant sides and rounded crests furrowed in every direction by the capricious gales of the desert. In the depths between the traveller finds himself

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as it were imprisoned in a suffocating sand-pit, hemmed in by burning walls on every side; while at other times, while labouring up the slope, he overlooks what seems a vast sea of fire, swelling under a heavy monsoon wind, and ruffled by a cross-blast into little red-hot waves. Neither shelter nor rest for eye or limb amid torrents of light and heat poured from above on an answering glare reflected below.

From Ha'yel the travellers proceeded through the district of Kaseem to Riad, the capital of Feyzul, chief or sovereign of the Wahabees, and the seat of their government. To enter thus the lion's den was a hazardous experiment, from which their friends at Ha'yel would fain have dissuaded them, but they were resolved to incur the risk.

The rise of the Wahabee sect and power is the most curious chapter in the history of modern Arabia, and it is the more curious and interesting because, having been apparently crushed and utterly ruined by the Egyptian army in 1817-18, the Wahabee power has not only survived what seemed at the time to be a death-blow, but is now more firmly established, to all appearance, than it was before that blow was struck. Mr. Palgrave, indeed, seems to think that there is a violent reaction, of opinion at least, against it in the countries subject to its authority; but those who are best acquainted with the East well know how much of such talk as he heard may be held against an existing Asiatic government, without even the most remote intention, on the part of those who hold it, of giving effect, by overt acts, to the opinions which they express with a freedom very likely to mislead a stranger.

We have not space for a history of the Wahabees, but a few sentences we must give to it in order to make our extracts from Mr. Palgrave's account of his sojourn at Riad intelligible.

The only power in Arabia which is of any great importance or is formidable to its neighbours is the Wahabee Principality, which for more than a century has been established in Nejd, and has absorbed several of the surrounding districts. In accordance with what appears to be the tendency of the Arabic mind, or at all events with the usual formula in Arabia, the Wahabees are a religious sect, whose fanaticism takes the direction of war and conquest for the purpose of propagating their peculiar tenets.

Some few years before 1750, a person of the name of Mahomed Ebn Abdul Wahab, of the tribe Temeem and branch Wahab, returned to Aredh after an absence of several years, during which he had studied Mahomedan Theology under the learned teachers of Bussora and Damascus. He attached himself, it is said, to the petty court of a chief, Ebn Ma'amer, of Eyānah, an ancient and considerable town, now in ruins, which was
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not many miles distant from Dereeyah and Riad. But having there begun to propagate opinions which were not acceptable to the authorities, he sought refuge with Saood Ebn Abdul Azeez, of the Aneizeh tribe, the hereditary chief of Dereeyah, and of a small territory attached to that town. Saood embraced the Wahabee doctrines, and soon began to propagate them, not only by his influence but by his sword. Saood was a man of ability and courage; but the people of that part of Arabia must have been previously prepared for some such movement, otherwise Wahabeeism could hardly have spread so rapidly. The power of Saood was altogether inconsiderable until it had been augmented by the accession of converts. The truth appears to be that the arrogant bearing of the Turks, who treated the Arabs with contempt, if not with contumely, the oppressions and injustice of the Pashas and their subordinates, who administered the local governments of Syria and Babylonia, with which the Arabs were constantly brought into contact, and to which they were nominally subject, made them ready to avail themselves of any means which might offer them a prospect of freedom; and, to say nothing of the career of Mahomed, that of Karmath and other sectaries had shown how efficacious a military and political engine new or reformed doctrines in religion might become in the hands of a competent leader in Arabia.

The Wahabee doctrine was simply a recurrence to the original text and teaching of the Koran, the rejection of all religious observances that had not been sanctioned by 'the book,' the rigid enforcement of every prohibition which it contained, and the observance of all that it enjoined. The Wahabees denounced as profane and idolatrous the honours paid to deceased Mahomedan saints, and the practice of praying for their intercession, which had become almost universal. They even extended this denunciation to the prevalent semi-worship of 'the Prophet' himself, as contrary to his own commands; and condemned as impious the 'association' of any other with the one true God, as calculated to impair the belief in his perfect unity. The Koran had forbidden the use of anything intoxicating, and the Wahabees, choosing to consider tobacco, which was freely used by all other Mahomedans, as one of those forbidden things, abstinence from it became a sort of test of orthodoxy, indulgence in it a proof of infidelity, and therefore one of the most heinous of crimes.

The teaching of the theologian and the prowess of the military leader were so successful that, before Saood's death (in 1765), his authority and the Wahabee doctrines were acknowledged and professed by nearly the whole of Nejd, and even by some of the districts on the shores of the Persian Gulf.

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On the death of Saood he was succeeded by his eldest son, Abdul Azeez, a warlike prince, whose military successes carried the terror of the Wahabee arms to Hejaz, and the Pashalic of Bagdad.

Mr. Palgrave's account of the acts and the death of this Chief or Prince will give our readers an opportunity of judging of the manner in which he relates historical events:—

'In 1800 or near it (my readers will call to mind what I have more than once said about Arab dates) 'Abd-el-'Azeez ascended the throne. His reign was short, but full of events equally glorious and pernicious.

'Restless and bold, but much less prudent than his father, 'Abd-el-'Azeez at once turned his arms against the East, stormed Kateef, where he made great slaughter of the inhabitants, occupied Bahreyn and the adjacent islands of the Persian Gulf, attacked the eastern coast of Barr-Fāris, which he detached irrecoverably from Persian rule, and lastly assailed the kingdom of 'Omān. This last expedition was headed by his younger brother, the impetuous 'Abd-Allah. The success of the Nejdeans was complete; after several battles, each a victory, 'Abd-Allah reached the heights above Mascat, and turned the fort batteries against the town below. The Sultan Sa'eed yielded to the storm, consented to the payment of an annual tribute, admitted a Wahabee garrison in the more important localities of his kingdom, and permitted the erection of mosques of orthodox fashion in Mascat and elsewhere.

'But these very conquests were fatal to 'Abd-el-'Azeez, who had by them provoked a foe much more dangerous than any hitherto known to the Wahabee empire. Kateef and Bahreyn were both of them dependencies of Persia, and had been even more closely linked to the latter kingdom by religious than by civil ties. 'Omān was also in intimate connection with Persia. The court of Teheran resolved to avenge its allies on the Arab brigand. To hazard a Persian army amid the wilds of Arabia would have been a measure equally dangerous and unprofitable; but there remained an easier way through an instrument familiar to Shiya'ees in all ages and climes, namely, the murderer's dagger.

'Numerous and dissident as are the sects sprung from the quarrels of 'Alee with his more successful rivals, they all of them agree on one point,—the traditional approbation and frequent practice of assassination. Shiya'ees of the original stock, Ismaileeyah (assassins *par excellence*, and from whom all others have derived the name), Druses, Carmathians, Khārijeeyah, Metāwelah, in a word, the entire kith and kin from the earliest Rāfedee down to the Bābee of our own time, have and do sanction the assassin's knife, wherever a purpose is to be attained or a rival to be got rid of; it is a part of their practical no less than of their theoretical code. Muslim and Christian, Sonnee and polytheist, each in his day has, an Arab would say, "tasted" the dagger of the multiform Shiya'ee, the prototype "carbonaro" of the East.

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East. 'Abd-el-'Azeez was now to learn at his own cost that the "secret sects" of Asia are not to be trifled with.

'A fanatic, native of the province of Ghilān, the land where 'Abd-el-Kadir had six centuries before made the enthusiasm of his disciples a pedestal to almost divine honours, offered himself for the work of blood. He received suitable instructions in Teheran, whence he journeyed to Meshid Hoseyn, the authentic Mecca of Shiya'ee devotion. There he procured a written pardon of all past or future sins, and a title-deed duly signed and sealed, assuring him the eternal joys of paradise, should he rid the earth of the Nejdean tyrant. With this document carefully rolled up and secured in an amulet round his arm, he took his way under mercantile disguise to Derey'eeyah, and there awaited an occasion for meriting the reward promised to the deed of treachery.

'Abd-el-'Azeez, a sincere Wahhabee, never failed to be present in person at the public prayers held in the great mosque of the town. Then it was that, without arms, and wholly taken up by the scrupulous exactness of devotions which permit no backward or sideward glance, he might prove an easy victim to the meditated crime. This the Persian knew; and when weeks of intercourse and strict outward orthodoxy had acquired him the full confidence of the townsmen, he one day took his stand in the ranks of evening prayer immediately behind 'Abd-el-'Azeez, went through the first two Reka'as of Islamitic devotion, and at the third, while the sultan of Nejed was bowed in prostrate adoration, plunged his sharp Khorassan dagger in his body. The blade penetrated between the shoulders, and came out at the breast; and 'Abd-el-'Azeez lay dead without a groan or struggle.

'His attendants caught up their swords where they lay ungirded for prayer, and unsheathed them on the assassin. The Persian, courageous from despair, defended himself a while with the weapon yet dripping royal blood; at last he fell, and was literally hewn to pieces on the ground of the mosque, but not till he had sent three of his assailants to follow their king in death. The written engagement, countersigned by the governor of Meshid Hoseyn, was found on the corpse; and 'Abd-Allah, who was now Sultan of Nejed, swore that his first vengeance for his brother's death should be on the city that had harboured his assassin.

'These events took place, so far as my informants could supply a date, about 1805 or 1806. 'Abd-Allah henceforth reigned alone; his younger brother Khālid, and Theney'yān, the son of 'Abd-el-'Azeez, with the other members of the family, had no share in the royal power. Khālid left a son, by name Meshāree, the future assassin of Turkee, and already mentioned in this narrative, in which Ebn-Theney'yān and another Khālid, also nephew of 'Abd-Allah, will find subsequent mention.

'Abd-Allah had inherited all his father's skill and superior force of character, but to these better qualities he joined the ordinary vices of one born in the purple; despotic, cruel, perfidious, haughty to a degree rare even in the East, and bigoted beyond measure for the
sect

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sect in which he had been himself brought up. The odious features seldom wanting in the portrait of a Mahometan autocrat—pride, reckless bloodshed, contempt of human suffering, lavish prodigality linked with unsparing oppression, capricious cruelty and equally capricious mercy—all found a full development in the Wahhabee despot, and marked each measure of his reign.

‘Scarcely had he buried his brother than he prepared to accomplish his sworn revenge on Meshid Hoseyn and the Shiya’ees of the Persian frontier. To this intent he put himself at the head of a powerful army, and directed his march towards the western bank of the Euphrates. On his way he threatened to swallow up the little municipality of Koweyt, then first rising into commercial importance, but a seasonable submission and large presents averted the dangerous honour of a Nejdean visit. Carrying all opposition before him, ‘Abd-Allah scattered the forces assembled to check his onset at Zobeyr, at Sook-esh-Sheyookh, and at Samowah, till he arrived before the large town of Meshid ‘Alee, to which he immediately laid siege. But whether a miraculous interposition of the stepson of Mahomet threw confusion among the Wahhabee assailants, as the Shiya’ees affirm to this day, or whether the besiegers wanted the requisite skill and strength for storming the fortifications, ‘Abd-Allah was repulsed with considerable loss, and had to give up his projects against Meshid ‘Alee. Leaving it to its defenders, he marched northward with new rage against Meshid Hoseyn or Kerbelah, the main object of his hatred. Here the impetuosity of his onset overcame all resistance, the town was stormed, and a promiscuous massacre of garrison and inhabitants appeased the manes of ‘Abd-el-‘Azeez. The tomb, real or supposed, of the son of Fatimah was destroyed, the rich mosque plundered and desecrated. I myself have seen at Riad different objects then carried off from the sanctuary of Persian devotion; all agree that the carnage was merciless, and that the inhabitants armed or unarmed were alike put to the sword.’

This is so well and skilfully told—the tragedy ending in poetical retribution is so artistic and complete, that we cannot without some reluctance disturb its effect by exposing its historical absurdity.

Meshed Hossein or Kerbelah was attacked and taken by the Wahabees, the town pillaged, the tomb and mosque plundered, and most of the inhabitants massacred on the 2nd of April, 1801. On the 13th November, 1803, Abdul Azeez was assassinated by a Persian whose relations had been murdered by the Wahabees when they sacked Kerbelah in 1801. The indiscriminate massacre at Kerbelah was not, therefore, provoked by, nor was it an act of retribution for the assassination of Abdul Azeez; but, on the contrary, the assassination of Abdul Azeez was provoked by, and was an act of retribution for, the unprovoked murder of a family at Kerbelah; and, if the Arabs did not regard

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regard it as a meritorious act, it was not the less strictly in accordance with their own practice of exacting blood for blood.

But that is not the only error in the passage above quoted. We are told by Mr. Palgrave that the reign of Abd-ul-Azeez was short. He succeeded his father, Saood, the founder of the Wahabee power, in 1765, and he was assassinated in 1803. He therefore ruled the Wahabees for thirty-eight years, which could hardly be considered a short reign anywhere, and least of all in Arabia. Then we are told that he was succeeded by his brother Abd-Allah; but his brother Abd-Allah never reigned, and every one who has any acquaintance with the history of the Wahabees knows that he was succeeded by his eldest son Saood,* who for many years had been the successful leader of his father's armies, and who completed the subjugation of the Hejaz which he had begun during his father's life.

The storm of Kateef and the massacre of its inhabitants did not take place subsequent to 1800, as Mr. Palgrave imagines, but in 1791.

The attack on Meshid Allee, in which the Wahabees were repulsed, was not made, as Mr. Palgrave alleges, prior to the sack of Kerbelah in 1801, nor till six years thereafter, that is in 1807.

It was not during the reign of Abd-ul-Azeez, and not till 1810, seven years after his death, that the Imâm of Muscat first agreed to pay tribute to the Wahabee. There is no evidence to connect the Court of Persia with the assassination of Abd-ul-Azeez; on the contrary the evidence goes rather to show that it was an act of private revenge for the murder of his relatives on the part of a fanatic seyud, a descendant, or supposed descendant, of Hossein, the grandson of 'the Prophet,' whose shrine had been desecrated. The statement that a 'written engagement signed by the Governor of Meshid Hoseyn was found on the corpse' of the assassin is also contrary to the evidence, which goes to prove that a paper was found, but without any signature whatever,† and which might have been written by any other fanatic or by a

* Both as a military leader and a civil governor Saood was the most distinguished man whom the Wahabees have yet produced. From his youth he had led his father's armies, and almost always to victory. He had been named successor many years before his father's death, and when that event occurred, his accession was hailed with acclamations both by the army and the people. But Mr. Palgrave seems either not to have known of his existence, or to ignore it.

† In a 'Précis de l'Histoire des Wahabys,' which is appended to M. Mengin's work, and is believed to be from the pen of M. Jomard, the following is the account given of the matter: 'On trouva dans son turban un billet sans signature, écrit en langue Persane; il était ainsi conçu: "Ton Dieu, ta religion, te font un devoir de tuer Abd-el-Aziz. Si tu parviens à échapper, tu aura de grandes récompenses; si tu succombes, le paradis est ouvert pour toi."'

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relation thirsting for vengeance on the murderers of the inhabitants of Kerbelah. After such a specimen of the manner in which he deals with historical facts, Mr. Palgrave must not be surprised if his statements are regarded as requiring confirmation.

By perverting almost every historical incident, by assuming what there is not a tittle of evidence to substantiate, by attributing impossible motives, and by drawing upon his own imagination, or that of his Arab friends, for such materials as the facts did not supply, he has made up a picturesque story, which he intends should be accepted as history. Considered as fiction, the chief defect of Mr. Palgrave's story of 'The Life and Death of Abd-ul-Azeez,' would be that it does such violence to the truth of history as is not permitted in historical romance.

He cannot account for these singular statements by saying that he was misled by his Arab informants. No intelligent Arab could have told him that the reign of Abd-ul-Azeez was short, or that he was succeeded by his brother Abd-Allah. Neither is this a mere mistake of the name and relationship of the successor, for the character which Mr. Palgrave attributes to that successor is, in almost every particular, inconsistent with that of Saood, the actual successor.

On the flight of Ghaleb, the shereef of Mekka, in 1803, to Jeddah, the 'Sacred City' had surrendered to Saood, who entered it with a part of his army. Mr. Palgrave states that Mekka was taken by Abd-Allah, and the Turkish garrison was massacred; but these statements are erroneous. Neither on that occasion nor on any other were the Wahabees guilty of massacre or pillage in Mekka. Saood made thereafter repeated 'pilgrimages' to Mekka, but always with a strong force; and in 1809 he received the personal submission of Ghaleb. But in 1803 he had interdicted all except 'the orthodox' from entering the 'sacred precincts,' and by military force closed the ordinary roads by which the Haj caravans entered the Hejaz. The prosperity if not the existence of Mekka and Medina depended mainly on the disbursements and traffic of the Haj; and Saood knew that by intercepting these he took the most effectual means of starving them into submission.

In 1809 Saood visited Medina, where he was received with open arms and much pomp, and, after a few days, returned to Dereeyah, without disturbing the tomb of Mahomed; but on a second visit, in 1810, he removed from it what the shereefs and guardians who preceded him had left of the votive offerings of many generations. The whole Mahomedan world—the Wahabees excepted—was struck with horror at the sacrilege; but when the jewels and vessels of silver and gold were sold by auction at

Medina

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Medina for much less than their value, the 'faithful' of that city were not deterred by any scruples of conscience from becoming the chief purchasers—not with any view of restoring these things to the tomb, but as a trading speculation.

The honour of the Sultan and the Turkish Government had been violated by the capture of the holy places of the Mahomedans and the interdiction of the Haj. The Pasha of Egypt was therefore required to recover the Hejaz from the presumptuous sect which had seized and desecrated the sacred cities and territory, and had, in the insolence of their fanaticism, denied the right of the Sultan to the kalifat of the Mahomedan world.

Mahomed Alee, lately appointed Pasha of Egypt, having got rid of the Mamelukes in the manner which history has recorded, began, with his usual ability and foresight, to prepare for the execution of the task which had been assigned him; and, gradually laying in stores, providing transports, and using his money and his influence to gain adherents in the Hejaz and the intermediate countries, resolved to send an expedition, under command of his son Toussoun or Torsoun Pasha, to recover from the Wahabees the holy places of Islam, and to open the way for the pilgrims who had for some years been debarred access by the ordinary routes to Mekka and Medina.

On the 2nd of April, 1811, Toussoun was invested with the command, but it was the 6th of October before the cavalry marched, accompanied by learned theologians of the four recognised Soonneh sects, who were to reconvert the deluded Arabs, misled by the innovating Wahabees. Landing at Yembo, the infantry, which had been sent by sea, got possession of that town after some not very obstinate combats, and was shortly afterwards joined by the Pasha, Toussoun, at the head of the cavalry. Having secured his communications with Egypt by the possession of Yembo, he resolved to march towards Medina, but sustained in the passes of Safra a serious reverse. Having been reinforced he advanced again the following year, and the Arab tribes which held the passes, having in the mean time been gained over at great cost of treasure, the Egyptians succeeded in wresting Medina from the Wahabees. For several years the Egyptian army prosecuted the war, and recovered not only Mekka and Jeddah, but also the towns and country towards the borders of Yemen and eastward to the confines of Nejd. In 1814 Saood, the Wahabee chief, died, and was succeeded by his son Abd-Allah, who neither inherited his father's talents nor his energy. In 1816 Ibraheem, the adopted son of Mahomed Alee, took command of the army and led it to the conquest of Nejd. Having been repulsed in three successive assaults, he raised the

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the siege of El Rass in Kaseem, but as he soon after captured Aneyza, the principal town of the district, the whole of Kaseem submitted. Ibraheem next attacked Shakra: after a siege of six days it capitulated. The direct road to Dereeyeh, the capital of the Wahabees, was then open to him, but he preferred to take the more circuitous route by Dhoroma, a large town, with a population of eight thousand souls, which was not fortified and from which the capital drew a great part of its supplies. At Dhoroma he encountered an unexpected and obstinate resistance, which so irritated him that he ordered his troops to massacre the whole of the inhabitants and to spare no one,—an order which was immediately executed:—

‘Ils firent (says M. Mengin) main-basse sur les habitans. La fusillade fut si vive, qu'en moins de deux heures la plupart périrent dans leurs maisons. Il ne resta que quelques centaines de femmes, de filles et d'enfans qu'épargna la pitié du soldat. Le sang coulait dans les rues encombrées par les morts.’

The governor Saood, a son of Abdallah, retired to his house with some faithful followers, and artillery was brought up to batter it; but Ibraheem, knowing that it contained precious articles, especially horses of almost inestimable value, considered it more profitable to allow Saood and his followers to capitulate:—

‘Satisfait d'avoir assouvi sa vengeance, Ibrahim Pacha permit aux femmes et à leurs enfans de rester au milieu des ruines de leur patrie, après avoir été les objets de la brutalité des soldats. A peine ce carnage était-il achevé, qu'un orage mêlé de pluie, de grêle et de tonnerre vint encore ajouter à cette scène de désolation, et porter la terreur dans l'âme des Turks.’

Dereeyah surrendered after a siege which endured for six months—from the 12th of April to the 9th of September, 1818—and, although the fall of the capital did not immediately involve the submission of the whole principality, the power of the Wahabees was broken. Their Prince was a prisoner; his eldest son, Saood, having been taken prisoner while attempting to make his escape before his father surrendered, had been put to death by order of Ibraheem, and the Wahabees had no army in the field that could offer any effectual resistance.

Mr. Palgrave (vol. ii. pp. 55, 56) gives a somewhat detailed account of a great battle fought at Koreyn, a few leagues from Shakra, on the route to Dereeyeh. He says, speaking of Abdallah, the Wahabee chief:—

‘His outposts were soon driven in by the Egyptian columns, and some skirmishes brought Ibraheem to Shakra’, a town then as now unwarlike and commercial; she readily opened her gates to the Basha.

But

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But a few leagues farther on at Koreyn lay gathered the great force of Nejed with 'Abd-Allah at its head; second in command was the invincible Hārith, described by tradition as the fiercest among all Wahabee leaders of old or of recent times.

'A tremendous battle, recalling that of Khālid and Moseylemah, here took place. It is said to have lasted two days, and to have been only decided by the Egyptian field-pieces on the afternoon of the second. Hārith with his lancers broke through the enemy's lines, and reached the Basha himself; but just as the sword of the Nejdean was raised to put an end to the war at one blow, a Circassian came behind him in the mêlée, and with a drawing stroke of his sabre cut through the Arab's loins. Hārith fell dead from his horse, but his companions undiscouraged continued the fray till night parted the combatants. The dreams of Ibraheem Basha are reported to have been long haunted by the memory of his imminent personal danger on that day, and for years after he would often start from sleep exclaiming the name of Hārith.

'At last the artillery, which had been dragged up a commanding height, did its work. 'Abd-Allah with his broken troops retreated to entrench himself in Derey'eeyah, and Wadi Haneefah lay open to the Egyptians. They advanced, but cautiously, and after dispersing a few troops left to check their way, came before the capital.'

This account must be derived from some Arab storyteller: at all events it is a pure fiction. No such battle was fought by the armies of Ibraheem and Abdallah at Koreyn or anywhere else. Except occasional skirmishes, and some affairs of cavalry, of which neither party had any considerable force, no contest occurred in the field. Abdallah retired as Ibraheem advanced, and neither attempted to raise the siege of any one of the fortified towns which were successively attacked, nor to defend the passes leading to Dereeyah. The Egyptian army marched from Shakra to Doroma without encountering almost any opposition, and, having taken Doroma and slaughtered its inhabitants, proceeded over difficult passes to Dereeyah without encountering any opposition whatever. The frightful episode of Doroma, to which we have already referred, Mr. Palgrave does not allude to.

Abdallah, after his surrender, was treated with a sort of chivalrous courtesy by his conqueror, and was sent a prisoner to Egypt with strong assurances, though, it is believed, without any positive promise, that his life at least was safe. In Egypt he was treated with consideration and even with kindness by Mahomed Alee, who forwarded him to Constantinople. There, after having been paraded in the streets for some days as a show to the populace, he was put to death, with all his Wahabee attendants, near the mosque of St. Sophia.

The Egyptian troops spread over the country towards the
Persian

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Persian Gulf, which had suffered less by the war than the central districts, and where provisions were therefore more abundant. The Wahabee power appeared to have received its deathblow and the conquest of Nejd had been accomplished. It had been a bold conception daringly carried out.

But though Mahomed Alee Pasha had conquered Nejd he was unable to hold it in subjection. His army was too far from Egypt, the base on which it must necessarily rely for the maintenance of its strength and resources, and there was an impediment perhaps still more insuperable. The Turk was still a Turk, more arrogant and contemptuous than ever after his successes, and the Arab was still an Arab, notwithstanding his reverses. It was not in human nature that these two heterogeneous elements should amalgamate or should even live together in peace, and in a few years the Egyptians were forced to abandon Nejd, leaving thousands of their skeletons to bleach or to be covered over in the shifting sands of the Desert. The dynasty founded by the first Wahabee Saood, after a series of domestic contests and some assassinations, resumed its ascendancy; and Feyzul, the grandson of the unfortunate Abdallah, having established his capital at Riad, not far from the ruins of Dereeyah, successfully asserted his authority over the whole principality of Nejd. The Wahabee power is now firmly fixed and as formidable as it has ever been; and if we accept Mr. Palgrave's account, the 'orthodox' stringency of the sect had relaxed nothing in its discipline when he visited Riad.

His account of his residence there, as well as of his flight—we can hardly call it his escape—from thence is curious and amusing.

On the fall of Dereeyah in 1818, when Abdallah ebn Saood, with most of his family, were made prisoners by Ibraheem Pasha, one of his sons, Toorkee, escaped, being then at a distance; and in 1862 Mr. Palgrave found Feizul, the son of that Toorkee, in undisputed possession of the principality of Nejd, with Riad for his capital. Feizul sought to re-establish Wahabeeism in all its plenitude, for it was the base on which his power rested. He was already, Mr. Palgrave says, an old man and quite blind, and may have had his weaknesses, but toleration was not one of them. The whole power of his government was exerted to enforce the most rigid conformity to the dictates of the Koran, as interpreted by the Wahabee commentators; but the occupation of the country by the Egyptians, the intercourse with Egypt which this had necessitated, the consequent loss of authority by the Wahabee spiritual guides, and other causes, had produced a relaxation of orthodox discipline and observance

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which,

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which, as zealous sectarian leaders foresaw, must bring down a judgment from heaven on the land. When, therefore, Nejd, which had hitherto escaped, suffered, some ten or twelve years ago, from a dreadful visitation of cholera, Feizul and his advisers did not doubt that this was the righteous judgment which the faithful few had foreseen. He called together the elders, pointed out the cause of the visitation, showed that the only hope of staying the plague lay in repentance and reform, but explained that he was himself now old and infirm, and stood in need of their aid to effect the requisite return to orthodox fidelity and observance. Mr. Palgrave shall tell the result:—

‘The elders of the town retired, held long consultation, and returning, proposed the following scheme, which received the kingly ratification. From among the most exemplary and zealous of the inhabitants twenty-two were to be selected, and entitled “Meddey’yeeyah” “men of zeal,” or “Zelators,” such being the nearest word in literal translation, and this I shall henceforth employ, to spare Arab cacophony. Candidates of the requisite number were soon found and mustered. On these twenty-two Feysul conferred absolute power for the extirpation of whatever was contrary to Wahhabee doctrine and practice, and to good morals in general, from the capital firstly, and then from the entire empire. No Roman censors in their most palmy days had a higher range of authority or were less fettered by all ordinary restrictions. Not only were these Zelators to denounce offenders, but they might also in their own unchallenged right inflict the penalty incurred, beat and fine at discretion, nor was any certain limit assigned to the amount of the mulct, or to the number of the blows. Most comprehensive too was the list of offences brought under the animadversion of these new censors; absence from public prayers, regular attendance five times a day in the public mosques being henceforth of strict obligation; smoking tobacco, taking snuff, or chewing (this last practice, vulgarly entitled “quidding,” had been introduced by the jolly tars of Koweyt and other seaports of the Persian Gulf); wearing silk or gold; talking or having a light in the house after night prayers; singing or playing on any musical instrument; nay, even all street games of children or childish persons: these were some of the leading articles on the condemned list, and objects of virtuous correction and severity. Besides, swearing by any other name save that of God, any approach to an invocation, or even ejaculation directed to aught but Him; in short, whatever in word or deed, in conversation or in conduct, might appear to deviate from the exact orthodoxy of the letter of the Coran and the Wahhabee commentary, was to be denounced, or even punished on the spot. Lastly, their censorship extended over whatever might afford suspicion of irregular conduct; for instance, strolling about the streets after nightfall, entering too frequently a neighbour’s house, especially at hours when the male denizens may be presumed absent, with any apparent breach of the laws of decorum or decency; all these were rendered

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rendered offences amenable to cognizance and correctional measures. It is easy to imagine what so wide-reaching a power might become when placed in the hands of interested or vindictive administrators. However, the number of the Zelators themselves, and the innate toughness and resistance of the Arab character, somewhat diminished the ill consequences which might naturally have been expected from this over-absolute and scarce-defined authority, though many and most atrocious instances of its exercise and abuse were related in my hearing.

'These Zelators are bound to a very simple style of dress, devoid of ornament or pretension; they may not even wear the sword, mark of directly temporal or military authority. But in compensation, each one bears in hand a long staff, which serves the double object of official badge and instrument of chastisement, much like the truncheon of our own policeman; this, combined with downcast eyes, slow walk, subdued tone of voice, the head-dress drawn cowl-fashion low over the forehead, but without head-band, and a constant gravity of demeanour, suffices to distinguish them at first sight from the ordinary crowd. Of course, in their conversation, pious texts and ejaculations, accompanied by the forefinger upraised every half-minute at least, in season and out of season, to testify to the unity of God, are even more frequent with them than among the common faithful. Pacing from street to street, or unexpectedly entering the houses to see if there is anything incorrect going on there, they do not hesitate to inflict at once, and without any preliminary form of trial or judgment, the penalty of stripes on the detected culprit, be he who he may; and should their own staves prove insufficient, they straightway call in the assistance of bystanders or slaves, who throw the guilty individual prone on the ground, and then in concert with the Zelator belabour him at pleasure. A similar process is adopted for those whom negligence has kept from public prayer; the Zelator of the quarter, accompanied by a band of the righteous, all well armed with stout sticks, proceeds to the designated dwelling, and demands an entrance, which no one dares refuse. It is then a word and a blow, or rather many blows and few words, till the undevout shortcomer is quickened into new fervour by the most cogent of all *à posteriori* arguments.'

Mr. Palgrave tells how these men used their power:—

'Furnished with such powers, and backed up by the whole weight of government, it may be easily supposed that the new broom swept clean, and that the first institution of the Zelators was followed by root-and-branch work. Rank itself was no protection, high birth no shelter, and private or political enmities now found themselves masters of their aim. Djeloo'wee, Feysul's own brother, was beaten with rods at the door of the king's own palace for a whiff of tobacco-smoke; and his royal kinsman could not or would not interfere to save him from undergoing at fifty an ignominy barely endurable at fifteen. Soweylim, the prime minister, and predecessor of Mahboob, was on a similar pretext,

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pretext, but in reality (so said universal rumour) at the instigation of a competitor for his post, seized one day while on his return homeward from the castle, thrown down, and subjected to so protracted and so cruel a fustigation that he expired on the morrow.'

Of the preaching in the central seat of Wahabee orthodoxy, which our author appears to have diligently attended, he does not seem to have a very favourable opinion. He says—

'Of morality, justice and judgment, mercy and truth, purity of heart and tongue, and all that makes man better, I never heard one syllable during a month and a half of sermon frequentation in this pious capital. But of prayers, of war against unbelievers, of the rivers of Paradise, of houris and bowers, of hell, devils, and chains, also of the laws of divorce, and of the complicated marital obligations of polygamy, plenty and to spare. Nor should I omit a very frequent topic, the sinfulness of tobacco, ay, and that confirmed by visible and appalling judgments, curiously resembling those which a spirit less Christian than Judaical introduces occasionally into European books of edification.'

One cannot help feeling desirous to learn the result of such a complete identification of the spiritual and temporal government as could hardly be found anywhere else unless in Rome. These are the terms in which Mr. Palgrave sums up his views on that subject:—

'Meanwhile poor morality fares little better in this pharisaical land than in Burns's Kilmarnock, or Holy Fair. True, lights are extinguished an hour or so after sunset, and street-walking rigorously inhibited; while in the daytime not even a child may play by the roadside; not a man laugh out. True, profane instruments of music disturb not the sacred hum of Coranic lectures, and no groups of worldly mirth offend serious eyes in the market-place. But profligacy of all kinds, even such as language refuses to name, is riper here than in Damascus and Seyda themselves, and the comparative decency of most other Arab towns sets off the blackness of Riad in stronger and stranger contrast. "A government which, not content with repressing scandalous excesses, demands from its subjects fervent and austere piety, will soon discover that, while attempting to render an impossible service to the cause of virtue, it has in truth only promoted vice," is one of the many just remarks of a well-known modern author. In fact, most of what Macaulay observes on this very topic in his "Critical and Historical Essays," whether his theme be the Rump Parliament and Puritan austerity, or the hideous reaction of immorality under the reign of the latter Stuarts, may be almost literally applied to the present condition of the Arab kingdom of saints, while it foretells a future inevitably not remote.'

But let us accompany Mr. Palgrave to the streets and markets of Riad, and take a look at its motley population:—

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'At last we reach the market-place; it is full of women and peasants, selling exactly what we want to buy, besides meat, firewood, milk, &c. &c.; around are customers, come on errands like our own. We single out a tempting basket of dates, and begin haggling with the unbeautiful Phyllis, seated beside her rural store. We find the price too high. "By Him who protects Feysul," answers she, "I am the loser at that price." We insist. "By Him who shall grant Feysul a long life, I cannot bate it," she replies. We have nothing to oppose to such tremendous asseverations, and accede or pass on, as the case may be.

'Half of the shops, namely, those containing grocery, household articles of use, shoemaker's stalls and smithies, are already open and busily thronged. For the capital of a strongly centralised empire is always full of strangers, come will they nill they on their several affairs. But around the butchers' shops awaits the greatest human and canine crowd: my readers, I doubt not, know that the only licensed scavengers throughout the East are the dogs. Nejdeans are great flesh-eaters, and no wonder, considering the cheapness of meat (a fine fat sheep costs at most five shillings, often less), and the keenness of mountaineer appetites. I wish that the police regulations of the city would enforce a little more cleanliness about these numerous shambles; every refuse is left to cumber the ground at scarce two yards' distance. But dogs and dry air much alleviate the nuisance—a remark I made before at Hā'yel and Bereydah; it holds true for all Central Arabia.

'But there are many strangers here too, and some hardly less foreigners than ourselves. That slender and swarthy form, clad in a saffron-dyed vest of a closer cut than the ample Nejdean shirt, with a crooked dagger at his girdle, and a short yellow stick in his hand, is a native of the outskirts of 'Omān, a land with which the Wahhabees have now not unfrequent nor always friendly doings. That other in a party-coloured overdress, with a large blue turban fringed red and yellow, overshadowing a cast of features totally unlike those of Central Arabia, and somewhat verging on the Persian or the Indian type, is an inhabitant of Bahreyn; commerce or tribute has dragged him here, sore against his will.

'But here comes a procession; it is a great man from Medinah, detesting and detested by all around, who, with his numerous attendants richly clad, himself rustling in silk and embroidery, has found his way to Riad on business of high import; perhaps to intercede, but in vain, for his friends in 'Oneyzah, perhaps to concert some wicked scheme in the Wahhabee interest for the downfall of the present Shereef. Be that as it may, all frown at him, and he frowns at all: I know not on which side is the deeper contempt and hatred.

'Close by I see a tall slender figure, remarkably handsome, and clad in a not inelegant though unadorned dress. It is Rāfia', one of the Sedeyree family, a chief esteemed alike for courage in war and for prudence in peace: but now, like all his relatives, under an official cloud,

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cloud, because belonging to the too-national party of the province, and suspected of a want of sincere attachment to the 'Aared dynasty.'

'Amid the rabble are many other elements, exotic to Riad, though never wholly absent from it. Camel-drivers from Zulphah, who in their frequent intercourse with Zobeyr and Basrah, have alloyed Wahabee gravity and Nejdean decency with the devil-may-care way of those ambiguous lands half Shiya'ee, half infidel; some ill-conditioned youth, who having run away from his father or the Meṭow'waa' at Riad, has a while sought liberty and fortune among the sailors of Koweyt or Taroot, and returned with morals and manners worthy of Wapping or Portsmouth, for Jack-tars are much the same everywhere; some thin Yemanees pedlar, come up by Wadi Nejrān and Dowāsir to slip quietly in and out through the streets of the capital and laugh at all he sees; perhaps some Belooch or Candahar darweesh, like those who accompanied us a month ago to Bereydaḥ, and who here awaits companions with whom to cross the eastern arm of the desert on his way to the Persian Gulf; mixed with these, the beggars of Dowāsir, more fanatic, more viciously ill-tempered, and more narrow in heart and head than the men of 'Aared themselves, with the addition of a laziness, meanness, and avarice quite their own; close by, some young, lean, consumptive-looking student, who, cursed with a genius, has come to study at Riad, where he lives on the Coran and the scanty alms of the palace; his head full of true orthodox learning, and his belly empty or nearly so; and others less significant, each on "his business and desire, such as it is," might an Arab Hamlet say.'

We had marked for quotation other passages relating to later parts of Mr. Palgrave's journey, and we should gladly have compared his account of the population, military force, and resources of Nejd in 1862 with that which was given by M. Mengin about forty years before; but we must abstain.

We take leave of Mr. Palgrave, thanking him for the amusement he has afforded us; but we may perhaps be permitted to say, without offence, that a little less anxiety to display his artistic skill, and a little more attention to the truth of history, might have ensured to him more unreserved confidence. His misapprehension as to the condition of Arabia and as to what was already known of Nejd, which gives him throughout the air of a man who expects to get credit for having been the first to discover what other writers had previously made known to the public, tends in like manner to make reliance more hesitating. Then the mystery which he has felt himself obliged or has thought proper to observe with regard to the purposes of his journey while he takes care to inform us of the auspices under which it was performed, has tended, we have reason to believe, to produce in some quarters a feeling of distrust. At the same time we must acknowledge, as we have already said, that, although

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although the colouring may sometimes be too high, we see no sufficient reason to doubt that the outlines of what he depicts from personal observation are for the most part faithfully drawn.

We must altogether object, however, to the course which he has pursued with regard to the narratives, especially of historical events, which he says he collected from the Arabs. He gives a general intimation, it is true, that he relates them as they were told to him, and that he is not responsible for their accuracy; but, having done this, he proceeds to embody them in his own narrative, to comment upon and use them as if their accuracy were undoubted. We have pointed out some instances and might have cited many more in which a very moderate acquaintance with the authentic information that was available to him would have enabled him to correct the errors to which he has given currency, and which must prevent his book from ever being regarded as an authority.

ART. VIII.—*A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art*. By Thomas Wright, Esq.; with Illustrations from various sources, drawn and engraved by F. W. Fairholt, Esq.

AMONG the many contributions which Mr. Thomas Wright has made towards English antiquarian research, and, in particular, towards the familiar delineation of the manners and customs of our ancestors, none is, perhaps, so popular or so well known as his two volumes entitled 'England under the House of Hanover, illustrated from the Caricatures and Satires of the day.' The very spirited woodcuts with which this book is adorned by Mr. Fairholt might alone have sufficed to make its fortune. Published only in 1848, it is already difficult to procure a copy. Encouraged by his success in this line, Mr. Wright has now attempted the wider enterprise announced in this title-page. We fear that in doing so he has been somewhat over ambitious. A history of the 'caricature and grotesque in literature and art,' extending over all countries and all time, comprising not only pictorial representations, but poetry, satire, the drama, and buffoonery of all descriptions, is a subject which, if it be attempted at all in a single octavo volume, could only be so in the form of a compact and well-reasoned essay, to which Mr. Wright's entertaining fragmentary sketches bear little resemblance. The 'immeasurable laughter' of nations, ancient and modern, cannot be reduced within so small a compass. We must therefore content ourselves with thanking Mr. Wright for his desultory but agreeable attempts for our enlightenment. And we propose, on the
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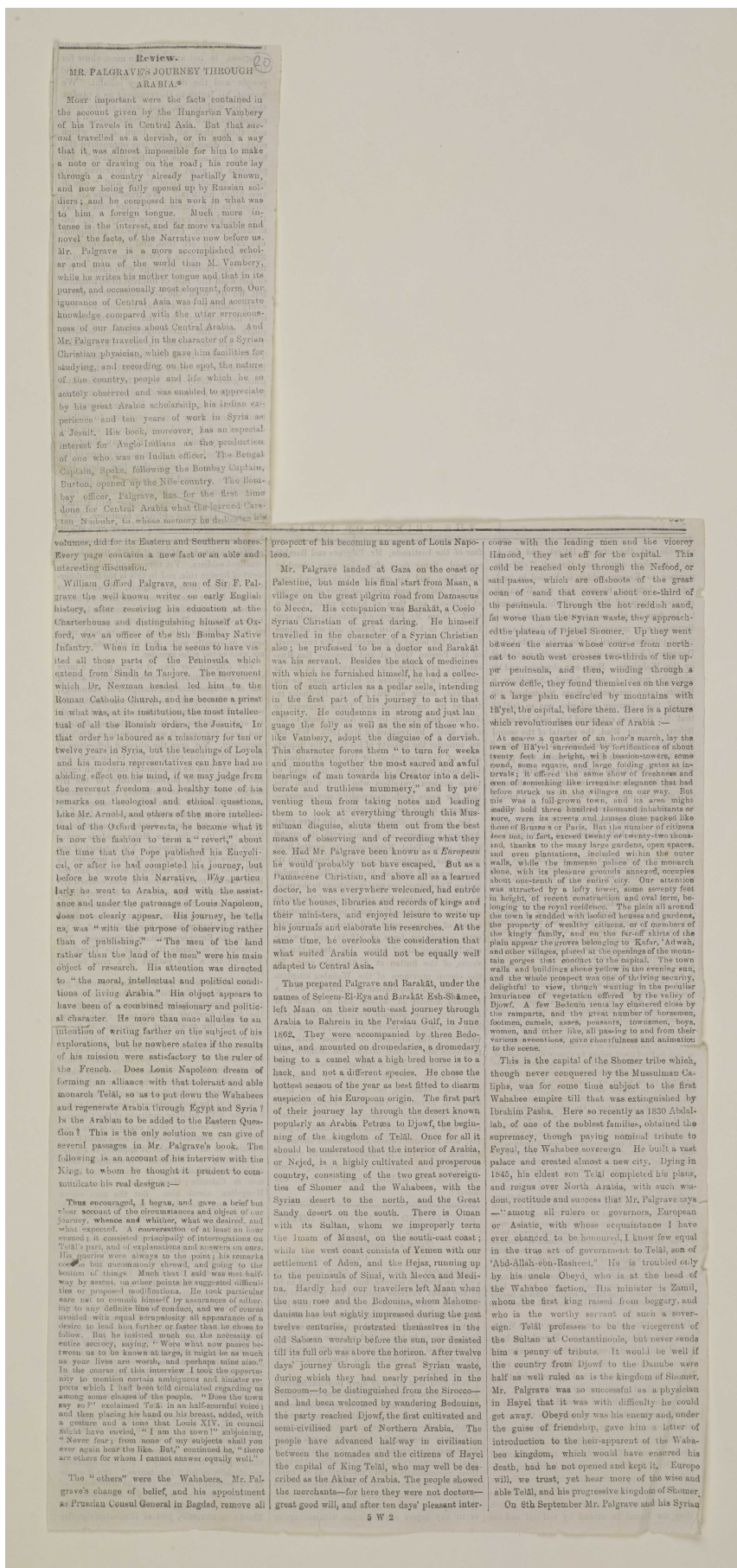
Caricature and Grotesque

present occasion, to confine ourselves entirely to the artistic portion of them: enlivened, as it is, by a new series of Mr. Fairholt's excellent illustrations. Our inability to transfer these to our own pages places us, as we feel, at a great disadvantage: many words are required to explain to the reader the contents of a picture, which a few outlines by an able hand impress at once visibly on the recollection. Deprived of this advantage, we must confine ourselves as well as we can to the points on which caricature touches the history of social and political life, rather than those by which it borders on the great domain of Art, properly so called.

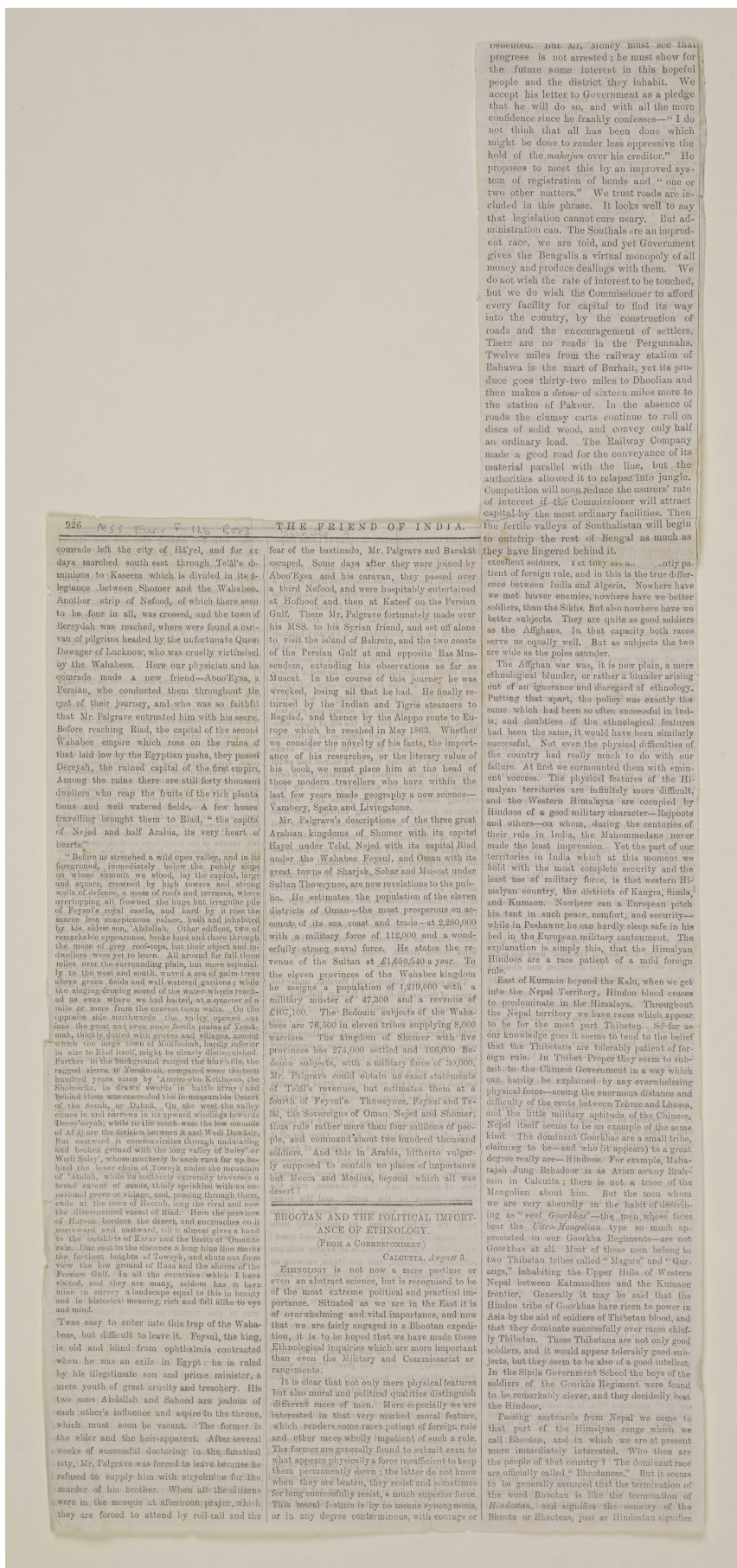
'The word caricature is not found in the dictionaries, I believe, until the appearance of that of Dr. Johnson, in 1755. Caricature is, of course, an Italian word, derived from the verb *caricare*, to charge or load; and therefore it means a picture which is charged or exaggerated. ["Ritratto ridicolo," says Baret's Dictionary, "in cui fiensi grandemente accresciuti i difetti." The old French dictionaries say: "c'est la même chose que charge en peinture."] The word appears not to have come into use in Italy until the latter half of the seventeenth century, and the earliest instance I know of its employment by an English writer is that quoted by Johnson from the 'Christian Morals' of Sir Thomas Brown, who died in 1682, but it was one of his latest writings, and was not printed till long after his death: "Expose not thyself by fourfooted manners unto monstrous draughts (*i. e.* drawings) and caricatura representations." This very quaint writer, who had passed some time in Italy, evidently uses it as an exotic word. We find it next employed by the writer of the Essay, No. 537, of the 'Spectator,' who, speaking of the way in which different people are led by feelings of jealousy and prejudice to detract from the characters of others, goes on to say "From all these hands we have such draughts of mankind as are represented in those burlesque pictures which the Italians call *caricaturas*, where the art consists in preserving amidst distorted proportions and aggravated features, some distinguishing likeness of the person, but in such a manner as to transform the most agreeable beauty into the most odious monster." The word was not fully established in our language in its English form of caricature until late in the last century.'—p. 415.

This, no doubt, is a serviceable, artistic definition of the word; but its popular meaning is, perhaps, a little more limited. It would be difficult accurately to distinguish 'caricature' in composition, according to the above description, from what we simply term 'grotesque;' exaggeration, that is, of natural effects for the mere purpose of the ludicrous. In using the word caricature, we generally add to this notion that of satire; and the best definition for our purpose, as well as to suit ordinary apprehension, though not at all originating in the primary meaning of the word, will be, that 'caricature' implies the use of the grotesque for the purpose

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