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ART. I.—*A Compendium of Christian Antiquities: being a brief view of the Orders, Rites, Laws, and Customs of the Ancient Church in the Early Ages.* By the Rev. C. S. Henry, A. M. Philadelphia, Joseph Whetham. pp. 332. Svo. 1837.

A PETTY ambition to be recognised as authors is, we fear, a growing vice among Americans. One of the lowest forms in which the passion shows itself, is that of abridgment. Not that abridgment, in itself, is evil; but because the abridger, in the cases now referred to, cannot deny himself the happiness of being thought a *bona fide* author, by that class of readers who confine themselves to title-pages. On the elegant title of the volume now before us there is no intimation that the book is not the offspring of the Rev. C. S. Henry. A very little turning of the leaves, however, suffices to show that it is all from Bingham, and on looking at the preface, we are gravely told, that “it makes no pretension to originality of investigation.” This is not strictly true; for the *pretensions* of a book are to be looked for in the title-page; and besides, there is some pretension in the affected statement that “the work of Bingham has been relied upon, as to facts and authorities—as well as followed

He followed Bingham with confidence. His plan precluded the possibility of so displaying, in detail, the authorities of his original, as to enable his readers to judge of their deficiency. And he had, undoubtedly, a right both to his plan and to his convictions of truth and duty. To follow him from page to page, and give warning against all the vulnerable points in his statements, would be to write a volume larger than that which we review. We can, therefore, only put our readers on their guard against inadequate and partial representations; and express our regret that the whole work of Bingham, and the rich and impartial pages of Augusti, cannot be spread out before every candid inquirer.

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ART. II.—*Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochin China, Siam, and Muscat: in the U. S. Sloop-of-War Peacock, David Geisinger, Commander, during the Years 1832-3-4.* By Edmund Roberts. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1837. 8vo. pp. 432.

Books of voyages and travels are no longer sought for the mere purpose of amusement. Science and Commerce are busy in exploring every nook and corner of the earth, in quest of their respective prizes, and Christian benevolence should be equally active in promoting inquiry into every avenue for the truth of the gospel. The day is coming, we doubt not, when the marine of Christian powers will be subsidiary to the cause of the Redeemer, and when it will not be considered more reasonable to fit out a vessel for the East India trade, than to send a cargo of bibles to Siam or Japan. But until that better day shall dawn, when Christian fleets, bringing the sons of Zion from far, their silver and their gold with them, shall be descried upon the ocean, flying as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows, we must be content to follow in the path opened by the laborious and daring children of this world, who, in their own way, are wiser than the children of light. Geography is becoming more and more a Christian science. It is the reconaissance of the great field of evangelical warfare. Every new discovery gives a hint to the missionary and the church. Already our missionaries are contributing more to the exact knowledge of remote regions than all the merchants, seamen, and savans of the

world put together; and the wise philanthropist is eagerly adding to these accounts every thing which he can gather from secular travellers.

It is in such considerations that we find our apology for devoting some space to a work which at first view might seem to be beyond our proper sphere. We are the more ready to do this, as the book before us, though abounding in information of the highest importance to our national commerce, has been scarcely noticed in those quarters where one might expect it to be received with the greatest interest. The history of the publication is as follows. For some years past the government of the United States has acknowledged the importance of furnishing more ample facilities and protection to its Asiatic commerce. The disastrous assault made on the ship *Friendship*, by the natives of Qualah Battu, excited attention, and hastened the measures which had been projected. The ship-of-war *Potomac* was despatched to the coast of Sumatra, and shortly after the sloop-of-war *Peacock* and the schooner *Boxer*, were sent as auxiliaries to the *Potomac*, with the additional intention of carrying to the courts of Cochin China, Siam, and Muscat, a mission charged to effect commercial treaties with these powers. The author of the work before us was the special or confidential agent entrusted with this negotiation. In the prosecution of their voyage, these vessels visited, in South America, several of the principal ports; in Asia, Bencoolen, Angier, Manila, Linting, Singapore, Batavia, Mocha, and Muscat; and in Africa, Mozambique and the Cape of Good Hope.

Upon most of the details in this narrative we see no reason to detain our readers; but we think it no more than just to say that they present a great body of important and entertaining observations, especially deserving the attention of commercial men. It was not possible for the author, by merely touching upon the skirts of so many countries, to acquire a very intimate acquaintance with their interior condition. Yet he cannot be charged with carelessness, for he has collected (rather than selected) so great a mass of statements, as to detract very much from the vivacity of his work. We can however commend to the reader's attention, as highly interesting and sometimes very animated, several of the descriptive passages concerning Sumatra, China, and Cochin China. The account of Canton is particularly good. Mr. Roberts seems to have used a laudable diligence in seeking authentic accounts of Chinese education. On this subject

the following extracts, somewhat condensed by us, may prove instructive.

“The highest literary examinations in the empire are triennial, and take place at Peking.—Two examiners are chosen from distinguished officers at Peking, under the immediate superintendance of the emperor; within five days after they are chosen, they must leave the capital.—The above examiners are assisted by ten others, who are selected from the local officers over whom the foo-yuen presides. Besides these there are many inferior officers, who are employed as inspectors, guards, &c. All these, together with the candidates, their attendants, &c., amounting to ten thousand and upward, assemble at the Kung-yuen, a large and spacious building designed solely for these occasions.—The number of candidates who assemble in Canton is between seven and eight thousand.

“The examination continues for several days, and each student must undergo a series of trials. The first is on the ninth of the moon, the second on the twenty-second, and the third on the fifteenth. The candidates are required to enter their apartments, on the day preceding the examination, and are not allowed to leave them until the day after it has closed. Thus they must pass two nights in close and solitary confinement. On the first day of their examination, *three* themes, which are selected from the ‘*Four books*,’ are proposed to them, and they are required to give the meaning and scope to each, to which a fourth is added, on which they must compose a short *poem in rhyme*. On the second day, a theme is given them from each of the ‘*Five classics*,’ and on the third day, five questions, which shall refer to the history or political economy of the country. The themes must be sententious, and have a meaning which is refined and profound. They must not be such as have often been discussed. Those which are given out for poetry, must be grave and important. In the themes for essays on political economy, the chief topics must be concerning things of real importance, the principles of which are clear and evidently of a correct nature. ‘There is no occasion to search and inquire into devious and unimportant subjects.’ All questions concerning the character and learning of statesmen of the present dynasty, as well as all topics which relate to its policy, must be carefully avoided. The paper on which the themes and essays are written is prepared with great care; and must be inspected at the office of the poo-ching-sze. It is firm and thick, and the only kind that may be used. The price of it is fixed by authority.

The number of characters, both in the themes and essays, is limited. The lines must be straight, and all the characters full and fair. At the close of every paper, containing elegant composition, verses, or answers to questions, it must be stated by the students how many characters have been blotted out or altered; if the number exceed one hundred, the writer is tsee-chuh, 'pasted out,' which means, that his name is pasted up at the gate of the hall, as having violated the rules of the examination, and he is forthwith excluded from that year's examination.—The student, on entering the hall of examination, must be searched; and if it be discovered that he has with him any precomposed essay, or miniature copy of the classics, he shall be punished by wearing a wooden collar, degraded from the rank of sew-tsae, and for ever incapacitated to stand as a candidate for literary honours; and the father and tutor of the delinquent shall both be prosecuted and punished.—Of the thousands of candidates assembled at these examinations in Canton, only seventy-one can obtain the degree of Kew-jing; the names of the successful essayists are published by a proclamation, which is issued on or before the tenth of the ninth moon, and within twenty-five days subsequent to the closing of the examination.

“To qualify the young for these examinations, and thereby prepare them for rank and office in the state, is a leading object of the higher schools and colleges among the Chinese. But a great majority of the schools in Canton are designed only to prepare youth for the common duties of private life. These latter, as well as many of the higher schools, are *private* establishments. And though there are teachers appointed by government, in all the districts of the empire, yet there are no public or charity-schools for the benefit of the great mass of the community. Whatever may be his object and final distinction, almost every scholar in Canton commences his course at some one of the private schools. These, among the numerous inhabitants of this city, assume a great variety of form and character, according to the peculiar fancy of individuals. The opulent, who are desirous of pushing forward their sons rapidly, provide for them able teachers, who shall devote the whole time to the instruction of two, three, or four pupils.—The high schools and colleges are numerous, but none of them are richly endowed, or well fitted for the purposes of education. The high schools, which are *fourteen* in number, are somewhat similar to the private grammar-schools in England and America; with this differ-



ence, that the former are nearly destitute of pupils. There are *thirty* colleges; most of which were founded many centuries since. Several of them are now deserted, and falling to ruins. Three of the largest have about two hundred students each, and, like all the others, only one or two professors.—Of the whole population of Canton, not more than one half are able to read. Perhaps not one boy out of ten is left entirely destitute of instruction, yet, of the other sex, not one in ten ever learns to read or write. There is scarcely a school for girls in the whole city. Public sentiment—immemorial usage—and many passages in the classics, are against female education; the consequence is, that females are left uninstructed, and sink far below that point in the scale of being, for which they are fitted, and which they ought ever to hold.”

From this subject we willingly pass to one which has much greater interest, we mean what relates to the commercial treaty with Muscat. As this was the most considerable part of the envoy's undertaking, we regard his observations concerning it as the most valuable portion of the book. The city of Muscat, or, as it is written by Niebuhr, Maskat, is the chief commercial emporium of the Persian Gulf, near the south-western entrance of which it is situated upon a bold and rocky foreland. The extreme southern entrance of the gulf, indeed, is Ras-el-Had, the Lands-end of Arabia. This whole eastern corner of Arabia, between Hadramaut and the Persian Gulf, is known as Oman, a name signifying a land of peace, and naturally recalling the Omani whom Pliny has placed somewhere in the same region.\* A glance at the map of Arabia will serve to show that from Muscat to Cape Mussendom the coast makes a graceful indentation, the chord of the curve running from north-west to south-east. This defines the maritime border of Oman. We shall first give a rapid sketch of the country, from independent sources, and then subjoin what may be gathered from Mr. Roberts. And here we must acknowledge our obligation to the incomparable Niebuhr, who, as he was the first European who gave any authentic account of this region, so he has left little to be supplied by his successors. To his patient accuracy and scientific skill we are indebted for the only complete survey of this coast: and he has given us not merely a chart of the

\* Pliny, Nat. Hist. l. vi. c. 32.

Persian Gulf, but a map of Oman, in detail, and even a topographical plan of Muscat itself.\*

The visit of Niebuhr occurred in 1765. The country of Oman he tells us, is bounded on the east by the sea, on the north by the Persian Gulf, and on the south by vast deserts. It is divided among several chieftains, of whom the most considerable at that time was the Imam of Oman. The whole coast from El Ras to Mussendom is mountainous, to the very borders of the sea. The only perennial streams are Masora, near Kuriat, and a river, not named, near Sib. The productions are wheat, barley, durra, duhn, pulse, and three sorts of grapes. Fish is so abundant as to be the common food of cattle and other animals.† This fact serves to explain why the inhabitants of the opposite coast should have been called by the Greeks, Ichthyophagi. Dates constitute the staple commodity, and are exported by whole ship-loads.

Muscat is the principal city of Oman, and the one most known to Europeans. Niebuhr makes its latitude  $23^{\circ} 27'$ . It lies at the southern side of a bay, nine hundred geometrical paces in length, and four hundred in breadth; and this is defended by abrupt rocks, on the east and west, under shelter of which the largest vessels find a safe roadstead. This beautiful harbour is defended by a number of batteries and several small forts. Muscat is a well fortified, walled town, but its principal security is due to natural advantages, which must always point it out as the most favourable port and emporium in these parts of the world. We have no doubt that it has been such for ages. The similarity of the name to the Mosca of Arrian, is too great to be overlooked, and although later geographers have chosen to designate Sajar or Schoer as the ancient Mosca, we are inclined to believe, with Niebuhr, that this is the celebrated port of the Periplus.‡ Let it be observed, that Arrian (or whoever wrote the noted Periplus), in describing the southern coast, brings us first to the Sachalitic gulf, then to the promontory Syagrum, then to the *Sinus Ominus*, and the port of Mosca. Now of this Syagrum, he remarks, that it is 'the greatest promontory of the world.'§ This hyperbolical expression cannot be tortured so as to apply to any of the small capes on the Indian Ocean,

\* Voyage en Arabie, Tom. 2. p. 64, sqq. Plates xv. xviii. ed. Amst. 1780.

† This is confirmed by Mr. Roberts.

‡ Periplus Maris Erythr. p. 18. Vincent's Periplus, p. 344.

§ Α'κρωτήριον τοῦ κόσμου μέγιστον.

but might easily be employed by a lively writer either of Cape Mussendom, or Cape El Ras.\* This commanding site has made it the entrepot of merchandise from Arabia, Persia and the Indies, and is precisely that which induces us to dwell so long on a seemingly unimportant point. The prominence of this place has led voyagers to denominate its prince Imam of Muscat, rather than Imam of Oman. In 1508 the city was taken by the Portuguese, who retained it about a hundred and fifty years. Niebuhr saw two churches which had been built by them, but which were now used as public edifices. The wealth of Oman consists chiefly in its dates, in which the trade was at that time wholly conducted by the Imam. In 1765 he had four vessels of war: the reader will be struck with the change in this particular. With these ships he plied the slave trade every year, to the coast of Quiloa and Zanzibar; from which he also imported ivory and other African commodities. The smaller vessels of the Imam were at that time so contemptible, that pirates ventured into the very harbour. At the same time Niebuhr considered the people of Oman as the most skilful navigators in Arabia. Then, as now, they were distinguished for using cotton sails, instead of the mats of the eastern seas. The principal soldiers of the Imam were negro slaves. The residence of the prince was at Rostak, a city lying westward of Muscat.

The Mohammedans of this province, as we learn from the same authority, belong to a sect called, variously, Beiäsi, Boiäsi, (by Mr. Roberts Bee-asis) and Abadi. They differ from Sunnites, Sheeites, and all other Moslems, in refusing to the descendants of Mohammed any special veneration.† It is for this reason that the prince assumes the title of Imam, and possibly of Caliph, though making no pretence to be of the sacred lineage, as do the Imams of Yemen.‡ The Beiäsi

\* Such is the opinion of Dr. Vincent, although we have seen him quoted as an authority on the other side. In giving an account of the cruise made by Hiero, under the order of Alexander the Great, Dr. Vincent says, "He seems to have gone down the coast below Maskat, and to have come in sight of Cape Ras-el-Had, the Syagros of the ancients."—*Voyage of Nearchus*, p. 479, Lond. 4to. 1797. See also Bochart, *Phaleg*. l. ii. c. 17.—The same opinion is likewise ably maintained by Dr. Robertson, in his learned *Disquisition concerning Ancient India*, p. 36, ed. London, 1793, 4to.

† *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 18, ed. Amst. 1724.

‡ Niebuhr uses the title Imam, Roberts that of Sultan. Both are accordant with Arabian usage. In speaking of Yemen Proper, Niebuhr says: "The governor of this part of Yemen is commonly styled Imam; he also discharges the functions of an Imam, when, during prayer in the mosque, he places himself before the assembly, that those who attend may see and imitate him in the



abstain, not merely from wine, but from coffee and tobacco, though they offer them to strangers. They affect simplicity of manners, dress, equipage, and ritual. Niebuhr does not represent them as fully realizing their principles in their life. They are regarded by the other Mohammedans as heretical, and are called Chauredsji, or Kharejites. But their most interesting trait is their singular comity and tolerance. They are universally polite towards foreigners, whom they allow to reside among them in the free enjoyment of their own customs, whether civil or religious. Thus the Banians, who are in Yemen forced to bury their dead, are in Muscat suffered to burn them; and the Jews, who in other Mohammedan countries must wear some distinctive badge, are here permitted to dress like the Arabs. The police was so excellent in the time of this traveller, that theft was unknown, though valuable wares often lay all night in the streets. During the hours of darkness no vessel was allowed to enter, nor any person to go from vessel to vessel, or to appear in the streets without a light. There was not a single Christian at that time living at Muscat.

We shall despatch in a few sentences all that we think it important to say with regard to the modern history of Muscat. A succession of petty princes reigned in Oman, bearing the title of Imams, until the time of the great Nadir Shah. This conqueror made an attempt to subdue Oman, but without success. The Imam Seif ben Sultan, having made himself odious to his frugal subjects, as a voluptuary, a drunkard, a smoker, and a coffee-drinker, lost his influence, and was despoiled of all his dominions, except Muscat and its environs, by a certain Sultan ben Murshed, who proclaimed himself Imam. Ben Seif was however able to maintain his impregnable fortress by the aid of his four vessels of war, until two of these were intercepted by his rival on the return voyage from Africa, upon which he resolved to throw himself into the arms of the Persian Shah; who, it may be observed, had recently failed to take Muscat, though he made the attack with twelve thousand men. The result was a war between Ben Murshed, and the united forces of Muscat and Persia; in this conflict both the contending Imams were slain. Achmed ben Said succeeded Ben Murshed, made peace with the

customary ceremonies." *Descript. de l'Arabic*, p. 162. The title *Sultan* signifies Ruler, Potentate, and is applied to almost all independent Mohammedan princes.

Persians, of whom he first held the principality of Muscat, and afterwards, at a favourable moment, declared himself Iman, and soon obtained control of the whole country. It is this Achmed ben Said, who appears to have been the reigning prince at the time of Niebuhr's visit: and here our authorities fail us, for we have no history of any subsequent changes. From all that we can learn, the same form of government has continued until our own day, and the commercial and military resources of the principality have greatly increased.

In returning from this digression to the work before us, it is proper to state that the mission of Mr. Roberts was intended to effect a commercial treaty with the government of Muscat. The vessels made Ras el Had on the 13th of September, 1833.

“Ras el Had is a low sandy point. A range of high mountains form the background of the landscape, which have an altitude of nearly seven thousand feet; this is a link in a chain of mountains, which extend as far as the Devil's Gap and Kuriat, and are known by the name of Jeebel Huthera, or the Green mountains.—The day previous to our arrival, as we lay at anchor, a few miles from Muscat, a boat was despatched, under the command of Acting-Lieutenant Brent, to the sultan, to inform him of our arrival, and the object of the visit. The boat returned laden with abundance of exquisite *grapes*, of four different kinds, and ripe *dates*, just plucked from the trees, and strung together like large golden beads, refreshing to the taste, and by no means too luscious or cloying to the appetite. There were other fruits also sent, such as the season afforded, with a number of goats and sheep, being presents from the Sultan; bringing also complimentary messages, and congratulating us on our safe arrival, and expressing himself highly flattered, that, at length, United States' ships-of-war should, for the first time, visit his ports, and more especially for the object of the mission.—The coast appeared to be nearly as steril as that of Abyssinia or Somauli, being mountainous, barren, rocky, and sandy; but villages were much oftener to be seen, and frequently of a large size, in the midst of groves of the date-palm. Boats also were in great numbers, and well built, instead of the frail catamaran; they were provided with cotton sails, and the owners were, apparently, better fed than those about the Red sea, and wore most venerable long beards, quite outstripping any of the goat family. The waters were teeming

with food—fish were in greater abundance, if it be possible, than about Mocha. In the morning, an interchange of salutes took place. The harbour, or rather cove of Muscat, is extremely limited in its dimensions; it does not exceed three fourths of a mile in depth, from its entrance at the small islet, called the Fishers' Rock, lying off the northern part of the Muscat island, and its width, between the fort on the island, and another fort on the main, on the western shore, is scarcely one half its depth. It is open to the north, and during the prevalence of northerly and westerly gales, in the winter, a heavy sea is thrown in. The cove is bounded by very precipitous black rocks, running up to the height of three or four hundred feet, being much jagged or serrated; and on the higher parts are perched small circular towers, which are said to have been placed there by the Portuguese, in the 'olden time,' when they held possession of the place."

Most of the houses are poorly built of palm-branches, coated with mud, and have no furniture beyond the simplest utensils. Dates and fish are the food of the inhabitants; goat's flesh being a rarity with these Ichthyophagi. The people are indolent, and beggars abound in every quarter. The population, within the walls, is estimated at about twelve thousand, chiefly Arabs, but with an addition of Hindoos, 'Persians, Scindians, Abyssinians, and negro slaves from the coast of Zanzibar; all reposing in safety under the mild and equitable government of a very worthy prince.' The suburbs contain about five thousand. The only artisans are weavers, smiths, carpenters, and makers of ropes and sandals. There is a sale at the slave-bazaar every evening. Like all preceding travellers, Mr. Roberts speaks of the abundance of fish in these waters. During the stay of the Americans, about two thousand Bedouin Arabs arrived by order of the Sultan; they were to be embarked, at the setting in of the northeast monsoon, for Mombas, and other parts of Africa. They are rather more swarthy than the Arabs of Mocha, slender, with open countenances, and sparkling eyes. They were naked, except at the waist, and were generally armed with spears. Large droves of camels and dromedaries arrive daily, indicating a brisk trade with the interior. There should seem to be no deficiency of provisions.

"We found the mutton here very excellent, the sheep costing two dollars, and goats at various prices: fowls from one dollar to two and a half per dozen: bullocks, very fat and very palatable, at ten dollars each. But there were no

hogs, turkeys, geese, or ducks. Fish was very abundant and cheap, and generally good flavoured. Both white and purple grapes were supplied us daily, and in profusion, by the sultan. The pomegranates were much superior to any I have ever seen. There were but few mangoes, the season for them having passed. The oranges were insipid, and tasted like the sweet lemon. Limes were very plentiful. The muskmelons gave out a fine perfume, but they were very tasteless. The dates, when not too ripe, had the flavour of a very sweet green chestnut. Pistachios, almonds, raisins, and kismisses, (or seedless raisins,) were plenty. Of vegetables, there were the long purple egg-plant, potatoes, onions, okra, and parsley. The date molasses was very good; wheat sold for one dollar and a quarter for one hundred English pounds.”

Inconsiderable as this city and province may seem to be, in regard to internal resources, great importance is attached to Muscat from its commercial enterprise, liberal policy, and foreign possessions. From the extracts which are subjoined, there will appear to be good reason to hope, that Christian charity following the track opened by commercial speculation, may find this Arab principality the key to many unexplored parts not only of Persia and Arabia, but of Eastern Africa.

“The sultan is of a mild and peaceable demeanour, of unquestionable bravery, as was evinced during the Wahabee war, where he was severely wounded in endeavouring to save an English artilleryman. He is a strict lover of justice, possessing a humane disposition, and greatly beloved by his subjects. He possesses just and liberal views in regard to commerce, not only throwing no obstacles in the way to impede its advancement, but encouraging foreigners as well as his own subjects.

“The Sultan of Muscat is a very powerful prince; he possesses a more efficient naval force than all the native princes combined from the cape of Good Hope to Japan. His resources are more than adequate to his wants: they are derived from commerce, owning himself a great number of merchant vessels: from duties on foreign merchandise, and from tribute-money, and presents received from various princes, all of which produce a large sum: a small tithe also is taken on wheat and dates, but more on houses or lands.

“His possessions in Africa stretch from cape Delgado to cape Guardafui: and from cape Aden in Arabia, to Ras el



Haud, and from Ras el Haud they extend along the northern coast of Arabia, (or the coast Aman) to the entrance of the Persian gulf: and he claims also all the seacoast and islands *within* the Persian gulf, including the Bahrein islands, and pearl-fishery contiguous to them, with the northern part of the gulf as low down as Seindy. It is true that only a small part of this immense territory is garrisoned by his troops, but all is tributary to him.

“In Africa, he owns the ports of Monghow, or Mongallow, Lyndy, Quiloa, (Keelwah,) Melinda, Lamo, Patta, Brava, Magadosha, (alias Magadshe,) and the valuable islands of Monfeea or Mafeea, Zanzibar, Pemba, Socotra, alias Socotera, &c. &c.

“From Africa are exported, gum-copal, aloes, gum-arabic, columbo-root, and a great variety of other drugs. Ivory, tortoise-shell, rhinoceros horns, hides, beeswax, cocoa-nut oil, rice, millet, ghee, &c.

“The exports from Muscat are wheat, dates, horses, raisins, salt, dried fish, and a great variety of drugs, &c. &c. Muscat, being the key to the Persian gulf, is a place of great resort in the winter months, for vessels from the Persian gulf and the western parts of India.

“The productions of Africa, of the Red sea, the coast of Arabia, and the countries bordering on the Persian gulf, may be had there.

“Their vessels trade not only to the countries named, but also to Guzzerat, Surat, Demaun, Bombay, Bay of Bengal, Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, the Mauritius, the Comoro Islands, to Madagascar, and the Portuguese possessions in East Africa; bringing Indian, African, and European articles.

“The number of vessels employed on these voyages I was unable to ascertain with any degree of exactness: but no number named was less than two thousand; of this a very large proportion are small craft, having but a few ships and brigs. The naval force of the sultan is very respectable in point of numbers, and they are daily becoming better *ship* sailors.

“The officers practise the lunar observations, and possess excellent chronometers. His force is sufficient to give him entire control over all the ports in East Africa, the Red sea, the coast of Abyssinia and the Persian gulf. He has an abundance of sailors, and although he has but a small number of regular troops, yet he can command any number of Bedouin (Bedwin) Arabs he may want, by furnishing them with pro-

visions and clothing. This force consists of between seventy and eighty sail of vessels, carrying from four to seventy-four guns."

"All religions, within the sultan's dominions, are not merely tolerated, but they are protected by his highness; and there is no obstacle whatever to prevent the Christian, the Jew, or the Gentile, from preaching their peculiar doctrines, or erecting temples. The principal part of his subjects are of the sect of the Mahometans, called the Bee-asis: they profess to abstain from the use of tobacco, spirits, and all fermented liquors, and from every description of pomp and magnificence, in their dress, their houses, or their mosques. (The latter are very ordinary buildings, being destitute of all ornaments, and without minarets.) They do not grant pre-eminence to the descendants of Mahomet, but maintain that all who are Mussulmans by birth, are eligible for any employment in church or state. I was of the opinion, until I became better acquainted with these people, that they were more strict than the other sects, both in precept and practice; but their religious prejudices are broken down, the form only is left; and away from Muscat, or those who are not in the immediate employ of the sultan, and are therefore not in daily attendance upon his person, they use tobacco, as well as all intoxicating liquors, freely."

It will be remembered that ninety years ago, the prince of Muscat possessed but four armed vessels. At the present time he has one seventy-four; five ships carrying from thirty-two to fifty-six; and several vessels carrying from six to eighteen guns; in all fifteen large vessels; besides fifty bag-helas, carrying from eight to eighteen guns; and ten balits carrying from four to six guns.

The intentions of our government were fully accomplished by this mission. His highness, Syed Syeed bin Sultan, (Said Seid ben Sultan) received the envoy with a simple, but cordial welcome, and immediately consented to admit our commerce into his ports upon equality of terms with the most favoured nations. In the course of the conferences, one very pleasing and characteristic trait of Arabian manners was evinced. 'When the fifth article of the proposed treaty was read, which related to shipwrecked seamen, the sultan at once objected to that part of it relating to a remuneration for expenses necessarily incurred in their support, and in forwarding them to the United States, and said that he wished the article to be so altered as to make it incumbent on him to

protect, maintain, and return them, free of every charge. He remarked that it would be contrary to the usage of Arabs, and the rights of hospitality, which have ever been practised among them; and this clause was inserted at his request.'

Upon a review of all these statements, we are strongly impressed with the value of this post in a missionary point of view; if not as a centre of direct operation, yet as a point of departure in exploring expeditions. When we consider that we here have an accessible port, at which the Christian traveller may at once come into contact not only with Bedouins and other Arabs, who are perhaps the least open to evangelical effort, but with Persians, Banians, Abyssinians, and people of the eastern African coast; and that the two thousand vessels of Oman penetrate almost every bay and inlet of the Red Sea and great Indian Ocean; and add to this the great tolerance of the people, and the peculiarly amicable relations with our government; it is impossible to suppress the hope, that Muscat may be for Mohammedan Asia and Africa, what Singapore promises to be for the China Seas.

One additional passage, respecting the ancient Portuguese colony at Mozambique, shall close our extracts from this work.

“The moral and religious character of the people is at the lowest ebb possible. The colony in East Africa has been entirely neglected by the parent-country for the last three years, owing to its distressed situation, being wholly unproductive to the crown of Portugal. Hundreds of unhappy exiles are dragging out a miserable existence in this most destructive climate, banished for supposed political offences, without means to live, excepting by a precarious and scanty subsistence, picked up from day to day; separated from their distressed families, denied the solitary comfort of writing, to inform them they are still dragging out a lengthening chain, or receiving a line from them, if, by chance, they ascertain where they are to be found; and as if the diabolical malice of the government knew no bounds, they are banished from the seacoast to the interior, to prevent their escape, or engaging in insurrections. I was informed that there are innumerable instances of persons being taken from their beds at midnight, in Lisbon and elsewhere, hurried on shipboard, and sent to the Portuguese possessions in East and West Africa, without a form of trial, or knowing any cause for this outrage on justice and humanity. Many hundreds have died on the passage from sickness, brought on by distress of mind;

others have been obliged to beg their daily bread, and finally died of starvation; while hundreds of others have fallen victims to a destructive climate.

“A gentleman, now residing at Mozambique, told me, that he and his brother were taken from their beds at midnight, without being suffered to hold any communication with their families, with nothing but their clothes on their backs, and hurried on board two different vessels, one to West Africa, to Benguela, and the other to East Africa, to Mozambique; and to make it the more heart-rending, all near relations were separated in this manner. We heard similar distressing accounts, when at the Cape de Verd Islands and at Macao. The bitter curses which have ascended to heaven, against the Braganza family, for the last three hundred years, from the exiles of Portugal, to South America, Africa, and India, from aged parents, heart-broken wives, and fatherless children, will shortly sweep from the earth this destructive scourge, and leave on record but a small part of the vile doings of the most heartless, worthless, lascivious, and diabolical monarchy, which ever disgraced the face of the earth.

“To prove the unappeasable hostility of the nations in East Africa, towards their oppressors, and every one who wears straight hair, it is a fact well known by all who are well acquainted with the state of things here, and substantiated by the Portuguese themselves, that they dare not go half a dozen miles into the country, without an armed guard. And this is the state of things from Da Lagoa bay (alias Lorenzo Marques) to cape Delgado, after having had possession of the coast upward of three hundred years; and so it is at Bissao, Saint Paul de Loando, Benguela, &c., in West Africa. The Portuguese, under a liberal form of government, unshackled by a state religion, known to be corrupt beyond measure, would prove themselves to be, as they once were, a noble people, zealous in all good works.”

In summing up what we have to say upon the work before us, we find reason for the remark, that it is not so much a good book, as a collection of materials from which a good book might be made. Where the traveller records what he has witnessed or heard, his observations are almost uniformly acceptable; but the volume is full, even to plethora, of matter which we had rather seek in histories and treatises. In every part of the journal, Mr. Roberts presents himself to us as a sensible and veracious man, gifted as an observer, benevolent in his feelings, zealously patriotic, even to a punctilio,



and withal a cordial respecter of religious institutions. In point of style, the work has glaring faults, not merely of negligence, but of grossly bad taste. Such passages as the following should not abound in a printed book. "It wants the besom of destruction to pass over the land, to cleanse out this Augean stable from the filth and pollution which characterize this modern Sodom, giving the innocent a warning, which shall be heard in a voice of thunder." p. 370.—"The surface of the water was red with myriads of crabs, which were sent forth by the *Great Provider* of all things, to sustain the larger fish." p. 350.—"With the exception of the sultan's palace, whose walls are bathed on the harbour side by 'Oman's green waters,' and on another side by the bazaar, a narrow, dark covered street," &c. p. 353. Any one who turns over these pages will perceive that we have touched, with a very gentle hand, upon this peculiarity. The most friendly counsel which can be given to the writer, is, that he should abstain from all attempts at ambitious writing. In this we refer not merely to a certain sentimentality, in which he seems often tempted to indulge, even at the expense of correctness, but to the frequent introduction of poetic scraps, which, in a majority of instances, are far-fetched and irrelevant. We regret that there should be occasion for even so much censure as this; because the substantial part of the book is good, and because we regard the author as having discharged his public trust in the most faithful manner.

Allusion has been made to the error of our traveller, in burdening his journal by needless compilation from other books. "I deemed it important," he says in the introduction, "that no useful information, from whatever source derived, should be withheld from my countrymen." It is this benevolent disposition which on the part of our travellers produces unreadable books, and on the part of our congressmen produces empty seats and solid columns of newspaper eloquence.

We have somewhere met with a letter of Archdeacon Paley, in which he communicates to a friend about to travel in the East, some hints upon the best way of recording his observations. He advises him to lay aside all prosing disquisitions, and to jot down the very objects which struck him as new and interesting, with the warmth and freshness of a first impression. Heartily do we wish that some counsels of the same kind could be whispered in the ear of our modern tourists. Without going to the extreme of the Sir John Carrs of

the last generation, they might give us a simple account of what they saw, and the representation thus produced would at least have the charm of individuality. Instead of this, our books of travels are oporose compilations from histories, encyclopedias, statistical tables and road-books. Following the example of our senators, who begin every discourse by a monstrous prolegomenon about first principles and ancient empires, our travellers feel bound to say all that can be said concerning the country upon which their feet have trodden, and so pertinaciously continue 'agere actum,' that with the exception of a slender thread of personal adventure, a dozen books on any given country will often be seen to contain the tedious repetition of the same particulars. It will be found that every writer of travels who has succeeded in producing a work of interest, has derived his charm from the graphic recital of those things which have come under his immediate observation, and has scrupulously avoided the long-drawn annals of the places visited,

Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,  
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.

We find an invincible disposition to yawn over every book of travels which pursues the opposite method; and this has been particularly the case with the journals of several eminent Americans who have communicated the results of their journeyings through the weekly periodical press. We find no fault with those enterprising editors, who have encouraged and remunerated these labours; they deserve the thanks of their patrons. But we certainly have a fair quarrel with their heavy correspondents, whose interminable dissertations give us rills of personal narrative flowing through savannas of boundless diatribe. Even genius seems to be rarefied into unimpressive diffuseness, when bespoken for a given number of weekly columns. We could name two travellers, one of whom is universally respected as a scholar and a divine, while the other is deservedly applauded as a brilliant and imaginative writer, but who have contrived by this method to yield the most prolix and tiresome exercitations as the fruits of their foreign tours. Instead of lively glimpses into the natural and social characteristics of Great Britain, for instance, they have gone into heavy treatises on the organization of the British government, or repeated the thrice-told tale of the origin of Dissent, the Corn Laws, and the Voluntary Question. All this is very good in its place, but is

alien to the spirit and character of a traveller's narrative. Except where the object is partly antiquarian, and thus demands the collation of ancient authorities, we should pronounce that book of travels the best, which should be made without the consultation of a single volume; and especially if the events and impressions were recorded in the glow of the first enthusiasm. For this reason, those narratives which are entirely concocted after the traveller's return, when he is cool in his study, and when each vivid feeling has been superseded or obscured by those which followed, must always prove sadly wearisome.

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ART. III.—*A Critical Grammar of the Hebrew Language.* By Isaac Nordheimer, Doctor in Philosophy of the University of Munich; Professor of Arabic, Syriac, and other Oriental Languages, in the University of the City of New York. In two volumes. Vol. I. New York: Wiley and Putnam. 8vo. pp. 280.

IN former articles we have endeavoured to apprise our readers of the progress made and making in this field of learning.\* On the last of the occasions here referred to, we had the pleasure of announcing an original Hebrew grammar by an American author. We have now the satisfaction of making our readers acquainted with another, not indeed by a native, but by a domesticated foreigner, whose reputation, as an author, is identified with that of his adopted country. As in the former case, we shall try to let our readers understand, precisely, what they may expect from the new grammar, not by vague formulas of praise or censure, but by exact description and distinct specification. This, we think, may be effected in the simplest manner, by recording the impression made upon ourselves, first by the exterior and less essential features of the work, and then by a close scrutiny of its internal structure, reserving, till the close of our critique, any general estimate or judgment of the whole.

The first distinctive circumstance, that strikes us in the work before us, is its neat appearance. In reviewing Professor Bush's work, we had occasion to point out the disad-

\* See especially the volumes for 1832, p. 568, and for 1835, p. 341.